

Of the ancient Etruscans, Tyrrhenians, or Tuscans, by Andrew Stuart, Esquire.

A strange mystery hangs over this people. Like the Greeks they had cultivated the arts at a very remote period; and the monuments which still remain, attest the excellence they had reached. From the Etruscans the Romans derived the greater part of their religious institutions; and Lucumo and the colony which he brought with him, transferred to Rome a civil wisdom which laid the corner stone of the fabric that was destined to be the temple of victory and empire.

When Rome was first established under the commanding genius of Romulus, the power of this people was in the wane and the brave Shepherd and his successors had to combat Etruscans superior to them in knowledge, but inferior in frugality and in public and private virtue. The withering influence of luxury and of vice had produced their usual effects, and the Etruscans were subjugated,

It is to be observed, that whilst in modern times, new settlements proceed from the low lands and along the banks of the rivers to the highlands and mountains; the exact converse of this must have taken place for a long time after the great deluge for reasons too obvious to be detailed. The fact is also supported by historical authority.

The chain of mountains which surround Italy have the form of a crescent whereof each extremity touches the sea: The earliest immigration must have been by land and either from or through this crescent.

The two shortest passages of the Alps are at their two extremities: That of the north which leads from Carniola into Frioul, and traverses the Julian Alps is the easiest of all. The southern passage touching the Mediterranean though less easy than the former is sufficiently short, and is passable even by savages. After these two passages the most convenient one is that of the Tyrol and Trentin.

Ancient Etruria was traversed from east to west by the Arno dividing it into two nearly equal parts, whereof one extended almost to the gates of Rome, and the other, bounded by Liguria, embraced a portion of the Genovese state, the valley of Magra and the old duchy of Carara and Lucca with its territory.

Perugia and Eugubio belonged to the Etruscans.

The people who inhabited this country were called by the Romans Etrusci & Tusei; by the Greeks Tyrrhenians: in their own language the general name of the nation was Rasena.

They spoke the same language as the Rhoeti, the ancient inhabitants of the Trentin, and the Tyrol comprizing that portion of the Alps through which flows the ancient Athesis (Pin, III. 24. Tit. Liv. v. 33.)

Upon these mountaineers first gaining a footing in Italy, the Rhoetian tide of emigration stopped at the northern bank of the Po, where they built two towns Mantua and Adria. The strong situation of the former of these towns enabled its inhabitants to resist the Gauls, and as it communicated with Rhetia, the Etruscans long maintained themselves in the country situated between the Po and the Adige.

The Etruscans soon extended their conquests to the south of the Po, and obtained possession of the whole country, from the Po to the Appenine Mountains, driving from it the old inhabitants, the Umbri, and destroying 300 of their cities.

Mr. Freret (Mem. de l'Acad. des Insc. et Belles Lettres, T. XXIII, p. 93,) very ingeniously fixes the period of this irruption and settlement. Varro in a passage cited by Censorinus, informs us that the Etruscans gave the name of an age to spaces of time of unequal duration and measured by the lives of particular individuals. The first of their ages was accounted from the foundation of the city or the establishment of the state—it lasted till the death of the survivor of all the citizens born on that day. At his death a new

age began measured in the same way, and so on. The Gods failed not to announce by prodigies the commencement of each new age.

Now the Etruscan Historians living in the eighth age of their nation estimated, according to Varro cited by Velleius Paterculus at 781 years, the duration of the seven previous ages. They added that the eighth age would be followed by a ninth and by a tenth, when (they said) the Etruscan nation would be extinguished.

But to what year does this eighth age of the Etruscan Era answer? Mr. Freret seems to have solved the problem satisfactorily. He remarks that the Etruscan soothsayers, having been consulted concerning some prodigies which had occurred in the first year of the Consulship of Sylla, answered that these prodigies announced the termination of one of the revolutions of the world, and the beginning of a new age—that there had been already eight ages differing in manners, and in the duration of the life of man—that each of these ages formed a great year, and that the Gods gave a signal of the termination of each period by some prodigy in the Heavens or upon Earth.

Suidas says nearly the same thing citing Livy and Diodorus:—he speaks also of eight ages concluded and gives to them the name of Periods or Revolutions of the great year. Hence Mr. Freret concludes that the eighth age of the Etruscans ended in the year 88, before our Era—that supposing the duration of this age to have been equal to the longest of the preceding ones—it would have been of 123 years and the eighth age thus have commenced 211 years before the birth of our Saviour, to which if there be added the 781 years of the previous seven ages we have the year 992 of the Christian Era as the time of the settlement of the Etruscans in Italy. This is 240 years before Rome was founded. Denina (*Istoria d'Italia*) says that the Etruscan people seem to have been at the height of their power in Italy about four hundred years before the

building of the City; but he does not give his reasons, and the generally very accurate, he seems here to have been mistaken.

Mr. Niebuhr a German Professor and son of the celebrated traveller of that name, was latterly sent to Italy by the King of Prussia to explore the antiquities of the ancient inhabitants of that Country, and his work has within the last few months appeared here in an English dress. He seems however to have added nothing to the knowledge which we previously had of the Etruscans.

The next great event in the History of this people was the irruption of the Gauls or Celts who passed the Col de Suze under Bellovesus, were met by the Etruscans on the banks of the Tesino where the latter were defeated, and the conquerors settled in the Milanese territory and in Insubria—driving the Etruscans to the north of the Po and taking possession of all their Cities except Mantua.

The Etruscans were first obliged to retreat into Umbria and thence into the territory of Picernum where they established the two towns of Atria and Cupra—the remainder of the nation traversed the Appenine Mountains threw themselves into Campania and formed a state of 12 Cities whereof the town afterwards called Capua was the head. The Samnites by a stratagem of which Livy speaks (Tit. Liv. IV. 37.) obtained possession of this City by surprize 420 years before our Era and 332 years after the foundation of Rome and were driven from the whole of Campania after being in possession of it nearly 400 years.

But of 'Tuscany they afterwards had only Mantua Atria and Cupra. The Etruscans of Tuscany beyond the Po, and those of Campania seem to have been then separate and independent bodies.

From the foundation of Rome downwards, the history of the Etruscans is to be read in the historians of Rome—The whole of this nation was ultimately extirpated by Sylla, they having joined the party of Marius,

I am not aware of any attempt having been made to explain the import of the word *Rasena*. *San Son* expressed by the Ionians *Zan*, *Zen Zena* were the original names of the Sun, the great object of antient worship (Bryant's Mythology, 1. 34.)

The word *Rha* is one of great antiquity and was the antient name of the river Volga.—*Rhea* is the most antient of the goddesses. It is found in composition in the following words *Rhadamanthus*, *Rhabduchi*, the Greek name for lictors; *Rhama* and *Rhamna*, a village of Attica in which was a celebrated temple of *Amphiaras*; *Rhamnus* another village of Attica, wherein was to be seen the statue of *Nemesis* by *Agorachritus* the scholar of *Phidias*, which statue *Varro* esteemed of greater excellence than any other he had ever seen; *Rhapsodi*; *Rhapton* or *Rhassta* the capital according to *Stephanus* of inner *Ethiopia*, inhabited by a nation called *Rhapsi*; *Rharias* one of the names of *Ceres*—*Rhecius* a charioteer of *Castor* and *Pollux*—*Rhenus* and *Rhodanus* the names of the *Rhine* and *Rhone*; *Rhamnenses* one of the tribes of *Rome* as established by *Romulus*. Other examples might be added, but these will probably be thought sufficient. The two words *Rha* and *Sen* give us the two first syllables of *Rasena*. But the Greeks in foreign words continually omitted the *Nu* final and substituted the *Sigma* which would make of it *Rhæ-ses*, or *Rhæ-sos*, thus the swamps which divided *Attica* from the territory of *Eleusinium* had the appellative of *Rhæsoi*—converted by the *Latins* into *Rhaetii*.

Plutarch in his *Symposiacs* introduces the *Etruscan Lycias* a scholar of *Pythogaras*, and makes him affirm *Pythagoras* was a *Tuscan*, assigning as the reason that certain of the symbols used by the *Pythagorians* were carefully observed by the *Etruscans* only.

Arciat has made a collection of the *Pythagorian Symbols* or precepts, they are as follow :—

Ne degustaris ex iis quibus est nigra cauda.

Stateram ne transilias.

Chœnici ne incidias.

Ne cuiuis dextram inieceris.

Arctum annulum ne gestato,

Ignem ne gladio fodito,

Cor ne edito.

Cibum in matellam ne immittas.

Ad finem ubi perueneris, ne retrouertare.

Tollenti onus auxiliare, deponenti nequaquam.

Ollæ vestigium in cinere confunde.

Unguium, criniumq; præsegmina urina non inspergenda.

Quæ uncis sunt unguibus non nutrienda;

Adversus Solem ne loquitor.

Hirundinem sub eodem tecto ne habeto.

Stragula semper circumuoluta habeto.

In annulo Dei figuram ne gestato.

Sellam oleo ne absterferus.

Coronam ne carpito.

Quæ ceciderunt ne colligito.

A gallo candido abstineas.

Panem ne frangito.

Salem apponito.

Ne libes Diis ex vitibus non amputatis.

Ne sacrificio sine farino.

Adorato circumactus.

Adoraturi sedeant.

Surgens e lecto vestigium corporis confundito.

A piscibus abstineto.

Those mentioned in the passage of Plutarch are the 11th, 13th, 15th, 28th.

There is one other given by Plutarch and which Alciat has omitted—viz. never step over a besom—Alciat has also omitted the golden rule of self examination for which we have the authority of Cicero who tells us that it was disclosed by a scholar of Pythagorus *frementibus condiscipulis*.

The following is a translation of it by Dr. Johnson. "Let not sleep, (says Pythagoras,) fall upon thine eye till thou hast thrice reviewed the transactions of the past day. Where have I turned aside from rectitude? What have I been doing? What have I left undone which I ought to have done? Begin thus from the first act and proceed; and in conclusion at the ill which thou has done be troubled, and rejoice at the good."

The inference which the interlocutor in Plutarch draws from similarity of doctrines does not seem to be conclusive. Pythagorus and the Etruscans may have drawn from a common source—and that probably was Chaldean. Pythagorus (whose birth is with great probability fixed at not earlier than the year 600 before the Christian æra by Mr. Freret, Acad: d'insc: et belles Lettres, Vol. XIV:) was perfectly master of the Chaldean as well as of the Egyptian Philosophy and Religion. The Governments which he established were highly aristocratic. But there do not remain sufficient vestiges either of his institutions or of those of the Etruscans, to enable us to compare them as well with each other as with those of the Egyptians and Chaldeans.

The most antient name of the earth is *Ai* and *Aia*. Thus we find the oldest Greek word to be *Gaia*, subsequently *Ge*. The termination *a*. being a contraction of these two words is still preserved in the names of many places as Mesopotamia, *Gallicia*, &c. &c.

The Sun the great object of worship in these antient times is seldom mentioned without an epithet, or some appellative of that supposed deity. What the import of the word *Rha* is, I dont know and to ascertain it would require a knowledge of oriental letters. *Rasena* then probably imports the land of the Sun with some accompanying epithet or attribute.

There are many reasons to induce us to believe that the *t* in *Rhæti* was pronounced like an *S*. and then the two first syllables of *Rasena* correspond with the common name of their *Rhætian* ancestors. Let the following passages of Virgil

gil be looked at. Virg. X. 388.—X. 402.—VI. 505—XII. 456.—V. 646.—III. 108.—X. 399.—also the name Rhæsus given by Homer to the Thacian King whose horses Uliſſes carried away at the ſiege of Troy.

It would extend this paper beyond its due limits to ſupport the conjecture which I have formed of the hiſtory of the Etruscans previous to their irruption into Italy at the period fixed by Mr. Freret of 1000 years before the Birth of our Saviour. It may be permitted however to ſtate generally that a more minute examination of their hiſtory will probably lead us to the concluſion that they came from the antient Thrace, and that in the great diſplacement of nations which took place at the ſiege of Troy they were propelled in the interval between theſe two epochs (an interval of about 186 years) into Italy.

Mr. Niebuhr does not ſeem to have read Bryant nor to have been acquainted with the original ſources of information which he refers to, when he excludes ſo dogmatically the name of Tyrhenians without condeſcending to aſſign any reaſon for the excluſion of one of the names by which they ſeem to have been known throughout the whole of antiquity.

There is a number of monuments and of inſcriptions in the Etruscan tongue, published by the learned men of Italy—Of theſe inſcriptions Mr. Freret again informs us ſome are in Latin others in Etruscan Letters. Theſe latter are the in ancient letters conveyed into Greece and Iberia by the Phœnicians, and are ſtill to be found on the ancient Spaniſh coins. They reſemble, as published by Count Laſtanosa much the Samaritan Letters but have little likeness to the letters ſeen upon the medals of Tyre, Sidon and Cadiz.

Thoſe in Latin letters are as unintelligible as the others—and all the reſearches into their meaning have hitherto in a great degree failed. Still, Mr. Neibuhr is in an error when he ſays in a note to his chapter upon the ancient Etruscans, that there are only two words of this tongue, the import of which is known,

There

There is a third Etruscan word preserved to us by Dyonisius of Halicarnassus. It is the word *Tursis*, which that writer informs us was adopted by the Greeks from the Etruscans and signifies a large Tower—such as was used by the Etruscans and copied from this people by the Greeks. From the Etruscans the Romans changed the first *s* to *r*—hence *Turris*. Whether our word *Tower*, and the French word *Tour* is derived from the Latin, or rather not derived directly from the ancient *Tor*—which is the probable root of the Etruscan *Tursis* may be doubted. It is proper to observe, that the Greek word *Tursis* has no Greek root.

Bryant has the following observations upon the word *Tor*.

“*Tor* is an hill or Tower. Many places in Greece had it in their composition ; such as *Torone*, *Torete*, *Toreate* : also in *Hetruria*, *Torchonium*. *Turzon* in Africa was a Tower of the Sun. It was sometimes expressed *Tar*, hence *Tarcunia*, *Taracena*, *Tarracon* in Spain, *Tarne* (*Tar-ain*) which gave name to a fountain in *Lydia* ; *Taron* (*Tar-on*) in *Maipritania*. Towers of old were either *Prutanea*, or light houses, and were styled *Tor-Is* : whence came the *Turris* of the Romans. Sometimes these terms were reversed and the Tower was called *Astur*. Such a one was near some hot streams at no great distance from *Cicero’s* villa. The river too was called *Artura*. There was also a place of this name opposite to the island *Lesbos*, undoubtedly denominated from the like circumstances in its situation, as may be learned from *Pausanias*, who had seen it.”

But besides this there are other words having an evident affinity to words still found in the Latin authors. This will perhaps best be shewn by copying here an Etruscan Inscription to be found in the *Miscellanea Antiq. Erud.* of *Spou-*

LERPITOR. SANTIRPIOR. DVIR. FOR.

FOVFER. DERTIER. DIERIR. VOTIR. FARER.

VEF. NARATV. VEF. PONI. SIRTIR.

It is proper to observe that the religion of the ancient nations of Italy seems to have been the same and to have differed

ferred much from that of the Greeks. In the knowledge of the religion of Italy, the Etruscans possessed an acknowledged pre-eminence. It was intimately connected with the civil forms of Law and Government—nay with all the principal acts of private life. The Romans derived their forms from the Etruscans. It is in these forms that we are to look for the almost unchangeable *verba solennia* thus adopted by the Romans. Now several of these *verba solennia*, are to be found in the above inscription, and I apprehend that it must have been a Votive tablet.

These were very common amongst the ancient Romans as well on public as upon private occasions. The poets often allude to this.

Me *Tabula sacer*
Votiva paries indicat avido
 Suspendisse potenti
 Vestimenta Maris Deo.

Horat. Carm. I. 5.

Again,

Votiva, pateat, veluti descripta tabella
 Vita senis. Horat. Serm. II. 1.

And Tibullus,

Pendebatque vagi pastoris votum
 Garrula silvestri fistula sacra Deo.

Lib. II. El. 3.

Authorities might be multiplied from the Latin poets and historians.

The word *Voveo* was in the ancient Roman Ecclesiastical law a *verbum solenne*. It will be found in the vow of Romulus of a temple to Jupiter Stator. Livy I.—of Appius, Livy X.—of Camillus, Livy V.—and it as well as the word *Votum* are found in a multitude of other places. Brissonius expressly says, *sed jam ad votorum formulas transeamus, in quibus solenne fuisse verbum voveo non est ignotum*,—Brisson. de Form. 105,

The word *Votum* is to be found also in conjunction with another word which we see in this inscription, the word *DUIR*, which is the same as the Latin word *Dare*, which is eminently a *Verbum Solemne* being one of the *Tria verba* (*Do Dico Dedico*) referred to in *Ovid's Fasta*.

Ille ne fastus erit per quem tria verba silentur.

Fastus erit per quem lege licebit agi.—*Ovid. Fast. lib. 1.*

After the defeat of the Consul *Flaminius*, by *Hannibal* at *Lake Thrasymine* the *Decemvirs* according to *Livy*, made the public Vow of a *Ver sacrum*, *si bellum prospere essit, resque publica in eodem quo ante bellum fuisset statu permansisset*. In the rogation of the Law to carry this into effect, the following words will be found *donum duit*—where this word evidently stands for *dat*.

The same word is found in the vow made by *Appius*, *inter prima Signa*, with his hands lifted to Heaven, as was the form: *Bellona hodie nobis si Victoriam Duis, ast ego templum tibi voco*.

A compound of this root is to be found in the fourth table of the 12 tables, (*Gothof. 4 fontes &c.*) *Si pater familias ter filium venum duit liber esto*.

The word *farer* is probably the same word as *fari* which is a *verbum solenne*. It is also probable that the terminations *er* and *ier* are terminations of the infinitive mood in the ancient Etruscan tongue. *Fasti sunt quibus licet fari prætori tria verba solemnia Do Dico Dedico.*—*Macrob. Saturnal I. 16.*

I am led to suppose that this may be an Etruscan termination of the infinitive—for the following reasons. It is more ancient than the common Latin termination of *re*. We meet with it in some of the ancient forms as in the word *Agier* for *Agere*. *Lucretius* who was fond of old locutions uses it frequently as also does *Persius*; and *Horace* more sparingly than either, following the rule which he expresses so well,

Obscurata diu populus bonus cruet atque
 Proferet in lucem speciosa vocabula rerum
 Quæ priscis memorata Catonibus atque Cethegis
 Nunc situs informis premit et deserta vetustas.

Epist. II. 2.

Ponere is a verbum solenne, and there can I think, be no doubt, that the word *Poni* in the inscription is used in the sense of the Latin word. Its being used here, serves also further to confirm the conjecture, that the inscription was one of a votive tablet.

Non ego victrices lauro redimere *Tabellas*
 Et Veneris media *Ponere* in acie morer.
 Subscribam, Veneri fidas tibi Naso *tabellas*
 Dedicat. Ovid. Amor. I. 11-

So also Propertius,

Magna ego dona, tua figam Cytherea columna
 Taleque sub nostro munere carmen erit ;
 Has *pono* ante tuam tibi Diva Propertius Ædem
 Exuvias tota nocte receptus amans,

El. 11.

All the ancient inscriptions upon stones abound with the words *Donum Dedit*, or *Donum Posuit*, but more frequently with the initials of these words *D. D.* or *D. P.*

The word *naratu*—may be the supine of the word *narro*. I conjecture that the two first words of this inscription are compound words—*Lar* or *Lars* or *Larts* is an Etruscan word, and signified in that language *Dominus*. At least so it is said in the *Viaggio di Platone nell'Italia dal Signor Cuoco* ; and tho' he does not cite his authority, yet he could not have been mistaken upon a point like this.

The Romans confined this term to their household Gods. But they were in the habit of prefixing the words *Dominus* and *Domina* to the names of their other Gods and Goddesses.

Ovid gives them this epithet in the 11th Elegy of the 3d book *Amor.* Petronius Arbitrator (Satyr.) says, *Timidissimo murmure volu n feci et Domina inquam Venus.*

So

So also Virgil,

Junoni cane vota lubens Dominam que potentem

Supplicibus supera donis. Æneid III. 438,

And again speaking of the mother of the Gods.

Et vineti curram *Dominæ* subiere liones.

Virgil in the sixth book of the Æneid gives the title to Proserpine. It may then be here a title.

Upon the concluding syllable of this first word we shall find all the information we require in Bryant. He says that Aur, sometimes expressed Or, Ur, and Our, signifies both light and fire. "Hence came the Orus of the Egyptians, a title given to the Sun. Quod solem vertimus, id in Hebræo est Ur; quod lucem, et ignem, etiam et Solem denotat. It is often compounded with the term above, and rendered Abor, Aborus, Aborras; and it is otherwise diversified. This title was often given to Chus by his descendants whom they stiled Chusorus. From Aur, taken as an element, came Uro, Ardeo; as a Deity, oro, horaeus was stiled Cham. Ur, by the Greeks; and under this title was worshipped at Halicarnassus. He is so called by Lycophron."

Sant in the next word seems to be an epithet. *Sanctus* is a *verbum solemne*, and was often applied by the Romans as an epithet to their Gods. The following are examples.

Sequimur Sancte Deorum,

Quisquis es. ————— Virgil Æneid. IV. 576,

Et cantant laudes Termine sancte tuas.

Ovid Fastor II.

Examples of this application of the word *Sanctus* might be multiplied. It is very frequently found so applied in ancient inscriptions.

Bryant enables us also to understand the concluding syllable of this word. "To the prefixes pi and phi is generally joined er by which the element of fire is denoted. They called their chief God Pur: and dealt particularly in divination by lots, termed of old *Purim*. Cicero takes notice
tice

tice of this custom of divination at Præneste ; and describes the manner, as well as the place : but gives into the common mistake, that the Purim related to Jupiter's childhood. He says, that the place, where the process was carried on, was a sacred inclosure, is est hodie locus septus religiose propter Jovis Pueri, qui lactens cum Junone in gremio Fortunæ mammam appetens, castissime collitur a Matribus. This manner of divination was of Chaldaic original, and brought from Babylonia to Præneste. It is mentioned in Esther, c. 3. v. 7. They cast Pur before Haman, that he might know the success of his purposes against the Jews. *Wherefore they call those days Purim after the name of Pur.* c. 9. v. 26. The same lots of divination being used at Præneste was the occasion of the God being called Jupiter Pur. This in after-times was changad to Puer : whence we find inscriptions, which mention him under that name ; and at the same time take notice of the custom which prevailed in his temple. Inscriptions Jovi Pnero, and Fortunæ Primigeniæ Jovis Pueri are to be found in Gruter. One is very particular.

Fortunæ Primigeniæ Jovis Pueri D, D,
EX SORTE compos factus
Nothus Rusicanæ
L. P. Plottilla.

That this word Puer was originally Pur may be proved from a well known passage in Lucretius :

Puri sæpe locum propter ac dolia curva
Somno devincti credunt se attollere vestem.

Many instances, were it necessary, might be brought to this purpose. It was a name originally given to the priests of the Deity who were named from the Chaldaic, Ur : and by the ancient Latins were called Puri. At Præneste the name was particularly kept up on account of this divination by lots. These by the Amonians were styled Purim, being attended with ceremonies by fire ; and supposed to be effected through the influence of the Deity. Præneste seems to be a compound of Puren Esta, the lots of Esta, the Deity of fire."