

Reassessing Etruscan Inscriptions Through a Turkic Linguistic Framework: Evidence from Vital Like Moral, Judicial, and Didactic Texts

Dr. Tariyel Azerturk Independent Researcher / Professor

Center of Sumerology, Etruscology and Turkology, 12909 Mukilteo Speedway B 206, Lynnwood, WA 98087, USA

ABSTRACT	ARTICLE DETAILS
This study reassesses selected Etruscan inscriptions through a Turkic linguistic framework, emphasizing the importance of artifact-based contextual reading. By correlating epigraphic text with visual narratives depicted on Etruscan bronze mirrors, the paper challenges the prevailing mythological interpretations commonly applied in Etruscan studies. Two representative case studies are examined: a mirror scene traditionally identified as the “Judgment of Paris,” here reinterpreted as the formal registration of a marriage alliance, and a second mirror depicting an elite woman receiving hairstyling services, argued to encode a didactic, procedural instruction. The analysis demonstrates that when inscriptions are read in direct relation to the depicted social practices, coherent moral, judicial, and practical meanings emerge. These findings support the hypothesis that a portion of Etruscan epigraphic material reflects real social life and institutional practices rather than abstract mythology. The study contributes to methodological discussions in epigraphy by proposing a context-driven, linguistically grounded approach to Etruscan texts. KEYWORDS: Etruscan mirrors, Turkic linguistic framework, epigraphy, daily-life inscriptions, didactic texts, marriage alliance.	Published On: 03 February 2026 Available on: https://irijsh.com/

1. INTRODUCTION

Etruscan inscriptions have long been interpreted primarily through mythological and Greco-Roman comparative frameworks. While such approaches have produced valuable insights, they often detach the written text from the material and visual context of the artifact itself. This study proposes an alternative methodology that integrates linguistic analysis with artifact-based interpretation, drawing on Turkic linguistic structures to reassess selected inscriptions. The objective is not to replace existing interpretations wholesale, but to demonstrate that certain texts yield coherent and socially grounded meanings when evaluated within a Turkic linguistic framework and read alongside the depicted scenes.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study is artifact-centered and comparative. Inscriptions are analyzed in direct relation to the visual narratives engraved on Etruscan bronze mirrors. The linguistic analysis applies Turkic lexical segmentation and semantic reconstruction as a working hypothesis. Multiple attested inscriptional variants from existing literature are compared, and proposed translations are tested against the social actions depicted in the imagery. This approach allows for internal consistency checks between text, image, and inferred social practice.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Registration of a Marriage Alliance

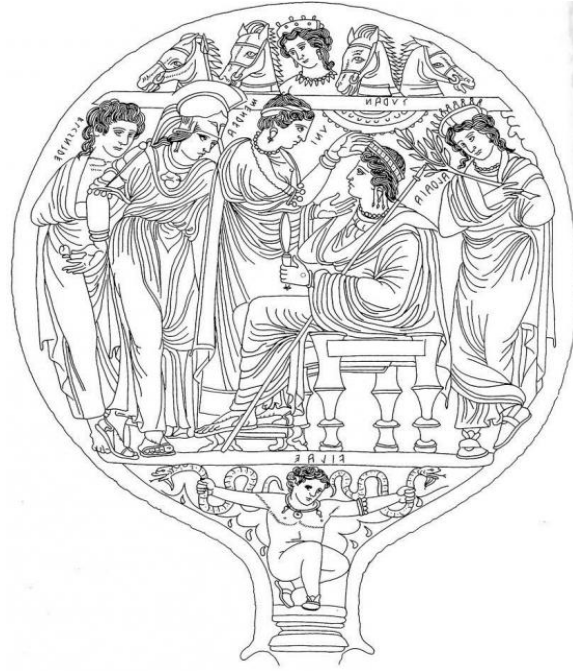


Figure 1. Registration of mesalliance – Mom is agreed.

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/36169603236745701/>

Etruscan bronze mirror (4th century BC). Scene traditionally interpreted as the “Judgment of Paris,” but here argued to represent the registration/formation of a marriage alliance within an elite family context. Source sketch: as provided by the author.

This mirror provides an informative example in which the visual narrative and inscription may be read as a coherent social document. Unlike fragmentary and severely damaged papyrus texts, this artifact preserves both composition and textual elements in a clear and testable form.

Inscription (as reported in related literature)

- The inscription scattered on the back of a hand-held bronze mirror has been cited from right to left in the following segmented form as below. Reed starts from left side of mirror:
- **ERKENSDE** –
- **MENRVA**^{1,2}
- **UNI**
- **TURAN**
- **AIAOLA** – only here script reads from left to right
- **FILAYE / VILAE** – this is seen below over a head of a boy, sitting and holding two-heads snake and reads as regular – from right to left

Model form (as cited):

ERKENSEDE MENRVA UNI TURAN ALTHAIA FIALAE

A reconstructed Etruscan line has also been reported as:

EREK[E]NSE DE, MEN R[E]VA, UNI TURAN, AYA, OLA VILAE

Turkic-based interpretation (working hypothesis)

ERKƏNSƏ DƏ, MƏN RƏVA BİLİRƏM TURAN UNİ (ONU)

- **Erkensde / erkensede** — “even if it is early; even if it is too soon for my teenage son”
- **Menrva** — segmented as **men + rva**
 - *men* = “I”
 - *rva* = *reva* = *rəva* – *rəva bilmək* “proper, suitable, fair”; using always with verbs *bilirəm* or *görürəm* like *rəva bilirəm* or *rəva görürəm* – I’m agree.
 - *As it seen Menrva* – going together of two words (*men* – I and *reva*- together - *Men reva [bilirəm]* – I’m agree never been a goddess.²
- **Uni** — **onu** - “her / to her” (contextual sense)

- **Turan** — personal name of the young so-called teenage groom
- **Filae / Filaye / Vilae** — “formally; by law” (legal-registration tone)

PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION:

“Even if it is early, I consider it proper that Turan may become her lawful husband, formally/by law.”

Contextual reading of the composition

The scene aligns well with an elite marriage preparation and alliance confirmation narrative. The central seated aged figure of beautiful lady appears as the bride, while attendants participate in preparation. The presence of multiple women in structured roles and the emphasis on elite symbols (including the harnessed horses) support a social-life interpretation consistent with marriage arrangement procedures.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MIRROR SKETCH

The sketch engraved on the mirror requires description, even if brief.

What do we see in this relatively well-preserved scene?

A young man (the outermost figure on the left), standing behind his beautiful mother (wearing a hat with a sharp, pointed visor), has fallen in love at the age of about sixteen or seventeen with a beautiful and wealthy woman whom he wishes to marry. The mother herself appears affluent and of elite status. She is placed by her beloved son before a difficult dilemma: *“Mother, I am in love.”*

“Very well,” the mother replies to her still very young son, “let us assume that is so.” However, there is one serious and troubling complication: the prospective bride is older than the mother herself. This realization deeply distresses the mother. Yet the son is so devoted to his beloved that he is ready to harm himself rather than live without her. Faced with this dramatic situation, the mother is compelled to yield to her son’s insistence.

“All right, my son,” she says, “show me this woman you call your ‘beloved.’”

The mother takes a gold ring with a diamond crown—clearly visible in the sketch—which she holds in her right hand behind her back.

The bride is the central figure in the composition, seated on a bench and attended by her servants. Her numerous ornaments—earrings, chest jewelry, and her richly decorated garment—together with her four-horse phaeton and the young female charioteer, visible from behind the wall, somewhere from a front yard, clearly testify to her great wealth and high social standing. Moreover, she has not yet faded with age; she appears well-preserved, attractive, and full of vitality.

Seeing all this, the mother—who initially gazes upon the woman with a stern and hostile expression—eventually agrees with her son’s decision. Yet she acts shrewdly. She declares:

“I agree that Turan may take her as his wife,” carefully adding the crucial word *“lawfully.”* Inwardly, she reasons: *Let him marry her—what will come of it? The boy cannot live without her, let him to marry and when she dies, all this wealth will remain his.*

The inclusion of the word **“VILAE”** (“lawfully”) in the inscription is therefore not accidental, but deliberate and meaningful.

An Etruscan bronze mirror dated to the 4th century BC, traditionally interpreted as the “Judgment of Paris,” is reexamined. The visual composition depicts an elite female figure seated centrally, surrounded by attendants, suggesting a formal social event. The accompanying inscription, when segmented through a Turkic linguistic framework, yields a legal-formal statement expressing approval of a marriage alliance. The proposed translation conveys consent and legal propriety, aligning with the social dynamics depicted in the scene. This reading supports an interpretation of the mirror as a visual-legal document rather than a mythological tableau.

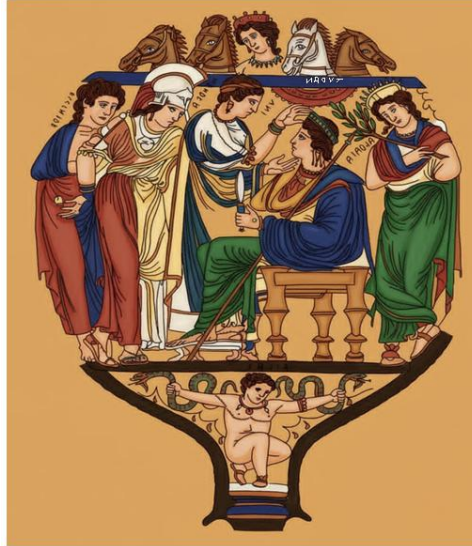


Figure 2. Author-regenerated sketch of the same scene, based on the original mirror composition.

3.2. TEACHING FENCING TO ETRUSCAN SWORDSMEN³



Figure 3. Etruscan men in training

Beneath the figure there is a row of syllables. If they are read from left to right, the sequence is:

OKMGERUİSHDOMTOSONNUEPAMATOXEEN

Our modeling

OK MGER U İSHDOMTO SONNU EP AMAT OXE EN

Complete reconstruction of the sentence (with punctuation)

OK M|E|GER U İSHDOMTO? SON|U|NU EP, AMAT OXE EN.

The same pronunciation with modern Azerbaijani explanations

OX M|E|GER U İSHDEMDE? SONU EP (QAP), AMAT (SONRA), OXA EN!

Glossary

- **ok / ox** — “arrow”; however, the weapon in the figure is clearly a sword. It seems that the Etruscans used **ok** as a name for this weapon.
- **mger** — undoubtedly corresponds to Turkic **məgər**, a question word meaning: “Isn’t it so...?”, “Do you really...?”
- **u / o** — a demonstrative pronoun singular: *that, it*; also functioning as a personal pronoun: *he, she*.
- **ishtomdo** — in modern usage this would be **ışdəmdə**, meaning: *in this position, in this action, in this operation*.
- **sonnu / sonunu** — from **son**: the end, the tip; also used for the hilt/handle part.
- **ep** — **qap / tut** - *hold, catch, seize, grab*.
- **amat** — *then, after that*.

- **oxe / oxa** — from **ox** - arrow, but in the text referring to the sword.
- **en** — **endir-** (verb): *to strike down with the sword*.

Even with the naked eye, one can see that the young man on the right is holding the sword not by its handle, but by its blade—something that could easily cause a serious injury to himself. The trainer in the middle therefore asks him, with visible tension:

“Is that how you hold a sword?”

This question fully reveals the central meaning of the scene.

Look again at the trainer’s (in the center) hand movements. Even without the written words, it is obvious that he is demonstrating the most subtle techniques of fencing—training each fighter to work with two swords.

LINGUISTIC NOTE

A very interesting feature of the pronunciation here is what may be called **okanye**—the retention of the unstressed sound **o**. In the Etruscan mouth, the Turkic language appears in this specific phonetic form.

The Etruscan dialect is connected with Turkic at every linguistic level: phonetics, grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. This connection is expressed through a vast body of linguistic material. At the same time, the presence of **okanye** suggests, on the one hand, an early stage of language formation, while on the other hand it highlights a distinctive character when compared with Babylonian Turkic.

In Babylonian written material, the sound “**o**” does not occur at all. Instead, it is replaced by “**a**” and “**u**”, despite the fact that Babylonian texts are more than 6,000 years old.

INTERPRETATION OF THE SCENE

For the first time in the five-hundred-year history of attempts to reconstruct the Etruscans—who lived approximately between the third and second millennia BCE in the Apennine Peninsula, in the region of Etruria (Florence)—we have the opportunity to present their real life to the world.

In this figure we observe two young Etruscan swordsmen under the guidance of a trainer conducting their exercise. The young man on the right does not even know how to handle a sword correctly. He holds it by its sharp edge, grasping the blade itself. Seeing this, the trainer questions him:

OK MGER U İSHDOMTO? - Is that how you hold a sword?

Then, somewhat nervously, he gives the instruction:

SONNU EP, AMAT OXE EN! –

Catch the tip (or end) properly, and only then strike with it!

The trainer’s words—spoken in Turkic—reveal the scene with complete clarity. For the first time, it is established that the true content of this and hundreds of other Etruscan reliefs and paintings can only be understood through the Turkic language.

Therefore, I invite those modern interpreters who see in every Etruscan scene only Greek fantastic god to observe once again the movement of the trainer’s hands, and the behavior of the young swordsmen. One will then see that even without the inscription, the meaning is clear: the trainer is demonstrating the refined details of sword fighting, training the technique of two swords for each fighter.

4. CONCLUSION

The two case studies presented demonstrate that Etruscan inscriptions can produce coherent and contextually grounded meanings when analyzed through a Turkic linguistic framework and evaluated in direct relation to artifact imagery. The marriage alliance scene reflects social-legal language tied to family decision-making, while the hair service scene exemplifies practical, instructional discourse. Together, these examples strengthen the argument for a methodological shift toward integrated visual-linguistic analysis in Etruscan epigraphy and invite further systematic application of this approach.

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- 3) 3 Tariyel Azerturk (2024). “8.5. Etruscan men are training with swords” 218-219 pp., in the book: Genesis of the Sumerian and Etruscan Turks and Their Language. (Based on Cuneiform and Etruscan Script). Bloomington, iUniverse, USA, 902 pp., in English.