



BRONZE STATUETTE IN ORIENTAL DRESS.

A BRONZE FIGURE OF A YOUTH IN ORIENTAL COSTUME.

[PLATE II.]

THE remarkable bronze figure published on Pl. II. was exhibited, by permission of the owner, at a meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies on Tuesday, May 8. It has not, so far as I am aware, been discussed in print, and has all the interest which attaches to an unsolved problem.

The figure was said to have been found by Egyptian natives, in 1912, in ruins to the east of the Suez Canal, but other reports ascribed it to Alexandria; and it is clear that, unless better information comes to hand, no stress can be laid on the alleged place of origin.

In the case of every new work of art, and especially if it presents features of striking novelty, the first question to be asked is: Is it genuine? But in the present instance, whatever the interpretation of the bronze may be, its authenticity and antiquity seem beyond question.

The figure is that of a boy, twenty-five inches in height, all told. The height of the head is a little more than a seventh of the whole, so the figure is not that of a young child, though it is familiar that the true proportion for the young is not always observed by the ancients. According to Schadow's scale of proportions he should be between ten and eleven.

The boy is dressed for a cold climate, with a sleeved tunic, gathered in folds under the girdle, cloak fastened on the right shoulder with a quatrefoil brooch, and low shoes, tied with looped thongs. The left hand is empty, but the fingers seem to have held an object of some size, which appears to have been attached to the wrist, near the end of the sleeve. The extended right hand held the handle of some lost object. It is finished off with a roughly modelled knob at the lower end, and is on a slight curve, and gradually increases in diameter to the point at which it is broken off, between the thumb and the forefinger.

One curious detail in the costume calls for notice. In front of the boy's middle is a sort of broad scarf, which hangs down in a heavy central fold, and is gathered up at the sides to two objects which serve as suspenders. On his right side the folds of drapery are complete. On the left, they are only preserved for a length of about half an inch, and are then cut away, as if by intention, to make room for the fingers, and for the object held in the

hand. For these there would certainly not have been room, if the folds had been of a size corresponding to those of the other side.

For the singular scarf I cannot supply any near parallel. At first sight, the object might be taken for a fold in a hitched up tunic, but it is not so. In some of the late terracottas of Erotes and the like, something of the sort occurs as a wisp of drapery.¹ But there the figure is otherwise nude. When, as here, the figure is fully draped in a tunic, the motive for the scarf seems to disappear.

Still more remarkable than the scarf is the headdress, which may be provisionally called a tiara. It is evidently supposed to be made of a stiff material. At the base it is nearly square in plan. The sides are slightly longer than the front and back, and the back is slightly wider than the front. At the top it terminates in a ridge, with three knobs. Each side is divided by parallel ribs into two panels, on which palmette ornaments are incised. A flap, as of leather, falls down at the back.



FIG. 1.—SILVER COIN OF TIGRANES. (Brit. Mus.)

It might be supposed that the clue to the subject is to be found in this extraordinary tiara, but it is by no means obvious. Western Asia is a region of distinctive headdresses. Those of Assyria, Persia, Crete, the Hittites, the Cypriotes and the rest have certain common characteristics and distinguishing marks. But the boy is so evidently Hellenistic, or Graeco-Roman, that it seems useless to hunt among the nations in remoter centuries.

If we confine our view to about the first century B.C. the Armenian royal headdress suggests itself, and we have it in detail on the coins of Tigranes² (97–56 B.C.). It occurs with trifling variations on different coins (Fig. 1). Like the tiara of the bronze, it has a tapering form, terminating above in a ridge with a series of knobs, and it has a long flap behind. On the other hand the lower part is oval, not rectangular in plan. Instead of the palmettes, we have a design of two eagles flanking a star. The flap is not a single one, falling at the back, but double at the sides, in the Persian manner. In case of need they can be brought across the chin, or, occasionally, to overlap on the lower part of the front of the tiara.

There is a reason for making minute study of the Armenian tiara, in connexion with the bronze. When the discovery was fresh a highly romantic interpretation of the bronze was suggested, which now calls for statement and examination. Antony and Cleopatra, as the consequence of their *liaison*, had twin children, a boy and girl, born in 40 B.C., and named Alexander

¹ Compare a figure of a boy, once in the Gréau collection, and not I think, entirely above suspicion. I owe this reference to Miss

Hutton.

² *B.M.C. Seleucidæ*, Pl. 27.

Helios and Cleopatra Selene. There was also another child whom they called Ptolemy.

Some six years after the birth of the twins, Antony ejected Artavasdes from the throne of Armenia, and amused himself at Alexandria, redistributing the eastern kingdoms. I quote Plutarch's account³ of the proceedings:—

'Antony incurred additional hatred, on account of the division amongst his children, which he made at Alexandria, and which was considered theatrical, and pretentious, and anti-Roman. He filled the gymnasium with a crowd, and set two golden thrones on a platform of silver, one for himself and one for Cleopatra, and others not so high for the children. First he declared Cleopatra queen of Egypt, and Cyprus, and Coelesyria, with Caesarion, reputedly her son by Caesar, to share her sovereignty. Next he declared his own and Cleopatra's sons kings of kings, and to Alexander he assigned Armenia and Media, and Parthia (whenever it should be conquered); to Ptolemy, Phoenicia, Syria and Cilicia. At the same time he brought forward the children, namely Alexander in Median costume, including tiara and erect kitaris; and Ptolemy with boots and cloak and hat (*causia*) with a diadem. The latter was the costume of the kings who succeeded Alexander, and the former was that of the Medes and Armenians. The boys saluted their parents, and then one was surrounded by a guard of Armenians and the other by a guard of Macedonians. Cleopatra, both then, and on other occasions when she appeared in public, wore the sacred robe of Isis, and was styled New Isis.'

The later career of Alexander Helios was inglorious. In 29 B.C. Augustus celebrated his threefold triumph. On the third day, which was the Egyptian triumph, Cleopatra was carried along on a couch, in effigy, to represent the fashion of her death, and the children Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene were among the prisoners. Plutarch states that Antony's much wronged wife Octavia took the children, and brought them up with her own, but from that point Alexander disappears from history.⁴

Plutarch's account of the scene at Alexandria has suggested the theory that the bronze represents Alexander Helios, in his brief moment of childish and precarious splendour. The interpretation is romantic and exciting, but it will hardly stand sober criticism.

The first objection is of a general *a priori* kind, that unfortunately things do not fall so pat in archæology, as to give us in effigy a particular incident mentioned by Plutarch.

The Median costume would no doubt have included tunic and trousers. It also not infrequently includes a chlamys, but it seems on such monuments as the Sidon sarcophagi to be represented as a larger and more ample cloak than that of the boy, which is more suggestive of the Macedonian cloak worn by Ptolemy. But the main question is as to the form of the tiara, and we cannot do better than refer to the coins of Antony and Cleopatra, with Armenian symbols,⁵ for the shape which may be supposed to have furnished a model. On these the tiara is nearly of the form of that of Tigranes,

³ Plut. *Antonius* 54. The story is closely paraphrased by Shakespeare, *Ant. and Cleop.*, Act III. sc. 6.

⁴ Dio Cassius 21, 21; Plutarch, *Antonius* 87.

⁵ Grueber, *Cat. of Coins of the Roman Republic*, Pl. 115, Figs. 10 and 15. Compare also the denarius of Augustus, *ibidem*, Pl. 119, Fig. 4.

which as we have seen is materially different from that of the bronze, with its rectangular plan, its absence of side flaps, and its single flap at the back.

The tiptoe attitude of the boy is common in late Greek and Graeco-Roman art for children, Erotes and the like, but it hardly seems appropriate to the suggested regal portrait.

The royal costume of Commagene is in some respects not unlike that of Armenia. It is preserved for us in the reliefs of the Nemrud Dagh.⁶ That mountain, the highest of the eastern part of the Taurus range, is crowned with the royal burying place of King Antiochos (who reigned 69–31 B.C.). It consists of a mighty tumulus, 150 feet in height. East and west of the



a

b

FIG. 2.—VOTIVE RELIEFS OF NEMRUD DAGH.

tumulus, and just at its origin, are the two terraces, with their rows of colossal statues, reliefs, and inscriptions. The reliefs consist partly of votive reliefs of royal ancestors; partly of Antiochos doing homage to divine patrons, to Zeus enthroned (Fig. 2a),⁷ to Heracles (Fig. 2b), Helios and

⁶ Humann and Puchstein, *Reisen in Klein-Asien und Nordsyrien*, p. 232.

⁷ Humann and Puchstein, *op. cit.* *Atlas*, Pl. 39.

Commagene. Antiochos wears the royal tiara. The cheek pieces are crossed above his brow in the Heracles relief, one lapping over the other. In the Zeus relief, the illustration leaves some uncertainty on the point. The costume includes a long sleeved tunic, a cloak, trousers and shoes. The singular plan of looping up the skirt of the long tunic with thongs, to give freedom of action to the legs, seems to be peculiar to the group of reliefs.

It is noteworthy, however, for our present purpose, that besides the royal tiara of Antiochos, and the Persian tiara of Zeus, different forms of tiara-like headdresses are worn by many others of the figures, both statues and reliefs. One such figure appears to be a royal kinsman.⁸

I would therefore suggest that by the first century B.C. the use of a tiara-formed headdress was somewhat indiscriminate, and that it was no longer, as in earlier ages, the special privilege of the great king, and that if we were better informed as to the Hellenistic art of Western Asia we might find more examples of its occurrence. If that is admissible, we may look about for one of those personages who in more Western representations are all characterized by a conventional 'Phrygian cap,' but who in the East might occur with a more distinctive headdress. Among such persons, Ganymede, Orpheus, Mithras, Attis and others, I would suggest the eunuch Attis as most appropriate.

Little is known of the earlier forms of the Attis type, before it was debased in Roman art. Certain terracottas found in numbers at Amphipolis⁹ seem to represent the subject. The figure is that of a youth with tunic and sleeves, long close-fitting trousers, sometimes a short cloak, and a peaked Phrygian cap, with flaps. His attributes are a syrinx and a pedum. In the later empire, the subject becomes common in votive and other reliefs, in a degraded form. The tunic, closely clinging to the abdomen, has been abandoned for nude flesh. It is worth pointing out that the gathering of drapery below the abdomen corresponds in some measure with the peculiar body scarf of the bronze.

The attribute, of which the handle remains in the right hand, may be a pedum. The fingers of the left hand seem to have held something, but there would hardly be room for the tympanum which occurs on the late reliefs, and the position of the fingers is not right for a syrinx.

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⁸ Humann and Puchstein, *Atlas*, Pl. 35, p. 517; Pls. 5-8. Cf. Biardot, *Terres-Cuites Grecques*, Pls. 16, 17.

⁹ Perdrizet, *Bull. de Corr. Hellénique*, xxi.