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CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION (GREAT BRITAIN)

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CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION

PROCEEDINGS

JANUARY 1912

(VOLUME IX)

WITH RULES AND LIST OF MEMBERS

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NINTH GENERAL MEETING, LONDON, 1912

Monday, January 8th

The first session of the Association was held in the Theatre of King's College, Strand, at 3.30 p.m. Dr. F. G. Kenyon occupied the chair.

Miss H. L. LORIMER read a paper on "Some Notes on Dress in Homer and in Archaic Greek Art."

Miss Lorimer.—"The subject of dress in Homer has been little studied in recent years. On the whole, Studniczka's view, which equates the women's dress to the later Dorian type, the men's to the Ionic, has held the field. More recently Pinza¹ has put forward the theory that Homeric dress is of a type Oriental in origin and common to the eastern half of the Mediterranean world, of which the best illustrations are furnished by monuments from the Mesopotamian area.

These theories have one point in common; they assume that all dress in Homer can be brought under one heading, Hellenic or Oriental. This may prove to be the case; but we are not entitled to start with the assumption. The co-existence in the poems of different types of armour is admitted: there is, a priori, no reason why the same should not be true of dress. And if the older sort of armour is of the South Aegean type, known to us from Cretan and Mycenaean monuments, it would not be extraordinary to find in the dress reminiscences of the same period.

There is, of course, no domain in which the antique is more likely to persist than in that of religion and all that pertains to it. Ares is never promoted to a corslet; the King of Gods has never advanced so far as to have a shield. If there are any traces of pre-Achaean costume in Homer, it will be best to seek them in connection with deities; and fortunately for our purpose the most detailed description of women's dress is contained in the account of the toilet of a goddess.

Hera preparing for her meeting with Zeus¹ anointed herself with ambrosia, and then 'clad her in her fragrant robe that Athene wrought delicately for her, and therein set many things beautifully made, and fastened it over her breast with clasps of gold. And she girdled it with a girdle arrayed with a hundred tassels.' The crucial words in Greek are:—

άμφὶ δ'άρ' άμβρδσιον έανδν έσαθ' χρυσείης δ'ένετῆσι κατά στήθος περουάτο.

Probably no one has ever been really satisfied by Studniczka's explanation of $\kappa a \tau \hat{a} = \sigma \tau \hat{\eta} \theta o s$. To apply the expression to the shoulder clasps of the Doric peplos is a measure of desperation. Granting that the word $\sigma \tau \hat{\eta} \theta o s$ could without any further qualification be used to indicate the front of the shoulder, it would surely stand in the plural.

The passage from the Trachiniae on which Studniczka relies to prove his interpretation of $\sigma r \hat{\eta} \hat{\theta} os$ bears this out, for Deianeira is there said to loose her peplos where the περονίς προκεῖτο μαστῶν, and thus expose one side and arm: clearly, she removes one pin only. It may perhaps be doubted whether the description refers to the Doric peplos. The word πέπλος tells us nothing, for it is loosely used by the tragedians: we know nothing of the fifth-century stage dress in which Deianeira had just been seen by the audience, and to which the description must have been applicable; and finally it is distinctly implied that the dress covered her arm, which is not characteristic of the Doric peplos. But granting that the Doric dress is intended, then μαστῶν in conjunction with the singular περονίς can only be regarded as a syncopated way of indicating that fibulae—or pins—occur in pairs, one on each shoulder.

Further, it is worth noting that the one monument which Studniczka adduces in favour of this point, viz. the François

¹ E. 178-80.

² Lang, Leaf and Myers, Translation of the Iliad.

³ Trachiniae, 924-5,

Vase,1 is relatively late, being hardly prior to 550 B.C., and in this matter of dress fastenings apparently unique. The dress in question is worn by the Moirai, and can be best examined on the left-hand member of the group (Fig. 1), which Studniczka chose for his illustration. The dress presents problems which there is not time on this occasion to discuss: whether it is really Dorian or not is open to question. The great pins which secure it on the shoulders are of course associated with that dress, but here they have rather the air of having been copied by an artist who did not perfectly understand his model. No pin inserted in this way could hold, and they are set much lower than their normal position about the level of the collar-bone. But even so it would hardly occur to any one to say that they were placed κατά στήθος. Read without prejudice, the passage in the Hiad can only be taken in the way in which Helbig originally took it (a view which he afterwards abandoned in favour of Studniczka's) as describing a dress which fastens, in modern parlance, 'down the front.' The Scholiast implies this when he says that the line was marked with the διπλη " ὅτι κατὰ τὸ στήθος έπερονώντο καὶ οἰχ ὡς ἡμεῖς κατὰ τὴν κατάκλειδα τοῦ ὤμου."

Alexandrian scholars, however ignorant of Homeric archaeology, have a right to be heard on the interpretation of a Greek phrase. It is due to ulterior considerations that a mistranslation has won such wide acceptance, and it is unfortunate that Pinza, wishing to apply the phrase to a dress clasped not merely on the shoulder but down the length of a short sleeve, has not only adopted the error but aggravated it.

We may note further that the word for the putting on of Hera's dress is neutral; ἀμφὶ ἔσατο has the precision neither of ἐνδύνω on the one hand, nor of περιβάλλομαι on the other. ἐνδύνω is used of putting on the closed cylindrical chiton, περιβάλλομαι of flinging on the loose cloak; ἀμφιέννυμι is applicable to either action. This is evident from the passage in the Odyssey 2 where the hero says of Kirke:

άμφὶ δέ με χλαϊνάν τε χιτώνά τε είματα έσσεν αὐτὴ δ'άργύφεον φάρος μέγα έννυτο νύμφη.

¹ Studniczka, Altgriechische Tracht, fig. 28. See Furtwängler-Reichhold, pl. i., ii. for the best reproduction of the vase.
² π. 542, 3.