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MARBLE TORSO OF DIONYSOS

GREEK, IV CEN. TYPE

Museum Appropriation 1919

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A PRAXITELEAN TORSO

THE torso to be described in this paper has not had a very long history, from the point of view of the archaeologist. It is said to have been found in the river Tiber, and appeared for the first time in a Sale held at the Spink Galleries, in London, in March, 1919, in the Catalogue of which it was first published (1). It had previously been, according to the Catalogue, in the Collection of Sir David Wilkie, from whom it passed into that of Sir Robert Peel. Very little is known of either of these collections. We know that the great Sir Robert Peel, the statesman and second baronet, was a lover of art and a collector of pictures, so that it is doubtless to him, that the Sale Catalogue refers. His son, the third Sir Robert Peel, sold the picture collection to the National Gallery in 1871, and may have got rid of other objects of art at the same time, or later (2). Of Sir David Wilkie, we know that he was a painter of great talent and reputation in the first half of the nineteenth century. He made a trip to Italy in 1825, during which time he may well have acquired this piece of sculpture. He died in 1841, and it is to be supposed that it was then that Sir Robert Peel acquired the torso, probably by purchase from the executors of Sir David Wilkie's estate (3).

The history of the torso is veiled in a mystery which it does not concern us to attempt to solve, from the death of Sir Robert Peel in 1850, until its appearance at the Spink sale in 1919. It may have been in the hands of the Peel family during the entire period; it is not impossible that it passed into the Hope Collection at Deepdene, for it is almost the only object of importance in the Spink sale that apparently had not been at one time or another in that collection. Be that as it may, it at once attracted the attention of Salomon Reinach, who either attended the sale, or went over the Catalogue with great care,

for he speaks of it, and publishes it in the number of the *Revue Archeologique* immediately following the Sale (1). In describing the torso, Reinach calls it, "style de Praxitèle; beau travail."

After thus flashing across the archaeological screen, the torso disappeared again, and, after a short period, has now found a permanent home in the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. It is always a matter for congratulation to have a piece of as great beauty as this rescued from an ill-deserved oblivion, and accessible to all who care to see it, in a public museum.

The torso is of a male figure. Its preserved height is 28½ inches or 72.4 cm., and the breadth of shoulder is 15 inches, or 38 centimetres. It is therefore, roughly, about three-quarters life size. It is nude, with the weight on the right side. Against the left thigh is a projecting piece of marble, evidently a branch of the supporting stump usual in a marble statue. Along the shoulders rest locks of long hair, which fall down almost to the breast. The arms, which seem to have been carved from the same block of marble as the body, are lost, but enough remains to show that the right arm was raised over the head, while the left arm hung down at the side, or rested on the support. The legs have been smoothed down, but whether this was done in antiquity, and the lower legs were carved from a different block of marble, or whether they broke off, and the smoothing off was done at a later period, is difficult to determine. At present, as the illustration shows, the torso is held to its base by dowels running up the legs; but whether use is made of ancient dowel-holes or not, I do not know.

That this torso was meant to stand in an open space is shown by the fact that the back is modelled with the same care and delicacy as the front, which would probably not be the case if it were to be thought of as part of a pediment group.

(1) Sale Cat., fig. 2.

(2) See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. XXI, pp. 41, 43, s. v. Sir Robert Peel.

(3) For a sketch of Sir David Wilkie, see *Enc. Brit.*, vol. XXVIII, pp. 644, 645.

(1) *Rev. Arch.*, series V, vol. IX, 1919, p. 198, figure 1. In the text, the word "Tigre" is doubtless a misprint for "Tibre."

Let us now consider the question of whether this is an original Greek work, or a Roman copy. The provenance would appear, at first glance, to favor the latter hypothesis; but it is not by any means convincing proof, for we know that Roman dilettanti often possessed, either through purchase or plunder, priceless original works of Greek sculpture. Furthermore, the material, which is Parian marble, and the exquisite texture of the surface suggest that we must look across the Ionian Sea, to Greece, for the ultimate source of this torso.

The question then comes up, "of what period in Greek sculpture is this piece?" Let us recall the words of M. Reinach quoted above, "Style Praxitèle; beau travail." That it owes its inspiration to Praxiteles and his school is easily seen. I should not be so rash as to call it an original, or even, necessarily, a copy of an authenticated work by him; but it certainly shows that influence, even if we are deprived in this case of the invaluable criteria to be obtained from the head, in the treatment of which Praxiteles and his followers employed a method quite different from that used by other sculptors.

In nearly all the works of Praxiteles we find that the figure does not stand exactly erect, but puts more weight on one foot than the other, and makes up for this by leaning against a support on the opposite side. This produces the rhythmic curve so characteristic of the Hermes, and most of the other well-known works attributed to Praxiteles. The reason for this curve was doubtless because the sculptor wished to bring the support necessary in a work in marble (and we have it well attested from antiquity that marble was his favorite medium) into the composition as an integral part of it, and necessary to the eye of the beholder, as well as in the stability of the statue. Thus in the Hermes, the Capitoline Faun, and other works usually classed as Praxitelean, we are unconscious of the presence of a support as such, and should miss it, were it taken away.

This rhythmic curve, so noticeable in all the statues assigned to Praxiteles, adds ma-



BACK OF MARBLE TORSO OF DIONYSOS

terially to the impression of indolent grace, which, however, the master, with the restraint so typical of the great age of Greece, never permitted to degenerate into slouchiness, lolling, or effeminacy. His figures of gods and fauns are always manly and virile, and convey the impression of resting after exercise. In the case of the Hermes, this grace is heightened by the delicate feeling for light and shade shown in the treatment of the surface, and the somewhat impressionistic modelling which is, of course, most pronounced in the rather rough blocking out of the hair, but is none the less evident in the rendering of the details of the body as well.

Now in our torso, we find a pose almost identical with that of the Hermes, the weight being on the right foot, while the body rests against a support, of which a fragment appears, at its left. The right arm, as we have seen, was evidently raised

above the head, much as in the Hermes; and we shall also see that we have good authority to restore it almost exactly as in that statue, with a bunch of grapes in the right hand. The left arm, as has been said above, rested at the side or on the support. We therefore have the rhythmic curve; a glance at the illustrations shows that the anatomy is treated in the same impressionistic manner; so that there is no doubt that it is a piece made under strong Praxitelean influence, if not under the direction of the master himself.

Our next question is, "Is this torso that of a human being, or of a god?" And if a god, which one does it represent? The falling locks on the shoulder give us a clue, and suggest a youthful Dionysos, although Apollo is sometimes represented with falling hair. By consulting various books of reference we find that statues of a Dionysos of almost identical type to this, if not quite the same, exist in several museums and collections (1). In these statues, where they are completely preserved, the god usually holds a bunch of grapes in his right hand, which is raised over the head, which as proved by the Hermes, is a Praxitelean trait.

We know of at least one statue of Dionysos from the hand of Praxiteles, attested by ancient authority, and there may be a second, but it is usually rejected by modern scholarship. In these two instances, Dionysos stands alone; but he appears in several groups, such as a group of the twelve gods in the Temple of Artemis Soiteira at Megara (2), and a group of Dionysos with Staphylos and Methe, formerly in

Athens and then removed to Rome (1). These groups, however, we can safely dismiss from consideration as we know of them only from literary evidence, and they may have been either reliefs or pediment groups, and it is quite evident that our torso is of a single statue, meant to be seen from any and every angle.

There remain, then, the two references to single statues of Dionysos by Praxiteles. Of one of these the location in antiquity is unknown, and its very existence is problematical, as our sole knowledge of it comes from a very rhetorical passage in Callistratus (2). For this reason it is rejected by Stuart Jones and other authorities; but an attempt to identify it has been made by Salomon Reinach (3) who publishes a bronze statuette, formerly in the Sambon collection, and now in the Louvre (4), and claims that it is a copy of the statue mentioned by Callistratus. This statuette bears no resemblance to the Providence torso, but has distinct Praxitelean traits.

The other statue of Dionysos by the hand of Praxiteles mentioned by ancient writers was at Elis (5), and its type has been identified by a coin of that place of the period of Hadrian (6). Here the resemblance is somewhat closer to our torso than the Sambon statuette, but there are important differences. The lower limbs are draped on the coin, and the falling locks characteristic of our torso, do not appear; but the pose is the same, with the right arm raised over the head, and the left hanging at the side.

We cannot, then definitely assign this as a replica of the Dionysos of Elis, but it is not too much to say that it is a school-piece of the period of Praxiteles, and directly under his influence, of a Dionysos based on the Elis type. The exquisite texture of the surface of this torso is worthy of the hand of the master himself, and is surely better than the usual Roman copy, which proves

(1) The work on which reliance was principally placed was Reinach's *Repertoire de la Statuaire*. Completely preserved statues of this type, probably Roman copies, exist in the Louvre (2 examples; Reinach, vol. I, p. 137, no. 1572, and p. 139, no. 1574, the latter partly draped); the Glyptothek in Munich (*ibid.*, I, p. 377, no. 1583); and Naples (*ibid.*, I, p. 379, no. 1586; the same statue is repeated on the following page). Other examples are Reinach, II, p. 121, no. 2 (Borghese coll.); p. 123, nos. 1 (Louvre), 3 (Berlin), and 5 (Syracuse); and p. 787, no. 3 (Royal Palace, Genoa). Most interesting is a small statuette in the Vatican (Reinach III, p. 236, no. 7; Amelung, vol. I, p. 50, no. 258) which is almost exactly like our torso, and where the head is preserved.

(2) Pausanias, I, 40, 3. Overbeck, *Antiken Schriftquellen*, 1193.

(1) Pliny, H. N., XXXIV, 65. Overbeck, 1203.
 (2) Stat. 8. Overbeck, 1222.
 (3) *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, LXIX, 1891, p. 265f.
 (4) *Repertoire de la Statuaire*, vol. II, p. 120, no. 3.
 (5) Pausanias, VI, 26, 1. Overbeck, 1221.
 (6) Most accessibly published in Baumeister's *Denkmäler*, vol. III, p. 1402, figure 1553.

that it was made either during the lifetime of Praxiteles, or at any rate, in the fourth century B. C., by a pupil who followed very closely the principles laid down by his master. As an example of the profound influence of Praxiteles on the art of the period, it is of great interest, and as a work of beauty it is a matter of congratulation that it finds its final resting place in a Museum devoted to the teaching of the correct principles of art, like the Rhode Island School of Design.

—STEPHEN B. LUCE



MADAME FERRY. Pencil Drawing by J. A. D. Ingres
Gift of Mr. William T. Aldrich, 1921

A DRAWING BY INGRES

DURING the summer of 1921, art lovers in Paris were treated to four remarkable exhibitions of varied date and character. These included the pastel portraits of Quentin de La Tour, the decorative fancies of Fragonard, the representative collection of Dutch Art from Rembrandt to Toorop, and the paintings and drawings of Ingres. In these days of emphasis on modern art, there was much in these exhibitions to give us pause, and to make us realize that the work of these masters of the past yet lives and is a power

to be reckoned with. Particularly is this true of the Ingres exhibition. We are familiar with the commonplace statement that J. A. D. Ingres was one of the greatest artists of the early nineteenth century in France, that for years he moulded the art of his time, and that his dictum was that "Drawing is the probity of art." But we needed the exhibition of last summer to make us realize more fully his true greatness as a draftsman and the marvellous sensitive beauty of his line. Perhaps it was the nineteenth century interest in Oriental Art with its appreciation of an expressive line drawing which helped to open our eyes. But whatever it was, Ingres is once again acknowledged as a superior master of line drawing.

The Museum acquired by gift from Mr. William T. Aldrich, a drawing by Ingres which was found in Paris at the time of the exhibition, but which had not been included in it. It is a portrait of Madame Ferry and is signed and dated May, 1861. Like other artists Ingres made many studies of hands, legs and drapery, all of which show his superior draftsmanship, and many of these were included in the exhibition noted, but he was happiest when he had as a subject a man or a woman who either at the moment was a moulder of contemporary life or had lived through years of service to the public or the family. It is to the latter class that Madame Ferry belongs. She had passed through lively chapters of French history, she had seen life in its many stages, her children were carrying on their part of the work of the world, and she sits in Ingres' portrait in the twilight of life as a distinct type of the French woman of the middle of the century. There is no need of shading in the usual artistic practice, for there is no lack of feeling for modelling and roundness. Moreover the line used is of practically the same size throughout the drawing, quite at variance with the Oriental line. Tight it is in a way, but only so far as is consistent with the nature of the medium used. This drawing shares, with Ingres' best work, the absolute sureness of the master to achieve

what he intended to express, and the marvellous skill of the hand which controlled the pencil.

—L. E. R.



"Ya-hsiu," Bronze Weight. Chinese, T'ang Dyn.
Museum Appropriation, 1918

A T'ANG BRONZE WEIGHT

IN the collection of Chinese bronzes which was bought with the Museum Appropriation in 1918, there is a group of small objects which throws some interesting side-lights on Chinese Art. One of these is a "ya-hsiu," or bronze weight which was used to hold in place the garments of the deceased. In date it belongs to the T'ang Dynasty, that period of history when Chinese artistic genius found its highest expression. With another race such an object might have been a simple block of metal, without decoration. But this in no way satisfied the T'ang genius. The weight in question shows a combat between a tiger and a bear. Its symbolism is most appropriate since the tiger is supposed to drive away demons. The artist was not satisfied to follow some conventional scheme of modelling, but presents a fierce struggle in which there is a wealth of action, inherent strength and power. The graceful flow of line and subtle treatment of masses, render it comparable to some of the great animal bronzes of other races. One thinks naturally of the work of Barye

of our own day, although in such comparison Barye hardly measures up to his Oriental prototype, perhaps because he was prone to finish his work with greater attention to detail. This bronze is not unique for there is one almost like it in the collection of Mr. C. L. Rutherford (Burlington Magazine, vol. 28, 1915-16, p. 238.) which was shown in the Exhibition of Chinese Art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1915. Doubtless other similar ones exist, but the one in the Museum may well be considered as typical and remarkable, and altogether a choice example of Chinese glyptic power.

—L. E. R.

NOTES

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES—At the meeting of the Corporation of the Rhode Island School of Design, held on June 7, Messrs. Howard Hoppin and Harald W. Ostby were re-elected for a term of service until 1928.

FALL EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN PAINTING—The annual Fall Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting is being shown in the galleries from October tenth to November fifth. Each year the advantage of having a small, carefully-selected group of canvases is apparent. Many of the canvases have been featured in the recent important exhibitions in New York, Philadelphia and Buffalo. Among those represented are Wayman Adams, Frederick Clay Bartlett, Gifford Beal, George W. Bellows, Frank W. Benson, Emil Carlsen, Bruce Crane, Charles H. Davis, Joseph DeCamp, John Folinsbee, Ben Foster, Frederick C. Frieseke, Daniel Garber, Childe Hassam, Robert Henri, Leon Kroll, Ernest Lawson, Hayley Lever, Jonas Lie, George Luks, Gari Melchers, Jerome Myers, Edward W. Redfield, Louis Ritman, W. S. Robinson, John Sharman, Robert Spencer, Gardner Symons, Giovanni B. Troccoli, Walter Ufer and Charles H. Woodbury. This exhibition is always looked forward to by many interested visitors; and this year, both for quality and variety, it merits repeated visits.

SCHOOL OPENING — The regular day classes of the School of Design opened for the new school year on September 25th, the night classes began October 2nd, the Saturday classes opened on September 30th. It is too early to give any idea of the size of the school for many delay in their registration, but all indications point to a very large, even perhaps record-breaking school for the coming year.

ACCESSIONS AND GIFTS

MARCH 15, 1922 TO JULY 1, 1922

Amulets

Thirty-one amulets, faience and stone. Egyptian, Late New Empire and Ptolemaic, anonymous gift.

Ceramics

Hydria, red-figured, Greek, Attic, II century, B.C., gift of estate of Charles Bradley and Museum Appropriation.

Kutahia ewer, XVIII century, and Hispano-Moresque vase, XVII century, gift of Mrs. Jean Paul Selinger.

Drawings

Landscape, pen and ink, attributed to Titian, *Man and Woman*, pen and ink and wash, by Theodule Auguste Ribot; gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke.

Enamel

Champlève panel, Venetian, XVI-XVII century, anonymous gift.

Furniture

Wing chair, American, Queen Anne style XVIII century, Museum Appropriation.

Jewelry

Two marble lip studs, African, XIX century, anonymous gift.

Two pairs of gold ear-rings, Greek II century, two pairs of silver ear-rings, Greek II century, gift of Ostby & Barton Company, in memory of Englehardt Cornelius Ostby.

Paintings and Water-Colors

Part of inner sarcophagus cover, Egyptian, Ptolemaic; fragment of mural painting, Egyptian, Ptolemaic; anonymous gift.

King Totila Blessed by St. Benedict, by Pisanello; *Portrait of Mrs. Marie Allaire Underhill Van Zandt*, by Samuel Lovett Waldo; *Young Woman Reading*, by Auguste Renoir; Museum Appropriation.

Portrait of Mrs. Gerald Murphy, by William James, gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke and Mr. William T. Aldrich.

Luzia Praga in Church, and *Dorothea, the Burgomaster's Daughter*, by Jean Paul Selinger, gift of Mrs. Jean Paul Selinger.

Four water-colors by Frank W. Benson; *Gnarled Sea Grapes*, *The Loafer*, *The Water-front*, and *Nassau Wharf*, Jesse Metcalf Fund.

Pewter

Mug made by Samuel E. Hamlin, Providence, 1824, gift of Mrs. Richard Howland.

Posters

Eighteen war posters, French, English and American, gift of William S. Innes.

Prints

Four etchings by George T. Plowman, gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke.

Sculpture

Seven ushabti, faience, Egyptian, Late New Empire and Ptolemaic; fragment of stele, Egyptian, Ptolemaic; anonymous gift.

Seals

Three haematite cylinder seals, Assyrian, Museum Appropriation.

Silver

Finger nail guard, Chinese, Ching Dynasty, anonymous gift.

Porringer and can made by John Burt, Boston, 1691-1745, Museum Appropriation.

Stained Glass

Leaded medallion, Swiss, 1550, and panel, Swiss, 1615, anonymous gift.

Textiles

Printed cotton, Indian, XIX century, gift of Miss Ellen D. Sharpe.

Toys

Terra-cotta doll, Greek, II century, B. C., gift of Prof. V. G. Simkhovitch.

Wood-carving

Anubis head, Egyptian, Ptolemaic, anonymous gift.

A NOTABLE ANNIVERSARY. The celebration in Rome this month of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the chair of History of Art in the University of Rome, and of Professor Venturi's occupancy of it for this period, gives us a good opportunity to consider our debt to the man who has held the professorship so long. To every student of the history of Italian Art the name of Adolfo Venturi stands for painstaking scholarship, critical ability and enthusiastic teaching. His monumental *Storia dell' Arte Italiana* is a work of reference without which no library is complete. No one has done more to encourage the study of Italian Art, for in addition to his teaching, he has, through the medium of the magazine *L'Arté*, which he has edited and backed for many years, provided a channel for the publication of serious articles in this field. His long experience as a museum director before he became a professor, has made him a strong advocate of the museum as the laboratory of the student. In fact no one could be more sure of the necessity of museums, or of their value both to the student and to the public.

An interesting part of the celebration is the raising of an endowment for a "Venturi Foundation" to provide scholarships and funds for research and publication.

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Rhode Island School of Design
Providence*

All communications should be addressed to the
General Editor, Mr. L. Earle Rowe

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ADMISSIONS.

HOURS OF OPENING.—The galleries are open to the public on every day of the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the Fourth of July. From July 1st to September 15th the hours are from 1 to 5 P. M. on week days and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays; from September 15th to July 1st the hours are from 10 A. M. to 5 P. M. week days and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays. The Pendleton Collection is open from 2 to 5 P. M. daily.

Twenty-five cents admission to the museum is charged on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the museum is free on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Free transferable tickets admitting four persons on pay-days are sent to all members of the corporation. Art students and artists, on application to the authorities, may obtain free tickets of admission for any pay-day. Teachers with pupils of both public and private schools will be admitted without payment upon application.

LIBRARY.

The Library contains 5,000 volumes, 16,747 mounted photographs and reproductions, 3,734 lantern slides, and about 3,510 postcards. During the months of June, July and August the library is closed.

PHOTOGRAPHS ON SALE.

Photographic copies of many of the objects belonging to the museum, including photographs of the Pendleton Collection of furniture, are on sale at the entrance to the museum.