

THE RANSOM OF HEKTOR ILLUSTRATED*

For many readers Book 24 of the *Iliad* marks the pinnacle not only of Greek epic but of Greek literature as a whole. The book begins with Achilles dragging Hektor's body round Patroklos' grave-mound and ends with the Trojan women mourning Hektor. In between we have Priam's visit to Achilles' hut to beg for the body of his son (24, 322–691). Priam leaves Troy at night and goes in secret to the Greek camp. He rides in a chariot driven by his old herald Idaios, and a mule-drawn wagon carries the gifts to honour his son's killer – these are sets of clothing (robes, mantles, cloaks, tunics), blankets, a beautiful cup, two tripods, four cauldrons and ten talents of gold. The god Hermes, disguised as a mortal, escorts him safely as far as the gate of the compound (24, 462–464). Once in the presence of Achilles, Priam approaches him, touches his knees, kisses his hands and begs for his son's body.

The account of the dialogue between the two enemies, the old king of Troy and the bravest of the Greek soldiers, is the climax of the epic and, although there are only two people involved, they call to mind others: the dead Hektor that Priam has yet to see, and Achilles' old father, Peleus, at home in Greece, who has not seen his son for ten years and will never see him alive again. The gods, as we learned earlier (24, 22–187), were persuaded by Zeus to bring Achilles' anger to an end, and Thetis has urged

* I am grateful to the museums and private collectors for the photographs and permissions to publish. Figs. 4 and 5 are taken from A. Furtwängler, K. Reichhold, *Griechische Vasenmalerei* (Munich 1904–) pls. 83 and 84; fig. 7 is taken from Trendall, Webster (infra n. 9) 56.

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The following are abbreviations used in the notes:

ABV – J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-figure Vase-painters* (Oxford 1956)

Addenda² – T. H. Carpenter, *Beazley Addenda* (Oxford ²1989)

ARV² – J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters* (Oxford 1963)

Brommer 1973 – F. Brommer, *Vasenlisten zur griechischen Heldensage* (Marburg ³1973)

Brommer 1974 – F. Brommer, *Denkmälerlisten zur griechischen Heldensage*. II. *Theseus – Bellerophon – Achill* (Marburg 1974)

Para – J. D. Beazley, *Paralipomena: Additions to ABV and ARV²* (Oxford 1971)

her son to agree to hand over the body; he does so, but not before some tense moments. Finally, the gifts are accepted, Achilles' revenge is at last laid aside, and Priam is allowed to take back Hektor's body to Troy. The narrative allows movement from Trojan palace to Greek camp, concentration on individual figures, recollection of people not present, the ritual of self-abasement, the myth of Niobe, expression of varying emotions – heart-ache, pathos, anger, tears. It is the most tremendous achievement of Greek epic. We know of no other early epic in which the episode of the ransom was included, nor of any mention of it in the other archaic literary genres.

We have been urged recently¹ not to expect too close a connection with Homer's account in any of the visual ways in which different myths and legends were set down. It has been shown that it is the stories in some of the other, now missing, epics that may have attracted the early craftsmen, not the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. So, with no reference to Priam's visit to Achilles in any other epic, we must assume that the story underwent changes with the passage of time. Itinerant bards in different parts of Greece had sung of the Trojan War before Homer's version won the day, and the elements of the story told in the *Iliad* would also have been passed on down the generations by word of mouth in other forms (mothers to children, soldiers round campfires, rhapsodes in the market place or on the festival platform) and with details that varied with each gathering and each generation. The story that we know from the 'monumental' text of Homer that has come down to us (at whatever date we imagine that to have been fixed) was never likely to have been heard in the exact form that we have; myths were adaptable and oral tales were variable. Lack of knowledge, failure of memory or disregard of a previous telling are all possible reasons for the story being illustrated in a manner different from the Homeric narrative.

When we turn to consider the visual images of this remarkable and complex meeting, we need to note the constraints that craftsmen in different media faced. The image was static, whereas the poetic version was a flowing narrative. The craftsmen had to choose the best way in which to illustrate the series of events – this could be a single moment or a combination of different moments to form a synoptic image. We have been reminded of Jane

¹ A. Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists: Text and Picture in Early Greek Art* (Cambridge 1998) – this book was inspired by Robert Cook's questioning of the influence of Homer in early Greek art, see *BABesch* 58 (1983) 1–10. For a recent summary of the problems of date of the *Iliad* and the early images of Trojan myths, see D. L. Cairns' introduction to his editing of *Oxford Readings in Homer's Iliad* (Oxford 2001).

Harrison's statement "Art has only one tense – the present".² We must also remember that the space the artists had at their disposal was restricted and that the size and shape of the area that they were filling placed limits on how much they could include. They also needed to avoid irrelevant details as they had to make the story clear and the characters recognisable in a single image. As the craftsman sat at his workbench, the story was already in his head; there was no occasion for checking for authenticity, wherever that might be found. As has been well said, "the pictorial traditions evolve independently of the canonical epic version toward the creation of the most visually telling and emotionally 'true' depiction".³

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Although pictorial images of myths increased in frequency in the seventh century BC, the earliest uncontested images of the ransom do not begin until the second quarter of the sixth century; none earlier has been recognised for sure.⁴ One of the earliest is also the simplest (Fig. 1).⁵ It is a small (5 cm square) bronze relief beaten in a mould. Reliefs such as this carrying different mythical images are most often found on bronze bands that decorated the vertical strip down the middle of the inside of the hoplites' shields, most likely made at Argos and many excavated at Olympia.⁶ These bands often carried a vertical row of figured scenes; Fig. 1 had been inserted as a singleton into a mirror handle. The composition com-

² See S. Lowenstam, "The Uses of Vase-depictions in Homeric Studies", *TAPhA* 122 (1992) 173.

³ M. C. Miller, "Priam, King of Troy", in: J. B. Carter, S. P. Morris (eds), *The Ages of Homer* (Austin 1995) 450.

⁴ A 7th century fragmentary comb found at the site of Artemis Orthia (Athens NM 15523) was at one time thought to show the scene, but this is doubted. See K. Friis Johansen, *The Iliad in Early Greek Art* (Copenhagen 1967) 280, 14; E.-L. I. Marangou, *Lakonische Elfenbein- und Beinschnitzereien* (Tübingen 1969) 94 & 192, fig. 73 a–b; *LIMC* I Achilleus cat. nos. 641 & 717.

⁵ Berlin, Staatliche Museen 8099: Friis Johansen (n. 4) 49, fig. 7; Brommer 1974, 98, no. 6 below; T. H. Carpenter, *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece* (London 1991) fig. 317; *LIMC* I Achilleus, cat. no. 642, pl. 121; K. Schefold, *Götter- und Heldensagen der Griechen in der Früh- und Hocharchaischen Kunst* (Munich 1993) 321, fig. 355; Snodgrass (n. 1) fig. 50.

⁶ For the Olympia shield-bands, see E. Kunze, *Archaische Schildbänder (Olympische Forschungen* II, 1950) esp. 145–148 (the mirror handle is Beil. 11) and Brommer 1974, 98–99, nos. 7–14. An Attic Siana cup fragment, of similar date (once Curtius: *ABV* 66, 50 The Heidelberg Painter; *LIMC* I Achilleus cat. no. 653), preserves part of a scene resembling this design, see Friis Johansen (n. 4) 137–138 and 267, 20 a.

prises four bearded figures and shows Priam before Achilles. Hermes with his caduceus is on the right; he has brought Priam to Achilles. To the left of him there is a trio of figures: the dead Hektor is on the ground with knees bent, and Priam (wearing thick clothing and carrying a staff) leans forward and stretches out his hand to touch the chin of Achilles who stands on the left with his spear upright. No gifts are in evidence, there is no room available. It is a stark reduction into an abbreviated snapshot of the whole sad story of a father facing his son's killer; the figures have not been set into any particular context as happens later in Athenian vase-painting (see below). It is a static scene but charged with meaning. Snodgrass⁷ places this scene in what he calls "that extensive 'no-man's land' of uncertainty"—we cannot be sure that Homer is the inspiration. The synoptic convention of composition customary at this time means that both Hermes and the corpse of Hektor have to be visible, no matter how unHomeric (24, 462–464 & 582–586). The craftsman had no option if he wished to make his subject clear.

Athenian vase-painters of the 6th and early 5th centuries have left a limited number of ransom scenes. The Athenian series starts about 570–560 BC, at a date similar to that of the relief, and it is interesting that no other vase-painting centre in the archaic period has left a single example of this theme. The earliest vase we have that shows the scene is a black-figure *hydria* (Fig. 2 a–b).⁸ The moment chosen is the arrival of Priam at Achilles' hut; this scene is given a specific setting which becomes traditional for later Greek craftsmen. Achilles (Fig. 2 a) reclines on a couch at his supper, a *phiale* in his right hand—from now on he is usually seen as an 'Athenian' symposiast, typical of 6th century Athens with its emphasis on social standing. White-haired and white-bearded Priam is bending down before him, using the side-table for support. Hermes, present on the left in front of a standing female figure, is on the edge of his seat and extends an arm as though urging the old king forward. There are still no ransom gifts on view. Over on the right (Fig. 2 b), behind Achilles, items of armour are displayed on a table and on the wall: an old-fashioned 'Boeotian' shield, two

⁷ See Snodgrass (n. 1) 133.

⁸ Zürich, Archäologisches Institut der Universität 4001 (on loan): *Para* 32, 1 bis (= *ABV* 85, 1 bis); Brommer 1973, 464, A8; *LIMC* I Achilles, cat. no. 650; *Addenda*² 23; H. P. Isler, "Un idria del Pittore di Londra 76 con il riscatto di Ettore", *Numismatica e Antichità Classica* 15 (1986) 95–123, pls. 1–9 (*non vidi*); O. Touchefeu-Meynier, "L'humiliation d'Hektor", *Métis* 5 (1990) 157–165; *LIMC* IV Hektor, cat. no. 84, pl. 289; Schefold (n. 5), 321, fig. 356; H. A. Shapiro, *Myth into Art* (London 1994) 40, fig. 23; Miller (n. 3) 451, figs. 28.2 and 28.3.

helmets, a breastplate and two pairs of greaves hanging above; a bearded man stands further to the right facing the scene. If the painter had given the matter any thought, these could be a mixture of items of Achilles' original armour that Patroklos wore and Hektor took from his corpse and donned for the final battle and of pieces from the second set of armour that Achilles' mother Thetis brought him for his final battle against Hektor. The body of Hektor lies stretched out supine on the ground beneath the table. When we compare this image with the version in our Homer (when-ever we imagine that it reached the format that we have), there is much to note that diverges from his account. The painter has included Hermes (he has even given him a seat) whereas Homer had dismissed him (24, 462–463); he has reduced the pair of Alkimos and Automedon (24, 472) to one man, and introduced a mass of armour to fill out the scene. Homer kept Hektor deliberately out of sight at this stage (cf. 24, 582–586), but, as we noted, the decorator of the bronze relief (Fig. 1) had no option, and the painter too needs to make clear that what Priam has come for is his son's body and so the painter had to show it in the scene, even though he manages to keep the body to one side. The differences are slight and most are forced on the painter by the "present tense".

The main elements of the encounter are clear in the painting, and, no matter who invented the composition, the moment and some of the details were now fixed in the vase-painting tradition. It was up to later vase-painters to introduce their own variations whilst retaining the basic format.⁹ In the next generation, shortly after the middle of the sixth century (540–530 BC), the painters establish a more compact scene. On a black-figure amphora in Kassel (Fig. 3)¹⁰ Hektor's body lies beneath the actual couch on

⁹ There is a scattering of Athenian vase-paintings that seem to diverge from the standard composition. Three of these are (1) Black-figure hydria, ca. 510 BC, Madrid 10920: *ABV* 332, 17 The Priam Painter; Friis Johansen (n. 4), 222, fig. 94 and 270, B30; *Para* 146; *LIMC* I Alexandros, cat. no. 71, pl. 391; W. G. Moon, "The Priam Painter: Some Iconographic and Stylistic Considerations", in: W. G. Moon (ed.), *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography* (Wisconsin 1983) 100, fig. 7.5; *Addenda*² 90 – harnessing Priam's chariot (for his visit to Achilles?); (2) Red-figure cup, ca. 480 BC, London BM E 75: *ARV*² 406, 2 The Briseis Painter; *Para* 371; *LIMC* VII Priam, cat. no. 69, pl. 403; *CVA* 9 (17) pl. 74 (850) 51 – Priam at the tent of Achilles?; (3) Red-figure calyx-krater, ca. 430 BC, Vienna University 505: *CVA* 1(5) pl. 24 (218); *ARV*² 1030, 33 Polygnotos; *Para* 442; A. D. Trendall, T. B. L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London 1971) III.1.18–19; *LIMC* I Achilles, cat. no. 660 – Priam and the cart.

¹⁰ Kassel, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen T 674: *Para* 56, 31bis (= *ABV* 135, 31 bis, Group E); Brommer 1973, 464, A7; K. Schefold (with Luca Giuliani), *Götter-*

which Achilles reclines – lack of space forces this composition but also gives the juxtaposition a symbolic significance. Priam, white-haired and bearded but more upright than on Fig. 2 a, is now stretching his hands down to his son. A handmaiden, perhaps Briseis, is in attendance, and white cakes, not strips of meat, show some of the meal Achilles has been taking. Armour and weapons are once more in abundance, including two helmets and two shields. Essentially the composition of the previous generation has been adopted with some alterations to fit the shape available – the vase-painters' convention has taken over, and craftsmen follow that tradition.

A few decades later one would expect knowledge of the Homeric poems to have increased if the evidence concerning the Peisistratids and the recitation of the Homeric poems in Athens is to be believed.¹¹ However, the vase-painters keep to the standard visual composition and illustrate the same moment as in black-figure: Priam's appearance before Achilles, but they enlarge the cast list in a curious way. Oltos, active 525–500 BC, expands the scene over the longer but narrower surface of a drinking cup, his favourite shape (Fig. 4).¹² He had more space to fill horizontally and introduced more characters – what had been a secret meeting now looks like a decidedly unHomeric parade.¹³ In Homer's version Achilles and two helpers, Automedon and Alkimos, go out and bring in the treasure together with the old herald Idaios (24, 572–579). Not so with Oltos, and he is followed by later Athenian red-figure vase-painters, creating a further vase-painting tradition.¹⁴ On side A we have the central figures we have seen before – this time a heavily bearded Achilles is drinking and eating and turns away to have a garland put on his head by a young woman, most likely

und Heldensagen der Griechen in der Spätarchaischen Kunst (Munich 1978) fig. 316; *LIMC I Achilles* pl. 122, 645; *Addenda*² 36; K. Schefold, *Gods and Heroes in Late Archaic Greek Art* (Cambridge 1992) fig. 316.

¹¹ For a clear statement on the problem, see R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual* (Oxford 1994) 144–154. See also R. Fowler, "The Homeric Question", in: R. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge 2004) 224–225.

¹² Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen 2618, from Vulci: *ARV*² 61, 74 and 1622; *Para* 327, 74; Brommer 1973, 465, B1; Schefold (n. 10), fig. 317; *LIMC I Achilles*, cat. no. 656, pl. 123; *Addenda*² 165, 74; Carpenter (n. 5) fig. 318; Miller (n. 3) figs. 28.5 and 28.6; A. J. Cark, M. Elston, M. L. Hart, *Understanding Greek Vases* (Los Angeles 2002) 54, fig. 46.

¹³ For the influence of Oriental royal iconography, see Miller (n. 3) 451.

¹⁴ There is also a contemporary black-figure amphora (ca. 510 BC) showing a single youth behind Priam carrying a tripod and *phialai*: Toledo Museum of Art 72.54; *CVA Toledo* 1 (17) pls. 4–5; *LIMC I Achilles* cat. no. 649, pl. 122; Shapiro (n. 8) 41, fig. 24; Miller (n. 3) fig. 28.4.

by Briseis – the garland creates a further link to the element of the symposium of the day. A young soldier behind her touches his helmet in amazement, as he has seen Priam approaching from the left, as yet unnoticed by Achilles who is concerned with his food and drink. So, the painter has introduced drama and surprise. Priam, who is painted as shaven in mourning,¹⁵ extends his arms towards the oblivious Achilles and does not yet pay any attention to the body of his son. Behind Priam Hermes is taking his leave, his task completed. Further over on the left we have a youth carrying bowls (*phialai*) and a water-jar (*hydria*) on his shoulder. He is the first of the long line of gift-bearers, for on side B three youths bring forward horses and (even more unexpectedly) a girl carries clothes.¹⁶ The painter has visualised a selection of kingly gifts such as the story demanded and had them brought to the hut by a retinue of servants. The danger of the journey from Troy to the Greek camp has been ignored.

A deep cup (Fig. 5),¹⁷ painted by the Brygos Painter about 490 BC, fits the traditional composition on one side of the vase only. In the right half Achilles is stretched out feasting, as usual, but we have reached the fifth century when the ideal hero was usually represented as a beardless young man, so the contrast between old Priam and young Achilles is now more pronounced.¹⁸ Achilles, now shown with a knife in his hand, turns his head towards a wine boy behind him who holds a wine-ladle and strainer – an even clearer reference to the Athenian symposium of the time that the cup was painted. As usual, the body of Hektor lies stretched out below the couch. He is fully bearded, his hands are tied and there is also a wound in his side. On the left four slaves, two men and two girls, following Priam, bring the gifts (*hydriai*, *phialai*, a foot bath, wicker baskets for clothes).

¹⁵ For shaven heads, see D. J. R. Williams, "Close Shaves", in: H. A. G. Brijder (ed.), *Ancient Greek and Related Pottery, Proceedings of the International Vase Symposium Amsterdam 1984* (Amsterdam 1984) 275–281.

¹⁶ What has been noted is that a youth on side B wears an eastern headdress and trousers, an early indication that the Trojans were beginning to be thought of as the easterners of the time of the painting. See Miller (n. 3) 451 and E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford 1989).

¹⁷ Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum inv. 3710, from Caere: ARV² 380, 171; *Para* 366 & 368, 171; Brommer 1973, 465, B2; E. Simon, M. Hirmer, A. Hirmer, *Die griechischen Vasen* (Munich 1981) pls. 146–147; LIMC I Achilles cat. no. 659, pl. 124; K. Schefold (with F. Jung), *Die Sagen von den Argonauten, von Theben und Troia in der klassischen und hellenistischen Kunst* (Munich 1989) 232–233, figs. 208a–b; *Addenda*² 227; Miller (n. 3) figs. 28.10–12.

¹⁸ On reasons for the presence and absence of beards, see Lowenstam (n. 2) 182–183 and nn. 61–63.

Priam makes no dramatic movement towards Achilles, he doesn't even stretch his arms down towards his son. He stands there, dignified as he is in Homer, noble and upright. This painter has depicted Priam's attitude in a far different way from the broken-hearted kings we have seen before. Only his white hair and beard reveal his age. The painter has made Priam a figure that has retained his majesty and dignity and not yet given way to grief in front of Achilles. One is reminded of Homer's Πρίαμος μέγας (24, 477) and Πρίαμον θεοειδέα (24, 483). Wade-Gery¹⁹ claimed that he knew "no picture from antiquity which renders a poetic subject more profoundly", though the painting has also been dismissed²⁰ as "a competent, factual, and cheerful representation".

Recently, much attention has been given to a newly published cup painted a little later (Fig. 6 a-c).²¹ Once again the painter (in the workshop of the potter Brygos) devoted both sides of the exterior of the cup to this one episode, but he also used the tondo inside as well. On side A (Fig. 6 a) we return to the stooping and shaven Priam with a royal sceptre, stretching his right arm to the knees of the feasting and beardless Achilles. A slave girl, as before, is holding a garland behind his head as he dines. This time Achilles, holding a knife and meat, is facing Priam. The body of Hektor again lies beneath the couch, hands bound and blood on his chest. The god Hermes is still there and turns to the left to draw attention to the grand procession that follows. This begins with a girl who stands behind a pillar, therefore she is still outside the inner room of Achilles' quarters and not yet in his presence. She has a stool on her head and a (glass) perfume pot in her right hand. On the other side of the cup (Fig. 6 b) is a line of no fewer than six Trojan attendants, including two more girls. They carry armour (helmet, greaves, shield, spear, cuirass), also a cloth, dishes (*phialai*), water-pot (*hydria*), wine-jar, mixing bowl and footbath. The gifts have become even more varied, and the items of armour and weapons even more inappropriate.²² As usual, the painter has

¹⁹ H. T. Wade-Gery, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge 1952) 81 n. 92.

²⁰ G. S. Kirk's review of Wade-Grey, *JHS* 74 (1954) 191.

²¹ New York, Shelby White and Leon Levy: *ARV*² 399 & 1650; *Para* 369; Brommer 1973, 465, B3; *LIMC* I Achilles cat. no. 661, pls. 124–125; *Addenda*² 230; *Glories of the Past* (New York 1990) no. 118 (von Bothmer); Shapiro (n. 8), figs. 25–27; Miller (n. 3), fig. 28. 7–9.

²² Two other red-figure vases of roughly the same period show arms and armour being carried in: (1) Fragmentary calyx-krater, Athens, Kerameikos 1977a–g: *ARV*² 186, 45 The Kleophrades Painter; *AM* 85 (1970) 6, fig. 2 and pls. 2–4; *Para* 340; *LIMC* I Achilles cat. no. 654, pl. 122; *Addenda*² 187 – one assistant carries a cuirass;

sacrificed the secret night visit of Homer for a larger picture. He has certainly painted Achilles' hut as a magnificent building; there is another column and further over a proper door. For this painter, as for Homer, Achilles lived in magnificent style.²³

But he has not yet finished with the story. In the tondo on the interior of the cup (Fig. 6 c) he has removed all the superfluous details and left Priam and Achilles by themselves, and there is now no dead body under the couch. Priam is shaven, both arms extended, and he bends close to Achilles. Achilles holds a knife for the meat – surely this is a continuation of the meal on side A; we cannot assume that the painter knew of the second meal that Achilles shared with Priam when agreement had been reached (24, 619–627).²⁴ They look one another in the eye and we can imagine them talking through their grief and their anger. The painter has placed the two main protagonists in close proximity, and this results in an effective focus. The confined space is here the servant of the painter, not the master.²⁵

One might ask the reason for the introduction of a parade of Trojan assistants on the vases. It is unlikely that Oltos, our earliest vase-painter of this composition, was the inventor of the new version. So, where does this break with the vase-painters' tradition originate? What brought the expanded cast at Achilles' hut? One thinks of a chorus of performers, but on present evidence Attic tragedy was only in its earliest years and may not yet have been staged at the City Dionysia.²⁶ A tragedy on this theme, even with a chorus of ransom-bearers, would need two actors to play the roles of Priam and Achilles, and the dating of Oltos' cup is certainly much too early for Aeschylus. It would seem that the vase-

(2) Fragmentary stamnos, Paris, Louvre Cp 10822: *ARV*² 552, 22; *LIMC* 1 Achilles, cat. no. 657, pl. 123; *Addenda*² 257 – spear and greaves.

²³ Homer makes Achilles' quarters similarly splendid with walls, gates, bars, huts, poles, bolts, doors, rooms and courtyard. On the "aggrandizement" of Achilles' "hut" in Homer, see N. J. Richardson's note in *The Iliad, a Commentary VI: Books 21–24* (Cambridge 1993) 318 on book 24, vv. 448–456.

²⁴ Shapiro (n. 8) 44 is mistaken in assuming that this must be the second meal. It is doubtful whether the painter was so punctilious.

²⁵ Some other painters reduce their cast to the protagonists alone, but less effectively. Achilles and the dead Hektor are usually the main figures used to identify the episode. Hermes (Harvard, Fogg Museum 1972.70) and both Hermes and Priam (Paris, Louvre G 153) can both be omitted (Priam's presence in the latter is signified by the knobbed stick). But the moment is always the same.

²⁶ See W. R. Connor, "City Dionysia and Athenian Democracy", in: W. R. Connor, M. H. Hansen, K. A. Raaflaub, B. S. Strauss, *Aspects of Athenian Democracy*, *Classica et Mediaevalia* 40 (Copenhagen 1990) 7–32.

painters had failed to relate the story to its wider context of the secret night visit.

There are no Athenian treatments of this episode after the years of the Persian Wars, and one would like to know why archaic painters chose this story. The ransom of the dead Hektor was an episode that had deeper meaning than the more superficial and repetitive battle scenes. Did the majority of painters realise that it was too complicated a subject? Was it lack of demand at the time or is it mere chance that we have so few? Many of the images that concerned the Trojan War were painted at the time when the Persians were knocking at the door of Greece and entering with sword and flame. It would have been easy for the painters to represent the Trojans as weak and effeminate foreigners and dress Priam as an eastern king like Darius or Xerxes. But that was not yet. The even-handed approach to Greeks and Trojans that Homer had shown is still there – the protagonists are all shown in Greek costume. Sympathy for both sides still rules.²⁷

The pots and cups we have looked at are all shapes used at symposia, so we might expect the images to have been items of discussion at the party. But of course the symposium shapes have more often been found as grave goods and were buried in cemeteries far from Athens. We know that two of them (Munich and Vienna, Figs. 4 and 5) were excavated in Etruria at Vulci and Caere.²⁸ One might wonder in what way the scene was interpreted by the non-Greek buyers.

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On a number of occasions in the *Iliad* Homer had introduced the weighing of the dooms (κῆρες) of warriors (e. g. 8, 68–74). At the time of the final battle between Achilleus and Hektor, Zeus held up the golden scales – “and down sank the day of doom for Hektor, and departed into Hades” (22, 212–213). Aeschylus composed a tragedy (now mostly lost)²⁹ called *Psychostasia* (“The Weighing of Souls”) on the subject of Memnon, the Ethiopian prince who came to help the Trojans after the death of Hektor, an episode that was

²⁷ See Miller (n. 3) *passim* for the way in which Priam was eventually orientated.

²⁸ For a detailed investigation of Attic pottery in Etruria, see Ch. Reusser, *Vasen für Etrurien: Verbreitung und Funktionen Attischer Keramik im Etrurien des 6. und 5. Jahrhunderts vor Christus* (Zürich 2002).

²⁹ S. Radt, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta III: Aeschylus* (Göttingen 1985) 374–377. We have no evidence for the absolute or relative dates of the tragedies.

included in the *Aithiopsis*. There are a few images on Athenian vases of the weighing of the souls of Achilles and Memnon in combat.³⁰ Aeschylus also wrote a trilogy on Achilles (again it is mostly lost)³¹ and used the weighing in the last play of the trilogy called *The Phrygians* or (perhaps the later title) *The Ransom of Hektor*. The various fragments of evidence we have for this play tell us that the chorus of Phrygians accompanied Priam to Achilles' hut and entered after a prologue between Hermes and Achilles singing and dancing a particularly memorable and exotic dance. Would they have entered with the ransom gifts and suited their movements to their presentation to Achilles? Later in the play Hektor's body was weighed against gold. It has been suggested that Aeschylus was influenced by the dialogue between Achilles and Hektor at the moment of Hektor's death (22, 338–354) when he promises that his mother and father will give Achilles bronze and gold in plenty in exchange for his body, and Achilles rejects the offer with "not even if the Trojans bring here and weigh out a ransom ten or twenty times your worth; not even if Priam, son of Dardanos, tells them to offer your weight in gold...". The effects of this new element appear early in figurative form; it may be this play that provided the inspiration for a terracotta relief (Fig. 7)³² belonging to a series called 'Melian' reliefs (from the fact that many were found on the island of Melos). The reliefs date from around 460–440 BC (25 cm × 20 cm) and were probably made to be attached to house-walls or fixed to chests and boxes. On the right a distressed and shaven Priam stands with his right hand on his forehead, a staff in his left. Achilles is over on the left, a helmet in his

³⁰ See L. D. Caskey, J. D. Beazley, *Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Part III (Boston 1963) 44–46; Friis Johansen (n. 4) 260–261; *LIMC* I Achilles cat. nos. 797–806, pls. 135–136.

³¹ Radt (n. 29) 364–370. The major study of this trilogy is B. Döhle, "Die 'Achilleis' des Aischylos und die attische Vasenmalerei", *Klio* 49 (1967) 63–119. On *The Phrygians*, see A. Kossatz-Deissmann, *Dramen des Aischylos auf Westgriechischen Kunst* (Mainz 1978) 23–32. Again the date of production is not known. Döhle believes that the series of vase-paintings showing Achilles seated and muffled in his cloak that start ca. 490 BC is related to Aeschylus' *Myrmidons* (the first play of the trilogy) and hence the trilogy is early in the 5th century. As we have seen above, the series of ransom scenes with the procession of gift-bearers starts too early to be connected with Aeschylus and cannot be influenced by his *Phrygians*.

³² Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum 926.32: J. W. Graham, "The Ransom of Hektor on a New Melian Relief", *AJA* 62 (1958) 313–319, pl. 82; Trendall, Webster (n. 9) 56, III.1, 20; Brommer 1974, 99, no. 16; *LIMC* I Achilles cat. no. 662, pl. 125; Schefold (n. 17) 234, fig. 209; Carpenter (n. 5) fig. 319.

hanging right hand, and his left hand rests on the frame of a large pair of scales. A young man has a bowl in his right hand and a rod in his left. The body of Hektor lies supine below, with the open lid of a chest behind him. We do not know how the weighing worked – it is likely that the body itself was placed in one scale of the balance (see later). If the play lay behind the Melian relief, one might ask how the influence reached Melos so quickly and by what route.³³ These reliefs were derivative products and may have copied contemporary paintings; so there are likely to have been other versions of the image, but we have no evidence (yet) that this version was adopted by Athenian vase-painters.³⁴ The new element of the weighing certainly became popular later.

On present evidence the theme had lost favour in Athens but in the 4th century it became popular with the Greek painters resident in South Italy who had a liking for scenes from Athenian tragedy and “Homeric” subjects.³⁵ Three Apulian kraters present the scene of the ransom. The earliest is to be found on a fragmentary calyx-krater (Fig. 8),³⁶ ca. 390 BC, which shows the old king kneeling and facing right, with Hermes in winged boots standing behind him. Priam is now dressed in non-Greek robes – he has at last become an oriental king, a colourful potentate in elaborate costume with Phrygian cap that was fashionable on the stage. Two further illustrations date from ca. 350 BC. Another fragmentary calyx-krater,³⁷ polychrome this time, once again shows Priam in elaborate costume, kneeling, facing right and touching Achilles’ knee as he sits on his resplendent couch complete with footstool. Neither fragment preserves any evidence of

³³ A connection with Aeschylus’ *Choephoroi* (458 BC) has been seen on the Melian reliefs which show Electra and Orestes at Agamemnon’s tomb (Berlin, Staatliche Museen terr. inv. 6803; P. Jacobsthal, *Die melischen Reliefs* [Berlin 1931] nos. 104–105; Trendall and Webster [n. 9] 41, III.1, 20).

³⁴ Miller (n. 3) 458 has seen this on Vienna University 505 (see n. 9, 3), but this seems to be mistaken.

³⁵ J. M. Moret, *L’Ilioupersis dans le céramique italienne: les mythes et leur expression figuré au IV^e siècle* (Rome 1975).

³⁶ New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 20.195 (Rogers Fund, 1920): Brommer 1973, 465, D4; Kossatz-Deissmann (n. 31) pl. 2.1 (K 5); Trendall, Webster (n. 9) 56, III.1, 21; A. D. Trendall, A. Cambitoglou, *The Red-figured Vases of Apulia I* (Oxford 1978) ch. 7, 8 and pl. 53, 4 (Black Fury Group); *LIMC I* Achilles cat. no. 665, pl. 125; A. D. Trendall, *Red Figure Vases of South Italy and Sicily* (London 1989) fig. 134.

³⁷ New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 10.210.17a: Brommer 1973, 465, D6; Kossatz-Deissmann (n. 31) pl. 3, 2 (K 6); *LIMC I* Achilles cat. no. 666, pl. 126.



Fig. 1. Bronze plaque on a mirror handle, ca. 560 BC
(photo: Ingrid Geshe-Heiden)

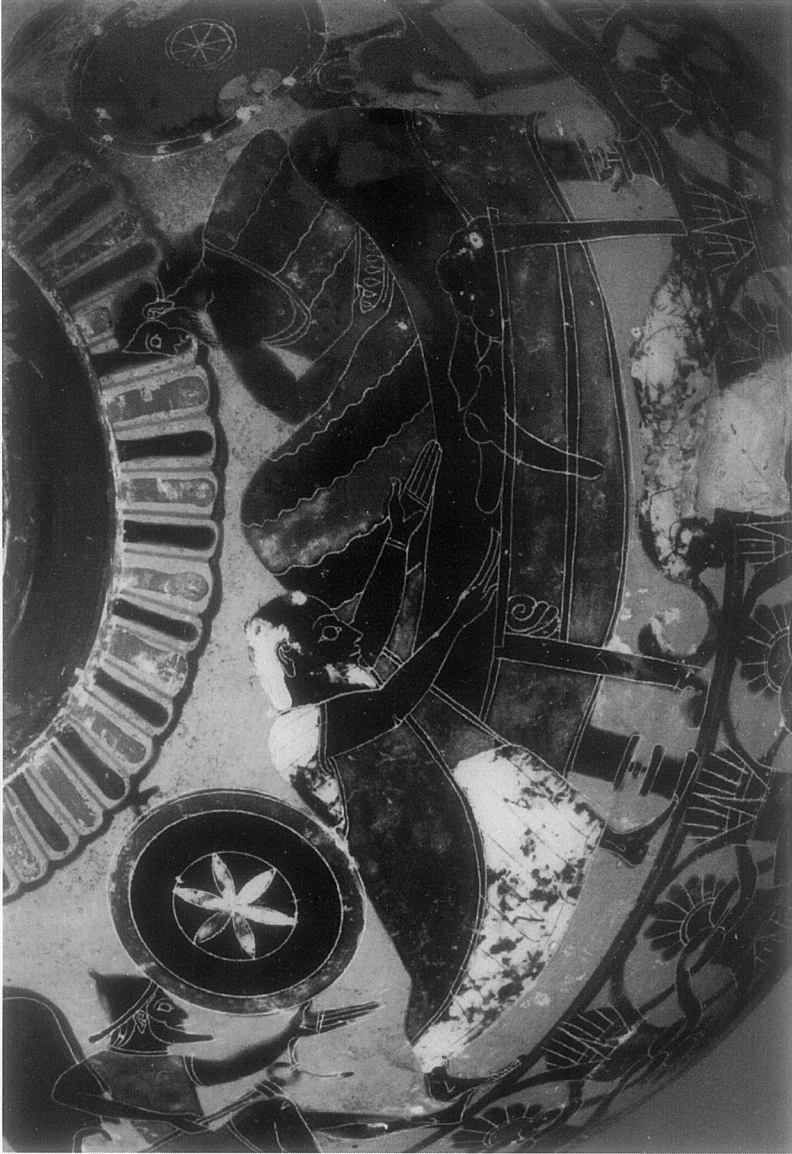


Fig. 2 a



Fig. 2 b

Fig. 2 a-b. Attic black-figure hydria, ca. 570 BC (photo: Sylvia Hertig)

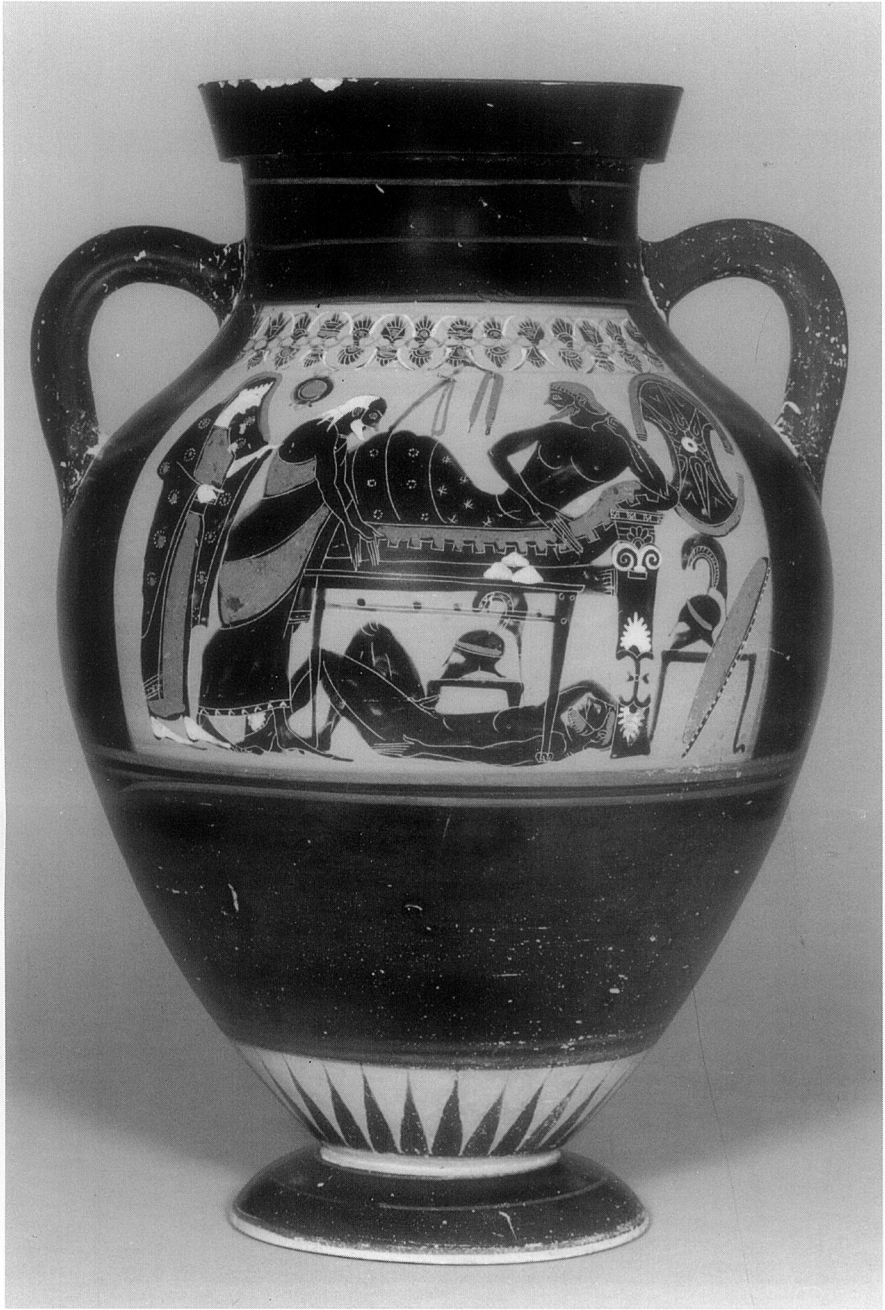


Fig. 3. Attic black-figure amphora, ca. 540 BC



Fig. 4. Attic red-figure cup, ca. 510 BC



Fig. 6 a

Fig. 6 a-c. Attic red-figure cup, ca. 490-480 BC (photo: Maggie Nimkin)



Fig. 6 b



Fig. 6 c



Fig. 7. 'Melian' terracotta relief, ca. 440 BC

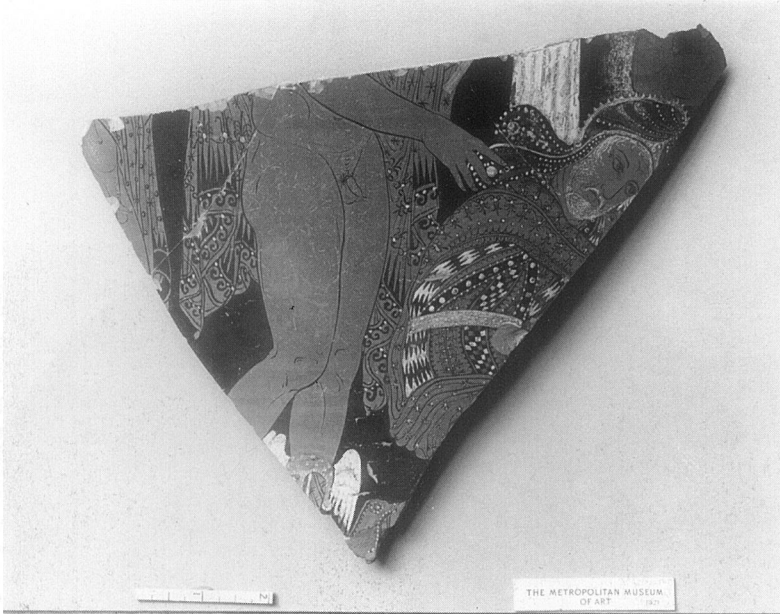


Fig. 8. Apulian red-figure calyx-krater fragment, ca. 400–390 BC



Fig. 9. Roman silver cup from Hoby, Denmark, late first century BC



Fig. 10. Greek lamp, from the Athenian Agora, mid 3rd century AD

the presence of Hektor's body. A volute-krater, now in the Hermitage,³⁸ is better preserved but restored. Amidst a gathering of figures (including Nestor and Antilochos, who are named) Achilles sits on a couch, again with a footstool, with Athena on his right and Hermes on his left; Priam, again exotically dressed in tragic costume, sits at a lower level beneath Achilles' feet. Below him to the left are the scales for weighing and Hektor's body being carried towards them. It would seem that this time the body was certainly about to be put in the scale pan.

There is never a hint that the ransom scene was ever reproduced in any large scale treatment in Greek sculpture, and with the end of painted pottery production ca. 300 BC we are poorer for epic scenes. In the Hellenistic period there are moulded bowls with scenes from epic³⁹ which sometimes have texts and names in the background. The ransom scene is reduced to a very simple composition of Achilles and Priam with no text or names.

Later, there are a few silver containers that are decorated with Trojan scenes in relief. The ones that survive with the episode of the ransom provide us with contrasting versions. There are two jugs from the large hoard of silver and silver-gilt, dating from the first century BC/AD, found in a sanctuary near Berthouville in central France. The scene round the front of one jug shows Achilles driving his chariot as he drags the body of Hektor behind him; then under the handle of the pair to it⁴⁰ there is Hektor's body actually being weighed in the scale pan, watched by a seated Achilles, a standing Priam and a crowd of others. It is a clumsy composition that earlier craftsmen had been wise to avoid. However, one might at this point recall that Aeneas in Virgil's first book of the *Aeneid* examined the reliefs in Dido's temple to Juno and saw episodes from the war he had just left; and one of those showed a scene (*Aen.* 1, 483–484) in which

ter circum Iliacos raptaverat Hectora muros
exanimumque auro corpus vendebat Achilles.

³⁸ St. Petersburg, Hermitage Museum inv. 1718 (St. 422): Graham (n. 32) pl. 83, 5; Brommer 1973, 465, D3; Kossatz-Deissmann (n. 31) pl. 2.2 (K 4); Trendall, Cambitoglou (n. 35) 424, ch. 16, 55 (influenced by the Lycurgus Painter): *LIMC* I Achilles cat. no. 664, pl. 125.

³⁹ See U. Hausmann, *Hellenistische Reliefbecher* (Stuttgart 1959) HB5, pl. 15, 1–2; Brommer 1973, 466, E1a–d; *LIMC* I Achilles cat. no. 668, pl. 126.

⁴⁰ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles: E. Babelon, *Le Trésor d'Argentarie de Berthouville* (Paris 1916) pl. 5, 6; *AJA* 42 (1938) pl. XIII and p. 86, fig. 3; Brommer 1974, 99, no. 23; *LIMC* I Achilles cat. no. 688, pl. 127.

So both the poet and the silversmith were influenced by the shocking detail that the archaic versions lacked.

The other silver vase is better known (Fig. 9), found in a local chieftain's grave at Hoby (Denmark);⁴¹ it is a straight-sided cup (*skyphos*) that shows that the more traditional version was still alive. Here there is no balance and no dead body to be weighed. Priam is dressed in an eastern bonnet, as is now the convention, and he is on his knees, as in Homer, kissing those terrible, man-slaying hands that killed so many of his sons. The Hoby cup has been considered a mythological counterpart to the silver cups with the emperor receiving the submission of Rome's enemies – here it is suggested that Tiberius is the new Achilles and the might of Asia is kneeling before Rome.⁴² The two young men may perhaps be intended for Alkimos and Automedon (24, 474), but they have also been seen as Julio-Claudian princes. Similarly, the two women on the right with their wool basket have been thought to have the faces of members of the Augustan royal family. We know that the scene was copied on Arretine cups which were made from an impression of the silver one.⁴³

In the Late Republican and Imperial periods the theme recurs spasmodically. One has the impression that it is reproduced in these periods because of its literary associations and for propaganda purposes. The meeting of Priam and Achilles was painted on house-walls and shaped in stucco reliefs to decorate the walls of underground tomb-chambers.⁴⁴ In stone, there are the reliefs that go by the name of "Tabulae Iliacae" and have the books of the *Iliad* arranged

⁴¹ Copenhagen, National Museum NM I 10.20: K. Friis Johansen, "New evidence about the Hoby Silver Cups", *Acta Archaeologica* 31 (1960) 185–188; D. Strong, *Greek and Roman Gold and Silver Plate* (London 1966) pl. 35 B; Vagn H. Poulsen, "Die Silberbecher von Hoby", *Antike Plastik* 8 (1968) Part 6, 69–73, pls. 42–48 and 55 a, with fig. 1; Trendall, Webster (n. 9) III.1, 22; Brommer 1974, 99, no. 22; *LIMC* I Achilles cat. no. 687, pl. 127; L. P. B. Stefanelli, *L'argento dei Romani* (Rome 1991) no. 26, pl. 89.

⁴² See C. Vermeule, "Augustan and Julio-Claudian Court Silver", *Antike Kunst* 6 (1963) 36–38, pls. 12, 5 and 13, 1–2.

⁴³ K. Friis Johansen, "An antique replica of the Priam bowl from Hoby", *Acta Archaeologica* 1 (1930) 273 ff. See *LIMC* I Achilles cat. nos. 681–684. It would be interesting to know how the silver cup came into the hands of the Arretine potters and where it was copied; it is not yet agreed where the two Hoby cups were fashioned.

⁴⁴ For mosaics, house walls, chamber tombs, see Brommer 1974, 99, nos. 18–20, 24 and 26; *LIMC* I Achilles cat. nos. 670–677, pl. 126.

round the sides.⁴⁵ It has recently been suggested that these reliefs were made for the nouveaux riches, either to show off their pretensions to literary finesse or to help them recall stories where their knowledge was defective. The reliefs are not very accurate, so one can perhaps forgive Trimalchio for his errors. Some gems also show the episode,⁴⁶ and it is frequently to be found on sarcophagi.⁴⁷ A series of Attic sarcophagi of the late second century AD⁴⁸ sets three episodes side by side: in the centre Achilles stands in his chariot with Hektor's body below, on the right Priam beseeches a mourning Achilles, and on the left the gifts Priam has brought are being unloaded from the cart. The right hand scene was reproduced at very small scale on a lamp (Fig. 10)⁴⁹ dating from the mid third century AD, with Priam once more at the feet of his son's killer who as usual turns away in sadness, still mourning for the dead Patroklos.

The episode is not one of the more popular ones in Greek and Roman art but it continued to be chosen as an enduring subject for centuries. The change from poetic narrative to pictorial image in this particular episode shows the strategies that craftsmen had to devise to make sure that, even though the settings, dress and gifts might vary, the meaning of the story was plain to their clients.

As a coda to the classical versions, there is a more recent illustration of the episode – a relief of the late 18th / early 19th century by the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen.⁵⁰ He chose the same tradi-

⁴⁵ Brommer 1974, 98, nos. 3–5; *LIMC* I Achilleus cat. no. 679, a–c. See also A. Sadurska, *Les Tables Illiaques* (Warsaw 1964) and N. Horsfall, “Stesichorus at Bovillae?”, *JHS* 99 (1989) 26–48.

⁴⁶ Gems: Brommer 1974, 99, nos. 25, 28–32; *LIMC* I Achilleus cat. no. 680, a–i, pl. 127.

⁴⁷ Sarcophagi: Brommer 1974, 99–100, nos. 1–13; *LIMC* I Achilleus cat. nos. 690–708, pls. 128–129.

⁴⁸ For Attic sarcophagi, see Schefold (n. 17) 235–236, figs. 210–211; *LIMC* I Achilleus cat. nos. 690–708, pls. 128–129. See K. Bulas, “Les illustrations antiques de l’Iliade”, *Eos Supplementa* 3 (1929) 96–104 and P. Linant de Bellefonds, “Le rachat du corps de Hektor: un thème favori sur les sarcophages attiques”, *Antike Kunst* 25 (1982) 124–136, pls. 23–25.

⁴⁹ Lamp: Agora L 4490: *Agora VII* pl. 15, 637; Brommer 1974, 99, no. 21; *LIMC* I Achilleus cat. no. 710, pl. 129; Linant de Bellefonds (n. 48) pl. 25, 3. See also K. Kübler, “Zum Formwandel in der spätantiker attischen Tonplastik”, *JDAI* 67 (1952) 99–145.

⁵⁰ Copenhagen, Thorwaldsmuseum A 791: M. R. Scherer, *The Legends of Troy in Art and Literature* (London 1963) 92, fig. 75; B. Jørnaes, *Bertel Thorvaldsen*.

tional moment as on the sarcophagi: Priam kneels before a seated Achilles. On the right he included Achilles' two companions and omitted Hektor's body. However, the companions still do not help Achilles bring in the ransom – they are surplus to requirements. Thorwaldsen has Trojan helpers carry in the gifts, their Phrygian caps matching Priam's. Once again, the secrecy and the perilous nature of Priam's solo visit that are such a strong feature in Homer's account have sadly been forfeited.

Brian A. Sparkes

Southampton, England

Учитывая вариативность и адаптивность греческих мифов, не удивительно, что сцена выкупа Гектора, архаическая литературная версия которой доступна нам лишь по “Илиаде”, никогда не воспроизводилась в точности так же, как у Гомера. Поколения певцов вносили изменения в повествование, как, в свою очередь, и художники. Текущая повествовательность эпоса застывала, превращаясь в отдельные картины; ограничения, накладываемые размерами и формой, существенно влияли на создание композиций в изобразительном искусстве. Визуальную интерпретацию сюжета можно проследить начиная с VI века – главным образом по афинской расписной керамике, позднее и на другом материале. В архаическую эпоху художники изображали процессию слуг с дарами, неуместную в гомеровском повествовании; позднее, под влиянием аттической трагедии, распространенным мотивом стало взвешивание тела Гектора. Художники разрабатывали собственные методы для изображения впечатляющих образов этого эпизода.

La vita e l'opera dello scultore (Copenhagen 1993) 87. The similarity of the scene on the Hoby cup, found in 1920, to Thorvaldsen's relief cast short-lived doubt on its authenticity (see van H. Poulsen [n. 41] 70–71).