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A Critical Evaluation of Gender Studies in Archaeological Accounts of Etruscans

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Honors Thesis

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<u>Introduction:</u>

Starting in the 20th century new social revolutions changed both society and many areas of academics. Archaeology has always been closely tied to political movements and social ideologies, and the rapid change in Western society's opinion and interpretation of gender throughout the 20th century sparked a great methodological change in the field. The feminist movement of the 1960s, which continues today, caused the creation of a new, feminized outlook on archaeology. This new theoretical framework addressed many of the patriarchal biases imbued in the excavation and analysis of past archaeology. However, despite its progress towards the study of gender in archaeology, the feminist theory introduced a new set of biases to archaeological research. The new gender based feminist theory was developed and refined into the gender theory applied by archaeologists today. Nevertheless, even with the improvements in archaeological theory that the gender focus provides, many researchers continue to analyze civilizations, such as the Etruscan civilization from 10th to 1st century Italy with older, more biased methods. Past research on the Etruscans has been limited and short ranged, and draws conclusions from biased information provided by non-Etruscan civilizations. The growing interest in the study of Etruscans using gender theory, and particularly how the material culture affected gender in the Etruscan society, has lead to a better, more in depth understanding of the civilization. While there are still many sources of bias in Etruscan archaeology, the application of the gender theory helps to make biases within past analysis of both Etruscan people and materials apparent. This paper takes a critical look at the rise and history of both feminist and gender archaeological theory, and discusses problems with past interpretations of the Etruscan civilization. Several major sources of bias which affect the archaeological interpretations are explored, and analyzed through three case studies as example. I have chosen to focus on the

published conversation from 1990 until present dealing with Etruscan mirrors and tomb architecture. Finally, this paper concludes with recommendations for further study of the Etruscan culture, several of which do not relate sole to gender, but to the study of Etruscans as a whole.

History of Gender Archaeology:

Before it is possible to examine the archaeological record through a gendered lens, key terms in gender research need to be defined. First and foremost, the basis of the following gender discussion is the Standard Model for Sex/Gender, which distinguishes between sex, gender, sexuality and intersex (Mikkola, 2012). Sparked by psychologist John Money's binary distinction between gender and sex in 1955, the feminist movement of the 1970s redefined the definitions of sex and gender (Spencer-Wood, 2006), and ultimately made to incorporate a category for people with both male and female sex characteristics (intersex) and a category for a person's sexual attraction and interest in others (sexuality).

While to some, gendered studies and archaeology mix as well as oil and water (Wylie, 1993), I believe that with an appropriate approach to research and analysis the role, construction and significance of genders in the past can be established. In fact, not only do I believe that analysis of ancient gender construction is possible, it is an essential part of fully understanding a past society and the people that lived in it. The idea that gender studies of the past are not necessary is naive, and illustrates a lack of understand of both one's society of present day as well as a massive underestimation of the past. Gender remains a hotly debated topic, has been discussed academically and bandied about in the media constantly for the past 40 years, and has played an important, if not always obvious role in societies throughout human history, which brings me to the point of underestimating the people of the past. Unfortunately some

archaeologists do not evaluate peoples of the past as having the ability to differentiate between sex and gender, believing that all cultures had only two distinct gender groups. The flaw in this logic is that it completely eliminates the sex element from one's gender. Humans are not born as amorphous blobs, or without any kind of sexual dimorphism. The sex (or intersex in some cases) that one is born with ultimately affects one's socially constructed gender later in life (Gilchrist, 1999). For example, since I was born with female sex characteristics, I was raised under the assumption that my gender aligned with my sex. If at some point in my life I feel my gender and my sex do not align, I have the option of changing either my sex or my gender with modern medicine and cosmetics. But even if I do decide to align myself with a different gender than the sexual characteristics I was born with I still spent a period of my life socialized towards one gender, and this will forever influence my conscious and unconscious choices about my gender throughout my life,. While gender and sex are different, they go hand in hand and cannot be separated from each other if a full understanding of a society's sexual structure is desired (Gilchirst, 1999). A potential critique of this outlook is that for many societies there is no positive way of knowing a society's sexual structure, and that even in today's globalized world different cultures have very different views of gender. This however ignores a specific type of evidence that illustrates that past cultures had some form of a sexual structure, whether simpler or more complex than today. Art, specifically art depicting humanoids, is evidence that there was a form of gender recognition (Sørensen, 2006). Art depicting humans or gods and goddesses in human form that shows sexual dimorphism demonstrates that the society that created the work has a concept of sex and gender. By creating idealized images that were aligned with different sexual characteristics ancient artists show that there was a concept of deviation. Not all people in the society had the same physical elements, such as reproductive

organs, and therefore a concept of gender was established through the difference. If a society notices the difference between the sexual characteristics of men and women (and "other") then by definition they are defining one gendered group in terms of the other, "…different genders are defined in relation to one another through their paradigmatic relationships" (Brumfiel, 2006, p. 34).

Upon reflection, countless researchers have asked themselves and their readership: why has there been no gender archaeology in the past (Wylie, 1993)? While many have written extensively on the subject, I believe that a major contributor to the lack gender studies falls on the archaeologists themselves, and the unique cultural values they bring to their research. Looking to the broader picture of archaeology's past, the founders and largest group of practitioners were, for a substantial period of time, wealthy, upper class white (western) European males (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Modern archaeology was born from Antiquarianism, which was a form of historical study that placed greater emphasis on artifacts and ancient texts. Initially a pastime for the idle elites, the field only began taking on a sense of professionalism at the end of the 19th century. It was not until around the 1960s that the processual theory of archaeology developed, and roughly a decade later the competitive post-processual school of theory emerged (Spencer-Wood, 2006). These two schools of archaeological theory remain fundamental players in archaeological today (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Despite the developments in the field of archeology itself, western patriarchy has remained strong and central in western European and North American society. While there is a growing level of job equality in the academic field between men and women, both men and women continue to look at the past through the lens of the modern patriarchy and the tradition of patriarchal archaeology, even if they do not realize it (Brumfiel, 2006). Up until the feminist movement in the 1970s,

antiquarianism and early archaeology left women out because they were not deemed important, interesting or significant (Sørensen, 2006). The men of the past ruled, built, thought, created and grew, and women were treated as just there, either silent or invisible. The only women who were discussed were queens or those specifically mentioned by name in ancient texts (Spencer-Wood, 2006). If she was involved with the ruler she was bound to have a cache of dazzling artifacts, or if she was named in a text then someone had to know about her, so she must have done something of note. Archaeology of the past wrote off women as merely decorative, a guest in a man's world that did not accomplish anything of significance or worth (Spencer-Wood, 2006). But why was this view so readily accepted by archaeologists up until as recently as the 1970s? It was primarily accepted because women were treated more or less the same way in modern society at the time, as decorations instead of contributors (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Clearly there were some women who were able to break through the male dominated culture and get their names into the history books, but those women fought to carve themselves a place of respect in society. How could a corpse, thousands of years old, hope to achieve the same recognition? Without being given a chance to show their influence on society, and without willingness to accept a woman in a role of power, the female contingent of the past was silenced by modern prejudices that have become so ingrained in our society that it seems natural. Before the development of feminist and gendered studies archaeologists frequently applied their own culture's oppressive social structures and applied them to the past, thus corrupting their interpretation and creating a level of almost invisible bias (Spencer-Wood, 2006).

It is important to bear in mind the religious affiliations of these fledgling archaeologists as well. The overwhelming majority shared a background in Christianity; despite whether their specific faith was Catholic verses Protestant or another sect. This religious influence brought

another level of oppressive biases with it, strongly altering interpretation and understanding of past cultures and archaeological sites. The conflict surrounding religious texts and archaeology has remained prominent in the current field. The balance between archaeological study and religious beliefs is sensitive, and an examination of the effect of religious bias on archaeological studies is a long separate argument.

With such a pre-established tradition it no longer seems surprising that gender studies in the academic field of archaeology slipped under the radar. In fact, there are many elements in current research that should be scrutinized to determine whether the framework of analysis is fundamentally biased by the archaeological tradition.

The feminist movement of the 1970s swept up issues of female oppression and instances of patriarchal bias and sought to combat them in as many different areas of life as possible, including academia (Spencer-Wood, 2006). "Feminist archaeology" was produced because women's roles in the past had been virtually ignored up until that point (Spencer-Wood, 2006). The new politicized theory of archaeological analysis focused on women's role in the past, but the full agenda of the movement went beyond the simple recognition of women. Brumfiel (2006) summarizes the goals of much feminist analysis,

> "First, these studies highlight the contributions of women in ancient societies, and, second, they demonstrate the variability of gender roles in ancient societies, with the implication that gender roles and identities cannot be attributed a universal, unchanging human biology laid down during the Paleolithic." (p.34)

The view of past non-feminist archaeology was that gender did not need to be defined, discussed or analyzed because the current gender structures of western civilization were believed to be

ubiquitous, universal construct (Brumfiel, 2006). As Spencer-Wood (2006) eloquently states, "so there was no variation [of gender systems] through time or between cultures that required explanation with archaeological theory or research" (p.61). The feminist theory movement went beyond just structuring a new theoretical framework of analysis; it also continually critiqued existing methodologies and the prevailing theoretical outlook of the time (Spencer-Wood, 2006). While the feminist movement's analytical methods were a step toward furthering gender equality in archaeology and a better, more comprehensive understanding of the past, the movement was far too politicized to create an unbiased framework. As the feminist movement developed, the corresponding archaeological theory developed in three waves, although this terminology gives the incorrect impression that each previous wave of theory was replaced by the newer one, when in fact the three waves developed in relation to each other (Wylie, 1993). Each wave was fundamentally grounded in the politics of its era, and the 1970s were a very active time for feminism and gender equality (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Each new methodology was most importantly a brick in the road furthering the feminist movement program and was steeped in a liberal political alignment within a democratic system. Modern politics create a bias around theoretical analysis, that similar to the bias of a western patriarchy, is invisible to many when they do not consciously question every aspect of the analysis (Sørensen, 2006). When an archaeologist lives and works in an established democratic system, then that person quite naturally makes seemingly harmless and often unconscious assumptions and conclusions about ancient peoples based on their current political and cultural system. An archaeologist in the present day might assume, because civil liberties are so valued and debated today, that a society in the past would naturally value their civil liberties as well. Unfortunately, without ancient texts and a robust archaeological record it is hard to definitively say if a society aligned with modern

values (at least on a fundamental level), but it is never acceptable to assume one way or another without evidence. Blind assumptions can create further research problems down the road, and limit the understanding of the society in question (Sørensen, 2006)(Izzet, 2007).

The three waves of feminist theory are broken down into the fundamental theoretical developments that they inspired, but multiple frameworks and ideas came out of each wave (Spencer-Wood, 2006). The first wave is referred to as the "Feminist Egalitarian Liberal Theory" (Spencer-Wood, 2006, p.66), and challenges the patriarchal practice of diminishing women's roles and importance within society. This wave directly critiques the previous fundamental assumption that women's sphere of interaction was the home, and man's was society at large, "…demonstrating that women exercised social agency in a variety of important roles in both public and domestic spheres" (Spencer-Wood, 2006, p.66). This first wave of theoretical change also tackled the broader issue of accepting modern tradition as the universal for all of human history, everywhere in the world (Spencer-Wood, 2006). To support this new theoretical outlook, researchers began collecting evidence from materials and text, and ethnographies of women's public roles, the importance and social significance of motherhood, and the combination of women's domestic and public roles (Spencer-Wood, 2006). A particularly significant observation made as a part of this wave, was later carried into gendered archaeology studies, "This feminist approach shows that the ideology of gender dichotomy between *either* female-domestic or male-public roles did not accurately express the complexity of actual gender practices" (Spencer-Wood, 2006, p.66). The second wave of Feminist Theory arose in the 1970s and forms a theoretically framed analysis of the patriarchy, and exposes how the "socially constructed ideology and societal institution" (Spencer-Wood, 2006, p.73) builds and perpetuates gender based inequality. While the building blocks of this wave are sound,

many have criticized this wave for over-generalizing gender by using a universal binary, which is a bad frame of analysis (Spencer-Wood, 2006). However, not all researchers got caught up in false universals of domestic verses public roles, and research of "the possibility of women's social agency or resistance to patriarchy," (Spencer-Wood, 2006, p.73) developed. Contemporaneous with the second wave of feminist theory, a new sub-group of Marxist-feminist theory, which was even more blatantly politicized, emerged (Spencer-Wood, 2006). This theoretical approach was based in a metaphor comparing the capitalist bourgeois class' exploitation of the proletariat to the male class and capitalism exploited women's domestic labor (Spencer-Wood, 2006). An excellent example of how modern politics can color how one looks at the past, "feminists adopted the Marxian framework of domination and resistance and applied it to gender relationships" (Spencer-Wood, 2006, p.74).

The third and most recent wave of feminist archaeological theory is a direct reaction to the second wave, and challenges the gender binary based heterosexual dichotomy of men and women (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Classified as the postmodern feminist approach, gender and sexuality are considered to be "complex, fluid performances that cannot be monolithically described for any social group" (Spencer-Wood, 2006, p.76). The postmodern approach looks at gender in terms of the larger societal picture, and considers gender in relation to class, ethnicity, race and other various social classifications that are constructed by society and affect people's way of life (Spencer-Wood, 2006). The postmodern feminist school reformed much of the previous theory's structure, such as women's domestic role, a society's dominant gender and gender's relationship to religious systems (Spencer-Wood, 2006). The postmodern framework has prompted further questioning of broader archaeological theory, and researchers such as

Spencer-Wood (2006) have begun advocating for the use of inclusive instead of exclusive models of analysis in order to better understand the range of social complexity.

The development of feminist archaeology, while biased, helped to reveal some of the bias present in both the analysis of sites and also how the sites themselves were excavated (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Prior to this development, women were infrequently excavated, and when they were they were only ever analyzed in terms of the domestic sphere (Gilchirst, 1999)(Spencer-Wood, 2006). Women, when excavated at all, were given limited interpretations that rarely stretched beyond the home, while men were the center of excavation (when the excavations centered on people and not monuments, etc.) but were never studied in relation to the home (Gilchrist, 1999). Men were analyzed in many different social spheres, from politics to hunting, but very infrequently were they considered in terms of the domestic area (Spencer-Wood, 2006). This is an extremely limiting viewpoint, and damaging to the understanding of both men and women within a society (Gilchirst, 1999). In societies where men and women resided together, either as spouses, children, or any other possible social grouping, both men and women were in some way involved with the home, since they both interacted with it. Not only did they both interact with the domestic sphere itself, but they also interacted with each other within the domestic sphere, creating another level of social dynamics. By living and acting within the same sphere men and women must have had some influence on each other. While the level of influence depended on the society, two gender groups cannot occupy and interact within the same space without influencing each other, and as a result influence each other's gender roles. People within society exist in relation to each other, not exclusively in terms of themselves.

Despite dealing with gender, feminist archaeological theory is not in fact gendered archaeology (Wylie, 1993). Spencer-Wood (2006) encapsulates the difference between the two

fields, "All feminist research is concerned with gender, but not all gender research applies feminist concepts, theories, or methods" (p.59). Gender theory in archaeology, while far from unbiased, is much less politicized than feminist archaeology, and is concerned with more than just the feminist agenda of recognition of women (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Gendered archaeology operates fundamentally on the establishment of genders in terms of their differences, basically that woman is gendered as such because she is not a man, and vice versa (Spencer-Wood, 2006). This approach is able to place gender in a fluid relation to the rest of society, allowing the social definition to not become stuck in a stagnant state (Sørensen, 2006). Establishing a gender group in relation to other gender groups also allows greater flexibility by eliminating a rigid binary structure and allowing for other gender groups that are unique from both men and women (Brumfiel, 2006).

Researchers such as Sørensen (2006) have provided useful generalizations about the shift from feminist to gendered theory, "the focus of such studies shifted from being about establishing women's positions in past societies to a concern with identifying key aspects of gender as part of social relations more widely" (p.111). While gender theory originally focused on analyzing the establishment of gender and the existence of gender groups within a society, more recent gender studies have begun to focus on "how gender is constructed and negotiated" (Sørensen, 2006, p.112). This growing theoretical approach to gender studies has had a secondary effect on archaeologists' interpretations of material culture (Sørensen, 2006). Material culture is beginning to be analyzed in terms of how it reinforces or contradicts a society's established gender groups (Sørensen, 2006). Material culture refers to objects made by or tampered with by humans, and thus occurred in societal context, and the socially established gender structure (Sørensen, 2006). Gendered archaeology is better than the feminist model at

presenting gender and material culture in societal context for several reasons. First and foremost, the complete picture of socially constructed gender cannot be obtained by studying one gender group (Sørensen, 2006). By focusing primarily on the female gender, feminist archaeological theory ignored roughly half of the society, namely the male gender group (and whatever percentage of people belonged to the 'other' category) (Izzet, 2007). The gendered model not only looks at gender in terms of other genders but also other social factors that could potentially influence gender groups, such as foreign contact, political changes, and general social shifts over time (Sørensen, 2006). This methodology establishes gender as a social construct that is subject to change, and grows and develops as society develops (Gilchrist, 1999). Increases in population, changes in political complexity, interactions with other societies, all these factors that cause the rise and fall of societies unsurprisingly also directly affects how people within the society construct themselves, and therefore their gender (Sørensen, 2006).

While every theoretical method has some level of political influence, the new engendered model is far less politically involved than feminist archaeology (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Feminist archaeology's goal was to place the focus on women in the archaeological record, and ultimately reconstruct the past with the aim of supporting women's rights in modern society (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Gender archaeology, on the other hand, attempts to analyze both male and female gender groups in a more neutral light (Sørensen, 2006). Gender archaeology does not use past gender groups for modern social rights; instead it aims to understand gender groups in terms of the ancient societies themselves (Sørensen, 2006). Gendered archaeology does not attempt to create a female biased view of the past, as feminist archaeology did, nor does it try to tell a male centered story of the past (Izzet, 2007). The goal of gendered archeological theory is simply to present the most accurate interpretation of the past that is possible with the available data (Izzet,

2007). Instead of adhering to the "add women and stir" method (Izzet, 2007) (Brumfiel, 2006), the new gender theory looks to analyze gender groups in relation to each other within their respective society, with no dominate focus on either group (Izzet, 2007)(Sørensen, 2006).

The shift within the field of gender archaeology to a focus on the construction and negotiation of gender instead of the presence of gender, is a step towards a more neutral viewpoint (Izzet, 2007). Acknowledging gender as a dynamic force created by the people develops a deeper understanding of how people within a particular culture lived (Izzet, 2007). While the new gender theory improves over past methods, it is not perfect. Due to modern prejudices, 'other' gender groups are infrequently considered by researchers when looking at gender within ancient societies (Spencer-Wood, 2006). However, following the progressive social movements of the past decade or so more researchers are considering other possible gender groups within the societies they study, creating new categories for people who do not appear to belong to either 'male' or 'female' (Spencer-Wood, 2006).

The most recent gender archaeology theory, as stated previously, considers the construction of gender by society, and does this through analysis of the material culture of a society (Sørensen, 2006). Gender theory aims to provide a context to 'things', displaying and explaining the meaning behind objects and "to whom this meaning 'belongs'" (Sørensen, 2006, p.108). Since we no longer have the people of ancient societies to look at and question, researchers have chosen to use the remaining material culture as a gateway into the gender dynamics of the past (Sørensen, 2006). Material culture is consciously created, and as such the objects have been constructed with the creator's culture in mind (Sørensen, 2006)(Izzet, 2007). Whether the creator unconsciously supported his/her social structures, or consciously worked against them, the object bears a connection of the social norms of its time, like an imprint of the

social constructs (Sørensen, 2006)(Izzet, 2007). While analyzing material culture within their societal context, users of the model must avoid consciously inserting modern bias (Izzet, 2007). When working with objects it is easy to accidentally analyze an object in terms of one's modern biases and understanding, instead of remaining neutral towards the object (Sørensen, 2006). Either because the object is one that continues to exist today, or because other types of the object have been found in the past, it is essential to the gender model to refrain from inserting modern connections and interpretations into the objects (Sørensen, 2006).

History of the Etruscan Civilization:

The Etruscan civilization was located in central modern day Italy, bordered by the Tyrrhenian Sea to the west, the Arno River to the north, the Tiber River to the south, and the mountain chain to the east (Haynes, 2000).   The fully realized Etruscan civilization began in the mid 8th century BC, due to the emergence of elements of complex society (Haynes, 2000). Past debates questioned the origin of the Etruscan people, and hypotheses have ranged from northern European immigrants to groups traveling from the Asian continent (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Despite the large volume of proposed origins, the theory that has become the most accepted both due to textual and archaeological evidence is that the Etruscan people were indigenous to central Italy (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). The earliest known period of Etruscan occupation dates back to the 10th century, and marks the beginning of the Villanovan period (Haynes, 2000). The Villanovan period remains until approximately 720 BC, when the existing groups develop into the complex society of the Etruscans (Haynes, 2000). Large, continually populated sites such as Tarquinia and Calvario have revealed hut remains from the Villanovan period (Haynes, 2000). The material and foundational evidence found at these sites and others reveal that this early

period of occupation consisted of small communities, which subsisted on farming and supplementary hunting and gathering (Haynes, 2000).

As the growing Etruscan population transitioning into the 8th century, evidence for increasing social stratification emerges (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Previous to the 8th century, contents of burials were roughly uniform, representing a level of equality within the Etruscan communities (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). However, as time progresses the tomb evidence becomes more specialized and varied, displaying an increasing element in class and social stratification within the Etruscan groups (Haynes, 2000). In the wealthier tombs pieces of advanced metalwork from "the north and the Balkans" (Haynes, 2000, p.13) were discovered, indicating an increase in trade as well as an increase in wealth of some members of the Etruscan community. Surveys of several cemeteries from this era show a drastic increase in population, which caused the need for more land and food, leading to both increased competition between neighboring communities as well as increased migration and founding of new cities (Haynes, 2000). While there is evidence of trade outside of Italy in the funerary record, there is also a high volume of internal trade between communities, and some cities began developing more specialized skills in certain crafts (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). By the late Bronze Age, the Etruscan communities had been exposed to trade with the Aegean and Levant, which further fueled the growing stratification and wealth of Etruria (Haynes, 2000). The increase in urbanization lead to communities ruled by chief-priests, whose representations of power drew influence from their Greek trading partners (Haynes, 2000).

The growth of urban centers and increased contact with foreign partners saw a change in Etruscan agriculture as well (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Olives and grapes, crops that later helped enforce the aristocratic social classes, began to be grown systematically, and existing

systems of agriculture were intensified (Haynes, 2000). Due to their geographic location, the

Etruscans also became accustomed to sea travel, both for trade and piracy, which increased

throughout the centuries (Haynes, 2000). Perhaps the most important change during the 8th

century is the development of the Etruscan language, which was diffused through trade from the

Greeks (Haynes, 2000). The period from the 8th to 6th century, marked by the beginning of the

Etruscan language, is known as the Orientalizing period of Etruscan history (Haynes, 2000).

During the 7th century a unified Etruria began a campaign of expansion, creating settlements

south of the Tiber River, going as far south as Capua (Haynes, 2000). In an attempt to gain

further territory, the Etruscans attacked the Greek colony of Cumae, but suffered a defeat that

marked the beginning of the Etruscan decline (Mackay, 2004). Etruscans are considered to be

"leaders in the process of urbanization in the 7th century" (Mackay, 2004, p.17) in Latium, and

both textual sources and archaeological evidence in Rome has verified that some of the last

Roman kings were Etruscan (Mackay, 2004). The decline initiated by the Etruscan defeat at the

hands of the Greeks was furthered by the last Etruscan king being driven from Rome by a group

of Roman nobles (Mackay, 2004). The loss at Cumae cost the Etruscan a large amount of sea

control, damaging their economy and trade networks (Mackay, 2004)(Haynes, 2000). This

decline, as well as other disruptions caused by different groups in the Mediterranean, disrupted

the Archaic period, which extended from approximately 575-480 BC and threw the region into a

time of crisis (Haynes, 2000).

Following the Archaic period, the Etruscans experienced both a social and economical

crisis, caused by a long list of grievances:

"the destruction of the trading partner Sybaris; the occupation of etruscanized Campania

by Italic Samnites; and the upheavals in Lazio caused by the expansion of the Umbro-

Sabellian tribes into the coastal plains and by the expulsion of the Tarquins [line of

Etruscan kings] from Rome and the defeat of Porsenna's army at Aricia." (Haynes, 2000,

p.263)

However, despite the general decline of the civilization, several individual cities managed to stay

afloat, and even prosper in some cases (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). The general decline has

been mapped through the archaeological record, particularly through the type, variety and

frequency of items found in tombs (Haynes, 2000). While the social elements are much more

difficult to track, especially because there is no known Etruscan text, there is a popular theory as

to the cause of increasing social tensions. Tomb evidence from 6th century graves show a return

to an increase in wealth equality (at least in the prosperous cities), suggesting the rise of an

Etruscan "middle class" during the civilizations high period (Haynes, 2000, p.266). One

proposed cause of social pressures is the friction between the old aristocratic class and the newly

emerging, wealthier middle class (Haynes, 2000). Some researchers have suggested that the

appearance of tyrants in Greek colonies during this crisis period may have also begun appearing

in Etruscan cities as well (Haynes, 2000).

While the Etruscans had lost much of their power, the complete decline and

Romanization of the Etruscan region was a long and drawn out process (Haynes, 2000). Over

the course of several centuries, roughly from the 4th century to the 1st century, Etruria was slowly

absorbed by the expanding Romans (Mackay, 2004). The Etruscans continually battled the

Romans for control of the land, both winning and losing several major battles (Haynes, 2000).

Several times the Etruscans united with other groups in central Italy against the Romans, such as

the Picenites who resided along the coast of the Adriatic Sea (Cicchi, 2013). Despite slowly

losing territory to Rome over time, the Etruscans were able to hold out until the reign of

Augustus, which began in 31 BC (Mackay, 2004). However, Augustus led a military conquest that dissolved the remaining lands of Etruria, absorbing the last of the Etruscans into Roman society (Haynes, 2000). Augustus' success at subduing and absorbing the Etruscans, as well as other non-Roman groups in the region, finally restored peace to central Italy, which had remained in a frequent state of warfare for several centuries (Mackay, 2004). Despite the absorption of Etruria into Rome, the material culture of the Etruscans still exists today, and provides a fascinating perspective of a powerful indigenous force within Italy.

Background of Etruscan Archaeology:

Archaeologists, art historians and hobbyists have been studying the Etruscans since the 19th century, and as with all early excavated societies the early excavations were biased and often very amateur (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). The wealthy people that lead the excavation teams often focused on the valuable and visually impressive sites, which in the case of the Etruscans were more often than not graves (Izzet, 2007). This bias towards graves has unfortunately persisted throughout the field of Etruscan study, and the vast majority of sites that have been excavated to date have been graves and necropolises (Izzet, 2007) (Hayes, 2000). Little excavation and research has been done about the daily life of the average Etruscan, or even of the wealthy Etruscans (Rask, 2011). The majority of data being analyzed and published by Etruscologists are drawn from tombs and a few temples which have been excavated in more recent years (Rask, 2011). Since there is a wealth of archaeological data missing from the Etruscan record, many Etruscologists make up for this gap by relying on ancient Greek and Roman texts. Unfortunately, Etruscan texts (other than small artistic inscriptions) have yet to be discovered, thus researchers often default to surviving texts from cultures known to have had contact with the Etruscans (Haynes, 2000). While textual sources can be extremely helpful to

archaeologists, they are not an unbiased form of information. Due to the lack of evidence, particularly about daily affairs and typical Etruscan behavior, many Etruscologists subscribe completely to Greek or Roman texts concerned with Etruscans (Izzet, 2012). While there is appeal in using foreign texts as evidence of Etruscan behavior, they are not an accurate source of information (Izzet, 2007)(Rask, 2011)(Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). The Greek and Roman writers that mention the Etruscans did not attempt to compile an accurate history of the Etruscan civilization, they simply used the Etruscans, who were in the area and thus known, as an easy source of comparison for their own society (Izzet, 2012). The writers were creating texts to promote pride and unity within their own culture, and not giving truthful, unbiased accounts of Etruscan actions (Izzet, 2007) (Izzet, 2012). While texts can be a useful source of information and can act as an excellent jumping off point for further research questions, they should not be wholeheartedly accepted as true fact (Izzet, 2012). Instead, the texts should be evaluated in terms of its importance within its own culture, and how the foreign writer might use the Etruscans to show or justify some element of his own society (Izzet, 2012).

A frequent position of analysis taken by Etruscologists is a grounding in the classics, namely from Greece and Rome (Hughes & Hughes, 1998). Much of the conclusions drawn by Etruscologists directly compare an element of Etruscan culture to that of either Roman or Greek culture, creating a distorted and limited view of the Etruscans (Izzet, 2007)(Rask, 2011). These direct comparisons bring light to another bias present in many researchers, especially those heavily involved with the classics, which is the view that the classical civilizations had the ideal way of functioning (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Through this mindset the changes within the Etruscan culture over time which saw the adoption of many Greek cultural elements was inevitable, because the Etruscans were simply naturally progressing towards the 'best' cultural

elements, namely the Greek ones (Izzet, 2007). This viewpoint is limiting because it is assumed that Etruscans are naturally advancing because they are becoming more Greek, and the reason for the change of the social impact and implications of the change are not being investigated or even asked (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). The widespread acceptance and reliance on external contact to explain changes in Etruscan culture is another consequence of reliance on the classics (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Despite persuasive arguments and evidence for the indigenous theory of Etruscans, that progress and change came from development within Etruria, frequently scholars "still prefer to use the evidence for external contact to explain the critical transition [into the Etruscan civilization]" (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998, p.83). The typically accepted opinion is that the small, localized groups of Etruscans only formed a complex society "'as a result of contact with the Phoenicians and Greeks'" (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998, p.83). This theory creates limitations, and discourages further analysis of the emerging complexity in Etruscan society, such as why it happened, how it happened, and the extent of the influence outside contact had. Etruscans are infrequently being evaluated in terms of themselves, and often in terms of other groups which cause covert biases and misinterpretation of the Etruscan archaeological record (Izzet, 2007).

Due to biases and logistic limitations of excavations, a large percentage of conclusions and assumptions about the Etruscans stem from tomb excavations and funerary artifacts (Haynes, 2000). Due to the high volume of funerary related objects, the contexts of the items frequently get taken for granted, especially when analyzing elements of art in tombs (Izzet, 2007). Funerary goods are not direct representations of reality, and as such need to be analyzed within their context of ritual mortuary products (Arnold, 2006). By removing or dropping the mortuary context, the object is no longer being considered as a ritual object, and thus any conclusions

based on it are potentially flawed (Arnold, 2006). While Etruscan grave goods may hold similar designs and meaning within the society, that assumption cannot be accurately made without non-funerary evidence to corroborate it (Izzet, 2007). In terms of art analysis of buried materials, there is little way of knowing whether the objects buried were decorated specifically with a funerary context in mind or if they were objects used by the deceased in daily life and then buried with them (Izzet, 2007). Knowing the context of the objects creation can help illuminate false conclusions drawn from art analysis of funerary materials (Izzet, 2007). If the purpose of the objects were for burial, then the object is likely to retain different social connotations, structure and design elements (Arnold, 2006). Another important pitfall of art analysis is that art is an idealized version of the world (Arnold, 2006). The carvings and painting in Etruscan tombs, and indeed anywhere, are not true pictures of reality but idyllic images, biased by the Etruscans themselves (Izzet, 2007). Therefore the scenes within artwork cannot be taken at face value, as they are not unbiased snapshots of reality, but thoroughly considered conscious depictions of specific elements of the Etruscan world (Izzet, 2007).

The current, most popular view of women in Etruria held by academics is that the Etruscan women occupied a very different position in society than Greek or Roman women of the time (Bonfante, 1994)(Hughes & Hughes, 1998)(Neils, 1994)(De Puma, 1994). Through the study primarily of textual and artistic evidence, archaeologists have concluded that Etruscan women were more equal role to men in their society, and were allowed to participate in male activities, such as feasting Bonfante, 1994)(Hughes & Hughes, 1998)(Neils, 1994)(De Puma, 1994). Evidence from graves, such as volume of grave goods and the presence of socially significant artifacts have led researchers to the conclusion that some Etruscan women even held independent positions of power within their society (Bonfante, 1994). While "no body of

Etruscan literature exists," it has been generally accepted through artistic analysis that "upper-class Etruscan women were more autonomous and privileged [than contemporary Greek women]" (Hughes & Hughes, 1998, p.33). Through interpretations of artistic images, brief inscriptions and non-Etruscan textual sources, Etruscologists came to the consensus that Etruscan women exercised their proposed autonomy through participating in social spheres instead of remaining confined to the home, attended public games, maintained personal names (instead of the names of their husbands or fathers) and accepted displays of affection (seen through statuettes and tombs) (Hughes & Hughes, 1998)(Bonfante, 1994). This supposed increased level of female autonomy in Etruria is supported primarily for the Etruscan civilization during the Archaic period, specifically the seventh through fifth centuries (Bonfante, 1994).

Although the view of Etruscan women as liberated and equal to men has become the assumed model for Etruscan analysis by nearly all researchers involved in the field (Izzet, 2007), the claimed support for the theory is not as strong as claimed. Arguments regarding female autonomy, proposed be researchers such as Bonfante (1994), rely on several sources of information which are unreliable. Bonfante (1994), for example, rests much of her argument on a Roman text which was written almost post-Etruscan, "these Roman [Livy] stories of Etruscan queens seem to reflect elements of local Etruscan customs," (p.244). Bonfante, and many others, base the foundational understanding of Etruscan women on a textual source written years after the height of the Etruscan civilization. Livy and other Roman's text detail Etruria as independent and prosperous, which was no long true by the time Livy wrote his histories, the civilization having officially ended by 31BC. Whether Livy and other writers were trying to be accurate is not the question, the fact is that the Etruscan society was already considered the past when the primary text used today to understand the Etruscans was written. In terms of the text's accuracy

itself, Livy's account was not written to provide an accurate account of the Etruscan civilization and the gender roles within it, but rather to provide a textual source of pride for the Romans (Izzet, 2012). Other sources of evidence Bonfante (1994) relies on for her argument is the assumption that inscriptions on artistic pieces equates to female literacy. This issue relates most heavily to the analysis of Etruscan mirrors, and as such will be discussed thoroughly in the first case study. Bonfante is far from the only researcher to base her gender conclusions on assumptions.

<u>Case Study Introduction:</u>

A contributing factor to archaeology's continual change in the approach to analysis is the terminology itself (Sørensen, 2006). Archaeologists rely on terms and categorizations such 'material culture', which are dynamic words, shifting in meaning and scope as the field itself changes (Sørensen, 2006). The definition of material culture has changed in conjunction with the larger methodologies and techniques used in archaeology (Sørensen, 2006). Following the movements of social change that have affected areas of academia in the last 30 years, the term 'material culture' has been redefined into a more inclusive, significant term (Sørensen, 2006). Material culture is no longer viewed by researchers as a static, passive force of the past (Sørensen, 2006). Instead, it is being reevaluated in terms of the material culture's dynamic, active role in building societies (Sørensen, 2006). An ancient society's material culture was viewed as a product of the society, not as an influential and fluid force within the society (Sørensen, 2006). Reevaluation and inspection of the influence of modern material culture has helped lead researchers to this new definition of material culture as an active player within a society (Sørensen, 2006).

Sørensen (2006) defines material culture as "…an extremely interesting and flexible medium that is used both to create notions of traditions, the maintenance of conventions, and normative behavior and as a means of defiance against and disrupting these same norms. [Material culture is] a medium intimately involved in the construction of meaning" (p.105). Sørensen (2006) argues that material culture should be analyzed with the understanding that the material culture of a society is essential to upholding and defining normative behavior and tradition. By placing the material culture in an active role in a society's social structure, it provides the opportunity to analyze specific aspects of a culture better, such as their gender roles and relationships (Sørensen, 2006)(Izzet, 2007). Giving the material culture, the man-made objects found within a site, a social context the objects become ascribed with meaning. The object has a relationship between the person owning, using or creating it, and thus takes on social meaning that is imparted to it from the user (Sørensen, 2006). The material culture is both created by society's structures and reinforces these structures, due to the tight knit relationship between material culture and gender norms (Sørensen, 2006). As Izzet (2007) states, "Etruscan behavior, attitudes and ideas would have been shaped by the material world that surrounded them" (p. 24). In terms of a more gendered context, the material culture and the relationship between people and objects is a "medium of performance" (Sørensen, 2006, p.113). Through the creation and use of objects, gender roles and gender norms are created, enforced and combated (Sørensen, 2006) (Izzet, 2007). Objects being made and used within a social context of meaning take on that meaning, becoming symbols representing and enforcing the structure for which they were built (Sørensen, 2006). Individuals within a society can either enforce their gender norms by creating and manipulating objects that conform to their socially constructed manner, or individuals can fight against the genderization of objects by purposefully manipulating them

against the expected gender role (Izzet, 2007). As Sørensen (2006) summaries Kirkham and Attfield's (1996) argument, she says, "objects lend meaning to people's lives and that people construct their identities through these relations" (p.115).

As I will explain through the following case studies, the shift from a passive to an active material culture greatly influences the research surrounding gender in the Etruscan civilization. As previously discussed, there have been many forms of bias, some obvious, some hidden, surrounding much of the analysis of the Etruscan civilization. Another instance of bias effecting the conclusions being reached, discussed and accepted by the academic community stem from the problem of continuing to view the material culture as a more passive component, and not an active participant (Sørensen, 2006). This neglect does not necessarily have to result in incorrect or extremely unlikely or biased results, but it does leave holes in interpretations about the past (Izzet, 2007). By not fully understanding the role people played in creating the material culture, and the effects said objects had on the people in turn, limits the researcher's ability to question the past and the gendered social structures of the Etruscan society (Izzet, 2007).

Case Study 1:

A wealth of funerary objects has been discovered at excavations in northern and central Italy (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). One item in particular, the hand mirror, has been discovered in a large percentage of all excavated tombs, many of which are in fair to excellent condition (Brendel, 1995). This large size of the pool of similar objects (currently 5000 mirrors have been excavated) (Izzet, 2012) is a benefit to researchers for several reasons: the large data set allows for more accurate general conclusions to be drawn about both technological techniques and artistic styles throughout Etruscan history, and it allows researchers to consider the variety in

both look and placement of the mirrors, allowing conclusions about both the significances of the mirrors and their effect on gender in Etruria (Bonfante, 1994) (Izzet, 2007).

Etruscan mirrors are easily portable hand-sized mirrors, made mostly from beaten bronze, although excavations have found examples of cast bronze as well (Izzet, 2012). The reflective surface of the mirror was made from a highly polished convex dish, and tests have suggested that if the mirror were continually polished and buffed it would maintain its reflective surface (Izzet, 2012).

Etruscan mirrors have been "found exclusively in funerary contexts" (Izzet, 2012, p.71), which has proved to be a major hurdle for those analyzing the mirrors. Like with all grave goods, analyzing the objects outside of their ritual funerary context can provide incorrect and unrealistic interpretations of a culture (Arnold, 2006), and the Etruscans are no exception. Unfortunately, as stated previously, the majority of archaeological evidence for the Etruscans has come from funerary contexts. As a researcher, it might be rather frustrating when all the available evidence for a culture is ritualistic, however it does not excuse the habit many researchers have developed of decontextualizing the objects in question (Izzet, 2012). A mirror passed down generation to generation and finally lost or sold or thrown away does not have the same social significance as a perfectly useful mirror that was buried with its owner. As Izzet (2012) eloquently phrases the problem:

> "the images engraved on the non-reflective side of the mirrors have been taken as straightforward representations of the "real" or "everyday" existence of the Etruscans; there has been little acknowledgement of the culturally constructed nature of these images, or of the problems of interpretation that arises when using funerary material to understand non-funerary spheres of life," (p.71)

Etruscologists such as Izzet argue that the first step in correcting the interpretations of the past is to both reconsider the objects in terms of their funerary context as well as consider the objects "as *objects* not just pictures" (Ridgway, 1992 via Izzet, 2012).

Before examining the approach researchers such as Izzet take when confronting the mirror issue, I will first look at the more problematic analysis and treatment of the mirrors from other Etruscologists.

In his article Richard De Puma (1994) examines the possible significances of the reoccurring image of Eos and Memnon, a popular scene depicted on Etruscan mirrors from approximately 530 to 450 B.C. (p.180). Before analyzing the exact conclusions that De Puma draws, I would first like to point out general successes and shortcomings of the article. De Puma (1994) opens his publication by discussing the method he used to date his mirrors in question so specifically to 470-450 B.C. De Puma (1994) relies on technological, stylistic and form indicators in order to attribute the mirror to specific time and place. This standard dating technique of simple comparison, while seemingly obvious and simplistic, cannot be underestimated. Studying an object in relation to the trends and changes within the society place the object in a stronger social context (Sørensen, 2006). When one can see where the mirror's shape and designs originated, and how they transformed one can gain a better understanding of the overall feelings within a society at that time.

While De Puma presents some good analysis of the mirrors in question, which I will touch upon later, he fails to address a wealth of important issues. Primarily, and this is true of many Etruscologists that deal with hand mirrors, there is absolutely no discussion of the mirror as a grave good, only as a piece of art (De Puma, 1994). The act of burying an object transforms a once ordinary, mundane object into a ritual object (Arnold, 2006). Burying one with their

possessions is a process of ritualizing the ordinary, and removes the object from its regular social role as "mirror" into a new ritualized role as "sacrifice for the dead" (Izzet, 2007). Etruscan belief in the afterlife is not actually relevant in so much that they clearly believed something or else they would not have buried a valuable object with the dead. If the experiments done at the British Museum are accurate, then the Etruscans chose to burry an object, the mirror that would never have stopped working (Izzet, 2012). A different interpretation could be made if the mirrors were extremely fragile and had short life-spans (so to speak), as the loss of the object would have been smaller if it would not last particularly long anyway. But an object made out of a semi-precious metal that can last indefinitely is not a worthless, common object and would be a much greater loss to the Etruscans that were alive and well. Armed with this knowledge of the mirrors it is easy to assume that they must have held an important enough meaning within society to justify the cost (Izzet, 2007). This opens the gates for countless questions about the significance of ritualizing mirrors, such as why were so many mirrors buried? Was receiving a mirror some sort of cultural tradition that was maintained over the years? Was it purely a symbol of power? Were some (or all) mirrors made solely for funerary contexts? I will not attempt to answer any of these questions here, but these are examples of questions that should be currently being discussed by Etruscologists as they examine funerary objects.

Delving more specifically into De Puma's article, he makes several conclusions and assertions that affect the outcome of his (and other's) analysis when they are founded on questionable principles. Firstly, De Puma (1994) notes that the use of short inscriptions on some mirrors may indicate that "Etruscan women were more literate than their Greek counterparts" (p.186). This comment is both a poor assumption to make and plays into the constant pitfall of many Etruscologists: comparing Etruria to Greece (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). However, more

on this deadly comparison later, and we return to the female literacy rate. If an Etruscan were rich enough not only to own a mirror but to be buried with one (again which is expensive because it is lavish and wasteful) then there is a higher chance the female owner would have a greater exposure to literacy. However, if De Puma's (1994) assumption in the previous paragraph is maintained: that women were familiar with the Greek stories depicted in mirrors and enjoyed them, thus resulting in such widespread production on the mirrors, then women would not have to be literate in order to understand the story. Simply by being familiar with the story and accustomed to Etruscan art styles (they lived there after all), one could easily know who was who and what has happening without written guides. Since not all mirrors bear inscriptions, or at least inscriptions describing something about the scene and not just the artist's name (De Puma, 1994), then it could be suggested that writing on mirrors was an element of power or status or wealth within the status sphere of owning a mirror itself (Bonfante, 1994). Writing (and perhaps literacy) on mirrors created a hierarchy of status within the larger hierarchical status structure of mirrors existing (and buried) within the society.

Another detrimental step De Puma takes in his analysis is taking the words of an ancient Greek author concerning the Etruscans as truth. As stated in a previous section, the ancient texts that so many researchers rely on for information about Etruscans are not actually about Etruscans (Izzet, 2007). A Greek writer is really writing about social convention in Greece, and setting the Etruscans up as an example, most likely creating a depiction that cannot be accepted at face value (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). De Puma (1994) even says this in his article, however he does not realize the implications, "…for most Greek men the ideal woman was one who knew the value of silence and spent her life at home spinning wool and attending the children" (p.186). Greek writers are not actually showing Etruscan women as liberated they're reinforcing their

own particular gender structure by using Etruscan "behavior" as a socially charged example (Izzet, 2007). The ancient writer is not giving the history of Etruscan society, but rather instructing Greek women not to act out of turn in their gender roles within Greek society (Izzet, 2007).

Yet another issue is that De Puma (1994) only considers the viewer, not the creator, and even then he eliminates viewing the mirror as an object and not just as art. De Puma, and many others, asks no questions as to what the agenda of the crafts man was, and any of the resulting questions that stem from that. Were the mirrors made purely for economic reasons, with design choices driven solely by popularity, as considered by De Puma (1994)? This is doubtful, because people do not live in a social vacuum. Whether he did so knowingly or not, the crafts man (or perhaps woman) creating the mirror inserted his own social relationship into the mirror's image (Izzet, 2007)(Sørensen, 2006). While more and more Etruscologists are asking what the female owners thought of the mirrors, still few questions are being posed concerning what the possible intentions and interpretations could be ascribed to the creator (Izzet, 2007). In response to the possible argument of "why would women buy a mirror if they didn't agree with the design?" not only does our society present us with consumable goods that do not always match our personal views, but it is also vital to remember the function of a mirror (Izzet, 2007). The user of this mirror, while maybe attracted to the decorative side, is not actually using the decorative side. The actual owner of the mirror spends little time looking at the decorative side of the mirror, unless of course the mirrors were made entirely for decoration, which begs the question why spend the time and effort making it functional? The truth is that the meaning within the decorative image may say more about the mindset of the craftsman than the women (or man) using it. And to further this line of questioning (which few if any researchers ever even

consider approaching) is that if the mirrors were made exclusively for a ritual funerary context then the "owner" (the deceased) would never even see the image theoretically. Just because the woman is the consumer does not make her the one defining the object's/art's meaning (Izzet, 2007). While Etruscologists are scrambling to figure out what the mirrors mean, it would be more useful for them to consider who the mirrors' decorative image was even meant for, and therefore who within society does this provide information on.

Despite the struggles within De Puma's (1994) analysis, he does provide a quality interpretation for the popularity of the Eos imagery in early Etruscan mirrors. De Puma (1994) took the material culture, the mirrors, and considered them in the broader terms of Etruria's history. De Puma (1994) considered the fact that during the time period of his mirror decoration in question the Etruscans were feeling the hardships and sadness of losing a war. De Puma (1994) theorized that the rise in popularity of the goddess Eos with her Trojan son Memnon, which was a Greek story the Etruscans were familiar with, coincided with the tragedies of war the Etruscans were feeling at home at the time. Looking at the imagery on the mirrors themselves, Eos is seen filling up most of the space within the mirror, clutching her dying (or dead) son who is draped across her arms (De Puma, 1994). Eos holds her warrior son up by her heart, close to her face as she leans over him and gazes into his face (De Puma, 1994). The love and concern for her child that Eos shows through both her posture and her angled face and grip could indicate that the idea of mother's love was particularly popular at the time, due to the ongoing war (De Puma, 1994). While De Puma executes many pitfalls that also ensnare many other Etruscologists, he does manage to provide a well-considered idea that is contextualized in terms of the larger Etruscan society as a whole.

Another example of inappropriately drawn conclusions, pulled from the same anthology as De Puma's work, is the brief analysis of Jenifer Neils. Neils early on encounters the problem of trying to analyze the art of Etruscan mirrors, and just like De Puma becomes wrapped up with explaining the images as pieces of fine art, and not as decorated mirrors that were presumably used by the owners (Neils, 1994). Neils (1994) also faces the challenge of interpreting the Etruscan versions of the Greek pantheon and mythology that was frequently displayed on the mirrors. In order to understand the significance of Greek myth on Etruscan objects, it is important to understand the relationship between the two cultures, and it is also paramount to remain aware where the Etruscan artistic influences are coming from (Brendel, 1995). Neils' (1994) comments in her article that, "it is perhaps not surprising that the idea of evading death and age particularly appealed to the Etruscans, who cherished life and entertained the notion of more of it after death" (p.190). The Etruscans were far from unique in having a belief in an active, life-like afterlife, and in fact did not seem to express in any outrageous way their concern with death (Izzet, 2007), which is quite overwhelming, in Neils' (1994) opinion. Compared to the pyramid building kings of Egypt's Old Kingdom, the Etruscans seem positively mundane. The vagueness of Neils' comment aside, the more important issue is that Neils (1994) does not remain in consideration of the fact that the stories being illustrated on the mirrors (in Neils' case the story of Jason) are Greek in origin. What Neils' statement is really looking at is how the Greeks are concerned with immortality and life after death. The Etruscans learned and inherited these stories, they did not create them (Neils, 1994), and as such they did not necessarily have the same view and fear of death as the Greek writers did (Brendel, 1995). However, this does not prohibit the Etruscans from still enjoying the stories themselves. Greek myth is still immensely popular in modern times, despite the fact that no one conceptualizes the world in the

same way as ancient Greeks did. Just because the stories were popular with the Etruscans it did not necessarily mean the people believed in them (Brendel, 1995). While they might in fact have been extremely concerned with immortality as Neils (1994) speculates, this argument needs more support than just assumed internalization due to popularity (Izzet, 2007). By saying that the Etruscans must have internalized the Greek fear because they liked the stories is once again promoting the idea that because they lived long ago they were more primitive than now. By operating along the theory that they cannot consume some form of foreign culture without it fundamentally changing their own culture leads to conclusions that are founded on the incorrect idea that the Etruscan culture is in some way lesser or lacking, and is unstable (Izzet, 2007)(Brendel, 1995).

The second major issue I discovered in Neils' (1994) analysis is that the majority of her conclusions are based on the idea that "it is doubtful that two such disparate versions [of Jason regaining youth shown on mirrors] could exist simultaneously?" (p.191). The fundamental errors with this line of reasoning is that it eventuates the mirror solely as a piece of art, and does not take into account any of the people involved with the mirror, not the owner, the craftsman, or anyone in between. Looking first towards the craftsman, Neils does not take into account why either of these images in question were produced at all, let alone allow room for the possibility that there could have been multiple interpretations that existed simultaneously. The mirror makers could have been competitors, thus causing two different images of the same scene to arise. Or possibly one of the mirror scenes was designed as a special request for a customer, instead of a typical design. Neils (1994) does not discuss where each mirror was found and where they might possibly originate, and thus never considers either of these options, or even that the creators were possibly from two different 'schools' of mirrors.   The art style itself

between each mirror is not the same, which Neils (1994) does not note. While the two scenes on the whole have similar styles, which is to be expected considering the ubiquitous nature of the Etruscan mirrors throughout Etruria (Izzet, 2012), they are dissimilar enough in composition, detail, figure, and patterning that they could simply be the same scene from two very different craftsmen. Neils is ultimately devaluating the Etruscan craftsman by not considering his relationship to his work. Her interpretation is based on the assumption that there can be only one representation of a scene because Etruscans would be unable to conceptualize the same scene in two different ways (Neils, 1994). The foundation of the analysis runs on the assumption that the Etruscans were intelligent enough to translate an image from a popular story onto an object (a mirror), but not intellectual enough to translate the same scene in multiple ways. While in the case of these particular mirrors I can see, understand and even agree with the author that the two scenes in the mirrors represent different stories (Neils, 1994), that does not mean that it is impossible for Etruscans to represent the same scene in different ways (Izzet, 2007). Nor does it mean that a piece of functional art should ever be evaluated without consideration for the utilitarian aspects of the object, the creator of the piece and the pieces target audience (Brendel, 1995).

While researchers such as De Puma and Neils may have some fundamental flaws in their approach to their studies, it does not mean that all the research done by them (and many others) is unimportant. The research that currently exists provides excellent source material for further examination of the archaeological record (Izzet, 2007).. Now that a large amount of conclusions have been made about the Etruscans (through limited funerary archaeology), other Etruscologists can being going back through what has been established as "fact" and reconsider in them, using questions in the vein as to those presented above. Research is not perfect in any field, and flaws

and biases will always be present in some form. These errors mean neither that the research is useless nor that it should be fully trusted. By questioning biased research new approaches to research and analysis can be found, and issues can be discovered and minimized in future studies.

While there is a large amount of "art for art's sake" type analysis concerning the Etruscan mirrors (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998), some researchers, like Vedia Izzet (2007)(2012), have already started to correct the biases present in much of the current research. Not only does Izzet (2007)(2012)base her analysis around the principle of treating martial culture as a dynamic, active part in upholding social norms, but she also discussed the Etruscan mirrors in a gender context. The focus of Izzet's (2007) analysis is twofold, "the first is to examine the cultural function of mirrors. The second aim is to look at the variations in such social and cultural expectations between male and female bodies" (p.43). Izzet not only aims to overcome the trap so many researchers fall into of looking at the mirrors only as art and not as objects, but unlike many of her fellows Izzet (2007)(2012) is taking in to account the people involved in the process of the mirror, and the relationship they have to the object because of their gender.

While many Etruscologists do not question the association between women and mirrors, Izzet (2007) clearly establishes her opinion on the topic. Izzet (2007) importantly notes that other researchers such as Spivey (1991) and van der Meer (1995) have argued for the use of mirrors by men, not just women, although it is widely accepted that the connection between females and mirrors was dominate within the Etruscan culture (Izzet, 2007). Throughout her analysis Izzet (2007) considers both the male and female relationship to the mirrors, and how they affect both gender roles. This angle of analysis goes beyond simply feminist study, which focuses almost exclusively on the female role, and is instead an important success for gendered

study, which analyzes multiple gender groups in relation to the material culture of their society. Izzet's (2007)(2012) analysis of the Etruscan hand mirrors is based heavily in the new gender theory, and as a result she interoperates the mirrors as objects within the society that held significance for Etruscan gender norms. Izzet (2007) argues that "instead of 'progressing', inevitably, through various stages of its history, we must ask why the Etruscan artifacts took the forms that they did when they did" (p. 19). Izzet (2007) explicitly states that her goal is not to prove wrong all theory of Etruscan gender that came before her, but simply to deepen understanding by adding a new level of analysis of the material culture.

Similar to De Puma and Neils, throughout her analysis Izzet (2007) discusses the significance of the art on the surface of the mirror, however unlike De Puma and Neils, Izzet is interpreting the relationship the functional artwork has with "creating self-identity" (p.43). Izzet (2007) begins her argument by addressing the use of a mirror, and noting the conclusions that can be drawn based on these uses. Mirrors are reflective; they allow the viewer to see a copy of themselves exactly as they are in that moment. If mirrors grew in popularity in Etruria, then it signifies that there was simultaneously a growing preoccupation with physical appearance (Izzet, 2007). Presumably Etruscans were buying mirrors in order to use them, as they seem too frequent to be simply a display of wealth, and some level of functionality must have been involved in order to make the investment worth the cost (Izzet, 2007).   In this case, the issue of personal appearance and adornment was becoming a more prevalent issue within the Etruscan society (Izzet, 2007). With this increased focus in personal appearance Izzet (2007) argues that there was also a rising concern with adornment and embellishment of one's self, as is often illustrated on the backs of the Etruscan mirrors. With only the beginning of her argument Izzet (2007) is able to provide a greater level of understanding of the significance of the mirrors, as

she is able to connect them to a shift in the social climate through logical conclusions based on the use of the mirrors as objects. By only understanding the mirrors as pieces of art, one can miss the entire social significance of the emergence of mirrors in Etruria in the first place (Izzet, 2007)(Brendel, 1995).

Since all of the mirrors have been discovered in a funerary context, and due to the fact that little excavation has been done of the 'average' Etruscan, Izzet (2007) points out the potential bias that there is a high probability that the mirror research is dealing exclusively with a relatively small, wealthy sector of the society. Another element that Izzet (2007) mentions concerning the archaeology, not just the art, of mirrors is that since such as large number have been found within funerary contexts, then it stands to reason from current evidence that there is a high probability of an Etruscan (women) being buried with a mirror. The location of the mirrors themselves are important, because as stated previously the objects in the funerary material culture rarely represent an accurate portrayal of the material culture of daily life (Arnold, 2006). Etruscologists must be aware and mindful of the fact that the objects found in a funerary context do not equal objects not buried with the dead (Izzet, 2007).

As she moves on to the mirrors themselves, Izzet takes the time to argue that the act of adornment is closely involved with the construction of gender itself. According to Izzet (2007), the act of adornment turns one into a "social skin" (p.48), and that the resulting manipulation of the body surface acts as a form of non-verbal communication with society. Other people within a society can evaluate elements of a person through their adornment, often such as gender association, statue, wealth, and even occupation (Bonfante, 1994). By adorning one's self, one is creating part of their personal identity and how that identity is perceived by others, and through adornment one is also either enforcing or destroying culturally created gender roles (Izzet, 2007).

Adornment is a way for people to "perform gender" (Izzet, 2007, p.56) as active participants, instead of being defines by a stagnant, binary gender (as in the view of previous archaeological theory). As Izzet (2007) begins her analysis of the meaning behind the images on the mirrors themselves, she uses the mirrors as evidence against the widely accepted viewpoint that Etruscan women were free from male dominance within their society, unlike so many of their Greek and Roman counterparts. Izzet (2007) comments that the images presented on the mirrors themselves, mostly scenes containing adorned or sexualized women, were actually instances of the male gaze effecting women in Etruscan society. According to Izzet (2007) "an Etruscan woman using a mirror imposed unto herself her society's ideals of how her body should appear" (p. 60). Not only are the images detailed on the mirrors mostly created by men, making the carvings idealized versions of the female form, but the act of giving a mirror or being socially pressured to have a mirror forces an awareness of physical appearance. Izzet (2007) also provides an interpretation for the high volume of divine characters present in mirror scenes; by placing these ideals and standards on divine figures they may seem more natural and correct to the viewer, and works to coerce women into adornment.

In a specific mirror involving Turan (Aphrodite) and the judgment of Alcsentre (Paris), Izzet (2007) analysis how the manipulation of the naked form and the presence of the male gaze within the mirror scene itself enforces the "emphasis on the competition and judgment of beauty by the male arbiter, Alcsentre" (p. 66). In the mirror the three goddesses are displaying themselves, drawn as the focal point of the image by placing them in the center, while the male figure of Alcsentre stands to the side, clothed, reclining and simply watching (Izzet, 2007). The goddesses are subjecting themselves to the male gaze of both Alcsentre as well as the male audience viewing the mirror (Izzet, 2007). The image is constructed for the viewer to evaluate

and judge the goddesses on their beauty, just like the male in the scene itself (Izzet, 2007).

Another mirror scene that Izzet (2007) analyzes displays a female figure, naked, between the two

fully clothed male figures of Tinas Cliniar (the divine twins) who are evaluating her. The

difference between the powers of the male over the female in Etruria is even more apparent in

this carving, and the "female body is objectified and rendered more passive than the male subject

and viewer" (Izzet, 2007, p. 69). The body of the women on the mirror becomes "an irresistibly

tempting, beautiful object, like the mirror itself" (Izzet, 2007, p. 69). A third mirror worth noting

is divided in half, displaying the female domain on one side and the male domain on the other

(Izzet, 2007). Izzet notes how the female side of the mirror is lavish and well-adorned, and

shows a well dressed women surrounded by high status objects (Izzet, 2007). The male side of

the mirror however shows the man in a more natural, rustic setting, focusing on nature and

simplicity instead of objects and adornment (Izzet, 2007). Izzet (2007) analyses this split mirror

image as the female existing as an adornment for the man, and provides the man with a symbol

of wealth and status, further objectifying women.

 Izzet broadens here analysis even further by choosing to analyze mirrors with male

centered scenes, such as athletic competitions and warfare. After discussing several scenes

displayed on the male mirrors, Izzet (2007) concludes that male adornment is internalized.

While the women are forced to continue to add layers of adornment and material on themselves,

the men are able to remain in a natural state, working to remove additional layers from

themselves and return to their natural manliness (Izzet, 2007). Another distinction from between

the male and female centered mirror images that Izzet (2007) brings up is that there is no one

within the mirror evaluating and judging the male, while there are males judging females within

the mirrors. The male focused mirrors are being viewed only by the holder, while female mirrors

have multiple viewers (Izzet, 2007). Finally, Izzet analyzes the setting context of the male and female mirrors. The female mirrors are all set in confined spaces, either confined physically by private settings such as the home, while the images of the males participating in athletic events are taking place in a public space (Izzet, 2007). Izzet (2007) uses a contextual analysis of the Etruscan mirrors in order to through doubt upon the excepted idea that Etruscan women were free from male oppression. This viewpoint of female liberation, which was based off of ancient texts from Greek's and Roman's describing the Etruscans, does not involve any significant evidence that stems from the Etruscan's themselves, only from what other cultural writers said about them (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Izzet (2007)(2012)challenges this biased view of the gender dynamic between men and women by evaluating Etruscan artifacts, and analyzing the mirrors in both the funerary context they were discovered in as well as the broader social implications that accompanied the rising popularity of Etruscan mirrors.

Case Study 2:

My final, and perhaps most obvious choice for analysis, is the archaeology of the Etruscan tombs and ritual spaces, such as cemeteries. Etruscan tombs have been excavated and analyzed for decades, and funerary remains and evidence amount for the largest portion of Etruscan remains currently discovered (Haynes, 2000). The unique architecture of the Etruscan graves, which changed drastically throughout the Villanovan and Orientalizing periods, as well as the wealth of material goods within many graves has caused Etruscan cemeteries to become popular sites for excavation (Haynes, 2000). The graves provide a mass of well-preserved data about the Etruscan culture that has been passionately debated and interpreted, from the outer wall construction of the tombs, to the change and variation of the internal structure to the variation of material grave good which have been preserved inside so many of the Etruscan tombs (Haynes,

2000). Due to the high volume of excavations done in this area of the Etruscan civilization, there has been more focus on analyzing Etruscan tombs in terms of gender, both through the feminist theory and then later through the new gender theory model (Bonfante, 1994). As shown in the first case study, the funerary mirrors have been analyzed, with varying levels of success, in terms of a more engendered view of Etruria. The same process has been applied to the tombs themselves, and as shown with the mirrors, there were both successes and problems with the resulting conclusions drawn from tomb interpretation. The issue of analyzing an object's artistic design only as art, and not in terms of the objects use or social context, again becomes a concern with the funerary analysis of tombs, just has it was a problem in the previous case studies (Izzet, 2007). The analysis of Etruscan tombs, while initially the first section of Etruscan study to become significantly engendered, still has flaws of interpretation caused by additional sources of bias, which are less prevalent in material goods such as the hand mirrors (Izzet, 2007). This case study delves further into several examples of analysis, both gendered and tomb specific, which have been generally accepted by much of the academic community, but upon reflection should be revaluated for sources of bias and accuracy.

While Bonfante (1994) attempts to use tombs as an indication of gender equality within Etruria, she leaves key elements of the tombs undiscussed and analyzed. Despite trying to provide further evidence for female autonomy, Bonfante's (1994) discussion of female tomb themselves, both in appearance and construction, repeatedly contradict her argument. In terms of the tomb furniture created for wealthy Etruscan families, while both male and female beds (included in the tomb) are shaped like banquet couches, the female bed is "encased in house-shaped containers" (Bonfante, 1994, p.247). Women, even in death, are quite literally trapped within the walls of their homes. The male beds are not constructed with confining walls and

barriers, while the female counterparts are encased in a low walled house (Bonfante, 1994), the presence of which indicates that the home was the female sphere of dominance. This view is further enforced by Bonfante's (1994) descriptions of exterior grave markers, "phallus-shaped for men, house-shaped for women" (p.247). Not only are women physically confined to the home in their tombs, but they are also being continually associated with the home throughout other elements of tomb construction. The male is being defined by himself, represented by his own body instead of by a social sphere or institution. The female, however, is once again being directed represented by the home. While Roman and Greek texts might insist that women in Etruria were autonomous and full participants in society, the actual archaeological evidence of Etruscan tombs tells a different story.

Harkening back to the previous discussion of the use of non-Etruscan ancient texts for analysis, some guesses can be made as to the cause of the disparity between the written record and the archaeological one. As stated previously, by the time Livy (a source Bonfante (1994) and others rely upon) wrote and published his histories, which included several sections detailing Etruria and the roles of Etruscan women in their society, the Etruscan civilization had already more or less collapsed (Mackay, 2004). Some areas of Etruria were able to hold out as independent against Rome until the rise of Augustus, but most of the past Etruscan glory and wealth had been destroyed, and many Etruscans had been absorbed into Rome, adopting and adapting to new customs (Haynes, 2000). The context of Livy's writing is important, because it reveals that Livy was not writing with a firsthand knowledge of the successful, luxurious Etruria he was writing about, but instead was describing a fallen civilization. The decadence and luxury experienced by the Etruscans could easily, and even unconsciously, have been manipulated by Livy to place the blame for Etruria's collapse upon their own decadence. The popular example

used by ancient writers to show the gender difference between their own society and Etruria is the presence of Etruscan women at feasts and banquets (Izzet, 2012). While a model Roman women does not attend dinners and parties with men, even her husband, while the Etruscan women were able to, according to non-Etruscan writers (Izzet, 2012). This account has been popularly used and accepted by many Etruscan researchers, even though these writings are biased and vague (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). These textual sources provide an outsider's opinion, as the writers do not recount the Etruscan actions in terms of the Etruscan culture, but rather in terms of their own culture (Izzet, 2012). Livy and his peers do not explain why the banquets in question were attended by both men and women (Izzet, 2012). There is no reference to ritual actions of the Etruscans, or consideration of the class groups present at these meals (Izzet, 2012). By accepting these non-Etruscan texts as presenting unbiased fact about Etruscans, researchers are not receiving an understanding of Etruscans in terms of the Etruscan culture, but rather Etruscans in terms of Roman or Greek culture (Izzet, 2012).

In terms of Bonfante's (1994) tomb analysis the examples previously given of gendered tomb elements further breaks down Bonfante's assertion that women were autonomous. The males are clearly being represented free from social connections and implications in their tombs. The marker of a phallus for a male's grave clearly exemplifies that men are defined in Etruscan society in terms of themselves, as a member of the 'male' social group explicitly. Regarding the tombs which Bonfante (1994) was analyzing, by comparing the male and female versions of each tomb element there are no clear associations between the males and any one particular social sphere other than 'male'. This is similar to the previous mention of mirror analysis, and as Izzet's (2007) research indicated the males are being associated with nature and the socially constructed concept of 'manliness'. Instead of being represented by nature as the males are, the

female tomb elements repeatedly represent women as a house (Bonfante, 1994). If women were truly as autonomous as the men, then a female grave marker would have included some element of nature or naturalness, such as the female reproductive organs. The evidence needed in order to support Bonfante's (1994) theory that the females were actually autonomous would be along the lines of reoccurring images of females associated primarily with the 'female' social group, instead of with a strict social sphere such as the 'home'. Currently, the material evidence, in multiple instances including the tomb marker and furniture constructed for the tomb, are in agreement and place women in the 'home' sphere.

While the tombs Bonfante (1994) analyses depict clear and ridged placement of the female in a socially determined sphere, it does not necessarily mean that the 'home' sphere associated with Etruscan females equates to a sphere of domesticity. While the evidence found in Etruscan tomb architecture challenges the generally accepted theory that Etruscan women were autonomous (Izzet, 2007), it does not necessarily mean the other extreme: that they were chained to domestic housework in life. When analyzing the 'home' sphere in Etruscan society, it is essential to remain aware of modern influences on the interpretation. Coming from a western education and cultural background, I have been socially trained to associate the female/home relationship with a picture of intense domesticity. However, just because my culture has enforced these associations and values upon me does not mean that they are universal. While there is archaeological evidence that Etruscan women were strongly associated with the home, limiting them in society by placing them in a specific sphere, it does not mean that Etruscan women were 'in charge' of the home in the same way a 1950's American housewife was. Conclusions about the extent of the women's influence in the home and in Etruscan society at large ultimately cannot be made yet, not without more information regarding the daily life of

Etruscans. For now, all that can be said on the topic is that there is archaeological evidence that

challenges the ancient text and artistic interpretations made about Etruscan women that state that

the women were autonomous, in social positions equal to that of the men. Without further

information about the execution and responsibilities of daily activities no clear conclusions can

be drawn concerning the extent of women's association with the 'home' sphere. Delving further

into this topic, the issue of class structure within the existing gender structure arises (Izzet,

2007). The Etruscan women famously dining with the men where perhaps of a certain social

class or possessed a title that allowed them to dining in the company of men, while a more

middle class Etruscan women may never even think of setting foot in a banquet hall (Izzet,

2012). These questions are currently unanswerable, and only further study into a wider variety

of aspects of Etruscan life will provide the archaeological evidence needed to answer them. In

addition to continued research, future scholars must remain conscious of their own modern

influences and biases on the data, and allow the archaeological record to speak for its self,

instead of adjusting the artifacts in order to fit a theory that is politically or socially convenient

now.

The argument of Bonfante (1994) that women were free to interact and move throughout

society is continually disputed by the actual archaeological evidence from Etruscan sites.

Comparisons are being drawn between non-Etruscan textual sources, and the archaeological

evidence is being manipulated in order to fit these idealizations, instead of crafting conclusions

based solely on actual archaeological evidence. The archaeological evidence that remains

undisputable is that the Etruscans did, artistically at least, approve of displays of affection

(Bonfante, 1994). While there has yet to be enough evidence to discuss how affection may or

may not have been displayed on a daily basis, the artistic representations of themselves that the

Etruscans chose to make acknowledge a level of intimacy and affection between people (Bonfante, 1994). However, this evidence does not so much provide an insight into Etruscan women as it does for all Etruscan gender groups, and how these groups interact with each other.

Publications such as Naso's (2007) analysis of tomb and funerary elements at a site in Caere from the 6th and 7th centuries provides examples of how excellent analysis can become polluted by biased source material and Etruscan study pitfalls. Naso (2007) opens his chapter with a wealth of relevant historical contextual information regarding first the general changes in Etruria during the urbanization period and then specifically on the changes at Caere itself. Before beginning his study of the archaeological record itself, Naso (2007) admits to the issue of relying solely on funerary context to understand an entire city: "in order to achieve a general interpretation of the social history of Caere, we are forced to use the most common available evidence: tomb architecture" (p.143). While his introduction and primary contextual discussion of two specific tombs at Caere is well organized, clear and definitive, his analysis is severely hindered by his later reference to Roman social aspects. Naso (2007) explicitly states that in order to ease understanding of the Etruscan social class groups analyzed in the tomb he not only compares but refers to them in terms of a Roman class structure: "I like to think about connections similar to the complex links seen in early Rome between *gentes patriciae*, *sodales,* and *clientes*, which played an important role in early Roman society" (p.144). Naso's first major error is this direct, unquestioned and unevaluated comparison between a well known and established Roman social structure to an unknown Etruscan structure which is still under evaluation (Naso, 2007). Naso (2007) is explicitly analyzing an element of Etruscan society through the lens of a Roman phenomenon, bringing all the weight and pre-established knowledge of these Roman titles into his evaluation of the Etruscans (theory in Izzet, 2007). By naming the

Etruscan 'equivalent' group after a Roman group, assumptions will be made, both consciously and subconsciously, by both Naso and other researchers referencing and building off his work (Izzet, 2012). Future research on the Etruscan social group Naso (2007) discusses will now be conceptualized as a Roman group, limiting analysis and causing problems for the Etruscan field. Further excavation and evidence for Naso's Etruscan social group may not match with the Roman patterns, causing problems when researchers attempt to make interpretations and conclusions. In the event of this happening the most likely courses of action will be either a manipulation of Etruscan evidence to fit neatly into the Roman model, or a complete scrapping of previous analysis, causing researchers to build up knowledge of the group from the ground up. Neither of these outcomes is desirably, as one creates factual inaccuracies and strongly biased conclusions, and the other wastes excessive amounts of time and resources. In order to circumvent these less than idyllic solutions, elements of one society should simply not be constructed in terms of another society, especially when there is such a vast inequality of knowledge between the two fields of study (Izzet, 2012).

Instead of evaluating possible similarities between the Roman classes and the apparent Etruscan ones, Naso (2007) continues his argument based on funerary remains, continually citing and comparing Etruscan social elements to Roman aspects. This severely limits the knowledge, both present and future of the Etruscans (Izzet, 2012). As previously stated, it is a better method of analysis to let the evidence speak for itself, instead of attempting to conform the materials into a preconceived meaning (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Instead of trying to make the data reach a specific endpoint, it should be evaluated in terms of itself and its social context (Izzet, 2007). By ascribing the Etruscan social classes in question to a Roman class then the 'endpoint' of the analysis has already been reached. This is another example of a classics biased viewpoint, where

the Greek or Roman "equivalent" is the superior model to follow (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998).

Instead of Etruscan social classes and ranking being questioned and examined as an aspect of

their complex society, it has been in a sense written off as 'the same things the Romans did'.

Naso's (2007) ultimate conclusions, that archaeological (and foreign textual evidence) support

the theory of "the existence of family armies in Central Italy" (p.145), which was supported

through an analysis of tomb architecture, is not an outlandish or misplaced claim. While his

theory is highly possible and even probable due to the increase in warfare (Hayes, 2000), he

undermines his own work by trying to support his claim with classically biased identifiers and

sources (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998) . In order to properly support his claims, Naso (2007) and

all Etruscologists must refrain from analyzing Etruscan aspects of society through the lens of

another society, simply because it is convenient or better illustrates a point (Izzet, 2007). In

order to better the discussion of the Etruscan civilization scholars need to be aware of and

remove as much classics bias and overtones as possible, in order to get a clear, accurate

understand of Etruria (Izzet, 2007)(Barker & Rasmussen, 1998).

   While on the topic of Etruscan tombs, particularly the architecture, the context of the

change in tombs has an effect on the possible conclusions drawn from the archaeological

evidence. The rise of the Etruscan 'middle class' in the 6th century, during the transition from

the Orientalizing period to the Archaic period, saw an increased standardization of tombs in

Etruria (Haynes, 2000). The growing wealth of the average Etruscan meant that a new, larger

group of people were being buried in larger, more decorative and expensive tombs, which was a

shift from previous tombs belonging primarily to elites (Leighton, 2004). Due to this population

and general wealth increase in Etruria, the tomb building process was streamlined to fit

consumer demand, but because of this tombs also became much more plane and simplified in the

Archaic and Hellenistic periods (Leighton, 2004). Tomb paint, as a form of interior tomb decoration, began around the same time as this rise in standardized tombs, and it is speculated variations in tombs paintings may have arose partly from "a desire to express individuality or a personal touch, at a time of growing standardization in funerary architecture" (Leighton, 2004, p.100). This element of personal choice in later tomb decoration, while more difficult to analyze, must be kept in mind. While personal choice should not be used as a catch all for tomb paintings that don't fit the Etruscan style mold it is important to note, particularly when analyzing the paintings in terms of gender. Having a client's personal choice in art and social themes provides a unique window into understanding of Etruscans on a more individual level. With this in mind, analyzing the contents of the tomb paintings through the gender theory lens allows scholars to glean insight into how individuals supported or acted against their society's gender constructions (Izzet, 2007). Instead of out of place seeming paintings being attributed to foreign influence or just bizarre personal taste (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998), they should be evaluated in the context of the Etruscan gender roles (Izzet, 2007).

While the tenacious views of classically biased analysis and a heavy focus on the influence of outside trade and interactions with Etruscans (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998), new scholarly work is being published that is challenging and reevaluating these past inaccuracies (Izzet, 2007). Etruscan researchers such as Rask (2011) do not even attempt to being their analysis without first opening their publications with critiques and evaluations of past analysis methodologies. In Rask's (2011) particular publication dealing with cult images in Etruscan ritual settings, she systematically refutes past frameworks for evaluating the Etruscans, such as "the view that Etruria was transformed primarily as a result of Greek influence," "[Etruscan research] has been shaped by trends in classical studies," and the idea that Etruscan art

underwent an naturally evolutionary linear transformation (to ultimately become more Greek-like) (p.90-91). Rask (2011) continues her break down of the faults in past mindsets of analysis, throwing doubt on certain elements of Etruscan history, which has become generally accepted, due to "a tendency to amplify the Greek elements of early Roman culture for the purposes of self-definition" (p.92). In her study of Etruscan sanctuary, Rask (2011) tears down the past misconceptions and poor conclusions caused by use of biased information and source material, including refuting the usefulness of non-Etruscan ancient texts, in one example "[the text being] more relevant to the formation of Rome's national identity" (p.92). While there is still a long way to go, both in terms of information gathering and letting go of out-dated and biased methods of analysis, recent scholarly work has started taking steps towards improving the evaluation and understanding of the Etruscan civilization.

Recommendations for Future Study:

First and foremost the primary objective of Etruscan studies now and in the future should be to develop a more complete archaeological record (Izzet, 2007)(Bonfante, 1994). The archaeological record for the Etruscan civilization is highly biased towards funerary remains and sites, which in turn inevitably biases the data (Haynes, 2000). Even when trying to take this bias into account it is impossible to make broad assumptions or claims about much of the society if the research is only looking at one small section of Etruscan life, namely their dead (Izzet, 2007). Recently, in the past decade some archaeologists have been trying to branch out from the Etruscan necropolises and have begun excavating sites that revolve more around daily life (Leighton, 2004). In order to build a better understanding of the Etruscans (and any society) there must be less focus on the exciting monumental artifacts, such as rich tombs, and more focus on the society as a whole (Izzet, 2007). Possessing only information about the small

percentage of extremely wealthy members within a society limits the conclusions and claims researchers can make, as they do not possess enough information about the majority of the population. While sites of daily living of both lower class and elites will probably not yield the same wealth as one of the ornate Etruscan tombs, they are an essential part to understanding the Etruscan civilization (Rask, 2011). If a more accurate, more complete picture of Etruria is ever hoped to reached, then researchers now must first develop a new frame of context, one that involves both the living and the dead (Izzet, 2007). Fleshing out the archaeological record for the Etruscans will also benefit other areas of study as well, such as ancient Rome and ancient Greece, as both societies had well established connections with the Etruscans (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Gaining a clearer picture of how the Etruscans lived, thought, worshiped and governed will help explain the connection between the Etruscans and early Roman kings, which is currently a muddled, confused and contradictory picture (Mackay, 2004). Further study will also help to illuminate the extent of Etruscan trade and influence in the Mediterranean world, and will give researchers a better picture of the connections between these three major civilizations (Bonfante, 1994).

It is also important that future research is done in a new frame of mind in regards to the ancient Romans and Greeks in particular. Much of Etruscan studies to date have been heavily biased, both overtly and covertly, by knowledge of the Roman and Greek worlds (Izzet, 2007). Researchers continually compare a specific element of ancient Greece's culture to the Etruscan culture, going so far as to give objects, rituals and other phenomena the same name as the Greek practices (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). This is damaging to the understanding the Etruscans for two reasons: 1) it enforces an image of Etruscans as copy-cats, a complete byproduct of other cultures and 2) it caps any future understanding of Etruscan research on that particular aspect

(Izzet, 2007)(Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Naming an Etruscan style of art, worship, government or ritual practice after a Grecian counterpart immediately draws a comparison between the two (Izzet, 2007). Placing the Greek (or sometimes Roman) name onto an Etruscan practice instates the Greek (or Roman) practice as the 'original', the 'correct' way, while the Etruscan practice is downgraded to a cultural knock off. The study of Greece and Rome have been placed on the pedestal of the 'classics' (Hughes & Hughes, 1998), a term that by definition recognizes both cultures as having "recognized and established values" (Oxford dictionary). While the classics are truly amazing and important to human history, they are not the "be all end all" of the Mediterranean and southern Europe. In order to fully develop a more unbiased, inclusive understanding of the Etruscan past then researchers need to start evaluating the Etruscans in terms of themselves, not in terms of another culture (Izzet, 2007). This is not to say that conclusions and connections should not be drawn between the Etruscans and their neighbors, but any connections made and similarities observed need to be explicitly explained and understood separately, not solely in relation to one another (Izzet, 2007). For example, if an Etruscan ritual is discovered which is markedly similar to a known Grecian ritual, then by study the connection but do not evaluate the Etruscan ritual as a copied or stolen version of the Greek practice. Acknowledging the two elements separately and individually in terms of their own cultures and impact on their culture will allow for better comparison of the two (Izzet, 2007). Not only does this greatly diminish a strong source of bias in so much of Etruscan study, but it will allow researchers a better understanding of both cultures. If one is able to compare two practices with the frame of mind that they are distinct elements from different cultures, then better questions regarding comparison and significance can arise (Izzet, 2007). For example, understand the significance of a practice in Greece verses in Etruria will allow researchers to

better question why such differences existed. What made the practice have meaning in one

cutler but less in another? What were the differences between the practices and how were they

significant to each culture? These questions cannot be answered if there is only a one sided

understanding of the cultures involved. If the assumption that the Etruscan practice is just a poor

imitation then researchers are completely skipping any and all significance the ritual had in the

culture, because it is implied and assumed that all the significant of the 'original' culture still

holds true for the Etruscans (Izzet, 2007). The other way in which comparing the very limited

field of Etruscan study to the vast wealth of research done on the classics is that it caps and limits

Etruscan study. If a new style of pottery is discovered in Etruria which resembles a Greek or

Roman counterpart, and then this new discovery is named for the Greek or Roman counterpart,

then the name gives the assumption that this new discovery is already know (Izzet, 2007).

 Instead of looking more to the Etruscan side of it, all one has to do is look up the Greek or

Roman 'original' and gain all the information needed. Not only does this write off the Etruscan

culture, but it also ignores the differences in known information between Etruria, Rome and

Greece. Decades of research, archaeologically, epigraphically, and other possible areas of study

have been dug up, decoded and analyzed for both Greek and Roman society (Haynes,

2000)(Hughes & Hughes, 1998). While researchers are still far from having a complete picture

of either civilization, their record is still much more complete than the Etruscan one. Where

elements of daily life in ancient Rome has been known for years, researchers are just beginning

to publish findings from non-funerary contexts in Etruria (Izzet, 2012). Comparing Etruscans to

others just limits the knowledge that is still needed. When Etruscan artifacts are directly

compared to another group's materials then it is implied no more research needs to be done in

this area (Izzet, 2007). Since it is just an Etruscan 'knock off', the 'original' culture has all the

relevant information needed. As well, not having any real understanding of the average Etruscan or even the daily life of an elite Etruscan can mislead researchers into making assumptions and comparisons between the Etruscans and other groups with limited, biased information (Izzet, 2007).

In the same vein of comparisons, it is essential that Etruscan study no longer relies on texts from other societies to further the present understanding of the Etruscans (Izzet, 2012). Researchers such as Izzet (2007)(2012) have already begun this crusade, publishing articles discussing the bias written in to ancient texts. It is important to understand that writing in general is biased, most notably by the author and the author's culture, and holds true in both modern and ancient writings. An ancient Greek philosopher or historian is not writing about Etruscan culture in order to share unbiased historic fact, he is writing in order to describe his own culture (Izzet, 2012). By displaying the Etruscans as an example, a writer is setting his own culture in direct comparison to the Etruscans (Leighton, 2004). If the writer approved of the Etruscans and wanted to display them as an image of model behavior, then his descriptions and narrative would display that, through use of language and what elements of Etruscan life he chooses to include. However, if a writer desires to use the Etruscans as a negative example, as is done by Livy and many others, then their word choice and chosen scenes will also reflect this (Leighton, 2004). This most notably relates to any attempt to look at gender in Etruria, as many researchers base their opinion of Etruscan women on Livy's writing still. It is important to understand, like Izzet (2012) says, that "[Livy] presents us with a window no onto Etruscan society but onto his own (p. 71)". While the growing concern for a more accurate depiction of gender in the ancient world is excellent, it must be done correctly in order to mean anything. Taking a Greek writer's word for how emancipated Etruscan women were instead of actually

look for and at evidence of women's roles in Etruria not helping our understanding of gender in the ancient world.

In terms of future gender studies, it is important to analyze any culture, not just the Etruscans, through as unbiased a lens as possible. Feminist archaeology, while a step in the right direction is ultimately not the direction future research should head in, because it is still limiting, biased, and highly politicized (Sørensen, 2006). When researchers bring modern social and political agendas into their analysis, they are simply rewriting the past to fit the needs of the future, instead of accurately presenting information about an aspect of a past society (Sørensen, 2006). The future of archaeology and research should focus on gender as a whole, what gender groups existed within a society, their socially constructed roles, and how these roles are displayed through the material culture and how they changed over time (Sørensen, 2006). It is important that future research understands that gender is not a stagnant concept, and that the uses and changes within material culture can provide an excellent insight into gender roles within a society (Brumfiel, 2006). While archaeology is naturally a politicized field, it is important to recognize one's own political bias and agenda, and let the evidence speak for itself, instead of re-writing evidence to fit one's own political narrative (Spencer-Wood, 2006). It is also important, both for future Etruscan study as well as the study of other cultures, to focus on gender as a concept verses a straight binary male/female structure (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Researchers must recognize that there are at least three gender groups active in most (if not all) societies, male, female and other. Analyzing a society solely in terms of a modern biased male/female binary not only limits the understanding of a culture but also can create incorrect conclusions (Spencer-Wood, 2006). The 'other' gender category is just as important as male and female within a society, and by erasing this category all the people that belonged to it are forced into either male

or female, creating anomalies in both groups because they belong to a different group entirely.

 On top of simply removing the binary gender bias many researchers (either consciously or subconsciously) hold today, it is also important to draw conclusions about a society outside of the modern western patriarchy (Spencer-Wood, 2006). The current social establishment that governs our society also governs how we think, whether we realize this or not. Assumptions about gender groups and roles can often be incorrect because they are based not on research but on a modern expectation. This patriarchal viewpoint is what sparked feminist archaeology in the first place, but it has not left the field of archaeology even today (Spencer-Wood, 2006). Simply by not analyzing the Etruscans without an open mind to the 'other' gender group is evidence of the patriarchal bias that limits gender to binary roles (Izzet, 2007). This innate bias is also what has lead researchers to automatically assume that mirrors in Etruria were primarily targeted towards women, even though men are frequently depicted as clean shaven, thus requiring use of a mirror (Izzet, 2007). It is assumed in our current society that women place a high value in their physical appearance, and so mirrors must be for them (Izzet, 2007). Similar assumptions are made in regards to discovering tools such as awls or spindle whorls or needles in Etruscan women's tombs(Izzet, 2007). These articles automatically assumed to be belonging to a female (versus male or other), thus writing women off into the corner of patriarchy where women are good only for mothering and housekeeping (Sørensen, 2006). The patriarchal assumptions that make their way into archaeological research is also why more questions regarding gender roles in society are not being asked by researchers (Sørensen, 2006). For example, since the primary role of women in the modern patriarchy is mothering and child rearing, it is taken as gospel that the same values held true in Etruscan society, and little analysis has been done of scenes depicting women as mothers or family images which are prevalent throughout Etruscan art (Spencer-

Wood, 2006). Our modern viewpoint ascribe certain emotions and social significance to motherhood, and therefore it is assumed to be the same for the Etruscans, when in reality it should be questioned and evaluated in terms of the Etruscan society (Izzet, 2007). Evaluating, questioning and analyzing elements of Etruscan culture that are currently being taken for granted, such as motherhood, could provide a wealth of new interpretations of the Etruscan society and broaden our current, limited understanding of the society at large.

While removing archaeology from the scrutiny of the modern patriarchy frame of mind, it is important to treat the material culture itself properly (Sørensen, 2006). Instead of assigning objects in the material record to one gender or another, as is commonly done with mirrors and spindle whorls, materials should be left gender neutral until enough evidence is gathered to tie it specifically to one gender or another (Sørensen, 2006)(Izzet, 2007). For example in the Etruscan issue, what if a percentage of mirrors belonged to people within the 'other' gender group? Or perhaps men also possessed mirrors in life but were not buried with them like the women, and if so why is that the case? By limiting an object specifically to one limited gender group you are losing possible research questions and a vital frame of mind that leads to a broader, better understanding of the Etruscan society as a whole (Sørensen, 2006). Even if enough evidence is gathered in order to identify an object strongly with a specific gender group, it is important to continue to consider the object in terms of society as a whole (Sørensen, 2006)(Arnold, 2006). For example, mirrors may eventually be proven to have held a place within female gender roles in Etruria, but that does not mean women are the only ones interacting with these objects (Izzet, 2007). If the mirrors were made by men, then how does this affect our understanding of men's relation to female standards of beauty in Etruria? Did women buy themselves these mirrors or were they given as gifts by men, such as husbands or fathers? Is this were the case then what

does that say about men's role in relation to the mirror and women, if a man is the one with the consumer power? Nothing, no gender group, no object, no society, exists in a vacuum, and archaeologists must always remember that. Just because an object may turn out to have strong connections to a single gender group, it does not indicate that it only affects that one gender group (Sørensen, 2006). Even within that gender group, certain objects (such as mirrors) may only affect a small percentage of the group, such as wealthy women (Izzet, 2007). Objects, even engendered objects, influence not just other gender groups but social classes as well. Researchers must be able to maintain an open-minded understanding of the relationship between the material culture and the people within a society in order to truly understand the importance of the object within the society (Izzet, 2007)(Barker &Rasmussen, 1998).

Lastly, an issue that is extremely important to Etruscan study in particular, which has already been stated briefly but requires further discussion, is the use and analysis of funerary artifacts and art. An overwhelming majority of the Etruscan archaeological record is based entirely off of funerary items (Haynes, 2000). The issue with using funerary artifacts as objects for generic, cultural wide interpretation is that what people choose to leave with their dead is not an accurate depiction of how they live their lives (Arnold, 2006). Every decision in the funerary sphere of a society is conscious, and structures are built and decorated according to what ritualistic beliefs a society has and how they want to treat and represent their dead (Arnold, 2006). While the funerary aspect of a society is important and extremely telling at times, it cannot be used as an example of daily life (Arnold, 2006). In the Etruscan realm, for example, the famous bronze mirrors have only been found in funerary context (De Puma, 1994), meaning that they do not necessarily represent daily life. Since so many of these mirrors are buried it could be possible they were made purely for ritual significance at the owner's time of death,

meaning the chosen artistic depictions are even further associated from daily life because they would be purely ritual based. Even if further excavation reveals mirrors outside of funerary contexts, then it is still important not to draw conclusions about society from the mirrors themselves (Izzet, 2012). Not only does current research create a gender bias for Etruscan mirrors, many researchers take the images depicted on the mirrors as accurate portrayals of Etruscan society (Izzet, 2007). This interpretation is as fundamentally flawed as analyzing Etruscans through Greek writers. Artistic images are not meant to show accurate daily life, they are meant to show idealized versions of the Etruscan world, and whether the craftsman meant to or not, no engraving is actually a fully realistic interpretation (Brendel, 1995). The mirror scenes can be extremely useful for understanding Etruscan society, as long as researchers remain wary that the images they are viewing are idealized, whether consciously constructed or not (Izzet, 2007)(Arnold, 2006).

While there have been many flaws with past Etruscan research, it does not mean that everything discovered to date is useless or incorrect (Izzet, 2007). Future researchers of the Etruscans should keep the past research in mind without accept the conclusions as fact. The flaws and biases of past Etruscan research do not invalidate the work, but it does mean that the conclusions require scrutiny and revaluation (Barker & Rasmussen, 1998). Just because a conclusion is biased does not mean that it is necessarily incorrect, but researchers should be skeptical about taking past conclusions for granted. Instead of basing future research off a potentially flawed conclusion of the past, the old research should be re-evaluated in terms of new evidence, and then verified and noted of its biases (Rask, 2011). It is impossible to create work of any kind without some level of bias, but by noting those biases it provides others the chance to consider the evidence and conclusions without the researcher's bias. Ultimately, research should

be as unbiased as possible, and this includes assumptions based off of flawed past research. To also further the field of Etruscan study, more care and focus should be put towards gender studies within the society, encompassing men, women and anyone belonging to an 'other' gender group (Izzet, 2007). Future researchers must maintain an open mind about Etruscan gender groupings and associations, and must focus on removing bias and influence of the modern western patriarchal model (Sørensen, 2006). The only way to truly understand the Etruscan culture, and the Etruscan women, is to evaluate as much evidence from the society as possible, and to do so in an unbiased, un-assuming way.

Conclusion:

The political and social movements of the past century, particularly those concerning gender equality, have strongly influenced the current field of archaeology (Brumfiel, 2006). From the feminist movement in the 1960s to current discussions regarding gender roles and the social form of gender, the archaeological analysis of the Etruscans has heavily mirrored these social movements (Spencer-Wood). The rise of feminism brought about a new field of female focused research and analysis, beginning with a feminist view of Etruscan tombs (Bonfante, 1994). However, despite the gender progress the feminist theory provided it ultimately is not the best framework for analyzing gender within the Etruscan society, as it focuses primarily on females and not on the dialogue between the Etruscan gender groups (Izzet, 2007). Out of the need for a more inclusive and broader gender-based framework the current gender theory of analysis emerged, which aims to evaluate the gender groups of a culture in connection to each other and the archaeological record (Sørensen, 2006). The archaeological account of the Etruscans is large, but limited in its diversity (Haynes, 2000). The limited archaeological data concerning the Etruscans have caused the rise of non-Etruscan sources in order to analyze and

explain the Etruscan way of life (Leighton, 2004). While these accounts present biased information and should be reevaluated, the conclusions drawn are excellent starting points for current scholars beginning to focus more on sites of daily life rather than tombs. Past conclusions and assumptions made about the Etruscans can be reevaluated in terms of new, Etruscan based information, and from there new conclusions can be drawn about the inner workings of the Etruscan society, both cultural and gender focused (Izzet, 2007). Some suggestions for future research are a widening of the Etruscan archaeological record and a limited use of ancient non-Etruscan texts for analysis (Izzet, 2007). As is important with all archaeology, the context, both physical and social, of an artifact must always be taken into consideration during analysis, in order to provide the most accurate conclusions possible (Izzet, 2007). While these suggestions appear simple, execution can be a struggle, as removing sources of bias in research always tends to be. However, even just frequent discussion and reevaluation of assumptions and generalizations of Etruscans in the academic computer can reduce any inaccuracies and false conclusions made in the Etruscan record. While implementing changes of analysis are challenging, the result of a well-rounded, well supported understanding of the Etruscan civilization is worth the effort.

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