

CORPVS SPECVLORVM ETRVSCORVM

N O R W A Y
OSLO - KUNSTINDUSTRIMUSEUM

S W E D E N
GÖTEBORG – STADSMUSEUM
LUND – KULTURHISTORISKA MUSEET
MORA – ZORNSAMLINGEN
STOCKHOLM – MEDELHAVSMUSEET
PRIVATE COLLECTIONS



«L'ERMA» di BRETSCHEIDER

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BY

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«L'ERMA» di BRETSCHNEIDER - ROMA
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INTRODUCTION

The collections of Etruscan mirrors in Norway and Sweden are unplanned, small and scattered. No ambitious collections of mirrors have been made in either Norway or Sweden. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, mirrors were bought at random as acquisitions from diplomats or other travellers to Italy, and later donated to feed the emerging aspirations of Academies or Museums to form a pedagogical display to educate the common folk about the splendour of ancient art. The history of forming comparative collections in Sweden commenced with the first Royal Custodian of Antiquities, Hans Hildebrand, who announced that the Museum of National Antiquities should organise a comparative archaeological collection to widen the views of the students of History and Archaeology in Sweden¹. Other Museum curators, like Georg Karlin in Lund, Georg Sarauw and Gustaf Henrik Berzelius in Gothenburg, took on the challenge and began to lavishly buy leftovers from large sales of private collectors. Incidentally, one or two Etruscan mirrors were part of the booty, as will be demonstrated in the catalogue. The artefacts were seen as objects d'art in their own right and no one was particularly interested in their provenance. The sparse notes of the inventory lists are telling, "Greece? Sicily?" and do not provide information about who bought it or where it was purchased. Of the acquisitions made by Swedish or Norwegian collectors after 1950, only one mirror has a known provenance prior to its purchase. It was bought in Rome 1951 and was earlier published by E. Gerhard in *Etruskische Spiegel*, a good guide to trace any previous history of a mirror. At these times no one was occupied with insights of the importance of provenance or of *tombaroli*, destroying potential cultural heritages. The collector's aim was a noble one, enlightening a wider public of the splendour of ancient arts.

The Swedish royalty collected ancient art objects from the seventeenth century onwards. They were mostly interested in sculptures, sometimes also "Etruscan Vases". The most famous are the sculpture collections of King Gustaf III, exhibited two years after his death in 1794 and today housed in the National Museum of Stockholm, founded in 1866². Both Norway and Sweden were busy forming national museums and handicraft collections in that period. Small university collections for pedagogical purposes were also established, mostly brought together with purchases by the early professors in the newly formed university subject of Classical Archaeology and Ancient History in the beginning of the twentieth century, or donated by minor local private collectors who were often former students at the Academy. The Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Medelhavsmuseet) was created in 1954 by uniting the Egyptian Museum in Stockholm and a number of collections of Italian, Greek, and South West Asian material among which the results of work carried out by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition between 1927 and 1931 were included. King Gustav VI Adolf was a renowned archaeologist and keenly interested in Etruscan culture and history. His collections were bequeathed to the Museum after his death in 1973, among them was a very interesting Etruscan mirror with a very rare subject.

Sometimes the collectors are more interesting than the mirrors they collected. Dr. Ingvald Undset, a well-known Norwegian archaeologist, spent time studying in Rome with his family where he acquired a mirror. His daughter, Sigrid, became a world famous writer and Nobel Prize Laureat. Another Norwegian was a member of the famous Skagen-group painters, Hjalmar Eilif Emmanuel Petersen. He visited Palestrina/Praeneste in the year 1881 and was given a mirror

¹ WIKANDER 1981 p. 47.

² LEANDER TOUATI 1998.

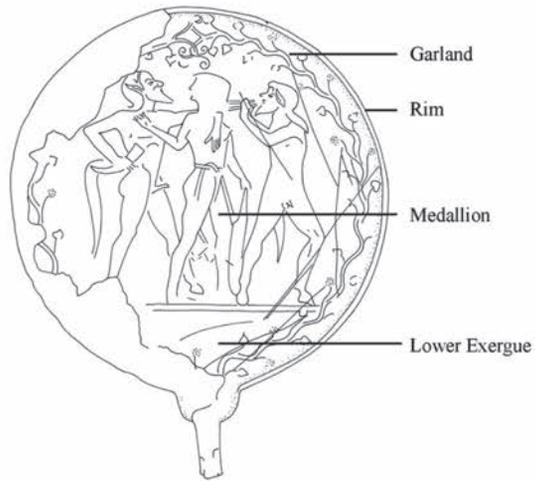
from ongoing excavations. He donated the mirror to the Konstindustrimuseet in Oslo the same year. The Swedish painter Anders Zorn also acquired mirrors, three Etruscan, some Greek and a Roman specimen. Due to the fact that he bought a fake mirror, one with a modern copy of a drawing taken from the Catalogue by Reinach from Palazzo Spada, it is possible to nail down the year of the forgery, 1912 or 1913. Such information can potentially facilitate further research on 'workshops' active in the forging business in the early twentieth century.

Organisation of the catalogue

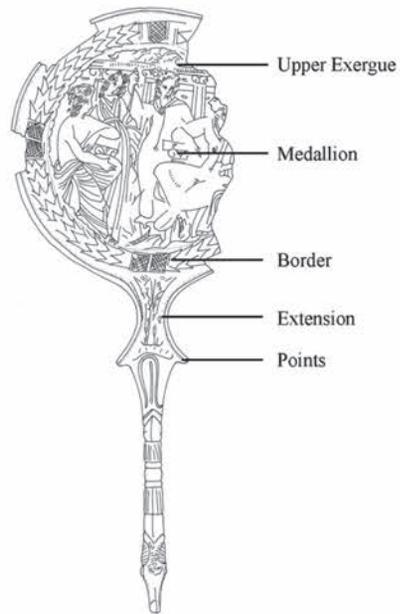
The descriptive text has mainly been modelled on the disposition recommended by the international committee on the publication of a corpus of Etruscan mirrors. Terminology and structure are formed after directives communicated by the late Professor Massimo Pallotino and Professor Adriana Emiliozzi Morandi in a review on an earlier version of the present work. It is chiefly the same as those used in the fascicle from the United States, (*CSE*, U.S.A. 3) and are given below in the typology chart.

In the description of the mirrors, the motifs, decoration, paraphernalia and other decorations, the actual right and left are used, "in her right arm she holds...to the left of her...the mirror disc from the reverse right" *et cetera*. Subject coding is a challenging adventure and open to opinion. In a supposedly objective work of scholarship such as the *CSE*, guesses should be avoided. However, progress is not made without qualified guesses supported by arguments. I have tried to restrict myself, but I have formed an opinion of motifs in earlier works and I try to argue for my opinion in the present.

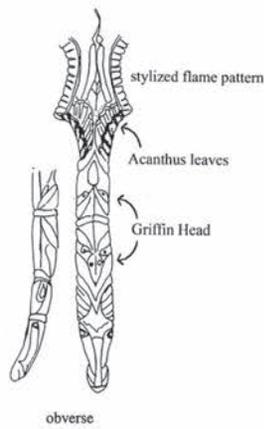
TERMINOLOGY



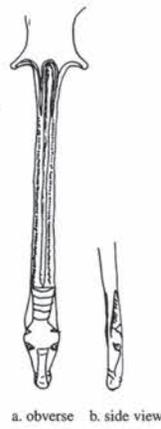
Tang Mirror



Handle Mirror

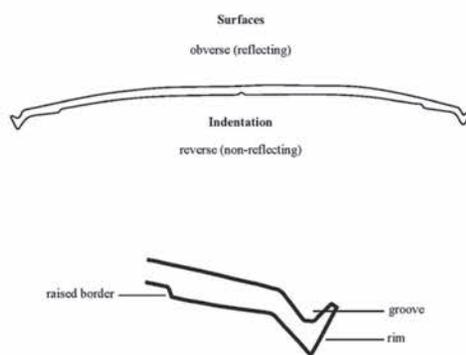


Ram's head (No. 11)
 1) circular horns are grooved
 2) locks of fur on chin and neck on the reverse
 3) locks of fur between the horns on obverse

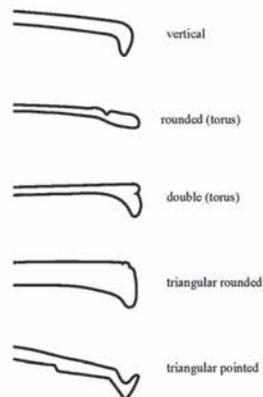


Hind's head
 1) ears lie flat
 2) reverse is left blank

SECTIONS



RIMS



ABBREVIATIONS

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- AMBROSINI 1996: L. AMBROSINI, *Una coppia di specchi del Gruppo delle «Lase» con un nuovo tipo di raffigurazione*, in *StEtr* 62, 1996, pp. 63-94.
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CATALOGUE

OSLO, KUNSTINDUSTRIMUSEUM

OSLO

KUNSTINDUSTRIMUSEUM

The Industrial Art's Museum (Kunstindustrimuseum) in Oslo was founded in the year 1876. Its first director, Henrik A. Grosch, was keenly interested in the gathering of Norwegian folk art, especially textiles, in order to promote domestic textile industry. For many years the museum held courses in traditional Norwegian handicrafts, such as woodwork and weaving. It also worked to inspire new directions in Norwegian handicrafts. Being the only cultural Historic museum in Oslo at the time, it also came to serve the purpose of being a National Museum, keeping a large number of national treasures, such as the Baldishold tapestry. Along with these, it also stores important collections of antique foreign handicraft products, such as the two Etruscan mirrors described in the present volume.

1. Engraved mirror. Figs. 1a-d.

Inv. 1667. Provenience: found in Palestrina during excavations in the summer 1881. Donated to the Museum by the painter Eilif Petersen the same year.

Bibl.: MARSTRANDER, 1942, pp. 101-11; WIMAN, *Malstria*, pp. 194-6.

Bronze. Fragmentary; two fragments from the reverse left-hand outer band, all of the right-hand part including border decoration, and part of the engraved medallion decoration is missing. The surface is of a light green shining appearance with grey-green-brown shades fading in and out of each other like watercolour paint. This shiny patina has been scraped off the extension on the obverse. The disc is very worn, and partly damaged around the s. The exposed section through the disc shows a homogenous bronze alloy with a core of shining metal where the outer 1/10 of a millimetre is corroded to a light green colour.

Diam. cm 13,5; length, total cm 29,6; length of handle cm 9,5; Diam. of border cm 1,3; width of extension at points cm 4,2; thickness of disc cm 0,8; weight gr. 191.

Circular handle mirror with the handle in one piece with the disc. Extension hour-glass-formed with projecting points. The section is concave with a raised border on the reverse; a deep groove runs concentrically around the rim and down the points of the extension. The rim has a triangular pointed profile. The upper part of the handle is decorated with three engraved, stylised, acanthus leaves rising from the grip. It is crowned with an engraved row of dots forming a semi-circular pattern with a small protrusion to the right. The pattern is similar to an extension pattern of a mirror in the Louvre that also has a row of dots in connection to the pattern (*CSE Louvre* 2, 45). The handle is of a rounded section, and has a grip composed of two stylised griffin heads - the upper facing the mirror disc; the

lower facing the ram's head. Between the griffins' heads there are three bandings - the central is undecorated; the opposed ones are riffled. The handle's terminal is a ram's head with rounded horns and curls on the forehead. The eyes are in form of round knobs; the nose-line and muzzle are indicated. The mirror disc and border have been subject to a thorough hammering process as testified by the metallurgical examination. There is no central cavity.

Reverse. A spiky garland engraved on the raised border surrounds the medallion. It has a setting of three tightly gathered, triangular, pointed leaves, and three preserved rectangular ornaments. The ones at the bottom and sides are formed in quadrangular sections, diagonally chequered with unfilled linings at either side of the two squares; the one at the top only has a central chequered area surrounded by two empty bands. A wavy line surrounds the medallion motif, engraved just below the raised border (DE GRUMMOND 1982, pp. 3-14). Four figures, two lateral seated males, and a standing couple, are set against a background façade. The façade consists of a decorated upper exergue of which the only identifiable item is a central palmette. The preserved left-hand section shows an irregular triangular ornament extending from the palmette and tapering towards the exergue corner. Below this is an architrave of three bands, the middle of which is dented. The construction is supported by three aeolic columns with drum flutings and a band below the column capital. An additional line is drawn between the second, third, and a possible fourth column. Below this line there are oval ornaments in the space between the columns, seemingly in two layers. The composition shows two seated lateral males, both resting an arm on the abacus of a short, aeolic, column. The left-hand male has a naked torso and a mantle draped around his hips and legs. His right leg is outstretched while his left one is bent. His right hand

is outstretched as if addressing the opposite seated person whom he directs his gaze upon. His hair is combed away from his brow and falls in three semi-circular curls at the side of his face and half-circle patterns imitating curls on the back of his head. Facing him sits another male in a similar, but reversed, position. He is naked except for a mantle flap over his left shoulder which continues behind his side and bottom; a baldric decorated with three bands - the middle of which is horizontal, short engravings and a sword hilt shaped by vertically placed semi-circles forming an oval with a central, single curve and an outer which connects the ornament to the right. He is wearing a pair of high, laced boots with flaps, which are shaped into a cover-leaf pattern folded over the brim, 'embades'. Behind and to the side of him stands a frontally rendered male with his face positioned in a three-quarter profile and his gaze directed to the seated right-hand male. He is wearing a mantle tied with a round button at the throat, which falls into folds behind the right side of his back. He has a spear in his raised right hand and wears 'embades'. He has a crown around his head. To the left of this male figure stands a woman in the background with her head in three-quarter profile. Her gaze is also directed to the male seated on the right. She is dressed in a 'peplos' tied to the waist and has a mantle wrapped around her left arm which she holds in a position behind her hip. Her hair is coiffured in long, semi-circular curls - a row of five semi-circular strokes to the right, and three to the left of her face. Her inner body details are casually rendered; the torso and stomach of the standing male in the centre are indicated by a vertical line adding two radiating, short lines at the end. The seated right-hand male has a line to indicate his left calf and small, horizontal, scratch marks that form a curve and are used to separate his right thigh from his lower leg. The engraved lines forming his genitals are partly preserved. The necks of the seated males show two short vertical strokes. The engraver made the eyes with a marked drooping expression. The eyebrow of the seated left-hand male is almost diagonal to his brow and the eye is made with a slanting s-curve of the upper lid, a half oval as an iris and a curved line that shapes the lower lid. All of the males are provided with these distinctive traits, however, less prominent in the female's face. Two slight m-shaped lines form the frontal characters mouths. The drawings show some similarities to CSE, Villa Giulia 3, 36, but differs in the rendering of boots. The extension is decorated with a bundle of three acanthus leaves. At the top there are two small oval ornaments at either side of the middle acanthus leaf.

SUBJECT. The mirror belongs to the Spiky Garland Group (HERBIG 1955-56, pp. 183-205). According to Beazley, this garland is a Dionysian attribute and the casings, accordingly, are rings keeping the laurel leaves in place (BEAZLEY, *EV*, pp. 130-2). The garland has not conclusively been established as having a Dionysian significance, albeit some scholars have pointed towards, for instance, a theatrical setting of scenes of the medallions of this group (VESSBERG 1964, pp.1-20; WIMAN, *Malstria*, pp. 203-4). Similar arrangements on Praenestine cistae may refer to festoons applied on triumphal podiums (BORDENACHE, *Ciste*, cat. no. 7). The four-figure group placed in front of an architectural background is a very common convention in later Etruscan

mirror engravings. The first issues of mirrors adorned by a spiky garland had very complex and varied motifs, perhaps borrowed from current illustrations of the Greek Drama (TRENDALL, WEBSTER 1971; BONFANTE 1980, pp. 151-2, n. 27; WIMAN, *Malstria*, pp. 192-4). SASSATELLI (1997 p. 350) suggests an innovator of the group possibly active in Orvieto. By time the spiky garland became fashionable in workshops in other towns in northern, central Etruria. The earlier more elaborate compositions were replaced by motifs of a standardised appearance, mostly consisting of four figure groups. The constellations of figures in these simplified settings are chiefly composed according to three basic schemes, either a simplified *Judgment of Paris* group (cf. CSE U.S.A. 1, 28), or an *Uthste and companions* group (cf. CSE GB 1, 33), or else various combinations of a *divine assembly* (cf. CSE Denmark 1, 13). A mirror in the British Museum (WALTERS, *BMC Bronzes*, cat. no. 714), one of many possible prototypes to the present mirror motif, labels its four figures from left to right: *Palmithe*; *Clupmsta*, *Uthste*; and *Menle*. GERHARD suggests that the scene is intended to illustrate Clytaemnestra seeking the advice of Palamedes in Aulis in order to prevent the sacrifice of Ifigenia (*ES*, 385). The Norwegian mirror shows a crown on the standing male figure, instead of the 'polos' of *Uthse* in the British Museum mirror. It is fairly common to furnish this background figure with a crown (cf. CSE Belgique, 1). It may even adorn the *Uni*-type in *Judgment of Paris* groups, or *Assembly of the Gods* groups (CSE GB 1, 44; CSE Denmark 1, 13; CSE GB 3, 6 and 7). A mirror in the Cabinet du Médailles (REBUFFAT, *Miroir*; 1, 1283) shows a similar subject with names for the figures. The central figures are named *Tinia* and *Uni*. The right-hand seated male is equipped similarly to the corresponding male on the Norwegian mirror and is named *Aile*. The fourth character, *Hercle* in the French mirror, has no correspondence to the Norwegian male who lacks any attributes typical of *Hercle* in iconographic conventions. It seems as if the subject relates more to the *assembly of gods* circle than to the other two prototypes. The naked, standing male with a sceptre and crown could perhaps be identified with *Tinia*. If so, his companion would be *Uni*, and the lateral males possibly *Castur* and *Pultuce* judging from analogies with similar mirrors. These identifications are hypothetical, however, and cannot be verified with certainty. The possible origin of these motifs as illustrations of the Greek drama is very plausible, but, as yet, not proven beyond reasonable doubt.

STYLE: This is the work of a skilful engraver. The lines are long, deep, steady, and continuous without unintentional overlapping. The composition, with two seated persons in the front, engraved larger than the pair in the background, renders an unusual depth to the motif. This feature reveals a good composer at work, one who has cunningly made use of the circular space available. The detailed drawing, on the other hand, is not quite as convincing; proportionality is lacking, upper arms are drawn too short, and lower arms too long, shoulder lines of the left-hand standing male are misplaced. These features render some clumsiness to the figures. Facial lines, like the lines that form the eyes, are not naturalistically formed and seem to be drooping downwards, as does the profile of the left-hand male. The right-hand figure has a more protruding, slightly up-turned nose.

A single, continuous line rendered close to the mouth, omitting any possibility of a chin, disfigures the front figures face-ovals. The sloping form and s-shaped eyes as well as the front figures mouths, with a curved upper and lower lip, are not uncommon to the spiky garland or guilloche-type mirrors, but the unusually large concentric curls combed away from the faces are traits singular to this engraver.

The mirror, a specimen of good metalwork, was found in Praeneste, but it has been suggested that the Spiky Garland Group of mirrors emanate from workshops in the northern parts of Etruria, esp. Orvieto (MANGAI 1985, pp. 21-40). The oblong infill decorations between the columns have close parallels on a mirror with a guilloche garland which is now stored in Frankfurt (CSE BRD 1, cat. no. 14). This mirror shows compositional, albeit not stylistic, similarities with the present mirror. HÖCKMANN suggests that it came from a northern Etruscan workshop based on the results of HAYNES (1953, pp. 21-45). The dating of these mirrors is much disputed (a late dating in the second or first century B.C.: HERBIG, *StEtr.* 1955-56, pp. 183-205; SALS KOV-ROBERTS 1983, pp. 31-54; HÖCKMANN 1987, pp. 247-89, contra: REBUFFAT, *Miroir*, p. 591 and p. 597; BONFANTE 1980, pp. 147-54). The French spiky garland mirror with a similar motif carries the *śuthina* dedication on its obverse. This inscription seems to cluster in Orvieto and other northern inland parts of Etruria (REBUFFAT, *Miroir*, p. 638; SASSATELLI 1997 pp. 346-52). The available results gathered so far strongly indicate that this mirror was produced in a northern workshop in Etruria. The most elaborate mirrors of the Spiky Garland Group seem to appear around the end of the fourth century B.C., and they may well have been produced throughout the third century B.C. (SASSATELLI 1997, p. 350). The present specimen shows no advanced simplification and may therefore be given a date around 275 B.C.

DATE: first decades of the III century B.C.

2. Engraved mirror. Figs. 2a-d.

Inv. 6363. Provenience unknown. Sold by Ms Undset, born Anna Marie Nicoline Charlotte Gyth, widow of the archaeologist Dr. Ingvald Undset and mother of the Nobel Prize Laureate in literature 1928, Sigrid Undset. The Museum of Applied Art purchased it in December 1900 or January 1901. The family Undset spent some years in Rome in the early years around 1880 and may have acquired the mirror at that time.

BIBL.: MARSTRANDER 1942, pp. 101-11; WIMAN, *Malstria*, pp. 158-9.

Bronze. Fragmentary, the upper semi-circle of the mirror has been broken off and the mirror has been bent c. 3 cm. above the handle. The bending damage has deflected the original curvature. The handle and the mirror disc do not originally belong together. The handle has been fastened to the mirror disc, at a time when Etruscan mirror was not in daily use since the front face of the handle has been fastened to the reverse side of the mirror. The upper part of an original extension has been hammered to form a curved fastening area soldered up to the re-

verse side of the mirror. The engraved decoration continues down this semi-circular area, and is made after the fastening of the new handle.

The original golden bronze colour predominates the reverse, with dark spots of purple corrosion products, and inside those, spots of more aggressive light green corrosion. The obverse patina is split in layers; the uppermost greenish-brown with spots of light green encrustation, the middle zone of the mirror is covered with a lighter green crust, spreading over a greenish-brown segment, this encrustation ends at the lower part of the mirror disc which shows a brownish, even patina. The reverse side has been cleaned but not actually conserved, hence the still active corrosion process. The alloy composition of the handle differs completely from that of the disc and gives further evidence for the application of the handle in post-Etruscan times. There is a small indentation, centrally placed.

Diam. cm 15,6 cm; length, total cm 25,4; length of handle cm 13,3; width of animal's head cm 1,4; diam. of indentation 0.03 cm; weight gr. 183.

Circular mirror (extension hidden by a secondary handle), originally equipped with a tang. The profile of the disc is convex from the obverse with a triangular pointed rim (cf. REBUFFAT, *Miroir*, 1340). The tang is broken off and replaced by a handle. The side of the rim which faces the obverse is notched, each notch having a triangular cutting that renders a rim which imitates a real cast astragal border. The thin disc of the mirror has been hammered into shape (GOODWAY 1989, pp. 25-30; SWADDLING *et al.* 2000, pp. 117-40). The second handle is cast with a circular section. The central stem forms a pair of opposed griffin heads with a central ridge between them. The end of the handle takes the form of a ram's head with horns, vertical fur rendering on the brow, elaborate, superciliar arches and a rounded muzzle. The reverse side of the handle is hollowed out and a line of punched dots run up the middle. The backside of the ram's head is elaborately formed with visible horns and vertically rendered locks of fur. The handle has a circular section, with an inner row of dots and a thorough working on the backside of the ram's head (CSE The Netherlands, 17 and 20, and CSE Denmark 1, 21). The formal features of the handle reveal no attempted forgery, but the composition is very dubious with as much as 16.5% Zinc (Copper 65% and Tin 6.03%). This is a brass - a unique alloy in an Etruscan mirror. It cannot be ruled out that this handle was cast in modern times using an authentic Etruscan handle as a matrix for the mould.

Obverse. The obverse lower disc shows traces of what might have been an engraved decoration. This, however, has been damaged to invisibility by the second fastening of the handle.

Reverse. A nude, winged female is facing towards the left-hand part of the disc. She has a pair of wings extending from her back, formed by double engraved lines on top, a wavy pattern just above the wing-quills, and each wing-quill topped by a hollow part of the wavy line. The left wing has six wing-quills, the first equally as long as the third, the second from the left being the longest, and the following four becoming smaller towards the body. The right wing consists of eight quills where once again the second is the longest. Her head is rendered in profile facing left. The crown of the head is broken off. Curved lines