

# NOTES

## Two Etruscan Bronze Statuettes

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INCREASING knowledge of the arts of ancient Italy makes it necessary from time to time to reassess the use of the term "Etruscan" and to consider whether or not its application to certain objects—and even to whole classes of objects—can be justified. The term was at one time applied almost indiscriminately to anything excavated in Italy that was not obviously Greek or Roman, and this included the terracotta vases found in Etruria and other parts of Italy. Shortly after the middle of the eighteenth century it was argued from the Greek inscriptions on some red-figured vases that they were made by Greeks and not by Etruscans. Some of those prejudiced by misplaced patriotism or commercial considerations continued to claim Etruscan manufacture for some Greek vases as late as the early nineteenth century, but as the body of available material became larger and better known, and after excavations were undertaken in Greece itself as well as in Italy, the Greek origin of many vases became established beyond dispute. In the nineteenth century the tendency arose

to think that anything of superior quality must therefore be of Greek workmanship.<sup>1</sup> This criterion survived into the twentieth century, and its use may be observed in the older descriptions of many of the Etruscan objects in the Museum. Thus several bronze statuettes formerly exhibited as Greek have been seen to show specifically Etruscan traits and have been transferred to the gallery of Etruscan art, one of the recent migrants being the bronze centaur given to the Museum in 1917 by J. Pierpont Morgan.<sup>2</sup>

It happens less frequently that objects formerly thought to be of the Roman Imperial period are shown to be of Etruscan manufacture and therefore several centuries earlier in date. Such was the case with a group of bronze statuettes from Nemi that appeared on the London art market in 1908.<sup>3</sup> They allegedly came from one of the Roman ships that were at that time still submerged in the Lake of Nemi, and they were therefore dated in the reign of Caligula (A.D. 37–41).<sup>4</sup> This dating was supported by the conjecture that

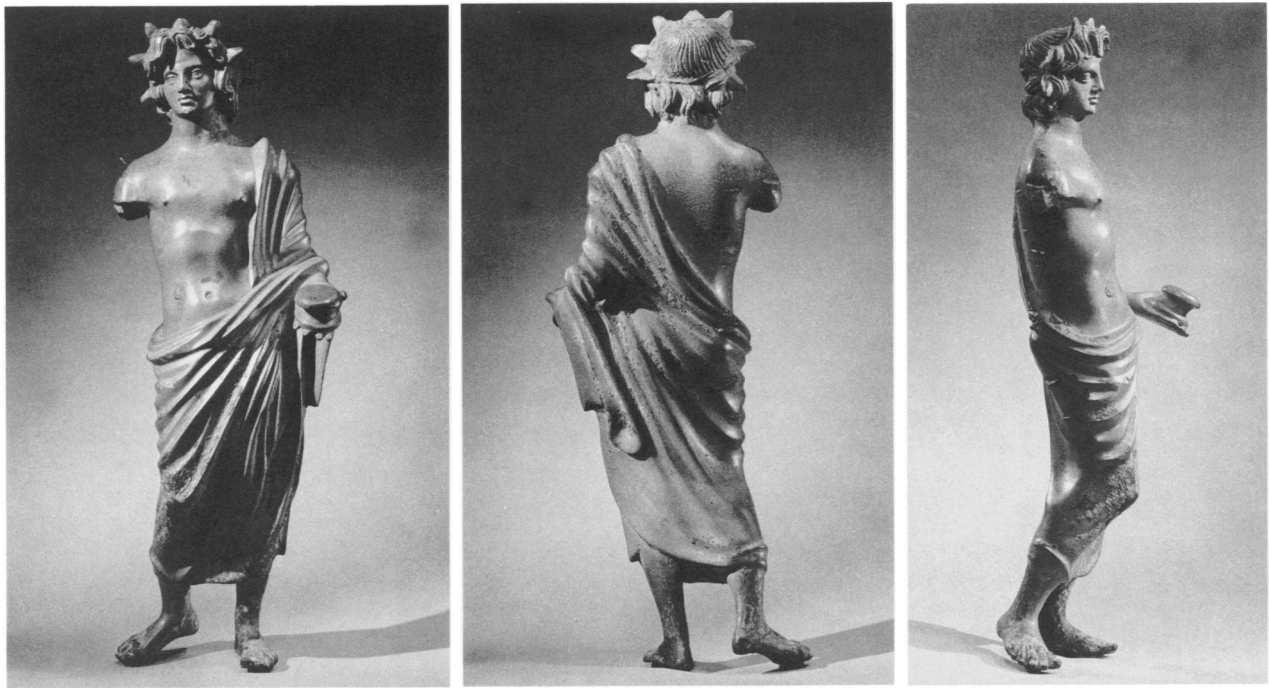
1. M. Pallottino, *Etruscologia* 5th ed. (Milan, 1963) p. 298. For a detailed account of the changing usage of "Etruscan" as applied to vases, see the chapter "The History of the Study of Vase-Painting" in R. M. Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery* (London, 1960) pp. 288 ff.

2. Dietrich von Bothmer, "The Case of the Morgan Centaur," *Archaeology* 20 (1967) pp. 221–222.

3. Sybille Haynes, "The Bronze Priests and Priestesses from

Nemi," *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung* 67 (1960) pp. 34 ff. They were first published by S. Reinach, "Bronzes du Lac de Nemi," *Revue Archéologique* 4th series, 14 (1909) pp. 176 ff., pls. 11–12.

4. For the date of the Nemi ships, see F. Barnabei, *Notizie degli Scavi* 1895, pp. 361 ff.; G. Ucelli, *Le Navi di Nemi* 2nd ed. (Rome, 1950) especially pp. 337 ff.



FIGURES 1-3

Bronze statuette of a priest, Etruscan, 11 century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 16.174.5

a particularly large and fine statuette of a woman represented Caligula's sister Drusilla.<sup>5</sup> Later scholars, finding it impossible to accept the statuettes as Imperial, urged a Republican date, and there is now general

agreement that the statuettes are Etruscan and to be dated in the second century B.C.<sup>6</sup>

The two bronze statuettes that are published here for the first time were acquired for the Museum in

5. The statuette, perhaps a priestess, is now in the British Museum (1920.6-12.1; S. Haynes, *RM* 67 [1960] pp. 36-37, no. 1). The identification as Drusilla was made in the *Illustrated London News* of January 1, 1910, pp. 6 and 11, and in Spink and Son's *Illustrated Catalogue of a Selection of Antiques and Objets d'Art* (London n.d., but apparently issued in the latter part of 1910, not 1911 as suggested by Bothmer and Vermeule, *American Journal of Archaeology* 60 [1956] p. 339) p. 51, where we read: "This view is strengthened by the fact that the dress of the figure is curiously similar to that of the famous marble statue of Drusilla at Munich, and the attitude of both figures is almost identical." No marble statue of Drusilla, however, exists at Munich (for portraits of Drusilla see J. J. Bernoulli, *Römische Ikonographie* II, 1 [Berlin and Stuttgart, 1886] pp. 324 ff.), and the statue in question must be that of "Livie Drusille Auguste" published by Clarac, *Musée de Sculpture Antique et Moderne* V (Paris, 1851) p. 216, no. 2380, pl. 935, whence S. Reinach, *Répertoire de la Statuaire Grecque et Romaine* I (Paris, 1897) p. 573. The caption on the plate reads "Drusille" and the names given in the text are apparently derived from Clarac's garbled version of the ancient inscription on the plinth: AVGVSTAE IVLIAE DRVSI. The correct reading, however, is AVGVSTAE IVLIAE DRVSI · F, and the statue is actually of Livia (A. Furtwängler, *Beschreibung der Glyptothek König Ludwig's I zu München*, 2nd ed. [Munich, 1910]

pp. 366-367, no. 367). The resemblance in drapery and stance between this statue and the bronze from Nemi is rather superficial.

6. For a detailed discussion of the chronology, see S. Haynes, *RM* 67 (1960) pp. 41-45. The earliest examples of the type from a dated context are those from the votive deposit at Carsöli, dated in the third century by the coins and pottery, Antonio Cederna, *NSc* 1951, pp. 169 ff., cf. S. Haynes, *op. cit.* p. 42 and Emeline Richardson, *The Etruscans* (Chicago and London, 1964) pp. 157 ff. Mrs. Richardson has pointed out to me that the relatively low quality of the Carsöli bronzes seems to imply that prototypes of a higher quality were already in existence before the end of the third century: perhaps some of the statuettes now known should be dated earlier than Mrs. Haynes suggests. J. G. Szilágyi, *Annales Musei Debreceniensis de F. Deri nominati* 1957, p. 51, also urges a late fourth- or third-century date for the origin of the type, pointing out that the phialai held by these statuettes are usually decorated with a star pattern reminiscent of that on some plates of the Genucilia Group, for which see J. D. Beazley, *Etruscan Vase-Painting* (1947) pp. 175 ff. and M. A. Del Chiaro, "The Genucilia Group," *University of California Publications in Classical Archaeology* 3 (1957) pp. 243-372. (I am indebted to Dr. Szilágyi for a reprint of his article.)



FIGURES 4–6

Bronze statuette of a priest, Etruscan, 11 century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 16.174.4

1916, when the Nemi bronzes were already known but before it became clear that they were Etruscan. One of them is of the same type as the priests from Nemi, and it is not surprising that they were described as Roman on the few occasions when they were referred to in print.<sup>7</sup> They were also exhibited with the Roman bronzes until 1964, but they were transferred to the Etruscan gallery after professors Blanche R. Brown and Hans Jucker had independently pointed out the incorrect classification on the labels.

1. Acc. no. 16.174.5; Figures 1–3; height 24.8 cm. (9¾ in.).

Youthful priest of the Nemi type with a pyxis in his left hand. The right arm is missing from just below the shoulder, but was doubtless extended with a *phiale* in

the hand. The youth stands with his weight on the left leg; the right leg is bent at the knee and the foot is drawn back, the ball of the foot resting on the ground. His head is turned slightly to the right and is crowned by a wreath with seven large pointed leaves. His only garment is a mantle draped rather loosely around the right side of the body, with one end hanging forward over the left shoulder and the other end thrown across the left forearm. The curved hem of the garment, which can be seen both behind and in front of the left leg, shows that this is the *tēbenna*, the typically Etruscan male dress, distinguished by its semicircular shape from the rectangular Greek *himation*. Represented in Etruscan art from archaic times, it is the direct ancestor of the Roman *toga*.<sup>8</sup> Like most of the figures of this type, the youth is barefoot.

7. *MMA Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition* (New York, 1920) p. 3. *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 15 (1920) p. 109; *id.* 16 (1921) pp. 14 and 38, notes 2–3. G. M. A. Richter, *Handbook of the Classical Collection* (New York, 1927) pp. 310 and 314.

8. The word *τήβεννα* is preserved by Dionysios of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* III.lxi.1, as the word used by the Greeks to

translate *toga*. He points out, however, that the word does not seem to be Greek, and it has therefore been conjectured that it may be a loan-word from the Etruscan. Plutarch, *Romulus* xxvi.2, gives the word as *τήβεννος* but the feminine form is attested by a second-century inventory of the Aphrodision on Delos, *Inscriptions de Délos* (Paris, 1935) 1442.B.34; see Liddell and Scott, *Greek-*

This statuette should be added to the list compiled by Mrs. Haynes of those of the Nemi type "for which any artistic merit can be claimed,"<sup>9</sup> and like them may be dated in the second century B.C.

2. Acc. no. 16.174.4; Figures 4-6; height 29.5 cm. (11 $\frac{5}{8}$  in.).

Youth pouring a libation. Like the Nemi priests he wears no tunic, but his *tēbenna* is draped high around his torso, leaving only the right shoulder and breast bare. The stance is very similar to the last: weight on the left leg, right leg bent at the knee and foot drawn back; the feet bare; the body twisted to bring the right shoulder forward, the right arm extended forward and to the right, bent at the elbow; in the right hand, a *phiale* tilted forward for the libation. The left arm is held close to the body beneath the *tēbenna*, but the hand points away from the body, palm forward, fingers and thumb extended. The head is turned slightly to the right; the hair is bound with a fillet.

This statuette is distinguished from those of the Nemi type by the manner in which the *tēbenna* is worn and by

the absence of pyxis and wreath. The closest parallel known to me is a headless statuette of a youth in Florence, which has an Etruscan inscription in two lines on the garment at the front.<sup>10</sup> Its right arm is missing from just above the elbow, and in the left hand is an object of irregular shape that appears to be a liver. The *tēbenna*, however, is almost identical, fold for fold, with that of the New York statuette. Smaller bronze statuettes of youths wearing the *tēbenna* in a similar fashion have been found at Carsòli<sup>11</sup> and Nemi.<sup>12</sup> The Carsòli example was found in a third-century context, and the slender proportions of the New York statuette suggest that it can hardly be earlier than this in date. The bland expression and the arrangement of the hair in large tufts, reminiscent of the hair-style of the Nemi priests, invite comparison with larger sculptures of the third to second century, such as the "Paris" and "Minerva" from Arezzo.<sup>13</sup> Its close similarity to the inscribed examples leaves no doubt of the Etruscan origin of the New York statuette, and together with the stylistic considerations points to a date in the second century B.C.

*English Lexicon*, ed. by Stuart Jones and McKenzie (Oxford, 1925-1940) s.v.  $\tau\eta\beta\epsilon\nu\nu\alpha$ ; cf. M. Pallottino, *Etruscologia* p. 335 and Emeline Richardson, *The Etruscans* pp. 67 and 106. For earlier statuettes wearing the toga, see Emeline Richardson, "The Etruscan Origins of Early Roman Sculpture," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 21 (1953) pp. 110-122. On the manly custom of wearing the toga without a tunic, see Aulus Gellius VI.xii.3.

9. *RM* 67 (1960) p. 41. Add also two bronze statuettes, a priest and a priestess, formerly owned by the late Capt. E. G. Spencer-Churchill: *Cat. Christie June 21-23, 1965 (Northwick Park Collection)* nos. 506 and 507, pl. 71, reputed to have been among "seven figures dredged up from Lake Nemi, circa 1907, from Caligula's barge." The priest appeared earlier in Spink and Son's *Illustrated Catalogue* (1910) pp. 52 ff., no. 535, fig. 58, where it was said to have been found with the priestess now London 1920.6-12.1. Neither of the Spencer-Churchill bronzes, however, was among the seven statuettes published along with the London priestess by Reinach, *RA* 4th series, 14 (1909) pls. 11-12.

10. Museo Archeologico inv. 13004, formerly in the Uffizi, found at Paterno di Valombrosa in 1831. L. A. Milani, *Il R. Museo Archeologico di Firenze* (Florence, 1912) I, p. 141, no. 141. H. Dragendorff, "Rappresentazione di un aruspice sopra un vaso aretino," *Studi Etruschi* 2 (1928) p. 181 and note 5, pl. 38, 3-4. For the inscription see also: Conte Giancarlo Conestabile, *Iscrizioni*

*etrusche e etrusco-latine in monumenti che si conservano nell'I. e R. Galleria degli Uffizi* (Florence, 1858) pp. 178 ff. and pl. 57, no. 199; A. Fabretti, *Corpus Inscriptionum Italicarum* (Turin, 1867) no. 256, pl. 23; W. Corssen, *Ueber die Sprache der Etrusker* I (Leipzig, 1874) pp. 643 ff.; *Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum* 2627 (q.v. for other early literature); E. Lattes, "Saggio di un indice lessicale etrusco," *Società R. di Napoli, Memorie della R. Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belli Arti* 1 (1911) p. 67 s.v. *alitle*; *id.*, "Appunti per l'indice lessicale etrusco," *R. Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere, Rendiconti* 2nd series, 45 (1912) p. 357 s.v. *eit*; G. Buonamici, *Epigrafia etrusca* (Florence, 1932) p. 70 and note 12.

11. Antonio Cederna, *NSc* 1951, pp. 169 ff., especially p. 191, fig. 8, no. 7 and p. 192, note 2. To the list of parallels there noted, add: (1) Villa Giulia 24473, height about 16 cm., right hand extended but empty, left hand as New York 16.174.4, Etruscan inscription on the front of the garment. (2) Villa Giulia 24491, height about 9 cm. (3) Berlin, height 14.2 cm.

12. A. Della Seta, *Museo di Villa Giulia* (Rome, 1918) p. 227, no. 6770. *NSc* 1951, p. 192, note 2. Height about 7.5 cm.; in the right hand, a *phiale*; in the left, a rounded object, perhaps a liver.

13. "Paris," Florence inv. 87669. *NSc* 1920, pp. 206-207, no. 6, pl. 3. G. Q. Giglioli, *L'Arte Etrusca* (Milan, 1935) pl. 378, figs. 1-2. "Minerva," Florence inv. 87708. *NSc* 1920, p. 207, no. 7, pl. 4. Giglioli, *ibid.*, fig. 4.