

## UNPUBLISHED BUCCHERO PESANTE POTTERY IN CHICAGO

(Con le tavv. XIV-XIX f. t.)

This brief article deals with eight examples of « bucchero pesante » in Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History (1). Exact provenances are unknown for these objects. They were acquired sporadically, some probably by agents working for A. L. Frothingham (2), others under circumstances which we now have no means of tracing. All were in the museum by 1912. Each entry, in addition to providing basic catalogue information, describes the object and cites comparanda. A concluding section considers possible dates and provenances for the pieces.

### CATALOGUE

1. Inv. 96600: Large « bucchero pesante » oinochoe (*tavv. XIV-XV*). Acquired 5 August 1910; said to be from Chiusi. Max. H., 0,509 m. Max. D., 0,257 m. D. of mouth, 0,192 m. D. of foot, 0,187 m.

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\* I pezzi presentati nel presente articolo, stando a quanto dichiara l'A., sono stati ricomposti da frammenti e a volte integrati in diverse parti. Questi interventi non risultano chiaramente dalle foto che si pubblicano. Pertanto la Rivista non prende alcuna posizione sulla loro attendibilità [N. d. R.]

(1) For permission to publish the vases I am indebted to Prof. James W. VanStone, Curator of the Anthropology Department. Special thanks are extended to three members of his staff, Christopher Legge, Lillian Novak and Phyllis Rabineau, for their continued cooperation and assistance. All photographs and drawings are by the author. The manuscript was completed in November, 1974.

(2) Much of the Etruscan pottery at the Field Museum was acquired by A. L. Frothingham between 1895-1898. Frothingham's excavations in Italy are discussed by E. H. DOHAN, *Italic Tomb-Groups in the University Museum*, 1942, pp. 1-2. The Narce material at the Field Museum has been published by J. M. DAVISON, *Seven Italic Tomb-Groups from Narce* (Università italiana per stranieri, Perugia. Dissertazioni di etruscologia e antichità italiche pubblicate a cura dell'Istituto di Studi Etruschi ed Italici, 1), 1972. Five remaining tomb-groups are being prepared for publication. Cf. R. DE PUMA, *A Buccero Tomb-Group from Chiusi*, in *Archaeology* (forthcoming).

This large, carefully made *oinochoe* is repaired but with few major restorations. Without doubt, it is the finest piece of «bucchero pesante» in the Field Museum's collection. The major decorative area is the belly. Here, at the center, is a frieze of eleven dancing nude females in relief (*tav. XIV a-d*). Each figure moves to the right with her head turned back to see the following dancer. The left arm is raised, the right arm is lowered; the left leg advances while the right leg follows. There is no incision and little modelling on these eleven dancers. The only internal features indicated are the long strands of hair and the left eye (*tav. XV a*).

Above the dancers is a row of twenty-seven gadroons; a carefully incised line about the perimeter of each one strengthens the relief quality of this ornamental frieze. A fine incision above this frieze marks the beginning of the shoulder. The frieze below the dancers consists of thirteen *gorgoneia* (*tav. XV b*). Every detail of the hideous visages has been exaggerated by deep incisions. The effect is one of strong contrasts unlike the softer modelling of the nude dancers. A broad grimace reveals massive square molars and sharp fangs; the nose is a series of wrinkled folds below a furrowed brow. Even the apostrophe-like locks of hair contribute to the frenzy evoked by these powerful masks.

It is instructive to compare these frightful *gorgoneia* with the exquisitely serene faces which adorn the mouth of this *oinochoe* (*tav. XV c*). The top of the octagonal handle terminates in a large human head with incised hair and carefully modelled features. Square arms branching to either side and following the curve of the rim terminate in two smaller human faces. These faces are again sensitively modelled and incised; the impression they convey is one of great calm.

The Chicago *oinochoe* finds its closest parallel in Tarquinia (3). Except for the lower belly and foot, which are largely restored, the shape is very similar; the Tarquinia *oinochoe* is only 3,1 cm. taller than the *oinochoe* in Chicago. The relief decoration of mouth, shoulder and belly is almost

(3) Tarquinia Inv. 776 (formerly Bruschi Coll.); GIGLIOLI, *AE*, pl. LII, 1; *CVA, Tarquinia 2*, pl. 2, 2; MONT., pl. 300, 3; R. BLOCH, *The Ancient Civilization of the Etruscans*, 1969, pl. 113.

(4) Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Museum 197: M. A. JOHNSTONE, *Etruscan Collections in the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, and the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Edinburgh*, in *St. Etr.* XI, 1937, pp. 389-390; pl. XLVIII, 2. Nude females on «bucchero» are rare. Giglioli (*AE*, p. 14; pl. LII, 1) believed the same dancing figures on the Tarquinia «*oinochoe*» were males, but there is no indication of male genitalia on them. Cf. two examples in *Ars Antiqua* (Auktion II, Antike Kunstwerke) Luzern, 1960, no. 127 a-b, p. 48; pl. 50. In addition there are similar unpublished examples in Milan and Baranello.

identical. Similar observations may be made about an *oinochoe* in Edinburgh (4) which is only a centimeter taller and wider than our *oinochoe*, and has the same decoration but a flat, rather than octagonal, handle. A second *oinochoe* in Tarquinia (5) with different ornaments may belong to the same group.

2. Inv. 24440: Large « buccero pesante » hydria (*tavv. XVI-XVII a-b*). Acquired 20 June 1912; provenance unknown. Max. H., 0,789 m. Max. D., 0,335 m. D. of mouth, 0,223 m. D. of foot, 0,193 m.

This unusually large hydria is reconstructed from numerous fragments; there are no major lacunae. The overall impression of the shape is one of elongated proportions sensitively articulated by applied and incised ornament. Three boldly modelled and incised human faces decorate the rim (*tavv. XVI a-XVII a*). The central face, the largest of the three, is formed from the upper termination of the vertical handle. The apparently female face wears long, deeply incised braids and a *tutulus*. A series of short zigzags are incised below the face; a deep groove, emanating from the handle, surrounds the entire relief. The flanking faces project from the edge of the rim but are at right angles to it so that all three reliefs face forward. The left face is the best preserved (*tav. XVII a*). An unusual detail is the small, incised semicircle on the forehead which appears on all three faces but is best seen here. The right face, intact but abraded, is similar to the left; it wears a *tutulus* like the large central face. The rim itself consists of four high, parallel ridges; at the center is a small boss with incised rosette.

The vase's wide neck is elegantly decorated with modelled, incised and punched figures and designs. The basic decorative format consists of two ornate friezes separated from each other and the shoulder of the base by bands of punched diagonals. Small crouching lions alternating with tongue motifs decorate the upper horizontal frieze (*tav. XVII b*). The lions are modelled in low relief; incisions delineate features of the heads and paws. The tongue motifs are modelled but with an incised volute radiating from each side at the top (6). A tongue is located directly beneath each side mask and the central rosette. An additional tongue appears beneath

(5) Tarquinia Inv. 776: *CVA, Tarquinia* 2, pl. 2, 1 Cf. Florence 72734, an *oinochoe* from Città della Pieve discussed in G. BATIGNANI, *Le oinochoai di bucchero pesante di tipo « chiusino »*, in *St. Etr.* XXXIII, 1965, pp. 312-313.

(6) Cf. a similar motif on Sèvres Inv. 2056, a goblet from Chiusi: *CVA, Sèvres* 1, pl. 28,6. The Princeton University Art Museum has several unpublished and uninventoried fragments of at least two large bucchero kraters with affixed human heads similar to the three on our *hydria*. These were apparently acquired by Prof. Alan Marquand in the 1890's and are probably from Chiusi.

the large vertical handle. There are four tongues and three lions in all. The lower frieze displays large lions alternating with elaborate lotus blossoms. The two friezes are separated by five parallel ridges; the central ridge is larger than the others and enlivened by a series of diagonals created with a square punch plus three rosette bosses similar to the one on the rim. In some cases these bosses are not aligned with the frieze motifs. A similar arrangement of punched and incised bands separates the neck from the shoulder.

A compact series of relief tongues decorates the shoulder; bold vertical ribs, creating a compartmented effect, cover the belly. Each tubular horizontal handle, placed at the vase's widest point, has a central relief ring. The huge vertical handle (H., 27 cm.; W., 8,7 cm.) consists of three tubular elements on the exterior. The interior surface is smooth. The foot moulding is a torus in three degrees.

3. Inv. 24442: Large « *bucchero pesante* » amphora (*tav. XVII c-d*). Acquired 20 June 1912; provenance unknown. H., 0,558 m. Max. D., 0,334 m. D. of mouth, 0,205 m. D. of foot, 0,164 m.

This large *amphora* has been restored from several fragments. The decoration is an unpretentious shoulder frieze of large, vertical gadroons. The thirty-three gadroons were not applied to the surface, but pressed into a mould from the interior of the vase where one may feel their indentations. The rim is decorated with three carefully produced relief lines; the neck is unornamented. The *amphora* has triple tubular handles; the foot profile shows a torus moulding in two degrees. The lid (No. 8) associated with this *amphora* probably does not belong.

Gadroons, a frequent motif on « *bucchero pesante* » vases, often appear as the primary decoration on the shoulder (7).

4. Inv. 24438: Large « *bucchero pesante* » amphora (*tav. XVIII a-c*). Acquired 20 June 1912; provenance unknown. H., 0,472 m. Max. D., 0,291 m. D. of mouth, 0,183 m. D. of foot (as restored), 0,157 m.

The vase has been reconstructed from several large fragments; the surface is cracked in many places. Large parts of the foot are restored. Relief ornaments dominate the shoulder and handles. The neck and belly are covered with a series of complex incisions (*tav. XVIII a-b*).

A triple torus moulding with two applied bosses on each side of the vase decorates the rim. Horizontal zigzags are incised between the bosses

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(7) M. MONACI, *Catalogo del Museo Archeologico vescovile di Pienza*, in *St. Etr.* XXXIII, 1965, pls. XCIV, c; XCV, b; XCVII, b; L. DONATI, *Buccheri decorati con teste plastiche umane: Zona di Orvieto*, in *St. Etr.* XXXVII, 1969, pl. CXII.

on the middle torus. Two strap handles arch between the shoulder and upper neck. Their outer surfaces are enlivened by crouching felines in relief; at the top of each handle is a female head which projects boldly above the rim. Incisions delineate the hair, eyes and ears of each head (*tav. XVIII c.*).



fig. 1 - Field Museum 24438 (No. 4).

Decoration on the *amphora's* tall neck consists of incised friezes and a triple torus moulding at the mid-point. The moulding is continuous but the incised friezes stop when they reach the area behind each handle. These friezes consist of zigzags directly above and below the torus mouldings. The large middle torus is incised with a series of alternating X's and groups of three vertical lines (fig. 1).

Three deep ridges form the transition between neck and shoulder. Above and below these ridges are incised zigzag bands. The shoulder frieze on either side of the *amphora* contains two large sphinxes, who move to the right, and flank a pendant palmette. The artist has used incised lines to articulate the wings, hair and facial features of the relief sphinxes; the palmettes are not incised. Simple incised trees decorate the area between each of these relief ornaments.

The decoration of the belly is a more complicated version of the system employed on the neck (fig. 1): incised friezes alternate with groups of ridges. The first incised frieze, a series of X's and vertical lines, duplicates one found above on the neck. A large, more elaborate version of this is repeated below. Here, in the major incised frieze on the belly, the large X's have small circles drawn in their angles. Finally, a simple zigzag decorates the last ridge zone. Except for two small torus mouldings the foot is undecorated.

The shape of this *amphora* is a relatively common one associated with Chiusi. Several parallels exist (8). On the basis of their decoration, these may be divided into two general types: simple and complex. The simple form has only one major relief frieze, no handle relief and little incision. The complex form adds reliefs to all the major areas and frequently has two major friezes on the belly and relief heads on the neck. Our *amphora* in Chicago, according to this classification, is of the simple form for although it is decorated with relief heads on the handles it has no additional heads on the rim or neck and has only one major relief frieze on the belly.

The subject of the main frieze on our *amphora* is repeated on several other vases (9). An example in the Cracow University Collection is the closest parallel. Similar incised ornaments, especially the use of alternating X's and verticals creating a « triglyph-metope » pattern, appear on many vases associated with Chiusi (10). Crouching felines as handle ornaments are frequent over a wider area.

5. Inv. 24439: « Bucchero pesante » *amphora* « a cilindretto » (tav. XIX a-b). Acquired 20 June 1912; provenance unknown. H., 0,474 m. Max. D., 0,323 m. D. of mouth, 0,186 m. D. of foot, 0,135 m.

(8) Related works are listed by P. G. Guzzo, *La collezione etrusca del Museo Nazionale di Atene*, in *St. Etr.* XXXVII, 1969, pp. 299-300 and L. DONATI, *Buccheri decorati con teste plastiche umane: Zona di Chiusi*, in *St. Etr.* XXXVI, 1968, pp. 339-340.

(9) Cracow University 120: *CVA, Cracow* 1, pl. 12, 6; Cracow, Czartoryski Museum 1410 and 1411: *Ibidem*, pl. 15, 4-5; Perugia 483: *GIGLIOLI, AE*, pl. LI, 2; Chiusi, Museo Civico: *Ibidem*, pl. XLVIII, 8.

(10) Brussels A 816: *CVA, Brussels* 2, pl. 2, 1a-b.

This large *amphora* has been reconstructed from several fragments; heavily restored areas include the handles and base of neck. The rim is impressed with a single groove. A large relief coil encircles the narrowest part of the neck. The most elaborate decoration consists of two friezes, on the shoulder between the handles and on the belly, produced by the same cylinder.

The seal (H., 1,9 cm.) belongs to Scalia's « Motivo XIX » (11). This consists of nine figures (fig. 2): no. 1, a tunic-clad warrior moving to the

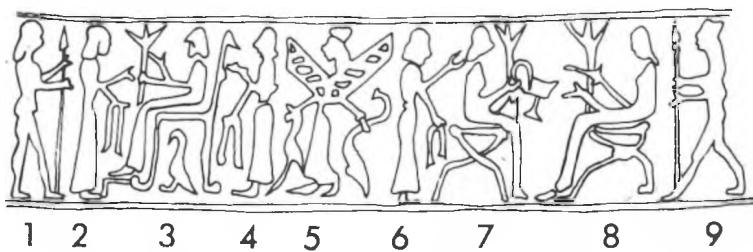


fig. 2 - Cylinder Impression on Field Museum 24439 (No. 5)

right and carrying a spear; no. 2, a woman bearing a fillet and approaching no. 3, a male seated on a large throne under which crouches a bird. He faces left, holds a three-pronged object in one hand and gestures to the woman with the other. Behind his throne appears a second woman, no. 4, who faces left, carries a fillet and perhaps another object in her raised hand. No. 5, a *Potnia Theron* with two birds, faces left (12). The second group consists of no. 6, a woman with fillet facing right and similar to no. 2; two figures, nos. 7 and 8, who sit on campstools facing each other in conversation. No. 7 offers a large *kyathos*. Perhaps behind them are two pronged objects (stylized plants?) similar to the object held by no. 3. The group is enclosed by no. 9, a spearbearer who moves to the left.

Three of the four known vases with the same frieze decoration come from Chiusi or its environs and are all chalices (13). The fourth, also a

(11) F. SCALIA, *I cilindretti di tipo chiusino con figure umane*, in *St. Etr.* XXXVI, 1968, pp. 378-379.

(12) The *Potnia Theron* corresponds to « Schema I » in G. VALENTINI, *Il motivo della Potnia Theron sui vasi di bucchero*, in *St. Etr.* XXXVII, 1969, p. 435.

(13) Detroit 61.112 (formerly Florence 2910): SCALIA, *op. cit.*, no. 141, p. 379; R. De PUMA, *Etruscan and Villanovan Pottery: A Catalogue of Italian Ceramics from Midwestern Collections*, 1971, no. 39, pp. 24-25. Boston 76210: SCALIA, *op. cit.*, no. 143, p. 379. Florence V 233: VALENTINI, *op. cit.*, no. 94, p. 435. The height of the frieze on the last vase is exactly the same as that on the Chicago *amphora*.

chalice, is without specific provenance but is probably also Chiusine (14). The Chicago *amphora* appears to be the only non-chalice « bucchero » which employs this particular frieze. The use of two horizontal friezes on an *amphora*, though unusual, is not unparalleled and seems to be another Chiusine feature (15). The shape itself, with its wide mouth, torus moulding at the neck's mid-point, bulbous belly and small foot, is characteristic of Chiusine *amphorae*.

6. No Inventory number: « Bucchero pesante » lid (*tav. XVIII d*). Provenance unknown. H., 0,188 m. D., 0,182 m.

This object was restored from several large fragments; part of the top projection is lost. Two cuttings (H., 5,4 cm.) opposite each other at the base may have allowed the lid to fit over the projecting decorative elements of a large *hydria* (16). The upper finial is hollow and may have accepted a modelled rooster of the type frequently encountered on « bucchero pesante » lids (*fig. 3*). The lower portion of this hollow element is decorated with diagonal lines formed by small punches. Two zones of diagonal grooves enliven the lower body of the lid (17).

7. No Inventory number (Accession no. 1149): « Bucchero pesante » lid (*tav. XIX c*). Provenance unknown. H., 0,152 m. D., 0,153 m.

The lid is carefully made and of finer clay than the two other examples in this catalogue. Small fragments are missing from the lower edge and the flaring lip of the finial. The finial is perforated and no doubt once held a modelled bird. The shoulder is decorated with a relief frieze of

(14) Heidelberg E 67: SCALIA, *op. cit.*, no. 142, p. 379; CVA, Heidelberg 2, pls. 47, 5 and 48, 2.

(15) Cf. GIGLIOLI, AE, pl. L, 4 an *amphora* from Chiusi now in Palermo. Chiusi, Museo Civico 178: SCALIA, *op. cit.*, no. 245, p. 396; pl. LXXXV, c. Also MONT., pl. 224, 8 from Chiusi. Copenhagen 4211: CVA, Copenhagen 5, pl. 211, 2a. Oxford 1920.318 from Chiacciano (unpublished).

(16) The large relief heads frequently projecting from the rims of « bucchero pesante » *hydriai* normally face frontally and are parallel to each other. Interference with the reliefs can be avoided by providing such vases with shallow lids with flaring bottoms. Cf. DONATI, Chiusi, *op. cit.*, Nos. 164-165, p. 341; pl. LXXVII, f-g.

(17) For a similar use of decorative diagonals on the lid cf. Brussels R 139: CVA, Brussels 2, pl. 1, 9 Cf. Florence 3001 (unpublished) and MONT., pl. 231, 3 and 5, lids from Chiusi.

(18) Hamburg 1211: E. von MERCKLIN, *Etruskische Keramik in Hamburgischen Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe*, in St. Etr. X, 1936, pp. 393-394, no. 46; pl. XLIII, 1. In a letter dated 15 October 1973 from Dr. W. Hornbostel, I learned that this object was apparently lost in World War II.

alternating lotus blossoms and pendant tongues and gadroons. Marking the carination below this frieze is a braid-like relief band created by deep diagonal impressions.

The shape and decoration (fig. 3) are closely paralleled by a lid in

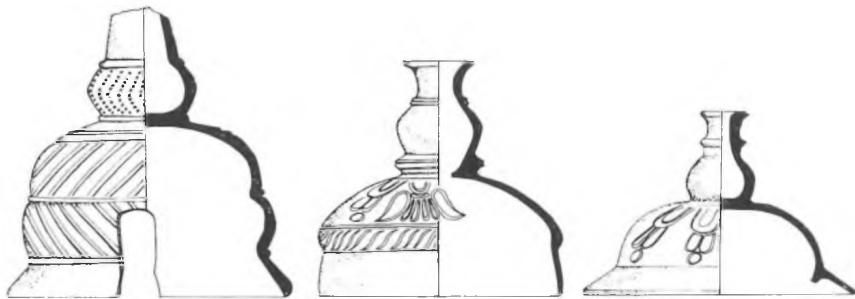


fig. 3 - Buccero Lids (Nos. 6, 7, 8).

Hamburg (18). Other similar lids, all associated with Chiusi, indicate that this example is probably from that region (19).

8. Inv. 24442-B: «Buccero pesante» lid (*tav. XIX d*). Acquired 20 June 1912. Provenance unknown. H., 0,122 m. D., 0,179 m.

This lid has been restored from several large fragments; some lacunae have been filled with modern additions. An interior flange (fig. 3) suggests that the lid may belong to a chalice rather than a large *amphora* or *hydria* (20). It seems unlikely that the lid belongs to the *amphora* (No. 3) discussed above. The decoration, confined to the dome-like shoulder, consists simply of eight gadroon pendants similar to those on No. 7.

#### DATES AND PROVENANCES

It is difficult to date sporadic «bucchero» vases precisely. It is likely that the eight examples of «bucchero pesante» in the Field Museum were discovered in Etruscan tombs, but we will probably never know what other objects, if any, were found with them. They are, like so many museum

(19) Athens 13481: Guzzo, *op. cit.*, no. 42, p. 299; pl. LXV, b. Athens 13490: *Ibidem*, no. 44, p. 300; pl. LXV, d. Cf. CVA, *Villa Giulia* 2, pl. 5, 5 and 8.

(20) However, most chalice lids do not have large, hollow finials or flaring rims. Cf. CVA, *Villa Giulia* 2, pl. 5.

antiquities, without specific archaeological context; they force us to rely on stylistic criteria to determine a possible range of dates.

From what we now know about « bucchero » production in Etruria it is likely that the vases belong to the 6th century B.C. Most of them can be assigned to the first half of that century with the large *oinochoe* (No. 1) being perhaps the earliest and the plain *amphora* (No. 3) and large lid (No. 6) perhaps the latest pieces. Most of the vases cited as parallels to our vases are also without specific archaeological context and, therefore, offer little assistance in securing a narrower range of dates. Some isolated motives find parallels on vases from Tombs VII and VIII at Poggio Buco (21). These datable tombs provide ranges between c. 625-550 B.C. and c. 620-580 B.C., respectively (22).

Several of the vases catalogued above (especially Nos. 4, 5 and 7) have strong stylistic affinities with pottery associated with Chiusi, a major center of « bucchero pesante » production in the 6th century B.C. With less certainty, the others (especially Nos. 2, 6 and 8) may also be assigned to Chiusi or workshops under its influence. Only the large *oinochoe* (No. 1) seems unrelated to the group. Due to its strong connections with vases found at Tarquinia, it might belong to a workshop in southern Etruria, perhaps Tarquinia itself (23).

RICHARD DANIEL DE PUMA

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(21) G. BARTOLINI, *Le Tombe da Poggio Buco nel Museo Archeologico di Firenze*, Firenze 1972, nos. 50-51, pl. L; nos. 37-38, pl. LXXI.

(22) *Ibidem*, pp. 104-107; 134-135. See also the discussion of chronology in R. DE PUMA, *A Bucchero Pesante Column Krater in Iowa*, in *St. Etr.* XLII, 1974, pp. 101-102.

(23) Cf. BATIGNANI, *op. cit.*, pp. 312-313 where a Tarquinian origin is suggested for Florence 72734, an *oinochoe* from Città della Pieve. According to the museum records, the Chicago *oinochoe* is said to have come from Chiusi; if indeed it did, it may have been an import from the south.



b



c



d

Details of *oinochoe*, Field Museum 96600 (No. 1)



*Hydria*, Field Museum 24440 (No. 2)



a



b



c



d

a-b) Details of *hydria*, Field Museum 24440 (No. 2).

c-d) *Ampbora*, Field Museum 24442 (No. 3).



a



b



c



d

a-c) *Ampbora*, Field Museum 24438 (No. 4).  
d) Lid, Field Museum (No. 6).



a



b



c



d

a-b) *Amphora*, Field Museum 24439 (No. 5).  
c-d) Lids, Field Museum (Nos. 7-8).