

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

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By Mel Copeland

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

A work in progress.

This work, "[Work Notes on Etruscan Murals and Mirrors I](#)," continues our work on the following texts on the Etruscan Phrases website: [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 1.94](#)) 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:

The Etruscans are a key to understanding the history that has been passed down to us. They had (no doubt long-standing) trade relationships with Phoenicia and Egypt, as well as Western European Celts and Iberians. They became a center in mining and trading iron and may very well have acquired iron smelting technology from Anatolia. They also were known for their workmanship in gold, the raw material of which they may have gotten from Iberian, Thracian,

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Anatolian (Lydian), British and Egyptian resources. They were sea-traders and in the story of Dionysus, whose homeland was believed to be Thrace or Phrygia, the Etruscans are remembered as pirates.

Apparently a Tyrrhenian ship kidnapped Dionysus and his "nurses" from the island of Icaria. The sailors began to fight over the youth, since he was quite handsome, and the captain of the ship, Acoetes, did as much as he could to protect the young man. Suddenly in spite of a stiff breeze in its sails, the ship stood still and then ivy and grapevines began to entangle everyone on the ship; then wild beasts – panthers, lions and bears – suddenly appeared on deck. Some say that the captain was eaten by a lion.



Figure 1 Typhon, Etruscan mural from Etruscan Phrases

In any event the terrified sailors jumped off the ship and turned into dolphins. The dolphins – having once been humans – thereafter were friendly to human beings. Dionysus placed one of them among the stars to commemorate his triumph and, no doubt, as a warning to pirates.

Dionysus' travels carried him to many parts of the world, including India and Egypt. Among his many adventures he is said to have routed the Amazons before Heracles made his famous expedition to their country. Dionysus got involved in the war between the gods and the Giants. Led by his braying asses, satyrs, seleni and Hephaestus, Dionysus rushed upon the Giants, but was turned back by the monster Typhon, and flew to Egypt. He and the other gods took refuge there disguising themselves as various animals. Dionysus took the form of a goat. While he and his army or followers were in Egypt they were lost and without water in the desert.

Someone spied a stray ram and followed

it. It vanished but on the spot where it was they spied a spring. To commemorate this event, Dionysus established a shrine of the ram-headed god Ammon and also placed the ram in the stars as the constellation aries. Dionysus and his followers returned to Olympus after Zeus had thrown the island of Sicily on top of the monster Typhon, who had been chasing them.

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The Greek historian, Ephorus, whom Strabo quoted, reported that when the Greeks founded their first colony, Naxos, in Sicily, they were afraid to penetrate further into the Western Mediterranean (called the Tyrrhenian Sea) for fear of the Tyrrhenians. He wrote this around 735 B.C. or earlier.

If we were to believe the *Iliad*, that the Greeks laid siege to Troy for ten long years, ravaging the farms in the land, then we can expect a disruption of farming and a drought as seen wherever armies pass through and occupy lands. As for the physical evidence of a drought about the time of the Trojan War (-1180 B.C.), a PNA study of solar output shows an increase in solar energy at that time, corresponding to a period of drought.

The people that are involved in the story of the *Iliad* are mound builders, whose tombs and megaliths spread from southeastern Europe into western Anatolia (Phrygia and Lydia, Troy being part of that area) and into Western Europe: Italy, the Iberian peninsula, the Atlantic coast of France, Britain and Germany. The Phrygians and Lydians are noted in the *Iliad* as allies of Troy, as well as the Thracians (modern Romania and Bulgaria). The tumuli follow similar practices that can be recalled in the *Iliad*:

In Homer, the story of the Argonauts and Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, the people involved in the Trojan War practiced cremation, as a rule, the raising of burial mounds which could often be used as landmarks and places for look-out stations (towers) and the holding of games around the mound after the burial. It is also noted in the *Iliad*, with regard to the raising of the barrow of Patroclüs, that a turning post around which the chariot racers would turn was a "boundary" which is called a "menhir" today. Also, in the raising of the barrow of Patroclüs the bard describes exactly what we find in other European barrows: a stone circle marking the perimeter of the tomb, that would hold in the dirt, the placement of stones to form the barrow, and the sacrifices, such as a bull, placed on the edge of the barrow.

The burial of Patroclüs is the oldest description that we have of an Indo-European mound burial. So it is worth repeating:

Iliad, book XXIII While the Trojans were mooring within their city, the Achaïans made their way to the ships beside the Hellespont. Most of them dispersed to their own vessels, but Achilles would not let the Myrmidons disperse until he had addressed them in these words:

"Your horses have done good service today, my brave comrades; but we must not unyoke them yet. Let us go, horses and chariots and all, to mourn for Patroclüs, for that is the honour due to the dead. When we have consoled ourselves with lamentation, let us unharness them and take our meal."

Then he led the cavalcade three times round the body, all mourning and crying aloud; and Thetis lamented with them. The sands were drenched with their tears, their armor was drenched, so much their hearts longed for that mighty man. And Peleïdês led their lamentations, as he laid his manslaying hands on his true friends' breast:

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"Fare thee well, Patroclūs, even in the house of death! See now I am fulfilling all that I promised! I said I would drag Hector to this place and give him to the dogs to devour raw; and in front of your pyre I would cut the throats of twelve noble sons of the Trojans, in payment for your death."

Then he did a vile outrage to royal Hector: he stretched the body on its face in the dirt beside the bier of Menoitadēs.

After that all took off their armor, and unharnessed the loud-whinnying horses, and sat down beside the ship of Achilles in their thousands. There he provided a fine funeral feast. Many bellowing bulls fell under the knife, many sheep and bleating goats; many tusker boars bursting with fat were stretched out to singe over the fire. Around the dead body the blood of the victims poured out in cupfuls was running all over the ground.

Meanwhile Prince Peleion [Achilles] was being led by the Achaean chieftains to Agamemnon. They had trouble to persuade him so deep was his sorrow for his comrade. At the King's headquarters orders were given to set a cauldron of water over the fire, that his body might be washed clean of the bloodstains, but he flatly refused and swore to it:

"No, by Zeus highest and greatest of gods! It is not lawful that water may come near my head, before I lay Patroclūs on the fire and build him a barrow and cut off my hair! For no second sorrow like this shall come upon me so long as I am among the living. Yet for this present we must consent to the meal which we hate. Then tomorrow, my lord King Agamemnon, shall be for bringing firewood and providing all that is proper to send the dead down into the dark. The fire shall burn him quickly out of sight, and the people shall return to their work."

They did accordingly: the meal was prepared, and all partook and found no lack. When they were satisfied, the others retired to rest; but Peleidēs lay with many of his Myrmidons, in the open air on the shore of the sounding sea, while the waves washed on the beach, lay groaning heavily until sleep fell upon him: a deep sweat sleep that soothed the sorrows of his heart, for his strong limbs were weary with that long pursuit after Hector about the city of Ilios.

In sleep came to him the soul of unhappy Patroclūs, his very image in stature and wearing clothes like his, with his voice and those lovely eyes. The vision stood by his head and spoke:

"You sleep, Achilles, and you have forgotten me! When I lived you were not careless of me, but now that I am dead! Bury me without delay, that I may pass the gates of Hades. Those phantoms hold me off, the souls of those whose work is done; they will not suffer me to join them beyond the river, but I wander aimlessly about the broad gates of the house of Hades. And give me that hand, I pray; for never again shall I come back from

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Hades when once you have given me my portion of fire. Never again in life shall we go apart from our companions and take counsel together; but I am swallowed up already by that cruel fate which got me on the day I was born; and you also have your position, my magnificent Achilles, to perish before the walls of this great city. One thing more I say, and I will put it upon you as a charge if you will comply: do not lay my bones apart from yours, Achilles, but with them, as I was brought up with you in your home, when Menoitios brought me quite a little one from Opoeis to your house, for manslaughter, the day when I killed Amphidamas' son — I did not mean it, we had a silly quarrel over the knuckle-bones. Then Peleus received me, and brought me up kindly in his house, and name me as your attendant. Then let one urn cover my bones with yours, that golden two-handed urn which your gracious mother gave you."

Achilles said in answer:

"Why have you come here, beloved one, with all these charges of this and that? Of course I will do as you tell me every bit. But come nearer; for one short moment let us lay our arms about each other and console ourselves with lamentation!"

He stretched out his arms as he spoke, but he could not touch, for the soul was gone like smoke into the earth, twittering. Achilles leapt up in amazement and clapped his hands with solemn words:

"See there now! So there is still something in the house of Hades, a soul and a phantom but no real life in it at all! For all night long the soul of unhappy Patroclüs has been by my side, sorrowing and lamenting and telling me what to do. And it was mightily like himself!"

All around were moved to lamentation when they heard his words. They were still mourning when Dawn showed her fingers of light. Then King Agamemnon sent out mules and men from the whole camp to bring firewood, under the charge of Idomeneus's man Merionês...Down on the shore they laid their logs in order, in the place where Achilles designed a great barrow for Patroclüs and himself.

When the logs were laid in their places, the men sat where they were, all together. Then Achilles ordered his Myrmidons to don their armor and harness their horses; they mounted the cars, both fighting men and drives, chariots in front, a cloud of footmen behind, thousands, and in the midst was Patroclüs borne by his comrades. They had cut off their hair and thrown it over the body like a shroud. Achilles came behind him clasping the head; his own unspotted comrade he was escorting to the grave.

At the place where Achilles had appointed, they laid him down and piled great heaps of firewood. Then Achilles did his part. He stood away from the pile, and cut off the golden tress which he had kept uncut among his thick hair for the river Spercheios, and spoke deeply moved as he gazed over the dark sea:

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"O Spercheios! This is not for thee! That vow was vain which Peleus my father made, that when I returned to my native land I would consecrate my hair to thee, and make solemn sacrifice, and that he would sacrifice fifty rams without blemish into thy waters, at the altar which is in thy precinct at the same place. That was my father's vow, but thou didst not fulfil his hope. Now, therefore, since I am not to return to my native land, I would give the warrior Patroclüs this to carry with him:

The he laid the hair in the hands of his well-beloved companion. All present broke into lamentation with all their hearts; and they would not have ceased while the sun shone, but Achilles drew near Agamemnon and said to him:

"Atreidês, you are our lord paramount, and it is yours to command. There is plenty of time for the people to mourn, but just now I ask you to dismiss them from this place and tell them to get ready for their meal. All this is the business of those who are nearest akin to the dead; and let the chieftains remain with us.

Agamemnon accordingly dismissed the people, while the mourners remained and piled up the wood, and made a pyre of a hundred feet each way, and upon it they laid the body. They killed flocks of sheep and herds of cattle in front of the pyre, skinned them and cut them up; Achilles took away all the fat, and covered the dead with it from head to foot, and heaped the flayed bodies about him. Jars of honey and oil he placed leaning against the bier. Four horses he laid carefully on the pyre, groaning aloud. Nine dogs the prince had, that fed from his table; two of these Achilles took, and cut their throats and laid beside him. The twelve noble young Trojans he slew without mercy. Then he applied the relentless fire to consume all, and with a groan he called on his comrades name:

"Fare thee well Patroclüs, even in the grave fare thee well! See, I now fulfill all that I promised you before. Here are the twelve noble sons of Trojans – the fire is eating them round about you! Hector Priamidês the fire shall not have to eat, but the dogs!"

But his threat was vain: no dogs were busy about Hector, for the dogs were driven off by the daughter of Zeus, Aphrodite herself, by day and by night. She washed the skin with rose-oil of ambrosia that it might not be torn by the dragging; and Phoibos Apollo drew down a dark cloud from heaven to earth, and covered the place where the body lay, that the sun might not scorch the flesh too soon over the sinews of his limbs.

But the pyre would not burn, and Achilles did not know what to do. At last he stood well away from the smoldering heap, and prayed to North Wind and West Wind promising them good sacrifices; many a libation he poured from his golden goblet, praying them to come and make the wood quickly catch fire, to burn the bodies.

Iris heard his prayers, and flew quickly to the Winds with her message.

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They were all in a party at West Wind's, and having a fine feast, when in came Iris flying and stood on the doorstone. As soon as they set eyes on her, up they all jumped and shouted out, every wind of them, "Come and sit by me!" But she said:

"No thank you, no sitting: I'm bound for the Ocean stream. There is a grand sacrifice in the Ethiopian country for us immortals, and I want to have some too. But Achilles is praying to North Wind and West Wind; he wants them to come and promises a good sacrifice. He wants them to make the pyre burn, where Patorclüs lies with the people all mooring around."

Her message given, away she flew, and the Winds rose with a devil of a noise and drove the clouds in a riot before them. They swooped upon the sea and raised the billows under their whistling blasts; they reached the Trojan coast and fell on the pyre till the flames roared again. All night long they beat upon the fire together blowing and whistling; all night long stood Achilles holding his goblet, and dipped into the golden mixer, and poured the wine on the ground, till the place was soaked, calling upon the soul of unhappy Patroclüs. As a father laments while he burns the bones of his own son, newly wedded and now dead, to the grief of his bereaved parents, so Achilles lamented as he burnt the bones of Patroclüs, stumbling up and down beside the pyre with sobbings and groanings.

But at the time when the morning star goes forth to tell that light is coming over the earth, and after him the saffron mantle of Dawn spreads over the sea, at that hour the flame died down and the burning faded away. Then the Winds returned over the Thracian gulf to their home, while the waters rose and roared.

And then Achilles moved away from the pyre, and sank upon the ground tired out: sleep leapt upon him and gave him peace.

Now the people were all gathering round Agamemnon. They made such noise and uproar that Achilles sat up and said:

"Atreidês, and you other princes, you must first quench the pyre with wine wherever the flames have touched. Then let us gather the bones of Patroclüs Menoitidês, and be careful to find the right ones. They are easy to know, for he lay right in the middle and the others were on the edge, horses and men together. His bones we must wrap in a double layer of fat and lay them in a golden urn, until I myself shall be hidden in Hades. But I do not wish any great mound to be raised for him, only just a decent one. Afterwards another can be raised both broad and high, by those of you who are left behind me."

They did his bidding at once. First they quenched the pyre with wine wherever it had burnt and the ashes were deep; then weeping they gathered the bones of their gentle companion, and laid them covered with fat in a golden urn, which they wrapped up in fine

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linen and put away safely in the hut. Round the pyre they set up a circle of stone slabs to mark the outside limit, and shoveled earth within.

The ancient myths, such as you see recorded by Ovid in *Metamorphosis*, recount how men and women and gods and goddesses changed into animals, trees and stones. Even rocks had life, such as the clanging rocks guarding the Hellespont through which Jason and the Argonauts had to navigate. As a ship would be passing between them, suddenly the rocks would close together, crushing the ship and all of its passengers. The *Iliad's* details on the barrows and traditions of the Trojans and Greeks also refer to the stones as having life to them. One group of stones mentioned in the *Iliad* involves a council of the elders who sat upon "polished stones." When looking upon a stone circle and ancient tumuli, picture if you will King Agamemnon and his allies in council with regard to the conduct of the war against the Trojans, for it may be that Hector's proposal to the Achaeans was in a stone circle. Njal's Saga, a late 13th century chronicle from Iceland, records a similar court before what is called the "Law Rock." Each year a special court, called the Althing, was held at the "Law Rock" to judge disputes, divorces etc. The saga records a period during which Icelandic family disputes produced many battles and revenge-killings. The disputes were resolved at the "Law Rock," in a manner similar to that recorded in the *Iliad* two thousand years earlier.

Listen to the bard's quote of Hector:

Iliad, Book VII: "Hear me speak, Trojans and Achaians both, and let me tell you what is in my mind. Cronidês throned on high would not let us keep our sworn treaty; but he ordains a hard struggle for us all, until either you shall take the castle of Troy, or you shall be vanquished yourselves beside your own ships. Here among you if any one of you has a mind to fight with me, let him come forth, and be your champion against Hector.

"Here is what I propose, and let Zeus be witness on both parts: if that man shall strike me down, let him strip me and take my armor for his spoil; but my body he shall give back to be carried home, that my people may give me dead my portion of fire. But if Apollo grant me success, and I strike him down, I will strip off his armor and take it into sacred Troy, and hang it before the temple of Apollo Shootafar; but the body I will give back, that his friends may carry it to their camp, to give him funeral and build him a barrow beside the broad Hellespont. Then men will say in far distant generations to come, as they sail along the shore, 'Yonder is the barrow of a man dead long ago, a champion whom famous Hector slew.' So my fame will never be forgotten."

Etruscan heroes and gods also followed descriptions seen in the *Iliad*. The *Iliad* is at least as old as the Etruscan scripts, which date as early as 600 B.C. But its tradition offers an earlier date which would be about 1,200 B.C., the time of the dominion of Mycenae, before the end of the Hittite Empire, circa. 1,180 B.C. The sons of the patriarch, Atreus, who were King Agamemnon and his brother, Prince Menelaus, were considered the supreme kings of the Achaeans at that

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time. In chapter XI of the *Iliad* Menelaüs prepares for battle, putting on his armor. Compare his armor to that of Prince Serelus, of the [Vetulonia tombstone](#):

Atreidês shouted orders to arm, and he armed himself. First he buckled on his fine greaves with silver anklets. Next he donned the corselet which Cinyrês had given him as a guest-gift; for the great rumor had come to Cyprus that the fleet was about to sail for Troy, and therefore he gave him this gift to please him. There were ten stripes of dark blue enamel upon it, twelve of gold, and twenty of tin; blue dragons reached up towards the neck, three on each side, like the rainbow which Cronion sets in the cloud to be a portent for mortal men.

Over his shoulder he threw the sword, with shining knobs of solid gold, and a silver sheath with golden slings.

He caught up a brave shield of fine workmanship, covering the body on both sides. Ten circles of bronze ran round it, and it had twenty bosses of white tin with one of blue enamel in the middle. Upon this boss was the grim-faced Gorgon glaring horribly, and on either side Terror and Panic. The shield-strap was of silver, and a blue dragon was twining upon it, with three heads twisted together and growing from one neck.

Upon his head he put a helmet with two horns and four bosses and a horsehair plume. How terrible was that nodding plume!

He took a pair of sharp spears with blades of bronze, which sent their glittering gleam high into the air.

This is the framework of the Etruscan heritage, to be passed down through their tumuli and artifacts. Murals inside their tombs and more particularly their finely-wrought mirrors follow this Trojan heritage. Their mirrors – though carrying Etruscan writing – have been found from the interior of Gaul to the Black Sea. We begin with the stories on the mirrors and are indebted to a major resource on Etruscan mirrors, *Corpus Speculorum Etruscorum*, a multivolume work. Copies I examined are in the University of California Library, catalogued in the [Pathfinder UCB Library Catalogue](#). (See http://www.maravot.com/Translation_ShortScripts_f.html for an introduction to them.) A few years ago one of the contributors of that work indicated that it was in the process of being updated.

We begin with the beginning of the story on the sack of Troy. King Agamemnon of Mycenae sought an alliance with the powerful city of Sparta. He proposed that the alliance could be accomplished through the marriage of his younger brother, Menelaüs, to the daughter of Sparta's king Tyndareüs, who was Helen, considered then to be the most beautiful woman in the world. She had two brothers, Polydeuces (Pollux) and Castor who were called the Dioscuri, whose constellation can be seen in the night sky as Gemini.

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There are several versions to the story of the birth of Helen. The most popular version has Zeus chasing the daughter of Night (Gr. Nix). Nemesis (meaning revenge), was a shape-changer and was the goddess of retribution for evil deeds or undeserved good fortune. She was the personification of the resentment aroused in men and gods by other men who commit crimes with apparent impunity or have inordinate good fortune. She fled from Zeus, changed into a goose, but was caught by him after he changed into a swan.

From their encounter an egg was produced – possibly two eggs, one containing Helen and the other one of the Dioscuri twins. According to the usual version two eggs were laid, each producing two children. Polydeuces (Pollux) and Helen, who were the children of Zeus came from one egg; from the other came, Castor and Clytemnestra who were the children of Tyndareüs. The Etruscan mirrors clarify this image, since it is the Dioscuri who present the egg to King Tyndareüs and his wife, Queen Leda.

(http://www.maravot.com/Translation_ShortScripts_d.html)

Script DA

DA-1 LATFA CASTVR PVLTVCEI TVRAN Leda, Castor, Pollux or Polydeukes, Turan
LATFA - See also CM-1. Note the "ei" suffix in Pollux's name. This suffix is common to Helen of Troy's name, ELINEI in Script MM.

DA-5 TVNTLE Tyndareüs TVNTLE - See also CM-2.

DA-6 THEI (ΘEI) THRVNEI (Θ RVNEI) ALSV RINA goddess (L. deus, divus, di, divi, **dea**, diva; It. dio, dia; Fr. dieu, dieux, deesse) of the Trojans (L. Troianus-a-um) the cold (L. alsius-a-um)? queen (L. regina-ae; It. regina; Fr. reine)

This scene shows Queen Leda and King Tyndareüs being presented the egg containing Helen by Castor and his brother Pollux, with Turan and another woman observing. There are six characters in the scene, one of which must be a goddess (besides Turan). Turan is probably the female next to Tyndareüs, which coincides with the order in the list. Next to Turan must be the

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other goddess: the Trojan goddess. Next to her would be Castor and next to him Pollux. The seated woman who appears somewhat bored or pensive must be Leda.

According to popular versions of the story it was shepherds who found the egg laid by Nemesis



that contained Helen and who presented the egg to Leda. In this story Castor is presenting the egg to Tyndareüs. This contradicts the storyline that Nemesis laid an egg in a grove in Sparta, where shepherds found the egg and took it to Leda, wife of King Tyndareüs. After Helen was hatched from the egg Leda reared her as her own daughter. In a variation of the tale, Zeus and Aphrodite plotted Nemesis' downfall. Aphrodite, in the form of an eagle, pretended to chase the swan Zeus. He took refuge in the lap of Nemesis (who retained her human form in this story, but otherwise would have changed into some horrible shape or monster). The goddess was overcome with compassion and did not chase the bird away but, instead, went

obligingly to sleep. In this version Nemesis laid an egg that was taken either by a shepherd or by Hermes, to Leda. Zeus placed both the swan and the eagle in the stars to celebrate his triumph.

In the other version from the Etruscans, Hermes (Etr. TURMS [TVRMS]) is presenting the egg to Tyndareüs. (http://www.maravot.com/Translation_ShortScripts_f.html)

CV – Corpus Bunderepublik Deutschland 4, Staatliche Museen Zu Berlin, Figure 32.b.

CV-1 TVRMS Hermes

CV-2 TVNTLES Tyndareüs He is holding an egg in his hand before Hermes. He is also seen in CM-2 and DA-5, as TVNTLE. Note the declension. Latin, 5th Decl. Abl. single -e; Nom. singl. -es.

The messenger of the gods, Hermes, plays a large role in Etruscan mythology, and is connected with whisking the souls of the dead away from Hades. Hermes (L. Mercury) is also important to the Celts, reported by Julius Caesar, "Gallic Wars," as being one of their most important gods.

Helen had been lusted after since a child. Theseus and his friend Peirithoüs were eager to marry daughters of Zeus. They decided to abduct Helen when she was twelve years old, – as

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she was sacrificing to Artemis – and carried her to the city of Aphidnae, in Attica, to become Theseus' bride. The Dioscuri waited until Theseus was away on another adventure, then captured Aphidnae, and perhaps Athens as well, with the aid of Spartan and Arcadian armies. They rescued Helen, carried off Theseus' mother, Aethra, and Peirithous' sister Phisadië, and placed Theseus' rival Menestheus on the Athenian throne.



Script DM Divine Mirror, mirror from Vulci

When it came time to marry off his brother Menelaüs, King Agamemnon decided to strike a bargain with King Tyndareüs, as Tyndareüs had extended invitations throughout Greece to marry off his daughter and all of the princes vied for her hand, including Idomeneus, who came from Crete, and Odysseus who sent no gifts. However, powerful king Agamemnon already had an edge up on the others, since he was married to Helen's older sister Clytemnestra. So he struck the successful bargain with Tyndareüs.

The Etruscan version doesn't exactly record the same situation. It seems that Helen was already seated on the throne of Sparta and as queen of Sparta struck the bargain herself. Agamemnon presented the purse directly to Helen under the approval of the gods.

(http://www.maravot.com/Divine_Mirror.html)

Here in Script DM we see on the top panel from right to left, the mother of Helen, Nemesis, seated next to Zeus, and next to the god are Heracles and Aphrodite. Their Etruscan names, left to right are Thalna, Tinia, Hercle and Turan. We thought the spelling of "Thalna" was "Ralna," but discovered that the Etruscan spelling of revenge **THALIO** (ΘALIV) which corresponds to retaliation (L talio-onis). Etruscan names often carry the augmentative "na", "ne," as in Italian; i.e., RASNA, RASNE, RASNES. See PC-8, Work Notes on Etruscan Devotional Plates III. Thus, THALNA (ΘALNA) corresponds to Gr. Nemesis, revenge.

Images of gods and heroes in classical mythology are often shown with totems with which they

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are associated. Athena is associated with the owl, for instance. Likewise, Nemesis is associated with a goose, which is standing next to Thalna. TINIA is the Etruscan supreme god (Gr. Zeus, L. Jupiter). Next to him is the hero HERCLE (Gr. Heracles, L. Hercules) who is holding his sign, a club. He presents to TINIA a cherub named EP OR (EP VR). We don't know why Hercle is in the picture, since he is not mentioned the story involving Helen's abduction by the Trojan Alexander (Paris). However, a cherub named Eros (L. Cupid), the son of Aphrodite (L. Venus, Etr. Turan) may have had something to do with causing Helen to fall in love with Alexander. The story involving Eros is also somewhat tangled, since Eros was believed to be among the first gods created, preceding Aphrodite who was born out of the sea foam near Cyprus, when Uranus was castrated. Hesiod says that Eros was on hand to greet her when she emerged from the sea. Also, Heracles and Aphrodite were not associated as lovers. She had married the lame fire-god Hephaestus, but did not remain faithful to him very long. She had a protracted affair with Ares (L. Mars, Mavors, Etr. MARIS) and had children by him: Eros, Deimus (Fear), Phoebus (Panic) and Harmonia. She also had brief affairs with two or three other gods. She repulsed the advances of Hermes until Zeus too pity on him and sent an eagle to snatch her sandal and carry it to him. The goddess had to submit to him in order to recover it. She bore Hermaphroditus, whose name was compounded of the names of his parents. The amorous god Priapus was reputed to be a son of Aphrodite by Dionysus and Poseidon was said to be the father of Aphrodite's son Eryx, king of the region of western Sicily that was named for him, but others say Butes was the father.

The second panel of the Divine Mirror is more complicated. From right to left we see an angelic being, **LASA THIMRAE (ΘΙΜΟΑΕ)**. LASA THIMRAE is probably the Lasa of the Thimbraean Apollo. She recalls Cassandra, who Propertius, in his Elegies, describes as a maenad. Cassandra got her prophetic powers when sleeping in Apollo's Thimbraean temple. The household goddess carries a wand of prophesy in her right hand and in the left hand what appears to be an alabaster unguent bottle, seen frequently being carried in ladies' hands in Etruscan murals. While we see Lasa Thimrae exiting on the right, on the left hand side of the panel is an alarmed man with a Phrygian hat holding up his hand as in protest. His name is AECAI. Note the suffix, "ai," in both AECAI and HELENAI. Helen's name is spelled HELENEI in [Script MM](#)). Aecai, here, is probably the son of King Priam of Troy who prophesied that Paris would bring destruction to Troy. His name was Aesacus, son of Priam by Arisbe. There is an interesting refrain from the work, "Alexandra," by Lycophron of Calchis (3rd century B.C.) that refers to the firebrand upon Troy voiced through Aesacus:

Alexandra (31) "...I see thee hapless city, fired a second time by Aeaceian hands..."

We can compare this passage to others from the same work:

Alexandra (219) "...And would that my father had not spurned the nightly terrors of the oracle of Aesacus..."

"...wherein one day hereafter the Tymphaean dragon, even the king of the Aethices, shall at a feast destroy Heracles sprung from the seed of Aeacus and Perseus and no stranger to the blood of Temenus..."

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Next to Lasa Thimrae is King Agamemnon (Etr. **ACHMEMNVN**) who is shaking the hand of Queen Helen. (**ELINAI**). Between them is Menelaüs who appears to be holding a spear in his left hand and touching the hair of Helen with his right hand. Helen's hand holding a bowl reaches across the chest of Menelaüs. The presentation of a bowl and egg is prominent in Etruscan funeral scenes and perhaps this scene suggests an eternal bond, as an egg and a bowl offering promise eternal life to those in Etruscan tombs.

To Helen's right are two important characters in the story. The first is a naked youth draped in celestial attire, as in the case of Helen and Agamemnon, whose name is **MENLE** (Menelaüs). He is being crowned by an angelic being named **MEAN**. She has her sign next to her which is a deer. This is the sign of Artemis, the virgin huntress; however, Artemis is featured abundantly in the Etruscan mirrors, so **MEAN** must be another virgin huntress.

MEAN (Latin Maenas-idis [f], a bacchante, a prophetess) is probably Artemis (the Romans called her Diana). [Homer](#) (*Iliad* ii. ; v. 43, xi. 431) refers to the inhabitants of Lydia as *Maiones* (Μαίονες). Homer describes their capital not as Sardis but as *Hyde* (*Iliad* xx.) [See wikipedia.org and www.maravot.com/Lyidian.html].

Based upon this mirror we may wonder how this Trojan Diana / Artemis came to be called Mean, recognizing that the great temple of Ephesian Artemis was nearby. We note that the Ephesian Artemis was sculpted as a woman with many breasts, who would certainly not connote a "virgin huntress," but rather the opposite, a mother goddess. However, Diodorus Siculus says:

Diodorus: EILEITHYIA, ARTEMIS & THE HOURS

[5.73.4] Eileithyia received care of expectant mothers and the alleviation of the travail of childbirth; and for this reason women when they are in perils of this nature call first of all upon this goddess.

[5.73.5] And Artemis, we are told, discovered how to effect the healing of young children and the foods which are suitable to the nature of babes, this being the reason why she is also called Kourotrophos.

Of interest is the fact that in the story of the Argonauts and Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, Iphigenia is supposed to be sacrificed to Artemis for Agamemnon's boasting. At the last minute a deer nearby was sacrificed upon the altar in lieu of Iphigenia, and the girl was whisked off to the Taurians along the Hellespont where she served as high priest of Artemis. It was a practice by the king of the Taurians to sacrifice foreigners in the temple of Artemis, and when Jason and the Argonauts arrived on the king's coast, Iphigenia helped them escape the sacrificial fire.

Diodorus Siculus provides another clue to the identity of **MEAN** and her act of crowning Alexander, as he says that Helen crowned Menelaus:

Diodorus: [78] LXXVIII. TYNDAREUS

Tyndareus, son of Oebalus, by Leda, daughter of Thestius, became father of

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Clytemnestra and Helen; he gave Clytemnestra in marriage to Agamemnon, son of Atreus. Because of her exceeding beauty many suitors from many states sought Helen in marriage. Tyndareus, since he feared that Agamemnon might divorce his daughter Clytemnestra, and that discord might arise from this, at the advice of Ulysses bound himself by an oath, and gave Helen leave to put a wreath on whomever she wished to marry. She put it on Menelaus, and Tyndareus gave her to him in marriage and at his death left him his kingdom.

MEAN and **LASA THIMRAE** represent an early Etruscan version of the Trojan War, and it is interesting that this Divine Mirror shows Artemis placing the laurel wreath on Alexander's head while Helen is shaking hands with Agamemnon, giving her hand in marriage to Menelaus. Alexander's name is spelled **ELCHINTRE** in this text. He appears in several mirrors, with some variance in spelling.

In mirror **CZ MEAN** is seen crowning **HERCLE** in the presence of Larentia (**LEINTH**). Larentia who is an obscure Roman goddess worshipped in an annual festival, the Larentalia. She is said to have been the wife of Faustulus, the shepherd who reared Romulus and Remus. She was also believed to have been the "she-wolf" that suckled the children – lupa, carrying a double meaning, of a she-wolf and a prostitute.



Larentia is connected with another story involving Heracle's temple at Rome, where the keeper had invited Heracles to a contest with dice, with the loser to give the winner a present. When the god won, the temple servant locked in the sanctuary, along with a sumptuous dinner, Larentia, the most beautiful prostitute in Rome. The god, after taking his fill, advised Larentia to court the next man she met. She did so and became the wife of a wealthy Etruscan who bequeathed to her all of his money. This money Larentia left in turn to the Roman

people. In another mirror, **CU**, **MEAN** is seated on a throne with Adonis (Etr. **ATVNIS**) standing next to her. Seated to his right is another woman holding a tambourine and is probably a Bacchante who is here named **EUAN** (**EFAN**).

On the bottom panel is another angel called **LASA RACON** (**RACVN**). **RAK**, **RAKaR** is a frequently used verb meaning to recount, speak, talk (It. raccontare; Fr. raconter; Belarus, raicca; Toch. rake) and Lasa Racon may be the angel of narratives, like a muse.

Now that we have seen the essential marriage arrangement we can explore how it got to this point. The story begins with the wedding of Thetis (**THETIS**) the mother of the Greek Trojan War hero Achilles. Thetis was the daughter of the sea god Nereus and Doris. It was the wife of Zeus, Hera, who raised Thetis the Nereid, and Thetis refused the advances of Zeus because of her

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loyalty to Hera. Zeus angrily forced her to marry a mortal, but a better known version of this story says that Prometheus and Themis warned Zeus that any son of Thetis would surpass his father or, more specifically, that if Zeus had a son by Thetis, he would one day rule in Olympus. The gods thus quickly arranged to marry her to a mortal.

Script CR – Corpus USA 4: N. E. Collections, Providence Rhode Island, Rhode Island School of Design Museum, figure 38a, said to be from

the tomb of Monte Torello, Fidenae. A copy of the mirror is in the British Museum.

CR-1 THETHIS (ΘΕΘΙΣ) Thetis **CR-2 PELE**

This mirror shows Peleus, who was considered the worthiest man of his time carrying off Thetis. Some say, however, that he had to win her by force. Like many other deities of the sea, Thetis could change her shape, but Peleus held her through several alarming transformation and finally won her.

Peleus, the husband of Thetis, was the father of Achilles. He was the son of Aeacus, king of Aegina, and Endeis. He and his brother, Telamon, plotted to kill their half-brother, Phocus, either because he excelled them in sports or merely to please their mother. One brother or the other murdered Phocus with a stone quoit during a contest, and together they hid his body. Aeacus learned of the crime and banished both. Telamon settled in the nearby island of Salamis, but Peleus wandered with his followers and flocks as far as Phthia. There King Eurytion, or his father, Actor, purified him of murder and gave him his daughter, Antigone, in marriage. Antigone bore a daughter, Pandora. According to Ovid, Peleus went from Aegina to Trachis, where Ceyx, king of Oeta, entertained him. Psamathe, Phocus' sea-nymph mother, sent a wolf to destroy Peleus' flocks. The fugitive tried vainly to appease her with prayers and sacrifice. Finally, Psamathe's sister Thetis, who later married Peleus, interceded for him and Psamathe turned the wolf to stone.

During the Calydonian boar hunt Peleus accidentally killed his father-in-law, Eurytion, and did not dare return to Phthia. He wandered to Iolcus where he stayed with King Acastus, but Acastus' wife, Astydameia or Hippolyte, fell in love with him. He repulsed her, so she sent word to Antigone that Peleus was about to marry her daughter, Sterope. Antigone killed herself from

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grief.

In further revenge Acastus tried to kill Peleus while hunting on Mount Pelion, where wild tribes of Centaurs roamed. The king of the Centaurs, the wise Cheiron, found him exposed and saved him. Later Peleus returned to Phthia from his year in exile and became king.

Zeus had in the meantime been pursuing his philandering habits and was chasing Thetis, and this angered Hera. Zeus had been warned, however, that Thetis was fated to bear a child who would be greater than his father. For one reason or another Zeus and Hera decided to marry off Thetis. They decided upon a mortal and, through either Cheiron or Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, they let Peleus know that he could capture her in a sea-cave on the Magnesian coast. She would change forms when he touches her, so he was told to hold her down while she slept. Thetis, captured in her sleep, became successively fire, water, a lioness and a tree, but finally succumbed to Peleus' persistence and consented to become his wife. The wedding was held on Mount Pelion and all of the gods were invited except Eris, the goddess of discord.

The two lived happily together in Phthia, unwary of the fate held in store for them. When she bore Achilles, to prove the child would be mortal, she exposed him to fire by night and ambrosia by day. Other accounts say that she dipped Achilles in boiling water, and then when she dipped him in the river Styx every part of his body was immortalized except the part by which she held him: his heel. Peleus stumbled upon her exposing the child to hot coals and became enraged. She thereupon returned to the sea and the child was sent to Cheiron for rearing.

The other account says that Thetis and Peleus continued in marriage and Thetis knew that Achilles would die in the Trojan War, so she thus had him raised in the disguise of a girl.

The scene of this mirror shows Peleus abducting Thetis. Another mirror, [Script DP-3](#), shows

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Peleus (Pelion) receiving Achilles and Ajax, either before they died or afterwards.

There was a problem at the much celebrated wedding of Thetis and Peleus on Mt. Pelion. All of the gods and mortals except the goddess of discord, Eris enthusiastically attended the wedding, but Zeus avoiding inviting Eris, the goddess of discord, whom no one liked. Eris came anyway, bearing a golden apple inscribed "For the Fairest." The divine rivalries that were provoked by this device would lead, after the famous judgment of Paris, to the Trojan War would be killed, among many other young Greeks, Achilles, the son of the happy couple whose marriage was



being celebrated. Not knowing the fate ahead, the couple lived happily, except for Thetis' practice of putting their only child, Achilles, in fire by night and anointing him with ambrosia by day, hoping to make him immortal. Peleus came upon Thetis as she was placing the child onto the coals and gave an indignant cry. She was so enraged she left her husband forever and returned to the sea. Occasionally she would help him in his affairs, however, and supported her son in the war, providing an unusual set of armor crafted by Hephaestus.

The Judgment of Paris

In the meantime the goddesses sought someone to judge who was the fairest, to be awarded the golden apple, whether it was Hera, Athena or Aphrodite. They chose the handsomest youth of the day, Alexander (Paris) son of King Priam of Troy. The young man was keeping his flocks on Mount Ida

when Hermes appeared (and some say Apollo as well) leading the three goddesses. Hermes explained the situation.

Not seeking an unbiased opinion, the three goddesses began offering bribes to Alexander. Hera promised to make him ruler of the world if he would award her the apple. Athena vowed that he would always be victorious in war and Aphrodite, as goddess of love, offered him marriage to the most beautiful woman in the world: Helen, daughter of King Tyndareüs of Sparta. Alexander did not hesitate in the slightest, ruling that Aphrodite was the fairest.

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Script MG - Judgment of Paris before Rhaea" 4th c. B.C. Bloomington, Indiana University Art Museum (Image: "The Etruscans," Federica Borrelli and Maria Cristina Targia, The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004)

MG-1 AL RAIA? a goddess, probably the Titaness Rhea or Rheia (L. Ops), mother of Zeus, Hera and Tethys. Here the text would thus read: to her, it (It. al) Rheia. Rheia was also identified with the Phrygian goddess, Cybele. The key to the scene should be in the word, FILAE, L. filia-ae, daughter(s). We know that Hera (VNI, Juno) was the daughter of Rheia. Athena (Minerva) was born to Zeus by Zeus' first wife, the Oceanid Metis, as follows: Zeus was warned by Ge and Uranus that if Metis bore a second son he would rule over heaven. Zeus, who had overthrown his own father and did not want to suffer a similar fate, circumvented this threat by swallowing Metis. As Metis' time for delivery drew near, Zeus began to have second thoughts about his predicament and sought either the Titan Prometheus or craftsman-god Hephaestus to extricate him from his predicament. One or the other solved the problem by striking Zeus on the head with an axe. Out popped Athena in full armor from his head.

MG-2 UNI (VNI) - the goddess Uni, (L. Juno, Gr. Hera) wife of Tinia (L. Jupiter; Gr. Zeus)

MG-3 MENRFA - Minerva, goddess of wisdom and patroness of arts and sciences (L. Minerva-ae; Gr. Athena)

MG-4 ELQINTRE (Alexander) - Note: See Script DM, [Divine Mirror.html](http://DivineMirror.html) for the spelling of Alexander's name as ELKINTRE.

MG-5 TVRAN - Turan, goddess of love (L. Venus ; Gr. Aphrodite)

MG-6 FILAE - daughters (L. filia-ae)

Here again is a twist to the tale of Helen of Troy. If Rhea is Cybele then we may be looking at an appeal. Hera, the wife of Zeus, could not judge, but Alexander's decision could have been appealed to Rhea. In any event, it so happens that Queen Helen and King Menelaüs were living happily in Sparta and invited Alexander over for a visit, which he gladly accepted. He stayed with them for some time and suddenly Menelaüs was called to Crete to attend the funeral of his grandfather, leaving Prince Alexander of Troy and Queen Helen of Sparta alone. Somehow Helen fell in love with Alexander and he whisked her and treasures from the Spartan palace off to Troy. The Script DM suggests that Eros (L. Cupid) must have had a hand in it, perhaps delivering a magic potion to Helen.

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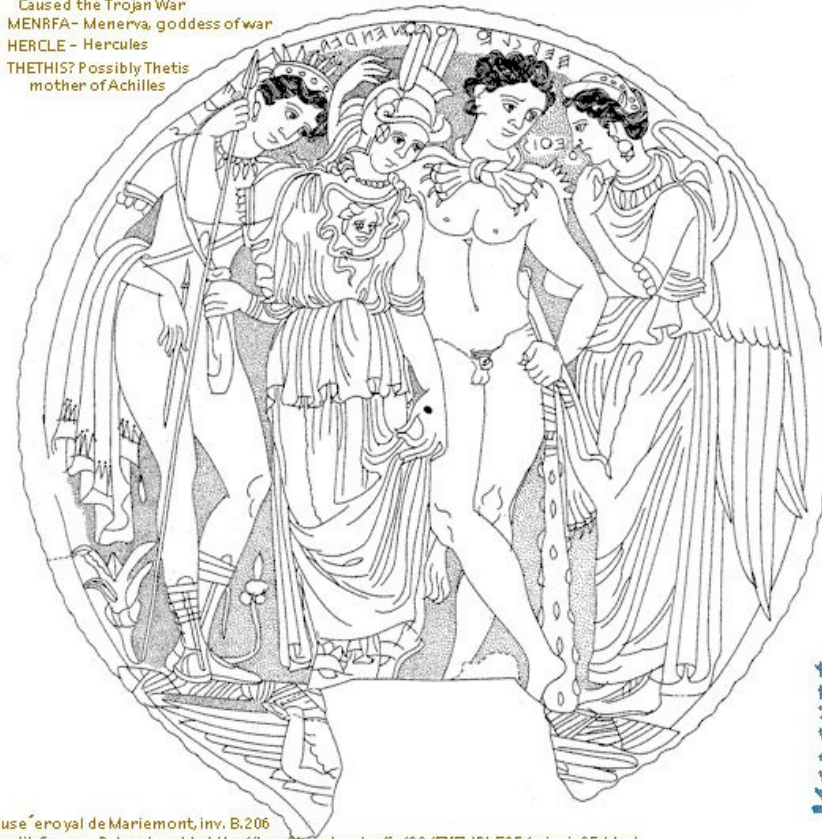
ERIS - Goddess of discord who threw a golden apple at Peleus & Thetis' wedding "For the fairest."

Caused the Trojan War

MENRFA - Menerva, goddess of war

HERCLE - Hercules

THETHIS? Possibly Thetis
mother of Achilles



Musée royal de Mariemont, inv. B.206

Credit Source: R. Lambrechts <http://bcs.fltr.ucl.ac.be/fe/03/EXEMPLE25/miroir25.html>

There is evidence that the Etruscans had even more facts to this story than those passed down to us. In mirror **MR** we see Thetis being approached by Heracles, Athena and Eris. We may wonder what that conversation is about, since Heracles is not in the story passed down to us in the context of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis and the "Golden Apple."

Script MR - Etruscan mirror in the Musée Royale de Mariemont, Belgium (Image from <http://bcs.fltr.ucl.ac.be/FE/02/Miroirs.html>). The names on the mirror are the following:

MR-1 HERCLE (Hercules) - Hercules, Heracles is a popular character on Etruscan Mirrors, found in the [Divine Mirror.html](#) Script DM, and the Volterra mirror, [Uni Suckling Heracles.html](#), Script AH.

MR-2 MENRFA - Minerva, goddess of wisdom and patroness of arts and sciences (L. Minerva-ae; Gr. Athena). She appears on several mirrors and perhaps on the [Magliano Disk](#), Script M13. There are variant spellings of her name: MANRIFA, M13, MANFRA?, Mirror #696, British Museum, and the Oberlin University Museum, __NRFA, Script [OB-1](#) (See the [Divine Mirror.html](#); Script OB, Etruscan (Corneto or Tarquinia) Hand Mirror with the Judgment of Paris, ca. 300 - 150 B.C. [Oberlin University, Allen Memorial Art Museum](#).

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MR-3 ERIS - Eris is the Greek goddess of discord and strife (L. Discordia-ae). Note the Greek spelling of her name on this mirror. This mirror is believed to be of three Greek goddesses, Eris, Athena (L. Minerva) and Thetis, the Neried (sea nymph) impregnated by Zeus, mother of the hero Achilles. The spelling of Thetis on this mirror is unusual.

MR-4 THETHIS (ΘΕΘΙΣ) -Thetis

The next scene in the tragedy of the Trojan War involves the reluctant Achilles who refuses to enter the war. He had been provided wonderful armor by his mother Thetis, fashioned by Hephaestus, and now sat brooding. Agamemnon had taken the Trojan captive Briseïs from him. During his attack on Lyrnessus, Achilles killed the sons of King Evenus and carried off his beautiful daughter as his concubine. Sometime later Agamemnon was forced by the insistence of Achilles and the other leaders to give up his own concubine, Chrysis, to save the Greeks from 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. Zeus consented. 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. Shortly thereafter Patroclüs, seeing the Trojans threatening to burn the Greek ships, begged to be allowed to wear Achilles' armor into battle. Achilles consented. Patroclüs, after distinguishing himself in a spectacular manner, was killed by Hector.



Script CG – Bunderrepublik Deutschland 4, Staatliche Museen Zu Berlin, Antikensammlung 2, 1995, Hirmer Verlag, Munchen.

CG-1 ACHLE (A ↓LE) Achilles - Name also seen in Script MM-2, CH-2. The name is on the shield and this must be Achilles who seems to be being supplicated by Agamemnon to join the battle at Troy.

CG-2 FELRE? Note: The word FELRA and FELRE appears in Scripts TC and Z.

CG-3 ACHMEMNVN - Agamemnon

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Agamemnon appears in the [Divine Mirror.html, Script DM](#). Phoenix and Odysseus were the ones that were in the [embassy to persuade him to join the battle](#).

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

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