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Roman helmets with a browband shaped as a vertical fronton¹

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The word “fronton” is primarily an architectural term referring to the completion of a facade of a building, a portico, or a colonnade (usually triangular, sometimes semicircular), restricted to the two roof slopes on the sides and to a cornice at the bottom. This French term comes from the Latin words ‘frons, frontis’, meaning ‘forehead’. As is well known, narrow sides of ancient temples (the front and the rear) always ended at the top with a low fronton of triangular field or tympanum that were adorned with sculpted friezes and figures. The triangular shape of a browband plate of Roman helmets (especially in the Ist century AD) resembles an architectural fronton. What is more, as in the case of temple frontons the vertical browbands of helmets from the period are also sometimes embellished with intricate decorations. This part of the helmet is referred to as ‘Stirnband’ or ‘Stirndiadem’² in the German literature while in English studies uses the term ‘brow-plate’ or ‘forehead-plate’.³

On the heads of Roman soldiers, and in particular as part of the Praetorian equipment, for a long time Hollywood actors have worn the so-called “Attic” helmets of various modifications. Costume design in these films have been based mainly on the accurate reproduction of the Roman reliefs.

However, there are absolutely no similar specimens known to archaeology. Consequently a question arises as to what kind of helmets were depicted on these reliefs, and if these illustrations accurately copied the then existing helmets or were merely a reflection of Hellenistic artistic traditions?

Both iconographic sources and preserved show that helmets from Hellenistic period had frontal parts decorated as a fronton ending with volutes at the temples.⁴ They constituted variation of the Attic helmet, quite popular in Greek art.⁵ This type of helmet is

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² BRAAT (1961); FISCHER (2012) 155, 208.

³ ROBINSON (1975) 133, 138 - 139; BISHOP, COULSTON (2006) 176; TRAVIS (2014) 97.

⁴ WAURICK (1983) 266 - 269, Taf. 38 - 39.

⁵ WAURICK (1983) 265 - 266.

characterized by a hemispherical bowl reinforced in the frontal arc of the forehead, and, in most cases, also by a vertically curved neck-guard. Sometimes this type of helmet was also provided with cheek-pieces and ridge-plumes of different shapes. Since the end of Vth century BC volutes above the ears were added to the frontal arc.

However, there is a gap of about three centuries between the "pseudo-Attic" Hellenistic helmet and the Roman model. For this period of time, there is no archaeological

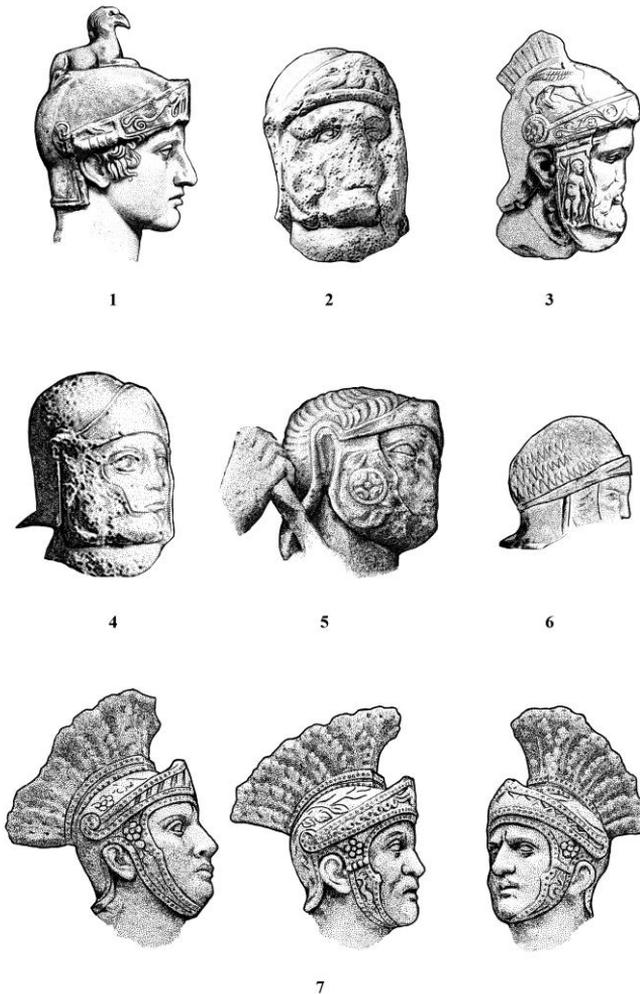


Fig. 1. 1 – Ares from Villa Torlonia, Rome; 2 – Dolanus tombstone, Wiesbaden museum; 3 – the so-called “Head of Mars”, The Art Insitute Chicago; 4 – tombstone of Rufus Sita, Gloucester; 5 – tombstone of C. Romanus Capito, Mainz; 6 – relief from Saintes; 7 – the so-called “Praetorian relief” in the Louvre Museum (author’s drawing).

evidence of such helmets being widespread in the Roman army. As for the iconographic sources, there are only few of them from the late Republican period and they show mainly Greek heroes.

Reliefs of the frieze of the Basilica Aemilia in Rome⁶ illustrating stories about the origins of Rome, which presumably date from the Ist century BC, show soldiers wearing muscle cuirasses and Attic helmets very similar to the version of Melos (by typology of G. Waurick).⁷ The style of these images demonstrates that the authors of these compositions were influenced by so-called “neo-Attic style”, so the impact of the old Greek samples of works of art is, of course, reflected in the artistic features of the monument.

Many iconographic sources depicting helmets have survived from the ‘Imperial period’ (fig. 1). The most important and informative ones include: triumphal arch in Orange,⁸ Trajan's Column,⁹ the Column of Marcus Aurelius,¹⁰ friezes from Arch of Trajan¹¹ and from Adamklissi Tropaeum Traiani¹² as well as the tombstones of various cavalrymen.

All of them represent exceptional diversity of helmet types. It is, therefore, logical to wonder whether iconographic sources are reliable. In particular, the following questions come to the fore: Did all the images we have reflect actual helmets? If not, which ones most closely imitated the real samples of that time? In order to investigate this issue in more depth, we need to take in to consideration the function of a given monument, a degree of the professionalism of an artist and his goals, and a requirements of a customer commissioning a given piece of art. Moreover, it is useful to scrutinize the quality of the material used by sculptor, as it may be crucial to the question of whether it was technically possible to show fine detail. Although, in some cases it is very difficult to find answers to these questions, generally they help to build a conceptual model of interpretation of iconographic armament.

Roman propaganda monuments are known best of all forms of art of that period. Their relatively wide familiarity may, at least partially, be attributed to their frequent appearance in Hollywood blockbusters. Despite numerous doubts expressed by modern researchers, they continue to be valuable sources in many aspects as those monuments, mostly located in the capital, show how military weapons were perceived by its inhabitants, and especially by the sculptors who worked on these monuments. Evidently, these artists considered primarily the weapons of the metropolitan garrisons, as well as the depictions of armor on Greek and Hellenistic monuments, from which they were learning their craft. Apparently, they found it important to display the structural type of helmet, for example, the so-called Attic one, planted in a common person's mind; as a Roman saw it as being removed from the multidirectional and quick change of improvements and deteriorations, consecrated by tradition and relating to a different, deep and slow-changing sphere of existence.

⁶ WAURICK (1983) 286, Taf. 47.

⁷ WAURICK (1983) 268, Taf. 38, 1 - 3, 9.

⁸ AMY, DUVAL, FORMIGÉ, HATT (1962).

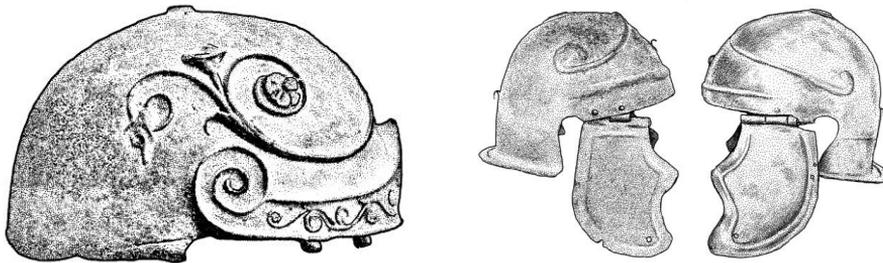
⁹ LEHMANN-HARTLEBEN (1926).

¹⁰ BECKMANN (2011); COARELLI (2008).

¹¹ L'ORANGE, VON GERKAN (1939).

¹² FLORESCU (1961).

Many Roman sculptures bore the traces of propaganda, whether they appeared on a triumphal arch in honor of an imperial victory or tombstone of a warrior. Their main function was to praise the deserved status and achievements of the depicted individual, and a more general, message directed to the public was glorification of the imperial policy.



From the left: **Fig. 2.** Helmet found at Ponte Sisto in Rome (after DEHN (1911) 252, author's drawing), **Fig. 3.** Helmets from Herculaneum (after ROBINSON (1975) Pl. 150 - 151, author's drawing).

Sculptors created a collective image of the Roman soldier, often sacrificing personal details. In addition, many of the capital's artists were not familiar with the real military equipment, and less skilled provincial artists who were better acquainted with military fashion, sometimes created more realistic images. However, the capital monuments should not be completely ignored, because they are likely to show soldier's equipment at the garrison of Rome, including the praetorian cohort. Apart from these monuments some other reliefs which are interpreted as depicting Praetorians and their armament can be seen on the fragments of the "Great Trajanic Frieze"¹³ in Rome and on the so-called "Praetorian relief" in the Louvre Museum¹⁴ (fig. 1, 7). All the soldiers depicted on them have ornate Attic helmets with crests and plumes which are not similar to common army pieces. However, there have been found some remnants of helmets of this "Attic" shape, which may suggest that they existed not only on graphical representations, but also in reality.

Some British researchers completely exclude purely artistic prototype of the "Attic" helmet and called the "Attic" also Chalcidian helmet if they do not have nasal guard.¹⁵ Judging by the lack of finds, after IVth century BC in Italy, helmets were not placed in a grave. However, this does not mean that the tradition of making "Attic" helmets was interrupted. Iconographic sources show that Roman artists of the Imperial period depicted its lower Italic and Hellenistic variants. In the late republican era and during the reign of Octavian Augustus there appeared helmet images of Hellenistic mixed types with a wide brim, fronton and volutes on the sides of the hemispherical or sphero-conical bowl. The wide brims of these helmets are reminiscent of the samples of the Macedonian cavalry.

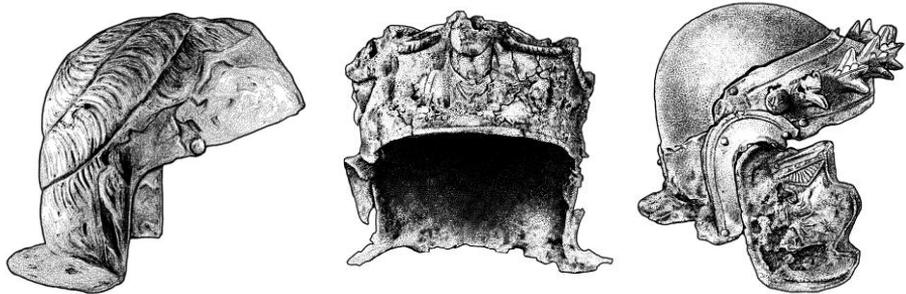
¹³ LEANDER TOUATI (1987).

¹⁴ RANKOV (1994) 20; KOEPEL (1990) 107; GIROIRE (2007) 177, cat. 115.

¹⁵ CONNOLLY (1998) 61 - 63.

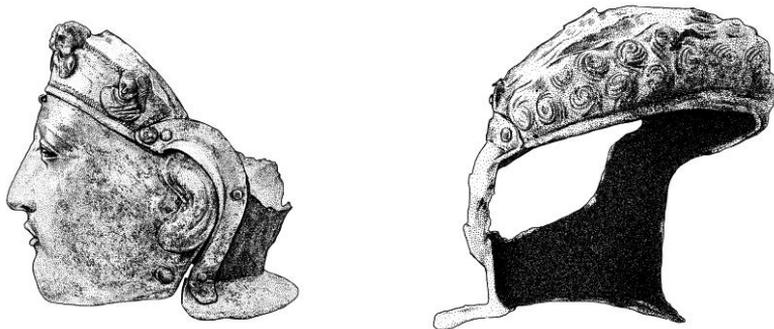
Roman cavalrymen on the altar of Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus¹⁶ wear similar helmets, which is consistent with the information of Polybius, who asserted that the Roman cavalry of his time was equipped in Greek style (Polyb. VI. 25). This altar dates from the second half of the Ist century BC, and hence reflects a continuation of this tradition of helmets at a later time.

In the first decades AD "Attic" helmets appeared in various scenes depicted on the so-called "Gemma Augustea".¹⁷ Some of these Hellenistic helmets of "Attic" style, were



From the left: **Fig. 4.** Helmet from Northwich (author's drawing), **Fig. 5.** Helmet from Hallaton (author's drawing), **Fig. 6.** Helmet from the Waal at Nijmegen (author's drawing).

obviously copied from Greek art, for example, a helmet with three crests belonging to goddess Athena (Roma), which tramples the armor of a defeated enemy. G. Waurick points to similarity between the helmets depicted on the "Gemma Augustea" and the known samples of an "Attic" helmet, especially helmets of Melos type, which have volutes on the sides, an arched neck-guard and a crest on the bowl.¹⁸



From the left: **Fig. 7.** Helmet from Nijmegen (author's drawing), **Fig. 8.** Helmet from Brza Palanka (author's drawing).

¹⁶ WAURICK (1983) Taf. 51.

¹⁷ WAURICK (1983) 266 - 271, Taf. 37.

¹⁸ WAURICK (1983) 268.

However, it is not just echoes of conservative iconographic tradition, since in addition to images of “Attic” helmets, there are also similar specimens which have been excavated and are known to us.

One of them is a bronze helmet with volutes and floral ornaments found¹⁹ (fig. 2) at the Ponte Sisto in Rome. This piece is similar to the helmet found in Pergamum (Bergamo, Turkey) (von Lipperheide collection)²⁰ and to the helmet from the burial which was

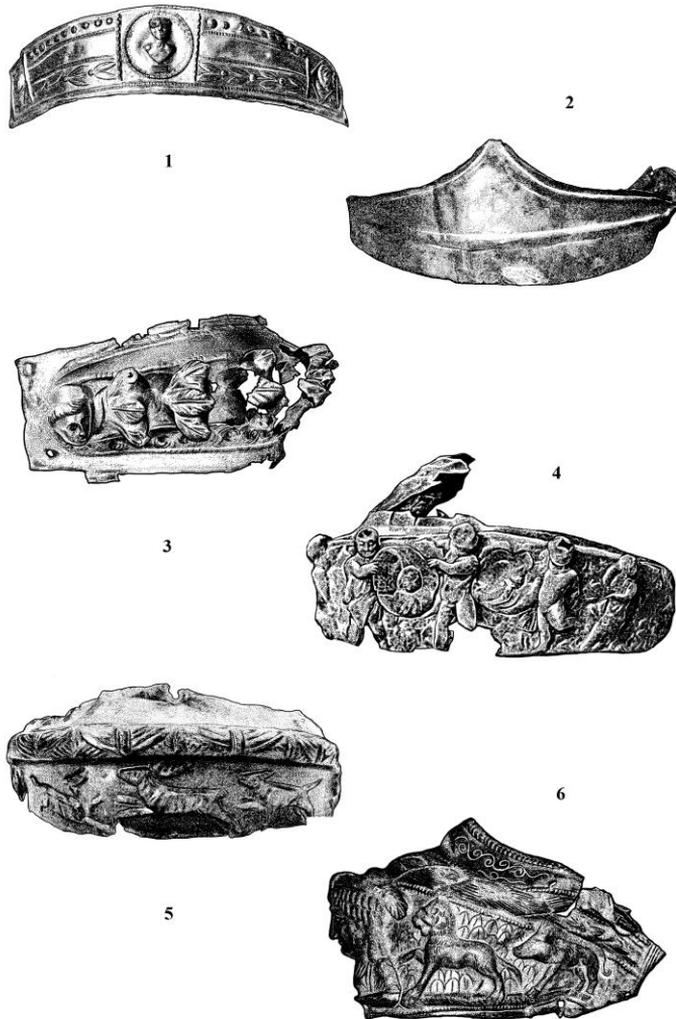


Fig. 9. Frontons (browbands) from Roman helmets: 1 – Amerongen; 2 – Nijmegen; 3 – from the Waal at Nijmegen; 4 – Pamuk mogila at Brestovets near Plovdiv (before restoration); 5 – former Axel Guttman collection (AG 809); 6 – Leidsche Rijn (author’s drawing).

¹⁹ DEHN (1911) 252.

²⁰ SCHRÖDER (1912) 327, 34; Beil. 12, 4.

destroyed during the construction of the Vladikavkaz fortress (State Hermitage).²¹ Unlike the find in Rome, the latter pieces are not decorated and, apparently, are older dating back to the Hellenistic era. Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to date this interesting piece reliably. However, should it indeed date back to the ancient period, then it proves clearly that the imitation of the Attic helmet existed in Rome of the Imperial period.



From the upper left: **Fig. 10.** Helmet from Pamuk mogila at Brestovets near Plovdiv (after restoration) (author's drawing), **Fig. 11.** Helmet from private European collection (author's drawing), **Fig. 12.** Helmet from former Axel Guttman collection (AG 461) (author's drawing), **Fig. 13.** Helmet from Butzbach (author's drawing).

Also to this group can be attributed two earlier helmets from Herculaneum dated by the first half of 1st century BC (fig. 3), which H. R. Robinson catalogues as the imperial-Italic

²¹ RABINOVICH (1941) Tabl. XXIII.

type (in his classification: Imperial-Italic A).²² However, with their small neck-guards and the absence of forehead peaks, these specimens differ from other helmets of this type (according to the above classification). At the same time, as on the helmets of the Attic type, their frontal part is decorated with a roll forming a sharp top in the middle of the forehead and with volutes. As a result, both specimens are closer to the Attic type, though because of their unusual decoration, it is doubtful whether both helmets are authentic, and H. R. Robinson even considers the possibility of an antique dealer's forgery.²³ However, it is tempting to construe these samples as a transitional form between the "Attic" helmet and the later Roman cavalry helmets of I-II centuries AD.

On the other hand, these helmets are very different from those depicted on cavalrymen's funerary reliefs of Ist century AD, and later on the "realistic" reliefs of triumphal columns and arches. For instance the soldiers on Trajan's Column wear helmets, which vary in shape, although most of them belong to the Weisenau type. A small part of helmets have small vertical frontons in the form of onlaid strap in the frontal part of the bowl, and some of them also have volutes which are reminiscent of the "Attic" helmet. Such helmets on the images of infantry and cavalry were combined with *lorica segmentata* and a chain mail.²⁴ Therefore, it is unnecessary to search for direct relation of this helmets type as a specific native troops, and with a certain military rank.

There are many images of Attic helmets on Roman monuments going back to the first two centuries AD. They are depicted on Trajan's Column, Trajan's triumphal relief (parts of which were subsequently embedded into the Arch of Constantine), and on other monuments.

Often such helmets are associated with Praetorians. These are soldiers involved in the funeral ceremony (*decursio*) on the pedestal relief of Antoninus Pius column and soldiers on the famous so-called "Praetorian relief" from the Louvre. As a rule, all of them are richly decorated with embossed floral ornaments, have a browband with volutes in the temporal region and are equipped with longitudinal crests with plumes.

The soldiers' armaments shown on the Marcus Aurelius column are similar to what is depicted on Trajan's Column. Yet they are some minor differences. One of them is a hemispherical bowl on most of these helmets. In this case, the frontal arc comes back to the nape of the helmet actually girding it. This form of a helmet has no parallels in real finds, so most probably it represents an example of some kind of artistic stylization. This version of the "Attic" helmet is shown on the heads of one third of the Roman soldiers on Marcus Aurelius column.²⁵ Similar helmets are also presented on the reliefs of Septimius

²² ROBINSON (1975) 65 - 67, Pl. 150 - 151.

²³ WAURICK (1983) 65.

²⁴ WAURICK (1983) 293.

²⁵ WAURICK (1983) 297.

Severus arch.²⁶ "Attic" helmets with volutes and a fronton continued to be depicted in Roman iconographic sources until the IVth century AD. For example, they appear on the Arch of Galerius in Thessaloniki (the beginning of the IVth century AD.) as well on the Arch of Constantine, and even on the reliefs from Theodosius column (end of the IVth century AD).²⁷

However, these monuments depict "Attic" type variants not yet known in any actual findings, such as helmets with a protruding fillet, separating the occipital part of the bowl and neck-guard. Apparently, it was a common type of helmet, but does not yet have an exact analogy among archaeological finds.

Later, many of the features of the "Attic" helmet can be observed on the cavalry helmets of Weiler/Koblenz-Bubenheim type, which are both very close to face-mask helmets. These helmets differ from the "Attic" helmet (hence the name "pseudo-Attic") because of the presence of the neck-guard and wide cheek-pieces covering the ears. To soften the "non-classical" impression there were realistic ears portrayed on cheek-pieces, which visually reduced the width of the upper part of the helmet. Yet volutes do not appear on any of the known specimens.

The emergence of new types of helmets is well illustrated by cavalrymen's tombstones. Additionally archaeological finds of such helmets have appeared recently. Most of the tombstones clearly demonstrate helmets with small neck-guard and diadem in the form of ornamental strip (fig. 1, 2, 4–6).

Some of the monuments show bowl's decoration in the form of curly hair and wide decorated cheek-pieces covering the ears (eg, tombstones of Flavius Bassus, Romanus etc.). The earliest representations of these helmets can be seen on the arch in Orange, which testifies to their existence in the early years of the Ist century AD.

In 1981 in Luxembourg in Weller, south of Arlon, on the outskirts of a small urban necropolis a tomb was discovered dating back of the first half of the Ist century AD²⁸. A completely preserved helmet was found there, which is known as the type that includes similar specimens such as Northwich²⁹ (fig. 4), Nijmegen,³⁰ Xanten-Wardt,³¹ Rennes,³² Koblenz-Bubenheim³³ helmets.

²⁶ WAURICK (1983), Taf. 60, 3.

²⁷ WAURICK (1983), Taf. 55, 61, 1.

²⁸ FAIRON, MOREAU-MARÉCHAL (1983) 551 - 564.

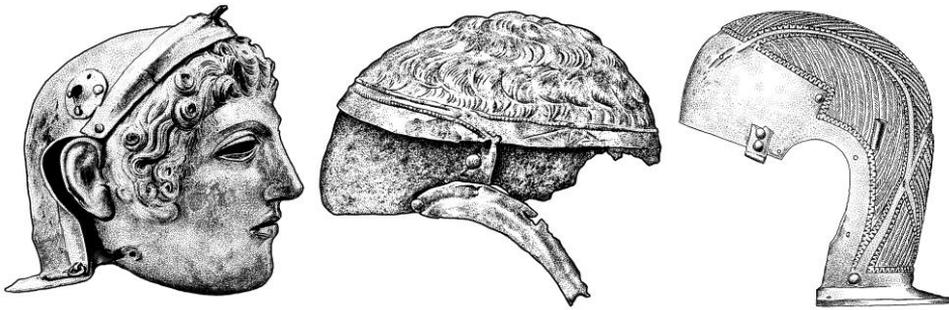
²⁹ ROBINSON (1975) 94, Pl. 247 - 249.

³⁰ ENCCKEVORT, WILLEMS (1994) 130, Fig. 4.

³¹ FEUGÈRE (1994) 105.

³² FEUGÈRE (1994) 107.

³³ KLUMBACH (1974) 45, No. 32, Taf. 32.



From the left: **Fig. 14.** Face-mask helmet from Roshava Dragana barrow at Chatalka (author's drawing), **Fig. 15.** Helmet from Koblenz-Bubenheim (author's drawing), **Fig. 16.** Helmet from Vechten (after KALEE (1989) Fig. 16, author's drawing).

This specimen has a bowl of iron, which is decorated with rows of relief curls. Iron cheek-pieces depicting ears were plated with bronze. Helmets discovered during gravel-dredging operations in the former Rhine channel near Xanten-Wardt (Germany)³⁴ give some information about the production of these samples. They were first, mounted from the bowl of iron, which was then plated with a richly decorated silver sheet. One of these helmets has retained traces of the textile coating on its surface, which can also be seen on some other recently discovered cavalry helmets. Other helmets found in the pit for ritual offerings near the Roman camp at Nijmegen (Netherlands) have a textile coating in such an excellent condition that it was possible to reconstruct it. It was designed as a knitted hat that covered a wig of hair (horse or human) covering helmet bowl. At the same time on the exemplars found in Nijmegen there were no hammered decorations in the form of curls. This unusual circumstance leads one to believe that perhaps the owners of cheapest unadorned copies followed the fashion by decorating the helmet with real hair.

The examples mentioned above were coated with silver, giving the helmets amazing shine and also protecting the iron from rusting. Additional protection against moisture was provided by horsehair wigs with elements of the textile coating that used to be put on the bowls.

Hellenistic pieces, as well as iconographic images of Alexander the Great, which were reflected in Roman art, could be the prototypes of such helmets.³⁵ Most probably, a helmet with rendered curly hair became popular in the army as it invoked the image of Alexander's helmet existing in the iconography. Roman generals were depicted wearing similar helmets. For example, a bust of Germanicus of Erbach (Odenwald)³⁶ resembles, although in a somewhat modified shape, the image of Alexander appearing on a coin of Seleucus I.³⁷

³⁴ JUNKELMANN (1996) 27, Abb. 42.

³⁵ BRACCESSI (1987) 53 - 65; CRESCI MARRONE (1987) 66 - 77.

³⁶ JUNKELMANN (1996) 27, Abb. 43, 48.

³⁷ KÜNZL (1999) 157.

Helmets with the browband fronton or diadem shown on Roman cavalry tombstones found in recent years correspond to more and more real extant analogies. Due to archaeological findings their evolution during I-III centuries AD can be reconstructed. However, the dates of discovered exemplars are only approximate, and in the absence of precise dating some of the samples cannot be used with confidence to build an evolutionary series of up to decades. Nevertheless, stages in this evolutionary process can be traced with reasonable certainty to within a few decades to centuries. In contrast to the iconographic sources, actual samples of Roman "Attic" and "pseudo-Attic" helmet types have been discovered so far only as expensive and decorated exemplars, which makes it part of the defensive cavalry armament.

Based on the available material, there are two variants of a browband fronton they may be distinguished on the existing helmets. Sometimes the frontal part of a helmet was decorated with an embossed relief, imitating a kind of a tiara (diadem). An example of such a helmet comes from Hallaton (fig. 5). It may be called the forerunner of "pseudo-Attic" helmets of Guisborough/Theilenhofen type, which back to the turn of IInd and the first half of the IIIrd century AD. In other cases, this "tiara-fronton" was made of a metal sheet, just riveted to the forehead of the helmet. Such finds with a decorated riveted browband date back to the Ist – early IInd centuries AD and are classified as Weiler-type helmets. The helmets from Nijmegen³⁸ (fig. 6, 7) and Brza Palanka³⁹ (fig. 8) provide a good illustration of this type. A similar helmet is in a private collection. There are also some preserved browbands that were attached to helmets of this kind. Pieces of this type were found in Nijmegen⁴⁰ (fig. 9, 2–3), Leidsche Rijn⁴¹ (fig. 9, 6) and in the Pamuk mogila near Plovdiv⁴² (fig. 9, 4; 10). The National Museum of Antiquities (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden) in Leiden has an embossed helmet browband from Amerongen, which bears a bust of an emperor (?) in the centre and two male heads on the sides⁴³ (fig. 9, 1). This find dates from around the early IInd century AD. The pieces from Butzbach⁴⁴ (fig. 13) and Hallaton⁴⁵ (fig. 5) can be considered as a transitional design between early and later helmet modifications with a vertical fronton.

Narrow "diadem" plate is also present on the face-mask helmet from Roshava Dragana barrow at Chatalka⁴⁶ (fig. 14). Plate-frontons imitating a "crown" of the "Attic" helmet were most probably attached to the frontal part of the helmets from Northwich

³⁸ KLUMBACH (1974) 46 - 47, Taf. 33, 61 - 62, Taf. 46; ROBINSON (1975) 98, pl. 269 - 271; NEGIN (2010) 48, fig. 32.

³⁹ PETROVIĆ (1993) 97 - 106; AMATO, SUMNER (2009) 185 - 186, fig. 270.

⁴⁰ KLUMBACH (1974) 47 - 48, Taf. 34, 51 - 52, Taf. 37; ROBINSON (1975) 98, pl. 269 - 271.

⁴¹ LANGEVELD, GRAAFSTAL, SWINKELS, KÜNZL (2010) 297 - 304.

⁴² SENZACIONNO (2013); *Unikalni artefakti* (2013) 7; *Представят уникалния боен параден шлем от Брестовица* (2015).

⁴³ KLUMBACH (1974) 52 - 53, Taf. 37; ROBINSON (1975) 138 - 139, pl. 417 - 420.

⁴⁴ JUNKELMANN (1992) 190 - 191, Abb. 169.

⁴⁵ SCORE (2011); SHARP, JAMES (2012) 38 - 41.

⁴⁶ BUJUKLIEV (1986) Pl. 8, №91.

(fig. 4), Koblenz-Bubenheim (fig. 15) and Vechten⁴⁷ (fig. 16). The lack of any decoration on their frontal part may indicate the initial presence of the described plate on these specimens of helmets, as this empty space constitutes an ideal place for fastening the fronton plate. Moreover, on the left side of the Koblenz-Bubenheim helmet there remained a riveted fragment of the fronton plate. All surviving plates are richly adorned with relief decorations and are very similar to helmets from iconographic sources, which show similarly ornamented helmets of Praetorians and cavalrymen.

Because some items of this type have rich decoration, it may be tempting to consider them parade armor. M. Feugère classifies these helmets as a category between combat and ceremonial specimens,⁴⁸ which makes sense, since they display a variety of features different from both ceremonial and combat helmets.

All known helmets of the Weiler type came from Ist century AD, but in the beginning of the IInd century AD these helmets were replaced by the Guisborough type.

Maximum distribution of Guisborough/Theilenhofen type correspond to the IIIrd century AD. They are often considered to be parade helmets because of their richly embossed decorations. Recently, however, researchers are inclined to believe that they were ordinary combat helmet.

The basic form of the Guisborough/Theilenhofen type of helmet⁴⁹ is basically very reminiscent of the Weiler/Koblenz-Bubenheim helmets.⁵⁰ The only difference lies in the fact that in the former the browband diadem was replaced with a vertical fronton with volutes, and the crown was no longer decorated with curly hair but either bore images of figures, such as snakes, or several crests that imitated a plume of feathers. The cheek-pieces covered the ears, but the soldier's face remained open. The decorative design of the helmets resembles pseudo-Attic helmets existing at that time.⁵¹

This modification is evidenced by finds from Guisborough⁵² (fig. 17, 3), Theilenhofen⁵³ (fig. 17, 4), Chalon-sur-Saône⁵⁴ (fig. 17, 2), Cetate-Războieni⁵⁵ (fig. 17, 1). Helmets from Chalon-sur-Saône and Cetate-Războieni have moderate decor. In contrast, the richness of decoration present on the helmet from Theilenhofen implies that it may justifiably be considered a part of ceremonial armor. This specimen has a ridge that make it similar to the Worthing type of helmets (fig. 17, 5–6).

⁴⁷ KALEE (1989) 211, Fig. 16.

⁴⁸ FEUGÈRE (1994) 110.

⁴⁹ BORN, JUNKELMANN (1997) 63 - 66.

⁵⁰ FEUGÈRE (1994) 114; JUNKELMANN (2000) 87 - 90.

⁵¹ JUNKELMANN (2000) 90.

⁵² ROBINSON (1975) 132 - 134, pls. 391 - 393; GARBSCH (1978) 73, Taf. 31, 1 - 2.

⁵³ KLUMBACH, WAMSER (1976 - 1977) 41 - 61; GARBSCH (1978) 55 - 56, Taf. 10.

⁵⁴ DÉCHELETTE (1913) 253 - 258, pls. XLIII–XLIV; ROBINSON (1975) 132 - 134, pls. 394 - 396.

⁵⁵ GARBSCH (1978) 100, Abb. 6; FEUGÈRE (1993) 112; D' AMATO, SUMNER (2009) 185, fig. 268.

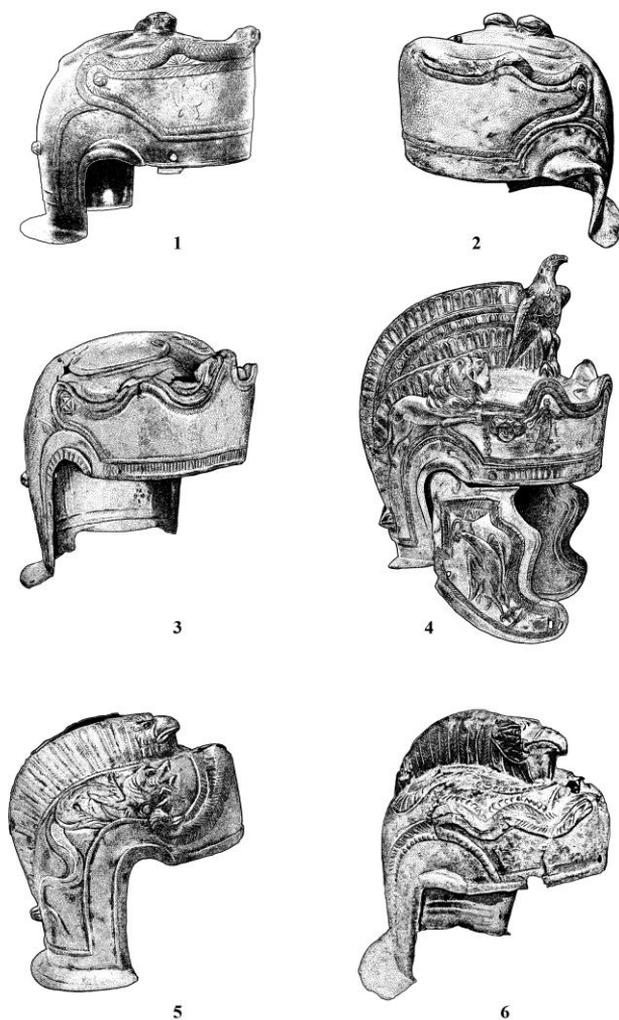


Fig. 17. Helmets of Guisborough/Theilenhofen ant Worthing type: 1 – Cetate-Războieni; 2 – Chalonsur-Saône; 3 – Guisborough; 4 – Theilenhofen; 5 – Worthing; 6 – Vetren, Silistra (author’s drawing).

Recently, there have been found several helmets, or their fragments, that form a class that may be regarded as a transition stage between the Weiler/Koblenz-Bubenheim and the Guisborough/Theilenhofen type. The most complete piece is in Guttman collection (AG 461)⁵⁶ (fig. 12). Despite the richness of decorations appearing on these helmets, currently, there are no good reasons to classify them as purely parade ones.

However, in contrast to the Weiler type, the Guisborough/Theilenhofen helmets were made solely of bronze and had no iron core. With regard to the protective properties of

⁵⁶ JUNKELMANN (2000) 15 - 160.

the material it is undoubtedly a significant step backwards. It is not clear if this was a reflection of the general trend towards making armour mainly for the sake of splendor, or whether it is merely a consequence of the fact that archaeologists have only ceremonial helmets of this type. However, having a less durable material, these helmets to ensure better protection by increasing the space between the head and helmet's bowl, which made it possible to use a thicker lining. The dating of this type of helmet is based on specimens found in Raetian sites ruined by Alamanni in the middle of the IIIrd century AD. However, M. Feugère believes that these helmets appeared in the middle of Ist century AD,⁵⁷ as some tombstones reliefs depict helmets with more pronounced browband tiara, which can be interpreted as a vertical fronton.

Thus, we can assume that during the first three centuries AD two modifications of the Roman imitation of the "Attic" helmet evolved. Helmets with the vertical fronton were more viable. The earliest archaeological evidence of this variant is the helmet from Hallaton (dated by the second quarter of the Ist century AD) and later helmets of the Guisborough/Theilenhofen type can be dated to the first half of the IIIrd century AD. Helmets with riveted browbands (diadems) did not exist as long, and to judge by archaeological material they were circulated only in the I-II centuries AD.

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Summary

Roman propaganda monuments are known best of all and they are still often cited, especially in Hollywood blockbusters. Despite the many doubts expressed by modern researchers, they continue to be sources valuable in many aspects as those monuments, mostly located in the capital, show how military weapons were perceived by the inhabitants of the capital, including the sculptors who were working on these monuments. There are many images of so-called Attic helmets on Roman monuments dated back to the first two centuries AD. As a rule, all of them are richly decorated with embossed floral ornament, have a browband with volutes in the temporal region and equipped with longitudinal crests with gorgeous plumes. The question arises, what are the samples were depicted on the Roman reliefs? How accurately this specimen have been reproduced by artists and sculptors, or, perhaps, we see only a reflection of the Hellenistic artistic tradition?

There are helmets with a browband shaped as a vertical fronton with volutes existed. Their later modification is presented by finds from Guisborough, Theilenhofen, Chalon-sur-Saône. The pieces of the Ist century AD – early IInd century AD are Weiler-type helmets with a decorated riveted browband. They are the helmets from Nijmegen, Brza Palanka and from other places. The pieces from Butzbach and Hallaton can be considered as a transitional design between early and later helmet modifications with a vertical fronton.

Thus, all of the above finds suggest that Attic helmets with browbands, which are often depicted on Roman propaganda monuments, are not the sculptors' invention, but helmets really common in the Roman imperial army, imitating the models of the earlier period.

Keywords: history, Roman army, art, helmet, antique