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INSCRIBED BASE OF AN ARCHAIC BRONZE STATUE
FROM MOUNT PTOUS.

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FROM MOUNT PTOUS.

[Plate X.]

About twenty years ago, a well-known French antiquary, M. Eugène Piot, purchased in Athens the small bronze base which is figured in phototype, on plate x, from a photograph taken by M. Balagny.¹ It was said to have been found in Beotia, a statement fully confirmed by the tenor of the inscription. The original still belongs to M. Piot, who has kindly allowed me to publish it. Many archæologists and epigraphists are well acquainted with it, and have repeatedly examined the inscription, trying to solve the difficulties which it contains. The Sphinx, however, has not yet met with her Oidipus, and the archaic text has remained inedited, while so many others, which are not easier to understand, have been collected by M. Roehl in his *Inscriptiones antiquissimae*. As far as I know, M. Rayet is the only writer who has mentioned this base, in a short notice published in the *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires*, 1881, p. 300, relating to the point of a spear with the inscription ΤΟ ΠΤΟΙΕΟΞ: ΗΙΑΡΟΝ; but he did not attempt to give a reading of it, and only stated that it bore the name of Apollon Ptoios. When I first became acquainted with the inscription, I hoped to hit on some good idea and to solve the problem; soon after, on perceiving that the task was beyond my knowledge, I nevertheless determined to publish it, in order that its difficulties might be submitted to the combined labors of all epigraphists, and not to the perspicacity only of the few who chance to visit Mons. Piot's collection. If archæologists published nothing but what they perfectly comprehend, the greater number, perhaps, of Greek and Semitic inscriptions would still

¹ M. Balagny's process allows him to obtain direct negatives on translucent paper, thus suppressing the inconvenience of glass *plaques*, which are a cumbersome and fragile burden to the travelling archæologist.



BASE OF A BRONZE STATUE FROM MT. PTOUS.

linger inedited and inaccessible to study. *Primum edere, deinde philosophari.*

Our plate gives the small bronze base somewhat beyond its natural size: the true dimensions are 76 by 36 millimetres. The two feet of the statuette, as may be seen from the phototype, are of very delicate workmanship. Although Apollon is named in the inscription, they may very well have belonged to a figure of some other god or goddess, since Letronne and others have proved, by convincing arguments, that the statue of one god was often dedicated to another.²

The inscription, as far as the reading of the letters is concerned, is very legible. The alphabet is that of Bœotia at about the beginning of the fifth century B. C., and the writing runs *boustrophedon*:

ΤΙΜΑΣΙΦΙΛΟΣ ΜΑΝΕΘΕΚΕΤΟΠΟΛΟΝΙΤΟΙΠΤΟΙΕΙΗΘ
ΠΡΑΟΓΓΕΙΟΝ

The only difficult letters are the two Γ of ΟΓΓΕΙΟΝ at the end of the inscription. The symbols can hardly be considered as *lambdas*, as the Λ in ΤΙΜΑΣΙΦΙΛΟΣ, which is very distinct, gives another type; on the other hand, the second one is much more inclined towards the right than the first. The photograph shows that the letter following the Ο in the third line has been engraved with some uncertainty; there is something like a retouch at the bottom, which gives it some resemblance to an Α. The sense of the first 36 letters is quite clear: *Τιμασίφιλος μ' ἀνέθεκε τῷ Πόλωνι τῷ Πτωίεϊ*, that is, in classical Greek, *Τιμασίφιλος μ' ἀνέθηκε τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ Πτωίεϊ*, *Timasiphilos has dedicated me to the Ptoian Apollon*. The old sanctuary of Apollon on Mount Ptous is well known from ancient writers; the site occupied by the sanctuary, now called *Perdikovrysi*, in the neighborhood of *Karditza* (Akraiphia), has been excavated during the spring of 1885 by a member of the French school of Athens, who discovered there a very important archaic statue of Apollon, in the style of the Apollon from Tenea, and many curious inscriptions on marble, pottery and bronze, which will be published next year in the *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*.³ The name

² Cf. Letronne, *Revue Archéologique*, 1844, p. 439; 1848, p. 248; *Annali dell' Istituto*, vi. p. 198-232; *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, t. xv. 1845, p. 132; Longpérier, *Bulletin de l'Athénæum français*, Avril, 1856, p. 32; *Catalogue des bronzes du Louvre*, No. 69; Rayet, *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*, i. p. 308.

³ Cf. *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, 10 Juillet, 1885.

of the dedicator, *Τιμασίφιλος*, I meet with for the first time: *Τιμασίθεος* has been already found in Bœotia.

The last twelve letters contain the unsolved riddle. Such readings as *ὁ πρῶον γήιον*, *ὁ πρῶον γῆ ὄν*, give little or no sense. In similar dedicatory inscriptions (for example, *Inscriptiones antiquissimae*, No. 408) the name of the god is followed by *δεκάτη*, or the like. I hope some reader of this paper will be successful in detecting the sense of this mysterious ΠΡΑΟΓΓΕΙΟΝ. It may be noticed that an archaic inscription from Sparta, several times copied by able epigraphists, bears the hitherto unexplained word ΙΟΛΛΕΙΟΝ or ΠΟΛΛΕΙΟΝ in *boustrophedon* writing (*Inscr. antiquissimae*, No. 58). M. Roehl, giving in his turn the same text, is compelled to write *Equidem haec non expedio*. There are yet more words in Greek epigraphy than are dreamed of in our lexicons.

SALOMON REINACH.

P. S. The present article was going through the press when I received from M. Bréal, member of the French Institute, the following letter, in answer to a photograph of the inscription which I had sent to him. M. Bréal has allowed me to publish his suggestion as an appendix to my *quaeritur*.

“Dear Sir:

“This is my interpretation of the last two words. At first, I was satisfied with it, then a little less, then not at all. Finally, I think it *possible* and offer it to you as it is.

“ΞΟΤΡΑ ΟΤΛΕΙΟΝ = ὄφρα ὀφείλων.

“That is to say: ‘*En sa qualité de débiteur.*’ “*Οπρα* became ὄφρα by metathesis of the aspiration (= ὄπη ἄρα). “*ὀπλείων* stands for ὀφείλων. Compare ὄφλω and ὀφλισκάνω.

“The difficulty is in the sense of ὄφρα, which must be considered here as synonymous with ὄσπερ, ἄτε, οἷα.

Si quid novisti rectius. . . .”

MICHEL BRÉAL.