

ISTHμία EXCAVATIONS, 1952

(PLATES 54–62)

OF THE four Panhellenic shrines of Greece celebrated in the Odes of Pindar only the Isthmian has not hitherto been subjected to systematic exploration on an adequate scale. The topographical studies by the early travelers and the exploratory excavations in more recent times have resulted in the identification of the site of the Isthmian Games (Pl. 54 a) but have left many of the topographical problems unsolved. The Stadium and the Theater, which can readily be recognized from extant remains above the ground, give the first clue to the topography; the location of the other buildings has remained in dispute.

The most conspicuous of the ancient landmarks are the ruins of the Isthmian wall (Pl. 54 b) which can be traced for most of its length across the Isthmos from the Corinthian Gulf to the Saronic. An irregular enclosure of some 350,000 square meters extending southward from this wall on the Peloponnesian side close to the Theater and the Stadium, was until twenty years ago known as the Isthmian Sanctuary, within which the two temples of Poseidon and Palaimon were thought to have been located. In 1883 Paul Monceaux investigated this enclosure and cleared the northeastern Gate.¹ Among the material built into the wall he found column drums and other architectural members of two buildings, one Doric and the other Ionic, the former of which he identified as the temple of Poseidon, the other as that of Palaimon. He concluded that the foundations of the Doric temple were to be sought beneath the church of St. John the Forerunner; the Ionic structure he placed farther south on the authority of Pausanias² who says that the temple of Palaimon was on the left side within the enclosure. The excellent masonry of the enclosure itself (cf. Pl. 56 a) Monceaux ascribed to the age of Augustus; others have not hesitated to date it in classical Greek times.

Monceaux's conclusions remained for half a century the prevailing view. Frazer,³ Fowler,⁴ O'Neil,⁵ and others repeated the information, each adding certain observations of his own. The first to cast doubt on the correctness of this view was Fimmen, whose article on the Isthmos appeared in the Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, *Real Encyclopaedie*.⁶ A fresh examination of the Isthmian topography was made in 1933 by R. J. H. Jenkins and H. Megaw, and the results of their studies were promptly published

¹ *Gazette archéologique*, 1884, pp. 373 ff.

² Book II, ii, 1.

³ *Pausanias Description of Greece, Commentary*, vol. III, pp. 9 ff.

⁴ *Corinth*, I, pp. 59 ff.

⁵ *Ancient Corinth*, p. 15.

⁶ *R.E.*, s.v. Isthmos.

in the *Annual of the British School at Athens*.⁷ The most important result of this investigation was the corroboration of Fimmen's conjecture that the enclosure which the earlier scholars took to be the Sacred Precinct of Poseidon was nothing else than a Byzantine Fortress. Several pits dug within the enclosure failed to reveal any early remains, and Jenkins concluded that the first occupation of the area for buildings of any size was in the first century of our era. Megaw's study of the Isthmian wall and the enclosure showed clearly that both are of the same date, and the technique of the masonry points unmistakably to the reign of Justinian as the period of their construction.

Jenkins dug several trial trenches and pits in three areas outside the Fortress. In the first two he found no traces of pre-Roman occupation; but in the third, on the banks of a ravine, more than half a kilometer to the west of the Fortress, he discovered some pottery and roof tiles and an elaborate system of reservoirs and channels of classical Greek times, and from these discoveries he concluded that the Sanctuary had been located here. Unfortunately, earthquakes and erosion have so altered the configuration of the land that the chances of finding the foundations of a large temple in this region seemed very distant.

The investigations of the two English archaeologists were of the utmost importance in correcting several errors⁸ of earlier topographical studies and in establishing the date and purpose of the Justinian Fortress. Although they did not achieve their main objective, which was to discover the site of the Isthmian Sanctuary, they narrowed down the possibilities considerably and prepared the way for further exploration.

When the University of Chicago decided to undertake the excavation of a classical site, the Corinthian Isthmos seemed a logical choice. Its nearness to Ancient Corinth, where the facilities of the Archaeological Museum and of the Excavation houses of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens would be available, was an important factor in the selection of the site; but it goes without saying that the compelling reason was the prospect of important archaeological discoveries. Whatever vicissitudes had befallen the Sanctuary, it did not seem possible that the place in which one of the most popular of the ancient Greek festivals was celebrated could have vanished so completely as to leave no worthwhile traces of its existence. The decision to begin an excavation at the Isthmia was reached in Chicago, somewhat rashly, no doubt, before there was an opportunity of examining the site afresh. In view of this

⁷ Vol. XXXII, 1932-1933, pp. 68-69. A brief notice of the first season's work appeared in *J.H.S.*, LII, 1932, p. 244.

⁸ A typical example of the perpetuation of errors is the statement, first made by Monceaux, that the Doric columns built into the fortress of Justinian had only sixteen flutes. This misinformation, repeated by subsequent writers before the appearance of Jenkins' and Megaw's article in 1933, has naturally led to erroneous speculation about the date of the temple.

fact, the first season was to be devoted to a preliminary exploration for the purpose of determining, if possible, the location of the sanctuary and of assessing the prospects for a more extensive excavation of the whole site.⁹

Two important discoveries were made during the preliminary survey prior to the beginning of the excavation. The inscription (see page 192) in honor of Themison was discovered at the Isthmian wall, from which it had been removed and left on the spot where it was found. On the ridge overlooking the village (seen in Pl. 54 a), which affords an unobstructed view of the eastern half of the Isthmos (Pl. 55 a), some trenches had been dug during World War II, and among the weeds growing over the mounds of earth from the trenches the gold earring described later in this article was discovered. This cursory examination of the region further led to the conviction that the main temple of the Isthmia was located not very far from the Fortress of Justinian, probably on higher ground, from which the column drums and other building blocks could readily have been rolled down before they were built into the wall. Among the debris of the demolished Fortress we counted more than a score of Doric column drums, each sliced into three pieces to render it more suitable for wall blocks (one seen in Pl. 56 a, lower right).

⁹ The excavation, which was under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, lasted from April 24 to May 17. The writer was ably assisted by Dr. Chrysoula Kardara, who at the end of the campaign made inventories and preliminary studies of the movable finds brought to the Corinth Museum. The drawings for Figure 1 and Plates 61 and 62 were made by George V. Peschke, the photographs by the writer. The services of the experienced foreman Evangelos Lekkas were made available by the American School of Classical Studies and all the men employed were veteran diggers from ancient Corinth. Cleaning and mending of the antiquities were done by George Kachros, the first Guard of the Museum, assisted by the second Guard, Evangelos Papapsomas. A most valuable service was rendered by the Corinth Canal Company, whose Director Constantinos Skepheris kindly placed at our disposal a hoist with operators for raising the colossal marble figure and a truck to transport it to the Corinth Museum.

The funds for the excavations were provided through the Greek Cultural Foundation for the University of Chicago, from donations by members of the Greek-American Community in Chicago. At the close of the excavation we had the pleasure of seeing several Chicagoans who have taken an active part in the work of the Foundation: Mr. and Mrs. John L. Manta, Professor Phillip Constantinides, Mr. and Mrs. Takis Christopoulos, Mrs. Theodore Askounis. To my colleague, Professor Peter H. von Blankenhagen, who spent several days in Corinth during the campaign, I am indebted for valuable suggestions. The American School of Classical Studies contributed greatly to the success of the initial campaign by making all its facilities available without cost. For these advantages the expedition is deeply indebted to the chairman of the Managing Committee, Professor Charles H. Morgan, and to the Director of the School, John L. Caskey. It is a pleasure also to acknowledge the cooperation of the Greek Archaeological Service, represented by the Ephor of Antiquities of the Corinthia, Mr. Ioannis Papademetriou. I desire further to express to the University of Chicago and to the Chancellor Lawrence A. Kimpton, to Professor Napier Wilt, Dean of the Division of Humanities, and to the Chairman of the Department of Greek, Professor Gertrude E. Smith, my appreciation of the privilege of obtaining leave from my teaching duties for the purpose of directing the first classical excavation undertaken in Greece by the University of Chicago.

The area which seemed most promising as the site of the temple is a small plateau, some four hundred meters to the west of the Fortress. The trenches dug there by Jenkins in 1933 had failed to reveal anything earlier than Roman, but we found many fragments of Greek roof tiles on the surface, and one shapeless poros block with a square depression at one end looked like the inner core from one of the Doric columns prepared for use in the Justinian Fortress. In this area we decided to run our first trench (Pl. 55 b), originally 26 m. long, and later extended to a length of 46 m. Simultaneously two small areas were investigated, one on either side of the west wall of the Justinian Fortress, at a point where pieces of drums from the Doric columns were particularly numerous (Pls. 55 c and 56 a). The pieces found in these areas were so similar to those discovered in the long trench on the plateau that before the end of the first day it seemed likely that the spot we had selected was the site of the temple. In the course of the next two days the long trench showed the unmistakable lines of a Doric temple structure. It cut diagonally across the width of the building, exposing the rock cuttings for all the east-west foundations, except the foundations for the south colonnade, where Roman floors and walls concealed the traces of the Greek building.

After it had become evident that the Doric temple was located in this area all the workmen were transferred to the temple site, where other trenches were laid out in an effort to reveal the whole plan of the building. Subsequently a small area was cleared close to the north temenos wall, where numerous architectural fragments and building terracottas were found in a burned layer containing many fragments of bronze bowls (cf. Pl. 60 e), completely crumpled and corroded and many of them melted into unrecognizable lumps of metal. This may be the edge of a *favissa* from one of several fires that caused damage to the temple of Poseidon.

THE TEMPLE OF POSEIDON

The temple area consists of an artificially leveled quadrangle, measuring approximately 116 m. from east to west and 78 m. from north to south. On the north and east sides are the remains of retaining walls built largely out of irregular stones laid in lime mortar. What exists today is probably only the foundation, and it is possible that more pretentious masonry was used for the wall itself. In the southwest corner of the quadrangle the rock has been cut away to a depth of over one meter, and a rock-cut bedding along the west end indicates that a temenos wall once existed at that point. The line of the bedding is continued toward the north by a roughly constructed wall, through which there seems to have been an entrance into the sanctuary from the west. Along the edge of the gully, a hundred feet beyond this gateway, there is a low retaining wall and traces of a road that probably led from the Isthmian Sanctuary to Ancient Corinth. The northwest corner of the temenos extends over

a ravine made by a streamlet flowing toward the northeast from the long hill, which is known to the population of the village merely as "Rache," the Ridge (Pl. 54 a). A vaulted passage constructed as an outlet for the water of this gully is still preserved to a length of 14 m. This tunnel, obviously of Roman construction, has frequently been mistaken for an approach to the crypt beneath Palaimon's temple, which Pausanias describes. It is tempting to connect both the tunnel and the temenos wall with the peribolos built by P. Licinius Priscus Iuventianus, who held the title of high priest (*archiereus*) for life.¹⁰

Within this quadrangle, almost in the exact center, stood the temple of Poseidon. The foundation, oriented very nearly according to the cardinal points of the compass, covers an area of 56.20 x 25.70 m., as measured on the trenches sunk into the rock of the plateau. The trench for the outer colonnade varies in width between 2.78 and 3.50 m., but the actual foundations were somewhat less wide. If we allow for a footing trench of *ca.* 0.20 m. on either side, the net width of the foundation at the narrowest point of the trench on the north flank would be only 2.38 m., which is rather small for a peristyle whose columns measured at least 1.86 m. in diameter (Pl. 62 b). If the foundation filled the entire trench at this point the width would be sufficient for a stylobate, 1.90 m. wide and two steps below the stylobate, each with a tread of *ca.* 0.40 m.

The trenches for the cella wall vary in width between 1.63 m. and 1.78 m. Where the foundations are preserved in the lower courses (Pl. 56 b) there is a footing trench on either side, *ca.* 0.20 m. wide. At the northeast anta, where two courses of the foundation are preserved (Pl. 56 c), the lowest course has a width of 1.60 m., and 19 m. farther west, where four blocks of the foundations for the north cella wall remain *in situ*, the width varies between 1.56 m. and 1.58 m. The blocks are carefully fitted and finished on the top with a straight chisel, the marks of which cross the joints in such a way as to show clearly that the tooling was done after the blocks had been put in place (Pl. 56 d). The stones in the foundations of the northeast anta are tied together with large double-T clamps, *ca.* 0.32 m. long, and in one of the cuttings some of the lead still remains at the bottom. Two blocks preserved in place in the foundation of the southwest anta (Pl. 59 c) have cuttings for similar clamps; elsewhere the exposed portions of the foundations have no clamp cuttings. Four blocks preserved *in situ* from the foundation for the north inner colonnade have been exposed. The foundation trench is here shallower, and for the most part it is little more than a leveling of the top of the rock. The blocks themselves differ considerably from those in the foundations for the cella wall. The tooling at the top and the anathyrosis are much the same in both cases, but all the stones in the foundations for the colonnade have drafted corners and a drafted edge at the bottom (Pl.

¹⁰ For his benefactions at the Isthmian Sanctuary see *I.G.*, IV, 203; Allen B. West, *Corinth*, VIII, Part II, *Latin Inscriptions*, No. 70; Oscar Broneer, *Hesperia*, VIII, 1939, pp. 181-190.

57 a). Three of the blocks are drafted only at one end, two at the north end, the middle block at the south end. The fourth block, which has deep grooves in the top made by despoilers for the purpose of splitting it into four quarters prior to removal, is similarly drafted at the corners both at the north and the south ends. There are no traces of clamps in this wall.

Only a small part of the temple area has been excavated, and in most of the trenches dug this season the foundations are lacking, with only the rock-cut trenches showing the outline of the building. As shown in the plan (Pl. 61) the temple was peripteral with deep pronaos and opisthodomos, and with a cella only *ca.* 20 m. in length and 11.20 m. in width, measured on the inside of the foundation trenches.¹¹

Of the superstructure nothing is left in place, but a jumble of wall blocks from the southwest corner of the building (Pl. 57 b) will be of help in restoring the temple. Numerous small fragments and one almost complete column drum, perhaps from the pronaos (Pl. 62 a), were found on the site. Many pieces of columns are exposed among the debris of the Isthmian Fortress, the largest of which has a diameter of 1.76 m., measured in the flutes, and *ca.* 1.86 m. on the arrises. There can be no doubt that all these column fragments come from the temple of Poseidon. They are of two types, one of which is smoothly finished with a straight chisel (Pl. 62 b), both in the flutes and at the joints, in a manner resembling that of the blocks in the foundations. The surface is covered with a very thin stucco, less than one millimeter thick. The second type is finished with a fine-toothed chisel and covered with heavier stucco. Some of the drums of this variety have preserved on the top surface two scratch lines dividing the circle into four quadrants (Pl. 62 c). All the drums with the center preserved have cuttings for *empolia*. A few small fragments from the capitals came to light in the excavations, some preserving the annulets (Pl. 57 c), but in no instance is the echinus sufficiently well preserved to show the profile. Over the whole area were found a number of guttae, mostly from the cornice, 0.039 m. long and 0.058 m. in diameter (Pl. 57 d).

Fragments from the marble roof were found in all the trenches of the temple area. One complete section of the raking *sima* (Pl. 57 e and f) has a height of 0.46 m. and a total length of 0.61 m., including the overlap, which is 0.058 m. long. The net length of the *sima* is 0.552 m., which represents the exposed length of the roof tile. But one pan tile, found together with the *sima*, has a total length of 0.715 m., a net length of 0.633 m., and a preserved width of 0.90 m. The profile of the *sima* is unusual, the nearest parallels of which come from Asia Minor and from Rhodes.¹²

¹¹ The following dimensions of the temple based on a rough calculation are tentative and will be revised after the whole area has been excavated. L. on stylobate 54.20 m.; W. on stylobate 23.70 m.; ratio of W. to L., : 2.287; greatest lower diam. of columns 1.86 m.; axial spacings on the flanks, *ca.* 4.44 m.; at the ends *ca.* 4.46 m.

¹² I am indebted to Lucy T. Shoe for this information. See her article on Greek mouldings

Many pieces from the horizontal sima were found (Pl. 58 b), some of which fit together, but a restoration of the decorative patterns must await the discovery of more pieces. There is no moulding at the top, and the upper edge is not straight but follows roughly the contours of the decoration on the face. There are many fragments of large lion head spouts (Pl. 58 a) flanked by the spirals and leaf designs on the sima.

The architectural fragments of the temple do not all date from the same period. Among the debris from the cella are many blocks of a soft yellow limestone with characteristic rope marks all around (Pl. 58 c). Though none of these blocks were found *in situ*, they seem to have been used as fill beneath the floor of the temple, and it is likely that they belong to a predecessor of the classical building. Some fragments of roof tiles of very archaic nature were found both on the temple site and in the trench dug close to the temenos wall. The existence of an earlier temple is further indicated by the cutting for a foundation running east to west in the exact axis of the building (Pl. 61). It is difficult to see how such a foundation could have served any purpose in the later building, and it is natural to suppose that it was made for an earlier structure. No other foundation trenches were found that could belong to the same period, but it is possible, since the orientation was the same, that some of the foundations of the classical building coincided with those of an earlier temple.

Considerable remains of later structures were found in the same area, particularly at the southeast end of the long trench, where there is a mortar bedding for a Roman floor; and many of the marble blocks from the temple area show the characteristic technique of Roman work. Most prominent among these are several small lion heads from a marble sima of late date and degenerate character (Pl. 58 d). One might be tempted to associate these with the building, *μέγεθος οὐ μείζων*, which Pausanias mentions as being the temple of Poseidon. It is not easy, however, to reconcile this statement with the discovery of the large temple on the same site, the material of which was available in the time of Justinian for the construction of the Fortress and the Isthmian wall. If a small Roman temple occupied the same site, the problem arises where the column drums and other blocks of the classical building were kept before being built into the wall. Furthermore, Pausanias' statement about the size of the temple seems surprising in view of the large number of statues that he saw in the pronaos and within the cella itself. The term, "not very large in size," may be sufficiently elastic to cover a considerable range, but if his words have any significance at all, they cannot be applied to the temple whose foundations have been laid bare in our excavations. A temple of that size could hardly have been termed small, even by a writer accustomed to the somewhat inexact use of language which Pausanias has been accused of employing.

The discovery of the Poseidon temple has done much to clarify the topography

of the whole region. Pausanias, approaching the sanctuary from the east, probably passed through the ornamental arch-way which later became the entrance into the Justinian Fortress. He first mentions the Theater and the Stadium, and on his route from there to the sanctuary he passed along an avenue with the statues of victorious athletes on one side and tall, straight pine trees on the other. Unless he used a round-about route he must have entered the temenos somewhere near its southeast corner. After describing the temple of Poseidon and its statuary he passed to the temple of Palaimon, which was inside the temenos on the left side of the entrance. It is possible that the southeast corner of the enclosure was somewhat irregular in shape, and the temple of Palaimon, which was circular, was doubtless very small. The position of the Doric temple in the very center of the quadrangle seems to preclude the existence of any other large structure within the same enclosure.

SCULPTURE

In one of the trenches dug near the west end of the temple was discovered, just below the surface, the upper part of a seated female figure of marble, about three times life-size (Pl. 59 c). The torso had been made in two pieces, the upper part of which was discovered; the arms and head, made separately and fastened by dowels, are missing. The statue is a good copy of a Greek original from the second half of the fifth century B.C.¹³ No attributes are preserved, but the type and size of the statue indicate that the figure represented a goddess—or, possibly, a deified empress in the guise of a goddess.

She wears three garments, differentiated by folds and texture. The under garment is an Ionic chiton, fastened over the right arm by small circular clasps, at least one of which is hidden by the peplos on the shoulder and five are visible. Long loose folds of thin fabric, very delicately rendered, hang vertically below the elbow. The only other place where the chiton is shown is below the left elbow, where the thin folds of the finer cloth are contrasted with the heavier fabric of the himation. Over the chiton she wears a Doric peplos (Pl. 59 a), fastened on the right shoulder with a large circular clasp; the corresponding clasp on the left shoulder is hidden by the outer garment. Beneath the short overfold in front the peplos hangs more or less vertically down to the lap, the horizontal surface of which is only roughly blocked out. It is obvious that the knees of the figure were high enough above the line of vision of the spectators so that the lap was invisible from below. The himation hangs over the left shoulder and falls in heavy folds in front. On the back its long sweeping folds are straight and shallow and less carefully rendered than in front (Pl. 59 b). The gar-

¹³ Inv. No. IS 1. Dimensions: Pres. H. 0.97 m.; greatest W. 1.33 m.; diam. of right arm at elbow, 0.182 m. (from side to side), and 0.197 m. (from top to bottom); cutting for head, 0.27 (left to right), and 0.22 m. (front to back).

ment extends diagonally from the left shoulder to below the right arm, where it reappears beneath the sleeve of the chiton; on the missing lower part in front it would have been thrown over the lap and terminated on the left side of the figure. The himation does not differ greatly in texture from the peplos, but the artist has managed the folds so skilfully that nowhere is there any confusion between the two garments.

The rendering of the drapery on the right shoulder is careless and rough, as if it were not meant to be visible. Beneath the folds of drapery extending vertically from the right arm there is a rough cutting (Pl. 59 b) on the side of the statue, which seems to have been made to fit the arm of a throne, but there is no corresponding cutting for the arm on the left side. Presumably the statue was one of a pair, with a companion figure on her left (the spectator's right) side. The figure did not face straight toward the front but was turned somewhat toward the spectator's right. The left forearm, which seems to have been held out almost horizontally, may have been supported by a rod held in the left hand, and when this was removed at the time of demolition the forearm probably fell down of its own weight, causing the front half of the socket and the adjoining folds of the himation to break away. This and some scratches on the right arm made by the plow, are the only serious damages to the marble.

At the horizontal joint on the under side, there is a well-marked anathyrosis (Pl. 59 c), but the vertical joint in front was less well fitted. There are no dowels or clamps, and the horizontality of the joint and the immense weight of the marble would have rendered metal fastening unnecessary.

The type represented by the Isthmia figure occurs in a statue from Corinth, about half life-size, representing Kybele seated on a rock with a lion beneath her feet. Franklin P. Johnson who published the Corinth statue refers to other figures with similar drapery, but makes this remark regarding the type: "No exact replicas are known to me and probably no original was closely copied."¹⁴ The discovery of the Isthmia statue raises the question again regarding the origin of the type, and this question is closely related to the problem of identification. The fact that the type was reproduced as a figure of Kybele offers no solution. Among the goddesses mentioned by Pausanias as being worshipped in the Isthmian sanctuary are Amphitrite, Leukothea, Galene, and Thalassa; and the inscription recording the donations of Licinius mentions temples of Eueteria and of Artemis and one of the Eleusinian deities, Demeter and Kore. The statue of Amphitrite, which Pausanias saw within the temple of Poseidon, was one of a group representing Poseidon and his wife standing in a chariot surrounded by Tritons, a dedication of gold and ivory presented by Herodes Atticus. In the pronaos Pausanias saw another statue of Amphitrite together with one of the Sea and two of Poseidon. He does not mention either the material or the size in this case, but it is not unlikely that the new statue is the figure

¹⁴ *Corinth*, IX, *Sculpture*, no. 55.

of Amphitrite seen by the traveler. The fact that it was discovered in the rear of the temple might be explained on the ground that it had been transferred from the pronaos to the opisthodomos after Pausanias' visit. If this is the correct identification, the figure of Amphitrite and one of the two statues of Poseidon were probably represented together as the divine rulers of the Sea. The original can hardly have been very famous, since so few copies have survived. Clement of Alexandria,¹⁵ quoting Philochoros, refers to a bronze pair of Poseidon and Amphitrite on the island of Tenos, made by the Athenian sculptor Telesias, who is otherwise unknown. The statues were of colossal size, nine cubits high (4.158 m.), which would have been the approximate height of the Isthmia figure, and it is not impossible that the marble statue was copied from the bronze group at Tenos.

Some smaller pieces of sculpture came from the temple area, among them several fragments of a marble relief. The largest of the pieces¹⁶ preserves the upper part of a female figure to left, her bare arms extended toward the front and her body bent (Pl. 58 f), as if she were fleeing or about to leap forward. On her back is the hand of a second figure, perhaps represented as pushing her or—less likely—holding her back. The use of the drill is much in evidence in the folds of the drapery, and the right upper arm has been cut loose from the background by means of a deep groove produced with the drill. At the corner of the mouth a small circular drill hole has a somewhat disfiguring effect on the face. The sculptor may have intended to produce an expression of excitement or distress, but the face hardly seems agitated enough for a figure in headlong flight. It is possible, however, that the fleeing figure represented Ino-Leukothea on the point of leaping into the sea and holding the child, Melikertes-Palaemon, at arms length in front of her to guard him from her mad husband Athamas, whose hand rests on her back.

Four fragments were found of another slab, all showing signs of having been in fire (Pl. 58 e). In the top is a cutting for a dowel with which the slab was fastened to a wall or base, and on the back are marks of the saw. Two contiguous fragments from the left half of the slab preserve parts of two human figures, a standing male figure bending forward and raising a dying figure, probably female. From the right corner of the slab is preserved part of a man holding a club in his hand, possibly Theseus engaged in one of his exploits. The proportions of the figures on the second slab are somewhat larger than those on the first fragment, but the difference is slight and it is likely that all the pieces belong to the same frieze.

Among the marbles from the temple was found a standing female figure of an early archaic type (Pl. 59 d),¹⁷ preserved from the waist to just above the feet. Her arms extend vertically along the sides, and in each hand she holds a curved object

¹⁵ *Protrepticus*, p. 41.

¹⁶ Pres. H. 0.24 m.; W. 0.15 m.; greatest Th. ca. 0.09 m.

¹⁷ Inv. No. IS 3. The material is gray marble. Pres. H. 0.27 m.; Th. front to back 0.107 m.

which seems to be the tail of an animal. They reach down so far toward the feet of the figure that they can hardly be the tails of two lions, for which there does not seem to be room at the base. They may be snakes, whose heads would reach to the edge of the garment. The statuette may be a marble copy of a primitive wooden statue of the *xoanon* type, but unless other fragments come to light in subsequent excavations it will not be possible to identify the figure.

INSCRIPTIONS

The epigraphical inventory of the season's finds comprises fifty pieces, most of them small fragments which cannot be restored, unless other pieces of the same documents turn up later. One small piece of black stone¹⁸ preserves four letters—**TPIT**—, which may possibly be part of the name Amphitrite. Another piece of white marble is from the bottom of a statue base (Pl. 59 e) set up by the Hellenodikai in honor of a certain Ptolemaios, who was agonothetes, presumably at the Isthmian Games.¹⁹

— — — — Πτ]ολεμαῖον
 — — — — ἀγωνοθέτην
 — — — — οἱ Ἑλληνοδῖκαι
 Ψ(ηφίσματι) Β(ουλῆς)

In the lower right corner are three small letters and a punctuation in the form of a leaf.

The most important epigraphical discovery from this season is the Themison base²⁰ mentioned earlier in this report. The stone had been built into the Isthmian wall, southeast of the Stadium, and had been removed by the owner of the field and left close to the spot where it was found. It is made of a mottled grayish brown limestone. The whole base is preserved, with the exception of a few chips at the bottom, but the inscribed face has suffered badly from later handling (Pl. 59 f). In the top is a dowel hole with pour channel.

Ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος
 Μειλησίων Γ. Αἴλιον
 Θεμισώνα Θεοδότου υῖ(ον)
 νεικήσαντα Ἴσθμια
 5 Νέμεα κοινὸν Ἀσίας ἔ
 καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀγῶ-

¹⁸ Inv. No. IΣ-33.

¹⁹ Inv. No. IΣ-21. H. 0.46 m.; W. 0.66 m.; Th. 0.56 m.; H. of lett. 0.07 m.; found in pronaos of the Poseidon temple.

²⁰ Inv. No. IΣ-1. H. 0.89 m.; W. 0.41 m.; Th. 0.34 m.; H. of lett. 0.02-0.027 m.

νας ΠΘ μόνον καὶ
 πρῶτον Εὐρεπίδην
 Σοφοκλέα καὶ Τειμόθεον
 ἑαυτῶ(ι) μελοποιήσαντα
 Ψ(ηφίσματι) Β(ουλῆς)

The inscription seems to date from the first half of the second century after Christ.

If the two letters ΠΘ (89) in line 7 are correctly read, the number of victories, 94 in all, won by Themison must be something of a record. His career as a poet and musician need not have been limited by age to the same extent as if he had been an athlete, and since he was the "first and the only one" to engage in the particular type of art in which he excelled, the number of his victories was presumably the same as that of his performances. The verb *μελοποιεῖν* would seem to imply that he set the dramas of Sophokles, Euripides and Timotheos to music, but the exact force of *ἑαυτῶ* in that connection is obscure. His accomplishment may have consisted in borrowing themes from the works of the three playwrights for the composition of lyric poetry which he would also have set to music. The passage would then mean that Themison was the first and only one to use "for his own purpose" (the dramas of) Euripides, Sophokles and Timotheos in the production of musical and lyrical compositions. The order in which the names of the three fifth-century play-wrights appear is significant in view of the patronage offered by Euripides to Timotheos after the first unfavorable impression made by the Milesian upon Athenian audiences. Themison, like his famous fellow-citizen of five centuries earlier, seems to have been an innovator, and it is not unlikely that he considered himself the artistic heir of Timotheos.

MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS

Some small pieces of pottery were discovered in the temple area, dating from the Geometric period to Roman times, but few of the fragments were found in any significant relationship to the temple. From the small trench close to the north temenos wall, among debris that seem to date chiefly from the end of the fourth century B.C., came a handle of an amphora stamped with the name ΑΑΚΑΝΟΡΟΣ (Pl. 60 a).²¹ One piece of a red-figured fish plate (Pl. 60 b)²² was found in the trench close to the west wall of the Justinian Fortress in a Roman context.

Among the miscellaneous finds from the temple area are two iron spear points

²¹ Inv. No. LP-5. Virginia Grace has kindly informed me that this stamp has previously been found only at Troy, where several examples, some stamped with the same die, have turned up.

²² Inv. No. IP-21.

(Pl. 60 c),²³ presumably dedications in the temple, and one small chisel (Pl. 60 c, lower left)²⁴ badly corroded. One bronze arrow point²⁵ (Pl. 60 c, center, bottom row) in very good condition was acquired from a member of the local community. Many fragments of bronze bowls (Pl. 60 e),²⁶ some with a border of raised dots below the rim, were found in the trench by the north temenos wall and similar pieces came from the temple area. A few pieces of bronze (Pl. 60 e, lower right), too heavy to be parts of bowls, seem to be from statues.

In a plowed field south of the Justinian Fortress a piece of limestone (Pl. 60 f) was picked up by the foreman of the excavation, which proved to be part of a halter²⁷ (jumping weight). It is curved at the top, and the curve of the preserved end is probably somewhat more abrupt than was that of the missing end. The bottom is slightly convex and the middle part was raised *ca.* 0.002 m. above the two ends. To



FIG. 1. Gold Earring. Two and one-half times actual size.

give the athlete a good grip on the weight there is a large cutting on one side, extending through more than half the thickness and met by a smaller cutting from the other side. The object is of special interest since it was part of the athletic gear of the Isthmian Games. The type is well known from two completely preserved examples found at Corinth and now in the National Museum in Athens.²⁸

A discovery of peculiar interest was made during the preliminary survey, prior to the commencement of the excavations. On top of the "Rache," among weeds growing in the earth from a trench dug by German soldiers during the last war, was found a gold earring (Fig. 1 and Pl. 60 d) of exquisite design and very delicate

²³ Inv. No. IM-71, L. 0.34 m. (Pl. 60 c, top); No. IM-45, L. 0.07 m. (Pl. 60 c, lower right).

²⁴ Inv. No. IM-48, L. 0.12 m.

²⁵ Inv. No. IM-32, L. 0.036 m.

²⁶ Inv. Nos. IM-5, 6, 9, 18, 20, 22, 27.

²⁷ Inv. No. IM-52. Preserved L. 0.085 m.; H. 0.095 m.; W. 0.077 m.; total L. probably *ca.* 0.22 m.

²⁸ They are illustrated in E. Norman Gardiner's *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, p. 300, fig. 62.

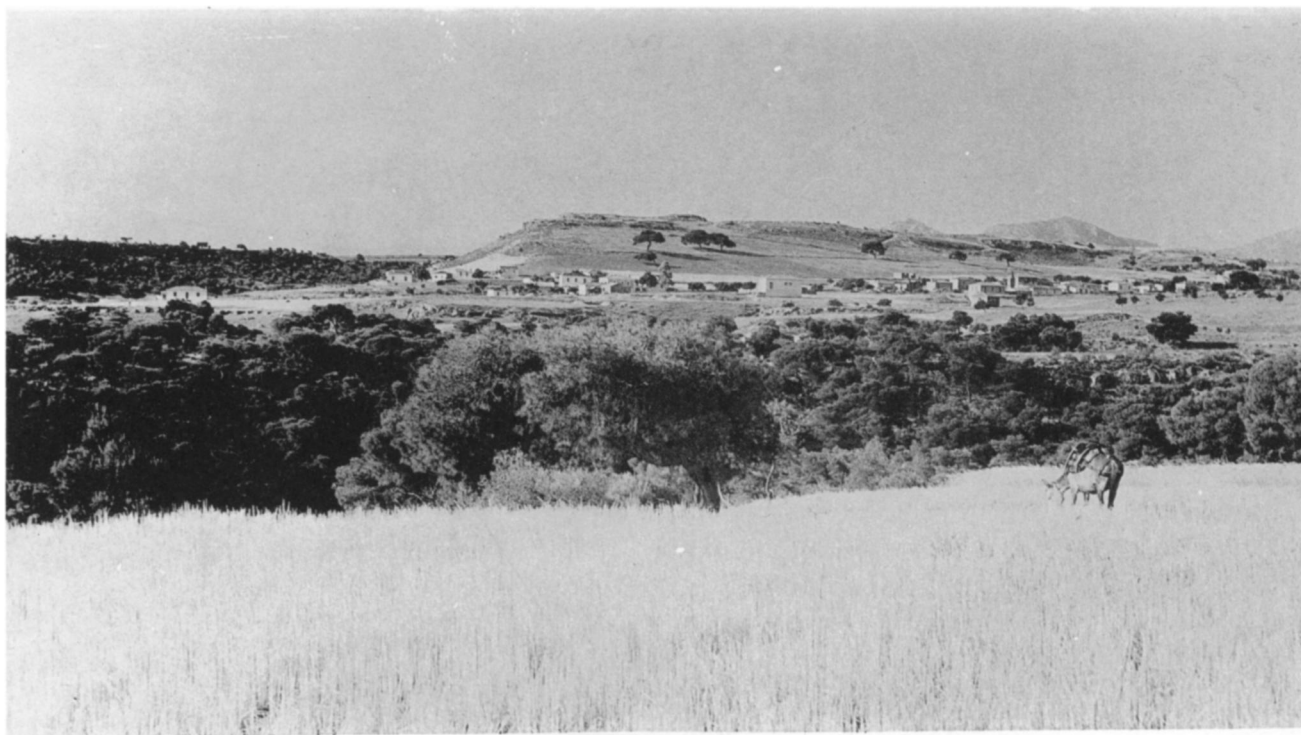
workmanship.²⁹ It consists of a lion's head and twisted strands of gold wire forming a loop. It is a common type of fourth century B.C. jewelry and one of the best examples of its kind. This chance discovery in an area which was not expected to yield antiquities of any kind led to a cursory examination of the ridge. Some pottery and roof tiles of classical Greek times were found on the surface, but much of the terrain has been disturbed by extensive quarrying both in ancient and modern times. When the excavations are resumed a more thorough testing of the fill on the whole hill will be made.

The first exploratory campaign at the Isthmian sanctuary has fully justified the expectations of the excavators. In a brief season's work with a very small force of workmen the most crucial problem of the topography was solved, the location and extent of the principal sanctuary were determined, and some objects of high intrinsic value were brought to light. The immediate objective of the next campaign will be to excavate the whole temple area, to continue the investigation of the "Brandschutt" along the north temenos wall, to determine the location of the temple of Palaimon and perhaps to test the accumulation of fill in the Theater. Over most of the area involved the soil appears to be comparatively shallow, and in many places the outline of classical buildings are visible above ground. It should be possible in three or four campaigns to uncover the most important of the buildings and to explore the whole area between the Poseidon temple and the Isthmian wall in order to fix the principal points in the topography and to add new information to the history of the Isthmian Games.

OSCAR BRONEER

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

²⁹ Inv. No. IM-65, greatest dim. *ca.* 0.017 m.; Weight 2 grams.



a. Isthmia from the North, the "Rache" in the Background



b. The Isthmian Wall, looking North

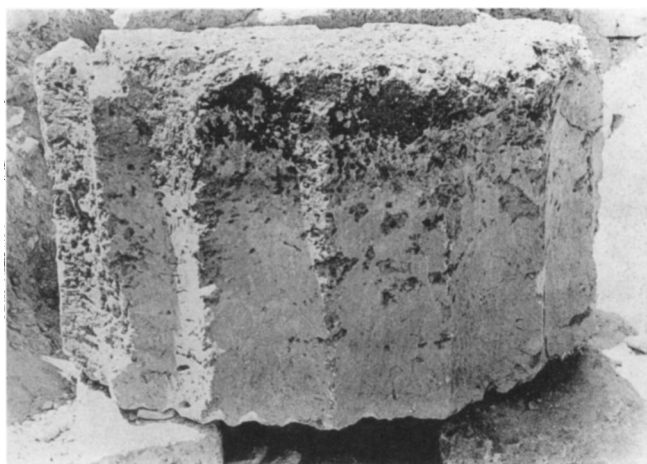
OSCAR BRONEER: ISTHMIA EXCAVATIONS, 1952



a. View of the Temple Site from the "Rache," Perachora in the Background

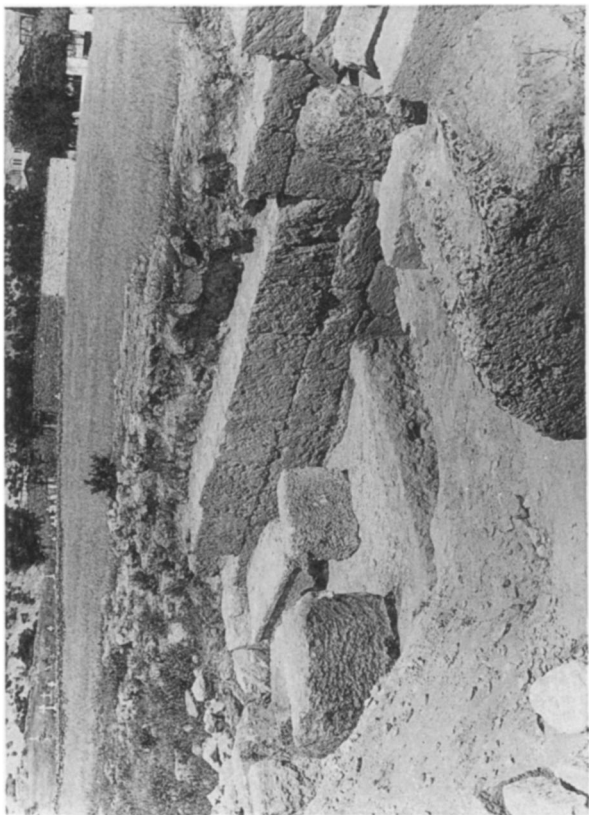


b. Long Trench through the Temple Area, from Northwest



c. Column Drum of Temple, Re-used in Justinian Fortress

OSCAR BRONEER: ISTHMIA EXCAVATIONS, 1952



a. Justinian Wall, Column Drum of Temple in Foreground



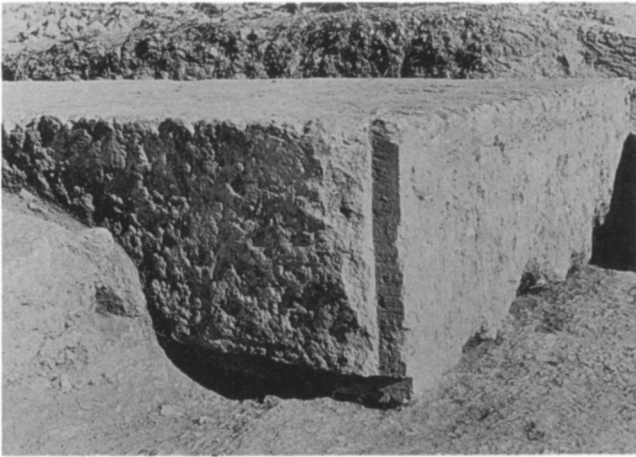
b. Foundations for North Cella Wall and Inner Colonnade



c. Foundation for East End of North Cella Wall



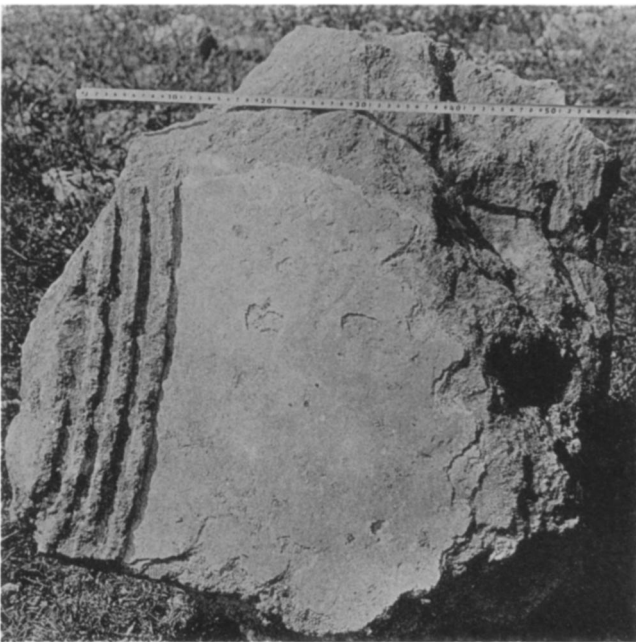
d. North Cella Wall, Details of Tooling



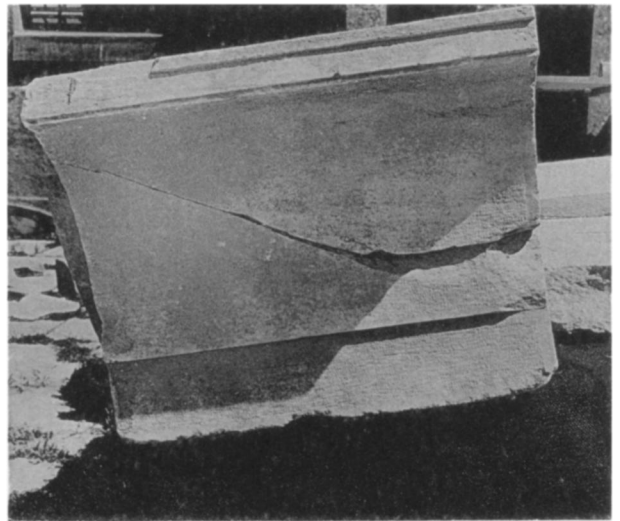
a. Foundation for Inner Colonnade, showing
Drafted Corners



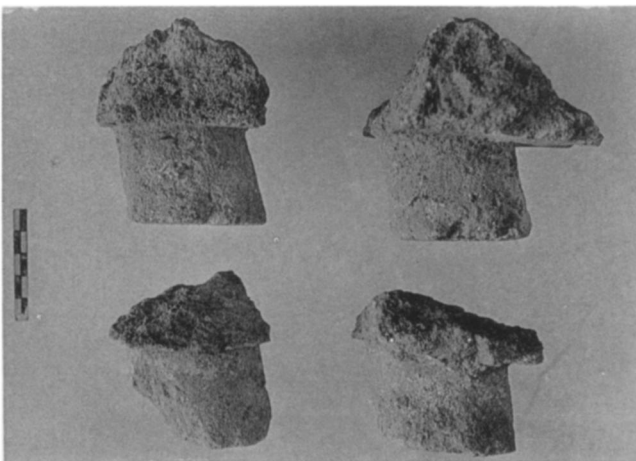
b. Blocks from South Cella Wall



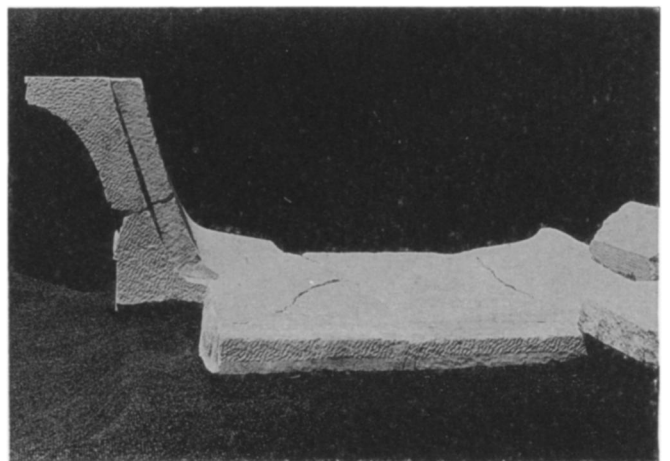
c. Fragment of Echinus from Column of Poseidon Temple



e. Raking Sima, Face



d. Guttae from Cornice of Temple



f. Raking Sima, Profile and Roof Tiles



a. Fragment of Lion Head Spout



b. Fragment of Horizontal Sima



c. Blocks with Rope Marks, Probably from Early Temple



d. Small Lion Heads from Sima of Roman Building



e. Fragments of Marble Frieze



f. Female Figure from Marble Frieze



a. Front View of Colossal Statue in Corinth Museum



b. Rear and Side View of Colossal Statue



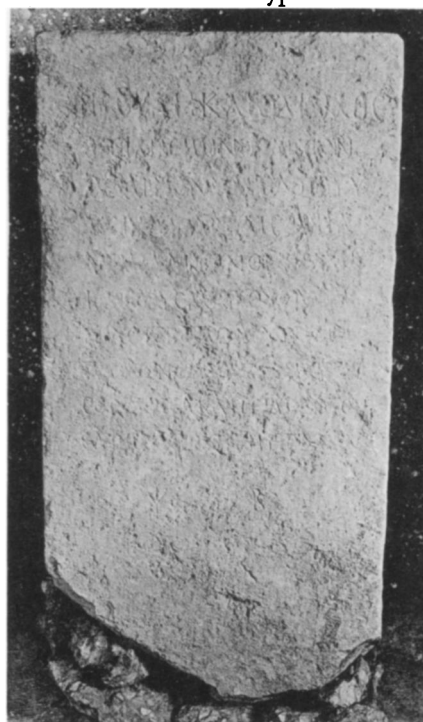
c. Colossal Statue of Goddess as found;
Foundation for SW Anta in Foreground



d. Part of Female Figure
of Xoanon Type



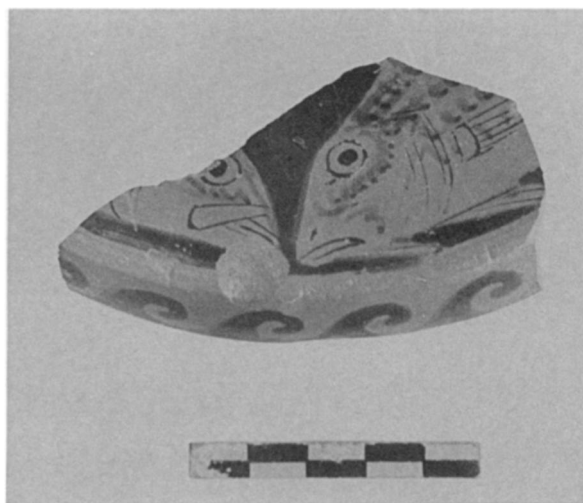
e. Fragment of Statue Base from Temple Site



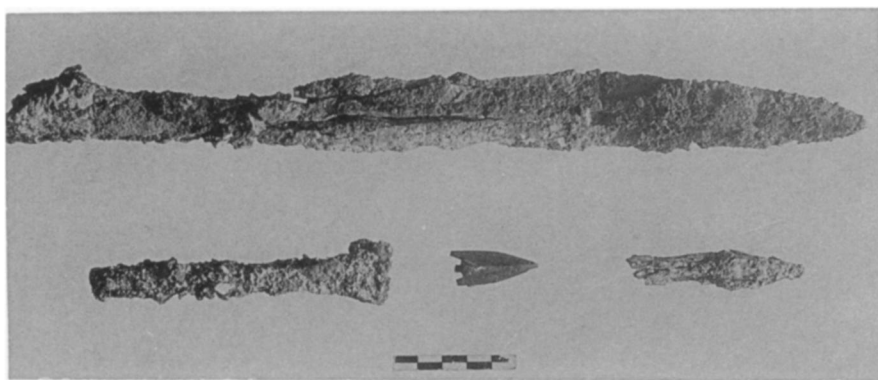
f. Inscription in Honor of the Poet
Themison of Miletos



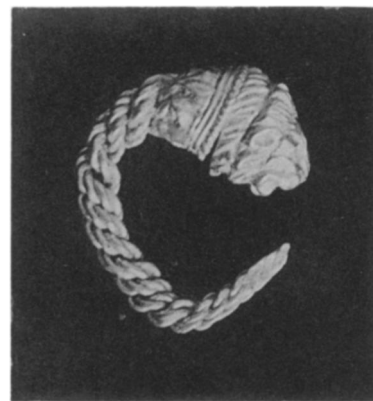
a. Amphora Handle Stamped
with Name of Alkanor



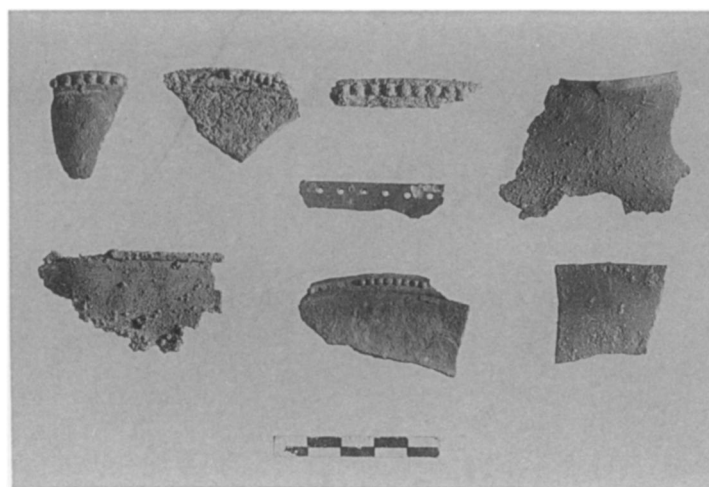
b. Fragment of Red-figured Fish Plate



c. Spearpoints and Chisel of Iron, and Bronze Arrow-head



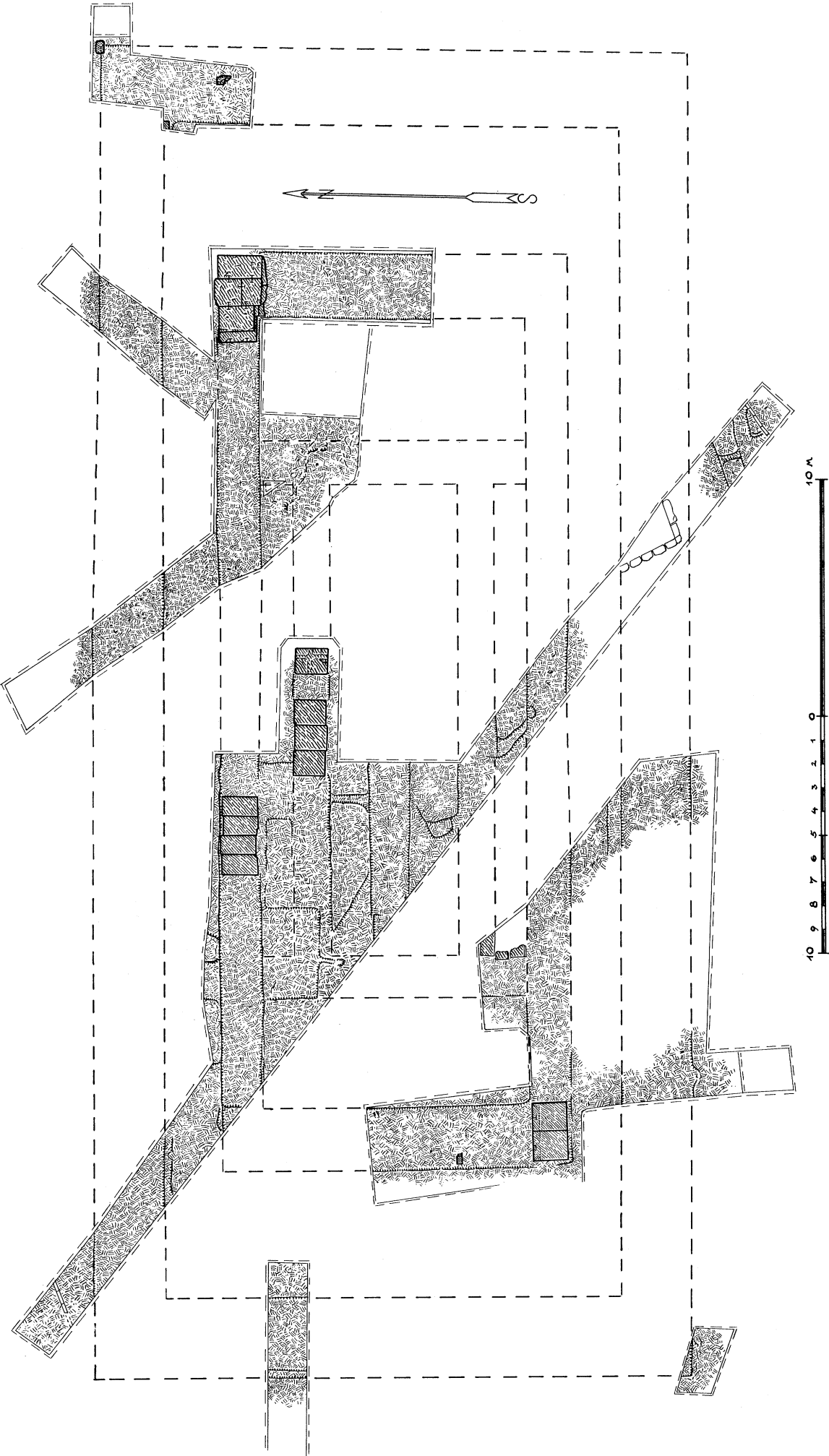
d. Gold Earring



e. Fragments of Bronze Bowls

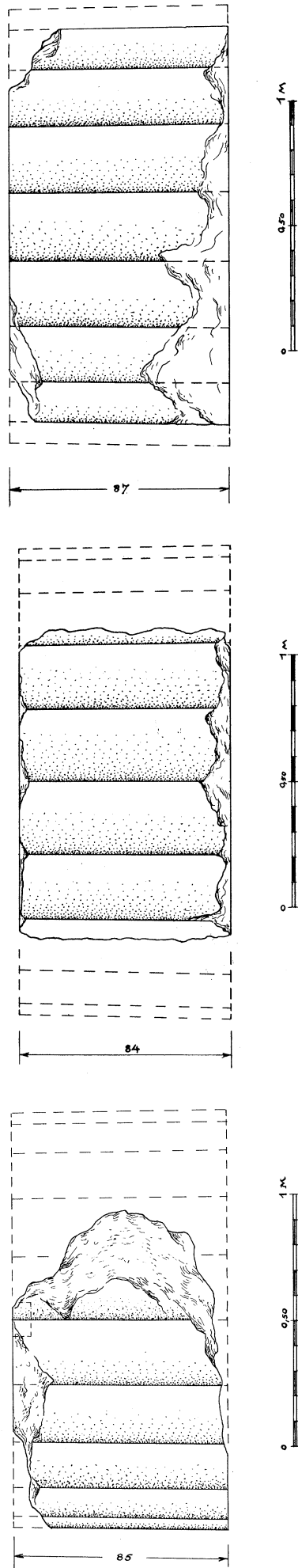
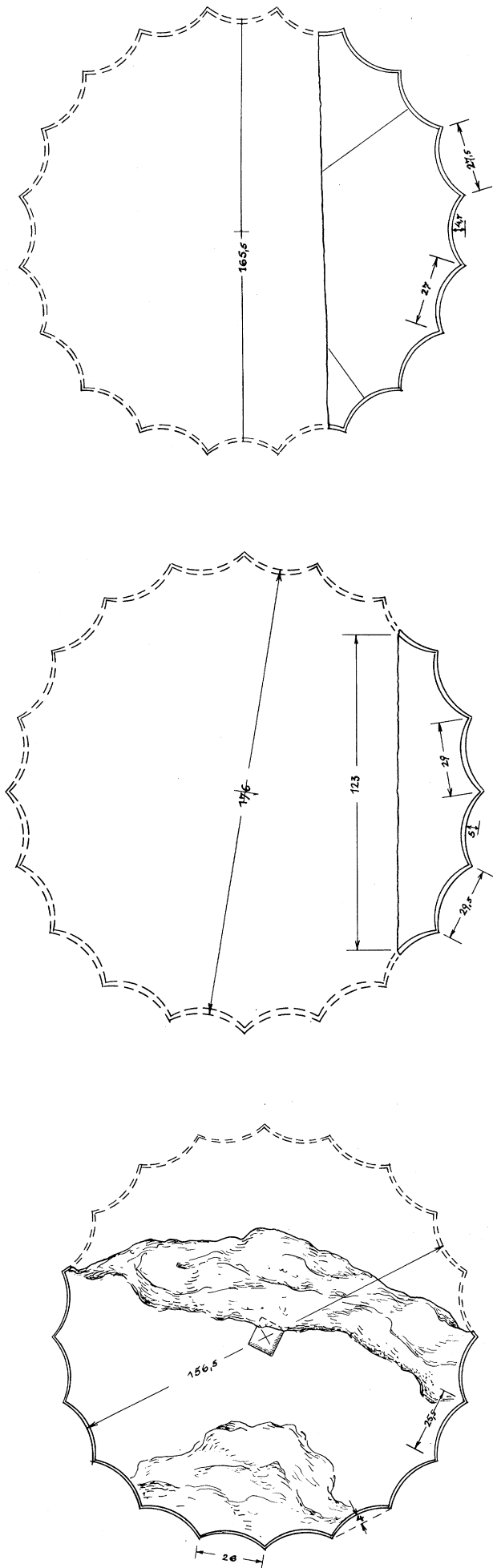


f. Fragment of Stone Halter



Plan of the Temple of Poseidon

OSCAR BRONEER: ISTHIA EXCAVATIONS, 1952



a. Column Drum found on Temple Site

b. and c. Two Column Drums of Poseidon Temple, Re-used in Justinian Fortress