

THE ETRUSCANS
IN THE MODERN IMAGINATION

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the Eighteenth Century
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- 84 The Problem of Atheism
Augusto Del Noce
*Edited and Translated
by Carlo Lancellotti*
- 85 The Etruscans in the
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*For my son André, with whom I explored the Acqua Alta Valley at Norchia
and followed D.H. Lawrence's footsteps from Tarquinia's Tombs
of the Rasenna to his grave at Kiowa Ranch, New Mexico.*

A: Why were you always so interested in the Etruscans?

S: Because they almost weren't there.

Like the corpses of the Etruscan kings ready to sink into ashes
at the first unbarring of the door of the sepulchre.

John Ruskin

I can imagine myself as a Greek or Roman, perhaps even as an Egyptian,
but the imagination stops short at the Etruscans. They don't quite
come into focus.

Al Purdy

I admire the Etruscans: they built wooden houses to live in and cities
of rock for the dead.

François Truffaut

And in the wars of the gods, I now take the side of the defeated gods.

Heinrich Heine

We can have no idea what sort of things are going to become history one day.
Perhaps the past is still largely undiscovered: it still needs so many
retroactive forces for its discovery.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Nous autres, civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes
mortelles.

Paul Valéry