

STUDIES ON DRAPERY OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

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A female figure of obvious Greek workmanship was recently discovered in excavation by the Oriental Institute of the University at Persepolis; She was found in a corridor outside a Court of Reception in a complex of buildings constructed by Darius the Great. Objects with Xerxes name inscribed and Alexander's coins were also discovered in the fill. Although her head and feet and hands are destroyed, probably knocked off by Alexander's soldiers, and the stool on which she sat, once of different material, is gone, what remains is in a perfect state of preservation. Fine white marble, whose crystals are of medium size and so ingrained that they seem to be inset in the smoothed and finished surface, suggest an island origin. Indeed the only exactly similar marble is the Niké discovered in Paros and still there in the local museum.

The position of the figure is unusual and therefore easily identified as the Greek original of the Penelope type known from Roman copies in the Vatican museum;¹ Innumerable grave stele, Greek and also Roman, represent a seated figure. Often they have a himation drawn as a veil over their heads and rest their cheeks against their hands, but never, except for the obvious copies of the Penelope, do they swing one leg over the other and rest their free left hand against the stool.

If the type was not common in later periods it was frequent earlier. Melian terracottas, of both the periods which Jacobsthal² differentiated show such a figure. But in the early period especially she is tall and thin, she faces the opposite direction,

¹ Helbig, Collections of Antiquities in Rome, I, nos. 92, 191, 189.

² Die Melischen Reliefs, Berlin, 1931, p. 69; nos. 89-93; fig. 52.

and the drapery is so different in arrangement and stylization that a Melian origin for the statue can not be concluded. That an Attic red-figured vase¹ shows such a posed woman but again without drapery similarities, would suggest that exported Melian terra cottas had made this the standard type for a certain mourning female, or that it was common all over the Greek world and the terra cottas are merely the Melian version and the statue is the artist's own version adaptation. The former seems the more reasonable.

She was first identified as Penelope because she sits in front of a loom on the red-figured vase. The accompanying figures on the terra cottas have also received appropriate names, sometimes Odysseus alone, then again with Eurycleia and Telemachus. But the new statue, without attributes, is no aid.

If the Penelope originally was set in a pediment, the composition might be compared to Olympia where each figure was made to fill a certain space in the gabled outline. Certainly the angle made by the bent head and raised knee upon which her right elbow is propped suggests the slope of a pediment. But such a reconstruction is made less necessary by the Odysseus of the Melian terra cottas who grasps her right arm and changes the triangle into a square.

The Olympia artists economized in labor and marble. Consequently horses and centaurs, Lapith maidens, Sterope and Hippodameia, Zeus and Apollo have only half figures as though sliced from head to foot, and indeed so flat that they could have

¹ Helbig, op.cit., p.54.

fastened close against the background by props put into their enormous holes. The only figures with full bodily thickness from front to back are those which are kneeling or lying and the two nude heroes, Pelops and Oinomaus.

The Penelope, too, was meant to be seen from the front. This alone would explain the unnatural thinness of the block of marble from which she was cut, though her artist could not permit the unseen parts to remain unfinished. Yet the Penelope much more than the kneeling or stretched out or stiffly erect Olympia figures was designed to sit against a background, and for the full front shoulders and profile legs each component part had a clearly defined outline. This emphasis on a decorative form rather than a living figure determined the unusual position of the legs, the inner hung over the outer, and of the arms, one of which holds up the head and the other presses against the stool. That the thighs are clumsily misunderstood beneath the himation could be objected from a realistic point of view, but compositionally their position is admissible because this is the line which determined the slope of the shoulders, the bend of the head and the angle of the arm. Contrast the Vatican Penelope where a Roman copyist who knew better tried to improve the relative proportions of thigh and legs. The original Melian terra cottas, flat plaques with holes cut out had needed no turning in space and the Penelope retained the old formalized version in preference to realism. Exactly comparable is Myron's Discobolos where the broad flat shoulders terminate in moving legs, and the individual figures of the Tyrannicides.

Profile legs and full front shoulders were accepted for the

Olympia pediments and limbs were shortened or lengthened or thickened on almost every bent or stretched figure where measurements could be taken. But occasionally a Lapith maiden draws one shoulder across the other, to protect herself from a centaur, and kneeling figures who face their toes show an interest in space substituted for clarity of outline. Thus the Penelope though finished in the back, is compositionally conceived more as relief and less as sculpture in the round than the half figures of the Olympia pediments.

Comparing the Chiaramonti, Vatican and Persepolis Penelopes, it is obvious that the first two are more similar than each other than to the original. The proportions are different, giving a broad flat appearance in the copies, the right shoulder slants less, and the lap is so flat that the fine scalloped edge, if it had been carefully copied, would have been hidden from view by the thigh. Even for the himation around the waist where the pleats are pulled open more like Olympia than the original, there is no exact copy of each fold. Sharply turned folds with interior filling do exist in essence, but they run vertically on the copies and lie horizontally on the the stool on the original. An entirely new set of folds was added which fall in front of the stool before they are drawn upon her thigh. One copy is in relief and the other has no particular arrangement of the folds in back, and the himation ends on the shoulder are not at all the same. So it would seem possible that after the original was lost, a type was evolved by artists, ^{more than two hundred years advanced} trying to remember the full drapery style and the unnatural proportions of the limbs, of the Transitional period, who therefore emphasized these archaisms too much and mistook the subordination of spatial interests to outline for mere relief.

From the Vatican Penelope it was impossible to imagine folds which double over themselves as upon the stool, or the series of layers piled upon her right thigh and hanging down her left shoulder. Such soft cupping around her hips in front and between the stool and her leg in back, where liquid could not run out, and such soft branching of full folds at her back almost rope like in their rounded projection, and even the first soft suggestion of a saddle formation are only in the original. The ^{re} ^{are} two sets of "cartwheels" where folds radiate from a center, one wheel at the back of her right elbow of folds folded over, the other nearby but with its center on the stool, of folds sharply cut out from material which seems drawn by suction. But most surprising is the chiton. From the oval beginnings as fastened on her shoulders, the folds descend in triangles, whose diagonal lines are emphasized by folding under, then pull out and swirl in under her still slightly archaic breasts, and finally fall below to double back and forth over themselves, both horizontally and vertically, not as material but as frosted decorations on cakes. Long deep striations of the left sleeve further outline the figure, and the scalloped edges of the right sleeve and its delicate finger print show even more clearly the "pastry" influence. Summed up the drapery of the new Greek original is soft with a variety of types of folds, some rounded, some sharp, some regularly parallel, others branching and still others doubled over themselves, but all with a characteristic fullness as though filled from within, which is not natural to woolen, linen or silk, and was hardly suggested by the copies. Yet however round and full these folds are, they can not hide the soft feminine body beneath. The great contrast between

The three Penelopes proves that Greek originals and Roman copies can not be compared on stylistic grounds, and necessitates studying the new original with sculpture in Greece. Since the head and arms and feet of the Penelope are not preserved, drapery must be the basis of comparison.

The regular perpendicular ends of the himation at her knee and shoulder at first recall archaic art. But for example the maidens from the Temple of Apollo at Delphi just suggest folds piled upon each other, for the plane remains flat, and only deep undercutting separates fold from fold. But on the Penelope a series of steps leads from the fold underneath to the one on top, giving to each a natural thickness.

Certain drapery characteristics of the Penelope might be assigned a metal origin, such as the deep cut grooves outside the right breast, the folding under which begins at the fastening of the sleeve on the shoulder, and the sharp edge of the himation in back under the right elbow. All these are conspicuously absent on the Delphi Charioteer, but what is least expected, folds even thicker and more like rubber ballons filled with water are under the blousing at the waist of the charioteer. These are clearly seen only from directly below and therefore are not apparent in photographs. Here as on the back of the stool of the Penelope, the folds must double back and forth upon themselves so fully rounded that a sharp bend is impossible.

The one short incision, which was later to become so popular, is used on the Penelope over her right thigh, and on the charioteer's right sleeve under the strap in the seventh rounded fold from the neck. It cuts into material which had already be-

come so swollen that such an incision was necessary, and which puffs out over the tip of the incised line. The charioteer has a comparatively small number of round folds at his waist and half-way down the skirt some of these are forced to fade out, usually at an angle, to make space for the less numerous and more widely spaced folds at the hem. To produce this result the sunk interior of the pleat has to be sucked in towards the body like under the Penelope's breasts.

There is a large series of peplos maidens of about this period. But all of them are the opposite of the delicate and graceful Penelope except for the Parian Niké. Similar in marble and size, the differences can be explained because one is a mature figure and wears a ^{Ionic} ~~Doric~~ chiton, while the other is youthful and dressed in a peplos. But the fall of the heavy end folds over the Niké's left shoulder is the same as these over the right shoulder of the Penelope. Both have the same widely spaced outward pointed breasts, and drapery which swings in below to accentuate the curved form beneath. Slight folds, which in profile would show the same ^{angle of} projection from each side, were used for the back of the Penelope and the outer left leg of the Niké. Though each has lost his head, the thickening of the tilted neck on the lower side and the horizontal hollow seem closely related. This Parian Niké holds bunched in her hand bits of drapery, with one short incised line of the Penelope variety, and folds around it which in their thick overlapping and doughy substance are very close to the pediments from Olympia.

Occasionally a fold made of a long continuous rope, which is so swollen that in cross-section it would be half spherical,

becomes too enlarged to continue as a single fold and therefore divides itself into two folds without loosing size or changing ^{direction} as under the Penelope's right arm. On the East Pediment at Olympia such branching is paralleled just above the right ankle of the Zeus. A groove may slice into the thickness to cut off the new fold or the branching may be in the form of a wishbone but in both the offspringing folds immediately have the same roundness and thickness as the parent folds. Good examples are on the legs of the kneeling charioteer ¹ and on the thigh and ankle of the youth ². Both corner figures of the West Pediment use branching, one ³ on the ground and on her left leg near the knee, the other ⁴ from her back towards her knee.

This drapery which seems to have been filled from within, is of such heavy substance that when it spreads upon a flat surface, as ground or stool, it doubles back, folding over itself. Though they remain longer and thinner in the Penelope at her back, a close resemblance is to be seen under the left knee of the kneeling charioteer ¹ and below the left hand of the youth ⁵. For the most peculiar ends on the front of the stool there are no parallels at Olympia.

Over the lap of the Penelope, though they retain the soft edges of the more common type, are some folds which seem starched, so that they can no longer curve but must be stiffly bent. Exactly the same idea was responsible for vertical folds below the left breast of the Lapith maiden ⁶. There is a similar sharpness in the transition of folds from a horizontal to a verti-

1 Buschor and Hamann, Die Skulpturen des Zeus Temples zu Olympia, Athens, 1934, pl. IV.

2 Pl. XXIX.

3 Pl. XXXIV.

4 Pl. LX^VIII.

5 Pl. XXVII.

6 Pl. LXXIV.

cal plane as by the thigh of the Penelope and between the legs
of the maiden on the East Pediment.¹ Sometimes two heavy folds
are separated by two long hollow grooves running towards each
other from both ends but not meeting in the center, so that a
puff is left which joins the upper to the lower fold in exactly
the same way as the branching is effected. At Olympia this is to
be seen at the waist of the Old Seer.

Short incisions are common, but for example at the back
of the waist of the kneeling maiden from the East Pediment,²
of the many incisions only one is of the Penelope type. It is also
found on the youth under his right leg and on the Lapith maiden³
who again has many of the ordinary type at her waist, but only⁴
two of the correct form which start from the line marking the
separation between leg and hip. For the fingerprint just above
the incision on the Penelope there is only one parallel at Olym-
pia, on one maiden above her left heel and in the overblouse at⁵
the back.

Folds, whether represented as grooves or as ridges alone
comprise the drapery. But occasionally the material has been
given the quality of real cloth and the folds have become
additions, so that the space between rather than the surface
drawing has become important. This shifting from the linear
ridges or grooves to the plastic ground beneath is seen between
the right thigh, right leg and bench at the back, and only once
at Olympia, by the ankle of the crouching maiden on the East
Pediment.⁶ Similar is the sucking in of the folds towards the body
as though the cloth was damp, so clear under the right breasts
of the Penelope, and though not accompanied by the same fold

1 Pl. XIX.
2 Pl. XXX.
3 Pl. XXV.

4 Pl. XLIII.
5 Pl. XX.
6 Pl. XIX.

arrangements, to be seen on the left skirt of the Hippodameia.

Broad end folds whose soft edges are exactly parallel, of the same size at top and bottom and finished in slight curves, almost twice as wide as high and set absolutely horizontally, are found three times on the Penelope, so it is not accident that swallow tail ends are missing. On the ^{East Pediment the} old seer¹ not only has this formula but the same amount cut out under the curved edges to throw shadows, a narrow raised hem down the straight edges and a hollow down the center. It is the same in the Lapith maiden who wears an Ionic chiton ² but even more exactly parallel to the himation of the Penelope are the folds over her shoulder, in their slight turning back, in the proportions of the ends and in the undercutting. Her skirt is made like the Penelope's, of narrow pleats evenly arranged, where two shallow grooves, nearer the edge than each other, run down the length of each pleat, and each pleat is separated from its neighbor by a narrow channel. Long slightly projecting folds, brought evenly to a point from both sides, as under the centaur's left leg, are comparable to the back of the Penelope. The chiton, for close examination shows that the artist intended the projections to be the folds not the incisions, is comparable to the Penelope only because there are none which are closer. Of all the Olympian pedimental figures, these two are the closest to the Penelope.

Since the Parthenon metopes have such a variety of types of drapery it is not surprising to find a combination of folds which suggests the Persepolis figure. The closest is at the corner of the North side, number XXXII, where ³ ^{are} the familiar

1 Buschor and Mamann, op.cit. Pl.III.

2 Pl.LXV.

3 British Museum, The Sculptures of the Parthenon, London, 1910
Pl.25.

short incisions with a puff at their ends, projecting folds which are long and fully rounded, bunches filled from within doubling back over themselves, and thin chiton folds, which are regularly emphasized by deeper incisions, ^{and} which "wiggle" in imitation of the greater folds. Material held close to the body by suction from which sharp folds project are also behind the right arm of the standing figure. Found only here and on the Penelope are the folds which radiate from a fixed point on the chair and are neither raised or sunk, but made of folds folded up from below.

From such a detailed analysis it can be concluded that sometime in the Transitional period a new type of drapery came into Greece whose characteristics was a fullness of folds. It manifested itself in different ways, such as at Olympia where doughy drapery sprawls over body and ground alike, hiding them both, or in the Parian Niké where doubled folds alone seem filled. It begins as early as the Delphi Charioteer and lasts as late as the Parthenon metopes. It was not predominant as proven by other Parthenon sculptures and such reliefs as that from Eleusis where it had no influence. Since Roman copies are of absolutely no value in discussing this Greek original, it is only worth remarking that at one period such rounded rope folds and full heavy edges and doubling and redoubling were revived for Roman togaed generals and draped ladies.

It has been an incorrect assumption based on the Olympia sculptures, where indeed it is true, that this preference for full folds is accompanied by lack of a body hidden beneath. Also to be discarded after a study of the Penelope is the common opinion that this heavy style was the antithesis of

of delicacy and grace. Because the Olympian artists handled the stuff somewhat clumsily and because they employed the many different arrangements all in the same manner, the great pediments become understandable as a local manifestation of a trend all over the Greek world. In other words, the subtleties of the Penelope drapery, the innumerable characteristics for which no parallels at all could be found, and the greater ease and better execution of all the characteristics for which slight similarities have been noted, place her at the center of some great art movement in which Olympia was only a faint echo.

Athenian artists had reacted against the "Ionic" trivialities of drapery and sweetness of expression in true "Doric" earnestness and had evolved a strong and sturdy style, according to the generally accepted opinion. But the island marble does not suggest an Attic origin for the Penelope and here already beautifully developed, though in a different ~~style~~^{manner}, are features which we are accustomed to associate with the Parthenon sculptures, combined with an occasional Archaic simplicity as the himation ends and a Transitional concentration on clarity of outline such as Myron's Discobolos. Was this new drapery, another influence which came from the East? When the origin of the statue shall have been determined and its artist named, it will be possible to see a center of art and a style entirely unknown or even unimagined before the discovery of the Persepolis Penelope;