

Figure and Space in Vase Painting and in Architectural Sculpture: On the (Ir-)Relevance of the Medium

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Abstract

The present article explores the relevance of medium in the study of Ancient Greek art by a parallel analysis of the relationship of figure and space in Attic vase painting and architectural sculpture. While innovative recent scholarship on Greek art tends to emphasize the incommensurability of different media of pictorial representation, this article shows essential analogies. The figures found in both pictorial media prove to comprise more than the physical body definition. Instead, no clear border can be drawn between the physical body and its “extensions” – armor, clothing, attributes, in some cases even elements of the figure’s spatial context as e.g., “landscape.” While such (presumed) surrounding space can be an intrinsic part of the figure, the idea of a pictorial space dissociated from the material frame is absent from both vase painting and architectural sculpture. Instead, the figures’ space is identical with their material frame, be it the picture field on a vase, or the pediment of a temple. This common trait among the two pictorial media is finally interpreted as an anthropological predisposition regarding what made for an image in Ancient Greece, pointing to the image’s power of presentification, as opposed to the modern concept of pictorial illusion. In doing so, this article advocates for further adoption of cross-media perspectives on Ancient Greek art – not as an alternative, but as an intellectually productive supplement to the newly increased awareness for differences of pictorial media.

Key-words: vase painting, architectural sculpture, depiction of space

Résumé

Par une analyse parallèle de la relation entre la figure et l’espace dans la peinture sur vases attiques et la sculpture architecturale, cet article explore la relevance du médium dans l’étude de l’art grec. Alors que la recherche récente avait tendance à souligner l’incommensurabilité de différents médiums de représentation picturale, cet article met en avant l’analogie. Dans ces deux médiums de l’image, la figure s’avère comprendre plus que le seul corps physique. Aucune frontière nette ne peut être tracée entre celui-ci et ses « extensions » - armes, vêtements, attributs, ou même des éléments du contexte spatial de la figure, son « paysage ». Alors que ce (soi-disant) espace environnant peut être une partie intrinsèque de la figure, l’idée d’un espace pictural dissocié du cadre matériel de l’image ne se retrouve ni dans la peinture sur vases, ni dans la sculpture architecturale. Tout au contraire, l’espace des figures s’avère identique au cadre matériel de l’image, que ce soit le champ d’image sur un vase, ou le fronton d’un temple. Ce trait commun entre ces deux médiums de l’image sera finalement interprété comme un élément déterminant de l’anthropologie de l’image en Grèce ancienne, soulignant son pouvoir de présentification à la place du concept moderne d’illusion picturale. Ce faisant, cet article veut inciter à une perspective sur l’image grecque qui croise les différents médiums de l’image – non en alternative mais en supplément productif à l’attention accrue pour les particularités de chaque médium.

Mots-Clés: peinture sur vases, sculpture architecturale, représentation de l’espace

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This article is partly based on a lecture that I gave in Paris on 18.10.2014. I am grateful to the audience’s comments and critiques. Moreover, the article seizes again some issues brought up (but not developed) in my doctoral thesis (Nikolaus Dietrich, *Figur ohne Raum? Bäume und Felsen in der attischen Vasenmalerei des 6. und 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2010), to which I will refer frequently. Finally, I would like to emphasize how much this research owes to the stimulating academic context of the (former) Centre Gernet in Paris.

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In the study of Ancient Greek art, we have learned to treat individual pictures not simply as a universal emanation of the art of a certain period, but to be attentive to differences of size, material, technique, function, spatial context, viewing context, intended public, etc., or in short: to differences in medium.² That awareness for differences in pictorial media had turned a very common practice in the study of Greek art problematic: drawing conclusions from those categories of pictures well represented and applying them to those categories of pictures less (or not at all) represented in our material record. This concerns especially attempts to learn about the history of Greek panel painting through the analysis of vase painting³, and about the history of Greek freestanding sculpture through the analysis of architectural sculpture or through analysis of Roman marble copies of Greek bronze statues.⁴ Of these three analogies drawn between different media of pictorial representation, the one between Roman copies and Greek originals has probably had the greatest impact on the shaping of “Greek art” both within and beyond scholarship.

In the present article, I will deal solely with vase painting and architectural sculpture, and more specifically with the depiction of space and “landscape” in

²Obviously, it is not possible to substantiate this by any exhaustive bibliography. Some especially telling and interesting examples shall suffice. Moreover, it has to be emphasized here that even though there is a shared interest in medial aspects of Ancient imagery in Ancient Studies, the term “medium” is mainly used in German scholarship. On the general potential of a medial perspective on Ancient imagery, see Muth; Petrovic (2012, p. 281-318). Good examples of emphasis put on the specificity of the pictorial medium in scholarship are the important and innovative works of R. Osborne on architectural sculpture from the late 1980s to the present. See Osborne (1987; 1994; 2000; 2009). Osborne explores in particular the implications that the viewing context of images placed on buildings (especially temples) have for their interpretation. A good example exploring the increasing interest in the questions of material and technique used in Greek sculpture and how these can be a decisive factor in the images’ final form is Luca Giuliani (2005). In this context, note e.g., also the work done in the past two decades on the specifics of bronze statuary, as opposed to marble sculpture. See e.g., Mattusch (1988; 1996; 2014). In the field of vase painting, the other pictorial medium dealt with in the present article, many of Lissarrague’s groundbreaking works undertake to show the relevance of the specific pictorial medium of the painted “vase” in various aspects: the contexts of use, the handling of vases, the circularity of the painted object, its two-sidedness, the various shapes of picture fields, and how all this affects the viewing of the pictures (see especially François Lissarrague [1987]). Of many articles see e.g., more recently Lissarrague (2009a ; 2009b). A more general tackling of the pictorial medium, as opposed to text, has also become a field of research in classical archaeology where the medium has proved to be a potent category of thought. For vase painting, such a perspective has yielded most interesting results in Giuliani (2003), on the formation and development of narrative iconography in Archaic and Classical Greek art, especially, though not only, in vase painting, or in Muth (2008), on violence in Attic vase painting, championing a medial perspective instead of a historicist reading of the developments between the early 6th and later 5th century BC.

³Although Attic vase painting has already received considerable attention in the wake of groundbreaking works by J. Beazley in the second third of 20th century, the principle aim has still been to study the history of Greek style in general, and hence to detach the pictures from the vases (medium). Arguably, the real turning point in scholarly interest in vase painting was Claude Bérard (1984), when the study of painted pots and cups finally emancipated itself from the larger pursuits of art history, and made way for at least two new perspectives, one more iconographical and semiotic (Bérard) and one more interested in the anthropology of the image (Lissarrague).

⁴Noteworthy are attempts since the 1970s to draw the history of Greek art/sculpture as far as possible from originals, and to keep Roman copies out of the frame, or at least to discriminate clearly between originals and copies. See e.g., Ridgway (1970; 1981) and Boardman (1985; 1995), with more confidence in Roman copies, but still making a clear distinction between originals and copies. Consistent in avoiding basing his approach on Roman copies is Osborne (1998). Interestingly, in more tradition-bound German scholarship on sculpture, this trend is much less prevalent (see e.g., the recent handbook on Greek sculpture Bol (2002-2010). See also an interesting attempt to base a discourse only on pictures for which we dispose of contextual information in the (very short) overview on Greek art Hölischer (2007).

these two categories of images, finally raising the question of whether medium is or is not a decisive factor in the spatiality of pictorial representation. Thus, I shall tackle a broad methodological issue through a fairly well defined case study. The conclusions drawn from this example will certainly not completely resolve the issue at hand – but they might help us question established beliefs on the presumed all-embracing relevance of the medium. In order to prevent a misunderstanding, I would immediately like to emphasize that my aim is not to plead *against* awareness of the medium in the study of Ancient Greek imagery, but rather to encourage scholars to look not only for differences in media, but also for analogies among-what are often very different-media for pictorial representation.

What is a figure?

One of the general features of Greek art that one might easily agree upon is the central place that devoted to the human figure. Inversely, “nature” and “landscape” as we know them from post-Renaissance European painting are strikingly missing in most Greek pictures, especially works of the Archaic and Classical period.⁵ Two very different Attic vases—an amphora from around 540 BC (fig. 1)⁶ and a lekythos from around 440 BC (fig. 2)⁷—provide an interesting commentary on these two assumptions regarding Greek art, both confirming them and, at the same time, raising critical questions. The amphora in Boston close to Exekias shows the God Dionysus sitting amidst a large vine. Twelve satyrs drawn on a smaller scale climb in the vine, occupied with the harvest, as the large baskets on the ground make the viewer understand. On looking at this picture brimming over with vegetation, it might seem difficult to uphold the assumption that nature had no place in Greek art. Inversely, the picture on the lekythos by the Achilles Painter in Munich features two feminine figures almost exclusively. One stands on the base line of the picture field; the other sits on a thin relief line. This line obviously denotes some kind of terrain elevation. One might imagine it to be rocky—but perhaps, there is no need to further specify this very minimal indication of “landscape.” The picture clearly does not invite the viewer to explore the exact nature of that terrain elevation: in contrast to the vines on the Boston amphora, this landscape element remains completely behind the figure. Significantly, the relief line

⁵This is a long-established view in Ancient art history, already apparent in Löwy (1900). The same claim is also made in more recent literature. See e.g., Hölscher (2003, p. 165). As a consequence, not many studies on landscape or landscape elements in Greek art exist. See e.g., Woermann (1876), Heinemann (1910), Pfuhl (1923, § 327), Bernert, Lorenz (1933), Elliger (1975, p. 3-8), Pfitzner (1937), Nelson (1976), Carroll-Spillecke (1985), Hurwit (1991), Chazalon (1995), Siebert (1996), Zaroni (1998), Hedreen (2001), Himmelmann (2005), LaRocca (2008), Dietrich (2010, p. 11-18).

⁶Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 63.952; Para 62, 317; close to Exekias; CVA Boston I, pl. 12:1-3; BA 350462. On this amphora as typical in depictions of nature in (pre-Hellenistic) Greek art: Hurwit (1991, p. 32). The following discussion of this picture is based on my analysis of Dionysus and vines in: Dietrich (2010, p. 71-79).

⁷Munich, Antikensammlung S 80; ARV 997:155, 1568, Para 438; Achilles Painter; CVA Munich XV, pl. 331:3, 341:4 and 35:2; BA 213977. The following discussion will partly repeat Dietrich (2010, p. 300-302). See also the recent work by Kunze-Götte (2009, p. 55-57).

extends only a few centimeters beyond the sitting figure, and then vanishes in the white ground of the vase, leaving unanswered all the questions which a viewer could potentially ask about the exact nature of that “landscape”: How are we to understand the passage from the uneven ground where the right figure is sitting to the base line on which the left figure is standing? How are we to reckon the limit at the right end of the picture field, where the minimally indicated rocky terrain “turns back into” the neutral white ground of the vase? The picture does not provide answers to these questions. The most straightforward conclusion to draw from this is that the viewer is not supposed to pose them.

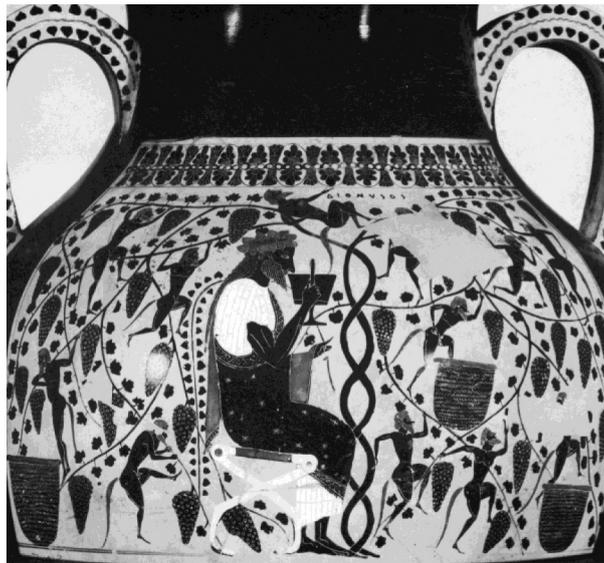


Figura 1: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 540 BC (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 63.952), with Dionysus amidst vines.

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Figura 2 A: Attic white-ground lekythos, ca. 440 BC (Munich, Antikensammlung S 80), with cithara-playing woman (a muse?) and the inscription "HAIKON" (*Helikon*).

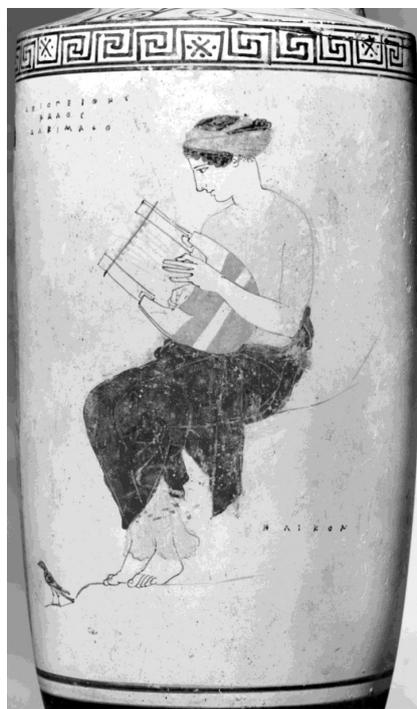


Figura 2 B

Thus, in one picture, the figures' natural environment receives special attention, and in another, younger by a century, that natural environment—though denoted by the thin relief line—seems largely irrelevant. How can we explain that difference? By the difference in context—the *symposion* for the amphora

and the funeral context for the lekythos? By the difference of date—later Archaic and High Classical? These two explanations can be easily ruled out: On *symposion* vases, relief lines are by no means more explicit in what landscape they actually depict than those on the Munich lekythos.⁸ Likewise, the phenomenon of sprigs covering all the available surface of the picture field may be found on all kinds of Attic Late Archaic black-figure vases, including vessels not linked to the *symposion*.⁹ Concerning the possible chronological explanation, there is the traditional idea found in older literature of a higher affinity to landscape in Late Archaic art under Ionic influence, contrasting with the more exclusive focus on the human figure found in Classical art, which would have acquitted itself from Oriental influence and become more truly “Greek.” Of course, this idea is a mere chimera. Aside from the obviously outdated ethnic argument intrinsic in it, this theory relies on very little evidence, consisting essentially of a small number of utterly overinterpreted pictures, as e.g., the famous Milesian Cup in the Louvre, the so-called “coupe à l’oiseleur.”¹⁰ Thus, context and chronology – the two standard ways for explaining difference in Classical Archaeology – will not help us here. Let us return, then, to our two vases, and more specifically to two inscriptions found on them, which will help us to pose the question even more clearly. Under the sitting figure on the Munich lekythos, an inscription reads “ΗΛΙΚΟΝ” [*helicon*], naming not a person as is usual, but a place/landscape, namely the famous mountain of the Muses, the Helicon.¹¹ Why do we find this very unique occurrence of a toponym in Attic vase painting on a picture whose only landscape element consists of the rudiments of a relief line? On the Boston amphora, we find the much less surprising inscription “ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ” [*dionysos*] (Dietrich 2010, p. 75-76). To name a figure through script already perfectly recognizable via iconography is most common in Attic vase painting, simply illustrating the practice of γράφειν, the drawing-writing of the Athenian painter-potters. Not the inscription’s wording, but its position within the picture field calls for further inquiry. Indeed, instead of being placed next to the figure of Dionysus as usual, the inscription is written beneath the framing ornamental band and right above the interlaced trunks of the vine, next to a climbing satyr (though the name does not refer to him). The practical reason for this unusual positioning of the name inscription is probably lack of space. If the inscription was added once the painting of the figures had been completed, there would have been no other free spot in a picture field densely

⁸On the relief lines’ general lack of an iconographical signification of their own, see Dietrich (2010, p. 245-253).
⁹On vine and ivy covering the picture field in late black-figure Attic vase painting, see Dietrich (2010, p. 177-230). For the present context, see especially Dietrich (2010, p. 198-199).

¹⁰Louvre F 68; CVA Louvre VIII, III He, pl. 78.3, 5 and 8; around 550 BC. See e.g., the comments on the Milesian cup in Heinemann (1910, p. 68-70, fig. 10). This idea is found as late as in Scheffold (1967, p. 39-41). For a refutation of the presumed Ionian origin of landscape depiction, see Nelson (1976, p. 23, nota 31), with further literature.

¹¹G. Hedreen uses this inscription as evidence for his general interpretation of landscape elements as depictions of specific localities. See Hedreen (2001, p. 183). As I shall show here, this misses the point. For a short overview on the uses of inscriptions on vases, see Osborne; Pappas (2007). For a comprehensive survey, see Immerwahr (1990). The most substantial contributions to the study of inscriptions on Greek vases are to be found in Lissarrague’s numerous publications on this topic. See e.g., Lissarrague (1985; 1987, p. 119-133; 1992; 1995; 1999a; 2013). See also Steiner (2007, p. 74-93), and Georg Gerleigner (forthcoming).

filled by vines and satyrs. Why then did the painter not simply renounce that pleonastic name inscription? The fact that the inscription was closer to the satyr than to Dionysus apparently did not worry the painter. But perhaps, it is even possible to find a positive reason for the placement.

On a contemporary amphora near the Princeton Painter, we also see Dionysus sitting surrounded by vines with small-scale satyrs climbing in the branches, though here, the vines do not grow from the ground. Dionysus is holding them in his hands (Dietrich, 2010, p. 77, fig. 56).¹² The vine here is understood as an attribute of the god, which includes the small-scale climbing satyrs. On another amphora by the Priam Painter with a picture very similar to that on the Boston amphora; the vines with climbing satyrs both grow from the ground *and* originate from Dionysus' hand (fig. 3) (Dietrich 2010, p. 70-73).¹³ Whether the vines grow from the ground on which Dionysus is sitting, or whether they grows directly from his hand, the pictures capture the same basic idea: they show Dionysus as the one who makes the gift of wine by causing the vines and grapes grow. Whether this idea is transmitted by making the vine an attribute he holds in his hands or not, the vine is an intrinsic part of the visualization of Dionysus as the god of wine. The conclusion to be drawn from this with regards to the Boston amphora is clear: the inscription "ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ" relates not only to the figure of Dionysus, but to the god *and* his gift. The figure of Dionysus and the vines growing at his feet constitute an inseparable unity, meaning that the name inscription placed on top of the interlaced trunks is very well positioned.

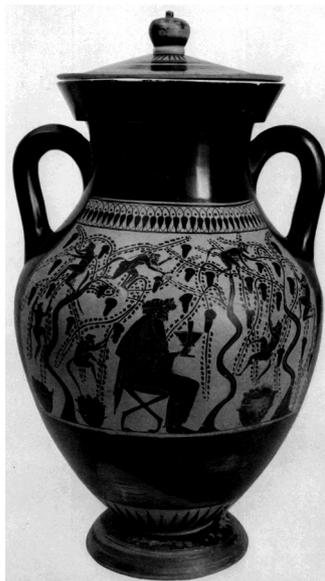


Figura 3: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520 BC (Rome, Villa Giulia 2609 (106463)), with Dionysus amidst vines growing both from the ground *and* from his hand.

¹²London, Market (Sotheby's 8-9.12.1986); around 540-530 BC; BA 16657.

¹³Rome, Villa Giulia 2609 (106463); Para 146.8ter; around 520 BC; BA 351080.

Thus, the rich representation of vines on the Boston amphora that had seemed to contradict the centrality of the human figure in Greek art by showing the painter's special attention to the natural environment proves to be another confirmation of that idea: the supposed natural environment turned out to be an extension of the principal figure, intrinsically bound to it. The vine's growth over the whole picture field makes manifest Dionysus' invasive presence on the vase.

However, by confirming the centrality of the human (or, in this case, divine) figure, this image forces us to rethink the very concept of a figure, and to ask whether it is possible to distinguish the figure completely from its environment. That question is intrinsically bound to the question of landscape in imagery, as can be seen in the history of landscape painting in Europe. Indeed, landscape painting initially developed from the backgrounds in pictures with Biblical or mythological subjects, gaining independence over time from such narrative content, until landscape finally became a subject matter in its own right.¹⁴ In European landscape painting, the fundamental distinction between surrounding space as an independent entity, on one hand, and the figures acting in that space, on the other, is a *condition sine qua non*. On our Boston amphora, however, if the figure of Dionysus were not included in the picture, the vines would lose their *raison d'être* and disappear as well!

What do we mean by "figure," then, and where shall we draw its boundaries? The human body is a well-defined entity, one might think: a torso, a head, two legs, and two arms—and innumerable Greek images made this entity their main or even exclusive subject matter, as e.g., the archaic *kouroi*. Even so, this human body can have "extensions." Comparing a Berlin Archaic Samian marble torso wearing a cuirass (fig. 4)¹⁵—one of the rare examples of *non-nude* archaic male statuary—with other, nude *kouroi*, it appears that the cuirass' ornamentation highlights precisely those anatomical features that receive special attention in depictions of nude male torsos: the protruding chest, the costal arch, the *linea alba*, and the naval.¹⁶ Instead of covering the torso, the cuirass reproduces it through ornamentation, conforming itself to the body. Certainly, the cuirass does not fuse itself completely to the body—there is no real danger of misreading it as a nude chest. By contrast, such a misreading is very likely to happen in the case of an archer's marble torso from about 470 BC discovered in the Athenian Acropolis (fig. 5) (Schrader, 1939).¹⁷ at least from the sight of the bare

¹⁴This very basic account of the development of independent landscape painting from earlier landscape backgrounds over the course of 16th and 17th centuries may be found in any handbook of European landscape painting. See e.g., Büttner (2006) for a much more complex and rich account.

¹⁵Berlin, Antikensammlung 1752 (other fragments still in Samos, Heraion depot II S 23. I 210); around 520-510 BC. See also Maderna-Lauter (2002, p. 265, fig. 351a-d), Blümel (1963, p. 45-46, fig. 112-115), Freyer-Schauenburg (1974, p. 158-162), Martini (1990, p. 61-63, fig. 18).

¹⁶Almost any nude *kouros* could be an example here, as a glance over the plates of Richter (1970) reveals. Admittedly, the structural similarity in how anatomy is depicted is less obvious in the more plastic modeling of the body of contemporaneous *kouroi* than in more linear depictions of earlier *kouroi* in the mid-6th century BC (see e.g., the *kouros* from the Ptoion at the museum of Thebes, inv. 3; Karanastassis [2002, p. fig. 254]).

¹⁷Athens, Acropolis Museum 599. On the statue's polychromy and its color reconstruction, see Brinkmann (2003) and Brinkmann; Scholl (2010, p. 149-153).

marble: Only the lower rim of the cuirass is depicted plastically. Elsewhere, the cuirass strictly conforms to the nude body.



Figura 4: Archaic torso of a cuirassed warrior, from Samos, ca. 520-510 BC (Berlin, Antikensammlung 1752)

The human body is a well-defined entity, one might think: a torso, a head, two legs, and two arms—and innumerable Greek images made this entity their main or even exclusive subject matter

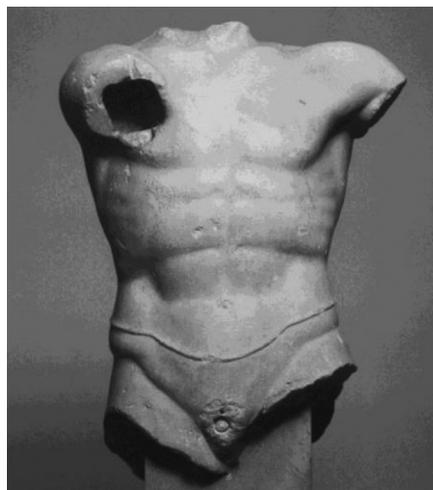


Figura 5: Early Classical torso of an archer, with a cuirass totally 'fused' to the body, from the Athenian Acropolis (Athens, Acropolis Museum 599), ca. 470 BC.

Painting made things unambiguous, as Brinkmann's color reconstruction shows. Still, the depiction of the armed male body accents the complete adherence of armor to body, and certainly not the dualism between the figure's *own* body and some *external* equipment. The cuirass' adherence to the body is especially well illustrated in some Attic vases from the Late Archaic period, at a time when painters started showing interest in detailing the rotation of the belly in transition from legs in profile to a frontal chest. Most surprisingly, this rotation is often depicted even when the figure is an armed hoplite wearing a cuirass. This is the case e.g., on a black-figure amphora in Rhodes which depicts Heracles fighting the Amazons (fig. 6).¹⁸ The lower part of the kneeling Amazon's cuirass is shown in profile, and the upper part from the front, as if her armor were elastic and clinging to the body. Here, the idea of body and armor as inseparable unit was apparently "stronger" than the practical impossibility of a stiff cuirass conforming to the body's movement. If nudity is a costume, then armor is "a nudity" (Bonfante, 1989)...



Figura 6: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520-500 BC (Rhodes, Archaeological Museum 301637), with Heracles fighting the Amazons. The cuirass of the kneeling Amazon is shown in profile in its lower part, and frontally in its upper part, as if it were an elastic garment clinging to her body.

These examples demonstrate that one cannot define a clear boundary between a figure's body and its armor.¹⁹ Heracles' iconic lion skin provides another example of an extension of the body that represents perfect symbiosis. In the figure of Heracles on the Euphronios Cup in Munich (fig. 7),²⁰ the lion skin is perfectly superimposed on the body, resulting in a doubling of the hero's head by the lion's. The unity of the body and its "second skin" evidently simultaneously contains an ethical dimension: the lion's ferocity, strength, and courage complement the hero's body in perfect correspondence.²¹

¹⁸Rhodes, Archaeological Museum 301637; ABV 315.5; Bucci Painter; CVA Rhodes I, III.H.e.3, III.H.e.4, pl. 41, 3; BA 301637. In later red-figure vases, even more complicated solutions for depicting the cuirass' rotation are found. See e.g., the cuirass of Menelaus on a cup by Douris around 480 BC in Paris (Louvre G 115; ARV 434.74, 1583, 1653, Para 375; Douris; see Buitron-Oliver (1995), pl. 71, nr. 119; BA 205119).

¹⁹Similar things could be said regarding the female body and clothing. On this, see Dietrich (forthcoming).

²⁰Munich, Antikensammlung 2620; ARV 1617, 1619, Para 322, 379; Euphronios; around 510-500 BC; BA 200080.

²¹On the complete superimposition of the lion skin on Heracles, see Lissarrague (1999b, p. 161-162).



Figura 7: Attic red-figure cup by Euphronios, ca. 510-500 BC (Munich, Antikensammlung 2620), Heracles fighting Geryon, with the lion skin doubling his head.

Because the adherence and symbiosis of the body with regards to its extensions in the figures of the hoplite or Heracles are so complete, the dissociation of the two are important enough to be depicted. This can explain why the scene of a hoplite putting on his armor, seen here on an amphora by the Amasis Painter in Boston, showing the mythical paradigm of this generic scene: Achilles receiving his arms from Thetis. (fig. 8),²² acquired enormous popularity in Attic vase painting.²³ Similarly, the great significance accorded to the lion skin and hanging arms in depictions of nude Heracles in agonistic fight as on the Euphronios krater in the Louvre²⁴ or on an amphora in Munich (fig. 9)²⁵ emerges from the tight cohesion of the hero's body and his "second skin": It is the cohesion of body and equipment that makes their separation worthy of such an ostentatious staging. In the case of the fighting, nude Heracles, the separation from his attributes emphasizes his agonistic nudity, as I have argued elsewhere (Dietrich, 2010, p. 327-334).²⁶

22 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 01.8027; ARV 152.27, 687, Para 63: Amasis Painter; CVA Boston I, pl. 271-2, 28.3; BA 310454.

23 A rather extensive literature exists regarding scenes in which warriors receive arms and depart for war. See e.g., Lissarrague (1984; 1990, p. 35-69), and Spieß (1992).

24 Paris, Louvre G 103; ARV 14.2, 1584, 1619, Para 322: Eurphronios; CVA Louvre I, III.lc.4, pl. 41-4, 51-3; around 510 BC; BA 200064.

25 Munich, Antikensammlung 1557; ABV 290.3: Painter of Boulogne 441; CVA Munich VIII, pl. 392.3, 395.1-2, 397.3; around 520-500 BC; BA 320344.

26 . Another example of an ostentatious and meaningful separation of the hero's body from his attributes/armor is the famous amphora of Exekias in Boulogne which shows Ajax preparing to commit suicide (Boulogne, Musée Communal 558; ABV 145.18, Para 60: Exekias; around 530 BC; BA 310400).



Figura 8: Attic black-figure amphora, ca 530-520 BC (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 01.8027), the arming of Achilles.



Figura 9: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520-500 BC (Munich, Antikensammlung 1557), Heracles and the Lion, the hero's attributes spread over the picture field.

While emphasizing the separation of the body from its equipment, the motive of weapons and armor/attributes set aside likewise has the effect of expanding the figure by filling the field more thoroughly with the hero. Extending the figure beyond its corporal limits is precisely the effect produced by the vines on the Boston amphora—a filling not in the traditional sense of *horror vacui*, but as a way of augmenting and intensifying Dionysus' presence on the vase. Many Dionysian figures—Dionysus himself, satyrs, maenads—extend themselves similarly through branches that literally emanate from their bodies and spread over

the picture field. The eyecup (fig. 10)²⁷ and the amphora (fig. 11)²⁸ present two examples of this *very* common phenomenon in later black-figure Attic vase painting. As I have shown elsewhere, these branches should be understood as climbing plants which cover in restless growth the vase's surface and indicate the real presence, life, and movement of the figures (Dietrich, 2010, p. 216-224). From the end of 6th century BC onwards, this method for making bodies “radiate” beyond their physical limits became generalized to any figure. This may be seen on a cup in the Paris’ Cabinet des Médailles that depicts Achilles pursuing the riding Troilos with branches indicating this action through the direction of their growth (fig. 12).²⁹ While it might strain some readers’ credulity to designate Heracles’ attributes as extensions of his body as I did above, this formulation very directly applies to the vines spreading across the picture field: they make manifest the painted bodies’ reach, their “cruising radius” on the surface of the vase.



Figura 10: Attic black-figure eye cup, ca. 530-520 BC (Munich, Antikensammlung 2052), with a dancing maenad holding vines.

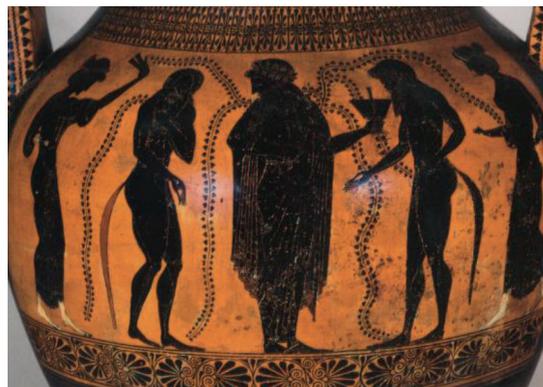


Figura 11: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520-510 BC by Psiax (Madrid, Museo Arqueologico Nacional 11008), Dionysus with satyrs and maenads, and ivy sprigs spreading from the central figure of the god all over the picture field.

27 Munich, Antikensammlung 2052; ABV 206.7, Para 95, 97; Group of Walters 48.42; CVA Munich XIII, pl. 241-8; around 530-520 BC; BA 302640.

28 Madrid, Museo Arqueologico Nacional 11008; ABV 253.1, 294.24, ARV 7.2, 1618, Para 128, 321; Psiax; CVA Madrid I, III He 8-9, pl. 23.1a-b, 241-2, 251-2, 261; around 520-510 BC; BA 200022.

29 Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 330; CVA Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France II, pl. 54.3-7; around 500-490 BC; BA 11356. See about this cup Dietrich (2010, p. 196-198). As an all-purpose depiction method no longer restricted to the Dionysian realm, these later branches most often lack any botanic specification.

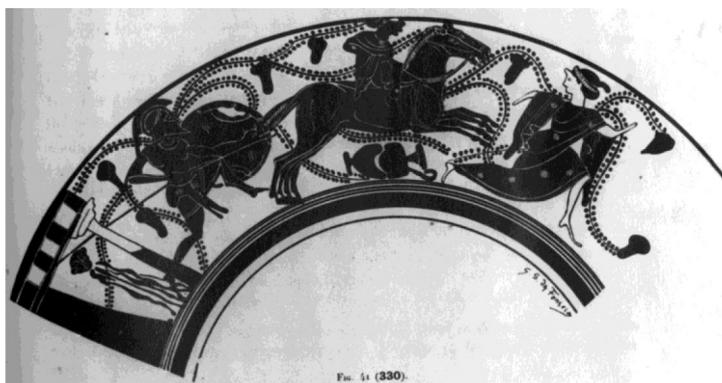


Figura 12: Attic black-figure cup, ca. 500-490 BC (Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 330), Achilles pursuing Troilos. Branches emphasize the movement and action by the direction of their growth.

Where shall we trace, then, the limits of the body? The physical body comprised of a torso, a head, two arms, and two legs is of course a well-defined entity—at least from a contemporary perspective.³⁰ But wouldn't we miss the hero's essence by reducing the figure to that physical body? His speed of movement, the reach of his power, the goal of his actions—aren't these equally essential elements of Achilles' painted body, i.e., of his figure? The "permeability" of the body, its susceptibility to taking on (what we call) attributes that enhance its power has been emphasized by J. P. Vernant, without referring to images specifically (Vernant, 1986; Hölscher, 2003, p. 167). We might say that the attributes of Heracles in fig. 9 are not limited to a means of identification, but also constitute an essential part of the hero's figuration as what he is. They make manifest his power; they indicate his unique way of fighting and his cunning; they conceal his history, or, in the case of his seemingly insignificant, but rarely missing (woven) clothing, emphasize his provenance from the civilized world.³¹

Whatever use one might make of the word "body" in describing Greek images, the essential argument of this article's inquiry into the relationship of figure and space, and indeed more specifically into the issue of "landscape," as we shall see, is that the human figure cannot be reduced to the body in its physiological form. Rather, it expands beyond the spatial unity of a torso, a head, two arms, and two legs. The figure is at once a contained body and containing space, or put differently, there is no fundamental dualism between figure and space in Attic vase painting. This proves most crucial in the question of "landscape." Indeed, an essential (though not, of course, the only) element of the

³⁰We might recall here that in early Ancient Greek language, the physical body is not a clearly defined entity and unity. Indeed, the word *σῶμα* (*soma*) comprising the physical body as a whole is used in Homer to designate the dead body only (see LSJ), whereas the living body is typically referred to by its most characteristic parts and not as a single organic unit. On this Homeric concept of the body, see Snell (1975, p. 13-29), especially p. 16. On how this can matter to the interpretation of early Greek imagery, see Himmelmann (1964), or recently Haug (2012, p. 503-529), especially p. 503-504.

³¹Among the vast number of studies which deal more or less directly with this subject matter and which cannot be listed exhaustively in any case, I would like to mention only the work of F. Lissarrague more closely linked to what has been said here. On the intimate and complex relationship of single heroes to their very particular arms or other equipments in the imagery of Attic vases, see especially Lissarrague (1980; 2007; 2008).

aesthetics of European landscape painting³² arises from the tension between ideological projections of man, on the one side, capable of action, but ultimately impotent and subjected to time, and his natural environment, one the other, inalterable and infinite (or even divine).

This dualism is missing from the Munich Lekythos by the Achilles Painter (fig. 2). To say that the woman *is on Mount Helikon*, as if they were with two distinct matters, a figure and a surrounding space, would be nonsense: by removing the figure from the picture, the “Mount Helikon” would be reduced to a tiny line, and nothing would be left over for the toponym inscription to designate.³³ The “HAIKON” named by the inscription has substance only in the woman sitting on the relief line, playing the cithara and thereby assimilated to the Muses of the Helikon. It is the figure of the cithara-playing woman that introduces the Helikon on the lekythos, just as it is the figure of Dionysus that introduced the vine on the Boston amphora (fig. 1). The figures’ capacity, on Attic vases, to expand beyond the limits of their physical body can go as far as to integrate “landscape” into representations of themselves.

Interestingly, there is a correspondence between the transgression in the limits of the physical body as well-defined spatial entity by the figure, on the one hand, and the *spatial limitation* of landscape elements in Attic vase painting, on the other. A couple examples might illustrate this. Late Archaic pictures of the punishment of Sisyphus depict the mountain up which he is condemned to roll his rock as no more than a rocky pillar, as we see on several black-figure Attic vases.³⁴ Even the infinite sea—the πόντος ἀπείρων—is treated in Attic vase painting as an object of limited expanse, as exemplified by an amphora in Mannheim where a ship sails literally on a “segment” of sea, bent down to the ground line on either side (fig. 13).³⁵ On a *skyphos* in Naples, the rocky ground on which Heracles reclines, a solitary banqueter, does not extend any further than the hero’s body (fig. 14).³⁶ Rather, the landscape remains within the spatial range and dimension of the figure. The last example points to the reason for that rule: The rocky ground on which Heracles reclines is an integral part of the hero’s depiction in that abnormal situation of the solitary banquet, emphasizing a perversion of the cultural institution of the *collective* gathering by substituting the built cline by with “raw” rock. As a mere cline substitute, the rock loses its *raison d’être* in places where it does not support the hero’s body. Thus it does not extend further, even though one might well imagine Heracles in a rocky landscape. This functional economy of the landscape element, strictly

³²The famous canvass by German romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich, “Mönch am Meer [Moonrise Over The Sea]” might stand for a (certainly quite extreme) example for this.

³³Contra: Hedreen (2001, p. 183).

³⁴See e.g., the *amphora* of the Acheloos Painter in Munich (Antikensammlung 1549; ABV 38312, Para 168; CVA Munich IX, pl. 12.3, 15.1-2, 17.5; around 510-500 BC; BA 302405). On the punishment of Sisyphus in Attic vase painting, see LIMC VII, p. 783-784, Sisyphos I 5-19; Dietrich (2010, p. 35-37).

³⁵Reiss-Museum Cg 343; CVA Mannheim II, pl. 6-7; around 520-510; BA 11. On the depiction of the sea, see Kunisch (1989, p. 64-70) e Dietrich (2010, p. 22-33).

³⁶Naples, Museo Nazionale 81154; ABL 2496; CVA Naples I, III, He 21, pl. 46.3-5; around 500-490 BC; 306782.

bound to the purpose it fulfills for the respective figure, be it a whole ship or single body, is generally prevalent(Dietrich 2010, p. 39-69, 327-365).



Figura 13 A: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520-510 BC (Reiss-Museum Cg 343), a ship sailing on well-delimited 'stripe of water'.

Indeed, an essential (though not, of course, the only) element of the aesthetics of European landscape painting arises from the tension between ideological projections of man, on the one side, capable of action, but ultimately impotent and subjected to time, and his natural environment, one the other, inalterable and infinite (or even divine)



Figura 13 B



Figura 13 C

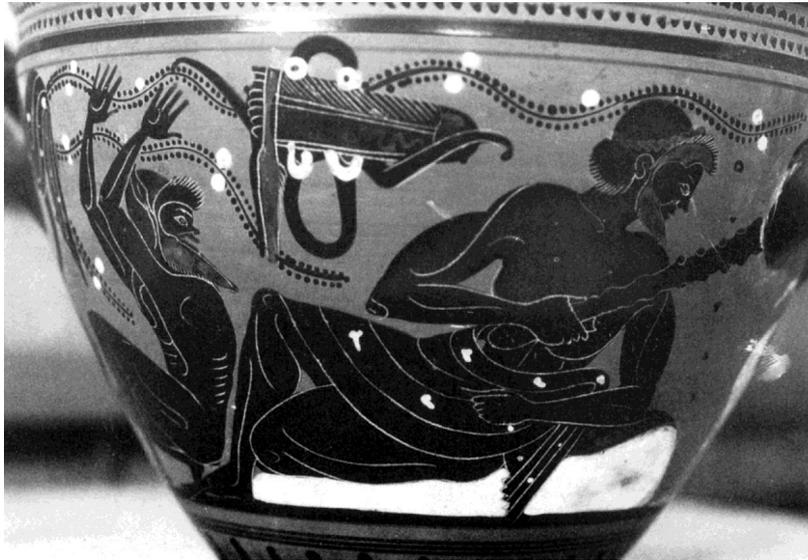


Figura 14: Attic black-figure skyphos, ca. 500-490 BC (Naples, Museo Nazionale 81154), with Heracles reclining on a stripe of rocky ground well-fitted to the length of his body.

To sum up, it emerges that the figure can expand beyond the limits of the body, or differently put, that the body in its representation is not limited physiologically to the body. The transition between the body, its extensions, and the spatial context is continuous. Although we have yet looked only at vase paintings in order to reach this conclusion, one might be inclined to think this true regarding the body in Archaic and Classical Greek imagery in general. But the increased awareness of differences of pictorial medium in current archaeological methodology cautions us against taking this for granted. However, a look at Greek architectural sculpture indeed reveals that we do not deal here with a trait specific to vase painting, but that in this very different pictorial medium, the modern duality between the figures and their spatial context is lacking just as much as it is in vase painting.



Figura 15 A: Helios emerging from the sea with his chariot, from the left corner of the eastern pediment of the Parthenon (London, British Museum).



Figura 15 B

This is particularly obvious, e.g., with the figure of Helios emerging from the sea in his chariot, in the left corner of the eastern pediment of the Parthenon (fig. 15) (Brommer, 1963, p. 3-4, 148; Palagia, 1993, p. 19; Erhardt, 2004).³⁷ Only the heads of the god and his horses appear above the surface of the water. The statue's plinth is covered with small waves, depicted in a more graphic than plastic mode, denoting the sea from which Helios emerges. These schematic waves run around the sculpture, but do not extend further into the surrounding space. The "sea" can thus literally be equated to a plinth supporting the sculpture, in a way quite similar to what we find in Attic vase painting, with a ship sailing on clearly delimited "segment of sea" (fig. 13).³⁸ The landscape element is a part of the depiction of Helios and intrinsically tied to him. Likewise other landscape elements found in the sculptural decoration of the Parthenon have close parallels in Attic vase painting (Brommer, 1977, p. 100-101). Take e.g., the *epebe* restraining a bull gone wild on the Parthenon frieze (fig. 16).³⁹ The small rock on which he sets his foot in order to have a better grip on the ground corresponds exactly in form and function to the rock in the Marathonian bull scene on the contemporaneous cup by the Kodros Painter depicting the deeds of Theseus (fig. 17).⁴⁰ Such a close

³⁷The complete bibliography on Parthenon sculptures is, of course, very large and cannot be summarized here. For a concisely commented bibliography, see Rolley (1999, p. 55-56) or Bol (2004, p. 509). The best presentation of the material remains of sculptural decoration remain the systematic publications of Brommer (1963; 1967; 1977).

³⁸See e.g., Reiss-Museum Cg 343; CVA Mannheim II, pl. 6-7; ca. 520-510 a.C.; BA 11. A contemporaneous lekythos in Berlin with Charon's bark "swimming in" - or better "standing on" a rectangular "piece of water" provides an even closer parallel (Antikensammlung F 2681; ARV 1385.2; CVA Berlin VIII, pl. 34 and fig. 7 (drawing); around 420-410 BC; BA 217828. See Dietrich (2010, p. 26).

³⁹South frieze, slab XXXIX (or XLIII). On youths restraining bulls depicted on the Parthenon frieze, see Jenkins (1994, p. 73) e Ellinghaus (2011, p. 125).

⁴⁰British Museum E 84; ARV 1269.4; around 440-420 BC; BA 217213. On this cup's landscape elements, see Dietrich (2010, p. 416-419).

relationship to figures in their specific stance is typical for all the fairly numerous rocks appearing on the Parthenon frieze.⁴¹ We find it in the bull-restraining scene not because this particular scene takes place in a more rocky space, but because it is needed for the specific attitude taken by the ephebe: It is a part of the *mise-en-scène* of his body in action and not part of an independent landscape.⁴² More emphatically, this applies to rocks on which figures defeated in fight are falling—another typical occurrence of rocks (Dietrich 2010, p. 393-404), both in vase painting and in architectural sculpture, as seen on South Metope 30 of the Parthenon (fig. 18) (Brommer, 1967, p. 124-125; Ellinghaus, 2011, p. 55-56), or on a roughly contemporaneous Attic cup in Florence (fig. 19).⁴³ The rock upon which he is falling is an integral part, one might say, of the dying figure's embodiment.



Figura 16: An Athenian youth holding back a bull in the sacrificial procession of the Parthenon south frieze (slab XXXIX – London, British Museum). In doing this, he sets one foot on a small rocky elevation.



Figura 17: Attic red-figure cup, ca. 440-420 BC (London, British Museum E 84), with the deeds of Theseus. The hero's stance with a foot set on a rock in the Marathonian Bull-scene closely corresponds to fig. 16.

⁴¹Other rocks appear especially (but not only) on the western frieze. These rocks are closely linked to the figures' specific actions, responding to some very down-to-earth needs of a higher spot to place a foot. See e.g., Jenkins (1994, p. 88, 106-107, 110-111).

⁴²For this function of rocks and relief lines in contemporary Attic vase painting, see Dietrich (2010, p. 480-506). A different interpretation of the rocks on the Parthenon frieze is found in Fehl (1961), interpreting the rocks as topographical indications. For discussion, see Jenkins (1994, p. 26-28).

⁴³Museo Archeologico 3909; ARV 943.59, Para 432: painter of London E 777; CVA Florence IV, III.14-15, pl. 141; around 460-450 BC; BA 212705.

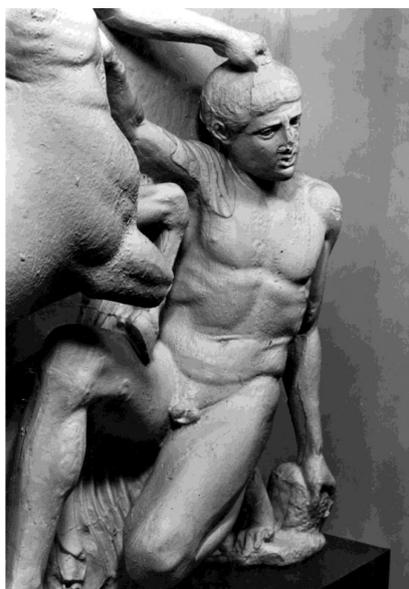


Figura 18: Metope of the Parthenon (South XXX - London, British Museum, from plaster cast) with a centaur and a Lapith fighting. The defeated Lapith fell on a small rock.



Figura 19: Tondo of an Attic red-figure cup, ca. 460-450 BC (Florence, Museo Archeologico 3909), with fighting warriors. Just as on fig. 18, the defeated fell on a rock.

As a general rule, the morphological and functional typology of rocks with their close correspondence to figures' needs and actions is very similar in the sculptural décor of architecture and in the painted décor of vases. This is best seen in a diachronic perspective. Rocks on the ground are still very rare in vase painting before the end of 6th century BC. Nor do we find them in architectural sculpture. When rocks start to occur in architectural relief, these often bear very close parallels in contemporary vase painting. This is the case with the rock on which Athena is sitting on the Olympia metope with the Stymphalian birds (fig. 20) (Hamiaux, 2001, p. 115-117).⁴⁴ One encounters

⁴⁴The larger part of this 3rd eastern metope (with the rock) is now in the Louvre (inv. Ma 171a-c). For a recent discussion of the sculptural decoration of the Temple of Zeus as a whole, see Kaminski (2004), with more extensive bibliography on p. 500-501.

the same peculiar morphology of rocks regularly in the contemporary oeuvre of the Villa Giulia Painter, as e.g., on a hydria with Apollo and the Muses in the Vatican (fig. 21) (Dietrich, 2010, p. 47-50).⁴⁵ The morphology of these rocks is obviously fitted to a specific sitting position with one arm set back in support of the body, confirming thus the rule of the functionality of landscape elements for staging figures. While such isolated rocks are frequently found in Attic vase painting from the first half of 5th century, a generalized rocky ground appears only beginning in the second half of 5th century.⁴⁶ It is in that same epoch that we find generalized rocky ground in architectural sculpture too, as e.g., in the friezes of the Hephaisteion (Bockelberg, 1979; Rolley, 1999, p. 107, fig. 94-95; Knell, 1990, p. 127-139, fig. 209-214), or in the combat scene on the western frieze of the Temple of Athena Nike in Athens (Rolley, 1999, p. 109-111; Knell, 1990, p. 140-149, fig. 222-224). The remains of a High Classical Greek pediment group from the Temple of Apollo Sosianus in Rome with an amazonmachy provides another good example (La Rocca, 1985). Both in vase painting and in architectural sculpture, such irregular ground allows the painter to diversify figures' stances and attitudes and thus to intensify the battles' dramatic tension.⁴⁷

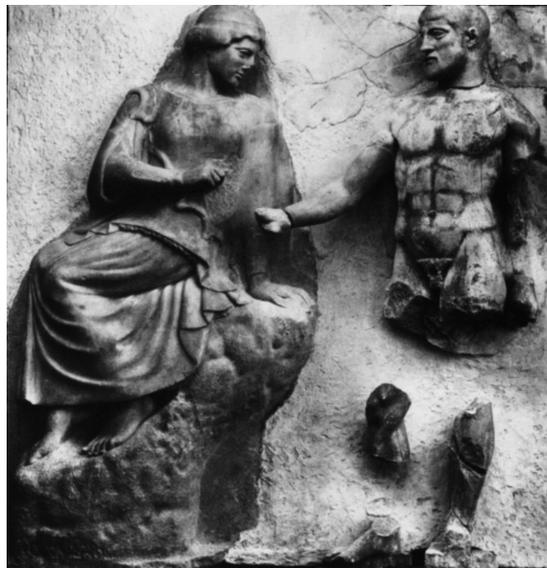


Figura 20: Olympia metope East III (plaster cast); Heracles hands over the Stymphalian Birds to Athena, sitting on a rock. Its peculiar form has closes parallels in contemporary Attic vase painting.

⁴⁵ Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 16506; ARV 623.70; around 460-450 BC; BA 207224.

⁴⁶ See e.g., a dinos with an amazonmachy in London (British Museum 1899.7.21.5; ARV 1052.29: group of Polygnotos; CVA London VI, III.Ic.11, pl. 1031a-d; around 440-430 BC; BA 213658). Such representations of rocky ground though remain very rare in vase painting. Instead, vase painters prefer to use relief lines for the purpose of placing figures on uneven ground.

⁴⁷ A good example for this in Attic vase painting is the lekythos of the Eretria-painter in New York (Metropolitan Museum 31.11.13; ARV 1248.9, 1688, Para 469; around 420 BC; BA 216945. See the plates in Richter, (1936).



Figura 21: Attic red-figure hydria , ca. 460-450 BC (Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 16506), with Apollo and the Muses. One is sitting on a rock closely related to the rock on Olympia metope east III (fig. 20).

There cannot be any doubt that this development of depictions of landscape elements in relation to the figures happened simultaneously in Attic vase painting and architectural sculpture. This is a most remarkable fact. In European post-Renaissance art, any attempt to draw a parallel between landscape depiction in sculpture and painting would be absurd. Concerning landscape depiction, panel painting as *depiction of spaces* (with or without figures) would outclass sculpture as *depiction of isolated figure* (in space) in any case. This intrinsic logic of the medium does not apply to Archaic and Classical Greece. That said, we have to emphasize here that vase painting is not totally equivalent to panel painting, nor is architectural (mostly relief-)sculpture equivalent to sculpture in the round. Checking the validity of this parallel with sculpture in the round from 5th century BC is considerably more complicated than doing so with architectural sculpture. The main reason for this is that most of our knowledge of Classical Greek sculpture in the round relies on Roman copies, and it is exactly with objects surrounding the figure like tree trunks or rocks that these copies are least reliable.⁴⁸ This methodological difficulty linked to the structure of available archaeological evidence cannot, however, invalidate our argument. Indeed, in contrast to much more “painterly” Renaissance relief, it has long been observed that pre-Hellenistic relief sculpture, essentially restricted to the depiction of interacting figures, is much more similar to sculpture in the round than it is to panel painting. In the case of pediments, both options of a sculptural decoration—relief and sculpture in the round—exist side by side: the first being chosen for smaller, the latter for larger structures. This is a direct reflection of the basic equivalency of relief-sculpture and sculpture. Thus, our observations regarding architectural relief sculpture are likely to provide a reasonably good approximation of what we could envisage, concerning the relationship of figure and space, for Classical sculpture as a whole.

What to do with this surprising parallel between two most different pictorial media—vase painting and sculpture? What could be called the spatiality of the figure, able to contain landscape elements, applies as much to the Helios figure from the Parthenon’s eastern pediment containing the sea from which the god emerges, as it does to the figure of Dionysus on the Boston amphora which

⁴⁸Such objects were indeed often added as structural support to the figures by Roman sculptors who copied bronze statuary in much more fragile marble. Thus, where such objects surrounding the figures are found in Roman copies of Greek originals, we do not know whether these were added by the copier or whether they existed in the original.

includes the vines that surrounding him. This obviously suggests that including landscape elements in the portrayal of the figure belongs to a more general, culturally determined concept of the image, applied to any pictorial medium. In other words, the spatiality of the figure belongs to a specific Archaic and Classical Greek anthropology of the image. I will explore this more closely at the end of the article. Though in the meanwhile, after the lengthy study of a seemingly obvious question to understand what a figure is, I will turn to a (shorter) study of the complementary question of knowing what pictorial *space* might be.

What is pictorial space?

When discussing space in architectural sculpture, it would be absurd to refer exclusively to the spatiality of the figure described heretofore, i.e., to the space included as part of the figures. Indeed, for Helios discussed above (fig. 15), another space much more apparent and more determining of the picture's general structure exists. This is the material space of the architectonic frame. If the space of the flat pediment triangle, poorly adapted to figural decoration, had not been imposed on the figures, the God Helios would never have been depicted in this rather extreme manner, with only his head and shoulders emerging from the sea.⁴⁹ What therefore is the relationship between the material space of the pediment triangle, externally imposed on the figures, and that space included in the figure's depiction as Helios' sea or Mount Olympus in the central scene of Athena's birth?

There cannot be any doubt that this development of depictions of landscape elements in relation to the figures happened simultaneously in Attic vase painting and architectural sculpture

Before starting to complicate the problem, an initial simple statement can be made with full confidence: despite the very immediate consequences that the very inconvenient frame of the flat pediment triangle⁵⁰ has on the structure and composition of the figural scene within, this externally imposed material space has no intrinsic iconographic meaning. The sculptor(s) did not try to convey that the birth of Athena took place in a temple pediment, but rather tried to include the scene in the most convincing manner into the "impossible" frame of the temple pediment.

⁴⁹As a matter of fact, where the figure of Helios appears on the more convenient rectangular frame of Parthenon East metope 14, the god's body is fully depicted. On this metope see most recently Schwab (2009).

⁵⁰"The pediment is an unhappy shape into which to force figure sculpture." (Boardman, 1978, p. 152)

The crucial point here is that this material frame, albeit bare of any iconic value—Helios is emerging from the sea and *not* from the temple entablature—is nevertheless not at all irrelevant to the image, nor is it ignored by the figures in their actions. I explain myself. A landscape by Claude Lorraine may continue beyond the canvas' frame, as if the picture's material space did not exist. The pictorial space of the painted landscape and the material frame have differing ontological statuses. Even where the painted canvas and its wooden frame touch, there is no point of contact between the landscape's pictorial space and its material frame/space. In the case of the Parthenon pediments, the relationship between the figural scene and its material space is inherently different. This is best seen in the opposite corner of the same pediment, where Selene's chariot sinks into the sea (fig. 22) (Brommer, 1963, p. 22-26, 156-157). One of her horses has turned his head to the right, in a way to project slightly out of the pediment's enclosed triangle, and—most notably—in a way to reach with his muzzle quite conspicuously *under* the level of the pediment's base. According to the logic of pictorial space, his muzzle should not be visible beneath ground level. The simple reason why, in this case, the muzzle remains visible down to the tip of its nose is that the material obstacle of the pediment's base is not there. Thus, in contrast to post-Renaissance perspectival painting with its infinite pictorial space "enclosed" in the picture's finite material frame, the "ground" in this picture is *not* virtually extended beyond the material frame. Instead, the "ground" corresponds exactly to the surface which the pediment provides to the disposition of the figures. The material frame of the pediment and the space of the figures are simply identical.



Figura 22 A: Head of one of Selene's horses, sinking into the sea in the Parthenon eastern pediment's right corner (London, British Museum AN 254914). Although it should correspond to "sea level," the horse's muzzle reaches conspicuously under the level of the pediment's base.



Figura 22 B

The Temple of Aphaia in Aigina provides a perfect example of material space and the figure's space as identical. The dying warrior in the left corner of the eastern pediment who tries in vain to get up again is about to literally fall out of the architectonic frame (fig. 23) (Ohly, 1976, p. 111-113; Dietrich, 2010, p. 125-126). By simulating the imminent fall of the defeated warrior from the pediment triangle, the sculptor uses the high position of the pediment figures for figurative ends. Another example directly taking into account the figures' position within the decorated architecture in order to enhance the dramatic power of the picture is the Stoa Basil on the Athenian Agora. As Pausanias tells us, the fight between Theseus and Skiron and the abduction of Cephalus by the winged goddess Eos decorated the roof of this early 5th century architecture as acroteria on either side: Theseus throws Skiron down from this roof just as he threw him from the cliff in the mythological account, and Eos holds the handsome Cephalus high above the viewer as she carries him off through the skies (Camp, 1986, p. 51-54; Camp; Mauzy, 2009, p. 17-18).⁵¹ The Atlas Metope of the Temple of Zeus in Olympia reveals a different way of using the (non-figurative) architectonic context for figurative ends (fig. 24) (Kaminski, 2004, fig. 44a).⁵² The Heavens' vault that Heracles carries on his shoulders is substantiated by the temple roof. A marble roof is indeed of truly enormous weight, and in this sense, a most efficient substitute for the Heavens' vault. But, the sculptor did not attempt to make the viewer believe that this roof really *is* the Heavens' vault! He did not *visualize* the mythological episode by virtually transposing the figures into the landscape of Mount Atlas. We might rather say that the sculptor *put into effect* Heracles' deed in the architectonic (and not-figurative) space of the temple. That Heracles stands in a temple metope is thus to be taken literally: it is not only a correct description of the temple as a decorated architecture, but also a valid description of the picture! A pictorial space that would detach the figures from their material space does not exist.

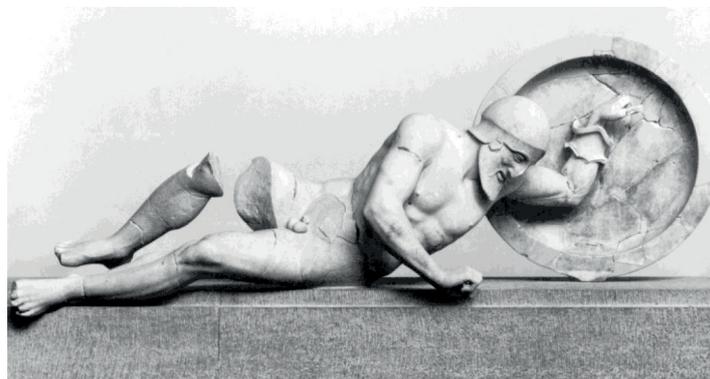


Figura 23: Figure from left corner of the eastern pediment of the Aphaia Temple in Aigina (Munich, Glyptothek). While trying in vain to rise up again, the dying warrior is about to literally fall out of the pediment triangle.

⁵¹See Pausanias I.31-2.

⁵²For further literature on the Temple of Zeus, see above note 51. For an interesting discussion of this metope in the context of similar phenomena in vase painting, see Martens (1992, p. 45-55).

Returning to our initial question of ascertaining the exact nature of the relationship between the (space of the) sea from which the Helios on the Parthenon emerges, and the (space of the) pediment from which he emerges (fig. 15), there is a clear answer. Helios appears from the pediment base. And these marble blocks *do not* run through the process of figurative metamorphosis that would turn them into the sea. They remain what they are: part of a temple pediment. Correspondingly, the event taking place in that pediment remains what it is, as well: the emergence of Helios from the Ocean, the depiction of the sea included in the figure of the god himself. The pictorial space of the image is identical to that of its architectonic frame, which does not bestow upon it, however, any iconographic signification. Simply put: there is no pictorial space mediating between the figures and their material frame.

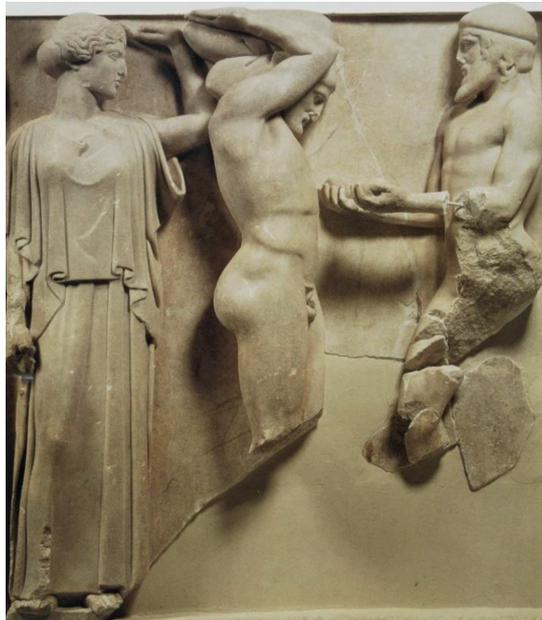


Figura 24: Olympia east metope IV (plaster cast); Atlas brings the Hesperides' apples to Heracles who is holding up the firmament with Athena's help. The temple's marble roof functions as a substitute for the firmament.

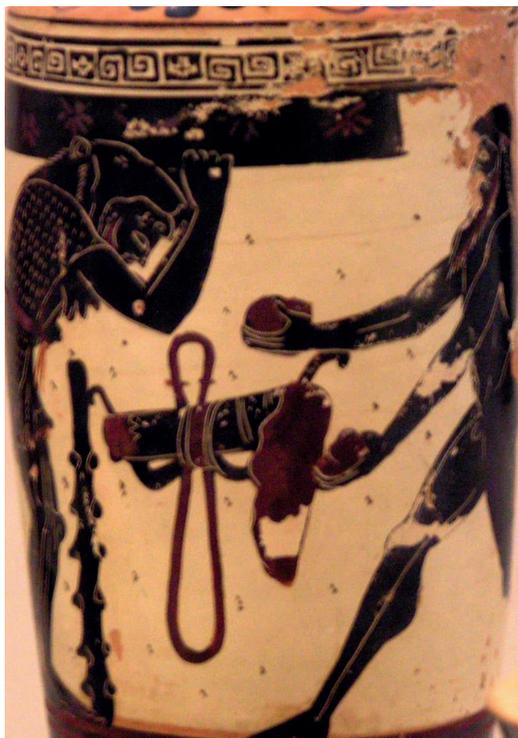


Figura 25: Attic black-figure lekythos, ca. 490-480 BC (Athens, National Museum 1132), with Heracles and Atlas. Just as on the Olympia metope, the picture field's "ceiling" functions as a substitute for the vault of the Heavens. Stars were painted on the architrave Heracles holds up.

Concerning this conceptualization of space, architectural sculpture provides a good model for describing the relationship of the figures to their material frame in vase painting as well (Dietrich, 2010, p. 114-137). On a lekythos by the Athena Painter, Heracles holds up an architrave covered with stars as a substitute for the Heavens' vault (fig. 25).⁵³ This depiction of the Atlas story thus adheres to the same idea as the Olympia metope: The picture field of the lekythos is interpreted as an architectonic frame whose "ceiling" is sustained by Heracles. It is easy to find in Attic vase painting other examples to support this architectonic reading of decorated vessels.⁵⁴ Frequently, painted frames in the picture field are interpreted as solid walls, as e.g., on the famous Exekias Amphora in the Vatican, where the heros' weapons lean against the border of the picture field.⁵⁵ However, these lateral "walls" do not have any iconographic significance, unless we assume that Achilles and Ajax throw the dice inside a

⁵³Athens, National Museum 1132; ABV 522, ABL 256.50; around 490-480; BA 330739. See with regards to this lekythos Dietrich (2010, p. 581, nota 191).

⁵⁴Another obvious case where the shoulder of a lekythos functions as the ceiling of the picture field is a one with Pholus and another centaur standing around the pithos (Palermo, Collezione Mormino 676; CVA Palermo, Collezione Mormino I, III.H.7, pl. 8.2-4; beginning of 5th century BC (Gela painter); BA 3050). Three columns sustain the upper limit of the picture field, as if it was a piece of entablature—and these columns have, of course, nothing to do with Pholus' cave where the wine pithos is. For a more detailed account, see Dietrich (2010, p. 103-104).

⁵⁵Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 16757; ABV 145.13, 672.3, 686, Para 60; Exekias; around 540 BC; BA 310395. On this and similar depictions of objects leaning against the "side walls" of the picture field, see Dietrich (2010, p. 115-119).

closed box. The same is true in the case of the lekythos: Heracles' deed consists of sustaining the Heavens' vault and not the shoulder of the vase—but this deed is *put into effect* within the space that the lekythos concedes to the figures. Even for the dying warrior about to fall from the pediment triangle of the Aphaia Temple, we find a direct parallel in Attic vase painting. On a mid-5th century crater with an amazonomachy, an Amazon struck dead by a Greek's spear is about to fall out of the picture field as if she made a false step and “missed” the base line of the picture field (fig. 26).⁵⁶ This vase is all the more revealing as the painter makes use of relief lines, thus breaking the (previously) necessary bond of the figures to the picture's base line. One might be inclined to think that this detachment from the base line would co-occur with a detachment from the material frame of the vase, and lead to the emergence of the concept of an autonomous pictorial space. But the fact that the figures can still literally “fall out of the image” shows that the picture field remains an essentially finite space, defined and delimited by the architecture of the vase. In this, the picture field on the vase is perfectly comparable to a sculpted metope, pediment or frieze in monumental architecture.



Figura 26: Attic red-figure crater, ca. 450 BC (Metropolitan Museum 07286.84), with an amazonomachy. One Amazon deadly wounded by a Greek's spear is about to fall out of the picture field, just as the dying warrior in the Aigina east pediment (fig. 23)

Conclusion

In the two sections of this article, the seemingly self-evident, complementary concepts of figure and (pictorial) space underwent a critical inquiry. I addressed consecutively the two pictorial media best preserved in our material record from Greek culture of the 6th and 5th century: Attic vase painting and architectural sculpture. Unlike what one might expect from these two quite different media, several analogies prevailed. In both cases, the figure comprises more than the body in its physiological definition. Whether by clothing, armor, or attributes held in the figure's hands or displayed in the picture field, the body

⁵⁶Metropolitan Museum 07286.84; ARV 6131, 1662, Para 397: Painter of the Woolly Satyrs; around 450 BC; BA 207099.

can be extended beyond its presumed limits.⁵⁷ No categorical opposition as between (contained) object and (containing) space exists between the figure and its surrounding space. Rather, there is a continuous transition. Indeed, the surrounding space can even be an intrinsic part of the figure, as in the case of Dionysus in Late Archaic Attic vase painting surrounded by vines that literally originate in and grow from his body, or as in the case of the emerging Helios in the Parthenon's eastern pediment, where the sea is an intrinsic part of the figure.

To this spatial dimension of the figure able to impress "his" space onto his surroundings in the picture field corresponds the non-figurative quality of the picture's space as a whole. The material core of the picture does not negate itself in favor of an illusionistic pictorial space. The figurative metamorphosis that transforms the painted pattern on the vase or the sculpted marble on the temple into a figure *does not* occur to the picture's material frame: the pediment triangle remains a pediment triangle. One might object that the same is true for the frame of a canvas. What makes the crucial difference here is that, in contrast to the canvas' frame, the framing features of the picture field in Attic vase painting or architectural sculpture remain within the reach of the figures. Objects can lean against the lateral "walls" of the picture field of a painted vase. Heracles can hold up the metope's "ceiling" instead of the Heavens' vault. Figures can even literally fall out of the picture field. The figures stand and act within their material, non-figurative space without the intermediary of pictorial space. They are literally "on the vase," "in the metope," "on the frieze" or "in the pediment."

A parallel study of the painterly medium of decorated Attic vases and of the sculptural medium in the figural decoration of monumental architecture has revealed an essential analogy in the relationship of figure to space. What shall we do with this outcome? It should be clear that this does not completely rule out the possibility of difference induced by the medium. There is no doubt that a study with another focus could have pointed out differences in the rendering of landscape elements in the two pictorial media. This study only shows that putting the focus solely on differences in pictorial media would have failed to acknowledge the common principles found here with regards to figure and space in different media. Analogies beyond media difference argue nevertheless for assuming some common ground in the manifold varieties of Greek images. Indeed, it seems likely that these analogies point to a more general characteristic of images in this specific cultural-historical context. What has been discovered has to do, I claim, with a fundamental determination of what an image was in Greece in the 6th and 5th centuries BC. Simply put, this could be formulated the following way: the pictorial *mimesis* does not provide a

⁵⁷The body's transgression of its physiological limits and the inclusion of clothes and attributes in its pictorial representation might be relevant for the history of the body, a prominent subject in more recent scholarship. Especially, this could help us rethink some basic assumptions about nudity, such as the standard antitheses of male nudity as opposed to female costume (see e.g., recently Haug [2012, p. 504-511], with many important observations on the early distinction of nudity and costume, though with a different interpretation), or Greek nudity as opposed to Roman costume (see e.g., the interesting, but rather dichotomist remarks in Meister [2012, p. 23-27, 47-51]; for an account of Greek nudity and Roman clothing more focused on ambiguity, see Squire [2013]).

view onto figures in an illusionary space distinct from the viewer's space, but rather makes these figures present within the viewer's space: on the vase, on the temple, or—this might be conjectured for freestanding statues, a category of images not studied here—in the public space of the sanctuary, of the necropolis or the agora (Dietrich, 2010, p. 543-546, 551-553).⁵⁸ This emphasis on Greek images' power of presentification is by no means new. Vernant's theory of the early Greek image highlighted this basic characteristic, even though he based his argument primarily on Ancient texts (Vernant, 1983). In current research, Vernant's general statement regarding Greek images plays an important role e.g., in scholarship as different as Verity Platt's *Facing the Gods* (2011) or the more recent works of Tonio Hölscher on Greek visual culture (Hölscher, 2012, p. 19-44; 2009, p. 54-67).⁵⁹ Be that as it may, still too little has been done yet to substantiate this claim regarding Greek images through the close study of single pictures. Otherwise, one cannot prove it a determining factor in their concrete form and design.

It is this level of specificity regarding the image in a given cultural-historical context—or in other words, a certain anthropological determination of the image—that tends to be neglected when putting the focus too exclusively on the pictorial medium. The increased awareness of the determining factor of the medium was certainly a justified response to the excessively totalizing idea of an all-embracing period-style, an idea that ruled (especially German) Ancient art history at least until the 1970s. It also correctly problematizes an all-too-narrow linking of image production and (political) history, as is still widely found in present scholarship.⁶⁰ But this should not prevent us from adopting a cross-media perspective on Ancient Greek visual culture too, not least because medium-specific and the cross media perspectives on Greek images can benefit each other and enhance the relevance of individual observations. In the current study, it is the fundamental differences in vase painting and architectural sculpture as media of pictorial representation that make the common principles ruling the two kinds of images so noteworthy.

Figures

Fig. 1

Title: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 540 BC (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 63.952), with Dionysus amidst vines.

Credit: Munich, Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke, Photothek.

⁵⁸An oft cited, paradigmatic example of the real presence and agency of the depicted person that Ancient statues are meant to reproduce is the case of the statue of Theagenes of Thasos erected on the city's agora and the anecdote reported by Pausanias (Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 6. 11. 5). See Hölscher (2010, p. 19).

⁵⁹The concept of presentification is e.g., also crucial in Bielfeldt (2014). See especially T. Hölscher (2014) and F. Hölscher (2014).

⁶⁰How the focus on the pictorial medium can help the re-evaluation of well-established historical interpretations of iconography is best exemplified by the work of Susanne Muth on violence in Attic vase painting from the 6th and 5th century BC (see especially Muth [2008], with a fierce, but in my opinion unjustified, critique by Christian Kunze in *Bonner Jahrbücher* 2010/2011, p. 595-602), and Muth (2006).

Fig. 2

Title: Attic white-ground lekythos, ca. 440 BC (Munich, Antikensammlung S 80), with cithara-playing woman (a muse?) and the inscription “*Ἑλικόν*” (*Helikon*).

Credit: Munich, Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke, Photothek.

Fig. 3

Title: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520 BC (Rome, Villa Giulia 2609 (106463)), with Dionysus amidst vines growing both from the ground *and* from his hand.

Credit: Dietrich (2010, fig. 52).

Fig. 4

Title: Archaic torso of a cuirassed warrior, from Samos, ca. 520-510 BC (Berlin, Antikensammlung 1752)

Credit: Berlin, Archäologische Sammlung des Winckelmann-Instituts, Photothek.

Fig. 5

Title: Early Classical torso of an archer, with a cuirass totally ‘fused’ to the body, from the Athenian Acropolis (Athens, Acropolis Museum 599), ca. 470 BC.

Credit: Berlin, Archäologische Sammlung des Winckelmann-Instituts, Photothek.

Fig. 6 Title: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520-500 BC (Rhodes, Archaeological Museum 301637), with Heracles fighting the Amazons. The cuirass of the kneeling Amazon is shown in profile in its lower part, and frontally in its upper part, as if it were an elastic garment clinging to her body.
Credit: Muth (2008, fig. 252).

Fig. 7

Title: Attic red-figure cup by Euphronios, ca. 510-500 BC (Munich, Antikensammlung 2620), Heracles fighting Geryon, with the lion skin doubling his head.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons (public domain).

Fig. 8

Title: Attic black-figure amphora, ca 530-520 BC (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 01.8027), the arming of Achilles.

Credit: CVA Boston I, pl. 27.2.

Fig. 9

Title: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520-500 BC (Munich, Antikensammlung 1557), Heracles and the Lion, the hero’s attributes spread over the picture field.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons (public domain).

Fig. 10

Title: Attic black-figure eye cup, ca. 530-520 BC (Munich, Antikensammlung 2052), with a dancing maenad holding vines.

Credit: Dietrich (2010, fig. 189).

Fig. 11

Title: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520-510 BC by Psiax (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional 11008), Dionysus with satyrs and maenads, and ivy sprigs spreading from the central figure of the god all over the picture field.

Credit: Dietrich (2010, fig. 151).

Fig. 12

Title: Attic black-figure cup, ca. 500-490 BC (Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 330), Achilles pursuing Troilos. Branches emphasize the movement and action by the direction of their growth.

Credit: Ridder (1902, fig. 41).

Fig. 13

Title: Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 520-510 BC (Reiss-Museum Cg 343), a ship sailing on well-delimited 'stripe of water'.

Credit: Dietrich (2010, fig. 1).

Fig. 14

Title: Attic black-figure skyphos, ca. 500-490 BC (Naples, Museo Nazionale 81154), with Heracles reclining on a stripe of rocky ground well-fitted to the length of his body.

Credit: Dietrich (2010, fig. 41).

Fig. 15

Title: Helios emerging from the sea with his chariot, from the left corner of the eastern pediment of the Parthenon (London, British Museum).

Credit: Brommer (1963, pl. 21 e 22.2).

Fig. 16

Title: an Athenian youth holding back a bull in the sacrificial procession of the Parthenon south frieze (slab XXXIX - London, British Museum). In doing this, he sets one foot on a small rocky elevation.

Credit: Brommer (1963, pl. 154).

Fig. 17

Title: Attic red-figure cup, ca. 440-420 BC (London, British Museum E 84), with the deeds of Theseus. The hero's stance with a foot set on a rock in the Marathonian Bull-scene closely corresponds to fig. 16.

Credit: Dietrich (2010, fig. 347).

Fig. 18

Title: Metope of the Parthenon (South XXX - London, British Museum, from plaster cast) with a centaur and a Lapith fighting. The defeated Lapith fell on a small rock.

Credit: Berlin, Archäologische Sammlung des Winckelmann-Instituts, Photothek.

Fig. 19

Title: Tondo of an Attic red-figure cup, ca. 460-450 BC (Florence, Museo Archeologico 3909), with fighting warriors. Just as on fig. 18, the defeated fell on a rock.

Credit: Dietrich (2010, fig. 337).

Fig. 20

Title: Olympia metope East III (plaster cast); Heracles hands over the Stymphalian Birds to Athena, sitting on a rock. Its peculiar form has close parallels in contemporary Attic vase painting.

Credit: Berlin, Archäologische Sammlung des Winckelmann-Instituts, Photothek.

Fig. 21

Title: Attic red-figure hydria, ca. 460-450 BC (Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 16506), with Apollo and the Muses. One is sitting on a rock closely related to the rock on Olympia metope east III (fig. 20).

Credit: Dietrich (2010, fig. 396).

Fig. 22

Title: Head of one of Selene's horses, sinking into the sea in the Parthenon eastern pediment's right corner (London, British Museum AN 254914). Although it should correspond to "sea level," the horse's muzzle reaches conspicuously under the level of the pediment's base.

Credit: Brommer (1963, pl. 60.1, fig. 22a), and Wikimedia Commons (public domain).

Fig. 23

Title: Figure from left corner of the eastern pediment of the Aphaia Temple in Aigina (Munich, Glyptothek). While trying in vain to rise up again, the dying warrior is about to literally fall out of the pediment triangle.

Credit: Ohly (1976, p. 111-113, pl. 64).

Fig. 24

Title: Olympia east metope IV (plaster cast); Atlas brings the Hesperides' apples to Heracles who is holding up the firmament with Athena's help. The temple's marble roof functions as a substitute for the firmament.

Credit: Berlin, Archäologische Sammlung des Winckelmann-Instituts, Photothek.

Fig. 25

Title: Attic black-figure lekythos, ca. 490-480 BC (Athens, National Museum 1132), with Heracles and Atlas. Just as on the Olympia metope, the picture field's "ceiling" functions as a substitute for the vault of the Heavens. Stars were painted on the architrave Heracles holds up.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons (public domain).

Fig. 26

Title: Attic red-figure crater, ca. 450 BC (Metropolitan Museum 07.286.84), with an amazonomachy. One Amazon deadly wounded by a Greek's spear is about to fall out of the picture field, just as the dying warrior in the Aigina east pediment (fig. 23)

Credit: Furtwängler; Reichold (1904-1932, pl. 116).

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