

The Final act of the Etruscans

Perceptions of Etruscanness in Imperial Rome

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Foreword

This thesis would not have materialised if it had not been for the support received by the KNIR, who allowed me to stay and conduct research during Covid, Iefke van Kampen, who provided me with important reading and advice, and Janric van Rookhuijzen, who supervised this thesis and supported my interest from the start.

Lastly, my parents, who throughout my studies have read my work, and supported their dyslectic daughter to study history, notoriously focussed on reading and writing, who had to learn dead languages, and never questioned if I could do it, but always believed I would.

Introduction – Etruscans and Rome

Whilst wandering around the Tuscan countryside in Northern Italy, one cannot help but notice the remnants left behind by the Etruscans culture. The *tumuli*, also known as burial mounds, are still clearly visible on the tops of many hills in former Etruria. Even though scholars are not unfamiliar with the Etruscan civilization, it has often been eclipsed by the great successes of their Southern neighbour, the Romans. The Roman conquests and domination of the Mediterranean started with the expansion and subsequent takeover of the neighbouring territories. This enormous undertaking took Rome several centuries to achieve. Notable among the Italic people engulfed by the Roman expansion are the Etruscans. This civilization struggled for centuries against the Roman invasion but was eventually absorbed into the growing Roman Empire.¹ In modern scholarship the importance of the creation of a pan-Italic culture to integrate the newly conquered territories into Rome has been attested. This in turn led to the disappearance of the smaller, less important groups now under Roman domination.² The great etruscologist Massimo Pallottino argues that the ensuing change experienced by the Italic cultural groups was so all-consuming that these groups were completely integrated into the Roman social group.³ Hence, in current scholarship, Italy is sometimes regarded as a largely culturally homogeneous group from the reign of Augustus (27 BCE – 14 CE) onward.⁴ In the process of creating this Italic identity, scholars argue that local identities and social distinctions were lost. As a result, etruscologists have generally stopped studying the Etruscans after the first century BCE, as it is assumed that the Roman integration was completed during this period.⁵

Nevertheless, references to the Etruscans are still prevalent in Roman literature from this era: they are present in numerous texts relating to Roman history, architecture, and religious practices. In the Roman perception, then, Etruscans do not seem to disappear entirely. Therefore, it seems that the “end of the Etruscans” might benefit from a nuance in the way we perceive their decline. In this thesis, I will re-evaluate the idea that the Etruscan culture ceased to exist upon complete integration into the Roman empire around the year zero.

An interesting parallel could be drawn between the end of the Etruscan civilization as understood so far, and the modern historiography around the fall of the Roman empire. It has been argued by influential scholars, starting several centuries ago with Edward Gibbon, that the fall of Rome in the fourth century CE was not an event that occurred in a single day, or could be linked to a single event.⁶ Rather, it should be seen as

¹ Scholars include Pallottino (1985), Liverani (2012), Haynes (2007).

² For an expansion on the idea of the creation of an Italic identity, see Pallottino (1985) 189 – 90.

³ Pallottino (1985) 189.

⁴ Pallottino (1985) points this out, as does Liverani (2012).

⁵ Scholarship starts speaking of Etruscan influence on Rome in preceding centuries, such as the book of John F. Hall, *Etruscan Italy: Etruscan Influences on the Civilizations of Italy from Antiquity to the modern Era*. During the Roman period Etruscans are rarely attested and more importantly, rarely seen as culturally different from Rome.

⁶ Gibbon (1789) *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

a gradual process that led to its inevitable conclusion.⁷ Indeed, after the fall of the city to the invading Gauls and following this the death the emperor in 395 CE, the Western Roman Empire did not cease to exist; many of its institutions remained intact, and if you were to ask a person living in this period they may have self-identified as Roman and as living under Roman rule. This re-evaluation of the fall of Rome and the subsequent perceived disappearance of its influence has thus been shown to have not been an instant event, but rather as a slow process that can be traced to events and decisions preceding the sacking. The aftermath was not straightforward either: the collapse of institutions and 'Romanness' did not happen instantly, and many can still be seen to have been active for several centuries. Similarly, the Etruscans may also have been alive in Roman perception longer than is generally assumed now. The continuation of 'Etruscanness' will therefore be the object of study of this thesis.

Theoretical framework

In order to answer the question to what extent the Etruscan culture lived on in Roman perception, we must first raise the difficult question of what exactly makes 'culture'. It seems fair to say that a culture constitutes a group that share important features such as language or religion, and, most importantly, see themselves as being part of this group. The debate on what makes a culture is too extensive for this thesis to completely analyse and even more so to try to answer. Instead, the notions of *commemorative culture* and *cultural memory* as described by Jan Assmann will be used to examine the perception of Etruscan legacy in the Roman perception. The use of the term *perception* will put the focus of this thesis not on what the cultural legacy of the Etruscans was in Rome or Roman culture, but rather, it will help emphasize the manner in which the Etruscans and their legacy were perceived in Rome, as can be seen in Roman cultural memory of the Etruscans. Moreover, most extant sources on the Etruscans have been written by Romans. If we can determine that, in the eyes of Romans, elements of the Etruscan culture survived, and that these features were still connected to the idea of the historical Etruscans, then we can argue that the Etruscan culture, to an extent, did not completely end with the Roman conquest of Etruria. The focus on perception indicates that this thesis will not attempt to give definitive proof of the continuation of the Etruscan culture, as this is simply beyond the scope of the research to be conducted here, and scholars are divided on what defines a culture.

The concept of *lieux de mémoire*, or places of remembrance, by Nora and the concept of cultural memory by Assmann have been used in recent decades by many scholars to understand interactions in the past. During this process, the concepts and scope of possible fields that benefit from this type of research have broadened.⁸ Assmann, himself an Egyptologist, employed the term *cultural memory* to show the use of a collective set of stories and myths, allowing the Egyptians to form a collective

⁷ Liverani (2012) 242 – 3.

⁸ See, among other: Erll et al. (2008).

consciousness, or a cultural identity.⁹ Assmann was not the first to use the idea of a *mémoire collective*, but built on earlier works of Maurice Halbwachs, that has now evolved into the field of cultural memory studies.¹⁰ The distinction as created by Assmann between *commemorative memory* and *cultural memory* lies in the time period which it spans: *commemorative memory* is passed informally between people within a culture. Cultural memory, on the other hand, is institutionalised in the form of written texts and rituals, all of which actively invite their partakers to remember an event or memory that has happened in the distant, often mythical, past.¹¹ The most telling contemporary example Assmann presents is our memory of the Holocaust: it is still part of commemorative memory, but as the events pass over the third generation mark, it is slowly transferred into our cultural memory. Stories are written down in order not to be forgotten and institutionalised in rituals through which we remember this horrific past have been established.¹² Even though the Holocaust is a horror of a completely different nature and intensity, this thesis will hypothesize that the possibility of lingering ideas of Etruscanness this could also have applied for Roman cultural memory on the Etruscans after the conquest of Etruria.

After all the different Etruscan cities were absorbed by the expanding Roman empire it may have taken several generations to constitute a new 'normal'.¹³ Based on an analysis of Etruscan religious institutions, looking closely at the persistence of cults and religious practices, and on the perception of the Etruscans, both by outsiders looking in and their self-perception, this thesis will use the concept of *cultural memory* and *lieux de mémoire* to analyse how 'Etruscanness' continued to live on in Roman *cultural memory*. This thesis examines the period from around 50 BCE to 100 CE, during which the Etruscan settlements were fully integrated in the Roman Empire but are perceived by modern scholars to be no longer distinguishable as a separate culture from Rome. This will be done in order to answer the following question: to what extent did the Etruscan culture lived on in the Roman perception in the shape of cultural memory during the Roman Imperial period?

Methodological considerations

This thesis is divided into five chapters in order to answer the proposed question. Each of these chapters emphasize different aspects of Roman cultural memory of the Etruscans. The long history between Rome and the varying Etruscan states strongly dictated the relations between the cities during the early Imperial period, the starting point of this research. Discussion on the process of Romanisation and the factors that led to the disappearance of the Etruscan cities have been well studied by scholars.¹⁴

⁹ Assmann (2011) 149 – 50.

¹⁰ Halbwachs (1985), Erll et al. (2008) V.

¹¹ Assmann (2011) 16 – 17.

¹² Assmann (2011) 22.

¹³ Though the exact cities are not known, this thesis will work with the most important cities of Veii, Caere, Tarquinia, Volsinii, Vulci, Arezzo, Perugia, Chiusi, Volterra and Roselle.

¹⁴ Pallottino (1985) 189, Liverani (2012) 229 – 253.

However, little research concerns the question of whether Etruscan cultural elements continued into the Imperial period and what this could mean for the perceived end of the Etruscans. This thesis will start, therefore, with describing the *status quaestionis* of ideas on how and when the Etruscan culture disappeared. In addition, the first chapter will paint a picture of events unfolding in the final centuries of Etruscan independence. This chapter will show the arguments of scholars such as Pallottino and Liverani for the disappearance of the Etruscan culture and on which aspects and events they are based.

The second chapter will start at the point where modern scholarship says the Etruscan culture can no longer be seen as independent from Rome, at the end of the first century BCE, and assesses to what extent people are still associated with their Etruscan heritage until the end of the first century CE. The central question will be whether those from Etruscan cities can still be seen in literature in Roman society, and to what extent their Etruscan heritage was still being mentioned. In order to answer this, I will look to two sources: Roman writers that mention the presence of Etruscans in Roman politics, and influential figures who are known to have been of Etruscan descent. In the perception of Rome, was mention made of Etruscan heritage and, if so, does this change in the first century CE?

In the third chapter, the question of the lingering presence of the Etruscan language in Etruria will be investigated. Here, this thesis will present the primary sources that give us insight into the use of Etruscan. This includes both inscriptions and writings on and about the use of Etruscan (in Latin, Greek, and Etruscan). What can we say with certainty about the end of the Etruscan language? In the last part of this chapter, this thesis will use modern linguistic theories to indicate that the concept of language loss and death cannot be assessed with the sources as easily as one might assume.¹⁵ This chapter will present the argument that Etruscan could very well still have been visible to Romans in later periods and, more importantly, still been connected to the historic idea of the Etruscans. If so, linguistic evidence points to cultural memory and the continuation of the Etruscans in the Roman perception.

The fourth chapter will look into the connection between cultural memory and Etruscan religious practices, that were, according to Roman sources, an essential part of Etruscan culture. This chapter will examine what these practices were, and whether they were still associated with the Etruscans during the first century CE. The focus will be on the Roman understanding and opinion of Etruscan religious practices. By tracing these practices from the first sources we have of them, up to their last mentions in Roman literature, this chapter will assess whether these rituals maintained their historical connection to the ancient Etruscans. This will be done by analyzing words used to refer to these religious practices and their participants. Indeed, to Rome, do they remain Etruscan, or do they over time lose this connection?

In order to delve deeper into this religious aspect, the fifth chapter will be a case study of the *Fanum Voltumnae*, the sanctuary that housed the Pan-Etruscan festival. As this festival in the territory of Volsinii was attended by all the Etruscan cities and a focal

¹⁵ The handbook on linguistic theories that will be used in this thesis, will be Erll et al. (2008).

point where Etruscan religious festivals were held, and probably political and economic treaties concerning all the Etruscan cities were made, which was started before the Roman conquest. It will be a good indication of the influence of social and cultural changes caused by the integration into Rome on the Etruscan religious practices. Did the festival continue in similar fashion after the Roman takeover, or did it cease to exist, or did it simply lose its Etruscan connection?

An important methodological consideration for this thesis concerns the terminology of 'Etruscan'. How can they be recognized in ancient texts? The term 'Etruscan' in itself raises questions, as it is derived from the word used by Rome to identify the Etruscans (either *Etruscī* or *Tuscī*), whereas this group referred to themselves as *Ravenna* or *Rasna*, of which we know from the few inscriptions found.¹⁶ Varro, in the first century BCE, provides an important testimony:

*Europae loca multae incolunt nationes. Ea fere nominata aut translaticio nomine ab hominibus ut Sabini et Lucani, aut declinato ab hominibus, ut Apulia et Latium, aut utrumque, ut Etruria et Tusci. Qua regnum fuit Latini, universus ager dictus Latius, particulatim oppidis cognominatus, ut a Praeneste Praenestinus, ab Aricia Aricinus.*¹⁷

The various localities of Europe are inhabited by many different nations. They are in general denominated by names transferred from the men, like Sabini 'the Sabine country,' and Lucani 'the country of the Lucanians,' or derived from the names of the men, like Apulia and Latium, or both, like Etruria and Tusci. Where Latinus once had his kingdom, the field-lands as a whole are called Latian; but when taken piecemeal, they are named after the towns, as Praenestine from Praeneste, and Arician from Aricia.

Based on his assessment, it seems fair to say that *Etruria* and *Tusci* were both used in Rome to refer to the Etruscan people. The Roman names – *Tusci* and *Etrusci* – have stuck, probably due to that fact that most attested references to this culture are in Roman sources. Indeed, the province in which the Etruscan cities were situated, Etruria, was named accordingly. The name later changed to Tuscani, when the provinces were redivided, which it remains to this day.¹⁸ The ducal family of Tuscany, the de' Medici, even claimed to be of Etruscan descent (15th century CE).¹⁹ Similarly, the Greek name for the Etruscans, *Tyrrhena*, is used to refer to the ocean adjacent to the Etruscan heartland: the

¹⁶ Pallottino (1977) 133: Rasna is also mentioned by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and in inscriptions such as found in the Cippus of Cortona. For more information on the literary sources left to us, see chapter three.

¹⁷ Var. *Ling.* 5.32, Transl. Roland G. Kent, Loeb-ed.

¹⁸ Pallottino (1977) 196.

¹⁹ See Forster (1971) 76 for more detailed examination of the use of Etruscan iconography by duke Cosimo I of Etruscan iconography to legitimize his rule. The *signoria* also used references to Etruscans to legitimize conquest of Pisa and Luca (also Etruscan towns), based on Poggio, *De nobilitate* (1440) 102–9. For further reading on this, see: Field (2017) or Bule (1996).

Tyrrhenian Sea. Due to this duality of the names *Etrusci*, *Tusci*, *Rasna* and *Tyrrhena*, which can refer both to the people living in the geographical or political area and the cultural group, some difficulties arise. After all, if one refers solely to the territory belonging to the province, does the writer see the people living there as a cultural group or is he merely referring to the residents? For the purpose of this thesis, the naming of the region can be considered a constituent of *cultural memory*: the name itself is a reference to the culture which lived there in times past and invokes a memory. However, whether or not individual cases actually show cultural memory may vary per case. Therefore, mentions of Etruscans in any shape or form require careful evaluation. This thesis will assess references to *Etrusci*, *Tusci*, *Rasna* and *Tyrrhena* to see whether they are referring to the Etruscans, or merely the geographical area. In some cases, the names themselves may have carried on the perception of the Etruscans. Therefore, though the writer might not intend to extend this identity to the residents, it does, in some cases, allow us to assess the persistence of the identification of area with historical links to the Etruscan culture.²⁰

This also applies when considering the naming of the Tyrrhenians, the Greek reference to area and more importantly, the sea which was ruled by the Etruscan tribes. When looking at translations of texts mentioning the Tyrrhenian Sea, the term used is always ‘the Etruscan Sea’. Horace, a Roman scholar, for example says the following:

*Tyrrhena regum progenies, tibi
non ante verso lene merum cado
cum flore, Maecenas, rosarum et
pressa tuis balanus capillis*

Maecenas, descendant of Etruscan kings, there is some mellow wine in a jar not yet tilted that has long awaited you at my house²¹

Here, we see the Roman poet Horace using the term *Tyrrhena* as a synonym for the Etruscans. This indicates that during Horace’s lifetime, which was from 65 BCE to 8 BCE, educated Romans understood the connection between the name *Tyrrhena* and the Etruscans. Possibly – though maybe not consciously – this connotation extended to the Tyrrhenian Sea as well as to the cultural group. The term τυρρηνός (*Tyrrhena*) has left its mark on the sea west of Etruria but is also used by Roman authors to refer to the Etruscan people.²² This intersection between the name of a geographical area and a possible connection to Etruscan culture seems reliant on the context of the text itself; in some context authors might simply refer to the Roman province, where the same term elsewhere points to the Etruscans. Therefore, this thesis will look at references

²⁰ This is underlined by the use of Τουσκον (Tuscany) to describe the residents of the area and make direct links to their cultural past. Procopius *The Gothic Wars*, 8.21.16: “for the Tuscans (*Τουσκοί*) even down to my day are gifted with prophecy”. Zosimus, 5.41.1 uses *Τουσκίας* (Tuscany) to similar effect.

²¹ Hor. *Od.* III.29, 1 – 4, Transl. Niall Rudd, Loeb-ed.

²² Macfarlane (1996) 245: clearly states that this word refers to the people in Etruria, not just a geographical location.

concerning *Tyrrhena* and *Etruscī*, which are respectively the Greek and Roman word for the culture in question under scrutiny, evaluating individual cases to assess whether they refer to the Etruscan as a social, cultural group, or merely the geographical area, in order to understand the continued perception of the Etruscans.

To complicate matters even further, the Etruscan cities were not a homogenous group, but consisted of at least twelve cities that made up the Etruscan League. The problem here is that historical sources do not agree on which cities were involved in this association. Indeed, the composition of the league seems to have been liable to change, as the leaving of Veii from the Federation demonstrates. We do not know if the vacated seat left was filled by another city, and if so, by which one. The interactions of the different cities with Rome also vary greatly. For example, Veii, the closest in proximity to Rome, fared very differently from the Northern city of Volsinii. The conquest of Veii happened about 200 years earlier as a result of a lengthy siege. The subsequent Roman occupation was brutal to the city's occupants. Volsinii was brought down largely due to internal strife, and a little Roman help. After the takeover, a large part of the city's inhabitants was forced to migrate to another region.²³ Though the events seem slightly similar, as they were several hundred years apart, they illustrate that each of the Etruscan cities has its own stories and history, especially in regard to their relations with Rome.

It is also important to note that, as with the Greek *poleis*, the Etruscan cities did not consist only of the main city, but for their wealth and influence were greatly reliant on their *Hinterland*. Even though cities are used to indicate territory, the changed are not confined to these spaces. It is important to take all this into consideration, there is still a strong shared tradition of religion, language, and iconography between these cities. These shared hallmarks make them identifiably and unmistakably Etruscan. The best indication of Etruscanness lies in the Etruscan Federation, in which different Etruscan cities came together to decide on political and military matters. This thesis will use 'Etruscans' when referring to features that apply to all the Etruscan cities, and when necessary, lay out the situation in the individual cities.

This thesis will include discussion of developments in the different Etruscan cities and assess the different effects of Romanization on the Etruscan culture, and the remaining visible markers in the shape of Roman cultural memory. The period and events which leads us to the question asked in this thesis fall under the term *romanization*, as due to a large influence of Rome on the Etruscan culture changes occurred that led them to become more Roman. The term *romanization* is notoriously problematic, for a number of reasons. Mainly, it implies a cultural dynamic were Rome influenced others, but foregoes the effects of different cultures on Rome. It has also been shown that in many cases this cultural influence was very limited.²⁴ The direct meaning of *romanization*, or the process where groups become more like Rome, implies a relationship that is not in line with how

²³ Liverani (2012) 229.

²⁴ Liverani (2012) 227 – 9.

scholars think these changes played out.²⁵ This thesis does not attempt to engage in the debate on romanization, but will at times use this term, as it conveys the following point: Etruria became increasingly populated by Romans, who spoke Latin and who progressively dictated social and political life in the Etruscan cities. Thus, leaving questions about Roman influence on culture aside, as well as the adaptation of Etruscan customs on Rome, it effectively meant previously Etruscan territories became increasingly, and forcibly, dominated by Rome, which led to integration into the Roman empire. This thesis will not question how this process played out but will aim to show that to Romans this process did not – in Roman eyes – lead to the disappearance of the Etruscans. More relevant might be to understand the process assessed here not as romanization of Etruria, but to what extent Romans perceived there to be traces of *Etruscanness*. Here, I do not mean actual Etruscan culture, language, or the like, but instead Roman notions relating to the ancient culture and their *perceived* presence during the first and second century CE. Etruscanness is not a new term and has been used by etruscologists such as Thomas Dempster, one of the first to study the Etruscans extensively in the eighteenth century.²⁶ Critique on this term deems it too vague, as it is used by scholars to characterize everything that can be perceived to contain an element of the Etruscans. For what constitutes Etruscanness? The answer, and by extension its usefulness for this thesis, is quite simply ‘what Rome finds it to be’. Most of our sources, as we will see, present the Etruscans as they were seen by Rome. Therefore, what was Etruscan is almost impossible to pinpoint exactly, as is the case for social groups in general. We are able to establish what Romans saw as being Etruscan, either in origin or in practice. In this thesis, the term “Etruscanness” thus will be used to indicate cultural, linguistic, and religious elements, *perceived* to be Etruscan.

²⁵ For more on the discussion of Romanization see Liverani (2010) 228 – 9. For Torelli (1995), discussing the Romanization of Etruria, this term was not yet problematic.

²⁶ De Angelis (2013) 1132.

Chapter 1 – The end and the start

This chapter will illustrate the view of modern scholars on the end of the Etruscan culture, by offering an overview of the changes that occurred on the Italian peninsula that have led to those views. This chapter will focus on the two aspects that have been seen as fundamental for the end of the Etruscan culture as independent from Rome. The first is the social-economic change that occurred when Rome finally took complete control of the Etruscan cities after several centuries of varying degrees of independence. The second is the creation of infrastructure in the shape of colonies and roads that changed the Etruscan landscape in a way that led to the Etruscans to become fully integrated into Rome, and to be indistinguishable as a separate culture. Several important scholarly works on the history of the Etruscans, such as those by Massimo Pallottino, Paolo Liverani and Sybille Haynes, will be used to indicate ideas on this topic.



Figure 1: principal towns and principal towns and cities of Etruria. (From L. Banti, *Etruscan cities and their Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973), p. 3.).

Pallottino is seen as one of the most important figures in the field of Etruscology, and therefore warrants being studied. More recent scholarship will be provided by the works of Liverani and Haynes.

To assess the events that unfolded between Rome and the Etruscans, scholars rely on a combination of primary sources relating to the history of Rome and on archaeological finds. No primary sources by Etruscans on their history survive, nor many Roman texts relating to the history of the Etruscans specifically, though we know several were written.²⁷ Historians are forced, therefore, to rely on Roman sources, most of which were written much later (as is the case with Livy), leading scholars to question their reliability. Based on comparisons between these sources relating to the Roman past and looking for consistencies between the accounts, scholars have been able to reconstruct the events as they took place with relative certainty. It is accepted, however, that not all dates are complete or correct, as well as the fact that the accounts probably reflect Rome in a more favourable light than strictly true to the reality that took place. For this thesis, the facts of the Roman conquest are generally agreed on by scholars established and have (mostly) been confirmed by archaeological research. However, sometimes the details on what took place differ in the primary sources available to us. When relevant, sources on events will be named and questioned appropriately. The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of modern scholarly ideas on the events that led to the perceived end of the Etruscans. Therefore, their views and the basis for their arguments will be the focus of this chapter.

Socio-economic change

The first, and arguably most drastic change that occurred due to the Roman takeover of Etruria is the implementation of the Roman form of government in the Etruscan cities, as it led to the disappearance of what scholars such as Pallottino see as the most visibly different aspect of the Etruscan culture, namely, the social make-up of the Etruscan cities. In order to understand this change and the impact it had; this part of the chapter will first explain in what way the social make-up of the Etruscan cities was so different that it was seen as a fundamental part of their culture. Secondly, the process that led to the change will be analysed and this will show that before Rome imposed its bureaucracy on the Etruscans, change in the social classes was already occurring.

Instead of Rome taking over the governing of the northern Etruscan cities, the empire seems to have taken advantage of the existing situation in order to exert indirect control. The southern Etruscan cities were integrated into Rome much earlier and their relationship with Rome was, therefore, very different. The relevance of the change in socio-economic make-up of the northern Etruscan cities is accordingly much greater for this chapter than the southern ones, as it is assumed that these cities, such as Caere and

²⁷ These books include the *Etruscarum rerum libri* (Books of Etruscans matters) by the Roman grammarian Verrius Flaccus (who will be discussed in the next chapter) and the twenty volumes of *Tyrrhenika*, written in Greek by the emperor Claudius.

Veii, lost their Etruscanness much earlier than the northern cities, probably already somewhere in the second century BCE.²⁸

Unlike other cultures in the ancient Mediterranean, the Etruscan cities were made up of only two social classes: the *principes* and the *servi*. This difference is described in Roman accounts on the conquest in Rome, as an explanation for Etruscan weakness, that eventually led to their demise.²⁹ The first were the ruling class, made up of aristocratic families that shared the rule of their respective cities. Before the fifth century BCE, the Etruscan cities were monarchies but during the fifth century this was changed into oligarchies, where instead of one person a group of the nobility was in charge.³⁰ This change coincided with a similar shift in Rome, where the Roman kings (of Etruscan descent) were ousted and instead replaced by a Republic. What makes the Etruscan social class so different is the role played by the *servi*. The best way to explain this, is by, again, comparing to the Romans. In Rome slaves were mostly enslaved conquered peoples made slaves or born into it and had the possibility to achieve freedom through manumission. Etruscan slaves did not have the possibility to become free but were mostly employed to work on landholdings for the *principes* in a system that is much closer to medieval serfdom, than to the Roman slaves.³¹ Due to the position of the *servi*, the Etruscan social system did not have a middle class of free citizens, only different types of unfree people.³²

Due to the large social gap, and the lack of the possibility of a better life, the Etruscan cities experienced social unrest from the fourth century onward, during which the *servi* tried to gain a better position. Sybille Haynes shows through an extensive analysis of tomb paintings in Volsinii shows that a shift, possibly as a result of the social unrest that, did seem to occur in some of the Etruscan cities.³³ In the case of Veii, Haynes argues that there seems to have become possible, to some extent, for the *servi* to gain administrative positions and the possibility to enter the military service. This seems to put them closer to Roman slaves.³⁴ Sadly, the primary literary sources on this process of change are vague. The change of the position as described by Haynes in the tombs near Volsinii, however, do show that progress seems to have been made that led the *servi* to fulfil a different role in the household, as this is what the scenes portray. As few sources on the position of the *servi* survive, it is unlikely we will be able to say for certain to what extent this shift occurred. Telling, however, is that Zonara when describing the social uprising in Volsinii in 265 BCE never refers to the *servi* as such, but to *oijkevta* (servants).³⁵ Though this is a later, non-Etruscan account, it might point corroborate the shift as noted by Haynes. However, the evidence does not allow us to draw a definite conclusion.

²⁸ Freeman (1999) 82.

²⁹ Examples are accounts by Livy and Zonara (when describing the social unrest that led to uprisings in Volsinii).

³⁰ Torelli (2000) 196.

³¹ Liverani (2012) 235 – 6.

³² Torelli (2000) 196.

³³ Haynes (2007) 329 – 31.

³⁴ Haynes (2007) 383 – 389.

³⁵ Zonara 8.7.4 – 8.

An example of the Roman use of local politics can be seen in the cases of Arezzo and Volsinii. The elites in both of these cities struggled because of popular uprisings to maintain their control of the territories. As was their agreement with Rome, both cities asked Rome to intervene in order to maintain their position. In the case of Arezzo, Rome was asked to intervene in 302 BCE by the ruling Cilnii family. Rome responded by quelling the rebellion and before leaving, Rome made sure the Cilnii were still safely in charge. The term that is used to refer to slaves in this event shows that some social shift may already have occurred in this Etruscan city. Sources on this event do not mention the *servi* as those rising up, but refer instead to the popular class, or a serving class as mentioned by Zonaras.³⁶ Rome clearly chose here to leave the local elite in power, and assured their support through helping them maintain their position.

A shift away from this tactic can be seen in a similar request made by Volsinii in 265 BCE. Volsinii asked Rome to intervene on their behalf, as Arezzo had. Liverani argues that before the Roman conquest the city had enjoyed relative peace, but due to the need for a larger military force, a position filled by slaves, a shift in social positions occurred that encouraged the *servi* to demand manumission to become freedman. This led to a new surge of social unrest, and thus, Rome was asked to intervene. Rome did indeed come to the aid of Volsinii, however probably not with the intended result. The city was completely destroyed, and the surviving inhabitants were forced to relocate and to build their city in a much less defensible position.³⁷ Rome seems to have wanted to strengthen its position by diminishing possible opponents, though their control of the area was still indirect. Rome's harsh response did not deter Etruscan cities to ask for help, as in 196 BCE another civil uprising occurred in Volsinii. The slaves were partially crucified and partially returned to their masters.³⁸

During the second century BCE, it seems that in Northern Etruria the land of large landholders was mostly worked by foreign slave labour on the land of large landholders.³⁹ Rome, during this time, tried to intervene and redistribute land, as they felt that the Etruscan rules on distribution were not right, and additionally Rome also redistributed land in the other territories of Italy, such as Umbria. This led to uprisings against Rome in 91 BCE, when the Etruscans and Umbrians protested against these reforms of Livius Drusus. The laws would have led to the local aristocracy losing power due to a change in the existing economic order.⁴⁰ The following year a coalition of Italic tribes rose up against Rome, and though this hardly touched Etruria, it brought great peril to Rome. After the end of the Social War in 88 BCE, the Romans decided to face the groups who had stood against the newly returned Sulla, which marked the end of the unrest in Rome. When the peace had returned in Rome, it allowed them to focus on the cities that had taken advantage of Roman instability, such as the Northern Etruscan cities. Ferocious fighting ensued at the Etruscan cities of Talamone, Populonia, Volterra, Arezzo, and

³⁶ Liverani (2012) 234.

³⁷ Liverani (2012) 234 – 5.

³⁸ Liverani (2012) 235.

³⁹ Haynes (2007) 383.

⁴⁰ Haynes (2007) 384.

Chiusi which resulted in sieges, starvation, and devastation. Sulla profoundly changed the make-up of the cities by assigning landholdings to discharged soldiers, leaving the previous landowners devastated in these northern Etruscan cities.⁴¹ In 27 BCE Etruria became a region of Roman Italy (the seventh) and with that the previous social make-up, which is seen as typically Etruscan, disappeared.

Several scholars see that the end of Etruscan independence that occurred after the destruction by Sulla did not mean the direct end of the Etruscan culture. This is mentioned, however briefly, by Pallottino and Haynes.⁴² Pallottino finishes his book on the integration of the different Italic tribes, of which the focus is on the Etruscans, with the following "What marks the end of a historical cycle, and the end of our journey through time, is the transition from plurality to the juridical-institutional, linguistic and cultural unity of ancient Italy".⁴³ Pallottino argues that part of the Etruscan culture was allowed to live on in the newly established Italic culture.⁴⁴ Due to the big socio-economic change, Pallottino and Liverani argue that the Etruscans lost their most important marker: their social make-up. The continuation of some practices such as local cult is, to them, not enough to show that the Etruscans survived as an independent cultural group.

Rome in Etruria

The result of the Roman takeover during the second and first century BCE was not only the socio-economic change that has been shown to have occurred in the Etruscan cities. Roman takeover of the area also led to an influx of Romans in Etruria. This part of the integration or assimilation of Etruria into the Roman Empire mostly results from the simple fact that large parts of Etruria became populated by Roman ex-soldiers. This was partly done to prevent the Etruscan cities from revolting against Rome, as it meant having trained Roman force present that could be called up easily and acted swiftly.⁴⁵ This was facilitated by the extensive road network installed by Rome, that led into the Etruscan heartland. Due to this, it was easier for Rome to send troops into Etruria, though Liverani questions whether this was merely symbolic, as by this time the Etruscan cities did no longer pose a great threat.⁴⁶ Sulla started the trend of creating Roman colonies in Etruria for Roman retired soldiers, which was taken over by Caesar and Augustus.⁴⁷ The long-term effect of the influx of Latin speaking Romans, though probably unintended, has been called the *romanization* of Etruria.⁴⁸ As mentioned in the introduction, this process, and the investigation of the term, is not the focus of this thesis. More important is the

⁴¹ Haynes (2007) 385.

⁴² Pallottino (1985) 152 – 3; Haynes (2007) 385 – 6.

⁴³ Pallottino (1985) 189, original tekst: Ciò che segna la fine di un ciclo storico, e il termine del nostro viaggio nel tempo, è il trapasso dalla pluralità all'unità giuridico-istituzionale, linguistica, culturale dell'Italia antica.

⁴⁴ Pallottino (1985) 192 – 3.

⁴⁵ Liverani (2012) 239 – 41.

⁴⁶ Liverani (2012) 233.

⁴⁷ Pallottino (1985) 188 – 9.

⁴⁸ Liverani (2012) 239.

effect seen by modern scholars of the creation of these colonies, which, according to them, greatly affected the Etruscan culture. The colonies were created by taking land from the Etruscan city states but were independent cities and landholdings.⁴⁹

The men who came to live in these territories brought with them their Roman culture, language and religion. Furthermore, intermarriage between Roman ex-legionnaires and local woman is seen to have had a big impact as well. Funerary inscriptions during this time show a change from mostly maternal named Etruscan lineages (or identifying a person through their mother's name) to a paternal system, as was common in Rome.⁵⁰

Conclusion

Modern scholars point to two major changes that eventually led to the end of the Etruscans as an independent civilization. The first relates to the socio-political shift that occurred during the first century BCE under Roman pressure, when the social economic structure was forced by Rome to change. However, this chapter has shown, that in the centuries before signs of change occurring due to internal pressure in cities such as Volsinii can already be seen. Though the extent of this change and its exact shape is hard to reconstruct due to a lack of sources, it seems that the Roman takeover, for this aspect could just be seen as the end of a social change that had been happening for a long time. Secondly, the influx of direct Roman influence during the first century BCE occurred due to the creation of Latin colonies on Etruscan soil. In combination with the Roman road network, Rome tried to make its military presence in Etruria felt. A possibly unintended effect was a further social change to the Etruscan cities. After the complete integration of Etruria into the Roman empire, some scholars argue that Etruscan cultural elements might have continued locally, such as local cults, or in the larger context of the Italic culture. However, scholars conclude that the Etruscan elements that continued were not enough to save the Etruscans as an independent cultural group, as their social structure, vital in distinguishing them, disappeared.

In conclusion, scholars argue that one of the most important aspects of Etruscan society, namely their social classes, disappeared, and along with an influx of Romans in Etruria this led to the end of the independence of the Etruscan culture.

⁴⁹ Liverani (2012) 232 – 3.

⁵⁰ Adams (2004) 160 – 1.

Chapter 2 – A lingering presence?

Introduction

In the first chapter, the gradual nature of the Roman conquest of Etruria and the subsequent slow 'romanization', or the greater influence of Roman culture in the Etruscan cities was presented. While establishing the scholarly consensus and view on the point and way in which the Etruscans as a culture disappeared, it became clear that the research thus far has mostly been limited to socio-economic inquiry. This second chapter will, first, examine the cultural memory concerning the Romans in the Early Imperial period through an examination of the view on Etruscan heritage in Rome. Therefore, this chapter will look at how the Etruscan heritage was viewed by and in Rome. An assessment will be made of whether references to Etruscans and Etruscan lineage were made in Rome, to see if in the Roman perception the Etruscans remained visible. In order to establish the Roman views, several important figures whom we know are to be of Etruscan descent will be studied by looking at literature written in the first century BCE and the first century CE and the political reasons for their presence in Rome. The reason for starting before the perceived end of the Etruscans is to put the presence of those with an Etruscan heritage during the first century CE in perspective. We will look at references made to the Etruscans in connection to these figures on the one hand, and on the other hand the possible connotations of these references for the authors. Testimonies by authors such as Horace, Propertius, Vitruvius and Livy will be studied to create an idea of the Roman attitudes to Etruscans in Rome and the change that occurred after the integration of Etruria into the Roman empire. This chapter will allow this thesis to showcase to what extent the perception of Etruscans in Rome changed from the first century BCE to the end of the first century CE. With this in mind, it will be possible to assess views on other parts of the Etruscan culture, by knowing how visible they were in Rome over this period.

Secondly, this chapter will take a broader look at references to the Etruscans in literature from this period, to analyse to what extent the idea and legacy of the Etruscans as a people lived on in Rome into the Early Imperial period. Where the first part focusses on people, the second will look into the mention of the Etruscans as a cultural group in literature from the first century BCE to the end of the first century CE. Are these references common during this period? And if so, in what context are the Etruscans named? This will enable us to create an idea of Etruscan visibility in Rome in the first century CE, which will help understand not only Roman Etruscan relations in Etruria, but also the visibility of the Etruscans in Rome itself.

Etruscans in Rome: politics, power and the people wielding it

The extent to which we can assess the presence of Etruscans in Rome is, naturally, limited by our sources. Most of the sources that relate to individual people in Rome that held high positions in Roman politics, and the sources on this were often produced by elites. Therefore, the presence of normal Etruscans, such as merchants or trades man, in Rome is hard to establish, but Etruscans in high places are more often identifiable. Indeed, several of the Etruscans that held high positions in Roman politics have already been identified. These individuals are connected with their Etruscan heritage by authors, which makes them relevant for this thesis. This part will look at established ideas on Etruscans in Rome, assessing whether these changes around the perceived end of the Etruscans and into the first century CE.

When taking a closer look at the evidence left to us, it becomes clear that Etruscans have always been part of Roman politics. It could be argued that, throughout Rome's ancient history, the rule of Rome was always at least partly in Etruscan hands. As we know, three of Rome's seven kings are thought to have been of Etruscan descent.⁵¹ The first of the Etruscan kings, Tarquinius Priscus (r. 616 to 579 BCE), is said to have been named Lucumo before coming to Rome, but on arriving here changed it to Lucius (the Roman version of the Etruscan name Lucumo, meaning king) and Tarquinius after the city Florus said he hailed from Tarquinia.⁵² Tarquinius Superbus (535 – 509 BCE), the last Etruscan king of Rome, was ousted by Porsenna, who was from Culsium, also an Etruscan city, who left in charge two consuls of Etruscan heritage, namely T. Herminius and Sp. Larcius. The truth of Larcius and Herminius Etruscan roots have been proven by inscriptions from Culsium in previous centuries.⁵³ Though Roman authors do not contest the existence of these figures; they are described as having been part of the army defending Rome. It is much more likely, however, that they were part of Porsenna's invading army, to drive out Tarquinius.⁵⁴ This set of events is important for our understanding of Roman-Etruscan relations of power, and the migration of Etruscans to Rome and the positions they held here: during this time, Rome was ruled by an Etruscan (Tarquinius), who was replaced by Etruscan intervention (Porsenna), to be replaced by Etruscan consuls (Herminius and Larcius).

Based on a combination of onomastics, epigraphical, historical, and literary evidence, John F. Hall shows convincingly that of the political leaders in the Early Republican Era, a large part was Etruscan. Few sources directly link people during this period to their Etruscan heritage, but combining information about names which were distinctly Etruscan, it is possible (to an extent) to assess whether or not people came from Etruria.⁵⁵ The naming system of an individual having a *gentilicium* and a *cognomen* is

⁵¹ Due to the time span covered by the seven kings of Rome it is unlikely that the number was so low. However, due to the stories by several ancient historians writing the history of Rome by Livy, *The History of Rome*, I; Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*; Florus, *Epitome Rerum Romanorum*. These sources were all written much later and can therefore not be taken as fact.

⁵² Flor. *Epit.* 1.5.

⁵³ Alföldi (1965) 76.

⁵⁴ Hall (1996) 159.

⁵⁵ Hall (1996) 150 – 1.

thought to have originated in Etruria, before becoming common in Rome as well.⁵⁶ Based on family names found in inscriptions in the Etruscan cities, thus affirming the Etruscan roots of those with the same name found in the *fasti consulares*, along with the Etruscan feel of the names these an assessments can be made on the provenance of figures on the list of early consuls, here and later on in this chapter.⁵⁷ Indeed, names such as Larcius sound rather un-Roman and are much closer to other Etruscan names found in inscriptions found in Culsium, leading scholars such as W. Schulze to believe this is the Etruscan city they hailed from.⁵⁸ The number of Etruscan names, along with it the part played by Etruscans in Roman politics, did decline, but they do not completely disappear. Due to this, their Etruscanness could have been forgotten or become unimportant. Hall argues that it is likely that due to assimilation of the Etruscan settlers in Rome the links to the Etruscan cities and heritage declined over several generations. When thinking of this process in the light of commemorative memory, as described in the introduction, the disappearance after about seventy years of the link to their Etruscanness seems to fit with Hall's timeline, as this phenomenon seems to be occurring from about 444 BCE. The *fasti consulares*, underline the decline the number of Etruscan names in high political positions.⁵⁹ However, between 284 and 91 BCE a new wave of Etruscans in Roman government can be seen, who were, once again, aware of their Etruscan descent. Some of these acquired senatorial status or the equestrian rank. These newcomers in Late Republican Rome did still feel Etruscan, as opposed to those who had moved there during Early Republic.⁶⁰

This second wave of Etruscans in Roman politics during the first century BCE coincided with the subsequent growing domination of Rome over the Etruscan territories.⁶¹ An important figure in the process of Etruscan assimilation into Rome was Gaius Julius Caesar, as he waged war on the Italian peninsula. Due to the anti-Sulla sentiment in Etruria, as described in the previous chapter, the Etruscans, stripped of their citizenship were inclined to follow him. Based on the estimations of how large this following was, it is reasonable to assume that it was substantial enough for Caesar to secure his position in Rome. In 44 BCE, Caesar extended full citizenship to those who had helped him, which had been taken away by Sulla, endearing himself to the Etruscan *gentes*.⁶² Hall argues this support of Caesar would not have been as strong, had Sulla's actions in the region not left lingering resentment in the Etruscan cities. This seems like a reasonable conclusion and explanation for the subsequent active promotion by Caesar of Etruscans into Roman political life, by giving them praetorships or promoting them to

⁵⁶ Pallottino (1985) 150.

⁵⁷ For a lengthier explanation, see: Hall (1996) 159.

⁵⁸ Schulze, *LE*, 83, 109.

⁵⁹ The documents inform us of the names of the consuls and other leading (chosen) figures in the Roman Republic. Though it is known that some of the names were invented, and others may have been tempered with, it is overall considered to be a reliable source.

⁶⁰ Harris (1971) 147 – 201.

⁶¹ Hall (1996) 158 – 9.

⁶² Hall (1996) 165 – 6.

the praetorian rank.⁶³ A telling example of this, is Sextus Appuleius of Luna's marriage to Caesar's niece and his being awarded priestships and political offices in line with the elevation of others who had helped Caesar.⁶⁴

Etruscans in Augustan Rome

After Caesar's demise and the subsequent rise of Octavian, the participation of Etruscans and their subsequent occupation of significant positions of privilege is considerable. Of these Etruscans, the most prominent, and possibly the best-known figure, was Gaius Maecenas. Though merely of equestrian rank, he was one of Augustus' closest advisors, and performed the role of cultural minister. In this capacity he was patron to many of the important writers of his time.⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that Maecenas is mentioned by many authors, both contemporaries and later chroniclers and many refer to his low status. Interestingly, Maecenas seems to have tried to compensate for this, by aligning himself to the great Etruscan family of the Cilnii, who we have seen in the first chapter asking Rome for help against a civil uprising, and Maecenas is alluded to as *Cilniorum smaragde*, (my emerald of the Cilnii).⁶⁶ Another important aspect of Maecenas' influence in Rome is his involvement in patronage of Augustan poets. He created an environment that led to a high-quality literary output, much of which is still available to us.⁶⁷ Maecenas also actively participated in the literary scene through his own writings, though these have in general been seen as of inferior quality to those of his contemporaries.⁶⁸ For the purpose of this thesis, my focus will be on the perception of Maecenas by his contemporaries and those who follow and his perceived Etruscan connection. Augustus's main advisor, M. Vipsanius Agrippa, is also said to have been from the Etruscan town of Pisa and is counted by Hall as 'of Etruscan descent'.⁶⁹ That people with strong Etruscan connections were able to get too great heights in the Roman political scene seems to be underlined by the fact that the wife of Claudius is also known to have been of Etruscan descent. This takes us further into the first century CE and the contemporaries of Augustus and is therefore an interesting addition.⁷⁰

Maecenas was native to Arezzo, as were the Cilnii, to whom he linked himself.⁷¹ The references to Maecenas' an Etruscan ancestry are relevant for this thesis as it would seem from sources making references such as *tunc urbis custodiis praepositus C. Maecenas equestri, sed splendido genere natus* (of equestrian rank, but none the less of illustrious lineage), or *regis erat Etrusce, genus: tu Caesaris almi/ dextera, Romanae tu vigil Urbis eras*

⁶³ Respectively Carrinas Flaccus and Norbanus Flaccus, Hall (1996) 166.

⁶⁴ Hall (1996) 166.

⁶⁵ Macfarlane (1996) 245.

⁶⁶ Macrob. *Sat.* 2.4.12, transl. Robert T. Macfarlane (1996) 260.

⁶⁷ Macfarlane (1996) 245.

⁶⁸ Macfarlane (1996) 245 – 6, argues that this is undeserving and that his writing is in many ways stylistically similar to those of Propertius and the like.

⁶⁹ Hall (1996) 168.

⁷⁰ Ceccarelli (2016) 37.

⁷¹ See page 14 – 15 for the full description of this event.

(you were, Etruscan, the race of a king: you were great Caesars right hand, the sentinel of the City of Rome) Maecenas might feel he benefited from this link.⁷² These two references seem to underline this: they claim he was a noble man and though of low origin, he was a great man. It might refer to his character but based on the subsequent mention of social status it seems likely to assume that Velleius Paterculus refers to his social status. Maecenas felt that it would benefit him to create this extensive genealogy relating him to the Etruscan aristocracy.⁷³ One might conclude that Maecenas believed that this would elevate his standing in Roman culture.

It seems that contemporary scholars reinstate Maecenas' connection to his Etruscan royal lineage, whereas later authors such as Silius Italicus, who lived in the first century CE, lost this reference and mainly focused on his equestrian status.⁷⁴ This is reinforced by the Roman historian Cassius Dio, who wrote in the second century CE and wrote of Maecenas: ἀνήρ ἰππεύς, καὶ τότε καὶ ἔπειτα ἐπὶ πολὺ (knight, both then and for a long time afterward).⁷⁵ Not all references in later periods lose the mention of the Cilnii, however. Silius Italicus who also writes during the first century CE mentions *cui Maeonia venerabile terra/ et sceptris olim celebratum nomen Etruscis* (his name was held in high honour in the Lydian land where his ancestors once were kings over *Etruri*), were the reference made by the Loeb translation shows that Lydian also refers to Etruria and the old myth of their perceived Anatolian provenance.⁷⁶ Homer, in his list of peoples, also makes reference to the Lydian descent of the Etruscans and might have served as reference for Silius. Etruscans are in this passage hailed as a group with a long lineage, that was held in high esteem already in the works of Homer. Maecenas, in using his Etruscan heritage, draws back on his city's past, to possibly make himself feel more stable in his social position during his time, when their greatness was known and understood, but no longer a reality. Though some references are made in the following century, it seems this argument loses favour in the first century BCE.

Usually, the following passage in which Virgil writes of Maecenas as *regis era, etrusce, genus* (thou wert of royal race, O Tuscan born), is read ironically.⁷⁷ The first observation of interest in this remark by Virgil lies in the social status of both men: Maecenas was of the equestrian rank, where Virgil had the status of a municipal aristocrat. This difference in social status between the two men, who were both important supporters of Augustus might be reflected in this description. It seems paradoxical that Virgil, who had the higher status, looked down on Maecenas and his desire to associate himself with the aristocracy of Arezzo to enhance his status.⁷⁸ His disdain does not seem to be his Etruscan roots, but merely his social status. In the *Aeneas*, his epic published posthumously in 19 BCE, Etruria is mentioned several times, mostly in

⁷² Velleius Paterculus, *Compendium to Roman History*, 2.88.2, transl. Frederick W. Shipley, Loeb-ed; Anonymous, *Eleg. Maec.* 13 – 14., transl. Macfarlane (1996) 259.

⁷³ He also refers to Maecenas' as *Tyrrhena regum progenies* (Hor. *Od.* III.29.3).

⁷⁴ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 9.40-41.

⁷⁵ Cassius Dio, *Roman history*, *XLIX.16.2*, transl. Earnest Caey, Herbert B. Foster, Loeb-ed.

⁷⁶ Sil. 9.40-41., transl. J. D. Duff, Loeb-ed.

⁷⁷ Verg. *Elegiae in Maecenatem.* 1.13-14, transl. J. Wight Duff, Arnold M. Duff, Loeb-ed.

⁷⁸ Hall (1996) 167.

a favourable light.⁷⁹ Here we see Etruscan cities tying themselves into the Trojan cycle, by creating foundation myths after the Roman conquest of Italy, as can be seen in literature from this period. A clear example is the city of Cortona, which is mentioned by both Virgil and Silius Italicus in connection to the Trojan War, as in the aftermath one of the heroes is said to have arrived here and founded the city.⁸⁰ These themes seem to have become the focus of Etruscan founding myths after Roman takeover, possibly to integrate their origin with that of Rome, which was said to have been founded by Aeneas.⁸¹ This shift can not only be seen in the works of Virgil and Silius Italicus, but also in archaeological finds from, for example, Cortona, that show an invigoration of scenes and figures from the Trojan cycle.⁸² The Greek authors Theopompus and Lycophron, who lived during the fourth century BCE have Odysseus come to Etruria first, and then move to Cortona, with Theopompus even going as far as to claim Odysseus died and was buried here.⁸³ It seems that this shift, where the Etruscans see themselves – and are seen – as part of the Trojan cycle was already gaining traction during the fourth century BCE, and was known and reaffirmed by Roman scholars during the first century BCE.

As the Romans liked to pride themselves on being descendants of Aeneas, Etruscans tying themselves into this mythological framework seems part of integration and indeed removing themselves from their own mythology surrounding this topic, about which very little is known. To an extent this suggests a loss of Etruscan ideas, and by extension, their independent cultural identity. Macfarlane argues that the epic is not in line with the general output of Augustan poets and attributes Vergil's break to an 'impulse to include Etruscan themes is precisely what produced Vergil's epic'.⁸⁴ Etruscans trying to integrate themselves into the Roman mythological references could be seen as integration. However, as we will see in chapter four and five, Etruscan religious practices on a broader sense did continue. Therefore, this move might be symbolic in reflecting the new power balance on the Italian peninsula, but not directly reflect a complete loss of Etruscan culture, as the founding myths still tell the tale of Etruscan cities being founded, but simply linking this foundation to that of Rome.

The second point is that Virgil himself was an Etruscan, as he hailed from the Etruscan city of Mantua. It might, therefore, have been a greeting from one Etruscan to another, a reference understood by both men. Virgil seems to refer to Maecenas as 'Etruscan', as one might name someone from Roma as a Roman. Coming from Virgil, a fellow Etruscan, this reference makes one think that the common reading of this might be influenced by the idea of the Etruscans as no longer being a distinct social group. Modern scholars might be influenced in their translation to read 'Tuscan born' instead of 'Etruscan'. Seemingly this might amount to the same, but the difference between the passive reference to the Etruscan (Tuscan born) and active (Etruscan) view on the

⁷⁹ Macfarlane (1996) 245.

⁸⁰ Sil. 4.720, 5.123, 8.472, Verg. A. 3.170, 7.205.

⁸¹ Fracchia (1996) 202.

⁸² Fracchia (1996) 202 – 3.

⁸³ Theopom. 1.296.114; Lyc. 805 – 8.

⁸⁴ Macfarlane (1996) 249.

Etruscans seems to occur. A better translation seems to be ‘thou wert of royal race, o Etrusc’, when considering the Etruscans during this time as a distinct social group.

The poet Horace, himself born in a city in former Samnite territory, writes of his good friend Maecenas and makes obvious connections to his Etruscan roots.⁸⁵ Horace makes more references to Etruscans in other works, such as in the *Satires*, where Horace links the assumed Etruscan opulence and decadence to a writer by the name of Cassius Etruscus.⁸⁶ However, due to a lack of evidence it is impossible to say whether Cassius Etruscus was a historical person or merely a rhetorical tool invented by Horace, with the obvious cognomen as a tool identifying Etruscan heritage. It cannot be deduced whether Cassius was situated in an Etruscan city, or of Etruscan descent, as Roger Macfarlane argues convincingly.⁸⁷ On this, Horace himself says Cassius was too opulent in his writing: *est brevitare opus, ut currat sententia, neu se / impediatur verbis lassas oneratibus auribus* (brevity is needed, so that the thought may be quick and hinder ears wearying under burdensome words).⁸⁸

Diodorus Siculus, a Greek writer from the first century BCE, goes into this topic of Etruscan opulence further, evident not only in writing:

καθόλου δὲ τὴν μὲν ἐκ παλαιῶν χρόνων παρ’ αὐτοῖς ζηλουμένην ἀλκὴν ἀποβεβλήκασιν, ἐν πότοις δὲ καὶ ῥαθυμίαις ἀνάνδροις βιοῦντες οὐκ ἀλόγως τὴν τῶν πατέρων δόξαν ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις ἀποβεβλήκασι.

. . . on the whole they have forfeited the prowess that has been among them an object of emulation from ancient times and by living a life of drunkenness and effeminate sloth they have forfeited, not unfittingly, their ancestral glory in war.⁸⁹

Diodorus himself makes mention of this a second time later on in his work, on the Sybarites’ affinity with Tyrrhenian (the Greek word, translated, referring here to the Etruscans as a social group) luxuriance, that, he claims, surpassed that of all other *barbaroi*. Catullus also makes mention of Etruscan exuberant behaviour.⁹⁰ The mention of Maecenas as effeminate in the period that follows might not just be due to his behaviour in Rome, but based on this segment from Diodorus, it might have been an idea of Etruscans who were more generally seen as living exuberantly, enjoying wine and being effeminate. Diodorus’ history focusses mainly on the Greek world, and therefore probably reflects a Greek sentiment on the Etruscans, which possibly could have been the same as in Rome. It is interesting to see, however, that the connection between effeminacy and Etruscans existed before the end, projecting back onto an earlier period, and is also ascribed to Maecenas:

⁸⁵ Nisbet (2007) 7.

⁸⁶ Hor. *Sat.* 5.40.3-5: transl. Macfarlane (1996) 256.

⁸⁷ Macfarlane (1996) 243.

⁸⁸ Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.9 – 10, transl. Macfarlane (1996) 256.

⁸⁹ Diod. 5.40.3 – 5.

⁹⁰ Catul. 39.11; Diod. 8.18.1.

Erat tunc urbis custodiis praepositus C. Maecenas equestri, sed splendido genere natus, vir, ubi res vigiliam exigeret, sane ex omnis, providens atque agendi sciens, simul vero aliquid ex negotio remitti posset, otio ac mollitiis paene ultra, feminam fluens, non minus Agrippa Caesari carus, sed minus honoratus (quippe vixit angusti clavi plene contentus), nec minora consequi potuit, sed non tam concupivit.

At that time, C. Maecenas was in charge of the city's guards. Maecenas was a member of the Equestrian order, but was nevertheless born of an illustrious background. In times of crisis, he was very diligent, almost prescient in perceiving what needed to be done. However, he was just as extreme once work was done, being over-the-top in revelling in effeminate pleasure, even more so; he was practically dripping with femininity. He was no less dear to Augustus Caesar than Agrippa, despite being bestowed with less honours, since he was content to remain in his social class. He could have achieved the same level of political influence as Agrippa if he had wanted to, but he had no desire to do so.⁹¹

In this translation, the term 'effeminate pleasure' is used. It has also been read as 'but when any relaxation was allowed him from business cares would almost outdo a woman in giving himself up to indolence and soft luxury'.⁹² One could either read this passage as a reflection on him enjoying women, or female pleasures. Knowing Latin, it might be both. It might be that this difference could reflect a modern social shift, as Shipley wrote his translation in 1924 century. However, the focus on 'feminine pleasures' remains. Not only Greek but also Roman sources connect effeminacy to the Etruscans. As we have seen, Maecenas is actively invoking this Etruscan heritage and quite possibly also known for living an indulging lifestyle, enabling to place his behaviour into this historical context.

Like Virgil, it is clear that Horace on occasion included Etruscan themes in his writing, which can be seen most clearly in the *Carmen Saeculare*. Macfarlane concludes that "The circle of poets assembled by Maecenas seem to have been encouraged to write about Etruscan topics, but they were unable to do so, due to this theme conflicting with wishes from their patrons."⁹³ What they did produce on Etruscan themes seems to be in agreement with Augustus' idea to create a national literature, looking back to the high days of Etruria and the rise of Rome. In order to create a cohesive Italy, Augustus worked on creating a common history, incorporating traditions from the different cultural groups in Italy.⁹⁴ Possibly due to the great cultural interaction between Rome and the Etruscan cities, the Etruscan heritage had a much larger impact in these histories than for example those of the Umbrians or Samnites. Etruscans were seen as being pivotal in many Roman aspects, such as architecture, language and religion, of which the last two will be the

⁹¹ Vell. Pat. *His. Rom.* 2.88.2 – 3, transl. Kris Masters.

⁹² Vell. Pat. *His. Rom.* 2.88.2 – 3, transl. Frederick W. Shipley, Loeb-ed.

⁹³ Macfarlane (1996) 255.

⁹⁴ Pallottino (1977) 151 – 190.

subject of the following chapters. After Augustus, however, the theme of Etruscan greatness in Roman literature seems to have disappeared.⁹⁵ From the third century CE onward, a revival of interest in Etruscan literature seems to have occurred, in turn preserving many of the works referring to the Etruscans by Augustan authors.⁹⁶ Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius, a Roman author from the fourth century CE, preserved part of a verse written to Maecenas by Augustus, in which he greets Maecenas:

*Vale, mi ebum Medulliae,
Ebur ex Etruria, lasar Arretinum,
Adamas supernas, Tiberinum margaritum,
Cilniorum smaragde, iaspi Iguvinorum,
Berulle Porsennae, carbunculum Hadriae*

Farewell, my Medullian ebony,
my ivory from Etruria, my Arretine lasar,
my Adriatic diamond, my Tiberine pearl,
my emerald of the Cilnii, my jasper of the Iguvini,
my beryl of Prosenna, my carbyncle of Hadria.⁹⁷

Here, a reference to Etruria can be found in almost every line. Though some doubts exist over whether or not Augustus himself wrote this poem, or if it is based on lines written by Maecenas himself, it clearly shows the different words and epithets used to refer to Maecenas' Etruscan heritage, down to his connection to the noble Cilnii.⁹⁸ Few of the works written by Maecenas survive, making it difficult to assess how Maecenas presents himself and his Etruscan heritage. The lack of references can, according to Macfarlane, be seen as telling in and of themselves. It seems unlikely Maecenas did not include Etruscan themes in his work, as no references to this being the case being brought down to us.⁹⁹

Helena Fracchia notes that the connection between the territory of Arezzo and Augustus is not only due to his friendship with Maecenas, but also due to his successful military recruitment in the area.¹⁰⁰ When the Perusine war occurred in 41 – 40 BCE, a civil war between Rome and the Etruscan city of Perugia, a strain was put on Augustus' relationship both with his close friend Maecenas, as well as the friendship with the Augustan poet Propertius, whom it is known was thought to have been of Etruscan descent as well.¹⁰¹ However, in his work several mentions are made to him being born in Asisium (modern Assisi).¹⁰² The area, at times, had been under Etruscan control, so greater knowledge of Etruscanness might be attributed to Propertius, but seems problematic.

⁹⁵ Macfarlane (1996) 256.

⁹⁶ Thomson de Grummond (2013) 543 – 544.

⁹⁷ Macrob. *Sat.* 2.4.12, transl. Robert T. Macfarlane (1996) 260.

⁹⁸ Macfarlane (1996) 260.

⁹⁹ Macfarlane (1996) 248.

¹⁰⁰ Fracchia (1996) 198 – 199.

¹⁰¹ Colonna (1980) 13.

¹⁰² Macfarlane (1996) 248.

Propertius, therefore, uses the reference to the much better-known Perugia to explain where he was from:

*Italiae duris funera temporibus,
cum Romana suos egit discordia civis,
(sic mihi praecipue, pulvis Etrusca, dolor,
tu proiecta mei perpessa es membra propinqui,
tu nullo miseri contegis ossa solo),
proxima supposito contingens Umbria campo
me genuit terris fertilis uberibus.*

If the Perusine tombs of our country are known to you,
funerals in Italy's hard times,
when Roman discord hunted her citizens
(This was especially painful for me, my Etruscan soil—
you allowed my neighbour's limbs to go abandoned,
no earth covers his poor bones)—
neighbouring Umbria, below Perugia on the plain
bore me, fertile Umbria, productive land.¹⁰³

Even if Propertius is not of direct Etruscan descent, this passage does imply affinity with Etruscan heritage in “my Etruscan soil”. In his later poems, Propertius names Asisium as his place of birth, seeming to solve the mystery.¹⁰⁴ Macfarlane is convinced Propertius is not of Etruscan descent based on these two passages, which do at least show that Propertius was not born in Perugia.¹⁰⁵ In many of his works, as we will see, however, references to Etruscan mythology are made. Nancy Thomson du Grummond, however, refers to “Propertius of Perugia” and notes his descent as being Etruscan.¹⁰⁶ This might be a way to indicate an author of whom the full name is not known. Other works do not mention the Etruscan connection. Frequent mentions by Propertius of the Etruscans and Etruscan mythology do seem to reflect a deep knowledge of the Etruscan culture. Along with the mention of “my Etruscan soil”, it does seem Propertius connected himself to the Etruscans.

Propertius came under Maecenas patronage after the publication of his first book. The most interesting of his works for the purpose of this thesis is the Vertumnus elegy, where he describes the statue of the Etruscan god Vertumnus, situated in Rome at the top of the Vicus Tuscus. In the monologue, in which the god himself speaks to a passer-by Propertius makes reference to the place in which the cult to the deity originated: Volsinii.¹⁰⁷ The story is set in a book which seems to have been commissioned (but this is

¹⁰³ Prop. 1.22.9 – 10, transl. Vincent Katz (1995).

¹⁰⁴ Prop. 4.1.121 – 34.

¹⁰⁵ Macfarlane (1996) 261.

¹⁰⁶ Thomson dy Grummond (2006) 3.

¹⁰⁷ Macfarlane (1996) 251.

uncertain) probably intentionally mentioning Etruscan themes, in order to integrate the Etruscans into a common narrative. Stories that show a common historical past and ideology are, for example, the tale of combined effort to banish the Sabines. This creation of a common past can be seen as part of the creation of an Italic cultural tradition, as we have seen previously, and was not confined to the Etruscans, but also to the other cultures on the Italian peninsula.¹⁰⁸ For our purpose, the fact that poets by distinguishing between Etruscan and Rome in their writings points to a perceived understood difference during this period. However, as the story puts emphasis on their shared past, this does not show visibility of Etruscans in the present, but merely a historic understanding of the relations between the Etruscans and Rome.

Etruscan authors?

Ovid presents in his work several poets of whom little is known, but are interesting due their nomenclature, the first being Tarquitiu Pricus. This name is related to that of the Roman dynasty of the Tarquini.¹⁰⁹ From mentions by Macrobius, we know that Tarquitiu Pricus' wrote a work on Etruscan haruspices, the Etruscan art of interpreting signs from the gods.¹¹⁰ Relevant here is the link between the name, which refers back to the Etruscan kings who ruled over Rome during the sixth century BCE and therefore presents an Etruscan link, before the Republic came into being, along with the reference to the very Etruscan practices of divination.

The second author is an unknown poet called Tuscus, sometimes identified as Codius Tuscus. However, this cognomen seemed to have been fairly common, at least in Spain were most of the mentions of this name have been found. The common use of the name, in combination with the geographical spread makes identification nearly impossible.¹¹¹ The name refers to the wider area in which the Etruscans resided, not a specific city within it, as with Tarquinius Priscus. Another reference to another poet is a certain tragic poet's named Turranius. Macfarlane assumes this name is derived from the Greek word used to refer to the Etruscans *Tyrrhena*, which seems to be possible. Interestingly, Pliny says of Turranius that he was born in Spain. This seems to be corroborated by other scholars, who show that many of the epigraphical instances of the name Tuscus have been found in Spain.¹¹² The notion that this very Etruscan sounding name was found in Spain might mean an Etruscan presence here. Through the use of these names referring to Etruria, however, one cannot conclude that these figures had a connection to either the geographical area or the social group that lived there.

However, as this is not the theme of this thesis, the relevance lies in complications that come with names: the presence of it does not equal Etruscan presence or Etruscan culture in Spain, as do Etruscan names in Rome. These references mainly point to a

¹⁰⁸ Macfarlane (1996) 252.

¹⁰⁹ Macfarlane (1996) 252.

¹¹⁰ Macr. 3.7.2.

¹¹¹ Kajanto (1965) 188: shows 23 out of 28 epigraphic mentions of Tuscus are found in Spain.

¹¹² Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 3.3.

(perceived) Etruscan presence in Spain. When these names are actively connected to Etruria and Etruscans, it points to a possible cultural memory in Rome, relating to the Etruscans. This combination of Etruscans and divinatory practices will be further explored in chapter 4, for now the fact that in literature these elements were known and connected shows that cultural memory of these phenomenon existed.

Of the next generation, at the beginning of the first century CE, of Etruscan writers in Rome, the most prominent is Aules Persius Flaccus, a stoic satirist who worked under the emperor Nero. Aules is an Etruscan praenomen, used by M. Valerius Probus, a contemporary: *Aules Persius Flaccus natus est ... in Etruria Volaterris, eques Romanus* (Aules Persius Flaccus was born at Volterrae in Etruria, a Roman citizen of equestrian class).¹¹³ It is usually assumed that Flaccus was born in Volterra, though the reference implies that he held the equestrian rank in Rome. As discussed above, Maecenas was of similar low social rank and sought to establish an impressive Etruscan lineage to counter this. Persius wrote, possibly reflecting on his own heritage, the following:

*an deceat pulmonem rumpere ventis
stemnate quod Tusco ramum millesime ducis?*

Or is it appropriate to burst our lungs with pride because you draw your roots over a thousand generations from an Etruscan stock? ¹¹⁴

Based on this, Macfarlane draws the following interesting conclusion: “What was true of Maecenas, *atavis editus regibus*, is equally true of Persius: neither made as much of his Etruscan ancestry as others anticipated he should”.¹¹⁵ It would seem that to Macfarlane, and the “others”, or modern scholars, he refers to, Maecenas and Persius ought to have been more inclined to use their illustrious heritage to their advantage. However, they did not. This could be due to a lack of standing of those of Etruscan heritage, or a lack of respect for the ancient Etruscan heritage they are linking themselves to. It would seem not, for as we have seen not only poets, but also politicians of Etruscan descent were drawn to Rome, and most likely stayed here. Perhaps then, during Augustus’ reign and in the period after, many were able to claim similar ties, making it lose its potency. Indeed, if everyone is of exceptional stock, then no one is. This would, therefore, suggest that understanding of the Etruscan (past) was very much alive and kicking, and, by extension, possibly the Etruscans themselves as well. After all, for having these connections have value, they need to refer to things that are part of the frame of references of those they are meant to impress. As the object was the elite of Rome, it seems logical to conclude that in Roman society the families and their place in Etruscan society were understood.

¹¹³ Probus *Vita Persi* I, transl. Macfarlane (1996) 265.

¹¹⁴ Pers. 3.27-28, transl. Macfarlane (1996) 265.

¹¹⁵ Macfarlane (1996) 255.

Etruscan literature in the Late Empire

The legacy of the authors from Etruscan descent also seems to extend beyond the birthplace of the above mentioned and the works created by them at the Augustan court. Indeed, we know of the availability of Etruscan writings during the Early Imperial period, as ancient authors refer to them, but little is known about the general availability. As we shall see in the next chapter, the Etruscan language seems to have been understood in Rome (to an extent), though most works were probably translated into Latin at some point. Of these, none have been left to us, possibly due to a decline in interest in the works in the first century CE. During the third century and lasting into the fourth, a renewed interest in Etruscan divination practices led scholars to record Etruscan religious practices by simple mentions or by citing brief fragments.¹¹⁶ Through references by other authors and the Zagreb Linen Books (our largest text in Etruscan, which will be discussed further in chapter three), we know that many of these were still accessible and in use during the first century BCE and CE, and possibly slightly later as well.¹¹⁷ The type of the works, whether literary, scholarly or religious in nature, is unknown, though we know of important religious works such as the *Disciplina Etrusca* which were used to understand the natural signs sent by the gods, and of some poets. However, beside the documentary works such as the *Disciplina Etrusca*, we do not know the genre in which Etruscan poets wrote, nor if these works were in Latin or Etruscan, or even if they wrote in verse.¹¹⁸

However, Roger Macfarlane concludes that the evidence for Etruscan is “ultimately disappointing”, due to the references we know from authors in the Imperial period who relied on Etruscan written sources.¹¹⁹ Because of this, it can be assumed that among those interested in the fields concerned, such as Vitruvius when referencing Etruscan architectural books, or Claudius when writing his histories halfway through the first century CE, Etruscan authors were known. Both Vitruvius, who lived during the first century BCE, and Claudius attribute specific aspects in their works to the Etruscans, of which most have to do with religious practices that were still in use during their time and performed by Etruscans, and, more importantly, were, over a long period of time, still perceived as Etruscan. This allows us to conclude that written sources in and on Etruscans did exist in the Early Imperial period, and in turn allowed a basis for the construction of Etruscan cultural memory during this time.¹²⁰ This phenomenon can be extended until the third century CE, when in his works Censorinus shows in his works that he still had knowledge of the Etruscan history.¹²¹ This may have been due to the sources on which he bases his works, mostly Varro and Suetonius, who lived much earlier. For this thesis, however, the knowledge of the Etruscan language and of Etruscan authors will be analysed in more detail in the following chapter. Here, the fact that it was seen as Etruscan, and most importantly directly named as Etruscan, bears relevance. It

¹¹⁶ Thomson de Grummond (2013) 543 – 544.

¹¹⁷ Pallottino (1977) 198 – 199, 223 – 224.

¹¹⁸ Varro refers to Volnius, who is thought to have written in verse (Var. *L.* 5.55).

¹¹⁹ Macfarlane (1996) 245.

¹²⁰ Macfarlane (1996) 245.

¹²¹ Cens. 17.6.

points to the survival of Roman *cultural memory* on the Etruscans several centuries after the end date given by modern scholars.

As Nancy Thomson de Grummond shows, many of the works relating to Etruscan religious doctrine were still consulted during the Late Antique period.¹²² The *Etrusca disciplina* was probably no longer used for practical and ritualistic purposes, but scholars often did base their work on these books. In this way, the existence and sometimes even the contents of lost Etruscan sources are known to us. In 238 CE, Censorinus described the Etruscan doctrine of the cycles of time, how to calculate the time that had been allotted by the gods to each of the Etruscan cities and, as an extension of this, to the Etruscan civilization itself.¹²³ Through the prophet Vegoia, the Etruscans had been told that there would be ten historical periods, known as *saecula*, in one of which the servants would move, in a fraudulent manner, boundary stones, which in Etruria was a mark of great disturbance.¹²⁴ As we have seen in the first chapter, this actually did occur. Sources say that this happened during the eighth *saecula*, which has been linked to events in the first century BCE.¹²⁵ The one Etruscan prophecy transmitted to us relates to the end of their civilization and was still copied in Late Antiquity. Censorinus bases his account on the work by Varro, discussed above. Arnobius, a rhetorician from North-Africa who wrote negatively on Christianity during the third century CE, preserves in his work details about the Etruscan believe system.¹²⁶ The most important sources for Arnobius were Varro and Cicero.¹²⁷ Several other authors in Late Antiquity also refer to the Etruscan religion, such as Servius, a pagan grammarian who was seen as a well learned man in his day, leaves us with commentaries on the work of Vergil and a document by Martianus Capella on Etruscan deities. These texts are not directly based on Etruscan written works but do show that in Rome in Late Antiquity the idea of the Etruscan still existed and were still connected to the ancient people of Etruria.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the presence of Etruscan figures in Rome during from the time of the Roman kings (sixth century BCE) to the Early Imperial period (first century CE). During the Early Imperial period, these figures were still connected to the Etruscan cultural group that had lived in Etruria for centuries. Though connotations to the Etruscans are not always positive, as attested in the effeminate and overly indulgent references made by scholars, they remain in place until Late Antiquity. This chapter has shown that in Rome figures born in Etruria were able to gain high positions and favour, without losing the link to their Etruscan descent, as has been investigated in the case of

¹²² Thomson de Grummond (2013) 546.

¹²³ Pfiffig (1975) 159–160.

¹²⁴ Liverani (2012) 236.

¹²⁵ These *saecula* did not span a century and were not necessary even in length, but in general cover the span of Etruscan presence in Italy quite well. Liverani (2012) 236.

¹²⁶ Arnobius writes this down in the *Adversus Nationes*.

¹²⁷ Thomson de Grummond (2013) 546.

Maecenas. Though in later Roman works these references are used less often, it was still known in the first century CE that Maecenas actively promoted his Etruscan heritage to gain higher status in Rome. By doing this, this chapter has argued that cultural memory can be seen in Roman literature in the first century BCE and CE: in this body of literature, people are described as Etruscan, and there is a clear understanding of Etruscanness.

Chapter 3 – The lingering of language

Introduction

As Robert H. Brophy harshly put it “Etruscan is the deadest of dead languages: not spoken, not understood, and not worth much, if figured out”.¹²⁸ Since Brophy wrote this in the 1970s, the understanding of the Etruscan language has greatly improved. It is still true, however, that very few sources in Etruscan have been left to us. This is most likely due to the fact that long inscriptions were written on perishable materials, that simply have perished. The materials on which longer inscriptions were carved were probably bronze and other valuable material, which were reused after the decline of the Etruscan culture, as happened on a large scale during later periods.¹²⁹ Surviving Etruscan sources include (amongst others) funerary epitaphs, though these mostly consist of names.¹³⁰ Longer religious inscriptions give scholars better insight into the Etruscan language. The longest is the famous *Liber Linteus*, more commonly known as the Zagreb Linen, a religious calendar that somehow made its way to Egypt and was used in the second century BCE to wrap a mummy.¹³¹ Due to the limited range of topics discussed in surviving texts, our knowledge of the Etruscan lexicon is limited to a few hundred words.¹³² The best understood parts of the Etruscan language are those connected to kinship terms, and the names of numbers, as these are often expressed in epithets.¹³³ They serve as an indication for the language contact between Latin and Etruscan in the period of Roman political domination, as they allow scholars to assess the extent to which the official language changed in the different Etruscan cities based on the language in which the inscriptions are written.¹³⁴

In this chapter, this thesis will discuss evidence of the perseverance of the Etruscan language during and after the Romanization. It will do so by examining literary evidence that may suggest the continuation of the Etruscan language, both written and spoken, from the first century BCE onward. Scholars argue that the last Etruscan inscriptions that have been found, around the year 0, coincide with the death of the language. However, several authors do make mention of Etruscan books and of the language still being spoken after this perceived end. The extent to which the language continued to be spoken is, of course, impossible to ascertain. Therefore, to understand the process of language loss in Etruria, eventually resulting in language death, modern scholarly ideas on these linguistic topics will be used to add to the limited literary

¹²⁸ Brophy (1978) 300.

¹²⁹ Agostiniani (2013) 460.

¹³⁰ Freeman (1999) 75 – 6; Agostiniani (2013) 457 – 8; Wallace (2016) 203 among others attest to this.

¹³¹ For a further description of the longest text brought down to us and what it tells us, see: Wallace (2016) 209 – 12.

¹³² Agostiniani (2013) 474.

¹³³ Words such as *apa* (father); *ati* (mother); *clan* (son); *sec* (daughter), and more complex relations such as *nefts* (nephew) and *prumts* (great grandchild) are understood due to their frequent use in funerary inscriptions. For a more extensive analysis of the word groups we know well, see: Agostiniani (2013) 474 – 3.

¹³⁴ Adams (2004) 169.

evidence and will help create a better picture of these processes for the Etruscan language.

Language Loss and the Disappearance of Language

When describing the reasons for the disappearance of the Etruscan language, scholars mostly focus on two aspects: on the one hand the big influx of Roman settlers in the newly created colonies, which were established mainly during the first century BCE, as described in the first chapter, led to Latin becoming the dominant language in the region; on the other hand, the switch made by the *principes* to create their inscriptions in Latin instead of their native Etruscan to appeal to the Roman elite (both in the Etruscan centres and in Rome) is seen as mirroring the common practice of speaking Latin in the daily situation in the Etruscan cities.¹³⁵ Both reasonings ignore, however, the possibility of the continued use of the Etruscan language outside inscriptions. It has been well documented that in smaller nuclei cultural changes after submission materialise much more slowly. Here, the distinction between *commemorative* and *cultural memory*, explored in this thesis, can be useful: language is usually passed down, through several generations via *commemorative memory*. It is often not consciously taught but learned through interactions with elders. In these more isolated centres, it was probably not necessary to learn Latin, so the process in which the Etruscan language was forgotten could have been slower than in the main Etruscan urban centres.¹³⁶

In order to understand how the use of Etruscan changed, it will be useful to look at modern scholarly understanding of the change in languages over time. As the analysis of inscriptions in this chapter will show, Latin and Etruscan were used side by side for several centuries, after which Etruscan is no longer used in inscriptions. Examples of this are the bilingual urns found in Arezzo in the first century BCE, the latest have been dated to around 40 BCE.¹³⁷ It would be useful, therefore, to see the change that occurred in Etruria due to the Romanization from the viewpoint of a modern linguist. Based on the power balance between the Etruscans and Rome, it seems fair to say that the change to Latin in Etruria was a *top-down* change, as discussed by modern linguistic theory: due to the political benefit to the leading groups of Latin, the change was instituted.¹³⁸ For the way language was influenced, understanding the balances between Latin and Etruscan is important. Latin became the official language and must have been spoken by those in high (political) positions. As the language change was initiated top-down, it becomes easier to compare what occurred in Etruria to more modern examples.

The fact the bilingual inscriptions found in Etruria are mostly funerary in nature, found in tombs of leading Etruscan families seem to underline this interest in playing both to the local, possibly still Etruscan speaking population and the connection of the leading families to Rome: the inscriptions are found in Etruscan cities, often in tombs of

¹³⁵ Hall (1996) 157 – 8.

¹³⁶ Baker et al. (2013) 300 – 301.

¹³⁷ TLE 930 (Rix Ar 1.3) from around 40 BCE, CIE 378 (Rix Ar 1.8), Kaimio (1975) 214 – 5.

¹³⁸ Baker et al. (2013) 292.

established families and seem to play both to the old Etruscan heritage and the new political situation in which Latin was dominant.

This idea of a bilingual situation in Etruria invites examination of the possible change that occurred in Etruscan due to a new interaction with Latin. Modern linguists are aware that it is not uncommon for different social groups within the same geographical area to speak different languages. This bilingualism can occur in different ways and the two spoken languages can have different relations to each other, mostly divided into three different groups. The first situation occurs when one social group speaks language A, and another speaks language B. Contact between the two groups is maintained by a small group who speaks both languages. This often occurs due to a geographical or social-cultural divide between the two groups, in which the group that speaks both languages serve as a sort of cultural mediator. However, as Latin became the official language in Etruria during the first century BCE, this scenario does not seem applicable to the Roman-Etruscan situation.¹³⁹ In the second scenario almost everyone speaks both languages, which, for example, occurs in many African countries, where besides French local languages are still in use. This situation shows parallels with Etruria's colonization by Rome, though more localized than in Africa. Due to the creation of colonies in Etruria, consisting mostly of ex-military men, it is unlikely that there was the possibility that the whole population spoke both Latin and Etruscan. This process in Africa has taken several centuries, and in that sense is also comparable to Etruscan - Latin relations. However, these languages had already had intense contact for several centuries, and do not present the introduction of a completely new language, as in Africa.

The last scenario, and for our case seemingly the most applicable one after full integration into the expanding Roman Empire, is the one in which part of the population is bilingual, and part only speaks one language. Often one is the official or dominant language spoken by the monolingual group, and the other is spoken by the bilingual subgroup. An interesting contemporary example is the existence and use of Frisian in the Netherlands: Dutch is the official and dominant language, but in the province of Friesland Frisian is still widely used, but predominantly in domestic rather than in public settings. This does occur to some extent: some road signs are bilingual, and students are even able to study Frisian in high schools.¹⁴⁰ Intuitively, this seems not dissimilar to the situation on the Italian peninsula: Latin was the official language, but local languages might have still been used both within the home as well as in an official capacity.

The third situation thus seems a feasible description of the relation between Latin and Etruscan. If we accept this assumption, we can also ascertain that Latin was the dominant language as the majority of the people living in Etruria spoke Latin, and probably only a part of the region's inhabitants still spoke Etruscan. In itself, this is not a new conclusion, but by identifying it as such, it allows us to project modern linguistic theory on Etruscan. Contemporary studies of the effects of this relation on the minority language, it has become clear that it often leads to language loss. After being handed

¹³⁹ Baker et al. (2013) 299.

¹⁴⁰ Baker et al. (2013) 299.

down for several generations via commemorative memory, it stops being spoken inside the house and over time fewer people are able to speak it, this eventually leads to language death.¹⁴¹ In some cases, like that of Frisian, language death has not (yet) occurred due to a strong movement to preserve the language, but there are signs that the language is no longer always passed down to younger generations.¹⁴² The following sections will show the evidence of the Etruscan language surviving going into the first century CE, by looking for signs that indicate the language might have been spoken after the perceived language death at the end of the first century BCE. Is there evidence of Etruscan still being written, or even merely understood, during the first century CE and, if possible, after?

The Etruscan Language

Inscriptions

Besides these indirect references in Roman literature, more direct evidence on (and in) Etruscan can be found in inscriptions, as we have already seen. Before taking a closer look at what those inscriptions show us about the disappearance of the Etruscan language, it must be stated that dating of the inscriptions is not always easy. This thesis will use the generally accepted dates provided by (recent) scholarship, but the reader is advised to keep in mind that there could be a margin of several decades. As the dating of these inscriptions can usually be placed within a twenty-year span, they are suited for the aim of this thesis, because they provide us with a fairly direct indication of the latest point at which Etruscan was at least active, and understood well enough to be used.

Due to the very different processes of integration into the Roman empire, the change from Etruscan to Latin that can be seen in inscriptions differs greatly per region, taking hold much earlier in the southern cities than those situated further north of Rome, as discussed in the first chapter. To understand the processes at play, we will, therefore, take a close look at different important cities that will help contextualize these differences and the possible implications for the change in the use of the Etruscan language, starting with Veii, the first city to fall to Rome. Veii was not only the first to be conquered by Rome, but also the first Etruscan site where the inscriptions in Latin, dating to the third century BCE, were found. Freeman argues, however, that Veii is not a good case in point, as the overall population of Veii was decimated after the defeat by Rome, and therefore the change to Latin would have happened in a very different manner to that of the other cities.¹⁴³ However, more recent archaeological research has suggested, that the population of Veii did not, seemingly, undergo as rigorous a social shift as previously presumed based on literary evidence on the Roman destruction of the city.¹⁴⁴ The disappearance of Etruscan inscriptions at such an early point, namely during the fourth

¹⁴¹ Baker et al. (2013) 300.

¹⁴² Baker et al. (2013) 299.

¹⁴³ Freeman (1999) 80.

¹⁴⁴ Liverani (2012) 244.

century BCE, shortly after the defeat of Veii, therefore, might not be due to a disappearance of the Etruscans from Veii, as Freeman suggests. It is clear, that a migration of Romans to Veii did occur, leading to an influx of Latin speakers that may have pushed out the subdued Etruscan speakers.¹⁴⁵

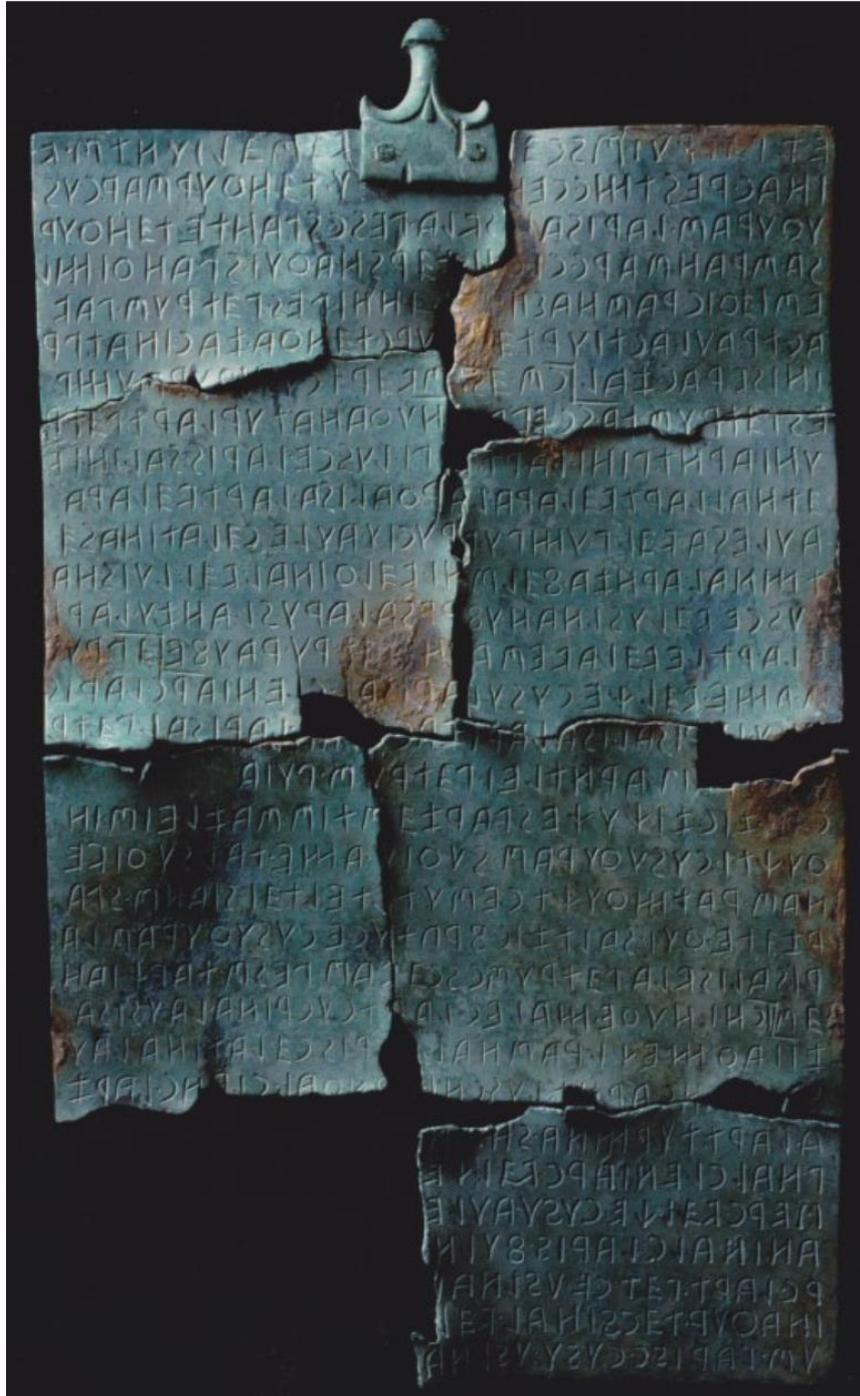


Figure 2: the Cortona tablet (Tabula Cortonensis) is one of the longer inscriptions found and is made of bronze. Many more were probably produced, but the material was often reused, thus not many have been left to us. (c.250–200 bce. Bronze. From Cortona. Cortona, Museo dell'accademia etrusca e della Città di Cortona. Photo by Luciano Agostiniani. Wallace (2016) 211.)

¹⁴⁵ Liverani (2012) 229 – 230.

The city of Caere, after Veii closest in proximity to Rome, had a close relationship with Rome, and the Caerean citizens were the first to receive Roman citizenship, for their help to Rome when invaded by the Gauls. Though close relations are already apparent during the fourth century BCE, the first attested Latin inscription dates to the late second or early first century BCE.¹⁴⁶ In Caere about 300 grave markers were found, either in Latin, Etruscan or bilingual. Freeman states that Etruscan was in use until the late second century BCE in this town which was politically and geographically close to Rome, during which the latest inscriptions found are dated.¹⁴⁷ Based on the available written evidence and the historical interactions between Caere and Rome, this seems to be a reasonable conclusion: during the third century BCE Caere was integrated into Rome and the process of language loss started, which after about three generations (according to commemorative memory theory) disappears completely.

In the city of Tarquinia, situated north of Caere, inscriptions in Latin have been found and dated to as early as the third century BCE. Etruscan inscriptions in Tarquinia seem to have been found up until the early first century BCE, indicating an overlap of languages over several centuries. In the city of Tuscania Etruscan inscriptions continued into the beginning of the first century BCE as well, when they are replaced by inscriptions exclusively in Latin.¹⁴⁸ This transition is mirrored in Vulci.¹⁴⁹ These northern cities show a consistent overlap in the use of Etruscan and Latin that started before the complete integration of these cities, which occurred around 90 BCE, and which lasted until the end of the second century BCE, when the Etruscan language seems to have been abandoned. In Perugia some of the longest inscriptions in Etruscan have been found, showing that during the first century BCE the Etruscan language was still very much alive enough to be a useful way to establish boundaries between territories.¹⁵⁰ This public use of Etruscan is echoed in an inscription on a statue found near Perugia, known as the "Arringatore" (Public Speaker) that has been dated to around 100 BCE.¹⁵¹ It seems reasonable to assume that at this time, the Etruscan language was still in use, precisely because it was used in such a public display in order to convey a message to those passing by; the people of the city it was placed in.

The above southern Etruscan cities thus show earlier signs of Latinization than their southern counterparts. In the northern city of Chiusi several Etruscan inscriptions have been found that have been dated to the first half of the first century BCE.¹⁵² These inscriptions are notably different to those from the above-mentioned cities. In the same tomb, which was used for several hundred years, inscriptions in Latin, Etruscan or

¹⁴⁶ Some problems have arisen about the dating of these inscriptions, explaining the vague period given here. For more discussion on the dating of these inscriptions see: Kaimo (1975) 193 – 196.

¹⁴⁷ Freeman (1999) 80.

¹⁴⁸ Kaimo (1975) 203 – 5.

¹⁴⁹ Freeman (1999) 80.

¹⁵⁰ *CIE* 4532 (Rix Cl 1.916 – 18).

¹⁵¹ Bonfante (1983) 136 – 7; *TLE* 651 (Rix Pe 3.3).

¹⁵² Freeman (1999) 80.

bilingual occur side by side.¹⁵³ The change in the use of Etruscan and Latin in these inscriptions does not seem to be chronological, with the older inscriptions being written in Etruscan and the later ones in Latin. In one of the tombs, we find epithets of a grandmother and mother in Latin, whilst their daughter's is in Etruscan and of a later date.¹⁵⁴

In a funerary setting the Etruscan language can also be found in the tomb of the Rufia, where Etruscan Latin and bilingual inscriptions were used from the third to the mid-first century BCE.¹⁵⁵ Another tomb of a powerful family, the Volumnii, contained a bilingual urn that has been dated to the late first century BCE, showing that here the Etruscan language persisted well into the period in which they are said to have been Romanized. Similarly, three urns found in Arezzo, situated in the North-East of Etruria, show Etruscan being in use at a late date. One urn has been dated to around 40 BCE, the other two are thought to be of an even later date.¹⁵⁶ A similar situation occurs in nearby Volterra, one urn can possibly be dated to as late as 10 or 20 CE.¹⁵⁷ J. Adams concludes the following based on the known corpus of bilingual inscriptions:

The above evidence concerns differing degrees of accommodation of Etruscan to Latin, and is consistent with Romanisation in progress, but accompanied by an attempt on the part of a few Etruscan families to maintain their old identity along with the new.¹⁵⁸

From this, it seems that we can establish that in the northern Etruscan cities, the language was still in active use and understood during the Imperial period. This seems to be in strong contrast with the southern cities, where the latest inscriptions seem to be during the second century BCE, except for Veii which lost its Etruscan epigraphy at an earlier date. It is also noteworthy that most of the bilingual inscriptions have been found in North-East Etruria, an area that was only officially under Roman rule from 90 BCE.¹⁵⁹ Because of this, it seems that for this area bilingualism was common, which also allows us to conclude it possibly remained in use much longer than written evidence alone might suggest. Furthermore, Adams points to an effort by the Etruscans to maintain their language. As stated, this is vital to steer of language death. Though the evidence is scarce, it seems that in the northern cities a conscious effort to preserve Etruscan was made.

The inscriptions mentioned here do not necessarily mean that Etruscan was still spoken. Based on the inscriptions in Perugia, and their public function, it seems that in this region around 100 BCE Etruscan was still in active use or at least understood by

¹⁵³ These include but are not limited to the following: *CIE* 955, 960, 1075, 1076, 1434, 1435, 2620, 2621, 3057, 3058. Kaimio (1975) 206 – 210.

¹⁵⁴ *CIE* 1075 – 79 (Rix Cl 1.916 – 18).

¹⁵⁵ Kaimio (1975) 210 – 213.

¹⁵⁶ Kaimio (1975) 136 – 7: *CIE* 3469, 3506.

¹⁵⁷ SE 9, 306 which was made after 40 BCE, *CIE* 109 (Rix Vt 1.160) dated to 10 – 20 CE.

¹⁵⁸ Adams (2003) 173.

¹⁵⁹ Adams (2004) 169. These bilingual inscriptions have been published in a collection for the first time in 1954, later collected with bibliography by Benelli (1994).

enough of the population for it to be of use to put them up in a public setting. Combined with other late inscriptions found dating to the beginning of the first century CE, it would seem that Etruscan was still in use and understood. The tombs in which these inscriptions were found such as in Arezzo, were created by and for the elite, who are also thought to be the first to embrace Latin. All things considered, it seems likely that if the elite was still acquainted with Etruscan, though in some cases it seems the writer used Latin formulas in Etruscan, therefore showing these social classes might not have actively spoken Etruscan.¹⁶⁰ The use could have been a sign of the desire to maintain Etruscan, vital to keeping a language from disappearing. It could also be a message from the higher classes to the lower ones, where it seems Etruscan likely lingered longer.

The disappearance of the Etruscan language could have started later in lower social classes, as the relevance of speaking Latin to take part in Roman politics was felt less keenly. Thus, extending the use of Etruscan into the first century CE. Freeman rightly states that these inscriptions do not mean Etruscan was still spoken but combined with the evidence of Etruscan literary proficiency in Rome, as we have seen in the previous chapter and which will be elaborated on in the next, can with some certainty be attested to the second half of the first century BCE – after which it becomes much more difficult, due to the fact very few sources have been dated to this period – it seems that in Rome the legacy of the Etruscan language survived into the Imperial period.¹⁶¹

Literary evidence

Scholars agree that there was a lively Etruscan written culture, extending beyond religious calendars to include satires, *carminas* and other genres that we also know from the Roman literary tradition.¹⁶² Varro, a Roman author mentioned in the previous chapter refers to the little known Volnius as an author of literary works in Etruscan: *sed omnia haec vocabula Tusca, ut Volnius, qui tragoedias Tuscas scripsit, dicebat* (but all these terms are Etruscan according to Volnius, who wrote tragedies in Etruscan).¹⁶³ In other parts of the work on the origin of words in the Latin language, Varro shows an understanding of the historical domination of the Etruscans – mainly in the presence of Veii so close to Rome – and the influence of the Etruscan language on Latin. An example is the name of the Tiber, which Varro explains to have been derived from an Etruscan name, either after *Thebris*, the name of the Etruscan river god, or *Tiberinus*, a king who died there and therefore had the river named after him; the Latin name is said to have been *Albula*.¹⁶⁴

Varro writes in the past tense, leading scholars such as Freeman to assume Volnius lived before Varro, even though we cannot ascertain how far back in the past. In this

¹⁶⁰ Adams (2003) 160 – 2.

¹⁶¹ Freeman (1999) 82.

¹⁶² Macfarlane (1996) 242 – 3.

¹⁶³ Varro, *Ling.* 5.55, transl. Roland G. Kent, Loeb-ed.

¹⁶⁴ Varro, *Ling.* 5.30.

context, the terms Varro is referring to are the names of the different tribes in the Roman 'field-land'. No reference is made to the actual Etruscan words, but it seems Varro is implying the Latin words are based on earlier Etruscan names.¹⁶⁵ As Varro does not mention Volnius elsewhere it is not clear who he is referring to, but it implies that during the time Varro wrote he must have been well enough known to need only be mentioned in passing. It seems that the only conclusion that can be drawn is that Varro was aware of an author who wrote in Etruscan and the works were also known to him.¹⁶⁶ This in turn seems to imply that during Varro's time people were able to read these Etruscan texts.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who lived in the first century BCE, describes the origin of the Etruscan language in his work on the history of Rome. Dionysius seems to have based his work, in which he disputes the origin of the Etruscan language in Phrygia, on originally Etruscan sources.¹⁶⁷ The sources on which Dionysius bases his argument seem to have been written in Etruscan and are possibly of a much earlier date. Through his statement that Etruscan and Phrygian have nothing in common it seems safe to assume that Dionysius has had knowledge of the Etruscan language.¹⁶⁸ As showing one's sources was not nearly as important as it is now, it is difficult to say how intensive Dionysius' contact with Etruscan was: did he merely rely on written sources, or did he hear people speak as well? During his lifetime it is possible that Etruscan was still spoken, based on the inscriptional evidence, discussed above, and literary evidence, discussed below.

On sources written in Etruscan often only allusions remain. The Roman philosopher Lucretius in the first century BCE gives reason to believe that not only were books in Etruscan still in use, but they were also still understood:

*Hoc est ingiferi naturam fulminis ipsam
perspicere et qua vi faciat rem quamque videre,
non Tyrrhena retro volentem carmina frustra
indicia occultae divum perquirere mentis.*

This is to understand the true nature of fiery lightning
and to see by what power it plays in nature,
not by unrolling scrolls of Etruscan verse
to search in vain for the hidden intentions of the gods.¹⁶⁹

Lucretius conjures the image of a person actively unrolling the scrolls and facing works written in Etruscan. This idea of Romans being able to read Etruscan can also be found in other – older – sources. It is even possible that understanding of Etruscan in Rome was

¹⁶⁵ Macfarlane (1996) 244.

¹⁶⁶ Freeman (1999) 76.

¹⁶⁷ Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.29.

¹⁶⁸ Freeman (1999) 77.

¹⁶⁹ Lucr. 6.379 – 82, transl. Freeman (1999) 76.

not uncommon, at least within the upper classes, as Livy tells us that during the fourth century BCE it was common practice for young boys to learn Etruscan:

*Habeo auctores volgo tum Romanos pueros, sicut nunc
Graecis, ita Etruscis litteris erudire solitos.*

I have authority for believing that in those days Roman boys were commonly educated in Etruscan literature, just as they now are in Greek ¹⁷⁰

Again, Livy does not feel the need to site his sources, but merely states he feels they are sufficient to draw this conclusion. Before this statement, Livy tells of the brother of the consul who, after having spent time in Caere was learned in Etruscan letters and so familiar with the language, he was sent into Etruscan territory in disguise.¹⁷¹ It seems based on the story of the brother who went to spent time in Caere, however, that this level of mastery of the Etruscan language was rare. After all, if more people were capable of speaking it, it would not have been an exceptional skill, leading to being remembered for it. However, Frontinus, Cicero and Valerius Maximus corroborate the story that Romans were taught Etruscan, which allows us to assess that not only was knowledge of Etruscan language common in Rome during this period, and possibly later.¹⁷² The story tells us of six Roman boys, most likely of high social status, who were sent to Etruria to get learned in the Etruscan *disciplina*, showing the direct influence of Etruscans in the religious practices in Rome during this period.¹⁷³ Because of this remark, it also seems safe to assume that to a certain extent Etruscan was a language understood outside of the Etruscan heartland.¹⁷⁴ Inscriptions outside of Etruria corroborate the idea of the Etruscan language being in use outside of Etruria, though it seems to be mostly used by Etruscans there, as three boundary markers from Tunisia show:

m vnata zvtaś tvl dardanivm tinś Φ

Marcus Unata set up the *cippus* of the Dardani to Tin. 100 paces ¹⁷⁵

All three have the same inscription, which are dated to the second or first century BCE and were probably erected by Etruscan colonists. Freeman states that this use of Etruscan was probably a sentimental remembrance of Etruria, not necessarily a sign of flourishing Etruscan speaking communities outside of Tuscany. The manner in which the boundary stones are set up are very similar to boundary stones found in Etruria, as is the manner in which the dedication is set up, with Tin – the Etruscan equivalent of Jupiter – as the

¹⁷⁰ Livy 9.36.1 – 8, transl. Freeman (1999) 76.

¹⁷¹ Livy 9.36.2 – 4.

¹⁷² Frontin. *Str.* 1.2.2.; Cic. *Diu.* 1.92. and V. Max. 1.1.1.

¹⁷³ For further explanation on the Etruscan *disciplina*, see page 46.

¹⁷⁴ Frontin. *Str.* 1.2.2.

¹⁷⁵ CRAI (1969) 526 – 51, transl. Freeman (1999) 81.

main deity. This use seems to be reflecting their heritage, but do not show a lively Etruscan speaking community, as it is unlikely others would have understood the boundary markers.¹⁷⁶

A second example of later authors referencing Etruscan still being understood is Aulus Gellius, who lived in the second century CE. The following reference to the Etruscan language has been used to assert late survival of Etruscan language, but the remark is indirect at best: *post deinde, quasi nescio quid Tusce aut Gallice dixisset, universi riserunt* (then, as if he had said something in Etruscan or Gaulish, everyone burst into laughter).¹⁷⁷ It is known that Gallic was still in use during the second century CE, when this statement was made.¹⁷⁸ The use of Etruscan and Gallic in the same manner, seems to imply that they were of a similar stature in Rome and possibly both seen as foreign languages in use by others. At any rate, the idea of the Etruscan language still existed. However, one could also argue, as Freeman does, that the reference to Etruscan here is similar to how one now would now say “that is Greek to me”.¹⁷⁹ Thus, the reference could mean Etruscan was still spoken, as we know Gallic was, but it could also mean that, to the cultured Roman listener, Etruscan was merely an odd language, though no longer still spoken. Whichever it might have meant for the Ancient Romans, it is clear that the distinction of the language and the connection to the historical people of Etruria survived into the second century CE.

Much later, Isidorus of Seville, noted: *Quos libros Romani ex Tusca lingua in propriam mutaverunt* (which books the Romans translated from the Etruscan language into their own).¹⁸⁰ Isidorus lived in the seventh century CE however, leading one to question the reliability of this account. It seems, however, that these accounts were based on older sources that are now lost to us, which gives them some reliability but most importantly more direct relevance for this thesis.¹⁸¹ The account by Isidorus shows that the idea of the Etruscan language and the Etruscan books were present in Rome; even if the language itself was no longer in use, the cultural memory served. Furthermore, in this phrase we see a reference to *Tusca lingua*, that in the first century CE seems to have been synonymous to the ‘Etruscan language’. This seems to justify identification of *Tuscus/Tusci* with the Etruscans for the Later Imperial periods.

Religious language

Language might not only have lingered longer in a rural environment. As we know from Latin, it is possible for a language to still be in use for very specific religious rituals and practices. The manner in which it was understood might have been very different than

¹⁷⁶ In Etruria many boundary markers have been found, leading scholars to believe they were held special importance for the Etruscans. For more on Etruscan boundary markers, see: Becker (2013) 360 – 4.

¹⁷⁷ Aul. Gell. *NA*. 11.7, transl. Freeman (1999) 76.

¹⁷⁸ Several primary sources attest the survival of Gaulish in the second and third centuries CE: Iraeneau, *Adversus haereses* 1; Ulpianus, *Digesta* 32.1.11; Lucian, *Alex*. 51.

¹⁷⁹ Freeman (1999) 78.

¹⁸⁰ Isid. *Etym*. 8.9.35, transl. Freeman (1999) 77.

¹⁸¹ Freeman (1999) 77.

merely a spoken setting, as to perform the rituals, simply using the words might suffice. The lingering of the Etruscan language in this setting, however, could point to the persistence of cultural memory past the perceived end, as the use shows a direct connecting with the historical past connected to the culture that used the language in a similar setting in previous centuries. The original books on Etruscan religion, known in Rome as the *Disciplina Etrusca*, were most likely written in Etruscan. As we will see in the following section, these books were still being conferred to in the Early Empire, which might mean that the language was not only around, but also still being understood in Rome. Furthermore, allusions to the Etruscans still using their language are thought to have been made by Zosimus, when describing the destruction of Rome in 408 CE:

τῇ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐχῆ καὶ κατὰ τὰ πάτρια θερ-
απεία βροντῶν ἐξαισίων καὶ πρηστήρων.

By divine prayer and worship in the ancestral manner,
Which had caused a violent and raging thunderstorm.¹⁸²

Though even Freeman admits this statement hardly seems to be an indication that Etruscan was an actively spoken language, it might be that in a religious, or liturgical, setting, certain rituals were still performed in Etruscan.

Another writer very indirectly referring to the Etruscan language in a religious setting is Ammianus Marcellinus, who writes on Etruscan readers of the priests accompanying Julian ‘The Apostate’ at the end of the fourth century CE. Unfortunately, of Marcellinus’ history spanning the lives of the emperors starting in 96 CE and ending in 378 CE, only the period 353 to 378 survives.¹⁸³ Marcellinus refers to the books used by the Etruscan soothsayers to interpret prodigies, namely the *libris exercitualibus* (books on war), *fulgurales libri* (books on lightning), and a section of the *ex Tarquitanis libris in titulo de rebus divinis* (Tarquitian books on celestial events). However, Marcellinus makes no mention of the language these books were written in; whether the books were Latin translations or used in the original Etruscan language is open to speculation.¹⁸⁴

Etrusci tamen haruspices qui comitabantur gnaros 1 prodigialium rerum, cum illis procinctum hunc saepe arcentibus, non crederetur, prolatis libris exercitualibus, ostendebant signum hoc esse prohibitorium, principique aliena licet iuste invadenti, contrarium.

¹⁸² Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, 5.41.1, transl. Freeman (1999) 19. Full passage: “While they were occupied in these reflections, Pompeianus, the prefect of the city, accidentally met with some persons who were come to Rome from Tuscany and related that a town called Neveia had delivered itself from extreme danger, the barbarians having been repulsed from it by storms of thunder and lightning, which was caused by the devotion of its inhabitants to the gods, in the ancient mode of worship.”, transl. Ceccarelli (2016) 37.

¹⁸³ Kagan (2009) 23.

¹⁸⁴ Freeman (1999) 78.

However, the Etruscan soothsayers, who accompanied the other adepts in interpreting prodigies, since they were not believed when they often tried to prevent this campaign, now brought out their books on war, and showed that this sign was adverse and prohibitory to a prince invading another's territory, even though he was in the right.¹⁸⁵

A reference to similar Etruscan influences in the reading of prodigies, of an even later date, makes a suggestion that leads Freeman to assume Zosimus might mean that the events taking place were not only performed by Etruscans in a similar fashion as had always been (perceived) to have happened, but also in took place in Etruscan. The only indication of this is the following small fragment: "... in the ancient mode of worship". This could be an indication that Etruscan was still being used in a liturgical setting. Not only is it hard to establish what "the ancient mode of worship" entailed – whether it is a reference to merely ritualistic practices, or also to the language used – it does seem to show these institutions still being prominent late into the fifth century CE, when Zosimus wrote his history.¹⁸⁶ The vagueness in Zosimus' description could also be interpreted as a lack of understanding of the proceedings, thus leaving it deliberately vague. However, it could also imply that in Rome and Etruria these practices were still well-understood and did not need a lot of explaining.

Many words in Latin connected to religious practices have Etruscan origins, such as the adaptation of the word *vates*, a term with renewed prestige among Augustan poets.¹⁸⁷ By the Late Republic the term had come to mean 'fortune-teller' or 'soothsayer'. In poetic compositions it had come to replace the Greek term *poeta*. We see in Marcellinus that this term is still connected to Etruscanness and *haruspices* during his time.

Conclusion

Based on this assessment, we can conclude that the relation between Etruscan and Latin allowed for both languages to exist simultaneously, though the roles played by both in the day-to-day life differed. Based on the literary evidence, Freeman draws a similar conclusion, but with the added linguistic insight provided in this chapter of the process and relations between languages in bilingual areas, I would conclude that it is likely that Etruscan survived for a while after the last inscription in Etruscan has been found. It seems likely that the end of inscriptions in Etruscan in 20 CE in the most northern city does not coincide with the death of the Etruscan language. Taking into account that commemorative memory allows for languages to be taught through interactions with the older generation allow for about three generations and accepting that the end of the Etruscans started with Latin being made into the official language in Etruria. Though we do not have strong evidence for a deliberate movement in Etruria to preserve their

¹⁸⁵ Amm. Marc. 23.5.10. Other places Etruscans are mentioned in his work are: 23.5.13 and 25.2.7.

¹⁸⁶ Freeman (1999) 79.

¹⁸⁷ Newman (1967) 89.

language, from inscriptions from Chiusi there seems to be a reversion back to Etruscan after several generations writing their funerary epithets in Latin and later on reverting back to Etruscan. This might point to a (temporary) move to preserve Etruscan, but the evidence on this is scant. Furthermore, the inscription on the statue base shows that Etruscan did serve a strong symbolic function until the first century BCE.

However, from later written evidence it seems that in the Roman cultural memory Etruscan survived until the second century CE: writers were aware of the language and quite certainly interacted with Etruscan texts and might possibly have been understood in a similar way to how Latin is understood by us. It is not possible to ascertain that these were not translated into (and therefore only accessible in) Latin, but it does not seem unlikely that texts in Etruscan were still in circulation and understood by some, at least to have been in Etruscan and by extension linked to the historical, cultural Etruscans. The anecdote comparing the possibly no longer spoken Etruscan to the still surviving Gaulic language might not mean that Etruscan was still an actively spoken language. It does, however, show that in Rome the language was understood by Rome as belonging to the memory of the Etruscans. The important realization for this thesis from this chapter is that we cannot say for sure when Etruscan ceased to be spoken, although we can be quite sure that Romanization did not signal its immediate death. We can also ascertain that the *memory* of the language and its influence on Latin persisted into the first century CE, and probably later.

Chapter 4 – The Etruscan religion

Introduction

This chapter will examine the continuation of Etruscan religious institutions. Like other domains of Etruscan culture, these institutions became, as we will see, increasingly dominated by Rome. By analysing the continuation of Etruscan religious practices and analysing the Roman narrative on this, this chapter will show that in Rome eyes these cultural phenomena never lost their Etruscan connection. As stated in the introduction, Jan Assmann's notion of cultural memory will help show how the existence of *cultural memory* demonstrates that the Etruscans as a separate culture did not disappear and can be connected to practices still taking place during the Imperial period.¹⁸⁸ This in turn points to the idea of Etruscans still being visible when these practices were enacted. The practices and rituals can indeed remind those taking part in them of the historical precedents to which they are linked, in this case the former prevalence of Etruscan culture.

The importance of considering religious practices lies in the fact that the Etruscans are currently often mentioned by scholars as being more dedicated to their religion than other cultures in the Mediterranean. This idea was already accepted in Antiquity, as testifies Livy, who notes that the Etruscans were not only *gens itaque inte omnes alias eo magis dedita religionibus quod excelleret arte colendi eas* (... a people more than any other dedicated to religion, the more as they excelled in practicing it).¹⁸⁹ Livy effectively says that the way in which the practices are followed is typically Etruscan. These ideas about Etruscan religion are validated by many modern scholars, such as Gregory Warden and Letizia Ceccarelli.¹⁹⁰ This chapter will examine if and in what ways Etruscan religion is distinguishable from its Roman counterpart and the extent to which it remains in use after the perceived Romanization of Etruria. Roman regard during the first century BCE of the Etruscan religion is reflected in this passage from Diodorus Siculus, who wrote under Caesar and Augustus:

γράμματα δὲ καὶ φυσιολογίαν καὶ θεολογίαν ἐξεπόνησαν ἐπὶ πλεόν, καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν κεραυνοσκοπίαν μάλιστα πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐξεργάσαντο: διὸ καὶ μέχρι τῶν νῦν χρόνων οἱ τῆς οἰκουμένης σχεδὸν ὅλης ἡγούμενοι θαυμάζουσί τε τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐν τοῖς κεραυνοῖς διοσημείας τούτοις ἐξηγηταῖς χρῶνται.

Letters, and the teaching about Nature and the gods they also brought to greater perfection, and they elaborated the art of divination by thunder and lightning more than all other men; and it is for this reason that the people who rule practically the entire inhabited world show honour to these men even to this day

¹⁸⁸ Assmann (2011) 22 – 3. See later notes 168 – 171.

¹⁸⁹ Liv. *His. Rom.* 5.1.6.

¹⁹⁰ Ceccarelli (2016) 37, Warden (2016) 162.

and employ them as interpreters of the omens of Zeus as they appear in thunder and lightning.¹⁹¹

This quote shows that during the first century BCE the Romans saw the Etruscans as deeply religious, probably far more so than Romans themselves, and seems to have had different religious practices than their southern neighbour. This chapter will firstly try to outline scholarly ideas on the Etruscan religion and how it is distinguishable from other religions in the Ancient Mediterranean. Secondly, the legacy of Etruscan religion in Etruria, and by extension in Rome, will be analysed in order to assess if the Etruscan religious practices survived the scholarly end of the Etruscans, and whether or not they were still seen as Etruscan.

Etruscan divination

The polytheistic religions of the Mediterranean share many traits. In the last few decades, scholars have shown that there was a certain amount of interchangeability between similar deities of different cultures and religions.¹⁹² Different cultural groups in antiquity, when the power balance shifted, brought their native deities and used the existing deity to connect to the local religion. The deities were seen by the different cultures as having different names, but in essence encompassing the same deity.¹⁹³ Though the religious systems were similar enough to facilitate this kind of syncretism, there are also aspects that can be attributed to specific cultures and regions. An example of these aspects relating to the Etruscan religion and that have already been hinted at repeatedly in this thesis are the different ways in which the Etruscans read signs to interpret the will of the gods, and by extension gain knowledge of the future.¹⁹⁴ The four categories that are part of the *disciplina Etruscan* are the *haruspices* (reading of intrails), *augures* (watching of birds), the interpreting of lightning and the reading of prodigies.¹⁹⁵ These different categories of signs to be interpreted were written down in the *Disciplina Etrusca*, by which the Etruscans believed they were able to understand the will of the gods. Though at first glance the rituals might seem similar to those used in the Near-East and even in Greece, they show a different understanding of the manifestation of the will of the gods.

¹⁹¹ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*. 5.40.2. Transl. William P. Thayer, Loeb-ed.

¹⁹² Several important works have been written on this subject, such as: J. Bergman, "Beitrag zur Interpretatio Graeca: ägyptische Götter in griechischer Übertragung," in: S. S. Hartman, ed., *Syncretism* (Uppsala, 1969), and J. G. Griiths, "Interpretatio Graeca," in: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* III (1980) 171. One well studied example is that of Apollo and Nabû in Egypt. The first scholars, for example, to point to the similarities between Apollo and Nabû was Javier Teixidor (1990) 72–73. Later this was underlined by others such as Paul-Alain Beaulieu (2014) "Nabû and Apollo: he Two Faces of Seleucid Religious Policy", *Orient und Okzident – Antagonismus oder Konstrukt? Machtstrukturen, Ideologien und Kulturtransfer in hellenistischer Zeit*. 13 – 30.

¹⁹³ Simon (2006) 45.

¹⁹⁴ Warden (2016) 162.

¹⁹⁵ The Etruscan terms for these practices are not certain. Roman terms, however, are found frequently and are used generally by scholars to refer to these practices (as does this thesis). For further explanation on the origin of the terms, see Thomson de Grummond (2013) 539.

Indeed, in Greece, several institutions existed where one could come ask questions of a representative of a deity, such as in Delphi.¹⁹⁶ This was not, however, a direct message sent by the gods to those willing to look, as the Etruscans believed the gods did. Etruscans believed that signs did not predict the future but were instead signs that occurred precisely because the future will take place; one could not interfere with what already had been decided, only prepare for the future that was to come.¹⁹⁷ It was, therefore, not a fate that could be averted or changed, as Greek myths often show being attempted, but was merely to show what was about to come true.¹⁹⁸

The Etruscan style of divination and interpretation of the will of the gods seems to have been first developed in the Near-East. Indeed, sources have been found that suggest these types of practices already existed around 2000 BCE. It is thought that they remained in active use until Seleucid times (third to first century BCE).¹⁹⁹ The heydays of these practices were under the Neo-Assyrian kings, during the eighth century BCE. It is under their rule that greater trade with the Mediterranean occurred which led to the establishment of new trade routes. This has led modern scholar to classify this period based on the great importance of this event: the Orientalizing period (700-600 BCE).²⁰⁰ This ancestry of the practice seems to be underlined by Cicero in his book *De divination*:

Gentem quidem nullam video neque tam humanam atque doctam neque tam immanem atque barbaram, quae non significari futura et a quibusdam intellegi praedicique posse censeat. principio Assyrii, ut ab ultimis auctoritatem repetam, propter planitiem magnitudinemque regionum, quas incolebant, cum caelum ex omni parte patens atque apertum intuerentur, traiectiones motusque stellarum observitaverunt

Now I am aware of no people, however refined and learned or however savage and ignorant, which does not think that signs are given of future events, and that certain persons can recognize those signs and foretell events before they occur. First of all—to seek authority from the most distant sources—the Assyrians, on account of the vast plains inhabited by them, and because of the open and unobstructed view of the heavens presented to them on every [p. 225] side, took observations of the paths and movements of the stars.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Mikalson (2009) 91 – 103.

¹⁹⁷ Rafanelli (2013) 566.

¹⁹⁸ Think for example of the story of Oedipus, or in a less mythological story the prediction by the oracle that wooden ships would ultimately save Athens from the Spartans (though it was debated among Athenians whether the oracle had meant wooden walls of ships, they seem to have made the right decision).

¹⁹⁹ Thomson de Grummond (2013) 546.

²⁰⁰ For examples of explanations of this, see Neil (2016) 16; Thomson de Grummond (2013) 546 – 8.

²⁰¹ Cic. *Div.* 1.2., transl. William Armistead Falconer.

Cicero names that during this time several cultural groups besides the Etruscans participated in the reading of the signs.²⁰² This might seem to suggest that these religious practices were not seen as inherently Etruscan and therefore might not suit the aim of this thesis. These influences travelled from the Near-East to Etruria via the Greek world, through which the trade routes led. It seems that the legacy of these practices was integrated into the Etruscan religion in a very profound way. So much so, that it was hitherto associated with the Etruscan people, as we will see later on in this chapter. Indeed, not only are there signs of religious practices from the Near-East being adopted in Etruria, but we also find a strong iconographic influence.²⁰³

However, when one studies Cicero's work closely, it becomes clear that within these practices, the Etruscans had a special role: the Etruscans are named alone as readers of lighting.

Etruria autem de caelo tacta scientissime animadvertit eademque interpretatur, quid quibusque ostendatur monstris atque portentis. quocirca bene apud maiores nostros senatus tum, cum florebat imperium, decrevit, ut de principum filiis sex1 singulis Etruriae populis in disciplinam traderentur, ne ars tanta propter tenuitatem hominum a religionis auctoritate abduceretur ad mercedem atque quaestum. Phryges autem et Pisidae et Cilices et Arabum natio avium significationibus plurimum obtemperant, quod idem factitatum in Umbria accepimus.

Again, the Etrurians are very skilful in observing thunderbolts, in interpreting their meaning and that of every sign and portent. That is why, in the days of our forefathers, it was wisely decreed by the Senate, when its power was in full vigour, that, of the sons of the chief men, six should be handed over to each of the Etruscan tribes¹ for the study of divination, in order that so important a profession should not, on account of the poverty of its members, be withdrawn from the influence of religion, and converted into a means of mercenary gain. On the other hand the Phrygians, Pisidians, Cilicians, and Arabians rely chiefly on the signs conveyed by the flights of birds, and the Umbrians, according to tradition, used to do the same.²⁰⁴

Next, bird reading seems to have been done to many and is thought to have been a more Umbrian practice on the Italian Peninsula, though others are involved in it as well. The next passage illustrates that astrology was for the Egyptians and Babylonians, but the reading of entrails, Cicero says, is an Etruscan specialty as well:

²⁰² Cic. *Div.* 1.19: Cicero mentions the Babylonians who use astrology and the Greeks with their oracles to give predictions on what would come to pass.

²⁰³ For more information on the spread of Orientalizing iconography in Etruria see (amongst others): Camporeale (2016), and Tuck (1994).

²⁰⁴ Cic. *Div.* 1.92, Transl. William Armistead Falconer.

Etrusci autem, quod religione imbuti studiosius et crebrius hostias immolabant, extorum cognitioni se maxime dederunt, quodque propter aeris crassitudinem de caelo apud eos multa fiebant

But the Etruscans, being in their nature of a very ardent religious temperament and accustomed to the frequent sacrifice of victims, have given their chief attention to the study of entrails.²⁰⁵

Not only are the Etruscans said to be occupied with the studying of entrails, they “have also become very proficient in the interpretation of portents”.²⁰⁶ For this thesis Cicero’s explanation of this speciality shows its relevance: many aspects of the interpretation of the will of the gods are seen by the Romans to have been executed by the Etruscans, who did so fervently and in a similar fashion for a significant period. Influential works on Roman religion, such as the book by Mary Beard *The Religions of Rome* notes the Etruscan origin of these practices, which become an important part of Roman religion, even instituted as one of the priestly colleges.²⁰⁷ In other words: though the reading of the signs at large was in itself not an Etruscan affair, aspects of it were *perceived* to be a typical Etruscan domain by Roman authors.

Haruspices, Auguries and Priestly colleges

In Etruria, several types of divination can be distinguished, the first of these was known as the *extispicium* (the Latin term for the reading of entrails). The priests interpreting these signs were named *haruspex* (plural *haruspices*).²⁰⁸ The second was the *augurium*, or the interpretation of signs connected to birds, consisting of flight patterns, appearances, and the like. *Augurium* is the Latin term for this practice. Partly due to the loss of the *Disciplina Etrusca*, we do not know the Etruscan term for the interpreting of bird signs.²⁰⁹ We know that in Rome there was a priestly college connected to the *augures*.²¹⁰ When describing their ancient past, Roman authors attribute the creation of these to the second Roman king Numa, who is said by Roman historians to have created the four priestly colleges during his institutionalization of Roman religious practices.²¹¹ Sources on this period are not always reliable, so to what extent this is accurate is unsure. Interesting is that early on in Rome’s history this institution was created, and possibly by a Roman king as well, as Numa was not of Etruscan descent, though several of the later kings were.²¹² The institution of the *augures* grew in importance under Augustus, who

²⁰⁵ Cic. *Div.* 1.93, transl. William Armistead Falconer.

²⁰⁶ Cic. *Div.* 1.93: “*quaedam etiam ex hominum pecudumve conceptu et satu, ostentorum exercitatissimi interpretes exstiterunt.*”, transl. William Armistead Falconer.

²⁰⁷ Beard (1996) 19 – 21.

²⁰⁸ Thomson de Grummond (2013) 539.

²⁰⁹ Thomson de Grummond (2013) 539.

²¹⁰ Beard (1996) 19 – 20.

²¹¹ Beard (1996) 18 – 24.

²¹² For a lengthier explanation of the problems surrounding this account, see Beard (1996) 15 – 22.

enlarged the body of priest within the college to sixty. The importance of these priests seems to have been substantial, as they helped Augustus and subsequent emperors to interpret the signs of the gods.²¹³ This closeness to the emperor is argued by Dominique Briquel to have meant great political importance, as one of his chief advisory bodies.²¹⁴

The Roman priestly college of the *augures* seems to have been based on Etruscan religious principles taken over by Rome during the early stages of Roman – Etruscan contact and remains in use until the end of the Imperial period.²¹⁵ Furthermore, there are indications that after installation of the *augures*, Etruscan priests were still asked to teach the skills of divination to Roman priests, or to perform the rites in Rome. This shows that during his time it had become less important in the Etruscan cities, but to Rome it still was still an important aspect of religious life.²¹⁶ Though it is hard to establish whether this happened during the Republican period, a mention of Cicero of this practice in 56 BCE, imploring Etruscan priests to keep up their native practice in their cities, as to be able to assist Rome to practice these same rites.²¹⁷



Figure 3: Bronze statuette of priest. Third century BCE. Göttingen, Archäologisches Institut der Universität. (Photo: Stephan Eckhart.). From Thompson du Grummond (2006) 37.

²¹³ Briquel (2007) 154.

²¹⁴ Briquel (2007) 157.

²¹⁵ The institutions are reshaped under Augustus, but do not seem to end until a late period. For further reading on Augustus and Roman religion, see Beard (1996) 192 – 3.

²¹⁶ Briquel (2007) 154.

²¹⁷ Cic. *Har.* 1.92.

As Cicero explains in his book on divination, the founder of Rome himself was a skilled reader of the signs of the gods, as Romulus had founded the city after interpreting bird signs, though Cicero seems to suggest that Romulus was simply the first Roman to embrace the practice:

Nam, ut omittam ceteros populos, noster quam multa genera complexus est! principio huius urbis parens Romulus non solum auspicato urbem condidisse, sed ipse etiam optimus augur fuisse traditur.

For, to say nothing of other nations, how many our own people have embraced! In the first place, according to tradition, Romulus, the father of this City, not only founded it in obedience to the auspices, but was himself a most skilful augur.²¹⁸

According to Cicero, the Roman kings following Romulus were also seen as diviners or even *augures* themselves, though that they mostly employed others to perform these functions.²¹⁹ Several of these kings were of Etruscan stock and it is interesting to wonder whether the *augures* were of Etruscan origin. We do know that Tanaquil, the wife of Tarquinius Priscus, and the first of the Etruscans to rule Rome, was a reader of signs and seen as a prophetess of sorts. Tanaquil had not only a great part in the rise of her husband resulting in him becoming king, but it is said she also intervened in his succession upon his death and instated the new king Servius Tullius after receiving signs.²²⁰ Sadly, this remains merely speculation, as the sources on these events were written down several centuries later and mostly seem to be a narrative employed to show the wickedness of the Etruscan rules that ultimately led to the creation of the Republic, on which Rome prided itself.²²¹ What is interesting, however, is that the practice of interpreting bird signs (*augures*) was adopted first in Rome, after which Licy says: *omnem hanc ex Etruria scientiam adhibebant* (they gradually introduced that art in its entirety from Etruria).²²² It seems that to Cicero the reading of bird signs is not necessarily connected to Etruria, but that the other disciplines – which undoubtably are the reading of the *haruspices*, lightening and prodigies – came to Rome via the Etruscans.²²³

Nancy Thomson de Grummond shows that priesthoods in Etruria were family affairs, where the father taught his son the skill, who then took over the priestly seat. This is convincingly shown by inscriptional evidence, showing different members of the same family being attributed to the priestly position. These priestly positions remained in the family, seemingly often for many generations.²²⁴ Roman priests were not trained in this

²¹⁸ Cic. *Div.* 1.3.2, Transl. William Armistead Falconer.

²¹⁹ Cic. *Div.* 1.3.2.

²²⁰ For more on the figure of Tanaquil, see: Meyers (2016).

²²¹ Authors such as Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassos and Florius write of Tarquinius Priscus and Tanaquil, see also note 51.

²²² Cic. *Div.* 1.3.2, transl. William Armistead Falconer.

²²³ Thomson de Grummond (2006) 39 – 42.

²²⁴ For further expansion on the functioning and role of Etruscan priests, see Thomson de Grummond (2006) 27 – 44.

way: their main proficiency for being a priest was their being a member of the Senate. Senators were appointed to different priesthoods based of their prominence and position, which was validated and extended by gaining these positions, but had not received the same training as Etruscan priests.²²⁵ This difference in perception of the deployment of priesthoods might be part of what Livy saw as the Etruscan rigorous religiousness and their close following of religious rules. In the next part, a closer look will be taken at signs of the religious practices from the perceived end of the Etruscans as a separate cultural entity will be taken.

The Legacy of Divination

Through Ammianus Marcellinus, a Roman historian who lived in the fourth century CE, we have some very late and direct references to the Etruscans. Marcellinus chronology is one of the most important sources for the later imperial period, spanning from 353 CE to 378 CE. Originally, his works spanned from emperor Nerva in 96 CE, though only this small part of his works survives. What makes Marcellinus works relevant are the direct connections made to the religious practice of divination, which he still links to the Etruscans, though Marcellinus seems to suggest they are not the only group adept at reading the prodigies present at this time:

Etrusci tamen haruspices qui comitabantur gnaros prodigialium rerum, cum illis procinctum hunc saepe arcentibus, non crederetur, prolatis libris exercitualibus, ostendebant signum hoc esse prohibitorium, principique aliena licet iuste invadenti, contrarium.

However, the Etruscan soothsayers, who accompanied the other adepts in interpreting prodigies, since they were not believed when they often tried to prevent this campaign, now brought out their books on war, and showed that this sign was adverse and prohibitory to a prince invading another's territory, even though he was in the right.²²⁶

In this passage, the Etruscans are named with the traditional term (*Etrusci*) where the others are merely named as *other adepts*. This seems to suggest that of these groups, the Etruscans were either the most prominent or the most well-known and therefore the only group worthy of note.

Intriguingly, in the work of Marcellinus the second time Justinian is said to have called in the readers of prodigies, the Etruscans are not mentioned by name but seem to be identified through their expertise in the interpreting of lighting, of which we know the Romans saw them as specialists.²²⁷ Interpreting lighting was one of the four types of godly signs interpreted by the Etruscans, besides the earlier mentioned *haruspices*,

²²⁵ Beard (1996) 27, Thomson de Grummond (2006) 33 – 35.

²²⁶ Amm. Marc. 23.5.10, transl. John C. Rolfe.

²²⁷ Amm. Marc. 23.5.13.

auguries and prodigies. The last mention of the Etruscans comes when the actual interpreting of prodigies starts, when Marcellinus refers to the “*Etrusci haruspices*”.²²⁸ Marcellinus wrote on late Roman emperors and mentions the Etruscan priests in connection with Justinian, who broke with the conversion to Christianity of his predecessors and reverted back to ‘paganism’. Though Justinian was only emperor for a short time (361 – 363 CE), Marcellinus makes mention of the *haruspices* and the Etruscans performing the rites on several occasions. It is interesting that during this time the practice of the *haruspices* was still performed. Furthermore, it could also have been a revival under Justinian of the pagan practices, that reinvigorated Etruscan religious practices. Whether or not actually performed by Etruscans in a cultural sense, it does point to a continuation of the *cultural memory* that shows knowledge of the historical connection between these practices and the Etruscans in the Roman empire during this period. It must be remembered that in this context, the use of the readers of prodigies might be a rhetorical tool to show the extent to which Justinian’s behaviour differed from the Christian emperors. The passage does show that even at this late date, the connection between religious practices and the Etruscans was still understood in Rome.

Indeed, even later references to the divination practices can be found in the works of the Greek historian Zosimus:

Etrusci tamen haruspices qui comitabantur gnaros 1 prodigialium rerum, cum illis procinctum hunc saepe arcentibus, non crederetur, prolatis libris exercitualibus, ostendebant signum hoc esse prohibitorium, principique aliena licet iuste invadenti, contrarium.

However, the Etruscan soothsayers, who accompanied the other adepts in interpreting prodigies, since they were not believed when they often tried to prevent this campaign, now brought out their books on war, and showed that this sign was adverse and prohibitory to a prince invading another's territory, even though he was in the right.²²⁹

Using the same reference as used previously when analysing the disappearance of the Etruscan language we can see that during the year described by Zosimus (408 CE, when the city of Rome was sacked) this practice is still attributed and connected to the Etruscans, as seen by the term *Τουσκίας* (Tuscany).²³⁰ Zosimus refers to the name of the region, not to the people who lived in it. Based on the context in which the word is used, however, it can be argued that the practice of reading of lightning can be closely tied to the region of Tuscany via the link that is the Etruscan culture, which was very likely understood by readers. Zosimus wrote his *Historia Nova* probably between around 500 CE. It might, therefore, even be accepted that at the period in which Zosimus wrote, the relation between Tuscany and the Etruscans with their specialized religious practices can

²²⁸ Amm. Marc. 25.2.7.

²²⁹ Amm. Marc. 23.5.10. Other places Etruscans are mentioned in this text are: 23.5.13 and 25.2.7.

²³⁰ Zosimus, 5.41.1, trans. Freeman (1999) 79.

still be seen. Zosimus' work also lends credibility to the account of Ammianus Marcellinus, possibly suggesting that Justinian was not alone in using Etruscan interpreters, but that even in later times the Etruscan interpreters were asked to provide guidance as well.

Conclusion

Following an examination of Etruscan religious practices, it becomes clear that these were already integrated in Roman religion at an early stage. In the Roman perception the *haruspices* and *augures* kept their Etruscan connotation. From an assessment of later sources, it has also been shown that after the scholarly dictated end of the Etruscan culture, several prominent authors still referred not only to the practice of divination per se, but with direct connection to the Etruscans. The terms used – *Etrusci* by Marcellinus and *Tuscani* by Zosimus – seem to indicate a direct link to both the cultural and geographical presence – in a historical sense – of the Etruscans going into Late Antiquity. This in turn might lead one to reposit the *perceived* end of the Etruscan culture until much later than the current scholarly consensus accepts.

Though it might be a bridge too far to say that Etruscans as a group continued to be visible, the above example shows on the one hand that during these rites Etruscan cultural memory was invoked. This means that those who performed them are part of a social group, who through the performance of the rituals which are associated with and reach back to memories of their ancestors doing the same, create a living and active cultural group that was associated with the historical Etruscans.²³¹ On the other, the continued link between the group and the religious practices shows that in Roman perception this does not get lost, but lasts. To put it differently, as long as these practices are in use, the cultural memory of the Etruscans persisted in Rome, which this chapter has shown to have continued, possibly, into the fourth century CE.

²³¹ Assmann (2010) 22 – 23.

Chapter 5 – Fanum Voltumnae – A case study

Introduction

This chapter offers a case study that examines the effect of Roman occupation and cultural domination on the site at which the Etruscans held their pan-Etruscan festival: the *Fanum Voltumnae* (Shrine of Voltumnus).²³² As a cult is often regional both in character and in reach, choosing a site with relevance to all the Etruscan cities allows us to analyse the continuation of a cult not only for a particular Etruscan subgroup, but for the Etruscans as a single cultural unit. Furthermore, if the use of the *Fanum Voltumnae* continued and was linked to Etruscan culture, we will be able to see it as a place of remembrance, or *lieu de mémoire*.²³³ In order to assess if a continuation of practices occurred in the Roman period, a discussion of the site before the Roman take-over, mostly focussing on the archaeological excavations conducted from 2000 onward, is necessary.²³⁴ The site at which scholars now believe the *Fanum Voltumnae* was situated, has only been recently been accepted as such, most notably in an archaeological publication of 2016.²³⁵ This case study will build on these recent findings, delineating the state of recent research to outline our understanding of the chronology of events taking place on the site. After this, a closer look will be taken at CIL XI 5265 which helps to shed light on the state of the *Fanum Voltumnae* moving into Late Antiquity, in order to assess whether Etruscan cultural memory still lingered after the scholarly end of the Etruscans and to provide a possible re-evaluated end point.

Voltumnus or *Velt-thumena*, the main deity at the heart of the celebrations at the Shrine, was a logical choice for a Pan-Etruscan sanctuary, based on the mythology surrounding this deity: in the origin story of the Etruscan people, *Velt-thumena* played a key role. Because of this, (*Tinia*) *Velt-thumena* was considered an *apa* (*pater*) of the Etruscan people. The name of the deity varies, based on whether the source material is Roman or Etruscan and variations in epithets. *Tinia* is the Etruscan equivalent of Jupiter, which seems to be occasionally connected to Voltumnus, who is seen as the most prominent Etruscan deity.²³⁶ This is corroborated by primary sources, in which *Velt-thumena* is mentioned by Varro as *deus Etruriae princeps* and, in Zonaras, the idea that the Volsinians, in whose territory the festival is said to have taken place claim to be ἀρχαίότατοι Τυρρηνῶν (most Ancient of the Etruscans).²³⁷ Zonaras is a late source, who lived in the twelfth century CE who based his work mostly on earlier, more contemporary scholars, such as Josephus, and partly on Cassius Dio.

²³² Though the name of the shrine is accepted to have been the Fanum Voltumnae, the gender and precise name of the deity varies and include (*Tinia*) *Velt-thumena*. This thesis used the generally used name(s) as ascribed by Massa-Pairault (2016).

²³³ The term created by Nora has been used by him to describe the French past in 4 volumes, published between 1999 – 2010, for a translated explanation of the concept of *lieu de mémoire* by Nora, see Nora (1989) 7 – 24.

²³⁴ For more details on the excavations conducted by Simonetta Stopponi along with the University of Perugia and Macerata, see Stopponi (2013) 632 – 654, or Massa-Pairault (2016).

²³⁵ Massa-Pairault (2016) published the latest findings, though several important articles appeared in 2013 by van der Meer and Stopponi.

²³⁶ Meer (2013) 99.

²³⁷ Zon. *Hist. Nov.* 8.7, transl. Massa-Pairault (2016) 109.

After the take-over of Volsinii, Voltumnus cult is ceremoniously taken to Rome. A process that is described by Propertius of Perugia, a scholar working during Augustus' rule. The story shows the interesting tendency of the Etruscans to be vague or ambivalent about a deity's gender when mentioning Voltumna.²³⁸ Vertumnus tells the passer-by how he can change his shape whichever way he wants; as a girl, man, or a multitude of professions such as fowler and fisher.²³⁹ Livy makes the deity appear as a woman when telling the story of the courtship of Pomona.²⁴⁰ We can deduct from these descriptions that the description by Propertius seems to be based on his knowledge of the Etruscan pantheon, which was understood by other authors, such as Livy, who use these traits to their advantage when using these characters. It seems, therefore, that in the Roman world, not only the existence of these Etruscan deities, but also their traits were taken over and understood.

In order to understand the *Fanum Voltumnae* as part of Roman cultural memory and as a place of remembrance, one must first delve into the events that took place at the site: the gathering of the Etruscan League, which we have discussed previously. Secondly, this thesis will analyse what we know of the site as it currently stands, based on the recent excavations. Then, the most important literary source for persistence of a cult at the *Fanum Voltumnae* will be studied, then well-known inscription of Hispellum. Lastly, the site of the *Fanum Voltumnae* will be shown assess to what extend the site of the *Fanum Voltumnae* could be seen as a place of remembrance, and therefore constitute an important and long-lasting case of Roman cultural memory on the Etruscans.

The Etruscan League

Most social groups in Antiquity organized themselves in coalitions, in order to create a protective network. As we have seen, on the Italian peninsula this was in Leagues: we know of a Sabine League, the Latin League, and, as discussed previously, the Etruscan League.²⁴¹ Though the information on the make-up and functioning of these Leagues is not greatly documented, several historians in the Late Republic and Early Imperial period mention the Leagues, allowing us to formulate ideas on how they operated.²⁴² For this thesis the workings Etruscan League are the most relevant. The Etruscan League consisted of either twelve or fifteen cities. The exact number of participating cities is not known, nor are the names of the Etruscan cities who took part in this League.²⁴³ It seems

²³⁸ Thomson de Grummond (2006) 3.

²³⁹ Prop. 4.2.14.

²⁴⁰ Liv. *Meta.* 14.623-771.

²⁴¹ Cornell (2008) 356.

²⁴² Important are the accounts of Livy, who describes the Etruscan League when discussion the Roman attack on Veii, and the difficulty they experienced due to having left the League. Two towns who were also under Roman threat visited the League, but no help was given: Liv. 4.17. Other (later) mentions include Dion. Hal. *Ant Rom.* 12.5; Flor 1.2.9; Cic. *Phil.* 9.4; Plut. *Rom.* 16. For more information on Veii and the League, see Becker (2013) 365.

²⁴³ Haynes (2007) 135: Haynes names the most famous Etruscan cities (both now and then). However, it is not certain these did indeed form the Etruscan League. Cornell (2008) corroborates the lack of certainty on the Etruscan League, as does Becker (2013) 365.

reasonable to assume that the most important cities such as Tarquinia, Volsinii, Vulci, Caere etc. were members, but this is open to speculation and complicated by the fact that it was possible for cities to leave the League, demonstrated by Veii leaving in 437 BCE.²⁴⁴ This means it was a member up to this point, but it is not clear who took its place after Veii left, so this only provides information during a small time frame and preceding the case study done here, focussing on the later stage of the *Fanum Voltumnae*.

Historians are not certain to what extent the League was able to interfere either politically or in a military fashion. On several occasions a coalition army was raised, as we have seen in chapter one, but the role of the League in this is impossible to ascertain.²⁴⁵ Due to the constant fighting between the Etruscan cities before the Roman takeover it seems reasonable to assess the League as being only of marginal importance. We do know, however, that the League met once a year for consultation at *Fanum Voltumnae*, or the Shrine of Voltumna. Here, they performed cult practices together, held games and interacted with their fellow Etruscans. Whether or not the League was important in a political capacity is for this thesis of little relevance. The important of this site as a focal point of Etruscan *shared* identity is.

The Pan-Etruscan sanctuary

In many of the sources referring to the League, mention is made of *Fanum Voltumnae* as a meeting site. However, the *Fanum Voltumnae* functioned not only as a meeting place, but also as a Pan-Etruscan sanctuary. During the gathering of the League-members a festival was held, along with games similar to those held at Olympia.²⁴⁶ Either the twelve kings of the Etruscan cities or the *populi* through a lictor elected a leader for the assembly.²⁴⁷ It is also thought that a priest was elected for a period to function as *sacerdos* during the festival, receiving great religious power for this specific period. Though extensive research had been conducted prior to the excavations at the Campo della Fiera, the location of the Shrine was still discussed by scholars at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as can be seen in the chapter by Ingrid E. M. Edlund-Berry, written in 2006.²⁴⁸ We know from Livy that the sanctuary was situated near Orvieto, the new town erected after the destruction of Volsinii. Afterward, a shrine for the deity Voltumna was erected in Rome, as was the Roman custom for dealing with the cults of conquered territories.²⁴⁹ Propertius writes about this shrine and alludes to the original cult site being situated near Volsinii as well.²⁵⁰ His nearness to Perugia when growing up may have indeed given him more insight into the mythology surrounding Voltumna, but it seems risky to base our assessment solely on this account. However, as cult around

²⁴⁴ Becker (2013) 353.

²⁴⁵ An example is the coalition army in which most of the Etruscan armies joined forces against Rome, for further explanation on this, see Liverani (2012) 232 – 4.

²⁴⁶ Haynes (2007) 137.

²⁴⁷ Livy mentions the *populi* (1.8, 5.1), Servius mentions *lucumones* (Etruscan term for king) *Aen* 8.475.

²⁴⁸ Edlund-Berry (2006) 124 – 126.

²⁴⁹ Livy 4.24; 5.1; 10.16.

²⁵⁰ Macfarlane (1996) 251 – 2.

Voltumna still occurred, both in Rome and in the League, during Propertius time, it is unlikely that his account is inaccurate.



Figure 4: Map of structures found at the Campo della Fiera. Temple A (orientated in East - West direction) situated on the left part of the picture, with the via sacra marked (from North to East, on the far right of the picture). After Stopponi 2012, pl. II.

More recent research and excavations have led both Françoise-Hélène Massa-Pairault and Simonetta Stopponi to argue that the site has been discovered and been convincingly identified as *Fanum Voltumnae*. Other important scholars on Etruscan religion such as Bouke van der Meer have accepted these findings as true.²⁵¹ The site is situated under the Orvieto plateau, which was known during the Middle Ages as “Campo della Fiera” (the Fairground), and thus falls in the category of extra-urban sanctuaries.²⁵² The relevance of the sanctuary being extra-urban is connected to the sacred road that was constructed, known as the Via Sacra. This road led from the city to the sanctuary. Evidence suggests that from the early period onwards the site was not only used by the Etruscans. Umbrian bronze, coins from the Greek world and Sicilian – Punic mints indicate the presence of non-Etruscan devotees.²⁵³ This is not uncommon, as people passing through the city, possibly for trade purposes, would go to a sanctuary to communicate with the gods to ask or give thanks for their safety. Due to the similarities between Etruscan, Roman and Greek deities this interchanging of deity was made possible.²⁵⁴ Within the Campo della Fiera site, several temples have been identified, notably named as Temple A, B and C (see figure 4). The most important of these seems to be temple A, which is connected to *Velt-thumena*.²⁵⁵ As we know the Shrine to this deity was the heart of the meeting place for the Etruscan League, it seems reasonable to assume this was the indeed the site mentioned in the written sources.

Along with the main city of Volsinii and subsequently the new town Orvieto, the site had been affected by the conflict between the city and Rome during the third century BCE. It seems that this effect extended to all of the temples found, as most seem to have been abandoned at during time.²⁵⁶ However, temple A, which has been identified as the temple dedicated to Voltumna, shows that a new altar was erected, replacing the previous one which was made in tufa.²⁵⁷ This indicates, on the one hand, continued use of the site after Roman takeover, and on the other a strong Roman presence henceforth on the site. The temple has been identified as being of the Tuscan classification, as opposed to the Greek peripteral temple, the important characteristics of which are known to us through the writings of Vitruvius.²⁵⁸ Of the temples found by archaeologist, no two seem to be the same. It must be remembered that Vitruvius describes an architectural style which had been in use from the sixth century onward,²⁵⁹ that could be seen at that time, but was effectively a contemporary description of an ancient practice.²⁶⁰ Vitruvius uses the word

²⁵¹ Meer (2013) 99 – 108.

²⁵² Massa-Pairault (2016) 107.

²⁵³ Stopponi (2013) 653.

²⁵⁴ Edlund-Berry (2013) 557.

²⁵⁵ Massa-Pairault (2016) 109.

²⁵⁶ Stopponi (2013) argues for 4 temples found and a possible fifth, named Temple A, B, C, D. Massa-Pairault (2016) is inclined to read the structure of the fifth building as another temple (E), though this is not certain. For this thesis, the presence of Temple A with the altars to Voltumnas found in front is the most important.

²⁵⁷ Massa-Pairault (2016) 115.

²⁵⁸ Vit. *De Arch.* 4.7: On the Tuscan Style. Transl., Frank Granger, Loeb-ed.

²⁵⁹ Warden (2016) 166.

²⁶⁰ Edlund-Berry (2013) p. 562.

Tuscanicis (Tuscan-like) to describe these temples, giving rise to the idea to during his time, the idea of “Etruscanness” might already (or still) have existed.²⁶¹ When describing the temple style itself, Vitruvius makes no mention of the Etruscans or Tuscan influences, though he introduces the style in the previous section as *Tuscanicis*.²⁶² Important to note is that P. Gregory Warden shows how most of the Etruscan temples do not seem to have the exact same style but seem to differ from the protocol described by Vitruvius.²⁶³ Thus, Vitruvius shows to be aware of the Etruscans who built these temples and he tries to create, based on temples still visible in his time, a protocol for the construction of these. This can lead us to conclude at during this time the temples were still there and likely in use. Most importantly, we can see evidence of a *cultural memory*: the Tuscan temples built in the distant past reminded people in later ages of the Etruscan people who had built them.

The Roman period

Though a lot is still unknown about the site, or in need of further examination, it has been established by Stopponi and her team during their excavations of the site that it has been used uninterruptedly from the sixth century BCE until the fourteenth century CE, though not always as a religious site.²⁶⁴ The previously described violent interactions between Rome and Volsinii during the fourth and third century BCE is shown to have had effect on the extra urban sanctuary as well, probably at some point putting Temple B and C out of use, leaving Temple A (in front of which the Fanum Voltumnae was situated) as the sole temple at which cult was conducted on the Campo della Fiera.²⁶⁵ The *temenos* at Temple A seems to have been restored at several points, possible showing that all Temples were affected, but not all were reconstructed. The archaeological record also shows that during the Roman period the site was still in use as a sanctuary, which is attested by work conducted on the Via Sacra, probably done around 50 – 25 BCE, the addition of a Roman Bath house on the site, and the addition of a Roman altar.²⁶⁶ This coincides with Augustan rule, during which the Etruscan League was re-established. Though it is unlikely the site was completely abandoned, it is possible that the League stopped meeting for a while.

The reinstatement of the League and the subsequent changes made to the site show its (renewed) relevance. For this thesis, the Roman basis for this is of special importance. The Romans were aware of the Etruscan League, its meeting place and felt it was beneficial to reinstate the site as a centre of cult activity by making the Etruscan cities take part in the yearly festival, which had stopped during at the beginning of the first century BCE and continued under Augustus.²⁶⁷ It seems reasonable to assume, that at the

²⁶¹ Vit. *De Arch.* 4.7 on the Etruscan temple, 4.6.6 mention of *Tuscanicis*. Transl. Frank Granger, Loeb-ed.

²⁶² Vit. *De Arch.* 4.6.6.

²⁶³ Warden (2016) 167.

²⁶⁴ Stopponi (2013) 633 – 4.

²⁶⁵ Warden (2016) 651.

²⁶⁶ Warden (2016) 651.

²⁶⁷ Stopponi (2013) 653.

start of the reinstatement Rome was aware of the Etruscan custom, and as long as the site remained in use, this cultural memory was re-invoked.

Though clearly new construction and reconstruction took place during the Roman period, no vase fragments from this phase have been found, unlike in the periods preceding the Roman occupation.²⁶⁸ Stopponi concludes her description of the Campo della Fiera site by saying that the Etruscan occupation was followed by a Roman occupation and shows the continued use of the site as a place of cult.²⁶⁹ It has been shown that the site remained in use by the Etruscan League in Roman times, though as it was reinstated by Rome, the nature of the event seems likely to have changed.

However, there is no reason to assume that the context in which the coming together of the Etruscan League at the Shrine occurred, and the rituals taking place during the meetings were not *perceived* to be the same as those which took place two centuries earlier. In the mind of the participants the use of the Shrine was probably based on a historical precedent and might have been seen as a continuation. Furthermore, as we have seen in the second chapter, the Etruscan books describing their religious practices and customs were still around and in use.

The Hispellum Inscription

The meetings of the Etruscan League at the *Fanum Voltumnae* during the Imperial period are hard to track, as very few sources are left to help indicate until when this occurred. However, one telling inscription was found at modern day Spello (CIL XI 5265),²⁷⁰ known in Antiquity as Hispellum, that might shed light on this. The inscription is a copy of a letter received by the city from the emperor Constantine, in which the emperor replies to the city's request to no longer having to send two priests to a sanctuary in the Etruscan city of Volsinii, yearly. The town was probably founded by Augustus in the province of Umbria, but the area was under Etruscan control at several points in the previous centuries and was therefore culturally closely related. It is important to note that, due to the date at which the city of Hispellum was founded, namely somewhere in the first century BCE, it is unlikely Hispellum was part of the original Etruscan League. Under Augustus, the League got upgraded from twelve to fifteen members.²⁷¹ It seems logical to conclude that Hispellum was one the cities added to the original territories. However, their partaking in the revised and reinstated celebrations at the *Fanum Voltumnae* does allow us, through CIL XI 5265 to get an outline of the events still taking place. Furthermore, it implies the existence of the League as the members need to permission from the emperor to leave said festival.

When studying the inscription, several interesting things become apparent. Firstly, it is widely considered by scholars that the inscription refers to the *Fanum*

²⁶⁸ Warden (2016) 648.

²⁶⁹ Stopponi (2013) 653.

²⁷⁰ For the inscription in its entirety, see appendix 1. It has also been extensively analysed by Gasco (1967).

²⁷¹ Becker (2013) 365.

Voltumnae, indeed situated in Volsinii's territory.²⁷² The description of the Hispellum priest having to travel to the sanctuary to take part in the festival seems to fit in with the descriptions of the set up as recounted by Livy and Servius.²⁷³ It seems logical to conclude that the festival during this time still had aspects similar to the Ancient president on which it was based. This is underlined by the description of the festival in the inscription, which describes how the Etruscan city of Volsinii conducted the festival:

*qui apud Vulsinios Tuseiae eivitate(m) ludos
se{h}enieos et gladiatorum munus exhibeant
sed propter ardua montium et diffieultates iti
nerum saltuosa inpendio poseeretis ut indulto*

werden, die bei Volsinii, einer Stadt Tusciens, Theater- und Gladiatorenspiele aufführen lassen; wegen der Steilheit der Berge und der Schwierigkeiten der waldigen Wege habt Ihr aber mit Nachdruck darum ge- beten, daß Euch Erleichterung gewährt werde,²⁷⁴

It has been established that these type of games, as well as the theatre scene were established by the Etruscans and later became an important part of Roman culture.²⁷⁵ The gladiatorial games were originally held in a funerary setting, as part of the games celebrating the dead., so interesting is to see this Etruscan practice still in use during the later stages of the Fanum Voltumnae.²⁷⁶ The inscription does seem to repeat several times that Hispellum will be allowed to celebrate their own games, but that this must not take away from those held in Volsinii.²⁷⁷ Besides the specific mention of priests being those who have to be sent to Volsinii, no reference to rites performed by them is noted. It is therefore not certain to what extent the Etruscan haruspices and auguries, as detailed in the previous section, were still practiced.

Secondly, the inscription has been dated fairly precisely to 333 – 337 CE, due to the mention of Constantine's sons as at the start as Caesars at the start. We know the years in which this title belonged to them, allowing us to place the inscription in a very specific time window. Due to this, we can conclude that the festival still functioned at the time the request was made. Though this date does not help us provide an end date for the festival, it does allow us to say that during the first half of the fourth century CE the festival was still celebrated. A further conclusion that can be drawn follows from the order given by Constantine in the inscription, which seems to focus on the continuation

²⁷² Most notably by: Stopponi (2013) 632; Massa-Pairault (2016) 143; Ammann (2002).

²⁷³ CIL XI 5265 r. 17 -19. Other primary sources corroborating the custom with similar stories: Liv. 1.8, 5.1, Servius *Aen.* 8.475.

²⁷⁴ CIL XI 5265 r. 19 – 22, translated and transcribed by Amann (2002) 2. See Amann (2002) 1 – 3 for a transcript of the inscription and translation (in German) or Gascou (1967) for the French translation.

²⁷⁵ For the influence of Etruscan theater in Rome, see: Maxwell (1996) 267 – 286. See Pallottino (1985) 167 on the origin of the Roman gladiatorial games.

²⁷⁶ Pallottino (1985) 167.

²⁷⁷ CIL XI 5265 r. 48 – 55.

of the Etruscan participation in the festival.²⁷⁸ A second part of the inscription repeats the request to keep sending priests to the festival:

*consequenter etiam editionum in prae-
dicta civitate exhibendorum vobis
licentiam dedimus, scilicet ut, sicuti
dictum est, per vices temporis sollem-
nitas editionum Vulsinios quoque non de-
serat, ubi creati(s) e Tuscia sacerdotibus
memo-
rata celebritas exhibenda est ...*

folglich erteilten Wir Euch auch die Erlaubnis, Spiele in der vorgenannten Stadt zu veranstalten, freilich so daß, wie gesagt, im Wandel der Zeit die Feierlichkeit der Spiele auch in Volsinii nicht vernachlässigt wird, wo die aus Tuscia gewählten Priester die erwähnte Feier abzuhalten haben.²⁷⁹

The focus on this continuation seems to imply that this was not the end of the festival but that the festival kept on functioning. This also coincides with the archaeological end of cult practices in the *Fanum Voltumnae*, which was out around 380 CE.²⁸⁰

Lastly, and for this thesis arguably the most important aspect of the inscription is that in the inscriptions the Etruscans are mentioned as a seemingly cohesive and recognizable group. Indeed, the city of Volsinii is in most mentions connected to a reference to the Etruscans, as in line 19: “*Vulsinios Tuseiae eivitate(m)*”.²⁸¹ Important to point out here, is that the references seem to be connected to the Etruscan practice that is taking place in Etruscan territory. This is placed opposite Hispellum, who, even though might have been under Etruscan rule at some point, is mentioned as being an Umbrian city, therefore making themselves legitimately not part of the festival.²⁸² It could be that this focus on the regional distinction is a rhetoric tool to make the decision to allow Hispellum to no longer take part in the festival seem more sensible. The mentions all seem to be to *Tusci*, or to similar forms of the same root, possibly relating to the name of the region in which the other cities were situated during this time.²⁸³ Regardless of whether the mention is to the name of the region or the people within the cities, the name is clearly linked to the festival.

Importantly, then, the Etruscans are not only mentioned as a group of cities, but they are bound together by the festival which can be clearly recognized as the *Fanum Voltumnae*. Here we can see most clearly the *cultural memory* at work: in the eyes of the

²⁷⁸ Amann (2002) 3.

²⁷⁹ CIL XI 5265, r. 48 – 54, transl. Amann (2002) 3.

²⁸⁰ Meer (2013) 99.

²⁸¹ CIL XI 5265, r.19: ‘Volsinii, einer Stadt Tusciens’, transl. Amann (2002) 2 – 3.

²⁸² Amann (2002) 5.

²⁸³ See also r. 15, 34, 53. When Etruria and Umbria merged into one region under Roman governance during the second century CE, the name became *Tuscia* (Pallottino (1985) 166).

Romans, even in these late times, the importance of these ancient cultural practices is recognized, and linked directly to the Etruscan people. Though the reason why is hard to establish, it shows that this aspect of Etruscan tradition was seen as important and deserving of continuation.

Lieux de mémoire

An important phenomenon that deserves further attention is the *Fanum Voltumnae* as a place of remembrance. Pierre Nora describes how the creation of a place of remembrance occurs when there is a clear break from the past, but at the same time a sense of historical continuity persists.²⁸⁴ The importance of sites, or inhabited space for cultural memory is also attested by Jan Assmann, who writes on the importance of places as crystallization points. According to him, the inhabited space is a way for people to anchor their identity in connection to a social group.²⁸⁵ In this way, places of remembrance grant an important possibility for social groups to shape and ground their identity.

After the extensive research into the site, both before and after the Romans came to dominate it, I have shown that it is fair to say that the Campo della Fiera and the *Fanum Voltumnae* situated on it, might have functioned as a place of remembrance, though in a different capacity than after the conquest. I would argue that the clear break necessary to create a place of remembrance as described by Nora could have been the perceived end of the Etruscan civilization: as the inhabitants of the Etruscan cities gained Roman citizenship and left behind their political and socio-economic independence, they left behind parts their Etruscanness. Chapter One has shown how this changed the social and political make-up of the cities, as the Roman administrative system was firmly established.²⁸⁶ Scholars such as Palottino, Haynes and Liverani have argued that this was such a big change, that it resulted in the end of the Etruscans as an independent cultural group. It is hard to say with certainty when the League stopped functioning. Some scholars, such as Bouke van der Meer, say the League was only in place from 434 to 389 BCE, after which it stopped functioning.²⁸⁷ However, we have seen that the *Fanum Voltumnae* site was in continues use from the fifth century BCE to the end of the fourth century CE.²⁸⁸ It could very well be that the political and military aspect of the League was only in place from 434, a date in line with the recent excavations at the Campo della Fiera site, to 389 BCE. The religious aspect might have continued on interrupted when the political role decreased in importance. Furthermore, the Etruscan cities on several occasions worked together, as well as with other groups on the Italian peninsula against Rome, suggesting a level of cooperation that seems to have required some kind of formal or institutionalized process.²⁸⁹ As this was the function for which the League was

²⁸⁴ Nora (1989) 7.

²⁸⁵ Assmann (2010) 24.

²⁸⁶ Liverani (2012) 239 – 240.

²⁸⁷ Meer (2013) 99.

²⁸⁸ Meer (2013) 99.

²⁸⁹ Liverani (2012) 228 – 253.

originally created, and it seems only logical it was still used until the end of the freedom of the Etruscan cities, placing it somewhere in the first century BCE.

Even if it is the case that the political and military side of the League was strongly reduced after 389 BCE, the continued use of the Campo della Fiera site suggests that the religious aspect of these meeting continued. The reinstating of the Etruscan League by Augustus seems to have been considering this religious and cultural tradition as well, rather than the military or political function as had been originally contrived. As argued previously, the festival taking place at the *Fanum Voltumnae* seems to have been similar in form as previously: the games and gladiator fights described by Livy as having taken place in the Shrine are also mentioned in the Hispellum inscription. During the festivities, Etruscanness is remembered, connected to the space in which the festival is held. It seems therefore just to conclude that the Campo della Fiera, the site that hosted the *Fanum Voltumnae* can be viewed as a place of remembrance for Etruscanness.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to, based on the new assumptions surrounding the site that housed the *Fanum Voltumnae*, assess the effect of the Roman take over on the Pan-Etruscan festival held here. It has, by examining archaeological evidence, shown that the Campo della Fiera was in continues use from the sixth century BCE to the thirteenth century CE, though religious activity seemed to have stopped in the fifth century CE. The Roman altar, found on top of the Etruscan one, corroborates literary evidence suggesting that Augustus reinstated the festival at the *Fanum Voltumnae*. The Hispellum inscription shows that the festival was still in place during the first half of the fourth century CE. Not only is the festival of which Hispellum is asking to no longer be part clearly established as the *Fanum Voltumnae*, it also shows the continued connection of the cities in Etruria with the Etruscan past. This cultural distinction between Tuscan and Umbrian was used to distinguish Hispellum from the other cities participating in the festival, giving them a reason to no longer take part in it. The site and its use in commemorating the historical Etruscans also shows it can be viewed as a place of remembrance, that was in use far longer than the end of the Etruscans as described by modern scholars. By extension, the *Fanum Voltumnae* clearly demonstrates that cultural memory of the Etruscans survived in Rome for several centuries after the Roman integration of Etruria in the first century BCE. This chapter has therefore argued that there is evidence to assume that in the Roman perception Etruscans were still linked to religious practices, as already seen in the fourth chapter, and shown that these persisted well into the fourth century CE.

Conclusion

This thesis argued that in Roman perception via cultural memory, Etruscanness survived after modern scholarship says their culture ceased to exist, namely around the year 0. Arguing so, it challenges the way modern scholars conventionally see the end of the Etruscans, as set out in chapter one. Indeed, it is assumed that the vast social and economic changes that occurred with the final, brutal takeover by Rome of the Etruscan cities, led to the predominance of Roman laws and bureaucracy in the area, changing the tense, but typical, social makeup of the Etruscan cities, and in turn to the loss of this distinctive Etruscan element. Some scholars, such as Pallottino, do attest that some cultural factors might have lived on for a while, yet they argue that this should be seen as part of the newly created Italic culture and no longer as a separate Etruscan culture. This, however, seem strange: if in Rome the idea of Etruscans as a cultural group persisted, as did important cultural markers, does that not mean that in a way, the Etruscans survived? This assertion, which is worked out in the rest of the thesis, allows for the argument that the end of the Etruscans as assumed by modern scholars is not an accurate reflection of the situation on the Italian Peninsula in the first century CE.

The second chapter has indeed shown that in Roman society during the first centuries BCE and CE, people of Etruscan descent held important positions in Roman politics. Often, they were directly associated with their Etruscan heritage. These references were not always positive, but it seems that some figures used their lineage to enhance their status. To Maecenas, for example, being a descendant from an important Etruscan family was seen as a positive trait. Literature written on and by Etruscans has also been analysed from this period, indicating that cultural memory of the Etruscans was alive up into the first century CE, and possibly much later.

In the third chapter, the possibility for the Etruscan language to have stayed in use after its perceived end around the year 0 has been assessed. This thesis concludes that there seems to have been a movement in the Northern Etruscan cities to preserve the language, a step modern linguistic theory says is vital for avoiding of language death. Due to the written evidence suggesting the possibility of Etruscan still being spoken after the turn of the millennium, and the possibility of the language remaining in use in a religious, as well as in a non-formal setting, it is possible that the Etruscan language was still in active use in the first century CE, and possibly later on as well. Furthermore, the idea of the Etruscans having a language of their own, and the influence this had had on Latin was known to Roman scholars during this time, as can be seen in the works of Varro on the origin of Latin words, indicating further that in Roman perception, Etruscanness lived on.

Moreover, chapter four shows that Etruscan religion also has survived the great social change in Etruria. Many sources indicate that the Etruscan religion was still actively used by Etruscans as well as in Rome. More importantly, many religious practices that were considered to be typically Etruscan even before Roman dominance, have lingered with that specific connotation also afterwards. Indeed, mentions of Etruscans performing these religious ceremonies and rites are noted by historians during the following centuries, the latest of which indicated that Etruscan priests continued to performed

auguries up until the sixth century CE. Although the Etruscans were not the only people to perform these rites, it is interesting that these practices are often explicitly accompanied by denominators such as *Tusci* or *Etrusci*. It seems, therefore, that in the *perception* of Rome these rites are connected to the idea of Etruscans as a historical people. Based on this, it seems likely that in the Roman perception, Etruscans were still very much alive in their cultural memory which was actively invoked when performing these rites.

The final chapter of this thesis performed a case study on the Campo della Fiera, the site the Etruscans used as their pan-Etruscan sanctuary, the *Fanum Voltumnae*. Recent excavations have shown that the site was in use from the fifth century BCE until the fourth century CE. Indeed, the inscription found in Hispellum shows that during the fourth century CE the festival was still held and the different cities participating were still sending priests, as we know they had done during the pre-Roman era, to the site near Volsinii. The Pan-Etruscan festival that took place here is an eminent example of cultural memory: Augustus, the Roman emperor, reinstated the celebrations which seem to have stopped after the Roman takeover during the first century BCE, taking them out of their original context as a place for the Etruscan political and military confederation to meet. Instead focussing on bringing together the different Etruscan cities to celebrate a shared festival. This also constitutes a significant break with the past, making the site a place of remembrance, or *lieu de mémoire*.

Admittedly, the continued factual existence of the Etruscans is impossible to state with any certainty. The sources drawn upon are scarce and often inconclusive, not allowing to draw definitive conclusions, even though many subdomains have been examined. However, when analysing the presence of Etruscans in Roman cultural memory, focussing on the preservation of an active memory of the Etruscans, it becomes clear that in Rome a strong tradition existed in which the memory of the Etruscans was kept alive, reaching far into the Imperial period, and possibly later. Not only was the ancestral heritage of the Etruscans understood and remembered, their influence on the Latin language, culture and religion is noted by many authors during the first century CE and in the following centuries. Especially the Etruscan religion seems to have had a profound influence in Rome and shows up in literary sources connected to the Etruscans for centuries after their perceived demise.

It can be concluded, therefore, that the idea of 'Etruscanness' did not end in the first century BCE. Certainly, the social and political makeup of the Etruscan cities became Roman, and a language shift from Etruscan to Latin can be seen in all the Etruscan cities. But the people living in the province of Etruria were still seen as descendants from Etruscans, if not as Etruscan themselves. Rome's knowledge of the importance of Etruscan culture, language, and architecture was not forgotten after the region was subjected to Romanization. However, this fact has been overlooked by modern scholarly work on Rome. On the one hand, those who study Italy during the Imperial period are usually not etruscologists, and on the other are references to, or the people from this area, no longer seen as Etruscans, even though sources suggest they did not disappear

instantly. This thesis hopes to have shown the relevance of studying the Etruscans; they might not have built an empire as large as Rome, but in the eyes of Romans their importance and influence on Roman culture, politics and religion was not forgotten. Furthermore, during the first and second century CE, though integrated, the Etruscans did not become invisible to Rome, and neither should they be in modern scholarship. Lest we forget.

This thesis has tried to shed light on the perceived presence of the Etruscans in the first century CE, looking at people, literature, language, and religion. However, as this was only the start of such a new way of looking at this culture, there is a lot that could not be considered. This thesis has not investigated figures known to have been of Etruscan descent in later periods, such as two Roman emperors who, M. Salvius Otho (69 CE) and Vibius Trebonius Gallus (third century CE), who respectively hailed from the Etruscan towns of Forentum and Perugia. Comparing thoughts on these two Etruscan rulers of Rome, however, can add to our understanding of views on Etruscans in Rome during the Imperial period. This can be helped by looking at the empress Herennia Etruscilla, whose name points to an Etruscan heritage. She came from a wealthy family and managed to become empress twice, by remarrying. Her son, Herennius Etruscus, also became emperor a year before his death. The use of this name itself, seeming to point to an idea of the Etruscans, seems to warrant further investigation, that this thesis has provided a basis for in the second chapter, as well as how these Etruscan emperors were received in Rome. Did Roman ideas on Etruscanness change during the second and third century CE, compared to those seen in this thesis? Understanding Roman views on these important figures might contribute to our understanding of Roman cultural memory of the Etruscans in the Late Imperial period, in which this thesis has hoped to provide the first step by showing that in the eyes of the Romans, the Etruscans were still perceivable in the first century CE.

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Appendix
CIL XI 5265

*E(xemplum) S(acri) R(escripti)
Imp(erator) Caes(ar) Fl(avius) Constantinus
Max(imus) Germ(anicus) Sarm(aticus)
Got(icus) victor
triump(hator) Aug(ustus) et Fl(avius) Con-
stantinus
5 et Fl(avius) Iul(ius) Constantius et Fl(avius)
Constans:
omnia quidem quae humani gene-
ris societate(m) tuentur pervigilium cu-
rae cogitatione complectimur, sed pro-
10 visionum nostrarum opus maximus
est, ut universae urbes, quas in luminibus
provin-
ciarum {h}ac regionum omnium species et
forma dis-
tinguitur, non modo dignitate(m) pristinam
teneant,
sed etiam ad meliorem statum beneficentiae
nos-
15 trae munere probe{a}ntur. Cum igitur ita vos
Tusci-
ae adserere{f}is esse coniunctos, ut instituto
consuetudinis priscae per singulas annorum
vi-
ces a vobis {a}dque praedictis sacerdotes
creentur,
qui apud Vulsinios Tusciae civitate(m) ludos
20 sc{f}h}enicos et gladiatorum munus exhibeant
sed propter ardua montium et difficultates iti-
nerum saluosa inpendio posceretis ut
indulto
remedio sacerdoti vestro ob editiones cele-
brandas Vulsinios pergere necesse non
esset,
25 scilicet ut civitati, cui nunc Hispellum
nomen
est quamque Flaminiae viae confinem adque
con-
tinuam esse memoratis, de nostro
cognomine
nomen daremus. in qua templum Flaviae
gentis
opere magnifico nimirum pro amplitudinem
30 nuncupationis exurgere(t) ibidemque {h}is
sacerdos, quem anniversaria vice Umbria de-
disset, spectaculum tam scenicorum ludorum
[qu]am gladiatorii muneris exhibere(t), ma-
nente
per Tuscia(m) ea consuetudine, ut indidem
cre-
35 atus sacerdos apud Vulsinios, ut solebat,
editionum antedictarum spectacula fre-
quentare(t), pr{a}ecationi {h}ac desiderio
vestro
facilis accessit noster adsensus. Nam civi-
tati Hispello aeternum vocabulum
nomenq(ue)
40 venerandum de nostra nuncupatione conces-
simus, scilicet ut in posterum*

*praedicta urbs
Flavia Constans vocetur, in cuius gremio
aedem quoque Flaviae, hoc est nostrae gen-
tis, ut desideratis, magnifico opere
pereici
45 volumus, ea observatione perscripta,
ne ae-
dis nostro nomini dedicata cuiusquam con-
tagios(a)e superstitionis fraudibus
polluatur;
consequenter etiam editionum in prae-
dicta civitate exhibendorum vobis
50 licentiam dedimus, scilicet ut, sicuti
dictum est, per vices temporis sollemp-
nitas editionum Vulsinios quoque non de-
serat, ubi creati(s) e Tuscia sacerdotibus
memo-
rata celebritas exhibenda est. Ita quippe nec
55 veteribus institutis plurimum videbitur
derogatum et vos, qui ob praedictas causas
nobis supplices ex(s)titistis, ea quae inpen-
dio postulastis impetrata esse gaude-
bitis.*

Z. 8–9: curae statt curarum
Z. 10: maximus statt maximum
Z. 12–13: distinguitur statt distinguit
Z. 19: apud statt apud
Z. 22: saluosa statt saltuosas oder saltuosorum
Z. 29: amplitudinem statt amplitudine
Z. 35: apud statt apud
Z. 44: pereici statt perfici
Z. 49: exhibendorum statt exhibendarum

As found in Asmann (2002) 1 – 3.