

ARCHAEOLOGY

Grotesque Figure Dug Up at Olynthus Shakes Art Theory

Discovery Shows Early Greek Art was Not all Beauty, Revealing Existence of Distinct Flair for Caricature

THE TERRACOTTA figurine of a squat, grotesque little man has been dug up in the Greek city of Olynthus, in Macedonia, and it bids fair to cause more disturbance to theories of classical art than many a piece of truly beautiful sculpture.

The "funny man" was found by Dr. David M. Robinson, of the Johns Hopkins University, who excavated at the ruins of Olynthus this past summer. The clay figure is pronounced by him to be evidence that early Greek art was not all beauty and idealism, as histories of art proclaim. Instead, there was a distinct flair for caricature among the Greeks of Olynthus, whose skillful fingers were shaping statuettes back in the fourth century B. C. and earlier.

Not the Only Caricature

The funny man with his straggly beard and broad mouth and flat nose is not the only caricature unearthed at Olynthus. Negro heads which are caricature types have also been found. Caricatures have heretofore been supposed to belong exclusively to a later period of Greek art.

Little terracotta figures of women in graceful poses are also among the art treasures newly recovered from the Macedonian city. Some of these figurines were in the ruins of houses. From the number, it appears that the Olynthians were partial to statuary art in their homes, and after death had these house ornaments placed in their tombs. Many of the clay statuettes have also been unearthed in the city's cemeteries, of which Dr. Robinson discovered two, one near the river which he calls Riverside Cemetery and the other one-half a mile to the east. Dr. Robinson explains that it was customary among the Greeks to provide art objects for the pleasure of the dead in the future world.

Traces of paint may still be seen on the faces and costumes of many of the little figures. One of these is a dancing girl, swaying in a step that was fashionable 2,300 years ago. Her hair is red. Her eyes are black. And her lips are

still scarlet. Dr. Robinson calls this dancing lady one of the most graceful figurines ever found in Greece.

In contrast to the dancer's lightly poised figure is another red-haired lady, who is depicted stiffly seated with hands in her lap. This figure of rigid dignity, perhaps a goddess, is a relic of an earlier, more archaic art period than the dancer.

The terracotta figures are the first important collection of such things to be obtained from Macedonia. They show that Olynthus, a northern Greek city, had a flourishing industry and art in baked clay wares from about 600 B. C. down to the day when the city was destroyed in war, 348 B. C. A terracotta factory was found by Dr. Robinson at Olynthus during a previous expedition in 1928. Moulds for shaping figurines have also been found this year, one of a horse and another of a lion's head. Many of the terracottas are of local

GENETICS

Tendency to One Sex May Be Hereditary in Families

IF THE CHILDREN in your family are all or nearly all of one sex, it may be because of a hereditary tendency toward maleness or femaleness handed down from your ancestors. At least such is the conclusion of Dr. Raymond R. Willoughby of Clark University as a result of a study of the heredity charts of 71 members of the freshman class at that institution, reported in the current issue of *Human Biology*. He found that the men in the class were members of predominantly male families, although the women came from families where most of the children were girls.

Dr. Willoughby found almost no relation in this group between intelligence and the tendency of the members of the family to have large numbers of



A GREEK "FUNNY MAN"

This is the little statue which is expected to be the subject of much controversy.

Macedonian clay which has mica in it. Others were imported from Attica and Boeotia.

The figures from Olynthus illustrate the development of this type of art from archaic to advanced style. They are, says Dr. Robinson, a little history of Greek art in themselves.

Science News Letter, October 31, 1931

children. There was, however, an extremely slight tendency for the more intelligent to belong to the less productive families. Nevertheless, he found that the great majority of families producing college men are much more than maintaining their numbers.

Men may feel cheered by another finding of Dr. Willoughby's—that there is a direct relation between intelligence and the proportion of men to women in the family.

Dr. Willoughby warns that these conclusions cannot be considered as definitely established until similar studies are made on far larger groups. He believes them to be very significant, however.

Science News Letter, October 31, 1931