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# HUMAN-MASK MUGS: EGYPTIAN MODELS FOR ETRUSCAN (AND ROMAN) CRAFTSMANSHIP\*

DI

FRIEDERIKE BUBENHEIMER-ERHART

E

DANIELE FEDERICO MARAS

SOCIO CORRISPONDENTE

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To the memory of János György Szilágyi (1918-2016)

*"A springboard has been provided: ... now is the moment ... to take up the work"*

(J.D. Beazley, cited by Szilágyi 1998, p. 702)

Le tazze a maschera umana sono un gruppo di vasi noto da una cinquantina di esemplari in bucchero e ceramica etrusco-corinzia, diffuso in Etruria meridionale e nel Lazio nel corso dell'Orientalizzante Recente. Gli autori dimostrano che il modello di tale forma vascolare va ricercato nei cosiddetti "vasi di Bes", prodotti in Egitto nel Periodo Tardo, proseguendo una tradizione più antica. La diffusione di modelli e iconografie egizie è una conseguenza del rinnovato contatto con le culture mediterranee, elleniche e anelleniche, che caratterizza la XXVI Dinastia saitica. Officine produttrici di tazze a maschera umana sono state identificate a Caere per il bucchero e a Veio per la ceramica dipinta, nell'ambito del ciclo etrusco-corinzio dei Rosoni. Le tazze appartengono a una serie di vasi plastici configurati di tradizione egittizzante, comprendente anche i balsamari a forma di scimmia, ariete, cervide. In alcuni di questi casi sembra possibile escludere una mediazione greca, come anche nel caso di alcuni rari contenitori pendenti a testa umana o di Acheloo, che dipendono direttamente da modelli ciprioti orientalizzanti.

Parole chiave: tazze a maschera umana, vasi di Bes, prodotti egittizzanti, ceramica etrusco-corinzia, bucchero.

*Masken-Tassen bilden eine Gruppe etruskischer Keramik, die durch rund fünfzig Exemplare in Bucchero und etrusko-korinthischer Ware bekannt ist und während der spätorientalisierenden Periode in Südetrurien und Latium verbreitet war. Die Autoren zeigen, dass diese Vasen auf Besvasen zurückgehen, welche im spätzeitlichen Ägypten hergestellt wurden und ihrerseits eine ältere Tradition fortsetzen. Die Verbreitung ägyptischer Vorbilder ist eine Folge neuerlicher Kontakte zu den Kulturen des Mittelmeerraumes, griechischen wie auch anderen, welche für die saitische 26. Dynastie charakteristisch sind. Produktionsstätten von Masken-Tassen können in Caere für die Exemplare in Bucchero und in Veji für die bemalte Keramik im Umfeld des etrusko-korinthischen 'Rosoni'-kreises lokalisiert werden. Die Tassen gehören zu einer Serie plastisch gestalteter Vasen, die auch Balsamarien in Form eines Affen, eines Widders oder Hirsches umfassen und ihrer Art nach ägyptisierend sind. In einigen Fällen erscheint es möglich, eine griechische Vermittlung der ägyptischen Vorbilder auszuschließen, wie es auch auf ein paar seltene Anhänger in Form eines menschlichen Kopfes oder eines Acheloos zutrifft, welche direkt von orientalisierenden zyprischen Vorbildern abhängen.*

*Schlagwörter: Masken-Tassen, Besvasen, ägyptisierende Artefakte, etrusko-korinthische Keramik, Bucchero.*

\* Letta nell'Adunanza pubblica del 25 giugno 2015.  
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Human-mask mugs are a peculiar form of vases of the Late Orientalizing and Early Archaic Periods, spanning from the last decades of the 7<sup>th</sup> to the mid-6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. They are known from about 20 examples in bucchero and 30 more in painted pottery, the latter belonging to the last phase of the Etrusco-Corinthian pottery production.

The vessels under discussion are small mugs with globular body, flaring lip and foot, and a single vertical handle—except for a couple of bucchero examples, which have two handles—whose modest dimensions range from 5 to 12 cm in height.<sup>1</sup> A relief human face is modelled onto the front opposite the handle. It is characterized by bulging eyes, curvy ridged eyebrows forming a T with the joint straight nose, a small protruding mouth, and sometimes a small beard; when present, ears are highly stylized. At times, further decorations, such as graffiti are added to bucchero examples, and painted water-birds and geometric patterns are added to painted the versions.<sup>2</sup>

In our paper we demonstrate that the unusual plastic decoration was deduced from Egyptian models and, more precisely, specific plastic clay vessels decorated with the face of the god Bes<sup>3</sup>—the so-called Bes-vases— deriving from an earlier tradition of the New Kingdom and continuing well beyond the Late Period.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, as we will see, Etruscan pottery productions following Egyptian and, in some other cases, Cypriot or Levantine models were a special feature of the last phase of the Orientalizing and early decades of the Archaic Periods. These productions spread in Southern Etruria and Latium thanks to the initiative of a few workshops of Vulci, Caere and especially Veii.

In this framework, human-mask mugs fit well into the frequent practice of acquisition and appropriation of East Mediterranean models and prototypes by the Etruscans during the Orientalizing Period, which still continued in the early Archaic Period. Additionally, since they are direct imitations of the Egyptian model, received, as it seems, without mediation of the usual Corinthian and East-Greek channels, human-mask mugs and other related productions shed new light on the cultural network that spreads from the coasts of Egypt, Cyprus and the Levant to Italy and beyond, including, but not being limited to Greek trade vectors.

<sup>1</sup> In literature vessels of this type have been called from time to time “cups”, “(face-)pots”, “vessels” and even “olpai” or “skyphoi” (the two handle version). Since they are rather deep containers, usually having one handle, the term “mug” seems more appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> The group has mainly been studied by G. Colonna (1959-1960; 1961b), J. G. Szilágyi (1972; 1998, pp. 380-381, 590-593); W.R. Biers (1979); M. Martelli (1987, p. 29; 1988, pp. 22, 27), and others.

<sup>3</sup> See already BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2005, pp. 158-159 and 534-535, nn. 94-95; BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2006.

<sup>4</sup> As recent literature on this Egyptian pottery type, see CHARVÁT 1980; KUCHMAN-SABBAHY 1982; GUIDOTTI 1983; RICHTER 2002; ASTON, ASTON 2003; GYÖRI 2003; KAISER 2003; LECUYOT 2009; DEFERNEZ 2009 and 2010; RAFIEI-ALAVI 2014.

Incidentally, the Egyptian connection of human-mask mugs provides a clue for the understanding of a similar production of face-pots taking place from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE on the Roman context, as the latter possibly originated in the renewed Egyptian fashion of the late Republican Period.

F.B.-E. - D.F.M.

## 1. EGYPTIAN BES-VASES, THEIR DEVELOPMENT, DISTRIBUTION AND NON-EGYPTIAN IMITATIONS

### 1.1. *Forms and Production*

In Egypt, vases decorated with the face of the god Bes are well known pottery products. They first appear in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE during the reign of Amenhotep III, king of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, and became more frequent throughout the following Amarna Period.<sup>5</sup> These vessels are of large dimensions with up to 50 cm in height (fig. 1). Their shape is that of a jar with rounded bottom, high elongated slightly tapering body with a small distinct shoulder and a high, wide, everted neck.



Fig. 1. Egyptian vessel with Bes mask, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, probably from the Theban area (perhaps the palace of Amenhotep III at Malqata). Berlin, Egyptian Museum, inv. 22620

<sup>5</sup> ARNOLD, BOURRIAU 1993: "I wish to thank Caitlín Barrett for sharing with me some thoughts on Bes, as well as bibliographical references."

On the upper part of the body the face of the god Bes, facing defiantly forward with his tongue out, is shown in high relief and polychrome painting with lively colours, mostly white, blue, black and red. It is rendered in great detail with big wide-open eyes, impressively executed with white eyeballs and black cat-like irides, a large snub nose with distinguished nostrils and an open mouth showing the thick red tongue. Pointed animal ears, a bristling beard and two stunted arms bent under the chin as if they were framing the face, obviously the limbs of a dwarf, are also characteristic details of this grotesque figure. Bes is wearing a collar painted on the body of the vessel and a high crown of ostrich plumes adorning its neck. On other examples, polychromy is much reduced and details as the ears appear rounded, resembling those of a wild cat, while the tiny arms of a dwarf are also visible, sometimes continuing into paw-like hands (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Egyptian vessel with Bes mask, 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> dynasty. Munich, Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst, inv. ÄS 7145



Vases of this type were produced in the area around Thebes in Upper Egypt until the production ceased towards the end of the New Kingdom. After an interval of about four centuries, corresponding with the Third Intermediate Period in Egypt, of which no relevant finds are known, the vessel type reappears at the beginning of the Late Period during the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty at some time in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>6</sup>

The vases of the Late Period however are much smaller than their magnificent predecessors, reaching a height of only about 15 cm and many times even less. Their decoration is reduced to moulded, but hardly any more painted elements. Their shape is also different as it is either a much smaller jar without neck, but only a small rim on top (fig. 3), a bottle with offset foot, narrow neck and small rim (fig. 4), or a jug with piriform body, an offset foot and offset neck, the latter sometimes adorned with horizontal profile lines, and with a vertical handle joining rim and body (fig. 5). The face of the god is shown in a more simplified and stylized manner with the facial features being reduced to the arched mono-brow continuing down into the nose, which is still the snub nose with the two accentuated nostrils, small globular eyes, a small open mouth and two semicircle ears.



Fig. 3. Egyptian Bes vase, Late Period

<sup>6</sup> ASTON 1996, pp. 82 and 333, pl. 231.



Fig. 4. Egyptian Bes vase, Late Period



Fig. 5. Egyptian Bes vase, Late Period

Vases of this kind continued to be produced from the Late Period (26<sup>th</sup> dynasty) through the reign of the Persian (27<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> dynasties) as well as the last Egyptian kings (28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> dynasties) down at least until the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Some examples seem to date even from as late as the Roman period (see below). Their repertoire has proved to have changed over time as recent investigations have shown.

On the basis of a thorough study considering shape, decoration and clay of the vessels as well as the chronological evidence provided by the find context David A. Aston and Barbara G. Aston could discern six different types of Late Period Bes-vases.<sup>7</sup> It is noteworthy that their types I-IV, which are contemporary with the reign of the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty (664-525 BCE) and thus corresponding in time with the Etruscan productions, testify to a continuous formal degeneration (fig. 6).

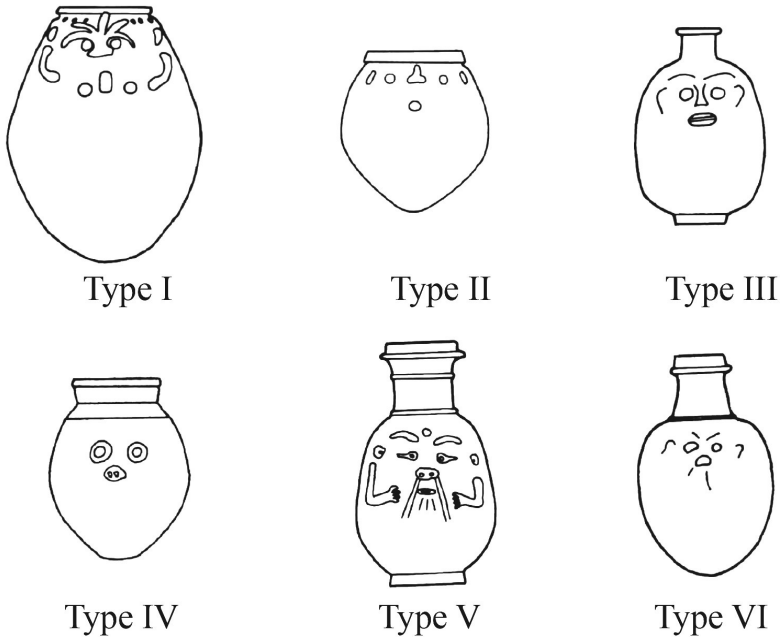


Fig. 6. Egyptian Bes vases, Types I-VI (ASTON, ASTON 2003)

Types I and II, belonging to the late 7<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, are jars with rounded bottom, without neck, but only a small wide rim. They are both characterized by much reduced and stylized elements of the grotesque face like eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth and ears as well as of the feather crown and the crippled arms; the difference between the two types is merely in size.

<sup>7</sup> ASTON, ASTON 2003.

Type III however, which was introduced in the course of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE in Upper Egypt, has the shape of an ovoid or piriform bottle with an offset foot, a narrow neck and rim; the decoration is limited to some cursory moulded facial features like eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth and ears and sometimes a few other details painted in brown.

Type IV, probably dating to the same period, looks even more stylized as far as the decoration is concerned, but seems to be connected with type II as it repeats the open shape of the vase apparent in this earlier type.

Types V and VI, belonging to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, basically derive from type III, but in addition have a vertical handle and show next to a more or less stylized relief decoration also some incised, punched or painted details.

Summing up, the Egyptian Bes-vases of the Late Period develop from open vessels with a wide mouth and without handle to jugs with a narrow neck and mouth and a single vertical handle just opposite the typical decoration. Their body, gradually diminishing in size, is more compact in the earlier examples and becomes more elongated in the later ones.

Bes-vases of the Late Period are attested by some hundred surviving examples from sites all over Egypt and certainly go back to several workshops or production centres. Many finds however come from places in and around Memphis where a major production centre must have been located.<sup>8</sup> The famous Old-Kingdom capital, situated at the top of the Nile delta, which had suffered much from the devastating Assyrian invasions and the large-scale destruction of cult places and temples caused by the invaders in the earlier 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE, recovered under the kings of the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty and soon became a flourishing centre in Lower Egypt again. At Saqqara, one of its necropoleis, Bes figured in monumental stucco reliefs at a Ptolemaic temple, situated at close distance from the pyramid of Teti.<sup>9</sup> There and in the nearby animal necropolis, terracotta statuettes representing erotic figures with an enormous phallus were found, including figures of the god interpreted as votive offerings.<sup>10</sup> During the Late Period, the area was in the focus of intense religious activity unfolding around the famous Serapeum and a destination frequently visited by pilgrims.<sup>11</sup> However no Bes-vases have come to light there. Bes, a most popular deity, was worshipped in houses and homes all

<sup>8</sup> ASTON, ASTON 2010.

<sup>9</sup> QUIBELL 1907, pp. 12-14 and 28-29.

<sup>10</sup> DERCHAIN 1981.

<sup>11</sup> YOYOTTE 1960, p. 49 ff.

over the country. Often he also appears in the so-called *mammisi*, small temples attached to large temple complexes of the Late, Ptolemaic and Roman Periods.<sup>12</sup> In the Bahariya oasis, two temples feature Bes prominently and may even have been dedicated to him.<sup>13</sup> It is perhaps in connection with those temples, that Bes-vases have been produced there. Examples of such vessels, which are basically following a 26th dynasty type, were deposited in local tombs still in Roman times.<sup>14</sup>

Bes, a bandy-legged dwarf with a squat stocky body and the tail of a lion dangling between his legs, with a lewd expression of his brazen and frontally forward looking face, was a decent deity, guardian of parturient women, newborn babies and children, married couples and prostitutes, musicians, dancers and carousers alike.<sup>15</sup> Often he appears accompanied by apes, lions or antelopes (figs. 7-8). Attendant of the goddess Hathor, Bes had manifold functions as a protector of people in different aspects of daily life and even an expected afterlife, everybody hoped for.<sup>16</sup>



Fig. 7. Egyptian faience amulet showing Bes nourishing the child Horus accompanied by squatting apes and a lion, 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> dynasty. Marseille, Musée d'archéologie, La Vieille Charité, inv. 98.5.2



Fig. 8. Egyptian faience amulet showing Bes nourishing the child Horus accompanied by squatting apes and a bound antelope, 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> dynasty. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. AeE 3090 (formerly Anastasi Collection)

<sup>12</sup> DAUMAS 1958; ARNOLD 1999, pp. 285-288.

<sup>13</sup> HAWASS 2000, pp. 169-173; LABRIQUE 2011.

<sup>14</sup> HAWASS 2000, pp. 79, 161.

<sup>15</sup> BULTÉ 2005.

<sup>16</sup> ROMANO 1989; BONNET 1971.

### 1.2. *Exports and Imitations*

Bes-vases of the Late Period have also come to light at several places outside of Egypt. Relevant finds have been recorded from Tell el-Herr in North Sinai,<sup>17</sup> Tell Jemmeh, Samaria, Tell el-Hesi, Tell Dor and Tell Mevorakh in Palestine,<sup>18</sup> Tell Kazel in Phoenicia,<sup>19</sup> Deve Hüyük in Syria<sup>20</sup> as well as from Babylon, Haft Tappéh near Susa and Persepolis in Persia.<sup>21</sup>

While some of the vessels seem to have been imported, others seem to have been locally imitated. Actually the finds from Babylon, Haft Tappéh and Persepolis, which are largely corresponding to type V of the Egyptian repertoire, a type that is especially attested from Lower Egypt and more precisely from sites like Saqqara or Abusir, have been considered local imitations. Their presence at places within the Persian Empire, at times when Persian kings ruled over Egypt, during the late 6<sup>th</sup>, the whole 5<sup>th</sup> and again in the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, may be easily explained by the fact, that these kings established new relations between the two regions, mostly affecting, of course, major centres like Memphis on the one hand, and Babylon or Persepolis on the other.

It is well known, that Memphis received many foreigners during the Persian period and benefitted from an intensified long-distance trade. Despite the wide distribution of the group in the Eastern Mediterranean and even further east within the territories of the Persian Empire, there is no clear evidence of Egyptian Bes-vases, so far, from the Aegean or the Western Mediterranean. A single vessel from Troy has been mentioned, but may perhaps erroneously have been attributed to the group.<sup>22</sup>

In Etruria, no Egyptian vessel of this type has as yet come to light. Nevertheless, the bucchero and painted pottery vessels of the group under discussion are certainly derived from them. They share the same decoration with the grotesque face of the god Bes on the belly, as is apparent in a bucchero example of the Cottier-Angeli Collection in Geneva (fig. 9).<sup>23</sup> The face of this Etruscan vase is characterized by the same arched mono-brow, which continues down to the nose, the nose itself being pointed, the globular protruding eyes

<sup>17</sup> DEFERNEZ 2010.

<sup>18</sup> BLAKELY, HORTON 1986; BENNETT, BLAKELY 1989; REISNER *ET AL.* 1924; STERN 1976a; STERN 1976b; STERN 1978; STERN 2001.

<sup>19</sup> GUBEL 1990.

<sup>20</sup> LEHMANN 1996; STERN 1976a; STERN 1976b; STERN 2001.

<sup>21</sup> RICHTER 2002; RAFIEI-ALAVI 2014.

<sup>22</sup> HÖLBL 1986. For this piece see also EASTON 2014.

<sup>23</sup> JUCKER 1991; CHAMAY 1993.

and the roundish protruding mouth with incised lines marking the strands of the beard. This time, no ears are indicated, but there are two recumbent winged lions in antithetical order arranged instead. The lions have wide open mouths and lolling tongues, just as Bes would have had. The forelegs and paws of the lions, rendered in low relief, resemble the stunted arms of the god. Although there is no direct comparison to this element in the Egyptian Bes vessels, lions were always closely connected with Bes in Egyptian iconography, yet the god himself, considered by some scholars to be of sub-Saharan African descent, may originally have been a lion rearing on his hind paws.<sup>24</sup>

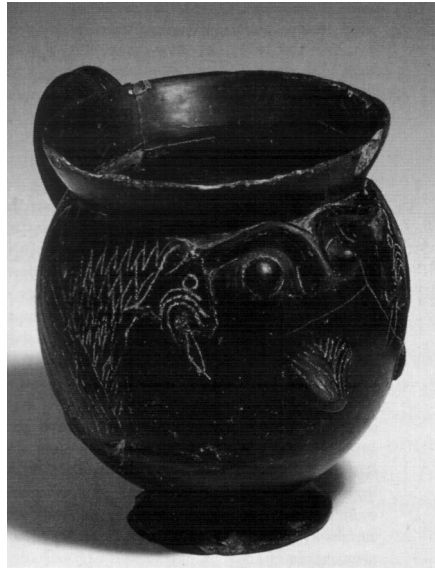


Fig. 9. Etruscan bucchero human-mask mug. Genova, Cottier Angeli collection, inv. 131 (no. 1)

Two Etruscan painted pottery examples of the same collection show the well-known facial features combined with semicircular ears (see below, nos. 29 and 32).<sup>25</sup> Here, the face is accompanied by water birds. Linear filling motifs like stripes and crosses over and around it seem to be reminiscent of the mane-like hair and shaggy beard of the god. The comparison makes clear, that the Etruscan potters shaped not just any human face, which by the way would hardly have been shown outward-looking, but the repulsive face of Bes, the god who was tremendously popular in Egypt and far from being unknown in Etruria.

<sup>24</sup> ROMANO 1989. See also WILSON 1975.

<sup>25</sup> JUCKER 1991; CHAMAY 1993; SZILÁGYI 1998.

The Etruscan vessels however were not just slavishly copied from the Egyptian models, but creatively altered and adapted to the Etruscan taste. This is especially apparent when looking at their shape. While it basically shares the bulbous body of types I, II and IV of the Egyptian repertoire, with a wide mouth, it prefers a foot instead of the rounded bottom, the latter destined to be put into the sand or on some kind of support. The neck or rim, like the foot, is markedly set off against the body and resembles that of types I, II and IV of the Egyptian repertoire. The vertical handle just opposite the face of Bes however, present in almost all of the Etruscan examples from the earliest pieces on, is absent from types I-IV of the Egyptian repertoire, but appears later in types V and VI, where it becomes a constant element.

The specific shape of the Etruscan vessels with their more dynamic well-defined contours is the work of potters who had long since learned much of their craft from the Greeks, and had themselves become real masters in the field. From a technical point of view the Etruscan pottery is of significantly higher quality than the Egyptian. What have been borrowed from the model are only roughly the shape and more precisely the peculiar decoration.

However, one kind of pottery, namely faience ware, was nowhere else of superior quality than in Egypt.<sup>26</sup> In the Late Period faience ware reached very high technical and artistic standards, also because the workshops, many of them at Memphis, were promoted by the Saite kings, who also rebuilt many of the devastated temples, like the most famous Temple of Ptah, and renewed the religious cults, thus restoring the former grandeur of the Old-Kingdom capital. Hence many examples of Egyptian faience ware like small vessels, figurines of gods, amulets or scarabs at that time were demanded even outside of Egypt and supplied by the flourishing workshops.

Products of Egyptian faience ware are known to have been imported into Etruria in many cases, among them first of all figurines of Pataikoi, manifestations of Ptah, as well as of Sekhmet and Nefertem, who complemented one another to the divine triad of Memphis.<sup>27</sup> Second in number are small figurines of Bes, at least 16 examples are attested, showing the dwarf-like god bandy-legged, sometimes with a lion's tail dangling between his legs, with bent arms and a face of enormous proportions in comparison to the tiny body, covered by a high crown of ostrich plumes (fig. 10).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> CAUBET, PIERRAT-BONNEFOIS 2005.

<sup>27</sup> HÖLBL 1979.

<sup>28</sup> HÖLBL 1979.





Fig. 10. Egyptian faience Bes figurine from Vetulonia, Poggio alla Guardia. Florence, Museo Archeologico, inv. 6.184

Egyptian figurines of Bes have been found at Southern and central Etruscan cities such as Veii, Vetulonia and Tarquinia, but also at places in the hinterland such as Capena, Narce and Civita Castellana. The Etruscans, as can be seen, were quite familiar with Bes. Furthermore, the range of Egyptian faience objects found in Etruria is only part of a wider spectrum actually produced at the time and can only be understood as the result of a deliberate choice on the part of the Etruscans.

Therefore, even if no Egyptian Bes vessel of the Late Period has been found on Etruscan soil as yet, the archaeological evidence at hand, fragmentary and incomplete as it may be, demonstrates beyond any doubt that the rampant popularity of Bes was reaching as far as Southern Etruria.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> For the popularity of Bes in other regions, see ABDI 1999; ABDI 2002; CULICAN 1976; WILSON 1975.

### 1.3. *Function of the Egyptian Bes-vases and Their Imitations*

The specific function of the Egyptian Bes-vases of the Late Period is difficult to determine. In fact, it cannot be ruled out, that these vessels served even multifunctional purposes. Most of the Egyptian examples of which the find context is known come from tombs.

At Asfunul-Matanah, in the area of Esna in Upper Egypt, one or two Bes-vases had been placed just next to the head of the deceased outside the sarcophagus.<sup>30</sup> At Saqqara, the necropolis of Memphis, Bes-vases quite often were part of the tomb equipment, but the custom of multiple depositions that was commonplace there, doesn't allow to ascribing them to single bodies. Shaft IX of the Tomb of Maya for instance yielded over one hundred bodies and with them eleven Bes-vases.<sup>31</sup>

The vessels in question certainly contained some liquid. Recently, Kevin R. Kaiser has studied their contents using scientific analyses.<sup>32</sup> Only part of the examples under investigation had contained a substance with lipids, probably milk, while others are likely to have contained water, wine or beer.

According to Egyptian beliefs, milk and water were considered to have strong regenerative powers and were therefore frequently used as offering to the dead, who hoped for rebirth and regeneration in the netherworld. Wine or beer didn't have any such connotation, but served rather as grave offering among other provisions. It may be relevant, however, that these alcoholic beverages have strong associations with Hathor, the goddess whom Bes frequently accompanies.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Egyptian burial customs and rituals connected with the disposal of the dead varied from one necropolis to the other, which is hardly surprising given the enormous geographical extension and regional diversity of the country, and finally, Bes-vases of the Late Period have occasionally also been found in settlements or military camps.

The heterogeneous picture of the find contexts may correspond with the manifold aspects of the god himself, who did not only provide fertility and prevent people from evil, but also guaranteed music and dance, life, joy and happiness. Outside of Egypt, the picture of find contexts is heterogeneous too, but, except for recurring settlement and military camp site finds from Palestine,<sup>34</sup> tomb contexts seem to prevail.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> BAKRY 1968.

<sup>31</sup> ASTON, ASTON 2010, pp. 68-72.

<sup>32</sup> KAISER 2003.

<sup>33</sup> BRUNNER 1954; BRYAN 2014; DEPAUW, SMITH 2004; JASNOW, SMITH 2010-2011; VON LIEVEN 2003.

<sup>34</sup> DEFERNEZ 2009; DEFERNEZ 2010; DEFERNEZ 2011.

<sup>35</sup> RICHTER 2002, pp. 291-292. Babylon: connected to sarcophagi.

In Etruria, the vessels echoing Egyptian Bes-vases have come to light mostly from tombs, but unfortunately many finds are deprived of their former context.

With no evidence of original Egyptian imports, how could the vessel type be transmitted to Etruria?

In actuality, imports of Egyptian Bes-vases on a larger scale can probably be ruled out, also because of the relatively poor quality of the Egyptian clay pottery. It seems however still possible that single pieces have been brought to Etruria to serve the local potters and painters as models.

Irrespective of this, Etruscans are likely to have travelled in Egypt and on their return brought back home objects or ideas of what they saw there. As has been described elsewhere, the range of Egyptian objects imported to Etruria is the result of a deliberate choice, which not only differs from the choices the Greeks or Phoenicians had made, but also presupposes an intimate knowledge of the Egyptian civilization on part of the Etruscans.<sup>36</sup> This means that the Egyptian objects or ideas could have reached Etruria directly, rather than through Greek or Phoenician traders.

As far as the Bes-vases are concerned, it is noteworthy that, at least for the time being, any similar imitations of such vases are lacking in the Greek or Phoenician pottery repertoires.<sup>37</sup> Thus the Etruscan imitations seem to serve needs and desires especially important to the Etruscans.

Under the kings of the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty Egypt experienced a period of political stability, considerably based upon the presence of Ionian and Carian troops, as well as of economic and cultural growth. Long-distance trade with the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean could finally be re-established, connections with the Western Mediterranean newly produced. With its capital Sais and the important time-honoured centre Memphis situated in the area or on the fringes of the Nile delta, it was natural to open the country towards the Mediterranean world. In fact, throughout large parts of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE Egypt attracted many foreigners from the Mediterranean who came either to visit, or even to stay in the country.<sup>38</sup>

The prospering markets and the restored temples with their flourishing workshops and estates had a fair share in attracting those foreigners. New products of the Egyptian arts and crafts were created, providing a perfect blend of tradition and innovation in terms of both, object design and working technique.<sup>39</sup> This is especially true for ceramics, and more precisely the Egyptian faience ware, fine examples of which were successfully traded both at home and abroad.

<sup>36</sup> BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2005; BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2006.

<sup>37</sup> See below, § 3, for other pottery types that might have been inspired by the Egyptian god Bes.

<sup>38</sup> VITTMANN 2003.

<sup>39</sup> DER MANUELIAN 1994; TIRADRITTI 2008.

The Etruscans, who at the same time, in the heyday of their seafaring activities, traded their most distinguished products like bronze utensils, bucchero pottery and Etrusco-Corinthian painted pottery to even far-away places in the Western Mediterranean, the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean, including Cyprus and the Levant, may have crossed the sea in stages and are most likely to have set anchor also before the coast of Egypt.

It is probably in this way, that they had the opportunity to visit sanctuaries, temples and the associated workshops, namely the most famous religious institutions of Memphis and Saqqara, to getting to know Bes and buying the small faience figurines of the god, perhaps along with the occasional example of an Egyptian Bes vase.

F.B.-E.

## 2. THE ETRUSCAN HUMAN-MASK MUGS

The Etruscan human-mask mugs were produced in Southern Etruria between the second quarter and the central decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, in the two different techniques of bucchero and Etrusco-Corinthian painted pottery.<sup>40</sup> As we have seen, their relationship with the Egyptian Bes-vases belongs to the category of local imitations depending from an exotic model.

In this regard, it is especially relevant that both productions in bucchero and painted pottery find the best comparanda for their decoration in type Aston&Aston III, produced in southern Egypt from the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE (fig. 6).<sup>41</sup> Shared elements are, for example, the pronounced features of ears, eyebrows, eyes and nose, as well as the prominent mouth with indication of the lips. The shapes of Etruscan vases is different from the Egyptian and matches rather with types Aston&Aston I-II, belonging to an earlier production from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>42</sup> However, notably the Etruscan form presents distinct foot and neck, two elements that appeared for the first time in the Egyptian repertory with type III. In actuality, the only major discrepancy is the presence of handles in the Etruscan cups.<sup>43</sup> As a matter of fact, these can be defined either as mugs having a vertical single- or double-torus loop handle on the back side, or, in two cases only, as sort of 'skyphoid' kantharoi with side handles.

<sup>40</sup> My deep gratitude for the support, help and advice goes to Erin Averett, Caitlín Barrett, Nancy de Grummond, Jean Gran-Aymerich, Robinson Peter Krämer, Maya Muratova, Maurizio Sannibale, Shirley Schwarz, Jacopo Tabolli.

<sup>41</sup> ASTON, ASTON 2003, pp. 99-100 and 107.

<sup>42</sup> ASTON, ASTON 2003, pp. 96-99 and 107.

<sup>43</sup> See above.

### 2.1. *Bucchero Human-Mask Mugs*

Very few examples come from archaeological contexts able to provide chronological data. It is however likely that the bucchero production is earlier than the corresponding painted production.<sup>44</sup> In particular, the relatively recent publication of a bucchero examples of the Cottier-Angeli collection in Geneva seems to fix the introduction of this type of vessel at the beginning of the last quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

1. Geneva, Cottier Angeli Collection, inv. 131.<sup>45</sup> H. cm 10.7. Reassembled from several fragments. Double-stick handle (fig. 9).

The features of the human face are rather stylized, having bow-shaped eyebrows, consisting in a thick ribbon joint at the top of the short vertical nose. The eyes are small circular buttons, the mouth is missing and a goatee completes the bottom of the face.

On both sides of the mug relief figures of winged crouching lions are depicted, whose foreheads blend with the end of the eyebrows and whose details are incised, such as manes, eyes and hanging tongues.

This mug belongs, therefore, to the rare production of incised relief bucceros, whose distribution area is limited to Caere. In particular, the features of the lions allow us to attribute the Cottier-Angeli mug to an advanced production of the workshop responsible for the superb exemplars of the olpai from the tumuli of San Paolo (now in Cerveteri)<sup>46</sup> and Campo della Fiera (now in Brussels).<sup>47</sup> As a matter of fact, the manes can be compared with the lion on the shoulder-frieze of the olpe of Villa Giulia, and the arched wrinkles encircling the roaring mouth are close to the treatment of the muzzle of two quadrupeds on the shoulder of the olpe of Brussels.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the discrepancy of the circular eyes derives from a simplification of the eyes visible on the Villa Giulia exemplar.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>44</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 65.

<sup>45</sup> JUCKER 1991, p. 200, n. 264; CHAMAY 1993, p. 233, n. 132; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 380, note 265 (with further bibliography); BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2006, p. 19, pl. 11.

<sup>46</sup> M.A. RIZZO, in *Veio Cerveteri Vulci* 2001, pp. 170-171, n. II.D.2.1; TORELLI, SGUBINI MORETTI 2008, p. 222, n. 71.14; PALTINERI, CANEVARI 2009, pp. 43-58.

<sup>47</sup> Musée du Cinquantenaire, inv. R132; L. CERCHIALI, in *Etruschi* 2014, pp. 138-139, n. 127; COSENTINO, MAGGIANI 2014. See already BONAMICI 1974, pp. 80-81, n. 109, and PALTINERI, CANEVARI 2009, pp. 48-49, 58-66.

<sup>48</sup> In my opinion, the coincidence of the relief technique and such rare stylistic features, along with the fact that the mug has been reconstructed from several fragments, casts off any doubts on the authenticity of the vessel.

<sup>49</sup> An opposite simplification is seen in the human figures on the olpe of Brussels that have no pupils.

A chronology in the decade 630-620 BCE or slightly later is therefore probable and the mug can be considered the starting point of the bucchero production of this workshop, which includes up to now 16 more known vessels.<sup>50</sup>

2. Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. 834. From Rome, votive deposit of the Lapis Niger.<sup>51</sup> H. cm 8.2; diam. cm 7.1. Two-faced and two handled, kantharos-like cup. Partially fragmentary: missing eyebrows (on one side) and handles (fig. 11, no. 2).

3. Mannheim, Reiss-Engelhorn Museen, inv. Cg 456. From Caere.<sup>52</sup> H. cm 11.2; diam. 15.7. Two-handled kantharos-like cup. On the back side is a graffito depicting a bird nosing down with spread wings (fig. 11, no. 3).

4. Tolfa, Museo Civico, inv. 62619. From Tolfa, Tomb IX of the necropolis of Ferrone.<sup>53</sup> H. cm 10,5; diam. cm 9,8 (fig. 11, no. 4).

5. Trevignano, Museo Civico. From Trevignano, Tomb Annesi-Piacentini<sup>54</sup> (fig. 11, no. 5).

6. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (formerly Museum für Kunst und Industrie). From the Castellani collection.<sup>55</sup> H. cm 11 ca.

7. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. C 709. From the Campana collection.<sup>56</sup>

8. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. C 707. From the Campana collection.<sup>57</sup> Covered by a lid with a plastic waterbird.

9. LAquila, Museo Nazionale, inv. 540.<sup>58</sup> H. cm 12.5. Partially fragmentary. The face has neither mouth, nor beard. Double-stick handle.

10. Frankfurter Sammlungen. From Caere.<sup>59</sup> The face has neither mouth, nor beard (fig. 11, no. 10).

11. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. C 708. From the Campana collection.<sup>60</sup> H. cm 10.5.

12. Cerveteri, Magazzino. H. cm 11.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>50</sup> The following entries relate to mugs except when explicitly mentioned (nos. 2 and 3).

<sup>51</sup> GJERSTAD 1960, p. 228, fig. 141, n. 7; COLONNA 1961a, p. 65, n. 7; A. DE SANTIS, in CRISTOFANI 1990, p. 55, n. 3.1.9.

<sup>52</sup> *Kunst* 1981, p. 13, n. 128; *Italien* 1996, p. 77, fig. 5; CVA Deutschland 75, Mannheim, Reiss-Engelhorn Museum 2, MÜNCHEN 2003, pl. 33.

<sup>53</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 65, n. 4, pls. 19c and 20b; RENDELI 1990, p. 97; RENDELI 1996, p. 72, FE9, 7.

<sup>54</sup> C. PISU, in *Trevignano* 2002, p. 30, fig. 17.

<sup>55</sup> EGGER 1903, p. 68, fig. 32; COLONNA 1961a, p. 65, n. 3.

<sup>56</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 65, n. 6; BIERS 1979, p. 52, fig. 8.

<sup>57</sup> EGGER 1903, p. 68, n. 2; SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 117, note 6.

<sup>58</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 65, n. 1; MICOZZI 1989, pp. 67-68, n. 85.

<sup>59</sup> SCHAAL 1923, p. 49, pl. 26f; COLONNA 1961a, p. 65, n. 2.

<sup>60</sup> EGGER 1903, p. 68, note 2; SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 117, note 6.

<sup>61</sup> SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 117, note 6.

13. Tarquinia, Museo Nazionale.<sup>62</sup>
14. Ostia, Magazzino, sequestro 5-1995.<sup>63</sup>
15. Siena, Bologna-Buonsignori Museum.<sup>64</sup>

16. New York, Columbia University, inv. PE 57.4. From the Olcott collection (gift 1905, said to be from Narce).<sup>65</sup> H. cm 10.9 (with handle 14.9); diam. cm. 8.4. Fragmentary. Flat ribbon-eyebrows and pointed nose; two circular buttons similar to the eyes are side by side in place of the mouth. The missing handle has been restored on the basis of a fragment depicting on both sides a female head, which probably does not belong to the vessel<sup>66</sup> (fig. 11, no. 16).

17. Marseille, Rue de la Cathédrale.<sup>67</sup> Fragment (ca. cm 6 × 7).

The exemplar no. 2 from the votive deposit of the Lapis Niger in Rome is the most similar to the Cottier-Angeli mug, for the form of the eyebrows and for the definite presence of a pointed beard: a feature that is not shared by the other exemplars of the series. Notably nos. 2 and 3 are also the only kantharos-like cups having two handles and, while no. 2 is the only two-faced vessel of the series, no. 3 is decorated with a graffito bird.

In actuality, notwithstanding their relative homogeneity in shape and features, these bucchero mugs present a remarkable variety that only partially can be considered the sign of an evolution of the production. In this regard, it is significant that nos. 3-8 show a faint pinch in correspondence of the chin that is obviously reminiscent of the goatee of the prototype. Additionally, all one-handled mugs from no. 4 on have large relief G-shaped ears framing the face on both sides.

It is significant, in my opinion, that the pointed beard is present in some exemplars that we can regard as earlier and tend to disappear in the following production (e.g., nos. 8-10 and 16),<sup>68</sup> when considering that this trait belonged to the original Bes-vases of the New Kingdom and is reduced to a painted feature or is no more visible in later Egyptian exemplars of the Late Period.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>62</sup> EGGER 1903, p. 68, note 2; COLONNA 1961a, p. 65, n. 5.

<sup>63</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 380, note 265.

<sup>64</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 380, note 265.

<sup>65</sup> EDLUND 1980, p. 35, n. 47, pl. 18.

<sup>66</sup> The fragment should be probably attributed to a kyathos similar to those found in Murlo, P. GAMBOGI, in STOPPONI 1985, pp. 82-84, nn. 77-101, esp. n. 82; TUCK, WALLACE 2015, p. 43, n. 20.

<sup>67</sup> GRAN-AYMERICH 2006, pp. 209-210, fig. 5; GRAN-AYMERICH 2015, pp. 213-214, fig. 7a. Further bucchero human-mask mugs mentioned in literature are: EGGER 1903, p. 68, note 2 (grey bucchero [?] 'Gesichtvase', H. cm 10.5, in the Museo Civico of Verona); MICOZZI 1989, p. 67 (exemplar in private collection, photo DAI, neg. n. 62340).

<sup>68</sup> Notably, the two circular buttons that characterize the mouth of no. 16 might be a trace of the earlier pinches of mouth and beard.

<sup>69</sup> GUIDOTTI 1983, pp. 48-54, type B2; ASTON, ASTON 2003, pp. 97-102, types II-IV.



2



3



4



5



10



16

Fig. 11. Etruscan bucchero human-mask cups: Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. 834 (no. 2); Mannheim, Reiss-Engelhorn Museen, inv. Cg 456 (no. 3); Tolfa, Museo Civico, inv. 62619 (no. 4); Trevignano, Museo Civico (no. 5); Trevignano, Museo Civico (no. 10); New York, Columbia University, inv. PE 57.4 (no. 16)



Unfortunately, most mugs of this series come from collections and have either little or no information on their finding contexts. The distribution arguable from these scattered data points to a workshop operating in the area of Caere (6 exx.)<sup>70</sup> and its hinterland (2 xx).<sup>71</sup> Also the provenance of the remaining exemplars from the surrounding major Etruscan communities would agree with such attribution.<sup>72</sup>

As regards chronology, judging from the few known finding contexts,<sup>73</sup> this production of bucchero human-mask mugs continued for some decades, presumably exceeding the end of the 7<sup>th</sup>, but arriving no later than the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The latest exemplars seem to be nos. 9 and 10, which have neither beard nor mouth and present round T-shaped eyebrows.<sup>74</sup>

In this period, a further development of the series takes place in Veii, where a fragmentary human-mask mug with different facial features has been found in the sanctuary of Portonaccio:

18. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP1046.<sup>75</sup> From Veii, sanctuary of Portonaccio: votive deposit at the altar. Fragment (cm 8.8 × 5.4) (fig. 12a).

The derivation of this mug from the group listed at nos. 1-17 is confirmed by the form of the vessel and by the T-shaped eyebrows joint to the nose. The eyes, however, are almond-shaped and have incised outline, and the puffy cheeks and pointed chin encircle a hollow area surrounding a short mouth with pressed lips. Summing up this human mask seems to have lost its stylization and gained some Dedalic features, whose best comparandum is found in Veii in a series of antefixes from the *oikos*-building of Piazza d'Armi, dating from the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>76</sup> (fig. 12b).

<sup>70</sup> Nos. 3, 7, 10, and possibly nos. 6 (Castellani collection) and 11-12 (Campana collection); see COLONNA 1961a, p. 66 and note 66.

<sup>71</sup> Nos. 4 (Tolfa), 5 (Trevignano).

<sup>72</sup> Nos. 2 (Rome), 13 (Tarquinia), 16 (Narce) and 17 (Marseille; see GRAN-AYMERICH 2015, pp. 213-214).

<sup>73</sup> The votive deposit of the Lapis Niger is the only context that seems to be not earlier than 575 BCE (A. DE SANTIS, in CRISTOFANI 1985, p. 55). It cannot be ruled out, however, that the human-mask was the earliest votive offering, having possibly been preserved in the sanctuary before offering it, on the grounds of its high symbolic value (note its two-faced feature that is alluding to Janus in a Roman context).

As regards no. 4, found in a funerary context in tomb 9 of the necropolis of Ferrone at Tolfa, it has been attributed to the second phase of the tomb, dating from the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. It is worth noting, however, that the earliest burial in this tomb dates back to the last quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and it is impossible to ascertain the pertinence of single funerary goods to specific burial; RENDELI 1996, pp. 79-81. Too late the chronology proposed for tomb 9 by BROCATO 2000, p. 148.

<sup>74</sup> On the contrary, MICOZZI 1989, p. 67, interpreted the stylization as a sign of earlier chronology.

<sup>75</sup> COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 170, n. 130.

<sup>76</sup> TORELLI 2008, pp. 216-217, nn. 69.3-4; WINTER 2009, pp. 245-247, n. 4.C.1.a.



Fig. 12. a. Etruscan bucchero fragmentary human-mask mug: Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP1046 (no. 18). b. Terracotta antefix from Piazza d'Armi, Veii

It seems most likely, therefore, to attribute this isolated vessel to a local workshop as an imitation of the Caeretan bucchero mugs, presumably in the framework of votive productions attached to the sanctuaries, such as those responsible for the architectural terracottas.

### 2.2. *Painted Human-Mask Mugs*

Not much later, in the period of the third generation of Etrusco-Corinthian painters, between 580 and 560 BCE, a further production of human-mask mugs in painted pottery began, having a clear dependence from the earlier bucchero models and no detectable connection with no. 18.

The earliest painted exemplars belong to the Rosoni Cycle and have been attributed to the manner of the Painter delle Code Annotate:<sup>77</sup>

19. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. 57317. From Bisenzio.<sup>78</sup> H. cm 9.4; diam. cm 8.7 (fig. 13, no. 19).

20. Cologne, H. Tollmann Collection. Unknown provenance.<sup>79</sup> H. cm 9.6 (fig. 13, no. 20).

20bis. Rome, Antiquarium Comunale, s.n. inv. From Rome, sacred area of S. Omobono.<sup>80</sup> Fragment.

<sup>77</sup> COLONNA 1961a, pp. 64-66; SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 379-380.

<sup>78</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 64, n. 18; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 379, n. 78.

<sup>79</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 379, n. 79, pl. 152c-d.

<sup>80</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 583, n. 105.

The globular form of these one-handle mugs repeats that of the usual bucchero models and the stylized face has T-shaped eyebrows, curving down to encircle button-shaped eyes,<sup>81</sup> and a short protruding mouth, but no trace of a pointed beard. Notably, there are no ears, but two rounded bumps that seem rather short horns,<sup>82</sup> which allow to attribute to this group the fragment no. 20bis too.<sup>83</sup> The painted decoration is better appreciated in no. 20 and consists of dotted circles on the eyes and short vertical strokes over the eyebrows. The bottom of the mug is painted black up to the level of the mouth. On both sides is depicted a waterbird, typical of the late Etrusco-Corinthian decoration, whose feathers evoke the manner of the Painter delle Code Annodate.<sup>84</sup>

The provenance from Bisenzio of no. 19 seems to confirm the connection of this production with the Vulcian market, as is known for the Rosoni Cycle. But it is worth mentioning that an identical manner in depicting waterbirds has been detected on a pyxis from the sanctuary of Portonaccio in Veii, which is included in a group possibly belonging to a local workshop.<sup>85</sup>

Some features of this production are shared by three mugs that have been attributed to the Poggio Buco Group:

21. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP988.<sup>86</sup> From Veii, sanctuary of Portonaccio. H. cm 6.8; diam. cm 5 (fig. 13, no. 21).

22. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP988d.<sup>87</sup> From Veii, sanctuary of Portonaccio. Fragment (cm 5.9 × 6).

23. Mainz, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, inv. O. 1560.<sup>88</sup> From southern Italy. H. cm 7.3; diam. 7.9 cm (fig. 13, no. 23).

Vertical painted strokes like those of n. 20 appear on both nos. 21 and 23—although in the latter case they are crossed by horizontal lines in a sort of chessboard motive.<sup>89</sup> The bump-horns are replaced by round-shaped bearlike ears. Eyes and mouth are similar in form and decoration, but the T-shaped eyebrows have a straighter aspect and the cheeks are decorated with either asterisks (no. 21), encircled by dots (no. 22), or crosses (no. 23).

<sup>81</sup> Not much different from those of the bucchero exemplars nos. 9-10.

<sup>82</sup> COLONNA 1961b, p. 25.

<sup>83</sup> See GJERSTAD 1960, p. 422, fig. 261, no. 68.

<sup>84</sup> See SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 380, fig. 62.

<sup>85</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 513-515, esp. n. 5, fig. 103. The painter shows an unusual narrative verve that is the mark of an imaginative and innovative master, especially in consideration of the small dimensions of the vessel.

<sup>86</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 70, n. 12; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 533, n. 32; COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 184, n. 374.

<sup>87</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 70, n. 13; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 533, n. 33; COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 184, n. 375.

<sup>88</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 70, n. 14 (F. BEHN, *Italische Allertümer*, Mainz 1920, p. 153, n. 1105).

<sup>89</sup> Remarkably, a chessboard motive characterizes the top of the pyxis from Veii mentioned in note 79 (SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 514, n. 5).



19



20



21



23



25



26

Fig. 13. Etrusco-Corinthian human-mask mugs: Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. 57317 (no. 19); Köln, H. Tollmann Collection (no. 20); Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP 988 (no. 21); Mainz, Römisch-germanisches Zentralmuseum, inv. O. 1560 (no. 23); Bundoora, A.D. Trendall Collection (no. 25); Bonn, Akademisches Kunstmuseum, inv. 1259 (no. 26)

The sides are depicted with either waterbirds (no. 21: hence the attribution to the Poggio Buco Group), or an unparalleled elaborate lyre-motif (no. 23).<sup>90</sup>

Also in this case, the stylistic attribution points to the workshops of Vulci, but the find spot from Veii of two out of three exemplars indicates the spread of the market at least to include the latter city.

A different style in depicting the human features is attested by three more mugs that have been attributed to the Maschera Umana Group, but should be gathered in a narrower group that I would describe as the ‘open-mouth face’, in consideration of a distinguishing feature of the relief:

24. Brussels, Musées Royaux, inv. A711. From the Campana Collection (acq. Rome, 1863).<sup>91</sup> H. cm 8,4; diam. cm 10,5.

25. Bundoora, A.D. Trendall Collection. Unknown provenance<sup>92</sup> (fig. 13, no. 25).

26. Bonn, Akademisches Kunstmuseum, inv. 1259. From Tarquinia.<sup>93</sup> H. cm 10 (fig. 13, no. 26).

In these vessels, relief-ears and eyebrows are joint and the lips are parted, possibly reinterpreting the original pair mouth-goatee of nos. 2-8 as an open mouth. In nos. 24-25 a black line marks all reliefs and encircles the face with an orderly, symmetrical effect, almost comparable to a monkey face. Thick circles outline also eyes and mouth (not visible in the poorly preserved no. 26).

Irregular painted spots with incised strokes (‘rosoni’) feature as filling elements, similar to the manner of the Painter delle Code Annodate. The waterbirds on the sides, however, belong to the later tradition of the Maschera Umana Group (nos. 24-25), in one case showing the rare feature of the spread-winged bird (no. 26).<sup>94</sup>

A different hand in the Maschera Umana Group is responsible for four mugs that are characterized by the feature of ‘3-shaped eyebrows’ and closed mouth:

<sup>90</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 590-591, note 27. A comparandum for the linear spiryal-decoration is found on a monkey-shaped flask from Capena (Leprignano): SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 112, fig. 1.

<sup>91</sup> A. GREIFENHAGEN, in *AA* 1936, c. 372; F. MAYENCE, in *BCH* 70, 1946, p. 372, fig. 1; CVA Belgique, fasc. 3, III, Cb, tav. 2, n. 3 a-b; COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 127, n. 2; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 583, n. 108.

<sup>92</sup> SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 117, figg. 7-9; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 583, n. 112, pl. 224c-d.

<sup>93</sup> A. GREIFENHAGEN, in *AA* 1936, c. 370, n. 21, fig. 24; COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 127, n. 1; BIERS 1979, p. 48, fig. 3; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 582, n. 96; M. SCARRONE, in BENTZ 2008, pp. 137-138, n. 190.

<sup>94</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 590. Notably, this feature appears on one more human-mask mug that I was unable to see and is unfortunately still unpublished; see below, no. 42.

27. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. IV.1917. From Tarquinia.<sup>95</sup> H. cm 9.8; diam. cm 10.

28. Viterbo, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 57318. From Bisenzio, Olmo Bello necropolis.<sup>96</sup> H. cm 9.2; diam. cm 9.8 (fig. 14, no. 28).

29. Geneva, Cottier-Angeli Collection, inv. 132. Unknown provenance.<sup>97</sup> H. cm 9.8 (fig. 14, no. 29).

30. Columbia, University of Missouri, inv. MO 76.34. Unknown provenance.<sup>98</sup> H. cm 9.5 (fig. 14, no. 30).

In these vessels, the ears are separated from the eyebrows and turned down as an upside-down U. Asterisks decorate the cheeks of nos. 27 and 29 (crosses in no. 30). The waterbirds are depicted in the style of the Maschera Umana Group.

This small group, presumably depending from the hand of a single potter, is taken as model for a series of similar mugs characterized by a cursory, careless production, attested by several exemplars:

31. Rome, Antiquario Comunale, inv. n. 17409. From Rome, sacred area of S. Omobono.<sup>99</sup> H. cm 10.5; diam. cm 10 (fig. 14, no. 31).

32. Geneva, Cottier-Angeli Collection. Unknown provenance.<sup>100</sup> H. cm 8.8.

33. Ullastret, Museo Monografico, inv. 1.099. From Ullastret.<sup>101</sup> H. cm 9.

34. Erlangen, Universitätssammlung, inv. I 663. Unknown provenance.<sup>102</sup> H. cm 10.1.

35. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. IV.3940. From the Castellani Collection (Caere?).<sup>103</sup> H. cm 8.5 (fig. 14, no. 35).

Notably, these vessels have no specific discrepancy from nos. 27-29 except for being shoddy imitations, presumably to be attributed either to a poorly talented apprentice, or to a cursory mass production.<sup>104</sup>

Filling elements are crosses and rare asterisks, at times both painted and incised, but it is worth mentioning some occasional spots with incised lines (on nos. 30, 34, 35), that evoke those seen on nos. 24-26.

<sup>95</sup> EGGER 1903, pp. 66-68, fig. 28; COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 127, n. 4; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 582, n. 97.

<sup>96</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 127, n. 3.

<sup>97</sup> JUCKER 1991, p. 200, n. 265; CHAMAY 1993, p. 233; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 583, n. 111; BUBENHEIMER-ERTHART 2006, p. 19, pl. 11.

<sup>98</sup> BIERS 1979; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 583, n. 109, pl. 224b.

<sup>99</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 125, A = *ibid.*, p. 128, n. 8; GJERSTAD 1960, p. 438, fig. 275, n. 22; P. VIRGILI, in CRISTOFANI 1990, p. 130; SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 582-583, n. 104 (with further bibl.); BRAITHWAITE 2007, p. 20, fig. B9, n. 2.

<sup>100</sup> JUCKER 1991, p. 200, n. 266; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 583, n. 110.

<sup>101</sup> *Étrusques* 1992, pp. 176 e 260, n. 303; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 583, n. 106, pl. 223d.

<sup>102</sup> CVA Deutschland 67, Erlangen 1, pl. 37, 1-3; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 583, n. 107, pl. 224a.

<sup>103</sup> Once in the Museum für Kunst und Industrie. EGGER 1903, p. 68, fig. 31; COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 128, n. 11; BIERS 1979, p. 48, fig. 2; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 582, n. 95.

<sup>104</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, pp. 131-133.



28



29



30



31



35



41

Fig. 14. Etrusco-Corinthian human-mask mugs: Viterbo, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 57318 (no. 28); Genf, Cottier-Angeli Collection, inv. 132 (no. 29); Columbia, University of Missouri, inv. MO 76.34 (no. 30); Rome, Antiquario Comunale, inv. n. 17409 (no. 31); Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. IV.3940 (no. 35); Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP988b (no. 41)

As regards fragmentary exemplars, in consideration of the visible features, I tentatively attribute to the last series the following fragments found in the sanctuary of Portonaccio in Veii:

36. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP 208. From Veii, sanctuary of Portonaccio.<sup>105</sup> Fragment (cm 4.2 × 3.4).

37. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP 119b. From Veii, sanctuary of Portonaccio.<sup>106</sup> Fragment (cm 10 × 8.5).

38. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP 172b. From Veii, sanctuary of Portonaccio.<sup>107</sup> Fragment (cm 6.2 × 3.8).

39. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP 206. From Veii, sanctuary of Portonaccio.<sup>108</sup> Fragment (cm 6.5 × 7).

40. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP 119. From Veii, sanctuary of Portonaccio.<sup>109</sup> Fragment (cm 7.5 × 6.2).

A peculiar decoration shows a fragmentary exemplar of Veii, whose face seems to derive from a contamination of the bucchero exemplar no. 18 with the later painted production. However, rather than evoking the Dedalic style, the face presents some East-Greek features:<sup>110</sup>

41. Rome, Museo di Villa Giulia, inv. VTP988b.<sup>111</sup> From Veii, sanctuary of Portonaccio. Fragment (cm 8.8 × 5.4) (fig. 14, no. 41).

Notably, the human-mask shows both mouth and pointed beard as in nos. 2-4 and 18, and the eyes are painted rather than in relief. Giovanni Colonna pointed out how the dotted circles that decorate the cheeks of this exemplar are a reminiscence of the painted eyes of the earlier series (nos. 19-35). It is therefore likely that this mug derives from that production, even though it is uncertain whether it belongs in the same workshop or is an imitation, influenced by the experience of sculptors of antefixes.<sup>112</sup> In any case, it is unlikely, in my opinion, that the chronology of no. 41 is substantially later than 550-540 BCE.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>105</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 127, n. 7; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 582, n. 102; COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 184, n. 377.

<sup>106</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 128, n. 9; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 582, n. 100; COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 184, n. 380 (note that nos. 381-382 are probably two more fragments of the same vase).

<sup>107</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 128, n. 10; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 582, n. 103; COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 184, n. 383.

<sup>108</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 127, n. 5; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 582, n. 101; COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 184, n. 378.

<sup>109</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 127, n. 6; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 582, n. 99; COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 184, n. 379.

<sup>110</sup> See a terracotta figurine from Naukratis mentioned below, note 149.

<sup>111</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 139-140; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 678, n. 8bis; COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 184, n. 376.

<sup>112</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 139.

<sup>113</sup> Notwithstanding COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 140.



Finally, three further known exemplars remain unattributed for lack of published pictures, pending direct observation:

42. Civita Castellana, Museo dell'Agro Falisco, inv. 5160. From Narce, tomb LXXVII of the necropolis South from Contrada Morgi.<sup>114</sup> H. cm 9.8.

43. Civita Castellana, Museo dell'Agro Falisco, inv. 5348.<sup>115</sup> From Narce, tomb LXXXI of the necropolis of Cavone di Monte Li Santi. H. cm 9.2.

44. Rome, Antiquarium Comunale, s.n. inv. From Rome, sacred area of S. Omobono.<sup>116</sup> Fragment.

### 2.3. *The Last Production*

After the central decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the production of the Maschera Umana Group quickly fades and disappears, along with the typical plastic forms that characterized its production. In the same years, however, a last attempt was made to rescue this type of vessel by updating it to the new figurative fashion, imbued with Ionic style.<sup>117</sup>

As a matter of fact, a late bucchero production is known from three exemplars, to which one more in painted pottery is added. From the most typical feature shared by these vessels, I propose to gather them under the name of 'Relief Mask Group':

45. Cerveteri, Soprintendenza Archeologia dell'Etruria Meridionale, inv. 45777. From Caere, necropolis of Banditaccia, tumulus VI, tomb 58.<sup>118</sup> Grey bucchero. H. cm 4.8. Double-stick handle (fig. 15, no. 45).

46. Reading, University Museum of Greek Archaeology, inv. 51.7.3.<sup>119</sup> Bucchero. H. cm 10.3 (fig. 15, no. 46).

47. Malibu, The J.Paul Getty Museum, inv. 83.AE.299.<sup>120</sup> Bucchero. H. cm 10.6; diam. cm 7.9 (fig. 15, no. 47).

48. Coll. Anglés D'Auriac. Provenance and current location unknown.<sup>121</sup> Fine ceramics with traces of black slip. H. cm 8.8; diam. cm 7.5 (fig. 15, no. 48).

<sup>114</sup> A. PASQUI, *MonAntLinc* IV, 1894, c. 525, n. 4; COLONNA 1961a, p. 73, n. 20 (attributed to the «Pissidi» Group); SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 678, n. 8 (unattributed); BIELLA 2014, p. 115.

<sup>115</sup> SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 117, note 6 (attributed to the «Macchie Bianche» Group); SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 522, n. 43 (attributed to followers of the Painter delle Code Annodate); BIELLA 2014, p. 115.

<sup>116</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 128, note 2; GJERSTAD 1960, p. 422, fig. 261, n. 68; P. VIRGILI, in CRISTOFANI 1990, p. 130.

<sup>117</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 699.

<sup>118</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 65, n. 8 (RICCI 1955, c. 466, n. 14, fig. 109).

<sup>119</sup> URE 1963, p. 62, fig. 78; SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 117, note 6.

<sup>120</sup> *GettyMusJ* 12, 1984, p. 249, n. 94; CVA USA 31, The J.Paul Getty Museum 6, p. 37, pl. 328.

<sup>121</sup> BOULOUMIÉ 1986, pp. 114-116, pl. 37b-c.



Fig. 15. Bucchero and painted human-mask mugs: Cerveteri, Soprintendenza Archeologica dell'Etruria Meridionale, inv. 45777 (no. 45); Reading, University Museum of Greek Archaeology, inv. 51.7.3 (no. 46); Malibu, The J.Paul Getty Museum, inv. 83.AE.299 (no. 47); Coll. Anglés D'Auriac (no. 48)

In these mugs, the human mask, protruding from the wall of the vase as a small low-relief face, presents an evolved aspect, including large almond-shaped eyes with rugged eyebrows, straight nose, mouth short and slightly smiling, and prominent chin.

All things considered, such features have a precedent in those of the East-Greek Acheloos-flasks of the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>122</sup> and can be substantially compared with a type of South-Etruscan antefixes dating from the central decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> See below, note 148.

<sup>123</sup> M. STRANDBERG OLOFSSON, in STOPPONI 1985, p. 57, nn. 27-29; WINTER 2009, pp. 247-250, n. 4.C.1.b.

These comparanda allow us to circumscribe a chronological framework corresponding with that of the only known archaeological context, pertaining to no. 45. As a matter of fact, the funerary goods of tomb 58 in tumulus VI of the Banditaccia necropolis in Caere date from the late 7<sup>th</sup> to the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>124</sup>

It is likely, therefore, that these evolved human-mask mugs are the late continuation of the earlier bucchero series (nos. 1-17), presumably going on until the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, in parallel to the painted production of the Rosoni Cycle that has been attributed to Veii. In this regard, the relevant workshop was probably operating in Caere, where the bucchero production originally belonged.

#### 2.4. *Plastic Vessels and Their Egyptian Models*

Human-mask mugs belong in the category of plastic vases, whose diffusion in both bucchero and painted pottery is especially relevant in the Late Orientalizing period and increases in the early and mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>125</sup> Scholars usually connect this fashion to East-Greek models, such as Rhodian Acheloos-aryballoi, monkey-shaped flasks, as well as vessels shaped as human legs and rams.<sup>126</sup> Corinthian influence has also been considered,<sup>127</sup> but a thorough evaluation of the relationships among all variants and different productions in the Mediterranean is still missing.<sup>128</sup>

It is undoubtable, however, that the Etruscan productions have a larger variety of forms and a broader diffusion in central Italy than their East-Greek counterparts.<sup>129</sup> A complete survey of Etruscan plastic vases of this period falls outside of the goal of this article.<sup>130</sup> In the following paragraph, however, I will highlight some crucial points that are relevant to the cultural framework of the human-mask mugs.

<sup>124</sup> MICOZZI 1989, p. 68; MICOZZI 1994, pp. 146-147.

<sup>125</sup> MARTELLI 1978, p. 181; GABRIELLI 2010, pp. 239-240.

<sup>126</sup> SZILÁGYI 1972, pp. 116-125; MARTELLI 1978, pp. 177-180 e 205-212; MARTELLI 1987, pp. 29 and 293; M. MARTELLI, in TORELLI, SGUBINI MORETTI 2008, p. 130. For some East-Greek exemplars found in the votive deposit of the sanctuary of Gravisca, see S. FORTUNELLI, in TORELLI, SGUBINI MORETTI 2008, pp. 251-253, nn. 194-208.

<sup>127</sup> PAYNE 1931, p. 176-180; see also SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 591, esp. note 34.

<sup>128</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 592 and note 36. For some relevant Bronze Age productions, see BOSSERT 1983, esp. p. 135..

<sup>129</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 591-592; see also MARTELLI 1978.

<sup>130</sup> A study of Etrusco-Corinthian plastic vases, with special regard to monkey-shaped flasks, will be the subject of a further research on the part of the writer of this contribution.

As a matter of fact, it is significant that monkey-shaped flasks in all their imaginative variants (fig. 16)<sup>131</sup> were introduced by and flourished in the production of the workshop of the Maschera Umana Group, as has been initially noted by Giovanni Colonna.<sup>132</sup> This close connection is further confirmed by the existence of at least three plastic flasks depicting a monkey holding in its lap a human-mask mug.<sup>133</sup>

The same workshop is also responsible for plastic vessels shaped as cervids and rams,<sup>134</sup> as well as combinations of different types, such as a monkey riding a cervid<sup>135</sup> and a two-headed hybrid made of a ram and a cervid joint by their back side.<sup>136</sup>

Such variety is unparalleled in Etruscan Archaic painted pottery and indicates a certain degree of freedom on the part of the craftsmen, presumably depending from their clientele. In order to justify the number of types and variants quickly introduced and spread in the Etruscan production, the influence of a plurality of Greek models has been hypothesized,<sup>137</sup> along with the taste of Etruscan craftsmen for diversifying imported forms.<sup>138</sup>

It is worth mentioning, however, that some Etruscan variants have no East-Greek or Corinthian precedent, such as monkey-shaped flasks holding a cub or a vessel, but find comparanda in Egyptian faience flasks from the New Kingdom and the Late Period<sup>139</sup>—that is to say earlier and roughly contemporary with the Etruscan production. In addition, Egypt is also the place of origin of the iconographies of crouching rams and antelopes, having tied legs, frequent in cosmetic equipment.<sup>140</sup> Therefore, as in the case of Bes-vases used

<sup>131</sup> Including monkeys with a hand on their mouths, holding a vessel in their laps, and holding their cub in their arms: SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 113; BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2005, pp. 158 and 532-533, nn. 92-93 (A.V. SIEBERT); BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2006, pp. 18-19.

<sup>132</sup> COLONNA 1961b, p. 25; see also SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 116-117, and SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 586-588.

<sup>133</sup> Salerno, coll. Fienga, inv. 651; Münster, inv. A6374; Villa Giulia, inv. VTP 415 (from the sanctuary of Portonaccio in Veii). COLONNA 1961b, p. 25; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 592; COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 188, n. 426.

<sup>134</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 590-591. Ram-flasks and statuettes are also known in bucchero, probably slightly earlier; see, for instance, COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 180, n. 345, from the sanctuary of Portonaccio in Veii. A group of piglet-flasks has also been hypothetically attributed to the Maschera Umana Group: MARTELLI 1987, p. 295, n. 96. A different workshop, probably sited in Vulci, is responsible for two flasks respectively shaped as a human leg and a hedgehog—repeating East-Greek models—found in a tomb of Bisenzio; MARTELLI 1978, p. 180, figs. 42-43.

<sup>135</sup> Erlangen, inv. I 630. SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 122; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 644 and note 104.

<sup>136</sup> Paris, Louvre, inv. CA 2197. SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 644 and note 105.

<sup>137</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 592.

<sup>138</sup> SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 114.

<sup>139</sup> BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2005, p. 158; BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2006, pp. 18-19; CAPRIOTTI VITTOZZI 2011, pp. 114 and 118-119, with further bibliography.

<sup>140</sup> See, for instance, London, British Museum 1888,0601.72 and 76 (GARDNER 1888, p. 87, pls. XVII.10 and XIX.8). See also HOULIHAN 1996, pp. 46-48, fig. 38; BULTÉ 2008, 9, pl. VI.

as models for Etruscan human-mask mugs, it is worth exploring the possibility that both East-Greek and Etruscan plastic vessels shared an earlier model in Egyptian productions.<sup>141</sup>

Notably, the frequentation of Greek tradesmen and travelers in Egypt is well attested in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, in Naukratis as well as Memphis and Saqqara.<sup>142</sup>

In this regard, a clue for the independence of Etruscan vases from Greek mediation might be provided by the impossibility of finding adequate East-Greek or Corinthian models for the whole Etruscan production. Additional evidence comes from the existence of Etruscan forms that depend undoubtedly from Egyptian and Near-Eastern models with no Greek mediation (such as the monkey-with-cub flasks<sup>143</sup>) and Greek forms repeating Egyptian models that have no counterpart in the Etruscan production.<sup>144</sup>

This phenomenon has been already observed for the Etrusco-Corinthian flat-bottomed *alabastra* of the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE, which derive from an Aegean-Levantine form;<sup>145</sup> for pilgrim flasks, whose precedent are the Egyptian new year's flasks that have been found also in Etruria;<sup>146</sup> and for the impasto basins of Phoenician-Cypriote tradition, dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, whose complex history involves cross-cultural influences from the Near-East and Greece.<sup>147</sup> The case of the Archaic painted basins with openwork handles is also illuminating, for their model originates from Cyprus and seems to have had no Greek mediation.<sup>148</sup>

Coming back to Etrusco-Corinthian plastic productions, some novelties come from a group of rare hanging containers shaped as human heads that have been compared with the human-mask mugs and attributed to the Maschera Umana Group.<sup>149</sup> Currently, four exemplars of this type are known, too different from one another to be gathered in an organic typology.

<sup>141</sup> BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2005, pp. 158-159; SANNIBALE 2014, pp. 22-23.

<sup>142</sup> See above, the contribution of F. Bubenheimer-Erhart; VILLING, SCHLOTZHAUER 2006, p. 8; VILLING 2013, p. 79. See also M. MARTELLI, in TORELLI, SGUBINI MORETTI 2008, p. 130.

<sup>143</sup> See, for instance, ARNOLD 1995, p. 58, n. 81. Remarkably, a figurine of a monkey possibly holding a cub is known in Cyprus; KARAGEORGHIS 2000, p. 159, n. 257.

<sup>144</sup> MARTELLI 1978, p. 178; see also *ibid.*, p. 179, for the Etruscan imitations of East-Greek plastic vessels.

<sup>145</sup> BELLELLI 2007, pp. 295-298.

<sup>146</sup> NERI 2008; MARAS 2011, pp. 187-189.

<sup>147</sup> BELLELLI, BOTTO 2002, pp. 303-306.

<sup>148</sup> BOTTO 2007, p. 77-78; MICHETTI 2010, pp. 135-138, with further bibliography.

<sup>149</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 65, note 58; COLONNA 1961b, p. 25; H.P. ISLER, in *LJMC* I.1, 1981, *s.zi Acheloos*, pp. 20-21, nn. 111 and 141; SZILÁGYI 1998, 593.



Fig. 16. Monkey-shaped flask with painted decoration. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. HIN 503d

An exemplar in Mainz, whose provenance is unknown, depicts a head of Acheloos with short horns (fig. 17a).<sup>150</sup> The best comparanda for it are the earliest painted mugs no. 19-20, but the face shares the feature of the 3-shaped eyebrows with mugs nos. 27-29, has a pointed beard as no. 41 and is covered with painted dots in the style of the monkey-shaped flasks.

A simplified version of the head of Acheloos is an exemplar from the sanctuary of Portonaccio in Veii that has no eyebrows, but bulgy eyes painted with a dotted circle as in the human-mask mugs (fig. 17b).<sup>151</sup> Unfortunately, I have not seen the exemplar from the Archaic votive deposit of Satricum, which is described in literature as an Acheloos.<sup>152</sup>

The last container of this type is preserved in the Glyptotek of Copenhagen, from unknown provenance, and has no horns, but bear-like ears and a large, protruding nose (fig. 17c).<sup>153</sup> Its facial features and the accessory decoration, including two waterbirds, match with those of the *Maschera Umana* Group and the mugs nos. 27-35.

<sup>150</sup> Mainz, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, inv. O.2076b: COLONNA 1961b, p. 25; H.P. ISLER, in *LIMCI*, 1981, s.v. *Acheloos*, p. 21, n. 141.

<sup>151</sup> Rome, Museum of Villa Giulia, inv. VTP696, from the sanctuary of Portonaccio in Veii: COLONNA *ET AL.* 2002, p. 187, n. 420.

<sup>152</sup> Rome, Museum of Villa Giulia, inv. 10457, from Satricum: listed in DELLA SETA 1918, p. 286; COLONNA 1961b, p. 25, note 1; *Leiden* 1985, p. 102, n. 131.

<sup>153</sup> Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. H 166b (HIN 503): MARTELLI 1987, p. 294, n. 94; SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 588, n. 200.

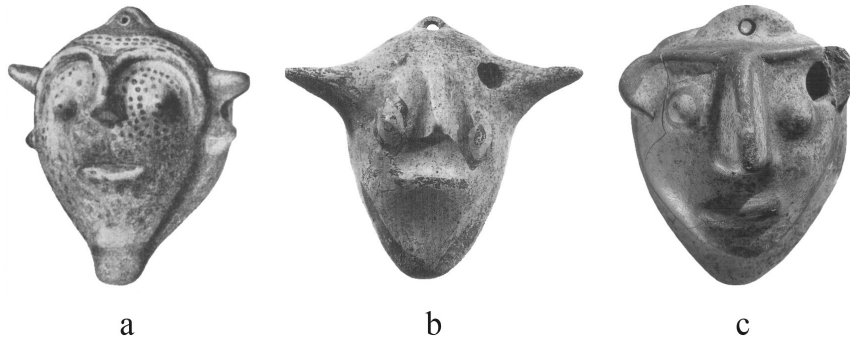


Fig. 17. Etrusco-Corinthian hanging head-containers: a. Mainz, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, inv. O.2076b; b. Rome, Museum of Villa Giulia, inv. VTP 696; c. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. H 166b (HIN 503)

The bull-like features of three of these containers have been compared with the later East-Greek Acheloos-flasks, dating from the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, which have been attributed to Rhodian production and were broadly exported in Italy.<sup>154</sup> In actuality, the significant discrepancies of the Etruscan containers point to the independence of the latter from the former.<sup>155</sup> As a matter of fact, the hanging containers of the *Maschera Umana* Group can hardly be defined as flasks as the Greek vases, when considering the pierced grip on the top of the head and the uncanny filling-and-pouring hole opened over the left eye, visible in the exemplars from Veii and in Copenhagen.<sup>156</sup> In general, these features seem suitable for a ritual object made for a specific use that is not easily understandable for us.<sup>157</sup>

Moreover, the head-containers were certainly destined to be hung as a sort of *oscilla* or masks. This feature allows us to find their model in a production of small terracotta human masks from Cyprus, starting from the 7<sup>th</sup> and continuing until

<sup>154</sup> COLONNA 1961b, 25. On the Acheloos-vases, see H.P. ISLER, in *LIMCI*, s.v. *Acheloos*, pp. 19-20, nn. 100-109; MARTELLI 1978, pp. 205-212, nn. 13, 75 e 107-109; *Acqua* 2008, p. 102 (E. STORACI) e p. 117 (A. D'AMICIS).

<sup>155</sup> Remarkably, a later terracotta figurine from Naukratis (London, British Museum, inv. GR 1888.6-1.658), dating from 550-525 BCE, shares with the Acheloos-flasks the conventional rendering of the beard and presents T-shaped ridged eyebrows very similar to the Etruscan human-mask mugs and hanging-containers (see above, especially no. 41); KERSCHNER 2006, pp. 112-113, fig. 11. Completely independent is also the contemporary Milesian workshop of face-pots, presumably also inspired to the Egyptian Bes-vases; SCHLOTZHAUER 2006.

<sup>156</sup> No opening or mouth is visible in the exemplar from Mainz; COLONNA 1961b, pl. VI.2.

<sup>157</sup> Additionally, it is worth mentioning that both the bull-like features of Acheloos and the hooked nose of the exemplar of Copenhagen seem to allude to hybrid, demonic creatures; see MARTELLI 1987, p. 294.

the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE (fig. 18).<sup>158</sup> Cypriote masks have flat, round faces—elongated in earlier versions—with pointed beards and bulgy eyes that match closely with the Etruscan head-containers.<sup>159</sup> In addition they often present pierced grips in order to be hung and in some cases have bull-like features,<sup>160</sup> comparable with the Greek Acheloos.<sup>161</sup> It is worth mentioning that these items have undoubted ritual connections, since they are usually found in sanctuaries,<sup>162</sup> but are also known in funerary contexts,<sup>163</sup> and originated Phoenician imitations—with different style—that were usually deposited in tombs.<sup>164</sup>

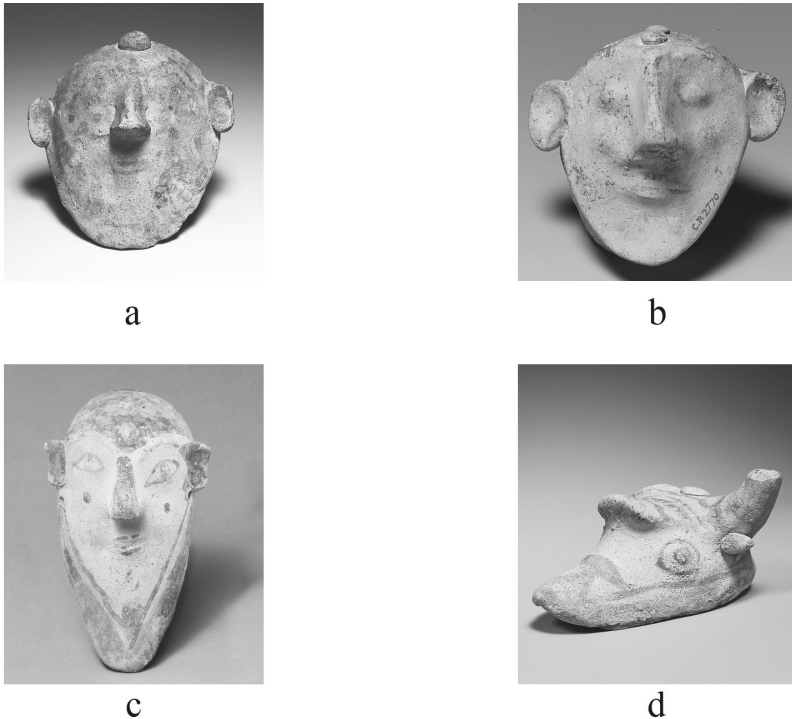


Fig. 18. Small terracotta human masks from Cyprus: Metropolitan Museum, New York, inv. Met 74.51.1480, 1699, 1700 and 1806

<sup>158</sup> KARAGEORGHIS 2000, pp. 146-147, nn. 221-226; AVERETT 2015.

<sup>159</sup> The best comparanda come from the sanctuary of Apollo Hylates at Kourion: Metropolitan Museum, New York, inv. Met 74.51.1480, 1699-1700, dating from the Cypro-Archaic II Period (600-480 BCE, from the Cesnola collection); AVERETT 2015, p. 35, cat. n. 84.

<sup>160</sup> Metropolitan Museum, inv. Met 74.51.1806-1807 (600-480 BCE, from the Cesnola collection).

<sup>161</sup> KARAGEORGHIS 2000, p. 147, n. 224.

<sup>162</sup> AVERETT 2015, pp. 17-19.

<sup>163</sup> AVERETT 2015, pp. 13-14, about the frequency in tombs of Amathus.

<sup>164</sup> *Assyria* 2015, pp. 209-210, nn. 95-97 (E. FONTAN, A.-E. DUNN-VATURI); p. 214, nn. 100-101 (Y. RAKIC); p. 221, n. 109 (M.D. LÓPEZ DE LA ORDEN).



No comparanda for this type of object are available in Greek craftsmanship, except perhaps for the iconography of the earliest examples of East-Greek Acheloos-vases, in faience and in the form of aryballoi,<sup>165</sup> one exemplar of which is known in Etruria in a funerary context from the necropolis of Monterozzi in Tarquinia (tomb LII).<sup>166</sup> It is clear, however, that the stylistic features of these vessels are quite different from the Etruscan head-containers, even though sharing reference to common models.

In this case, therefore, the direct derivation of an Etruscan production from East-Mediterranean models with no Greek mediation is ascertained and points to a different channel in the widespread network of Mediterranean inter-cultural contacts.

In this regard, it is likely that East-Greek and Etruscan workshops gleaned innovations from common sources including Cypriote, Anatolian and Near-Eastern trade networks and often drawing ultimately from the Egyptian lore.<sup>167</sup> Therefore, even though in many cases East-Greek influence is evident in Etruscan productions—presumably due to direct contact with Greek trade routes<sup>168</sup>—other occurrences provide evidence for different forms of contact: either involving the use of different carriers,<sup>169</sup> or the migration of East-Mediterranean craftsmen and travelers to Italy,<sup>170</sup> or the mobility of Etruscan people overseas along trade-routes.<sup>171</sup> It is not unlikely, however, that in the Late Orientalizing Period all these phenomena were at work at one time.

<sup>165</sup> New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 17.194.

<sup>166</sup> CULTRERA 1930, pp. 170-171, figs. 49-50, who wrongly attributes the vessel to Egyptian production. Ears and horns are missing, but can be detected by their traces.

<sup>167</sup> SANNIBALE 2007, pp. 126-127; SANNIBALE 2014, pp. 22-30. Notably, in the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century, the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis reigned over Cyprus too.

<sup>168</sup> MARTELLI 1978, p. 179-180; MARTELLI 1987, pp. 29 and 293-294; M. MARTELLI, in TORELLI, SGUBINI MORETTI 2008, p. 130; see also FRANCOCCI 2011, p. 49.

<sup>169</sup> BELLELLI 2007, pp. 297-298 (possible Western Greek mediation); MICHETTI 2010, pp. 137-138 (inclusion of Sardinia in the trade network); DE SALVIA 2011, pp. 38-41 (interest of the Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Cypriotes in the *Aegyptiaca*); VILLING 2013, p. 79 (Naukratis as a multi-ethnic trade center, involving Greeks, Phoenicians and Cypriotes); BOUROGIANNIS 2013, pp. 169-173 (presence of Phoenician craftsmen and tradesmen in the Dodecanese); M. SANNIBALE, in *Assyria* 2015, p. 314 (Campania as cultural melting pot of craftsmanship).

<sup>170</sup> COLONNA, VON HASE 1986, pp. 52-53; M.A. RIZZO, in TORELLI, SGUBINI MORETTI 2008, p. 80; SANNIBALE 2008, pp. 107-108; M. SANNIBALE, in *Assyria* 2015, pp. 313-314. It is worth mentioning here a Phoenician inscription incised before firing on the lid of a locally produced impasto olla from a tomb of Tarquinia, which reads *zḥ* or *zdh ykp* (CIE 10160; see also BAGNASCO GIANNI 1996, pp. 174-176, n. 160; BAGNASCO GIANNI 2010, p. 120, who interprets it as a nonsense inscription with 'Phoenicianizing' letters). More on this subject in a further contribution.

<sup>171</sup> BUBENHEIMER-ERHART 2006, pp. 20-21; see also VILLING 2013, p. 84.

Notably, such human mobility has been hypothesized in the Aegean area too, in order to explain some long distance contacts that brought ancient Egyptian iconographies in the Greek art and craftsmanship of the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>172</sup> In this perspective, it is worth mentioning that in the second quarter of the century the iconography of Bes originated in Greece, especially in Athens, the iconography of Silens (and later Satyrs),<sup>173</sup> which was extremely successful in Greek art and soon gave rise to a production of head vases,<sup>174</sup> conceptually similar to the Etruscan human-mask mugs.<sup>175</sup>

### 2.5. *A Workshop in Veii*

It is remarkable that all painters involved in the production of painted human-mask mugs belong to the Rosoni Cycle and to the connected Maschera Umana Group.<sup>176</sup> The Vulcian roots of the Cycle, evident in its initiator and eponym, the Rosoni Painter, have been perfectly outlined by Giovanni Colonna more than 50 years ago. At that time, the scholar invited to use caution in evaluating the provenance data of the late Etrusco-Corinthian pottery, which is broadly found in Veii and Latium,<sup>177</sup> and pointed at the prominence of Vulci in the political history and the trade networks of the Archaic period.<sup>178</sup>

More recently, once again Colonna has been responsible for identifying in Veii the activity of a workshop of the Cycle, depending from the painter (and potter?) Velthur Ancinies, who was a disciple of the Rosoni Painter and signed one of his painted vessels, a *phiale*, in the typical writing system of Veii.<sup>179</sup> Around 560 BCE, Velthur Ancinies moved from Vulci to Veii, thus distancing himself both physically and stylistically from his master.<sup>180</sup>

In actuality, the possibility that a workshop of late Etrusco-Corinthian pottery was operating in Veii had been already suggested by J. Szilágyi.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>172</sup> CAPRIOTTI VITTOZZI 2011, pp. 111-112; DE SALVIA 2011, pp. 40-41.

<sup>173</sup> BARRA BAGNASCO 1992; CAPRIOTTI VITTOZZI 2011, pp. 119-121; SANNIBALE 2007, p. 127, with further bibliography.

<sup>174</sup> The earliest production of face-kantharoi with Silenic features in the Aegean goes back to a workshop of Miletus, operating in the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BCE; SCHLOTZHAUER 2006.

<sup>175</sup> See already BEAZLEY 1929, pp. 40-41, who suggested that later Ionic/Attic face-kantharoi were purposefully produced for the Etruscan market, as an advanced version of the bucchero human-mask kantharoi and mugs. See also BRAITHWAITE 2007, pp. 8-10 and 21.

<sup>176</sup> See the graphic in COLONNA 1961a, p. 75.

<sup>177</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, pp. 140-141.

<sup>178</sup> COLONNA 1961a, pp. 80-83.

<sup>179</sup> COLONNA 2006, pp. 165-172; MICETTI 2010, pp. 139-140.

<sup>180</sup> COLONNA 2006, p. 172.

<sup>181</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 513-515.

As a confirmation, a productive area has been recently discovered, equipped with pottery kilns dating from the late 7<sup>th</sup> to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE and presenting misfired wasters of bucchero and Etrusco-Corinthian vessels.<sup>182</sup> Notably, this has been indicated as the possible workshop where Velthur Ancinies worked.<sup>183</sup>

Such shift from Vulci to Veii of a branch of the late Etrusco-Corinthian production has further important consequences in relation to the painted human-mask mugs.

As a matter of fact, the distribution data of the painted human-mask mugs—calculated on the grounds of known provenances—demonstrates that Veii and the surrounding communities are the best candidate for their production area: Veii (8),<sup>184</sup> Rome (3),<sup>185</sup> Narce (2),<sup>186</sup> Caere (2),<sup>187</sup> Tarquinia (2),<sup>188</sup> Bisenzio (2),<sup>189</sup> Ullastret (1).<sup>190</sup> It is not surprising that this distribution by and large tallies with that of the monkey-shaped flasks<sup>191</sup> and the non-plastic vases of the Maschera Umana Group (including the presence of findspots overseas).<sup>192</sup>

It is worth, therefore, investigating if there is any possible link between the activity of Velthur Ancinies in Veii and the slightly later workshop of the Maschera Umana Group.

In addition to the wide use of crowns of dots as filling elements and the peculiar rendering of birds and lions, distinguishing stylistic features of V.A. are a cross shaped filling motive encircled in dots; the angular, hooked feathers for waterbirds; and the original interpretation of a lion's mane and a helmet-crest as a thick series of braids (fig. 19).<sup>193</sup>

<sup>182</sup> MICHETTI 2010, pp. 139-140, esp. note 46, with further bibliography; B. BELELLI MARCHESINI, in BARTOLONI *ET AL.* 2013, pp. 145-146.

<sup>183</sup> B. BELELLI MARCHESINI, in BARTOLONI 2009, p. 123. For future research, archaeometrical analyses of the wasters from Piano di Comunità, as well as of vases attributed to Veian production are highly recommendable, in view of the possibility of identifying physico-chemical markers in the clay-body.

<sup>184</sup> Nos. 21-22, 36-41.

<sup>185</sup> Nos. 31, 44-45.

<sup>186</sup> Nos. 42-43.

<sup>187</sup> Nos. 24, 35. One more cup possibly from Caere is mentioned by SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 583, n. 113, as present on the Italian market in 1988.

<sup>188</sup> Nos. 26-27.

<sup>189</sup> Nos. 19, 28.

<sup>190</sup> No. 33.

<sup>191</sup> SZILÁGYI 1972, pp. 119-120.

<sup>192</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 596 and 693-695.

<sup>193</sup> COLONNA 2006, pp. 168-172.

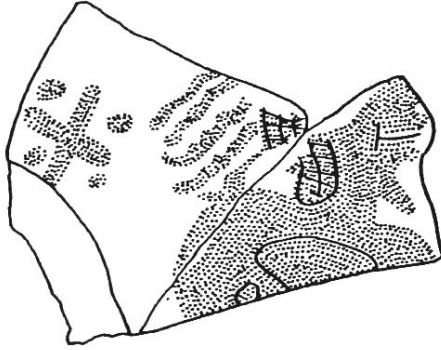


Fig. 19. Fragment of a closed vase (alabastron? flask?) attributed to Velthur Ancinies

Notably, the cross shaped filling element is shared by V.A. and the Maschera Umana Group.<sup>194</sup> The introduction of this sign can be traced back to the asterisks that decorate the cheeks of the human-mask mugs attributed to the Poggio Buco Group (nos. 21-22), which tended to become a simple cross already in no. 23.<sup>195</sup> Asterisks of this type, with either five or six strokes are present on a cervid-flask in Toronto<sup>196</sup> and on mugs nos. 29 and 32. Dots encircling asterisks and crosses appear from time to time and are rather a sign of better care on the part of the painter than a stylistic feature.<sup>197</sup>

As regards the manner of depicting waterbirds of V.A., it is worth noting that it is the closest precedent in the Rosoni Cycle to the simple incised lines that characterize the feathers in the Maschera Umana Group.<sup>198</sup>

Finally, the rare motif of braids—which harks back to the much earlier manner of the Painter of Civitavecchia<sup>199</sup>—finds its only comparandum in the unique figure of a warrior depicted on the back of a monkey-shaped flask of the Maschera Umana Group (fig. 16).<sup>200</sup>

<sup>194</sup> COLONNA 2006, p. 171.

<sup>195</sup> The connection of this motif with similar stamps on Sabine impasto amphoras (COLONNA 2006, p. 171, note 33, with further bibl.) is therefore incidental, unless we consider the latter as an imitation of the former.

<sup>196</sup> Private collection: SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 123.

<sup>197</sup> COLONNA 2006, p. 171.

<sup>198</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 589.

<sup>199</sup> MARTELLI 1987, p. 268. n. 45; see also SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 590, note 25, on a pithos of the Castellani collection (with further bibl.).

<sup>200</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 590, pl. CCXXVI, a. It is even possible that the fragment attributed to Velthur Ancinies belongs to a monkey-shaped flask with a similar decoration (COLONNA 2006, p. 171, fig. 6a: described hypothetically as an alabastron).

On the ground of these comparisons, it is most probable that at least some painters of the Maschera Umana Group were followers of Velthur Ancinies, who worked side by side with colleagues coming from the experience of the Cycles of Codros,<sup>201</sup> of the Galli Affrontati<sup>202</sup> and the Vulcian workshops of the Rosoni Cycle (Painter delle Code Annodate).<sup>203</sup>

All considered, the location of this stylistic melting pot cannot be but in Veii.<sup>204</sup> In the past, this hypothesis had been ruled out in favor of Caere as place of production,<sup>205</sup> on the ground of the alleged improbability that Veii exported its pottery in an extended trade network, including markets overseas.<sup>206</sup> In actuality, recent achievements of research have proved the projection of Veii on the sea<sup>207</sup> and the participation of the city in a broad inter-cultural network<sup>208</sup> that is the ideal framework for the widespread distribution of the Maschera Umana Group in the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

In this regard, the different provenance of human-mask mugs and plastic vessels—from votive deposits in Veii and Latium and from tombs in Southern Etruria—is a cultural aspect, depending on different funerary uses and display of status-symbols.<sup>209</sup> It is not by chance that the introduction of new (plastic) shapes in the production coincides on the one hand with the movement of painters (and potters?) from Vulci to Veii, and, on the other hand, with the prevalent votive destination of the vessels.

The crisis of the elite market of the earlier generations of Etrusco-Corinthian productions<sup>210</sup> fostered the last craftsmen of this production to spread their trade network<sup>211</sup> and to change their target. In this perspective, both the movement Southwards—to Veii for Velthur Ancinies and the Maschera Umana

<sup>201</sup> SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 596.

<sup>202</sup> In consideration of a bilingual dinos in Paris: SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 125, fig. 12.

<sup>203</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 75; see above, the comment to nos. 24-26.

<sup>204</sup> Incidentally, the hypothesis of local workshops attracting painters and, possibly, potters of diverse education sheds light on the circulation of models and cartoons, as well as stylistic features. The attractive power of a workshop depended on the availability of an established facilities including laboratories and kilns, the existence of a guaranteed clientele and the potential opening to broad markets. In my opinion, this hypothesis is historically better defensible than the hypothesis of 'travelling workshops' (SÖDERLIND 2002, pp. 314-326, on votive terracottas; see also MARAS 2014, p. 468, note 62) or of several workshops in different locations producing vessels of the same Group (SZILÁGYI 1998, p. 596).

<sup>205</sup> SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 120; COLONNA 1985, p. 14; MARTELLI 1987, p. 294; MICOZZI 1989, p. 67.

<sup>206</sup> COLONNA 1959-1960, p. 140; SZILÁGYI 1972, p. 120.

<sup>207</sup> ARIZZA *ET AL.* 2013, pp. 114-119.

<sup>208</sup> BELLELLI 2007, p. 303; MICHETTI 2010, pp. 137-138; BARTOLONI *ET AL.* 2013, p. 136.

<sup>209</sup> MICHETTI 2010, p. 141.

<sup>210</sup> COLONNA 1961a, pp. 82-84; MARTELLI 1987, p. 29; SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 699-700.

<sup>211</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 79.

Group, to Caere for the Galli Affrontati Cycle<sup>212</sup>—and the introduction of ritual plastic vases of East Mediterranean inspiration find their *raison d'être*.

D.F.M.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion of this survey, we would like to stress the relevance of the agency of the Etruscans in importing not only prestigious and symbolic objects from Egypt and the Near East—a typical but not exclusive phenomenon of the Orientalizing Period—but also of the ritual and religious customs of which these objects are the material evidence.

Already in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the famous faience vessel and amulet-necklace found in the Tomb of Bokchoris in Tarquinia provide evidence for the familiarity of the Etruscans with the original religious meaning of the Egyptian figures represented.<sup>213</sup> Additionally, the above mentioned head-containers harking back to Cypriote models and the human-mask mugs alluding to the Egyptian Bes-vases demonstrate the adoption of exotic symbols and rituals in a later moment of the Orientalizing Period. Such adoption corresponds in time with a change in overseas trade carriers, endorsing Ionian and East-Greek contacts, rather than Corinthian as in the earlier decades.

Significantly, these human-mask vases belong to a new fashion of the Etrusco-Corinthian pottery production—with some anticipations in bucchero—that involves the introduction of several plastic vessel types which were all borrowed from Egyptian models, such as monkey-flasks and vessels in the shape of crouching quadrupeds. Amongst others, plastic vessel types like these spread independently in contemporary Greece too, starting from Rhodes, the Ionian area and Corinth, with the important consequence of the adoption of the iconography of the Egyptian Bes for Greek Silens and Satyrs.<sup>214</sup>

As we have seen, the renewed trade and cultural network starting from international markets or much frequented centres—such as Naukratis and Memphis—involved the participation of Cypriotes and Phoenicians as well, thus giving evidence for an international opening of the Mediterranean cultures to the novelties coming from Egypt at the time of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, from the second quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> to the third quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>212</sup> SZILÁGYI 1972, pp. 125-126; SZILÁGYI 1998, pp. 596-610.

<sup>213</sup> BUBENHEIMER-ÉRHART 2005, pp. 156-158.

<sup>214</sup> SCHMIDHUBER 2010.

<sup>215</sup> Incidentally, this worth mentioning that during the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty the Pharaoh Amasis II ruled over Cyprus too.

In this regard, the widespread relevance of this phenomenon suggests to cross the boundaries of ‘ethnic’ archaeologies and chronological phases, in order to acknowledge the existence of a short-lived, but significant ‘Egyptianizing’ phase across the Late Orientalizing and Early Archaic Periods. Southern Etruria participates directly in this cultural phenomenon, with independent features that cannot always be attributed to Greek mediation.

In Etruria, this phenomenon ended around 540 BCE in correspondence with the crisis of the Phocaean migration to the West that brought about the battle of the Sardinian Sea.<sup>216</sup> After this crucial turning point, another transformation of Greek trade in the West took place, this time to the advantage of Attic pottery, which achieved the uncontested supremacy of imports and imitations in Etruria from then on.

Human-mask vases—also called face-pots or head-vases—were common in Attic productions and local Italian imitations too,<sup>217</sup> with preference for plastic depictions of Silens (also originally deriving from the iconography of Bes), as well as maidens/Menads, negro-heads and, in Etruria, rare demon figures, presumably referring to the underworld.<sup>218</sup>

The debt of such later productions towards the Egyptian Bes-vases, if any, is too weak and far in time to acknowledge any direct or indirect connection.

In this regard, perhaps it is not by chance that a new fashion of human-mask vases corresponded later to a moment of renewed cultural and religious influence of Egypt in Italy and the West. As a matter of fact, it is obvious that thin-walled face-pots produced in Italy at least from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE onwards have a close resemblance in shape, technique and style to the much earlier Etruscan human-mask mugs.<sup>219</sup>

These peculiar vessels started a long lasting tradition continuing in the first centuries of the Current Era and were widespread throughout Roman Europe, with special regard to military sites on the German *limes* and in Britain (fig. 20).<sup>220</sup>

<sup>216</sup> Sources and discussion in *MAXH* 2000, esp. pp. 47-56 (G. COLONNA).

<sup>217</sup> BEAZLEY 1929. See above, notes 137-138.

<sup>218</sup> See, for instance, BEAZLEY 1956, p. 614; BAGLIONE 2000, pp. 347-348, 367-368; BAGLIONE 2004, p. 96; BRAITHWAITE 2007, pp. 8-10 and 23-25.

<sup>219</sup> COLONNA 1961a, p. 66. On Roman face-pots in Italy, see recently SCHINDLER KAUELKA *ET AL.* 2000; BUTTI RONCHETTI, MOSETTI 2006; BENEDETTI 2007; BRAITHWAITE 2007, pp. 39-69; ROBINO 2007, pp. 159-160.

<sup>220</sup> BRAITHWAITE 2007, pp. 71-314 and pp. 325-350 on the military connection.



Fig. 20. Roman face-pot from tomb 28 of the necropolis of Minusio, Codra (Canton Ticino). First half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE

It is suggestive to point out the possible dependence once again from the Egyptian Bes-vases, whose production still continued until the Roman conquest.<sup>221</sup> This might be a consequence of the spread of Egyptian cults, such as those of Isis and Serapis, especially practised from the Augustan Period on.

This subject, however, deserves more attention than we can pay in some closing remarks. By now, we will be content to have stressed once more the debt of Classical culture towards the Egypt of the pharaohs: a field of research that still holds surprises today.

F.B.-E. - D.F.M.

<sup>221</sup> Bes-vases of the Roman period are known, for instance, from tombs in the Bahariya oasis, where Bes was also worshipped in two temples, see HAWASS 2000, pp. 79, 161 (Bes-vase) and pp. 169-173 (temple of Bes). For examples of another type, attributed to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, see GUIDOTTI 1983, pp. 54-57.



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Fig. 2, Courtesy Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst München.  
Fig. 3, after DEFERNEZ 2010.  
Fig. 4, after ASTON, ASTON 2010.  
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