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Siddhartha in Meditation

George Nixon Black Fund and Contribution

Sixth Century

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY

SUBSCRIPTION ONE DOLLAR

Dr. Goldschmidt states that it was one of a group which decorated a jewelled reliquary made for the Church of San Millán de la Cogolla near Nájera, almost due east of Búrgos, in the province of Logroño. In 1809 Napoleonic troops, it is claimed, robbed the Church of its gold and jewels and, although a few of the ivories of the reliquary were lost, most of them are still in the Church for which they were made over eight hundred years ago.

The plaques, cut in high relief, depict events in the life of St. Aemilianus (San Millán), and ours combined with that at Florence represents the scene of his death. They were described in 1601 by Prudencio di Sandoval, and Dr. Goldschmidt quotes this Spanish author's reference to our subject as follows:

"St. Aemilianus lies dead on the bier with a high cross at his head. Beside the bier is a monk in a short garment who pulls his hair, and a second monk with a cowl stands at the head with his hands at his breast in sorrow over the death of the Saint." Sandoval also recorded the two inscriptions:

UBI ANGELI DEI GAUDENTES AD CELUM CONSCENDUNT ANIMAM BEATI EMILIANI PORTA(N)TES.
DE EIUS OBITU ET OBSEQUIO ASELLI PRESBITERI,

or in translation:¹

"WHERE THE ANGELS OF GOD RISE WITH JOY TOWARD HEAVEN CARRYING THE SOUL OF BLESSED AEMILIANUS."

"ABOUT HIS DEATH AND THE SERVICE ARRANGED BY THE PRIEST ASELLUS."

Above the two arches, emerging figures of the angels of God are seen, each holding an arm of the figure representing the ascending soul of St. Aemilianus. This important ivory makes one of three exhibited together, thus offering an opportunity for comparative study, since they are of the eleventh, twelfth, and fifteenth centuries. The earliest in date and the latest to be acquired is referred to in the following works:

Die Elfenbeinskulpturen, by Adolph Goldschmidt; *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, by Kingsley Porter; *Elfenbeinwerke aus Italien*, by Hans Graeven; *El Arts Romanica en España*, by Gomez Moreño.

The three plaques may be seen in the Gothic Gallery.
EDWIN J. HIPKISS.

A Florentine Coin of the Sixteenth Century

DURING the reign of Diocletian, 284-305 A.D., two brothers known as Cosmo and Damian gave away their property and devoted themselves to the poor as physicians. Persecuted under the orders of the Emperor they escaped, according to their legend, drowning, burning, and death by stoning, but were in the end beheaded. Damian and Cosmo were eventually accepted popularly as saints, and having been physicians they

¹Thanks to Professor W. R. W. Koehler of Harvard University.



Forty Soldi Piece in Silver

Florence, 1530-1537

Gift of Dr. George L. Walton

came to be the patron saints, appropriately enough, of the Medici family of Florence.

Cosimo de Medici engaged Fra Angelico to paint scenes from their legendary history; and such subjects were also painted by Pesselino, Ghirlandajo, and Titian. Figures of Damian and Cosmo by Michael Angelo stand on either side of the Madonna in the Medici Chapel in Florence. Churches were dedicated to them.

When Alessandro de Medici came to issue the coinage of his short reign (1530-1537), he turned to Benvenuto Cellini, and we read in this goldsmith's famous autobiography his comment on the occasion. "He gave me orders at once to strike dies for his coinage; and the first I made was a piece of forty soldi, with the Duke's head on one side and San Cosmo and San Damian on the other. This was in silver, and it gave so much satisfaction that the Duke did not hesitate to say they were the best pieces of money in Christendom. The same said all Florence and every one who saw them."

Everyone knows of Cellini's adventurous life and his colorful report of it, but not everyone knows objects of his making,—one of his "best pieces of money in Christendom," for example.

As a gift, among other interesting coins, made recently by Dr. George L. Walton, the Museum now owns and illustrates herewith Cellini's forty soldi piece made for Duke Alessandro de Medici.

EDWIN J. HIPKISS.

Some New Objects from Tell-el-Amarna

IN the BULLETIN for April of last year there appeared a note recording the receipt of a small group of reliefs from the Egypt Exploration Society's excavations at Tell-el-Amarna, a gift from that institution made possible by a contribution from Mrs. Charles Gaston Smith and her Group of Friends. In November last the Museum received a second shipment of antiquities from these excavations, this time through the generosity of the Hon. Robert P. Bass of New Hampshire, who had placed a sum of money at the disposal of Dr. Reisner to be used as he might deem best in the interests of the Museum and the Department of Egyptian Art. The Director of our Egyptian Expedition very generously allocated the major part of this contribution to the furthering of the scientific researches of his fellow excavators at Tell-el-Amarna, and the shipment just received



Face of King Akhnaten from Tell-el-Amarna

Limestone, XVIII Dynasty

Gift of the Egypt Exploration Society through the Hon. Robert P. Bass



Portrait Head. Trial Piece from Tell-el-Amarna

Limestone, XVIII Dynasty

Gift of the Egypt Exploration Society through the Hon. Robert P. Bass

has been sent by the British expedition in recognition of this assistance.

The group comprises twenty objects, found, for the most part, in the season of 1935-36, during the

excavations in and about the great palace of Akhnaten. Noteworthy among them are several pieces of relief sculpture showing portraits of members of the royal family. One of these is a limestone



Queen Nefertiti from Tell-el-Amarna
Alabaster XVIII Dynasty
Gift of the Egypt Exploration Society through
the Hon. Robert P. Bass

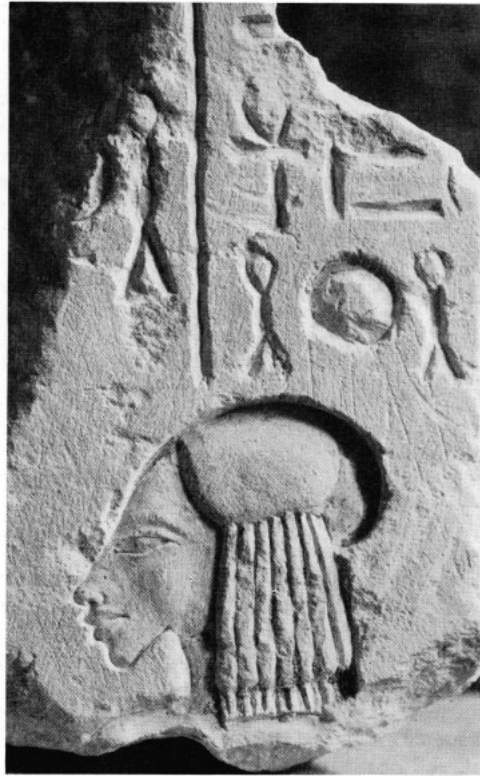
fragment on which is preserved the lower part of the king's face in bold relief.¹ Here are seen the characteristic full lips, drooping chin, and scrawny neck of the heretic king, and the piece happily gives us the very parts of his face which are missing in the fine "trial piece" portrait of him received last year (*Bulletin*, XXXIV, p. 23). A comparison of the lips in the two pieces leaves no doubt that both represent the king. The new piece shows traces of one forearm raised in front of the face in the traditional gesture of adoration, and this is, therefore, certainly a fragment from one of the subjects in which the king is represented in the act of making an offering. The face was originally painted a deep red, but there remain only minute traces of color on neck and chin.

Akhnaten's wife, Queen Nefertiti, is represented by a fragment from an alabaster stela.² The piece shows the upper part of her figure in the offering position, and her head is complete. On her forehead is the uraeus serpent, emblem of royalty, and she wears an elaborate wig coming down over the ears and covering part of her long neck. Above may be seen the symbolic hands, in which the rays of the Aten-disc terminate, spread over her in protection, and one of these hands holds the symbol of life—"giving life to her nose" as the Egyptians expressed it.

Nefertiti bore the king six daughters, and on another fragment in this group, perhaps from the same alabaster stela, we read the name of one of them, Meryt-Aten. It is probably this princess who is represented by the appealing little head from a fragment

¹Reg. No. 37.4. Width 16.2 cm.

²Reg. No. 37.3. Height of worked face 16.5 cm.



Head of a Princess from Tell-el-Amarna
Limestone XVIII Dynasty
Gift of the Egypt Exploration Society through
the Hon. Robert P. Bass

of limestone relief¹, for a trace of the name appears to be included in the portion of the inscription which remains above. The modelling of this charming head is admirably executed, and shows the sloping forehead, drooping chin, and peculiar skull formation characteristic of most of the representations of Akhnaten and his family which have come down to us. The princess is shown wearing the side-lock, the distinctive mark of childhood. Both her face and the lower part of the lock were colored red, and the hieroglyphs above retain traces of blue paint.

One of the most interesting of the pieces just received from Amarna is a study of a male head on a rectangular slab of limestone,² one of the so-called sculptors' "trial pieces" of which a relatively



Male Head from Tell-el-Amarna
Limestone XVIII Dynasty
Gift of the Egypt Exploration Society through
the Hon. Robert P. Bass

¹Reg. No. 37.1. Height of worked face 18.7 cm.

²Reg. No. 37.2. Length 22 cm.

large number have been found on the site. In all probability a portrait study, it does not represent the king, and there is no means of identifying the subject, if indeed he was anybody of prominence. The face has been quite delicately rendered in low sunk relief, and the artist has taken an obvious interest in the distinctive lines of the abnormally long nose, thick lips, and small receding chin. Having depicted the profile with a good deal of care, however, the sculptor appears to have lost interest in what was probably the casual occupation of an idle hour. The eye and eyebrow have been hastily incised, and the outline of the head and neck, together with the ear and the hair line beneath it, is merely scratched on the stone, as though the artist, called back to more serious occupations after an interval of relaxation, had yet snatched an additional moment to rough in the outlines of his unfinished work.

The last of our illustrations shows a small scrap which has survived from a shattered limestone relief.¹ There is no evidence as to the nature of the scene to which this fragment once belonged; its interest for us lies in the rather humorous rendering of the little bald-headed man, a subsidiary figure, probably a servant. The head is less than two and a half centimeters in height, yet the sculptor has succeeded in imparting a good deal of personality and character to it, and one cannot help suspecting that it must be a whimsical caricature of someone known to the artist.

There is much evidence that the royal residence of Akhnaten at Tell-el-Amarna was lavishly decorated with colored representations of scenes from nature. The famous frescoes showing birds fluttering in papyrus thickets, and the pavement whereon calves are seen gambolling against a varied background of plant forms, are witness to the king's taste for color and gaiety, and to his fondness for nature. Among the antiquities recently received from the Egypt Exploration Society are a number of important fragments of polychrome glazed faience tiles recalling scenes of this character. These include two pieces of a tile with the figure of a duck in flight, and several fragments illustrating plant forms such as the thistle, the lotus, and the papyrus.

Many years ago natives of near-by villages, digging in the ruins of Tell-el-Amarna for fertilizer, came upon a quantity of documents written in the cuneiform script on clay tablets. These have since become famous as the "Tell-el-Amarna Letters"—the diplomatic correspondence of the Egyptian government with the rulers of foreign lands. The peasants had blundered upon what was once the archives department of the Egyptian Foreign Office, and archaeologists obtained a mass of information about her foreign relations at a time when Egyptian imperial power had just passed its zenith. In view of these facts there is no little interest attached to the last object to be mentioned in these notes. It is a brick of sun-dried mud² on which has been stamped in

hieroglyphic characters the name of the building for which it was intended. The inscription may be translated "Records-Office of Pharaoh, (to whom be) Life, Prosperity, Health," and the brick once formed part of the building in which the famous "letters" were housed.

The new consignment sent to the Museum by the Egypt Exploration Society is a most welcome addition to the small group of objects representing the art and culture of Tell-el-Amarna received a year ago, for the Department is now in a position to offer its public by no means negligible examples both of sculpture in relief and of the decorative arts illustrating this significant phase of Egyptian history.

DOWS DUNHAM.

Lectures

DR. EDGELL

DR. GEORGE HAROLD EDGELL will discuss "The Later Scientists of the Quattrocento in Florence" in the Main Lecture Hall of the Museum on Tuesday, February 9, at 3 o'clock p.m. This will be the third in the series of four related lectures on Florentine painting which the Director is giving this season to Annual Subscribers and friends of the Museum. The first lecture, "Florentine Painters of the Early Renaissance" delivered on November 17, and the second, "Filippo Lippi and Botticelli" delivered on January 19, were enthusiastically greeted by large audiences.

DR. B. H. HILL

DR. B. H. HILL, formerly Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Greece, presented some of the significant results of his investigation during many years of architectural problems on "The Athenian Acropolis."

MR. ERIC NEWTON

MR. ERIC NEWTON will deliver a lecture on "The Meaning of Modern Art" in the Main Lecture Hall on Wednesday, March 10, at 3 o'clock p.m. Mr. Newton is art critic for *The Manchester Guardian*, and will come to Boston after an extended lecture tour through Canada under the auspices of the National Gallery of Ottawa.

Exhibitions

PRINTS

THE PRINT DEPARTMENT, in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment, has placed a number of important prints and drawings on view in the Special Exhibition Galleries from January 15 to March 10.

GERMAN ART

AN EXHIBITION OF GERMAN ART, comprising paintings and drawings dating from the fifteenth to the twentieth century, brought to America by the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, will open with a private view to Annual Subscribers and their friends on Tuesday, March 16. The Exhibition will be open to the public from March 17 to April 15.

¹Reg. No. 37.8. Length 8.6 cm.

²Reg. No. 37.10. Length 30 cm.