

A MARBLE HEAD IN PRINCETON

(PLATE 45)

AS his share of the tribute to Rhys Carpenter, Ernest T. DeWald, Director Emeritus of The Art Museum, Princeton University, gave permission to publish a small marble head in his possession (Pl. 45).¹ The gesture was made with particular remembrance of the time when both, after retirement from Bryn Mawr and Princeton, were Mellon Professors at the University of Pittsburgh.

All that we know about the head is that it was bought in Athens nearly forty years ago. The stone compares favorably with Parian marble in its crystalline structure, size of grain, and color. Whatever the source of the raw material, it would seem that an Attic hand carved the features and finely waved hair of the fragment which preserves about two-thirds of the head of a youth. Enough of the neck remains to show the right tendon, brought into prominence by torsion; the figure was that of a young man with head turned proper left. There is neither attribute nor context to identify him as god or hero, so there is also the possibility—a greater one—that he represents a mortal of athlete's age.

The sculptural style is sufficiently evocative of the Parthenon frieze to prompt a search of the ranks of the Panathenaic procession for comparisons, but there the foreheads are flatter, the eyes more heavily and uniformly framed by the lids, the hair worked in simple patterns.² It is within the immediate range of the Dexileos stele of 394/3 and related reliefs that the head seems to belong.³ The lingering influence of the Pheidian school is still felt; the sharply rounded forehead and more complex modelling of the eye of the Praxitelean school is yet to come.

There is no technical proof to decide whether the figure was in relief or in the round. A slight asymmetry of the face and narrowness of the skull suggest a piece

¹ The piece is now in the collection of The Art Museum as part of the bequest of Professor DeWald. Inventory number 68-242. Preserved height, 0.071 m.; width, 0.052 m.; depth, 0.032 m. About one-third of the head is missing: the left side from behind the eye and cheek to center back. There is a brownish deposit on the left cheek and on the broken back surface; this underlies small incrustations which appear on other parts of the head. The sculptured surface has suffered some nicks and bruises, notably along the right cheek and the hair above it, as well as in the area of the right ear and the tip of the nose. Reaction under ultra-violet light indicates that most of these, as well as the broken surface at the back, are not recent damage. The photographs are by Mr. Richard Taylor of Taylor and Dull, New York. Colleagues have been generous and helpful in discussions about the head; theirs is the credit side of this account; the author claims the debit.

² Photographs of many heads are conveniently assembled by Walter-Herwig Schuchhardt, "Die Entstehung des Parthenonfrieses," *Jahrb.*, XLV, 1930, pp. 218 ff., and Giovanni Becatti, *Problemi fidiaci*, 1951. Professor Matthew Wiencke very kindly made available to me for comparison photographs by Miss Alison Frantz which will be reproduced in his forthcoming study.

³ Tobias Dohrn, *Attische Plastik vom Tode des Phidias bis zum Werken der grossen Meister des IV. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, 1957, pp. 127 ff. For convenient illustrations, see R. Lullies and M. Hirmer, *Greek Sculpture*, 1960, nos. 186 (Dohrn no. 50), 192 (Dexileos stele, Dohrn no. 29), 201 (Ktesileos stele, Dohrn no. 54).

of high relief which has been broken away from its background.⁴ The separation would have been the result of a blow which sheared off the head and left a decapitated figure;⁵ the irregular and untooled surface of the break shows no mark of an implement which would have initiated careful removal by cleavage. One can, on the other hand, argue that the head belonged to a statuette and was cracked apart when the sculpture was damaged; there seems to be no change of direction at the edges to prove the presence of a background and no hint of restriction imposed upon the tooling by an adjacent vertical surface. Statistically, however, the prevalence of reliefs among preserved pieces of sculpture of similar size and period is in favor of relief.

The height of the head indicates a figure which, if erect, would measure about half a meter. This would be comparable to the figures on the frieze of the cella of the Erechtheion⁶ or to those on the basis of the statue of Nemesis at Rhamnous.⁷ Pursuing for the moment the idea of the head as a piece broken from a relief, scale and depth of carving help reduce the probabilities when considering the type of monument to which such a fragment could belong. The limited number of buildings with sculptured Doric metopes or Ionic friezes of appropriate dimension makes architectural ornament unlikely. Sculptured decrees are too small. Grave stelai with figures of equivalent height are among the smaller examples, usually executed in low relief and more modest in artistic quality. A votive plaque of the more pretentious sort⁸ or auxiliary ornament of a larger work of art (as the base from Rhamnous) would be the most likely source for the head as relief. As free-standing sculpture the statuette would probably be the gift of a youth or his family at some shrine or temple. Whichever its original function, the present purpose of the head is that of provocative offering, for the masterly eye of the recipient of these notes will undoubtedly make its own assessment and draw its own conclusions.

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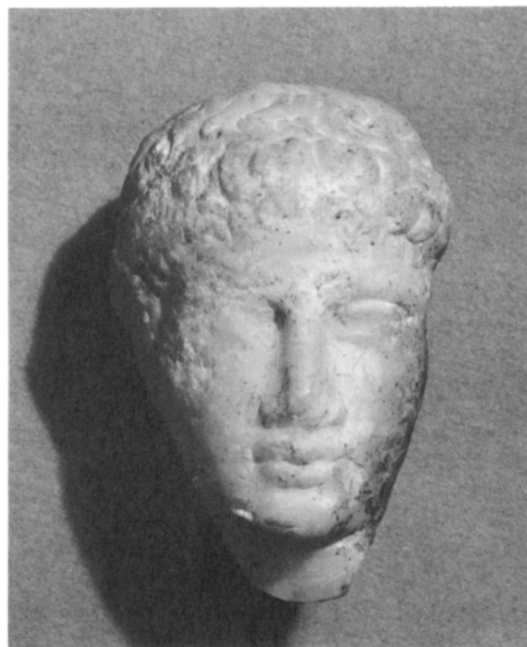
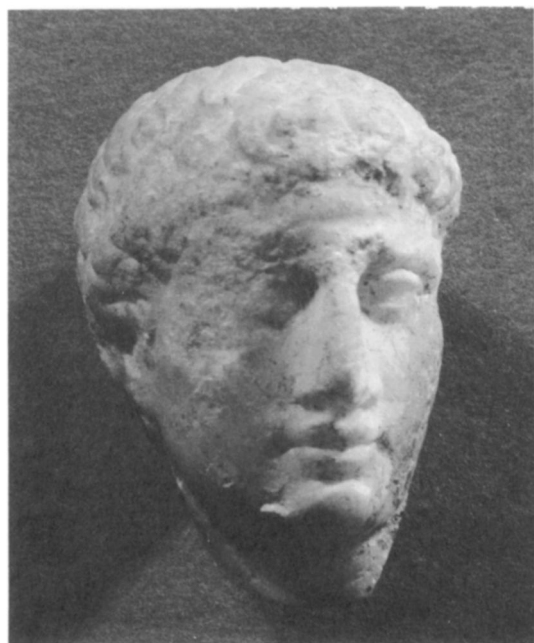
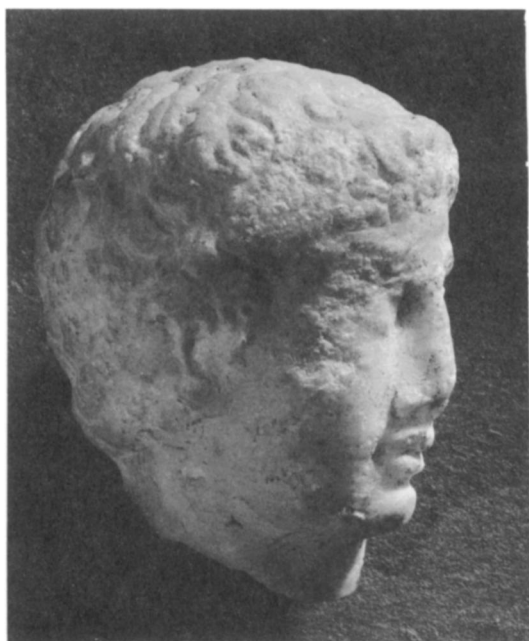
⁴ A mirror-image of such a relief, on larger scale, is given in the photographic detail of the stele from Salamis by Sheila Adam, *The Technique of Greek Sculpture in the Archaic and Classical Periods*, 1966, pl. 57.

⁵ Cf. J. N. Svoronos, *Das Athener Nationalmuseum*, 1908, pls. XXXVI, XL, and note the absence of heads in the extremely high relief of the Nike Parapet; Rhys Carpenter, *The Sculpture of the Nike Parapet*, 1929; Lullies and Hirmer, *op. cit.*, nos. 189 ff.

⁶ J. M. Paton, ed., *The Erechtheum*, 1927, pp. 239 ff., pls. XL ff.; Ludwig Pallat, "The Frieze of the Erechtheum," *A.J.A.*, XVI, 1912, pp. 175 ff. The unusual technique of the frieze, white marble applied to a darker background, meant that the back surfaces of the figures were tooled. The treatment is illustrated by Paton, *op. cit.*, p. 269, fig. 165, D. Pallat, *op. cit.*, p. 180, fig. 11, illustrates the straight, vertical profile of the back surface. For this distinctive treatment as identification, cf. the comments on fragments of the Erechtheion frieze found by Oscar Broneer, "Excavations on the North Slope of the Acropolis," *Hesperia*, II, 1933, pp. 349-350; IV, 1935, pp. 138-140.

⁷ B. Stais, 'Εφ. 'Αρχ., 1891, pp. 65-70, pls. 8-9; L. Pallat, *Jahrb.*, IX, 1894, pp. 1 ff.; Svoronos, *op. cit.*, pp. 167 ff., pls. XLI-XLII.

⁸ As Svoronos, *op. cit.*, p. 120, no. 9, pl. XXVIII; Otto Walter, "Die Reliefs aus dem Heiligtum der Echeliden in Neu-Phaleron," 'Αρχ. 'Εφ., 1937, part 1, pp. 97 ff.; Lullies and Hirmer, *op. cit.*, pl. 188.



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