THE STATUE OF THE DIADUMENUS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO THE DIADUMENUS OF POLYCLETUS, DESCRIBED BY PLINY AND LUCIAN.

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Among the valuable additions in sculpture made during the last few years to the collection of antiquities in the British Museum, are now to be noticed some statues very recently acquired from Rome, where they formed a portion of the objects of Art preserved in the Palazzo Farnese, the property of the ex-King of Naples.

I have selected one of these as the subject of a few remarks which I propose to offer to the Archæological Institute, as it seems to me to have some special claims to the attention of archæologists, independently of the interest it must have, as a work of sculpture, in the estimation of all intelligent and competent judges of Art. I shall add to these some conclusions at which I have arrived during my investigation of ancient authorities, and my own examination of the work in question; and I shall beg to offer these with great deference to the impartial judgment of those scholars and antiquaries especially who take an interest in ancient sculpture.

The statue referred to is in marble, and represents a youth of small life-size, entirely naked, adjusting a fillet round his head; hence its title, *Diadumenus*. The figure rests chiefly on the right leg, the left being slightly advanced, and bent at the knee; but the left foot is well planted on the ground. The support is at the right side, and is formed of the trunk of a palm-tree, showing the stems of the leaves cut short, in the usual way of representing this accessory.

The fillet, ταινία, with long ends, embraces the head, being tightly pressed on the hair over the forehead.

The right arm is raised, and the hand is holding one end of the fillet on this side, as if about to return or tie it.

The left arm is broken off, but it is preserved. It is, how-

ever, a modern restoration. The action is copied from the other arm.

It has been supposed by the learned that this statue may be an ancient copy of a celebrated work by Polycletus, called Diadumenus.

The statue has received injury in various places. The surface, in the lower part of the legs, has been tampered with, apparently with the view of rubbing out stains in the marble; and a cross fracture, running through both thighs, by which the statue was broken in two, has been repaired, and the separated portions fastened together by iron pins and clamps. All this has been done clumsily, and, as is often the case in works of this kind, evidently by incompetent hands. Fortunately, however, no irreparable damage has been done; and, though it will require great care, it will not be difficult to restore the statue to its almost original condition, as, with the exception of the left arm and a portion of the nose, every part of it is indisputably ancient.

The style of Art in this work is characteristic of what is known to have prevailed in the advanced part of the fifth century, B.C., when sculpture was throwing off the remaining stiffness of what has been called the later Archaïc school.

The head claims attention both for character and treatment. It shows some of the peculiarities of the early school referred to, and at the same time the influence of the new and more perfect style that was being introduced. The same connection with the Archaïc manner may be observed in the somewhat conventional treatment of the divisions of the *torso*—less in the back than the front—and especially at the base or lower lines of the *obliqui* muscles, on both sides. On the side of the loose or resting (left) leg this is very striking, and it is obviously untrue to nature. In that action of the lower limb there would be no indication of force or weight in this muscle. Another circumstance to be noticed, with reference to the archæological question, is the peculiar and elaborate treatment of the hair on the *pubis*. It is carefully dressed in small parallel curls, showing, in this respect, a very remarkable resemblance to the same treatment in Archaïc works, of which good examples may be seen in the casts, preserved in the British Museum, of the Eginetan marbles from the temple of Jupiter Panhellenius.

The peculiarities here generally referred to will be at once apparent if the work under consideration, and others known to belong to the transition period, are compared with the sculpture of the immediately succeeding school, inaugurated, or rather perfected, by Phidias and his contemporaries. Polycletus, it is true, was amongst these; but it is important to this inquiry to know that he was also associated with those who belonged to the later phase of the Archaïc school. This is clear from two curious passages, one of which occurs in Cicero (*de clar. Orat.* xviii.), the other in Quinctilian (lib. xii. 10). The writers are describing, in illustration of their own subject, the style of art of a series of sculptors, downwards, from the artists of the most Archaic school; and the various steps or changes in the productions of the different sculptors are traced down to Polycletus. These traditions are sufficiently interesting to be quoted at length.

Cicero says: "Quis non intelligit Canachi signa rigidiora esse quam ut imitentur veritatem? Calamidis, dura illa quidem sed tamen molliora quàm Canachi; nondum Myronis satis ad veritatem adducta . . . Pulchriora etiam Polycleti," &c., &c.

Quinctilian, in like manner: "Duriora et Tuscanicis proxima Calon atque Egesias; jam minus rigida, Calamis; molliora adhuc supradictis Myron fecit. Diligentia ac decor in Polycleto supra cæteros," &c.

The examples that will most clearly exhibit the perfection of style ultimately attained may fortunately be found where the comparison may easily and readily be made. This is in the sculptures of the Parthenon now preserved in the British Museum.

From what has already been said it will be seen by all who take interest in ancient art, that this statue of the Diadumenus has very great claims to attention. Although, in some respects, it may not be placed quite on an equality with the sculpture that illustrated the immediately following school, it must undoubtedly take a very distinguished place among the productions of a most important period in the history of this art. It precisely occupies that very narrow line of demarcation between the lingering traditions connected with the old prescriptive style—hallowed by long usage and its application to the mythical traditions of Greece—and the consummation of sculpture in its noblest and

purest phase; when, under Phidias, Alcamenes, Praxiteles, and others, the highest perfection of form, and the most refined and careful execution were shown to be compatible with the most dignified and sublime conceptions,—a combination which the religious prejudices of the previous ages, in their attachment to the Archaïc types, deemed inadmissible.

I shall now proceed to make some remarks on this statue with reference to the great historical interest that attaches to it. The artistic merits of the work are naturally those which have chiefly claimed my attention; but in order to explain, or lead up to, the supplementary matter I have to bring forward, it will be expedient to touch slightly upon some collateral circumstances bearing upon the history of the Diadumenus of Polycletus.

The statue in the British Museum evidently represents a young man tying or attaching a fillet: precisely what the Greeks termed *Diadoumenos*. Two authors especially, Pliny and Lucian, describe a statue so called as one of the most celebrated works of Polycletus. The former (lib. 34, c. 8) says, "*Polycletus Sicyonius, Ageladæ discipulus, Diadumenum fecit molliter juvenem*," that is, "Polycletus, the Sicyonian, the scholar of Ageladas, made a youthful Diadumenus, or a young man tying on a fillet." I omit here the expression *molliter*, as it will hereafter be referred to more particularly.

Lucian (*in Philopseude*) speaks of "the statue tying a fillet on the head as very beautiful, the work of Polycletus." The original is τὸν διαδούμενον τὴν κεφαλὴν τῇ ταινίᾳ, τον καλόν, ἔργον Πολυκλείτου.

Pliny adds that this work was estimated (not sold, as some have translated it) at the sum of a hundred talents—*centum talentis nobilitatum*—equal to nearly £25,000 sterling. However exaggerated this valuation may appear to us, yet, as Pliny seems to have been in the habit of recording every report or piece of gossiping that reached him, it is fair to conclude that this statue, so pointedly referred to, enjoyed a very high public reputation. The allusion to it by Lucian has, perhaps, still greater weight, for he had the professional and practical knowledge that would especially qualify him to give an opinion on a work of the kind. Although it appears he did not choose to exercise the art, he was educated as a sculptor, so that his testimony that the Diadumenus was beautiful (καλόν) is of no small value.

Now we not only have here the subject of our statue defined, but there is further curious evidence to connect this identical work with the age of Polycletus himself, in the characteristic style it exhibits.

It is precisely that which is said to have distinguished this sculptor's productions. Pliny, describing the peculiarities of the manner of Polycletus, says that he usually made his statues standing on one leg: "*Proprium ejusdem ut uno crure insisterent signa.*" And with respect to another characteristic—the *square*, conventional treatment to which allusion has already been made—that they, the *signa* or statues, were of a square character: "*quadrata tamen ea esse,*" &c.

This statue exhibits these very peculiarities.

So far all this helps to strengthen the belief that the Diadumenus of the British Museum may be a true and literal copy of the celebrated statue referred to in such complimentary terms by the ancient writers above quoted; and, beyond this, the evidence it bears of undoubted antiquity, may justify us also in considering it a work executed in the time of Polycletus.

If it were possible at first to think it a late Roman copy, we should expect to find it executed in the marble of the country, the *marmor Lunense*, now known as the Carrara marble; but the material is unquestionably Greek—the famous marble of Pentelicus, so extensively used by all the greatest sculptors of Greece. But there is room also for another supposition, almost logically arising out of these premisses; and a question is involved in it of the greatest possible interest to antiquaries and lovers of art. It is very remarkable that there is no direct mention made, by any ancient writer, of the material in which two of the most famous works of antiquity, the Diadumenus and Doryphorus, were executed. It has generally been assumed that they were of bronze, as were so many of the best works of the great masters, but there is no authority for it; while there is fair reason for supposing they were among the numerous ancient works executed in marble. At any rate, no evidence can be produced to prove the *Diadumenus* of Polycletus was not executed in this material; it, therefore, may, at least, be discussed as an open question.

Though Polycletus is especially celebrated for his works in bronze, in which he was the rival of Myron, "*emulatio autem in materiâ fuit*," he is also mentioned as the author of various statues in marble. Pausanias (lib. ii. c. 20) refers to one, at Argos, of Jupiter Milichius; and again (c. 24) to three others, in a temple on Mount Lycone, of Apollo, Latona, and Diana, all of which were of "white marble" (λευκου λίθου); showing beyond any question that this sculptor worked in this material; of which the expression marks distinctly the white, bright hue (λευκὸς). However, the object is simply to point to the fact that these were well-known works of Polycletus, in marble; and, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, to suggest that the Diadumenus may have been executed in this material.

It is now time to refer to an expression used by Pliny (*loc. cit.*) in his description of the Diadumenus, the consideration of which was postponed when the translation of the passage was given, but which may now be properly introduced in connection with this part of the subject. It is the term *molliter*, which means "softly" or "delicately"—*fecit molliter juvenem.*

The expression has usually been interpreted as referring to something delicate or effeminate in the sculptor's treatment of the figure. But, assuming that the statue represented a youth who had been successful in the games, as the palm-tree in our supposed copy would lead us to believe, *molliter*, taken in the above sense, scarcely seems appropriate. It is true, the upper portion of the figure exhibits lightness and a certain elegance in the forms, but not in a degree that would make the term *molliter* applicable to the whole figure. The lower part is obviously of a robust character, rather overcharged than not, so that here there is still less justification or reason for the use of the expression. As then *molliter* appears to be a term of questionable propriety as applied to the physical form of *any* subject of the athlete class, or a trained competitor in the public games, may it not be permitted to endeavour to find an explanation for it free from the objection above referred to, and yet that may make the expression applicable to the statue of the Diadumenus? May it not be more consistent, as well as reasonable, to refer it to the *technical* treatment of the *material* in which the statue was executed,—an explanation of the term

which, while it meets the objection as to its misapplication to the subject of the statue, gives great additional force to the presumption that the original work was in marble? Marble admits of the finest and most delicate manipulation, and there is ample authority to show how highly the ancients valued perfection in this branch of art. The term *molliter* would, then, correctly express this delicate execution, and would be taken in connection with *fecit* rather than with *juvenem*, and would be the equivalent to the modern Italian *morbidezza*, often used by sculptors to describe the soft, rich quality of surface which may be given to marble.

This speculation may be thought to be beside the question, and I offer it with deference, not resting upon it as an argument, inasmuch as the premisses are only assumed. I also admit that the view scholars have taken, that Pliny intended to imply a comparison, or rather contrast, between the works he is describing, is deserving of attention; though in a question of artistic criticism the judgment of that writer may not be placed very high. It is to be remembered that Lucian, a better authority in this respect, makes no remark upon the age or treatment of the statue. He simply says it was "beautiful."

Incidentally, reference has been made, above, to the difference of character of form observable in the upper and lower portions of this statue; that while all the upper portion, as the head, throat, and body, are comparatively of a light character, there are, in the lower extremities, the indications of great physical power. The quality of these forms, in a certain force and fulness in the thighs, the strength shown in the hips, and the size and breadth of the feet, give rise to other curious speculations, suggesting the probability that this statue represents a successful competitor who gained his distinction in one of those contests of activity, such as running, in which the lower extremities were chiefly called into action. In all the contests requiring great muscular force and weight—as wrestling, boxing, quoit-throwing, and others of the kind—a very different development would, I am disposed to think, have been displayed. It would have been in the deep chest, the muscular arms, and the thick, short throat, that the appearance of great strength would have been exhibited.

I will now briefly sum up the evidence that has been

adduced for claiming for this statue a very distinguished position.

That the statue is ancient, there is no reason to doubt.

That it represents a youth occupied precisely as the Diadumenus of Polycletus, described by Pliny and Lucian, can scarcely be questioned.

That the style of the sculpture corresponds with that which characterised the works of a certain age, and that this was the age of Polycletus, and recorded as essentially the manner of this sculptor, must be allowed by all competent judges.

And that the material is Pentelic marble, and not Italian marble, admits of no doubt, and is further corroborative of the true Greek origin of the statue.

There is no reliable history of the place or time of its discovery, though it is said to have been found, with other ancient remains, in the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla; but the circumstance of this statue having been preserved in Rome, where so many of the masterpieces of the great sculptors of antiquity were collected when Corinth, Athens, and other cities of Greece were despoiled of their best works of art by their Roman conquerors, strengthens the presumption that it was among the important monuments of Grecian sculpture thus accumulated in the Eternal City.

I approach the conclusion of my subject with some anxiety, but I will not shrink from announcing the strong impression that has been left on my mind, after a careful review of all these various arguments, and a not less conscientious examination of the statue itself.

It seems to me by no means impossible, nay, there is rather a very great amount of probability, in the cumulative evidence adduced, that in this interesting statue we possess, not simply an ancient copy of a celebrated work, but the original Diadumenus of Polycletus.

I am of course prepared to hear so bold an opinion questioned as a mere conjecture. But though it may not be in our power, at present, to pronounce authoritatively on so nice a point, I have no hesitation in saying, that both from the ancient authorities, as well as from my own practical acquaintance with technical points of Art, there appear to me very sufficient grounds for entertaining this gratifying

belief; while I think, I hope not presumptuously, that there are none equally strong for rejecting it. I have touched but gently on various questions which may seem rather to belong to the province of scholars than of the practical artist. Feeling my incompetency to deal fully with these, I respectfully leave their consideration to others better qualified to decide upon them.

Possessing, as we already do in this country, the original sculptures of the Parthenon, of the Mausoleum, and of the Temple of Apollo in Arcadia, it would indeed be a subject of congratulation if we could establish the authenticity of so celebrated a production as the far-famed Diadumenus—one of the most famous of the many famous statues of antiquity; a work of one of the greatest masters of sculpture whose names have been handed down to modern times; and so highly esteemed by the ancients, that we are told the almost fabulous money value of one hundred gold talents was set upon it.

It is not necessary, nor would it be desirable, to enter here upon the questions that have arisen among scholars and antiquaries respecting the precise date of Polycletus, and especially whether or not there were two or more celebrated sculptors of the name. The artist whose work has now been discussed lived, there can be no doubt, in the earlier part of the fifth century B.C., probably between 480 and 430 before our era. He may, therefore, although one of the late Archaic school of sculptors, have been also contemporary with the sculptors of the best age of Greek Art.

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