

# AN AKROTERION FROM THE TEMPLE OF ARES IN THE ATHENIAN AGORA

(PLATES 47-48)

IN 1891 the work of cutting the trench for the installation of the Athens-Piraeus railroad brought to light a number of ancient marbles in the area of the Athenian Agora, among others a female figure of about three-quarters life size (Pls. 47-48).<sup>1</sup> Both the legs are broken away, but it is clear that the figure must originally have been about to step forward, the right foot slightly raised. Her Doric chiton is blown back by the wind as she moves, and its short overfold billows up to form a ridge just below the breasts. The general type and dress are thoroughly appropriate to an akroterion of a temple, and she has long been recognized as such.<sup>2</sup> The back of the figure was not intended to be seen; the drapery is treated in a rather sketchy manner and worked with no regard for detail. The same treatment occurs on the akroteria from Epidauros<sup>3</sup> and on the Nike from the Stoa of Zeus in the Agora.<sup>4</sup> Of the base of our statue nothing remains. We have only the roughly rectangular pier which rose from the plinth and served to support the main weight of the figure. The working

<sup>1</sup> Athens, National Museum no. 1732. (S. Papaspiridi, *Guide du Musée National, Athens*, 1927, p. 72.) Preserved height 1.10 m. Height from center of left kneecap to left clavicle 0.71 m., from center of left kneecap to waist 0.42 m. Height of supporting pier 0.065-0.15 m., length 0.20-0.18 m. Pentelic marble. Kavvadias ('Αρχ. Έφ., 1893, pp. 39-47, pls. 4-5) associated the statue with the Bryaxis base, which had been found in the railroad cutting about 50 meters to the east of the statue. This attribution was rejected by Miss Richter (*The Sculpture and Sculptors of the Greeks*, New Haven, 1930, pp. 281-282, figs. 725-26) on the ground that the style of the figure is that of the late fifth century, a date too early for the work of Bryaxis. Studniczka (*Kalamis*, IV, 1907, p. 81) identified the figure as the central akroterion of the east façade of the Hephaisteion. Thompson has shown this attribution improbable in view of another more likely candidate of totally different style (*Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, p. 241 note 30) and has proposed that the statue be assigned to the Temple of Ares (*Hesperia*, XXI, 1952, p. 95). Kavvadias, Richter, and Studniczka identified the figure as a Nike Apteros; Svoronos (*Das Athener Nationalmuseum*, Athens, 1908, pp. 164-169, pl. XXVII) as a Nereid. It has been mentioned briefly by Collignon (*Histoire de la sculpture grecque*, Paris, 1897, II, pp. 307-308, fig. 157) and Picard (*La Sculpture antique*, Paris, 1926, II, p. 96, fig. 44). I am deeply grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Chr. Karouzos, the Director and Assistant Director of the National Museum, for permission to publish the recomposed statue and for the facilities used in studying and photographing. I owe my photographs to Miss Alison Frantz. This study was begun while I was a member of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. It has benefited greatly from numerous valuable suggestions made by Professors Homer A. Thompson and Rhys Carpenter.

<sup>2</sup> F. Studniczka, *Kalamis*, IV, 1907, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> J. F. Crome, *Die Skulpturen des Asklepiostempels von Epidauros*, Berlin, 1951, pls. 3, 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Hesperia*, IV, 1935, p. 374, fig. 4.

of the drapery behind the right leg indicates that it projected too far to remain without support of some kind. Consequently, the plinth must originally have extended forward under the right foot in the manner of the base of the Nike of Paionios.<sup>5</sup> The base of the Nike from the Stoa of Zeus<sup>6</sup> is not of the same type. The movement of this Nike to the side, determined by her position as a lateral akroterion, allows an arrangement of the limbs in a single plane and so requires no additional support for the feet. The even and pronounced weathering of the marble and the character of the base preclude the possibility that our statue was part of a pedimental group. The sharp, easily comprehensible pattern of the drapery is completely in keeping with the lofty position the statue would have occupied as an akroterion, and the extreme frontality and forward movement suggest that originally it must have stood above the peak of the gable.

Two joining fragments<sup>7</sup> of the statue (part of the left leg broken just above and below the knee) were found in 1951 in a Late Roman level a few meters to the east of the Temple of Ares. According to the early publication, the statue itself was found about twenty meters to the north of the temple.<sup>8</sup> Since in this general area there is no known building other than the Temple of Ares suitable in date, it seems reasonable to accept Professor Thompson's suggestion that our akroterion originally adorned its east façade.<sup>9</sup> When the temple was destroyed,<sup>10</sup> the damaged figure was built into a wall near by,<sup>11</sup> while the fragments of little value for re-use remained close to the spot where they fell.

The scale of the statue is also entirely suitable to the Temple of Ares. The original height of the figure must have been 1.32 meters, exactly the same as that of the group of two girls which has been identified as the central akroterion from the east front of the Hephaisteion,<sup>12</sup> a temple of approximately the same dimensions as the Temple of Ares and probably a work of the same architect.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Curtius and Adler, *Olympia, Ergebnisse*, IV, pls. 46-47.

<sup>6</sup> *Hesperia*, IV, 1935, pp. 374-379, figs. 4, 5, pl. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Inv. S 1539. Preserved height 0.315 m., width 0.175 m., thickness 0.10 m. The fragments were first identified in 1952. They have been turned over to the National Museum and permanently joined to the statue.

<sup>8</sup> P. Kavvadias, 'Αρχ. Έφ., 1893, p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> H. A. Thompson, *Hesperia*, XXI, 1952, p. 95.

<sup>10</sup> The temple was probably destroyed by the Herulians in A.D. 267. See W. B. Dinsmoor, *Hesperia*, IX, 1940, p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> Kavvadias, 'Αρχ. Έφ., 1893, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> An instructive table of the relative heights of central akroteria to tympana is given by Thompson, *Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, p. 242, note 31. To this one might add the akroteria of the Siphnian Treasury, which are in the same relative scale of proportions as the Hephaisteion and the Parthenon (tympanum height 0.735 m., restored height of central akroterion 0.63 m., *Fouilles de Delphes*, IV<sup>2</sup>, pp. 163-164) and those of the temple of Asklepios at Epidauros which are somewhat smaller (tympanum 1.30 m., akroterion, restored, 1.10 m., Defrasse and Lechat, *Épidaure*, p. 55).

<sup>13</sup> Dinsmoor, *Hesperia*, IX, 1940, pp. 1-47.

The date given by Dinsmoor for the Temple of Ares is 440-436 B. C.<sup>14</sup> and the akroteria should be contemporary with or should postdate the completion of the building. If we compare the dated monuments from the second half of the fifth century, we find the closest parallels for the drapery style of our figure in the 420's, after the completion of the Parthenon pediments and before the Nike Temple Parapet. The modeling of the figure is emphasized by a pattern of sharply defined ridges of drapery, a style that begins on the Parthenon frieze and pediments. One of the female figures among the goddesses of the frieze,<sup>15</sup> possibly Nike or Iris, presents a striking parallel to our akroterion, especially the presence in the drapery above and below the waist of a series of tubular folds nicked in the center where they meet the waist band. Among the pedimental statues, one might select the Selene from the east gable<sup>16</sup> for comparison. The drapery pattern is essentially similar, but the ridges on our figure are more isolated, less flat and broad, suggesting a slightly later date. The concentric catenaries visible above the girdle on the under part of the chiton and on the back of our akroterion are paralleled on an unpublished marble statue of Nike on loan in the University of Pennsylvania Museum, thought to be a copy of the Nike which stood on the right hand of the Athena Parthenos.<sup>17</sup> Of the two Hesperides from the Hephaisteion, the carrying girl has drapery of a similar style, while that of her companion is quite different.<sup>18</sup> The surface of the pedimental figure from Sounion is very badly weathered, but the folds between the arm and the breast on the left side are well enough preserved<sup>19</sup> to indicate a marked resemblance to the treatment of similar folds on our figure. Points of resemblance between our akroterion and two of the female figures from the Altar of Ares have already been noted by Mr. Thompson.<sup>20</sup> One<sup>21</sup> especially shows an affinity of style and design, but it is of more delicate workmanship in keeping with its lower position. The treatment of the drapery and its formal arrangement indicate that work on the altar must have been contemporary with the completion of the akroteria.

This style of raised ridges is found also, but now fully developed, on the miniature frieze from the base of the statue of Nemesis at Rhamnous<sup>22</sup> attributed to Agorakritos and on a documentary relief from Eleusis dated in 421-20 B. C.<sup>23</sup> The sharply

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>15</sup> A. H. Smith, *The Sculptures of the Parthenon*, pl. 34, 28.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 6, 1.

<sup>17</sup> According to the Museum label. The statue is to be published by Rhys Carpenter in a forthcoming number of 'Αρχ. 'Εφ.

<sup>18</sup> *Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, pls. 53-55.

<sup>19</sup> *Arch. Anz.*, XXXVII, 1922, pp. 259-262, pls. 3-5.

<sup>20</sup> *Hesperia*, XXI, 1952, p. 95.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 22 b, d.

<sup>22</sup> E. Kjellberg, *Studien zu den attischen Reliefs des V. Jahrhundert*, Uppsala, 1926, pls. 4-5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 12, 39.

isolated drapery folds on one of the fragments of the frieze <sup>24</sup> are closely paralleled on the upper part of our akroterion, but the stage of development is slightly more advanced. The small frieze of the Nike Temple <sup>25</sup> represents a similar stage in the evolution of this style, and there one can see the calligraphic mannerisms of the Nike parapet in an incipient stage. All trace of these mannerisms is absent from our figure, a fact that suggests she is closer to the Parthenon pediments than to the Nike parapet, where this special style achieved its ultimate elaboration.

There are, nevertheless, interesting points of comparison between our akroterion and the sculptures of the parapet. The rather peculiar device of curving the drapery from the right side of the figure over the right leg and onto the left knee, found on the new fragment from the Agora, can be discerned under the broken surface of one of the Nikai of Carpenter's Master A. <sup>26</sup> The motive seems to have been adopted into the standard repertoire for the indication of a wind-blown effect, and it reappears on the central akroterion of the east façade at Epidauros. <sup>27</sup>

An analysis of the drapery that flies free of the figure leads to the same dating. Here a comparison with the Nike of Paionios, a work of the same general type which can be dated to shortly after 425 B. C., <sup>28</sup> will be especially helpful. Even a casual glance will show that the curves and swirls of the free drapery are more boldly handled on the Nike than on our akroterion. Where the drapery falls free of the body, it seems to take on a life of its own and is no longer controlled by the necessity of modelling the figure. On our statue the point of transition between free drapery and that which models the body is much less skillfully accomplished. The body form is almost completely obscured in the area just below the left arm and at the left hemline. The sculptor has not yet mastered the transition to free drapery, and he must, therefore, have worked at least several years earlier than the time Paionios was modelling the Nike at Olympia.

Among the fifth century figures which are represented as running or alighting, our statue is a relatively early example of the completely frontal type. The Nike of Kallimachos reconstituted by Raubitschek <sup>29</sup> and some of the representations of winged figures on late archaic vases <sup>30</sup> are the earliest in this group. The Nike of

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 5, 16.

<sup>25</sup> C. Blumel, *Die Friese des Tempels der Athena-Nike*, Berlin, 1923; *idem*, *Jahrb.*, LXV-LXVI, 1950-51, pp. 135-165.

<sup>26</sup> R. Carpenter, *The Sculpture of the Nike Temple Parapet*, Cambridge, 1929, pl. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Crome, *op. cit.*, pl. 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Olympia*, *loc. cit.* The statue must have been set up soon after the naval victory at Sphakteria in 425 B.C.

<sup>29</sup> *A.J.A.*, XLIV, 1940, p. 55, fig. 1.

<sup>30</sup> A Nike on a lekythos of the Dutuit Painter in New York (dated ca. 490 B.C.) and an "Iris" or Nike on a cup of the Brygos Painter in London retain the archaic *Knielauf* schema (Richter, *Red-Figured Vases in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New Haven, 1936, pp. 51-52, pl.

Paionios and the Athenian akroteria from Delos,<sup>31</sup> on the other hand, reveal a complexity of drapery folds and of free flying drapery in a more advanced stage of development than that found on our figure.

Undoubtedly the sculptor of our akroterion provided some clue to her identity which is no longer preserved, an attribute held in her hand or placed beneath her feet in the manner<sup>32</sup> of the eagle on the base of the Nike of Paionios or the sea creatures which accompany the Nereids from Xanthos. The general type of the figure is that of a Nike, but the concept of a Nike Apteros seems to be unknown in the fifth century.<sup>33</sup> It should also be noted that Nikai such as those of Paionios and from the Stoa of Zeus<sup>34</sup> have much more mature and buxom figures. On the other hand, a Nereid<sup>35</sup> is hardly appropriate to a Temple of Ares. A more logical identification than either a Nike or a Nereid would be Hebe, the sister of Ares and the personification of youth.<sup>36</sup> In the *Iliad* Hebe solicitously bathes her brother's wound after his encounter with Diomedes (V, 905), and throughout the poem she is characterized as the female counterpart of Ganymede, the cup-bearer of the gods (IV, 2). In this capacity she appears on a number of early red-figured vases. On a late archaic cup in the manner of the Brygos Painter from Vulci<sup>37</sup> she holds a phiale in her hand, and on a hydria of the Painter of Palermo in Munich<sup>38</sup> she is represented wearing a Doric chiton, similar to that on our akroterion; she carries an oinochoe in her right hand and a phiale in her outstretched left hand. This general type continues into the second half of the fifth century and may be seen on a lekythos of the Achilles Painter in Cambridge.<sup>39</sup> Another lekythos in Cambridge<sup>40</sup> by the same artist pictures Athena with a winged figure not unlike the representation of Hebe on the first lekythos. Both type and clothing are similar, and on a number of vases<sup>41</sup> we find a winged figure carrying an oinochoe or phiale indistinguishable, apart from the wings, from the Hebe type. The winged figure must represent either Nike or Iris.

28; J. C. Hoppin, *A Handbook of Attic Red-Figured Vases*, Cambridge, Mass., 1919, I, p. 110), while a Nike holding an oinochoe on a kylix of the Splanchnopt Painter in New York (ca. 460-450 B.C.) is represented in a fully frontal pose (Richter, pp. 108-110, pl. 81).

<sup>31</sup> F. Courby, *Exploration archéologique de Délos*, XII, pp. 237-238.

<sup>32</sup> *Olympia*, loc. cit.; A. H. Smith, *Catalogue of Sculpture in the British Museum*, II, pp. 33-38.

<sup>33</sup> W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, III<sup>1</sup>, cols. 310, 316. The small Ionic temple on the Acropolis is actually dedicated to Athena, who is Nike Apteros.

<sup>34</sup> *Hesperia*, IV, 1935, pl. 4.

<sup>35</sup> The suggestion of Svoronos, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>36</sup> Pauly-Wissowa, *R.E.*, VII, cols. 2579-2584; Kekulé von Stradonitz, *Hebe, eine archäologische Abhandlung*, Leipzig, 1867; Roscher, *Lexikon*, I<sup>2</sup>, cols. 1869-1871.

<sup>37</sup> J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figured Vase-Painters*, Oxford, 1942, p. 258, no. 3; Gerhard, *Trinkschalen und Gefässe des königlichen Museums zu Berlin*, Berlin, 1848-50, pl. D.

<sup>38</sup> Beazley, *op. cit.*, p. 192, no. 3; Kekulé, *op. cit.*, pl. 5, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Beazley, *op. cit.*, p. 639, no. 66; *C.V.A.*, fasc. 2, R and S, III I, pl. 13, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Beazley, *op. cit.*, p. 639, no. 64; *C.V.A.*, fasc. 2, R and S, III I, pl. 13, 3.

<sup>41</sup> *C.V.A.*, Louvre, fasc. 3, III Id, pl. 10, 1; fasc. 8, III Id, pl. 36, 6; Richter, *op. cit.*, pls. 81, 93; Hoppin, *op. cit.*, II, p. 423.

We shall find that the same confusion of types appears in the sculptural representations of the period. The "Iris" of the east pediment of the Parthenon<sup>42</sup> wears the Doric chiton typical of the female messenger, but she is wingless. The immaturity of the figure suggests that she is Hebe rather than Eileithya,<sup>43</sup> and like our figure she is apparently in rapid motion. One of the goddesses of the frieze,<sup>44</sup> as we have already noted, bears a striking resemblance both in general type and in arrangement of drapery to our figure and to one of the fragments from the Altar of Ares. She holds one hand in front of her while with the other she is touching or arranging her hair. Hebe appears in a similar pose on an onos of the Eretria Painter in Athens.<sup>45</sup> Frequently she appears on vases in the company of Hera,<sup>46</sup> with whom she stands on the Parthenon frieze.<sup>47</sup> These examples are sufficient to indicate that a certain confusion existed in type, attributes, and function among Hebe, Iris, and Nike. All three are servants to the Olympians and wear the dress appropriate to their calling. It is not surprising that our figure has so constantly been referred to as a Nike, when actually Hebe is the wingless counterpart of both Nike and Iris.

Parallel examples of the use of a minor mythological figure of special appropriateness for the akroterion of a temple are found in the Hesperides of the Hephaisteion<sup>48</sup> and in the figure carrying a goose from the Asklepios Temple at Epidauros. Crome has identified the latter as Epione, the wife of Asklepios and so also a symbol of triumph over sickness.<sup>49</sup> Hebe is appropriate as an akroterion alighting on the peak of a temple in her capacity of Olympian messenger, but undoubtedly on the Temple of Ares she appears as a symbol of youth rather than merely as a servant of the gods. Her name indicates that she originated as a personification. In the fifth century, however, she is not only the personification of youth but the giver of youth as well. In the *Herakleidae* of Euripides, a play that almost certainly dates to the opening years of the Peloponnesian War,<sup>50</sup> and is therefore more or less contemporary with our akroterion, Iolaos prays to her for the restoration of his youth for a single day (lines 851 ff.), and it is ultimately through Hebe that victory is won for the *Herakleidae* and Athens.

<sup>42</sup> Smith, *The Sculptures of the Parthenon*, pl. 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 34, 28.

<sup>45</sup> Beazley, *op. cit.*, p. 726, no. 27; 'Εφ. 'Αρχ., 1897, pl. 10, 1; E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung der Griechen*, Munich, 1923, fig. 562.

<sup>46</sup> For example, on a vase from Kerch by the Kadmos Painter (Beazley, *op. cit.*, p. 804, no. 5; *J.H.S.*, VII, 1886, p. 204, D).

<sup>47</sup> C. Picard (*Manuel d'archéologie grecque, La Sculpture*, II, Paris, 1939, p. 462) suggests that the figure is either Hebe or Iris. However, Smith (*The Sculptures of the Parthenon*, p. 53) notes the outline of wings in the area behind the figure, indicating that she must be either a Nike or Iris.

<sup>48</sup> Thompson, *Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, pp. 248-251.

<sup>49</sup> Crome, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>50</sup> G. H. Macurdy, *The Chronology of the Extant Plays of Euripides*, Columbia Univ. Diss., 1905, pp. 11-38.

Our figure might be restored holding an oinochoe in her left hand and phiale in her outstretched right hand, on the basis of the type generally found on vase paintings. Alternative attributes appear on an early archaic cup by Oltos,<sup>51</sup> which depicts Hebe seated in the assembly of the gods holding an apple in one hand and a flower in the other. The late archaic cup in the manner of the Brygos Painter<sup>52</sup> shows her holding a branch and a phiale. These attributes may be derived from the poetic phrases Ἥβης ἄνθος<sup>53</sup> and Ἥβας καρπός.<sup>54</sup>

A fragment of an angle akroterion base from the Temple of Ares indicates that single figures, perhaps Nikai, flanked our central statue.<sup>55</sup> If so, the composition of three female figures is used here for the first time and provides the precedent for the use of three Nikai on the Temple of Artemis at Epidauros.<sup>56</sup>

In using a mythological figure of special appropriateness to the temple, the architect is following a precedent which, as we have noted, he originated on the Hephaisteion. With the Temple of Ares, however, he seems to have returned to the simpler device of a single figure, such as had been used for the earliest akroteria of the figure style,<sup>57</sup> rather than a group.

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<sup>51</sup> Beazley, *op. cit.*, p. 38, no. 50; Pfuhl, *op. cit.*, fig. 360.

<sup>52</sup> Gerhard, *loc. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> *Il.* XIII, 484; Solon, (D<sup>2</sup>) 21.

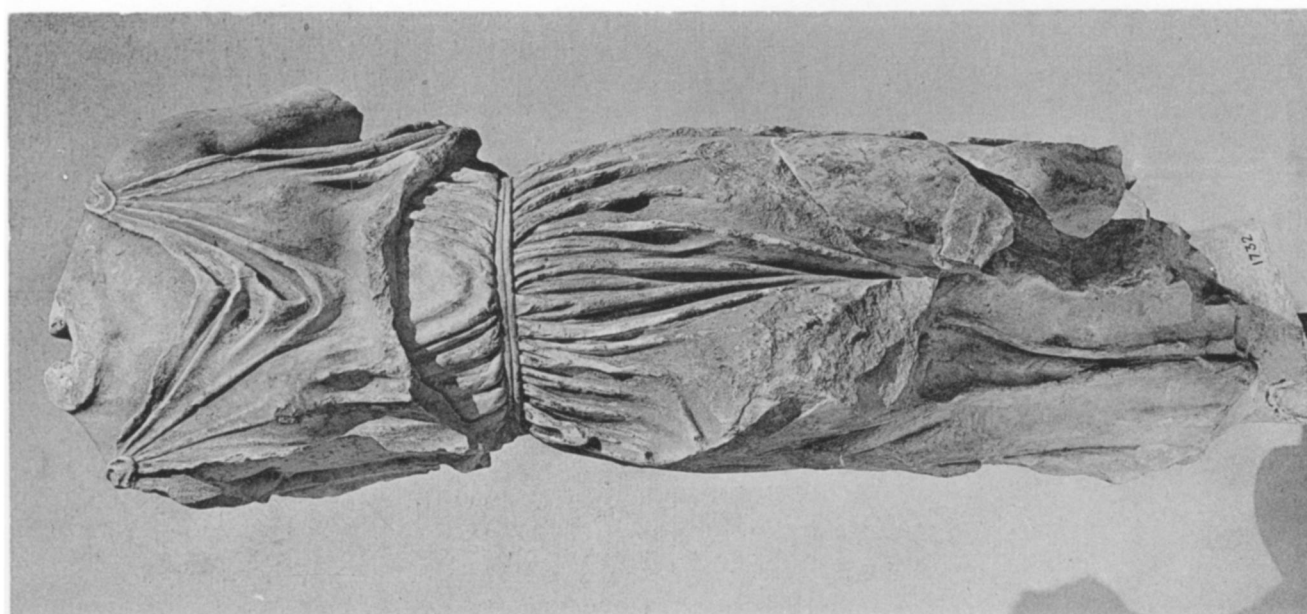
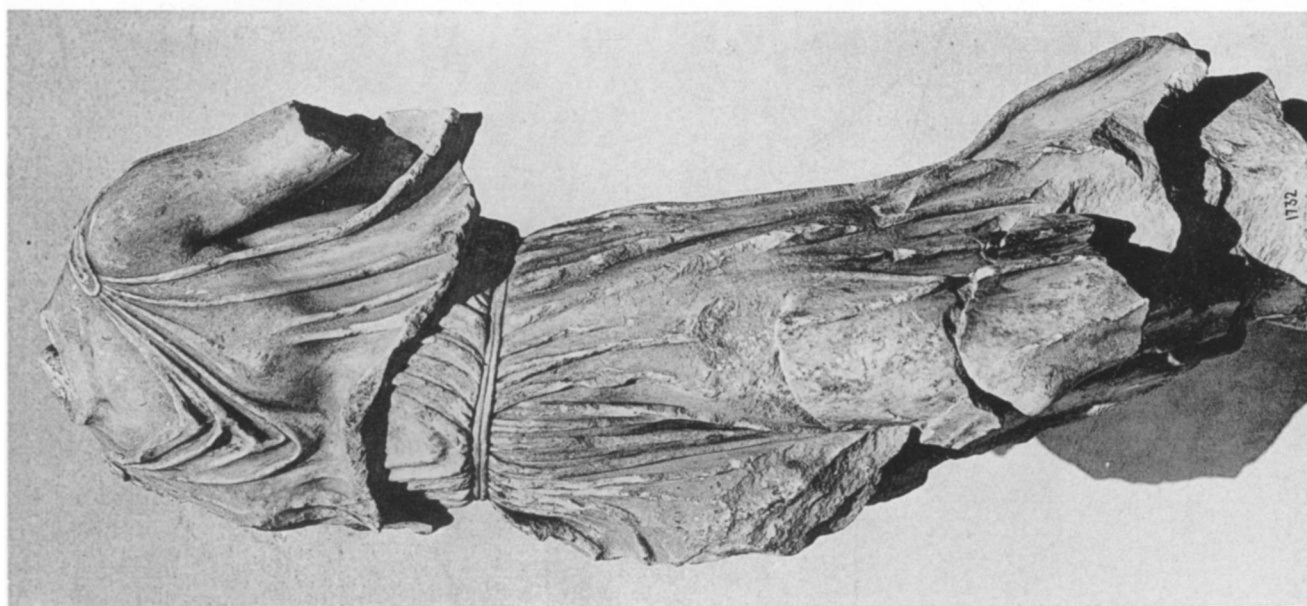
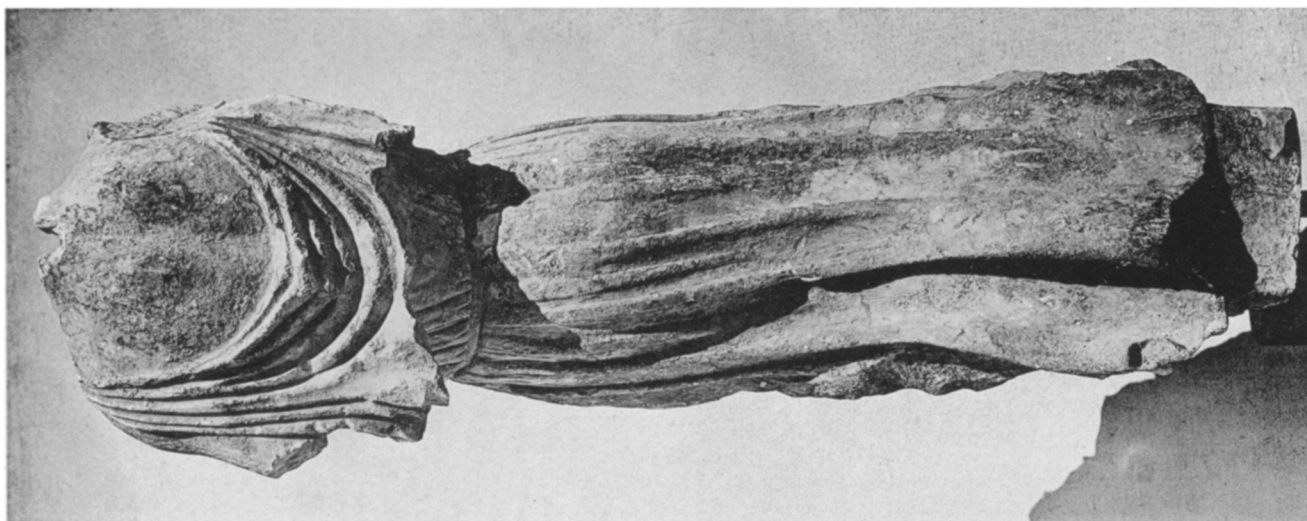
<sup>54</sup> Pindar, *O.* 6, 67; *P.* 9, 109.

<sup>55</sup> Dinsmoor, *Hesperia*, IX, 1940, p. 37. Bulle has identified a representation of the temple on a fragment of a kalix krater in Würzburg which also seems to indicate Nikai akroteria ('Αρχ. Ἐφ., 1937, pp. 473-482).

<sup>56</sup> Defrasse and Lechat, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-171.

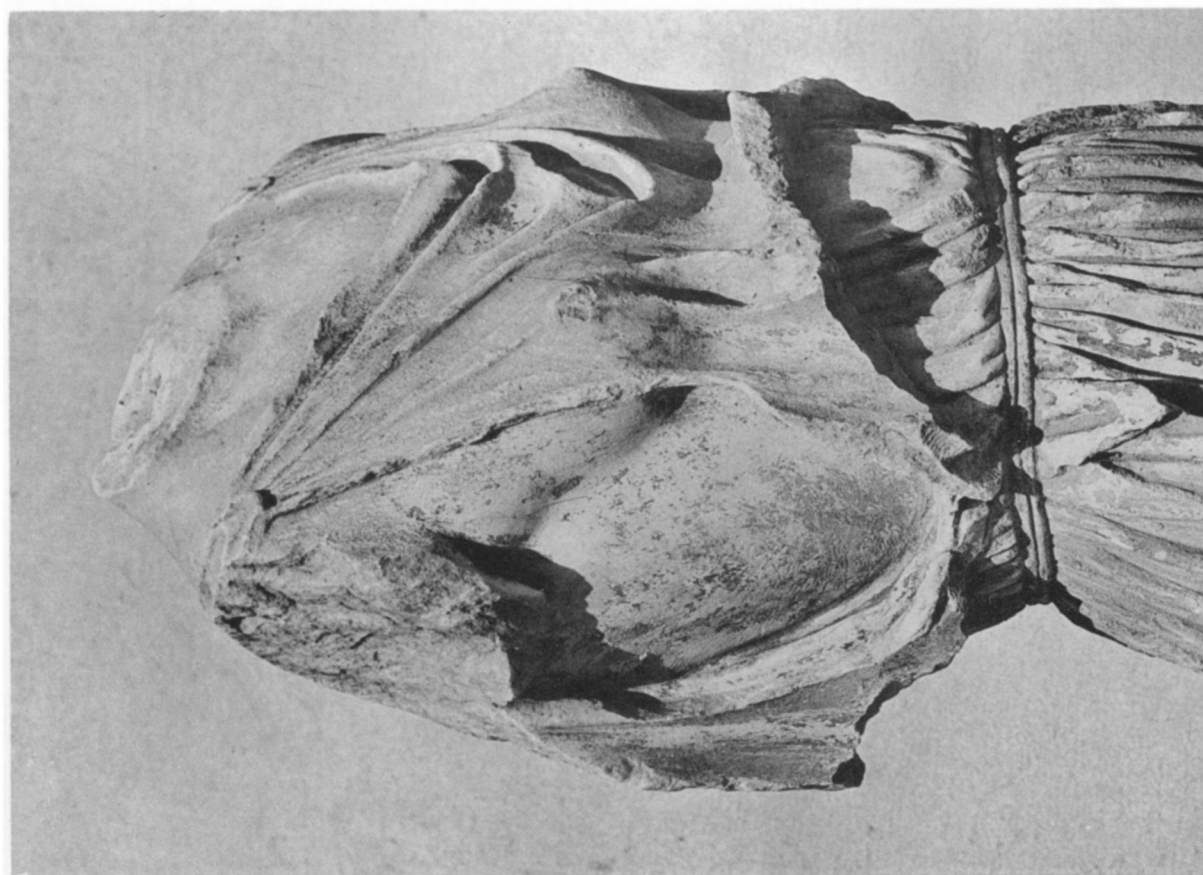
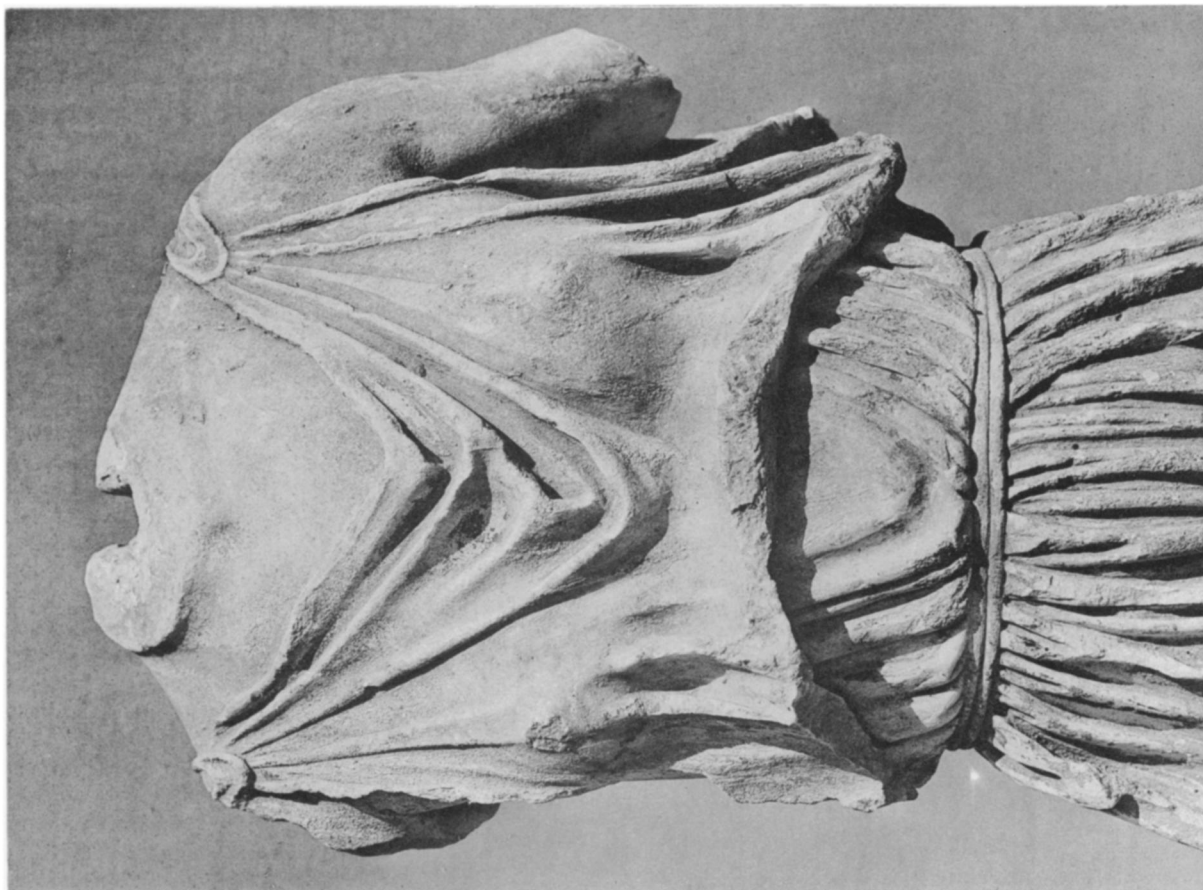
<sup>57</sup> For example, the Siphnian Treasury, *Fouilles de Delphes*, IV<sup>2</sup>, pp. 163-166. Of the remaining two temples by the same architect, the one at Sounion had palmette akroteria and the one at Rhamnous had conventional griffins as angle akroteria (Dinsmoor, *The Architecture of Ancient Greece*, 1950, p. 182).





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