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## MARBLE HEADS IN THE TCHINLY-KIOSK MUSEUM.

[PLATE IX.]

The two marble sculptures, a medallion and a bust, which have been admirably reproduced by M. Dujardin on PL. IX, belong to the Museum of Tchingly-Kiosk, at Constantinople.

I. The medallion (1.02 m. in diameter) is said to come from the Byzantine Forum or *Augusteon*:<sup>1</sup> it is a head of Medusa in relief, sculptured in that peculiarly dry and frigid style which characterizes Greco-Roman art in its later stage of development, or its decay. One striking feature in the art of that period is a tendency to ornamental regularity in the representation of the human figure. After having gradually conquered its independence from the realm of architecture and decoration, in the days of pre-Pheidian sculpture, it seems as if the declining art had felt a temptation to resume the yoke which the genius of ancient masters had shaken off. Indeed, the history of the type of Medusa, which has more than once been retraced,<sup>2</sup> may serve as an illustration of that curious evolution. In the most ancient works, particularly the black-figured vases and works in metal, the head of Medusa is an emblem of horror and dismay, something like a hideous bugbear or *ἀποτρόπαιον*; often used, besides, as a simple ornament, undoubtedly connected with a superstitious idea of prophylaxy, but without any relation to the objects on which it is represented.<sup>3</sup> Gradually, however, the type is seen to evolve, under the increasing influence of idealism: the coarseness of expression and grotesque ugliness

<sup>1</sup> Reinach, *Catalogue du Musée Impérial*, 1882, No. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Levezow, *Ueber die Entwicklung des Gorgonideals* (*Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie*, 1832, and separately, Berlin, 1833); Six, *Specimen literarium inaugurale de Gorgone*, Amsterdam, 1885 (cf. *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. VI, pp. 275-286); Dumont, *Monuments grecs*, 1878, p. 22 sqq.; Wolters, *Gypsabgüsse antiker Bildwerke*, No. 1597.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the most ancient known marble figure of Medusa, a medallion found in Sparta (*Archäol. Zeitung*, 1881, pl. 17, 1 and p. 291; *Mittheil. des deutschen Instituts*, vol. II, p. 317). This Medusa is an architectural ornament, as is also an archaic head of Medusa found on the Akropolis of Athens (Ross, *Archäol. Aufsätze*, vol. I, pl. 8, p. 109), and a similar one from Olympia (Wolters, *Gypsabgüsse*, No. 385).



ness disappear,<sup>4</sup> giving way to a two-fold conception of the Gorgon's head,—either as a symbol of intense but noble suffering, or as the image of fascinating but fatal and cruel beauty. The former is chiefly represented by the Ludovisi Medusa in Rome,<sup>5</sup> the latter by the Rondanini Medusa in Munich,<sup>6</sup> two masterpieces belonging, in all probability, to the end of the Alexandrine period. As a symbol of pain, the Ludovisi type was very well adapted to the adornment of sarcophagi,<sup>7</sup> while on the other hand the type of the Rondanini sculpture afforded an easy motive for architectural decoration. Both these types, especially the latter, were adopted and repeatedly used by Roman art. The head of Medusa occurs on countless monuments, and finally tends to become a mere ornament, without any mythological or moral meaning attached to it. The two winglets on the top of the head, which first appear in the Alexandrine period,<sup>8</sup> are always preserved in the Roman type; but the tongue is no longer thrust out, the menacing rows of teeth do not appear, and the entangled serpents forming the head-gear are generally omitted.<sup>9</sup> The head is encircled, as in the Medusa of Constantinople, with thick twists of hair,<sup>10</sup> still recalling

<sup>4</sup> A legend alluded to by Pindar, which may have found greater credit in later times, praises the beauty of Medusa (*εὐπάραος*, *Pyth.* XII, v. 28).

<sup>5</sup> *Monumenti dell' Instituto*, vol. VIII, pl. 35; Diltthey, *Annali*, 1871, pp. 212-238; Lucy Mitchell, *A History of Ancient Sculpture*, pl. 6, p. 618; Schreiber, *Die antiken Bildwerke der Villa Ludovisi*, p. 131. Wolters (*Gypsabgüsse*, No. 1419), while objecting to the traditional name of Medusa given to that splendid piece of sculpture, notices that Prof. Brunn decidedly maintains it.

<sup>6</sup> Lützow, *Münchener Antiken*, pl. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Stephani, *Compte-Rendu de la commission de Saint Pétersbourg*, 1863, p. 89. Jahn contends that the head of Medusa on sarcophagi is not meant as a symbol of death and pain, but as an *ἀποτρόπαιον* (*Berichte der sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, 1854, p. 47).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Levezow, *op. laud.*, p. 87. The winglets are a euphemistic transformation of the horns which appear in archaic monuments such as *Archäol. Zeitung*, 1881, pl. 17. Cf. *Arch. Zeit.*, 1845, p. 185.

<sup>9</sup> Hesiod mentions two serpents around the Gorgon's waist (*Scutum*, v. 233 sqq.). Pindar calls Medusa *ὀφιδόης* (*Olymp.* XIII) and the Gorgons *παρβένιοι ἀπλάτοι ὀφίων κεφαλαίς* *Pyth.* XII). In the X<sup>th</sup> Pythic ode, the head of Gorgon is expressively styled *ποικίλον κάρα δρακόντων φέβασιν*. Aischylos speaks of the *δρακοντόμαλλοι Γόργονες* (*Prometheus*, v. 804). Cf. Apollodoros, II, 2. The entangled serpents in the Gorgon's hair are not, however, an ordinary occurrence in the works of archaic art (cf. Levezow, pp. 29, 82). One of the most ancient instances is a terracotta mask, now in Berlin, engraved at the end of Levezow's paper, pl. I, fig. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ovid (*Metamorph.* IV, v. 795) goes so far as to praise the beauty of Medusa's hair: . . . *Nec in tota conspexior ulla capillis*

*Pars fuit. . . .*



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the aspect of serpents, but only to those who are acquainted with the original type. Under the winglets and beneath the chin, uniting the extremities of the two terminal locks, there are circular bands which may be taken for serpents,<sup>11</sup> but are indeed, in many instances, more like taenias or neck-ties. The workmanship of the serpentine hair is perfectly regular and symmetrical, resembling an elaborate frame in wood or metal, rather than the natural waving of locks. It seems as if Medusa, no longer able to petrify her opponents, had finally petrified herself into the dull stiffness of an ornament. Such is the case with the Medusa of Constantinople. The expression of the face is neither coldly disdainful, nor painfully languid: it is harsh and almost ugly. The ugliness was probably not aimed at by the sculptor, but the harshness is certainly intentional, as may be seen from the wrinkled forehead, the frowning brow, and other details such as the ungraceful corners of the mouth. The eyes and the winglets still preserve distinct traces of blue painting; the nose is flat and vulgar, the mouth and chin are coarse, sensual, and realistic. On the whole, this elaborate piece of Roman workmanship, which has come to us in a state of perfect preservation, is, like the mythic figure it represents, a rather distant echo of Greek and Alexandrine tradition, and the only redeeming qualities which it can claim are characteristic of every art on the verge of decay: ornamental instinct and technical skill.<sup>12</sup>

II. The bust, which has been figured on the same plate, was found at Kyrene,<sup>13</sup> and is perhaps an idealized portrait of the Empress Sabina, wife of Hadrian, who was sometimes represented under the aspect of various goddesses,<sup>14</sup> and may have assumed in this instance the majestic appearance of Hera. It affords another illustration of the transformation and corruption of Greek models by the *fa presto* artists of imperial Rome. Although the surface of the marble has suffered a good deal from rain or dampness, the workmanship might

<sup>11</sup> The serpents forming a kind of neck-tie are often to be seen under the heads of Medusa; cf. Ross, *Archäol. Aufs.* I, pl. 8; Levezow, pl. IV, No. 44; pl. V, Nos. 47-51. The heads of the serpents projecting from beneath the winglets are very distinct in the Rondanini Medusa (Levezow, pl. V, fig. 50).

<sup>12</sup> A similar medallion, but of smaller proportions, was found at Pompeii, and is engraved in the *Museo Borbonico*, vol. XIII, pl. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Reinach, *Catalogue du Musée Impérial*, No. 304.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Sabina as Ceres, in the Louvre, No. 593 (Durny, *Histoire des Romains*, vol. V, p. 2); Sabina as Venus Genitrix, found in the Augusteum of Otricoli (*Museo Pio-Clementino*, III, pl. 8).



be praised as tolerably free and spirited, if it were not for the two locks of hair falling on either side of the neck. These locks resemble human hair but little more than do the serpentine curls of Medusa: they are metallic spirals awkwardly copied in marble. Here, again, we may observe a resemblance between late Roman clumsiness and early Greek inexperience: the graceful and lively treatment of hair was one of the last attainments of Hellenic art, and one of the first that Roman sculpture forfeited. In spite of this very great defect, the head in question is interesting as a not altogether unworthy reminiscence of the type of Hera such as it had been, according to Brunn's conjecture, created by Polykleitos. There is a striking resemblance between the head in Constantinople and the celebrated bust from the Farnese collection now in the Museum at Naples, where Brunn has recognized the influence of a Polykleitan model, whilst others prefer attributing its origin to Alkamenēs.<sup>15</sup> The fact that female heads belonging to the same series are of comparatively rare occurrence adds some value to the bust of Constantinople, which, so far as I know, has been hitherto neither described nor engraved.

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<sup>15</sup> *Museo Borbonico*, vol. v, pl. 9, 2; Overbeck, *Kunstmythologie*, pl. 9, 1, 2; *Monumenti*, vol. VIII, pl. 1, with Brunn's article in the *Annali*, 1864, p. 297. A good wood-cut is given by Lübke, *Geschichte der Plastik*, vol. I, p. 184.