The Parthenon Frieze Terracottas

Author(s): A. H. Smith

Source: *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 14 (1894), pp. 264-266

Published by: [The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/623971>

Accessed: 11/01/2015 21:20

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

THE PARTHENON FRIEZE TERRACOTTAS.

THE terracotta relief, of which an illustration is given below, is one of the series of fragments with reproductions of the Parthenon frieze which have of late years attracted considerable attention.

The present fragment¹ was bought by me in Rome, in February 1894, of a small antiquity-dealer in the Via Tor di Nona. The vendor vowed that it had been found in the bed of the Tiber, in the course of the works in connexion with the Ponte S. Angelo, but no doubt his statement merely indicates that the bed of the Tiber is for the moment the fashionable provenience. The terracotta is 10¼ inches high, and it is obvious that it contains a part of the design of the slab at the west end of the north side of the Parthenon frieze. The original marble is in the British Museum.

Hitherto, three similar fragments have been identified, viz.: (1) Priest and boy with peplos, at Copenhagen; (2) Upper part of Athene, in the Louvre, (3) Lower part of Athene and figure of Hephaestos in the Museo Kircheriano at Rome. All the fragments are published by Dr. Waldstein in his *Essays on the Art of Pheidias*. Each of the fragments had been accepted as genuine at its respective museum, and Dr. Waldstein in the text of the work just quoted proposed to regard Nos. 1 and 2 as clay studies for the frieze by Pheidias. The subsequent discovery however of No. 3, and the information to which it led, made the authenticity of the series more than doubtful. This was pointed out by Dr. Waldstein in an appendix to his *Essays*, and till recently the fragments found no defenders. Prof. Furtwaengler,² however, basing himself on the technique of the terracotta, has declared the Copenhagen fragment (and therefore presumably all the fragments) to be genuine antique reductions of the frieze, made in the time of Augustus. It is therefore worth while to reconsider the question with the further light thrown on it by the new fragment here published. For my own part, I am of opinion that it proves incontestably that all four fragments are of recent origin.

The fact which we have to take into account is that there exists in Rome a

¹ *Röm. Mitth.* ix. p. 94, *Rev. Arch.* 1894, p. 77: see also certain letters, mainly occupied with other issues, addressed by Dr. Waldstein

and M. S. Reinach to the editor of the *Nation* (New York), May 3, 31, July 19, 1894.

² *Meisterwerke*, p. 743.

series of moulds of a reduced copy of parts of sixteen slabs of the frieze,³ and that the figures which occur on the terracotta fragments are similar in every detail to those of the moulds. To this Furtwaengler replies that the resemblance is explained by the fact that both are faithful copies of a common original. The new fragment, however, and the figures of the Roman series are not quite similar to the original marble, and *the same discrepancies occur in both.*

In the new fragment, the finer details of drapery etc. are by no means accurately reproduced. The small creases, if carefully compared with those of the original, are fewer and larger, and more hastily sketched, and in these discrepancies the terracotta agrees exactly with the Roman mould.

It is therefore certain that the two series are not independent reductions, as Furtwaengler suggests.

The Roman moulds are believed to have been based on a series of casts made by Choiseul Gouffier. Whether this be so or not, it is certain that

³ Waldstein, p. 262.

the series as a whole is not ancient because the head of Iris is now known to have been wrongly restored,⁴ and because some of the slabs are made up of different parts of the original frieze brought together in a way which proves that the original was in a ruinous state when the moulds were made.

The only possibility that remains is that the terracotta fragments were genuine, and were made by some sculptor to serve as a base on which he founded his reduction of the frieze. This does not seem likely, and each fragment that is discovered increases the improbability. Moreover it is evident that the new fragment was copied from the frieze when it had reached its present state of decay. The drapery on the shoulder of the attendant was once no doubt worked like other drapery of the frieze. The surface of the marble is now however broken away, and the clay has been smoothed down to a plain flat surface over the fracture.

For these reasons I conclude that both moulds and terracottas are works of the present century. One question remains, whether the moulds preceded the terracottas or *vice versa*. Prof. Petersen⁵ inclines to the former view, because the clay seems to have been pushed into a mould in such a way that the front and back of the plaque are not completely united. It appears to me however that the terracotta preceded the mould. Certain strokes, folds, etc., that were evidently drawn in the wet clay with a blunt tool, reappear in the mould.

A. H. SMITH.

⁴ *American Journ. of Arch.* v. p. 8.

⁵ *Röm. Mitth.* ix. p. 94.