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Author(s): Mrs. A. W. van Buren

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ARCHITECTURAL TERRACOTTA ORNAMENTATION IN ROME FROM THE SIXTH TO THE FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

(Plates xxxii-xxxiv.)

By MRS. A. W. VAN BUREN (E. M. DOUGLAS).

The interesting constructions of the late republican period, and the great buildings of imperial Rome, loom so large before us that it is difficult to realise the remains of earlier periods when temples and other public edifices were of humble proportions, built of local stone and adorned merely with terracotta. Yet in Rome itself numerous early terracottas have come to light; and their broken fragments can help us to form an idea of the fictile decoration used in the Rome of the early republic, and of the appearance of the city at that date.

The earliest temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was, according to tradition, dedicated in 509 B.C. From its site comes an antefix adorned with a palmette in relief, coloured alternately red and black; the back is flat, but the design is repeated on it in the same colours.¹ Previously, a large slab, now in the Antiquarium, had been found here, decorated with a maeander in red and black.² These fragments belong to the end of the sixth or the beginning of the fifth century B.C. The antefix from the same site, representing a female figure with rich drapery, belongs to a much later period.³

The garden of the church of the Ara Coeli has yielded, at the foot of a wall of *opus quadratum* and at a depth of six metres, an antefix (height 22 cm.) in the shape of a female head, which was placed in the Conservatori Museum⁴ (plate xxxii, no. 1). It is akin to Ionian types of the early fifth century; the eyes are slanting, while the corners of the mouth are slightly raised in an 'archaic smile.' The black hair, arranged in six waves on either side, is crowned by a red 'stephane,' adorned in front by a large raised ornament carried out in black. The arched eyebrows and the eyelids were outlined in brown. From the place where it was found, it is probable that this head belonged to an earlier and smaller temple on the site where afterwards rose the temple of Iuno Moneta, said to have been erected in 344 B.C.

¹ *Bull. Comm.* 1896, pp. 119, 189, pl. xii-xiii, no. 4; *Not. Scav.* 1896, p. 185.

² *Bull. Comm.* 1896, p. 120, pl. xii-xiii, no. 3; *Not. Scav.* 1878, p. 235; Pinza, *Mon. Lincei*, xv, p. 496, fig. 152.

³ *Bull. Comm.* 1896, p. 119, pl. xii-xiii, no. 1; *Not. Scav.* 1896, p. 186.

⁴ *Bull. Comm.* 1876, p. 227; 1889, p. 229, Pinza, *Mon. Lincei*, xv, pp. 500, 763, figs. 153a, b; Winter, *Typenkatal.* i, p. cxxi; Helbig, *Führer* (3rd ed.), no. 1009.

On the Palatine, too, a number of terracottas have likewise been found among the early remains on the south-west slope. Numerous fragments were taken out of a circular well between the 'House of Livia' and the temple of Magna Mater, the most important being the fine fragments of friezes now in the Museo delle Terme (plate xxxiv, nos. 1-6), which are akin to those found at Velletri, now preserved in the Naples museum (Borgia collection). One shows two horses galloping to left (no. 1), another, a figure on a chariot to right, with a second draped figure standing behind (no. 5); a third has a similar female figure standing to right, with her right hand on her hip (no. 4). A fragment of a banqueting scene depicts a man on a couch, holding a kylix in his right hand and a long knife in his left. Beside him are a small table with vessels, and a dog lying on the ground (no. 3). The small piece with a draped figure seated left, holding patera and sceptre, recalls the Velletri frieze where a procession of worshippers approaches a row of seated deities. There is also a small portion of the cornice of these reliefs, with scale pattern in red and black and flutings above (no. 6), precisely resembling finds made at Velletri, Praeneste, etc.¹

Further towards the top of the Steps of Cacus, part of a group was unearthed which must have decorated a pediment. It is in full relief, archaic in modelling, and consists of a horse's leg and part of the tail, painted red. A peculiarity is that the muscles are not modelled, but are indicated by fine lines, as in vase painting. Part of a fluted cornice was also found, which seems to agree in dimensions with the group.² Another fragment, also from a frontal group, seems later than the horse in treatment, but it is so broken and shapeless that it is difficult to define.³ To the end of the sixth or the beginning of the fifth century belongs a bit of a wing which must have been part of an acroterion, since it is painted on both sides; and three fragments of a frieze; on one, the body of a horse; on another, the neck of a horse and the hands of his driver; on a third, a horse's foot.⁴ Further fragments which were found here depicted hunting scenes in very low relief, the hind quarters of two horses with the middle pole of the chariot between them, and the hind leg of some wild beast in front; a stag; the hind leg of a horse and a warrior's legs cased in greaves; the wheel and platform of a chariot with the foot of a man preparing to mount⁵; and a horse yoked to a chariot.⁶ All these reliefs are painted in colours (red, blue, etc.) on a cream ground. Lastly, there is a small piece of frieze with the

¹ *Not. Scav.* 1896, p. 291; Pinza, *op. cit.* p. 512; Pellegrini, in Milani, *Studi e Materiali*, i, p. 105; Helbig, *Führer* (3rd ed.), ii, p. 216, no. 1508; H. Nachod, *Der Rennwagen bei den Italikern*, p. 53, nos. 39c and 40b. The photographs of these fragments I owe to the kindness of Signor Paribeni, Director of the museum.

² *Not. Scav.* 1907, p. 539, figs. 59, 60, 66.

³ *ibid.* 1907, p. 539, fig. 61.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 273.

⁵ *ibid.* p. 540, figs. 62-65.

⁶ *ibid.* p. 452, fig. 23.

recurved wing of the steed which drew the chariot, the reins passing behind it. Different in style, and probably of rather later date, is a procession of maidens, apparently engaged in a ritual dance.¹

Among the ruins of a large temple at the top of the Steps of Cacus an antefix with the head of a bearded satyr was discovered; the clay is red, but all traces of colour have disappeared. The same type, with hair rendered plastically and moustache with curling ends, is found at Satricum and elsewhere. Although archaic in appearance, it may be as late as the fourth century, since near it was dug out another antefix in the form of a female figure holding a lion in each hand, the so-called *πότνια θηρών*, a type exceedingly common from the archaic period down to the fourth and third centuries B.C. In this example the forepaws of the lions rest on the shoulders of the figure, so that they appear to be clambering up her.²

These numerous fragments must have belonged to a group of early buildings which once crowned the summit of the south-west corner of the Palatine, but were swept away to make place for the late republican constructions which arose upon their site. They are far too mutilated to allow us to identify these buildings with any certainty, especially as no inscriptions have come to light with them, but it has been suggested that one of the buildings may have been the substructures of the Aedes Romuli, and another the fifth Sacrum of the Argei.³ Further discoveries may be looked for on the Palatine, since Professor Boni is laying bare, under the palace of Domitian, buildings which seem intimately connected with the primitive Roman state.

If we now turn to the Roman Forum, we find that it is only in certain parts that fictile decorations have been discovered, namely, around spots connected with some of the earliest traditions of Roman history, the Niger Lapis, the Comitium and the Regia. Near the first was found a relief decorated with a warrior on horseback armed with a spear, which belongs possibly to the sixth century.⁴ It resembles the friezes from Velletri, but the treatment is earlier and more purely Ionian; the design tends to spread beyond the field, for the warrior's helmet and plume cut into the border, and the horse is slimmer and less heavily built than those of later examples. With this fragment was an antefix in the shape of a Gorgon's head. Only the forehead and eyes remain, but these suffice to show that the type approximated most closely to the Campanian beardless Gorgon of Dr. Koch's division B.⁵

The excavations in the Comitium in 1900 revealed reliefs of yellowish clay with cream slip and the usual traces of colour. From

¹ *Not. Scav.* 1907, p. 273, fig. 15.

² *ibid.* p. 452, fig. 24.

³ Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*, i (3rd ed.), p. 42, pl. 2.

⁴ *Not. Scav.* 1899, p. 157, fig. 17; 1900, p. 143.

⁵ Koch, *Dachterrakotten aus Campanien*, p. 38,

pl. 7, 1.

the eleventh stratum below the imperial pavement came a fragment showing the hind legs of some feline beast, and a border of broken maeander in red. Another, from the tenth stratum, has two men on horseback galloping to left, armed with round shields and brandishing weapons which may be axes, as on the Velletri frieze, to which this piece seems to correspond.¹ A piece evidently belonging to the same frieze was found in the fifth stratum, but on it only the feet of the rider remain.²



FIG. 25. TORSO FROM THE CONSERVATORI MUSEUM (p. 187).

A few paces away, a head of reddish clay was discovered, much damaged, but apparently representing one of the female heads so commonly used for antefixes in the fifth and fourth centuries. The face is missing, but round the throat is a necklace with pendants, and the hair is waved back on to either shoulder where the red colouring is still visible. The back of the head was painted with a

¹ *Not. Scav.* 1900, p. 326, figs. 28, 29. For stratification see p. 217, ff. and *Oesterr. Jahresb.* vi, p. 146, fig. 94.

² *Not. Scav.* 1900, p. 320, fig. 21.

cream slip, and divided into zones by brown lines with red crosses between them at intervals.¹

The Regia, where interesting discoveries might be looked for, seems to have been too thoroughly demolished and rebuilt to have retained many traces of its early appearance. Still, what remains proves that here also the decoration was fictile, though possibly, since it was a dwelling, it was less lavishly adorned than the shrines of the deities. All that was found was a tile with maeander in blue, yellow, green, gray, red and black, and part of an antefix with egg-moulding. These were lying in a republican well in the north-west corner of the building.²

Perhaps the most important archaic terracotta found in Rome is the so-called 'Wounded Warrior' of the Conservatori Museum (fig. 25), which was found in 1875 on the Esquiline.³ It is a torso from shoulders to waist (height 37 cm.), and is mounted on a base to which it did not originally belong. Its reddish clay is covered with a cream slip and highly polished. The warrior's black chiton, visible over the shoulders, has a cream border edged with a red band of black dots. Over it is a corselet, cream to indicate the glint of metal. Each plate is outlined with a brownish band, and the upper edge is decorated with small eight-pointed stars in red and black, while above the waist runs a maeander pattern in red. The shoulder-pieces are in two parts; the lower, which is rounded, is painted in black with a red border; while the upper has a large black star in the field, recalling the star on the shoulder-piece of Aristion on the well-known stele signed by Aristokles at Athens,⁴ and a number of small squares below the star. The shoulder-pieces were fastened by two thongs, attached to the buckle at the edge of the rounded lower piece and passing through a couple of rings above the waist. The extended left arm held the round shield, painted dark red inside. It was held by a strap ornamented by an elaborate chequer-pattern in red, brown, black and cream. This strap was secured by a metal button, and three little fastenings hanging from it passed towards the edge of the shield. Under the warrior's left breast is a red wound from which the blood flows down over the corselet. The fine technique and the details of the armour, which is identical with Greek armour used in the sixth century, has led to the suggestion that this torso, with various other terracottas from Falerii, Satricum, etc. were the work of Phocaeen artists who had emigrated to Etruria and Latium.⁵ Almost all authorities date it in the sixth century,

¹ *ibid.* pp. 307, 308, fig. 11.

² *Not. Scav.* 1899, pp. 220, 487.

³ *Bull. Comm.* 1875, p. 54; Milani, *Mus. Italiano*, i, p. 93, 8; Graillot, *Mélanges d'arch. et d'hist.* 1896, p. 162, note 6; Petersen, *Röm. Mitt.* 1896, p. 179; Rizzo, *Bull. Comm.* 1911, p. 34;

Deonna, *Terres cuites antiques*, pp. 103-6, fig. 3; Wiegand, *Ny Carlsberg*, ii, p. 19.

⁴ Perrot, viii, fig. 341, p. 663, after the coloured cast in Berlin.

⁵ Sevignoni, *Mon. Lincei*, viii, 1898, p. 536; Hausar, *Oesterr. Jahresh.* ix, p. 116.

and it cannot be later than the very beginning of the fifth century.

To it belongs also a fragment showing a leg from knee to ankle (height 23 cm.), with an orange-coloured greave outlined in red; the calf of the leg is very full, but the ankle is slim. The flesh is represented by cream colour. This fact is remarkable, since the flesh of archaic male figures is invariably painted dark red, except in the case of certain archaic heads of satyrs. This cream colour, taken in conjunction with the rather fully developed breasts and the position of the wound, lead me to believe that this is no male warrior, as usually supposed, but an Amazon. The Amazons were frequently represented as wounded in or below the breast; in the archaic period they were armed precisely as were their male opponents, and are indeed distinguishable only by their white flesh. Moreover an Amazonomachia was popular in terracotta decoration. Reliefs from Praeneste show mounted Amazons attacking warriors¹; at Satricum the subject is repeated,² and an antefix from Capua is adorned with a female figure on horseback, thought to be Artemis, but more probably an Amazon armed with bow and quiver.³

Many other fragments of friezes have been found on the Esquiline. One slab, discovered in ten pieces in the Via Napoleone III, on 22nd October, 1874, has been reconstructed and is now in the Conservatori Museum.⁴ The relief, which probably decorated a tomb,⁵ is stamped, but the colour has almost disappeared. It depicts a procession of bigae to right, and in each case the further horse was indicated by painting rather than relief. The driver of the first chariot, who may be female, is dressed in a long chiton and himation. The garment of her companion, if it existed, was suggested merely by colour. Another nude figure walks beside the horses. The steeds of the second chariot are winged, and here again two figures stand in the chariot, the driver clad in a chiton and holding the reins and a whip, and another with long hair, wearing a mantle, who lays his left hand on the driver's shoulder and his right on his own hip. The chariots have six-spoked wheels, and the usual guard in front. Dr. Nachod⁶ classes this relief as Etruscan derived from eastern originals, and points out that here the vivacious gallop of the Greek advance to battle has become a quiet walk, typical rather of a triumphal procession. From the style of the drawing and the details of the chariots, harness, etc. the relief may be dated between the middle and end of the sixth century. The significance of the scene has been very variously interpreted—as a funeral procession, where the dead man is borne to the other world by winged,

¹ Fernique, *Préneste*, in *Bibl. Écoles Françaises*, 17, p. 212.

² Helbig, *Führer* (3rd ed.), ii, p. 353, no. 1786s; Petersen, *Röm. Mitt.* 1896, p. 178.

³ Lenormant, *Gaz. archéol.* vii, pl. 14.

⁴ *Bull. Comm.* 1875, p. 51; pl. 6-8, no. 1; Pinza, *Mon. Lincei*, xv, p. 212, ff. fig. 90.

⁵ G. F. Gamurrini, in *Röm. Mitt.* 1887, p. 225.

⁶ H. Nachod, *Renntwagen bei den Italikern*, p. 52, no. 39b.

i.e. supernatural steeds, in fact, an apotheosis, a view suggested by the fact that this relief and others similar were found in tombs; as an advance to war¹; or as a procession of chariots returning from the funeral games. This last was the view of the Italian excavators, who suggested that the wings marked out the horses of the victorious chariot.² It must, however, be remembered that the Italic artists of the archaic period were fond of bestowing wings on beings who in Greek art were unwinged, in order to indicate not only their superhuman quality but also the speed of their passage, and the latter idea may have been transferred to animals. Similar wings appear frequently on friezes of this description, on bucchero ware and also on some ivory reliefs found at Corneto.³ Until all the examples have been collected and compared it is impossible to interpret their real significance, or accurately determine the source from which they all derive.

Another piece from the Esquiline, now in the Conservatori Museum, is a satyr's head (height 34 cm.), discovered in 1877 near S. Antonio (plate xxxii, no. 2). It shows a type common in the end of the sixth or beginning of the fifth centuries.⁴ The satyr's black hair in schematised curls is crowned with ivy leaves which all point upwards, thus forming a diadem; there is a cluster of berries behind either ear. The forehead is furrowed; the arched brows black, lids outlined black; the eyes in the plane of the cheeks have the ball black, iris red, pupil black. The lips are red, as are the moustache and 'mouche,' whereas the beard is black, waved horizontally and covered with a series of undulating white lines, perhaps intended to portray the sheen of the dark hair. The natural tone of the clay is dull red; this was covered by a cream slip upon which the colours were laid, the slip being left uncoloured for flesh tints. The base is ornamented with opposing lines in red and black on a cream ground. A mark of the early date of this antefix is the fact that it was attached directly to the master-tile, without any supporting projection such as we meet in later examples.

A broken antefix, found in the bed of the Tiber near the island and now in the national museum, reproduces the frequent type of the satyr and maenad dancing.⁵ Both heads have disappeared, and the whole group is much damaged. The maenad advances right, and, behind her, part of the body of the satyr is visible. There is a curious square projection in front of the body of the maenad which has not yet been explained. The fine series of this type from Satricum, which includes so many variations on the motive, does not

¹ *ibid.* p. 71.

² Lanciani, *Bull. Comm.* 1875, p. 51; cf. Gamurrini, *loc. cit.*

³ *Ann. Inst.* 1860, p. 478, ff; *Mon. Inst.* vi, pl. 46, 1-4.

⁴ *Bull. Comm.* 1877, p. 276, no. 2; 1889, p. 229, no. 33. Pinza, *Mon. Lincei*, xv, p. 508, fig. 157.

⁵ *Not. Scav.* 1896, p. 38, fig. 13; Helbig, *Führer*, (3rd ed.), ii, p. 216, no. 1510.

seem to give an exact parallel to this scheme. The antefix must have come from an archaic temple on the island ; it is too early in style to have formed part of the temple of Asklepios dedicated in 266 B.C.

A satyr's head antefix, later in type than the one before mentioned, and perhaps from the end of the fifth century, was discovered in 1889 in the Via dei Serpenti and is now in the Conservatori Museum¹ (plate xxxiii, no. 1). The height is 20 cm. the width 27 cm. The head is broken across the mouth and beard, but has been restored. The hair grows up in little separate strands above the brow, and is crowned with a wreath of ivy with two clusters of berries in front and bound with crimson taeniae looped at the sides. The ears are pointed, brows fleshy, lips thick and forehead wrinkled. The eyes are a black circle with an incised point in the centre. The flowing beard and moustache leave the lips bare. The flesh is deep red, the hair bright brown.

From the same locality, under the church of S. Francesco di Paola, came what is apparently part of an acroterion.² The fragment is semicircular ; all that remains are the feet of a bird or gryphon and part of the border, ornamented with enclosed palmettes alternately red and black, and edged with outlined scallops. The style is that of the early fourth century, and the site not far from the spot where the matrons are said to have dedicated a temple to Juno Lucina in 375 B.C.

On the site of the Ministry of Agriculture, near the Via S. Susanna, various fragments of antefixes were found of the type of the *πότνια θηρῶν* holding her lions (height 12 × 7 cm.).³ Traces of colour remain, and as a frieze found with them illustrates scenes from the Odyssey, etc. these antefixes are probably examples of a late survival of an early type and may belong to the third century.

There are also a few terracottas of unknown provenance, such as the Gorgoneion antefix in the Conservatori Museum⁴ (plate xxxiii, no. 2). The hair is in two rows of 'stylised' curls, and two long locks in pearl-like divisions hang down on either shoulder ; the small ears are placed very high ; the eyes are oblique, the mouth large with great tusks and protruding tongue. The beard is in flame-like strands alternately red and black. There is a red necklace with red and black pendants. The border of the antefix ended in a volute on either side of the face, and the base was adorned with an interlaced maeander in red and black on a cream ground, but the colour on the face has mostly disappeared. The height is 23 × 25 cm.

¹ *Bull. Comm.* 1889, p. 507, no. 4 ; *Not. Scav.* 1889, p. 159.

² *Bull. Comm.* 1896, p. 190, pl. xii-xiii, no. 2 ; *Not. Scav.* 1896, p. 326.

³ *Not. Scav.* 1907, pp. 518, 680.

⁴ Pinza, *Mon. Lincei*, xv, p. 499, fig. 150. It is identical with certain antefixes found at Capua and Campania, type vii in Dr Koch's classification see his *Dachterrakotten aus Campanien*, pl. 6, no. 3, p. 37, note 1.

In the national museum is an antefix with a satyr's head, the colouring well preserved. He wears an ivy wreath with red flowers at intervals, and clusters of yellow berries. The black hair is plastically rendered, ears pointed, beard red with a yellow 'mouche,' and black moustache with curling ends. The forehead is wrinkled, the brows emphasised by a very curved black ridge, while the eyelids are outlined black; eyes red with black pupils. The mouth is very small. Four black spiral curls descend on to the shoulders, each one larger than the one above. This is a type of the latter half of the sixth century, and may be compared with the examples from Satricum and other sites.

In the same museum is a female head, two-thirds life size, of the usual archaic type, with arched brows, eyes oblique, small mouth and 'archaic smile.' The hair is in waves round the face, but the side curls are broken. The hair is covered by the pointed cap common in early Ionic work, and the figure wears a red necklace and small round red ear-rings. The coarse red clay was covered by a cream slip.

Lastly, also at the national museum, is a frieze similar in technique to the one found at Praeneste¹ (plate xxxiv, no. 2). On a blue ground a biga advances left. The front horse is white, the further one red, while the harness is red with a white collar and blue strap. Behind the horses is a youth with red flesh and long black hair, who wears a white chiton; he advances with the horses, but looks backward towards those who follow. Very few of the details are plastically rendered, for all deficiencies were supplied by colour. This work, like the analogous frieze from Praeneste, may be dated to the early fifth century.

Many influences can be traced in these pieces. On the whole, it is in the friezes that Etruscan influence seems most marked, for in them there are elements essentially non-Greek, such as the augur's curved rod, details of dress, and even the whip instead of the Hellenic goad.² The subjects of the friezes are frequently met with on the red stamped 'pithoi' and dishes found in Etruria, of which the Louvre possesses such fine examples. These vases exhibit the procession of horsemen, the winged bigae, the chariot contests and the banqueting scene. Red stamped ware has also been found on many sites of Asia Minor, Greece, Cyprus, Crete, etc. and it is probable that the models which the Etruscans used were imported into Italy in the end of the eighth or the beginning of the seventh century.³ All evidence seems to show that these models were probably works in metal, and that Ionia was their place of origin.

¹ *Not. Scav.* 1905, p. 124, ff. fig. 1.

² H. Nachod, *Renntwagen bei den Italikern*, p. 63. But the whip appears on works undoubtedly

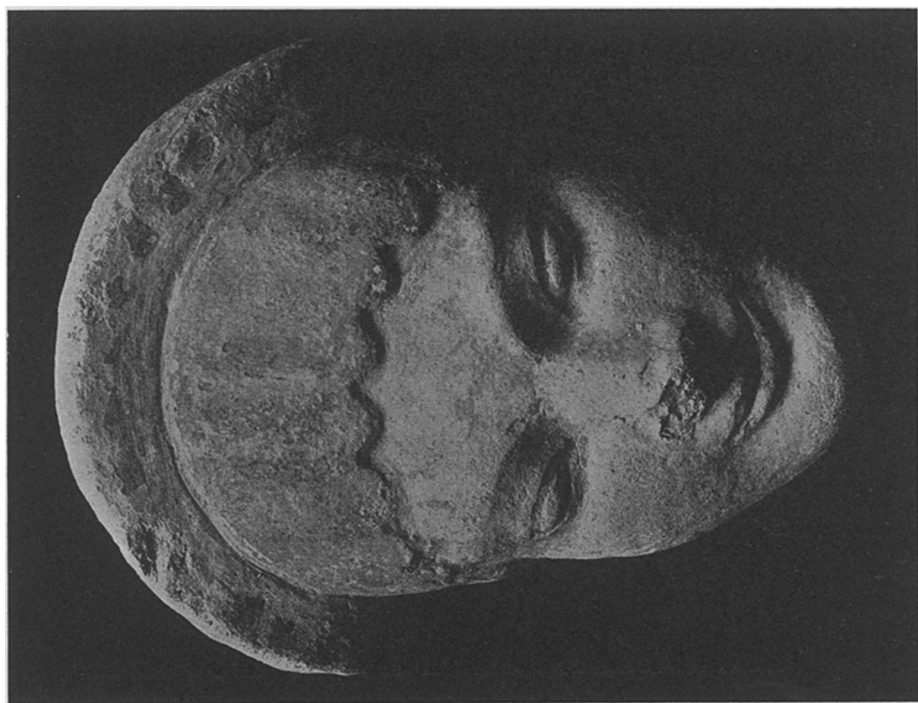
Ionian, such as the relief with charioteer from Cyzicus (*B.C.H.* 1894, p. 493).

³ Pottier, *Vases antiques*, ii, p. 384.

The scanty material so far found in Rome is inadequate for a proper study of the subject, and needs to be supplemented by the finds from Satricum, Segni, Falerii, etc. Still, enough remains to give an idea of the gorgeous multicolour effects produced by the decorations of the early Roman temples. For the present I have limited myself to an enumeration of the material extant, in the belief that few, outside some specialists living in Rome, are even aware of the existence of these fragments. They will also repay closer study, for in the sixth and fifth centuries the ornamentation of buildings was not merely decorative but still retained a religious, or at least a distinctly apotropaic significance, as the predilection for antefixes in the shape of a gorgon's head with protruding tongue clearly shows.



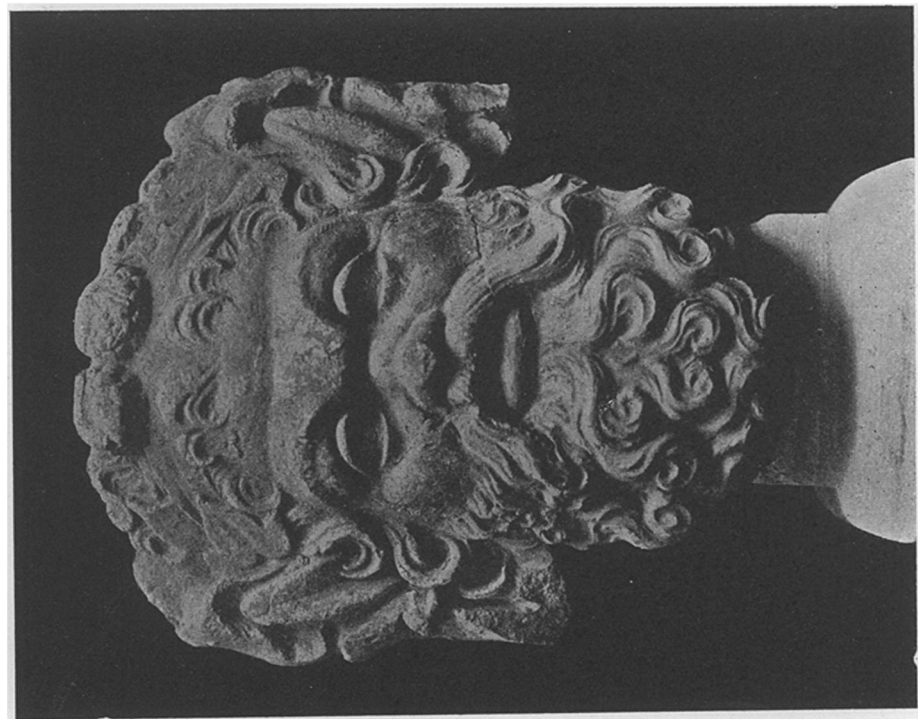
NO. 2. SATYR'S HEAD FROM S. ANTONIO (p. 182).



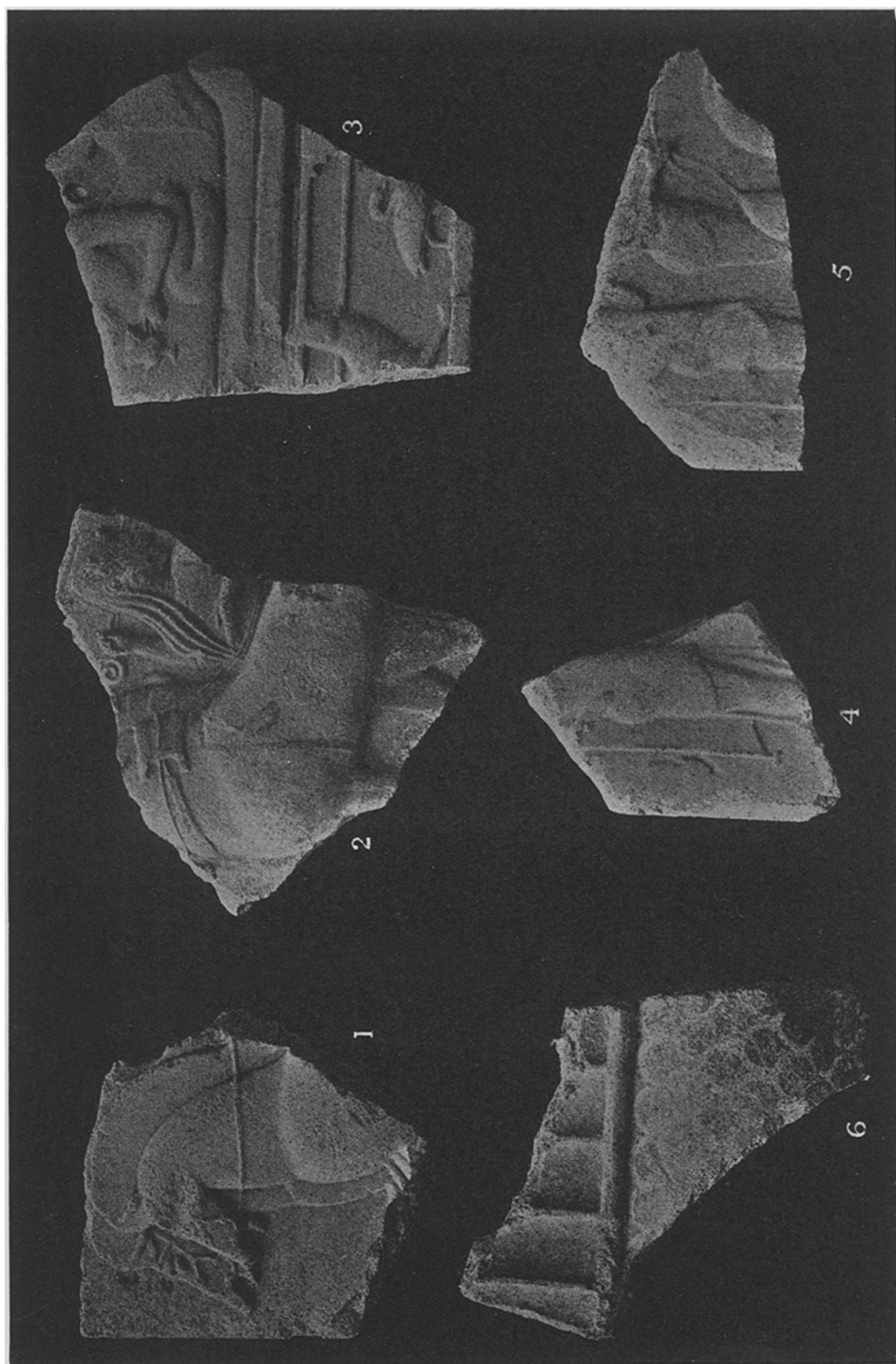
NO. 1. ARCHAIC HEAD FROM THE GARDEN OF THE ARA COELI (p. 183).



NO. 2. GORGONEION ANTEFIX IN THE CONSERVATORI MUSEUM (p. 190).



NO. 1. SATYR'S HEAD FROM VIA DEI SERPENTI (p. 190).



TERRACOTTA FRAGMENTS IN THE MUSEO DELLE TERME (p. 184).