



Etruscan Myth, Sacred History, and Legend

Nancy Thomson de Grummond

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This volume is the first comprehensive account of Etruscan mythology, an elusive and difficult subject because no Etruscan textual narratives have survived from antiquity. In order to interpret the myths and make the Etruscans come alive for us today, Nancy Thomson de Grummond acts as an archaeological detective piecing together evidence from representations in art, from archaeological sites, and from indirect accounts of Etruscan lore in Greek and Roman texts. She starts with the purely Etruscan material, beginning with their stories of the prophets and ending with their very particular view of the underworld. She probes the relationship between myth and ritual, as well as what myth reveals of Etruscan attitudes about politics and in particular about their society, as well as statements about gender and the human body made through myth and art.

Specific topics include an overview of the Etruscan geographical setting; a review of questions of origins and of general Etruscan chronology, especially as it relates to the development of myth; our written sources, with a short discussion about what is known of the Etruscan language (largely through inscriptions), and the media in art that are most useful for the study of Etruscan myth, especially engraved bronze mirrors. Annotated representations in art and of other evidence from archaeology illuminate Etruscan mythology, and an appendix essay on studying Etruscan mythology lays out the history of the study of Etruscan myth and the principal publications on the subject.

Authorities and students involved with front-line research on the Etruscans, classicists who study and teach the mythology of ancient Greece and Italy, and scholars of world myth interested not only in the comparanda but also in the methodology for studying myth without the illumination of local written narrative will benefit from this book.

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