

1 Article

2 Medea in Etruscan Art

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6

7 **Abstract:** It could be said with some precision, that in Antiquity the myth of the Argonauts and
8 especially of Medea herself as a personage of this myth, has enjoyed popularity not only in Greece
9 but also outside its territories. The first among the Italic tribes to be introduced to the personage of
10 Medea no doubt were the Etruscans, who were the first to establish intensive contacts with the Greeks
11 from Euboea founding a colony in Cumae, Italy. It is noteworthy that the first image of Medea in the
12 World Art is seen on Etruscan ceramics. The paper gives detailed analyses of Etruscan artefacts on
13 which Medea appears, providing a solid precondition for substantive conclusions. Some new versions
14 of an interpretation expressed in relation to each of the artefacts on the basis of critical analysis of
15 Etruscan archeological material, of classical texts and of previously undertaken modern research, are
16 provided. Images of Medea in Etruscan art confirmed from the Orientalist era to the Hellenization
17 period represent an original, local interpretation of Medea's image. Medea's magical art turned out to
18 be familiar to the Etruscans, who were well known all throughout the Mediterranean for divination
19 and being experts of magic. In contrast to the Greeks, they turned Medea into an object of cult
20 worship, identifying her with the Etruscan sun god Cavatha.

21

22 **Keywords:** keyword 1 Medea 2 Argonauts; 3 Etruscan Art; 4. Cavatha

23

24 1. Introduction

25 The first among the Italic tribes to be introduced to the personage of Medea no doubt were the
26 Etruscans, who were the first to establish intensive contacts with the Greeks from Euboea founding a
27 colony in Cumae, Italy¹. The personage of Medea was reflected in the mythological perceptions
28 and worship of cults alternating with Circe, Marica, Bona Dea, Angitia, and Cavatha² is
29 present in the perceptions of the Ausones, Marsians, Latins, and Etruscans³. It is noteworthy
30 that she is encountered in the most archaic layers of the mythological narratives of the
31 Apennine Peninsula, in the so-called genealogical myths. Consequently, this myth *Via Etrusca*
32 became known to other Italic peoples. Information regarding the Etruscan perceptions of Medea is

¹ Cristofani 1999, 83

² Kobakhidze 2002, 70-79

³ Kobakhidze 2007, 102-108

33 primarily derived from different genres of antique literature, which so to say, can be termed as
34 secondary sources. Etruscan works of art themselves can be labeled as primary sources.

35 It is noteworthy that there has been no complex study of the appearance of Medea in Etruscan art,
36 which is important in providing a complete account of the role of Medea not only in Etruscan but also
37 in Antique and world culture.

38 It is apparent that the chronology of the spread of the Argonaut myth in Etruria cannot be directly
39 connected to the appearance of Medea's image on objects made in local Etruscan workshops, because
40 it was naturally preceded by the import of works of Greek art (mostly ceramic) showing this myth
41 into Etruria.

42 Greek myths also appear on ceramic products belonging to various periods in the wake of imported
43 ceramics.

44 Locally produced ceramics divided into a few classes from the end of the 8th century to the first
45 quarter of the 6th century BC belong to the earliest period. These are: Etruscan geometric ceramics,
46 painted ceramics of the Orientalist period from Caere, ceramics with white figures done on a red
47 background, the so-called white on red, bucchero, and Etruscan-Corinthian ceramics.⁴

48 **1. Hydria from Caere.**

49 A supposed image of Medea first appeared in world art on Etruscan ceramics made from bucchero
50 during the Orientalist period. Particularly, a hydria dating from 660-640 BC has been found in the
51 Etruscan city of Caere (Etr. Cisra, Gr. Agylla -modern-day Cerveteri), where according to widespread
52 opinion, Medea and a three-headed dragon have been pictured.

53 A few words regarding the city of Caere itself where an interesting work of Etruscan art was
54 discovered.

55 Information about the city itself bears importance in light of the fact that Etruria had never been a
56 unified state. The term "Etruria" implied the conventional unity of cities quite different from each
57 other, with the city of Caere being distinguished for its location and the high level of development of
58 the culture.

59 Due to proximity to the sea, Caere can be boldly called an Etruscan naval gate. This was really the
60 reason for Caere's especially intense contact with the Greeks, Phoenicians and Carthaginians, with
61 this being further reflected on their varied culture. Caere was one of the important members of the
62 thalassocracy of Etruscan cities, giving it the means to found such colonies as the quite distant
63 Marseilles⁵ and receive the honor of participating in such international and massive projects as
64 constructing the treasury of Delphi.⁶ Naval might was the not the only reason for Caere's close

⁴ Bellelli 2008, 27

⁵ Michetti 2016, 73

⁶ Brique 2013, 47

65 relationship with the Greeks. According to tradition, Caere is considered to have been founded by the
66 Pelasgians of Thessaly two generations before the Trojan War along with the city of Spina. Hellanicus
67 of Mytilene argued that the Pelasgians of Thessaly, after their expulsion by the Greeks, migrated to
68 Italy, landed near Spina, founded Cortona, and changed their name into “Tyrrhenians”⁷, which is also
69 corroborated by Dionysius of Halicarnassus⁸.

70 Thus at one glance, there were some certain preconditions for an interest in the myth of the
71 Argonauts here in Caere where it was considered to be a place of the settlement of the Thessalian
72 Pelasgians. The distant voyage of Jason, the Thessalian hero, was reflected by this myth.

73 Let's return to the image presented on the Cerveteri hydria, which to this day has been given many
74 interpretations.⁹ Ronald Dick, who first published this image in 1981, took it to be an episode of the
75 battle between Heracles and the Hydra, but being characteristic of the 7th century, the typical Etruscan
76 woman's attire worn by this figure stripped away support for Dick's version¹⁰ (**Figure 1-2**)

⁷ Hellanicus, EGM fr. 4, in Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.28.3;

⁸ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* I, 18, 3-5;

⁹ See: Martelli 1987, 94, 265; Schmidt 1986, 388, n. 2; Strazzulla 2006, 631-672; Lortkipanidze, 2004, 37-40.

¹⁰ Bonfante 2003, 216



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78

79 **Figure 1.**

80

81



82

83 **Figure 2**

84 The woman wrapped in a long cloak, facing the three-headed snake, and touching the two upper heads
85 with outstretched arms has been quite enthusiastically connected to the episode of the Argonaut myth
86 according to which Medea puts the dragon guarding the Golden Fleece to sleep with a spell (**Figure**
87 **3**).



88

89 **Figure 3**

90

91 A supposition was also expressed that Medea might be generally pictured as a sorceress. The basic
92 argument of a viewpoint equating this woman's figure to Medea is represented by the fact that an
93 image of Medea with the corresponding inscription "Metaia" has been shown on an Etruscan olpe
94 made in approximately the same period and in the same workshop, which we will focus upon below.
95 Apart from this, the connection of Medea to the woman pictured on an Etruscan olpe, at one glance,
96 is bolstered by the fact that Medea appears on Greek ceramics surrounded by snakes. Particularly,
97 Medea might be pictured in the middle of two snakes on two Attic lekythoses dated to 530 BC. One
98 is kept at the British Museum (**Figure 4**)



99

100 **Figure 4.**

101 whereas the second is in Würzburg in the Wagner Museum Collection¹¹ (**Figure 5**).

¹¹http://www.engramma.it/eOS2/index.php?id_articolo=1378



102

103

104

105 **Figure 5.**

106

107 About four years ago, while analyzing this particular work, Daniel Ogden notes in a quite
108 interesting book printed at Oxford *Drakon. Dragon Myth and Serpent Cult in the Greek and Roman*
109 *Worlds*¹² that connecting the image to Medea and the dragon from Colchis (accordingly, here not
110 only Medea, but the earliest image of the Colchis dragon would be shown) is difficult to imagine. It
111 is basically stated in his argumentation that the Golden Fleece appears nowhere on the hydria and the
112 Colchis dragon would never be pictured with three heads. Neither can Ogden support the connection
113 of the woman's image with one of the Hesperides, because neither has the Hesperides' garden been
114 pictured, nor do the other Hesperides appear in the proximity of the monster Ladon (if this is clearly
115 Ladon).

116 After a broad excursion into Greek mythology and cult worship dedicated to the relationship of a
117 virgin, priestess, and snakes, where the author supports himself on excerpts of compositions by
118 Herodotus, Aelianus, Lucian, Pausanias, and others, Ogden exchanges it with material on the

¹² Ogden 2013, 203 and foll.

119 Romans, even searching for a key here among Roman sources and archaeological material.
120 Absolutely identical subject material is not confirmed, although a search for certain parallels in Italian
121 material can be managed. In this case the Marsian goddess Angitia is implied, who like the Marsians
122 themselves, enjoyed a reputation as a snake tamer among people inhabiting ancient Italy. It must be
123 taken into account that aside from the three-headed snake, two other snakes appear on the Etruscan
124 olpe with their heads pointing towards the figure of the woman.

125 It is interesting that stemming from the fact of the Marsian language differing a little bit from
126 Latin¹³, the etymology of the name of the Marsian goddess (Angitia) can be precisely connected to
127 the Latin for snake “anguis”. The genealogical myth of the Marsians given by Plinius is examined in
128 detail in my aforementioned article “Medea in the Religion and Mythology of Ancient Italic People”.
129 Plinius notes that Circe's son Marsyas was an ancestor of the Marsians¹⁴. It is interesting that Servius
130 clearly points out that in Marsian mythology, Circe is an equivalent to the goddess Angitia¹⁵. At the
131 same time, some cases of alteration between Circe, Medea, and Angitia have been demonstrated by
132 me. It is a noteworthy fact that Caere, where the hydria was found, borders on land settled by the
133 Marsians, providing the supposition that the image of the snake taming woman on the vessel might
134 be inspired by Marsian myths as well.

135 If Antigia of the Marsians is pictured on the Etruscan olpe, what relation did it have to Etruscan
136 conceptions, or to say it otherwise, what local significance did a snake itself have in Etruscan folk
137 tales? Why did the Marsians' conceptions turn out to be relevant for the Etruscans? In my opinion,
138 the key for this is offered by Etruscan art itself. Here, not only is the theme of goddesses with snakes
139 implied, which was popular all throughout the Mediterranean starting from the Minoan period and
140 which is confirmed in images of Vanth, the goddess of death in the Etruscan pantheon, as can be
141 clearly seen on a bronze sculpture from the 5th century BC at the British Museum¹⁶ (**Figure 6**).

¹³Conway 1897, 289-299

¹⁴ Plin. *Nat. Hist.*, VII, 15

¹⁵ Serv. *Ad Aeneid.*, VII, 750

¹⁶Bonfante, Bonfante 2002,210.; Spinola, - http://www.bretschneider-online.it/rda/rda_pdf/rda_11/rda_11_05.pdf



142

143 **Figure 6.**

144 One's attention is captured precisely by the three-headed snake shown on the Etruscan hydria,
145 which, as was noted, appears nowhere in the material connected to Medea, Circe, nor any of the other
146 goddesses with snakes.

147 A Thracian parallel is worth noting, indicated by Nancy de Grummond in connection to the image
148 of the three-headed snake and the woman. An image of a three-headed snake and a woman is engraved
149 on a silver Thracian plate gilded with gold from Letnitsa (Bulgaria) dating to 350 BC, with the woman
150 holding a mirror¹⁷. **(Figure 7.)**

¹⁷ de Grummond 2006, 5.



151

152

153 **Figure 7.**

154 But the most noteworthy thing is the Etruscan material itself and especially the image of the three-

155 headed snake, which had been discovered on some wall art of an Etruscan tomb a few years ago.

156 Particularly in 2003, in the Tomba della Quadriga Infernale at the necropolis of Pianacce dating to

157 the beginning of the 4th century BC, a three-headed snake can be seen pictured in the underworld¹⁸158 **(Figure 8-9).**

159

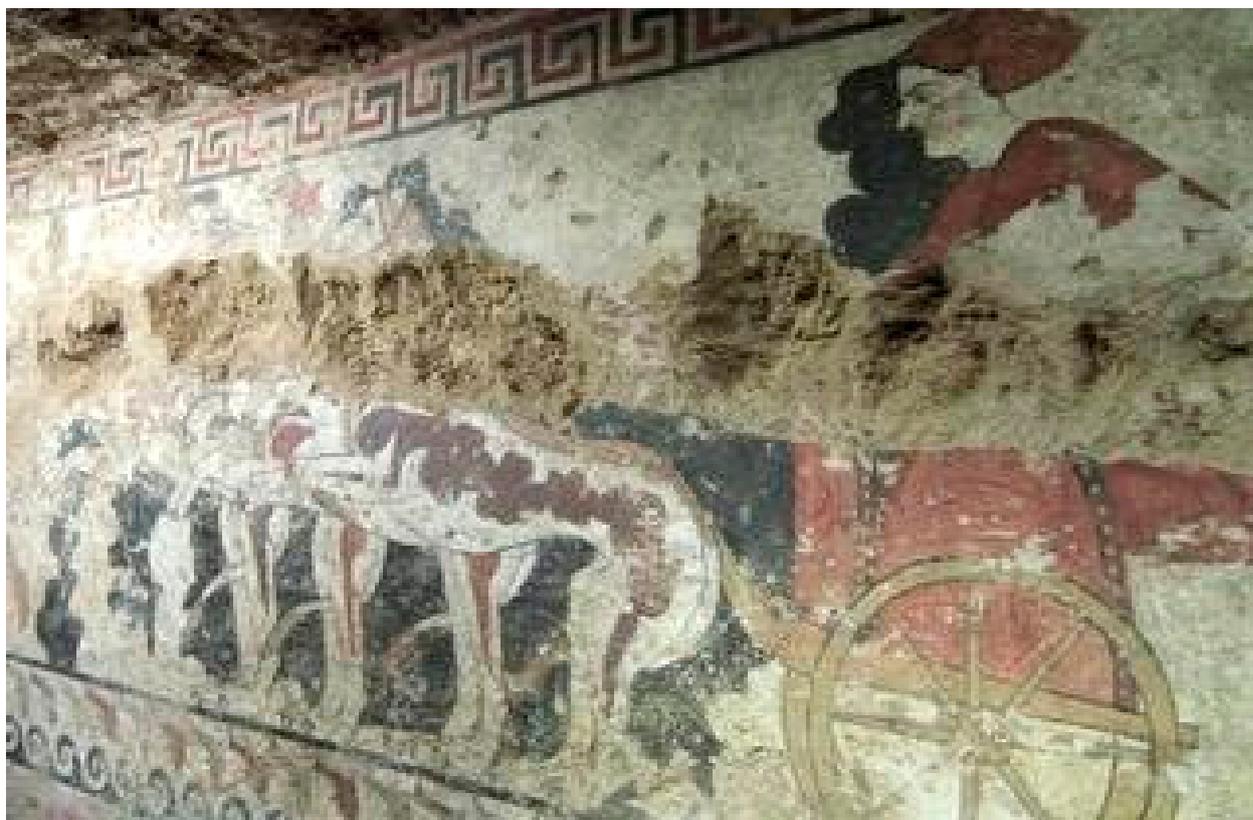
¹⁸<http://www.museosarteano.it/pagina4.php?linguanumero=2#iniziopagin>



160

161

Figure 8.



162

163

Figure 9.

164 This tomb is noteworthy in many respects and has not been an object of thorough study for the
165 time being, although in this case, it reveals that the image of a three-headed snake is not foreign to

166 Etruscan art and is connected to the underworld. According to one idea, the three-headed snake with
 167 beards can be perceived as a guardian of the underworld.¹⁹

168 In this respect, a theme of the relationship of the Etruscan snake to Cerberus is no less interesting,
 169 being an issue of separate research, although it must be noted that Cerberus, having snakes appearing
 170 on its body, is represented on a famous Ionian hydria from the Louvre Museum Collection of the
 171 Archaic Period. This hydria was also found in Cerveteri and is dated to 510 BC (Figure 10).



172

173

Figure 10.

174 Thus, there is a supposition that the hydria discovered in Cerveteri with the image of the woman
 175 and a three-headed snake is not connected to Medea and must supposedly reflect the voyage of a
 176 deceased person to the underworld or some ritual connected to their burial, where the three-headed
 177 snake shows a creature living in (or guarding) the underworld, with this creature in turn being
 178 approached by a priestess or goddess (possibly Angitia or Vanth), or the deceased herself.

179

180 **2.Olpe From Caere.**

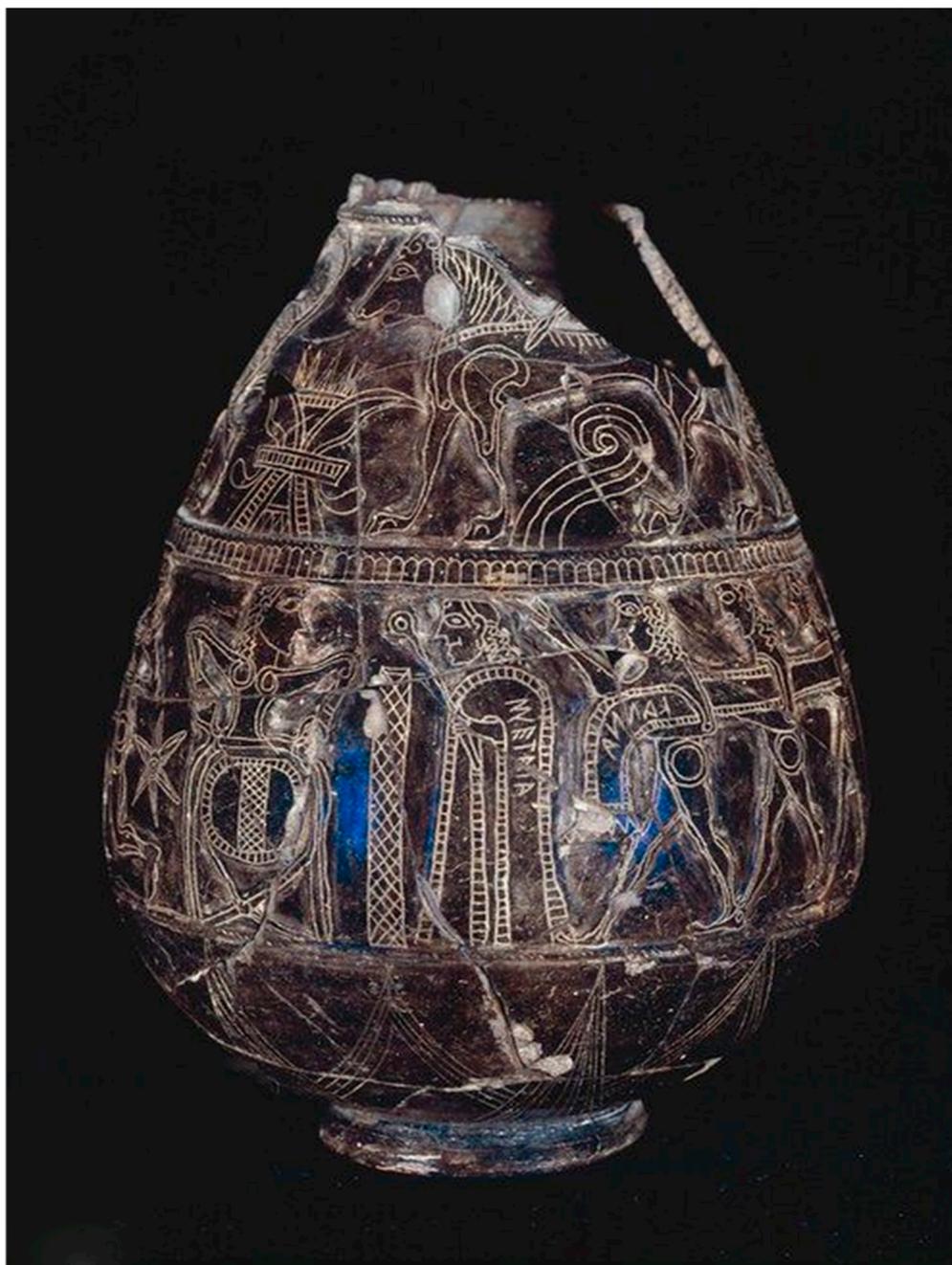
181 Identifying the woman pictured on the aforementioned Etruscan olpe dating to 630 BC found right
 182 in Caere to Medea is no cause to doubt, because it is accompanied by a proper inscription “Metaia”,
 183 which according to a majority of researchers, represents an Etruscan transliteration of Medea's name.

¹⁹ Pieraccini 2016, 100

184 Medea is seen surrounded by the Argonauts and Daedalus (Taitale) on this vessel found in the same
185 tomb. It must be said like Medea, this is the first image of Daedalus in world art.

186 This vessel created during the Orientalist period of Etruscan art and made from bucchero is dated
187 to 630 BC, having been discovered in a grave. Today it is part of the Villa Giulia Exhibit.

188 What is pictured on this olpe? There are some zoomorphic images on the top frieze: a lion, some
189 panthers, and floral ornaments (**Figure 11-12**).



190

191

192 **Figure 11.**



193

194 **Figure 12**

195 The lion is placed in the center with the panthers flanking it. These panthers have a human foot
 196 sticking out of their mouths, whereas on the lower frieze, which is noteworthy for this paper, there
 197 are some carved out scenes in the following sequence (from left to right) (**Figure 13**):



198

199 **Figure 13**

200

201 1. Two boxers sparring with each other, with each wearing only one sandal on a foot.

- 202 2. A young man coming up out of a small, ritual (?) cauldron.
- 203 3. A woman wearing a long robe coming towards a columnar wedge holding a staff in her
204 left hand and having her right hand lifted up in the air. She has the inscription “Metaia”
205 on her clothing.
- 206 4. 6 naked men following after each other in a line. The leader of the procession has his
207 hand upraised like Medea. They are holding a long, fabric-like item bearing the
208 inscription “Kanna”.
- 209 5. A flying, winged man with hands lifted high having the inscription of “Taitale”
210 between one of the wings and the body.

211 It will not be an exaggeration to say that many researchers more or less connected to classical art,
212 mythology, or literature have had a desire for interpreting this scene. This is understandable, because
213 this has something to do with the first images of Medea and Daedalus in world art! Many
214 investigations have been devoted to these images and it is noteworthy that one of them belongs to
215 Nino Lortkipanidze, an exceptional Georgian researcher who has specially examined this specific
216 work in a paper “The Reflection of the Argonaut Myth in Early Greek Culture”.

217 Along with this, many questions arose due to the image, particularly the mythological theme
218 presented on bucchero. Some of them are: Which scene connected to Medea is pictured here, who are
219 these men going in the procession, what do the boxers show, what is the connection of all this to
220 Daedalus, is this one episode or a cyclic alternation of episodes?

221 The paper format does not provide the means of presenting every idea connected to the theme in a
222 detailed manner, thus you will be introduced to the concise contents of the basic versions through
223 general theses and be offered a few personal interpretations as well.

224 ***2.1. The young man coming up out of the three-legged cauldron and Metaia***

225 In the general opinion of researchers, the scene where Medea rejuvenates through her sorcery must
226 be shown here, whereas the young man coming up out of the small cauldron might be Aeson, Pelias,
227 or Jason, who was prepared beforehand by Medea for Aeëtes' difficult tasks²⁰. It's possible that all of
228 them together are implied here so Medea's image as a sorceress might be generalized in this way.²¹
229 Nino Lortkipanidze justly notes that “flatly identifying the pictured young man with someone
230 becomes more difficult due to the fact that all the literary sources connected to the miracle of
231 rejuvenation by Medea belong to a period considerably later than 630 BC.”²²

²⁰ Rizzo, Martelli, 1993, 32

²¹M.Schmidt, 1986

²² Lortkipanidze 2004, 21.

232 Yet, the earliest of these literary sources is a fact regarding Jason's rejuvenation by Medea preserved
233 by Simonides²³, when a fact concerning Aeson's rejuvenation appears considerably later with Ovid²⁴.
234 Along with this, which will be examined below, the scene of Aeson's rejuvenation has never been
235 presented in art. In the classical age, rejuvenation generally implies a change from one age to another
236 – a transformation from an old person to a young one, or that of a young man to a teenager or child.²⁵

237 In regard to connecting the young man emerging from the cauldron on the Etruscan olpe to Pelias,
238 this is impossible according to the myth, for Pelias' rejuvenation had generally never taken place –
239 his body was boiled in a cauldron and he passed away as an old man. Let's see which version of the
240 theme is more frequently represented in other Etruscan works, even in a later period. Two 4th century
241 BC Etruscan mirrors of the Hellenization period will be examined as examples.

242 The figures of three standing women and one man sitting down accompanied by the inscriptions
243 Metvia, Menrva, Rescial, and Heasun are shown on the first mirror, which was found in Talamone in
244 1878 and is kept today at the British Museum²⁶. Metvia²⁷ is Medea holding a drinking bowl in her
245 right hand and bringing it to the lips of an almost unconscious Heasun (Jason) (Figure 14 a). Menrva,
246 the Etruscan Athena and easily identifiable with a garment bearing an image of the Gorgon
247
248 Medusa, tries to hold Jason's neck with her right hand while holding an oinochoe in her left, in which
249 a magical liquid has supposedly been poured. A bird flies close to her hand.

250

²³Simonides, fr. 204

²⁴Ovid. Met.7. 159-293

²⁵ Graf 1997,41

²⁶London, British Museum, GR 1901.6-18.1.

²⁷The transliteration of the Greek Μήδεια into the Etruscan forms of Metaia, Metua, and Metvia, according to some researchers' opinions, indicates various sources of borrowing - Rigobianco 2013. For example, in the case of Metaia, the name is fitted to the form of local names widespread in Caere - Rizzo, Martelli 1993,47



251

252 **Figure 14. a****b.**

253 It's interesting that a similar oinochoe is held by Menrva/Athena on the pediment of the 5th century
 254 BC Temple A at the Caere port of Pyrgi, where an episode from the play *Seven Against Thebes* is
 255 shown. As it seems, here Athena is trying to bestow immortality on Tydeus²⁸ (Figure 15).

²⁸Terracotta plaque from Pyrgi, Rome, Villa Giulia

256



257

258

Figure 15.

259 In regard to Rescial being pictured on the mirror, she might be one of the Lasas represented on a few
 260 Etruscan mirrors.²⁹ Definitely, in the opinion of some researchers, this scene shows the Colchian
 261 episode of the Argonaut myth, where Medea gives Jason a magical liquid to drink in order to
 262 successfully complete Aeëtes' difficult tasks.³⁰ Unfortunately, there are no inscriptions on **the second**
 263 **mirror, which was discovered in 1855** and is currently kept at the Cabinet des Medailles in Paris³¹
 264 (Figure 14, b.). A man coming up out of a cauldron is shown here. The scene is attended by one
 265 elderly and one young man sitting on a bench and two women standing. In Jennifer Neils' opinion,
 266 the scene of Jason's rejuvenation in Iolcos is pictured here, attended by Pelias, his son Akastos,
 267 Medea, and supposedly one of Pelias' daughters, although it is possible for two of Pelias' daughters
 268 to be shown instead of Medea³².
 269 The episode shown on this mirror is analogous to scenes pictured on 5th century Attic lekythoses
 270 where a young man in a cauldron also appears.

²⁹Bonfante, Bonfante, 2002, 204

³⁰Meyer 1980, 106, pl.26, 1.

³¹Paris, Cabinet des Medailles, 1329 (ex Opperman)

³² Neils 1994, 190

271 A scene having a black figure shown on an Attic lekythos discovered in Etruria will be cited as
 272 an example, which in the beginning was connected to the rejuvenation of Jason's father Aeson.³³
 273 (Figure 16).
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 282
 283

Figure 16.

As was pointed out above, this episode has been borrowed from Ovid³⁴ and to this day has not been confirmed on any work of art, although later on it was interpreted as the episode of Jason's rejuvenation by Medea in Iolcos. This latter viewpoint really proved to be correct on the basis of some data³⁵ regarding a red figure hydria discovered in Etruria, now kept at the British Museum and belonging to a Copenhagen artist. A white-haired Jason standing by a three-legged cauldron is pictured on it, who is watching how Medea boils a sheep within it (Figure 17).

³³Attic lekythos with a black figure, Leiden, Rijksmuseum, Meyer 1980, 106, pl 69/70, 5

³⁴Ovid. Met.7. 159-293

³⁵London, British Museum, E163, from Vulci



284
285 **Figure 17.**

286 Accordingly, stemming from the fact that a scene of Aeson's rejuvenation has not been confirmed in
287 art for the time being and as was previously determined, it's impossible for Pelias to be shown in this
288 context, the young man coming up out of the cauldron on the Etruscan olpe must be Jason. Why is
289 Jason's name not indicated on the Cerveteri olpe or how can his identification be carried out? In regard
290 to the identification of Jason's image, in this respect, Jennifer Neils' remark in connection to Jason's
291 images in classical art is of interest. She specifically notes that Jason does not have some mark
292 differentiating him. He is frequently shown naked or with a traveler's cloak and cap, with him being
293 encountered less frequently with a single sandal, as a rule.³⁶

294 In regard to the reason as to why the name of the main character from the Argonaut myth is not
295 shown beside Medea and Daedalus, this topic will be revisited upon presenting some final
296 conclusions. Thus it is the supposition that the young man pictured on the olpe must be Jason, despite
297 it not being accompanied by an inscription and accordingly, the central scene reflected on the Etruscan
298 lekythos must show Jason's rejuvenation by Medea in Iolcos. In this respect, an observation of one

³⁶Neils 2001 p.636

299 Etruscan ritual is interesting, being pictured on one of the Etruscan mirrors from 275-250 BC³⁷, where
300 three children having the names Mariś Isminthians, Mariś Husrnana, and Mariś Halna follow an
301 initiation ritual by submerging themselves into a deep vessel filled with liquid³⁸. **(Figure 18)**

302



303

304 **Figure 18.**

305 It is notable that the Etruscan god Mariś, having three epithets embodying the god's various ages
306 here, is shown on yet another bronze mirror where he is participating in the same initiation ritual by
307 submerging himself into a liquid³⁹. Mariś, who was a patron god of fertility in archaic Etruscan

³⁷London, British Museum, ES 257B – Bonfante 1986, 243

³⁸ de Grummond, , 2006, 21

³⁹ Pallottino1992 29-30; Wagenvoor 1956, 219 and foll.

308 conceptions, is a symbol of renewal and rebirth in his Ausone variant, having been shown as a centaur.
 309 He died and rose from the dead three times.⁴⁰ (Figure 19)

310 The same ritual is seen on an Etruscan-Latin basket from Palestrina where Menrva stands in a
 311 cauldron of boiling liquid along with the armed Maris. Menrva has one hand wrapped around Maris'
 312 leg, whereas she holds a slender stick or spike up to his face or nose. Cerberus has been shown by
 313 Maris' head, whereas an image of a winged woman flies close to Menrva⁴¹ (Figure 19).



314
 315 **Figure 19.**

316 It is noteworthy that despite the myth connected to the Argonauts being conveyed on the
 317 Etruscan olpe, the scene is adorned with Etruscan subjects: Medea is wearing Etruscan attire⁴²,
 318 she is holding a staff, and there is a small cauldron characteristic of Etruscan rituals where Jason
 319 undergoes rejuvenation, being similar to Etruscan works of this period.

320 Now it is time for the next image, in particular a procession of six men bringing Kanna.

⁴⁰ Ael. *VH*, IX, 16; Kobakhidze 2005, 59

⁴¹ <http://www.langkjer.dk/origin/2-26.htm>

⁴² Bonfante, 2003, 216

321

322 **2.2 The six men and Kanna**

323 Maria Rizzo identifies these six men as the Argonauts, whereas the oblong object they are holding
324 is not the Golden Fleece or the Argos, as it might have been according to the myth. Instead it is
325 identified as the fabric mentioned in Pindar's 4th Pithian ode, which the Argonauts had received as a
326 sign of winning in a competition held on the island of Lemnos.⁴³

327 While agreeing with Rizzo that the Lemnos episode of the Argonaut myth is shown here, Erica
328 Simon considers that the Argonauts do not appear here, instead they are the Dactyls, patrons of the
329 art of finding iron and greatly honored on the island of Lemnos. The Dactyls are holding a door bolt⁴⁴.
330 As demons of craftsmanship, the Dactyls are an ideal combination of Medea, having the art of magic
331 and of Daedalus, a skilled artist.

332 In my opinion, the men pictured on the Cerveteri olpe following along behind Medea in a line
333 create a unified composition with Medea and it is not possible to examine them independently from
334 the figure of Medea. It is quite clear on the picture that Medea and the man at the head of the
335 procession have the same gesture and the man's forward placed foot touches Medea's long robe. At
336 the same time, if this is from the Lemnos episode of the Argonauts, Medea has no business being here
337 because this adventure befell the Argonauts before sailing to Colchis.

338 I think establishing the meaning of “kanna” will elucidate this topic even more. It is
339 encountered in Etruscan texts only once in this form and, as it seems, is an adjective derived by
340 the “na” suffix from kana and kana mentioned in other inscriptions. The “na” suffix is universally
341 understood to mean “belonging”, or so to say “belonging to kana”. In regard to the meaning of
342 cana/kana itself, it must mean “a decoration” or “gift”, being confirmed in a number of epigraphic
343 works, according to the established version.⁴⁵

344 Yet a version of various interpretations of this word exists according to which kanna must be read
345 as kauna, with it possibly being connected to the Greek word *καυνάκη*, which itself is etymologically
346 connected to “gunnaku” in Persian and Syriac, meaning “something made from fur”.⁴⁶ In Burket's
347 point of view, this word came into the Greek lexicon from Persian during the so-called Orientalization

⁴³ Rizzo, Martelli, 1993,36-40

⁴⁴ Simon 2000, 171-181

⁴⁵For a detailed overview of these forms in Etruscan epigraphic materials, cf. Rizzo, Martelli, 1993, 47-53

⁴⁶ Pugliese Carratelli 1994, 363-369

348 period with the meaning of “a worsted wool cloak”.⁴⁷ At one glance, on the basis of the latter
 349 interpretation of the Etruscan word, a certain justification can be found for connecting the image
 350 shown on the olpe to the Lemnos episode – the Argonauts bring a woolen fabric which they have
 351 earned as a prize for winning in a competition on Lemnos Island. Yet there has also been an attempt
 352 at connecting “kanna” to the Greek “κάννα” (reed) or “κάνναβις” (cannabis).⁴⁸ There is also
 353 Schmidt's⁴⁹ viewpoint that this word might be connected to the Greek word “κάννας” which is
 354 encountered in Aristophanes' *The Wasps*⁵⁰ and means a sacral rug made from willow branches or
 355 grapevines.

356 I think the latter meaning of kanna might not precisely reflect the etymology of the Etruscan word,
 357 yet essentially be closer to this specific episode, whereas the fact that the ornament of this object is
 358 identical to the ornament shown on Medea the priestess' cloak does not indicate that kanna is a fabric,
 359 as Rizzo deems it to be,⁵¹ but instead that this thing bears a sacral function. Accordingly it really
 360 might have been placed in the corresponding box located between Daedalus and the sixth man.⁵²

361 Thus, in my opinion, the main theme shown on the olpe, on the whole reflects the scene of Aeson's
 362 rejuvenation by Medea in Iolcos, which in comparison to the Lemnos interpretation, might have been
 363 attended by all the participants of this narrative – Medea, the Argonauts, and Jason.

364 Let's examine the other figures presented on the bucchero for some final conclusions.

365

366

2.3. The boxers

367 In the case of connecting the scene pictured on the bucchero to the island of Lemnos, it's
 368 understandable who the boxers might be. They are clearly the Argonauts participating in a contest,
 369 earning a prize later on, too. There will be no digression here regarding the reason of why the

⁴⁷ Burkert 1984 ,38-39

⁴⁸ See: Rix, 2002-2003, 95-101

⁴⁹ Schmidt 1986

⁵⁰Ar.*Vesp.*394 (κού μή ποτέ σου παρὰ τὰς κάννας οὐρήσω μηδ' ἀποπάρδω)

⁵¹ Rizzo, Martelli 1993,17

⁵² Rizzo, Martelli 1993, 17

370 contestants are wearing only one sandal. It will only be noted according to one opinion that one of
371 the contestants might be Jason himself, who according to the myth, had lost a sandal in Pelias' palace
372 before his arrival,⁵³ whereas in a second version, these are some other Argonauts competing against
373 each other for their other sandal.⁵⁴

374 Jennifer Neils notes that wearing a single sandal might have been significant for a young man
375 during an initiation.⁵⁵ Nancy de Grummond is also a supporter of perceiving the scenes presented on
376 the olpe as an initiation ritual, seeing the beginning of the ritual precisely in the ritual competition,
377 which is followed by washing and receiving a garment as a gift.⁵⁶

378 The tradition of showing scenes of boxers in Etruscan art is interesting. An exhibit at the Dallas
379 Art Museum is noteworthy in this respect, which depicts some boxers fighting each other for a
380 prize shown on a second plane. The similarity of the poses between the boxers shown on this
381 ceramic object and the boxers on the olpe from Cerveteri are striking. In both cases the boxers have
382 one foot extended forward and placed on their opponent's foot. One hand is bent and the other is
383 brought forward. The Dallas ceramic is dated to 750 BC and can be boldly considered as a prototype
384 of the Cerveteri boxers (**Figure 20**).

385

⁵³ Rizzo, Martelli 1993,41

⁵⁴ Simon 2000, 178

⁵⁵ Neils 1994 V.636

⁵⁶de Grummond, 2006, 5-6



386

387

Figure 20.

388 It is interesting that even in the Mycenaean world, as it seems, boxing was conducted with these sort
389 of moves, since the boxers pictured on a 1,300 BC amphora are placing their right, stretched-out foot
390 on each other. Yet a greater similarity can be detected on the relief of a Mesopotamian terracota dating
391 to approximately 2,000 BC, which was discovered in Eshnunna, at Tell Asmar in modern-day Iraq
392 (Figure 21).

393



394

395 **Figure 21.**

396 Despite the various interpretations of the theme shown on the Etruscan olpe, the majority of
397 researchers agree on one thing that the boxers are the Argonauts. Supporters of the Lemnos
398 interpretation consider this match to be a part of the Lemnos competition.

399 In my opinion, the ritual of Aeson's rejuvenation has a sacral significance indicated by the
400 images of the priestess, the three-legged cauldron, and the sacred rug, at the same like all rituals
401 according to the Etruscan tradition, being accompanied by ritual contests. The ritualistic nature of the
402 athletic contests was clearly not foreign to other cultures, yet athletic Etruscan fights identified

403 basically from the art of tomb walls, as a rule, were accompanied by images of priestesses, which
 404 were foreign to the Greek world, for example. Let's examine an image showing a wrestling match for
 405 example, which is dated to 530 BC and is from a so-called Augur tomb at Tarquinia (**Figure 22**).



406

407 **Figure 22.**

408 As is clearly seen, a priest holding an arched staff appears behind the contestants and tells the future
 409 according to some birds. Along with this, a ritual cauldron stands behind the wrestlers indicating the
 410 sacral nature of the contest.

411 Thus it is the opinion that the picture shown on the Etruscan olpe must be examined as a single
 412 narrative presented in one act, which is relevant to the Iolcos episode of the Argonaut myth. The
 413 central figure of this episode is Medea, who is rejuvenating Jason. This ritual is accompanied by
 414 athletic contests with the participation of the Argonauts and a procession of men (Argonauts)
 415 following Medea the priestess with a ritual gift.

416 In my version, the unified nature of the narrative shown on the Etruscan olpe is strengthened by
 417 the most recent archaeological data as well, according to which **the scenes shown on the Etruscan
 418 ceramic product of this period reflect only one specific episode from a narrative of Greek
 419 mythology.** A combination or alteration of a few episodes on it are only confirmed later on.⁵⁷

420 Thus, this episode of the Argonaut myth which the Etruscans had learned about from the
 421 Greek colonists undergoes a certain transformation on Etruscan soil and becomes suited to the

⁵⁷ Bellelli 2008, 27-28

422 expressive forms and cultural reality that were established in a conservative Etruscan society. Being
423 shown on the Etruscan olpe, attired in Etruscan garments, and holding an Etruscan staff (which is not
424 naturally encountered in an analogous scene on Greek vases), Medea performs a ritual by following
425 Etruscan customs. Some boxers, participants of the procession bringing a sacral gift to the ritualistic
426 pillar, are involved in the ritual. An Etruscan ritual of a man's initiation is reflected by the scene, in
427 which a contest, bathing, and a sacrifice are presented.

428 It's true, there is a viewpoint that it is difficult to find some sort of logic in the principle of selecting
429 an episode from Greek mythology on something locally made by the Etruscans. But in my opinion,
430 this logic really exists, especially at the first stage of Greek-Etruscan relationships and until the so-
431 called Hellenization period in Etruscan art began. Three specific factors will be named, which in our
432 opinion, defined the depiction of the narrative connected to the Argonauts on an Etruscan olpe
433 discovered in a tomb:

- 434 1. Caere's factor – as was mentioned before, naval might was not the only reason for Caere's close
435 relationship with the Greeks. Along with the city of Spina, Caere was traditionally considered to
436 have been founded by the Pelasgians of Thessaly, which is corroborated by Dionysius of
437 Halicarnassus as well.⁵⁸ Thus, the specific preconditions existed for an interest in the Argonaut
438 myth reflecting the distant voyage of Jason, a Thessalian hero, right here in Caere, which was
439 considered as place for the settlement of Pelasgians from Thessaly.
- 440 2. The sacral factor – This specific theme from the stories of the Argonauts had been selected due
441 to its sacral function, which as it is known, is a very familiar theme to the Etruscans. They were
442 distinguished all throughout the Mediterranean for knowledge in various arts of divination and
443 for their religiosity.
- 444 3. The Iolcos episode of the Argonaut myth was interesting for the Etruscans precisely in the
445 context of a deceased person's burial, for it reflected a process of rejuvenation, a renewal of life
446 stirring hope for the deceased to be reborn.
- 447 4. An initiation ritual connected to renewal and rejuvenation existed in Etruscan cult worship, as
448 was mentioned above.

449

450 The analysis of Etruscan ceramics from the Archaic period reveals that the Etruscans aspired
451 towards naturalism when conveying Greek myths and maximally preserved independence in the
452 context of assimilating the culture of other peoples.⁵⁹

453 Szilàgui's hypothesis is also worthy of note in connection with this, as he specially studied
454 themes shown on Etruscan-Corinthian vases from 630-500 BC. Despite the existence of Greek

⁵⁸Dion. Halic. I, 18, 3-5.

⁵⁹ Smith 1999,179-206

455 characters on Etruscan ceramics, he had concluded that they had an Etruscan essence. Many things
456 as such turned out in these works where the theme has not been identified and it is clearly based on
457 an Etruscan context. He names one of the exhibits at Villa Giulia as an example of this, which is dated
458 to the years 630-580 BC, where some themes completely unknown to Greek mythology are depicted
459 ⁶⁰

460 This episode shown on the Etruscan olpe has been interpreted through local naturalism, which
461 implied the placement of the ritual within a so-called Etruscan context and its depiction through
462 attributes and forms (the boxer scene, the ritual of dedicating kanna, Medea depicted with a staff)
463 characteristic of Etruscan cult worship and rituals.

464

465 2.4. *Daedalus*

466 Clearly, it's impossible to make a final conclusion without an analysis of Daedalus' figure, because
467 even today, an interpretation of Daedalus surrounded by Medea and the Argonauts remains a problem
468 for researchers. Currently, not one theme from Greek mythology or literature has been confirmed
469 possibly connecting Daedalus and the characters of the Argonaut cycle to each other.

470 Supporters of identifying the theme shown on the olpe with the Lemnos episode of the Argonaut
471 myth explain Daedalus' appearance beside Medea and the Argonauts (the Dactyls) in the following
472 manner: As a craftsman and inventor bestowed with a special talent having been transformed into an
473 epithet of craftsmanship. (In this case, the Greek adjective “δαίδαλος” is implied, which signifies one
474 who is trained, a master craftsman and is used as an epithet by Pindar for Hephaestus. Hephaestus,
475 who is battling against Ares, has the caption Δαιδάλος on an image of the one of the vessels.) ⁶¹,
476 Daedalus is “ideally” connected to the island of Lemnos. Lemnos, where according to Homer⁶² ,
477 Hephaestus' blacksmith shop was located in the crater of an active volcano and where the capital was
478 Hephaestia⁶³, represented a place in the world at that time renowned for the finding of metal and
479 metallurgy. In the same respect, the Colchis “of plentiful gold” stirred up some interest, with this
480 interesting the Etruscans as well, who were distinguished themselves for finding and working

⁶⁰. Szilágui 1992.

⁶¹ - Preller, 1872, 148-149; Kerényi, 1951,155

⁶² Preller, 1872,106.

⁶³Burkert 1983,260

481 metal. Lemnos and the communities of Colchis were symbolically connected to each other.⁶⁴
482 Accordingly, it is possible for Daedalus and the Argonauts (the Dactyls) to be associated together
483 within this context. Nino Lortkipanidze names the extant ancient contacts between Etruria and the
484 island of Lemnos as some of the motives and additional arguments for a depiction of the Lemnos
485 episode of the Argonaut myth on this bucchero by the Etruscans. Particularly, according to her
486 hypothesis, some information regarding the resettlement⁶⁵ of the Tyrsenians (Etruscans) and the
487 dwelling⁶⁶ of Pelasgians and Tyrsenians on Lemnos are corroborated with Herodotus. This is
488 confirmed by archaeological data, particularly by a stela from Lemnos dating to the 6th century BC
489 made in a language cognate to Etruscan which indicates the organic connection existing between
490 these two geographic centers.⁶⁷

491 It's clear no one denies the close connection between Etruscan and the language of the Lemnos
492 stela, which is clearly reflected in very recent research by de Simone, Hergon, and Maltzham⁶⁸, yet
493 the fact also has to be taken into account that aside from this specific case, no supposition has been
494 expressed by researchers regarding the probable depiction of some mythological or historical fact
495 connected to Lemnos on any work of Etruscan art. Along with this, I think a demonstration of the
496 Etruscans' interest in finding metal on the tomb inventory is out of context.

497 At the same time, it must be justifiably noted that apart from Etruscans living in Caere having a
498 mythological relation to the Thessalians, which was discussed above, the city of Tarquinia had some
499 quite intimate connections with one more active area of the Argonaut myth, particularly with Corinth,
500 which is confirmed in Antique literature. A myth narrated by Pausanias in *Description of Greece* is
501 implied here, according to which Athena's temple, located in Corinth and called Salpinga, had been
502 founded by Hegeleus, Tyrsenos' son (this is the Tyrsenos, who according to Herodotus, led the people
503 from Lydia who were later given the king's name as an ethnonym) and Heracles' grandson. It was
504 Hegeleus himself who taught the aristocrats having come from Temenos how to play the trumpet he
505 had invented. This is why Athena's temple is called "The Trumpet".⁶⁹ The settlement of the

⁶⁴ Lortkipanidze 2004, 28-31.

⁶⁵Hdt., I, 94

⁶⁶Hdt., VI,137

⁶⁷ Lortkipanidze 2004, 37

⁶⁸ De Simone 1996; Heurgon, 1985, 93-103; Malzahn 1999, 259-279.

⁶⁹Paus., II, 21, 3

506 Corinthian Demaratus in Etruria attests the extant bilateral connections between Etruria and
507 Corinth. Livius tells us regarding this.⁷⁰

508 Let's return to the Etruscan olpe and examine the theme of Daedalus, Medea, and the Argonauts
509 with the assumption that in all, the Lemnos episode is not pictured but instead the one at Iolcos,
510 specifically the scene of Aeson's rejuvenation by Medea in which the Argonauts participate. How is
511 it possible to include Daedalus in this context?

512 Before this topic is examined directly, a brief mythological digression will be presented possibly
513 pointing out certain parallels between Daedalus and Medea. Having never ended up in one
514 mythological narrative, it is notable that certain points of contact can be found for Medea and
515 Daedalus, despite them being distinguished from ordinary mortals through special abilities, with the
516 first being magic and the second being craftsmanship:

- 517 1. It is true that having a discussion about a precise chronology in a myth is impossible, but
518 Medea and Daedalus are “contemporary” characters – Theseus, the one who defeats the
519 Minotaur imprisoned in the labyrinth built by Daedalus, is Medea's step-child.
- 520 2. Daedalus is also connected to a solar cult like Medea (Medea, as the granddaughter of
521 Helios; Daedalus as a servant of Pasiphae, Medea's aunt and Helios' daughter, a craftsman
522 having flown towards the sun and lost his only son due to the sun's power);
- 523 3. Medea and Daedalus have committed the murder of a close relative in their homeland;
- 524 4. Like Medea, Daedalus also runs away from his homeland and then leaves his new
525 homeland, where he loses his child (children). Both of them run to safety by flying away.
- 526 5. Medea defeats Talos, Daedalus' creation, with her sorcery.
- 527 6. And finally, an episode of great interest to us – the murder of Pelias carried out by Medea
528 through someone else, Pelias' daughters, with the body of the king Iolcos being boiled in
529 a bubbling cauldron (In general, a person's rejuvenation or them being brought to life by
530 being boiled in a cauldron is not foreign to other epochs and cultures ⁷¹). This manifests a
531 certain likeness to Daedalus' adventure, although being of a later character, is greatly
532 interesting – having escaped from Minos, Daedalus seeks refuge in Sicilia with Cocalus,
533 the king of Kamikos. When Minos comes looking for Daedalus, Cocalus makes him
534 agree to bathe in the bathhouse. Here he is killed by Cocalus' daughters, or according to a
535 second version, Daedalus throws him into the boiling water himself and kills him.⁷²

⁷²Liv.I.34.1-7.

⁷¹ cf. Vojatzi 1982, 99-100

⁷²Hdt., vii.169, Diod. Sic.,IV, 78, 80; Hyg. Fab. 44; Paus. VII.4. §5; Ov. Met., Book VIII, 261

536 I will return to these parallels when making some final conclusions. Before presenting them, it
537 seems necessary to examine Daedalus in the context of Etruscan art and mythology, without which it
538 is impossible to make a correct analysis.

539 Today it is universally recognized that the term “Taitale” shown on the Etruscan olpe really fits
540 with the Greek Daedalus. Images of Daedalus are encountered elsewhere in Etruscan art with
541 precisely this form of the name (with some minor alterations – Taitle). In particular, it is on Carnelian
542 scarab beetle at the British Museum⁷³ (**Figure 23**).



543

544 **Figure 23.**

545 which is dated to 450-400 BC and shows Daedalus (Taitle) bobbing on top of the sea. It is also on a
546 5th century BC golden bulla from the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore⁷⁴, where Icarus (Vikape) is
547 depicted together with Daedalus. This last inscription where the Greek digamma is reflected indicates

⁷³ In regard to Etruscan scarabs and in connection to this specific work, cf. Krauskopf 1999, S. 405-421), 416

⁷⁴Rizzo, Martelli 1993, 44, 47-48

548 that the story of Daedalus and Icarus in Etruria had been known from an ancient time and it might
549 have been borrowed from a Dorian source – either Corinth or Crete.⁷⁵ (Figure 24).



550

551 **Figure 24.**

552 Both these works are of a comparatively later time period and in comparison to the Cerveteri olpe
553 belonging to the Orientalist period of Etruscan art, they were created during the Hellenization period
554 of Etruscan art. Along with this, as on the scarab beetle, the episode of Daedalus' adventure well
555 known from Greek mythology is shown on the bulla, which cannot be said for Daedalus' unknown
556 narrative shown on the Etruscan olpe. Yet he is pictured here with wings like on the seal and the
557 scarab beetle.

558 It must be noted that there is an idea that there is a border in the differentiation of functions of
559 Daedalus' images during the sixth century in Etruscan art. Specifically, Daedalus must be perceived
560 as a mythological character in the first half of the 7th-6th century BC, however as a so-called “local”
561 craftsman and mythic hero in the second half of the 6th century and the 5th century BC.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Morris 1995,196

⁷⁶Prayon 1998, 102-105.

562 Accordingly, stemming from the dating of the Etruscan olpe, Daedalus must be perceived here as a
563 mythological character, possibly as a certain demonic power in comparison to the Daedalus pictured
564 on other Etruscan works, where he comes across as a craftsman or mythic hero.

565 What must this demonic character depict in this specific context?

566 A fact must be taken into account that in relation to Greek myths, Etruscan ceramic makers,
567 as a rule, were characterised by an aspiration towards thematic transformation and variation,
568 which reveals their artistic freedom and at the same time, a desire for Greek myths to be fitted to an
569 Etruscan reality.⁷⁷

570 This trend is seen especially clearly during the Orientalist period itself, when the first steps were
571 being taken in Etruscan-Greek relationships. At one glance, the Hellenic myths depicted on works of
572 Etruscan art reflect the Greek narrative, but at the same time they do not coincide with the Greek
573 model and offer other iconographic schemes. There are many anomalous themes differing from works
574 of Greek art in these schemes. These themes had been created through the influence of local
575 conceptions.⁷⁸

576 It is noteworthy that the Etruscan pantheon is still not “open” to foreign and Greek influences
577 during the Orientalizing period.

578 If the scene depicted on the Etruscan olpe is viewed within this context, where, as was mentioned
579 before, a ritual of Etruscan rejuvenation or rebirth can be deciphered beyond the Iolcos episode of
580 Jason's rejuvenation by Medea, and in which a priestess and participants of various cult acts of a ritual
581 initiation – that of a contest as well as a sacrifice – are included, it will be possible to explain Daedalus'
582 appearance within this context as well.

583 If we again return to the Etruscan mirror on which three Mars are shown and the scene of the
584 Etruscan rejuvenation is depicted, a few gods are presented here, including Menrva (Athena) and
585 Turms. Mariś Isminthians sits on Turms' arm, a god corresponding to Hermes Psychopompos.⁷⁹ Is
586 the winged being corresponding to Teitale among them or not?

587 It must be said up front that a winged being in Etruscan art of the Orientalist period is only
588 equivalent to a god. Winged beings generally reflect movement between the realms, whereas in tomb

⁷⁷Maggiani 2008, 47–56.+

⁷⁸ de Grummond, 2006

⁷⁹ van der Meer 1995 ,167

589 art – a movement from this world to the next, from death to life.⁸⁰ Here, Daedalus must be examined
590 as a winged, demonic power attending the scene of rejuvenation and rebirth.

591 Which god can attend this ritual?

592 Providing an answer to this complex question significantly digresses from the theme of the paper.
593 At a glance, this scene, reflecting a rejuvenation ritual and implying rebirth, might have been attended
594 by a psychopompos god, including Turms depicted on the British Museum mirror and many other
595 gods connected to the underworld, of which many are represented in the Etruscan pantheon. Yet I
596 think two factors must be given more consideration:

- 597 1. Local (in this case Caere) cults and their functions;
- 598 2. Represented images with the same expressive forms in the same chronological period.

599 To briefly formulate it – Which gods are depicted with wings among the honored gods in 7th
600 century Caere and which of them can be connected to the renewal of life and rebirth?

601 Caere and its port Pyrgi were known for the temples of many gods. It must be mentioned that each
602 Etruscan city had a so-called prominent god at various different times which has especially honored
603 along with the common Etruscan gods. At this stage, 6 temples have been identified in Caere, with
604 only two of them having been studied archaeologically. This is a temple, which in accordance with
605 antique sources, was dedicated to either Leucothea (Pseudo Aristotle)⁸¹ or Ilithyia (Strabo)⁸² and is
606 dated to the 5th century BC. There is also the 6th century temple of Uni. According to tradition, the
607 temple of Leucothea at Caere had been founded by Pelasgians from Thessaly.⁸³

608 Today, Leucothea and Ilithyia have been identified with the Etruscan goddess Thesan by
609 researchers.⁸⁴

610 Thesan the dawn goddess is an ancient winged goddess remembered in the form of Tes on the
611 Liber Linteus. She was especially honored in Caere and Pyrgi.⁸⁵ It is noteworthy that she was

⁸⁰ Haynes 2000,148

⁸¹Arist. Oeconomica,2.1349.b; Ael., VH, I, 20; Polyaeus, Strat. 5.2.21

⁸²Strabo, 5.2.8.

⁸³Banti 1973, 39

⁸⁴Dennis 1985, 291

⁸⁵ Simon 2006 60

612 simultaneously the goddess of divination, childbirth, and the generation of life.⁸⁶ Her name is
613 supposedly commemorated in a votive inscription on a 7th century bucchero amphora from Chiusi
614 and on a oinochoe from Tralietela.⁸⁷ It is noteworthy that she is encountered with the sun god Usil on
615 the Liber Linteus Zagrabienensis mummy wrappings (TLE 1)⁸⁸, as well as on many images.⁸⁹ In regard
616 to images of Thesan during the Orientalist period, a few works along this line are interesting, where
617 Thesan is presented while flying. Her image on an acroterion within Leucothea's temple at Caere is
618 also informative in this regard, which is currently placed at the Berlin Antikesammlung. Thesan is
619 taking away a young man (adolescent?) in her arms while flying (**Figure 25**).



620

621 **Figure 25.**

⁸⁶ Jannot 2005 ,158-160

⁸⁷ Carpino 2003, 109, note 62

⁸⁸ Pallottino 1968

⁸⁹ Bonfante 1986, 226

622 An image of Thesauros on a bronze mirror from Vulci dating to 570 BC captures one's attention, where
623 the goddess has again taken up a young man in her arms and is flying away quickly Here there will
624 no longer be any digressions regarding interpretations of the image, according to which the myth of
625 Eos and Cephalus is depicted. This Greek version, in my opinion, represents a Hellenic attempt at
626 interpreting the Etruscan theme shown on the acroterion. (Figure 26)
627



628

629 **Figure 26.**

630 A reinforcement for an Etruscan vessel dating to 570 BC having an image of a flying woman and a
631 bronze Etruscan image currently kept on the island of Samos can be relegated to this group of images
632 (Figure 27).

633



634

635 **Figure 27.**

636 It is possible to surmise that the Etruscan Thesan stands beyond Taitle, which as a specially
637 honored goddess and a patron of rejuvenation in Caere and Pyrgi, attends this initiation ritual and is
638 perhaps trying to snatch up the rejuvenated young man. But the figure depicted on the Etruscan olpe
639 is not a woman, attested by its connection to Daedalus and its naked depiction, which is impossible
640 in the case of a goddess in the Etruscan reality of the Orientalization period. It is the opinion that
641 some other male solar god might be here, encountered in Thesan's retinue. This might be the sun god
642 Usil,⁹⁰ who was also specially honored at the temple in Pyrgi (**Figure 28**).

643 In this respect, images of Usil from the Orientalist period at the A Temple in Pyrgi are especially
644 interesting, manifesting a great similarity to the figure of Taitale depicted on the Cerveteri olpe.

645

⁹⁰ Cristofani 2000, 313



646
647
648
649
650

Figure28.

A bronze image of Usil supposedly from Vulci dating to approximately 490 BC and currently in a collection at the J. Paul Getty Museum is also interesting. **(Figure. 29)**



651
652

Figure 29.

653 A brass stand created at the turn of the 6th-5th centuries BC is of the same type, which has been
654 identified with Usil and today has been put on the auction at the Royal Athena Galleries ⁹¹
655 **(Figure 30).**



656
657 **Figure 30.**

658
659
660

661 2. Results

662 I suppose, that **hydria discovered in Cerveteri** with the image of the woman and a three-headed
663 snake is not connected to Medea and must supposedly reflect the voyage of a deceased person to the
664 underworld or some ritual connected to their burial, where the three-headed snake shows a creature
665 living in (or guarding) the underworld, with this creature in turn being approached by a priestess or
666 goddess (possibly Angitia or Vanth), or the deceased herself.
667

⁹¹ <http://www.royalathena.com/PAGES/EtruscanCatalog/Bronze/BLL02JE.html>

668 Thus in my opinion, it is the winged Etruscan solar god Usil/Catha standing beyond Teitale pictured
669 on the **Etruscan olpe from Caere**. He had a local cult in Caere and images of him were typologically
670 connected to winged images of Daedalus.

671 This connection was supposedly not based only on an iconographic similarity, but instead on a
672 realization that the name of the winged Daedalus was in a certain relationship with the sun. It is
673 possible to examine Medea as well in the same context as the granddaughter of Helios. Medea, who
674 was connected to the Etruscan god Cavatha, the daughter of the sun Catha⁹², was naturally included
675 in this narrative.

676 The rejuvenation of Jason by Medea is pictured on the Etruscan olpe, with an Etruscan ritual of
677 rejuvenation and rebirth being read beyond it (this ritual is known from images and antique sources).
678 This ritual was connected to solar cults, which were characteristic of many religions and the cult
679 worship of Egypt and the East. The sun, being born anew every dawn, was perceived as a symbol of
680 rejuvenation and rebirth.⁹³

681
682 The ritual of rejuvenation in the context of the Etruscan tomb stirred up hope for the deceased's
683 rebirth and immortality. The Etruscans' longing for cultural relationships with the Hellenic world is
684 reflected by the perception of characters of the Argonaut myth as participants of the ritual, including
685 Medea and Daedalus, a hero of a popular mythological narrative and a possessor of demonic power.
686 At the same time, it answered a modal tendency of the Etruscan elite's infatuation with "foreign"
687 culture. Images of Medea in Etruscan art confirmed from the Orientalist era to the Hellenization
688 period represent an original, local interpretation of Medea's image. Etruscan culture, in turning out to
689 be a mediator between the Greek and Italic worlds, performed a great role in popularizing Medea and
690 the myths connected to her on the Appenine Peninsula. Medea's magical art turned out to be familiar
691 to the Etruscans, who were well known all throughout the Mediterranean for divination and being
692 experts of magic. In contrast to the Greeks, they turned Medea into an object of cult worship,
693 identifying her with the Etruscan sun god Cavatha. She penetrated into the mythology, religion, and
694 art of the ancient Italian people through the Etruscans. It can be said that the Etruscan reception of
695 Medea influenced even ancient Rome, and later on, European art and culture *Via Roma*.

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⁹³ Bellah 2011,233. Stadler 2012,465

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