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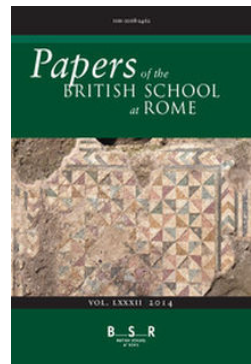
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PAPERS OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ROME.

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A BRONZE PLAQUE IN THE ROSENHEIM COLLECTION.

BY MRS. ARTHUR STRONG.

THE bronze plaque with bust portrait of Aristotle reproduced on Plate XXV. by kind permission of its present owner, Mr. Maurice Rosenheim, was once the property of the English College in Rome—the venerable institution whose history has recently been made the subject of an important and exhaustive monograph by His Eminence Cardinal Gasquet.¹ An illustration of the plaque taken from the same photograph as the present plate, together with brief notes contributed by Dr. Ashby and myself, has already been given² in His Eminence's book. Dr. Ashby's note appears in the earlier part of the book, which was already printed off when my own note, written after the re-discovery of the plaque, was sent in. The later account, therefore, could only be hurriedly inserted on the eve of publication, without time for a proof, and I gladly take this opportunity of amplifying and correcting it.³

The old label still attached to it shows that the plaque already

¹ *A History of the Venerable English College, Rome.* By Cardinal Gasquet. London, 1920.

² By permission of the Faculty of Archaeology of the British School at Rome.

³ The substance of the present note appeared in the Cardinal's book, where, however, Dr. Ashby's account and mine should have been unified, had there been time in which to see the proofs.

had a long history behind it when it came into the possession of the Collegio Inglese, having belonged in turn to Henry VIII. of England, to Cardinal Reginald Pole, to Cardinal William Allen and to his secretary, Roger Baines, who left it by will, among other 'pious donations,' to the Library of the College. It disappeared along with other treasures in the troubles brought upon the College by the French occupation of Rome in 1798. Since then the plaque has been practically lost sight of, and few of the scholars who have discussed this type of Aristotle seem even to have known that it ever existed. Neither Courajod,¹ who knew five of the replicas of this Aristotle, nor Molinier in his *Plaquettes* (under No. 643), nor again Bernoulli in his *Griechische Iconographie*,² make any mention of this particular example. But Seroux d'Agincourt had left a description of it, accompanied by a sketch, among his voluminous MS. notes for his work on the history of art, now preserved in the Vatican Library,³ and on d'Agincourt's authority the plaque was referred to by Ch. Huelsen in his exhaustive list of inscribed terminal portrait-shafts.⁴ Some years later, Dr. Ashby detected on the back of a drawing by John Alexander in the British Museum⁵ the copy of the description of a portrait of Aristotle at the English College which was evidently the same portrait described by d'Agincourt and noted by Huelsen, though the existence of the original was still unknown. Finally the researches instituted by Cardinal Gasquet in preparation for his book lent a fresh interest to the whole question, and last summer, in answer to enquiries set afoot by Dr. Ashby and myself, we were informed by Mr. G. F. Hill, Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, that the plaque was purchased some years ago by the late Max Rosenheim at the Warneck sale in Paris, and was still in his collection. By the courtesy of the present owner, Mr. Maurice Rosenheim, the plaque was deposited for my inspection at the British Museum. At the same time that it was photographed, a cast of the 'Aristotle' was taken by

¹ Courajod, *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, xxxiv. 1886, pp. 191 ff. Courajod and Molinier both believe that the 'Aristotle' had a 'Plato' as counterpart.

² Vol. ii. p. 88.

³ *Cod. Vat. Lat.* 9846 f., 98 (kindly verified for me by Monsignor H. Mann).

⁴ *Roem. Mittheilungen*, xvi. 1901, p. 178, 28*.

⁵ T. Ashby: *Forty Drawings of Roman Scenes by British Artists (1715-1850) from originals in the British Museum* (1911), p. 7; the drawing (Plate I.) is of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, and is dated 1715.



FIG. 1.—BRONZE PLAQUE IN MODENA.



FIG. 4.—PRINT BY ENEA VICO, 1546.



FIG. 5.—ENEA VICO'S PRINT REVERSED, 1553.



FIG. 6.—FROM THE *Imagines* OF F. ORSINI.

Mr. Ready, and was afterwards presented to the College in place of the vanished original.¹

The plaque is 32 cm. high and nearly 19 cm. broad, rounded at the top and pierced with holes for suspension or attachment. The philosopher is represented in profile, facing right, with long hair and beard, wearing the doctor's cap with tassel² and the doctor's hood and gown. Below, on the plinth, runs the inscription in three lines

ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗΣ | Ο ΑΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΤΩΝ | ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΩΝ

Style, workmanship and composition point to the close of the fifteenth century as the date of its production, and there is obviously no question here of a genuine portrait of the philosopher. Five other replicas exist (enumerated by Courajod and Molinier) which are respectively in Florence (Bargello), Modena (Fig. 1),³ Venice (Mus. Correr), Brunswick, and the Coll. G. Dreyfus in Paris. I have not been able to procure information as to all these, but from the almost identical measurements and technique of the Florence⁴ and Collegio Inglese examples, it seems probable that all the plaques were taken from the same mould and that any slight variants between them are due to retouching with the chisel.

The 'Aristotle' was likewise reproduced in medal form, and I am much indebted to Mr. G. F. Hill for the following description of two examples in the British Museum:—

"1. *Cast bronze medal* (Fig. 2, a). *Obv.* Bust of Aristotle to r.; wearing round cap, with legend

ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗΣ Ο ΑΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΩΝ

¹ Mr. C. F. Bell, of the Ashmolean, Oxford, and Mr. Henry Oppenheimer (who, moreover, obtained the cast for me) were also good enough to give information as to this and other replicas.

² On Aristotle with a cap see Bernoulli, *loc. cit.* In the fresco of 'St. Thomas in Glory' in Sta. Caterina at Pisa, attributed to F. Traini, Aristotle also wears a cap—though of round rather than pointed shape—in contrast to Plato, who is characterized as an Oriental by the embroidered shawl round his head.

³ Venturi, *Galleria Estense in Modena*, p. 82. The illustration in my text is after a photograph kindly procured by Cardinal Gasquet.

⁴ By the courtesy of the Director of the Bargello, Dott. G. de Nicola, I have received a photograph of the Bargello replica with details as to its dimensions, etc. It measures 325 cm. × 183 cm., and seems in every respect a replica of the Rosenheim example.

Rev. Pegasus rising r. from rock. [This reverse is a surmoulage from the medal of Cardinal Bembo by Benvenuto Cellini.] Diam. 49.5 mm.

Note.—Molinier (644) describes a specimen in the Bibliothèque Nationale two millimetres smaller. Neither specimen can be as early as the fifteenth century, since the reverse is a mechanical reproduction of Cellini's medal of Bembo (about 1539-40). But the obverse may be cast from an earlier specimen.



FIG. 2.—TWO MEDALS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

2. *Struck silver medalet* (Fig. 2, b). *Obv.* similar to preceding, but without inscription.

Rev. ΑΡΙΞ ΤΟΤ ΕΛ ΟΥΞ above image of the Ephesian Artemis.

Diam. 22.5 mm.

Not earlier than sixteenth century.¹

The effigies of both large and small medal exaggerate, as it were, the features of the 'Aristotle' of the plaque, so that the sixteenth-century date assigned to them by Mr. Hill rather confirms than contradicts the earlier date proposed above for the plaque itself. It was inevitable that in the process of multiplication the character of the face should be altered, but the descent from the portrait of the plaque is always clear.

¹ Mr. Hill adds: "In the L. Welzl v. Wellenheim Cat. (Vienna, 1845) ii. No. 13121 is described a one-sided medal, of bronze, with evidently the same type and the inscription ΑΡΙΞΤΟΤΕΛΟΥΞ. The size appears to be about 35 mm."

The 'Aristotle' was engraved by Enea Vico in 1546 (Bartsch xv. 338, No. 253).¹ Of this engraving, Dr. Ashby informs me, there is a copy reversed dated 1553 (Fig. 5),² and a still later copy with Lafréry's address,³ showing the popularity of the effigy. It figures as an authentic portrait of the philosopher in the earlier edition (1570) of the *Imagines et Elogia* of Fulvio Orsini (p. 57)⁴ though Faber, who re-edited the *Imagines* in 1606, doubted its authenticity and substituted for it a no less apocryphal Aristotle.⁵ Orsini had been misled by a series of fakes or forgeries based on the plaque, all more or less directly attributable to the notorious Pirro Ligorio. Among these were a relief described as *tabella marmorea caput exhibens comatum et barbatum pilo tectum*, which Ligorio palmed off upon Cardinal du Bellay as a genuine antique, and two herms which he provided with heads imitated from the same type of Aristotle.⁶ Enough has been said to indicate the value attached in the Renaissance to the portrait reproduced in our plaque and its replicas. As I understand that Dr. F. Studniczka, to whom we owe the recovery of the genuine portrait of Aristotle preserved in the head at Vienna and in the Museo delle Terme,⁷ is preparing a monograph on the sources of the *Imagines* of Orsini, I do not propose to dwell further here upon the iconography of the plaque.

Its interest in the present connexion lies chiefly in the long account of its history preserved on the old label already referred to. The writing has become nearly illegible through age, but the following transcript kindly made for me by Mr. G. F. Hill,⁸ is in substantial agreement with the copy which was identified by Dr. Ashby on the back of John

¹ Fig. 4 is after the example in the Print Room of the British Museum (by kindness of Mr. A. M. Hind).

² Fig. 5 is from the example in Dr. Ashby's collection.

³ No. 185 of the copy described in Bernard Quaritch's *Rough List*, No. 135, pp. 119 ff., No. 1530.

⁴ The *Elogia* was published by Lafréry. The text on p. 56 describes a marble relief (*tabella quaedam e marmore*, cf. above), but the illustration on the page facing is, to judge from its shape, after a gem (see Bernoulli, p. 88) which distorts the features of the head on the plaque to the verge of caricature.


⁵ A relief, Visconti *Iconogr. Grecque*, i., p. 92, and pl. 20, 1; Bernoulli, *loc. cit.* and note 5.

⁶ Huelsen, *op. cit.* p. 177, Nos. 26*, 27*. Apparently one of the herms was a genuine antique, the other a forgery; cf. Bernoulli, *loc. cit.*

⁷ Bernoulli, p. 94 ff.; Studniczka, *Das Bildnis des Aristoteles*, p. 24. A. Hekler, *Greek and Roman Portraits*, pl. 87.

⁸ Mr. Hill tells me that the reading is chiefly due to Mr. C. R. Peers.

Alexander's drawing.¹ Corrections or additions from this copy, which was presumably made when the original was in better condition, are marked below as A.

HANC Aristotelis Iconem HEN^{cus} VIII Angliæ
 REX dum religionem litterasque coleret fummo
 tamquam ab ipso Philosopho] jam tum spirante, ductam,
 habuit in pretio: Litterarum pietatisque studio in
 5 ANGLIA collabente, eam CARD: POLUS. unicum
 temporis fui lumen, feritatem Regis declinans, Romā
 detulit, quæ post aliquod annorum intervallum, felici
 [cas]u, ad CARD: ALANUM ingens e[tiam g]ēntis
 Anglicanæ ornam[ent]um pervenit, a quo cum fato
 10 concederet, ROGERUS BAINESIUS qui [illi] tum ab
 epistolis erat, dono eam accepit, ac vivis exiens Col-
 [leg]jj Anglicani de URBE bibliothecæ egregium
 [am]oris fui Μνημόσυνον reliquit
 [A.D.] VI IDUS OCTOB: AN^o MDCXXIII 

L. 10, *illi*, restored from A, seems necessary to make it clear that Baines was Allen's secretary. L. 14, *amoris*,² obviously the right reading, is confirmed by A. In A the two last lines are run together as follows: *amoris sui reliquit VII^o Id. Octob. Anno MDCXXIII Μνημόσυνον*.

The five personages whose names are so vividly linked together by our plaque were each, in his different way, involved in the fortunes of the English College in Rome, but Cardinal Gasquet's book deals so fully with all these matters that it would be superfluous here to do more than comment briefly on two or three points raised by the story told on the label.

The statement that the plaque originally belonged to Henry VIII. reminds us that the cultivated Tudors apparently held Aristotle in high honour. If we may trust a conjecture of the late J. H. Middleton, it is Aristotle who, bearded like the figure of our plaque³ and with 'a sword-knife and gypspere hanging to his girdle' as befits the 'fighting philo-

¹ During his stay in Rome in 1715, Alexander, like other distinguished Englishmen, was doubtless entertained at the English College, and would then see the plaque.

² [am]oris had been suggested by Mr. J. A. Herbert for Mr. Peers' [hon]oris.

³ Here, if I interpret rightly a rough sketch before me, Aristotle wore a Greek hat similar to that of Palaeologus in Filarete's bust.

sopher,' stands in the first niche to the left of the entrance in Henry VII.'s chapel in Westminster Abbey.¹ There is no trace, however, of Henry's personal ownership of any portrait of Aristotle. The King was a noted collector, as the lists of objects of art belonging to him testify, but though several plaques and plaquettes are enumerated in these lists no 'Aristotle' figures among them.² The omission could perhaps be explained on the supposition that the plaque was only a short time the property of Henry. This is what had occurred to me when suggesting in my note to Cardinal Gasquet's book that the 'Aristotle' was perhaps procured in Italy by Reginald Pole himself in those years (1519-1527) when the future Cardinal stood high in his royal cousin's favour, and when after studying at Padua at Henry's own wish and expense, he visited the rest of Italy and came into close touch with its varied literary and artistic interests. Pole returned to England in 1527 and a first break with the King occurred in 1533 on the difficulties caused by the question of the Royal Divorce, at which time Pole received 'permission' to travel abroad once more. In these short and crowded eight years had the plaque been ever handed over? May not the language of the label be due to later amplification? On any theory it is difficult to see how Pole got hold of a plaque in the King's possession after the break between them. Yet if ever it was in England, Pole presumably took the 'Aristotle' away with him in 1533. He cannot have had it when he returned from abroad in 1544, since it is inconceivable that it should have left the country after his death at Lambeth in 1558. Pole was created Cardinal by Paul III. in 1537, and next year was appointed Curator or Guardian of the English Hospice in the Via Monserrato, which was transformed in 1575 into the English College. Here Pole lived when in Rome, and it is natural to suppose that he had the plaque with him, and left it at the College on his return to England. What the lucky accident was—indicated by the *felici casu*

¹ See J. T. Micklethwaite, 'Notes on the Imagery of Henry VII.'s Chapel'; *Archæologia* 47, 2 (1883), p. 368.

² I am deeply obliged to Mrs. R. L. Poole, of Oxford, for her kindness in hunting for some mention of the plaque through the Inventories of Jewelry in the 'Calendars of Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII.' (Brown and Gairdner). The following are interesting items in the present connection: 1523 (year), No. 5114, 'a tablet of St. John Baptist.—1530, No. 6789, under "Images," Our Lady of Boleyn with a subject; a gentleman of the Almain fashion, etc. . . . also *Twenty-five tablets and plates*, among which St. Margaret and St. Anne, Our Lady, St. George, St. Sebastian, St. Barbara, St. Peter, St. Christopher, etc.' But Mrs. Poole adds 'no Aristotle.'

of the label—that afterwards brought the ‘Aristotle’ into the possession of Cardinal William Allen is likewise unknown.¹ Allen had been intimately connected with the foundation of the College, where he, too, lived even after his elevation to the Cardinalate (1587) though at his death (1594) the plaque apparently became the property, not of the College, but of the Cardinal’s faithful friend and secretary, Roger Baines. Finally, when Baines died, the ‘Aristotle’ was legally made over by will to the College. At this point its adventures should have ceased had it not been for the Napoleonic happenings of the year 1798. May we not hope that an object so intimately connected as is the ‘Aristotle’ with the history of the oldest English institution in the Eternal City may some day be seen restored once more to its old Roman home?

Though not concerned here with the question of the portraiture of Aristotle, real or imaginary, I cannot resist suggesting in conclusion that the plaque which so long passed as a genuine portrait of *il maestro di color che sanno*, though its non-antique character is self-evident to modern eyes, may possibly be discovered in time to possess iconographic interest of another kind. That it is a portrait seems clear alike from the individuality of the features—evident especially in the high cheek bones, hollow cheeks and long upper lip—and from the precision of all the details of hair, beard and costume. This is no generalized traditional conception such as that which inspired the painters of ‘St. Thomas in Glory’ at Sta. Caterina in Pisa or at Sta. Maria Novella in Florence, where Aristotle is represented according to the purely conventional type so often given in the Renaissance to figures intended to represent ancient philosophers. There is much, therefore, to commend the suggestion thrown out by the young Belgo-Russian Hellenist, M. Léon Kochnitzky, to the effect that we have here under the guise of Aristotle an authentic likeness of some illustrious Greek scholar of the Renaissance. The suggestion gains in force, moreover, if we accept the view of both Courajod and Molinier that the ‘Aristotle’ had for counterpart a second plaque representing Plato. What more natural than to represent these philosophers with the features of scholars who had respectively championed their causes in the fifteenth century—possibly in the famous Council of Florence of the year 1439? Descriptions exist of these Greeks, whose long beards

¹ A gift from Pole to Allen is out of the question, as Allen was only one year old when Pole left England in 1533, and did not go to Rome till nine years after Pole’s death.

and shaggy hair roused the mirth, it appears, of the younger scholars of Florence, who, however, soon learned to recognise them as 'fully worthy of their ancestors . . . and still true to the traditions of the Lyceum and the old Academy.'¹

The Greek invasion of Italy had begun long before the Fall of Constantinople. In one of the minor scenes of the great bronze gates of



FIG. 3.—BRONZE MEDAL IN MUSEO CORRER.

St. Peter's Filarete depicted a sitting of the Council, and in after days people who had seen the *Graeci*—many of whom had established themselves in Italy—were pointed at with envy by younger contemporaries. Out of compliment to his labours, some Aristotelian of the calibre of Theodorus Gaza² or Georgius Trapezuntius might well be represented as

¹ J. E. Sandys, *History of Classical Scholarship*, ii. pp. 59 f.

² I am not referring here to the 'portrait' of Theodorus in the MS. of his Grammar at the Laurentian Library. By the courtesy of Mr. W. Ashburner, of Florence, and of Prof. Guido Biagi, a photograph of this lies before me; it is obviously a quite conventional type.

the great philosopher himself. Or should this appear too bold a conjecture, it may at least be surmised that an artist of the later Quattrocento took one of these learned Greeks as his model for the portrait of the illustrious philosopher, whose writings had so profoundly influenced medieval thought. It will be seen that the questions raised by the 'Aristotle' are not easy of solution. But the interest that now attaches to the replica in the Collegio Inglese will serve to make the whole series better known and perhaps also to bring to light the 'Plato' if that companion plaque really ever existed.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Ashby for allowing me to publish what in the first instance was his discovery.

By the courtesy of the 'Direzione' of the Museo Correr in Venice, I receive—though unfortunately too late for insertion in the body of the article—a photograph of their version of the Aristotle (Fig. 3). It now appears that the Correr example is not, as was generally supposed, a replica of the plaquette with inscription as above, but a large medal measuring 8.1 cm. in diameter. The photograph shows it slightly enlarged. This medal presents variations from the plaquette in the treatment of hair and beard which here are lank and straight, in the shape of the head and line of profile, in the disappearance of the hood,¹ but the derivation is clearly from the same original. Inscribed ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗΣ.

According to Mr. G. F. Hill, who sends me the information, the British Museum also possesses a version of the medal (one-sided, of lead or pewter, diam. 104 mm.) in which the character of the cap is misunderstood (it is made taller, with regular ribbing, and has no turnover or tassel at the apex). The inscription is in Latin—ARIS TOTELES. This version is evidently very late.

¹ In the medals from the British Museum, likewise, the hood which appears in the silver medalet (above, Fig. 2 b) is reduced in the bronze medal (Fig. 2 a) to a border (that of the hood), treated so as to resemble a straight collar.



BRONZE PLAQUE FORMERLY IN THE ENGLISH COLLEGE AT ROME.