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# **Etruscan by Definition**

The Cultural, Regional and  
Personal Identity of the  
Etruscans

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Papers in honour of  
Sybille Haynes, MBE

Edited by Judith Swaddling and Philip Perkins

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# Foreword

**Neil MacGregor**

Director, The British Museum

Dr Sybille Haynes, MBE, is a remarkable woman, whose moving life-story appears over page. It is a privilege to be able to mark her six decades as an Etruscologist of international repute with this volume offered on behalf not only of the British Museum but of her countless friends and colleagues around the globe. In this country Sybille, more than anyone else, is responsible for bringing the Etruscans to modern public awareness. She created the first exhibition at the Museum devoted to the Etruscans, in 1976, and went on to produce ground-breaking publications on Etruscan artefacts, most recently the volume that can justifiably be called the modern bible of Etruscology, her *Etruscan Civilisation*. In Italy, as across Europe and America, Sybille commands the utmost respect and universal affection of her peers. Her many honours, in addition to her MBE for services to Etruscan art (1976), include her distinction as Dignitario, Ombra della Sera, Volterra (1981).

Sybille has always championed the importance of artefact studies and archaeological context. Indeed without such expertise, gained from years of study, it is impossible to pronounce on any ancient culture with authority. The papers in

this volume all demonstrate that same belief and passion for the Etruscans.

Sybille wears her encyclopaedic knowledge with much grace and charm. Indeed her own *joie de vivre* mirrors those exhilarating scenes of dance and revelry which we see in Etruscan wall-paintings: her enthusiasm, spontaneity and immense knowledge not only of the Etruscans but of the arts in general would make her a delightful and welcome guest at an Etruscan or any other banquet!

In recent years Sybille's indomitable spirit and stamina have helped her through health problems which she has concealed and borne with characteristic generosity and fortitude. She remains abreast of Etruscan news, a frequent visitor to Italy, and a great support to her Etruscan colleagues, students and scholars alike. Still demonstrating that pioneering spirit, she has established the Sybille Haynes Trust for an Etruscan lectureship at the University of Oxford. All of her friends at the British Museum and all who have contributed to this *Festschrift* salute her endeavours and wish her continuing joy from her beloved Etruscans.

# Sybille Haynes, MBE, In her own words



I was born Sybille Overhoff on 3rd July 1926, twin daughter of an Austrian father, Dr Julius Overhoff, and a German mother, Edith, *née* Kloepfel. I grew up in Berlin, Frankfurt am Main and Austria, one of five children. Schooling was interrupted by Nazi interference in education and compulsory removal from the Gymnasium to labour camps from February 1944 to March 1945. Fleeing from the advancing Russian army from a camp in Thuringen, I reached bomb-shattered Frankfurt in grim circumstances and found my parents alive, but my eldest brother and three of my closest friends killed in France and on the Russian front. We were made homeless by the occupying American troops, but managed to camp in an abandoned flat for 18 months.

While waiting for Frankfurt University to reopen in 1947, I started privately to learn Chinese with Professor Carl Henze. However, my intention from childhood had been to study Classical Archaeology and in particular Etruscology. This early interest was stimulated by being shown the sale catalogue of a small collection of antiquities, formed by my German great-grandfather, the sculptor Melchior zur Strassen, who had lived in Rome for five years before returning to Germany as a professor of sculpture and museum director. On his death this collection had to be sold, but the catalogue illustrated in line drawings three engraved Etruscan mirrors, the designs on which fascinated me. This catalogue did not survive the bombing of my grandmother's house in Cologne.

When war damage to the J.W. Goethe Universität in Frankfurt was partly repaired I started studying Classical Archaeology with Prof. Guido von Kaschnitz-Kleinberg (later the first post-war director of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Rome), Ancient History with Prof. Matthias Gelzer, Art History with Profs. Herbert von Einem and Harald Keller and Ethnology with Prof. Adolf Ellegard Jensen at the Frobenius Institute. In the difficult economic conditions during the holidays I managed to work in Paris in 1948, Rome in 1949 and London in 1950 to familiarize myself with the great collections of antiquities of Europe. I took my degree 'summa cum laude' in December 1950.

Encouraged by von Kaschnitz, who had a great interest in Etruscan civilization, I wrote in Munich a thesis on 'Studien zu nachklassischen etruskischen Bronzespiegeln', an excerpt of which was published in *Mitteilungen des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 1952/1953.

My time of study in the Greek and Roman Department of the British Museum in Spring 1950 had been greatly facilitated by the kind helpfulness and generosity of the then Keeper, Professor Bernard Ashmole and his Assistant Keeper, Denys Haynes. The Department had suffered war damage, the present Greek and Roman Life Room being an empty shell, open to the sky, which we crossed on duckboards because of standing rainwater. Most of the large sculptures were still stored in the deep shelter of the closed Aldwych tube station tunnel, but much of the bronze collection was accessible.

In January 1957 I was married to Denys Haynes, the beginning of 43 extremely happy years of shared life and work. I was fortunate then to be invited by Bernard Ashmole to serve as a voluntary assistant in the Department, for there were then only four scholars employed on the gigantic task of post-war reorganization. While helping with this, answering enquiries on Etruscan subjects and dealing with the German and Italian correspondence, I learned a great deal and, over the years, published many articles in international archaeological periodicals and in 1965 a booklet for the British Museum on *Etruscan Bronze Utensils* (second edition 1975) and in 1971 *Etruscan Sculpture*. I was made Foreign Member of the Istituto di Studi Etruschi ed Italici in 1965. In 1976 I arranged the first Etruscan Gallery in the Department and invited my distinguished friend and colleague Professor Massimo Pallottino of Rome's 'La Sapienza' University to speak on this occasion to the Friends of the British Museum. Her Majesty the Queen invested me with the MBE for 'Services to Etruscan Art' in 1976, and in 1985 I was elected a Corresponding Member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut.

Since 1985 I have lived and worked in Oxford, where Corpus Christi College made me an elected member of the Senior Common Room and of the Centre for the Study of Greek and Roman Antiquity.

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### Editorial note

Bibliographical abbreviations are those used in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 101, 2000, 10–24.

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