

TWO INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM HERMITAGE MUSEUM OF LENINGRAD

1. Since my publication of four inscriptions from the collection of Hermitage Museum in the last volume of our *Studies* (1) one more Etruscan inscription came to light. It is engraved on a bronze helmet (figs. 1-2) found in a tomb in the ancient necropolis near



Fig. 1.

Bolsena and purchased by Hermitage Museum from Campana's private collection together with other objects of Etruscan art (2).

(1) *St. Etr.*, XXVI, pp. 267-272.

(2) I am very grateful to Z. A. Bilimovich from Classical Department, Hermitage Museum, for valuable information she placed at my disposal; to

Apart from brief mentioning in the Catalogue of Campana's collection (3), afterwards repeated by Stephani (4) (where it is erroneously said to be made of silver), neither the helmet nor its inscription are known to be published anywhere else.



Fig. 2.

On both sides of the helmet there are remnants of iron plates which were used for fastening the cheek-plates. Round the brim runs a braid-like ornament and besides that there was an additional piece of adornment near its upper projection, which in Campana's and Stephani's catalogues is called «the feet of hippocampus».

her good offices I also owe the photos of this helmet and of the cantharus described below.

(3) *Cataloghi del Museo Campana. Dei bronzi etruschi e romani*, p. 3, n. 5.

(4) L. STEPHANI, *Drevniye bronzy i terrakoty*, St. Peterburg, 1872 n. 364.

There is no doubt that this adornment originally had nothing to do with our helmet and was attached to it much later. Recently it was removed (5).

Similar helmets were spread in the fourth and third centuries B. C. in the territory of Bolsena as well as in some other districts (6).

The inscription consists of a single word scratched in the letters of late-etruscan alphabet (13-15 mm high) on the back part of the helmet. It reads:

A N I O V M

śuθina

The lexical meaning of this word is rather well known to call for extensive comment. Being one of numerous Etruscan adjective buildings in *-na* it is derived from the noun *s/śuθi* «sepulchral chamber» and means «pertaining to the sepulchre» or the like. We find the same word recorded on various bronze objects coming from Bolsena region, which in this way were designated as belonging to the sepulchres and thus withdrawn from the profane use.

2. Cantharus B-1790 (fig. 3), black varnished clay, found in Cumae in 1853. On close examination of its inscription, which

(5) Due to the presence of this adornment certain doubts were called forth as to the authenticity of the helmet. The suspicion was also provoked by crude workmanship of its inner surface and still more reinforced by the fact that a number of objects purchased from Campana's collection later on proved to have been forged.

Nevertheless I am inclined to believe that in the present case we have a genuine ancient specimen. My confidence proceeds first and foremost from the character of the inscription it bears. Had it really been a forgery, the forger should have possessed an unusually profound knowledge of Etruscan epigraphy. This opinion is also shared by prof. Szilagyi from Budapest who during his recent visit to Leningrad saw this helmet. He ascribes the singularity of its inside to mechanical cleaning from chlorous salts which it probably underwent before finding its way to Hermitage Museum.

(6) G. M. A. RICHTER, *Greek, Roman and Etruscan bronzes in the British Museum*, London, 1915, nn. 1549-1552.

was already published and discussed by a number of scholars (7), some details attracted my attention which generally passed unnoticed. In view of this circumstance and the small number of preserved Campanian texts its new publication, in my opinion, may offer some interest.

The inscription is Oscan, painted with white clay round the



Fig. 3

body of the vessel. The letters (27-30 mm high) are reported to have been originally gilded, though my efforts to find any traces of gilt were futile. Now the inscription is much damaged; one can easily read only one half of it: *...ufis*

(7) G. MINERVINI, in *Bullett. arch. nap.* nv. sr. I, 163 f.; W. CORSSSEN, in *Zeitschr. f. vergl. Sprachf.*, XI, 324; A. FABRETTI, *CI*, n. 2762; L. STEPHANI, *op. cit.*, n. 610; I. V. ZVETAIEFF, *Sylloge inscriptionum Oscanarum*, Petropoli, 1878, n. 54; R. v. PLANTA, *Grammatik der oskisch-unbrischen Dialekte*, Strassburg, 1892-1897, n. 122; R. S. CONWAY, *The Italic Dialects*, Cambridge, 1897, n. 91; Fr. WEEGE, *Vasculorum Campanorum inscriptiones Italicae*, Bonnae, 1906, n. 62; E. VETTER, *Handbuch der italischen Dialekte*, Heidelberg, 1953, n. 113; G. BOTTIGLIONI, *Manuale dei dialetti italici*, Bologna, 1954, n. 57.

The other half which stood on the opposite side of the cup is entirely effaced. But in the places where letters were painted the varnish is somewhat darker than in the surrounding space, and thorough examination reveals delineation of the word *upils*

Thus the whole inscription reads:



upils | ufiis :

After *upils* there are traces of three interpuncts just as after *ufiis*. Conway was doubtless wrong alleging that « there is one interpunct between the names, but three after the second ». The mistake is easily explicable as in his time a part of the inscription was already illegible.

The interpretation does not present any difficulty and I quite agree with prof. E. Vetter who translates: Opilius Ofius.

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