

IKARION IN ATTICA: 1888–1981

(PLATES 1–6)

THE FIRST FEW YEARS of the existence of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens were filled with the excitement of constant discoveries, for the infant institution quickly began its venture into archaeology with all the enthusiasm of a new convert. Such was the atmosphere which led to the excavations at Ikarion, the legendary site of the first arrival of Dionysos in Attica and traditionally connected with the beginnings of Attic tragedy and comedy.¹ Prior to 1887 the location of the deme Ikarion was unknown, various savants having placed it at sites all over Attica at one time or another. In May of that year, however, the German scholar Arthur Milchhöfer, walking from Marathon to Kephissia, stumbled upon a ruined church in a valley on the north slope of Mount Pentelikon. The church had numerous ancient blocks built into its walls, including dedications to Dionysos, and this, together with the modern name of the area, Dionyso, led Milchhöfer to conclude that the remains represented the location of the deme Ikarion.² Augustus Merriam, Director of the American School for 1887/1888, visited Berlin in July of 1887 while on his way to Athens to assume his post. There he was informed by Ernst Curtius of Milchhöfer's theory. Upon reaching Athens, Merriam lost no time in visiting the site, deciding to excavate there, and obtaining a permit.³

The excavations, which lasted with various interruptions from January 30 to March 19, 1888 and November 13, 1888 to January 14, 1889, were entrusted to Carl Darling Buck, a student at the School, who dug at the principal site and vigorously investigated the general area as well. Activity was centered around the Byzantine church, which was completely demolished. Its fabric contained numerous ancient worked blocks, inscriptions, and fragments of sculpture, and its apse had been built on an ancient semicircular monument. A few blocks from the Byzantine structure survive, and we illustrate one with decoration probably belonging to the 11th or 12th centuries after Christ (Pl. 4:b).⁴

¹ A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*, 2nd ed. rev., Oxford 1962, pp. 69–80. Throughout this report we use “Ikarion” rather than the more common “Ikaria” as the deme name. The neuter form would appear to be the correct one of the two possibilities, and we would cite at least three authorities in confirmation: J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece* II, London 1913, p. 461; D. M. Lewis, “The Deme Ikarion,” *BSA* 51, 1956, p. 172; and John Traill (private communication).

Special abbreviation used in this article:

Buck, 1889 = C. D. Buck, “Discoveries in the Attic Deme of Ikaria, 1888,” *AJA*, ser. 1, 5, 1889

² The church had been noted by early travelers but Milchhöfer must be credited with the first identification. See *Berliner philologische Wochenschrift* 7, 1887, pp. 770–772.

³ The above is based on Merriam's report as Director for 1887/1888, *Seventh Annual Report of the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1887–1888*, Cambridge, Mass. 1889, pp. 47–98.

⁴ An impost capital also exists in the pile of blocks west of the monument but it is deeply buried and could not be recovered. Our thanks go to Timothy Gregory for advising us on the possible date for the decoration. The church is recorded in *Εἰρετήριον τῶν μνημείων τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, III, *Μεσαιωνικὰ Μνη-*

The work at Ikarion produced an astonishing amount of material: inscriptions, some of which secured the identification of the site, sculpture from Archaic to Roman, and parts of at least seven major constructions including a theatral area, a Pythion, and the Semi-circular Monument. It was clear almost from the beginning that the small area investigated must be the center of the deme. Summaries of the excavations and accounts of the finds were quickly published.⁵ In later years the epigraphical material was added to the literature, and a few new inscriptions came to light.⁶ A brilliant start has also been made on a reconsideration of the sculpture from the site.⁷ Although arousing considerable interest at the time, the physical remains seem to have been generally forgotten, and despite care and occasional cleaning in recent years by the Greek Archaeological Service the buildings have progressively disappeared under luxuriant vegetation. Only the theatral area has remained of interest, due to its peculiar shape and possible antiquity.⁸

The occasion of the Centennial of the American School in 1981 seemed an appropriate moment to turn again to Ikarion, one of the School's earliest and most interesting excavations. Accordingly, a program of cleaning and study was undertaken in May and June of 1981 with the full cooperation of the Greek Archaeological Service and particularly of Dr. Basileios Petrakos, Ephor of Attica, whose help and understanding are especially appreciated.⁹ The following paper contains a report on the state of the archi-

μεία (A. K. Orlandos), Athens 1933, p. 198. The earlier excavators apparently did not describe or fully record the building they demolished.

⁵ C. D. Buck, "Discoveries in the Attic Deme of Icaria," *AJA*, ser. 1, 4, 1888, pp. 421-426 (inscriptions); Buck, 1889, pp. 9-17 (sculpture); pp. 18-33 (inscriptions); pp. 154-158 (chronological report of the excavations); pp. 158-165 (topography of the district); pp. 165-181 (architectural remains); pp. 304-319 (inscriptions); pp. 461-477 (sculpture). All the *AJA* reports were later reprinted in *Papers of the American School of Classical Studies V, 1886-1890*, Boston 1892, pp. 43-125.

⁶ D. M. Robinson, "Three New Inscriptions from the Deme of Icaria," *Hesperia* 17, 1948, pp. 141-143; *idem*, "A New Mortgage Inscription from Icaria," *Hesperia* 19, 1950, pp. 23-24.

⁷ I. Bald, "The Archaic Statue of Dionysos from Icaria," Abstracts, *General Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America*, *AJA* 1978, p. 5.

⁸ The bibliography on the theatral area is vast in comparison to what has been written about the rest of the site. The following are the major references: H. Bulle, *Untersuchungen an griechische Theatern*, Munich 1928, pp. 4-6; C. Anti, *Teatri greci arcaici*, Padua 1947, pp. 145-146; O. A. W. Dilke, "The Greek Theatre Cavea," *BSA* 43, 1948, pp. 150-151, 176-177; *idem*, "Details and Chronology of Greek Theatre Caveas," *BSA* 45, 1950, pp. 30-31; A. E. Stanley, *Early Theatre Structures in Ancient Greece: A Survey of Archaeological and Literary Records from the Minoan Period to 338 B.C.* (diss. University of California, Berkeley, 1970), University Microfilms 1971, pp. 109-116.

⁹ The project, though necessarily small in scope, was large in organization, and a number of friends and colleagues went out of their way to lend assistance. We must thank Professor Henry Immerwahr, Director of the American School, for supporting the project and Eugene Vanderpool for helping to conceive it many years ago. Without Halford Haskell and Pamela Berich Haskell we never would have accomplished anything, and particularly warm appreciation goes to them. We must also thank two volunteers from the School, Linda Grimaldi and Myra Christensen, who also typed our manuscript, for giving freely of their time for the laborious and boring job of cleaning stones. A number of colleagues took some of their own precious time to come to Ikarion to give us the benefit of their advice. A simple listing must suffice to show our appreciation: Jordan Dimacopoulos, Homer Thompson, John Travlos, C. K. Williams, II. Site photography is by the authors and by Ioannidou and Barzioti. Finally, the entire project was financed by the Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank especially this organization for its support. Two active members of S.P.G.H., Richard Howland and

tectural remains at Ikarion as they are in 1981, comparisons with their condition upon excavation at the end of the 19th century, supplementary descriptions of the remains where necessary, and our own observations. It should be read with Buck's architectural summary at hand,¹⁰ and we have reproduced Buck's original sketch plan together with our own actual-state plan (Figs. 1 and 2).¹¹

THE SITE

The center of the deme Ikarion occupies land on the north side of Mount Pentelikon (Figs. 2 and 3), sloping down both to the north and to the east in a series of terraces, both natural and artificial or partially artificial. The upper, southwestern one holds on the west the remains of the Pythion (H); the altar (I) and the theatral area lie to the east. To the south and above the terrace runs the 19th-century road used by the excavators of 1888 and above that the modern asphalt road. Below, to the north, the natural slope of the land has been cut by an old road running northwest to southeast, which was evidently responsible for destroying the northeast wall of the Pythion and perhaps much else besides. This old but obviously post-ancient road seems to run to the east of the theatral area. At a still lower level to the northeast lie the Semicircular Monument (A) and Bases B and C, beyond them and lower, Wall E and, lower to the northeast, Building D. As Walls E and F to the northeast and Wall ab of Building G to the southwest seem to define an entrance, this area will be considered first.

Building G

Only a corner of Buck's Building G is preserved. Portions of Walls ab (northeast) and ad (northwest) are extant in the form of a series of massive blocks resting on substantial foundations of partially worked stones (Pl. 1:a). The exterior surfaces are quarry faced. The finish on the interior is not clear, for while these blocks are up to 0.60 m. thick, there is no evidence of dressed surfaces on the inner faces. The upper surfaces are dressed as setting beds, and so one would expect as least one additional course of masonry. The preparation of the upper surfaces resulted in a straight border along the outer perimeter of the building. Clearing in 1981 has clarified a feature 6.5 m. southeast of the north corner of the building. At least one block with foundations lies northeast-southwest (at d), and we interpret this as a cross wall. It is interrupted by a late grave, not yet excavated. The northeastern outer wall (ab) of the building seems to have continued to the southeast, for the last large wall block still in place is dressed on its southern end to receive yet another. It is impossible at this time, however, to determine the original

Virginia Nick, deserve our particular thanks for their drive and enthusiasm in this project, which brought a portion of the Greek heritage back to light.

¹⁰ Buck, 1889, pp. 165–181.

¹¹ The contours included on our actual-state plan are based on an arbitrary datum not related to the Greek Geodetic Survey. Their purpose is merely to illustrate the topography of the site in 1981. The axis of the present site and of the Pythion lies on an approximately northwest-southeast line. Upper-case letters refer to both plans, lower-case letters to Fig. 1.

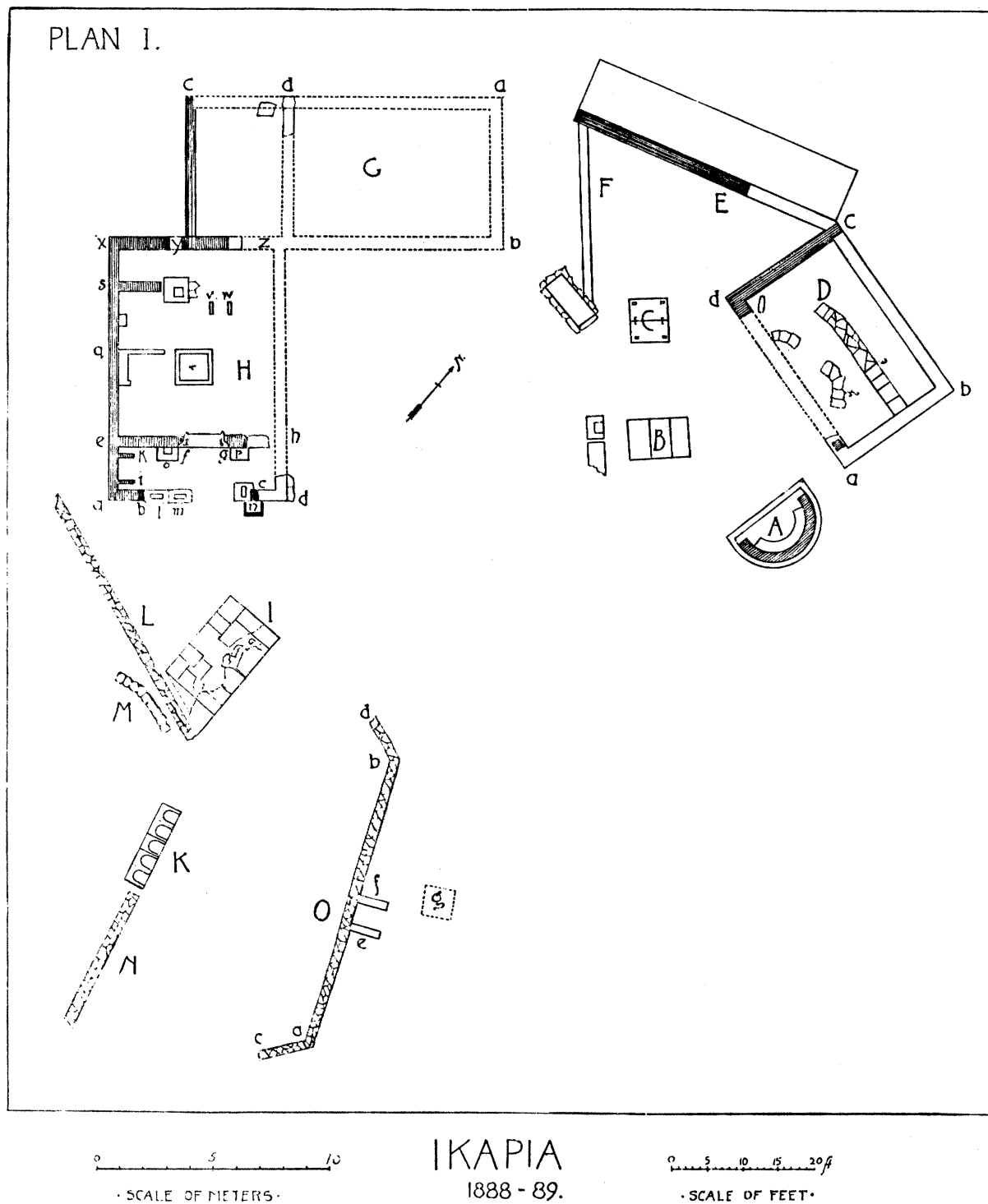


FIG. 1. Sketch plan of site after the 1888 excavations (*AJA* 5, 1889, Plan I).



FIG. 2. Actual-state Plan, 1981.

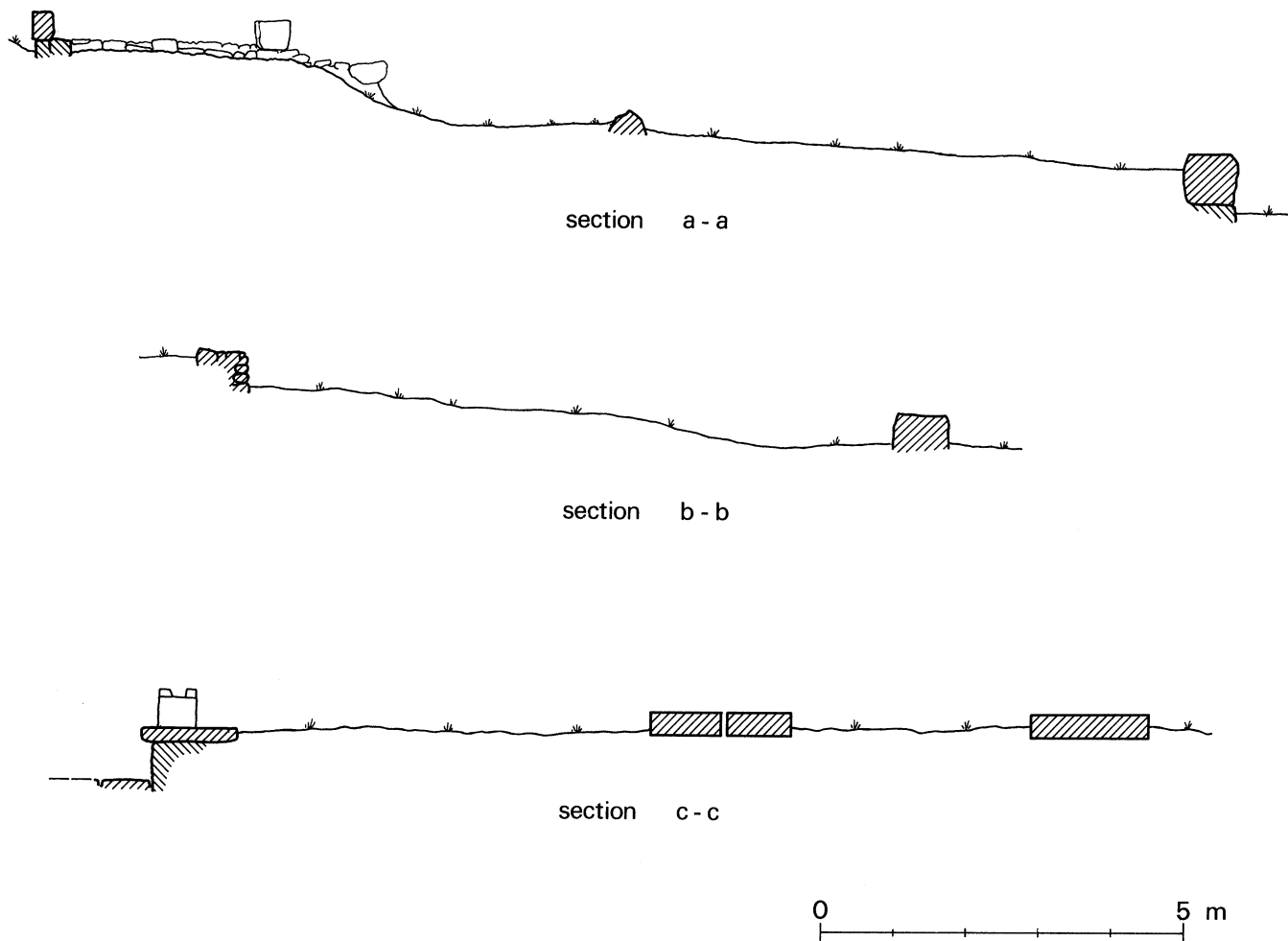


FIG. 3. Sections.

dimensions of the building or its use. The existence of at least one additional undug grave indicates that the building has not been fully excavated.¹²

Walls E and F

Wall E, apparently both a retaining and a peribolos wall for the area, is relatively well preserved, presenting an appearance essentially similar to that seen in the 19th century: a well-built stretch of masonry, pierced by at least three openings. The con-

¹² Buck (1889, p. 176) interpreted this structure as an adjunct to the Pythion, Wall ϵ forming its west side. The distinct difference in elevation between this building and the Pythion makes it seem highly unlikely to us that Wall ϵ was a part of Building G. The discovery of the existence of a cross wall might indicate a building facing southeast on approximately the same orientation as the Pythion (perhaps the Temple of Dionysos?). Only more excavation in Building G can clarify its exact nature.

struction of this wall is distinctive and deserves further comment. One course is preserved above a well-built euthynteria of variously sized blocks, including some massive ones. The construction throughout is of paired orthostates, dressed on their exterior surfaces and very roughly shaped on the interior, with anathyrosis on the ends. These orthostates are separated by a rubble core. At about 7.5 m. from the western end of Wall E, one of the exterior blocks has fallen outward, giving a good view of the wall construction (Pl. 1:b). In certain places shallow supplementary blocks were used to bring the upper surface to a uniform elevation, suitable for the support of a mud-brick wall above.¹³ The western termination of the wall is clearly indicated by a solid block extending through the thickness of the wall and finished on all three exposed faces. This block has been set down into the euthynteria block below it, which has been cut to receive it, leaving a stretch of some 0.30 m. of roughly worked stone along the western face of the end block. This is so rough that it must have originally been below ground level.

To the north, outside Wall E, Buck reported the existence of a "platform".¹⁴ As it is now buried under more than 0.55 m. of earth, we were only able to reclear a small section *ca.* 1.80 × 0.50 m., *ca.* 0.77 m. below the floor of the western opening in Wall E (Pl. 1:c). This floor was revealed to be constructed of rough-hewn plaques up to one meter in length. These are laid up against the massive foundation blocks on either side which appear to continue down below them as a retaining wall. The exact nature of the "platform" at the lower level outside Wall E is unclear; perhaps it was a terrace or passage. There must have been steps or perhaps a retaining wall for a ramp at the west end of the platform as ground level is conjectured to have been just above the base of the westernmost euthynteria block of Wall E.

At two points the openings in the wall at orthostate level are clearly defined by well-dressed blocks laid as headers. Their height is less than that of the normal orthostates, for they were once spanned by shallow blocks so as to provide an opening *ca.* 0.39 m. high on the west and *ca.* 0.50 m. high on the east (Pl. 1:d).¹⁵ Furthermore, these two openings are supported by unusually large slabs in the euthynteria course. A third such opening is suggested by a gap in the construction of the euthynteria *ca.* 2.30 m. east of the easternmost preserved opening, though, to be sure, the evidence is not conclusive.

The most distinctive feature of this wall, and a feature common to most of the stone construction at Ikarion, is the surface treatment of the blocks. A series of many short, vertical chisel cuts forms an over-all pattern of the type known as "furrowed work". Occasional blocks show longer grooves in four or more tiers, closer to what is known as "pointed work", but both types (Pl. 4:c) can exist in the same wall. This tooling appears

¹³ Although there is no definite evidence for the material of the upper portion of Wall E, we believe that it was most likely of mud brick. The method of construction of the extant, masonry portion of the wall, which provides a series of horizontal levels as the wall steps down to the east, as well as the lack of blocks on the site that might be assigned to Wall E, indicate to us that this wall was not completely constructed of stone.

¹⁴ Buck, 1889, p. 173. He records a maximum width of 2.28 m. but an average width of about two meters. He does not record what happens at the west end of the platform.

¹⁵ This can be seen in the old photo of the area, Plate 2:b, and in Buck's drawing (Buck 1889, p. 174, fig. 26).

on both the exterior and interior faces of Wall E, suggesting that the wall was freestanding above the euthynteria. This kind of surface decoration, well liked at Ikarion, is not uncommon.¹⁶

Buck found a long pillar (1.708 m. in height) which bears a choregic inscription, resting on Wall F apparently near its junction with Wall E (Pl. 2:a, b).¹⁷ Despite the proximity of this block to the western end of Wall E and the apparent suitability of its dimensions for a decorative termination to the wall, it is clear that in actuality this pillar was originally situated elsewhere. Three of its vertical faces are smoothly dressed but the fourth, opposite the inscription, shows anathyrosis, while Wall E was in all probability constructed of mud brick above the orthostate course. Furthermore, the lower end of the pillar is finished with a tenon, requiring a socket for which there is no provision at the end of Wall E.

The principal problem concerning Wall E is the use of the openings through the wall. Wall E lies well below the level on which the Semicircular Monument sits, and the whole site sloped from southwest to northeast and east in a series of terraces. While it would obviously be desirable to prevent water from building up behind such a retaining wall, the upper part of which was apparently freestanding, the openings may be perhaps too large and too numerous to have functioned only as drains.

Wall F was considered by Buck as belonging to a "late period".¹⁸ While it is clearly later than Wall E, which it abuts, it nevertheless seems to us pre-Roman. The construction, of small blocks relatively carefully laid in mud mortar, is common in ancient Greek practice. The wall may have had some relation to the northern (northwestern) entrance to the site and perhaps originally extended further to the southeast.

¹⁶ Securely dated examples of pointed and furrowed work are hard to find. See R. L. Scranton, *Greek Walls*, Cambridge, Mass. 1941, pp. 21–22 for definition of terms and pp. 172–174 and 178–183 for lists of examples. A number of examples of furrowed work are known in recently published grave enclosures at Rhamnous, particularly the monuments of Euphranor and Diogeiton. The former cannot be dated more closely than to the 4th century (B. Petrakos, "Ἀνασκαφὴ Ραμνοῦντος," *Πρακτικά*, 1975 [1977], pp. 6–10; *idem*, *Πρακτικά*, 1976 [1979], p. 9. See also W. Wrede, *Attische Mauern*, Athens 1933, pl. 72), and the latter was apparently standing by at least the last quarter of the 4th century (Petrakos, *Πρακτικά*, 1975, pp. 15–25 and *Πρακτικά*, 1976, pp. 22–28). Examples of surface decoration closer to furrowed work and to most of our blocks are also known from Rhamnous, notably the upper surface of the block carrying an early 3rd-century inscription of Theophanes, but Petrakos indicates that the inscription belongs to a second use of a 4th-century block, and presumably it is to the earlier period that the furrowed work belongs because its decoration is interrupted by a cutting for a funeral lekythos (*Πρακτικά*, 1975, pp. 29–33, pl. 11: β and γ). Eretria also provides examples of masonry similar to ours. Those mentioned in publications seem to belong to the late 5th and early 4th centuries; see C. Krause, *Eretria*, IV, *Das Westtor*, Berlin 1972, fig. 122. Our purely subjective feeling, however, that the majority of furrowed work at Ikarion may be as late as the very end of the 4th century or even the beginning of the 3rd is encouraged by the present research on the architecture of the Asklepieion in Athens that seems to indicate a date for its south wall at the very end of the 4th century (see Wrede, *op. cit.*, pl. 73). We would like to thank Rhys Townsend for this information.

¹⁷ Buck, 1889, p. 28, no. 7 (= *IG* II 5, 1282b). The inscription is a dedication of three men on the occasion of their victory as choregoi in a competition for tragic choruses. With the exception of the inscription belonging to the Semicircular Monument and that on the door sill of the Pythion (see below, p. 15), this inscription appears to be the only one left on the site.

¹⁸ Buck, 1889, p. 174.

Building D

At the lowest level within the site and abutting Wall E there is a fairly well defined building on sloping ground, Buck's Building D (Pl. 3:a).¹⁹ Three sides are relatively well defined while the fourth, the south side, has largely disappeared. The west wall is built on a foundation of rubble masonry faced with larger, partially worked stones on the exterior, which supports a course of irregularly shaped blocks finished in furrowed work. Of the five preserved in this part of the building, two blocks, those at either end, appear to extend the entire thickness of the wall. Those between are facing blocks and seem to require similar ones on the interior face of the wall much in the fashion of Wall E. The upper surface of this course manifests polygonal jointing, so clearly an additional course was once present. The north side of the building, not preserved to the same height (Fig. 3, section b-b, right), is of similar construction but at some points includes much larger stones in the foundations. The east wall now consists only of very large foundation blocks at a lower level, while the foundations of the south wall are preserved only at the corners.

The north wall of Building D is in effect an extension of Wall E which abuts it and which we take to be the northern boundary of the site. For this reason we assume no entrance on that side of the building. The better preserved construction of the west wall is sufficient to indicate there could not be an entrance there either. It seems to us that the east wall likewise contained no entrance because one approaching from this side is presented with a back view of the Semicircular Monument. The cluster of structures evident to the south of the building (the Semicircular Monument, bases, etc.) strongly suggests that entrance to the building was on the south side, opening to a veritable field of monuments.²⁰

The Semicircular Monument

The most obvious monument on the site is situated to the south of Building D and higher up the slope. It takes the form of a hemicycle built throughout of marble. Labeling it Monument A, Buck and Merriam identified it as a choregic dedication on the basis of a victory inscription on its architrave, which Merriam at least took as definitely referring to a choregic victory.²¹ Evidently damaged in antiquity, the monument was at least in part reconstructed to form the apse of the Byzantine church. It has suffered further damage, since the majority of its blocks have fallen to the north, although all these are present and in relatively good condition.

The monument (Fig. 4, Pl. 3:b) rested on a euthynteria of roughly shaped marble blocks dressed flat on their upper surfaces. The floor consisted of seven blocks, all still present, although one now occupies a position lower in the foundations at the rear. The

¹⁹ Buck, 1889, pp. 172–173. The presumably earlier walls found within Building D are now deeply buried, and we were not able to recover them.

²⁰ A similar building with an entrance on the long side is known at Messene and has been identified as a Temple of Artemis; A. K. Orlandos, "Νεώτεροι ἔργοναι ἐν Μεσσηνίᾳ," *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern*, U. Jantzen, ed., Tübingen 1976, fig. 19, p. 22.

²¹ Buck, 1889, pp. 165–171 and p. 171, note 13 (= *IG* II 3, 1317).

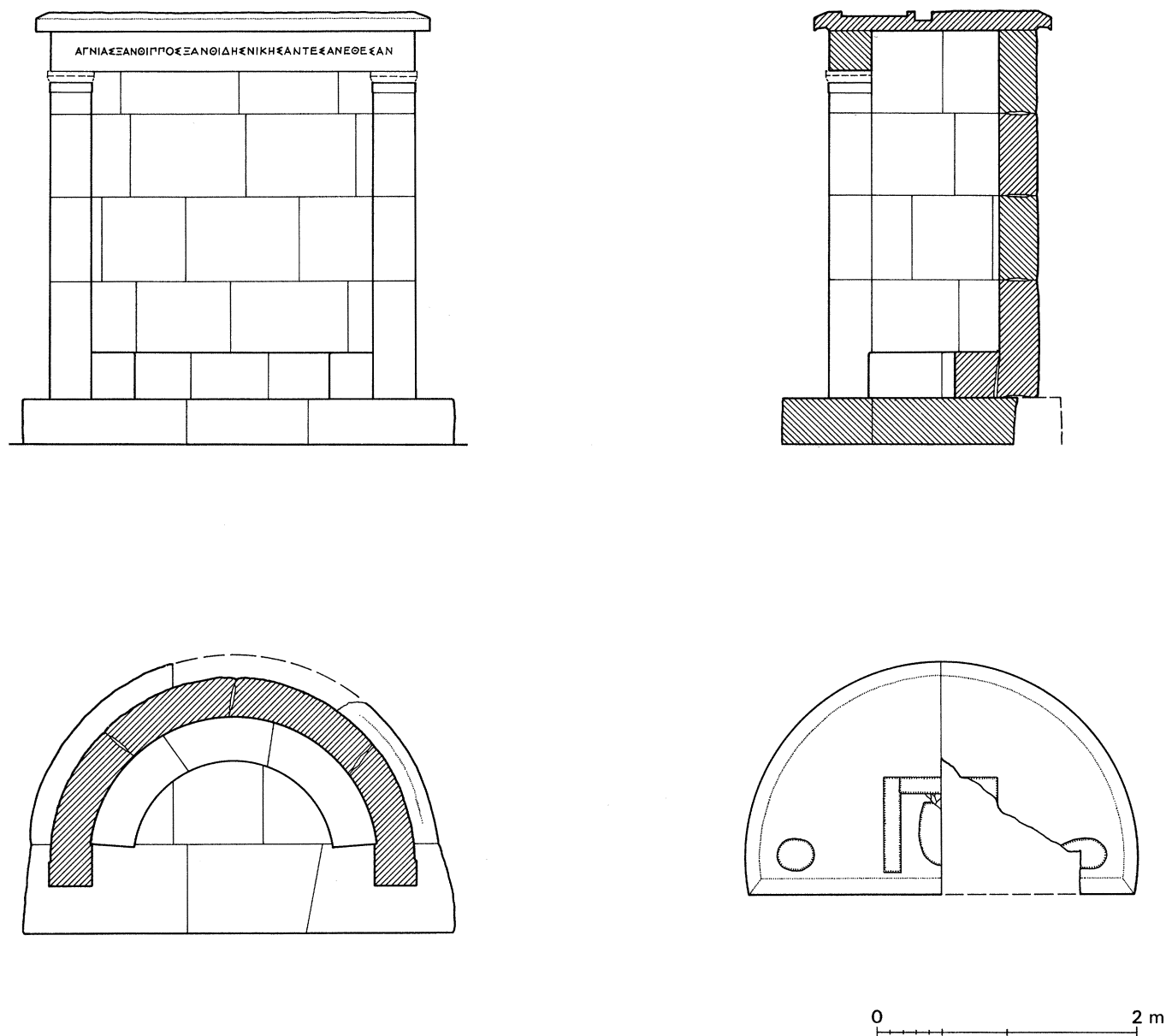


FIG. 4. Semicircular Monument. Restored plan, elevation, section and roof.

underpinnings have deteriorated, causing the blocks of the euthynteria and the floor to spread and in some cases to fall toward the rear. A wall of masonry in four courses formed a semicircle, each end of which terminated in a well-defined anta; only two blocks of the first course still stand. Within, three plain, curved blocks formed a bench concentric with the wall. Two of these are still approximately in position while the third

has fallen to the rear of the monument. Each wall block may be restored to its original position with confidence. The geometry of each block is unique, permitting each course to be reassembled in its proper horizontal sequence. The heights of the blocks vary by as much as 0.012 m. in a single course, but four distinct course heights can be determined. The orthostate course is the tallest and leaves no doubt as to its proper position in the sequence. The topmost course is also securely identified, for the two end blocks are cut to receive the monolithic architrave. The two remaining courses measure *ca.* 0.656 m. and *ca.* 0.625 m. in height and are assigned to the second and third levels, respectively. A diminution in width as the building rises, amounting to *ca.* 0.01 m. in total, characterizes both the front and the interior faces of the antae. This slight but measurable phenomenon assists in assigning the second and third courses to their correct positions. As Buck noted, the cutout in the end blocks of the fourth course, made to receive the architrave, is 0.085 m. taller than the height of the architrave block. We agree with the excavators that small capitals must once have crowned the antae. The wall blocks show anathyrosis on the vertical surfaces, and the horizontal surfaces are dressed as setting beds. No clamps or dowels were used in the assembly of the monument. Claw-chisel tooling is clearly visible on the interior and front surfaces, while the rear of the monument is rough picked. The evident economy of construction throughout suggests to us that the dedicators wished to create as large a monument as possible for the sum expended.

The roof of the monument, made in two pieces, is well preserved despite the loss of part of one of them. The perimeter of the underside is cut as a simple geison, while the upper surface is roughly finished, with a bevel 0.13 m. wide across the front and 0.11 m. wide surrounding the remainder (Pl. 5:a). The monument clearly carried additional adornment, as cuttings on the upper surface of the roof blocks show. The oval cuttings towards the corners suggest akroterion figures, and the central cuttings appear to have supported a naiskoslike device containing sculpture within. No trace of these adornments has come to light.

The monument bears a resemblance to numerous semicircular dedications found in other sanctuaries.²² These are consistently low, unroofed monuments, however, and the architecture of the Ikarian Semicircular Monument may be unique. That it was a choregic dedication seems probable enough, as Buck and Merriam concluded. Certainly the sanctuary offers no evidence to suggest any other reason for its construction.

Bases B and C

West of the Semicircular Monument stretches a cache of blocks, most taken from the chapel when it was demolished, others from elsewhere on the site. This cache was established by the excavators of 1888 and has apparently been added to and subtracted

²² E.g., at Delphi, an exedra near the ex-voto of Krateros, earlier than the 3rd century: M. F. Courby, *FdD*, II, *La terrasse du temple*, Paris 1927, pp. 296–297; at Epidauros, several unpublished examples in the sanctuary of Asklepios; at Phlius, an example incorporated into the theater, of the 4th century or later: W. R. Biers, “The Theater at Phlius: Excavations 1973,” *Hesperia* 44, 1975, pp. 56–57; at Messene, exedrae of Hellenistic date: A. K. Orlandos, “Ἀνασκαφή Μεσσήνης,” *Πρακτικά*, 1969 [1971], pp. 112–113 (= *Tò Ἔργον*, 1969, p. 121); “Ἀνασκαφή Μεσσήνης,” *Πρακτικά*, 1970 [1972], pp. 132–133 (= *Tò Ἔργον*, 1970, pp. 112–114).

from in the intervening 93 years. All these blocks are thus out of place and present a jumbled picture to the visitor. Two constructions still in place lie at the perimeters of the stone pile.

Monument B consists of a euthynteria course resting on earth; it is composed of three blocks and originally measured 2.62×1.67 m. Joint faces show anathyrosis, and three pry holes are visible on the top surface. The base, 0.30 m. thick, has a lifting boss on the center of the southeast side of the central block. The ground level is indicated by the vertical faces of the blocks, for the bottom 0.18 m. is less smoothly dressed than the apparently exposed upper portion. Two blocks, not now identified, can be restored here on top of those that are *in situ*.

The euthynteria course for Base C to the northwest of Monument B, is clearly visible under its northwest side. These blocks appear to have been re-used, for two of the three visible pry holes bear no obvious relation to the base itself. The northeast side seems to rest, at least partially, on bedrock. The base consists of two marble blocks; it originally measured 1.885×1.615 m. The joint faces show anathyrosis, and the blocks were secured by two T-clamps. A dowel hole is located near each of the four corners of the base. Pour channels lead to the dowel holes; in one the dowel itself is still well preserved. The beginning of the pour channels and the still visible setting line provide a reasonably accurate indication of the exterior dimensions of the course above, which would have measured approximately 1.25×1.54 m.

The Theatral Area

The theatral area consists of Buck's Wall O and a line of marble thronelike seats originally found *in situ* on a line of marble slabs.²³ This area has deteriorated since the excavations. The marble blocks have been rooted up and slung in a heap and the thrones moved about (Pl. 4:a). There is no trace of Buck's Wall N. The most prominent feature now is a series of roughly hewn stones set on a rubble foundation that originally must have formed Wall O. At each end the foundations of a wall run off at an approximately 45° angle, giving the appearance of a retaining wall. Originally, two features (f, e) extended from the east face of Wall O but they are no longer in evidence, a rough pile of stones and tiles now perhaps marking their position. Cleaning here showed clearly that the area had been disturbed by pits and other intrusions since the early excavations. Block g, which Buck suggested had rested on f and e, is still to be seen lying some five meters east of Wall O. This block is apparently part of a monument, for there are cuttings on its upper surfaces evidently intended to receive some form of dedication.

The large, irregularly shaped blocks that lie in the line of Wall O do not form a continuous level surface (Fig. 5). Beginning with the block at the north end, they alternate in treatment, every second block neither as well worked on its upper surface nor brought up to the same elevation. Three of the larger blocks, which do form a relatively level area, each have three cuttings on their upper surfaces. On each block two are approximately 0.03 m. square and 0.04 m. deep, while the third, to one side of the pair,

²³ Buck, 1889, pp. 176–177.

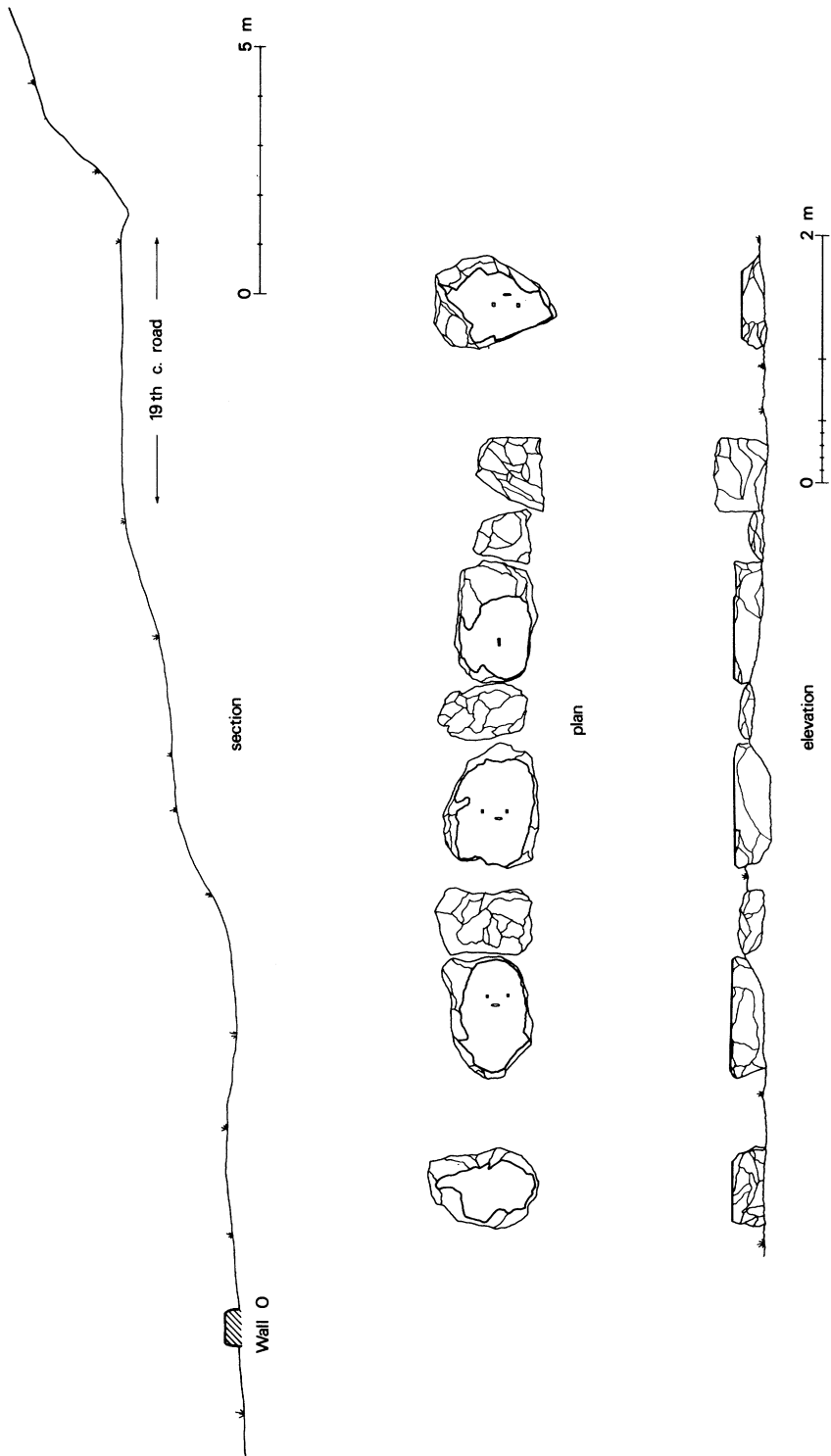


FIG. 5. Section through theatral area, looking south.

is a pry hole. The central block has a single elongated central cutting 0.02×0.06 m. by 0.03 m. deep.

The use of these cuttings is problematic. It is obvious that the second block from the south is out of place and perhaps even the last, isolated block to the south has been shifted about. Possibly these larger blocks acted as foundations to carry vertical piers of wood or even stone which were pinned to them. The intervening spaces between the vertical supports may have been bridged by slabs supported on their centers by rubble packing, thus forming a continuous line of upper slabs along the line of Wall O. It is peculiar that Buck infers that Wall O is simply a "rude wall of uncut stones." Perhaps when first cleared the packing between the present larger blocks brought the whole wall to one level, that of the top of the large blocks, at or near ground level. Alternatively, it is quite possible that Wall O supported a more conventional wall of squared blocks rather than a series of uprights. The larger stones with the dowel holes in the extant remains of Wall O would then have served as the underpinnings for the vertical joints of the first course of such a superstructure.

The proposed reconstruction of spaced uprights on a level "stylobate" of course brings to mind a theater skene. We believe that, lacking positive evidence of the use of this area as a theater, it would be best to consider it as a "theatral area", recognizing that in a deme center secular activities are just as likely as theatral activities to have been carried out in such a space.

Five thronelike seats seem to form a contiguous group (Fig. 6). Each of the double seats has anathyrosis on one end, while the single seat has it on both sides, and so we would expect these to have formed a group of five. The sixth seat is a round-backed throne. All were apparently once supported by a series of elongated marble slabs, now dumped to one side. Pry holes on the upper surface of one of these slabs seem to correspond to the length of the double seats. The best preserved example, found by the excavators near the church and still *in situ*, is illustrated in Plate 5:b.²⁴

Altar I and Associated Walls

The damage noticed in the theatral area is once again evident in the area of the great altar, I. Only two blocks of the north end of the altar are still preserved. The rest have disappeared entirely, and in their place there remains only a modest accumulation of stones. The preserved slabs of the altar are 0.13 m. thick. The large slab at the north end has a pry hole towards the northeast corner. Anathyrosis is evident on the joint faces.²⁵ Walls L and M have largely disappeared. A conglomeration of stones in this area only suggests the existence of the walls noted by Buck.

²⁴ For similar thrones from Athens, see those found re-used (as herm bases) in front of the Stoa Basileos (*Hesperia* 40, 1971, pl. 49:a). It has been conjectured that they were "seats of honor" for the Stoa and their use apparently not connected with theatrical performances (H. A. Thompson and R. E. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora*, XIV, *The Agora of Athens*, Princeton 1972, pp. 83-84, 87).

²⁵ Buck, 1889, p. 176. Apparently 15 slabs of this altar were in place in the 19th century. After having looked in vain for the various walls mentioned by Buck in this area, we refilled to the level of the two preserved blocks of the altar.

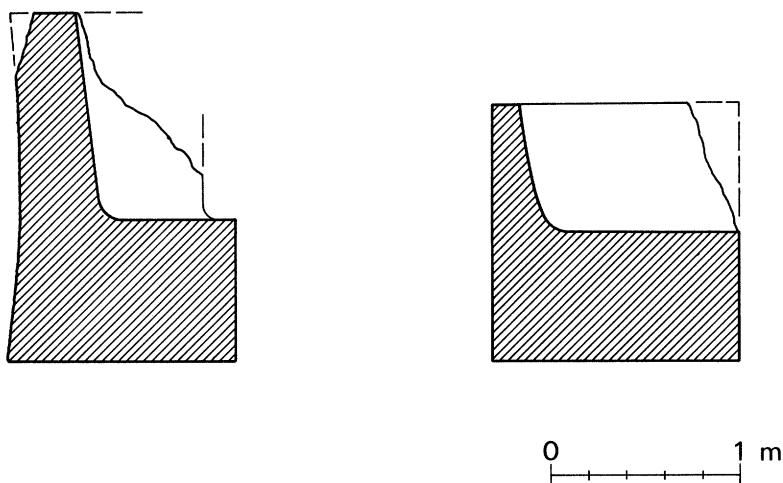


FIG. 6. Theatral seats: sections.

The Pythion

Situated immediately to the northwest of the altar, the Pythion is a simple building *ca.* 11.30 m. long, with a pronaos, cella, and perhaps a narrow adyton (Pl. 6:a).²⁶ As now preserved, the building consists of rubble foundations with a few dressed blocks of an upper course on the outer faces of each of the three preserved walls. The exterior faces are finished in pointed work. The southeast end of the temple consisted of two spur walls terminating in antae. The southwestern one is still *in situ*, preserved to a height of 0.97 m. Its southeastern (outer) surface is treated in furrowed work while the remaining two preserved surfaces are only roughly dressed. The northeastern anta, a fragment of which was apparently still *in situ* in Buck's day (Fig. 1), is no longer to be found. Its placement can still be determined by the position of the later stele base that was cut to fit around it. The entrance to the building became constricted with time by the insertion of three stelai, two to the southwest and one, that already mentioned, to the northeast.

A rubble foundation wall (eh) bonded to the southwest wall of the building defines the pronaos, providing a space *ca.* 1.80 m. in depth. The threshold block, inscribed Ἰκαριῶν τὸ Πύθιον,²⁷ in position in Buck's day, has been tipped over and has slid down towards the northwest. Indeed, as a comparison of the two plans shows (Figs. 1, 2), several features found by Buck are now missing, including the bases at k and i, in front of which was found a relief of Apollo and Artemis.²⁸

²⁶ Buck, 1889, pp. 174–176.

²⁷ Buck, 1889, p. 174, fig. 27. The inscription can now be made out only with great difficulty. We hope that a permanent roof can be erected over this unique inscription, which would allow the stone to be completely cleaned.

²⁸ Buck, 1889, pp. 175, 471, no. XI, pl. 11:3.

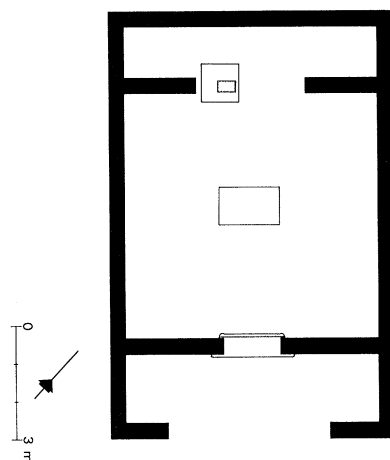


FIG. 7. Restored plan of the Pythion, based on remains visible in 1981 (not including dedicatory bases).

The cella, which measures 6.40 m. deep internally, has also deteriorated since 1888. The northeast side of the central rectangular structure (Buck's altar) has disappeared, while the southeastern slab has fallen to one side. The rear wall of the cella, which bonds with the southwest wall of the temple (at s), extends 1.88 m. and apparently terminates in a cut rectangular block, quite possibly the base of a door jamb. Thus, a passageway would have been provided between the cella and the narrow space, *ca.* 1.30 m. in depth, which Buck described as an *adyton*. Interrupting the passage is a large block, nearly square, with a cutting on the top surface apparently intended to receive a stele or other dedication.

Wall cy, extending northwestward from the back wall of the Pythion, was considered by Buck to be the southwest wall of Building G. Its much higher elevation in relation to the walls preserved of Building G to the northeast makes this unlikely. Wall cy is now preserved for a length of only *ca.* two meters; the remaining 5.00 m. have been obliterated by the construction of the modern retaining wall that limits the site at present on the northwest. Only two blocks are preserved of the southwest face. They are treated with very worn furrowed work and rest on a foundation of small stones, quite unlike the large blocks in the foundations of Building G to the northeast.²⁹

The upper surface of the large foundation block at d is characterized by a rough-picked band *ca.* 0.30 m. wide running in a northwest-southeast direction. We take this setting bed as clear indication of the now missing north wall of the temple. We are thus

²⁹ Buck, 1889, p. 176. O. A. W. Dilke ("Details and Chronology of Greek Theatre Caveas," *BSA* 45, 1950, p. 31, fig. 6) apparently also separated this wall from Building G.

able to restore the width of the temple as *ca.* 7.50 m. (Fig. 7). It follows that the spur walls at the east end of the temple were of unequal length.

In the wall between pronaos and cella, approximately 1.70 m. northeast of the southwest wall of the temple, there is a block with a smoothly worked surface. As its character is decidedly different from the rubble construction of the rest of the wall, we take this to be the underpinning of the southwestern end of the inscribed door sill, which should be restored to a position approximately 0.40 m. southeast of its present location. If this is its proper location, then the threshold block would have been situated on the axis of the building. It is curious that the outer entrance of the temple is not symmetrically designed. Figure 7 presents a restored plan of the temple based on our observations and on the assumption that nothing else, to the northeast of the existing dedication base, blocked the entrance to the adyton. The building presents a primitive appearance; no exact parallels are known to us except for general similarities to simple and early temples with adyta of one sort or another.³⁰

The central rectangular structure characterized by Merriam as a statue base and by Buck as an altar (t) is particularly interesting (Pl. 5:c).³¹ Its construction of four upright slabs seems to us unsuited to the requirements of a statue base. The slabs, of micaceous schist, are only roughly dressed on the exterior surfaces and loosely joined. One would expect a base for a statue to be constructed of solid blocks and be more finely dressed and of a type of stone less prone to fracturing. One would also perhaps expect the statue of the god to be placed further to the rear of the building.

The structure would not have been as prominent in antiquity as it is today, for the tops of the slabs would have been about level with the threshold block when the latter was in its correct position; the slabs might have supported something at about ground level.³²

An altar is a good possibility. Perhaps it was not the major altar for the god; Altar I to the southeast of the temple could have filled this role, unless it was the altar for the deme. The structure in the Pythion may have been for liquid offerings which would have trickled down through the packed stones reported to have been found inside it when it was excavated.³³

The habit of dressing the faces of blocks with vertical grooves has already been mentioned. It should be noted that in this building not only are the preserved wall blocks

³⁰ The plan of the Pythion at Ikarion bears only superficial resemblance to a number of other small temples in Attica and elsewhere, for instance, the temple in the Eleusinion in Athens (Thompson and Wycherley, *op. cit.* [footnote 24 above], p. 151, fig. 37); the three temples recently recorded by J. Travlos ("Τρεῖς ναοὶ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος: Ἀβλιδίας, Ταυροπόλου καὶ Βραυρωνίας," *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern*, U. Jantzen, ed., Tübingen 1976, p. 204, fig. 8); and the temple of Apollo Pythias at Asine (O. Frödin and A. Persson, *Asine, Results of the Swedish Excavations, 1922-1930*, Stockholm 1938, pp. 148-151, p. 150, fig. 130).

³¹ Buck, 1889, p. 175, and note 18.

³² An omphalos, the symbol of the god, apparently found in all sanctuaries of Apollo, comes to mind first, but there is no evidence for an omphalos at Ikarion.

³³ Buck, *loc. cit.* (footnote 31).

so treated but also smaller blocks used in the foundations. An example of this can be seen in the foundations for the rear wall of the Pythion (Pl. 5:d). The temple as we have it, then, should be contemporary with most of the stone construction on the site and probably dates no earlier than the 4th century B.C.³⁴

Fallen tiles and mud-brick detritus along the southwest wall indicate that the original excavators merely traced the walls and apparently did not clear out the entire building. Excavation here might clarify the feature labeled q, described by Buck simply as “an insignificant wall,” and might in fact uncover evidence for the earlier shrine that must have existed on the site.

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³⁴ Buck (1889, p. 175) dated the inscription on the threshold block to the 4th century. It has apparently not been restudied since the original publication.



a. Wall ab of Building G from the east. Wall F in foreground



c. Portion of the "platform" north of Wall E, from the northeast



b. Wall E, fallen exterior face block from the west



d. Wall E from the south



a. Block bearing choregic inscription, at junction of Walls E and F, as found in 1888



b. Junction of Walls E and F in 1981



a. Building D from the west



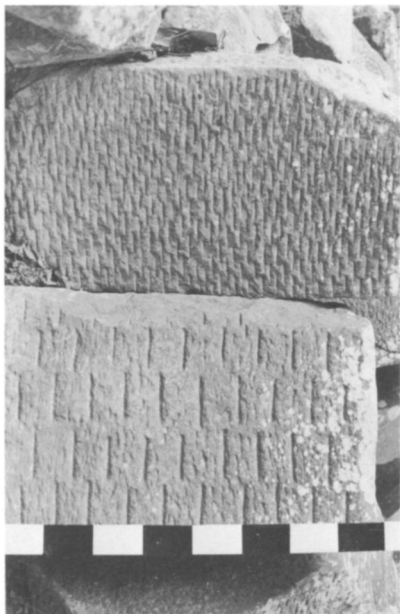
b. The Semicircular Monument from the west



a. The theatral area from the southeast



b. Decorated block from the Byzantine church, in a stone pile



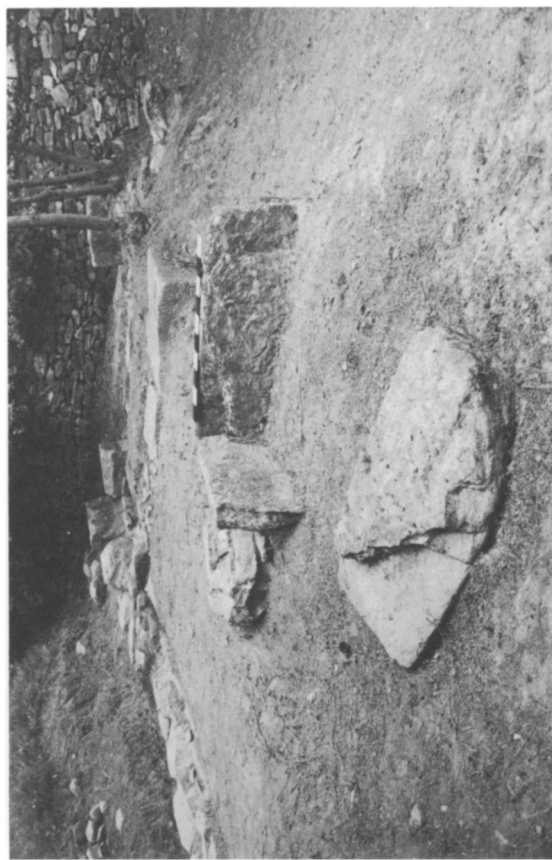
c. Furrowed (above) and pointed work on random blocks in a stone pile



a. Upper surface of a roof block from the Semicircular Monument



b. Double throne seat from the theatral area



c. Rectangular construction in the Python, actual state, from the southeast



d. Tooled blocks in the rear wall of the Python, from the southeast



a. The Pythion from the northwest after the excavations of 1888. Wall cy in foreground



b. The Pythion from the northwest after clearing, 1981. Wall of the adyton in foreground