

HISTORY OF ACQUISITION AND THE FIRST CENTURY IN CALIFORNIA

On November 12, 1902, eighty-eight cases of antiquities and plaster casts of ancient sculpture arrived in San Francisco. These had been shipped from Rome on August 27 via New York, whence they went overland to the Museum of Anthropology of the University of California. Case 186, which was nearly the last in the group to be prepared for shipping, contained an inscribed portrait herm of Plato (fig. 1), which is now in the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology (PAHMA) on the Berkeley campus.¹ Mrs. Hearst had employed Alfred Emerson, a classical scholar and friend of Benjamin Ide Wheeler (then president of the University of California), to acquire Greek and Roman antiquities in Rome as part of her plan for a museum that would bring together char-

1. Inv. no. 8-4213. The cases were actually numbered beginning with 101. The case with the Plato portrait was number 186, although one of Emerson's notes labels it as 185. Those two cases contained material purchased on the same day from the same source, so the confusion is as understandable as it is insignificant. The identity of the piece in case no. 186 with the Plato portrait is assured by a notebook in Emerson's hand where the "herm of Plato" is mentioned and the herm's inscription reproduced.

acteristic artifacts of ancient cultures for the edification of the citizens of northern California.²

The Plato herm was purchased by Emerson from the Fratelli Iandolo, a well-known firm of antiquities dealers in Rome,³ on August 16, 1902, less than two weeks before the shipment left for California. This herm, together with a large marble Roman matron, was paid for by a check in

2. An obituary of Emerson by Harold N. Fowler can be found in *AJA* 48 (1944): 80. The segment of his life that is especially significant for his work in Rome begins with an overlap with Wheeler at Cornell University from 1891 to 1895. Wheeler left in 1895 for a year in Athens at the American School of Classical Studies and stayed on for the following year, 1896–97. The next year Emerson left Cornell for two years at the American School in Athens (1897–99). Wheeler left Cornell in 1899 for a twenty-year stint as president of the University of California. Already in 1896, however, Wheeler had persuaded Phoebe Apperson Hearst to contribute to the American School's then fledgling excavations at Corinth. Wheeler was obviously instrumental in Mrs. Hearst's choice of Emerson as her representative in Rome, and Emerson would have been an obvious candidate in any event, since he had previously prepared the catalogue of the collection of plaster casts at Cornell. See A. Emerson, *Catalogue of the H. W. Sage Collection of Casts from Antique Sculpture* (Ithaca 1900); and Kuniholm et al. 2003, 14.

3. The two sons of Salvatore Iandolo, Antonio and Alessandro, were running the business at the time of Emerson's visit and it was they who sold many pieces to a variety of museums just before and after the turn of the century. Their customers included the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (to which they sold the "Boston Throne" in 1895), and many smaller collectors. The two sons of Antonio, Augusto and Ugo, continued the family business, even though they went through bankruptcy after an abortive scheme to excavate on the grounds of the Villa Adele at Anzio, which they had purchased for that purpose in 1909. A new law of the Italian state prohibiting the export of antiquities put a stop to that plan. See <http://www.anzio.net/davedere/iadele.htm>.

For the antiquity trade during this time, see Iandolo 1935, *passim*; F. Poulsen 1951, 8–9; and Pollak 1994, 138–40 *et passim* and fig. 15. I thank Mette Moltesen and Joan Mertens for these references.

the amount of three thousand lire on August 23, 1902.⁴ Emerson seems not to have been very impressed with his purchase, although his taste is open to question. In a long letter to Mrs. Hearst of September 21, 1902, he extols a portrait (PAHMA inv. no. 8-4214) that is heavily restored and of inferior material, but he mentions the Plato portrait only in passing: "Let me add a fourth terminal figure with a Greek inscription."⁵ He is also rather dismissive in his lone published reference to the piece. In a synopsis of a brief lecture given at the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in the winter of 1902/3, Emerson presented a list of some of his Roman purchases. Number 11 is an "inscribed herma of pseudo-Plato."⁶ Further, the inventory catalogue entry for the piece includes this statement, handwritten at an unknown time: "Pertinence of head is not certain." We shall return to that remark, but the doubt thus expressed may explain at least in part why this portrait herm has been left in total obscurity for more than a century.

Some of that darkness was lifted in 1965 and 1966, when two publications of the inscribed herm shaft appeared, but without the head.⁷ R.J. Smutny, then a graduate student at Berkeley who was working on Latin

4. The matron has the inventory number 8-4240 in the Hearst Museum collection. Earlier purchases from the Fratelli Iandolo of a number of pieces were paid for on July 1, 1902; they cost 6,550 lire.

5. Letter in the archives of the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum. The packing list for case no. 186 is even less precise: "1 hermes." It is particularly frustrating that Emerson does not mention whether the head and the shaft had been broken and repaired. But his descriptions of all his purchases are very superficial and often devoid of such detail.

6. Emerson 1903, 97-98. His lecture may have been accompanied by lantern slides according to a letter he wrote to Wheeler in November 1902 asking for permission to present his purchases to the AIA. This is the only evidence of any photographic record of the portrait head until quite recently, when photographs were made for this publication.

7. Richter 1965, 166 under no. 8, fig. 907; and Smutny 1966, 2-5. Although Richter's work appeared first, it is clear that she was dependent upon Smutny

inscriptions, included the inscription in his monograph *Greek and Latin Inscriptions at Berkeley*; the Plato text was the only Greek inscription in his collection, and Smutny presented it as a modern fake. He derived this opinion from the citation of a note from Thomas Ashby to G. Mancini that the latter published in 1952, and from the response of Margherita Guarducci, who examined a squeeze of the Berkeley text at Smutny's request.⁸ We will return to this question of the antiquity of the Berkeley inscription, but we must note for the moment that Guarducci definitely never saw the Berkeley stone, and it is not certain that Ashby did either. As we shall see, firsthand examination reveals that the inscription is actually ancient.

Meanwhile, the head had been detached and misplaced; Smutny says:⁹

when the piece entered the Museum it presumably possessed a head of some kind, for the inventory book carries the remark, "Pertinence of head is not certain." In a thorough search of the Museum, I was able to find no head, Platonic or other, suited to this shaft, nor do the curators know of any head belonging to it.

Thus, the head has never been published.¹⁰

and his manuscript for her description. The inscription had been mentioned in 1952 by G. Mancini, *Inscriptiones Italiae* 4.1, under no. 583.

8. Smutny 1966, 3 n. 17. This assessment of the inscription has been repeated more recently, again without inspection of the stone itself, in Palma Venetucci 1992a, 281 n. 36.

9. Smutny 1966, 5. It is not known who entered this remark in the inventory or when.

All the material collected by Emerson was put into the first Hearst museum, a large structure built in 1898 for the Hastings College of the Law on Parnassus Heights, about three miles west of the center of San Francisco—in the event, too far away from the center of the city for the lawyers. This is the present site of the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine. The museum collection, including the material collected by Emerson, moved to the Berkeley campus only in 1931. Presumably the Berkeley Plato went along with the collection, although there are no specific records to document this.

10. The head was located in 1966 when Charlotte Sweet carried out a reedition of the museum inventory. It is curious that her description of the Roman