Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Pinax. Gods and Heroes [Πίναξ. Θεοί και Ήρωες (Pínaks. Theoí kai Īrōes)] (Series): Athena [Αθηνά (Athīna)] by Thetis Authentics Ltd. ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/568. Entry version as of November 01, 2026.

Thetis Authentics Ltd.

Pinax. Gods and Heroes [Πίναξ. Θεοί και Ήρωες (Pínaks. Theoí kai Īrōes)] (Series): Athena [Αθηνά (Athīna)]

Greece (2013)

TAGS: Athena Gods Greek Art Minerva Zeus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Pinax. Gods and Heroes [Πίναξ. Θεοί και Ήρωες (Pínaks. Theoí kai Īrōes)] (Series): Athena [Αθηνά (Athīna)]
Studio/Production Company	Thetis Authentics Ltd.
Country of the First Edition	Greece
Country/countries of popularity	Greece, English-speaking countries
Original Language	Greek, English
First Edition Date	2013
First Edition Details	*Pinax. Gods and Heroes: Athena* [Πίναξ. Θεοί και Ήρωες: Αθηνά (Pínaks. Theoí kai Īrōes: Athīna)]. Thetis Authentics Ltd., 2013.
Official Website	thetis.gr (accessed: October 30, 2018)
Genre	Puzzles and games
Target Audience	Crossover (5+; Instructions state: Keep away from children under 3–4 years old)
Author of the Entry	Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk
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Creators



Thetis Authentics Ltd. (Company)

Thetis Authentics was founded by Dr Eleni Aloupi-Siotis in 1999, replacing the 1994-founded Thetis Hellas archaeological consulting company based in Athens, Greece. Thetis Authentics uses non-invasive techniques to date artefacts and art, mostly for museums and private collections. The company expanded to include the creation of ceramic replicas of ancient artefacts. Dr Aloupi-Siotis holds a PhD in Analytical Chemistry based on research on archaeological ceramics at the Institute of Materials Science (NCSR Demokritos, Athens/University of Ioannina). She taught Archaeometry at the University of Thessaly before going on to work as a forensic expert at the Greek Ministry of Justice's Court of Appeals, and, then, to found Thetis Hellas.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: October 30, 2018);

Eleni Aloupi's profile at independent.academia.edu (accessed: October 30, 2018).

Prepared by Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk

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Additional information

Summary

The Thetis Authentics puzzles are reproductions of sections of scenes from ancient vases, each recreated on a flat ceramic plaque (pinax) which has then been broken into 9–12 sherds. In this archaeologist role-play game, the challenge is to reassemble the vase scene using the sherds. The Thetis website describes the puzzles as "archaeologically inspired" and as "museum quality ancient ceramic replicas". These descriptions are based on the unusual nature of the reproductions – the scenes are created in clay slip which changes during the firing process in the manner of ancient ceramics and in contrast to the majority of modern reproductions, which are made with acrylic paints. This particular pinax shows the birth of the goddess Athena through Zeus' head. There is a cardboard mount that can be used to display the pieces once the scene has been assembled.

Each puzzle is accompanied by a bilingual information sheet. The sheet invites the reader to guess the identity of the figure(s) in the scene. It contains safety guidance for handling the pieces, and for tackling puzzles which enclose the puzzle pieces in plaster (see further examples in this database). A second page contains images of all the plaques in the *Gods and Heroes* series and information on who is depicted and where the original vase is held. Readers are then invited to search on the internet for "black and red figured decoration techniques", "black glazed pottery", "amphora", "dinos", "hydria and skyphos" in order to find out more. There is a note urging the reader to 'remember' that buying good quality reproductions helps restrict the traffic in illegal antiquities.

Analysis

The Thetis vase reproduction puzzles are a fun way for young people to play at being archaeologists and recreate the excitement of piecing together ancient artefacts. The puzzles are very good quality and look very like real ancient vase pieces. They offer the opportunity to own something very like an ancient artefact. The high production value means that these puzzles are fairly expensive and, as such, more likely to be bought for a child than by a child; nonetheless, they could make an inspirational present for a young person. The inspirational aspect comes from handling something like a real artefact, which creates an experience akin to touching something ancient and therefore

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something physically connected to the ancient past. This makes both the ancient past and the practice of archaeology or conservation a more tangible, real concept. The puzzles also present the opportunity to examine a vase scene in close detail, with the act of examination also increasing the connection to antiquity more than a less realistic "vase-like" picture might. Another major learning point of the plaque puzzles is the opportunity to reflect on how ancient ceramics come down to us. It is a common misconception that most vases seen in museums survived intact, when in reality many were found in pieces and reassembled. Putting the puzzle together demonstrates how scenes/vases can be reconstructed.

The scenes chosen for the *Gods and Heroes* series depict famous figures from key myths, perhaps chosen for their recognisability. The selection chosen for the puzzles presents an image of antiquity that is male-dominated and combat orientated. The series features Heracles slaying the Hydra, Odysseus blinding the cyclops, Theseus stabbing the Minotaur, and Achilles preparing to ambush and kill (an off-plaque) Troilus. The puzzle under review is the only one to feature a female character, depicting Athena emerging fully armed from the head of Zeus (based on an amphora in the Louvre: Paris, Musée du Louvre: F32; Beazley Archive ref. 310303; published in Beazley, J. D., *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1956): 135.43). The birth of Athena is an interesting myth and the opportunity to enjoy a puzzle based on that myth provides encouragement to find out more about the myth and about Athena herself.

The small size of the font in the information sheet provided indicates that it is written for adults or teens rather than young children. The sheet offers fairly limited guidance about ancient pottery or culture. The images included reproduce the scenes on the plaques, not the actual vase scenes, and there is no image of the full vase or a reference that would enable people to look-up the vase easily. As such, it is difficult for the viewer's impression of the scene to go beyond what is included in the puzzle, which leaves the selected scene out of context. One cannot see how it fits onto the vase, what or who is included in the rest of the scene, what scene is featured on the reverse of the vase, or what patterns accompany the scene, all of which would have been instructive. The suggestion that puzzle-owners look up key terms on the internet is valid, but nonetheless leaves the onus on the child (or their guardian) to locate suitable or relevant information. The overall impression is that the series offers a good

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	quality main product while leaving the customer to establish its educational benefits.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Athena Gods Greek Art Minerva Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Conflict Death Heroism Learning Masculinity Play* Puzzle*

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