

THE BOY JOCKEY

In the fall of 1926, the Greek archaeologists, under the supervision of Mr. N. Bertos, were diving for antiquities off the coast of Artemisium. Their success was large. In the 1926 *APXAIOLΟΓΙΚΟΝ ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ*^①, Mr. Bertos has published the finds. His article states that, during ancient times, a boat loaded with cargo apparently met with an accident, sending the ship and its freight straight to the bottom of the sea. All of the objects were, retrieved in 1926, within the same small area, which presupposes that the bottom of the boat fell directly out and down. On the floor of the sea among the finds, were many pebbles of a variety different from those normally found in this area on the bottom. These, as was the custom, were probably used as ballast. From the nature of the remainder of the boat and its appurtenances, Bertos supposes that it sank not later than the first century B.C. Certainly it was no earlier than this, for some of the antiquities found are easily dated as late as the second century B.C.

Among the objects which the divers raised was a bronze statue-badly damaged by time and the sea-of a small boy. The right arm was found separate from the figure, and the right leg from the thigh down was missing. This was found, however, in a subsequent exploration of the same area. The statue is, at the present date, in the National Museum at Athens and complete in the original with the exception of restorations and patches of small parts of the anatomy, which had rotted or been worn away. It is now quite

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free from holes and corroded portions, and is very faithfully and conservatively restored. (See photograph 1.) For further information as to its condition when first found, and for a photograph of it at that time, see the *ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΟΝ ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ*, *pages 91-95 ΠΑΡΑΡΤΗΜΑ*

The bronze figure is a male child in the position of a horseback rider. He is bent sharply forward at the hips, his body from the hips up and his head are turned toward the left. His left arm is raised in front of the head and bent at the elbow; his left hand is clenched around some fragments of bronze which are all that remain of the reins. His right arm is bent at the elbow in a right angle also, but is pulled back and down in the position one would expect of the arm which is used for quiring the horse; the right hand clutches a fragment of bronze also, which is undoubtedly what is left of a whip. (See photograph 1.) There is a hole left purposely in the middle of the upper abdomen, and I agree with Mr. Bertos in thinking that this was for the purpose of clamping the rider to his mount. (See photographs 1 and 2.) The eyes of the statue were inset with another material, of which only one small piece in the right eye remains. (See photograph 4.) The boy's dress consists of a chiton and spurs. The chiton is caught up over the left shoulder, on his right side hangs down below his arm in front and back, is belted at the waist, blouses over above the belt, and terminates some distance above the knees. (See photographs 1 and 6.) The spurs consist of thongs wound around the ankle and under the instep, and protruding prongs on the heel. (See photograph 3.)

Mr. Bertos, in describing the statue, says that it is a life-size portrayal of a small boy between eight and ten years old. The age which he gives is correct, but the statue is

considerably under life-size. The dimensions of the figure are as follows:

Height from bottom of chiton to tip of left hand-	0.65m.;
Height from top of head to toe (giving approximate height of the child)-	ca.1.04m.;
Length of arm-	0.38m.;
From crotch to heel-	0.49m.;
Foot length-	0.15m.;
From tip of reins to left foot-	0.82m.;
From whip to right foot-	0.42m.;
From top of head to left foot-	0.82m.;
From top of head to right foot-	0.87m.;
Spread of body between heels-	0.62m.;
Spread of body between knees-	0.35m.;
Spread of body between hands-	0.64m.;
Thickness of drapery-	ca.0.0025m.;

The boy is a jockey. It is evident from his appearance that he is not a child riding ponyback for pleasure. He is looking back to discover the proximity of his competitors. There is no pleasure in his facial expression-only excitement and a grim determination to win. His tongue is pressed forward against his lower teeth and lips, and he is breathless with the intensity of the situation. (See photograph 4.) Miss Anita Klein in her book, *CHILD LIFE IN GREEK ART*, makes no mention of the greek child as a jockey. To be sure, this statue is the sole example of such a thing, but it is an outstanding figure and not to be ignored in a study of the child in Greek sculpture! I ought here to say that Mr. Bertos offers

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the possibility that the statue represents Mars, the god of war, and not simply a child employed as a jockey. I disagree heartily with this theory, for the child is obviously of a low caste, entirely lacking in anything which might be construed as god-like, and of far too humble an appearance and physiognomy to be anything but a boy of the streets.

When the figure was discovered, there was found with it and the other objects, parts of a bronze horse-head, chest, neck, and left front foot. I was unable to find it in Athens, but Mr. Bertos describes it as of natural size and in the activity of running. At first sight the archaeologists thought that the horse and jockey were parts of the same group. But after cleaning, the horse proved to be definitely fifth century B.C. The boy is obviously not, the reasons for which assertion I will go into later. The execution of the horse, Mr. Bertos says, is perfect, and he compares it to the Parthenon pediment horses. If, as he says, the horse is life-size, it is impossible that a figure as small as the Boy Jockey should have been mounted upon it. The spread of the knees of the child is too small to permit him to sit astride anything but a horse considerably under life-size. Mr. Bertos, after reaching the conclusion that they were separate pieces because of their different dates, felt that there must be another horse and another rider on the sea bottom off Artemisium. To this date none has been discovered, but this does not make it any less certain that the horse and rider are unconnected.

To quote Mr. Bertos again, the statue was in very poor condition when first discovered. He feels that this was partially owing to its having been submerged in the sea for about two thousand years.

thousand years. However, he goes on to say that the many worn places on the body cannot be attributed entirely to the influence of time, but also to the poor execution of the work originally. He uses this idea that the statue is not finished with great care, as an argument to prove that it cannot be of the good Greek period. The statue is now in excellent condition, and there seem to have been very few places which it was necessary to retouch. I think that Mr. Bertos must have judged the execution poor before the statue had been properly cleaned. It is very well executed. Nevertheless, I do not need to agree with Mr. Bertos' statement to prove that it is not of the good Greek period. The technique and style of the figure are beyond any doubt well out of the fifth century sculpture, and its idealism and classicism. Primarily the subject is of the genre type. Secondly the statue is very realistic. The straining of every muscle of the entire body produces an ugly effect at times; in certain lights the boy looks positively distorted, harried, and haggard. (See photograph 2.) The eyebrows, disarranged by the riding, are represented as such; they are true to life. I have mentioned the protruding tongue; this is not pleasant to look at, but it is realistic. The muscles in the legs and arms, the wrinkles on the backs of the legs at the knee, the veins in the neck, and the scrawny breastbones are all exact and very living. The chiton which the boy is wearing is torn and ragged; there is no dressing him up for appearance' sake. The drapery is pressed flat against the body in front, and is blown out behind, which gives an effect of speed and movement. The garment is graphically represented, as Mr. Bertos says. The chiton falls in great folds, making strong shadow lines. (See photograph 6.) The whole figure is sculp-

tured graphically. The torso is twisted, as I said before. The entire statue is life-like and very vitalized; the muscles with their straining are full of vitality. In the composition of the statue, there is realism, ease and mastery of technique, and graphic representation. These qualities class it in the Hellenistic period. In the National Museum, it is dated ca. 200 B.C., which is as approximately correct as one is able to determine.

In the *ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΟΝ ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ* article, it is stated that the Boy Jockey is not a greek child, but a mulatto. Mr. Bertos goes on to say that the representation of mulattoes delighted the Alexandrian art, since the executors found their models close at hand owing to the mixed population of the town. This theory is ingenious, to say the least! The statue clearly being a product of the Hellenistic age, might also be a product of the Alexandrian school. Hence, since the boy's face is of an unusual contour, what is more natural than to decide that he is mulatto, etc. etc.? But I am not convinced that he has negro blood in him. On the contrary, I am sure that he has not. True, he has high cheekbones, a rather flat bridge to his nose, and a thick underlip (See photograph 4); but many greek children today- I have examined them closely- have high cheekbones. Flat noses are rather less common, but children's noses are seldom other than pug and turned up, as his is. The impression of fullness which his lower lip gives may be explained by the pressure of his tongue against it. His hair is wavy, but decidedly not kinky as the hair of mulattoes customarily is. His profile is not unlike that of any small child (of white blood) with an attractive face, in spite of the fact that the photograph makes it possible ^{to imagine} that the bronze figure is that of a dark-skinned boy. (See photograph 5.) Because of these refutations, and after studying

the monograph, THE NEGRO IN GREEK ART, I am sure that the Boy Jockey has no negro blood in him.

The statue of the Boy Jockey is exactly what the name signifies. There are no pretensions, and the artist leaves nothing to the imagination. He does not attempt to raise the work above a level of portraying with great exactitude, the actual appearance of a child of the lower classes competing in a horse race. In spite of this, (or because of it, as the case may be,) to my mind the Boy Jockey is a 'purple patch' of Hellenistic sculpture.

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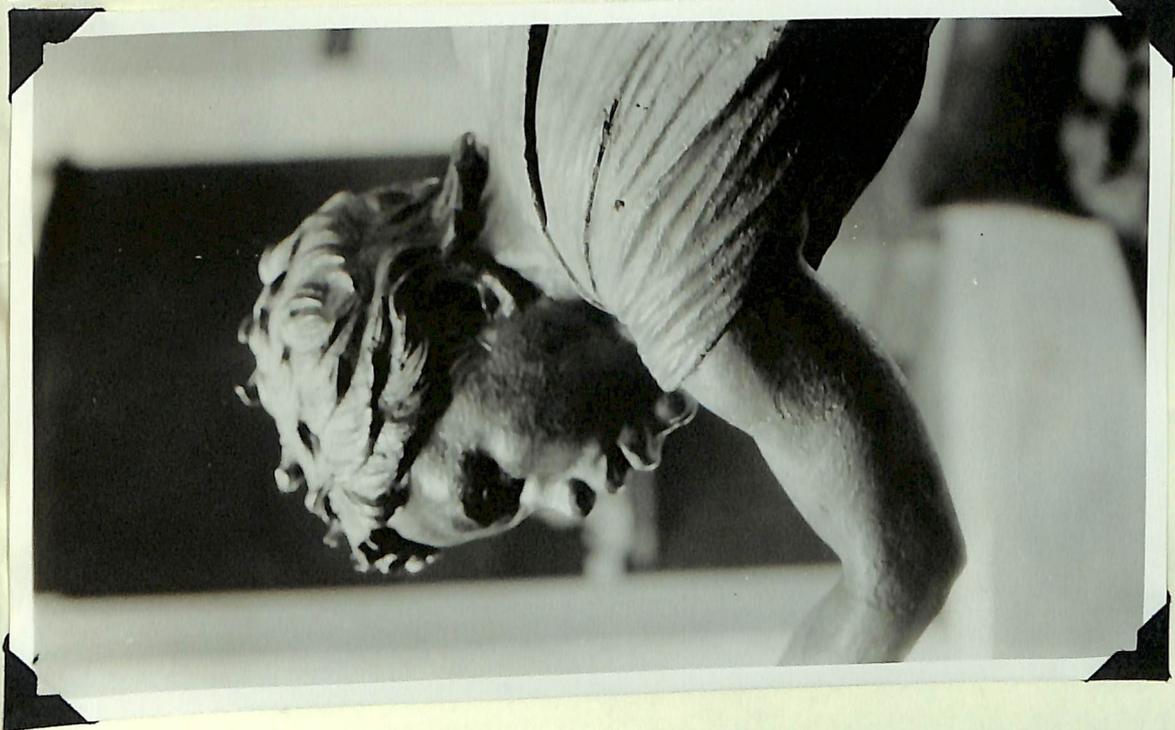


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