

IMAGE AND SOCIETY IN ARCHAIC ETRURIA*

By BRUNO D'AGOSTINO

(Plates I–IV)

There are no direct visual representations of the city in Etruscan art, any more than there are in Attic art. Indeed the civic aspect of the Etruscan world is in general particularly elusive; even in inscriptions, references to political and social structures are rare and brief. In the case of Athens, the study of the imagery of Attic vase-painting as a unified and structured system of representations has revealed hitherto unsuspected significations.¹ It is true that the basic places and occasions of social, institutional, political and religious life are not themselves portrayed; yet the social categories and essential functions of the city are displayed, through the medium of a kind of anthropological description. It is a form of allusive display, creating the image through a bare selection of iconographic signs which evoke the essential places and moments of social life. The images of Attic vase-painting themselves represent reality only in a mediated form, and even in this form a part of reality remains outside the range of possible representations. Nevertheless, if one recognizes the rules of the game, it is possible to recover from the images a wide range of information concerning the society which produced them.

In order to obtain such results, it is of course necessary to have access to a range of images which is broad, homogeneous and structured; and in this respect the corpus of Attic pottery represents a unique group: it would certainly be hazardous to attempt the same sort of analysis in relation to Etruscan pottery.² Yet there is no lack in Etruria of corpora of images which can (within certain limits) lend themselves to such analysis: I am thinking of such archaic complexes as the tomb-paintings of Tarquinia and the funerary relief sculpture from Chiusi.³ Both complexes are sufficiently broad and homogeneous from the chronological and topographical points of view; both concern images produced for a funerary context, and this context charges them with a particular semantic intensity. It is agreed that in the ancient Mediterranean world the moment of death is the occasion on which the community tends to make explicit its own system of values: on the one hand, at that point the social image of the dead man becomes permanently fixed; on the other, society tends to reassert its own equilibrium, which has been threatened by the loss of one of its members.⁴ It is therefore reasonable to claim that complexes of images related to the funerary domain contain their own description of the society which produced them.

The paintings from Tarquinia and the Chiusi reliefs present fundamental structural analogies: in both cases it is a question, not of isolated images, but of

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The following abbreviations are used in the notes: d'Agostino 1983: B.d'Agostino, 'L'immagine, la pittura e la tomba nell'Etruria arcaica', *Prospettiva* 32 (1983), 2–12.

d'Agostino (forthcoming): B.d'Agostino, 'Military Organisation and Social Structure in Archaic Etruria', in *The Greek City*, ed. O. Murray and S. Price, Oxford.

Jannot: J. R. Jannot, *Les reliefs archaïques de Chiusi* (1984).

La mort, les morts: La mort, les morts dans les sociétés anciennes, ed. G. Gnoli, J.-P. Vernant (1982).

Steingraber: S. Steingraber, *Catalogo ragionato della pittura etrusca* (1985).

Thuillier: J. P. Thuillier, *Les jeux athlétiques dans la civilisation étrusque* (1985).

Weege: F. Weege, *Etruskische Malerei* (1921).

¹ F. Lissarrague, A. Schnapp, 'Imagerie des Grecs ou Grèce des imagiers', *Les temps de la réflexion* (1981), 275–97; *La cité des images—Religion et société en Grèce antique* (1984).

² On the interpretation of Etruscan imagery there is a lively debate, for which see E. Simon, *JdI* 88 (1973), 27 n. 2; I. Krauskopf, *Der thebanische Sagenkreis und andere griechische Sagen in der etruskischen Kunst* (1974). In this field there have also appeared recent researches inspired by an 'iconological' approach: see most recently L. Cerchiai, 'Sulle tombe "del Tuffatore" e "della Caccia e della pesca"'. *Proposte di lettura iconologica*, *Dialoghi di Archeologia* (1987), 1.2, 113–23.

³ On Etruscan tomb painting see in general the repertory of Steingraber. For a first attempt at iconological interpretation of the Tarquinia paintings, see L. Cerchiai, 'La machaira di Achille: alcune osservazioni a proposito della tomba dei Tori', *AION. ArchStAnt* 2 (1980), 25–39; d'Agostino 1983. On the Chiusi reliefs see the monograph of Jannot.

⁴ See on these problems, *La mort, les morts: Mortality and Immortality; the Anthropology and Archaeology of Death*, ed. S. C. Humphreys, H. King (1982); R. Garland, *The Greek Way of Death* (1985).

monuments offering miniature figurative cycles composed of a small number of images necessarily possessing a common reference. So it is a legitimate aim to investigate the meaning of these relationships, in order to identify the underlying systems.⁵

But before proceeding with this semiological investigation, we must first ask what is the relationship in this instance between the images and the society which produced them. As is well known, a variety of interpretative models have been proposed, both for Etruscan tomb-painting and for Etruscan funerary reliefs. The most widespread hypothesis, which we may call the 'realistic theory', is that the images are an accurate portrayal of funerary ceremonial. From this perspective, the games that are so frequently represented are the funeral games documented in the literary tradition; it is natural to recall the games which the Delphic oracle ordered the Etruscans to perform in expiation of the killing of the Phocaeen prisoners after the battle of Alalia.⁶ It is, however, this model which causes the greatest difficulties in the analysis of images: to concentrate on the most obvious points, how on this interpretation can we explain the presence of the deceased as a living participant in the tomb paintings of Tarquinia? One might suppose that he has been 'restored to life' in order to assist at the symposium and the games held in his honour. But how can we explain the presence of images such as that of the hunt, which have nothing to do with funeral games?

Another interpretation, which may be called 'magico-ritual', is that according to which the images refer to the future existence of the dead person in the after-life, an after-life which is conceived of as similar to this world. The images serve as a substitute for reality, assuring for the deceased the enjoyment in the after-life of those same pleasures which were so dear to him in this life. But such a conception of the after-life is foreign to all that we know of the ancient world, and of the Etruscan world in particular.

A third interpretation, which we may call 'social', is the one which seems to me the most convincing. The images serve to exhibit emblematic situations in the life of the *dominus*, and are intended to characterize his status and his social position.

This is the interpretation which I follow. Yet, as we shall see, it is not possible to apply it *tout court* to the evidence as a whole, which is highly complex, and reveals the presence of different orientations, co-existing sometimes even within a single figurative cycle. A long journey will therefore be necessary in order to recognize the rules of the game; but this will enable us to understand in some measure how the complex of images is structured.

In an earlier article, my point of departure was provided by the tomb paintings of Tarquinia in the archaic age.⁷ The results there obtained will be used later in this article as a point of comparison; but the first centre of attention will rather be the corpus of archaic reliefs from Chiusi recently assembled and published in exemplary fashion by R. Jannot.⁸ Leaving on one side the large circular bases from Poggio Gaiella, which remain at present wholly exceptional, this corpus essentially comprises four different classes of monument: sarcophagi are very rare, cinerary urns are more common; but the greatest part of the 270 monuments is made up of bases and *cippi*. Unfortunately, in all cases we are dealing with old discoveries: we do not therefore know the relevant contexts or the ultimate relationship of a plurality of monuments to a single burial. In particular we do not know the function of the bases, which may perhaps have served to support cinerary statues. From the point of view of their images, it can be said that the urns and the bases form a homogeneous corpus, and present the same cycles of scenes, which are in general different on the four sides of the monument. The *cippi* differ in presenting a simplified repertory of images, often reduced to scenes of dancing repeated on four sides in an almost identical manner.

A preliminary examination of the repertory of reliefs on the bases, the urns and

⁵ Useful methodological suggestions for a contextual interpretation of ancient imagery may be found in A. Pontandolfo, A. Rouveret, 'Ideologia e società a Poseidonia nel IV sec.a.C.', in *La mort, les morts*, 299-317.

⁶ Herod. 1. 167. This interpretation has recently been upheld by Thuillier, 419 ff.

⁷ Cf. d'Agostino 1983.

⁸ Jannot.

the few sarcophagi, reveals immediately the frequency of scenes of *prothesis*. These are in general structured according to a fixed schema (Pl. I, 1): the body is extended on a *klinē*, with the head on the right; it is likely, as Jannot observes, that this orientation indicates the interior of the house. To the right of the *klinē* there is almost always a woman, while the rest of the characters taking part in the scene are both male and female in attitudes of mourning; the women are in general more numerous, and children are sometimes found. The mixture of persons present, differing in age, sex and perhaps also in social status, would seem to indicate the general participation of the family group and the community.

After the symposium, the *prothesis* is undoubtedly the most frequent subject in this kind of relief. Although it is true that the Chiusi monuments are often much damaged, and that it is possible in only about half of the scenes of *prothesis* to establish the sex of the deceased, nevertheless the number of well-preserved scenes remains comparatively large;⁹ and it therefore seems significant that in all of these the deceased is a woman. This is true in all cases, with a single exception—an urn from Palermo of modest workmanship which belongs at the start of the production of the Chiusi reliefs:¹⁰ here a male figure is represented on the *klinē*, and under it are helmet and greaves (Pl. I, 2).

The monuments where the scene of *prothesis* is well preserved are also those which allow us to recognize most clearly the context of images which accompanies this type of representation. In general these are scenes which have a clear affinity of signification with the *prothesis*, like the *comploratio*, which Jannot prefers to interpret as a funeral dance (Pl. II, 1), and scenes which we can describe as female or male 'conversation pieces' (Pls. II, 2; III, 1); these latter are scenes of uncertain meaning, but are clearly connected with the funerary context.

On the whole both men and women participate in the *comploratio*, as in the manifestations of grief included in the *prothesis*, even if (as I have said) women are usually more numerous. Indeed, in the context of the monument as a whole, it seems possible to recognize a tendency towards depicting a balanced participation by both sexes. If in fact women are solely or predominantly present at *prothesis* and *comploratio*, the female prevalence in these scenes is balanced by the inclusion of male scenes on the other sides of the monument. The clearest manifestation of this tendency can be seen on the Munich base:¹¹ here in fact both the *prothesis* (Pl. III, 2) and the 'conversation scene' which accompanies it have an exclusively female character; but the equilibrium is restored by the inclusion, on the other two sides of the base, of a 'male conversation scene' and of a representation of horsemen (Pl. IV, 1).

Leaving aside scenes which are bound up with the funerary ritual, the repertory of female images can be said to be non-existent: there are no scenes referring to the female sphere, a deficiency which is remedied through the use of images which we would regard as typically male: the phenomenon is easy to recognize in one of the earliest urns, preserved in the British Museum.¹² In the *prothesis* scene the dead woman is assisted only by other women, but on the two adjacent sides a duel between hoplites is portrayed, and, on the fourth side, another scene of military character—a warrior greeted by a woman prepares to mount a chariot. In a base in London of the first half of the fifth century,¹³ the female *prothesis* is accompanied by two representations of the symposium and a 'return from the chase'. The male version of this cycle can perhaps be recognized in another base in London,¹⁴ where a scene of the return from the chase is associated with the symposium and with representations of hoplites and horsemen.

Among those images which we are inclined to regard as specifically male, the symposium seems in particular to reveal especially complex implications. While in the archaic paintings from Tarquinia the representation of the 'conjugal symposium'

⁹ The cases in which it is possible to identify the sex of the deceased, according to the data given by Jannot, are 15 out of 28 representations of *prothesis*. In 14 of these the deceased is a woman.

¹⁰ Jannot, A¹ 2, p. 15, fig. 80.

¹¹ Jannot, D II 12, pp. 164 ff., figs 561-3.

¹² Jannot, A¹ 3, pp. 15 ff., figs 84-7.

¹³ Jannot, D II 10, pp. 162 ff., figs 554-7.

¹⁴ Jannot, D I 7, pp. 146 ff., figs 502-4.

plays a central role, in the Chiusi reliefs the participants at the symposium are predominantly male. Other elements suggest that there was a difference in the conception of the symposium between Chiusi and Tarquinia.¹⁵ In this connection one can point, for example, to the mistrust which exists at Chiusi for *kōmos* scenes, which are completely absent from the funerary repertory, and are to all appearance replaced by ordinary scenes of dancing. This tension is completely absent at Tarquinia, where the *kōmos* is a subject accepted to such a point that it can at times be represented even in a version with a domestic flavour, far removed from the Greek conception.¹⁶

Yet the male connotations of the symposium are not sufficient to prevent its appearance on female monuments. The same observation holds, as we have seen, for other typically male subjects like the hoplite duel and the chase. The phenomenon is illuminated by observations already made in relation to another corpus of images of a later date, that of the fourth-century tomb paintings from Poseidonia-Paestum.¹⁷ Here it has been shown how there existed initially a structured system of images solely relating to a male cycle, in which the deceased is in general represented as a warrior. In composing the decoration for a female tomb, it was sufficient to borrow the images of the male cycle, changing that of the warrior for another of generic character. Only at a later stage was an autonomous female cycle defined, which in this case too gave prominence to scenes of funerary ceremonial. At Chiusi, even if a female cycle connected with funerary ceremonial seems to have existed from the start, the position is nevertheless analogous, in respect of the absence of themes specifically linked to the world of women, and the substantial dependence of the female repertory on that of men.

It is more difficult to establish the characteristics and structure of the male cycle. Given the fragmentary state of the monuments, this would be possible only by identifying images reserved exclusively for such a cycle, just as the scenes related to funerary ceremonial seem proper to the female cycle. Such seems in fact to be the case with representations of athletic games and chariot racing. Although we must not forget that these scenes are often known only from fragments, and that therefore we can say very little about their figurative contexts, it still seems significant that such scenes are connected only once with a representation of the *prothesis*. This is on a base from Chiusi,¹⁸ which offers a badly damaged *prothesis* scene (in which it is impossible to identify the character of the deceased) a scene of dancing and a symposium. On the fourth side there is a horseman, with a man who has fallen between the horse's legs. The presence of the *prothesis* scene alone, even if the sex of the deceased cannot be determined, suggests that the base was intended for a female burial. But this is an isolated case, which will not alter the general picture. Normally, in contrast, scenes of athletics and chariot races do not appear associated with the images drawn from funerary ceremonial, which are typical of the female cycle; and this seems to confirm their exclusive relation to the male cycle.

Among the monuments with scenes of games, the Palermo base is particularly interesting in relation to the study of the social order,¹⁹ and not only because it is one of the few well-preserved monuments of this type of representation. It shows in fact various types of athletic displays and games taking place in a public place; two magistrates, assisted by a scribe intent on registering the results, follow the contests from a stand; their presence confers a particular solemnity on the occasion.²⁰ The base

¹⁵ The Louvre sarcophagus, Jannot B 1 5, pp. 23 ff., figs 105–7, seems to be a monument of extreme interest for clarifying this difference between the two conceptions. On the main face a human symposium is opposed to a remarkable symposium of Sileni; these themes are further developed on the shorter sides, one of which represents an orgy of Sileni, the other a sacrifice to the gods. But the three sides do not seem to belong to the same monument; and strong doubt has been cast on the authenticity of the main face (inv. no. 3610) and the side face with the orgy (inv. no. 3603): cf. M. F. Briguet, 'La sculpture en pierre fétide de Chiusi au Musée du Louvre', part I in *MEFRA* 84 (1972), 847 ff.; part II in *Mélanges P. Boyancé* (1974), 103 ff. Only a dismantling of the monument with a view to a new

restoration can establish definitively its real composition.

¹⁶ I refer to scenes like that on the left wall of the Cardarelli Tomb at Tarquinia; cf. M. Moretti, *Nuovi monumenti della pittura etrusca* (1970), 96–7, fig. a.

¹⁷ Cf. n. 5; for the development of these investigations see A. Rouveret, G. Pontrandolfo, 'Pittura funeraria in Lucania e Campania—Puntualizzazioni cronologiche e proposte di lettura', *Dialoghi di Archeologia* (1983), 2, 91–130.

¹⁸ Jannot, D 1 5, pp. 142 ff., figs 492–6.

¹⁹ Jannot, C 1 8, pp. 49 f., figs 171–3.

²⁰ On these points see G. Colonna, 'Scriba cum rege sedens', *Mélanges J. Heurgon* II (1976), 187–92; Thuillier, 440 ff.

dates from around 480 B.C.; in the same period the representation of public games also appears in the tomb paintings of Tarquinia, in the little frieze of the Tomb of the Chariots.²¹ This well-known example shows vividly the participation of a general public, watching the games from the stands, beneath which other less restrained spectators indulge in erotic play. These images display for the first time a social occasion which transcends the ambit of the aristocratic *oikos*, and involves the community as protagonist.

Even apart from these two important monuments, the scenes of athletic games and chariot racing in the Chiusi reliefs, in their iconography and the figurative conventions adopted (Pl. IV, 2), closely recall painted tombs at Tarquinia, above all the Tomb of the Olympic Games.²² This seems to me an important consideration in the attempt to assess the analogies and differences between the repertoires of the Chiusi reliefs and the tomb painting of Tarquinia in the archaic age.

The immediate impression is of a marked divergence between the two repertoires: whereas images connected with funerary ritual are very common at Chiusi, they are in contrast almost entirely absent at Tarquinia, where the only examples are those in the Tomb of the Dead Man, the Tomb of the Dying Man and the Tomb of the Funeral Couch.²³ But when attention is directed to the male repertoire, this first impression is corrected, and the analogies with the repertoire of archaic tomb painting at Tarquinia become evident. As we have seen, representations of funerary ceremonial are essentially a female attribute, and it is precisely this fact which explains their marginality in the repertoire of Tarquinia. The problem can be clarified by considering the different character of the funerary monuments at Chiusi and Tarquinia. At Chiusi, the bases, urns, and sarcophagi were dedicated to a single individual, just as at Poseidonia in the case of the painted tombs intended for a single burial. This circumstance enables us to distinguish the two aspects of the funerary iconography, male and female. At Tarquinia, in contrast, the painted tombs are not individual ones: they are destined for the *oikos*, and reflect its ideology; therefore their imagery is decisively male, and as such excludes almost completely the female aspect of funerary ceremony. Confirmation of this interpretation can be found in the fact that the painted tombs of Chiusi²⁴ show a substantial convergence in subject-matter with the repertoire of archaic painting at Tarquinia; they show the same scenes, and exhibit the same exclusion of images related to funerary ceremony.

Compared with the female imagery, that reflected in the archaic painted tombs is completely different, for good reason. It does not have the purpose of representing the events surrounding the deceased or the occasion of death; in fact it does not possess a direct relation with the individual deceased; instead its purpose is to celebrate the *oikos* through its head. A social abstraction like that of the head of the *oikos* cannot be displayed in the *prothesis*; he is present and absent at the same time—present in being at the centre of the celebratory discourse which recalls him, absent in that this discourse is manifested in the tomb, at the moment in which death has placed in danger the continuity of the *oikos* and imposes the urgent need for its restoration.

This ambiguous status is reflected in the imagery: often in fact the head of the *oikos* is present in the tomb, placed at the central point in the figurative cycle. In an important though restricted group of archaic tombs, he is present as one of the conjugal couple who, stretched on the *klinē*, dominate the tympanum or the end wall. Sometimes instead he is evoked in absence, by means of the image of the closed door, which expresses his actual separation from the world of the living.²⁵ This is the explanation of the scene on the end wall of the Tomb of the Augurs, and of the gesture of salute or leave-taking which the 'augurs' direct towards the closed door.²⁶ This is also the explanation of the complex play of iconography which evolves around the motif of the closed door, and involves it in an allegorical representation of the symposium. But in order to understand these aspects, we must examine in general the

²¹ Thuillier, 622 ff., fig. 66; Steingraber, 295 ff., no.

²⁴ Steingraber, 272 ff., nos 14–27.

⁴⁷ ²² Steingraber, 333 ff., no. 92.

²⁵ On these problems see d'Agostino 1983.

²³ Steingraber, 325 ff., no. 82; 330 ff., nos 88–9.

²⁶ Steingraber, 289, no. 42.

iconography of the symposium, and its various formulations in the archaic painting of Tarquinia.

The consumption of wine plays an essential role in the funerary ideology which is displayed in these tombs. It is indeed referred to in the two themes most commonly represented, the symposium and the *kōmos*. Yet the symposium recalled in the schema of the 'conjugal couple' does not express in Greek style the socializing function played by the consumption of wine; it rather represents the return to an older iconography, that of the seignorial symposium, as displayed on the clay plaques of the Murlo type.²⁷

These relief plaques precede the Tarquinia paintings in question by only a few decades; nevertheless, they represent a stage in Etruscan social history earlier than that of the painted tombs of the late archaic period. At that stage, which corresponds to the first half of the sixth century, the control of the community was in the hands of a restricted aristocratic élite, formed from the core of the gentilial society. This élite finds its most conspicuous expression precisely in the seignorial palaces of Murlo and Acquarossa.²⁸ It was only in the course of the sixth century, with the development of trade and of new forms of commercial agriculture (vines, olives), that a new wealthy class emerged with its power based on personal property. The old seignorial world was forced to open itself to these new productive classes, and southern Etruria seems to have developed towards a new timocratic order. The renewal of the motif of the symposium, emblem of seignorial ideology, on the part of the emerging classes, reveals their desire to legitimize, through the use of these images, the new social status that they had achieved.

The most famous representation of the conjugal symposium is that painted in the tympanum of the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing.²⁹ The couple, reclining on a *klinē*, occupies the centre of the tympanum. The man holds in his left hand a cup, perhaps a silver *phialē*, while the woman prepares to crown his head with a garland. In this scene the two halves of the tympanum have specialized functions: the left-hand (female) side depicts two small figures preparing garlands, and a flautist, while a *cista*, typical sign of the female sphere, hangs in the background. In the half tympanum on the right hangs a lyre, which acts as a pendant to the flute and occupies a place corresponding to the *cista*. The world of wine consumption is dominant in this typically male section of the tympanum: two boys serve the recumbent man, one holding what was perhaps a *simpulum*, the other in the act of drawing wine from a *kratēr* with an *olpē*. The *kratēr*, together with two amphorae and two *phialai* or *lebētes*, occupies the right-hand corner of the tympanum.

Analogous representations occur in other tombs datable to the last twenty years of the sixth century, like the Tomb of the Old Man and the Tomb of the Painted Vases.³⁰ From the tympanum, which in the earliest phase represents the chief decorative field within the chamber, the image shifts to the end wall; in addition to the schema of the conjugal couple, in the archaic age a more complicated schema was already appearing, with three or four symposiasts lying on individual *klinai*, as in the Bartoccini tomb.³¹ However, as long as the symposium occupied the central position within the funeral chamber, it retained in my view its function as emblematic representation, the fundamental symbol of the life-style of the Etruscan lord.

The interpretation of those complexes which seem to evoke the deceased, at the same time as underlining his absence, is more difficult. It is convenient to start with a limited group of tombs which place vessels connected with the consumption of wine, and especially the *kratēr*, in the centre of the pediment or of the end wall. We have indeed seen how the *kratēr* and other vases used in the consumption of wine are

²⁷ On these plaques cf. J. P. Small, 'The Banquet Frieze from Poggio Civitate (Murlo)', *Studi Etruschi* 38 (1971), 25 ff.; A. Andren, 'Osservazioni sulle terrecotte architettoniche etrusco-italiche', *Lectiones Boethianae, Op. Rom.* 8 (1974), 2 ff., pl. XIX. 42-3; M. Cristofani, 'Riflessioni sulla decorazione architettonica di prima fase in Etruria e a Roma', *Gli Etruschi e Roma* (1981), 189-98; *Case e palazzi d'Etruria* (Exh. cat. Siena), ed. S. Stopponi (1985), 122 ff.; nn. 404-36.

²⁸ On these problems see M. Torelli, 'Polis e "Palaz-

zo"—Architettura, ideologia e artigianato greco in Etruria tra VII e VI sec.a.C.', *Architecture et société* (Actes Colloque Rome 1980), (1983), 471-99. On the development of the Etruscan economy in the course of the sixth century, cf. G. Colonna, 'Basi conoscitive per una storia economica dell'Etruria', *Atti Ist. Ital. Numism.* 1976, 3-29.

²⁹ Steingraber, 299 ff., no. 50.

³⁰ Steingraber, 357 ff., no. 123.

³¹ Steingraber, 292 f., no. 45.

always prominently placed in the archaic paintings of Tarquinia, as being essential elements in the imagery of the symposium, in the same way as are flautists and lyre-players. These tombs seem to attempt to synthesize in symbolic imagery the essential values of the symposium, by displaying a kind of 'exaltation of the *kratēr*'.

The earliest example of this imagery is found in the Tomb of the Lionesses. Massive figures of reclining symposiasts, like the Lycian dignitary in Tomb II at Karaburun,³² occupy the side walls of the chamber. A motif of palmettes divides the figured frieze from the lower register of the walls, which is filled by a marine background with sporting dolphins. In the centre of the end wall, this marine motif and the palmette pattern are broken by a niche framed as a false door.³³ Above this, in the tympanum, towers a great volute *kratēr*, apparently of gilded bronze decorated with a silver garland. The fact that the portrayal of the vase alludes to the consumption of wine is demonstrated by the presence of a *simpulum* hanging up, and by the *oinochoē* at the far right of the scene. The significance of the *kratēr* is emphasized not only by its position in the centre of the end wall, but also by its insertion between two musicians, and by the presence of male and female dancers who clearly belong to the sphere of the *kōmos*, because one of them holds an *olpē* and they are associated with the *oinochoē* already mentioned.

A little more recent than the Tomb of the Lionesses is the Tomb of the Dead Man,³⁴ which shows on its end wall a similar scene of the 'exaltation of the *kratēr*'. In this tomb, however, two different ways of conceiving the funerary imagery co-exist: the emblematic representation of the symposium is accompanied by one of the only two scenes of *prothesis* known at Tarquinia.

The 'exaltation of the *kratēr*' is still found at the start of the fifth century in the Tomb of the Chariots.³⁵ This tomb belongs to the period when funerary imagery is beginning to change at Tarquinia; the end wall offers in its lower register a great symposium frieze now clearly inspired by the Attic model. And yet, on the bracket supporting the roof in the centre of the tympanum, a huge *kratēr* is represented, partially overlapping which are two servants holding *oinochoē*, *simpulum* and jug; these two figures turn out towards two reclining symposiasts, who seem to be leaning against the central support.

The schema adopted in the preceding tombs can be related to that in the Tomb of the Lyre-player,³⁶ which is roughly contemporary with the Tomb of the Chariots. A *kōmos*-revel develops along its walls, with male and female figures dancing to the sound of the usual musical instruments. In the tympanum the support of the main beam is itself transformed into a *kratēr*, flanked by two leopards with heads turned outwards. The exaltation of wine must still have retained its meaning for the Etruscan public, even when reduced to its most symbolic expression.

Without the help of such images it would not be possible to understand scenes like those in the Cardarelli Tomb and the Tomb of the Whippings.³⁷ These tombs belong to a group characterized by the presence, in the centre of the end wall, of the image of the closed door, boundary between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Sometimes in such tombs two musicians flank the door; but the special feature of these two tombs is the fact that in both cases, on each side between the musicians and the door, a wine-vessel is interposed. In the Cardarelli Tomb, where the scene is well preserved, the *kratēr* is on the left between the lyre-player and the door, while the amphora is on the right between the door and the flautist. In the other tomb the schema is perhaps inverted.

What is the connection between the different schemata so far examined? One may suggest the following interpretation: in the years around 530 B.C., when the figurative repertory of Tarquinian tomb painting was being developed, the symbolic represen-

³² Steingraber, 322, no. 77. For the comparison with Karaburun, cf. A. Akerstrom, 'Etruscan Tomb Painting—An Art of Many Faces', *Op.Rom.* 13 (1981), 7 ff. (13 ff.).

³³ Below the niche there is a miniature symposium scene; cf. C. Weber-Lehmann, 'Spätarchaische Gelage-

bilder in Tarquinia', *Röm.Mitt.* 92 (1985), 38 f., pl. 24. 2.

³⁴ Steingraber, 333 f., no. 89.

³⁵ Weege, pls 84–5; Steingraber, 295 ff., no. 47.

³⁶ Weege, figs 83–5; Steingraber, 306, no. 57.

³⁷ Tomba Cardarelli: Steingraber, 302 f., no. 53; T. Fustigazioni: 312 f., no. 67.

tation of the head of the *oikos* centred on the consumption of wine. When the programme envisaged the representation of the head of the *oikos*, the consumption of wine was represented by means of the symposium; when, however, the programme envisaged the evocation of the head *in absentia*, the consumption of wine was represented by means of the symbolism of the closed door accompanied by vases and musicians, as in the Cardarelli Tomb and the Whipping Tomb, or by means of the simple exaltation of the *kratēr*, as in the Tomb of the Lionesses and other related tombs.

From this brief account of the iconographic themes dominant in the archaic painting at Tarquinia, it has been possible to show the complexity and variety of the strategies adopted by the new Etruscan élite in displaying its system of values. What do these images tell us about the society which produced them?

In the first place they tell us something about the social relationship between the two sexes. There existed no rigid ideological divide between them, even if their roles were clearly differentiated. The conjugal symposium confirms what we were aware of from other sources about the joint participation of women in this central ceremony in the life and the ideology of the ruling class. The phenomenon is more evident at Tarquinia, but it is visible also at Chiusi, as can be seen in one particular urn.³⁸

Moreover, it is possible, by means of the phenomenology of the symposium, to clarify some aspects of social history. From the beginning the 'conjugal symposium' did not exclude the representation of an enlarged symposium; indeed this schema is represented in tombs as early as the Tomb of the Lionesses.

In both cases, as we have seen, the images are derived from the repertory favoured by the 'princes' of Murlo and Acquarossa,³⁹ as it recurs in the architectural revetments of phase I. The use of this older imagery served, as I have said, to legitimize the emergence of a new ruling class with a timocratic base. The changed function is indicated by the fact that these images are no longer the attribute of an individual, the *princeps*, but constitute the prerogative of a wider dominant group, united by a common privileged social status and a common culture. The painted tombs at Tarquinia, from the sixth century to the Hellenistic age, represent scarcely 2 per cent of the total of tombs discovered, which is enough to give an idea of how restricted the character of this timocratic élite remained. Yet the painted tombs are in the final analysis modest chamber tombs of a family character, far removed from the monumental gentilitial tombs of the orientalizing period. This same timocratic élite finds expression at Caere in the tombs with dado and portcullis, uniform in aspect and arranged in regular lines along axially ordered streets.⁴⁰

As far as the choice of imagery is concerned, this emerging class reveals a traditionalist attitude towards continuity, which suggests a strong resistance to ratification on the ideological level of the emerging social transformations.

It is not until the first decades of the fifth century that this repertory of images is modified in any substantial fashion. As I have already mentioned, tombs like those of the Triclinium, the Maiden, or the Leopards return to the image of a symposium which is extended, male, reserved principally for youth, and in which women appear only in the guise of *hetairai* or musicians. The model is that of the Attic symposium, which, in accordance with a tendency also visible in other areas of Etruscan culture,⁴¹ becomes dominant just at the point when the Etruscan world reveals a tendency to turn in upon itself.

A strong traditionalism can also be felt in the representations of athletic contests and chariot races. The world of the gymnasium and the palaestra seems never to have had deep roots in Etruria. The contest as manifestation of *aristeia* always took second place to the contest as exhibition. This explains the connection between contest, games (even when involving blood as in those of Phersu) and chariot races. The recent

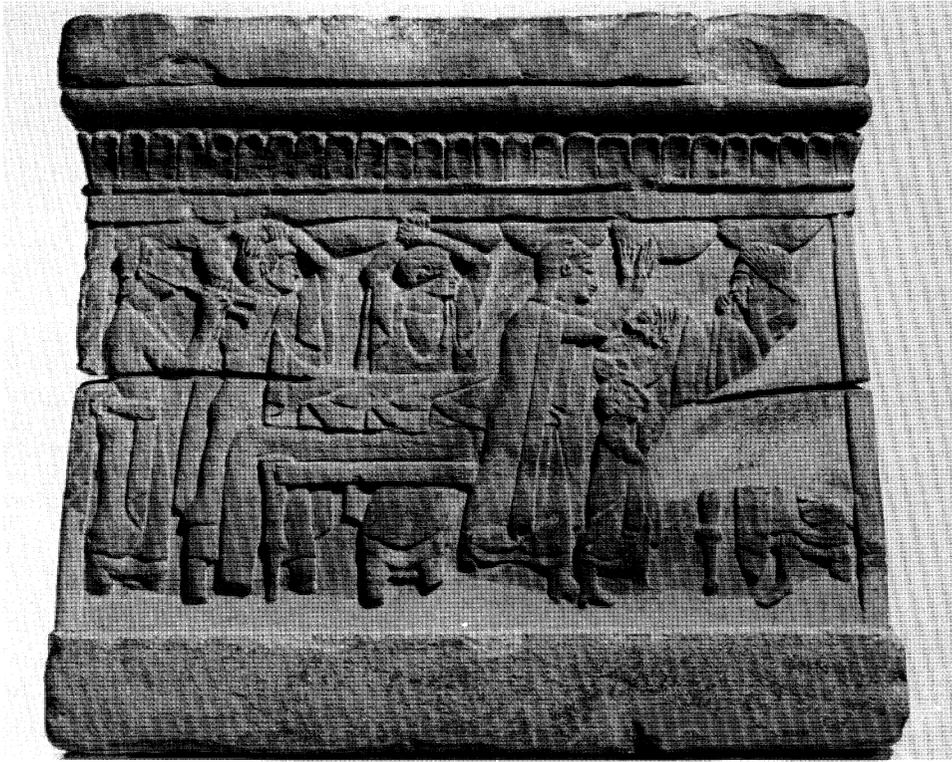
³⁸ Jannot, B II 4, pp. 28 ff., fig. 119.

³⁹ On these problems see d'Agostino 1983.

⁴⁰ Cf. G. Colonna, 'L'Etruria meridionale interna dal Villanoviano alle tombe rupestri', *Studi Etruschi* 1967,

23 ff., 69; F. Prayon, *Frühetruskische Grab- und Hausarchitektur*, 22 *Ergh. Röm. Mitt.* (1975), 148.

⁴¹ M. Cristofani, *L'arte degli Etruschi—produzione e consumo* (1978), 91.



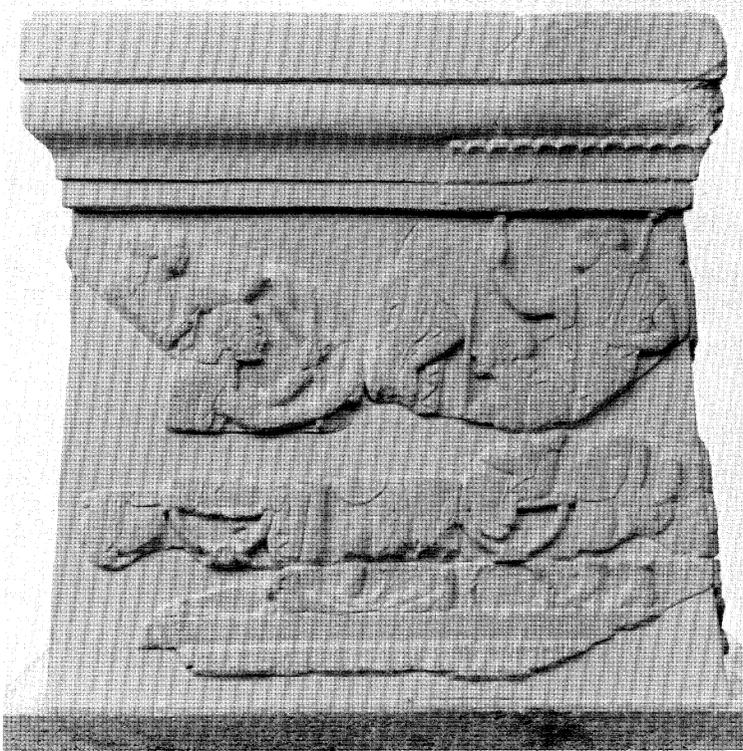
(1) BASE, JANNOT C II 35: *PROTHESIS*.
COPENHAGEN, NY CARLSBERG GLYPTOTEK H 205.



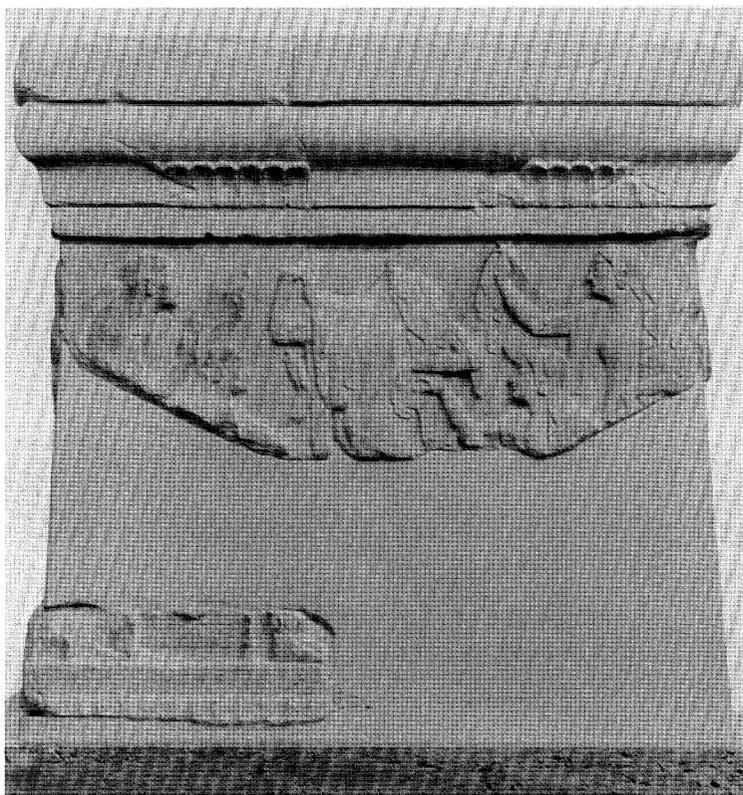
(2) URN, JANNOT A' 2: *PROTHESIS*.
PALERMO, NAT.MUSEUM N.I. 8414.



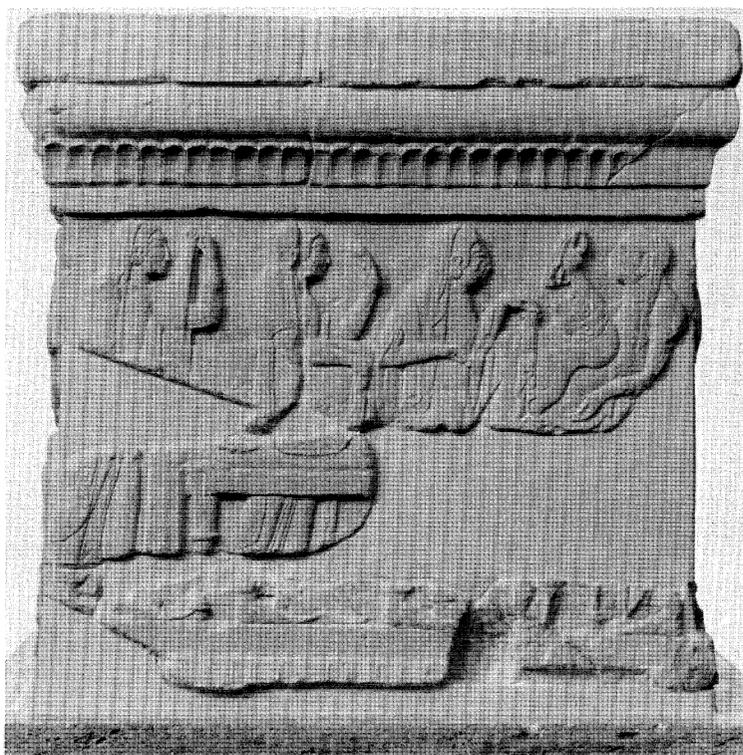
(1) BASE, JANNOT C II 35: *COMPLORATIO*.
COPENHAGEN, NY CARLSBERG GLYPTOTEK H 205.



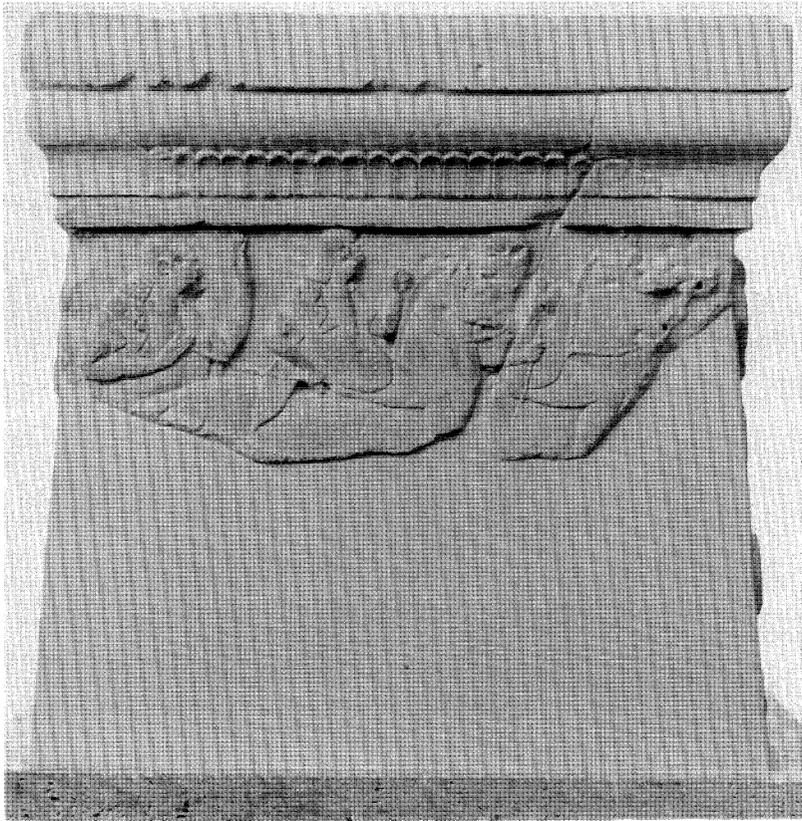
(2) *CIPPUS*, JANNOT D II 12: MALE CONVERSATION PIECE.
MÜNCHEN, ANTIKENSAMMLUNGEN.



(1) *CIPPUS*, JANNOT D II 12: FEMALE CONVERSATION PIECE.
MÜNCHEN, ANTIKENSAMMLUNGEN.



(2) *CIPPUS*, JANNOT D II 12: *PROTHESIS*.
MÜNCHEN, ANTIKENSAMMLUNGEN.



(1) CIPPUS, JANNOT D II 12: HORSEMEN.
MÜNCHEN, ANTIKENSAMMLUNGEN.



(2) BASE, JANNOT C I 8: CHARIOT RACE.
PALERMO, NAT. MUSEUM N.I. 8385

book by Thuillier analyses this conception well;⁴² but the author also observes how these games, earlier reserved for a restricted social élite, at the beginning of the fifth century became a spectacle for a wider public: this important change is revealed in the tomb painting, through comparison of the scenes from the Tomb of the Augurs, for example, with those from the Tomb of the Chariots, or those on the Chiusi base at Palermo already described.

What can these images tell us about public life and institutions? Almost nothing. In the archaic period the aim of celebrating the individual, by exhibiting his rank or a particular political and social role which he played in life, is completely lacking: we look in vain for reference to a *cursus honorum* or the noble descent of the deceased, such as will appear later in the gentilitial tombs of the fourth century. The head of the *oikos* is placed in a dimension of social dignity so abstract as to leave his personal history out of account. Among the Chiusi reliefs the only image which might relate to a political institution is the assembly scene portrayed on a base from Palermo.⁴³ But the base is damaged, and, as for the figurative context, we possess only a part of one scene on another side, which may itself relate to a mythological theme.⁴⁴ Moreover, it is difficult to imagine an isolated political representation within the general context of the Chiusi reliefs.

The symbolic character of this funerary painting, its reference to an abstract social condition, make it capable of expressing only the fact that the individual *oikos* belongs to the social élite, leaving in complete obscurity the functional relationships within the social order. For instance military organization, which we know to have been basic to the structure of the neighbouring Roman society, is left virtually unrepresented. Whatever opinion may be held about the organization of the Etruscan army,⁴⁵ it is clear that, in southern Etruria at least, there was no hoplite ideology, in the sense of the conception of a society of equals within a strongly unified structure like the Greek city. This fact must be remembered in discussions of both the Etruscan army and the Etruscan city in the archaic age. In general the hoplite is represented as an isolated figure, a pyrrhicist in the context of games and contests.⁴⁶

Such is the situation at Tarquinia. At Chiusi, as far as military organization is concerned, things seem to be a little different. There are in fact a few reliefs with representations of hoplites, which are usually interpreted as scenes of dancing or contest; then there is the splendid *cippus* in the Museo Barracco,⁴⁷ which portrays in an elegant Attic style scenes of the arming of a warrior, a battle around the body of a dead man, and horsemen. But the most significant monument is without doubt that comprised by the reliefs from Poggio Gaiella.⁴⁸ These consist of a number of circular drums which perhaps belonged to a single monument. On one of them a rank of soldiers is represented, each armed with Corinthian helmet, breastplate, hoplite shield and spear, accompanied by a flute-player. The procession was probably taking part in a *prothesis*, as can be seen from another fragment of a similar drum, less well preserved. Such a scene in the mid-sixth century must provoke reflection on the importance of the military element in inland Etruria of the Tiber valley. In this area the situation must have been very different from that in southern Etruria, as many other indications confirm.⁴⁹

From this discussion it is possible to arrive at certain general conclusions of a provisional nature. Southern Etruria in the archaic period is revealed through its imagery as a world in transition, which had not yet developed an 'ideology of the city', conceived of as a structure based on the idea of the citizen body as a community of

⁴² Thuillier, 611 ff.

⁴³ Jannot, B II 1, pp. 26 f., figs 108-10.

⁴⁴ As Jannot saw, the mythological scene cannot represent Achilles and Penthesilea; it may rather be Achilles and Troilus, following the iconography already known on a Pontic *amphora*: CVA Reading 1, pls 36-7, pp. 35 f. This does not mean to deny that the assembly scene in contrast is typically Etruscan in its antiquarian detail.

⁴⁵ On this question see d'Agostino (forthcoming).

⁴⁶ On the pyrrhicist in Etruria cf. G. Camporeale,

'La danza armata in Etruria', *MEFRA* 99 (1987), 11-42; N. Spivey, 'The Armed Dance on Etruscan Vases', in Acts of the Symposium at Copenhagen (forthcoming). See also L. Bouke van der Meer, 'Greek and Local Elements in a Sporting Scene by the Micali Painter', *Italian Iron Age Artifacts in the British Museum*, ed. J. Swaddling (1984), 439-46.

⁴⁷ Jannot, D II 16, pp. 167 ff., figs 570-3.

⁴⁸ This is group A in Jannot: A 1-7, pp. 7 ff., figs 62-75.

⁴⁹ On these problems see d'Agostino (forthcoming).

equals. The city of southern Etruria in the archaic age was quite different from the Greek *polis*, and was strongly marked by a structure of clientship. Despite the emergence of a new timocratic order, the gentilial organization remained powerful, even as it came to be overshadowed by new forms of economic activity and political organization. It remains to investigate what were the real characteristics of this distinctive conception of the city, which had begun to take shape as early as the second half of the eighth century.

Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli