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Author(s): Warwick Wroth

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## A STATUE OF THE YOUTHFUL ASKLEPIOS.

THE marble statue of a youthful male figure holding in his left hand a snake-encircled staff, which is reproduced in the accompanying plate, was found by Smith and Porcher at Cyrene,<sup>1</sup> and is now in the collection of the British Museum. By its original discoverers this figure was named Aristaeus: an attribution which has been adopted, though with some hesitation, in the *Museum Guide* to the Graeco-Roman Sculptures.<sup>2</sup> As, however, this attribution seems more than doubtful, it may be well to lay before the readers of the *Hellenic Journal* some additional remarks upon the subject, and to direct special attention to a statue which is not among those photographed in the *History of Discoveries at Cyrene*, and which has not, hitherto, been figured elsewhere.

The statue now to be described is four feet five and a half inches in height, and represents a young and beardless male figure standing facing. His right hand rests upon his hip, and under his left arm is a staff round which is coiled a serpent. The lower half of the body is wrapt in a *himation*, the end of which falls over the left shoulder, leaving the chest and the right arm uncovered. The hair is wavy and carefully composed, but does not fall lower than the neck: around the head is a plain band, above which has been some kind of crown or upright head-dress: the top of the head has been worked flat. On the feet are sandals, and at the side of the left foot is a conical object which has been called a rude representation of the *omphalos*, but which is, in all probability, a mere support. The head of

<sup>1</sup> *History of Discoveries at Cyrene*, by Capt. Smith and Commander Porcher. London, 1864, p. 103, No. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Part ii. (1876), p. 48, No. 114. The statue is at present in the Graeco-Roman Basement.



the serpent, and the left hand, which has rested on the staff, are wanting.

This statue was found in a Cyrenian temple which has been called the Temple of Venus on account of several statuettes of that goddess having been there discovered together.<sup>1</sup> Besides the images of Aphrodite, there were also found a Demeter, a pilaster in form of Pan, a representation of Apollo, a relief of the nymph Cyrene crowned by Libya, and other objects.<sup>2</sup> The divinities found in company with our statue being so miscellaneous, it is obvious that its find-spot cannot be considered much guide in determining its attribution. Fortunately, however, the figure itself holds an object which is sufficiently familiar and distinctive—that snake-encircled staff which is the almost invariable accompaniment of the god Asklepios. The pose, moreover, and the arrangement of the drapery are those which must be recognised as preeminently Asklepiian, though of course they are not appropriated to the God of Medicine exclusively. There would, in fact, be no difficulty in naming this figure Asklepios, were it not for the feminine appearance and the extremely youthful forms which it presents. The staff is, indeed, the staff of Asklepios, but the face is the face of Apollo. It is no doubt this divergence from the familiar bearded type of the God of Healing which has rendered previous writers, in spite of the presence of the snake-encircled staff, averse from denominating this statue Asklepios. The attribution to Aristaeus has not, however, much to recommend it. When we have said that this statue was discovered at Cyrene, and that Aristaeus was the mythic founder of Cyrene; when we have urged that Aristaeus would probably resemble Apollo in his features, and that he had a subordinate rôle as a medical divinity, we have exhausted the stock of arguments in favour of this attribution. And even if those arguments were far more convincing than they are, this representation would still entirely fail to accord with any of the artistic representations of Aristaeus, so far as they have been made out by archaeologists: for, in accordance with his character as a beneficent patron of country life in general, this divinity seems to have been portrayed as a bearded figure holding in his right hand the Horn of

<sup>1</sup> Smith and Porcher, *op. cit.*, p. 77.      <sup>2</sup> Smith and Porcher, p. 102, f.

Plenty,<sup>1</sup> or perhaps as a shepherd bearing upon his shoulders a ram.<sup>2</sup>

But if we are willing to discard Aristaeus and to fix on Asklepios as the personage here intended, our difficulties will be much lessened by recalling the fact that certain ancient statuaries portrayed the God of Medicine not under the image of a man of mature age, but as a youth. Though I have no right to make the publication of this statue an excuse for a dissertation on the presentment of Asklepios in art, I shall, perhaps, be justified in saying a few words as to this youthful type of the God of Medicine.

There can, I think, be little doubt, especially if we look to the numismatic evidence, that the bearded type of Asklepios is the one which early became generally prevalent. The creation of the Zeus-like ideal of the God of Healing has, with much probability, been referred by Overbeck<sup>3</sup> to Alkamenes, or to some one or other of those pupils of Pheidias who made images of Asklepios. The portrayal of Asklepios as a youth must, probably, be regarded as something quite exceptional—just as the representation (by Boëthos) of Asklepios as a *child* was clearly exceptional.<sup>4</sup> Even the genius of Skopas, who delighted so much in the beauty of youth and who was perhaps almost the first to display the God of Healing as young, could not win for this conception a place in the affections of the multitude:—*Νεός δὲ γυῖας δαίμονας καθιππᾶσω*, men said of this young Asklepios; and, as we know from innumerable effigies, from coins and from gems, from statue and from votive relief, it was the *bearded* Asklepios who did in the end prevail. It is unfortunate that of this remarkable type we should know so little; but there are, I believe, only three undoubted references to statues of Asklepios as a youth.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eckhel, *Num. Vet. Anecd.*, p. 107; G. C. Müller, *De Corcyraeorum Republicâ*, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> See the article 'Aristaeus' in Daremberg and Saglio, *Dict. des Ant.* A bronze statue found in Sardinia representing a young and nude male figure, on whose body are bees, has been explained as Aristacus; see Spano, *Bull. Sardo*, 1855.

<sup>3</sup> *Griech. Plastik* (3rd edition), vol. i. p. 274.

<sup>4</sup> Overbeck, *Schriftquellen*, No. 1599.

<sup>5</sup> Overbeck (*Griech. Plast.* i. 274, 3rd ed.) incidentally remarks that Praxiteles represented Asklepios youthful, but I cannot find any authority for this statement. No doubt it is a slip of the pen for Skopas.

Perhaps the earliest of which we hear is the *agalma* which stood at the entrance of the Temple of Asklepios at Sikyon, and which was made in gold and ivory by the sculptor Kalamis (circ. B.C. 500-460). Pausanias,<sup>1</sup> who describes it as that of a beardless figure, distinctly calls it Asklepios; and there is no reason to suppose him mistaken, though this representation of the God of Healing is apparently unique—the god holding in one hand a sceptre and in the other a pine cone.<sup>2</sup> A beardless statue of Asklepios is also mentioned<sup>3</sup> as existing at Phlius, but Pausanias gives us no particulars respecting it. Lastly, we learn from the same authority that the great Skopas made for the Temple of Asklepios at Gortys in Arcadia an *agalma* of the god in which he was represented as youthful.<sup>4</sup> We should have been grateful to Pausanias for any details concerning this work, for in all probability it was no mere repetition of an older idea, but itself an original Asklepios type. But the indefatigable traveller to whom all archaeologists owe so much had no room in his notebook for long descriptions, and he merely describes this youthful Asklepios as he describes that of Sikyon and of Phlius, by saying that it is an Asklepios who has not yet grown a beard—*οὐκ ἔχων πω γένεια*.<sup>5</sup> On extant monuments, representations of the youthful God of Medicine are extremely rare. A coin (see woodcut) in the French Collection, issued in the reign of Caracalla at Phlius, seems certainly to portray Asklepios as beardless; though the specimen is, unfortunately, not in a very satisfactory state<sup>6</sup> of preservation. In addition to this

<sup>1</sup> Paus. ii. 10, 3. Cp. Overbeck, *Griech. Plast.* (3rd ed.), i. 217-222.

<sup>2</sup> Πίττος κατὰ τὴν τῆς ἡμέρας. Cp. the relief in the *Ἀθήναιον*, vol. v., p. 318, No. 39, and Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Hist. d'après la Bible* (2nd ed.), p. 84 (note).

<sup>3</sup> Paus. ii. 13, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Paus. viii. 28, 1. Cp. Ulrichs, *Skopas*, p. 15 f., and p. 39 f.; Overbeck (on Skopas), *Griech. Plast.* (3rd ed.), vol. ii. p. 11 f.

<sup>5</sup> Skopas also made a statue of Asklepios for the Temple of Athene Alea in Tegea (Paus. viii. 47, 1). It is not stated by Pausanias whether or not it was beardless. At Titane there

was a marble statue of Asklepios called *Γορτύσιος* (Paus. ii. 11, 8), and because the Asklepios of Gortys in Arcadia was beardless, it is supposed by Curtius (*Peloponnesos*, i. p. 35) and by Panofka (*Asklepios*) that this statue was likewise beardless.

<sup>6</sup> Panofka, in his *Asklepios* (Taf. v. n. 6), engraves the reverse type of a similar coin of Phlius (*obv.* head of Sept. Severus; = Mion. *Suppl.* iv. 1044, p. 159), but from an extremely bad specimen. The coin here reproduced is taken from a cast kindly sent me by M. Babelon of the Bibliothèque Nationale. In the case of the youthful seated figure feeding a serpent

there should be mentioned two marble statues, engravings of which may be consulted in Clarac<sup>1</sup> or Wieseler-Müller. Both these statues (Nos. 775 and 776 in Plate lx. of the *Denkmäler*) represent a youthful male figure who stands facing,



leaning on a snake-encircled staff. On the left of one figure (No. 775) stands a netted *omphalos*, on the left of the other (No. 776), a globe. The head of the figure No. 775 somewhat resembles that of a young Herakles, and his hair is short and curly: the hair of the other figure (No. 776) is long, and hangs down on each side of the head. It is extremely unsatisfactory to note that in the case of both these marbles the serpent and staff are restorations. The head of No. 775 certainly belongs to the statue, and the head of No. 776 is stated by Clarac to be antique, 'et seulement rattachée,' but I am much inclined to doubt whether it belongs of right to its present body.

To these examples of the youthful Asklepios—such as they are—we may now add the statue which forms the subject of the present paper. However little that statue may reproduce the work of Skopas, it is, archaeologically, of some importance as another instance of a very rare and interesting class of representations; while it has the merit of being absolutely untampered with by modern restorers. It evidently belongs to Roman times, but is, perhaps, not later than the reign of Hadrian. The treatment of the drapery is hard and the face rather expressionless. The vacant look which the eyes now wear may, indeed, have been obviated originally by the use of

represented on a silver coin of Zacynthus, it is hazardous to determine whether Apollo or the young Asklepios be intended. (See Mionnet, t. ii. p. 206, n. 8; *Planches*, Pl. lxxiii. n. 3;

cp. Prof. P. Gardner's *Types of Greek Coins*, Pl. viii. No. 33.)

<sup>1</sup> *Mus. de Sculpt.* Pl. 549, N. 1139; (tom. iv. text, p. 10): Pl. 545, No. 1145 (tom. iv. text, p. 3, No. 1145).



colour; and though there is little to praise in the general execution of this work, I think we may see in it the traces of better things, and may even believe that its sculptor had in mind the production of some older and more famous artist whose powers exceeded his own.

The worship of Asklepios was certainly flourishing at Cyrene in the first century A.D.;<sup>1</sup> and it is, indeed, extremely probable that this cultus was known to the Cyrenians at a time long anterior to the Roman rule. Herodotus,<sup>2</sup> it will be remembered, speaks of the noted physicians of Cyrene, and a school of medicine at that epoch almost implies a sanctuary of the God of Medicine.<sup>3</sup> At the neighbouring town of Balagrae, Asklepios was revered (though we know not how early) as *Ἱατρός*. This worship is said by Pausanias<sup>4</sup> to have been derived from Epidaureus, and to have been handed on by the Cyrenians to the Cretan Lebene.

Before taking leave of this subject, I ought to mention certain representations of an undraped beardless youth holding a snake-encircled staff. These representations occur on Roman coins and medallions of the Imperial age, and special attention has been lately directed to them by Dr. Von Sallet in a short notice published in the *Zeitschrift für Numismatik* (vol. ix. (1881) pp. 139-141). The German numismatist is doubtful whether we ought to consider the figures in question to be those of the young Asklepios or of an Apollo holding the Asklepiian staff. In a paper recently published in the *Numismatic Chronicle* (vol. ii., 3rd ser., pp. 301-305) I have myself endeavoured, whilst bringing forward other representations of the same class, to show that these figures are those of Apollo, who in his character of medical divinity has borrowed the peculiar attribute of his son Asklepios.

<sup>1</sup> Tacit., *Ann.* xiv. 18. L. Müller, *Numismatique de l'ancienne Afrique*, vol. i. (Coins of the Cyrenaica), pp. 163-164. A figure probably of Hygeia ('art very late and coarse') was found at Cyrene in the Temple of Apollo (Smith and Porcher, p. 100, No. 12), as well as a statuette ('sculpture late and bad') probably of Asklepios. (Cyrene, find-spot not noted. Smith and Porcher, p. 107, No. 127.) 'Le serpent d'Esculape est aussi placé

comme type sur les monnaies [of the Cyrenaica] de l'époque romaine.' Müller, *op. cit.* p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> iii. 131.

<sup>3</sup> On autonomous coins of the Cyrenaica the serpent occurs as an accessory symbol. Müller (*op. cit.* p. 110; Cp. *Suppl.*, p. 3) would refer it to the cultus of Asklepios.

<sup>4</sup> ii. 26, 7. Cp. Barth, *Wanderungen durch die Küstenländer des Mittelmeeres*, vol. i. pp. 415-416 and p. 432.



My chief grounds for this contention are that (in two, at any rate, of the instances) the arrangement of the hair in long tresses is unmistakably Apolline, and that the figures are introduced completely undraped, while we have no evidence that such was the case with Asklepios even when represented as a youth. While therefore it may be well in searching for examples of the youthful God of Medicine to beware how we mistake an Apollo for a genuine young Asklepios, yet in our Cyrenian statue both the style of the hair and the presence of drapery lead us to see an example of the youthful Asklepios rather than an Apollo holding the Asklepiian staff.

WARWICK WROTH.