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GOLDEN GORGON-MEDOUSA ARTWORK IN ANCIENT HELLENIC WORLD

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to highlight some characteristic examples of the golden works depicting the gorgoneio and Gorgon. These works are part of the wider chronological and geographical context of the ancient Greek world. Twenty six artifacts in total, mainly jewelry, as well as plates, discs, golden bust, coins, pendant and a vial are being examined. Their age dates back to the 6th century. B.C. until the 3rd century A.D. The discussion is about making a symbol of the deceased persist for long in the antiquity and showing the evolution of this form. The earliest forms of the Gorgo of the Archaic period depict a monster demon-like bellows, with feathers, snakes in the head, tongue protruding from the mouth and tusks. Then, in classical times, the gorgonian form appears with human characteristics, while the protruded tusks and the tongue remain. Towards Hellenistic times and until late antiquity, the gorgoneion has characteristics of a beautiful woman. Snakes are the predominant element of this gorgon, which either composes the gargoyle's hairstyle or is plundered like a jewel under its chin. This female figure with the snakes is interwoven with Gorgo-Medusa and the Perseus myth that had a wide reflection throughout the ancient times.

KEYWORDS: Medusa, Gorgon, Gorgoneion, Hellenistic, Archaic, Golden, Typology, Comparison, images, protruded, Magna Grecia, antiquity, myth, Phiale

1. INTRODUCTION

The Gorgon-Medusa as a terror or beauty figure has been widely used in ancient art. The Gorgon image appears in several pieces of art and architectural structures including e.g. the pediments of the Temple of Artemis (c. 580 BC) in Corfu, the mid-6th century BC, life marble statue, in cups, in coins, burial reliefs, shields, jewellery, ceramic vases (Johnson, 1993). The materials that bear Medusa images range from ceramics to marble, bronze, gold. Being one of three sisters, known as the Gorgons, the Medusa¹ is a particular figure. The three of them were born from Phorcys and Ceto. According to Hesiod's Theogony (270-281), the Gorgons were the sisters of the Graeae and lived in the utmost place towards the night by the Hesperides beyond Oceanus (in later written sources of Apollodorus, Graeae and the Gorgon sisters are connected to Perseus myth). Medusa was decapitated by Perseus.

However, later authors (Herodotus, Pausanias) place the Gorgons' abode in Libya. The Gorgon sisters were Sthenno, Euryale, and Medusa; Medusa was mortal while her sisters were immortal.

To define the difference between *Gorgoneion*, *Gorgo*, *Medusa* and *Gorgon head*; Gorgoneion and Gorgon head is the head alone (Homer Iliad 5.741 and Odyssey 11.634), and Gorgo is called the whole-body daemon and represents an apotropaic symbol. Medusa, according to the myth, is one of the three gorgon sisters. The Greeks made offerings to the "averting gods" (ἀποτρόπαιοι θεοί, apotropaioi theoi), chthonic deities or procession of protective deities via a symbolic depiction and heroes who grant safety and deflect evil (Liritzis et al., 2017).

The Gorgon became a popular shield design in antiquity along with being an apotropaic (warding off evil) agent. In fact, the goddess Athena and Zeus were often portrayed with a shield (or aegis) depicting the head of a Gorgon, who is typically believed to be Medusa.

There exist several archaeological examples of the Gorgon's face being used on breastplates, in mosaics and even as bronze end pieces on ship beams in the Roman period. Perhaps the most famous example of Medusa in art in antiquity was the Athena Parthenos statue from the Parthenon which was made by Phidias and described by Pausanias. This statue of Athena depicts a Gorgon's face on the goddess' breastplate. In Greek mythology there is, also, Hesiod's description of Hercules' shield which describes the events of Perseus and Medusa (Hesiod, Theogony, 270-281).

¹ Etymological interpretation of word Medusa=Μέδουσα, from verb μεδῶ/medo= guard and protect.

Medusa appears in the ancient Hellenic World and colonies, with a geographic spread from Olbia and Crimea of Black sea, to Libya, and eastern Iberia, to Sicily, Near East and Bactrian Afganistan, as well as parallels in other parts of the World (Wilk, 2000).

From our survey, for first time, a gathered collection of 26 Gorgon-Medusa images made in gold are attributed to excavation sites or broad regions of origin from the wide ancient Hellenic World. This collection is typologically studied and critically assessed with respect to depictions in various other scenes and materials. It represents a collection of many more golden medusa-gorgon artworks, worth of discussing along the frame of period, style and purpose.

2. ANCIENT LITERATURE AND MYTHOLOGICAL SETTING

There are several local myths about the magic properties of Gorgon-Medusa. In our present iconography the major representations are gorgon-heads. The earliest written sources refer to an isolated *gorgoneii head* (gorgon head or gorgoneion), without a body, which causes the terror to anyone who sees it. Then the sources report the head of the *gorgon* (mermaid) or the gorgo or the gorgons, with a unique determination of the terror they cause. Although the genealogy of the Perseus was known to Homer, its association with the gorgon is mentioned for the first time in the Hesiod. The Theogony describes the genealogy of medusa, one of the three gorgons-mermaids, which is identified with more characteristics and is associated with the Perseus. The decapitation of the gorgon-medusa, the birth of the Pegasus and Chrysaor (the golden sword bearer), the treatment of her head with the fossil property by Perseus, are mythical elements that are embellished and associated with other mythological persons and mythological affairs giving food to the writers and the poets until Late Antiquity and Renaissance. At the same time, and as it emerges from the written sources, the individual gorgonian head, is going through a remarkable course independent of medusa.

For the genealogy of Perseus and his relationship with Medusa, the poet Ferekides wrote in the 5th century. B.C. King Akrisius had received an oracle according to which he would die from the hands of his unborn grandfather. That's why she decided to lock his daughter Danae along with her breast feeder in an underground prison whose walls were covered with metal plates. Danae, however, fell in love with Jupiter, who transformed her into a golden rain and so entered her prison. From this union Perseus was born. Akrisius, when he heard the cry of the child and learned about the birth of his grandson, killed

the breast feeder and locked Danae and the little Perseus into a trunk threw it into the sea. The chest was washed in Seriphos, where it was picked up by the fisherman Dikty and transferred to his brother, King Polydektes, thus saving the life of mother and son. According to Pherecydis, Polydektes was treating them "as if they were relatives of him". There Perseus was grew up too. But Polydektes finally loved Danae. In a sporting event by King Polydektes, Perseus prided himself on bringing the head of Medusa, the mortal Mermaid of the three sisters, and was endowed with the tremendous power of stoning men who looked at her. The King seized the opportunity to exterminate Perseus once and for all to marry Danae, holding Perseus a hindrance and giving him the murder of the Gorgons sure to kill him. Perseus, however, helped by the gods turned triumphant, especially he was helped in his conquest to acquire Medusa's head from Athena and Mercury. They helped him to secure the hood of Hades to make him invisible, the feathered sandals for running fast, and a sack (kivisis) to put the head of Medusa. With these magic paraphernalia and the protection of the gods, Perseus was able to defeat Medusa while she was asleep. At the time of her death Pegasus the sacred winged horse and Chrysaor the hero with the golden sword were born from her cut neck, both off springs from her union with god Poseidon. Pegasus received this name because he was born at the source of the ocean, and Chrysaor because he was holding a golden sword. The two sisters of Medusa, seeking revenge of her death, followed Perseus who tricked them by wearing helmet of Hades that made him invisible. Then Perseus returned to the island of Seriphos (Aegean) by finding his mother as supplicant in a temple, along with his savior Dikty, chased by Polydektes. Then, he presented to Polydektes the head of the Gorgon, where he turned to rock, Dikty became the king of Seriphos and his mother Danae returned to Argos in their homeland. Perseus then went to Argos to find his grandfather. But the oracle was verified and Perseus accidentally killed Akrisius from an unlucky disc drop during matches he attended. Perseus then abandoned Argos and went to Asia to reside, where his son became the Persian leader, from whom the Persians took their name" (Apollonius the Rhodian, comments on Pherecydes, Schol Apoll. Rhod. IV 1091, 1515; Pherecydes: FGrHist 1, 61 f., Fragments 10-11). Some say that Medusa lost its head because of Athena; because they say that the Gorgon wanted to be compared with her in beauty (Apollodorus, Library, Book 2, chapter 4.3).

At any rate either of Medusa, and Gorgon's head or Gorgoneion, in all myths are related to protection from terror to the living and the dead. Essentially a

chthonian creature residing in the most distant points to the earth, the hades underworld, and, also in the sea having marine origin too. The latter is extracted from the symbolic genealogical cycle consisting of marine-related deities.

3. TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

The jewels bear witness to the great development of gold jewelry in Athens in the 9th century and are decorated with the granulation² and filigree (wire technique)³ that require close coaching and persistent practice.

The development of Gorgon - Medusa in art during the archaic to late antiquity is presented with the golden artifacts per Museum collection.

3.1 ARCHAIC PERIOD

The Archaic era, 7th and 6th c. BC, is a time of great social and political change (Garland & Dillon, 1994; Jeffery, 1976). Transformation of racial society into politics has already taken place. The city as a state consisted more as a city and more towns. The kings were initially elected, but later they became hereditary. The kingdom was succeeded by the aristocracy and price control. For these two centuries, the economy is still mainly rural, while shipping, commerce and crafts are growing. The second great colonization of the middle of the 8th century turns to the west and it lasted almost throughout the 7th century B.C. The first trips of the Greeks to the west are probably due to the search for metals, which were acquired through the exchange of agricultural products (Boardman & Hammond 1982).

The art of the Archaic period is particularly interested in the human form (even in the depiction of the gods) and its activities. It has a narrative character: every picture tells or refers to a story or a piece

² Granulation or Coccidia: a goldsmith's decorative technique, where tiny gold beads are attached to the surface of the jewelry. The cohesive material used (some other metal or alloy) has a melting point lower than that of gold, so that when the craftsman submits the jewel to a naked flame, the cohesive material melts and acts as a glue, leaving no signs of its use. The granulation has appeared in the Aegean since the Minoan period and returned to use after the Dark ages

³ Wireworks (filigree): goldsmith's decorative technique, similar to granulation, where the surface of the jewel is decorated with single or multiple rows of gold wire which is attached to the jewel by the same method as in the granulation. This technique has remained popular in Greek and European jewelry almost uninterrupted to date. It is more widely known as filigree, while the goldsmiths call it with the name of filigree

of it, every image is a fact, usually fantastic-mythical, once historical.

During the 7th century BC the great sacred, specific cities or panhellenic are being developed, which receive the vows of eminent citizens, mainly pottery and jewelery, as well as bronze and stone sculptures (Robertson, 1975). Below three golden objects are presented from Delphi, Benaki Museum, Palermo Museum and Kyzikos in Mysia Asia Minor (Figures 1-4).

a) Delphi Museum

Gorgo-Medusa is another demonic form of ancient Greek art that has been in the great sculpture

since the Archaic period. Gorgon is portrayed as a woman with bent right angles legs, in the shape of «εν γούνασι δρόμου» (en gounasi dromou i.e. having the legs bent to the right, the body and face facing front, with both hands on the chest or holding snakes or bent running) - a conventional posture of the legs that attributes the fast-moving, jogging and flying. The face of Gorgon is monstrous, twisted and has tusks, while the plots of her hair end up in snakeheads, like her belt too. According to tradition, anyone who stood over her terrible face stoned from fear.



(A)



(B)

Figure 1. (A, B) The two hemi-cyclical golden plates of Delphi (Museum of Delphi).

In the Delphi Museum there are two semicircular slabs in gilded bronze found in two small pits, at the Stoa of the Athenians at the south of the polygonal wall of the Apollo temple (Fig.1). It dates to the third quarter of the 6th c. B.C. (525-500 BC). On each plate is depicted a gorgon-shaped demon. The two semicircular plates were applied to a copper substrate/object. The artist tried to make them the same, but there are several differences, which shows that there was no mold. Gorgo is winged, with bent knees, typical typology of the Archaic period). The two similar plaques found in Delphi, among several objects associated with a chryselephantine statue of a female figure, probably Artemis. The body has male features and tail. In her bent upwards arms she holds a snake. In her head it is observed striped loops on the front and around the face. The muzzle, another typological feature of the archaic gargoyle, is surrounded by wrinkles with tusks, teeth and protruded tongue. Under the chin four turns [= hair? or snakes?]. Under the chin four large rings are a kind

of crown (Width: 6 cm, Height: 5 cm). The wings go like open hands. The frame consists of embossed dots in a row (Amandry 1939; Karagiorga, 1975). They may have been fibulae, attached to the statue's dress at the shoulders. The Gorgon's head is truly "horrid" and beast-like. Probable from a workshop in East Greece (Ionia), probably Samos, 6th century BC.

b) Palermo Museum, Ital (Fig. 2)

Gorgon in Palermo. Found in Himera at Temple A. It is exhibited at Reg. It dates back to the 6th Century. B.C. (550-525 BC). Gorgon keeps snakes with two raised hands whose tails disappear at the corners of the mouth. Details such as the bold back leg and the edge of the garment hanging over the belt do not allow dating in the first half of the 6th century (Bonacasa et al., 1970). The same types of archaic temples and other buildings with some peculiarities, however, are also built in Greater Greece, in the Greek colonies of Lower Italy and Sicily. The same types of archaic temples and other buildings with

some peculiarities, however, are also built in Greater Greece, that is, in the Greek colonies of Lower Italy and Sicily.



Figure 2. Gorgo at Palermo found in the Hmiera, Italy, at Temple A

c) Benaki Museum Athens (Fig.3)

Golden casting relief of gorgoneion of 6th c. BC (Fig.3). The thin sheet thickness and the stitch holes in its periphery suggest that it was a decorative element of a dead man's garment, which would protect the gorgone's apotropaic properties (size: diameter 0.088 m).

Round mask with human characteristics. Inflatable cheeks, big nose, tongue protruding. The swollen eyes with the raised eyebrows give the apotropaic element the look. Stylish headdress incorporating the snakes into the cheek area.

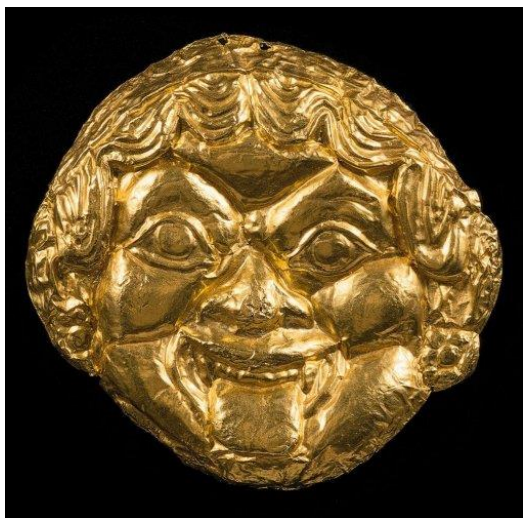


Figure 3. Gorgoneio, at Benaki Museum, Athens (donated by Imre Somlyan, IE 27513)

d) Mysia in Anatolia

Gorgon Medusa head above a tuna fish on a white gold stater from Kyzikos (Cyzicus, Κύζικος) Mysia, northwestern Anatolia (today Erdek, Balıkesir Province, Turkey), circa 500 BC. (Fig.4).



Figure 4. The head of Gorgon Medusa from Kyzikos Mysia Anatolia. British Museum, London.

In Fig.4 this round mask has less human characteristics. The nose looks like an animal muzzle. Worn mouth with flattened tongue and teeth rows, among which tusks are distinguished. Eyes intense and large, without eyebrow pattern. Human ears hanging ear tags. Two snakes emerge from the chin. Six sea-horses (hippocampus) decorate the head instead of a hairdo; hippocampus implying its marine origin.

3.2 CLASSICAL PERIOD

In the classical period, the self-confidence of the craftsmen, a sign of the confidence they felt about their abilities and the aesthetics of their customers, gives bold and striking specimens in all decorative arts. Due to its nature, goldsmiths are dedicated to the production of luxury goods. From the 7th c. B.C. in Athens and in other Greek cities social groups had been developed who were able to use valuable items. The jewels of the classic period are mainly gold. The goldsmiths of this period use their long-known fine techniques to make ear tags, necklaces, scarves (bracelets), rings with engraved representations.

And in the more violent compositions, the calm and sober interference of the artist froze the matter, giving the ideal human form to the content of the conception. The great painters of the time, Polygnatos from Thassos and Mekon from Athens, developed the artistic tendency to incorporate the scenes depicted in their physical space and to characterize the faces by emotionality, but to attribute their character as well.

Forms in the free-rhythm phase have greater unity, and more frequent is the three-quarters portraiture. The eyes are intersected when the face is incised. The heads reduce in size and they get a neck. General wilderness has somewhat softened (Robertson, 1975).

Below we refer to some types of ten objects of Classical period Medusa (Fig.5-15) ranging from circular discs, pendant, jewel, circular piece from a necklace, buttons. Found in various places from Iberia, to Greece, Magna Grecia, Olbia, Asia Minor (Smyrna), Cyprus. Several objects are in Hermitaz Museum. Though the fabrication place is not certain yet the sophisticated art is of excellent quality. The Hermitage collection is probably from the Crimea-Olbia region.



Figure 5. A gold Medusa disc from Emporion / Ampuries. Fabricated in Western Mediterranean at 5th century BC. Collection of Archaeological museum in Barcelona.



Figure 6. Golden pendant from Cyprus.

Fig.5 is a golden disc in the center is a face relief of prodigious artwork, from the half-opened mouth teeth are seen, from shaky hair seems to evolve snake coils decorating around the head, thus filling the decoration of the disc. The expression of the person is strict, a characteristic element of the classical period.

Fig.6 the golden pendant is attributed to a Cypriot origin of the ca.450 BC (Dimensions overall: (2.9 x 1.8cm) and it is classified as Gold and Silver (The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874-76. Accession Number: 74.51.3397b) (Cesnola, 1903; Williams et al., 1994; Karageorghis et al., 2000; Markowitz & Falino, 2006; Karoglou, 2018).

The pendant, which represents the face of a Gorgon, originally was elaborately embellished. Both earrings – of which only one is preserved – as well as the eyes would have contained enamel.

Additional granulation of 16 little balls on a crescent wreath articulated the hair, particularly 12 of them around the proper left ear, and in the teeth. It is interesting and a unique design the round little snakes that accommodate granules in the wreath.



Figure 7. Embossed decoration, Hermitage Museum.

Fig.7 shows the embossed decoration in the jewel of 5th c. B.C. It is a Gorgon's head inside a metal circle. Head and forehead are decorated with garlands. Medusa shown with wide and compressed nose, a ghastly gaze, protruding ears, tusks, and protruding tongue.

Fig. 8 shows an embossed head of Medusa of the middle of the 5th c. B.C. Snakes-hair symmetrically surround the frowning front. A wide nose, a ghastly gaze, protruding ears, tusks, and protruding tongue.



Figure 8. Cameo of Medusa head from Hermitage Museum.

Figures 9-16 are all respective golden round embossed plates with a description in their captions. In the case of Fig.15 Gorgoneia (or the later named Gargoyles) have human characteristics, inflated cheeks and closed mouth without tongue and teeth protruding. In the hair the snakes are incorporated with the intimate hairstyle. Snakes also seem to adorn the circles surrounding gorgoneia. It is noted that the expression of the two hogs is not apathetic but calm.



Figure 9. Gold jewelry with Medusa head of the 5th -4th cent. B.C. Medusa's mask. Round face, in the hair, snakes like corn cobs, from the Hermitage collection.



Figure 10. Gold jewelry, 5th-4th cent. B.C. Medusa mask profile. Closed mouth, diligent hairstyle. Snake in the area of the throat. Hermitage collection.



Figure 11. Gold jewelry. 5th-4th cent. B.C. Medusa's face of beautiful type, with round face, closed mouth, wavy hair where snakes are involved. Hermitage collection.

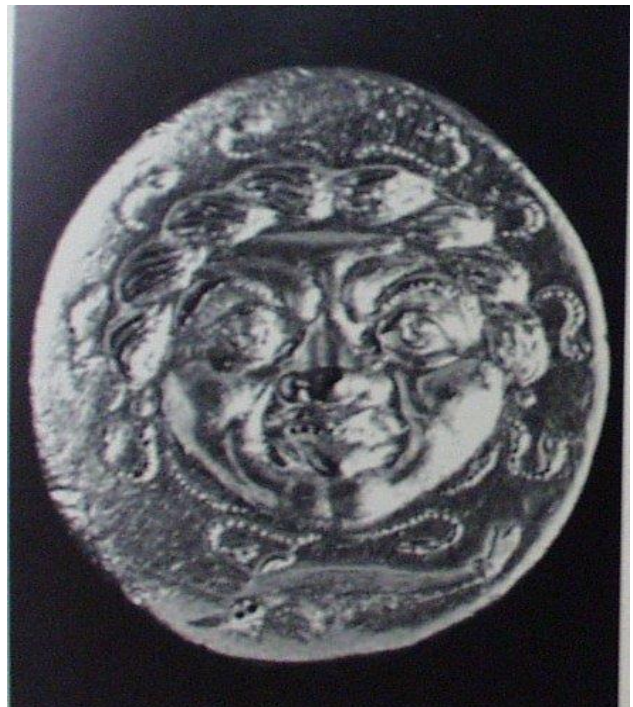


Figure 12. Golden ring from Smyrna. 1st half of the 4th c. B.C. (400-350 BC). Round type, very repulsive, wrinkled face. Snake wreath. Below the Gorgoneion a dolphin. The dolphin is an element verifying the marine origin of Gorgon. (Marshall B.M., *Finger Rings* Nr 94 Taf.4; Buschor Taf.10,7; Boardman, *GGFR* 224,299 Nr.731 Abb.731 Farbtaf bei S. 216, LIMC IV-1 (EROS-HERAKLES), 1988, 296, image 171). British Museum collection.



Figure 13. Golden piece from a necklace. 4th c. B.C. The middle form of the 5th and 4th centuries: Gorgoneia in human form and some monster traits: wild boar tusks, protruding tongue or a particularly wide oval head shape. Also, curly hair, wrinkles around the mouth and on the forehead. Mouth half-open (not convex) with tongue projecting lightly. Munich, Antikenslg. 2321 (Buschor 33 No. 2 Taf.47.1; LIMC IV, 1988, 295, figure 171).



Figure 14. Golden Disc. Magna Grecia (Greater Greece). Late 4th cent. B.C. This is the beautiful type and Hellenistic mixed styles. Gorgoneion in relief on a wreath with helices. Head-haired woman with large eyes, encircled by a wreath of intertwined snakes. Berlin, Staatl. Mus. 30219, 457 (Buschor 35 Taf 53.1, Greifenhagen a.O 59 II 97 No. 2 Taf 68.2, LIMC IV, 1988, 297, figure 172).



(A)

(B)

Figure 15 (A, B). Two of a number of gold buttons with Gorgon heads, among offerings found in the cist grave of a girl (Kavallaris Plot), Mieza, Macedonia, Greece. 350-325 BC. Veria Archaeological Museum, Macedonia, Greece. Inv. Nos. M 1690 a-στ, M 1692, M 1692.

(NB: In classical times, the gorgonion acquires human characteristics, but this does not mean that in some works it has no character from an animal).



Figure 16. Twelve gorgon heads in the disc, on both sides of triangular shaped heads are other old men faces (Hermitage Museum)

Fig.16 is a phialae dated to mid 4th c BC, from the fortified graveyard Kul-Oba near Kerch (excavation of 1830), a man's tomb. This phiale is of 23 cm in diameter. The head of Medusa has symmetrical features everywhere and upright snakes on the head, on a elaborate headdress. Earrings and perhaps another jewel between eyes. Scary, huge mouth with sharp teeth and protruding tongue.

3.2 HELLENISTIC PERIOD

The bloom of the miniature craft from the 4th century BC was great and culminates in Hellenistic times. The development of the corresponding techniques (silversmith, engraving, glassworks etc.) and the increased demand for decoration and luxury items contributed to the spread of the miniature craft during the Hellenistic period. With the establishment of the Hellenistic kingdoms, workshops are located in all places where there is a Greek presence - Egypt and North Africa, Anatolia, Mesopotamia,

Central Asia, etc. Contact with local cultures and interaction between the artists resulted in the use of new techniques and materials, but the Hellenistic work seems to have been highly sought after because of its "Greek" character, which they also sought to preserve. Precious silver and gold vases and other utensils, precious jewels of precious materials, semi-precious stones with relief representations cover demand from the rulers and their environment. Hellenistic portraits (sculptures, reliefs, frescoes, coins, seals) are in the overwhelming majority of depictions of rulers. Inspirant of this tactic was Alexander, whom we know to have given specific artists exclusive permission to craft his image in sculptures, paintings, stamps and coins. Alexander's portrait was a model for the depictions of the Hellenistic kings after him, a fact that continued by the Romans. (Boardman, 1988; Kokkorou-Alevras, 1995).



(A) (B)

Figure 17. a) Diadem from golden strips coming from Kyme, now in British Museum., Catalog No: 209, b) Three gold disc-shaped appliques with die-formed designs of Medusa heads, from Kyme, also in the British Museum, diameter 1.5 cm, No 2085. Both end of 3rd c. B.C.(330-300 BC)

Fig.17 (a, b) were found in a tomb in Kyme of Aegolis (NW coast of Asia Minor near Marmara) and was purchased in 1877. The Fig.17a consists of two golden thin strips, which form a diadem (Dimensions: length 31,5cm, weight: 42 gr). They are decorated with twenty-eight gorgoneia, each in a circle of beads. At both ends it is cut round and bears from a hole to be tied. The prominent tongue is noticed,

something that is not found in the rustic of the Hellenistic period. (British Museum. Dept. of Greek and Roman Antiquities; Marshall, F. H. (Frederick Henry) (1911). Catalogue of the jewellery, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman, in the departments of antiquities, British Museum. London: Printed by order of the Trustees. σελ. 237).



Figure 18. Golden belt bearing gorgoneia, rather from central Asia, in its complete length of 87 cm. The central roundel worked as a cameo with a funerary libation scene surrounded by enameled filigree and granulation motifs (Alicia Perea et al., 2018)

Fig.18 is an extremely complex gold and enamel funerary belt showing the portraits of a man and a woman and dated to the early Hellenistic period. The data obtained point to a Near Eastern workshop (Babylon) as the place of manufacture, while comparative typology leads us to the Far East (Afghanistan) as the presumable origin of the morphotype (Alicia Perea et al., 2018). The central roundel, which is slightly bigger than the others, shows a funerary libation scene in relief. It represents a nude woman looking at the viewer from the left back; the left hand holds a kylix and the right one holds the end of a very thin cloth whose opposite end rests on a low column. In front of her a shield with a gorgoneion on a stool and a helmet with a crest on the floor.

The gorgoneion of the shield is typologically a typical Hellenistic one. The face is slightly turned, two snakes are tied to a knot under the chin. Another feature is the imprinting of emotion in expression and facial features. There is the sadness of death. It could be the face of the dead man himself. It is re-

markable that the gorgoneion is represented in the shield, which gives another symbolism. The shield belongs to the dead warrior. The deity standing in front of the shield has turned her head in the opposite direction so that she does not face the gorgoneion (medusa head). The scene reminds us of the myth of Perseus, who had used a mirror to avoid harming Medusa's deadly gaze. We see, therefore, that the shield also has the role of a mirror. The mythology of the gorgon on the shield had a great impact. Thus, the placement of the gorgoneion as a unique theme is interpreted in many shields that are depicted at all times in pots and many other objects of art. The shields and weapons in general were worthy of hymns and descriptions because they were metallurgical works at times when art was attributed to exceptional creators. The work of the metals was a sacred activity. Homer (*Iliad* Σ 478-608) and Hesiod (*Aspis* 223-237) dedicate many verses to describe scenes in the shields.



Figure 19. Panticapaeum Necropolis. First half of the 3rd century. B.C. Hermitage, Gold Treasure Hall.

Fig.19 is another funeral object of isolated heads of Gorgon-Medusa, Gold necklace with two Herculean knots, length 57 cm (Excavation of 1841). Two heads with human features and embedded snakes in long hair.

3.3 ROMAN PERIOD

From the middle of the 2nd cent. BC, the Roman presence is particularly intense in Greece and in the rest of the Hellenistic world. Whether by war or by peaceful means, the Romans intervene in the political life of the Hellenistic East and influence its art. Roman art is characterized by a multitude of loans from the art of Greece, mainly with different content. From Greek art, the Romans took the anthropocentric interest, social character and interest in narrative, where each picture refers to a story. A classical interest in the classical art of Athens, which the Romans considered the highest form of the Greek spirit, is developing. The result was artworks of "Greco-Roman" style, which influenced the aspect of Western European culture and continue to affect it until today (Kokkorou-Alevra, 1995). The art of portraiture is decisively promoted this period by the coin artwork.

All the Roman rulers, like in the Hellenistic period, made sure to portray themselves in the currencies of their state, as a sign of strength, but also as a guarantee of their financial strength.

Figs.20, 21 and Fig.22 show busts and coins bearing gorgoneia.

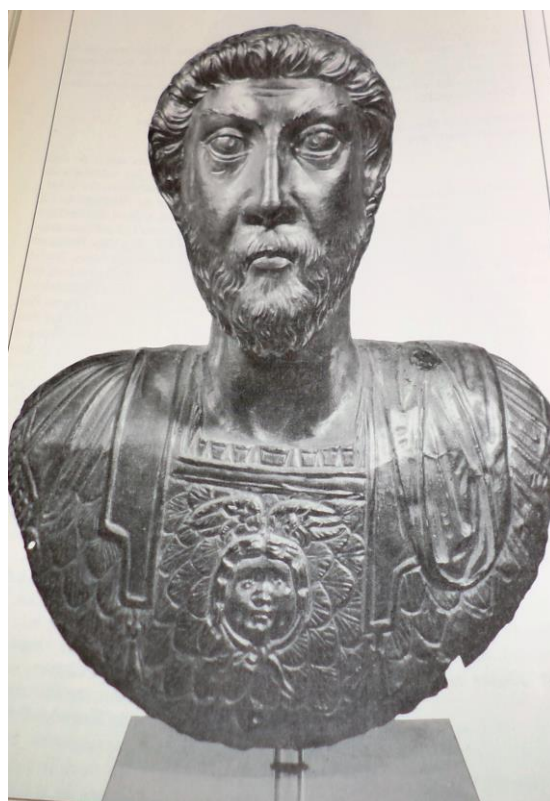


Figure 20. Golden bust of Marcus Aurelius with the gorgoneio in the chest. Losana. *Mus. d' arch. et d' hist.* dating in 170 - 180 AD. Found in Avenches. Thick face, hair as a hood slightly wavy (Gesichter, έκθεση Berna (1983) 141 - 143 (Jucker. H.),

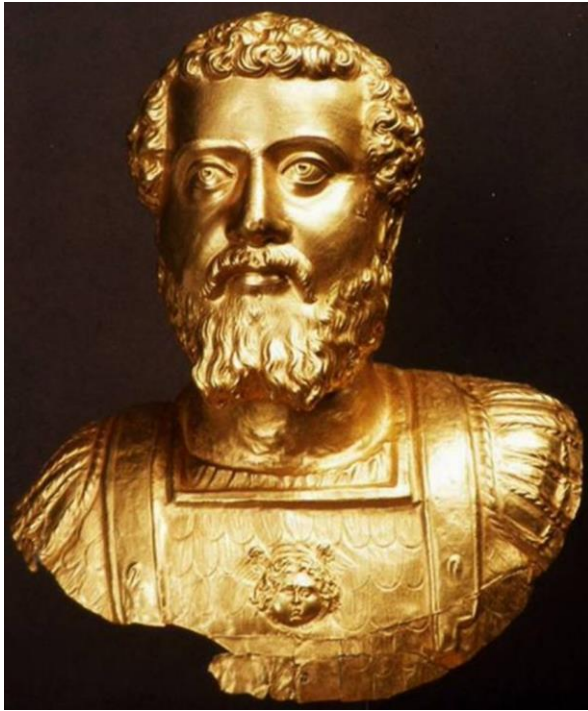


Figure 21. Bust of Septimius Severus. Gold. Late 1st – early 2nd century CE. H. 37 cm, weight 950 gr. Komotini, Archaeological Museum. Found on the hill of St. Petra near Plotinoupolis, 1965 (See Daux 1965; McCann 1968; Soechting 1972).



Figure 22. Golden coins. Ruler: Septimius Severus 201-210 AD. Gold coin (obverse) Head of Septimius Severus, laureate, bearded, right. (reverse) Large head of Medusa, full face, eyes inclined slightly to right, with long curling hair and wings: knot below chin. Minted in Lazio Rome. Inscription: SEVERVS PIVS AVG and PROVIDENTIA (British Museum 1867,0101.760).

The gorgoneion decorates the central spot of the chest of Roman emperors and senior officers. It co-exists in the currency along with the name or bust of the emperor on the other side of the coin. (Fig.20-22).

Fig. 23 of the Hermitage collection belongs to the isolated heads originated in eastern Mediterranean.



Figure 23. 1st century BC Pendant with Gorgon-Medusa. Round face with human characteristics, slightly pointed. Hermitage, hall 112

4. DISCUSSION

The beautiful gorgon emerges gradually from the 4th century. The first time at this stage is depicted sleeping so that Perseus can defeat it. It is shown in profiles by three quarters. The most impressive of this front orientation is its transformation into a beautiful gorgon. Towards Roman times she acquires a sense of compassion, has flawed characteristics and is not the imagination of fear.

Its apotropaic nature is diachronical, and appears depicted in many different scenes and forms, though lack of context in most of them.

The golden coins and busts with gorgoneion-medusa shows the richness, wealth, prosperity, the jewels bearing medusa mainly in tombs are specially made for the protection of the dead and the tomb and imply eminent person and rich. Gorgoneion during classical and Hellenistic times acts as an amulet that is a piece of jewelry usually hung about the neck and thought to be a magical protection against evil or disease and obviously inheres apotropaic action at the same time.

Per period we may draw the following remarks:

ARCHAIC ERA (700-480 BC)

The facial features are repulsive and apotropaic. The look is horrible. The eyes are gurgled, and the brow outline is intense.

The apples of the face are stretched out to emphasize the repulsive feature. The apotropaic nature is emphasized.

As a transformation of the Potnia Theron (the mistress of animals) we observe Gorgon with a chiton, gorgonian head and wings holding two animals from the neck or having two animals on either side. Sometimes it keeps snakes, reminding us of the Minoan goddess of snakes.

CLASSICAL ERA (480-323 BC)

An important feature of the classical period is that the gorgoneion face has only human characteristics (eyes, eyebrows, nose, ears, chin) and no zoomorphic ones. At the same time, the mouth is either half-open with the tongue out and the tusks or closed.

During the classical period, gradually the transition from the ugly and abhorrent to the Middle type and finally the beautiful style. What are the forms? How is this typology determined? Towards the end of the classical period with the beginnings of the 3rd century, when the Hellenistic period begins, we may encounter several Medusa heads turning lightly on the side or turning slightly their gaze. The snakes still exist in the village, but the innovation of the period is that they begin to be depicted tied to a knot under the chin.

HELLENISTIC ERA (323-146 BC)

The handsome image is now established. Almost exclusively met are the individual heads. Main characteristic of the Hellenistic period: the slight turning of the head / gaze towards the side. There are some front and profile heads (three quarters). Pussy faces with inflatable cheeks. The pattern of the scaly patch exists to a lesser extent. The snakes are sometimes in the hair and sometimes in a knot under the chin. Feathers only on the head.

ROMAN ERA (146 BC-330 AD)

In the Roman era we meet the head of Medusa in a great many objects and with many variations. The beautiful type has been going on since the Hellenistic era. In the beautiful form there is a variety of hairstyle and facial features. On a large number of Medusa heads in the hair are placed two small feathers and the knot of the two snakes under the chin.

As a symbol in its overwhelming majority, Medusa (and no longer Gorgo) has the status of protector and abhorrence. It is a kind of amulet (protects the emperor / senior official who wears it in his auspices, right at the heart point).

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As a prime funerary symbol, it is found on tombstones and tombs. Gold jewels and semi-precious stones are also found in burials (rather rich women) along with other objects such as compasses.

In general, Gorgon- Medusa has a definite marine origin; from Hesiodean Theogony and the genesis of Cosmos, from Chaos (Theogony, 31). Along the succession of personified natural forces comes to Pontus genealogy, an ancient, pre-Olympian sea-god, one of the Greek primordial deities, Nereus the eldest son of Pontus, identified as one of the old men of the sea; Phorcys as a primordial sea god, generally cited (first in Hesiod) as the son of Pontus and Gaia, and then Ceto the primordial sea goddess in Greek mythology, the daughter of Gaia and Pontus. As a mythological figure, she is most notable for bearing by Phorcys a host of monstrous children (about Ceto see, Liddell & Scott. 1996). Most sources describe Medusa as the daughter of Phorcys and Ceto, though the author Hyginus makes Medusa the daughter of Gorgon and Ceto (Preface by Gaius Julius Hyginus, 64 BC-17AD, see: Rose, 1935, 422. NB: Fabulae = genealogies).

5. CONCLUSION

Characteristic examples of the gorgoneion-Medusa in gold has been found from archaic to Roman periods in various forms, and in a context related to tombs, coins, jewellery, busts. In all depictions the golden material used characterize the importance as an amulet apotropaic symbol for kings and dead, expression of wealth and power. The predominant consensus regarding origin of Gorgon-Medusa is undoubtedly marine, and apparently scenes are depicted with sea creatures (e.g. dolphins, hippocampus). The setting and image of gorgoneion/medusa head with respect to surrounding context follows mythological legendary description about mirrors, apostrophe of face, but also use of this symbol to protect live or dead persons from evil and harmful agents. Gorgon-Medusa was a subject that had a wide appeal and was very popular in artworks in very long periods (at least from Archaic to Roman) and the its depiction in gold implies rich owner.

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