

## MARES, MARIS, MARS, AND THE ARCHAIC GODS

(Con la tav. XXXVIII f. t.)

This article will be an interpretation of an old myth about a centaur Maris and an attempt at showing his place in the world of the archaic gods \*.

It can be said in general that the archaic Mediterranean peoples' concept of life and death was different from that of the classical world. Their gods were different. Many of the important ones were what we call chthonic or chthonian, for the want of a better name. Chthonic, according to Webster's Dictionary, is said of a divinity or spirit, dwelling or reigning in the underworld. However, most of those that interest us here could live in either world or commute between the two worlds. Those gods were plentiful in the Minoan, the old Roman, and the old Etruscan world.

The first step must, of necessity, be an examination of the Maris myth. Secondly, a characterization of the divinities with whom Maris was associated will reveal his nature. Thirdly, it will be timely to look at him in a larger environment.

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A natural point of departure is a recent article by Erika Simon « Il dio Marte nell'arte dell'Italia Centrale »<sup>1</sup>. This article is not a discussion of Mars in the art of Central Italy, as the title seems to indicate; it is rather an attempt at interpreting a picture on the side of a late 4th century Praenestine cista<sup>2</sup>.

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\* Besides the usual abbreviations (*BCH*, *CIL*, *CIE*, *PW*, etc.) these abbreviations are used: BAYET: J. BAYET, *Herclé*, Paris 1926. G.-K: E. GERHARD, G. KÖRTE, *Etruskische Spiegel* I-V Berlin 1884-97. PFIFFIG *ES*: A. J. PFIFFIG, *Die Etruskische Sprache*, Graz 1969. PFIFFIG *RE*: A. J. PFIFFIG, *Religio Etrusca*, Graz 1975. RUNES-CORTSEN: *Der Etruskische Text d. Agramer Mumienbinde*, hrsg. M. Runes, Glossar v. S. P. Cortsen, Göttingen 1935. SCHOLZ: U. W. SCHOLZ, *Studien z. altitalischen u. altrömischen Marskult u. Marsmythos*, Heidelberg 1970. SIMON: E. SIMON, *Il dio Marte nell'arte dell'Italia Centrale*, in *St. Etr.* XLVI, 1978, 135-47. *Studien*: G. HERMANSEN, *Studien über d. italischen u. d. römischen Mars*, v. F. Glöde übersetzt, Copenhagen 1940. WISSOWA: *Religion u. Kultus d. Römer* v. Georg Wissowa, 2. Auflage, München 1912.

<sup>1</sup> *St. Etr.* XLVI, 1978, 135-47.

<sup>2</sup> The cista was found in Palestrina in 1871 and acquired by the Museum in Berlin, inv. n. 6239. Now most accessible in G. Bordenache Battaglia's *Corpus delle ciste Prenestine* I, 50 ff., w. additamentum p. 61; A. Michaelis' publication in *Ann. Inst.* 1873 221 ff. and *Mon. inediti* IX plates LVIII-LIX still cannot be discarded.

The cista is an ordinary cylindrical bronze cista on three legs, covered by a lid. Around the middle of the cista, between an upper and a lower palmetto frieze, is shown a line of gods: Diana, Fortuna, Iuno, Iovos, Mercuris, Hercle, Leiber Apolo, Victoria, Menerva, and Mars. There is no necessary, organic connection between the divinities, other than they seem to constitute a local Olympus. The interesting figures are Menerva and Mars. Menerva is dressed in a peplos, with an aegis on her breast and with her shield and helmet laid on a rock pile behind her. In front of her an adolescent Mars is kneeling on the rim of a dolium, naked except for a helmet, with a shield on his left arm and a short lance held high in his right hand in a throwing position. In the dolium under him is indicated some kind of an agitated fluid, boiling or flaming. Menerva is supporting him with her left arm around his waist, while with her right hand she is doing something to his mouth with a stick. That this group is more important than the other figures on the cista is shown by the palmetto frieze above Mars: here the frieze has been interrupted to give room for a Cerberus and a snake (*tav. XXXVIII a*).

Several explanations of this group have been offered, but Simon rejects them all and starts looking for a new and better one. And she believes to have found it in the myth about Ares and Otos-Ephialtes, the aggravating sons of Aloeus<sup>3</sup>. These two brothers held Ares prisoner in a bronze dolium in Crete for thirteen months. And poor Ares might have died if the stepmother of Otos and Ephialtes, Eeriboia, had not told Hermes about his plight. Hermes stole Ares out of the dolium when he already was in a poor shape following the thirteen months in an uncomfortable prison. This is Homer's version. In a Thracian version Apollo kills Otos and Ephialtes.

This is an interesting interpretation and gives great credit to Erika Simon's erudition and imagination.

And yet a compelling case can be made against both Simon's and other previous explanations of the picture<sup>4</sup> to the effect that it belongs to a different religious world, whose gods, like those of Rome, have borrowed the clothes and appearance of Greek gods but whose nature is drastically different.

Later it will be shown that the chthonian goddess Menerva often appears in situations that are inconsistent with Athena's nature and that she has only superficially been identified with Athena. Likewise, Roman Mars, Greek Ares and Etruscan Maris are by no means identical. Also Hercules-Hercle will be found to show features that are unfamiliar in Greek and State-Roman mythology, for

<sup>3</sup> SIMON 143.

<sup>4</sup> Briefly surveyed *Studien* 51 ff.; 59 n. 1. A short account of the various interpretations in PFIFFIG *RE* 348-49. Bordenache Battaglia (as n. 2) has a bibliography p. 50 and interpretations pp. 52-54. In their accounts of the interpretations both Pffiffig and Battaglia are sometimes incorrect.

the Greek gods and their names did not arrive in a vacuum in Italy. Of the eleven gods on the cista only two have Greek names. We have here a real Italic environment.

Now, if we look at Simon's Greek myth and compare it with the cista picture, we find no mention of Athena in either of its versions. Simon suggests that in an unknown Greek myth, which she believes to be the background for the cista picture, Athena was the liberator of Ares, either alone or together with Artemis. With the stick in her right hand she is applying ambrosia — the elixir of the gods — to his mouth to revitalize his stiff limbs. The Cerberus in the frieze above his head is there to indicate the deadly danger in which he found himself during the imprisonment. Of course, also the agitated water calls for an explanation: Leiber (i.e. Bacchus) makes young wine bubble in the dolium in place of the liberated Ares. Erika Simon further suggests that here we have an illustration from a scene in a satyr drama or a comedy: the cista picture is based on a comedy about the gods in Epicharmos' style. She regrets that we have only a few fragments of his comedies and only an incomplete list of his works.

Erika Simon refers to some other interpretations of the cista picture than her own. She remarks that since the gods of the Berlin cista have Italic names it has been thought that one could here use the cista picture to reconstruct a so far unknown Mars myth, but warns against it: « This is methodologically wrong because the oldest group of Prenestine cistae, in which the Berlin cista belongs, usually is decorated with scenes from Greek mythology » (p. 142).

But would it not also be methodologically wrong to impose Greek mythology, cutting a heel and clipping a toe, on an alien religious organism, in a totally Italic environment? In the cista picture there are only two elements, Mars and the dolium (or pithos), which could be related to the Otos-Ephialtes myth. But even the faintest hint that the brothers are involved is missing. There is no mention anywhere that Athena-Menerva participated — the unknown myth and the Epicharmian drama do not exist anywhere. If the dolium were the prison of Mars, and if he just has been pulled out of it, it would now be empty and not full of fluid. So the suggestion that Leiber lets young wine bubble in the pithos in Mars' place is no better motivated than the unknown Menerva myth or the Epicharmian drama. And what would be the rationale for the bubbling wine? The Cerberus *and* the snake in the frieze above Menerva and Mars show that the place where this « liberation » of Mars happens is in the Underworld. But the myth, as told by Homer, locates Ares' prison in Crete and not in the Underworld, and the idea that Cerberus should symbolize the danger in which Ares lived during his imprisonment is unprecedented and unlikely. And if the myth tells us that Ares was stolen away by Hermes, what place are we then looking at in the cista picture? And did Hermes steal the pithos as well? And so forth. We are forced to accept so many assumptions in order to squeeze the Greek myth into this picture.

## THE PALESTRINA MARIS MYTH.

In *Studien* of 1940 I called attention to a so far overlooked Maris myth, which seems to be a local Palestrina myth, told by Aelian in his *Varia Historia* IX 16. I want to return to it here.

Aelian was born in Latin Palestrina (Praeneste), but wrote in Greek. His work included an invective against Elagabalus, but he waited for the emperor's death (A.D. 222) to publish it. That dates him approximately. Philostratus<sup>5</sup> contends that he never left Italy. Aelian himself — a more reliable source than Philostratus — tells in his *De natura animalium* XI 40 that he had been in Alexandria<sup>6</sup>. Anyway, he must have been well informed about Palestrina and her lore:

*Varia Historia* IX 16:

Τὴν Ἰταλίαν ὥκησαν πρῶτοι Αὐσονες αὐτόχθονες. πρεσβύτατον δὲ γενέσθαι Μάρην τινὰ καλούμενον, οὗ τὰ μὲν ἔμπροσθεν λέγουσιν ἀνθρώπῳ ὅμοια, τὰ κατόπισθεν δὲ ἵππῳ· αὐτό δὲ τοῦνομα εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα φασὶν ἵππομιγῆς δύναται. δοκεῖ δὲ μοι πρῶτος ἵππον ἀναβῆναι καὶ ἐμβαλεῖν αὐτῷ χαλινόν, εἴτα ἐκ τούτου διφυῆς πιστευθῆναι. μυθολογοῦσι δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ βιῶναι ἔτη τρία καὶ εἴκοσι καὶ ἑκατὸν, καὶ ὅτι τρεῖς ἀποθανὼν ἀνεβίω τρεῖς· ἐμοὶ δὲ οὐ πιστὰ δοκοῦσιν.

This myth was always considered a myth about a hero Mares. But it is not about a hero Mares. Μάρης at the time of writing was pronounced Maris, and that is the name of the Etruscan god who was identified with Mavors-Mars. Aelian's way of spelling is a natural way of transliterating Maris into Greek at that time<sup>7</sup>.

According to that myth Maris was the first of the autochthonous Ausones; Ausonia was originally a part of southern Central Italy<sup>8</sup>. The myth is a typical Italic explanation of the origin of a people or a city, and similar myths are known from other regions, too. Maris is here a centaur. The horse and the centaur are chthonian animals (*Studien* 72-78) and in particular identified with Mars in the *equus October*. He lived 123 years, which is an Etruscan *saeculum*<sup>9</sup> and appa-

<sup>5</sup> *Vitae sophistarum* 31, 3. Aelian was said never to have left Italy nor to have been aboard a ship nor to have seen the sea.

<sup>6</sup> "I saw a holy ox with five legs, a gift to that god, in the great city of Alexandria".

<sup>7</sup> E. SCHWYZER, *Gr. Gr.* I 186: "In der Kaiserzeit muss η = ι nach und nach die herrschende Aussprache geworden sein".

<sup>8</sup> PW VI col. 2561 s. vv. Ausonia and Ausones. See also E. T. SALMON, *The Making of Roman Italy*, London 1982, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Censorinus, *De die natali* xvii, 6: *Quare in Tuscis historiis, quae octavo eorum saeculo scriptae sunt, ut Varro testatur, ... scriptum est quattuor prima saecula annorum fuisse centenum, quintum centum viginti trium, sextum undeviginti et centum, septimum totidem, octavum tum demum agi...* 123 is the longest of the Etruscan saecula.

rently an Etruscan detail. Furthermore, he died three times and came back to life three times.

The three lives were also given to another person from Palestrina: Erulus, king of that city and mythic son of the goddess Feronia<sup>10</sup>. The whole tradition is local.

This is most likely the Mars myth which is illustrated on the Praenestine cista. The picture shows Mars at the moment when he is brought back to life, — or rather when he is being reclaimed for the upper world by Menerva. We do not know how this was conceived by the ancient world. But somehow the revived must be prepared for the world to which he returns. He has been immersed in the fire or the boiling water of the dolium, the orthodox way of bringing the dead back to life<sup>11</sup>. It has been objected to this interpretation that Mars in the picture is too old for somebody being born again<sup>12</sup>. However, the myth says that he was revived, came to life again (ἀνεβίω), not that he was born again (see below). And it is interesting that on the exergue of the early 4th century mirror from Todi Hercle (Hercules), whom the pontifices declared to be the same person as Mars (see below), is represented as an adolescent in the same age group as Mars; he is sitting with a fire under him and may be in exactly the same situation as the young Mars (*tav. XXXVIII b*). Hercle's companion Vilae is shown on a mirror in Bloomington as an adolescent crouching over a similar vessel with stylized flames on either side along the margin of the exergue<sup>13</sup>.

There are a couple of Etruscan mirrors in which the same act of revival seems to be depicted (*tav. XXXVIII c-d*). The young Maris in these pictures looks younger than the Mars of the Praenestine cista. But still the interesting detail in all pictures is that the young Mars has been immersed into an amphora, that is, into a vessel that is not meant to be a bathtub. In his article about the picture on the Praenestine cista Fr. Marx refers to the urn which symbolizes the Styx river where Thetis immerses Achilles to make him invulnerable<sup>14</sup>.

Apart from the similarity of the urn and the amphorae there is no relationship between Achilles' and the Marises' baths: they serve different purposes. The essence of the Maris ceremony is demonstrated by *tav. XXXVIII b*, in which Maris husrnana is being pulled casually out of the amphora by Menerva. We must conclude that he has been dunked in it. Here the three young Marises are shown together, maybe symbolizing the three Maris lives. Another similarity: Mars and Maris husrnana

<sup>10</sup> *Studien* 62 f.

<sup>11</sup> *Studien* 53 f.; 60. A charming late sixth century vase picture in BM shows Medea boiling a ram in front of Pelias. Guirand's *Greek Mythology*, London 1967, 116.

<sup>12</sup> SIMON 141.

<sup>13</sup> The mirror from Todi: *Mon. Ant. Linc.* XXIII, 664-69, *tav. III*. The best picture of the mirror in Bloomington: Nancy Thomson de Grummond, *Reflections on the Etruscan Mirror*, *Archaeology* XXXIV, 1981, p. 54. L. BONFANTE, *St. Etr.* XLV, 1977, 149-68.

<sup>14</sup> FR. MARX, in *Archäol. Zeitung* XLIII (1885) col. 172.

in *tav. XXXVIII a, c* are shown not sitting but balancing in an awkward position on the edges of their vessels. Still another inner relationship, which cannot be explained, is that it is Maris husrnana whom Menerva is handling in *tav. XXXVIII c* as well as in *tav. XXXVIII d*.

Erika Simon (146) thinks that the amphora in fig. 4 contains a fertility drug. She says that the scenario of the mirror clearly (*inequivocabilmente*) centers on fertility: the amphora (or crater) contains a drink which brings fertility (*una bevanda che rende fecondi*). Simon quotes Ovid's *Fasti* 4,151f. where the concoction given as a drink to young brides to become fertile is described. Now, one might ask why newly born, or rather revived, young boys would need a fertility drug under a regimen which is designed for women? And, looking at Maris husrnana, who is being dragged out of the amphora, head first, one might ask the prosaic question how he gets to the drink? Ovid says that Venus drinks the drug (*hoc bibit* v. 154). With what part of the body does Maris husrnana drink? In this case one has to disagree with the distinguished German scholar.

These young Maris are at least nine days old by Roman reckoning: they are all wearing their bullae (Festus 107 Lindsay s.v. *dies lustricus*). Michaelis<sup>15</sup> pointed out that what Menerva does to Mars (*tav. XXXVIII a*) is part of the *dies lustricus* ritual. Persius II 31-34 tells how a grandmother or a god-fearing aunt who knows how to protect against evil eyes lifts the boy from the cradle and first purifies his forehead and moist small lips with cleansing saliva on her obscene middle finger (i. e. the finger which is a powerful substitute for the apotropaic phallus) and then prays for his future. The ceremony in this case is rather irrelevant. The ceremony may be considered symbolic and be interpreted as an introduction to a new life.

Who are these Maris? They are not the sons of Mars, as has been suggested<sup>16</sup>. In Maris husrnana, husrnana is an adjective meaning young; the *-nana* must be a dittography<sup>17</sup>. Maris halna is Maris with the adjective halna (thalna), also meaning young<sup>18</sup>. While these adjectives are reasonably well interpreted — despite

<sup>15</sup> *Annali dell'Istituto* XLV, 1873, 221 f. Cf. J. MARQUARDT, *Privatleben der Römer*<sup>2</sup> I reprint 1964, 83 ff.

<sup>16</sup> SCHOLZ 156. Opposed, PFIFFIG RE 35.

<sup>17</sup> *bušur*, pl. = *clenar* TLE 887, 889; TLE 888 shows *clenar* as synonym w. *bušur*. *busine vinum*, *buslne vinum* four times in the *Agr. Mum.*: young wine, must. *buzrna*: *juvenilis*.-na adjectival suffix, *Runes-Cortsen* 79; *Pfiffig ES* 92 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *halna* developed from *thalna*. S. P. CORTSEN, *Lyd og Skrift i Etruskisk*, Copenhagen 1908. 77-81, has compiled material showing the development  $\theta > h$ , ad modum  $\theta ui > hui$ . However he remarks (p. 81): "There are only few completely reliable proofs of the development  $\theta > h$ ; but the development itself is indisputable, parallel to  $c > \chi > h$  and  $(p >) \varphi > h$ ". Likewise Pallottino, *Elementi di lingua etrusca* 22 15. The goddess *thalna* has been identified as Hebe-Juventus by Vetter (*Glotta* XIII, 146-48). Vetter also points to the family name Juventius Thalna where the Italic nomen of the family is the translation of the Etruscan cognomen Thalna (or vice versa). Cf. *Runes-Cortsen* 79; *Studien* 57.

reservations about  $\thetaalna > halna$  —, Maris isminthians poses a problem. It is the same combination of Maris and a qualifying adjective or noun in genitive. Isminthians has been considered a derivative of *Smintheus*, an epithet of Apollo's<sup>19</sup>. Or it has tacitly been assumed that isminthians, like the other two epithets, would mean young, but we have no factual support for that assumption. There is also great uncertainty about the connection with the Greek name Σμινθεύς. In Etruscan Σμινθεύς is rendered as Sminthe<sup>20</sup>, and it is conceivable that Maris isminthians would have received the -i- which separates the two s's through anaptyxis<sup>21</sup>. But it must be considered unlikely that isminthians here would be other than a characterizing adjective of the same value as halna and hursnana. Apollo's Etruscan name is Ap(u)lu, and to create a combination like Maris Turans or Maris Hercules, the name would have been Maris Ap(u)lus.

Regardless of the meaning of the epithet isminthians, this young Maris has clearly the same status as the two other Maris, and together they may represent the three lives of Maris. We do not know what concept ancient man had about the three lives of Maris. In a different connection A.J. Piffig, who does not know this Maris myth, points out that some persons were believed to have more than one soul (*RE* 13). Whatever the concept may be, it is not likely that the three Maris lives would be three identical courses of life; each would be different from the other two, and each may have been distinguished by its own Maris epithet — halna, hursnana, isminthians. The spectacular thing is that these three young Maris have been depicted together; they belong together.

On the other hand, there can be little doubt about the meaning of Maris Turans or Maris Hercules: it is Turan's Maris and Hercules's Maris. What kind of association is expressed by the genitive is an open question. Is Maris a son of Turan? That Maris may be a son of Hercules is very probable, and in that case Menerva seems to be the mother (see below). Maris Turans is known from a mirror (*G-K* 381). He is a naked, winged adolescent in a chlamys, with a head band and leaning on a spear. This picture is not well preserved, but good enough to be interpreted as Theseus and Helena embracing; on Helena's side, with a tree between them, is Maris Turan's<sup>22</sup>. Maris' connection with Turan is as likely as that with Menerva, not the least since both goddesses seem to be one of the Minoan mother goddesses (see below). What local variation of cult myths is expressed herein we have no way of verifying.

<sup>19</sup> C. DE SIMONE, *Die griechischen Entlehnungen im Etruskischen* II (1970) 253; 333-34. E. FIESEL, *Namen d. griech. Mythos im Etruskischen*, Göttingen 1928 59 f.; 98; PFIFFIG *RE* 360; G. DUMÉZIL, *Etrusque Maris Isminthians*, *Rev. de phil., de litt. et d'hist. anciennes* XXIX, 1954, 9-18 expresses his ideas on the subject.

<sup>20</sup> PFIFFIG *ES* 178.

<sup>21</sup> G. DUMÉZIL, as note 19.

<sup>22</sup> PFIFFIG *RE* 249; 280. Deecke believed that *Maris* in *Maris Turans* derived from gr: *meîrax*.

## HERCLE.

Maris Hercle's may indicate that Maris is Hercle's son, as mentioned above<sup>23</sup>. Etruscan Hercle has not much in common with Greek Herakles<sup>24</sup>. He is seen as a god of wells and baths, sometimes depicted as sailing on a raft made of amphorae, with the lion's skin set up as a sail, or on land with his foot resting on an amphora lying on the ground. This Hercle can only be observed in S. Italian or Etruscan territory. On the Piacenza liver he is placed prominently on the gall bladder with Neθuns. In the Zagreb mummy wrappings Neθuns appears as a more prominent god than Tinia. This situation corresponds to the conditions in the oldest Greek religion as revealed by the Linear B inscriptions: here Poseidon is more important than Zeus. All this indicates how important Hercle was to the archaic Italo-Etruscan world<sup>25</sup>.

Hercle is shown with young persons on various mirrors:

One (G-K 181) carries the picture of Hercle with a club in his right hand and with a winged Epiur on his left arm. He faces an enthroned Tinia behind whom is an enthroned θalna. Behind Hercle, an enthroned Turan.

Another mirror (G-K 335B) depicts three persons: to the right a Menerva in the complete attire of Athena Polias, including the owl, holding her lance in her left hand and lifting her right hand in a gesture meant for a naked Hercle, who has bent forward to lift the adolescent Epiur off the ground.

In the mirror G-K 165 Hercle, with the lion's skin hanging from his left forearm and with the club shouldered on his left shoulder, holds a young, anonymous child, who sits on Hercle's right hand, facing Hercle, while Menerva, with a diadem on her head (no helmet) and with a necklace, is taking hold of the child's right arm. Behind Menerva is Turan. Behind Hercle is a naked Munθu, reaching up to place a crown on his head.

There are yet another couple of mirrors with Hercle and an anonymous child: one in Göttingen, on which Hercle holds the child in the same manner as on the previous mirror, in the presence of Turan and Menerva<sup>26</sup>, and a second one (G-K V 64B), on which Hercle, between θanr and θalna, holds a naked child on his arm.

The name Maris Hercules is provided by the mirror G-K V Nachtr. 16, where the name is written next to an adolescent in a himation. He is in company with

<sup>23</sup> To Maris husrnana, halna and isminθians Pfiffig and other scholars wou'd like to add *Epiur*, which then is considered a Mars epithet. Pfiffig sees iconographic similarities between Maris Hercules and Epiur (*RE*, 351-52).

<sup>24</sup> PFIFFIG *RE* 340f.

<sup>25</sup> See PFIFFIG, *Einführung in die Etruskologie* (1972) 64.

<sup>26</sup> *Abb. Ges. d. Wissensch. Göttingen, phil.-hist. Klasse, N. F. XVI*, 4, 1919, p. 44 n. 29.

Apulu, Artumes, Hercle, and Vile. In this latest case Menerva was not present with Hercle.

But on the two previously mentioned mirrors (*tav. XXXVIII c-d*) Menerva with the Maris child is the central figure. They will both be described here, although Hercle is shown directly only in *tav. XXXVIII d*. In both mirrors the Maris child she is holding is Maris husrnana, whether it is planned or coincidental. While the Menerva in *tav. XXXVIII d* is dressed up as Athena Polias with Korinthian helmet, peplos, aegis and gorgoneion, and with a lance in her right hand, the Menerva in *tav. XXXVIII c* is dressed in a much simpler way. She wears a helmet of a much simpler type, a necklace around her neck; in her belt is a panther skin. Remarkable is her full, motherly right breast, which has forced its way out of her garment. She seems to just have pulled Maris husrnana out of the luxurious amphora with the life-giving bath. On the exergue of the mirror is the picture of a naked Lasa, who is pulling a robe over her head. Her name is given as Recial, and she is also seen on other mirrors where new youth or immortality is given<sup>27</sup>. Turan is on the left side of the Maris amphora, gesturing with both hands. Behind Turan is a Leinth<sup>28</sup>, who here is a young man with a spear in his left hand. His left foot is resting on a rock, and a Maris halna is sitting on Leinth's left knee. Behind Menerva is an athletic young man, leaning on a spear in his right hand, with a chlamys hanging down his back. A line of eleven betyls is perched on the architrave behind the whole scene.

The mirror *tav. XXXVIII d* adds a few details. The acting person is Menerva, who is pulling Maris husrnana out of the amphora. On the other side of the amphora is again Turan. Behind Menerva is Turms, having Maris isminθians on his left knee. Behind Turan is a naked young man with a chlamys hanging down his back, leaning on a spear in his right hand. On the edge of the mirror his name is given as Aran, which has been emendated as (L)aran<sup>29</sup>, the Etruscan god of war. Behind him stands a naked woman with a robe over her shoulders, holding Maris halna on her left arm. In the exergue is Hercle with his club and the amphora raft at his knees, an indication that Hercle is involved in what happens here.

#### THE QUESTION OF PARENTHOOD.

To discuss Hercle's relationship with Menerva and the young Maris boys it is best first to remember that Hercle is shown with Menerva and Turan together, but more frequently with Menerva alone<sup>30</sup>. Menerva is his most steady companion,

<sup>27</sup> PFIFFIG RE 282-83.

<sup>28</sup> *Leinth* is used as name for both a female and a male deity of death: PFIFFIG RE 281-82.

<sup>29</sup> PFIFFIG RE 310.

<sup>30</sup> BAYET 217-23. *Mlaχ*, which Bayet considers a goddess, cannot be a name. It must mean offering, *oblatio*. PFIFFIG, *Studien z. d. Agramer Mumienbinde*, *Öst. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist.*

to the extent that she comes along on some of his Twelve Labours, when he goes for the apples of the Hesperides (Bayet 125), when he fights the Nemean Lion (Bayet 104), or the Erymanthian Boar (Bayet 53), when he fights the Amazon Hippolyte (Bayet 92), and on other occasions, as recorded by Bayet (217-22). This proves a companionship other than the Menerva-Hercle-young Maris connection. The young children whom he holds in his hands, and who mostly are in the centre of the picture, reveal his paternity by all usual conventions. Maris Hercle's, apparently an outright statement of a father-son relationship, has been mentioned above. Menerva is present in some of the pictures, and the children are sometimes handled by him, sometimes by her. It all creates a parental atmosphere, a father and a mother, shown in a conventional way, and some scholars believe that Menerva is the mother<sup>31</sup>.

There is much evidence to support these scholars. In the article « Minerva Mater » (as n. 31, 120-24) Ragna Enking has supplied proof that Athena was a goddess of fertility, in people as well as in the fields. One Greek myth claims that by Hephaistos she is the mother of Apollon Patroos (Enking 121). Although Martin P. Nilsson<sup>32</sup> calls this myth « belanglos », he quotes at the same time material which shows that similar ideas existed elsewhere in Greece. One myth is known from Pausanias (5.3.3.), according to which Herakles had devastated Elis and its people, and, consequently, the women of Elis prayed to Athena that they might conceive at once when they had been with their men. Their request was granted, and to thank the goddess they built a temple for Athena Meter at the Βαδύ River.

Is it interesting to see how Nilsson (as n. 32, 443-44) is puzzled by the Athena Meter of the women of Elis. The strange and remarkable information cannot be explained away, he says, and it is so much stranger because the epithet Meter never was given to other goddesses than Ge.

The epithet is hardly strange, on the contrary, it shows in what category the women of Elis placed Athena. Deciding here is the reality: what function does this divinity fulfill for the population, and how do the people see her? They worship her as Athena Meter, and that is the most important piece of information that we get out of Pausanias' myth. It is difficult to follow Scholz (158), who will take the myth as a proof of Athena Meter's virginity, while the reality of

*Kl. Denkschr.* 81. bd. Vienna 1963 p. 37 g.; CORTSEN, in *Runes-Cortsen* 86; *Glotta* XXVII, 1939, 271 ff.

<sup>31</sup> PFIFFIG *RE* 30-31; most important: RAGNA ENKING, *Minerva Mater*, *Archaeol. Jahrb.* 59-60 (1944-45, publ. 1949) 111-124. BAYET 218-19 finds that some instances, where Menerva hands a drink or a flower to Hercle, create an impression of *une union amoureuse*. Opposed: DUMÉZIL (as n. 19) 11; SIMON 147 opposes it because Scholz does so (SCHOLZ 147-48). Scholz' motive is that Athena-Minerva in Greek and Italic religion never is a mother herself, her virginity is always emphasized - an outdated statement.

<sup>32</sup> M. P. NILSSON, *Ges. d. gr. Religion* (Iwan Müller's Hdb. V, 2, 1) I (1967) 443-44.

Pausanias' myth confirms our concept of Athena Meter's nature: firstly, the women of Elis address the same kind of prayer to Athena Meter as is addressed to any other mother goddess, including the Etruscan Menerva (see below); secondly, also Herakles is involved with Athena in this myth in the same way as Hercle with Menerva, here in a more negative way; thirdly, the Athena temple is built at a river like the temples of other chthonian ancestral divinities.

Enking (121-22) stresses that Athena-Minerva is the successor of pre-Greek mother goddesses, and that here the Etruscan version has preserved the most archaic features. To this could be added that one cannot conclude that the content of Italo-Etruscan art is Greek because the form is Greek. Virgin Athena has never been so consistently tied to a man as Menerva is tied to Hercle. The parental atmosphere is more convincing if one looks toward Rome and considers how Roman legend pictures Hercules' relations with Acca Larentia, who seems to be Rome's answer to Etruria's Menerva. One expects him to act in the same way with Menerva as with Acca Larentia<sup>33</sup>.

The link from the young Marises to Italic or Roman Mars is not a natural one. They are not identical in the sense that the names Maris and Mavors-Mars have any etymological link. We still have to see an etymological demonstration that the two are the same word<sup>34</sup>. And since the Praenestine cista, too, illustrates the same Maris myth as the mirrors, it seems that the myth told by Aelian about Mares-Marīs has been interpreted locally as a myth about Mars. The cista picture testifies to that by using the name Mars. The myth, according to its content, may have been either Etruscan or Italic: the core of it is Italic — or rather, pre-Italic — but may have been transmitted by the Etruscans. The centaur is the Mars horse (cf. equus October) and the hero god from whom the tribe descends. The identification with Maris and the addition of the Etruscan saeculum comes out of an Etruscan background. Those who have identified Maris with Mars have upgraded Maris because universal Mavors-Mars at the time was a greater god than Maris.

#### MARIS-MARS AND HIS CHTHONIAN CONNECTIONS.

A look at Maris' position or nature and at those with whom he was associated will then tell what he was like and why the population of one part of Italy felt that Mars and Maris were identical. The gods who are of major concern here are Menerva, Hercle, Acca Larentia, Mars, and Maris. It is characteristic of them all that they are chthonian, concerned with growth and regeneration and powerful in the Underworld.

*Menerva's* chthonian character is proven by her altar, dug into the ground

<sup>33</sup> Hercules and Acca Larentia are lovers; she is variously involved with Romulus-Remus. Plut. *Qu. Rom.* 35; *Studien* 110 ff.; 130 ff.; E. TABELING, *Mater. Larum*.

<sup>34</sup> Walde-Hofmann II 45 (s. v. Mars); PFIFFIG RE 249.

and equipped with a drain for libations<sup>35</sup>. This is also the case in her recently (1965) excavated temple at S. Marinella. The altar is also here set up for libations, and it is well documented that Menerva is the goddess worshipped in the temple. Menerva may have replaced an older predecessor, whose name most likely was Lanchumita<sup>36</sup>. But it is not unthinkable that Lanchumita simply was Minerva's epithet. Minerva was a healing goddess, but also a mother goddess, as confirmed by the inscription on a leaden strip found in a well at the S. Marinella temple. In this somewhat fragmented inscription a woman pledges a generous sacrifice to Lanchumite if she may give birth to a boy<sup>37</sup>. The motherly nature of the goddess, which is so evident in the mirrors, is in agreement with what we see in S. Marinella. Menerva's name may very well be Etruscan. The etymology which has been generally accepted (\*Menesoua > Menerva), has been proved wrong by inscriptional evidence from Veii from the sixth century; in these inscriptions the name has been written with an *r*, while the rhotacism (*s* > *r*), which is the precondition for the theory about Menerva's name, did not occur till the third century<sup>38</sup>. That precludes the possibility of the name being Indo-european — unless a better etymology can be proved.

Mars' chthonian character seems now well established. In Rome he was associated with Acca Larentia, in whose honour the Larentalia were celebrated on December 23, a festival for the dead, conducted by the pontifices and the flamen Quirinalis (*Studien* 28ff., 143f.). The equus October rite, in which blood from the horse's penis is dripped on the altar of the Regia, is a fertility rite<sup>39</sup>. Mars brings fertility to the fields and protects the crops and stock (Cato, *de agric.* 83; 141 2-4). Even after the reform of the Mars cult (see below) and the downgrading of the original universal Mars he is remembered in Perugia in the early empire (*CIL* XI 1919): A. Domitius evoc. aug. made provisions in his will to have a *puteal* (i.e. a *munds*)<sup>40</sup> set up by Herennius Priscus and dedicated to Mars

<sup>35</sup> PFIFFIG *RE* 58; 76-79; 258.

<sup>36</sup> PFIFFIG, *Ein Opfergelübde an die Etruskische Minerva*, *Öst. Akademie d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Klasse. Denkschriften* 99. Bd. Vienna 1968 11-13.

<sup>37</sup> See summary *ibid.* 114-15.

<sup>38</sup> PFIFFIG *RE* 256; E. KIECKERS, *Hist. Lat. Gramm.* (Darmstadt) 1965 I 114-15.

<sup>39</sup> SCHOLZ 139-40; 159-60. Chthonian horse: *Studien* 72-78. Romulus-Remus, Caeculus: SCHOLZ 128-30.

<sup>40</sup> PFIFFIG *RE* 315, with fig. 127a & b, shows monsters coming up from the Underworld through two *mundus*. - Today the chthonian character of Mars is generally understood and accepted. One exception is French writer Georges Dumézil, who in several places of his vast production turns against the chthonian Mars in my *Studien*. The present article answers most of his criticism, and I find no reason to take up the discussion here. The intervening 43 years have not disproved the chthonian nature of archaic Mars. It is now a dead issue. A condensation of Dumézil's criticism can be found in his *Naissance de Rome*, 6th ed. Paris 1944, 49 ff. or his *Archaic Roman Religion* 1-2, U. P. Chicago, 1970, 241-44 and 677-80, transl. from *La religion romaine archaïque*, Paris 1966 pp. 243 ff.; 644 ff.

Augustus: *Marti Aug./sacrum/ A. Domitius (. . .) F/ Tro. Nepos evoc/ aug. testamento/ poni iussit cura/ (Her)enni Pudentis/(. . .) Prisci*. This is a serious act of faith and important to testator — and most likely subject to pontifical law, since it is set up in public.

*Acca Larentia*, the mother of the Lares, another chthonian mother goddess, is part of the Mars-Romulus myth, of which several versions exist. She may be the mother of the twins Romulus and Remus. Or she may have been the wife of Faunus and, consequently, a she-wolf<sup>41</sup>. The Larentalia, celebrated at a grave — the strongest proof of her chthonian character — were mentioned above.

*Hercle-Hercules* has many features in common with Mars, so many indeed that the pontifices declared that Hercules and Mars were the same person<sup>42</sup>. Furthermore, Maris and Hercle are close neighbours on the Piacenza liver, between the gallbladder and the wheel, together with Leθam<sup>43</sup>. Hercules receives sacrifice jointly with Ceres on December 21<sup>44</sup>. Hercules Victor in Tivoli has *salii* like Mars<sup>45</sup>. In the same way as the Mars boy is seen in fire or boiling water on the Praenestine cista (*tav. XXXVIII a*), the Hercle boy is seen sitting in flames in the handle exergue of an Etruscan mirror from Todi (*tav. XXXVIII b*), as mentioned above. Verrius Flaccus (from Palestrina) gives us the information that Hercules, like Faustulus, in Rome has been espoused to Acca Larentia<sup>46</sup>, which simply means that in Etruscan land he was paired with the chthonian goddess Menerva, in Roman territory with Acca Larentia, an *interpretatio Romana* of Menerva.

About *Maris* not much is known. As mentioned, there is no indication that the two names Maris and Mars etymologically have the same origin. Furthermore, while Mars after the Tarquin reform was divided into two (Mars of the official state cult and the old agrarian Mars), the obscure Maris and the Etruscan god of war Laran have always been two different gods. Maris is listed on the leaden plate from Magliano together with other divinities: Cauθa, the sun god; Aisera, who has been the object of extensive discussions among etruscologists. Pfiffig surveyed the discussion more than once<sup>47</sup> and has concluded that Aisera is an important chthonian deity, a Magna Mater mother goddess and mistress of birth and growth. This conclusion is based on the kind of sacrifice which Aisera receives. θanr and Calu are well documented: θanr is a birth goddess, while Calu is a god of death<sup>48</sup>. They may have been the divine Etruscan couple who was identified with Greek-imported Aita (Hades) and Phersipnei (Persephone). Suri

<sup>41</sup> *Studien* 110 ff.; E. TABELING, *Mater Larum* 39 ff.

<sup>42</sup> *Studien* 86; Serv. *Aen.* VIII 275; Macrobian. III 12, 5.

<sup>43</sup> BAYET 244 f.; PFIFFIG *RE* 126.

<sup>44</sup> WISSOWA 282; Macrobian. III 11, 10.

<sup>45</sup> *Studien* 86; Macrobian. III 12.

<sup>46</sup> *Studien* 110; 121.

<sup>47</sup> *Studien* z. d. Agr. Mumienb. (as n. 30) 68-75. PFIFFIG *ES* 262-64.

<sup>48</sup> PFIFFIG *RE* 319-20.

was an oracular deity, like other chthonian gods, for instance Jupiter Indiges, about whom more will be said below. Maris Menita Afr is here characterized by the company in which he finds himself — a predominantly chthonian company.

*Maris Almus Pater.* The Maris section of the Magliano inscription gives us still more information about Maris. In the inscription his name is — in dedicatory genitive — Marisl Menitla Afrs. The epithet Menita is derived from the root *men-* to give, to bring (examples of derivatives: *Thes. Linguae Etruscae* I 239-40) and *afrs* could be objective genitive pl. r *Afr*, forefather, is etymologically connected with *aprilis* and *Aphrodite*, who, like Dionysos, is a divinity of the dead and the living and comes out of the oldest stratum of Mediterranean religion. This has been pointed out by S. P. Cortsen. He combined these elements and concluded that Maris Menita Afrs would mean Mars ψυχροπόρος<sup>49</sup>. Here Afrs is considered objective genitive, governed by Menita.

However, the difficulty is that nowhere has Maris or Mars received the charge of bringing the dead to Elysium or Hades. It is very likely that we have misunderstood the name of the god. There is no doubt about the meaning of *afrs*. *Afr* is a forefather, as said already<sup>50</sup>, *afr nac* is a venerable forefather = *manes*, as *ati nacna* is a grandmother, and *apa nacna* is a grandfather. The same combination of *afr* and *nac* is at the end of the Magliano inscription: *afr naces*. The meaning of it appears most clearly in the inscription CIE 5213, TLE 363: (... *a)veleš feluskeš tusnutni(eš suθi)/alpan alaš mini mul/uvanike hirumi(a) aφersnaχs* . . . . (Giving gladly a grave to Aule Feluske Tusnutnie, Hirumia dedicated me to his *manes* . . .). This inscription is on a stele from 7.-6. century, about 200 years older than the Magliano inscription<sup>51</sup>. Our misreading of the Maris

<sup>49</sup> "Der Monatsname Aprilis", *Glotta* XXVI, 1938, 270-74, see esp. 272 n. 1; *Glotta* XXVII, 1939, 277.

<sup>50</sup> *afr* to Pallottino, *Etr.*, 415, is "padre, antenati, parentes" (*aper-ucen* possibly equals lat. *parentare*); to PfiFFIG *ES* 283 it is "Eltern"; Stoltenberg, *Etr. Sprachl.* 14 "Vorfahren"; Nelida Caffarello, *Avviamento*, Dizionario, loco suo: *aper* "azione sacra, sacrificio funebre?".

<sup>51</sup> A brief commentary on the Maris section of the Magliano inscription (TLE 359). *Marisl Menitla Afrs cialaθ χimθm.avilsχ.eca.cepen.tuθiu.θuχ.ixutevr.bešni.mulveni.eθ.zuci.am.ar.* The Maris name has already been discussed. In *cialaθ* one must consider PfiFFIG's suggestion (*ES* § 104) that *cialaθ* is an older form for *cialχ* and that the development *cialaθ* > *cialaχ* > *cialχ* is the same as in *zilaθ* > *zilaχ* > *zilχ*. By rejecting Cortsen's translation of *cialaθ* as "bull", which seems to be just a guess because the god is Mars-Maris, or Stoltenberg's "Dreistieropfer" et al. and accepting *cialaθ* = *cialχ*, this paragraph becomes uniform with the beginning of the instruction for the Cauθα worship: *LXXX(e)z* = *cezpalχ(e)z*; one has to disregard the point between *LXXX* and *ez*. It is the same kind of adverb as *θunz*, *ciz* or *cespz*. *Cialaθ.χimθm.avilsχ.* indicates the frequency of the offering. Similar informations are given with the other offerings in this inscription, but no convincing interpretation of *χim* (+θ+m) has so far been found. *Cepen* is a priest. There is general agreement that *tuθiu* is an adjective developed from the Umbrian loan word *tuta* "city, community". To be rejected is Cortsen's suggestion "the first" as a derivative of *θu(n)* "one" (*Glotta* 27 (1939) 272-73). "The first" in Etruscan is *θuns-na* (PfiFFIG *ES* 108

name is that we have failed to understand that *Afr* as well as *Menita* are epithets to Maris, three dedicatory genitives in row — no grammatical connection between *Menita* and *Afr*. Rendered in Latin his name could be Maris Almus Pater — Almus in accordance with Alma Ceres, Alma Venus, almus parens, and Pater in accordance with, for instance, Sol Pater, Ju-piter, Aeneas Pater — an epithet given to gods from whom a people or a tribe descends: Maris can claim it because he was a god from whom the nation of the Ausones descended.

#### ARCHAIC GODS.

The previous examination of the Aelianic Maris myth has given some insight into an archaic Mars cult in which there was a shorter distance between the dead and living. It shocked Mommsen deeply that the *Fasti Praenestini* and Macrobius both stated that there were *feriae Jovi* on the day, December 23, when Larentalia were celebrated. « Wie dies individuelle Totenfest zugleich ein Fest des Gottes

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& 111). Furthermore, *AM* VII 8 has *cepen tutin* where *tutin* is archaic genitive of *tuta*. "The priest of the state" or "the city" is a probable translation. *Ixutevr* is another priest or priest's helper; *hešni* is an unknown ἡπαξ; it looks like a substantive in accusative, meaning some kind of offering; *Runes-Cortsen* 86 translate *hešni mulveni* "soll geben (und) schenken", considering both words identical grammatical forms. The end of the Maris section is of interesting brevity. The liturgical instructions have been abbreviated considerably owing to a lack of space. The inscription has been chiselled into the sides of a nearly round, or rather heart-shaped, leaden plate. Both sides are written in the same way: the lines form a spiral, beginning at the edge and going counterclockwise round and round, ending in the centre. Approaching the centre of the plate, with nowhere to go and not space enough for the whole text, the writer shortened the text, but so that it would be easily understood by readers with a knowledge of liturgical matters. Maris, being the last of the gods on that side — after Cauḥa and Aisera —, had the instruction about his worship reduced to *eθ zuci am ar* at the end. A comparison with the liturgical instructions in the Agram Mummy Wrappings makes the Maris text clear. For instance *AM* X 2-4: . . . *ciem . cealxus . ca(pe)ni . marem . zac . ame . nacum . cepen . flanax . vacl . ar*. ("in 27 sacrificial bowls there shall be *marem zac* and then the *flanach* priest shall make a libation"). *ame*: there shall be; *marem* a fluid; *zac* an unknown adjective; *ar*: imperative: make; *vacl*: libation. In *AM* *ar*, imperative, is found three times, every time with *vacl* as object (VII 21; VIII 10, X 4); of the six times that *ara* (3 . person pres.) appears, three times it is with *vacl*. It is a frequent formula, and knowledgeable people would understand it even if *vacl* were left out — especially since *ar* alone could be used in the meaning of lat. *facere*, to sacrifice. Etruscan spelling permits us to read *am* as *ame*, cf. *Mnerva* = *Menerva* (PfiFFIG *ES* 29 bis), and so the Magliano inscription falls in with the expressions *vinum acilḥ ame* (VIII 8), which also is followed by *vacl ar*, or the already quoted *marem zac ame* (X 3). In the Magliano inscription one reads then *zuci ame*. *Zuci* is of uncertain meaning — most likely it is a fluid. It appears also three times on the Cippus Perusinus. With all due reservations, the Maris section could be translated approximately in this way: "To Maris Almus Pater, thirty times a year (?) the State Priest and one (θu-c) assistant priest shall offer *hešni*. There must be *zuci*; make libation". The greatest lacuna in our knowledge of the Maris cult is that we cannot interpret the two offerings to the god: *hešni* and *zuci*.

des Lichtes und Lebens, des Jupiters, ist, dieser Rätsel Wort ist wohl auf immer verschollen » he says<sup>52</sup>.

One of the most important contributions to research into Roman religion in the later years was made by Carl Koch with his book « Der römische Juppiter », Frankfurt a. M. 1937. He points to the cult at the Numicus river by Lavinium for Sol Indiges, Jupiter Indiges, and Aeneas Pater Indiges, the one succeeding the other<sup>53</sup>. The cult has a grave as its centre, a concept which is in extreme conflict with all later Roman ideas about Jupiter. The *flamen Dialis* of the later Jupiter could not go close to a grave or a corpse, could have nothing to do with the cult of the dead, and could not touch or mention beans or goats or get close to horses — all out of the chthonic world. But Koch finds evidence of chthonian Jupiter in many places. For instance: *CIL* X 3802 and 5799 (*ILS* 3071) show altars at which Jupiter and the Manes are worshipped together. *CIL* X 797 (*ILS* 5004) from the Jupiter temple in Pompeii shows that Sp. Turranius, besides other religious duties, also was *sacrorum principiorum p. R. Quirit. nominisque Latini quai apud Laurentis coluntur flam. Dialis flam. Martialis*, — in other words *flamen Dialis* and *flamen Martialis* at the same time. Behind Jupiter Indiges we can also see Vediovis (Koch 61f.), whose cult brings us back all the way to Alba Longa (Koch 63-67). An altar found at Bovillae in Latium (*CIL* I 807; XIV 2387; *ILS* 2988) is dedicated to Vediovis with this inscription: (in front) *Vediovei Patrei genteiles Iuliei*/ (on the side and in the back) *Vedi(ovei) aara/ leege Albana dicata*/. That means that the Julian clan had Vediovis as their forefather, and that, in the last analysis, the contents of Vergil's Aeneid is not something thought up by either Vergil or Augustus but simply part of the old cult myth. The Julii descended from Vediovis and Aeneas Pater in the same way as Latinus descended from Sol Indiges (*Aen.* XII 161-64), or the Aurelii from the sun under the name of Ausel<sup>54</sup>.

Einar Gjerstad has not so long ago shown that Vediovis most likely is a pre-Indoeuropean god<sup>55</sup>. At the site of the Vediovis temple on the Capitolium of Rome, in the location *inter duos lucos* Colini in his excavation found pre-urban pottery and ex-votos, and after a study of Vediovis and his cult in Rome Gjerstad finds a parallel to it in the painting on the Minoan sarcophagus in Hagia Triada showing a vegetation god, who dies in the fall and is revived in the spring<sup>56</sup>. He and Vediovis are both young gods, and the sacred animal of both is the goat.

<sup>52</sup> *Römische Forschungen* II 4; Wissowa 116 has a similar, strongly worded statement.

<sup>53</sup> Koch o. l. 39; also Koch, *Gestirnverehrung im alten Italien*, Frankfurt a. M. 1933, 100-118; *REL* LVII, 1979, 49-68 Robert Schilling has supplemented Koch's work with details on the transition from Sol Indiges to Aeneas, in his article *Le culte de l'Indiges a Lavinium*.

<sup>54</sup> Koch, *Gestirnverehrung* 33-41.

<sup>55</sup> The article *Veiovis - a pre-Indoeuropean God in Rome?* in *Op. Rom.* IX, 1973, 35-42.

<sup>56</sup> See also Martin Persson Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion*<sup>2</sup>, Lund 1968, 426-42.

However, in our context it is more interesting that exactly on the Minoan ruins in Hagia Triada was erected a temple for Zeus Velchanos, a Cretan vegetation god<sup>57</sup>, who was born and died each year — the chthonian pattern. He, too, is shown as a young beardless god, approximately in the age group of young Mars of the Praenestine cista. His presence in various parts of Crete is proven by the existence of a month *Ελχάνιος* in other places than Knossos and also by the existence of a feast called *Belchania*<sup>58</sup>. Here immigrant Zeus has replaced an older Minoan god. This Cretan god Velchanos appears in Etruria on the Piacenza liver as *Velch(ans)*, and in company of nature gods of his own kind. We are further informed that the month of March in Etruria was called *Velcitanus*<sup>59</sup>. Here can be seen a link between Minoan and Etruscan religions.

To this religion corresponded the concept of the happy death, which is expressed in the oldest Etruscan graves: the deceased travels on the back of a dolphin or a hippocamp to Elysium, and this fearless condition persists till about 400 BC. when the horror of death and the terrifying monsters of later Etruscan religion invade the Etruscan graves<sup>60</sup>.

This world of the archaic gods is where the Maris myth from Palestrina belongs. Maris is incarnated in a horse body, a whole nation is his descendents, and he dies and reverts to life the symbolic three times, the three lives probably coming out of the oldest Mediterranean religions<sup>61</sup>. At one time the people of an area of Central Italy, maybe not far from Palestrina, identified Maris with Mars because, in their judgement, Mars and Maris had much in common. Justly so, because the sources available to us reveal the chthonian nature of both gods.

However, sometime in the sixth century BC, presumably under the reign of the Tarquins, the Jupiter cult was reformed. Jupiter and Juno were purged of all their chthonian features and appointed the supreme divine couple (Koch 90-134). At the same time Mars' status was changed. He lost his status as the leading god and was specifically made a god of war. But this was only true of the official Roman state religion, because chthonian, agrarian Mars lived on in the countryside: the Romans now had two Marses<sup>62</sup>.

This Roman experience of two levels of religion is no different from what

<sup>57</sup> NILSSON, *Min. Myc. Rel.*<sup>2</sup> (1950) 550; PRIFFIG *RE* 296-97.

<sup>58</sup> F. DÜRRBACH-A. JARDE, *BCH* XXIX, 204 ff.; G. DOUBLET, *BCH* XIII, 61-63; Hesychius 421 (Schmidt): *Γελχάνος* ὁ Ζεὺς, παρὰ Κρησίην. The possibility of Velchans being derived from Volcanus has been disproved by W. Meid *IF* LXVI (1942-44) 434 f. On the dramatic birth of Cretan Zeus, see NILSSON (as n. 57) 542-43. Other Zeus'es: Nilsson (as n. 32) I 319-24.

<sup>59</sup> *TLE* 856. For *Ελχάνιος* as the name of May (?) in Crete see *BCH* above n. 58.

<sup>60</sup> Much material about these phases of Etruscan religion is easily accessible in PRIFFIG *RE* 167-78.

<sup>61</sup> Pindar (Christ) *Ol.* II 75 ff. testifies that those who have lived three times in both worlds without sin will go to Elysium. Here it is considered part of Orphic-Eleusinian religion.

<sup>62</sup> SCHOLZ 20-26; 42-44; 157.

happened in the Greek world: the Olympian gods were for the Homeric knights, while the old chthonian deities were the religion of the peasants out in the fields and vineyards <sup>63</sup>.

An example of this co-existence of old and new religion is young Zeus, son of Kronos and Rhea or Gaia (the « Potnia »). He was suckled by the goat Amaltheia in a cave in Crete, and every year he died and was burned <sup>64</sup>.

That version of the tale comes out of the archaic peasant world. But Callimachus' Hymn to Zeus comes out of the world of the Olympic gods; verses 6-9 say:

Ζεῦ, σὲ μὲν Ἰδαίοισιν ἐν οὐρεσὶ φασι γενέσθαι, Ζεῦ, σὲ δ' ἐν Ἀρκαδίῃ · πότεροι, πάτερ, ἐψεύσαντο; Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται · καὶ γὰρ τάφον, ὦ ἄνα, σεῖο Κρήτες ἐτεκτάναντο · σὺ δ' οὐ θάνες, ἐσσι γὰρ αἰεὶ.

Oh Zeus, some say that you were born in the Idaean Mountains,  
but, oh Zeus, others say in Arcadia.

Oh Father, which of the two are lying ?

« The Cretans are always liars ! »

Yes, oh Lord, for the Cretans have built your grave,

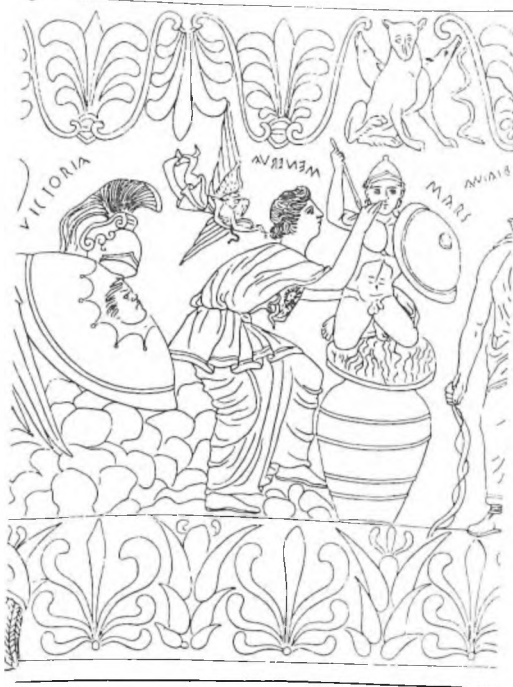
but you did not die,

You live forever !

† GUSTAV HERMANSEN

<sup>63</sup> M. P. Nilsson (n. 56) sums it up pp. 632-33.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem* 536-54.



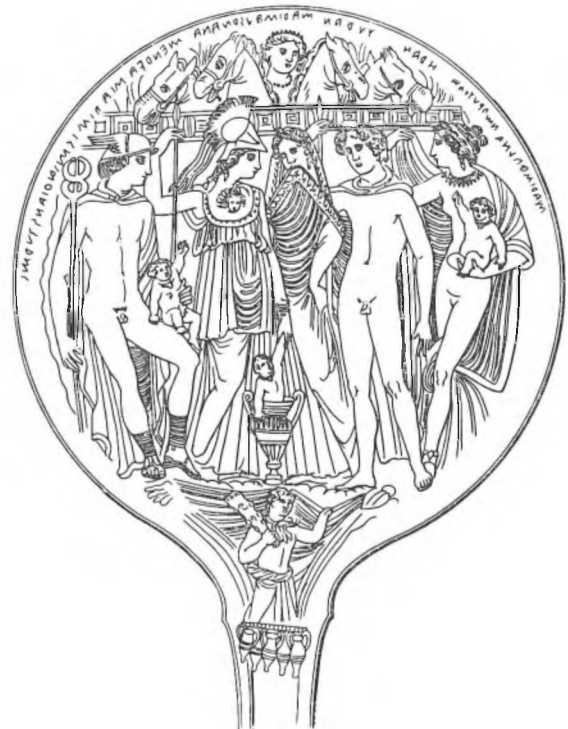
a



b



c



d