

## AN ARCHAIC MALE HEAD FROM ATHENS.

By kind permission of Commander Down, R.N., of Wokingham, Berks, I am allowed to publish an archaic head (Fig. 1) in his possession. It was



FIG. 1.—ARCHAIC HEAD IN THE POSSESSION OF COMMANDER DOWN.

found by him in Athens when cruising in Greek waters about the year 1879.

The head, which has been broken off abruptly at the neck, is 13 m. in height, 105 m. in depth, and 315 m. in circumference. The material is a rather coarse-grained white marble. The face has unfortunately suffered con-

siderably: the lower part of the nose has been broken off and the surface of the mouth and chin is damaged, and there is a deep indentation over the left eye. The left side of the face is much better preserved than the right.

To take the features in detail:—enough of the mouth remains to show that it was represented in a short, straight line with a considerable depression at each corner, and that the lips were thin. The result, as far as can be judged, is that the face must have had something of the 'archaic smile.' The neck is massive; the structure of the cheekbones and forehead is clearly indicated. The eyes, like those of all primitive Greek heads, protrude unduly, a characteristic which Lechat<sup>1</sup> has termed *l'exophthalmie archaïque*. They are neither on the one hand set properly in the head, nor on the other hand are they merely engraved on the rounded surface of the marble. The sculptor seems to have realized that the eye ought to be represented in the same plane as the front of the face, but he has been unable to carry out this idea successfully. The eyes are not set obliquely as in many of the earliest archaic Greek heads. In shape the eyes are somewhat long; the lids are represented by narrow ridges. The ears, though set back slightly too far in the head, are well rendered compared with those of most archaic heads; the details of their structure, however, have not been carefully studied. The fact that they are not represented conventionally is a proof that the head does not belong to the earlier part of the archaic period.<sup>2</sup>

The hair and back of the head are well preserved and show several interesting features. In the centre of the back of the head is a small circular depression from which a series of more or less deeply cut lines radiates in straight lines towards the front and back, and in curving lines towards the sides of the head. This arrangement, as Deonna points out,<sup>3</sup> is characteristic of the later archaic heads. The hair is confined by a fillet, the line of which is clearly marked all round the head. This fillet is tied in a knot on the top of the head immediately above the centre of the face, an arrangement which differs from the usual method of tying at the back of the head.<sup>4</sup> The loose ends of the fillet run for a short distance parallel to and above the fillet on either side of the knot. In front of the fillet is a double row of close curls in the form of volutes terminating in a single row which runs round the back of each ear. These rows of curls are the commonest method of arranging the hair in archaic art of the second half of the sixth century B.C.<sup>5</sup> There are no indications of locks hanging down in front over the shoulders. Below the fillet at the back of the head is a thick mass of hair, represented by a series of parallel lines, which roughly continue those that radiate from the centre of the head: the hair is cut off in a curved line across the nape of the neck. The shortness of the hair at the back of the head distinguishes this head from most of those of the archaic period and indicates the transition from the

<sup>1</sup> *Sculpture attique*, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> Deonna, *Les Apollons archaïques*, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 105. He cites as examples the 'Apollo' of Mt. Ptoion (Nat. Mus. Athens,

No. 20) and the Berlin Head (Berlin Mus. No. 536).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Deonna, *op. cit.* Pl. VII.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* pp. 108-109.

long hair usually worn in the sixth century to the shorter hair of the fifth century.

There can be no doubt that this head belonged to a statue of the class to which Lechat<sup>6</sup> has given the generic name of *Κούροι*, representations of the nude male figure portraying human beings and corresponding to the class of female statues known as *Κόραι*.

We have already noticed several details which indicate that this head belongs to the later part of the archaic period of Greek Art, *viz.* the rendering of the ears and eyes, the lines representing hair radiating from the centre of the skull and the abrupt termination of the hair on the nape of the neck. The fact that the head was found in Athens makes it practically certain that it is the work of the early Attic school, of which the excavations on the Acropolis have given us such ample monumental evidence.

Deonna<sup>7</sup> has made an elaborate and convincing local classification of archaic nude male figures. He ascribes the following heads and statues of which the heads have been preserved to the Attic school of the second half of the sixth century B.C. :—the Volomandra statue (Nat. Mus. Athens, No. 1906), the head from Aegina (do. No. 48), and the Acropolis head (Acrop. Mus. No. 663). These heads are, with the possible exception of the head from Aegina, considerably more archaic than our head. It is more closely akin to the group of heads which Deonna ascribes to the Attic school of the last quarter of the sixth century, *viz.* the Louvre head from Attica (No. 695), the Rayet-Jacobsen head in the Glyptothek of Ny-Carlsberg, the Webb head in the British Museum, the head from Delphi (Nat. Mus. Athens, No. 64), and the fragment of a head from Mt. Ptoion in the Museum at Thebes. These works, particularly the Louvre head and the head from Delphi, bear a close resemblance in style to our head, which may roughly be placed in the last quarter of the sixth century B.C. It is certainly more archaic in style than the two heads which Deonna attributes to the Attic school of the end of the sixth and beginning of the fifth centuries, namely, the Berlin head (Berl. Mus. No. 536) and that of the statue from Mt. Ptoion (Nat. Mus. Athens, No. 20), in which the rendering of the hair has undergone still further refinement.

This work is of interest as adding another to the not very long list of heads of Attic *Κούροι* of the sixth century B.C.

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<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 251.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 352-363.