

The Hellenistic Mosaic Head from Dor, Israel: Reconsidered

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*In memoriam
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ABSTRACT

A unique mosaic fragment, found during the archaeological excavations at the site in 2000, dated to mid-late second century BCE, depicts a head among a garland, probably part of a decorative border for a central *emblema*. The aim of this article is to determine, on the basis of literary sources, iconographic and stylistic analyses, as well as comparative examples, whether the head does illustrate a mask or, alternatively, a depiction of the god Dionysos.

Key words: Dionysos. *Emblema*. *Enthousiasmos*. Fillet. Garland. Mask. *Protome*. *Tainia*.

El mosaico helenístico con cabeza de Dor, Israel, revisado

RESUMEN

Un fragmento único de mosaico, hallado durante las excavaciones arqueológicas realizadas en Dor en el año 2000 y datado en la segunda mitad del siglo II a.C., presenta una cabeza rodeada de una guirnalda; debió formar parte del borde decorativo de un *emblema* central. El objetivo de este artículo es determinar, recurriendo a las fuentes literarias, al análisis iconográfico y estilístico y a ejemplos comparativos, si tal cabeza ilustra una máscara o si supone una representación del dios Dionisos.

Palabras clave: Dionisos. *Emblema*. *Enthousiasmos*. Filete. Guirnalda. Máscara. *Prótomo*. *Tainia*.

Contents: 1. Iconography and Pollux's Masks. 2. A Mask or the Head of Dionysos?

¹ The late Shalom Perlman was Professor of Classics at Tel Aviv University, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and the Head of the Department of Classical Studies for many years. Shalom Perlman passed away on September 17, 2008.

Ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία ἐστὶν ὡς περ εἴπομεν μίμησις φαυλοτέρων μὲν, οὐ μέντοι κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ἐστὶ, τὸ γελοῖον μόνον. τὸ γὰρ γελοῖον ἐστὶν ἀμάρτημά τι καὶ αἴσχος ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν, οἷον εὐθύς τὸ γελοῖον πρόσωπον αἰσχρόν τι καὶ διεστραμμένον ἄνευ ὀδύνης

Comedy, as we have said, is a representation of inferior people, not indeed in the full sense of the word bad, but the laughable is a species of the base or ugly. It consists in some blunder or ugliness that does not cause pain or disaster, an obvious example being the comic mask which is ugly and distorted but not painful

(Aristotle, *The Poetics*, V.1-2 [1449a], HAMILTON FYFE, trans., 1965).

A mosaic fragment, discovered in a Roman refuse pit during the archaeological excavations at Dor (ancient Dora) in 2000, is made in the technique of *opus tessellatum* and *vermiculatum*.² A head is depicted among a garland that comprises fillets, ivy leaves, vine leaves, olive leaves, olives, pomegranates, pine cones, trailing branches, tendrils and flowers (five- and six-petalled rosettes). The mosaic displays a wide range of colours: white, black, yellow, and several tones of red, grey and beige. Its high artistic quality indicates that the artist(s) must in all probability have been trained in one of the main centres of Hellenistic art, most likely Alexandria,³ or possibly were brought from there to create the mosaic at Dor. Based on iconographic and stylistic analyses, as well as comparative examples, the excavators dated the mosaic to the Hellenistic period - mid-late second century BCE.⁴ A comparison with other mosaics, from Pergamon, Alexandria and Delos, led the excavators to the conclusion that this is a mask-and-garland mosaic,⁵ used most probably as a decorative border for a central *emblema* of a mosaic pavement.⁶ By presenting a different interpretative approach, this article sets out to determine whether the head does illustrate a mask or, alternatively, a depiction (a «portrait») of the god Dionysos.⁷

² STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 132-143.

³ STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 142.

⁴ STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 132, 141.

⁵ For the poetic aspect of the garland, see *Anthologia Graeca* (PATON, trans., 1980), IV.1 (*The Stephanus of Meleager* - ΜΕΛΕΑΓΡΟΥ ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΣ) and IV.2 (*The Stephanus of Philippus* - ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΣ).

⁶ STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 132, 134. It should be noted that a second head is suggested by a fragment of an eyebrow and adjacent wavy strands of hair (see STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 132, 139).

⁷ For an article dealing with the same mosaic, see SAGIV-HAYIK 2011, 829-841.



Fig. 1. Dor, the mosaic head (photo: author). **Fig. 2.** Dor, detail of Fig. 1 (photo: author).

1. ICONOGRAPHY AND POLLUX'S MASKS

The head represents a male youth, slightly turned to the right. It is surrounded by various vegetal motifs, which form part of the garland (**Figs. 1-2**). The refined sensuous face, the bright colours and the rich flora around it create delicacy, beauty, youthfulness and freshness, enhancing the vitality of the facial features and emphasizing personal characteristics. The head is encircled, above the forehead, by a headband (στεφανή?) and crowned by a dome-shaped hat in tones of red, fastened by an X-shaped black-white-grey *tainia* (*taenia*) and studded with four small bunches of grapes. On the bottom right-hand of the head, a wide, wavy fillet of the *tainia* emerges from the lower locks of the hair (traces of the same wavy fillet can be seen on the lower left-hand side). The skin of the face reflects various tones of beige. Stylized locks of hair in light and dark brown shades descend on either side of the head. The eyelids and almond-shaped eyes, slightly drawn down, create a dream-like impression, the sense of a dreamy gaze. An enlarged black pupil, surrounded by a brown iris, is clearly seen. The cleft chin and left ear, half-covered by the hair, are discernible. Various tones of red were used to depict the sensuous lips. The natural, normal-sized half-open mouth, with oral cavity emphasized in black, enhances the pathos of the face.

Based on the Pollux's *Onomasticon*, the excavators attributed the head in the Dor mosaic to an eclectic theatre mask, combining the features of two comic masks, Nos. 13 and 16.⁸ Mask No. 13 presents the delicate (ἁπαλός- *hapalos*) young man: he has hair like the admirable (mask No. 10: πάγχρηστος νεανίσκος- *panchrestos*)⁹ and is

⁸ See BETHE, ed., 1967, IV.146-147; WEBSTER 1969, 17, 33, 43; WEBSTER *et alii* 1, 1995, 19-22.

⁹ See BETHE, ed., 1967, IV.146-147; WEBSTER *et alii* 1, 1995, 16-17.



Fig. 3. Amisos, terracotta suspension comic mask (after Stewart and Martin 2003, 137, Fig. 11).



Fig. 4. Marble mask of a delicate youth (after Webster 1970, 119, Ill. IV[a]).

the youngest of all, with a pale face, reared in the shade, and suggesting softness.¹⁰ Mask No. 16 (ἐπισείστος [the second *episeistos*]) also presents a delicate young man with wavy fair-hair.¹¹ This mask has a smooth, rather short plump face with level brows and a moping expression, a straight nose, and hair falling loosely, and not brushed away from the forehead.¹² T.B.L. Webster defined mask No. 16 as derived from the Middle Comedy mask O, the «worried lover», and interpreted it as a «wild young man about town».¹³ In any case, it is very difficult to distinguish between masks Nos. 13 and 16. Despite the delicacy and beauty of these comic masks, which are attributed to young men in Pollux's description, the facial features are stereotypic, impersonal and given to deliberate exaggeration.¹⁴ The actual and real physiognomy was undoubtedly deliberately altered in such masks in order to achieve a dramatic effect. This is in contrast to the head in the Dor mosaic, which preserves naturalistic appearance, by emphasizing its human characteristics.

¹⁰ See BETHE, ed., 1967, IV. 147: ὁ δ' ἀπαλὸς νεανίσκος, τρίχες μὲν κατὰ τὸν πάγχρηστον, πάντων δὲ νεώτατος, λευκός, σκιατροφίας, ἀπαλότητα ὑποδηλών; WEBSTER 1969, 17, 43; WILES 1991, 75; WEBSTER *et alii* 1, 1995, 19-20.

¹¹ See BETHE, ed., 1967, IV.147: ὡσπερ καὶ τῷ δευτέρῳ ἐπισείστω, ἀπαλωτέρῳ ὄντι καὶ ξανθῷ τὴν κόμην; WEBSTER 1969, 17, 33, 43; WEBSTER *et alii* 1, 1995, 21-22.

¹² WEBSTER *et alii* 1, 1995, 22.

¹³ WEBSTER *et alii* 1, 1995, 22.

¹⁴ Philostratus (V.9.1-2) tells that the inhabitants of *Hispolo* (possibly the modern Seville) in Spain fled from the theatre in fear when the tragic actor raised his voice with a booming sound (probably through the open mouth of a mask), as if a demon had shouted at them. In the Roman period the masks resemble those of the Greek theatre. Thus for example, the grotesque can be observed in the tragic masks of the young man on the left and of the woman in the center in the Herakleitos mosaic from the third century CE, currently in the Musei Vaticani in Rome (WEBSTER 1969, 210 [IM9], Pl. VI[b]).



Fig. 5. Tarentum, mask of a lively youth (after Bieber 1961, Fig. 549).



Fig. 6. Mosaic depicting masks of a slave and a flute player girl (after Bieber 1961, Fig. 329).

2. A MASK OR THE HEAD OF DIONYSOS?

As mentioned above, the head in the mosaic was interpreted as a mask-and-garland.¹⁵ Indeed, mosaics consisting of a mask-and-garland are, together with various geometric and floral motifs, part of a decorative border around a central *emblema*.¹⁶ Such decorative borders can be found in several mosaic pavements, as for example at Delos, Pompeii, Antioch and so on. In the *House of the Masks* at Delos, ca. 180-100 BCE, a frieze with theatrical masks is depicted within ivy scrolls.¹⁷ The tiger-rider mosaic from the *Casa del Fauno* at Pompeii, second century BCE, currently in the Museo Nazionale di Napoli, is surrounded by a frieze of masks-and-garlands.¹⁸ In another mosaic from the *Casa del Fauno*, two tragic masks are incorporated with garlands.¹⁹ The *emblematic* mosaic of *Europa and the Bull* in the *House of the Boat of Psyche* at Antioch (now in Baltimore), dated to the third century CE,²⁰ is surrounded by a mask-and-garland decorative border.²¹ We may conclude that the fragmentary Dor mosaic was part of a similar decorative border surrounding a central *emblema*, but the comparative examples of the

¹⁵ STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 132, 134.

¹⁶ Cf. STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 132.

¹⁷ POLLITT 1986, III. 229 (on 218).

¹⁸ RANIERI PANETTA 2004, 354.

¹⁹ POLLITT 1986, III. 236 (on 222-223); RANIERI PANETTA 2004, 355-358.

²⁰ LEVI 1947 (1971), 167-172, Pls. XXXV(a-b), CLIII(b); LING 1998, 126, III. 90.

²¹ WEBSTER (1956, 152) claims that the ancestor of such a border can be seen on the Gnathia vases with individual hanging masks set in a floral pattern to form a border. On a *krater* by Python (350-325 BCE), now in the Musei Vaticani, a banquet of three actors is depicted, with hanging comic/grotesque masks above them and a frieze of ivy leaves supported on side bars (see BIBER 1961, Fig. 538).



Fig. 7. Thysdrus (El Djem), mosaic of a Bacchic mask (after Foucher 1961, Pl. XIII [Fig. 3]).



Fig. 8. Delos, mosaic of a youth (detail) (after Bruneau 1974, 14, Fig. 12).

above mentioned mosaics demonstrate a considerable difference: the masks are depicted in a grotesque manner with a deliberate distortion of the facial features (exaggeratedly gaping mouths and staring eyes, thus lacking delicacy and vitality).

The head from Dor has been identified as a mask of a young man and suggested to be eclectic, combining the features of two masks of young men from the New Comedy.²² It should be noted that the masks of New Comedy are characterized by an intentional exaggerated or distorted facial expression²³ and a grotesque appearance, adopted from the Old Comedy and Doric farce.²⁴ These masks possess an excessively wide open mouth and lack vitality. Of the numerous comparisons, represented in various artistic media, some examples only of comic masks will be presented here: those in the *House of the Masks*, ca. 180-100 BCE, at Delos;²⁵ in the decorative border of the *emblematic* mosaic of the tiger-rider in the *Casa del Fauno* at Pompeii;²⁶ the masks worn by the strolling musicians in a mosaic signed by Dioskourides of Samos from the so-called *Villa of Cicero* at Pompeii, late second or early first century BCE, now in the Museo Nazionale di Napoli;²⁷ in a mosaic pavement from *Via Ardeatina*, just south of Rome, dated to the mid-first century BCE, now in the Musei Vaticani (*Stanza di Eliodoro*);²⁸ the mask of a slave, crowned with a garland, depicted on a mosaic from Pergamon, dated to the second century CE, now in the Berlin Museum; four masked men of Menander's play

²² STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 234.

²³ Cf. BIBER 1961, 45.

²⁴ BIBER 1961, 92.

²⁵ BRUNEAU 1974, 25-26, Figs. 25-27; POLLITT 1986, Ill. 229.

²⁶ RANIERI PANETTA 2004, 354.

²⁷ CHARBONNEAUX *et alii* 1973, Ill. 140 (on 141).

²⁸ LING 1998, 36-37, Ill. 22.



Fig. 9. Delos, mosaic depicting Dionysos riding a leopard (after Bruneau 1974, 24, Fig. 24).



Fig. 10. Delos, mosaic representing a winged Dionysos riding a tiger (after Dunbabin 1999, 33, Fig. 33).

Achaeans, identified by the Greek inscription Μενάνδρου Ἀγαιοί, in the *emblem* of a mosaic found at Ulpia Oescus in Thrace, Bulgaria;²⁹ masks of a slave and a flute player girl in a mosaic of the second century CE, now in the Capitoline Museum in Rome (**Fig. 6**);³⁰ a Bacchic mask, with rough facial features and lacking delicacy, in a *triclinium* mosaic from the *House of the Months (Maison des Mois)* in Thysdrus (El Djem, Tunisia), dated to the early Severan era (**Fig. 7**);³¹ a terracotta mask of Dionysos from Myrina, second-first century BCE, now in the Louvre Museum; a marble mask of a delicate youth, now in the British Museum (**Fig. 4**);³² the mask of a lively youth, Roman period, from Tarentum (**Fig. 5**);³³ and so on. Unlike the facial features of the Dor mosaic, these latter selective comparative examples of masks are impersonal and rather stereotypic. However, the closest comparison to the head in the Dor mosaic is a terracotta suspension comic mask of a youth from Amisos (**Fig. 3**),³⁴ dated to the mid-second century BCE, now in the Louvre Museum. Its face is soft and roundish, its eyes are large, with heavy eyelids, the hair is wavy and a band (fillet) is encircles its forehead.³⁵ Despite the resemblance to the head from Dor, the mask from Amisos differs in having an excessively agape mouth and its facial features are exaggerated, lacking any individuality or personal characteristics.

²⁹ BIEBER 1961, 88-89, Fig. 315.

³⁰ BIEBER 1961, Fig. 329.

³¹ FOUCHER 1961, 296, Pls. XI (fig. 1), XIII (Fig. 3).

³² WEBSTER 1970, Pl. IV(a) (opposite 119).

³³ BIEBER 1961, Fig. 549. Representations of New Comedy, such as on Gnathia vases of the early third century BCE, terracottas from Myrina and elsewhere, masks in varied materials from various sites in the Graeco-Roman world, frescoes, mosaics, reliefs and the ninth-century CE illustrations of Terence, make it possible to conclude that the types of masks and costumes remained fixed from the late fourth century BCE up to the Christian period (see BIEBER 1961, 153-154; NAVARRE 1963, 415-416; WEBSTER 1970, 99).

³⁴ BIEBER 1961, 95, Fig. 344; STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 137, Fig. 11.

³⁵ STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 136.



Fig. 11. Corinth, mosaic, head of Dionysos (after Papahatzis 1985, 87, Fig. 16).

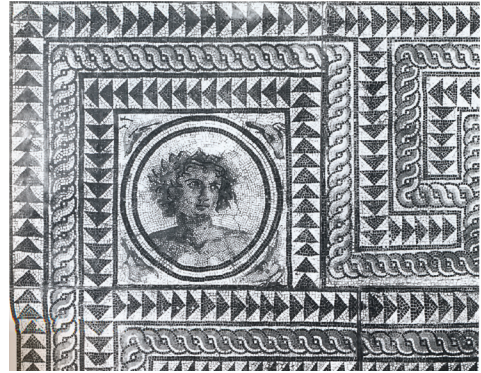


Fig. 12. Saint-Romain-en-Gal, mosaic representing a bust of Dionysos (after Ling 1998, 65, Ill. 44).

In contrast to the above-mentioned representations of comic/grotesque or burlesque masks, some comparative examples for similar facial features to those of the head in the Dor mosaic can be presented, particularly from various other mosaics. The decorative border of the *emblematic* mosaic of Athena and Hermes in the *Insula of the Jewels* at Delos (130-88 BCE) incorporates a rich garland in which a youth is depicted with personal facial features (**Fig. 8**),³⁶ together with comic/grotesque masks. His face is oval and pale, lacking softness in comparison with the head of the Dor mosaic, his eyes are brown and almond-shaped, his nose thin and reddish, his mouth half-open, his lips are thin, and his head is crowned with a garland, all creating the impression of human facial features. The emphasized teeth strengthen the assumption that the head represents somebody.³⁷ Two other close comparative examples are those of the mosaic pavements from the *House of the Masks* and the *House of Dionysos* at Delos, both dated to *ca.*180-100 BCE, depicting Dionysos riding a leopard (**Fig. 9**)³⁸ and a winged Dionysos riding a tiger (**Fig. 10**)³⁹ respectively.⁴⁰ Although a few scholars have interpreted the first mosaic not as Dionysos, but rather as a Dionysiac demon riding on a leopard on rocky ground,⁴¹ it is more generally accepted as depicting

³⁶ BRUNEAU 1974, 14-15, Figs. 12-13.

³⁷ Accordingly, the “portrait” of Delos, resembling the facial features of the Dor mosaic head, constitutes a head combined with a decorative border of mask-and-garland type.

³⁸ CHARBONNEAUX *et alii* 1973, Ill. 192 (on 185); BRUNEAU 1974, 24, Fig. 24; POLLITT 1986, Ill. 230 (on 219); DUNBABIN 1999, 37, Fig. 38.

³⁹ BRUNEAU 1974, 35-36, Figs. 37-38; POLLITT 1986, Ill. 231 (on 219); DUNBABIN 1999, 33, Fig. 33.

⁴⁰ POLLITT (1986, 216) claims that the identity of these two Dionysiac figures is not altogether obvious. They are commonly called Dionysos, but Dionysos is not normally winged like the figure from the *House of Dionysos*, and even the sex of the figure from the *House of the Masks* is not certain.

⁴¹ RUMPF 1953, 166. It is possible that the rocky ground represents one of the sacred mountains of Dionysos’ cult, either Kithairon mountain south of Thebes, or Kinthos mountain at Delos. Dionysos is sometimes called “lover of the mountain shade, wanderer on the mountains” (ὄρεσκίον, οὐρεσιφοίτην) (see *Anthologia Graeca* –PATON, trans., 1968– IX.524.16).



Fig. 13. Koroni (Greece), mosaic, the drunken Dionysos (after Roussin 1995, 41, Fig. 15).



Fig. 14. Smyrna, marble head of Dionysos (Courtesy of The National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden, Netherlands).

the figure of Dionysos attired in the costume of an actor in the play.⁴² His head is adorned with a *tainia*, rosettes and ivy leaves, like in the Dor mosaic. In the second mosaic, Dionysos closely resembles the head on the Dor mosaic in his refined young face, individual features, large open eyes with a vital human look, flashy, slightly open sensual lips, round and refined cheeks bones, and head adorned with ivy leaves. Two mosaics, one from a Roman villa at Corinth, dated to the first-second century CE, currently in the local archaeological museum (**Fig. 11**),⁴³ and the other from Saint-Romain-en-Gal (near Vienne, France), second half of the second century CE, now in the British Museum (**Fig. 12**),⁴⁴ represent a head and a bust (*protome*) of Dionysos/Bacchus respectively, as a delicate young man, adorned with locks, curls and crowned with ivy leaves and *tainia*. The face in both mosaics is roundish, the eyes are large, almond-shaped and dreamy, the lips are sensual and the mouth is slightly open, similar to the Dor mosaic. The drunken Dionysos depicted in a central medallion in a mosaic at Koroni in Greece (surrounded by masks, gladiators and beasts), dated to the third century CE, points to a similar physiognomy with the head in the Dor mosaic (**Fig. 13**).⁴⁵

⁴² Cf. WELCH 2005, 941-943.

⁴³ PAPAHAZIS 1985, Fig. 16 (on 87).

⁴⁴ LING 1998, 65, Ill. 44.

⁴⁵ ROUSSIN 1995, 41, Fig. 15.

Dionysiac attributes indeed feature in the Dor mosaic, such as ivy leaves, pine cone, bunches of grapes, a garland and fillets, creating an ambience, suggesting the divine, Dionysiac, inspiration or ecstasy (ἐνθουσιασμός - *enthousiasmos*).⁴⁶ According to the excavators, «By garlanding the room like the banqueters themselves, the mosaics define it as a hospitable space marked by Dionysiac *enthousiasmos* and the altered state of consciousness it creates».⁴⁷ If, indeed, the *enthousiasmos* is one of the characteristics of Dionysos or the Dionysiac ambience,⁴⁸ expressed in the visual art by large eyes and a slightly open mouth, then the head in the Dor mosaic may be associated with the god. The comparison of the Dor mosaic with Dionysos/Bacchus depicted in sculpture and wall paintings is also interesting. For example, the marble head of Dionysos from Smyrna, 200 BCE, now in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (National Museum of Antiquities), Leiden, Netherlands (Fig. 14), and a fresco of Dionysos/Bacchus (in the company of Silenus) from Pompeii, 30 BCE, now in the British Museum, illustrate amazing resemblance to the head from Dor: the eyes are large and wide open, the lips sensual, slightly open, the cheeks bones are round and refined, the chin is round and fleshy, and a *tainia* (in Smyrna) or a garland (in Pompeii) crowns the heads. In another wall painting, recently found in the royal box of Herod's theatre at Herodium (last quarter of the first century BCE), the *protome* of Dionysos is represented, accompanied by Silenus. The head of the god is crowned with fillets, probably studded with fruits (bunches of grapes?), similar to that in the Dor mosaic.⁴⁹

The ancient literary sources intensify and strengthen the association of the head in the Dor mosaic with that of Dionysos. This is clearly expressed in Aristotle's *Poetics*, as quoted at the beginning of this article. Thus, according to Aristotle or the Aristotelian perception, the head from Dor, contrary to comic masks, is not laughable and certainly not ugly, distorted or grotesque, but delicate, pleasant and beautiful. This association is also expressed in Euripides' *Bacchae*, in which Pentheus says that Dionysos has *flowing locks down thy cheeks floating, fraught with all desire; and white, from heedful tendance, is thy skin, smit by no sun-shafts, but made wan by shade, while thou dost hunt desire with beauty's lure* (πλόκαμός τε γάρ σου ταναός, οὐ πάλης ὕπο, γέννυον παρ' αὐτὴν κεχυμένος, πόθου πλέως; λευκὴν δὲ χροιάν ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἔχεις, οὐχ ἡλίου βολαῖσιν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ σκιᾶς, τὴν Ἀφροδίτην καλλονῆ θηρώμενος).⁵⁰ In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Dionysos is described as a mysterious young man, feminine, drunk and shaky: *... , virginea puerum ducit per litora forma. Ille mero somnoque gravis titubare videtur vixque sequi* (*... , a little boy with form beautiful as a girl's. He seemed to stagger, as if overcome with wine and sleep, and could scarce follow him who led*).⁵¹

⁴⁶ See LIDDELL *et alii*, *GEL*, s.v. ἐνθουσία = ἐνθουσιασμός, 566-567.

⁴⁷ STEWART – MARTIN 2003, 140-141.

⁴⁸ For the *enthousiasmos* in Greek religion, see BURKERT 1985, 109-111; BURKERT (1985, 110) claims that "In the Dionysos cult ecstasy plays a quite unique role, with the result that Dionysos almost acquires a monopoly over enthusiasm and ecstasy, but this ecstasy is ambivalent".

⁴⁹ See NETZER *et alii* 2010, 98 (colour fig. G).

⁵⁰ Euripides, *Bacchae*, 455-459 (WAY, trans., 1962).

⁵¹ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III.607-609 (MILLER, trans., 1971).

There are two possibilities regarding interpretation of the head in the Dor mosaic: one, it represents a comic mask of a delicate young man from the New Comedy⁵² and the other, the head of Dionysos. With regard to the first possibility, the comic masks from the New Comedy are schematic, stereotypic, and sometimes distorted and grotesque with an exaggerated gaping mouth. The facial features in the Dor mosaic, in contrast, are refined and characterized by the physiognomic qualities of a portrait (round refined cheek bones, emphasized eyelids, almond-like large brown eyes, large pupils that occupy three-quarters of the brown irises, thick dark eyebrows, half-open mouth and sensual lips). In addition, we can clearly see a black enlarged pupil surrounded by brown iris, rendering a personal expression. The face excels in beauty, youthful and freshness; despite the dreamy eyes, the figure seems to demonstrate vitality, in the transcendental and pensive look, in contrast to the inanimate masks, whose eyes lack pupils and are distorted and grotesque.

Several representations in the mosaics mentioned above, at Corinth, Saint-Romain-en-Gal and Delos (*House of the Masks* and *House of Dionysos*), as well as a sculptural portrait of Dionysos from Smyrna, support the view that the head in the Dor mosaic represents the figure of Dionysos. Furthermore, the Dionysiac attributes and characteristics – fillets, ivy leaves, vine leaves, bunches of grapes, pine cones, trailing branches, tendrils, and the suggested *enthousiasmos* – lead to the conclusion that the head in the Dor mosaic should be considered as that of the god Dionysos.⁵³

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⁵² A combination of masks Nos. 13 and 16 in BETHE, ed., 1967.

⁵³ The suggestion (SAGIV-HAYIK 2011, 839) to consider the head in the Dor mosaic as “an initiate of the Dionysiac mysteries” is vague, groundless and unconvincing.

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