

REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

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REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE

**Cambridge Antiquarian Society,**

AT ITS FORTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,

MAY 7, 1883,

WITH AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY,  
1882—1883.

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ALSO

**Communications**

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No. XXV.

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# REPORT

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WITH APPENDIX.



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XIII. ON SOME ETRUSCAN MIRRORS WITH ENGRAVED  
REVERSES. Communicated by C. W. KING, M.A.,  
Trinity College.

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[Nov. 6, 1882.]

THE metallic hand-mirrors of the Etruscans, that are ornamented with designs in shallow outline (*graffiti*), cut with the graver upon their backs, are the peculiar manufacture of that, in all other branches of art, nation of copyists. The idea was evidently suggested by the large flat bowls decorated on the inside with an endless variety of mystic figures, executed by the same process, which the Phoenicians made and carried by camel-loads to the farthest regions of the East, whole *nests* of them being discovered in the buried palaces of Assyria, giving us to understand the nature of "the two bowls of *fine copper* more precious than gold" enumerated amongst the gifts of Artaxerxes to the Second Temple. The serious and gloomy temper of the Phoenician race strongly manifests itself in the decoration of these instruments of festivity; nothing appears in them except figures of deities, the animals that were their types, or else battle-pieces commemorating some great leader and his protecting god.

But when those noted metallurgists of antiquity, the Etruscans, happily applied the same kind of embellishment to what, in all stages of civilisation, has been a necessary of life to the better half of the human race, they widened the range of subjects by admitting others more congenial with the destination of their ware. The cheerful mythology of the Greeks, learnt by the Tyrrhene artist from the vase-paintings imported from Corinth and Athens, enlivens the reverse of the mirrors of the better sort with the legends of Aphrodite and Dionysos; or, if more serious, with scenes drawn from the Epic Cycle; or, to come more to the point, with the fair owner of the mirror contemplating her charms in what, at the time, must have been a gift of price. These engravings, though without finish, and evidently dashed off with the greatest expedition, frequently display the touch of a master-hand in the freedom of the drawing, and the expressiveness with which they tell their story. But their chief value to *us* lies in the circumstance that the engraver, for the benefit of his semi-civilized but knowledge-craving customers, has, in many cases, added the *names* of the actors in his own language, and thereby handed down to us the most trustworthy of all the few clues that remain for the solution of that, as yet, desperate problem.

It is difficult to imagine why those most unreasoning of all creatures, the Italian antiquaries, gave for so long a time the name of *patera* to these relics, whereas that of '*padelle*' (in their own language) was so much better suited to their outward form. No liquid for libation could have been contained on their plane surface, except by a perpetual miracle vouchsafed by the gods whose images they bore, whereas the slight rim surrounding their reverse, and the long tail projecting from their circumference, give them to the vulgar eye only too much the look of a frying-pan.

This style of mirror-decoration is peculiar to the Etruscans: I have met with no example of the sort that can be attributed



to any other school of art except one discovered at Salamis, which represents similarly in outline, but very stiffly drawn, the elevation of the temple of Paphos, and which is of a semi-Phoenician character<sup>1</sup>, rather than Greek. Indeed it would be rash to regard the place where it was found as affording any argument for its having been made in Greece; for Critias<sup>2</sup>, the disciple of Socrates, praises the Etruscans as pre-eminent for their goldsmiths' work and the making of all metallic articles for domestic use, and Pliny notices the 'Tyrrhena sigilla,' as diffused through every region of the world. In fact this method of adding elegance to the dressing-table seems to have been repugnant to Greek taste: at all events it is never found employed on mirrors of genuine Hellenic manufacture.

Their artists, on the contrary, expended all their skill upon the *mirror-cases*, flat circular boxes of silver or bronze, used for containing reflecting disks, unprovided with handles. The *τορευτική*, that is, repoussé-work in high relief (the invention of Phidias himself), may be found carried to its greatest excellence in some of these mirror-cases. Two incomparable examples of the style are the one in silver with a Bacchic group, at Florence, and the bronze in the collection of the British Museum, with the bust of Nereus and two sea-nymphs reclining on his bosom. A third, equally elaborate in design (Pl. I.), was obtained by Mr Lewis from the Charvet Collection. A Bacchus, evidently returning from the feast, hardly able to carry the thyrsus poised upon his shoulder, is supported by a well-grown Cupid (no longer the infant god): whilst a fully draped Muse walks before, playing upon the *cithara*, the peculiar attribute of *Erato*. Nothing can be better than the compact grouping of these figures, which are in half relief; but they retain something of the squatness of the archaic style.

<sup>1</sup> Figured and described in A. P. di Cesnola's *Salamina*, page 59.

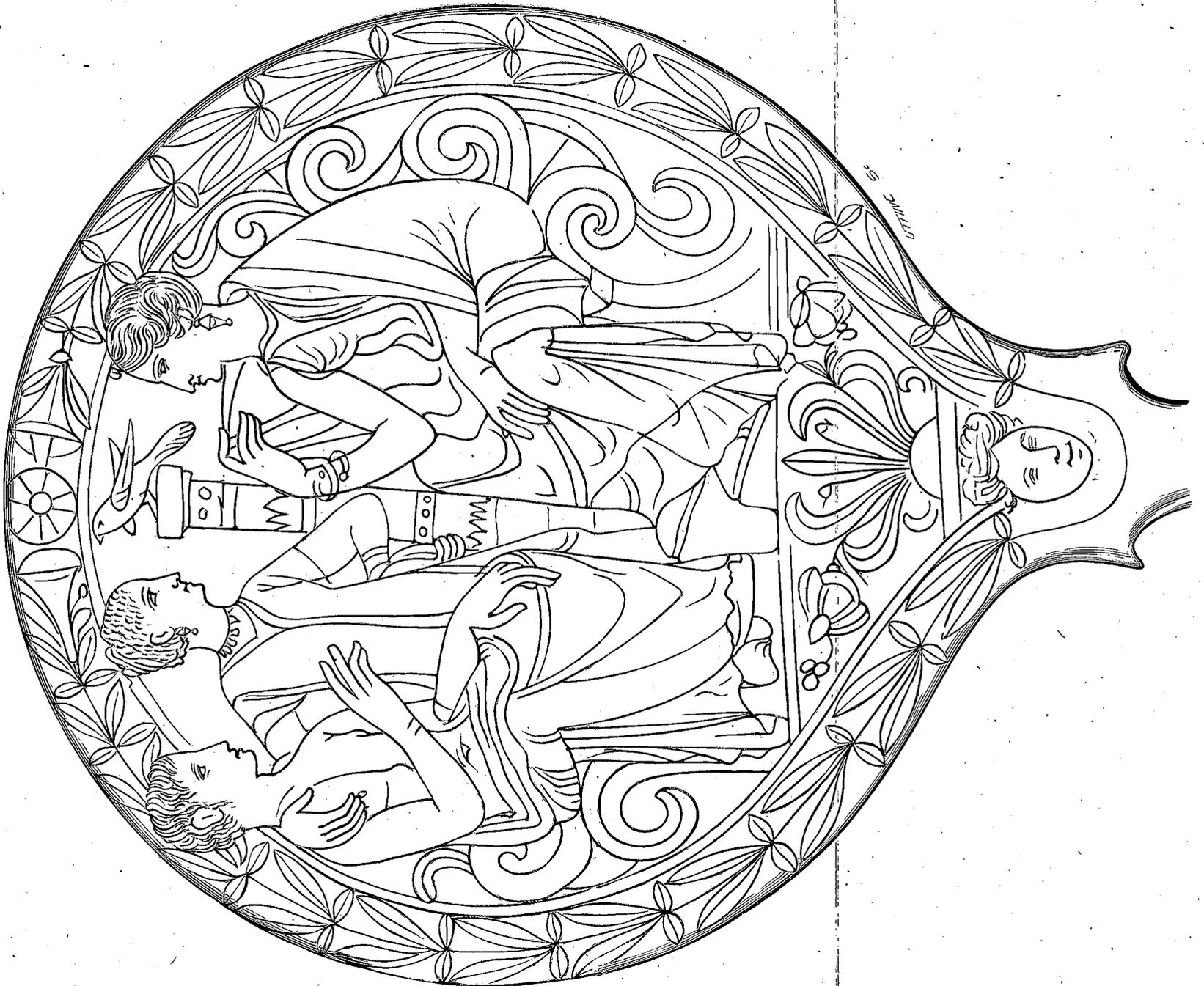
<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Athenæus, i. 50.

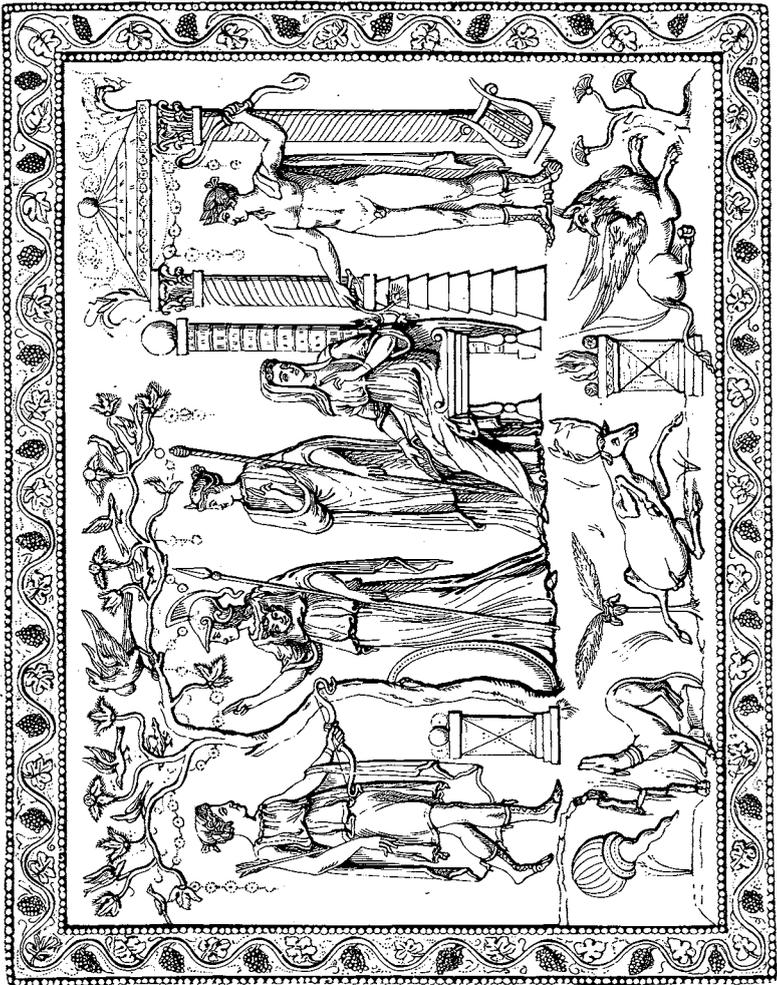
This case, or properly speaking, *cover*, for the article had no underpart, being merely designed to protect a polished surface from injury, still contains its original *speculum*, irrevocably cemented to it by rust. A lively imagination may picture yet stamped upon the mirror the *spectrum* of the face last caught by it as the cover was pressed down over it for the last time, and for ever!

Another Grecian expedient for adding elegance to the simple article of the '*mundus muliebris*' was to support it by the Goddess of Love in person, by forming its handle into a graceful statuette of Aphrodite. There was lately in the possession of M. Feuardent a matchless specimen of such adaptation, in which twin Loves, supported upon the shoulders of their mother ('*Alma Mater Cupidinum*'), bear up between them the reflecting orb, in the same manner as our heraldic supporters do the shield. Sometimes, again, the handle is moulded into the form of a nude *ephebus*, shewing that its use was to throw back to its own gaze the youthful beauty of the male sex, to which the impartial taste of the ancients tendered equal homage with the other.

These preliminary remarks will, perhaps, be not unwelcome to persons hitherto unfamiliar with this branch of archaeology, before we proceed to the examination of the pieces that form the proper subject of this memoir. Like many others which have afforded me such pleasant and suggestive themes for elucidation, they are now added to the collection of the Rev. S. S. Lewis.

One of these mirrors (Pl. II.) presents us with a scene which at first sight suggests nothing more than the homely idea of an affectionate family party. We see a well-dressed lady 'of a certain age,' seated *vis à vis* to her son and daughter; the one seated, the other standing with her hand fondly laid upon her brother's shoulder: a wreath of bay-leaves makes a frame to the picture. But, on closer examination of the accessories to the *tableau*,





SILVER LANK FOUND AT CORBRIDGE IN NORTHUMBERLAND.

(From the *Archæological Journal*.)

we discover, in the centre, a *Doric column* supporting a *Raven*, Horace's 'Oscinem corvum' the established pictorial type of the Delphic Oracle—which together with the wreath from Apollo's own tree and the Artemisian arrangement of the maiden's hair, places it out of doubt that we have before us the Twin-deities resting at the place specially appropriated to the brother, and engaged in deep converse with Mother Earth, or else Themis, each of them the primaeval keepers of the oracular cavern. The Gorgon's head below, which at first sight appears inconsistent with the general character of these decorations, will be found on a deeper examination to give the strongest support to this theory; for Ion describes the omphalos as

στέμμασι γ' ἐνδύτων, ἀμφὶ δὲ Γοργόνες<sup>1</sup>.

The wheel-like object, opposite to this in the leafy border, is the regular symbol of the sun-god, and completes the evidence required for the identification of the subject of the picture.

The scene is, in fact, an abridgement of the one fully carried out upon the celebrated Corbridge Lanx (Pl. III.); and it is highly interesting to compare this example of the manner of treating such subjects, as practised by the race from whom Rome derived the first principles of every art, with that exemplified by the magnificent *anaglyptum*<sup>2</sup> belonging to the period of her culminating glory. The Etruscan sketch has a pleasing simplicity about it, and the well-balanced composition

<sup>1</sup> Euripides *Ion* v. 224.

<sup>2</sup> An oblong silver dish, 20 × 15 in. and weighing 159 ounces. It bears in low relief Apollo standing under a tabernacle, addressing Themis seated, by whose side stands the Sibyl; then comes Minerva addressing Diana, who appears approaching. The central column supports a globe, but the raven is perched upon the wide-spreading *aesculus*, which preceded the bay-tree, as Ævid tells,

"aesculiae capiebant frondis honorem;  
nondum laurus erat." (*Metamorph.* lib. I. v. 449.)

of the group, with the judicious touch of the graver producing so much effect with such small expenditure of labour, evinces the taste of a true artist and the dexterity of a practised hand.

The picture just discussed needed no Oedipus to divine its meaning<sup>1</sup>; far different, however, is the question with the second mirror (Pl. IV.), now about to be described. The engraving represents, in an inferior style to the preceding, a youth, nude except for a scanty *chlamys* floating from his shoulders, mounted on a tall horse slowly cantering towards the spectator's left, but without any distinctive attribute to indicate whether of divine or mortal nature. The border is the wave-pattern, which so frequently (as on the coins of Tarentum and elsewhere) accompanies marine subjects, and the addition of the dolphin in the rider's rear proves that in this place it is no mere ornamental appendage. Subject and drawing coincide so closely with some lately found on Cyrenaic pottery<sup>2</sup>, that all might well be supposed to come from the same period of art, if not from the same school. His work done, the artist was sensible that so indefinite a picture required further explanation, and as it could not tell its own tale, he has, with kindly intention, added an inscription; but has, unfortunately, so worded it as to make confusion worse confounded. He has written in the field, in front of the rider, EPKLE IIANSTE (retrograde) for which the greatest authorities upon that unknown language have proposed solutions, utterly at variance with each other, and equally refuting themselves by their divergence from all of the kind yet observed and by their inapplica-

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above, I find that Gerhard has published what appears to be the same subject (*Etruskische Spiegel*, pl. cccclxxx. i.), but explains it as 'Paris and Helen'—an interpretation that, to the ordinary mind at least, seems the widest possible from the mark, being supported by no one detail in the picture, except the presence of a male and a female actor.

<sup>2</sup> Figured in the *Archaeologische Zeitung* for 1881, pl. 13.



bility to both subject and object—it would therefore be equally useless and invidious to quote them. The rational method of proceeding in such a matter, is first to examine the nature of other explanatory legends found in similar positions on Etruscan works of every kind, and from the result of such examination to lay down principles to guide us in the present difficulty. Now, it will be found to be the invariable rule, that the inscriptions simply give the *name* of the person or object to which they are attached; such a thing as the “artist’s signature” (an explanation that has been hazarded in the case before us) is altogether without precedent. The deities are designated by the names of corresponding powers in the national mythology; Zeus, Hera, Hephaestos, Hermes, Aphrodite, Dionysos, Leto, &c., being translated as Tinia, Thalna, Sethlans, Mercur, Turan, Pupuns, &c., whilst the names of men are transliterated in so barbarous a fashion, docked and cropped, as ‘Odysseus’ into ‘Ulxe,’ ‘Polydeukes’ into ‘Polluke’<sup>1</sup>, ‘Tydeus’ into ‘Tute,’ &c., as to prove that the nature of the Tyrrhene speech sprang from totally different principles from the Hellenic; making the words suffer the same metamorphoses as afterwards in their transition from Latin into Celtic. Hence we are led to surmise that the two words on our mirror are the names of the man and of the horse; and one of them is just the form which might be expected in Etruscan to represent the Greek Herakles.

Although the demi-god does not appear as an equestrian in any piece of antique sculpture that has come down to our times, nevertheless it is certain that he must have figured in that character in some primeval legend. Sufficient proof is the wild story, related by Herodotus<sup>2</sup>, of the stealing of his horse, as he was traversing the Scythian desert, by the woman-serpent, Echidna (the true ‘Seraph-Nachash’ of the Rabbins).

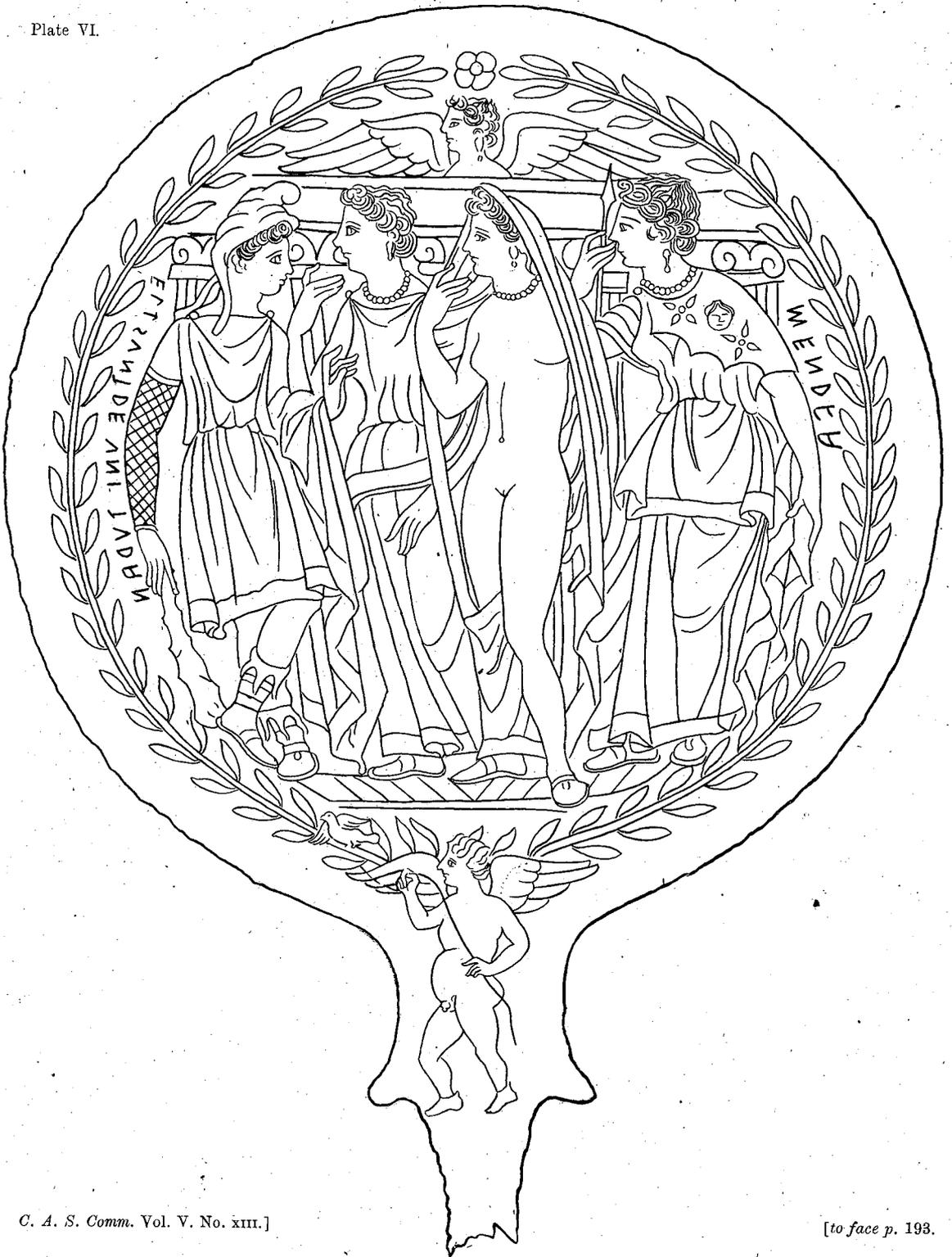
<sup>1</sup> The originals of their Latin forms, so strangely differing from the Greek.

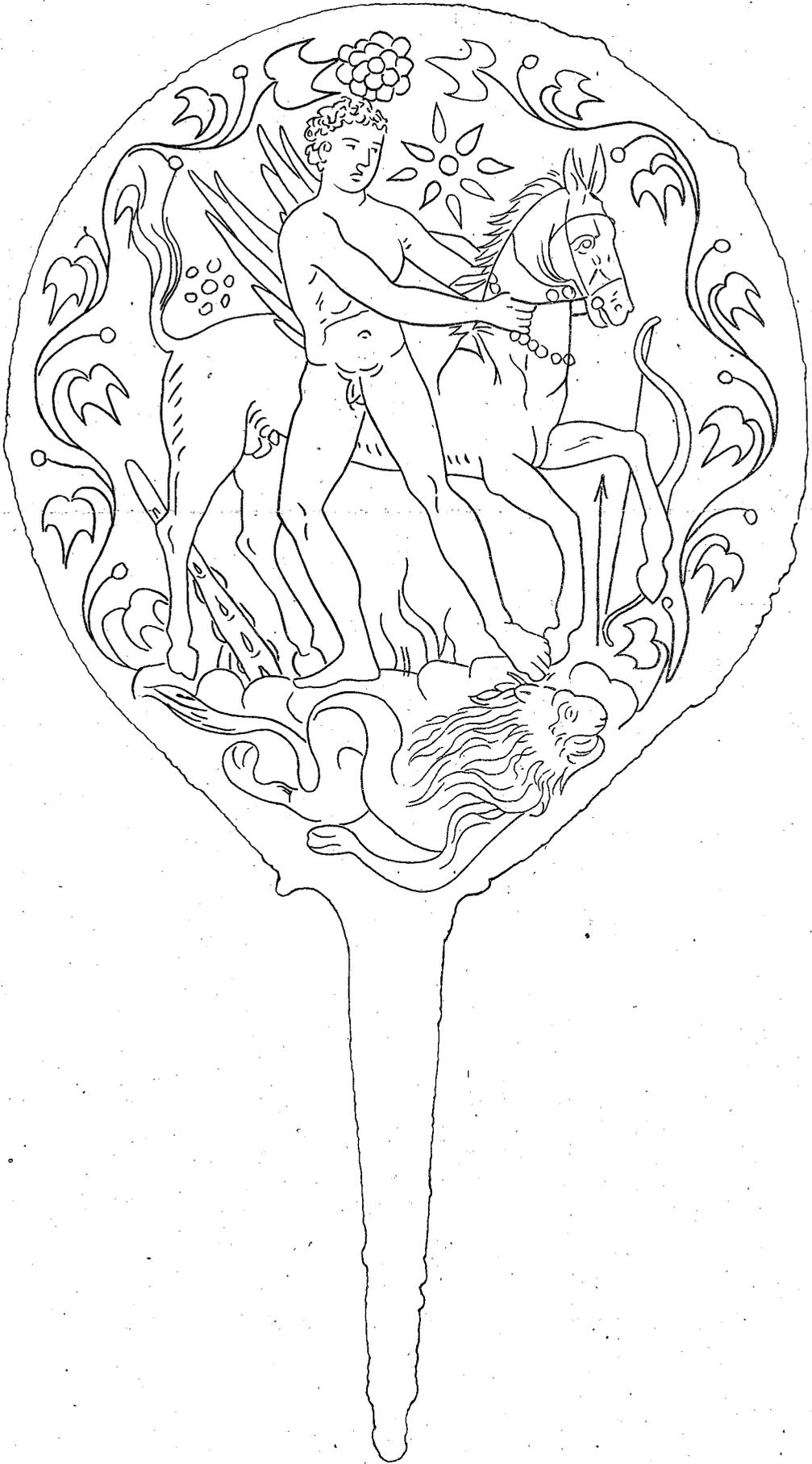
<sup>2</sup> lib. iii. cap. 108.

In the first draught of this essay<sup>1</sup> I had proposed an explanation of the mysterious ΠΑΝΣΤΕ, which though by no means satisfactory, seemed the most plausible solution of the problem; but which a fortunate discovery in the meantime has now enabled me to correct. At the recent sale of the Castellani Collection, Mr Lewis obtained a mirror (Pl. V.), which, though uninscribed, evidently represents a previous scene in the same legend; and may even have come from the same hand, so great is the similarity of workmanship. In this *graffito*, Hercules under the same extremely juvenile form, but recognisable by his club bow and lion's-hide which he has cast on the ground in the violence of his motions, is pulling down an unmistakeable *winged Pegasus*, ornamented, like the steed in the former tableau, with an open-linked chain passed round the neck. In the two pictures, therefore, the *actor* is the same—in the first, he is identified by the inscription; in the second, by the attributes: whence we have good reason to conclude that it is the same horse that appears in both the representations, and that *Panste* is but the strangely rendered Etruscan form of *Pegasus*. Many Etruscan sculptures were evidently inspired by legends (perhaps learned from the Dorians) now entirely lost: of course the feats of Hercules were multiplied and diversified without end by the story-tellers; and it is very conceivable that the exploits of Bellerophon were often transferred to the more celebrated demigod. One such *variant* may have been how that Hercules caught the Gorgonian horse, and as the most effectual method of breaking him in at once divested him of his wings, and used such a conveyance across the interminable plains of Scythia.

Another mirror (Pl. VI.), also from the Castellani Collection, is remarkable for the pictorial treatment of the group engraved upon it, and equally so for the curiosity of the details. It is the often-repeated subject of the Judgment of Paris. The

<sup>1</sup> The reference in *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 40, p. 36, *note* is to a proof copy of this preliminary draught.





three competing goddesses are seen advancing towards the Idaean shepherd, making each of them the same gesture of salutation: he lifts his left hand, as if surprised at the unexpected visit, leaning with his right upon the pastoral ragged staff. Two are fully and elegantly draped; but the artist has thrown all his power into the nude figure of Venus, and has produced an outline of perfect beauty of form, as also in the half-figure of Love, which soars above his mother's head, as though lending force to her persuasions. He has also faithfully rendered the ornaments of an Etruscan *belle* of his own day—the large vase-shaped pendants in the ears; the necklace of big spherical gold beads; but, by an unusual omission no bangles on the arms; and the *sandals*, instead of the long-toed Etruscan shoe. A remarkable peculiarity in this point is the tight-fitting gauntlet of network which entirely covers the arms of the shepherd; and which doubtless represents a kind of rustic armour worn by the shepherds and hunters of Etruria. A ludicrous little pot-bellied Cupid is placed in the exergue, and a dove completes the artistic part of the design.

Much additional value is given to this relic by the clearly-cut inscriptions, which according to custom declare the names of the actors in the scene. Two of the goddesses retain their regular designation of MEURFA, and TURAN; but the third, instead of THALNA as usual, is here named UNI, which is altogether new to me in an Etruscan monument, although it is preserved in its Roman derivative *Iuno*. But it is in the transliteration of the Greek ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ that the ineffectual struggles of an Oriental pronunciation are most curiously manifested. The Tyrrhene has rendered the  $\Xi$  by that "broad-arrow" character of his own alphabet which represents the Greek  $\chi$ , followed by an S (just as the Roman  $x$  takes an  $s$  after it in some legends of consular date): the termination of the word he represents by TRE; which shows us how the Romans, who obtained their first knowledge of Grecian poetical

names from the works of Etruscan artists, came to change the termination *dros* into *der*.

The design is framed within a wreath, not of the so frequent ivy, but of *myrtle*, in evident connection with the deity whose triumph it commemorates.

The more than ordinary task and labour expended upon the work sufficiently declares that this mirror was an *objet de luxe*; perhaps a wedding present from some wealthy *Lucumo* to his bride, in the days when Veii was as yet the formidable rival of Rome:

“vincere cum Veios posse laboris erat.”

Not the slightest hint as to the manufacture of these very interesting works of art is to be found in ancient writers, except it be in the casual notice of Pliny<sup>1</sup> that “mirrors were *formerly* made at Brundisium until those of silver, first made in Pompey’s time, came into common use even with the servant-wenches.” The singular term ‘*temperabantur*’ probably hints at some trade-secret in the management of the alloy; for otherwise why should that remote town have had the monopoly of an article in such general demand, which could equally well have been made on the other side of Italy, in the furnaces of the copper mines on the Tuscan coast. Or one may suspect from Pliny’s transition from the *bronze* to the *silver* that he is referring only to the superior class of the article in question, for it is hardly probable that the whole of Italy was dependent for its supply of this toilette-necessary upon a single place<sup>2</sup>.

The analysis of these mirrors gives copper, tin, and a large

<sup>1</sup> Optima. apud maiores fuerant Brundisina, stanno et aere mixtis: praelata sunt argentea. primus fecit Pasiteles Magni Pompei aetate. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 9, § 45.

Specula etiam ex eo (*stanno*) laudatissima, ut diximus, Brundisi temperabantur, donec argenteis uti coepere et ancillae. *Ibid.* xxxiv. 17, § 48.

<sup>2</sup> Tarentum, however, was famous for the number and merit of the bronze statues that filled its *agora* and temples; hence the joke of Fabius, to evade their spoliation, ‘Let us leave the Tarentines their angry gods.’

proportion of antimony—the last ingredient rendering the alloy very hard and brittle, and therefore susceptible of a higher polish. The modern “speculum-metal” employed for the mirrors in reflecting telescopes is made of copper, tin, and one per cent. of arsenic. Baron Pichon, with his usual kindly readiness to impart information upon questions of archaeology that interest us both, has sent me a recipe *Pour faire miroirs de fonte* extracted from a MS. of the 15th century written for Margu rite de Cl ves, third wife of Charles d’Orl ans. You are told to take 8 pounds of bell-metal (*arain*, for *leton*, i.e. *laiton*, latine or brass will not answer); add to this when in fusion 2 pounds of fine Cornish tin; remove the dross by burning on the surface a handful of linen-rag and skimming it carefully; then rub down the plate with emery-powder upon a table of lead, and give the final polish with fine *poudre d’estain* upon chamois leather in order to remove all scratches.

Pliny mentions the making of *glass* mirrors at Sidon, as an invention of his own times. Although he is apparently speaking of silver mirrors, when he states that gilding them on the back improves their power of reflection, yet the remark can only be intended for those of glass. These must have gradually superseded the ancient metal *specula*, for Dante, writing A.D. 1300, uses *vetro impiombato*, ‘leaded,’ or as we improperly say, ‘silvered’ glass<sup>1</sup>, as a synonym for ‘mirror’. Still the 15th century

<sup>1</sup> E quei: S’io fossi d’ *impiombato vetro*  
L’image di fuor tua non trarrei  
Piu tosto me che quella dentro impetro.

*Inferno*, c. 23, v. 25.

Dante refers to the glass mirrors in two other places:

Così, come color torna per vetro  
Lo qual dietro a s  piombo nasconde.

*Paradiso*, c. 2, v. 89.

E s  rivolge, per veder se ’l vetro  
Gli dice ’l vero, e vede ch’ el s’ accorda  
Con esso, come nota con suo metro.

*Paradiso*, c. 28, v. 8.

recipe quoted above makes it appear that mirrors of the antique composition continued to be made down to a much later period than is commonly supposed. Steel highly polished seems also to have been employed for the purpose far down in modern times. No specimen can be quoted so conspicuous for historic interest and artistic also as the one made for the celebrated Isotta da Rimini (1440-50), preserved in the Soulages<sup>1</sup> collection. The metallic plate, 10 × 8 in. in measurement, is inclosed in a massy frame of walnut wood, exquisitely carved with heraldic bearings and other devices, amongst which the Malatesta elephant stands conspicuously forth. But more suggestive of the strangest and most opposite reminiscences of love, hatred, pleasure and death is the circular mirror in the same collection, ascribed to Lucrezia Borgia, on the authority of the flaming grenade, her well-known device, to be seen on the frame. In the wonderful arabesque covering the wood, all kinds of animals creep in and out amongst the foliage, in which also lurks the grisly skeleton, almost indispensable to Gothic art. On the back of the mirror appear the Virgin and Child, converting the whole, at pleasure, into an instrument of devotion.

The Byzantine poet, Symposius, has a riddle which runs as follows:

'Nulla mihi certa est, nulla est peregrina figura;  
Fulgor adest intus, radiata luce coruscans;  
Qui nihil ostendit nisi quod se viderit ante?'

Here the expression 'fulgor' seems more applicable to a reflector in metal than in glass.

Truly there is nothing new under the sun: for Statius sings of an anticipated Daguerreotype, when he describes in high-flown strains how Earinus, Domitian's favourite eunuch, despatches his votive curls inclosed in a jewelled casket, to his

<sup>1</sup> Now in the South Kensington Museum.

<sup>2</sup> *Poetae Latini*, ed. Maittaire, vol. II. page [1611], *Aenigm.* LXIX.

national deity at Pergamüs, who had at first qualified him for so enviable a position by means of a painless operation. At the command of Venus, Cupids act as the tonsors, using their arrows in lieu of scissors, and as they are shutting up the box, one of them lays hold upon the second Ganymede's mirror, with his last look imprinted therein :

“Tum puer e turba, manibus qui forte supinis  
Nobile gemmato speculum portaverat auro,  
‘Hoc quoque demus, ait, patriis non gratius ullum  
Munus erit templis ipsoque potentius auro;  
Tu modo fige aciem, et vultus hos usque relinque.’  
Sic ait, et speculum recludit *imagine rapta*<sup>1</sup>.”

This pleasing picture has, however, an ugly reverse, and his rival Martial tells how the same article might become a fatal weapon in the hands of an irascible beauty :

‘Unus de toto peccaverat orbe comarum  
Annulus, incerta non bene fixus acu.  
Hoc facinus Lalage speculo quo viderat ulta est,  
Et cecidit sectis icta Plecusa comis.  
Desine iam Lalage tristes ornare capillos,  
Tangat et insanum nulla puella caput :  
Hoc salamandra notet, vel saeva novacula nudet,  
Ut digna speculo fiat imago tuo<sup>2</sup>.’

Although mirrors of metal turn up abundantly in Italian soil, and in fact appear for many centuries to have accompanied their mistress to the tomb as a distinction of sex, just as the housewife's badge, the thimble, did throughout the Middle Ages<sup>3</sup>, yet we very rarely hear of such a discovery being made in a Roman-British interment. Even if we suppose that the high value of the implement (necessarily of foreign importation) caused it to be retained for use in the *present* world, yet speci-

<sup>1</sup> Statius, *Silv.* III. 4. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Martial, *Epigr.* II. 66.

<sup>3</sup> They are plentifully found in disturbing the earth of old churchyards, and are short and open at the top, like those still used by tailors. Similarly a miniature chalice and paten of pewter distinguish the last resting-place of the mass-priest.

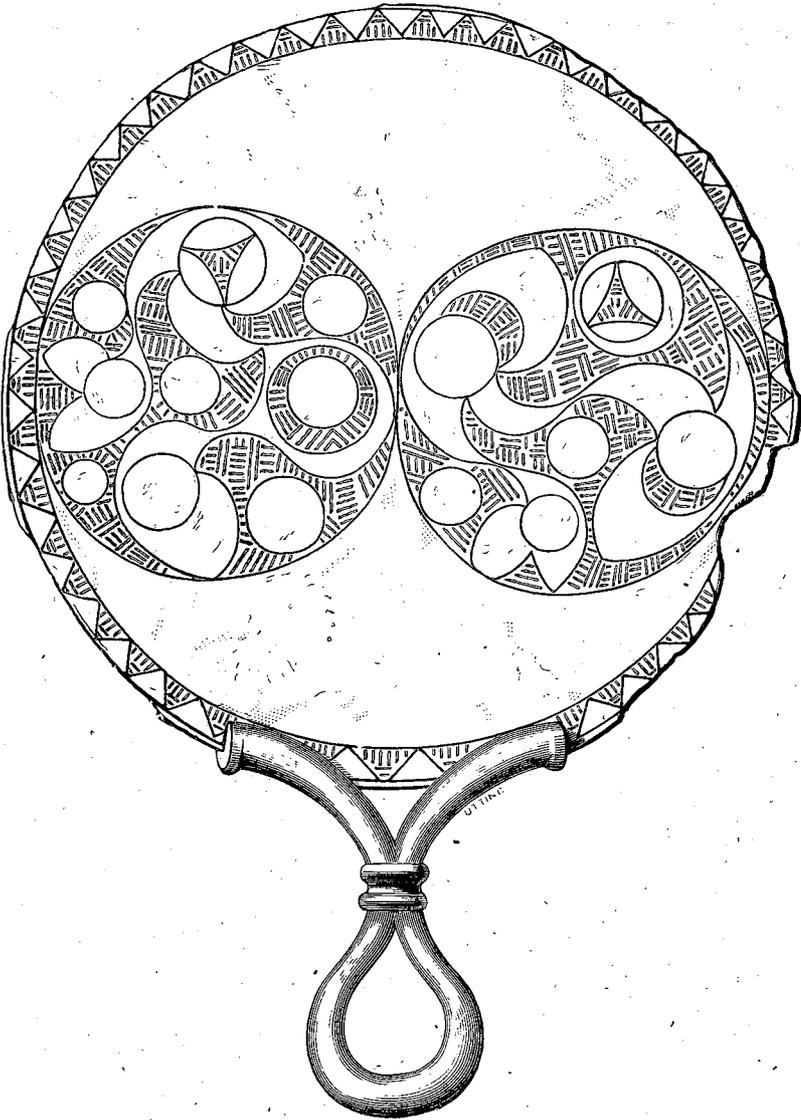
mens, accidentally lost, would certainly have come to light amongst the other relics of Roman habitation, had these articles been in general use amongst the provincials<sup>1</sup>. We must therefore suppose that our insular fair ones were forced, like the shepherd in Virgil, to content themselves with the present Irishman's shaving glass—a tub of clear water—whenever they wished to arrange their 'cerulean tresses,' as Propertius<sup>2</sup> strangely calls them.

I have been able to find one record of the exhumation of a regular mirror, which is of the highest interest both in itself and in the concomitant circumstances of its discovery. It is of genuine Celtic manufacture, for the back is adorned with two combinations of those weird involved circles, that are the distinguishing characteristic of Irish ancient metal-work (Pl. VII.). It was found in 1833 at Trelan Bahow, Cornwall, in a prehistoric cemetery on the slope of a hill in the district of St Keverne's, in company with bronze rings plated with gold, bronze pins and bracelets, but also (a most remarkable fact) with *stone implements*. These circumstances render it possible that the mirror was the importation of some Gallic or Phœnician trader, and the peculiar decoration merely the addition of the purchaser to adapt the object to the national taste.

But mirrors were put to a higher use by the ancients than that of affording agreeable reflections to the feminine mind;

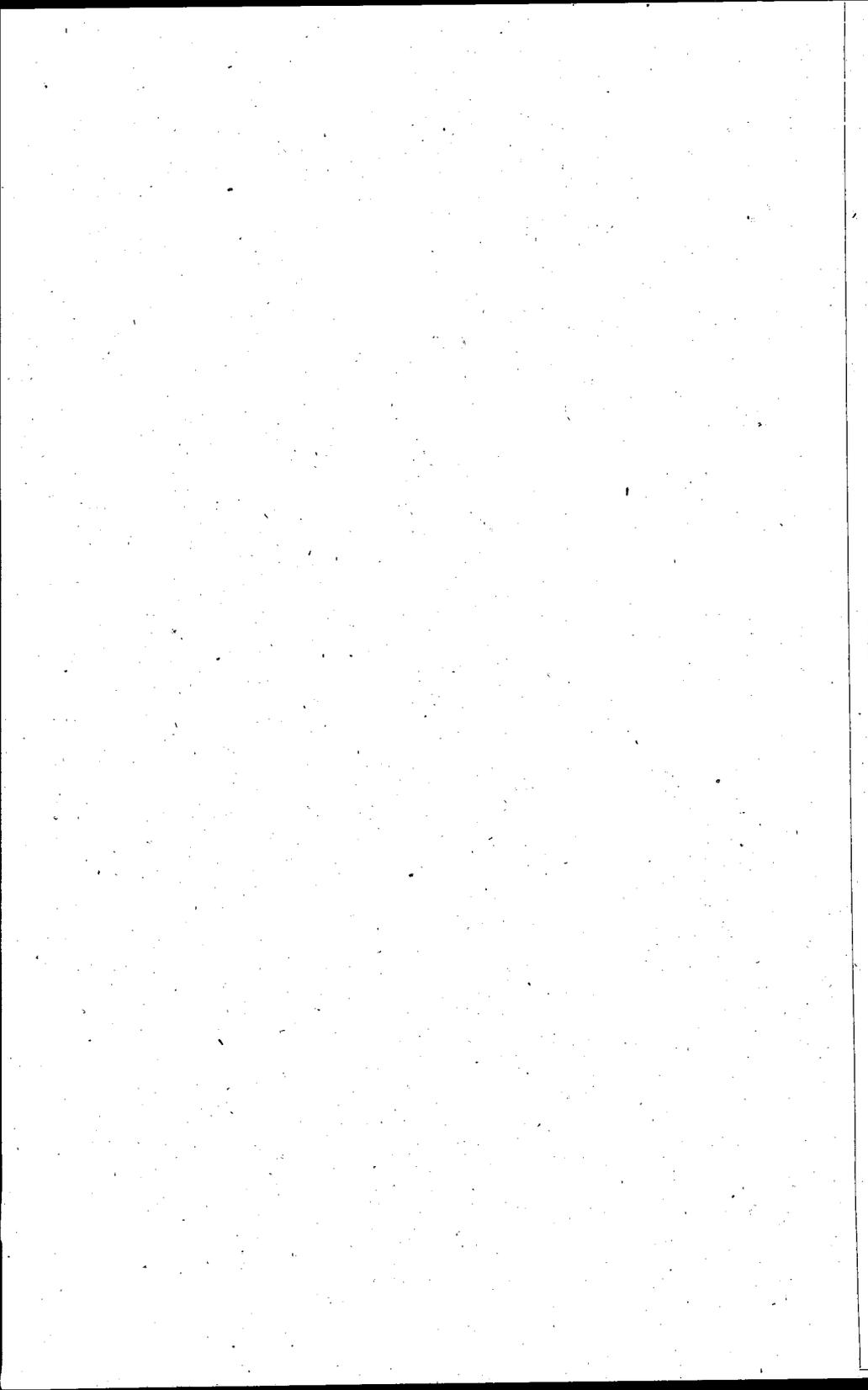
<sup>1</sup> A remarkable specimen was lately brought to light in company with other relics of the Roman period, and is now preserved in the museum, at Cologne. It is a bronze mirror-case, 3 inches in diameter, having in the centre a very fine impression of a first brass coin of Nero struck without reverse from a die, and surrounded by three sunken mouldings forming a frame for the relief, in the way that the medallions are occasionally seen completed. This fact proves that plaques, thus stamped, were produced at the imperial mint for the purpose of ornamentation only. Similarly *solidi* of the family of Constantine are extant, struck on the obverse alone, evidently for jewellery. This mirror-case is accurately figured in the Journal of the Rheinland Antiquarian Society, Vol. LXXI, Pl. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Eleg.* III. ix. 31.



MIRROR FOUND AT TRELAN BAHOU, NOW IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM. Scale  $\frac{2}{3}$ .

(From the *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. xxx. page 267.)



they were made the means of prying into the future. Spartian<sup>1</sup> relates how the unlucky Didius Julianus, terrified at the rise of three powerful competitors at once for his dearly bought throne, after exhausting all the resources of authorised religion had recourse in his last distress to unhallowed expedients, and amongst others to that in which, "a boy, with eyes blindfolded, is "made to look into a *mirror*, in which, as it is reported, the boy "beheld the approach of Severus, and the downfall of Julian." The same instrument, so convenient for all the inventions of jugglery, continued the favourite resource of magicians until their trade came to an end. To say nothing of Cornelius Agrippa and his wondrous looking-glass, we may still view with awe in the Londesborough collection the actual 'shew-stone' into which the Cromwellian conjuror, Kelly, "did call his spirits"; or as Hudibras expresses it:

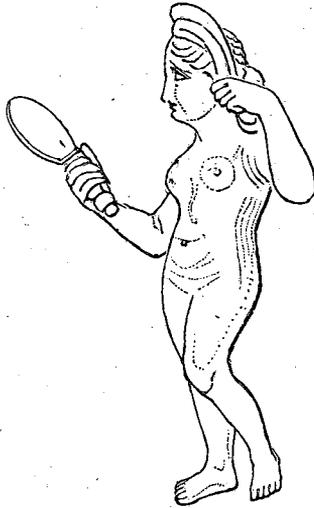
"Kelly did all his tricks upon  
The Devil's looking-glass—a stone;  
Where, playing with him at bo-peep,  
He solved all problems, ne'er so deep"

It is in reality one of those mirrors that the old Mexicans cut so ingeniously out of that obdurate material, obsidian; of an oval shape, with a high raised margin to protect the polished surface. It is difficult to imagine how the copper-coloured beauties of Montezuma's court contrived to 'see themselves as others see them' in so dusky a medium; Pliny remarks of the obsidian, that it was much in request for panelling walls, but that it reflected *shadows* and not *images*.

The mention of enchanted mirrors brings us down to a variety of the species, still commonly to be met with, although here all the *magic* lies in a curious artifice of the metal-worker. These are the Chinese mirrors of some mixed metal, having the reverses decorated with inscriptions, flowers, and

<sup>1</sup> *Didius Julianus*, cap. vii.

birds in low relief, whose exact images appear in the reflection cast by the mirror under a strong light. These remarkable effects greatly puzzle ordinary spectators; but the most probable explanation is a very simple one—that the effect is produced by long hammering of the relievo figures, which either condenses the corresponding portions of the entire plate, thereby causing the surface to reflect the rays of light differently from the densified parts, or else that the surface is slightly elevated in such places, not sufficiently indeed to be perceptible to the touch, but sufficiently so as to produce a slight variation of light and shade.



APHRODITE HOLDING A MIRROR.

Egyptian Bronze from Thebes, figured to the size of the original (in the collection of Mr Lewis).