

## New Light on a Master Bronze from Etruria

By Beth Cohen\*

THE CHIMAERA OF AREZZO, J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM AT THE GETTY VILLA, MALIBU, 16 JULY 2009–8 FEBRUARY 2010, curated by Claire L. Lyons and Seth D. Pevnick.

THE CHIMAERA OF AREZZO, edited by Mario Iozzo, in collaboration with G. Carlotta Cianferoni, Claire L. Lyons, and Seth D. Pevnick. Pp. 51, b&w figs. 12, color figs. 50. Edizioni Polistampa, Florence 2009. €8; \$15. ISBN 978-88-596-0628-4 (paper).

The large bronze statue—more than 4 ft. long—known as the Chimaera of Arezzo depicts a fantastic compound animal from Greek mythology visualized as a lion with a goat's head (or protome) emerging from its back and a serpent for a tail (figs. 1, 2).<sup>1</sup> This statue of ca. 400 B.C.E. shows the creature under attack: the Chimaera, roaring menacingly, draws backward on his haunches as if to spring, with the lion's claws bared and now-lost eyes originally fixed on an attacker. Walking around the statue or viewing it in QuickTime on the exhibition's permanent Web site<sup>2</sup> reveals that the goat head has flopped over, mortally wounded, as thick droplets of blood gush from both sides of the neck. The lean and sinewy lion's body has also been wounded: blood spurts from the left (rear) rump, and the small, round hole

nearby must document the coup de grâce of a now-lost spear.

In Greek myth, the fire-breathing Chimaera, offspring of Typhon and Echidna, was slain by the Corinthian hero Bellerophon, mounted on the winged horse Pegasus (e.g., Hes. *Theog.* 319–25). This bronze statue is presumed to have been part of a sculptural Bellerophon group, but, when it was found outside the Porta San Lorentino at the Tuscan town of Arezzo—ancient Etruscan Arretium—in 1553, no other monumental sculpture was recorded, though it was part of a deposit including small bronzes.<sup>3</sup> Cosimo I de' Medici (1519–1574), the self-proclaimed Duke of Etruria, ordered this impressive trove whisked off to his own collection in Florence. After cleaning by the duke and the artist Benvenuto Cellini, the bronze statue was displayed in the Palazzo Vecchio, the city's historic town hall employed by Cosimo as a residence. Since the Chimaera was found with the snake tail broken off (a then-preserved tail section was never attached), despite its goat's head, this statue was initially believed to represent a lion. Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574)—the Florentine courtier, painter, architect of the Uffizi, and author of *The Lives of Artists*, who was himself from Arezzo—took special interest in the Arretine treasure, and he published the antiquarian verdict that the bronze statue depicted the Chimaera.<sup>4</sup> The inscription "TIN-

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<sup>1</sup> Iozzo 2009, 4 (fig.), 10 (fig.), 29–35, figs. A–E; 49, no. 1 (Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 1).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/chimaera/>.

<sup>3</sup> Del Vita 1910; Colonna 1985, 172, fig. 21 ("F" on plan); 173–74, no. 10.1.

<sup>4</sup> See Pallottino 1977, 4, quote no. 2 (Vasari, *Ragionamente terzo*); see also for the Chimaera's discovery, inscription and display, 4, quote no. 1 (Vasari, *Proemio delle Vitae, Origine delle arti di disegno. IV. Presso gli Etruschi*).



Fig. 1. Installation view of the exhibition: *right*, the Chimaera of Arezzo; *left*, cases with ancient vases, gems, and finger rings (E.M. Rosenbery).



Fig. 2. Rear view of Etruscan bronze statue of the Chimaera, from Arezzo, lgth. 129 cm, ca. 400 B.C.E. Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 1 (E.M. Rosenbery; © Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana–Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Firenze).

SCVIL,” in retrograde letters on the statue’s right foreleg—now known to be a dedication to the Etruscans’ main deity, the thunderbolt-wielding sky god Tinia<sup>5</sup>—could not yet be understood. In the 16th century, however, “there never seems to have been the slightest doubt that the *Chimera* was an Etruscan antiquity.”<sup>6</sup> This important conclusion located the inception of great art in Tuscany; moreover, the Etruscan Chimaera gave Florence an antiquity to compete politically with the renowned bronze *Lupa* (She-Wolf) that symbolized Rome.<sup>7</sup> In the 18th century, the Chimaera was moved to the Uffizi and in 1870, to Florence’s new archaeological museum.<sup>8</sup>

Focusing on this venerable masterpiece, the J. Paul Getty Museum’s intriguing boutique exhibition, which occupies a single gallery of the splendid Getty Villa, is the first fruit of an ongoing international association with Florence’s National Archaeological Museum. Their collaboration, which will include large loan exhibitions of ancient bronze statuary and Etruscan art, is one positive ramification of the separate agreement between the Italian Ministry of Culture and the J. Paul Getty Trust after the latter’s commitment to return 40 antiquities from the Getty Museum’s Villa Collection to Italy.

*The Chimaera of Arezzo* exhibition is accompanied by a handsome slender catalogue. Introductory notes present the Florentine museum and its goals and the collaboration between the Getty and Italy. Brief chapters discuss the diverse themes masterfully encapsulated in this small exhibition: the Chimaera as a bronze statue, its modern history and influence, its ancient Greek myth, and Etruscan context. The catalogue ends with a checklist of 30 objects (29 on display plus one alternate) and includes pertinent bibliographical citations throughout. It has been published in both Italian- and English-language versions under the auspices of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali and the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana in Florence. The Istituto Italiana di Cultura and the Italian Consulate General of Los Angeles have also provided support for the exhibition. Augmenting eight carefully

selected loans from Florence and six individual loans mostly from several Italian and American museums, 15 of the works on display (and the alternate) have been drawn from the Getty Museum’s own Malibu Villa Collection and from the Research Library of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. While the exhibition has no brochure or audio guide, reference copies of the catalogue rest on a bench in the gallery (fig. 3).

Upon entering the exhibition gallery—with a general color scheme featuring muted tones of gray and beige, plus charcoal-colored cases and wall frames—the visitor encounters the black-patinated bronze statue silhouetted against a reddish-orange backdrop (recalling the color of Roman Arretine Ware), which is emblazoned with translated lines from Homer’s *Iliad* (6.179–83) containing the earliest known reference to the Chimaera (see fig. 1). The Italian loan is arrestingly set on a tall, charcoal-colored base and perfectly lit by ceiling spotlights for detailed viewing from all sides. The Getty Museum’s dramatic display differs markedly from the statue’s traditional home in the window-lined Etruscan bronze corridor of the Florence museum.<sup>9</sup>

Four angled placards, one centered on each side of the rectangular guard rail around the statue, succinctly introduce visitors to major aspects of the Chimaera of Arezzo and invite them to look at the work from all sides. The placard on the front discusses the Chimaera statue’s Greek mythological depiction, its identity as an Etruscan hollow-cast bronze, classical in style, which was originally outfitted with fangs and inlaid eyes in different materials, and its intended function as an offering in an Etruscan religious sanctuary. Under the rubric “Style and Workmanship,” the placard at the head considers the Chimaera’s association with lions shown in Athenian art of the late fifth century B.C.E. (note esp. its stylized, flame-like mane) and with lion’s-head waterspouts from Magna Graecia; these Greek ties stand in contradistinction to the inscribed Etruscan dedication to Tinia, which was written on the creature’s right foreleg before the sculptor’s model was cast. The label suggests further that

<sup>5</sup> Maras 2009, 32–3, 92, 187, 194–95, 223–24, no. Ar co.2; see also Bonfante 2006, 15–16, 18–19 (for the inscription’s typically Etruscan archaic placement upon the statue rather than on a base).

<sup>6</sup> Gáldy 2009, 124; see also Pallottino 1977; Gáldy

2006.

<sup>7</sup> Gáldy 2009, 124, 132.

<sup>8</sup> Iozzo 2009, 28.

<sup>9</sup> Cristofani 1979, 4–5, 8, fig. 8.



Fig. 3. Installation view of the exhibition's right side: *left background*, case with Etruscan small bronzes; *middle-ground*, bench with catalogues; *center background*, wall-mounted case with ancient coins; *right background*, 16th–18th-century illustrated books, an engraving, and a manuscript documenting the Chimaera of Arezzo's western afterlife (E.M. Rosenbery).

the Chimaera statue “was created in a workshop that included craftsmen immersed in the artistic ambience of the Greek colonies in the Southern Italian peninsula as well as Etruscan metal-workers famed for their expertise in bronze casting.” The placard on the Chimaera’s back flank deals with visual evidence for the statue’s iconographic context in a sculptural group also containing a statue of Bellerophon on Pegasus. The last placard, at the tail end, discusses the statue’s early modern history, from its discovery in Arezzo and the reattachment of its original ancient left front and rear lower legs to the modern restoration of its tail with the snake’s head biting the goat’s horn in 1785. (Most visitors, transfixed by this “cool” detail, do not read far enough to learn that it is a restoration.) Interesting false-color x-radiographs on this last placard, which should have been reproduced larger, show repairs and the statue’s internal construction.

The thrilling opportunity to see the bronze Chimaera statue afresh in Malibu invites a brief reconsideration of the location of its fabric in

light of notable findings from recent analyses of two other “Etruscan” monuments.

First, the antiquity of Rome’s venerable *Lupa*, presumed to be an archaic Etruscan master bronze of the early fifth century B.C.E.,<sup>10</sup> has been questioned. In 2006, after cleaning the statue, Carruba (controversially) suggested that it is a medieval work of ca. 700 C.E. cast in one piece like a church bell rather than in parts, according to ancient practice.<sup>11</sup> Pending publication of further scientific evidence, this reviewer is inclined to agree. Removing the *Lupa* from the canon erases the supposedly earlier Etruscan tradition of large bronze (animal) sculpture before the classical Chimaera.

Second, in a 2001 study of the fourth-century B.C.E. Amazonomachy sarcophagus of the Etruscan woman Ramtha Huzcnai, from Tarquinia, Brecolaki demonstrated definitively, through comparative technical analysis, that this “Etruscan” alabaster sarcophagus’ Greek-looking tempera paintings ought indeed be attributed to a Greek workshop of Magna Graecia, perhaps at Taranto.<sup>12</sup> Thus, an Etruscan

<sup>10</sup> E.g., Cristofani 1985, 290–91, no. 114 (450–430 B.C.E.).

<sup>11</sup> Carruba 2006, 13–48.

<sup>12</sup> Brecolaki 2001, 21–34, 41–2 (table).

family procured a high-quality Greek monument from South Italy rather than patronizing Etruscan (or other central Italian) masters working in a classical Greek idiom.

The Malibu exhibition (and its catalogue), attempting to furnish visitors with a cogent, current view, present the Chimaera as a masterpiece of Etruscan bronze sculpture, whose production is attributed to a workshop in which a sculptural model fashioned by (Greek or Italiote) artisans trained in the Greek artistic milieu of Magna Graecia (esp. Metaponto) was cast by Etruscan bronzeworkers (in Latium).<sup>13</sup> This complex collaborative scenario is a significant effort to rise above the mire of conflicting scholarly opinions about the Chimaera's origin, which cannot be itemized here but range from its being a Greek-mainland import to Vasarian insistence upon the bronze statue's Etruscan nature.<sup>14</sup> But perhaps an alternative suggestion is particularly appropriate now. While the Etruscan inscription rendered before casting on its foreleg indicates that the Chimaera was conceived as an Etruscan religious dedication, it need not signify that the bronze statue was made by Etruscans. Some scholars have long held this statue to display Greek workmanship: most significantly, Orlandini, who pointed out the Chimaera's relationship with waterspouts from Metaponto, specifically suggested that it was made in a Greek workshop of Magna Graecia carrying out Etruscan commissions.<sup>15</sup> Without an earlier *Lupa*, the fashionably classical Greek-looking Chimaera now must stand at the head of the tradition of monumental Etruscan bronze (animal) statuary. But the Chimaera is, in fact, more Greek-looking than any other Etruscan large bronze, and we should now seriously consider whether this Arretine dedication, like the Tarquinia Amazonomachy sarcophagus, might indeed be a piece acquired by Etruscans from fine Greek artisans in Magna

Graecia. Since this assuredly ancient bronze was worked over for several centuries during early modern times, a definitive answer may not be found in the bronze casting.<sup>16</sup> In any event, the Etruscans ought to be appreciated fully—not only as terrific art makers but also as ambitious purchasers and commissioners of artworks to fulfill their socioreligious needs.

In the Malibu exhibition, after circling the ever-fascinating Chimaera of Arezzo, the visitor best takes in the exquisite supporting display of smaller objects by touring the gallery clockwise (see fig. 1). The opening section is concerned with early artistic depictions and the myth's dissemination throughout the Mediterranean world. A wall text, appliquéd on an orange rectangle topped by a miniature silhouette of the Chimaera, introduces the Bellerophon myth.<sup>17</sup> The hero sought refuge with King Proetus at Tiryns after murdering the tyrant of Corinth, his home city. Proetus' wife, Stheneboea, claimed falsely that Bellerophon seduced her. Rather than kill Bellerophon himself, the king sent him to (his father-in-law) King Iobates of Lycia with sealed instructions that he be killed. This portion of the hero's story appears on a Lucanian red-figure amphora of Panathenaic shape of ca. 420 B.C.E., which may have been inspired by a South Italian production of Athenian tragedy.<sup>18</sup> King Iobates, certain Bellerophon would die, ordered him to kill the fire-breathing Chimaera. The hero accomplished this feat upon the winged horse Pegasus. As a reward (after further trials), Bellerophon was given the king's daughter as a bride and also his kingdom.

It is a pleasure to see one of the earliest Greek representations of Bellerophon and the Chimaera on the Protocorinthian aryballos (ht. 6.8 cm) of ca. 650 B.C.E. from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (see fig. 1, left).<sup>19</sup> This tiny vessel for perfumed oil is often illustrated in

<sup>13</sup>Iozzo 2009, 34–6; cf. Maggiani 1990.

<sup>14</sup>E.g., Cristofani 1985, 295–97 (with summation). For the association of its inscription's epigraphy with southern Etruria (and a Chiusine workshop), see Maggiani 1990, 58–9 (with references); Maras 2009, 223.

<sup>15</sup>Orlandini 1983, 457–58, figs. 483–85. According to Cristofani (1991), a waterspout from Pheidias' workshop at Olympia influenced those from Magna Graecia.

<sup>16</sup>Guidi and Pierdominici 1992; Pecchioli 1992; Carruba 2006, 50–2, no. 1. Bronze technique, not an exhibition focus, was included in the Getty Villa's

symposium "Myth, Allegory, Emblem: The Many Lives of the Chimaera of Arezzo," 4–5 December 2009.

<sup>17</sup>LIMC 3:249–59, pls. 197–209, s.v. "Chimaira"; LIMC 3:259–69, pls. 209–17, s.v. "Chimaira."

<sup>18</sup>Iozzo 2009, 17, fig. 8; 49, no. 3 (attributed to the Pisticci-Amykos Group; Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 82263); see also Iozzo 2009, 14–16, 26 n. 3, 43 (on influence from lost plays by Sophocles [*Iobates*] and Euripides [*Beller.*, *Sthen.*]).

<sup>19</sup>Iozzo 2009, 14, fig. 2; 49, no. 4 (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 95.10 [attributed to the Chigi

publications by the rollout drawing, which here is printed on the label to elucidate the actual work. Enduring iconographic features already appear in this orientalizing depiction: the tripartite compound animal breathing fire is fully formed; the hero, notably advancing from right to left, with his spear poised for attack, is mounted on Pegasus, who, hovering above the groundline, is shown as flying. Like this Protocorinthian Chimaera, not merely a tongue but red flames (executed in copper) might originally have issued from the bronze statue's open jaws.<sup>20</sup>

Gems and finger rings, including several of classical Greek, Etruscan, and South Italian manufacture, from the Getty Museum's own Villa Collection,<sup>21</sup> which share the petite wall-mounted case of the aryballos (fig. 1, left), document the ongoing role of small luxury items in the widespread distribution of the Chimaera myth, in which a Greek hero slaughters the Other. (Exhibition visitors' examination and evident enjoyment of these intaglio miniatures is aided by much-used magnifying glasses hanging on the wall nearby.) A striking Etruscan carnelian and gold scarab ring (lgh. 3.1 cm) of ca. 400 B.C.E.<sup>22</sup> subtly functions as didactic material through a photographic enlargement of its Bellerophon composition on a scrim blocking a side doorway. This vertical composition, showing the hero on Pegasus flying to the right directly above the Chimaera, whose lion's head twists up and around toward the attacker, evidently became canonical in Italy. However, the right-facing Chimaera of Arezzo, with its forward-looking lion's head tilted up and slightly turned to its right, might instead suggest an oppositional fight composition, with its attacker approaching from the right.

A wall text introduces the Etruscans as an ancient people whose culture and rich narrative art, influenced by the ancient Near East and Greece, thrived in central Italy from the eighth century until their defeat and absorption by the

Romans during the last few centuries B.C.E. Their language, which can be read, if not completely understood,<sup>23</sup> is "a non-Indo-European tongue written in a modified Greek alphabet." Following the current approach to the Etruscans, the wall text emphasizes our knowledge of this people through extensive archaeological finds from their necropoleis and temples, which support their continuity in Italy.<sup>24</sup> Yet, the popularity in Etruria of a Greek myth that takes place in Anatolia (Lycia) brings to mind Herodotus' (1.94) controversial assertion that Lydians colonized parts of northern and central Italy. A useful map of the Mediterranean world on the nearby wall panel indicates sites relevant for the exhibition.

The exhibition's earliest object—displayed in its own case on the adjacent rear gallery wall (see fig. 1, center background)—is an impasto olla (storage jar) from Orvieto of ca. 700–650 B.C.E. made by the Faliscans,<sup>25</sup> a people neighboring the Etruscans who lived in central Italy north of Rome. Its incised design, shown in a line drawing on the label, depicts a helmeted man with a spear standing amid several beasts; he pursues from the rear the creature at the right, which appears to have a lion's body with a goat's head projecting from its back and might be the Chimaera. The man might be Bellerophon or, as Camporeale suggested, simply a hunter.<sup>26</sup>

In considering possible representations of the Chimaera during the Orientalizing period of the seventh century B.C.E. in Italy, one misses—among loans from Florence's National Archaeological Museum—the imposing Etruscan gold leech fibula (lgh. 15.6 cm) from the Tomb of the Lictor at Vetulonia, which depicts in *pulviscolo* granulation on its catchplate a right-facing procession of beasts, including, at the left end, one that looks like a lion with a goat's head emerging from its back.<sup>27</sup> Another early depiction possibly showing both the Chimaera and Bellerophon is still in situ in the Tomb of the

Group]).

<sup>20</sup>This possibility was suggested, in conversation, by Iozzo (pers. comm. 2009). Copper might also have been employed to inlay the bronze Chimaera's blood, now black on account of (early) modern patination.

<sup>21</sup>E.g., Iozzo 2009, 49, no. 6 (Greek chalcedony scaraboid gem, inv. no. 81.AN.76.49), no. 7 (Etruscan carnelian scarab, inv. no. 81.AN.76.183), no. 10 (South Italian gold box bezel ring, inv. no. 88.AM.104).

<sup>22</sup>Iozzo 2009, 19, fig. 15; 49, no. 9 (Atlanta, Michael C. Carlos Museum, inv. no. 2009.8.1).

<sup>23</sup>While the wall text employs the word "deciphered," Bonfante (2006, 9) argues that Etruscan "inscriptions can be read, and so they need not be 'deciphered.'"

<sup>24</sup>On earlier approaches, including considering Etruscans as immigrants, see Briquel 2000.

<sup>25</sup>Iozzo 2009, 13, fig. 1; 50, no. 14 (Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 72748).

<sup>26</sup>Camporeale 1977.

<sup>27</sup>Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 77261 (Iozzo 2009, 47, fig. 42).

Bulls at Tarquinia of ca. 540–530 B.C.E., painted on the gable of the wall uniquely depicting the Greek myth of Achilles ambushing Troilus at Troy. In this context, Steingraber refers to “the myth of Bellerophon and the Chimaera, a heroic subject of Anatolian origin beloved by Etruscan princes.”<sup>28</sup>

Basel’s Etruscan black-figure neck amphora of the La Tolfa Group from ca. 525 B.C.E. with a Chimaera depicted on each side (see fig. 1, left middleground [leftmost vase in freestanding case]) is the only European loan from outside Italy.<sup>29</sup> On the front, a female version of the fantastic animal, who is endowed with a male lion’s mane and nine mammae (instead of a lioness’ four) on her underside,<sup>30</sup> nurses a lion cub. On the back, a male Chimaera lurks, breathing fire. This welcome vase attests that Chimaeras of both female and male gender were envisioned in antiquity;<sup>31</sup> it thus clarifies a seeming discrepancy in the exhibition’s installation—the male Chimaera of Arezzo<sup>32</sup> is displayed beneath Homer’s lines (*Il.* 6.179–83) describing the Chimaera killed by Bellerophon as female. This creature’s name, furthermore, probably derives from the Greek word for she-goat (*chimaira*).

The issue of the Chimaera’s gender may be relevant for a Getty object strategically placed in the corridor outside the exhibition’s entrance to lure museum visitors: an archaic Laconian black-figure cup attributed to the Boreads Painter (fig. 4).<sup>33</sup> In a heraldic composition on the large tondo inside this Spartan cup, Pegasus, rearing on his hind legs, confronts the Chimaera. Here, a dismounted Bellerophon, advancing in a *knielauf* pose, spears the fearsome creature in the belly, and red blood spurts from the wound. This Chimaera is said to have a “shaggy belly,” following Stibbe’s



Fig. 4. Laconian black-figure cup with Pegasus, Bellerophon, and the Chimaera, diam. (without handles) 18.5 cm, ca. 565 B.C.E. Attributed to the Boreads Painter. Malibu, Villa Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 85.AE.121.1.

description of it with “meticulously incised hair on the belly.”<sup>34</sup> However, perhaps this detail is instead a misunderstood rendition of the long row of mammae with prominent teats commonly shown on the underside of a female Chimaera.<sup>35</sup>

The right side of the gallery focuses on the Chimaera statue’s 16th-century discovery and its “life” after antiquity (see fig. 3). A vitrine containing Etruscan small bronzes includes several statuettes that appear to have been unearthed with the Chimaera at Arezzo on 15 November 1553: a crowned male figure holding a phiale (ht. 29.8 cm), interpreted as Tinia, of ca. 300–200 B.C.E.,<sup>36</sup> a youth holding a phiale (ht. 29 cm) of ca. 325–300 B.C.E.,<sup>37</sup> and probably also a rearing wounded griffin (ht. 14.3 cm) of ca. 400–300 B.C.E.<sup>38</sup> Unlike the traditional display in the Etruscan bronze corridor of the

<sup>28</sup>Steingraber 2006, 91.

<sup>29</sup>Iozzo 2009, 18, fig. 12 (reverse: female Chimaera); 50, no. 11 (Basel, Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, inv. no. Zü399). For the male Chimaera, see *LIMC* 3:pl. 213 (fig. Chimaera in Etruria 38 [right]).

<sup>30</sup>See Brown (1960, 166) on unnaturalistic features in depictions of lionesses.

<sup>31</sup>Sexually neutral Chimaeras were supposedly also represented (*LIMC* 3:257, s.v. “Chimaira”)—or, at least, Chimaeras with manes but without visible genitalia.

<sup>32</sup>In photographs, the statue’s genitals are generally obscured by shadow (Iozzo 2009, 29, 30, fig. A1).

<sup>33</sup>Iozzo 2009, 16, fig. 7; 49, no. 2 (Malibu, J.

Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, inv. no. 85.AE.121).

<sup>34</sup>Stibbe 1991, 5.

<sup>35</sup>E.g., supra n. 29.

<sup>36</sup>Iozzo 2009, 22, fig. 21; 50, no. 16 (Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 15); see also Vilucchi and Zamarchi Grassi 2001, 62, no. 1.

<sup>37</sup>Iozzo 2009, 22, fig. 20; 50, no. 17 (Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 4); see also Vilucchi and Zamarchi Grassi 2001, 63, no. 2.

<sup>38</sup>Iozzo 2009, 23, fig. 22; 50, no. 18 (Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 555); see also Vilucchi and Zamarchi Grassi 2001, 64, no. 3.

Florence museum, the exhibition importantly emphasizes that the Chimaera belonged to a votive deposit probably dating to the second century B.C.E.,<sup>39</sup> a time of Etruscan and Roman conflict.

The display along the right wall details the Chimaera's early modern history, from its acquisition by Cosimo I to its 18th-century installation in the Uffizi (see fig. 3, background). As discussed in a wall text, the Medici ruler considered the Chimaera statue "a symbol of his dominion 'over all the chimaeras,' referring to his conquered foes." Cosimo I is documented here through an engraved portrait from 1544 by Nicolò della Casa after a drawing by Baccio Bandinelli,<sup>40</sup> in which he is depicted with armor decorated *al'antica*, most suitable for the "Duke of Etruria."

The following tiny wall-mounted case contains several ancient coins, including a Greek silver stater of Sicyon from ca. 380 B.C.E. depicting a Chimaera that was in Cosimo's own collection.<sup>41</sup> A coin from Corinth (27 B.C.E.–14 C.E.)—the only Roman work on display—shows the entire motif of Bellerophon mounted on Pegasus killing the Chimaera.<sup>42</sup> The label placard points out that coins in the Medici collection aided scholars in correctly interpreting the bronze statue as a Chimaera.<sup>43</sup> Vasari, who published the bronze statue's identification, was instrumental in having the Arretine bronzes displayed in the *scrittoio* (study) he designed for Cosimo I in the Palazzo Vecchio and in showcasing the Chimaera there in his newly frescoed hall of Medici Pope Leo X.<sup>44</sup>

An 18th-century engraving with a *veduta* of Florence's Piazza della Signoria, showing the Palazzo Vecchio and the Uffizi (see fig. 3, right background),<sup>45</sup> draws visitors toward the

display table featuring western depictions of the ancient bronze statue. One, a previously unpublished 16th-century manuscript from the Getty Research Institute (fig. 5),<sup>46</sup> alone justifies the loan of the Chimaera of Arezzo. It is by Alfonso Chacón (1540–1599), a Spanish Dominican scholar active in Rome who worked on ancient epigraphy. On the facing page (see fig. 5, left), the Etruscan alphabet is written in a vertical column to the right of the corresponding letters in Latin. Significantly, Chacón's pen-and-ink drawing on the recto (see fig. 5, right) records the right foreleg of the bronze Chimaera with its retrograde Etruscan inscription. Dated to 1582, this manuscript may contain the earliest preserved portrayal of the Chimaera—filtered through a focus on Etruscan writing. For the discovery of the folio's subject, we are indebted to the eagle eyes of Claire L. Lyons, the Getty Museum's curator of antiquities at the Getty Villa, who earlier had worked at the Getty Research Institute.

The exhibition's thought-provoking finale is concerned with the western afterlife of Bellerophon and the Chimaera in the iconography of St. George.<sup>47</sup> This related motif of the Christian knight mounted on a white horse slaying a dragon has been illustrated by two charming 15th-century French illuminated manuscripts in succession (see fig. 3, case in the right foreground).<sup>48</sup> Yet, as the label points out, "here the monster is reptilian rather than feline." And, in addition, now the dragon, rather than the horse, has wings.

Despite his heroic act of killing the Chimaera, Bellerophon's story did not end happily. Attempting to fly to Mt. Olympus on Pegasus, he was thrown, fell to earth, became lame, and was hated by the gods.<sup>49</sup> The winged horse was

<sup>39</sup> Turfa 2006, 92, 106, 108 n. 18.

<sup>40</sup> Iozzo 2009, 21, fig. 19; 50–1, no. 21 (Research Library, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, inv. no. 2000.PR.33).

<sup>41</sup> Iozzo 2009, 24, fig. 26; 51, no. 22 (Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 35703).

<sup>42</sup> Iozzo 2009, 24, fig. 27; 51, no. 23 (Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 35694).

<sup>43</sup> Gáldy 2006, 111.

<sup>44</sup> *Supra* n. 4; see also Gáldy 2009, 63, 84, 124.

<sup>45</sup> Iozzo 2009, 21, fig. 18; 51, no. 25 (Los Angeles, Research Library, Getty Research Institute, inv. no. 89-F16).

<sup>46</sup> Iozzo 2009, 23, fig. 24; 51, no. 27 (Los Angeles, Research Library, Getty Research Institute, inv. no. 840005B).

<sup>47</sup> The display's penultimate spot contains a photographic facsimile of a third-century C.E. Roman Bellerophon mosaic excavated at Palmyra, Syria, in 2003. Unfortunately, this misleading and oddly placed reproduction is the exhibition's largest "object" next to the bronze Chimaera; it should have been consigned to the catalogue.

<sup>48</sup> Iozzo 2009, 20, fig. 16; 51, no. 29 (Follower of the Egerton Master [1405–1420]; Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 83.ML.101.92); 20, fig. 17; 51, no. 30 (Master of Sir John Fastolf [1430–1440]; Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 84.ML.723.33v).

<sup>49</sup> E.g., Eur. *Beller. frr.* 311N<sup>2</sup>–312N<sup>2</sup>; Hom. *Il.* 6.200–2; Pind. *Ol.* 13.131–32; *Isthm.* 7.60–8.

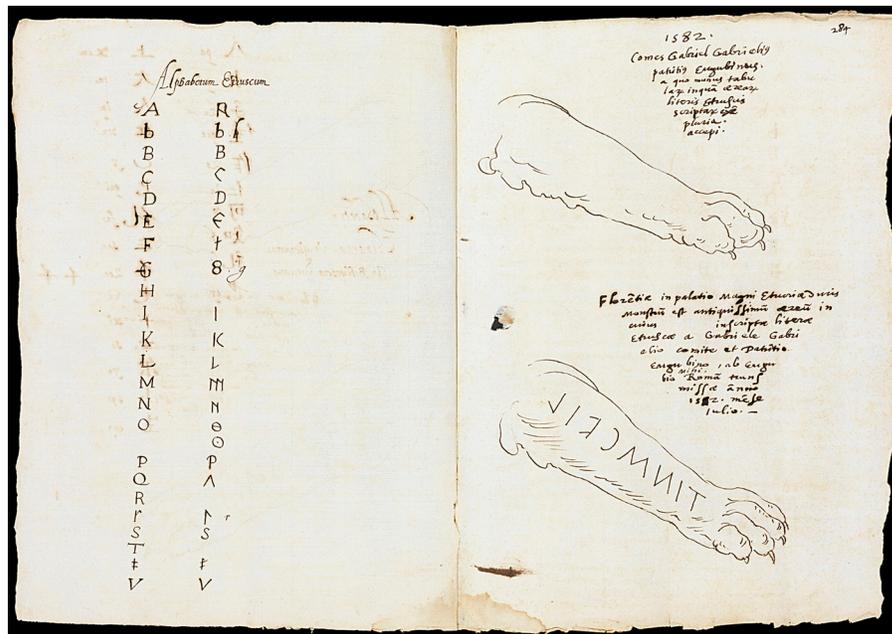


Fig. 5. Manuscript with pen and ink drawings by Alfonso Chacón (1540–1599): facing page, Latin and Etruscan alphabets; recto, right foreleg of the Chimaera of Arezzo with retrograde Etruscan inscription, 28 x 41 cm, 1582. Los Angeles, Research Library, the Getty Research Institute, inv. no. 840005B.

housed in Zeus' stables and ultimately turned into a constellation. Surviving as the constellation Equus in astronomical illustrations, Pegasus passed into post-Antique western imagery displaying both his ancient form and identity.<sup>50</sup> Now the Getty Museum's inspiring exhibition, devoted to the Bellerophon myth's other fantastic animal, illuminates the Chimaera's own historic survival and passage into western culture by means of a classic icon of animal art.

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<sup>50</sup> Yalouris 1977, 20, 28–9, figs. 32, 33, 87–9, 92, 100, 101, 103, 108; the constellation is sometimes depicted as a protome.

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