Death of a Hero: Iconography of the Emotional Transformation of Achilles on South Italian Vases of c. Fourth Century BCE

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by

Selma Amzi

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DEATH OF A HERO:
ICONOGRAPHY OF THE EMOTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF ACHILLES
ON SOUTH ITALIAN VASES OF C. FOURTH CENTURY BCE

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**Introduction**

Art that developed outside mainland Greece in the fifth and the fourth century BCE, particularly in the area of South Italy, developed a unique style. Pottery is something that survives in the largest quantities, and gives us some insight into the period and lives of people who did not leave many written records. These vases were painted from the earliest times, and their decoration depended on many factors: painters, consumers, current fashions, economy, political changes, as well as personal tastes. The images depicted on these vases can tell us much about the South Italian people’s way of life, the technical advances they made, the type of garments they wore, as well as show us customs in wedding ceremonies, funeral rituals, and religious beliefs. Furthermore, they can represent the people they came into contact with, through trade or war, and ultimately, reveal values through the complex mythology scenes.

Vase painters were always interested in illustrating written texts and the *Iliad*, one of the most admired stories throughout Greek history, was often represented. This thesis will concentrate on six red-figure vases painted in South Italy around the fourth century BCE for the South Italian market which are decorated with scenes from the *Iliad*. Focusing on three themes from the *Iliad*: the Mourning of Patroclus, the Dragging of Hector’s body and the Ransom of Hector, I intend to analyze the iconography of these scenes, exploring the emotional transformations of Achilles, and evaluating the unifying theme of death behind all three episodes. I will, in addition, attempt to explain how the South Italian artists transformed the scenes from Homer’s *Iliad* to an intricate composition with multitude of figures, layers, and details. I will observe this in the frame
of the developments of the fourth century BCE, considering social and political influences that shaped and affected art and artisanship.

To understand the iconography of the six vases in my formal analysis, I will first consider the influences of Greek mythology and ideology on the colonies in the South of Italy and the changes in depicting the scenes from the *Iliad* in South Italian vase painting of the fourth century BCE. I will consider the liberties vase painters took in depicting these scenes, as well as what aspects of the representations changed in this period. The analysis of the emotional changes of Achilles and their representation will bring about a new set of questions referring to the society and environment in which they were created and consumed.

To see how South Italian vase painters arrived at such complex images, Homer’s original story should be examined, as well as earlier representations of it. The early Attic vase painters, from mainland Greece, were the first ones to transform the written words of the *Iliad* into images. For more than three centuries these representations remained popular, but were shaped by the social and political changes, vase painters’ personal styles and their creativity, as well as the specific fashions of the period. Evolving with time, these images ultimately influenced the vase painters of Magna Graecia.

It is important to note that these images, even though they represent the scenes from the *Iliad*, are not entirely influenced by the original texts, and sometimes not at all. As the text was not always easily accessible, artists had to remember what they read or heard, and create their own interpretations while adding plausible details. Modern scholars very often rely on the ancient texts to interpret the images and scenes
represented on Greek vases, but identifications become harder as the artists take more liberties in depicting certain scenes.

J.P. Small argues that the artists illustrated stories and not texts. She also believes that artists did not depend on written text as much, relying more on the world that surrounded them, other artists, and older representations.¹ The images are not just ‘mirrors of literary creations’, L. Giuliani says, but the vase painters are selective and eclectic, combining different sources. Giuliani claims that the vase painters’ interest is not a specific text, but a collection of mythological material.²

Another very important influence on representations of scenes from the Iliad were theatrical performances of this story in the fifth century BCE as well as their revival in the fourth century BCE. The final product of the South Italian vase painters was furthermore influenced by significant changes in the cultural and political values of the period where the expression of pathos became a goal of painting, sculpture, and even architecture, as well as in almost every other aspect of life. Fascination with the representation of strong personal feelings like mourning, anger, pity, and compassion became extremely fashionable, something Homer’s Iliad explores in the course of the changes that Achilles undergoes in the epic.

The Iliad

The Iliad is a poem about the anger of Achilles, the greatest hero of the Achaeans, as Homer introduces it in the first few lines. This anger, first directed toward Agamemnon, the leader of the Achaeans, for taking away Briseis, his prize and at the same time, his honor, causes Achilles to withdraw from the battle. Thetis, Achilles’ divine mother, persuades Zeus on behalf of her son, to help the Trojans in the battle while Achilles is not fighting, to convince Agamemnon and all the Achaeans of Achilles’ value in the battle. The Trojans, knowing that the Greeks were weaker without Achilles, and with the help of Zeus, boldly run their troops down to the Argive ships hoping to bring the ten-year-long war to an end.

When Agamemnon realizes that he needs Achilles’ help, he sends an embassy of three ambassadors chosen by Nestor: Phoenix, Ajax, and Odysseus, all three close friends of Achilles, and men he respects and loves. Odysseus presents to Achilles Agamemnon’s offer of peace with gold, gifts, and his own daughter as a wife to Achilles. Achilles proudly rejects the offer, as it does not contain Agamemnon’s apology for the offence. The embassy is a failure, but after hearing out all three friends, Achilles changes his decision to leave Troy the next day, and decides to stay until the Trojan army reaches his ships.

Nestor additionally encourages Patroclus, Achilles’ closest friend, to ask Achilles for permission to go and fight in his armor, scaring the Trojans into believing that Achilles is back in the battle, and stopping their attack on the Argive ships. Patroclus receives Achilles’ permission to defend the ships, but not to go further and attack the city without Achilles. After killing many of the Trojans, Patroclus himself is killed by Hector,
the bravest of the Trojans, who after killing him, strips him of Achilles’ armor. It is important to note here that a hero’s armor to the ancient Greeks was an essential part of their persona, something they were proud of and recognized by in the field, and the armor of Achilles, the greatest hero, was the ultimate prize for any warrior. The idea and symbolism of armor will be important in the further discussion of the iconography of these scenes and I will return to it several times in the course of the analysis of the images.

Menelaus, Agamemnon’s brother, and Ajax, the second best warrior after Achilles, fight off Hector who intended to behead the body of Patroclus and leave him to the Trojan dogs to devour. Menelaus and Ajax succeed in saving the body of Patroclus, and Ajax carries it back to camp and to Achilles for a proper burial. Homer gives us many examples of the treatment of the enemy and their dead bodies throughout the *Iliad*: after an opponent is killed, and his armor (made of valuable materials) seized as proof of the victory, the body would be left for animals to consume without a proper burial ceremony.

After Hector kills Patroclus, the anger Achilles had for Agamemnon is now transferred to Hector and all the Trojans. Achilles deeply mourns Patroclus and decides to avenge his death. However, as Hector had taken his armor from the dead body of Patroclus, Achilles could not go to battle. Here, again, Achilles seeks the help of his divine mother. Thetis goes to Hephaestus, the god of the forge, who willingly uses his talents to create the most magnificent, elaborately decorated armor that Homer describes in detail in the Book XVIII of the *Iliad*. Thetis brings this new set of arms to Achilles and comforts him while he mourns his friend.
Ready for battle, Achilles calls an assembly of all Achaean leaders, including Agamemnon, and proposes an immediate attack on the Trojans. Agamemnon, finding an opportunity to end the animosity that caused so much tragedy in the Greek camps, gives a long speech excusing his behavior as the will of the gods who made him mad, portraying himself as a victim. Agamemnon, furthermore, pledges to deliver the promised gifts to Achilles. However, Achilles is indifferent to Agamemnon’s speech and his pledge, and interested only in avenging the death of his friend. While other warriors who were in battle, are wounded, tired, and hungry, Achilles refuses to eat or drink, and is in turn supported by Athena who feeds him nectar and ambrosia. He goes to battle immediately, and for the first time Homer describes the ‘godlike’ Achilles in action. Achilles mercilessly kills many Trojans, and finally reaches Hector at the walls of Troy. Hector, unable to get out of the fight peacefully, implores Achilles to give his body, if killed, to his parents for proper burial. Achilles, in his wrath does not even consider the idea, and is pitiless toward Hector, as he was to all the other Trojans since he came back to the battle. His flaming wrath is evident in his words to Hector:

"Beg no more, you fawning dog – begging me by my parents!
Would to god my rage, my fury would drive me now
To hack your flesh away and eat you raw –
Such agonies you have caused me! Ransom?
No man alive could keep the dog-packs off you,
Not if they haul in ten, twenty times that ransom
And pile it here before me and promise fortunes more –
No, not even if Dardan Priam should offer to weigh out
Your bulk in gold! Not even then will your noble mother
Lay you on your deathbed, mourn the son she bore..."
The dogs and birds will rend you – blood and bone!”3

Once he kills Hector, the dead body of his enemy becomes the focus of the retribution. Killing Hector was not enough to soothe Achilles’ heart and satisfy his revenge, so he ties the body to the chariot and drags Hector around Troy three times. He then drags the body to the Achaean camps, where it is further mutilated and stabbed by other Greeks. At the funeral games of Patroclus, Achilles ruthlessly drags the body around the funeral pyre, and in addition kills twelve Trojan captives at his tomb.

Throughout this story, the gods play an important role. While the battle rages on the plains of Troy, so the battle rages on Mount Olympus. The gods have taken sides in the battle of mortals, some for their amusement, while some had personal reasons and closer connections. Hera and Athena were patrons of the Achaeans, as Paris ruled against them in his famous ‘golden apple’ beauty judgment, while Aphrodite was protecting Paris and the Trojans, as she was the winner of the same contest. Aeneas, a Trojan, was also Aphrodite’s son. Poseidon supported the Greeks, while Apollo and Artemis were on the side of the Trojans. Zeus was impartial, but many times throughout the story was swayed by the other gods to help either side, as on the occasion when Thetis supplicated him for her son’s honor.

While Achilles dragged and mutilated the body of Hector, Apollo and Artemis, protected it, and as a result after twelve days of mutilation, Hector’s body was in the same condition as the moment he was killed. The Trojan patron gods watching from Olympus were unhappy with Achilles’ treatment of Hector’s body, and after the funeral of Patroclus, when Apollo spoke against Achilles saying he has no pity and no respect,

even Hera and Athena did not deny it. Homer here is emphasizing one extreme, a pitiless warrior at the height of his fury, to be able to create more powerful and dramatic impact when he will show the same character later express compassion.

The *Iliad* is not only a story about Achilles’ anger, as Homer introduces it, but it follows a profound emotional change in this main character. After the anger, mourning, and revenge, there is a growing sense of pity and compassion in Achilles. This theme of pity emerges throughout the *Iliad*, and Achilles is many times described as ‘pitiless’ in actions toward his enemies, something Homer highlights throughout the story, building up to a more effective contrast at the end when he shows Achilles’ transformation. This change in Achilles’ anger is visible already in the gifts he gives to Antilochos and Diomedes, the winners of the funeral games of Patroclus, as he gives them the items he received in few instances when he was merciful to his victims, before the death of Patroclus. At the funeral games, as a judge and a mediator, Achilles becomes a part of the humanity again. He has left his solitude, he has avenged the death of his friend, and now he can participate in the social event celebrating the memory of Patroclus with his fellow Achaeans. This is the link between the anger and the pity Achilles will show in the moments when he is faced with Priam, and Homer slowly sets the scene for the compassionate Achilles. Achilles is many times called ‘godlike’ throughout the *Iliad*, and his actions reflect that epitome, but at the end he realizes his limitations, and recognizes that he is only human, a mortal. His mother is divine, his armor is made by a god, his horses are immortal, but none can save him. This change that Achilles goes through is
nowhere as strong and visible as in the last book with the scene of the Ransom of Hector.4

After the gods decide on the fate of the body of Hector, Zeus and other Olympians send Thetis to inform her son of their decision. Thetis tells Achilles of the anger of the gods for the continued mutilation of Hector, and their decision that he must return the body to Hector’s parents. Furthermore, she informs him that he will be honored with magnificent gifts brought by the Trojans as ransom for Hector. Achilles is indifferent on hearing the news from his mother and shows no emotion. Zeus also sends the goddess Iris to Priam, father of Hector and king of Troy, advising him to prepare the gifts and go to Achilles’ tent with only one elderly herald to ransom his son. Homer describes the wealth of gifts Priam prepares in detail, and the uneasy feeling of his wife, Hecuba, as well as the rest of the household, while he sets on his dangerous journey.

Zeus, furthermore, out of pity for Priam’s sufferings, sends Hermes to escort him to the tents of the Myrmidons. Hermes presents himself to Priam as an aide of Achilles, after Priam reaches the Achaean camp, and leads him to Achilles’ tent. Hermes does not come inside, and only advises Priam on how to approach the man who has killed so many of his sons. Achilles, who has just finished dining, accompanied by Automedon and Alcimus, is surprised by the visit, and impressed by the courage of the aged Priam. He was ready to ransom the body, as instructed by the gods, but did not expect the king of Troy to come himself. Priam, kneeling down by Achilles, kisses his hands and implores Achilles to pity him, and Achilles to see his own father Peleus in him. Seeing an old man mourning a dead son deeply stirs Achilles, who is aware of his fate and knows that his

father, too, will soon mourn the death of his son. Achilles even regrets the pain he has caused Priam by being at Troy, when he should be in Phthia, caring for Peleus in his old age. With these thoughts on his mind, as he is re-evaluating the pain that he is causing to his enemy, Achilles stops being 'godlike', and becomes human, seeing himself as others see him. At that moment both Priam and Achilles mourn together in silence, one his son, the other his father and, in addition, Patroclus.

Achilles keeps the presence of king Priam a secret from Agamemnon and gives orders to have the body of Hector washed and anointed. He takes two capes and a shirt from the lavish gifts Priam brought to wrap the body of Hector. Achilles than lifts the body to the carriage himself, thus starting the funeral rites of his enemy. He offers a meal to Priam, and in addition, a bed, honoring him as a guest. Furthermore, Achilles arranges with Priam twelve days of peace to conduct funeral games and bury Hector. With the funeral of Hector, the Iliad ends.

As we have seen, the tale of Achilles is a powerful and complex tragedy, including many important emotional transformations, hard decisions, and painful realizations. The story evidently appealed to many over a long period of time for its artistic and dramatic values, as well as its ethical, political, and religious teachings. Below we will see how Homer's epic found its way to the southern regions of Italy, how the focus of the teachings shifted, and how it was implemented in the artistic representations of the period. This will, in addition, complete the background picture and circumstances of the development of the six vases discussed in this thesis.

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6 Zanker, p. 119-120.
South Italian Vases

Mythological images, like the scenes from the *Iliad*, as well as other images depicted on Attic pottery were important and popular in Greece and outside of it, in Greek colonies. By the second half of the sixth century BCE Athenian style pottery dominated the domestic and colonized market. In South Italy, during the colonizing period, many Greek cities were founded, like Taranto and Mesaponto that grew and exerted power and influence on the local native population. Besides the Greek colonists who imported Athenian pottery, the natives of South Italy also imported it for their personal needs, as is evident from the remains of funeral goods found in their tombs. The import of Athenian wares lasted as long as the Athenian political strength and power lasted, but after the defeat in the last Peloponnesian War, the commerce was reduced, and many areas that had enjoyed imported Athenian vases had to revert to other sources, or create their own versions of these goods.

At the end of the fifth century BCE peoples of South Italy started creating imitations of the Athenian ware they used to import, often using Greek mythological scenes to decorate them. The workshops that produced these goods may have been founded by potters who left Attica at the time of the Peloponnesian wars and after the fall of Athens, or Athenians who were forced to leave because of the economical difficulties, as well as the plague in 430 BCE. These potters moved to Southern Italy where they established new workshops and trained other potters.

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8 Ibid.
The style that developed in the South of Italy from the end of the fifth century BCE, after the decline in Athenian pottery imports, evolved and transformed into a distinct form that art historians only recently have begun to study in its own right. The first two established schools of vase painting were Lucanian and Apulian. In their early stages, both were similar, but each very soon developed into a unique style. Apulian, as the largest subgroup of South Italian pottery, includes over eight thousand extant examples; the six vases that will be discussed in this thesis are Apulian. Many of the vases from South Italy come from tombs, inviting questions regarding their source, as well as their consumption. The information regarding these South Italian vases is limited, as numerous examples have been stolen from tombs and their provenance is unknown, leaving art historians with many unanswered questions. Understanding the social and political changes that occurred during the fourth century BCE can shed some light on the way of life and customs of the people, and help fill this gap to some extent.

The art of Magna Graecia is important in the history of Greek art. The vases from South Italy give us a broader insight not only into the mythology and the drama of the period, but also into the daily lives of South Italian people, their customs, social conditions, and funerary practices. After 400 BCE when the departure from Athenian style became more visible, local tastes became more pronounced. This was most notable in floral decorations, intricate patterns, large multi-figured compositions that were laid out in several registers, and from the shape and size of pottery used for this decoration. Once these elaborate ornate changes were introduced, they slowly grew in complexity. The South Italian pottery developed over a period of more than a century, from 440 BCE
to 300 BCE, when it almost completely died out. The chronological date for the vases is based largely on stylistic criteria.10

For some time the ‘Plain’ and the ‘Ornate’ style that developed in Apulia, ran parallel. Towards the middle of the fourth century BCE, the ‘Ornate’ style became dominant, even though the ‘Plain’ style was still in use at the end of the century. The reasons for the rising interest in the ‘Ornate’ vases were determined by the changes that were happening in the arts of the fourth century BCE. Masters of monumental paintings like Apollodoros, Zeuxis, and Apelles worked in this period. These artists made advances in showing perspective, shading techniques (chiaroscuro), and especially in the rendering of the emotional state of their characters.11 With the addition of perspective the painters were able to create paintings on much larger scale and include many more figures in their compositions. These are the new elements that the vase painters tried to copy on the smaller scale of their pottery. This is, in addition, the reason they favored the larger size vessels, trying to emulate the imposing and luxurious works of the contemporary artists.

Furthermore, the Apulian artists used more color in their embellishments, from white, yellow, and orange to red, blue, and green, creating more vigorous and more dimensional representations than their predecessors.12 The ‘Ornate’ vases, because of their considerable size, have a larger area to decorate, and vase painters had an opportunity to depict more elaborate costumes and details. They, in addition, filled the surrounding area of the scene on the pot with some type of stylized floral decoration. The excessive floral decoration on the South Italian vases is the hallmark of Apulian pottery.

These vase painters had a fresh and lively approach to decoration, with none of the constraints that Attic vase painters had.

Apulian vase painters have a wide variety of subject matter. Evident is the interest in funerary motifs, that appear more frequently than in the Attic vases.\textsuperscript{13} Additionally, many of the scenes are from known dramas, many from plays by local dramatists, as well as works lost to us today. Apulian vases are also known for depiction of lesser known myths, which tells us that they had access to mythology that we do not have today. In addition, there are many scenes from everyday life; warriors in native armor, women getting dressed in native dresses, while others show native people and Greeks together in peace, and some in battle with Greeks.\textsuperscript{14}

The vases discussed in this thesis were created by the most significant painters or their circles, in the development of the Apulian ‘Ornate’ style of decoration: the circle of the Gravina painter and Baltimore Painter, as well as important artists like the Ilioupersis painter, Darius, Lycurgos, and painters of the Black Fury Group. The Gravina Painter, named after a tomb discovered in Gravina, is one of the pioneers of the ‘Ornate’ style.\textsuperscript{15} He worked at the very end of the fifth century BCE, and three-quarter view faces, elaborate drapery, and detailed pattern work are some of the characteristics of his work. An Apulian red-figure pelike, the first of the six vases discussed in this thesis, shows the scene of \textit{the Mourning and Arming of Achilles} (Fig. 1). The vase dates to 425-400 BCE, and is by a painter close to the Gravina painter.

\textsuperscript{13} A. D. Trendall, “South Italian Red-Figure Vase-Painting” in \textit{Greek Colonists and Native Populations, Proceedings of the First Australian Congress of Classical Archaeology}, (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1990), p. 225
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 228
The Black Fury Group painter worked soon after him, at the beginning of the fourth century BCE, and is known for fine details and excellent meticulous execution. The fragmentary example of Apulian red-figure calyx crater depicting the Ransom of Hector (Fig. 2) from 400-390 BCE, another vase discussed in the thesis, shows these qualities. The difference of a few decades between the Gravina Painter and Black Fury group is evident, and it is a shame we have only fragments of the latter’s work to compare to the whole vases of other painters. Here Trendall’s suggestion to look at fragments is valid\textsuperscript{16}, as in the fragment we can notice intricate details of the drapery and delicate features that might be lost in a large, overwhelming composition.

The Ilioupersis Painter, who worked in the first quarter of the fourth century BCE, was very important in the development of the ‘Ornate’ style. His scenes became more elaborate, with more white and yellow color. Compared to the later painters, his drapery was still simple, but his figures were more mannered in their poses. He introduced new features in both the figural and ornamental decoration. His innovation in the decoration of volute craters was important, as after him they became the most popular shape in ‘Ornate’ decoration.\textsuperscript{17} The remaining four vessels discussed in the thesis are all in this new prevalent volute crater shape. He added round medallions in the volute handle decoration, and heads of women in the floral decoration on the necks of the vases.\textsuperscript{18} The Ilioupersis painter also introduced the funerary theme on any type of a vase by adding naïskos scenes on the obverse. This scene consisted of a white temple, resembling marble, often with a statue of the deceased in the same color inside the naïskos, and mourners around it in red-figure technique. The third vase discussed in this thesis, an

\textsuperscript{16} A. D. Trendall, “South Italian Red-Figure Vase-Painting”, p. 229.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 188-189.
Apulian volute crater from Ruvo, with a scene of *the Dragging of Hector's body at the Tomb of Patroclus*, from 460 BCE (Fig. 3), is an example of these innovations by the Ilioupersis painter.

The "Ornate" style continued to develop with the Lycurgos Painter, from the middle of the fourth century BCE. His compositions were on a larger scale, with two or three levels. Trendall believes he is the most important of the "Ornate" artists. He was skillful in rendering perspective and overlapping planes, and used more color than his predecessors. In many things the influence of the Ilioupersis painter is evident: he had a fondness for faces in three quarter view, suitable for showing emotion, and used elaborate patterns on drapery, which were often worn ‘off-the shoulder’. The poses of his figures were even more artificial than those of the Ilioupersis painter. The Lycurgos painter furthermore loved mythological subjects, and used them on many of his vases. An Apulian volute crater by the Lycurgos Painter from 450 BCE is another example of *the Ransom of Hector* scene and is the fourth vase discussed in this thesis (Fig. 4).

The Darius Painter worked in the third quarter of the fourth century BCE, and was also significant in the development of the "Ornate" style in Apulia. His compositions were on a large scale, with elaborate and rich decoration. He was the first vase painter to decorate monumental size vases of the period, including his name vase, the Darius crater, that is more than 130 cm high, and his Patroclus crater that is 142 cm high. This red figure volute crater, from 340-330 BCE, Canosa, represents *the Funeral Games of Patroclus* (Fig. 5) and is another example of this theme discussed in the thesis. With these types of

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vases the Darius painter established a new, modern method of composition. He increased the number of figures from the Ilioupersis and Lycurgos painters in his substantial vases. He furthermore favored dramatic and mythological decoration, but also showed several unique themes, never shown anywhere else. The Darius painter identified some of his scenes, not by naming the characters, but by giving the name of the whole scene, as he did on the Patroclus vase with the inscription on Patroclus’ tomb. As he worked in the period of Alexander the Great, he was influenced by his conquests and contacts with the Persians. With his many innovations the Darius Painter had a significant influence on contemporary painters.

The Painter of Louvre K67 was a follower of the Baltimore Painter. He worked in the final stage of the development of the ‘Ornate’ style at the end of the fourth century BCE. His Apulian red figure volute crater, the last one discussed in this thesis, shows the Arming and Mourning of Achilles (Fig. 6), and dates to 325-300 BCE.

By following chronologically the work of these vase painters we can see how the Apulian ‘Ornate’ style developed and how they influenced one another in their work. This will be especially evident in the following discussion of the representations on their vases. In the following chapters I will analyze the images on the designated six vases and follow the similarities and differences of their depictions. Furthermore I will analyze the emotional changes of Achilles and symbolism surrounding the scenes and their characters. The vases will not be listed chronologically by date, but will be grouped according to the three major events of the story of Achilles, as well as the three major emotional states he went through: mourning, anger, and pity.

22 Ibid., p. 930
The Mourning and Arming Scenes of Achilles

The *Mourning and Arming of Achilles* scene is represented on two of the six vases discussed here, and their subject is a turning point of the *Iliad*. It shows the moment when Achilles is mourning his friend Patroclus, while his mother arrives with her sister Nereids and brings a new set of armor for Achilles. This is typically referred to as the “second arming scene” and it is important for several reasons: it is a consequence of Achilles’ anger with Agamemnon and his absence from battle; it focuses our attention on the symbolic meaning of armor and it reminds us of the divine lineage of Achilles and his inevitable death.

An Apulian red-figure pelike (see Fig. #1) from 425-400 BCE, by a painter close to the Gravina Painter, shows the second arming scene. On the left side Achilles sits in a cave opening, supporting his head with his left hand and looking down, while Thetis and four more women riding fantastic marine animals are approaching him. They are Nereids, daughters of the sea god Nereus, and like Thetis they are sea nymphs, often associated with sea and marine animals.

Achilles, separated from the rest of the scene by the curved line of the cave opening, is shown in a three quarter view, barefoot, and covered with a cloak from his waist down. The cloak is decorated with a black borderline and drapes over his knees. In his right hand he holds a long stick. The painter shows his skill in executing the fine details of Achilles’ body, like his nails and body creases, as well as in showing emotion on his face. Achilles’ posture and his face show obvious grief and an expression of sadness. He seems unaware of the approach of the Nereids, as he is lost in his sad, melancholic thoughts. The vase painter shows a scene of a quiet and dignified mourning.
Homer in the *Iliad* describes his mourning quite differently:

“A black cloud of grief came shrouding over Achilles. Both hands clawing the ground for sooth and filth, He poured it over his head, fouled his handsome face And black ashes settled onto his fresh clean war-shirt. Overpowered in all his power, sprawled in the dust, Achilles lay there, fallen…
Tearing his hair, defiling it with his own hands. And the women he and Patroclus carried off as captives Caught the grief in their hearts and keened and wailed, Out of the tents they ran to ring the great Achilles, All of them beat their breasts with clenched fists, Sank to the ground, each woman’s knees gave way. Antilochus kneeling near, weeping uncontrollably, Clutched Achilles’ hands as he wept his proud heart out – For fear he would slash his throat with an iron blade. Achilles suddenly loosed a terrible, wrenching cry And his noble mother heard him, seated near her father, The Old Man of the Sea in the salt green depths, And she cried out in turn.”  

This event was a turning point of the *Iliad*, and Achilles’ passionate show of emotions gives us a glimpse of the other emotional outbursts we can expect. This event especially affects the course of the actions Achilles takes in the unfolding events of the war when he decides to return to the battle to avenge Patroclus’ death. Furthermore, the mourning of Achilles becomes a popular subject in ancient vase painting, with sometimes a few different scenes merging into one. The Corinthian black-figure olpe from 570-550

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23 Homer, Book XVIII, lines 25-42.
BCE (Fig. 7) shows Achilles lying on the couch, with his hands at his head, pulling his hair in a gesture of mourning. Thetis and Odysseus stand at his feet and an old man and two women at his head. On the wall above Achilles, a large shield and pair of greaves are hanging, while in front of the couch is a table set with food and dishes. This scene recalls the mourning scene with a body laid out on a bier, but Achilles is alive and in fact participates in the mourning.

The decoration of the olpe represents three scenes combined into one: the first one is of Thetis and the Nereids, who, after hearing Achilles’ cry, come out to comfort him; the second scene recalls an old man and Odysseus urging Achilles to eat and drink the food laid out on the table; and the third is indicated by the armor on the wall referring to the ‘second arming’ of Achilles. The armor on the wall reminds the viewer of the death of Patroclus and foretells Achilles’ own death. The artist of the olpe followed the story in the Iliad closely in describing the fervent mourning of Achilles and in reminding the viewer of what is to come by adding Thetis and the Nereids, as well as the armor on the wall.

The Apulian pelike similarly combines the two scenes of Achilles’ mourning and arming. Beyond Achilles’ cave, Thetis rides on a hippocamp. Three more Nereids are on dolphins, while the last one is riding a fish monster. The wave pattern surrounds the cave opening and runs along the bottom of the border indicating an aquatic setting. In addition, two small fish floating between the Nereids and their animals indicate where the action is taking place. All the animals are shaded in dilute glaze, giving them a three-dimensional feel. Thetis, the first Nereid in front of Achilles and the cave, is bringing his

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25 Ibid., p. 37.
new shield. She is shown seated in a three quarter view, while her head is shown in profile, as are all the other Nereids on this side of the pelike. Here we can see the influence of the Gravina painter in their elaborate drapery. The shield Thetis is bringing is foreshortened, showing the inside of it in black, with a light border pattern. Thetis is wearing a belted chiton, intricately draped around her body, and veiling her head. She has white bracelets, a tiara, and decorated shoes on her feet. The animal she rides, the hippocamp, is a combination of a horse in front and a snaky fish in the back. Below the front legs of the animal, fins appear, while the snaky body ends with fins and a fishtail. The body is furthermore covered with white dots and the mane of the animal was added in white color.

Behind Thetis, another Nereid is riding a dolphin, seated in a three quarter view facing the right side, but awkwardly turning back toward Thetis. She is holding a cuirass in her hands that is shaded with a yellowish brown dilute glaze. Her sleeveless, belted chiton heavily drapes over her crossed legs, and black border of her dress shows only on the bottom folds. She also wears shoes and has her hair up in a bun. Like Thetis, her arms are decorated with white bracelets. The two Nereids below Thetis are again shown riding the dolphins. The first one wears a himation, with a sleeveless chiton underneath, and similar headgear to Thetis, and the second one has a double stripe border decoration on her sleeveless chiton, while in her outstretched hand she holds her himation. Both Nereids are shown in three-quarter view, but while the first one is seated on the dolphin, the second one is shown as if she is swimming alongside the dolphin. She holds on to the dolphin with her right hand, she is barefoot, and her garments are floating behind her.

The fifth Nereid is riding a large monster-fish with snaky tail and the same white dot decoration on the body as on Thetis' hippocamp. This Nereid is again shown in three quarter view, with her legs crossed, while the garment draped around her has single black borderlines on both her chiton and himation. She has a tiara similar to Thetis', wears shoes, and in her right outstretched hand, she holds a Corinthian helmet accentuated with added white.27

The scene on the other side of the vessel is similar, as if it is the continuation of the front scene, even though the two are separated with decorative details around the edges and handles of the vessel. The back scene has four Nereids; three on dolphins, and one in the center on a hippocamp. The first Nereid wears a chiton, himation, bracelet, and a crown. She rides a dolphin, and does not hold any armor. The second, similar to Thetis on the other side of the vessel, is on a hippocamp, has the same dress, but has a double black stripe border down the side, and a himation over her head. She holds in her left hand another foreshortened shield, but now shown from the outside, decorated with a row of black dots on the border and a black sun-like design with white circle in the center. Her face is the only one shown in a three-quarter view on this side of the vase. The third Nereid in the upper right holds a low-crested Corinthian helmet in her right hand. Below her is the fourth Nereid; riding on a dolphin, and like the first one she does not hold armor. The way the Nereids are seated with their legs and heads turning toward left or right, and alternating fantastic and marine animals, enlivens the composition giving it

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more action than a standard linear procession of the Nereids would. The figures are spaced out and are not overlapping, but the artist still shows depth by putting some of them higher up, to be perceived as further behind.

The armor that the Nereids are bringing is the same one described in detail in the *Iliad*. The scene of a woman bringing armor to a soldier becomes such a popular and widespread theme on ancient vases, that the soldier does not need to be identified. It becomes a generic arming scene, so universal that it could be applied to any warrior. These scenes of similar composition would always recall the greatest warrior of the Achaeans and were meant to link the everyday warrior with the famous Achilles and his heroic sphere.

Thetis and her sister Nereids are frequently represented in these scenes of the second arming of Achilles after the second half of the fifth century BCE. The first arming of Achilles happened at his hometown of Phthia, before he left for Troy, while the second arming was at Troy after the death of Patroclus. Even though Thetis was present at both events, clues are often included to identify which one is portrayed. The body of Patroclus could be included in the scene, or a setting that resembles a tent, also Achilles is almost always shown in mourning, but most significant, and easiest to identify, is that in the second arming Thetis is accompanied by her sister Nereids on sea animals. Thus, the standard for representing the second arming scene consists usually of a man in mourning.

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29 Homer, Book XVIII, lines 558-720.

30 Barringer, p. 28-29
seated inside the tent-like structure, being approached by several well dressed women who are holding different pieces of armor and are riding sea animals.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{31} Barringer, p. 17-19.
Aeschylus’ Trilogy

J. M. Barringer argues that the iconography for the second arming scene in classical vase painting was greatly influenced by the play of Aeschylus’s trilogy, *Achilleis*, of 490-460 BCE.\(^{32}\) In Aeschylus’ trilogy, the first play, the *Myrmidons*, shows the events that lead to the scene in the tent: the Achaeans trying to persuade Achilles to rejoin the fighting, Patroclus’ battle and death, Achilles’ mourning of Patroclus, his resolution to rejoin the battle to avenge his friend’s death, and a request for his new armor. The second part of the play, the *Nereids*, starts with a chorus of the Nereids who are riding sea animals and bringing new armor from Hephaestus, the god of the forge. The play concludes with the death of Hector. This scene inspired vase painters to use the image of the Nereids riding on the sea animals and include them in the arming at Troy.\(^{33}\) The majority of vases decorated after 460 BCE show several Nereids acting as attendants to Achilles in this decisive moment of the acceptance of his fate and his own death, even though in the *Iliad* Thetis was the only one who comes to bring him the armor.\(^{34}\) The third part of the trilogy was the *Phrygians*, where the story of the Ransom of Hector is shown, and will be discussed in more detail below with the vases depicting this scene.

M. L. West has a different view of the Aeschylus’ trilogy; he agrees that the first play is the *Myrmidons*, which covers the embassy to Achilles, Patroclus’ death and Achilles’ mourning.\(^{35}\) West then places the *Phrygians* as the second play, and not the *Nereids*, as it is commonly assumed. He believes Hector would have been killed in the interval between the *Myrmidons* and the *Phrygians* plays. In this second part, Achilles

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\(^{32}\) Barringer, p. 17-19.
\(^{33}\) Ibid., p. 20-24.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., p. 17-19.
accepts the ransom and the scales are brought in to weigh the body and the ransom gold.\textsuperscript{36} The third part, in West’s theory, would be the \textit{Nereids}, where Thetis and her sister Nereids come to warn Achilles of his nearing death. Nevertheless, Achilles, ready to face it, goes off to fight. The battle would not be shown on the stage, but the Nereids would receive the news of his death. More lamentations would be sung while Ajax brings the body of Achilles, telling what happened. In conclusion, Thetis names Apollo as the killer of her son.\textsuperscript{37} This version of the trilogy encompasses the whole story of Achilles, and is not just the part described in the \textit{Iliad}.

Theatrical performances of Aeschylus’s \textit{Achilleis} and the playwright’s description of the second arming scene played a significant role in the representation of the Nereids in pictorial arming scenes, even though many images still depended on the Homeric account. The visual example from these public performances had a strong impact on the vase painters, who incorporated the scenes from the play into their work. They featured a mourning, enshrouded, and seated Achilles with Nereids riding sea animals, each carrying a piece of armor, and created a new standard composition format for the second arming scene during the second half of the fifth century BCE.\textsuperscript{38} If we look at the vase decoration that was influenced by those plays, it is obvious that the Nereids are in every instance bringing armor, and this scene then could not be placed after Hector’s death in the third play of the trilogy. The natural conclusion would be that the \textit{Nereids} play is the second part of the trilogy.

An example of the new popular standard motif of representing the second arming of Achilles is an Attic bilingual lekythos from 420 BC, by the Eretria Painter, (Fig. 8).

\textsuperscript{36} West, p. 341.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, p. 342.
\textsuperscript{38} Barringer, p. 30-32.
The decoration on this vessel is divided into three zones, with top and bottom decoration in red-figure technique, while the middle zone has white ground. On the white ground of the lekythos, it is easy to identify the scene from the Iliad\textsuperscript{39}; Thetis is coming to the plains of Troy to bring Hephaestus’s gift of armor to her son, Achilles. She finds him mourning his friend Patroclus.

The first scene shows the interior space, or enclosure of Achilles’ tent on the Trojan plain; it is flanked with columns on both sides and draped curtains fill the space above the figures (Fig. 9). Two figures are inside the tent; Patroclus, identified with his name written above him, lies on a kline\textsuperscript{40}, with his profile to the left, covered with a cloth. His head is tilted up and his eyes are closed. Nude Achilles, also identified by an inscription and shown in profile, is seated on a klisomos next to Patroclus, with both hands in his lap.\textsuperscript{41} It is a silent scene of dignified mourning with Achilles seated next to the body, motionless, his head bowed.

The scene on the lekythos continues to the right, beyond the tent, where the Nereids are riding dolphins and each is holding a piece of armor. They are also named, seated on a dolphin in a three-quarter view, all wearing a himation over a belted chiton, and are decorated with an assortment of different jewelry. The scene is enlivened by the various directions the Nereids are turning and by the vibrant color. We can only imagine the effect of the scene when it was just finished, with the added shimmer of applied three-dimensional gilding to the armor and the jewelry of the Nereids.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{39} Homer, Book XIX, lines 1-28.
\textsuperscript{40} G.M.A. Richter, Ancient Furniture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 54. A popular piece of furniture used for sleeping, dining and lounging.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 45. Richter defines klisomos as a chair that is a Greek invention, with elegant sweeping lines of back and legs, while back and rear form an unbroken fine curve.
The first Nereid on the bilingual lekythos, riding closest to the tent where Achilles and Patroclus are, is Klymene and she is holding in her upraised right hand a sword (Fig. 10). Klymene turns to the second Nereid, Psamante, who brings a helmet and is turned toward the third Nereid, Thetis, with a gesture of speaking. Thetis brings a large, frontal shield and a spear (Fig. 11). Behind her two Nereids (with lost names) carry a corselet and a greave. Galyatea brings reins, while Euploia has the second greave. Kymodoke is the last Nereid with large parts of the top of her body missing and a cliff or a mountain behind her.43 As on the Apulian pelike, Nereids are bringing armor to the mourning Achilles, but here, each one is holding a different piece of armor, and they are spaced one behind another, as if they were in a funeral procession toward the tent of Achilles.

The Symbolism of Death

Even though Nereids are minor deities in the Greek pantheon, they played an important role in the *Iliad* and are a significant part of some religious beliefs of the ancient Greeks.\(^{44}\) The Melian reliefs from c. 470-450 BCE (Fig. 12) in Athens and the terracotta gilt appliqué reliefs from Taranto, c. 350-320 BCE (Fig. 13) of Nereids riding dolphins or other sea animals were used as decoration for wooden sarcophagi. Such close connection with the funerary sphere is also evident in two Apulian vase paintings in Ruvo: the red-figure amphora (Fig. 14) and the red-figure pelike (Fig. 15) from the fourth century BCE. Both vases are divided into registers and show the deceased in a naïskos, a small temple, surrounded by the mourners on the top register. The bottom register, divided by a narrow band of decorative motifs from the top register, shows the Nereids riding the sea animals and carrying Achilles’ armor. Here, again, the Nereids are shown without Achilles, and are connected to the scene above, evidently tied to the funerary theme.\(^{45}\)

Patroclus, not often represented in the scenes of the second arming, could be shown on the lekythos to confirm that the arming scene is the one that happened during the Trojan War, but it could also suggest another level of interpretation. A design on the Athenian lekythos from the British Museum (Fig. 16) shows how the lekythoi were used and represents a woman carrying offerings for the dead. In one hand she brings a funeral lekythos and in the other a basket of fruits. Next to her is an inscription: “Πάτροκλ(ε) χαίρε”. According to the *Iliad*, there were women who mourned seemingly for Patroclus but each mourning her own sorrow. The passage in the *Iliad* about the women mourners

\(^{44}\) Nereids continue to appear in Greek and Latin literature until the twelfth century C.E.

\(^{45}\) Barringer, p. 39-44.
consequently became the basis of a Greek proverb known as Πάτροκλος πρόφασις, “to make a pretext of Patroclus” and is used in connection with those who cannot show grief for their own losses but mourn them in relation to other misfortunes. This vase is a direct illustration of that proverb.46 Could this also be interpreted in the context of the scene of Achilles’ mourning? Might it be that he is mourning not for Patroclus only but also for himself as well?

Before coming to Troy, Achilles had a choice of leading an uneventful but long life or dying young and glorious. By putting on his first armor, received from his mortal father, Achilles accepts his inevitable, but heroic, death. After Patroclus’ death, Achilles realizes that he must return to battle and avenge his friend’s death by killing Hector, the strongest and bravest of Trojan warriors. Furthermore he realizes that after killing Hector he will become the greatest hero of the war and will achieve the glory prophesized, but that his own death will follow soon after. Therefore, by mourning Patroclus, he also mourns his own inevitable death. This explains the image of Achilles on the Corinthian black-figure olpe (Fig. 7) where Achilles himself is the one lying on the bier like a corpse while also mourning someone else. Thetis and her sister Nereids do not mourn for Patroclus, but for Achilles, as if he is already dead.47

Furthermore, the painter of the bilingual vase places the second arming scene on the white ground, thereby evoking its connection with the funerary sphere. Even though white ground decoration had been used for some time in everyday objects, the fact that its soft surface can be scratched and cracked more easily than black and red-figure

decoration led to its abandonment from everyday use and a shift toward its use in funerary equipment, of which we have many examples today.\textsuperscript{48}

For Achilles, the act of receiving his second armor symbolized his divine strength, as it was made and delivered by immortals, but it also ensured his imminent death. According to Aeschylus’s trilogy, as the Nereids were the ones who gave Achilles his armor, they were the attendants to his death and witnesses to his immortalization.\textsuperscript{49} The Nereids in Greek religion were goddesses of mourning and transition, while ancient Greeks also believed that they had the power to immortalize. As death was considered a voyage over sea, the Nereids were considered natural attendants.\textsuperscript{50} Their presence, as well as their funeral-like procession, furthermore underscores the funeral nature of the scene on the white ground of the lekythos. The Melian and Tarantine terracotta appliqués of the Nereids, which decorated wooden sarcophagi, and the Nereids on the two Apulian vases with images of the “heroized dead”, show how this myth transformed into an apparent funerary context and became an appropriate and acceptable image in funerary art.\textsuperscript{51}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Barringer, p. 45-48.
\item Ibid., p. 49-55.
\item Ibid., p. 45-48.
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Combining Scenes and Characters

On the Apulian volute crater by Louvre K67 painter (Fig. 6) with the same theme, we can see a now recognizable image of the second arming of Achilles. This volute crater is intricately decorated. The main scene is placed on the belly of the vase, while the lip, volutes and shoulder of the vase are adorned with floral decoration, and the neck of the vase shows a chariot scene. The main scene is divided into two registers. The bottom one shows Thetis riding a hippocamp, and holding a cuirass in her right hand. She wears a crown and a draped chiton. The hippocamp has similar decoration to the hippocamp from the Apulian pelike (Fig. #1), white dots over his body. Thetis is shown in three quarter view, and her head is bowed, with a sad expression on her face. To Thetis’ right, in the lower left corner, is another Nereid, seated. She looks up toward the scene in the upper register. She wears a sleeveless chiton and with her right hand lifts up her himation over her shoulder.

The upper register shows Achilles seated in the center. He is turned to the left, his body twisting on a chair, with legs toward the left, chest frontal, and his head turning right. In his left hand, he lifts a greave in front of him, as he turns his head away from it. His right hand is bent over his chest, reaching for the sword that hangs on his baldric. He is nude, and has only drapery over his lap. Achilles is shown beardless with short curly hair, and a stocky and heavy figure. His face in three-quarter view expresses grief. In front of Achilles, to the left, stands Talthybius, a messenger of Agamemnon. He wears short chiton, himation, and petasos, a felt hat. He is barefoot, like Achilles. With one hand he leans on his stick, and with the other gestures toward Achilles.
Behind Talthybius stands Odysseus. He is shown mostly from the back, turning toward the central group, but a large portion of his body, from below his shoulders to his ankles, is missing. He has a beard, and his face is shown in profile, like all the other characters on the vase, except Achilles and Thetis. On the right side of Achilles is Automedon, Achilles' charioteer and his favorite after Patroclus. Achilles face is turned toward him. Automedon, standing in a contraposto pose, wears a chlamys and boots, and his body is shown frontally, but twists as he is turning his face toward Achilles, while his hands are outstretched on the opposite side. He is holding the wheel of the chariot, taking it off the wall in a preparation for the battle.

To the far right, Antilochus is seated below the wheel Automedon is taking down. He is in between the two registers. Antilochus is a son of the wise Nestor, and he was the one who brought the news of Patroclus' death to Achilles. It is possible that in the play he had an additional role to play, since he is often represented in these scenes. His character and the news he brought might have also been so stirring that the vase painters felt it important to include him in the representations. He is wearing a hat and his himation drapes over the chair or the rock on which he is sitting. Antilochus is nude, the baldric for his sword crosses his chest, and he holds a spear in his left hand, while his head turns to look up toward Automedon and Achilles. Achilles is the central figure, and all the other figures are turned toward him, except his mother. This focus on Achilles by other characters forces the viewer of the vase to focus on him as well. Thetis, who knows what is about to happen, even as a goddess still cannot prevent it. She impotently

watches, unable to save her son. Her moving grief-stricken facial expression almost conveys that feeling to the viewer.

This vase combines a few scenes of the story; first, as on the previous vases, the mourning and seated Achilles is represented, while the Nereids approach him from the bottom register. The difference in this representation is that Achilles already holds one piece of the new armor in his hand, while Thetis holds another, showing that the moment represented is the one after they have already reached him. The armor and Thetis' helpless expression reminds the viewer what is about to happen next. Achilles is not only quietly mourning as in previous scenes, but is ready to go and avenge his friend, with his hand reaching for the sword and his charioteer preparing the chariot.

The vase painter in addition to the established theme of the mourning and the arming adds Odysseus to the scene, possibly recalling an earlier event, the embassy to Achilles, which was part of Aeschylus' play. He furthermore adds Talthybius, Agamemnon's herald, who originally took, and now returned, Briseis to Achilles. Talthybius is perhaps meant to recall the scene when Agamemnon returns the girl and the promised gifts. The artist here obviously wanted to show that the hostility between Agamemnon and Achilles is a thing of the past, and a new quest is indicated with the armor that is being brought, together with a preparation for the battle. This would again be part of the play, evident from the addition of characters not included in the *Iliad*, but included in the trilogy of Aeschylus.\(^5^3\) The artist combines the scenes from the plays and

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does not depend solely on Homer, where Thetis brings the armor to Achilles alone, and Talthybius does not visit Achilles.\textsuperscript{54}

Talthybius is shown on another similar vase, where the artist inscribed his name. The Attic red-figure calyx crater by Polygnotos from 450-440 BCE (Fig. 17) is the only known example where a vase painter depicted all three scenes from Aeschylus’ trilogy on one vase. It is in fragments, but enough of them survive to understand the scenes. The decoration was divided into two registers. On the top register Thetis and the Nereids, with their names inscribed, are bringing the armor of Achilles and riding on the fantastic sea animals.\textsuperscript{55} The lower band shows Achilles seated in front of a bier on which Patroclus’ body is laid. Even though a large part is missing, the chair and bottom of Achilles’ legs are visible, as well as the legs of a bier on which Patroclus is laid. At the end of the Myrmidons, Achilles was mourning Patroclus, in a scene that very much resembles the one from the white ground of the Eretria painter’s bilingual lekythos (Fig. 9). A woman, probably Briseis, approaches him, entering the tent-like setting. Behind her Talthybius comes. He is dressed in chlamys, with a traveling hat, pilos, and a herald’s staff. This scene is different from the Iliad, as Briseis was not returned until later. Aeschylus might have had a different order in his play, where in the Nereids Talthybius brings Briseis back as a symbol of peace between Achilles and Agamemnon, as well as a symbol in the new development of the story.\textsuperscript{56} On the other side on the lower band, Priam is shown with his lavish gifts stacked on a mule, representing a scene from the third play, the Phrygians.

From the beginnings of their vase decoration, the South Italian vase painters showed an interest in subjects from dramatic performances. The pots they painted usually

\textsuperscript{54} Trendall and Webster, \textit{Illustration of Greek Drama}, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
did not show the particular scene from the play, but often gave a summary of a play as a whole, showing several of its principal characters, and frequently adding gods and goddesses connected to the play and its characters.\textsuperscript{57} This was especially common in the Apulian vases, where tragedies, as well as comedies, were popular and revived in the fourth century BCE.

\textsuperscript{57} Trendall and Webster, \textit{Illustration of Greek Drama}, p. 11.
Dragging the body of Hector at the Tomb of Patroclus

The next group of images shows the dragging of Hector's body and its mutilation. It is the pinnacle of Achilles' revenge and anger, and it is the moment when he fulfills his destiny: Achilles has killed the greatest hero of the Trojans and ensured glory for himself. Both the Ilioupermis painter and the Darius painter show the moment of dragging the body around the tomb of Patroclus on their vases.

The Apulian red-figured volute crater from Ruvo, by Ilioupermis painter, from 360 BCE, was found in pieces and reassembled (Fig. 3). On the belly of the vessel the scene of Achilles with the body of Hector at the tomb of Patroclus is shown. The tomb is indicated by a small temple structure inside of which is a sculpture of Patroclus, standing in contraposto, his body and face shown frontally. He is nude, with a shield in his left and a spear in his right hand. We know it is a sculpture because Patroclus is the same white color as the building he is standing in. This image recalls the scenes of mourning for the deceased by the *naiskos* that the Ilioupermis painter made popular. At his tomb, on the right side, is a woman, probably Briseis, in a long garment, with her hair down, and an offering in her hand. This is again consistent with the *naiskos* scenes of the Ilioupermis painter, where mourners were often represented around the tomb, mourning, and bringing gifts for the deceased. The difference on this vase from the general *naiskos* scene is the addition of a central motif.

On the left side of the tomb of Patroclus, and in the center of the scene is a four-horse quadriga chariot of Achilles. His horses are in motion, their front legs high up, bodies overlapping, and their heads turning in different directions. The details of their reins are added in white. In the chariot, shown partially behind the horses, Achilles
stands. He is turning back to look at the body of Hector that is outstretched below the tomb of Patroclus. Hector is shown face down, nude, and his ankles are tied to the back of Achilles' chariot. Achilles has drapery over his right shoulder and a belt with white dots. In his right hand he holds the reins of the horses, while his left hand is upraised and is gesturing toward Hector. His face is shown in a three quarter view, but there is an expression of sadness on his face unseemly for this moment. The expression on his face might indicate that this was the last time that Achilles took Hector's body, when he realized he was not satisfied any more with the act, or the painter shows the emotion that Achilles felt for Patroclus when he had the need to once more drag the dead body of Hector.

The ground line of the scene is indicated with white dots, and repeats above the chariot again where two more figures show up behind it. The ground line shown by white dots is another invention of the South Italian vase painters in pursuit of representations of depth and space. In the upper left corner is a man shown up to his waist, represented partially behind that ground line. Chlamys drapes over his shoulders and his hat hangs in the back of his head. Two spears rest in the background, while he seems to be taking down the shield off the wall. Immediately above Achilles, behind another white dot ground line a woman stands with elaborate drapery, decorated with three-dot design and black borderline. She has two bracelets added in white on her upraised right hand, in which she holds a circular object, possibly a wreath. In her other hand she holds a box. Her elaborate drapery and jewelry might designate her as the goddess Thetis.

The scene of the killing and dragging of the body of Hector would not be shown on the stage. It is something that happens in the interval of the two plays, and the
audience would hear about it from the characters in the next part of the play. However, the vase painter chooses this moment because it is climactic. It is a unique image, as no other myths so specifically describe the mutilation of an enemy. This one scene explains the events that happened before: Briseis is added to represent the cause of Achilles’ withdrawal from the battle, which in turn causes Patroclus to be killed. Furthermore, his divine mother, his immortal horses, and his armor forged by a god, remind us of his ‘godlike’ qualities, but at the same time the viewer knows that they cannot help him. His fate is set and after the death of Patroclus and the death of Hector, as he has been foretold, his own death will follow.

The volute crater by the Darius Painter has a similar scene but it is greatly expanded (Fig. 5). It is decorated in a true ‘Ornate’ style with multi-figural decoration. As mentioned before, it is a very large vessel, over 140 cm in height. It was found in a grave, and clearly, it was not used in a household, but made specifically for the funeral, as part of the funeral goods. The vase dates to 340-330 BCE. The Darius Painter’s crater is a more complex image of the Funeral of Patroclus with many figures arranged in three registers, including Achilles, who is shown twice: in the chariot, dragging the body of Hector, and at the tomb of Patroclus, killing the Trojan captives. This multi-figural representation once more combines a few scenes into one and includes the armor in which Patroclus died, which Achilles later stripped off of the dead body of Hector.

The scene of Achilles dragging the body of Hector is at the bottom right. The chariot is pulled by four horses, but unlike the horses on the Iliupersis Painter’s vase these seem to be standing still, although their heads are similarly turning in different ways. Achilles’ position in the chariot resembles the one on the Iliouperis Painter’s vase,
turning back to glance at the body of Hector, but not gesturing toward him as he holds the reins in both hands. Hector's muscular body is shown partly behind the chariot, with blood pouring out of his wounds, his left hand by his body, while the other is stretched above his head. Achilles' drapery falls from below his waist where it is held by a belt added in yellow. His baldric is crossing over his chest and is decorated with white dots on black ground. Achilles' face, in three quarter view, again seems to express grief, and the same expressions can even be seen in the eyes of his immortal horses. Behind Achilles and above the body of Hector is a seated nude warrior with a shield and a spear, looking at Achilles.

To the left of the horses is a small reflecting pool of water, or a fountain, and two elaborately dressed and bejeweled women are getting water. They are standing on a line of white dots indicating ground, while the Darius painter adds some other plants and growth to separate them from the Trojan captive standing behind them, in a lower left corner. The captive's garment falls to his knees and is decorated with black dots and a black borderline. His Phrygian hat is added in yellow, and his dark hair curls below it. Three other Trojans, above, are sitting on a rock behind Achilles, who is slaying the fifth Trojan at the tomb. They all have long hair and their hands are tied. The Phrygian hats and their belts are added in yellow. Two of the Trojans wear long sleeve undergarments and pants added in brown and decorated with white dots. Their drapery over undergarments is shown in a contrasting color and decorated with dots, zigzags, swirls, and elaborate border patterns. Two of the Trojans have their faces shown in the three quarter view. Helplessness and despair are evident on their faces, as well as in their
postures. The five Trojans shown represent the twelve Achilles killed at the tomb of Patroclus.58

To the right of the three seated Trojans, Achilles is standing, nude, while his chlamys with single black borderline, flies behind him. He is slaying the fifth Trojan at the tomb. With his left foot Achilles is stepping on the ankle of the Trojan, pulling him by the hair with one hand, and preparing to strike him with a sword in his other hand. The Trojan at the tomb is on his knees, looking up with a pleading expression on his face toward his killer. His elaborate Phrygian hat has already fallen down, below his knees, in front of the tomb of Patroclus. Another sword, indicated in yellow, is below his and Achilles’ feet.

The tomb of Patroclus is portrayed here differently than on the Ilioupersis vase. The Darius Painter shows perspective with the pile of wood for the funeral pyre. There is no sculpture, but rows of wood are placed on a white pedestal, in preparation for his funeral pyre. The body of Patroclus, that would have been burned here, is not shown. All around it and on top the armor that Patroclus died in is showcased. This armor, that Hector took after he killed Patroclus, was returned by Achilles when he avenged the death of his friend. Besides the sword below Achilles’ feet, in front of the pyre is the foreshortened shield with the face of Medusa, and a greave on each side of the shield. Above, on top of the pyre, a Corinthian helmet in the middle is flanked by two cuirasses, one showing body muscles, the other intricately decorated all over with dots and swirls, and a head of a woman or Medusa on the chest. All the armor is indicated in yellow with shading in reddish-brown. Below it, animal bones are shown, indicating a sacrifice.

To the left of the tomb, and above Achilles in a chariot on the bottom register, is Agamemnon. He is pouring libation at the tomb of Patroclus. Agamemnon is shown with a beard, helmet, cuirass, himation, and boots. He holds a spear in his left hand, while pouring a libation with his right. The helmet, cuirass, top of his boots, spear, handle of his sword, and a libation vessel are all added in yellow with the same shading as the armor on Patroclus’ tomb. His himation drapes in many folds over his left shoulder and his left arm. Behind Agamemnon is a woman in a long dress, wrapped in her himation, and with a headdress. She is followed by an attendant. Above them in the top register is an unusual group of three figures: a nude man shown from the back with an animal skin draped over his right arm. Next to him another man, with a herald staff and a hat, gestures toward the seated woman who holds a shield and a spear. The spear Agamemnon is holding in the middle register extends all the way to the herald in the top register.

The bed of Nestor is shown above the funeral pyre of Patroclus. Like the pyre below, the bed is foreshortened, showing the legs in the background, and four posts that hold up the fabric above. The bed is colored in white and brown, and the delicate legs and bottom of the bed are decorated with what looks like carvings or painted decoration. Old Nestor is seated on the bed. On one side are two pillows, while on the other side his sword is shown. Above the pillows are two wheels of the chariot. Phoinix, standing in front of the bed strikes a conversational gesture toward Nestor. Phoinix and Nestor are the two elderly advisors, both closely connected with Achilles. Both have white hair and himations draped around their bodies covering them to the ankles. On the other side of the bed, the group of three figures balances the composition. A woman, draped in her himation, holds with one hand the post of Nestor’s bed, and lifts her himation over her

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shoulder with the other. Behind her two nude men with armor are conversing. One is seated on a rock, and the other is standing.

As this scene would not be shown on the stage, the artist must have been inspired by other means to create this composition. L. Giuliani believes there are two methodological oppositions in reading these images: ‘philodramatic’ and ‘iconocentric’. Philodramatic means that the vase painters use drama and are attached to the theater, so it is possible to use their representations to reconstruct the lost plays. The iconocentric view is that vase painters use pictorial stories and are influenced by the tradition of iconographic formulae. As these large vases were made for funeral ceremonies, the consolatory speakers at these events, Giuliani further argues, used them to interpret the images and connect the mourning public with the mythological episodes represented, thus minimizing their own pain. They could find comfort in associating the deceased and their suffering with the mythical heroes and stories. The fact that these vases had a mythological scene in front, and a *naïskos* scene in the back supports this theory.

The connection of the mythological and funerary theme is furthermore asserted by the type of decoration found inside the tombs. Etruscan tombs, where many of these vases were found, are most often covered with frescoes, and in the François Tomb in Vulci, from 350-330 BCE, scenes from the Trojan War were represented, including Ajax and Cassandra, Phoenix and Nestor, and Achilles sacrificing Trojan prisoners at the tomb of Patroclus. It is interesting to note that these images, with inscribed names of the heroes, were represented on the walls together with the images and inscriptions of actual

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60 Giuliani, p. 72-74.
61 Ibid., p. 86.
important people, battles, and events from the Etruscan history.\textsuperscript{62} By mirroring these images of bloodshed and brutality artist made allegorical and historical analogy of the Greek mythological and Etruscan contemporary events.

\textsuperscript{62} The Mysterious Etruscans, 04.22.07 http://www.mysteriousetruscans.com/francois.html#battle
Achilles Versus Hector

Achilles is the hero of the *Iliad* and hero of the Greeks, but to modern readers, Hector is the one who is more respected. It is possible that is because we have sympathy for his death, for the suffering of his parents, his wife, and for his noble actions. He is a hero, but he is weaker than Achilles, and in the *Iliad* we see his death and his mutilation, which stirs our sympathy for him. Hector is shown as a protector of his hometown, Troy, while Achilles is the attacker who fights for selfish reasons: his honor. Achilles' passionate nature is the cause of the brutal treatment of Hector's body and the killing of the twelve Trojans at the pyre of Patroclus. But Achilles, in ancient Greece, was considered the ideal hero, the greatest soldier, and was even worshipped. To understand this, we have to put our present-day ideals aside, and try to see him from the ancient Greeks' point of view.

The body of an enemy in battle was the property of the victor, as was his armor: a trophy. Through many examples in the poem, Homer shows us that there is no need to bury the body of an enemy.63 The phrase used often in the *Iliad* was to 'throw the body to the dogs and birds', unless the body could be saved by fellow warriors, or ransomed by the family.64 When Hector was battling Patroclus, he was threatened with the same fate. After he killed him and stripped off his armor, Hector dragged the body of Patroclus, with the intent of cutting off his head. The Greeks knew what would happen to Patroclus unless they could save his body. Homer furthermore makes sure that Achilles hears of Hector's treatment and the threats to Patroclus' body, as the goddess Iris, sent by Hera,

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64 Ibid., p. 49.
tells him. Afterwards, Achilles' actions toward the body of Hector are expected, and are not criticized by other Greeks or the gods. Hector himself knew what Achilles would do to his body when their duel started. Even Hector's parents are aware of what will happen to their son's body.

Through the mutilation of Hector's body, Homer dramatizes Achilles' love for Patroclus. Hector has love for his parents, his wife and son, his brothers, his city, and even for Helen, but Achilles has all his love for Patroclus, his companion and friend, someone whom he sees as an older brother. Achilles realizes that it is his fault that Patroclus is dead. He had raged for too long, and he realized it too late. His anger with Agamemnon is not condemned by others. His fellow warriors and the Olympian gods as well, support and understand his stand. To help him win his honor back, Zeus even turns the tide of the battle. This shows that the reason for his withdrawal from the battle is justified; Achilles' fault is that he persists in his rage for too long. Even after Ajax, in the embassy to Achilles begging him to help and save his friends, Achilles is pitiless.

Similarly, Homer repeatedly shows the mutilation of the body throughout the *Iliad*. This theme is built up by the previous mutilation scenes of other heroes and its climax is Achilles, back in battle, mercilessly killing the Trojans and killing Hector in the end. In his treatment of the body of Hector, Achilles was not condemned by his fellow Greeks or by the gods, but his passionate nature makes him again go too far when he continues to drag the body after the funeral games of Patroclus. That is the point at which the gods have to intervene. The rising violence in the *Iliad*, shown first by the violence of other characters in the battle, is slowly built up by Homer. Its height is Achilles'
treatment of Hector’s corpse. The violence slowly relaxes after the funeral games of Patroclus with the sense of exhaustion and futility. Homer, through funeral games, helps to create a peaceful atmosphere where Achilles can heal and eventually give the body back. In the ransom of Hector, Achilles must be humanized again, and the story moves from passionate brutality to calm finale.

Through this development, the audience has to be emotionally involved and the stakes have to be high. Homer has to convince the reader of Achilles’ personality though his previous actions, but also show that human dignity and relations are universal, and encourage the audience to identify with the hero. Achilles’ emotions throughout the *Iliad* are extreme, but the funeral games are a transition where the two sides of Achilles are shown, his cruelty in killing the captive Trojans and mutilating the body of Hector, as well as the slow change toward the merciful side shown through his decisions and actions as a judge at the contests. Achilles shows pity for the best charioteer who, by the interfering of the gods, came in last. He is a mediator, resolves conflicts in the funeral games, and even gives gifts to Nestor, who did not compete, and Agamemnon, whom he honored as the best archer, before the competition even started.

At the beginning of Patroclus’ funeral games Hector’s body is alone and far from his family, and Achilles is passionately lamenting Patroclus. Suffering for both men invokes the audiences’ compassion and sympathy. At the games, Achilles furthermore urges others to eat. This is important as it shows on another level the change in him. The audience knows that after Achilles heard of Patroclus’ death, he rejected offers of food and surrendered to the horrors of battle, bloodshed, killing, and death. Now that he has

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avenged his friend, a gentler side of Achilles emerges; he can eat again, and urges others to do so as well.
The Ransom of Hector

Homer prepared the audience for the emotional change in Achilles at the funeral games of Patroclus, setting the scene for the compassionate Achilles. In the last book of the *Iliad*, Homer shows a different side of Achilles in the scene of the Ransom of Hector. The last vase and a fragment from the group discussed in this thesis show the moment when Priam arrives at the tent of Achilles. To be able to ‘read’ these scenes, we should first see how the representations of this type developed over time to the period with which we are concerned.

The emotional scene of Priam kneeling and humbly kissing the hands of the man who killed his son was an enticing image and at the same time a great challenge to the vase painters. Some of the artists who took up this challenge had to add details and information that writer did not specify. J.P. Small argues that these vase painters illustrated stories and older representations of the same scene, rather than actual texts.68 She proves this by pointing out depictions of chariots in scenes from the *Iliad*: while Homer always describes the chariots as *bigas*, two-horse chariots, in art they are mostly represented as *quadrigas*, as these were common in later centuries.69 This is evident in the vases depicting the scenes of the Dragging of the Body of Hector, where Achilles is riding in a *quadriga* shown in both the Darius and the Ilioupersis vase.

Small furthermore points out discrepancies in illustrations of the period costume where the artist shows heroes in contemporary costumes, not in the garments they wore in the Mycenaean age, mostly because the artists did not know what they wore a few

68 Small, p. 6.
69 Ibid., p. 15.
hundred years before, or believed that they dressed the same.\textsuperscript{70} Vase painters in addition combined a few scenes of the story, creating a mixture of elements, to make the image more dynamic and interesting, as we have seen in examples of representations of the Mourning and Arming of Achilles, as well as in the representations of the Dragging of Hector's body.

One example of this kind of representation for the Ransom of Hector scene is a cup in Munich, by the Oltos Painter from 520-510BC (Fig. 18), where the image of the ransom runs around both sides of the cup. Bearded Achilles lies on a kline after dinner, with meat and bread still on the table in front of him. He is holding a cup, as he would do at a banquet, and looks over at the un-named woman behind him, who is placing a wreath on his head. This scene would be reminiscent of contemporary Attic banquet scenes.\textsuperscript{71} Here, the painter is drawing from his knowledge of present-day customs, because details such as these are not described by Homer. The artist also includes the dead, naked body of Hector below the couch of Achilles. In the \textit{Iliad}, Homer specifies, the body was outside. Here, the dead body dramatizes the setting and the artist uses it as a device to remind us of what took place prior to this scene, as well as to emphasize the reason for Priam's visit.\textsuperscript{72} To the right of the woman is a warrior with helmet and shield, while on the left of the kline a gray haired and bearded Priam approaches. His hands are outstretched toward Achilles in a pleading gesture. Behind Priam, Hermes withdraws, looking and gesturing toward Priam, and is followed by a youth with gifts. On the other side of the cup more Trojans are represented with gifts on horses, included among them a young girl. The painter is interested in showing the expensive gifts Priam is bringing and

\textsuperscript{70} Small, p. 29.  
\textsuperscript{71} Friss Johansen, \textit{The Iliad in Early Greek Art} (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1967), p. 130.  
includes the Trojans just as the bearers of those gifts. They, as well as the horses, are not mentioned in the *Iliad*.\(^{73}\)

Later painters used a similar main composition for the story with the lounging Achilles, the body of Hector, the supplicating Priam, Hermes and other Trojans included. The Brygos painter represented a comparable version of this scene on his skyphos in Vienna from 490 BC (Fig. 19), but here Achilles is shown as youthful, with no beard, as was the artistic custom of the period. Below Achilles is the outstretched bleeding body of Hector, while the space above him is filled with armor that hangs on the walls, indicating the interior of Achilles' tent. A young cupbearer replaces the woman from Oltos' cup, while the horses and Hermes are left out. The Trojan attendants are again bringing valuable gifts.\(^{74}\)

As mentioned earlier, after 490 BC, the famous playwright Aeschylus wrote a trilogy about the events of the Trojan War that greatly influenced Attic as well as other representations of the same theme. In the *Phryges*, the third part of the trilogy, the story of the ransom of Hector is represented. The scene was inside Achilles' tent and the chorus consisted of Trojans who accompanied Priam. In the play, Hermes alone, and not Thetis, visited Achilles and informed him that he must return the body of Hector for proper burial.\(^{75}\) After Hermes left, the chorus and Priam came on the scene, while Achilles sat silent. When the chorus ended their 'barbarian' song and dance, Priam spoke. The body of Hector was laid out in front of Achilles' couch. After another song, as the climax of the scene, the scales were brought to the stage to weigh the gold and the body of Hector, for in this play, Achilles agreed to return the body if the Trojans paid him

\(^{73}\) Johansen, p. 130.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., p. 133.

\(^{75}\) West, p. 341-342.
Hector's weight in gold. This version of the story is again different from Homer's account.\textsuperscript{76}

After the plays of Aeschylus, artists could draw inspiration not only from written texts, stories they heard, and images they had seen from the work of other artists, but also from enactments of the story on the stage, as we have seen in the other examples. Incorporating these visual images from the plays, a story was created that included Hermes together with Priam and many Trojan attendants in the tent with Achilles and the dead body of Hector. Furthermore, the scales could be included, or the actual weighing of the body could be represented. The artists fused a few important scenes into one and combined them into an image that was readable and still understandable to the contemporary viewer, as well as to us today.

Two fragments from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, attributed to the Black Fury Group (Fig. 2), are part of the same South Italian calyx crater that represents the Ransom of Hector. They are both covered with red wash, giving them an orange color.\textsuperscript{77} They are also one of the finest examples of the detailed and meticulous execution of the Ransom of Hector scene. The two fragments together contain partial renderings of six figures; besides Achilles and Priam, three gods and a Trojan are shown. The fragment with Priam consists of the three joined pieces that are 23cm high and 19.7cm long.\textsuperscript{78}

An aged Priam is partially preserved; his head in three quarter view, curved back with partial outstretched arm, most of his torso, and just part of the foot is visible. His white hair is coming out from his Phrygian cap and he has a short white beard. He is

\textsuperscript{76} West, p. 341-342.  
\textsuperscript{77} Kenneth Hamma, "Fragment of an Apulian Calyx Crater" in The Art of South Italy; Vases from Magna Graecia edited by Margaret Ellen Mayo (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; Richmond 1982), p. 84-86.  
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
kneeling, probably, besides the *kline* in which Achilles is sitting. The fluted column behind Priam shows that the scene is inside Achilles’ tent. Priam’s oriental costume is highly decorated and worthy of a king. His Phrygian cap, long sleeved garment and his shoes are elaborately decorated with black, white, and dilute glaze of checkers, diamond patterns, palmettes, rows of white dots, and zigzags. His belt also has ornaments. The chlamys drapes from his left shoulder around his back and over his lap. It is adorned with stars and more white dots. The decoration of Priam’s garment shows close attention to detail while his face shows sincere deep pathos, fatherly love, and pain at the sight of the dead body of his son. Priam is not looking up at Achilles, a portion of whose right arm is only visible above Priam’s head, but his sad face is looking down, probably at the body of his son Hector, laid out below Achilles’ *kline*.\(^79\)

Behind Priam is the partially preserved image of the nude body of Hermes. His youthful muscular body is covered merely with a chlamys that falls over his right shoulder, and is also richly decorated with black, white and diluted glaze of swirls, rays, stars, white dots, and palmettes. His body is preserved only from his belly down to his ankles, where the top of his winged sandals is shown and accentuated in white. Hermes’ encouraging right arm extends and touches the shoulder of the kneeling Priam in front of him. Above his extended arm the bottom of his kerykeion is visible.\(^80\) Behind Hermes is only a small fragment of another figure, possibly one of the Trojan attendants of Priam, the ransom bearer. He is also nude and part of his decorated chlamys is visible hanging behind him.

\(^{79}\) Trendall and Webster, *Illustration of Greek Drama*, p. 57.
\(^{80}\) Hamma, p. 85.
The other fragment illustrates parts of two figures. It shows the god Apollo with his cithara. The same attention to detail is also evident in this part of the crater. Apollo’s chiton has a similar decoration to the chlamys of Hermes. The wreath on Apollo’s head and the cithara are accentuated in white, as well as details on the border of his chiton. Above and to the left of Apollo is a partial figure of a seated woman. Her body is preserved only below the shoulders, with part of her left arm and her bent left leg. Her chiton is intricately decorated and is draped around her legs. Her belt, bracelet, and the dots holding her chiton together at the sleeve are indicated in white. She does not have attributes like Apollo and Hermes, but she could be Artemis, sister of Apollo, who is often represented accompanying her brother.81 The addition of the gods Apollo and Artemis is plausible, as they are the ones who protected the body of Hector from mutilation, and argued with the other Olympian gods for his release.

The Black Fury Group fragments, as one of the greatest examples of early Apulian vase painting, gave popularity to depictions of faces in three-quarter view, enabling artists to show more emotion or contemplation in the expressions of their characters. Furthermore, as evident from the second fragment depicting Apollo and Artemis, the figures were distributed in different levels showing three dimensional space and depth; by putting some figures higher or lower, they are seen as further away or in front of each other. It is certainly regrettable that only fragments of this crater remain, and the viewer is left to imagine and recreate what the rest of the scene might have represented.

Another painter who worked in the ornate style of Apulia and who was also very successful in showing the tormented look on the faces of his figures was the Lycurgos

81 Hamma, p. 86.
The earliest representation of the actual weighing of the body of Hector and the ransom gold is found on a South Italian volute crater from Ruvo by the Lycurgos Painter (Fig. 4). This later image, from 350 BCE, even though heavily restored, can help us visualize how the complete scene of the Black Fury Group fragments, with the additional figures of gods and attendants, might have looked. On the Lycurgos painter’s volute crater the figures are separated onto two main levels, while some are placed in the middle connecting the two.

The central figures are those of Achilles and Priam. Achilles is seated on the top level in a three-quarter view on a kline that has decorated cushions and covers. His legs are crossed, and his head rests on his right arm and a stick. The drapery of his cloak covers his head, as he is often represented when mourning, while his feet are resting on the footstool, below which white dots indicate ground level. There is a gloomy look on his face as his eyes gaze toward the body of Hector below.

Priam who sits below Achilles’ kline connects the scenes of the top and bottom levels. His oriental garment is intricately decorated in contrast to the plain chlamys of Achilles. He wears his Phrygian cap and sandals, as on the Black Fury Group fragment. Priam’s long sleeved shirt has a checkered pattern decoration, while his chlamys elaborately drapes over his body. His tilted head in mourning replicates Achilles’ posture above, but his face is shown in profile. The two olive branches in his left hand rest by the feet of Achilles, while he supports his head with the right. The tormented, tragic look on Priam’s face, and similar one on Achilles’, recalls the words of Homer:

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82 A. D. Trendall, *Red Figure Vases of South Italy and Sicily* (Thames and Hudson; New York, NY, 1989), p. 78.
“Remember your own father! I deserve more pity…
I have endured what no one on earth has ever done before –
I have put to my lips the hands of the man who killed my son.”
Those words stirred within Achilles a deep desire
To grieve for his own father. Taking the old man’s hand
He gently moved him back. And overpowered by memory
Both men gave way to grief. Priam wept freely
For man-killing Hector, throbbing, crouching
Before Achilles’ feet as Achilles wept himself,
Now for his father, now for Patroclus once again
And their sobbing rose and fell throughout the house.84

The dramatic and vibrant representation tempts us to believe that the artists might have used the actual texts while working, but looking at the rest of the composition, we can notice that the scene has evolved so much, it is almost impossible that they referred to the original text of the Iliad.85 Here, Achilles is flanked by two deities, Athena and Hermes. To the left and in front of his kline Athena stands in her warrior costume with a sleeveless garment, long aegis with a Gorgon face and snakes at the hem that falls below her hips, while her himation drapes around her arms in many folds. She also has a helmet and holds a spear in her right hand, while comforting Achilles with her outstretched left hand. Her face, as well as Hermes’, is in profile. Hermes, approaching Achilles from the right, leans on the cushions of his kline and gestures toward Achilles with his kerykeion. His nude body, covered only with a chlamys that flowingly drapes over his right shoulder, is shown in three quarter view from the back. He also wears a petasos, a

84 Homer, Book XXIV, lines 589-599
85 Woodford, The Trojan War in Ancient Art, p. 87.
travelers’ hat. Behind Hermes is seated Antilochos with two spears and a shield, and on the opposite side, behind Athena, Antilochos’ father Nestor is standing, shown with white hair and beard, leaning on his staff.

On the lower lever, behind Priam, is seated Thetis. She wears an elaborate garment that drapes around her body, and has a headdress and a staff. She turns toward a young winged Eros who is bringing a plate with food. Behind him, a nude warrior with a spear approaches and gestures, like Hermes above him, towards the center of the composition. Below Priam is an altar, and to the left two nude Trojans carry the body of Hector. Another Trojan holds the scales in preparation to weigh the body, and below him, another winged Eros seems to be helping. All the men are beardless except old Priam and Nestor, and most of the figures are named. The Lycurgos painter achieves the sense of depth by creating different levels with white dots indicating the ground, as well as using perspective by foreshortening of the *kline* of Achilles, and showing its back legs. Armor hanging on the wall indicates the interior of the tent.

Both of the South Italian representations of the Ransom of Hector add gods and goddesses that could not appear at the same time in the tent of Achilles. Both, also, have figures arranged in space and highly decorated garments. Athena, Thetis, and Nestor, on the Lycurgos painters’ crater, and Apollo and Artemis on the Black Fury Group fragments could be from some other play that has not survived to today, but from which artists drew inspiration. It is also possible that the scene represents a summary of the play, including the main characters and gods associated with them.
The Pity of Achilles

The themes of death and suffering are central to the story of the *Iliad*. The pathos of Hector’s death and the pathos of Priam’s suffering are connected to the wrath of Achilles, and they also foreshadow the future of Achilles. But, after all the pain and suffering that the hero must go through, Homer introduces a positive theme of resolution and reconciliation, and pity as the catalyst. To use the pity effectively, Homer repeatedly represents Achilles as ‘pitiless’, and uses this adjective throughout the book. The pitiless Achilles is contrasted with other characters in the story, and Homer represents Patroclus as the one who shows the most pity, who is generous and kind. This is evident in moments when Achilles sends Patroclus to find out about the wounded warriors from Nestor, as well as when Patroclus asks Achilles to go to battle in his armor. This theme is shown in the Trojan side of the battlefield as well, where Hector pities his wife and son, while his parents pity their son’s fate.

In addition to humans, gods also show pity. Thetis, naturally, pities her son’s fate; Zeus, out of pity for Achilles while he mourns Patroclus and refuses to eat and drink, tells Athena to sustain him on ambrosia and nectar. Out of pity, again, he sends Hermes to help Priam on his travels to the Greek camps. Contrasted to all this compassion and kindness, Achilles’ cruelty does not stop until he finally kills Hector, which is a climax of Achilles’ pitilessness toward the Trojans. The fury of Achilles against the dead body of Hector, to which Homer so carefully and conscientiously built up, is superseded in the end by his pity for Priam.

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87 Ibid., p. 32.
88 Ibid., p. 64.
In the scene of the Ransom of Hector, Achilles expresses admiration for Priam, and reassures him that he has nothing to fear. A man who has raged in the battlefield and mercilessly killed so many Trojans, as well as many of Priam’s own sons, now peacefully accepts the king of Troy into his tent. Achilles is magnanimous toward Priam, as he surpasses his generosity shown or implied in previous events.\(^8^9\) The scene is so much more effective and shocking just because it is contrasted with his previous actions and feelings.

The importance of this scene extends beyond the pity of Achilles. Achilles actively participates in ‘healing’ Priam’s sufferings by convincing him to eat and drink, and by consoling him. Priam’s request to sleep is an acknowledgment of that healing.\(^9^0\) Furthermore, by consoling Priam in his grief, Achilles consoles himself as well. He shows empathy for Priam, his enemy, recognizing him now only as a fellow mortal who suffers for the loss of loved ones. The death of Patroclus has brought suffering to Achilles, and will eventually bring suffering to Thetis and Peleus when he himself is killed, just as the death of Hector brought suffering to Priam and Hecuba. Furthermore, Achilles acknowledges that mortals have to live and die with suffering, and that is something, he recognizes, that binds the Achaeans and Trojans together as humans.\(^9^1\) By suffering, gods teach men and put them on the road to understanding and wisdom, making them better, and teaching them pity.\(^9^2\)

The pity of Achilles concludes with his contemplation of mortality. The pity is directly associated with human mortality, since it is the human beings who are pitied and

\(^8^9\) Zanker, p. 128.
\(^9^0\) Kim, p. 65.
\(^9^1\) Ibid., p. 151.
who suffer: the wounded or dead warriors, their friends, and the families they leave behind. The immortal gods are never pitied, either by humans or by other gods.\textsuperscript{93} Mortality and pity here also parallel each other. For Achilles, the resolution of one, his pity, implies the resolution of the other, his mortality.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{93} Kim., p. 66.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 170.
Conclusions

We can now see how the scenes representing Achilles' transformations developed and altered over time, first in visual decorations by Attic painters with minimal attention to detail of garments and furniture, toward the much more meticulously decorated Apulian vases. The excessive decoration is not only evident in the composition, but also in the popular floral decoration all around the vase. Furthermore, in visual decoration, a significant change happened with the rise of the interest in three dimensional space, allowing for multi-figural, complex compositions, and pushing the vase painters to experiment with layering, foreshortening, and shading, something they would have been exposed to by seeing the works of the many great wall and panel painters of the period.

Theater had a strong impact on these representations as well, but it is difficult to draw conclusions about specific theatrical performances and their specific influences, since only about eleven percent of written plays have come down to us today. Also, playwrights wrote many stories on the same subject, and those very often contradicted each other. Small explains how it was not easy to attend the plays that were presented only once in Athens. In addition, nude men, often found on the vases, would never have been on stage, meaning that if the artist represented the play he saw, he must have changed their 'costume'. This only shows how the vase painters may have combined many influences to create an image, and were not required to follow texts word for word, as art historians often do today in interpreting an image. An excellent contemporary example for the manipulation of the original story of the Iliad is the production of the movie Troy where the modern cinematographers altered the story, working with the

95 Small, p. 43.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., p. 54.
original text but purposefully changing certain events significantly, only to be able to appeal to the tastes of the contemporary audience.

The development of an interest in pathos, as a reflection of the social and political changes that happened during the fourth century BCE, was yet another important influence on vase painters and the subjects they painted. Personal experiences, rather than ethos, became central, and interest in showing contemplation, sentiment, and strong emotions become evident in the representations of the period. In the works of intellectuals, as well as in the arts, after the Peloponnesian wars, escapism and aloofness are evident.98 This aloofness from the affairs of state and concentration on private emotional experiences become the most important force in the arts of the period.99 As these feelings are universal, people from different places and different classes could identify themselves easily with the characters showing these emotions. With the migrations and establishments of large urban centers where diverse peoples mixed, the language they spoke was different, the gods they prayed to could be different, but the emotions they felt were the same. And as these urban environments became impersonal, the only connection people had were universal personal feelings, the pathos of individuals.

We might imagine it furthermore reassuring and encouraging to know that heroes suffered as much as humans and were faced with hard choices, or that tragic misfortunes befell them.100 In this period the spotlight changed from the image of the victorious, brave hero, to a scene with which the viewer could more easily emotionally connect. This

99 Ibid., p. 142.
was evident in the arts in representations of basic and universal human feelings, of which suffering was the first to be used by the artists. ¹⁰¹

The idea of fate is closely connected with the representations of death on these images. How much is Achilles responsible, when gods inspire and restrain him, and have so much influence on his actions? Certain events in the *Iliad* are predetermined, like the fall of Troy and the death of Achilles after the death of Hector, and the gods cannot change them. Even Zeus cannot alter the fate of his son Sarpedon who is killed by Patroclus. Homer touches on the subject when he shows that destiny could be changed, but at the price of order in the universe; when Sarpedon was about to be killed, Hera convinces Zeus that if he saves him, he will invite the rage of the other gods who also have sons dying in the battle, lose their respect, and eventually create chaos. Achilles’ fate is similarly pre-determined. Even with all his heroics and honor, his divine lineage and the help that he received from the gods, his preset fate cannot be altered.

Achilles and heroes in general sooner or later realize their limits and accept mortality and establish or reestablish a human relationship with their fellowmen. This is later the model for the greatest Athenian tragedies.¹⁰² Helen realizes this at the beginning of the *Iliad*; she sees the consequences of her actions and feels responsible, something gods never do. Taking responsibility is a step toward recognizing and accepting her humanity and mortality. At this point she breaks the bonds of her self-absorption, but here Achilles just enters his. He is ‘godlike’, lonely, and heroic, while the rest of the world is excluded from his experience. His road to final release is long and harsh, filled

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¹⁰¹ Pollitt, p. 143.
with suffering that finally leads to his death. The Iliad shows the hubris of Achilles, and in turn of the Greeks. He is powerful and 'godlike', but cannot escape his fate, and he realizes that too late.

Achilles' advice to Priam, when he comes to ransom the body of Hector, is to eat, and he convinces him to eat, despite his grief. He furthermore tells him the story of Niobe and her twelve children who were killed by Apollo and Artemis. Niobe boasted she was superior to the goddess Leto, who had only two children, Apollo and Artemis. But for her boasting, the twin brother and sister punished her by killing all twelve of her children. She mourned, Achilles says, but she ate despite her grief. It is a powerful lesson about the tragic consequences of trying to be 'godlike', and an interesting choice of a story by Achilles. It could be said that he himself learned that lesson.

In the end, the death of Patroclus and death of Achilles are closely linked. His anger is fueled by his inability to accept his own fate. For Homer, as for Aeschylus, the reality is passion and suffering, it is the human condition, and humans' task is to find the strength to accept their fate. This human condition is evident in the images on the vases that represent the changes Achilles goes through in accepting his fate. The suffering, as the strongest and as the first emotion the artists explore, is unmistakable in the vase art of South Italy. Achilles and his emotional transformations and decisions depicted on the six vases discussed in this thesis are excellent examples of the painter and patron's interest in emotions, religion, and fate, and are some of the strongest reasons for the exploitation of the story in this period of vase painting.

103 Knox, p. 46-47.
104 Segal, p. 73.
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