

A MINIATURE BRONZE STATUETTE

(Con la tav. XI f.t.)

The small scale Etruscan bronze figurine in an English private collection (*tav. Ia-c*) measures only 5.7 cm in height¹. It represents a draped man who stands with his left foot slightly advanced and both forearms raised, the right one slightly higher than the left. Both hands are broken off at the wrist, but the position of the arms suggests that at least the right hand originally held out an object. Below the man's feet are the remains of casting tangs that once served to fix the statuette into a base.

The surface of the bronze is covered with a slightly grainy, pale green to olive-coloured patina, not thick enough to obscure the incised details on the head and drapery. The man is barefoot and wears a close-fitting, ankle-length tunic with short sleeves, their lower edge marked by two parallel lines, while the hem at the neckline is indicated by a slightly raised band. Over the tunic is draped a semicircular mantle (the Etruscan *tebenna*) with a turned-over upper edge, thrown over his left shoulder and falling in stacked pleats to knee-level in front and behind. The border of the mantle is decorated with an incised zig-zag pattern.

The man has a neatly trimmed, spade-shaped beard and long S-shaped moustaches. Both the beard and his long, brushed-back hair, which hangs in a rectangular mass over his shoulders, are finely incised with parallel lines. The head is crowned by a twisted diadem with a raised round object in the centre of the bunched up hair above the forehead and the temples. Arched eyebrows and sharply edged lids give the eyes an intense expression as if looking slightly upward. The pupils are marked by small round projections.

In type and style the statuette is closely related to a somewhat larger bronze figurine in the Museo Estense di Antichità in Modena (*tav. XI d-f*)². Long hair and beard, clinging drapery that models the anatomy of the slim but muscular body, stance and attitude of the raised forearms are identical in both. But the larg-

¹ I am greatly obliged to the owner for the loan of photographs of the statuette.

² Inv. 523. P. 12505. H. 17.2 cm. E. RICHARDSON, *Etruscan Votive Bronzes. Geometric, Orientalizing, Archaic*, Mainz 1983, p. 215, no. 2, figs. 502, 503, with earlier literature; M. CRISTOFANI, *I bronzi degli Etruschi*, Novara 1985, pp. 283-284, no. 99; F. BERTI - C. GASPARRI (eds.), *Dionysos. Mito e mistero*, Exhibition Catalogue, Bologna 1989, p. 157, no. 76.

er size of the statuette in Modena has allowed its maker greater scope to incise finely the curving lines of the folds on the mantle, and adding to its zig-zag border a decoration of small stars³.

This statuette has been identified as Fufluns, the Etruscan equivalent of the Greek god Dionysos⁴. The identification is based on the twisted diadem to which three ivy corymbs are attached. Ivy as well as vine are the plants that characterize Dionysos in Greek art, where the god is usually represented crowned with either of these and holding out a kantharos, the two-handled wine cup on a tall foot, or a drinking-horn or/and a branch of vine⁵. The bronze in Modena will have held such a vessel in the missing right hand, while the left open palm is stretched out in a ceremonial gesture. This statuette has been dated to about 480 B.C. and ascribed to a northern Etruscan workshop⁶. It served as a votive offering.

The iconographic type adopted in Etruria for Fufluns at this period is that found on imported late Archaic Attic and Ionian black-figured vases from the second half of the 6th century B.C. onward, showing the standing figure of Dionysos. A number of such vases were discovered in the cemeteries of Vulci⁷.

From Cerveteri came several of the s.c. Caeretan hydriae, water-vessels painted by East Greek artists who had settled there between 530 and 500 B.C.⁸. One of these vases was decorated with a scene of Dionysos and satyrs at vintage, set between a large border of fruiting ivy above and below. This representation of Dionysos is about the oldest painted in Etruria known so far⁹. The motif of the twisted ivy branch recurs on many of the hydriae¹⁰.

In the cemeteries of Tarquinia we can trace such Dionysiac symbols painted on walls and ceilings of many underground chamber-tombs from the late 6th cen-

³ For good detail photos see CRISTOFANI, *cit.* (note 2), no. 99.

⁴ LIMC III (1986), p. 532, *Fufluns* 8 (M. CRISTOFANI); M. CRISTOFANI, *La testa Lorenzini e la scultura tardo-archaica in Etruria settentrionale*, in *StEtr* XLVII, 1979, p. 88, pl. 27. For additions to Cristofani's list in LIMC see G. COLONNA, *Riflessioni sul dionisismo in Etruria*, in F. BERTI (ed.), *Dionysos*, Acts of Congress (Comacchio 1989), Ferrara 1991, pp. 117-118.

⁵ For these representations see LIMC III, *cit.* (note 4), pp. 414-514 *passim* s.v. *Dionysos* (C. GASPARRI). For the significance of the kantharos see M. GRAS, *Canthare, société étrusque et grecque*, in *Opus* III, 1984, pp. 328-329.

⁶ CRISTOFANI, *La testa Lorenzini, cit.* (note 4), p. 88.

⁷ For example: Attic amphora in München, Antikensammlung 1401, CVA 1, pl. 32, 2, ca. 540 B.C.; Attic amphora in British Museum B198, ca. 520-510 B.C.; Attic amphora in British Museum B264, end of 6th century B.C.

⁸ J. M. HEMELRIJK, *Caeretan Hydriae*, Mainz 1984.

⁹ HEMELRIJK, *cit.* (note 8), p. 20, no. 9, hydria by the Eagle Painter, from Cerveteri, via Dirocchetta, Tomb 1, no. 1, in Villa Giulia, ca. 530-520 B.C.; LIMC III, *cit.* (note 4), p. 538, comment and p. 533 no. 16 (M. CRISTOFANI).

¹⁰ HEMELRIJK, *cit.* (note 8), pl. 6, nos. 22 and 10; pl. 7, no. 11; pl. 8, nos. 13 and 14; pl. 9, nos. 15 and 18; pl. 15, no. 9; pl. 16, nos. 17, 19, 20, 21; pl. 17, nos. 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29; pl. 18, nos. 31, 32.

ture B.C. onward. Ivy leaves appear on the column of a large number of tombs¹¹, while ivy friezes form the upper border of some of the wall paintings¹². Reclining satyrs, typical followers of Dionysos, were introduced first in the painted gable of the entrance wall of the Tomb of the Hunting and Fishing¹³ in ca. 530-520 B.C., and, in a similar position, in the Tomb of the Inscriptions¹⁴ of about 520 B.C. A lost tomb of late 6th century date, called Tomb of Dionysos and the Satyrs, showed on the pediment of the back wall a cortege of the god and his companions¹⁵. A strong East Greek influence is evident in the wall-paintings of a number of these Tarquinian tombs. A splendid example is the Tomb of the Lionesses¹⁶, on the rear wall of which is represented a large krater, a mixing vessel for wine and water, garlanded with the ivy of Dionysos and flanked by two musicians playing kithera and aulos, to the sound of which an orgiastic dance takes place. Directly below this scene a niche is carved in the wall, thought to have contained the cinerary urn of the deceased. The iconography of the paintings clearly suggests that the tomb's owner was an initiate in the mysteries of the god¹⁷. Thus liberated through ritual, the dead could face the beyond, assured of a new life.

Direct evidence for a cult of Dionysus practised by Etruscans comes from Vulci. The city has yielded a by now well known series of Etruscan votive inscriptions, incised on four Attic red-figured vases, ranging in date from ca. 460 B.C. to the end of the 5th or early 4th century B.C.¹⁸. These graffiti name the god Fufluns with the appellative Pachie, derived from the Greek βάκχιος or βακχεῖος. The Etr-

¹¹ The earliest dating from 510-500 B.C. S. STEINGRÄBER, *Etruscan Painting. Catalogue raisonné of Etruscan Wallpaintings* (D. RIDGWAY and F. SERRA RIDGWAY eds.), New York 1986: Tomba Cardarelli, no. 53, pls. 54-58; Tomba dei Baccanti, no. 43, pl. 26; Tomba del Citaredo, no. 57, p. 301, fig. 136; Tomba del Maestro delle Olimpiadi, no. 83, pls. 113-115; Tomba del Vecchio, no. 124, p. 355, figs. 346, 347; Tomba dei Fiorellini, no. 64, pl. 69, p. 304, figs. 144-146; Tomba 4260, no. 156, p. 367; Tomba 1822, no. 140, p. 359, fig. 365; Tomba della Fustigazione, no. 67, pls. 73-75, p. 307, figs. 155-157; Tomba del Teschio, no. 116, p. 346, fig. 315; Tomba delle Bighe, no. 47, pl. 38, pp. 289-291, figs. 77, 78; Tomba 994, no. 134, p. 357, fig. 350; Tomba del Letto Funebre, no. 82, pls. 110-112, p. 319; Tomba 5513, no. 162, p. 369, figs. 389-390; Tomba della Scrofa Nera, no. 108, pls. 140-144, pp. 340-341, figs. 288, 289; Tomba del Triclinio, no. 121, p. 352, fig. 337.

¹² Tomba del Letto Funebre, no. 82, pl. 112; Tomba del Triclinio, no. 121, pls. 166-171; Tomba 5591, no. 164, p. 370, figs. 391-393.

¹³ STEINGRÄBER, *cit.* (note 11), no. 50, pp. 293, 294, fig. 92.

¹⁴ STEINGRÄBER, *cit.* (note 11), no. 74, p. 314, fig. 185.

¹⁵ STEINGRÄBER, *cit.* (note 11), no. 59, p. 302; COLONNA, *cit.* (note 4), p. 118, n. 13; F.-H. MASSA PAIRAULT, *La tombe des lionnes à Tarquinia*, in *StEtr* LXIV, 2001, p. 62, note 86.

¹⁶ STEINGRÄBER, *cit.* (note 11), no. 77, pl. 97, pp. 316, 317.

¹⁷ For a very far-reaching interpretation of all the wallpaintings of this tomb see MASSA PAIRAULT, *cit.* (note 15), pp. 43-70.

¹⁸ M. CRISTOFANI - M. MARTELLI, *Fufluns Pachies: sugli aspetti del culto di Bacco in Etruria*, in *StEtr* XLVI, 1978, pp. 119-134; COLONNA, *cit.* (note 4), p. 118.

uscian dedication reads *fuflunsl paxies velclθi* = of (belonging to) Fufluns Pachie in the city of Vulci. Colonna has suggested that the various types of Attic vases thus inscribed served in a domestic cult of Fufluns before being deposited in the tomb of their Etruscan owners¹⁹. Initiates into the mysteries of Fufluns/Dionysos, they were promised a blessed life in the beyond. This belief is compellingly concentrated in the words inscribed on one of three small bone tablets with Dionysiac graffiti, found in the temenos area of the Milesian Black Sea colony of Olbia: *bios thanatos bios*. The shortened form of the god's name ΔΙΟ or ΔΙΟΝ, that is also scratched on these bone tokens proves that a Dionysiac cult existed in this East Greek colony, a cult which, in the 5th century B.C. had an Orphic, eschatological aspect, for Orphics are mentioned on one of the tablets²⁰. That the cult of the god in Olbia goes back to the 6th century B.C. is indicated by the inscription on a bronze mirror of late 6th century date, excavated in the city²¹. For the orgiastic celebrations of the cult of Dionysos in Olbia in the 5th century B.C. we have the testimony of Herodotus (4.78-80), who tells the story of the Scythian king Scyles, who took part in them and was subsequently killed by his own people for adopting a foreign cult.

In Magna Graecia, too, the cult flourished²², closer still to Etruria, it is attested at Cumae²³. Its transmission from there to Lazio and Etruria has been connected with the activities of Aristodemos of Cumae in the late 6th century B.C.²⁴

In Greek eyes the Etruscans were barbarians, but from the dialogue between the disguised Dionysos and Pentheus in Euripides *Bacchae* (482) we learn from

¹⁹ COLONNA, *cit.* (note 4), pp. 118-120.

²⁰ A. S. RUSYAEVA, *Orfizim: Kul't Dionisa* (Orphism and the Dionysos cult in Olbia), in *Vestnik Drevnej Istorii* 1978 (1), pp. 87-104; F. TINNEFELD, in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 38, 1980, p. 65; M. L. WEST, *The Orphics of Olbia*, in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 45, 1982, pp. 17-29; COLONNA, *cit.* (note 4), pp. 118-119, n. 20; A. BOTTINI, *Archeologia della salvezza. L'escatologia greca nelle testimonianze archeologiche*, Milano 1992, pp. 151-157.

²¹ It comes from a woman's grave. The inscription names both the mirror's owner, Demonassa, the daughter of Lenaios (followed by the characteristic orgiastic exclamation of joy, *euai*) and also Lenaios, son of Demokles (followed by a wish for long life). Lenaios is an epithet that belongs exclusively to Dionysos. That Demonassa's father was called Lenaios suggests that the cult of Dionysos existed already in the previous generation, i.e. the middle of the 6th century B.C. BOTTINI, *cit.* (note 20), p. 156.

²² S. GUETTEL COLE, *New evidence for the mysteries of Dionysos*, in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* XXI, 1980, pp. 223-238 (particularly p. 235 f.), with previous literature.

²³ L. H. JEFFERY, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, Oxford 1961, p. 240, n. 12; COLE, *cit.* (note 22), p. 231; BOTTINI, *cit.* (note 20), pp. 58-62. This 5th century B.C. inscription from a tomb at Cumae forbids burial there for anyone who has not become a *baccheus*, i.e. initiated in the mysteries and therefore safe on the way to the underworld.

²⁴ A. MELE, *Aristodemo, Cuma e il Lazio*, in M. CRISTOFANI (ed.), *Etruria e Lazio arcaico*, Acts of Congress (Rome 1986), Roma 1987, pp. 172-174.

the god that the cult had spread to them, too: «all barbarians celebrate these rites with dances»²⁵.

From the iconographic and epigraphic evidence we have reviewed, it is clear that the cult of Dionysos had spread in the second half of the 6th century B.C. at least to those Etruscan aristocrats whose painted tomb-chambers in Tarquinia have survived. For the existence of the cult in the 5th century B.C. we have the evidence of Etruscan graffiti on Greek vases from Vulci.

Sculptural representations of Dionysos in Etruria at this period are, however, extremely rare. The bronze statuette in Modena and the miniature Fufluns here published are the only ones known so far from the first half of the 5th century B.C. Their virtually identical stance and dress suggest that both may have copied a common model, perhaps a cult statue that could have been carved from wood²⁶ or modelled in terracotta²⁷. It is uncertain if public sanctuaries of Dionysos/Fufluns existed in the late Archaic period in Etruria²⁸, but the fine votive bronze statuettes we have discussed are proof of a private cult of the god at that time²⁹.

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²⁵ COLONNA, *cit.* (note 4), p. 119.

²⁶ Pliny records (*N. H.* XIV 1) that at Populonia there was a statue of Zeus, carved from a single vine. We do not know the date of this statue, but that large-scale wooden sculptures were carved as early as the second half of the 7th century B.C. is proved by the wooden head, originally covered with gold foil, discovered in the necropolis of Vulci and now in Milan: F. PRAYON, *Die Anfänge grossformatiger Plastik in Etrurien*, in *Archäologische Untersuchungen zu den Beziehungen zwischen Altitalien und der Zone nordwärts der Alpen während der frühen Eisenzeit Europas. Ergebnisse eines Kolloquiums in Regensburg* (1994), Bonn 1998, pp. 191-207; A. SARTORI, *Una scultura lignea etrusca*, in *QuadTic XXX*, 2001, pp. 37-50; M. TORELLI (ed.) *Gli Etruschi*, Exhibition Catalogue, Monza 2000, pp. 222-223; p. 586, no. 137.

²⁷ For architectural statues of terracotta from Veii see M. SPRENGER-G. BARTOLONI, *Die Etrusker*, München 1977, pls. 118-126 with earlier literature. For a large number of recently restored terracotta votive statues, many from Veii, see A. M. SGUBINI MORETTI, *Veio Tarquinia Vulci. Città d'Etruria a confronto*, Exhibition Catalogue, Roma 2001, *passim*.

²⁸ For the appearance of cult statues in Etruria see G. COLONNA, in *Santuari d'Etruria*, pp. 23-25, and fig. 4 with the representation of a statue of Dionysos on an altar-base, engraved on a bronze plectrum in the Liebieghaus in Frankfurt/Main, dated to 470-460 B.C., also Colonna, *cit.* (note 4), p. 117, fig. 1.

²⁹ For later bronze statuettes and reliefs representing Fufluns see S. BRUNI, *Note in margine all'iconografia di Dionysos in Etruria*, in *Dionysos, cit.* (note 4), pp. 197-208. The left lobe of a bronze handle-relief in the British Museum (Reg. No. 73.8-20.95), discussed by Bruni on p. 200 of this article, cannot represent Dionysos, for the male figure on the left is short-haired, brutish-faced, as well as stuffing a piece of his garment into his mouth, see S. HAYNES, *Etruscan Bronzes*, London 1985, pp. 305-306, fig. 163. For a further bronze statuette of Dionysos see S. BRUNI, *Ancora sull'iconografia di Dionysos in Etruria. Sul candelabro da Montecchiaro presso Montecchio (Sasso Marconi)*, in *Ocnus IV*, 1996, pp. 67-88. I am greatly obliged to the author and friend for the gift of offprints.



a-c) Etruscan bronze figurine in an English private collection; *d-f)* Etruscan bronze figurine in the Museo Estense di Antichità, Modena, Inv. 523.