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The Etruscan language : new acquisitions

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THE ETRUSCAN LANGUAGE: NEW ACQUISITIONS (PL. 16-19)

In the last twenty years many Etruscan inscriptions have been found, bringing the total number of documented exempla to well over 10.000, even if we restrict ourselves to those of a certain linguistic importance. The variety of supports is striking: lead tablets, such as that of Pech Maho¹; cippi, of which there is an exceptionally beautiful, though fragmentary, one from Tragliatella, between Cerveteri and Veio²; and the important stele of Saturnia³, which has a fairly long text. We now even have the bronze-plated lead weight of a balance, the so-called *aequipondium* of Cerveteri⁴. Each of these documents supplies important elements for our knowledge of Etruscan. Take, for example, the cippus at Tragliatella (Fig. 1a, b), which has given us a verb with a *thel-* base, which inevitably recalls the Greek *thelo*, *ethelo*; and here we return to the old but still-lively debate on Etruscan's linguistic kinship with the other languages of the classical world (and the Etruscans wanted to be, and were, an integral part of the classical world; to realise that one need only stroll round the necropolises of Cerveteri and Tarquinia, or visit any of the main Etruscan museums in Rome, Tarquinia and Florence). New finds in the field of inscribed pottery allowed Agostiniani to dispel some of our embarrassing ignorance with his deciphering of the recurrent sequence *ei minipi capi*⁵ (there are about ten cases of it with minor variants): this can only mean "do not take me", to be understood as the inscribed vase speaking

in the first person, in the well-known archaic, Etruscan, Greek and Latin tradition of the speaking object. Nor is there any difficulty in linking *capi* with the Latin *capio* and the Greek *kapto* in the dual sense of "contain" and "take".

The stele of Saturnia, discovered in 1984 but edited in 1999, again has the verb *zinece/tinece*, already familiar from other monumental inscriptions, probably meaning "had done"; in the sense that the figures mentioned in the funeral text took upon themselves to have this commemorative stele erected on behalf of Larth Laucies, their father. The verb in question is also known from the Rhaetian in the transitive sense of "make an offering" in a votive context. This is a fact of great importance, confirming Etruscan-Rhaetian kinship. But there is more: the past participle on the stele, *thamequ* is not, unfortunately, semantically ascertainable with any certainty, but it certainly refers to an action conferring honour of the person concerned in the epitaph. The late German linguist H. Rix related the ending *-qu* to that which appears in Etruscan past participles of the type *zinaku* "done, performed"⁶. This should settle the question of the Etruscan-Rhaetian identity, as Rhaetian also had absolutely similar verb forms, a particular case in point being the verb *eluku* "offered". Explaining this similarity on a historical-linguistic-archaeological level has led to open disagreement between those who have studied the ethno-genesis of the Italian peninsula. For one group, a genuine

¹ G. COLONNA, *L'iscrizione etrusca del piombo di Linguadoca*, Scienze dell'Antichità 2, 1988 (1989), p. 547-555; M. CRISTOFANI, *St. Etr.* (Rivista di Epigrafia Etrusca) 57, 1991, p. 285-287. This article uses the following abbreviations: AGOSTINIANI = L. AGOSTINIANI, *Tabula Cortonensis*, Rome 2000; CIE = *Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum*; MORANDI = A. MORANDI, *A proposito di etrusco tamera*, Rev. Belge Phil. Histoire 76, 1998, p. 135-142; PALLOTTINO = M. PALLOTTINO, *Etruscologia* (7th ed.), Milan, 1985; *St. Etr.* = *Studi Etruschi*; RIX = H. RIX, *La seconda metà del nuovo testo di Cortona*, in *La Tabula Cortonensis*, *Quaderni di Archeologia Etrusco-Italica* 28, 2002, p. 77-86; TLE = M. PALLOTTINO, *Testimonia Linguae Etruscae*, Milan 1968 (2nd ed.). For references to Indo-European I have mainly drawn on the work of Pokorny: J. POKORNY, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I-II, Tübingen-Basel,

1994 (reprint), here abbreviated to POKORNY. For typographical reasons Greek characters are transcribed as follows: theta with *th*, phi with *ph*, and khi with *kh*.

² A. MORANDI, *A proposito di due epigrafi etrusche ceretane*, Rev. Belge Phil. Histoire 73, 1995, p. 105-125.

³ A. MAGGIANI, *Nuovi etnici e toponimi etruschi*, in *Incontro di studi in memoria di Massimo Pallottino*, Pisa-Rome 1999, p. 47-61, tabs. I-II.

⁴ M. CRISTOFANI, *Due testi dell'Italia preromana*, *Quaderni di Archeologia Etrusco-Italica* 25, 1996, pp. 39-54; MORANDI, p. 135-142, in particular.

⁵ L. AGOSTINIANI, *La sequenza eiminipicapi e la negazione in etrusco*, *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 69, 1984, p. 84-117.

⁶ H. RIX, *Rätisch und Etruskisch*, Innsbruck, 1998, p. 22-24.

Etruscan form almost in the heart of Europe (the territory of the Rhaetians certainly extended beyond the Austria-Italy divide) confirmed the theory that the origins of the Etruscans were in northern Europe. For the other group, Pallottino above all⁷, the Etruscan-Rhaetian kinship meant only that the Etruscans had expanded northwards, and this was confirmed by the relative lateness of Rhaetian epigraphs. The latter view was supported by historiographic tradition, which regarded the Rhaetians as simply Etruscans who had fled from the plain of Padania after the Celtic invasions in the early VI century, “*prisco Tarquinio Romae regnante*” (Livy, V, 34). But, though it was given scant credit in the past, protohistorical archaeologists are reconsidering the possibility that, while the Etruscans certainly did penetrate the territory of the Adige Valley and even further north, nevertheless the Rhaetians had longstanding settlements in areas remote from the territories traditionally regarded as theirs. Thus, we should look afresh at the “northern” theory.

The new epigraphic documents that I want to consider here – inevitably, for want of time, limiting myself to the most important – are, with the year of their discovery, the *aequipondium* of Cerveteri, 1996, the Tabula Cortonensis⁸, 2000, with additional reference to the tablet of Tarquinia, 1985 (Fig. 2a, b), and the Pech Maho lead⁹, 1988 (Fig. 3). The last two are, unfortunately, more or less incomprehensible, as their brevity is accompanied by considerable lacunae.

It should be mentioned first of all that these new documents have shown us just how much we still do not know of Etruscan, at the level both of grammar and of lexis; each new discovery thus adds difficulty to difficulty, particularly when the texts are non-religious in character, concerning contracts and regulations to be respected between the parties in relation to the possession of some land or burial area, or of valuable pieces of property such as a boat. Clearly, it is a “spoken” language, and in these cases the inscriptions are completely impenetrable, such as the notable case of the Cippus of Perugia, CIE 4538. In comparison, ritual-religious texts, thanks to their repetitiveness and schematic formulae, the Zagreb Mummy and the Tabula Capu-

ana (once known as the “Tegola [tile] di Capua”) are much more accessible in some passages. The new texts give the impression that each discovery leads endlessly to new words. Evidently it is a language whose rich lexis we know only in part, even though each new inscription adds to our store.

Of the tablet of Tarquinia we can say only that it is a text commemorating actions by a member of the family of the Clevsinas, as is indicated by the puzzling adjective with funeral connections *rutzss*, and *svaleni* “during his life”; hence, I would not follow Pallottino in describing it as a “legal text”, a term that has been much used – and misused – for some years now. Unfortunately we only have half of each line as the document was damaged long ago. The person who gave his name to the text, a Ceisinies, belonged to one of the most distinguished families in the city of Tarquinia, as is clear from the imposing hypogeum “dei Ceisinies”¹⁰; there is a reference to his nomen gentilicium in two epigraphs of notable importance, one containing the linguistically valuable term *tamera* “tomb”, which was, unfortunately, long misunderstood by Etruscologists to the detriment of Etruscan studies in general (*tamera*, although it had been correctly interpreted by nineteenth-century Italian antiquarians, was later translated as a term used in connection with magistrates, and related by many scholars to the Anatolian *dammara*!). In the 1980’s I offered a re-interpretation of the longer of the two epitaphs on the tomb, after retrieving a hitherto-unknown old drawing¹¹. As I have said, the inscription on the Tarquinian tablet contains a new, incomprehensible word, *rutzss*, indicative of how difficult Etruscan is. Oddly, at around the same time as the edition of the tablet an inscription in a Tarquinian hypogeum was discovered and published, where the word recurs in the form *rutz*, which was not understood, either by the original editor or by Rix, who read *ruz*¹².

At the same time that Pallottino provided a commentary on the Tarquinian tablet, he also dealt with a small bronze base from the collections of Manchester Museum¹³. The relatively late inscription contains a dedication to the god Hercules, *Hercles* in the text, with some familiar terms in the dedications, but with varying declinations, *munis*, *truta*, *ala*, *alpnina*, *luths*, *inpa*.

⁷ PALLOTTINO, p. 89 ff.

⁸ AGOSTINIANI, with F. Nicosia.

⁹ G. COLONNA, *loc. cit.* (in note 1).

¹⁰ W. DOBROWOLSKI, *La peinture étrusque dans les recherches du XVIII^e siècle*, I, *Archeologia Warsz* 39, 1988, p. 27-67.

¹¹ On the inscription: A. MORANDI, *La tomba dei Ceisinies*

a Tarquinia. Una nuova lettura dell’iscrizione CIE 5525, *Römische Mitteilungen* 96, 1989, p. 285-292, tabs. 54-55.

¹² H. RIX, *Etruskische Texte*, I, Tübingen 1991, Ta 1.88. I reexamined the inscription in the autumn of 2006.

¹³ M. PALLOTTINO, *Presentazione di due iscrizioni etrusche*, *St. Etr.* 51, 1985, p. 609-614.

A case apart is the Pech Maho lead (southern France, near the *apoikia* of Emporion). When it was discovered, rolled up on itself, it was first thought to be a weight; when its true nature was discovered, it was a disappointment, as it has an inscription in Etruscan characters on one side, and on the other an inscription in Ionic Greek¹⁴. The Etruscan inscription reads:

Venelus . [sa]is [—]
zeke . *kisne* <e> . *heki*[u] [—]
Veneluz . *ka* . *Utavu*[m] [—]
heitva . *kiven* . *mis* [—]
Mataliai . *mel* [—]
 [—] *zik* . *hinu* . *tuz*[u] [—]

Unfortunately, although the two texts have similar content, there is no direct relation between them. The Etruscan is the earlier of the two; the inscription on the opposite side came later and was the work of merchants and sailors, giving information of the purchase and sale of boats, with the purchasers and sellers (Emporitani) and mention of witnesses. It is true that the Etruscan text has some correspondence with the Greek – inevitably, at the level of trade and money, but the inscription tells us nothing apart from possible references to a figure, *kisne* and *kiven*, which might be related to the number “three”, which in Etruscan is *ci* and, strangely but of little use, to the *triton/triten* on the Greek side. Any residual hope of a possible “bilinguistic” correspondence is undoubtedly dashed by the *Mataliai* of the Etruscan text, which is an obvious locative of a settlement, *Massalia*/Marseilles, with *t* in place of *s*¹⁵. This means that the two epigraphic documents are defined by the place of the commercial transaction, although this is not stated specifically in the Greek text. It should also be mentioned that here and elsewhere the locative recalls – e.g. *Capue* “to Capua” – the vowel termination of Latin locatives such as *Romae* “to Rome”.

The *aequipedium* from Cerveteri (Fig. 4a, b) is very important. It was published in 1996 by Cristofani and fully illustrated with photographs. Unfortunately, the transcription was inaccurate, and in 1998 I published a new edition after extensive direct inspection, with a new transcription¹⁶. Later corrections by Maggiani and others have

not changed the overall interpretive picture, which remains complex, due to the poor state of preservation of the artefact. The inscription reads:

Raths . *Turmsal*
Velus . *Apkhmsal*
thusti . *thui* . *methlumth*
muxxs [—] *ms*[.] *el*
macuni . *Hercles*
alpan . *tece* IIC(?)
eutta . *thescu-*
ac . *pentha* . [V]el
xave . *zilci* . *Lath-*
ale . *Nulathes*

We start with a dedication to Rath and Turms, the latter being the Etruscan Mercury. The fact that later on, half-way through the inscription, the weight of the object is given suggests it refers to the commercial sphere, as well as to the divine presence invoked, Turms, and to the form of the artefact. The mention of the magistrate and highest citizen in the expression *zilci* at line nine, which is not merely indicative of the year, suggests the weight had an official function. The onomastic forms at lines 8-9, are problematic and susceptible to various interpretations, but do not introduce significant linguistic elements.

In the case of this inscription, as elsewhere, comparison with inscriptions in other languages – Latin in particular – has led to more or less obvious reflections for which it is quite pointless, and sometimes misleading, to speak of “method”, in the case of “bilinguistic method”¹⁷. Once we have ascertained that Latin inscriptions on weights have onomastic phrases of various kinds, with names of gods, magistrates, dates, etc., interpretation can always be resolved mainly at a linguistic level, i.e. by speculation from within the Etruscan language. This is where the difficulties lie, as – and this should always be borne in mind – the Etruscan language is still beyond us. Following other paths becomes obligatory when the Etruscan itself provides us with the lead (vd. below).

The inscribed weight in question is unique in the way the content is structured and expressed, as the other known to us, of uncertain origin, is much shorter¹⁸; like this

¹⁴ J. POUILLOUX, *Un texte commercial ionien trouvé en Langue-doc*, Scienze dell' Antichità 2, 1988, p. 535-546; J. CHADWICK, *The Pech-Maho Lead*, Zeit. f. Papyrologie u. Epigraphik 82, 1990, p. 161-166.

¹⁵ See also by Cristofani: M. CRISTOFANI, *La “lettera” di Pech Maho, Aleria e i traffici del V secolo a. C.* [in:] *Etruschi e altre genti*

dell'Italia preromana, Rome 1996, p. 83-96.

¹⁶ MORANDI, p. 135-142.

¹⁷ PALLOTTINO, p. 435 ff.

¹⁸ L. BONFANTE, *St. Etr.* (Rivista di Epigrafia Etrusca) 59, 1994, p. 269, tabs. XLVII-XLVIII; M. CRISTOFANI, *ibidem*, p. 270.

one, however, it was offered as a votive gift by a person indicated at line two, to the nominative Vel Apkhmsa (Colonna and Maggiani read *Luvkhmsal*), and the two gods Rath and Turms, one being probably the epiclesis of the other, as often happens in Etruscan and Italic texts (the Iguvine Tables in particular); and the offering cannot have happened once only, given what is written in the following lines.

The third line is surprising – but by now we are becoming used to surprises of this kind with the Etruscan language. *thusti thui methlmth*: this can be translated as “together here in the methlum”, but we should not lose sight of the “history” of these two terms *thusti* and *methlum* in Etruscan linguistics. The first appears in various spellings (*tusthi*, *tusti*), in particular contexts that suggest the connection between two deceased persons, husband and wife, and has always been translated as “together”, a concept emphasised by the locative particle *thui* “here”. *tusthi thui hupninethi* “together here in the repository”, TLE 630, is therefore the equivalent of our *thusti thui methlmth*, with final *th* indicating the place. We need to pause over *methlum*. For some time now the term has been translated as “city”, and so we have in this text “together here in the city”. But it is difficult to think that the two gods Rath and Turms are being referred to, who would in this way seem to be subject to the will of ordinary mortals, and there is certainly nothing on the site that can help us place their temple. Indeed, as we shall see, the inscription later excludes this. In my view it is all the people mentioned in the text that are to be considered as “together”: each with his own duties, they operate, we are to suppose, in a context described by the term *methlum*. The idea that *methlum* meant “city” or “territory” is the result of various initial misunderstandings, the first of which is connected with the idea that the *methlumt* on the Bronze Liver of Piacenza contrasts with the sense of a *pul* in one of the sections of the Liver. However valuable his study may be, Maggiani misinterpreted this term¹⁹, as various scholars, myself included, pointed out immediately after its publication. He thought that *pul* (which should actually be read as *tur*) is the sky, and *methlumt* should be translated “on earth”; hence *meth-*

lum = “territory” and “city”(!), an obvious contrast to find on a “*templum*”, that is to say, a planisphere such as the Liver of Piacenza. For the sense “city”, which is inadmissible in the Liver, we need to return to the older view of Pallottino, who attributed it to the term *spure/spura*. On the subject of *methlum* I have already referred elsewhere to the phrase *spureri methlumeri* on the Zagreb Mummy, to be translated as “for the city and for the people” (remember the Roman abbreviation *SPQR*), “people” being the equivalent of the Latin *populus*, which was originally all those citizens who held public, civil or religious positions or who had the power to elect them. A linguistic short-cut to explain this term, which remains so mysterious if left to the Etruscologists, is possible, however: by examining systematically the known roots in Indo-European that are present in Etruscan. Starting from the base **med-/met-* and an immediate product of it in Italic, the *meddiss* “he who manifests the law” – also bearing in mind the Latin *moderor* and Greek *medomai* – *methlum* will give us the sense of “judiciary” (in Oscan we have *meddikiai* “in the judiciary”, from *meddiss* obviously), but also college of magistrates. So at line 3 we should understand that all the figures mentioned are “together” in the order of civic positions.

Little can be said about lines 4 and 5, partly because they are difficult to read. However, the name of the god Hercules, who was popular in the area, surfaces²⁰ *macuni* could be a reference to the place of worship of Hercules; here the weight in question was left as a votive gift. What we read at line 6 is much more important, however: *alpan tece*, a phrase which has a dual value for us, both cultural and linguistic, as we have all the elements to identify their meaning and function; Maggiani’s translation “*libens posuit*” must be accepted²¹. *alpan* usually recurs in votive inscriptions associated with the verb *turce* “gave”; so *alpan turce* “gave as a welcome thing”. It is clear, then, that *tece* has a similar meaning, forcing us, at least here, to set aside any possible mention of the god Tec (!), such as we find in other examples, such as the inscription of the Haranguer, CIE 4196²², which has been known since the 16th century. In this inscription there is no verb in a finite form and *tece* is now generally taken to be the undeclined name of the god,

¹⁹ A. MAGGIANI, *Qualche osservazione sul Fegato di Piacenza*, St. Etr. 50, 1982 (1984), p. 53-88.

²⁰ M. CRISTOFANI, *I culti di Caere*, Scienze dell’Antichità 10, 2000, p. 414 ff; G. COLONNA, *Divinazione e culto di Rath/Apollo a Caere (a proposito del santuario in loc. S. Antonio)*, Archeologia Classica 52, 2001, p. 151-173.

²¹ A. MAGGIANI, *Riflessioni sulla tavola di Cortona* [in:] M. Pandolfini, A. Baggiani eds, *La Tabula Cortonensis e il suo contesto storico-archeologico*, Quaderni di Archeologia Etrusco-Italica 28, 2002, p. 67.

²² G. COLONNA, *Dalla Chimera all’Arringatore*, Atti e Memorie della Accademia Petrarca di Lettere, Arti e Scienze 47, 1985 (1987), p. 167-186.

but this, I would say, is hardly in keeping with the present example. That *tece*, which was already known by the earliest students of Etruscan, was to be related to the Greek verb *etheke*, an aorist, was accepted unreservedly and regarded as strong evidence for the idea that Etruscan was connected with Greek (we should not forget that in the 18th century many Greek products, particularly pottery, were regarded as Etruscan)²³. With the new evidence of the *aequipondium* of Cerveteri I believe that this relation should be restated, with all the necessary adjustments to recent knowledge; we have a fundamentally important linguistic fact and we must now draw the necessary consequences from it in our classification of Etruscan, while giving recognition, where due, to other research criteria that have achieved results. *alpan* too should be interpreted comparatively with due consideration to the classical world, and to Greek in particular; in fact, as well as the various adjectival forms such as *alpnistos*, *alpalaion*, we should recall the important correspondence with *alpar* “welcome thing”²⁴. Maggiani and others see a C after the two vertical lines, which would certainly be a mark of value; this, then, would be a clear indication of the weight of the object officially marked in the context of the donation. This would mean that the sacred imposes certain rules at the level of the profane, and hence also in trade. Consequently, there are also names of people guaranteeing this official status, though for the moment there remains the insurmountable problem of line 7 in the inscription, unless we take the sequence as a person’s name to be linked with what follows. Obviously this would suggest that *tece* was a third person plural, “*posuerunt*”.

The bronze table of Cortona, generally known now as the Tabula Cortonensis, came to us in seven interlocking fragments (Fig. 5a, b). It had been broken long ago into eight pieces, and preserved, apart from the lost eighth fragment, a loss that did not compromise the completeness of the text. It can easily be dated to the 3rd century BC and it has been established as coming from Cortona, although the name of the city, which appears in other epigraphs²⁵ does not appear in the inscription. We are sure of its provenance

from the graphemes used, the presence of the nomen gentilicium Cusu and the reference to Lake Trasimeno, which is close to Cortona. It was found by accident, but we do not know how, which makes for various problems of interpretation concerning its purpose and various meanings²⁶. The discovery of the Tabula was followed by a long legal dispute at the expense of the man who found it (fortunately, his identity is known, confirming Cortona as the place of origin). This at once aroused interest and curiosity from scholars and ordinary people in the object, an interest and curiosity that were partly satisfied by the knowledge that the long inscription was “occupied” by various onomastic forms, which seemed to – and indeed did – partly diminish the value of the new discovery. For years the archaeology division in Tuscany (Soprintendenza Archeologica per la Toscana) kept any detailed information on the inscription hidden until Agostiniani’s spare but correct edition in 2000. Not even Pallottino investigated it, despite his fame and prestigious position as President of the National Institute of Etruscan Studies, a fame that was, however, overshadowed by the successes of other scholars, in particular Rix, in the exegesis of Etruscan epigraphic documents and in the linguistic field in general. A year before Agostiniani, De Simone²⁷ had managed to gain possession of a photographic reproduction of the Tabula, but there were errors in his reading of some passages of the text, and his translation and commentary overall and in detail were extremely personal, with serious misunderstandings, starting from the idea that the text on the Tabula deals with aristocratic funeral rites (recalling the Roman *parentatio*), rites expressed by confraternities. This belief was based on the verb form *fratuce* and lexical and verb forms such as *suthiu*, *cesu*, etc., forms that only later took on specifically funeral connotations, having previously more general functions.

The new text is unique of its kind despite its similarities with the Cippus of Perugia, which may be a tombstone – the word *thaura* “tomb” appears. The TC text contains negotiations between two family groups, Petru Sceva with wife and, I think, a son, and the Cusu²⁸ over some

²³ L. LANZI, *Saggio di lingua etrusca*, II, Florence 1824 (2nd ed.), p. 470; A. TROMBETTI, *La lingua etrusca*, Florence 1928, p. 229 (Lessico); A. MORANDI, *Le ascendenze indoeuropee nella lingua etrusca* I, Rome, 1984, p. 19.

²⁴ P. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, I, Paris 1968, p. 64.

²⁵ A. MORANDI, *Cortona e la questione dei confini etruschi*, *Annuario dell’Accademia Etrusca di Cortona* 23, 1987/1988 (1989), p. 30 ff.

²⁶ See the legal part in the study cited here as AGOSTINIANI,

Appendix I, by F. NICOSIA.

²⁷ C. DE SIMONE, *La Tabula Cortonensis tra linguistica e storia*, *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Classe di Lettere e Filosofia* 4/3, 1999, p. 1-122.

²⁸ As an aside to the more important linguistic questions I note that Rix’s punctilious insistence on some minor aspects of the debate on the Etruscan language at times raises doubts and even a slight smile, as in the occurrence of the reading “Cusciu” of the patrician from Cortona, Cusu, written with the *sade*, the pronunciation *sc* being effectively “guaranteed” by the author himself: RIX, p. 83.

estates. These are said to be on level ground, *spanthi/spante*, and in the hills, *mlesiethi*, being a *vina* “vineyard” and a *restm* (meaning unknown). Other property is mentioned, with *sran* and, possibly, *tersna*, while on *pes* I think we should seek a simpler solution (see below).

Here is the inscription (following the MAGGIANI edition of 2002):

Side A

*e<.>t Petruis Sceves eliunts . v-
inac . restmc . cenu . tenthur sar . Cus-
uthuras . Larisalisvla . pesc . spante . tenthur .
sa . sran sarc clthil(?) . tersna thui . spanthi ml-
esiethic . Rasna S////> inni . pes . Petrus . pav-
ac . traulac . tiur . tenthurc . tenth . zacinat . pr-
iniserac . zal / cs . esis vere Cusuthursum . p-
es . Petrusta . Scevas /nuthanatur . Lart . Petr-
uni . Arnt . Pini . Lart . Vipi . Lusce . Laris . Salini . V-
etnal . Lart . Velara . Larthalisa . Lart . Velara .
Aulesa . Vel . Pumpu . Pruciu . Aule . Celatina . Se-
tmnal . Arnza . Felsni . Velthinal . Vel . Luisna
Lusce . Vel . Uslna . Nufresa . Laru . Slanzu . Larz-
a Lartle Vel Aves Arnt . Petru . Raufe / epru-
s . ame . Velkhe . Cusu Larisal . deniarc . Laris
Cusu . Larisalisa Larizac . clan . Larisal . Petr-
u . Scevas . Arntlei . Petrus . puia
cen . zic . zikhukhe . sparzestis . sazleis . in
thukhti . cusuthuras . suthiu . ame . tal . suthive-
nas . ratm . thukht . cesu . tliteltei . sians . spa-
rzete . thui . salt . zic . fratuze . Cusuthuras . La-
risalisvla . Petrusc . Scevas . pess . Tarkhian-
es / cnl . nuthe . malec . Lart . Cucrina . Lausisa .
zilath . Mekhl . Rasnal . Laris . Celatina Lau-
sa clanc . Arnt . Luscni . Arnthal . clanc . Larz-
a . Lart . Turmna . Salin [- -]
pnal . deniarc . Velkhe [- -]
serc . Velkhe . Cusu . Aule [— -]
Aninalc . Laris . Fuln [- -]
rc . Lart . Petce . Uslnal [— -]
inathur . Tecsinal . Vel [- -]
us . Larisc . Cusu . Uslna [- -]*

Side B

*Aule Salini Cusual
zilci . Larthal . Cusus . Titlnal
Larisalc . Salinis Aulesla . Celtineitis-
s . Tarsminass . sparza . in . thukht cesu*

*ratm . suthiu . suthiusve . Velkhes . Cusus A-
ulesla . Velthurus . Titlnis . Velthurusla.
Larthalc . Celatinas Apnal . Larisalc Ce-
latinas . Titlnal*

The estates in questions were located between the hills and *Tarsminass* (obviously the modern Lake Trasimeno, Agostiniani reminds us), and, in any case, in Etruscan territory, as is explicitly stated with *Rasna* in line 5. As there are numbers in the text that can only be interpreted as monetary values, the negotiations must have been over a property sale, given with indications of surface area expressed by the term *tenthur*, which is plural. Given the importance of the act, the sale took place in the presence of many witnesses, indicated as *nuthanatur*. Obviously there are some uncertain lexical items – very few, as we have seen, are verbs – about which we can only conjecture.

There has been some energetic insistence on the possibility of this being the surviving exemplar of four copies of the contract (leaving open the possibility of another being found in future!). On this view, a copy was left with each of the families, the support for this conjecture being the words *in thukht cesu* “that in the house (is) placed”. However, to speak in terms of archives and archivists in these families, with references to the classical (or even, it would seem, the modern) world is taking things too far²⁹. And in any case, from what the discoverer claimed, the place indicated was more likely to have been a sacred place with its store-room than a private house. The sense of “table” for the word *sparza* is generally accepted.

On the social plane, it is difficult to see why scholars have brought in the Second Punic War, which involved the area of Cortona (Battle of Trasimeno) but does not seem to have had any effect on the social order as far as possession of the land is concerned. Nor do the contracting parties and witnesses, some of them with children, show any sign of social decline. Nor are there any representatives of the servant class, or those of humble origins, to judge from the name forms, given the absence of specific terms such as *lethe* and *lautni*.

To sum up what we can be sure of: Petru Sceva sold some land between Cortona and Lake Trasimeno in Etruscan territory, *Rasna* at l. 5; its extent is indicated with *tenthur* and its value in figures, again at line 5. Various people acted as witnesses, *nuthanatur* and perhaps *eprus*, terms whose meaning is not fully clear, and still less their structure. At line 18 the act is underwritten with the formula *cen*

²⁹ RIX, p. 83, uses the rather grandiloquent term of “archivist”.

zic zikhukhe “this agreement was written” (literally “this writing was written”), *sparzestis* “with this table”, a table that is specified as *sazleis* (the *s* seems to indicate the ablative).

The act also concerned Petru Sceva’s wife, *puia*. Bridging lines 5 and 6 is the polysyndetonic phrase *pavac traulac* related to *Petrus* (*Scevas* is omitted); so *pava*, like *puia* is an indication of kinship, in this case “son”. This meaning – “son”, but also “young man”, “boy” – can also be found in the mirror of Tuscania, in the phrase *Pava Tarkhies*³⁰. At lines 20 and 21 a figure indicated as *sians* is said to have performed an action, *fratuce*, probably the work of engraving the writing, *zic*, on the table, *sparzete* (-*te* indicating the locative) “that is placed in the house of the Cusu”, in *thukhti Cusuthuras suthiu ame*. It also specifies what happens for the Cusu and Petru Sceva in relation, line 22, to what is said *pes Tarkhianes*, a land that is defined by a person’s name, probably connected with an earlier possession, given the northern names based on *Tarkh-*, widespread in inland northern Etruria, suggesting that these peoples moved south to settle in the Tyrrhenic area around Tarkhna/Tarquini³¹. The suggested translation of *pes* with “land” seems appropriate, given the content, though I would not exclude a possible reference to the Umbrian of nearby Gubbio; in the Iguvine Tables *perum*, from an earlier **pedom* (and in Greek we have *pedon*), is translated “ditch”, but this is clearly a development from the original sense of “land”. Other witnesses at line 23 observe and verify, *nuthe malec*, the situation. These include *zilath Mekhl Rasnal* Laris Celatina.

Side B tells us when the contract was drawn up, by the indication of the names of the two eponymous supreme magistrates, *zilci Larthal Cusus...Larisalc Salinis*, and the fathers’ and mothers’ names. Side B and the whole text end with the statement that somewhere near Lake Trasimeno, mentioned above, the table, *sparza*, now in the nominative, is placed *ratm*, translated – also by Rix – with the Latin “*rite*”, “following the rite”, or “the rule” if we want to use a less religious term, on the basis of an unexpected and sur-

prising onrush of etymological fervour; the table is placed, *cesu* – a verb that we know as a past participle in a funeral context, meaning the “lying” of the deceased –, in *thukht*, in the ways expressed in lines 18-20, with Velkhe Cusu, Velthur Titlnei, Larth celatina son of Apnei and Laris celatina son of Pitnei (as the last two share the same name they are distinguished by their mothers’ names) acting as guarantors.

At this point, given how much has been acquired on the level of meaning, *tenthur* “toises”, *spanthi* “in the plain”, *sparza* “table”, *fratuce* “he engraved”, etc., some terms require closer attention, starting with *Rasna* and *zilath Mekhl Rasnal*, which remain unclear in spite of the translation. *Rasna* has various correspondences in and, very rarely, outside Etruria³². Its translation in recent years (Rix was the harbinger in the early 1980’s) as a general term for the “public”, the “people” or even armed youths³³ does not do justice to its prominence in institutional and geographical-national contexts. At Cortona *Rasna* appears on the famous Cippus of Campaccio, fragmentary and of uncertain origin, with the repeated syntagm, CIE 439, *tular Rasnal* “border of Etruria” – a border that cannot be too distant geographically, given the historical closeness of the Umbrian peoples down to our own times and their warlike nature at the time this epigraph was made (3rd century BC). According to Dionysios of Halicarnassos, the Etruscans and Tyrrhenians used the term *Rasenna* in an incontrovertibly national sense³⁴. The term also occurs in the Cippus of Perugia, *Rasne*, *Rasnes*, where it clearly has nothing to do with *publicus*, *populus* and *iuventus*. Now from Cortona itself we have in the Tabula, apart from the already mentioned *Rasna*, evidence of a *zilath Mekhl Rasnal*, an expression that until 2000 had been documented only in southern Etruria and the area between Porano/Orvieto (Volsinii?) and Chiusi, indicating a supreme position that was certainly not limited to the merely local context. Clearly, between Cortona and Perugia we are in border territory, a territory of conflict with the Italics. The term *Rasna* is thus used as

³⁰ *Pava*, documented on the mirror of Tuscania CIE 10411, was interpreted by me as “son/youth”, MORANDI, *op. cit.* (note 23), p. 27, referring to the Greek *paus*, *παῖς*. With extreme licence the term has been translated as “haruspication”, but see MAGGIANI, *loc. cit.* (note 21), p. 72.

³¹ Oddly, in onomastics and Tarquinian epigraphs in general there is no trace of the base *Tarkh-*, which we have only in the name of the city Tarkhna. The mirror of Tuscania, with reference to the saga of Tarquin, was the subject of an early excursus by a young and inexperienced Pallottino (he was still a student!): M. PALLOT-

TINO, *Uno specchio di Tuscania e la leggenda etrusca di Tarchon*, Rendiconti Acc. Lincei VI, 1930, p. 49-87, tabs. I-II.

³² F. RIBEZZO, *Nuove Ricerche per il Corpus Inscriptionum Messapicarum*, Rome, 1944, p. 198; they are brick stamps with the wording *Rasne*, and no other explanation has been offered.

³³ G. COLONNA, *Il lessico istituzionale etrusco* [in:] *La formazione della città preromana in Emilia Romagna, Atti del Convegno Bologna-Marzabotto*, Bologna 1988, p. 28.

³⁴ DIONYSIOS of Hal., I, 30, 3; I have dealt with this subject in: MORANDI, *loc. cit.* (note 25), p. 30 ff.

an explicit national prerogative of contrast and Cortona, like Tarquinia and Chiusi/Volsinii, was without a doubt a centre of such importance as to have a supreme magistrate of the Etruscan nation³⁵. *sians*, which is to be linked with the already known *siansl*, *sansl*, is a palatalised form preceding the second name referred to here; it is certainly not the name of a god, but the name of a function³⁶. The various studies dealing with these unusual forms have linked them with the Latin Semo Sancus and the Umbran **Sancos* in the sense of “sanction, ratify”. Elsewhere, in the inscription of the Haranguer, *CIE* 4196, and the Putto Graziani, *CIE* 4561, the form *sansl* seemed a dative, encouraging the idea of a divine name and the relative etymological explanation, which has also been taken up again recently, with the tentative suggestion of “father” as the meaning³⁷. In the Tabula Cortonensis *sians* could thus be in the semantic sphere of “sanction”, “sanctioner”, given the context, and unlock the passage with the verb *fratuce*, which has been a puzzle for those scholars worth their salt who have studied the Tabula.

There are far greater comparative possibilities in the other words mentioned above, as we shall see. As hinted above, the verb *fratuce* was completely misinterpreted, using etymological criteria that were absolutely inappropriate, the scholar in question, De Simone, denying any possible Indo-European influence³⁸; obviously Etruscan should not be explained under the influence of false appearances, and comparison should rather be directed towards the lexical bases, which are to be reconstructed both semantically and structurally. De Simone translated *fratuce* “operated as a confraternity”, subject *sians*, treating it as a denominative

verb on a Latin-Italic base, *fratres*, *frater*. Oddly, previous exegetes of the Tabula did not think that, by analogy with other occurrences, the *f* of *fratuce* might refer to an arch-phoneme, unvoiced or voiced, *p* or *b*. It is fairly common in Etruscan for *f* to have a secondary status, but also in various other languages³⁹: Latin *pater*, Germanic *vater*, Greek *parthenos/pharthenos*, etc. In the bilingual Etruscan-Latin inscription at Pesaro, *TLE* 697, *frontac* is a word connected with the Greek *brontè*; in fact, the person mentioned in the inscription, *L. Cafatius/Laris Cafates*, was a haruspex and interpreter of thunderbolts, *fulgurator* and a *frontac*⁴⁰. Elsewhere we have the nomen gentilicium *Nufrznei*, which in Latin is the feminine *Noborsinia*⁴¹. Therefore our *fratuce* should be considered in the linguistic-semantic context from which the Latin *brattea* “tablet (worked with incisions and in relief)” derives, and I would add that the form *bractea* is a retro-formation of *brattea*⁴². In this way we reach an absolutely acceptable sense at the cost of a slight semantic shift; the translation is: “the *sians* has had the writing, zic, engraved” and he did it on a tablet (*sparza*). Basically Rix interpreted the words in the same way, but without the necessary references, as with *sparza*⁴³. In my view, this word should be linked directly with the Greek *speiro* and the Latin *spargo*; so, more obviously, should *spanthi* and *spante* whose base *span-* has a widespread Indo-European ancestry⁴⁴.

Etruscan scholars have undoubtedly made advances in recent years, with important discoveries that are now part of our common knowledge. It is, though, a pity that this has induced a sense of false security – and I refer once again to Rix – that has led to interpretations that are completely axiomatic. One example is the plural, which in

³⁵ In the inscription *CIE* 5093 the city of Chiusi is mentioned as a place for performing the function of *zilath Mekhl Rasnal* and there are some examples of *Clevsinslth*, “to Chiusi”, with the *-th* suffix of place. However, it should be noted that the epigraph in question, which is in one of the so-called Golini tombs, should not be assigned to Volsinii/Orvieto, which is about 9 kilometres from the Golini tombs, but to the unknown and sizeable centre in the territory of the municipality of Porano.

³⁶ Of this the author is certain: RIX, p. 79 and 84.

³⁷ M. PALLOTTINO, *Nota sull'iscrizione dell'Arringatore*, *Bollettino d'Arte* 2, 1964, p. 115-116.

³⁸ C. DE SIMONE, *L'ermeneutica etrusca oggi* [in:] *Atti del Secondo Congresso internazionale Etrusco, Firenze, 1985*, III, Rome 1989, p. 1307-1320.

³⁹ A. MORANDI, *Nuovi lineamenti di lingua etrusca*, Rome, 1991, p. 40, and MORANDI, p. 150.

⁴⁰ The connections made by various scholars between the words of

this inscription and Greek, in particular *netsvis* with *neduia* and *frontac* with *brontè*, aroused a certain interest and even controversy in the past, mainly because the comparison was made without adequate knowledge either of Etruscan or of Indo-European. After various studies and A. MORANDI, *Il “celto-ligure”, l'etrusco, il retico e il camuno: nuovi dati*, in *Rivista di Studi Liguri*, LXIX, 2004, p. 48 ff., I insist once again that the bilingual inscription at Pesaro has not been given the attention it deserves.

⁴¹ H. RIX, *Per una grammatica storica dell'etrusco* [in:] *Atti del Secondo Congresso Internazionale Etrusco, Firenze 1985*, III, Rome 1989, p. 1299.

⁴² A. MEILLET-A. ERNOUT, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine* (3rd ed.), Paris 1951, p. 75.

⁴³ RIX, p. 82. In AGOSTINIANI, p. 94 and 111, the word is not translated, but merely classified as “inanimate”.

⁴⁴ POKORNY, p. 996-998; *spanthi*, already known in Etruscan, had been related to the Greek *spondeion* “plate”: E. PERUZZI, *Aspetti culturali del Lazio primitivo*, Florence 1978, p. 157-158.

Etruscan is now given two forms, by recourse to rules of other, mainly modern languages⁴⁵; on this view the termination *-khva* is used for objects and inanimate things, and it is true that in the gold tablet of Pyrgi *pulumkhva* is translated by “stars”⁴⁶; while the termination *-r* specifies people and animate things. This has been unexpectedly refuted by the Tabula Cortonensis (and not only by that: one need only think of examples such as *tul*, *tular*, *tiu*, *tiur*, meaning “border” and “borders”, “month” and “months”), and the embarrassment was such that Rix and others were led to completely misleading translations. For example, *tenthur* is an indication of surface measures – the inscription does not contain the other, much lower, indication of measure, *naper* – which in my view should be related to the Indo-European base that gave us the Greek *temno* and Latin *tendo* (Maggiani translates *tenthur* with “toises” but we also

have “tent” from the same root!)⁴⁷. Rix understood it as qualifying the figures who were “*locatari*” (lessees) of the estates mentioned, though he actually writes “*locatori*”, his daring sorties into Italian frequently letting him down; here and there in the printed texts some kindly but tardy hand has corrected it to “*locatari*”⁴⁸. So, apart from linguistic-comparative speculations, which the term *tenthur* certainly encourages, we need to reconsider the whole question of Etruscan plurals, excluding the adjectival termination *-khva*⁴⁹. On the other hand, with relation to *tenthur*, which appears only in the Tabula Cortonensis, it should be mentioned that its termination *-r* replicates that of *naper*, providing a striking counterpoint between this document and the Cippus of Perugia, the first used for defining the main lines of farmland, and the second, with *naper*, to define the narrow spaces of a tomb.

⁴⁵ As we find in the work of Wylin and Agostiniani: K. WYLIN, *Il verbo etrusco*, Rome 2000; L. AGOSTINIANI, *La considerazione tipologica nello studio dell'etrusco*, *Incontri linguistici* 16, 1993, p. 23-44.

⁴⁶ There are accepted cases of lexical items where the *p* and *f* function is interchangeable, e.g.: *Pupluna*, *Pufluna*, *Fufluna*, and we might also include the *pulumkhva* of Pyrgi and *fulumkhva* of the Cippus of Perugia. However obscure this latter text may be, we can absolutely exclude the possibility of “stars”; so for *pulumkhva* of Pyrgi we must think of something different.

⁴⁷ POKORNY, p. 1062, root * *tend-*.

⁴⁸ H. RIX, *Osservazioni preliminari ad una interpretazione dell'aes cortonense*, *Incontri linguistici* 23, 2000, p. 11-31. On this see the illuminating contribution by del De Simone: C. DE SIMONE, *Gnomon*, 76, 2004, p. 496-500, a review of the volume by G.M. FACCHETTI, *Appunti di morfologia etrusca*, Florence 2002, a work that is unfortunately cited even by distinguished authors.

⁴⁹ I have constantly insisted on this in my work, most recently in MORANDI, *loc. cit.* (in note 40), p. 59.

JĘZYK ETRUSKI – NOWE NABYTKI

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł traktuje o argumentach czysto lingwistycznych, dotyczących nowych nabytków epigraficznych tekstów etruskich, odkrytych w ciągu ostatnich dziesięcioleci XX w. Autor omawia słowa podstawowe, zarówno znane już ze słownika etruskiego, jak i inne, całkiem nowe, biorąc pod uwagę ich precyzyjne znaczenie, również z punktu widzenia lingwistyki porównawczej, zwłaszcza na poziomie języków klasycznych, greki i łaciny. Nie brak jednak też odniesienia do włoskiego kompleksu instytucjonalno-lingwistycznego, którego integralną częścią był niewątpliwie świat etruski. Wśród nowych dokumentów szczególnie ważna jest tzw. Tabula Cortonensis. Zapisany na niej kontrakt dotyczący zbycia gruntów jest w pełni zrozumiały; wymieniono tu strony zainteresowane zakupem, warunki kontraktu, świadków-gwarantów, nazwę brązowej tabliczki, na której to wszystko zapisano – *sparza*, nowe słowa: *male*, *nutce* – „widzą”, „gwarantują” (świadkowie). Jest to żywe i wierne zwierciadło życia etruskiego, pomiędzy sprawami publicznymi a prywatnymi.

Znacznie trudniejszym zabytkiem, także ze względu na zły stan zachowania, jest *aequipondium* (odważnik z ołowiu inkrustowany brązem) z Cerveteri. Również on przekazuje nam bezpośrednie dane na temat życia etruskiego, tym razem z zakresu handlu znajdującego się pod boską

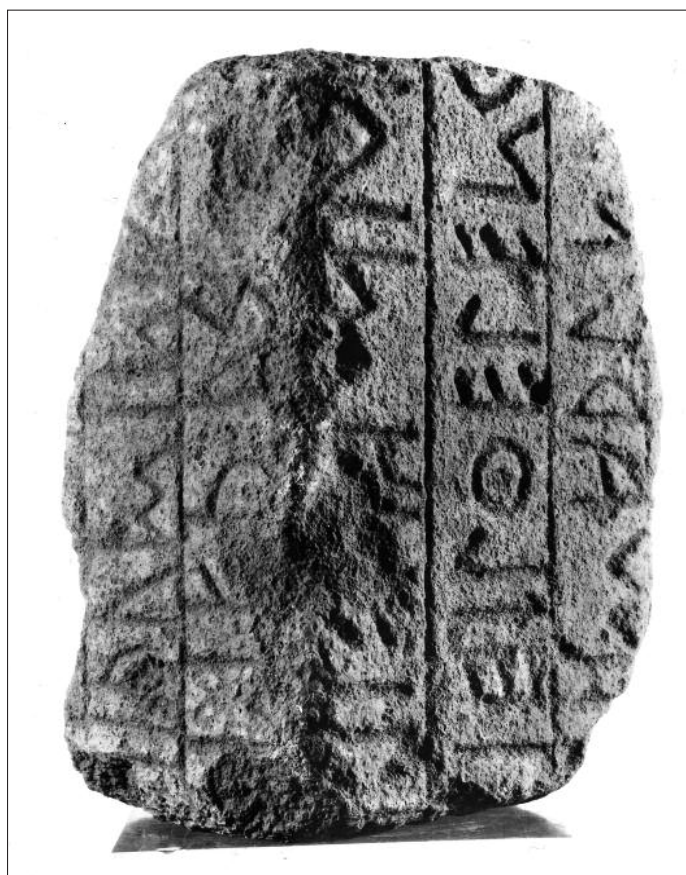
opieką Turmsa, który był etruskim odpowiednikiem Merkurego/Hermesa.

Z czysto lingwistycznego punktu widzenia bardzo interesujący jest czasownik występujący na cippusie z Tragliatella. Jest on zniszczony, ale możliwy do odtworzenia, może jako *thelenth(as)*, tzn. pochodzący bezpośrednio od greckiego *ethelo*, *thelo*.

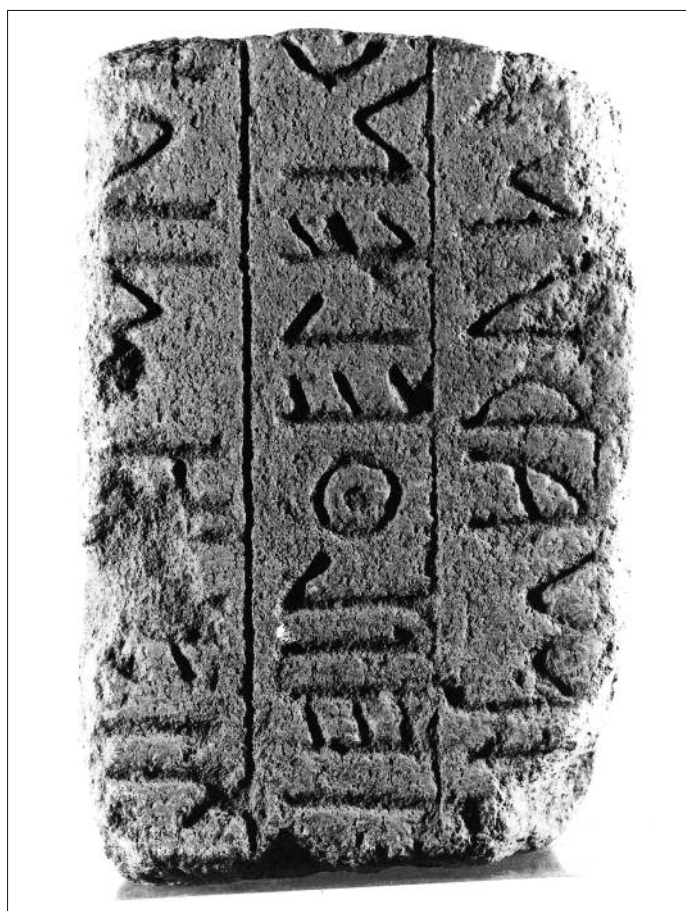
Płytką z Pech Maho, mimo że rozczarowuje w sensie lingwistycznym (choć w momencie odkrycia spodziewano się tutaj grecko-etruskiej bilingwy), również odzwierciedla „aktualne” momenty życia etruskiego na obszarze południowej, śródziemnomorskiej Francji, który z pewnością był otwarty na obcych przybyszy. Wśród nich Etruskowie są już bardzo dobrze udokumentowani – na wybrzeżu morskim i w głębi lądu, w dolinach rzek – poprzez importy i inskrypcje.

Dzięki dokumentom epigraficznym opisanym w artykule (oddanym do druku w 2007, ale zaktualizowanym) język etruski jest obecnie znacznie lepiej znany; zwłaszcza dzięki dużej liczbie nowych słów można mieć nadzieję, że język etruski jawić się będzie jako bogaty leksykalnie i otwarty na inne języki, czyli wcale nie zamknięty i spenetrowany tylko przez jakieś pomniejsze zapożyczenia, i to głównie z greki.

PLATE 16



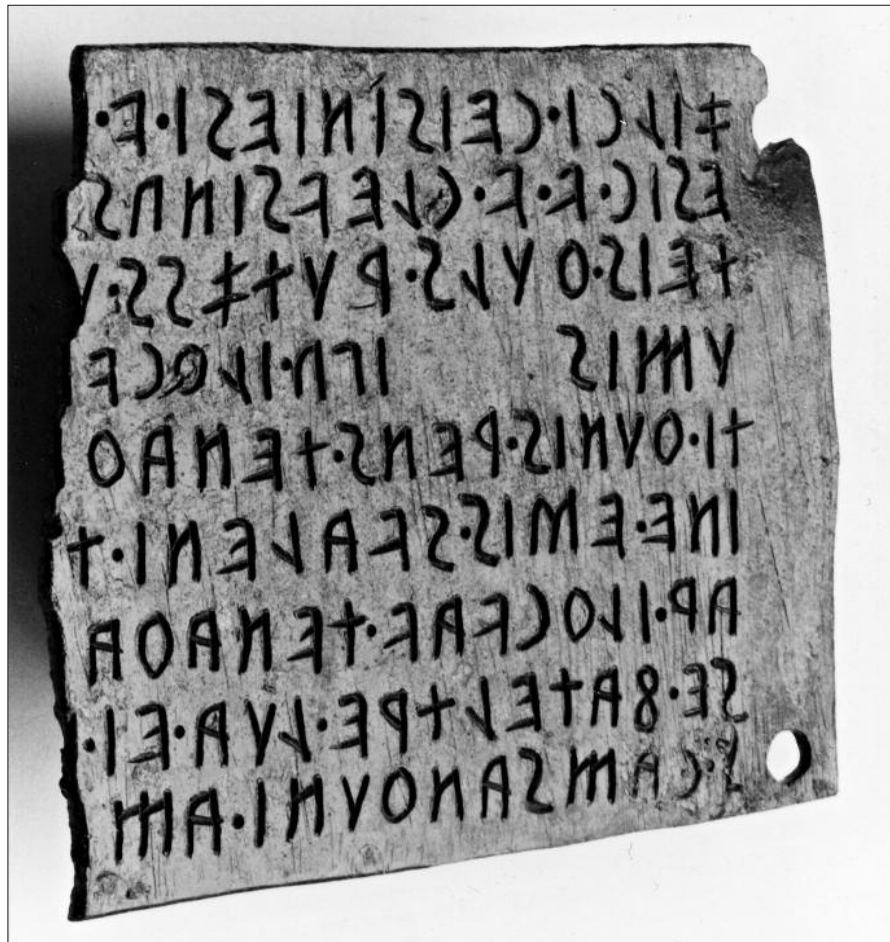
a



b

Fig. 1a, b. The cippus from Tragliatella (Cerveteri)

a



b

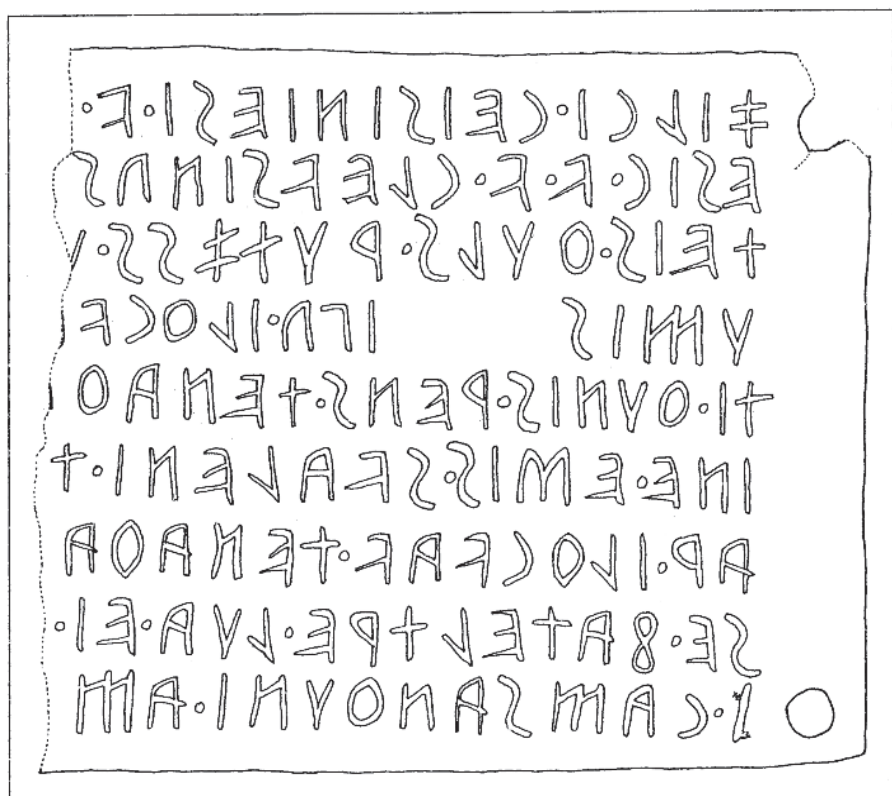


Fig. 2a, b. Tarquinia, the thin
bronze-table

PLATE 18

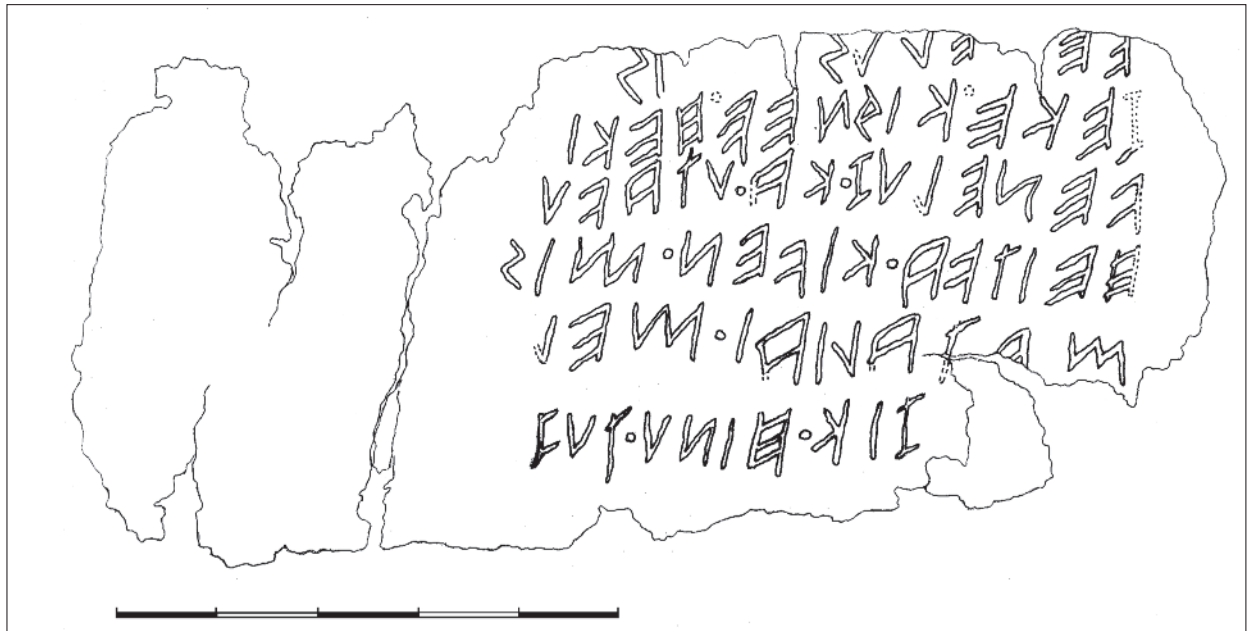


Fig. 3. Pech Maho (France), the inscribed lead

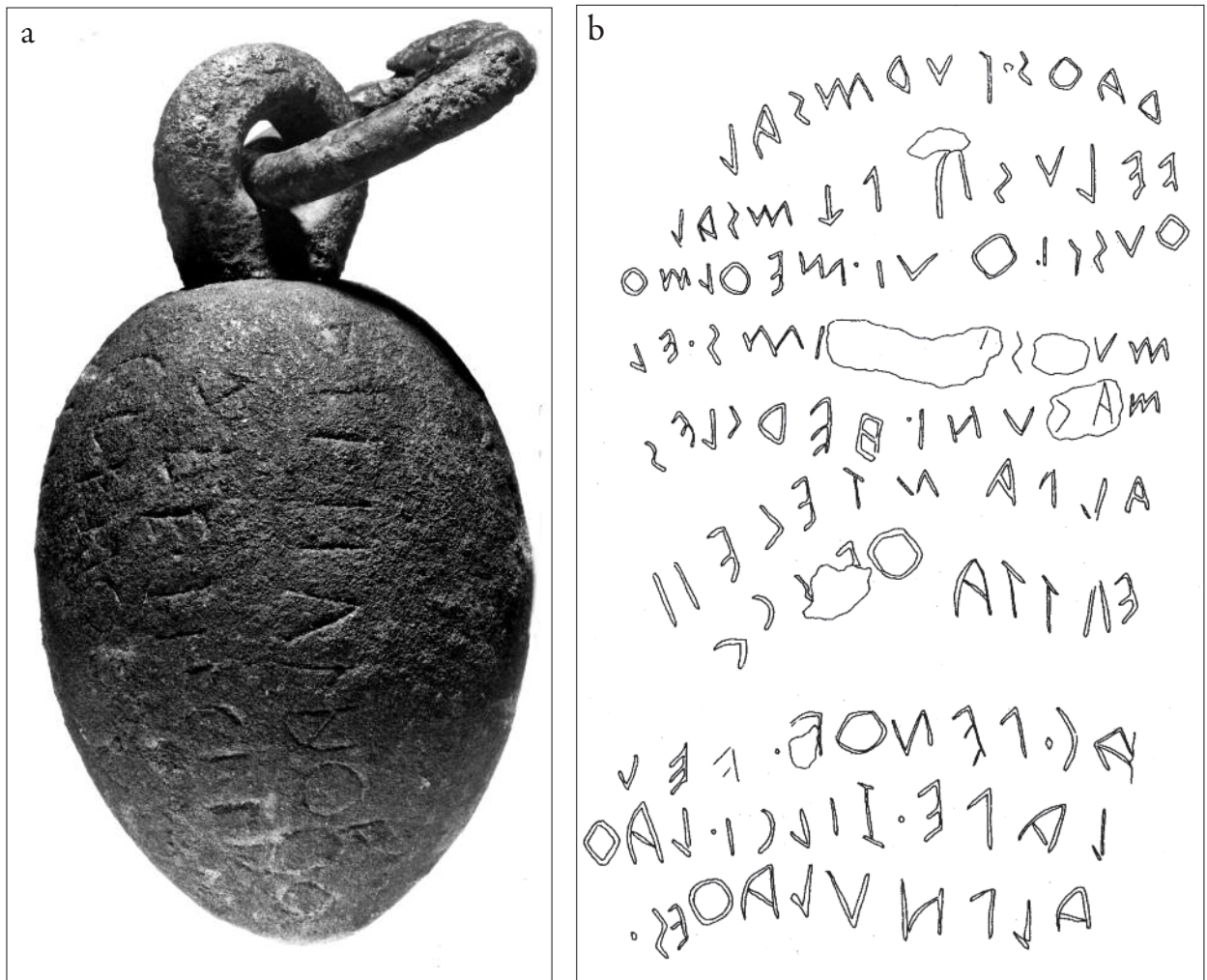


Fig. 4. a – Cerveteri, the aequipondium, b – Cerveteri, the inscription of the aequipondium

a



b

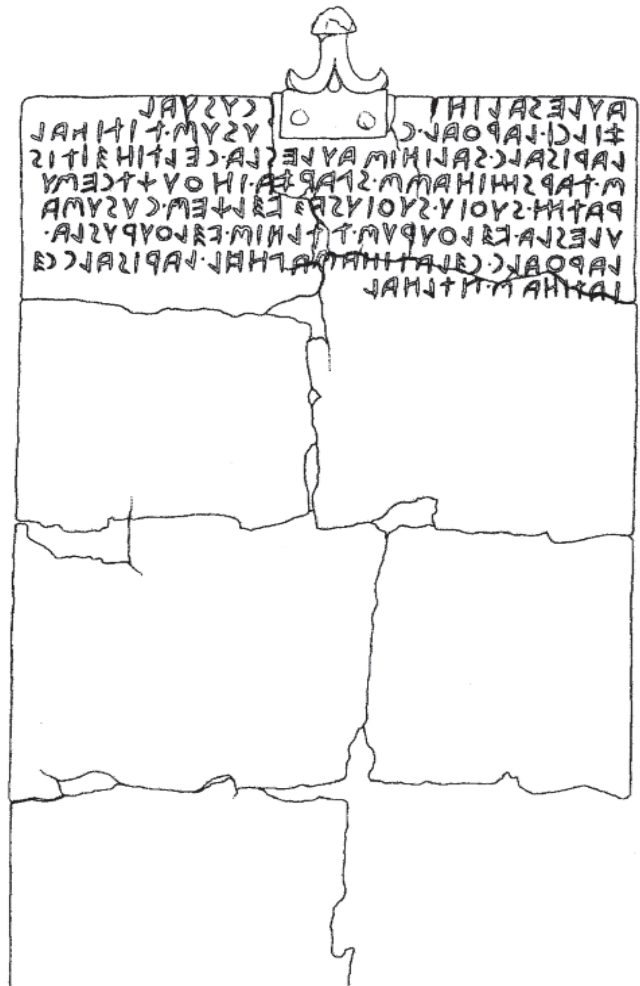


Fig. 5. Tabula Cortonensis, the inscriptions:
a – Side A, b – Side B.