

THEATRICALITY IN THE REPRESENTATIONS OF HELMETS DURING THE LATE ARCHAIC PERIOD



Although theatre is considered to have been, since its inception, one of Athens' most influential cultural institutions, explicit theatrical scenes are almost entirely absent from the corpus of vase paintings dating to the first half of the fifth century B.C.¹ Scholars have attempted to propose several solutions to this puzzling phenomenon. For example, some have suggested that certain masculine *kalos* inscriptions written next to female figures denote male actors playing female roles. In addition, certain plays are said to have influenced the iconography of myth depicted on vases. Scholars have further claimed that vase painters, in depicting tragic scenes, deliberately omitted explicit signs of dramatic performance in order to maintain the 'dramatic illusion' characteristic of that genre.² However, even the depictions that can be most plausibly characterized as theatrically-inspired do not contain enough visual markers to be identified with known dramatic performances.³ Thus, the number of indisputably theatrical scenes depicted in vase paintings is indeed very scant.⁴ It is extremely difficult to explain this absence. Athenian vase-painters, evidently, chose to avoid the theatre as subject mat-

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1. Taplin (1997) 69-70; Csapo (2010a) 3.
2. Green (1991) 40; Taplin (1997) 71-72.
3. Green (1994) 24, 26; Taplin (1997) 69-72, 90. Taplin discusses two scenes that may be exceptional in this respect. One of them is the scene decorating the krater from Basel discussed below. He argues that it may be a reminiscence of dramatic ghost-raising scenes, such as the one probably included in Aeschylus' lost *Psychagogoi*.
4. For surveys of the visual evidence in general, see Green (1994) 16-48 (chapter 2); Froning (2002) 70-95; Csapo (2010a) 1-37 (chapter 1). For focused discussion on satyr plays, see Krumeich (1999) 41-73, on comedy, see Green (2010) 71-102.

ter for their vases. Oliver Taplin suggested a tentative solution and claimed — on the basis of comparison to other subjects that did not find their way to vase paintings — that the Athenians perceived tragedy and comedy as part of ‘political’ life, and therefore vase painters did not consider these subjects, like other ‘political’ subjects, suitable for depiction on ceramic ware.⁵

The purpose of this article is to offer a different perspective on the apparent absence of theatrical scenes from vase paintings. I argue that the Athenian theatre did, in fact, have a substantial influence on vase painters, but that instead of depicting scenes from the theatre, vase painters embedded theatrical elements into their paintings, revealing the connection between these two artistic media. In particular, I propose that theatrical elements are present in depictions of warriors, and are captured in an image that will serve as a case study: Chalkidian helmets decorated with artificial hair on the forehead, an image first seen on Athenian red-figure vases at the turn of the sixth century. These images convey theatricality by establishing an analogy between the helmet (and other panoply items) and the mask (and other ornate costume items), thus defining the role of the warrior and its performativity; I argue that the vase-painters’ choice to depict the helmets in such a way was influenced by the rapidly developing Athenian dramatic performances in general and the use of the theatrical mask in particular.

THE VISUAL PHENOMENON: HELMETS DECORATED WITH ARTIFICIAL HAIR

The Chalkidian helmet was an improvement of the archaic Corinthian helmet, an adaptation with slots for the ears and cheek pieces that could be elevated by means of hinges. Thus, the Chalkidian helmet was less obstructive to vision and hearing than the Corinthian helmet, required less material to make, and weighed less. Chalkidian helmets began to appear in artistic representations in the first half of the sixth century, and their presence in visual art forms increased considerably after 530.⁶

The first scholar to discuss the visual representations of helmets decorated with artificial hair on the forehead was B. Schröder, in his article dealing with the helmet collection in Berlin. He argued that these representations mirrored the embossed locks found on real helmets.⁷ F. Hauser identified the

5. Taplin (1997) 89

6. Everson (2004) 87.

7. Schröder (1905) 20. He compares the helmets to the one worn by Menelaos, depicted by Makron on a red-figure *skyphos* from Boston (Museum of Fine Arts, 13.186. *ARV*²

dense spheres adorning Chalkidian helmets not as hair but as *tettix*—head-gear in the form of cicadas. His identification is disputed, however, and it is clear that some depictions of these adornments depart substantially from the *tettix*-like shape.⁸ P. Hannah, in her unpublished dissertation, collected the most comprehensive list of these helmets, comprising more than seventy representations. Forty-one date to the Late Archaic period, twenty one date to the Early Classical period, and thirteen date to the High Classical period.⁹ Helmet representations from each of the three periods feature hair in a variety of shapes; the most common is the shape of thick curls, but in some cases the hair is designed in a smooth bunch or in straight bangs. In representations from the Late Archaic period, helmets appear in specific mythological contexts, in genre scenes, and in scenes devoid of any narrative; in some cases they are worn on the head during battle, and in others, they are displayed by warriors or other figures or featured in arrays of panoply. By contrast, in representations from the two subsequent periods, helmets are always worn on the head, in most cases during battle. In what follows, I focus on helmet representations from the Late Archaic period, owing to the large number of representations as well as the proximity of this period to the inception of Athenian theatre.

Half the helmet representations from the Late Archaic period are attributed to Douris, a prolific painter active in that period.¹⁰ He was clearly fond of the artificial hair decorations adorning Chalkidian helmets and was probably the first to depict them in vase paintings. The first example of this visual phenomenon appears on a cup signed by Douris dating to ca. 500,¹¹ but perhaps the finest example decorates his famous cup belonging to the Museum of Fine Art at Vienna (*Fig. 1*).¹² The outer sides of the cup feature the story of the fate of Achilles' armor, the *Hoplōn Krisis*, *The Award of the Arms*. Side A depicts the struggle between Odysseus and Aias, and side B shows the vote in the presence of the goddess Athena.¹³ In the tondo we see an adult male

458.1, 1654, 481; *Addenda* 119; *Addenda*² 243; *BAPD* [= Beazley Archive Pottery Database] 204681).

8. Hauser (1906) 96-99. Other scholars addressed this issue in discussions of specific vases. See Arias – Hirmer (1962) 342, Pl. 146; Vermeule (1966) 5; Beazley – Caskey (1954) 20.

9. Hannah (1983) 193-94, 209-10, 220-21.

10. Buitron-Oliver (1995) 1-3.

11. Vienna, the Museum of Fine Art, 3694. *ARV*² 427.3, 1569, 1652; *Para* 374; *Addenda* 116; *Addenda*² 235; *BAPD* 205047. From Cerveteri, Etruria. Another early example is Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, 538; *BAPD* 205060.

12. Vienna, the Museum of Fine Art, 3695. *ARV*² 429.26, 1569, 1653; *Para* 374; *Addenda* 116; *Addenda*² 236; *BAPD* 205070. From Cerveteri, Etruria.

13. On the literary sources, see Gantz (1993) 629-34; Hedreen (2001) 105 ff.

handing panoply items to a younger man; this scene is usually interpreted as representing Odysseus handing items to Neoptolemos.¹⁴ Achilles' panoply is depicted twice, once in the struggle scene and twice in the tondo. In both panoply sets the helmet is of Chalkidian type and is decorated with artificial hair on the forehead line.

It seems that Douris invested significant efforts to make the helmets look like human faces. This pertains especially to the helmet displayed in the tondo. The forehead of the helmet is decorated with thick, voluminous curls, in addition to other facial details: the helmet's eye-holes look like eye-sockets, and the nose guard is shaped in soft lines. At first glance the helmet appears to be a human face located between the two heroes. The fact that the helmet is situated above an anthropomorphic arrangement of panoply items reinforces its lifelike quality.

Another example is a *kantharos* signed by Douris as both painter and potter.¹⁵ The *kantharos* belongs to a collection in Brussels and dates to ca. 490. On the body of the vessel we see a continuous Amazonomachy scene. On one side Herakles and another Greek warrior fight three Amazons; on the other side a Greek warrior fights four Amazons. All seven Amazons wear identical Chalkidian helmets with elevated black cheek guards, long crests with a tapering point at the rear, and thick curls on the forehead. The Greek warrior who fights four Amazons wears a similar helmet, adorned with smooth rather than curly artificial hair. Douris distinguishes the Amazons' helmets from that of the Greek warrior by means of the shape of the artificial hair. In the first scene the decorated helmet is being held up as if on display, flanked by two living heads, whereas in the second the helmet is worn on the head.

Douris was not the only painter who depicted helmets with artificial hair. The Brygos painter, the Foundry Painter and Makron, all active during the Late Archaic period, are responsible for additional important examples. The Brygos Painter's depiction of the *Hoplōn krisis* appears on a cup belonging to the British Museum (Fig. 2).¹⁶ The scenes on the outer sides of the cup echo the narratives depicted by Douris, discussed above.¹⁷ Unlike Douris,

14. Buitron-Oliver (1995) 13, No. 42, Pl. 26; Williams (1980) 139, Pl. 33, 8; Woodford (1993) 102. Boardman identifies the scene differently, see Boardman (1975) Fig. 285.2.

15. Brussels, Musées Royaux, A718. *ARV*² 445.256, 1569, 1653; *Para* 521; *Addenda* 118; *Addenda*² 241; *BAPD* 205305. From Cerveteri, Etruria. See also Buitron-Oliver (1995) 19, 75-76, No. 48; Reeder (1995) 374-376, No. 120.

16. London, The British Museum, E 69. *ARV*² 369.2; *Para* 365; *Addenda*² 224; *BAPD* 203901. From Vulci, Etruria.

17. The scene decorating the tondo is different, and its interpretation is disputed. See Williams (1980) 140. However, the narratives depicted in both Douris' and the Bry-

the Brygos Painter locates Achilles' armor under the handles. A pair of upright standing greaves is located under one handle; an array of a Chalkidian helmet on top of a round shield is located under the second handle. The dome of the helmet is decorated with a checkerboard pattern, and the forehead is decorated with bangs-like straight hair. Another representative example by the Brygos Painter is a large *skyphos* housed in Vienna (Fig. 3 a, b).¹⁸ Side A shows the ransom of Hektor, and side B features a gathering of Greek heroes. Two lavishly ornate helmets hang on the background "walls" of each scene. On side A, next to old Priam, a Chalkidian helmet hangs on a hook. The helmet's decoration includes a long crest with a geometrically decorated base, a dome with a checkerboard pattern, a black neck-guard with a light contour, and thick curls along the forehead, represented by a series of curly lines (Fig. 3a). A similar helmet hangs on side B, located between the pair conversing on the left side of the composition (Fig. 3b). The decoration is almost identical to that of the helmet on side A, but here an animal silhouette decorates the cheek piece, and the artificial curls are accentuated. The Brygos Painter positions these two helmets next to the heads of live figures, providing the viewer with an opportunity to compare the human head to the helmet that serves as its protective cover.

Another scene in which a helmet is presented as if on display decorates a cup attributed to Makron.¹⁹ The outer sides depict two seemingly unrelated scenes: on side A we see four men and the Theban Sphinx, and side B shows four men in motion. In the tondo we can see a warrior, flanked by a stool and a shield, holding his helmet (Fig. 4).²⁰ The helmet is decorated with thick curls on its forehead, and it seems that Makron, like Douris, has tried to make it appear quite similar to the human face. Although some scholars interpret it as an arming scene, it seems that the warrior is displaying his helmet rather than wearing it.

A cup attributed to the Foundry Painter is another example (Fig. 5). The cup, now in Berlin, dates to 490–480.²¹ In the scene decorating the tondo

gos Painter's tondo scenes cannot be easily identified, and in this respect the two painters follow an identical narrative scheme, each presenting a well-identified outer scene and an ambiguous inner scene.

18. Vienna, the Museum of Fine Art, 3710. *ARV*² 380.171, 1649; *Para* 366, 368; *Addenda* 112; *Addenda*² 227; *BAPD* 204068. From Cerveteri, Etruria.

19. Paris, Musée du Louvre, G266. *ARV*² 461.32; *Addenda*² 244; *BAPD* 204714. From Vulci, Etruria.

20. Kunisch (1997) Pl. 109, No. 330.

21. Berlin, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, F2294. *ARV*² 400.1, 1573, 1651, 1706; *Para* 370; *Addenda* 114; *Addenda*² 230; *BAPD* 204340. From Vulci, Etruria.

we see Hephaestus handing Thetis the divine armor he made for Achilles. The god sits on a stool holding a Chalkidian helmet in his left hand, in front of his face. The helmet has black cheek guards, a crest with a pointed edge, and thick curls running along the forehead.

The final example I will discuss is a representation of a helmet, shown with an array of panoply items, decorating the shoulder of a *hydria* from the Louvre (*Fig. 6*).²² The *hydria* is unattributed and dates to ca. 490. On the right it features a highly decorated Chalkidian helmet positioned on top of a Boeotian shield; the shield is lying flat and shown in profile. Behind the shield stands a sword in an upright position and on the left a composite corselet is shown from the back. As the scene is devoid of any narrative content, scholars have argued that the empty panoply items are an embodiment of “all the values of war and heroism of which Attic imagery provides innumerable examples”.²³ The helmet has a double crest, with a checkerboard pattern decorating the base of each crest. The dome of the helmet bears a pattern of scales, and an animal silhouette decorates its cheek piece. In addition, thick bangs decorate its forehead. Like the other panoply items in the scene, this helmet and the other helmets discussed above are spectacular objects, theatrical by nature. They are lavishly ornate, sometimes displayed for show. By adorning the helmets with artificial hair, the vase-painters enhance their resemblance to the human face.²⁴

BACKGROUND: BEING A HOPLITE – BEING A CHORUS MEMBER

My interpretation that vase-painters’ depictions of Chalkidian helmets suggest a theatrical influence is based on the inherent similarity between the role of a hoplite and the role of a member of a dramatic chorus, a similarity acknowledged by the ancient Greeks²⁵ and reflected in literary sources and visual artifacts.

Socrates (active in the second half of the fifth century) is the earliest known source to establish a connection between the two social roles. In Athenaeus’

22. Paris, Musée du Louvre, G179. *BAPD* 5758. From Vulci?, Etruria.

23. Lissarrague (1989) 51, Fig. 72. See also Lissarrague (2008) 16-17.

24. The phenomenon of helmets resembling the human face is not restricted to Chalkidian helmets; it can be observed in other types of helmets as well. In general, starting at the end of the sixth century, vase painters adopted the tendency of rendering helmets as resembling the human face. In my view, this phenomenon in general should be connected to the developing theatre.

25. Winkler (1990) 22; Dugdale (2008) 78-80; Bierl (2009) 79-80.

(active ca. 200 C.E.) *The Learned Banqueters* (14.628f.) Socrates is quoted as saying the following:

“For the type of dancing in which the choruses engaged in those days was graceful and impressive, and imitated, as it were, the movements of men wearing armor. This is why Sokrates in his poetry claims that the best dancers are also the best warriors, putting it as follows, “Those who show the gods the finest honors in choruses are the best in war”. For choral dance represented something approaching military drill and was a way of demonstrating not just good discipline generally but specifically the care they took of their bodies.”²⁶

Other ancient sources also drew parallels between the hoplite and the chorus member. In particular, they established a connection between the military phalanx and the formation characteristic of the dramatic chorus.²⁷ For example, Aelius Aristides (117–181 C.E.) stated the following:

Well! In what part of the chorus or in what rank shall we place Miltiades of Marathon? Or is it clear that we shall place him before the audience and in a favorable position for being seen by all? Except that the man is not quite “a stander of the left”, but is at the right wing of the Greeks’ battle line.” (*On Behalf of the Four* 3.154)²⁸

The scholion to this passage explains the connection between the phalanx and the chorus, suggesting that the former served as a metaphor for the latter:

“This is a metaphor taken from the choruses at the Dionysia. When the choruses entered they sang their hymns moving transversely and kept the audience on their left, and the foremost of the chorus kept to the left side...since the left side in choruses is more distinguished, though in battle [lines] it is the right ... when entering they placed the good choreuts on their left side in order that they might be located facing the people.” (Scholion to Aristides, *On Behalf of the Four* 154)²⁹

A visual representation that creates an analogy between a chorus and a

26. Translation: S. D. Olson, LCL, 2011.

27. Csapo – Slater (1995) 353. It seems that this rule applies particularly to the entrances and exits of the chorus, see Webster (1970) 112, Foley (2003) 9.

28. Translation: Behr, *P. Aelius Aristides, The Complete Works*, 1986. Also translated in Csapo – Slater (1995) 361, No. 309A. On the sources of Aelius Aristides, see Bowie (2002).

29. Translated in Csapo – Slater (1995) 361, No. 309B.

hoplite phalanx appears in a column-krater from Basel.³⁰ The vase, whose attribution is disputed, is dated to 500-490.³¹ It depicts six figures, arranged in three pairs, approaching an altar. Their costumes are almost identical: they wear masks crowned with diadems and sleeveless short “shirts” on top of *chitoniskoi*. Illegible letters appear next to their open mouths, indicating singing. The figures appear to be moving in dancing steps, in unison and in a rectangular structure. This structure, along with the use of masks, suggests that this is a dramatic chorus, probably tragic.³²

A red-figure *pelike* dated to 440-430, belonging to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and attributed to The Phiale Painter,³³ establishes additional analogies between chorus members and hoplites. The depicted scene features two chorus members preparing to perform.³⁴ The chorus member on the left is already in costume, dressed as a maenad. The one on the right is still in the process of getting dressed: He is already wearing his dress and one boot, and he is pulling the other boot onto his lifted leg. His mask is lying on the ground.³⁵ The composition of this theatrical dressing scene is reminiscent of that of the typical arming scene. One representative example of the well-known arming motif appears on a black-figure amphora from Würzburg, in the manner of the Lysippides Painter, dating to ca. 520.³⁶ In the center of the scene a warrior is shown in the typical arming posture, adjusting a greave to the lifted leg. He is flanked by subsidiary figures: A woman is handing him his spears and shield, while a Scythian archer moves to the left. The manner in which the warrior is adjusting his greave mirrors the movement of the chorus member in the Boston *pelike*, who is lifting his leg to pull on his boot. The other chorus member in the *pelike*, disguised as a maenad — that is, enacting a female role — is handing him his garment, just as women are often seen handing warriors various items. Finally, a maenad’s mask is lying on the ground, in the typical position of the warrior’s helmet. This

30. Basel, Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig, BS415. *BAPD* 260.

31. Slehoferova (1988) 23, Pl. 6.3-5.

32. Csapo – Slater (1995) 57. Csapo argues that the representation of only half of the chorus — six instead of twelve members — is due to lack of space, and it serves as a synecdoche for the whole chorus. See Csapo (2010a) 6.

33. Boston (MA), Museum of Fine Arts, 98.883. *ARV*² 1017.46; *Para* 440; *Addenda*² 315; *BAPD* 214224. From Cerveteri, Etruria.

34. Oakley (1990) 39, No. 46, Pl. 26A.

35. These boots are identified as *kothoroi*, soft, formless and lace-less boots. In the first half of the fifth century they are found also in sympotic contexts and in other dramatic contexts of the phallus-chorus. See Csapo (2013) 44, 50-56.

36. Würzburg, Universität, Martin von Wagner Mus., L184. *ARV* 4.23; *ABV* 258.14; *Para* 144; *Addenda*² 67; *BAPD* 302246. Unknown provenance.

scene constructs a nearly exact mapping between the warrior's arming process and the chorus member's dressing process, exploiting every possible pictorial element: the mask is like a helmet, the theatrical boot is like the greave, the chorus member is like the warrior.³⁷

The analogy between the mask and the helmet can be observed even in vase paintings that probably predate the official institution of the theatre. A famous pictorial scene showing such an analogy decorates an amphora, attributed to the Painter of Berlin 1686, housed in Berlin³⁸ and dated to ca. 540. (*Fig. 7*).³⁹ The amphora shows a comic choir of six males, three of them performing as knights, and three performing as horses. The so-called "knights" wear Corinthian helmets equipped with unique decorations: the first with animal ears, the second with a moon-shaped crest, and the third with a cross encircled by a disk.⁴⁰ Each "horse" wears a special mask shaped as a horse head and a costume composed of a horsetail attached to a short red leotard. In the scene the helmets and the masks serve the same purpose: defining roles enacted by chorus members.

The visual and textual representations described above draw attention to the similarities between the role of the hoplite and that of the chorus member: Both were performed in public, in "phalanxes" moving in unison. Both the hoplite and the chorus member concealed their identities beneath a costume, covering themselves from top to bottom, and the value of an individual was measured according to his contribution to the group. Notably, literary sources mention that those who served as chorus members received exemption from military service.⁴¹

37. In this context, it is interesting to note that scenes of figures putting on footwear, mainly sandals, as a synecdoche for the process of dressing, use the same posture seen on the Boston phiale and on the Würzburg amphora. The process of dressing in general, not only by chorus members, has an affinity to arming and deserves a separate discussion. For a discussion on the motif of footwear-donning and its connection to arming, see my article "The visual motif of footwear-donning in Archaic and Classical Athens", in: G. Ventura (ed.), *Shoe Matters*, Tel Aviv: Resling Publishing, 2014 (Forthcoming, in Hebrew). However, as discussed below, there is a particularly strong connection between the chorus member and the hoplite, owing to the similarities between the modes of performance and the usage of a top-to-bottom costume.

38. Berlin, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, F1697. *ABV*: 297.17; *Para*: 128; *BAPD* 320396. From Cerveteri, Etruria?

39. Ghiron-Bistagne dates the amphora to 550; see Ghiron-Bistagne (1976) 262, note 1. Green dates it a bit later, to 540-530; see Green (2007) 166.

40. Some scholars identify the leftmost decoration as feathers; see Green (2007) 166; Danner (1993) 27, note 79, for earlier references to this issue.

41. Csapo – Slater (1995) 352; Wilson (2000) 79; Lech (2009) 355.

THE HELMET REPRESENTED AS A THEATRICAL MASK

The choice to depict Chalkidian helmets with artificial hair on the forehead might be explained as a mere decorative element, but this would not answer the question of why vase painters chose to depict artificial hair in a way that increased the helmets' similarity to the human face and why they began to do so when they did. I propose interpreting this phenomenon by relating to another object that was meant to look like the human face and flourished in this very period: the theatrical mask. Both reflect a transfer of details from the human face to the objects that cover them.

The helmet and the theatrical mask have many aspects in common, and the conceptual analogy between the two objects emerges clearly from the dressing scene in the Phiale Painter's *pelike*, discussed above. Both the helmet and the mask are meant to cover the face and the head, and they serve as crucial components in constructing men's roles as warriors and as chorus members, respectively.⁴² Both conceal the identity of the individual in favor of the collective group. The mask-helmet analogy was articulated by Y. Korshak, who dealt with depictions of frontal helmets: "The helmet itself is mask-like, an artificial face that covers the real one".⁴³ D. Wiles noted that the helmet-makers and mask-makers coped with the same technical problems.⁴⁴

In the Late Archaic period theatrical masks were rather new, and we know for certain that they were equipped with artificial hair. The earliest representations of theatrical masks confirm this. For example, in the column-krater from Basel, discussed above, the masks of the six chorus members clearly bear artificial hair: straight bangs on the forehead and long locks covering the crown, running down to the nape of the neck. The mask depicted on the *pelike* of the Phiale Painter also features artificial hair, arranged in a bun and fastened with a band. A fragment of an *oinochoe*, dating to 470–460, shows a naked youth holding a theatrical mask in his right hand;⁴⁵ the mask, shown in frontal view and entirely painted, is decorated with locks of hair and a diadem. Another example, dated a bit later than the *oinochoe* fragment,

42. Hall (2006) 34, 144.

43. Korshak (1987) 23.

44. Wiles (2007) 57–58. When discussing the fragmentary satyr play *Theoroi or Isthmias-tae* written by Aeschylus, Wiles connects between these two objects. See Wiles (2007) 207.

45. Athens, Agora Museum, P11810. *ARV*² 495, 1656; *Para* 380; *Addenda* 122; *Addenda*² 250; *BAPD* 205573. From Athens. Froning (2002) 72, FIG. 89.

decorates a bell krater belonging to the museum at Ferrara, Italy.⁴⁶ In the theatrical scene we see a dancing maenad, wearing a long dress, a *nebris* and a mask. She stretches her hand towards a standing youth, who holds a frontal mask in his right hand. Both masks have artificial hair, and the one worn by the maenad is shown in profile so we can look at its structure. It covers both the face and head and has eye sockets, a gaping mouth and an accentuated jaw line. The back of the mask is rendered in the shape of a *sakkos* with artificial hair poking out.

The composition of the scenes decorating the cups attributed to Douris, Makron and the Foundry Painter, discussed above, further reinforces the theatrical qualities of the helmet (*Figs. 1, 4, 6*). Specifically, in these scenes the helmets are portrayed as if they are being displayed and examined. In each of these three cases, the helmet is located in a position that encourages the viewer to compare it to the human head. In Douris' cup the helmet is located right between Odysseus' and Neoptolemos' heads, and its curls are fashioned in the same manner as Neoptolemos' curls. Similarly, Makron positions the helmet opposite the warrior's head and at a similar height, inviting a comparison. The Foundry Painter locates the helmet just below Thetis' head and right in front Hephaestus' face.

In some pictorial representations theatrical masks are positioned in a similar manner. Perhaps the most famous example is the Pronomos vase, a celebrated volute krater, housed in Naples and dating to ca. 400.⁴⁷ The vase depicts a group of actors and a choir of satyrs celebrating their victory in the presence of Dionysus and his consort. Most of the members of the theatrical cast have removed their masks, and some are displaying or examining them. These masks are positioned at the same level as the actors' and chorus members' faces, thereby allowing the viewer to compare between them. The comparison between the mask and the human face is especially prominent for chorus members Nos. 1, 3, 11 and 25, as well as for the actor playing the figure of Papposilenos (No. 10) and for the unidentified female figure sitting on the edge of Dionysos' *kline* (No. 8).⁴⁸ All these figures are holding their masks against their heads, and chorus member No. 3 and Papposilenos are gazing at

46. Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina, T173CVPA. *BAPD* 5039. From Spina, Italy. Riccioni (1959) Pl. 17.

47. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, H3240. *ARV*² 1336.1, 1704; *Para* 480; *Addenda*² 365; *BAPD* 217500. From Ruvo, Italy.

48. I follow the numbering of the key illustration in the anthology devoted to the Pronomos vase, see Taplin – Wyles 2010: xv, Fig. 0.0. See also Figs. 0.1, 0.2.

their respective masks.⁴⁹ Here, too, the viewer is encouraged to compare between the exposed human head and the mask; in the case of the satyr the comparison is, of course, achieved by way of contrast.

It seems to me that Douris, Makron and the Foundry Painter were quite conscious of their choice to embed theatricality into their representations of the Chalkidian helmet. Each of their scenes decorates a tondo, that is, each painter intended for the observer to gradually reveal the scene while drinking and ultimately, I believe, to experience it as “a wonder to behold,” a “*thauma idesthai*”.

Makron’s scene includes another unique detail that reinforces its theatrical underpinnings. The warrior is looking out of the pictorial plane directly at the beholder, as if to invite him to inspect the helmet as well. Such awareness of the viewer and of being viewed is a major factor in creating theatricality.⁵⁰

CONCLUSIONS

The representation of helmets decorated with artificial hair on the forehead is a visual phenomenon that first emerged at the turn of the sixth century B.C. The timing of its sudden appearance is surely not a coincidence. Looking at the representations, it is apparent that the vase painters invested efforts in humanizing the helmets. In many cases they were deliberately positioned in a manner that would encourage a comparison to be made to the human head. The helmet became a spectacular object, similar to the theatrical mask, defining the role of the person who wore it.

The relationship traced between the decorated Chalkidian helmet and the theatrical mask has far-reaching implications. It opens new directions in considering the inspiration and influence that the theatre had on Athenian art and helps to resolve the problem of the absence of explicit theatrical scenes from the corpus of vase paintings. The phenomenon discussed above points to a complex relationship between the art of the theatre and the art of vase-painting. In this particular case study, it seems that the latter was influenced by the former and manifested that influence through a specific manner of depicting the warrior and his panoply.

49. Other examples: red-figure bell krater, Sydney, University, Nicholson Museum, 47.05 (Seidensticker [2010] 222, Fig. 12.3); Fragmentary red-figure volute krater, Würzburg, Universität, Martin von Wagner Mus., H4781. (*BAPD* 217516); red-figure bell krater, Ferrara, T161C (Csapo [2010b] 119, Fig. 7.17); marble grave relief, Piraeus, Archaeological Museum (Junker [2010] 147, Fig. 8.8).

50. Fried (1980) 100, 109-10; Osborne (1998) 97. See also, Isler-Kerényi (2004) 31, 39, 51-53, 77; Cohen (2010) 38-43.

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Abstract

The focus of this article is the visual phenomenon of Chalkidian helmets decorated with artificial hair on the forehead, an image first seen on Athenian red-figure vases at the turn of the sixth century. I argue that the decision of vase-painters to add this decorative element to helmets, and thus humanize them, was influenced by the developing Athenian theatre in general, and the use of theatrical mask in particular. The interpretation is based on visual and textual evidence that suggests a conceptual relationship between the hoplite in the phalanx and the member of the dramatic chorus. This interpretation has far-reaching implications. It opens new directions in considering the influence that the theatre had on Athenian vase-painters and helps to resolve the absence of explicit theatrical scenes from the corpus of vase paintings.



Fig. 1. Red-figure cup, signed by Douris. Vienna, the Museum of Fine Art, 3694.



Fig. 2. Red-figure cup, attributed to The Brygos Painter. London, The British Museum, E 69.
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Fig. 3a, b. Red-figure skyphos, attributed to The Brygos Painter. Vienna, Museum of Fine Art, 3710.





Fig. 4. Red-figure cup, attributed to Makron. Paris, Musée du Louvre, G266. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Hervé Lewandowski.



Fig. 5. Red-figure cup, attributed to the Foundry Painter. Berlin, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, F2294. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, photographer: Johannes Laurentius.

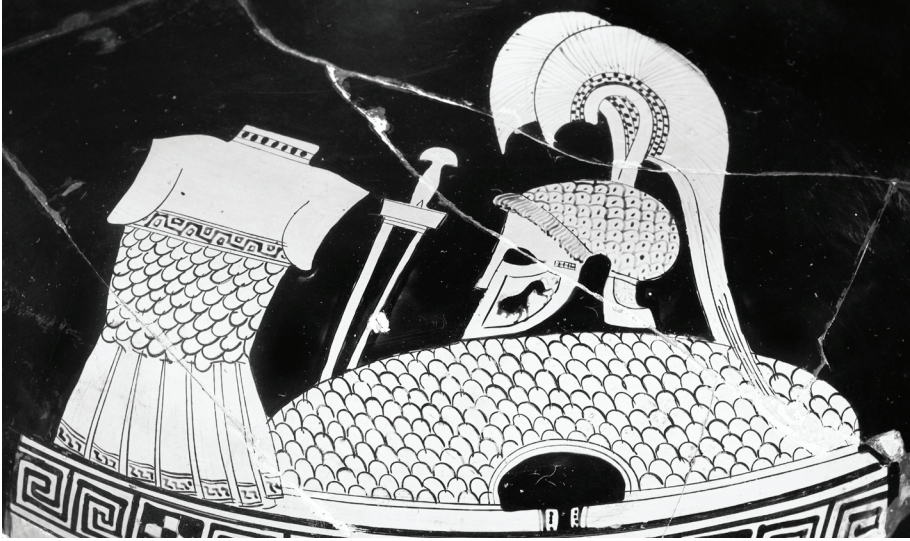


Fig. 6. Red-figure hydria, unattributed. Paris, Musée du Louvre, G179. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Hervé Lewandowski.



Fig. 7. Black-figure amphora, attributed to the Painter of Berlin 1686. Berlin, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, F1697. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, photographer: Johannes Laurentius.