



# Etruscan News



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Acheloo head pendant, ca. 480 BC. Louvre.



Inscribed granulated fibula, Castellani.



Acheloo head pendant, Castellani.

## New Etruscan and Italic Rooms at the Musée du Louvre

by Laurent Haumesser

Since 2018, the Etruscan collections have no longer been visible to the public at the Musée du Louvre: the rooms built between the late 1970s and early 1980s, on the museum's first floor, needed to be completely refurbished. This has now been achieved, after several years' work on both the objects *continued on page 20*



## Etruscan Treasures The Castellani Collection between History and Fashion

Fondazione Luigi Rovati Milano  
by Giuseppe Sassatelli, Giulio Paolucci  
and Valentino Nizzo  
October 25, 2023 - March 3, 2024

Fondazione Luigi Rovati is hosting the exhibition "Etruscan Treasures. The Castellani Collection between History and Fashion", curated by Giuseppe Sassatelli, Giulio Paolucci and Valentino Nizzo. More than eighty masterpieces including Etruscan jewelry and faithful 19th-century reproductions, Attic and Mediterranean ceramics – carefully chosen from the Castellani Collection of Villa Giulia's Museo Nazionale Etrusco – will join the permanent collection of the Fondazione's Art Museum. The proximity creates a unique case of contamination between antique and contemporary typical of Fondazione's exhibition strategy.

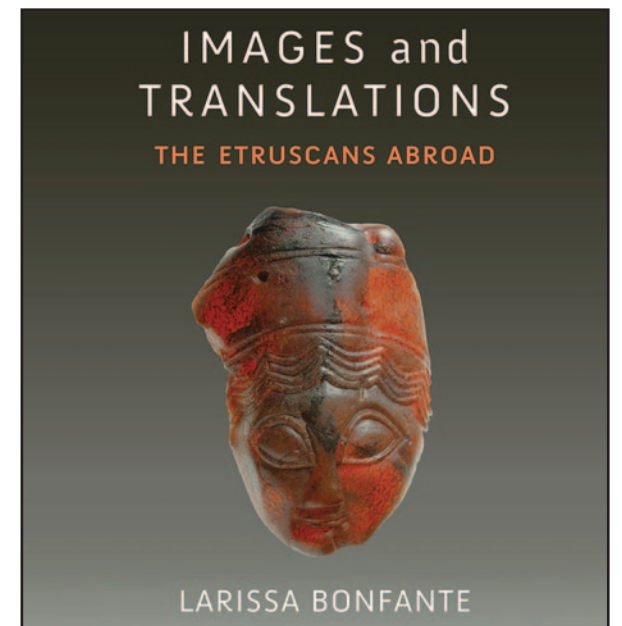
The exhibition takes place in collaboration with Villa Giulia's Museo Nazionale Etrusco in Rome and it offers an in-depth analysis of the history of the Castellanis, a family of goldsmiths, collectors and antiquarians. It recounts the history of their extraordinary collection and their goldsmith's shop that launches a new jewelry genre "in the style of the ancients", aimed to reproduce the forms and the crafting techniques of antique jewels. The new genre soon became a trend among many international clients, intrigued by its evocative value and sophistication.

The activity of Fortunato Pio Castellani and his sons Alessandro and Augusto, renowned goldsmiths, collectors and antiquarians, is tied to the season of the great archaeological finds in the areas formerly inhabited by the Etruscan and Italic populations. Their collection was partly donated to Villa Giulia Museum in 1919 and partly scattered across cultural institutions around the world. Over the years the family starts and develops the intense work of collecting artifacts and promotes their exchange across the Peninsula, spurred on by a mix of historical interest, research demands, national identity and international trade. *continued on page 21*

## Images and Translations: The Etruscans Abroad

A New Book by Larissa Bonfante  
Review by Jean Turfa

Bonfante, Larissa. *Images and Translations. The Etruscans Abroad*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023. ISBN: 978-0-472-13197-6 (hardback) \$65. 494 pages. 238 B&W illustrations, 8 maps, 20 color plates. *continued on page 35*



## Etruscan Spina, a Large Port on the Mediterranean An Exhibition at the Villa Giulia

October 11, 2023 - July 4, 2024

by Valentino Nizzo

The celebrations of the centenary of the discovery of Spina (3 April 1922), which began last year at the Museum of the Ancient Delta of Comacchio and then continued at the National Archaeological Museum of Ferrara, will end in Rome at the Villa Giulia with two important exhibitions. The Roman venue is a synthesis which hopes to make the general public more aware of the Spina excavations' contributions to our historical and archaeological understanding of the pre-Roman Mediterranean.

A selection of about 600 important finds on display in Ferrara and Comacchio will "dialogue" with over 100 objects from the Villa Giulia. These objects expand the story of the great Etruscan port of Spina, from before its birth around 530-520 until its decline at the beginning of the 3rd century BC.

The political and economic dialectic is highlighted in the Augustan era by a well-known passage in Livy: "Before Roman domination, Etruscan power extended widely by land and sea; the names of the two upper and lower seas by which Italy is surrounded like an island, offer testimony to their power, since the Italic populations called one the Tuscan sea, a name common to the entire people, and the other Adriatic, from the Etruscan colony of Adria" (V, 33, 7-11, trans. I. Lana). The Villa Giulia exhibition, therefore, offers a deeper context on the Tyrrhenian front that led to the birth and rise of Spina. It pays particular attention to its ideal western "counterpart," Pyrgi, the port sanctuary of Caere.

The thorny question of Etruscan origins is intertwined with traditional histories of Spina and Caere/Pyrgi. Spina, according to the version handed down in the 5th century by Hellanicus, was the landing place of the Pelasgians, the ancestors of the Tyrrhenians (in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* I, 28, 3). Similarly, Caere/Pyrgi was considered the metropolis of the Tyrrhenians in a well-known passage from the commentary on the *Aeneid* (X, 184) by Servius.



Fig.4

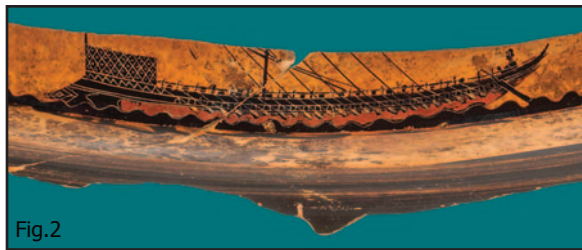


Fig.2

According to Greek opinion, both Spina and Caere had the exceptional privilege of dedicating votive treasures at the Panhellenic sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi.

In the late 6th century BC, Greek historiography began to develop the first mythical-historical plots to provide an adequate context to relationships with the fearsome Tyrrhenians. The Athenians favored the idea of a possible common origin (*syngheneia*/brotherhood) through the Pelasgians. In contrast, the Dorians posited an Eastern origin for the Tyrrhenians. This would have grouped them with other "barbarian" peoples like the



Fig.5

**Fig.1** Pebble from Spina with Etruscan inscription MI TULAR, "I am the border" (late 5th or 4th century BC), which suggests a planned urban organization of the settlement. National archaeological museum of Ferrara (Photo MANFE)

**Fig.2** Detail, Attic black-figure dinos signed by Exekias with Homeric allusion to the "wine-coloured sea"; contained in the vase, metaphorically furrowed by the ship on the rim. 540-530 BC. From Caere, Castellani Collection, Villa Giulia (Photo ETRU).

**Fig.3** Etruscan black-figure hydria depicts the metamorphosis of the Tyrrhenian pirates into dolphins by Dionysus. Provenance unknown. Vatican Painter 238. 510-500 BC. Rome, Villa Giulia (Photo ETRU).

**Fig.4** Fragment of a bronze tripod from Vulci with the apotheosis of Heracles and Hebe (?) between Hermes (l) and a double aulòs player, perhaps to be identified with Athena (r);, perhaps from Spina found on the Athenian acropolis 550-475 BC (photo Acropolis Museum of Athens).

**Fig.5** Attic red-figure volute krater, bearing one of the most complex representations of the myth of the Seven against Thebes and the deeds of their children, the Epigonoï, a theme full of meaning, for the Athenians in the aftermath of the Persian Wars for the warning it offered against the fratricidal struggles that had pitted the Greek cities against each other. 460-450 BC Spina, Painter of Bologna 279, National Archaeological Museum of Ferrara (Photo MANFE)



Fig.1

Persians. Starting from legendary antecedents, such as those of Daedalus and Phaeton, the mythical imagery is, therefore, inextricably intertwined with history and its characteristic ideological manipulations, offering the Villa Giulia exhibition a further key to understanding Spina's greatness and, with it, the entire Etruscan nation which, as Cato the Censor recalled, once extended to almost all of Italy.

This discussion will be explored in depth at the Villa Giulia exhibition with some exceptional and unprecedented loans. For the first time in Italy, it will be possible to admire the fragment of a Vulcian tripod showing the "Apotheosis of Heracles" from the Athenian Acropolis, which may have come to Athens from Spina. Also new is the juxtaposition of the monumental krater with one of the most complex depictions of the "Seven against Thebes" from Tomb 579 at Valle Trebba and the contemporary (and even more extraordinary) high relief from Pyrgi, in which the same myth was depicted on the rear façade of the Temple of Leucothea. No doubt, this was intended as a warning against the barbarity of senseless and fratricidal wars. Finally, from the Villa Giulia storerooms comes a careful selection of transport amphorae which, together with those found in Spina, will allow us to explore the commercial schemes that characterized the Mediterranean from the 6th to the 3rd century BC.

An exhibition catalog is published by ARA Editions and edited by Paola Desantis, Elisabetta Govi, Valentino Nizzo, Giuseppe Sassatelli and Tiziano Trocchi. See also: [www.museoetru.it](http://www.museoetru.it)



Fig.3