

BOOK REVIEW

La Fibule de Préneste. By CHRISTIAN TOURATIER. Langues et langage 23. Provence: Presses Universitaires de Provence, 2013. Pp. 273. Paper, £29.00. ISBN 978-2-8539-9874-1.

Touratier has compiled in nine chapters an account of the Praeneste Fibula (“Brooch of Palestrina”), whose authenticity has been disputed for over a century. The gold pin was discovered in the Tomba Bernadini at Palestrina (Lazio) in 1876. The 10.5 cm-long fibula is important because it is engraved with the oldest known inscription in archaic Latin dating to the 7th century BC.

The engraving on the catch records the gift of the object by a *Manios* to a *Numasios*: *MANIOS : MED : FHE:FHAKED : NUMASIOI* (“Manios made/fashioned me for Numasios”). The meaning of the verb (reduplicated perfect tense) is “he made.” This is not likely the goldsmith’s signature but the name of the wealthy donor—a ‘signature’ of the gift, which may imply that the Fibula was produced within the household of the donor himself.

In 1980, epigraphist Margherita Guarducci claimed that the inscription had been forged by Francesco Martinetti, an art dealer, and Wolfgang Helbig, director of the German Archaeological Institute at Rome—men known for shady dealings. Guarducci maintained that the Fibula’s first presentation in 1887 was a hoax to advance the careers of both men. In 1898 Georg Karo claimed that Martinetti told him that he had stolen the unengraved Fibula from a tomb in Palestrina.

Chapter 1 begins with Wolfgang Helbig’s first public presentation of the Fibula in 1887, its provenance, and dating. Ferdinand Dümmler’s analysis of the history of Italic alphabets, especially Etruscan, Umbrian, and Oscan, led him to suggest that Italic writings might have used the digraph FH. He claimed that a digraph was found in the most ancient inscriptions of Crete, Melos, and Thera.

Chapter 2 discusses Giacomo Lignana’s doubts about the Fibula’s authenticity. He argued that the text was too beautiful to be genuine, and proposed that the pin was Oscan and intended for the Roman market. He said that the dative in *oi* and the reduplicated perfect *fehaked* of the inscription were both Oscan. Fur-

ther studies of the Fibula by Franz Bücheler, Michel Bréal, Alfred Ernout, and Antoine Meillet found the inscription to be genuine.

Chapter 3 considers whether the inscription could be Etruscan or Venetic, based on the digraph FH (or rather HF). Elia Lattes suggested the Venetic patronym *vh* for *fh* in the dedication. Lattes observed that VH appears in a Greek inscription from Tanagra allowing him to suggest that the Etruscans applied Greek VH to their phonetic system. In 1976 Giovanni Colonna claimed that the Fibula's inscription was genuine. In 1983 Raimund Pfister and Guido Devoto concurred.

Chapter 4 follows the Fibula's vicissitudes and travels starting with its arrival at the Museum of Villa Giulia in 1889. In 1891, it was transferred to the National Prehistoric and Ethnographic Museum Luigi Pigorini in Rome where the Tomba Bernardini was on display. The pin was not included in publications of the tomb and in 1960 it appeared separately from the rest of the tomb goods when they were transferred to the Museum of Villa Giulia where they remain.

Chapter 5 surveys the Italian scholars who question the Fibula's authenticity: Giovanni Pinza, Vittore Pisani, and Guido Devoto. Chapter 6 looks at those who believe the Fibula to be authentic: Franz Bücheler, Michel Bréal, Alfred Ernout, Antoine Meillet, Wolfgang Schmid, Jacques-Henri Michel, Michel Lejeune, Jacques Heurgon, and American epigraphist Arthur Gordon who in 1975 found both the Fibula and its inscription to be genuine.

Chapter 7 reveals that most of Italy no longer believes in the Fibula's authenticity. Romano Lazzeroni (1981) concluded that the inscription and the Fibula were 19th-century forgeries. This was corroborated by Aldo Prosdocimi (1984). Chapter 8 discusses the reactions to the Fibula outside of Italy. Few specialists, except Raimund Pfister (1983), were convinced by Guarducci's forgery theory. Eric Hamp (1981) and Hans Krummrey (1982) concurred. Catherine Trümper (1983), Franz Wieacker (1984), Gerhardt Radke (1984), Ernst Pulgram (1978), Rudolph Wachter (1987), and Markus Hartmann (2005) considered the Fibula genuine.

Chapter 9 summarizes the opinions of experts. Mark Rosenberg and Adolf Greifenhagen argued that the Fibula was genuine. In 1992 Edilberto Formigli concluded otherwise based on more modern scientific analyses. Since its discovery in 1876, the inscription on the Praeneste Fibula has posed archaeological, epigraphical, and linguistic problems. The four words inscribed on the pin present other problems: the dialect of Latin and the sociolinguistic relationship of Latin with other languages of and around Latium (Oscan and Etruscan). Still

unanswered is the question of Latin word order, although characteristic of Latin is the relative freedom of word order.

Touratier has written a comprehensive history of the Praeneste Fibula with a select bibliography. The book answers many questions about the Fibula's authenticity, but one question persists. Are the pin and its inscription truly genuine? In 2011 the Prehistoric and Ethnographic Museum Luigi Pigorini hosted a roundtable of scholars who, through new scientific analyses, established that the gold Fibula and inscription are authentic and date from the first half of the 7th century BC. Touratier has produced a compelling study about the Praeneste Fibula that will inform classicists for years to come.

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