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## ETRUSCAN BRONZE STAMNOI

The aim of this brief report is to point to some of the effects the presence of Etruscan bronze stamnoi in the regions north of the Alps had upon the genesis of early Celtic Art. These stamnoi with their ornamental handle attachments reached the areas of the Neckar, the Moselle and Saar as well as the Loire and upper Marne, and that during the middle decades of the fifth century B.C. Almost all of these vessels can be attributed to the Kleinaspergle and the Weiskirchen Groups, as I call them, products of a workshop in Vulci which can be traced back to the beginning of the second quarter of the century, if not before. To the features in Early La Tène artefacts which have been indentified by previous work as being directly influenced by these Etruscan imports<sup>1</sup> we should add one of the most characteristic elements of early Celtic art, namely the so-called 'bladder ornament'<sup>2</sup>. This ornament was created under the direct stimulus of the 'eye-cup motive' which appears on the bulk of the imported stamnoi of Vulcentine workmanship<sup>3</sup>. A clear example of this influence can be discerned on the stone pillar from Pfalzfeld, now in Bonn<sup>4</sup>, and, more elaborately transformed, on the gold bowl from Schwarzenbach, now in Berlin<sup>5</sup>. Here we can identify with some precision the carriers of the stimuli operative in the rise of the earliest sophisticated art in Western Europe north of the Alps.

The products of Vulci were not however the only stamnoi imported into the said areas north of the Alps. The find from Basse-Yutz in the middle Moselle region, just north of Metz (now in the British Museum) includes two Etruscan stamnoi belonging to the Giardini Margherita and the Dürrnberg Groups respectively. These Groups may have been produced in workshops in the middle Tiber valley, perhaps Orvieto or Todi, and the Basse-Yutz stamnoi seem quite early, presumably still in the first half of the fifth century. Found with them were the famous early Celtic flaggons, a pair clearly inspired in their shape by the Etruscan beaked flaggons ('Schnabelkannen') which were imported in con-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. recently for instance O.-H. FREY, in L. PAULI et al., *Die Kelten in Mitteleuropa* (1980) 77.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. P. JACOBSTHAL, *Early Celtic Art* (1944) 83, where alternative names, such as 'comma leaf' are proposed. The origin of the motive is not however examined.

<sup>3</sup> B. B. SHEFTON, *Die Aufnahme fremder Kulturinflüsse in Etrurien und das Problem des Retardierens in der etruskischen Kunst* (1981) 117 ff.; see also Roncalli's intervention, *ibidem*, 123.

<sup>4</sup> JACOBSTHAL, *cit.* at note 2, pl. 9 ff.

<sup>5</sup> IDEM, *cit.*, pls. 18 and 271, patterns 324-325.

siderable quantity into the regions. It can however also be shown that the artist responsible for these two masterpieces knew Etruscan stamnoi of several varieties and took over decorative elements from each of them. Thus the face mask forming the lower attachment of the flaggon handles of the Basse-Yutz vessels is clearly inspired by the satyr faces on many of the imported Vulcentine stamnoi attachments; the shaping of the moustache is so very characteristic! Yet the ornamental bands on the flaggons are derived from a different source, namely a stamnos of the Giardini Margherita Group, albeit later than the one found at Basse-Yutz. During the second half of the fifth century habitually these stamnoi had cable pattern as bands at the bottom of the side walls and also on the flat top of the mouth. These are precisely the places where on the Celtic flaggons of Basse-Yutz we find bands of cable and lozenge pattern respectively, the cable pattern indeed with coral inlay<sup>6</sup>. The multiplicity of Etruscan sources traceable on these flaggons is not the least of their fascination. As far as we can tell these Etruscan ornamental prototypes date to the second half of the fifth century, that is to say rather later than the date of the stamnoi they were found with. Even so the date suggested by the Etruscan models is appreciably earlier than that commonly assigned to the flaggons by prehistorians<sup>7</sup>.

Intriguingly the influence of decorative elements of Etruscan stamnoi on Celtic art continues beyond the period when we can document their presence north of the Alps, and the mechanism of transmission has yet to be found. The well known spouted flaggon from the Waldalgesheim grave (now in Bonn) has as its lower handle attachment a very memorable face flanked above by the bladder motive alluded to before<sup>8</sup>. This face could not in my view have been conceived without the artist's knowledge of the satyr heads on the San Ginesio Group of stamnoi, also products of Vulci. One might even go further by saying that the inspiring models could hardly have been later than the very early fourth century, when the furrow in the forehead and the plastically raised eyebrows were characteristic of the Group at that stage. However the difficulty is that stamnoi of the San Ginesio Group are only found in Etruria proper and also across the Apennines in the Adriatic region which just at that period was receiving waves of Celtic migration and settlement. Is it conceivable that the Celtic Master of the Waldalgesheim flaggon had been part of such a migration and had known such Etruscan stamnoi in Italy and then returned to his home north of the Alps to produce his masterpiece?

The full treatment of the classification and distribution of Etruscan bronze stamnoi will appear as part of the centennial republication of the Kleinaspergle tomb (now in Stuttgart), edited by W. Kimmig.

<sup>6</sup> For details of the flaggons IDEM, *cit.*, pl. 178 ff. – cable pattern; pl. 180 – face masks; pl. 182 – band on top of mouth.

<sup>7</sup> Also IDEM, *cit.*, 90 n. 4.

<sup>8</sup> IDEM, *cit.*, pl. 190.