

Walter Burkert's image of the wandering poet or seer as transmitter of cosmogonic texts and divinatory techniques from the "despotic" East to the "free-market" West during the Orientalizing period (750-650 BC) has captured the imagination of many scholars of the ancient world, especially Classicists. However, one important component of his theory, that liver divination was imported by such wandering craftsmen in the Early Archaic period, is not supported by the evidence.

The similarities between Greco-Roman and Akkadian terminology are not as cogent as they would seem at first glance, since terms such as "road," "river," and "gates" are common in extispicy traditions around the world, as is the positive association of light color and the negative association of dark color, while the presence of an inauspicious mark on the left and an auspicious mark on the right are considered good signs, and the absence or deformity of a lobe is a very bad sign. Furthermore, the terms "head" and "weapon/knife" have different meanings in the Akkadian tradition than in the Greek and Roman traditions, nor is the procedure for reading the livers the same. However, although Greek hepatoscopy cannot be directly borrowed from Mesopotamia, nor can it be an independent development, because Homer does not know of it (the *thuoskopos* inspected smoke from sacrifices). Some time between the crystallization of the Homeric tradition and the first depiction of hepatoscopy in art (530 BCE), the practice was imported, and I propose that the practice was transmitted in a military context, because diviners played a key role in military decisions, they were vulnerable to kidnapping by the opposing side, and there was a concern that they would defect to the other side, as seen in the Greek, Akkadian and Hittite sources. I further suggest that the place of transmission was coastal Anatolia and/or Cyprus, where a strong continuous tradition of hepatoscopy can be traced from the second millennium BCE into the Iron Age. Although originally brought from Mesopotamia, both directly and via the Hurrians, hepatoscopy can be seen to be evolving independently of Mesopotamian influence already by 1200 BCE in the Hittite sources.

As for the Etruscan divinatory tradition, I postulate that the strain represented by the uninscribed terra cotta Falerii Veteres liver (pre-241 BCE) was brought from Anatolia when the Etruscans made their way to Italy at the end of the Late Bronze Age. Although there is still strong resistance to the theory of an Etruscan migration to Italy among modern scholars, it is supported not only by the statements of ancient historians, but also by the similarities between the Tyrrhenian languages and Anatolian languages and by genetic typing of Tuscan cattle and humans. The bronze Piacenza liver (second half of the second century BCE), which is divided into zones assigned to particular gods, represents an innovation of Mesopotamian origin, originating in the Hellenistic period when hepatoscopy was on the wane and astrology was growing in importance, as can be seen by the equation of parts of the liver with gods and stars or planets in a Seleucid era text from Uruk (SpTU IV, 159) and in Hephaestion's *Apotelesmatica* 3.6.14-17 (b. 380 CE).