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The Eugene Berman Collection: A Roman Memoir

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Abstract
This memoir recounts the author's first meetings with David Soren in Tunis and Rome during the summer of 1970. It also records an influential visit to the Roman apartment of a major artist and collector of Etruscan antiquities, Eugene Berman (1899–1972), that same summer and gives a brief description of the collection, now the property of the Italian State. Finally it shows how that visit helped to set the author on a path that would lead to his career as an Etruscologist.

This is a personal memoir about my first meeting of Noelle and David Soren and some of the events that shaped my development as an archaeologist at the time. In that regard, I hope the Sorens and our readers will find it an interesting and amusing diversion from the more serious and useful contents of this Festschrift.

It was the summer of 1970, almost fifty years ago. I had spent May doing research in London and Paris but moved on to work on Roman mosaics in Tunisia in June. I met David and Noelle in Tunis that month. Then, after some archaeological work in Sicily and Naples, I arrived in Rome on a very hot day in July. Unfortunately, I did not begin to keep a journal of my European sojourns until 1977 and so must reconstruct the happenings of this period, seven years earlier, from memory. Exact dates are impossible to recover, but I knew from our previous meeting that the Sorens were also going to be in Rome in July. We met again one afternoon at the American Academy in Rome. David was preparing for his preliminary exams at Harvard and I had just completed my Ph.D. at Bryn Mawr a year earlier. We were both very young, but at least I could qualify as "experienced" when it came to taking rigorous doctoral exams in classical art and archaeology. Somehow the three of us decided that we should go to Tivoli to visit Hadrian's Villa and, on a later day, to Ostia Antica where we could review the architecture and art for David's upcoming exams. Both trips, despite the oppressive summer heat, were enjoyable, entertaining and enlightening for all of us. Walking methodically through the various ruins, talking about Hadrian and Rome, about "baroque" elements in Roman architecture, then about film noir and other cinema that we enjoyed, about Italian cuisine and numerous topics of mutual interest helped to lay the foundations for a long-lasting friendship. In future years we would all meet again at excavations and over meals in Italy or at meetings of the Etruscan Foundation in Boston, New York and other cities. So, summer 1970 was the beginning of a long and happy relationship that continues to this day.

In that summer I was also working on organizing an exhibition of Etruscan and Villanovan pottery for the University of Iowa. An elegant new art museum had opened in 1969 during my first year of teaching there and I had become a friend of Ulfert Wilke (1907–1987), the founding director. Wilke was a fascinating character. He came from an artistic Bavarian family, spoke with a charming German accent, and was very cosmopolitan and talented.[1] He was an excellent painter, printmaker, and draftsman who produced a great deal of art all of his life. He knew personally scores of artists and collectors in North America, Europe and Japan. Best of all he possessed an incredibly discerning eye for artistic quality and had begun, during the early 1960s, to add ancient art to his earlier holdings of Japanese, African and Oceanic art. When we first met he already owned a small but fine collection of early Etruscan pottery. Most of this had been purchased while he was a Guggenheim Fellow at the American Academy in Rome, either on excursions to the Porta Portese flea market in Trastevere, or from established dealers, or sometimes by exchange with other artist-collectors. For example, he might offer a recent painting or watercolor plus a cash fee in exchange for an antiquity from another artist or collector who valued his art. When he encouraged me to work on an exhibition of ancient pottery for our new museum and learned I would

be in Italy the next summer, he instructed me to visit a good friend who lived in Rome and who had an Etruscan collection I should see. He would send a letter of introduction but told me relatively little about this friend and gave only a vague idea of the scope of his collection. Thus, I was quite surprised when I finally met Eugene Berman in late July, 1970.

The Berman Collection

Mr. Berman was a successful stage and set designer who had worked in New York and Hollywood from ca. 1936 to 1955. He was born in St. Petersburg in 1899 but in 1919 immigrated to France, via Finland, with his parents and older brother Léonid (1896–1976) to escape the hardships of the Russian Revolution. The Berman brothers studied art at the Académie Ranson in Paris where their teachers included Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard. There were numerous visits to Italy during the 1920s and 1930s, sometimes with Eugene's close friend, Emilio Terry, the influential architect and designer.[2] Eugene Berman's work was exhibited as early as 1923 in Paris; his first solo exhibition there was at the Galerie Katia Granoff in 1927. He first visited America in 1936 and at that time he began his long association with theater design (for the Hartford Festival and later for the Metropolitan Opera). Theater, and especially ballet, had been a powerful interest from his earliest years. As a child he had known Nijinsky, who lived in the same St. Petersburg apartment building. He moved to the USA in 1940 and became a citizen in 1944. In 1950 he married the film star Ona Munson, perhaps best remembered today for her moving portrayal of Belle Watling, Rhett Butler's loyal prostitute friend, in *Gone with the Wind* in 1939.[3] (This last detail about Berman's marriage was the only one Wilke had told me about Berman before I met him.) Like many of us, Berman adored and was constantly inspired by Italy. His work as a set designer and artist was strongly influenced by the ancient ruins, by Palladio's *Teatro Olimpico*, and by contemporary Italian painters and friends like Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978). After his wife's death, he resided in Rome for the last sixteen years of his life (1956–1972). It was in 1959, when both Berman and Wilke held Guggenheim Fellowships, that they met in Rome.

So, I had the address and telephone number of a Russian-American artist-collector in Rome. Imagine my surprise when I realized that Via del Plebiscito 107 was part of the splendid baroque Palazzo Doria Pamfili in Rome's historical center![4] I was greeted by the matronly housekeeper on the appointed afternoon. She ushered me through an almost impassable corridor crowded with art into a vast *salone* filled with extravagant Italian antique furniture, Moroccan carpets, and walls of shelves holding scores of ancient vases. One side of the room led to a spacious *terrazzo* decorated with potted plants, large Florentine stone sculptures and 18th century French cast-iron figures. These last flanked a large Etruscan cinerary urn and fragments of Roman capitals. No doubt the Italian servant noticed my startled reaction. I tried to make Italian small-talk and said something to the effect that "Working here must be like working in a museum." "Indeed," she replied, "when I dust, the *maestro* notices every object that I accidentally move out of place, even slightly." She served me a drink and mentioned that my host would be with me presently.

After a few minutes, while I was attempting to absorb the splendor of my surroundings but careful not to disturb anything, Berman appeared. He was a short, rotund, bespectacled man wearing an elaborate silk robe, red velvet slippers decorated with golden arabesques, and a soft, black embroidered pill-box cap. He might have been the bey of some forgotten Ottoman district in the Balkans. Despite this exotic outfit, he was rather formal and asked about my education, my present teaching position, his friend Wilke and the university's new museum. We also talked a great deal about the various objects in his collection as we wandered about the *salone* and then to other rooms in his vast two-floor penthouse. His observations were primarily aesthetic; he didn't seem especially interested in the archaeological details or cultural significance of his antiquities.

Upstairs were three parlors or *salotti*, as he called them, all filled with art. Clearly, every room in the apartment, even the bathrooms, showed his passionate connection to the theater; all were richly appointed with carefully arranged art. I remember especially a glorious studio on the upper floor. The walls were painted a perfect Pompeian red which served as a vibrant background for a series of Piranesi's *Vedute di Roma* engravings in elaborate gilded frames. The placement and relationship of every object in the home seemed to have been thoughtfully calculated for maximum effect. Indeed, it was a personal museum... and, he explained, it was always changing. New acquisitions or objects traded or sold to friends and galleries necessitated subtle adjustments. Cabinets might be closed and then, on other days, opened to reveal intimate displays of Roman or antique Venetian glass or Pre-Columbian pottery. An Egyptian mummy mask might move to a larger room and now be flanked by Villanovan biconical urns or African masks and colorful Peruvian textile fragments.[5]

The collection was emphatically eclectic, but in general tended to the primitive. For example, Berman (like Wilke, who had learned from the master) preferred Villanovan and early Etruscan pottery, especially impasto and bucchero, to the later Etruscan painted vases that imitate Greek wares.[6] In fact, I didn't notice any Attic black or red-figured pottery; the less refined early Corinthian and Daunian pottery was more to his taste, but not especially well-represented in the collection. He had some beautiful pieces of Cycladic sculpture whose elegant simplicity would appeal to many modern artists. There were several Etruscan stone cinerary urns and terracotta sculptures, including a large Tuscanian sarcophagus lid (Fig. 1).[7] There were items from the Italic and Greek Bronze Age all the way through Coptic textile fragments he had collected on a trip to Egypt in 1964, not to mention the many examples



Figure 1: Eugene Berman seated in his salone in 1967. Behind him are a series of large Etruscan pithoi and the lid of a late Etruscan terracotta sarcophagus. Photograph by Robert Emmett Bright, Rome.

of "modern" Oceanic and African ethnographic material, several purchased in Rome. The antiquities were often juxtaposed with contemporary prints, paintings and some of his own work as well as with antique Italian folk art. Gore Vidal, who was then a neighbor and had acquired paintings by both Berman and his brother Léonid, mentions that John Huston, the American film director and actor, had seen Berman's Etruscan collection and offered to purchase it on the spot, but had been refused.[8]

Throughout this magnificent home I noticed that an overriding principle was symmetry. Every shelf, every wall, every *cassone* lid or tabletop had its landscape of objects arranged in perfect symmetry (Fig. 2). This accounted for the many "twins" in the collection; for example, matched pairs of bucchero kantharoi and Mafriq masks. As we moved slowly through the rooms I often noticed that Berman, while engaged in conversation, was meticulously (dare I say obsessively?) rearranging objects that were a few millimeters less than perfectly aligned. I recalled the housekeeper's comment. In his love of symmetrical arrangements Berman descended from a distinguished line of 19th century collectors like the Castellani.[9]

Another important feature of his taste appeared most clearly in the Villanovan and Etruscan pottery. He favored monumentality. His best vases were almost always large, imposing objects with what a museum curator today would probably call "presence." These vases were



Figure 2: The second *salotto*, top floor of Berman's apartment, Rome, ca. 1962. Photograph by Robert Emmett Bright, Rome.

normally hand-built, not thrown on the potter's wheel, and were usually decorated in simple techniques like incision and stamping, rather than painting. In some ways, this direction was astute because, at the time, almost no one was collecting such pieces and so they were relatively affordable. His collecting began in the post-war period Italians call *Il Boom*, when American dollars went very far. The antiquities market then and now considered painted Greek pottery far more desirable and, therefore, always demanded higher prices for it.[10]

After several hours of this grand tour, I offered my thanks for a wonderful visit. As I was leaving, Berman paid me a compliment. He said that almost all of the scholars who came to see his collection were really only interested in two or three pieces that were relevant to their own specialized studies. They often ignored everything

else, even some of the most spectacular or unusual objects. I was different, he said, because I showed an interest in and talked about many things. I didn't say that perhaps I was simply too young to have developed a special focus, and he, generously, didn't supply such a plausible explanation for my broad taste. Besides, I really was excited to see so many beautiful things from so many periods and amazed to think that one man had collected such a wide range of objects that demonstrated such exquisite taste in so many fields.

What happened to this splendid collection? Eugene Berman died on December 14, 1972, two and a half years after my one and only visit to his home. He bequeathed the entire collection of some 3,000 pieces to the Italian State.[11] The majority of the antiquities are kept in the storerooms of the Forte Sangallo, home of the Museo Archeologico dell'Agro Falisco at Civita Castellana (ancient Falerii, just north of Rome). There have been sporadic exhibitions of selected material and there are plans for their eventual installation at the Museo di Villa Giulia in Rome. Today, there is a small display of three Etruscan objects with an explanatory text briefly describing Berman and his collection on the second floor of the Villa Giulia.

The Diaspora

Some of the objects from the Berman collection were sold or traded before his death in late 1972. One Pre-Columbian piece was sold to Nelson Rockefeller in 1964; he later donated it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[12] Several Villanovan and Etruscan vases were sold or traded to Ulfert Wilke in the early 1960s. In turn, Wilke later sold most of his ancient pottery collection to Dr. Howard D. Sirak and his wife Babette (née Lazarus), important collectors of late 19th and early 20th century art in Columbus, Ohio. The Sirak Collection of major paintings was donated to the Columbus Museum of Art in 1991; at the time, the collection was appraised at $80 million. Apparently the museum was not interested in the Etruscan, South Italian or Middle-Eastern antiquities the Siraks had acquired.[13] Babette Sirak died in 2004. With Howard Sirak's death on January 14, 2015, most of the antiquities were auctioned and are now dispersed.[14] Much of Wilke's African and Oceanic material is now in the Utah Museum of Fine Arts in Salt Lake City.

It is a strange coincidence that my interest in Etruscan archaeology brought me into contact with these collectors: Wilke in 1968, then Berman in 1970, and finally the Siraks in 1979. The antiquities were the common thread and I have watched, now with dismay, as many of the vases are dispersed far and wide, perhaps lost to scholars and the public. Fortunately, the majority of Berman's Etruscan collection (at least as it was at his death) is intact and will eventually be displayed, one hopes, in a permanent public setting where it can be appreciated and studied. Almost all of the Sirak vases, approximately seventy pieces, were acquired from Wilke; several of these had been in Berman's collection still earlier.[15] Some of the surviving letters show that, in addition to selling or trading pottery from his own collection, Berman sometimes offered opinions and advice to Wilke about possible acquisitions and relevant dealers.

Crustumerium

I was a naïve young man at the time I first saw Berman's collection and, although I talked quite a lot that day, I did not ask scores of questions that I now wish I had. Some would certainly center on a distinctive type of impasto pottery associated with the archaic Latin site of Crustumerium. In 1970 I, like most archaeologists, had only a vague awareness of this ancient place, although its name appears in Virgil and a few other ancient authors. Thirty years later it would become a big part of my life because I would co-direct excavations there.

First, the three vases in question (Fig. 3): They are hand-built of fine impasto and have unusual handles with pointed tooth-like protrusions giving rise to the Italian designation, *cuspidate*. The incised decoration for the largest, an *anfora tricuspidate*, simply consists of parallel lines and stamped circular devices in vertical rows (Fig. 3, A).[16] A smaller version of this shape in Berman's collection is the *anforetta tricuspidate*, this time incised with a bird on its neck (Fig. 3, B). The third vase is a different shape, a *kantharos tricuspidate* or double-handled cup.[17] It is simply decorated with incised zigzag bands (Fig. 3, C). As I later learned, the peculiar type of tooth-like handle ornament on all three of these vases is often (though not exclusively) associated with the ancient site of Crustumerium, only eleven miles north of Rome on the Via Salaria. Crustumerium is the northernmost of the ancient Latin towns in Central Italy, near the nexus of borders with Etruscan, Sabine and Faliscan territory. All three of these well-preserved vases date to Latian phase IV A, ca. 725–650 BCE.[18]

Crustumerium had been identified by Philipp Clüver in 1624 but not studied carefully until the 1970s, and not scientifically excavated until even later.[19] So, how did Berman acquire three pieces that probably came from there in the 1960s? Unfortunately, clandestine explorations have been conducted for many years all over Italy. It is quite likely that these vases, along with others now dispersed, were extracted from early burials at the site, easily found their way to the antiquities markets in nearby Rome and were purchased by Berman, probably at different times, for his collection.[20]

Another possible connection to Crustumerium is a large red impasto vessel of a type commonly called a *dolio* or *olla* (Fig. 4). Ulfert Wilke saw this piece in Lugano in 1972, purchased it and later illustrated it in an exhibition catalogue.[21] He sold it to Howard Sirak, at some point between 1975 and 1979 when I examined it. Its present location is unknown to me. The distinctive feature of this kind of large vessel is that it has small cup-like forms held by struts and appended to its rim. Several similar vessels have been excavated at Crustumerium[22] and other ancient Latin sites like Lavinium (modern Pratica di Mare) and



Figure 3: Detail of display of Italic vases in the second *salotto* of Berman apartment, Rome, 1967. Photograph by Robert Emmett Bright, Rome. A. inv. 137194; B. inv. 137193; C. inv. 137195.

Rome's Esquiline cemetery, the last excavated in 1881. Here again there is a possible association with Crustumerium, and one wonders if illicit excavations there, or at some other Latin site, may have supplied the dealer with the example last seen in Columbus, Ohio. I have made a similar case for two unprovenanced examples in the Fordham University Museum (Fig. 5).[23]

Another vase, also connected to Berman, may have come to light in the early 1960s by similar means. It appears in several photographs of the upstairs second *salotto* (Fig. 2).[24] The urn in question is in the corner, on a long shelf above the open door at the right. Several other Villanovan and Etruscan vases appear on stacked individual shelves set into the left corner.[25] This Villanovan urn, according to Wilke's journal, was acquired by Berman in Chiusi and may have been found in that area. Berman sold it to Wilke in 1963. At the time, Wilke was living in New York City but arranged to have his friends Edie and George Rickey, the famous kinetic sculptor, pack and carry the urn, its two accompanying bowls, and an associated bronze chain ornament in a cardboard box from Rome. On November 1, 1963 the Rickey's flight arrived in New York and they delivered this new acquisition to a relieved Wilke. (Sometimes his pottery shipments arrived in fragments.) All of this is recorded in the Wilke journals.[26]

This group of Villanovan vases and the bronze chain appeared in the exhibition held at the University of Iowa Museum of Art in 1971 (Fig. 6).[27] At some point in the mid-1970s Babette and Howard Sirak acquired this group from Wilke. After the death of Howard Sirak in 2015, the two small bowls appeared at a California auction house. I have been unable to trace the large biconical urn, its lid or the associated bronze chain.

Some features of the urn's shape are distinctive. For example, most Villanovan urns are biconical like this one, but their carinations are usually more abrupt. Here the transition from foot to mid-point is almost a perfectly smooth straight line which continues past the carination to an equally smooth line in the opposite direction. It is more typical for there to be a bulge or abrupt "break" in the line, and the lines themselves are often convex not straight as they are here. So, the profile is a bit unusual.[28] The lid fits perfectly on the urn. It is in the shape of a bronze helmet with a perforated central knob, perhaps originally meant to hold a decorative finial. There are seven small perforations along the bottom rim. On some preserved bronze helmets these are thought to be for the attachment of a felt, cloth or leather lining to protect the warrior's head. The helmet is decorated with incised chevrons and parallel lines, similar to the incised decoration on the urn.

All four ceramic pieces (urn, lid, and two small bowls)



Figure 4: Red-ware Latian *dolio* or *olla* with four cup-like attachments, ca. 620–600 BCE. Photograph by Ugo Donati Gallery, Lugano, ca. 1970.

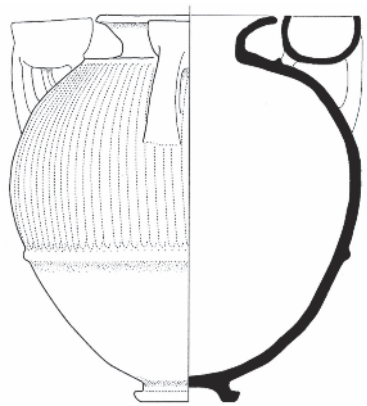


Figure 5: Red-ware Latian *dolio* or *olla* with four cup-like attachments, ca. 620–600 BCE. Fordham University Collection, inv. 2.002. Drawing by Elizabeth Wahle.



Figure 6: Villanovan biconical urn with bronze chain and two associated bowls, late 9th century BCE, said to be from Chiusi. Photograph by Donald D. Roberts, Iowa City 1969.

are made of the same clay, have the same color, share the same decorative techniques, and appear to have been fired together. This fact strengthens the likelihood that they do indeed form a tomb group. The bronze chain is more of a problem. There are examples of excavated urns found with bronze chains,[29] but they are usually associated with adult female or child cremations. However, here the helmet-shaped lid would seem to indicate a male cremation. On the other hand, if the chain were found originally within or near the urn rather than on it, it could be part of the tomb offerings for a deceased male. Such is the case with similar chains associated with a male inhumation.[30] Another problem is that the chain is made of several authentic bronze elements that may have belonged originally to different items. They may have been "restored" as an individual chain and placed on the urn by an enterprising antiquities dealer anxious to make the tomb group more attractive, interesting and expensive. Unfortunately, we can probably never know.

Early Villanovan and Etruscan pottery of the types briefly described here is still relatively unpopular with collectors, museum curators and scholars or their students. And yet, it always seems to strike a chord with some people who fall under its spell. Part of this must be simply the attraction of the "primitive." These vases rarely show the sophisticated technical refinement of later painted pottery, either Greek or Etruscan. Also, only occasionally are they decorated with figurative (or animal) designs and narrative, and so they usually do not tell a story. Of course, this limits their utility to document the lives and beliefs of these early people, arguably the most valuable feature of later painted pottery that often depicts elaborate scenes from myth, legend or daily life. Rather, it is the simplicity and directness of pure ornament or the dramatic monumentality of these vases that appeal. Of course, all of these objects were unfortunately deprived of their archaeological contexts and thus we cannot use them to examine more closely the funerary rituals of these early people. This has been done, with very interesting results, in a number of carefully controlled, professional excavations that are often prompted by an effort to stop further clandestine operations.[31] Thanks to the generous bequest of Eugene Berman his collection now belongs to the Italian people, and indirectly to anyone in the world who wishes to take the time to see and study it. I am grateful to have met him, talked about his interest in ancient pottery, and explored his magnificent Roman apartment in the eventful summer of 1970.

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1 His mother was Amalie (Mally) Brandes Wilke (1876–1954), a painter and the granddaughter of Georg Heinrich Brandes (1803–1868), a respected landscape painter. Ulfert's father, Rudolf Wilke, was a well-known artist and caricaturist who worked for the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, based in Munich. See *Rudolf Wilke (1873–1908): Centennial Anniversary of his Birth* (exhibition catalogue, University of Iowa Museum of Art, March 4 through April 15, 1973). Ludwig Thoma, the editor of *Simplicissimus*, said something in his obituary for Rudolf Wilke that could apply equally to his son Ulfert: "To stand with him before good paintings was both edifying and delightful. Neither vanity nor arrogance got in the way of the pure pleasure he took in good art and he gave cogent reasons for his appreciation of it from his own experience." For more on Wilke's life and work, see Gerald Nordland, *Ulfert Wilke: A Retrospective* (Salt Lake City: Utah Museum of Fine Arts, University of Utah, 1983).

2 Berman's extensive travels have been briefly catalogued by Maria Vittoria Thau in Anna Maria Moretti Sgubini (ed.), *Scavo nello scavo: gli Etruschi non visti. Ricerche e riscoperte nei depositi dei musei archeologici dell'Etruria meridionale. Catalogo della mostra, Viterbo 5 marzo 2004–30 giugno 2004*. (Viterbo: Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Etruria Meridionale , 2004), 204. According to Thau, Berman became an American citizen in 1936, but in his own catalogue for an exhibition at the Knoedler Gallery in Paris (*Eugène Berman, 1928–1964*, "Notes Biographiques," n.p.) he gives 1944 for his citizenship. For more on Berman's life and work, see Michael Duncan, *High Drama: Eugene Berman and the Legacy of the Melancholic Sublime* (New York and Manchester: Hudson Hills Press, 2005).

3 On Ona Munson and Berman: The nature of their relationship is obscure. We know that the two met in 1936 when both lived in the same Hollywood apartment complex, the Villa Carlotta, and were working on various films. Munson appears in several of Berman's paintings and seems to have taken on the role of muse. They married at the Los Angeles home of Igor Stravinsky in 1950, fourteen years after their first meeting. It may have been a marriage of convenience. After Eugene's death, Léonid claimed that "[My brother Eugene] never had intimate relations with women" (Léonid [Berman], *The Three Worlds of Léonid*, [New York: Basic Books, 1978], 114) and some of Munson's lesbian affairs are well known and documented (e.g., with Mercedes De Acosta, the playwright; see Robert A. Schanke, *That Furious Lesbian: The Story of Mercedes De Acosta* [Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press], 2003). Berman was certainly depressed after his wife's suicide in 1955, and numerous paintings, sketches and photographs of her adorned his Roman apartment. The couple shares a common grave at the Ferncliff Mausoleum in Hartsdale (Westchester Co.), NY.

4 The American writer John Cheever (1912–1982) and his family also had this address from November 1956 to September 1957, but their apartment was on the piano nobile. See Benjamin Cheever (ed.), *The Letters*

of John Cheever (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), especially pp. 185–207. I have been unable to locate any evidence that Berman met the Cheevers.

5 Several years before his death in 1987, Ulfert Wilke gave me a folder containing numerous photographs, letters and postcards sent to him by Berman. The photographs record almost every room in the large Roman apartment. Many of these help to document the various changes that new acquisitions required. A major archive of Berman's photographs, including personal albums, was part of his donation to the Italian State and is now kept in the Archivio di Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Etruria Meridionale (SBAEM), Rome. Other Berman material is in the American Academy in Rome and the Archive of American Art in Washington, D.C. The largest holdings of Berman's many works related to his stage sets and costume designs are at the Tobin Collection for Theatre Arts in the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas.

6 On the back of one of the photographs of vases sent to Wilke ca. 1967, Berman wrote "5 big Villanovan pots (pride of my collection)." Wilke in *An Artist Collects: Ulfert Wilke, Selections from Five Continents* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Museum of Art, 1975), 16, Rome, Jan. 2, 1961: "Visiting the Villa Giulia makes it apparent that my tastes are limited. Villanovan and black buccheri very archaic with dots and symbols, fascinate me." He mentions visits to the Museo Pigorini, certainly a museum close to his taste in both ethnographic and archaeological materials. He would also have enjoyed the Museo Archeologico in Bologna, which has a vast collection of Villanovan pottery, but seems not to have visited Bologna.

7 Etruscan terracotta sarcophagus lid (inv. 137224), ca. late 2nd century BCE: Maria Donatella Gentili in Moretti Sgubini 2004, 233–234. For the pithoi displayed beneath the sarcophagus lid and the stamnos in foreground, see Moretti Sgubini 2004, 213, no. 5 and 223, no. 20.

8 Gore Vidal, *Palimpsest: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1995), 147.

9 Historical photos of the Castellani studio show a definite influence on Berman's taste in displaying his collection. See Anna Maria Moretti Sgubini, "La collezione Augusto Castellani: dallo 'studio di ricevimento' di piazza di Trevi alle sale dell'emiciclo e dei Sette Colli del Museo Etrusco di Villa Giulia," in A. M. Moretti Sgubini and Francesca Boitani (eds.), *I Castellani e l'oreficeria archeologica italiana* (Rome: L'ERMA di Bretschneider 2005), especially 270–277 and figs. 11-1-10.

10 In his journals, Wilke often records the cost of similar pieces he was purchasing in Italy in the early 1960s. By today's inflated standards, they are bargain-basement prices although he usually complains that some fashionable dealers always ask too much. In much of their correspondence both Berman and Wilke complain that they are spending far too much on art and need to curb their obsessive collecting. Such attempts as they made were almost always unsuccessful.

11 On May 3, 1979 I had a conversation with Wilke about Berman's estate. At this time, more than six years after his death, it was still being negotiated and Wilke had heard that several objects had gone missing or were "lost" in the process. To the best of my knowledge, the collection had never been catalogued before Berman's death. Wilke also recounted an interesting anecdote about Igor Stravinsky when he visited Berman in Rome. The composer admired Berman's wonderful collection and was especially fond of two paintings by Wilke that Berman had acquired. In a gesture typical of Berman's long friendship with his fellow Russian émigré, he insisted that Stravinsky accept the paintings as a gift.

12 Colima cylindrical terracotta vessel: Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY acc. no. 1979.206.1121.

13 The museum has only four pieces of comparable Italic pottery, all donated in 1931 by General and Mrs. Edward Orton, Jr. The unpublished vases are a Latian amphora with spiral handles, a type frequently excavated at Crustumerium (inv. 64.51); a Capenate kantharos and stemmed plate (inv. 64.46 and 64.48, respectively); a bucchero stamnos (inv. 64.50).

14 Most of the pottery has appeared in online auctions: Ancient Resource LLC, Montrose, CA, Auction 42, July 19, 2015; Auction 44, September 27, 2015; Auction 46, December 13, 2015; Auction 47, February 6, 2016; Auction 49, April 24, 2016. Additional vases have appeared at I. M. Chait, Beverly Hills, CA: October 4, 2015 auction. Provenance information for these items is often uneven. In some cases Wilke is mentioned along with Sirak, but in others one or neither may be mentioned.

15 Wilke records a letter to Sirak stating "You have in essence the cream of [my] Etruscan collection. You don't need more." (See *An Artist Collects* 1975, 36, Columbus, Feb. 9, 1969.)

16 A very similar unpublished vase is in the Toledo Museum of Art, acc. no. 1995.3. It was a gift from the NY antiquities dealer, Edoardo Almagia.

17 This shape is treated extensively by Paolo Togninelli, "Crustumerium: il sito e I materiali di recente acquisizione" in Francesco Di Mario (ed.), *Il Tesoro Ritrovato: Il senso del bello nella produzione artigianale del Lazio antico* (Rome: De Luca, 2000), 71–73. No. IV, 7 (p. 71) is almost identical to the Berman example in fabric, technique, shape and decoration.

18 Dimensions: Fig. 3, A (inv. 137194), H. 24.4–27.1 cm;

D. of mouth, 13.7 cm; Fig. 3, B (inv. 137193), H. 13.3 cm; D. of mouth, 8.3 cm; Fig. 3, C (inv. 138195), H. to rim, 8.9 cm; D. of mouth, 14.5 cm.

19 On Crustumerium, see Lorenzo Quilici and Stefania Quilici Gigli, *Crustumerium: Latium Vetus* III (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1980); Francesco di Gennaro, "Crustumerium: Il centro protostorico e arcaico e la sua necropoli," in Maria Rita Di Mino and Marina Bertinetti (eds.), *Archeologia a Roma: La materia e la tecnica nell'arte antica* (Rome: De Luca, 1990) 68–72, pl. II; Angelo Amoroso, "Crustumerium" in Silvana Rizzo (ed.), *Roma. Città del Lazio* (Rome: De Luca, 2002), 36–40; Francesco di Gennaro, Paolo Togninelli and Richard De Puma, "Crustumerium e l'Etruria," in *Etruscan Studies* 9 (2002–2003): 45–62; Paolo Togninelli, "Between Crustumerium and Eretum: Observations on the First Iron Age Phases and the Finds from the Archaic Period" in Sinclair Bell and Helen Nagy (eds.), *New Perspectives on Etruria and Early Rome in Honor of Richard Daniel De Puma*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 3–21; Richard De Puma, "Crustumerium and Etruria," in *Bollettino di Archeologia* on line, 1, special vol. 2010, 96–101; *Crustumerium: Death and Afterlife on the Threshold of Rome* (exhibition catalogue, Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 2016).

20 A very similar amphora to the first one in Berman's collection is part of a collection formed in the late 19th and early 20th century by Evan Gorga (1865–1957): inv. 262093, Laura Ambrosini, *Evan Gorga al CNR: Storia e immagini di una collezione* (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 2013), 85–87, no. 11. This demonstrates that Crustumerium has been the victim of *tombaroli* for a very long time. Its proximity to the Via Salaria makes illicit excavations quite convenient. In fact, it is known that most of the clandestine activity conducted during the period when Berman was collecting took place at tombs within easy walking distance from the Via Salaria.

21 The vase is mentioned in Wilke's journal entry for July 25, 1972: "To Ugo Donati in Lugano… [where I saw] a large Etruscan vessel with four cup-like attachments I covet" (*An Artist Collects* 1975, 50; illustrated as no. 11, p. 71). Dimensions: H. 48.1 cm; Max D. ca. 44 cm.

22 Typical examples: Francesco di Gennaro, "Le olle a coppette e la ceramic di impasto a superficie rossa dipinta in bianco," in Maria Antonietta Tomei (ed.), *Roma. Memorie dal sottosuolo. Ritrovamenti archeologici 1980/2006* (Milan: Electa, 2006) 228–229; Barbara Belelli Marchesini, "La necropoli di Crustumerium: Bilancio delle acquisizioni e prospettive" in P. A. J. Attema, F. di Gennaro and E. Jarva (eds.), *Crustumerium. Ricerche internazionali in un centro latino* (Groningen: University of Groningen, 2013) 107, fig. 17. This author discusses possible funerary rituals that used vessels of this type on pp. 107–109.

23 R. De Puma in Barbara Cavaliere and Jennifer Udell (eds.), *Ancient Mediterranean Art: The William D. and Jane Walsh Collection at Fordham University* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), nos. 45–46, Fordham University Collection, inv. 2.002 and 2.003. See also No. 42, a smaller painted version of the shape; this type has also been excavated at Crustumerium. Dimensions for Fordham urns 2.002 and 2.003 are almost identical: H. 51 cm; Max D. ca. 46 cm.

24 Egyptologists will notice a late mummy mask, prominently displayed atop the central cabinet. This is perhaps from the Theban area and dates to the 4th century BCE. See Angelo Timperi in Moretti Sgubini 2004, 243–244 (inv. 137246). Berman had only a limited interest in Egyptian antiquities. At his death in 1972 he had dozens of pieces of Egyptian art in the collection, but most are very minor works.

25 The only other biconical urn, at the top left, is now inv. 137181 (see Moretti Sgubini 2004, no. III.a.1, p. 212). The closed cabinet at center appears opened in another photograph published in Moretti Sgubini 2004, fig. 5, p. 210. It contained a collection of Roman and antique Venetian glass. (The published photo is reversed as are most of the photos of Berman's apartment illustrated in this catalogue.)

26 See *An Artist Collects* 1975, 20, NYC, Nov. 1, 1963. For vases damaged in transit, see entry p. 24, NYC, Oct. 19, 1965.

27 Richard D. De Puma, *Etruscan and Villanovan Pottery: A Catalogue of Italian Ceramics from Midwestern Collections* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Museum of Art, 1971), 7–8, nos. 1–4. The photograph in the catalogue omits the chain, although it was displayed in the exhibition. The chain (max. L. 25 cm; D. of discs, 5.2 and 2.7 cm) was perhaps part of the tomb offerings rather than an ornament for the urn itself. One can easily imagine that Berman (or his dealer) decided to add it to the urn for its artistic interest and effect. Dimensions: urn, H. 30.2 cm; D. 30.5 cm; lid, H. 10.8 cm; D. 20.8 cm; bowls, H. 7.9 and 7.3 cm; D. 10.5 and 9.6 cm.

28 Several close parallels are in Bologna: Silvana Tovoli and Daniele Vitali (eds.), *La necropoli villanoviana di Ca' dell'Orbo a Villanova di Castenaso. Problemi del popolamento dal IX al VI secolo a.C.* (Bologna: Museo Civico Archeologico, 1979) tombs 10 (fig. 24,1), 16 (fig. 34,1), 42 (fig. 15, 1) and 53 (fig. 13,1). The earliest of these tombs (nos. 42 and 53) date to the 9th century BCE; tomb 10 is ca. 800–750 BCE and tomb 16, the earliest, belongs to the mid-7th century BCE. Another related group comes from Sasso di Furbara, near Cerveteri: D. Brusadin Laplace, "Le necropoli protostoriche del Sasso di Furbara," *Bollettino di Paletnologia Italiano* 73 (1964) 143–186, especially p. 162, no. 1, pl. II.

[29] For example, Villa Giulia inv. 62547, from the "Tomb of the Sardinian Bronzes," Cavalupo necropolis, Vulci: Maria Antonietta Fugazzola Delpino, *La cultura villanoviana. Guida ai materiali della prima età del Ferro nel museo di Villa Giulia* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984) 96–97, no. 26; Daniela De Angelis, "Villa Bruschi Falgari: il sepolcreto villanoviano," tomb 64 in Anna Maria Moretti Sgubini (ed.), *Tarquinia etrusca: una nuova storia* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2001) 89–91.

[30] For example, Andrea Babbi and Uwe Peltz (eds.), *La Tomba del Guerriero di Tarquinia: Identità elitaria, concentrazione del potere e networks dinamici nell'avanzato VIII sec. a.C.* (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2013), no. 70.

[31] See n. 22: Belelli Marchesini 2013, and n. 29: De Angelis 2001.