

Work notes on Etruscan Mirrors and Murals, Part II — a survey of Etruscan Phrases texts

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(Relating to mirrors http://www.maravot.com/Etruscan_Phrases_a.html)

A work in progress.

This work, "[Work Notes on Etruscan Murals and Mirrors II](#)," continues our work on the following texts on the Etruscan Phrases website: "[Work Notes on Etruscan Murals and Mirrors I](#)" [Translation of Devotional Plates III](#), [Translation of Devotional Plates II](#), http://www.maravot.com/Translation_ShortScripts_g.html 1.28.12) and other work notes: "[Work Notes on the Tavola Eugubine, Script Q1-Q273](#)", "[Work Notes on the Tavola Eugubine, Script Q278-Q453](#)", "[Work Notes on the Zagreb Mummy](#)," "[Work Notes on the Tavola Cortonensis](#)," "[Work Notes on the Perugia Cippus](#)," "[Work Notes on the Magliano Disk](#)", "[Work Notes on the Novilara Stele](#)," and "[Work Notes on the Pyrgi Gold Tablets](#)" (PDF files), all of which are reconciled to one another. This latest work is based upon Etruscan [GlossaryA.pdf](#) developed from our [Indo-European Table 1](#).

General note: The scripts on this page are short texts found on Etruscan mirrors selected from texts on Etruscan Phrases website, incorporated in Etruscan Phrases [GlossaryA.xls](#). The mirrors shown here are the more interesting, from the standpoint of story-telling, as well as in the context of the confirmation of grammatical patterns. Some images are poor and will be improved when possible.

The most dominant theme of Etruscan mirrors is the story of Helen of Troy (Homer's Iliad) and what happened to the heroes in and after the Trojan War. The story-line often diverges from that of the Greco-Roman version, remembered from the Etruscan point of view, as opposed to the Greek. Their point of view no doubt relates to the tradition recorded by Herodotus ([Herodotus, I.94](#)) that they are descended from a King in Lydia named Atys whose son, Tyrsenus, was selected to lead a group of immigrants to a new home among the Ombrici of southern and central Italy. He led his half of the nation abroad because of a long drought after the Trojan War. Strabo ([Strabo 5.2.2](#)) repeats this story. The people Tyrsenus led out of Lydia to Italy were known as the Tyrrheni, and the Tyrrhenian Sea off the coast of northwestern Italy is called after them. They were known as a powerful nation and some of the most feared pirates of their day. And their antiquity is recorded in the ancient myth of Dionysus. We continue the story of Helen of Troy, as told in the mirrors, following [Work Notes on Etruscan Murals and Mirrors I](#). The mirrors in this document are from Etruscan Phrases, most of which are at: http://www.maravot.com/Translation_ShortScripts_f.html.

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We began the story with Zeus chasing Nemesis who had changed into a goose. He changed into a swan and raped her, after which she laid two eggs, one of which contained Helen, who would become the most beautiful woman in the world. In script CX Zeus has the name Anchas:



Script CX – Corpus France, Fascicule III, Musée du Louvre, Figure 3b.

CX-1 ANCHAS (AN↓ AS) Anchas, a word referring to Zeus who changed into a swan (L. cygnus, It. cigno, Fr. cygne, m.) as he chased Nemesis, "retribution," who had taken the form of a goose. The child born of the rape was Helen. ANCHAS may refer to "anguish," (It. angoscia, f. anguish,

distress; L. ango-ere, to press tightly; of the throat, to strangle; in gen., to hurt, distress; of the mind, to torment, make anxious; L. angor-oris, compression of the throat, suffocation; of the mind, distress, anguish, trouble; Fr. angoisse, f. anguish, agony; spasm, distress, anxiety; angeisser, to anguish, to distress). The closest Latin word appears to be Ind. Conj. 2nd Pers. singl. angās, "you distress." Here Zeus appears to be emerging from the swan, causing Nemesis anguish. Nemesis (Etr. Thalna) appears to be untying the cord to her robe.

CX-2 THALNA (ΘALNA) Nemesis, the mother of Helen, the name THALNA relating to Etr. THALIO (ΘALIV), retaliation (L. talio-onis, f), Script PC-7. THALNA appears at: DM-6, DK-4, DN-5. In DM-6 she is the consort of Zeus (Etr. TINIA). There are two versions to the rape of Nemesis by Zeus. Both stories refer to Zeus, as a swan, chasing Nemesis who had taken the form of a goose. The Etruscan version shown here agrees with the tale involving Aphrodite. Aphrodite had taken the form of an eagle and gave chase to the swan Zeus and Zeus took refuge in the lap of Nemesis (who retained her human form in this story). The goddess, apparently overcome with compassion, did not chase the bird away but, instead, went obligingly to sleep – subsequently to produce an egg containing Helen.

Following the seduction of Nemesis there are two versions of the story, where the Dioscuri delivered the egg laid by Nemesis to King Tyndareüs and another version shows Hermes delivering the egg. Script DM showed the marriage contract between King Agamemnon and Queen Helen, who is sitting on the throne of Sparta. After this we showed the account of the marriage of Thetis and Peleus, with Eris (discord, strife) tossing a Golden Apple into the wedding with the inscription, "For the fairest." This resulted in "The Judgment of Paris," where Alexander (Paris) was asked to judge who among the goddesses, Aphrodite, Hera and Athena, was the fairest. Here is another mirror that displays "The Judgment of Paris":

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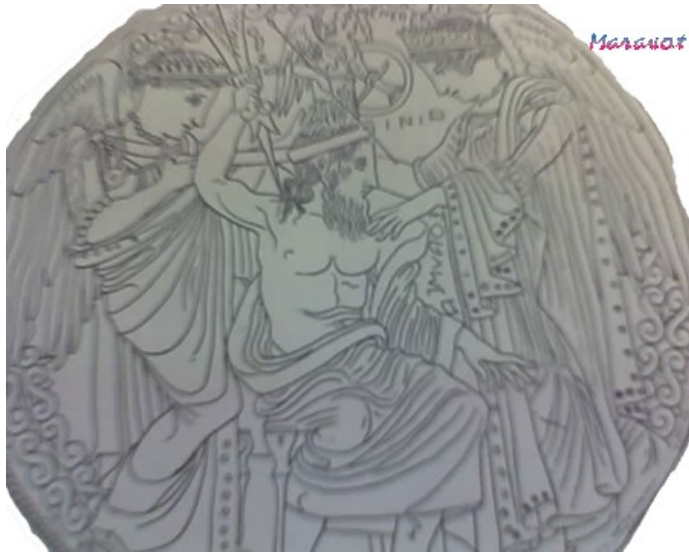


The Judgment of Paris, Script CK –
Corpus, Great Britain 2, Cambridge,
Corpus Christie College, figure 4.

CK-1 MENRFA Minerva (Gr. Athena)

CK-2 ELCHSVNTRE (EL↓SVNTRE) VNI
TVRAN Alexander/Paris, Uni (Gr. Hera),
Turan (Gr. Aphrodite)

Athena (Etr. MENRFA) played a large role in the Trojan War, she and Hera taking the side of the Greeks, because Paris angered them when he awarded the Golden Apple to Aphrodite.



Script DH

DH-1 TINIA Tinia, supreme god (Gr. Zeus)

DH-2 MENERFA Minerva (Gr. Athena)

DH-3 ERA OSCA mistress (L. era] of
the birds of augury (L. oscen-inis)

Athena (L. Minerva) had an unusual birth, sprouting out of the head of Zeus. It appears that the first wife of Zeus (Etr. Tinia) was the wise Oceanid Metis. When she was pregnant Zeus was warned by Ge and Uranus that if she

bore a second child it was destined to be a son who would rule heaven. Zeus, who had overthrown his own father and did not wish to suffer a similar fate, circumvented this catastrophe by swallowing Metis. He realized he may have been too hasty, when it was time for Metis' daughter to be born. He called on the Titan Prometheus or the craftsman-god Hephaestus to extricate him from his predicament. One or the other solved the problem in a forthright manner by splitting open Zeus' head with an axe. The goddess Athena leaped out, wearing full armor. The gods were profoundly alarmed at this prodigy until the goddess removed the armor and revealed herself in a less formidable aspect. In this mirror we can see Minerva (Gr. Athena) coming out of the head of Tinia (Gr. Zeus). Written next to Tinia's left arm is Era Osca (ERA VSCA) which may apply to a goddess who wears a tiara, assisting the birth. Another goddess is in attendance behind Tinia. Era Osca probably refers to Athena. Athena was regularly represented in art, even from early times, as a tall, stately woman wearing a crested helmet and often carrying a spear and shield. Her bird was the owl and she was sometimes depicted – for example, in the huge statue of Athena Promachus that stood on the Acropolis – accompanied

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by a snake.

We have another mirror that shows Athena, Nemesis, Hera and Zeus together. There is one other character in the scene whose name appears to be Preale, but the word may be PRE ALE:

Script DN-1 PREALE or PRE ALE before (L. prae, adv. before, in front) Alia, Latium? (L. Allia, Alia-ae, river in Latium). As an alternative ALE may be "you nourish," (L. alo, alere, to nourish,

support, rear, feed). ALE appears at **Script Z622: CIS ALE MALE** in what manner (L. qui, quibus) he will nourish, support (L. alo, alere, alui, altum, for alitum, Ind. Fut. 3rd Pers. singl. alet) with the unfavorable, evil (L. malus-a-um, Abl. singl. -e)

DN-2 VNI Uni, goddess, consort of Tinia, (L. Juno, Gr. Hera)

DN-3 TINIA Tinia, father of the gods, (Gr. Zeus, L. Jupiter)

DN-4 MENRFA Athena, (L. Minerva)

DN-5 THALNA Nemesis, mother of Helen of Troy, goddess of retribution

DN-6 LAVAN they bathe, cleanse, anoint? (L. lavo, lavare, Ind Pres. 3rd Pers. Pl. lavant)

This text contains 6 words and five characters, four of whom are Uni, Tinia, Minerva and Thalna. This is an unusual relationship, since Thalna (retribution) is the mother of Helen of Troy. Retribution is, of course, the focus of the Trojan War. Hera and Athena took the side of the Greeks because the Trojan prince, Alexander, chose Aphrodite as the fairest. The Greeks went to war with Troy to restore Helen to Sparta and her lawfully wedded husband. No doubt retribution was involved here as well.

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In Part 1 of this presentation, we left off with the embassy to Achilles who was brooding over the loss of his concubine, Briseïs. Agamemnon wanted Achilles to get back into the war, and he needed it bad enough that he would restore Briseïs back to Achilles.



Script CQ – Corpus USA 4: N. E. Collections, Providence Rhode Island, Rhode Island School of Design Museum, fig. 49a and 49b, said to be from Fabriano.

CQ-2 ACHULE (A[↓]VLE) Achilles, son of Thetis, standing upon what appears to be a shield. See Scripts [MM](#) and [CG](#) which represent the name of Achilles as ACHLE.

CQ-3 ACHL (A[↓]VLE) FESR Achilles, Briseïs? to eat, feed on, to use, enjoy (L. vescor-i)? This is a girl whom Achilles has his arms around. In an attack against Lyrnessus, Achilles killed Mynes and Epistrophus, sons of King Evenus, and carried off a

beautiful Lyrnessan woman named Briseïs as his concubine. Some time later Agamemnon was forced by the insistence of Achilles and the other leaders to give up his own concubine, Chryeïs, to save the Greeks from a plague. Enraged, he took Briseïs from Achilles. Achilles surrendered her but refused to fight any longer or to allow his troops to do so. His mother appealed to Zeus to give the Trojans victory so that the Greeks should be forced to heap honors on Achilles in order to win his help. As a result, the Greeks were gradually beaten back to their ships in an assault

led by Hector.

Agamemnon sent old Phoenix, together with Odysseus and Ajax, to offer not only Briseïs but a great deal of treasure as well if Achilles would rejoin the fighting.

Achilles refused, and kept Phoenix with him.

At that time Achilles' best friend Patroclüs, who had borrowed his armor, was killed. At first he was

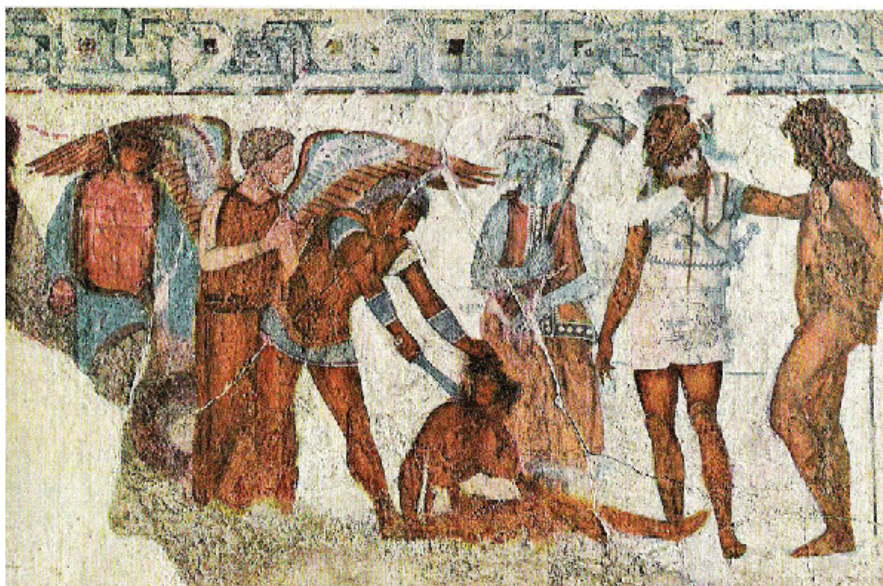


Figure 1 Mural from Francois tomb, "Achilles Sacrifice of the Trojan Captives"
Image from Etruscan Phrases

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mistaken for Achilles, because of his armor, and he killed the Lycian king Sarpedon. Three times he led the Greeks up to the walls of Troy, but was at last wounded by Euphorbus and killed by Hector. A fight raged for hours over his naked corpse before the Greeks were able to rescue it. Achilles refused to bury the body (which Thetis embalmed with ambrosia) or to eat until he had avenged himself on the Trojans. At the funeral he killed twelve Trojan men on the grave. Achilles held games around the bier / tumulus of Patroclüs and then reentered the war. Filled with grief and rage, Achilles turned back the Trojans with a shout and rejoined the fighting. Eager for revenge he killed dozens of Trojans and even fought the river Scamander when the river-god, finding his waters choked with Achilles' victims, rose against him. Achilles would have been drowned had not Hephaestus dried up the river. (Achilles mother, Thetis, had Hephaestus fashion the armor he wore). Undaunted, Achilles continued his onslaught until the Trojans were driven back within their walls. Hector alone turned to meet Achilles before the gates. Achilles, aided by Athena, killed him and, stripping him of his armor, dragged his body behind his chariot to the ships. After many combats, with the last whom he killed being Memnon, an Ethiopian or



Assyrian ally of the Trojans, Achilles himself was killed by an arrow shot by Paris from the safety of the Trojan walls. There was a terrible struggle over his corpse. Ajax finally carried it from the field, while Odysseus defended his rear. Achilles' ashes were buried in a golden urn, mixed with those of Patroclüs, and a great barrow was raised over them by the sea.

Ajax and Odysseus vied for Achilles' armor. When the other Greek leaders awarded it to Odysseus, Ajax went mad and

killed himself.

Script DC (Mirror in British Museum)

DC-1 AIFAS Ajax (L. Aiax-acis; Gr. Named after eagle, aietos)

DC-2 LASA AIFAS HAMPHIAR (HAMØIAR) Lasa, household goddess (L. Lasa), Ajax, Amphiaräus, an Argive warrior and seer.

DC-5 HAMPHIAR (HAMØIAR) In this scene we have the goddess presenting a document that carries all three names. Ajax had gotten into a dispute over who should be worthy to take the dead Achilles' armor, and having become desolated over not winning it he committed suicide. Amphiaräus, a son of Oicles and Hypermnestra and a descendant of Melampus, was the great diviner of his day. Loved by both Zeus and Apollo, he received his second sight from Zeus. Amphiaräus hunted the Calydonian boar and, some say, was second only after Atalanta in shooting it. He drove Adrastus from the Argive throne, but the quarrel was patched up. He

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married Adrastus' sister Eriphyle and agreed that she should thereafter act as arbiter between himself and Adrastus, each agreeing to abide by her decisions.

When Oedipus died, Amphiaraus helped to officiate at his funeral and was much admired by the Theban women. Later, knowing that only Adrastus would survive the campaign of the Seven Against Thebes, he at first refused to join it, but Eriphyle, bribed by Polyneices, forced him to go. Amphiaraus made his sons, Alcmeon and Amphilochus vow to avenge him.

This scene involving Ajax is unusual, but consistent with other Etruscan mirrors involving heroes in scenes which the Greeks and Romans did not describe. While we know that Ajax committed suicide because he was not awarded the armor of the dead Achilles, it is not clear what Amphiaraus has to do with the scene involving Ajax's remorse.

In another mirror we have Athena addressing Ajax. This mirror is important since it shows an



“os” declension similar to the Greek spelling. See also Script DL, mirror from Tuscania which shows an augur reading a liver before Lord Tarquin (Etr. **AVLE TARCHVNVS**). The wife of Tarquin was Tanaquil, Script A-1, (Etr. **TANCHVILVS**).

Script CN – Corpus USA 2: Boston & Cambridge, Iowa State University Press, 1993; Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Cambridge-Harvard University Museums, fig. 9a, Boston Museum, provenance unknown.

CN-1 - EIFAS TELaMONOS (TELMVNVS) Ajax [son] of Telamon

CN-3 - MENARFA (Gr. Athena)

Telemon, son of Aeacus, king of Aegina, became king of Salamis. He had participated in the expedition of the Argonauts and the Calydonian Bear Hunt. He also was with Heracles when he stormed the ramparts of Troy and is also believed to have been in the war against the Amazons.

There were two men named Ajax in the Trojan War. Ajax "the lesser" was a son of Oileus, a Locrian king, and recognized as a great spearman. Ajax, son of Telamon, was one of the largest and greatest warriors among the Greeks. He was named after the eagle. When Heracles prayed to Zeus to send a brave son to his friend Telamon, an eagle (Gr. aietos, L. aquila; avis-is, a bird of omen) appeared, signaling the god's assent. The son who was born was named Ajax (Aias) for the eagle. Ajax made his great reputation at the Trojan War, to which he led twelve ships

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from his father's island kingdom of Salamis. Taller by a head than the other Greeks and, next to Achilles, the handsomest of them, he was a bulwark on the field of battle. He fought most often side by side with Ajax of Locris, but his half-brother, Teucer, occasionally used his huge shield as a haven from behind which he could shoot arrows in safety. Ajax met Hector in single combat and they fought until the heralds parted them; afterward they exchanged gifts, Hector giving Ajax a sword in return for his belt.

Ajax was the strongest defender of the Greek ships when they were threatened by a Trojan advance. He was a member of the [embassy sent to plead with Achilles](#) to rejoin the fighting, but, being a better soldier than speaker, he left most of the persuasion to Odysseus and Phoenix. He defended the corpse of Patroclus and, later, carried the dead Achilles from the field while Odysseus held back the Trojans.



Ajax and Odysseus contested the right to be awarded Achilles' arms in recognition of their services to the Greek cause. Either with the aid of Athena or through some collusion with the judges, the eloquent Odysseus won the arms. Ajax was so distressed by this blow to his honor that he went mad and slaughtered the herds of the Greek forces, imagining them to be the leaders who had injured him. On recovering his senses, Ajax was overcome with shame and committed suicide with the sword that Hector had given him. At first Agamemnon and Menelaüs would not allow his body to be buried, but

they relented; some say that a flower bearing the letters Ai sprang up from his blood. "Ai" is an expression of grief, as well as a component of his name. Odysseus saw Ajax in the Underworld, according to Homer.

The next scene in our tragedy that is supplied in the mirrors has to do with the murder of Clytemnestra, the wife of Agamemnon and sister of Helen. Their own son, Orestes, killed her.

Script DF "Orestes and Clytemnestra," Veii, Fourth Century B.C.

DF-1 CLUTHUMUSTHA (CLVΘVMVSΘA) Clytemnestra, wife of King Agamemnon

DF-2 OROSTHE (VRVSΘE) Orestes, son of King Agamemnon and Queen Clytemnestra, parents of Orestes

DF-3 NATHOM (NAΘVM) sailor? (L. nauticus-a-um)

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DF-4 AEITHEON (AEI ΘEON) Jason

Clytemnestra was the daughter of Tyndareüs, king of Sparta, and Leda and was the sister of Helen of Troy. Tyndareüs married Clytemnestra to Tantalus, son of Thyestes. Agamemnon, king of Mycenae, killed her husband and her baby, whereupon Tyndareüs gave her to him in marriage. She bore several children to Agamemnon: Iphigeneia, Electra (Laodice), Chrysothemis, and Orestes. Agamemnon deceived her into sending Iphigeneia to Aulis, on the pretext of marrying her to Achilles; in reality he was preparing to sacrifice her to Artemis (Agamemnon had offended Artemis by boasting that he was a better archer than she, so she asked him to sacrifice his beloved daughter to make things right).

When Clytemnestra discovered this treachery she conceived a great hatred for her husband and plotted with her lover, Aegisthus, to kill him on his return from the Trojan War. When Agamemnon returned, accompanied with his new concubine, Cassandra, daughter of King Priam, the two lovers killed him in his bath and Clytemnestra, herself, is reported to have killed Cassandra. Aegisthus and Clytemnestra had two children, Erigone and Aletees.

Orestes had been sent away as a child to Phocis by his sister Electra. There he was raised by Strophius, who had married Agamemnon's sister, Anaxibia or Astyoche. Orestes and Strophius' son, Pylades, became loyal friends, and Pylades accompanied Orestes in nearly all his subsequent adventures. Eight years after his escape from Argos, Orestes, now a young man, went to Delphi to ask of the oracle what it was his duty to do about his father's murderers, who were prospering in Agamemnon's palace. Apollo commanded him to kill them both. With many misgivings Orestes journeyed to Argos with Pylades and there made himself known to Electra, whom Aegisthus had married to a commoner or otherwise humiliated. Urged on by Electra, Orestes killed Clytemnestra and her lover.

In spite of its divine sanction, this deed led the Erinyes of Orestes' mother to drive him mad. Moreover, he was brought to trial by Clytemnestra's father, Tyndareus and one of her relatives, Oeax, urged his banishment. Orestes wandered to Delphi to seek help from the oracle on his madness. Apollo told him to go to the land of the Taurians to steal the wooden statue of Artemis that had fallen there from heaven. If he brought it to Attica it would restore his health.

The Taurians – who were a tribe of Scythians – had a practice of sacrificing all of the strangers that visit their land, and Iphigeneia was the priestess of the Temple of Artemis. When Orestes and his friend, Pylades, stepped foot on the Taurian soil they were instantly captured and dragged to the temple to be sacrificed. Iphigeneia recognized them and arranged for their escape, with Athena's help. On his return, Orestes became king of Mycenae and as a descendant of Tyndareüs he succeeded to the throne of Sparta when Menelaüs died, and being the king of both cities he became the most powerful monarch in the Peloponnesus. Pylades married Orestes' sister, Electra, who bore him two sons, Medon and Strophius.

In this mirror we see beneath the floor of the murder scene Jason of the Argonauts who killed a dragon guarding the Golden Fleece in Colchis. Jason's story begins with the murder of his father

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by Pelias, king of Iolcus. Pelias and his twin, Neleus, had been exposed at birth and a horse herder accidentally discovered them, but a mare had trampled on Pelias' face, leaving a livid mark (pelios). When grown, Pelias revealed his violent nature by killing the stepmother of his mother, who was Tyro, daughter of Salmoneus and the god Poseidon. She had mistreated Tyro as a child, accounting for the reason Tyro abandoned Pelias and his twin. Pelias then began to persecute his brother Neleus and their half-brother Aeson. When Neleus put in a claim to the throne, Pelias turned on his twin and drove him out of the country. Aeson's wife bore a son, but it was mourned as dead at birth, so Pelias felt no alarm. Pelias became one of the most powerful Greek kings of his day, but a prediction by the Delphic oracle came to his attention, that an Aeolid wearing one sandal would one day bring about his death.

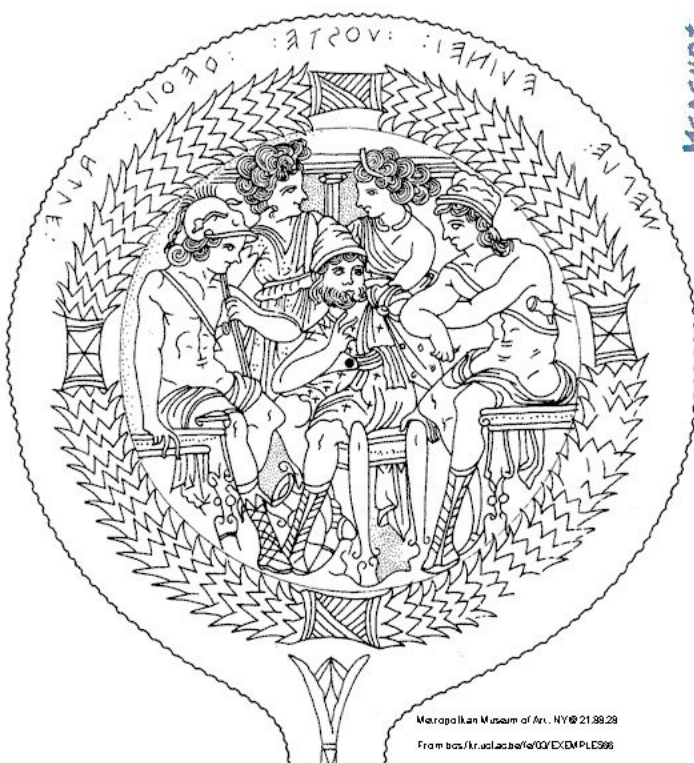
The prophecy came true the day Jason returned to claim the throne of Iolcus. In crossing a stream on the way to the city he lost a sandal, and went on without it. The king was not present in the city when Jason entered it, but an official of the city heard the young man who was missing a sandal declaring his right to the throne, and he reported his sighting to King Pelias. Pelias recognized the boy and tricked him into going to Colchis to recover the Golden Fleece — which Pelias believed would be Jason's last voyage. While Jason was gone on his adventure with the Argonauts Pelias killed Jason's father, Aeson, and his brother Promachus, a mere boy. Aeson's wife committed suicide.

Pelias had from an early date offended Hera, in refusing to sacrifice to her, so Hera had taken sides with Jason, greeting him at the stream where he lost his sandal, and she contrived a complex plan of revenge against Pelias: to cause Jason to abduct the sorceress, Medea, who was the daughter of the king of Colchis where the Golden Fleece was kept. Hera caused Medea to fall in love with Jason, and Medea continued to be the main help for Jason, to kill the dragon that guarded the Golden Fleece and to deliver the poison that would take Pelias' life. After Pelias was killed Jason and Medea took the throne of Iolcus and then went to Corinth to claim the throne there that had been in Medea's inheritance (Her father, Aeëtes, had been king of Corinth before he took the throne of Colchis). Their presence in Corinth was not well received by the Corinthians, however, because they believed the powerful sorceress would stop at nothing to gain her ends. She was beginning to become an embarrassment to him and finally Jason divorced her and took the hand of Creon's daughter, Glauce or Creüsa. Threatened with banishment as well as divorce, Medea reminded Jason that all the exploits for which he was famous would never have been accomplished without her help. There are several differing accounts as to what happened to Medea and her two sons by Jason, Mermerus and Pheres, after the divorce.

When the artist-story-teller of the mirror placed Jason in the bottom panel of the scene, beneath the panel describing Orestes' revenge for his father's death, it may be as an allusion to the revenge Jason took upon Pelias, his father's murderer. As one can see, both stories, which we summarize here, are quite complex, and this is a testimony to the Etruscan artisan's extraordinary story-telling abilities. Another mirror like it is the [Divine_Mirror.html](#), Script DM.

The character in the scene which is named NATHVM, who brandishes snakes in his hands,

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must be Pylades.

Another Etruscan mirror with strange connections is **Script MM** - Mirror in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Acc. # 21.88.28. It shows Orestes as a bearded man among four characters: **MENLE** (Menelaüs) **ELINEI** (Helen) **THETHIS** (Thetis) and **ACHLE** (Achilles).

Two of the three male figures are holding up two fingers. The bearded man seated in the center of the scene is wearing a cloak with a star pattern on it, suggesting royalty, as in the royal characters of the [Divine_Mirror.html](#), **Script DM**, such as Agamemnon. He seems to be instructing the two men who are

armed, with knives slung on their sides. The one on the left either has a spear or a staff. There are two women standing behind the bearded man in this scene.

The names on this mirror are MENLE (Menelaus), his wife, ELINEI (Helen), ORSTE (Orestes), THETHIS (Thetis) and ACHLE (Achilles). The name of MENLE is damaged. The arrangement of the names on the mirror should be over the heads of the characters to whom they apply, and following this arrangement the center figure would be VRSTE (Orestes) and the two women behind him would be ELINEI (Helen) and THETHIS (Thetis). The two young men on either side would thus be ACHLE (Achilles) and MENLE (Menelaus). We earlier thought MENLE was NEPLE (Achilles son Neoptolemus), but the first character in the name appears to be a partially written "M" and the third character a partially written "N." MENLE appears also in the Divine Mirror: http://www.maravot.com/Divine_Mirror.html

MM-1: MENLE, Menelaus

MM-2: ELINEI, Helen of Troy (See ELINAL declension at Script DM)

MM-3: VRSTE, Orestes

MM-4: THETHIS, Thetis

MM-5: ACHLE, (A)LE Achilles

We find in other Etruscan mirrors rather complex stories, and the one in this mirror appears to be just as complex as the others. Because Orestes is the seated figure who is central to the scene, with Helen, the sister of his mother upon whom Orestes will commit a revenge-murder, we may conclude that the subject has to do with revenge murders. Orestes would revenge the

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murder of his father, Agamemnon, by his mother Clytemnestra and her cuckold. Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, murdered King Priam in revenge for killing his father Achilles. Helen is also the object of the revenge story, since she was abducted by Priam's son, Alexander. Menelaüs was, of course, married to Helen and her abduction caused Menelaüs and Agamemnon to launch a thousand ships to redeem her from Troy, where Alexander (Paris) had taken her and untold riches from Menelaüs' palace in Sparta. THETHIS (Thetis) accompanies her son AKLE (Achilles).

The marriage of Thetis was the cause of the abduction of Helen and the Trojan War, in as much as Eris, the goddess of discord, was not invited to the wedding. In spite Eris threw a golden apple into the wedding ceremony with the words "For the fairest" inscribed upon it. Orestes' role was to take revenge on his mother, Clytemnestra, who, together with her lover, Aegisthus, murdered his father, King Agamemnon, on his return from the Trojan War. ACHLE appears in

several texts: ACHLE, MM-2, CG-1, DP-1, LM-4, ACHL or ACHLA, CH-2, ACHVLE, CQ-2.



Orestes had to be purged of the blood upon his hands, though he had been put on trial and acquitted. Here is another mirror showing the purification ceremony. Since it was Apollo who told him to kill his mother, it seems appropriate that Apollo would officiate in the purgation ceremony.

Script CT – Corpus USA 4 N. E.

Collections, fig. 34a, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, from Orvieto, 1946.

CT-1 METVA Medea, daughter of King Aeetes, wife of Jason

CT-2 APLV Apollo

CT-3 ORSTE (VRSTE) Orestes

CT-4 ANV? The fundament (L. anus-i) or to prophesy, sing, celebrate (L. cano, canere, cecini, cantum)

Note: In this mirror Apollo appears to be sacrificing a pig over the head of Orestes, no doubt an act of purifying Orestes of murdering his mother and her lover. Medea had been responsible for the murder of her brother, by Jason, when escaping Colchis. She also purified Heracles of the murder of his children. Jason in Corinth later divorced her because she was not a citizen; she went to Athens, where the king, Aegeus, father of Theseus by the Trojan Aethra, married her

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and they bore a son Medus. Medus became the father of the Medes (of Persia). Orestes was one of the last survivors of the Trojan War heroes.



Script CI – Corpus Great Britain 2, Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Collection, Cambridge University, fig. 8a.

CI-1 AMPHIARE (AMØIARE)

Amphiaraüs

CI-2 TVTE Tydeus

CI-3 ATRSTE Adrastus

Amphiaraüs was an Argive warrior and seer. In this mirror he seems to be divining before the seated King Adrastus. He was a son of Oicles and Hypermnestra and a descendant of

Melampus and was the great diviner of his day. Loved by both Zeus and Apollo, he received his second sight from Zeus. Amphiaraüs hunted the Calydonian boar and, some say, was second only after Atlanta in shooting it. He drove Adrastus from the Argive throne, but the quarrel was patched up. He married Adrastus' sister Eriphyle and agreed that she should thereafter act as arbiter between himself and Adrastus, each agreeing to abide by her decisions.

When Oedipus died, Amphiaraüs helped to officiate at his funeral and was much admired by the Theban women. Later, knowing that only Adrastus would survive the campaign of the "Seven against Thebes," he at first refused to join it, but Eriphyle, bribed by Polyneices, forced him to go. Amphiaraüs made his sons, Alcmeon and Amphilochs, vow to avenge him.

On the way to Thebes, Amphiaraüs repeatedly warned of impending disaster, blaming Tydeus for fomenting the war. Nevertheless he was second only to Adrastus as a leader and may have surpassed him. He avenged himself on Tydeus by preventing his immortalization by Athena. Zeus saved the seer from the shame of being speared in the back by Periclymenus by splitting the earth with a thunderbolt. Amphiaraüs, together with his chariot, charioteer, and horses, vanished forever. Amphiaraüs was avenged on the Thebans and Eriphyle by Alcmeon. His daughter Demonassa married Thersander.

In time Adrastus and his brothers patched up their quarrel with Amphiaraüs, and the seer married their sister Eriphyle. Again, on the Argive throne, Adrastus was visited by Polyneices and Tydeus. Because of an oracle, he married them to his daughters and, in spite of Amphiaraüs' warnings of disaster, raised a force from among his Argive kinsmen – seven champions and their followers – to restore Polyneices to power in Thebes.

The expedition began with the ominous death of the infant Opheltes at Nemea; in his honor

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Adrastus instituted the Nemean games. At Thebes, the rash courage of the seven Argive champions could not prevent their rout and death. Adrastus was saved only by the swiftness of his fabulous horse, Arion. He was forced to go as a suppliant to Theseus at Thebes before he could even bury his dead.

When they reached manhood, the sons of the Seven, called the Epigoni, marched against Thebes under Alcmeon to avenge their fathers. Adrastus accompanied them. This campaign succeeded, but, as Adrastus alone had survived the first war, his son Aegialeus was the only Argive leader to die in the second. Adrastus died of grief and old age at Megara on his way home with the victors.

Tydeus was a Caledonian warrior with the Seven Against Thebes, a son of Oeneus, king of Calydon. In the siege of Thebes he was mortally wounded by Melanippus, but killed him in turn. A favorite of Athena, Tydeus would have been made immortal if he had not shocked the goddess by eating Melanippus' brains. Diomedes, Tydeus' son by Deïpele, was one of the Epigoni and a hero of the Trojan War.

Script V: Alcestis and Admetus



Vase from Vulci
Image from "The Search for the Etruscans," James Wellard, Saturday Review Press, NY, 1973.

Translation: "Behold the dawn to us I am born of the dark to pluck out, pull from the funeral pile."

For larger image see http://www.maravot.com/Translation_ShortScripts_a.html. The character with the hammer is Charon, the Ferryman of Hades who hits one on the head on entering Hades to assure you are dead; Alcestis is making her offer to her husband, who is threatened by



**Figure 2 Scene from the tomb of Orcus,
Tuchulcha threatening Theseus**

Tuchulcha, the harbinger of death. After dying in her husband's stead, some say that Persephone rescued her from Hades, bringing her to life. Tuchulcha can also be seen threatening Theseus who was also rescued from Hades (See [Etruscan Murals.html](#)). Here Theseus (ΘΕΣΕ) is in Hades, threatened by Tuchulcha. He may be TRE8IPER (L. tres, tria three; vipera-ae; It. vipera; Fr. vipère) "three viper" who is mentioned in the Tavola Eugubine Q442, Q481.

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V-1 - ECA EVS CE: NAC: ATRVM: 8eLER RFCE Behold! (L. en!, ecce!) the dawn (L. Eos) to us (It. ce): I am born (L. nascor-i, 1st pers. singl. nāscō); of the dark black, dark (L. ater, atra, atrum, 2nd Decl. singl. acc.) to pluck out, pull (L. velo, vellere, velli (vulsi, vorsi) vulsum) or alternatively, the sailing ship (It. vellero) from the funeral pile (L. rogos-i, m.)

V-8 - ALCeSTI Alcestis, eldest daughter of Pelias, king of Iolcus. Because of her piety, Alcestis could not bring herself to take part with her sisters in their fatal attempt to rejuvenate their father. She was therefore spared the ruin brought upon the royal house through the plot of Medea and Jason. She married the equally pious Admetus who had the help of Apollo in winning her hand in marriage. She was so faithful to her husband she agreed to die in his stead. When he was dying he was told that only a substitute willing to die on his behalf will save him. Admetus asked his aging parents if they would give up the remaining years of their lives, but they refused. But Alcestis offered to die on his behalf. It is believed that she was later resurrected by Persephone, Queen of Hades or Heracles. The character with the serpents may be Tuchulcha. Both demons are pictured in Etruscan tombs. Charon can also be seen with his ominous club in the mural fig. 1, "Achilles' Sacrifice of the Trojan Captives." Charon can also be seen in Script BC, a tomb mural where Charon is chasing the deceased who can be seen fleeing through a door painted in the wall, with the caption "CHARON (↓ARVN) CHON CHVLIS (↓VN ↓VLIS) Charon with (L. con) caulis, a shepherd's crook? (related to L. caulae-arum, f. pl. a hole, opening; a sheep-fold)? (See http://www.maravot.com/Translation_ShortScripts_b.html)

V-3 ATMITE Admetus - king of Pherae. Admetus was the elder son of Pheres – founder and king of Pherae, a city in Thessaly – and Periclymene, a daughter of Minyas. When Jason, son of Pheres' brother Aeson, came to nearby Iolcus to claim his father's throne from the usurper Pelias, Admetus went with Pheres to support Jason at the confrontation. He joined Jason's crew of Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece, and the cousins both took part in the Calydonian boar hunt. Diodorus Siculus [4.53-2, 6.7.8] said that Jason gave Pelias' daughter Alcestis to Admetus as his bride.

Other popular heroes and gods shown on the mirrors include Adonis and Dionysus (Etr. Flufiuns). Dionysus and the Etruscans (Tyrrhenians) share a common heritage, as they are both linked together in the formative years of Dionysus' life. The young god was kidnapped by Tyrrhenian pirates, as discussed in Part I of this work. The story includes the youth's trip to India and finally to Egypt, where he and other gods sought safety from the war between the gods and the Giants and the onslaught of the monster Typhoeus. They returned to Olympus after Zeus had disposed of the monster, reportedly buried under the island of Sicily.

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Script CD – Deutsche Demokratishche Republik, Faszikel I, Berlin Staatliche Museum Antikensammlung, 1986, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin

CD-1 APVLV Apollo (We don't know of any account involving Apollo, Semele and Dionysus)

CD-2 SEMLE Semele

CD-3 FUFLUNS (8V8LVNS) Semele was the mother of Dionysus whom the Etruscans called Fufluns.

Dionysus was a Greed god of wine, and of vegetation in general.

Dionysus was also known to the Greeks as Bacchus. This name was also used by the Romans, but they often identified Dionysus with their own god Father Liber and called him by this name as well.

Many places, including Thebes, claim credit for Dionysus' birth, including Dracanum, naxos, Icarus and Mount Nysa. Popular accounts suggest his origin in Thrace from which he crossed the Hellespont to Phrygia, where he learned the cult of Cybele and Atys. There are many versions of Dionysus' birth. According to the Orphic account, known only from late Classical writers, Zeus lay with Persephone in the form of a snake. The result of this union was the child Zagreus, who was often identified with Dionysus. Zeus' jealous wife, Hera, persuaded the Titans to tear the child to bits and eat him. Athena saved his heart, however, and brought it to Zeus, who swallowed it. He then fathered the child a second time by seducing Semele, a daughter of Cadmus, king of Thebes. In a variation of this story, Zeus fed the pieces of Dionysus' heart to Semele in a drink and she conceived. The god's second birth at Thebes (which in this tale accounts for his common epithet "twice-born" corresponds fairly closely to the more usual version of the myth.

The generally accepted account begins with Zeus' seduction of Semele. When Hera discovered that Semele was pregnant by Zeus, she disguised herself as the girl's old nurse, Beroë. Without much difficulty she persuaded Semele to insist that her divine lover appear to her in his full majesty, as he did to his wife. The rash girl made Zeus promise to grant whatever boon she asked, then demanded what Hera had suggested. Unable to dissuade Semele, Zeus reluctantly agreed and visited her as a thunderbolt, or else in a chariot amid thunder and lightning. Semele was blasted or died of freight. Zeus snatched the unborn child from her womb and the flames of the burning chamber and sewed it into his own thigh. In due course he opened the stitches and removed the infant, thus providing another reason to call Dionysus the twice-born god. Hermes took the baby to Ino, Semele's sister (or to certain nymphs on Mount Nysa, or to Macris in Euboea.)

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Ino and her sisters, Agave and Autonoë, had spread a rumor after Semele's death that her story of being seduced by a god was a lie. Nevertheless, Ino accepted the child from Hermes and, with the approval of her husband, Athamas, acted for a time as his nurse, agreeing to rear him as a girl, as Hermes requested, presumably in the vain hope of deceiving Hera. Hera hated the child and punished one or both of its foster parents with madness for succoring it.

Pausanias [3.24.3-4] reported an entirely different tradition of Dionysus' birth, one which he said was known only to the inhabitants of Brasiae, a coastal town in Laconia. According to their story, Semele lived to bear her baby at Thebes, but King Cadmus did not believe her tale about being seduced by Zeus. He locked mother and child in a chest and flung it into the sea. It eventually washed ashore at Brasiae. Semele was dead, but the baby was saved. At this point Ino arrived at Brasiae in the course of her mad wanderings and nursed Dionysus in a cave. Although this myth contradicts the usual story, it is one of a number of indications in art that Dionysus had strong connections with the sea.

After Ino nursed the child Zeus transformed him into a kid in order to hide him from the jealous Hera. Hermes then carried him to the nymphs of Nysa, a mountain that different writers have located in Thrace, Asia and Africa. Some accounts identify these nymphs as the Hyades, formerly called the Diodonidae, and add that Dionysus later placed them in the stars out of gratitude. In any event the Nysaeans raised the goat-child in a cave on the mountain. Later, when Dionysus had returned to human form, they became his followers, the maenads, and shared much of the persecution to which the god was subjected.

When he was a mere boy he asked some Tyrrhenian sailors to take him to the island of Naxos. They believed he was the son of a wealthy merchant and took him aboard with the intention of selling him for ransom. They steered the ship off course and some say the youth was so handsome the sailors tried to rape him. The helmsman, Acoetes, did his best to save the passenger, for he sensed that he was more than an ordinary mortal, but the other sailors threatened him for interfering.

Suddenly, in spite of a stiff breeze in its sails, the ship stood still. A sound of flutes was heard and ivy and grapevines twined themselves about the oars and masts. Some say the oars turned to snakes. The astonishment of the sailors turned to terror as wild beasts — panthers, lions and bears — appeared on the deck. Some say that the captain was eaten by a lion, others that he ordered Acoetes to turn back to the proper course, but it was too late. In a frenzy of fear the sailors leaped into the sea, where they were changed into dolphins. Acoetes would have followed, but Dionysus restrained him, assuring him that he had won his favor by his attempts to save him. As for the dolphins, having once been human themselves, they ever afterward remained friendly to human beings. Dionysus placed one of them among the stars to commemorate his triumph and, no doubt, as a warning to pirates. In a variant of the tale the sailors began a wild dance and fell off the boat into the sea.

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Figure 3 Image from psu.edu Pennsylvania State University,
Erotic Art of Ancient Rome:

Later Dionysus went to Phrygia where he was purified by Cybele and cured of his madness. While he was in Phrygia he adopted the oriental costume that he and his followers affected and instituted many rites resembling those of Cybele. When he left Phrygia he became acknowledged as a god. Wherever people honored him and observed his rites he rewarded them with many blessings, particularly the knowledge of the cultivation of the grape and the pleasures of

wine. Where he encountered opposition, he brought terrible destruction on those who defied him.

Dionysus traveled with a strange company of Maenads, Satyrs and Seileni. Male as well as female votaries dressed in flowing garments that seemed effeminate to the Greeks. During their revels they wore animal skins and carried thyrsi, poles twined with ivy and grapevines and often surmounted with pinecones. They worshipped the god, or achieved communion with him, in orgiastic, often nocturnal, rites on the mountains. In religious frenzy, probably under the influence of wine, the revelers often had visions of their god, who might appear in the form of a bull or a goat. The women suckled kids or fawns, and sometimes tore them apart with their bare hands and ritually ate them.

When Dionysus returned to his birthplace, Thebes, he drove his mother's sisters and all of the women of Thebes mad, because the sisters had refused to acknowledge his divinity after Semele's death. When he came to Argos, where either Proetus or Anaxagoras was king, he drove the women mad, causing them to believe they were cows, some also eating their own children. The Argive men called Melampus the seer from Pylos to cure the women, which he did for a fee, amounting to a sizable share of the kingdom.

He passed through Phrygia on the way to India and there encountered Midas, king of the Mygdonians, who entertained him with splendid hospitality. Dionysus rewarded him by offering to grant any boon that he asked. Midas foolishly requested that everything he touched should turn to gold. The god reluctantly consented, but was not surprised when Midas, starving because he could not eat gold, returned to ask that the gift be withdrawn. Even a god cannot rescind his own vows, but Dionysus told Midas how to wash away his "golden touch" by bathing in the river Pactolus.

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Some say that he changed some of his own Thracian bacchants into oak trees for killing his priest Orpheus. This is uncertain, however, for, although Orpheus is widely credited with having taught, or even invented, the mysteries of Dionysus, he is also said by some writers to have been punished with death for neglecting the god's worship.

The obscure god Iacchus, who was celebrated in the Eleusinian mysteries, was often identified with Dionysus, but this may be only because the names Iacchus and Bacchus were confused. Dionysus had many names and epithets, among them Bromios (Thunderer), Lenaeüs (He of the Wine-press), Lyaeüs (He who frees) and Dendrites (He of the trees).

During the reign of Pandion, Dionysus came to Attica. Instead of seeking a direct confrontation with the king, however, he chose to teach the culture of the vine to a man named Icarius and his daughter, Erigone. Icarius was delighted with this boon to mankind, but when he gave some wine to the local peasants they thought themselves poisoned and killed Icarius. Erigone hanged herself. Dionysus drove the women of Attica mad and they too began hanging themselves. Their husbands, after consulting an oracle, punished Icarius' murderers and instituted an annual "swinging festival" in Erigone's honor. Dionysus relented and the women of Attica regained their sanity. He placed Icarius, Erigone and even their dog, Maea, in the stars as the constellations Boötes, Virgo and Canicula or Procyon.

Script MS 565/2, "Icarius, the first disciple of Dionysus" Image supplied by Elizabeth Gano



MS 565/2
Early Etruscan script. Italy, 6th c. BC

Sørenssen, Librarian for The Schøyen Collection. Special thanks to Martin Schøyen, owner of the Schøyen Collection, for providing me with his handwritten copy of the script based upon his personal examination of the mirror. His rendering was quite helpful in clarifying the characters used on the mirror, some of which are hard to read.

The script is about Ikra (Icarius) who was an Athenian (here identified as a king) who had a daughter, Erigone. Both welcomed Dionysus, the god that taught Icarius the culture of the vine. Icarius loaded a wagon with wineskins, called his faithful dog, Maera, and set off to spread the word. The first persons that he met were some shepherds. He gave

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them some of the wine, which, from inexperience, they drank unwatered. Rousing much later from a drunken stupor, they thought that the stranger had tried to poison them. They beat Icarius to death with clubs, flung his body into a well or buried it under a tree, and ran away. Erigone looked everywhere for her father and was finally led to him by Maera, who howled over his grave. Distracted with grief, she hanged herself from the tree that grew over the grave. The dog also committed suicide by jumping into a well.

Dionysus, angered that the deaths of his devoted followers had gone unavenged, sent a madness on Athenian girls that caused them to hang themselves from trees. The Athenians learned the cause of this phenomenon from a miracle, found and punished the murderers, and instituted rites in honor of Icarius and his daughter that were held during the grape harvest. During this "swinging festival" girls swung from trees on swings, in imitation of Erigone. Dionysus further honored the two by placing Icarius in the sky as the constellation Boötes, Erigone as Virgo, and Maera as the dog star.

In Script MS 565/2 Ikra is driving a chariot pulled by two centaurs. The mirror seems to tell a story that hasn't quite come down to us. We know the story of Icarius, how he was clubbed to death by shepherds whom he had introduced to wine. His driving a chariot pulled by Centaurs is new. The characters above the Centaur's leg MS-20, reads: AN PREsSE, "to the press. The mirror shows an image of a man with a club with a Phrygian style cap (common in Etruscan images) driving two centaurs with a dog beside the chariot. One centaur carries a bunch of grapes and the other appears to have a cast cutting instrument - as reflected in its handle - probably used for cutting grapes. He also has an animal hanging over his shoulder that is destined for a feast. Above the driver is a cherub. This image, then, shows what appears to be Icarius and his friends driving off to dinner. The cherub above them appears to be sprinkling them with water, with both hands outstretched. He is not likely warning Icarius. If it were not for the dog in the design, we could suspect that the driver could be Dionysus. Because of a name on the left-hand bottom circumference of the mirror which is Ikra, the driver is probably Icarius who was a key disciple of Dionysus who spread the worship of Dionysus, known as the Bacchalian rites.

Text of Script MS 565/2 (See http://www.maravot.com/Schoyen_mirror.Ikarius.html)

● **Bottom left side: MS-1: IbOA RVI Le ET: VSV ENAI :** Ikra the king (Fr. roi) there (Fr. le) from (L. et) Oso (Mt. Ossa, in northern Magnesia) Enai (Eioneus = Ixion). The letter "b" is used somewhat in the Tavola Eugubine and appears to be a "g" transcribed as "k." Thus, "Ikra the king there from Mt. Ossa of Ixion."

● **Top left side: MS-13: TRE RI: CIM Se QISI** Three (L. tres, tria) things (L. res, ri) who, whom, whose, that (L. quis, quid; It. chi, Fr. qui) of itself (L. se) you did (L. queo, quire, quivi, and quii, quitum, Ind. Perf. 2nd Pers. singl. quīstī). The character "Q" can be seen on the [Etruscan writing tablet](#).

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● **Top right side: MS-14: ESV Ce 8RATER IRE** to go out / I go out (L. exeo-ire-li [ivi]-itum, Ind. Pres. 1st Pers. singl. exeō) wherewith, wherefrom (L. qui, old abl. of qui; qui, quae, quod) the brother (L. frater-tris) with wrath (L. ira-ae, Abl. singl. -e) IR declines: IR, IRE, and IRI, IRV. IRI appears to be the word "wrath, used frequently in the Zagreb Mummy script "Z" ; 8RATER is used in Scripts Q, R and G; it declines: 8RATA (possibly It. fratta, bush, hedge), [8RATER](#), [8RATR](#), [8RATRV](#), [8RATRVM](#), [8RATRVS](#). This key word demonstrates that the Tavola Eugubine and Ikarius mirror share a common language, i.e, Etruscan. We hope to find other texts with the word.

● **Bottom right side: MS-18 SEK HeKNIS KVPIS CEPI A BeR** I cut (L. seco, secare, secui, sectum, Ind. Pres. 1st Pers. singl. secō) the grapes (L. acinus-i, 2nd Decl. Dat. pl. -is), bunch of grapes; abundant (L. copia-ae, 2nd Decl. Dat. pl. -is; It. copia; Fr. copieux); from the vinestock (Fr. cep; 2nd Decl. Dat. singl. -i) to (L. a) the drink (It. bere, to drink; Fr. boire, drink).

Note AKNI is used in Script Z. Cepi appears at L31; CEP, CEPE, CEPEN, CEPIS appear in script Z, used in the same context) The context of "harvesting to drink" is the main purpose Icarius had in mind.

● **Words above the Centaur's leg: MS-24: AN PRÉSSE** or, whether (L. an) he presses he presses (L. presso-are, Ind. Pres. 3rd Pers. singl. presset; It. pressare, to press, pressa, press) alternatively it may be: "to the press!"

● **Word under the cherub: MS-25: PVLESI** young boy (L. puellus-i, 2nd Decl. Gen. -i) It may refer to the messenger "lares" (household god) of the tribe of the Centaur Pholus). The winged cherub appears to be sprinkling / anointing the driver. Another winged child is held in the hand of Heracles in the [Divine Mirror.html](#), being offered to the god Tinia (Greek Zeus, Latin Jupiter). That child has the inscription EPE VR above his head. The cherub god, ERVS, Eros, (L. Cupid, Amore) is mentioned frequently in Script N, Q and R (Tavola Eugubine) and possibly as ERvS, Au62. Erus-i, Latin, master, owner, lord," may be indicated at Au62, the [Pyrgi Gold tablets](#).

● **Words over the head of Ikra: MS-26: III AP THICU (ΘICF).** The first characters appear to be the Roman Numeral III. out of, from, after, on the side of (L. a, ab, abs) glory, grace (L. decus-oris, 2nd Decl. Abl. -o; 4th Decl. -u)

Roman numerals are used in tomb inscriptions (See [Translation Scripts.html](#)), and should properly be called "Etruscan numerals," since the Etruscans passed the alphabet to the Romans. III agrees with the word, TRE, at MS-13. The "F" is sometimes written upside down and represents a vowel at the end of a word.

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Among the three disciples of Dionysus are two centaurs. The centaurs are known in mythology for being among the first to get drunk drinking wine and turning violent. Hercules was involved



Figure 4 Roman Mosaic of Dionysus & His Court,
ca. 2nd-4th centuries:

with the centaurs. He was entertained by Pholus, a civilized member of their tribe, when the other Centaurs, aroused by the odor of wine, broke up the feast. Hercules killed many of them and drove away the others, most of whom fled either to Malea, to Mount Pholoe (named for Pholus) or to Eleusis. Nessus, however, went to Aetolia, where he ultimately took a terrible revenge on Heracles. An innocent victim of Heracles' war with the Centaurs was Pholus, who dropped one of his guest's poisoned arrows on his foot. Heracles also inadvertently caused the death of the wise Centaur Cheiron, who had reared Jason, Asclepius, Actaeon and Achilles. Cheiron was the firstborn of Centaurus or Ixion.

Cheiron also befriended Peleus when he was deserted without weapons on Mount Pelion by Acastus. Cheiron saved Peleus from an attack by hostile Centaurs and found for him the sword that Acastus had hidden. Later he told Peleus how to win the love of Thetis. From the two was born

Achilles. Cheiron was noted for his knowledge of medicine, which he taught to Asclepius, and he was a competent sculptor as well. When, after Actaeon's death, his dogs howled in loneliness, the centaur comforted them by making a statue of their master.

Cheiron is sometimes said to have been king of the Centaurs. With them he was driven from Pelion by the Lapiths, after a protracted war between the two tribes. The Centaurs took refuge at Mount Malea in the southern Peloponesus, but were encountered by Heracles in Arcadia when he hunted the Erymanthian boar. When they attacked the friendly Centaur Pholus, Heracles killed many and drove the others from the land. During these hostilities Cheiron was accidentally shot by Heracles, or else dropped one of Heracles' poisoned arrows on his foot, as did Pholus. Cheiron could not die, but the pain of the wound, and perhaps the fate of his people, made him regret his immortality. [See Apollodorus 1.2.4, 2.5.4, 3.4.4, 3.13.3-5, Hyginus, *Poetica Astronomica*, 2.38]

Actaeon was the son of Aristaeüs and Autonoë. Actaeon was taught the art of hunting. Several explanations are offered of how he fatally offended the goddess Artemis. Some say that he

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claimed to be a better hunter, others that he offered to violate Artemis in her temple, still others that she destroyed him at Zeus' bidding because he wanted to marry his aunt Semele, whom Zeus was currently courting. According to the most usual account, Actaeon's crime was the accident of coming upon the goddess as she was bathing with her nymphs on Mount Cithaeron. To prevent him from telling others of the indignity that she had suffered, Artemis changed him into a stag, or else threw a deerskin around him, and he was torn to pieces by his own hounds. The hounds, who could not now find their master, howled in grief until the Centaur Cheiron took pity on them and made a statue of Actaeon to soothe them. [Apollodorus 3.4.4, Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3.138-252; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 180, 181.]

Our source on Mythology is the Meridian handbook of Classical Mythology, by Edward Tripp, New American Library 1970.

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