

SKETCHES OF
ETRUSCAN PLACES

AND OTHER ITALIAN ESSAYS

D. H. LAWRENCE

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011-4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published in paperback 2001

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

- Lawrence, D. H. (David Herbert), 1885-1930.
Sketches of Etruscan places and other Italian essays.
p. cm. - (The Cambridge edition of the letters and works of D. H. Lawrence)
Includes bibliographical references.
1. Etruscans.
2. Italy - Description and travel - 1901-1944.
3. Lawrence, D. H. (David Herbert), 1885-1930 -
Journals - Italy.
i. De Filippis, Simonetta. ii. Title.
iii. Series: Lawrence, D. H. (David Herbert), 1885-1930.
Works. 1979.

DG223.L374 1992 937'.5-dc20 91-34290

ISBN 0 521 25253 9 hardback
ISBN 0 521 00701 1 paperback

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INTRODUCTION

Sketches of Etruscan Places

The Genesis and Composition

In 1925 D. H. Lawrence and his wife Frieda left New Mexico to return to Europe: 'Myself, I hate the real U.S.A., Chicago and New York and all that. I feel very much drawn to the Mediterranean again: we may winter in Sicily.'¹ They sailed from New York on 21 September 1925, and after a few weeks in England and Germany, arrived at Spotorno on 15 November and rented the Villa Bernarda,² where they lived until April 1926.

Lawrence had already stayed in Italy on three previous occasions. The first was after his elopement with Frieda, from early September 1912 to the beginning of April 1913 when they lived at Gargnano (Lake Garda); the second period, from the end of September 1913 to the beginning of June 1914, was spent at Lerici (La Spezia), also in the north of Italy; Lawrence's impressions of these Italian experiences, particularly of his sojourn at Gargnano, were conveyed in a series of essays collected in the volume *Twilight in Italy*.³ The third Italian period belongs to the years 1919–22, when the Lawrences chose the south and lived mostly near Taormina, Sicily.

Since 1912–14, Lawrence had been fascinated by Italy, by its landscape, climate, people, atmosphere: 'One must love Italy, if one has lived there. It is so non-moral. It leaves the soul so free. Over these countries, Germany and England, like the grey skies, lies the gloom of the dark moral judgment and condemnation and reservation of the people. Italy does not judge.'⁴ Italy represented a completely different world to him, and he could see in it

¹ *Letters*, v. 277. (Subsequent references to *Letters*, iii., v. and vi. are given in the text with volume and page number.)

² Spotorno is a small town on the coast of Liguria, northern Italy. The Villa Bernarda was owned by Angelo Ravagli (1891–1976), who was to marry Frieda in 1950.

³ Also called 'Italian Sketches', parts were first written in 1912–13; it was extended and revised for book publication in 1915 and published in 1916.

⁴ James T. Boulton, ed., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* (Cambridge, 1979), i. 544.

the invitation for a more authentic way of life. 'Why is England so shabby. The Italians here sing ... And they go by the window proudly, and they don't hurry or fret. And the women walk straight and look calm. And the men adore children – they are glad of their children even if they're poor. I think they haven't many ideas, but they look well, and they have strong blood.'⁵

Although Lawrence's feelings about Italy were not always consistent, sometimes expressing great love and admiration, at other times being sharply critical, Italy provided a sympathetic context for his fast maturing beliefs. Italian rural life and culture gave him insights into an earlier more natural and spontaneous world, untouched by the corruption of modern industrialisation, power, money and intellectualism. Italy was thus a rich source of inspiration for a number of his writings.

The charm that Italy had exerted on Lawrence drew him back for a third sojourn in 1919. This time he stayed for two full years, mainly in Sicily, but he also spent some time in other Italian places.⁶

It was during this third period that Lawrence also visited Picinisco (13–22 December 1919) – a small village in the Abruzzi mountains where the last part of *The Lost Girl* is set – and Sardinia (5–13 January 1921), which provided him with the subject of his second Italian book *Sea and Sardinia*. Here, as in all his other writings inspired by his experiences in foreign countries, Lawrence offers the reader not only a description of the places he visited and of the people he met, but also clearly shows the impact they had on him and how they related to his own feelings and ideas.

His unending quest for unspoilt places where he could feel the natural impulses in their full and authentic power, however, drew him towards other continents, and he left Italy, with Frieda, on 26 February 1922. It was more than three years (spent principally in USA and Mexico) before they returned, drawn back by their rediscovered Europeaness and attracted by Italy once more. They arrived at Spotorno, on the Italian Riviera, on 15 November 1925; from the Villa Bernarda Lawrence wrote to Earl and Achsah Brewster ten days later: 'We've taken this house until end of March, but that doesn't mean we can't go away for a while. I should like to move south when the spring comes – to see Amalfi and Sicily in February'.⁷

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 460.

⁶ In March 1920 the Lawrences settled at Fontana Vecchia, in a villa 'out of Taormina on the green height over the sea, looking east' (*Letters*, iii. 494). For the specific places DHL visited and dates, see Chronology.

⁷ *Letters*, v. 345. Earl Henry Brewster (1878–1957) and Achsah Barlow Brewster (1878–1945), American painters, and students of Eastern philosophy. DHL met them on Capri in

Indeed, Lawrence and Frieda left Spotorno for Florence at the end of April and, a short time later, they settled at Scandicci, near Florence, where they rented the Villa Mirenda in early May 1926 and where they lived for the rest of their fourth Italian sojourn, until June 1928.

It was during March–April 1926 that Lawrence began to plan his visit to the various historical sites of Etruria in order to write a book about them. Ill health delayed his plans during the summer of 1926 and in the autumn he was involved in the writing of the first and second versions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. He was also growing impatient with his publishers and with the critics and reading public in general. Their persistent misunderstanding of his work, together with their readiness to condemn and censure, made him all the more committed to the writing of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. These reasons, combined with his gradually worsening health, account for his fluctuating enthusiasm for the Etruscan project, and indeed, even after his tour of Etruria, prevented him from ever attempting a second trip to complete the book as originally planned.

Lawrence's fascination with the Etruscans predated the planning of the expedition by at least six years. He had long been interested in Etruscan culture and history, and in the Etruscans' ancient 'wisdom', that old, 'dark' conception of life which had disappeared with them when they were absorbed into Roman civilisation.

Lawrence's readings in his formative years may have awakened his curiosity in Etruscan culture. In 1908, for instance, as Jessie Chambers recalls, he 'was very impressed by Balzac's *La Peau de Chagrin*'. At the beginning of the novel, the hero observes 'an Etruscan vase of finest clay, the nut-brown maiden dancing before the god Priapus, to whom she joyously waved her hand'. In December 1915 Lawrence read *The Golden Bough*⁸ and was very much taken by Frazer's account of tree-spirits in chapter IX, 'The Worship of Trees', where central Etruria and its 'rich fields' are mentioned.

An early mention of the Etruscans in Lawrence's own writing is contained in the poem 'Cypresses'. Written in September 1920 at Fiesole (Tuscany), it shows clearly how Lawrence had already traced the main elements which he later developed into the more complex and conscious vision offered in *Sketches of Etruscan Places*. In the poem, Lawrence's

April 1921 and visited them in Ceylon in March–April 1922. DHL toured the Etruscan area with Earl Brewster in April 1927; see the Brewsters' memoir, *D. H. Lawrence: Reminiscences and Correspondence* (1934).

⁸ E. T. [Jessie Wood], *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* (1935; reprinted Cambridge, 1980), p. 106; *La Peau de chagrin* was published in 1831. George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton, eds., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* (Cambridge, 1981), ii. 470 and n.

attitude to the Etruscans is still unresolved. The tone is exploratory, undecided, as the form of the first half of the poem shows, with its series of unanswered questions: 'Tuscan cypresses,/What is it? ... Is there a great secret?/Are our words no good? ... Is it the secret of the long-nosed Etruscans? ... Were they then vicious, the slender, tender-footed/Long-nosed men of Etruria? ...'⁹ Rosalind Baynes recalled: 'Sometimes he came to Fiesole where I was now living, climbing by a steep track up through the olives and along under the remains of Fiesole's Etruscan walls ... It was here several ... poems were suggested – "Cypresses," for example.'¹⁰ A year later, on 10 September 1921, Lawrence mentioned the Tuscan cypresses once more in a letter to his mother-in-law and, again, he drew a physical parallel with the Etruscans: 'This is Tuscany, and nowhere are the cypresses so beautiful and proud, like black-flames from primeval times, before the Romans had come, when the Etruscans were still here, slender and fine and still and with naked elegance, black haired, with narrow feet.'¹¹ Lawrence's keen interest in the Etruscans and his desire to penetrate their 'secret' were also shown in a letter to Catherine Carswell written about six weeks later: 'will you tell me *what* then was the secret of the Etruscans, which you saw written so plainly in the place you went to? Please dont forget to tell me, as they really do rather puzzle me, the Etruscans.'¹²

During the same year, 1921, Lawrence wrote his second book on his theory of the unconscious, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*.¹³ In its foreword, Lawrence attributes to ancient civilisations some kind of deep life-knowledge, which is completely lost and unknown to modern man:

I honestly think that the great pagan world of which Egypt and Greece were the last living terms, the great pagan world which preceded our own era once, had a vast and perhaps perfect science of its own, a science in terms of life. In our era this science crumbled into magic and charlatany. But even wisdom crumbles ... Then

⁹ Published in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers (The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence)*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts, 1964, i. 296–7, ll. 1–2, 6–7, 14, 40–1).

¹⁰ Edward Nehls, ed., *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography* (Madison, 1957–9), ii. 49–50. Rosalind Baynes (1891–1973) met DHL in Berkshire in 1919. She arranged for him and Frieda to stay at Picinisco in December 1919. DHL stayed in her house at Fiesole in September 1920.

¹¹ Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton and Elizabeth Mansfield, eds., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* (Cambridge, 1987), iv. 84. Frieda's mother was the Baroness Anna von Richthofen (1851–1930). The same image of the Tuscan cypresses recurs in *Aaron's Rod* 265:31–4. The idea of lost wisdom, intuited through plants, goes back to *The White Peacock* (ed. Andrew Robertson, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 129–30).

¹² Roberts, Boulton and Mansfield, eds., *Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, iv. 105. Catherine Carswell (1879–1946), Scottish critic, novelist and biographer, met DHL in summer 1914, and often corresponded with him, particularly during the war years.

¹³ *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* had been written in 1920.

came ... the world flood ... The refugees ... fled ... and some, like Druids or Etruscans or Chaldeans or Amerindians or Chinese, refused to forget, but taught the old wisdom, only in its half-forgotten, symbolic forms.

The old 'secret' was lost with the Etruscans and so for Lawrence man is no longer able to understand the real meaning of life: 'We are really far, far more life-stupid than the dead Greeks or the lost Etruscans.'¹⁴ In *Sea and Sardinia*, written in the same year, Lawrence also refers to the Etruscans and their gods as an expression of man's 'conscious genius'.¹⁵

The fact that so little was known about the Etruscans and their civilisation helped to stimulate Lawrence's imagination and curiosity, and gave him the opportunity to interpret freely the Etruscan remains in terms of those symbols which best expressed his own ideas. So, for Lawrence, the Etruscans were the keepers of the old, great secret of life, and when finally he came to write the book, they were to symbolise naturalness, spontaneity and simplicity – aspects of the positive civilisation which was dramatically antithetical to the modern, mechanical and corrupted world.

Although Lawrence's interest in the Etruscans can be dated back at least to 1920, it was only in spring 1926 that he seriously started planning to visit the places where Etruscan culture had developed, and to write a book on them. At the end of March his interest in the Etruscans caused him to make a short trip to Perugia, accompanied by Millicent Beveridge and Mabel Harrison;¹⁶ there he visited the National Archaeological Museum, famous for its Etruscan urns, and a few days later he wrote: 'I have an idea I might like to roam round in Umbria for a little while, and look at the Etruscan things, which interest me' (v. 416). The first contact with an Etruscan town and museum was – as one would expect – very stimulating and fired Lawrence's enthusiasm for writing 'a book about Umbria and the Etruscans: half travel-book, scientific too' (v. 412). As several letters written between 4 and 11 April indicate, he was considering spending a few weeks in Perugia in order to collect material; on the 4th, writing to his English publisher Martin Secker, he also mentioned his reading:

We might go to Perugia, and I might do a book on Umbria and the Etruscan remains ... It would be half a travel book – of the region round Perugia, Assisi, Spoleto, Cortona, and the Maremma – and half a book about the Etruscan things, which interest me very much. – If you happen to know any good book, modern, on

¹⁴ *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, chap. vii. ¹⁵ *Sea and Sardinia*, chap. vi.

¹⁶ Anne Millicent Beveridge (1871–1955), Scottish painter, and her fellow-artist Mabel Harrison (*Letters*, v. 407, 412 and 403 n.1). The first shared his interest to the extent of sending him a book on the Etruscans (see p. xxviii below).

Etruscan things, I wish you'd order it for me. I've only read that old work, Dennis' – *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*.¹⁷ (v. 413)

However, Lawrence had mixed feelings about the idea of writing a book; as we see from a letter he wrote the next day to his English agent Curtis Brown, shortly after having made his original plan, he was by no means committed to the scheme: 'I fancied I might like to do a book, half travel and half study, on Umbria and the Etruscans. The Etruscan things interest me very much. We might stay at Perugia for a couple of months and get material. But heaven knows if I'll really do it – the book, I mean. I'm "off" writing – even letters – ' (v. 415).

In a letter to Richard Aldington of 18 April 1926, Lawrence explains more clearly his interest in the Etruscans: 'the Etruscan things appeal *very much* to my imagination. They are so curiously natural – somebody said bourgeois, but that's a lie, considering all the phallic monuments'.¹⁸ At this point Lawrence had only visited the museums in Florence¹⁹ and Perugia, and yet he had already quite clearly defined his own idea and interpretation of Etruscan culture as natural and anti-bourgeois, a judgement which was later confirmed by his tour of Etruria.

The plan to go to Umbria seemed, by this time, less appealing to Lawrence; on 25 April he wrote to Earl Brewster: 'I had thought of staying perhaps a couple of months in and around Umbria, and doing a book on the Etruscans. But I notice, if ever I say I'll do a thing, I never bring it off. To tell the truth, I feel like going away – perhaps to Spain, or to Germany' (v. 437). Nevertheless he was still interested in reading about the Etruscans, for he wrote to Secker on 29 April: 'I'm reading Italian books on the Etruscans – very interesting indeed. I'll join Vieusseux's library here – they will have more things.'²⁰ Even if he had deferred his visit to Umbria, the idea of writing a book on the Etruscans was firmly fixed in his mind; moreover,

¹⁷ George Dennis's *The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria* was published in two volumes of over a thousand pages with close printing and many footnotes in 1848; a revised edn was published thirty years later.

¹⁸ *Letters*, v. 427. Richard Aldington (1892–1962), novelist, biographer, critic, poet; DHL first met him in July 1914, and visited him in Berkshire in August 1926: 'As I knew he was contemplating a book on the Etruscans, I had a dozen standard works on the subject sent down from the London Library; and we spent a good deal of time turning them over and discussing Etruria, which was very important at that time in Lawrence's private mythology' (Nehls, *A Composite Biography*, iii. 84–5).

¹⁹ Probably DHL had visited the Archaeological Museum in Florence when he first stayed there in 1919, by which time he had also read Dennis. It contains mainly Etruscan and Egyptian remains (see Explanatory note on 175:4).

²⁰ *Letters*, v. 444. Vieusseux is a well-known Florentine circulating library, founded in 1819; see *ibid.* n. 3.

Secker has been urging me to write a travel book: and I don't want to do an ordinary travel book, just of places. So I thought I might stay here [at the Villa Mirenda] two months or so, and prepare a book on the Etruscan cities – the dead Etruscans. It would mean my travelling about a good deal . . . That would be in June – at present I'm reading the Italian books on the Etruscans, getting the idea into shape. (v. 448–9)

The idea of travelling through Etruria became more feasible when the Lawrences left Spotorno and settled at the Villa Mirenda, in the Florentine countryside: 'we have taken a villa about 7 miles out of Florence here, in the country, and I can use that as a centre, when I have to go travelling round to . . . quite a number of places in Tuscany and Umbria, where the best remains are. At present I am supposed to be reading up about my precious Etruschi!' (v. 447). In a number of letters written around mid-May, Lawrence, although professing to be undecided about writing his book on the Etruscans, confirmed that he was still reading about them, and he told Curtis Brown: 'I . . . may this summer manage a book, half-travel and half description of Etruscan things, about those people. It would have quite a lot of photographs' (v. 460). The inclusion of photographs was, in Lawrence's opinion, essential for the book's success (v. 461).

Towards the end of May 1926 Lawrence sent a letter to his sister-in-law Else Jaffe which contains the roots of all the main ideas which were to be developed extensively a year later in the actual writing of the Etruscan sketches. After describing the kind of book he intended to write – 'nothing pretentious, but a sort of book for people who will actually be going to Florence . . . and those places, to look at the Etruscan things' – he declared:

Etruscan things . . . have a great attraction for me: there are lovely things in the Etruscan Museum here . . . Mommsen hated everything Etruscan, said the germ of all degeneracy was in the race. But the bronzes and terra cottas are fascinating, so alive with physical life, with a powerful physicality which surely is as great, or sacred, ultimately, as the *ideal* of the Greeks and Germans. Anyhow, the real strength of Italy seems to me in this physicality, which is not at all Roman.²¹

²¹ *Letters*, v. 464–5. DHL refers to the Archaeological Museum in Florence (see footnote 19 above). Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), German historian and professor of law, author of *Römische Geschichte* (Berlin, 1861), trans. as *The History of Rome* by W. P. Dickson (rev. edn, 1894). Mommsen makes a number of critical remarks about the Etruscans and their life style which 'leave no doubt as to the deep degeneracy of the nation' (II. iv. 436). See also I. xii. 232; I. xv. 309; II. iv. 435; II. ix. 124–5, 128.

The reference to Mommsen is repeated, in a very similar style and tone, at the beginning of 'Cerveteri', the first of the six sketches.²² Lawrence considers the Italian people not as the progeny of the Romans, but as the offspring of the Etruscans, whose 'physicality' is still alive in Italy. What Mommsen and others had interpreted as the 'germ of all degeneracy' is, in Lawrence's view, a virtue: the very source of authentic life and vivacity. The Italian people and their true ancestors, the Etruscans, come to symbolise naturalness, spontaneity and the inner and true freedom in contrast with all the misconceptions, artificialities and hypocrisy of Western industrialised society.

Two other books on the Etruscans are mentioned in this letter, though they are both damned with faint praise. Fritz Weege's *Etruskische Malerei* (Halle, 1920, 1921) seemed to interest Lawrence only for its reproductions, while Pericle Ducati's *Etruria Antica* (Turin, 1925) – like many books he had already read – he considered neither particularly original nor stimulating. Lawrence dismissed the so-called authoritative books on the subject as 'dreary, repetition and surmise', partly because their traditional, historical interpretation was based on a viewpoint so radically different from his own. A letter written in June 1926 to Millicent Beveridge particularly reveals this attitude:

Many thanks for Fell, his book came a few days ago. He's very thorough in washing out once more the few rags of information we have concerning the Etruscans: but not a thing has he to say. It's really disheartening: I shall just have to start in and go ahead, and be damned to all authorities! There really is next to nothing to be said, *scientifically*, about the Etruscans. Must take the imaginative line.²³

In this letter and elsewhere, Lawrence still talks of visiting the Etruscan places in September, but two letters – the last written in 1926 in which the Etruscan plan is mentioned – have a rather different tone and the project seems to be set definitely aside for that year. Not only did he seem to have changed his mind about writing the book; he was also very hostile towards the idea of publishing in general as he always resented the pressure from publishers to meet the demands of what he regarded as a generally unqualified reading public. A letter written on 28 June 1926 has a challenging tone: 'I haven't done any of the Etruscan book yet: and shan't do it, unless the mood changes. Why write books for the swine, unless one absolutely must!' (v. 483). Three weeks later the tone is still negative, but a little more subdued: 'Of literary news, I have none. I wanted to write a

²² See below 9:22–8.

²³ *Letters*, v. 473. DHL refers to Roland Arthur Lonsdale Fell, *Etruria and Rome* (Cambridge, 1924).

book on the Etruscans and Etruscan cities – sort of half travel book. But I get such a distaste for committing myself into “solid print,” I am holding off. Let the public read what there is to read’ (v. 496). He was also conscious of the strain writing put upon his health; in a letter of 29 July 1926 he complained bitterly: ‘I am not doing any work at all: feel sufficiently disgusted with myself for having done so much and undermined my health, with so little return. Pity one has to write at all’ (v. 504).

It was early 1927 before Lawrence resumed his planning for the Etruscan tour, and by now he had found a companion, Earl Brewster. Lawrence mentioned his new project to him in a letter of 27 February: ‘If you and Achsah ask me, I’ll come to Ravello for a week or ten days, then we’ll go our walking trip . . . Or should we meet in Rome and look at those Etruscan tombs?’²⁴ A few days later he gave Earl more details of their projected trip:

What I should most like to do, for the trip, would be to do the western half of the Etruscans – the Rome museums – then Veii and Civit  Castellana and Cervet[e]ri – which one does from Rome – then Corneto, just beyond Civit  Vecchia in Maremma – then the Maremma coast-line – and Volterra . . . If there were time, we might get to Chiusi and Orvieto – we could see. I have a real feeling about the Etruscans.²⁵

Lawrence had an additional incentive for the trip because ‘an American magazine’ wanted to publish the articles (v. 655, 653). However, of all the places he mentioned in his letter, only Rome, Cerveteri, Corneto, the Maremma coastline and Volterra were actually visited, probably for lack of time. Orvieto and Chiusi were later mentioned, in several letters, as places to be included in a second Etruscan tour and to be described in another six sketches: ‘I intended to do twelve sketches, on different places – but when I was ill, I left off at Volterra . . . if you felt at all keen about the Etruscan book, I’d sweat round Arezzo and Chiusi and Orvieto and those places, and do the other six sketches this autumn.’²⁶ Unfortunately that second tour was never made; nor of course were those sketches written.

Another month was to pass before he actually set out. On 19 March 1927 Lawrence left the Villa Mirinda and joined the Brewsters in Ravello on 22 March; after a week, on 28 March, he and Earl drove to Sorrento.

²⁴ *Letters*, v. 648. Ravello is a small village on a hill over the Amalfi coast, s. of Naples.

²⁵ *Letters*, v. 649–50. The places mentioned are all within the regions of Lazio, Umbria and Tuscany (central Italy). Corneto is the ancient name of Tarquinia (see Explanatory note on 25:2).

²⁶ *Letters*, vi. 182, to Alfred Knopf, DHL’s current publisher in USA. DHL planned to do an essay for each of the ‘great’ city-states – and possibly a second volume of the ‘little places’ (vi. 89).

Brewster recalled: 'From Sorrento we started on our Etruscan pilgrimage, beginning with the museum of the Villa di Papa Giulia in Rome.'²⁷ From Rome, on 5 April 1927, Lawrence announced that he and Brewster were finally on their way to the Etruscan places: 'Brewster . . . and I are going to stop off at various places on the east [i.e. west] coast, to look at Etruscan tombs and remains. Several people have asked me for travel articles, and I might do them on the Etruscan places' (vi. 25).

During and soon after their trip, Lawrence wrote several postcards and letters which make it possible to date and trace the itinerary he and Brewster followed through Etruria. On 6 April they left Rome for Cerveteri from where Lawrence wrote: 'Came here from Rome with Earl today – a fascinating place of Etruscan tombs' (vi. 27). On the 7th and the 8th they were in Tarquinia, as Lawrence wrote from there on 'Friday evening': 'We had two very delightful days here, looking at painted tombs . . . And tomorrow we go to Vulci – expect to be in Volterra, the last place, by Monday' (vi. 27). It is likely that they were at Vulci on the 9th and at Volterra on 10 April; he almost certainly arrived at the Villa Mirinda on the evening of Monday, the 11th.²⁸

In April Lawrence wrote a number of letters describing his Etruscan experience in enthusiastic terms. A letter to his mother-in-law, written in German on the 14th, contains what would be the core of his approach to the Etruscans: 'They were a lively, fresh, jolly people, lived their own life, without wanting to dominate the life of others. I am fond of my Etruscans. They had life in themselves, so they didn't have so much need to dominate. I should like to write a couple of sketches of Etruscan places – nothing scientific, but just as it is now, and the impression one has' (vi. 33–4).

In spite of his enthusiasm, Lawrence did not start writing on the Etruscans immediately. Instead, between 13 and 28 April, he wrote 'a story of the Resurrection . . . It's called *The Escaped Cock*, from that toy in Volterra.'²⁹ After this, he briefly went back to his project on the Etruscan

²⁷ Brewster, *Reminiscences and Correspondence*, p. 122. The National Museum of Antiquities was built under Pope Giulio III and is commonly called 'Villa Giulia'.

²⁸ A letter to Nancy Pearn of the periodical department at Curtis Brown from the Villa Mirinda, dated 12 April, says: 'I got back here last night' (vi. 29). Two letters dated 13 April, suggest that the 12th was the date of DHL's return to the Villa Mirinda (vi. 30, 31); however, considering that in the Volterra sketch we are told that DHL and Brewster arrived there on a 'Sunday afternoon' and spent the Monday morning visiting the museum, DHL may well have returned to the Villa Mirinda on the evening of that same day.

²⁹ *Letters*, vi. 50. Brewster recalled that, when they were at Volterra on Easter morning, they 'passed a little shop, in the window of which was a toy white rooster escaping from an egg. I remarked that it suggested a title – "The Escaped Cock – a story of the Resurrection". Lawrence replied that he had been thinking about writing a story of the Resurrection: later

sketches: 'Now I really want to do a series of "Travel Sketches of Etruscan Places". I liked my trip to Cerveteri and Tarquinia and Vulci so much, I'd like to jot them down while they are fresh. Then later go to Cortona and Chiusi and Orvieto etc. . . . And so make a little book of Etruscan places' (vi. 42). Finally, only two days later, on 29 April, he informed Secker: 'I began my essays on the Etruscan things – I believe they'll be rather nice' (vi. 45) – but broke off almost immediately to write other essays³⁰ and to type *The Escaped Cock*.

However, during the month of May, Lawrence did not work much. He was ill with 'bronchial colds, mixed with malaria' (vi. 66) and was concerned about *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. He was deeply committed to the novel, and in it he tried to synthesise his most strongly held beliefs, many of which had come to their maturity during his long consideration of the Etruscans and their culture. In the description of the Tomb of the Painted Vases, included in the essay 'The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia' 1., he wrote:

the etruscan paintings: they really have the sense of touch; the people and the creatures are all really in touch. It is one of the rarest qualities, in life as well as in art . . . Here, in this faded etruscan painting, there is a quiet flow of touch that unites the man and the woman on the couch, the timid boy behind, the dog that lifts his nose, even the very garlands that hang from the wall.³¹

The concept of touch, in the sense of physical and pre-mental communication, is a major theme of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and Mellors, in the final part of the novel, preaches it as his gospel: 'Sex is really only touch, the closest of all touch. And it's touch we're afraid of. We're only half-conscious, and half alive. We've got to come alive and aware. Especially the English have got to get into touch with one another, a bit delicate and a bit tender. It's our crying need—'³² There are many similar echoes between the Etruscan essays and the novel, one of which is particularly illuminating. It concerns the passage from 'Cerveteri' where Lawrence describes the Etruscan-like faces of the people he had seen there: 'warm faces still jovial with etruscan vitality, beautiful with the mystery of the unrifled ark, ripe with the phallic knowledge and the

in the book of that title which he gave to me, he has written: "To Earl this story, that began in Volterra, when we were there together"' (Brewster, *Reminiscences and Correspondence*, pp. 123–4). The story was revised and extended later.

³⁰ Probably 'Flowery Tuscany' IV and 'Germans and English'; see below.

³¹ See below 54:3–14. DHL wrote 'etruscan' for the adjectival form in the manuscript, and sometimes in letters: his practice is followed in this edition; see below, p. xlviii and Note on the text.

³² *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (ed. Michael Squires, Cambridge, 1992, 277:32–6).

etruscan carelessness!³³ There is an obvious connection between this and his feelings about *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, expressed in a letter written about a year after the essay: 'It is a nice and tender phallic novel – not a sex novel in the ordinary sense of the word . . . I sincerely believe in restoring . . . the phallic consciousness, into our lives, because it is the source of all real beauty, and all real gentleness' (vi. 328).

In spite of all his ill health and his worries about the novel, Lawrence did not abandon his project on the Etruscan sketches; in fact, at times he demonstrated a serious and professional attitude towards the project, such as thinking about the book in its final form, as we can see from his letter to Secker on 29 April 1927: 'do send me Dennis' *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*. I should like to read it again, and my copy is in America. It's a good book . . . We can put thrilling illustrations in an Etruscan book!' (vi. 45). Taken by the idea of including photographs in his volume, on 1 June 1927 Lawrence wrote to his sister-in-law Else and asked her to buy him a copy of Weege's *Etruskische Malerei*, a book which only a year earlier had certainly not roused much interest in him.³⁴ He also started collecting photographs: 'I got photographs too from Alinari – and on the one from the Tomba dei Tori, the two little improper bits, "un poco pornografico," as brave as life. Amusing!'³⁵

On 6 June 1927, Lawrence wrote to Secker:

I began doing the Etruscan book – have done about 80 pp. MSS. Of course it fascinates *me* – but the public is an ass I don't understand. I've got some lovely photographs, too, from Alinari. I might possibly, if the gods wish it, get these *Sketches of Etruscan Places* done by early autumn – and you might, if you liked, in that case get it out for Christmas. But God knows how it'll go. – It would have to be a book with many full illustrations – a hundred even – and as such it could be a standard popularish – not scientific – book on the Etruscan things and places, and might really sell, for the photographs at least are striking and beautiful. When I've finished 'Tarquinia', I'll let you see the essays on Cerveteri and Tarquinia, with some of the photographs, and you can let me know what you think, for the rest of the book. Perhaps in about two weeks I can send you so much. (vi. 77)

Lawrence was already writing his third essay (the first '80 pp. MSS.' correspond to 'Cerveteri', 'Tarquinia' and 'The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia' 1., that is, the first part of the essay which was to be divided into

³³ See below 22:39–41. ³⁴ *Letters*, vi. 74. See above, p. xxviii.

³⁵ *Letters*, vi. 50. The *Tomba dei Tori* is described in 'The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia' 2. (see below, pp. 120–5).

Alinari, a publishing firm founded in Florence in 1852 by Leopoldo Alinari (1832–65), soon became famous for its excellent photographic reproductions and art books. DHL had considered using some of their photographic work in *Sea and Sardinia* (see *Letters*, iii. 696–7).

two parts).³⁶ However, despite his continuing enthusiasm, Lawrence had come to think that his was not a popular subject: 'I am working at my Etruscan book – a piece of hopeless unpopularity, as far as I can see. But the pictures may help it' (vi. 82). In fact, he was convinced that good photographs were essential if the book was to succeed at all, and he wrote to Earl Brewster: 'I am in rather a fix for some photographs for my Etruscan essays' (vi. 85), asking him to get information about some photographs, particularly of the *Tomba della Caccia e della Pesca* (Tarquinia) and of the *Ponte dell'Abbadia* (Vulci).³⁷

Within another week Lawrence had written 'The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia' 2. and 'Vulci'; he then sent 'Cerveteri' to his agent Curtis Brown to forward to Secker, and wrote to the latter:

I am sending to Curtis Brown today the first of the *Sketches of Etruscan Places*: 'Cerveteri'. It is about 6000 words. I contemplate doing a dozen essays of that length – or perhaps 14. This one has eight photographs: and that might be the average. I have done four more essays, but am waiting to get them typed, and for photographs. I'll send them along in about a week. – Will you let me know at once what you think about a book of this sort. If you are doubtful of it, I won't press ahead with it. It would have to have about a hundred illustrations. (vi. 84)

On 25 June, Lawrence informed Earl Brewster that the last of the first batch of sketches had been written: 'I wrote my essay on Volterra – made me think of you' (vi. 89). On 2 July Lawrence pressed Secker again: 'I have done so far six essays of my Etruscans . . . *give me your candid opinion*. I want this book – which will be a bit expensive to you, owing to illustrations – to be as popular as I can make it. And I am open to any suggestions you can make me' (vi. 93). Obviously, as long as Secker was inclined to publish, in spite of the cost, Lawrence felt obliged to seek his opinion. Not long after, he received a reassuring letter from Nancy Pearn, saying: 'You will, I gather, already have heard from Secker, saying how pleased he is with the idea of a book on the "Etruscan Sketches"'.³⁸

Another attack of illness in July, however, forced Lawrence to bed again, and the project for his second tour with Brewster had to be postponed along with his writing of the second group of sketches: 'I want Frieda to post the rest of the Etruscan Sketches to Curtis Brown tomorrow – the first six. It is all I have done – but half the book: and all the photographs. But I

³⁶ See below, p. xxxix.

³⁷ DHL also asked Millicent Beveridge to look for photographs in the British Museum (vi. 93). See Appendix III on the photographs.

³⁸ Letter from Nancy Pearn to DHL, 30 June 1927, UT. All the correspondence between DHL and Nancy Pearn quoted hereafter is located at UT.

could not get any of Vulci ... I shant be able to do any more of my Etruscans this summer' (vi. 105).

This letter of 22 July to Secker indicates that, by this time, all the essays (except 'The Florence Museum') had been typed.³⁹ Lawrence never refers to typing arrangements for the Etruscan sketches in his letters. We do not know the identity of the typist – who appears to have been a professional – nor at what stage Lawrence made his revisions on the typescripts. 'Cerveteri' was typed by the 14th of June; the other five essays were typed by the 22nd of July;⁴⁰ it is probable that Lawrence expected to do a final revision of them all after he had written the other six sketches. 'The Florence Museum' was never mentioned in his correspondence; it may have been written in July, when he told Secker that he wanted to do Etruscan essays on 'Florence and Fiesole. – Cortona – Arezzo – Chiusi – Orvieto – Perugia' (vi. 93); or it may have been written in October – after his return to Florence from Austria and Germany – as an attempt on Lawrence's part to revive his commitment to the Etruscan book (vi. 195–6).

Lawrence wrote again to Secker on 17 August (vi. 130) and 17 September, asking once more for his opinion on the Etruscan essays, but apparently Curtis Brown had not forwarded the sketches to him: 'Stupid of Curtis Browns not to give you that Etruscan MS. and photographs, as I *insisted* they should at the time: I want your opinion' (vi. 151). On 30 September Lawrence was still writing to Secker: 'I hope you'll get those Etruscan essays soon' (vi. 168).

In autumn 1927, Lawrence was still talking about his plan for the second half of the book, but his energy, interest and will seemed to be fading away: 'I don't feel a bit like work ... I *ought* to finish the Etruscan Essays, of which I've done just half. But I feel terribly indifferent to it all, whether it's done or not' (vi. 195–6).

Besides his ill health, Lawrence was by this time too concerned with *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to pay proper attention to anything else. The tone of a letter to Alfred Knopf, 1 January 1928, is very casual: Knopf had asked about the sketches, but it no longer seemed likely that Lawrence would make any serious attempt to finish the Etruscan book: 'As for the Etruscan Sketches – as you know, they are only one-half done – the other half would need a jaunt through middle Italy here – it's very cold – I cough – hotels are unwarmed in out-of-the-way places: so you see the chances. If I can get the

³⁹ For a discussion of 'The Florence Museum' see below, p. xxxviii.

⁴⁰ See above, pp. xxxii–xxxiii and *Letters*, vi. 77, 84.