Uni and the Golden Gift of Thefarie
The 50th Anniversary of the Discovery of the Gold Tablets of Pyrgi
by Daniele F. Maras and Rex E. Wallace

As many of our readers know, Pyrgi is the site of the most famous Etruscan sanctuary. The literary sources mention the port city and sanctuary because it was pillaged by Dionysius the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse, in 384 BCE.

Excavation began at Pyrgi in 1956, after fragments of terracotta sculptures, antefixes, and painted tiles were discovered in an area a few hundred meters south of the Castle of Santa Severa. Thanks to an agreement between the Soprintendenza Beni Archeologica per l’Etruria Meridionale and La Sapienza University of Rome, Massimo Pallottino immediately began excavation at the site, with the help of Giovanni Colonna, who served as the excavation’s field director and later succeeded him.

Site of Pyrgi. continued on page 4

Excavations in a sacred Etruscan and Roman well at Cetamura del Chianti have brought forth some 14 bronze vessels and hundreds of objects that show ritual usage of the water source. The results, obtained over a four-year period of excavation, were announced at a press conference on July 4, 2014, at the Museo Nazionale Archeologico di Siena by team members Nancy de Grummond (director; Florida State University), Francesco Cini (president of Ichnos: Archeologia, Ambiente e Sperimentazione) and Nóra Marosi (conservator, Studio Art Centers International). The hilltop site of Cetamura is located ca. 30 km north of Siena, on the property of the Badia a Coltibuono (Gaiole in Chianti). The excavations are conducted under the auspices of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana (Andrea Pessina, Soprintendente).

The shaft on the top zone of Cetamura (Zone I) is perhaps more properly called a cistern, since it does not obtain water from an aquifer, but rather accumulates it through seepage from the sandstone bedrock walls. But its great depth suggests comparison with other Etruscan wells. The bottom was found at ca. 32.5 m below ground level, a depth that was probably planned as 100 Etruscan feet using the module known at Cetamura of ca. 32/33 centimeters.

The lowest level of deposits suggests that the well was dug to this depth around the beginning of the third century BCE. The shaft is called a cistern, since it does not obtain water from an aquifer, but rather accumulates it through seepage from the sandstone bedrock walls. But its great depth suggests comparison with other Etruscan wells. The bottom was found at ca. 32.5 m below ground level, a depth that was probably planned as 100 Etruscan feet using the module known at Cetamura of ca. 32/33 centimeters.

Holy Waters at Cetamura
by Nancy De Grummond

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Etruscans at Oxford
Dr. Charlotte Potts
Sybille Haynes Lecturer in Etruscan and Italic Archaeology and Art Woolley Fellow, Somerville College, Oxford

The Etruscans seem to have well and truly arrived at the University of Oxford after 18 months of high-profile events.

Following the creation of the new Sybille Haynes Lectureship in Etruscan and Italic Archaeology and Art, Oxford has actively sought to raise the profile of the Etruscans in the study of the ancient world both within and outside its walls. Students now have the option of taking undergraduate and postgraduate courses on Etruscan Italy as part of their degrees, including a new paper on Etruscan art taught with the collections of the local Ashmolean Museum and Oxford University Museum of Natural History, due to the kind support of key staff. The Haynes Lecture also continues to be a highlight of the annual Oxford calendar, with Prof. Larissa

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Previous Haynes Lectures at Oxford


2010: Jette Christiansen: “The Etruscans in their Mediterranean Setting.”


2012: Stephan Steingräber: “Five Centuries of Etruscan Painting, 700–200 BC: Recent discoveries and research.”


The Pyrgi Plaques: A ceremony to celebrate the 50 Year Anniversary of their Discovery

The plaques were found in July 1964 by Prof. Giovanni Colonna. The anniversary of the important discovery was celebrated in June during a ceremony organized by the current director of the archaeological superintendency, D.ssa Rossella Zaccagnini, the Superintendent for the archaeological sites of southern Etruria. Considering the plaques’ bilingual significance, the maintenance of strong friendships between peoples on opposite sides of the Mediterranean is key. To this end, the Ambassador of Tunisia and the Lebanese consul in Italy were invited to the ceremony representing the ancient peoples of both Carthage and Phoenicia.

They then planted near the archaeological site two trees as a harbinger of peace in the Mediterranean: a cedar of Lebanon and an olive tree. The superintendent for southern Etruria, D.ssa Alfonsina Russo, introduced the ceremony by thanking the Tunisian and Lebanese diplomats, local authorities (mayors were present from Cerveteri, Ladispoli and Santa Marinella, also representing the people of ancient Kaisra), volunteers from the archaeological group for the territory of Cerite, who had restored for the occasion the circuit of polygonal walls surrounding Roman Pyrgi. She also introduced the re-enactment of the discovery.

On beach at Santa Severa, Alfonsina Russo and ambassadors from Carthage and Lebanon plant trees.