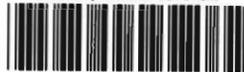


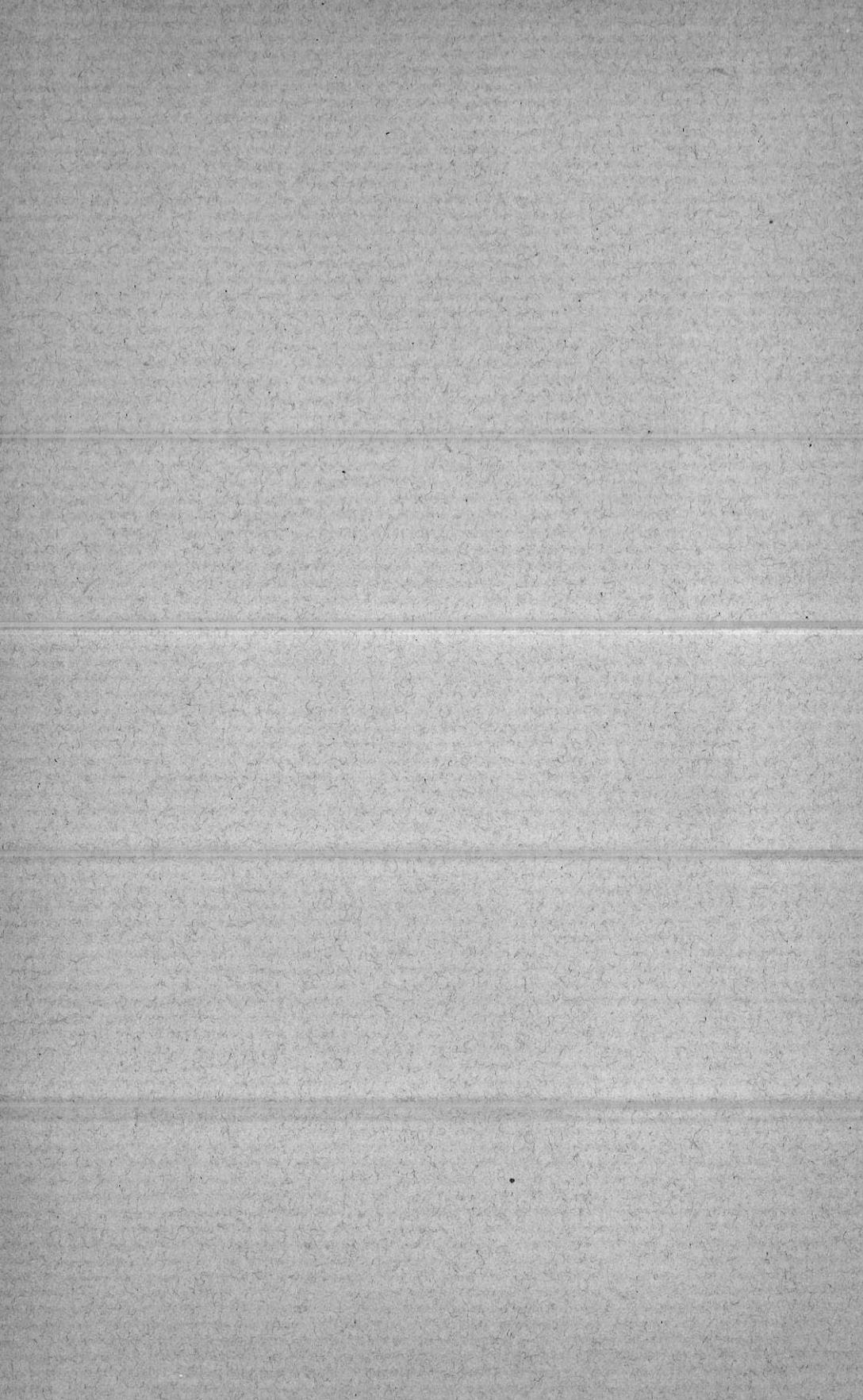
S. Reinach — Portrait de Platon.

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## AN INEDITED PORTRAIT OF PLATO.

[PLATE I.]

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During the summer months of 1881, which I spent in Smyrna, I had the opportunity of purchasing a certain number of antiquities for the Louvre Museum, and of examining a great many more, which I now regret to have allowed to escape. Among the former is the fine marble head published here for the first time on PLATE I. I was informed of its existence by a Greek broker, who told me it was walled in a Turkish house somewhere about the top of mount Pagos. On my expressing the wish to go with him to see it, he answered that it was impossible, for some reason, and that he would rather bring the head to my hotel. I believe the whole story about the Turkish house was false, for the broker, who probably was himself in possession of the head, began by getting from me the price which the pretended Turk demanded, and then a commission of twenty per cent. for his trouble. Be that as it may, I did not regret the small sum paid for it, the head having proved to be still more interesting than I supposed at the time I first saw it.

I safely conveyed my acquisitions to the Louvre, in the autumn of 1881, and a long time elapsed before I thought again about the bearded philosopher's head, which remained, rather forgotten, in the storeroom of our Museum. Five years later, in the autumn of 1886, while going through the Old Museum in Berlin, I was struck by a head, quite similar in appearance, with a small pedestal bearing the inscription ΠΛΑΤΩΝ. Having asked one of the keepers for some information about it, I learned that Professor Helbig was on the point of publishing

this bust of Plato in the *Jahrbuch d. deutschen archäol. Instituts*. I was naturally bound to await his publication: in the meantime, I caused the head in the Louvre to be mounted on a bust in plaster and photographed. I must now give, together with a few supplements, a short analysis of Professor Helbig's learned paper in the *Jahrbuch*,<sup>1</sup> which I would have entirely translated, as the best illustration of the Louvre bust, if the *Jahrbuch* were not so widely known among friends of archæology and art.



FIG. 1.—Bust of Plato, in the old Museum of Berlin.

The Berlin bust, which is reproduced in *fig. 1* for the sake of comparison, first appeared at the sale of Alessandro Castellani's collection in Rome, in the latter days of March 1884.<sup>2</sup> The catalogue describes it, as follows, under No. 1086: *Hermès de Platon, avec l'inscription ΠΛΑΤΩΝ sur la guine. Μάρτυς γινε. Νεε fruste*. It was purchased by Count Michael Tyszkiewicz, who shortly afterwards presented it to the Berlin Museum.<sup>3</sup> The workmanship is rather dry, but points to a good original. As the inscription—which, to judge from the shape of the characters, is not anterior to the epoch of the Antonines—is undoubtedly genuine, and belongs to the same period as the sculpture itself, the Berlin bust deserves a high rank among the typical materials of Greek

iconography, being the first authentic portrait of the great philosopher.<sup>4</sup>

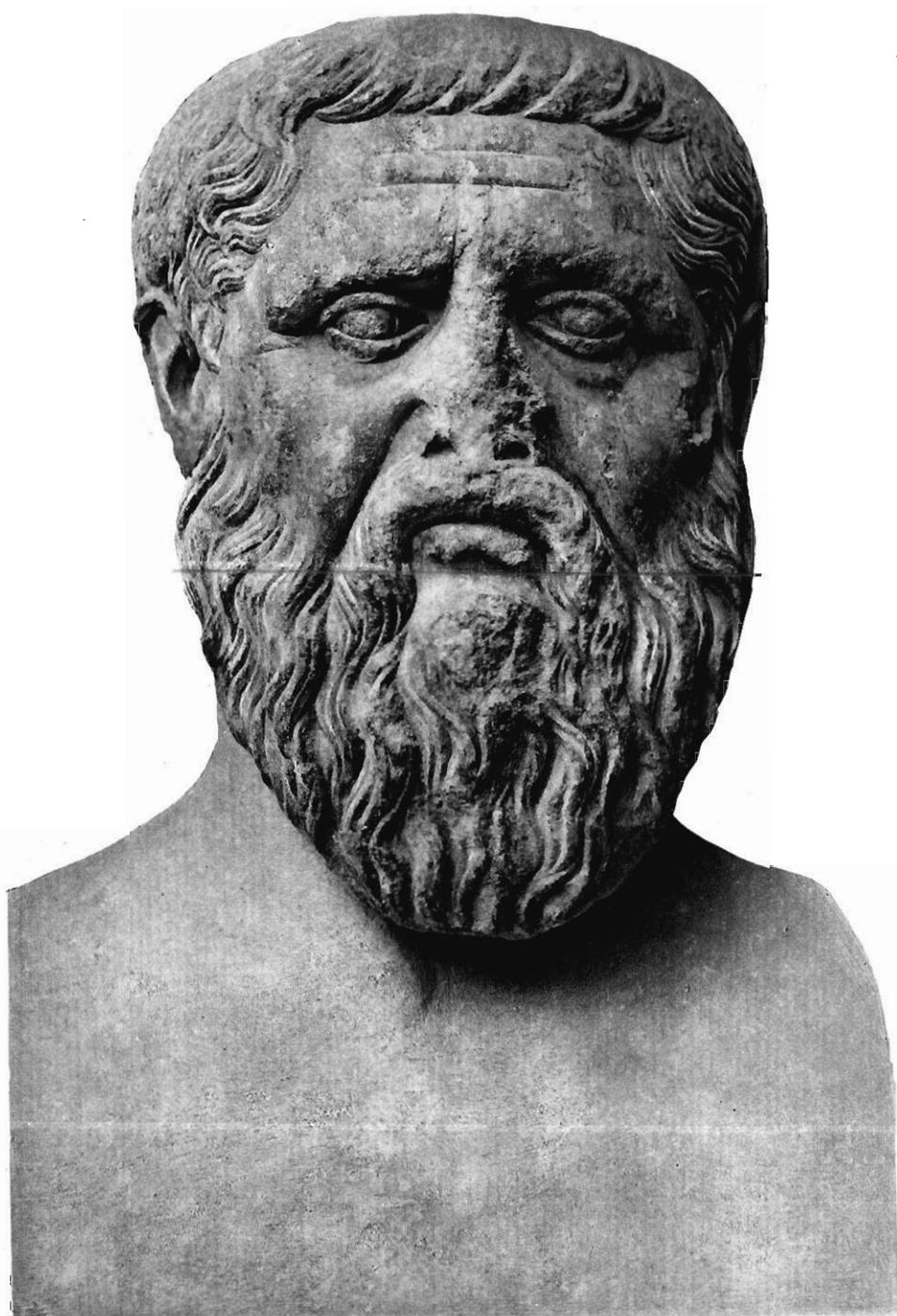
Previous to that discovery, Visconti had published a small bust in

<sup>1</sup> HELBIG, *Ueber die Bildnisse des Platon*, in *Jahrbuch des deutschen archäol. Instituts*, 1886, Bd. I, S. 71–78, Taf. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Catalogue d'objets d'art dépendant de la Collection Alessandro Castellani*: Paris, 1884, 4o.

<sup>3</sup> *Verzeichniss der antiken Sculpturen des Berliner Museums*: Berlin, 1885, p. 61, No. 301.

<sup>4</sup> A bust of Plato, with his name inscribed, was discovered in 1846 at Tivoli (*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, No. 6103), but Professor Helbig has been unable to find it at the Vatican and it has never been published.



Hélios Desjardis

PORTRAIT-HEAD OF PLATO

in the Museum of the Louvre



the Museum of Florence bearing the name of ΠΛΑΤΩΝ.<sup>5</sup> But the inscription is probably a forgery, the style of the sculpture belonging to the imperial period, when the letter Π with unequal branches was no longer used.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, there exists in the Vatican Museum a bust very like the Castellani Plato, the pedestal of which bears the inscription ΖΗΝΩΝ.<sup>7</sup> M. Helbig, who has published a photograph of that bust under two aspects,<sup>8</sup> believes the inscription to be modern, arguing from the suspicious appearance of the characters, which are scratched on the surface of the marble rather than engraved. The Vatican bust is, in fact, very puzzling. Judging from the photograph, the inscription bears no conclusive evidence of falsity, and we may perhaps admit that the confusion between Plato and Zeno originated in some Græco-Roman workshop, where several busts of philosophers were being sculptured at the same time. The resemblance of the Vatican bust to those in Berlin and Paris is evident, and certain details even lead to the supposition that they are derived from the same original; but the head of the Vatican Plato is more slender, more delicate in appearance, than any of the other replicas. M. Helbig is inclined to think that the Roman bust, in which the pupils of the eyes are not marked with the chisel, is the best copy and the nearest to the original. It is the best, perhaps, from an æsthetic point of view, but the evidence of the bust from Smyrna seems to show that the true features of Plato, with their natural roughness and severity, are to be looked for in the Smyrna sculpture rather than in the somewhat idealized and edulcorated copy preserved in the Pio Clementino Museum.

Beside the copy in question, M. Helbig has enumerated five others: (1) a head in the Capitol, No. 58, which has not yet been correctly

<sup>5</sup> VISCONTI, *Iconografia graeca*, I, pl. XVIII a, 3, 4, p. 219–21 (I, p. 172 of the 4o edition in French); SCHUSTER, *Ueber die erhaltenen Porträts griechischer Philosophen*, t. II, I, p. 12–13. I learn from DÜTSCHKE (*Antike Bildwerke in Oberitalien*, t. III, p. 190, No. 393) that the genuineness of the inscription was first suspected by E. BRAUN (*Annali dell' Instit.*, XI, p. 207). Visconti believed that this head was the one which had been found in Athens in the XV century and sold to Lorenzo de' Medici by Girolamo da Pistoia; but this cannot be true, as Dütschke observes, and the bust purchased by Lorenzo, later in Gori's collection and in Pisa, must have been mislaid or have perished in some fire, as it has never reappeared since.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. DITTENBERGER, in the *Archäol. Zeitung*, 1876, p. 139, and my *Traité d'épigraphie grecque*, p. 205.

<sup>7</sup> VISCONTI, *Museo Pio Clementino*, t. VI, pl. 33.

<sup>8</sup> *Jahrbuch*, 1886, pl. VI, 2 and p. 72; also in BAUMEISTER, *Denkmäler des klassischen Alterthums*, p. 1335, fig. 1492.

published ;<sup>9</sup> (2) an inedited head in the Villa Borghese ; (3) a head in the Casino di Pirro Ligorio, badly preserved, published along with M. Helbig's article ; (4) a head in the Torlonia collection ;<sup>10</sup> (5) another inedited head in the Vatican, No. 140. It is not necessary, for our purpose, to mention a few other cognate sculptures, described by M. Helbig, which, however, bear no close resemblance to the series we are dealing with. Upon the whole, we find eight replicas of the same type, the Berlin and the Paris busts included : a number certainly to be increased by fresh research in collections, but sufficing to prove that there existed some celebrated portrait of Plato, sculptured in his time, which remained, perhaps exclusively, the model from which all the later copies were derived. M. Helbig has justly remarked that the disposition of the hair and beard in the replicas can be paralleled by specimens of Attic sepulchral *stelai* belonging to the IV century B. C. We know from Olympiodoros (*Life of Plato*), that images of Plato were set up in many places, *πανταχοῦ ἀνακείμεναι*, and Visconti<sup>11</sup> had already expressed the belief, which seems to be shared by M. Helbig, that the original of those portraits was the bronze statue made by Silanion,<sup>12</sup> which was perhaps afterwards transferred to Constantinople, where Christodoros describes a bronze statue of Plato<sup>13</sup> in the public gymnasium of Zeuxippos.

The chief texts relating to Plato's physical appearance have been carefully collected by M. Helbig : I will only add one of Olympiodoros, which has already been quoted by Visconti. The name or rather the surname Πλάτων, involving the idea of breadth, had been differently explained in ancient times : Neanthes thought it alluded to the breadth of his forehead, while others explained it by his broad chest, or even by his broad eloquence.<sup>14</sup> Olympiodoros, adopting the first two explanations, writes : 'Ἐκλήθη δ' οὕτως διὰ τὸ δύο μόρια τοῦ σώματος ἔχειν πλατύτατα, τὸ τε στέρνον καὶ τὸ μέτωπον, ὡς δηλοῦσι πανταχοῦ αἱ ἀνακείμεναι αὐτοῦ εἰκόνες οὕτω φαινόμεναι. This passage is important in so far as it is inspired by the knowledge of many authentic portraits of Plato that Olympiodoros had the opportunity of examining. Now, the breadth of the forehead, a characteristic of profound thought and sublime intelligence, is a remarkable feature of

<sup>9</sup> BOTTARI, *Museum Capitolinum*, I, pl. 67.

<sup>10</sup> *I monumenti del Museo Torlonia riprodotti con la fototipia*, Roma, 1884, pl. XI.

<sup>11</sup> *Iconographie grecque*, I, p. 173.

<sup>12</sup> *DIOG. LAERT.*, III. 25.

<sup>13</sup> *CHRISTOD.*, Ἐκφρασ., v. 97.

<sup>14</sup> *DIOG. LAERT.*, III. 4.

the Smyrna head, where it is perhaps more strikingly marked than in any other of the replicas.

The ancient writers have also dwelt on the stern and somewhat gloomy expression of Plato's countenance. Three verses of a comedy by Amphis, a contemporary of Plato, are thus quoted by Diogenes:<sup>15</sup>

᾽Ω Πλάτων,  
ὡς οὐδὲν οἶσθα πλὴν σκυθρωπάζειν μόνον,  
ὥσπερ κοχλίας σεμνῶς ἐπηρκῶς τὰς ὀφρῦς.

This description perfectly agrees with the bust from Smyrna. M. Helbig thinks the word *κοχλίας* is corrupt, and writes: *Das Wort κοχλίας ist offenbar verdorben, da die Schnecke keine Augenbrauen hat und somit ausser Stande ist dieselben emporzuziehen.* I confess that I cannot share M. Helbig's opinion on this point. The word *κοχλίας* seems, on the contrary, quite correct and even ingenious: but the comparison is not—for it would be simply ridiculous—between Plato and a snail. The poet compares with the spiral of the snail's back the winding eyebrows of the philosopher, a likeness which may be perfectly understood by throwing a glance on the plate annexed to this article. By a similar metaphor, a winding staircase was called *cochlea*, and the name *κοχλίας* was also applied to the sinuosities of the human ear, *κοχλίας τῶν ὠτων ἢ ἔξωθεν περιβολή*.<sup>16</sup>

Although the reverse of the Smyrna head is much injured, it seems certain that it belonged to a double hermes, and it was probably associated with a portrait of Sokrates. A double hermes of Sokrates and Plato was recently found at Chiusi,<sup>17</sup> but is still inedited. A hermes in the Polytechnikon at Athens, also inedited, is thought by M. Helbig to represent Plato and Pythagoras, a supposition which I am not able to control.

As the finder or the purchaser of a work of art is allowed a certain amount of partiality toward his discovery, I will finish this note by expressing the opinion that the Smyrna Plato, although of late workmanship, is perhaps the most characteristic specimen in the series of sculptures which may claim the noble label ΠΛΑΤΩΝ, and remind the reader that it is the first, and as yet only one, which has been undoubtedly discovered on Hellenic soil.

SALOMON REINACH.

*Saint-Germain en Laye, France.*

<sup>15</sup> DIOG. LAERT., III. 28; MEINEKE, *Fragm. comic. graec.*, III, p. 206.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. STEPHANUS-DIDOT, *Thesaurus*, s. v.

<sup>17</sup> HELBIG, *Bullettino dell' Inst.*, 1879, p. 232; *Jahrbuch*, 1886, p. 75.



