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sented as flat on top but completely visible with only a narrow space between it and the upper border. This secondary development is illustrated by a mosaic depicting the Judgment of Paris in the Louvre⁶, by a pastoral relief⁷, and by the scene which has been discussed in this paper.

⁶*Antioch On The Orontes, The Excavations of 1932*, p. 44, fig. 3.

⁷Schreiber, *Die hellenistischen Reliefbilder*, I, pl. 2.

VERSATILE INTERESTS OF THE EARLY NEGRO ARTIST: A NEGLECTED CHAPTER OF AMERICAN ART HISTORY

BY JAMES A. PORTER
Washington, D. C.

The increased cultural activity of the American Negro within the past ten years has evoked a widespread interest in his historical background in America. Many new historical, critical and informational studies have appeared through which it is now possible to see more comprehensively and concretely the part played by the Negro in our history.

Recent historical writings on the Negro have brought to light many new facts as well as introduced new values into the alert American consciousness. As a result, many prevalent misconceptions concerning the Negro have been corrected. The evidence indicating that there is now an historical art of the American Negro is difficult to locate and identify. It is the business of the historian, however, to convince the critic of its existence through the presentation of such evidence. The possibility is now apparent that such will ultimately be done by those who are taking the pains to search the records. This article attempts to indicate the possibilities of such research through a recital of the subjects or the repertory which constitutes the materials for a new chapter in American art history.

Anticipating the slighting sort of criticism which will look upon these works as merely imitative of the works of white artists, it is necessary to call attention to the fact that not one of them is wholly without interest as a work of art, or lacking in vigor and imaginative quality. All have been motivated by profound sincerity of purpose, for which reason we sometimes find that feeling has prevailed over the colder qualities of precise form and objective color.

The earliest efforts of the Negro artist are known only through writings that are not always descriptive in form, offsetting several possibilities of

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Urban America and elsewhere
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alone was a sufficiently clear index of race even without the tiara if that is what Paris wears in the relief. The only object which may serve to identify the abducted girl is the torch which was a regular feature of the Greek marriage procession and may have no further significance in the relief. A passage in a late author, however, tells us that Simon Magus "turned into allegory the Wooden Horse and Helen with a torch."⁴ It would seem then that the torch as an attribute of Helen was widely known in the first century which is probably the period of our relief. As the oft-married Helen she was entitled to it but the torch may involve a pun since the name *ἑλένη* meant "torch" according to Hesychius. Thus the torque and the torch are strong evidence in favor of the identification of the two figures in the relief as Paris and Helen who are stopping in their flight from Sparta at some wayside shrine of Zeus, the father of Helen. Their attendant is Aeneas whom Aphrodite commanded to accompany Paris.

It is hardly possible that this small relief which is only 50 cm. in length can be the original of the theme. It contains too many significant details to have been the creation of an artist of the Roman age. He has rather copied a Hellenistic relief by some eclectic sculptor who has combined something of Praxitelean grace with the art of a bronze statuary, possibly Lysippus. The figure of the attendant with its pronounced abdominal line suggests a bronze original. The major interest of the artist was in his story rather than in landscape, and consequently the human figures are placed in the front plane of the relief while the rocky ground is very generally treated. The oak is not a mere detail of landscape but an essential element of the story, marking the sanctuary of Helen's father, Zeus. The form of the tree should be noted. It is flattened on top but there is a narrow space between it and the border of the relief. The origin of this flattening is to be sought in Hellenistic painting where it was a means of reconciling the traditional interest in human forms with the new interest in landscape. In order to include a tree in the foreground of a picture without unduly reducing the size of the human figures and thereby belittling their importance, the painter conceived of the upper foliage of the tree as concealed by the frame of his picture. Consequently there was no space between the foliage and the frame. This device is finely illustrated by a mosaic at Corinth which copies a painting.⁵ A shepherd, probably Paris, stands under a tree near his resting cattle. By eliminating most of the foliage of the tree it was possible for the artist to enlarge the figure of the shepherd. Subsequently the tree thus cut off was repre-

⁴Hippolytus, *Philosophoumena*, VI, 1, 19 (Cruice, p. 263).

⁵T. L. Shear, Corinth V, *The Roman Villa*, pls. IV, VI; *Amer. Jour. Arch.*, 1925, p. 392, fig. 9.



JEREMIAH LOGUEN

BY WILLIAM SIMPSON



CAROLINE LOGUEN

deduction and interpretation that would be of considerable importance to us. It is also true that not all of these references in writing are at present authenticated beyond a shadow of doubt. They appear to be honest enough testimonies, although some of them are quite astonishing in character. For example, from Edward Peterson's *History of Rhode Island* published in 1853 the sketch concerning Gilbert Stuart contains the following interesting reference — “. . . It is also true that he (Stuart) derived his first impression from witnessing Neptune Thurston, a slave who was employed in his master's cooper-shop, sketch likenesses on the head of casks, and remarked that if he had an instructor he would make quite a celebrated artist.” We may infer from this that the work of the slave had interest and liveliness since his efforts appealed to one of America's greatest portrait painters in his formative years. The repertory of our earliest Negro artists was probably initiated with the “Taking of likenesses.”

Phillis Wheatley wrote and dedicated a poem to Scipio Moorhead, a young man who possessed some talent for drawing and who was a servant of the Rev. John Moorhead of Boston. The title of the poem is *To S. M., a young African painter, on seeing his works*. We judge from the drift of the stanzas that one of Moorhead's subjects must have been “Damon and Pythias.” This introduces a new item to the repertory. Needless to say, the work must have been an imaginative and evocational piece, founded upon the Greek legend and probably a little tinged with the didactic spirit of the Moorhead household.

Concerning the slave of Thomas Fleet's there is a feeling that his contribution was probably more varied and characterized by more workmanlike qualities as well as more successful and serious. Thomas Fleet was a printer who emigrated to this country from England in 1721. After a life of energetic enterprise he died in 1783, in Boston, Massachusetts. His capabilities as a publisher were considerable and it appears that he relied for his assistance in his business upon the abilities of this Negro who to us is nameless. Concerning this early printer and his Negro assistant Isaiah Thomas' *History of Printing in America* seems to be the only source of information. The following excerpt is taken from the book:

The principal performances of Fleet, until he began the publication of a newspaper, consisted of pamphlets for booksellers, small books for children and ballads. He made a profit on the latter, which was sufficient to support his family reputably. He owned several Negroes, one of which worked at the printing business, both at the press and at setting types; he was an ingenious man, and cut, on wooden blocks, all the pictures which decorated the ballads and small books of his master . . .

Although the writer has not been able to locate anywhere such specimens of Fleet's publications as contained illustrations of any kind, he sees no reason why Isaiah Thomas' word should not be believed. It adds something to the subject-matter with which the Colonial Negro artist, bound by the manacles of slavery and suffering by the general opprobrium in which his race was held, found opportunity to work.

Not simply this incident, but its place in our story seems to initiate a sequence in the practice of engraving by Negroes. In the nineteenth century, Patrick Reason and a man of unknown name whose work is mentioned in connection with a report on race relations, were engravers. Daniel Warbourg of New Orleans was also an engraver. The work of Patrick Reason and Daniel Warbourg is preserved in several places. The subjects of the work of Patrick Reason fall conveniently into three classes: engraved portraits, illuminations of manuscripts, and drawings of the human figure, such as the famous "Kneeling Slave" which was circulated by the abolitionists in the interests of anti-slavery. His technique was skilled, as Stauffer who, by the way, incorrectly mentions him as *Philip H. Reason*, attests. According to both written and pictorial records, the majority of his commissions were received from the abolitionists of New York City. Some of his engravings were used as frontispieces for inspirational biographies of anti-slavery liberals and run-away slaves, a fine example of the latter being the engraving of the portrait of James Williams bound in with the narrative of his life as its frontispiece. A contemporary of Reason, and a very able writer has recorded the following about him:

Patrick Henry Reason, a gentleman of ability and fine artist, stands high as an engraver in the City of New York. Mr. Reason has been in business for years, in that city, and has sent out to the world, many beautiful specimens of his skillful hand . . . Martin R. Delany — *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*. 1852.

From the painters Robert Duncanson (1821-1871?) and Robert Douglass, Jr. (active around 1833), the repertory descends notably varied and augmented. Duncanson was the first Negro landscape painter of any consequence. His training was obtained here and in Europe, and he improved it through sound observation and a sincere approach to his work. The influences that converged upon him are suggested by the titles of his paintings, several of which are preserved in Cincinnati, New York City and Philadelphia. He was a friend of Tennyson and was inspired to interpret the poet's *Lotos Eaters* in a painting of the same name. Other titles from Duncanson

are "Western Hunter's Encampment," "Ellen Isle of Loch Katrine," "Old Oaken Bucket," and "Trial of Shakespeare" (now located in Cincinnati). It is possible to believe that the panoramic composition of "Eventide," here reproduced and the fidelity to nature shown in its forms indicate that Duncanson was clearly influenced by the Hudson River painters.

Robert Douglass, Jr., a contemporary of this artist, writes that he was a pupil of Thomas Sully. According to Martin R. Delaney, Robert Douglass, Jr., for many years kept a study and gallery of painting and daguerreotype in the City of Philadelphia. In the year 1833, Douglass placed an announcement in a September issue of the *Emancipator*, one of the newspapers of the day. It is here given in part.

Robert Douglass, Jr., begs leave to inform the public that he has completed a lithographic portrait of Mr. Lloyd Garrison from a painting by himself. R. D. flatters himself that, from the admiration and esteem entertained for this great philanthropist, and the novelty of this first effort, a portrait from the life of so distinguished a gentleman, by a man of color will insure for him a portion of public patronage.

It is quite generally known that New Orleans, during the first quarter of the last century afforded a propitious environment for Negro talents. The work of Eugene and Daniel Warbourg, brothers, who were born free, is well known in New Orleans. Their work was not of the same class as ironsmithing, because Eugene was a sculptor and Daniel, an engraver. Eugene Warbourg (1825-1861) finally acquired a European reputation as an artist. The hampering prejudice and jealousy of his fellow-artists in New Orleans drove him abroad in 1852. He left many works considering that his career was so short and according to his biographer, some of these are still preserved in New Orleans. The titles of two works by him are "Le Pecheur" and "Le Premier Baiser." Engravings attributed to Daniel Warbourg have not been discovered.

Alexander Pickil (d. c. 1840) is another New Orleans artist. Pickil's disillusionment with his environment and the attitude of critics and friends toward his art was the cause of his destroying all or almost all of his paintings. A brief sketch of his life can be found in R. L. Desdunes' *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*.

The chronicle begins more and more to take form through the accumulation of evidence. Moreover, the artists begin to appear in numbers, which is indicative of increase in opportunities and in incentives for work. Around 1850 we become aware of several names that were being associated with solid artistic achievement. It is convenient to group them all under the designation "Centennial Artists," since at least four of them were represented

in the epoch-making Centennial Exposition of 1876. Merely to mention names and give titles, of course, gives the reader but a scant idea of the qualities of their work. It is the purpose of the article to lay the ground work whereby these early Negro artists will receive their proper allocation within the general outline of American art history. Detailed discussion of their work is reserved for another place.

Edward M. Bannister (1833-1903) of Providence, Rhode Island, was a man of conservative traits if one may judge by his paintings. He was, nevertheless, an energetic spirit, and an influential one in certain New England circles. He is credited with having organized a group of artists in Providence into an art club which ultimately became the nucleus of the Rhode Island School of Design. "Under the Oaks," his most noted effort in painting, received first award medal in the Centennial Exposition of 1876. A number of Bannister's paintings are now preserved in the Rhode Island Museum of Art; others are privately owned. Nearly all of the titles from Bannister known so far are landscapes.

Of more importance than Bannister as an artist, although included in the same group, was Edmonia Lewis (1843-?), the first Negro woman in America to attempt sculpture with success. She extended the technical range as well as increased the content involved in this repertory as we have chosen to view it. Her earlier work was steeped in the moralistic sentiment that motivated anti-slavery movements of the last century. This, of course, made it capital propaganda for anti-slavery agitators. Her "Freedwoman" which has been so widely commented on was adapted to the moral feelings typically entertained by the great American abolitionists toward such experience.

Edmonia Lewis left America and went to Rome to study. It is as yet undetermined whether her introduction to the neo-classical style of sculpture began in America or in Europe. But the sculptures here reproduced can be quite definitely placed in the neo-classical tradition. The sculptures of this unusual woman introduced new texts into our collection: "Hagar in the Wilderness," "The Marriage of Hiawatha," "Asleep" and "Awake," and the portrait busts of John Brown, Robert Gould Shaw, and Abraham Lincoln are some of them. It is not inappropriate to interpolate the following notice which appeared in *Freedmen's Record* in January, 1867.

Many of our readers will be glad to hear from Edmonia Lewis, the young sculptor of mixed African and Indian blood now resident in Rome. She sent us a photograph of a new design for a group called "The Morning of Liberty," representing a standing male figure, casting off his chains and a young girl kneeling beside him. The design shows decided improvement in modelling the human figure, though the type is less original and



ENGRAVED PORTRAIT OF JAMES WILLIAMS
By PATRICK REASON



EVENING
By ROBERT DUNCANSON



AWAKE

BY EDMONIA LEWIS



ASLEEP

characteristic than in the "Freedwoman," which she sketched in the Spring. Her next step will be to combine the merits of the two and give us a really valuable group.

I do not believe that the last sentence was intended as a disparagement of the "Freedwoman," but purely indicates in a comparative way, the merits of the two completed works.

Perhaps the finest talent of all of these early artists was William Simpson (b.d. 1872), a portrait painter of Buffalo, New York. In a biographical sketch of him by William Wells Brown we learn that he painted whole families on a single canvas, a fact that points to unusual skill. Certainly, one can find no fault with the drawing of these portraits of J. W. Loguen and Caroline E. Loguen; and even the somewhat decayed condition of the portraits does not prevent our seeing a certain richness of colour that in pristine state must have been remarkable. Simpson has given us the only likeness that we have of a man whose life formed one of the unusual biographies produced to help the anti-slavery cause. It is a pity that we know so little of the life and work of this man; for what we do know of his art seems to be an index of fine talent.

In a collection of Afro-Americana once owned by William H. Dorsey of Philadelphia there are several interesting objects of art. Three of these are original paintings by J. G. Chaplin, an American Negro painter who received his art education in Germany. There are interesting bits of illustration that reveal the temper and intellectual interests of his period as much as they do Chaplin's qualities as an artist. These illustrations are variously captioned "Macbeth Frightened by Banquo's Ghost," "The Fool," and "Emancipation." It is understood that Chaplin worked with such grandiose and typically academic themes as "The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar" which recalls similar projects of the unfortunate Washington Allston. But no pedantry or grandiose self-consciousness shows in these small works.

With these heroic persons, and I mean heroic in the actual sense, for against odds and in the face of the most painful self-deprivation, they pursued an unremunerative calling, an epoch seems to conclude itself, an epoch in all respects identical, let us say to the main stream of American life in the nineteenth century. These individuals passed through its terrible upheaval at midcentury and felt all the agitation that preceded this upheaval. Certainly, they were affected by the extraordinary years of national reconstruction. After them came painters whose opportunities, experience, and achievement brought new attitudes and new conceptions to enrich the repertory wherein the early soul-struggles of the American Negro can be traced.

THREE AMERICAN PORTRAITS IN DETROIT

BY E. P. RICHARDSON

Detroit, Michigan

The American portraits in Detroit are a reflection of the history of the city. The main current of settlement swung into Michigan only in the 1820's, after the opening of the Erie Canal. Detroit until the 30's was still a fur trading post. But in the immigration came families from the east and south, whose family portraits form a fair cross-section of American portraiture from the Revolution to the Civil War. In an exhibition of American portraits from Detroit collections, held at the Detroit Institute of Arts last October, the eighteenth century was represented by the fine Pitts Collection. The nineteenth, however, was represented by portraits from New England, the Middle States, and Kentucky.

Among the unpublished pictures brought to light by the exhibit, three were of especial historical or esthetic interest. One of these was of the seventeenth, one of the eighteenth, and one of the nineteenth century.

A seventeenth century Portrait of a Young Woman (Fig. 1) in the collection of the Edison Institute, Dearborn, came from the Lemon Collection with the furnishings of the Wayside Inn. The canvas is in need of cleaning but not otherwise in bad condition. The portrait represents a girl wearing a large, soft, felt hat and a dress with a broad collar of Flemish style (probably homemade) lace. The stiff bodice and half-sleeves of the dress are ornamented with metal braid. The white half-sleeves are edged with lace similar to that of the collar. The girl was evidently fond of jewelry, for she wears not only several chains about her neck and a bracelet on each arm, but a ring on the fourth finger of each hand. In her right hand she holds a spray of flowers.

Nothing is more rash, in our present state of knowledge, than to attribute anything to the seventeenth century colonies without definite documentary evidence, and in this case evidence is lacking. The provincial painting of the colonies and of England, as well as of France, the Low Countries, the Palatinate and (who knows) South America, are easily confused, all sharing similarities of style and a lack of positive individualities. The chances may be six out of ten that a canvas was done abroad; three that it was done on these shores by a bird of passage, like Blackburn in the next century; one that it was done by a native resident.

In spite of this, I think there is sufficient reason to include the Dearborn