

# ETRUSCAN MYTHOS



To understand the Etruscans we step into their world about 1,200 B.C. Although that date and the subsequent centuries are somewhat of a “Dark Age” to us, we can see in the light from the Etruscans and other Indo-European peoples, such as the Aryans of India who created the Rig Veda, the Danaäns of the Illiad, an attempt to reconcile their lives, their hopes and dreams, to that which is greater than them: the gods. What these ancient peoples, in those ancient times, were reconciling was then even ancient history to them. Many cultures of this time carry a common theme. They passed down to us the Táin Bó Cuailnge, also called The Tain. It is about a great battle between the two major chieftans of Ireland, concerning a cattle-raid by Queen Medb and King Ailill, of Connacht, with their allies, against the king of Ulster. The hero of the story is Cúchulainn, his name meaning “the hound of Chulainn.” Though a giant of a man, still in his youth, he is obliged to watch the cattle that are about to be raided, because he killed the hound that normally watched the cattle. Obviously he is at the center of the battle that takes place and certain warriors that are killed in the battle leave their names to the places of Ireland where they were killed. It follows the same pattern of story-telling as the Illiad and the Hindu version of the “great battle” called the Mahabharata. An Anglo-Saxon, Danish version of the “great battle” is another wonderful story, Beowulf, that involves the hero, Beowulf, who destroys the monster Grendel, that lives underground, and feeds upon the warriors of a Danish palace. More ancient in the Indo-European tradition, perhaps, is the Rig Veda, which tells us of the god Indra (like the Greek god Zeus and Etruscan god Tinia) who destroys a dragon. In Greek mythology Zeus destroys the monster, whose legs were serpents, Typhōeus or Typhon. In Celtic mythology the name of this god who destroyed monsters or dragons is probably Cernunnos. Typhōeus is a character, like many other Greek gods, remembered in Etruscan images. Knowing this we should be able to find in Tinia’s epithet a reference to Typhōeus, or the Etruscan name of that character, if much different.

Much of what we have come to know of Etruscan culture has stemmed from the writings of other cultures, mainly that of the Greeks and the Romans, and directly from archaeological evidence gathered from the objects they left behind.

### Theories of the Origin of the Etruscans

Even among ancient writers, there was difference of opinion as to whether the Etruscans were indigenous or originated from Asia Minor. The earliest historical account of the Etruscans was given by Hesiod who mentions the Etruscans in the “Theogony”. However it is fair to say that the works of such early writers as Hesiod and Homer consist of an equitable mixture of legend and fact, stemming from the period around 750 BCE in Ionian Greece, part of Asia Minor. Homer himself is probably not one, but the collected oral traditions of many authors.

The first reasonably believable account was given by Herodotus in the 5th Century BCE. He writes that the Etruscans originated in Lydia, in Asia Minor, and that due to a famine in the area, they invented a number of games to take their minds off the lack of food:

*“...After some time, the famine had not improved, so they drew lots, and half the population gambled today, and eating on the following day without playing. In this way they got through 18 years. Things got worse, however, rather than better, and the king therefore divided all the Lydians into two groups and drew lots to decide which should stay and which should emigrate, putting himself at the head of those who were to remain and appointing his son, who was called Tyrrhenus, as the leader for those who had to leave. Those Lydians whose lot it was to leave went down to Smyrna and built boats on to which they loaded all their possessions and sailed away to seek a life elsewhere. After sailing past many lands they came to Umbria in Italy where they built cities and still live to this day, changing their name from Lydians to Tyrrhenians after the king’s son Tyrrhenus who had led them....”*

However, despite the fact that he travelled widely, the accounts of Herodotus were prone to inaccuracies.

It has been suggested that the Etruscans were part of the famous Pelasgians, or Sea Peoples of Lemnos, and the evidence is that the Pelasgians were a mixture of various peoples including some of the biblical Canaanites who were also called the Phoenicians by the Greeks. There are many ancient references which use the terms Tyrrhenian and Pelasgian interchangeably.

Hellanicus of Lesbos, another Greek historian writing in the fifth century BC, mentioned a group of Pelasgians who arrived in Italy and there changed their name to Tyrrhenians.

Roman authors confirmed an eastern origin for the Etruscans. Virgil referred to the town of Cerveteri, built on an ancient rock where once the Lydians, a race distinguished in war, settled the hills of Tuscany. And Seneca (who died in AD 65) stated that ‘. . . Asia claims the Etruscans as her own.’ Tacitus (first to second centuries AD) accepted the story as told by Herodotus. Other tales also locate the Etruscans in Asia Minor, linking them with the Pelasgians; and refer to Tyrsenians or Tyrrhenians on the islands of Lemnos, Imbros and Lesbos, just off the Asian coast in the northern Aegean, and on Delos, the holy island in the centre of the Cyclades.

In the first century BC, a dissenting voice spoke up. Dionysius, another Greek historian from Halicarnassus, writing four centuries later than Herodotus, declared a different finding:

*“I do not believe that the Tyrrhenians were a colony of the Lydians, for they do not use the same language as the latter, nor can it be alleged that, though they no longer speak a similar tongue, they still retain some other indications of their mother country.”*

The Etruscans referred to themselves as Rasenna, but to the Romans and Greeks they were Etrusci, Tusci, Tyrrheni, or Tyrseni. To the modern Italians they are still Etrusci and the name of the Etruscan Sea is still the Tyrrhenian, after perhaps 3,000 years.

The controversy was to rage on until the late 20th century.

Perhaps the strongest evidence put forward by the Eastern providence school is the Lemnian inscription. Excavations on Lemnos turned up a community there which dates to around 600 BCE and which links the Etruscans to that place.

The inscription on the Lemnos Stele was dated at 600BCE and was written in a language similar to Etruscan. It was found in a warrior’s tomb with weapons and pottery which are very similar to early Etruscan. The necropolis of the city contained 130 cremated burials. In the women’s burials an early form of Etruscan Buccero pottery was found. Buccero clay was used by the people of Asia Minor and by the Etruscans. In the male sites daggers and axes of the Cretan and Etruscan models were found. The evidence, then, is for a small community which had strong cultural ties with the Etruscans and, to a lesser extent, the inhabitants of Asia Minor.

One theory that was put forward was that the inhabitants of Lemnos represented a pocket of pre-indo-european speaking people, whose language was similar to Etruscan. There are difficulties with that theory when one examines the alphabet and the language in some detail. The Stele is dated at approximately 600BCE, and uses an alphabet used in Northern Etruria at that time. The first evidence of Etruscan inscriptions dates to about 750 BCE, and use a script which was based on the early Euboian alphabet, learned from the Greeks at Cumae. The Greeks first established their colony at Cumae in about 750 BCE, yet there was evidence of the Etruscans in Italy well before this time. If the Lemnos stele was an isolated artifact of a pre-indo-european language, then the alphabet is too similar to Etruscan for it to have developed from any other source. It is more likely to represent an isolated

colony of either 'Pelasgians' or Etruscan pirates.

The Northern provenance theory, which bases its evidence on the similarities of Raetian and Etruscan languages has one major flaw, in that the Raetian Alpine inscriptions are much later, and are more consistent with later Etruscan influences, or associated with the scattering of the Northern Etruscans as a result of Celtic incursions.

There are problems with all theories which suggest that the truth is far more complicated as always. A likely solution is that the Etruscans were originally from aisa minor, but were subjected to cultural influences and immigrants at various stages in their history. The nature of these cultural influences are nowadays understood much better. The result of this was a gradual development of an Etruscan civilisation. The influx at some time of a group from Lydia is not inconsistent with this theory which is gaining more and more acceptance.

### Etruscan History

There is no precise time when we can say that the Etruscan civilisation began. According to the libri fatales as described by Censorinus, the date can be calculated at 968 BCE, but it was a gradual change that came over the land that was to become Etruria. Between the 10th and the 8th century BCE, several things began to happen. There was a drift from scattered village settlements into urbanised centres. The incidence of cremations decreased in favour of inhumation. Land was cleared and drained on a massive scale. Trade with the Aegean commenced, evident from the appearance of Greek artifacts.

The plentiful deposits of metals on Elba and the nearby coastline, and the bounty of Etruscan agriculture resulted in growing prosperity for the Etruscans. Bulk export trade typically used large shipping amphorae, and metal ingots have also been found in several sites.

By the end of the 7th Century BCE, Etruscan territory had expanded to include parts of Northern Italy, with the Po Valley league, and the Etruscan city states held sway over large areas of Latium, including Rome, and Campania to the South.

With the increasing trade and the specialization of crafts, the application of new techniques, particularly in metal extraction and agriculture, the living standard improved. This corresponded to an exponential increase in demographic growth. The Etruscan aristocracy increased in power, authority and wealth. They were buried in rich tombs or necropolises next to cities such as Tarquinia, Caere, Vulci and Veii.

Greek immigrants started to arrive and began to exert a significant influence in the art and culture of Etruria.

It was also during this period that grapes were introduced to the Italian peninsula. Grape seeds found in early Etruscan grave sites in Chiusi, show that the predecessor of Chianti had arrived. Craters and other vessels of Greek design started to appear.

The Orientalizing Period is generally taken as the period between the end of the 8th Century until the late 7th Century BCE. It is so called because of the eastern influence in art and artifacts. Typical of this period was the Regolini Galassi tomb at Caere, in which were found objects with obvious Egyptian and Eastern influence such as Ostrich eggs, Sphinxes, scarabs and lions with an Assyrian like character.

During this period, the Etruscans began to take control of sea trade particularly in the Tyrrhenian sea, and the control of sea routes to Campania, where a strong Etruscan core settled around Capua and Salerno.

Other research shows that the Etruscans were descendants of people who thrived in the ninth to eighth centuries BC known as the Villanovans. Etruscan cities began to arise in the seventh century BC where Villanovan villages had been.

The Villanovans controlled the rich copper and iron mines of Tuscany and were accomplished metalworkers. In the second half of the 8th century the Villanovans of Tuscany were influenced artistically by Greece; also, inhumation became the predominant burial rite, as it did during the same period in Greece.

The Villanovans went through an Orientalizing phase (which prompted scholars to speculate that the Etruscans, who sprouted from the Villanovan culture, have an oriental origin, from Anatolia or further east. According to Massimo Pallottino,



*"During the more evolved phase of the Villanovan culture notable changes began to appear which anticipate the splendour of the subsequent Orientalizing phase: there was the spread of inhumation and the appearance of the first chamber tombs, the use of iron became more general, and decorated motifs (scarabs and amulets of Egyptian type, Greek painted pottery and its imitations, etc.). The passage from Villanovan to Orientalizing was therefore neither radical nor sudden. Many aspects of the Orientalizing phase (the great architectural or pseudo-architectural tombs themselves, black bucchero pottery, ornaments and jewellery) were well within the scope of indigenous culture, though they might well have been stimulated by external influence, both eastern and Greek, and especially by economic prosperity. Individual objects and motifs were imported from Egypt, Syria, Cyprus, Rhodes and from Greece in general; others came from even more distant lands, Mesopotamia or Armenia (Urartu). A characteristic type of decoration mingled Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Syrian, Aegean and near Eastern motifs, at times in hybrid compositions; another took over friezes composed of real and fantastic animals as found in luxury articles of Cypro-Phoenician origin, but re-worked and spread mainly by the Greeks themselves in the course of the seventh century B.C. The main impression gained when considering Etruscan tombs of the Orientalizing period and their sumptuous contents is that the essential forms of the culture they represent had their roots in a local tradition, whereas the spirit and outward appearance of the decorative elements were acquired and may be attributed to eastern 'fashion.' If we ignore for the moment the composite character – indigenous and exotic – of Etruscan Orientalizing, and examine only its imported elements, it becomes clear that they are not confined to Etruria,*

*but are more or less present in many other Mediterranean lands, beginning with Greece itself, where no Tyrrhenian immigration could possibly be suspected."*

According to legend, the Etruscan League of 12 cities was founded by two Lydian noblemen; Tarchun and his brother Tyrrhenus.

Tarchun lent his name to the city of Tarchna, or Roman Tarquinii. Tyrrhenus gave his name to the Tyrrhenians - the alternative name for the Etruscans.

Although there is no total consensus on which cities were in the league, the following list may be close to the mark: Arretium (Arezzo), Caisra (Caere or modern Cerveteri), Clevisin (Clusium or modern Chiusi), Curtun (modern Cortona, Perugia), Pupluna (Populonia), Veii, Tarchna (Tarquinii or modern Tarquinia-Corneto), Vetluna (Vetulonia),



Felathri (Volaterrae or modern Volterra), Velzna (Volsinii or modern day Bolsena), and Velch (Vulci or modern day Volci).

Some modern authors include Rusellae. The league was mostly an economic and religious league, or a loose confederation, similar to the Greek states. During the later imperial times when Etruria was just one of many regions controlled by Rome, the number of cities in the league increased by three. This is noted on many later Grave stones from the 2nd Century onwards.

According to Livy, the twelve city states met once a year at the Fanum Voltumnae at Volsinii, where a leader was chosen to represent the league.

As well as the “dodecapoli” of Etruria itself, there were two other Etruscan leagues, that of Campania, the main city of which was Capua, and the Po Valley City States in the North, which included Spina and Adria (Atria).

It has been suggested by some authors that the number 12 is of ritual significance, and is also associated with the Eastern origins of the Etruscan civilization. Ionia, with whom Etruria had a long association, also consisted of a league of 12 city states. There is a considerable discrepancy in the spelling of some of the names, depending on the sources, much of it stemming from spelling differences between the various cities, grammatical cases etc. In some cases, we can only guess at the original Etruscan name.

Among all that has been discovered through these various times and means of investigation and excavation, there are no Etruscan literary works or historical accounts. There are, however, many writing samples carved on tombs. The Etruscan writing system is unique in that its letters come from the Greek alphabet, yet its grammatical structure is unlike any other European language. The epitaphs usually tell of the person's name, class, occupation, and also sometimes delineate whom he or she was related to, thus enabling experts to elicit certain genealogies.

Other conclusive information about the Etruscans comes from writers of other times. Religion was at the heart of Etruscan culture. The Romans themselves depended on some Etruscan books of divination, that is, the practice of foretelling the future, and determining the will of the gods through signs. The Etruscans followed three books of divination concerned with reading entrails of animals, lightning, and the flight patterns of birds respectively.

They were a seafaring folk, however, and traded extensively with the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean like the Greeks and Phoenicians, coming under their influence.

On a political and economical level, the Etruscans are known as great seafarers, and traded extensively with the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean like the Greeks and Phoenicians, coming under their influence. They were wealthy miners of iron, copper, tin, lead, and silver. Tin was unheard of in Italy and was usually shipped in from Celtic or Asian sources to make bronze. These two sources of wealth lead them to the zenith of their cultural and political power in the sixth century. Also around this time, Latin cities were erected and influenced greatly by the flourishing Etruscan culture surrounding them.

The Etruscan civilization flourished to the north of Rome from the 9th to the 1st century B.C. In Tuscany, Umbria and Northern Latium many Etruscan tombs have been excavated, bringing to light innumerable works of art manufactured by this highly-skilled people: carved stone sarcophagi, wall-paintings, bronze reliefs, ceramic vases, golden jewelry and other objects dating from well over 2000 years ago.

The Etruscans went on to lay the foundation of the city of Rome, to clear the shepherd's huts which once littered the Palatine Hill, to drain the swamps and transform what had been a collection of tribal sheep herders into a true city which would eventually dominate large tracts of Europe, Asia and North Africa alike. From the Etruscans came writing, and Roman history was born in the true sense.

Their Religious legacy had profound influences on at least the rituals and dress of the Church. Etruscan Art had obvious influences on Renaissance artists such as Michelangelo.

A confederation of Etruscan towns was formed and was at the height of its power in the 6th century B.C. The last three of Rome's seven kings were probably Etruscan and although they were disliked by the Latin people, they did much for the city: they built the Cloaca Maxima to drain the Forum, constructed walls around the town and the erected the Temple of Jupiter on Capitol Hill. They also instituted an efficient administrative system.

The last king, Tarquinius Superbus the Proud, was driven out of the city in 510 when the Romans opted for a republic. After this the Etruscans stayed north of the Tiber and their influence gradually declined, although the haruspices, responsible for religious rites and divination in Rome, continued to be Etruscans up to the end of the republic. Eventually, the Etruscan culture was absorbed into that of Rome.

The decline in Etruscan wealth manifested itself in their tombs, ever growing in modesty, the end of public building and importing of Attic pottery, and a dramatic decrease in political participation.

There are many traces of Etruscan civilization throughout Northern Latium. At Tarquinia there is an extensive necropolis, with many beautiful wall paintings (unfortunately now much faded). Another “city of the dead” is near Cerveteri, where the tombs are in the form of circular mounds, probably imitating the round huts in which the local population lived.

In 386 B.C., the Gauls took over Rome and the Po valley, causing the Etruscans to lose their trading routes across the Alps. Toward the end of fourth century B.C., the Etruscans rebelled against the Roman republic, but were defeated despite help from allies of Gauls, Samnites, and Lucanians.

In 282 B.C. they accepted a peace treaty after suffering another defeat. Within a few years, all Etruscan cities were taken over by Rome, and the Etruscans thus vanished from the political realms of the world.

The Etruscans show a rich heritage in their artifacts and tombs having to do with the Trojan war. The date of that war is believed to be about 1,180 B.C., the same time the Hittite empire met its demise and it may be the same time when the Aryans of the Rig Veda marched into the Indus Valley and Sarasvati river basin, although Hindu scholars tend to subscribe to a date ~ 1,500 B.C. or earlier. We can say that the warriors of the Rig Veda were equipped with iron and spoke of iron fortresses. While the word for iron may have included “bronze” it is clear from the Iliad that the time of its war is an Iron Age period, when it speaks of iron weapons and particularly the lump of iron that was thrown in the games around the tomb of Patroclus. In the Iliad, Book XXIII, “The Funeral of Patroclus,” we are told that:

*“...Achilles brought out a lump of roughcast iron which that mighty man Eëtion used to hurl. When he killed Eëtion, he brought it away with the rest of the spoils. He rose now and said: ‘Rise, you who wish to contend for this prize. Any man will have enough here to use for five revolving years, even if his fat fields are far away. No shepherd or plowman will need to visit the city for iron, there will be plenty at home.’”*

There are many myths about the origin of the Etruscans, as discussed, but the Battle of the Greeks and Amazons says it all. This scene leads us back to the old myth involving kings Priam and Atys the Lydians. There are several references to Ati, and the sons of Ati. The photo of the Battle of the Amazons is courtesy of the Skira book on Etruscan Painting, a volume of the Collection, The Great Centuries of Painting, 1952. Many of the paintings and murals in the Etruscan tombs deal with Trojan themes. Probably emulating the Etruscan tombs were Thracian tombs. A theme in the Etruscan tombs follows the prin-





central theme of the Rig Veda, which I call, Banquet of the gods. Many stories in mythology begin with a banquet of the gods, and the heroes and kings of men are immortalized with that theme. Also associated with the Banquet of the gods are the Hittites and Mitanni. The Hittites and the Mitanni help set an important date with regard to the formation of the Indo-European languages, particularly with respect to their relationship to the Latin-Etruscan and Germanic languages. The Treaty of Mitanni, for instance, invokes the gods Indra, Mithra, Varuna and the “twins,” of the Rig Veda. The treaty dates to about 1380 B.C. “The Banquet of the gods” is a term used in the Rig Veda but is most appropriately viewed in Etruscan murals. While the Etruscan murals certainly reflect Greek mythology, the scenes of a banquet in death are best matched with those of the Egyptian tombs. Nothing reminds us of this close relationship more than the Zagreb Mummy text, a text written in Etruscan on a woman’s mummy found in Egypt.

### **Etruscan Literature (or the lack of...)**

There is strong evidence that suggests that much of Etruscan literature was in fact deliberately destroyed. This is certainly the view expressed by a number of authors, but was this entirely the case?

There are many unanswered questions, owing to the lack of the literature in the first place. How much of a literature base did the Etruscans have and what was the nature of this literature?

Did they have written histories, or were their writings mainly for the purpose of trade and religion, in the same way as the Phoenicians?

Early Christians in the 4th Century CE have been blamed for the systematic destruction of Etruscan literature. It may have been the fact that Etruscan religious beliefs and practices were so deep-rooted among the Romans that led to the complete destruction of all Etruscan literature as a result of the advent of Christianity. Arnobius, one of the first Christian apologists, living around 300CE, wrote “Etruria is the originator and mother of all superstition”.

There is evidence that a significant portion of Etruscan literature was systematically destroyed following the Theodosian code, since it represented the Old Religion and was considered as idolatry and the work of the devil. (It is recorded that Flavius Stilicho, a regent for the Emperor Honorius between 394 and 408 CE, burnt a number of “Pagan volumes” which included the Tagetic books, which had been stored in the Temple of Apollo in Rome.)

However there are other probable reasons that led to the demise of Etruscan literature.

In order to better understand the fate of Etruscan literature we should first look at how Roman writing was recorded. The Roman literature that survives today originates from about 200 BCE onwards. There is very little from before this period. In the early days, wax tablets were used as notebooks. Schoolchildren learned to write on wax tablets. Papyrus was used, but this was an expensive item, since much of it had to be imported. Carbonised papyrus rolls have been found at Herculaneum, some of them partially legible, but the bulk of Papyri available nowadays survive as fragments, usually from Egypt and Byzantium.

In the later Roman period, Papyrus began to be replaced by Vellum and parchment. These materials are treated animal skins. These survived much better than papyrus, and became very popular since they could be scraped, and re-used many times. During the dark ages, monks spent many long hours manually transcribing Classical literature, some religious, but some of secular origin. It is largely thanks to these monks that we have quite an extensive library of Latin and Greek literature to this day.

But what of the Etruscans? One noted discovery of the 20th Century was the Liber Linteus, or Linen book, which was thought to be the fragments of an Etruscan book made of linen and re-used to preserve an Egyptian Mummy. The Liber Linteus can be seen in Zagreb museum. If linen was used as a medium, then this would have had even less chance of survival than papyrus. Certainly there have been examples of models of Etruscan books found in the tombs of Cerveteri. These suggest that Linen was indeed traditionally used by the Etruscans for the written word.

The question of the scope of Etruscan literature remains unanswered, but it is quite clear from other sources that it must have been quite substantial. Censorinus refers to the Annals of Etruria, and during the late Roman Republic and Early Imperial years it was considered quite fashionable for Roman Patricians to send their boys to Etruscan schools to further their education. Some of this would no doubt have been a grounding in the disciplina etrusca, but it seems unlikely that that was all that they learned. We also know that enough of the history of Etruria survived in written form even up to late Imperial times for the emperor Claudius to write a twenty volume history of Etruria. (together with an 8 volume history of the Carthaginians, both in the Greek Language) If even a fragment of this history survived today it would answer a great many questions.

### **Language**


The Etruscan language (The Etruscan culture appeared in Italy ~1,000 B.C.) can be treated as a viable language dating c. 1,200 B.C., probably based in Anatolia, when major climatic changes forced Indo-Europeans on the march. Some left Anatolia “because of a long drought,” and about the same time in the Rig Veda we see the Aryans singing hymns to their gods, including the now dry Sarasvati river, having to do with the god Indra killing the dragon that holds back the rain and waters of the Sarasvati. The Sarasvati is an old river that, according to the Rig Veda, descended from the Himalayas to the sea. The Sarasvati river ran parallel to the Indus river and included ancient ruins now known as the Harappa Civilization. The rites of the Sarasvati among the Hindus, of inviting the gods to a banquet, to appease the gods so they will be favorable, is essentially the same rite we see among the Sumerians, Egyptians, the Greeks, Etruscans and others. Of these ancients and others the Thracians are of interest because in the Illiad they were well-known for their horses (as were the Etruscans and Trojans), were allies of the Trojans – no doubt spoke a language familiar to the Greeks and the Trojans – and built tombs similar to the Etruscans. In the Illiad Achilles sold one of King Priam’s sons to the Thracians. Much of the Etruscan mythology refers back to the Trojan War.



Linguists can decipher Etruscan inscriptions, which are written from right to left using a primitive Greek alphabet, but the exact meaning of many words is unknown. The epigraphs found in tombs can usually be understood, however, as they are very brief and contain little more than the name and age of the deceased.

While there is no doubt that the Etruscan language is Indo-European and closely related to Latin, the work is not complete until other relationships are examined. We need to better understand what the Etruscan scripts say, and to do that, though we can read them, we

need to be able to understand what we are reading. This is where an understanding of other like mythologies and languages is important and introduced in this work. For instance, in the "Tomb of the Lioness," in Tarquinia, a mural that can be viewed that shows dancers and musicians on either side of an enormous vase or cauldron, and above them two lionesses. Actually, on the left appears to be a lioness, and on the right appears to be a leopardess. What mythology is being represented here? As can be seen, the images from the Etruscan tombs are not just pretty images, though many have deteriorated; they tell a story. Our purpose ought to be to understand that story, to hopefully find

Etruscan Alphabets				
Model	VI-V Centuries	IV-I Centuries	Greek Names of Letters	Modern Equivalents
	A	A	alpha	a
	δ		beta	(b)
	ι	ι	gamma	c (k)
	Δ		delta	(d)
	Ε		epsilon	e
	Ϝ		digamma	v
	Ζ		zeta	z
	Η		eta	h
	Θ		theta	th
	Ι		iota	i
	Κ		kappa	k
	Λ		lambda	l
	Μ		mu	m
	Ν		nu	n
	Ξ		ksi (samech)	(s)
	Ο		omicron	(o)
	Π		pi	p
	Σ		san	s
	Τ		koppa	q
	Ρ		rho	r
	Σ		sigma	s
	Τ		tau	t
	Υ		upsilon	u
	Χ		ksi	s
	Φ		phi	ph
	Ψ		chi	ch

at least a piece of the story in the extant Etruscan scripts. We need to step beyond the efforts of the "historians" of the past.

Because so many of the Etruscan murals recall Greek mythology –some contain names that coincide with greek gods and goddesses – we can presume that they adopted Greek themes to themselves, like the Latins. The Greek Zeus is the Latin Jupiter, for instance. We also know from the Aeneid of Vergil (born in Cisalpine Gaul, 70 B.C.) that the Lydian refugees with Aeneas were able to enlist the Etruscans (Tyrrhenians) to aid them in their war against the indigenous Latins at Rome. Mentioned in that tale is also the fact that nearby was a Greek colony. The Greeks did influence Etruscan works of art, justifying the title of the "Hellenic" period in Etruscan "history." I put the word, history, in quotes for a reason. What is known about the Etruscans is from archeological data and bits and pieces of testimonials from the Greeks and Latin historians. Here we shall attempt to put more legitimacy to the idea of an Etruscan history, one that at least is composed of words from their own hands – not others.

We know that the Etruscans reflected Greek mythological themes on their pottery and in their tombs and artifacts. They had a "Hellenic" period, circa. 350 B.C., but so did others trading with the Greeks during that period. The Scythians incorporated Greek myths and designs into their ornaments, for instance, in part with interest in trading the goods to Greeks, who would be looking for such designs. The Romans, who also had their own mythology, like the Etruscans and others, adopted Greek mythology to their art forms.

The flow of culture seems to have been from the Greeks to other cultures, rather than the Etruscan culture, contemporaneous with the Greek, flowing into the Greek. If this is true, one might expect that the Etruscan language became infused with Greek words. However, Etruscan words shows little commonality between the Greek and Etruscan languages. The bias of the Etruscan language, in fact, is towards the so-called Romance languages. This bias is significant, since it excludes a bias towards other languages, such as Greek, Persian or Sanskrit. Those who have claimed that Etruscan is "Slavic," or some other relationship, such as being of the Middle East, Persian, etc., or Sanskrit, may now repose in the knowledge that Etruscan is proto-Italic-Gaelic. Those who are of a "Romance" language may also feel confident that they have an ancestor language which preceeded the dominion of Latin.

## Etruscan Sexuality

Many Greek and Roman authors including Theopompus of Chios and Plato referred to the Etruscans as immoral. During later Roman times, the word Etruscan was almost synonymous with prostitute, and Livy's histories moralise about the rape of Lucretia, where Roman women are seen as virtuous model wives in comparison to their liberated Etruscan counterparts. We shall examine the evidence given by these sources and also from Necropolis art such as the "Tomb of the Bulls" in Tarquinia.

Athenaeus, a Greek grammarian of the 3rd Century CE came too late to give a personal eye-witness account of Etruscan life-style, and had to rely instead on the accounts of Timaeus and Theopompus who both lived in the 4th Century BCE.



According to Timaeus:

*"Among the Etruscans who had become extravagantly luxurious, it is customary for the slave girls to wait on the men naked...."*

A Greek historian's account of the behaviour of Etruscan women. Theopompus of Chios, 4th cent. BCE (Histories Book 43)

*"Sharing wives is an established Etruscan custom. Etruscan women take particular care of their bodies and exercise often, sometimes along with the men, and sometimes by themselves. It is not a disgrace for them to be seen naked. They do not share their couches with their husbands but with the other men who happen to be present, and they propose toasts to anyone they choose. They are expert drinkers and very attractive."*

*The Etruscans raise all the children that are born, without knowing who their fathers are. The children live the way their parents live, often attending drinking parties and having sexual relations with all the women. It is no disgrace for them to do anything in the open, or to be seen having it done to them, for they consider it a native custom. So far from thinking it disgraceful, they say when someone asks to see the master of the house, and he is making love, that he is doing \_\_\_\_, calling the indecent action by its name.*

*When they are having sexual relations either with courtesans or within their family, they do as follows: after they have stopped drinking and are about to go to bed, while the lamps are still lit, servants bring in courtesans, or boys, or sometimes even their wives. And when they have enjoyed these they bring in boys, and make love to them. They sometimes make love and have intercourse while people are watching them, but most of the time they put screens woven of sticks around the beds, and throw cloths on top of them.*

*They are keen on making love to women, but they particularly enjoy boys and youths. The youths in Etruria are very good-looking, because they live in luxury and keep their bodies smooth. In fact all the barbarians in the West use pitch to pull out and shave off the hair on their bodies."*



## Etruscan Art

In this work there is beauty, since many of the Etruscan inscriptions are on murals or frescos painted in Etruscan tombs. The paintings are extraordinary art forms in themselves, but now they are also sources of new history about the Etruscans from the Etruscan point of view.

The first Etruscan pieces to be discovered were two bronzes found in 1553 and 1556 during the Renaissance. Etruscan excavations began in the eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth century major archaeological evidence was found at Tarquinia, Cerveteri, and Vulci.

At that point, Etruscan culture and the mysteries surrounding it gained notice by museums which started to collect the objects unearthed in the digs. In the twentieth century, archaeologists began to use sonar photographic sound, a means that determines whether or not excavation would be lucrative before entering a burial chamber; this and other technology has allowed for more than 6,000 grave sites to be examined.

In all studies of Etruscan art, it should be remembered that a large proportion of Etruscan art did not survive up until the present day. We read of the Roman destruction of Volsinii and the destruction of 2000 Etruscan bronzes which were melted down to produce bronze coins. As a result of this, we have a somewhat skewed perception of Etruscan art, in that most of the art that survives today is funerary art, and we form totally wrong impressions about the Etruscans as a result. From excavations at Murlo, Roselle and other city sites, it is apparent that art was a normal part of Etruscan life. In Murlo, a seventh century Etruscan villa has been unearthed. Reconstructions show large painted terracotta panels adorned the entrances. Necropolis art in the form of polychrome reliefs and frescoes hint that the Etruscans used colour to great advantage even from the earliest times. Although painted tombs are among the most famous, it should be remembered that these represent a minority, and that only the aristocratic families could afford such luxuries as tomb frescoes.

Etruscan art has been said by some 19th and even 20th Century writers to be somehow inferior, although this was usually by erroneous comparison to the Greek mathematical ideals of beauty. Nowadays we can appreciate Etruscan Art much more readily, since Etruscan Artists seem to capture the feeling and the essence of so many of their subjects so much better than for example art of the highly stylised Classical period.

The styles of Etruscan Art vary considerably between the individual Etruscan cities, and there was also significant variation on style depending on the period - so much so that we can date Etruscan art works in many cases by comparison with other examples. The interest in Etruscan Art grew during the renaissance, at which time the extant Etruscan art had considerable stylistic influences on the emerging artists of the renaissance, many of whom lived in former Etruscan cities where such art was plentiful. By the nineteenth century, Etruscan art had grown to a passion, and the "excavation" of Etruscan tombs to meet growing demands increased. An example of this is the brother of Napoleon, who owned land near Canino, which included



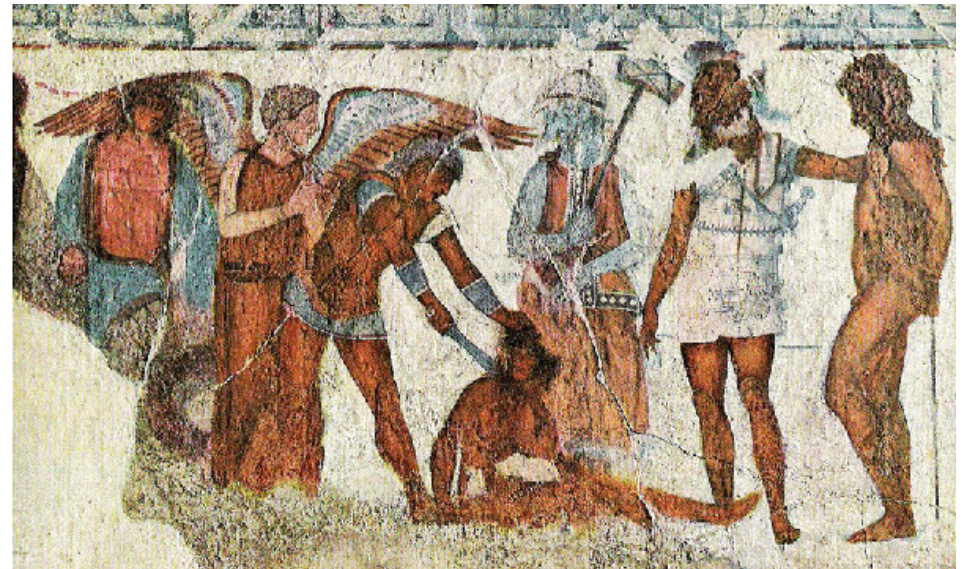
the Etruscan necropolis of Vulci. These "resources" he exploited to great effect, destroying many pieces of Etruscan art in the process, and covering in the tombs with soil afterwards. As a result of this and many other examples, we now have thousands of pieces of Etruscan Art whose provenance is unknown, and which are still in private collections, or have been donated to museums in Europe and the United States.

## The Art of The Etruscan Gold-Smith

Etruscan gold work was arguably unrivaled in the Mediterranean during the first millennium BCE. A considerable selection of Gold jewellery was found in the Regolini Galassi tomb, which was discovered in the 19th Century, surprisingly with little evidence of looting. Looting was all too common in Ancient days, and was even encouraged officially by Alaric the Goth when his armies overran Rome in the early 5th Century CE. The precise technique of granulation and forging was, for a long time a forgotten art, and it was only rediscovered in the 20th Century by E Treskow.

## Etruscan Frescos

Etruscan Frescoes typically depicted figures vibrant with life, often dancing or playing musical instruments. They painted birds or animals on many of these intermingled with the human figures, who usually looked strong and healthy and full of the joy of life. The little birds and other figures from nature somehow do not seem out of place or look like mere decorations, but lend a natural harmony to the finished work.



## Religion

The Etruscans had a firm belief in the supernatural; religious ceremonies and funeral rites were of prime importance. They built tombs resembling their dwellings and placed household objects of all kinds near the bodies of their relations, for them to use in the after-life. Their priests practised divination, interpreting marks on the liver of a sacrificed animal, or shafts of lightning in the sky, as omens from the gods. The Lares, the household gods of the Romans, originated as Etruscan divinities.



In later archeology digs of the Etruscan areas of Veii and Volsinii, we do find that the Etruscans had names for their own deities. Known Etruscan names for their deities were Uni, Minerva, Maris, Laran, and Nortia. Many have theorized about these deities and attempted to put them into triads, but there is nothing in the Etruscan writings to suggest triads because none of their deities are ever mentioned together. Nortia was the principle goddess of the city Volsinii with her own temple. Minerva seems to be worshipped by the Etruscans from about 500 BC and she replaces where Zeus would be to the Greeks. She also had the names of Minerva, Menerva, Menrva, Merva, and Mera. Uni was the principle goddess of Veii and the Greeks labelled her "Hera." She is usually depicted naked on carved mirrors. But in a more recent archeology dig in Pyrgi two sections of an Uni temple dating back to 480-470 BC and the other to c. 384 BC tell a unique story. The Etruscan inscriptions on gold foil for the temple say "Uni-Astarte." Astarte is the Phoenician name for the goddess Ishtar, suggesting that the Etruscans may have migrated from the Canaanites, Sumerians, Babylonians and Phoenicians by boat or intermarried with them. The other votive inscriptions in the temple on clay have only an Uni dedication.

The Etruscans myths were heavily influenced by the Greeks, mainly the fact that their gods possessed human attributes and dispositions. The Etruscans often combined Greek influences with stories of their own. There is also mythology purely Etruscan, in accordance with which many cults gathered in dedication to their gods. In Etruscan religion, the realms occupied by humans and by the gods are very specific, and their practices followed very exact procedures to avoid ill will of the gods. In thier funeral rites, they seemd to favor Egyptain Ideals of caring for thier dead in elaborate tombs.

### Superstitions and Rites: Etruscan Feng Shui

One day a farmer from Tarquinia, while he was busy working in the fields, ploughing the white land with long and straight furrows, drove his harrow into the ground and saw the body of a young boy coming to the surface. According to the Etruscan tradition the young boy was Tagetes, the wise and worshipped prophet-child whose words were listened to by a crowd of people whose number apparently rose hugely with the passing of time.

Tagetes taught the Etruscans the difficult discipline of haruspicy, the art of divining the future by observing the entrails of sacrificed animals, namely the liver.

The haruspex was a priest highly thought of by this people; he was so important in divining the future that his "profession" outlived the Etruscan civilization itself for centuries, after the latter was absorbed in the Roman civilization.

The Tagetic Books were part of the sacred tradition of the Etruscan people which is famous all over the world for its deep religion: they contained the rules and the indications for better understanding the will and the signs of the divinity, and consequently for behaving through actions such as sacrifices, libations and different rites.

The Etruscan religious literature and particularly those books were greatly successful in the ancient Roman world; they were appreciated especially in the II and III centuries A.D., when similar esoteric doctrines became widespread in opposition to the dawning Christianity.

Other famous volumes are the Vegonic Books, containing the indications dictated by Vegoia, the nymph who dictated the rules to establish the boundaries of fields, real estates and the territory of cities. A short passage was handed down by Tarquinius, a first century-B.C. writer who had had the possibility of reading some passages of those books in Apollo's temple in Rome, where a copy of them was kept with other "pagan" volumes that were then apparently burnt by Stilicho. This passage relates the famous prophecy of the nine-centuries duration of the Etruscan people and nation. And this is, in fact, the dura-

tion of the period of political independence of the Etruscans, if we consider the time from the Villanovan phase to the beginning of the first century B.C., that is when the Etruscans obtained the civitas, the Roman citizenship.

The relationship the Etruscans had with their divinities was quite different from the one of other peoples in the ancient world. While the Greeks believed the gods lived in their own world, often careless of the human world and accustomed to the same passions and weaknesses of humanity, the Romans had a relationship with gods merely based on juridical rules.

The Romans had a strict series of rules that often consisted of a sort of a mere exchange: if I receive a particular grace I will dedicate this ex-voto to the divinity: this is what some of them seemed to say, similarly to what happens today in the religions of the South and Centre of Italy where it often borders on paganism and fetishism.

On the contrary, the Etruscans had a relationship with the gods based on submission: the divinities lived in the sky or under the ground and it was necessary to understand their will by observing the ostenta, the signs that, through the haruspex and the augur priests, indicated the behavior one had to have.

This sense of deep religiousness, it may be said almost of inferiority towards anything concerning the divine, suggests a feeling of oppression. Every single action of a human being was "controlled" by that particular divinity, similarly to the popular religiousness of the other peoples in ancient Italy, namely the Latins.

Therefore all religious practices, rites, sacrifices, the division of space into "dwell-

ings", each of them inhabited by a particular divinity, were so important in the life and culture of this people that it was admired by the other peoples for its dedication and devotion; on the other side, Christian writers came to deprecating the Etruscan religion, like Arnobius (IV century A.D.) who apparently accused Etruria itself of being the "land of all superstitions".

Though very little of the Etruscans religious literature has survived, we know it contained not only the indications of the divinatory practices but also the rules and the practices concerning the civil, political and military life of this people.

Emerging from this basic concept the Rasenna scrupulously followed a complex code of rituals known by the Romans as the "disciplina etrusca". Even up to the fall of the Roman Empire, the Etruscans were regarded by their contemporaries with great respect for their religion and superstitions.

### The Disciplina Etrusca

The disciplina etrusca seems to have comprised three categories of books of fate. The first was that of the libri haruspicini, which dealt with divination from the livers of sacrificed animals; the second, the libri fulgurates, on the interpretation of thunder and lightning; the third, the libri rituales, which covered a variety of matters. They contained, as Festus says, "prescriptions concerning the founding of cities, the consecration of altars and temples, the inviolability of ramparts, the laws relating to city gates, the division into tribes, curiae and





centuriae, the constitution and organization of armies, and all other things of this nature concerning war and peace.

Among the libri rituales were also three further categories: the libri fatales, on the division of time and the life-span of individuals and peoples; the libri Acherontici, on the world beyond the grave and the rituals for salvation; and finally, the ostentaria, which gave rules for interpreting signs and portents and laid down the propitiatory and expiatory acts needed to obviate disaster and to placate the gods.

Heaven and earth were imagined as being quartered by a great invisible cross consisting of a north-south axis called cardo and an east-west line called decumanus, to use the Latin terms. All ritual and religious observance was based on this division of celestial and terrestrial space. It alone enabled the priests to decipher and understand the signs emanating from the gods. And every sacral and secular undertaking on earth had to be coordinated with it. For the Etruscans believed that auspicious and inauspicious powers were irrevocably and for all eternity located in the four quarters of the sky, in accordance with the cosmic stations of the gods. The east was considered of good augury, because there the highest deities, those favourable to man, had chosen to dwell. The north east was the most auspicious and promised good fortune. In the south the gods of earth and nature ruled. The terrible and merciless gods of the underworld and of fate dwelt, it was believed, in the drear regions of the west, especially in the quarter between north and west, which was the most inauspicious.

The Etruscans even evolved a system of town planning based on these religious concepts, which were likewise reflected in the elaborate ritual prescribed for the foundation of a new city. In Etruria the town laid out in accordance with the sacred rules was considered a minute portion of the cosmos, harmoniously integrated with an all-embracing order governed by the gods.

The priest, after fixing the north-south and east-west lines by the sky, turned to the south and pronounced the words: "This is my front, and this my back, this my left and this my right."

The divinities of the Etruscan pantheon were numerous; some of them, entirely new, were introduced during the profound Hellenization of culture, others were identified with analogue divinities, others preceded the coming of the Greek gods.

In order to know their names and position in the universe, a bronze model of sheep liver can be helpful: it is the famous "Piacenza liver" (II-I century B.C.) divided into specific cells with the inscription of the names of the divinities of the sky such as Tinia (Jupiter) and Uni (Juno), of the sun such as Nethuns (Neptune), of the earth such as Fufluns and Selvans, and of the hell such as Cel, Culsu, Vetis, Cilens, Vanth, Charun (Charon).

We can also remember, among the divinities borrowed from the Hellenic culture, Menerva (Minerva), Aplu (Apollo), Artumes (Artemis), Maris (Mars), Turms (Mercury), Hercle (Hercules). An important divinity was Voltumna, worshipped in a shrine at Orvieto, the ancient Volsinii destroyed by the Romans in 264 B.C. It became the federal sanctuary of the Etruscans and, consequently, its god too became the main divinity. Some people suggested he could be identified with Vortumnus, the god worshipped in Rome on the Aventine after the destruction of Volsinii. Maybe the name doesn't refer to a particular god, but it could be a designation of Tinia, the main divinity.

Among the main temples whose ruins can be seen in the province of Viterbo, there is the important temple of Artemis at Tarquinia, in the area of the ancient town - a relief model can be seen in the Archaeological Museum of the town itself where one can also admire the very famous winged horses.

In the study of temple architecture, the various temples of the ancient Falerii are really important; today they can be admired at Civita Castellana and their finds are kept in

the Archaeological Museum of the Agro Falisco situated inside the town itself. Numerous small sacred areas are scattered, throughout Etruria:

We can remember the big volcanic-stone cylindrical altar of Grotta Porcina at Vetralla and also all the terraces of the cube- and semi-cube-tombs of the rupestrian necropolis, where Etruscan priests performed the rites and ceremonies in honor to the divinities of the next world and in memory of the dead.

In order to know the procedures of some of these rites, epigraphic sources can be helpful, and particularly two extraordinarily valuable documents: the Capua tile, a big terra-cotta tile with the inscription of the rules for the offering to the gods, and the Zagreb mummy, a book made of inscribed linen rolls reused in Egypt in the I century B.C. to wrap up the body of a dead person. This mummy was taken to the West by a 20th-century merchant and precisely in the Croatian town towards the half of last century, but its importance was recognized only at the end of that century. The book arrived in Egypt with a group of Etruscans (maybe coming from Romanized northern Etruria) who went to Africa (a Roman colonial territory too) looking for a better life. The linen bands show the black-ink inscription of a sort of religious feast-days calendar, offers and prayers that had to be dedicated time after time to the divinity of a particular day. Not all the text has been understood.

The Etruscan people, therefore, had amazed its contemporaries with their meticulous, respectful and accurate religious rites and they continue to amaze us today for the complexity of their sacred world and maybe for the strong spirituality emanated by the ancient sepulchres, the places of living and the sacred grounds of our forefathers.

## Education

So complex and all-embracing a doctrine naturally required long and laborious study. For this, the Etruscans had special training institutes, among which that at Tarquinii early enjoyed the highest repute. These institutes were much more than priests' seminaries in the modern sense. To judge by their range of studies they were a kind of university with several faculties. For their curricula included not only religious laws and theology, but also the encyclopaedic knowledge required by the priests, which ranged from astronomy and meteorology through zoology, ornithology, and botany to geology and hydraulics. The last subject was the specialty of the aquivices who advised the city-states on all their hydraulic engineering projects. They were expert diviners who knew how to find subterranean water and how to bore wells, how to dig water channels, supply drinking water in the towns, and install irrigation and drainage systems in the fields. In addition they could create artificial reservoirs and they collaborated with other priests who specialized in constructing subterranean corridors and tunneling mountains. In Etruria, as in the ancient East, theological and secular knowledge were not separated. Whatever man set himself to do on earth must be in consonance with the cosmos. Thus all the efforts of the priests were directed upon the heavens when it was necessary to discover the will of the gods in accordance with the sacred doctrine. The orientation and division of space were of crucial importance as much in divination from an animal's liver as in laying the foundation of a temple, in interpreting a shooting star as in surveying land and marking out a garden and field.

## Etruscan Tombs

The Etruscans attributed great importance to the cult of the dead, because it was also a means of asserting the prestige and power of a family. We can distinguish different periods in this cult and its development is also reflected in the typologies of the necropolises.

In the earliest times, the Etruscans were closely attached to the conception of the continuation of a vital activity by the deceased after death. The tomb was thus built



like a house and given furnishings and decorations, both real and reproduced in miniature. Sometimes the walls were frescoed with scenes from daily life or the most important, serene and pleasant moments in the deceased's life. In the same way, cornices, beams, ceilings and frontons, intended to reconstruct the home environment, were painted or sculpted in the rock.

The most ancient examples of monumental tombs were built on the model of the dwelling then in use: a hut with a round or oblong floor-plan. These circular tombs were built using large blocks of stone and covered with a false dome obtained from the progressive inward projection of the rows of blocks until a last slab closed the roof. Access to the sepulchral chamber was through a short corridor where offerings of food or furnishings were often placed.

When this type of tomb was abandoned, tombs excavated underground, first of all with a single room and then with several chambers, were used. The tombs excavated completely underground, generally in hillsides, are defined as "hypogeal" tombs, whilst those excavated in flat land and covered by soil and gravel are known as "tumuli".

This new type was characterized by a central chamber accessible from a long passage beyond which there were other chambers. The floor-plan could be very complex with a passageway, lateral chambers and a central hall with columns and benches. At times, the tumuli assumed monumental dimensions, with a diameter of over 90 feet and they often contained various tombs of members of the same family. Examples of the first period can be seen in Cerveteri and can be linked to the evolution of the dwelling typologies contemporary with the necropolis (second half of the 7th century BC) when houses were divided into two or three rooms flanked and preceded by a sort of vestibule or built around a central courtyard.

From the mid 6th century BC and throughout the 5th century BC, there was another change in the plans of the necropolises. The new tombs were called "cubes" and were built side by side in rows, forming real cities of the dead with streets and squares. Inside the tombs there were only two chambers, and outside there were lateral steps leading to the top of the cube where there were altars for worship. This change reflects a profound modification in the social structure, with the establishment of a non-aristocratic class encouraging less ostentatious houses.

Furthermore, due to the influence of the Greek world, the basic conceptions regarding the destiny of the dead had also undergone a change. The primitive faith in the "survival" of the deceased in their tombs had been replaced by the idea of a "kingdom of the dead", imagined along the model of the Greek Avernus.

The Etruscan Haruspices and soothsayers remained well into the 5th Century CE, and according to some reports, may have survived in the Eastern Empire in Byzantium. The ancient tradition of their ancestral leaders proved difficult for the Romans to give up entirely.



Sacrophagus of Etruscan couple still in repose with each other after death. Etruscan tombs were elaborate for the wealth, similar in many respects and themes to Egyptian tombs.

## Etruscan Deities



As the Etruscan Underworld demons Vanth and Charun stand by to conduct the spirits of the dead into Hades, Achilles cuts the throats of his 12 Trojan prisoners as a blood sacrifice to the spirit of his friend Patroclus, who was killed in battle by the Trojan prince Hector. The shadowy ghost of Patroclus looks on approvingly at far left with Minerva

**Achlae** - Greek river god, Achelous.

**Achle, Achile** - Legendary hero of the Trojan War, from the Greek Achilles.

**Achmemrun** - Legendary king of Mycenaean Greece, from the Greek Agamemnon.

**Achrum, Acharum** - Legendary Greek river of the underworld, the Acheron.

**Aita/Eita** - The Etruscan god of the underworld. He is identical with the Greek Hades and the Roman god Pluto.

**Alpanu, Alpan, Alpnu** - The Etruscan goddess of love and the underworld. She belongs to the Lasas and is usually portrayed naked. Her name means "willingly" in Etruscan.

**Angerona** - Ancient goddess of the winter solstice and sometimes called a goddess of death. She is associated with keeping the name of a god from an enemy. She represents the silence of winter. She is often depicted with her mouth sealed with one finger over it. Her feast on December 21st and is known as Angeronia or the Divalia.

**Ani** - The Etruscan sky god who lives in the highest heaven (in the north). He shows many similarities with the Roman god Janus. He is also a sky god.

**Aminth** - Winged deity in the form of a child, probably identified with the Greek Amor.



**Aph/Aphaea** - Creator Goddess mentioned in some texts. Goddess of Birth and credited by some as the mother of the Etruscan gods. The cow is her sacred animal and has associations with Hera, Artemis, Astarte and Isis. It is inferred in some tablets that she was a river personified and through Janus, or Tini (the sky) used 12 burning stones (alchemical mixture of fire and water) to create the Etruscan gods-namely Morpheus among others.

**Aplu, Aplu (The Greek god Apollo)** - The Etruscan god of thunder and lightning. Aplu is usually portrayed with a wreath of laurel on his head, holding a staff in one hand and a laurel twig in his other hand.

**Aril** - Etruscan deity identified with Atlas.

**Aritimi, Artumes** - The Etruscan goddess of night and death, but also the personification of growth in nature. She can be identified with the Greek goddess Artemis.

**Athrpa** - The Greek deity Atropos or Aisa, was the oldest of the Three Fates, and was known as the “inflexible” or “inevitable.” It was Atropos who chose the mechanism of death and ended the life of each mortal by cutting their thread with her “abhorred shears.”

**Atunis** - The Etruscan form of the Greek Adonis. He can often be found in the company of Turan, the goddess of love.

**Aivas/Eivas/Evans** – Personification of terror. Possibly equivalent to Ajax the hero.

**Begoë/Vegoia** - Etruscan nymph believed to have power over lightnings; she was also said to have composed a tract known as Ars Fulguritarum (“Art of the Thunderstruck”), which was included in the Roman pagan canon, along with the Sibylline Books.

**Calu** - Etruscan infernal god of wolves, represented by a wolf.

**Catha/Cavtha/Cath** - god and goddess, not well represented in the art. She appears in the expression *ati cath*, “Mother Cath” and also *maru Cathsc*, “the maru of Cath”; however, the nature of the maru is not known. She is also called *sech*, “daughter,” which seems to fit Martianus Capella’s identification of the ruler of Region VI of the sky as *Celeritas solis filia*, “Celerity the daughter of the sun.” In the Piacenza Liver the corresponding region is ruled by Cath. The male aspect is identified with the Roman god Sol.

**Cel** - Etruscan earth goddess, probably identified with Ge, as she had a giant for a son. Her name occurs in the expression *ati Cel*, “Mother Cel.”

**Celsclan** - Etruscan Gigas, “son of Cel”, identifying her as “Earth”, as the giants in Greek mythology were the offspring of the earth.

**Celi** - September’s deity

**Charontes** - Etruscan demons of death. The name suggests a connection to the Greek Charon and his Etruscan equivalent Charun.

**Charun** - The Etruscan demon of death who torments the souls of the deceased in the

underworld. He also guards the entrance to the underworld. He is similar to the Greek Charon. Charun is portrayed with the nose of a vulture, pointed ears and is usually winged. His attribute is the hammer, with which he finished off his victims. He often accompanies Maris (Mars) in battle.

**Culsans** - God of doors and doorways, corresponding to the two-faced Roman god Janus.

**Culsa/Cul** - The Etruscan demoness who guards the entrance to the underworld. Her attributes are a torch and scissors. She was often represented next to Culsans.

**Cupra** - Ancient goddess of fertility forming a triad with Tina and Minerva. Her weapon is the thunderbolt.

**Cuth** - Referred to in the Zagreb mummy texts as the god of July and possibly an early sun god akin to Phoebos. See Cautha.

**Easun/Heasun/Heiasun** - Etruscan version of the mythological hero Jason.

**Epiur/Epeur** - Greek *epiour*, “guardian”, a boy presented to Tinia by Heracle, possibly Tages.

**Ethauswa/Ethausva** – goddess of childbirth. Winged lady in service to Tinia.

**Evan** - The Etruscan goddess who personifies personal immortality. Evan belongs to the *Lasa*.

**Februus** - The Etruscan god of the underworld and also a god of purification. The month of February, his sacred month, was named after him.

**Feronia** - An Etruscan goddess of fire and fertility.

**Fortuna/Univirae** - Goddess of fate, good luck, fortune and chance. She is shown around the globe with a cornucopia on her head and a rudder in her hand. Here symbol is the wheel of fortune and her festival date is June 24th. She is sometimes depicted with Ploutos, god of wealth, in her arms.

**Fulfluns** - An Etruscan god of vegetation, vitality and gaiety, son of the earth-goddess Semia. He shows many similarities with Dionysus and Bacchus, the Greek and Roman gods of wine.

**Heracle/Hercele/Herecele/Herkle/Hrcle** – Etruscan form of the legendary hero known to the Greeks as Herakles and the Romans as Hercules. With Perseus, the main Etruscan hero, the adopted son of Uni/Juno, who suckled the adult Heracle. His image appears more often than any other on Etruscan carved hardstones. His name appears on the bronze Piacenza Liver, used for divination (hepatoscopy), a major element of Etruscan religious practice. His Etruscan epithet, sometimes substituted for his name, is *Calanice*, “beautiful victory”, derived



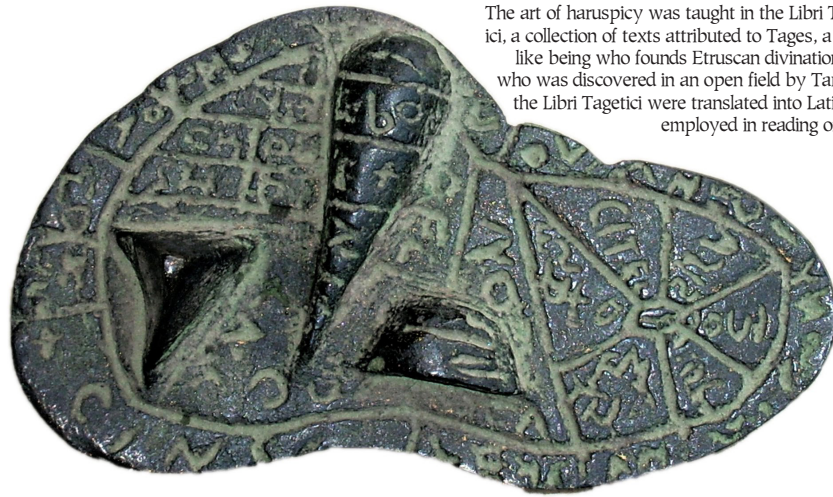
Charun



from Greek Kallinikos. Demi-god of strength and victory.

**Hipece** - The magic spring, Hippocrene, represented in Etruscan art as a water spout in the form of a lion's head.

**Horta** - An Etruscan goddess of agriculture.



The art of haruspicy was taught in the Libri Tagetici, a collection of texts attributed to Tages, a child-like being who founds Etruscan divination, and who was discovered in an open field by Tarchon; the Libri Tagetici were translated into Latin and employed in reading omens.

**Haruspex** - In the religion of the Etruscans, a haruspex (plural haruspices) was a person trained to practice a form of divination called haruspicy (haruspicina) the inspection of the entrails (exta), hence also called extispicy (extispicium) of sacrificed animals, especially the livers of sacrificed sheep and poultry. The Etruscans were also well known for the practice of divining by the entrails of sheep. A bronze sculpture of a liver known as the “Liver of Piacenza”, dating to around 100 BC, was discovered in 1877 near the town of Piacenza in northern Italy. It is marked with the name of regions assigned to various deities of Etruscan religion.

The striking parallel not just of the prevalence of the practice of haruspicy, but the specific artefact type of liver models recording the significance of the various parts of the liver has given rise to the hypothesis of a strong cultural connection between Etruria and the Ancient Near East.

**Ilithiia** - The goddess of childbirth, known to the Greeks as Eileithyia. Occurs also in the expression fleres atis ilithiial, “statue of mother Eileithyia.”

**Iynx** - An Etruscan mythological creature, a bird of love

**Jana** - Queen of secrets. Associated with Janus.

**Janus/Janna** - God of beginnings and endings and doorways. Referred to as the father of the 12 gods by the Etruscans. Each gods alter belonged to each of the 12 months of the year, however this is unlikely because at the time of this myth the year was not divided into

twelve months unless there was sumarian influences at work. He is often depicted as a man with two faces, one facing forward and one facing back. Seer of the pasts and the future.

**Jove** - He is the Roman Equivalent of Zeus (Jues), Greek Jupiter or Hebrew Jahovah. Thunder god, sky god, and god of wrath.

**Kulmu** - God of Tombs, shown with shears and tourches.

**Laran** - The Etruscan god of war. He is depicted as a naked youth wearing a helmet and carrying a spear.

**Lares/Lars** - Ancestor spirits, gods of the homes. The Lars are two ancient gods embraced by the Romans. Originially they were thought to be spirits of the feilds but in later times they represented deified spirits of the ancestors. There function was to sheild against harm. Often depicted as a household statue of a young man holding a drinking cup. Their sacred animal is the dog. They have associations with Faustulus, the nurse/mother of Romulus and Remus.

**(The) Lasa** - In Etruscan myth, they are female deities and the guardians of graves. They are often found in the company of Turan, the goddess of love. The Lasa are sometimes portrayed with wings, but also without. Their attributes are mirrors and wreaths. Their names were Alpan, Evan, Racuneta and Vecu.

**Lenith** – Faceless goddess who waits at the gates of the underworld with Eita. Both male and female, and possibly related to lein, the Etruscan word for “to die”, but does not appear in any death scenes.

**Letham/Lethans** – Protector god who lives in Eita the underworld.

**Losna/Lusna** - An Etruscan goddess of the moon.

**Malavisch** - Divinity of the mirrors, probably from malena, “mirror.”

**Man/Mani** - Etruscan class of spirits representing “the dead” and yet not the same as a hinthial, “ghost.” From the Mani came the Latin Manes, which are both “the good” and the deified spirits of the dead.

**Mania** - The guardian of the underworld, together with Mantus. Goddess of the Dead, and Daughter of Night; are her titles. Consort to Mantus.

**Mantus** - An Etruscan god of the underworld, associated with the city Mantua (the current Mantova).

**Maris** – A class of divinity used with epithets: maris turans, maris husumana, maris menitla, maris halna, etc. The appearances in art are varied: a man, a youth, a group of babies cared for by Menrva. The Roman god, Mars, is believed to have come from this name. Pallottino refers to the formation of a god by “... fusing groups of beings ... into one.” Of Mars he says “... the protecting spirits of war, represented as armed heroes, tend to coalesce into a single deity, the Etrusco-Roman Mars, on the model of the Greek god Ares.”



**Mean/Meanpe** - Etruscan deity, equivalent of Nike or Victoria.

**Menarva/Menrva/Menrfa** - The Etruscan version of the Greek Athena, and portrayed similarly (with helm, spear, and shield). Just like Athena, Menrva was also born from the head of a god, in this case Tinia. She is part of triad with Tinia and Uni. She is the predecessor of the Roman goddess Minerva and is also associated with childbirth, intellect, war and art.

**Metus** - The Gorgon, Medusa. The head appears on the Aegis of Menrva as a Gorgoneion.

**Munthukh** - Goddess of love and health, and one of the attendants of Turan.

**Nethuns/Neptuns/Neptunus** - The Etruscan god of water, originally of wells but later also of the sea. He shows many similarities with the Greek Poseidon and is the predecessor of the Roman Neptune. His attributes are the trident, the anchor, the sea horse, and the dolphin.

**Nortia** - The Etruscan goddess of fate and fortune. Her attribute is a large nail and at the beginning of the New Year a nail was driven into a wall in her sanctuary. This is variously explained as a fertility rite, an expiation rite, or symbolizing the conclusion of the year just past. Her temple was located in Volsini, the center of the Etruscan federation (currently the Italian city Bolsena).

**Orcus** - An Etruscan god of the underworld, punisher of broken oaths. He was portrayed in paintings in Etruscan tombs as a hairy, bearded giant.

**Pacha** - Greek Bacchus, an epithet of Fufluns.

**Pantasila/Pentasila** - The Greek name, Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons.

**Pecse/Pakste** - The name of the legendary winged horse, Pegasus, assigned by the Etruscans to the Trojan Horse

**Penates** - Usually shown in groups of two or three, they are associated as household gods and keepers of storerooms. These gods share the hearth with Vesta and the Lar.

**Phersipnai/Phersipnei/Proserpnai** - Queen of the underworld similar to Persephone.

**Phersu** - A divinity of the mask, probably from Greek prosopon, "face". The god becomes adjectival, \*phersuna, from which Latin persona.

**Rath** - Etruscan deity identified with Apollo. Tarquinia was his sanctuary.

**Satres** - god of time and necessity. Depicted as an old man carrying a sickle and hourglass



like Saturn.

**Selvans** - An Etruscan god of woodlands, the predecessor of the Roman Silvanus.

**Sethlans** - The Etruscan god of fire and blacksmiths. His appearance is similar to the Greek Hephaestus and the Roman Vulcan and often wields an axe.

**Silenus** - The Satyr or wild nature personified.

**Summamus** - Like the sky god Tinia, he wielded thunder and lightning.

**Svutaf** - A winged Etruscan deity whose name, if from the same Latin root as the second segment of persuade, might mean "yearning" and therefore be identifiable with Eros.

**Tages** - An Etruscan founding sage/deity who possesses wisdom. He appeared from a grove when a field was newly ploughed and taught the gathered Etruscans the skills of divination and augury. Tages is portrayed as a young man with two snakes as legs. This particular Etruscan art of divination is later applied by the Romans as well.

**Tarchies** - Occurs in Pava Tarchies, label of a central figure in depictions of divination, who, along with Epiur, a divinatory child, is believed to be the same as Tages, founder of the Etruscan religion, mentioned by Roman authors.

**Tarchon** - An Etruscan hero who, together with his brother Tyrrhenus, founded the Etruscan league of cities. It consisted of twelve cities: Arretium (Arezzo), Caere (Cerveteri), Clusium (Chiusi), Faesulae (Fiesole) or Cortona, Perugia (Perugia), Populonia, Rusellae (Roselle), Tarquinii (Tarquinia-Corneto), Vetulonia, Volaterrae (Volterra), Volsinii (Bolsena), and Vulci (Volci). Tarchon lent his name to the city of Tarchonium, the later Tarquinii.

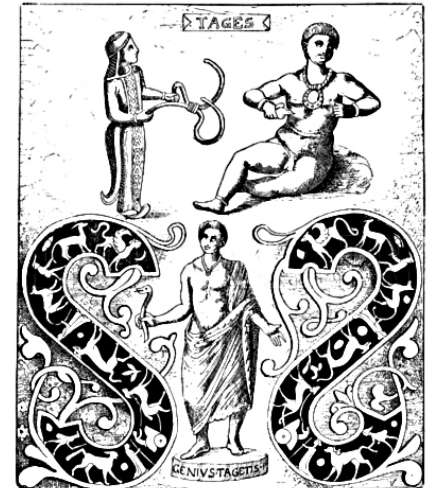
**Thalna/Thalana/Talna** - Etruscan divine figure of multiple roles shown male, female and androgynous: it attends the births of Menrva and Fufluns, dances as a Maenad and expounds prophecy. In Greek thallein, "to bloom". A number of divinities fit the etymology: Greek Thallo and Hebe and Roman Iuventas, "youth."

**Thanr** - An Etruscan deity shown present at the births of deities.

**Thesan** - Etruscan goddess of the dawn. She was identified with the Roman Aurora and Greek Eos.

**Thesan** - The Etruscan goddess of the dawn, and the patroness of childbirth. She shows some similarities with the Roman Aurora.

**Thethlumth** - Underworld deity concerned with fate.



Tages

**Thevrumines** - The Minotaur of Minos

**Tinia/Tini** or **Tina** - The supreme sky god of the Etruscans, who lives in the northern part of the sky. He holds boundaries sacred, watched over them, and ensured their inviolability. Together with his wife Uni, and the goddess Menrva, he forms a triad of gods. His attributes are a cluster of lightning bolts, a spear and a scepter. The Romans equated him with Jupiter. In fact, Tinia-Jupiter was introduced to the city of Rome during the period of Etruscan monarchy (c. 650-510 BCE).

**Tiv/Tivr** – Etruscan deity identified with Greek Selene and Roman Luna (goddess).

**Thuscva** – Unknown deity of the Piacenza Liver. An Italic god and Sabine progenitor, who had a temple on the Quirinal Hill, and appears on an Etruscan boundary stone in the expression *Selvans Sanchuneta*, in which Sanchuneta seems to refer to the oaths establishing the boundary. Sancus probably comes from Latin *sancire*, “to ratify an oath.”

**Tuchulcha** - An Etruscan demoness of the underworld. It is a horrible, winged creature with snake-hair and the beak of a bird. Similar to the harpy or gorgon.

**Turan/Apru** - The Etruscan goddess of love, health, and fertility, and the patroness of the city Vulci (in the current Italian province Viterbo). Turan is usually portrayed as a young woman with wings on her back. The pigeon and white swan are her symbolic animals and she is accompanied by the Lasas. Her Roman equivalent is Venus.

**Turms** - The Etruscan god who guides the deceased to the underworld. He is the messenger of the gods and, like his Greek equivalent Hermes, he wears winged shoes and carries a heralds' staff.

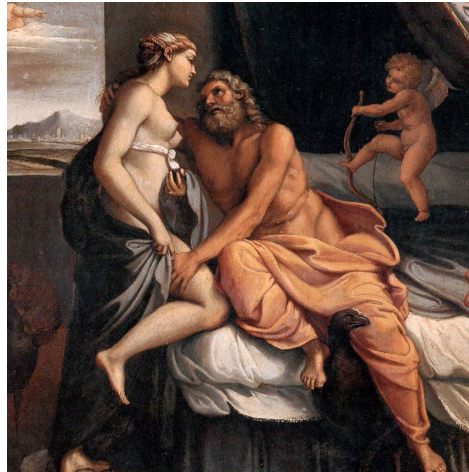
**Tushna** - Etruscan name for Apollo.

**Tvath** – Similar to Demeter, goddess of resurrection, Love and death.

**Uni/Vni** or **Iuno/Juno** - The supreme goddess of the Etruscan pantheon. She is the goddess of the cosmos, and the city goddess of Perugia. Together with her husband Tinia and the goddess Menrva she forms a triad. Her son is the hero Hercle (clearly Hercules / Heracles). Uni is identical to the Greek Hera and the Roman Juno. Goddess of marriage.

**Urphe** - The mythological figure, Orpheus.

**Usil** – Deity identified with Greek Helios, Roman Sol.



Tina and Uni

**Uthste** - Legendary hero, Odysseus.

**Vanth** - Etruscan winged demon of the underworld often depicted in the company of Charun. She could be present at the moment of death, and frequently acted as a guide of the deceased to the underworld. Her attributes are a snake, torch and key.

**Vea** - Etruscan divinity, possibly taking its name from the city of Veii.

**Vediovis** - Early name for Jove.

**Veive** - The Etruscan god of revenge. He is portrayed as a young man wearing a laurel wreath and holding arrows in his hand. A goat stands next to him.

**Voltumna/Veltha/ Veiove/Veive/Vetis** - A chthonic god of the Etruscans, later elevated to the status of supreme god. He is also the patron god of the federation of twelve Etruscan city states. The center of his cult was in Volsini. The Romans named him w. God of the seasons. Also thought of as a mother goddess.

**Zirna** - She is a moon goddess depicted with half moon necklace. Her companion is the love goddess Turan.



An Etruscan Bronze Sculpture - The Chimera

## Etruscan Myths

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, Egypt, Greece, 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, Anatolian, 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.

### Dionysis' Story

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. In any event the terrified sailors jumped off the ship and turned into dolphins. As for the dolphins, having once been humans, from thereafter 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



Theseus in the Underworld

to Olympus after Zeus had thrown the island of Sicily on

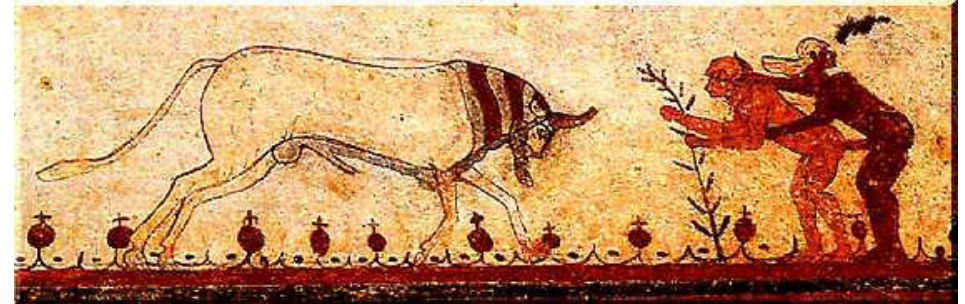
top of the monster Typhon, who had been chasing them.

### Theseus

These (Theseus) threatened by a demon, Tomb of Orcus, Tarquinia. Theseus is known for killing the Minotaur of King Minos to save the lives of the Athenian children sent in sacrifice to it; but he had many adventures, and the one shown here involved his friend Peirithoüs, with whom he had abducted the daughter of Zeus, Helen, when she was about 11 years old. Later she was abducted by Paris a prince of Troy. But Peirithoüs later convinced Theseus that they ought to abduct Hades' wife, Persephone. Hades froze them there in a "state of forgetfulness," frozen by snakes, until Hercules found them there and rescued Theseus and some say Peirithoüs was freed as well.

### Typhon

Typhon, a titan with serpent-legs. Tomb of the Typhon, 1st century B.C. In the Greek myth Typhon, or Typhöeus, was a monster born to Ge that had a hundred burning snake heads and spoke with voices of men and animals. He battled with Zeus, and in one of many tales Zeus crushed Typhon's smoking body under a mountain. Some say Zeus threw Sicily on top of him, giving Mt. Etna life. Here the monster's legs are snakes and its palms are flush against the ceiling, holding it up. His grey-blue colors reflect the grimness of the realm of



Charon and his lord, Aita (Hades).

### The Tomb of The Bulls, Tarquinia

The frescos on this tomb are characterised by fertility symbols, although the meaning of some of the symbolism is not entirely clear. The panel on the left depicts a heterosexual scene involving two couples, whereas the scene on the right depicts a homosexual scene. This has been variously interpreted. It is noted that the bull on the right has an aggressive pose, whereas the bull on the left is completed passive, which has been interpreted by some authors as a disapproval of homosexuality. Note also that the bulls have human faces, possibly indicating some mythological context.

### The Tomb of The Bigas, Tarquinia

The Above picture is taken from a watercolour painting which was painted soon after the discovery of the Tomb of the Bigas in Tarquinia (These frescoes have since almost completely deteriorated) The picture shows an audience of a chariot race, and show a homosexual couple making love quite openly in full view of all. This shows that perhaps Etruscan society had a high acceptance level of homosexuality. The city of Pompeii was founded by the Etruscans as part of their expansion in Campania. Although captured by the Samnites in the 4th Century, and later by the Romans, it retained many of the customs introduced by the Etruscans, in common with Capua, the Urbs princeps of the Campania league. We have



a very good understanding of sexuality among the Pompeians during the 1st Century CE, although to correlate this with Etruscan habitation of Pompeii requires a trained imagination. In Pompeii, all variations of sexuality were openly and blatantly pursued. Here, homosexuality, group orgies and even pedophilia were widely accepted as normal behaviour. It has been variously argued, that the mores of Pompeii were influenced by the Samnites, the Greeks, or



A fresco in the Etruscan Tomb of the Leopards.

that they reflected the norm in general Etruscan society.

### The Tomb of The Floggings - Tarquinia

The tomb of the floggings (tomba della fustigazione) has frescoes which depict erotic scenes, and like those in the Tomb of the Bulls, these may carry an underlying apotropaic theme. On the right hand wall, there are two erotic scenes separated by a prothesis (funerary door). The wall paintings are badly damaged. The scene to the right shows a woman, clad only in a tutulus, bending and holding the hips of a bearded man who faces her with a smile. From behind, the woman is approached by a youth who has one hand on her buttocks and raises a whip with the other hand. On the left side of the prothesis, another woman embraces a young man, while being penetrated from behind by a bearded man. The other walls of the tomb are covered with scenes of musicians, drinking, dancers etc, which suggest the influence of the cult of Dionysus.

Many items of pottery from Tarquinia tombs, particularly of the 6th and 5th Century also show such erotic scenes, and tend to back up Theopompus's view of Etruscan society, however these may be no more than copies of Greek art of the same period. Perhaps the erotic images are part of some wider significance such as a religious festival (cf the Roman festival of Lupercalia, probably the forerunner of Valentine's Day).

The fact that the imagery is used so blatantly in tombs tends to reinforce the belief

that Etruscan society was much more permissive than other contemporary societies. Some authors have drawn parallels with present day US society, from the perspective of the fact that both are very open societies, and with a high immigrant population. My own opinion is that we should exercise extreme caution when comparing modern societies with their ancient counterparts.

While forming such hypotheses, we must also be cognisant of the changing influences over time. Of the tomb scenes, the Tomb of the Bulls is the oldest, dated at around 520 BCE. The tomb of the floggings is approximately 50 years younger, about the same age as the Tomb of the Bigas.

While these tomb scenes may seem out of place under the myths section, I thought that these conveyed a certain amount of folklore about the Etruscans that we should not draw conclusion upon. These very well could be scenes of folktales that amused them in life.

### The Story of Lucretia

"The royal princes sometimes spent their leisure hours in feasting and entertainments, and at a wine party given by Sextus Tarquinius at which Collatinus, the son of Egerius, was present, the conversation happened to turn upon their wives, and each began to speak of his own in terms of extraordinarily high praise. As the dispute became warm Collatinus said that there was no need of words, it could in a few hours be ascertained how far his Lucretia was superior to all the rest. "Why do we not," he exclaimed, "if we have any youthful vigour about us mount our horses and pay your wives a visit and find out their characters on the spot?"

While other wives were found in various states of wantonness, Lucretia was: "very differently employed from the king's daughters-in-law, whom they had seen passing their time in feasting and luxury with their acquaintances. She was sitting at her wool work in the hall, late at night, with her maids busy around her. The palm in this competition of wifely virtue was awarded to Lucretia."

Her virtue only served to make her the target of Sextus Tarquin. Livy goes on to say that: "Sextus Tarquin, inflamed by the beauty and exemplary purity of Lucretia, formed the vile project of effecting her dishonour."

Sextus Tarquin "went in the frenzy of his passion with a naked sword to the sleeping Lucretia, and placing his left hand on her breast, said, "Silence, Lucretia! I am Sextus Tarquin, and I have a sword in my hand; if you utter a word, you shall die." When the woman, terrified out of her sleep, saw that no help was near, and instant death threatening her, Tarquin began to confess his passion, pleaded, used threats as well as entreaties, and employed every argument likely to influence a female heart...he threatened to disgrace her, declaring that he would lay the naked corpse of the slave by her dead body, so that it might be said that she had been slain in foul adultery. By this awful threat, his lust triumphed over her inflexible chastity, and Tarquin went off exulting in having successfully attacked her honour. Lucretia, overwhelmed with grief at such a frightful outrage, sent a messenger to her father at Rome and to her husband at Ardea, asking them to come to her..."

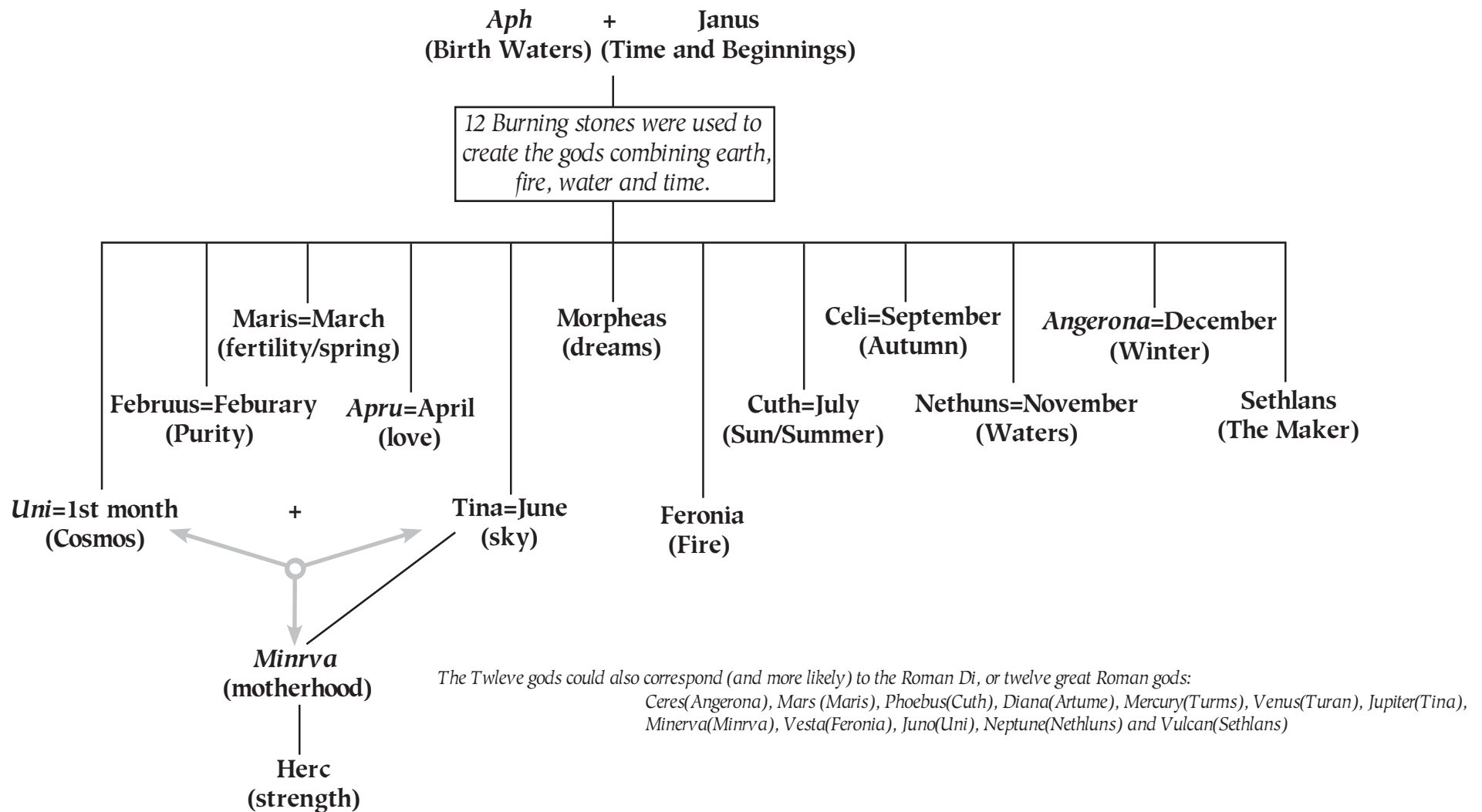
Her husband and father at her side, they attempted to console her, philosophically explaining that: "it is the mind that sins not the body, and where there has been no consent there is no guilt."

Nevertheless, Lucretia could not bear to live with her honour forsaken. "She had a knife concealed in her dress which she plunged into her heart, and fell dying on the floor. Her father and husband raised the death-cry."

So it can be said that a virtuous woman was a thing of beauty and esteem to the Etruscan men, otherwise this story would not have survived until today.



## Etruscan Geneology



This geneology is highly speculative and is based upon the myths of Janus and Aph. I have issues with the assumptions made as to the names and origins of the gods. Cuth and Celi are mentioned as months in the Zagreb mummy text as well as Eslem, Zathrums and Veive as being months of the year. Morpheas is specifically mentioned in the myth itself and being born from Aph along with 11 other deities which is confirmed in the myths of Janus. These 11 gods are not able to be read off of the scrolls and tablets that exist today. The interpreter makes reference that these gods correspond to the months of the year, but at the time of the myth, the Etruscans did not have a twelve month calendar. The Greek and Roman calendars of the day had ten months. So as a result of incomplete material I created an idea of what the geneology may look like trying to synthesize all the information together. The Mythology of the Etruscans was very heavily influenced by the Greeks and little is known of their original religious practices before they were strongly hellonized. Perhaps in the future, more insight will be given as the true origins of the Etruscans are tracked down scientifically. It is agreed upon that Uni, Tina and Minerva make up a holy trinity for the Etruscans.

**Note:** Names in *Italic* are Female and Non-Italic names are Male deities.