**Pantomime horsemen: “cavalry-sports” helmets and Roman popular culture in the frontier provinces**

**Boris Rankov**

Decorated helmets fitted with a metal mask in the form of a human face have been found throughout the territory of Roman empire, and sometimes beyond it. Despite the significant number of examples surviving either whole or in part from the first to the third centuries AD, these helmets remain an enigma to students of the Roman army. They have usually, though not exclusively, been found either in military contexts at or near forts garrisoned by cavalry, or in hoards or graves associated with other military equipment, the latter often cavalry-specific such as horse-chamfrons. Most of them have therefore been identified as cavalry helmets, and it is widely accepted that many of these were of the type referred to by the second-century writer and general Arrian in his treatise *Tactica* whilst describing Roman cavalry exercises (*hippika gymnasia*) . According to Arrian, “these helmets, unlike those made for battle, do not protect just the head and cheeks, but are made to fit the faces of the cavalrymen completely, with openings for the eyes so as not to interrupt the vision whilst nevertheless providing protection for the eyes.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Consequently, helmets with face-masks are usually referred to in the modern scholarship as “cavalry-sports” helmets, even though Arrian’s distinction of these from actual field equipment is thought not to be quite so clear-cut as he asserts. His description does not go into detail about the form and iconography of these helmets, but all of the surviving examples have the mouth closed or only slightly open. Many of them could be seen simply as representing young men with a variety of hairstyles, and as such, they may be idealised portraits of their wearers or of soldiers in general. In several cases, however, some sort of distinctive headgear is shown, not always military in nature, and much more surprisingly a number of the helmets clearly depict female heads. Inevitably, the interpretation and significance of the latter has drawn considerable scholarly attention.

**The Greeks vs Amazons hypothesis**

In 1975, H. Russell Robinson in his classic work *The armour of Imperial Rome*, whilst introducing a discussion of a mixed hoard of “male” and “female” helmets found at Straubing in Bavaria (Figs 1a, 4a), noted that “Arrian’s description of the *hippika gymnasia* tells how the horsemen were divided into two teams, which took turns to attack and defend. Were there, then, two distinct characters among the helmets that would identify one side from the other? One does not have to look long for the distinction, for some masks are male and others are female – and this leads swiftly to a suitable and obvious subject for the display: the ever-popular theme of Greek and Roman artists, the wars between Greeks and Amazons.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Another scholar of Roman military equipment, Michael Simkins, subsequently suggested that the 3rd-century painted shield from Dura Europos depicting a battle between Greeks and Amazons should be associated with the *hippika gymnasia*.[[3]](#footnote-3) Since then, Robinson’s has become the most widely accepted explanation for the female-face helmets, at least in the English-speaking literature, and it has recently gained further impetus from the discovery of the (male) Crosby-Garrett helmet in Cumbria in 2010, whose Phrygian cap has been interpreted as representing a Trojan combatant in the most famous conflict in which Greeks clashed with Amazons, the Trojan War.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The Greeks vs Amazons interpretation is, however, unsatisfactory. Firstly, Junkelmann has already pointed out that Robinson’s hypothesis was based on the discovery of four male masks and three female masks in the Straubing hoard, but the former are stylistically earlier than the latter, so that it is far from certain that they were originally meant to be used together or that their collocation predates the assembly of the hoard in the mid-third century AD.[[5]](#footnote-5) Secondly, the interpretation fits only a very limited number of the known female-face helmets: the three of the supposedly “Oriental” type found in the Straubing hoard, the single example of the same type found at Eining, and some fragments, mostly from Germany, which appear to show a similar hair-style.[[6]](#footnote-6) It does not allow for the majority of female helmets whose hairstyle or head-dress gives us no reason to recognise them as Amazons. Thirdly, the identification of even the Straubing and Eining masks as Amazons is problematical: Robinson simply asserts that the female Straubing helmets are ‘somewhat Oriental in appearance’ without arguing the case any further,[[7]](#footnote-7) while Bartman’s later suggestion that their hair’s ‘conical shape recalls the soft felt cap worn by Amazons as well as Scythians, Sarmatians, and certain other easterners’ exposes the extreme weakness of the argument: a conical hairstyle is not the same as a Phrygian cap. Fourthly, Simkins’ association of the Dura shield with the *hippika gymnasia* is a red herring. Not only was the shield found stacked with two others, one showing a warrior god and the other a scene of the sack of Troy,[[8]](#footnote-8) but as is common in “Greeks vs Amazons” scenes the Amazons are shown on horseback while the Greeks are shown fighting on foot. There is thus no reason whatsoever to think that the scene in some way makes reference to contemporary *hippika gymnasia* between two teams of horsemen, rather than simply showing a mythological military scene inspired by the *Iliad* and associated literature. It has also been claimed that the *hippika gymnasia* were in some way related to the *lusus Troiae*,an equestrian display at Rome recalling the city’s Trojan origins, which was performed by the sons of senatorsand revived by Augustus and of which we have a poetic description in Vergil’s *Aeneid*.[[9]](#footnote-9) The latter refers only to three (not two) teams made up of Trojan youths, and there is no indication in Vergil’s text or in any other of our sources for the *lusus* that either Greeks or Amazons were being portrayed. Finally, the “Greeks vs Amazons” hypothesis does not accord with the fact that there is a significant preponderance of male masks over female amongst those that survive (a ratio of roughly 4:1). Both types appear in a broad range of iconographical forms, with only the male masks of the so-called “Alexander” type (see below) appearing even in moderate numbers. The whole hypothesis thus rests on the flimsiest of foundations, and the explanation for the female types should be sought elsewhere.

**The *hippika gymnasia* as performance and spectacle**

We must begin by considering the nature of the *hippika gymnasia* at which some at least of the “cavalry-sports” helmets appear to have been worn. Our direct knowledge of these exercises comes entirely from the aforementioned passage of Arrian, together with fragments of a large inscription from Lambaesis in Numidia recording various addresses by Hadrian to his troops at military exercises held in AD 128.[[10]](#footnote-10) The latter may have been attended by Arrian, who was a personal friend of the emperor, and may indeed have been the inspiration for the composition of the *Tactica* in AD 136 while he was governor of the garrisoned province of Cappadocia.[[11]](#footnote-11) After giving an account of Macedonian infantry phalanx tactics in the first part of the work (1-32.2), Arrian moves on to describing the Roman army’s *hippika gymnasia* in the second and concluding part (32.3-44.3). His account of the latter has two recurrent emphases. One of these is on the skills required, especially throwing javelins from horseback rapidly and accurately, at the gallop and on the turn, and whilst swinging the shield to protect the flank and back; these were presumably precisely the sorts of skills which an earlier writer, Pliny the Elder, wanted to celebrate and impart – perhaps with the *hippika gymnasia* in mind -in his now lost treatise *On throwing from horseback*, which he wrote when he was in command of a cavalry unit in Germany in the mid-1st century A.D.[[12]](#footnote-12)

The other main emphasis in Arrian’s text is that of spectacle. He draws attention to the “helmets of iron or bronze, which have been gilded so as to draw upon them the gaze of the spectators” (34.1), and have yellow crests for beauty (*es kallos*) and to flow in the breeze (34.4); the shields are light because the exercises are geared towards precision and beauty (*ep’ oxyteti kai kallei*), and are multi-coloured to look attractive (*es hedonen*) (34.5); and the tunics (*chitonia*) worn instead of armour are red, hyacinth-blue or multi-coloured (34.6). The first charge onto the field is choreographed for beauty and brilliance (*es kallos kai lamproteta*) as the horsemen rush in from all sides (35.1); both Roman and Scythian standards are used to make the charge more colourful and terrifying (*tou poikiloteran te kai phoberoteran ginesthai ten elasin*) (35.2); he describes how the Scythian standards are stitched together from different-coloured pieces of cloth to look like serpents and be as terrifying as possible, hanging loose off the shaft when the horses are at a standstill but trailing along in the breeze and hissing when the horses are at a gallop (35.3-4); these are meant to strike the viewer with both pleasure and terror (*tei opsei*...*hedonen e ekplexin*) and to keep the different groups in the charge apart (35.5); in this way, both the aesthetic (*to kallos*) and the useful (*ten chreian*) purpose of the display are maintained (35.7); the beauty (*to de kallos*) of a manoeuvre lies in the number and accuracy achieved by the trooper in throwing the javelins (36.4); the spectators are shown the skill of javelin-throwing, with the riders aiming to keep their seats elegant and straight (*euschemon kai orthe*) and display the brightness (*lamprotes*) of their arms and the speed and flexibility of their horses (38.2-3); the horsemen work together to give the spectators the best view of the action (38.4); the noise of spear hitting shield in the Cantabrian manoeuvre is terrifying, and the circling of the horses is elegant (*euschemon*) (40.7); Arrian, however, thinks that riders should perform within the rules rather than simply aiming to create an impression (*ekplexin*) (40.12); he concludes by noting that the emperor has devised exercises, some for beauty (*kallos*), some for speed, some for terror (*ekplexin*), and some for usefulness, so that the empire now outshines the virtues of ancient Sparta (44.2). Arrian’s text thus presents the *hippika gymnasia* both as a training drill and as a performance to delight and impress its spectators.

In Arrian’s text, the exercises take place on a specially-prepared area of level ground which has been dug over to make it soft and has been marked off into an enclosed square (*apotemnomenoi…es plaisiou isopleurou schema*) equipped with a tribunal (34.1). If Arrian did accompany Hadrian to Lambaesis in AD 128, it is very likely that he was thinking specifically of a 200 m square (4 ha) levelled area surrounded by a narrow wall which is situated some 2.5 km north-west of the legionary fortress of Lambaesis. A monument to Hadrian’s visit was set up in the centre of this area, consisting of a column erected upon a base at least 2 m high and 4.55 m square. Around the four sides of this base were inscribed the verbatim texts of Hadrian’s speeches to the infantry and cavalry of various military units of the province of Numidia, critiquing their performance in military exercises; these texts suggest very strongly that this enclosure was where Hadrian inspected at least some of these exercises, possibly from the base itself acting as a tribunal.[[13]](#footnote-13) Nine major fragments of the inscribed texts survive, including addresses to the infantry and the cavalry of *legio III Augusta* and to the cavalrymen of *ala I Pannoniorum* (a purely cavalry unit), of *cohors VI Commagenorum* (a mixed unit comprising both infantry and cavalry) and of another, unknown, unit. Whereas the legionary infantry were engaged in building the walls of a practice camp, the cavalry of the various units were evidently carrying out the sort of exercises described by Arrian. Hadrian appraises the javelin-throwing of the legionary, *ala* and *cohors* cavalry, and notes how the legionary cavalry made this harder than it needed to be by their choosing to wear cuirasses which “detracts from the elegance” (*gratiae demitur*), and how the *ala* cavalry were able to fill the whole exercise ground and to display their speed one day and agility the next; he tells the *cohors* that they have made up by their enthusiasm and energy for their smaller exercise area and numbers, the more compact nature of their display (including the so-called “Cantabrian” manoeuvre which is described by Arrian), and the inferiority of their horses and equipment compared to the *ala*,in line with the difference in their pay; the cavalry of the unknown unit, however, are castigated for the disorder of their manoeuvres.[[14]](#footnote-14) Hadrian’s focus in the speeches is thus, as one might expect, very much on the military proficiency shown by the participants, but he is also fully mindful of the splendour of their horses and equipment and the quality of the display as a spectacle.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Both Hadrian and Arrian imply that the cavalry display exercises had become an established feature of military life by the early second century if not before, with Hadrian referring to the cavalry exercises as having particular formats (*leges*) which make them easier or harder if the are not adhered to, [[16]](#footnote-16) and Arrian indicating that some of the rules for their performance had been laid down by the emperor himself.[[17]](#footnote-17) From this we may infer that formal exercises of this type were being conducted at similar venues throughout the empire known as *campi*, after the Campus Martius (“Field of Mars”) in Rome which was the original training ground of the army under the Republic.[[18]](#footnote-18) The imperial horse guards (*equites singulares Augusti*), for instance, established by Hadrian’s predecessor Trajan in a fort on the Caelian hill in Rome at the very end of the first century AD, appear to have used a huge open area nearby, the *campus Caelemontanus*, some 300 m square (9 ha), on the site of what is now the piazza S. Giovanni in Laterano.[[19]](#footnote-19) Several rectangular or square areas of levelled ground near forts and fortresses in Britain have similarly been identified as *campi*. One near the fortress of *legio II Augusta*  at Caerleon in south Wales, measuring 267 m by *c.* 162 m, may have covered a slightly larger area (4.3 ha) than that at Lambaesis, but others identified near auxiliary forts were much smaller. These included an unfinished rectangular area 122 m by 97.5 m (1.2 ha) outside the fort at Tomen-y-mûr in north Wales, and two in Cumbria, a rectangular one measuring around 137 m by 91 m (1.25 ha) near the fort at Hardknott and one to the south of the fort at Maryport measuring 87 m by 85 m (0.74 ha).[[20]](#footnote-20) Many more have been attested or deduced throughout the empire from dedications which either refer specifically to a *campus* (sometimes with a *tribunal*)or were made to goddesses known as *Campestres* or to other deities with the same epithet; such dedications were made almost exclusively by Roman cavalrymen and were in several cases set up on the probable site of the exercise ground itself.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Ann Hyland has pointed out that, given the rapidity with which horses cover the ground at a gallop, the areas identified at the auxiliary forts would have been quite restrictive for cavalry exercises involving more than a limited number of horsemen: she suggests that the 1.25 ha ground at Hardknott, for instance, would have made manoeuvres at speed difficult even for just two squadrons (*turmae*) of 32 men each.[[22]](#footnote-22) From this it follows that the exercise grounds of the legionary fortresses, which were three times the size, could have accommodated comfortably perhaps only the four *turmae* (128 men) of a mixed cohort and six *turmae* at most, while even the huge *campus* on the Caelian hillis likely to have been too small for the 16 *turmae* of a single *ala* to perform simultaneously. This accords with the impression given by Arrian that cavalry exercises were performed by groups of horsemen taking turns, and his observation that only the best riders were involved.

At first glance, it would seem plausible that military amphitheatres, where available, could have been used for such equestrian displays, but the size of their arenas is against this. The first amphitheatre built alongside the new legionary fortress at Lambaesis in the Trajanic period had, like its Antonine successor, an arena only 68 m long and 55 m wide, covering 0.374 ha, while the arena of the Colosseum in Rome, the largest amphitheatre ever built, provided almost exactly the same area at 79 m long and 47 m wide, covering 0.375 ha.[[23]](#footnote-23) The exercise ground constructed for Hadrian’s visit in AD 128 provided some fourteen times this area, and since the Hardknott exercise ground was still four times larger than either of these arenas, the latter were probably not large even enough for a whole *turma* to perform. Any cavalry exercises held in an amphitheatre would thus have to have been at a very reduced scale indeed, greatly diminishing the spectacle, even though it would have offered a much better view than any exercise ground for a much larger number of spectators. We may note that the *lusus Troiae* in the city of Rome, which may have involved fewer than 40 riders, normally took place in the relatively large expanse of the Circus Maximus rather than in the contemporary amphitheatre of Statilius Taurus.[[24]](#footnote-24)

The space required for even a small number of troopers to perform *hippika gymnasia* suggests that venues in the frontier provinces would have been restricted to military exercise grounds, and perhaps only the larger ones. In the light of this and despite the clear indications both in Arrian’s account and in Hadrian’s *adlocutiones* that they were intended to provide a spectacle, there is every reason to believe that their audience would normally have been restricted to fellow troops arrayed around the immediate side-lines, as at a school football match, and a limited number of officers and dignitaries watching from a tribunal.

**Face-mask helmets in the Roman army**

We should not be surprised that elaborate and beautiful mask-helmets were manufactured for the appreciation of such a narrow, albeit select, audience. There is ample evidence that Roman troops owned their own equipment, both everyday weapons and armour for which a deduction was made from their pay, and equipment which was more showy, decorative and expensive, which it is reasonable to assume they commissioned and paid for directly.[[25]](#footnote-25) Since the face-mask helmets would certainly have fallen into the latter category and are often marked as prized personal possessions by the names inscribed upon them,[[26]](#footnote-26) we must assume that they reflected those troopers’ individual tastes and enthusiasms. Indeed, for an exercise performed before the senior officers of the unit and the province, and perhaps even the emperor himself, one can understand why the men chosen to display their skill would have wanted to appear as eye-catching and memorable as possible.

Helmets with anthropomorphic features (rather than actual masks) have a long ancestry going back to the third millennium BC, stretching from the Middle East, through Thrace, Macedonia, Illyricum and into Italy. The ultimate origins of the Roman “cavalry-sports” helmets have thus been attributed by various scholars to all of those regions, although the only helmet of the pre-Roman period which was undoubtedly fitted with a face-mask is depicted on a frieze from Pergamon of the early second-century BC now in Berlin.[[27]](#footnote-27) There is thus no doubt, that such helmets were being manufactured several centuries before the earliest known Roman examples*.* Because of the Arrian passage, and because many were found at or near the sites of forts wholly or partially garrisoned by cavalry, most of the Roman helmets have been identified as belonging to horsemen, although the apparent depiction of a mask on the monument from Mainz of a standard-bearer of *legio XIV Gemina* suggests that some at least may have been worn by infantrymen.[[28]](#footnote-28) Even if the majority did belong to cavalry, there is good evidence that not all of these were restricted to the exercise or parade ground. The earliest known Roman helmet-mask was found at Kalkriese in Germany, usually identified as the site of the defeat of Varus in AD 9, and a similar, unfinished mask was found rusted to an anvil at the legionary fortress of Haltern on the river Lippe, which was given up with the rest of Germany across the Rhine shortly after the same defeat; in both cases we appear to be dealing with a wartime context.[[29]](#footnote-29) Mask-helmets also appear to be depicted alongside regular military equipment both on a number of victory monuments of the early Principate[[30]](#footnote-30) and on two funerary monuments of the late first century AD which commemorate individual cavalrymen, a standard-bearer of the *ala Petriana* from Corbridge in northern Britain, and a Frisian trooper of *ala I Thra(e)cum* from Cirencester in the southern part of the same province.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Junkelmann has argued strongly that the earliest Roman mask helmets were in fact designed specifically for battle and may only incidentally have come to be used for *hippika gymnasia*. He bases his argument in part on the observation that the majority of the surviving mask helmets of known provenance did not come from burials or hoards, as mostly did other types of highly-decorated military equipment such as greaves, shield-bosses, horse-decorations and chamfrons buried as treasured pieces either with or by their owners; rather, they came from frontier forts or their *vici*, or were found in association with much more ordinary military equipment, or as scrap metal. Moreover, although some later examples were made of very thin metal, many others – especially those dating from the first century AD - were easily sturdy enough to withstand real battle damage, as has been shown by experiments with reconstructions using missiles both thrown by hand and shot from a catapult. In addition, experimental re-enactment by Junkelmann and others has demonstrated that, although such helmets would have been hot and uncomfortable to wear, restricting both vison and hearing, these are things to which a soldier can become acclimatised if the helmet offers significant protection to the most vulnerable part of the body, the face. This would be especially true of men whose military role limited their ability to protect themselves, as would have been the case with standard-bearers encumbered by their *signa*, such as the men commemorated at Mainz and Corbridge*.*[[32]](#footnote-32)

Nevertheless, the Arrian passage does leave us in no doubt that face-mask helmets were by the early second century AD being worn as the normal equipment of Roman cavalrymen taking part in *hippika gymnasia*, and that he at least, as a highly experienced commander and military writer, saw them as specific to such contests and essentially different from helmets worn in battle. One can certainly see why such helmets, which were often silvered or gilded just as Arrian says, would have been appropriate to exercises of this type, significantly contributing to the spectacle whilst offering genuine and necessary protection against a barrage of missiles concentrated beyond anything likely to be encountered on a real battlefield.

Our detailed knowledge of the sort of helmet which corresponds to Arrian’s description goes back to the discovery of one of best-preserved examples, found as part of hoard of Roman military equipment at Ribchester in Lancashire in 1796 and published by Charles Townley three years later.[[33]](#footnote-33) Further discoveries were made in the course of the nineteenth century, especially in Germany, but detailed studies, placing them in the context of ancient mask-helmets in general, did not appear until the works of Otto Benndorf in 1878, Ludwig Lindenschmidt in 1881, and Otto Donner von Richter in 1894.[[34]](#footnote-34) Renewed study was prompted by the discovery of parts of eight examples of “sports” helmets at Straubing in Bavaria in 1950 (Figs 1a, 4a), including the three female masks previously mentioned, and of another four, including another female mask of the same type, at Eining, also in Bavaria, in 1975.[[35]](#footnote-35) In the same year, H. Russell Robinson published the standard typological classification of such helmets in English,[[36]](#footnote-36) after which two German scholars produced further typologies: Kohlert in 1978 based on around 114 examples,[[37]](#footnote-37) and Junkelmann in 1996 and 1997 based on those and a further 53, mostly from the Axel Guttmann collection.[[38]](#footnote-38) Junkelmann subsequently catalogued another four in 2000, and D’Amato and Negin have now illustrated more than 20 further helmets located in museums in eastern Europe and in private collections worldwide.[[39]](#footnote-39) A few more have also come to light as the result of archaeological activity, such as the androgynous mask with curly hair mask found in 1997 in the *fossa Corbulonis* at Roomburg (Matilo) in the Netherlands, the Crosby Garrett helmet (Fig. 5a), depicting a young male wearing a Phrygian cap, which was discovered in Cumbria in 2010, and the fragmentary mask of what appears to be a male “Alexander-type” helmet (see below) which was discovered in Hellvi on the island of Gotland, Sweden in 2011.[[40]](#footnote-40) We thus have at present close to 200 examples of Roman face-mask helmets, although not all of these have the masks preserved.[[41]](#footnote-41)

All three of the main typologies are extremely complex and differ from each other in their categorisation, partly because of the different weighting placed by them upon construction and iconography. Junkelmann’s typology is the most thorough and detailed, identifying 14 types of helmet in seven different groups, and has received widespread acceptance amongst scholars specialising in Roman military equipment, especially in Germany. More recently, however, there has been a reaction against this complexity, with Bartman arranging the masks into three groups, Fischer into four, and d’Amato and Negin into only two main groups.[[42]](#footnote-42) This lack of agreement amongst scholars serves to underline the genuine diversity to be found amongst the helmets and, together with the uncertainty about the intended use of specific examples, the impossibility of treating them as a homogeneous phenomenon.

Nevertheless, within this diversity the female masks have been amongst the most obvious to group together, and all the aforementioned typologies have done so to a greater or lesser extent. Junkelmann notes that the earliest face-masks helmets dating from the first part of the first century AD do not show any feminine features at all, but that in the course of the century a mixed iconography associating details of feminine hairstyle with male facial characteristics develops alongside the purely male types, and that by the latter part of that century the first completely female mask appears in Italy in the Rapolano hoard. Female types, often with richly jewelled hairstyles, are not uncommon in the second century AD, and the supposedly “Oriental” types exemplified in the Straubing and Eining hoards appear in the early third century. Junkelmann goes on to draw attention to the similarity between the female helmets in particular and clay models of theatrical masks, usually modelled life-size and often found in funerary contexts.[[43]](#footnote-43) Only recently, however, has it been recognised that the similarity is actually with a very specific type of theatrical mask, that used in Roman pantomime.[[44]](#footnote-44)

**Pantomime and its masks**

If the *hippika gymnasia* were a specialised and exclusively military form of spectacle, Roman pantomime was the opposite. This was a form of popular entertainment which emerged in Italy during the first century BC, but had its roots in the mimetic theatrical dance of the Greek world.[[45]](#footnote-45) In pantomime, a single performer – apparently always male under the Principate - accompanied by rhythmic music (the beat normally being given by a wooden foot-clapper called a *scabellum*) and by a chorus singing a libretto, presented stories derived from mythology, literature and history. The libretto provided commentary, but the essence of the entertainment was that the stories were told through the medium of graceful gesture, especially with the hands, apparently borrowing from the repertoire of athletic gestural exercise (*cheironomia*) in the gymnasium, and through whirling, acrobatic dance; the masked soloist danced all or most of the parts in turn, changing masks to change roles and ending his performance by friezing into a dramatic pose. In its classic, grand form, developed by two star dancers Pylades and Bathyllus early in Augustus’ reign, pantomime – especially the tragic form associated with Pylades - was normally performed in the theatre. It differed both from other mythological spectacles which were performed by multiple dancers, masked or unmasked, in a somewhat wider range of venues, and from the equally popular but much more diverse and fluid genre of mime, which encompassed a whole spectrum of comic and satirical performances, spoken, sung and danced, sometimes incorporating acrobats, jugglers and all manner of other entertainers.[[46]](#footnote-46) Under the patronage of Augustus, who made it part of his strategy of cultural revival and renewal,[[47]](#footnote-47) it caught on rapidly in the city of Rome where it was greeted with fanatical enthusiasm by its audiences and made household names of its leading practitioners. It soon spread through the empire as star performers, whose rival fans in the early Principate often caused trouble in the capital which led to expulsions, either chose or were driven to seek careers beyond Rome.[[48]](#footnote-48) By the early third century, it appears that metropolitan pantomimes were attached to an imperial school and were routinely sent out by imperial command to the rest of Italy and the provinces, presumably as a means of keeping their fans in the capital under control.[[49]](#footnote-49)

In Lucian’s treatise on pantomime, *De saltatione*, produced in the early 160s AD, the dialogue’s protagonist Lycinus reviews all the mythological themes he thinks pantomimes should know, indicating the vast range of stories which were potentially available to be performed, The themes and characters that we know were actually danced in antiquity were collected by E. Wüst in 1949 and have since been supplemented and corrected by other scholars, particularly Marie-Hélène Garelli.[[50]](#footnote-50) In both cases, the themes reflect their source material in Greek tragedy, and the characters are mainly the deities, heroes and heroines known from that genre. The huge popularity of classic pantomime and mythological spectacle in general thus meant that they served to transmit the stories of Greek and Roman mythology much more widely and effectively than literary texts or the theatrical performances of tragedy itself. This is made explicit, with regard to classic pantomime at least, in a text by Libanius, an orator of the fourth-century AD from Antioch-on-the-Orontes, one of the most cultivated cities of the empire. He tells us that:

“when writers of tragedy went into decline and only the better-off could indulge in cultural education while most people had none, some god took pity on the people’s lack of education and introduced pantomime to teach ordinary people about the past. Now, a gold-worker can converse intelligently with someone from the schools about the house of Priam and that of Laius.”[[51]](#footnote-51)

Libanius thus presents pantomime in his own day as the principal conduit of Greco-Roman culture to the masses. Moreover, because pantomime dancers’ skill lay precisely in communicating wordlessly, they were able to speak not just to those who could not read, but also to those who could not even understand the languages in which the stories being told had been written.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Pantomime’s popular appeal, however, lay not in its educational or cultural influence, but in its impact as spectacular entertainment. It was noisy and colourful, and it presented the great stories of Greek mythology through a virtuoso display of artistry and athleticism that audiences found both moving and exciting. Connoisseurs were able to read these stories through an easily assimilated vocabulary of the graceful movement of the dancers, set off by their rich, multi-coloured robes and their beautiful masks with closed mouths.

Since theatrical masks in antiquity were apparently made of lightweight perishable materials such as linen and leather, our knowledge of them derives entirely from literary evidence, from iconographic representations in mosaics, from relief decorations, from statuettes of terracotta or ivory, and from miniature or full-sized model masks and moulds in clay or plaster.[[53]](#footnote-53) We are only able to recognise these as specifically pantomime masks, however, because Lucian devotes chapter 29 of *De saltatione* to them, enabling us to identify the particular characteristics of pantomime masks which distinguish them from the other types of mask which were used on the ancient stage:

“There is no need for me to mention that the form of the dancer is decorous and attractive, since this is obvious to anyone who is not blind. The mask itself is very beautiful and appropriate to the performance, not gaping like the other ones but with the lips closed, since the dancer has many others to shout on his behalf. Once upon a time the same performers both sang and danced but then, since their hard breathing as they moved disrupted their singing, it was deemed better for others to sing in accompaniment.”[[54]](#footnote-54)

It is also evident from the rest of Lucian’s work that the masks represented different characters (although these may have been generic rather than specific), and were changed on stage as the pantomime dancer playing all the parts moved from one character to another.[[55]](#footnote-55)

**Pantomime Masks and Face-Mask Helmets**

It is the closed or only slightly-open mouth which provides the best clue to identifying pantomime masks in the iconography, although this feature is not a conclusive indicator and there can frequently be uncertainty in associating particular figures or scenes with pantomime. The first attempt at collecting together the visual evidence for pantomimes and their masks was made by John Jory in 1996 and came from a wide variety of sources and regions of the empire; this evidence included applique medallions; reliefs on a silver casket and an ivory plaque; funerary-altar, sarcophagus and theatre reliefs in marble, and a mask held in the hand of a marble statue; various mosaics; and in particular a variety of terracotta masks and statuettes. Jory noted that the great majority of masks depicted were female, possibly because the majority of pantomime roles – or at least the majority of those popular with audiences - may have been female, and he was able to identify three different types amongst them: (i) “a young female wearing a diadem with ringlets of hair or ribbons at the back of the mask, often found in a Dionysiac context;” (ii) “older women with a plain or severe hairstyle parted in the middle;” and (iii) “young women with the hair piled up on the head.”[[56]](#footnote-56) Jory took up the discussion again in 2001 and, after describing two types of mask corresponding to his earlier types ii and iii, went on to state that “other standard types with minor geographical or temporal variations occur throughout the Roman world and among the over two hundred masks reflecting pantomime which are known to me at least eight further types can be identified with some degree of certainty. However much more work needs to be done before the full codification of these types is complete.” No comprehensive catalogue and no such codification has yet been published, possibly because of the difficulty which is identified in Jory’s paper of distinguishing with certainty in the iconography between pantomime masks and straightforward depictions of the human head. [[57]](#footnote-57) Meanwhile the number of known possible depictions has continued to grow.[[58]](#footnote-58) This new evidence does not, however, appear to have undermined the validity of Jory’s 1996 typology for some of the female masks as far as it goes.[[59]](#footnote-59)

The preponderance in the evidence of female pantomime masks and the relatively clear-cut categorisation of the female “cavalry-sports” helmet-masks mean that it is the latter, around 43 of the 200 or so total, which offer the best opportunity to make comparisons. Perhaps the most striking similarity is between the four well-known female helmet-masks from Straubing (Fig. 1a) and Eining and a pantomime mask shown on a second-century terracotta statuette from Tunisia (Fig. 1b) published by C. Albizzati in 1928.[[60]](#footnote-60) The three Straubing examples, all of bronze, were found together with four male helmet-masks and a variety of cavalry equipment and other bronze objects in a hoard of the third century which was buried near a *villa rustica* situated some three kilometers west of the fort; [[61]](#footnote-61) the latter appears at to have been occupied from the mid-second to the early third century by a unit of foot-archers which, if the consensus that face-mask helmets were usually worn by cavalry is correct, suggests that these may have come from elsewhere along the *limes*.[[62]](#footnote-62) The very similar Eining helmet-mask, also of bronze and dating from the third-century, but distinguished by the survival of a blue-paste gem fixed in the middle of the forehead, was found buried with other cavalry equipment in the *vicus* east of the local fort, which lies some 35 miles west of Straubing along the Danube road;[[63]](#footnote-63) at the time this fort was occupied by *Cohors III Britannorum equitata*,a mixed unit comprising both infantry and cavalry, so it is not impossible that the Eining and the Straubing helmets were all made in the same workshop for some of that unit’s troopers.[[64]](#footnote-64) All of the helmets show curly hair piled up on top of the head in a conical shape with a central parting leaving a triangular area above the eyebrows and wrapping close around the face. The Albizzati statuette is identified as a pantomime dancer by its long tunic reaching to the ankles and the scarf or *pallium* worn diagonally across the body, which was apparently used as a prop during performances.[[65]](#footnote-65) Since the figure is not holding a mask and is shown striking a pose, probably indicating that the dance is about to begin, it is reasonable to assume that the head is shown wearing a mask. Like the helmet-masks, this has the hair arranged in ringlets piled in a conical shape either side of a central parting on top of the head and wrapping close around the face, but also hanging in long strands down the back; from the front, the overall similarity with the helmets (whose bowl-sections are all missing) is very close. The mask on the statuette does not fit within Jory’s typology of female masks, and he and Garelli both follow Albizzati in identifying it as male. This therefore raises the possibility that the Straubing and Eining helmet-masks, the best-known of all the “female” types, are actually male, and it has indeed been suggested by some scholars that their curly “hair” should be identified as a fur cap, and that they may in fact represent some of Rome’s male oriental opponents.[[66]](#footnote-66) Most Roman army scholars have nevertheless continued to interpret them as female, and a fragmentary but much more clearly female mask of the same type from Gräfenshausen-Birkenfeld in Baden-Württemberg has what is undeniably hair sculpted in waves, similarly piled conically up on top of the head and hanging close around the face.[[67]](#footnote-67)

A number of pantomime masks with a severe hairstyle corresponding to Jory’s type (ii) are certainly female. These include a full-size terracotta mask from Rome, possibly of the first century AD (Fig. 2b); a second-century relief mask on the *scaenae frons* of the theatre at Aspendos in Turkey; a mask being held in the hand of a third-century terracotta statuette from Egypt of a dwarf wearing the long tunic and *pallium*; one shown in repoussé relief on a fourth-century silver casket from the Rome; and the masks of two pantomime dancers shown on separate panels of a mosaic of *c.* AD 400 from Noheda in Spain.[[68]](#footnote-68) In all of these examples, the mask is characterised by the central parting of the hair, which lies relatively flat on either side of the head. The hair of the masks on the Aspendos relief, the Egyptian statuette and the Noheda mosaic is shown unadorned, but pricking on the mask on the silver casket suggests jewels in the hair, and the terracotta mask from Rome appears to show a vertical band along the central parting. These masks, too, have close parallels amongst the female face-mask helmets. An iron example of the second half of the second century found inside the cavalry fort of (probably) *ala I Thracum victrix* at Carnuntum-Petronell,[[69]](#footnote-69) is particularly close to the terracotta mask from Rome in its iconography, showing the hair arranged in rows with a similar band marking the central parting and the hairline on either side held back by a line of pearls (Fig. 2a);[[70]](#footnote-70) another example of similar date in bronze, found during the excavation of a late second-century watch-tower *Burgus* Solva 26 at Visegrád-Várkert in Hungary,[[71]](#footnote-71) likewise shows the hair being held back by a vertical band along the parting and by bands along the hairline either side of the forehead, with a small *lunula* ornament suspended where the three bands meet;[[72]](#footnote-72) a third, fragmentary, mask in bronze or copper-alloy from an unknown provenance in the eastern Danube region appears to have been very similar;[[73]](#footnote-73) several other examples are known.[[74]](#footnote-74)

The visual evidence shows a wide variety of other female pantomime masks, which include but are not confined to Jory’s type (iii); most of these have highly-coiffed hair, which is often shown with a head-piece or tied into two bunches on top of the head with a diadem.[[75]](#footnote-75) The female face-mask helmets often share details with such masks, but there are no close parallels. A beautiful helmet of unknown origin, possibly Syria, but now in the Getty Museum shows the hair bound up with a diadem-like ribbon suspended from a head-piece (Fig. 3a); another from Newstead (*Trimontium*) in northern Britain shows the hair held back by decorated vertical bands, while the same function is performed by horizontal and vertical strands of pearls on two helmets from Cincşor and Resça and a fragmentary one from Ostrov, all in Romania,.[[76]](#footnote-76) The Resça example has hair swept back at the side in a manner reminiscent of one of the female pantomime heads from the frieze of the *propylon* of the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias.[[77]](#footnote-77) In all these cases, we may see a generic resemblance between the pantomime masks and the face-helmets, but nothing as proximate as can be observed with the examples already cited.

A further group of female helmets evidently depicted the gorgon Medusa, sometimes recognisable even when the helmet is fragmentary from snakes in the hair or a pair of small wings above the forehead, both of which commonly feature in gorgon iconography.[[78]](#footnote-78) Bronze examples with snakes include one from Kalenik in Bulgaria and another from an unknown provenance and now in a private collection; examples with wings are known from Varna (*Odessus*) in Bulgaria and Weissenburg in Bavaria; and examples with both snakes and wings include one from Weissenburg and a three-part silver-plated helmet from Pfrondorf in Baden-Würrtemberg. [[79]](#footnote-79) The head of Medusa is of course ubiquitous as a symbol in the Roman world, but the struggle of Perseus against the gorgons is certainly included by Lucian amongst the mythological stories that a good pantomime dancer ought to know, and more significantly a Medusa with snakes in the hair appears amongst the fifteen closed-mouth masks shown on frieze blocks from Aphrodisias which have been identified by Jory as potentially pantomimic.[[80]](#footnote-80) Other female helmet-masks are more difficult to associate with pantomime masks, including those of the so-called Silistra type with thick, curly hair without a parting,[[81]](#footnote-81) but the ones cited above themselves constitute almost half of all known examples.

There are, moreover, a number of face-mask helmets which bear a strong resemblance to some of the known male pantomime masks. Frel, the first scholar to suggest a link between theatrical masks and the “cavalry-sports” helmets, drew attention to the similarity of a late first/early second century clay mask found at Trier to a male face-mask helmet of the same period from Gaziantep in Commagene (Turkey); the terracotta mask shows a row of curls across the forehead surmounted by a ridge with further curls above, while the helmet-mask, which has a similarly broad face, has a row of small curls running across the forehead surmounted by much thicker, wavy hair. Frel may be right in suggesting that the terracotta actually represents a face-mask helmet, but it is equally possible that it depicts a pantomime mask with some sort of head-piece.[[82]](#footnote-82)

A closed-mouth mask being held in the hand of a bone statuette of a dancer of unknown provenance but now in the British Museum (Fig. 4b) shows wavy hair swept up over the middle of the forehead to create a so-called *anastole* with two locks parting either side.[[83]](#footnote-83) This hairstyle is famously characteristic of portraits of Alexander the Great,[[84]](#footnote-84) but is of significance here in that it is also found from the first century AD on a number of beardless, youthful male helmets from all round the empire which have therefore been designated as “Alexander”-type. At least six helmets clearly show the parted *anastole*, including one of those from the Straubing hoard (Fig. 4a), but several others have generally wavy hair swept up from the face and have therefore usually been included within this group.[[85]](#footnote-85)

Finally, a very strong resemblance may be seen between two clay masks, one from Calvi in Campania (Fig. 5b) and one from Pompeii, and the Crosby Garrett helmet (Fig. 5a), one of the most beautiful yet discovered.[[86]](#footnote-86) Both clay masks show a youthful face with curly hair surmounted by a Phrygian cap, and they have therefore been connected by Wootton with similar closed-mouth pantomime masks shown on a number of decorative marble architectural pieces known as *oscilla*; she identifies these as representing Attis, who is a character in one of the most popular themes of pantomime.[[87]](#footnote-87) Exactly the same iconography is apparent in the helmet, apart from the griffin ornament attached to the top.[[88]](#footnote-88)

**Conclusions: Pantomime on the Frontier**

In addressing the enigma of the face-mask helmets, and the female types in particular, some scholars have seen them as expressions of élite culture being passed down to the common soldiery. Although he does not connect them with theatrical masks, the cultural historian Ted Lendon has suggested that they arose as the result of aristocratic officers inflicting their own Greek-influenced taste and culture upon the rank-and-file. More specifically, he argues that the phenomenon should be seen against the background of a well-attested renewed imperial interest in Greek precedents in military affairs, including Alexander the Great and the Macedonian phalanx, from the late first to the early third century AD.[[89]](#footnote-89) Since the helmets were the troopers’ own property, however, it seems implausible that they would have accepted the imposition of elaborate and presumably expensive forms, including highly-decorated female masks, for which they would have had to pay either directly or through deductions unless they themselves found them attractive. It is much more likely that cavalrymen selected designs which appealed to them, and that some were prepared to pay extra for a helmet that they thought would get them noticed on the exercise ground.

The art-historian Elizabeth Bartman meanwhile does assume that the troopers made their own choices and has argued that the use of female masks by Roman cavalrymen should be seen as a form of cross-dressing, which empowered their male wearers by demonstrating that they were unafraid of appearing in feminine guise. She argues that this was possible because the females depicted by the masks were exotic and oriental, either Amazons in the case of the masks with conical hairstyles, or eastern warrior women in the case of the masks with carefully coiffed hairstyles bedecked with jewels and diadems. She compares the latter with the women depicted on Palmyrene grave *stelae*, and links them with supposedly female burials including horse bones and military equipment found at Brougham (Brocavum) in Cumbria which may suggest the presence of soldiers from the Danube in the local garrison. Bartman concludes that the female masks are representative of a general interest in female warriors in antiquity, as demonstrated by an anonymous late-Hellenistic treatise known as *Tractatus de mulieribus claris in bello* and by Plutarch’s *Mulierum virtutes*. In particular, she follows Deborah Gera in associating this interest with the rhetorical *topos* of the relative courage of men and women, and sees the debate surrounding this as having been “filtered down…into the popular consciousness of the Roman cavalry,” providing “a moral and intellectual underpinning to the division of participants in the *hippika* into competing teams;” the female helmets thus made the exercises “a competition with allegorical resonances.”[[90]](#footnote-90) This hypothesis, however, depends upon the argument that the Straubing and Eining masks are female and meant to depict Amazons because of the similarity of their conical hairstyle to a Phrygian cap, and that masks with a perfect coiffure tied with ribbons, jewels and pearls could represent oriental female warriors; neither of these identifications is either secure or persuasive. The further attempt to link the discrimination of competing teams on the exercise ground by the gender of their helmets (for which there is no actual evidence) with rhetorical and philosophical debate amongst élite civilians in the gymnasium is wholly speculative and arguably far-fetched, especially when one remembers that the surviving male helmets female helmets outnumber the female by a factor of around four to one.

What has been characterised as cross-dressing by Roman cavalrymen nevertheless remains problematical, even though it seems to have consisted only of the wearing of female helmets. All our other evidence for Roman soldiers in female dress is late and appears in the context of festivals associated with the Kalends. An inscription from Rome records such a festival in AD 362 involving fire-fighting equipment and *matronae cum carpentis*, i.e. matrons with carts, who were presumably troops of the *vigiles* who made up the capital’s fire-brigade dressed as matrons to celebrate the *Matronalia* on 1st March;[[91]](#footnote-91) in addition, some late-Roman Christian writers express their disapproval of soldiers dressing up as women for the New Year festival on 1st January.[[92]](#footnote-92) The carnevalistic character of such festivals, in which the world is deliberately being turned upside down, would however be quite different from the *hippika gymnasia* or any other military event at which the splendid and expensive face-mask helmets might have been worn, where discipline (Hadrian’s *disciplina*) and devotion to the emperor and the established order would have been of the essence.

The aim of this paper is of course to suggest that a plausible solution to the puzzle is provided by the influence of pantomime and pantomime masks. This is not meant to imply that Roman cavalrymen made use of face-mask helmets to put on quasi-theatrical performances. There is no indication whatsoever of a narrative or mythological aspect to the *hippika gymnasia* in our only description of them, despite Arrian’s focus on the beauty of the helmets and the spectacle of the exercises, and as we have seen the Greeks vs Amazons interpretation has no real foundation in the evidence. Two inscriptions from Rome do record men of the fire-brigade (*vigiles*) and the local detachment of the Misenum fleet putting on a theatrical performance together as mimes in order to commemorate the birthday of Septimius Severus, with several of them taking the role of *stupidi* and one even that of *mul*(*ier*), i.e. a woman. Furthermore, an altar set up *numinib(us) Aug(ustorum)* in AD 207 by a veteran of *legio XXX Ulpia Victirix* at Lyon, the capital of Gallia Lugunensis and the centre of the imperial cult in Gaul, records that he was a *scaenicus*. Since at this period the four legions of the German provinces regularly sent a detachment to Lyon to act as a garrison to protect the imperial mint, this man is likely to have served here and his theatrical function may well have been in connection with the cult of the emperors; the same may be true of a *scaenicus* of *legio IIII Scythicae* recorded at Dura Europos, but there is no indication on the inscription.[[93]](#footnote-93) Mime, however, was a genre suited to performance by non-professionals for special occasions, unlike the highly-skilled genre of pantomime,[[94]](#footnote-94) and none of the evidence cited implies that dramatic performance played a significant role in military life, at least outside the major centres of the empire.

As we have seen, face-mask helmets appear to have been known in the Roman army from at least the Augustan period, shortly after the Roman form of pantomime emerged in the capital. There is no reason to link the two at that stage, or to suppose that there is anything more than a coincidence between closed mouths of the helmet masks, which would have contributed towards their protective function, and the closed mouths of the pantomime masks, which reflected the essential nature of the performance. Nevertheless, given the explosion in the popularity of pantomime in the first century AD, it is not difficult to see why the similarity between them might have been recognised by armourers and might thus have come to influence them in producing what must have been some of their prize pieces, especially when they were intended for equestrian exercises and displays. We have already noted that at an early stage of their development some face-mask helmets began to be decorated with features which gave them an androgynous appearance, particularly through the incorporation of aspects of female hairstyle with masculine facial features. Long flowing hair appears to have been a particular feature of pantomime masks, so this may indicate the beginnings of such influence.[[95]](#footnote-95)

We have also seen that from the first century AD several of the male helmets portrayed beardless youths with the hair swept up above the forehead, the so-called “Alexander” type, sometimes with an *anastole* parted above the centre of the forehead. Although Alexander himself is not recorded as the subject of pantomime, his iconography undoubtedly moulded the image in Classical art of his hero, the legendary Achilles, who was most certainly danced in pantomime.[[96]](#footnote-96) A favourite theme involving Achilles appears to have been his sojourn on Scyros, dressed as a girl by his mother Thetis to protect him from his fate, until he was tricked by Odysseus into revealing himself and was taken to Troy.[[97]](#footnote-97) The story was a popular one in the art of the Roman imperial period, especially wall paintings and mosaics,[[98]](#footnote-98) and it is highly likely that the masks worn by the pantomimes who danced Achilles made allusion to the established iconography of Alexander/Achilles. The potential appeal of this type to Roman armourers and their cavalry trooper clients, and the mask shown on the bone statuette in the British Museum (Fig. 4b) may be an example.[[99]](#footnote-99)

From there, it would have been a relatively short step to the adoption of other pantomime masks as models, and several surviving helmet-masks are sufficiently idiosyncratic to have been derived from the masks for known pantomime characters, especially divinities: for instance, a bronze mask from Rapolano in Italy wearing and ivy wreath might represent Dionysus,[[100]](#footnote-100) a female mask from Nola in Italy wearing a Corinthian helmet might easily be portraying Minerva,[[101]](#footnote-101) and the Crosby Garrett helmet with its Phrygian cap could be an Attis or even Paris, the central character in the story of the Judgement of Paris.[[102]](#footnote-102) It goes without saying that several of the female masks with bejewelled hair, the Getty Museum helmet for example, could have been used to portray any goddess such as Juno or Venus.[[103]](#footnote-103) The attraction of emulating such masks, apart from their value in making the wearer stand out from the crowd, would not be their mythological resonances as such but their association with a hugely popular form of spectacle and the star dancers who performed it. On this reading, Roman cavalrymen can be seen not as supine show-pieces for the high culture of their aristocratic officers, or third-hand participants in a rhetorical debate of which they were only dimly aware, but rather the ancient equivalent of rock-fans celebrating their idols by adopting a militarised imitation of their key accoutrement.

If the influence of pantomime masks on at least some “cavalry sports” helmets, both male and female, is accepted, then it has an important implication. We know that by the late-second/early third century if not before dancers were being sent out from Rome to perform classic grand pantomime throughout Italy and in all parts of the empire.[[104]](#footnote-104) There is ample evidence of their presence in Gaul and North Africa, for instance, including the Albizzati statuette from Tunisia, and even a little which indicates that they reached some of the frontier provinces. A third-century epitaph found at the colony of Timgad in Numidia, some 20 km east of the legionary fortress at Lambaesis, commemorates a dancer by the name of Vincentius who is described as “the glory of pantomimes.”[[105]](#footnote-105) We also have evidence on a late second/early third-century inscription from Rome of an unknown pantomime who “danced (*saltavit*) at Rome” and “won 80 gold crowns (?) on the Palatine/at the Palace (*in Palatio*),” performed for a number of years in Italy in each of Umbria and Picenum, Apulia, Samnium, Valeria, and Liguria, and then for some years also in Germania Inferior, being crowned three times in Italy and three times in “the Province” (Gallia Narbonensis) at Massilia (Marseilles).[[106]](#footnote-106) The inscription thus demonstrates that by this period it was possible for a leading pantomime sent out from Rome to draw an audience and make a living for a number of years not just in the more Romanized provinces but also on the very fringes of the empire. A small amount of archaeological evidence even suggests that masked pantomime was known right on the frontier. A fragmentary third-century clay mask with a closed mouth has been found in the south *vicus* of the fort at Straubing in Raetia (Fig. 3b), only three kilometers from the find-spot of the contemporary Straubing hoard, and a fourth-century mask with the hair piled on the head and tied with a ribbon in two large bows, similar to several others found in Gaul, was discovered at Noviomagus (Nijmegen) in Germania Inferior which was a base for legionaries from the first century BC to the fourth century AD.[[107]](#footnote-107) The distribution of “cavalry-sports” helmets may, however, indicate that knowledge and appreciation of pantomime spread to many other frontiers.

If the argument presented here is correct, the Straubing and Eining helmets reinforce the evidence of the Straubing clay mask for familiarity with pantomime in Raetia on the middle Danube, as does the “Alexander-type” examples with parted *anastole* found at Straẞ-Moos in the same province. Other “Alexander” helmets found at Echzell, the site of a cavalry fort on the Wetterau-*limes* of Germania Superior, at Herzogenburg six miles south of the cavalry fort of *ala I Thracum* and then *ala* *I Augusta* at Treismauer (*Augustiana*) in Noricum, and in Israel/Syria Palaestina potentially add those provinces to the list.[[108]](#footnote-108) The male helmet from Gaziantep which resembles the clay mask found at Trier may do the same for Commagene.[[109]](#footnote-109) Female helmets with the severe hairstyle are known from Carnuntum-Petronell in Pannonia Superior, Visegrád in Pannonia Inferior, Krivnja in Moesia Inferior, and an unknown provenance probably in the same province.[[110]](#footnote-110) Of the female helmets with bejewelled hairstyles, one was found in Reşca (Romula/Malva), the capital of Dacia Malvensis, another at Cincşor, the site of a fort apparently occupied by an infantry unit, *cohors II Flavia Bessorum*, in Dacia Inferior, and a third came from the fort of *ala Augusta Vocontiorum* at Newstead in Britannia,[[111]](#footnote-111) while the Crosby Garett helmet with the Phrygian cap was found 11 miles south-south-east of the cavalry fort of Kirkby Thore in Cumbria.[[112]](#footnote-112)

Helmets echoing pantomime masks have thus been found in Britannia, Germania Superior, Raetia, Noricum, Pannonia Superior, Pannonia Inferior, Dacia Malvensis, Dacia Inferior, Moesia Inferior, Syria Palaestina and Commagene, most of them either on or close to the actual frontier line. While the influence of pantomime on military fashions might not be entirely surprising in the eastern empire, it is more unexpected to find it on the northern frontiers, not just in Germany but all along the Danube and even in northern Britain. If pantomime masks were familiar and popular enough in these provinces to be imitated in military metal, then this suggests that actual performance of grand, or at least masked, pantomime was familiar there too. It is indeed by far the most likely way for the masks to have become available as models, and if masked pantomime was known to the troops then it should have been equally familiar to the local civilian populations who in one way or another depended upon the army. Pantomime may thus have been danced in the theatres situated in legionary *canabae* such as Strasbourg and in auxiliary-fort *vici* such as Catterick and Nida-Heddernheim,[[113]](#footnote-113) and in some form perhaps even in *vici* without known theatres such as those at Straubing. If so, both soldiers and civilians would have been exposed, visually and aurally and in the most engaging way, to the themes and characters of classical literature without needing to read or even to understand Latin. Whilst we should not expect that either group would then have been able to ‘converse intelligently with someone from the schools about the house of Priam and that of Laius,’ they might nevertheless have come to know the stories of the Trojan War and of Oedipus, intimately, and have been affected by them in ways which would have been real and deep without leaving any trace to posterity.

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The notion behind this paper was initially inspired by the photographs brought back from research visits to the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of the 1980s by my then colleague at the University of Western Australia, the late John Jory, whose work led to the publication of Jory 1996 and several other important papers on the topic of pantomime masks. My interest in the possible connection between these and “cavalry-sports” helmets was subsequently rekindled by the publication in this journal of Bartman 2005, and by the work and enthusiasm of my then colleague at Royal Holloway, University of London, Edith Hall, who was at the time preparing the publication of Hall and Wyles 2008 which brought together a great deal of exciting new work on ancient pantomime. I am also grateful for comment and encouragement from various colleagues, especially Ted Lendon, who attended day conferences at the University of Warwick in 2008 and King’s College, London in 2009 where I first exposed my ideas, and from others who heard a much more developed version of them at the 24th International Limes Congress in Serbia in September, 2018. Finally but not least, I must express my thanks to the editor and anonymous referees of this journal whose comments helped to make my argument much clearer and saved me from many errors; they are in no way responsible for those which remain, which are entirely my own.

1. Arr. *Tact.* 34.2-4: *ta krane de tauta ou kathaper ta eis makhen pepoiemena pro tes kephales kai ton pareion probebletai monon, alla isa pantei tois prosopois poieitai ton hippeon, aneoigota kata tous ophthalmous, hoson me epiprosthen tou horan gignomena skepen homos parekhein tei opsei*. For translations and discussions of the section of the *Tactica* (32.3-44.3) which describes the *hippika gymnasia*, see Hyland 1993, esp. 72-7 (English translation); Junkelmann 1996, esp. 88-92 (German translation). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Robinson 1975, 108, cf. 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Simkins 1979, 29. For the “Amazon” shield, see Rostovzeff et al. 1939, 349-63 with plates XLIV-XLV; James 2004, 178-9 with fig. 98, plates 7-8; Bishop and Coulston 2006, 179 and 310 with plate 4b. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Greeks vs Amazons interpretation: Dixon and Southern 1992, 128; Bartman 2005, 111-13; Lendon 2005, 271-2, 435; Bishop and Coulston 2013, 42-3; d’Amato and Negin 2017, 213-5; Bishop 2018, 11; Bishop and Coulston 2018, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Junkelmann 1996, 46-7, [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “Oriental”-type female masks: Garbsch 1978, A 1 (p. 45) with Taf. 1.1 (Eining); B 5-7 (p. 48) with Taf. 3-4 (Straubing) (Fig. 1a); also Garbsch 1978, O 46 (p. 71) with Taf. 25.1-2 (Gräfenhausen-Birkenfeld, Baden-Württemberg); Junkelmann 1996, O 114 (p. 95) (Eining); O 115 (pp. 95-60 (Gnotzheim, Bavaria); O 117 (p. 96) (Pförring, Bavaria); O 118 (p. 96) (Sittling, Bavaria); D’Amato and Negin 2017, 215 Fig. 251c (Rudno, Slovenia). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Klumbach 1952, however, sees similarities with Severan imperial female portraiture and that of Palmyrene funerary monuments, but even if we accept this it would not make them Amazons. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Shields found with the “Amazon shield”: Rostovzeff et al. 1939, 326-49, 363-9 with plates XLI-XLII and XLVI; James 2004, 176-9 with plates 6 and 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Verg. *Aen.* 5.545-603; on the *lusus Troiae* and its possible relationship to the *hippika gymnasia*,see von Petrikovits 1939, 209-20; Weeber, 1974, 171-96; Junkelmann 1991, 4th ed. 2008, 142-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See Le Bohec 2003 and Speidel 2006 for texts and translations. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Bosworth 1988, 22-3; 1993, 230 and 261; Tonnet 1988, 32-33; Birley 2000, 212; Voisin 2003, 22 and 31-4. For the date and occasion of composition see Arr. *Tact.* 44.3; cf. Wheeler 1978. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Plin. *Ep.* 3.5.3. It is not impossible that Arrian knew the work and made use of it in the *Tactica*;cf. also the interest in the equestrian throwing skills of British opponents (*Brittunculi*) shown in a well-known writing tablet from Vindolanda: *Tab. Vindol. II* 164.4-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Le Bohec 1977; 1989, 407-10; 2003, 46-51; Speidel 2006, 3-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Le Bohec 2003 (text and commentary pp. 59-119); Speidel 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See Speidel 2006, 38, 64 on Hadrian’s comments about the legionary cavalry and the quality of the cohort’s equipment (*armorum cultus*). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Le Bohec 2003, 84-7: Texte 4; Speidel 2006, 9: B. The Legion, field 6, lines 5-7: [*Exe*]*rcitationes militares quodam modo suas leges/*[*ha*]*bent* *quibus si quit adiiciatur aut detrahitur aut minor/exer*]*citatio fit aut difficilior.* [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Arr. *Tact*. 42.2: *ei ta ennoma kai pros basileos tetagmena droie…ton allon skopon, hos ep’autoi de toutoi kata prostaxin basileos es ekdochen tes trites lonches hista<tai>.* [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See Davies 1989; Le Bohec 1989a, 119-21; Hyland 1993, 19-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Campus Caelemontanus*: *CIL* 6.9475; Speidel 1994, 114, 127-8 with fig. 10; Junkelmann 1996, 57-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Caerleon: Davies 1989, 261 n.57 citing information from G.C. Boon (875 ft x *c.* 530 ft); Burnham and Davies 2010, 88, however, give “at least 220 m by 160 m” (3.52 ha), which would make it slightly smaller than the exercise ground at Lambaesis. Tomen-y-mûr: Gresham 1938, 198 (400 ft x 320 ft); Junkelmann 1996, 57 notes that it would have been 133 m x 106 m (1.4 ha) if completed. Hardknott: Collingwood 1928, 337 (150 yds x 100 yds). Maryport: Cummins 1892, 18 (95 yds x 93 yds). It should be noted that such exercise grounds are notoriously difficult both to identify and to measure with any precision, so that estimates in the scholarly literature are often inconsistent and the figures given here should be treated as having a significant margin of error. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The evidence is collected by Irby-Massie 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Hyland 1993, 21-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Lambaesis: Golvin 1988, 93-4 no. 60, cf. 130-1 no. 111 (dimensions at pp. 94 and 130); Bomgardner 2000, 180-1. Colosseum (Amphitheatrum Flavium) at Rome: Golvin 1988, 173-80 no. 153 (dimensions 79.35 x 47.20 m at p. 176); Bomgardner 2000, 1-31, esp. 20-3 (dimensions 76.96 x 46.18 m at p. 21). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The *lusus Troiae* in the Circus Maximus: Suet. *Caes*. 39.2; *Tib.* 6.4; *Cal.* 18.3; *Claud.* 21.3; *Nero* 7.1; Tac. *Ann.* 11.11; cf. Cass. Dio 49.43.3 (in the Forum Romanum?); 54.26.1 (in the Campus Martius near the Theatre of Marcellus?) 59.7.4; 11.2 (round the Mausoleum of Augustus); on the number of riders involved, see Verg. *Aen.* 5.560-2; on the *lusus* itself, see note 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Cf. *P.Vindob.* L 135.8-11; Gilliam 1986, 429-32. For personal ownership of military equipment, see MacMullen 1960; Nuber 1972; Breeze 1976; Speidel 1992; Bishop and Coulston 2006, 262-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Inscriptions indicating individual ownership of face-mask helmets: Garbsch 1978, I 1 (p.58) with Taf. 12.1 (Ribchester); O 6 (p. 63) with Taf. 19.1 (Nijmegen); Junkelmann 1996, O 94 (p. 94) with Abb. 75 (Wessenburg); O 95 (p. 94) (Weissenburg); Garbsch 1978, B 4 and 8 (p. 48) (Straubing); Junkelmann 2000, AG 812 (pp. 189-90) (unknown provenance in the Danube provinces); Garbsch 1978, O 40 (pp. 69-70) with Taf. 24.2 (Resça). The Weissenburg, Straubing and Resça examples, and that from somewhere in the Danube provinces, all indicate that the owner was a member of a cavalry *turma.* [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. For an overview, see Junkelmann 1996, 22-6 with notes 33-66 including extensive bibliography. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *CIL* 13.6898, the monument of Q. Luccius Faustus of *legio XIV Gemina*; cf. *CIL* 13.6977, the similar monument of C. Valerius Secundus from the same legion. For the possible representation of mask-helmets on these monuments, see Lindenschmidt 1881, 5; Simkins 1984, Pl. B2; Junkelmann 1986, 173 with Taf. 33 and 34a; Wilhelmi 1992, 10-11; against, see Benndorf 1878, 59; Donner von Richter 1894, 49-50; Toynbee 1948, 24-5 n.31; Beck and Chew 1991, 23; Bishop and Coulston 2006, 105-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Kalkriese mask: Berger *et al.*1991, 229, Abb. 20; Franzius 1991; 1993, 131-5, Abb. 24a and b; 1999, 117-148. Haltern mask: Kropatschek 1909, 351-2, Textabb. 10 and Taf. XXXIX.2; Garbsch 1978, O 1 (p. 62). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See Junkelmann 1996, 20 with Abb 21-23. Mask helmets may appear on the (probably) Augustan/Tiberian Arch of Orange: Amy and Bruchet 1962, pl. 18, 16, 43 I, II a-d, IV a-b., 75; cf. Feugère 1993, 40, 193. A possible masked helmet similar to that found at Vize has been recognized on a column of the early Principate decorated with arms and trophies and now in the Musée d’Art et d’Archéologie du Périgord at Périgueux: Robinson 1975, 136 Plate 411 and caption. There also appears to be a trophy with a helmet mask depicted just to the right of the figure of Victory on the Column of Marcus Aurelius in Rome (Scene LV): Caprino *et al.* 1955, fig. 70; cf. Toynbee and Clarke 1948, 24-5 n. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. See Junkelmann 1996, 18-22 with Abb. 24-31. Corbridge cavalryman: *RIB* 1172 = *ILS* 1077 (now in Hexham Abbey), monument of Flavinus, *signifer* of the *Ala* *Petriana*; Cirencester cavalryman: *RIB* 109, monument of Sex. Valerius Genialis, *eques* of the *ala I Thra(e)cum*. For the identification of mask helmets on the Corbridge and Cirencester monuments, see Toynbee 1948, 24-5 n.31 (citing I.A. Richmond, pers. comm.); Robinson 1975, 104-5 on Plate 300; 1976, 5 (reconstruction by R. Embleton); Junkelmann 1991, 4th ed. 2008, 164-5; Krier and Reinert 1993, 43; against, see Bishop and Coulston 2006, 105-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Evidence for the likely use of face-mask helmets on the battlefield: Junkelmann 1991, 4th ed. 2008, 165-73, esp. 172-3 (on the discomfort of wearing mask-helmets) and 190 (dismissing the scepticism shown about the use of mask-helmets in battle by Franzius 1999, 130, 140, and by Bartman 2005, 103); Narloch 2012. Experimental reconstructions: Willer and Meijers 2007, 31-50; Meijers, Schalles and Willer 2007, 68-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Townley 1815. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Benndorf 1878; Lindenschmidt 1881; Donner von Richter 1894. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Straubing: Keim and Klumbach 1951. Eining: Kellner 1978. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Robinson 1975, 107-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Kohlert 1978, cf. the helmets catalogued in the same volume: Garbsch 1978, 45-56 (Katalog: Raetische Verwarhrfunde A.-G.), 57-60 (Katalog: Sonstige Verwahrfunde H.-M.), 61-2 (Katalog: Grab- und Einzelfunde N.), 62-76 (Katalog: Grab und Einzelfunde O. Helme 1-80); the total of ca. 114 combines the ca. 34 helmets and fragments which appeared in the exhibition itself with another 80 helmets from around the empire listed in the catalogue. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Junkelmann 1996, 93-7, 100-1 (continuing Garbsch’s Katalog: Grab und Einzelfunde O. Helme 81-133); Born and Junkelmann 1997, 11-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Junkelmann 2000, 189-97; D’Amato and Negin, 2017, figs. 166, 251c, 254h (museums); figs. 180, 185, 190, 192-3, 211-12, 237, 238a, 248, 253f-g, 255g, 256, 261f, 262 (private collections). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Roomburg (Matilo): van Enckevort and Hazenberg 1997; Haalebos and Willems 1999, 251 fig. 5; Hazenberg 2000, 50-1 with Afb. 30; d’Amato and Negin 2017, 209 fig. 245. Crosby Garrett: Worrell 2010; Jackson 2010; Worrell et al. 2011; Boughton 2011; Breeze and Bishop 2013; Breeze 2018.Hellvi, Gotland: Holm and Widerström 2011; Price and Mortimer 2014, 525-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The most up-to-date survey may be found in d’Amato and Negin 2017, 149-230. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Bartman 2005, 105-117; Fischer 2012, 221-6; cf. also Fischer 2016, 105-7; d’Amato and Negin 2017, 165-230. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Junkelmann 1996, 46 with nn. 142-9, esp. n. 147 citing Frel 1987, 73-4 on the link between face-mask helmets and theatrical masks. Rapolano female helmet-mask: Garbsch 1978, M 3 and 4 (p. 60) with Taf. 15.3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Hall 2008, 40 n.104 citing the present writer; Slater 2010, 537; Dunbabin 2010, 421 with nn.20-1; 2016, 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. On pantomime in general, see Wüst 1949; Rotolo 1957; Jory 1981; Beacham 1991, 140-53; Leppin 1992; Csapo and Slater 1995, 369-85; Garelli 2007; Lada-Richards 2007; Hall and Wyles 2008 (esp. the introduction by Edith Hall pp. 1-40); Webb 2008; Slater 2010; Dunbabin 2016, 85-113. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Classic pantomime and its salient features are described most clearly and succinctly by Garelli 2007, 2-9 and Dunbabin 2016, 85-6, where is differentiated by both of them from other mythological spectacles and from mime (Garelli 2007, 128-32; Dunbabin 2016, 110-20). On the links between the physical and military training of the Roman élite in the gymnasium and the training undertaken by pantomimes, and especially the imitation of the movements of boxing and wrestling in pantomime, see Slater 1990; 1994, esp. 132-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Garelli 2007, 168-77; cf. Slater 2010, 539. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Pantomime riots and expulsions: Cass. Dio 54.17.5; Macrob. *Sat*. 2.7.19 (under Augustus); Tac. *Ann*. 1.54 and 77 (Tiberius); Suet. *Nero* 26.5; Tac. *Ann.* 13.25; cf. 14.21 (Nero); Plin. *Pan*. 46.1; Suet. *Dom.* 7; Cass. Dio 68.10.2 (Domitian). See Jory 1984; Slater 1994; Garelli 2007, 193-204. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Sordi 1953, 118-20; Garelli 2007, 231-4, based on two inscriptions from Rome (*AE* 1956.67: see below with note 106) and Lepcis Magna (*AE* 1953.188 = *IRT* 606); cf. also the career of the pantomime Theocritus (Cass. Dio 77.21.1-4; cf. *SHA Carac.* 6.1) who taught the emperor Caracalla to dance but failed in the theatre at Rome, moved to Lugdunum (Lyon) where he was more successful with a less sophisticated audience, and thus returned to imperial favour and was eventually appointed to command a Roman army in the East. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Luc. *Salt.* 36-60; Wüst 1949, 847-9; Kokolakis 1959, 52-4; Molloy 1996, 279-82; Garelli 2007, 267-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Libanius *Or.*  64.112; see Jory 2004; Lada-Richards 2008, esp. 292-8; Toner 2017, 178-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Quintilian (*Inst.* 11.3.87) writes of a pantomime’s hands as speaking “the common language of all the world” (*omnium hominum communis sermo*); cf. Lucian’s (*Salt*. 64) story of a prince from Pontus in the Black Sea asking the emperor Nero for a pantomime dancer to act as an interpreter with his barbarian neighbours. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. The material evidence for the masks used in tragedy, satyr plays and comedy is collected in Webster 1967; Webster and Green 1978, cf. Green 1980, 123-31; Webster, Green and Seeberg 1995. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Lucian *Salt.* 29-30. On pantomime masks and their difference from those of tragedy and comedy, see Jory 1996, 5-19; 2001; 2002; Garelli, 2007, 210-22; Petrides 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Wyles 2008, 69-74. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Jory 1996, 8-19 with figs. 4-18 (typological discussion on pp. 18-19). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Jory 2001; cf. de Chaisemartin 2006; Dunbabin 2016, 91-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. The most recent survey of the visual evidence appears in Dunbabin 2016, 91-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Cf. Slater 2010, 533 n.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Albizzati 1928; cf. Jory 1996, 16; Garelli 2007, 213-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Keim and Klumbach 1951; Garbsch 1978, B 1-3 (pp. 47-8) with Taf. 2.3 and 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *Cohors I Flavia Canathenorum sagittariorum milliaria* at Straubing (*Sorviodurum*): *CIL* 3.5973; 11992f and g; Wagner 1956/7 no. 142.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Kellner 1978; Garbsch 1978, A 1 (p. 45) with Taf. 1.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. *Cohors III Britannorum equitata* at Eining (*Abusina*): *CIL* 3.5935; 11944; 11950; 11956; 14111a-e and g; *IBR* 506. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Pantomime costume: Lucian *Salt.* 2; 29; 63; Fronto *De or.* 4-5; Lib. *Or*. 64.52; see Garelli 2007, 4-5, 213-7; Wyles 2008, 62-8; Dunbabin 2010, 423-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Hair interpreted as a fur cap: Keim and Klumbach 1951, 13; helmets as male-type: Breitinger 1951, 722; von Petrikovits 1952, 138; Gamber 1978, 373. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Benndorf 1878, 322 Nr. 16 Taf. 9.3-4; Garbsch 1978, O 46 (p.71) with Taf.25.1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Jory 1996, 12-13, 15, 17, with figs. 7 (silver casket from Rome), 13 (statuette from Egypt), 14 (mask from Rome), 18 (Aspendos relief); Valero Tévar 2013, 316-25; Uscatescu 2013, 384-8; Dunbabin 2016, 95-6 with fig. 4.8 (Noheda mosaic). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. *Ala I Thracum victrix* at Carnuntum-Petronell (?): *AE* 1992.1409; 2006.1065; cf. Visy 2003, 58-60 (by M. Kandler). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Carnuntum-Petronell helmet-mask: Junkelmann 1996, O 111 (p. 95) with Abb. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. The nearest fort to Visegrád-Várkert was Dunabogdány (*Cirpi*), about five miles to the east and the base of the mixed *cohors II Alpinorum equitata* (*CIL* 3.3646; 3647; *AE* 1982.798), which may have provided the garrison for the watchtower; the helmet could therefore have belonged to a trooper of that unit. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Visegrád helmet-mask: Garbsch 1978, O 42 (p. 70) with Taf. 24.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Unknown provenance: Junkelmann 2000, AG 806 (pp. 194-5) with Abb. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Other helmet-masks with severe hairstyle: Krivnja, Bulgaria (*Abrittus*) (Garbsch 1978, O 43 (p. 70); d’Amato and Negin 2017, 219 fig. 254 g); Gilău, Romania (d’Amato and Negin 2017, 219 fig. 254 h); an unknown provenance in Bulgaria (Born and Junkelmann 1997, AG 450 (pp. 97-102) with Abb. 73-6; d’Amato and Negin 2017, 219 fig. 254b). Several of the helmet-masks with this hairstyle are designated by Junkelmann as being of Reşca type (see below with note 76) but the latter mask does not have their central parting. D’Amato and Negin 2017, 217-24 assign them to a very diverse *mater* *castrorum* sub-group of female masks, which they see as representing imperial women in the late second/early third century and which they associate with their cult in the Roman army, but none of them resembles the iconography of either of the two empresses who bore that title, Faustina the Younger and Iulia Domna. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Jory 1996, 13-16 with figs. 9, 10a-b, 15, 16; 2001, 2-11 with plates 1, 3-5, 7-8; Garelli 2007, 220-1 with fig. 10; note also the fragments in clay of what appear to be pantomime masks with diadems and hair piled on top of the head from Vechten, Nijmegen and Köln in Germania Inferior (van Hoorn-Groneman 1960, 75-7 with Abb. 1-4) and Straubing in Raetia (Fig. 3b; see note 107). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Getty Museum helmet: Garbsch 1978, O 44 (p. 70) with Taf. 25.3 (Fig. 3a); Newstead: Garbsch 1978, O 39 (p. 69) with Taf. 24.1; Cincşor: d’Amato and Negin 2017, 220 fig. 255f; Reşca: Garbsch 1978, O 40 (pp. 69-70) with Taf. 24.2; Ostrov: Garbsch 1978, O 56 (p. 73) with Taf. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Jory 2002, 250-1 with fig. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Helmets with Medusa masks are noted by Bartman 2005, 107 and constitute one of the sub-groups of female helmets in D’Amato and Negin 2017, 225-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Medusa helmet-masks with snakes: Kalenik: Garbsch 1978, O 45 (p. 70); d’Amato and Negin 2017, 226 fig. 261e; with wings: Varna: Garbsch 1978, O 29 (p. 68) with Taf. 23.1;Weissenburg: Junkelmann 1996, O 94 (p. 94) with Abb. 75; with both snakes and wings: Weissenburg: Garbsch 1978, O 22 (p. 66) with Taf. 21.1-2; Pfrondorf: Garbsch 1978, O 48 (p. 71) with Taf 26.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Struggle against the gorgons: Luc. *Salt.* 44; this cannot, however, be used as direct evidence that this story was actually danced, cf. Garelli 2007, 259-67. Aphrodisias frieze blocks with pantomime masks: Jory 2002, 248-51; contra, de Chaisemartin 2006, esp. 54-5, with a photograph of the Medusa mask at 78 fig. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Silistra-type helmets: Garbsch 1978, O 28 (p. 68) with Taf. 22.4; Born and Junkelmann 1997, 90-7 no. AG 449 with Abb. 69-72; Junkelmann 2000, 196-7 no. AG 813. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Frel 1987, 73-4 with Taf. 1.2 and 4, linking the Trier terracotta mask (Junkelmann 1996, 48 Abb. 95; Rose 2006, Taf. 16 Kat. Nr. 220) with the Gaziantep helmet-mask (Garbsch, O 30 (p. 68) and Taf. 23.2). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Garelli 2007, 214, 457 with fig. 5, noting that some aspects of the figure’s costume make its identification as a pantomime dancer rather than a supporting actor uncertain. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Koepp 1892; Bieber 1964; Stewart 1993. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. “Alexander”-type face-mask helmets with parted *anastole*: Garbsch 1978, B 2 (pp. 47-8) with Taf. 2.1 (incorrectly captioned as B 1) (Straubing) (Fig. 4a); L 1 (p. 59) with Taf. 14 (unknown provenance, Israel): O 18 (pp. 65-6) with Taf. 20.2 (Echzell); O 21 (p. 66) with Taf. 20.4 (Straẞ Moos); O 23 (p. 67) with Taf. 21.3 (Herzogenburg); O 99 (p. 94) with Abb. 73-4 (Welzheim); cf. also a mask from a three-part helmet of unknown provenance in a private collection: d’Amato and Negin, 2017, 177 fig. 180. Other face-mask helmets of general “Alexander” type: Garbsch 1978, B 1; B 3; B 4 (pp. 47-8) with Taf 2.2 (B 1 incorrectly captioned as B 2); O 17 (p. 65) with Taf. 20.1; O 20 (p. 66); O 24 (p. 67) with Taf. 21.4; O 25 (p. 67) with Taf. 22.1; Junkelmann 1996, O 95-6 (p. 94); O 98 (p. 94) with Abb. 59; d’Amato and Negin 2017, fig. 238a. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Calvi mask: Levi 1926, 144 fig. 116 no. 647 inv. 21442; Wootton 1999, plate IV fig. 7; Pompeii mask: Levi 1926, 203-4 fig. 149 no. 874 inv. 116711; Wootton 1999, plate III fig 6. Crosby Garrett helmet: see note 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. *Oscilla* depicting Attis: Wootton 1999. Attis as a pantomime character: Tert. *Apol.* 15.3-5; cf. *Ad nat.* 1.10.44-7; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 7.33; cf. 2.38; 4.35; Hieron *Epist.* 43.2; it has also been suggested by Newman 1990, 343-66 that the story of Attis in Catullus 63 may have been written as a pantomime libretto; see Garelli 2007, 271-80; cf. Weinreich 1948, 11-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Griffins regularly appear as decorations for the summits of gladiatorial (“Thracian”) and other helmets with a high curling crest similar in shape to the Phrygian cap: Wahl 1977, 108-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Lendon 2005, 268-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Bartman 2005, 105-17 (quotations at p. 117), citing Gera 1997, 58.For the Brougham graves, see Cool 2000, esp. 170 (burial no. 194), 241-2 (burial no. 303), 460-1, and cf. 432-5, 463-6 on the possible Danubian or trans-Danubian identity of the local army unit; note however that the identification of these burials as female is tentative. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Firemen dressed as *matronae*: *CIL* 6.3744=31075; see Sablayrolles 1996, 393-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Asterius *Hom.* 4.7; Caesarius *Serm*. 129.2; see Radermacher 1918, esp. 86-8, 109-10; Grig 2017, esp. 242-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Theatrical performance by *vigiles* and *classiarii*: *CIL* 6.1063; 1064; cf. 3.14695 (=*IGRPP* 1.552); 6.3042; 3059; 10.3487; legionary *scaenici*:  *ILTG* 234 (Lyon); Cumont and Rostovzeff 1939 no, 860 = *AE* 1940.229 (Dura Europos); cf. also *CIL* 3.10501; 13,12075; see von Petrikovits 1980; Dietz 1985, 250-2; Leppin 1992, 157; Sablayrolles 1996, 391-3; Garelli-Francois 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Soldiers were explicitly banned from the professional stage: *Dig*. 48.19.14. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Lib. *Or.* 64.50-1; cf. the use by pantomimes of stage names such as Karamallos (‘Fleecy Head’) and Chrysomallos (‘Goldilocks’) in apparent reference to their masks: Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 23.268-71; Aristaenetus *Ep.* 1.26.18; Malalas *Chron.* 15 p, 386, 17-20 Dindorf; Const. Porph. *Exc. de insid.* 170; text on a 5th-century contorniate medallion discussed by Jory 1996, 7 with fig. 2. Long hair is shown hanging down from the back of the mask on the Albizzati statuette (Albizzati 1928, Tav. I). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Alexander and the image of Achilles: Smith 1988, 59 with n.22; Stewart 1993, 78-86; Trofimova 2012, 33-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Achilles on Scyros in pantomime: Lucian *Salt*. 46; Liban. *Or.* 64.68; the latter passage also makes reference to the dancing of Achilles’ exploits at Troy, and later in the same work Libanius mentions that the pantomime dancing his character can switch to the secondary character of Paris (*Or.* 64.113); note also Lucian *Pseudol.* 25, which mentions Achilles as a secondary character apparently singing in accompaniment to the dancer. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Achilles on Skyros in Roman art: Kossatz-Deissmann 1981, 58-69; Ghedini 1997; Dunbabin 2010; 2014, 231-4; 2016, 103-7; 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. In this context, we may note that the words *chaitai… xanthai* used by Arrian *Tact*. 34.4 to describe the yellow crests of the helmets worn in the *hippika gymnasia* are reminiscent of Homer’s description of the long, yellow hair of Achilles (*xanthen…chaiten*) at *Il.* 23.141, and were presumably meant to be recognised a such by the philhellene and highly cultured emperor Hadrian in whose honour the work was written. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Garbsch 1978, M 3 (p. 60) with Taf. 15.1-2. Dionysus as a pantomime character: *Anth Plan.* 290 = *AP* 16.290; cf. *AP* 9.248; for Dionysiac pantomime masks, see Jory 1996, 9-10 with fig. 4 (applique medallion from Orange); 2002, 248-51; de Chaisemartin 2006, 44-5 with fig. 6 (mask on the Sebasteion frieze at Aphrodisias); cf. also the closed-mouth terracotta Maenad masks from Pompeii: Rose 2006, 76-7 Abb. 33-5 (Naples Museum Inv. 116713; 21437; 116710). [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Garbsch 1978, O 41 (p. 70) with Taf. 24.3. Minerva as a pantomime character: Tert. *Apol.* 15.2; August. *De civ. D.* 18.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Crosby Garrett helmet: see note 40. Attis as a pantomime character: see note 87. For pantomime masks with a Phrygian cap, see notes 86-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Getty Museum helmet: Garbsch 1978, O 46 (p. 71) with Taf. 25.3. Juno as a pantomime character: Tert. *Apol.* 15.2; Lié. *Or*. 64.70; August. *De civ. D.* 18.10; Nonnus *Dion.*19.251. Venus as a pantomime character: Fronto *De or,* 5.4 (van der Houtp. 150 (A 381)); Tert. *Apol.* 15.2; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 4.35; Lib. *Or*. 64.70; Jer. *Ep.* 43.2; August. *De civ. D.* 7.26; 18.10; Cassiod. *Var.* 4.51. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Leppin 1992, 47-8, 176-81 (Appendix II); see also note 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. *AE* 1956.122; cf. Bayet 1955; Garelli 2007, 429-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. *AE* 1956.67 = 1989.60 = 1994.142 = 2007.223; see Sordi 1953; Leppin 1989; Garelli 2007, 229-31. Leppin (pp. 40-1) reads the seventh line of the fragmentary inscription as […*Britt*]*ania* *Germania* *Inferiore* *ann*[*is*…] which would add another frontier province to the pantomime’s travels; he does so on the basis of the geographical proximity of the two provinces mentioned, but [*Aquit*]*ania* or [*Lusit*]*ania* are equally possible epigraphically and, sincethe omission of *et* before *Germania* is inconsistent with the usage of rest of the inscription, so is a dittography of [*Germ*]*ania.* [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Straubing clay mask: Pielmeier 1990, Abb. 7; Junkelmann 1996, 46-7 with Abb. 93-4; Rose 2006, Taf. 12 Kat Nr. 172. Nijmegen clay mask: Hahl 1960, Nr. 36 (p. 15), Taf. 6.3; Bloemers 1979, cover and 68, fig. 81; Webster, Green and Seeberg 1995, 507 cat. no. 6WT 1a, cf. 1b-f; Jory 2001, 6-7 with Plate 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. See note 85; a*la I Thracum* at Treismauer: *AE* 1950.116; 1974.472; 2007.1086; *ala I Augusta* at Treismauer: *CIL* 3.5655; *AE* 2007.1084-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Gaziantep helmet and Trier pantomime mask: see note 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. See notes 70-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. See note 76; *cohors II Flavia Bessorum* at Cincşor: *AE* 1971.379; cf. 1994.1500; *Studii si Cercetari de Istorie Veche, si Arheologie* 38 (1987) no. 386; 40 (1989), no. 496; *ala Augusta Vocontiorum* at Newstead: *RIB* 2121 (a dedication by a *decurio* of the unit to the *Campestres*: see note 21). [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. See note 40; cavalry at Kirkby Thore: *CIL* 8.4800; *RIB* 65; cf. Breeze and Shaw 2018, 90-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Sear 2006, 196 (Catterick,), 215 (Strasbourg), 219 (Nida-Heddernheim). [↑](#footnote-ref-113)