APOLLO AND THE *MUNDUS* OF CAERE

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APOLLO AND THE *MUNDUS* OF CAERE: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE PALM TREE FRESCOES OF THE HYPOGAEUM OF CLEPSINA

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LAY ABSTRACT:

The Hypogaeum of Clepsina is an underground ritual chamber in Caere, which scholars theorize to be a *mundus*, a liminal space where chthonic rituals were enacted in honour of the infernal gods. The *mundus* was tied to notions of civic foundation, which suggests that the hypogaeum's construction (or renovation) around the year 273 BC, the time when the city of Caere was officially converted into a Roman *praefectura*, was a statement of Rome's re-establishment of Caere. Thus, gaining a deeper understanding of the hypogaeum, especially the cults worshiped within it, contributes to our knowledge of the role that religion played in Roman expansion during the Republican period. The palm tree frescoes decorating the niche of the hypogaeum provide important clues as to the identity of the deity worshiped in the *mundus*. They are a reference to the god, Apollo Soranus, or Śuri, who was a chthonic deity fitting to preside over the *mundus* of Caere.

ABSTRACT:

At the heart of the Etruscan city of Caere exists the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, an underground ritual chamber which scholars theorize to be a *mundus*, a liminal space linking the earthly realm with the underworld. It was a place where chthonic rituals were conducted in honour of the infernal gods and the ghosts of the ancestors, and its creation was tied to notions of civic foundation. The hypogaeum was constructed or renovated around 273 BC, at the time when the city of Caere was officially converted into a Roman *praefectura*. As one of the earliest projects undertaken in the newly established Roman Caere, the hypogaeum likely had a symbolic significance, reinforcing the establishment and stabilization of the territory under Roman control. Consequently, gaining a deeper understanding of the *mundus* of Caere, especially in terms of the cult worship and rituals that occurred within it, contributes to our knowledge of the role that religion played in Roman expansion in Italy during the Republican period.

One of the most remarkable features of the hypogaeum is its painted niche, which is adorned with frescoes of two large palm trees. This thesis will explore the symbolic meaning of the palm trees, since these frescoes provide important clues as to the deity originally worshiped within the ritual chamber. The connection between the palm tree motif and Apollo will be investigated, as the god's cult was imbued with strong solar, oracular, and chthonic associations in Etruria and Central Italy. He was syncretized with the Italic deity, Soranus, otherwise known as Śuri, a deity who received cult veneration at the important sanctuary of Caere's port settlement, Pyrgi. Apollo Soranus, or Śuri, was a chthonic deity equated with the ruler of the underworld, and thus was a god altogether fitting to preside over the *mundus* of Caere.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

i – Title Page

ii – Descriptive Note

iii – Lay Abstract

iv – Abstract

v – Acknowledgements

vi – Table of Contents

vii-ix – List of Illustrations

x – List of Abbreviations

xi – Declaration of Academic Achievement

1-6 – Introduction

7-33 – Chapter 1: Apollo and the Palm Tree

34-61 – Chapter 2: The Cult of Apollo in Etruria

62-97 – Chapter 3: The *Mundus* of Caere

98-100 – Conclusion

101-128 – Illustrations

129-141 – Bibliography

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

Introduction:

Figure 1 – Map of Caere. Photo source: Banti, 1973.

Figure 2 – Palm tree fresco from the niche of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina. Photo source: Colivicchi, 2014.

Chapter 1:

Figure 3 – Athenian red-figure calyx krater depicting Apollo, Artemis, Leto, and the personification of Delos around a palm tree. Palermo, Mus. Arch. Regionale 2178, Beazley Archive 220558. Photo source: Perseus Project.

Figure 4 – Athenian red-figure calyx krater, attributed to the Cadmus Painter, depicting the contest between Apollo and Marsyas. Ruvo, Museo Jatta 1093. Beazley Archive 215689. Photo source: Beazley Archive.

Figure 5 – Athenian black-figure hydria depicting the struggle between Apollo and Herakles for the Delphic Tripod. Stuttgart, Wurttembergisches Landesmuseum 84.1, Beazley Archive 14872. Photo source: Beazley Archive.

Figure 6 – Athenian red-figure calyx krater depicting Dionysos greeting Apollo upon his return from the land of the Hyperboreans. St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum ST1807, Beazley Archive 215695. Photo source: Beazley Archive.

Figure 7 – Athenian red-figure cup, attributed to Onesimos, depicting Achilles dragging Troilos to the altar of Apollo. Perugia, Museo Civico 89, Beazley Archive 203224. Photo source: Beazley Archive.

Figure 8 – Fould stamnos CA 6529, depicting Achilles preparing to ambush Troilos, while Athena watches. Photo source: Gaultier and Villard, 1985.

Figure 9 – Fould stamnos CA 6529, depicting Troilos with his horses. Photo source: Gaultier and Villard, 1985.

Figure 10 – Fould stamnos CA 6529, depicting Polyxena, by the water fountain with a palm tree. Photo source: Gaultier and Villard, 1985.

Figure 11 – Fould stamnos CA 6529, depicting Ajax retrieving the body of Achilles. Photo source: Gaultier and Villard, 1985.
Figure 12 – Fresco from the Tomb of the Bulls in Tarquinia, depicting Achilles ambushing Troilos. Photo source: Tuck, 2015.
Chapter 2:
Figure 13 – Etruscan bronze mirror from Orvieto, depicting Usil rising from the waters of Okeanos. Minneapolis Institute of the Arts 57.198, Corpus Speculorum Etruscorum 1.26a. Photo source: Simon, 2006.
Figure 14 – Etruscan bronze mirror from Tuscania, depicting Usil, with the attributes of Apollo, among Nethuns and Thesan. Vatican Museum, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 12645, Etruskische Spiegel 1.76. Photo source: De Grummond, 2006.
Figure 15 – Map of Cerveteri showing the location of S. Antonio. Photo source: Izzet, 2000.
Figure 16 – Altar lambda at Pyrgi. Photo source: Colonna, 2006.
Figure 17 – Terracotta antefixes from Pyrgi, depicting a) Usil (or Śuri?), b) mistress of horses (Cavatha?). Photo source: Simon, 2006.
Figure 18 – Shrine *Gamma* at Pyrgi. Photo source: Colonna, 2006.
Figure 19 – Inscribed conical object with Etruscan inscription referencing Cavatha. Photo source: De Grummond, 2004.
Figure 20 – Canine statuette from Cortona, dedicated to Calu. Photo source: Defosse, 1972.
Figure 21 – Fresco of Aita wearing a wolf cap, from the Tomb of Orcus II, Tarquinia. Photo source: Elliot, 1995.
Figure 22 – Etruscan urn from Chiusi, depicting a ritual with a chained wolf emerging from a *puteal*. Photo source: Defosse, 1972.
Figure 23 – Etruscan urn from Perugia, depicting a ritual with a man wearing a wolf skin emerging from a *puteal*. Photo source: Defosse, 1972.
Figure 24 – Lid from a Villanovan situla, depicting a ritual with a chained wolf (or possibly the monster, Olta) in the centre. Photo source: Elliot, 1995.

Chapter 3:

Figure 25 – Inscription of C. Genucius Clepsina. Photo source: Colivicchi, 2014.

Figure 26 – Plan of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina. Photo source: Colivicchi, 2014.

Figure 27 – Graffito of Sol Invictus Mithras slaying a bull. Photo source: Colivicchi, 2014.

Figure 28 – Possible mundus complex in Bolsena. Photo source: Pailler, 1970.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

c. – *circa*

C. – century

BC – before Christ

AD – *anno Domini*

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

I declare that I am the sole author of this paper, having conducted the research and composed the writing myself. However, completion of this work would not have been possible without the knowledge and expertise of Dr. Fabio Colivicchi, head of the Caere Project and expert on the Hypogaeum of Clepsina. Under his supervision, I participated in the Caere Project for three excavation seasons, during which time I explored the hypogaeum and its surrounding area, and studied the history and culture of Etruscan Caere. The research being done by the Caere Project inspired me to examine the significance of the palm tree frescoes of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, in order to learn more about the cult function of this important ritual structure. Furthermore, the guidance of Dr. Spencer Pope in the writing of this paper was crucial for its successful completion.

Introduction

The Etruscan city of Caere, modern day Cerveteri, is situated on the Tyrrhenian coast, approximately 49 km to the north of Rome. Although a small town now, ancient Caere was once a thriving city, and one of the greatest cultural and religious centres of the Etruscan world. She was a coastal city whose economy was centred on sea-faring and trade, possessing no less than five port settlements where goods from all over the Mediterranean were shipped. Her largest port, Pyrgi, had a huge sanctuary where sea-farers, merchants, and visitors from throughout the Mediterranean world could come to worship the gods. Caere was particularly influenced by interactions with the Greeks of *Magna Graecia*, and many Greek merchants and artisans called Caere their home, running workshops from which they could easily sell Greek wares to their Etruscan clientele. Consequently, Caere adopted many Greek customs, such as athletic games and banqueting practices. New religious ideas and mythological tales were also transmitted to the city through interactions with the Greeks, so much so that the Caerites were even said to have a treasury at Delphi, where they would consult the oracle of Apollo on important matters of state.[1] Furthermore, Caere's proximity to Rome made them close neighbours, and for the most part, they maintained good relations with each other. Caere and the other nearby Etruscan communities had a great influence upon Rome, especially in religion, where they transmitted many fundamental rituals to the Romans.

[1] Strabo, 5.2.3.

Caere's supremacy over the sea, along with the authority and affluence that accompanied it, peaked in the Archaic period and began to wane at the end of the 5th C. BC. Already by the time of Roman expansion in the Italic peninsula, she was only a shadow of her former glory, and was easily absorbed into the Roman sphere of control. Caere became an official *praefectura* of Rome around 273 BC, and came under the control of a man named C. Genucius Clepsina, a Roman senator of Etruscan descent, and the first *praefectus* of Caere.[2] One of the first exploits he undertook in the newly occupied Roman Caere was to construct, or more likely, to renovate, an important religious structure situated in the centre of the city. This area of Caere had been a venerable religious site from a very early period in the settlement's history, and thus was a prime location for Clepsina to leave his mark on the religious landscape of the city (Fig. 1). Located in the area of Cerveteri now known as the Vigna Marini-Vitalini, the Hypogeaum of Clepsina is an elaborate subterranean ritual complex, consisting of a main chamber, which is reached by a long staircase and *dromos*, a deep *cavaedium*, and a tunnel system. The hypogeum is remarkable for the number of inscriptions written on the walls of the main chamber, the most famous of which is the name of C. Genucius Clepsina, *praefectus*, which was traced into the plaster coating of the wall.

The Hypogaeum of Clepsina also has another very significant feature: a frescoed niche that serves as the focal point of the main chamber. The niche is located in the

[2] M. Torelli, 2000, "La Fondazione della *praefectura Caeritum*," in *The Roman Middle Republic: Politics, Religion, and Historiography c. 400-133 BC*, ed. Christer Bruun (Rome: Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae, Vol. 23): 150-157. For the scholarship on this subject, see chapter 3.

northern corner of the chamber, and is oriented in the direction of north north-east, a direction that is associated with the chthonic realm according to augural lore.[3] The niche connects the main chamber with the tunnel system, and although it is narrow in width, it spans the whole height of the chamber in length. Furthermore, the niche is aligned with a large window in the main chamber, through which the light of the setting sun on the eve of the winter solstice could shine through and illuminate it. The frescoes that adorn the niche are original to Clepsina's creation or renovation of the space, as they are Hellenistic in style and executed in true-fresco technique on the coat of plaster dated by the inscription of Clepsina. The paintings on the back wall of the niche are, regrettably, very damaged, but they seem to depict two palmettes framed by small white doves. However, the frescoes adorning the side walls of the niche are well preserved, and demonstrate the full artistry of the niche's decoration. They depict two large palm trees flanking the niche, painted in vibrant hues of greens, blues, and browns. The palm trees measure 1.8 m in height, and are detailed with the fronds and the trunks carefully articulated in darker pigments (Fig. 2).[4]

The palm tree is an important motif in the ancient repertoire with many different meanings. It could signify longevity, prosperity, and posterity, making it a very powerful sign of the future welfare of the newly established Roman community.[5] However, the palm trees of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina may also have had a more nuanced meaning,

[3] Torelli, 2000, 147.
[4] Torelli, 2000, 147.
[5] Fabio Colivicchi, 2014, "The *Mundus* of Caere and Early Etruscan Urbanization," in *Urban Dreams and Realities: Remains and Representations of the Ancient City*, Ed. Adam M. Kemezis (Leiden: Brill): 54-55.

connected with the cult function of the subterranean shrine and the deity worshipped within it. It has been proposed that the Hypogaeum of Clepsina was a *mundus*, an underground ritual structure in Roman religion related to the concept of civic foundation, and believed to be a gateway to the underworld through which offerings could be made to the infernal deities, and the *manes* could emerge into the realm of the living on certain days.[6] The *mundus* of Rome was consecrated to the chthonic deities Dis Pater, Proserpina, and Ceres, whose presence indicates the agricultural associations of the *mundus* and the chthonic realm. Probably of Etruscan origin, the *mundus* was an important ritual structure for communing with the dead, and likely served an oracular and divinatory function as well.

The intentional astronomical alignment of the niche with the sunset of the winter solstice indicates the strong chthonic and solar associations of the subterranean shrine, as the sun was believed to ritually die at this time. The NNE facing orientation of the niche, a realm of the heavens which the Etruscans believed was ruled by Dis Pater, further supports the chthonic nature of the *mundus*.[7] The palm tree frescoes of the niche area may be a symbolic reference to the presiding deity of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, a god who was altogether chthonic, solar, and oracular in nature. This was the Etruscan god, Śuri, otherwise known as Apollo Soranus, an important chthonic deity in central Italy and one

[6] Torelli, 2000, 141-177.
[7] L. B. van der Meer, 1987, *The Bronze Liver of Piacenza: Analysis of a Polytheistic Structure*, Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology, vol. 2 (Amsterdam), 22-26. Martianus Capella names the god Dis Pater, but perhaps it was really an Etruscan equivalent of the underworld god who resided in this realm. Mart. Cap. 1, 45 ff.

of the principle deities worshiped at the nearby sanctuary of Pyrgi.[8] In Italy, Apollo's connections with oracular prophecy, the sun, and the underworld were emphasized, and he was easily syncretized with Etruscan chthonic, oracular, and solar deities, as in the case of Śuri. The palm tree was an important iconographical marker of Apollo even in Etruria, and so it is possible that the palm tree was adopted as a symbol of Śuri as well. Furthermore, the chthonic connections of Apollo Soranus were so strong in central Italy that he was also conflated with Dis Pater, ruler of the underworld and also of the *mundus*. The solar alignment of the niche and its orientation towards the realm of the heavens in which Dis Pater resided further support the argument that the niche was sacred to Śuri. Therefore, it is possible that the niche of the *mundus* of Caere was consecrated to the solar, oracular, and chthonic deity, Śuri, whose Apollonian associations made the palm tree a fitting decoration for the hypogaeum's most sacred space.

The first chapter of this thesis will focus on establishing the palm tree as an iconographical signifier of Apollo, both in Greece and in Italy. It will examine the use of the palm tree in Greek vase painting as a symbol for indicating myths and locations sacred to Apollo, with or without the god being represented physically in the scene. It will also study the adoption of the palm tree motif in Etruria as a symbol of Apollo, as appears in the Troilos Fresco from the Tomb of the Bulls in Tarquinia. In so doing, it will demonstrate that the palm tree served as a symbol of Apollo in Italy and Etruria, and

[8] Giovanni Colonna, 2007, "L'Apollo di Pyrgi: Sur/suri e L'Apollo Sourios," *Studi Etruschi*, vol. 73, 101-134.

could be used to denote places sacred to the god, such as the niche in the Hypogaeum of Clepsina.

This thesis will then discuss the cult of Apollo in central Italy and Etruria, examining how the Greek god became syncretized with the Etruscan sun god, Usil, and assumed chthonic associations because of the belief that the sun symbolically died at night. Furthermore, the second chapter will focus on Apollo's syncretism with Śuri, also known as Apollo Soranus, an important deity worshipped in central Italy and Etruria who was imbued with strong solar, chthonic, and oracular associations. It will consider the prominent cult worship of Śuri in the territory of Caere, and establish him as a probable candidate for the presiding deity of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina.

The final thesis chapter will address the issue of interpreting the religious function of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, and will support the argument that the subterranean shrine was a *mundus*. This chapter situates the cult of Śuri in the chthonic, oracular, and possibly solar nexus that the concept of the *mundus* encompasses. However, examining the *mundus* is also crucial for understanding the larger significance of Clepsina's construction (or more likely, renovation) of the hypogaeum in Caere. Connected to notions of civic foundation, the creation of a *mundus* in Caere by Clepsina during this transitional time period would have been a symbolic act signifying the re-foundation of Caere as a Roman *praefectura*. As such, gaining a better understanding of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, and the cults worshiped within it, contributes greatly to knowledge of the Romans' use of religion in establishing new settlements in Italy during the Republican period.

Chapter One - Apollo and the Palm Tree

"Rejoice, blessed Leto, for you bare glorious children, the lord Apollo and Artemis who delights in arrows; her in Ortygia, and him in rocky Delos, as you rested against the great mass of the Cynthian hill hard by a palm-tree by the streams of Inopus."

Homeric Hymn to Apollo, II.18

At the heart of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina is a small, yet elaborately painted, niche. The palm tree frescoes decorating it offer important evidence for understanding the ritual function of the space and the identity of the deity worshipped within it. As such, it is important to investigate the symbolic meaning of the palm tree in order to understand the significance of its appearance on the walls of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina.

The palm tree was a prevalent motif in the ancient Mediterranean world and consequently had many different symbolic meanings that varied with the cultural context of its use. It was a prominent symbol in the Near East, closely related to the sacred tree, and conveyed ideas of fertility and abundance. In Egypt, the palm symbolized longevity and eternity, and was sacred to the sun god Re because the shape of its branches were thought to resemble the radial rays of the sun. To the Archaic Greeks, the palm was foremost a sacred symbol of Apollo, but it could also be used in art to suggest the eastern world and ideas of exoticism. It later became a symbol of victory, as the practice of awarding palm branches to victorious athletes at games was established in the Classical period. This custom was adopted by the Romans during the third century BC, who afterwards strongly associated the palm tree with victory, whether it be in athletic competition, military matters, or even personal business. For the Etruscans, the palm tree motif was most likely introduced to them through contact with the Phoenicians and the

Near East during the Orientalizing period. The palm tree motif appears on imported Phoenician goods found in Etruscan tombs from this period, such as silver bowls and precious metal jewellery. However, trade with the Greeks and the importation of Greek figural ceramic wares to Etruria resulted in the association of the palm tree with the god Apollo in Etruria as early as the Archaic period.

The variety of meanings for the palm tree in the Mediterranean world presents difficulties when trying to interpret the frescoes of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina. Furthermore, since it is possible for symbols to be multivalent, the palm tree motif may have several different and interchangeable meanings, possibly even at the same time. As such, the archaeological and historical contexts of the frescoes must be considered to evaluate their significance. Given the proposed function of this ritual space as a mundus, herein a case is made that the palm tree frescoes are a reference to the presiding deity of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina: the solar, chthonic, and oracular god, Śuri, otherwise known as Apollo Soranus. This chapter will examine the motif of the palm tree, particularly in relation to its use as a symbol of Apollo, in order to demonstrate the strong connection that existed between Apollo and the palm tree in Etruria, as well as in Greece. In both Etruria and Greece, the palm tree was employed as an iconographical symbol referring to Apollo, and was used in art to demarcate places and serve as a visual reminder of myths that were sacred to the deity.

The Birth of Apollo and the Palm Tree of Delos

The Homeric Hymn to Apollo is one of the earliest recorded accounts of Apollo's presence in Greece, and it demonstrates the existence of a strong relationship between Apollo and the palm tree already in this early period. The hymn sings of Leto's painful labour while giving birth to Apollo on the island of Delos, where she grabbed hold of a palm tree for support during her ordeal. As a result of the events surrounding the god's birth, both the island of Delos and the palm tree became sacred possessions of Apollo, and a sanctuary to Apollo was founded upon the island. There are even representations of this famous childbirth in Greek art: a particularly vivid depiction of Leto's childbirth is portrayed on a red-figure pyxis from Euboea, showing the goddess, seated and enduring her labour pains while she clutches the trunk of a palm tree with her left hand.[9] A woman supports Leto from behind; she is most likely the goddess of childbirth, Eileithyia, whose assistance is crucial to the long-awaited delivery of the twins. Athena and several other female divinities are also in attendance, observing the momentous occasion of Apollo and Artemis' birth on the Island of Delos.

The association of the palm tree and Apollo's birth is reflected in several other artistic representations of the god as well, most notably in examples that depict all three members of the Delian triad together. An Athenian red-figure calyx krater dating to c. 450-400 BC and found in Sicily depicts Apollo, Artemis, and Leto congregating around a palm tree (Fig. 3).[10] Leto and Artemis stand on either side of the palm tree, while Apollo

[9] Athenian red-figure pyxis, c. 400-300, Athens, National Museum 1635, Beazley Archive 2090.
[10] Athenian red-figure calyx krater, c. 450-400, Palermo, Mus. Arch. Regionale 2178, Beazley Archive 220558.

sits facing them, crowned with laurels and holding a laurel branch in his right hand. Artemis holds a phiale and an oinochoe in her hands as she prepares to pour a libation, an act that indicates the sacred context of the scene. Behind Apollo stands another female figure, who also bears a laurel branch in her right hand. Beazley has tentatively identified this divinity as the personification of Delos, whose presence completes the portrayal of the Delian triad.[11] The palm tree on this krater establishes the location of the scene as the island of Delos, and celebrates the members of the Delian Triad. Another such depiction is found on a black-figure amphora from the Louvre, which features the three divine family members congregating around a palm tree, together with a deer.[12] Leto is seated on a folding chair in the shade of the palm tree, as her children, Apollo and Artemis, stand facing her. The palm tree also appears in compositions that feature only Artemis and Apollo, who are often depicted facing each other while standing on opposite sides of a palm tree. An early example of this arrangement is provided by the Amasis Painter, whose lekythos depicts Apollo, holding his *kithara*, and Artemis, her bow, as they stand opposite each other and separated by a palm tree, a deer, and a folding stool.[13] A slightly different configuration of this scene can be found on an Athenian black-figure amphora from Tarquinia, which depicts the divine siblings standing together between two palm trees, each of which has a stag standing behind its textured trunk.[14]

[11] Beazley, J.D., Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1963): 1321.9, 1690
[12] Athenian black-figure amphora, c. 550-500, Paris, Louvre F252, Beazley Archive 205657.
[13] Athenian black-figure lekythos, c. 575-525, attributed to the Amasis Painter by Beazley, London, British Mus. B548, Beazley Archive 310486.
[14] Athenian black-figure neck amphora, c. 550-500, Tarquinia, Mus. Naz. Tarquiniese RC6991, Beazley Archive 320083.

Moreover, the palm tree is occasionally featured alongside Apollo alone, a scheme which particularly strengthens his personal connection with the symbol in Greek art. For example, an Athenian red-figure skyphos from Palermo depicts the god playing his *kithara* while he sits on top of a pile of palm leaves.[15] A white raven, another one of Apollo's symbols, perches in a nearby tree to listen to the god's music. The combination of Apollo's symbols: the palm tree, the *kithara*, and the raven, securely convey the god's identity in the composition. Another, more simple depiction of Apollo standing alongside his palm tree can be found on a red-figure lekythos from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.[16] Apollo, holding his customary *kithara* in his left hand, is shown plucking a leaf from the palm tree standing next to him, an action that invokes the intimate connection between the god and his symbolic tree.

The earliest literary reference to the palm tree of Apollo and his precinct on Delos appears in the *Odyssey*, during Odysseus' initial address to the Phocaean princess, Nausicaä. When Odysseus first approaches and tries to win her favour by means of flattery, he fabricates an eloquent simile to describe her youthful beauty. He likens Nausicaä to a young palm tree, shooting up beside the altar of Apollo at his sanctuary on Delos.[17] For this simile to be meaningful for Homer's audience, the connection between Apollo, his palm tree, and his birthplace on Delos must have been already widely recognized in the early Archaic period. Odysseus' reference to a palm tree growing beside

[15] Athenian red-figure skyphos, c. 500-450, Palermo, Mus. Arch. Regionale T183, Beazley Archive 7789.
[16] Athenian red-figure lekythos, c. 475-425, New York, Metropolitan Mus. 53.224, Beazley Archive 207592.
[17] Hom. *Od*. 6.162-165.

the altar of Apollo also reflects the early establishment of a more complex iconographical motif employed in Greek art, which also came to designate locations sacred to Apollo and the Delian Triad. The combined motif of a palm tree together with an altar was frequently employed in Greek art to indicate shrines belonging explicitly to the members of the Delian triad, especially Apollo and Artemis.[18] An Attic red-figure column krater from Madrid attributed to the Comacchio Painter shows Apollo standing at an altar, behind which grows a large palm tree.[19] He holds a phiale in his right hand, about to pour a libation, and he is flanked by two female figures, possibly Artemis and Leto, or perhaps Artemis and the personification of Delos. A black-figure neck amphora found at Tarquinia presents another example of this motif, as it features a scene of Apollo, Artemis and Leto standing around an altar which has a palm tree growing behind it.[20] It is even possible for this combined motif of a palm tree and an altar to denote places sacred to the Delian triad even when the gods themselves are not explicitly included in the scenes. Sourvinou-Inwood has made a case that the combined motif of an altar and a palm tree is used frequently in vase painting to denote locations, rituals, and myths which were associated with Artemis, in particular those relating to the *Arkteia* at Brauron.[21] Several

[18] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, 1991, "Altars with Palm-Trees, Palm-Trees, and *Parthenoi*," in *Readings in Greek Culture: Text and Images, Rituals and Myths* (New York: Clarendon Press): 100. Sourvinou-Inwood argues that there are no representations of the altar and palm tree motif existing in Greek art that cannot be tied to the members of the Delian triad (and rarely to Dionysos, because of his associations with Delphi).

[19] Athenian red-figure column krater, c. 450, Madrid, Museo Arqueologico Nacional 1999.99.91, Beazley Archive 9024734.

[20] Athenian black-figure neck amphora, c. 525-475, Hannover, Kestner Museum 753, Beazley Archive 3254.

[21] Sourvinou-Inwood, 1991, 99-143. Sourvinou-Inwood argues that the motif of the palm tree and the altar was connected in particular to Artemis' role as the protector of young girls as they entered into the age of marriage and womanhood. Consequently, scenes of pre-nuptial events or erotic pursuits are also included in

vase fragments have been unearthed at the Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron that depict a running race between young girls, presumably depicting a competition which was part of the *Arkteia* festival.[22] A palm tree is included in the background of these scenes to designate the competition's location as the Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron, in the same manner as the palm tree is used to denote spheres of influence belonging to Apollo. Furthermore, these fragments demonstrate that the motif of the palm tree was employed in Greek art not only to indicate Artemis in association with Delos and the Delian triad, but also to refer to her in connection to her sanctuary at Brauron, a cult fairly removed from that of the Delian triad.

The Palm Tree of Apollo in Mythological Settings: Apollo and the Punishment of Marsyas

Just as the palm tree could indicate sanctuaries and spheres of influence belonging to Artemis, it could also serve as a common device in Greek art for conveying the identity of myths and settings sacred to Apollo. A palm tree was often included in the background of scenes illustrating mythical events that occurred in Apollo's domain, regardless of

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the sphere of Artemis' influence, which explains the occasional appearance of the altar and palm tree motif in depictions of such scenes. However, her argument has been challenged by Torelli, who views the results of her inquiry as inconclusive, and disagrees that the motif of the palm tree and altar always refers to Artemis, especially in her guise as a guardian of young girls. He points out that a goddess such as Hera or Persephone was more likely to preside over the pre-nuptial rituals of a young woman than Artemis, and that the palm tree was a multivalent symbol, with a range of different meanings such as victory, fertility and exoticism. Nevertheless, what is important for the purposes of this study is that in specific contexts the palm tree is certainly used to denote places sacred to Artemis and the Delian Triad in Greek art, such as in depictions of the festival at Brauron or in illustrations of myths regarding Artemis. Mario Torelli, 2002, "Divagazioni sul tema della palma. La palma di Apollo e la palma di Artemide," in *Le orse di Brauron; un rituale di iniziazione femminile nel santuario di Artemide*, ed. Bruno Gentili and Franca Perusino (Pisa: ETS), 139-151. Also see Marco Giuman, 1999, *La dea, la vergine, il sangue: archaeologia di un culto femminile* (Milan: Longanesi).

[22] For the publication of these fragments, see Lilly Kahil, 1965, "Autour De L'Artémis Attique," *Antike Kunst* 8: 20-33, and Lilly Kahil, 1977, "L'Artémis de Brauron," *Antike Kunst* 20: 86-98.

whether the god himself was involved in the narrative, or the event simply transpired at one of his sanctuaries. The palm tree became a symbol of Apollo's authority, and was frequently included in the depiction of other Apollonian sanctuaries, such as Delphi, and the sanctuary of Thymbraion Apollo in Asia Minor. It was also often employed in conjunction with other symbols of Apollo, such as the Delphic tripod and the *omphalos*, to impart fully a sense of Apollo's eminence in the scene. For example, an Attic red-figure volute krater from Ruvo, attributed to the Cadmus Painter, depicts the famous musical contest between Marsyas and Apollo, a popular theme warning of the dangers of hubris and the occasionally vengeful nature of the god.[23] The myth tells how the satyr, Marsyas, discovered Athena's discarded pipes and challenged Apollo to a musical competition, one which he inevitably loses. As punishment for his hubris, Marsyas was flayed alive, in some accounts while hanging from a tree.[24] On the Ruvo krater, Marsyas sits beneath a spindly palm tree, strumming upon a large *kithara*, while Apollo sits and listens opposite to him (Fig. 4).[25] Athena stands between the two competitors, helping to judge the outcome of the musical contest. In the foreground of the vase stands a tall tripod, which together with the palm tree, serves to indicate that the mythical narrative and its setting belong to the domain of Apollo. These Apollonian symbols function as important aids in the identification of both the god, Apollo, and the narrative of his competition with Marsyas on this krater. Perhaps the palm tree also fulfils a dual purpose

[23] Athenian red-figure calyx krater, attributed to the Cadmus Painter, late 5th C. Ruvo, Museo Jatta 1093.
[24] Apollod. *Bib*. 1.4.2.
[25] For the identification of the tree as a palm tree, see Sheramy D. Bundrick, 2005, *Music and Image in Classical Athens* (New York: Cambridge University Press): 138.

in the illustration: it presages the impending punishment of Marsyas, as it will be the tree from which he is suspended while being flayed. The same krater bears another version of the myth of Marsyas upon its neck, in which Marsyas this time plays his customary pipes in the contest, rather than the *kithara*, as Apollo abides nearby and listens.[26] A palm tree is also included in this composition to foreshadow Apollo's inevitable victory.

In other representations of the myth of Marsyas, there is usually some Apollonian symbol included in the arrangement to help facilitate the identification of the scene. Frequently it is Apollo's laurel, whether in the form of a branch held by the god himself, or a tree growing in the background of the scene. One example of Apollo's contest with Marsyas from the British Museum features the satyr playing his pipes before a Laurel tree, while Apollo and two women judge his performance.[27] One of these women holds a *kithara*, perhaps identifying her as a muse. The laurel tree is included in this depiction to emphasize the dominance of Apollo in the myth, fulfilling the same function as the palm tree does in other depictions of the story. A further symbol of Apollo which appears occasionally in depictions of the myth is the Delphic tripod, such as the one which

[26]Although it is conventional for Marsyas to be depicted playing his pipes in the competition, there are nonetheless several Athenian vases which show him performing on a *kithara*. Another krater attributed to the Cadmos painter also shows Marsyas holding a *kithara* while Athena and Apollo converse with each other nearby (Athenian red-figure krater, 450-400, Syracuse, Mus. Arch. Regionale Paolo Orsi 17427, Beazley Archive 215692). A further Athenian red-figure krater from Heidelberg depicts Marsyas seated on a rock playing a *kithara* while Apollo stands before him (450-400, Heidelberg, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität B195, Beazley Archive 215753.) It seems that this representation of Marsyas was a deviation from the original myth which appeared in Athens during the late 5th C. For more on this matter, see Michalis Tiverios, 2011, "The Cadmus Painter and his Time," in ᾽Αττικὸν … κέραμον: *Veder Greco a Camarina dal principe di Biscari ai nostril giorni*, ed. Giada and Elvia Giudice (Catania): 165-171. Also see Bundrick, 2005, 131-139.

[27] Athenian red-figure bell krater, c. 450-400, London, British Mus. 1920.6-13.2, Beazley Archive 215756.

appears on an Athenian red-figure bell krater in the Hillsborough Collection.[28] In this depiction, Apollo leans upon his laurel staff and listens while Marsyas plays his pipes, and in the background of the contest stands a column surmounted by a tripod. A further illustration of this scene from an Attic red-figure calyx krater in Bologna combines the two elements of a palm tree and tripod together, just as on the Ruvo krater, in order to clearly identify the myth as belonging to Apollo.[29] The audience for the contest has expanded considerably in this depiction, as many of the other gods, including Hermes, Poseidon, and Artemis, gather around to listen. Apollo himself holds his *kithara* and laurel staff while he stands and listens to Marsyas' pipe playing. A palm tree situated behind Hermes and a small tripod resting on top of a column are included in the background to clearly convey that the myth depicted on this krater belongs in the corpus of Apollonian myths.

Apollo and the Struggle for the Delphic Tripod

The struggle between Apollo and Herakles over the Delphic tripod is another popular mythical encounter in vase painting during the late Archaic period.[30] According to Apollodorus, Herakles once visited the sanctuary of Delphi to consult the Pythia. However, when the priestess refused to deliver an oracle to him, Herakles instead decided

[28] Athenian red-figure bell krater, c. 450-400, Hillsborough (CA), W.R. Hearst 20, Beazley Archive 215701. For a more complete discussion of the representation of Aeschylus' *Erinyes* in vase painting, see Oliver Taplin, 2007, *Pots and Plays: Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase Painting of the Fourth Century BC* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum): 58-66.
[29] Athenian red-figure calyx krater, c. 450-400, Bologna, Museo Civico Archeologico 301, Beazley Archive 215693.
[30] Karl Schefold, 1992, *Gods and Heroes in Late Archaic Greek Art* (University of Cambridge Press): 153-158.

to plunder the sanctuary and abscond with the Delphic tripod. Apollo struggled with Herakles to stop him from stealing the tripod, and finally, Zeus himself had to intervene and quell his quarrelling sons.[31] In several illustrations of this myth, a palm tree is included in the background of the scene to situate the mythical conflict in the realm of Apollo's influence, specifically his sanctuary at Delphi. The contest between Herakles and Apollo is displayed on a black-figure hydria from the Landesmuseum Württemberg, which features a depiction of Herakles attempting to rip the tripod away from Apollo, who has lost his grasp on its legs, as Athena and Artemis observe the conflict and cheer for their respective champions (Fig. 5).[32] In the centre of the composition stands a large palm tree, designating the scene of the struggle as Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi, and perhaps even foreshadowing the outcome of the struggle as Apollo's victory. An Athenian red-figure amphora from Boston also boasts a similar depiction of this myth (although the goddesses are omitted), and also includes a palm tree in the background between the two competitors.[33] A slightly different arrangement is presented by a black-figure oinochoe from Brussels, which shows the two divinities struggling over the tripod in between two palm trees.[34] This scheme is echoed by a black-figure amphora from Berlin, which also employs two palm trees in its composition to frame the divine contenders, as well as two deer to emphasize further the Apollonian nature of the scene.[35]

[31] Apollod. *Bib*. 2.6.2. Also see Plut. *De E Apud Delphos*, 6; Paus. 10.13.7.-10.13.8
[32] Athenian black-figure hydria, c.525-475, Stuttgart, Wurttembergisches Landesmuseum 84.1, Beazley Archive 14872**.**
[33] Athenian red-figure amphora, c.525-475, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 63.1515, Beazley Archive 275680.
[34] Athenian black-figured oinochoe, c.550-500, Brussels, Musees Royaux A1903, Beazley Archive 330553.
[35] Athenian black-figured amphora, c. 550-500, Berlin, Antikensammlung F1853, Beazley Archive 6095.

The palm trees included in these depictions of the mythical struggle serve to emphasize the presence and superiority of Apollo in the narrative. Not only do they situate the conflict in a setting that belongs to Apollo, in this case, his sanctuary at Delphi, but they also function as signs of Apollo's dominance in the scene. Moreover, it is clear from these representations of the myth that the palm tree has come to denote Apollo's authority at other sanctuaries, like Delphi, as well as the sanctuary of Delos with which it was originally associated.

Apollo in the Land of the Hyperboreans

The secondary reading of the palm tree as a symbol of Apollo's presence at Delphi is supported by depictions of a further mythical encounter that occurred at the sanctuary. It was believed that Apollo would annually leave his sanctuary at Delphi for three months in the winter to visit the far away land of the Hyperboreans. During this time, although Dionysos was looking after the sanctuary in Apollo's stead, all those who dwelt at Delphi prayed for his swift return in the spring. [36] The return of Apollo from the land of the Hyperboreans is pictured on several vases, which show the god being received by Bacchic revelers, such as Maenads and Satyrs, at his sanctuary at Delphi. Moreover, several of these depictions were influenced by an earlier version of the myth recounted by

[36] Plut. *Mor*. 389c. It is from Plutarch that we learn of Apollo's three month annual absence from the sanctuary, during which time Dionysos reigns at Delphi instead. During this time, he says that dithyrambs were sung to Dionysos instead of paens to Apollo, and that the oracles ceased. However, an earlier version of the myth by Alcaeus mentions that Apollo flew away from Delos to the land of the Hyperboreans, remaining there for a full year before arriving at Delphi (Alcaeus frag. 2). As with most myths, there were variations in the story of Apollo's visit to the land of Hyperboreans, and sometimes cult practice did not align perfectly with the myth itself. Joseph E. Fontenrose, 1959, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins* (United States: University of California Press): 375-389. See chapter 2, pages 39-43, for further discussion of the important chthonic connotations of this myth.

the poet, Alcaeus, who explains that Apollo rode away to the northern land on a chariot pulled by swans.[37] A late classical Athenian red-figure krater at the British Museum demonstrates a modified version of the myth, in which Apollo arrives at his sanctuary on the back of a swan, holding his *kithara* in his hands. [38] Two maenads and a satyr greet him, with the satyr raising his right arm in a salutation to the arriving god. A hare runs beneath the arriving god, perhaps a symbol of fertility and the coming spring. In the centre of the composition stands a large palm tree, situating the myth at Apollo's sanctuary of Delphi. The interpretation of this vase is corroborated by a red-figure calyx krater from St. Petersburg, which bears an illustration of Apollo and Dionysos greeting each other and shaking hands, as maenads and satyrs are seated around them, carrying out acts of worship and playing music (Fig. 6).[39] A large palm tree stands between the two gods in the middle of the composition, and situated in front of the tree, in the foreground of the vase, is the *omphalos* of Delphi. Furthermore, at the edge of the scene, adjacent to one of the seated satyrs, stands a large tripod. The combination of these three potent symbols of Apollo conveys the setting of the gods' reunion as the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. Dionysos, who also possessed a cult at the sanctuary of Delphi, was believed to

[37] Alcaeus (307c Lobel-Page), as paraphrased by Himerius, *Or*. 48.10–11.
[38] Athenian red-figure bell krater, c. 380, London, British Mus. 1917.7-25.2, Beazley Archive 217933. For the interpretation of this vase, see E. M. W. Tillyard, 1923, *The Hope Vases: A Catalogue and a Discussion of the Hope Collection of Greek Vases with an Introduction on the History of the Collection and on Late Attic and South Italian Vase*, (Cambridge): 96-97.
[39] Athenian red-figure calyx krater, c. 450-400, St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum ST1807, Beazley Archive 215695.

reign in Apollo's absence, and consequently, he is included in the composition to further convey the mythical narrative and the Delphic setting.[40]

Apollo and the Flight of Orestes

Representations of other myths at Delphi typically rely on similar iconographical references to indicate the location of the scene and to suggest Apollo's presence at the sanctuary. For example, vases depicting Orestes' flight from the *Erinyes*, sometimes show him clinging desperately to the *omphalos* while Apollo prepares to purify him.[41] Other versions simply depict him kneeling before Apollo, with a tripod in the background to designate the location of the scene as Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi.[42] An Apulian red-figure krater from Naples creatively combines all these elements into a vivid depiction of Orestes' arrival at Delphi.[43] He clings to the *omphalos* while Apollo stands firmly beside him, extending his right arm and brandishing his bow to drive away the pursuing Furies. Between his feet sits the Delphic tripod, an indication that the events of this scene occur in the sacred domain of Apollo. Artemis is also present at the sanctuary, standing on a platform and watching as Apollo averts the furies. The inclusion of Artemis in the scene is unusual in depictions of this myth, but her presence functions to enhance the power of Apollo. Furthermore, Artemis concentrates intently on Apollo's actions, as is implied by

[40] Joseph E. Fontenrose, 1959, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins* (United States: University of California Press): 379-389. The strong relationship between these two gods, especially in regards to their chthonic associations, will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 2.
[41] For example, an Apulian red-figure bell krater, c. 370-360, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1976.144.
[42] For example, a Paestan red-figure bell krater, c. 350-340, from London, British Museum 1917.12-10.1.
[43] Apulian red-figure volute krater, c. 360, attributed to the Black Fury Painter, from Naples, Mus. Arch. Nazionale 82270 (H 3429).

her gesture of sheltering her brow with her hand, an action which functions to bring the viewer's attention back to Apollo himself. Apollo is the focus of this krater, dominating the entire scene with his intimidating stance, and surrounded by iconographical symbols of his authority at the sanctuary. The palm tree is one of these icons, just like the tripod, the *omphalos*, and the laurel tree, which functioned as a significant iconographical device in Greek art for indicating locations, events, or myths which belonged in the sphere of Apollo's influence.

As demonstrated above, these symbols of Apollo could even be used interchangeably, with the palm tree denoting Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi rather than Delos, and in rare cases, with the *omphalos* representing his precinct at Delos rather than Delphi. An example of the flexibility of these symbols is found in an illustration of the Delian Triad which adorns an Athenian red-figure pyxis from Ferrara.[44] It shows Apollo *kitharodos* preparing to pour a libation from the *phiale* he holds in his hand, as he and Artemis stand near an altar and their mother, Leto, accompanies them nearby. Hermes also appears at the edge of the scene, wearing his travelling attire and observing the sacral rites at the sanctuary. Symbols of the Delian Triad pervade the scene: there is a deer, a tripod, and a palm tree present. However, the most striking element of the composition is the inclusion of a female figure, labelled Delos, who is comfortably seated on the *omphalos*. The presence of the personification of Delos confirms that this scene of ritual is occurring at the sanctuary of Apollo at Delos, yet the *omphalos* of Delphi is

[44] Athenian red-figure pyxis, c. 450-400, Ferrara, Mus. Nazionale di Spina 12451, Beazley Archive 216209.

nevertheless included in the scene with the other symbols of Apollonian power. In this way, the *omphalos*, the palm tree, and the tripod could at times be used interchangeably to indicate sanctuaries and spheres of influence belonging to Apollo and the Delian Triad.

Apollo and the Murder of Troilos

Similarly, the motif of the palm tree was also used to indicate sanctuaries of Apollo other than his major precincts of Delos and Delphi. This is particularly evident in illustrations of the sanctuary of Thymbraion Apollo in Asia Minor, a sanctuary which occurs frequently in representations of the Trojan Cycle myth of Achilles and Troilos. Although the surviving literary evidence of the myth is scanty, the theme was prodigiously popular in art, decorating ceramic wares, sculptural reliefs, and even the frescoes of Etruscan tombs. It was a complex myth which allowed artists to choose their subject from several different moments of the narrative: they could illustrate the initial ambush of Troilos at the water fountain, or the desperate flight of Troilus from the pursuing Achilles, or even the brutal murder of the boy at Apollo's altar, or they could represent the ensuing fight over Troilos' body.[45] According to several ancient accounts, Achilles ambushed and murdered the Trojan prince, Troilos, at the sanctuary of Thymbraion Apollo while Troilos was exercising his horses outside of the Trojan walls. Achilles' slaughter of the boy was mandated by the gods (except Apollo), as Troilos' death was one of the requirements stipulated for the Greeks to successfully sack the city

[45] Guy Hedreen, 2001, *Capturing Troy: The Narrative Functions of Landscape in Archaic and Early Classical Greek Art* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press): 120.

of Troy.[46] In many artistic depictions of this myth, Apollonian symbols are included conspicuously in the composition. Just as in representations of Apollo's sanctuaries at Delos and Delphi, symbols such as the palm tree and the tripod were used interchangeably or in combination to convey the precinct of Thymbraion Apollo. It was important to establish the sacred setting and the presence of Apollo in representations of this myth, since it was Achilles' violent murder of the young Trojan prince at Apollo's shrine which incited the vengeful wrath of the god and ensured the hero's death.[47]

The François vase provides the most direct indication of Apollo's involvement in the myth, as it shows the god himself physically present at the sanctuary while Achilles pursues Troilos.[48] An assortment of gods is in attendance, all of whom are watching as Troilos attempts to flee Achilles on horseback. Behind Achilles stands Athena, urging the hero onwards to complete his murderous task and ensure the eventual victory of the Greek army over the Trojans.[49] Hermes also watches the unfolding incident, holding his *caduceus* and wearing his traveller's *petasus*. It is possible that his presence in the scene was intended to foreshadow the impending death of Troilos (and perhaps even that of

[46] Apollod. *Ep*. 3.32; schol. *Iliad* 24.257; Lyk. *Alex*. 307-313; schol. Lyk. *Alex*. 307-313; Dio Chrys. *Or*. 11.78.
[47] Schefold, 1992: 227; Hedreen, 1991: 162-173.
[48] Athenian black-figure volute krater, c. 600-550, Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 4209, Beazley Archive 300000.
[49] Bruno d'Agostino and Luca Cerchiai, 1999, *Il mare, la morte, l'amore: Gli Etruschi, i Greci e l'immagine* (Roma: Donzelli editore): 109, fn.9; Hedreen, 2001,167-168. Athena is featured as the patron goddess of Achilles in several representations of this myth, such as the one which is found on an Athenian black-figure hydria from Leipzig. This hydria shows Achilles pursuing Troilos and Polyxena, as Athena stands behind him and exhorts him to the chase. Athenian black-figure hydria, c. 550-500, Leipzig, Antikenmuseum d. Universitat Leipzig T49, Beazley Archive 102. Also see the discussion of the Fould Stamnoi below, pages 26-27.

Achilles), as the god prepares to assume his role as Hermes *psychopompos*.[50] Hermes turns his head back to converse with another female divinity: Thetis, the concerned mother of Achilles, who gestures anxiously to Hermes with her raised arm. She has warned her son many times that Apollo would slay him if he were to enter into battle and murder certain men.[51] Her worried posture is warranted, since an angry Apollo swiftly approaches from the other side of the fountain house, raising his left arm in indignation at the unfolding murder. The direct manifestation of Apollo in the scene, especially when considered in conjunction with the apprehension of Thetis, connects Achilles' murder of Troilos with his eventual death at the hands of a vengeful Apollo.[52]

The reason for Apollo's anger becomes apparent through representations of Achilles butchering Troilos upon the altar of Apollo and defiling it with the boy's blood, as if conducting a perverse sacrificial act. The best example of this scene is found on a red-figure cup by Onesimos, which features a depiction of the moment immediately before Troilos' murder when Achilles drags the boy towards the altar, both on its exterior and on its *tondo* (Fig. 7).[53] Both illustrations show Achilles grasping Troilos by his hair as he forces him to the altar and prepares to slaughter him. The exterior of the cup includes a more detailed setting of the scene, incorporating Troilos' horses into the image to convey further the mythical narrative. Although Apollo himself is not directly included in the

[50] Hedreen suggests that Hermes is present in the scene as a supporter of Achilles, and as a messenger of Zeus sanctioning the murderous act. Hedreen, 2001, 168.
[51] For example, according to Apollodorus, Thetis warned her son not to murder Tenes, whom some said was a son of Apollo, as this act would incite the fury of Apollo against him. Apollod. *Ep*, 3.23 and 3.26.
[52] Hedreen, 2001, 172.
[53] Athenian red-figure cup, by Onesimos, c. 500-450, Perugia, Museo Civico 89, Beazley Archive 203224.

scene, the altar is explicitly recognized as belonging in the god's sphere of influence, since a large palm tree and a tripod stand prominently behind it in the background. Another palm tree stands slightly removed from the altar, reinforcing the site of the scene as the sanctuary of Thymbraion Apollo. This impious act of slaying Troilos upon the desecrated altar of Apollo, whom some Hellenistic writers even asserted was the father of the boy, incites the fury of the god against Achilles.[54]

Symbols referring to Apollo's authority at the sanctuary also appear in depictions of other moments occurring in the course of this myth, especially in illustrations of Achilles' initial ambush of the boy at the water fountain. A raven, the messenger of Apollo, is included in many representations of this scene, such as the one that appears on an Athenian black-figure amphora from Berlin, now lost.[55] Troilos is depicted approaching the water fountain on horseback, while his sister, Polyxena, accompanies him on foot. Little do they know that Achilles is crouching menacingly behind the water fountain, fully armed with his spear and shield readied for the impending attack. Apollo's raven perches on the top of the fountain, overseeing the affair, an indication of the watchful presence of the god at his sanctuary.[56] A laurel tree growing alongside the fountain is also featured in several depictions of the ambush scene, serving to indicate that the ownership of the fountain belongs to Apollo. One example is found on an

[54] For Apollo as the father of Troilos, see Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.12.5; Lyk. *Alex*. 307-13; schol. Lyk. *Alex*. 307.
[55] Athenian black-figured amphora, c.550-500, Berlin, lost F1694, Beazley Archive 303412.
[56] For a more in depth discussion of the Raven as a symbol of Apollo, see Hedreen, 1991, 171-172; D'Agostino and Cerchiai, 1999, 109; Piero Boitani, 1989, *The European Tragedy of Troilus* (New York: Oxford University Press): 12-13.

Athenian black-figure amphora from Munich, which shows Achilles preparing to spring out from behind the fountain and brandishing his raised spear as Polyxena approaches to fill her *hydria*, while Troilos accompanies her on horseback.[57] Another Greek warrior stands behind Achilles, who is an unusual addition to the scene. Two symbols of Apollo are prominent in the scene: there is a large laurel tree growing beside the fountain and a raven soaring in the air behind Troilos. Both of these symbols signify that the scene of the ambush is set at Apollo's precinct, and that the god himself is monitoring the tragic events which are about to transpire.

Occasionally, the sanctuary of Thymbraion Apollo is denoted simply by a palm tree alone, with neither an altar nor a fountain included in the composition. A black figure amphora from Göttingen shows Achilles lurking behind a palm tree as he prepares his ambush.[58] On the opposite side of the amphora is a picture of Apollo *kitharodos*, and a tripod is included near the handle of the amphora. Apollo's divine authority is the focus of this amphora, and these Apollonian symbols of the tripod and the palm tree, together with the representation of the god himself, imply that Apollo is watching the events transpiring at his sanctuary. Just as Apollo's symbols surround Achilles in this composition, so too will Apollo's wrath envelop Achilles in the subsequent siege of Troy.

Another representation of Achilles' ambush of Troilos adorns an Etruscan red-figure *stamnos* from the Louvre, one of a pair of vessels discovered in Vulci, called the

[57] Athenian black-figure neck amphora, 575-525, Munich, Antikensammlungen J89, Beazley Archive 310004

[58] Athenian black-figure neck amphora, Gottingen, Georg-August-Universitat J12, Beazley Archive 6901. See Hedreen, 123 n.13.

Fould *Stamnoi*.[59] Here Achilles is depicted heroically nude except for his helmet, shield and spear, while before him sits a female divinity upon an altar, likely Athena (Fig. 8). She directs Achilles to attack Troilos by pointing her right hand towards the boy, who stands nearby with his horse (Fig. 9). Beside Troilos is a fountain with a lions-head spout, the base of which is partially concealed by the large palm tree growing in front of it. A female figure in eastern garb stands on the opposite side of the fountain, who is possibly intended to represent Polyxena in Trojan costume (Fig. 10).[60] The narrative ends here, and a new myth begins with the depiction of Ajax carrying the body of Achilles over his shoulder (Fig. 11). The Fould *stamnos* does not simply allude to eventual death of Achilles at Apollo's hands with a series of Apollonian symbols, but it explicitly portrays the consequences of Achilles' murderous act by including a scene of his death in the composition. The murder of Troilos may have eventually enabled the Greek army to sack Troy, but the immediate consequences of this crime are Apollo's anger and Achilles' certain death.

As the Etruscan Fould *stamnos* demonstrates, the mythological theme of Achilles and Troilos was very popular in Etruria, even appearing as early as the late 6th century BC in a remarkable Etruscan tomb fresco. This is the famous painting of Achilles and Troilos from the Tomb of the Bulls at Tarquinia, dated to c. 540-530 BC, and it is unusual in

[59] Etruscan red-figure *stamnos*, c. 300, Paris, Louvre CA 6529. See Françoise Gaultier and François Villard, 1985, "Les stamnoi Fould: un dernier éclat de la peinture sur vases en Étrurie," in *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot*, Tome 67: 1-30.

[60] Alternately, the female could be Artemis, who is occasionally shown wearing eastern dress, such as is found on an Apulian red-figure krater, c. 400-300, Paris, Louvre G515, Beazley Archive 10874. Her presence would be unusual in the narrative, but she could have been included in the composition in connection with its location at the sanctuary of Apollo. Gaultier and Villard, 1985, 23.

Archaic Etruscan funerary painting, as it is a rare depiction of a specific mythological narrative (Fig. 12).[61] The composition of the scene was derived from representations of the myth on imported Greek vases, as the artist has chosen to illustrate the moment of *stasis* before Achilles springs out of hiding and slaughters Troilos, who is approaching the fountain on horseback. Yet the fresco is not a mere imitation of the motif found on Greek vases, but rather an active adaptation of the myth to suit an Etruscan funereal context. Elements of the scene have been intentionally modified: Achilles wields in his hand not a sword, but a curved sacrificial knife, called a *machaira*, used for slitting open a victim's throat in Etruscan sacrifices. This *machaira* situates the scene in a perverted sacrificial context, wherein Troilos becomes the victim of an appalling act of premeditated human sacrifice upon the altar of Apollo.[62] The *machaira* functions proleptically, since it insinuates Achilles' impending slaughter of Troilos, an act of sacrilege that will provoke the anger of Apollo. The fountain depicted in the fresco is also suggestive of the sacrificial nature of the scene, as its chequered façade resembles other depictions of sacred altars found in Etruscan art, for example, the design of the altar found on the Campana plaques.

[61] Mythological scenes were used extensively as decoration in other forms of Etruscan art during the Archaic period, such as pottery and relief sculpture. Sepulchral art, however, preferred motifs connected with funereal practices and the afterlife, such as banqueting celebrations, funeral games, and *komos* revels. See Stephan Steingräber, 2006, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum): 66-70.

[62] D'Agostino and Cerchiai, 1999, 92-94; Hedreen, 2001, 158-164. The implication of human sacrifice is also emphasized in representations of the myth on pottery, especially in scenes where Achilles drags Troilos to the altar, or desecrates his body after his death. For example, the red-figure cup by Onesimos, mentioned above, pages 24-25 fn. 53.

Apollo's presence pervades the scene: at the centre of the composition stands a large red palm tree, situated beside the fountain to signify that the myth is located at the sanctuary of Apollo. The design of the tree appears to be derived from eastern models, as it is laden with fruits, a detail not included in Greek representations of the palm tree. This type of palm tree is conspicuous in the decoration of Phoenician silver bowls, several of which were found in Etruscan tombs. For instance, a silver bowl found in the Bernardini Tomb at Praeneste, in Latium, carries a representation of an aristocratic hunting scene in its outermost register, which includes a similar fruit-bearing palm tree in its scenery.[63] The palm tree in the Tomb of the Bulls is a prime example of the active acculturation occurring in Etruscan art during the Archaic period, considering that the painter of the tomb employed an eastern version of the palm tree motif to represent Apollo in a Greek mythological context. The tree divides Achilles and Troilos, perhaps symbolizing Apollo's reluctance for the two heroes to engage in their ensuing struggle. Beside Achilles and behind the fountain grows a number of plant shoots, which Simon has identified as laurel trees thriving in an Apollonian laurel grove.[64] It is possible that another potent symbol of Apollo appears in the scene as well; a setting sun may be sinking below the ground line of the composition, directly beneath the figure of Troilos on horseback. The interpretation of this red, semi-circular object, with wavy lines

[63] Glenn E. Markoe, 2000, *Phoenicians* (Los Angeles: University of California Press): 149.
[64] Erika Simon, 1973, "Die Tomba dei Tori und der etruskische Apollonkult." *JdI* 88: 27–42. She also argues that the laurel grove painted in the panel underneath the fresco of Achilles and Troilos is also a product of this Apollonian influence, which was prominent in Etruscan tombs on account of the chthonic nature of Apollo in Etruria.

radiating outwards from its surface, as the setting sun was proposed by Oleson, who argued that it was included in the scene to indicate the time of day at which the ambush transpired. He situates Troilos' murder at sunset, just before the onset of night.[65] Furthermore, Oleson connects the 'sun' to the cult of Apollo, arguing that the solar disk signifies the god's presence at the sanctuary, just like the palm tree and the laurel grove.[66] Although Oleson presents an intriguing argument, it is hard to determine if it does indeed depict the sun. The sun appears primarily in anthropomorphic form in Greek and Etruscan art, and so the appearance of a direct representation of the sun in an Etruscan tomb fresco is improbable, although not impossible.[67]

If this motif does represent the sun, it would be a particularly appropriate symbol in the context of an Etruscan tomb, as the sun and solar divinities had strong chthonic

[65] John Peter Oleson, 1975, "Greek Myth and Etruscan Imagery in the Tomb of the Bulls at Tarquinia," *AJA* 79, n. 3: 193-200.
[66] Oleson, 1975, 194-197.
[67] Jean MacIntosh Turfa, 2012, *Divining the Etruscan World: The Brontoscopic Calendar and Religious Practice* (New York: Cambridge): 61-62. See also R. Ross Holloway, 1986, "The Bulls in the 'Tomb of the Bulls' at Tarquinia," *AJA* 90, n. 4: 448. There have been many other explanations of this object offered by scholars, all of which have proved inconclusive. Some scholars, for example, Camporeale, have identified it as a poorly illustrated plant. Giovannangelo Camporeale, 1964, "Saghe greche nell'arte etrusca arcaica," *La Parola del Passato* 19, 443. Poulsen furthered this idea, proposing that it represented a *Blumenbeet*, a type of flowering plant related to the Near Eastern motif of the 'Tree of Life.' Frederick Poulsen, 1912, *Der Orient und die Fruhgriechische Kunst* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner): 66-68. This theory is possible, given that there is some eastern influence in the execution of the fresco, and that the *Blumenbeet* can be found on Phoenician bowls from Etruria. However, it still seems unlikely that the object in question is a plant, considering that the other vegetal elements in the scene, such as the palm tree and the laurel shoots, are well-executed and rendered in precise detail. Furthermore, depictions of the *Blumenbeet* found on fragments of 7th C. shell-engravings uncovered at Aegina and Naukratis (which Poulsen argues were created by a school of artists (likely Phoenicians) who modified the 'Tree of Life' motif and transmitted it to the Greeks and Etruscans) show the stems of the plant terminating in flowers and leaves. The red object in the Tomb of the Bulls bears little resemblance to the Assyrian 'Tree of Life,' and its lack of foliage or blossoms suggests that it was not meant to represent a *Blumenbeet* either. Finally, one of the most original interpretations of the object comes from Simon, who argues that it represents an Etruscan 'death demon,' coming to claim the life of Troilos. Erika Simon, 2013, "Greek Myth in Etruscan Culture," in *The Etruscan World*, ed. Jean MacIntosh Turfa (Oxon: Routledge): 500.

associations in the ancient world, and especially in Etruria.[68] It was believed that the sun travelled through the heavens by day, but traversed the realms of the underworld by night, only to be reborn at the dawn. The rising and setting of the sun represented the cycle of life, death and rebirth. For Troilos, the sun sinking directly beneath him signifies that the end of his life is approaching as he draws nearer to Achilles. This solar motif would be an Etruscan addition to the conventional iconography of the ambush of Achilles, making the scene even more appropriate for the funereal context in which it is found. Troilos, just like the Etruscans interred in the tomb, is about to embark on a journey to the dark realm of the dead.

The fresco of Achilles and Troilos in the Tomb of the Bulls is an Etruscan adaptation of the popular Greek myth, altering the scene slightly to fit the Etruscan funereal context. It associates Apollo and his sanctuary with the Etruscan conception of the sun god as a chthonic entity, an unusual modification of the scene, but not exceptional in Etruscan art. Three Etruscan black-figure amphorae by the Tolfa Group from Caere carry depictions of Achilles crouching behind a fountain and setting his ambush. These amphora, painted in the second half of the 6th C. BC, around the same time as the Tomb of the Bulls, all include a very unusual feature in the scene: on top of the chequered fountain stands a small figurine of a man with a wolf's head, brandishing either a *machaira* or a thunderbolt in his hand. [69] Simon interprets these wolf-like figures as

[68] See Alain Ballabriga, 1986, *Le soleil et le tartare: l'image mythique du monde en Grèce archaïque* (Paris: Editions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales).
[69] D'Agostino, 1999, 115-119. The thunderbolt attribute which is held by one of the figurines is likely the result of the connection between *Śuri* and Apollo in Etruria.

infernal demons connected to the chthonic nature of the worship of Apollo in Etruria.[70] The symbol of the wolf was closely connected to the worship of Apollo in Etruria, since Apollo Lykeios came to be syncretized with the indigenous chthonic deities of central Italy and Etruria, in particular, Śuri/ Soranus.[71] Furthermore, the *machaira* wielded by two of the figurine implies the act of human sacrifice which will be performed at Apollo's sanctuary, a perverted ritual which recurs several times in the mythology of Apollo.[72]

These representations of the myth of Achilles and Troilos incorporate distinctly Etruscan elements in the scene that allude to the chthonic nature of Apollo in Etruria.[73] The sanctuary of Apollo on these amphorae is not denoted by traditional elements like the palm tree or the tripod, but by the addition of motifs implying death and human sacrifice, such as the wolf-figurine and the *machaira*. The fresco in the Tomb of the Bulls also

[70] Simon, 1973, 39-40.
[71] The connection between wolves, the underworld, and Apollo in Etruria will be examined in greater depth in chapter 2.
[72] D'Agostino, 1999, 115-119. Also see Giovanni Colonna, 1984, "Apollon, les Étrusques et Lipara," *MEFRA* 96, n. 2: 571. D'Agostino and Colonna point out that human sacrifice is treated with some ambiguity in the mythology of Apollo. A distich of Ovid's poem, *Ibis*, suggests that there was a strong connection between Apollo and human sacrifice in Etruria, as it describes how the Etruscans slaughtered a man named Theudotus on the altar of Apollo (Ovid, *Ibis*, 465-466, which many scholars believe was inspired by a line from Callimachus' lost *Aetia*). A scholiast on the text clarifies the meaning of this phrase, explaining that the Etruscans vowed to sacrifice the most courageous warrior of the enemy Lipareans, a man named Theudotus, to Apollo in return for granting them victory in their battle for control of Lipara. When the Etruscans emerged victorious from the battle, they made good on their promise and slaughtered Theudotus upon the altar of Apollo. A strong connection is drawn between human sacrifice and Apollo in Etruria in this poetic reference. See Colonna, 1984, 557-559; Giulio Massimilla, 2011, "Theudotus of Lipara (Callimachus, fr. 93 Pf.)," in *Culture in Pieces: Essays on Ancient Texts in Honour of Peter Parsons*, ed. D. Obbink and R. Rutherford (Oxford): 208-19; Massimiliano Di Fazio, 2013, "Callimachus and the Etruscans," *Histos* 7, 49-50; Antonio La Penna,1959, *Scholia in P. Ovidi Nasonis Ibin* (Florence): 124-125. Human sacrifice also occurs at the altar of Apollo in other mythological accounts as well. For example, Neoptolemus is murdered by Orestes before the altar of Delphic Apollo, after he himself had sacrificed both Astyanax and Polyxena at similar altars following the sack of Troy. If Troilos was Apollo's son, as several Hellenistic literary accounts claim, then perhaps the murder of Achilles' son before the altar of Apollo at Delphi was an act of divine retribution.
[73] D'Agostino, 1999, 118.

presents the myth of Troilos and Achilles in this manner, adding an Etruscan layer of significance to the popular Greek tale to make it suitable for a tomb. The combined motifs of the palm tree, the *machaira*, and the potential sun, not only suggest the setting of the scene as the sanctuary of Thymbraion Apollo, but also indicate the chthonic nature of the cult of Apollo and the sun in Etruria. For the Etruscans, it was not only the pathos and drama of the scene that made the myth of Achilles and Troilos so appealing to them: it was its strong association with human sacrifice, death and the underworld. Apollo's palm tree in the Tomb of the Bulls also assumes these infernal connotations as the cult of Apollo was syncretized with the chthonic and solar divinities of central Italy and Etruria, and his iconography was modified and perpetuated in Etruscan art.

Chapter Two – Apollo in Etruria

Past the streams of Okeanos they went, past the rock Leukas, past the gates of the sun and the land of dreams, and quickly came to the mead of asphodel, where the spirits dwell, phantoms of men who have done with toils.

Homer, Odyssey, 24.11-14

In the *Odyssey*, the entrance to the underworld stood at the Gates of the Sun, through which the setting sun would pass as it began its nightly voyage in the realm of the dead, traversing the stream of *Okeanos*. It was believed in antiquity that the sun god, *Helios*, rising from the east, would ride his four-horse chariot through the heavens and bring life-begetting light to the earth. He ended his celestial journey in the western land of the *Hesperides*, from which place he would navigate the stream of *Okeanos* during the night to return to the east. In some accounts of his night-time journey, Helios is said to sail across *Okeanos* in a golden cup, forged by Hephaestus.[74] However, there is another version of Helios' nightly voyage in which the sun god drifts across *Okeanos* in a golden bed, wrought by Hephaestus, allowing him to sleep soundly during his underworld venture.[75] Sleep was closely associated with death in the ancient world, so much so that Hesiod even refers to the god, Sleep, as "the Brother of Death."[76] That Helios slumbers as he travels along the stream of *Okeanos* implies that he is in a death-like state while in the underworld. Thus, the sun would symbolically die at the end of the day, and then be reborn with the sunrise at dawn. The parallel between the path of the sun and the life-

[74] Aeschylus, *Heliades*, fragment 33 (from Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae,* 11. 39. 469F); Stesichorus, Fragment S17 (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 11. 469e).
[75] Mimnermus, fragment 12.
[76] Hesiod, *Th*. 756.

cycle of humankind was acknowledged by many cultures in antiquity, who regarded the rising and setting of the sun as symbolic of the birth and death of a man. As the sun was connected to ideas of mortality, solar deities frequently assumed strong chthonic associations in the ancient world.[77]

Apollo was one such god who was imbued with chthonic associations, especially in central Italy and Etruria. Of course, Apollo was not originally a solar deity in Greek religion, as Helios fulfilled this function and was responsible for the movements of the sun. Rather, he was a god of music, healing, and prophecy to the Greeks. It was not until the Hellenistic period that Apollo was occasionally equated with Helios as the god of the sun in Greek literature.[78] However, the epithet of Phoebus, 'the bright one' or `shining one,' which was used to describe Apollo in works as early as the Homeric epics, indicates how this association between the god and the sun could have developed fairly early on in the Greek world.[79]

Nevertheless, Apollo did take on the identity of a solar deity at a much earlier date in Etruria, when he was syncretized with the indigenous Etruscan sun god, Usil, in the Archaic period. It would, perhaps, be more accurate to reverse this idea: it seems more likely that the appearance and iconographical attributes of Apollo were employed for Usil when the Etruscan god was first depicted in an anthropomorphic form in art. Simon

[77] See Ballabriga, 1986.
[78] Fontenrose, however, argues that Apollo and Helios/Sol were always treated separately in Greek and Roman literature, even by the Augustan era poets, until early Christian writers amalgamated the two deities. See, Joseph E. Fontenrose, 1940, "Apollo and the Sun-God in Ovid," *American Journal of Philology* 61, no. 4: 429-444. Also see, Joseph E. Fontenrose, 1939, "Apollo and Sol in the Latin Poets of the First Century B.C.," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 70: 439-455.
[79] Hom. *Il*. 15.221; 15.365; 16.667; 20.152; 21.436; 21.448.

suggests that the equation of these two deities may have resulted from the Sibylline Oracles, which regularly conflated Helios and Apollo, and which were known in Etruria from as early as the 5th C. BC.[80] The Etruscan sun god is usually portrayed as a handsome, youthful male, who often wears his long and curly hair tied back at the nape of his neck; an appearance very akin to that of Apollo in Greek art. Such representations can be found on Etruscan bronze mirrors, which frequently feature either the sun god in full form, or his head in profile, centred within a radial disk.[81] A late 6th C. mirror from Orvieto, now in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, depicts the bust of the sun god, half-submerged in wavy waters (Fig. 13).[82] He is depicted as a young man, with a bare torso, and long, curly hair bound by a fillet. His face is in profile, surrounded by a radial sun disk. He extends his arms outwards on either side of his body, and in both palms he balances a sphere with undulating lines extending from its surface. De Grummond has identified these strange orbs as fireballs, which serve to emphasize the fiery solar nature of the god, perhaps rising up from, or sinking into, the stream of Okeanos.[83]

The most singular and direct conflation of Usil with Apollo is found on a bronze mirror from the middle of the fourth century, now in the Vatican Museum, that shows

[80] Erika Simon, 2006, "The Gods in Harmony: the Etruscan Pantheon," in *The Religion of the Etruscans*, ed. Nancy de Grummond and Erika Simon (Austin: University of Texas Press): 47.
[81] For a more in-depth evaluation of the depiction of the Etruscan sun god upon bronze mirrors, see Margherita Tirelli, 1981, "Le rappresentazioni del sole nell'arte etrusca," *Studi etruschi* 49: 41-50.
[82] Etruscan Bronze Mirror, Orvieto, c. 500 BC, Minneapolis Institute of the Arts 57.198, *Corpus Speculorum Etruscorum* 1.26a.
[83] Nancy de Grummond, 2006, *Etruscan Myth, Sacred History, and Legend* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology): 8.

Usil alongside the deities Nethuns and Thesan (Fig. 14).[84] The sun god stands in the middle of the composition, and is framed by the other two deities. Nethuns, an Etruscan adaptation of Neptune, sits at Usil's right, cradling his trident in the nook of his right arm and addressing Usil, as indicated by the gesture of his left hand. Thesan, the Etruscan goddess of the dawn, stands to Usil's left and leans upon his shoulder. Usil is depicted nude, save for a chlamys that is draped across his body and covers his genitals. His curly hair is cropped to a shorter length in this illustration, and a nimbus encircles his head, indicating his solar associations. The most striking element of Usil's representation on this mirror is the bow clutched in his right hand. On this mirror, Usil has directly assumed the attributes of Apollo, indicating that the Etruscans borrowed from the established iconography of Apollo to depict their own sun god in an anthropomorphized form. The depictions of Usil in Etruscan art emphasize his solar aspects, with a radial crown or nimbus almost always surrounding his head. Apollo was connected with this Etruscan sun god and imbued with solar significance in Etruria, even when he himself was also adopted separately into the Etruscan pantheon as Apulu, or Aplu.

Apulu retained many of his Greek attributes and responsibilities when he was integrated into the Etruscan pantheon. He was venerated as a god of music, healing and prophecy by the Etruscans, and possessed his usual attributes of a lyre, a laurel staff, or a bow. The prophetic functions of Apulu especially appealed to the Etruscan people, who had a long-standing interest in divination and deciphering the will of the gods through

[84] Etruscan Bronze Mirror, Tuscania, c. 350 BC, Vatican Museum, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 12645, *Etruskische Spiegel* 1.76.

practices such as augury and haruspicy. His connection with oracular prophecy in Etruria was so strong that the Etruscans even consulted his oracle at Delphi on matters of great importance. In fact, so frequent were their visits to the Pythian oracle that the Caerites and the even had a treasury at Delphi.[85] Herodotus describes how the Caerites were struck by a severe plague following the Battle of Alalia, which they thought was inflicted upon them in retribution for their slaughter of the Phocaean prisoners of war. They sent an embassy to Delphi to procure an oracle from Apollo, telling them how to alleviate this sickness. The Pythia instructed the Caerites to institute yearly Greek games in the city of Caere in order to appease the spirits of the massacred Phocaeans and mitigate the epidemic.[86] The Caerites followed the advice of the Pythia, and they established an annual festival with games in the city of Caere.

However, certain features of Apollo that were more marginalized in his cult worship in Greece were embraced and accentuated by the Etruscans when they adopted the god. In particular, Apulu became associated with indigenous chthonic deities in Etruria, becoming a god of death and the underworld in certain circumstances. His connection with death is not without precedent in Greek mythology, as Apollo could often act as a harbinger of death: at the start of the *Iliad*, he devastates the Greek troops with a pestilence, shooting his plague-ridden arrows at the Greek camp for nine days.[87] This is Apollo as a vengeful god, dealing death among the Greeks for Agamemnon's

[85] Strabo, 5.2.3.
[86] Herodotus, 1.167
[87] Hom. *Il*. 1.53-54.

greed. Apollo continues to destroy the Greeks in other myths of the Trojan cycle, and is eventually the god responsible for the death of Achilles. Nor is his role as a bringer of death restricted to Greek epic. He is often represented in Greek myth as a god who exacts punishment on those behaving hubristically. As mentioned in the previous chapter, he cruelly flays Marsyas as a penalty for the satyr's audacity to challenge him in a musical contest. In another famous myth, Apollo, together with his sister, slays the children of Niobe in punishment for her hubris. Apollo often assumes the guise of the "far-shooter" in Greek mythology, in which role he brings punishment and death to those who transgress him.

It is in Delphic myth, however, that Apollo's association with death is most strongly manifested. According the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, the god slew the Python upon his arrival at Delphi and usurped the control of the sanctuary. However, he was not the only god who held sway at Delphi. A more obscure fragment of Delphic mythology tells of Apollo's relationship with Dionysos at Delphi, with whom he shared the governance of the sanctuary for a part of the year.[88] This account of the two deities sharing the sanctuary of Delphi is intertwined with the myth of Apollo and the land of the Hyperboreans, and is a telling example of the chthonic nature which both gods occasionally assume. Although Apollo was the primary deity of the sanctuary, he was only present at the sanctuary for nine months of the year. Every year at the onset of

[88] Evidence that Dionysos received cult veneration at the sanctuary of Delphi appears in Greek literature as early as Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, in the opening speech of which (lines 24-26) the Pythia acknowledges Dionysos as one of the presiding gods of the region.

winter, Apollo would depart from the sanctuary to visit the far-away land of the Hyperboreans. During his absence, Dionysos would reign for three months at the sanctuary in his stead, and dithyrambs instead of paeans would be sung at the sanctuary.[89] However, upon the arrival of spring, Apollo would return to Delphi and was welcomed back by his worshippers with joyous celebration. This myth was even reflected in the Delphic calendar, with the Delphians celebrating the return of Apollo in the spring every year on the seventh of Bysios, at which time oracular service was renewed at the sanctuary and the festival of the Theophania occured.[90] This Delphic cycle of myth was closely related to ideas of death and rebirth, and the transition of seasons.

Dionysos, of course, was a god with strong chthonic connections, as the belief of his death and resurrection was an integral element of his mythology in certain mystery cults, particularly in Orphic worship. Some ancient sources even suggest that there was a tomb of Dionysos at Delphi, where his body was supposedly deposited after he was dismembered by the Titans.[91] It would be from this tomb, then, that Dionysos was revived at the start of winter for his term of rule at Delphi, and it stands to reason that Dionysos would then return to this tomb at the beginning of spring. The Dionysos at Delphi was not the god in his usual convivial character as a promoter of wine and festivity, but the god in his more serious role as a chthonic deity of death and winter.[92] If Dionysos' recession to

[89] Plut. De E apud Delphos 9.
[90] Fontenrose, 380-381, 383. However, in later times it seems that the oracle remained active at the sanctuary even during the winter months.
[91] Fontenrose, 375-377. Plut. *Mor*. 365a; Tatian, *Adv*. *Gr*. 8; Philochorus 328 *FGrH* F7.
[92] Fontenrose, 379-381.

his tomb every spring was a type of yearly ritual death, then what should we make of Apollo's trip to the land of the Hyperboreans? It is possible that Apollo's yearly trip to the land of Hyperboreans for the winter season was symbolic of his own ritual death. After all, the land of the Hyperboreans was believed by the Greeks to be situated far away in the north, on the shores of Okeanos, and to be the land through which the Eridanos River flowed, as if it were part of the underworld itself.[93] Rather than being a joyous occasion, all of Delphi is saddened at his departure, and the inhabitants of the sanctuary longingly awaiting the god's return in the spring.[94] In fact, according to Apollonius of Rhodes, Apollo himself shed tears as he travelled to the land of the Hyperboreans. In his *Argonautica,* Apollonius refers to a version of the myth in which Apollo was banished from heavens and forced by Zeus to live among the Hyperboreans as a punishment for reacting angrily to the death of his son, Asclepius.[95] In this version of the myth, Apollo's sojourn among the Hyperboreans appears more like an annual trip to the underworld, which he is forced to undertake as a form of punishment for his actions.[96] Even more evidence for a chthonic interpretation of this myth is supplied by literary accounts that hint at the existence of a tomb of Apollo at Delphi.[97] After acknowledging that a strain of

[93] Apollon., *Arg*. 4.594 ff. Furthermore, Apollonius tells us that it is in this land that fiery Phaethon met his end, plunging into the waters of the Eridanos River, along the banks of which the Heliades mourn unremittingly for their lost brother. The land of the Hyperboreans is also a place where a solar deity dies and departs for the underworld, with much sorrow and lamenting on the part of his family, rather than simply a paradise of never-ending spring.
[94] Fontenrose, 386-387. Claud. 28.25-34.
[95] Apollon., *Arg.*4.611-626.
[96] Fontenrose, 86-89. A similar interpretation of Apollo visiting the underworld as a form of punishment has also been applied to explain the myth of Apollo's servitude under Admetus, which was his punishment for killing the Cyclopes.
[97] However, the sources for this information are rather vague, and originate from a much later period in antiquity. Porphyry provides the most direct testament of the tomb of Apollo at Delphi in his *Life of*

Delphic myth existed in which Apollo was supposedly killed or sentenced to visit the underworld, it becomes easier to comprehend the relationship between Dionysos and Apollo at Delphi. It is a cyclical relationship of death and rebirth: when one god visits the underworld, the other god presides over the sanctuary until he is reborn. Although a more obscure version of Delphic myth, it is nonetheless important for understanding the occasional chthonic character of Apollo in Greek religion, as well as for recognizing the close relationship between the two gods.

The association between Apollo, Dionysos, and the underworld, was not unique to Delphic myth, but was also acknowledged in Etruscan mythology and art. It is not surprising that in Etruria, where the cult of the dead and the afterlife was a major focus of worship, the chthonic aspects of adopted deities, like Apollo and Dionysos, would be accentuated. One bronze mirror from Vulci in particular demonstrates the existence of these mythological ideas in Etruria. Incised on the mirror is a depiction of Apulu standing beside a young Fufluns (Etruscan Dionysos) who is entwined with his mother in an intimate embrace. A small satyr sits beside Apulu, playing on an *aulos*.[98] Simon argues that the appearance of the Fufluns with his mother, Semla (Etruscan Semele), alludes to the Orphic tale of Dionysos journeying down to the underworld to reclaim his mother, a mythological event which was celebrated every eight years at Delphi during the festival of the *Herois*.[99] The inclusion of Apulu in the mirror's scene suggests that an association

Pythagoras. Although the death of Apollo is most likely taken from Pythagorean tradition, it is likely that the inspiration for these ideas came from ancient folklore. Porph. *Vit. Pyth*. 16; Fontenrose, 86.

[98] Etruscan bronze mirror, from Vulci, 4th C. BC, Berlin, ES, *1.83*.

[99] Simon, 2006, 49.

between the two gods existed in their cult worship in Etruria, just as it did at Delphi. Etruscan tomb painting elucidates further the connection between the two deities in Etruria, especially in their chthonic sphere. Tomb frescoes often contain *komos* scenes, which are depictions of Dionysiac revelling in honour of the deceased. Prime examples of *komos* scenes are painted in the front chamber of the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing at Tarquinia, in the Tomb of the Leopards, and in the Tomb of the Triclinium at Tarquinia. These *komos* scenes frequently occur in wooded groves, with trees painted in the background between the dancers. Simon argues that these trees are laurel trees, and were included in the scene to indicate that the Bacchic revellers are celebrating within an Apollonian laurel grove, which she believes would be an appropriate setting for a funereal celebration, given Apulu's underworld associations in Etruria.[100]

This chthonic guise of Apulu becomes even more perceptible when he is syncretized with other indigenous deities in Etruria, especially those holding similar prophetic powers. It appears that Apulu, in his guise as an oracular deity, was particularly important in the city of Caere and its surrounding territory. Evidence was discovered for the conflation of Apulu with the indigenous Etruscan prophetic deity, Rath, in excavations at Caere carried out in the S. Antonio area of the modern city, where a large iron nail, quadrate in section, was recovered (Fig. 15). This object undoubtedly served a ritualistic function, as it was engraved with symbols on all four of its sides. This nail closely resembles an inscribed nail from Pergamon, which was a component of a curious

[100] Simon, 2006, 49; Erika Simon, 1996, *Schriften zur etruskischen und italischen Kunst und Religion* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner): 63-65.

device used for divination.[101] Colonna believes that the nail found at Caere belonged to a similar divinatory apparatus, which was likely connected to the Etruscan deity, Rath, who was worshipped at the sanctuary. Colonna has equated this god with Apulu in his role as a prophetic deity. One of the major pieces of evidence Colonna uses to support his identification of Rath as Apollo is a mirror from Tuscania, which shows a young haruspex, named Pava Tarchies, examining a liver while a group of mortals and deities gather around to observe him. One of these spectators is an Apulu-like figure, who carries a laurel branch in his hand. The inscription on the mirror contains a reference to Rath in the genitive (Rathlth), which Colonna has interpreted as indicating that the mirror was dedicated to the sanctuary of Rath.[102] Votive dedications to Rath were found in the area of S. Antonio, leading Colonna to speculate that there once had been a temple to Rath in the area.[103] If such a sanctuary once existed at the area, it likely would have been an important oracular site, where divinatory rituals would have been carried out and oracles would have been sought.

Apollo of Pyrgi

[101] Giovanni Colonna, 2001, "Divinazione e culto di Rath/Apollo a Caere (a proposito del santuario in loc. S. Antonio)," *Archeologia classica* 52: 151-173. It is important to note that similar magical nails date primarily from the 3rd and 4th C. AD. Silvia Alfayé Villa, 2010, "Nails for the Dead: A Polysemic Account of an Ancient Funerary Practice," in *Magic Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept. – 1 Oct. 2005*, ed. Richard Lindsay Gordon and Francisco Marco Simón (Netherlands: Brill): 442. However, the date of the nail from Caere is difficult to determine, and it is possible that the nail was used for divination in an early period of the city's history.
[102] Giovanni Colonna, 1987, "Note preliminari sui culti del Portonaccio a Veio," *Scienze dell'Antichità* 1, 431‑435. Also see Ingrid Krauskopf, 2013, "Gods and Demons in the Etruscan Pantheon," in *The Etruscan World*, ed. Jean MacIntosh Turfa (Oxon: Routledge): 519. Etruscan Bronze Mirror, Tuscania, Early 3rd C., Florence, Mus. Arch. Nazionale.
[103] Colonna, 2001, 161-165.

Another important oracular shrine was located at Pyrgi, the thriving port settlement of Caere on the Tyrrhenian coast. This commercial hub boasted an impressive series of sanctuary complexes, where sailors and merchants from throughout the Western Mediterranean could come to worship. Aelian mentions that there was a temple to Apollo at Pyrgi, which Dionysius of Syracuse plundered in 384 BC, along with the riches belonging to the Temple of Eileithyia at Pyrgi.[104] Excavations in the southern sanctuary of Pyrgi have revealed the possible location of the temple, although here he was worshiped not as the Greek Apollo, but as the chthonic, prophetic god, Śuri, whose name was inscribed on a votive offering recovered at the site. A votive deposit was unearthed next to altar *Lambda*, which contained an assortment of ceramic wares and metal objects (Fig. 16). Several vase fragments found in the deposition have been dated to approximately the first quarter of the 5th C. BC, providing a similar date for the other material in the deposit and the altar itself.[105] Included among these offerings was the foot fragment of an Attic kylix, which was inscribed with the names of the deities, Cavatha and Śuri, likely the gods to whom the precinct belonged.[106] A sequence of shrines was consecrated to these two deities, the earliest of which is called shrine *Beta*, dating from c. 530-520 BC. Although small in dimension (32 m^2), the structure was nonetheless decorated with both terracotta akroteria and antefixes. It had an oblong-shaped plan and was divided inside into two *cellae* of unequal size. Two golden earrings were uncovered

[104] Ael. *Var*. *Hist.* 1.20. For Dionysius' raid on Pyrgi, see Diod. 15.14.3.
[105] M. P. Baglione, 2000, "I rinvenimenti di ceramica attica dal santuario dell'area Sud," *Scienze dell'antichita* 10, 339‑351. Also see Colonna, 2006, 139.
[106] Colonna, 2006, 138-139.

underneath the floor of the larger, left-hand *cella*, which suggests that they were intended as foundational offerings to a female goddess who was worshiped in the *cella*.[107] These golden earrings were fashioned in a lunate shape, and constitute strong evidence that the cella was dedicated to Cavatha, since such earrings had special significance in the cult worship and iconography of Kore in Italy, a goddess with whom Cavatha shared many traits.[108] It seems that the two deities, Śuri and Cavatha, shared a cult structure in the earliest phase of temple-building in this section of the southern sanctuary.[109]

Furthermore, it is possible that a set of terracotta antefixes found at the sanctuary may include figural depictions of the two deities. The antefixes date from the late sixth century, and although they were found on the north side of the sanctuary, it is believed that they once adorned a building in the southern sanctuary.[110] One of the antefixes depicts a young man with long hair, running in front of a sunburst. Some have identified this figure as the Etruscan sun god, Usil, but it is possible that this is actually a depiction of Śuri, the oracular and solar deity of Pyrgi, who will be discussed in greater detail below.[111] This antefix is paired with another that depicts a female figure embracing two

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[107] Colonna, 2006, 148-150.
[108] Nancy de Grummond, 2004, "For the Mother and Daughter: Some Thoughts on Dedications from Etruria and Praeneste," in *Charis: Essays in Honour of Sara A. Immerwahr*, ed. Anne P. Chapin (Princeton: Hesperia Supplement, 33): 360. Several votive busts of Kore from Morgantina include holes pierced through their ears, in which earrings could be placed, and other busts and coins from Sicily show Kore wearing elaborate earrings. Furthermore, earrings found in a funerary context from San Vito di Luzzi, near Hipponion, bear inscriptions referring to Kore and Lysios (Persephone and Dionysos). A. Bottini, 1992, *L'archeologia della salvezza: L'escatologia greca nelle testimonianze archaeologiche* (Biblioteca di archeologia 17, Milan), 56-57.
[109] Colonna, 2006, 149.
[110] Nancy de Grummond, 2008, "Moon over Pyrgi: Catha, an Etruscan Lunar Goddess?" *AJA* 112, no. 3: 423-424.
[111] De Grummond, 2008, 424-425. For the identification of the figure as Usil, see I. Krauskopf, 1990, "Helios/Usil," *LIMC* V Addenda: 1038-1047; Simon, 2006, 47.

horses, commonly referred to as "the mistress of horses" whom de Grummond argues represents Cavatha (Fig. 17).[112] If these identifications are correct, the antefixes provide an extremely rare and valuable glimpse into the physical representations of Śuri and Cavatha, and further strengthen the solar connection between Apollo and Śuri.

Around the middle of the fifth century, a second, larger shrine was constructed nearby shrine *Beta*, named shrine *Gamma* (Fig. 18). The structure had a rectangular plan measuring 5.7 m by 8.7 m, and was adorned with terracotta antefixes. It had a single, large *cella* inside, suggesting that the building housed the cult of only one deity. A large ingot of lead was found standing vertically in the ground directly behind the structure, which Colonna interprets as both a planimetric reference and a foundational offering to the god of the sanctuary.[113] The upright ingot of lead is perhaps related to the black *cippi* found in other areas of the sanctuary, which Colonna argues were aniconic representations of the god Śuri.[114] As such, the temple was likely consecrated to Śuri, for whom the lead ingot would have been a suitable offering.

Shrine *Alpha* was the last of these three buildings to be constructed, erected shortly after the destruction of shrine *Beta*, which is believed to have occurred during the Syracusan sack of Pyrgi.[115] Shrine *Alpha*, constructed around the middle of the fourth century, has a more quadrangular shape than the previous two structures, measuring 6.3 m by 7 m, and it lacks any sculptural decoration. Several pottery offerings found near the

[112] De Grummond, 2008, 419-428.
[113] Colonna, 2006, 148-151.
[114] Giovanni Colonna, 2007, "L'Apollo di Pyrgi: Sur/suri e L'Apollo Sourios," *Studi etruschi* 73: 117-123.
[115] Colonna, 2006, 151.

shrine bear inscriptions dedicating the objects to Cavatha, and some pieces of jewelry found in the vicinity are also likely property of the goddess.[116] It is likely that even after the cult of Śuri was transferred to shrine *Gamma*, Cavatha continued to be venerated in shrine *Beta* until it was demolished. Afterwards, her cult was transferred to the newly constructed building of shrine *Alpha*.

Colonna has presented a compelling case for identifying Śuri and Cavatha with Dis Pater and Proserpina respectively.[117] The goddess Cavatha (also called Catha, Cavutha, and Cavtha) appears to have been a daughter goddess in Etruria and central Italy, as she is referred to as śeχ, meaning 'daughter,' in a late 5th C. BC inscription from Orvieto.[118] Furthermore, a conical bronze object of unknown origin, dating from the 4th or 3rd C. BC, bears a dedicatory inscription reading *ecn:turce:laris:Θefries:espial:atial.caΘas*, which refers to Cavatha in an insightful way (Fig. 19). This curious conical object was first published by Bonafante, who interpreted part of the inscription as reading 'mother Catha."[119] However, Cristofani revaluated the inscription and suggested that the word for mother, *ati*, should accompany the preceding word *espial*, possibly the name of an unknown deity in the genitive.[120] This would make the inscription read, "Catha, of Mother Espi." De Grummond takes Cristofani's argument one step further, and proposes that *espial* should actually be read *estial*. The name would

[116] Colonna, 2006, 151.
[117] Giovanni Colonna, 1992, "Altari e sacelli: L'area Sud di Pyrgi dopo otto anni di ricerche," *Rend. Pont. Acc.* 64: 98-99.
[118] Colonna, 2006, 139-140. Attic red-figure skyphos, 5th C. BC, from Orvieto, now in Copenhagen.
[119] Larissa Bonafante, 1994, "Originis incertae," (REE) *Studi etruschi* 59: 269‑270.
[120] REE 59, 1993, pp. 270-271, no. 26 (Mauro Cristofani).

therefore be a variant of Esti/Eistei, a name that appears in conjunction with the name of Śuri on the Mangliano tablet, dating from the 5th C. BC. The relevant part of the tablet's inscription (side B, line 5) reads, *śuris eisteis*, which means, "of Śuri, of Eistei." It is interesting to note that Cavatha's name also appears on the tablet in the genitive. Consequently, if the conical object does read "Catha, of mother Esti," Esti could refer to Demeter (Etruscan *Vei*), and Catha to Kore. Such inscriptions certainly indicate that there was a strong connection existing between the three Etruscan deities, Śuri, Cavatha, and Esti.[121]

It makes sense then, that Cavatha, an Etruscan version of Persephone, would share a sanctuary at Pyrgi with her consort Śuri, a chthonic deity associated with Dis Pater. The underworld nature of Śuri is attested to by the existence of a special type of altar found in the southern precinct of Pyrgi. This altar, named *podium* B, encloses a well-shaped shaft in its centre, which extends down into the earth to a depth of about 6.5 meters.[122] Sacrificial offerings would have been deposited in the shaft, dedicating them to the chthonic deities dwelling in the realm below. Colonna interprets this feature as a *mundus*, a channel to the underworld through which offerings could be made, and the spirits of the dead could emerge. The discovery of such a *mundus* at Pyrgi reveals the strong chthonic nature of Śuri. Furthermore, Colonna has convincingly shown that the god Śuri was closely related to the Faliscan underworld god, Soranus, who was worshipped on the

[121] De Grummond, 2004, 357-358. Also see Giovanni Colonna, 1994, "L'Apollo di Pyrgi," in *Magna Grecia, etruschi, fenici: atti del trentatreesimo convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia, Taranto, 8-13 Ottobre 1993* (Taranto: Instituto per la storia e l'archeologia della Magna Grecia): 368-369, fn. 59.
[122]Colonna, 2006, 140-141.

heights of Mt. Soracte, not far from Caere.[123] He suggests that the name, Soranus, was a derivation of Śuri, since the Faliscans often obtained the names of their deities by adding the suffix *-nus* to different stem words. Thus, the Etruscan deity, Śuri, became *Suranus*, and then eventually Soranus, in the Faliscan language.[124] However, this Faliscan underworld deity was also known to the Romans by another name, Apollo Soranus, a title which reveals much about the chthonic nature of Apollo in central Italy.

Apollo of Mt. Soracte

Cult activities in honour of Soranus were carried out at night on the mountain's summit by worshippers called the *Hirpi Sorani*, or "Wolves of Soranus." They were fire-walkers, treading over smoldering embers in order to purify themselves before the god during an annual ritual. It is certain that Soranus was equated with Apollo; in fact, Vergil refers to the god of Mt. Soracte as "Apollo, guardian of Mt. Soracte" in the *Aeneid*, and subsequent literary references to the cult designate Apollo alone as the presiding god.[125] This cult belonged to Apollo in his purificatory and chthonic guise, so much so that Servius even identifies Apollo Soranus with Dis Pater, revealing the strong underworld connections of Apollo in central Italy.[126] Servius also provides an explanation for the name of the *Hirpi Sorani*, describing how during a certain sacrifice to the chthonic deity

[123] Colonna, 1994, 345-375. For criticisms of his theory see Jean-Paul Thuiller, 2007, "L'Apollon de Pyrgi: un dieu disparaît?" *Studi etruschi* 73: 93-100. For Colonna's defence against Thuiller, see Giovanni Colonna, 2007, "L'Apollo di Pyrgi: Sur/suri e L'Apollo Sourios," *Studi etruschi* 73: 101-134.
[124] Giovanni Colonna, 1985a, "Novita sui culti di Pyrgi," RPAA 57: 76, n. 58; Mika Rissanen, 2012, "The *Hirpi Sorani* and the Wolf Cults of Central Italy," *Arctos: Acta Philologica Fennica* 46: 119, n. 32.
[125] Verg. *Aen*. 11, 784‑788. It is significant that the character in the Aeneid who utters this prayer to Apollo of Mt. Soracte is an Etruscan warrior, named Arruns. For Apollo as the god of Mt. Soracte, see Strabo 5, 226; Plin. *nat*. 7, 19; Sil. 5, 175‑183; Sol 2, 26.
[126] Serv. *Aen.* 11,785.

on the mountain, wolves appeared and stole the entrails of the sacrificed animals from the flames. After shepherds chased these wolves for a considerable distance, they reached a cave emitting poisonous fumes and became sick from inhaling these gases. To alleviate their illness, the men consulted the deity, who told them to live in the manner of wolves. Thus, Servius tells us that they behaved like plunderers, and were called the *Hirpi Sorani*.[127]

This is, perhaps, a fanciful explanation of the *Hirpi Sorani*. The connection between the wolf and Apollo Soranus more likely stems from the combination of ideas from both the Greek worship of Apollo and from indigenous beliefs about the wolf in central Italy. In Greek literature, Apollo often carried the epithet of Lykeios, a name which the Greeks believed originated from his connection with wolves.[128] In Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, the chorus invokes Apollo Lykeios and implores him to "be a wolf to the enemy force, and give them groan for groan."[129] Sophocles also refers to Apollo's lupine connections in his *Electra*, although he calls Apollo, "the wolf-slaying god," when mentioning his *agora* in Argos.[130] Pausanias also refers to a precinct of Apollo Lykeios existing in Argos, and explains how it was founded after Apollo sent a wolf to attack a

[127] Serv. *Aen.* 11,785.
[128] There is a long-standing debate about the meaning of this epithet in modern scholarship. Some scholars, such as Brown and Guthrie, interpret this epithet as meaning Apollo of Lycia, referring back to the possible eastern origins of the god Apollo. Edwin L. Brown, "In Search of Anatolian Apollo," in *Charis: Essays in Honour of Sara A. Immerwahr*, ed. Anne P. Chapin (Princeton: Hesperia Supplement, 33): 243-257; W. K. C. Guthrie, 1950, *The Greeks and their Gods* (Boston: Beacon Press): 82-87. However, other scholars, for example, Gershenson, believe that the name refers to the god's connection with wolves. Daniel E. Gershenson, 1991, "Apollo the Wolf-god," *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, mono. n. 8 (McLean (VA): Institute for the Study of Man).
[129] Aesch. *Sep*. 145-146. καὶ σύ, Λύκει᾽ ἄναξ, Λύκειος γενοῦ στρατῷ δαΐῳ στόνων ἀντίτας. Trans. Herbert Weir Smyth (1926).
[130] Soph. *El*. 6-7.

herd of cattle in the area. The wolf subdued the bull that was protecting the herd, and the Argives interpreted this outcome as a sign that Danaus should be ruler of the city.[131] Delphic Apollo was also associated with wolves; Pausanias describes how a bronze wolf statue was dedicated at Delphi by the people of Delphi, after a wolf killed a robber who had plundered golden treasures from the sanctuary, and guided the Delphians to the place where the spoils were hidden.[132] Wolves were also involved in another incident that transpired at Delphi. Pausanius reports that the wolves of Mount Parnassus saved the inhabitants of Delphi from drowning in a flood by guiding them up the mountain with their howling.[133]

It seems that Apollo was also connected to the wolf through his mother, Leto. In some later mythical accounts of Apollo's birth, Leto is said to have transformed into a wolf to escape Hera's persecution while she wandered the earth in search of a place to give birth during her arduous labor.[134] Other mythical accounts describe how after giving birth, Leto visited the river Xanthos with her newly born children, where wolves guided her to a suitable bathing place at the river's edge. In thanks, she renamed the land Lykia, after the wolves which had helped her. This later mythical account from Antoninus Liberalis attempts to reconcile the different meanings of the epithet Lykeios by tracing the origin of the name of Lycia from the Greek word for wolf, a valiant, although perhaps

[131] Paus. 2.16.3-4.
[132] Paus. 10.14.7. This story is also reported in Ael. *N.A.* 12.40.
[133] Paus. 10.6.2.
[134] Ael. *N.A.* 10.26. Aelian also suggests that wolves experienced a period of labour lasting for 12 days and 12 nights before giving birth, since this was how long it took Leto to travel from the land of the Hyperboreans to Delos. Ael. *N.A.* 4.4.

futile, effort.[135] Regardless of the true origin of the epithet, it is doubtless that the Greeks did consider the wolf to be an important associate of Apollo and his mother.

The Wolf in Etruria

The wolf played a very crucial role in Etruscan religion, and seems to have been closely associated with ideas of death and the underworld. In fact, the Etruscan word for death, *lupu*, is remarkably close to the Latin word for wolf, *lupus*.[136] There is evidence that the Etruscan god of death was represented as a wolf in art; a bronze statuette from Cortona in the shape of a wolf bears a dedicatory inscription on its leg to the infernal god, Calu (Fig. 20).[137] Many Etruscan votive inscriptions reveal that the Etruscan word for the underworld was '*calu*,' as the dead were said to go "to Calu."[138] Perhaps the word '*calu*' served as both the name of the deity and the title of the underworld at the same time, much like the title 'Hades' in Greek religion. This is hard to determine, however, since Calu never appears as a personification in Etruscan art.[139] Instead, whenever the god of death was depicted, he was personified in the form of Aita, the Etruscan adaptation of Hades. Aita only begins appearing in Etruscan tomb paintings in the later periods of

[135] Antoninus Liberalis, *Met*. 35.
[136] A.W.J. Holleman, 1985, "Lupus, Lupercalia, Lupa," *Latomus*, t. 44, fasc. 3: 609-614. Also see John Elliott, 1995, "The Etruscan Wolfman in Myth and Ritual," in *Etruscan Studies*, vol. 2: 24.
[137] Paul Defosse, 1972, "Génie funéraire ravisseur (Calu) sur quelques urnes étrusques," *L'antiquité classique* 41, fasc. 2: 496-499. It is Defosse who suggests that the Etruscan god of death was called Calu, after the inscription on this statuette. The statuette appears very dog-like in shape, but there is evidence that dogs were involved in funerary cults (for example, the Phersu fresco from the Tomb of the Augurs at Tarquinia depicts a brutal funeral game in which dogs are involved), and it possible that both dogs and wolves were symbolic of death in Etruria. The statuette of Calu is now in the National Archaeological Museum in Florence.
[138] Simon, 2006, 57.
[139] Ingrid Krauskopf, 1988, "*Aita/Calu*," *LIMC* IV: 394-399.

Etruscan art, around the middle of the 4th C BC. Although he is portrayed with an appearance similar to his Greek counterpart, Aita maintains an important clue of his Etruscan origin in his costume. He wears the head and skin of a wolf over his own head and shoulders, an attribute which points back to his connection with Calu, the Etruscan wolf-god of death.[140] The most famous depiction of Aita wearing a wolf-pelt is found in the Tomb of Orcus II at Tarquinia, painted around 325 BC (Fig. 21). The frescos illustrate the Etruscan underworld, which is overseen by the rulers of the realm, Aita and his wife, Phersipnei (Etruscan Persephone), who are painted on the back wall of the tomb. The concept of the underworld is heavily influenced by Greek mythology, if not altogether predominantly Greek, with scenes of Greek heroes such as Theseus and Pirithous, and Agamemnon, Teiresias, and Ajax in the underworld. However, several Etruscan additions and adaptations are made to the scene, such as the Etruscan demon, Tuchulcha, and the wolf-skin garb of the god, Aita. The iconography of the wolf, a long-standing symbol of death in the Etruscan culture, was applied to the god of death, Aita, to reinforce his chthonic connotations.

Furthermore, there are numerous examples in Etruscan art of a type of death-demon represented as a half human, half wolf creature. This creature is frequently featured in funerary contexts, and perhaps acted as a harbinger of death in Etruscan religion. Several funerary urns, originating mostly from Volterra, Chiusi, and Perugia, are

[140] Krauskopf argues that this is not the skin of a wolf, but a live wolf, implying that Aita is a hybrid creature, both wolf and personified god at the same time. This strengthens even further the association between wolves and the Etruscan god of death. Krauskopf, 2013, 524.

engraved with a depiction of an unusual chthonic ritual being enacted, for which we have no literary parallel (Fig. 22). The iconography of this scene is fairly consistent: a group of men stand around a circular wellhead, out of which emerges either a fully-formed wolf, or a wolf-man, usually chained by the neck. On one urn from Perugia, the creature is actually depicted as a man wearing the skin of a wolf, which perhaps indicates that this scene depicts a ritual re-enactment of an Etruscan myth (Fig. 23). The wolf or wolf-man aggressively lunges at the men surrounding him, while they pour libations to the creature and attempt to subdue it. In several representations, winged Vanth, an Etruscan demon of death, stands in the background and presides over the ritual. The underworld associations in this scene are strong: the creature emerges from a *puteal* in the ground, which is likely a portal to the netherworld, called a *mundus*.[141] Whatever ritual or myth this strange scene depicts, it seems to have originated from the earliest periods of Etruscan religion. A bronze *situla* found in a Villanovan grave near Bisenzio has an elaborately wrought lid decorated with bronze figurines (Fig. 24). The figures, some of which are brandishing spears, all run in a circle around a dog-like creature which sits with its front paws raised in the middle of the lid. The creature is chained at the neck, just like the wolf demons on the urns. There is a circle incised in the bronze directly below the creature, which may possibly have been intended to represent the circular well.[142]

Several theories have been proposed in an attempt to explain what exactly is depicted on these urns, none of which have been conclusively proven. Brunn and Körte

[141] See chapter 3 for the discussion of the *mundus*.
[142] However, it may just as likely be a simple decorative inclusion on the lid of the *situla*.

have identified the wolf-like creature with Olta (or alternately, Volta), a monster which, according to Pliny, escaped from the underworld and terrorized the lands of Volsinium, until Porsenna summoned a lightning bolt to expiate it.[143] The creature in this myth, Olta, may be related to the Etruscan earth deity, Veltha, which would explain the chthonic origin of the beast.[144] Richardson supports this interpretation, and suggests that the *puteal*, from which the creature emerges, symbolizes the place where the expiatory lightning bolt will strike the earth.[145] However, the *puteal* may carry a different significance in this scene; it could be a mundus, an entrance to the underworld through which offerings were made to the dead and ghosts could return to the realm of the living.[146] It is possible that the urns portray a ritual re-enactment of the myth of Olta; however, this is by no means a universally accepted explanation of the image. Defosse interprets this creature simply as a representation of Calu, the Etruscan god of death.[147] Simon construes the scene to be a rendering of the myth of Sisyphus, and that the creature climbing out of the well is the embodiment of death, which Sisyphus has chained by the neck. She identifies the figure who in most representations of the scene pours a libation over the monster, as the Corinthian king, Sisyphus.[148] There is little evidence to support this reading of the scene, and it is more likely that the urns depict a longstanding indigenous tradition, rather than a

[143] Pliny, *N.H.* 2.54.140. H. Brunn and G. Körte, 1916, *I rilievi delle urne etrusche*, vol. 3 (Rome); 16-24.
[144] A. J. Pfiffig, 1975, *Religio Etrusca* (Graz: Akademische Verlagsanstalt): 313-315.
[145] Festus tells us that the Romans would erect a *puteal* over the sacred ground where a lightning bolt had struck. Festus 333. Emeline Richardson, 1977, "The Wolf in the West," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery: Essays in Honor of Dorothy Kent Hill* 36: 95. The *puteal* may have another meaning in this context: it could be a *mundus*, an entrance to the underworld.
[146] The *mundus* will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.
[147] Defosse, 1972, 499.
[148] Simon, 2013, 508-509.

Greek myth. All that can be said with certainty at this time is that the urns depict an Etruscan myth, or perhaps even a ritual re-enactment of it, that involved a menacing death demon coming up from the underworld. It might have been a ritual conducted at Etruscan funerals in honor of the deceased, as Etruscan tomb paintings indicate that such ritual re-enactments and games were a customary at elite Etruscan funerals. In fact, the infamous Phersu fresco painted in the Tomb of the Augurs demonstrates some similarities with the urns, as it depicts a masked man provoking a pack of ferocious dogs to attack a man wearing a bag over his head and wielding a club for defense. It is possible that there may be some connection between the use of dogs in this rather gruesome sport and the Etruscan wolf demon of death.[149]

As mentioned above, there is a certain demon, half-wolf and half-man, which appears several times in representations of the murder of Troilos by Achilles on amphorae from Caere, painted by the Tolfa group. This wolf demon of death, included in the depiction as a statuette on top of the fountain, stands in an aggressive pose with a *machaira* in its hand, symbolizing the imminent demise of the Trojan prince, Troilos.[150] Simon considers these statuettes to be demons of death, associated with Apollo in his more chthonic, Etruscan guise of Śuri/Soranus Apollo.[151] On one amphora, moreover, the wolf demon even brandishes in his hand a thunderbolt, rather than a *machaira*, which

[149] Elliot, 1995, 30-31.
[150] D'Agostino, 1991, 115-117. See above, pages 31-33. This half-man, half-wolf death demon also appears on other ceramic wares, such as on the *tondo* of a plate from Vulci, now in the Villa Giulia, and an amphora from Caere, now in the Louvre.
[151] Simon, 1996, 67-68.

may be a reference to the chthonic, thunderbolt wielding god, Śuri.[152] Although it is odd that these wolf demons do not appear among the other death demons included in the repertoire of Etruscan tomb painting, such as Vanth and Charun, their repeated appearance in scenes of death on Etruscan urns and amphorae nevertheless upholds the interpretation that they are infernal creatures. It seems that Apollo, with his connection to wolves, was conflated with chthonic deities like Soranus and Calu, and became a god associated with death and the afterlife in central Italy.

The Cult of Śuri-Apollo in Central Italy

The sanctuary of Apollo that Aelian claims was sacked by Dionysius of Syracuse was probably none other than the sanctuary of Śuri in the southern precinct of Pyrgi.[153] It is likely that Aelian chose to refer to the Etruscan god, Śuri, by the name of his closest Greek equivalent so that he could most easily convey to his audience the nature of the deity worshiped at the sanctuary.[154] There is other evidence unearthed at the sanctuary of Pyrgi that points to such a conclusion. A votive deposit found near altar *Lambda* in the southern precinct of Pyrgi, the same one mentioned above in connection with the inscription naming Śuri and Cavatha, contained a bundle of iron and bronze sheets hammered into the shape of leaves.[155] These were likely prophetic *sortes*, on which oracular responses could be recorded. It seems that just like Apollo, and his other

[152] D'Agostino, 1991, 117. See Giovanni Colonna, 1992, "Altari e sacelli: L'area Sud di Pyrgi dopo otto anni di ricerche," *Rend. Pont. Acc.* 64, 101-107.
[153] Ael. *Var. hist.* 1.20. Colonna, 2006, 151.
[154] Colonna, 1985a, 76, n. 58; De Grummond, 2008, 426.
[155] Colonna, 2006, 138-139.

Etruscan counterpart, Rath, Śuri was a god of prophecy who offered oracular consultation at his sanctuaries. Furthermore, similar *sortes* have been found at other Etruscan sanctuaries, such as at Viterbo and Arezzo, which refer to the god Śuri in their inscriptions.[156] Śuri seems to have been an important deity venerated throughout Etruria, with several of these votive inscriptions on *sortes* revealing his importance as an oracular deity. In fact, it is possible that he, and his consort Cavatha, presided over another sanctuary, located in the Tarquinian port town of Gravisca, not far north of Caere and Pyrgi. In the northern area of the sanctuary, there were two chthonic altars, which Bagnasco Gianni identifies as belonging to Śuri and Cavatha.[157] Their construction dates to approximately 530-480 BC. A votive deposit was unearthed in close proximity to these altars, the contents of which mirrored closely those found in the aforementioned votive deposit from Pyrgi.[158] Furthermore, throughout the sanctuary unusual black stones, or *cippi*, were discovered, which were ovoid in shape and made from a type of stone called Serpentinium.[159] Black stones similar to these have been found in other cult areas belonging to Śuri, in particular, at Pyrgi, and have been suggested by Colonna to be

[156] Colonna, 2006, 141.
[157] Giovanna Bagnasco Gianni, 2013, "Tarquinia, Sacred Areas and Sanctuaries on the Civita Plateau and on the Coast: Monumental Complex, Ara Della Regina, Gravisca," in *The Etruscan World*, ed. Jean MacIntosh-Turfa (New York: Routledge): 605.
[158] Bagnasco Gianni, 2013, 607. The deposit contained a number of spearheads, miniature weapons, and even a small figurine of a warrior, indicating a male god's presence at the sanctuary. There was also a variety of skyphoi and olpai in the deposit, likely dedicated to such a female goddess as Cavatha. Also see Lucio Fiorini and Simona Fortunelli, 2011, "Si depongano le armi. Offerte rituali di armi dal santuario settentrionale di Gravisca," in *Miti di guerra riti di pace. La guerre e la pace: un confronto interdisciplinare*, ed. Concetta Masseria and Donato Loscalzo (Edipuglia): 42-43.
[159] Fiorini and Fortunelli, 2011, 46-47.

aniconic representations of the god.[160] However, this northern area of the precinct was abandoned sometime during the later 5th C. BC, as the two large altars were dismantled around 430-420 BC, and it appears that the a cult precinct of Apollo was instead established in the southern section of the sanctuary. A *cippus* was found in this southern sanctuary that was inscribed with a votive dedication in Greek naming Apollo of Aegina as the recipient of the offering. It was dedicated by a Greek man named Sostratos, and indicates the important Greek presence in this area of Etruria at this time. Another votive inscription found nearby the *cippus* of Sostratos was also addressed to Apollo, further indicating that he possessed a sacred space in this part of the sanctuary.[161] It appears that Śuri-Apollo was one of the major gods sharing the sanctuary of Gravisca, worshipped by both Greek and Etruscan shrine visitors alike.

The cult of Śuri-Apollo was highly venerated in southern Etruria, and the territory of Caere in particular, as the god had major sanctuaries both in the central city and in its major port of Pyrgi. Here, Apollo was not a god of music and healing, but a solar god of oracular revelation and the underworld, whose characteristics were derived from the chthonic nature of the setting sun. This chthonic and prophetic nature of Apollo in Etruria and Central Italy is expressed most powerfully in Vergil's portrayal of the Sibyl of Cumae in the Aeneid. Dwelling in her cave at Cumae, close to the mouth of the underworld, the Sibyl is inspired by Apollo to utter oracular prophecies, which she

[160] Colonna, 2007, 117-123. A similar Serpentinium *cippus* has been uncovered in recent excavations around the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, and could point to the worship of the cult of Śuri in the area.
[161] Bagnasco Gianni, 2013, 608.

records on leaves.[162] Perhaps the leaf-shaped *sortes* found at Pyrgi were meant to invoke the idea of the Sibyl's prophecies. Not only was she a prophetic figure, but the Sibyl also served as Aeneas' guide through the underworld. The priestess of Apollo leads the hero to the gates of the underworld, conducts the proper sacrificial acts to the Proserpina and Dis Pater, and then guides him throughout the entire underworld to meet the shade of his father. Vergil's depiction of the Sibyl of Cumae presents the priestess of Apollo as a prophetic and chthonic figure, just like the powerful god she serves. She is the embodiment of the god Apollo as he is worshipped in Etruria and Central Italy.

[162] Ver. *Aen*. 3.441-452

Chapter Three – The *Mundus* of Caere

He founded the city, having summoned men from Etruria who prescribed everything according to sacred ordinances and writings, just as in a religious rite. For a circular trench was dug near the area of the current Comitium, and the first-fruits of all.... were deposited here. And finally, each man came carrying a small portion of his homeland, and these offerings were thrown into this pit and mingled with the first-fruits. They call this trench by the same name as that of the heavens, a mundus.

Plutarch, *Life of Romulus*, 11.1-2

It has now been established that Apollo had a significant chthonic and prophetic presence in Etruria, and in particular, the territory of Caere, where he was venerated in sanctuaries in the guise of the prophetic god, Rath, and the chthonic deity, Śuri. Additionally, Apollo may have also received cult veneration at the very heart of Caere, in an area of city that had a long tradition of religious worship, originating from the earliest stages of the settlement's history. There exists an underground ritual complex in the area of the Caeritan plateau now known as the Vigna Marini-Vitalini, which is in close proximity to the city's Roman theatre, located in the Vigna Parrocchiale. The subterranean complex, called the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, was constructed in the 3rd C. BC, after the Roman conquest of Caere. It remained in continuous use until the 3rd C. AD, although the complex's religious function changed over the centuries as it became associated with Mithraism during the Severan period. The hypogaeum was abandoned in the following centuries and went relatively unnoticed until partial excavations of the complex were undertaken by a team of archaeologists, led by Mauro Cristofani, starting

in 1983.[163] The hypogaeum was first published in 1987 in a report by Cristofani and Gregori, who made known to the scholarly world the unusual features of this underground complex, in particular, its inscriptions and its frescoes.[164] A greater area of the hypogaeum's plan and its surrounding location was explored during a series of excavation campaigns in 2001 to 2003, conducted by the University of Perugia under the direction of Mario Torelli. In the course of these investigations, the team partially excavated a section of the hypogaeum adjacent to the main chamber, which turned out to be a deep *cavaedium*, perhaps leading down to a well-spring. They also explored the area surrounding the hypogaeum, uncovering a series of features which suggested that this spot had been a site of sacred significance from as early as the orientalising period.[165]

Excavations in the Vigna Marini-Vitalini resumed in 2012, under the direction of Fabio Colivicchi of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and subsequent excavation campaigns were undertaken in 2013 and 2014. During these campaigns, the main chamber of the hypogaeum was fully excavated, and the area surrounding the hypogaeum was explored in order to understand more about settlement patterns in the city's centre.

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[163] M. Torelli, 2000, "La Fondazione della *praefectura Caeritum*," In *The Roman Middle Republic: Politics, Religion, and Historiography c. 400-133 BC*, ed. Christer Bruun (Rome: Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae, Vol. 23): 141. The hypogaeum had been found fortuitously in the 1950's and 60's, but was not published until the report of Cristofani and Gregori in 1987. Fabio Colivicchi, 2014, "The *Mundus* of Caere and Early Etruscan Urbanization," in *Urban Dreams and Realities: Remains and Representations of the Ancient City*, ed. Adam M. Kemezis (Leiden: Brill): 47, fn. 7.

[164] Mauro Cristofani and G. L. Gregori, 1987, "Di un complesso sotterraneo scoperto nell'area urbana di Caere," *Prospettiva* 49: 2-14.

[165] Fabio Colivicchi, 2003, "Il *mundus* di Clepsina e la topografia di Cerveteri. Scavi dell'Università di Perugia nell'ex Vigna Marini-Vitalini campagne 2001-2002," *Science and Technology for Cultural Heritage* 12 (Pisa: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali): 11-42. Also see, M. Torelli and L. Fiorini, 2008, "Le indagini dell'Università degli studi di Perugia nella vigna Marini-Vitalini," *Mediterranea* 5: 139-163.

Archaeological evidence unearthed during these campaigns continues to support the interpretation of the site as a sacred location for the Caerites dating from at least the orientalizing period.[166] Furthermore, the deliberate orthogonal orientation of the hypogaeum aligns with the other structures in its vicinity, some of which date to the 7th C. BC, suggesting that the hypogaeum may have been a Roman re-construction or renovation of a very ancient cult space in Caere.[167]

The hypogaeum is of great significance for understanding the history and political status of Caere during the 3rd C. BC on account of an inscription engraved in the wall of the main chamber (Fig. 25). The inscription, located at eye level, reads "C. GENUCIO(S) CLOUSINO(S) PRAI." However, the inscription is strangely engraved in two-different scripts: "CLOUSINO(S) PRAI." was traced directly into the wet plaster, and employs an earlier style of script with rougher, more angular letters. The first half of the inscription, "C. GENUCIO(S)," was added later and carved into the wall when the plaster had already started to harden. The letters are written in a script with more rounded curves, especially noticeable in the execution of the letters 'C,' 'G,' and 'O,' to compensate for the difficulties of tracing a name in dry plaster.[168] The name mentioned in the inscription is of tremendous significance, as the individual is known historically. According to the *Fasti*, C. Genucius Clepsina was a Roman consul in the year 276 BC, and again in the year 270

[166] Excavations have revealed a number of ceramic implements that were ritually deposited in this area, some of which dated to the Villanovan period based on stylistic analysis. Some of these wares are miniature in scale, indicating that they were ritualistic objects intended to serve as cult offerings.
[167] Colivicchi, 2014, 58. The excavations of the hypogaeum are still ongoing, with the aim of fully excavating the hypogaeum, including the *cavaedium*, and comprehending more fully its relation to the structures uncovered in the near vicinity, as well as its significance to the city of Caere as a whole.
[168] Colivicchi, 2014, 47.

BC. Both Clepsina and Clousinos are derivative forms of the cognomen, Clevsina, which was an Etruscan name meaning "from Clusium."[169] C. Genucius Clepsina was a Roman magistrate of Etruscan descent, who was sent to supervise the administration of Caere as it transitioned into an official Roman *praefectura*.[170] This inscription provides a very specific date for the construction of the hypogaeum, and helps us to contextualize the structure in terms of Caere's historical and political development.

Relations between Caere and Rome during the Republican Period

Around the year 273 BC, Caere was officially made a *praefectura* of Rome, after a conflict occurred between the Caerites and their Roman neighbours. Prior to this, Caere had been made a public ally of the Rome state in gratitude for their assistance in sheltering the Vestals and sacred objects during the Gallic invasion of 390 BC.[171] Additionally, Gellius states that they were the first settlement to be granted the status of *civitas sine suffragio* in return for this favour.[172] His statement suggests that the status of *civitas sine suffragio* may not initially have had such negative connotations as it developed later in the Republic, when it became a punitive title imposed on troublesome

[169] Cristofani, M. 1989. "C. Genucio Clepsina praetore a Caere." In *Atti del Secondo Congresso Internazionale Etrusco, Firenze 1985*, ed.G. Maetzke. Roma: G. Bretschneider: 167. Also see Torelli, 2000, 151. Brennan argues that the name may have belonged to a homonymous descendant of the consul C. Genucius Clepsina. However, there is no reason to dismiss the identity of the individual as being the historical Clepsina, especially considering what we know about the political situation in Caere at the time of the historical Clepsina's activity in Rome. T. Corey Brennan, 2000, *The Praetorship in the Roman Republic*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press): 652-655.
[170] Torelli, 2002, 142-143.
[171] Livy, 5.50.3. For the grant of *civitas sine suffragio*, see Strabo (5.2.3), who interprets the grant of *civitas sine suffragio* as always having a negative connotation.
[172] Gellius, (16.13.7) acknowledges the later penalizing nature of the title, *civitas sine suffragio*, remarking that the tablets on which were recorded the names of citizens who were to be deprived of voting rights came to be known as the Caeretan tablets.

peoples. However, Strabo does not specifically associate the granting of the title *civitas sine suffragio* with the deeds of the Caerites during the Gallic invasion, but instead remarks that it was an act of ingratitude on Rome's part, who did not sufficiently remember the Caerites' past help.[173] This suggests that the status of *civitas sine suffragio* was bestowed on Caere at a later date, and always was intended as a punitive measure. Perhaps the title was imposed on the Caerites around the year 353 BC, after Rome declared war on the Caerites for joining the Tarquinians and assisting in their rebellion against the Romans. According to Livy, the Caerites, finding themselves to be no match for the Roman forces, quickly surrendered and sent envoys to Rome to appeal for forgiveness. They were supposedly pardoned by the Romans on account of their earlier assistance during the Gallic invasion, and a hundred-year peace treaty was established between the two peoples. [174]

This peace treaty, however, certainly did not last for the full one hundred years. Around the year 273 BC, Caere and Rome were once again entangled in some sort of dispute, and the Romans were on the verge of declaring war on Caere. However, the hostilities were ceased when the Caerites sent ambassadors to Rome, who surrendered half of their territory in return for Roman amnesty. Following this agreement, the Romans began constructing colonies in territory formerly belonging to the Caerites, and promptly made Caere into a Roman *praefectura*. The administration of Caere was overseen by a

[173] Strabo, 5.2.3.
[174] Livy, 7.20.7-8. It is important to note that Livy makes no mention of the status of *civitas sine suffragio* being granted to the Caerites during this occasion.

praefectus, a member of the senatorial class sent as a yearly magistrate to supervise the affairs of new *praefecturae*.[175] It is probable that C. Genucius Clepsina, the author of the inscription in the hypogaeum, was the first *praefectus* of Caere, sent to watch over the official incorporation of the city into the Roman state.

The inscription of Clepsina's name in the hypogaeum gives a fairly good approximation for the complex's date of construction, as it was likely completed around 273 BC, or shortly thereafter. Since the hypogaeum's orientation fits with the orthogonal plan of the earlier structures in its vicinity, it is likely that the hypogaeum was a pre-existing structure of great religious significance, which Clepsina renovated, expanded, and refurbished.[176] This would make the renovation of the hypogaeum one of the earliest building projects undertaken in Roman Caere. The renovation of a religious structure by the Romans in this ritually sacred area of the city must have been intended to convey an important message to the Caeritan citizens during this turbulent, transitional period. So then, what was the function of this subterranean structure, and what was the significance of the Romans undertaking such a construction project as one of their first tasks in the newly integrated territory? To investigate these questions properly, it is important first to examine the orientation, plan, and remarkable features of the hypogaeum.

Appearance and Features of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina

[175] It was often the policy of the Roman senate to assign magistrates of ethnicities similar to the newly conquered peoples in order to govern their cities more effectively. Thus, Clepsina with his Etruscan pedigree, would appear a sensible choice for the position of *praefectus* of newly conquered Caere. On this practice, see G. Clemente, 1976, "'Esperti' ambasciatori del senato e la formazione della politica estera romana tra il III e il II secolo a.C.," *Athenaeum* 54: 319-352.
[176] Colivicchi, 2014, 58.

The Hypogaeum of Clepsina functioned ritualistically, as the layout of the subterranean complex adheres to divinatory practices and the Etruscan conception of the cosmos: the long *dromos* leading down to the hypogaeum is oriented on the north-south axis, and the main chamber of the complex is quadrangular in shape, probably arranged in accordance with the designations of an augural *templum* (Fig. 26). The chamber's four corners align with the cardinal points, and the doorway into the chamber is positioned in the west corner of the room, a meaningful location according to the principles of augury.[177] The niche in the main chamber is located in the north corner of the room, and most importantly, faces the direction of north north-east.[178] According to Martianus Capella's account of the Etruscan division of the heavens, this sector belonged to deities who were chthonic in nature, in particular, the ruler of the underworld, Pluto.[179] The direction of the niche suggests at a chthonic function for the hypogaeum, and the orientation and shape of the entire chamber indicates that it likely served a divinatory purpose.

[177] Torelli, 2000, 146-147. Colivicchi, 2014, 51-53.The Iguvine Tablets (6.8-11) stress the importance of establishing the four corners of an augural *templum*. In his description of a *minor templum*, Festus emphasizes the importance of the angles (*angulos*) in setting up an augural *templum*. Festus, s.v. *Minora Templa*, 146.

[178] Colivicchi, 2014, 51-53.

[179] Pluto's name appears in the third region of the heavens, as described by Martianus Capella. This region likely corresponded to the NNE direction. Pallottino argues that by comparing the Liver of Piacenza to Capella's description of the sixteen heavenly regions, it becomes apparent that Capella's region 1 should not be placed in the north, but should be shifted two places so that it sits in the NW region of the heavens. This would place region 2 in the NNW, and region 3 (which contains the chthonic gods, Pluto, Discordia, and Seditio) in the NNE. Mart. Cap. 1, 45 ff.; M. Pallottino, 1956, "Deorum Sedes," In *Studi in onore di Aristide Calderini e Roberto Paribeni* 2 (Milan: Casa editrice Ceschina): 223-234; L. B. van der Meer, 1987, *The Bronze Liver of Piacenza: Analysis of a Polytheistic Structure*, Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology, vol. 2 (Amsterdam): 22-26.

The main chamber possesses two large windows in its south-western wall, which would have opened onto a large, square *cavaedium*, located adjacent to the hypogaeum. This well was accessed by another set of stairs leading from the surface, from which vantage point it would have been possible to observe the niche directly through one of the windows. These stairs also lead to the hypogaeum itself, connecting with a corridor which converges with the end of the *dromos*. The alignment of the window was a deliberate and extremely important feature of the complex, as it was designed so that the niche was illuminated by the setting sun on the eve of the Winter Solstice.[180] This intentional cosmological arrangement indicates the significance of the niche in connection with the sun, and confirms that the hypogaeum was planned in accordance with the Etruscan conception of the heavens. Moreover, charcoal traces found on the walls of the main chamber indicate the places where torches were mounted, and confirm that nocturnal rituals, likely connected with chthonic and funerary worship, occurred in this subterranean chamber.[181] These nocturnal rituals may have occurred during the eve of the Winter Solstice, after the sun had set and its rays no longer illuminated the niche.

There is a circular opening in the back wall of the niche which leads to a tunnel system, the corridors of which are large enough for a person to walk through without difficulty. The passageway leads to an area with a circular shaft above it, which is capped with a *puteal*. This well may have granted access to the hypogaeum without the need of

[180] Colivicchi, 2014, 55-57.
[181] Colivicchi, 2014, 55-57.

opening the main gateway to the inner sanctum.[182] The tunnel system continues past this point, but has not yet been excavated. Small holes stained with traces of ferric oxide in the back wall of the niche are evidence that iron nails once suspended a metal trap-door, or some other system of closure, over the circular opening, restricting accesses to the tunnel system and perhaps keeping its inner recesses secret. The walls of the niche are adorned with elegant Hellenistic paintings, executed in true-fresco technique and original to the first phase of the hypogaeum's construction. The most striking elements of the niche's frescoes are the two large palm trees adorning the walls on either side of the niche.

The Hypogaeum of Clepsina is also remarkable for a number of other inscriptions written with charcoal residue on the walls of the main chamber. These inscriptions date from a much later period in the hypogaeum's history, and indicate that hypogaeum continued as an important cult space even into the Severan period.[183] One of the most striking and significant of these graffiti is drawn on the inside of the window through which the setting sun would illuminate the niche. It depicts the solar deity, Sol Invictus, wearing a radial crown as he straddles a bull, which he is probably preparing to slay (Fig. 27). Although clearly a reference to Mithraism, the graffito is unique for merging the iconography of Sol Invictus with that of Mithras.[184] The presence of Mithraism indicates

[182] Colivicchi, 2014, 54.
[183] Evidence for small restorations being undertaken in the main chamber also reveals that the hypogaeum was continually in use, at least until the Severan period. Colivicchi, 2014, 51.
[184] Torelli, 2000, 157-159. Sol Invictus and Mithras are seemingly paradoxical divinities, who are at the same time nearly the same deity as well as separate individuals. See Roger Beck, 2006, *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 54; 95-96. Although Mithras can be

a shift in ritual use of the hypogaeum, but perhaps it was not so much a departure from the old cults revered there, as it was a development from them. Solar worship continued in the hypogaeum, although now in the form of the cults of Sol Invictus and Mithras. A similar development in the ritual use of the space can be inferred by another one of the charcoal inscriptions which mentions the festival of the Rosalia.[185] The Rosalia was an important occasion in the Roman world when the dead were honoured and the ancestors celebrated with offerings of roses at their graves. It was celebrated in May, which the Roman's considered the month of the dead, an unlucky time when marriages should be avoided. The reference to a festival of the dead in the hypogaeum points to the continued chthonic character of the space over the centuries, a perpetuation of purpose which will be discussed in greater detail below.[186]

Ritual Function: The Hypogaeum as a *Mundus*

The orientation, organization, and inscriptions of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina decisively indicate that it was a space designed for ritual use, most likely chthonic and divinatory in nature. It had originally been proposed by Cristofani that this underground complex was an elaborate nymphaeum where young girls would come to worship before their impending nuptials.[187] He interpreted the palm tree frescoes as allusions to the cult

referred to as Sol Invictus Mithras, it is unusual for him to be depicted wearing a radial crown while carrying out the Tauroctony.
[185] Torelli, 2000, 157-159.
[186] Torelli, 2000, 157-159.
[187] Cristofani, 1987, 2-14.

of Artemis and her role as the guardian of young women upon entering marriage.[188] However, there is little evidence to support the interpretation that the palm trees of the hypogaeum symbolized this aspect of the cult of Artemis, and it seems dubious that the Romans would choose to construct a nymphaeum in the centre of Caere as one of their first building projects in this turbulent time period of newly established Roman occupation. Moreover, cults associated with pre-nuptial rituals usually occurred on the peripheries of settlements, in keeping with the liminal nature of marriage for young women. The hypogaeum is located in the city centre of Caere, and therefore was not likely a nymphaeum.

A more complex and religiously significant interpretation of the hypogaeum's function has been offered by Torelli, who proposed that the hypogaeum was a special type of Italic religious structure, called a *mundus*.[189] The *mundus* is an intricate concept that encompasses several different, albeit interconnected, religious implications. In the most general terms, the *mundus* was a place of intersection between the realms of heaven, earth, and the netherworld, a significant liminal space in which divinatory rites could be carried out. It was a *templum sub terra*, a ritually defined and consecrated subterranean space reflecting the orientation and organization of the heavens.[190] Furthermore, it was believed that the *mundus* was a portal to the underworld, through which offerings to the

[188] See Sourvinou-Inwood, 1991, 99-143, for her full argument that the palm tree was a symbol of Artemis as the guardian of young women entering into marriage. Also see above, chapter 1.
[189] Torelli, 2000, 141-177.
[190] Varro describes the existence of three types of *templa*: The heavenly *templum*, the earthly *templum*, and the underground *templum* (*templum sub terra*): *Templum tribus modis dicitur, a natura, ab auspicando, a similitudine: a natura in caelo, ab auspiciis in terra, a similitudine sub terra*. Varro, *Ling*. 7.6.

infernal gods could be made, and the ghosts of the ancestors could emerge into the upper world on certain occasions during the year.[191] It is possible that the Hypogaeum of Clepsina was such a *mundus*, functioning as a space for ancestral and chthonic worship.

The *mundus* is a religious construction shrouded in mystery and speculation. The most well-known *mundus* was located in Rome, but its precise location, religious function, appearance, and origin are open to debate.[192] It was a subterranean shrine consisting of a lower section consecrated to the *manes*, and a circular well that could serve as an access point when the *mundus* was sealed.[193] Much of our information on the *mundus* comes from ancient accounts by antiquarian writers, such as Macrobius, Varro, and Festus, all of whom describe the *mundus* as a liminal space connecting the living realm with the underworld, through which the spirits of the dead could emerge into the upper world when the *mundus* was unsealed.[194] However, their explanations of the *mundus* conflict with accounts given by authors such as Plutarch and Ovid, who describe it as a type of foundational pit. Plutarch's account of the *mundus* is the most divergent description, as he attributes the creation of the *mundus* to Romulus, claiming that the first king undertook its construction as one of the founding acts of his new city. He describes the *mundus* as a circular trench dug in the earth, into which the citizens each deposited an

[191] Varro *apud* Macrobius 1.16.18, and Ateius Capito *apud* Festus, 154.
[192] Barbette S. Spaeth, 1996, *The Roman Goddess Ceres* (University of Texas Press): 63-65. See Flavia Calisti, 2007, "Il mundus, l'umbilicus e il simbolismo del centro a Roma," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 31: 55-77; Henri Le Bonniec, 1958, *Le Culte de Cérès à Rome* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck): 175-184; and A. B. Cook, 1940, *Zeus: a Study in Ancient Religion*, vol. 3 (Cambridge University Press): 429-431, fn.1, for in-depth descriptions of the earlier scholarship surrounding the *mundus*.
[193] Colivicchi, 2014, 54.
[194] Macrob. *Sat*. 1.16.16-18; Fest., *s.v. mundus*, 54 Müeller; Fest., s.v. *mundus*, 142 Müeller.

offering of their first fruits together with a handful of soil from their homeland. He states that the mundus was of Etruscan origin, and that Romulus had Etruscan priests present at the *mundus'* creation to ensure it was constructed properly according to the *disciplina etrusca*. [195] Plutarch is the only author to situate the *mundus* in the Roman Comitium and to designate it as the physical centre of the city, leading some scholars to surmise that he confused it with the *Roma Quadrata*, another obscure religious structure that other authors locate on the Palantine.[196] The *Roma Quadrata* was also tied to Romulus' foundational rites of the city, perhaps explaining the reason for Plutarch's confusion, if indeed he was incorrect.[197] Ovid also gives a brief description of a circular foundation pit which recalls the *mundus* in his *Fasti*, describing it as a ditch dug by Romulus into which clods of earth from neighbouring fields were thrown as a foundation ritual. Although he does not specifically describe the *mundus* in Rome, his account echoes the ideas proposed by Plutarch.

These inconsistencies in the different accounts have led some scholars to suggest that two different types of *mundi* coexisted in Rome. Weinstock was one of the first scholars to propose this theory, arguing that there existed one type of *mundus* serving as the entrance to the infernal realm, and another associated with the foundational trench in the Comitium described by Plutarch, and possibly Ovid. Weinstock believes that neither

[195] Plutarch, *Rom.* 11.1-2.
[196] Fest. *s.v. Quadrata* 258. This view is supported by scholars such as Deubner and Colivicchi. L. Deubner, 1933, "*Mundus*," *Hermes* 68: 276-287; Colivicchi, 2014, 54.
[197] Fest. *s.v. Quadrata* 258. Festus remarks rather vaguely that the important tools used by Romulus in the foundation of the city were stored in the *Roma Quadrata*. See Joseph Rykwert, 1976, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Faber and Faber): 87-88.

of these two types of *mundi* were related to the *Roma Quadrata* on the Palatine.[198] Another theory ventured is that the *mundus* was originally located on the Palatine, but was relocated to the Comitium as the city of Rome expanded.[199] Coarelli, however, has proposed that the *mundus* corresponds to a small sanctuary to Dis Pater which, according to Macrobius, was located next to the *ara Saturni* in the Forum, near the Comitium.[200] He identifies the *mundus* as a subterranean counterpart to the *umbilicus Romae*, a small circular construction located in front of the Temple of Saturn.[201] Recalling Servius' remark about the *umbilicus Italiae*, Coarelli emphasizes that the *umbilicus/omphalos* in the ancient world could also serve as an entrance to the underworld, just like the *mundus*.[202]

[198] S. Weinstock, 1930, "*Mundus Patet*," *Mitt. Deutsc. Arch. Inst. Röm.* 45: 111-123. This argument is supported by H. J. Rose, 1931, "The *Mundus*," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 7: 113-127; André Magdelain, 1990, "Le pomerium archaïque et le mundus," in *Jus imperium auctoritas. Études de droit romain* (Rome: *L'É*cole française de Rome): 182-191.

[199] This idea is supported by A. L. Frothingham, 1914, "Circular Templum and Mundus," *AJA* 18, no. 3: 316. See also L. du Jardin, 1930, "*Mundus, Roma quadrata e lapis niger*," *Rend. Pont. Acc.* 6: 47, in which the theory that the *mundus* was moved from the Palatine to the Comitium in order to make room for the construction of the *Domus Aurea* is proposed.

[200] Macrob. *Sat*. 1.11.48; Filippo Coarelli, 1983, *Il Foro Romano: Periodo Arcaico* (Roma: Edizioni Quasar): 119-226.

[201]Verzar also argued for the identification of the *mundus* with the *umbilicus Romae*. Monika Verzar, 1976-77, "L'Umbilicus Urbis. Il mundus in eta tardo-repubblicana," *Dialoghi di archaeologia* 9-10: 378-398. However, this identification has met with some disapproval. See H. S. Versnel, 1993, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion: Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual*, vol. 2 (New York: E.J. Brill): 173, fn. 4, for a summary of these arguments. However, Versnel urges that even if the *umbilicus Romae* and the *mundus* cannot be identified as a combined entity, the two structures may nevertheless have been located in the same vicinity.

[202] Servius, *ad Aen*. 7, 563; Coarelli, 1983, 215. It is interesting to note that at Delphi, the *omphalos* marked the umbilicus of the world, and according to some versions of Delphic mythology, it had strong chthonic associations as it was believed to be the tomb of Dionysos. See chapter 2, pages 39-43, for a more detailed discussion of this topic.

The origins of the *mundus* are also obscure, and it remains uncertain whether the *mundus* was initially derived from Etruscan traditions, as Plutarch claimed.[203] However, an interesting theory was proposed by Fowler, who argued that the concept of the *mundus* was inspired by early agricultural practices.[204] Fowler suggested that Plutarch's comment about the first-fruits of the Roman people being deposited in the foundational trench hinted at another possible dimension of the *mundus*: a storehouse for grain seed and other agricultural produce. He investigated the relationship between the days of the year on which the *mundus* was open and the agricultural calendar, concluding that in origin, the *mundus* was the agricultural storehouse of the city. The creation of such a storehouse would have been a crucial founding act for a new city, as it needed to ensure the safety of its food supply. Fowler suggests that Etruscan traditions were later grafted onto the *mundus*, causing it to become associated with the worship of the infernal gods and the chthonic realm, rather than being a secure place to store seed-corn. As Rome expanded and the city centre ceased to lie at the heart of agricultural production, the more practical functions of the *mundus* became obsolete, and the *mundus* instead became imbued with new religious significance influenced by Etruscan beliefs of the underworld.[205]

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[203]Pffifig claims that although the term *mundus* may have been Roman, the concept of the *mundus* was likely Etruscan in origin. Ambros Josef Pfiffig, 1975, *Religio Etrusca* (Graz: Akademische Verlagsanstalt): 84. Dognini also believes that the concept of the *mundus* was derived from Etruscan traditions, and that it was closely linked to the liminal god, Janus, and his Etruscan counterpart, Culsans. Cristiano Dognini, 2001, "Il mudus e la guerra," in *Il pensiero sulla guerra nel mondo antico*, ed. Marta Sordi, vol 27 (Vite e Pensiero): 109-122.

[204] W. Warde Fowler, 1912, "Mundus Patet: 24th August, 5th October, 8th November," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 2: 25-33.

[205] Fowler, 1912, 26-30. Versnel proposes that the chthonic attributes of the *mundus*, and its association with Dis Pater, may have sprung from concerns over the wealth and prosperity of the agricultural season. The opening of the grain stores was a transitional moment filled with anxiety and uncertainty. The unsealed storehouse offered the promise of wealth from a productive agricultural season, but if the seed had spoiled,

Fowler's theory was modified by H. J. Rose, who agreed that the *mundus* was agricultural in origin, but opposed the idea that it was originally a storehouse for seed corn. Rose suggested that the *mundus* was a place where agrarian rituals were enacted, and small quantities of grain seed were stored as offerings to the infernal gods to secure their blessing for the agricultural season.[206] The occurrence of such agrarian rituals in the *mundus* is supported by a scholiast on Vergil, who mentions that a young boy would descend into the *mundus* to receive an oracle foretelling the productivity of the coming agricultural year.[207] If true, this ritual also suggests an important divinatory function of the *mundus* as a place where oracular revelation occurred.

The agricultural associations of the *mundus* are further supported by Festus, who refers to the *mundus* in Rome as the *Mundus Cereris*.[208] He tells us that the *mundus* was kept closed for most of the year, except on three specific days: the 24th of August, the 5th of October, and the 8th of November. Fowler speculates that these three dates originally coincided with the agricultural calendar, marking important times of the year when the storehouse would be opened in order to store the harvested seed-corn.[209] However, as the *mundus* acquired a more chthonic connotation over time, it became a threshold through

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it could spell ruin and hunger for the coming year. Versnel, 1993, 170-171. Coarelli argues that Saturn, who had both chthonic and agricultural associations, originally presided over the *mundus*, but that he was later replaced by Dis Pater, or the 'Rich Father," who represents the wealth of the earth. Coarelli, 1983, 224-225. Weinstock disagrees with the theory that the *mundus* had agricultural functions in origin, since none of the ancient texts discussing the *mundus* refer to agriculture practices directly. Weinstock, 1930, 115.

[206] Rose, 1931, 115.

[207] Scholiast de Berne in Verg. *Buc*. 3. 104. The scholiast does not use the term *mundus*, but refers to a circular well, which was likely an entrance to the *mundus*.

[208] Fest., s.v. *mundus*, 54 Müeller.

[209] Fowler, 1912, 25-33.

which the *di manes* were believed to rise up from the underworld and roam the earth on the three days when the *mundus* was opened. In fact, Macrobius calls the *mundus* the *Plutonis fauce*, the 'jaws of Pluto," and declares that it was consecrated to the rulers of the underworld, Dis Pater and Proserpina.[210] It was imperative that the rest of the year the *mundus* be sealed with a special stone, called the *lapis manalis*, so that the *manes* could not escape into the world above.[211] On the three days when the *Mundus Cereris* was opened and the *di manes* were released into the upper world, Festus, quoting Cato, states that no public affairs could be carried out in the Roman state, whether it be business transactions, political deliberations, or even military endeavours, as these days were thought to be ill-omened.[212] Varro corroborates this statement, claiming that it was dangerous to conduct matters of warfare, business, and marriage on the days when the *mundus* was open, since the *mundus* was believed to be a gateway to the sad and infernal deities.[213] The Romans believed it to be unwise to conduct business on days when ghosts were freely wandering the streets, and could threaten the well-being of the Roman state and people. This is especially evident in the ban against marriage on these three days, since starting a family on a day so heavily associated with death and the infernal world was thought to be most inauspicious.

Ceres and the *Mundus*

[210] Macrob. *Sat.* 1.16.16-18.
[211] Fest., s.v. *manalis lapis*, 128/93 Festus claims that the *lapis manalis* covered the mouth of hell (*ostium Orci*), through which the Manes could emerge into the upper world. Whether this was the entrance of the *mundus* or not is a subject of some debate.
[212] Fest., s.v. *mundus*, 142 Müeller.
[213] Varro in Macrob. *Sat*. 1.16.16-18.

The infernal deities, Dis Pater, Proserpina, and the *di manes*, were not the only divinities to hold sway over the *mundus*. The *mundus* in Rome was called the *Mundus Cereris* by Festus, which reveals it close connection with the Roman agricultural goddess, Ceres.[214] Festus' claim is supported by an inscription found at Capua mentioning a *sacerdos Cerialis Mundalis*, a priestess of the *mundus* of Ceres.[215] The cult of Ceres was one of the longest standing cults in central Italy, worshipped throughout Latium, and among many of Rome's neighbouring tribes as early as the regal period. In fact, Ceres is the recipient of one of the oldest inscriptions found bearing the name of any Roman deity. An impasto urn, found in the territory of Falerii and dating from approximately 600 BC, bears an inscription in Faliscan which appeals to Ceres to provide grain.[216] This evidence indicates that from the earliest origins of her cult, Ceres was a deity associated with agriculture, crops, and the fertility of the earth. She was likely an indigenous Italic agricultural deity, who later was syncretized with the Greek goddess, Demeter, and adopted Demeter's iconography and mythological corpus for her own cult.[217]

[214] Fest., s.v. *mundus*, 54 Müeller. There is some contention over the question of whether the *mundus Cereris* is the same as the *mundus* which was consecrated to Dis Pater and Proserpina. Given the close mythological relationship between Ceres, Proserpina, and Dis Pater, as well as the strong chthonic associations shared by all three deities, I believe that the *mundus Cereris* is the same as the one belonging to the infernal couple.
[215] *C.I.L.*, X, 3926. Le Bonniec, 1958, 175.
[216] Spaeth, 1996, 1.
[217] Le Bonniec, 1958, 11-17. There have been several different theories proposed as to Ceres' origin and development. However, the most widely accepted theory is that she was a native Italic deity, who, like many other archaic Roman deities, was animistic and did not have a personified form. However, being exposed to Hellenistic influence at an early period, she adopted the iconography and mythology of Demeter for her own cult. Other theories proposed suggest that Ceres was always a counterpart of Demeter, or that she was never closely associated with the Greek goddess at all.

Nevertheless, Ceres was never completely supplanted by the Greek goddess, but instead retained many of her own indigenous functions, rituals, and festivals.

One of the oldest festivals celebrated in Rome was the Cerialia, an agricultural festival dedicated to Ceres and celebrated on the 19th of April. This festival is marked on the oldest extant Roman calendar, which testifies to the antiquity of the cult of Ceres at Rome.[218] Horse races were held in the Circus Maximus during the festival, and a strange religious rite was enacted during which foxes were released into the circus and their tails set on fire.[219] This ritual had a purificatory significance, and was probably intended to keep the crops healthy and free from blight.[220] A temple to Ceres was located somewhere in the vicinity of the Circus Maximus, although its exact location has not been verified.[221] Possible sites for the temple include the slope of the Aventine, overlooking the Circus Maximus, or next to the Forum Boarium, where the current Church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin stands.[222] Although the temple is named after its central goddess, Ceres, it had a tripartite structure and was shared by the deities, Liber and Libera. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the construction of a temple to these three gods was vowed in the year 496 BC in response to a grain shortage and famine at Rome. After consulting the Sibylline Books, the Romans were advised to construct a temple to Demeter, Kore, and

[218] Spaeth, 1996, 34.
[219] Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.679-682, 703-712.
[220] Spaeth, 1996, 36-37.
[221] Vitruvius, 3.3.5; Pliny, *NH*, 35.154; Tacitus, *Ann*, 2.49.
[222] Le Bonniec identifies a platform found in the Forum Boarium as belonging to the Temple of Ceres. Le Bonniec, 1958, 266-267. However, Spaeth argues that the temple was located on the northern slope of the Aventine. Spaeth, 1996, 82-83.

Dionysos.[223] These three gods were known as the Aventine triad, and became the patron deities of the plebeians, as well as the overseers of the Circus Maximus.

As a goddess of fertility, agriculture, and grain, Ceres was closely associated with the productivity of the earth, as well as with birth and death. As such, she held jurisdiction in the chthonic sphere, and could be worshipped alongside other infernal deities.[224] As an agricultural and chthonic deity, she presided over the *mundus*, a hypogaeum at first used as a storehouse for grain seed, and later as a sacred space for worship of the infernal deities. Her association with death is particularly evident in the practice of sacrificing a pig to cleanse a family after the death of a relative. This sacrifice, the *porca praesentanea*, was conducted during the funeral in the presence of the dead person, and was a mandatory ritual for cleansing the family of pollution.[225] In the case that the deceased family member did not receive a proper burial, the heir of the family was instead required to carry out a sacrifice called the *porca praecidanea*, devoted to Ceres.[226] The religious significance of these sacrifices is highlighted by Cicero, who explains that the sacrifice of the pig is necessary for consecrating the tomb and placing it

[223] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 6, 17, 2-4. See Le Bonniec, 1958, 279-305, for a discussion of earlier scholarship on the origins of the triadic cult. Both Le Bonniec and Spaeth argue that both the tripartite structure of the cult and the deities worshiped were Italic in origin, despite some Greek influence in the temple decoration. Spaeth, 1996, 6-9.
[224] A marble relief from the Tomb of the Haterii (c. 98-117 AD) depicts Ceres alongside Mercury, Pluto and Proserpina. The inclusion of Ceres among this assembly of underworld deities indicates her close association with the chthonic realm, as does the funereal context of the relief. Vatican 10.018. Spaeth, 1996, 56.
[225] Fest. s.v. *praesentanea porca*. 250 Müeller. Festus is the only source to mention the goddess, Tellus, in connection with these sacrifices. All other sources claim that the rituals belonged to Ceres alone. On account of this, Spaeth argues that Varro's mention of Tellus is erroneous. Spaeth, 1996, 54.
[226] Varro. in Non. Marc., 163 Müeller.

in religious awe.[227] A family could neither conduct a proper burial nor free themselves from the pollution of death without first honouring Ceres with the sacrifice of a pig.

Ceres' chthonic connections were likely strengthened by her association with Greek Demeter, and the integration of mythological tales belonging to the Greek deity into the Roman cult of Ceres. The story of the Rape of Persephone was particularly important for reinforcing Ceres' connection to the infernal realm. The Greek cult of Demeter and Kore was highly venerated in *Magna Graecia*, but it is not until the Middle-Republic that there is any evidence for its worship in a Roman context.[228] However, by this period, the cult of Ceres had been considerably Hellenised in Rome, and the goddess came to be worshipped alongside her daughter Proserpina, the goddess of the underworld. Around this time, a festival derived from the Greek *Thesmophoria* was introduced in Rome, during which the participants would re-enact the myth of the Rape of Persephone.[229] The festival commemorated the sorrow of Demeter as she searched for her abducted daughter, and the consequential loss of the world's agricultural fertility. It also celebrated the subsequent return of Persephone from the underworld, and the restoration

[227] Cic. *Leg*. 2.55-57.

[228] As mentioned above, Libera, later equated with Proserpina, was worshipped alongside Ceres and Liber in the Aventine triad. However, she took a subsidiary role to the other two deities, and it was not until some point in the 3rd C. that she came to be prominently worshiped in connection with Ceres. The exact period for the introduction of the rites of Proserpina and Ceres are unknown, but Livy provides a *terminus ante quem* of 216 BC, when he reports that the festival to Ceres and Kore was interrupted by the mourning of the Roman women following the disastrous Battle of Cannae. Livy, 22.56.4; Eric Orlin, 2010, *Foreign Cults in Rome: Creating a Roman Empire* (Oxford University Press): 104-105. However, evidence of early cult worship of Ceres and Proserpina as a mother and daughter unit close to Rome may be supplied by a 5th C. BC bronze tablet from Agnone, which carries an Oscan inscription describing a sanctuary of *kerrí* (Ceres). It reports that there was an area sacred to *futír* (daughter) at the sanctuary, who is likely to be identified with Proserpina/Kore. De Grummond, 2004, 361.

[229] Spaeth, 1996, 11-13.

of agrarian fecundity to mankind. These rites represented the ritual death and rebirth of the goddess Persephone, and with her, the fertility of the earth. As such, the cult of Ceres and Proserpina at Rome was tied to ideas of fertility and rebirth, further strengthening the agricultural and chthonic associations of Ceres.

It is likely that Ceres also was closely connected to the Etruscan goddess, Vei, who was another chthonic goddess of fertility.[230] Vei was one of the major goddess worshipped throughout Etruria, and her presence at many important Etruscan shrines is demonstrated by inscribed votives bearing the goddess' name. Offerings dedicated to her have been found at major sanctuaries like Gravisca, Pyrgi, and the Cannicella Sanctuary in Volsinii.[231] Two anatomical votives of uteri found at the small extra-mural sanctuary of Fontanile di Legnisina at Vulci are particularly indicative of her role as a fertility goddess and promoter of childbirth. These two terracotta uteri are rare and exceptional artefacts, since they were inscribed with the goddess' name before firing, and constitute two of only five known inscribed anatomical Etruscan votives.[232] She also presided over the dead as a chthonic deity, as her shrine at the Cannicella Sanctuary in Volsinii reveals. This unusual sanctuary was located within the Cannicella necropolis, alongside the Volsinii burials, and inscriptions uncovered in the area suggest that Vei was the presiding deity of the sanctuary, keeping watch over the dead. One of the most important inscriptions found at the sanctuary was engraved on an altar, dating from the 3rd C. BC, and reads '*Θval veal*,'

[230] Simon, 2006, 46-48.
[231] Jean MacIntosh Turfa, 2006, "Votive Offerings in Etruscan Religion," in *The Religion of the Etruscans*, ed. Nancy de Grummand and Erika Simon (University of Texas), 97, 100; Colonna, 2006, 140, 143.
[232] Turfa, 2006, 101.

or 'Vei who is going to reveal,' which might also suggest a prophetic function for the goddess at this sanctuary.[233] Although no artistic representations of Vei have been securely identified, it is possible that a nude female statue found at the Cannicella Sanctuary, which was sculpted from marble and dates from approximately the 6th C. BC, may be a depiction of this fertility goddess.[234]

Vei may also be known by another name found mentioned in several inscriptions: Cel Ati, or 'Mother Earth.'[235] Five bronze votive statuettes found at Castiglione del Lago, near Lake Trasimene, all bear inscriptions marking them as offerings to the mother goddess. The figurines are both male and female, and hold attributes related to the cult worship of Cel Ati/Vei/Ceres.[236] The female figures in particular carry a pomegranate in their left hand, which was a symbol of fertility and the main food ritually consumed on the second day of the Thesmophoria, hinting at the connection between Cel Ati and Ceres. Furthermore, the Liber Linteus of Zagreb indicates that the goddess Catha/Cavatha, who can be convincingly identified with Proserpina, found worship in sacred precincts of Cel Ati. [237] It is likely that these two deities are the mother and daughter, Ceres and Proserpina. Cel Ati may also be connected with the earth mother

[233] Van der Meer, 1987, 112-114; Turfa, 2006, 100.
[234] Simon, 2006, 47. The identification of the statue is highly controversial.
[235] Simon, 2006, 48.
[236] De Grummond, 2004, 354-355. De Grummond argues for a date of approximately late 4th C. to early 3rd C. BC for the figurines. However, Colonna has proposed that they should be dated to around the middle of the 4th C. BC. G. Colonna, 1976-1977, "La Dea etrusca Cel e i santuari del Trasimen," *Rivista storica dell'antichità* 6-7: 49, 51. Van der Meer has argued for an even earlier date of 400-350 BC. Van der Meer, 1987, 73.
[237] Van der Meer, 1987, 73. For the identification of Catha/Cavatha with Proserpina, see above, pages 48-49.

goddess, *Gé*, since an Etruscan mirror from Populonia carries a depiction of a giant who is labelled *Celsclan,* or the 'son of Cel.' In Greek mythology, the giants were thought to be the earth-born children of *Gé*, making it probable that Cel is her Etruscan equivalent.[238]

It is clear that as a goddess with strong connections to both fertility and the chthonic realm, Ceres/ Vei/ Cel Ati was one of the deities presiding over the *mundus*, together with her daughter, Proserpina, and Dis Pater. The discovery of one inscription referring to Vei in the vicinity of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina in Cerveteri suggests that she was worshiped in the area of the Caeretan *mundus*, just like her Roman equivalent, Ceres, presided over the *mundus* in Rome. In excavations of the nearby Vigna Parrochiale, the goddess' name was found engraved in Etruscan script on a shard of an olletta made from impasto coarseware. Several more impasto coarseware ollette, identical in shape and material, but lacking inscriptions, were found intact in a nearby deposit, and are believed to be a foundational offering for the large Tuscan-style temple which was constructed in the area. [239] This significant inscription suggests that Vei may have been one of the major deities venerated in this sacred area of the city of Caere. Recent excavations in the adjacent Vigna Marini, where the Hypogaeum of Clepsina is located, have revealed a similar shard of impasto with the name of Vei inscribed upon it. This new inscription is currently being studied by Enrico Benelli, and has the potential to shed

[238] Van der Meer, 1987, 75.
[239] V. Bellelli, 2008, "Per una storia del santuario della Vigna Parrocchiale a Cerveteri," in *Saturnia Tellus: Atti del convegno internazionale* (Roma): 325-326.

much light on the worship of Vei in the urban centre of Caere, and perhaps, in the Hypogaeum of Clepsina itself.

Other *Mundi?* The Significance of Chthonic Shrines in Rome and Central Italy

Returning to Rome, there was supposedly another underground shrine in the city that was closely related to the *mundus*, as it also had strong agricultural and chthonic associations. This was the underground altar of Consus, located in the centre of the Circus Maximus, near the first *meta* of the south-eastern side of the platform.[240] The altar of Consus was located underground, in a circular trench or a subterranean chamber which was covered by earth for most of the year. However, the altar was uncovered during chariot races and on the festival of the Consualia so that sacrifices and burnt offerings of the first fruits could be made to the god.[241] Consus was an archaic Roman agricultural deity who was the guardian of subterranean storehouses and grain seed, and therefore a chthonic god associated with the earth. His name possibly comes from the verb, *condere*, meaning 'to store,' 'to put away,' or 'to bury,' revealing his original function as the god of the granary.[242] It is probable that he was one of the earliest deities to be worshipped in the Circus Maximus, and his festival, the Consualia, celebrated on August 21st, was connected with the origin of the Circus games in Rome.[243] In his description of the rape

[240] John H. Humphrey, 1986, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing* (University of California Press): 258-259; Tert., *Spect*. 8.6, 5.8.
[241] Tert., *Spect*. 5.5-7; Dion. Hal., 2.31.2-3; Plut., *Rom*. 14.3.
[242] R. M. Ogilvie, 1965, *A Commentary on Livy: Books 1-5* (Oxford University Press): 66; Humphrey, 1986, 62. However, there is an alternate etymology offered by Plutarch, who connects the name of Consus with the word *consilium*. Plut., *Rom.* 14.3-4.
[243] Humphrey, 1986, 62.

of the Sabine women, Livy describes how the circus games of the Consualia originated as an elaborate rouse designed by Romulus in order to lure the neighbouring peoples to Rome.[244] The prominence of the god, Consus, within the foundational mythology of the circus games demonstrates the importance of this archaic agrarian cult in the Circus Maximus. However, his original functions were obscured over time as he came to be associated with the earth and with horses, and thus, came to be associated with the god Neptune.[245] The stimulus for the changes in the god's nature may have come from the Etruscans, especially in regards to the god's association with the infernal realm and his character as a chthonic deity. The Etruscans considered subterranean shrines to be connected with the underworld, and so the Altar of Consus, just like the *mundus*, came to be imbued with strong chthonic associations.[246] The chthonic connections of Consus were further enhanced by the association of horses and horse races with funeral processions and games.[247] His presence as a chthonic deity came to be important in the Circus Maximus, and the location of his shrine at the *metae* was particularly appropriate, as the hairpin turn was the most daunting and perilous segment of any race.[248]

Marcattili argues that the Altar of Consus consisted of a hypogaeum under the platform, wherein the actual altar was located, and a super-structure on top of the

[244] Livy, 1.9; Dion. Hal., 2.31.2-3; Plutarch says that the games were instituted after Romulus discovered the underground altar of Consus, and that the Sabine women were taken during this celebration. Plut., *Rom.* 14.3.
[245] Plut. *Rom.* 14.3; Dion. Hal., 2.31.2-3; Tert. *Spect.* 5.5.
[246] Ogilvie, 1965, 66. The addition of horse-races and mule-races to the Consualia may also have been inspired by Etruscan influences.
[247] Ogilvie, 1965, 66; For the horse as a funerary animal, see Aul. Gell. 10.15.3.
[248] Humphrey, 1986, 258.

platform marking its position.[249] He argues that this superstructure appears in depictions of the Circus Maximus in mosaics and reliefs as a prominent *monopteros* structure standing beside the *metae* of the platform's south-eastern end. This *monopteros* would have had a circular shaft in the middle of its platform, through which the underground chamber and altar could have been reached.[250] The opening to the shaft was likely sealed by a cover, and perhaps even concealed with earth, except on the days when the Altar of Consus was exposed. On these special festival days, the aperture in the platform would have been uncovered, providing access to the chthonic *templum* below. Marcattili conjectures that there would have been a second, more accessible entrance to the hypogaeum, a type of *dromos* through which priests could easily reach the altar.[251]

Marcattili also argues that the Circus Maximus, like the *mundus*, functioned to some extent as an analogy of the heavens, and a metaphor for human life.[252] One of the principle deities of the Circus Maximus was Sol, the sun god, whose cult was likely worshiped in the Circus from its earliest history.[253] Marcattili argues that the Circus Maximus represent the cyclical journey of the sun, as Sol rises in his *quadriga* at one end of the track and sets at the other, symbolically dying and entering the underworld through

[249] Francesco Marcattili, 2006a, "Ara Consi in Circo Maximo," *MEFRA* 118-2: 621-651.
[250] A parallel for such a tholos structure with a circular shaft in the centre of its platform is found at the Sanctuary of Fortuna at Praeneste, which will be discussed shortly.
[251] Marcattili, 2006a, 628. It is important to note that the proposed reconstruction of a hypogaeum and *dromos* for the Altar of Consus is based heavily on the arrangement of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina in Cerveteri, and the *mundus* at Bolsena.
[252] Francesco Marcattili, 2007, "Cerere e il mundus del Circo Massimo," in *Le perle e il filo. A Mario Torelli per i suoi settanta anni*: 210-211.
[253] For Sol and his worship in the Circus Maximus, see Marcattili, 2006b, "Circus Soli principaliter consecratur: Romolo, il Sole e un altare del Circo Massimo," *Ostraka* XV, 2: 287-330.

the *Ara Consi*.[254] The concept of the symbolic death of the sun was an important element of solar cults in Italy, and reveals the seemingly contradictory chthonic character that the sun and solar deities could sometimes assume.[255] It is notable that Marcattili's proposed connection between the sun and the Altar of Consus in the Circus Maximus conjures to mind the indications of solar worship occurring in the Hypogaeum of Clepsina in Caere.[256]

The chthonic nature of such buried ritual structures in Rome is further confirmed by the existence of another subterranean altar, located in the north-western section of the Campus Martius. This was the Altar of Dis and Proserpina in the Tarentum, which mostly remained buried deep beneath the earth, and was only uncovered on the celebration of the *Ludi Saeculares*. The festivities of the *Ludi Saeculares* went on for three days and three nights, and were only celebrated every *saeculum*, which Censorius' defined as the longest length of a human lifespan, approximately one hundred years.[257] The *saeculum* was an Etruscan division of time, and perhaps indicates an Etruscan influence on the development of these chthonic rituals to Dis and Proserpina.[258] Nightly sacrifices were held to honour and propitiate the rulers of the infernal realm, Dis and Proserpina,

[254] Marcattili, 2007, 210-211.
[255] As discussed in chapter 2.
[256] Colivicchi, 2014, 55-57.
[257] Censorius, *DN*, 17.2. In reality, the *Ludi Saeculares* were not always celebrated quite so regularly.
[258] It has been proposed that the *Ludi Saeculares* could have had an Etruscan origin, being established during the Etruscan period of rule in Rome. The Etruscan deities who would have been worshipped there were Maris and Feronia, both of whom had strong chthonic associations in Etruria. See J. F. Hall III, 1986, "The *Saeculum Novum* of Augustus and its Etruscan Antecedents," *ANRW* II 16, 3: 2564-2589, esp. 2574.

signifying the chthonic nature of this festival, at least until its radical reform under Augustus in 17 BC.

The concept of the *mundus* shares many traits with both the Altar of Dis and Proserpina and the Altar of Consus. Located underground, these ritual complexes could only be uncovered or opened on specific festival days, and remained sealed and hidden from view at all other times. These shrines and their presiding deities were all associated with the earth, fertility, and the chthonic realm, and they were all very archaic cults in Rome. These subterranean altars and *hypogaea* served as important liminal spaces between the underworld and the world of the living, through which the infernal gods and spirits could be honoured and appeased. It is not surprising then, that evidence has been found for the existence of similar chthonic shrines outside of Rome.

Although the *mundus* in Rome has never been discovered, excavations at the nearby sites of Praeneste and Bolsena have revealed possible parallels for the *mundus* at Rome.[259] The Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste was a famous oracular shrine where visitors could consult the *sortes praenestinae* to determine their fortunes.[260] These *sortes* were wooden lots, which upon consultation, were drawn from a chest by a young boy and given to a priestly interpreter, called a *sortilegus*, to determine the response of the gods.[261] This oracular consultation supposedly took place in a natural grotto located in

[259] In 1914, Boni uncovered a subterranean tholos structure on the Palantine, which he claimed was the *mundus*. This identification has not been widely accepted.
[260] For a comprehensive study of the practice of divination at the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia, see Jacqueline Champeaux, 1982, *Fortuna. Le culte de la Fortune à Rome et dans le monde romain. I - Fortuna dans la religion archaïque* (Rome: École Française de Rome): 55-84.
[261] Cic. *Div*. 2.86. For the importance of divination by lot in Central Italy, see Federico Santangelo, 2013, *Divination, Prediction and the End of the Roman Republic* (Cambridge): 73-83. Livy reports that there were

the oldest area of the sanctuary, from which a spring welled forth.[262] Unfortunately, no evidence for these *sortes* has yet been found at the sanctuary. There was, however, a deep circular well uncovered at the sanctuary, which Coarelli speculates may have functioned as a *mundus*.[263] The well was covered by a *monopteros*, a circular podium on which seven Corinthian columns stood, supporting a conical roof with a Doric frieze decorating its entablature. A travertine balustrade encircled the entrance to the well, the shaft of which descends 7.5 m into the ground. The lowest section of the well is formed from tufa in *opus quadratum*, and was likely original to the construction of the well at a much earlier period in the sanctuary's history.[264] This high degree of monumentalization demonstrates the well's significance as a sacred structure at Praeneste, and its *monopteros* super-structure brings to mind Marcattili's reconstructions of the Ara Consi in the Circus Maximus.[265] Coarelli has proposed that a similar *monopteros* surmounted the *mundus* of Rome, which he identified with the *Ara Saturni* in the Forum.[266] It is possible that during the Hellenistic period, *monopteros* style super-structures similar to the one found at Praeneste were constructed to delineate the location of *mundi*. Furthermore, a circular

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also *sortes* for divination in Caere, which mysteriously shrunk during the second Punic War, portending the coming disasters. Livy, 21.62.

[262] L. Richardson, JR., 1976, "Praeneste," In *the Princeton Encyclopaedia of Classical Sites* (Princeton University Press). The grotto was enlarged and renovated several times throughout the sanctuary's history.

[263] Coarelli, 1983, 223. Coarelli claims that the boy descended into the well to retrieve the oracles; however, the textual sources provide no evidence that a boy climbed into a well to draw the *sortes* at Praeneste.

[264] Francesco Marcattili, 2005, "Mundus," In *Thesaurus Cultus et Ritum Antiquorum*, vol. 4 (Getty Museum): 282-284. Also, Marcattili, 2006a, "*Ara Consi in Circo Maximo*," *MEFRA* 118-2: 627.

[265] Marcattili, 2006a, 621-651.

[266] Fragments of a travertine *monopteros* dating from approximately the end of 2nd C. BC have been found by the Umbilicus Urbis. Coarelli, 1983, 211-214. A similar *monopteros* surrounding a circular well has been found at Pompeii in the Foro Triangolare, which Verzar speculates may also have been a *mundus*. Verzar, 1976-77, 395-398.

well-head, or *puteal*, like that found at Praeneste, often symbolically marked the entrance to the infernal realm.[267] Thus, the deep shaft at Praeneste may have served as a conduit to the underworld, through which offerings to the chthonic deities could have been cast, and oracles could have been procured.

Another subterranean ritual complex has been discovered in Bolsena that shares several similarities with the Hypogaeum of Clepsina.[268] The complex comprises of an underground chamber, reached by a long *dromos* with a north-eastern orientation, and a large, rhombus-shaped cistern that could be accessed by a circular well constructed above it (Fig. 28). The complex also possesses a system of smaller tunnels, several of which are large enough for a man to traverse.[269] There is a small niche at the end of the *dromos*, right before the entrance to the main chamber, which may have served a ritual function. The main chamber is the complex's most remarkable feature: the room itself is square, but its ceiling is conical and has a circular opening in its centre, an *oculus*, exposing the room to the sky above. Although the room was thought to be a cistern at first, re-evaluations of the evidence have shown that this chamber probably fulfilled a religious function.[270] Traces of decorative red paint have been found on the walls, and fragments of

[267] H. Wagenvoort, 1956, *Studies in Roman Literature, Culture, and Religion* (Leiden: Brill): 119, 124-125.
[268] Jean-Marie Pailler, 1970, "Bolsena 1970: La Maison aux Peintures, les niveaux inférieurs et le complexe souterrain," *MEFRA* 83, n.2: 384-402.
[269] Pailler, 1970, 395.
[270] There has been some debate over the function of this space. Cazanove argued that it was only a cistern, while other scholars, such as Jolivet and Marchand, have upheld the interpretation of the structure as a shrine. See O. de Cazanove, 2000, "Bacanal ou cisterne?" *AntCl* 69: 237-253; V. Jolivet and F. Marchand, 2003, "L'affaire du Bacanal. Nouvelles réflexions sur le sanctuaire bachique du Poggio Moscini à Bolsena, in Santuari e luoghi di culto dell'Italia antica," *Atlante Tematico di Topografia Antica* 12 (Roma): 35-51; V. Jolivet, 2008, "Retour sule le Bacanal du Poggio Moscini à Bolsena," *Materiali per Populonia* 7 (Pisa): 339-352.

painted columns have been discovered, which suggest a fair degree of ornamentation in the chamber. Given the unusual form of the room, and its painted embellishments, it was likely not a utilitarian structure, but a shrine.[271]

This chamber shares many similarities with the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, as well as with the description of the *mundus* provided by ancient accounts. The long *dromos*, small niche, and quadrangle-shaped main chamber, large cistern, and deep well, are reminiscent of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina. Another striking correspondence between the Hypogaeum of Clepsina and the subterranean room in Bolsena is the time at which they were constructed: the Hypogaeum of Clepsina dates to shortly after Caere was transformed into a Roman *praefectura*, around 273 BC. Based on evidence found during the excavations of the hypogaeum in Bolsena, the underground chamber, *dromos*, cistern, well, and niche (the earliest features of the complex) were all constructed in the second half of the third century BC, probably shortly after the Romans founded *Volsinii Novi* and relocated the inhabitants of Volsinii to this new settlement in 264 BC.[272] Perhaps the creation of this *mundus* in the newly-established, Roman Volsinii served both a religious and a political function, much like the Hypogaeum of Clepsina in Caere.

It is possible there was also a mundus in Corfinium, although no archaeological evidence has yet been found to corroborate its existence. An inscription from Corfinium refers to the construction of a mundus during the early period of urbanization in Roman

[271] Pailler, 1970, 385, 388.
[272] Pailler, 1970, 392, 394.

Corfinium.[273] The inscription discusses the financial source for the construction of the *mundus*, the theatre, and the *gradus* in the new settlement. The document indicates the importance of the *mundus* as an element of the public infrastructure in a Roman settlement, and that it was possibly associated with the theatre. It is noteworthy that in Cerveteri, the theatre of Roman Caere was located very close to the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, perhaps suggesting that there was a common practice of placing the *mundus* near a theatre. This would not be surprising, given that Ceres, one of the presiding deities of the *mundus*, often had a cult presence in Roman theaters in the Imperial period. In Ostia, the shrine in the centre of the Square of the Corporations, the theatre's portico, is traditionally identified as a temple to Ceres.[274] The Roman theatre in Mérida boasted a set of statues featuring the trio of Ceres, Proserpina, and Pluto in front of the theatre.[275] Similarly, the theatre in Leptis Magna had a small shrine to Ceres at the top of the *cavea*, in which a colossal cult statue of Ceres Augusta (albeit endowed with the facial features of Livia) was displayed.[276] The ruins of a theatre at Dugga, also in North Africa, have furnished an inscription which refers to Ceres Augusta, and the layout of the temple suggests that there was a shrine to her in the top of the *cavea*, much like at Leptis

[273] CIL IX 3173 = ILS 5642. See Hubert Devijver and Frank Van Wonterghem, 1983, "Un 'mundus' (Cereris?) a Corfinium: Nuova lettura e interpretazione dell'inscrizione CIL IX 3173 = ILS 5642," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*: 484-507.
[274] J. A. Hanson, 1959, *Roman Theater Temples* (New Jersey: Princeton): 95. There is much debate over the deity (or deities) worshipped in this shrine. See L. B. van der Meer, 2009, "The Temple on the Piazzale della Corporazioni in Ostia Antica," *BABESCH* 84: 163-170.
[275] Raymond Lantier, 1915, "Le Théâtre Romain de Merida," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, n 2: 172.
[276] Susan E Wood, 2000, *Imperial Women: A Study in Public Images, 40 BC-AD 68* (Leiden: Brill): 122-124; Hanson, 60.

Magna.[277] There may have been associations between Ceres, the *mundus,* and the theatre during the Republican period as well. Nevertheless, the mention of the financing of a *mundus* and a theatre in the same inscription from Corfinium certainly contributes to our understanding of the *mundus*' significance as an important civic structure in newly established Roman communities.

Several similarities between these subterranean structures are recognizable when they are examined together, which can help situate the *mundus* in the Roman world. In particular, the practice of constructing a *mundus* in the early periods of a Roman settlement, as occurred at Caere, Bolsena, and Corfinium, indicates that the *mundus* was likely a significant symbolic structure, probably connected with the foundation and religious well-being of a newly formed Roman community. This evidence, taken together with the myth of Romulus constructing a *mundus* in Rome as one of his first foundational acts, suggests that there may have been a practice of constructing *mundi* in the centre of newly acquired Roman territories during the Republican period as a statement of foundation and Roman hegemony. The Hypogaeum of Clepsina was just such a *mundus*, constructed to symbolize Caere's transformation into a true Roman *praefectura*. It is not surprising that the C. Genucius Clepsina, the first *praefectus* of Caere, would feel the need to inscribe his name on the wall of the hypogaeum to commemorate his role as the founder of a new Roman community.[278]

The *Mundus* of Caere

[277] Hanson, 1959, 61.
[278] Colivicchi, 2014, 63-64.

The plan of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina seems to adhere fairly well to the description of the *mundus* found in literary sources, which claims that there were two separate components belonging to the *mundus*: a deep circular well or shaft, through which the *mundus* could be accessed without unsealing the main entrance, and a subterranean chamber which was consecrated to the *manes*.[279] Furthermore, the strong evidence for the cult of Vei, Ceres' Etruscan equivalent, in the immediate vicinity of the hypogaeum, strengthens the argument that the Hypogaeum of Clepsina was a *mundus* connected with the worship of Ceres, and the chthonic couple, Dis Pater and Proserpina. The Severan inscriptions referencing the Rosalia support this conclusion, indicating a form of cult continuity occurring in the hypogaeum, as it persisted as a sacred space associated with the chthonic realm and the *manes* of the ancestors. Finally, the focal point of the hypogaeum, the painted niche, presents the best evidence for the hypogaeum's identification as a *mundus*. Oriented towards the chthonic realm of the heavens in which Dis Pater resides, the niche is imbued with chthonic significance. Moreover, it is illuminated by the setting sun on the Winter Solstice, an astrological arrangement that reveals the strong solar and chthonic associations of the *mundus*, as the sun was thought to symbolically die when the night arrived and the nocturnal rituals began in the Hypogaeum of Clepsina.[280] The niche was charged with solar and chthonic significances, and so it is important to keep these implications in mind when interpreting the niche's elaborate frescoes. The palm tree frescoes of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina were allusions

[279] Colivicchi, 2014, 54. Cato apud Fest. 144.14L; Fest. 145.12L; Schol. Bern. in Verg. Ecl. 3.104.
[280] Colivicchi, 2014, 57.

to an Etruscan deity both chthonic and solar in nature, who was one of the principle deities of the *mundus*: the underworld god, Śuri.

Conclusion

The frescoed niche was the sacred focus of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, imbued with strong solar and chthonic associations on account of its alignment with a chthonic sphere of the heavens and the setting sun of the Winter Solstice. It also served as an important liminal space connecting the tunnel system and *puteal* access with the hypogaeum's main chamber. The significance of the space is further confirmed by the presence of painted frescoes depicting palm trees, which must have had great significance in regards to the cult practices occurring in the subterranean shrine. These palm tree frescoes are a symbolic reference to the presiding deity of the *mundus* of Caere, the Etruscan god Śuri, otherwise known as Soranus Apollo.

The palm tree was one of the primary symbols of Apollo, and was often used as an iconographical aid for indicating events and locations which were sacred to the god. As the cult of Apollo spread to Etruria, his iconographical attributes, such as the bow and the palm tree, persisted as symbols of his Etruscan equivalent, Aplu/Apulu, and were even adopted by other indigenous Etruscan gods. Usil, the Etruscan sun god, came to be represented in the guise of Apollo, possessing the Greek god's physical appearance and attributes. As a result, Apollo became more closely associated with the sun in Etruria than he had been in Greece. Apollo's chthonic associations were also intensified upon being adopted into the Etruscan pantheon as a consequence of the belief that the sun symbolically died when it set at night. Thus, Italic Apollo was a god associated with oracular revelation and the underworld, serving, for example, as the source of the Sibyl's

prophetic inspiration in the Aeneid.[281] He became associated with several indigenous prophetic deities, most of whom had strong chthonic connections. In particular, he became syncretized with the god Śuri, a prophetic, chthonic, and solar deity worshipped in Southern Etruria and Latium, also known as Soranus Apollo. Moreover, Śuri was also equated with the ruler of the underworld, Aita or Dis Pater, making Apollo tantamount to the supreme chthonic deity in central Italy.

Śuri had a major cult centre at Pyrgi, the port settlement of Caere, which he shared with his consort, Cavatha. It was a sanctuary where the god could be consulted for oracular prophecy, as revealed by a bundle of leaf-shaped *sortes* found in excavations of the precinct.[282] In descriptions of the sanctuary by Greek authors, Śuri is referred to by the name of Apollo, indicating just how closely related the two syncretized deities were. The presence of a major cult site of Śuri so close to Caere suggests that he might also have received veneration in the city as well.[283] It is likely that he was one of the principal deities of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina, the *mundus* of Caere, which was the symbolic centre, or umbilicus, of the city. The *mundus* was a subterranean shrine consecrated to the infernal deities, including Dis Pater, Proserpina, Ceres, and the *manes*, and was closely connected with ideas of civic foundation. It was a chthonic *templum* where divinatory rites and oracular prophecy occurred. The alignment of the niche with the celestial house

[281] Ver. *Aen*. 3.441-452.
[282] Colonna, 2006, 138-139.
[283] A large black *cippus* found in recent excavations in the vicinity of the hypogaeum further supports the theory that there was an important cult centre for the god in the city centre, since similar Serpentinium stones have been interpreted as aniconic images of Śuri. See Colonna, 2007, 117-123.

of Dis Pater and the setting sun of the Winter Solstice also indicates the presence of a chthonic solar cult, where the symbolic death of the sun was commemorated. It was Śuri, a deity altogether prophetic, chthonic, and solar in nature, syncretized with both Apollo and Dis Pater, who ruled over this *mundus*. The palm trees decorating the niche are potent symbols of this chthonic Apollo, and their presence in the *mundus* contributes to our understanding of the nature of his cult in Caere. The centrality of Śuri's cult in Caere was probably taken into consideration when Clepsina chose to decorate the hypogaeum with his palm trees. It is even possible that the hypogaeum was a pre-existing shrine to Śuri, perhaps already a *mundus*, which Clepsina renovated because of its significance in the religious landscape of Caere. Clepsina chose to leave his mark on one of the most venerable cult areas of the city, ruled over by one of the most influential and revered deities in the territory of Caere, the chthonic Apollo, Śuri.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

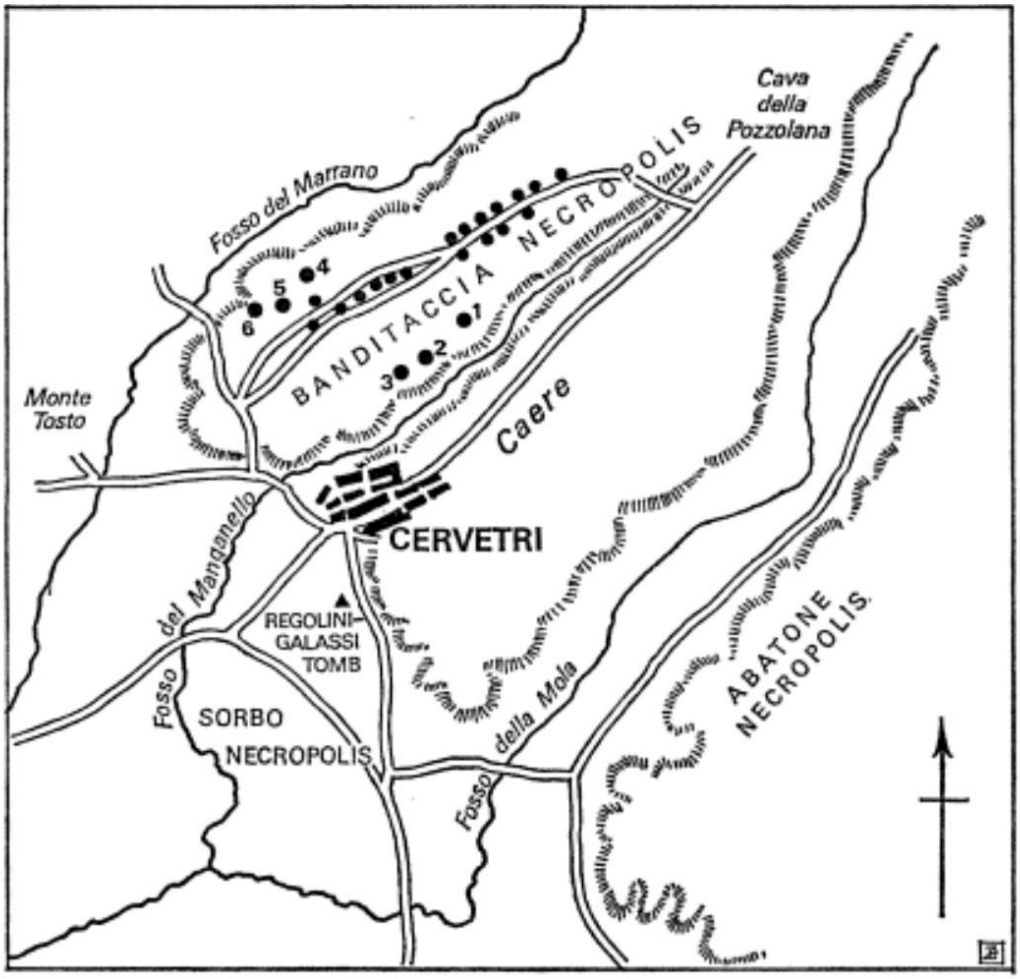

Figure 1 – Map of Caere. Photo source: Banti, 1973.

Figure 2 - Palm tree fresco from the niche of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina. Photo source: Colivicchi, 2014.

Figure 3 – Athenian red-figure calyx krater depicting Apollo, Artemis, Leto, and the personification of Delos around a palm tree. Palermo, Mus. Arch. Regionale 2178, Beazley Archive 220558. Photo source: Perseus Project.

Figure 4 – Athenian red-figure calyx krater, attributed to the Cadmus Painter, depicting the contest between Apollo and Marsyas. Ruvo, Museo Jatta 1093. Beazley Archive 215689. Photo source: Beazley Archive.

Figure 5 – Athenian black-figure hydria depicting the struggle between Apollo and Herakles for the Delphic Tripod. Stuttgart, Wurttembergisches Landesmuseum 84.1, Beazley Archive 14872. Photo source: Beazley Archive.

Figure 6 – Athenian red-figure calyx krater depicting Dionysos greeting Apollo upon his return from the land of the Hyperboreans. St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum ST1807, Beazley Archive 215695. Photo source: Beazley Archive.

Figure 7 – Athenian red-figure cup, attributed to Onesimos, depicting Achilles dragging Troilos to the altar of Apollo. Perugia, Museo Civico 89, Beazley Archive 203224. Photo source: Beazley Archive.

Figure 8 – Fould stamnos CA 6529, depicting Achilles preparing to ambush Troilos, while Athena watches. Photo source: Gaultier and Villard, 1985.

Figure 9 – Fould stamnos CA 6529, depicting Troilos with his horses. Photo source: Gaultier and Villard, 1985.

Figure 10 – Fould stamnos CA 6529, depicting Polyxena, by the water fountain with a palm tree.

Figure 11 – Fould stamnos CA 6529, depicting Ajax retrieving the body of Achilles. Photo source: Gaultier and Villard, 1985.

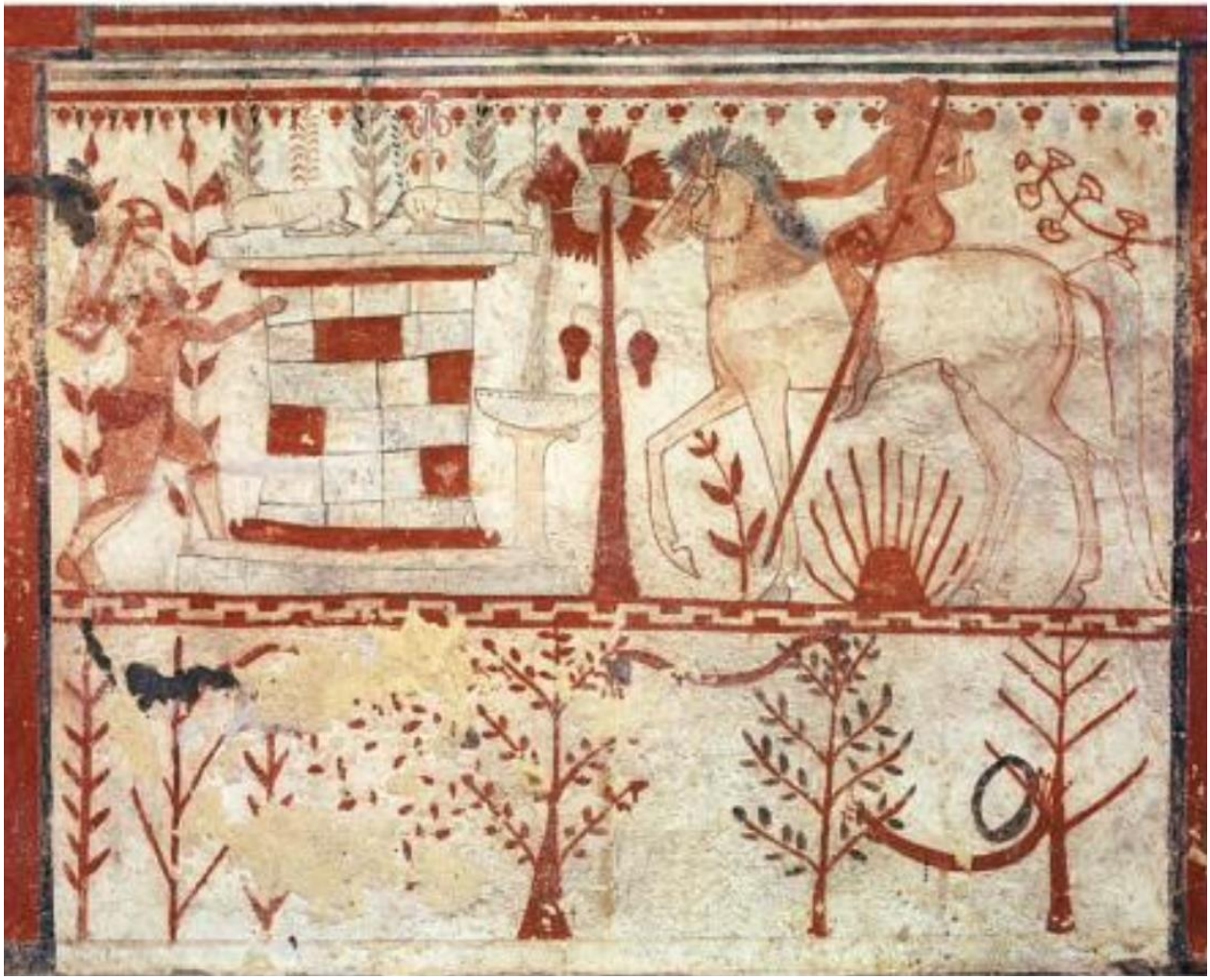

Figure 12 – Fresco from the Tomb of the Bulls in Tarquinia, depicting Achilles ambushing Troilos. Photo source: Tuck, 2015.

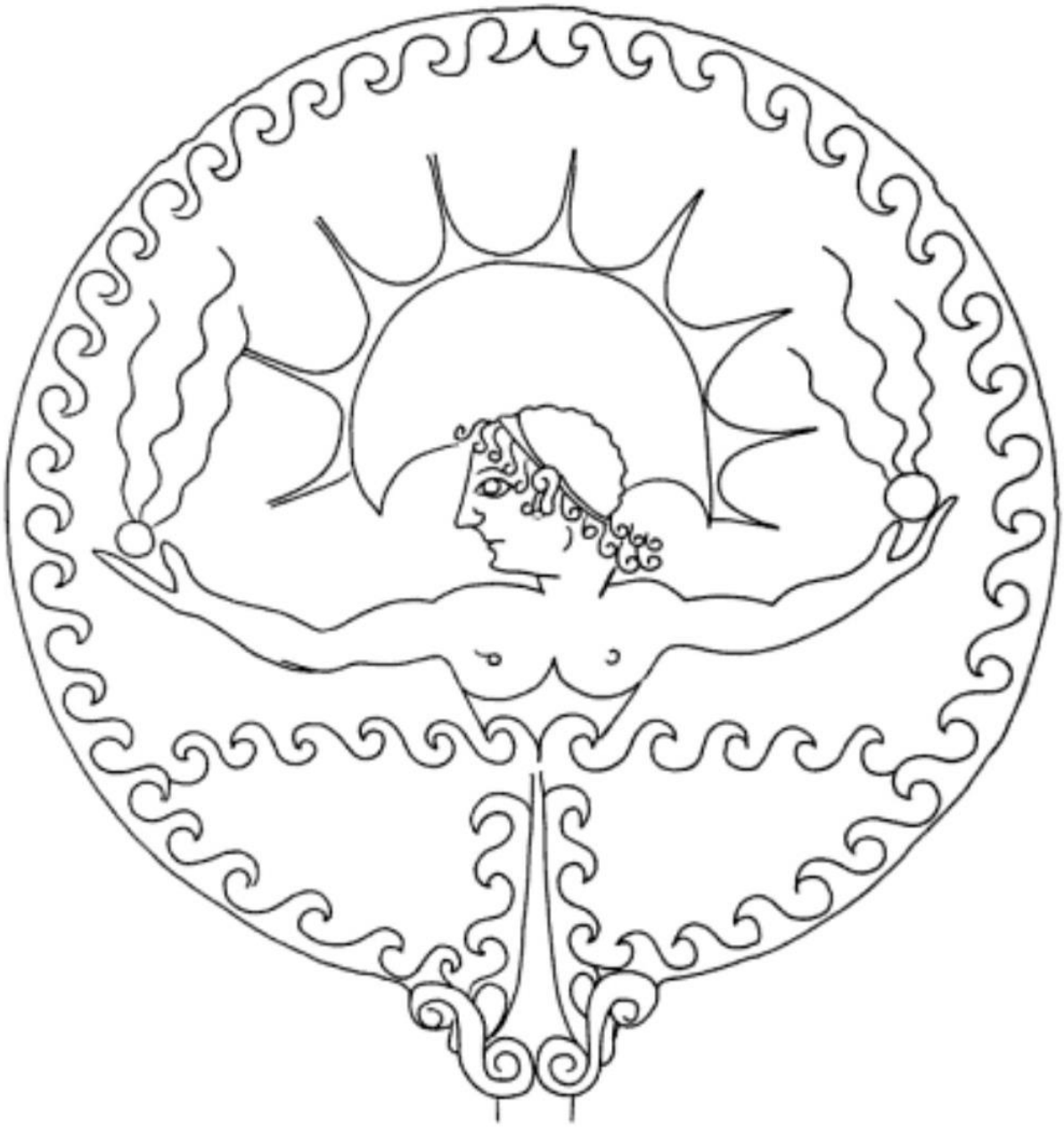

Figure 13 – Etruscan bronze mirror from Orvieto, depicting Usil rising from the waters of Okeanos. Minneapolis Institute of the Arts 57.198, Corpus Speculorum Etruscorum 1.26a. Photo source: Simon, 2006.

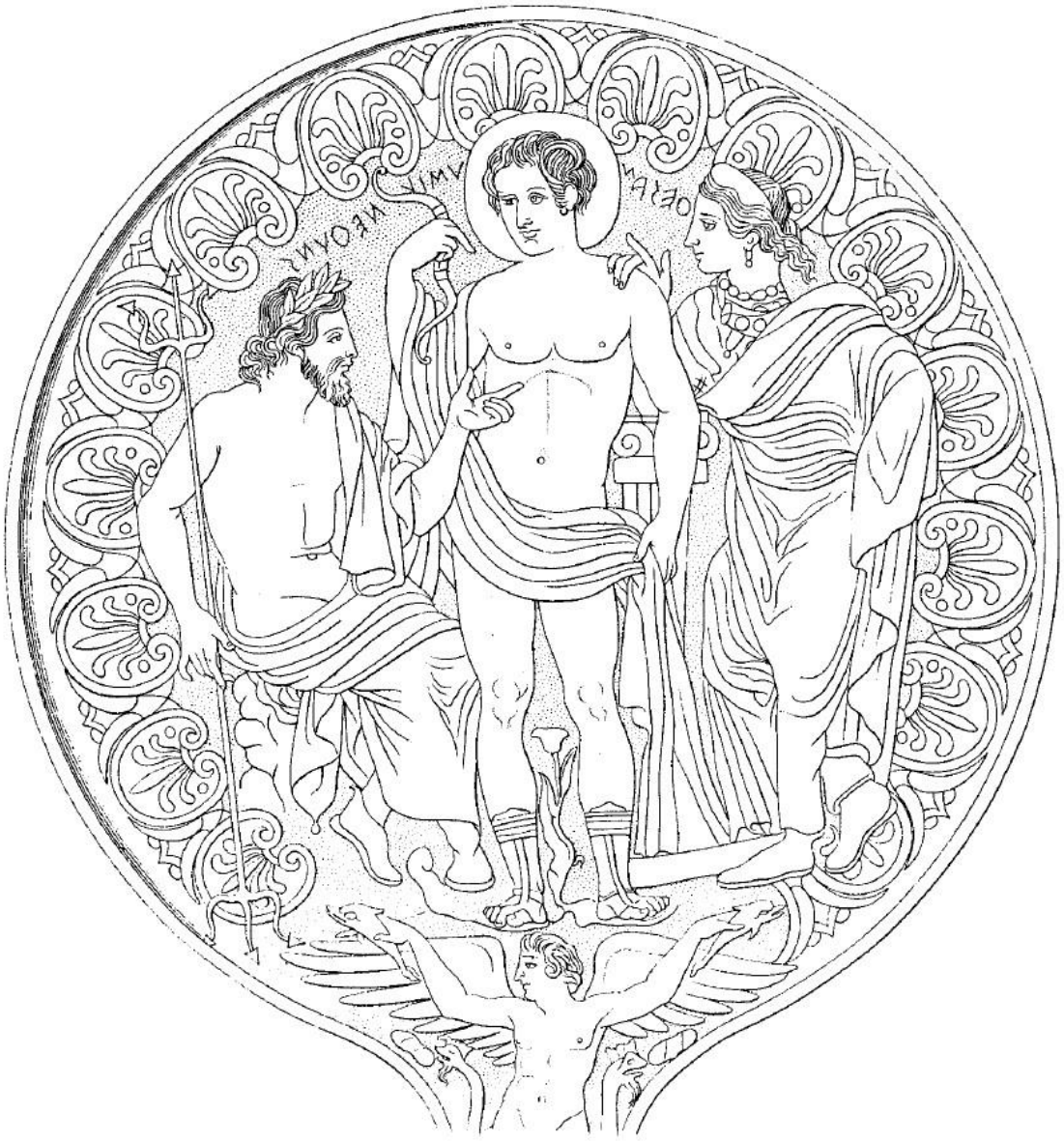

Figure 14 – Etruscan bronze mirror from Tuscania, depicting Usil, with the attributes of Apollo, among Nethuns and Thesan. Vatican Museum, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 12645, Etruskische Spiegel 1.76. Photo source: De Grummond, 2006.

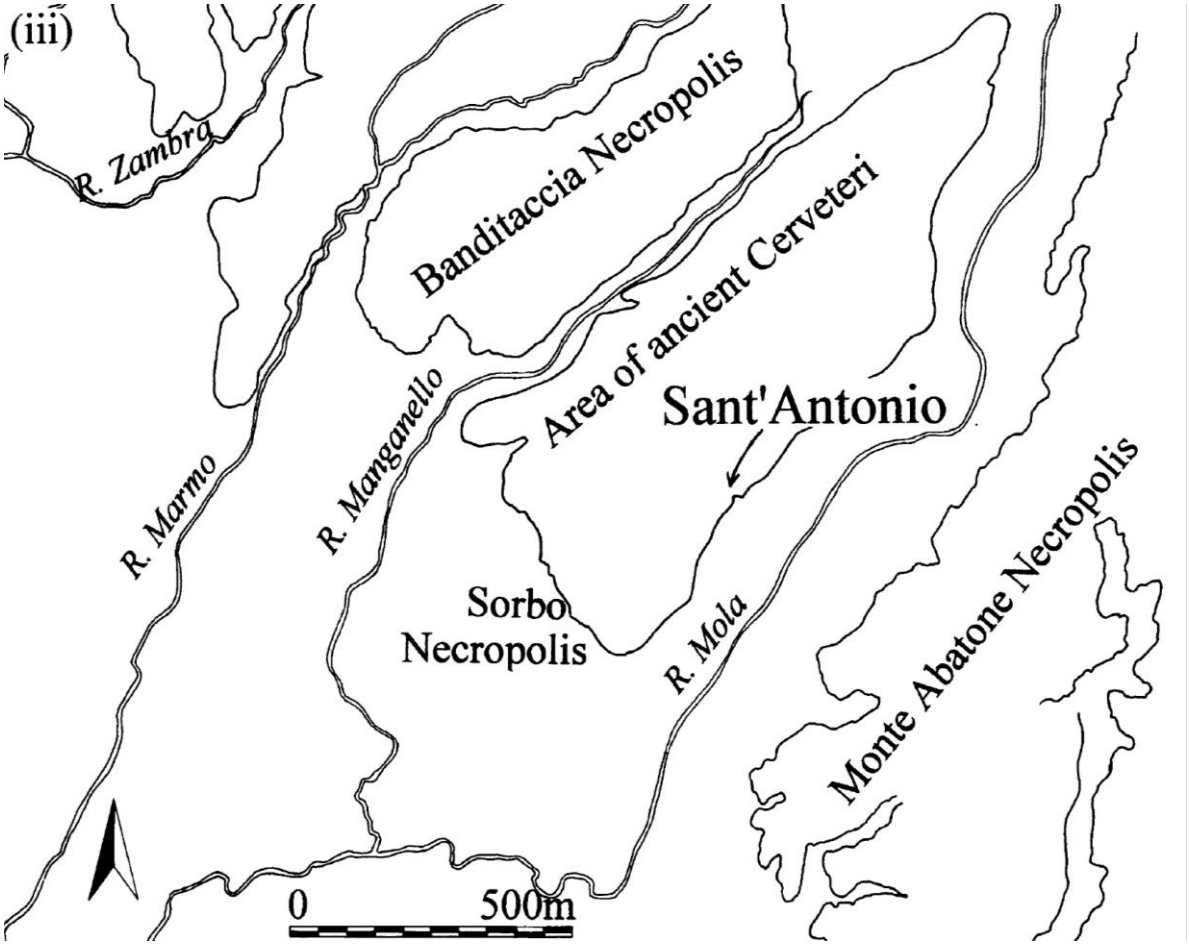

Figure 15 – Map of Cerveteri showing the location of S. Antonio. Photo source: Izzet, 2000

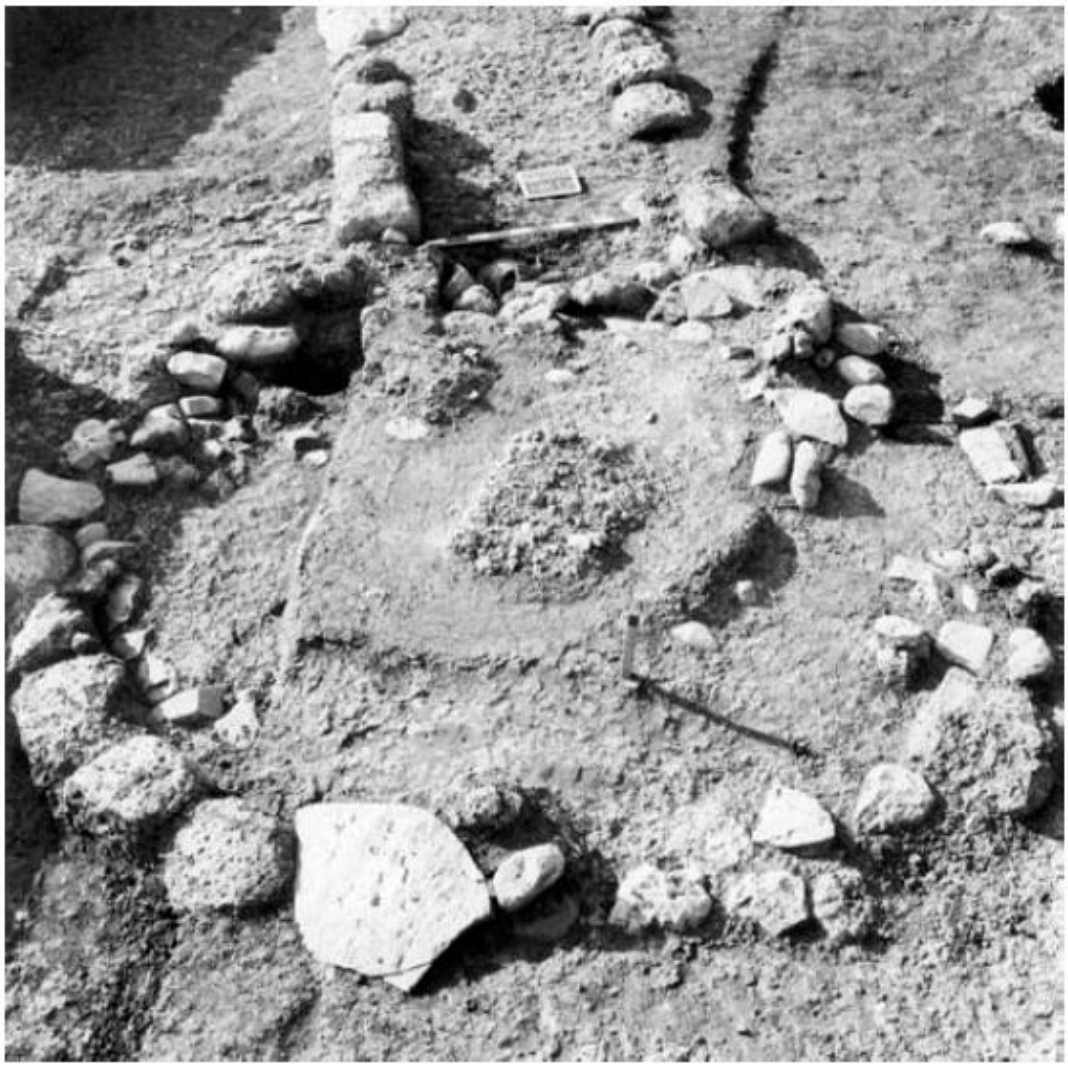

Figure 16 – Altar lambda at Pyrgi. Photo source: Colonna, 2006.

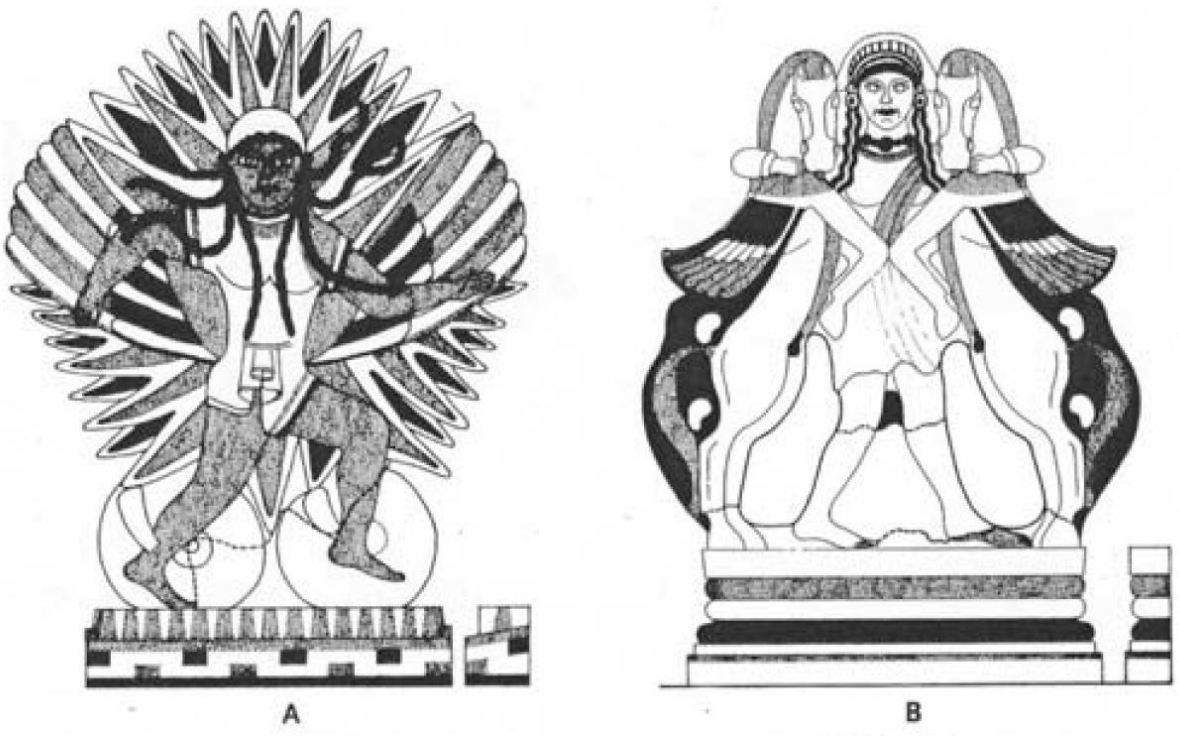

Figure 17 – Terracotta antefixes from Pyrgi, depicting a) Usil (or Śuri?), b) mistress of horses (Cavatha?). Photo source: Simon, 2006.

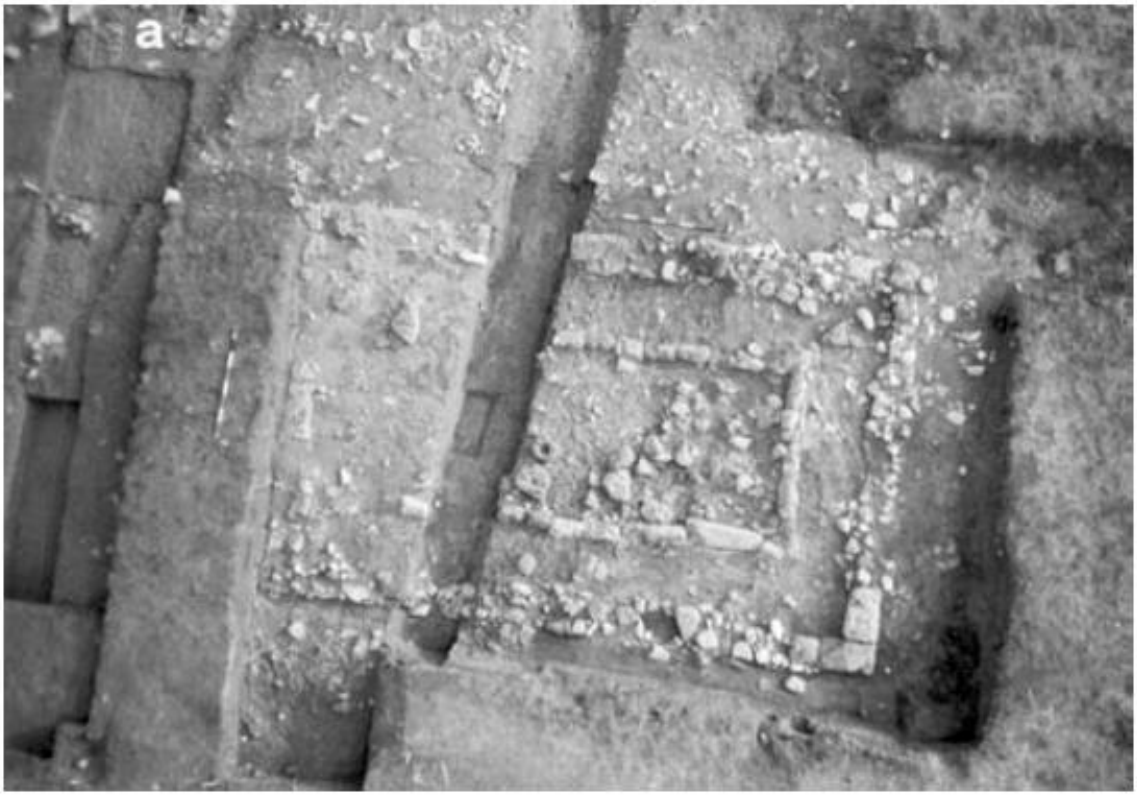

Figure 18 – Shrine *Gamma* at Pyrgi. Photo source: Colonna, 2006.

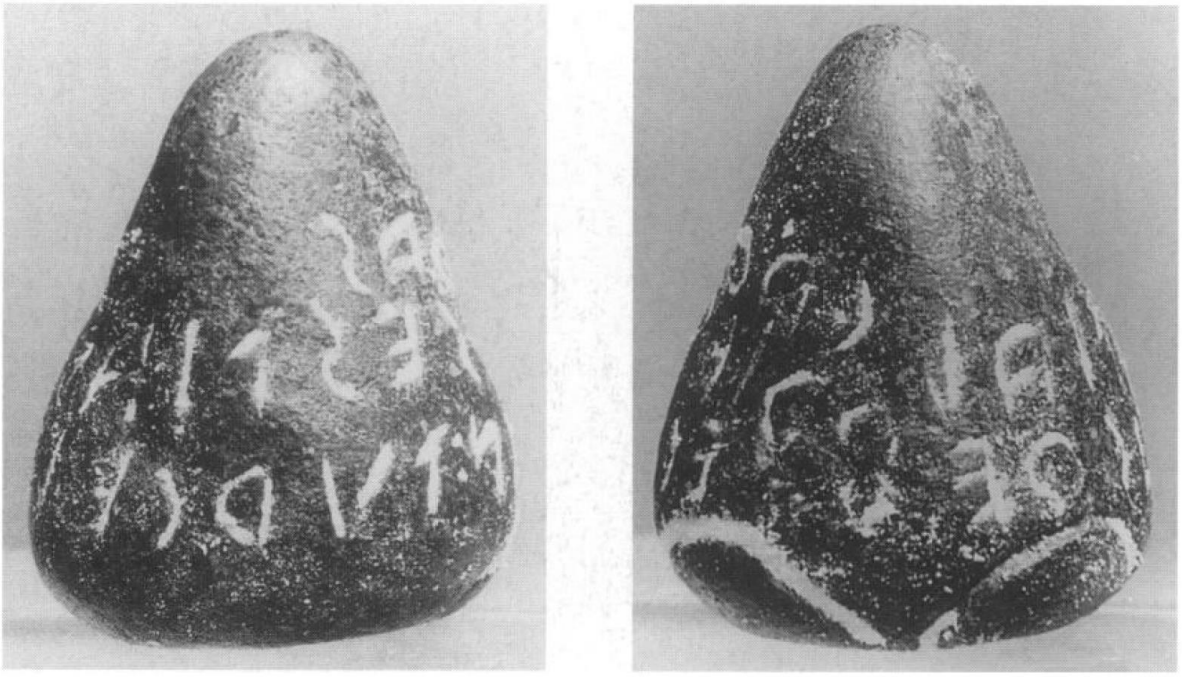

Figure 19 – Inscribed conical object with Etruscan inscription referencing Cavatha. Photo source: De Grummond, 2004.

Figure 20 – Canine statuette from Cortona, dedicated to Calu. Photo source: Defosse, 1972.

Figure 21 – Fresco of Aita wearing a wolf cap, from the Tomb of Orcus II, Tarquinia. Photo source: Elliot, 1995.

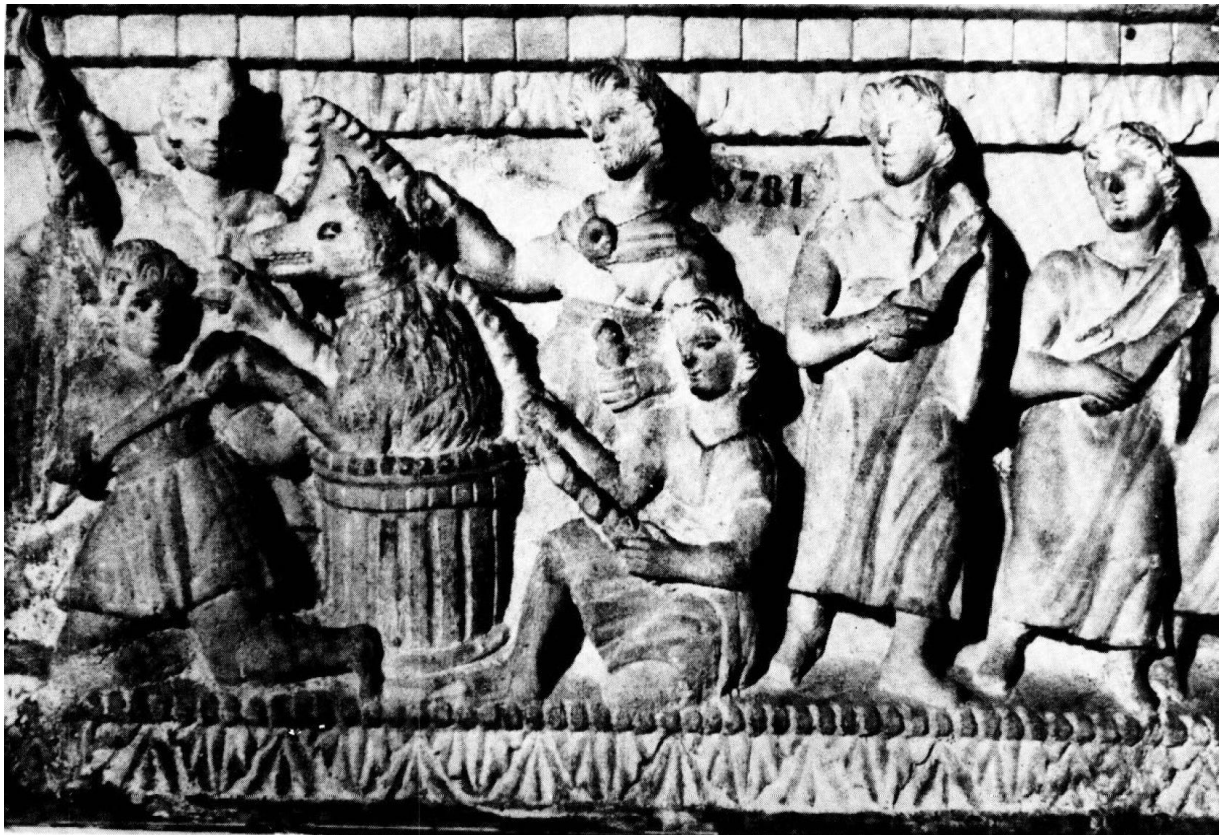

Figure 22 – Etruscan urn from Chiusi, depicting a ritual with a chained wolf emerging from a *puteal*. Photo source: Defosse, 1972.

Figure 23 – Etruscan urn from Perugia, depicting a ritual with a man wearing a wolf skin emerging from a *puteal*. Photo source: Defosse, 1972.

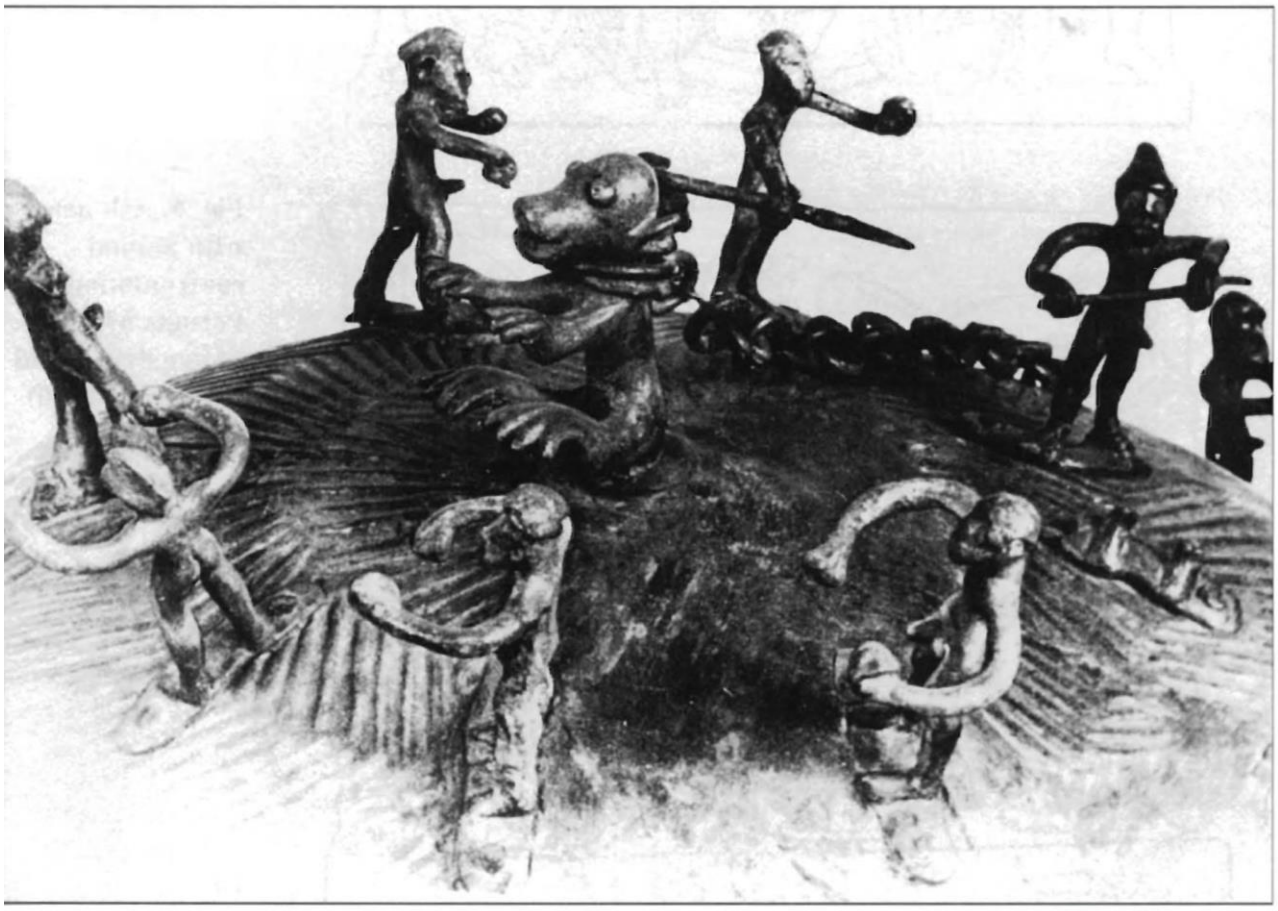

Figure 24 – Lid from a Villanovan situla, depicting a ritual with a chained wolf (or possibly the monster, Olta) in the centre. Photo source: Elliot, 1995.

Figure 25 – Inscription of C. Genucius Clepsina. Photo source: Colivicchi, 2014.

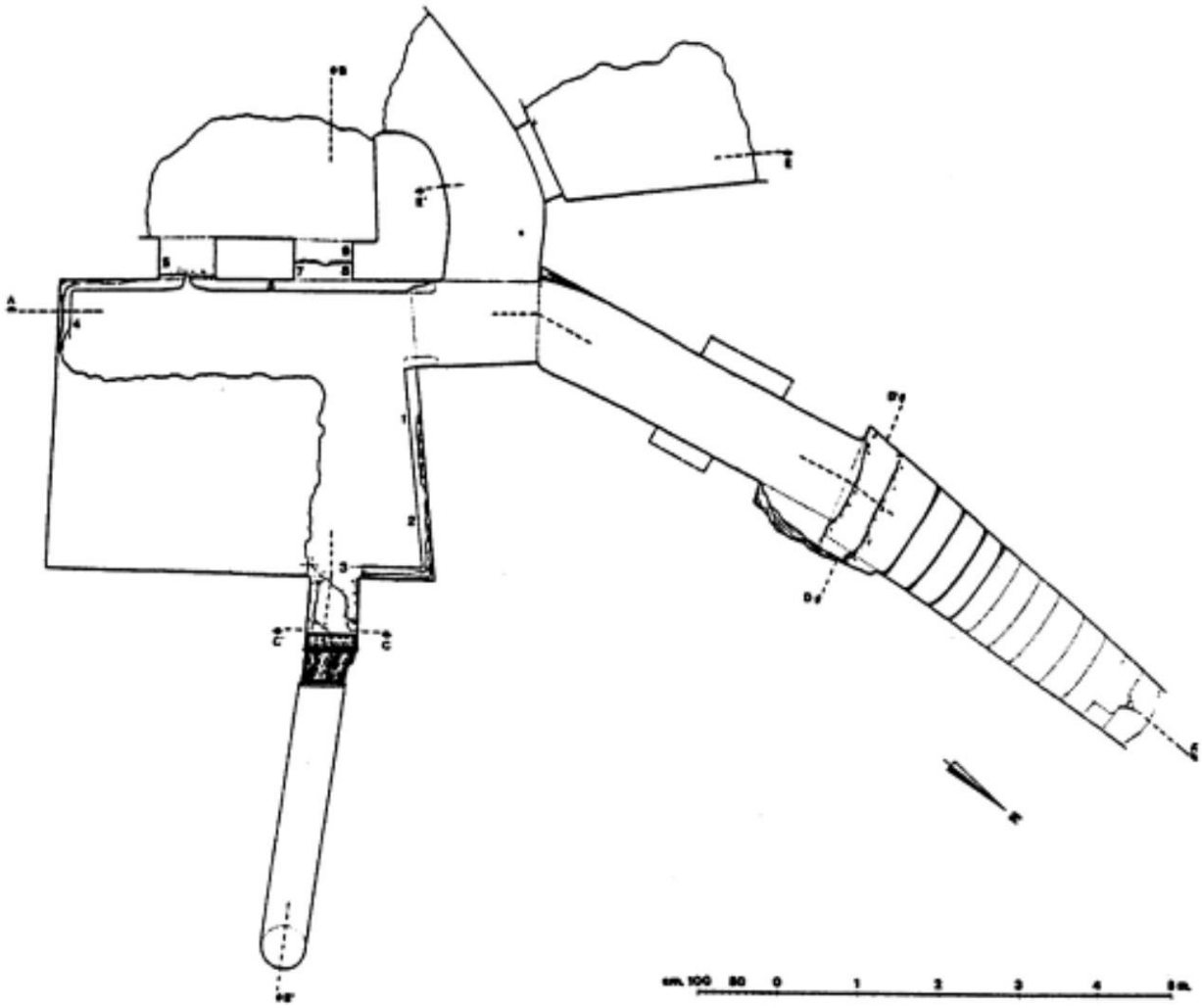

Figure 26 – Plan of the Hypogaeum of Clepsina. Photo source: Colivicchi, 2014.

Figure 27 – Graffito of Sol Invictus Mithras slaying a bull. Photo source: Colivicchi, 2014.

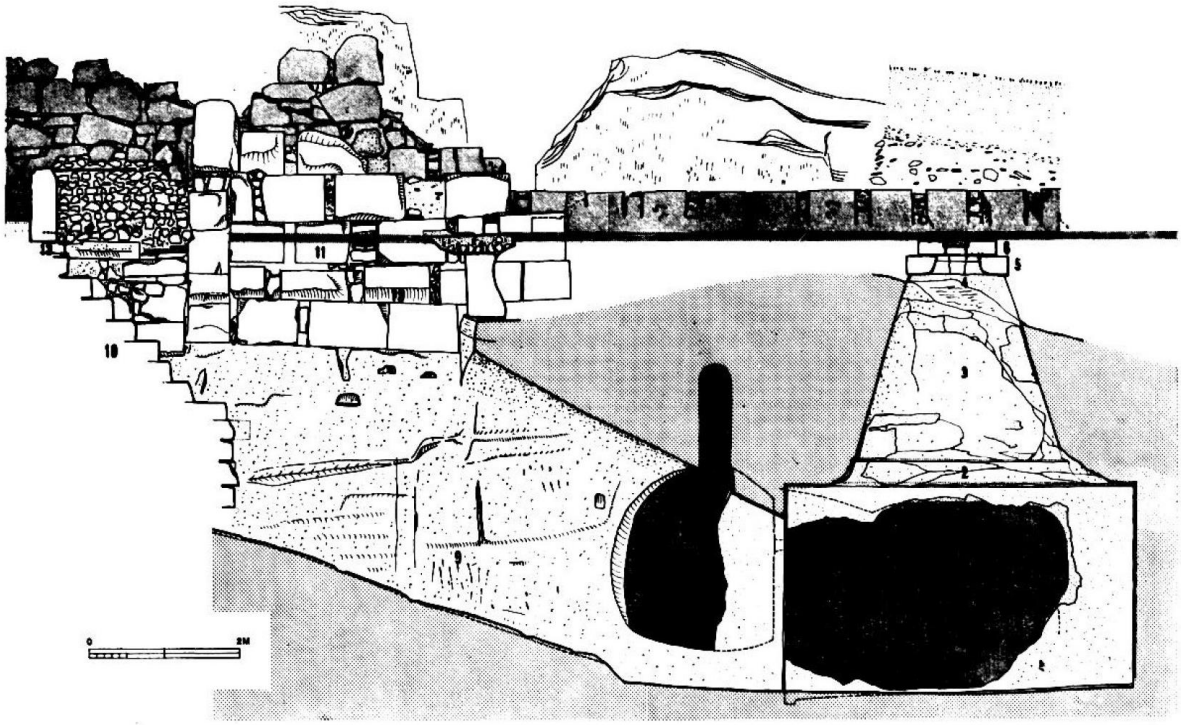

Figure 28 – Possible mundus complex in Bolsena. Photo source: Pailler, 1970.

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