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S. Luke drawing the Virgin

Roger van der Weyden (1400-1464)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lee Higginson

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SUBSCRIPTION ONE DOLLAR

its feet an apricot branch laden with delicate white blossoms and buds. The bird as depicted has a green-yellow breast, wings, and tail; its throat is red, the lower part spotted black; the crown and auricular are black, the beak yellow, and the legs purple-brown. The subject itself is comparatively unassuming, but, treated in most minute detail—each line drawn conscientiously and the color applied carefully—the picture presents an exquisite interpretation of the atmosphere of spring. In liveliness the whole is quite unlike those matter-of-fact "flower and bird" pictures by the contemporary artists of the Academy who followed the dictates of fashion for which Hui Tsung was largely responsible. Hui Tsung excelled particularly in depicting, among other subjects, birds and plants, and here in *The Five-colored Parakeet* we have an example of his masterly attainments in painting.

The scroll must have been executed during the first quarter of the twelfth century. Of the collections in which the scroll was treasured, we can name several with certainty—the collection of the Emperor Wên Tsung (1304-1332), of Tai Ming-shuo (died in 1660), of Sung Lao (1633-1712), of the Emperor Chien-lung (1710-1799),¹ of the Emperor Chia-ch'ing (died in 1820), of Prince Kung (died in 1897), and of Chang Yün-chung (nineteenth-twentieth century). As evidence of the ownership and also of approval, these connoisseurs affixed their seals, altogether thirteen on the painted silk and eight on the margins. The last named collector, Chang Yün-chung, has attached at the end of the scroll five separate inscriptions, three of which are eulogies of the work, one an historical sketch of the scroll, and one an extract from Chien Lung's catalogue concerning the same. Thus, since its execution about eight hundred years ago, the scroll has enjoyed the favor of emperors and statesmen of China until recently. In 1927 it was taken to Japan to become one of the treasures of the Honorable T. Yamamoto of Tokyo,² and this year it passed from him to this Museum.

As is to be expected, the ravages of time are noticeable in the deterioration of the silk on which the picture is executed and in the diminished brilliance of the pigments. Nevertheless, the importance and the fineness of the picture are unimpaired. Then, too, the accompanying inscription is a very worthy specimen of Chinese calligraphy. A writer in the *Kokka* points out that the scroll may be considered the most representative example among a very limited number of genuine works of the Emperor, and that both the painting and the writing reflect vigorous and exact handling,—qualities noticeable in every line. Further, he remarks that the whole scroll proves undeniably the Chinese

¹The scroll is described in the Imperial Catalogue *Shih Chü Pao Chi* (*chüan* 24, leaves 7-8).

²The scroll is described in Mr. Yamamoto's catalogue *Chokuwaido Shogwa Mokuroku*, Vol. 1, leaves 72-83. While in the Yamamoto Collection, the scroll was shown at the Exhibition of Chinese Paintings held in Tokyo in 1929 and was much admired by connoisseurs and scholars. Reproduced in *To-so-gen-min Meigwa Taikwan*, the Catalogues (large and small editions) of the exhibition.

contention that the two arts—painting and calligraphy—are one and the same.¹

Already in the Ming period Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555-1636) deplored the scarcity of authentic works among the numerous pictures purporting to be by Hui Tsung. Today this utterance may be repeated with unreserved vigor. It is, therefore, with a feeling of justifiable pride that the Museum announces the acquisition of this excellent work by the Emperor Hui Tsung whose paintings and calligraphy deserve high praise because of their unquestionable merit and not merely because they are from the hand of a sovereign.

KOJIRO TOMITA.

An Ancient Egyptian Forgery?

IN the collection of Egyptian antiquities given to the Museum by the late C. Granville Way there is a small limestone or marble statuette of the god Amen-Rê² which is marked by a number of peculiarities that give it a special interest. The figure is only ten centimeters in height (just under four inches) and represents the god seated upon a block-like throne with a low back, wearing the kilt (unpleated), the divine beard with curling tip, and a flat-topped headdress with a transverse slit across its upper surface into which were originally set the two plumes (made of bronze?) which are the characteristic symbols of this god. The modelling of the body is remarkably refined and delicate for so small a figure, and shows the detailed rendering of the torso muscles characteristic of late Egyptian sculpture. In style the figure is entirely in keeping with a late dating and would not attract any particular notice were it not for the inscription which is incised on the vertical pillar extending up the back from the base to the shoulders. This inscription, which will be legible to Egyptologists in the accompanying cut, includes what appears to be intended for the name of a king of the Twelfth Dynasty, and has other peculiarities which call for explanation. Photographs and a cast of the inscription were accordingly submitted to Mr. Battiscombe Gunn of the University Museum in Philadelphia, a specialist in Egyptian philology, and he has kindly permitted me to quote his opinion of the inscription. Mr. Gunn translates:

"Utterance by Amen-Rê, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, <to> 'his-beloved-son,' the Son of Rê, Amenemmes, may he live forever."

He considers "that the statuette is pretty late, and the inscription on it an ignorant and careless copy of the *beginning* of an inscription contemporary with one of the kings Amenemmes [Amenemhat] of Dynasty XII."

To appreciate the significance of Mr. Gunn's opinion it is necessary to give here a few words of explanation.

The collection given to the Museum by the late

¹ *Kokka*, No. 472, pp. 63-64.

² Reg. No. 72.715.



Limestone Statuette of Amen-Ré



Way Collection



Saite Period

The illustration in the center is from a plaster impression of the inscription

C. Granville Way in 1872, to which this figure belongs, was originally formed by Robert Hay, who collected the objects in Egypt between 1828 and 1833 (the piece is No. 116 in the *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection of the Late Robert Hay*, London, 1869). As it is generally recognized by Egyptologists that forgeries sufficiently skillful to deceive the connoisseur were not produced before 1880, it seems out of the question that this statuette can be a modern forgery.

It was a common practice among the ancient Egyptians to make figures of their gods in the likeness of the reigning king, who himself was a living god, and hence the only available model on which the portrait of a divine being could be based. And further, we frequently find inscriptions on such figures, as in this instance, relating the god represented to the king in whose likeness the figure is made. The general purpose of such figures and inscriptions was to assure to the king the favor of the god, and perhaps also a share in the offerings made to him in the temple. As would be expected, such figures are normally contemporary with the king whose name appears on them, and our statuette is, therefore, remarkable because it gives the name of a king who lived at a very much earlier date than that which can be assigned to the statuette.

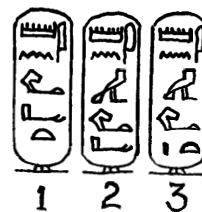
It is noteworthy that the inscription is abnormal.

Although it begins with the phrase "Utterance by Amen-Ré," there is no speech by the god following, for the inscription ends after identifying the king to whom the god speaks.¹ Then the preposition "to" (Egyptian *n*) which should precede "his-beloved-son," has been left out, and lastly, the royal name in the cartouche is entirely misspelled and fails to include an important element². It is for these reasons that Mr. Gunn characterizes the inscription as he does (see above).

We have thus a statuette made perhaps in the Saite Period, a time when Egyptian art was strongly given to harking back to older models, and during which there was a very obvious archaizing tendency and much copying from the antique. On it had been engraved an inscription purporting to date the

¹ Meaningless use of the introductory expression *dd mdw tn* is well known in certain late texts, especially on coffins, but the present instance does not appear to be an example of that sort.

² On the peculiar writing of the royal name enclosed in the cartouche Mr. Gunn makes the following comments:



"The cartouche (1) is certainly a monstrosity: I can find nothing like it. The (2) given twice in Mariette, *Karnak*, Pl. VIII, e, as being on the Karnak altar of Amenemhat I is in my opinion certainly an error for (3), but I cannot check this. The mistake would have passed unnoticed, since until the end of last century *h* was read *h'*. Possibly (in this case) the *t* + stroke of *h*; *t* was misread as *'* and a final *t* then added. The omission of *m* is very queer."

figure to the Twelfth Dynasty, or at any rate dedicating it to one of the kings of that period. The question arises whether the figure was intended to deceive and to pass as a Twelfth Dynasty piece, trading on the antiquarian interest which we know to have been prevalent at the time, or whether it was merely a figure of the god allegedly in the likeness of an earlier king, and not intended to pass as an antiquity. It would be difficult to answer that question with certainty, but I am inclined, in view of the fact that the inscription is not frankly in the Saite style, but appears to be an attempt to copy an older model, to look upon this statuette as an ancient Egyptian forgery.

DOWS DUNHAM.

The Ray Expedition

THE Museum of Fine Arts has recently arranged to coöperate with the University Museum of Philadelphia in excavating the ancient Persian site of Ray (Rhages), about six miles southeast of Teheran. Mrs. William Boyce Thompson has established a special fund on behalf of the University Museum, and the American Institute of Persian Art and Archæology is contributing its influence to the support of the joint undertaking.

Through the courtesy and helpfulness of the Persian Government and of Monsieur André Godard, Director of the Service of Antiquities in Persia, the Expedition has been granted permission not only to excavate the entire walled-in town of ancient Ray (an area of about fourteen square miles) with an additional margin of two kilometres from the outermost points of the walls in order to include its suburbs, but also to investigate by soundings the entire valley of Shah Abdul Azim. The concession thus totals about fifty square miles of territory on which there are ancient remains.

As the site is known to contain deposits which date from the fourth millennium B. C., and even earlier, and as it has been continually occupied since that early time, there exists a well-founded hope of finding evidence of the entire history of the development of Persian culture and of its relations with the Mesopotamian cultures. The town was one of the Median capitals and was a place of consequence in the Achæmenid Period; Alexander the Great paused there on his march from Ecbatana to Hekatompylos where the last Darius was assassinated; it was also one of the Parthian capitals and was apparently important in the Sassanian Period to judge from a rock relief of that time on the site. The Golden Era of its history was during the Middle Ages when it became one of the great centers of the Islamic world. Legend has made it the birthplace of Zoroaster's mother and fact the birthplace of Harun-al-Rashid.

The most beautiful as well as the most valuable examples of Islamic ceramics have already come from this site as the result of illicit digging on the part of natives, who have, however, not destroyed the remains of the ancient town as they have made

only accidental finds by burrowing. No scientific excavations have as yet been undertaken, although this has always been regarded by savants as the most important ancient site in Persia. In as much as Ray was a royal town, the deposits which are to be found there are of more consequence than those from non-royal sites.

The work will be carried on by Dr. Erich F. Schmidt, Field Director, and a staff of assistants. Dr. Schmidt has been excavating in Persia for the past two years and has completed his investigations at Tepe Hissar near Damghan, about two hundred and fifty miles east of Teheran. A part of the necessary field equipment is thus already in Persia and the nucleus of a trained crew of native workmen is also on hand.

Under the generous regulations adopted by the Persian Government in regard to the division of objects discovered by excavators, the Expedition will acquire one half of the finds and the Persian Government will retain the other half. Of the objects falling to the share of the Joint Expedition, an even division will be made between the Museum of Fine Arts and the University Museum. Both museums may thus look forward to strengthening their collections of Persian and Islamic art by acquisitions of artistic excellence, of unassailable authenticity, and of historical significance,—a combination of desirable qualities most easily achieved by the scientific excavation of such a site as Ray.

American Folk Art

THE Exhibition of American Folk Art, organized by the Museum of Modern Art and exhibited there in December and January last season, will be shown in the Museum from October 11 until November 5. The objects are largely the work of craftsmen and amateurs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and include paintings, prints, wood sculpture, sculpture in metal, and plaster ornaments, many of which are possessed of the naïve charm and sincerity which characterized the rustic environment of much of this country before the middle of last century. There will be a private view of the Exhibition for subscribers and their friends on Tuesday afternoon, October 10, from 2.30 until 5 o'clock.

Classes in Appreciation of Design

A CLASS in the Appreciation of Design with Mrs. Sayward will begin Wednesday morning, November 1, and continue through March. For information about Saturday drawing classes, lectures, gallery talks, and other courses, apply to the Division of Instruction.

In response to a constant demand for a continuation class on the part of those who have studied at the Museum or elsewhere, there will be another course of twenty lessons beginning Tuesday morning, November 7.

Also, connected with the latter course or taken