THE BRONZE STATUE FROM CERIGOTTO.¹

[PLATES VIII., IX.]

IN February, 1901, M. Kabbadias very courteously sent to the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, of which he is an honorary member, some photographs and a brief description of the remarkable series of bronze and marble statues found in the sea off the north coast of Cerigotto. In view of the great interest that had been excited by this discovery, M. Kabbadias' communications were at once laid before the Society at an open meeting, and were also published in this Journal.² But the fragmentary state of the figures and the corrosion of their surface prevented the possibility of any final judgment as to their general effect or the details of their modelling. If this was the feeling even of those who had seen the originals, it was far more so with those who could only judge from somewhat unsatisfactory photographs of them; and such opinions on them as were expressed at the time would be admitted by the authors to be subject to revision in the light of a more complete and careful study. A certain amount of misunderstanding was due to the general interest taken in the discovery, and the consequent demand for some authoritative and generally intelligible information about it³; for example, the claim put forward by M. Kabbadias for the Cerigotto statue 'to rank as high among statues of bronze as does the Hermes of Praxiteles among those of marble' probably led to its comparison with that masterpiece, to which its resemblance is only superficial.

The study of the Cerigotto bronze has now entered on a new phase, with the completion of its cleaning and restoration, and with its publication by M. Kabbadias in the *Ἐφημερίς Ἀρχαιολογική* for 1902, p. 145, and Plates 7-12. Under these circumstances it has been thought that a new reproduction,⁴ together with a brief note on the statue as now exhibited, would be welcome to the readers of this Journal.

¹ The modern Greek official name of the island is Antikythera—apparently a recent coinage. The ancient name is Aegila or Ogylos, the local modern name Singilio.

² xxi., 1901, p. 205.

³ I have not thought it necessary to refer in detail to the earlier theories; some were base-

less or untenable, some have already been withdrawn by their authors. It was really impossible to form any clear opinion before the statue was cleaned and put together.

⁴ The photographs reproduced in Pl. VIII., IX. were kindly supplied by Mr. Bosanquet.

M. Kabbadias gives a complete account of the external evidence as to the statue—of the circumstances of its discovery by divers, of the other statues in bronze and marble found with it, of the ship and its furniture. All this evidence goes to show that the shipwreck must have occurred some time in the first or second century before our era, a date confirmed by the character of the pottery found among the contents of the ship. There is, therefore, much probability in the conjecture made by M. Kabbadias at the first discovery, that the ship was carrying a cargo of the spoils of Greece to Rome; but there is no confirmation of its suggested identity with the ship with part of Sulla's plunder which was lost off Malea; indeed, that ship would probably have had a richer burden. The various statues found are of a very miscellaneous character—mostly, so far as they can be dated, of the Hellenistic age. But it is impossible to draw any inference from the whole collection as to any one statue belonging to it, except that the circumstances seem to preclude the possibility of any of them being much later than the beginning of the Graeco-Roman age. No earlier limit can be fixed, for it is evident that any statue—of the fifth or fourth century, or even earlier—might find its way into such a mass of various plunder.

Each of the statues found, and among them the life-size bronze figure which is reproduced in our plates, must then be judged entirely on internal evidence, from a study of its style and its subject. Before we consider these, it will be as well to add a few words on the question of the cleaning and restoration which it has undergone. In the process of cleaning the bronze, the expert assistance of M. Rhousopoulos, Professor of Chemistry in the University of Athens, was called in. He adopted a method similar to that which had been applied to the Acropolis bronzes,⁵ and with a similar result. The patina has been entirely destroyed, and the surface of the bronze is now almost black. This may have been necessary for the cleaning and preservation of the statue, and without special knowledge as to its condition and the chemical or other processes that had to be employed, it is impossible to criticise fairly what has been done; but one may be permitted to regret, from the artistic point of view, the necessity for such measures. The restoration of the statue—that is to say, its mounting in an erect position, and the filling up of the cracks and gaps that still remained after the extant fragments had been pieced together—has been entrusted to M. André, who was summoned from France for the purpose. He has done his work skilfully; but the restored portions have been made indistinguishable in colour and texture from what remains of the original. The amount of restoration necessary can be seen in a photograph published by M. Kabbadias; it amounts only to some small portions, chiefly below the neck and in the front of the thorax and abdomen. It would have been easy, by a slight difference in colour, to have made the restorations distinguishable; this would have been a help to the student, and would, in the case of the general public, have removed a certain feeling of uneasiness, the lack of confidence in a statue known

⁵ See *J.H.S.*, x., p. 275.

to be restored to some indefinite extent. As a matter of fact, the extant fragments adjoining the gaps leave little room for doubt as to the correct restoration of the added portions. The general form of the abdominal muscles is not doubtful—a fact of importance, in view of the peculiar character of their modelling.

When the statue was first found it was confidently claimed as an original of the fourth century. Those who could only see it a small piece at a time in or out of its bath of acid did not feel competent to express any criticism of this opinion, though the details of the modelling, especially in the arm and hand, aroused some doubts as to its correctness. Now that one can see the whole statue, set up in the Museum at Athens, or examine the series of photographs that is now accessible, I think there is a fairly general feeling among archaeologists that it is no longer possible to regard the statue as an original of the fourth century. I do not propose, in the space and time now available, to make any attempt to assign the statue finally to its date and school; but merely to give a brief indication of the reasons that induce me as well as others to assign it to the Hellenistic rather than the Hellenic period.

Let us consider first the type of the head, the only part that could be appreciated before the statue was pieced together, though its surface was obscured by corrosion. The question of its resemblance to the Hermes of Praxiteles has already been touched upon; such resemblance as there is consists mainly in the physical type represented, and so far might be considered as an indication of Attic origin. There is very little artistic affinity with the style of Praxiteles; there is no trace of the fine sweep of the lines of the brow away towards the temples that is characteristic of Praxitelean heads; the nose, as compared with that of the Hermes, lacks distinction of shape, and the mouth is small and weak. The head has also been compared with a class commonly attributed to Scopas, a class including the Lansdowne House Heracles among others⁶; but the resemblance here also appears to be superficial rather than essential. The hair, indeed, is very similar—so similar as to suggest imitation, especially in the little locks standing erect above the forehead; the eyes, also, are set in deep shadow, and there is a heavy overhanging mass of flesh below the brow, as in the Scopas heads. But the resultant expression is totally different; there is nothing of the passionate, far-away look that is characteristic of Scopas; and it is impossible to imagine a greater contrast with the dilated nostril and half open, panting lips of Scopas than is offered by the nose and mouth of the Cerigotto statue. The slight and graceful proportions of the face—all the more conspicuous for their contrast with the heavy torso—are also unlike the massive proportions of Scopas. It would be easy to carry these comparisons further; but the impression may be summed up in imitation of a well-known saying—there is something of Praxiteles and Scopas in the

⁶ I regret that I was prevented from hearing read before the Hellenic Society.
Dr. Waldstein on this matter, in his paper

head, but little that is either Praxitelean or Scopaeic. To put it in another way, it is not the work of a contemporary of those masters, but of a later imitator; and of an imitator with the eclectic taste that marks the Hellenistic age.

When we come to consider the limbs and torso, the Hellenistic character of the work asserts itself even more emphatically. The muscles of the torso, and especially those of the abdomen, are very heavy, and out of keeping with the rather slight proportions of head and limbs; they betray the anatomist in their laboured modelling, and contrast with the free and rapid observation of living nature that gives so great a charm to the work of the fifth and fourth centuries. The modelling and surface treatment of the limbs, especially of the outstretched right arm and hand, are such as of themselves to cast doubt on the possibility of a fourth century origin. The uncouth realism in the rendering of the sinews of the arm and the skin of the hand might have occurred in an archaic statue; but such work does not recur until late in the Hellenistic period.

It is, however, above all the general effect and pose of the statue that give the first impression of the lateness of its date. There is a lack of simplicity, a seeking after theatrical effect, that is obvious at the first glance, and that still makes itself felt after a longer study.⁷ It is perhaps unfair to make this statement without expressing an opinion as to the subject and the action of the statue; but the mere fact that, although its action is apparently so distinctive, so much controversy has been possible as to its meaning, suffices to some extent to justify the charge; one may remember the analogy of the Aphrodite of Melos, itself a fine work of the Hellenistic age. The object of which the handle is visible in the left hand may be a strigil, held ready for use; but the statue is certainly not an apoxyomenos in the act of scraping himself; in that case the peculiar action of the right arm would have no meaning; it is not merely stretched out, as is sometimes the case with athletes holding strigils, as depicted on vases, but is held up in a constrained position, evidently for some definite purpose. What that purpose was it is impossible to say; the object once held between the two fingers and the thumb of the right hand must have been approximately spherical. It is inconceivable, even in a Hellenistic work, that an athlete should hold out an oil-flask in such a manner, nor does the action fit the notion of holding out an apple or some such object. Perhaps the impression most obvious to a spectator is that the statue is holding out some object in the direction of the goal on which his eyes are fixed, and so possibly is taking aim; but even for this the action is not very appropriate; nor have we any record of an athletic contest consisting in throwing a ball at a mark. Another possible suggestion—perhaps the most probable—is that the statue represents an athlete in the act of catching a ball that has been thrown to him; if so, however, it must

The photographs, being taken with a wide-angled lens from too close, exaggerate the awkwardness of the pose; but even in the original it is felt.

be admitted that his pose is somewhat affected, and ill suited to the action. But, whatever be the interpretation, it can hardly be disputed that the centre of interest and so of composition is outside the statue itself; there is, in short, a deficiency of that *αὐτάρκεια* which is a quality rarely if ever absent from statues of the fifth and fourth centuries, though often enough violated by the dramatic and sensational work of Hellenistic sculptors.

All these considerations lead us to the conclusion that the Cerigotto bronze is a statue, probably of an athlete in a somewhat theatrical pose, dating from the Hellenistic age; and showing in its execution the eclectic character, the combination of mannerisms copied from earlier artists with anatomical study and realism in details, which is often to be seen in works of that period. A more careful study and comparison may probably lead to a closer definition of its date and school; but this it is perhaps wiser not to attempt at present.

In conclusion, it is well to guard against any depreciation of the high artistic value of the new bronze statue. If the present short study has been devoted to pointing out its defects rather than its excellences, this is because the former are what distinguish it from others and so enable us to assign its date, while the latter are what it probably shared with a countless number of fine bronze statues that have now been destroyed. As a bronze original of Greek, even if of later Greek workmanship, its value both to the artist and to the archaeologist cannot easily be exaggerated, and even the claims that were made for it on its first discovery were hardly excessive.

E. A. GARDNER.

HEAD OF BRONZE FROM CERIGOTTO.

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