

# AN INSCRIBED VOTIVE RELIEF TO PAN FROM EPIDAUROS (IG IV<sup>2</sup> I, 305)

ROBERT S. WAGMAN\*

**E**pidauros, Archaeological Museum, cat. 147 = IG IV<sup>2</sup> I, 305 [Plate 1]: votive relief representing Pan. Slab of light grey limestone, roughly squared and broken in the lower right corner. Height: 0,87 m. Width: 0,51 m. Thickness: 0,29 m. In the upper part of the stone, the inscription: ΓΟΡΓΙΑΣ ΚΡΗΘΕΥΣ / ΤΟΙ ΦΡΟΥΡΟΙ ΑΝΕΘΕΝ. Lettering assigned to the fourth or third century B.C.

The relief shows Pan in right profile, facing a vertical structure carved along the stone's right edge. On his left shoulder the god carries an elongated object which branches out at one end, perhaps a tree. In his right hand, lowered at his side, he holds a smaller object, also elongated in shape and pointing vertically to the ground (a *lagobolon*?) Hiller von Gaertringen simply describes this relief as "anaglyphum Panis arborem ferentis." A more extensive, if somewhat inaccurate, description, is given by M. Fraenkel in IG IV, 1352: "Pan instructus membro erecto et pedibus capri sinistra demissa nescio quid tenet, dextra supra humerum sustinet rem in superiore parte latiore, fortasse arborem." Neither Hiller or Fraenkel appear to take notice of the vertical structure at the right end of the relief<sup>1</sup>.

This idea of a Pan *dendrophorus* supported by the editors of IG IV raises an interesting iconographical problem. Unlike other semiferine creatures of the Greek imagination (such as his closest relatives, the Silenes, or the Centaurs), and unlike

what one might legitimately expect of a woodland god (such as the Latin god Silvanus, often assimilated to him)<sup>2</sup>, Pan is never depicted in the act of carrying or wielding trees or tree branches. Trees, in other words, do not belong among the iconographical attributes of the Goat God. This departure from the iconographical tradition, in the Epidaurian relief, leads us to conclude that in this case we are not dealing with another generic representation of Pan, but with something more specific, a pictorial 'narrative' more closely associated with the local cult of the Goat God — the illustration, perhaps, of an Epidaurian legend.

A key element, in reconstructing the 'narrative' represented on the Epidaurian monument, is the upright structure which stands directly across from the god at the right edge of the pictorial field. This can be identified either as a cave shown in profile, or as an architectural element of some kind, perhaps a gate entrance to a rustic shrine<sup>3</sup>. The presence of such a structure, whether a sacred cave or a temple gate, enables us to place the unusual figure of a Pan *dendrophorus* within at least two plausible contexts.

\* University of Florida. Department of Classics.

1. FRAENKEL, M., IG IV, 1352 (1902); HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, E., IG IV<sup>2</sup> I, 305 (1927); WAGMAN, R., ZPE 93 (1992) 45-46, plate I: b; *Inni di Epidauro* (BSA 75) Pisa 1995, 71: T 2; 73: T 8; *L'inno epidaurico a Pan* (Biblioteca di MD 14) Pisa 2000, 13: T 2, cf. 21-24; 16: T 8, cf. 32-35.

2. Tree(s) as an attribute of Silenes: e.g. LIMC VII (1997) 1129, cat. 204, s.v. Silenoi; of Centaurs: e.g. LIMC VII (1997) 693, cat. 252, s.v. Kentauroi and Kentaurides; 723, cat. 30, s.v. Kentauroi (in Etruria); of Silvanus: DORCEY, F., *The Cult of Silvanus* (Columbia Studies 20), Leiden, New York, Köln 1992, 33-48.

3. Profiled caves: (a) in vase-painting: e.g. LIMC VII, 1997, 693, cat. 252, s.v. Kentauroi and Kentaurides, (b) in relief sculpture: e.g. LIMC VI, 1992, 28, cat. 56, s.v. Kerberos; cf. JOBST, W., *Die Höle im griechischen Theater des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. Eine Untersuchung zur Inszenierung klassischer Dramen*, Wien 1970, 83 ff. Temple gate: e.g. HEMELRIJK, J.M., BABesch 49, 1974, 144-146, plates 50-51, and 118-120, plates 1-9.

One possible interpretation is that the Epidaurian relief represents the Goat God in the act of planting a sacred grove. Groves and gardens in close proximity to sacred caves or other rural precincts are widely attested in the Greek world, and we should not dismiss the idea that similar establishments may have existed at Epidauros, where the presence of underground springs and the hilly configuration of the land offered an ideal setting for this type of cultic complex. As for the possibility that the vertical structure to the right of the Epidaurian relief may represent a building, rather than a cave, it is important to remember that within the Asclepieum itself there are a number of architectural structures associated with the cult of the Nymphs and subterranean waters<sup>4</sup>. Among these, the so-called 'Sacred Fountain' in the mideastern sector of the sanctuary -with its unusually elongated chamber projecting against the side of the hill in an obvious attempt to emulate a natural cave formation- provides perhaps the best parallel for the unidentified structure shown in our relief<sup>5</sup>.

A second, perhaps even more intriguing, possibility offers itself when we interpret the object on the god's left shoulder as a club, rather than a live tree. In this case, Pan would not be depicted here as a gardener, but in his other role as a guardian of sacred places, a function which seems particularly appropriate to the profession of the monument's dedicants, the watchmen (φρουροί/) Gorgias and Kretheus<sup>6</sup>. The κωρύβη, or heavy club, appears in the Goat God's iconography as a substitute of, or sometimes as a complement to, the more familiar *lagobolon*, the light throwing stick which he uses to hunt the hare<sup>7</sup>. Unlike the *lagobolon*, however, which is a weapon exclusively associated with the hunting sphere, the *korune* crosses over to the world of guardsmen and custodians (such as, for

instance, the κωρυνηφόροι of Pisistratus: Hdt. 1, 59; D.L. 1, 1, 66; Plut. *Sol.* 30), being a traditional attribute of guardian gods like Heracles or Priapus. When interpreted in this light, the dedication to Pan by the Epidaurian phrouroi Gorgias and Kretheus, far from being an isolated accident, finds its place in a broader, well-defined, religious tradition which links the Goat God with the professional category of watchmen and guards<sup>8</sup>. The traces of this tradition can be followed, across the Greek world, from the island of Thasos in the northeastern Aegean, to the Corycian cave on Mt. Parnassus. At Thasos we find the dedication of a statue to Pan by an entire squad of Thasian φρουροί/, *IG XII, Suppl.* 429:

Κισσοφόρου Βρομίου πρόπολον φιλοπαίγμονα  
Πάνα ἐστήσαν φρουροί κοινὸν ἄγαλμα τόδε [*sequuntur nomina custodum Thasiorum XX*].

At the Corycian cave, an inscription cut in the live rock of mountain bears witness to the devotion of the local policemen for this god: *BCH Suppl.* 9 (1984), *Inscriptions*, 345, n. 9:

Εὐστρατος / Ἀλκιδάμου / Ἀμβρύσιος, /  
συμπερίπολοι, / Πανί, Νύμφαις.



Plate 1: Votive relief representing Pan (*IG IV² I, 305*) (Epidauros, Archaeological Museum, cat. 147).

4. Epidaurian waterworks: KAVVADIAS, P., Τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ ἐν Ἐπιδαύρῳ, Ἀθήναι 1900, 165; LAMBRINOUDAKIS, V.K., (*BCH Suppl.* 28) Athènes 1994, 225-236.

5. Sacred Fountain at Epidauros: ROUX, G., *L'architecture de l'Argolide aux IV<sup>e</sup> et III<sup>e</sup> siècles avant J.-C.* (*BEFAR* 199), Paris 1961, 289-291; cf. LAMBRINOUDAKIS, *o.c.*, 229.

6. On the Epidaurian φρουροί: JEFFERY, L.H., *AD* 21 A, 1966, 18-24; CLINTON, K., in: *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence (Proceedings of the Second International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, organized by the Swedish Institute at Athens, 22-24 November 1991 = Skrifter utgivna av Svenska institutet i Athen, 8°, 13)*, Athens 1994, 17-34.

7. FÜRTHWÄGLER, A., *Ad* 49, 1877, 212 "Osservando le più antiche rappresentanze di Pane, quelle del secolo quarto, non isorgiamo mai il pedo ricurvo ma sempre un diritto bastone nodoso o una piccola mazza". Pan armed with both club and lagobolon: e.g. REINACH, S., *Répertoire de la statuaire grecque et romaine, II*, Paris 1897, 67, n. 7.

8. LAUNEY, M., *Recherches sur les Armées Hellénistiques*, Paris 1950, II, 933.