

and with the intention to at once amuse, teach, and admonish with a dash of fine Attic salt. He was the first to whom the comic Grace displayed all her loveliest beauties. The invaluable fragments that time has preserved for us from more than a hundred of Menander's lost comedies can also give us—in light of the indisputable communion of poetry and art and the influence of one on the other—an image, apart from the written evidence, of the beauties of the artistic works in which Apelles and Lysippos clothed the Graces. Their best works are too well known to be discussed here. I will, however, mention a marble Herakles in Florence inscribed with the name of Lysippos,¹³⁴ because this work has been extolled as a genuine work of his.¹³⁵ As has already been noted by others, this name is spurious,¹³⁶ and there is no evidence that this artist worked in marble. I refer the reader to what I said in the first part with regard to this and other inscriptions.

a. The statue of Laokoon

Yet the good fortune that still watched over the arts even as they were decimated has preserved for the wonder of all the world a work from this period of art—a testament to the truth of the accounts of the splendor of so many lost masterpieces. Laokoon with his two sons, fashioned by Hagesandros, [Poly]doros, and Athenodoros of Rhodes,¹³⁷ is in all probability from this period, though we cannot be definite about this and cannot specify, as some have done, the Olympiad in which these artists flourished.¹³⁸ We know that even in antiquity this work was preferred above all paintings and statues, and accordingly it merits from lesser posterity, which has produced nothing comparable to it in art, all the more attention and admiration. In it, the wise man finds an object for scrutiny and the artist an inexhaustible source of learning, and both can be convinced that there is more to it than meets the eye and that its maker's understanding was much loftier still than his work.

Laokoon is a being in the greatest pain, fashioned in the likeness of a man seeking to gather the conscious strength of his mind and spirit against it. As the pain swells his muscles and tenses his nerves, his fortitude of spirit and strength of mind are manifested in the distended brow. The chest strains upward with stifled breath and suppressed waves of feeling, so that the pain is contained and locked within. The fearful groan he draws in and the breath he takes empty the abdomen and hollow out the sides, exposing to our view the movement of his entrails, as it were. Yet his own suffering seems to concern him less than the agony of his children, who turn their faces toward their father and cry out for help. The father's heart is manifested in the wistful eyes, and his compassion seems to float over them like a cloudy exhalation. His face is plaintive rather than agonized; his eyes are turned toward the higher power. The mouth is full of sorrow, and the lowered bottom lip is heavy with it; in the upwardly drawn top lip, this sorrow is mixed with pain, which in a stirring of discontent, as at an undeserved and unworthy suffering, runs up to the nose, swelling it and manifesting itself in the dilated and upwardly drawn nostrils. Beneath the brow, the battle between pain and resistance, as if concentrated in this one place, is composed with great wisdom, for just as pain drives the eyebrows upward, so resistance to pain pushes the flesh above the

eye down and against the upper eyelid, so that it is almost completely covered by the overlying flesh. The nature that the artist could not embellish, he has sought to make more developed, more strenuous, and more powerful. Thus, where the greatest pain is expressed, the greatest beauty is also to be found. The left side, into which the serpent pours forth its venom with a furious strike, is where, because of its proximity to the heart, Laokoon appears to suffer most intensely, and this part of the body can be called a wonder of art. His legs want to rise so that he can flee his curse. No part is at rest—even the chisel marks help to create the impression of a tightened skin.¹³⁹

Some doubt has been cast on this work, and because it is made not of a single block, as Pliny [the Elder (*Naturalis historia* 36.4.37)] assures us was true of the Laokoon in the Baths of Titus, but of two pieces joined together, some assert that the present Laokoon is not the much-celebrated one of antiquity. Pirro Ligorio is one of the doubters, and on the basis of fragments of larger than life-size feet and serpents dug up in his day, he wishes to argue that the antique Laokoon was much larger than the present one; and, having made this assumption, he wishes to have those fragments considered much more beautiful than the statue in the [Cortile del] Belvedere—as he wrote in his manuscripts in the Vatican library. Others have also raised this insignificant doubt with regard to its being in two pieces, without considering that the join would not have been as visible then as it is now. Ligorio's pretension is noted here only because of a mutilated head, larger than life-size, found under the rubble behind the Palazzo Farnese. It bears a resemblance to the head of Laokoon and may belong to the feet and serpents mentioned above. This mutilated head, together with other fragments, has now been sent to Naples. I cannot leave unmentioned that in San Ildefonso, at the pleasure palace of the king of Spain, has been found a relief depicting Laokoon and his two sons along with a winged Cupid who hovers over them as if he wished to come to their aid.

Other than in this most beautiful and grand work from the highest period of art, this period lives on in the coins of Philip [II] of Macedon, Alexander the Great, and his immediate successors. The seated Jupiter on silver coins of Alexander can give us a picture of the Olympian Jupiter of Pheidias: so much divinity is modeled into the small features of his face, and the workmanship is taken to the point of greatest refinement. Also worthy of this period is the beautiful head of Alexander in marble, larger than life-size, in the gallery in Florence; a smaller, life-size head of this king, now on the Campidoglio, is thought to be a copy of this head from the hand of a good artist. A bronze head said to be of Alexander that is among the discoveries at Herculaneum seems, to those who have seen and studied it, only mediocre.

One might expect here an opinion on two engraved gems, one with the head of Alexander, the other with the head of Phokion, both inscribed with the name of Pyrgoteles,¹⁴⁰ who had the exclusive right to engrave the head of this king. All the literature identifies these pieces as the work of this master, and it seems foolhardy to deny the alleged antiquity of the first. Neither

b. Engraved gems supposedly by Pyrgoteles from this period

s.v. "Praxiteles"); and Danet, *Dict[ionarium] Antiq[uitatum]*, s.v. "Praxiteles"; [Baudelot de Dairval, *Trois lettres... sur un[e] prétendue méd[aillé] d'Alexandre*, [letter 1,] p. 3.

122. Cicero, *De divinat.*, bk. 1, chap. 36. [Cicero, *De divinatione* 1.36.79.]

123. The two oldest manuscripts, to be found in the library of San Marco in Venice and in the Laurentian library in Florence, have the reading given in the printed book [(that is, Praxiteles)].

124. *Idyl.* 5, v. 105. [Theocritus, *Idylls* 5.105.]

125. Pausan., bk. 1, p. 20, l. 16. [Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.8.4; for the brothers' work associated with Kadmos, see Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 9.12.4.]

126. Plin., bk. 34, chap. 5. [Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 36.4.24; note that Pliny locates Kephisodotos's wrestlers not in Ephesus but in Pergamon.]

127. Idem, bk. 36, chap. 4, no. 10. [Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 36.4.35.]

128. Several years ago, a head inscribed with the name *Eubouleus*, son of a Praxiteles, went missing from the Villa Negroni. The form of the letters was somewhat different from the inscription as published.^(a) I transcribe it here from an accurate drawing:

ΕΥΒΟΥΛΕΥΣ
ΠΡΑΞΙΤΕΛΟΥΣ

[Eubouleus,
son of Praxiteles.]

The manner of writing does not indicate that it is from the period of the celebrated Praxiteles.

(a) Stosch, preface to *Pier[es antiques] gr[avées]*, p. xi.

129. *De fin.*, bk. 4, chap. 4. [Cicero, *De finibus* 4.4.10.]

130. Plin., bk. 34, chap. 19. [Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 34.19.61.]

131. Demosth., *Phil.* 3, p. 48 a, l. 23. [Demosthenes, *Speeches, Philippic* 3.31.]

132. Aristot., *Polit.*, bk. 7, chap. 14, p. 209 (edit. Wechel). [Aristotle, *Politics* 1334a15–19.]

133. *Ibid.*, p. 208. [Aristotle, *Politics* 1333b22–24.]

134. The name was overlooked by one interpreter of antique statues,^(a) otherwise he would not have thought that the statue could be a work by Polykleitos. This Herakles would give no clear idea about the one or the other artist.

(a) *Racc[olta] di stat[ue]*, with commentary by Maffei, [col]. 44; cf. Cambiagi, [*Descrizione dell'imperiale giard[ino] di Boboli*, p. 9.

135. Maffei, *Raccolt[a] di stat[ue]*, no. 43].

136. Maffei, *O[s]serv[azioni] letterarie che possono servir di continuazione al Giornal de' letterati d'Italia*, vol. [6], p. 398. [Winckelmann's citation is from Francesco Bianchini, "Articolo XI: Del Palazzo de' Cesari."]

137. At Nettuno (formerly Antium), Cardinal Alessandro Albani discovered in 1717, in a large vault that lay sunken in the sea, a base of a statue made of a dark gray marble that is now called *bigio*. On the base, the following inscription is to be found:

ΑΘΑΝΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΑΓΗΣΑΝΔΡΟΥ
ΡΟΔΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ

„Athanodoros, son of Agesander, from Rhodes, made it.“ We learn from this inscription that father and son worked on the Laokoon, and presumably Apollodoros was also Agesander's son, for this Athanodoros can be no other than the one cited by Pliny [the Elder (*Naturalis historia* 36.4.37; the Loeb edition gives the names as “Hagesander, Polydorus and Athenodorus, all of Rhodes”)]. This inscription further proves that more works of art than the three that Pliny mentions have been found on which the artists placed the word „made“ in a completed and perfective tense, that is, ἐποίησε, *fecit* [(made)]; he relates that other artists, out of modesty, expressed themselves in an imperfect tense, ἐποίει, *faciebat* [(has made)]. Below the same vault, deeper in the sea, was found a piece of a large relief on which one can now still see depicted part of a shield and a dagger hanging below it, as well as a tumbled heap of large stones, at the base of which a tablet leans. Of all the extant works, none is comparable to this in elegance and workmanship. It is in the possession of the sculptor Bart[olomeo] Cavaceppi.

138. Pliny [the Elder] makes no mention of the period in which [H]agesandros and his collaborators lived, but Maffei, in his commentary on antique statues, has declared that this artist flourished in the 88th Olympiad, and Richardson, among others, has followed him in this. Maffei has, I believe, taken an Athenodoros who was among the students of Polykleitos for one of our artists and, as Polykleitos flourished in the 87th Olympiad, placed his presumed student an Olympiad later;^(a) Maffei could have had no other grounds for saying this. Rollin speaks of the Laokoon as if it were no longer in existence.^(b)

(a) Plin., bk. 34, chap. 19. [Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 34.19.50.]

(b) [Rollin], *Hist[oire] anc[ienne]*, vol. 11, p. 87.

139. I have found in an authenticated written report that Pope Julius II granted to Felice de' Freddi [(also spelled variously: Fredi, Fredis, Freddis, Fredy)] and his sons, who discovered the Laokoon in the Baths of Titus, as a reward *introitus et portionem gabellae Portae S. Iohannis Lateranensis* [(entrance through and a portion of the taxes collected at Porta [Asinaria, near] San Giovanni in Laterano)]. But Leo X restored this source of revenue to the church of San Giovanni in Laterano and instead gave him the *Officium Scriptoriae Apostolicae* [(office of papal scribe)], issuing a papal brief to this effect on 9 November 1517.

140. Stosch, *Pier[res antiques] grav[ées]*, nos. 55, 56.

141. [Bellori, *Veterum*] *Illustr[ium Philosophorum, Poetarum, Rhetorum, et Oratorum] Imag[ines]*, [pl.] 85, [pt. 3,] p. 10.

142. There is a rumor going around that the cardinal paid 1,200 scudi (others say zecchini) for it, but both reports are false. He received it as a present from the current canonico di Castiglione.

143. Gori, *Dactyl[iotheca] Zanet[tiana]*, pl. 3.

144. [Vasari, *Le vite de' [piu eccellenti] pitt[ori, scultori e architettori]*, pt. 3, [“Vite di Valerio Vicentino, . . . e d'altri eccellenti intagliatori di camei e gioie,”] p. 291 (ed. Florence, 1568); cf. Ven[uti], pref[ace] to *Num[ismata] Rom[anorum] Pontif[icum]*, p. xxii.

145. This artist carved in stone the portrait of Henry II, king of France, in the collection of [Pierre] Crozat; see Mariette, *Descr[iption sommaire] des pier[res] grav[ées] du cabinet [de feu M. Crozat]*, p. 69.

Johann Joachim

Winckelmann

**History of the
Art of Antiquity**

Introduction by Alex Potts

Translation by Harry Francis Mallgrave