

8. MEDIA FOR THESEUS, OR: THE DIFFERENT IMAGES OF THE ATHENIAN POLIS-HERO*

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Greek heroes like Herakles, Achilles and Theseus were integral parts of what the Greeks regarded as their past. As such, even though not historical figures in the modern sense of the word, they were constituent elements of Greece's "intentional" and imagined history and cultural memory.¹ What was 'known' about these heroes was expressed in myths, in traditional stories told about them that took place in the remote past. But these stories did not constitute a set corpus of tales. Rather, the memory expressed in these myths was substantially negotiated through the reshaping of the heroic stories themselves. Greek myths were open to changes and adaptations according to the changing interests of their audiences and of those social agents in charge of retelling these myths. In this sense narrating myths was 'intentional,' even though not every change was intentional in the strict sense of the word.² Greek myths were narrated in oral, written and visual form. In the oral culture of archaic and classical Greece, visual representations of myths – permanent as well as performative ones – played an important role in transmitting and shaping these myths. Thus, constructed, visual images of Greek myths provide a highly important body of evidence from which to understand changes in and negotiations of myth as part of an imagined history.

In modern scholarship visual records of archaic and classical Greek mythology are very often taken as a homogeneous corpus of testimonia following identical – that is, visually and artistically defined – rules of iconography based on nar-

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1 GEHRKE 1994, 2001 and 2003 ("*intentionale Geschichte*"); ASSMANN 1999 ("*kulturelles Gedächtnis*"). Heroes and heroines: BRELICH 1958; KEARNS 1989; LYONS 1997; MILLER 2000; PIRENNE – DELFORGE 2000. Achilles: KOSSATZ – DEISSMANN 1981; KING 1987; LATACZ 1995. Herakles: BOARDMAN 1990; PADILLA 1998. Theseus: NEILS 1994; WOODFORD 1994; CALAME 1996; see below. Hero cults: FARNELL 1921; LARSON 1995; DEOUDI 1999; HÄGG 1999; BOEHRINGER 2001.

2 Myth: KIRK 1970 and 1974; BURKERT 1979, 1–5 (definition of myths as traditional tales); GRAF 1985, 7–14; ELLINGER 1987; VERNANT 1987; VEYNE 1987; DOWDEN 1992; SAID 1993; BUXTON 1994; HÖLSCHER 1999; GRAF 2000. Ancient term *mythos*: MEYER 1999. Changing and reshaping myths: KING 1987; VERNANT 1987, 240–1; MEIER 1988; CALAME 1996; SCHEER 1993; LATACZ 1995; PADILLA 1998.

ratives established by written texts.³ Nevertheless, not only did our written testimonia have different functions, agents and audiences – which produced different narratives – but images also appeared on pottery, as well as in architectural sculpture and statues, votive reliefs, paintings and terracottas. These images had different functions, addressed different audiences and were initiated by different patrons and artists of varied skill. Most of the images on Attic vases, for instance, even though very often exported to Italy,⁴ were produced for viewing in Athens during symposia, while others were used during funerals or as votives dedicated in sanctuaries.⁵ On the other hand, the same myths that are displayed on these vases appear in Athenian architectural sculpture, though with completely different functions, in different material and with different modes of reception.⁶ Hence, material, technique, iconography, style, visibility, function, audience and reception together define different groups of visual images as what we can call visual media. These media regulated visual communication by their specific sets of qualities. It is under these conditions that visual representations of myths were read by and produced meaning for ancient viewers.⁷

If we take architectural sculpture – that is, reliefs and sculptures in the round adorning temples or other public buildings – as one example of such a visual medium, another crucial point becomes obvious.⁸ The design of figural architectural sculpture was the result of conventions and of deliberate decisions made by the

3 Cf. SCHEFOLD 1978; SCHEFOLD – JUNG 1988; SCHEFOLD 1993; SHAPIRO 1994; WOODFORD 2003, and the conception of the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (with review GIULIANI 1997). GIULIANI 2003 focuses upon techniques of narration, JUNKER 2005 provides an introductory overview.

4 Cf. REUSSER 1995; FLESS 1999; OSBORNE 2002; STEINER 2007, 234–6. For the relation between export interests and images, and for exceptional cases of the designing of images with regard for the wishes of foreign purchasers: SHAPIRO 2000; SCHMIDT 2005, 24. Cf. for ‘Etruscan’ readings of vase-paintings, ISLER-KERENYI 1997 and the discussion between MARCONI 2004 and OSBORNE 2004. A possibly too optimistic view of Attic *specifica* in vase-painting is proposed by WEBSTER 1972, but cf. also KRON 1988, for ‘deeply’ Attic themes.

5 The different functions of Attic vases have not been studied comprehensively, cf. only: SCHEIBLER 1983, 11–58; SPARKES 1996, 155–67; KREUZER 1998, 32–41; BOARDMAN 2001; MANNACK 2002, 37–52; JUNKER 2002; RATHJE 2002; SCHMIDT 2005, 22–7. For the symposium use of Attic vases: LISSARRAGUE 1987, VIERNEISEL 1990 and recently NEER 2002, 9–26 and STEINER 2007, 231–64. The vases from the Athenian agora (cf. MOORE 1986; ROTROFF – OAKLEY 1992; MOORE 1997) and from the Athenian acropolis (GRAEF – LANGLOTZ 1925–33) provide a good insight into the choice of themes in Athens herself.

6 For broader surveys of architectural sculpture and/or its elements cf. DEMANGEL 1933; LAPALUS 1947; KÄHLER 1949; DELIVORRIAS 1974; FELTEN 1984; KNELL 1990; CASTRIOTA 1992; BUITRON-OLIVER 1997; RIDGWAY 1999; CLEMENTE 2007. A volume on “Structure, Image, Ornament. Architectural Sculpture in the Greek World,” proceedings of a conference at Athens in 2004, organised by P. Schultz and me, is in preparation for print, see BARRINGER forthcoming, and VON DEN HOFF forthcoming b. More specific questions are addressed by OSBORNE 1994 and 2000.

7 VON HESBERG 2003a, 9–12.

8 For architectural sculpture as a medium of visual communication see VON HESBERG et al. 2003.

buildings' patrons and sculptors.⁹ On the other hand, besides the guiding interests of patrons and sculptors, which are almost always unknown to us, individual readings of such sculptures by their viewers must have been another relevant factor. The Athenian women in Euripides' *Ion* (vv. 184–218) are a telling witness of this.¹⁰ They enter Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi and admire the reliefs and pediments of the god's temple. While doing so, they start talking about the different heroic deeds of Herakles and Perseus depicted high on the temple walls. It is in the middle of this process of viewing that they turn to another image: a gigantomachy. Here, they suddenly focus upon a single figure. They recognise what they call "our goddess," that is, Athena. Thus, the process of viewing and understanding architectural sculpture, as imagined by Euripides, includes a situation in which the beholders, Athenian women in Delphi, while looking at images of myth adorning a temple, express their cultural identity and personal interests. What is obvious here is that a personal identification with the figures depicted in architectural sculpture must have been another important factor in their reception – though not necessarily a guiding principle for the choice of themes by the temple's builders. This will be true as well for vase-painting or other media. Hence, even within a single visual medium the discourse of (changing/different) meanings and readings of heroic images is a complex field. It depended not only on the character of the medium, the patrons' and sculptors' original 'intentions,' the sculptors' skill, the setting and conventions, but also on the viewers' cultural disposition, their interests in reception and many other factors, often rather opaque to us.

This chapter provides a contribution to understanding this complex discourse. Its purpose is to explore to what extent the design and themes of mythological images in architectural sculpture and vase-painting were distinct from each other, and how their particular character as visual media was related to the function, reception and use of these images – that is, to the interests of the people who were addressed by these images and of those who were addressing others by commissioning works of art that made use of mythological scenes. Did these media employ specific forms of narrating, of creating visual history and 'spinning time'? And were the ways in which they represented myths related to the identity of patrons and the contexts in which the images were used and seen during the same period of time and within the same historical framework?¹¹ In a limited case study, I will only try to outline the specific iconographic and thematic character of Athenian public architectural sculpture and vase-painting that features one mythological figure, Theseus, in the late sixth through the middle of the fifth century. Theseus became Athens' polis-hero during the sixth century. He is often present in Athenian architectural sculpture of the period under discussion, and his omni-

9 KNELL 1990, xi; BUITRON-OLIVER 1997, 9; RIDGWAY 1999, 143–219.

10 KOSTER 1976; ZEITLIN 1994; VOGT 1998; RIDGWAY 1999, 9 with n. 24; STANSBURY-O'DONNELL 1999, 63–5; cf. also STEINER 2001, 44–50; VON HESBERG 2003, 112–13 for further examples.

11 Cf. OSBORNE 2000; VON HESBERG et al. 2003.

presence in Athenian vase-painting of this period is well known.¹² Hence, the images of Theseus provide a useful body of evidence with which to compare architectural sculpture and vase-painting, two of the most prominent visual media in archaic and classical Athens, and to clarify differences between these media and their aesthetic conventions.¹³

The Theseus theme emerges in Athens' visual culture and specifically in Attic vase-painting in the time of Solon, around 570. From this time on, the slaying of monsters like the Minotaur and the centaurs and (only rarely) the collective rescue of the Athenian children on Crete were the Theseus stories told in images on Attic vases.¹⁴ Around 520/10 a new cycle of adventures found its way into Athenian vase-painting: Theseus' deeds along the road from Troizen to Athens, his slaying of brutal villains like Sinis, Kerkyon, Skiron and Prokrustes (figs. 1–2 and 6), as well as the rape of the Amazon queen Antiope. The introduction of these images – fights against pitiless human robbers and the seizure of a woman as a luxurious and prestigious object – signifies that Theseus, the archaic polis-hero, became a figure within a new construction of identity long before the Persian Wars and not as a result of Athens' success at Marathon.¹⁵ This trend had its heyday in the decade around 500, just after the reforms of Kleisthenes. At this time, we do not find new stories about Theseus, but rather new modes of telling these stories: multiple new and old deeds of Theseus were first arranged together on a single vase as a set of heroic events with the hero appearing up to five times on the same vessel (so-called 'cycle-vases,' fig. 2). Both power in fighting human injustice and overwhelming, constant activity, the *polypragmosyne* of Athens' most important hero, were now crucial elements of Theseus' image, and thus of Athenian self-definition in this period.¹⁶

It was also in the years after Kleisthenes that Theseus first appeared in Athenian architectural sculpture, namely in the metopes of the Athenian treasury in the panhellenic sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. It is still unclear when exactly between 510 and 490/80 the treasury was built as a collective Athenian dedication to Apollo.¹⁷ By now, more and more scholars prefer a date shortly after the battle of

12 WALKER 1995; CALAME 1996; MILLS 1997; LUCE 1998. Surveys of Theseus images: NEILS 1987; SHAPIRO 1989, 145–6; NEILS 1994; WOODFORD 1994; FLASHAR 2003; SERVADEI 2005.

13 This will go beyond the usual comparisons of visual records in order to reconstruct missing parts of sculptured images or to recover references made by the artists, cf. only HOFFELNER 1988; SCHWAB 1989.

14 First Attic Theseus images in the sixth century: SHAPIRO 1989, 143–9; KREUZER 2003; MUTH 2004; KREUZER 2005; HOMME-WÉRY 2006; TORELLI 2007; VON DEN HOFF forthcoming a; see also SHAPIRO 1991. MUTH 2008 was published too late to be considered here.

15 New deeds: NEILS 1987; NEILS 1994; VON DEN HOFF 2003; KREUZER 2003; see further bibliography above n. 12.

16 NEER 2002, 154–64; VON DEN HOFF 2002; VON DEN HOFF 2003; for cycle-vases see also below n. 36.

17 For the Athenian Treasury: AUDIAT 1933; DE LA COSTE-MESSELIÈRE 1957; GAUER 1968, 45–65; BOARDMAN 1982, 2–4 and 9–15; FLOREN 1987, 247–50 (with further bibliography); KNELL 1990, 52–63; STEWART 1990, 132 figs. 211–17; BÜSING 1992; BANKEL 1993, 169–

Marathon in 490, when a victory monument for Marathon was set up in front of the treasury. Nevertheless, there are reliable reasons to separate the building of the

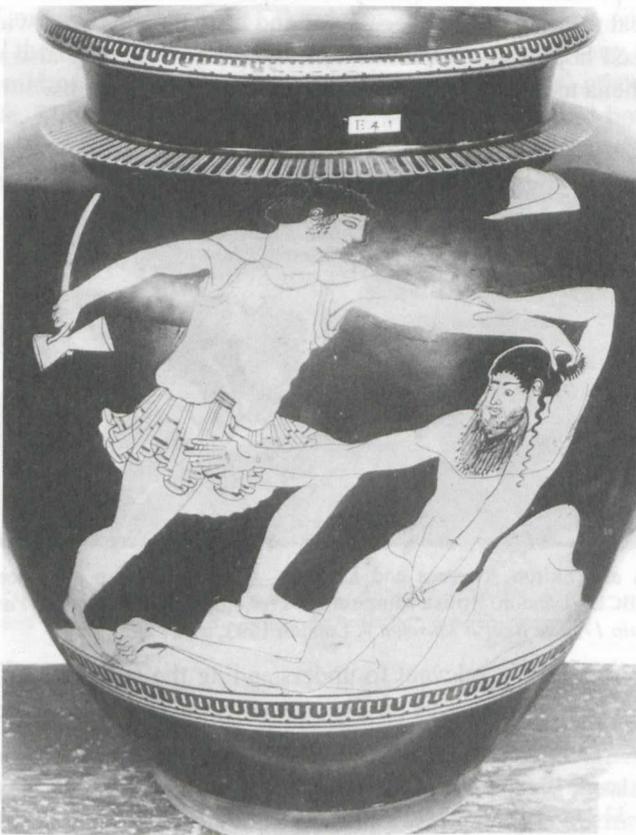


Fig. 1: Theseus and Procrustes. Attic stamnos (around 490/80 BCE). London, British Museum E 441 (photograph courtesy of the British Museum, London).

treasury from the erection of the Marathon base, and to date the beginning of the works for the treasury in the time before 490, as art historians have argued earlier.¹⁸ The Marathon base seems to have been added after 490 in front of the

70; BOMMELAER 1993, 133–8 (also for the Marathon monument); RIDGWAY 1993, 343–6; AMANDRY 1998 (also for the Marathon monument); JACQUEMIN 1999, 315–16 no. 077 (Marathon monument) and no. 086 (with further bibliography); RAUSCH 1999, 92–106 and 129–132; RIDGWAY 1999, 88–9; PATRIDA 2000, 48–70; NEER 2004 (with further bibliography); VON DEN HOFF forthcoming b.

18 ALSCHER 1961, 234–6 n. 117; KLEINE 1973, 94–7; see also DINSMOOR 1946 (ornamental decoration before 490), BANKEL 1993, 169–70 (architecture before 490). For the different suggestions regarding the date cf. bibliography in the previous n. and, to take only the German positions: GAUER 1968, 51–65 (after 490); GAUER 1980, 128 (started after 499); BROMMER 1982, 68 with n. 8 (510/00); FLOREN 1987, 247 (around/shortly before 500); MARTINI 1990, 249–50 (shortly before 500); BÜSING 1992 (after 490; painted decoration fin-

building's south side in order to change the 'message' of the treasury and to make it, indeed, a victory monument for Marathon.¹⁹ If this is true, the Athenians started to erect their splendid marble treasury at Delphi in the decade after their revolutionary political reforms under Kleisthenes and after the first great victory of their newly organised hoplite forces in 507/6,²⁰ at a time when they also started to rebuild their Athena temples on the late archaic acropolis at Athens.²¹

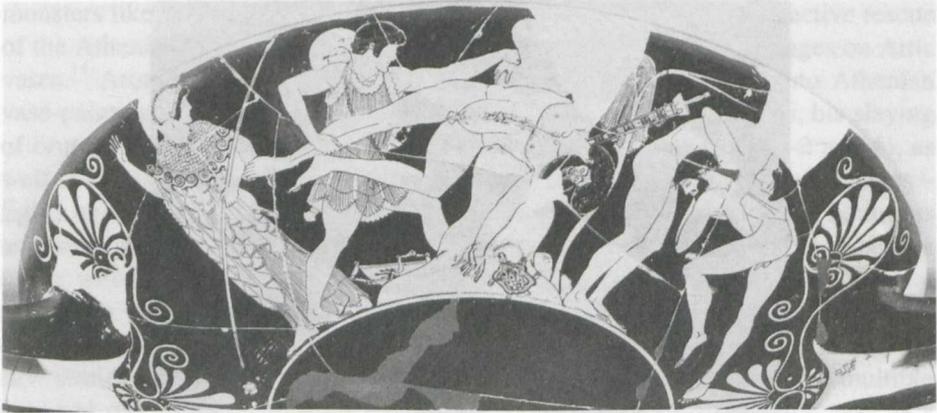


Fig. 2: Theseus and Skiron, Theseus and Kerkyon. Attic 'cycle'-cup with deeds of Theseus (around 490/80 BCE), London, British Museum E 48 (photograph after *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, Great Britain 17, The British Museum 9*, London 1993, pl. 27 b).

Such a date is highly relevant to understanding the sculpture of the treasury, namely its metopes, which focus on Theseus (figs. 3–5) and Herakles.²² As Rich-

ished even later); BANKEL 1993, 169–70 (started before 490, finished afterwards); RAUSCH 1999, 129–32 (around 500); BRINKMANN 2002, 354 (after 490); FITTSCHEN 2003 (before 490); VON DEN HOFF forthcoming b (before 490). AMANDRY 1998; BRINKMANN 2002; and NEER 2004 favor a date after 490 also due to a ledge of stones below the treasury's south wall, on which the Marathon base is situated (AMANDRY 1998, 87 fig. 7; AUDIAT 1930, pls. 15–6; AUDIAT 1933, pls. 1 and 5 ["coupe γ-δ"]; HANSEN 1975, pl. 6). As FITTSCHEN 2003, 13–14, has observed, this ledge can be found also below the other walls of the treasury and thus cannot be taken as decisive argument for the contemporary building of both, cf. VON DEN HOFF forthcoming b.

- 19 Thus, Pausanias by saying that the treasury was set up "from those spoils taken from the army that landed with Datis at Marathon" (10.11.5) embraced what the Athenians tried to achieve by setting up the Marathon base in front of their older treasury.
- 20 In addition to the arguments mentioned above, cf. n. 18, the quality of the treasury's metopes makes it quite improbable to assume that sculptors of such skill have worked in such a late-archaic style between 490 and 480.
- 21 For building activities on the Acropolis see: KORRES 1993; KORRES 1997, 218–43; cf. HURWIT 1998, 121–36; HOLTZMANN 2003, 82–7.
- 22 For the metopes see: DE LA COSTE-MESSELIÈRE 1957; RIDGWAY 1977, 236–8; BOARDMAN 1978, 159–60 fig. 213; SCHEFOLD 1978, 165–8; GAUER 1980; BROMMER 1982, 68–9 pls. 1–4 a; DEMARGNE 1984, 1012 no. 596 pl. 762; HOFFELNER 1988; BOARDMAN et al. 1990, 7 no. 1703; KNELL 1990, 52–63; STEWART 1990, 132 figs. 211–17; MARCADÉ – CROISSANT 1991, 57–60; FRONING 1992, 135–8 figs. 6–8; WOODFORD 1992, 576 no. 26 pl. 320; MAAS 1993,

ard Neer has recently underlined, the Athenian and the panhellenic hero were juxtaposed at Delphi to highlight Athens' claim of special relationships to both. But if both appear, what were their different roles and how were these roles divided? Four sets of metopes belonging to the Athenian treasury, each with a different mythological theme, are preserved. Herakles and Geryoneus belong to the western rear of the building. The *communis opinio* arranges Herakles' other deeds above the north side, Theseus' deeds (fig. 3) above the south side and both heroes' (or only Theseus') amazonomachy above the building's east side, the side of the treasury's entrance. Every visitor will see the south side first as he approaches the

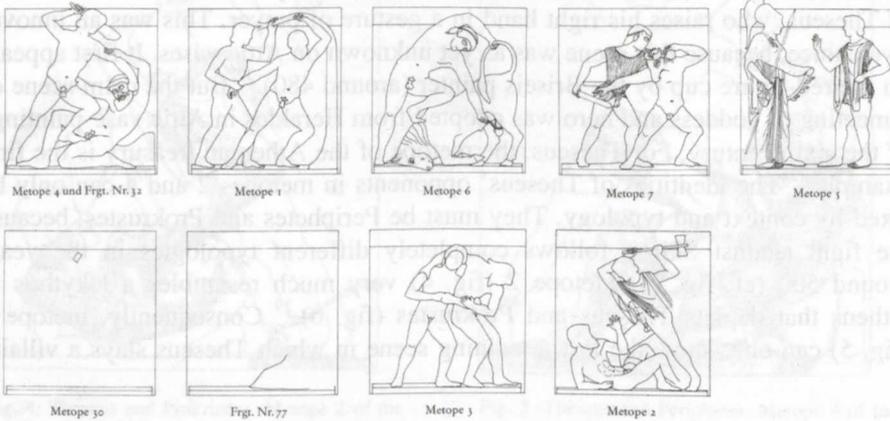


Fig. 3: Deeds of Theseus. South metopes of the Athenian treasury at Delphi (drawing after Hoffelner 1988, Beilage 5).

treasury from the sanctuary's entrance. It is here that Athena, Athens' polis-goddess, appears in the metopes, and this is also the side featuring Theseus' deeds.²³ As far as the arrangement of the other metopes is concerned, in contrast to the *communis opinio* Klaus Hoffelner has argued that the Herakles metopes belong to the treasury's east side, while the amazonomachy adorned the north side of the building. This is indeed the most convincing solution given the themes, number and shapes of the metopes.²⁴ This new arrangement is of great relevance: The amazonomachy in the north was only rarely seen by any visitor. Rather it is Herakles, who appears above the building's entrance (below Athena in the pediment), who is the most prominent part of the treasury, while Theseus is first seen on the south side by visitors approaching from the sanctuary's entrance. This achieves a more or less fair distribution between the two heroes.

The Athenian interest in Theseus, as manifest by his appearance in the treas-

168–75; NEILS 1994, 928 no. 54 pls. 633–4; STANSBURY-O'DONNELL 1999, 146–9; NEER 2004.

23 Cf. HOFFELNER 1988, 102–8.

24 HOFFELNER 1988; VON DEN HOFF forthcoming b; cf. also RIDGWAY 1999, 88–9. Thus, the (Attic?) amazonomachy is no longer positioned in the middle between Herakles' and Theseus' deeds, HOFFELNER 1988, 108–17.

ury's metopes (fig. 3), is more precisely defined by the iconography which was chosen for each of his deeds, and by these iconographies' relationships to other contemporary images of Theseus, namely in Attic vase-painting. Metope 1 depicts Theseus' fight against Sinis. Theseus is holding the villain's tree, which he will soon use to hurl the brutal robber through the air. The same typology is common on Attic vases since the late sixth century.²⁵ In addition, metope 3, the wrestling match with Kerkyon, metope 6, the fight with the Marathonian bull, and metope 7, the slaying of the Minotaur, all adopt vase-painting typology of the years around 500.²⁶ In this regard, the metopes follow conventional patterns of representation in both visual media. On the other hand, metope 5 shows Athena in front of Theseus, who raises his right hand in a gesture of prayer. This was an innovative choice, because this scene was as yet unknown on Attic vases. It first appears on the red-figure cup by the Briseis painter (around 480).²⁷ But the calm scene of a meeting of goddess and hero was adopted from Herakles in Attic vase-paintings of the sixth century. For Theseus, the metope of the Athenian treasury is the first example.²⁸ The identities of Theseus' opponents in metopes 2 and 4 can only be fixed by context and typology. They must be Periphetes and Prokrustes, because the fight against Skiron follows completely different typologies in the years around 500 (cf. fig. 2). Metope 2 (fig. 4) very much resembles a lekythos in Athens that depicts Theseus and Prokrustes (fig. 6).²⁹ Consequently, metope 4 (fig. 5) can only show the last remaining scene in which Theseus slays a villain:

- 25 Metope 1 (Sinis): HOFFELNER 1988, 78 fig. 1; cf. only NEILS 1994, 926 no. 33 pl. 623; no. 36 pl. 625; 927 no. 44 pl. 627; 927–8 no. 46 pl. 629; 929 nos. 64, 67, 72 pls. 638–9; SERVADEI 2005, 36–8.
- 26 Metope 3 (Kerkyon): HOFFELNER 1988, 80 fig. 3; cf. NEILS 1994, 923 no. 33 pl. 623; 926 no. 36 pl. 625; no. 39 pl. 626; 927 no. 41 pl. 626; no. 44 pl. 627; 927–8 no. 46 pl. 629; 932 no. 109 pl. 644; SERVADEI 2005, 42–4. Metope 6 (bull): HOFFELNER 1988, 84 fig. 6; cf. NEILS 1994, 926 no. 34 pl. 624; no. 36 pl. 625; 937 no. 198–91 pls. 655–7; SERVADEI 2005, 73–5. Metope 7 (Minotaur): HOFFELNER 1988, 84–6 fig. 7; cf. YOUNG 1972; WOODFORD 1992, 547–81; WOODFORD 1994, 941 no. 238 pl. 661; SZUFNAR 1995; SERVADEI 2005, 100–10; MUTH 2004.
- 27 Metope 5 (Athena): HOFFELNER 1988, 83 fig. 5. Athena possibly held a helmet in her left hand (KASPER-BUTZ 1990, 178; VON DEN HOFF forthcoming b) as often in vase-paintings of this period, cf. NEILS 1994 nos. 190 and 311; KUNISCH 1974. Rf. cup by the Briseis painter, New York, Metropolitan Mus. 53.11.4; 1970.46: ARV² 406.7; NEILS 1987, 96–7; 161 no. 59 fig. 48; SCHEFOLD – JUNG 1988, 242–3 fig. 293; NEILS 1994, 947 no. 309 pl. 666; SERVADEI 2005, 176–8 fig. 75.
- 28 BROMMER 1982, 69. For Herakles and Athena: BECKEL 1961, 41–66; MOMMSEN 1989; BOARDMAN et al. 1990, 143–54; KUNISCH 1990. The only similar Theseus scene of this period: NEILS 1987, 74 and 157 no. 29; NEILS 1994, 947 no. 308.
- 29 Metope 2 (Prokrustes): HOFFELNER 1988, 78–80 with n. 10 (further bibliography) fig. 2, comparing the lekythos Athens, National Mus. 515 (here fig. 6): ABV 518; HOFFELNER 1988, 103 fig. 32; NEILS 1994, 929 no. 63; 933 no. 123; cf. also below n. 33; VON DEN HOFF 2001, 83. Usually, at this time, Theseus, fighting Prokrustes, holds the hammer behind his back and grasps the villain's head, cf. here fig. 1 and NEILS 1994, 926 no. 33 pl. 623; no. 36 pl. 625; 933 nos. 126–8 pl. 646; no. 133 pl. 647; nos. 134, 136, 137, 140 pl. 648; SERVADEI 2005, 44–6.

the death of Periphetes. This is again astonishing, because Periphetes almost never appears in vase-painting cycles of Theseus' adventures, and never before around 470/60.³⁰ The reason for this choice seems obvious. According to the myth, it was only against Periphetes that Theseus used a club. The club was best known as Herakles' weapon.³¹ Depicting Theseus and Periphetes made the Athenian hero similar to Herakles, his pendant in the treasury's metopes, as did metope 5 with Theseus and Athena.

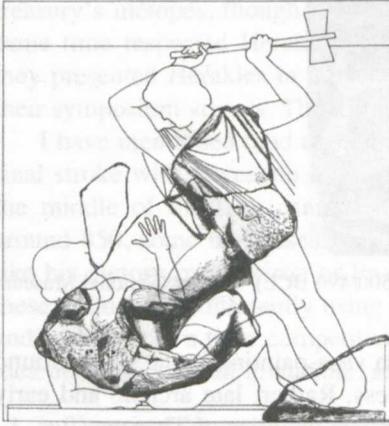


Fig. 4: Theseus and Prokrustes. Metope 2 of the Athenian treasury at Delphi (drawing after Hoffelner 1988, fig. 4).



Fig. 5: Theseus and Periphetes. Metope 4 of the Athenian treasury at Delphi (drawing after Hoffelner 1988, fig. 2).

Metopes 2 and 4 are unusual in another sense. Even though much is lost of the depicted figures, Theseus' motion (metope 4) and his preserved shoulder (metope 2) strongly suggest that he was holding his weapon above his head and/or executing a final stroke. Such an attack is only possible if the attacker is fearless of any counter-strike, because the whole right side of his body is defenceless. What we could call a 'final stroke posture' is always a risk and, by the same token, a sign of high self-confidence – a *signum* of the attacker's invincible *tolma*, as Andrew Stewart also has argued. It was later adopted for the statue of Harmodios, the tyrant-slayer, in the Athenian agora (fig. 11).³² Around 500 (and even around 490), to depict Theseus in this manner was unusual, though not unknown. The above-mentioned lekythos (fig. 6), another lekythos with Theseus and Skiron, and an early red-figure cup are the only examples among more than 20 other images.³³

30 Metope 4 (Periphetes?): HOFFELNER 1988, 82–3 fig. 4 (also with further bibliography). Theseus and Periphetes in other images: NEILS 1994, 927 no. 45; 928 no. 55; 929 no. 61.

31 COHEN 1994.

32 STEWART 1985, 63; STEWART 1997, 75; VON DEN HOFF 2001; cf. TAYLOR 1991, for the motif also SHEFTON 1960; SUTER 1975; FEHR 1984, 22; ERMINI 1997.

33 Theseus using a weapon raised above his head in the latest sixth century: lekythos, Berlin, Staatliche Museen 1984.61 (WEHGARTNER 1991, 19–20 pl. 6; NEILS 1994, 931 no. 100).



Fig. 6: Theseus and Prokrustes, Attic lekythos (around 500/490 BCE). Athens, National Museum Inv. 515 (photograph after Hoffelner 1988, fig. 32)

Hence, although this iconography was known in vase-painting in the years around 500, in this medium it did not have any success. Rather, late archaic and early classical vase-painting favoured other, more archaic qualities of Theseus (figs. 1–2): not his invincible *tolma*, but his agonistic qualities in competitive, equal fights, even though his future victory is always made clear.³⁴ Compared to this representation of Theseus in the late sixth century, the way in which Theseus was depicted on metopes 2 and 4 of the Athenian treasury underlined much more strongly his self-confident, bold power – that is, his superiority. Thus, around 500, not only was Theseus' image in the treasury's metopes at Delphi designed decisively to establish a firm relationship with Herakles, but the set of sculpture on public display also aimed at depicting a still traditional (as most metopes show), but in some scenes more superior Theseus than owners of Athenian vases were used to seeing. In Delphi, in the years after 507, to express Athenian superiority must have been a priority for the dedicants of the treasury, the Athenian polis itself.³⁵

Another point of difference between the public images of the treasury at Delphi and Attic vase-painting of the same time is important. Theseus cycles – that is, the depiction of multiple deeds of the hero continuously on one vase – were established in Attic vase-painting around 510/500 (fig. 2). In architectural sculpture,

Lekythos, Athens, National Mus. 515 (above n. 29). Cup, Paris, Louvre G 71 (NEILS 1994, 933 no. 132). See below n. 49.

34 VON DEN HOFF 2001, 82–3; cf. MUTH 2004 for late archaic images of Theseus slaying the Minotaur and their character, though with different focus, cf. also MUTH 2008.

35 The bold, superior engagement characterises Theseus in another public monument of late sixth-century Athenian public sculpture, in a sculpture group with Theseus slaying Prokrustes (?) from the acropolis: NEILS 1987, 45–6, 177 no. S 1 figs. 16–17; NEILS 1994, 934 no. 155; HURWIT 1999, 126 fig. 104. Here, Theseus also fights with a weapon raised above his head.

the Athenian treasury is an early example of a comparable technique of narrative (fig. 3). But while it was also used for both Herakles and Theseus in Attic architectural sculpture afterwards (witness the Hephaestion metopes discussed below) and for Theseus on Athenian symposium vases (more than 20 examples, mostly cups), there are almost no examples of Herakles cycles in Attic vase-painting (only two kraters, and both by the Kleophrades painter).³⁶ On their symposium vessels, the Athenians seem to have focused more on the multiple activities of their polis-hero than on Herakles' best-known cycle of deeds. Thus, the Athenian treasury's metopes, though innovative in certain elements of iconography, at the same time respected Herakles' traditional panhellenic importance. Furthermore, they presented Herakles in a cycle of deeds, as the Athenians only rarely did on their symposium vessels. The differences of media are obvious.

I have mentioned (and argued elsewhere) that in Attic vase-painting Theseus' final stroke with a weapon high above his head became dominant shortly before the middle of the fifth century, despite a few forerunners around 500. As of around 450, some of Theseus' deeds have changed typology almost completely, like his victory over Skiron or Prokrustes (fig. 7). Theseus is now able to defeat these villains by confidently using their possessions as weapons in a final blow – and no longer in a truly competitive, equal physical fight like before.³⁷ Hence, the idea of Theseus as an invincible, self-confident victor, cautiously presented in the



Fig. 7: Theseus and Prokrustes, Theseus and Skiron. Attic 'cycle'-cup with deeds of Theseus (around 440/30 BCE). London, British Museum E 84 (photo, courtesy of the British Museum London).

Athenian treasury half a century before, became dominant in Athenian symposium imagery not before the age of Perikles. It is unclear if this happened as a

36 Theseus cycles on Attic vases: BROMMER 1982, 65–8; NEILS 1987, 143–8; SCHEFOLD – JUNG 1988, 236–51; TAYLOR 1991; FRONING 1992 (also for other cycles); NEILS 1994, 926–8 nos. 32–53 pls. 623–32; STANSBURY-O'DONNELL 1999, 149–55; VON DEN HOFF 2002; VON DEN HOFF 2003; WOODFORD 2003, 23–4; SERVADEI 2005, 48–52. Herakles cycles on Attic vases: FRONING 1992, 131–54 figs. 10–15 (rf. crater Malibu, J. P. Getty Museum 84.AE.974); 16–19 (rf. crater Malibu, J. P. Getty Museum 77.AE.11); BOARDMAN et al. 1990, 7 no. 1702 pl. 9 (ibid. 6 mentions an earlier Corinthian example).

37 VON DEN HOFF 2001; cf. further bibliography above n. 32. Some of the relevant images are listed below in n. 49.

slow adoption of the public imagery by the vase-painters. But if so, why was this adoption so late? The fact that we know of some rare earlier examples of this iconography on vases (fig. 6) does not support the idea of a slow and late adoption.³⁸ Rather it appears that, in Attic vase-painting around 500, such a self-confident image of Theseus was only one of many experimental solutions for describing the qualities of Athens' polis-hero in vase-painting, but it was an unsuccessful one. Such an image seems not to have been what the Athenians wanted to look at on vases. Hence, the reason for the failure of this iconography in late sixth-century vase-painting, and for its success in contemporary architectural sculpture may also have been the different character of these visual media.

What were the reasons for this variability in talking about Theseus in different visual media? One important difference between vase-painting and architectural sculpture lies in their specific practical function. Most of the Theseus cycles appear on cups and kraters – that is, on symposium vases, which were used (and, due to their size, were only understandable as narratives) in smaller circles of users. Images of architectural (and other public) sculpture were visible abroad in panhellenic sanctuaries, and at Athens to many visitors.³⁹ They not only addressed a much wider Greek and foreign audience but were also designed for public and official commissions. This stands in contrast to the production of vases, which were shaped by individual potters', painters' and buyers' interests. Hence, Attic vases, though often exported to Etruria, are representatives of a visual discourse internal to the polis. It appears that, around 500, this inner-polis discourse included a greater variety of images of Theseus and, as a whole, was more focused on Theseus as a traditional, agonistic fighter, while in public sculpture the Athenians presented a more far-reaching image of their hero's superiority. Later, around the middle of the fifth century, the inner-polis discourse became dominated by the new idea of Theseus as invincible superhero. On the other hand, the public character of the Athenian treasury could also have led to a different image of Theseus within the panhellenic context that resulted from the setting of the treasury in Delphi. Possibly, this gave reason to focus on Herakles as well, and to introduce and construct Theseus, who was less known to the audience at Delphi, as a hero comparable to the well-known panhellenic Herakles and his highly renowned cycle of deeds.

Another Athenian set of metopes featuring Theseus helps to clarify this idea: the metopes of the Hephaisteion on the Kolonos Agoraios, high above the western side of Athens' political centre, the agora (figs. 8–10).⁴⁰ It was around 460/50 that

38 See above n. 35.

39 It would be interesting to ask if the conventions of narration also differed in vase-painting and architectural sculpture, cf. for the vases GIULIANI 2003.

40 For the Hephaisteion and its metopes: SAUER 1899, 155–79 pls. 4–5; DINSMOOR 1941; KÄHLER 1949; LIPPOLD 1950, 158; KOCH 1955 121–5 pls. 24–7; MORGAN 1962; 1963; RIDGWAY 1981, 26–30 figs. 7–10; BROMMER 1982, 69–70 pls. 4b–7; DÖRIG 1985, 74–9; BOARDMAN 1991, 146 fig. 111; NEILS 1987, 126–8; 177 S3 figs. 70–5; HOFFELNER 1988, 111–12 fig. 39; SCHEFOLD – JUNG 1988, 246–50 figs. 299–300; BOARDMAN et al. 1990, 7 no. 1706 pls. 12–13; KNELL 1990, 127–39; WOODFORD 1992, 575 no. 11 pl. 317 (Minotaur);

the Athenians decided to depict both Theseus and Herakles in the metopes of this prominent public building. Sculptural style and mason marks on the temple's marble tiles indicate that the roof as well as the earliest metopes were carved during this first phase of construction around 450, although the building was not completed before the later fifth century.⁴¹ In Athens after Ephialtes' reforms, the decision of how to decorate the Hephaisteion as a public temple must have gone through the usual political process, that is, it must have been officially sanctioned by demos and boule and followed by the architects and sculptors, who had to make official reports about their plans and activities.⁴² Thus, the choice of themes and iconographies in the metopes must reflect majority ideas of this time, even though we do not know if political factions or leaders played a role in this process.⁴³ As on the Athenian treasury, the Athenians claim both the panhellenic hero Herakles and the polis-hero Theseus as their primary heroic examples. What we know about the Marathon painting in the Stoa Poikile, painted only some years before, points in the same direction. Here, Theseus and Herakles appeared together with Athena as heroic supporters of the Athenians.⁴⁴ The panhellenic connection, so vividly played out in Delphi much earlier, received new interest in fifth-century Athens itself.

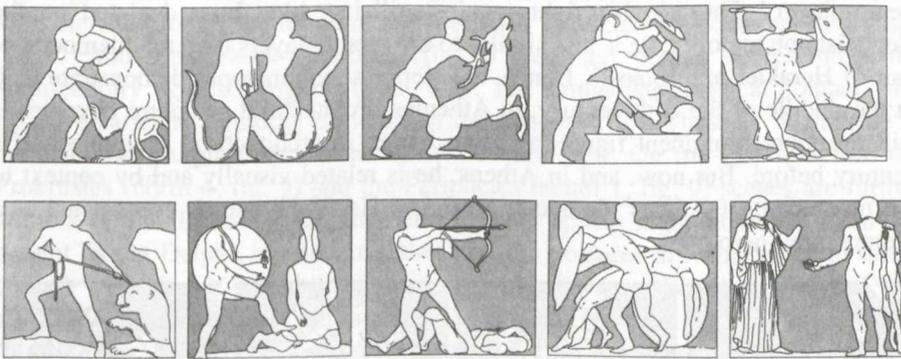


Fig. 8: Deeds of Heracles. East metopes 1 – 10 of the Hephaisteion at Athens. Athens, Hephaisteion (drawing after Knell 1990, fig. 198).

DELIVORRIAS 1993; NEILS 1994, 928 no. 55 pls. 635–6; CRUCIANI – FIORINI 1998, 79–142 pls. 7–11; REBER 1998; YEROULANOU 1998; see now also BARRINGER forthcoming.

- 41 For the date cf. DINSMOOR 1941, 152–3; WYATT – EDMONDSON 1984; KOTSIDOU 1995, 93; REBER 1998, 32. YEROULANOU 1998, 404–7 has observed no changes of planning between design of the metopes and architecture of the temple. The exact date 449 for the beginning (DINSMOOR 1941) is dubious; the frieze was carved during the second half of the fifth century.
- 42 Cf. BURFORD 1969; LAUTER 1974; HIMMELMANN 1979; RIDGWAY 1999, 186–219.
- 43 The Hephaisteion has often been related to Kimon (see only BOERSMA 1964; CRUCIANI – FIORINI 1998, 109–31), rarely to Perikles (MORGAN 1963, 102–8), but neither can be proved with any certainty.
- 44 Paus. 1.15.3 (Theseus emerging from the Attic soil, thus demonstrating his direct relationship to Attica). Cf. now STANSBURY-O'DONNELL 2005.

If we compare the cycle of metopes from the Delphi treasury and the Athenian Hephaisteion it appears that, also in Athens, Herakles occupies the most prominent position above the entrance of the building in the east (fig. 8). But now Herakles has Athena as his companion (metope east 10), and Herakles appears more often (ten metopes, versus eight with Theseus). Metope east 2 provides a further new feature: Herakles and Iolaos together fight the Lernean hydra. This joint action in itself is nothing new, but the protagonists' parallel motion with at least one of them holding a weapon above his head is unusual – though, of course, well known, since this is the guise of the tyrant-slayers' statues (fig. 11), which were set up a quarter of a century before the Hephaisteion was built and could be seen opposite the temple's front, down on the agora.⁴⁵ In this particular visual context, two heroes, moving and acting like Harmodios and Aristogeiton must have appeared as paradigmatic fighters for democracy. Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (vv. 631–2) is a telling witness of this idea. Here, fighting side by side with Aristogeiton's statue on the agora (i.e., in the guise of Harmodios) is a definite sign of democratic habit.⁴⁶ It is interesting that Herakles and Iolaos were depicted in this posture at a time when, in Attic vase-painting, it was Theseus who more often acted as the superior victor in the typical posture of Harmodios (fig. 7). But Theseus usually acts alone. Only in centauromachies and amazonomachies is he a 'team-player.' Thus, in his fights against villains, like those depicted on the Hephaisteion metopes, he is less similar to the tyrant-slayers than the 'democratic' pair of Herakles and Iolaos.⁴⁷ Hence, the Hephaisteion metopes demonstrate that, in the middle of the fifth century, in Athenian architectural sculpture Herakles is still the more prominent figure, as he had been in architectural sculpture half a century before. But now, and in Athens, he is related visually and by context to the monument of Athens' democratic origins. He, if anyone, is constructed as a 'democratic' hero.

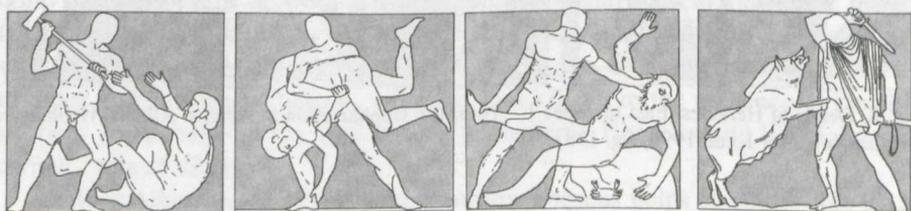


Fig. 9: Deeds of Theseus. North metopes 4 – 1 of the Hephaisteion at Athens. Athens, Hephaisteion (drawing after Knell 1990, fig. 201).

On the Hephaisteion, Theseus appears only in the eight easternmost metopes on the north (fig. 9) and south side (fig. 10), thus framing his panhellenic companion. All deeds depicted in the Delphi metopes were set on stage again, except for

45 For the tyrannicides cf. FEHR 1984; STEWART 1990, 135–6 figs. 227–31; STEWART 1997, 69–75; KRUMEICH 2002, 221–2 and 237–40 (with further bibliography); OENBRINK 2004.

46 Cf. OBER 2003.

47 It is problematic to argue that every single Harmodios posture was meant to define the 'democratic' character of the actor (TAYLOR 1991, 36–70).

the calm scene with Athena, which Herakles has 'taken over' (east 10). Most metopes follow well-known traditional patterns of depicting Theseus, which were also typical for the Delphi metopes (fig. 3). Indeed, some images seem to have been modelled with regard to these earlier reliefs, like the Minotaur (south 4, fig. 10), the Periphetes (south 1, fig. 10) or the Prokrustes (north 4, fig. 9) scenes. Only sometimes is Theseus' superiority made more obvious than in late archaic images; witness Kerkyon (north 3, fig. 9), whom he is about to defeat immediately by throwing him to the ground. This is never shown on Attic vases in a comparable manner.⁴⁸ But altogether Theseus is not the self-confident, invincible winner

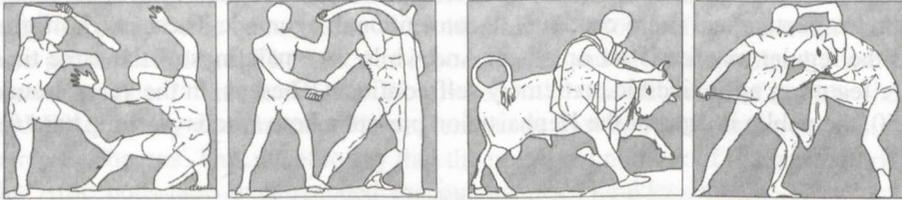


Fig. 10: Deeds of Theseus. South metopes 1 – 4 of the Hephaisteion at Athens. Athens, Hephaisteion (drawing after Knell 1990, fig. 204).

fighting in the above-described new 'final-blow-posture' (except for the scene with the sow from Krommyon in metope north 1), which the contemporary vases (fig. 7) and some Delphi metopes (fig. 3) presented. Rather he resembles the sixth-century agonistic fighter (figs. 1–2). The immediate physical contact with his adversaries is a guiding principle of the images. Thus, Theseus' visual role in architectural sculpture was different in 500 and 450. On the Hephaisteion, the Prokrustes (north 4, fig. 9) and the Periphetes (south 1, fig. 9) scenes are further witness of this. In both cases, the hero does not appear high above his fallen opponent like at Delphi, but acts in rather unusual postures in front of and in direct contact with him. It is certain that his strikes will cause the villain's defeat, but still the hero appears less 'invincible' than in the Harmodios guise. The Skiron (north 2, fig. 9) and the Sinis scene (south 2, fig. 10) provide further evidence. Neither the vase-painting typology of Theseus wielding Skiron's basin over his head (fig. 7) was adopted nor the aggressive sword-attack against Sinis, both of which were new on Attic vases of this time.⁴⁹ Instead, Theseus is acting purely by physical force, using his hands to be successful. Rather than his victorious character, his physical power and his skilful agonistic knowledge in fighting are highlighted – like in late archaic vase-painting and very much like Herakles, who also uses physical power in the Hephaisteion scenes.

It appears that in the Hephaisteion metopes, Theseus is depicted as a victorious and skilful, but traditionally fighting agonistic hero comparable to Herakles. The idea of his 'natural' superiority, as expressed in the 'final-blow-posture' in

48 Cf. NEILS 1994, 926–8 and 932–3.

49 Skiron: NEILS 1994, 926–32 nos. 33, 36, 44, 97, 101, 102, 104, 106. Sinis: NEILS 1994, 929–93 nos. 73, 74, 77, 78, 79 (sword above his head), 80. Cf. also the new Prokrustes scenes: VON DEN HOFF 2001, 83 with n. 41.

contemporary vase-painting is ignored almost completely. Not only did the Theseus image change from Delphi to Athens and from 500 to 450, but the Theseus images also differ in different media of the same date. In the Hephaisteion metopes, the choice could have been partly due to the interest in making Theseus resemble Herakles, who regularly proves his power by his physical engagement. It is in favour of this interpretation that Theseus was very probably using the club against Periphetes in metope 1 of the Hephaisteion's south side (fig. 10).⁵⁰ This is similar to the treasury at Delphi. But while the Athenian treasury was innovative insofar as Theseus' image was at least partly designed in a new, self-confident manner, the Hephaisteion tells another story. Here, his image is retrospective and more cautious. A conventional, agonistic Theseus who fights in the regular manner is set on stage. And while vase-paintings of the same time are featuring an invincible, extremely self-confident Theseus, in the years around 450, the public images of the Hephaisteion present a hero who is working hard for his success.

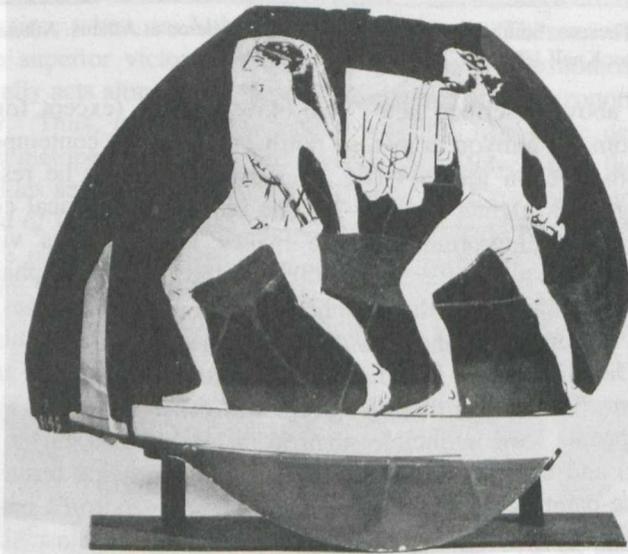


Fig. 11: Harmodios and Aristogeiton. Attic oinochoe (late fifth century BCE). Boston, Museum of fine Arts 98.936 (photograph after *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 85, 1970, 105 fig. 7).

As far as Herakles, the dominating figure of these metopes, is concerned, another iconographic trend is obvious. In contrast to his image in Attic vase-painting, he always lacks his lion-skin (fig. 8). It is not before the end of his deeds, that is, in the last metope (east 10) in front of Athena, that he has this distinctive attribute.⁵¹ His almost naked appearance in the other metopes can also be

50 See above n. 40.

51 For the lion skin cf. COHEN 1998.

observed in the earlier fifth-century Olympia metopes.⁵² But when directly set beside Theseus in Athens, this also makes him very similar to the young Athenian hero, who is always naked in the metopes of the Hephaisteion. Thus, in the Athenian context, not only does Theseus resemble Herakles, but Herakles is also modelled in the manner of a young Theseus. In the Hephaisteion metopes, both heroes seem to be adjusted to each other.

To sum up: It appears that there are, indeed, deep differences between the images of Theseus and Herakles in different visual media and in different periods of Athenian history. In the public realm (figs. 3–5 and 8–10), from the late sixth through the fifth century, the Athenians were consistently interested in keeping alive the panhellenic connection, which Herakles as a topic of architectural sculpture guaranteed. Here, Theseus was introduced as and always remained a sort of ‘new Herakles.’⁵³ This is different from what Attic vase-paintings of the late sixth and fifth century demonstrate. Here, Herakles is slowly losing importance compared to Theseus. This is not to say that the preserved number of images featuring the Attic polis-hero ever reached the quantity of Herakles images. Even here, Herakles remained a central paradigm.⁵⁴ But in Attic vase-painting, new techniques of narration (‘cycle-vases’) were especially created for Theseus in order to express his constant activity (figs. 2 and 7). This way of talking about the hero was almost never used for Herakles. Juxtapositions of Theseus and Herakles on a single vase are quite rare. Furthermore, on Attic vases Theseus, even though the club could be his attribute, is only rarely fashioned explicitly as a second Herakles, as demonstrated by the lack of vase-paintings showing his club-fight against Periphetes – which, on the other hand, is included in both architectural sculpture complexes discussed here. In Attic vase-painting, the image of Theseus develops almost independently from Herakles. Here, Theseus is an agent of change as an element of a visual debate about Athens’ specific myths and relevant values.

Apart from this, chronological differences have become clear. Starting with architectural sculpture, around 500, the Athenian Theseus was presented to a panhellenic audience at Delphi (fig. 3) as a self-confident hero – in contrast to what the majority of contemporary images on Attic vases show (figs. 1–2), where he acts in the role of an agonistic fighter, working hard for his success. In public images of the middle of the fifth century (figs. 9–10), on the other hand – at least in Athens – the Athenians no longer overestimated Theseus’ superiority, as the rather ‘archaic’ Hephaisteion metopes show, even though the idea of depicting Herakles and Theseus as professional victors is more obvious than in late archaic images. In Attic vase-painting of the Periklean period it is almost completely different: Theseus appears as a ‘naturally’ superior hero (fig. 7).

52 Cf. the metopes from Olympia: BOARDMAN 1990, 7 no. 1705; KNELL 1990, 80–4 figs. 115–21.

53 The comparisons between Theseus and Herakles remain a literary topos: Plut. *Thes.* 6.8–9 and 8.

54 Cf. BOARDMAN 1975, 1–2; cf. BAŽANT 1990, figs. 4 and 8. Only for amphorae cf. SCHEIBLER 1987, 89.

If we question the historic and social relevance of these differences, both the agents who used the different visual media under discussion and the functions and contexts of each medium's use – historically and practically – must be taken into account. In public sculpture commissioned by the polis of the Athenians, a Herakles-like Theseus was opportune. By using Herakles and Theseus to decorate public Athenian buildings, Athens maintained her status as a deeply (pan)hellenic polis and elevated Theseus to a status equal to Herakles.⁵⁵ Athens' prestige was raised. This was one aim of architectural sculpture. But this seems to have been of no specific interest for the Athenian symposium audience, where Theseus himself is a central figure of interest and innovation. Either the agents or the functions of these images must have been different.

The treasury at Delphi is a dedication by the Athenian polis. Its self-confident public image of Theseus could have been due to the implicit or explicit interest of the polis in demonstrating Athens' growing self-confidence after the reforms of Kleisthenes to a broader, panhellenic audience. One could speculate as to whether the shift to a less 'naturally' superior – and to a more professionally successful – Theseus 60 years later in architectural sculpture at Athens (but not in vase-painting) also happened with regard to a specific audience, for example out of consideration for foreign visitors in Athens. The tragedies of the later fifth century, another Athenian public medium of storytelling, could provide another facet of this trend, as Sophie Mills has demonstrated.⁵⁶ It is astonishing that in these tragedies, almost contemporary with or slightly later than the Hephaisteion metopes, Theseus plays the role of a helpful, human king. The fact that this figure is of no interest in vase-painting or public sculpture is certainly due not only to the necessities of tragedy as a genre, but also to the broad audience in the theatre of Dionysos, a group of people who would take the Theseus figure on the stage as a representative of Athens itself even more than his image in architectural sculpture.⁵⁷ What is clear is that the design of architectural sculpture did not only depend on the actual mentality of its patrons – that is, the polis as a whole – but also on decisive interests in self-representation within specific visual contexts and according to the audience of these public images.

In Attic vase-painting, it appears that, at the turn of the century, the new iconography of Theseus, obvious in the Delphi metopes, did not have much success. Images of a self-confident, superior Theseus remained rare (fig. 6) and unsuccessful. The vases were used by a local Athenian audience, even though its social range is unclear. But in the time around 500, the traditionally aristocratic interests of this audience seem to be obvious, because the viewers were still interested in traditional heroic patterns of Theseus' agonistic behaviour (figs. 1–2). This audience seems to have been more influential for vase-paintings in Athens than for the

55 SHAPIRO 1989, 149.

56 MILLS 1997.

57 Cf. the recent discussion about the 'social function' of Athenian drama: WINKLER – ZEITLIN 1990; GRIFFITH 1995 and 1998; GRIFFIN 1998; GOLDHILL 2000; SEAFORD 2000; RHODES 2003.

sculptural adornment of the Athenian treasury, which adopted other, innovative ideas. Around the middle of the fifth century, on the other hand, the vase-painters broadly adopted the image of Theseus' self-confident *tolma* and superior power (fig. 7). Now, the inner-polis discourse, as reflected in vase-painting, focuses more on heroic self-confidence and less on traditional agonistic values of equal fighting, as on sixth-century vases. It remains an open question as to whether this was due to a broadened, less aristocratic audience than in the late archaic period or to a changed Athenian self-perception. But it happened, while the public sculpture maintained the idea of Theseus as a traditional hero of the Herakles type.

It will be clear by now that what one could call the visual discourse about the polis-hero is complex and controversial in Athens. Myth as represented (and negotiated) in visual media did not tell a single "intentional history," but "intentional histories." The Athenian polis was the commissioner of public sculpture for a broad audience, the Athenian symposium circles were the patrons and audiences of Attic vase-painting with Theseus and Herakles. Architectural sculpture as public sculpture aimed at presenting widely acceptable images of the hero, understandable to and appreciated by a broad, panhellenic audience and fitting the self-image of the polis as dedicant of these images. Its aim was a message, often within a panhellenic discourse. Vase images, on the other hand, were not designed as broadly public, let alone political or ideological messages. Rather Attic vase-painting was a medium of debate within the polis and can be used as evidence to understand this debate and its conflicting positions.⁵⁸ Considering these differences, it would be superficial to talk about the heroic imagery of the sixth and fifth century as a homogeneous corpus of images representing Athens' memory as reflected in myths. Rather, as we have seen, we have to ask in what sense differences between visual media resulted in different iconographies and modes of narration and vice versa. Theseus and Herakles were different figures when they were looked at on Attic vases by smaller groups of Athenians during symposia and when they were presented by the polis on the public or panhellenic stage in architectural sculpture. If this distinction could be confirmed by further studies, our modes of dealing with visual media as records of Greek 'intentional history' would have to be adjusted. Telling stories, or 'spinning time,' is different in tragedies and historiography, on vases, in statues and in reliefs, in a sanctuary and high above temple columns. It will only be the entire corpus of these records in all its diversity which provides answers to the question of what members of different Greek poleis considered to be their imagined mythic history and how they remodelled this memory. The rich corpus of images produced in archaic and classical Athens is a revealing record of these diverse remodellings, even though it only rarely provides any clues to clarify which specific social groups and protagonists were engaged in this process.

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