

A FRAGMENT OF AN ARCHAIC VESSEL WITH STAMPED DECORATION

(PLATE 72)

A FRAGMENT of pottery of unusual interest (Pl. 72)¹ was found in the Argive Heraion in November 1949. The piece, now in the collection of sherds at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, was projecting from the foundation courses of the north wall of the East Building.²

As the profile drawing (Fig. 1)³ shows, the sherd⁴ includes a section of the

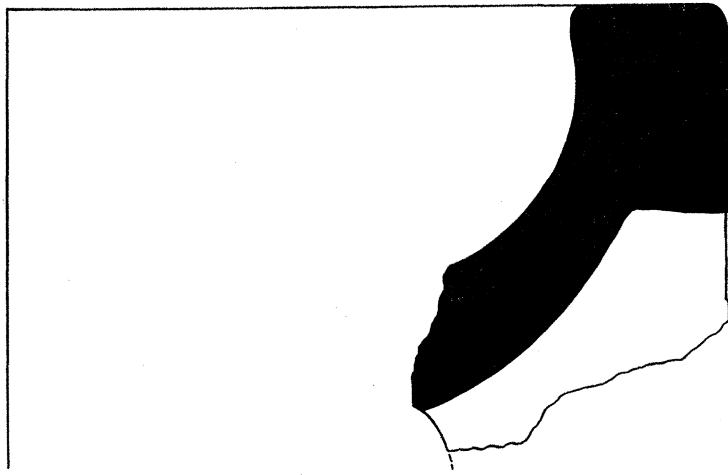


Fig. 1. Profile of Sherd (1:2).

bowl and the top of one leg of a kind of tripod vessel. Neither the width of the legs nor the height of the vessel are known precisely, but the proportions of the vase were probably like those of smaller tripod bowls or pyxides common at Corinth.⁵ The salmon-pink clay is of coarse texture with numerous large brick-red grits throughout. The light brownish-yellow slip, 0.002 m. thick where the relief of the stamped decoration is highest, is much worn on the rim; on the interior it is so thin that the large

¹ I am grateful to Miss M. Alison Frantz for this photograph.

² C. Waldstein, *The Argive Heraeum*, I, Boston, 1902, pp. 116-117, pl. XII.

³ My appreciation to Miss Marion Welker for this drawing.

⁴ H. 0.12 m., L. 0.23 m., Th. at rim 0.04 m., Th. where leg separates from underside of bowl 0.021 to 0.03 m., est. Diam. of bowl 0.38 m.

⁵ S. Weinberg, *Corinth*, VII, i, *The Geometric and Orientalizing Pottery*, p. 69, nos. 290, 291, pl. 37; pp. 72, 87; C. Boulter, *A. J. A.*, XLI, 1937, p. 229, no. 34, fig. 25. See also *supra*, p. 201, No. 250.

grits are visible. Comparison of both clay and slip with examples⁶ from the Potters' Quarter and elsewhere at Corinth showed clearly that the vase is of Corinthian manufacture.

The decoration is divided into two portions, a zone 0.05 m. high just under the rim, and, below it ornamenting the legs alone, a band 0.02 m. high. The stamp unit of this band consists of two rows of three spirals with a fan-shaped element filling the space between the ends of the two rows of spirals.⁷ The full unit of the stamp on the zone is preserved too, for the first two figures on the left repeat the last two figures on the right. This unit of four figures is marked off at both ends, to the left of the figure with the spear and to the right of the second gorgon, by a slight ridge of clay and faint lines of smoothing. This indicates that the stamp was not a cylinder which would have been rolled along continuously, but a mould-like stamp which was fitted against the curve of the vessel.

The scene represented is obviously the pursuit of Perseus by the gorgons. The second figure of the stamp unit, Perseus, like the Perseus on the shield of Herakles⁸ who . . . ὥς τε νόημι' ἐπὸτάτο, has his right arm and hand with palm visible stretched forth at shoulder level as he hastens away to the left. On his feet are winged sandals, and a sword hangs across his chest. The identification of the *kibisis* which one would expect to find in his possession is less certain. The partially-preserved circle between Perseus and the figure ahead of him may be the *kibisis* swinging from his outstretched hand;⁹ it may, however, be simply the remains of a filling ornament like the bird flying between Perseus and the first gorgon.

Two gorgons, in identical archaic pose with chest frontal and legs in profile, press hard upon Perseus. Unusual for gorgons, either Corinthian, Attic, or Chalcidian, is the straight-leg running position as well as the peplos split at the waist and the right leg projecting. The *Knielaufen* pose and a short chiton are more common by far.¹⁰ The closest parallel for this straight-leg running position with skirt split is the Rhodian plate of the late seventh century B. C. on which the gorgon in repre-

⁶ Corinth Museum, Inv. C-39-281 (same clay), KP2788 (same clay and slip), C-38-684 (same slip), all unpublished.

⁷ An exact duplicate of this spiral pattern is to be found on a bronze volute crater of the late sixth century B. C. which is most probably of Corinthian manufacture. B. Filow, *Die Archaische Nekropole von Trebenischte am Ochrida-See*, Berlin, 1927, pp. 43, 45, figs. 38a, b.

⁸ Hesiod, *The Shield of Herakles*, lines 216 ff.

⁹ For *kibisis* swinging from hand see R. Cook, *B. S. A.*, XXXIV, 1933-1934, p. 60, pl. 19. For the more common *kibisis* swinging from arm see C. Albizzati, *Vasi Antichi Dipinti del Vaticano*, Rome, 1927, pl. 34, 335; *C. V. A.*, Bibl. Nat. I, pl. 46, 1, 2, 5, 6; E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung*, Munich, 1923, fig. 190.

¹⁰ H. Payne, *Necrocorinthia, a Study of Corinthian Art in the Archaic Period*, Oxford, 1931, pp. 79 ff., pls. 18, 43; G. M. Young, *J. H. S.*, LVII, 1937, p. 125, pl. 6, 1; *C. V. A.*, Bibl. Nat. I, pl. 46; C. Smith, *J. H. S.*, V, 1884, pl. 43; A. Rumpf, *Chalkidische Vasen*, Berlin, 1927, pls. 55, 108, 117, 137, 145, 198.

sented as a Πότνια Θηρῶν.¹¹ The decoration of the peplos which consists of an all-over diamond pattern with a raised circle in the center of each diamond is common in archaic Greek art.¹² The hem of the peplos is indicated by a narrow band of parallel lines slanting from right to left. Among Corinthian gorgons the single pair of sickle-shaped wings is more usual than two pairs of wings.¹³ The facial details of the first gorgon are partially preserved: the tongue protrudes, and a tusk projects from each corner of the broad-grinning mouth. There is no trace of a beard or of snakes in hair or at waist; these gorgons are clearly of the later Corinthian type which began to be humanized in the early sixth century B. C. and developed until gorgons became “. . . simple winged human beings of normal proportions with gorgoneia instead of ordinary heads.”¹⁴

A nude, bearded male figure with left hand resting on hip and right hand grasping a spear leads the procession. Though his identifying attributes are missing,¹⁵ he is most probably Hermes, who, with Athena, figures largely in the myth as Perseus' helper.

In relief pottery, this representation of the Perseus myth is unique except on one complete Boeotian pithos and a fragment of another with a scene of Perseus beheading a strange half-horse Medusa.¹⁶ The technique of the Boeotian representations is probably not stamping, however, but rather free-modelling of clay applied over an incised design with stamped decorations added afterwards.¹⁷

Waldstein¹⁸ early recognized Corinth as a center for the manufacture of relief pottery, and, at Corinth itself a few sherds have been found. Only one,¹⁹ however, which appears to be later in date stylistically²⁰ than this fragment from the Argive Heraion, has human figures. In the absence of comparable archaic ceramic relief with human representations, reference to the figure style of Argive-Corinthian

¹¹ J. Six, *J. H. S.*, VI, 1885, pp. 277 ff., pl. 59.

¹² Εφ. Ἀρχ., 1892, pl. 9 (Boeotian pithos with relief decoration); B. Graef, *Jahrbuch*, I, 1886, pl. 10 (Payne, *op. cit.*, no. 1461, Late Cor. I); E. Kunze, *Neue Meisterwerke Griechischer Kunst aus Olympia*, Munich, 1948, fig. 47.

¹³ For Corinthian gorgons and other figures with a single pair of wings see Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 80, fig. 23e, pl. 18, 1, p. 87, fig. 27e; E. Curtius and F. Adler, *Olympia*, IV, Berlin, 1890, pl. 8, 78; B. Filow, *op. cit.*, pl. 8, 2.

¹⁴ Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

¹⁵ At least two vase paintings of the pursuit of Perseus by the gorgons represent the assisting divinities without their attributes. *Arch. Zeit.*, 1882, pl. 9, 2; C. Albizzati, *op. cit.*, pl. 34, 335; J. D. Beazley, *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, V, 1934, p. 113 (79).

¹⁶ A. DeRidder, *B. C. H.*, XXII, 1898, p. 457, fig. 7, pls. 4, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 511-512.

¹⁸ *The Argive Heraeum*, II, Boston, 1905, p. 182, nos. 5, 6, pl. 63.

¹⁹ Corinth Museum, Inv. CP-1911, unpublished.

²⁰ Professor Saul S. Weinberg, who is now working on the Corinthian relief fragments, has kindly suggested a date about the middle of the sixth century B.C. or a bit later.

bronze reliefs ²¹ and of Corinthian vase paintings ²² suggests a date just before the middle of the sixth century B. C. for the tripod fragment from the Argive Heraion. It therefore fills a noticeable gap in the history of Corinthian relief fragments between the seventh century B.C. sherds from the Argive Heraion and the later fragment found at Corinth. Furthermore, the sherd has interest for the entire field of relief pottery in the archaic period, refuting as it does the statement which Courby was able to make at the time of his study that “. . . on ne rencontre jamais, avant la fin du VI^e siècle, un vase à relief qui puisse exactement se ‘transposer’ en vase peint . . .” ²³

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²¹ W. Lamb, *Greek and Roman Bronzes*, London, 1929, p. 120; M. Holleaux, *B. C. H.*, XVI, 1892, pp. 353 ff., pl. 11; E. Kunze, *op. cit.*, p. 22, fig. 45.

²² Payne, *op. cit.*, pl. 40, 2; E. Pfuhl, *op. cit.*, fig. 190; C. Albizzati, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²³ F. Courby, *Les Vases Grecs à Reliefs*, Paris, 1922, p. 39. It may be noted that the direction of Perseus' flight on the matrix was to the right, as it is usually represented in vase paintings. See *C. V. A.*, Louvre, III, pls. 15 and 16; *C. V. A.*, Bibl. Nat., I, pl. 46; *C. V. A.*, The Robinson Collection, I, pl. 17; *C. V. A.*, British Museum, III, He, pl. 10, 3; the Nessos vase, *Ant. Denk.*, I, pl. 57; C. Albizzati, *op. cit.*, pl. 34, 335.



a. Sélinonte. Mur de l'acropole



b. Olympie. Mur de la terrasse des trésors

PIERRE AMANDRY: OBSERVATIONS SUR LES MONUMENTS DE L'HÉRAION D'ARGOS



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