

T. B. L. WEBSTER
(University College, London)

Two Attic comic actors from Ampurias

The director of the Museo de Prehistoria de la Excma. Diputación Provincial de Valencia has invited me to contribute a note on two terracotta statuettes from the Collection Cazorro of Ampurias, today in this Museum of Valencia. I originally heard of these statuettes from Fräulein Lore Asche.

They belong to the large class of statuettes representing actors of comedy of which there is another example in the seated slave in Madrid (Laumonier pl. XXV, 2).

The two statuettes in Valencia are of approximately the same size (9.2 and 8.8 cm.) but differ greatly in execution. The woman holding her veil in front of her face is undoubtedly an Attic original and a very fine example of the type (Lám. I, 1). The woman with her hand on her hip is an ancient copy taken from a worn mould which was itself taken from an Attic terracotta figure of the same date as the first figure (Lám. I, 2). Mr. R. Nichols has explained the technique of taking moulds from figures in an admirable article in the *Annual of the British School at Athens* 47 (1952) 219f. In what follows I shall speak only of the original Attic figures, not of the derived copy.

Several examples of both the figures survive. Twelve other examples (1) of the women holding the veil in front of her face are known to me, and their provenances are Athens, Vari, Tanagra, Olynthos, South Russia, Troad, Thasos.

(1) Cf. WINTER: "Terrakottatypen", 421/8.
HIGGINS: "Terracottas in the British Museum", I, num. 744.
BIEBER: "History of the Greek Theatre", fig. 123.
WEBSTER: "Greek Theatre Production", 180, num. 11 b.
Add A.J.A. 1903, 333, num. 61; Berlin, photo German. Arch. Institute in Athens, 624; Thasos Museum, num. 954. I owe the last two references to Mrs. D. B. Thompson.

I know three other examples (2) of the woman with her hand on her hip, and their provenances are Athens and Olynthos. Olynthos gives a bottom date because the town was destroyed in 348 B. C., and style precludes a top date much earlier than 375 B. C.

The Metropolitan Museum (3) possesses two sets of seven terracotta statuettes of comic actors found in a tomb in Athens. One set has an example of the woman holding the veil in front of her face and the other set has an example of the woman with her hand on her hip. The figures in the two sets are very alike in style and probably all come from the same Athenian workshop. Examples of two of the first set and three of the second set have been found in Olynthos, so that they can all be dated in the second quarter of the fourth century B. C. The man in whose tomb these sets were put must have been either an actor or a poet or a lover of comedy, and it is reasonable to suppose that the sets represent the casts of two comedies in which he was specially interested. The two women have the same mask, which is distinguished by the curious peak of hair in the centre of the forehead, probably indicating that the hair was held by a metal clasp here. In the New Comedy of Menander and his successors a very similar mask was worn by the younger version of the Pseudokore; the curious title "False-maiden" seems to mean that she is a maiden because parents will be discovered in the course of the play and a false-maiden because she is living with the man whom she will ultimately marry. In Middle Comedy this was probably the mask worn by the heroine of the play. In the first New York set the woman holding her veil is probably Auge who has been raped by Herakles, and the play was a parody of Euripides' *Auge* possibly by the comic poet Euboulos. In the second New York set the girl with her hand on her hip is probably in love with a young man, whose friend or slave (both are characters) extracts money from his father's bailiff to buy her from her mother. Both sets give us interesting evidence for Attic comedy in the period between Aristophanes and Menander, which we only know from fragmentary quotations.

(2) Cf. BIEBER: "History of the Greek Theatre", fig. 129 (New York, from Athens).

LUSCHEY: "Ganymed", 74, fig. 2-3.

ROBINSON: "Olynthos", XIV, núm. 380 D.

WEBSTER: "Greek Theatre Production", 181, num. 12a.

(3) BIEBER: "History of the Greek Theatre", fig. 122-128, 129-135.

WEBSTER: "Greek Theatre Production", 71-3.



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Two attic comic actors (Ampurias) (1/1)

(Foto Grollo)