In the discussion of the *Bakkhai* which follows I shall again use the structure of chapters one and two, considering first the spectators’ prior visual familiarity (προεωρακώς) with Dionysos and his worship, then the relation of the prop and the play, and finally a discussion of the transformations of the mask—through image and concept—during the course of the play. Where the urn/head/mask of the *Elektra* is a vehicle in a one-to-one relation/mapping with its abstract topics of death/deceit/revenge, the mask as vehicle in the *Bakkhai* relates in each of its transformations to at least two topics. First, as I argue below, the play invites a same-shape/image mapping between the mask of the god of cult, the *thyrsos*, the smiling mask of the Stranger/Dionysos of the play, and the tragic mask of Pentheus (see Plates III.i–iv at end of chapter). The first of these is a mental image, whereas the other three are visually perceived in the course of the play. Secondly, these elements map onto pairs of abstract and paradoxical topics. The image of the god of cult maps onto worship and retribution, the *thyrsos* relates to dance and to violence, the image of the Stranger maps onto both delight and delusion, and the mask of Pentheus relates finally to sanity and suffering. The doubleness and ambiguity of the Dionysos of the play, θεὸς/δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποις δ’ ἠπιώτατος (860–1) “a god most terrible, but to man most gentle”, is not new to the spectators, as we shall see when we examine below the images of the god which the spectators may bring to the performance.

προεωρακώς

Carpenter lists three categories of representations of Dionysos available to the fifth-century Athenian spectator: “the mythic, the cultic and the comic”. The beardless god of myth was an image familiar from

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4 The generic mask undergoes transformations through image mappings and through mappings between the concepts symbolised by those images. For simpler examples of image and conceptual mappings see above in Introduction, section III, *Metaphor: concrete and abstract*, Conceptual metaphor and Image metaphor.


7 Carpenter (1997) 105.
sculpture on the east pediment and east frieze of the Parthenon. In the last quarter of the fifth century the beardless Dionysos was also depicted on vases by the Dinos painter. The mature god of cult was a familiar image from the spectators’ own religious participation in Dionysiac cult, as well as from vase paintings which represented the god by a bearded mask mounted on a column. This scene, featured on the black-figured lekythoi and the red-figured stamnoi known as the Lenaia vases, is possibly indicative of Dionysiac worship. Plate III.i below is adapted from the marble mask of Ikaria, a later, more durable form of the column mask than that depicted in black-figured and red-figured vase paintings. The third category, Dionysos the effeminate clown, was familiar to the spectators particularly through old comedy. Although produced after the Bakkhai (407–406 BC) Aristophanes’ Frogs (405 BC) provides an image of the feminised Dionysos in saffron gown (κροκωτῷ, 46).

Foley adds two further categories of representation familiar to the spectators: Dionysos the beast-god, and Dionysos the patron of the theatrical festival. The latter is the Dionysos who can bridge comedy and tragedy, and whose own festival pattern of “pompe, agon and komos”, a pattern found in the structure of old comedy, is also recognisable, Foley argues, in the Bakkhai. Seaford relates this structure

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11 See Wrede (1928) 75–6 and Plates 21.3 and 22.2. In colour Plate III.i is adapted from archaic terracotta masks of Dionysos found in Boeotian graves (see Wrede [1928] 90). This type of mask, which continued into the fifth century, had a red face and yellow hair and beard.

12 Dodds (1960) xxxix.


15 Foley (1980) 133 at n. 43. For an illustration of the kalpis singled out by Foley for its representation of the dual nature of Dionysos in masks of the anthropomorphised god and the beast-god see Boardman (1975) 35 and illustration 44, Beazley no. 200171. On the “theriomorphic” Dionysos see also Winnington-Ingram (1948) 29–30.

