ARCHAIC ETRUSCAN PAINTINGS FROM CAERE.

THE British Museum has lately acquired five terra-cotta slabs on which are Etruscan paintings of an archaic and interesting character such as have not hitherto been seen in this country. These slabs were found at Cervetri in 1874 inside a small tomb to which they had served as wall decorations. The only measurement that is given of the tomb is the size of the entrance which was forty inches in height. As that corresponds with the height of the three principal slabs we may perhaps assume that they had been placed against the walls so as to rest on the ground and reach up to the height of the doorway. The surface of the slabs has been first covered with a white slip which converts them into *πίνακες λελευκωμένοι* such as were used by Craton of Sikyon, one of the oldest painters in Greece.

On this white slip the designs were sketched in with an ivory or wood point and then filled in with reds and blacks, the white ground being allowed to stand for the faces and arms of the women and for dresses which were meant to be white, whereas the flesh of the men is always painted red. In this use of white to distinguish women from men we have an artifice familiar in the Greek black-figure vases. But there the white is specially laid on and becomes a conspicuous feature on the vases. Here we have an older stage of the process, more natural, less conspicuous, yet quite effective enough. It is said by Pliny that the painter Eumaros was the first of the Greeks to distinguish men from women, and it has often been thought that this distinction consisted in white colour for the flesh of women. But as this use of white had been traditional from very early times, possibly long before Eumaros, we may perhaps assume that his peculiar name had given rise to the story of his having first made the distinction in question.

As was befitting a tomb the paintings represent scenes of mourning. This was not always so in Etruria as we know from the banqueting and other festive scenes on the tombs at Corneto. But the more archaic the art the more likely was it—whether vase-painting or tomb-painting—to have this sepulchral character. I have taken the slabs in a different order from that of Sig. Brizio who described them at the time of the discovery.¹

No. 1 contains three figures, two of them being men standing face to face, the one holding a branch, the other carrying over his shoulder a standard surmounted by the figure of a bull; both men wear curious hats to which

¹ *Bullettino dell' Inst. Arch.* 1874 p. 128.

ETRUSCAN PAINTING No. 2.

reference will afterwards be made. The third is a female figure carrying a spear and a wreath; she herself wears a wreath (Pl. VII.).

No 2, three female figures, two of whom follow on after the last figure on slab No. 1; they hold each a branch of pomegranate in the right

ETRUSCAN PAINTING, No. 3.

hand, while with the left they carry the skirt or the upper robe gathered up over the forearm. The third figure is turned in the opposite direction, *i.e.* to the right and carries a circular vase or pyxis with a lid, such a vase as may be seen among our archaic black ware from Etruria.

No. 3, three female figures, two of whom continue the movement of the last figure on slab No. 2. They each hold an alabastos and wear a mantle drawn up over the head in the manner of mourners. The third figure is turned nearly to the front, her head in profile to the right. Signor Brizio describes her as in the act of fastening round her waist a metal girdle the end of which is coiled round her limbs. One would think it more likely that she is unfastening the girdle. A strip of metal might readily in being unfastened throw itself in a coil round the body.

Nos. 4—5 each represent a sphinx, drawn on a considerably larger scale than the other figures. Apparently these two slabs had been placed on either side of the doorway. They have suffered a good deal from the damp of the tomb.

For the moment we may pass over some details indicative of nationality in these paintings, and endeavour by other considerations to arrive at an approximate date for them.

To begin with the two sphinxes just mentioned, it is obvious that they have been drawn with a strong firm hand. Compared with the human figures on the other slabs they suggest an earlier period of art in which the drawing of animals, including sphinxes and such-like, had reached through much practice, a bold decorative manner, while the drawing of the human figure still betrays the want of experience. That is much the same as what Brizio means when he says that the sphinxes seem to exhibit a more archaic style than the other figures. To illustrate this difference of skill in the rendering of animals as compared with men by another instance I would refer to two vases found in the Polledrara tomb at Vulci, and now in the British Museum, which vases from having been very inadequately published by Micali¹ have never been duly appreciated. The one is a large amphora of coarse red ware which did not call for other than the ordinary traditional decoration. Accordingly it is painted chiefly with figures of animals, more or less fantastic. The other is a hydria of a nearly black ware and of finer shape, with a polished surface which plainly invited a more ambitious method of decoration. The subject chosen is the Greek legend of Theseus and the Minotaur, a subject which could not have been invented in art but by a Greek. The drawing of the figures is quite consistent with what we know of early Greek art. Nor can we take refuge in the thought that after all this particular vase may have been a local Etruscan product in which some known Greek vase had been imitated. Because ware of this particular kind not only does not occur in Etruria, but is found at Naucratis in Egypt, and places like Rhodes which stood in intimate relationship with Naucratis. We have therefore from our tomb in Etruria two vases, one of which, with figures of animals chiefly, represents generally speaking the end of an old-established decorative system of art, while the other illustrates the beginning of a new stage where invention and originality were needed rather than conventional training. We thus see that both systems had for a time existed side by side. So far as

¹ *Mon. Ined.* pl. 4.

concerns the Polledrara tomb we can approximately define that time from the existence in it of a scarab of Psammetichos I., who established in Naucratis the Ionian and Carian mercenaries who had served him so well. The scarab may have been produced after his death, it is true, and a small allowance of years could be made for that if it were thought necessary—I do not think it is. Somewhere in the actual reign of Psammetichos I. (656—611 B.C.) seems to me to suit best the general contents of the tomb.

A comparison between the figures of Ariadne and Theseus on the Polledrara hydria and our new paintings will show that there need not have been much difference of time between them. It seems to me that our paintings are later, and that we may accept 600 B.C. as nearly applicable to them. That date takes us to a period when the Etruscans had enjoyed for some time the stimulus to art that had been given by the settlement among them of those artists who had emigrated from Corinth to escape the rule of the Kypselidae. It is assumed that the advent of these artists had given a stimulus to art in Etruria, and I think there is good reason for believing so. But we must remember also that those Corinthian artists would hardly have chosen to settle in a place which was not already well in the way of artistic development.

Helbig with general consent, I believe, has taken certain wall-paintings on a tomb at Veii¹ as the oldest existing examples of the art, and no doubt these paintings at Veii do represent a stage of art which in its spirit at least was much older than our paintings. The designs consist chiefly of animals, wild or fantastic, very high on their legs and slender in their limbs, as are also the few human figures. But these Veii paintings though older in spirit were not necessarily older in practice for this reason, that in the Polledrara tomb, as we have seen, were found along with the more highly painted hydria an amphora with designs which in the closest manner resemble the paintings of Veii. These paintings may therefore either represent the end of an older stage of art, when new lines were being struck out, or they may actually, as Helbig assumed, represent that older stage of art at its prime. It would not matter much either way but for the fact that this older stage was essentially Oriental, and not a natural growth in Etruria or among the Greeks. It is quite possible that this Oriental style may have reached the Etruscans simultaneously with the later style, and that being purely decorative it had been adopted for decorative purposes at the same time as the later and more ambitious style was being taken up by more ambitious artists, or for higher purposes.

Our paintings have been compared with certain slabs in the Louvre² which also were obtained from Caere and have long been celebrated. The comparison is just so far as concerns the thick heavy limbs of the figures, the high boots, the system of colouring and even the vertical stripes underneath

¹ Micali, *Mon. Ined.* pl. 58, figs. 1-3; Helbig, *Annali*, 1859 p. 325. See also a fragment from *Annali dell' Inst. Arch.* 1863 p. 337. Caere in Berlin, *Arch. Zeit.* 1872, pl. 68 p. 96.

² *Mon. dell' Inst. Arch.* vi.-vii. pl. 30;

ETRUSCAN PAINTING, No. 4.

ETRUSCAN PAINTING, No. 5.

the figures. Nevertheless the heads and faces of the Louvre paintings are of a much more advanced type than ours, the profiles are more nearly vertical, the beards are more formal and more like those of later art, as is also the drapery. It has been suggested that these differences may have arisen from our paintings having been the work of an artist of a more local character, and there is something to be said for this view considering the curiously local or at least national costume worn by the two men on slab No. 1. In particular the hats which they wear are the same as those on the famous bronze situla at Bologna,¹ the designs of which it is allowed have a strong provincial character. But even if our paintings have something of a provincial character, it would be safe to say that the profiles of the figures and the markedly conventional rendering of the knees would alone be enough to prove them older than the Louvre paintings.

The Louvre paintings have been much discussed but not, I think, fixed down to a narrow date. They have been compared with certain vases found in Etruria and painted in a style which has been described as an Etruscan imitation, more or less contemporary of Corinthian art as it was practised towards the end of the seventh century B.C.² But the vases found at Naucratis in Egypt, the fragments of a painted sarcophagus from Clazomenae and other evidence have gone to show that Corinth was not the only and perhaps not the original centre from which the Etruscans were influenced in their painting whether on vases or on walls. The source of that influence is to be looked for also among the Greeks of Asia Minor and in particular among those Asiatic Greeks who had settled in the Delta of Egypt in the latter part of the seventh century B.C. That influence we may consider to have been represented by the person whom Pliny calls Philocles, the Egyptian, placing him at the head of his list of the oldest painters; elsewhere a native of Samos, named Saurias is reckoned among the oldest painters. Even in the later Etruscan paintings at Corneto which can hardly be earlier than the middle of the sixth century B.C., we have a banquet scene in which appear painted vases of a type found in numbers at Daphnae, and at a place called Fikellura in Rhodes.

One technical point may be noticed which is common to much of the Daphnae pottery, to the Clazomenae fragments, to the Louvre paintings, to our new slabs and to much of the very archaic pottery of Etruria,³ the habit of indicating borders to dresses and such like by a row of white dots between two black or red lines. I am inclined to think that this which became so pronounced a habit in these quarters and not always confined to borders of drapery, may have had its origin in an attempt to indicate a border of small rosettes such as are seen constantly in Assyrian art. Many rosettes made of

¹ Zannoni, *Scavi della Certosa di Bologna*, pl. 35. The hat worn by the first figure on our slab No. 1, is the same as that worn by warriors on the situla, while the hat of the other figure is the same as that worn by civilians or perhaps priests.

² *Mon. dell' Inst. Arch.* vi.-vii, pl. 77: *Annali*, 1863, p. 229, the subjects being Europa on the bull and the Hunt of the Calydonian boar.

³ See for example, *Gazette Arch.* vii. pls. 33-34.

glass and pierced for attachment to dresses were found at Mycenae, Tiryns, Ialysos, Spata and elsewhere, while on the pottery of those localities only a beginning is made in the painting on of rosettes, a beginning which afterwards was developed to excess at Camiros and Corinth. The rich border of guilloche along the tops of our slabs is strongly suggestive of Asia Minor, ultimately of Assyria, and considering how the older paintings of Tiryns and Mycenae had followed rather the models of Egypt we may conclude that this new element of Assyrian design in the Caere paintings indicates a change of the source of influence from Egypt to Asia Minor, or at least a junction of the two. A painted terra-cotta slab given by Perrot (*Assyrie*, pl. 14) is one of many instances of the guilloche pattern in Assyria: this slab is further interesting because one of the figures has a profile resembling the female figures on our slabs; indeed the form of the nose and nostril on our slabs and the manner of indicating the eye (as best seen in the first female figure on the right) have a strongly marked Assyrian character. So also the branch of three pomegranates carried by one of the Caere figures is just the same as the branch carried by Sargon in a relief given by Perrot (*Assyrie*, p. 513 fig. 235). Among the early pottery of Naucratis—that in which the figures are painted on a white ground, we have a number of fragments on which a very similar profile, the same hook on the nostril, and the same formation of the inner corner of the eye are to be found. As for the pomegranate it abounds on these painted vases from Naucratis. The bones of the knees in our paintings are rendered quite differently from anything I have seen in Assyrian or Egyptian art—though as far as they form a conspicuous mass they are like the Assyrian.

I am inclined to compare our new paintings with these early fragments from Naucratis while the Louvre paintings may be compared with the pottery of Daphnae which latter has been assigned to about 550 B.C.

Apart from these questions there are in the new paintings one or two things to be noticed; for instance, the standard surmounted by a bull which one of the men carries over his shoulder. It is stated that the regal insignia of Rome had been derived from Etruria, and it is known that in triumphal processions the insignia of triumph were the wreath and the ivory sceptre surmounted by an eagle.¹ For such a sceptre there was an archaic name *scipio*, and if that word is derived from the Greek as is supposed, then the idea of the sceptre also would have come from Greece. But one is inclined to go to the East for its origin.

'In Assyria,' says Herodotus (I. 195), 'every man of position had a sceptre surmounted by an apple, a rose, a lily, an eagle or something else, the rule being that no sceptre should lack an *episemon*.' One of the oldest examples of Assyrian art, the fragment of a stele from Tello in the Louvre, represents a standard surmounted by an eagle with spread wings.² In Egyptian art also similar standards are to be seen, and it might have been better for the argu-

¹ Marquardt and Mommsen, *Handbuch Röm. Alt.* i. p. 342.

² Perrot, *Assyrie*, p. 592.

ment as to an artistic influence reaching the Etruscans from the residents in the Delta of Egypt to have appealed to the instances of Egyptian standards; but I am anxious to keep the way open also for a probable influence coming from Asia Minor and primarily from Assyria and Chaldaea. The Etruscans themselves claimed to have come originally from Lydia, and at present there is an inclination to believe that at least they had been in early times much influenced in their art from that quarter. To a large extent the influence that reached Etruria in the 7th century B.C. would be much the same whether it came from the Greeks of Asia Minor or from the Asiatic Greeks settled in Egypt. It would still in the main be an Asia Minor influence.

Only this is to be borne in mind that in Egypt there were resident Phœnician craftsmen also whose wares would find their way to Etruria along with the Greek productions and would have had an effect of their own. Something similar to the ostrich eggs in the Polledrara tomb must have served as a model for the Veii paintings. Not only that but Caere itself had been a Phœnician factory, its old name Agylla being a Phœnician word meaning it is said the 'round town.' I have already remarked that the vase carried by one of the women mourners is quite Etruscan in its shape; but when we come to the alabasti, or 'tear bottles' as they used to be called carried by two others, we are in this difficulty that vases of this shape occur very rarely if at all in native Etruscan pottery. They do occur in the Polledrara tomb where they had been imported, without any manner of doubt as the decoration of them testifies. The women mourners remind one of the grief at the funeral of Hector (*Iliad*, xxiv, 722, ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναῖκες).

The male figure on slab No. I. who carries a branch wears a toga thrown over his left shoulder in the manner described as that of the old Roman Cinctus Gabinus.¹

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¹ Cinctus Gabinus est cum ita imponitur toga ut lacinia quae prostrinsecus reicitur attrahatur ad pectus ut ex utroque latere picturae (?) pen-

deant. Isidor. *Orig.* xix, 24 quoted in Müller's *Etrusker*, ed. Deecke i. p. 252.

ETRUSCAN PAINTING ON TERRACOTTA.

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