

Alessandro Naso (ed.)

Etruscology

Etruscology

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88 North Africa

Abstract: North Africa has yielded Etruscan and Italic finds dating to the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, which are particularly concentrated in Carthage. Carthaginians and Etruscans were both *barbaroi* and natural allies against the Greeks, as the literary tradition confirms. The quantity and the nature of the pottery and bronzes found here show that the Punic city had direct and intense trade relationships with Etruscan partners such as Caere. Etruscan artifacts have also been found in Greek colonies such as Cyrene and Naucratis, probably brought along the complex trade routes connecting the western and eastern Mediterranean in the Archaic period. Good relations between Carthaginians and Etruscans continued for many centuries, since in Tunisia and Algeria there are isolated finds until the second and first centuries, including inscriptions revealing the presence of Etruscans, who probably escaped from their homeland when it was conquered by Roman armies.

Keywords: Trade, personal relationship, Carthage, Cyrene, Tunisia

Introduction

Etruscan finds in North Africa are concentrated particularly in Carthage, as has been noted by several scholars, but Etruscan objects have also been found in other places, such as the Greek colonies of Cyrene and Naucratis.¹ For a general and reliable overview, then, it is necessary to extend the field of research to all of North Africa and to compare the large amount of data from the Punic city *par excellence* with finds from elsewhere. After a very few finds that date to the Early Iron Age, two main phases can be distinguished. The first corresponds to the Late Orientalizing to Archaic period, and the second to the Late Archaic to Hellenistic period (Fig. 88.1).

1 The Iron Age

In the early 1870s, the Marquess of Courtance bought a bronze *antenna* sword in Egypt and gave it as a gift to the king of Italy for the Armeria Reale of Turin, where it is still preserved (Fig. 88.2). There is no record of the sword's original provenance,² but the type is widely distributed in Italy and Central Europe in ninth- and eighth-century BCE contexts. Raffaele Carlo de Marinis has recently discussed the various typologies that have been developed for these swords. The exemplar in Turin belongs to

¹ Pallottino 1963; MacIntosh Turfa 1977; Morel 1981, 1990; Thuillier 1985; von Hase 1989; 1993; Naso 2006; Gran Aymerich 2009, 22–28; Naso 2010.

² Venturoli 2002, 36–37, no. A' 43.

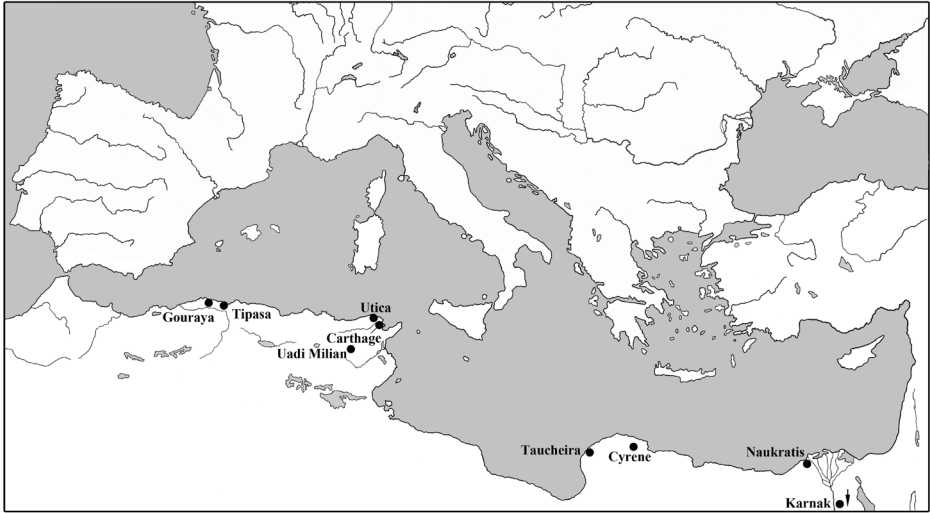


Fig. 88.1: North Africa. Map of the sites cited in the text

the oldest type, known as the Tarquinia-Vetulonia type, and dates to the ninth century.³ This chronology makes it highly improbable that this Italic sword, a ceremonial weapon, could have come from North Africa, but of course the question is still open to debate.

Trade relationships between North Africa and the Italic regions are, however, evidenced by three pottery sherds found in disturbed layers in Carthage. They belong to a particular shape of Sardinian jug, the *brocche askoidi*. Outside Sardinia, where they were popular from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age, jugs of this shape are known in Etruria (especially in Vetulonia, but also in Vulci, Tarquinii, and Caere), Sicily (Mozia and Dessueri), Crete (Khaniale Tekke), and Spain (Huelva, Carambolo, and Cadiz).⁴ Perhaps they were used for a specific commodity, which may explain their wide distribution. Iron Age Pottery from central Italy has been found at Utica both in the french-tunisian and spanish excavations⁵.

³ de Marinis 1999, 542–47.

⁴ Delpino 2002; Lo Schiavo 2005.

⁵ Monchambert et al. 2013, 48-50, no. 20a–b, fig. 44; Ferjaoui and López Castro forthcoming; López Castro, forthcoming.

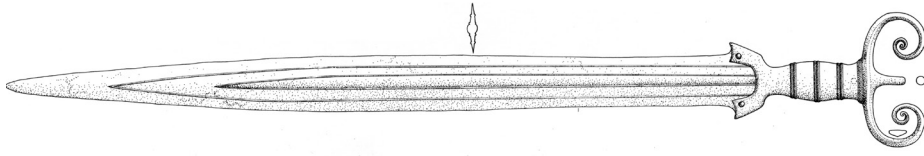


Fig. 88.2: Bronze antenna sword (after Bianco Peroni 1970, pl. 45, no. 305)

2 Late Orientalizing and Archaic periods

From the second half of the seventh century, the founding of Greek colonies such as Cyrene (with its subcolonies including Taucheira—modern Tocra—and Apollonia) and Euhesperides in western North Africa, and Naucratis, in Egypt, brought not only Greek colonists but also new connections and new waves of trade. At that time, Carthage had not yet begun its expansion into western North Africa, but had already established trade relations with the Etruscans, as the many finds indicate, and probably also with the Italic populations in Sicily, as reported by ancient authors. In its tombs, both old and new excavations have found more than sixty bucchero vases dating from the third quarter of the seventh century onward.⁶ Among these early finds, an *oinochoe* in thin bucchero (It. *bucchero sottile*) is particularly notable. The form is quite typical for Caere and its district, and dates to just after 650. Twenty-eight small amphorae and twelve *oinochoai* or jugs, found in many graves and probably connected to wine consumption, also indicate contact with southern Etruria in the second half of the seventh century. In Carthage, there are also bucchero drinking cups: 2 *kotylai*, 11 *kylikes*, and 11 *kantharoi* (Fig. 88.3). The bucchero *kantharos* is the number one sign all over the Mediterranean of Etruscan presence, from Spain to Turkey, and from southern France to North Africa, particularly Tom Rasmussen's type 3e, which was used from the end of the seventh to the first half of the sixth century. To the distribution map of this shape compiled by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hase can be added further finds from the Aegean Sea (see chapter 87 Naso and Fig. 49.2).

This map can include Taucheira in Libya and Naucratis in Egypt as well. At Naucratis, at least two *kantharos* sherds have been found, belonging to type Rasmussen 3e.⁷ The first sherd is relevant because—according to its publisher Erika Prins de Jong—some traces of silvering are still preserved on it⁸. “Silvering” refers to a particular treatment of the surface, which may have been achieved in two different ways.

⁶ von Hase 1989; Docter 1993, 229–30 nos. 23–24.

⁷ Naso 2006, 189, figs. 3–4; 2010, 80 nos. 26–27, figs. 2–3.

⁸ Prins de Jong 1925, 55–56 no. V. 2, pl. 3 (top right).

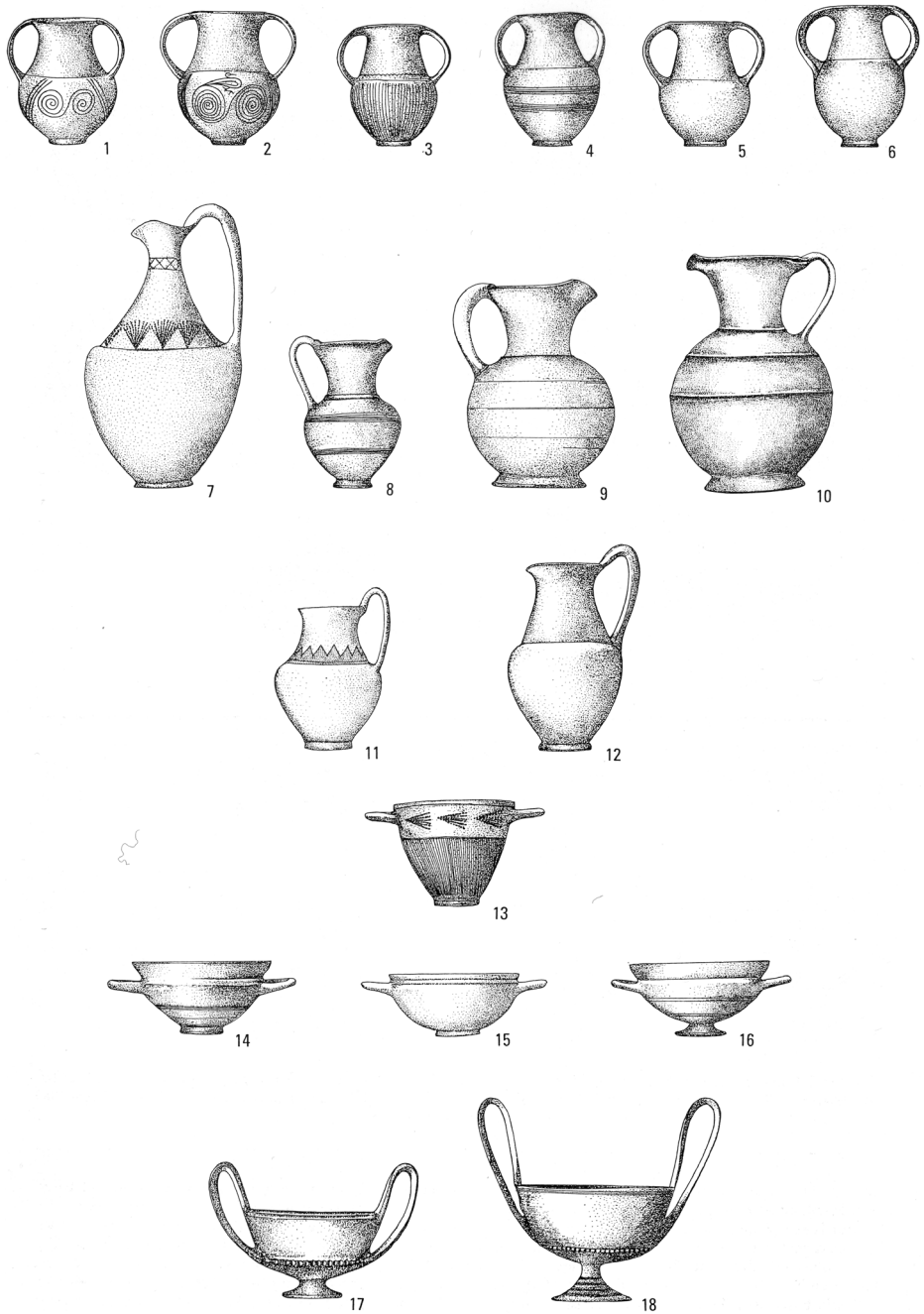


Fig. 88.3: Bucchero pottery from Carthage (after von Hase 1989, fig. 29)

The first method, which is older, quite rare, and more expensive, applies a thin layer of metal (silver or gold) to the pottery using a particular type of clay (bole, It. *bolo*) as an adhesive. According to Klaus Burkhardt, the second method was cheaper and more frequent, and involved burnishing the surface before and during firing the pot to achieve a silver appearance.⁹ Because both methods were exclusive to workshops in Caere, we can assume provenance from that city for the bucchero *kantharos* found at Naucratis. The presence in Naucratis of bucchero with silver decoration is all the more significant, since throughout the Mediterranean only one other sherd with such decoration is known, from the Heraion in Samos. According to Bernard Bouloumié, some bucchero *kantharoi* with silver decoration were probably found in the La Love wreck off Cap d'Antibes; but it is impossible to verify this.¹⁰

The Caeretan origin of bucchero vases found in Naucratis and Samos is not surprising. As we have seen, many bucchero vases found at Carthage probably came from Caere. Other evidence suggests that some bucchero vases found in Miletos were also made in Caere. Thin section and petrological analyses of bucchero samples found in the Aphrodite sanctuary on Zeytintepe in Miletos show values very close to those of similar analyses by Burkhardt in his major research project on bucchero pottery from southern Etruria.¹¹

It is noteworthy that the older excavations of Carthage yielded more than twenty Etrusco-Corinthian vases. These are Etruscan imitations of Corinthian pottery that were very popular in Vulci and Tarquinia but less so in Caere, the Etruscan city that imported the largest quantity of Corinthian pottery and therefore had less interest in imitations. Janos-Györgi Szilágyi classified the Etrusco-Corinthian vases found in Carthage as imports from Vulci and Tarquinia, all of which date to the first half of the sixth century. These classifications have recently been confirmed by some new Etrusco-Corinthian fragments found during two German excavations near the Decumanus Maximus of Roman Carthage, led respectively by Friedrich Rakob and Hans-Georg Niemeyer. The number of imports from Tarquinia, and particularly for the vases of the “Pittore senza Graffiti,” has thus increased.¹² In Carthage, Etruscan transport amphorae have yet to be found, but it would not be surprising if they do appear.¹³ These results are again compatible with the Etruscan finds from Miletos, where some bucchero sherds may belong to vases from Tarquinia. Miletos is the find-spot of the only Etruscan transport amphora identified up to now in the entire eastern Mediterranean (Fig. 14.1).

⁹ Burkhardt 1991, 114–15.

¹⁰ Long and Sourisseau 2002, 30.

¹¹ Naso 2009.

¹² All Etrusco-Corinthian vases from Carthage are listed in Naso 2010, 79 no. 8.

¹³ The so-called Zita trade amphorae, which Roald Docter considered to be also of Central Italic origins (Docter 1998), are now definitively attributed solely to Sardinian production by Oggiano 2000, 241–42.

How can we interpret the bucchero and Etrusco-Corinthian vases found in Carthage? They were probably more than simple objects of trade or exotic pieces for deposition as grave goods, especially if we connect these pots, whose numbers increase between the third quarter of the seventh century and 550, to the events of the second half of the sixth century. Thanks to many historians, we know that in that time relations between Carthage and the southern Etrurian cities were particularly good and intense. The role of the Etruscans was not secondary in the mid sixth century, when the expansionist policies of Carthage, which was destined to become almost an empire in the following years, began with the expedition led by Malcus in Sicily and Sardinia.¹⁴

Herodotus explicitly mentions the alliance between Caere and Carthage against the Greeks of Phocaea in the battle of the Sardinian Sea in about 540 (Hdt. 1.166.1–2). It is widely accepted that the Carthaginians achieved control of Sardinia only after this battle, in the second half of the sixth century, while the Etruscans began their domination of Corsica. This alliance was probably in force at least until the second half of the fourth century, because in his *Politica*, Aristotle cited a deliberate, official treaty between Etruscans and the Punic empire, probably between Caere and Carthage. His references seem to indicate the existence of written documents (*graphai*) concerning trade and military agreements (Arist. *Pol.* 3.5.10–11). The existence of such treaties between Caere and Carthage can be supported by other historical traditions, such as the information from Polybius on the first treaty between Rome and Carthage, dated about 509 (Polyb. 3.22.4–13). Scholars currently accept the existence of this first treaty, and only a few are convinced that this is an invention, a projection into the past of the treaty between Rome and Carthage dating to 348. Carmine Ampolo stresses the authenticity of this early treaty and dates it to the end of the sixth century¹⁵. This period at Caere is the age of Thefarie Velianas, the king of the city responsible for the construction of the temple now known as Temple B in the sanctuary of Pyrgi, the main harbor of Caere. Thefarie Velianas is expressly named in the gold tablets from Pyrgi—two in Etruscan and one in Punic—that also record the deities of the sanctuary, the Etruscan Uni and the Punic Astarte. According to many scholars, the honor of putting a Punic inscription in one of the main sanctuaries near Caere—and of consecrating it to a Punic deity—is closely connected to the alliance described by Herodotus. Perhaps to become king of Caere, Thefarie also received Carthaginian support.¹⁶

An important find shows the existence of close personal relationships between Etruscans and Carthaginians, and probably also reflects the custom of the two peoples meeting one another in their respective cities. One of the few Archaic Etrus-

¹⁴ Different opinions, however, have been expressed about Malcus and his enemies (Bernardini, Spanu and Zucca 2000; Krings 2000).

¹⁵ Ampolo 1987, 80–84; Scardigli 1991, 47–87.

¹⁶ Colonna 2010, with previous bibliography.



Fig. 88.4: *Tessera hospitalis* from Carthage (after Pugliese Carratelli 1986, fig. 55)

can inscriptions outside Etruria was found in a tomb of the Santa Monica necropolis in Carthage. Inscribed on the reverse of an ivory *tessera* in the form of a quadruped (Fig. 88.4) is *mi puinel karthazies vesqu[vacat]na* (“I belong to Puinel the Carthaginian...”). This little tablet, dating to the last quarter of the sixth century, has been identified as a *tessera hospitalis*—almost an identity card, intended to match another similar piece belonging to an Etruscan. Palaeography indicates that the tablet was inscribed in Tarquinii or Vulci. Only a few other ivory *tesserae hospitales* are known; it is not by accident that one in the form of a panther was found outside Etruria, in Rome (see chapter 79 Naso). In another tablet, only partially preserved, from the Etruscan residence of Murlo (Siena), Adriano Maggiani suggested restoring the name *puinel[---]*. If his interpretation is correct, this could be further evidence concerning relations between Etruscans and Carthaginians.¹⁷ In the last quarter of the sixth century, then, after the battle of the Sardinian Sea, we can clearly see direct and personal contacts between southern Etruscans and Carthaginians, both of them *barbaroi* and therefore

¹⁷ Maggiani 2006.

natural allies against the Greeks. It is also possible to accept a proposal by Dietrich Berges, who included Etruscan people among the possible clients visiting the state archive in Carthage.¹⁸

We may therefore conclude that the presence of rich Etruscan Archaic finds in western North Africa was due not only to trade, but in some cases also to direct relations with Etruria, particularly with Caere.

In the Greek colonies of North Africa, in contrast, we can ascribe the Etruscan finds to indirect contacts through trade. This may be the case of the bucchero *kantharoi* in Taucheira and Naucratis and of the other bucchero vases from Naucratis recently published by Phil Perkins. Bucchero sherds are known to have been found at Karnak in Egypt and Tipasa in Algeria. Thanks to information kindly provided by Pierre Rouillard, we know that only one Etruscan sherd has been found at Karnak—a small amphora dated to 600.¹⁹ The Etruscan bucchero vases found in Greek sanctuaries can generally be considered gifts from merchants returning home, as can be seen from the Greek names inscribed on bucchero vases dating to the first half of the sixth century found in Perachora, Ialiso (on Rhodes), and Sicily (in Selinous and now in Leontinoi). These include a Nearchos in Perachora and probably a Leukios in Leontinoi (see chapter 87 Naso).

What is quite surprising in North Africa is the absence of Etruscan bucchero at Cyrene. This may be due to the scarcity of Archaic pottery published from the site. What has been found in Cyrene, however, is a bronze fragment belonging to an Etruscan utensil, which Mario Zuffa identified as an *infundibulum*,²⁰ a very elaborate funnel that was part of a wine set. It is in the form of a small bronze frog with a hole bored through it and a cutaway to fit a tang by which the frog could be attached to a bronze handle. The frog held a strainer that was originally fixed with rivets. Both frog and strainer could be lifted up and the funnel used alone. *Infundibula* usually have a handle in the form of a lyre that ends in a duck's head with a long bill, or more rarely in a ram's head. It is quite common for the hinge to be T-shaped, or, if representational, a lion couchant, a frog, or occasionally a sphinx. These utensils are a typical Etruscan invention, and were used for pouring wine, for instance from a krater into a *oinochoe* or from a *oinochoe* into a *kantharos*. In the second half of the sixth century they were very popular all over the Mediterranean (Fig. 88.5). *Infundibula* from that period are the counterpart in bronze of the bucchero *kantharoi* from the first half of the same century; they are a real Etruscan marker, one of the valued *tyrrhenoi chalkoi* celebrated in ancient Greek literature. Since Zuffa's article, which listed twenty-eight of them, many new finds have surfaced. We can now list more than 100 *infundibula*

¹⁸ Berges 1997, 52.

¹⁹ Perkins 2007. All the sherds have already been listed (Naso 2010, 79 no. 2 for Tipasa, 80 nos. 28–32 for Naucratis, 80 no. 34 for Karnak).

²⁰ Zuffa 1960.

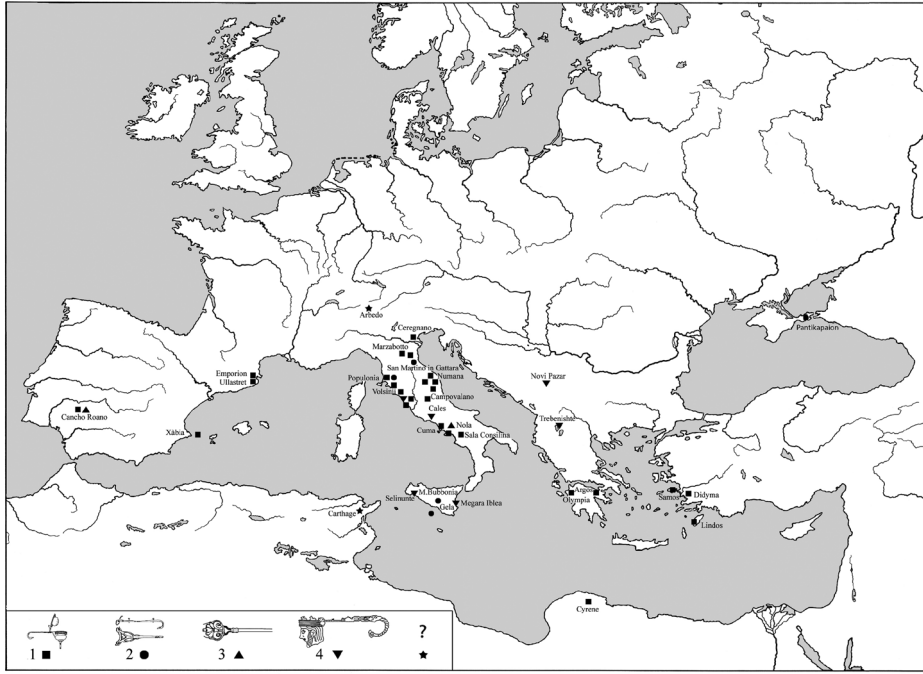


Fig. 88.5: Diffusion of bronze infundibula (map compiled by A. Naso)

belonging to at least four main types: (1) lyre-handled (the most common, with subtypes); (2) similar but without tang, known from San Martino in Gattara; (3) palmette-handled; (4) special forms, including non-Etruscan examples.

Although many have appeared on the art market with no provenance, the findspots, when known, are significant. In Italy they are quite widespread. The main source is southern Etruria, but they have also been found in Campania, Umbria, ancient Picenum (corresponding to the modern-day southern Marche and northern Abruzzo), and the modern-day Veneto; several examples have been found in Sicily. Outside Italy there are four from Spain, one from Cyrene, three (or more) from Olympia (one with a Greek inscription), one from Argos, one from Ialiso on Rhodes, one from Thasos, one from Samos, and one from Didyma. Another funnel was found in Switzerland, in the Arbedo hoard. Two further bronze fragments that represent ducks' heads, from Carthage and from Didyma, may belong to *infundibula* or to ladles, which have also been found in Greece. This wide distribution, including not only Italic regions but also the Mediterranean basin and central Europe, and the provenance of many pieces from illegal excavations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, seems reason enough to localize the workshop in southern Etruria. Against current opinion, which assumes only one workshop in Volsinii, the different forms (or subtypes) of the lyre-

handled utensils suffice to postulate the existence in southern Etruria of more than one workshop.²¹ One of these may have been in Vulci, where the most famous Etruscan bronze workshops flourished, which were responsible both for masterpieces, such as the rod tripods found on the Athenian Acropolis and in a Celtic grave in Bad Dürkheim near Speyer in Germany, and for everyday vases, such as the countless bronze beak-spouted jugs (Ger. *Schnabelkannen*) that were destined for long-distance trade in the territories north of the Alps (see chapter 82 Baitinger). Seven *Schnabelkannen* have also been found in Carthage.

An Etruscan archaic bronze mirror from Sestino (prov. Arezzo) has stylistic influences of a mirror group from Mit Rahineh in Egypt, dated to the end of 7th cent. BCE. Two Egyptian mirrors of this group have been found in Greek sanctuaries and show the distribution in the Mediterranean of these artefacts; one can presume Egyptian mirrors arrived to Etruria through direct or indirect contacts²².

3 From the Late Archaic to the Hellenistic period

Herodotus reports that in the early fifth century, Dionysios of Phocaea fought against Etruscans and Carthaginians (Hdt. 6.17), who, according to the same historian, shared a common fate in the battles lost against the Greeks of Syracuse (the Carthaginians in Sicily at Himera in 480, the Etruscans in the Sea of Cumae in Campania in 474). From Diodorus Siculus we learn that at the end of the fourth century, Samnite, Etruscan, and Celtic mercenaries fought for Agathocles of Syracuse against the Carthaginian army (Diod. Sic. 20.11.1). The few, but relevant, archaeological finds may confirm the relationships that underlie these encounters.

In this context we must mention a find that is not Etruscan. A chamber tomb in Tunisia near Ksour es-Saaf, not far from Mahdia, yielded an impressive triple-disc cuirass of gilded bronze, perfectly preserved, in 1909. Similar cuirasses, datable to the end of the fourth century, are common in southern Italy among Samnites, Lucanians, and other Italic populations.²³ The interpretation of the cuirass is not clear: is it war booty? Or is it the ceremonial attire of an Italic soldier, or rather officer, of Agathocles? Both are possibilities.

In Carthage and Cyrene, there are also some red-figure Etruscan plates of the Genucilia class, dating to the end of the fourth–early third century.²⁴ This pottery was

²¹ Naso 2015, nos. 1–94, with previous literature.

²² Maggiani 2003.

²³ Tagliamonte 2004, 161 footnote 103. Gianluca Tagliamonte is working to an edition of these cuirasses (Tagliamonte 2014, 181).

²⁴ Naso 2010, 79 no. 16 (at least six Genucilia plates from Carthage) and no. 23 (one Genucilia plate from Cyrene).

produced in several workshops, one of which was in Caere. The find of a 50 cm high marble *cippus* in the “Salammbô *tophet*” shows the probable presence of an Etruscan from Caere in Carthage. Such *cippi* are typical markers for male tombs in Caere from the fourth century onward. It would seem very probable that this *cippus* was the gravestone of an Etruscan who died in Carthage, perhaps in the early third century.²⁵ Relationships between Etruscans and Punic people may also be presumed in the second century, thanks to a small bronze disc with an Etruscan inscription found in a Punic grave near Gouraya in Algeria. The Etruscan inscription mentions an Etruscan personal name, *pumpun larthal*, meaning “Pumpun (son) of Larth.” Can the absence of a praenomen for Pumpun mean that the relationships stated on the disc were with all the male members of the Pumpun family, i.e. with all the sons of Larth? According to Dominique Briquel, this is a possibility.²⁶

It is not coincidental that, in the fourth and third centuries, when the Roman armies were conquering Etruria city by city, some northern Etruscans fled their land to find a new homeland in Africa. This could explain how the longest Etruscan inscription, the *liber linteus* (now in the Zagreb National Museum), written on linen cloth carbon-dated to within twenty-five years of 390, came to be found in Egypt. The palaeography suggests that the inscription dates from the end of the third to the second century. We do not know whether the Etruscan book was written in Egypt or, as seems more likely, was taken to Egypt, where it was used to wrap a mummy. This is presumed to have happened quite late, perhaps after the Perusine War (41–40), because its characteristics suggest that the book was written by a scribe from a north Etruscan area such as Perugia (Perugia).²⁷

Finally, eight Etruscan inscriptions on three boundary stones, found in Tunisia in the hinterland of Carthage, name the same person, the Etruscan Marce Unata Zutas (Fig. 38.6). Because Unata is a typical name from Clusium and its district, they probably relate to the escape from Clusium in 82 of the Roman consul Cn. Papirius Carbo and his Etruscan friends mentioned by Appian.²⁸

Thus the presence of Etruscans in North Africa was a persistent phenomenon, a feature of the *histoire de longue durée* of this region.

²⁵ von Hase 1996; Bénichou-Safar 2004, 179 pl. XLIX, 9.

²⁶ Briquel 2006 on this inscription, with previous literature.

²⁷ Maggiani 2007 and now Belfiore 2010 for various aspects of the inscription. Srdoč et al. 1990 suggest a radiocarbon date, which few scholars accept.

²⁸ Colonna 1983, 1–5. See also chapter 38 Torelli.

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