

HEROIC HAIRCUTS

IN *C.Q.* xxii (1972), 199 Professor R. G. Austin has drawn attention to the 'Εκτόρειος κόμη, short at the front, unusually long at the back. It must be related to that other heroic 'long back and sides', the Theseis,¹ which is described by Plutarch (*Thes.* 5) who compares Homer's Abantes (*Il.* 2. 542, ὀπιθεν κομόωντες) and adds by way of explanation that the custom was not learnt from the Arabes, as some think, nor from the Mysians (which incidentally explains Hector), but because the Abantes liked close combat and short front hair denied their adversaries a hand hold. The same explanation probably serves the Hectorean hair style. Once hoplite fighting and armour were generally adopted in Greece—by the end of the seventh century—the severing of the front locks would have had little value since the hoplite helmet effectively covered the front and side of the head leaving no possibility of free long front hair. In the Geometric period and in Bronze Age Greece, which between them account for the fighting styles described by Homer and which are probably inherent in most Greek myth, it was a different matter. In both periods there are representations of duels where a warrior seizes his adversary by what we should take to be the forelock. In the Geometric art of Athens such scenes are now variously explained by scholars as deriving from the artistic conventions of either the Bronze Age² or the contemporary Near East.³ Neither will be completely correct and contemporary practice is likely to bear some of the responsibility for the scenes. In later art a warrior's hair is sometimes shown hanging long behind the helmet. When hoplites are arming attention is paid to their hair, but principally to trimming or rolling up the back hair to keep it out of the way. There are several late Archaic representations of this, which have been discussed by various scholars.⁴ Besides these there are a very few scenes in which the warrior does appear to be cutting off the front locks, but, where the whole scene is identifiable, it is the arming before the expedition of the Seven to Thebes, and the removal of the forelock is better explained as an act of dedication, or even of despair, well suited to the general mood of all these scenes of preparation for the dire enterprise.⁵

However important short front hair may have been to the early warrior, none of these red figure scenes has anything to do with it, or with a Hector, or with a Theseus, and where these heroes are shown there is nothing distinctive

¹ See also W. Bremer in *R.E.* s.v. 'Haartracht', 2120, where the Hectorean style is explained, wrongly in the light of Professor Austin's note, as for hair brushed up and back from the forehead.

² J. L. Benson, *Horse, Bird and Man* (1970), 100 f.

³ G. Ahlberg, *Fighting on Land and Sea in Greek Geometric Art* (1971), 76 f.

⁴ E. Haspels, *Attic Black-figured Lekythoi*, 71–4; J. D. Beazley, *Der Kleophrades-Maler*, 28 and *Attic Red-figured Vases in American Museums*, 72 f.

⁵ Examples are: on the Kleophrades

Painter cup, Acr. 336 (*A.R.V.*² 192, no. 105; Beazley, *Der Kleophrades-Maler*, 28 f., pl. 32. 2; E. Simon, *Antike Kunst*, iii (1960), 15; G. M. A. Richter, *A.J.A.* lxxiv (1970), pl. 82. 9); on a hydria in Switzerland (Richter, *op. cit.* 331–3, pl. 81, fig. 5, where Parthenopaios is named and the identity of the Seven certain); on a lekythos by the Oionokles Painter, Cleveland 28. 660 (*A.R.V.*² 648, no. 37, where a single figure is shown). For dedication of hair locks and their attachment to chariots see J. K. Anderson, *A.J.A.* lxxv (1971), 191 f.

about their hair. Nor should we expect it, since the Greek habit was to present myth history in modern dress. Where Hector is shown unhelmeted, as in the famous arming scene by Euthymides,¹ there is nothing remarkable about his hair. Nevertheless, Professor Austin cites another red figure vase of the end of the sixth century, now in a private collection in New England,² where the dead Hector is shown beside Achilles' couch, with his hair long and spreading back from the forehead instead of being dressed in the usual manner for these scenes, as though he were still upright and alive. This is not, however, an allusion to the 'Hectorean' style for hair since it can be explained in another way. It is a borrowing by the artist of a current way of showing the hair of another dead hero at Troy, not lying on the ground but being lifted from it by Sleep and Death—Sarpedon. A near-contemporary calyx crater of the Pezzino Group³ shows a dead warrior's hair in just this manner, splaying loose once his helmet had been removed. In another version, apparently by the Nikosthenes Painter,⁴ the hair is properly dressed. Beazley had noted the majesty of the composition on this vase and surmised that the invention of it was the work of some greater master, perhaps Euphronios. As von Bothmer has observed, his guess has been made good by the Euphronios crater recently acquired for New York,⁵ where Sarpedon, lifted by Sleep and Death, has his head turned down towards the ground and his hair loose but of course not splaying in the same manner. The artist of the New England vase has borrowed a different convention for his horizontal hero and, with some other red figure artists,⁶ fails to recall how well Hector's body had been repaired after its distressing experience around the walls of Troy and then daily around Patroklos' tomb.

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¹ *A.R.V.*² 26, no. 1; E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung*, iii, fig. 364.

² *Auktion, Münzen und Medaillen* xxxiv (1967), pl. 46, no. 149; J. D. Beazley, *Paralipomena* (1971), 324; D. M. Buitron, *Attic Vase Painting in New England Collections* (1972), 80 f., no. 37.

³ *A.R.V.*² 32, no. 2, recently republished by P. E. Arias in *Archeologia Classica* xxi (1969), 190 ff. with pls. 53–63. The men lifting him are not winged, so the body need not be either Sarpedon or Memnon.

⁴ *A.R.V.* 126, no. 24; Pfuhl, op. cit., fig. 345.

⁵ *Metropolitan Museum Bulletin* xxxi. 1 (1972), no. 15.

⁶ The Brygos Painter, *A.R.V.*² 380, no. 171 (K. F. Johansen, *The Iliad in Early Greek Art*, 134, fig. 46); and Makron, *A.R.V.*² 460, no. 14 (*B.A. Besch.* xxix, 15, fig. 4). Sarpedon's body had been similarly treated, again by Apollo, before removal by Sleep and Death (*Il.* 16. 667–83), but Euphronios shows it still bleeding freely.