

A XOANON FROM NARCE

(*Tavv. I-II*)

The University Museum, Philadelphia, has had in its possession since 1897 the fragmentary archaic head (M. S. 721) shown in Tav. I, 1-3. It will be seen at first glance that it belongs to the series of xoana on which the researches of Bianchi-Bandinelli (1) and Levi (2) have thrown light. It measures 0,43 m. in height and 0,169 m. in width. A perpendicular fracture has left only a little over half of the piece and this remnant has suffered further by the loss of much of the nose, of most of the chin, and of portions of the tresses of the hair. The material is a volcanic tufa composed of pumice and marked by perforations made by escaping gases. On account of its coarse grain it is ill adapted to sculpture. It is, however, so soft that it may be cut with a pen-knife, and for this reason as well as for want of a better stone, its defects were probably overlooked by artists accustomed to working in wood or clay.

The head belongs not to a statue but to a xoanon the lower part of which was cylindrical (3). This cylindrical base begins where the long tresses of hair are cut abruptly by a horizontal line. There are no shoulders and so no arms. The space below the chin is filled with two triangular planes, one above the other which may possibly have been intended by the artist to represent the folds of a garment, or a neck-band. The hair on the crown of the head, Pl. I, 1-3, is parted in the middle and divided symmetrically in locks which extend as far as the fillet; below the fillet it hangs in long tresses only a pair of which, presumably on either side, next to the face, are ornamented with herring-bone pattern. The head

(1) *Mon. Ant.*, XXX, cols. 492-493.

(2) *Not. Scavi*, 1931, pp. 228-236; *Dedalo*, 1933, pp. 198 ff; *Boll. d'Arte*, 1934-35, pp. 49-51.

(3) Cf. LEVI, *Il museo civico di Chiusi*, p. 14; BIANCHI-BANDINELLI, *op cit.*, col. 536.

which may well be a stereotyped derivative of such palmettes as occur on the gold plaque from the Bocchoris Tomb (1). It is quite possible, then, that this bowl also should be dated to the end of the seventh century. And lastly there is the oinochoe of Pl. II, 4 which is made of cream colored clay and is without slip or paint. The ribbed decoration and high foot give it a later look, but Payne on a recent visit to the University Museum, thought that it might well belong to the Early Corinthian period. Thus, although the evidence of these four pots is not as decisive as could be wished, it points to the last quarter of the seventh century.

So far as I am aware our xoanon is the second to be reported from Faliscan territory, and the first to be associated with a trench tomb. The difference in tomb does not imply a difference in date since trench tombs lasted on into the period when chamber tombs were abundant (2). Similarly the fact that at Bagnolo xoana were found adjacent to ziro burials does not necessarily imply an earlier date than that to which xoana found adjacent to chamber tombs are to be assigned, since ziro burials were used for a long time at Chiusi after chamber tombs had become common (3). The other Faliscan head to which reference was made is also of tufa, and comes also from Narce. It was found at the entrance of a chamber-tomb (4). There can be little doubt that this head is later than ours. In general it seems to be a more competent work and in particular may be noted the plastic fold below the eyebrow, and the more elaborate arrangement of hair, such as the locks above the forehead and the curls at the ends of the tresses behind. Whether this head was set directly upon a column without shoulders is impossible to say, at least from the illustration. Bandinelli (5) assigns the xoana from Chiusi to the sixth century; Levi, however, in discussing those from Bagnolo (6) divides Italic xoana into an earlier and a later group, points out that a considerable length of time must have been required for their development and on this ground assigns the earliest of them to the seventh century.

If our head be compared with those in Levi's first group, it

(1) MONTELIUS, *op. cit.*, Pl. 295, 1.

(2) HOLLAND, *op. cit.*, p. 63 and *passim*.

(3) VON DUHN, *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, s. v. Clusium, p. 312.

(4) BARNABEI, *Mon. Ant.*, IV, col. 507.

(5) *Loc. cit.*, col. 536.

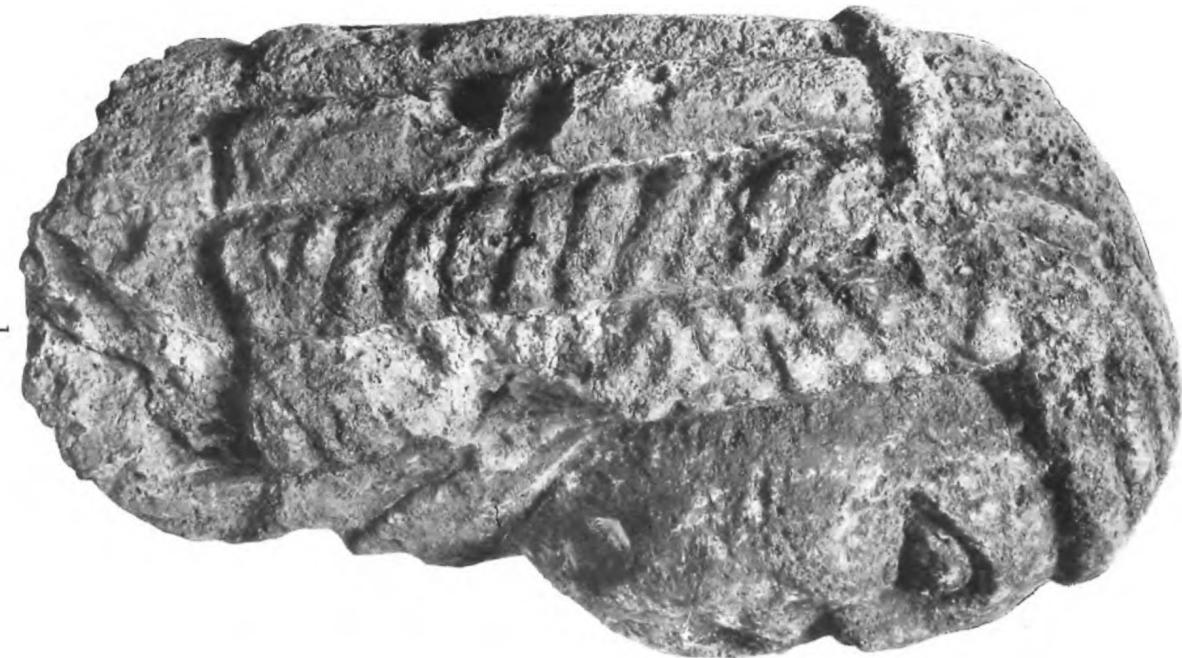
(6) *Not. Scavi*, 1931, p. 236.

will be noted first that in none of these is the head set directly upon a cylindrical base without the addition of shoulders and arms. This fact seems to indicate an early date for our piece. In the second place the paucity of planes employed by our artist, and their abrupt intersections, imply a date anterior to the period in which *e. g.* the xoanon no. 2258 in the Chiusi Museum was made (1). Again there may be noted in our head the absence of a plastic fold about the eye to represent eyelids, such as appears in this Chiusi head. Perhaps the closest analogy to our head is furnished by another xoanon in the Chiusi Museum (2) but this figure has arms and the eyeballs, which are shaped like those of our head, seem to be bounded at least below by a plastic fold representing the lower eyelid. I am inclined therefore on stylistic grounds to consider our head one of the earliest of Italian xoana and to date it to the same period to which the vases from the adjacent trench tomb were assigned, to the last quarter of the seventh century, and very probably to the earlier years of this period not long after 625 B. C.

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(1) LEVI, *Il museo civico di Chiusi*, p. 26, fig. 8.

(2) *Mon. Ant.*, XXX, fig. 83.



PHILADELPHIA · UNIVERSITY MUSEUM — Head of xoanon from Narce



1



2

3

4

PHILADELPHIA - UNIVERSITY MUSEUM — Vases found in trench tomb, adjacent to head