GREEK MARBLE SCULPTURES

By DIETRICH VON BOTHMER
Associate Curator of Greek and Roman Art

The Catalogue of Greek Sculptures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, published by Miss Richter in 1954, contains the Greek sculptures, and Roman copies and adaptations of Greek sculptures, acquired by the Museum up to 1952. Since then the collection has been increased by seven more marbles, which are published here as a supplement to the Catalogue.

Earliest among them is an archaic Attic grave monument, said to have been found at Spata, in Attica. The form is unusual in that it is not a long slender shaft but rather short and square. The tombstone is inscribed “Kalliades, the son of Thoutimides.” The relief shows a Gorgon rushing through air. Her wings are spread out, but the impression of speed is increased by the movement of arms and legs, which is that of a running figure. The right knee almost touches the ground in the convention dear to archaic Greek art. A similar Gorgon occurs in the predella of an archaic grave relief in Athens. In the absence of comparable parallels for the shape of the gravestone the dating is tentative: perhaps the late sixth or the very early fifth century B.C.

Our next sculpture is almost a hundred years later. It is a statue of Hermes, formerly in the collection of the Marquis of Lansdowne and later in the Hearst collection at San Simeon. This statue is life size, and the type is known from several Roman copies or adaptations of a lost Greek original. Of these replicas the Lansdowne-Hearst Hermes is the best example and the most complete. Only the left hand, the tip of the nose, and a few fingertips of the right hand are restored. The stance and the modeling are Polyclitan, but the proportions are post-Polyclitan and suggest a date in the late fifth century for the Greek original on which this statue is based.

The torso of a youth is close in style and time to the Hermes. It, too, is one of several Roman copies, of which the best preserved is in the Louvre. This complete statue shows a boy, rather moody in expression, leaning with his left hand on a support, his head inclined toward his left shoulder. It was formerly called Narcissus but is now thought to represent Adonis, or, more probably, a boy athlete.

The grave relief of Phainippe is an Attic original of the fourth century B.C. Phainippe is shown seated on a chair. In her left hand she holds a mirror on her lap; with her right hand she arranges the edge of her mantle, which has been brought up over her head. On the left a servant girl approaches with two caskets. The composition and the style allow us to date the relief in the first quarter of the fourth century B.C.

On another Attic grave relief the name of the deceased is not engraved but painted and has been read (tentatively) “Eukleia.” The slab is decorated with a loutrophoros in relief. Vases of this shape were used to fetch the water for the baths of the bride and the groom, and their presence in tombs or their representation on tombstones is taken to imply that the deceased was still unmarried. Until 1949 the Eukleia stele was in the collection of Samuel Untermyer.

A third relief belongs to a large class of votive reliefs. A hero and his wife are shown at a banquet, and worshipers, smaller in scale, approach from the left. A snake and a horse’s head appear in the background. The inscription is incomplete: the remaining letters can be read, “to a physician.” The workmanship is Attic of the late fourth century B.C.

The seventh item, an Aphrodite of the Venus Medici type, has been published before in the Bulletin (May 1953, pp. 241-251), when the statue was exhibited as two fragments, with the torso mounted on one pedestal and the feet and the plinth on another. The two parts have recently been reunited, with the missing length of the legs and most of the right foot restored in plaster, after the Venus Medici in Florence, which is of the same scale. The original was made by one of the followers of Praxiteles at the very end of the fourth century B.C.
Grave relief with the representation of a Gorgon. It is inscribed, below, in three lines: "Kalliades, the son of Thoutimides." Said to be from Spata in Attica. About 500 B.C. Height, 21½ inches. Rogers Fund, 1955
Statue of Hermes, Roman copy of a Greek work of the late 5th century B.C. The left hand has been restored. Height with plinth, 5 feet 11 inches. Gift of the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, 1956
LEFT: Grave relief of Phainippe (the name inscribed). Attic, first quarter of the IV century B.C. Height, 40 inches. Fletcher Fund, 1953.

RIGHT: Grave relief of Eukleia, showing a loutrophoros. Attic, IV century B.C. Height, 33 1/4 inches. Gift of Joseph V. Noble, 1957
Statue of Aphrodite, Roman copy of a Greek work of about 300 B.C. Parts of the legs and right foot have been restored. Height with plinth, 5 feet 2 1/2 inches. Fletcher Fund, 1952