

XXVI.—*An Account of the CYRENAIC ANTIQUITIES in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. With Historical Notices of the Ancient City of Cyrene, in North Africa.*

8th February 1830.

“ The Donations exhibited at this Meeting, included a splendid collection of Cyrenean Antiquities, transmitted to the Society from the Colonial Office, by Robert Hay, Esq., Under Secretary of State. The Curator stated, that no account or description of these Antiquities had yet been received from the British Consul, who had forwarded them to this country, but that such an account was daily looked for, and the antiquities would again be exhibited, as soon as the description of them arrived.”—(*Minutes of the Society*, p. 148.)

17th May 1830.

“ A letter was read from R. W. Hay, Esq., Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the Earl of Elgin, President of the Society, with an Account, by H. Warrington, Esq., Consul to His Britannic Majesty at Tripoli, of the discovery at Cyrene of the splendid collection of Antiquities lately presented by Mr Hay to the Society.”—(*Ib.*, p. 164.)

The letters referred to in these extracts, are as follows:—

Downing Street, 16th April 1830.

DEAR LORD ELGIN,—I send you inclosed all the information I have received from our Consul at Tripoli respecting the precise spot where the Cyrenaic Antiquities were found, which have lately been presented to the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland; and I am sorry that the account is not more satisfactory.—Yours very truly,

R. W. HAY.

The Earl of Elgin.

Extract of a letter from Mr Warrington to Mr Hay, dated Tripoli, 27th February 1830.

“ My son having just returned here, I desired him to write to me, stating

where he found the specimens of antiquity, and I refer you to the inclosed letter for information.

“ The vases were found in the neighbourhood of Bengazi, the ancient Berenice.

“ All the other antiquities were found in my garden.”

Tripoli, 26th February 1830.

MY DEAR FATHER,—In answer to your inquiry regarding the place where the female statue was found, namely, at Cyrene, I deem it requisite to explain, that the remains of the City stand on the elevation of a mountain, below which, facing the north, are various shelving flats, or terraces, inclining towards the base or plain country. These hill-sides contain sepulchral caves or apartments, evidently constructed by human art. It was upon the uppermost of these terraces, and near to the celebrated fountain of Cyrene, where, on digging about seven yards below the surface, I discovered the statue in question, being perfect all but the arm, and some trifling defects. The arm was found the day following, by digging a few yards distance, and at about the same depth. On the hill-side, above the spot where the statue was discovered, and over the fountain, I traced the following half-legible inscription:—

Λ Η Δ Ι Ο Ν Υ Σ Ι Ο Σ Ω Τ Α
 Ι Ε Ρ Ε Ι Τ Ε Υ Ω Ν Τ Α Ν Π Α Ν Α Ν .
 Ε Τ Ε Κ Ε Υ Ε Σ Ε

I am, &c.

(Signed) H. G. WARRINGTON.

P.S.—The smaller statue, marble heads, and pieces of basso-relievo, were found near the place above described, and about the same distance from the surface. From the nature of the ruins on that spot, I have every reason to believe that any future research would be attended with success.

H. G. W.

Historical Notices of the ancient City of Cyrene, in North Africa; with reference to the Cyrenean Sculptures and other Antiquities presented to the Society in 1830. Communicated by WILLIAM WEIR, Esq., Advocate.

[Read to the Society 27th February 1832.]

The value of the Marbles from Cyrene, transmitted to the Society by their late Secretary, as memorials of antiquity, may best be made to appear by a brief *resumé* of the history of that state.

Northern Africa, as it stretches along the Mediterranean, may be viewed as naturally divided into three regions. At the eastern extremity is the valley of the Nile, with the general features of which all are familiar; at the western, the great mountain-chain of Atlas, with its numerous streams, creating the fertile plains of Barbary. The intermediate space, an extent of about a thousand miles, is for the most part a shifting sandy desert. In the middle of this waste there rises along the coast a steep and high ridge abounding in springs, which sprinkle the surrounding desert with valleys of the most brilliant verdure. This district, extending from the Syrtis eastward to the boundaries of the sterile Marmorica, is the classical Cyrenaica, or Pentapolis.

Cyrene, the city from which the province derives one of its names, was founded by a Lacedæmonian colony, somewhat more than 600 years before Christ. About the middle of the next century, Barca was built by the retainers of some brothers of the King of Cyrene, somewhat to the westward, at a distance of nine miles from the sea. At a later period, the inhabitants of this filial town, attracted by the superior commercial advantages of Phalemeta, on the coast, gradually migrated thither. Tenchira was peopled from the superabundant population of the towns already mentioned, and refugees from Greece. In like manner, Hesperis (to which the name of Berenice was subsequently given) sprung up, still farther to the westward, near the extremity of the central and fertile part of Cyrenaica. To the east of Cyrene was Derna.

The early portion of the history of this territory is the same as that of all the petty Greek states of the same period,—a succession of tyrannies and popular commotions. When the Ptolemies seated themselves on the throne

of Egypt, they speedily extended their domination over Cyrenaica. It remained subjected to their sceptre till the death of Ptolemy Physcon, who, dying 116 years before Christ, bequeathed it to his son Ptolemy Apion. This prince reigned twenty years, and having no children, named the Romans his heirs. The republic declared the inhabitants of Cyrenaica independent. At a later period it was incorporated with the empire. It became a chief place of refuge for the Jews, and its prosperity seems to have been much impaired by the restless and caballing dispositions of these new denizens. It was reserved, however, for the brutalizing sway of Mahomedanism to give the death-blow to Cyrenaica.

Respecting the constitution, literature and arts, wealth, and social and commercial intercourse of Pentapolis, little has come down to us. A chain of strong forts, the ruins of which may still be traced along the landward frontier of the state, indicate that this oasis of civilization, amid the moral desert of ancient Africa, was held against incursions of the native tribes by the tenure of the sword. The distinguished philosophers and literati who derived their birth from this state, lead us to believe that it was noways behind the rest of Greece. Aristippus, the disciple of Socrates, eminent for his elegant voluptuousness, graceful and insinuating deportment, and a rigidly rational appreciation of wealth and pleasure which shone through and redeemed the other traits of his character, was a native of Cyrene. Eratosthenes, the second keeper of the Alexandrian Library, was his countryman. Carneades, whose subtle powers of disputation alarmed the rigid virtue of Cato, and Callimachus, poet and historian, the ornament of the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, sprung from the same soil.

From the time that the Saracens mastered the coast of Africa till the second decennium of the present century, this site of ancient civilization had been withdrawn from European observation. In 1817, Paolo della Cella, an Italian physician, in the employment of the Bey of Tripoli, published some observations, the fruits of an excursion he made in attendance upon his master from Tripoli to Egypt. His remarks, the result of a hasty survey, were superficial enough, but they served to excite attention. The British Government, always honourably distinguished by its zeal in the prosecution of maritime discovery, employed Captain Beechey and his brother to examine and delineate the coast of the Syrtis and Cyrenaica, and Captain Smith to attend with his vessel, for the purpose of carrying off whatever deserved

and would admit of removal. These gentlemen completed their task in the course of the years 1821–22, and the result was published at London in 1828.¹ The Geographical Society of Paris proposed, in 1824, a prize of 3000 francs to the traveller who should give the best account of the country called by the ancients Cyrenaica or Pentapolis. Before the end of the following year M. Pacho appeared to claim the prize, which was adjudged to him in consequence of the favourable report of the commission appointed to examine his manuscripts and collections.² These are the sources whence our knowledge of the present state of Cyrene and its antiquities is derived.

Time is found to have made sad havoc. The Berenice of the Ptolemies, better known by its poetical name of Hesperis, appears to have been totally buried under the sand. Above it has been built a wretched village named Bengazi. When an Arab wishes to build here, he digs up the remains of splendid columns and rich entablatures, which, regardless of their beauty, he breaks down to suit his purpose. The city of Teucheira has been converted into a heap of rubbish, presenting no feature of interest or beauty. Its walls alone have been enabled, by their Cyclopean strength, to resist storm and desolation. They form one of the most perfect specimens of ancient fortification. They are a mile and a half in circuit, and defended by twenty-six quadrangular towers, and admitting no entrance but by two opposite gates. In Ptolemeta nothing of the walls remains but one magnificent gateway. The site of the town is occupied by the remains of an amphitheatre, of two theatres, and of the columns and tessellated pavements of a palace. At the time of Captain Beechey's visit, the area was partly covered with grain, and partly with thick

¹ ["Proceedings of the Expedition to explore the Northern Coast of Africa, from Tripoly eastward, in 1821 and 1822; comprehending an Account of the Greater Syrtis and Cyrenaica; and of the Ancient Cities composing the Pentapolis. By Captain F. W. Beechey, R.N., and H. B. Beechey, Esq." London, 1828, 4to.]

² [Jean-Raymond Pacho, a native of Nice, born in 1794, died at Paris in 1829, before the completion of his great work on Cyrenaica, entitled, "Relation d'un Voyage dans la Marmarique, la Cyrénaïque, et les Oasis d'Audjelah et de Maradeh (pendant les années 1824 et 1825), accompagnée de cartes géographiques et topographiques, et de planches représentant les monuments de ces contrées." This work, which was published under the auspices of the Minister of the Interior, forms a large volume in 4to of text, and an atlas of three maps and 100 plates, Paris, 1827–29. It received the approbation of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, and of the Geographical Society at Paris. *Edit.*]

brushwood, four or five feet in height. Jackals, hyenas, bats, and owls, tenanted the jungle and the buildings, the companions of desolation. At Apollonia and Derna, the western limits of Captain Beechey's travels, he found ruins of the same character, but on a smaller scale.

The most imposing remains of antiquity are found at Cyrene, the ancient capital. The situation of this city is as strikingly beautiful as can well be imagined. It stands on a high plain, 2300 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. At the height of 1500 feet of sheer ascent, commences a finely wooded plain. The abrupt ascent from the extremity of this level to that on which the city stands is 800 feet, and is divided into successive terraces, along each of which is a smooth rocky path, still retaining the indentation of wheels. The face of each of these terraces is hollowed into ranges of grottos. Around the interior of these caves are grouped tombs and sarcophagi, numerous and varied in their ornaments and inscriptions. The external fronts present an agreeable contrast of different styles. The ranges of grottos are eight or nine in number, and extend for a mile and a half along the roads leading to Cyrene. They were the depositories of a part, at least, of the bones of the dead; and thus, while the city is abandoned to solitude, and while history scarcely tells us more of her than that she did exist, her places of sepulture, in their infinite multitude and lavish adornment, undeniably demonstrate that she was wealthy and luxurious, and that for a long tract of ages.

The city itself is, like the others, entirely deserted, but its fountains and caves attract the wandering flocks and their herds. All of them, and in particular that which is termed the fountain of Apollo, appear to have been highly ornamented, and statues and bas-reliefs are still found in their vicinity. The remains of a spacious amphitheatre occupy the extreme verge of the plain, built so as to receive the fresh northern breeze. There are several temples, and among others, one which seems to have been dedicated to Diana. Statues are found scattered through the city in great numbers, many of which are partly or wholly under-ground. Those on the surface are in general severely mutilated.¹

¹ [In the Account of Captain Beechey's Expedition, after noticing that in the neighbourhood of the Theatre at Cyrene, "there are still many statues above ground, in excellent style," and describing two of these, of white marble, much larger than life, and exhibiting beautiful examples of taste and execution, the Author states,—“There are several other statues above

The marbles from Cyrene, presented to the Society at the meeting held on the 8th of February 1830, and from which specimen engravings are this evening laid upon the table, are :—A tolerably perfect statue of Æsculapius ; a mutilated fragment of a bas-relief, the figures apparently representing a procession ; and several heads ; and a monumental fragment. One of the heads is eminently beautiful ; and another, which however is too much defaced to admit of any opinion being formed respecting the style of its execution, is remarkable for a dotted ornament on the bandage or tiara, seldom seen except on very ancient coins. The bas-relief contains three figures. The female form seems to support herself on the lintel of a door. The male figure next to her, apparently in the act of approaching, extends his right arm (from which the hand has been broken off), and supports a cornucopia on his left. His female companion seems to hold a vessel of some kind.

My remarks are confined to the fragments of bas-relief. The action of the whole three figures is unconstrained and elegant. The line formed by the wreathing of the cornucopia, in the centre figure, continued by the position into which the thigh is thrown by the protrusion of the knee, and the drawing back of the foot, is eminently graceful. The simple action of his female companion, by making her arm repeat a portion of this line, groups the two figures most successfully. The first figure is chiefly remarkable for the easy grace of her position, and the skill with which the arrangement of her limbs and drapery in lines nearly the reverse of those already mentioned detaches her from the group. We feel at once that she is not in company with them. The drapery of these three figures is arranged with the most graceful simplicity.

Action, expression, arrangement, and drapery, would lead us to refer this piece of sculpture to a period when art stood high. The style of the execu-

ground in this part of the city, in the best style of Grecian art ; and many good examples of Roman sculpture, or it may be Roman portraits, executed by Greek artists, which we should rather conclude, from the excellence of workmanship employed in them, and from the fact of Cyrene having been a colony of Greeks, even when under the dominion of Rome. Every part of the city, and indeed of the suburbs, must have formerly abounded in statues ; and we are confident that excavation judiciously employed, in many parts even indiscriminately, would produce at the present time *many admirable examples of sculpture.*—P. 527. It would surely be desirable that a portion of the money annually voted for the British Museum should be bestowed in carrying on excavations, under the direction of the resident Consuls, at such places as Cyrene, so likely to repay the expense and labour, by rich antiquarian discoveries. *Edit.]*

tion, however, forbids the supposition,—it is infinitely inferior to the conception. The same remark holds true of all the other Cyrenaic fragments in the possession of the Society, with the exception, perhaps, of the head already alluded to as bearing a mark in general expressive of high antiquity. This fact is of importance, when taken in connection with what we know of large collections of inscriptions from Cyrene, submitted by M. Pacho to the Committee of the Geographical Society of Paris. Only one was found to belong to the era of Cyrenean independence, and two to that of the Ptolemies; all the rest were Roman. The monumental fragment in the possession of the Society, engraved on the same plate with the *bas-relief*, is evidently not older than the age of the Ptolemies. The inference of the Parisian literati is, that the Romans, amid the scarcity of marble, took down the ancient edifices to obtain materials for their own. It is possible that further researches amid the *debris* of Cyrene and the other towns of Pentapolis, may invalidate this inference; but, be this as it may, that country will still afford a rich and instructive harvest to antiquaries.

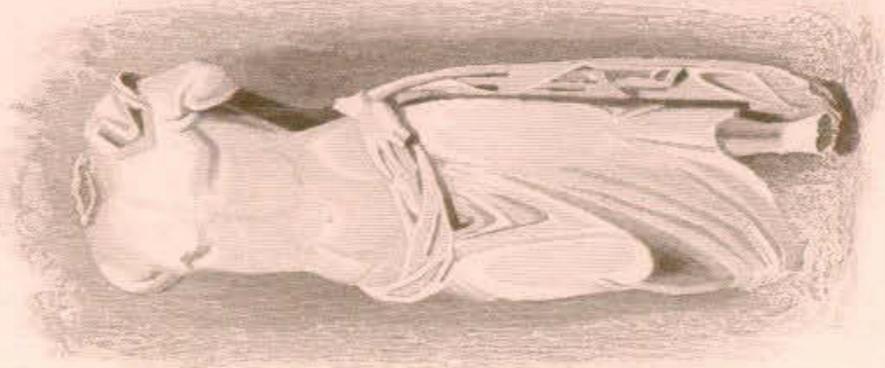
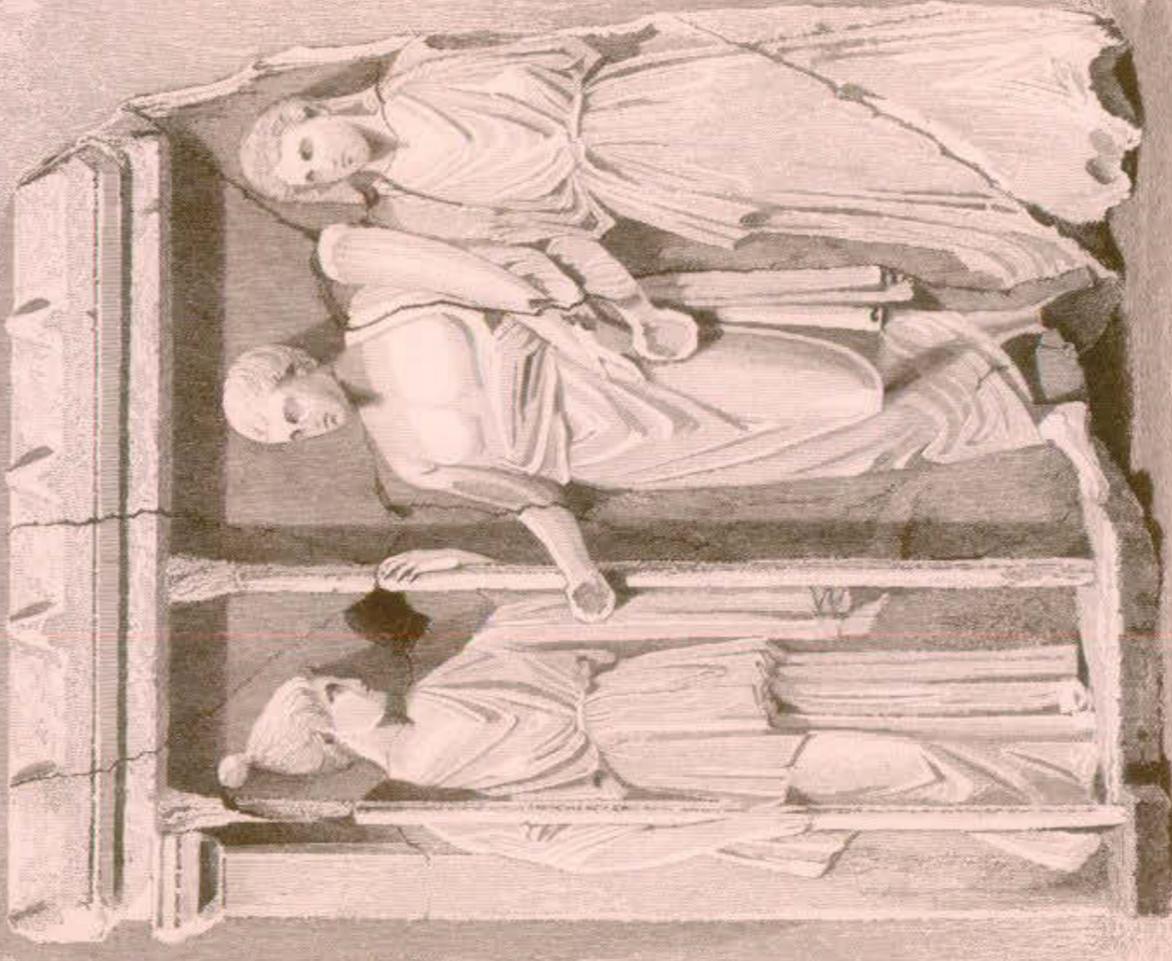
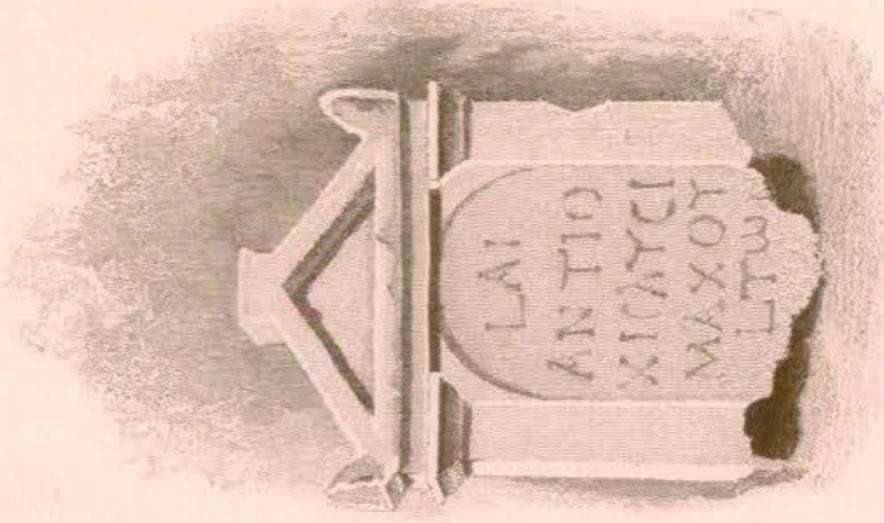
The Antiquities described in the foregoing communications consist of the following Remains:—

1. A Statue of Æsculapius, in marble, 4 feet 2 inches high. Engraved on Plate XVI.
2. A Male Statue, in marble; mutilated. Engraved on Plate XVII.
3. A Female Head, also in marble; imperfect.
4. Head of a Warrior, with flowing hair, in marble; imperfect.
5. A Female Head, somewhat larger than life, in marble; imperfect.
6. A group of three Figures, in Basso Relievo. Engraved on Plate XVII.
7. A Female Head, crowned with Ivy, and long braided hair, forming part of a small marble Statue, measuring $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
8. A painted Greek Vase, with six figures, probably Bacchus meeting Ariadne, at Naxos, measuring $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and 33 inches in circumference; of the three male figures, two are standing holding the thyrsus, and one of the females is playing on a cymbal.
9. A small Head of a Camel, in terracotta, measuring 2 inches.
10. A Monumental Tablet, with a Greek Inscription, dedicated to the memory of Antiochus Lysimachus, found near the Fountain of Cyrene. Engraved on Plate XVII.



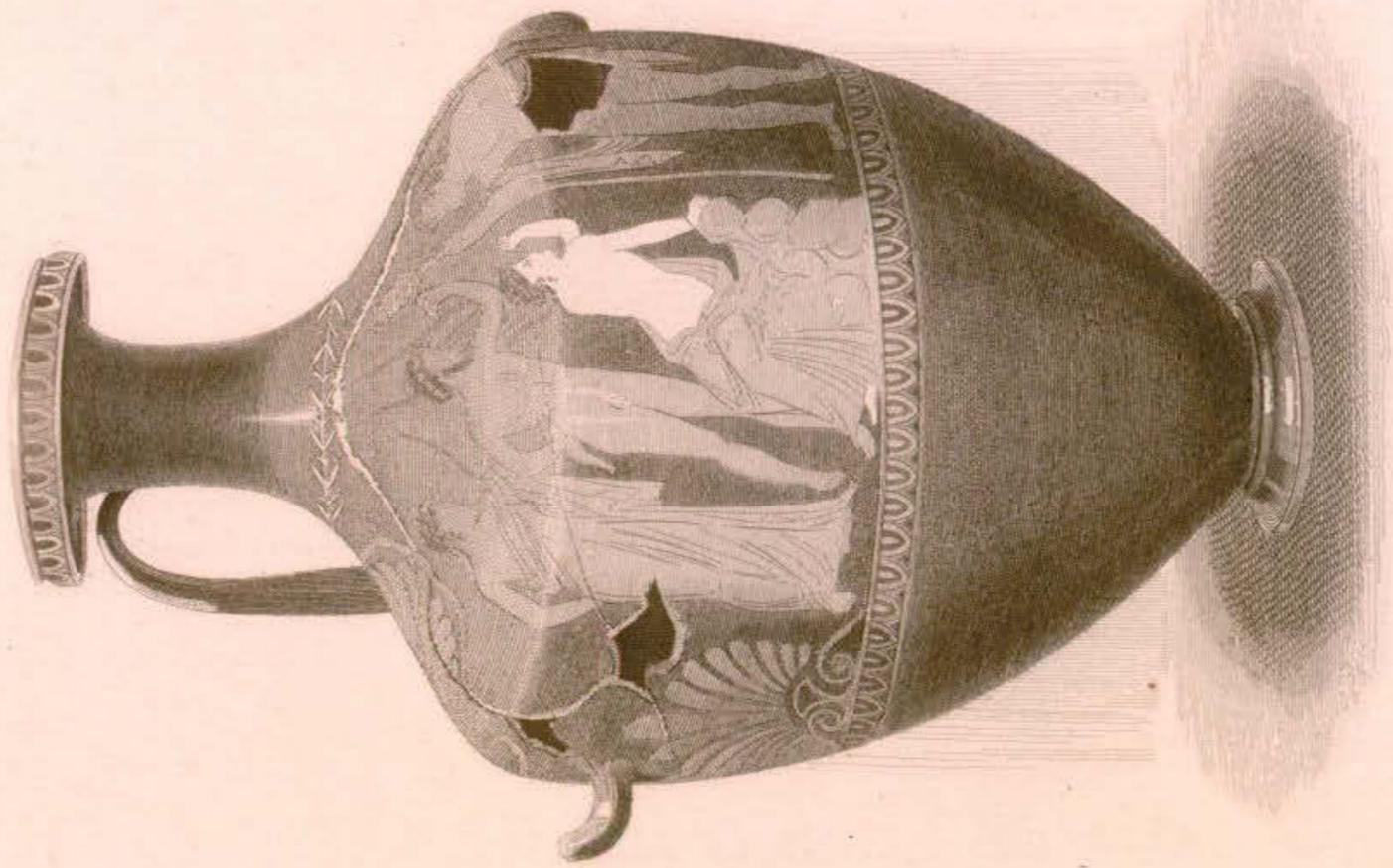
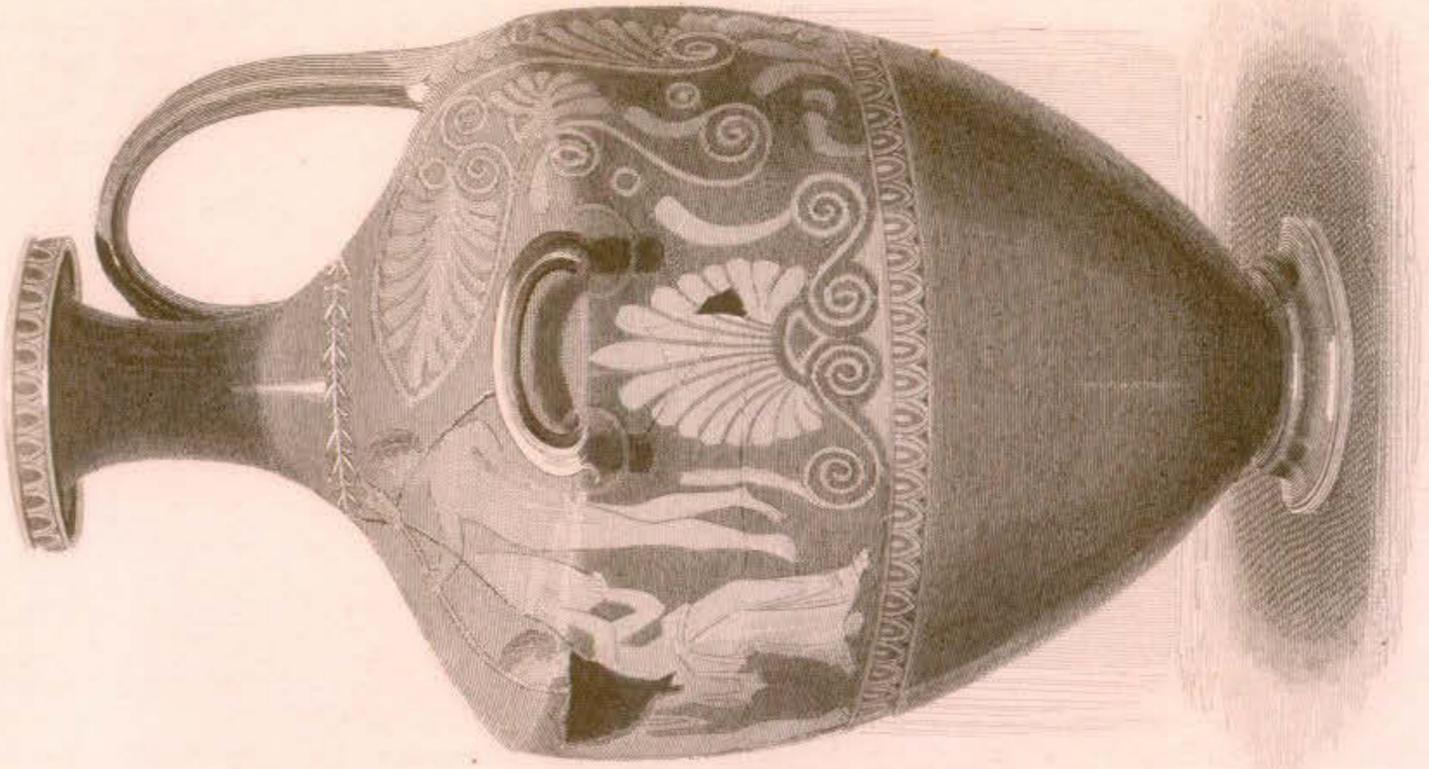
W. Penny. Delt. et Sculpt.

CYRENAIC ANTIQUITIES. N^o 1.



W. Penny. Delr. et. Sculpt.

CYRENAIC ANTIQUITIES. N^o 2.



CYRENAIC ANTIQUITIES. N^o 3.