

## An inscribed bucchero aryballos

David Ridgway

The bucchero aryballos (fig. 1) treated in this note bears a well-known retrograde Etruscan inscription:<sup>1</sup>

*mi larthaia telicles lechtumuza* (I am the little lekythos of Larthai, the daughter of Telicles<sup>2</sup>)

My primary concern is with the typology and relative chronology of the vase itself, and with the light that these can shed on the seemingly mixed (Etruscan and Greek) origin of the individual who is defined epigraphically as its owner.

This interesting artefact, first published in 1930 and long thought to be lost, appeared on the New York antiquities market in 1999. It has now joined the collection of classical antiquities at New York University, where L. Bonfante has defined its shape in two brief presentations as a "squat lekythos" ("with an ovoid body") of the 6th c. B.C.<sup>3</sup> For my own part, I believe that it can safely be assigned to a date around the middle of the 7th c.<sup>4</sup> As for the shape, and its name, Bonfante is undoubtedly correct to call the vase a "lekythos", though in the perhaps slightly misleading sense that the vase is a deliberately-achieved bucchero version of an Early Protocorinthian (hereafter EPC) shape that a Corinthian would have regarded as a lekythos. This very word is inscribed in the Corinthian alphabet on Tataie's famous aryballos, exported from Corinth to Campanian Kyme,<sup>5</sup> but, for reasons that have been helpfully rehearsed by M. Kanowski and others,<sup>6</sup> it is now too late in practice to break with the modern convention that small Corinthian (and Corinthian-inspired) unguent vases should be referred to as "aryballoi".

1. Select bibliography: M. Hammarström, "Eine archaische etruskische Vaseninschrift," *StEtr* 4 (1930) 261-66 (*editio princeps*); C. de Simone, *Die griechischen Entlehnungen im Etruskischen I* (Wiesbaden 1963) 89; id. in *ANRW* 1.2 (1972) 508-9; *TLE*<sup>2</sup> no. 761; G. Colonna, *MÉFRA* 82 (1970) 649-50, n.4; 651, n.3; 654-55, fig. 7 (no. 15); id., *ArchCI* 25-26 (1973-74) 143-44; L. Agostiniani, *Le "iscrizioni parlanti" dell'Italia antica* (Florence 1982) 138 (no. 522), 193; *ET* 336 (OA 2.2); G. Bagnasco Gianni, *Oggetti iscritti di epoca orientalizzante in Etruria* (Florence 1996) 315 (no. 313); ead., in *Dall'Indo a Thule: i Greci, i Romani, gli altri* (Labirinti 24; Trento 1996) 310-11; S. Marchesini, *Studi onomastici e sociolinguistici sull'Etruria arcaica: il caso di Caere* (Florence 1997) 36-37 (no. 42), 130-31, 163-64; G. and L. Bonfante, *The Etruscan language: an introduction* (2nd edn., Manchester 2002) 138-40 (Source 11).
2. This is in effect the translation proposed by Hammarström (*supra* n.1) 266 and accepted by S. P. Cortsen, *Glotta* 23 (1935) 150; so too G. and L. Bonfante (*supra* n.1) 138 and L. Bonfante 2006 (*infra* n.3, both works). Although the individual concerned has in the past been regarded as male by some authorities (followed by the present writer: *CAH*<sup>2</sup> IV [1988] 664), a female identity is now generally agreed: on the distinction between Larth (m.) and Larthai (f.), see C. de Simone, *I Tirreni a Lemnos* (Florence 1996) 11; Marchesini (*supra* n. 1) 130-31.
3. L. Bonfante, "Nunc ubi sit comperit lechtumuza," in *Aemnestos. Miscellanea di studi per Mauro Cristofani* (Florence 2006) 274-76; ead., "Etruscan inscribed bucchero aryballos," in ead. and B. Fowlkes (edd.), *Classical antiquities of New York University* (Rome 2006) 111-13 (no. 33).
4. See, e.g., the following items all cited *supra* n.1: de Simone 1968 and 1972 (second half of 7th c.); Colonna 1970, 654-55, fig. 7 (no. 15: "660-690 a.C."); id., 1973-74, 143 ("metà VII sec." Note too that Colonna had previously [*infra* n.9] proposed a slightly earlier date, not later than 675); Bagnasco Gianni, *Oggetti* 115-18 ("prima metà [or "metà"] del VII sec. a.C."); Agostiniani 138 and Marchesini 36 suggest "650-625 a.C."
5. L. H. Jeffery, *Local scripts of Archaic Greece* (2nd edn., Oxford 1990) 240 (no. 3), 454 with pl. 47; A. Bartonek and G. Buchner, *Die Sprache* 37 (1995) 199-200, no. C1. Three of the other four aryballoi attributed to the same hand as Tataie's aryballos by C. W. Neelt (*Protocorinthian Subgeometric aryballoi* [Amsterdam 1987] 106-7, list liii) come from Motya, P.thekoussa, and Tarquinia — which suggests that Corinthian terminology might well have been known in Italy by the 7th c. Tataie was most probably Etruscan or Italic: M. Frederiksen in D. and F. R. Ridgway (edd.), *Italy before the Romans* (London 1979) 296; so too Colonna in *La céramique grecque ou de tradition grecque au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en Italie centrale et méridionale* (Naples 1982) 189-89.
6. M. G. Kanowski, *Containers of Classical Greece* (St Lucia 1984) 27-29 and the ancient and modern references there cited.