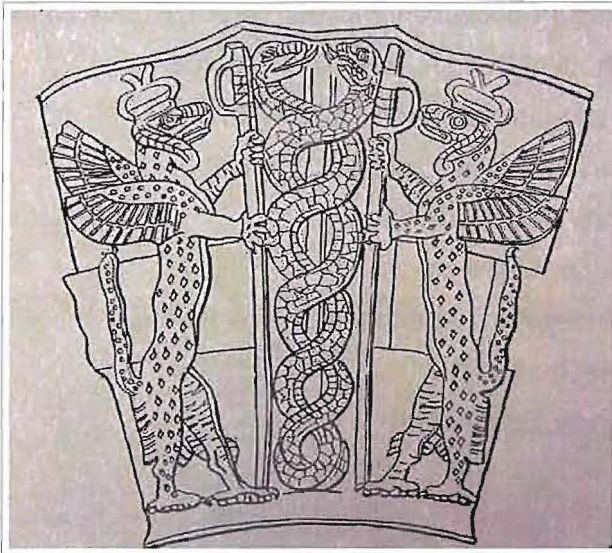


The Caduceus or Kerykeion



"...Ningishzida, who brings together giant snakes and dragons!...who directs speech aright, and who hates wickedness! Mighty power, whom no one dare stops when he spreads confusion!...The merciful king [Enki] entrusted you from your birth...He let you have life and creation...Who can rival you in the highest heaven?...you who carry out commands in the great Underworld..." (pp. 250-252. "A balbale to Ningishzida." Jeremy Black, Graham Cunningham, Eleanor Robson & Gabor Zolyomi. *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*. Oxford University Press. 2004 hardback edition, 2006 paperback edition with corrections)

Snakes can represent

Rebirth: Because they shed their old skin and appear as reborn

Messengers to the underworld: Both due to their ability to be reborn and also because they literally live above and below the ground

Death and Healing: Death due to the venom, healing because in correct doses snake venom can cure.

Description of Iris in the Illiad

And to the Trojans went, as a messenger from Zeus that beareth the aegis, wind-footed, swift Iris with a grievous message. These were holding assembly at Priam's gate, all gathered in one body, the young men alike and the elders. And swift-footed Iris stood near and spake to them; and she made her voice like to that of Polites, son of Priam, who was wont to sit as a sentinel of the Trojans, trusting in his fleetness of foot, on the topmost part of the barrow of aged Aesyetes, awaiting until the Achaeans should sally forth from their ships. Likening herself to him swift-footed Iris spake to Priam

Attributes of Hermes: Messenger, Guide to the Afterlife, Patron of Travelers, Merchants and Thieves, Omens

The caduceus or kerykeion on coinage is often represented with Hermes/Mercury but also without him. The Greek kerykeion is always represented without wings.

The Roman caduceus is represented with and without wings. Was there a difference in meaning?

The caduceus appeared on Early Republican coins and then again in the 1st century B.C. There was a gap of around one hundred years with no caduceus.



Iris Depiction

Museum Collection: Museum of Art, Rhode Island

School of Design, New York City, USA

Catalogue Number: RISD 35.707

Beazley Archive Number: 204107

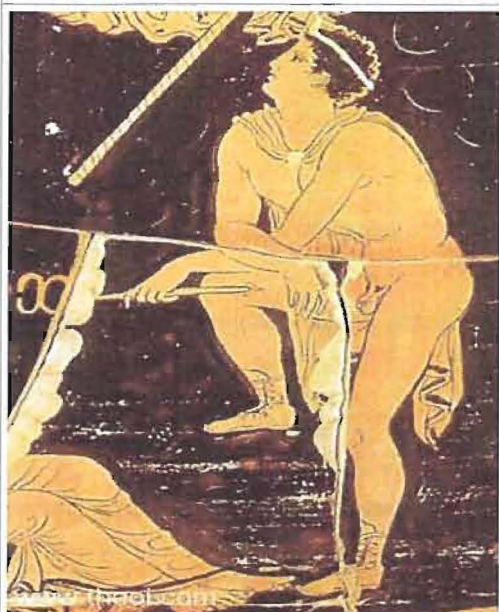
Ware: Attic Red Figure

Shape: Lekythos

Painter: Attributed to the Brygos Painter

Date: ca 480 BC

Period: Late Archaic



Museum Collection: Museo Nazionale

Archeologico di Taranto, Taranto, Italy

Catalogue Number: Taranto 8264

Beazley Archive Number: N/A

Ware: Apulian Red Figure

Shape: Krater, volute

Painter: Name vase of the Painter of the Birth of Dionysos

Date: ca 405 - 385 BC

Period: Late Classical



Greece, early 5th century B.C.

Bronze

5 x 4 1/8 x 3/4 in. (12.7 x 10.5 x 1.9cm)

Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of the Junior League of Dallas, 1969.7