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Helen Re-Claimed, Troy Re-Visited: Scenes of Troy in Archaic Greek Art

Our view of the Trojan War is in many ways so largely and vividly shaped by the work of Athenian artists that we often neglect familiar episodes, from both Homer's poems and the epic cycle, in non-Attic form. In tribute to a scholar who has illuminated so much of archaic narrative and iconography, including how it develops outside Athens, my exploration moves abroad to consider the following: how did artists and audiences outside Athens, beyond a community known for the reperformance of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (if not its initial transcription, but certainly self-identified as guardians of the text), visualize and narrate the story of Troy? How were the diverse cultural communities of Archaic Greece differently invested in separate episodes of the Trojan War and its legacy, and why?

Reclaiming Helen, Recovering Aithra: The Trojan War in Corinth

Ever since J. D. Beazley drew modern attention to an extraordinary vase now in the Vatican Museums, readers of Homer have appreciated how alternatives to engaged combat, and averting long years of battle at Troy, inspired hope in poetry and art. A colorful volute krater, the work of a Late Corinthian painter once in the collection of Mario Astarita (in Naples, thus presumably from Central Italy), depicts the Greek embassy to request the return of Helen, an episode from the lost epic poem, the *Kypria* (color figs. 1 and 2).¹ From the left (color fig. 1), Odysseus, Menelaos, and the herald Talthybios wait on the walls of Troy (according to Beazley), or on the steps of an altar (Mark Davies), to be received and allowed to request the return of Helen and her property. They are approached by four women, robed in ankle-length chitons under colored mantles they hold closed below the neck, and all are named. The first female facing the Greeks is Theano, known in the *Iliad* as a Trojan priestess (6.286–311); here she carries a spindle, and is followed by three women, labeled Dia, Malo, and a nurse (*trophos*). Behind the female reception line for the Greek visitors, fifteen young men on horseback, plus two on foot, are identified by name as some of the fifty sons of Theano, presumably assembled to protect the women (?) or the sanctuary (?) from the

¹ Beazley 1958; Davies 1977; Wachter 2001, Cor 74, 83–85; Danek 2005; Kaltsas/Shapiro 2008, 196 (M. Sannibale).

enemy, even on a diplomatic mission. Mentioned briefly in the *Iliad* for its failure (11.138–142), this mission costs two young Trojans their lives at the hands of Agamemnon, in atonement for what their father urged on the Trojans: death to the ambassadors. But this early appeal is recalled more warmly by Theano's husband, Antenor, who tells Helen herself (*Il.* 3.205–224) of receiving these Greeks as guest friends, and who still argues for returning Helen and her possessions to the Greeks (*Il.* 7.348–353). So why are Theano and her three female attendants, rather than leading Trojan males, the focus of this scene, and the target of a Greek request?

In the first place, Theano's presence helps set the scene on the Corinthian krater in the sanctuary of Athena at Troy, where the ambassadors, accompanied by their herald, are protected by divine law. This would make their mission more of a suppliant appeal than a diplomatic embassy to recover Helen. Indeed, while the embassy failed – the Trojans refused to return Helen, and the war began (or continued) – it brought its Greek ambassadors, or at least Odysseus, under lasting, even life-saving, guest-friend protection by Antenor and Theano (*Il.* 11.123–125, 138–142; Proclus, *Chrest.* 152–154), and his Trojan hosts, their home, and son under that of Odysseus (Pausanias 10.26.8, 10.27.3–4; Strabo 13.1.53, citing Sophocles).² Yet this scene set at Troy could also conjure up Odysseus' later infiltration in the citadel, this time in disguise on a mission to steal the Palladion (with or without the complicity of Helen, Theano, and Antenor: *Od.* 4.244–251; P. Köln VI 245; Proclus, *Chrest.* 224–227).³ Thus, an artist might stage their first encounter on sacred premises, for the sake of later events in the same sanctuary. If so, a Corinthian artist may have designed an East Greek or Ionian setting for the scene, by rendering three steps of a monumental (marble?) altar as the seat of the Greek embassy.⁴ Claude Bérard prefers a political setting, with young mounted Trojans assembling to meet the envoys seated on the steps of a theatron.⁵

More answers are provided by Bacchylides, whose dithyramb 15, “the sons of Antenor” (*Antenoridai*) or the *Request for Helen*, gives Theano a prominent role in the embassy, as priestess of Athena.⁶ According to a scholion on *Iliad* 24.496, the poet also gives her fifty sons, in the tradition of King Priam himself (*Il.* 6.243–250, 24.495–497), of whom we see some on this krater. Surviving fragments of the papyrus give us few lines but help flesh out this intriguing episode in poetic terms. It opens, in fact, with Theano – Ἀθήνας πρόσπολος – who [opens the] golden [door?] of battle-rousing Pallas' [temple?] to Menelaos and Odysseus. She may have addressed the envoys – a verb,

2 Davies 1977; Danek 2005. Cf. Williams 1991 on Onesimos' Ilioupersis cup (BAPD 13363) where both Antenor and Theano are spared by the Greeks, and Aithra is rescued by her grandsons.

3 Parca 1991 on a late tragic version (where Odysseus delivered letters to Helen).

4 As argued by Davies 1977, 78–70; in the Corinthia, a limestone altar on a smaller scale, with Doric triglyph frieze, would be typical of the Archaic period.

5 Bérard 1977, with response by Davies 1977, 83–85; Danek 2005.

6 Espermann 1980, 35–49; the story also appealed to comic poets (Epicharmus).

προσῆνεπεν, has no clear subject – in a short speech, whose content is unclear but involved the gods, and obtaining something, without guile. Next, the sons of Antenor seem to have led the envoys (to the marketplace?), while Antenor delivered their message to Priam and sons, and heralds convened the Trojans in the marketplace. Part of the speech by Menelaos survives, invoking Dike, Eunomia, and Themis against Hybris, which robbed him of his wife, but not the words of Odysseus (unless verses 10–30 are restored to him), which might have allowed readers to compare their rhetoric and arguments. In short, a tradition like this poem could account for most of the figures and their placement on the vase.

As a priestess, Theano is highly intrusive in Homer, where she first appears in person at the propitiation of Athena in *Iliad* 6. After the rampage of Diomedes in *Iliad* 5, the Trojans return to their citadel to propitiate their chief deity. How this action is initiated is telling: the prophet Helenus (son of Priam) urges his brother Hektor to return to the city and activate a special appeal to Athena: their mother, Hecuba, shall gather the “old women,” ascend to the acropolis, unlock the doors of the *hieron* and offer the finest peplos to Athena by placing it on her knees. This offering enforces a vow: twelve heifers will be sacrificed, if the goddess will take pity on Troy and hold back Diomedes (86–97). No priestess is mentioned in these initial instructions, but once repeated by Hektor to his mother (271–278), they are carried out by Theano, with a prayer to the goddess in direct speech, after Hecuba chooses a fine cloth to offer to Athena. The priestess is introduced, in Homeric fashion, with three lines that give us her name, pedigree, and office (6.298–301), formulaic for a new character in Greek epic. Nevertheless, an ancient reader of Homer had to comment on and explain this sudden change of actors and duties at a crucial moment (scholia on the *Iliad* 6.304), and modern scholars find Theano problematic.

To begin with, she is only mentioned elsewhere in epic as daughter, wife, and mother, not as a priestess, nor does any other female serve the gods in Homer.⁷ Cassandra is merely a marriageable daughter (*Il.* 13.365), and a sister mourning her brother (24.699), rather than a virgin or priestess as in Greek tragedy. Thus, Theano’s intrusion into Bronze Age epic is even more striking, as noted by ancient and modern scholars, while the highly Athenian details of the temple, statue, peplos, and cult of Athena make the entire passage, for some, an Athenian interpolation.⁸

Beyond those concerns, why does Theano upstage the queen, to whom ritual instructions are directed as if she is to carry them out in person? In prehistoric Anatolia, it would in fact be the queen herself, at least under the reign of Hattusili III and his wife Putuhepa, daughter of the priest of Ishtar from Kizzuwatna, who would carry out these prayers and vows to the gods. In a recently published Hittite votive

⁷ Kirk 1990, 165: “Theano, then, is a curious innovation ... No other priestess is mentioned in Homer;” cf. Espermann 1980, 43–44; Sauge 2000, 548; Laughy 2010: 67–68; Graziosi/Haubold 2010.

⁸ Aristarchus athetized line 311 (Athena’s response); Sauge 2000, 547–549; some view the *Iliad* itself as a Peisistratid work: Skafte Jensen 2011.

text, the queen (probably Putuhepa) is to make special prayers and vows to persuade the gods to stop the action of Piyamaradu, a perennial pest in western Anatolia under the reign of at least three Hittite kings.⁹ In one of the more striking parallels to Homeric poetics, as I have argued elsewhere, this text prefigures the Trojan appeal to Athena against Diomedes, but in the *Iliad*, Hecuba as queen is upstaged by an actual priestess, Theano, who bears the key and opens the temple door. It sounds for all the world as if an Anatolian, Aegean tradition (queen as priestess) has been updated for the sake of an actual priestess, Theano, more familiar to a Greek audience. Moreover, once she appears, Theano delivers the prayer, instead of the queen (without prompting from Hecuba). Holding the keys to a sanctuary, Theano also performs as a proper functionary in Bronze Age Greece. Linear B texts in Mycenaean Greek (ca. 1250 BCE) list two separate officials, a priestess (i-je-re-ja, *hiereia*) named just before (and with a connective suffix, *qe* = *kai*?) a *ka-ra-wi-po-ro* (-*qe*) or a *klawiphoros*; in PY Eb 32, both priestess and keyholder hold land, and in PY Eb 30, a *klawiphoros* even has a name (“Karpathia”). Thus one way to understand this passage in *Iliad* 6 is in prehistoric terms, if we imagine an older tradition of two separate functions, priestess and keyholder, who operate together in cult. In the Homeric division of labor, Hecuba controls the royal stores and brings a gift, while Theano holds keys to the temple and leads the prayer.

There are other peculiarities to the passage worth mentioning here: Athena is never addressed in epic as *Potnia*, a title reserved for more maternal figures (Hera, etc.) or qualifying Artemis as Mistress of Animals [*Potnia Theron*]; there are metrical anomalies in the phrase ἄξον δὴ ἔγχοϛ; the prayer is delivered in a collective voice, without prior verbal instructions; the ritual cry (*ololyge*) is uttered prior to sacrifice, unlike its function in other Homeric passages. All combine to compromise its authenticity for some scholars.¹⁰ In my understanding of these anomalies (as I have explored more fully elsewhere), they are due to memories of Anatolian practices, projected onto a Trojan population by a Greek poet.

But interest is piqued further by Theano’s companions on the Corinthian krater: “*Dia*” could be a divine attendant but is also a common epithet for a goddess in Homer (as Athena is addressed in *Iliad* 6, in prayer, as “*dia theaon*”). *Malo* [Melo] could likewise be a common Greek name, but also recalls an Anatolian deity, [Athena] *Malis* or *Maliya*, invoked by Hipponax (40 IEG), and glossed by Hesychius as a local (Lycian, in some contexts) name for Athena, successor to Hittite *Maliya*.¹¹

This poetic fragment returns us to the image of Theano on the Corinthian krater: why is she spinning? Distaff and spindle are attributes buried with a queen in the Hittite royal funeral (KUB XXX.15, A II 60–62), but also appropriate to cults of Athena

⁹ Beckman/Bryce/Cline 2011, 248–252 (AhT 26 = CTH 590); Morris 2013.

¹⁰ Sauge 2000.

¹¹ Watkins 2007.

where a peplos is woven for her by temple personnel, as in Athens. In Greek art and culture, spinning wool distinguishes “reverent behavior” of an elite or leisured class of women.¹² Perhaps we are seeing a visual equivalent of the conflation of queen and priestess, as observed in their divided duties in the propitiation scene in *Iliad* 6.

Other crucial details on this krater link it closely to epic versions of the story. The name of Menelaos is spelled, not in Corinthian dialect, but in poetic form (with intervocalic digamma, curiously missing from the name Dia on the same vase), as if the artist knew the name from hexameter verses, possibly even from an East Greek tradition.¹³ Moreover, the nurse may be not Trojan but Greek, in fact, the Athenian who accompanied Helen to Troy, Aithra, the mother of Theseus (*Il.* 3.143; Plutarch, *Thes.* 3–7, 31–34).¹⁴ Captured from Attica when Helen’s brothers rescued her from Theseus, or from Thessaly by Hektor (Plutarch, *Thes.* 34), her recovery by her grandsons, Akamas and Demophon, was popular in Attic paintings of the fall of Troy, giving Athenians a noble cause for native heroes in the Trojan War (Pausanias 10.25.5). But its oldest attestation was on the Early Archaic chest of Kypselos (Pausanias 5.19.3), a Corinthian dedication at Olympia made of cedar wood inlaid with ivory and gold, which also featured other themes popular in Corinthian vase painting (Amphiaraos and Eriphyle, etc.). A possible Spartan source for such works, as in the later archaic ivory carvings found at Delphi, would give the Peloponnese a leading role in the design of narrative scenes from the Trojan cycle in early Greek art, prior to their lasting canonization by Athenian artists.¹⁵

But what did such figures represent for Corinthian poets or artists, and why? M. L. West doubts that works attributed to the epic poet of Corinth, Eumelos, represent any early, independent poetic tradition, rather than post-Iliadic fabrications.¹⁶ How commonly do Corinthian artists show such deep engagement with their Eastern neighbors, or with Near Eastern traditions?

The biography and adventures of Bellerophon link Corinth (or Ephyra) and Lycia, at least since Homer, in the same book of the *Iliad* where Theano makes her debut as priestess (6.119–236). But beyond the Chimaera, with its prehistoric roots in Anatolian art and legend, other monsters may have inspired opponents of gods and heroes in Corinthian art.¹⁷ A version of Typhon, opponent of Zeus, may appear (as a snake) on a Middle Corinthian alabastron now in the National Archaeological Museum, and an unusual Late Corinthian spherical aryballos has an archer hunting horses – if not the man-eating horses of Diomedes, then perhaps the type of wild onager common on

¹² Lowenstam 2008, 31; on priestesses, see Georgoudi 2005.

¹³ Wachter 2001, 84, 335–340; I am grateful to Ann Patnaude for pointing this out.

¹⁴ LIMC I (1981) 420–430, s.v. Aithra (U. Kron); Williams 1991, 52–53 fig. 8g; Wachter 2001, 304; Finglass 2013, 38.

¹⁵ Croissant 1988, 161–162; Carter 1989; Shapiro 1990c, 116–117, 126–128.

¹⁶ West 2002 even denies that Homeric Ephyra (*Il.* 6.152, 210) lay in the Corinthia.

¹⁷ Iozzo 2009, 39–44; Soldi 2012.

Assyrian reliefs.¹⁸ Some years ago, Ann Gunter argued for direct influence from Assyrian reliefs (lion-hunting scenes) on Corinthian art, even on such famous miniature vases as the Chigi Vase, and some of us have argued for close relations between Phoenicians and Greeks at Corinth.¹⁹ Such encounters could also have happened in the West, where Corinthians and other Greeks met Phoenicians on Sicily, and remind us of the far-flung contexts for telling Greek stories under the spell of Near Eastern tales and demons.

Gathering more of these examples might lead us to understand a view of a formal embassy, spanning mainland Greek and East Aegean traditions, where Anatolian offices of priestesses played a public role in encounters with foreigners and matters of national security. Thus, more than a tribute to the influence of Bacchylides or a sign of the popularity of the epic cycle in early Greek art, this configuration of temple officials and foreign guests on the Astarita krater could appeal to an era when Greek sanctuaries attracted international, even royal visitors, and Greek artists imagined epic relations of the Trojan War in contemporary circumstances.²⁰

Homer's Homeland? Stories of Troy in Ionia

Farther from Athens but closer to Troy, the coast of western Anatolia plays an enigmatic role in the construction of the Greek narrative about Ilion. Active in the second millennium as a region engaged in warfare, subjugation, rebellion, and negotiation with Hittite kings of Central Anatolia, and productive of poetic traditions of its own centered on Pergamon (with Telephos/Telepinu, and the “Mysian war”), coastal Anatolia is home to Homer but not to its own epic tradition.²¹ The cities and regions that encircle the birthplace of Homer in Greek legend, (Smyrna, Chios, etc), are conspicuously absent from the action on both the Greek and Trojan sides, and even from the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2. Miletus, a Greek city in the Early Archaic period, and once a Minoan, then Mycenaean, settlement in the Bronze Age, is too barbarian, or too Carian, to join the Greek side and shows up instead among the Anatolian allies of Troy (*Il.* 2.867–875). How do these Greek cities insert themselves into Homeric action, through art as well as through local epic cycles, now lost?

Evocative of the Trojan dynasty and its story is an archaic Klazomenian hydria, whose fragments are now separated in two locales, both far from its original home. On a fragment now in Athens, its dislocation the legacy of a failed modern Greek expedition to Asia Minor, a herald moving right looks back at two or more horses (two heads are all that survive, of what could be a four-horse team or cavalcade), as he

¹⁸ Arvanitaki 2012.

¹⁹ Gunter 1990; Morris/Papadopoulos 1998.

²⁰ Morris 1992; Naso 2006; on early Greek diplomacy, see Karavites 1986 and 1987.

²¹ See Davies 2000, on the “Teuthranian” (Mysian) war; Beckman/Bryce/Cline 2011.



Fig. 1: King (on throne) flanked by standing female, receiving herald and team of horses. Body fragment of North Ionian black-figure hydria from Klazomenai, 550–540 BCE. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 5610. Photo: Eleftherios Galanopoulos. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund.

approaches a royal couple seated on a throne, facing left (the bearded king is certainly on a throne, the female behind him may be standing) (fig. 1).²² While there is no way to certify that the royal pair represents Priam and Hecuba, rather than another epic couple, another fragment of the hydria introduces the sad story of the fate of their son.

On the shoulder of the same vase (now in Brussels), Achilles drags Hektor's body from his chariot, in a composition rendered more pitiful by the way the crown prince of Troy is tied face down, his visage ground into the dust.²³ This is also the oldest known image of this cruel and savage treatment of the enemy corpse by the Greek hero, later celebrated (or deplored?) from Attic vases to Roman sarcophagi, as if the fate of Troy's hero attracted artists, earlier, and in graphic form, on Asian soil. With such a scene on the shoulder of the vase, one can only hope that the rest of the body of the vase shows the more merciful resolution of the *Iliad*, the return of Hektor's body in Book 24 that closes the poem with a royal Trojan funeral.

²² LIMC VII (1994) 517 no. 36, s.v. Priamos (J. Neils); Cook/Dupont 2003, 106 fig. 12.8 (Athens, National Archaeological Museum 5610). See Davies 2000 on the Greek expedition to Klazomenai.

²³ Cook/Dupont 2003, 186 n. 11; CVA Brussels 3, pl. 106.5; Kephaliidou 2010, 131–134 fig. 7.

Elsewhere in the repertoire of Klazomenai, only three of its famous painted clay coffins bear mythological scenes, next to dozens with colorful but anonymous hoplites, riders, and chariots in battle and procession, and it is perhaps not surprising that they tell a tale of Trojan royalty.²⁴ One from the city itself, now in Izmir, tells the story of Troilos, with Achilles crouching behind a tree at the far left, although the figure of the young Trojan prince himself is missing in the lost central portion.²⁵ A twin found at Abdera gives us both more and less of the story, without Achilles, but complete as to its Trojan protagonists (from left to right: a seated Priam, riding Troilos, and women with water jars heading to the fountain or filling up from it).²⁶ Finally, most poignant of all, a sarcophagus now in Leiden shows the sacrifice of Polyxena, with figures Greek and Trojan grouped around the central, egg-shaped tomb of Achilles (fig. 2): armed soldiers approach it from the left, while another armed Greek drags a woman towards it from the right, his left hand gripping her wrist, while his right holds a dagger or sword, ready for execution.²⁷ Polyxena and her pitiful fate seem sadly popular on Anatolian soil, in both local and imported works of art. In addition to the magnificent Early Classical marble sarcophagus from the Troad with the scene of her sacrifice, an Attic red-figure column krater from Tekirdağ across the Hellespont (ancient Bisanthe/Rhaidestos) seems to show the Trojan princess being offered by her father Priam (escorted by Hermes) as part of the ransom for her brother's corpse.²⁸ It is interesting to speculate whether, and how, Trojan hero/ines and non-Homeric episodes may have captured the imagination of artists and poets in a separate, even local, tradition.

These two stories are closely linked in both narrative and art, for both young royal Trojans were pursued by Achilles, in love and ambush: the young prince died at the fountainhouse, his sister who refused Achilles or was refused by him, while the Greek hero was alive, ended up a sacrifice on his tomb. To find these tales of love and loss (for such is what they are) painted on three archaic clay coffins and on related pottery from the same city suggests how close artists in Anatolia may have felt to the dynasty that once ruled Troy and lost to Greek heroes. Centuries later, Apulian artists still remembered the story of Troilos, and even gave the fountainhouse where he met his death an Anatolian setting with archaic "Aeolic" column bases and capitals.²⁹ Like the monumental altar that received Greek heroes on a Corinthian krater, it indicates

24 Cook/Dupont 2003, 123.

25 Cook 1981, 36 (G.7) pl. 48.1–2.

26 Cook 1981, 177 (G.7A) pl. 77.

27 Cook 1981, 36 (G.8) pl. 48.3. For Attic vase paintings of Polyxena at the fountain, see Cohen in this volume.

28 Sevinç 1996; Tuna-Nörling 2001, but see LIMC Suppl. (2009) Add. 45, s.v. Achilleus (A. Kossatz-Deissmann) (the female may be Briseis); See Knittlmayer 1997, 80–99, on Troilos and Polyxena in Attic vase painting.

29 LIMC I (1981) 269, s.v. Achilleus (A. Kossatz-Deissmann): St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum B2085 (from Potenza); the architectural façade on this vase supports the identification of the early "mushroom capitals" from Old Smyrna (Bayraklı) as bases, not capitals: Akurgal 1983, fig. 72a.

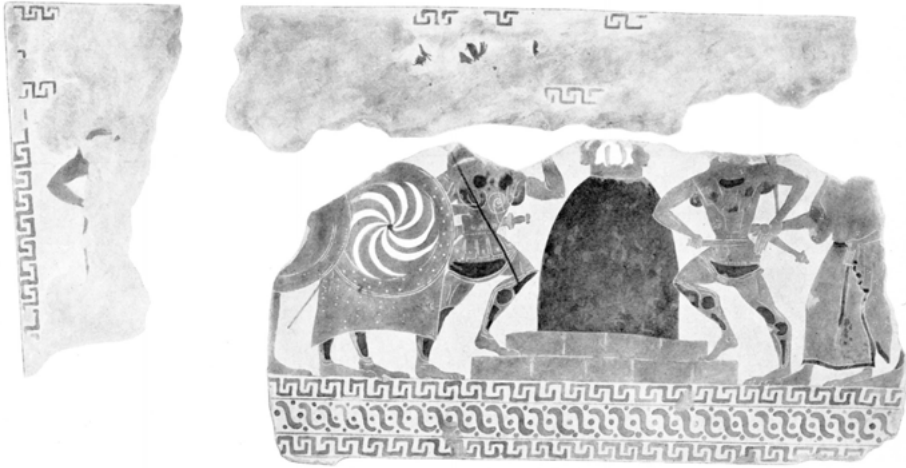


Fig. 2: Sacrifice of Polyxena, from Klazomenian sarcophagus. Albertinum Group (500–470 BCE). Leyden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden I.1896/12.1: once Izmir market, said to be from Klazomenai. After Cook 1981, G.8.

how artists suggested native settings for the epic cycle with the inclusion of architectural features local to the action of the *Iliad*.

From Troy to Samothrace

In my third and final iteration of what we imagine may be royal reception scenes set at Troy, a remarkable fragment of a carved marble relief, said to have been found at Samothrace and now in the Louvre, represents a seated Agamemnon on a royal stool, facing left, and flanked to the right by Talthybios and Ep[eios] (fig. 3).³⁰ Broken off at the right, and closed by vestiges of a griffin head (protome) of which only a long spiral curl survives, the original shape, full scene, and onetime function of this marble slab remain enigmas. Purchased on Tenedos by Count Choiseul-Gouffier in the eighteenth century, it was said to have been found on Samothrace, thus it belongs somewhat broadly to the archaic art of the northeast Aegean, and must depict a scene set at Troy. What kind of embassy was received by Agamemnon? One might naturally imagine the opening of the *Iliad* 1 (8–32), when Chryses approaches the Greek king with gifts and suppliant wool strands to request the

³⁰ Bothmer/Mertens 1979, 195; LIMC I (1981) 258, s.v. Agamemnon (Y. Touchefeu); Hamiaux 2001, 84–85 no. 76 (also identified as the throne armrest of a cult statue, with an initiation scene, but myth is more likely).



Fig. 3: Fragmentary marble relief: seated Agamemnon, Talthybios, and Ep[eios?] behind throne. Paris, Musée du Louvre inv. Clarac 608 (Ma 697): from Samothrace? (bought on Tenedos, 1818), 550–520 BCE. Photo: Hervé Lewandowski. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

return (ransom) of his daughter. Agamemnon’s refusal to do so brings on the anger of Apollo and disease among the Greeks, the substitution of Briseis as the king’s prize when Chryseis is finally returned, and the anger of Achilles, so such a scene would launch the entire plot of the *Iliad*, and was popular for that reason throughout the history of Greek and Roman art.³¹ As in the Corinthian krater and the scenes from Klazomenai, an artist has framed a formal scene with details that emphasize royal and official attributes (herald’s scepter, etc.).

Meanwhile, in Attic art, a single work (the François Vase, ca. 560 BCE) shows Priam’s seat as a mere *thakos*, in contrast to the elaborate throne where Zeus sits. Could one reason be, as I argued years ago, the proximity of Eastern Greeks to impressive Lydian, Phrygian, and, eventually, Persian rulers?³² While these shaped

³¹ Ben Abed 2006, 124 fig. 6.13, from the House of the Nymphs, Nabeul (Tunisia).

³² Morris 2003, 11–16.

the depiction of kings like Priam, the events of his life most popular in mainland Greek art – his abject appeal to Achilles for his son’s body, or pitiful death at the hands of Achilles’ son, Neoptolemos – do not offer occasions for a noble image of a king enthroned in all his power and regal trappings. Nor does the Trojan cycle give Agamemnon many opportunities for displays of royal power, as the epic cycle focuses on tragic moments in his life (sacrifice of his daughter, quarrel with Achilles, and murder at the hands of his wife). Instead, one wonders if East Greek or Anatolian audiences, with their different memories and experience of kingship, imagined Homeric kings, both Greek and Trojan, in such moments of dignity and rulership.

Back to Athens: Homer in Athenian Art and Poetry

This range of Trojan stories in Greek art returns us to a perennial question on the date of origin of these tales in written and “final” form. Recent studies on the chronology of early Greek poetry differ widely on dating the final formation of Homeric epic, as they range from arguments for an eighth-century date (Joachim Latacz), to a seventh-century literate poet (M. L. West), to an evolutionary model that embraces a spectrum of development from prehistory to archaic fixation (Gregory Nagy), to an argument for the role of Solon (André Sauge), to a precise date of 522 BCE as the date when Hipparchos, tyrant of Athens, commissioned the recitation and dictation of the earliest written epic (Minna Skafte Jensen).³³ Beyond these arguments, all agree on certain factors observed long ago: the relatively late appearance of scenes specific to our *Iliad* (sixth century BCE) and the great popularity of episodes outside of Homeric epic, drawn from the *Kypria* and *Ilioupersis* traditions, in early Greek art.³⁴

In these arguments, vases both Attic and other continue to contribute important evidence on the chronology and formation of the *Iliad*. For example, Walter Burkert has recently drawn attention to two early sixth-century BCE vases, one Attic and one Corinthian, whose decoration (early scenes of the ransom of Hektor) supports the idea that Book 24 of the *Iliad* was well known before the middle of the sixth century.³⁵ Such testimonia (the Attic vase is one of three to represent this episode, in 570–560 BCE) certainly help dispel the notion that a complete poem only took shape under the Peisistratids, a generation later. Perhaps even earlier (ca. 580 BCE) is the Corinthian plate now in Princeton, with a less explicitly Iliadic version of the ransom, but one which finds parallels in contemporary “Argive” shield bands. Made at the same time, the famous dinos by Sophilos with the funeral games of Patroklos has labels that imply knowledge of the division of the epic into books with titles (however “adven-

³³ Anderson/Haug 2012 presents a recent survey of the chronology of Greek epic poetry.

³⁴ Snodgrass 1998; Lowenstam 2008.

³⁵ Burkert 2012.

turesome” the artist’s spelling). The fact that this dinos was enjoyed outside Athens, in the homeland of Achilles (Thessaly), enhances our sense of how widely the poem was enjoyed, read, or performed. And, the fact that the artist includes another Homeric detail, Tethys (*Il.* 14.302), in the wedding procession of Peleus and Thetis on his London dinos, makes his learning loom even larger.

In short, Shapiro’s own argument for the “emancipation” of Attic iconography from non-Athenian traditions rested on a comparison of the chest of Kypselos, as a quintessentially Peloponnesian work, with the mythological encyclopedia represented by the François Vase, a masterpiece and collaboration between two Athenian artists. In the lead-up to this key moment, some of the vases treated here exemplify its predecessors: “large vases crowded with many figures.”³⁶

More intriguing is the fact that the artist of one of the vases noted by Burkert, the hydria in Zurich, is also the painter of London B76 (another hydria with a Homeric scene, the chariot of Hektor, from Kameiros, Rhodes), and even painted the Burgon amphora, the earliest Panathenaic vase. Thus, he was involved both in a Homeric, Iliadic subject and in producing prize vases for the first festival where Homer’s poems came to be regularly recited. This implies the kind of patron-centered productivity that changed the Athenian pottery industry, from the seventh century BCE onwards.³⁷ But it also captures the fusion of ritual (re)performance of Homeric poetry with its deployment in visual panoramas across the fields of painted pottery, a process that we associate with Athens but that may have flowered in many regions of Greece. This allows us to have our epic, and eat it too: while versions of the Trojan War captured artists across many early cultures of Greece, and called forth scenarios designed for different social settings of the archaic period, its definitive sequence of episodes, and even verses, still owes much to Athenian poets, patrons, and artists.

³⁶ Shapiro 1990c, 143.

³⁷ See essays in Paleothodoros 2012.