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Slaves, Freedpeople and Non-Citizens in the Etruscan World: Evidence from Epigraphy

Abstract: *In Etruscan epigraphy, the identification of non-citizens usually relies on name forms, although their interpretation is not always straightforward. The first section of the present paper offers a brief overview of the most common ambiguities in the name forms employed in inscriptions. The only way to try to understand Etruscan personal names is by studying evidence from each city on its own terms. The second part of the paper is devoted to the study of the social standing and behavior of freedpeople in Clusium through epigraphic evidence. The study also makes use of comparisons with data gathered from Perugia; they can sometimes be more informative than Clusine evidence, thanks to the availability of a more accurate body of knowledge on the tomb assemblages, which may prove crucial for the understanding of the inscriptions found in them. A review of some tomb groups shows that in a specific area of the Clusine territory, around the middle of the second century BC, an elite family that owned large estates in that area had disappeared; its estates were not acquired by another family of comparable status, but were divided into smaller plots, which gave lesser families, some even of unfree origin, the opportunity to become smallholders and, with time, even to climb the social ladder.*

In Etruscan epigraphy, the identification of non-citizens – or individuals of non-citizen origin, whether foreign or unfree – usually relies on name forms. This method, albeit largely employed in literature, raises several issues; the most relevant among them is that Etruscan inscriptions were usually composed as if they were meant to address qualified readers. In fact, the Etruscan epigraphic culture never attained the high degree of formalization that is characteristic of other epigraphic cultures of Italy (especially, but not exclusively, the Latin one). Each series of inscriptions can only be understood according to its own code, provided that the evidence available is large enough for us to be able to interpret that code. Only in funerary inscriptions on cippi from Caere, Tarquinii and Volsinii, between the mid-fourth and the mid-first centuries BC, personal names were often written using a standard name formula; this is quite an exceptional feature by Etruscan standards and probably had something to do with their being placed outside the tombs, which made them the most “public” type of inscriptions ever conceived in the Etruscan world.¹ This is why the unusual name formula *tasma satnas* on a cippus

¹ See especially Enrico Benelli, “*Breve in exiguo marmore nomen ero*: l’iscrizione funeraria etrusca tra esposizione pubblica e spazio privato,” in *L’écriture et l’espace de la mort: Épigraphie et nécropoles à*

from Bagnoregio (*ET* Vs 1.257) can be confidently interpreted as belonging to a slave, as proposed by its first editor, Giovanni Colonna,² and is universally accepted in Etruscological literature. *Tasma* is the Etruscan transcription of the Messapian female name *Dazima*; since the stock of late-Etruscan praenomina is limited, the formula employed in this inscription should be interpreted as comprising a female slave's individual name, followed by the gentilic of her master in the genitive case. This was the normal way of naming slaves in the Roman world, but we can be reasonably sure that it was usual in the Etruscan world as well, especially because the servants depicted in the tomb Golini I are identified by captions employing this type of name formula, alongside other ones.³

This inscription from Bagnoregio is remarkable because South Etruscan funerary epigraphy is otherwise completely impervious to individuals of unfree birth; freedpersons appeared only when the inscriptions on South Etruscan cippi began to make use of the Latin language. This is a stark reminder of the weight of epigraphic habit in the shaping of evidence. In any case, despite the fact that funerary epigraphy from Southern Etruria was a preserve of freeborn individuals, freedpeople have been documented in three (or four) votive inscriptions from this same region.⁴ One further votive inscription from Tarquinii (*CIE* 10007 = *ET* Ta 3.6) is usually interpreted as mentioning a slave.⁵ Nevertheless, new studies about Etruscan derivative suffixes⁶ show that the name *Murila* is perfectly understandable as an Etruscan gentilic, and the formula *murila hercnas* can be interpreted as comprising a gentilic and a cogno-

l'époque pré-romaine, ed. Marie-Laurence Haack, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 502 (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2016): 401–11, and Jorma Kaimio, *The South Etruscan Cippus Inscriptions*, Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 44 (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2017). Kaimio's paleographical datings of the inscriptions are sometimes far too high.

² *Rivista di Epigrafia Etrusca*, in *Studi Etruschi* 35, 1967: 546–47.

³ *CIE* 5078–5088 = *ET* Vs 7.2–12. On Etruscan slave names, see Helmut Rix, *Die Termini der Unfreiheit in den Sprachen Alt-Italiens*, Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei 25 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1994): 66–67, and Enrico Benelli, “Slavery and Manumission,” in *The Etruscan World*, ed. Jean MacIntosh Turfa (London: Routledge, 2013): 451–52.

⁴ *ET* Vs 3.12; *CIE* 11155 = *ET* Vc 3.15; *ET* Cr 3.62 (the text is not correctly transcribed; it reads: *cn turce tite utaves v. l. hercles alpan*). The integration of *ET* OA 3.11 proposed by Adriano Maggiani, “Lautni,” in *Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte der Etrusker: Akten der internationalen Tagung, Wien, 8.–10.6.2017*, ed. Luciana Aigner-Foresti and Petra Amann, Phersu. Etrusko-italische Studien 1 (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2018): 308, is not easily acceptable since it essentially rests on a low-quality picture of the inscribed statuette. Only an autoptic reading may settle the question.

⁵ See Daniele Federico Maras, *Il dono votivo: Gli dei e il sacro nelle iscrizioni etrusche di culto*, Biblioteca di Studi Etruschi 46 (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra, 2009): 387–88, with literature.

⁶ Valentina Belfiore, *La morfologia derivativa in etrusco: formazioni di parole in -na e in -ra*, “Mediterranea” – Supplemento 13 (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra, 2014): 77–79.

men, like the individual named *Petru Scevas* on the Cortona Tablet.⁷ Both interpretations are equally possible because this type of name formula is not very common. If we move to inland Northern Etruria, specifically to Clusium and Perugia, the epigraphic habit changes dramatically; freedpersons, and occasionally even slaves, are relatively well-documented in funerary inscriptions.

The identification of unfree birth (or unfree ancestry) through name forms is not always straightforward. The use of gentilics derived from Greek names is probably the most uncontroversial marker. In late Etruscan epigraphy, Greek names are always associated with freedpeople because they were usually employed to name slaves.⁸ This is a feature shared by the Etruscan and Roman worlds, and it was probably a consequence of the provenance of most slaves, which were the same Eastern Mediterranean markets. This is why the Etruscanized Greek name employed as a gentilic by an individual like *Vel Antilxu Fulu*, son of a *Pepnei* (*REE* 78, 10), can be confidently interpreted as a proof of unfree ancestry. The gentilic of the mother of this individual is a further clue of his low social standing, because the family *Pepna* is otherwise unknown at Clusium. Therefore, it is likely that the mother of this individual did not belong to a major elite family, as can be reasonably expected of a freedman's wife. The same cannot be said of another individual – *Vel Tiples*, the author of a votive gift at Tarquinii (*CIE* 10012 = *ET* Ta 3.5). He has been identified as the descendant of a freedman,⁹ especially because the Etruscanized Greek name *Tipile* is actually known as a freedman's gentilic from a roughly coeval inscription from Clusium (*CIE* 2096 = *ET* Cl 1.1645). But *Tiples* can be interpreted otherwise, because the suffix *-le* is widely attested in Etruscan gentilics, and the name **tipe* is known from a seventh-century inscription from Veii,¹⁰ where it was employed as a gentilic. Therefore, *Tiples* may be the late form of a perfectly plausible Archaic gentilic **tipe-le-s*; its connection with the Etruscanized Greek name *Tipile* is, of course, possible, but it is by no means the only explanation available.

If Greek names can be significant, unusual name formulae are not. Late Etruscan funerary epigraphy at Clusium and Perugia never attained the high degree of formal-

7 On *Petru Scevas* from Cortona and his relationship with the various branches of the *Petru* family, see especially Mario Torelli, "La 'Tanella Angori', i *Cusu* e la *Tabula Cortonensis*," *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia di Archeologia* 77 (2004–2005): 186–87 (dating too low, untenable genealogy); Adriano Maggiani, "I *Petru* di San Quirico e di Trequanda e i *Cusu* di Cortona," *Annuario dell'Accademia Etrusca di Cortona* 35 (2016): 369–89 (dating too high, possibly wrong connections); Enrico Benelli, "I *Cacni*, famiglia perugina," *Römische Mitteilungen* 121 (2015): 192–93.

8 This is not the case in Archaic Etruscan epigraphy, of course. The tiny number of individuals bearing names with apparently Greek roots mentioned in Orientalizing- and Archaic-age inscriptions belonged to the social elite; they are usually considered to be immigrant aristocrats (although the Greek origin of some of the name roots can be seriously questioned, and their number is probably overstated).

9 See Maras, *Il dono votivo*: 390–91, with literature.

10 *CIE* 6325 = *ET* Ve 2.8; *tipeia* is the feminine form of **tipe* inflected in the genitive case.

ization that is characteristic of South Etruscan cippi. Family trees and family links show that the choice of one or another of the many name formulae employed in funerary epigraphy had absolutely nothing to do with the social standing of the individuals. Some uncommon formulae, such as the use of the mother's praenomen instead of her gentilic in metronymics, may more likely have a chronological meaning than a social one – provided they have meaning at all. Moreover, at Clusium, the use of uncommon praenomina and name formulae seems to have often been the preserve of those in the highest echelon of the local elites. A good example of this kind of odd naming practice is the inscription *CIE* 2960 = *ET* Cl 1.2549, the epitaph of one *patacs tlesna petrua*. Without the knowledge of Clusine families, we could easily misinterpret it as a record of the name of a freedman, with (1) *patacs* as his slave name, transformed into a gentilic after his enfranchisement, (2) *tlesna* as a cognomen and (3) *petrua* as his mistress's gentilic in the genitive case. However, it is in fact the other way round: *patacs* is the cognomen, *tlesna* is the gentilic, *petrua* is a metronymic and the praenomen is not recorded; the individual belonged to the distinguished family branch *Tlesna Patacs*, linked by marriage to the most important families of the Clusine aristocracy.¹¹ Some other inscriptions from Clusium employ this kind of name formula, and they can usually be ascribed to individuals belonging to elite families.

The evidence shows clearly enough that in the late funerary inscriptions from Clusium and Perugia, all kinds of unusual names and name formulae had no outright social meaning; the social standing of the individuals can only be understood by reconstructing, if possible, the history of their family and the network of their family links. If this proves not possible, the name type alone does not help.

If we move to even less formalized epigraphic series, such as the inscriptions on pottery, their decoding is even more problematic and often all but impossible to achieve. Thorough studies on a single series of vase inscriptions (from a single city and from a short period of time) may help us to understand the significance of the names inscribed on vases, because knowledge of the onomastic tradition of a specific city is the only way to be able to distinguish praenomina, gentilics and other types of names. Even studies of this kind, however, can leave at least part of the evidence unexplained.

One particularly striking example consists in the three inscriptions from Spina that read *usticne tatis*.¹² *Usticne* has been considered an Etruscan transcription of the Venetic word *Ostikno*, a type of patronymic adjective used in eastern Venetia. Since *tatis* may be identified as a name inflected in the genitive case, *usticne tatis* sounds exactly like the type of name formula one would expect to be used for a slave in the Etruscan world: a foreign name followed by another name in the genitive case. But

¹¹ *CIE* 1047 = *ET* Cl 1.956; *CIE* 895 = *ET* Cl 1.2150; *CIE* 835 = *ET* Cl 1.2548.

¹² Annalisa Pozzi, "Le tombe di Spina con iscrizioni etrusche" (PhD diss., Università di Padova, 2011): 325, 341, 379.

the archaeological evidence casts some doubts on this apparently plain interpretation. The inscriptions belonging to this individual have been found in three different tombs. The distribution of inscriptions on pottery that bear the same personal name in more than one grave assemblage is usually connected with the socially exclusive practice of gift exchange. So, it is possible that *usticne tatis* was not a slave after all; maybe he was simply a foreigner – but his full name finds no parallels in Venetic onomastics. Maybe the names employed in these inscriptions do not correspond with the full, official name of this individual. We have no clear solution for this puzzling item of evidence. This is a further warning against the acritical use of name typology. Typologies may have sense only when referring to specific contexts – ones where they are supported by adequate evidence. Otherwise, they are potentially misleading. Above all, no such thing as a general pan-Etruscan name typology has ever existed.

The only group of people of lesser social standing that is relatively well-distinguishable in Etruscan epigraphy is comprised of freedpeople. Exactly as it happened in the Roman world, the Etruscan slaves, once manumitted, received a gentilic, which they passed on to their offspring. But similarities between Etruscan and Roman enfranchisement practices stop here. In the Roman world, a freed slave received his (or her) master's (or mistress's) gentilic; this meant that further generations would bear a gentilic which made them not easily identifiable as the offspring of a former slave. In the Etruscan world, on the contrary, a freedperson's gentilic coincided with his/her slave's name; descendants of freedmen were thus always potentially recognizable through their family name.¹³

On the other hand, the Roman practice also meant that freedpeople were conceived as being new members of their former master's *gens*; we know that Roman manumission did not sever all bonds between a former slave and a former master, and that law and custom defined a number of ways in which some kind of dependency survived even after a slave had become free.¹⁴ Etruscan laws are, of course, completely unknown to us; we can only note that the Etruscan practice resulted in the creation of entirely new *gentes*. Since Etruscan freedpersons were not usually buried in their former master's family tombs, it seems that the creation of a new family name brought with it, at least in theory, the complete independence of former slaves, although it is impossible to draw any straightforward conclusion on this topic.

The Etruscan word for “freedman” is *lautni*; *lautniθa* is its female form, which means “freedwoman”. It has traditionally been connected with the word *lautn*, meaning “family”. Since the *-i* suffix is usually believed to have been used in the forming of adjectives, the original meaning of *lautni* is intended as something akin to “belonging

¹³ Helmut Rix, *Das etruskische Cognomen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963): 356–72; Rix, *Die Termini der Unfreiheit*: 96–111.

¹⁴ On this topic, see the classical study by Georges Fabre, *Libertus: recherches sur les rapports patron-affranchi à la fin de la république romaine*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 50 (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1981).

to the family". Even if this reconstruction seems reasonable enough and has been widely accepted,¹⁵ a new find may cast doubts on it. The most ancient inscription known to date that mentions a freedperson (*ET* Vs 3.12) was discovered at Orvieto in 2009; its author was a freedwoman, who dedicated a bronze statuette originally fastened onto a large stone base. The inscription belongs to the late Archaic period (probably the first decades of the fifth century BC); the Archaic form of the word *lautniθa* appears here as *lauteniθa*. This seems to suggest that no direct relation existed with the word for "family", whose Archaic form was *lavitun*.¹⁶ This word, as with many other Etruscan ones, has also served as a base for a gentilic, formed with the derivative suffix *-ie*; the Archaic form, *lavitunie*, is documented in an inscription from Marzabotto, which was carved onto a large pebble, usually identified as a scale weight.¹⁷ Archaic gentilics with the ending *-nie* normally evolved into *-ni* in the late period, but since *lautni* might be confused with the word for "freedman", the late form used for the Archaic *lavitunie* was *lautne* instead (*-ne* was actually a possible evolution of the Archaic *-nie*, but it is far less common than *-ni*).¹⁸ This is how things normally went; but at Volaterrae, another course was followed. The late form of the gentilic *lavitunie* in the Volaterran inscriptions is written as *lautni* (*CIE* 129 = *ET* Vt 1.124), sometimes possibly with an anaptyctic *-u-*, which gives it an Archaic appearance (*ET* Vt 1.125). The word for "freedman" is known only once at Volaterrae (*CIE* 49 = *ET* Vt 1.45); it employs the anaptyctic form, *lautuni*.¹⁹ This inscription is usually dated to the late third century BC, mainly through paleography, which is a notoriously tricky criterion. If its dating is correct, then it is the most ancient funerary inscription mentioning a freedman known to us; the name *muceti* is usually credited as one of Ligurian origin, which speaks of a supply of slaves from immediately outside the boundaries of the Etruscan world, not far from Volaterrae itself.²⁰

This evidence from Volaterrae is a useful reminder of a fundamental feature of Etruscan anthroponymy: namely, that each city had its own traditions, its own name forms, its own ways to reproduce them in epigraphy. This is what ultimately under-

15 See especially Rix, *Die Termini der Unfreiheit*: 111–16.

16 *ET*, TC, lines 22–24 and 61; see also Rix, *Die Termini der Unfreiheit*: 112.

17 *ET* Fe 1.13 (misinterpreted as a funerary inscription); Giuseppe Sassatelli, ed., *Iscrizioni e graffiti della città etrusca di Marzabotto* (Imola: University Press Bologna, 1994): 15–18.

18 Attested as a cognomen (*CIE* 1855 = *ET* Cr 1.184) and in its genitive form in gamonymics (*CIE* 3613 = *ET* Pe 1.275; *CIE* 4622 = *ET* AS 1.49).

19 A second inscription (*ET* *CIE* 4613 = *ET* Vt 4.6) with the more common form *lautni* can be reasonably identified as a forgery: see Riccardo Massarelli, *I testi etruschi su piombo*, Biblioteca di Studi Etruschi 53 (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra, 2014): 195–96.

20 See, for instance, Adriano Maggiani, "I Liguri della Versilia e della Toscana settentrionale," in *Ligures celeberrimi: La Liguria interna nella seconda età del Ferro: Atti del convegno internazionale Mondovì 26–28 aprile 2002*, ed. Marika Venturino Gambari and Daniela Gandolfi (Bordighera: Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri, 2004): 201, footnote 66.

mines any attempt at a general typology of Etruscan name forms. The only way to try to understand Etruscan personal names is by studying evidence from each city on its own terms. This will prove to be impossible in some cities where epigraphic evidence is too scanty. But even in cities where inscriptions number in the hundreds or even in the thousands, there will always be some names which will remain unexplained.

In the final part of this paper, I will try to put together some information about the social standing and behavior of freedpeople in Clusium. I have been able to identify 126 individuals who can be safely – or almost safely – recognized as freedpersons; all but one are mentioned in funerary inscriptions dated to the second and first centuries BC. The only exception is a votive inscription on a bronze statuette, which was lost a couple of centuries ago.²¹ I will make some reference, when necessary, to evidence from Perugia, which is roughly comparable with that from Clusium in terms of chronology and type.²²

The name formulae of Etruscan freedpersons were first classified into a number of types by Helmut Rix in 1994;²³ these types were partially revised by Adriano Maggiani in 2018.²⁴ Both typologies are highly unsatisfactory because they are unnecessarily complicated and at the same time miss the real issue concerning the names of freedpersons as they appear in the Etruscan inscriptions. The main issue stands as follows.

Since the Etruscan freedpersons employed their former slave name as a gentilic, they needed to add a new praenomen, which was often not recorded in inscriptions. The name formula was always completed by the former master's or mistress's gentilic in the genitive case, sometimes comprising his/her praenomen and/or cognomen. The word *lautni* or *lautniθa*, sometimes written in abbreviated form, was usually placed at the end; its presence was mandatory because the name could otherwise be misinterpreted as belonging to a slave: a confusion freedpeople were obviously eager to avoid. This is what occurred in about three-quarters of the Etruscan inscriptions mentioning freedpersons. But a quite different formula appears in the remaining quarter of these inscriptions; it includes a praenomen, a gentilic (which can be in the genitive

21 CIE 2340 = ET Cl 3.6; see also Maras, *Il dono votivo*: 243–44.

22 Evidence from Perugia has recently been examined by Jorma Kaimio, *The Funerary Inscriptions of Hellenistic Perugia*, Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 50 (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2022): 179–81. Kaimio identified forty-eight freedpersons; this means that the evidence from both Clusium and Perugia reached a total number of 174 individuals, dwarfing what is known from all other cities put together, with no more than eight individuals who can be safely recognized as freedpersons.

23 Rix, *Die Termini der Unfreiheit*: 96–111.

24 Maggiani, “Lautni.” This latter contribution, moreover, employs a highly questionable chronology for Clusine funerary inscriptions that heavily affects its conclusions; on this topic, see Enrico Benelli, “Da Etruschi a Romani: scelte linguistiche, epigrafiche e identitarie nell'Etruria del II–I secolo a.C.,” in *Sprachen – Schriftkulturen – Identitäten der Antike: Beiträge des XV. Internationalen Kongresses für Griechische und Lateinische Epigraphik: Fest- und Plenarvorträge*, ed. Petra Amann et al., Tyche Supplementband 10 (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2019): 31 and footnote 7; 38 and footnote 28.

or the nominative case) and the word *lautni* (or *lautniθa*). The presence of a single gentilic (instead of two, the freedperson's and the master's ones) raises some questions; if it is inflected in the genitive case, we can understand it as a record of the former master's name. But, if this is the case, where is the freedperson's new gentilic, which is probably the most important component of his/her name formula because it witnessed his/her manumission? It cannot be identified with the praenomen preceding the gentilic because, as far as we know, names that were regularly employed as praenomina in one city never occurred as gentilics in that same city (the stocks of praenomina employed in late Etruscan onomastic practice differed from city to city). Exceptions to this rule (for instance, *Aule* at Clusium) are extremely uncommon. This means that in inscriptions of this kind, the first component of the name formula can only be the freedperson's new praenomen. If the gentilic is written in the nominative case, this name formula becomes even more puzzling: if we understand it as the freedperson's gentilic, the former master's name would be missing, which would be bizarre, to say the least.

The only explanation for these apparently abnormal name formulae would be that the freedperson's gentilic was identical to that of the master/mistress; hence, their enfranchisements must have taken place after 90 BC, when the Etruscan laws were replaced by Roman ones, following the incorporation of Etruscan city-states by Rome.²⁵

Evidence from Perusian tomb groups can underpin this conclusion; in this case, Perusian evidence is more informative than Clusine data, because knowledge of the tomb assemblages may prove crucial for the understanding of the inscriptions found in them. The nineteenth-century law of the Papal States, which remained in vigor until 1902, provided for some kind of governmental control on archaeological discoveries; this is why it is possible to have at least some information about the finding of most Etruscan inscriptions from Perugia. In the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, on the contrary, the cultural heritage did not enjoy any kind of legal protection; excavations in the Clusine territory were mostly undertaken for profit by entrepreneurs who fueled a flourishing antiquarian market. Information about the discovery of most Clusine Etruscan inscriptions is therefore lacking, and only thorough – and often boring – research work in the family archives, in the ancient land registries and on the history of local collections, together with some good luck, may help to understand something about their contexts.

The first relevant item of evidence is a bilingual inscription, found in the tomb of the *Vlesi* family, discovered in 1878 in the necropolis of Ponticello di Campo.²⁶ The

²⁵ See Enrico Benelli, "La società chiusina fra la guerra annibalica e l'età di Augusto: osservazioni archeologiche ed epigrafiche," *Ostraka* 18 (2009): 309–10 and footnote 21, for a list of the evidence from Clusium. The Perusine inscriptions have now been revised by Jorma Kaimio, who shares this conclusion; see Kaimio, *The Funerary Inscriptions*: 181.

²⁶ Kaimio, *The Funerary Inscriptions*: 28–29, with literature.

tomb contained thirteen urns – ten of them inscribed (eight in Etruscan, one in Latin and one bilingual) – and five uninscribed cinerary ollae. The freedman mentioned in the bilingual inscription *CIE* 3692 = *ET* Pe 1.211 was buried in this family tomb because he married one *Vlesi* woman, as is made clear by the inscription carved on her urn (*CIE* 3691 = *ET* Pe 1.210). Both the Latin section of the bilingual inscription and the gamonymic of the freedman's wife allow us to understand the significance of the formula: praenomen + gentilic + *lautni*. In this case, it is evident that *scarpe* is the gentilic of both the freedman and his former mistress.

A second item of evidence comes from a tomb discovered in the Palazzone necropolis in 1843.²⁷ Six inscribed urns were recorded, which identify this tomb as a collective burial space employed by people of unfree birth and their immediate relatives. Shared tombs of this kind are known from both Clusium and Perugia; they seem to have emerged relatively late, probably not earlier than the mid-second century BC, and may contain burials of people from all social levels, including even elite individuals. The Etruscan custom of not usually allowing freedpeople to make use of the burial spaces belonging to their master's families made this kind of tomb particularly attractive to them.

One of the (at least) three freedmen buried in this collective tomb (*CIE* 3868 = *ET* Pe 1.417) was characterized with the following name formula: a praenomen + a praenomen in the genitive case + a gentilic that can be equally read as a nominative or as a genitive (*tinś* had both functions) + *lautni*. The correct understanding of this name was enabled by his wife's gamonymic (*CIE* 3869 = *ET* Pe 1.418), which made it clear that the gentilic of the *lautni* was identical to that of his master. The *Tinś* family owned a tomb in the Piscille necropolis;²⁸ its main line seems to have employed only two male praenomina, *Vel* and *Arnθ*. Since the freedman had been the slave of one *Vel* but was named *Larθ* (or *Laris*), his praenomen was probably intended to signify that he had not been born a *Tinś*. This was probably a way in which Etruscan elite families – after the adoption of Roman law made freedpeople's gentils undistinguishable from those of their former masters – attempted to preserve some kind of naming gap between freeborn people and their former slaves.

The contexts of these Perugian inscriptions confirm that the formula praenomen + gentilic + *lautni* should be applied to enfranchisements that occurred under Roman law, which resulted in a change in the way freedpeople received a gentilic. Consequently, this should be the prime criterion in classifying the various name formulae employed by freedpeople in Etruscan inscriptions. Further subdivisions are of course possible, but they are merely a matter of epigraphic habit and individual choices.

It is not always possible to discern if a freedperson belongs to the "Etruscan" or the "Roman" type; some inscriptions remain unclassified. This is the case, for in-

²⁷ Kaimio, *The Funerary inscriptions*: 46–47, with literature.

²⁸ Kaimio, *The Funerary Inscriptions*: 57–58, with literature.

stance, of poorly preserved or poorly documented inscriptions. But even texts that can be read with certainty and completely can be problematic. This especially happens when it is not clear whether the first component of the name formula is a praenomen or a gentilic. Although most praenomina can be clearly identified thanks to our knowledge of the onomastic traditions of Etruscan cities, some names can be intrinsically ambiguous, if their function is not made clear beyond any doubt by the name formula in which they are included, which is unfortunately often the case. This especially happens with hypocoristics such as *Θanicu* or *Velicu* or *Larziu*, among others. It cannot be excluded that the choice of employing hypocoristics, which may have mirrored the way an individual was usually identified in his/her social environment, concealed the full “official” name of the deceased. Evidence from Perugia can again be extremely useful in understanding these ambiguities. A freedman named *velu anis lautni* (CIE 3936 = ET Pe 1.482) was the progenitor of a family buried in a tomb found in the Palazzone necropolis in 1846; his genealogical position was made clear by the placement of his urn in the middle of the rear bench of the chamber.²⁹ The gentilic used for his descendants, however, was always *Veli*. This means that the name of the former slave, and his “official” gentilic after his enfranchisement, was probably *Veli* – not the hypocoristic *Velu* preferred for his epitaph.

Alongside hypocoristics, other names employed by freedpersons may be equally ambiguous. An interesting case is represented by an inscription written on a Clusine terracotta urn in the Museum of Torino (ET Cl 1.2206): *licni · satles · lautni*. A formula of this kind may be easily interpreted as typically “Etruscan”, with *Licni* as the name of the former slave transformed into a gentilic after his enfranchisement, and *Satles* (in the genitive case) as his master’s gentilic. But the same museum also preserves the urn of his wife (ET Cl 1.2207), *aplunia licnis satles*; the gentilic *Aplunia* makes it clear that she was the offspring of a freedman (if she was not a freedwoman herself, which is in any case not explicitly stated in her inscription because she preferred to mention her gamonymic instead, which filled all the available space on the urn’s rim). This means that *Satle* was both the gentilic of the freedman’s former master and one of the names of the freedman himself. How should we interpret this?

Both urns, which have so far remained unpublished (Fig. 1–2), belong to a very uncommon type; the mold bearing the scene of the so-called “hero fighting with the plough” is so terminally worn that the surface is almost flat, and the figures are barely recognizable were it not for the painting; the upper part of the mold was probably broken off, and the original dentil cornice replaced by a crude festoon.³⁰ One urn of

²⁹ Kaimio, *The Funerary Inscriptions*: 48, with literature.

³⁰ Type B Id in the classification by Marina Sclafani, *Urne fittili chiusine e perugine di età medio e tardo ellenistica*, Tyrrhenica 7 (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 2010): 69. Another urn of this uncommon type is preserved in the University Museum at Bonn: see Martin Bentz, ed., *Rasna: Die Etrusker: eine Ausstellung im Akademischen Kunstmuseum; Antikensammlung der Universität Bonn* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2008): 159–61, n. 239. The inscription is too badly preserved to be recognized; since most

this kind was employed by an individual whose death can be dated, for genealogical reasons, to the second quarter of the first century BC.³¹ This means that the freedman *Licni Šatles* may well have been manumitted under Roman law. If this was the case, he chose to conceal his real name by employing a pure Etruscan freedman's name formula (slave name + gentilic of the former master in the genitive case + *lautni*). Only the gamonymic inscribed on the urn of his wife made it possible for us to dispute his intent: following Roman practice, the slave name *Licni* had become his cognomen, and should have been placed after his gentilic.



Fig. 1: Terracotta urn with inscription ET Cl 1.2206.

Clusine artifacts in the Bonn Museum seem to have been purchased from the Bargagli collection, it is possible that this urn has the same provenance. One more urn of this type is preserved in the National Archaeological Museum of Tarquinia, where it arrived as part of the Bruschi Falgari collection. The marriage connections between this family and another family of prominent collectors (the Giorgi from Città della Pieve) can possibly explain the small number of Clusine artifacts in the Museum of Tarquinia, as well as some Tarquinian artifacts once preserved at Città della Pieve: Sabrina Batino, “Epifanie dal mercato antiquario: Oinochoai apule dalla collezione Giorgi Taccini di Città della Pieve,” *Archeologia Classica* 72 (2021): 740–41 and footnote 18.

³¹ Sclafani, *Urne fittili*: 217, Cl 136 (CIE 1077 = ET Cl 1.918); on this tomb, see Enrico Benelli, “Epigrafia etrusca dell’Etruria romana,” in *Epigrafia e società dell’Etruria romana: Atti del Convegno di Firenze, 23–24 ottobre 2015*, ed. Giovanni Alberto Cecconi et al. (Rome: Quasar, 2017): 213–14.



Fig. 2: Terracotta urn with inscription ET Cl 1.2207.

The case of *licni satles* and his wife reveals that, while names of the “Roman” type refer to enfranchisements that took place after 90 BC, names of the “Etruscan” type have no chronological significance because they may have been conceived as part of a “tradition”, which at least some people sought to preserve after the absorption of Etruscan city-states into the Roman state. A bilingual inscription belonging to a freedman (CIE 1288 = ET Cl 1.219) may also be a demonstration of this ambiguity, as the two parts were apparently written according to the two different onomastic practices; unfortunately, this urn is lost, and its reading is a reconstruction based on a sketch.

The gentilic *Satle* is otherwise unknown in Etruscan inscriptions from Clusium, although its base and its suffix are both safely recognizable as Etruscan. It is highly likely that its Latin form is *Satellius*; one *C. Satellius*, his sister and his freedwoman were part of a group of families linked through the descendants of two freedmen of the *Papirii* who had arrived at Clusium at the beginning of the first century BC.³² The freedwoman was accompanied by an exceptional set of grave goods, including some

³² On this group of families and their tombs, see Enrico Benelli, “Matrimoni misti e identità in cambiamento: Chiusi da città etrusca a municipio romano,” in *Atti del Convegno: Matrimoni misti: una via per l'integrazione tra i popoli*, ed. Simona Marchesini (Trento: Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 2012): 107–8, with references.

mosaic glass bowls, which can be dated to the age of Augustus.³³ Unsurprisingly, most of these people were former slaves, which makes it possible for some connection to have existed between this group of *Satellii* and the freedman *Licni Šatles*. This group of *Papirii* seems to have been particularly successful in building up family connections with local people; the distribution of their burials suggests that they were able to put together a significant amount of landed property in three different parts of the Clusine territory. At least some of these estates seem to have been connected to an area immediately to the west and northwest of the city of Clusium.

The name of the wife of *Licni Šatles*, *Aplunia*, points towards this same area. We know two freedmen named *Apluni*; one of them (*CIE* 4794 = *ET* Cl 1.26), who was a slave of one *Vipi Leiḫu*, was buried in a tomb found at Val d'Acqua, very far from where most members of his former master's family had been buried.³⁴ The Val d'Acqua tomb seems to have been employed by freedpeople only; the inscriptions mention three individuals, two freedwomen and the *Apluni* freedman.³⁵ A further inscription on a tile in the museum of Chiusi (*ET* Cl 1.2787) can probably be associated with this same individual and consequently to this same grave assemblage.³⁶ The second *Apluni* was the freedman of one (*Seiante*) *Cumere* and was buried in the tomb of the *Remzna Sepie* family at Macciano (*CIE* 1081–1082 = *ET* Cl 1.920–921). The inscriptions found in the latter tomb are remarkable in that they bear witness to the social ascent of a family of unfree origin;³⁷ the last *Remzna Sepie* married a *Cezirtli*, the daughter of a freedwoman of an immigrant, who was named *Pontia*, and of a *Cezartle*. The *Cezartle* family was probably of low social standing because it is only known through three individuals, two of them buried in the same tomb; one of them is a freedman, while the Latin inscription mentioning his kinsman is susceptible to more diverse interpretations. This tomb (*CIE* 708–718) was probably another collective burial, although most of the inscriptions refer to members of the *Spitu* family; since this Tarquinian gentilic is otherwise unknown at Clusium, these people may have been immigrants who reached the city in relatively recent times. The inscriptions in this tomb are mostly in Latin, or in a kind of mixed language, which points to the first century BC; the only item from its grave assemblage known to us is an Arretine cup bearing a stamp dated between 20 and 10 BC.³⁸ This tomb was probably found somewhere around Chianciano.³⁹

³³ Gian Francesco Gamurrini, "Macciano (frazione del comune di Chianciano)," *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità* (1900): 8–10.

³⁴ *CIE* 633–641 (Lago di Chiusi).

³⁵ *CIE* 4790–4794 = *ET* Cl 1.22–26.

³⁶ It is not uncommon that inscriptions on tiles went unnoticed immediately after the excavation, and that they would only be discovered later, when the tiles were finally cleaned up.

³⁷ Benelli, "Epigrafia etrusca": 213–14.

³⁸ *CVArr* 1581.

³⁹ Information about the discovery of this tomb can be found in an anonymous entry in the *Mémoires pour l'histoire des sciences & des beaux arts* 1729: 1905–7 (dated October 1729). The text says: *On a découvert depuis peu à trois milles & demi de Montepulciano un ancien Sepulcre, long de cinq pieds &*

In this same western section of the Clusine territory, there was another collective tomb⁴⁰ employed by six freedpeople, two apparently freeborn women and another female individual whose name formula is ambiguous. Its whereabouts can be estimated through the inscriptions presented to the Museum of Chiusi in 1873 by Pietro della Ciaia, whose estates were located near Macciano. There were three freedmen who had been slaves of the *Alfni* family; a freedwoman had been the slave of one of them, *Venzile*. All the gentilics refer to a group of families associated with the *Alfni*, whose family burial seems to have been at Dolciano.⁴¹ The *Alfni* were not an elite family; they appear relatively late in epigraphy and seem to have links to families of similar rank, but also to the last scions of ancient elite families such as the *Hele* or the *Purni*, who experienced a severe decline in status during the first half of the second century BC.

The offspring of the freedman *Venzile* (CIE 3076 = ET Cl 1.1146) – who had probably lived around the beginning of the first century BC because one freedwoman of his (CIE 3078 = ET Cl 1.1148) was enfranchised under Roman law – enjoyed remarkable success. One son of his married a woman belonging to the *Alfni* family. Since this marriage brought with it a considerable advancement in status, I assume that she could have been a freeborn woman from his former master's family, and not a freedwoman. Their son (CIE 1437 = ET Cl 1.356) made the unusual choice of using a bilingual inscription, which was a mark of status in early imperial Clusium; he was buried together with his son and other apparently unrelated people in a tomb at Poggio al Moro (CIE 1437–1441).⁴² Another grandnephew of his was twice a *quattuorvir iure dicundo* of the *municipium* of Clusium, and he was buried in a remarkable marble cinerary urn that had probably been imported from Rome and dates to the early age of Tiberius; his tomb was, not unsurprisingly, very near to the tomb of the *Alfni*, whence this story had begun some 150 years earlier.⁴³

demi sur un pied & demi de largeur . . . The description can be referred to a tomb of the so-called “*dromos* type”, with no chamber; on this type, see especially Elisa Salvadori, “Le tombe con nicchiotti di Chiusi e del territorio chiusino,” in *Etruschi e Romani a San Casciano dei Bagni: le stanze cassianensi*, ed. Monica Salvini (Rome: Quasar, 2014): 68–69, 73–74. Its distance from Montepulciano (3.5 miles – not leagues, as mistakenly reported in the CIE entry) shows that the findspot is situated somewhere eastwards to southwards, because the westernmost instance of a *dromos* tomb has been possibly identified in the small necropolis at Pianoia, a couple of kilometers south of Montepulciano (Salvadori, “Le tombe”: 74, with references). The area of Chianciano is therefore the most probable location of this tomb.

⁴⁰ CIE 3074–3085 = ET Cl 1.1144–1155.

⁴¹ CIE 4795–4798 = ET Cl 1.9–12.

⁴² The name *Stanze Dei* identified the painted tomb found at Poggio al Moro in 1826, in the estates of Giuseppe Dei; on this discovery, see Enrico Barni, *La tomba dipinta di Poggio al Moro a Chiusi* (self-published, 2013), with literature.

⁴³ CIL XI, 7122; on this inscription and its related marble urn, see Edgar Pack and Giulio Paolucci, “Tituli Clusini: nuove iscrizioni e correzioni all’epigrafia latina di Chiusi,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie*

Research on Clusine epigraphy may be a labyrinth, but it is sometimes possible to find Ariadne's thread. The evidence collected so far shows that there was a remarkable agglomeration of burials of freedpeople and non-elite families, often interconnected to each other, in a specific section of the Clusine territory. It is evident that something must have happened there around the middle of the second century BC. It is very likely that an elite family that had owned large estates in that area had disappeared; for some reason, its estates were not acquired by another family of comparable status but were instead divided into smaller plots, which gave the opportunity to lesser families, some even of unfree origin, to become smallholders, and, with time, even to climb the social ladder. It is possible to tentatively identify the original landowners as the Umrana family, one of the most distinguished lineages of the early and middle Hellenistic period.⁴⁴

Another feature that will require further study is the social standing of the former masters who enfranchised their slaves, because it seems that only a small part of the freedpeople known to us had been slaves of elite families. This is not what we would expect, especially in comparison to what happened later in the Roman world. This seems to suggest that slave owning in late Etruscan society was a relatively common feature, involving non-elite families alongside elite ones, and that many people were able to purchase slaves from the same Eastern Mediterranean markets that supplied the Roman world. Epigraphic evidence seems to suggest that second-century Etruscan society was very different from what it is usually assumed to be, and that it promptly seized the opportunities offered by the onset of the "classical" Roman slave economy. This point deserves further research.

I think that the only way to understand the role that people of unfree birth may have played in Etruscan society is by conducting a thorough analysis of the archaeological and epigraphic evidence. If our ultimate goal is to reconstruct a social history of the Etruscan world, pure speculation on the forms of names will lead nowhere.

Epigraphic Sources

CIE = *Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum*, Leipzig, 1893–.

CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin, 1861–.

CVArr = August Oxé and Howard Comfort, *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum: A Catalogue of the Signatures, Shapes and Chronology of Italian Sigillata*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Habelt, 2000).

ET = Gerhard Meiser, ed., *Etruskische Texte: Editio minor* (Hamburg: Narr, 2014).

REE = *Rivista di Epigrafia Etrusca*, in *Studi Etruschi*.

und *Epigraphik* 68 (1987): 169 and footnote 44; Friederike Sinn, *Stadtrömische Marmorurnen* (Mainz: Zabern, 1987): 100–101.

44 See Enrico Benelli, "Chiusi: dalla città etrusca al municipio romano," *Mediterranea* 20 (2023): 129–33.

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