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**John Cabot University**

The Graduate School  
Department of Art History and Studio Art

Master of Arts in Art History

Dating Troubles: an Investigation into the  
Painted Decoration within the  
Tomb of the Blue Demons

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## Abstract

The Tomb of the Blue Demons is an Etruscan burial chamber from Tarquinia shrouded in a damaged archaeological record, traditionally dated to the mid-fifth century BC. With extraordinary frescoes of a hunt, a procession, a banquet, and the Underworld, the tomb has captivated archaeologists for its unusual blue beasts—creatures who do not arise in Etruscan visual trends until one hundred years after the tomb's ascribed date. Scholars adhering to the traditional date of the tomb have explained these painted demons as a newfound Etruscan concern for the afterlife. However, similar funerary characters appear on sixth-century terracotta plaques from nearby Cerveteri. In these examples, however, these human characters have yet to transform into the monstrous creatures we see in the Tomb of the Blue Demons. Additionally, identical grotesque figures decorate many other Etruscan materials (ranging from pottery and mirrors to cinerary urns and sarcophagi), all dating from the mid-fourth to late third centuries BC.

The demons in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, then, not only demonstrate a visual expansion of pre-existing afterlife thoughts in Etruria, but also realign the frescos' date with the mid-fourth century BC. A closer look at these demons alongside the tomb's other paintings reveals additional discrepancies in their drafting techniques and pigments. Here, painters unmistakably used a red sketch before painting and lightly outlining the demons—a technical feature noticeably absent from the other three walls. These iconographic and painterly differences throughout the Underworld more closely align the fresco with later artistic trends in Etruria. Considering all of this evidence together, it thus appears as if the Underworld scene in the Tomb of the Blue Demons was likely painted at a second historical moment, much after the tomb was originally adorned with the more traditional painted scenes. This allows a dating of the Underworld scene to the mid-fourth century BC, underscoring an intricate level of artistic adaptation and innovation previously unseen in funerary decoration.

## **Dedication**

For my Bee.

*07.05.1928*

*22.05.2020*

## **Acknowledgments**

I must begin by expressing my immense gratitude towards Professor Corrado and Professor Fuhrmann-Schembri, for not only their assistance at every stage of this project, but also their patience throughout. Professor Corrado's intense experience with ancient wall paintings, and all things Roman, has broadened my understanding and love for these wall paintings on an entirely unanticipated level, and I am extremely grateful to have been able to be her student. Similarly, Professor Fuhrmann-Schembri's invaluable knowledge of the Etruscans enriched my research with information and sources that I otherwise would not have been able to access. Their guidance and advice with this thesis has been monumental in its progression from start to finish.

Finally, I am also deeply grateful to my parents and my brothers for their unwavering support, not only through this thesis, but throughout my graduate education. Without their constant encouragement, it undeniably would have been impossible for me to complete my studies.

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# I. Introduction

## Il Mondo Dei Morti: The World of the Dead

Throughout the ancient Mediterranean, artists and writers portrayed rich beliefs and practices surrounding death and the afterlife. In Etruria, for example, along Italy's western coast (Fig. 1), mysterious monsters begin to appear in funerary art as guides for the deceased, blurring the boundaries between life on earth and the hereafter. With piercing eyes, raggedy beards, and countless beast-like features, these startling demons adorn Etruscan sarcophagi, pottery, cinerary urns, and chamber tombs found throughout Italy (Fig. 2), dating fairly late in the chronological spectrum to primarily between the fourth and first centuries BC.<sup>1</sup> These exquisitely hideous figures are strangely absent from Etruscan visual culture before this time, causing archaeologists and art historians to debate their mysterious identities, funerary significance, and cultural implications. Who are these ghostly figures, and from where did they originate? When do they first appear in Etruria, and why were they so popular?

These bizarre creatures are just as fascinating as their Etruscan patrons, who left behind scant amounts of written literature.<sup>2</sup> In terms of their cultural context, however, we know that they were witness to several strong and contemporary neighbors. The Etruscans did not arise as a significant power in the ancient Mediterranean until the eighth century BC. Shortly afterwards, Greek populations began settling in Italy's southern regions, bringing their culture, artists, and

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<sup>1</sup> Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), 248-249.

<sup>2</sup> Bonfante, Larissa, *Etruscan*, Reading the Past, V. 8. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 50.

materials with them.<sup>3</sup> Then, in the early fourth century BC, the Romans started pushing north into Etruria, absorbing their territories and civilization completely, by the first century BC.<sup>4</sup> The Greeks and Romans directly affected Etruscan artistic and visual culture through these migrations and conflicts, leaving distinct traces of such impact above all in Etruscan funerary decoration.

In Etruria, afterlife concepts initially appear as eating and drinking vessels deposited as grave goods during the eighth century BC.<sup>5</sup> These were meant to assist and accompany the dead into the next life. Beginning in 700 BC, funerary objects began to be ornamented with new artistic displays that featured cultural conceptions of the afterlife. These objects primarily depicted banqueting scenes, as carved into an Etruscan cinerary urn and painted on a kylix from the early fifth century (Fig. 3; 33). Many Etruscan chamber tombs also appear with wall paintings that illustrate the same funerary theme, with multiple tombs in Tarquinia. For example, the Tomb of the Leopards (Fig. 21), Querciola I (Fig. 22), and the Tomb of the Maggi Family (Fig. 32), all from the fifth century BC. Often times, these feasting images also include scenes of hunting and processions either on the same wall, or on surrounding walls.

Later during the fourth century, visual interpretations of the phases after death and the underworld itself quickly gained popularity in tomb painting (Fig. 4), and remained fashionable until the first century BC.<sup>6</sup> As opposed to the imagery depicted in earlier tomb paintings, these frescoes often included unsettling, ghoulish demons lurking throughout their compositions,

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<sup>3</sup> Barker and Rasmussen, *The Etruscans* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Barker and Rasmussen, *The Etruscans*, 6. This was a period filled with Roman interaction termed *Romanization*. The period of Romanization begun with the fall of Veii in 396 BC, and lasted through the third, second, and first centuries until Etruria became dominated by the Romans. See also: Chapter 8, p. 262-296.

<sup>5</sup> J. Rasmus Brandt, "Passage to The Underworld. Continuity or Change in Etruscan Funerary Ideology and Practices (sixth–2nd Century BC)," in *Death and Changing Rituals, Death and Changing Rituals: Function and Meaning in Ancient Funerary Practices*, Eds. Marina Prusac and Håkon Roland (Oxford; Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2015) 143. The leaving of banqueting utensils and vessels shows a concern for the dead's nourishment in the afterlife —providing them with something to eat and drink in the next life, or at the ancestral funerary banquet painted on many tombs.

<sup>6</sup> Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 248-249.

sometimes along vague shorelines and often with the deceased (Fig. 5). So far, the Tomb of the Blue Demons is the earliest example of these Underworld depictions discovered in Tarquinia (Fig. 2), a major Etruscan city ninety kilometers north of Rome (Fig. 1). The tomb lies in Tarquinia's Monterozzi necropolis, an Etruscan burial ground overflowing with chamber tombs, both painted and unpainted (Fig. 6).

Within the Tomb of the Blue Demons, ancient painters created a single yet elaborate fresco composition on each wall. Directly across from the entrance, on the back wall, is a festive banquet scene with four reclining couples and a musician (Fig. 7). Moving counter-clockwise around the tomb, on the left wall, a man drives a chariot led by two vibrant horses (Fig. 8). Dancers, musicians, and one child frame and escort him on either side, creating a joyous procession. Across the tomb's entrance, on the wall with the tomb's door, shadowy animals and murky hunters scatter throughout the space, though little to no pigment survives on the surface (Fig. 9). Finally, a troubling Underworld illuminates the wall to the right, inhabited by three human figures and five fearsome demons (Fig. 10).

Here, to the left, as the fog clears in the Underworld, a dark figure slowly rows through rippling blue waters. He stands in a large brown boat wearing a red tunic that starkly contrasts against his strange blue-black flesh. His long oar pushes the vessel away from a rocky shoreline, where a veiled woman comforts a young child as they wait for those who trail behind. Among them, another mysterious blue man and a ghostly winged creature guide a woman insistently towards the water. Not far behind this grouping, a giant blue male figure awaits with snakes wrapped around his arms. His gigantic nose, deep-set frown, and fiery red eyes turn away from those at the shoreline while his snakes slither wildly forward. Their thin tongues whip around aimlessly as the blue beast comes face to face with a flying, black-skinned monster, who sneers at

him in return. With outstretched arms and a hunched back, the black monster carefully traverses the rugged shoreline to catch up with the others.

This unsettlingly vivid tomb has captivated scholars and archaeologists for its unusual combination of traditional, joyous imagery and the frightening underworld scene, whose haunting blue beasts do not otherwise arise in Etruscan popular visual trends until at least one hundred years later. Thus, adhering to the early and traditional date of the tomb, scholars were quick to identify these blue demons as the first to appear, chronologically, in Etruscan tomb paintings. With its discovery, in other words, the tomb quickly became known as the location where “iconographic themes of the Etruscan afterlife were used...for the first time,”<sup>7</sup> and little has changed about its reputation in scholarship since. In fact, every case study on Etruscan wall painting describes these monsters as a visual metaphor for a new anxiety about death that the Etruscans started to have, apparently, in the middle of the fifth century BC.<sup>8</sup>

Whether or not these demons truly illustrate such a cultural shift, however, is a question only the patrons can answer. There are no inscriptions within the Tomb of the Blue Demons, making it impossible to confidently determine if these demons symbolize a newfound fear of death or are tied to social and political events, as scholars have previously suggested. These demons do, however, demonstrate an undeniably distinct level of artistic creativity that continues to play an important part in Etruscan funerary art throughout the first century BC. Similar monstrous anxieties appear en masse nearby in Tarquinia, Paestum, Vulci, and Rome, and from across the Mediterranean in Greece, all from the fourth and third centuries BC, challenging the mid-fifth

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<sup>7</sup> Adinolfi, G., Carmagnola, R., Cataldi, M., Marras, L., and Palleschi, V. “Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging,” *Archaeometry*, v61 n. 2 (2019): 450. <https://doi.org/10.1111/arc.12423>.

<sup>8</sup> Cataldi-Dini, “Tarquinia: La Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri,” in *Pittura Etrusca al Museo di Villa Giulia*, ed. Maria A. Rizzo, (1989), 151.

century date ascribed to the right wall's fresco. These comparable funerary narratives from elsewhere in the Mediterranean reveal an intense mutation and diversification of painted demons specific to fourth and third century Etruria, where figures are noticeably more gruesome and conniving like in the Tomb of the Blue Demons.

The demons are not the only unusual element about the right wall that call into question its traditional fifth century date. Underneath the painted imagery, a preparatory red sketch shines through, and many figures have foreshortened limbs (Fig.),<sup>9</sup> the same two artistic techniques applied to the fourth-century monsters elsewhere in Etruria. These construction techniques notably do not appear in the other three compositions, further isolating the demons fresco within the tomb. By putting these wall paintings in conversation with one another, and more broadly with Etruscan funerary art, this thesis will demonstrate that the Underworld fresco within the Tomb of the Blue Demons was executed at a different, later moment than the other wall paintings inside the tomb.

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<sup>9</sup> Gloria Adinolfi, Rodolfo Carmagnola, and Maria Cataldi Dini. "La Tomba Dei Demoni Azzurri: Le Pitture." Essay. In *Pittura Parietale, Pittura Vascolare: Ricerche in Corso Tra Etruria e Campania: atti della giornata di studio*, Santa Maria Capua Vetere, 28 maggio 2003, edited by Fernando Gilotta, (Naples, Italy: Art Typographical Publishing, 2005): 45.

## II. Chapter 1: The Tomb and Its Preservation

### La Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri: An Unexpected Find

Construction workers initially found the Tomb of the Blue Demons in 1985 while digging to address Tarquinia's water supply. Lying beneath the provincial road of Via Ripagretta, the tomb rests just outside the Monterozzi Necropolis, which the road now curves around (Fig. 6). Here, archaeologists Maria Cataldi-Dini, Gloria Adinolfi, and Rodolfo Carmagnola among others excavated the structure, revealing a damaged, rectangular space with exquisitely frescoed walls (Fig. 11).<sup>10</sup>

Before excavating, however, archaeologists inserted a probe into the tomb, gaining valuable information about the burial's temperature, pressure, and humidity. These studies revealed steady conditions within the structure; although, archaeologists noticed an increase in pollutants during the first excavation phase; a situation they believe sped up the deterioration of the frescoes. Likewise, after the tomb's discovery and later excavation, visitor presence caused the humidity and pressure to increase exponentially, further damaging the wall pigments.<sup>11</sup> A glass door now blocks modern visitors from the burial space in order to minimize future damage. This pressurized door regulates the tomb's temperature, pressure, humidity, and exposure to sunlight while allowing visitors to see the frescoes inside.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Maria Cataldi-Dini, "La tomba dei Demoni Azzurri," *Atti Del Convegno Internazionale Di Studi La Lombardia per Gli Etruschi: Milano 24-25 giugno 1986: Tarquinia: Ricerche, Scavi e Prospettive*, ed. Maria Bonghi Jovino and Treré Cristina Chiaramonte (Italy: Milano, 1987), 37-38.

<sup>11</sup> De Carli, P., S. Massa, and D. Nichi. "Conservative Control of an Archaeological Excavation: The Tomb of 'Demoni Azzurri' of Tarquinia," 406-408.

<sup>12</sup> Adinolfi, "Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging," 451.

Outside the tomb, excavators uncovered three potential openings to the chamber, through differences in soil layers around its entrance (Fig. 12). Based on radiocarbon dating, the first phase reportedly occurred during the mid-fifth century BC, establishing the earliest date for the tomb.<sup>13</sup> At this time, Etruscan workers initially dug out the chamber from the colossal tufo bed in the necropolis. This rocky layer surrounding the chamber had deep crevices, requiring workers to smooth the walls by mixing small limestone flakes with pale clay before plastering the tomb from floor to ceiling. Workers then drove iron nails into each wall's middle section and dug a pit in the chamber's far-left corner (Fig. 7-11).<sup>14</sup>

At an unknown time after this, archaeologists hypothesize that painters re-plastered and frescoed the tomb.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, the patrons filled the space with ceramic fragments and animal bones, signifying the second and “final burial, and therefore the conclusion of all the acts related to funeral ceremonies.”<sup>16</sup> From the burial, excavators recovered burnt soil, carbonized wood, fragmentary bones, a spear, iron chariot fittings, and an amphora (Fig. 13a-13b).<sup>17</sup> When radiocarbon dated, these goods produced a date of 422 ± 45 years. Further testing on the salvaged ashes and bones revealed them to be from three horses, a turtle, a pig, a goat, and a cremated human male.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> De Grossi Mazzorin, “Nuovi dati sui cavalli etruschi: i resti equini della tomba dei ‘Demoni Azzurri’ a Tarquinia,” 326.

<sup>14</sup> Cataldi-Dini, “La tomba dei Demoni Azzurri,” 38.

<sup>15</sup> Adinolfi, Carmagnola, Cataldi, “La tomba dei Demoni Azzurri: Le Pitture,” 45. Adinolfi explains that pieces of the ceiling and walls needed replastering because they “had undergone new subsidence and it was therefore necessary to intervene again,” creating patches of new plaster that are especially visible below the blue and winged demons along the right wall.

<sup>16</sup> De Grossi Mazzorin, “Nuovi dati sui cavalli etruschi: i resti equini della tomba dei ‘Demoni Azzurri’ a Tarquinia,” 324.

<sup>17</sup> Leighton, Robert, *Tarquinia: An Etruscan City* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2004), 93.

<sup>18</sup> De Grossi Mazzorin, “Nuovi dati sui cavalli etruschi: i resti equini della tomba dei ‘Demoni Azzurri’ a Tarquinia,” 326-328. These results perfectly fit the 450 - 430 BC attribution that UNESCO ascribed the tomb in 2004. See: UNESCO, World Heritage Committee, “Etruscan Necropolises of Cerveteri and Tarquinia,” (Europe and North America: UNESCO, July 7, 2004), 19.

The third soil layer appears entirely made of dirt, which filled into the tomb from a hole dug above the doorway, likely left by earlier tomb looters (Fig. 12). Further evidence for looting, and a third opening, lies in the back left corner of the tomb (Fig. 11). Here, archaeologists found a large, rectangular floor pit that “was already almost completely emptied,” with only small piles of discarded burnt wood and bone fragments remained along the pit’s edge.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, various iron fragments and scorched earth were in a pile below the right wall. Finally, based on cavities in the floor, archaeologists place funerary beds in the chamber’s back corners (Fig. 11);<sup>20</sup> however, excavators found no traces of those structures or the bones once laying on them.<sup>21</sup> The absence of these funeral beds, as well as the fragmentary nature of the recovered objects, indicates that there was once much more within this tomb than archaeologists unearthed in 1985. now permanently disrupted and erased.

Within the burial chamber, excavators propose that the frescoes tell of an aristocratic husband and wife. Here, on parallel journeys, the couple transitions from their earthly lives to the funerary feast with their ancestors.<sup>22</sup> On the left wall, a man rides a chariot with horses alongside dancers and musicians. However, on the right wall, strange blue and black-skinned demons escort the female on her venture. These demons are undoubtedly more frightening than the dancers and musicians guiding the man, suggesting that a more ominous fate awaits her after death.

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<sup>19</sup> Cataldi-Dini, “Tarquinia: La Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri,” 153.

<sup>20</sup> Adinolfi, “Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging,” 450.

<sup>21</sup> Cataldi-Dini, “Tarquinia: La Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri,” 153.

<sup>22</sup> Cataldi-Dini, “Tarquinia: La Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri,” 151.

## The Blue Demons in Scholarship

Since the tomb's discovery, every subsequent book on Etruscan art, life, and culture has mentioned the startling demons on the right wall. According to the traditional chronology of painting in the ancient Mediterranean (Table 1), these strange Underworld images align with the Hellenistic period, which falls between 330 and 100 BC.<sup>23</sup> However, academia dates the Tomb between 450-430 BC, during the Late Archaic and Early Classical periods.<sup>24</sup> The tomb's excavators, explain this 130-year timeline discrepancy by framing the tomb as a predecessor to future pictorial trends:

The [Tomb of The Blue Demons] ...is a turning point in Etruscan wall paintings of the late fifth century because of crucial changes that took place here between the late archaic and classical period. In fact, iconographic themes of the Etruscan afterlife were used here for the first time, showing the Underworld inhabited by blue and black-skinned demons.<sup>25</sup>

It is this view that then became repeated in scholarship for decades. In 1995, Etruscan scholar Mauro Cristofani expanded upon this idea, using the Tomb of the Blue Demons to describe “a turning point in the funeral decorative repertory” of the afterlife.<sup>26</sup> According to Cristofani, the right wall's monsters are a visual reference more clearly connected with death than the “earthly” scenes of feasting, hunting, and celebratory processions on the surrounding walls. Here, in the Underworld, the beastly figures inhabit “a marginal world” *exclusively* for the deceased while on

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<sup>23</sup> Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Cataldi-Dini, “La Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri,” 39; Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 5.

<sup>25</sup> Adinolfi, Carmagnola, R., Cataldi, M., Marras, L., and Palleschi, V. “Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging,” 450.

<sup>26</sup> Cristofani, “La Pittura Tardo-Etrusca,” 56.

their journey to the afterlife.<sup>27</sup> With this analysis, Cristofani provides a valuable glimpse into the mentality behind the monsters, which is absent in earlier scholarship.

More recently, advancements in imaging technology have uncovered severely faded and damaged pieces of the Tomb of the Blue Demons. In 2009, excavators published multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging results on the heads of a blue demon and woman from the right wall.<sup>28</sup> Here, the woman's eyes, nose, and shoulder come into focus alongside the demon's outstretched arm (Fig. 14). His face, however, is not absolutely recognizable outside of a dark mass.<sup>29</sup> Archaeologists also applied these imaging analyses to the entrance wall in 2017, where scant traces of fresco pigment remain from the hunting scene and thus remains hardly visible to the naked eye, today (Fig. 15).<sup>30</sup> The article focuses its discussions around the techniques used to acquire the images, exemplifying the application of these imaging methods in archaeology rather than investigating the newly discovered fresco.

Nevertheless, the study successfully discerned an outline of the entrance wall's entire composition. Here, ancient painters illustrated a wild boar, a feline, and a landscape rich with vegetation (Fig. 9). Among the shrubs, two hunters pursue the boar as another hunter chases after a stag.<sup>31</sup> While archaeologists have exposed more about the tomb since its excavation with these imaging studies, very little has changed regarding its historical narrative or reputation in scholarship.

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<sup>27</sup> Cristofani, "La Pitture Tardo-Etrusca," 56.

<sup>28</sup> These techniques have typically been applied to ancient wall paintings before any conservation. It is through these images that archaeologists obtain valuable information about "the fresco details not otherwise visible" to the naked eye. For more: Adinolfi, "Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging," 450-58.

<sup>29</sup> Luciano Marra, Anna Pelagotti, Maria Cataldi, Rodolfo Carmagnola, and Gloria Adinolfi, "La signora dei demoni azzurri," *Archeo*, (Ottobre, 2009): 81-83.

<sup>30</sup> Adinolfi, "Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging," 450-58.

<sup>31</sup> Adinolfi, "Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan Tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging," 453-457.

As recent as October of 2020, archaeologists have reiterated that the Tomb of The Blue Demons is “the oldest representation of the dead world of Etruscan funerary painting.”<sup>32</sup> However, the Tomb of The Blue Demons is not the first time visual metaphors for the Underworld appear in Etruscan visual art. In 2015, archaeologist J. Rasmus Brandt closely examined this idea in his book *Death and Changing Rituals*. According to Brandt, these demons signal a *continuation* rather than an *invention*, explaining that ideas surrounding a world meant for the dead already existed in Etruria before the sixth century BC in Villanovan grave goods dating from 900 to 700 BC. Additionally, mythical funerary figures appear on terracotta plaques in Cerveteri, dating as early as the early sixth century BC (Fig. 16).<sup>33</sup> Here, though, these afterlife guides look entirely human and have yet to mutate into the extraordinary, sinister forms we see during the fourth and third centuries BC.

This heavy academic focus on dating the monsters’ visual arrival in Etruria, and the attempts at deciphering what their arrival signaled, has left behind the tomb itself, and all of its unanswered questions. For example, excavators took special note of a red sketch underlying the Underworld fresco that does not appear in the banquet, procession, or the hunt (Fig. 17).<sup>34</sup> While Cataldi-Dini points out that this drafting discrepancy could show different hands painting the tomb, additional scholarship surrounding the burial has neglected to investigate this question further.

By analyzing how the drafting techniques, pigments, and painting style of the Underworld scene interact with its surrounding paintings, this thesis will demonstrate that different hands painted the Underworld fresco. With a red sketch, fuller forms, and ghostly monsters, the right

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<sup>32</sup> Sofia Ceccarelli, Massimiliano Guarneri, Martina Romani, Lucina Giacomini, Massimo Francucci, Massimiliano Ciaffi, Mario Ferri De Collibus, Adriana Puiu, Gianluca Verona-Rinati, Francesco Colao, and Roberta Fantoni “Are the Blue Daemons Really Blue?” *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 47, (October, 2020): 258.

<sup>33</sup> Brandt, “Passage to The Underworld: Continuity or Change in Etruscan Funerary Ideology and Practices (6th–2nd Century BC),” in *Death and Changing Rituals: Function and Meaning in Ancient Funerary Practices*, eds. Marina Prusac and Håkon Roland (Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2015), 143. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvh1dtm6>.

<sup>34</sup> Cataldi-Dini, “La tomba dei Demoni Azzurri,” 45.

wall's painters left distinct traces of their cross-cultural artistic knowledge and capabilities that are not visible or apparent in the other walls. These noticeable changes in the way ancient artists illustrated the demons also reveal visual trends within the frightening features that parallel with broader artistic trends of imitation characteristic of late fourth and early third century Etruria. More importantly, combining these observations collectively points to a more complex timeline for the tomb's Underworld painting, which is more closely aligned with the late fourth and early third centuries, rather than the mid-fifth century BC.

### III. Chapter 2: Faded, Fractured, and Frightening - the Frescoes

#### The Tomb

Upon arrival at the tomb, a ramp fourteen meters long gradually leads to a single chamber, submerged more than four meters below ground (Fig. 18). At the ramp's end, the tomb space resembles a large imperfect square crowned by a double-pitched ceiling and column. The dark, enclosed chamber stretches six meters long on all four sides, with walls over three meters high—much more extensive than other single-chamber tombs on the Monterozzi Necropolis (Fig. 19). A thick brown line divides each wall in half, and a red line frames the top of the walls. (Fig. 7-11). Gentle cracks spread throughout the withered pigments, heightening their aged appearance. Each composition only occupies the wall's top half, leaving the dado areas below entirely blank. Beneath each fresco, nails forced into the surface have caused small fragments to chip away from the surface. Otherwise, the paintings' surfaces are smooth, with minor tool marks from builders and artisans only observable in the dados.

More extensive damage appears on the back and right walls, where large areas of the surface no longer survive, exposing patchy compositions and jagged rocks behind (Fig.7).<sup>35</sup> The tomb's damage continues into the floor, where a large pit lies below the left and back walls in the chamber's far left corner (Fig. 11). Next to this pit, along the tomb's far wall, are four much smaller

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<sup>35</sup> This textural difference shows the tomb builders applied a thick preparatory ground material to the rocks' natural surface, potentially to avoid the physical labor needed to smooth the stones. A typical characteristic of later fresco painting, this technique primarily involved using clay mixtures. Sprenger, M. and Bartoloni, G., *The Etruscans. Their History, Art, and Architecture*, (New York, Abrams: 1983), 64.

floor cavities evenly dispersed into the formation of a square. Two more small holes are also in the tomb's far-right corner, below the right and back walls. Additionally, in the ceiling above these floor pits in the back right corner, large plaster portions have detached, leaving a deep, irregular crevice in the tomb's ceiling.

### **The Banquet Scene**

Directly across from the tomb entrance, a banqueting scene depicts four reclining couples as they feast (Fig. 7). The fresco's background space fills with leafy branches, focusing viewers' attention on the celebration taking place. Among the banqueters are seven males and one female, each wearing elaborate textiles covered with reds, yellows, and blues. Intricate geometric patterns border their garments, further embellishing each figure. Thin black outlines frame many figures, with particularly prominent examples being in the composition's lower-left corner. Here, visible black marks outline the musician and the footstool behind him. The musician, wearing a vibrant blue tunic over one shoulder, plays the flute as he stands next to a tree. He faces the right, looking across the wall toward the banqueters next to him.

The first two men recline on red and blue textiles with cream borders. Below these textiles, a thick red and yellow checkered cushion comforts the couple. The male in red holds the stem of a branch in his left hand while he turns to look affectionately at the figure to the right, in blue. His right arm leans against the younger male behind him, who holds up a piece of food in his right hand. These two males gaze at one another, causing the second male to turn away from the kylix he holds. This second male's bright blue robe wraps around his left shoulder while he sits at the feet of a woman covered in red cloth.

Here, the wall's bottom half has detached, destroying the fresco below the banqueters. Based on imaging studies conducted throughout the tomb (Fig. 20a), a clearer picture of the wall reveals a woman sitting in profile view, wearing a sheer, pleated top as she reaches towards a bearded figure to her right. With her hair trailing behind her head as if caught in a light breeze, she places her arm at the nape of his neck. The male directly faces her, sitting in profile view. Red fabric covers the lower part of his body while his right hand cradles the woman's torso; his left-hand does not survive.

In the center of the composition, the only nude figure looks to the viewer's right, walking towards a more clearly defined male who raises his hand. Blue textiles cover this banqueters' legs, while a red fabric drapes over his left shoulder. Turning in the opposite direction, he leans against a bearded male holding a branch across his chest. A teal cloth covers this figure's legs as a yellow and red textile falls beneath him, against the checkered cushion. His blue robe has a bold border of yellow rectangles encased with red lines. This man leans against another banqueter who reclines under red textiles.

At the composition's far-right, the final two banqueters stare at one another. Here, the left figure holds a fig with one hand while turning to gaze at the male to his right. A red textile covers his lap, bordered with a thick hemline of cream triangles. The male beside him cradles his shoulders, and also has a fabric covering his bottom half as he leans against a rectangular pillow. This cloth has an intricate geometric pattern of yellow and red contrasting with his blue tunic. Both the compositions' ends have gold, decorative legs on the banqueters' bed, framed by larger branches. Interestingly, the pediment space above the fresco appears insignificant with only two leafy branches filling the space—a compositional arrangement atypical of fifth-century Tarquinian banquet scenes (Fig. 21-22).

## The Procession Scene

On the left wall, spirited procession figures walk, dance, and ride towards the banquet (Fig. 8). The first male, standing to the viewer's far left, turns to the viewer's right with one leg raised and both arms spread out as he dances. He wears a plain brown tunic, with a red fabric draped over his shoulders and no shoes. The dancer's right-hand grasps towards another male ahead of him, who also dances barefoot. He, too, wears a brown garment, with blue patches adorning his belt and skirt. Both men wear decorative bands on their heads, with strings fluttering behind their necks.

Following these two dancers, a bearded man guides a two-horse chariot. With one brown horse and one bright blue horse, the driver wears a copper fabric draping over his right shoulder and arm. A thin blue border adorns his orange robe, further contrasted with a saffron yellow fringe. He looks to his left while his body faces the right, directly towards the brown chariot in front of him. He holds the reins instructing the horses; the foremost horse has a bright blue coat, illustrated in a simple outline alongside a brown horse further in the background. Both horses have long orange tails with matching manes and plain collars around their thick necks.<sup>36</sup>

After the horses, a third male dances towards the banquet; however, he wears more lavish garments than the other dancers, with strapped sandals and an open tunic. Facing the right, he wears a cloak across his shoulders, both turquoise and saffron, decorated with orange dots. This

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<sup>36</sup> In the tomb, bones from at least three different horses were among various ceramic fragments and four other species' bones (pig, goat, dog, and turtle). Also found were metal and wood fragments and two iron horseshoes, which were once a chariot with two wheels. These deposition practices primarily occur in seventh-century Etruscan tombs also enriched with weapons and shields; however, there are no military goods in the tomb, more closely aligning it with a social status display. According to scholar Jodi Magness, ancient Cyprus and Italy are the only regions with this type of wealthy-funerary parade. See: De Grossi Mazzorin, "Nuovi Dati Sui Cavalli Etruschi: i Resti Equini della tomba dei "Demoni Azzurri" a Tarquinia," 328, 325-326; Magness, Jodi, "A Near Eastern Ethnic Element Among the Etruscan Elite?" in *Etruscan Studies: Journal of the Etruscan Foundation*. Vol. 8, Article 4 (2001): p. 82. Barker and Rasmussen, *The Etruscans*, 261; Krauskopf, "The Grave and Beyond in Etruscan Religion," 78.

man reaches forward to a musician walking ahead of him, who wears similar sandals and a blue and yellow tunic.

Leading the procession, this male plays the flute while walking beside a second musician, who plays the lyre. The lyre player wears a red tunic gathered at his left shoulder, embellished with a bright blue border and one cream stripe. The musicians stand behind a more petite figure who approaches the pottery ahead of them. This child wears a brown tunic gathered at both shoulders with a headband. Striped sections of aqua and chestnut cover the child's legs, draping at their bare feet. This skirt-like piece of clothing has wavy lines, furthering the idea of movement as his feet appear to step forwards. Lastly, the child carries a brown object in his right hand and gestures with his left- towards a large amphora on the table before him.

At the procession's end, painters illustrated multiple ceramic objects gathered on a table with two shelves below. Here, the wall pigment does not survive as it does in the composition's center. The artist's reconstruction, however, offers valuable insight for the objects once decorating the area (Fig. 23). On the ground, a deep brown *kylix* sits beside two other things. Above these, two more *kylikes* fit snugly on the first shelf—both of which are black in the reconstruction. One of these vessels is the same size as the one on the ground below, and the other is comparably much longer. The highest shelf, below the tabletop, holds only one item resting centrally.

Topping the table are three exceptionally large ceramics, two of which are identical amphorae. These two amphorae are cream-colored with red accent bands near their rims and bases. Between them is a much more decorative black *calyx krater* that has two figures filling its central register and ornate motifs on the top and bottom of the vessel. Located at the base of these three containers are two smaller pitchers, or *oinochoe*, and a smaller *alabastron*, all decorated with

various black and red designs. On both the table's ends, large decorative legs support the furniture and its shelves.

Throughout the festive procession, minor damage affects the composition aside from fading (Fig. 8). Interestingly, no wall fragments have detached from the procession as they have in the banquet, leaving the composition reasonably intact. The fresco's bottom right corner and left side have suffered the most pigment loss. This severe fading in the first three figures appears again on the tomb's entrance wall, to the procession's left, in a barely visible fresco.

### **The Hunting Scene**

Across the tomb's entrance wall, virtually no pigment survives on the wall (Fig. 15). Red paint traces hint that a fresco once illuminated the surface, and through ultraviolet and fluorescent imaging, archaeologists revealed hunting scenes on both sides of the doorway. Based on these technological surveys, an artist has reconstructed the composition (Fig. 9). On the viewer's left, a hunter holds a spear across his body. Much of his torso, opposite arm, and head have entirely faded. Next to the first hunter, there is a "dark mass" from which scholars discerned a tusk, an ear, and four legs, probably indicating a wild boar (Fig. 24). The digital analysis also revealed one more animal here, above the door's top left corner (Fig. 25), biting the boar's back. Below these creatures, a second hunter lurks in the shrubs with a long spear close to the doorway (Fig. 15).<sup>37</sup>

Above the door, the technological analysis revealed a wild caracal cat sitting on a branch (Fig. 26), which is recognizable by the shape of its ears and the red illustrating its pelt.<sup>38</sup> In the

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<sup>37</sup> Adinolfi, G., Carmagnola, R., Cataldi, M., Marras, L., and Palleschi, V. "Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging," *Archaeometry*, v61 n. 2., 2019, 454-455. <https://doi.org/10.1111/arcm.12423>.

<sup>38</sup> According to zoologist Marco Masetti. See footnote 37.

center of the wall, the cat stealthily waits above the door leering at animals below.<sup>39</sup> To the right, the artist's reconstruction depicts a large deer prancing towards the doorway, with large antlers twisting up to the tomb ceiling. A smaller, more agile feline runs between the deer's legs. Behind the deer, another hunter prepares to launch a spear towards the animal (Fig. 27). Adinolfi hypothesizes there was once a field lush with greenery and shrubs in the hunt's background,<sup>40</sup> but the way that ancient artists colored the hunting figures is unknown.

When archaeologists excavated the tomb, they found dirt had filled up to the ceiling behind the tomb entrance from a hole above the original entranceway (Fig. 12). This soil piled up over time and settled directly against the hunting fresco, contributing to the widespread and intense fading. Archaeologist Jacopo De Grossi Mazzorin theorizes that looters dug the hole to access the burial, which then gradually filled back in over time.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Underworld Scene**

Across the right wall, painters created a composition filled with traveling humans and gruesome, lurking demons (Fig. 10). Reading left to right from the tomb's back right corner, the first wall portion does not survive except for a blue man paddling a boat towards the banquet (Fig. 28). Here, the blue figure stands with his body facing viewers and with his head turned in profile as his left elbow raises behind him. The ship he steers is crescent-shaped as it floats across the water, and it is decorated with a crisscross pattern along the vessel's rim. Wearing a tight brown fabric over blue-gray skin, the male also wears a hat, fastened through his black beard.

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<sup>39</sup> Adinolfi, "Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia," 456.

<sup>40</sup> Adinolfi, "Recovery," 452.

<sup>41</sup> De Grossi Mazzorin, "Nuovi dati sui cavalli etruschi: i resti equini della tomba dei "Demoni azzurri" a Tarquinia, 324-25.

Next to the boatman, the first female wears a full-length garment with strapped sandals (Fig. 29). Her tunic has an elaborate border of red and yellow circles framed by a thin teal line. Her face gazes at the figures to the viewer's the right as she places her hand on the child beside her. The child wears a cream-colored tunic with a fragile turquoise border as he gestures towards a blue demon towards the center of the composition. Here, the blue figure's body faces frontally while both of his arms gesture towards the woman on his right (Fig. 30). Though he looks back at her, his body walks in the opposite direction, as he appears to be guiding her towards the other figures. He wears a gray-brown tunic hemmed in yellow pigment and spotted with reds, which gathers at his waist to create a billowing skirt. The female he gazes at addresses him in return while her left-hand reaches above the winged figure at her waist. Through a simple outline, artists hinted at pleating in her tunic. Red fabric covers her head and drapes across her shoulders, and is bordered in an intricate yellow and blue geometric pattern. The fabric delicately frames the woman's face, covering her hair as her body opens toward viewers. At her waist, a male leans forwards to grasp her. His legs actively bend, and he has fluorescent blue hair and large wings, surviving in a single outline.

After this winged monster, a large blue creature holds a yellow-gray snake in each hand (Fig. 31). The serpents have dark red dots covering their bodies, and both their tongues slither out of their open mouths.<sup>42</sup> This blue beast wears a red tunic adorned with a yellow border gathered on his left shoulder. With his body facing frontally, his head turns to the viewer's right, and his feet slide to the left. His knees bend slightly, scrunching him between the composition's top and bottom. He has flaming orange hair with enlarged, pointed facial features. His eyes are a burnt red hue, and a deep frown sits above his chin as he looks at the final figure on the wall.

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<sup>42</sup> These snakes closely resemble the snakes found in the tomb of the Infernal Quadriga, Sarteano. Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 228.

The figure on the viewer's extreme right wears a short sleeved white tunic bordered in blue (Fig. 31). Large wings extend out behind him. His right foot lifts from the ground, both knees are bent, and he leans forward as if trying to take flight. The figure's bright orange hair matches the beard that frames his sharp, sinister eyes. In profile, thin black lines border his lips and his eyes. Wall fragments are missing between this winged figure and the blue figure, making it difficult to discern any fresco here. Behind these figures, the composition becomes obscure with no background environment, except for the blue water beneath the boat at the painting's opposite end (Fig. 28).

## Summary

The Underworld scene starkly clashes in theme alongside its neighboring compositions, with vague surroundings and even more suspicious characters. Ancient painters strangely placed an unsettling atmosphere together with festive aristocratic displays. Hunting, procession, and banquet images all illustrate events enjoyed by the living, even during a funerary ceremony. Contrastingly, the Underworld fresco depicts a space exclusively for the dead, and a location accessible to humans only after death. Here, mysterious multicolored monsters and winged creatures await to guide the deceased's soul on their journey into death. These creatures do not accept everyone on the trip, however, leaving many souls trapped in a liminal phase between life on earth and the hereafter, haunting those they left behind.<sup>43</sup>

Compared to the other three walls, this ominous composition drastically transforms the tomb's ambiance. With the sociable banquet, the festive procession and the successful hunt,

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<sup>43</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on its Challenging Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1992), 117.

painters carefully built the tomb's airy, jovial environment only to disrupt it with beastly spirits along the right wall. This visual and atmospheric clash is apparent nowhere more vividly than in the monsters' grotesque features, which distinctly differentiate their otherworldly presence from the other figures in the tomb. Artists constructed these figures with various combinations of hideous physical attributes: some have razor-sharp fangs and mangey hair, others have long, hooked noses and flaming red eyes. A few creatures have wings, others have blue skin, and one figure has all six characteristics.

Regardless of the differences between these demons, the right wall's composition reveals the Etruscans' imaginative capability to visually reinvent the same afterlife themes. In Etruscan art, comparable unsettling figures survive from elsewhere in Etruria explicitly dated after the fourth century BC—supplying valuable insight for dating and cataloging the monsters here in the Tomb of The Blue Demons.<sup>44</sup> Intricately adapted on sarcophagi, pottery, and other tombs, these demons show a distinct level of artistic imagination in later Etruscan art that is not present in the banquet or the procession.

Compared to the Underworld, banqueting compositions show a visible framework and formula for depicting Etruscan funerary feasts. In each image on cinerary urns, painted ceramics, and tomb walls (Fig. 3; 33; 21), a male couple always reclines on the left side of the composition. Next to this same-sex couple on the left, another couple reclines on a funerary bed in the center of the compositions, however they depict a male and female (Fig. 22). Interestingly, the female always wears the same white and red striped tunic and leans into the male to her right. After these two banqueters, artists illustrate another couple feasting, who are often both male (Fig. 22; 32).

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<sup>44</sup> Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), 248-249.

These compositions closely resemble the Greek *symposion*, an all-male dining event except for female entertainers or prostitutes.<sup>45</sup> In Etruria, however, artists significantly altered their details to depict Etruscan traditions of including women. As seen in the back wall of the Tomb of the Blue Demons (Fig. 7), a woman reclines beside multiple other males. While the nature of Etruscan feasting appears quite like Greek traditions, the inclusion of women in Etruscan banquets is a grave cultural and social difference. The women of Etruria notably had more freedoms in society than the women of Greece, and participation of females in Etruscan social events, like banquets, was often a point of contention between the two civilizations.<sup>46</sup> The banquet on the far wall in the Tomb of the Blue Demons, perfectly emulates this Etruscan tradition in parallel with other mid-fifth century BC banqueting frescoes in Tarquinia.

Interestingly, ancient artists never illustrate demons in Etruscan banquets, although they do occasionally appear in late third century processions (Fig. 35). Banqueting and procession themes both, however, do not creatively transform on the same level as the Underworld does over the course of Etruscan wall painting. These two themes largely remain the same while afterlife depictions change drastically. In their first feature on the sixth century BC terracotta plaques from Cerveteri, afterlife figures appear as other Etruscans, as humans. They quickly mutate, however, and by the mid-fourth century BC they become strange creatures from another world, who will all continue to evolve in Etruscan wall painting until the first century BC.

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<sup>45</sup> Athenian red-figure stamnos with reclining youths and men, woman playing pipes. 475-425 BC. Paris, Musee du Louvre: G415. Vase number: 214408. Beazley Archive.

<sup>46</sup> Barker and Rasmussen, *The Etruscans*, 249; 107. See also: Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality*, 23.

## IV. Chapter 3: Molding Mediterranean Monsters

### Introduction

With elongated ears and noses, unkempt beards, and ghoulish expressions, ancient painters applied crude features to the Tomb of the Blue Demons' figures, underscoring their otherworldly presence (Fig. 36). Their mysterious personalities become amplified with multicolored flesh, large wings, and fiery eyes. Among the five demons, however, each figure's body position, hair color, skin color, textile pattern, and facial features is different from every other, evoking ideas of individuality and specific character identity.

These distinctive characteristics and exaggerated features shed light on the right walls' painting process and decorative period through broader trends of imitation. Comparably unsettling figures survive in at least ten other tombs on the Monterozzi necropolis, all from the mid-fourth to the early third centuries BC. During the late fourth and early third centuries BC, especially, there appears to have been a tendency among artists to rearrange and remold the exact monstrous figures into slightly different versions—creating patterns of variation rather than duplication.

These variations closely align with the crude figures in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, presenting valuable pictorial comparisons for naming and dating these demonic characters. These ghastly visual similarities also surface in Greek and Roman images during the mid-fourth century BC, demonstrating an active diffusion of cross-Mediterranean artistic and funerary traditions. Regardless of whether or not the Etruscans adopted the compositions specifically from the Greeks or Romans for the Tomb of The Blue Demons, artists unquestionably merged and reinvented these

cross-Mediterranean themes to harmonize with and enhance this burial chamber during the late fourth century.

## Figure One

The most apparent parallel connects the tomb with Greece through the blue boatman quietly paddling in the tomb's back right corner (Fig. 28). Scholars, including Steingraber, Adinolfi, and De Grossi Mazzorin, widely agree this figure is Charon, a Greek mythological figure responsible for ferrying the dead across the river Styx into the Underworld—if he approved their journey.<sup>47</sup> In ancient literature, Charon served as a guide for the deceased, described by writers as “a demonic spirit in Hades” who has blue-black flesh—much like Figure One.<sup>48</sup>

Greek art typically depicts Charon on *lekythoi*: tall, narrow funerary vessels heavily traded in the ancient Mediterranean and primarily used for storing oil (Fig. 37).<sup>49</sup> These distinctly shaped vessels often displayed mythological scenes linked to death, and repeatedly illustrate Charon (Fig. 38).<sup>50</sup> Occasionally, Greek artists placed Charon alongside the deceased, as in this late fifth century red-figure *lekythos* (Fig. 39). Other times, artists depict Charon beside other mythological characters, as found on a white-ground *lekythos* from 475 - 425 BC (Fig. 40). In these images, painters always placed Charon on a boat wearing a tunic and either holding an oar, rowing, or helping the deceased step into the skiff (Fig. 41). He appears more human than monstrous in many

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<sup>47</sup> Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on its Challenging Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, 117.

<sup>48</sup> Barker and Rasmussen, *The Etruscans*, 240. A note on his blue flesh: After analyzing ancient sources, like Pausanias, scholars argue that blue connects directly to the deceased's physical state after death: with no blood flow or oxygen, skin gradually turns blue as the body decays. Therefore, these demons appear as personifications of the forces which take away the deceased's soul but leave their physical bodies behind.

<sup>49</sup> Mannack, Thomas, “Greek Decorated Pottery I: Athenian Vase-Painting,” in *A Companion to Greek Art*, edited by Tyler Jo Smith, and Dimitris Plantzos (John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2012), 56. More images of this vessel are available in the Alison Franz Photo Collection: AT210 - AT213.

<sup>50</sup> Barker and Rasmussen, *The Etruscans*, 135-36.

of these illustrations, as if he is quietly enjoying a small boat trip. Likewise, in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, Charon serenely rows away from the deceased and other demons on the shoreline. This posture closely resembles an early fifth-century white-ground *lekythos*, where Charon stands aboard his boat with one hand holding his long oar and the other arm behind him (Fig. 37).

The immense similarities between Charon's depictions and Figure One, in these images, illustrate the painters' familiarity with Greek mythology and fifth century artistic trends. Charon's *lekythos* depictions portray the exact figure as that in the Tomb of the Blue Demons: a man wearing a dark, knee-length tunic and large, round hat stands, in profile view, in a boat. Likewise, in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, Figure One's silhouette faces his left as he begins rowing (Fig. 28). Meanwhile, the bottom of his deep red tunic disappears into the ship. Additionally, painters applied similar material features to Figure One's context: a large, crescent-shaped dinghy, adorned with a billowing ribbon and driven by a long oar—explicitly placing Greek visual traditions within the tomb.

However, these similarities with fifth-century Greek objects do not necessarily make a mid-fifth-century date more compelling for the fresco in Tarquinia. As Steingraber importantly noted, ancient Mediterranean archaeology reveals many chronological delays in artistic diffusion between cultures, meaning that many *lekythoi* did not arrive in Etruria until many years after their production in Greece.<sup>51</sup> These cultural considerations point the fresco towards a slightly later completion date, more closely aligned with when these Greek objects likely began appearing in Etruria during the fourth century BC.

Outside Greece, four hundred kilometers south of Tarquinia, Charon has also surfaced in Tomb 47, from Paestum. On the east wall of this tomb, which dates to around 350 BC, Charon

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<sup>51</sup> Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 27.

stands aboard his yellow boat (fig. 5).<sup>52</sup> He gestures to a woman and more petite figure on land, and below them, three figures follow a cow and a young male. The other three walls of this tomb depict reclining women, a youth, and a musician.<sup>53</sup> A solid red line frames these registers, and beneath the frescoes, painters left the dado areas blank, much like in the Tomb of the Blue Demons. Tomb 47, however, has a thicker red band along the wall's base. At the top of the wall, Charon's facial features are remarkably ghoulish. His mouth has been depicted with two thick red lines, which match his long tunic. Disheveled gray hair spikes from his head while bushy black eyebrows grow above his enormous beady eyes. These circular eyes appear sunken into his face with dark shadows above them from his eyebrows. He has no neck, only two black dots for a nose, and on his left cheek, painters added red shades that almost look like face paint. While resting his right wing, Charon spreads his left wing out beside him and reaches towards the woman before him—a posture opposite to Charon in the Tomb of the Blue Demons. Finally, thin black strokes outline his arms as thick black lines and a few red brush strokes shape his wings.

While not identical to Figure One, Charon in Tomb 47 illustrates striking compositional similarities. Below his crescent-shaped vessel, gray waves tumble towards the boat, meeting his triangular ore; his solid red tunic drapes over his shoulders, gathering at his waist before disappearing into the ship. Likewise, in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, the blue sea below Figure One's boat gently stirs from his rowing. Even though the boat's left end does not survive, the ship's right side dramatically curves up behind him. Figure One wears a similar red tunic but faces away from the other figures, while in Tomb 47, Charon reaches for the veiled woman's hand. Additionally, the woman wears red and white textiles with an intricate necklace and matching

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<sup>52</sup> A. D. Trendall, "Archaeology in South Italy and Sicily, 1967-69." *Archaeological Reports*, no. 16 (1969), 34. doi:10.2307/580996.

<sup>53</sup> Mark Cartwright, "[Paestum](#)." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. Last modified February 02, 2016.

headdress, which directly echoes the woman's attire beside Figure One in the Tomb of the Blue Demons, as well as the woman between Figures Two and Three.

These compositional and illustrative parallels between Tomb 47 and Figure One visually connect the Tomb of the Blue Demons with artists in a mid-fourth century Greek settlement in southern Italy. Here, in Tomb 47, Charon exhibits many features found on early imported Greek vases such as the *lekythoi*. He also illustrates, however, facial adaptations characteristic of Etruscan funerary monsters. Likewise, in the Tomb of the Blue Demons, Charon's features are further adapted and enhanced to harmonize with the other mysterious creatures in the scene. These similarities between the Tomb of the Blue Demons and Tomb 47 demonstrate almost identical artistic practices that support a mid-fourth century BC date for the right wall.

Elsewhere in Etruria, few illustrations explicitly resemble the Greek Charon as do Figure One and the figure in Tomb 47. The same Charon does appear in one other chamber burial, the François Tomb (fig. 42a), found slightly north of Tarquinia, in Vulci. The tomb's date ranges between the end of the fourth century through the first century BC, displaying multiple burial depositions and pictorial embellishment phases.<sup>54</sup> Here, in elaborate scenes of Greek mythology and Etruria's military clashes with Rome,<sup>55</sup> a blue Charon stands behind a beheaded male figure (fig. 42b).

Like Figure One in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, the François figure wears a red tunic adorned with a white band down his chest and a white cap covering his head. Interestingly, in this tomb, Charon is now without a boat but steadies a hammer on his left shoulder. Although not well preserved, his face has a lengthened, grotesque nose resting above a dark beard. With these

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<sup>54</sup> Steingräber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 187. This tomb, believed to be intact when found in the nineteenth century, held the remains and grave goods from four generations of the family; Pallottino, Massimo, *Etruscan Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1952), 115.

<sup>55</sup> Pallottino, *Etruscan Painting*, 118. These battles were specifically with Vulci and Tarquinia.

attributes, this mid-fourth century BC Charon resembles Figure One *and* the monstrous faces of Figures Two through Five (Fig. 36).

By imitating Charon's Greek attributes and introducing a hammer and grotesque face in the François Tomb, the artists also visually connected him with a parallel figure in Etruscan mythology: Charun, who according to Etruscan mythology, served similar guiding purposes for the dead (Fig. 43a). Charun is often depicted with blue skin in tomb painting and wears a red and white tunic,<sup>56</sup> like in the Tomb of The Blue Demons and the François Tomb; however, this figure also typically carries a hammer and wears tall, strapped boots—two things present in the François Tomb; but absent in the Tomb of The Blue Demons. These notable visual discrepancies and adaptations in the Tomb of The Blue Demons make clear that Figure One is indeed Charon and *not* Charun; however, the figure's presence still serves the same purpose: to ferry the dead to the Underworld.

Alongside these similar Charon images found in burials from territories to the north, south, and east of the Tomb of the Blue Demons, the right wall displays a level of cross-cultural artistic awareness primarily practiced during the mid-fourth century BC. Furthermore, these late comparanda reveal a tendency among artists to replicate the same funerary theme expertly and continuously into slightly varied images—creating trends of imitation. In other words, based on a widely accepted visual interpretation of Charon's ferryman role, artists in the Tomb of the Blue Demons re-combined his features on the right wall, making slight compositional alterations to Charon in order to visually harmonize him with the other monsters and the rest of the tomb.

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<sup>56</sup>Ancient sources explicitly link blue directly to *Charon*, setting him apart from other Underworld demons. Based on accounts like Pausanias, scholars argue that blue connects directly to the deceased's physical state after death. In the writings of Pausanias, these demons appear as pictorial representations of the natural forces which take away the body's blood flow and oxygen after death, turning the skin blue. Physical decomposition, therefore, must have been part of the journey to the afterlife, both accelerated and guided by monsters into a world beyond the living. For more: Francesco Marcattili, "Il Colore di Caronte e le porte dell'Ade" in *Segni e Colore: Dialoghi sulla pittura tardoclassica ed ellenistica*, Atti del Convegno (Pavia, Collegio Ghislieri, 9-10 Marzo 2012): 69-78.

## Figure Two

In the composition's center, a blue figure mimics Charon's blue flesh (Fig. 36; 31). Surviving on the wall without a head or hands, Figure Two wears a short tunic. The fresco pigments have severely faded where his head and hands would be, leaving only the damaged plaster surface below. Through imaging surveys (see Chapter 2), archaeologists recovered Figure Two's head, which eventually resulted in a more detailed reconstruction (Fig. 14). We now know that Figure Two has bright orange hair, and his head is turned to his right, with flaming orange hair. His ears, nose, teeth, and eyes all have sharp prickly edges, threatening to pierce anyone who comes too close.

Even though Figure Two's original face does not survive well, artists arranged his remaining body parts in a similar manner to many other transitory figures found on contemporary Etruscan on mirrors, sarcophagi, and ceramics. These sharp traits notably resurface on a late fifth century inscribed Etruscan mirror, naming the Underworld figure as Nathum (Fig. 44a-44b). On the mirror, Nathum stands to the viewer's left behind two other figures (Orestes and Clytemnestra) and holds two snakes. As an underworld goddess of destiny, fate, and unknown power,<sup>57</sup> Nathum's presence aligns with the murder about to take place before her. On this mirror, Nathum's triangular profile precisely emulates Figure Two's angular facial features and wild hair. She wears a plain, short-sleeved tunic that gathers at her waist and reaches her mid-thigh. Finally, Nathum's body turns to the right toward viewers as she walks to the left with one knee bent—exactly like Figure Two.

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<sup>57</sup> Smith, William, "Religion," in *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, 1854. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>

The visual similarities between Figure Two and Nathum, while based on a reconstruction of the Tomb of The Blue Demons, serve as an example of the grotesque features Etruscan artists were assigning and adapting to these strange, otherworldly characters during this time. Ancient artists recombined these features once again on the fourth century Sarcophagus of the Priest (Fig. 45). Here, behind a winged figure, a blue monster reaches towards a warrior. He has no wings or tools, but he does have a knee-length tunic gathered at his waist, a mangy beard, and an outstretched arm, just like Figure Two. In both the Sarcophagus and the mirror, the figures resembling Figure Two each stand behind others in the composition, sometimes partially tucked at the back of the scene. Similarly, in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, Figure Two tries to guide the deceased woman while three other figures compete for her attention. This subtle, yet active posture is unlike the traditionally Etruscan paratactic-profile view that artists illustrate figures with in the procession, banquet, and elsewhere during the fifth-century BC.

This bizarre supporting role by Figure Two appears yet again on a red-figure calyx-krater from the end of the fourth and beginning of the third century BC. Decorating the krater are multiple women, a beheading, and two images of Charun (Fig. 46a-b). Each Charun has elongated, pointy ears on both sides of his head, framing large black eyes and a sharp nose. Both Charuns also wear a short tunic over their lean body, echoing Figure Two's garment. On the vessel's front, one Charun sneers at murder taking place, revealing razor-sharp teeth above his disheveled beard. The other Charun, on the vessel's opposite side, gazes at a veiled woman to his right while another woman stands behind him to the left.

While his precise identity is still a mystery, Figure Two simultaneously emulates many other wandering monsters from fourth century Etruria to underscore the Underworld's ephemeral atmosphere. Through jagged teeth, spiny hair, and physical movements, artists recombined other

transitory, morbid visual associations here on the right wall to not only guide the deceased woman on her journey, but to also harmonize Figure Two with the other monsters in the composition. Artists continue to use his turning posture to create demons throughout the fourth and third centuries BC.

### Figure Three

The third demon's pigments have partially faded, erasing his wings and face (Fig. 36; 31). His bottom-half survives, leaving long legs and a dark-brown torso wearing only a loincloth. These few attributes create a character who looks partially human, although his blue hair, piercing eyes, and pale wings reinforce his ghostly status. Additionally, he crouches extremely low to the ground to snatch at the woman's waist. She unknowingly looks in the opposite direction at Figure Two; meanwhile, Figure Three is about to fly off and force her to join him.

This phantom-like figure appears outside Etruria on multiple mid-fifth century red-figure ceramic vessels from Greece. Found in Attica, a white-ground *lekythos* from 450 – 400 BC has a similar naked figure carrying the deceased's feet (Fig. 47).<sup>58</sup> He appears again on a red-figure *kantharos* from Nola, Italy, dated between 475 and 425 BC (Fig. 48).<sup>59</sup> This transitory rendition of Figure Three grabs the deceased while another figure holds a sword and has a serpent slithering around his torso, resembling Figure Four. Finally, a late fifth-century red-figure pitcher displays him again, this time wearing a knee-length tunic.<sup>60</sup> While illustrated in an entirely different artistic

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<sup>58</sup> Attic white-ground lekythos. Beazley Archive, Vase Number: 216353. London, British Museum, D58. Beazley Archive.

<sup>59</sup> Red-Figure *kantharos*, 475-425 BC. Found in Nola, Italy. Beazley Archive. Vase Number: 212127. London, British Museum, London, British Museum, E155. Beazley Archive.

<sup>60</sup> Red-figure Athenian mug, 450 - 400 BC. Beazley Archive. Vase Number: 17489. Liverpool, Merseyside Museum, Port Sunlight, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, Lady Lever Art Gallery, 50.43.12.

style, these three mythological Greek figures underscore Figure Three's dramatically monstrous adaptation into Etruscan visual culture during the fourth century BC.

The Greeks also emulate Figure Three's snatching aura in the Tomb of Persephone from Vergina, dated to the mid-fourth century (Fig. 49).<sup>61</sup> This faded fresco illustrates a frame from the tale of Persephone when Hades abducts her into the Underworld to live with him for half the year,<sup>62</sup> portraying a vividly grim narrative. Here, along the left wall, Persephone flails her arms above her head while Hades' arm anchors her to the chariot for the journey. He uses his other arm to steer the horses into the world below as a female figure in the bottom right shudders in terror from seeing the devastating event.

Compared to Figure Three, the Tomb of Persephone depicts an entirely human interpretation of the journey to the Underworld after death. This human illustration of mythological characters is comparable to the lekythoi imagery, and more importantly, explicitly underscores the eccentricity of the Etruscans' later funerary figures. Additionally, in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, much more of the journey visually unfolds around Figure Three, while in the Tomb of Persephone, little happens on the walls surrounding Persephone. These marked differences in visual form and overall composition between the Tomb of Persephone and Figure Three more broadly capture the many pictorial discrepancies existing between Greek and Etruscan Underworld images, especially during the fourth century BC.

Within the Monterozzi Necropolis, a similar spirit reappears on the right wall in the Tomb of Orcus II (Fig. 50). Here, across from a cyclops, a nude winged figure walks away from a nude

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<sup>61</sup> M. Stefankis and A. Vlavogilakis, "Reproducing the Wall Painting of the Abduction of Persephone (Vergina-Macedonia): Conditions and Restrictions for a Successful Archaeological Experiment," *EXARC Journal* 2014/1. (February 2014), <https://exarc.net/>.

<sup>62</sup> Lincoln, Bruce, "The Rape of Persephone: A Greek Scenario of Women's Initiation," *The Harvard Theological Review* 72, no. 3-4 (1979), 223. For the fully translated excerpt from *Homer* see: 225.

man standing beside a ceramic display. The winged figure on the earlier wall, however, comparably emulates Figure Three's transient profile. In the Tomb of Orcus II, painters created this unnamed figure with markedly human physical features and an active stance, making him appear more angelic than demonic, and more Greek than Etruscan. Additionally, to the frescoes' right is a slightly recessed wall decorated with Tuchulcha, an Etruscan Underworld demon who closely resembles Figure Four.

Despite Figure Three's facial features, his similarities with the figures in Greece underscore the multifaceted ways Etruscan artists gained visual inspiration from elsewhere in the Mediterranean and actively adapted those images to intertwine with their own visual culture. Whether or not artists specifically referenced Greek examples in creating Figure Three, the figure unquestionably occupies an identically quiet and unsettling presence. Instead of resembling a human, however, painters in the Tomb of The Blue Demons blended his features with more "Etruscan" attributes, adding spindly fingers and toes, disheveled hair, and wide eyes to harmonize with the surrounding fresco—simultaneously underscoring his otherworldly and ephemeral presence. As previously stated, these grotesque adaptations creating Figure Three are signature of artists painting in late fourth and early third century Etruria, casting doubt on the fresco being produced during the mid-fifth century BC.

### **Figure Four**

While Figures Two and Three both escort the woman towards Figure One, Figure Four turns in the opposite direction, fiercely glaring at the dark beast to his left (Fig. 36; 2). His arms stretch out to either side, and he holds a spotted snake in each hand. Beneath him, fresco fragments have crumbled from the wall, leaving him to appear hovering above an empty void. Figure Four's

identity is ambiguous, for he contains many of the visual attributes discussed for the previous characters. For example, his blue flesh mirrors both Figures One and Two, and his disturbing facial features mimic Figure Five (as will be discussed). Additionally, his short, one-shoulder tunic looks like Figure Two's garment. These visual combinations of the other monsters in the composition echo the immense parallels between Figure Four and other figures in fourth century Etruscan visual culture, shedding some light on his identity and dating.

Figure Four's sinister profile also appears on a mid-fifth century mirror, previously mentioned for its visual similarities to Figure Two. On this mirror, to the far left, Nathum stands in profile view holding a snake in each hand as she looks towards the viewer's right, echoing Figure Four's glance towards Figure Five (Fig. 44a-b).<sup>63</sup> Figure Four, although, appears noticeably more menacing with bushy eyebrows, an elongated nose, and protruding and upturned lips, accentuating Figure Four's mutations into tomb painting during the mid-fourth century BC. Additionally, the serpents with spotted scales wrap around her arms with gaping mouths, like Figure Four's snakes. Nathum also wears a short tunic; however, she has short sleeves while Figure Four's tunic gathers on his shoulder.

Despite these changes in their facial features and tunics, Nathum occupies an identical transient and prowling presence as Figure Four. However, without an inscription in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, naming Figure Four as Nathum becomes confounded by similar mythological depictions elsewhere in late fourth century Etruria. Instead, their similarities serve to underscore how artists molded pre-existing Underworld ideas to synchronize with the neighboring wall paintings while still coinciding with broader afterlife visual associations.

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<sup>63</sup> Orestes kills Clytemnestra. Etruscan Mirror, 440 BC. Altes Museum, Berlin. <https://www.arretetonchar.fr/>

The Tomb of Orcus II also has strange, unnerving monsters on its walls resembling Figure Four (Fig. 51). Located across the Monterozzi necropolis, the Tombs of Orcus I and II date from the mid-fourth century to the first century BC. Its patrons routinely expanded the chamber, adding rooms and burials for multiple generations.<sup>64</sup> Within the frescoes, scholars Sprenger and Bartoloni name the many Greek and Etruscan Underworld characters Hades, Persephone, Geryon, Theseus, Tuchulcha, a Cyclops, and Odysseus.<sup>65</sup> These funerary figures illustrate “a gloomy, even sinister view of the next world,” which scholars argue creates an uncomfortable atmosphere within the burial.<sup>66</sup>

Along the entrance wall to Tomb II, a severely damaged Tuchulcha stands next to a reclining figure while holding snakes, comparable to Figure Four. As an Underworld demon, Tuchulcha stems from Etruscan mythology, though, his precise roles are unclear. In Tomb of Orcus II, a blue snake wraps around his left arm as he looks to his left, echoing Figure Four. Damage has erased Tuchulcha’s right side, including parts of his face, his entire torso, and legs. The parts that survive illustrate a face with swollen, monstrous features: his ears resemble a donkey’s, and two small snakes slither from the crown of his head. Additionally, a beak stretches from his face framed by disheveled gray hair. Just like Figure Four, Tuchulcha looks at the figure on his right, with his one serpent flailing out to the side.

Naming Figure Four as Tuchulcha, without wings, a beak, or snakes slithering from his head, is challenging; however, ancient artists perceptibly sought reference in his images for the Tomb of the Blue Demons. A more recognizable rendition survives in Vulci on a mid-fourth-century red-figure amphora. Here, Tuchulcha waves two serpents while an oblivious couple

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<sup>64</sup> Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 206.

<sup>65</sup> Sprenger and Bartoloni, 67.

<sup>66</sup> Sprenger and Bartoloni, 67.

embraces and a wide-eyed Charun holds his mallet (Fig. 52). Both Tuchulcha and Charun have unkempt beards and mangy hair growing from their heads, much like Figures Four, Five, and One. Additionally, *all* these Figures wear knee-length tunics gathered at the waist. Compared to Figure Four, explicitly, Tuchulcha depicts the exact figure only with wings. He has the same thick eyebrows, scraggly beard, enormous ears, glaring eyes, and over-grown hair as Figure Four. Furthermore, his serpents have the same spotted scales and triangular beards, although they do not show their tongues. Many stylistic discrepancies exist between the amphora's Tuchulcha and the frescoed characters in the Tomb of The Blue Demons; however, their iconographic similarities in clothing and physical features are undeniable, casting doubt on Figure Four being illustrated in the mid-fifth century BC as ascribed in scholarship.

A similar serpent figure also hovers in the third century Tomb of the Typhon (Fig. 53), additionally in the Monterozzi necropolis.<sup>67</sup> This nude male has snakes for legs that slither out to his left and right, much like the snakes around Figure Four's arms. Here, however, the snakes are blue, matching his gigantic feathery wings and wild hair. His lean arms reach up to the tomb ceiling above him as if to support the structure. This figure's face does not survive well, keeping his identity and significance a mystery, however, his demonic presence is undeniable. While both the figures in the Tomb of the Typhon and Tomb of Orcus II exemplify minor visual adjustments to Figure Four, their identical monstrous aura demonstrates shared artistic knowledge and expression emblematic of late fourth century Etruscan tomb painting.

A Tarquinian sarcophagus, dating between the fourth and third centuries BC, depicts a more identical figure carved into its sides (Fig. 54).<sup>68</sup> On the front, the left-most figure sits with

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<sup>67</sup> Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 260.

<sup>68</sup> Sarcophagus, Etruscan, fourth-third century BC. Museo archeologico nazionale di Tarquinia, Italy. Photo by the author.

their legs bent, turning to look over their shoulder toward the serpent in its left hand—a pose identical to Figure Four. This figure, however, has wings tucked behind him and sits atop a cliff watching over the others. The figures to his right turn away, looking towards an exchange between two figures in the composition's center. Compared to this figure, Figure Four appears a direct copy of the mysterious demon.

Many other monsters from Etruria exhibit Figure Four's grotesque features, including Charon from Tomb 47 (previously discussed under Figure One, fig.5). However, whether Figure Four specifically depicts Nathum, Tuchulcha, or Charon, he undeniably commands the same mysteriously morbid presence as all three here in the Tomb of the Blue Demons. On the right wall, painters emphasized his otherworldly and transient existence by recombining recognizable demonic attributes from monsters painted elsewhere in Etruscan funerary art. Collectively, these unmistakable, aggressive features in Figure Four amplify the unnerving atmosphere on the tomb's Underworld and directly mimic fourth century painting practices.

### **Figure Five**

The final demon, hovering before the blue monster (Fig. 2), resembles multiple figures throughout Etruscan visual culture. Interestingly, most of these comparable depictions surface from late fourth century and third centuries in Tarquinia, within the same necropolis as the Tomb of The Blue Demons. One example is found in the Tomb of the Anina Family, from the third century BC (Fig. 43a). The Anina Family's Tomb, founded by Arnth Anina, holds multiple frescoes and inscribed sarcophagi illustrating the Underworld and marriages from the other Etruscan cities of Perugia, Volterra, and Chiusi. Directly beside the door in the Tomb of the Anina Family, a grimacing blue Charun glares past the entranceway to Vanth, a female underworld

demon who commonly accompanies him (Fig. 43b).<sup>69</sup> Charun wears bright red and holds his hammer at his shoulder over his wings. He has flaming orange hair to match his lengthy beard, which grows from his gray-blue skin, much like Figure Five. With thick black outlines, this Charun figure's details have been rendered with small brushstrokes defining his joints, facial features, wings, and folds of clothing. The thickness of these outlines makes the figure appear as a caricature, speaking to the patrons' stylistic preferences and a distinctive fresco painting workshop.

Charun in the Tomb of the Anina Family exemplifies how ancient artists slightly altered their demons, reapplying them in a new setting with minorly different clothes and accessories than seen before. With the same piercing scowl, hooked nose, active stance, and mighty yet feathery wings, Figure Five emulates an identical ominous and otherworldly profile to Charun in the Tomb of the Anina Family. Simultaneously, ancient artists did not incorporate Charun's accepted attributes into Figure Five—whether consciously or unconsciously, leaving out a hammer, tall boots, and a red tunic. Additionally, in the Tomb of The Blue Demons, Figure Five has no relationship to a doorway, as Charun does in the Tomb of the Anina Family and often elsewhere in Etruscan tomb painting, such as in the Tomb of the Charuns (fig. 55a-b) and Tomb 5636 (fig. 4). These changes potentially show that Figure Five is, in fact, *not* Charun, but another funerary figure closely related to his guiding role. Nevertheless, the wicked features on both Charun and Figure Five are emblematic of late fourth and third century Etruscan painting practices.

Previously mentioned for its visual similarities between Tuchulcha and Figure Four, there is also a depiction of Charun in the Orcus Tombs (Fig. 56). Painted diagonal from the entrance to Tomb I, a fragmentary blue Charun stands in profile with his hammer. The red tool matches the red detailing in his tunic and his large wings that relax behind his shoulders. Like Figure Five,

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<sup>69</sup> Bonfante and Swaddling, *Etruscan Myths*, 33. Vanth also appears in the François Tomb, previously discussed under Figure One (Fig. 41a).

Charun's orange hair grows long and unkempt from his head and face. While the figure does not entirely survive, painters visibly illustrated this monster with delicate details in his wings, face, hair, and clothing.

Compared to Figure Five, Charun in the Tomb of Orcus I survives much better with many intricate, minute details still in the frightening demon. Painters used a much darker palette on Figure Five, illustrating him with black skin instead of blue, and foggy gray wings. Meanwhile, Charun in the Tomb of Orcus I grows colorful red and white wings to match his red and white striped tunic. More importantly, Charun carries a large red hammer in the Tomb of Orcus I and even has a sort of halo above his head—two things absent in Figure Five's image, potentially meaning Figure Five is a demon other than Charun.

Also of note from Tarquinia are three sarcophagi, one of which previously mentioned for its similarities to Figure Four: an unnamed sarcophagus, dating between the fourth and third centuries BC (Fig. 54),<sup>70</sup> the Sarcophagus of Lars Pulena, dated to the third century BC (Fig. 57)<sup>71</sup> and another unnamed sarcophagus,<sup>72</sup> dated to the fourth century BC (Fig. 58). Each of these sarcophagi have multiple monstrous figures closely resembling Figure Five painted and carved into their sides. These figures appear in a single register, arranged in a side-by-side manner like the monsters in the Tomb of the Blue Demons. Most notably, in the first unnamed sarcophagus (Fig. 5), four demons with wings flank three humans in the composition's center. On the right, the first figure mimics Figure Five with an active stance in profile view and wings spreading behind him. Additionally, he looks to the figures on his left, who comparably fill the rest of the frame.

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<sup>70</sup> Sarcophagus, Etruscan, fourth-third century BC. Museo archeologico nazionale di Tarquinia, Italy.

<sup>71</sup> Sarcophago del Magistrato Laris Pulena, Etruscan, third century BC. Museo archeologico nazionale di Tarquinia, Italy. <https://www.meisterdrucke.uk/>

<sup>72</sup> Sarcophagus, Etruscan, fourth-third century BC. Museo archeologico Nazionale di Tarquinia, Italy.

The most discernible difference between these two figures is a minute change in arm posture. In the Tomb of the Blue Demons, Figure Five reaches both his arms forward, towards the blue demon. However, on the sarcophagus, artists kept the figure's hands close to their body: his left arm rests at his hip while his right arm reaches towards his bulbous nose and deep-set frown. While rendered in a different medium, Figure Five appears as a painted variation of this monster, underscoring the widespread adaptations and applications of demonic funerary figures nearby in late fourth century Tarquinia.

## **Summary**

Within these Etruscan images, no two demons are visually the same, even when inscriptions list them as a specific mythological figure. This repeated alteration of monstrous funerary characters reveals a pattern of imitation and diversification specific among fourth and third-century artists painting in Etruria. These variations in Etruscan art also illustrate that neither the painters of the Tomb of the Blue Demons, nor the patrons, were concerned about creating exact replicas of mythological figures. Instead, these mysterious beasts likely served to accentuate the Underworld theme and display the patron's broader interest in and knowledge of how life looks *after* death.

Collectively, the visual differences between the Underworld and its surrounding frescoes mirror broader thematic changes in Etruscan tomb painting during the mid-fourth century BC. At the time of the burial chamber's construction, during the mid-fifth century BC, demons are found nowhere else in Etruscan wall-painting. One hundred years later, however, artists paint countless ghastly demons on tomb walls across Etruria, showing new visual trends in fresco painting. These painting practices suggest that artists completed the Underworld during the mid-fourth century

BC, while other painters created the tomb's hunt, procession, and banquet less than one hundred years earlier.

## V. Chapter 4: Pigments, Drafting Technique, and Painting Style

### Introduction

Dating the tomb solely on iconography is complicated, partially due to the poor preservation state. Large sections of the tomb's right and back walls have fragmented and detached, and the surrounding pigments that survive slowly fade from the surface. Additionally, scholars can securely date only a few Etruscan tombs to the fifth century,<sup>73</sup> making timelines slightly more complex. To aid dating in dating tombs, scholars often look to pigments, drafting techniques, and painting styles within frescoes. These methods employed by artists often relate to broader chronological trends in Etruscan tomb painting, which help scholars to date paintings through identifying patterns in illustration techniques (Table 1).

In the Tomb of the Blue Demons, artists painted the four walls with distinct design methods that further distinguish the right wall from the surrounding images. For on the right wall, artists use rich, vibrant blues above a red preparatory sketch which helped to enhance three-dimensional forms (Fig. 17). However, there are no signs of preparatory sketches on the other three walls, and the painted forms are markedly flatter (Fig. 59a-b). The differences in pigments, drafting techniques, and painting styles on the right wall more closely align the Underworld fresco with wall painting trends elsewhere, datable to between the mid-fourth and third century BC.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, the hunt, procession, and banquet perfectly emulate other fifth-century tomb painting traditions in Tarquinia.

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<sup>73</sup> Cataldi-Dini, "La tomba dei Demoni Azzurri," 42.

<sup>74</sup> Steingraber, "Etruscan and Greek Tomb Painting in Italy, c. 700-400 BC," in Pollitt, J. J., *The Cambridge History of Painting in the Classical World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 104, 126.

## Blinded by the Blue: Discrepancies in Paint Pigments

Generally speaking, the artists of the Tomb of the Blue Demons chose a color palette typical of Etruscan tomb paintings for the wall frescoes. Various hues of browns, reds, and yellows contrast against bright blues throughout the procession, the banquet, and the Underworld scenes (Figs. 7; 8; 10). Each human figure in the tomb appears to have the same taupe skin color, although hair color varies from a light golden blonde to a dark, chocolate brown. Their robes vary between a deep red, a light yellow, and vivid blues. There are indications of a murky green once present in the leaves, filling the empty background spaces on each wall except the Underworld.

When looking more closely at the paintings, the color blue appears to have withstood the test of time better than other pigments. The tone and visual appearance of blue, however, varies between the walls. To the left, in the procession scene, the textiles and horse are a slightly green, luminescent blue (Fig. 59a) However, in the banquet and the Underworld scenes, the garments and demons are a deeper, more vivid blue (Fig. 59b; 31). This eccentric blue also adorns the musician in the banquet but is strangely absent from the procession and hunting scenes. While the variation in hue looks minute, differences in pigments could show that the resources and ingredients available for mixing blue changed, and specifically that the workshops painted at separate times.

A recent pigment study on the right wall revealed that painters used Egyptian blue to color the demons in the Underworld.<sup>75</sup> According to ancient sources, Egyptian blue was an artificially produced color initially pioneered in Egypt (Fig. 60). Pliny the Elder denotes the pigment as “the

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<sup>75</sup> Ceccarelli, et. Al. “Are the blue daemons really blue?” *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 47, 257-263. In October of 2020, Sofia Ceccarelli, Massimiliano Guarneri, Martina Romani, et. Al. published a case study after scanning and analyzing seven pigment samples from the Underworld scene. Ceccarelli et al. confirmed the presence of the chemical elements *Cu* (copper), *Si* (silicon), and *Ca* (calcium) in the blue pigments, alongside red ochre, and goethite. A patina and preservation substance were also on the surface.

most esteemed of all,” explaining its widespread use in ancient Mediterranean wall painting.<sup>76</sup> The pigment is a product of *cæruleum*, a type of sand favored by artists. To produce the deep cobalt blue, artists boiled the sand with glastum plant flowers;<sup>77</sup> then, to create the dull blue skin tone for the demons, painters mixed black into the vibrant blue. The same vibrant blue illuminates the banqueter’s garments; however archaeologists have yet to conduct testing on these blue pigments decorating the banquet in the same way they analyzed the right wall.

In the procession, painters noticeably illustrated the garments and the horse with a much paler, more yellow hue of blue (Fig. 59a). The pigments in the procession need testing to confirm or deny any differences in the blues’ chemical composition; however, their visual differences are obvious. Painters applied this pale yellow-blue consistently throughout the left wall’s composition, creating a bright horse and vibrant textile borders. This aqua-blue color appears in many procession and banquet scenes of fifth-century tombs, such as the Tomb of the Triclinium (Fig. 61), the Tomb of the Leopards (Fig. 21; 62), and the Tomb of the Maggi Family (Fig. 32). The colors in the procession figures are also comparably much flatter, with only fields of color and minor details added, revealing further artistic discrepancies between the tomb walls. These colorful differences amount to more than just disparities between individual artists, but rather, accumulate to chronological distinctions between pigment trends in the mid-fifth century BC and the late fourth century BC.

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<sup>76</sup> Pliny the Elder’s writings in *Natural History* detail the different shades of colors, their manufacture, and sometimes the types of images that artists painted with them. According to him, artists in the Near East, Greece, Northern Africa, and the Italian peninsula used Egyptian blue in wall paintings. Pliny Nat. 33.26 and 33.57.

<sup>77</sup> Depending on the method of preparation these three types of blue differentiate further, for example: “Scythian, which is easily dissolved, and which produces four colours when pounded, one of a lighter blue and one of a darker blue, one of a thicker consistency and one comparatively thin.” Another type is Cyprian. Pliny Nat. 33.57

## Behind the Fresco Scenes: A Look at Drafting Techniques and Painting Styles

A closer look at these frescoes reveals more inconsistencies between the walls of the tomb, in particular, in terms of drafting technique. In the Underworld scene, painters unmistakably used a red sketch before painting the figures. Alternatively, there are no traces of preparatory drawings lying underneath the hunt, procession, and banquet scenes (Fig. 59a-b).<sup>78</sup> These sketches are especially visible in the demon's limbs, faces, and tunics (Fig. 29). Many red lines have a purple glow about them from artists painting over them with blue pigments, lightly illuminating the edges of the figures. Thin red curves also survive below Figure Five's arms, once forming dark clouds behind the figures. In a few locations, such as Figure Four's snakes (Fig. 2), the red sketches reveal places where the painters went beyond the preparatory guides, illustrating the twisting snakes with slightly different curves than initially drafted.

In art-historical scholarship, few discussions examine these preliminary red sketches in Etruscan tomb painting. Stephan Steingraber briefly mentions that before the fourth century, artists typically painted inscriptions in red or black without incising first;<sup>79</sup> however, before that, from the sixth to the fourth century, ancient painters primarily began their frescoes with a design lightly incised into the wall plaster. After incising, artists often underlined the composition in dark pigments before adding solid colors,<sup>80</sup> much like in the procession and banqueting scenes. Here, the colors in the figures are also comparably much flatter, with only fields of color and minor details added, revealing further incongruities between the frescoes. These visual and technical

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<sup>78</sup> Cataldi-Dini, "La tomba dei Demoni Azzurri," 39.

<sup>79</sup> Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 189.

<sup>80</sup> Steingraber, "Etruscan and Greek Tomb Painting in Italy, c. 700-400 BC," 104, 126. When executed under an experienced and talented group of artisans, these guides "were virtually invisible." See more: Roger Ling, *Roman Painting*, 204.

discrepancies between the wall's drafting methods reveal that the Underworld's preparatory drawings more closely correspond to artistic approaches practiced in the fourth century BC.

The Underworld also reveals illustration techniques more closely related to many late fourth century frescoes in Tarquinia, including the Tomb of the Shields (Fig. 34a-b), the Tomb of the Typhon (Fig. 53), and the Tombs of Orcus I-II (Fig. 50; 51-56), where figures have fuller, more organic forms. On the right wall, the use of pigments is exceptionally fluid, and this delicate level of blending renders the figures, their clothing, and their surrounding composition in a representational style, speaking to the knowledge and talent of the painters. The monsters' limbs most obviously reveal this, which have all grown into lean and defined physiques compared to the thick legs of the procession participants. By using "brushstrokes of more dense color," painters enhanced the monsters' visual volume, while only fields of color and thin, fragile outlines construct the figures in the left and back walls.<sup>81</sup>

In all, the technical differences between the Underworld and its surrounding frescoes amount to broader parallels with changes in Etruscan wall painting techniques over time. These variations in hue, drafting techniques and painting style more closely align the fresco with fourth century painting practices in the Etruria, and further suggest that painters completed the composition on a separate occasion from the structure's fifth century construction. Likewise, the neighboring frescoes were also likely painted at this earlier time given their intense synchronicities with traditional Etruscan tomb painting compositions.

It comes as no surprise that such vividly distinct figures would also be illustrated with different techniques; however, it is surprising that archaeologists and scholars have thus far neglected to investigate them. As mentioned throughout this thesis, multiple burials nearby the Tomb of the

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<sup>81</sup> Adinolfi, "La tomba dei Demoni Azzurri: Le Pitture," 45.

Blue Demons were repeatedly used by families and kinship groups over generations. These burials, although, are more recognizably reused because not only do they have multiple rooms, but they were also found with their grave goods almost completely intact. Meanwhile, the single-chamber Tomb of the Blue Demons was discovered with very few traces of its Etruscan patrons. Nevertheless, there is no evidence otherwise contesting repeated use of single chamber tombs; and with three openings identified by archaeologists, it appears very likely the Tomb of the Blue Demons was repeatedly used by its patrons and their artists.

## VI. Conclusion

The question of what happens after death has haunted the human species for millenia; our body decays, but does our soul stay alive? If so, where does it go, and how does it get there? Ancient civilizations in the Mediterranean often sought answers to these questions in mythology and religion, developing countless deities associated with death to resolve any uncertainties. In Etruria, the concept of life after death initially lacked these characters, at least as expressed visually. However, with large fiery eyes, straw-like hair, and wrinkled noses, sinister creatures quickly arise in Etruscan funerary art during the fourth century, seemingly from nowhere. When did they arrive, and why were they so popular?

As we have seen, the Etruscans created an extraordinary visualization of these afterlife ideas on the right wall of the Tomb of the Blue Demons. Here in the Underworld, five disturbing monsters usher the deceased along a dull shoreline, simultaneously guiding them onto their next life while intensifying the vague and ominous environment. Their presence becomes even more unsettling when looking outside the fresco and around the burial, where traditional hunting, feasting, and parade compositions decorate the other three walls. These images perfectly align with popular Etruscan pictorial themes during the fifth century; however, as exemplified in Chapter 3, the Underworld's extraordinary monsters are directly characteristic of artistic practices popular in Tarquinia during the late fourth and early third centuries BC.

Thus far, the scholarship surrounding the tomb only describes a single date and decoration event to the entire structure and gently skips over the evidence suggesting otherwise. However, visible thematic differences in the Underworld's figures and changes in their artistic construction strongly indicate that alternate painters completed the right wall's fresco as a fourth-century

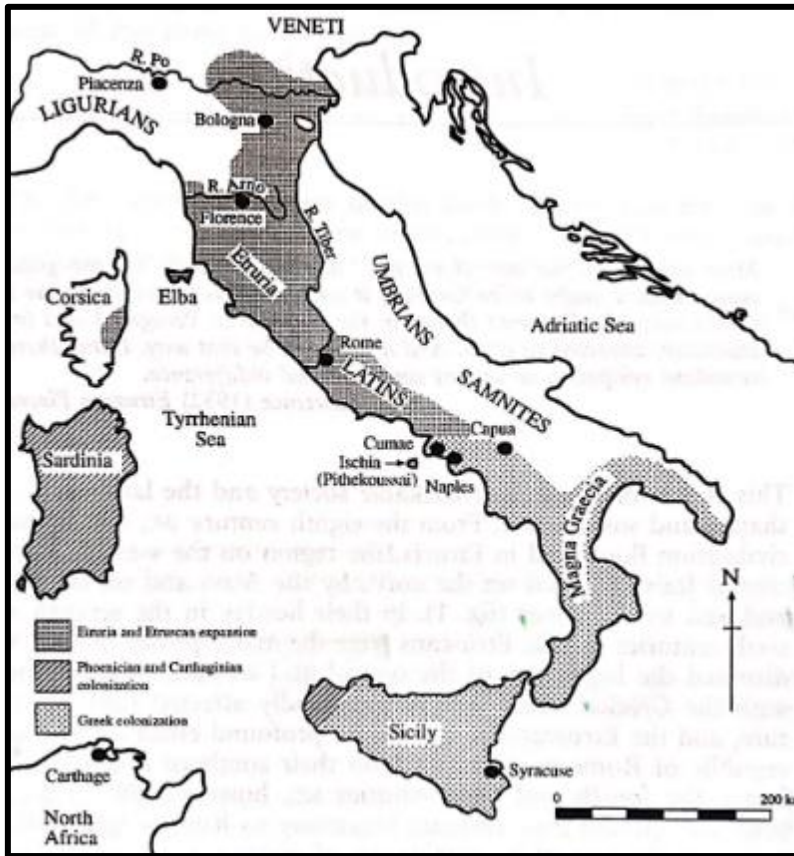
addition to the mid-fifth century burial, expertly adapting the monsters to harmonize with the existing frescoes. Naturally, realigning the Tomb of the Blue Demons' decoration timeline also slightly changes the burial's narrative and reputation in scholarship. Rather than illustrating the parallel journey of a married couple during the mid-fifth century BC, the frescoes, instead, tell of a family's many ventures into the next life over the course of the mid-fifth and late fourth centuries BC. Unfortunately, based on the tomb's looting and damage, a clear picture and timeline of the burial's decoration and use may never arise. However, given this, it is all the more important that the tomb's surviving structure, frescoes, and grave goods are thoroughly analyzed and not just subjectively interpreted, as they have been thus far.

## Tables

|                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Early Orientalizing     | End of the eighth – 650 BC |
| Orientalizing           | 650 – 575 BC               |
| Archaic                 | 575 – 480 BC               |
| Sub-Archaic & Classical | 480 – 400 BC               |
| Late Classical          | 400 – 330/320 BC           |
| Hellenistic             | 330 – 100+ BC              |

*Table 1. Chronology of Painting in the Ancient Mediterranean. After: Steingraber, Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting, 5.*

## Figures



**Figure 1.** The cultural regions of ancient Italy. Barker and Rasmussen, *The Etruscans*, 2.



**Figure 2.** The Tomb of the Blue Demons, Tarquinia. Detail of the right wall. Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 181.



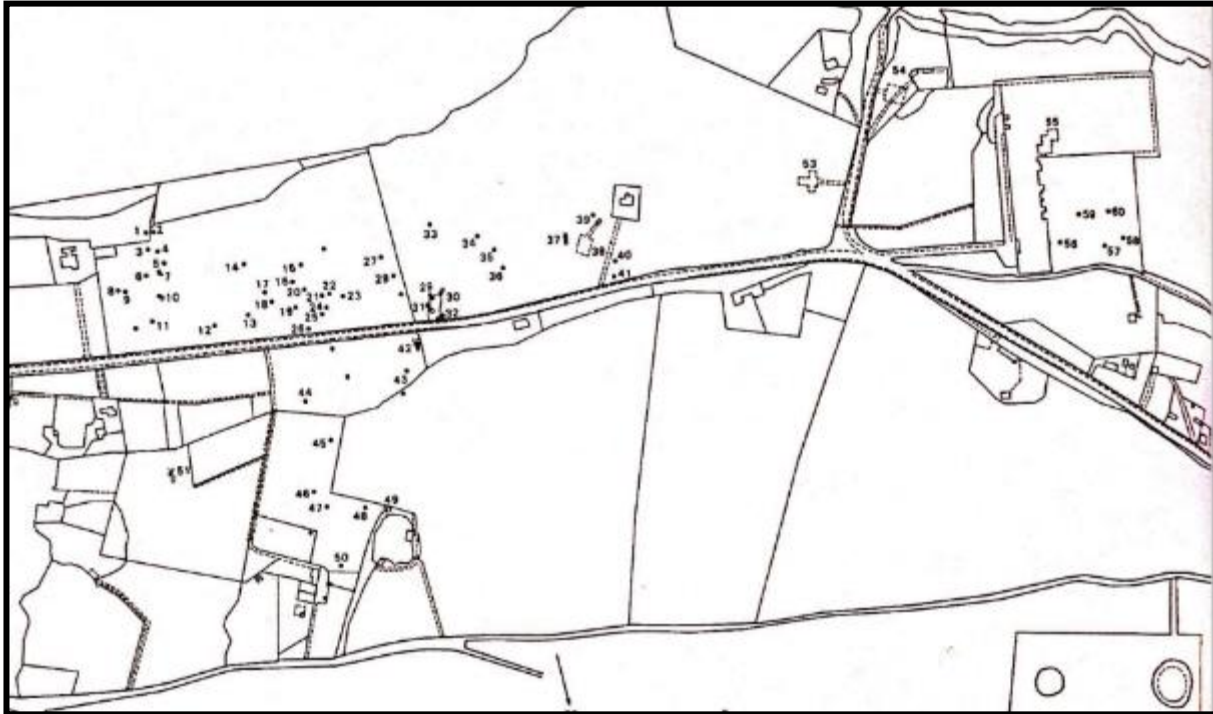
**Figure 3.**  
Etruscan cinerary  
urn. 490-470 BC.  
Chiusi. The  
British Museum:  
1873.0820.750.  
[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G\\_1873-0820-750](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1873-0820-750)



**Figure 4.** Tomb  
5636, Tarquinia. Late  
third century BC.  
Photo by the author.



**Figure 5.** Tomb 47, Paestum. Mid-fourth  
century BC. DeAgostini, Getty Images.



**Figure 6.** Map of painted tombs in the Monterozzi necropolis, Tarquinia. Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 16.



**Figure 7.** The Tomb of the Blue Demons Detail of back wall with banqueting fresco. Photo by the author.



**Figure 8.** The Tomb of the Blue Demons  
Detail of the left wall  
with procession fresco.  
Photo by the author.



**Figure 9.** The Tomb of the Blue Demons. Artist's reconstruction of the entrance wall with a hunting scene. Adinolfi, "Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan Tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging," 2019.



**Figure 10.** The Tomb of the Blue Demons Detail of the right wall with underworld fresco.  
Photo by the author.

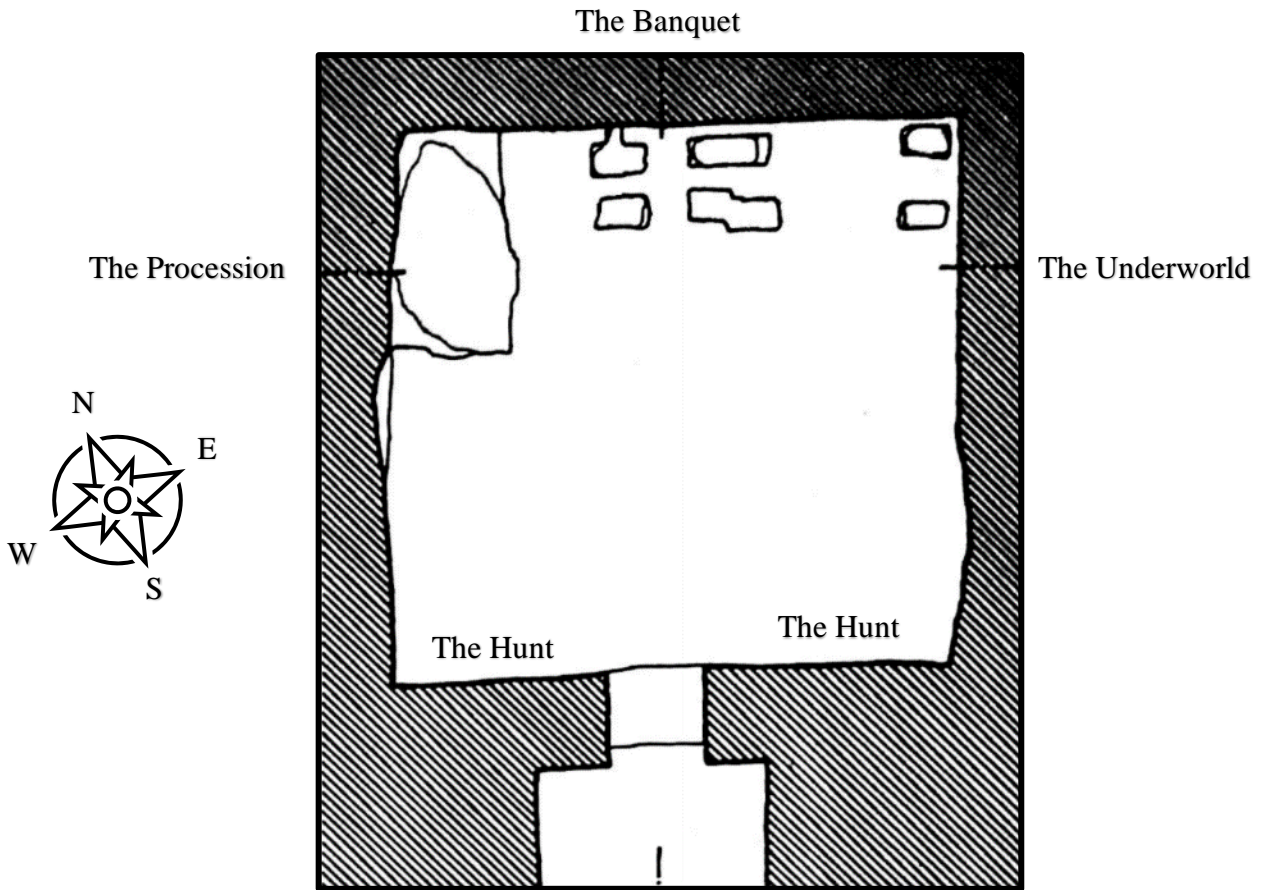


Figure 11. Layout of the Tomb of the Blue Demons. After: Cataldi-Dini, 1989.

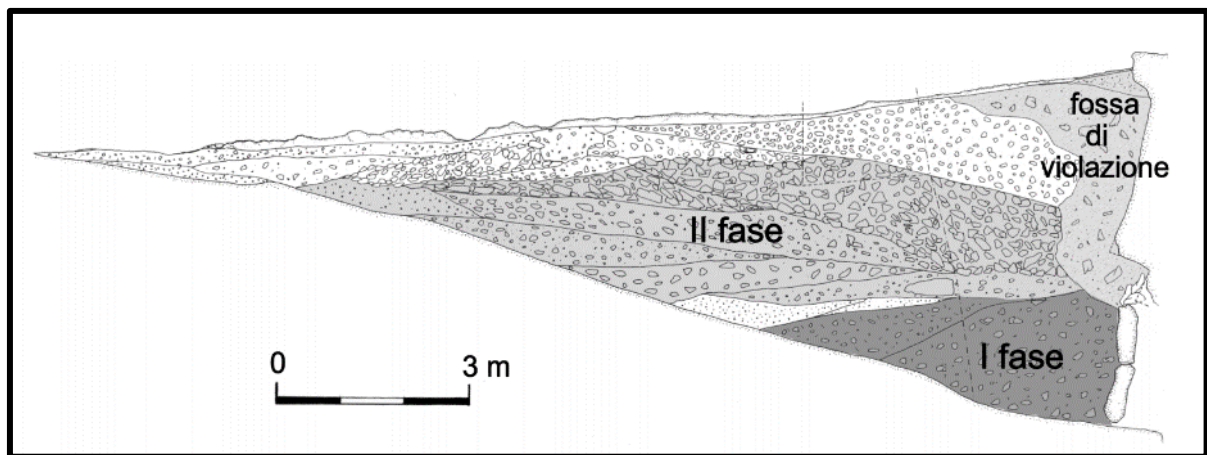
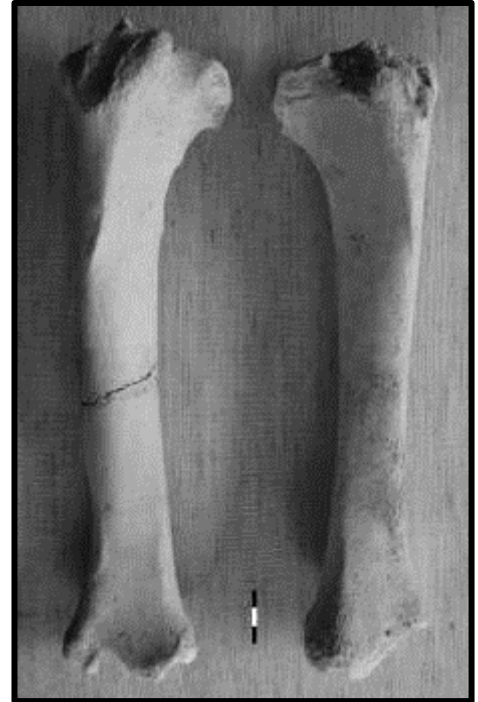
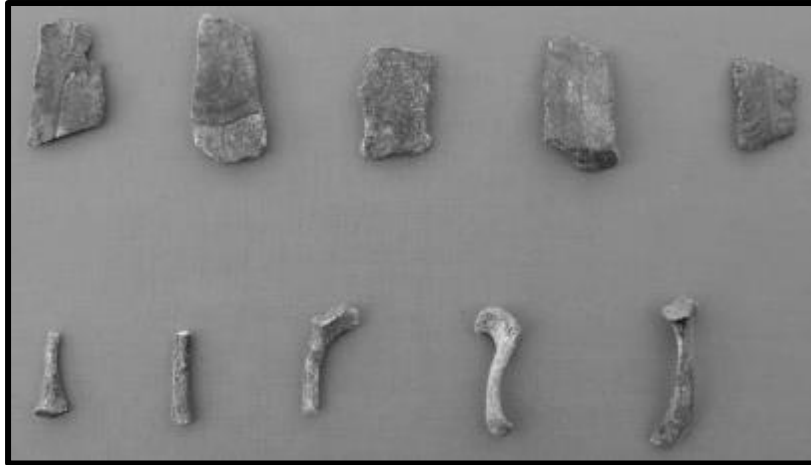


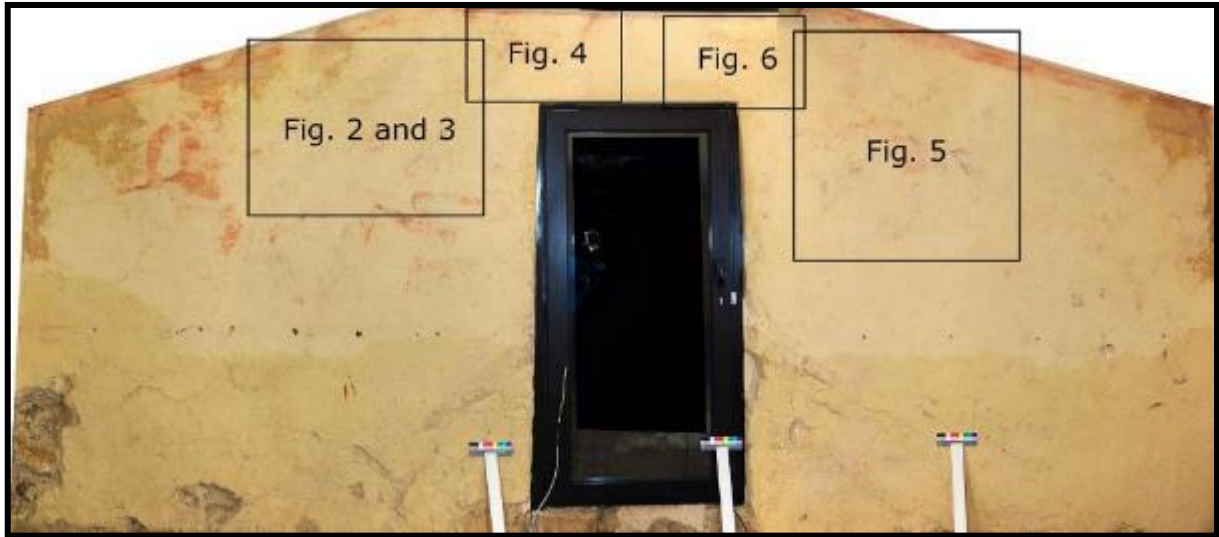
Figure 12. Stratigraphy around the Tomb of the Blue Demons' entrance. De Grossi Mazzorin, "Nuovi dati sui cavalli etruschi: i resti equini della tomba dei 'Demoni Azzurri' a Tarquinia," 325.



**Figures 13a-13b.** Bone and pottery fragments recovered from the Tomb of the Blue Demons. De Grossi Mazzorin, “Nuovi dati sui cavalli etruschi: i resti equini della tomba dei ‘Demoni Azzurri’ a Tarquinia,” 326-327.



**Figure 14.** Tomb of the Blue Demons. Detail of woman and blue demon on the right wall. Marra, Luciano, Anna Pelagotti, Maria Cataldi, Rodolfo Carmagnola, and Gloria Adinolfi, “La Signora Dei Demoni Azzurri,” *Archeo*, (Ottobre, 2009): 82.



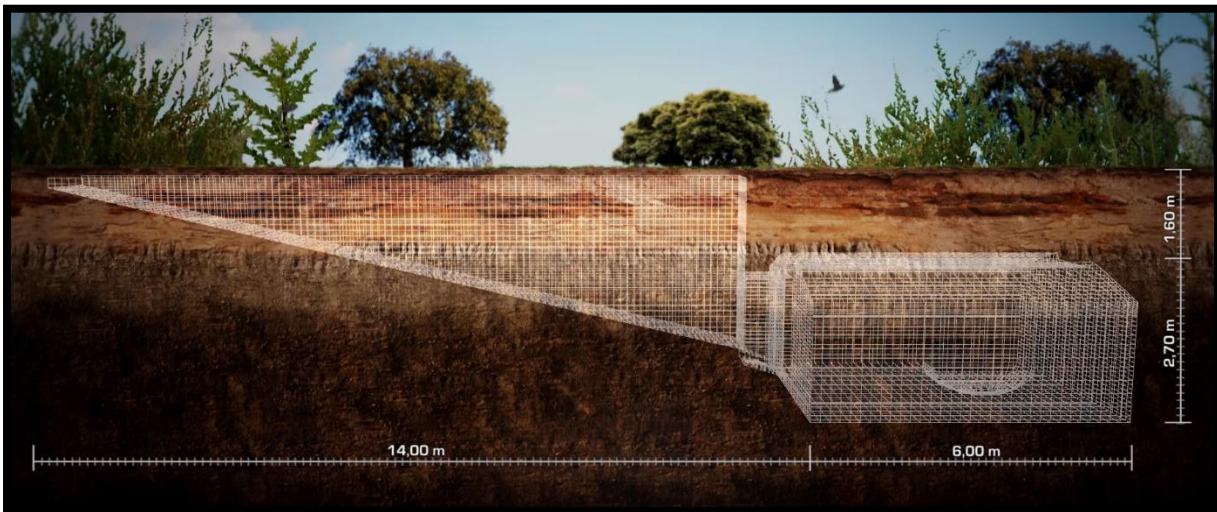
**Figure 15.** Tomb of the Blue Demons, Entrance wall. Adinolfi, “Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan Tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging,” 453.



**Figure 16.** Terracotta plaques, 560-550 BC, Cerveteri. British Museum, London, England. Museum number: 1889,0410.1-5. [britishmuseum.org](http://britishmuseum.org)



**Figure 17.** Tomb of the Blue Demons. Detail of the Underworld fresco with red preparatory sketch. <https://www.gettyimages.com/>



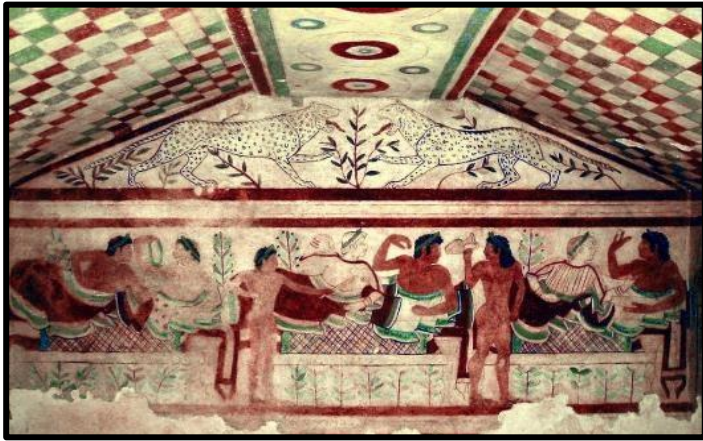
**Figure 18.** Diagram of the tomb by “New Technologies and Design Department – CETMA.” “Necropoli di Monterozzi – La tomba dei demoni azzurri – (430 – 440 BC circa),” YouTube video, 3:35, posted by “New Technologies and Design Department – CETMA,” May 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsfxfeS29YE>.



**Figure 19.** The Tomb of the Blue Demons, 3D Digital Illustration. Il Progetto CO.B.R.A. <http://cobra.enea.it/Interventi/tomba-dei-demoni-azzurri-tarquinia-digitalizzazione-3d-a-colori-mediante-sistema-laser-scanner-rgb-itr>



**Figure 20.** Digital reconstruction of the banquet scene by “New Technologies and Design Department – CETMA.” “Necropoli di Monterozzi – La tomba dei demoni azzurri – (430 – 440 BC circa),” YouTube video, 3:35, posted by “New Technologies and Design Department – CETMA,” May 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsfxfeS29YE>.



**Figure 21.** Tomb of the Leopards, Tarquinia. 480 BC. View of the banquet scene below a pediment decorated with a hunt.

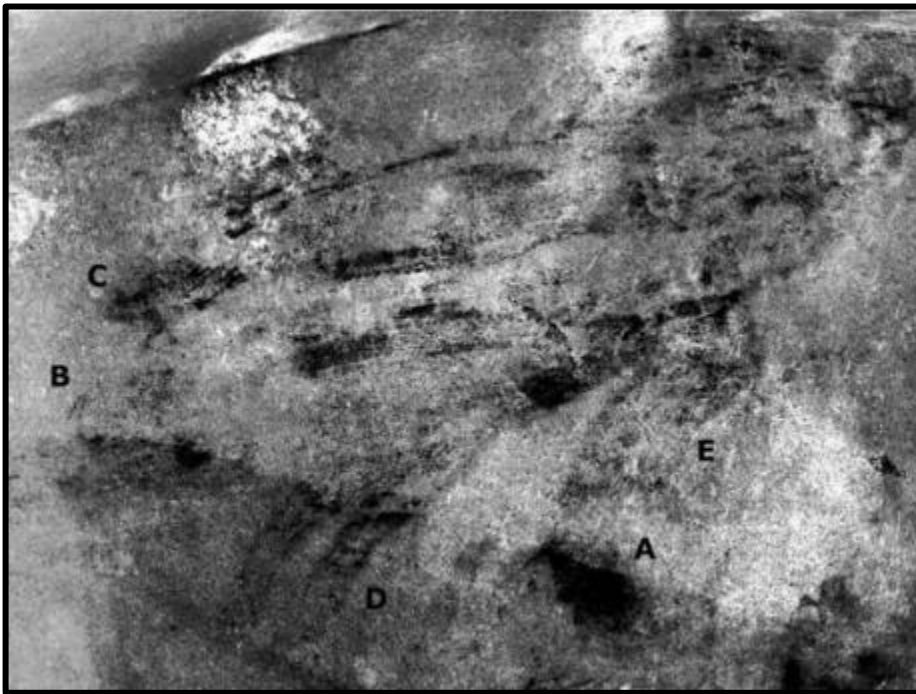
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb\\_of\\_the\\_Leopards#/media/File:Tarquinia\\_Tomb\\_of\\_the\\_Leopards.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb_of_the_Leopards#/media/File:Tarquinia_Tomb_of_the_Leopards.jpg)



**Figure 22.** Querciola Tomb I, watercolor reconstruction by Carlo Ruspi painted in the 1830s shortly after the tomb's discovery. Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), 156.



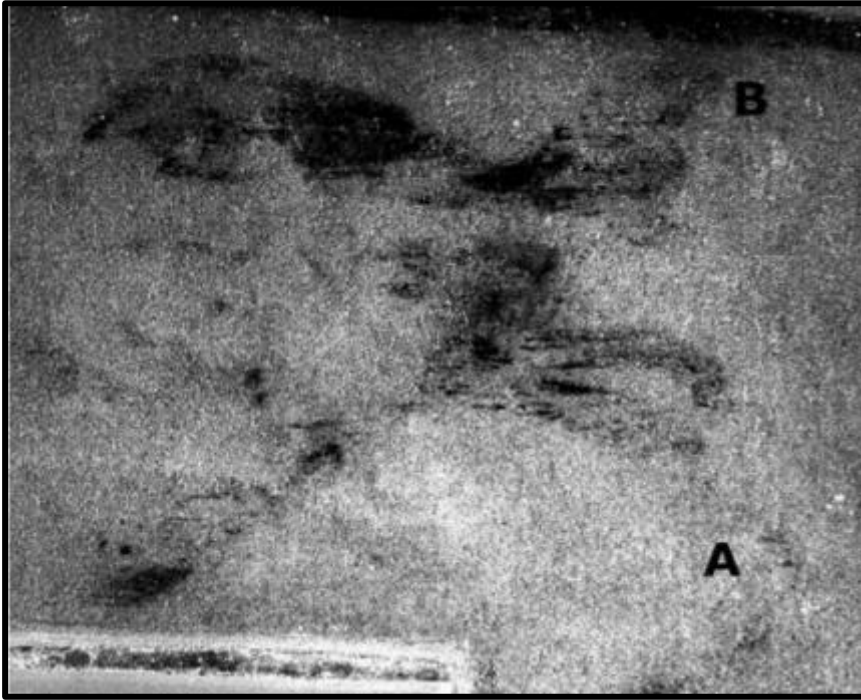
**Figure 23.** Digital artist's reconstruction of the procession scene from the Tomb of the Blue Demons, Tarquinia, Italy. "Necropoli di Monterozzi – La tomba dei demoni azzurri – (430 – 440 BC circa)," YouTube video, 3:35, posted by "New Technologies and Design Department – CETMA," May 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsfxfeS29YE>.



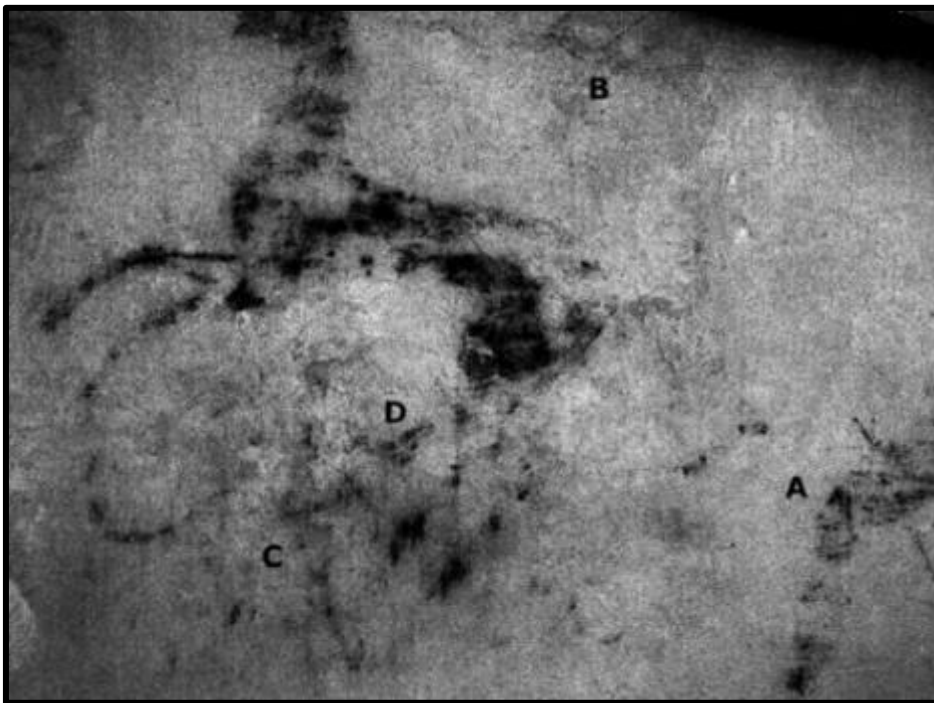
**Figure 24.** Blind-source separation analysis of the fresco that once occupied the entrance wall. Adinolfi, “Recovery of a lost wall painting at the Etruscan Tomb of the Blue Demons in Tarquinia (Viterbo, Italy) by multispectral reflectometry and UV fluorescence imaging,” 454. <https://doi.org/10.1111/arcm.12423>.



**Figure 25.** Blind-source separation analysis of the fresco that once occupied the entrance wall. Adinolfi, “Recovery,” 455. <https://doi.org/10.1111/arcm.12423>.



**Figure 26.** Blind-source separation analysis of the fresco that once occupied the entrance wall. Adinolfi, “Recovery,” 456. <https://doi.org/10.1111/arcm.12423>.



**Figure 27.** Tomb of the Blue Demons. Blind-source separation analysis of the fresco that once occupied the entrance wall. Adinolfi, “Recovery,” 455. <https://doi.org/10.1111/arcm.12423>.



**Figure 28.** Tomb of the Blue Demons. Detail of the Underworld fresco, left-most figure. <https://www.gettyimages.com/>



**Figure 29.** Tomb of the Blue Demons. Detail of the Underworld fresco. <https://www.gettyimages.com/>



**Figure 30.** Tomb of the Blue Demons. Detail of the Underworld fresco.  
Image: <https://www.gettyimages.com/>



**Figure 31.** Tomb of the Blue Demons. Detail of the Underworld fresco.  
<https://www.gettyimages.com/>

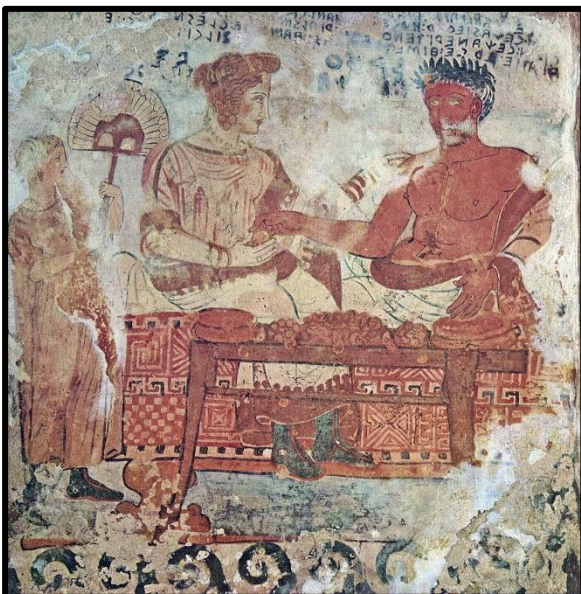


**Figure 32.** The Tomb of the Maggi Family, Tarquinia. Mid-fifth century BC. Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 143.



**Figure 33.** Red-figure kylix with Pluto and Persephone excavated in Vulci. 430 BC. London, The British Museum: 1847.0909.6.

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/861150001>



**Figure 34a.** Tomb of the Shields, Tarquinia, third – second century BC.

<http://ancientrome.ru/art/artworken/img.htm?id=225>



**Figure 34b.** Tomb of the Shields, Tarquinia, third – second century BC. <http://ancientrome.ru/art/artworken/img.htm?id=225>



**Figure 35.** Sarcophagus, Etruscan. Late third century BC. Museo archeologico Nazionale di Tarquinia, Italy. Photo by the author.



**Figure 36.** Outline of the right wall. After: Cataldi-Dini, 1989.



**Figure 37.** Athenian white ground lekythos, detail, Charon. Vase number 209341. 500 - 450 BC. Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum, B2663. Beazley Archive.

**Figure 38.** White ground lekythos, detail, Charon. AT 212, Athens National Archaeological Museum. <http://athina0.ascsa.edu.gr/>



**Figure 39.** Athenian red-figure *lekythos* with white ground outline. 450 – 400 BC. Found in Attica, Greece. Beazley Archive. Vase Number: 275504. Beazley Archive.



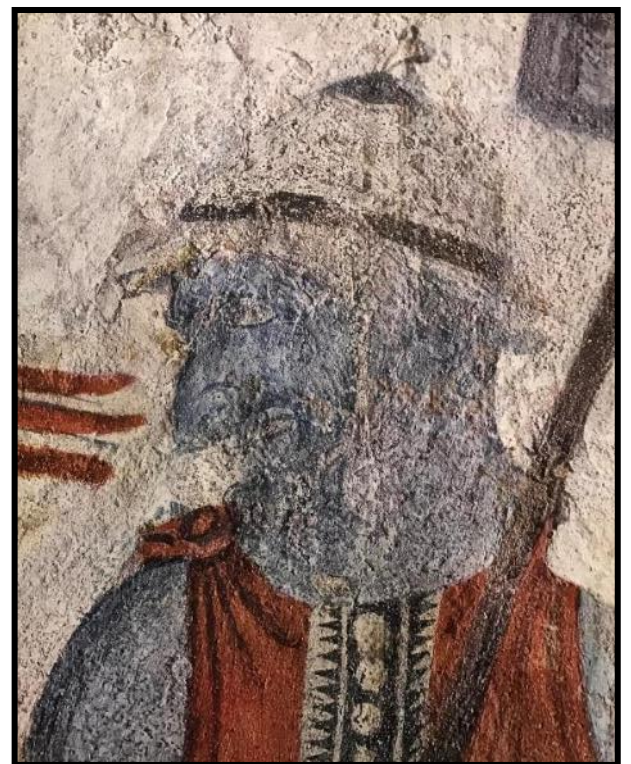
**Figure 40.** Athenian white ground lekythos, detail, Charon. Vase number 212342. 475 - 425 BC. Athens, National Museum, 17916. Beazley Archive.



**Figure 41.** Athenian white ground lekythos, detail, Charon in a boat with staff. Vase number 275550. 425-375 BC. Köln private collection. Beazley Archive.



**Figure 42a.** François Tomb, Vulci. Fresco with the Sacrifice of the Trojan Captives. Fourth Century BC. Pallottino, *Etruscan Painting*, 115.



**Figure 42b.** François Tomb, Vulci. Detail of Charon from the fresco with the Sacrifice of the Trojan Captives. Fourth century BC. Pallottino, *Etruscan Painting*, 117. 8



**Figure 43.** Tomb of the Anina Family, Tarquinia. Third century BC. Steingräber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 270.



**Figures 44a – 44b.** Orestes kills Clytemnestra. Etruscan Mirror, 440 BC. Altes Museum, Berlin. <https://www.arretetonchar.fr>



**Figure 45.** Sarcophago del Sacerdote (Sarcophagus of the Priest), Etruscan, fourth century BC. Inv. RC 9871. Museo archeologico Nazionale di Tarquinia, Italy. Photo by the author.



**Figure 46a- 46b.** Red-figure calyx-krater, details, end of the fourth century - beginning of the third century BC. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Achilleus\\_Charun\\_Cdm\\_Paris\\_2783\\_full.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Achilleus_Charun_Cdm_Paris_2783_full.jpg)



**Figure 47.** Attic white-ground lekythos. Beazley Archive, Vase Number: 216353. London, British Museum, D58. Beazley Archive.



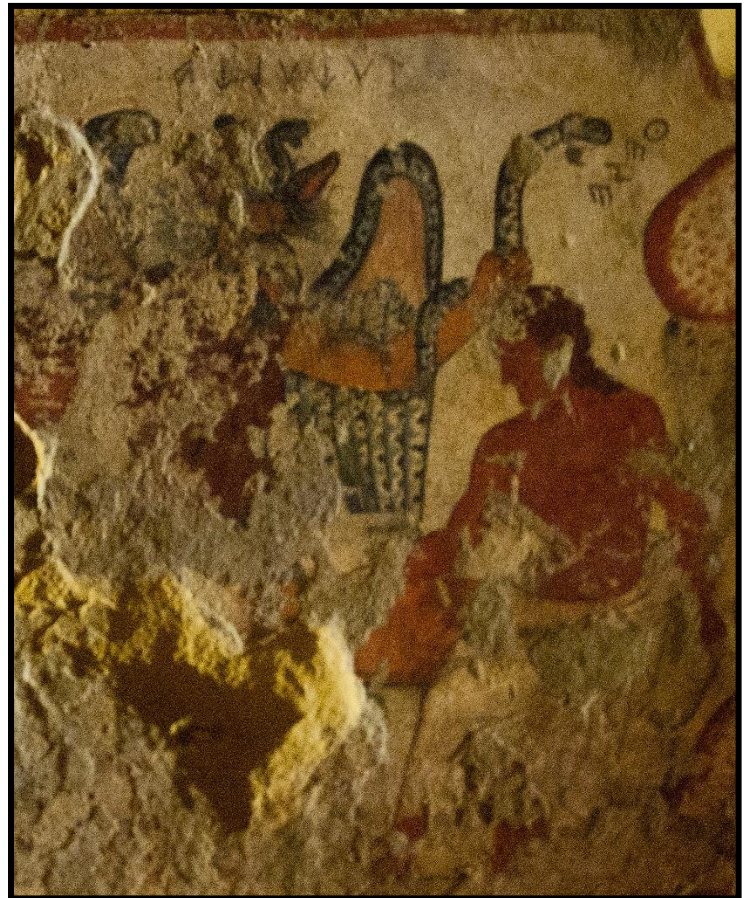
**Figure 48.** Red-Figure *kantharos* dated to 475-425. Beazley Archive, Vase Number: 212127. London, British Museum, E155. Beazley Archive.



**Figure 49.** Tomb of Persephone, Detail of Hades abducting Persephone. Mid fourth century BC. Vergina, Greece. [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)



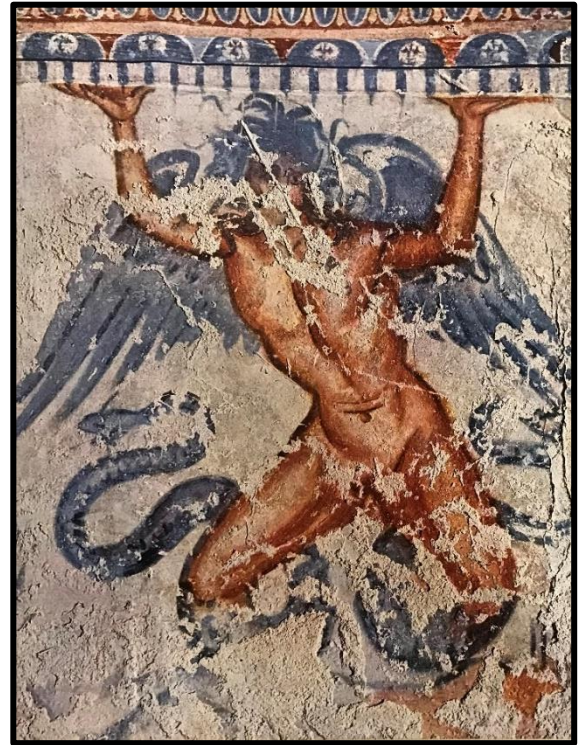
**Fig. 50.** “Facsimile of painting on right wall, Tomba dell’Orco II,”  
Tempera on canvas,  
Accession Number  
05.46 (NY Carlsberg  
Glyptotek Catalogue),  
Museum of Fine Arts,  
Boston: 1897.  
<http://www.mfa.org>.



**Figure 51.** Tomb of Orcus II, detail of Tuchulcha. Late fourth century BC. Tarquinia. Robin Iversen Rönnlund.  
<http://commons.wikimedia.org>.



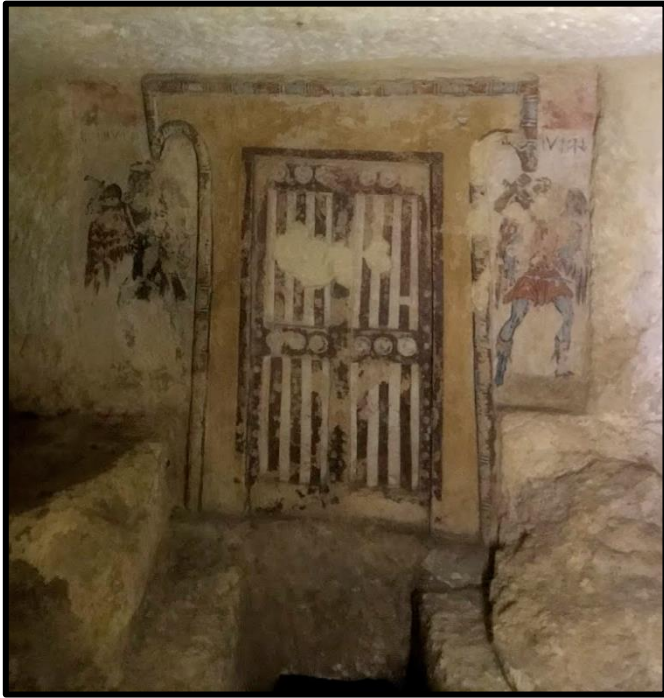
**Figure 52.** Etruscan red-figure amphora, found in Vulci. 350 BCE. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles: Luynes. 728 (Inv. 116). <http://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr>.



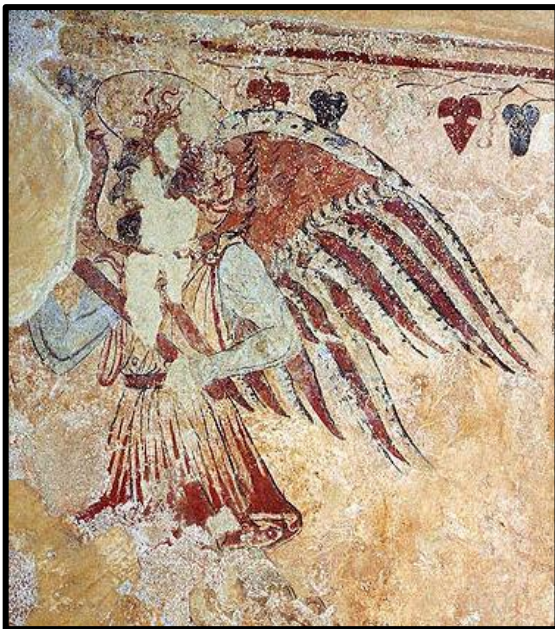
**Figure 53.** Tomb of the Typhon, Late third century BC, Tarquinia. Pallottino, *Etruscan Painting*, 127.



**Figure 54.** Sarcophagus, Etruscan, Fourth-Third century BC. Museo archeologico Nazionale di Tarquinia, Italy. Photo by the author.



**Figure 55a (above, back wall)-**  
 Photo by the author.  
**55b (right, Detail of Charun figure from the**  
**right wall)**  
 Tomb of the Charuns, Tarquinia. Mid-third  
 century BC. Steingräber, *Etruscan Painting:*  
*Catalogue raisonné of Etruscan Wall Paintings,*  
 61.



**Figure 56.** Tomb of Orcus I, Tarquinia.  
 Mid-fourth century BC.  
[https://www.leportedellanno.unito.it/eng\\_roma\\_morti\\_grande\\_1.htm](https://www.leportedellanno.unito.it/eng_roma_morti_grande_1.htm)



**Figure 57.** Sarcophago del Magistrato Laris Pulena (Sarcophagus of the Magistrate Laris Pulena), Etruscan, Third century BC. Museo archaeologico Nazionale di Tarquinia, Italy. <https://www.meisterdrucke.uk>



**Figure 58.** Sarcophagus, Etruscan, Fourth-Third century BC. Museo archaeologico Nazionale di Tarquinia, Italy. Photo by the author.



**Figure 59a.** Tomb of the Blue Demons. Detail of the left wall, Procession fresco.  
[gettyimages.com](http://gettyimages.com)



**Figure 59b.** Tomb of the Blue Demons. Tomb of the Blue Demons. Detail of the back wall, Banquet fresco.  
[gettyimages.com](http://gettyimages.com)



**Figure 60.** Pigment samples from Egypt. British Museum, London. Museum Number: EA6658. [britishmuseum.org](http://britishmuseum.org)



**Figure 61.** Tomb of the Leopards, Tarquinia. 480 BC. Detail of procession fresco. Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 133.



**Figure 62.** Tomb of the Triclinium, Tarquinia. 470 BC. Steingraber, *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, 138.

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## Appendix 1: Thematic Register of Painted Tombs in Tarquinia

Organized by pictorial theme, all chronology is in BC.<sup>1</sup>

### Banqueting

| <b>Tomb</b>         | <b>Italian Name</b>        | <b>Discovery</b> | <b>Chronology</b>              |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bacchantes          | Tomba dei Baccanti         | 1874             | 510-500                        |
| Bigas               | Tomba delle Bighe          | 1827             | 490                            |
| Black Sow           | Tomba della Scrofa Nera    | 1842             | 450                            |
| Blue Demons         | Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri   | 1985             | Mid 5 <sup>th</sup> – late 4th |
| Cardarelli          | Tomba Cardarelli           | 1959             | 510-500                        |
| Funerary Bed        | Tomba del Letto Funebre    | 1873             | 460                            |
| Hunting and Fishing | Tomba della Caccia e Pesca | 1873             | 510 B.C.                       |
| Leopards            | Tomba dei Leopardi         | 1875             | 480                            |
| Lionesses           | Tomba delle Leonesse       | 1874             | 520                            |
| Maggi               | Tomba Maggi                | 1958             | Mid. 5th                       |
| Maiden              | Tomba della Pulcella       | 1865             | Late 5th                       |
| Orcus I             | Tomba dell'Orco I          | 1868             | Late 4th                       |
| Querciola I         | Tomba Querciola I          | 1831             | Late 5th                       |
| Shields             | Tomba degli Scudi          | 1870             | Late 4th                       |
| Triclinium          | Tomba del Triclinio        | 1830             | 470                            |
| Warrior             | Tomba del Guerriero        | 1961             | Early 4th                      |
| 5513                |                            | 1967             | 450                            |
| 5591                |                            | 1968             | 500-490                        |

### Hunting

| <b>Tomb</b>         | <b>Italian Name</b>         | <b>Discovery</b> | <b>Chronology</b>              |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Blue Demons         | Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri    | 1985             | Mid 5 <sup>th</sup> – late 4th |
| Deer Hunt           | Tomba della Caccia al Cervo | 1960             | Mid. 5th                       |
| Hunter              | Tomba del Cacciatore        | 1962             | 510-500                        |
| Hunting and Fishing | Tomba della Caccia e Pesca  | 1873             | 510                            |
| Maggi               | Tomba Maggi                 | 1958             | Mid. 5th                       |
| Querciola I         | Tomba Querciola I           | 1831             | Late 5th                       |

<sup>1</sup> After: Steingraber, S. *Abundance of Life: Etruscan Wall Painting*, (Getty: 2006), 308-310.

## Processions, Dancers, and Musicians

| <b>Tomb</b>           | <b>Italian Name</b>             | <b>Discovery</b> | <b>Chronology</b>              |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bacchantes            | Tomba dei Baccanti              | 1874             | 510-500                        |
| Baron                 | Tomba del Baron                 | 1827             | 510                            |
| Bertazzoni            | Tomba Bertazzoni                | 1960             | Early 4th                      |
| Blue Demons           | Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri        | 1985             | Mid 5 <sup>th</sup> – late 4th |
| Bruschi               | Tomba Bruschi                   | 1864             | Early 3rd                      |
| Cock                  | Tomba del Gallo                 | 1961             | 400                            |
| Francesca Giustiniani | Tomba Francesca Giustiniani     | 1833             | Mid. 5th                       |
| Funerary Bed          | Tomba del Letto Funebre         | 1873             | 460                            |
| Hunting and Fishing   | Tomba della Caccia e Pesca      | 1873             | 510                            |
| Inscriptions          | Tomba delle Iscrizioni          | 1827             | 520                            |
| Jugglers              | Tomba dei Giocolieri            | 1961             | 520                            |
| Leopards              | Tomba dei Leopardi              | 1875             | 480                            |
| Lionesses             | Tomba delle Leonesse            | 1874             | 520                            |
| Meeting               | Tomba del Convengo              | 1970             | Early 3rd                      |
| Painted Vases         | Tomba dei Vasi Dipinti          | 1867             | 510-500                        |
| Procession of Cybele  | Tomba con Processiona di Cibebe | 1738             | Hellenistic                    |
| Pygmies               | Tomba del Pigmei                | 1958             | Early 4th                      |
| Querciola I           | Tomba Querciola I               | 1831             | End 5th                        |
| Ship                  | Tomba della Nave                | 1958             | Mid. 5th                       |
| Triclinium            | Tomba del Triclinio             | 1830             | 470                            |
| 3242                  |                                 | 1961             | Early 4th                      |
| 5513                  |                                 | 1967             | 450                            |
| 5591                  |                                 | 1968             | 500-490                        |

## Demons and the Underworld

| <b>Tomb</b>      | <b>Italian Name</b>                  | <b>Discovery</b> | <b>Chronology</b>              |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Anina Family     | Tomba degli Anina                    | 1963             | 3rd                            |
| Blue Demons      | Tomba dei Demoni Azzurri             | 1985             | Mid 5 <sup>th</sup> – late 4th |
| Charuns          | Tomba dei Caronti                    | 1960             | Mid. 3rd                       |
| Heads of Charun  | Tomba con Testi di Charun            | 1833             | Hellenistic                    |
| Orcus I, II, III | Tomba dell'Orco I, II, III           | 1868             | Late 4th                       |
| Querciola II     | Tomba Querciola II (Tomba degli Ane) | 1832             | Late 3rd                       |
| Shields          | Tomba degli Scudi                    | 1870             | Late 4th                       |
| Typhon           | Tomba del Tifone                     | 1832             | Late 3rd                       |
| Whipping         | Tomba della Fustigazione             | 1960             | 490                            |
| 5512             |                                      | 1967             | Late 3rd                       |
| 5636             |                                      | 1969             | Late 3rd                       |

