



TERRA-COTTA STATUETTE FROM CYPRUS.

A CYPRIAN TERRA-COTTA.¹

By TALFOURD ELY, M.A., F.S.A.

The statuette which I now place before you was, with two others, bought by me at Sotheby's, in 1892, at the sale of Cyprian antiquities belonging to the late Edwin Henry Lawrence, Esq., F.S.A., a great-nephew of Sir Thomas Lawrence, once President of the Royal Academy. These antiquities were obtained by Mr. Lawrence from his son-in-law, Major Alessandro di Cesnola, who is said to have discovered "14,000 objects of archæological value," before the British occupation of Cyprus.²

In the sale catalogue the statuette is described as an "Actor in bear's skin." On the plinth is "Cyprus (Salamina), Jan., 1878."

In *Salamina*,³ however, there is a woodcut of this figure, which is described as follows:—

"Fig. 227 *Terra-cotta* Statuette of an Actor." "Another grotesque figure is that of a bearded Hercules of a very archaic type, and clad completely in a lion's skin, the head and ears of which are placed on his head, so that the ears project on the right and left. His beard falls on the breast of the statuette, the bare face of which has a stony and energetic expression. In his right hand is a monstrous club, strengthened with bands of metal; it rises to the owner's shoulders. In his left hand is a large basket or dish, filled with fruit of different kinds, as well as a piece of flat bread or cake; his hands and feet are bare."

The latter interpretation is scarcely admissible. The skin perhaps *might* possibly be a bear's; it could hardly be a lion's, for the distinctive scalp and jaws are lacking.

Again, neither type of countenance nor attributes can be said to be those of the hero in question, even allowing for comic extravagance. There is nothing "archaic" in the type.

¹ Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, February 5th, 1896.

² Preface to second edition of *Salamina*, p. xxiv.

³ *Ib.*, p. 198.

Let us look for ourselves then, and we shall find that the figure is standing in a position of rest, with right knee slightly bent, and right foot a very little advanced. With his right hand he clasps an object resting on the ground, and much larger than an ordinary club, for it reaches almost as high as his shoulder; except hands, face, and feet (which are bare), the whole figure is covered with a close-fitting, shaggy skin. The forehead is high, bold, and wrinkled; the face better modelled than the rest, with beard and drooping moustaches. The ears are those of a beast, and may possibly be attached to the hide. Some drapery wound round the waist falls in folds at the left side. The left hand supports a basket, in which are probably fruits, five in number, but possibly they may be sacrificial cakes. The aged look and staid respectability of the face are not at all suited to the gluttonous and generally disreputable brawler who answers to the name of Hercules on the ancient stage. It is rather a peaceable deity of woods or gardens that stands before us. I see nothing of "a stony and energetic expression," but rather a placid—and even benevolent—countenance, such as would befit a worthy and prosperous City merchant, or more appropriately a model country gentleman "all of the olden time," with a weakness for occasional indulgence in more wine than was good for him.

If the figure is not a Hercules it is hardly more correct to describe it generally as an "actor." What a comic actor of classic times looked like may be very well seen in the Terra-cotta Room at the British Museum, where a shelf in Centre-case B supports a series of grotesque dramatic figures. It must not be forgotten that, even in Tragedy, masks were regularly employed; and the large mouths of these were vastly distorted for the purposes of the comic and satyric stage. In the face of our figure there is no such distortion, and if we compare it with the above-mentioned terra-cottas in the British Museum, or with the very next woodcut in *Salaminia*¹ (which happens to represent an actor), we shall see its decided difference from the huge-mouthed mask.

We have found, then, that the statuette is neither a Hercules nor an "actor in bear's skin."

¹ Fig. 228.

What, then, is its proper interpretation? This, I think, is not very difficult to determine: it is a Seilenos. That faithful nurse and supporter of Dionysos from childhood is very frequently met with in collections of terracottas, *e.g.*, there are three images of him in one wall-case in the British Museum (Case 54 in the Terra-cotta Room).

I do not, however, remember to have seen any representation of him exactly like the one now before us. He is generally far more gross and objectionable in pose and general bearing, a very Falstaff of mythology.

Lucian¹ describes him as a stumpy old fellow, fat, and with big ears sticking up, and an utter coward—a description closely tallying with extant monuments.² Still, however unattractive he may be to our prosaic minds, devoid of Bacchic inspiration, he was in ancient times a favourite with artists of every class and every rank, from the most ambitious sculptor to the humblest purveyor of images in clay. With the vase painters he was a stock subject; and in Furtwangler's admirable *Beschreibung*, of the Berlin collection of 4,221 vases, there are no fewer than 137 entries under the head of "Silen."

In forty or fifty paintings discovered at Pompeii or Herculaneum Seilenos figures conspicuously. By Pliny there are mentioned, among the works of Praxiteles which had been brought to Rome, "Sileni in Pollionis Asini monumentis."³ Among these was probably to be found the original of the pleasing group exhibited at Athens (in Pentelic marble), at the Louvre, and elsewhere,⁴ of Seilenos, here in nobler form, holding the infant Dionysos, a motive well known to us through that prized remnant of the master's work, the Hermes and Dionysos, discovered in 1877 in the Temple of Hera at Olympia, and also through the Munich Eirene and Ploutos,⁵ copied from the work of Kephisodotos, the father of Praxiteles. Perhaps such a Seilenos is intended when Pliny, speaking of

¹ *Bacchus*, 2; *Cf. Deorum Concilium*, 4.

² *E.g.*, the figures in Wall-case 38 of the Bronze Room in the British Museum.

³ *Naturalis Historia*, xxxvi, 23.

⁴ *E.g.*, in the Munich Glyptothek,

No. 114, and in the Vatican. A remarkable vase from Athens in the Berlin Antiquarium (No. 2,925) shows Papposeilenos carrying the infant Dionysos on his left arm.

⁵ No. 96 in the Glyptothek.

“Satyrs” by unknown masters, mentions one who *ploratum infantis cohibet*.¹

A crouching Seilenos is to be seen at Athens (in place of an Atlas) now supporting the cornice of the front wall of the stage of Phædrus,² but apparently adapted from an earlier structure. This was a favourite motive. Copies of it slightly modified are a replica, once used as a fountain, found at Rome in 1874,³ and a kneeling Seilenos in terra-cotta from the Lecuyer collection now at Berlin.⁴

At the British Museum Seilenos is to be found on a leaden cup in the Etruscan Saloon. A little further on he may be seen in terra-cotta, supported by Eros, close to the Gold Ornament Room.⁵ He is credited with 54 out of the 2,349 items comprised in the Catalogue of Engraved Gems exhibited in that room, the representation often taking the form of a “Mask of Seilenos.”

There are also several masks of Seilenos in terra-cotta from Capua in the Terra-cotta Room,⁶ where, too, is to be seen an interesting Greek statuette of Seilenos carrying the infant Dionysos,⁷ and dangling before him a bunch of grapes.

Of the coins representing Seilenos, one only need be mentioned here. It is the unique tetradrachm of Ætna, as Catana was called for about 15 years before its overthrow in 461 B.C. This splendidly preserved specimen of fine archaic work, apparently fresh from the mint, is now in the hands of Baron Hirsch; but an electrotype is in the British Museum, and of this, through Mr. Barclay Head's kindness, I am able to show you a copy. Besides the reference to the huge beetles celebrated by Aristophanes,⁸ the type is, as Mr. Head has observed,⁹ eminently characteristic of the place of issue. For, according to the



Cyclops of Euripides, Seilenos was kept in bondage in the

¹ *Nat. Hist.*, xxxvi, 29. See Welcker quoted by Wieseler *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, ii, 406.

² See *Monumenti dell' Istituto*, ix, 16.

³ *Bulletino della Commissione Municipale*, tav. xiv, xv, i, p. 135ff.

⁴ Furtwangler, *Jahrb.* ii (1887), p. 200.

⁵ In Wall-cases 10-12.

⁶ Wall-case 67. They were probably amulets, to avert the evil eye. See

Furtwangler, *La Collection Sabouroff*, note 15, on plate 149.

⁷ In Wall-case 15. It is said to be a caricature of the Hermes of Praxiteles, but Seilenos is looking at the grapes, and not out into the distance, like the Hermes. Compare the Seilenos and Infant from Melos in central-case B.

⁸ *Pax*, i, 73.

⁹ In the Bronze Room, Table-case B.

caves of Ætna, a district rich in the wine to which he was so warmly attached.

Among the marbles in the Græco-Roman Basement at the British Museum is a disc bearing on the obverse Pan, on the reverse Seilenos before an altar.

Mr. A. S. Murray, Keeper of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, has pointed out to me the interesting Greek bronze of "Seilenos Kistophoros,"¹ which resembles the Pompeian bronze lamp-bearer at Naples,² and, like that figure, must have been intended to support something.

Among the vases we find Seilenos masquerading in the midst of his brethren in guise of a herald, on a red figured Psykter.³ In more serious fashion he takes a leading part in imitating a neophyte in the Bacchic mysteries, as depicted on a terra-cotta relief.⁴

We must not forget, however, that although we are accustomed to think of Seilenos as an individual—the faithful follower of Dionysos in his varied adventures and triumphs—the earlier artists and story-tellers know nothing of such individualisation, but place before us Seilenoi as members of a class, and as a class not easy to distinguish from that of the ordinary Satyrs. Thus in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (l. 262) we hear of Seilenoi in the plural, as lovers of nymphs, but with no individual characteristic. Even Pausanias⁵ remarks that those of the Satyrs who were advanced in age were called Seilenoi. On that compendium of sixth-century mythology, the famous François Vase, we have three Seilenoi in a group. There can be no mistake as to their identity, for their name is written above them. They have horse's legs, a peculiarity found, I believe, nowhere else in Attic art. It seems to have been a Macedonian type, being found on the coins of Lete.⁶

There was, however, in early myth an individual Seilenos, who was totally unconnected with Dionysos and his tipsy crew. This was the old Asiatic deity of flowing water,⁷

¹ In the Bronze Room, Table-case B.

² Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, Abb. 895.

³ E 768 in Table-case D of the Third Vase Room.

⁴ Campana, *Opere in Plastica*, 45.

⁵ I, 23, 6.

⁶ See Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 177.

⁷ See Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, p. 1639, a valuable source, from which I have obtained much help in preparing this paper.

who, under the name of Marsyas,¹ became well known to the Greeks from his ill-fated attempt to outdo with his shrill flute the music of Apollo's lyre.² Pausanias³ gives an unpleasant idea of the effect on the hearer of the musical efforts of Marsyas when he tells us that the Phrygians attributed their triumph over the invading Gauls to the help afforded by that river-god, who kept the enemy at bay by the strains of his flute. Surely bagpipes must be meant. This fabled contest between Apollo and Marsyas may shadow forth the real struggle for ascendancy between the older and the newer theologies of Western Asia. It is curious to find that the top-heavy inebriate of classic art has been developed from what we might denominate a "total abstainer," an impersonation of the limpid stream. According to Pausanias⁴ the inhabitants of Pyrrhicos, in Laconia, were indebted to Seilenos for their water supply.

On the beautiful Ficoroni cista we see him comfortably seated by the gushing spring of which he is the guardian. Lucretius (VI, 1265) uses the Doric form "*silanos aquarum*" for "fountains of water." Nay even so late as Imperial times the figure of Seilenos was a favourite one for fountains, as may be seen at Pompeii. The water poured forth from the goat-skin bag carried by Seilenos on his shoulder, a skin at another time supposed to contain wine, when the old Phrygian water-deity had lost his independence and degenerated into the bibulous follower of Dionysos.

In one instance alone do we find Seilenos as an independent deity possessed of a temple in his own right apart from Dionysos, even after his perversion from abstinence to alcoholism. This was at Elis; and Seilenos was represented as receiving a cup of wine from the hands of Methe, the impersonation of drunkenness.⁵ Pausanias goes on to say that one might conjecture the tribe of Seilenoi to be mortal, on the ground of the existence of their tombs, one at

¹ Herodotus (vii, 26) has τοῦ Σιληνοῦ Μαρσύεω. Cf., τὸν Σιληνὸν Μαρσύαν, Pausanias I, 24, 1.

² See Herodotus *loc. cit.*, and Xenophon *Anabasis* I, 2, 8. "The Satyr" mentioned in *Anab.* I, 2, 13, as having been caught by Midas, who had poured

wine into the fountain, would appear from the use of the article to be meant for Seilenos.

³ X, 30, 9.

⁴ III, 25, 2.

⁵ Pausanias, VI, 24, 6.

Pergamos, another "in the land of the Hebrews," of all places in the world. By such mortality we are reminded of the mournful cry, "Great Pan is dead." As far as outward form is concerned, perhaps the lowest type of this rural divinity, a type almost brutal, is the Papposeilenos, whom Pollux² describes as τὴν ἰδέαν θηριωδέστερος, rather beastlike in appearance. Wieseler makes a strong distinction between ordinary Seilenoi and the Papposeilenos.³ This creature, with pointed ears and beard, creeps on all fours, and is covered all over with thick hair.⁴

More human, if more depraved, Seilenos appears in the joyous rout of Bacchic worshippers, now propped up by Eros or by youthful Satyrs, now with difficulty keeping his equilibrium on the back of a donkey,⁵ an animal which, however undignified in modern estimation, is assigned to him in virtue of his prophetic gifts, according to Baumeister, who compares Pindar's legend of asses sacrificed to the Hyperborean Apollo.⁶

Seilenos seems to have been sometimes regarded as a puny creature. At any rate Pausanias,⁷ speaking of a certain stone on the Acropolis of Athens, says it was only big enough for a little man to sit upon, and adds that the story was that Seilenos had rested on it.⁸

Again, in a Pompeian picture he is painted as of diminutive size. Compare the Seilenos on the sarcophagus from the Villa Casali.⁹ So, too, in a familiar way he came to be used as a support for lamps, balances, and such trifling gear.¹⁰

He is, however, on occasion, represented in a more dignified fashion, as in certain Pompeian pictures where

¹ Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum*, XVII.

² IV, 142.

³ *Das Satyrspiel, Göttinger Studien*, 1847, zweite Abth. p. 591, "Dieser Papposilen ist . . . eine bestimmte, von den übrigen Silenen wohl zu unterscheidende Person, und von Papposilenen in der Mehrzahl . . . darf nicht die Rede sein."

⁴ See Gerhard, *Antike Bildwerke*, 56, 3.

⁵ See Clarac, *Musee de Sculpture*, pls. 138, 155.

⁶ *Denkmäler*, p. 1639; Pindar, *Pythia* X, 33.

⁷ I, 23.

⁸ So Helbig. *Wandgemälde* 397, "Silen auffällig klein gebildet."

⁹ Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, Abb. 492. Commenting on the smallness of the Seilenos attacking a nymph in plate 140 of the *Sammlung Sabouloff*. Furtwangler quotes two similar instances of equally small satyrs.

¹⁰ *E.g.*, a specially fine bronze at Naples, see *ante*, p. 15.

he tends the infant Dionysos,¹ or plays the lyre before the grown-up god.²

Nay, one's first impression as to the bronze head of Seilenos discovered at Colchester³ is its strong resemblance to Zeus, so full of majesty is it with flowing locks and beard.

A head of Seilenos in Thasian marble at Castle Howard was taken for a portrait of a poet, till betrayed (like Midas) by its pointed ears. It is a "very noble type, without any vulgar feature," says that excellent judge, the learned author of "Ancient Marbles in Great Britain."⁴

Our survey, then, of the development of the Seilenos myth has shown us how the primitive Oriental deity of the running stream has passed over, like others, to a post in the train of the joyous god of the vine.

Originally one of many, and hardly distinguishable from kindred rustic spirits in half-human form, he has assumed, like his brother of the wilds, Pan, a fixed and definite status as the lieutenant of the all-conquering Dionysos. Drunken reveller as he is, he still retains much of the wisdom and repute for hidden lore that has always marked the water daemon in every age and clime. As he dealt forth his theories of Kosmos to old Midas in the heyday of his Phrygian power, so, too, Seilenos lends an antique colouring to the verse of imperial Rome. Brought captive before the Phrygian monarch, he tells of the distant land beyond this Kosmos possessed by giant men,⁵ and winds up with the pessimist's moral, that it were better never to have been born.⁶

To Vergil's Chromis and Mnasylos the tipsy demi-god pours forth first his favourite cosmogony, and then a mass of old-world tales from the stones of Pyrrha to Philomela's speedy flight.⁷

Seilenos when recognised as the guardian and preceptor of the youthful Dionysos, *custos famulusque dei*

¹ Helbig *op. cit.*, 371, 374-79.

² *Ib.*, 395. See also *Museo Borbonico* II, 31.

³ In 1845. See *Archæologia* XXXI, pp. 443-7, pls. xiii and xiv.

⁴ Michaelis *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, VI, p. 38.

⁵ Theopompos, quoted by Aelian, V H. III, 18.

⁶ According to Aristotle, quoted by Plutarch *Consol. ad Apoll.*, 27. Compare Servius on *Bucolica* VI, 13; and Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, I, 48.

⁷ *Bucolica*, Ecl. VI, 13-84.

Silenus alumnus, as Horace¹ calls him, assumes a position altogether distinct from and superior to that of the common herd of Satyrs, mere lovers of wine, women, and the rustic music of the flute. The marshals of Ptolemy's procession impersonated Seilenos; and on the wagon bearing the winepress he was represented as in command of the Satyrs.²

As Maclean remarks,³ he represented the "*crassa Minerva*" of the ancients, "Wisdom under a rough exterior."

In the Satyric drama Seilenos was one of the principal personages represented, not a mere member of the chorus. Thus in the *Cyclops* he is *father* of the Satyrs.⁴

In Idyllic poetry he plays a part akin to that of Teiresias in Tragedy, or, in Epic verse, of Calchas, who knew what is, what will be, and what was in former time.⁵

The comparison, therefore, of Socrates to Seilenos was not, after all, so very uncomplimentary to the Athenian philosopher, though, according to Athenæus,⁶ Critobulus seems to have meant to be rude when saying Socrates was far uglier than the Seilenoi. This, of course, is very different from Plato's curious comparison of Socrates with the sculptors' Seilenoi.⁷

May not this supposed resemblance between Seilenos and Socrates have had something to do with the adoption of the head of the former as an amulet? This often occurs in *grylli* and other gems, "perhaps as passing for the emblem of universal knowledge."⁸ No doubt such figures were often intended to ward off "the evil eye"; and the rugged features, bald head, snub nose, and shaggy beard were all adapted to arrest the dreaded first glance. Yet it certainly is a little strange that these aged lineaments should have been so zealously perpetuated in the sensuous Hellenistic times, when the majestic Zeus and Hera, and Athena with her warlike virtue, were being

¹ *Ars Poetica*, 239.

² Athenæus, V, 197E, and 199AB.

³ In a note on the above passage of Horace.

⁴ See lines 13, 82, and 269.

⁵ Homer *Iliad* I, 70. Cf. Vergil *Georgics* IV, 392, 393, and Conington's note thereon.

⁶ V, 188. See Xenophon, *Symposium* IV, 19, and V, 7.

⁷ *Convivium* 32, cf. 33 and 37. See also the Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Clouds*, I, 223.

⁸ King, *Antique Gems*, pp. 263, 264.

elbowed out by the deities of love and wine; when youthful beauty was sought above everything, and the shrewd old Hermes of the black-figured vases was replaced by a comely Ephebos, while Dionysos himself had to drop his former flowing beard. Possibly there was some idea of contrast; and certainly the clumsy old toper does well set off the lithe forms of Eros and the youthful Satyrs as they support his tottering steps. A similar reason may excuse the presence of another rugged patron of the woods and hills, Pan; though Pan's uncouth ugliness really requires no excuse, seeing that he is by nature half a goat.

But to return to our statuette. We have come to the conclusion that it represents Seilenos, or, more exactly, Papposeilenos. A further question, however, arises: is it supposed to be Seilenos himself or merely an actor representing him? A good deal depends on the date, and in the case of Cyprus dates are difficult to establish. There were, however, several successive waves of civilisation which passed over the island:¹ at first a primitive style of art akin to that of Hissarlik; then Egypt prevailed through the medium of Phoenicia. With the conquests of Sargon, Assyrian influence became paramount; a little later the Egyptians under Amasis conquered Cyprus; and then came the Persians, who in turn were supplanted by Cimon and his fellow Greeks. With these earlier phases of art our figure has nothing to do. It is not "Trojan," or "Mycenaean"; nor is it Egyptian, or Phoenician, or Assyrian, or Persian, or early Greek. It is probably Græco-Roman; and therefore may very well be an actor, whereas if it had been of much earlier date it would hardly have been likely to be anything but an image of the demi-god himself.

Seilenos was more or less covered with shaggy, wool-like hair, as we see him in the famous Parian marble statue (No. 98) in the Bacchus-Saal of the Munich Glyptothek, or in the kneeling figure in terra-cotta acquired for the Berlin Antiquarium in 1886.² This hair was of his own growing.

For stage purposes, of course, a corresponding dress was

¹ See Papayannakis in *Gazette Archeologique*, 1877, p. 117 ff.

² See page 117, note 4.

required. This, according to the grammarian Pollux,¹ consisted of a shaggy tunic,² or shepherd's coat, of goat-skin or similar material—just, in fact, such a rough goat-skin clothing as one sees at the present day among the Greek mountains. This rustic outfit appears in the monuments in two forms, viz., either as a modern-looking suit of coat and trousers, as on a statue figured by Clarac;³ or as what nowadays are styled “combinations,” a tight-fitting covering for the whole person, shown on the vase from Ruvo, represented by Baumeister in Plate V of his *Denkmäler*, and on a krater in the Museo Gregoriano.⁴ This latter “combination” form comes nearest to our statuette.

We must next consider whether this shaggy covering of our little Seilenos is intended for the natural hide of the figure or for such a garment put on it. I think it is a garment, looking especially to the even distribution of the hair, and to its abrupt limitation at the extremities.

Is the figure, then, to be taken as the actual Seilenos himself, dressed in goat-skin, or as an actor playing his part? It seems to me that the tight-fitting dress is not such as would be ascribed to Seilenos in his natural state, but is rather a form of costume specially fitted for dramatic action, such a costume as we see in the famous Pompeian mosaic;⁵ while the drapery wrapped round the waist represents Pollux's *φοινικῶν ἱμάτιον*, or purple upper garment.⁶

It is true that, though there are huge ears, like those of a pig, there appears to be no mask, therefore the actor could hardly be on the stage, but must be supposed to be standing at ease behind the scenes. On the other hand, he would scarcely, under such circumstances, take the trouble to go on holding the basket of offerings. But we must not be too particular in the case of such a figure. The maker may well have combined the traditional features of Seilenos with the accessories familiar to him on the Satyric stage. Anyhow, in view of the Ruvo vase-picture before referred to, we can hardly be wrong in pronouncing our terra-cotta to be an actor playing the part of Seilenos.

¹ IV, 118.

² Cf., Aelian, *Varia Historia*, III, 40, Ἴσθης δ' ἦν τοῖς Σιληνοῖς ἀμφίμαλλοι χιτῶνες

³ *Musée de Sculpture*, tav. V, n. 874A, 221D.

⁴ Mueller, *Denkmäler* II, 397. See *ibid.*, 475 and 519-522. Compare the bas-relief *Museo Borbonico* II, 11.

⁵ *Mus. Borb.* II, 56.

⁶ *Loc. cit.*