

LINTEL WITH THE PAINTED LIONESS

(PLATES A AND 39-48)

I. DISCOVERY OF THE LINTEL

FIVE fragments of Pentelic marble of what appeared to be some kind of lintel were found in February and March of 1938 by the late Arthur W. Parsons while excavating a part of the original fill of the "Valerian Wall" to the southeast of the ancient Agora of Athens.¹ They were in the stretch of wall approximately half way between the Stoa of Attalos and the Propylaea of the Acropolis.² The discovery of the fragments was reported by Professor T. Leslie Shear³ who dated them to the latter part of the fifth century B. C. on the evidence of both the style of the painting and the workmanship of the block.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE FRAGMENTS OF THE LINTEL

Four of the fragments have traces of a painted band of palmettes, a fact which is not particularly important. But what is noteworthy is that the largest fragment has, in addition to the palmette ornament, the rear half of a lioness painted on a plane parallel to that of the palmette (Pls. A; ⁴ 39, a; 41, a).

The fragments show little sign of having been exposed to the weather, an indication either that they were set up in a protected position or that they were not used for a great length of time.

The all-over height of the largest fragment, shown in Plate 41, a, is 0.495 m. This is almost exactly 1½ Attic feet (0.328 m. + 0.164 m. = 0.492 m.).

When we compare the five fragments with one another, we find that they can be separated into the two following varieties:

- 1) Those fragments which have a finished horizontal surface immediately beneath the palmette band (cf. Pl. 41, a).
- 2) Those fragments which have a finished horizontal surface at a distance of 0.052 m. below the palmette band (cf. Pl. 41, b).

¹ The fragments are in the temporary museum of the Agora, Inv. A 818a, A 818b, A 818c, A 818d, and A 812. The Valerian Wall was erected in the latter part of the third century after Christ (cf. *Hesperia*, VII, 1938, p. 332).

² On the plan in *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, p. 386, this part of the wall lies near the small circular building in the Eleusinion.

³ *Hesperia*, VIII, 1939, p. 221, fig. 17.

⁴ The color plate is the generous gift of the author.—Ed.

The clamp cutting in the upper surface of the biggest fragment (Pls. 41, a; 43, b, A; 45, b) is unusual. The head of the clamp is 0.191 m. from the vertical (actually slightly inclined) joint which goes with the clamp. Now, fifth century Athenian clamps for wall blocks $1\frac{1}{2}$ Attic feet high are ordinarily 0.26 m. to 0.30 m. long, with the cutting for the clamp running 0.13 m. to 0.15 m. on either side of its vertical joint. If the clamp of Plate 41, a, were symmetrically placed about its vertical joint, the clamp would be 0.382 m. long; but this is too long for an ordinary clamp in a wall block $1\frac{1}{2}$ Attic feet high. Here, then, is an indication that the clamp had a shorter hold on the block next our lintel fragment than it had on the lintel fragment itself. Such a shorter hold on a block can only be explained if that block is not long enough for a full half clamp hold upon it (Pl. 45, b). The clamp of Plate 41, a, would hardly be left exposed. It would probably be hidden by something placed on top of it; and this is proved by the fact that the finish of the top of the block indicates that something did rest on the block.

Enough of the left side of the largest fragment is preserved to show that the side was finished for contact with some member. Further, we note that the side is inclined inward as it rises, indicating that the fragment was set up against an inclined member (Pl. 41, a). The fascia beneath the lioness tips outward as it rises (Pl. 41, a) with the same angle of inclination as that of the side of the fragment. The corresponding fascia of fragment 4 (Pl. 42, a) is perpendicular to the bottom of the fragment (Pl. 44, b). Both front and back friezes are perpendicular to the bottom of the fragment (Pl. 44, b).

The engraved lines on the fragments are of considerable interest. There are constructional setting lines: for example, that on the under side of the corbel, shown on Plate 41, a, at A and on Plate 46. There are engraved lines limiting colored fields (Pls. 41, a; 43, a; 46). The lioness shows in a number of places that she was outlined on the marble with a pointed tool (Pl. 39, a), and the same may be said of the palmettes (Pl. 39, b). Engraved lines also greatly help in the recovery of the pattern of an ornament; the engraved lines on the ceiling of the coffer (Pls. 39, b; 41, b, A) tell us that the ceiling had an ornamentation of painted lozenges. The lozenge decoration supplies important information, namely a possible width and length for the coffer (Pls. 42, b; 43, a; 47; 48, a and b), as we shall see.

Patterns of ornament are revealed not only by engraved lines. Due to the ravages of time, the marble beneath certain colors has suffered more than beneath other colors—a weathering process which often brings out the pattern distinctly.

The palmettes of the big fragment do not turn the corner in a ship-shape way, for there is not sufficient space in the corner (Pls. A; 41, a); the 0.03 m. in the corner (Pl. 41, a) should be 0.007 m. greater for a proper corner. This unworkmanlike corner probably indicates the use of a stencil for which the axial unit of the ornament was not an exact subdivision of the fascia to be decorated. To explain

the unsatisfactory corner, we may suggest that a correct stencil was prepared for one side of the coffer, and that this stencil, although the axial unit of its ornament was not an exact subdivision of the other side of the coffer, nevertheless was used for both sides of the coffer.

The palmette ornamentation on the fragment represented on Plate 41, b (cf. also Pl. 43, b, C), does not turn the corner with a palmette as in the fragment shown on Plate 41, a, but with the motive between the palmettes. The distance from the corner to the axis of the first palmette is 0.04 m. (Pl. 41, b), one centimeter more than the distance from the corner to the axis of the first motive between the palmette of Plate 41, a.⁵ The two different methods of turning the corner probably mean that there were two distinct coffers.

The series of lines to the rear of the lioness are hard to interpret. They suggest a bird of some kind, perhaps an eagle with its head and tail turned toward the lioness, the rest of its body turned in the other direction. There is an early bronze tripod relief at Olympia, with eagles in one zone and an eastern goddess with a pair of lions in another.⁶ The eagle represents Zeus, son of the Mother of the Gods, and the lions symbolise the power of that goddess; both Zeus and the lion are thus connected with the Mother of the Gods.⁷ The other motives on the tripod are stock ornaments for the period, but the eagles are less common. Was the tripod at Olympia dedicated to the Mother of the Gods and set up in the Metroon at Olympia?

Good examples of color applied to marble thus far discovered in Athens are mostly confined to architectural motives such as eggs and darts, beads and reels, honeysuckles, plain bands, frets, and the like.⁸ There are, however, three marble stelai and a marble disc in the National Museum at Athens decorated with paintings of various subjects; unfortunately all are in such bad condition that the paintings can be made out only with the greatest difficulty. Wiegand has published in color the rear quarters of a lioness, found on the Acropolis of Athens, which is very similar to what is left of our lioness, but his lioness is at a somewhat bigger scale than ours.⁹ His lioness seems to be painted on plaster on a poros background. The color of the background of his lioness (he suggests that she may have been a sphinx) is blue, like the background of our lioness. During World War II, Wiegand's fragment was removed from the Acropolis Museum in Athens and stored for safety; it is still (1954) in storage. So far as Athens is concerned, our lioness is the best example of a painting on marble. The colors have faded considerably since the discovery of the fragments sixteen years

⁵ The axial distance of the palmettes varies but little—0.0735 m. to 0.0745 m.

⁶ F. Winter, *Kunstgeschichte in Bildern*, p. 204, fig. 1.

⁷ Jane Harrison, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens*, pp. 44-53.

⁸ F. Penrose, *Principles of Athenian Architecture*, 1851, pls. XXIII, XXIV, XXVI; *Hesperia*, II, 1933, pp. 119 f., figs. 8, 9; VI, 1937, p. 42, fig. 26.

⁹ Th. Wiegand, *Poros-Architektur der Akropolis zu Athen*, pp. 230-231, pl. VI, 3.

ago. Fortunately Mr. Piet de Jong noted the colors soon after the fragments came out of the "Valerian Wall" (Pl. A).

The finest examples in Greece of paintings on marble are those on the stelai from Pagasai now in the museum at Volo.¹⁰ They date from Hellenistic times, later than our lioness. Examples of color applied to marble statues are strikingly evident in the case of the famous maidens of the Acropolis Museum in Athens. H. Schrader gives six good colored plates of the maidens, all earlier than 480 B.C.¹¹ There is an extraordinary example of gold applied to a marble head of Hellenistic date in the museum of the Agora of Athens.¹² A modern expert on gilding asserts that the gold of this head was put on with a brush.

In Professor Shear's account of the discovery of our fragments, he wrote that the color of the lioness was yellow and that its background was bright blue. To Professor Shear's color note may now be added that:

- 1) The horizontal bands next the blue background of the lioness were bright vermilion; the bands next these red bands were green.
- 2) The plain band heading for the corbel was red.
- 3) The background of the palmette ornamentation was blue, though not so well preserved as shown in Plate A.
- 4) The palmette ornament was probably gold.
- 5) The horizontal bands next the palmette ornamentation were also probably gold; the horizontal bands outside these probable gold bands were red.
- 6) The band around the background of the lozenge-shaped decoration of the soffit of the coffer was blue (Pls. 39, b; 41, b; 42, a and b; 43, a).

A fairly shrewd guess can be made as to how the lioness and the palmette decoration were painted. To aid the painter in the application of his colors, the outlines of the lioness were, as has been said, engraved on the marble with a pointed metal tool; in doing this perhaps a stencil was used. The animal does not seem to be modeled (in a painting sense), but the use of three tones in the treatment of the end of the tail is observable (Pl. A).

About methods of painting in the fifth century in Greece we have some information. For the encaustic process there seem to have been at least the two following methods:

¹⁰ A. Arvanitopoulos, *Γραμμαὶ Στῆλαι Δημητριάδος-Παγασῶν*.

¹¹ *Die Archaischen Marmorbildwerke der Akropolis*, pls. I-VI. Colored architectural terracottas, colored terracotta statuettes, and the colored plastered walls of public and private buildings are a few of the other examples which demonstrate the love of the ancient Greeks for color.

¹² Cf. *Hesperia*, XVII, 1948, p. 177, pl. 53, 1-2.

- 1) Colored waxes were applied to the marble with a heated spatula.
- 2) Molten wax was mixed with color to make a paint which could be applied with a brush.¹³

A hot iron was run over the painting to even out the irregularities caused by the wax. The hot iron also tended to drive the wax, and its paint, into the pores of the marble, thus not only giving the painting a good grip on the marble, but also preventing dampness from getting under the painting, which would cause the painting to peel. Then tallow was applied to the surface of the painting and carefully rubbed into the pores of the painting with a soft material; this helped to prevent the moisture and other injurious ingredients of the atmosphere from working their way into the painting.¹⁴

In addition to encaustic we find another Greek method of painting in the fifth century B. C. The colors were mixed with the white of egg and applied with a brush. This method did not require the application of a hot iron, for the surfaces of such paintings were smooth and the white of egg firmly glued the colors to the marble.

The colors ¹⁵ yellow, blue, green and red appear on our fragments. The yellow came both from a yellow earth and from a plant. The blue was prepared by fusing a mixture of sand, nitric acid and copper filings. The red was either oxide of lead (a by-product in the production of silver) or cinnabar, a sulphide of mercury.

To this list of bright colors should, in all probability, be added gold, as has been suggested above. That gold leaf was used in the fifth century B.C. is proved by the Erechtheion building inscription.¹⁶ A sizing must be painted on the marble before the gold leaf is applied—the sizing adheres to the marble, and the gold leaf in its turn adheres to the sizing. Another method of gilding was to powder gold filings (sometimes to pulverize a rich gold ore) and to make the powder into a paint by mixing the powder with the white of egg; this paint was put on with a brush, and the white of egg was the glue which made the gold paint stick to the marble.¹⁷

The lioness seems to be a straightforward piece of encaustic painting; that is, the color of the animal and the color of the background were painted directly on the marble; there is no over-painting of these two colors. But the accessories of the lioness were painted on top of the general color of the lioness, in the manner of vase paintings of the fifth century B. C.

¹³ Resin and gum arabic seem also to have been substituted for wax in both these methods, and sometimes oil was added to the concoction.

¹⁴ For encaustic painting, cf. *Encyclopedia Italiana*, XIII, pp. 942-3. Encaustic painting is not used today on account of its technical difficulties.

¹⁵ Vitruvius, who wrote in the first century B. C., records a list of colors and states how they were prepared (VII, 7-14, Morgan transl. pp. 214-220), but he does not describe how paintings on marble were made.

¹⁶ "Two leaves of gold were bought for gilding the two eyes of the column" (cf. Paton and Stevens, *Erechtheum*, pp. 396-397, lines 41-43).

¹⁷ Pliny, *N.H.*, XXXIII, has a good deal to say about the properties of gold.

In painting the palmette decoration a different method was used:

- 1) Blue coloring matter was mixed with white of egg (to make the color adhere to the marble) and then applied to the *whole* background with a brush.
- 2) A stencil was made of the ornament and by means of this stencil the ornament was engraved on the blue background with a metal point. The metal point sometimes cut through the coat of paint, thus, in a number of places, leaving its mark on the marble (Pl. 39, b).
- 3) The blue background beneath what was to be the actual ornament was removed by stippling with a small metal tool struck with a hammer (Pl. 39, b).
- 4) Either the white of egg or some kind of sizing was applied with a brush to the stippled areas, to fill the pores and to make a good surface upon which gold paint would stick well.
- 5) Powdered gold mixed with white of egg was then applied with a brush to the stippled areas. Two coats of gold paint were required for a first class job. Gold is the most difficult of colors to be applied to marble. It requires a much longer time (six to twelve months) than ordinary colors before it is sufficiently fixed to resist the rays of the sun, the rain, and the small quantities of various acids which are present in the atmosphere especially of cities.

The above method of painting an intricate repeating ornament (such as our palmette) on a colored background saves much time, and an even color is assured for the background. The writer successfully made a colored copy on marble of a section of the palmette ornament. The copy and its stencil are in the temporary museum of the Agora. The colors are as bright today as they were when made five years ago.

A stippled surface does not always mean that the surface where this occurs was covered with gold. Take the case of the coffers of the Propylaea of the Acropolis of Athens. Penrose publishes two of these with backgrounds of blue:¹⁸ in both cases the backgrounds are clearly stippled, while the ornaments are now whitish in color and very smooth. There seems to be no reason to doubt Penrose's accuracy in the matter of these Propylaea backgrounds; but in his text he says that he is not certain about the places where gold is indicated in his plates.¹⁹ The many fragments of coffers of the Temple of Ares in the Agora of Athens,²⁰ which are stored in the temporary museum of the Agora, have well preserved backgrounds of blue, and yet these backgrounds are *not* stippled. The above goes to show that, as we would expect, there were different methods of applying colors to marble in the fifth century B.C. in Athens.

The workmanship and technical details of our fragments point to a date a little

¹⁸ Penrose, *op. cit.*, pl. XXV, 4 and 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56, last line.

²⁰ Cf. *Hesperia*, IX, 1940, p. 41.

after the middle of the fifth century B.C. The nearest parallel to the palmette ornament seems to be the closely similar pattern painted on the sima of the Parthenon.²¹ But we have no parallel for a coffer of this date decorated with painted lozenges. There is only one other example found in the Athenian Agora of an all-over lozenge decoration painted on marble of about the same date as that of our lioness. This is the case of an Ionic capital where the space between the palmettes of the volutes is decorated with small painted lozenges.²² In the Temple of Bassae we have an approximately contemporary decoration of lozenge-shaped marble coffers between marble ceiling beams.²³

Nor have we any parallel of about the middle of the fifth century B.C. for a painted marble architrave.

III. PLACING THE FRAGMENTS ABOUT A COFFER

Let us try to place our fragments about a coffer.

Even if the fragments do not come from the same coffer, a possibility suggested by the two different ways in which the palmette ornament turned the corner, in all likelihood the fragments come from similar coffers; that is, it will suffice to look for a coffer which will explain the two varieties of coffer blocks illustrated in Plate 41, a and b.

The lozenge-shaped decoration of the soffit of the coffer tells us that the coffer was rectangular, with the long diagonal of the lozenges parallel to the frieze of the lioness (Pls. 39, b; 42, a, fragment 5; 42, b). If the coffer had been square, there would not have been small lozenges, but small squares, in the coffer. On fragment 5 of Plate 42, a, the band defining the lozenges starts from the corner of the fragment (Pl. 42, b). Undoubtedly all four corners were alike (Pl. 43, a). We would then have a certain number of half lozenges along the long sides of the coffer, and a certain number of half lozenges along the short sides of the coffer, though not necessarily the same number as those along the long sides. Just how many half lozenges should be placed along both the long and short sides of the coffer is the problem to be solved in trying to determine the size of the coffer.

The lozenge decoration may also be considered in a second way. Let us suppose that we start with a rectangular coffer, which is not excessively long in proportion to its width. A natural way for the decorator to determine his lozenges would be to draw the diagonals of the coffer (cf. Pl. 48). The angle between the diagonals must, however, be such as to make well shaped lozenges, not greatly elongated lozenges. He could then put the same number of half lozenges on all four sides of the coffer; but

²¹ Michaelis, *Der Parthenon*, pl. VII, 9.

²² Inv. A 1930.

²³ Cockerell, *Temple of Bassae*, pl. IX.

he would have to select a number of half lozenges which would make the size of the lozenges in proper scale with the structure of which the fragments formed part. It is obvious from the above that the width and length of the coffer are so uncertain that, without more data, the five fragments can be arranged about a coffer only in a tentative way (Pl. 42, a).

IV. POSSIBLE ORIGINAL DISPOSITION OF THE FRAGMENTS

From what sort of construction did our fragments come? In attempting to answer this question we should keep in mind the fundamental conditions which the fragments must fulfil, to wit:

- a) A decorated coffer is placed above the level of a man's eye. There is no reason for putting such a coffer at a level below the eye of a man, where it would not be seen.
- b) The lioness, a fairly elaborate and delicate painting, must be placed where it can easily be seen, that is, on the outside of the structure of which it formed part, and not too high above a man's eye. On the other hand, the palmette, an architectural decoration of less importance than the lioness painting, may be placed on the vertical sides of a coffer (Pls. 41, a and b; 42, a), for the coffer would surely be placed in a less conspicuous position than the frieze of the lioness.
- c) If the coffer is rectangular (as indicated by the lozenges on the soffit of 5, Pl. 42, a), then the long dimension of the coffer is parallel to the frieze of the lioness.
- d) It follows that the two different types of fragments (Pls. 41, a and b; 42, a; 44, b) must be placed on opposite sides of the coffer, for their palmette bands are both parallel to the long axes of the lozenges and therefore parallel to each other—fragment 5 (Pl. 42, a) could not have come from the sides of the coffer.
- e) As the front and back of the coffer were decorated with palmettes, the sides of the coffer would also be decorated with palmettes. This means that all four sides of the coffer were intended to be seen.
- f) Of special importance is the fact that the front and rear friezes of the fragments given on Plate 41, a and b, were vertical, while the side of the fragment on Plate 41, a, was inclined.
- g) The good preservation of the fragments indicates either that they occupied a protected position in their building or that they were used for only a short time.

- h) Are we to consider the lioness as a purely decorative piece of painting, or are we to attach some symbolism to her use? Surely the latter alternative is to be preferred to the former.

Keeping the above conditions in mind, let us consider from what sort of structure the fragments might, or might not, have come.

- 1) From the wall of a building.

If fragment 1 (Pl. 41, a) came from a wall, the height of the fragment, 0.495 m., would indicate that the building to which the wall belonged was of moderate size; for example, the ordinary wall blocks of the Erechtheion average 0.49 m. in height. As fragment 1 had a decorated coffer, the fragment would have to span an opening in the wall—it would have to be a lintel of some kind. But, as the height of the lintel was that of an ordinary wall block—main door lintels are two courses high on account of the width of such doors—the lintel could not have spanned a wide opening; the height of the lintel is correct for a small door not more than 0.85 m. wide or for a window about as wide as those of the east portico of the Erechtheion, where the height of the lintel was 0.485 m. (only 1 cm. less than the height of the lioness lintel), where the length of the lintel was 1.54 m., and where the clear opening of the windows was *ca.* 0.655 m.²⁴

In the case of a small door, the decoration of our lintel would be too near the pavement because the delicate painted portions could be injured. The scale of the lioness and of the palmette would, however, go well with a window the lintel of which was not less than 4.50 m. to 5.00 m. above the pavement, well out of reach.

But how would our lintel be supported? The question is answered by looking at the under side of the lintel (Pl. 41, a). At A (Pl. 41, a) is a corbel which is decidedly peculiar for the soffit of a window lintel. The bottom of the corbel has an engraved line which lies in the plane of the face of the palmette ornament painted on the inside of the fragment; and there is a somewhat rough finish inward from the engraved line (at A, Pl. 41, a), showing that the lintel was supported by a projection from the jamb of the course below. This projection would undoubtedly be continued to the base of the opening. Such an arrangement gives us a splayed opening. A splayed opening allows more light to pass through the opening than if there were no splay (Pl. 45, c; angle A is not as large as angle B). And we shall see later on that the head of our opening was also splayed (Pl. 44, b). As the demand for more light is decidedly greater for a window than for a small door starting from the floor, we may claim with a fair amount of certainty that our lintel came from a window.

²⁴ *Erechtheum*, fig. 27. The underside of the lintel and the inside of the jambs were cut away during a repair. Originally both lintel and jambs may have been splayed (cf. *Erechtheum*, p. 45, pl. XVIII, fig. 1), a feature we shall find that our fragments have.

Let us now attempt to establish the size of the coffer in the bottom of our lintel. As the window had no great width—let us assume about a 0.75 m. clear opening on account of the moderate height of the lintel—the coffer in turn could have had no great length as the length of the coffer was the same as the width of the window at the top of the latter (Pl. 43, a and b). On Plate 43, a, the length of the coffer, namely 0.762 m., may be fairly accurate; but, it will be observed, the width of the coffer depends upon the width of the wall. The window on Plate 43, a, is supposed to be in a wall as thick as the east cross wall of the Hephaisteion, which is 0.807 m. thick. The east windows of the Erechtheion are in a wall 0.639 m. thick; those of the Picture Gallery in the Propylaea on the Acropolis of Athens are in a wall 0.885 m. thick.²⁵ We propose the east cross wall of the Hephaisteion as the wall in which to imagine our lintel, because:

- a) The Hephaisteion must have resembled in size the building from which our lintel came, for both constructions had wall courses *ca.* 1½ Attic feet high; both constructions were of moderate size.
- b) On account of the excellent preservation of the Hephaisteion, we are sure of the width and height of the east cross wall and of the dimensions of the pronaos in front of that wall.
- c) The Hephaisteion and the construction from which the lintel came were both built in Athens at approximately the same time; the date of the Hephaisteion is 449-444 B. C., which is the approximate date of the lintel.

It should be understood that we do not claim that the lintel came from the Hephaisteion; but, to demonstrate certain points, the east cross wall of that temple is an appropriate wall in which to suppose that the lintel was originally located, provided there were no columns inside the temple; it is known that the temple was not originally planned to have interior columns.²⁶

In the wall of the Hephaisteion the coffer would be *ca.* 0.37 m. wide (Pls. 43, a; 44, b). In a narrower wall, the width of the coffer would be reduced to 0.285 m. (Pls. 43, a, A; 44, b, distance D-C).

Let us suppose, then, that the lintel comes from the east cross wall of the Hephaisteion, and that the coffer measured 0.762 m. x 0.37 m. (Pl. 43, a). Can our five fragments be placed around such a coffer? Although the fragments probably come from two distinct windows (as we may infer from the two different ways in which the palmette ornament turned the corner), yet we may imagine that the five fragments came from the same coffer provided they can be placed around the coffer without the fragments invalidating one another. Thus Plate 42, a, will illustrate how frag-

²⁵ *Erechtheum*, pl. XVII; R. Bohn, *Die Propylaeen der Akropolis zu Athen*, pl. IX.

²⁶ Cf. W. B. Dinsmoor, *Observations on the Hephaisteion*, pp. 65-73.

ments 1 and 5 can be placed in the corners of such a coffer, and how fragments 2, 3, and 4 can be approximately located in accordance with the difference of their vertical sections (Pl. 44, b).

Fragments 4 and 5 of Plate 42, a (cf. also Pls. 41, b; 44, b) have portions of a plain vertical surface and of a projecting fascia below that plain surface, which in a way correspond respectively to the surface on which the lioness is painted and to the fascia below the lioness. There are some differences, however, between fragment 1 and fragments 4 and 5 of Plate 42, a. The plain surface of fragment 5 (Pl. 41, b) is well enough preserved to enable us to assert that there are no indications of it having been painted; and the height of the fascia beneath this surface is unknown but what there is left of it, on fragment 4, is not inclined to the bed of the lintel, as is the fascia beneath the lioness (Pl. 44, b). We may, therefore, assign the fragments which received little if any special treatment, namely, fragments 4 and 5, to the inside of the wall, and the remaining fragments, namely, 1, 2, and 3, to the outside of the wall.

Why was the corbel necessary? The wall above the orthostates being composed of blocks of nearly uniform height, and the lintel also having approximately that uniform height, the corbel lifted the head of the window 0.052 m. above the bed of the wall course corresponding to the lintel, an arrangement which, just as in the case of the splayed jambs, allowed more light to pass through the window than if no corbel had been used (Pl. 44, b). If, in the case of a window lintel, more light is wanted, the lintel must be splayed on its outside, not on its inside. Here then, we have a second indication as to which side of the lintel was the outside and which the inside.

The splaying of both head and jambs of the window probably means that light was wanted, perhaps badly, for the interior of a building.

As the lioness was on the outside of the fragment 1 (Pl. 41, a) and the palmette on the inside of the fragment, the block must have occupied a position in which both lioness and palmette were seen. A lintel in a wall fulfils this condition—the lioness could be seen by those who were outside the building, and the palmette by those who were inside the building. In fact, all four sides of a coffer beneath a window lintel can be seen.

Plate 44, b, shows how the spacing of the palmettes may have been arranged on the short sides of our trial coffer; Plate 43, b, B, indicates the way the palmettes may have been spaced on the long sides of the same coffer.

Does a coffer 0.762 m. in length (Pl. 43, a and b) make the frieze of the lintel long enough so that the painter had room for a good composition? If the frieze is too short, the frieze and, along with it, the coffer must be made longer. Plate 44, a, shows that a coffer 0.762 m. long would give the painter a frieze sufficiently long for a good composition, perhaps a lioness bringing down a bull.²⁷ (Compare Plate 43, b,

²⁷ Cf. R. Heberdey, *Altattische Porosskulptur*, pp. 77 ff., fig. 54.

for the fact that the length of the coffer equaled the width of the window at the top of the latter).

On Plate 41, b, at B in plan and B' in section (cf. also Pl. 42, a, fragment 5) is an engraved line, and the prolongation of the line appears on the soffit of fragment 4. Did it define a field of color? Was it a setting line for a grille or for wooden shutters? Was it a constructional line to guide the mason in cutting the block? Apparently it did not indicate the vertical face of a block beneath, for on both sides of the line the soffit is dressed alike, and fairly well dressed at that. But the well dressed portions are too small to make the definite statement that the scratch does not indicate a vertical face beneath. The significance of the engraved line is not clear.

The two different methods in which the palmette ornament turned the corner in the coffer may mean, as we have mentioned above, that there were two distinct coffers; hence two distinct wall openings. Now, a good-sized door with a window on either side of it is not an unusual Athenian motive of the fifth century B. C.; witness the east portico of the Erechtheion and the Picture Gallery of the Propylaea of the Acropolis of Athens (cf. note 25). Is it possible that our lintel formed part of such an architectural composition? We shall see that there are indications that this may have been so.

Let us carry one step further the hypothesis of placing the lintel in the east cross wall of the Hephaisteion—let us see if a central door with a window on either side of it can be arranged in the wall. The first seven courses above the orthostate of that temple measure quite consistently 0.511 m. in height. The eighth course measures 0.494 m. which is within a millimeter of the height of the lioness lintel (Pl. 45, a). Course 9 measures 0.487 m. (measured in the opisthodomos because the vaulting of the mediaeval church prevented its measurement in the pronaos and the cella); courses 10 and 11 measure 0.42 m.; courses 12 and 13 measure 0.404 m.²⁸ Let us place the lintel of our window in line with course 8 where there is only 0.008 m. difference in height between the wall course and the lintel. Plate 45, a, shows that a central door with a window on either side of it is a possible treatment for the east cross wall the length of which was 6.253 m.²⁹ The clamp cutting in the upper surface of our biggest fragment (Pl. 41, a) supports the theory of a central door and two windows, for the wall block between our window lintel and the door jamb must be a short block (Pl. 45, a) and a short block forces a longer clamp cutting in the window lintel than in the short block, provided an ordinary clamp is used (Pl. 45, b).

Plate 46 gives the reader an idea, in isometric, of the way the front and bottom of the window lintel might look.

There is an important parallel between our supposed windows in the Hephaisteion

²⁸ Dinsmoor, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-57 for the east cross wall and footnote 157 for the height of its courses.

²⁹ Dinsmoor, *op. cit.*, fig. 26.

and the windows in the east wall of the Erechtheion. The vertical friezes of the lioness lintel indicate that the lintel came from a wall with vertical faces (which is true of the east cross wall of the Hephaisteion); and the jambs of the lioness lintel were inclined. These two features, vertical wall and inclined jambs, occur in connection with the Erechtheion windows.

We have discussed at some length the possibility that our fragments originally came from a window in a wall, because there is *only one* objection to such a theory, namely, that there is no precedent in Greek architecture of the fifth century B. C. for a window lintel decorated with painted motives. But the lintels of the windows of the east portico of the Erechtheion were highly ornate, for they were decorated with carved moldings and the moldings were very probably painted.³⁰ The contrast between a plain wall and a decorated colored lintel existed in each case. If the interior walls of a building were covered with paintings and the building itself were dedicated to some deity, it seems within the realm of possibility that the outside of the lintels of the windows lighting that building might be decorated with paintings symbolic of the deity in honor of whom the building was erected. A progressive painter would not hesitate to do such a thing, precedent or no precedent. There was no lack of pioneer painters in Athens in the fifth century B. C.³¹

2) But the wall of a building may not be the only place where our fragments could have been used. Professor Homer A. Thompson³² has made the following interesting suggestion.

We have seen that the lioness is appropriate to the Mother of the Gods; we know that her statue is many times represented in Greek art as a seated figure, generally carrying a phiale in one hand and a cymbal in the other and accompanied by lions.³³ Jane Harrison publishes a terracotta plaque of this seated goddess, with a lion and bull frieze below the goddess.³⁴ The same writer refers to the bull-devouring lions in the *Philoktetes* (*op. cit.*, p. 50). Further, literary evidence decidedly favors Pheidias as the sculptor of the most famous statue of the Mother of the Gods, a statue which he made for the Metroon in the Agora of ancient Athens. A number of statuettes representing this goddess have been found in the excavations of the Agora. They strongly resemble each other and were almost certainly inspired by Pheidias' famous statue. In these statuettes, lions, symbolic of force and domination, accompany the goddess (Pl. 40, a).³⁵ Langlotz³⁶ regards as a copy of Pheidias' work

³⁰ *Erechtheum*, pl. XVII, pl. XVIII, fig. 1.

³¹ Much later, at Pompeii there are architraves which are covered with stucco and then decorated with painted scenes.

³² The writer wishes to thank Prof. Thompson for the valuable help he gave as the present article progressed.

³³ Jane Harrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-53.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48, fig. 11.

³⁵ Inv. S 731.

³⁶ *Phidias-probleme*, p. 66.

in the Agora the statue found a few years ago at Livadhia and now in the museum at Chaeronea (Pl. 40, c) ; he would date the original earlier than the pedimental groups of the Parthenon. It is tempting to think that the Mother of the Gods in the Agora was a commission which led up to Pheidias' appointment to the work on the Parthenon. Hence a date around 450 B.C. might well be suitable for his statue of the Mother of the Gods.

The fact that several small marble bas-reliefs have been found in the Agora representing the Mother of the Gods as seated in a naiskos (Pl. 40, b)³⁷ leads Professor Thompson to believe that our fragments may have come from a construction which had something to do with Pheidias' statue, such as a free-standing naiskos sheltering the goddess. Plate 47, 1, attempts to show what the monument may have looked like, with its lintel decorated with painted lionesses and its soffit embellished with painted lozenges. It will be seen that the corbel of the soffit permits more light to fall upon the statue than if the corbel had not been used.

There is an objection to the naiskos shown on Plate 47, 1; the palmette ornament on the back of the lioness fragment cannot be seen. But this difficulty could be overcome by opening the sides of the naiskos as shown on Plate 47, 2, or by opening the back of the naiskos as shown on Plate 47, 3.

If we would, in still another way, overcome the objection to a naiskos with solid sides and back, we may do so by changing the naiskos into a baldacchino which, with its four free-standing supports, is open on all sides. Plate 48, a, gives an idea of what a baldacchino might look like.

For both a naiskos and a baldacchino we submit the two following rather compromising considerations:

- a) The corbels seem unnecessary. To have no corbels and to continue the under side of the fascia beneath the lioness as a horizontal joint for the monument as a whole would have been the natural thing to do (Pls. 47, 48).
- b) The sides of the monument were probably inclined (because the block in contact with block Pl. 41, a, was inclined), while the fronts and backs of the monument were vertical (because the frieze of the lioness and the frieze of the rear blocks of the coffer were vertical; see Pl. 44, b). We would expect to find either all four sides of the monument inclined or all four sides vertical.

3) The corbel on the underside of the largest fragment (Pl. 41, a) suggests wooden construction. This possibility, added to the fact that the lioness is appropriate to the Mother of the Gods, led Professor Rhys Carpenter, a few years ago, to believe that our fragments might have come from a marble throne upon which the goddess was seated. He was justified in making this suggestion, for Greek sculpture records

³⁷ Inv. S 9222.

many thrones inspired from wooden chairs; for example, there is a bas-relief found in the Peiraeus³⁸ which actually shows the Mother of the Gods seated on such a throne (Pl. 40, d). Professor Carpenter would place our fragments about a coffer in the under side of the throne (Pl. 48, b). To make the coffer visible the coffer needs to be raised above the level of a man's eye; this means a substantial pedestal, but such a pedestal is quite possible (Pl. 48, b).

The distance from the top of the base to the top of the head of the statue shown on Plate 48, b, can be calculated approximately at 3.70 m. by using the thickness of the fragment of Plate 41, a, as a measure (0.495 m.). It will be seen that we are dealing with a colossal statue; so big, indeed, that, like the Lion of Amphipolis,³⁹ our statue would probably be constructed in courses; this, too, is possible (Pl. 48, b).

There are some factors, however, which seem to the writer to exclude the possibility that our fragments came from a throne:

- a) If our coffer blocks were used in the throne of a colossal statue, there probably was neither a naiskos nor a baldacchino over the statue; the goddess was an isolated statue (Pl. 48, b). Under such conditions, why were the sides of the coffer block together with the two carved lions leaning against that coffer block so markedly inclined (Pl. 48, b)?
- b) As the statue and its pedestal can be calculated at *ca.* 5.00 m. in total height (Pl. 48, b), the monument, on account of its large size, would require carefully prepared foundations; no suitable foundations in or near the Metroon, in connection with which the statue was made, have been found, although the building and its neighborhood have been completely excavated.
- c) A throne is broader than it is deep (Pl. 48, b). Therefore the fragment of Plate 41, a, and the fragment of Plate 41, b, must have come from the front and back of this throne (as indicated by the direction of the lozenges). As the drapery around the calves of the statue hid most of the front of the throne between the two carved lions (Pls. 40, c and d; 48, a and b), we are obliged to put the painted lioness at the back of the throne and the plain fragment, Plate 41, b, at the front of the throne. The corbels then go at the rear of the statue, where their employment cannot be satisfactorily explained.

The writer believes that there is only a slight possibility of our fragments being connected with a throne.

When we reconsider the three proposals as to how the fragments were originally used—in the wall of a building, in a naiskos or a baldacchino, in a throne—we see

³⁸ Berlin Museum No. 691. Jane Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 46, fig. 10.

³⁹ Broneer, *The Lion Monument at Amphipolis*, pp. 35-41.

that the fewest objections are encountered when the fragments are supposed to come from the lintel of a window in the wall of a building.

V. LOCATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION FROM WHICH THE FRAGMENTS CAME

We have already mentioned the Eleusinion as being fairly close to the place where the fragments were found (the distance is *ca.* 45 m.). The Eleusinion is not yet completely excavated, but it is known that there were buildings in the precinct suitable in date and type for our lioness lintel.⁴⁰ The foundations of one of the buildings thus far excavated show that the building apparently consisted of a cella with a colonnade on the east side of it and another colonnade on the south side of it. The interior dimensions of the cella must have been *ca.* 6.60 m. x 13.60 m. As the east cross wall of the Hephaisteion was 6.253 m. long and was found long enough for a central door with a window (spanned by our lioness lintel) on either side of it (Pl. 45, a), our fragments could have come from the colonnaded building (or from some other building not yet excavated on the north slope of the Acropolis).

The place where the fragments were found does not by any means rule out a derivation from the Metroon on the west side of the Agora, for an architrave block from that building was found in the "Valerian Wall" just south of the Stoa of Attalos. Consider how the Beulé Gate was built of blocks from the Monument of Nikias! To the Mother of the Gods, the parent and protector of all living things, were intrusted the state documents in the Metroon. We have seen that the statue which Pheidias made of her had something to do with the Metroon, and that the lioness of our lintel may well have been an attribute of the goddess. In view of the strong presumption that our fragments came from a window, is it not possible that the lioness lintel came from a window in a wall of the Old Bouleuterion, which housed the state records and which was built *ca.* 500 B. C. but undoubtedly underwent numerous alterations before it was succeeded by the Hellenistic Metroon? The introduction of such a window might well have been made at the time the statue of Pheidias was provided.

Although it is not known exactly how the fragments of the lioness lintel were used or from what construction they came, yet, as the investigations in the Agora are still in progress, a definite solution may some day be obtained.

It is unsatisfactory to publish fragments for which many important details are so tantalizingly lacking as in the case of the lioness lintel. We trust, however, that, on account of the exceptional importance of the fragments, the reader will be indulgent.

GORHAM P. STEVENS

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS

⁴⁰ J. Frazer, *Pausanias*, I, 14, 3; II, pp. 119 ff.; E. Vanderpool, *Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, pp. 134-6.

PLATE A

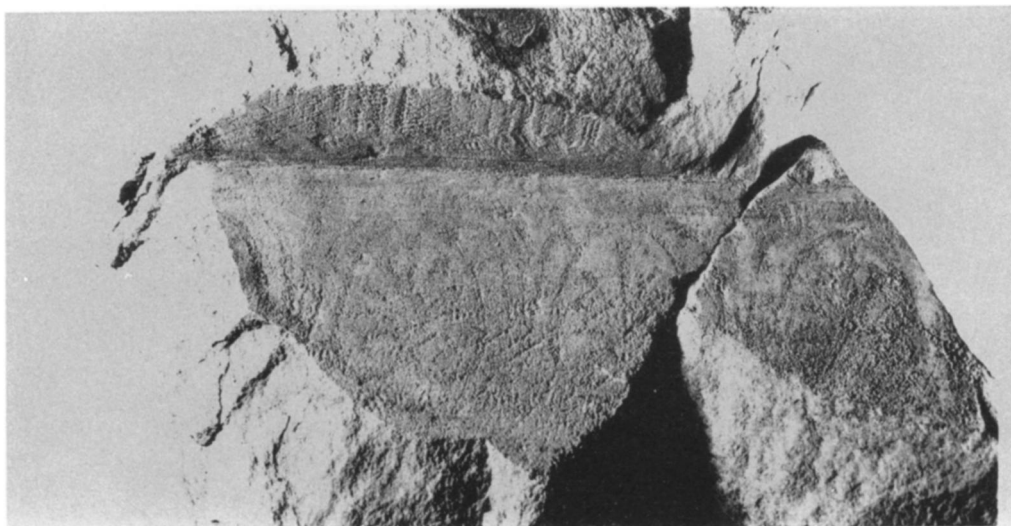


Above, Lioness recorded by Piet de Jong at Time of Discovery;
Below, Palmette restored by Piet de Jong.

GORHAM P. STEVENS: LINTEL WITH THE PAINTED LIONESS



a. Rear Quarters of the Lioness



b. Fragment No. 5 showing traces of the Palmette, also the Engraved Lines of the Soffit of the Coffin

GORHAM P. STEVENS: LINTEL WITH THE PAINTED LIONESS



a. Marble Statuette of Mother of the Gods,
from the Athenian Agora



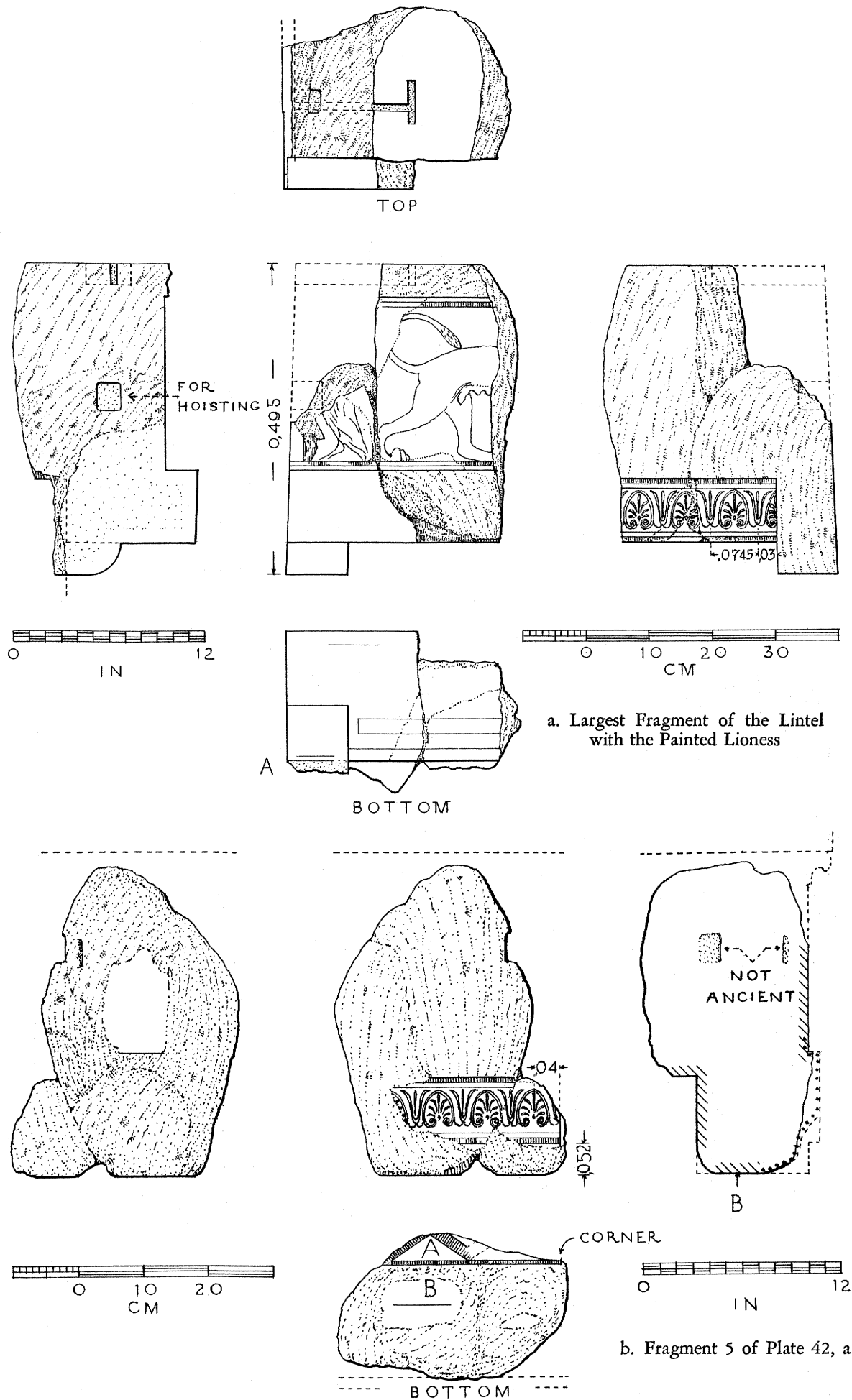
b. Marble Relief of Mother of the Gods Seated
in a Naiskos, from the Athenian Agora

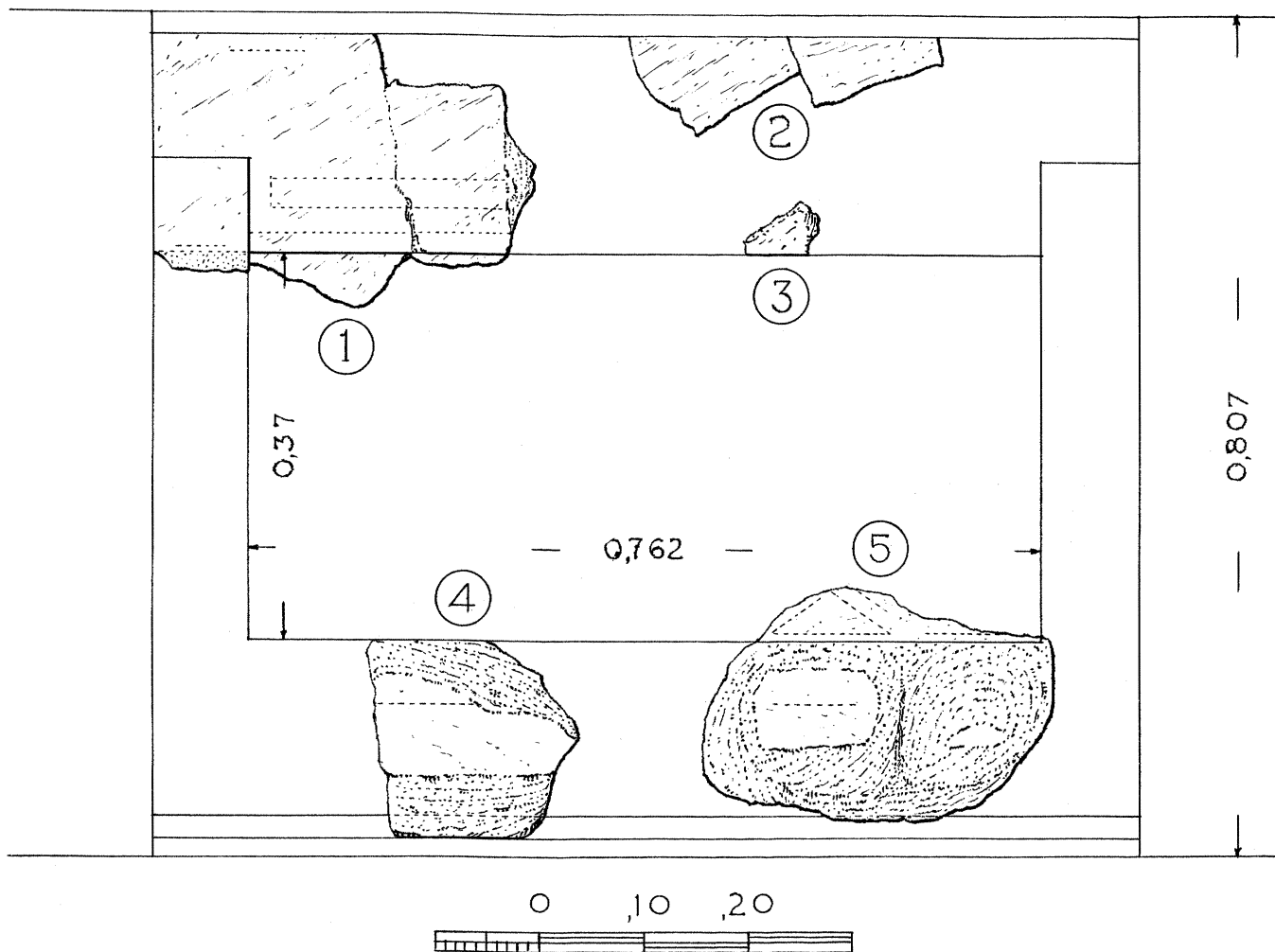


c. Marble Statue of Mother of the Gods,
from Livadhia

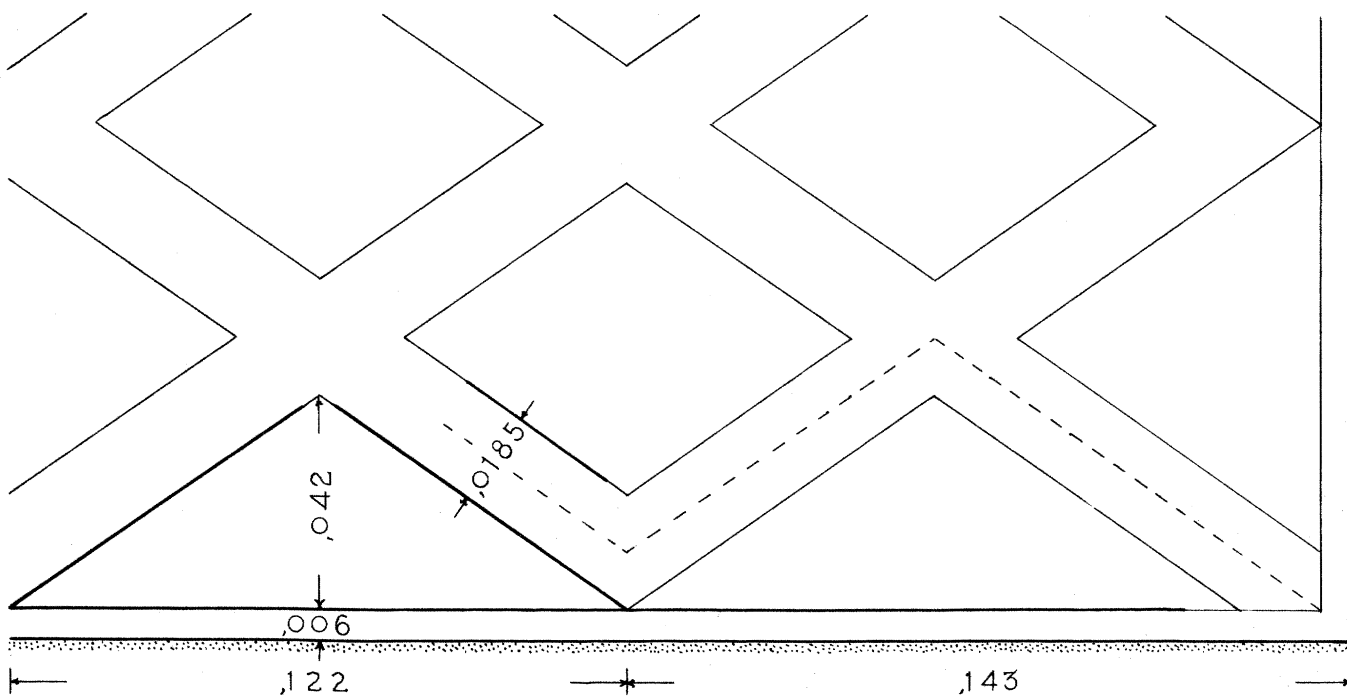


d. Relief of Mother of the Gods, from Peiraeus

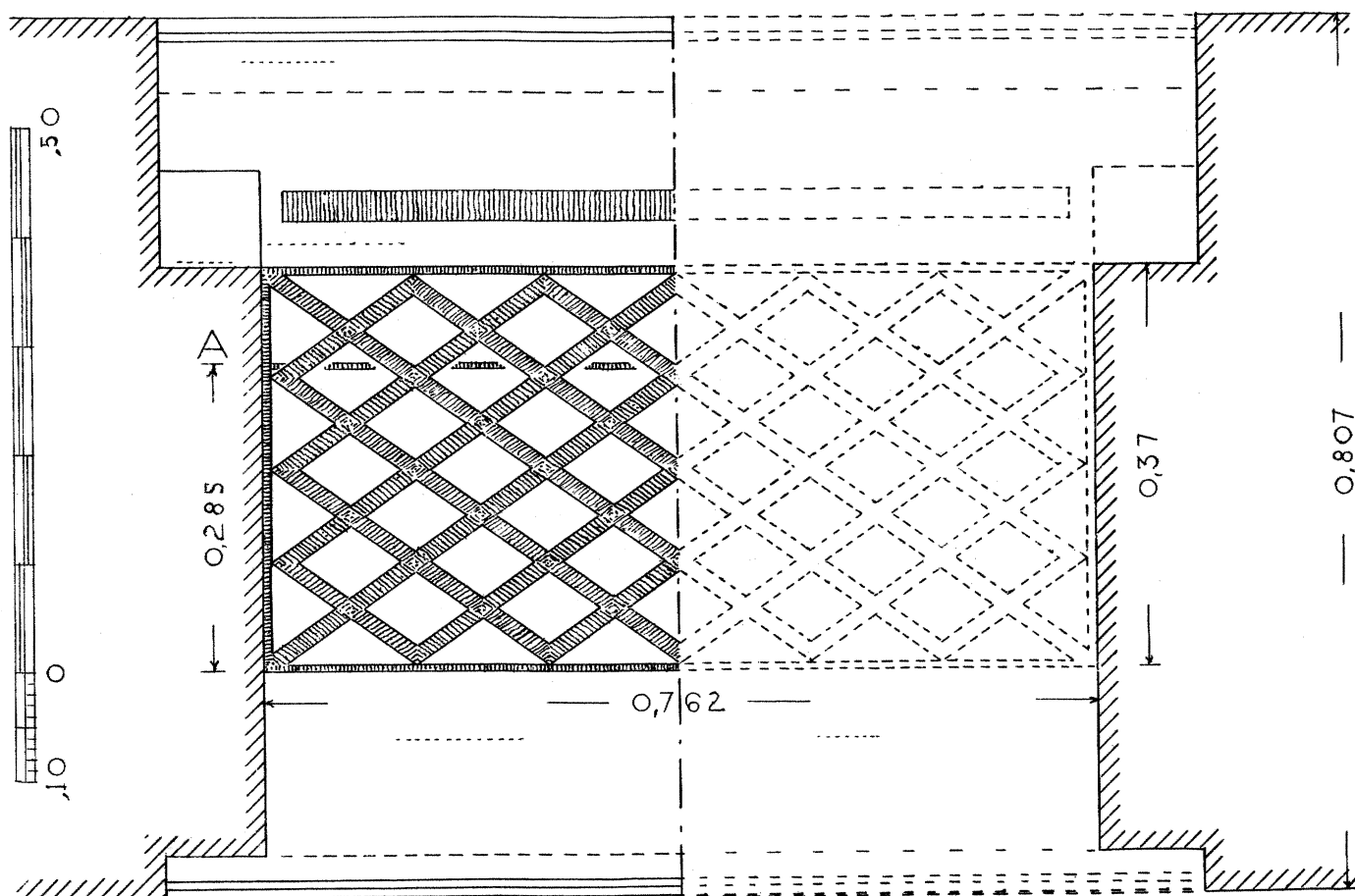




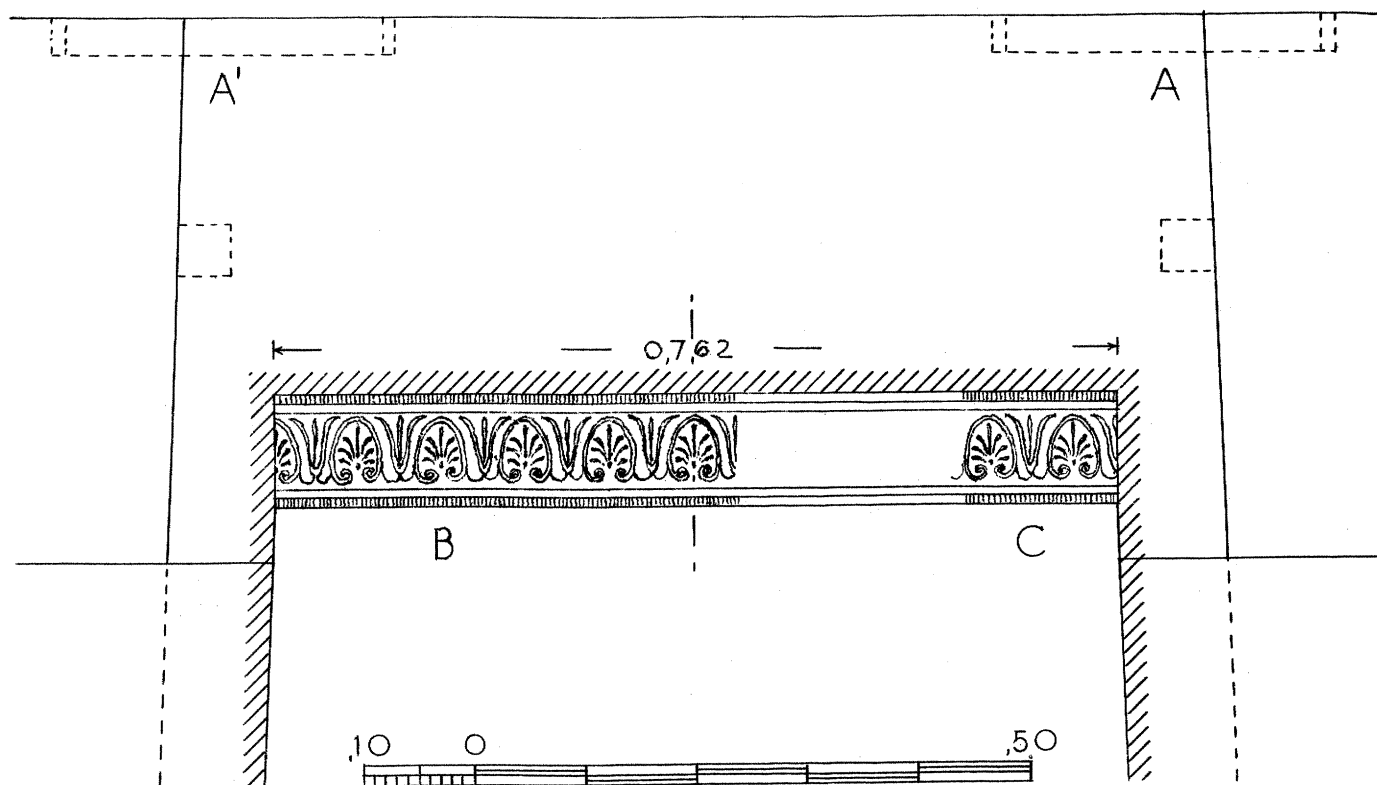
a. Proposed Arrangement of the Five Lintel Fragments about a Coffe



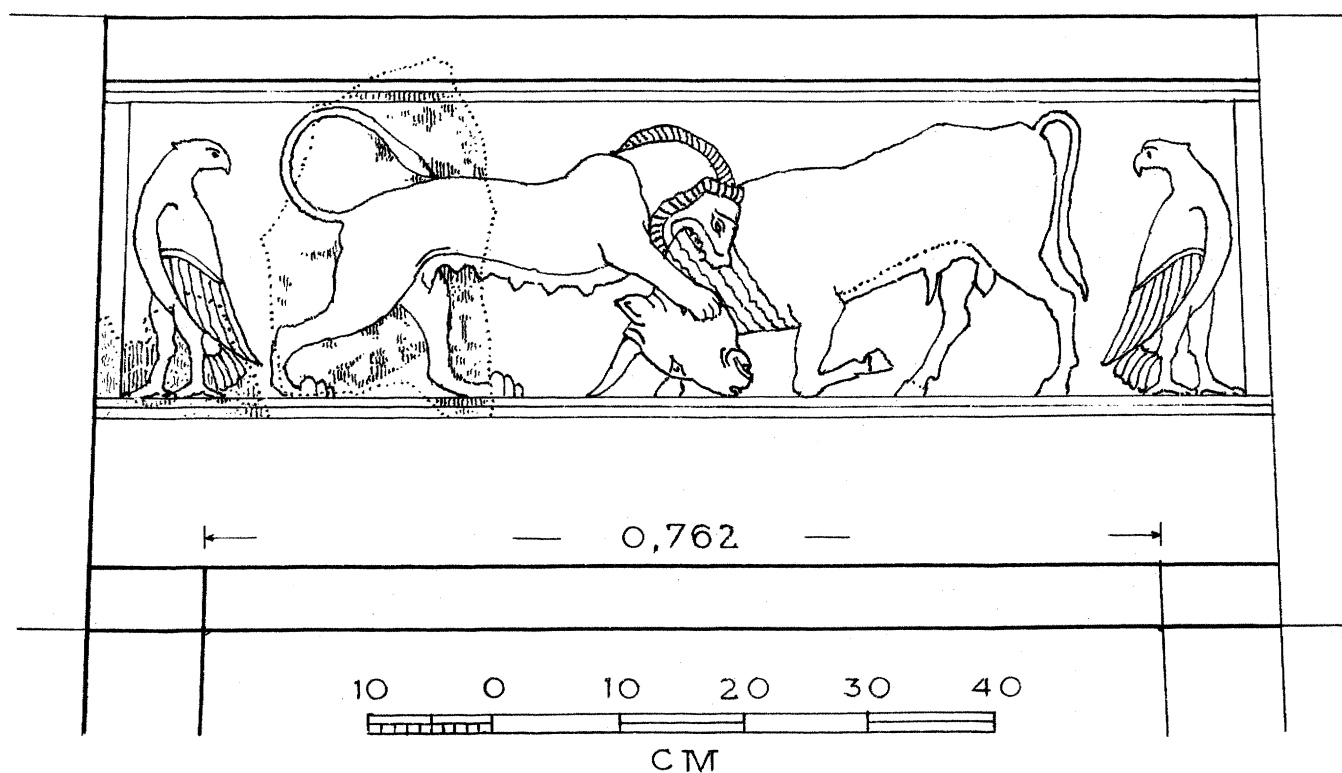
b. Detail of Engraved Lines for Lozenges of the Soffit of the Coffe



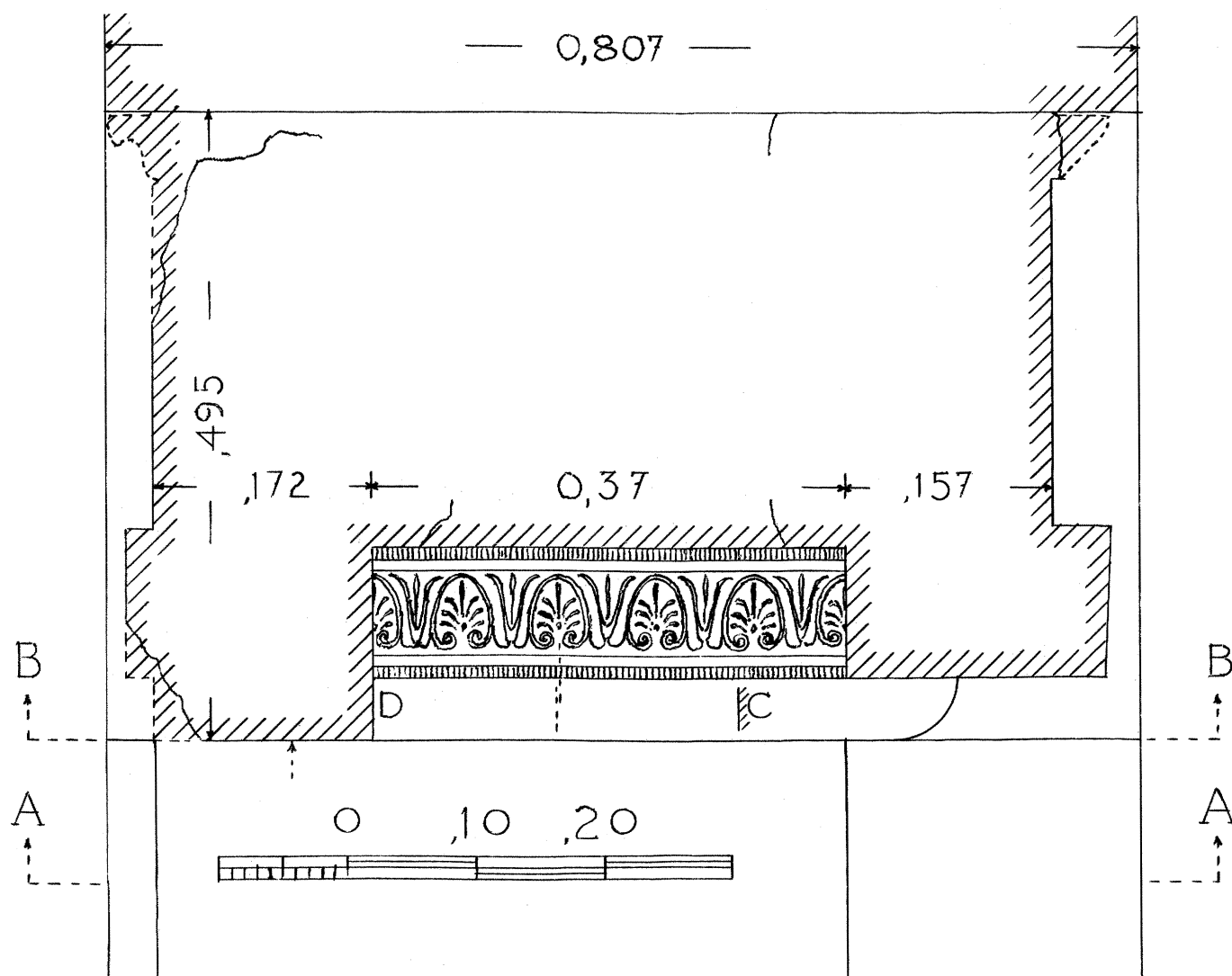
a. Painted Decoration of the Ceiling of the Coffin; a Restoration



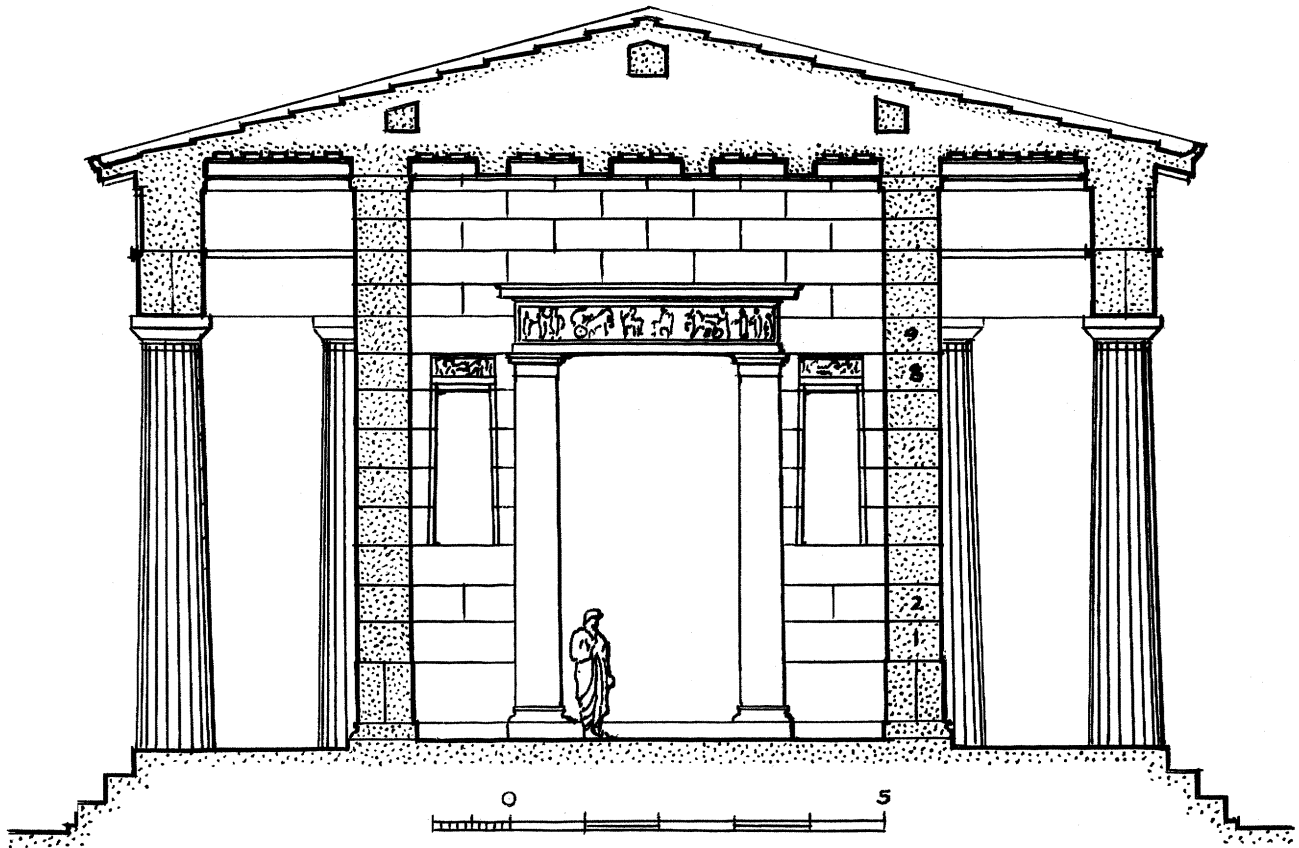
b. Longitudinal Section through the Lintel; a Restoration



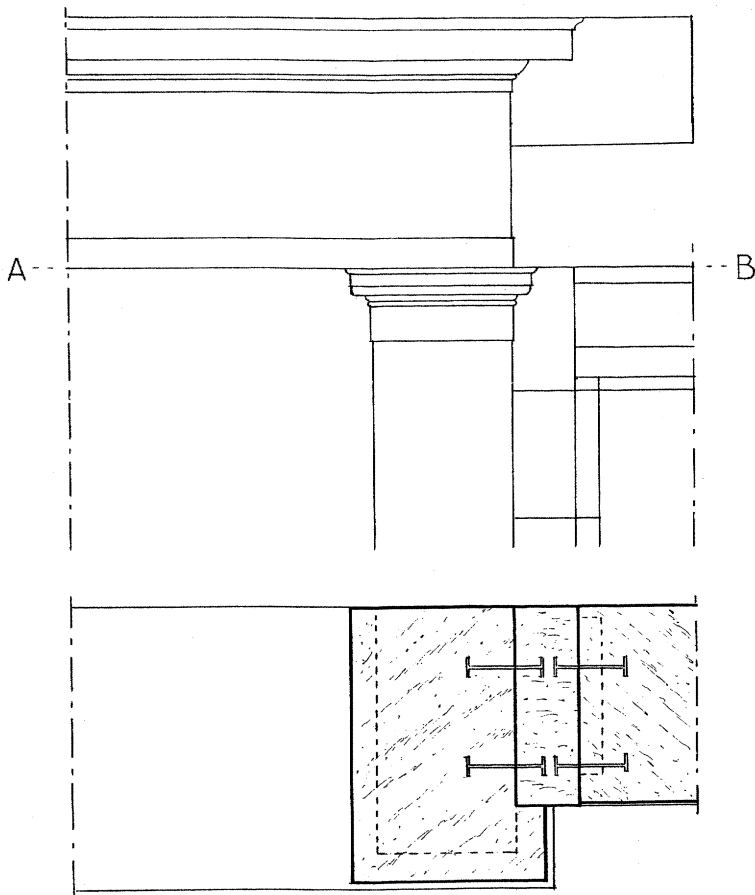
a. Tentative Restoration of the Frieze of the Lioness



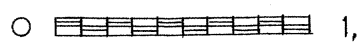
b. Cross Section through the Lintel; a Restoration



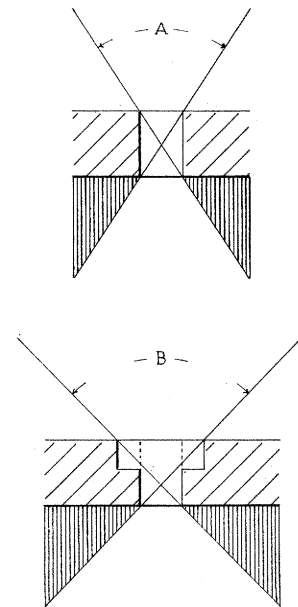
a. Tentative Restoration of East Cross Wall of Hephaisteion



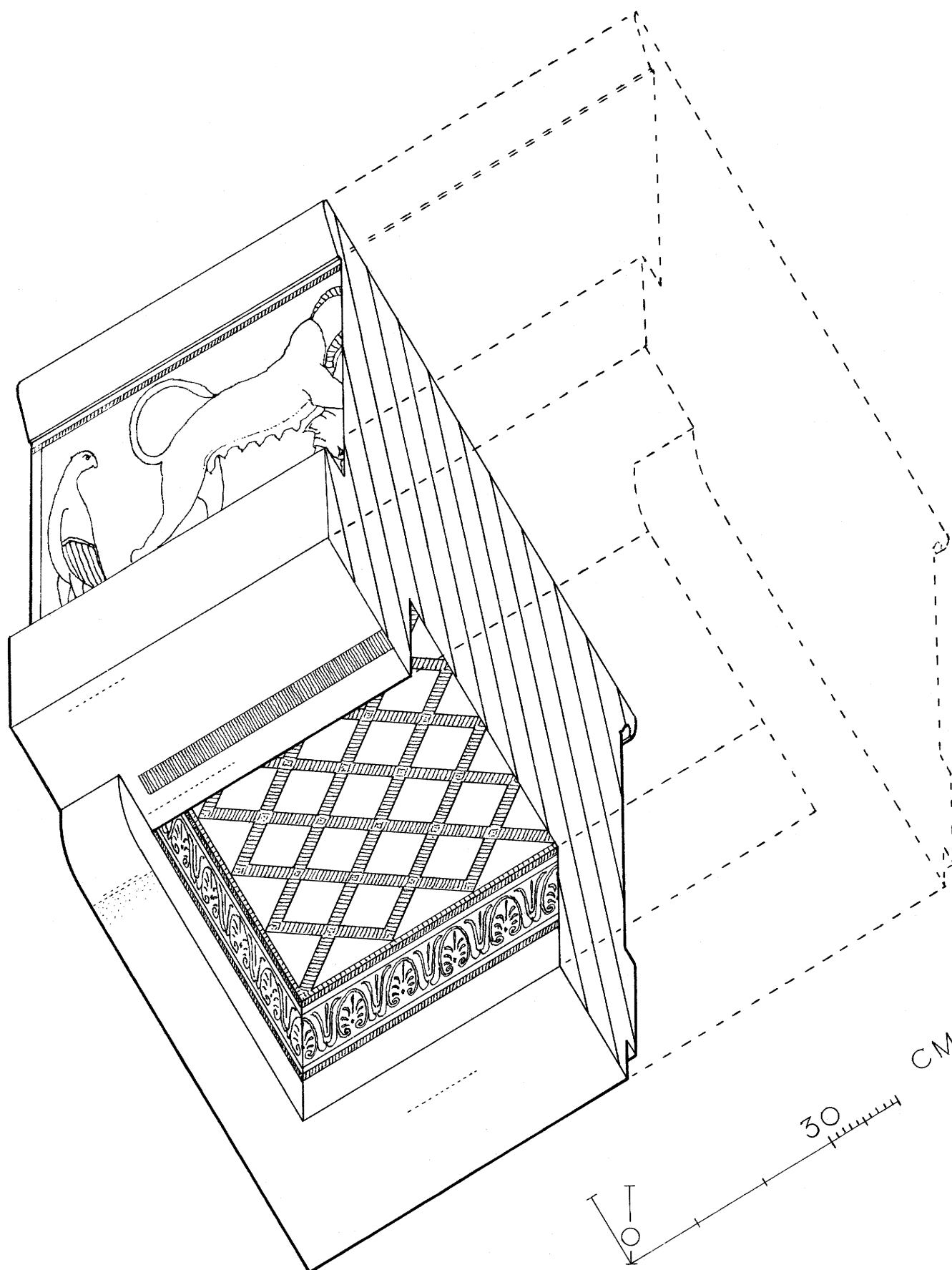
PLAN A-B



b. Probable Clamps for Small Block between Lioness Lintel and Door Jamb shown in "a" above

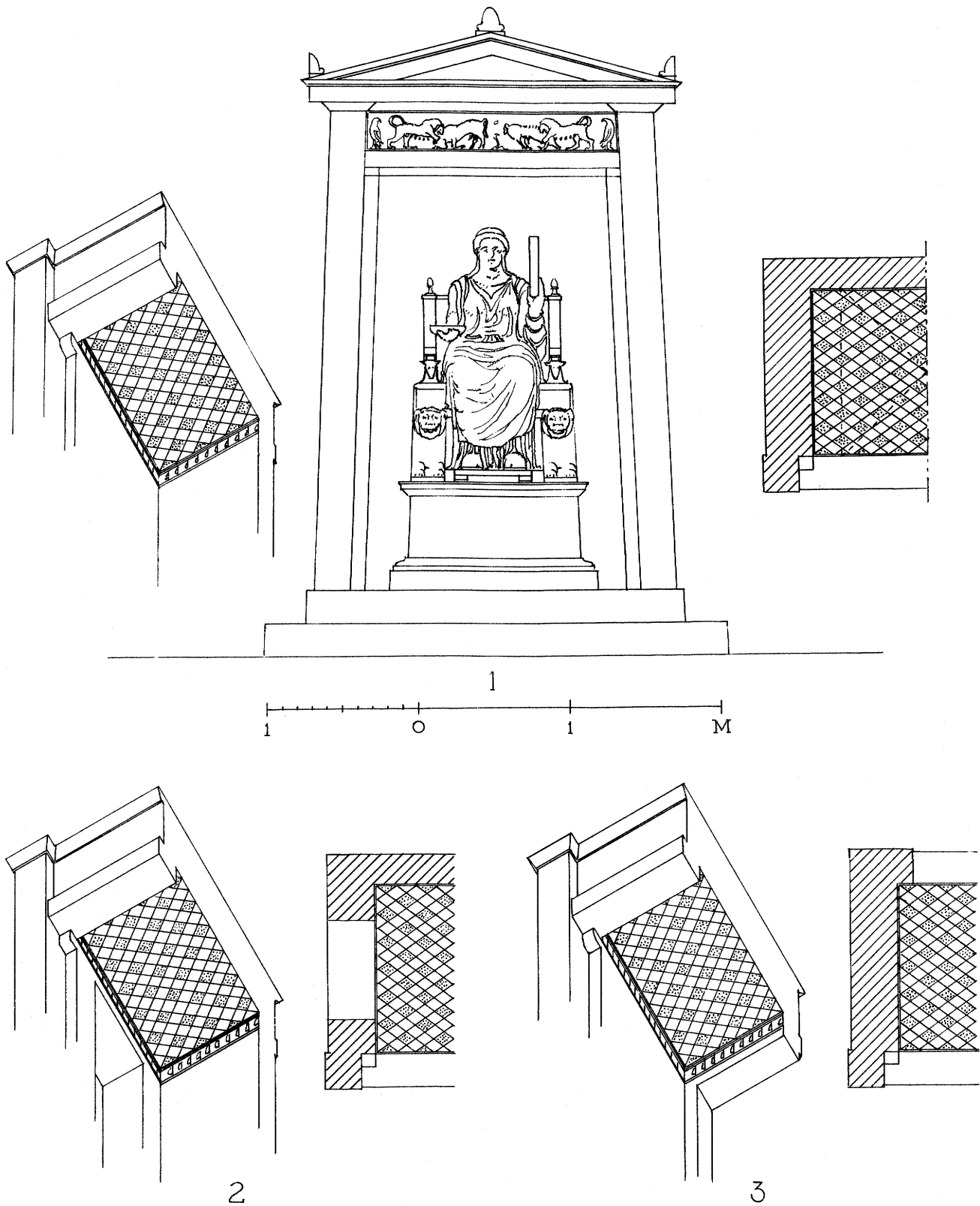


c. Splayed Window Jambs Allow more Light to Pass through Window



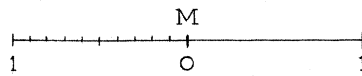
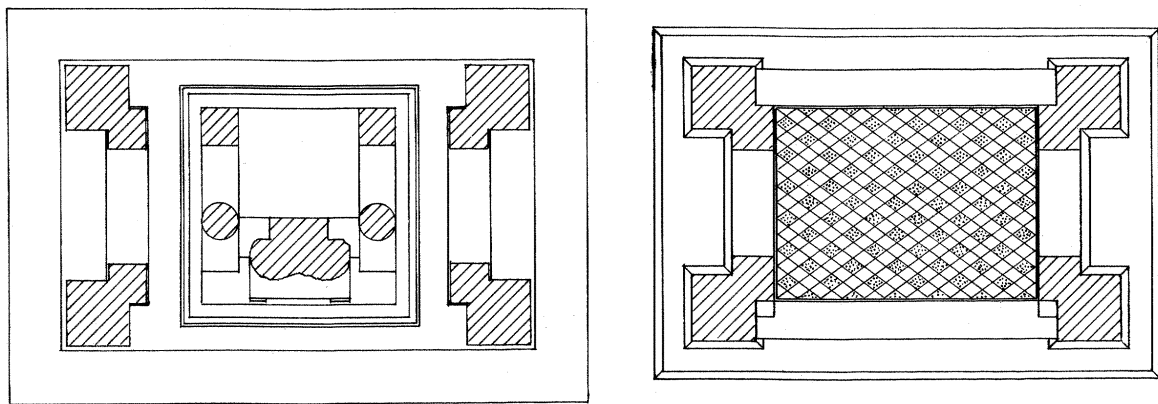
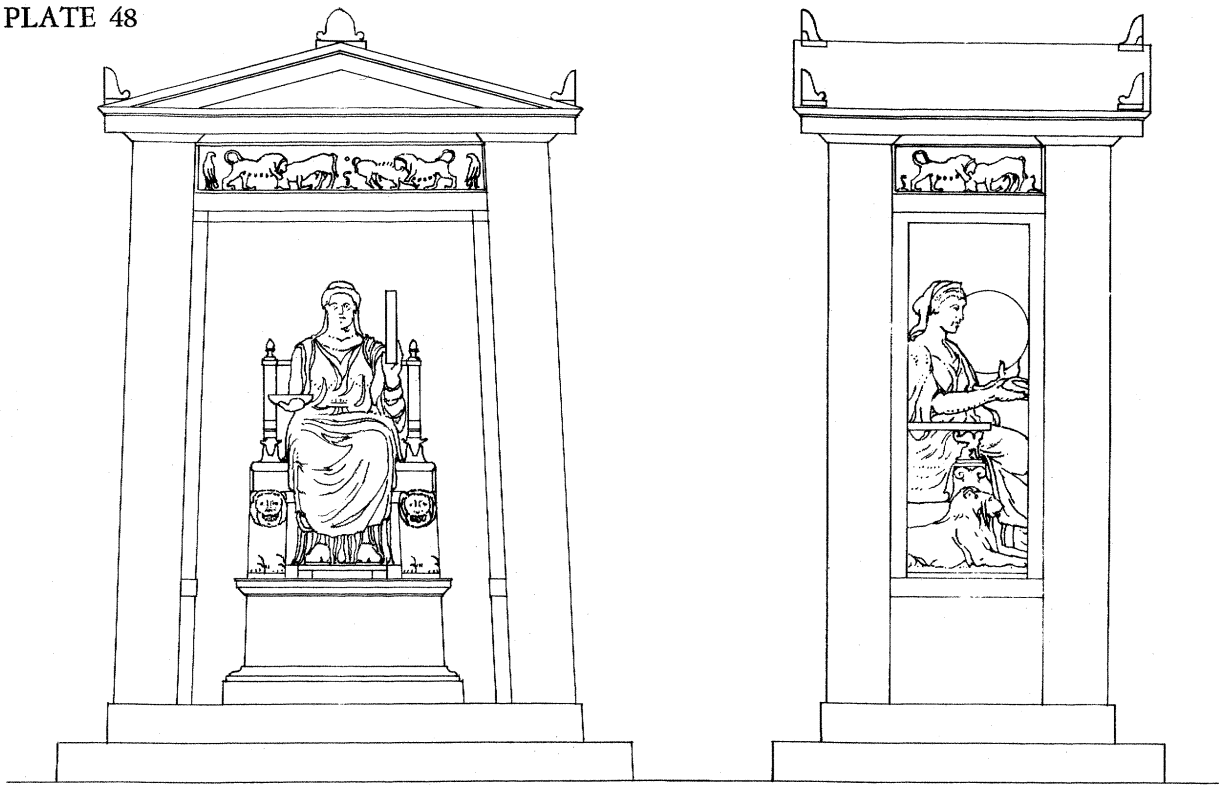
Isometric of the Lioness Lintel as used for a Window

GORHAM P. STEVENS: LINTEL WITH THE PAINTED LIONESS

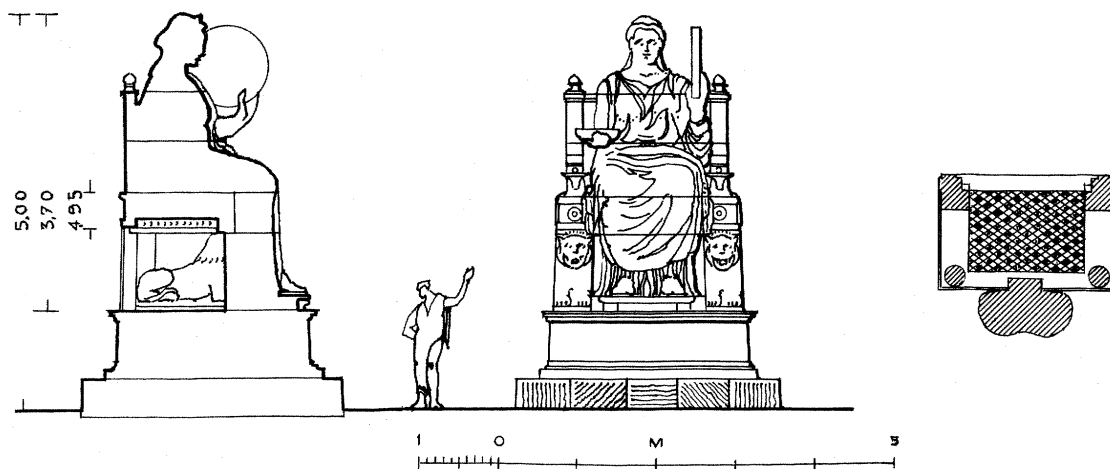


Tentative Restoration of a Naikos to shelter the Mother of the Gods

GORHAM P. STEVENS: LINTEL WITH THE PAINTED LIONESS



a. Tentative Restoration of a Baldacchino to shelter the Mother of the Gods



b. Tentative Restoration of the Lioness Lintel as used in a Throne (A-A in Plate 40, d)