

reminds us that Etruscan writings were still abundantly available in Augustus' time (p. 243; so too Hall, p. 5): we must hope that they were not all as bad as those of the unhappy Cassius Etruscus (Hor., *Sat.* 1.10.63–64: can *ambustum* really imply 'partial cremation' to the point of attesting Cassius' characteristically Etruscan obesity [p. 241]?). R. L. Maxwell (pp. 267–85) looks usefully at the convincing pictorial reasons for supposing that the Etruscans performed and participated in mime before the Romans did. The final piece in the Roman section is contributed by the Professor of Music at Brigham Young, H. Powley (pp. 287–303), whose account of the Etruscan musical legacy is useful and informative: I am glad to learn that developments in metallurgy ('including the ability to bend a metal tube', p. 294) can be linked with refinements in wind instruments. Etruscan influences and survivals in post-Roman Italy are prudently accorded less space: 'Etruscan Echoes in Italian Renaissance Art' by S. Bule (pp. 307–35); and a visit, brilliantly conducted by N. Thomson de Grummond, to 'Etruscan Italy Today' (pp. 337–65)—and, among other delights, to its roof-tiles and *mano cornuta* sign, 'which Italians make today in several contexts' (p. 356). So did Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), on being portrayed in old age by a pioneer photographer.

The papers in *Etruscan Italy* are well illustrated and properly annotated, and the collection ends with a bibliography (pp. 373–95) that is remarkable for the number of recent specialist works it contains. Throughout, I was frankly relieved by the lack of any reference either by the editor or his contributors to a 'new approach' or a 'radical reassessment' of the whole field, or of the methods used in it. In practice, I have found that these banners rarely herald much more than what I have called elsewhere 'kite-flying in Chiantishire': which, *pace* Spivey (*CR* 46 [1996], 135), is no substitute for the kind of honest professional work described above (kite-flying is in any case an activity best avoided by those who do not know where the trees are).

Happily, in their very different ways, the three books considered here show once again that bad currency cannot drive out good.

University of Edinburgh

DAVID RIDGWAY

REFLECTED MYTHS

L. B. VAN DER MEER: *Interpretatio Etrusca. Greek Myths on Etruscan Mirrors*. Pp. vii + 285, 1 pl., 108 figs. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1995. Paper, Hfl. 65. ISBN: 90-5063-477-X.

There exist about 1,500 bronze Etruscan mirrors that have engraved scenes on the reverse side, usually depicting Greek myths; of these, almost 300 (all dating from the period of c. 490 to 250 B.C.) are supplied with Etruscan inscriptions which identify the mythological figures. This book analyses what the author calls 'the most interesting' of these epigraphic mirrors from an iconological point of view, discussing the source and meaning of these mythical scenes. Of especial benefit to readers is the generosity of illustration, with very nearly 100 of the mirrors discussed being clearly reproduced, for the most part by line drawings.

There is much here that is valuable. Find-spots are tabled and mapped, so the reader can see at a glance that the most frequent of these are Vulci, Tarquinia, Orvieto, Chiusi, Perugia, and their surroundings. The mirrors are treated both chronologically and typologically, which has the advantage of showing how popular taste differed over the period under question. In the earlier years, for instance, depictions of the

Labours of Herakles or of scenes from the Trojan Cycle of myths were popular, while a century later the adventures of Perseus were coming into favour, as was the love affair between Aphrodite and Adonis (shown on twenty-two epigraphic mirrors), and to a lesser extent that of other couples, such as Dionysos and Ariadne, and Admetos and Alkestis.

One of the most fascinating questions that the author poses is that of influence from other art forms: by what sources—visual, oral, or literary—were the mirror engravers inspired? Wherever possible, he points to visual parallels in both Attic red-figure and South Italian vase-painting. He also seeks on occasion to show literary influence. Two mirrors here discussed depict Klytimestra about to be killed by Orestes, and both of them, he suggests, show some knowledge of Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*. One has a sub-scene of a winged Sun-god, perhaps influenced by *Cho.* 983–6, and the other a sub-scene of Jason with the dragon, perhaps a heroic parallel similar to that in *Cho.* 831–2. Another mirror shows the suicide of Ajax; not the usual depiction of Ajax having thrown himself on his sword, or being about to do so, but the version used by Aeschylus in his *Threissai*, where Ajax's body is invulnerable except for one weak place in his armpit, and he succeeds in killing himself only when a goddess shows him the vulnerable spot. On the mirror, Ajax is desperately trying to force a bending sword into his belly, while Athena approaches, pointing authoritatively to his armpit. With no (surviving) visual parallels for this unique scene, the engraver may have been influenced by a literary or oral source that stemmed from Aeschylus. This is all, of course, far from conclusive, but is certainly suggestive.

V. also points to details or Etruscan adaptations on the mirror scenes which suggest that the engravers knew and understood the myths that lay behind their creations. Good examples are two depictions of the birth of Athena from the head of Zeus. The Eileithuiai who stand by in the many Greek scenes of this myth have been replaced by the Etruscan birth-goddesses, Thalna and Thanr or Ethausva, who are acting as though assisting at a real birth, pressing Zeus' midriff to ease the birth process, or bandaging and soothing his head.

So this is a fascinating and thought-provoking book. Inevitably there are some annoyances. The English is sometimes decidedly shaky, as in Philoktetes' 'arch' instead of bow (p. 73), or dramatic 'choir' instead of chorus (p. 69). The effect can range from the amusing, such as the 'twig', not log, that Althaia throws into the fire to end the life of Meleagros (p. 156), to the downright misleading, as when Orpheus and Palamedes are said to have been 'struck by jealousy', when 'destroyed by jealousy' is what is meant (p. 90). There are also some inexplicable omissions. The catalogue listing the mirrors discussed is incomplete and includes only seventy items. Incomplete also is the (otherwise useful) table of Etruscan names showing the frequency and chronology of each name on mirrors and in other kinds of Etruscan art. Several important names, such as Turan/Aphrodite and Menerva/Athena, are completely omitted, as are others less important. It would also have been immensely helpful to have included a glossary of Etruscan names, since these are often so unlike the Greek that one can sometimes forget the correct identity of a god or hero who re-enters the text after the lapse of a chapter or two.

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

JENNIFER R. MARCH