



AN ITALO-GREEK TERRA-COTTA LAMP  
FOUND AT VICO EQUENSE.

THE ANTIQUE ORIGINAL, FROM THE BAS-RELIEF OF WHICH ONE OF THE HALF FIGURES  
OF THE "MARTELLI MIRROR," ASCRIBED TO DONATELLO, HAS BEEN DERIVED.

## ON AN ITALO-GREEK TERRA-COTTA LAMP.

*The antique original from the bas-relief of which one of the half figures of the "Martelli Mirror," ascribed to Donatello, has been derived.*

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The well known bronze preserved in the South Kensington Museum and known as the "Martelli Mirror" from the fact of its having been in the possession of the Martelli family of Florence for many years, is one of those numerous imitations of classic objects which were produced by the artists of the later fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries. The Martelli family were friends and patrons of Donatello in his younger days, and it was always believed that the mirror in question was a highly elaborated work by that great sculptor; executed by him for that family, but probably at a later period than when he was under their immediate protection.

As such it was purchased by Mr. now Sir J. C. Robinson, from the Martelli in the year 1863, for the South Kensington Museum, and was then considered by him, in accordance with the belief of that family and the statement of Cicognara, to be a most carefully executed work by *Donato di Belto di Bardi*, of about the year 1450 to 60. As such it was described by the present writer in his catalogue of the bronzes in that Museum, under No. 8717-'63, on pages 58-9, and an illustration accompanied that description.

I need not here repeat more of that description than is necessary for the purposes of this paper. It is a mirror of silvered bronze, the back of which is ornamented by a bas-relief, "an allegorical representation of fruitfulness in which are half-length figures of a satyr and a bacchante." He is crowned with a chaplet of vine or ivy and draped in goat's skin; his right hand holds a drinking cup in form of the classic *carchesium*, and with his left he points upwards, extending the first and fourth fingers, as towards the smaller figure of a priapic Term or Hermes placed

upon a pedestal above. The Bacchante faces him and with her left hand milks her abundant breast into a *rhyton*, which, terminated as a griffon, is held by her right. She also has goat-skin clothing and is vine-crowned; each has a thyrus, and below is a bust of an aged female, on the base of which is inscribed NATVRA. FOVET, QVAE. NECESSITAS. VRGET.

Since the acquisition of this admirable work, other, perhaps cotemporary replicas or surmoulages of the whole of the bas-relief have come to light,<sup>1</sup> and plaquettes of the two principal figures have long been known, some probably of the period of the original, others of later and inferior casting. The more exact and scientific study of renaissance sculpture, which has occupied many investigators since the period when this bronze was acquired for the South Kensington Museum, has led to another verdict in respect to its attribution, and the now generally accepted opinion of connoisseurs is that it is of subsequent date to the period of Donatello (*in circa* 1383 to 1466), and the work of some unknown Florentine sculptor-goldsmith of the earlier years of the sixteenth century. In this opinion Dr. Bode, M. Émile Molinier,<sup>2</sup> M. Eugène Muntz,<sup>3</sup> M. A. Armand, and other investigators are agreed, following the suggestion advanced by Signor Lazari in his *Notizia della raccolta Correr* at page 201, who doubted the attribution of the Martelli mirror to Donatello which was accepted by the historian of renaissance sculpture, Cicognara, in his *Storia della Scultura* (Vol. 4, p. 121).

It is not, however, upon the period or the authorship of this beautiful work that I would direct the attention of the Institute this afternoon, but upon the source from which at least one of the principal figures has been derived. I need not dwell on the well-known fact that the fashion of these renaissance metal mirrors was derived from those used in ancient Egypt, in Greece, and in Etruria, the reverses of which, or their cases, are frequently enriched with subjects in bas-relief, or incised upon the mirror's back; but it is extremely interesting to discover the

<sup>1</sup> One is in the Pourtales collection, now at St. Petersburg.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Plaquettes*, vol. i, pp. 15, 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Donatello*, p. 92.

antique originals from which the artists of the *bel cinque cento* derived so many of their subjects. Donatello himself copied from an antique intaglio on calcedony, then in the Medici cabinet, now in the Museum at Naples, the subject of one of those roundels which adorn the architecture of the cortile to the Riccardi Palace at Florence; the subject is the theft of the Palladium, Diomedes seated, holding the sacred figure. It is figured by M. Eugène Muntz in his work *Les précurseurs de la Renaissance*, at page 143, and on the plate opposite page 192. On the same plate will be seen a representation of an intaglio, the subject of which is Apollo and Marsyas, presumed to be that which was also copied by Donatello for one of the roundels in that cortile. It also has been reproduced in the form of bronze plaquettes, an example of which I have laid before you from my collection now at Oxford.

There are five variations of this plaquette described by Molinier in his work (*Plaquettes*, pp. 2 and 4). Another so imitated rather than actually copied by Donatello is an antique gem, now also in the collection at Naples, representing Bacchus and Ariadne (see Muntz, Donatello, pp. 53-4, and also figured in the *précurseurs* on the same plate) on a car drawn by two winged females, and driven by Cupid. We have this also reproduced in the form of a plaquette described by Molinier, under No. 8 at p. 6 of *Les Plaquettes*.

I will only allude to one other which is figured by Muntz on the same plate—an antique gem on which is engraved the subject of Neptune and Pallas holding argument. This gem Donato also used as his model for another of the roundels at the Palazzo Riccardi formerly Medici in the Via Larga. The other seven corresponding roundels which were also the work of Donato and his pupils are all derived from classic originals, gems, terra-cottas, &c.

It would be useless to give more examples of the adaptation of antique models or designs by the sculptors of the earlier renaissance in Italy, and I will therefore proceed to a description of the chief object of my paper.

I have the pleasure of exhibiting this afternoon two early examples of the probably cotemporary plaquettes representing the Satyr and the Bacchante of the Martelli

mirror, as also of some other plaquettes evidently derived from antique gems. I am not aware whether any antique work has been discovered, or is now known, which could have been the original from which the fine figure of the bacchante has been derived; neither have we hitherto known any original from which the satyr could have been copied. The late Baron H. de Triqueli, writing in the *Fine Arts Quarterly Journal* for May, 1864, refers to a statement made by Gori, in his description of the antique gems of the Medici cabinet, that among them were two antiques representing these two figures, but we are not aware that these gems have since been traced.

It was, however, the good fortune of that assiduous collector and eminent antiquary, our member Mr. Arthur Evans, last year to meet with and secure for the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, an Italo-Greek terra-cotta lamp, on which this identical figure is somewhat rudely modelled. We there see the same bearded head, vine or ivy crowned; the right hand holding the cup; the left raised upward with the first and fifth extended fingers; the thyrsus and a tree stem are behind, and the general pose and disposition of the figure in approximate agreement with that we have upon the plaquette and the Martelli mirror. A piece of drapery drawn upwards to a point in front of the Dryad, is the only object which we do not find on the bronzes.

That the subject on this terra-cotta lamp was derived from some more important antique work in marble or terra-cotta, or from some cameo or intaglio of antique workmanship, there can be no question, and that the bronze mirror was a combination of copies, probably from antique gems, the whereabouts of which is now unknown to us, or which may have since been lost or destroyed, there can be little doubt, although even the comparatively coarse rendering upon our lamp would afford a sufficient model for the clever renaissance artist to adopt and refine upon, in all the details of a more studied and elaborated copy.

The body of this lamp is circular, barely three and three-quarter inches in diameter; having the usual projecting burner, with voluted sides; the nozzle has been broken off, and is wanting.

It was recently found at Vico Equense between

Castellamare-di-Stabia and Sorrento where an ancient cemetery has lately been discovered, dating from early Oscan to late Greco-Campanian times. This lamp was derived from one of the later tombs and belongs perhaps to the third century B.C.