

# Etruscan Symbols in Greek Literature

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Doi: 10.19044/llc.v5no2a1

[URL:http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/llc.v5no2a1](http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/llc.v5no2a1)

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## Abstract

There has been no systemic study of the representation and interpretation of the Tyrrhenian (Etruscans) influence on Hellenic civilization. The article is dedicated to an account of the innovative ideas and forms that have sprung up in one of the highly developed civilizations of the Mediterranean and the specifics of their transformation in Greek literature, which itself prepared the ground for their metamorphosis into symbols and their eventual spread into world culture. The most interesting of these symbols are the Tyrrhenian pirates, the Tyrrhenian trumpet, and Tyrrhenian sandals, which find their reflection in many Greek literary works. The research is based on a close study of Antique literary sources (passages from the literary works of Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Pausanias etc.), as well as archaeological sources and academic literature. The different spheres and innovations of Tyrrhenian civilization were of great interest to the Greeks, which subsequently found their reflection in Greek literature. They gained a newly found value and via Graeca became Etruscan symbols in the literary culture of the following ages. Respective literary “clichés” have specifically been built on these very characters or symbols. Finally, we can say with some confidence that Etruscan innovations in Greek sources have undergone certain transformations and have been turned into innovative Greek literary symbols. In this case we do not talk about the Hellenization of the Etruscan but about the emergence of qualitatively new literary characters which have given birth to a multiplicity of new reflections and receptions in world literature.

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**Keywords:** Etruscans; Greek literature; literary symbols; Etruscan innovations.

## Introduction

The question as to what contributions have been made from Greek innovations to world culture has always sparked academic interest in different epochs. In turn, multiple studies have been devoted to trace the influence of other ancient cultures in the Greek legacy. It is well-known that the inclination

of Greek culture for searching out novelties and in turn, offering mankind with innovations often led to different achievements visible in other ancient civilizations. A specific and original interpretation of those achievements helped the Hellenes give motion to qualitatively different values. In this context, there has been no systemic study of the representation and interpretation of Tyrrhenian (Greek name for Etruscans) influence on Hellenic civilization. It should be mentioned that contemporary humanitarian studies have shown an increased interest in the Etruscans' contribution in the process of the development and formation of the Roman and other civilizations of ancient Italy<sup>1</sup>, as well as in the Greek influence within the same process<sup>2</sup>. However, a study which would tackle the question of the counter influence of Etruscan innovations, their interpretation and reformulation in Greek culture has not taken place until recently. The article is devoted to an account of some of the innovative ideas and forms that sprung up in one of the highly developed civilizations of the Mediterranean and the specifics of their transformation in **Greek literature**, which itself prepared the ground for their metamorphosis into symbols and their eventual spread into world culture.

## I.

The most interesting of these literary symbols are the Tyrrhenian pirates, the Tyrrhenian trumpet, and Tyrrhenian sandals, which find their reflection in many Greek literary works.

To start with, the Greeks were introduced to the Tyrrhenians when Etruscan culture was at its height. It should have been during the founding of the first Greek colony by the Euboeians in Cumae in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. This is exactly the period which provides us with archaeological artifacts depicting an increase in the mutual connections between Greek colonists and the Etruscans<sup>3</sup>. The first reference to the Etruscans, most probably presented in the ending of Hesiod's *Theogony* (I have devoted an article arguing about the organic nature of this passage from Hesiod's poem<sup>4</sup>, which will not be discussed here in detail) should also depict this very period, where Etruscans are introduced as being the servants of Agrius and Latinus, the sons of Odysseus and Circe:

Κίρκη δ' Ἡελίου θυγάτηρ ἐπεριονίδαο,  
 γείνατ' Ὀδυσσεύος ταλασίφρονος ἐν φιλότητι  
 Ἀγριον ἠδὲ Λατῖνον ἀμύμονά τε κρατερόν τε·  
 [Τηλέγονον τε ἔτικτε διὰ χρυσοῦν Ἀφροδίτην·]

1 Cf. : Henry Harrel-Courtes, James Hogarth 1964; John Franklin Hall ed. 1996; Sinclair Bell and Alexandra A. Carpino ed. 2016

2 Cf.: Calvert Watkins 1995, vol.97, 35-50; Kathryn Lomas 1995; Irad Malkin 2011;

3 Cristofani ed. 2000, 83

4 K 2002, vol. 5, 70-79.

Οἱ δ' ἦτοι μάλα τῆλε μυχῶ νήσων ἱεράων  
πᾶσιν Τυρσηνοῖσιν ἀγακλειτοῖσιν ἄνασσον. (Hes. *Theog.* 1011-1016)  
Circe, the granddaughter of Helios, born from Hyperion,  
Being in love with Odysseus, gave birth to Agrius  
And to the genuine and powerful Latinus (Telegonus was born to a golden  
Aphrodite).  
Both of them live on distant sacred islands  
And rule over the famous Tyrrhenians.<sup>5</sup>

The question as to who was entitled with the term “Tyrrhenian” still haunts the academic community, as well as questions regarding the identity of the Dionysian thieves or whether the pirates reincarnated into dolphins; were they Pelasgian tribes living in Chalcis or the Etruscans? The academic community is still far away from a consensual point of view.<sup>6</sup> The opinion deliberately represented in the book *The Etruscans in Classical Literature* regarding the existence of two ethnically different Tyrrhenian tribes (“Eastern” and “Western”) is not supported by facts. So, as I suppose, Hesiod implies “the Etruscans” under the term „Τυρσηνοῖσιν“

So, in *Theogony* the Greeks acknowledged the huge military potential of the Etruscans and their high cultural development is duly reflected in Hesiod’s positive epithet to the Etruscans – “ἀγακλειτόν” - meaning “famous”, “renowned”. Herewith, another important fact should be mentioned, in that Hesiod places and considers the Etruscans within the common mythological Hellenic narrative, thereby increasing further interest in the Etruscans and their innovations. This interest was duly expressed by the Greeks in many Greek literary works.

In this context, the tale of Dionysus and the Tyrrhenian pirates is important, a literary interpretation of which comes late in the Homeric hymns. In the Homeric hymns, the 7<sup>th</sup> dithyramb tells the myth about Dionysus and the Tyrrhenian pirates.

This is the first mention of the myth in Antique literature:  
Immediately, on a fine deck boat,  
On the wine colored sea,  
Some Tyrrhenian thieves appeared,  
Guided by destiny.  
(Hom. *Hymn.* 7. 49-51)

Therefore, the imprisonment of the pirates is equated by Homer as evil destiny. The same can be discovered in other citations:

οἱ δὲ θύραζε κακὸν μόνον ἐξάλυοντες  
(Hom. *Hymn.* 7.8)

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5 Translation in the text is done by the author herself in a word-by-word manner.

6 Cristofani ed. 2000, 295-296.

Persecuted (from the outside) by the evil destiny.

However, cruelty is alien to the Tyrrhenian pirates in the Homeric myths (in contrast to Nonnus) and when they meet Dionysus it seems happenstance, being attributable to a certain call of destiny. It did not happen on purpose as it is highlighted in *Dionysiaca* for example.

In the Homeric hymn there is no author's evaluation of the Tyrrhenian pirates, which is in conflict with the principles of lyrics.

This "anomaly" might be attributable to the following underlying factors:

1. The hymn first and foremost devotes most of the attention to the object of aggrandizement; therefore, the Tyrrhenian pirates are of lesser importance in this myth.
2. In general it is not customary for lyrics to highlight the opposition visible in other genres. Consequently, the opposition of Dionysus vs pirates is significantly divorced from the frames of the literary concept;
3. By the time Homeric hymns were being written (7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> cent. BC), it should be said that in general, before the politico-institutional essence of the state was formed, piracy was not decried as a shameful activity and was considered as an integral part of commercial relationships.<sup>7</sup> Almost all the sea states, including the Phoenicians and the Greeks, were involved in piracy. Therefore, the Tyrrhenians were unlucky to meet a god-like man in place of an ordinary mortal.

However, the selection of the Etruscans as the primary antagonists to Dionysus in this tale besides the "success" in piracy (the fascination with thieves on the sea became a powerful, instrumental influence on a perception to label Etruscans pirates in ancient times even before Sicily was colonized by the Greeks.<sup>8</sup>) was also in many ways conditioned by a certain historic context. Stated in a literary way, it is evident there is some gap between Hesiod's "αγακλειτοί" and the "λήϊσται" of Homeric hymn on pirates. The key to this connection could be found in one of the Pythian odes by Pindar.

Pindar prays to Zeus:

λίσσομαι νεῦσον, Κρονίων, ἡμερον  
ᾄφρα κατ' οἴκον ὁ Φοῖνιξ ὁ Τυρσανῶν τ' ἀλαλατὸς ἔχη, ναυσίστονον  
ὑβριν ἰδὼν τὰν πρὸ Κύμας  
οἷα Συρακοσίων ἀρχῶ δαμασθέντες πάθον,  
ὠκυπόρων ἀπὸ ναῶν ὃ σφιν ἐν πόντῳ βαλεθ' ἀλικίαν,  
Ἑλλάδ' ἐξέλεκτων βαρείας δουλείας. (Pind. *Pyth.* I. 72. 102)

Cronion, I pray to you on my knees,

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7 Camporeale 1998, 36-49

8 K 2007, 18-19; 280-283

Please delay the Phoenicians and the Tyrrhenian war cry,  
And only when they insolently hear groaning on their boats,  
Near the Cumae.  
When they feel the torture from the ruler of Syracuse,  
Who threw out their youths from high-speed boats into the sea.  
And saved Hellas from the shackles of slavery.

The facts recounted in Pindar's ode are based on facts that have taken place in reality. Gelo, the tyrant of Syracuse, defeated the Carthaginians near Himera in 480 BC, while Hiero of Syracuse who came to defend the Greeks of Cumae defeated the Etruscan fleet.

It should be said that the relationship between the Etruscans and Cumaeans had been strained since 524 BC. In exactly the same year, the Etruscans attacked the Greek colony and encircled the Euboeans together with the Umbrians and Daunians.

The information provided by Pindar is also interesting in how the Greek poet writes about the Phoenicians. However, he is in fact describing the battle with the Tyrrhenians.

The following might be the reason for this:

1. The battle near Cumae took place relatively late;
2. The sea battle near Cumae took place during the tyrannical rule of Hiero, who was Pindar's contemporary, which to no surprise is logically to be of more interest to him.
3. In Pindar's view, defeating the Etruscans as the most fearsome close neighbors was a fact of much more importance.

It is noteworthy that Pindar considers the victory of Cumae and Syracuse over the Phoenicians and Etruscans to be equally important to the victory of the Greeks over the Persians near Plataea and Salamis.<sup>9</sup>

In Von Vacano's viewpoint: "Here we observe the birth of a myth where the Greeks' fight for freedom acquires a nature of a world war comprising all of the Mediterranean. The Carthaginians and Etruscans represent the so-called second wing of the barbarian attacks led by the Xerxes."<sup>10</sup>

We can add that to this viewpoint regarding the second wing of the barbarians, Pindar's accent of the war with the Phoenicians is not surprising when picturing the Tyrrhenians as a centralized fearsome power for the first time in history.

This viewpoint by Pindar will have great influence on the stereotype formed of the Etruscans in the Antique era, which saw them as aggressive and fearful military adversaries.

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<sup>9</sup> Vacano 1977, 151.

<sup>10</sup> Vacano 1982, 151

For example, Diodorus of Sicily points out that due to the Etruscan pirate attacks, half of the population was busy with agriculture in Lipari, and the other half defended the island from Etruscan pirates (V, 9, 4) beginning from Knidian colony period (580 BC). Strabo says that the Etruscans were widely famous for piracy, which according to the author, served as the main reason for Etruria's decentralization: “Τότε μὲν οὖν ὑφ’ ἐνὶ ἡγεμονίᾳ ταπτόμενοι μέγα ἴσχυρον, χρόνιος δ’ ὕστερον διαλυθῆναι τὸ σόστημα εἰκὸς καὶ κατὰ πόλεις διασπασθῆναι βία τῶν πλησιοχώρων εἴξαντος· οὐ γὰρ ἀπ[ώ]ρον εὐδαίμονα ἀφέντες τῇ θαλάττῃ κατὰ ληστείαν ἐπέθεντο ἄλλοι πρὸς ἄλλα τραπόμενοι πελάγε, ἐπέ ὄπον γε συμπνεύσαιεν, ὑκανοί ἦσαν οὐκ ἀμύνασθαι μόνον τοὺς ἐπιχειροῦντας αὐτοῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀντεπιχειρεῖν καὶ μακρὰς στρατείας ποιεῖσθαι.” (Strab. II. 2) - “Their united government was dissolved, and the Tyrrhenians, yielding to the violence of their neighbors, were broken up into separate cities; for otherwise they would not have given up a happy land and taken to the sea as pirates, different bands turning to different parts of the high seas; indeed, in all cases where they acted in concert, they were able, not only to defend themselves against those who attacked them, but also to attack in turn and to make long expeditions”.

This might be the reason why the Greeks associated Etruscans with the pirates wrangling with Dionysus, which should have happened no earlier than the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The myths recounted in Homer's hymns gave birth to a completely new literary symbol of **godless robbers/thieves** who are solely motivated by loot, an image, which since then and forever has been associated with the Etruscans.

In Greek literature, the Tyrrhenian question is also taken up by Euripides. Dionysus' meeting with the Tyrrhenian pirates happens immediately in the first few lines of the satirical drama *Cyclops*. Silenus thinks that the kidnapping of Dionysus by the Tyrrhenians was a trick of Hera and links his imprisonment by the Cyclops with an attempt to free Dionysus from captivity:

ἐπεὶ γὰρ Ἥρα σοι γένος Τυρσηνικὸν  
ληστῶν ἐπῶρσεν, ὡς ὀδηθείης μακράν,  
-ἐγὼ πυθόμενος σὺν τέκνοισι ναυστολῶ  
σέθεν κατὰ ζήτησιν ( Eur. Cyc. 11-14 ).

When Hera encouraged pirates from the Tyrrhenian tribes:

To take you away and sold you afar,  
I, a learner of this, sailed with my children,  
To find you.

This passage is interesting, since the kidnapping of Dionysus through Hera's orders is not confirmed in other historical sources. Thus, in my viewpoint, the inclusion of the wife of the ruler of Olympus in this plot links the Etruscans with the additional “web” of Greek mythology. This process,

as was demonstrated above, begins with Hesiod and qualitatively deepens with Euripides. Euripides' consideration of the Tyrrhenians as real Etruscans can be clearly observed in his tragedy *Heraclidae*, which will be discussed later in the article.

From a literary standpoint, we come across an interesting interpretation of the literary characters/symbols in *Dionysiaca* by Nonnus.

This literary work dating back to the late antiquity is devoted to a description of Dionysus' journey. It is natural that in an epos of such a character, the famous myth regarding the Tyrrhenian pirates must be told. First of all, it is interesting which developments come before and after this passage in *Dionysiaca*. Nonnus is not original in this case and like the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid, this episode follows the scene of the angry Pentheus who is taken up with the desire to catch Dionysus before Agave kills Pentheus.

The 45<sup>th</sup> chapter begins with a description of bacchanalia. Some women are dancing on the mountain and Tiresias, Cadmus, and Pentheus are with them. The latter addresses the elder in order to regain their consciousness, refuse Dionysus, and return to the old gods. In response, Tiresias tries to convince him in the might of Prince Dionysus and tells him the "Sicilian Story" about Dionysus punishing evil tourists by turning them into fish.

Why Dionysus did become angry with the tourists? In Nonnus' opinion, the reason is boundless Tyrrhenian cruelty:

Τυρσηνῶν ποτε παῖδες ἐναντίλλοντο θαλάσση,  
 ξεινοφόνοι, πλωτῆρες ἀλήμονες, ἄρπαγες ὄλβου,  
 πάντοθεν ἀρπάζοντες ἐπάκτια πάεα μῆλων· ἡ μιθανῆς, ἕτερον δὲ προασπίζων  
 ἔτι ποιίμνης

ἀμφιλαφῆς πολιῆσι φόνω φοινίσσετο ποιμήν  
 ἔμπορος εἴ ποτε πόντον ἐπέπλεεν, εἴ ποτε Φοίνιξ  
 ὄνια Σιδονίης ἀλιπόρφυρα πέπλα θαλάσσης εἶχειν...  
 ...εις Σικελῆν! Ἀρέθουσαν ἀνὴρ πορθμεύετο Φοίνιξ  
 δέσμος, ἀρπαμένοιο λιπόπτολις ὄλβου.

ἀλλὰ δόλω Διόνυσος ἐπὶ κλονον εἶδος ἀμείψας  
 Τυρσηνοὺς ἀπάφησε (Nonnus, *Dion.* 45.105-120).

The sons of Tyrrhenians strolling by the sea,  
 Slayers of the foreigners and robbers of gold,  
 Stole every herd of sheep from the seaside,  
 And the shepherd who tried to save the sheep was left half dead.  
 People were also killed alongside the sheep,  
 If a merchant who sailed by sea,  
 Or saw Phoenicians coming from Sidonia to Sicily,  
 They took them wrapped in chains to Aretuza  
 But Dionysus changed his appearance  
 And cunningly fooled the Tyrrhenians.

This episode is of great significance in the poem. This is the last of the arguments to help Pentheus regain his lost consciousness, since after this episode he is killed by his own mother.

If in *Metamorphoses* Pentheus hears this story from Acetus, the ruler of the Tyrrhenians and himself an eye witness, in the work of Nonnus however, this story is narrated by Cadmus, a sorcerer and by Thebes, a very influential person. Neither in the first, nor in the second case does the Pentheus belief change. This episode in the *Metamorphoses* is narrated by Acetus himself, who tells this story to anger Pentheus in helping him regain consciousness and worship Dionysus.<sup>11</sup>

The Tyrrhenian pirates are pictured as soulless booty hunters and the reason for their tragic fate was due to their disrespect of the gods.

With this story, Pentheus gets a warning from destiny, which is inescapable for the prince who revolts against Dionysus.

It is noteworthy that Ovid does not say much about the Tyrrhenians or their crimes and cruelty. As is evident from the title, the poet devotes primary attention to the process of metamorphosis when Dionysus meets the pirates. First of all we should say that with Homer, as well as with Ovid, Dionysus personifies an innocent victim who happens to come across the pirates by chance, while Nonnus highlights that Dionysus himself decided to punish the pirates: "Dionysus changed his clothes, and deceived the pirates"(45, 120).

Such a targeted action by Dionysus was determined by the behavior of the Tyrrhenian pirates. In Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* itself there is a recount of the stories regarding the distinctive cruelty of the Etruscans, where it becomes evident that Dionysus will certainly fight against that cruelty.

The Dionysus of Nonnus is not a concrete god, yet traits characteristic of epic characters like heroism and others can easily be observed in his image.<sup>12</sup>

If we take into account the version provided by Rouse we can easily explain such a literary description of the Tyrrhenians by Nonnus. It is a lesser possibility that Nonnus equates the mythological image of the Tyrrhenian pirates with the Etruscans, who for five centuries already ceased to be significant adversaries to the Greeks on the sea.

It becomes evident for the Greeks that they will be punished by Dionysus. They will be punished as cruelly as the Tyrrhenian pirates have been punished before, since Dionysus cannot avoid the cruelty and comes to meet his destiny through his own choice.

Rouse rightfully remarks in the mythological representation by Nonnus in *Dionysiaca*, that the Dionysus of Nonnus is not simply a

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11 Ov. *Met.*, IV,655-657

12 Rouse 1940, XIV.

mythological character and the characteristics of epic personages, like heroism and other traits attributable to the Messiah, are visible in his image

The researcher also thinks that “Dionysus with Nonnus was also pictured as a conqueror (he came from the East and declared of himself in a fight with the Helens) and is equated with the conqueror of people, Alexander, who conquers the world with truth and a fight for its attainment.”<sup>13</sup>

When taking these arguments into account, it becomes easier to explain passages devoted to the distinctive cruelty characteristic of the Tyrrhenians recounted in the poem, with these passages creating a favorable platform for the rise of the hero and the negative characters becoming part of the literary method and a personification of hyperbolized evil.

So, a literary cliché with differing interpretations is confirmed in all three periods of ancient literature, providing a stimulus for its reception in the world of literature and art.<sup>14</sup>

A couple of words about the existence of the cult of Dionysus in Etruria (It can be assumed, that Dionysus’ settlement in Etruria, as in other episodes of his adventure, was not easy and painless).<sup>15</sup>

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Etruscan chthonian deity Phuphluns (Fufhluns), the cult of which was popular in the city of Veii, preserved its name, but became a character of Hellenic myths and occupied Dionysus’ place in Etruscan pieces of art. In parallel with the popularization of the Dionysus cult in Italy (it seems that Etruscans got acquainted with him in Cumae),<sup>16</sup> the myth about Dionysus and the Tyrrhenian pirates probably created by the Euboeans in the 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century BC, as it was mentioned above, reflects the attitude of the Greeks towards the Tyrrhenians and piracy as well. This is narrated by some allegoric language for this fantastic metamorphosis.

Therefore, the myth about Dionysus and the Tyrrhenian pirates, which is metaphorically based on the opposition of good and evil, might be reflecting several historical events: 1. War between Greeks and Etruscans (Tyrrhenians) for supremacy on the sea. 2. The history of the establishment of Greek culture (Namely, the cult of Dionysus) in the Tyrrhenian Sea Basin and the Apennines (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>c.c.BC). It is significant that Tyrrhenian pirates, being the personification of negative forces, acquire some additional features in ancient literature and turn into **hyperbolized evil**.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, it seems quite realistic to consider the date of the creation of the Dionysus myth to be 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. It is significant that this assumption is justified by

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13 Rouse 1940, XIV.

14 K 2008, 73-79.

15 Livy for instance, points out, that Dionysus cult emerged to Rome exactly from Etruria, which was forbidden by the Senate in 186 B.C

16 Cristofani 1978, 118.

17 K 2007, 280-281.

archaeological data - so far there is no reflection of a specific myth in pieces of art earlier than the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.<sup>18</sup>

The Tyrrhenian trumpet is another interesting literary case. The story of the invention of this musical instrument in Greek sources is widely discussed in the context of mythology. It is noteworthy that in Antiquity, the Etruscans were considered as the inventors of the military trumpet (though some scientists point to the Egyptian origins of the trumpet<sup>19</sup>). Though we come across the trumpet as early as Homer's works, researchers of Antique music do not consider it to be a musical instrument since it could only produce a few weak tones.<sup>20</sup>

The Etruscan military trumpet was a contrary case and stood out significantly in this context. This musical instrument had a strong sonority and a wide musical range.<sup>21</sup> This was exactly the reason the Greeks became utterly interested in this novelty.

In relation to this, Diodorus of Sicily, in a description of different native tribes, points to the Tyrrhenians as well in the 5<sup>th</sup> book of *Bibliotheca historica*:

(1) Λείπεται δ' ἡμῖν εἰπεῖν περὶ τῶν Τυρρηνῶν, οὗτοι γὰρ τὸ μὲν παλαιὸν ἀνδρεία διενεγκόντες χώραν πολλὴν κατεκτήσαντο καὶ πόλεις ἀξιολόγους καὶ πολλὰς ἔκτισαν. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ναυτικαῖς δυνάμεσιν ἰσχύσαντε καὶ πολλοὺς χρόνους θαλαττοκρατήσαντες τὸ μὲν παρὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν πέλαγος ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν ἐποίησαν Τυρρηρικὸν προσαγορευθῆναι, τὰ δὲ κατὰ τὰς πεζὰς δυνάμεις ἐκπονήσαντες τὴν τε σάλπιγγα λεγομένην ἐξεῦρον, εὐὐχρηστοτάτην μὲν εἰς τοὺς πολέμοις, ἀπ' ἐκείνων δ' ὀνομασεῖσαν Τυρρηνὴν, τὸ τε περὶ τοὺς ἡγουμένους στρατηγούς ἀξίωμα κατεσκεύασαν, περιθέντες τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ῥαβδούχους καὶ δίφρον ἐλεφάντινον καὶ περιπόρφυρον τήβενναν, ἔν τε ταῖς οἰκίαις τὰ περίστωα πρὸς τὰς τῶν θεραπευόντων ὄχλων ταραχὰς ἐξεῦρον εὐχρηστίαν· ὧν τὰ πλεῖστα Ῥωμαῖοι μιμησάμενοι καὶ πρὸς τὸ κάλλιον αὐξήσαντες μετήνεγκαν ἐπὶ τῇ ἰδίᾳ πολιτείᾳ (Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* V 401).

“We also have to tell you about the Tyrrhenians, who became prominent with their characteristic bravery, conquered a huge landmass, and established many famous cities. With the help of military ships, they acquired power to establish their dominance on the sea. That is the reason one of the Italian seas is called the Tyrrhenian Sea. They also perfected land forces and invented a very useful tool in the war – a trumpet, which was called Tyrrhenian after their name, they also invented a military rank of commander-in-chief, as

18 The earliest: Hydria from Taledo (510-500 cc. B.C. Ohio. Fine Arts Museum: Bowl Exekias (540-530 B.C.), Munich, Antikensammlungen.; Paleothodoros, 2012, 459-466

19 West 1992, 119.

20 Norquist 2014, 241-256.

21 Pallottino 1984, 353; Keller 1985, 387.

well as a coach made of ivory for the rank of lictors accompanying the commander-in-chief. They also invented a round portico for a house, which is very useful to defend oneself from the noise.”<sup>22</sup>

In connection with the Etruscan trumpet, important information that is provided by Pausanias deserves some careful attention: “Αθηνᾶς δὲ ἰδρύσασθαι Σάλπιγγος ἱερὸν φασιν Ηγέλεων. Τυρσηνοῦ δὲ τοῦτον Ηγέλεων, τὸν δὲ Ηρακλέους εἶναι καὶ γυναικὸς λέγουσι τῆς Λυδῆς. Τυρσηνὸν δὲ σάλπιγγα εὐρεῖν πρῶτον, Ηγέλεων δὲ τὸν Τυρσηνοῦ διδάξαι τοὺς σὺν Τημένῳ Δωριέας τοῦ ὀργάνου τὸν ψοφον καὶ δι’ αὐτὸ Αθηνᾶν ἐπονομάσαι Σάλπιγγα, πρὸ δὲ τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Αθηνᾶς Επιμενίδου λέγουσιν εἶναι τάφον.” (Paus.II,21, 3.)

“They say that in Athena’s Temple (situated in Temenos) which they say was founded by Hegeleus. They also say that Hegeleus was the son of King Tyrsenos and the grandson of Heracles from a Midian woman (Omphale). Tyrsenos was the first to invent the trumpet and Hegeleus, the son of Tyrsenos, was the one to teach the royalty from Temenos how to play this instrument. That is why Athena is called the “Trumpet”(Σάλπιγγα).

This is the Tyrsenos who Herodotus calls the first King of the Etruscans, the one who emigrated from Lydia and whose name became the ethnic name for the Etruscans.<sup>23</sup>

As we see, the myth by Pausanias puts the Etruscans within the context of Greek mythology by relating them to Hercules. Thus, I think that this myth has archaic origins and as proof I can point to the Greek tragedy where the Tyrrhenian trumpet is mentioned several times in relation to Athena .

Greek tragedy provides another symbol related to the Etruscans, which subsequently is firmly established in Greek literature. This line begins with Aeschylus. In *Eumenides*, Athena gives the following order to a messenger:

Κήρυσσε, κῆρυξ, καὶ στρατὸν κατειργαθοῦ,  
ἢ τ’ οὖν διάτορος Τυρσηνικῆ  
σάλπιγγος βροτείου πνεύματος πληρουμένη  
ὑπέρτονον γήρυμα φαίνετω στρατῶ. (Aesch. *Eum.* 569-572.)

“Blow the trumpet and collect the army,  
So that through the Tyrrhenian trumpet,  
The filler of the souls of the dead  
Could inform the army with a strong voice”.

In the prologue to *Ajax* Sophocles draws an even closer parallel between Athena and the Tyrrhenian trumpet. The invisible Athena talks with Odysseus, whose voice he compares with that of the Tyrrhenian trumpet:

Ω φθέγγμ! Αθάνας, φίλτάτης ἐμοὶ Θεῶν,

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<sup>23</sup> Herodotus, I, 94

ὦς εὐμαθέ σου, κᾶν ἄποπτος ἦς, ὅμως  
 φώνημ' ἀκούω καὶ ξυναρπάζω φρενί,  
 χαλκοστόμου κώδωνος ὡς Τυρσηνικῆς. (Soph. *Aj.* 14-17.)  
 Oh, do I hear the voice of the most beloved among the Gods?  
 Yes it is you, though you are invisible  
 I can hear the voice that steals my soul,  
 Just like the copper headed Tyrrhenian (trumpet).

It is noteworthy that Sophocles does not even directly mention trumpet (σάλπιγξ) but limits his lines with a metaphor “Tyrrhenian” (Τυρσηνικῆς), without directly mentioning “trumpet” (σάλπιγξ), which I think confirms the popularity and high knowledge of the instrument.

Following in the footsteps of Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides makes the sound of the Tyrrhenian trumpet be heard before the battle in *Heracleidae*, this time without mentioning Athena:

ἐπεὶ δ' ἐσήμην' ὄρθιον Τυρσηνικῆ  
 σάλπιγγι καὶ συνῆσαν ἀλλήλοισι μάχην. (Eur. *Herakl.* 830-831.)  
 The loud voice of the Tyrrhenian trumpet was heard  
 Uniting everyone in the fight.

This line is interesting since Euripides decides to voice the Tyrrhenian trumpet exactly in *Heracleidae*. I think he was familiar with a version of the myth that was mentioned by Pausanias where the use of the trumpet was linked with one of the descendants of Hercules. It is as if Euripides adds to his myths, being more persuasive or convincing.

Therefore, this great innovation of the Etruscans attracted the interest and attention of the Greeks from the very beginning with its distinct sound, becoming a symbol of a **divine, terrible sound** in Greek literature. Due to its functions, it became widely associated with Athena and Hercules, the most prominent of the Greek heroes - preparing the plot for many subsequent literary works.

It is noteworthy that linking the sound of the Tyrrhenian trumpet with divine origins was later reflected in Roman literature. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Venus makes a signal to Aeneas with a thunderstorm. The sound of thunder resembles that of the Tyrrhenian trumpet:

Namque improviso vibratus ab aethera fulgor  
 Cum sonitu venit et ruere omnia visa repente  
 Tyrrhenusque tubae mugire per aethera clangor. (Verg. *Aen.* VIII. 524-526.)

“Unexpectedly the thunder will make the ether tremble,  
 Comes sounding and pierces through everything with noise and shine,  
 It shouts as a Tyrrhenian trumpet, shaking the skies.”

Here we should also take into account that Venus personifies Athena in a certain sense in *Aeneid*. Venus, as well Athena speaking to Odysseus in

Sophocles' *Ajax*, is always supportive of his son. By mentioning the Tyrrhenian trumpet in this context, Virgil makes another hint that Aeneas is a Roman Odyssey who executes the wills of gods.

Another symbol provided by ancient literature and art is the Tyrsenian sandals. In Etruria, sandals gain popularity as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC through Greek influence. Before sandals were popular, cocked boots called *calcei repandi* were commonly used.<sup>24</sup> The Etruscans developed an interesting modification of the sandals they previously took from the Greeks. They covered the wooden bottoms of the sandals with bronze, divided the braids, and garnished them with a golden brocade. *Tyrrhena plantis* quickly gained popular support as a new fashion product through multiple archaeological findings not limited to modern day Italy.

This Tyrrhenian innovation quickly reached Athens, the capital of fashion at that time. When a woman of Aristophanes' era bought Etruscan sandals, they were considered a luxury good, distinct with an **exotic look**.<sup>25</sup> During the past few years, a supposition supported with concrete proof has made an appearance, suggesting that Tyrrhenian sandals are present in many Greek sculptures. Among them, a scholar suggests the sculpture of Athena Parthenos by Phidias might be decorated with Tyrrhenian sandals.<sup>26</sup> This supposition is based on the *Onomasticon* (vii, 92) by Julius Pollux, a 2<sup>nd</sup> century author, where we find a passage explaining certain "laws" (PCG iv, FR 39) by Kratinos and it mentions "Σανδάλια Τυρρηνικά". Pollux writes that these are the quadrangular sandals with which Phidias decorated the sculpture of Athena Parthenos.<sup>27</sup> It seems that these elegant sandals were popular during the time of Pericles, inspiring Phidias to select this model of shoes when sculpturing Athena's appearance.

It is interesting that in one of the passages of *Aeneid*, Virgil mentions the Tyrrhenian sandals as *Tyrrhena plantis*. It is noteworthy that an Ausonian personage wore the same sandals:

Tyrrhena pedum circumdat vincula plantis.

(Verg. *Aen.* VIII. 212)

He wound the straps of the Tyrrhenian sandals round his leg.

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24 Camporeale 2011, 184-186.

25 Bonfante, 2003, 60

26 Adembri, 2000, 1-4 /.

27 Edmonds, 1957, vol.3. 64; Bryant, 1899, 78

In the whole of Italy and not only, an author wearing those kind of popular shoes by Ausonian Evandros in the poem appears to be natural.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the different spheres and innovations of Tyrrhenian civilization stirring up great interest among the Greeks subsequently found their reflection in Greek literature, having been awarded newly found value and via Graeca became Etruscan symbols in the literary culture of the following ages. Respective literary clichés have specifically been built upon these very symbols. It is also noteworthy that Greek literature points to the Etruscan origin of these innovations everywhere, however the literary characters and symbols tend to be purely Greek.

### Conclusion

With the help of the aforementioned examples, I think there is a possibility to examine an interesting scheme of the process of transforming and interpreting Etruscan innovations characteristic of Hellenic culture in relation to the Etruscans (and not only).

After being introduced with concrete achievements during the first stage, the facts that were of interest to the Greeks **were identified** after which the data that was of special interest **was defined in the framework of the antique legends** by appropriating certain place within them (Hesiod, Euripides (Cyclops), Pausanias). This process was not devoid of subjectivism, which to a great degree was determined by the specific mind set of the Hellenes towards the Etruscans. However as a rule, the relationship was variable and every change was reflected accordingly in the mythological narratives as well as literary works (Homeric hymns, Pindar).

Fictional literature always displayed a certain readiness to accept novelties alongside every other aspect of Hellenic culture, which were then eagerly integrated into the fictional frame of literary works via a mythological base. This foreign element then acquired an additional so-called “mythologized” nature in literary works and the fictional function **became an autonomous symbol** (Aeschylus; Sophocles; Euripides, Nonnus). Alongside the aforementioned scheme, Etruscan innovations underwent transformation in Greek literary sources and became innovative fictional characters via literary reproduction. In this case I do not mean their Hellenization but the creation of qualitatively new Greek fictional symbols, which in turn contributed to the founding of multiple reflections and receptions in world literature.

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28 It is interesting that this variety of shoes is quite popular in the fashion industry and is even equally popular nowadays under the name of Tuscan sandals (the other name of Etruscans by Romans).

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