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NOTE ON THE FRAGMENT OF A PAINTED PINAX FROM PRAESOS.

(PLATE III.)

ON p. 240 *sqq.* of the *B.S.A. Annual*, vol. viii., Mr. R. C. Bosanquet has described a tomb opened by him at Praesos during the excavations of 1901. The tomb had originally been of the 'beehive' type though the upper portion had been broken before the excavators opened it. The layer of earth constituting the original floor of the tomb was covered to a depth of nearly two feet with a tightly packed deposit of broken pottery, whilst in a small vestibule leading into the tomb from the dromos a few better preserved vases were found. Owing to the confusion caused by the later use of the tomb and by the fall of the roofing stones it is difficult to make out any stratification in the deposit, but on the analogy of the Menidi tomb Mr. Bosanquet would explain the large quantity of pottery found here as the result of a long period of hero-worship. The bulk of the pottery is of the Geometric period and comprises a sequence of at least several generations. Nothing of indisputably Mycenaean date was found in the tomb, and the latest objects that came to light were two small fragments of red-figure ware. Lying among the late geometric sherds was the fragment of a painted pinax represented on Plate III. The fragment comprises about one-third of the plate, which must have been originally some fourteen inches in diameter. The decoration is strikingly different from that of the Geometric fragments, a figure-scene occupying both the interior and exterior surfaces of the plate.

The interior scene represents a boy on horseback, though only the front half of horse and boy is preserved on the fragment. Both

figures are drawn in outline filled in with a brown flesh-colour laid upon the reddish buff slip, which gives a dull red tone. The horse is stiffly drawn and no inner markings are visible in the present condition of the plate. The boy sits his horse with thigh almost vertical and the knee sharply bent back. He holds the reins in both hands, the left arm hanging by his side and bent at the elbow, the right arm bent at the elbow but lifted up above his head. On either side of his neck a long lock of braided hair falls on his breast. The body is clumsily drawn, the line of the chest running straight down without attempt to represent the abdomen. The horse's feet rest upon a black line which separates off the lower part of the field into an exergue of which only one corner still remains. The whole is enclosed in a heavy band of black.

Upon the exterior surface of the plate is depicted a male human figure wrestling with a sea-monster. The monster apparently lifts its body vertically in the centre of the plate, its tail bending away to the right. This tail is the only part of which it is possible to get a clear notion. It is painted in black silhouette, the scales or coils being represented by incised lines with white pigment to express the higher lights on the coils. The curious white band and triangular patch on the upper part of the monster probably represent the gills and small fin below, the head being just outside the surviving portion of the vase. The human figure wrestling with it is drawn in outline except for the black mass of his hair and beard. His arms encircle the upper part of the monster. His left knee is bent and perhaps is meant to be pressing against his opponent's back. His right leg is thrust forward and must have been planted so as to give purchase in throwing back the whole weight of his head and body as he drags down his foe. Unfortunately the fragment is broken just at the top of the man's neck and his head is lost. Enough remains to shew that he had a sharp pointed beard and heavy club of hair falling down his back. He is nude except for sword-strap, sandals, and waist-belt. A sheathed sword hangs under the left arm supported by a strap which presumably passed over the right shoulder though it is lost in the drawing. One end of the strap hangs loose from the sheath. The sheath itself is apparently of leather with an ornamented metal tip, painted, as is also the sword-handle, with white pigment over the buff slip, which gives a pale yellow colour. The human figure and the background are in the same dull red colour as the figures on the reverse.

Of the two scenes it is clear that the second was meant to be most seen and to mark the obverse side of the plate, that is, the side that would be seen if the plate were suspended against the wall of a room. The whole quality of the drawing on this side is different from that of the reverse. Here the artist boldly places one arm immediately behind the other, makes effective use of his black masses and keeps his line true and significant though with a tendency to over-emphasis and mannerism. On the reverse the potter has taken a stock motive out of his pattern-book and has executed it with little care. He has refused to face the real problem of drawing the right arm in proper perspective, and instead of attempting it merely employs an ugly conventional rendering. His line is poor and weakly drawn, and his figures both of man and horse are far from their real form.

The plate stands unique amid the surroundings in which it was found. It can hardly be of Cretan fabric. So far as the evidence goes the potter's art in Crete never underwent any real revival after the downfall of the Mycenaean power, and the later Mycenaean ware of the island gradually degenerates into stiffer geometric forms, so giving rise to a local branch of the general Geometric Style that prevailed throughout the Aegean in the eighth century. Very little foreign influence makes itself felt in the pottery of the island until the incoming of the black-figured and red-figured vases from Attica. The local geometric style has peculiarities of its own both in its forms of ornament and its vase-shapes, many of them closely analogous either to Cypriot or to the 'schwarz-geometrisch' ware of Rhodes, but the style never developed to anything approaching the splendid quality and individuality of Attic Dipylon ware, although the jug found by Miss Boyd at Kavousi¹ shews that it had worked its way up to the representation of men and women. There is no evidence for the existence of any Cretan 'Orientalizing' style following the Geometric.

It is certain too that the plate cannot belong to the Mycenaean period in spite of some puzzling reminiscences of Mycenaean art, as in particular the characteristic heavy waist-belt.² Both by its style and technical qualities it calls to mind the great Melian amphorae and the vases of the same fabric found in Rheneia.³ The clay is crisp and red with a fine reddish buff slip. The human figures are drawn in outline,

¹ *A.J.A.* 1901, Plates III. and IV.

² Cf. *B.C.H.* 1897, pp. 169-183.

³ *J.H.S.* vol. xxii. p. 47 *sq.*

that of the horseman being filled in with flesh colour. The sea-monster is represented in black silhouette with incised markings, a process which is often employed on the Rheneia vases side by side with outline drawing. In the actual quality of draughtsmanship the plate is equally close to the 'Melian' class, and there are many even of the same mannerisms, as for instance in the hands, profile and knee of the riding figure; moreover the shape of the plate is quite different from that of the Rhodian plates but has close analogy in those found in Rheneia, which have a vertical rim set at right angles to the body, no base-rim and the more important decoration on the exterior surface. The decoration of these Rheneia plates consists for the most part of plain black concentric circles on the interior, with the more elaborate forms of 'Melian' ornament, rosettes, spirals, etc., on the outer surface of the plate, while in place of the suspension holes of Rhodian plates they have a curved ribbon handle of the type often found on open bowls of Dipylon or Vourva fabric. According to Mr. Bosanquet's account plate-fragments of just this type were found among the débris of the Praesos tomb.

Of the two scenes represented on the plate that of the horseman is already familiar on the Melian amphorae, and it occurs under the same type on one of the Rheneia vases. The more elaborate scene represented on the exterior of the plate is clearly based on the type of the *ἄλιος γέρον*, one of the oldest pictorial types of Hellenic art. It is best known on the black-figure vases of Athens, where the monster has the name of Triton, but fully developed examples of the type occur as early as the seventh and the first half of the sixth century.¹ On the well-known 'Island Gem' (*Brit. Mus. Cat.* No. 82) the scheme is adapted to a circular field and is remarkably close to that of the Praesos plate. Herakles there appears with beard and long hair, carries his quiver on his back, and wears what is perhaps a short leathern jacket,² but might equally well be a heavy metal waist-belt of the Mycenaean type. If the latter, it would be a striking coincidence with the belt worn by the figure on the plate. Herakles clasps

¹ For a list *vide* Roscher, *Lexicon*, p. 2193. The Assos frieze and the Poros pediment both shew the type as modified by the limitations of an architectural setting. The bronze relief from Olympia more closely resembles the plate in the arrangement of the figures, though Herakles there carries a quiver and the monster is represented with human head turned back towards Herakles. Its great importance lies in the inscription which gives a definite name to the type and shews that it belongs to Peloponnesian as well as Ionian art.

² So the B.M. Catalogue, with a query.

his left arm around the monster's neck and with his right hand holds its left wrist. In front of the monster is a large fish occupying the vacant field, whilst another occupies the field below the two figures. It is not improbable therefore that on the plate also a large fish to the left of the monster balanced the human figure to the right, and the curious white object below the figures, which looks like a human foot, may be a portion of another fish.¹ A very similar 'Island Gem' (Furtwängler, Pl. V. No. 32) shews the motive of the *ἄλιος γέρον* without Herakles, the figure being simply represented with arms outstretched as though swimming. This latter gem was found in a grave in Melos, and its close resemblance to the former makes it necessary to assign both to the same provenance.

The connexion of the Praesos plate with the Rheneia vases and the Melian amphorae seems to be clear, although it is only in general character that the plate corresponds with the other vases, and in detail it shews distinct characteristics of its own, especially in the more carefully executed representation of the obverse. The curious 'Mycenaean' air of the Herakles figure is not merely the accidental result of the heavy waist-belt, but is produced also by the formalism in drawing which seems an essential factor of the painter's style. So too the definiteness and severe economy of the representation, combined with the clean field and the exergue, suggest that the artist is working under a 'Dorian' influence which is foreign to the other vases. Such characteristics are no doubt due in part to the individuality of the painter, but the whole representation is impressed with a style that makes one look to the Peloponnese for an explanation. The same influence is evidently at work in the sphere of Argive-Corinthian art, and among Proto-Corinthian vases of this period the vase found in Aegina with a representation of Odysseus (?) under the Ram² is very closely related to our plate. The 'Euphorbos' plate too, which is largely affected by the 'Melian' fabric, shews also a curious connexion with Argos in the letters of the inscription. On the other hand the source of the influence affecting the Praesos plate might equally well be found in the Cyclades themselves. The special characteristics of the plate—those

¹ That this object cannot really be the foot of a female figure, as is suggested by its shape and colour, seems to be certain from its scale and lack of detail. Hardly less impossible is the supposition that it can represent a landscape setting for the scene, unless, with some reminiscence of Mycenaean marine paintings, it indicates a rock.

² *Athen. Mitt.* 1897, Pl. VIII.

which distinguish it from the rest of its class—are just those suggestions of Mycenaean and Dorian influence which, from the history of the island, one might expect to find in Melos ; and if, as I have argued elsewhere (*J.H.S.* xxii. p. 58), the so-called *Melian Amphorae* be wrongly named and be in reality, like the Rheneia vases, a Delian product, one could readily accept the Praesos plate as representing the sister fabric of Melos. In the absence of positive evidence a definite attribution of the vase would be out of place. Without it the plate is still of the greatest intrinsic interest in itself and an important addition to the evidence already available for the pottery of the Aegean islands at the beginning of the sixth century.

J. H. HOPKINSON.

PAINTED PINAX FROM PRAESOS.