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HEGELEUS THE TYRSENIAN IN CORINTH AND DEMARATUS THE CORINTHIAN IN TYRSENIA

(THE ORIGINS OF GREEK-ETRUSCAN DIALOGUE)

In Book II of his *Description of Greece*, Pausanias describes the temple of Athena in Temenus, which he visited, telling a legend about how it was founded: "A sanctuary of Athena Trumpet (Σάλπιγξ) they say was founded by Hegeleus. This Hegeleus, according to the story, was the son of Tyrsenus (Tyrrenus), and Tyrsenus was the son of Heracles and the Lydian woman [Omphale]; Tyrsenus invented the trumpet, and Hegeleus, the son of Tyrsenus, taught the Dorians from Temenus how to play the instrument and for this reason gave Athena the surname Trumpet."¹

The information in this passage requires special comments and analysis. We will focus on several important issues:

I. Tyrsenus. Herodotus was the first to mention Hegeleus' father Tyrsenus. Believing that Tyrsenians (Lat. Etruscans) came from Lydia, the Greek historian says that because of famine caused by a harvest failure, a group of Lydians led by Tyrsenus, the son of their King Atys, "went down to Smyrna, and built themselves ships, in which, after they had put on board all needful stores, they sailed away in search of new homes and better sustenance. After sailing past many countries they came to Umbria, where they built cities for themselves, and fixed their residence. Their former name of Lydians they laid aside, and called themselves after the name of the king's son, who led the colony, Tyrsenians [Tyrrenians]."²

The format of this paper provides no possibility to discuss in more detail the opinions on Etruscans' origin in Antiquity and modern science.

¹ Pausanias, *Graeciae descriptio*, II, 21, 3.

² Herodotus, *Historiae (Historiae apodexis)*, I, 94.

The only thing we would like to mention is that the version described by the "father of Greek history" was regarded as quite trustworthy in the sources of all periods of Antiquity. Pausanias is no exception in this regard, as in the passage we are focusing on, he relies on the legend on Tyrsenus mentioned by Herodotus.

II. Heracles. Thus, according to Pausanias' version, Tyrsenus was the son of Heracles and a Lydian woman – Omphale. Connecting Heracles with Lydians and then with Etruscans is a very noteworthy issue. It should be born in mind that in Etruscan mythology, Heracles, who corresponds to Greek Heracles, has a special place, and we have devoted a special report to Etruscan Heracles.³

Etruscan Heracles has proved to consist of, so to say, two layers. One of them, which is chronologically younger, is an embodiment of Etruscan Heracles due to the growth of popularity of Hellenic mythology through the influence of the Greek colonizing movement and second Heracles is more archaic and shows no connection to his Greek analogue, being connected with conceptions widespread in the Mediterranean area in the Pre-Indo-European times. According to the latter, Heracles is a significant element of the Etruscan cult service of Haruspicy. He is the founder of the Etruscan race⁴ and the son of the goddess of sky. Correspondingly, Pausanias' version of Heracles being the father of Tyrsenus could be a reflection of a Greek modification of the Etruscan myth.

III. Invention of Trumpet. The fact that Etruscans indeed invented this kind of trumpet is confirmed by Diodorus Siculus. His *Bibliotheca historica* says that "they were the inventors of the salpinx, as it is called, a discovery of the greatest usefulness for war and named after them the 'Tyrrhenian trumpet'!"⁵

Unlike Greek trumpet, Etruscan trumpet was cylindrical with one end bent. It was an instrument used in war, but they also had a straight trumpet, which was used for religious purposes.⁶

It is noteworthy that this instrument is mentioned by all three ancient Greek tragedians. Τυρσηνική σάλπιγξ is mentioned by Aeschylus in *Eumenides*, Sophocles in *Ajax*, and Euripides in *Heracleidae*. It is noteworthy that in the first two works, Tyrsenian trumpet is mentioned in connection with Athena. In particular, at the start of the fourth episode of *Eumenides*, Athena orders a herald:

³ Kobakhidze E., Italian Heracles., Tbilisi 2004, 174-182 (in Georgian).

⁴ Strabo, V, 2, 2 [29], Dionys. Hall., I, 28, 5.

⁵ Diodorus Sicullus, V, 40, 1.

⁶ Cristofani M., Musica, In: Dizionario illustrato della civiltà etrusca, Firenze 2000, 182-183.

Herald, give the signal and restrain the crowd;
and let the piercing Tyrrhenian trumpet,
filled with human breath,
send forth its shrill blare to the people!⁷

In the prologue to *Ajax* by Sophocles, where invisible Athena speaks to Odysseus, the Greek hero tells the goddess:

Ah, Athena's voice, of the gods
the one I cherish most. How clear you sound.
I can't see you, but I do hear your words -
my mind can grasp their sense, like the bronze call
of an Tyrsenian trumpet (14-17).

In our opinion, the connection between Tyrsenian trumpet and goddess Athena in the aforementioned passages by Aeschylus and Sophocles is a reflection of the legend mentioned by Pausanias. In particular, Tyrsenus' son invented this musical instrument, built a temple of Athena, and called it "Trumpet", which reflects a mythological connection between Athena and Tyrsenian trumpet (we will dwell on this connection again later).

It is clear that Pausanias' legend is beneath all criticism chronologically. The temple of Athena was presumably founded in Corinth in the classical period, while mythical Hegeleus lived in the dawn of the Etruscan civilization. There are at least four centuries between these events.

It is acknowledged by everyone today that Greeks must have familiarized themselves with Tyrsenian trumpet no earlier than 8th century BC, when the Greek colonization was making its first steps in Italy. The archaeological materials showing extensive relations between Etruscans and the Greek colony of Cumae confirm this.⁸

Later, the peaceful coexistence of Etruscans and Greek colonists changed to military confrontation, which developed into the struggle for domination on the sea. There is no doubt that Etruscans made their war trumpets sound, leaving an indelible trace in Greek literature.

IV. Temple of Athena in Corinth. We have already said above that in the legend quoted by Pausanias, like in mythological themes in general, it is hardly possible to fit chronology into historic reality. Correspondingly, the foundation of the temple of Athena in Corinth by Hegeleus can have only

⁷ Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 569-572.

⁸ Pallottino M., *Etruscologia*, Milano 1984, 353; Keller W., *La civiltà etrusca*, Milano 1985, 387.

a symbolic value. Of course, the legend is a reflection of contacts between Etruria and Corinth, which could not have started earlier than the 8th century BC taking into account archaeological data. However, at the same time, we believe that it is no accident that the myth comprises information on Tyrsenian Hegeleus devoting the temple precisely to goddess Athena.

In our opinion, the key to this problem is in special relations between Heracles and Athena. We do not mean support for the son of Zeus from Athena during the rivalry between Hera and Heracles (according to Pausanias, Hegeleus is the son of Heracles). In this regard, it would be interesting to take into account Etruscan mythology. Tyrsenian legends preserved in Roman sources show closer relations between Heracles and Menrva (Etruscan analogue of Athena) than Hellenic myths. In particular, Menrva is presented as Heracles' beloved woman or wife.⁹

Thus, if we assume that Etruscan legends comprise information reflecting ancient connections between Heracles and Athena (or rather Minerva) as a mythological theme widespread among the ancient Pre-Greek and Pre-Italian population, it may seem more logical that Tyrsenus' grandson Hegeleus pays special tribute to Athena and devotes a temple to her in the legend mentioned by Pausanias.

Taking the aforementioned into account, it is possible to conclude that the myth mentioned by Pausanias seems to be an example of early cultural dialogue between Etruria and Greece. At this stage, Hellenes make more efforts to "import" more from the Etruscan culture. In particular, Greeks adopt Tyrsenian myths (transforming them to a certain extent) and innovations (for example, Tyrsenian trumpet), trying to create a mythological version of the origins of the Etruscan ethnos and find a place for them in their own genealogical grid: Tyrsenus is the son of Heracles and Hegeleus is his grandson.

It is noteworthy that the first emergence of Etruscans in the ancient literature was linked precisely to an attempt to make them part of Greek mythology. At the end of *Theogony*, Hesiod writes:

And Circe the daughter of Helios, Hyperion's son,
loved steadfast Odysseus
and bare Agrius and Latinus who was faultless and strong;
also she brought forth Telegonus by the will of golden Aphrodite.
And they ruled over the famous Tyrrhenians,
very far off in a recess of the holy islands.

⁹ Cristofani M., op. cit, 136.

We share the opinion of those researchers, that these lines are organic for Hesiod's poem and were not inserted in it in the 6th or 5th century BC, an opinion we substantiate in the article *Circe and Italy*.¹⁰

The legend in Pausanias' work, which reflects relations between Tyrsenians and Corinthians, stems from the verge of the 8th and 7th centuries BC. These relations are not yet marred by confrontation and battles.

It is known that Corinth was one of the pioneers of the Greek colonizing movement. Although "Etruscans were too powerful for Greeks to establish colonies on their territory",¹¹ this did not restrict cultural contacts between Greece and Etruria.

It is noteworthy that myths, like with Pausanias, reflect not only Etruscans' contribution to the Greek culture, but also the contribution of Greeks to the Tyrsenian civilization. In our opinion, Livy makes an interesting allusion. He presents, so to say, the second part of Pausanias' version, depicting the contribution of Corinthians to the Etruscan civilization. A passage in the well-known work by the Roman historian *Ab Urbe Condita Libri* (VII) reads: "He [fifth Roman King Tarquinius Priscus] was the son of Demaratus a Corinthian, who had been driven from home by a revolution, and who happened to settle in Tarquinia. There he married and had two sons, their names were Lucumo and Arruns" (I, 34, 96-97).

In our opinion, the fact that Corinthian Demaratus settles in Tarquinia, takes an Etruscan wife, leads an Etruscan lifestyle, and gives his sons Etruscan names points to a bridge between Corinth and Etruria, which the Greek refugee walked along. At the same time, it was Demaratus, who shared important achievements of his culture with Tyrsenians together with adopting Etruscan traditions. In particular, Tacitus writes in his *Annals* that Etruscans adopted their alphabet from Demaratus of Corinth (IV, 50). Scientists generally accept today that the Etruscan alphabet is of Greek origin.

In our opinion, Tacitus' information may be close to reality. At the same time, it is indeed possible to assume that a Greek, who had learned Etruscan, could have created an alphabet adapted to the Etruscan language. Finally, it is noteworthy that the most archaic epigraph in

¹⁰ Кобахидзе Е., Кирка и Италия, *Caucasica. The Journal of Caucasian Studies*, vol. V, Tbilisi 2002, 70-79.

¹¹ Kavtaria G., *Ancient Greece*, Tbilisi 2005, 96 (*in Georgian*).

Etruscan dating back to the 8th or 7th centuries BC was found precisely in Tarquinia.¹²

Taking the aforementioned into account, we believe that the so-called "Cumaean theory", which says that Etruscans adopted their alphabet from Euboean colonists living in a new settlement,¹³ needs to be revised. We believe that it would be more logical to assume that the Etruscan alphabet took shape precisely in this Etruscan city on the basis of contacts between Corinth and Tarquinia.

We think that this Etruscan alphabet spread to Rome later in the era of Demaratus' son Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, who probably introduced this innovation, together with other ones, during his reign in Rome. It can also be assumed that the spread of literacy in Rome started by teaching Etruscan and later, the alphabet was adapted for Latin.

A kind of confirmation of this opinion can be found in the following phrase by Livy: "There is authority for asserting that at that time Roman boys were, as a rule, instructed in Etruscan literature as they now are in Greek".¹⁴

Thus, analyzing mythological data in ancient sources, archaeological materials and scientific literature, we can draw the following conclusions: First contacts between Greece and Etruria, which took the shape of genuine dialogue, were established on the verge of the 8th and 7th centuries BC. They became familiarized with each other much earlier than Greeks established close relations with Latium and Romans. Greek colonists familiarized themselves with Etruscan innovations, mythology and religion and interpreted and adopted Tyrsenian legends. Etruscans, for their part, familiarized themselves with the achievements of Hellenes in developing their writing system, which became the basis for the Etruscan alphabet. This was the start of Greek-Etruscan dialogue, which deepened and became more varied during the following centuries.

It can be said that the dialogue between the Greek and Etruscan cultures contributed greatly to the development of these civilizations and their contemporary world and later, to the formation and development of modern European cultures.

¹² Pandolfini M., *Scrittura*, In: *Dizionario illustrato ...* 263-264.

¹³ Camporeale G., *Gli Etruschi, storia civiltà*, Torino 2000, 194.

¹⁴ Livius, IX, 36, 3-4.