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Liber, Fufluns, and the others: rethinking Dionysus in Italy between the fifth and the third centuries BCE

Abstract: In response to a dossier of different theonyms and iconographic profiles for a set of gods in central Italy from the 5th–3rd centuries that correspond to Dionysus, this chapter considers the relationship between Fufluns, Liber, Hiaco (and other by-forms) with reference to two main concepts. (a) Translation: based on the work of Jan Assman, Homi Bhabha and others, we may investigate to what extent these divine forms were 'translations' or 'interpretations' of a Greek archetype. (b) Multiplicity: following the work of Versnel, Henrichs and others, we may consider the cluster of gods under the rubric of religious polymorphism: was Dionysus one god or many? The chapter argues for the fragmentation of Dionysus in Italy in the 5th–3rd centuries, and for the significance of local myths and forms of worship of the god as against a generalized 'Roman' standard. The discussion focusses on two case studies, Vulci in Etruria and Praeneste in Latium, with particular reference to local colour. The Etruscan evidence surveyed comprises epigraphic and iconographic attestations of Fufluns Paχie on fifth-century ceramics and a fourth-century mirror respectively. Praenestine evidence analysed includes bronze mirrors and *cistae* which depict Fufluns, L(e)iber and Hiaco. In conclusion it addresses the significance of the fragmentation of Dionysus in Italy for the interpretation of the Bacchanalian affair of 186 BCE.

Introduction

If one wishes to discuss the way in which Dionysus was worshipped by the non-Hellenic populations of Italy, one must necessarily deal with two distinct but overlapping questions: the first is that of multiplicity, the second of translation.

I am much grateful to the editor for his invitation to contribute to the original conference and to this volume and for our subsequent warm and intellectually stimulating exchanges and conversations, and to Stéphanie Wyler, Francesco Massa and Laura Puritani for sending to me some of their unpublished and published works. I wrote the original paper during a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship awarded by the Irish Research Council, and I revised it during a Research Fellowship awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

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Multiplicity is an essential characteristic of Dionysus, as of any other god. In a passage of *De natura deorum* (3.58), also discussed in this volume by Gesine Manuwald, Cicero has the character Q. Aurelius Cotta comment on the multiplicity of gods, listing at least five different *Dionysoi*, and John the Lydian reproduces a similar catalogue (*Mens*. 4.51).[1] Different mythical genealogies and cults mark different 'aspects' or personae of Dionysus – terms that I use with awareness of their vagueness, but that point at the difficulty of defining with precision this tension between one and many. Cotta rejects this overabundance of *Dionysoi* as absurd (3.60). There is a palpable tension in this passage between unity and multiplicity: mythology shows that there are many gods, whereas Cotta's philosophy argues that there must be one. So, at different discursive levels, Dionysus can be one and many. Recent scholarship on Greek polytheism has greatly focused on this aspect of ancient deities.[2] With regard to Dionysus in particular, Henk Versnel and Albert Henrichs have underlined that the great number of divine personae identified with Dionysus and their concurring unity in different contexts and at different levels is a defining characteristic of the god.[3] As Henrichs has provocatively stated, one could turn 'the monotheistic creed of oneness in trinity, or of unity in multiplicity, into a pagan declaration of faith in a Dionysos who is simultaneously one and many: "Dionysos is a god, Iakchos is a god, Sabazios is a god. And yet they are not three gods, but one god."'[4]

It is worth noting that Cicero uses a form directly transliterated from Greek, Dionysus, rather than the common Latin translation Liber, as he frequently does elsewhere.[5] Translatability is a further essential characteristic of polytheism: two or more gods from different linguistic areas could be considered mutual translations. In Classical scholarship having gods in different languages considered the equivalent of each other has rarely been studied in terms of translation, but rather of interpretation or using hierarchical categories such as Hellenization or Romanisation.[6] The idea of gods in translation was formulated by Jan Assmann in the nineties and expanded by other scholars working on the Near East, such as

1 With a notable difference: Cicero writes that the Dionysus of the Orphic rites is son of Jupiter and Luna – whereas John the Lydian has Semele. This detail makes it probable that Cicero and John the Lydian are using (directly or indirectly) a common Greek source, and Cicero confuses Semele and Selene, incorrectly translating the name as Luna. See Henrichs 2013, 560.

2 Versnel 2011a; Parker 2011.

3 Versnel 2011b; Henrichs 2013.

4 Henrichs 2013, 555.

5 See Manuwald in this volume.

6 On *interpretatio* see Ando 2005; Bettini 2016; Parker 2017, 33–76.

Mark Smith.[7] According to Assmann, translation is one of the ways in which different gods are united. The most ancient documents attesting this practice are Babylonian: it was common that, especially in legal documents, the names of Babylonian gods would be translated from Sumerian, and from the late second millennium BCE onwards, lists of names of gods with translations in different languages were produced in Mesopotamia. Although Greeks and Romans did not produce such lists, translating gods was a common practice, attested by countless documents, and discussed already by Herodotus in book 2 with a profound awareness of the nuances and the complexity of the process.[8] Assmann argued that the translatability of gods must be based on one or more elements that the divinities in question shared.[9]

This problem can be connected with the broader concept of cultural translation, theorised by Homi Bhabha.[10] Playing on the etymological ambiguity of the term 'translation' as transportation and interpretation, Bhabha argues that the translator moves in a liminal space between different languages or semantic systems, and that the work of translation creates something entirely new. Temporally, translation happens in the present; it tends to be always an unfinished and temporary business, but can project itself towards the past and the future. This aspect of Bhabha's theory is particularly useful because it focuses on translation as a continuous process, in which the status of the source or the resulting item is relatively unimportant in essentialist terms. Potentially, focusing on cultural translation also allows us to appreciate the agency of the translators, as it is these individuals and groups between semantic systems than engage in the process. If the metaphor of cultural translation has been criticised by some for being too vague, there have in turn been vigorous defences against these critiques.[11] Recently, Peter Burke has brilliantly used cultural translation to describe a variety of historical phenomena of the Renaissance, thus showing that the concept can be useful beyond contemporary, postcolonial contexts.[12] Burke distinguishes cultural translation from the closely related concept of hybridization precisely for the question of agency: he believes that if a process of hybridization can be done unconsciously, a process of cultural translation always implies a conscious

7 Assmann 1996; Assmann 2008, esp. 54–58; Smith 2008.
8 See Burkert 1985; Calame 2011.
9 Assmann 2008, 54.
10 Bhabha 1994, 303–37.
11 Maitland 2017, 18–27.
12 Burke 2016, 11–41.

choice. It seems to me that in the present case of Dionysus the metaphor of cultural translation is particularly cogent and powerful to characterise what was happening in ancient Italy between Etruscan, Greek, and Latin gods and goddesses.

The question of translation involves a discussion of what names Dionysus was called in languages other than Greek, such as Liber in Latin and Fufluns in Etruscan. On the basis of which common elements were these translations formulated? The question of multiple divine personae is intimately interconnected with that of translation. Which Dionysus was translated? Who performed the act of translation? And how many different translations were possible? Is it fair to say that Liber is Dionysus in Latium, or Fufluns Dionysus in Etruria? Was there a Dionysus in Italy, or multiple divine figures, identified with a different set of multiple divine figures for a number of different reasons? To what extent may one consider Dionysus in Italy as a unitary rather than a fragmented phenomenon?

An argument for a unity of Dionysus in Italy is strongly based on the perspective provided by Roman sources. When Livy narrates the Bacchanalian affair in book 39, he describes the story of the corruption of the Bacchanalian rituals as an Italian phenomenon, which had started with a *Graecus ignobilis* who imported a new form of rites to Etruria (39, 8, 3), and a dubious Campanian priestess called Paculla Annia (39, 13, 9). The *SC* decree from Tiriolo (*ILLRP* 511) also confirms the Roman understanding of the Bacchanalia as an Italian issue.[13] Another argument for unity is based on the uniform character of phenomena pertaining to visual culture. Across the languages and cultures of ancient Italy there is a broad acceptance and local elaboration of Greek iconographies, including Dionysian elements such as satyrs, maenads and the god Dionysus himself.[14] But how should we interpret these images without the aid of written sources, strong contextual evidence or inscriptions? Versnel has underlined the methodological frailty of a unifying interpretation of iconographic evidence, even when it pertains to a single linguistic area: identical representations may be used to signify radically different personae or aspects of the deity.[15] When we consider iconographies across different languages and cultures, a unifying interpretation inevitably becomes even frailer. Distinct cultures might give different meanings to the same images, and without contextual information or written signs such as inscriptions, we

13 A comprehensive recent discussion is Briscoe 2008, 230–90, but see also Bispham 2007, 116–23; Cazanove 2000; Pailler 1988; and Steinhauer in this volume.

14 For an approach based on iconography see Cerchiai 2011; Cerchiai 2014; Puritani 2016; and Puritani 2018.

15 Versnel 2011a, 521–22.

moderns are hardly in the position to appreciate this. The risk, therefore, is of giving a unifying interpretation of ancient evidence based on the faulty assumption that iconography must have a universal meaning.

In this chapter I argue against a unifying interpretation of Dionysus in Italy. On the one hand, I do not think that a Roman perspective should be adopted, and on the other I argue that the uniformity of Dionysian imagery in Italy might conceal a variety of disparate meanings hidden from the eye of the beholder, which are revealed only when inscriptions and other contextual evidence help us appreciate them. In a forthcoming paper, Stéphanie Wyler argues that the evidence on Loufir in Pompeii shows, on the one hand, a strongly local adaptation of Hellenistic models, and on the other the sanctuary seemingly unaffected by the Bacchanalian affair.[16] I shall also argue that a careful consideration of local evidence yields a much better understanding of Dionysus in Italy than has been achieved hitherto, and I shall put more emphasis than has previously been done on the process of translation of a Greek god from a cultural point of view, looking at multiple translations. I shall consider how Dionysus was translated in two Italian cities, Vulci in Etruria and Praeneste in Latium, between the fifth and the third centuries BCE.

Vulci

Vulci is a remarkable place to look at Dionysus in Italy. In the second half of the sixth century BCE local potters produced a number of artefacts known as the Ivy Leaf Group, because ivy leaves are often used as decorative patterns.[17] The workshop was active in the decades after 550 BCE and some of the known vases represent Dionysus. What to make of this Dionysus? Was he already identified with an Etruscan god? This is a question that cannot be answered, but the Ivy Leaf Group shows that the iconography of Dionysus was not only known from imported Greek pottery, but that it was so familiar that it was reproduced in the local production.

It is in the following century that we have four epigraphic documents from Vulci that testify to the translation of Dionysus as Fufluns. The most ancient of these objects in an Attic red-figure *kylix* cup attributed to the Penthesileia painter

16 Wyler forthcoming.

17 Werner 2005.

(460–455 BCE). Inside the cup one can see Apollo fighting Tityos with Leto witnessing the struggle. Outside, groups of young men and women are represented. The inscription is on the bottom of the cup, after glazing, and it reads *fuflunsl paχ[---]*.[18] The object was found at Pian della Badia during excavations promoted by Lucien Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, to whom the Pope awarded lands and the title of Prince of Canino.[19] A further inscription is on an Attic red-figure *kylix* cup attributed to the Marley group (425–400 BCE). Inside the cup is represented an old Silenos riding a fawn. Outside there are three female figures in movement, one with a baby. The object also comes from the Bonaparte excavations. The inscription, with a rather uncertain hand, is on the bottom on the cup, and it reads *fuflunsul paχies velclθi*.[20] A third inscription was found on a fragment of a handle of black-painted Attic pottery (probably fifth century BCE), which was discovered in the 1980s near the western gate of the city.[21] The final inscription that I discuss is on an Attic red-figure *rhyton* cup in the shape of a donkey with a representation of Eros (end of the fifth, beginning of the fourth century BCE), discovered during the Bonaparte excavations. The inscription, on the handle, reads *fuflun(s)l paχies velclθi*.[22]

The inscription: *fuflunsl paχies velclθi* can be translated as 'of Fufluns Paχie (genitive), at Vulci (locative)'. The divine name Fufluns is followed by the epithet Paχie; this is the Etruscan rendering of a Greek word, either Βάκχος or Βάκχιος.[23] In a recent paper, Marco Antonio Santamaría has argued that Βάκχος originally referred to the worshipper of Dionysus, whereas Βάκχιος subsequently came to be an epithet of the god, which would mean 'god of the Bacchants'.[24] This would suggest that perhaps Paχie comes directly from Βάκχιος. The name and the epithet of the god is in the genitive, which clearly here must express divine ownership of the object. The locative *velclθi*, 'at Vulci', is equally interesting. In his monograph on Etruscan votive inscriptions, Daniele Maras has underlined how in such a context the name of a city in locative cannot be merely a specification of place, which would be redundant: it must be rather interpreted as a way to

18 Maras 2009, Vc.co 3 = *CIE* 11101.

19 For the little we know of the history of the excavations, see Cristofani and Martelli 1978, 119–23; Della Fina 2004. The excavations started in 1828 and were first promoted by Princess Alexandrine, Lucien's wife.

20 Maras 2009, Vc.co 5 = *CIE* 11073.

21 Maras 2009, Vc.co 4 = *CIE* 10985: *[---]aχies v[---]*.

22 Maras 2009, Vc.co 6 = *CIE* 11110. The missing sigma is likely to be a mistake of the engraver rather than a variant of the divine name.

23 Maras 2009, 396; Cristofani and Martelli 1978, 127, with previous bibliography.

24 Santamaría 2013.

clarify the local character of the god, in the way in which local epithets work in Greek and Latin.[25] One can think of Athena Lindia, or of Venus Erycina: they are not just Athena at Lindos or Venus at Eryx but they are specific and distinct goddesses, with individualised characteristics, with the local specification often hiding a process of translation from a different language (such as in the case of Eryx).[26] So the Fufluns Paχie inscriptions at Vulci put together an Etruscan divine name, an epithet of Greek derivation and a local specification which makes clear that this is an individual god, residing at Vulci and there only. The number of documents and their distribution over half a century make clear that we are dealing with a custom repeated over time (a ritual?). In spite of the presence of local production, all the inscriptions above are on imported Attic pottery, but it is unclear what the significance of this might be: I would be inclined to think that expensive imported pottery was considered better suited to an offering than cheaper local productions.

What kind of god was Fufluns Paχie? Marina Martelli has argued that he was a god strictly connected with wine, mostly because in local pottery from Vulci and other places in Etruria Fufluns-Dionysus is often represented with a *kantharos* cup, but this is hardly surprising, given that Fufluns already took over the iconography of Dionysus in the second quarter of the fifth century BCE.[27] Giovanni Colonna has given these texts a mystical interpretation. His argument goes as follows: these inscriptions probably come from graves, but if they were regular gifts to a divinity one would expect to find them in a sanctuary. Therefore, they should be considered evidence of rites of initiation, objects that the Bacchants would take to their graves as a proof of their different status in the netherworld.[28] This is difficult to support: to formulate his argument, Colonna assumes that there is a substantial uniformity between Greek and Etruscan practices. Moreover, Colonna assumes that these objects come from graves, but there can be no absolute certainly about it as we are ignorant of precise contexts, due to the antiquarian character of the Bonaparte excavations. Even if they came from graves, does this necessarily imply the presence of initiation rituals? One might invoke as a parallel the objects with Latin inscriptions called *pocola deorum*. Most of them were produced at the beginning of the third century BCE: they were pieces of pottery of various shapes with the painted inscription *pocolom* followed by the

25 Maras 2009, 94.

26 On this point, see Parker 2003 and, in transcultural contexts, Parker 2017, 77–110.

27 Cristofani and Martelli 1978, 132. The earliest evidence for the attribution of the iconography of Dionysus to Fufluns is the archaic mirror I shall discuss in the following section.

28 Colonna 2005, 2018–19.

name of a deity in the genitive.[29] Many of these objects were found in Etruscan *necropoleis*, and three were found in Vulci, dedicated to Vulcanus, Ceres and Aequitas.[30] Of course these *pocola* are completely different from the Fufluns Paχie inscriptions: they are much later, and the formula is painted on the pottery by the workshop during the production of the piece, rather than engraved after glazing at the moment of the offering. But both kinds of objects testify to the practice of having a formula of divine ownership inscribed on pottery found in graves, in this case clearly without any implication of initiation.

One can focus on the epithet Paχie and give a Dionysian interpretation of the god Fufluns at Vulci, but the locative *velclθi* is no less significant to the interpretation of the inscriptions and the related practices: with whatever ritual he was honoured, the god was one of Vulci, a divinity who had some kind of connection with Dionysus through the common epithet Paχie /Bakchios, but must have had a profoundly local character.

This strong local character is confirmed by the final document regarding Fufluns at Vulci. It is a mirror kept in Berlin, which was produced in the first half of the fourth century BCE (fig. 8).[31] One can see a young Fufluns embracing his mother Semla (Semele), next to a standing Apulu (Apollo). In this case we have a scene in which the mother of Fufluns is labelled with an Etruscan rendering of her Greek name. However, the scene does not recall any obvious Greek myth, and it is not clear to what extent it makes sense to look for one. Erika Simon has argued that the scene represents the resurrection of Semele by Dionysus during the Delphic festival of Herois, but such a specifically Delphic myth on an Etruscan mirror would be quite astonishing.[32] Bonfante has argued that the scene represents Fufluns/Dionysus after a descent to Hades to bring Semla back to the living.[33] I do not believe that the scene must necessarily be inspired by a mythological narrative. A mirror recently excavated from the environs of Orvieto shows exactly the same composition with some minor variations, but, other than Apulu, the other characters have different names: there is a young Turnu (Eros), and the embracing characters are the lovers Atunis (Adonis), and Turan (Aphrodite).[34] The identical composition of the two mirrors implies that the scenes are meant to show relationships between different gods and characters in a stereotypical way.

29 Cifarelli, Ambrosini and Nonnis 2002–2003.
30 *CIL* I^2 439, 445, 453.
31 *ES* 83 = *CSE DDR* 1, 5.
32 Simon 2013, 505–6.
33 Bonfante 1993, 231–32.
34 Feruglio 1998.

This may also be true for the mirror from Vulci, which would not be the representation of a specific myth, but a way of conveying a relationship between Fufluns, Semla and Apulu.

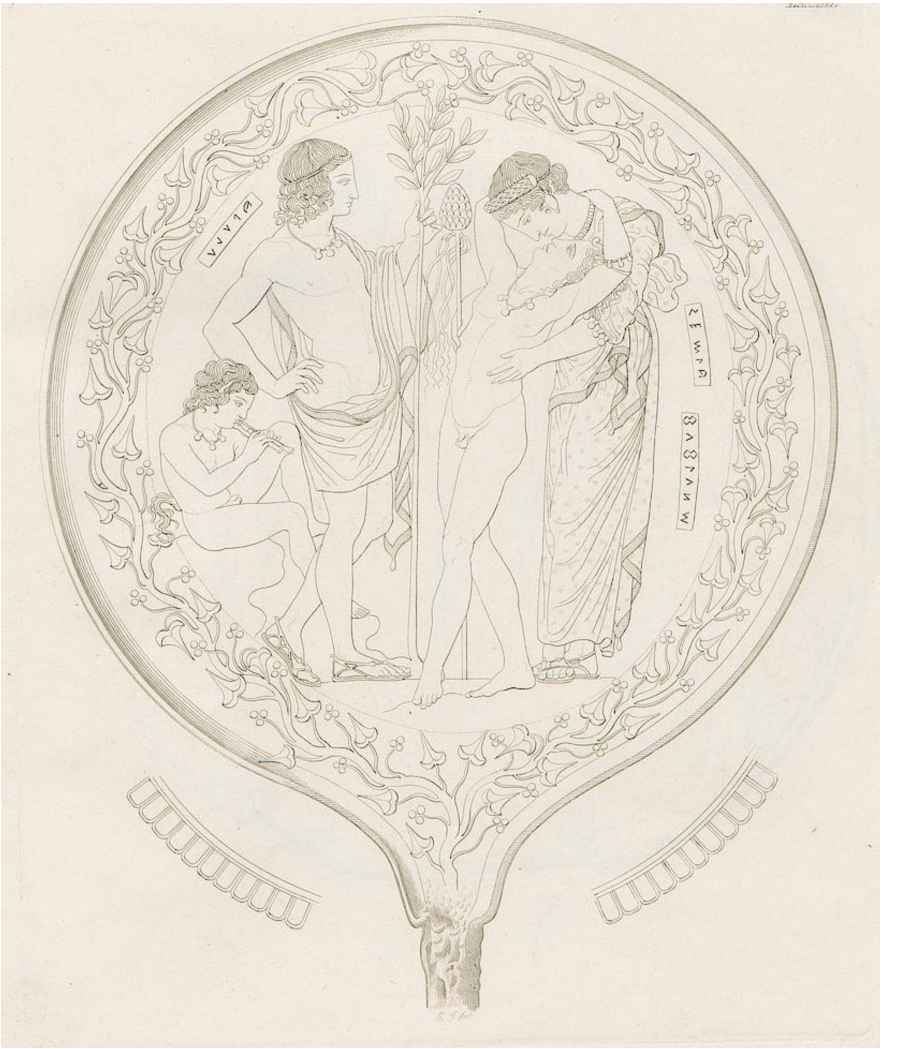

Fig. 8: Mirror with Fufluns embracing Semla, Vulci (from *ES* 83)

Wyler has shown that a terracotta relief from Vulci, produced around 250 BCE, which represents a Dionysian character (Fufluns?), with Ariadne/Ariatha, is indeed a local variant of a broader Hellenistic iconography widespread in Italy and Sicily, which features Dionysus and a female goddess frequently identified with Venus/Aphrodite.[35] At Vulci this iconography has details which suggest an astrological interpretation. The relief also shows that at Vulci Fufluns was not associated with a female goddess but rather with mortal women (Semla, Ariatha).

Praeneste

The Latin town of Praeneste is deservedly famous for its high-quality bronze workshops, which produced a large number of engraved mirrors and *cistae*, mostly found in graves during eighteenth- and nineteenth-century excavations. Several of these mirrors and *cistae* also have inscriptions meant to identify the represented figures. Whereas engraved *cistae* are a typical product of Praeneste, and are only inscribed in Latin, several mirrors were inscribed in Etruscan up until the fourth century BCE. The question of the extent to which these objects must be considered Etruscan or local is debated.[36] From the fourth century BCE onwards, locally produced mirrors have a different shape than those imported from Etruria (pear-shaped rather than circular), are occasionally inscribed in Latin, and show the characters of a strong local tradition. For the earlier period the situation is less clear. Marisa Bonamici is inclined to think that the Praenestine mirrors inscribed in Etruscan were imports realised by workshops operating in Perugia and Tarquinia.[37] In any case it is generally admitted that there must have been some kind of interchange between Etruscan and Latin craftsmen, and for the later production it has been argued that this is a possible explanation for some eccentric characteristics of the Latin language used to inscribe these objects.[38] One could imagine Etruscan craftsmen living in Praeneste and working with Latin craftsmen to satisfy the needs of wealthy clients.

35 Wyler forthcoming; Cristofani 1986, no. 62.
36 A good summary of the debate in van der Meer 2016; also Franchi De Bellis 2005, 13–15.
37 See Bonamici 2002.
38 Mancini 1997.

Fig. 9: Mirror with Fufluns, Menerva, Artamis and Esia, Praeneste (from *ES* 87)

An archaic circular mirror, dated around 475–450 BCE on stylistic grounds, was found near Praeneste in 1794, and is now in the Bologna Museum (fig. 9).[39] The mirror shows four characters with their names inscribed: on the left we have *Menarva* and *Fuflunus* holding a *kantharos* cup, looking towards *Artamis*, who is holding in her arms a female figure called *Esia*. As in the previous instance, no obvious Greek myth is identifiable. It has been proposed that Esia must be identified with Ariadne, although in Etruscan she is normally called Ariatha, and the scene represents a little-known mythical story.[40] The *Odyssey* alludes to Ariadne killed by Artemis (11.321–25), but the full story is in a fragment of Pherecydes of Athens.[41] According to Pherecydes, Athena appeared to Theseus and ordered him to abandon Ariadne and go back to Athens, which he did. After being consoled by Aphrodite, Ariadne is taken by Dionysus, who gave her a golden crown after mating with her. Subsequently, Artemis killed Ariadne for throwing away her virginity.

According to this interpretation, Esia in the mirror would be Ariadne, killed by Artemis as a punishment because she had lost her virginity to Dionysus. However, the scene remains puzzling to me: although in the fragment of Pherecydes Athena warns Theseus that he must leave Ariadne, I see no good reason why she should be present in the engraving. Secondly, Robert Fowler has shown that the sentence about Artemis killing Ariadne in the fragment is probably a later addition which is likely not to belong to the narrative of Pherecydes and, if this is the case, there would be no reason to associate the scene with the fragment.[42] Moreover, on the mirror Artamis seems to be kidnapping Esia rather than killing her. To emphasise how the interpretation of this scene is uncertain, I can refer to a recent paper of Marjatta Nielsen and Anette Rathje, where exactly the opposite interpretation of the scene is given: they claim that Artamis is rescuing Esia, and that the scene testifies to the powers of salvation of the goddess.[43] I think that one has to accept that no simple explanation from known myths can make sense of this scene, which might represent a local myth of which we have no written record.

The form *Fuflunus* in the nominative is very peculiar. Gerhard Radke used it to argue that the name Fufluns had a Latin or Italic etymology, and it came from

39 *CSE* Italia 1, I, 10. For the date, most recently Maggiani 2002, 19 has 'pieno quinto secolo.'

40 Lambrechts 1978, 72–73. Also Bonfante 1993, 232, who refers only to the *Odyssey*; and Colonna 2005, 2021, where the name *esia* is explained as coming from Greek αἰσία, 'auspicious', because she is consecrated to the goddess.

41 BNJ 3 F 148a.

42 Fowler 2000–2013, II, 472.

43 Nielsen and Rathje 2009.

an unattested **Foflunos*.[44] I do not think it is very productive to think of etymologies, but it is certainly striking to see this form attested in a mirror from Praeneste, and I wonder whether the workshop producing the mirror may have been open to Latin influences. As it has a round shape, this object is usually considered an import from south Etruria, but there is no reason to rule out local production, perhaps by an itinerant Etruscan craftsman or a mixed workshop.[45] As the interaction between Etruscan and Latin has been used to explain some peculiarities of the Latin language used on Praenestine bronzes from the fourth century BCE, the same might hold true for the form Fuflunus one century earlier. What is certain is that exactly the same scene, and the same inscriptions in Etruscan, are also present on a pear-shaped mirror, certainly produced at Praeneste, probably around 350 BCE, now in Brussels.[46] This later copy shows the continuous significance of Fuflunus in Praeneste. The mixture of linguistic and cultural influences one can see on these two mirrors also has a bearing on the general interpretation of their meaning. Who was Fuflunus to the Praenestines? A fancy foreign god, who was nice to decorate mirrors with? To what extent was he Etruscan or Praenestine? What is certain is that the Latinised form of the name suggests a degree of local adaptation.

44 Radke 1965, 136.

45 Van der Meer 2016, 72 envisages the possibility of itinerant craftsmen and admits that mirrors from Praeneste inscribed in Etruscan show linguistic peculiarities which seem to suggest an interaction with Latin, although he is sceptical as to the permanent presence of workshops with Etruscan workers because of the lack of epigraphic evidence other than the mirrors. I think, however, that the mirrors themselves represent good enough epigraphic evidence.

46 Lambrechts 1978, 67–73. For a fourth-century BCE date see CSE Italia 1, 1, 30.

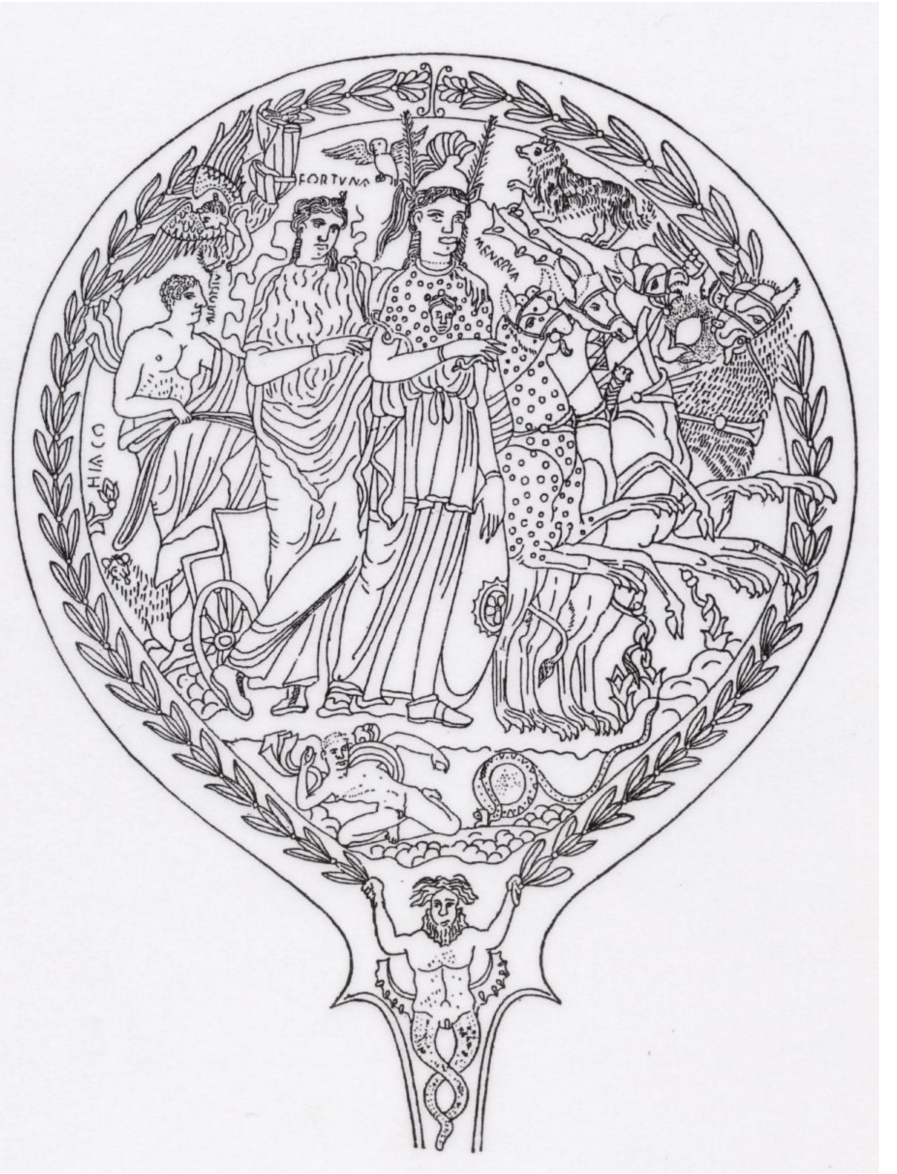

Fig. 10: Mirror with Hiaco, Menerva and Fortuna, Praeneste (from Matthies 1912)

An even greater local character is to be found in a mirror of the later series, inscribed in Latin. This mirror was found in Praeneste and it is in the Museo Nazionale di Palestrina (fig. 10).[47] It is dated around 350 BCE, and it is therefore contemporary to the Fufluns/Semla mirror from Vulci and to the copy of the Fuflunus mirror from Praeneste. In the foreground, we see Minerva and Fortuna embracing each other. On the background, we have a character labelled Hiaco riding a chariot led by monsters, surrounded by wild beasts, while Victoria crowns him. This scene in the background is unanimously interpreted as the celebration of the triumph of Hiaco. Franchi De Bellis has demonstrated that this Hiaco must be a Latin rendering of Ἴακχος. The initial H represents a problem to this interpretation, although there have been several attempts to explain it.[48] Other than the name, Hiaco has very little resemblance to the Ἴακχος of Eleusis. The march on a chariot crowned by Victoria seems hard to explain other than as the divine representation of a triumphal ceremony in the presence of the goddesses Fortuna and Minerva. Dionysus is also represented riding a chariot led by monsters on an early fourth-century BCE Attic *pelike*, although on this object he is not crowned by Nike, and he seems to be riding faster.[49] I wonder if the same character, Hiaco, should not also be identified with the one represented on another, uninscribed mirror from Praeneste, which shows a Dionysus-inspired character holding a thyrsus, and riding a chariot led by panthers, crowned by Victoria.[50] One can see the difference between the iconography on the Attic *pelike* and the Praenestine mirrors, where the triumphal character of Hiaco is highlighted by the presence of Victoria crowning him. I believe that the triumphal iconography of the scene makes it likely that the explanation of the engraving rest, at least partially, in Praenestine ceremonies and rituals.

The final piece of evidence I should like to discuss is a Praenestine *cista*, which gives yet another translation of Dionysus, and which is also discussed by Stéphanie Wyler in this volume (fig. 11). The object is normally dated to around the late fourth or early third centuries BCE, although there is great uncertainty in the dating of Praenestine *cistae*.[51] The scene represents a meeting of gods: Juno, Jupiter, Mercury, Hercules, Apollo, Liber, Victoria, Minerva, Mars, Diana and Fortuna. Liber holds a vine branch, which identifies him as a translation of Dionysus.

47 CSE Italia 6, 83 = CIL 1^2 2498.
48 Franchi De Bellis 2005, 113.
49 Gasparri 1986, no. 461.
50 *CSE* Italia 6, 83.
51 Bordenache Battaglia 1979, no. 5.

This is also the earliest appearance of the name Liber (inscribed *leiber*). The central element of the scene is Minerva doing something to Mars, under whom is located an amphora. Erika Simon has recalled the myth of Otus and Ephialtes imprisoning Ares in a bronze vase for 13 months, and surmised that Liber might be supervising the liberation (*Il.* 5.385–98).[52] Menichetti thought in terms of a mythological representation of local *rites de passage* of young men into adulthood.[53] Many other theories have been formulated.[54] In any case what matters to us is the representation of Liber with the iconographic characteristics of Dionysus.[55]

Fig. 11: Cista with a meeting of gods, Praeneste (from *Mon. Inst.* 1873)

There are other characters who might be identified with Dionysus, appearing on three other uninscribed Praenestine *cistae*. On the first, he appears with other characters next to an altar.[56] On a second *cista* he appears in what would seem to be a Dionysian procession.[57] On the third, he is represented with a satyr walking towards young women bathing, with a parallel female figure walking in the same direction.[58] Satyrs are often represented on *cistae* and mirrors. This has led Wiseman to believe that at Praeneste there was a cult of Liber, and that the scenes

52 Simon 1978.
53 Menichetti 1996, 80–95.
54 Bordenache Battaglia 1979, 52–54.
55 On this Praenestine *cista*, see also Wyler in this volume.
56 Bordenache Battaglia 1979, no. 4.
57 Bordenache Battaglia 1979, no. 14.
58 Bordenache Battaglia 1979, no. 22.

on mirrors and *cistae* must refer to dramatic performances and mime-plays in his honour, influenced by similar performances in Magna Graecia.[59] Without any direct Praenestine evidence of a cult of the god, such as votive gifts or similar items, however, it is of course very hard to say if it is the case, and we should beware of applying what we know of the Roman Liberalia to explain the complex iconographies appearing on Praenestine bronzes. Moreover, as these *cistae* are not inscribed, the identification of the characters must remain uncertain. Were the characters meant to represent Liber, Hiaco, or some other possible translation of Dionysus not transmitted to us?

So, who was Dionysus at Praeneste? The obvious thing one immediately notices is that the translation seems to be erratic: he is known by several names, from the Latinised Etruscan name Fuflunus to Hiaco and Liber, and even the iconography changes quite significantly from one image to another. I have already discussed Wiseman's theory of Liber as the god of drama, which I personally do not find very compelling, in the case of Praeneste. The triumphal iconography with Hiaco crowned by Victoria which appears on some of the mirrors, on the other hand, is striking, and I wonder if 'Dionysus' at Praeneste might have been associated with triumph. One must also notice that, while Liber or Hiaco is occasionally shown with a thyrsus and with vine branches, he does not seem to appear with drinking vessels. In the archaic Fuflunus mirror, the god is shown holding a *kantharos* cup, but it would appear that the translated Dionsysus at Praeneste does not have strong associations with wine. Liber, Fuflunus and Hiaco at Praeneste are all represented together with the goddess Minerva, although the other characters in the scenes vary.[60] This is in stark contrast with Vulci, where Fufluns is rather associated with mortal women such as Semla and Ariatha.

Conclusions

To make some concluding remarks, in this paper I have discussed the presence of Dionysus in Italy as a question of translation between Greek, Latin, and Etruscan. This discussion has shown all the complexity and the difficulty of considering an ancient god with such a multiple and complex identity as Dionysus in translation. Dionysos, Bakchios, Iakchos were freely translated into Etruscan and

59 Wiseman 2008, 119–24.

60 This is a suggestion for which I am grateful to Jackie Elliott.

Latin. As translations must be based on one or more common elements, it is reasonable to assume that such must have been the case. However, it is at times very different to determine which common elements one must work with. In Vulci wine and mysteries have been proposed, and although I find the wine theory more convincing in its simplicity, the common basis might be altogether different, and unknowable to us. Most importantly we have seen in Vulci a god, Fufluns, to whom was attributed an epithet of Dionysus and his iconography, but also a local specification (*velclθi*). He was connected with Semla, the mythical mother of Dionysus, but on the mirror the two also share a connection with Apulu, which must probably be explained locally. This allows us to make a strong case that Fufluns Paχie at Vulci was a god with a strong local identity. Thinking in terms of cultural translation, one must underline the absolute newness of this mixture of different elements. The extent to which Fufluns is identifiable with Dionysus in abstract and essentialist terms is not so important; nor is it important to determine the original basis of this identification – it seems to me that the people of Vulci found themselves in a liminal space between different semantic systems, and were able to produce something powerfully new, a response to the ubiquity and the pervasiveness of Greek iconography and culture in Etruria and the persistence of the indigenous traditions led to the creation of an entirely new deity, as Vulcian and Etruscan as he was Greek.

The case of Praeneste seems to show the exact opposite, because the local evidence seems to be much more erratic in the translation of Dionysus. The mirror in Etruscan shows Fuflunus with Minerva and Artemis in what would seem to be an eccentric myth, and, although it is uncertain whether the item was produced by a local workshop, the name Fuflunus might show some Italic and Latin influence – moreover, we have a later copy of the mirror certainly produced by a local workshop. The Hiaco mirror is equally eccentric and, although Hiaco appears to be a transliteration of Ἴακχος, the scene would appear to be influenced by local triumphal ceremonies. When Liber appears, he does so in a context which is difficult to interpret, a meeting of gods whose central element is an obscure scene involving Mars and Minerva. So the translation of Dionysus at Praeneste seems significantly more fragmented than Dionysus at Vulci, and would seem to consist of a number of divine figures with different names. A possible reason might be that, without the constraint of a local cult of Liber, Fuflunus or Hiaco, the evidence we have seen must be interpreted as an expression of individual choices of the artists, who had more freedom to create images which seemed fit to them (or to their clients) although, regrettably, the evidence does not allow to reconstruct the identity of the individuals involved, and understand the extent of their

agency. One should also take into account the increased level of complexity created by the interaction of Greek, Etruscan, and Latin elements that probably helped destabilise the translations of Dionysus. In the evidence under consideration, these different translations of Dionysus at Praeneste are associated with Minerva, which implies that, in spite of the erratic translation of the name, there seem to be certain recurring characteristics, beyond the mere iconography. In view of these circumstances, even though we cannot be sure whether there was Dionysian cult at Praeneste, one cannot really speak in terms of a mere transposition of the Greek god, as the representations always have local inflections, from the Latinized name Fuflunus to the reference to the Latin ceremony of the triumph. If the translations of Dionysus at Praeneste are more ephemeral than at Vulci, precisely for this reason they show how the temporality of cultural translation is primarily in the present: it is an ever-unfinished business that individuals and groups renew and engage with all the time. At the same time, the present act of translation uses and reinterprets the timeless symbolic repertoire of myths and rituals. The cultural translation of Dionysus in Italy, therefore, occupies not only a linguistic liminal space between Greek, Etruscan, and Italic, but also a temporal liminal space between historical acts of translation and the timelessness of myth.

One must observe that, in spite of the fragmentation and the diversity, these characters are still recognizable as translations of Dionysus, and this is mostly through iconography, the use of names and epithets deriving from those attributed to Dionysus, like Paχie and Hiaco, and the association with characters associated with Dionysus in myths, like Semele and Ariadne, especially at Vulci. The obscure scenes on mirrors and *cistae*, bearing no obvious connection with any known myth, are best explained as references to unknown variants of myths, perhaps elaborated locally, or as references to local ceremonies. The mixture of local specificity and fragmentation is evident: one is still able to recognize a 'Dionysian' pattern in the evidence from Vulci and Praeneste, but must, at the same time, admit significant local differences. These differences mostly depend on which meaning would have been given to Dionysus in a specific act of translation. These acts of translation are not necessarily, nor obviously related to the relationship between Dionysus and a Fufluns or Liber that would predate Greek influence. The case of Praeneste in particular shows that these varying translations could have been related to individual choices and interpretations, and that a continuous flow of new translations was possible.

This chapter has shown that the multiplicity of Dionysus in translation produces radically different phenomena in different places. Dionysus, Fufluns, Paχie, Bakchios, Hiaco, Iakchos and Liber in Italian towns must be investigated

in their specificity, and we must resist the impulse to look for a lowest common denominator, and to explain the obscure aspects of the evidence by assuming a general uniformity with material from other places. The fragmentation of 'Dionysus' in Italy also raises important issues as regards the interpretation of the later Bacchanalia as an Italian phenomenon. Moving away from the reassuring coherence of Roman sources, I have shown that the Roman perspective on the Bacchanalia as an Italian phenomenon is, from many points of view, illusory, at least for the period under consideration.

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