

Corinthian Helmet Of The 'Hermione' Type

Greece

6th - 5th Century B.C.

Bronze

H: 26 x W: 16.5 cm

One of the most elegent and iconic shaped helmets of ancient war-fair, this Corinthian helmet of the ‘Hermione’ type, represents the last phase in the three-century development of one of the most recognisable emblems of Greek armor. Created from a single piece of hammered bronze, there are finely-drilled holes for connecting straps or a lining, and the loop at the back for attaching a crest or plume. Its simple, undecorated finish highlights its elegant symmetry and its commanding practicality. Its cheek-guards with long diagonal base lines enclosed the throat for maximum protection, while its flared base permitted the wearer to move his neck comfortably. Its main decoration is a plain, flat border that loops around its almond-shaped eyeholes and down the long, slanting nose guard. This fluid curve underscores the powerfully masculine yet graceful proportions of this work of art. These elements, together with the enlarged dome with its sweeping ridge over the forehead, identify it as the late ‘Hermione’ type, dating the helmet between approximately the end of the 6th century and the early 5th century. Art historical evidence suggests that these helmets were often worn pushed back on the head to reveal the face during times of peace, for example during processions and festivities. The style’s popularity endured for hundreds of years throughout Archaic and Classical Greece, and is commonly found on Greek and Roman sculpture of both mortal heroes and divine gods, drawing associations with a noble and glorious past. The Greeks revered it as a helmet type worn by valiant Homeric conquerors, and it was adopted by the Romans in their love of all things Hellenistic.

Literature:

Ancient Treasures XI, New York, 2013, p17.

Catalogue 1, 2016, p10-13.

Ancient Greek Helmets: A Complete Guide and Catalog, 2019, p428, C684.

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