

Two Ancient Marbles

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vase with horizontal handles; eight Dipylon vases of various shapes; two black-figured Ionic vases; a black-figured *omos*, with a scene of women working wool; a red-figured hydria in the style of Onesimos, representing Theseus and an Amazon; a red-figured psykter in the style of Smikros, with athletic scenes; a red-figured krater, with a young warrior departing for battle; a large black stamnos on which the sole decoration is a small red-figured lion on the shoulder; two white Athenian lekythoi, one with an Amazon, the other with the usual representations of mourners bringing offerings to a tomb; several fragments from a large Apulian vase; a black kylix in the center of which is a facsimile of a Syracusean coin with the goddess Persephone; and a late Greek lekythos in the form of a woman running. It is particularly satisfactory that our collection is enriched by some examples of early Greek vases, which are as yet very poorly represented in this Museum, and it is gratifying that the eight new Dipylon vases are splendid specimens of that style and also exceptionally well preserved.

An important acquisition is a beautiful Arretine vase signed by Tigranes and decorated with reliefs representing four "kalathiskos" dancers and two satyrs playing the double flutes. It will be remembered that two years ago the Museum acquired three remarkable Arretine moulds (described at length in the Museum BULLETIN, July, 1909, p. 124). This is our first example of an actual vase, cast from such a mould. Of Roman date is also a remarkable urn of purple agate glass, decorated with medallions of lions' heads and clusters of grapes in relief. It is in an excellent state of preservation, including even the lid.

Only three terra cotta figurines have been acquired this year: an old nurse with a child, a girl carrying a bouquet, and a seated young woman, of specially fine execution, all three of Tanagra type. A collection of miscellaneous terra cottas from Tarentum includes several interesting pieces, such as Medusa masks of various periods, reliefs, moulds, and weights.

The nine gems (exhibited in the Gold Room) are of special importance, several of

them being well-known pieces of the famous Marlborough Collection. They consist of a cameo of a head of Alexander the Great, in blue turquoise superimposed on black paste and set in a beautiful enameled gold ring of the Renaissance period. A sard intaglio of the Augustan period representing a female bust, signed by the artist Gnaios (*Γναϊου*) and set in a gold ring of the eighteenth century. A Roman intaglio of sard, a so-called gryllos, representing a female head conjoined with two Seilenos masks (cf. Sale Catalogue of the Marlborough gems, p. 114, No. 662). A Roman intaglio of *nicolo* representing a Roman portrait-head, with a caduceus and a tortoise in the field (cf. Sale Catalogue of the Marlborough gems, p. 91, No. 521). A Roman cameo, of sardonyx, representing a seated Harpokrates holding a cornucopia, the whole mounted on an enameled slide (cf. Sale Catalogue of the Marlborough gems, p. 51, No. 283). A cameo of sardonyx, set in a modern ring, representing a dead Amazon being supported by her comrade, with a horse standing by (cf. Sale Catalogue of the Marlborough gems, p. 60, No. 326). An unmounted Roman cameo representing Victory driving a two-horse chariot. A massive gold ring with large bezel, on which is engraved a head of Herakles. A glass paste with a female head, three-quarters front, white on purple ground.

G. M. A. R.

TWO ANCIENT MARBLES

THE most important acquisition of the Classical Department during the year is the beautiful Greek head shown in figs. 2-4, which as an illustration of the principles of Greek sculpture at its greatest period is also the most important object in the collection at the present time. It is considerably larger than life-size, the length of the face being $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches (24.1 cm.) and the total height of the piece $21\frac{3}{4}$ inches (55.3 cm.). The marble is of a Greek variety, coarser in texture than Pentelic, but lacking the translucent quality of the best Parian. It has a beautiful, creamy

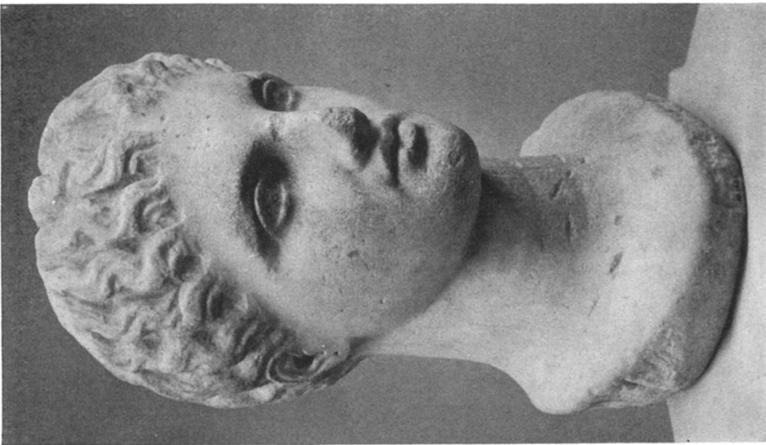


FIG. 2-4. GREEK HEAD OF A GODDESS
FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

tone, streaked in places with a deeper, orange color due to the oxidation of the iron in its composition, an effect which is familiar in Greek sculptures. Fortunately the surface has suffered little injury, the most serious blemish being the loss of the tip of the nose. The knot into which the hair was gathered at the top of the head was of a separate piece, and is also missing, its place being indicated by the flattening of the surface at this point, and by the three dowel-holes for its attachment.

The head is evidently from a statue, having been made separately and inserted at the junction of the neck and shoulder. This fact is useful to bear in mind, since it explains certain generalizations in the treatment, the sculptor's obvious intention being to give it what may be called a carrying power from the considerable height above the eye at which it was to be seen. The subject cannot be identified with certainty, but it was clearly an ideal type rather than a portrait, and from its size in all probability a goddess rather than a nymph or heroine. Furthermore, its youthful character shows it to be a maiden, not a matron, and thus the probabilities are narrowed down to a choice between Persephone and Hygieia, of which the former seems on the whole the more likely. In date it belongs to the early part of the fourth century B.C., the period of transition between the era of Pheidias and that of Praxiteles.

While not the actual work of one of the greatest masters of this period, it was undoubtedly executed under the immediate influence of one, and by a man who was full of the spirit and traditions of his time. There are few Greek heads extant which better illustrate the characteristics of these, chief among which is the tendency toward conventionalization, but with an entire absence of conventionality. The face is reduced to its simplest planes, yet the severity of its modeling is relieved by the way in which the light, wavy masses of hair rise from the cheek and brow; and while the deep parallel grooves between the locks have an almost mannered look at close range, this sketchy treatment was well calculated for its effect at a distance,

just as is the case with the treatment of the hair in the *Hermes* of Praxiteles. The pose is saved from rigidity by the slight bend of the neck, which gives it life and movement, and the neck itself, beautifully proportioned to the head, escapes monotony by the folds, common in Greek female heads, to which the French have given the name of the "necklace of Venus." So in the modeling of the features careful study will reveal an infinite number of subtleties which make the whole alive in spite of its broad simplicity, and which show that this simplicity was produced by conscious effort, guided by a masterly instinct, not as the result of indifference or a prescribed formula. The forehead, for example, though apparently a simple curve, is really a succession of minute variations, which might easily have become exaggerated, as they did in later works; the line of the cheek is equally varied, though its variations are almost imperceptible; and the eyes, although reduced to their simplest terms, show this same principle, one being slightly larger than the other. But perhaps the most striking illustration of the avoidance of a schematic treatment is in the sculptor's recognition of the fact that in nature the lowest point of the face is not in the middle of the chin, but at one corner of it—a detail which is common to all good heads in Greek sculpture—and though the difference is very slight, it is sufficient to produce that inequality which holds our interest, whether or not we are conscious of it. The combination of all these qualities with the beauty of each feature taken by itself, its harmonious relation to all the others, and the spirit of serene indifference which breathes through the marble, makes this head a noble example of the types of their divinities which the Greek sculptors gave to their race.

Another important acquisition is a Roman marble sarcophagus of the second century A.D. (fig. 1). This sarcophagus is not a recent discovery, but has been above ground for many years, and has passed from one ownership to another several times. It was possibly in the church of S. Pancrazio, in Florence, in the seventeenth century, as it seems to have been

among some ancient marbles which were taken from that church by the Del Nero family early in the following century. While in the Del Nero palace, also in Florence, it was illustrated for the first time by Gori, in 1744, in his work on Greek and Roman inscriptions,* and in the nineteenth century it passed by inheritance to the Torrigiani family, in whose burial vault, in the Giardino Torrigiani, it stood until lately. On its surface it still bears some of the marks of its vicissitudes, for on the sides, which were apparently left smooth by the original sculptor, the arms of one of its former owners (a hound rampant) have been carved in low relief, and on the front are a keyhole and a niche for the insertion of a lock, showing that it was once used as a chest.

As was customary among the Romans, in the early centuries of the Empire, the front of the sarcophagus is decorated with an elaborate composition in relief, the subject of which was taken from Greek mythology, without any necessary reference either to death or to the deceased, but selected simply for its ornamental value. In the present case it is the musical contest between the Sirens and the Muses. The fable of the Sirens and their power to charm by their music is too well known to need repetition here. According to the tradition which was most common in later Greek times they were three sisters, one of whom played on the double pipes, another on the lyre, and the third sang. The story which is here illustrated is related in a few words by Pausanias (IX, 34, 3), who says that, instigated by Hera, they challenged the Muses to a competition; and the Muses, having defeated them, tore out their wings, and with the feathers made crowns for themselves. Both episodes of the story are represented in our relief. At the left Zeus, Hera, and Athena appear as judges of the competition, Zeus seated between the two goddesses, holding his scepter and thunderbolt, with his eagle starting out from under

*Gori, *Inscript. ant.*, III, pl. XXXIII, p. cxx. Other publications of it are Millingen, *Ancient Unedited Monuments*, II, pl. XV, p. 28; Müller-Wieseler, *Denkmäler*, II, No. 750. It is also described by Dütschke, *Antike Bildwerke*, II, p. 183, No. 404.

his chair. The competition itself is in full progress, and the Sirens are taking their turn. One is playing on the double pipes, the second is singing, and the third is playing on a lyre. They are represented as undersized women, with ugly faces, straight, coarse hair, and birds' legs and claws; and in this part of the scene they are dressed in short garments. Their wings are omitted here, possibly because of the difficulty of introducing them in this crowded part of the composition, or of combining them with the garments, but in the second scene they are shown. Opposed to the first Siren is Euterpe, holding her pipes in her hands, while the opponent of the singing one is Polymnia, and Erato, about to strike the chords of her lyre, is matched against the third. Between them, in the background, stand Urania and Thalia, taking no part in the contest, but identified by their attributes, the globe and the comic mask, at their feet.

Without any mark of transition or division, the scene next passes to the triumph of the Muses, who fall upon the defeated Sirens, already stripped of their garments, and tear the feathers from their wings. In this scene the Muses are not identified by any attributes; but as they complete the number of nine, it is possible that the artist intended them for the four sisters not represented in the scene of the competition. All the Muses wear a peculiar headdress, consisting of two long feathers. This decoration, which is frequently seen on the Muses of late Greek and Roman art, is not a trophy of their victory—it will be observed that some of them wear it while the contest is still in progress—but is a type which Alexandrine art borrowed from the feather headdress of the Egyptians, and which passed thence to Rome.† The curtain which is hung along the background has no special significance, it being the usual method of indicating an interior in these reliefs.

This sarcophagus is an excellent example of Roman decorative sculpture of the period of the Antonines, in a remarkably well-preserved condition. There are no

† See Weicker, in Roscher's *Lexikon*, *Seirenen*, p. 616, and his *Seelenvogel*, p. 76.

restorations, and the only injury worth recording is the loss of the upper part of one of the horns of the lyre upon which the Siren is playing. The surface of the marble has recently been cleaned, and the removal of the whitewash with which it was coated has disclosed numerous traces of the dark red pigment originally applied. As this pigment appears equally upon the background, garments, hair, flesh, and accessories, it evidently covered the entire surface, possibly as a foundation for other colors.

E. R.

THE STUDY COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

THE knowledge that a collection of photographs for the use of students of the history of art was a necessary accompaniment to the books in the Library led to the purchase of small lots of photographs in the year 1904, but it was not until 1906 that an effort was put forth to build up an adequate collection. Since that time the collection has grown rapidly by means of purchases and gifts until it now numbers over 29,000.

Most of the purchases during the past four years have been made by a representative of the Museum, who obtained them from the principal dealers in Florence, Rome, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, and London, and from Constantinople and India. Others have been secured by the Curators of the Museum in Egypt, Holland, Belgium, England, and Ireland, so that a personal selection and inspection of the photographs was made and good prints were obtained. However, in making purchases a personal visit to the dealer is not always necessary, as one is able to make selections from the catalogues, issued by most of the important dealers (names of whom may be obtained at the Museum) in the cities mentioned, and to secure good prints; but a personal visit is of great value in obtaining some of the desirable photographs which do not appear in catalogues.

The Museum collection contains photographs of architecture, sculpture, painting, and the minor arts, and its scope is extensive, including as it does Assyrian

and Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Etruscan, early Christian, Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance art, as well as that of the present day, making a comprehensive history in pictures of ancient and modern art. The views in India, modern Egypt, and Palestine are unusual and therefore worthy of mention. That part relating to architecture and sculpture of the Renaissance is supplemented by the splendid collection presented by Mr. E. D. Adams in 1890 and contained in books which may be seen in the cases placed around the model of Notre Dame in the Large Hall of Casts. The collection is strong in photographs of paintings, among the finest and largest being the Sistine Chapel ceiling, and reproductions of the famous Ghent Altarpiece of the Van Eycks. On the walls of the Photograph Room are the unique set of large photographs of the Raphael tapestries in the Vatican, presented by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, for whom they were specially made by order of the Pope. The industrial arts of all periods from the ancient Egyptian period to the nineteenth century are represented by examples of mosaics, enamels, pottery, and porcelain, metalwork and jewelry, furniture and carved and inlaid woodwork, carved ivory, leather and illuminated manuscripts (notably many from Persia), rugs, tapestries, embroideries, and laces.

Among the colored plates in the collection is the famous series of Medici prints, as far as published, which contains many examples of the work of Renaissance artists of all schools. They should prove of great value to teachers and students of paintings, particularly to those who have not seen the originals, for the color undoubtedly adds to the beauty and attractiveness of the print, even though to connoisseurs it seems not absolutely true to the original. Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper and Vermeer's Pearl Necklace may be mentioned as particularly pleasing.

The publications of the Arundel Club, excellent photogravures in portfolios, issued yearly since 1904, are valuable as showing for the first time reproductions of paintings chiefly in private galleries in England.