A GREEK RELIEF RE-DISCOVERED

B. ASHMOLE

In the second volume of *Specimens of Ancient Sculpture*, published by the Society of Dilettanti in 1835 as a selection of the finest classical pieces then in England, there stands at the head of the Prefatory Remarks an engraving with the title ‘Bas-relief from Rhamnus ... Mr. Deering’ (fig. 1); but when in 1915 the Dilettanti issued part V of its *Antiquities of Ionia*, a debased copy of the old engraving appeared on the title-page, with the comment that ‘the origin and present resting-place of this beautiful relief are unknown’. Until two years ago this still seemed true: the relief had escaped the eye of Michaelis when he was compiling his *Ancient Marbles* in the seventies, and Süsserott in 1938 had to be content with reproducing the original engraving from the volume of *Specimens*.

John Peter Deering, the owner, was a member of the Society of Dilettanti, and one of the architects in the archaeological mission sent out by the Society to Asia Minor in 1811. After working there the party crossed to Attica, and investigated several ancient sites, of which Rhamnus was allotted to Deering. He found in the cella of the larger temple ‘two pieces of alto rilievo, very much damaged and corroded’, and these must be the pieces of our relief, which was at one time broken in two. There is a simple explanation of its disappearance after publication. Deering’s name had originally been Gandy—he was indeed commonly known as Mr. Gandy Deering—but those who were later searching for the relief looked for an owner named Deering rather than Gandy. It was not, in fact, lost, but had remained in the possession of the family, and was purchased in 1952 by the British Museum from his great grand-nephew, Dr. Eric Gandy of Gipsy Hill in south east London. When the house at Gipsy Hill was partially destroyed by bombing during the last war, the relief was blackened, and its one remaining head lost in the debris; but in 1953 this head was found in the garden and presented to the Museum by Dr. Gandy (figs. 2, 4–5).

1 Süsserott, 120, pl. 22. 2 For the full quotation see page 94.
Registration number 1933 5-30 1. Pentelic marble. Measurements in centimetres: Height (from bottom of lower bed) 62; width (bottom) 58, (top) 63.5; thickness (maximum at level of lower bed and at top of stone) 13.5; depth of relief (maximum) 7.5; depth of frame 5. Interval between rows of cover-tiles on the roof (ridge to ridge) 13.

The lower bed has an ancient tooled surface, and there are remains of a tenon (for fixing it on to the top of a stele) 35 cm from the left edge. We can estimate the original width of the relief with a fair degree of probability. If we allow at least 25 cm for the tenon (votive-reliefs vary in the proportionate size of the tenon, but it can hardly have been less than this, and may well have been as much as 36 or 37 cm, i.e. about a quarter of the whole); and if we restore, as we must, the equivalent amount of marble on the other side of it, we obtain a total width for the relief of between 135 and 147 cm. Now the rows of cover-tiles indicated on the roof are 13 cm from ridge to ridge, that on the left being set 11 cm from the left end. Were there ten such rows—a likely number—these would yield a total of 117 cm: to this should be added the space at the left end (11 cm) plus a similar hypothetical space at the right end, giving a