
Etruscan myths cannot only be considered a reflection of Greek myths, as Nancy T. de Grummond (De G.) states. Many elements and even complete stories are of Etruscan origin (e.g. Tages). According to De G. we have to identify as many elements that are authentically Etruscan as possible in iconographical sources (representations on mirrors, urns, gems; statuettes with inscriptions, etc.). She uses the internal combinatory approach, the same method as is used in the study of the Etruscan language. This implies that scenes with similar content are compared. De G. tries to interpret scenes from the Etruscan perspective, not “by way of the Greeks” (pp. 12-8). In addition, she uses the method of comparative (Indo-European) mythology in order to understand which myths were represented and why. She stresses that “scholars should stop trying to judge Etruscan representations of myths on whether they are consistent with Greek texts” (p. 238). In my opinion, however, scenes of Greek origin would not be understandable without texts.

According to De G. we have to realize that although many Greek and Italic/Roman gods were syncretized with those of the Etruscans, the original Etruscan deities can be very different. Therefore, De G. decides to use only the Etruscan names of these gods. A table lists the Greek and Roman equivalents of the Etruscan deities.

Since our main sources of Etruscan myths are visual representations, the character of the book is highly iconographical. This is because Etruscan written sources on myths are absent (except for some *didaskalia*, short narrative inscriptions that accompany mythological scenes). De G. does not avoid using Greek and Roman visual and literary sources, but tries to use these sources in a critical way, sifting the elements that are consistent with internal Etruscan evidence. De G. states that text and image in Greece for example, but also in Etruria, have to be considered as two independently developing worlds. On several occasions De G. points to remarkable parallels between Etruscan mythology on the one hand and Norse and Italic/Roman mythology on the other.

However, the main problem with her methodology is this: when is a mythological representation really Etruscan? Many mirrors, for example, show as core scene a Greek myth supplemented by original Etruscan gods, personifications and *couleur locale* (e.g., the Birth of Menerva is flanked by two Etruscan birth goddesses or two martial gods). In these cases one could better speak about *interpretatio Etrusca* than about Etruscan myths.

Here follows a synopsis of the structure and contents of the book. Chapter I (pp. 1-21) provides the reader with a short introduction to the Etruscans, useful
Human figures were represented from the eighth century BCE onwards. Initially scenes had a generic character, such as hunting scenes. One of the first possibly mythological representations is visible on a bronze burial urn from Bisenzio from the end of the eighth century BCE: the lid shows a group of bronze figurines representing two rows of warriors dancing around an enchained monster. A similar kind of monster, a wolf or man with wolf cap, is also present on Hellenistic urns, a fact that, according to De G., leads to the conclusion that the Bisenzio urn could represent one of the first local myths. The problem, in my opinion, is not only that the gap between the urn of Bisenzio and the Hellenistic urns is ca. 500 years, but also that the monster on the bronze urn is not a wolf, but rather an embryo-like death demon (cf. the monster on a horse on the famous Etrusco-Corinthian Truia vase, not mentioned in this book). Strangely enough, De G. calls the urns 'Hellenistic', while she criticizes the term a few pages later. The majority of the epigraphic and non-epigraphic bronze mirrors with mythological representations, the main source used in the book under review, date from ca. 500-ca. 275 BCE. Mirrors were usually made for and used by women and frequently buried along with them.

The use of myths in Etruria was manifold: entertainment but also expression of social values (e.g., brides preparing for marriage), archetypal representations of a certain social or religious activity (e.g., Tages revealing the *Etrusca disciplina*), so-called charter myths. A large percentage of Etruscan myth may have had, according to De G., a direct religious meaning. Although this is difficult to prove because of the fact that little is known about Etruscan politics, it cannot be excluded that some myths can be interpreted in a political way.

The last paragraph of the first chapter deals with the nature of the gods. Before the anthropomorphic deities came into being, Etruscan gods seem to have been *numina*. Anthropomorphic gods can be doubled or tripled (e.g. the infant Mariś on two mirrors) or change sex, especially gods that are unknown in Greek myth.

Chapters II to X are based on—mainly—iconographical sources. De G. starts with The Prophets (Chapter II, pp. 23-40), extremely important in Etruscan religion, proceeds with Creation, Time and the Universe (Chapter III, pp. 41-51), The Principal God of Etruria (Chapter IV, pp. 53-70), Great Goddesses (Chapter V, pp. 71-112), More Gods (Chapter VI, pp. 113-45), Spirits (Chapter VII, pp. 147-72), Heroes and Heroines (Chapter VIII, pp. 173-99), Foundation Myths and Legends (Chapter IX, pp. 201-7), and finishes with Afterlife and Underworld (Chapter X, pp. 209-33).