

THE ALTAR OF PITY IN THE ATHENIAN AGORA ¹

(PLATES 14-18)

“THERE was in the midst of the city [i. e. Athens] an altar belonging to no god of power; gentle Clemency had there her seat and the wretched made it sacred; never did she lack a new suppliant, none did she condemn or refuse their prayers. All that ask are heard; night and day may one approach and win the heart of the goddess by complaints alone. No costly rites are hers; she accepts no incense flame, no blood deep-welling; tears flow upon her altar, sad offerings of severed tresses hang above it, and raiment left when fortune changed. Around is a grove of gentle trees, marked by the cult of the venerable; wool-entwined laurel and the suppliant olive. No image is there, to no metal is the divine form entrusted, in hearts and minds does the goddess delight to dwell. The distressed are ever nigh her, her precinct ever swarms with needy folk; only to the prosperous is her shrine unknown. Fame says that the sons of Hercules, saved in battle after the death of their divine sire, set up this altar. — — — — — Already to countless ages were those altars known; hither came flocking those defeated in war and exiled from their country, kings who had lost their realms and those guilty of grievous crime, and sought for peace.”

(Statius, *Thebais*, XII, ll. 481-509; reprinted by permission of the publishers from the Loeb Classical Library, translated by H. J. Mosley.)²

HISTORY AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE SANCTUARY

Statius, writing about A. D. 90, has left a circumstantial and probably trustworthy picture of the setting of the Altar of Pity and some illuminating details as

¹ I owe my photographs to Alison Frantz, my drawings to John Travlos and the benefit of stimulating discussion to Margaret Crosby.

² Urbe fuit media nulli concessa potentum
Ara deum; mitis posuit Clementia sedem,
Et miseri fecere sacram; sine supplice
nunquam
Illa novo, nulla damnavit vota repulsa.
Auditi quicunque rogant, noctes diesque
Ire datum; et solis numen placare querelis.
Parca superstio: non turea flamma nec altus
Accipitur sanguis, lacrimis altaria sudant,
Maestarumque super libamina sarta comarum
Pendent et vestes mutata sorte relictæ.
Mite nemus circa, cultu insigne verendo;
Vittatae laurus et supplicis arbor olivæ.
Nulla autem effigies, nulli commissæ metallo

Forma deæ, mentes habitare et pectora
gaudet.
Semper habet trepidos, semper locus horret
egenis
Coetibus, ignotæ tantum felicibus aræ.
Fama est, defensus acie post busta paterni
Numinis Herculeos sedem fundasse nepotes.
— — — — —
Jam tunc innumerae norant altaria gentes:
Huc victi bellis patriaque a sede fugati,
Regnorumque inopes scelerumque errore
nocentes
Conveniunt pacemque rogant.

to the cult.³ According to the tradition followed by Statius, the altar was founded by the children of Herakles; others report that the children took refuge at an existing altar.⁴ The high antiquity of the foundation receives further confirmation from the

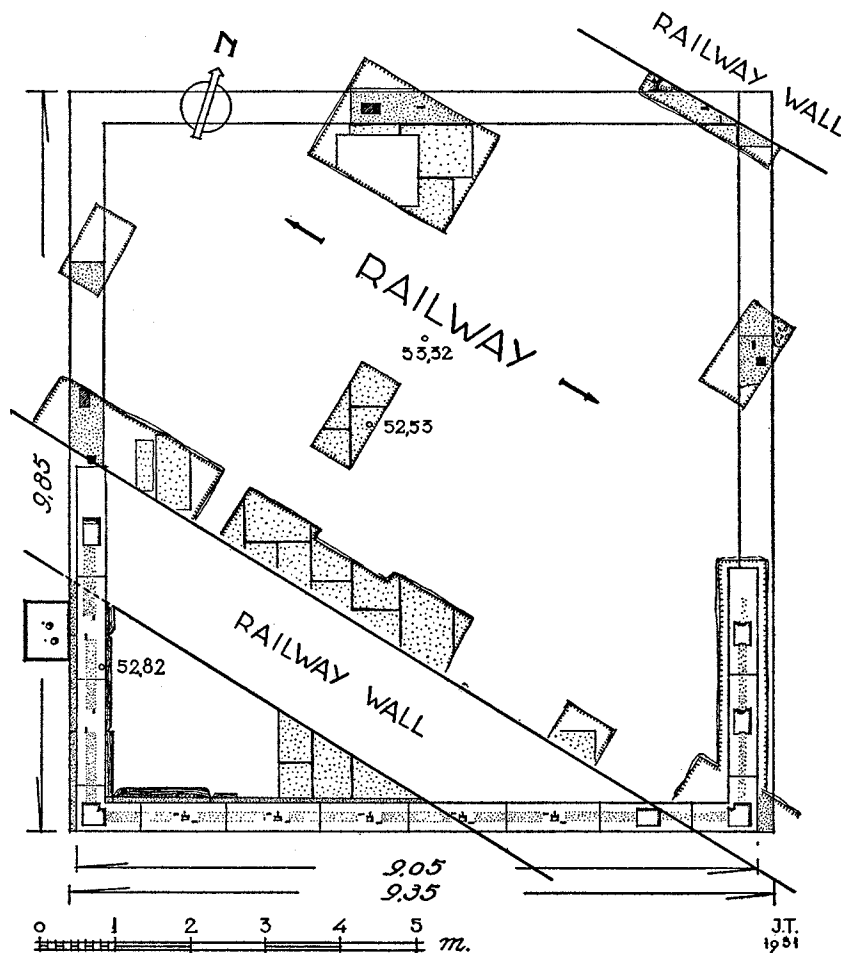


Fig. 1. Altar Peribolos: Plan of Actual State (The blocks of Period I and the floor slabs are stippled)

tradition that Adrastus here sought the help of the Athenians to secure decent burial for the Argives who had fallen before Thebes.⁵ Diodoros Siculus (XIII, 22) observes that the Athenians were the first to establish an altar of Pity; Pausanias

³ On the trustworthiness of Statius in his descriptions of Greek scenes cf. Frazer's comment on Pausanias I, 17, 1.

⁴ Apollodoros, II, 8, 1; Schol. Aristophanes, *Knights*, 1151; Zenobios, II, 61; Philostratos, *Vitae Sophistarum*, II, 1, 5.

⁵ Apollodoros, III, 7, 1.

(I, 17, 1), who was naturally interested in the cult, was aware of no other sanctuary of Pity in Greece.⁶ The first even quasi-historical reference to the altar occurs in a speech put by Diodoros (XIII, 22) into the mouth of a Syracusan participant in the debate on the fate of the Athenian prisoners taken in 413 B. C. References in the later Greek and Latin authors and in the scholia are numerous. Among the latest references is a passage in Libanios reminding the Emperor Julian that he had himself seen the Altar of Pity at Athens while studying there (A. D. 355).⁷

As to the site of the altar, Statius (*Thebais*, XII, l. 481) placed it in the middle of the city, Pausanias (I, 17, 1), more precisely, in the Agora. Since Pausanias mentioned the altar immediately after the statue of Solon which stood in front of the Stoa Poikile and the statue of Seleukos which was a little farther off, we may assume, in view of the writer's general practice, that the altar also stood in the vicinity. It is now abundantly clear from the sequence of Pausanias' record, taken in conjunction with the discovery of fragments apparently from the superstructure of the Stoa Poikile, that the Stoa bordered the north side of the square, and probably the western part of that side.⁸ This brings us to the neighborhood of a monument which was discovered in the course of the current excavations (1934) and which has been identified by means of an inscribed statue base found *in situ* as the sanctuary of the Twelve Gods, founded, as we know from Thucydides (VI, 54, 6-7), by Peisistratos the younger in his archonship in or about 521/0 B. C.⁹

It was suggested long ago by Wilamowitz¹⁰ that the Altars of Pity and of the Twelve Gods were identical, and this suggestion has been regarded favorably by the most recent student of the problem.¹¹ The arguments are briefly as follows. Pausanias made no reference to the Altar of the Twelve Gods as such, yet he is not likely to have neglected a monument of such venerable antiquity had it still been called by its original name in his day. Both altars are known from numerous literary references

⁶ A small marble altar was found close by the temple of Asklepios at Epidauros inscribed 'Ελέου | βωμόν | Ἱεροκλῆς | κατ' ὄναρ | Θ. (Ἐφ. Ἀρχ., 1883, p. 150, no. 43; *I.G.*, IV², i, 1282). Below the inscription are incised two branches, an obvious reference to the custom described by Schol. Aischines, II, 15, p. 286 (Schultz): ἰκετηρία δὲ οὕτω ἐγένετο· ῥάβδον θαλλῶ ἐλαίας στῆψας καθήστο κατέχων εἰς τὸν Ἑλέου βωμόν, μέχρις οὗτινος ἔτυχε τῶν δικαίων. The letter forms would suggest a date in the later second or third century, probably after the time of Pausanias' writing.

⁷ *Oratio*, XV, 39 (Foerster). The literary references have been assembled by C. Wachsmuth, *Die Stadt Athen im Altertum*, II, Leipzig, 1890, pp. 436-440; J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias' Description of Greece*, II, London, 1898, pp. 143 f.; W. Judeich, *Topographie von Athen*², Munich, 1931, pp. 356 f.

⁸ *Hesperia*, XIX, 1950, pp. 327-329.

⁹ For the discovery cf. *Hesperia*, IV, 1935, pp. 355-358 (Shear), for further exploration in 1946 *Hesperia*, XVI, 1947, pp. 198 f. (Thompson) and for the definitive publication *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, 1949, pp. 82-103 (Crosby).

¹⁰ *Aus Kydathen, Philologische Untersuchungen*, I, Berlin, 1880, p. 201, note 4.

¹¹ M. Crosby, *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, p. 102.

to have been the principal places of asylum in Athens; it is improbable that there were two such separate establishments within the same limited area. Statius' localization of the Altar of Pity *urbe media* is curiously reminiscent of the well attested use of the Altar of the Twelve Gods as a central milestone for the measurement of road distances. Philostratos wrote of the foundation of the Altar of Pity as of a thirteenth god.¹² The famous statue of Demosthenes by Polyeuktos is said to have stood near the Altar of the Twelve Gods and to have had a plane tree of no great size beside it;¹³ on the supposition that the Altars of the Twelve Gods and of Pity occupied the same precinct, this plane tree may have formed part of the grove around the Altar of Pity as described by Statius.¹⁴

The identification of the sanctuary of Pity with that of the Twelve Gods receives additional support from an observation made during the excavation of 1946. To the south and to the west of the Peribolos of the Twelve Gods the stratification had been disturbed in antiquity by the digging of several irregular pits measuring about one metre in diameter and the same in depth.¹⁵ These pits were found by the excavator full of loose earth clearly distinct from the hard packed gravel of the square. The potsherds from this earth indicated that the intrusion began as early as the fourth century B. C. The explanation would seem to be that the holes were opened for the planting of trees, presumably the olives and laurels of Statius' description.¹⁶

The probability thus becomes very strong that the sanctuary which had originally contained the Altar of the Twelve Gods and which is now known from its actual remains, was referred to by Statius and Pausanias as the Altar of Pity. Miss Crosby in her recent study has argued for the addition of the worship of Pity to that of the Twelve Gods and for the eventual predominance of Pity in the sanctuary, the Twelve Gods receiving compensation in the form of a mural done by Euphranor in the near-by Stoa of Zeus about the middle of the fourth century B. C.¹⁷ It might be added that the altar in front of the Stoa of Zeus was greatly enlarged in the Hellenistic period, conceivably to accommodate the cult of the Twelve Gods.¹⁸

¹² *Epist.* 39 (70): [οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι] τὸν Ἑλέου ἐστήσαντο βωμὸν ὡς τρισκαίδεκάτου Θεοῦ.

¹³ Ps. Plutarch, *Vitae X Orat.*, p. 847^A; Plutarch, *Demosthenes*, 31.

¹⁴ Libanios in a school rhetorical exercise (*Declam.* XXII, ed. Foerster, vol. VI, p. 339) described Demosthenes as taking refuge at the Altar of Pity; was this perhaps suggested by the proximity of the statue to the Altar of the Twelve Gods = Altar of Pity?

¹⁵ *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, pl. 12, 1.

¹⁶ Cf. the pits for shrubs in the "Garden of Hephaistos": *Hesperia*, VI, 1937, pp. 396-425.

¹⁷ *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, p. 103.

¹⁸ *Hesperia*, VI, 1937, pp. 10-12. Pausanias (I, 3, 2-3) mentioned three paintings in the Stoa of Zeus: (1) The Twelve Gods, (2) Theseus, Democracy and the People and (3) the Battle at Mantinea. Of the second he observed: "The painting signifies that it was Theseus who established political equality at Athens. There is, indeed, a popular tradition that Theseus handed over the conduct of affairs to the people, and that the government continued to be a democracy from his time down to the insurrection and tyranny of Peisistratos." Is it possible that paintings (1)

In view of the well attested tradition for the high antiquity of the Altar of Pity, we must suppose that either the original altar was transplanted or a new version of it was at some time set up within the peribolos originally designed for the Altar of

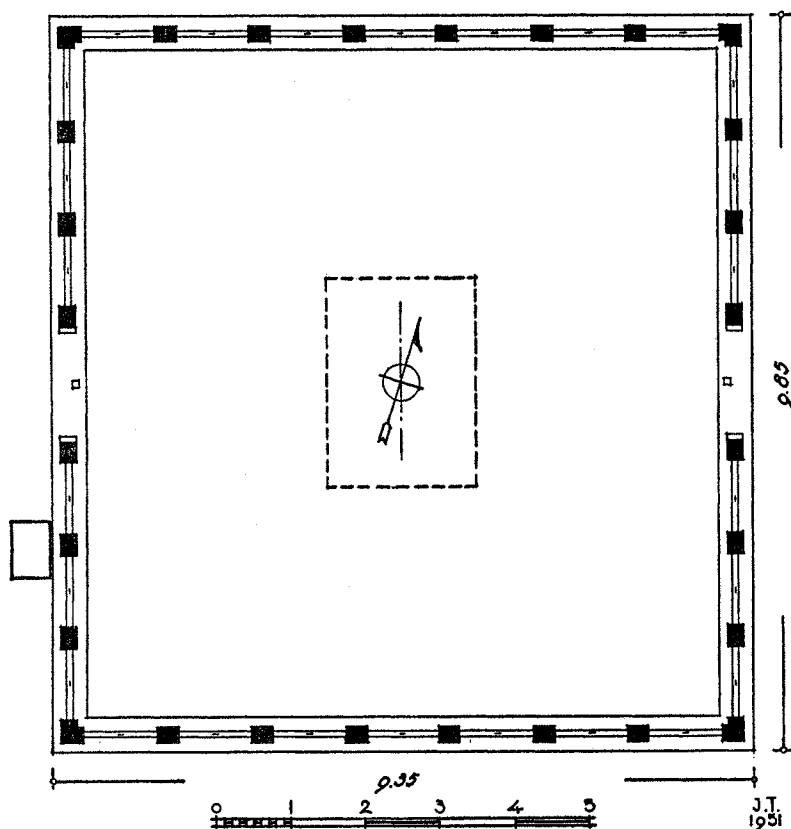


Fig. 2. Altar Peribolos, Period I: Restored Plan

the Twelve Gods. It is quite possible that for a time both the Altar of Pity and the Altar of the Twelve Gods stood together within the same enclosure; it seems probable, however, that by the time of Statius and of Pausanias the Altar of the Twelve Gods had been moved elsewhere leaving the sanctuary to Pity alone.

and (2) were conceived as a democratic counterpart to the foundation of the Altar of the Twelve Gods by the younger Peisistratos?

That the transplanting of altars was tolerated in Athens is sufficiently proven by the history of the great marble altar to the east of the Metroon which, though made in the fourth century B. C., reached its present position in the first century B. C., having previously stood, as it seems, on the Pnyx (*Hesperia*, II, 1933, pp. 140-148; XII, 1943, p. 300, note 38). In the case of the sanctuary of Ares, both temple and altar, built originally in the fifth century B. C., migrated to their present positions in the time of Augustus (*Hesperia*, IX, 1940, pp. 47-52; XX, 1951, pp. 56 f.).

As to the date when the worship of Pity was introduced to this site, we are left largely to conjecture. The most likely occasion, however, would appear to be the time when the enclosure wall of the sanctuary was rebuilt. Miss Crosby has shown that the original post-and-slab parapet erected by the younger Peisistratos was in all probability demolished by the Persians in 480/79 B. C. and that it was replaced after a long interval by a completely new parapet of which only the sill remains. The little pottery to be associated with this rebuilding runs down at least to the neighborhood of 425 B. C. providing a *terminus post quem*. On the other hand, the close similarity between the surface treatment of the new sill and that of the Nike Temple bastion makes unlikely a date lower than the end of the fifth century. The available data would thus indicate that the new parapet was erected within the last quarter of the fifth century.¹⁹

RESTORATION OF THE PARAPET

Since the parapet is basic to our further enquiry it will be necessary to describe its remains in detail, even at the risk of repeating to some extent the statements made in the earlier study of the monument.

Of the original parapet erected by the younger Peisistratos there remains the greater part of a stone sill with sockets for the fastening of posts and with smaller cuttings midway between the posts which may be supposed to have held dowels for the support of thin, intermediate slabs (Pls. 14, 15; Figs. 1-2).²⁰ The overall dimensions as measured on the sill were 9.35 m. from east to west and 9.85 m. from north to south. There were eight posts on each of the four sides, placed 1.25 m. centre to centre, the intermediate slabs measuring *ca.* 0.97 m. in width, except only at the central intervals in the east and west sides where the cuttings indicate a clear interval between the posts of *ca.* 1.37 m. The middle of the east and west sides would be the logical places for entrances to the sanctuary, and a square sinking in the sill at the middle of the wide interval in the west side may indeed have served for a closure of some sort, though scarcely for regular doors which would be out of keeping with a place of asylum. Although the relevant block on the east side is missing, the analogy

¹⁹ From several somewhat contradictory scholia on Aristophanes' *Plutus*, line 385, it would appear possible that in this line the poet had in mind a painting of the children of Herakles seeking the protection of the Athenians, a painting done by Pamphilos (or by Apollodoros) and exhibited "in the Stoa of the Athenians," i. e., presumably the Stoa Poikile. If we are right in our identification of the Sanctuary of Pity, it would be thoroughly appropriate to have in the near-by colonnade, and possibly in sight of the altar, such a representation of those who were variously regarded as its founders or as among its earliest suppliants. (Compare the relationship between the Altar of the Twelve Gods and the painting of the Twelve Gods by Euphranor in the near-by Stoa of Zeus). Either Pamphilos or Apollodoros might have done the painting between the time of the rehabilitation of our sanctuary and the date of the *Plutus* (388 B. C.). The evidence of the scholia is too tenuous to lean on more heavily. Cf. Wachsmuth, *Stadt Athen*, II, pp. 518 ff.

²⁰ *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, pp. 86-88, fig. 4.

of other sanctuaries would call for an entrance here, more especially since such an entrance would have afforded direct access from the Panathenaic Way which skirted the peribolos on the east side.²¹ Our altar enclosure thus restored, modest in scale

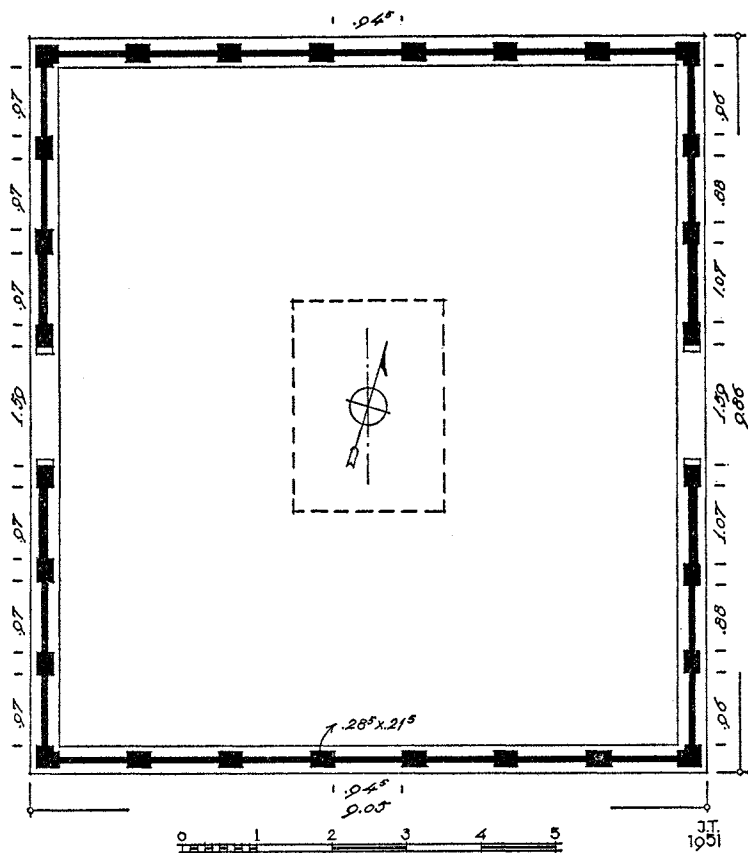


Fig. 3. Altar Peribolos, Period II: Restored Plan

and material and accessible from east and west, may be paralleled in the pre-Persian altar place of Apollo at Didyma, the circular scheme of which was perhaps suggested by the ash mound that constituted the altar proper (Fig. 4).²²

²¹ In the earlier publication (*Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, pp. 89 f.) the parapet in both periods was restored with an entrance only on the west side; the considerations here adduced make much more probable the restoration of an entrance in both the east and the west side in both periods.

²² Wiegand, "Siebenter vorläufige Bericht über Ausgrabungen in Milet und Didyma," pp. 41-43 (*Berl. Abhandl.*, 1911); Schleif, *Jahrbuch*, XLIX, 1934, p. 148; Knackfuss *apud* Wiegand, *Didyma*, I, Berlin, 1941, Text pp. 136-139; Drawings, pls. 80, 84; C. G. Yavis, *Greek Altars*, Saint Louis, 1949, pp. 208 f. The ash heap is attested by Pausanias (V, 13, 11). Only the sill and orthostates of the enclosing wall remain. There is no certain trace of sculptural decoration although it is conjectured that free-standing statues stood on a paved ring inside the wall.

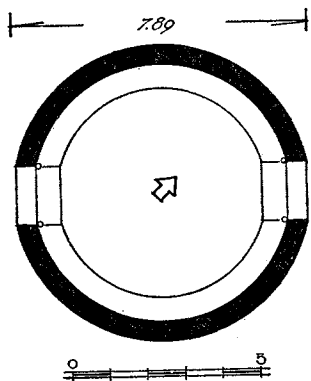


Fig. 4. Altar of Apollo at Didyma (After *Didyma* I, pl. 84)

Of the parapet as rebuilt in the second period of the sanctuary there remain the sill blocks for the entire south side, for the southern half of the west side and for the southern third of the east side (Fig. 1).²³ The evidence preserved on this much of the sill is enough to show that the second parapet was essentially similar to the first, consisting, like the first, of eight posts with intervening orthostates on each of the four sides and with an entrance in both the east and west side. The overall dimensions differ slightly from those of the first period. The east to west width in Period II may be measured directly as 9.05 m., compared with 9.35 m. in Period I. If the now missing north sill of Period II be restored symmetrical with the well preserved south sill, the north to south overall width becomes 9.86 m. for Period II

(Fig. 3) as compared with 9.85 m. for Period I (Fig. 2).²⁴

Differences are to be noted in the manner of securing the posts and intervening slabs in the two periods. Whereas in Period I all the posts for which we have evidence were set in sockets and fastened each with two side dowels, in Period II only those posts that were liable to special strain were set in sockets, undowelled, while the others were set on the flat top of the sill and fixed each with two side dowels (Fig. 1).²⁵ The socketed posts, as recorded by the surviving sill, are those at the southwest and southeast corners of the peribolos, at the south side of the west entrance, in the second and third positions from the south on the east side and in the second position

²³ In June, 1951, additional investigation on the spot brought out some evidence not available at the time of the earlier study. Cf. Fig. 1 of *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, p. 83, with Fig. 1 of the present study. By undercutting the south retaining wall of the railway trench it was possible to examine the bedding for the fourth post from the south on the west side, a detail which had been known previously only from the measured sketch made in 1891 when the railway was under construction. The southeast corner block of the sill was again exposed, and this time over its full extent. The bedding for the third post from the south on the east side was re-opened, and the bedding for the second post, which lies directly below one of the live rails, was cleared for the first time. We are greatly indebted to the Athens-Piraeus Electric Railway Company, and in particular to the Chief Engineer of the Company, Mr. Yannises, for facilitating the exploration in a most cordial manner.

²⁴ If, however, the north sill of Period II was drawn in toward the middle of the enclosure, as was done with the east sill, the north to south dimension must be reduced by *ca.* 0.15 m. Such a contraction would bring the inner edge of the north sill of Period II into contact with the north edge of the marble block found in the north part of the peribolos (*Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, p. 92), a desirable conjunction. In our restoration, however, both in this and the earlier study we have preferred to suppose that the new north and south sills were set in the same relation to the earlier sills beneath. The possible error does not, fortunately, affect the further argument.

²⁵ The central dowels with pour channels in the second to sixth positions from the west on the south side probably date from a repair (Fig. 1).

from the east on the south side.²⁶ The need for greater stability at the outside corners and alongside the entrances is obvious; in the east side the architect may have feared the perils of traffic on the closely adjacent Panathenaic Way.

The socket for the post at the south side of the west entrance is flanked on the side toward the opening by an extension measuring 0.08 m. long, sunk to a depth of 0.06 m. as compared with 0.04 m. for the post bedding proper (Pl. 15b).²⁷ This may have held a jamb, perhaps of marble; it would be a very unusual arrangement for the socket of a door pivot.

The average depth of the sockets is 0.03 m. apart from that flanking the west entrance which is 0.04 m. deep. The posts when set in the sockets were leaded; a little of the lead remains in place in the socket beside the west entrance (0.003 m. thick). The posts that were set on top of the sills were secured each by a face dowel in either of the narrow edges.²⁸

The posts measured in plan at their bases, as indicated by the sockets and weather stains, *ca.* 0.285 x 0.215 m. In the case of the second and third posts from the south on the east side, in which the narrow faces were grooved to receive the edges of the orthostates, the normal dimension of 0.285 m. was maintained for the central core of the post (Fig. 5).

The existence of orthostates between the posts is clearly attested first by the indication of grooves in the sides of some of the posts as shown by the sockets for the second and third posts from the south on the east side (Pl. 15c), secondly by the presence of a very shallow worked bed on top of the sill, and thirdly by weather stains left by the edges of the slabs.

The normal thickness of the orthostates was *ca.* 0.08 m. The slabs adjoining the entrances, however, would seem to have been appreciably thicker at the bottom. This is attested for the west side by the fact that the dressed bed, while aligning with that of the neighboring slab on the inner side, was widened toward the outside so that it could have accommodated a slab as much as 0.14 m. thick at its bottom (Fig. 6).

²⁶ The socket for the second post from the east on the south side is now concealed by the south retaining wall of the railway trench and is known only from the sketch of 1891. All the other sockets, having been examined recently, appear to be uniform in workmanship and to be original parts of Period II.

²⁷ The sketch of 1891 made no distinction between the deep and shallow parts of the cutting which were therefore represented by a single rectangle in the earlier study (*Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, p. 83, fig. 1).

²⁸ In the south half of the west side of the parapet the outermost posts were apparently set first; then, as shown by the pryholes, the adjacent orthostates and the next posts were placed and, finally, the middle slab was thrust in between these last posts. A pryhole in the bottom of the socket for the southeast post must have been used against the edge of the easternmost orthostate in the south side, and a similar pryhole in the bottom of the third socket from the south on the east side would have served for the orthostate to the south. No pryholes have been observed on the south side.

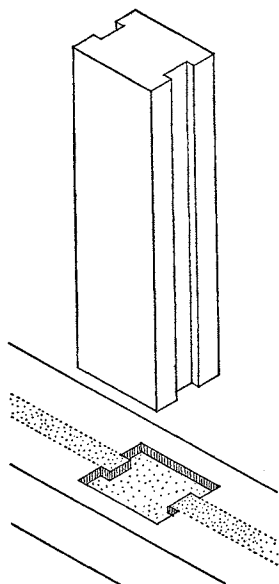


Fig. 5. Scheme of Second and Third Posts from South on East Side

In the corresponding space on the east side there is no such clearly defined bed, but the surface of the sill is remarkably fresh almost to the line of the outer faces of the posts, suggesting that here also the base of the slab was of abnormal thickness. That the upper part of the same slab, however, was of normal thickness is indicated by the provision for a groove of normal width in the side of the post as shown by the form of the socket.

The intervals between the posts, i. e. the width of the orthostates, measure uniformly 0.945 m. on the south side. The north side, where none of the sill remains, may be assumed to have had similar spacing. The three spaces in the south part of the west side are again precisely uniform with one another, measuring 0.97 m. each. We may assume that the corresponding three spaces to the north of the west entrance were symmetrical with those of the south; such an arrangement would leave a central space for the entrance with an open width of 1.59 m., possibly to be reduced by jambs 0.08 m. thick.

In the south half of the east side we encounter a striking irregularity. The southernmost space, to be sure, with an actual width of 0.96 m., would seem to have been intended to be of the same size as those in the west side. The next space to the north, however, measures only 0.88 m. The third space from the south cannot be measured directly inasmuch as the bedding for the post that bounded it on the north is now missing. If, however, we assume that the east entrance was of the same width as the west entrance (and it is difficult to see why it should have been otherwise) the width of the space to the south of it may be restored as of 1.07 m. It would now appear that the original intention of the architect was to have in the south section of the east wall three panels of uniform width corresponding with those on the west side. Some necessity arose, however, for giving greater width to the panel adjoining the east entrance. This additional width was gained by narrowing the neighboring panel. Although none of the sill of the north part of the east parapet of Period II remains, that section may be restored symmetrical with the south part.

Not a fragment of the superstructure above the sill has thus far come to light. It is clear that posts and orthostates were at some time carefully removed. This is especially evident in the case of the southeast corner post where a channel has been painstakingly chiselled along the east and south sides of the socket (Pl. 15d). The stratification showed that the stripping of the parapet occurred after the Herulian sack of A. D. 267, and we may assume that the altar, together with its parapet, was transplanted to a place of safety within the "Valerian Wall" (late third century)

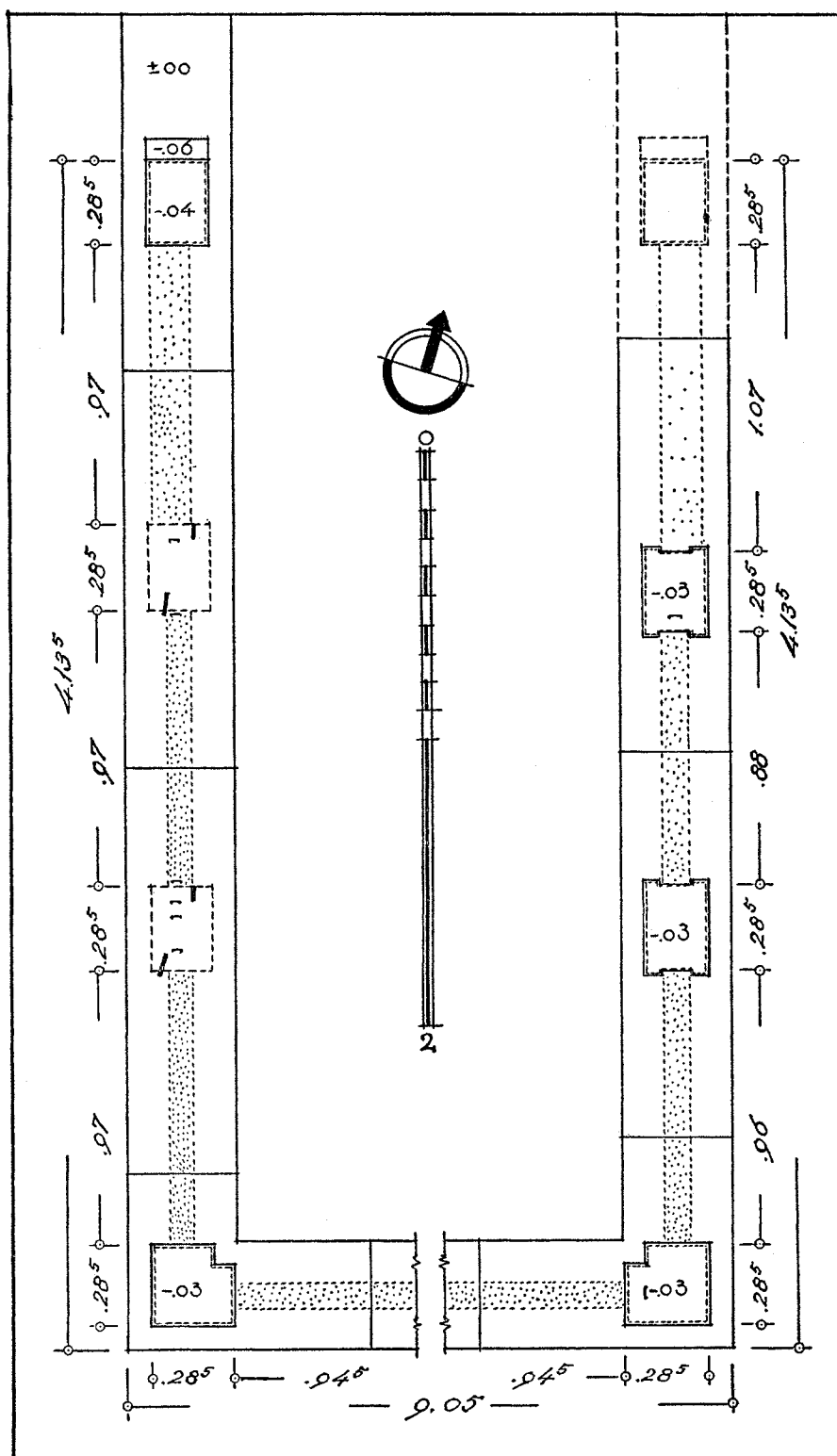


Fig. 6. Parapet Sill of Period II: South Halves of West and East Sides

where it was seen by Julian in A. D. 355. Lamentable as is the loss of the most direct evidence for the reconstruction of the parapet, its removal proves clearly that the parapet was accounted of value. This is emphasized by the contrast with the fate of the fence around the Eponymous Heroes, many fragments of which were found on the spot showing that no effort had been made to transplant an enclosure of little intrinsic interest (cf. below and pages ff.).

As for the material of the superstructure, it would appear probable that since poros was used for the sill it was used also for the posts and for the crowning member above the posts. The thinness of the orthostates, on the other hand, virtually excludes the use of poros for these members and implies marble. The marble grave stelai of the fifth and fourth centuries were commonly set in poros bases and a combination of marble and poros is well attested for the closely contemporary Stoa of Zeus in the Agora in which marble metopes were set between triglyphs of poros with architrave and cornice of marble.²⁹ In the Middle Stoa of the Agora (second century B. C.) marble metopes were entirely framed in poros. The difference in texture and color between the two materials produced an agreeable contrast.

For the design of the superstructure of our parapet we may draw some cautious inferences from the analogy of a near-by monument that has already been mentioned, viz. the fence around the statues of the Eponymous Heroes in the southwest corner of the Agora (Pl. 16).³⁰ The architectural style of the monument of the Eponymous Heroes, combined with the literary references to it, suggests a date in the last quarter of the fifth century; it is therefore closely contemporary with the second period of our parapet and has so many points in common as to justify the assumption that the one monument influenced the design of the other, the Eponymous Heroes being perhaps by a few years the earlier.³¹ The fence around the long statue base was supported, like our parapet, on a sill consisting of a single course of poros blocks; the posts and the capping stone above them were of the same material. The narrow

²⁹ *Hesperia*, VI, 1937, p. 28.

³⁰ The monument has not as yet been completely excavated or studied. For the identification cf. Vanderpool, *Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, pp. 129-132; for the details of construction cf. Stillwell, *Hesperia*, II, 1933 pp. 137-139; for earlier comparison with the Peribolos of the Twelve Gods cf. Crosby, *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, p. 91, note 21.

³¹ The monument was used, *inter alia*, as a place for posting the preliminary drafts of the constitution as it was being revised in the last decade of the fifth century (Andokides, I, 83; cf. the other references to its use for this purpose as collected by Wachsmuth, *Stadt Athen*, II, p. 388). In Aristophanes, *Peace*, line 1183 (421 B. C.) is a reference to a man who found his name posted for military service near a statue of Pandion (εἶτα προστὰς πρὸς τὸν ἀνδριάντα τὸν Πανδίωνος εἶδεν αὐτὸν κἀπορῶν θεῖ —); this statue was regarded by the Scholiast *ad. loc.* as one of the familiar group. For further possible evidence of this monument as early as 426/5 B. C. see in the next number of *Hesperia*, "Excavations in the Athenian Agora: 1951," note 12. On the other hand, the presence of conglomerate blocks in the lower underpinning of the sill for the fence at its northwest corner would argue against a much earlier date.

faces of the posts were stippled inside a smooth border in exactly the same fashion as the vertical faces of our parapet sill. The fence posts as originally arranged stood, like most of the parapet posts, on the flat top of the sill and were secured by a face dowel set in each of the narrow sides; in subsequent repairs the posts were set down in sockets and leaded, as in the case of certain posts of the parapet. The interaxial spacing of the fence posts (1.27 m. on the flanks; 1.00 and 1.03 m. on the ends) is close to that of the parapet posts (1.255 m. normal on east and west; 1.230 m. on south and, presumably, north). The size of the fence posts at bottom (0.207 x 0.285 m.) is very close to that of the parapet posts (0.215 x 0.285 m.) and theoretically the two may have been intended to be the same.³² In view of these many similarities between the two monuments in parts that are well preserved, we may venture to employ the analogy of the fence in reconstructing the missing superstructure of the parapet.

One of the most striking features of the fence of the Eponymous Heroes is the fact that the outer faces of its posts are divided each into two jambs by a wedge-shaped, depressed panel and, in logical consequence, the posts are slightly wider at the top than at the bottom (0.30 m.: 0.285 m.).³³ The architect evidently decided to treat the spaces between the posts as doorways, the jambs of which in contemporary practice normally inclined inward toward the top. We may with probability hypothesize a similar treatment in the parapet, where the spaces between the posts might have been regarded as closed openings or where the (presumably) marble slabs that filled the spaces might have been treated like so many stelai which in this period were normally narrower at the top than at the bottom.³⁴

³² The dimensions of the fence posts as given in *Hesperia* II, 1933, p. 138 (ca. 0.33 x 0.25 m.) were taken from dowel cuttings on the foundation; the revised dimensions given above are drawn from fragments of the posts that have come to light since the earlier study.

³³ This point is not brought out in the earlier study (*Hesperia*, II, 1933, p. 138, fig. 22).

³⁴ A double herm of archaic date found at Sardis, now in Berlin, is shown by shallow channels in its sides to have served as a support for the thin orthostates of a parapet. Since the width of the herm diminishes downward from 0.31 to 0.22 m. in a height of 1.23 m. (head missing), the intermediate panels must have had a corresponding upward diminution (*Beschreibung der antiken Skulpturen*, No. 883; L. Curtius, *Die antike Herme*, Munich Dissertation, 1903, pp. 18 f., figs. 12-14).

Inscribed stelai when set edge to edge were sometimes given a semblance of upward taper by a wedge-shaped sunken panel centred on the joint between two contiguous slabs. This is the case with the casualty list assigned by Raubitschek to the first year of the Peloponnesian War (*Hesperia*, XII, 1943, pp. 25-27; Agora Inv. No. I 3181 a and b + *I.G.*, I², 944). The two joining fragments from the Agora have anathyrosis on the left side and the joint surface is bordered by a sunken panel which contracts in width from top to bottom, from 26 to 19 mm. in a height of 470 mm. (The two fragments make contact behind, not in front as shown in Raubitschek's photograph taken from squeezes). The sunken border is 3 mm. deep on the side remote from the joint surface but grows shallower as it approaches the joint; hence the floor of the panel would have had a \wedge -shaped profile identical with that on the posts of the enclosure around the Eponymous Heroes. A similar

Again, on the analogy of the fence, we may restore above the posts of our parapet a stone cap of simple profile projecting laterally a little beyond the faces of the posts.

The posts of the fence are 1.01 m. high. The spaces between the posts measure 0.985 m. wide at the bottom on the flanks, 0.715 and 0.745 m. at the ends. Hence in the fence the spaces are in general somewhat higher than wide, and a similar analogy may reasonably be expected in the parapet.

The evidence adduced from the traces on the parapet sill of the altar supplemented with analogies drawn from the fence of the Eponymous Heroes, makes reasonably certain the reconstruction of the superstructure of the parapet in its normal parts. But what of the intriguing anomalies that have been observed in connection with the openings flanking the entrance ways, viz. the extraordinary thickness of the bottom of these slabs and the extraordinary width of the panels on the east side? The simplest and most plausible explanation would seem to be that, whereas the normal orthostates of the parapet were plain, those flanking the entrances were sculptured on their outer faces, some exigency of design requiring the sculptured panels on the east side to be wider than those on the west (Pl. 18d).

In view of the popularity of the Altar of Pity as attested by the literary references, in view also of its prominent position and accessibility, there would appear to be a fair possibility of finding copies or echoes of the sculptured panels of its parapet among the products of later Greek art. In casting about for copies we should expect to find them in the form of thin slabs, slightly higher than wide, with a slight upward taper, with relief sculpture of only moderate projection (to keep within the thickness of the frame), in Attic style of the late fifth century and with themes appropriate to the Athenian conception of Pity. Copies, if of the same scale as the originals, should measure in the case of the west panels about 0.97 m. in width at the bottom, of the east panels about 1.07 m., or a trifle less to make allowance for the groove in the side of the post. The lower edge of the panels should measure not more than *ca.* 0.14 m. in thickness. The case for identification would of course be enormously strengthened if one could produce not isolated works but a compact series.

One such series, and one only, is available, viz. the group of four "Three-figure Reliefs" which have recently been the subject of an admirable comprehensive study by Heinz Götze (Pl. 17).³⁵ The subjects represented are Orpheus leading back

explanation will serve for the sunken borders on *I.G.*, I², 942, 958 and 965, perhaps also 955, which were regarded by Brueckner (*Ath. Mitt.*, XXXV, 1910, pp. 215-216), followed by Raubitschek (*Hesperia*, XII, 1943, p. 27), as a provision for a bordering frame. On these stelai also the sunken border tapers downward.

³⁵ *Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, pp. 189-280. The relevant bibliography is conveniently assembled by Götze in this article. The same scholar has returned to the theme in a special study of the Hesperid panel in *Jahrbuch*, LXIII-LXIV, 1948-49, pp. 91-99. L. Curtius has taken exception to some of Götze's conclusions in his stimulating study of the Orpheus panel in *Interpretationen von*

Eurydike to the upper world, Hermes attending; two daughters of Pelias about to boil their father at the instigation of Medea; Theseus, Peirithoos and Herakles in the underworld; Herakles in the Garden of the Hesperides.³⁶ Götze has to my mind convincingly shown that the four panels are so organically related to one another in both theme and composition as to prove that the original series was designed by a single master for a single monument though probably carved by two different sculptors.³⁷ He has made out a very strong case, moreover, for believing that the series as we have it is complete. That the prototypes were of Athenian design is abundantly clear from their pure Attic style; that the monument stood in Athens may be inferred from the regular use of Pentelic marble in the copies, from the close adaptation of the left-hand figure of the Hesperides panel on an Attic vase painted soon after 400 B. C.³⁸ and from numerous echoes of the panels on Attic gravestones of the late fifth and fourth centuries B. C.³⁹ The close correspondence among the copies, despite the fact that they were made by different hands at various times, may be taken to prove that the prototypes were readily accessible to the copyists; the same is true of the great three-figured relief from Eleusis, obviously designed to stand at ground level, which was copied with remarkable fidelity in the Roman period,⁴⁰ whereas such comparatively inaccessible reliefs as those of the Nike Temple Parapet, where scaffolding would have been required by the copyist, inspired only free adaptations.⁴¹ Not

sechs griechischen Bildwerken, Bern, 1947, pp. 83-105. David M. Robinson has published a fragmentary fifth copy of the Orpheus panel now in his collection in *Hommages à Joseph Bidez et à Franz Cumont*, II, Brussels, 1949, pp. 303-311. Miss Richter will publish a fragment from another copy of the Peliad relief now in the Metropolitan Museum in the *Festschrift* for Andreas Rumpf; in the meantime she has kindly provided me with a photograph and measurements of the fragment.

³⁶ The copies leave no question as to the original appearance of the Orpheus and the Peliads slabs; the same is not true of the other two slabs. On the existing copies the head of the seated Peirithoos is lacking; Götze has restored the head as turned toward Theseus, i. e. toward the speaker's right, which results in this slab being identical in respect of the direction of gaze with the Hesperides slab and consequently makes difficult any balanced juxtaposition of the panels. I have preferred the old restoration with the head reverted, as carried out in plaster on the Louvre and Torlonia copies; this restoration also appears to be more congruent with the set of torso and arms. On the Hesperides panel Götze has argued against the existence of the tree in the original; I have here followed Götze, although not with complete conviction, preferring to reserve judgment until I can examine the relevant marbles at first-hand.

³⁷ *Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, p. 239. Curtius (*op. cit.*, p. 89) has admitted the likelihood of the four reliefs coming from one and the same monument, but has preferred to regard them as the work of four different sculptors. Götze has defended his original thesis in *Jahrbuch*, LXIII-LXIV, 1948-49, p. 91, note 2.

³⁸ Richter, *Red-Figured Athenian Vases in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New Haven, 1936, no. 166, pls. 162, 163, 173; Götze, *Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, p. 228.

³⁹ Some, though by no means all, of these have been pointed out by H. Diepolder, *Die attischen Grabreliefs*, Berlin, 1931, pp. 16 ff.

⁴⁰ Richter, *Ἀρχ. Ἐφ.*, 1937, pp. 20 ff.

⁴¹ Curtius, *Röm. Mitt.*, XLIX, 1934, p. 259, note 2.

only the accessibility but also the great popularity of the prototypes is attested by the number of copies: five of the Orpheus slab and three of each of the others, a situation without parallel among works of this general order.⁴²

All the panels are marked by a slight upward taper which may be regarded in this period as an indication that they were conceived of primarily as stelai standing on or near ground level. The same is implied by the amount of free space above the heads of the figures; this is readily paralleled among contemporary grave stelai whereas on fifth century Attic reliefs intended for lofty positions, e. g., the friezes of the Hephaisteion, Parthenon and Nike Temple and the Nike Temple Parapet, the heads crowd the top of the field. Three of the slabs retain a moulding more or less complete across their tops. Best preserved in this respect is the Orpheus panel in the Louvre which is crowned by a simple ovolo with an apophyge below leading into the plane of the background (Fig. 7).⁴³ The Naples version of the Orpheus panel has only the apophyge; the Berlin copy of the Peliad slab shows a debased or re-worked form of the same moulding as the Louvre Orpheus slab. The ovolo, in the time of the prototypes of our slabs, would not have been employed as an independent crowning moulding; its presence at once implies the original existence of a proper crowning member such as may be seen on the grave stelai of the period.⁴⁴ Since the lateral edges of all the copies, insofar as they are preserved, are plain and show no return of the mouldings, we may infer that the sides, like the front, of the top, were concealed by a frame.⁴⁵

In respect of width the four panels fall into two groups of two each, those with

⁴² I regard all the known examples of the three-figure reliefs as copies. Götze (*Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, pp. 224 f.), without having seen the Metropolitan Museum fragment of the Hesperides panel, left open the possibility of its being an original; autopsy leaves little doubt that this is the work of a copyist, though an able one. Several scholars, most recently Carpenter (*M.A.A.R.*, XVIII, 1941, pp. 68 f.; also Götze, *op. cit.* pp. 204 f.), have argued for the originality of the Lateran Peliad relief. It is to be observed, however, that on this example the whole composition has been tilted to the spectator's left with distressing consequences for the equilibrium of all three human figures and the tripod. The Berlin example of the same series, although a more mechanical piece of work, shows the composition in a normal, vertical disposition. It may be conjectured that the maker of the Lateran panel determined to bring the top of the head of the right Peliad to the level of the top of Medea's pointed hat, a mechanical correspondence that is not likely to have been insisted upon by a fifth-century designer. More in the flavor of the fifth century is the balance between the high peak of Medea's hat and the spike on the cap of Orpheus, these two figures having formed a balanced pair according to our restoration to be presented below.

I am grateful to Professors Rhys Carpenter, Margarete Bieber, Frank E. Brown and Dr. Heinz Götze for the benefit of their observations on the Lateran relief.

⁴³ I am indebted to M. J. Charbonneaux for the drawing reproduced in Fig. 7.

⁴⁴ Compare, for example, the stele in the National Museum, Athens: Diepolder, *Die attischen Grabreliefs*, pl. 12, 1.

⁴⁵ This detail distinguishes our slabs from the great Eleusis relief on which the mouldings return around the sides, proving that it stood free.

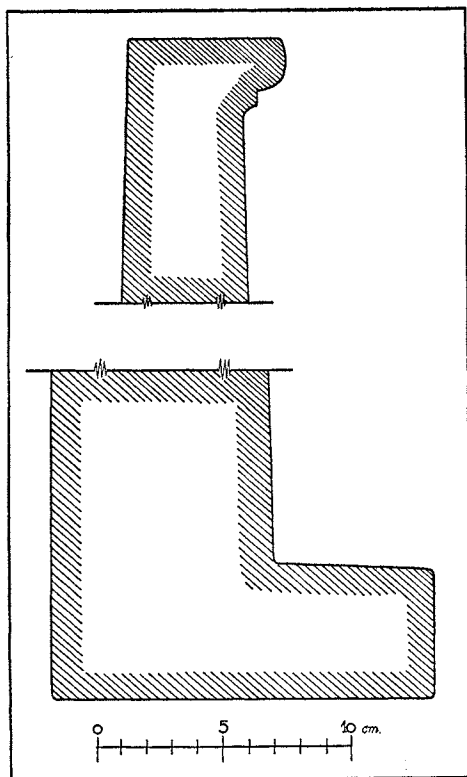


Fig. 7. Orpheus Panel in Louvre:
Partial Section

a seated figure being slightly wider than the others.⁴⁶ Starting with the narrow slabs, and using Götze's figures, we find that of the two copies of the Orpheus panel which preserve their full width the Naples example measures at the bottom 0.99 m. and the Villa Albani 0.95 m., an average of 0.97 m. The figures for the two well preserved Peliad panels are Lateran 0.955 m. and Berlin 0.97 m.; an average of 0.962 m. None of the three known replicas of the Peirithoos panel is preserved to its full width. The Museo Torlonia version, however, preserves the lower parts of all three figures and as now made up measures 1.22 m. across the bottom. This figure includes a vertical strip of modern restoration on the left side and an abnormally wide margin of background on the right. Observing the very narrow margin on the preserved right side of the Paris version, we may safely deduct a considerable amount from 1.22 m. to arrive at the width of the prototype; a figure between 1.05 m. and 1.10 m. will probably be near the mark. In the Hesperid panel we are virtually

reduced to the Villa Albani version in which the left-hand figure is entirely modern (although undoubtedly close to the original in scale and placing), and the right edge has also been restored. The relief as now

⁴⁶ It may be objected that the dimensions of Greek originals cannot safely be inferred from Roman copies. In the present instance, however, the multiplicity of copies provides a useful control. The lists of dimensions given by Götze show, for example, a remarkable uniformity in the heights of individual figures as they are repeated on the various copies of the same prototype. In comparing the Louvre and the Museo Torlonia versions of the Peirithoos slab, Götze discovered a remarkable agreement between the two in overall dimensions and in the spatial relations of figure to figure, despite many discrepancies in the rendering of details (*Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, pp. 210-216). So close are the correspondences in general that we must suppose the copyists to have worked by pointing either directly from the originals or from plaster casts of the originals. The same procedure has been hypothesized for the New York copy of the great Eleusinian relief, since the missing parts of the copy could be filled out with plaster casts of the corresponding parts of the original (Richter, *Αρχ. Έφ.*, 1937, pp. 20 ff.). Comparable correspondence in dimensions has been observed among the several copies of the slabs of the Dancing Maenad Monument, another Athenian structure closely contemporary with ours which must have stood at ground level in some prominent place in the city (G. Caputo, *Lo Scultore del grande Bassorilievo con la Danza delle Menadi in Tolemaide di Cirenaica*, Rome, 1948, p. 15).

constituted measures 1.168 m. across the bottom but here again the elimination of the abnormally wide lateral margin will reduce the figure to the bracket 1.05 m. to 1.10 m.

The copyists have taken some liberties in fixing the taper of their panels. In four cases the sides are well enough preserved to permit measurement. The Naples Orpheus relief shows a diminution of 0.065 m. as compared with 0.025 m. in the Villa Albani version. The Lateran Peliad panel tapers by 0.023 m., the Berlin counterpart of the same by 0.075 m. The diminution of the originals probably lay between the extremes here represented. For the Peirithoos panel diminution is attested by the preserved lower right hand corner in the Louvre version; for the Hesperid panel no ancient edge is preserved.

In determining the height of his slab the copyist was permitted a certain degree of freedom by the existence of the comparatively broad band of background above the heads of the figures in the original panels. Thus the height of those copies which preserve the upper moulding measures 1.18-1.19 m. in the Naples Orpheus, 1.14 m. in the Louvre Orpheus and 1.16-1.17 m. in the Berlin Orpheus. It is perhaps fair to conjecture that the height of the originals was four feet of 0.295 m. = 1.18 m.⁴⁷

The thickness of the background in those cases where measurements are available is as follows (quoting Götze): Naples Orpheus 0.075-0.08 m.; Louvre Orpheus *ca.* 0.08 m.; Lateran Peliads 0.09 m.; Berlin Peliads 0.09 m. above to 0.12 m. below; Louvre Peirithoos 0.08 m.; Berlin Peirithoos 0.08 m.; Metropolitan Museum Hesperids 0.05 m. Although it would be rash to suppose that the copyists were bound to retain the thickness of the originals, the preponderance of a thickness of *ca.* 0.08 m. in the copies is striking and perhaps significant. The maximum projection of the relief is *ca.* 0.05-0.06 m. The thickness of the slabs at the bottom, inclusive of background and the ledge on which the figures stand, varies from 0.12 to 0.14 m.; the Berlin Peliad relief being abnormal with a maximum thickness of 0.17 m.

Returning now to our parapet sill with the two pair of sculptured panels in mind, we see at once that the two broad slabs can be accommodated perfectly, and only, in the spaces adjacent to the east entrance; it follows that the companion pair must have occupied the corresponding positions on the west side (Fig. 8). Since, moreover, the obvious intention of the designer was to emphasize the entrance ways and to lead the eye toward them, we may be sure that the slabs were so distributed that in each case two out of the three heads on each panel were turned toward the opening. Hence the Peirithoos slab goes to the right of the east entrance and the Hesperid slab to its left, the Peliad slab to the right of the west entrance and the Orpheus slab to its left. It will be apparent that the congruence in technical details is complete, the

⁴⁷ For the use of a foot of 0.295 m. in the second period of the Peribolos cf. Crosby, *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, p. 91, note 20.

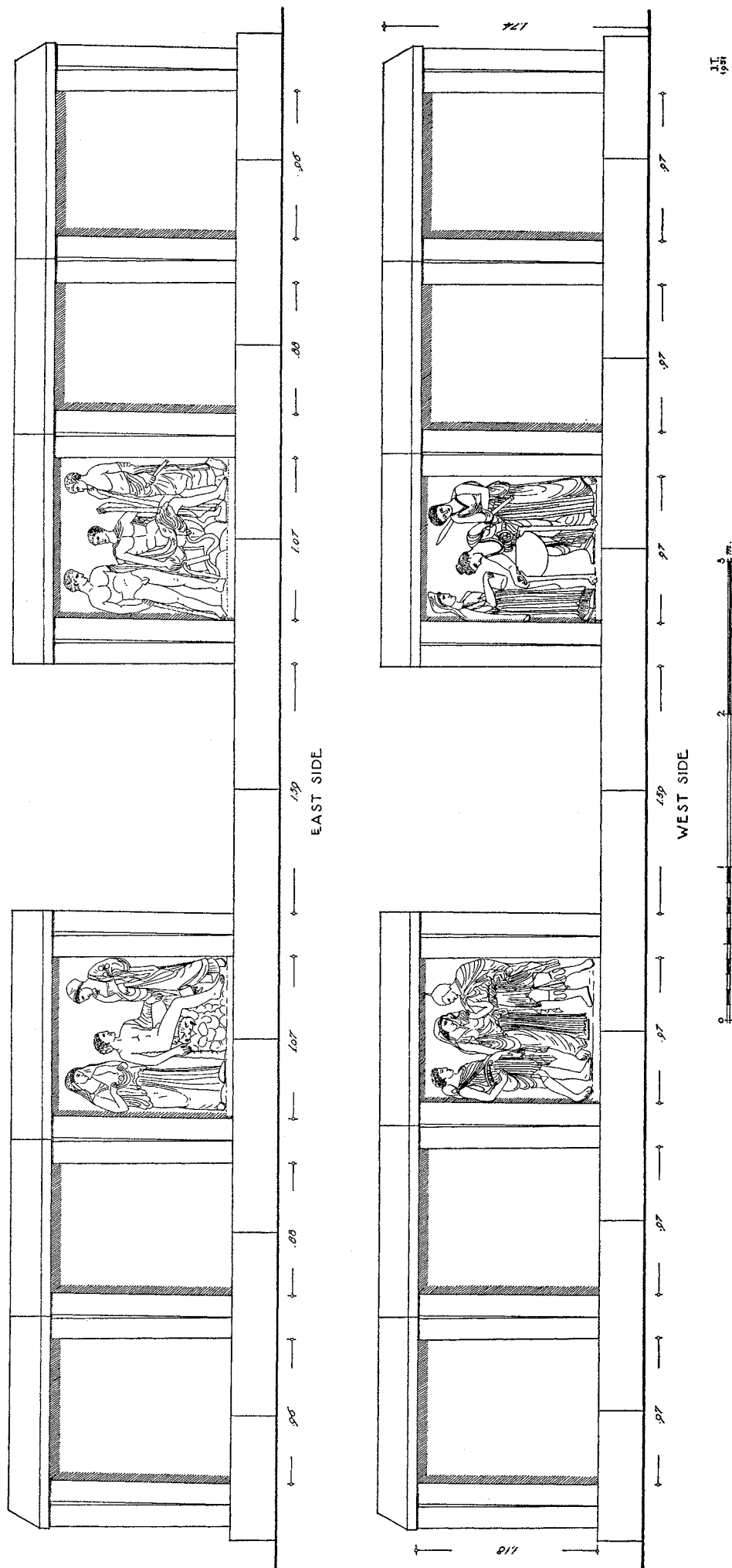


Fig. 8. East and West Sides of Parapet: Restored Elevation

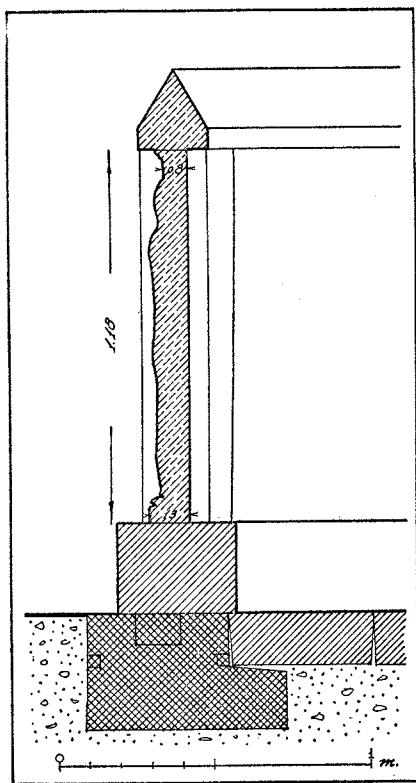


Fig. 9. Parapet of Period II:
Restored Section

width and thickness of the bottoms of the slabs agreeing with the indications on the existing sill (Fig. 9), the height and upward taper and the need for enframement meeting the requirements of our hypothetical reconstruction based on the analogy of contemporary monuments. Most convincing of all is the fact that the greater width of the Peirithoos and Hesperid panels, occasioned by the use of a seated rather than standing central figure, perfectly accounts for the otherwise puzzling and disturbing enlargement of the spaces adjacent to the east entrance. It may be observed also that such a restoration will explain the curiously hybrid nature of the plaques which have points in common with both metopes and free-standing stelai. Finally, this placing puts the reliefs at a level at which the copyist could with the greatest facility have done his pointing or taken impressions for the making of plaster casts; within a stone's throw of our precinct stood Hermes Agoraios who is described in Lucian, *Jupiter Tragoedus*, 33, as "covered with pitch from being cast every day by the sculptors."

It may seem at first glance surprising that only four out of the twenty-six panels of the parapet should have been sculptured. One will recall, however, that only eighteen out of the sixty-eight metopes of the Hephaisteion were carved and that the juxtaposition of decorated and plain panels is just as abrupt on the temple as in our parapet. The sculptured metopes of the Hephaisteion are confined to the east end of the building, ten on the east façade proper and four at the eastern extremity of both the north and the south flank; they thus adorn the three exposed sides of the east porch of the temple which constitutes its entrance. Our sculptured panels also would seem to have been placed with the object of emphasizing and adorning the entrances to the sanctuary.

The scheme here proposed for the placing of the sculptured slabs finds other correspondences in the Hephaisteion. That the eastern slabs were broader than the western should not startle anyone who has in mind the greater length of the eastern inner frieze of the Hephaisteion as compared with the western. The prominence given to Herakles and Theseus in the two broad panels of the east side of the parapet is again paralleled by the glorification of the same two heroes in the eastern metopes and pediment of the Hephaisteion. The Peliads and Medea, even Orpheus and

Eurydike were in Athenian eyes barbarians and as such were appropriately relegated to the west side just as the Lapiths and Centaurs were kept in the west frieze of the Hephaisteion. The double prominence given to the sculpture of the east side of the parapet by scale and theme was perhaps the more justified by the fact that this side faced directly on the Panathenaic Way, just as the temple faced on the market place.

It is also to be observed that the seated figures which dominate the eastern panels of the parapet find ready parallels in the east (but not in the west) friezes of the Hephaisteion, Parthenon and Temple of Nike Apteros. The presence of the seated figures, moreover, combined with the quiescence of the standing figures in the east panels, lends to the eastern pair something of the apparent tranquility which is repeatedly found in eastern pedimental groups; the feeling of movement and action is much more palpable in the western panels, as in western pediments.

A nice discrimination is to be observed in the distribution of the sexes. On entering the sanctuary from the east one had three males on his right, if from the west three females; to one's left in the east entrance were one male and two females, in the west two males and one female. The sum of the right-hand panels was therefore three males and three females, and likewise the sum of the left-hand panels. Such balancing of the sexes may be paralleled elsewhere in pediments and friezes of the period, notably in the east friezes of Hephaisteion and Parthenon.

One might, therefore, regard our two pair of panels as constituting a highly abbreviated version of the "normal" sculptural decoration of Attic temples of the fifth century, the curtailment being due no doubt to the small scale of our sanctuary and to the financial exigencies of the time.

THE THEMES OF THE PARAPET RELIEFS

It is time now to consider whether the themes of the four reliefs can be brought into relation with what we know of the Athenian conception of Pity. That conception was comparatively simple and close to our own: compassion inspired by the misfortunes common to human life, and philanthropy, especially toward strangers in distress. One aspect of the general conception is stressed repeatedly by the literary sources, viz. the pity inspired by a grievous situation that has come about through a reversal of fortune. This is illustrated by Statius' *vestes mutata sorte relictæ* (*Thebais*, XII, l. 490). Pausanias is explicit: "Pity, who of all the gods is most helpful in human life and in reversals of fortune."⁴⁸ A particularly illuminating reference occurs in one of the mock legal cases recorded in the *Controversiae* of the Elder Seneca.⁴⁹ An Olynthian taken captive by Philip II at the sack of the city in 348 B. C. was purchased by the famous Athenian painter Parrhasios. The artist placed

⁴⁸ I, 17, 1: Ἐλέου βωμός, ᾧ μάλιστα θεῶν ἐς ἀνθρώπινον βίον καὶ μεταβολὰς πραγμάτων ὅτι ὠφέλιμος.

⁴⁹ *Controversiae* X, 5, 34, pp. 502 ff., ed. A. Kiessling.

his newly acquired slave on the rack and used him as a model for Prometheus Bound. The slave died under the torture, but Parrhasios finished his picture and dedicated it in the sanctuary of Athena. Parrhasios is accused of treason as one who has betrayed the city's reputation for philanthropy. The accuser suggests that the painting might better have been used to adorn the Altar of Pity: *Si videtur tibi istis muneribus aram Misericordiae orna.*⁵⁰ The point of the story is clearly the reversal, or rather double reversal of fortune that brought the Olynthian into a piteous situation: dismayed as he must have been at first on falling into the hands of the embittered Macedonian king, the wretched man's hopes were raised high by the prospect of belonging to the household of a distinguished Athenian, but those hopes were dashed utterly by the grim use to which he was finally put. Although the case was purely imaginary, the story illustrates what was regarded by the ancients as appropriate decoration for the Altar of Pity.⁵¹

In the adornment of a monument of the fifth century B. C. the figures from real life would have been replaced, of course, by mythological characters. We were given a good example of what to expect when, a few years ago, Ernst Langlotz identified a sculptured metope from the Temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous which is our best parallel in Attica for a sanctuary of the fifth century devoted to the worship of a pure abstraction. The theme is the slaughter of the Niobids, clearly chosen as an example of the working of Nemesis.⁵²

Let us return now to a brief review of the themes of the four sculptured slabs. Orpheus had been promised that he might recover his dead wife Eurydike provided he could find her in Hades and bring her back to the upper world without looking on her face. Having succeeded in segregating her from among the myriad ghosts, Orpheus had in triumph reached the threshold of the upper world, but here, unable longer to restrain his natural impulse, he glanced back and lost his beloved forever. The artist has chosen the moment when their glances met; Hermes Psychopompos, who is laying hold of Eurydike to lead her back, already knows the issue and so too did every Greek who viewed the marble. Here then is a poignant representation of a piteous situation that followed on a reversal of fortune.

Medea, by means of a trial demonstration, had convinced the daughters of Pelias that they might rejuvenate their father by cutting him up and boiling him. Our artist has chosen the moment before the awful climax. The one daughter brings out

⁵⁰ Cf. the story preserved by Plutarch (*Nikias*, 30) of how the innocent and unsuspecting messenger of the tidings of Syracuse was racked by the Athenians.

⁵¹ Cf. the school theme of Libanios: *Demosthenis de Ara Misericordiae Oratio* (Foerster, *Libanii Opera*, vol. VI, pp. 339-369). Demosthenes, having taken refuge at the Altar of Pity, was abandoned by the Athenians to Philip's emissaries. Kindly treated and released by Philip, Demosthenes advised his fellow citizens to abolish the Altar of Pity.

⁵² Langlotz, *Scritti in onore di Bartolomeo Nogara*, Citta del Vaticano, 1937, p. 225, pl. 21; H. Kähler, *Das griechische Metopenbild*, Munich, 1949, pp. 69, 88, pl. 94.

the tripod cauldron; the baleful witch holds ready her jar of magic herbs; but the deeply troubled attitude of the second daughter who bears the knife warns us that the boiling is to have not supernatural but only natural results and that the high hopes of the daughters are to end in bloody tragedy: another reversal of fortune with piteous consequences.

Peirithoos and Theseus, having failed in their attempt to carry off Persphone from Hades, were caught and chained to a rock. Their hopes were raised high by the appearance of their powerful friend, Herakles, but he succeeded in freeing only Theseus, not Peirithoos. The panel shows the three heroes at the pitiful moment of parting, two of them to return to the upper world, the third to remain for the rest of time bound to a cliff in Hades.

The fourth panel portrays a fateful moment in Herakles' final labor, the acquisition of the golden apples of the Hesperides. Having found out, after long journeying, the garden of the gods where the apples grew, Herakles succeeded in inducing the fair sisters to drug the serpent which guarded the tree and to pluck the apples for him. In the course of these negotiations, as we know from many vase paintings, the girls had fallen in love with the handsome young hero. Yet the moment came when the Hesperides, if they would have Herakles complete his mission, must turn over the apples and part with their loved one. The marble depicts the girls in the final anguish of the decision which was to reverse their fortune and to leave them in piteous desolation.⁵³ The attitude of the youthful hero is also sober; we may imagine that his triumph in achieving his task has already been clouded by the painful thought of parting.

As Götze has well observed, the four panels thus illustrate all the significant human relationships: parents and children, man and wife, companions, lovers.⁵⁴ And in each case the incident chosen illustrates a piteous situation induced by a reversal of fortune. All the victims are such as might well have come to seek comfort at the Altar of Pity, at whose thresholds they are indeed depicted. Here then is a marble record of the "distressed who are ever nigh her," to be compared with the record of Athena's adorants in the Panathenaic frieze of the Parthenon.

⁵³ Götze (*Jahrbuch*, LXIII-LXIV, 1948-49, pp. 91-99) has argued that the figure to the left is not a second Hesperid but Hera in the act of receiving the apples from Herakles, an act which would signify Herakles' decision to complete his mission and hence to take leave of the Hesperides. Götze stresses the difference in the age, bearing and dress of the two female figures and insists that the attitude of the left-hand figure is appropriate not to giving but to receiving. Surely, however, the differences noted between the two figures are such as might well have been introduced to avoid monotony (as in the Peliad relief and in vase renderings of the Hesperides theme), while the hesitant attitude of the woman with the apples in the fold of her dress is adequately motivated by her reluctance to bring the parting nearer. I also prefer, *pace* Götze, to hold to the view that the female figure in the tenth metope on the east façade of the Hephaisteion is a Hesperid rather than Athena (*Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, p. 245).

⁵⁴ *Jahrbuch*, LXIII-LXIV, 1948-49, p. 99.

THE OCCASION FOR THE ERECTION OF THE PARAPET

It may be worth while to consider briefly the occasion for the refurbishing of the old sanctuary and the construction of the new parapet with its carved panels. The majority of the many scholars who have previously concerned themselves with the three-figure reliefs have been impressed by the evident kinship between these representations and contemporary tragedy, and most have been inclined to hypothesize some direct or indirect connection with the theatre, usually on the hypothesis that the panels formed part of one or more choregic monuments.⁵⁵ Yet the advocates of theatral associations have been compelled to admit their failure to establish a direct connection between any of the four reliefs and any known tragedy, nor has anyone succeeded on the technical side in finding a place for the slabs in the theatre or in fitting them into a choregic monument of known form.⁵⁶

Some earlier scholars had considered the possibility of a sepulchral connection especially for the Orpheus relief, supposing that the panel might have been set in the wall of some famous tomb.⁵⁷ No adequate parallel, however, has been adduced from the period of the three-figure reliefs for the use of mythological scenes in tombs whether private or public.⁵⁸ Yet it is hard to shake off the feeling of some connection with death. This feeling is inspired partly by the prominence of Hades in two out of the four panels. It is strongly reinforced by the fact that the whole physical appearance of the reliefs and their composition fit into the natural line of development of Attic gravestones of the second half of the fifth century and that our reliefs in turn influenced the design of subsequent gravestones.⁵⁹ (The persisting and universal appeal

⁵⁵ For a summary of earlier opinions cf. Götze, *Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, pp. 189-191, 247-251, and, more recent, Curtius, *Interpretationen von sechs griechischen Bildwerken*, pp. 83-105.

⁵⁶ Götze (*Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, p. 249) suggests as a possibility that the three-figure reliefs, like the great Eleusinian relief, may have stood individually in front of a wall. It must be noted, however, that the analogy with the Eleusinian relief is not perfect since on it the crowning mouldings are complete in themselves and return around the edges of the stele, whereas on our series, as implied at least by the copies, the upper part of the crown was cut as a separate member and the mouldings were confined to the front of the stele.

⁵⁷ Cf. for example P. Gardner, *Sculptured Tombs of Hellas*, London, 1896, p. 181; D. M. Robinson, *Hommages à Joseph Bidez et à Franz Cumont*, II, p. 310.

⁵⁸ The exception which may be taken to prove the rule is the grave lekythos of Myrrhine (Conze, *Attische Grabreliefs*, II, No. 1146, pl. CCXLII; Diepolder, *Die attischen Grabreliefs*, p. 19, pl. 13) on which Hermes Psychopompos leads away the dead. Both the idea and the figure style are clearly derived from the Orpheus panel. The unique position of the lekythos has been emphasized by Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 180 and by A. Brueckner, *Ornament u. Form der attischen Grabstelen*, Strassburg, 1886, p. 84.

⁵⁹ Götze (*Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, pp. 273-280) has traced the earlier history of the three-figure relief in some detail, but has done little to relate the four panels of our series to the gravestones. This may be done easily from the plates of Diepolder, *Die attischen Grabreliefs*, and from Diepolder's comments especially on pp. 16 ff.

of the Orpheus panel in this connection may be illustrated by the evident part which it played in the design of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, Pl. 18e).⁶⁰ It might be conjectured, therefore, that the parapet was designed to commemorate, directly or indirectly, some event of national importance that involved the state in tragedy and caused the death of many citizens. That the Athenians did not shrink from memorializing the grim as well as the glorious aspects of war is sufficiently attested by the Mourning Athena from the Acropolis who is perhaps best interpreted as the patron goddess of the city in sorrowful contemplation of a casualty list of fallen citizens (Pl. 18c). If such an hypothesis is to be entertained regarding the three-figure reliefs we shall have to find an occasion of major consequence, since no other public monument of fifth-century Athens compares with this in the cumulative effect of its solemn sentiment.

Before proceeding further with this line of reasoning we must consider more closely the date of our parapet. As we have seen above (p. 52), the evidence of the associated potsherds and the style of working of its blocks indicate for the sill of the new parapet a date in the last quarter of the fifth century. Recent students of the three-figure reliefs have tended to date them in the decade 420-410 B. C.⁶¹ A date rather late in the decade is perhaps indicated by the close similarity in both figure style and composition between the panels and the *traditio* relief of 410/09 B. C. in the Louvre,⁶² by the close kinship between the panels and the frieze of the Erechtheion which was being carved 409-06 B. C., and by the dependence which has been observed between our panels and the Nike Temple Parapet, datable with a high degree of probability within the Peace of Nikias (421-415 B. C.).⁶³

A date late in the decade 420-410 B. C. brings us close to the time of the Sicilian disaster of 413 B. C., an event which Thucydides (VII, 87) regarded as the "greatest of all that had happened in the course of the War, indeed the greatest of all Hellenic events of which we have record—for the victors most splendid, for the vanquished

⁶⁰ Architect, Lorimer Rich; sculptor, Thomas Hudson Jones; completed, 1931. I am indebted to Colonel James F. Watt, QMC, Memorial Division, for information on the history of the Tomb and for the illustration. The Arlington monument shows how admirably our panel is suited for insertion in an architectural frame.

⁶¹ Cf. especially the discussion by Götze in *Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, pp. 239-245: "nach 420;" E. Kjellberg, *Studien zu den attischen Reliefs des V. Jahrhunderts*, Uppsala, 1926, p. 141 (of the Orpheus relief): "etwa in das zweitletzte Jahrzehnt des V. Jahrhunderts;" Curtius, *Interpretationen von sechs griechischen Bildwerken*, p. 83: "Jahrzehnt 420-410 v. Chr."

⁶² *I.G.*, I², 304; *Encyclopédie Photographique de l'Art*, Le Musée du Louvre, III, Paris, 1938, p. 168. The surviving figure on the treaty relief of Athens-Neapolis of 410/09 B. C. is identical in ponderation with Eurydike: *I.G.*, I², 108 +; *Jahrbuch*, XLII, 1927, p. 70; *B.S.A.*, XLVI, 1951, pp. 200-209, pl. 23.

⁶³ Cf. Carpenter's observations on the Peliad panel in *M.A.A.R.*, XVIII, 1941, p. 62. Professor Carpenter informs me by letter that he continues to regard the Peliad panel as later than the Nike Temple Parapet but as still within the fifth century.

most disastrous.”^{63a} The appalling reversal of fortune suffered by Athens in her Sicilian adventure is effectively brought out in Thucydides’ account by the contrast between his description of the brilliant departure (VII, 30-32) and his sombre final word: “land-force and fleet and everything perished and few out of many came back home” (VII, 87). The loss of life was very great; 2700 Athenian hoplites had participated in the expedition,⁶⁴ and of all these only stragglers returned. The recollection of this shocking loss of men inspired two poignant lines in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, written in the year following the disaster, lines which must have sent a shiver of horror through the theatre.⁶⁵ The tragedy of the business impressed Euripides who is reported to have composed an *epikedeion* on the fallen.⁶⁶

One is tempted to look for veiled references to the Sicilian adventure in the themes of our panels. Was Eurydike, for instance, conceived, in somewhat the same spirit as Basileia in Aristophanes’ *Birds*, as the symbol of Athens’ earlier prosperity and power, so nearly recovered and then so irretrievably lost in front of Syracuse?

Should Medea be thought of as playing the role of Segesta in the Sicilian affair? The people of Segesta, as Thucydides more than once emphasized (VI, 9, 1; VI, 11, 7), were barbarians; as pledges of their good faith they had given the first Athenian envoys 60 talents of silver and assured them of ample additional wealth (VI, 8, 1); they impressed the second deputation by a cunning display of gold and silver vessels (VI, 46). So too did Medea, the alien woman *par excellence* of Greek myth, urge on the daughters of Pelias by a trial demonstration of her powers of rejuvenation. If allegory be admitted in the Peliad panel, the subject of the hoped-for transformation must, of course, be Athens. The metaphor of old age was placed by Thucydides (VI, 18, 6) in the mouth of Alkibiades as he advocated the Sicilian expedition in 415 B. C.: “the state, if she remain in peace, will, like anything else, wear herself out upon herself and her skill in all pursuits will grow old (*ἐγγηράσκεισθαι*).” It will be recalled, moreover, that Aristophanes in his *Knights* (424 B. C.) had represented the rejuvenation of Demos by the Medean formula.⁶⁷ If one will venture still further with the allegory, he may find in the representation of the two Peliads on the marble

^{63a} This passage and those which follow are reprinted by permission of the publishers from the Loeb Classical Library, translated by C. F. Smith.

⁶⁴ Thucydides, VI, 43 and VII, 20.

⁶⁵ Line 524: ‘οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ;’ ‘μὰ Δι’ οὐ δῆτ’;’ εἰφ’ ἑτερός τις, and line 589: (Lysistrata) πρῶτιστον μὲν γε τεκοῦσαι | κακπέμψασαι παῖδας ὀπλίτας. (Proboulos) σίγα, μὴ μνησικακίης.

⁶⁶ Plutarch, *Nikias*, 17. It will be recalled also that some of the Athenian prisoners secured their freedom by reciting verses of Euripides to their Sicilian masters (*ibid.*, 29).

⁶⁷ The theme of rejuvenation recurs with extraordinary frequency in contemporary drama, e. g. in no less than eight out of the eleven surviving plays of Aristophanes; in the lost *Geras* of the same comedian; in the *Bacchai* of Euripides (lines 184 ff.). Cf. B. E. Richardson, *Old Age among the Ancient Greeks*, Baltimore, 1933, pp. 67 f.; F. M. Cornford, *The Origin of Attic Comedy*, Cambridge, 1934, pp. 87-93; W. Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, I, iv, Munich, 1946, p. 195.

panel a most vivid parallel to the contrast drawn by Thucydides (VI, 8-26) between the two schools of thought in the great debate on whether or not there should be an expedition to Sicily: the young, eager and bustling sister standing for the party of youth and action headed by Alkibiades, while the elder sister, whose knife marks her as the actual agent of the deed but whose expression betrays her foreboding, must recall the cautious and fearful Nikias into whose unwilling hands was thrust the magnificent armament that was to prove his country's ruin.

Dare one suspect in the representation of the inglorious ending of Perithoos' attempt to do violence to Persephone a reminder of Alkibiades' travesty of the Mysteries? Was the story intended to suggest Sicily where the rape of Persephone was commonly localized? May Persephone of the story have been expected vaguely to personify the island as Demeter personified Sicily on the Dionysios relief of 394/3 B. C.? ⁶⁸ Is Herakles' role in the story to be paralleled by Demosthenes' arrival in Sicily with reinforcements whereby he brought high hopes of deliverance, hopes which were not justified by the event?

In Herakles' journey to the westernmost reaches of the world in search of the golden apples of eternal life it is very easy to read a parable on the Athenians' expedition to Sicily, "the longest voyage from home yet attempted," ⁶⁹ particularly when we read that the chief motive with the multitude was "the hope not only to get money for the present but also to acquire additional dominion which would always be an inexhaustible source of pay." ⁷⁰

These are intriguing speculations, but it must be borne in mind that not one of the suggested references to the historical event is susceptible of proof. On the other hand, the choice of themes and the prevailing atmosphere of the reliefs indicate clearly that they were designed in the shadow of some great disaster, which can scarcely be other than Syracuse, just as the reliefs that had been carved a few years earlier to adorn the parapet of another Athenian sanctuary, that of Nike Apteros, reflect the glow of triumph that came of Pylos and Spakteria.⁷¹

⁶⁸ I.G., II², 18; J. N. Svoronos, *Das Athener Nationalmuseum*, pl. 205, 2; R. Binneboesel, *Studien zu den attischen Urkundenreliefs des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts*, Diss. Leipzig, 1932; R. Schöne, *Griechischen Reliefs aus athenischen Sammlungen*, Leipzig, 1872, pl. 7, 49; H. K. Süsserot, *Griechische Plastik des 4. Jahrhunderts vor Christus*, Frankfurt am Main, 1938, pl. 2, 1.

⁶⁹ Thucydides VI, 31, 6. Cf. also 21, 2; 30, 2; 68, 2; 86, 3.

⁷⁰ Thucydides VI, 24, 3. Cf. also 90, 4.

⁷¹ The date of the victory was 425 B. C.; the date of the temple, according to Dinsmoor, *ca.* 427-424 B. C. (*The Architecture of Ancient Greece*, London, 1950, p. 185). The design of the parapet was presumably conceived within those years, even if not executed until the Peace of Nikias (421-415 B. C.). It is also true, of course, that the themes of the parapet, Nikai making sacrifices and setting up trophies, have a general propriety for the cult; it is to be noted, too, that Persian weapons occur on some of the trophies, recalling the triumph that was uppermost in the minds of the Athenians when the temple was first projected in or about 449 B. C.

If one turn to contemporary drama, the case for supposing that our monument echoes the shock of the Sicilian disaster is at least as plausible as the generally accepted view that the *Birds* of Aristophanes allegorized the expansive mood and fantastic expectations which dominated the Athenian scene on the eve of the expedition.⁷² A still closer analogy may be drawn between our panels and the *Trojan Women* of Euripides (415 B. C.) which so closely followed the Melian massacre and which so evidently expressed the reaction of a sensitive lover of Athens to the outrage committed by his country. In the carved marbles as in the play the artist's commentary is couched in mythological terms, but in each case the mythological characters are so far humanized and the feeling is so poignant as to leave no doubt that the author was inspired by a very profound and a very fresh experience.

Of significance also is the similarity in the treatment of Herakles and Theseus as between our reliefs and the *Herakles* of Euripides. At the close of the play Herakles, aghast at the results of his mad slaughtering and desperately in need of an asylum, is led off to Athens by Theseus who recalls with gratitude his own deliverance from the underworld by Herakles. It is true that the two heroes had been jointly and splendidly honored a generation earlier by the Athenians in the Doric frieze of the Temple of Hephaistos, but nowhere else, apart from Euripides' play, is the association of the two so prominently and so tenderly illustrated. In the Peirithoos panel we have before us the delivery of Theseus from Hades; in the companion panel Herakles appears as if among the suppliants at this altar, the acknowledged place of asylum in Athens, and a place closely connected by Athenian tradition with the family of Herakles. It is hard to avoid the feeling that the choice of themes in our parapet was somewhat influenced by Euripides' *Herakles*, something which would be entirely possible if we accept for the play the most plausible date, i. e. within the Peace of Nikias (421-415 B. C.).⁷³

We should not, however, regard the four parapet panels as direct illustrations of or in any substantial way dependent on contemporary plays; we shall do better to think of them as an independent tetralogy in marble comprising, as did at least one of Euripides' tetralogies, three canonical tragedies and a fourth which was a blend of tragedy and comedy.⁷⁴ In their deeply human quality, in their preoccupation with psychological problems, in their predilection for romantic love and melodramatic situations, the altar reliefs find their best parallels in the mature plays of Euripides.

⁷² Cf. B. B. Rogers' introduction to his edition of the *Birds*, London, 1906, pp. xii-xix.

⁷³ On the vexed problem of the date cf. W. Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, III, i, Munich, 1940, p. 437.

⁷⁴ Götze had arrived at much the same conclusion in the second of his articles on the reliefs: *Jahrbuch*, LXIII-LXIV, 1948-49, p. 99. Cf. also G. Rodenwaldt, *Das Relief bei den Griechen*, Berlin, 1923, p. 57.

DECORATED TEMENOS WALLS

Our parapet belongs to a period in which decorated screens were much in vogue among Athenian designers. That of which we know most, though we possess the least, enclosed three sides of the rectangular area in front of the statue of Zeus in his temple at Olympia. According to Pausanias (V, 11, 4) it was a work of Panainos, the brother of Phidias, who is also reported to have participated in the painting of the Stoa Poikile. The surviving remains indicate that the barrier consisted of stuccoed poros orthostates set between the columns.⁷⁵ Each of the nine panels, as Pausanias reports, was filled by a scene of two mythological figures. In addition to the structural similarity, it is worth noting the large common element in subject matter as between the Olympia screen and our parapet. In both works Herakles was prominent, appearing at Athens in two out of four panels, at Olympia in three out of nine; both monuments, moreover, included representations of the Hesperides and of the Theseus-Perithoos story. The more compact Athenian series was marked, however, by a uniformity of motif which was curiously lacking at Olympia.

The Olympia parapet, being indoors, was naturally painted; the parapet of Nike Apteros, erected a few years later in Athens to protect and adorn the top of the goddess' lofty bastion, was carved in high relief the better to withstand the weather and to profit from the sunlight. Executed apparently during the optimistic years of the Peace of Nikias (421-415 B. C.), this parapet shows the free use of marble in large masses, socle, die and crown being cut in one block, in striking contrast with the frugal construction of our screen. The Nike frieze is ostensibly continuous, unbroken by posts or triglyphs, yet a glance at the restored scheme will reveal at once that each slab was designed as a panel and that the normal unit comprised two divinities (Athena or Nike) separated by a bull, an altar or a trophy.⁷⁶ One might therefore regard this design as intermediate between the normal two-figure scheme familiar in the metopes of earlier Attic buildings, as also in Panainos' painted screen, and the more involved three-figure composition of our panels.

Two other monuments of the latter part of the fifth century may be mentioned in this connection, although both are in a highly problematic category. First, the high reliefs associated with the Altar of Ares in the Athenian Agora, similar in scale, in height of relief and in quality to the Nike Temple Parapet, although probably a few years earlier in date. Reduced as they now are to two fragmentary female torsos and half a dozen exquisite but battered heads, these sculptures have not yet been certainly

⁷⁵ The results of Dörpfeld's re-examination, as well as the citation of earlier discussions, are to be found in W. Dörpfeld, *Alt-Olympia*, I, Berlin, 1935, pp. 247-256.

⁷⁶ R. Carpenter, *The Sculpture of the Nike Temple Parapet*, Cambridge, Mass., 1929, fig. 14, plan I.

placed in relation to the altar.⁷⁷ Second, the Dancing Maenad Monument, now represented by ancient copies: a circular structure somewhat over two metres in diameter with isolated figures of maenads carved in low relief on its outer face.⁷⁸ The structure is too high to have served itself as an altar and its proportions are very unlikely for a statue base of the late fifth century (the most popular current hypothesis). One might therefore consider the possibility of the orthostates having formed a hollow drum interrupted by a narrow entrance in such a way as to constitute a screen around a small altar; two such circular altar screens, with plain rather than sculptured walls, were erected by an Athenian family on Delos *ca.* 400 B. C.⁷⁹

Only a few predecessors are known for this late fifth century crop of ornate screens. In the first place it may be observed that the original Peisistratid parapet around the Altar of the Twelve Gods was probably carved with figures of the Twelve Gods in relief.⁸⁰ This consideration may have determined the use of six panels on either entrance side, making twelve in all. It is tempting, moreover, to suppose that the author of our parapet had the earlier work in mind in laying out his sculptural decoration, for it too contains a total of twelve figures, six of either sex, a balance which may surely be hypothecated for any formal representation of the Twelve Gods. Although possible echoes of such earlier reliefs have been noted in both sculpture and painting, no certainty has yet been achieved.

Another and better attested early example of a sculptured altar screen is that of the sanctuary of Ajax in Aegina, known to us from Pausanias' account (II, 29, 6): "In the most prominent part of the city is the so-called sanctuary of Ajax, a square peribolos of marble. Alongside the entrance are reliefs representing the ambassadors once sent to Ajax by the Greeks. . . . Within the enclosure are olive trees planted long ago and an altar which does not project far from the ground. It is said in secret that this altar might be the tomb of Ajax."⁸¹ The Aiakeion thus had in common

⁷⁷ *Hesperia*, XX, 1951, pp. 57 f. In the season of 1951 three more female heads were found around the ruins of the altar and a second torso was recognized among the finds of earlier seasons.

⁷⁸ Franz Winter, "Über ein Vorbild neu-attischer Reliefs," *Berlin Winckelmannsprogramm*, L, 1890, pp. 97-124, pl. II, left; Gisela M. A. Richter, *A.J.A.*, XL, 1936, pp. 10-20; Giacomo Caputo, *Lo scultore del grande bassorilievo con la danza delle menadi in Tolemaide di Cirenaica*; Oscar Broneer, *Hesperia*, XX, 1951, pp. 297 ff.

⁷⁹ Roussel, *B.C.H.*, LIII, 1929, pp. 167-176, figs. 1-7, pl. V; Yavis, *Greek Altars*, pp. 200-202. A fragment from a circular parapet of this type was found in the northeast corner of the Athenian Agora in 1951.

⁸⁰ This hypothesis, which antedates the excavation of the site, was favorably regarded by Miss Crosby: *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, pp. 96, 103.

⁸¹ 'Ἐν ἐπιφανεστάτῳ δὲ τῆς πόλεως τὸ Αἰάκειον καλούμενον, περίβολος τετράγωνος λευκοῦ λίθου. ἐπειργασμένοι δὲ εἰσι κατὰ τὴν ἔσοδον οἱ παρὰ Αἰακὸν ποτε ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων σταλέντες. . . . τοῦ περιβόλου δὲ ἐντὸς ἐλαίαι πεφύκασιν ἐκ παλαιοῦ καὶ βωμός ἐστιν οὐ πολὺ ἀνέχων ἐκ τῆς γῆς· ὥς δὲ καὶ μνήμα οἶτος ὁ βωμός ἐστιν Αἰακοῦ, λεγόμενόν ἐστιν ἐν ἀπορρήτῳ.

I owe the reference to Miss Barbara Philippaki. Cf. Hitzig-Blümner, *Pausaniae Graeciae*

with our peribolos the square outline, the altar within, the trees and the marble reliefs by the entrance; it differed in having but a single entrance. That the chief glory of the Aeginetan monument was its sculptured parapet is evident from Pindar's reference to it as "the well fenced grove of the Aiakidai."⁸²

The practice of adorning a gateway with relief sculpture on either side of the opening has been regarded as of eastern origin⁸³ and possible antecedents are indeed to be found especially in the gateways and palaces of the great Hittite sites.⁸⁴ But, apart from such isolated phenomena as the Sphinx Tomb of Xanthos,⁸⁵ intermediate links are lacking in Asia Minor.⁸⁶

It is to the island of Thasos that we must turn for the finest series of openings flanked by reliefs. No less than three of the gateways in the city wall are known to have been so adorned.⁸⁷ A similar disposition of figures is known on two other Thasian monuments: a small, fragmentary and isolated marble relief on which two female votaries approach a doorway or niche occupied by a goddess⁸⁸ and the well

Descriptio, ad loc. Welter (*Aigina*, Berlin, 1938, p. 52) places the Aiakeion on a terrace at the southeast corner of the Temple of Aphrodite and associates it with the remains of a propylon. This identification, however, would not seem certain; the scale of the propylon is more appropriate to the peribolos of the great temple. Curtius (*Peloponnesus*, I, p. 334) interpreted Pausanias' ἐν ἐπιφανεστάτῳ τῆς πόλεως as *medio in foro*. Welter (*loc. cit.*) attributes to the Aiakeion a fragmentary late archaic relief now in the Aegina Museum.

⁸² *Ol.* XIII, 109: Αἰακιδᾶν τ' εὐερκὲς ἄλσος. Cf. *Nem.* V, 53: προθύρουσιν δ' Αἰακοῦ | ἀνθέων ποιέοντα φέρε. *Ol.* XIII dates from 464 B. C., *Nem.* V from the 80's of the fifth century. Welter (*loc. cit.*) dates the construction of the Aiakeion to ca. 490 B. C.

⁸³ G. Mendel, *B.C.H.*, XXIV, 1900, p. 567, note 5; F. Eichler, *Die Reliefs des Heroon von Gjölbaschi-Trysa*, Vienna, 1950, p. 10.

⁸⁴ Cf. H. T. Bossert, *Altanatolien*, Berlin, 1942, fig. 474 (Boghazköy); figs. 874-888 (Sakçagözü); fig. 893 (Zincerli).

⁸⁵ F. N. Pryce, *Catalogue of Sculpture in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities of the British Museum*, I, i, Prehellenic and Early Greek, London, 1928, pp. 132 f., pls. XXVI f.

⁸⁶ The freestanding statues that flank the openings in the tympanum of the fourth-century Temple of Artemis at Ephesos as portrayed on the coins have been regarded as late examples of the practice (B. L. Trell, *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*, No. 107, 1945, pp. 24 f.).

⁸⁷ (1) A satyr bearing a kantharos, on a jamb (Picard, *C.R.A.I.*, 1912, pp. 203-205, fig. 4; 1913, pp. 360-363, fig. 1);

(2) A seated divinity accompanied by a winged messenger, on a jamb (Mendel, *B.C.H.*, XXIV, 1900, pp. 560-569, pls. XIV, XV; Picard, *C.R.A.I.*, 1912, pp. 196-200, fig. 2; *Rev. Arch.*, XX, 1912, pp. 43-76);

(3) Herakles and Dionysos with attendants set on opposite sides of a gate passage (Studniczka, *Jahreshefte*, VI, 1903, pp. 180-186; Deonna, *Rev. Arch.*, XVI, 1908, pp. 25-39; Picard, *C.R.A.I.*, 1912, pp. 200 f.).

At Alyzia in Acarnania a gate in a fortification wall is flanked to one side on its inner face by a relief at ground level showing Herakles, of the Farnese type, alone in a rectangular panel, to be thought of, no doubt, like the corresponding figures on the gates of Thasos, as a guardian of the city (L. Heuzey, *Le Mont Olympe et l'Acarnanie*, II, Paris, 1856, p. 413, pl. XI).

⁸⁸ Picard, *Mon. Piot*, XX, 1933, pp. 39-69; *Manuel d'archéologie grecque, La Sculpture*, II, i, Paris, 1939, p. 88, fig. 40.

known group of three marble reliefs found on Thasos in 1864 and now in the Louvre (Pl. 18, a and b).⁸⁹

On the complete slab a gateway, or mouth of a niche, is flanked on the left by Apollo and a goddess (?), on the right by three nymphs. The two smaller slabs have been restored as flanking a similar opening: Hermes and a female companion to the right, three Graces to the left. The two compositions come from the "Prytaneion" and are believed to have been set in the facing walls of a passage.⁹⁰ Ordinances governing the sacrifices to the various divinities are inscribed on the lintel of the niche and on the plinth below Hermes. The style of the sculpture, supported by the letter forms, suggests a date *ca.* 490-480 B. C. The strong admixture of Attic flavor has been frequently and no doubt rightly emphasized. It is tempting to suppose that in composition as well as in style the island work owes something to an Attic prototype, i. e. to the hypothetical sculpture on the original parapet of our sanctuary. On the other hand, the exquisite care with which the Thasian artist avoided dry symmetry while achieving an easy balance, his adroit handling of the spatial problem, the studied variety in the minutiae of stance, dress and coiffure all look forward to the still more refined subtleties of our second parapet.⁹¹

In the period immediately subsequent to the construction of our parapet the best parallels for its scheme of decoration are to be found in Lycia whither, it has been conjectured, some of the Athenian artists who must have despaired of a livelihood in Athens after Aigospotamoi emigrated in search of commissions. One thinks first of the Heroon of Gjölbaschi-Trysa, where the doorway in the wall that enclosed the family burial plot was flanked on either side on its inner face by a dancing figure carved on the jamb.⁹² Still more relevant for comparison with the sculptural decoration of our parapet are two rock-cut tombs in Limyra, another Lycian site. In both cases the doorway of the tomb is flanked to either side by figures carved in relief in

⁸⁹ Studniczka, *Jahreshefte*, VI, 1903, pp. 159-179, figs. 99-101 (photographs, drawings and technical details); Picard, *Manuel, La Sculpture*, II, i, pp. 88-93; Charbonneaux, *La Sculpture grecque archaïque*, p. 62, pl. 77; *Encyclopédie photographique d'Art, Le Musée du Louvre*, III, Paris, 1938, p. 148.

⁹⁰ Picard, *C.R.A.I.*, 1913, pp. 376 f.

⁹¹ The temple and altar of Zeus Agoraios in the Agora of Thasos (probably fourth century B. C.) were enclosed on the north and west, and presumably also on the south, by means of a fence of stone posts and wooden rails. On the east, between the beddings for posts, are beddings for orthostates. Were the orthostates sculptured? Cf. *B.C.H.*, LXXIX, 1950, pp. 333-335.

An example in North Greece of relief sculpture used in a different way to flank an entrance to a walled precinct is the frieze of dancing girls from the Propylon on the Central Terrace at Samothrace (late fourth century B. C.): Lehmann, *Hesperia*, XX, 1951, pp. 16-18, and above pp. 25-28, Fig. 2. With this has been compared the contemporary frieze of Erotes apparently from the Sanctuary of Eros and Aphrodite on the North Slope of the Athenian Acropolis: Broneer, *Hesperia*, IV, 1935, pp. 143-147.

⁹² O. Benndorf and G. Niemann, *Das Heroon von Gjölbaschi-Trysa*, Vienna, 1889, pls. IV, VI; F. Eichler, *Die Reliefs des Heroon von Gjölbaschi-Trysa*, p. 10, pl. I.

the scarped rock. In one a man with his three sons looks across to wife and daughter; in the other a solitary man, surely the deceased, bids farewell to wife and child from whom he is separated by the mouth of the tomb (Pl. 18 f.).⁹³ The motif of the grave separating the living from the dead is thoroughly familiar, of course, from the Attic white-ground lekythoi, and the family groups on the Lycian tombs are rendered in the style of Attic grave stelai of the late fifth and early fourth century. The memory of our parapet may well have led to the combination of these elements in the tomb façades of distant Lycia.

Comparative material is scanty for the later fourth and the third centuries,⁹⁴ but the great altars of the second century (Pergamon, Priene, Magnesia, Kos), in which the enclosure wall is given monumental treatment, all show a startling advance beyond our modest establishment in the extensive use of free-standing as well as relief sculpture and of columns. In these monuments, moreover, the altar proper, surrounded by its screen, stood on a lofty podium which was decorated on its outer face with sculpture, and the place of sacrifice was accessible only from the west side. It is perhaps of some significance that at Priene the sculpture around the podium is not, as at Pergamon and as intended at Magnesia, a continuous frieze but a series of panels, one of which is restored to either side of the main entrance in a way reminiscent of our parapet. The construction of this altar is dated to the middle of the second century B. C. at which time there was set up in the temple a new cult statue, an adaptation at one-third scale of the Athena Parthenos of Phidias.⁹⁵

In view of the prevalence of the "Pergamene type" of altar in the later Hellenistic period it is startling to observe that the Ara Pacis Augustae, the first monumental altar of which we have knowledge in Rome, shows an abrupt break with the Hellenistic tradition and a reversion to the older type represented by our Athenian sanctuary. The Ara Pacis is modest in scale and simple in its basic design: the altar proper is surrounded on all four sides by a marble parapet pierced by entrance ways of equal width to east and west (Fig. 10).⁹⁶

The resemblance between the Roman monument and the Athenian is obvious in the scale and in the plan. Equally striking is the correspondence in the sculptural decoration. In the Ara Pacis, as in the Altar of Pity, all the sculpture is in relief of

⁹³ Petersen and v. Luschan, *Reisen in Lykien, Milyas und Kibyratis*, 1889, pl. XV; Bossert, *Altanatolien*, figs. 240, 245; Eichler, *op. cit.*, p. 10, fig. 3.

⁹⁴ An altar court unearthed on Samothrace in 1951 may help to fill the gap.

⁹⁵ A. von Gerkan, *Bonner Jahrbücher*, CXXIX, 1924, pp. 15-35; M. Schede, *Die Ruinen von Priene*, Berlin, 1934, pp. 36-38.

⁹⁶ Platner-Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, s. v. Ara Pacis Augustae. On the results of the most recent excavations (1937-1938) cf. Raleigh Radford, *J.R.S.*, XXIX, 1939, pp. 48 f. The earlier publications are now superseded by those based on the definitive exploration and reconstruction of the altar: G. Moretti, *L'Ara Pacis Augustae* (Itinerari dei musei e monumenti d'Italia No. 67) Roma, 1938; *idem*, *Ara Pacis Augustae*, Rome, 1948.

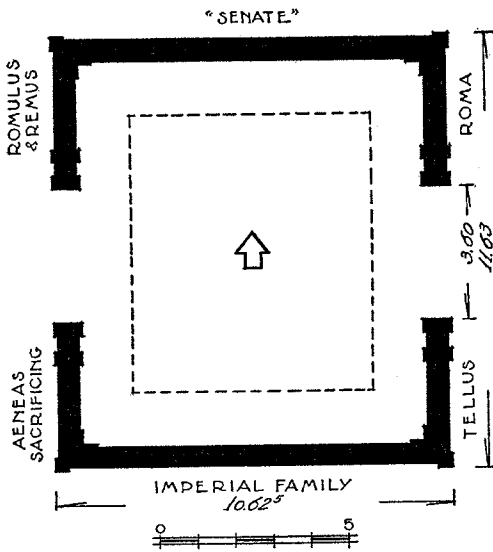


Fig. 10. Ara Pacis: Restored Plan

medium height and there is a noticeable absence of the free-standing statues and the isolated figures in high relief that are so characteristic of the altars of "Pergamene type." On the Ara the figured reliefs comprise one medium and one small frieze on the altar proper, continuous friezes of large scale on the upper part of the outer face of the parapet running the full length of both the north and south flank, and a rectangular panel of the same scale set at the same height to either side of both the east and the west entrance. These four groups of sculpture appear to be independent of each other and each to have its own significance.⁹⁷ The small frieze on the altar proper illustrates the ritual for the annual sacrifice as specified in the *Monumentum*

Ancyranum; the medium frieze on the altar

has been interpreted as a representative of the ceremony by which the altar was dedicated on January 30th, 9 B. C.; the great processional friezes on the north and south sides record the ceremony of consecration on July 4th, 13 B. C. These first three groups of sculpture thus serve, so to speak, practical purposes and they have in common a realistic, historical flavor.

It is quite other with the four great panels that flank the entrances: on the east side, to the left Tellus seated between two *Aurae*; to the right Roma likewise seated between subsidiary figures; on the west side, to the left the twins and the wolf with Mars standing; to the right Aeneas standing, accompanied by Achates (?) and a camillus, making sacrifice on the discovery of the sow. Here we have been transported from the world of fact to the realm of myth and allegory: commencing on the west with scenes from the fabulous beginnings of Rome, culminating on the east in the personification of Rome in all the majesty which she had achieved in the Augustan era, and in the figure of Tellus as a symbol of the prosperity that was assured by the newly established peace. The myth and allegory, therefore, are very significantly related to the cult of the *Pax Augusta*, although there is no trace of a specific representation of the divinity herself.

As to the inspiration behind this sculpture, it has been commonly and no doubt rightly maintained that the historical friezes were suggested by the Panathenaic frieze

⁹⁷ I find more ingenious than convincing Moretti's attempt (*Ara Pacis Augustae*, p. 310) to establish a continuity of theme through the two panels and the long lateral frieze of both the north and south side of the parapet.

of the Parthenon.⁹⁸ For the great panels one might draw an analogy with the pediments of the Parthenon, but such an analogy would be both incomplete and inexact. Yet the panels are so reminiscent of the fifth century in their figure types, in their sculptural style and in the grandness of their conception that one would gladly find for them also a fifth-century prototype. Such is now available in the sculptured parapet of the Athenian altar. The mechanical correspondences are obvious in the distribution of the panels around the two entrances to the sanctuary and, more specifically, in the allocation of the two quiescent panels, each dominated by a central seated figure, to the east side and of the more active scenes filled with upright figures to the west side. In both sanctuaries, moreover, the nature of the divinity is implicit in the mythological-allegorical scenes. And the two divinities, as it turns out, have much in common. Statius (*Thebais*, XII, 482) apostrophizes the deity of the Athenian sanctuary as "mitis Clementia;" Ovid (*Fasti*, I, 712) addresses the goddess of the Ara Pacis as "Pax mitis."

The Ara Pacis shared the Campus Martius with the temple and altar of the god of war. It rose on the right side of the Via Flaminia, the "great north road" by which Augustus must have returned to Rome after his pacification of Gaul and Spain which was the occasion for the consecration of the Ara Pacis. The Altar of Pity stood on the right side of the Panathenaic Way by which suppliants from abroad, from Argos or Thebes or Plataia, for instance, must have approached. And from the Augustan period onward the transplanting of the Temple of Ares into the Agora had made of the old square a virtual "Campus Martius" so that here too we have a curious collocation, a sanctuary of Pity in combination with a temple and altar of the god of war.

These many correspondences need not be fortuitous. In the years around 15 B. C. the aspect of the Athenian Agora was radically changed by the building activities of Augustus and his family. An Odeion was erected in the middle of the square by Agrippa, the son-in-law of Augustus.⁹⁹ As part of the same program the fifth-century temple of Ares, together with its altar, was dismantled and moved from its original station, to be re-erected in the northwest quadrant of the Agora,¹⁰⁰ a stone's throw from the Altar of Pity. There is reason to believe that Augustus and/or his adopted son Gaius Caesar was associated with Ares in the rededication of the temple.¹⁰¹ It is altogether probable that Roman architects from the capital had participated in this

⁹⁸ Cf. especially E. Petersen, *Ara Pacis Augustae*, Vienna, 1902, pp. 165-169.

⁹⁹ *Hesperia*, XIX, 1950, p. 89.

¹⁰⁰ *Hesperia*, IX, 1940, pp. 49-52; XX, 1951, pp. 56-58.

¹⁰¹ Dinsmoor, *Hesperia*, IX, 1940, pp. 49-52. Cf. the association of Livia with Nemesis at Rhamnous as indicated by an inscription on the architrave of the temple (Broneer, *A.J.A.*, XXXVI, 1932, pp. 397-400) and the common priesthood of Hestia, Livia and Julia as recorded on one of the thrones of the Theatre of Dionysos (*I.G.*, II-III², 5096).

building program, particularly in determining the site and the design of the Odeion.¹⁰² Such specialists are more likely than not to have been among the leading authorities of their time, and hence may well have been called upon to design also the Ara Pacis, "la prima grande espressione dell' arte romana" (Colini), the reliefs of which "represent the highest achievement of Roman decorative art that is known to us" (Platner-Ashby). What more natural than that they should have been influenced in carrying out the new commission by their still fresh impressions of Athens, or that they should have taken back with them to assist in the execution Athenian artists steeped in the traditions of their own city?¹⁰³

Is it perhaps possible that the man who showed so much sensitivity in adapting the artistic forms of the Altar of Pity to the needs of the Ara Pacis should have been aware also of a certain historical propriety? The consecration of the Ara Pacis on July 4, 13 B. C. marked the conclusion of a protracted military campaign in the far west: "The Senate voted to commemorate my return by the consecration of the Ara Pacis when in the consulship of Ti. Nero and P. Quinctilius I came back to Rome from Spain and Gaul, things having gone well in those provinces."¹⁰⁴ We have seen reason to believe that the Altar of Pity likewise commemorated the outcome of a great military effort in the distant west, an issue no less momentous in its consequences which had been settled, also in the heat of summer, exactly 400 years earlier.¹⁰⁵

HOMER A. THOMPSON

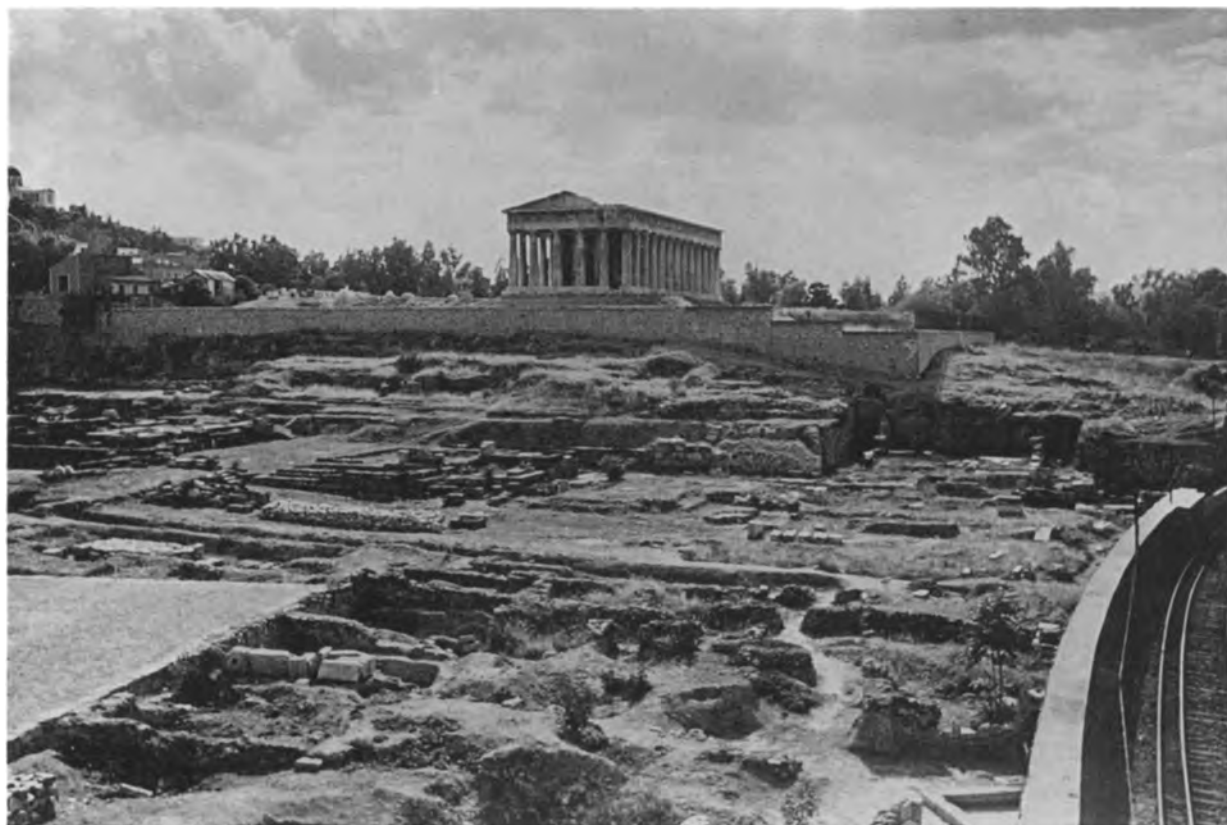
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¹⁰² *Hesperia*, XIX, 1950, pp. 90-98.

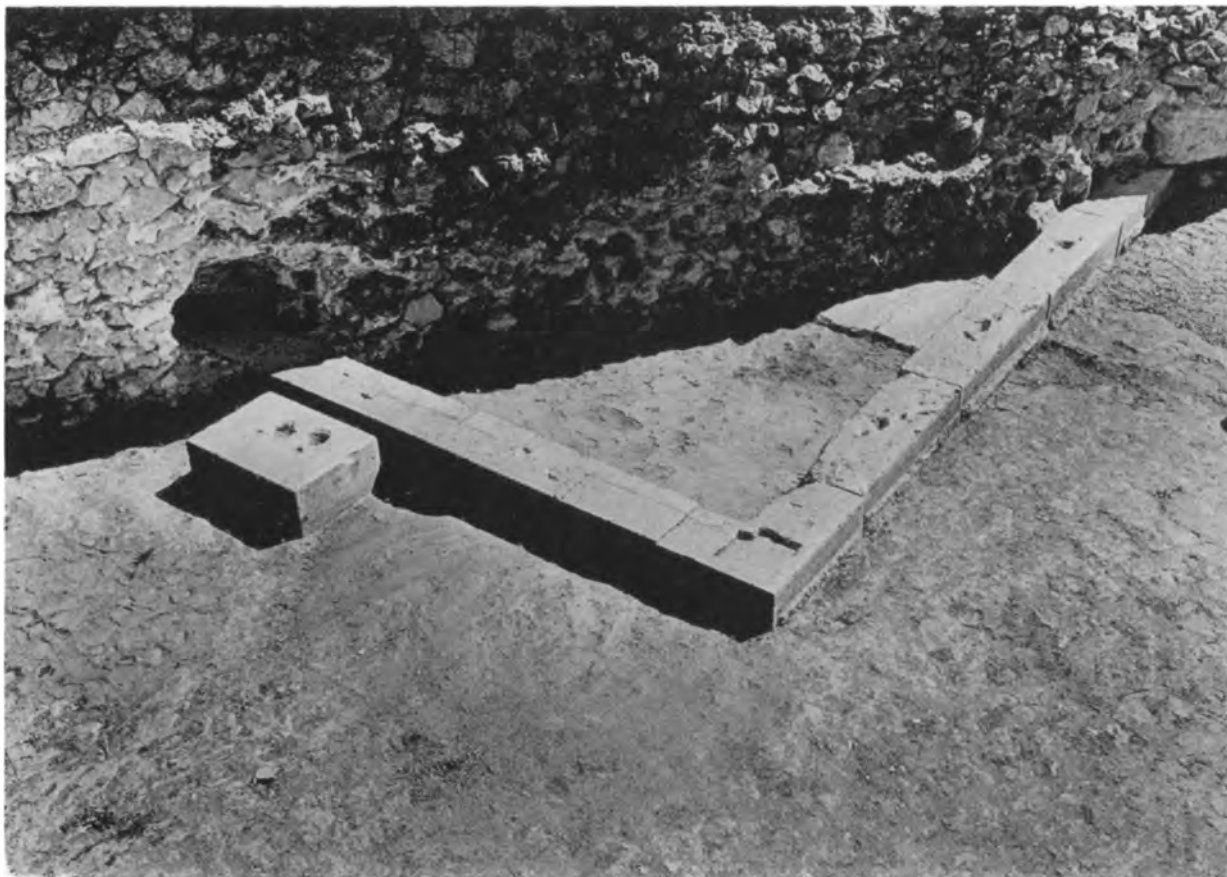
¹⁰³ This hypothesis of a direct and immediate influence from the side of Athens would seem more plausible than either Petersen's view that the square plan of the Ara Pacis enclosure was basically Italic (*Ara Pacis Augustae*, Vienna, 1902, pp. 140-142), or Moretti's suggestion that the design of the Ara Pacis was an outcome of the tide of Greek influence that had set in as early as the second century B. C. (*Ara Pacis Augustae*, pp. 192-196. On the participation of Greek artists in the execution of the work cf. Moretti, *op. cit.*, p. 298). It also relieves us of the necessity for resorting to Pasqui's ingenious hypothesis that the Ara Pacis as we know it was a reproduction in marble of a temporary wooden structure erected for the ceremony of consecration in 13 B. C. (*Studi Romani*, 1913, pp. 283-304). The panelling on the lower part of the inner face of the parapet of the Ara, which has been most commonly regarded as an imitation of wood-work, may well have been suggested by the post-and-slab construction of the Altar of Pity.

¹⁰⁴ *Monumentum Ancyranum*, ii, 39-41 (Lat.).

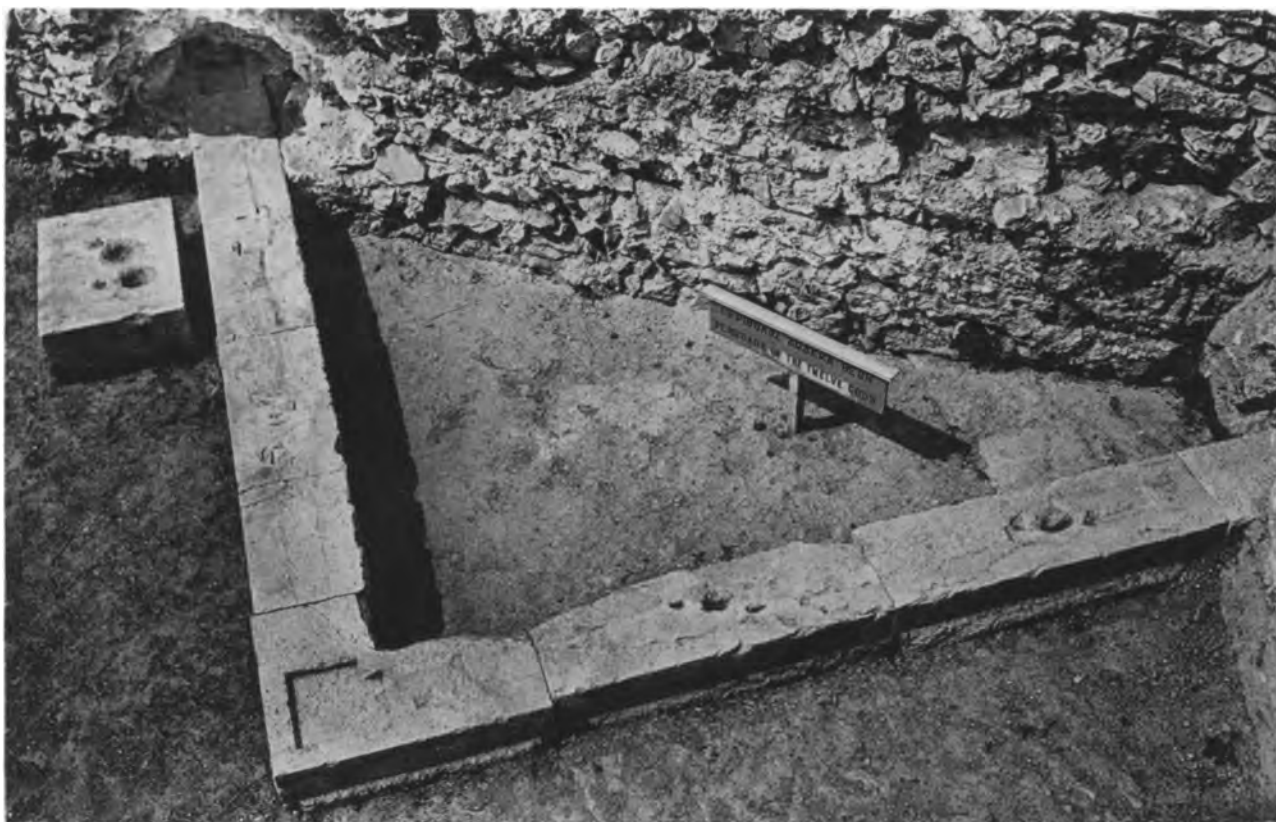
¹⁰⁵ The eye of any cultured Roman of the period must have been caught especially by the Orpheus slab of our parapet, for Virgil in his fourth Georgic, published in 29 B. C., had produced the only other representation of the myth that can compare with ours in beauty of expression and in depth of feeling.



a. Site of Altar from the Northeast (1951)
(The southwest corner of the peribolos appears in the lower right)



b. Parapet Sill of Period II: Southwest Corner from the Southwest
HOMER A. THOMPSON: ALTAR OF PITY



a. Parapet Sill at Southwest Corner, from the South



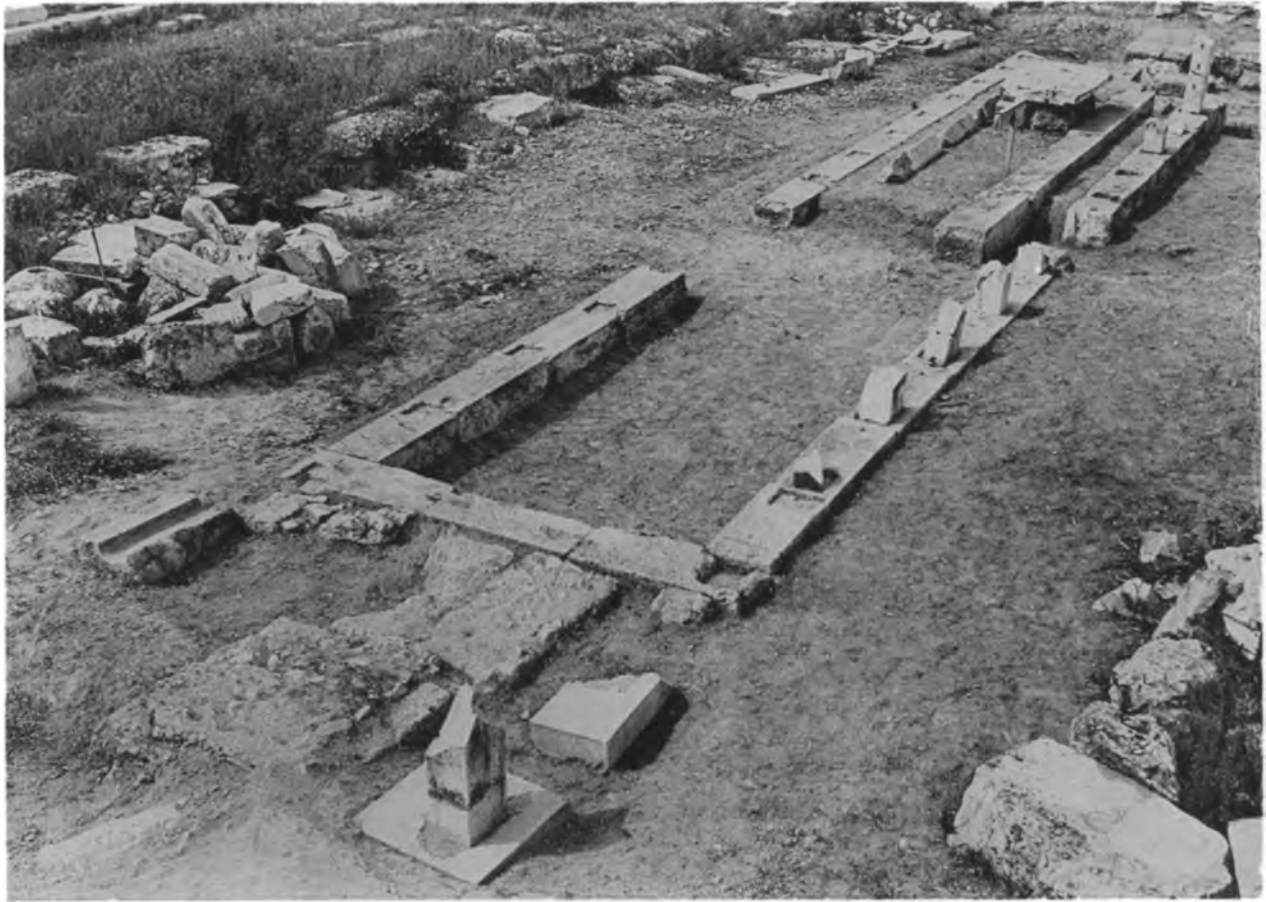
c. Post Socket third from South on East Side



b. Post Socket at South Side of West Entrance



d. Post Socket at Southeast Corner



a. Eponymous Heroes, from the Southeast



b. Eponymous Heroes: Detail of West Fence, restored
HOMER A. THOMPSON: ALTAR OF PITY



a. Orpheus Panel in Naples
(Photograph Anderson No. 23246)



b. Peliads Panel in Lateran
(Photograph Anderson No. 24220)



c. Hesperides Panel in Villa Albani
(Photograph Anderson No. 1890)



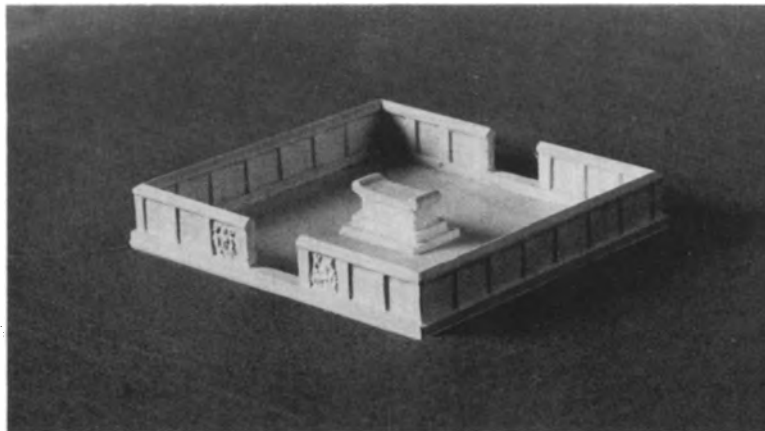
d. Peirithoos Panel in Louvre and Museo Torlonia
(*Röm. Mitt.*, LIII, 1938, pl. 34, 2)



a. and b. Reliefs from Thasos in Louvre
(*Encyclopédie photographique, Louvre III*, p. 148)



c. Mourning Athena.
National Museum, Athens



d. Altar of Pity, Model



e. Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington



f. Tomb at Laryma, Lycia
(Bossert, *Altanatolien*, fig. 245)