

## A SANCTUARY OF ZEUS AND ATHENA PHRATRIOS NEWLY FOUND IN ATHENS

In the spring of 1937 excavations conducted by the Department of Public Works of the City of Athens in the north central part of the ancient town revealed a small sanctuary of Zeus Phratrios and Athena Phratria that bordered an important north to south roadway. The immediate object of the excavation was the preparation of foundations for a public bath and comfort station. On the appearance of ancient remains the Department of Antiquities in the Ministry of Education was consulted and a partial exploration of the area was carried out under the supervision of the undersigned while the work of construction continued. The City Works Department, in the person of its engineers, and the building contractor, Mr. K. Antonopoulos, rendered willing and welcome co-operation. The drawings which accompany this article have been prepared by Mr. John Travlos.

The site of the discovery may be fixed conveniently by reference to the plan of the city in Judeich's *Topographie von Athen*. It lies about midway on a straight line joining the north end of the Stoa of Attalos and the Acharnian Gate, by the little Square of Karamanos which is formed by the junction of Bysse and Boreas Streets with Athena Street. As will be clear from Fig. 1, the ancient roadway at the point exposed lay just to the east of Athena Street and its line continued in its southwesterly direction would cut the modern thoroughfare obliquely.

The Square had once been adorned by the mediaeval church of St. Nicholas, known, apparently from its founder, as St. Nicholas Ktena. Of the church and its history we have little information. It would seem to have been demolished before the middle of last century: sacrificed, perhaps, along with other churches and many private houses to the laying out of the modern Athena Street in 1834 and the following years; or possibly included among the 70 churches of the city which were obliged to contribute their material to the construction of the New Metropolis in the 40's.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the architectural marbles noted below may well derive from the building, and many of the ancient marbles found on the site were probably brought from elsewhere in the city to be used in its foundations. A couple of large vaulted tombs of concrete, which came to light in the middle of the area, their tops *ca.* 2.00 m. below modern surface, must have been included in the church yard.

The place of the Church was taken by the School of Karamanos, whose name lingers on in the Square, though the building itself has long since perished by fire.

<sup>1</sup> On the church see A. Mommsen, *Athenae Christianae*, Leipzig, 1868, no. 168; T. N. Philadelphus, *Ἱστορία Ἀθηνῶν ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας*, Athens, I (1902), p. 274. Its name appears in a list of the churches of Athens of 1822 (Philadelphus, *l. c.*); it is marked on Schaubert's plan of 1833, but Mommsen, working in 1866, wrote of it in the past tense.

The area to be occupied by the new building may be distinguished in Fig. 1. It is L-shaped, with maximum dimensions of *ca.* 29 m. and 30 m. With the exception of a rectangular pit that was opened around the altar itself the archaeological exploration was confined to the deep trenches cut for the outer walls of the new building and to

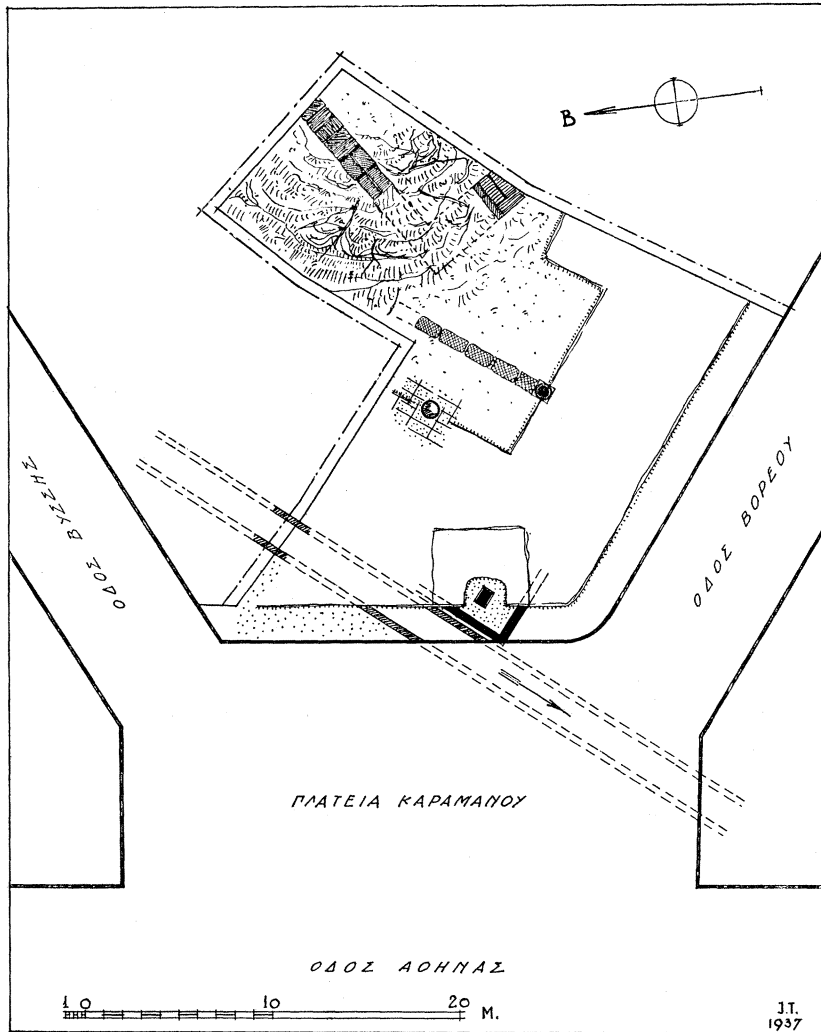


Fig. 1. Karamanos Square and Adjacent Area as explored in 1937<sup>1</sup>

the one large cellar room of the structure. This limited investigation revealed a marked irregularity in the ancient ground level, *viz.* a difference of *ca.* 5.50 m. between the western and the higher eastern side of the area, a configuration which one would certainly not have suspected from the present level surface of the region.

<sup>1</sup> Since this article was originally intended for publication in a Greek journal, the legends on the plans are written in Greek.

Of the ancient roadway, two short lengths were exposed to a maximum of *ca.* 5.00 m. Its surface was much worn by traffic and its hard-packed gravel extended down at least 1.00 m. Only the eastern limit of the thoroughfare could be fixed and that by reason of its being bordered by a large drain that flowed from north to south. The floor of the channel in large part consists of living rock, which, at a point opposite the altar actually intruded into the otherwise rectangular section of the drain (Fig. 3). A single thickness of large blocks of poros and conglomerate, usually set as orthostates, formed each wall of the channel, giving it an average depth of *ca.* 1.00 m. Its mean width was half as great again and was spanned by a carefully constructed flat vault of segmental bricks. The top of the vault lay approximately at the level of the ancient

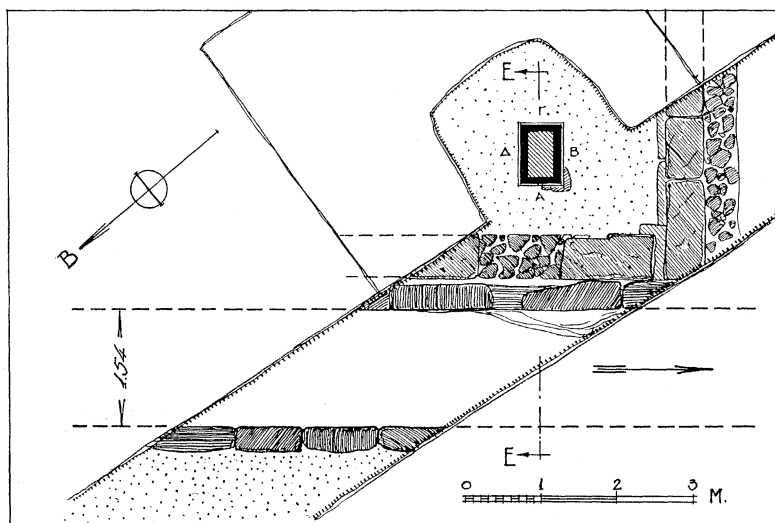


Fig. 2. Sanctuary of Zeus and Athena, Plan of Actual State

road. The brickwork is undoubtedly of Roman date. It may well have replaced an earlier covering of transverse stone slabs. The relative levels of drain and altar suggest that the drain is the later of the two (Fig. 3); yet this would permit of a date for the drain in the Hellenistic period, with which its style of construction would agree. This must not be taken to imply an equally late date for the roadway, for it frequently happened that even major thoroughfares of the city were provided with such costly drains only in comparatively late times.

The orientation of the short length of roadway exposed, combined with its importance as indicated by its width, the great accumulation of road metal and the presence of the drain, suggests that we have to do with one of the arterial streets of the city that led from its centre out through the gates, in this case, in all probability, from the northeast corner of the Agora to the Acharnian Gate. The position of the gate itself would seem to have been established already with fair certainty and the general line of the roadway

outside the gate is given by the discovery of graves along appropriate lines, but the present length appears to be the first piece of the street thus far exposed within the limits of the ancient city.<sup>1</sup>

The lower course of the drain may be conjectured with equal probability. It must, that is, have poured its water into the great sewer, perhaps the ancient Eridanos, which flowed from east to west along the north edge of the Market Place and thence out through the Sacred Gate. Its course in this general region lies between and deep below the modern Hermes and Hadrian Streets.<sup>2</sup> The probable point of junction of the two channels is distant *ca.* 280 m. from the area under discussion. That our channel served a natural line of drainage is clearly shown by the volume of water which still seeps through its loose filling. It was doubtless this stream of water which fed the Spring of Borias, a landmark in this district of Turkish Athens.<sup>3</sup>

The Sanctuary of Zeus and Athena adjoined the east side of the drain (Figs. 2, 3). Only the southwest corner of its temenos was exposed with short lengths of its west and south enclosure walls. These were built of massive conglomerate blocks roughly dressed, laid in a single row on the bedrock or on a slight packing of small stones. The west wall abuts against the side of the drain. It is preserved only a few centimetres above the ancient ground level. The south wall, of which two courses remain in position, served in its lower part as a retaining wall against the higher ground level to the south, which lay *ca.* 1.50 m. above the base of the altar. Immediately behind the wall is a packing of field stones.

The altar rested directly on bedrock, in part on a slight packing of small stones (Figs. 3–6). Four slabs of Hymettian marble set on edge supported the now missing altar top. The side pieces are neatly fitted at the corners with half-housing joints cut with anathyrosis and they were secured to one another by an iron clamp of  $\square$  shape

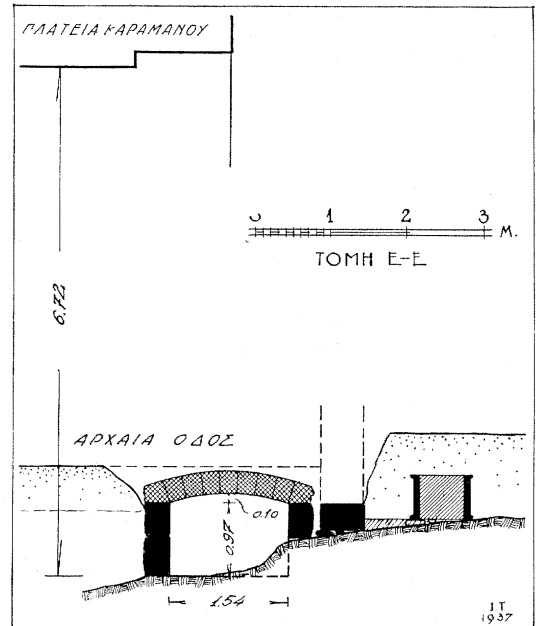


Fig. 3. Sanctuary of Zeus and Athena, Cross-section on Plan, Fig. 2

<sup>1</sup> On the Acharnian Gate cf. Judeich, *Topographie*<sup>2</sup>, p. 143. Actual remains of it have been reported near the intersection of Aiolos and Sophokles Streets, *ca.* 350 m. to the northeast of our site.

<sup>2</sup> On this drain cf. E. Ziller in *Ath. Mitt.*, II, 1877, pp. 117 ff., pl. VII; Judeich, *op. cit.*, p. 205. The main drain, in the parts explored, has shown an inside width of *ca.* 2.10 m. and a vaulted cover, in some places of brick, elsewhere of stone.

<sup>3</sup> On the fountain see A. Mommsen, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

set obliquely and led into the top of each corner. All four sides were finished below with a cyma recta above a fascia, above with an ovolo and fascia (Fig. 5). The exposed faces were dressed with a fine-toothed chisel. The northwest upper corner of the altar had been roughly broken away; its remaining surfaces are fresh and clean; even the base moulding had been rubbed but slightly.<sup>1</sup>

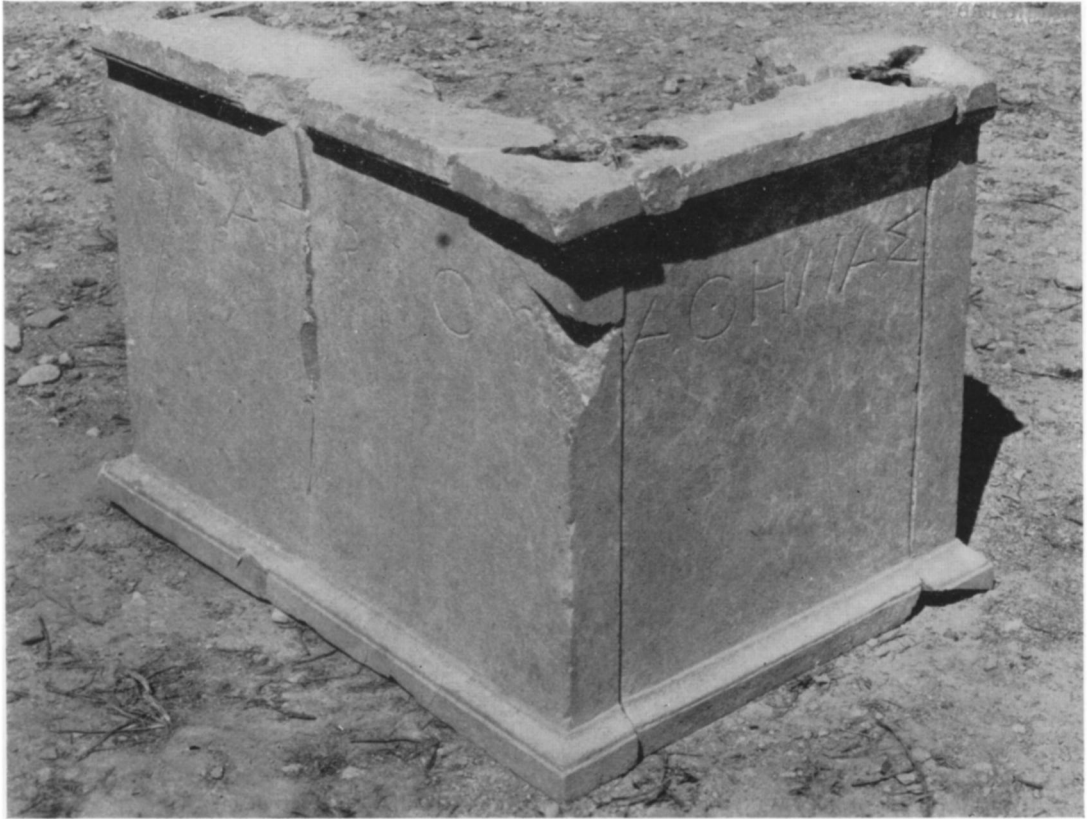


Fig. 4. Altar of Zeus and Athena

Of the inscription on the altar one word was cut on the upper face of each slab.<sup>2</sup> The name of Zeus appears on the west end, that of Athena on the east, and their appellations follow respectively on the south and north sides, thus:

ΔΙ]ΟΣ | ΦΠΑΤΡΙΟΥ | ΑΘΗΝΑΣ | ΦΡΑ[ΤΡΙΑΣ

For the date of the altar, the letter forms would suggest a time in the second half of the fourth or the early third century B.C. Their evidence is supported by that of the few pot-

<sup>1</sup> The altar has been removed to the Museum of the "Theseion."

<sup>2</sup> The letters are 0.065 m. high, cut shallow by a hesitating hand. The flaring finials are noteworthy.

sherds which were found beneath the ground level around the altar and in the packing of its enclosure walls: these sherds are of the fourth century B.C., as late as its end.

The altar was probably the central and chief part of the cult place. Its position, immediately to the east of the roadway, would seem to rule out the possibility of an associated temple. We may suppose rather that we have to do with a small, utterly simple sanctuary erected and maintained not by the state, but by some individual phratry. In general character our altar finds a close parallel in another altar of the same divinities recently found in the Agora of Athens. The altar of the Agora has

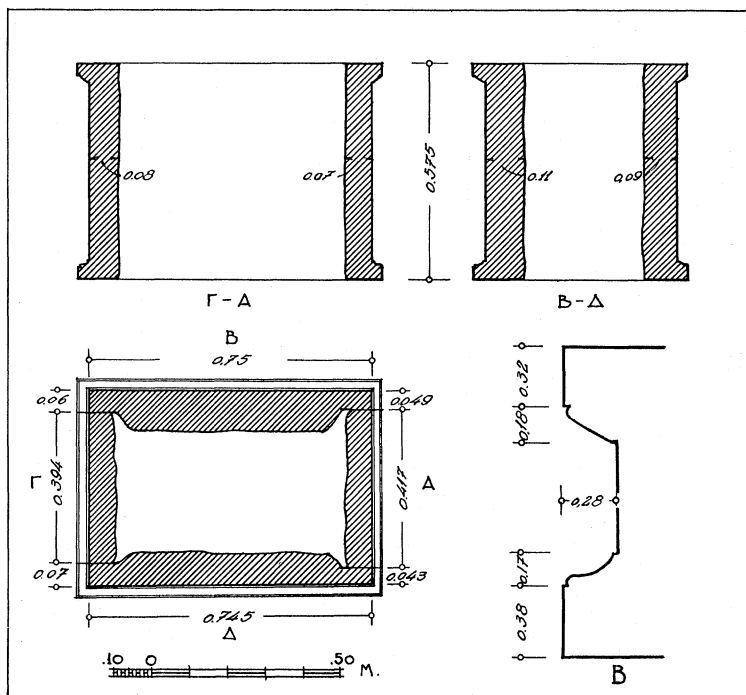


Fig. 5. Altar of Zeus and Athena, Sections and Details of Mouldings

been associated with a miniature temple that stands close beside the larger Temple of Apollo Patroos on the west side of the Market Square; and, by reason of its prominent position in this public place, it has been connected with a state cult.<sup>1</sup> Its very possession of a temple may further confirm the greater dignity of the sanctuary in the Agora as compared with that in Athena Street.

In the corner of the building lot diagonally opposite the altar appeared the south-west corner of an ancient building (Fig. 1). Its foundations of large conglomerate blocks carefully bedded on the living rock were preserved to a maximum height of three courses.

<sup>1</sup> *Hesperia*, VI, 1937, pp. 104 ff. See also a discussion of the cult of Zeus Phratrios and Athena Phratria by Professor W. S. Ferguson in his study of the Salaminian decrees in *Hesperia*, VII, 1938, pp. 28 f.

Nothing of the euthynteria remained in the part exposed. The west foundation wall measured *ca.* 1.40 m. wide, the south *ca.* 2.10 m. This greater dimension was adequate to support steps and colonnade and suggests that the building had a porch facing south. The ancient ground level to the south of it must have lain at least as high as the modern Athena Street, must have risen, that is, 5.50 m. or more above the ground level of the altar. For the date of the building we have no clue save in the style of construction which suggests good workmanship of the fourth century or Hellenistic period. Its identification remains obscure.

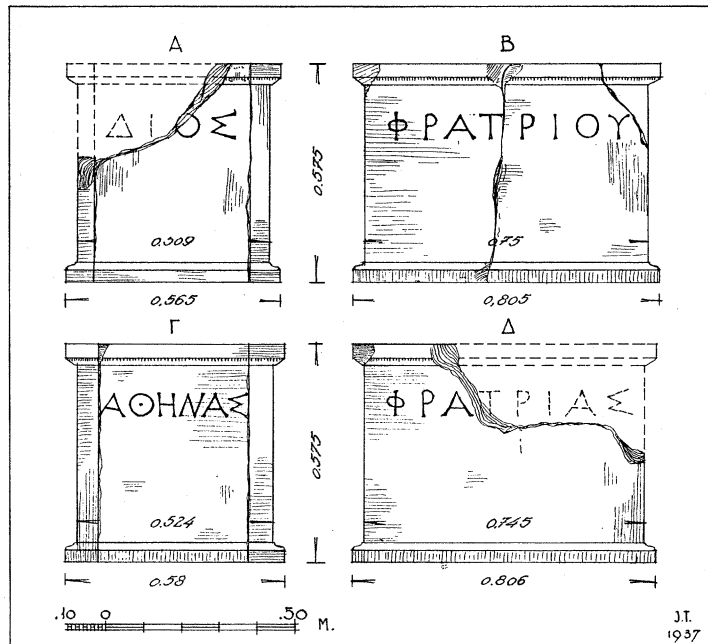


Fig. 6. Altar of Zeus and Athena, Elevations

In the middle of the area traces were found of a building whose style of construction would suggest a date in advanced Roman times (Fig. 1). Of a north to south wall, presumably the east wall of the structure, a few stones remained in position: large conglomerate blocks laid in a single thickness and bedded in grey mortar. Associated with this wall, and lying to the west of it at a level *ca.* 4.20 m. below the surface of the modern Athena Street, was a floor paved with large and carefully jointed rectangular slabs of Pentelic marble *ca.* 0.02 m. thick. The slabs were bedded on a layer of mortar which contained much pounded tile and which for the most part immediately overlay the dressed bedrock. Toward the east side of the marble floor a curbing of Hymettian marble gave access to a well through a mouth *ca.* 0.46 m. in diameter. The curbing rose just above the level of the floor and was pierced by a narrow channel which connected floor and well. Once more we must admit ignorance regarding the identification of the building.

The altar and the building of the marble floor were found buried deep beneath a mass of destruction débris that rose to a new ground level *ca.* 1.20 m. above the old (Fig. 3). The corner of the temenos was filled to a depth of *ca.* 0.50 m. with silt that had accumulated presumably at some time when the drain was out of service. Above the silt lay a loose mass of fallen brick and tile and ash. These circumstances suggest a destruction such as may well have befallen this region of the city in the Herulian sack of 267 A.D. Since the area lies outside the circuit of the "Valerian Wall," within which the city confined itself after that disaster, it may well have remained desolate for long thereafter. Road and drain, however, were undoubtedly reconditioned and continued in service. The importance of this line of traffic in the general scheme of the city is well illustrated by the fact that both in Turkish Athens and in the city as reorganized after the War of Independence, a major thoroughfare has followed closely the line of the ancient street.

A number of small finds came to light in the course of the building operations. For the most part these were found in the disturbed upper filling, i.e., a context of no significance. The stone statuette, No. 2, however, was found in the great drain and so may be supposed to have come from nearby. Some of the architectural marbles, as already noted, may derive from the Church of St. Nicholas which once occupied the site. The grave stones must have been carried in for building purposes from one or other of the ancient cemeteries outside the city gates, probably in quite recent times. Insignificant potsherds and fragmentary terracotta lamps dating from the fifth century B.C. onward were found in small numbers. Of some interest perhaps, is a scrap from the rim of a black-glazed multiple kernos, similar to one in the Agora published in *Hesperia*, III, 1934, p. 340, B 27. This was found imbedded in the packing for the west enclosure wall of the temenos.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Grave Relief. Fig. 7

Height, 0.48 m.; Width, 0.31 m.; Thickness, 0.12 m. Pentelic marble. The surface much weathered. A fragment from the lower middle part of the slab. The lower edge is preserved and shows traces of having been leaded into a slot.

Of the figures there remains a draped boy who stood between a seated woman on the right and a standing draped figure on the left. Of these two, little remains. The boy's head is summarily rendered but his drapery and the seated woman are skilfully and carefully handled. Style and workmanship are of the late fifth century.

### 2. Statuette of a Male Figure. Fig. 8

Height, 0.38 m.; Width across shoulders, 0.15 m. The material is a fine-grained black stone with bands and flecks of a milky whiteness. The head is missing, both forearms, the right leg from below the knee and the left from above the knee. In the broken ends of both legs are traces of iron dowels and there are three holes for similar dowels in the back of the tree stump against which the figure

<sup>1</sup> The objects catalogued below have been deposited in the Museum of the "Theseion" together with the altar of Zeus and Athena.





Fig. 7. Fragmentary Grave Relief

leans. These perhaps all date from a repair of the lower part. The front surface is smooth polished. The back, particularly in its lower part, is unfinished and retains the marks of gouge and rasp.

The statuette represents a male figure who stands, with his left thigh supported on the top of a rough tree stump. Both upper arms hang vertical and on either thigh is a point of attachment for the respective hand or the object held in the hand. The break on the left upper arm indicates that some tall object was pressed close to the arm. The figure wears a simple chiton of knee length that was passed



Fig. 8. Statuette of Black Stone

under the right arm, knotted over the left shoulder and bound around the hips with a rope tied in a Herculean knot.

The rustic dress and the negligent pose suggest a countryman: a shepherd, hunter or fisherman, who carried his implements in his hands. Or is it Attis with shepherd's staff in his left hand? Type and style might be paralleled as early as the second century B.C., though material and workmanship make an early Roman date more probable for our piece.

## 3. Columella of Pentelic Marble

Height, 0.26 m.; Diameter, 0.16 m.; Height of letters, 0.017 m. Broken away below. In the second line the three letters are quite distinct and there would seem never to have been others.

ΑΠΟΛΛΟΔΩΡΟΣ      Ἀπολλόδωρος  
 ΟΛ                      Υ

## 4. Columella of Hymettian Marble

Height, 0.21 m.; Diameter, 0.195 m.; Height of letters, 0.015 m. Broken away below.

ΑΤΛΟΣ                      Ἄτλος  
 ΚΧΘΙΟΣ                    Κλόδιος  
 ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ              Ἀλέξανδρος

## 5. Columella of Hymettian Marble

Height, 0.42 m.; Diameter, 0.19 m.; Height of letters, 0.025 m. Much of the lower part and the top above the fillet is broken away.

ΓΛΑΥΚΗ                    Γλαύκη  
 ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ              Δημητρίου  
 ΣΟΥΝΙΕΩΣ                Σουνιέως  
 ΓΥΝΗ

## 6. Columella of Pentelic Marble

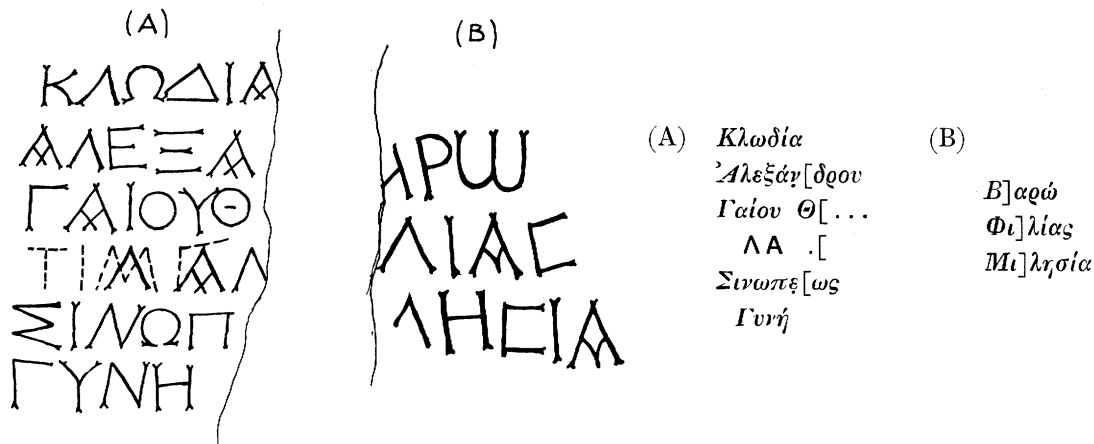
Height, 0.42 m.; Diameter, 0.178 m.; Height of letters, 0.015 m. Slightly battered.

ΙΠΝΗΤΙΟΝ                Ἰπνήτιον  
 ΛΕΩΣΤΡΑΤΟΥ            Λεωστράτου  
 ΠΕΡΓΑΣΗΘΕΝ            Περγασήθεν  
 ΘΥΓΑΤΗΡ

The name Ipnetion, to my knowledge, is otherwise unknown.

## 7. Columella of Hymettian Marble

Height, 0.43 m.; Diameter, 0.27 m.; Height of letters in (A), 0.025 m., in (B), 0.03 m. Broken away below and behind. It bears two inscriptions, by quite different hands, on opposite sides of the stone.



Faint traces beneath an erasure in (A)l.4 suggest an original reading: ΤΙΜΓ[

## 8. Circular Marble Base. Fig. 9

Pentelic marble. Height, 0.26 m. Only a fragment of the top remains.

A circular base supports a rectangular abacus. The top of the shaft is encircled by a band of palmettes alternating with leaves of water plants, above which is a bead-and-reel, and a braided half-round. The crowning moulding of the abacus is entirely broken away. Summary work. Possibly to be associated with the revetment crown, No. 9.

## 9. Marble Revetment Crown. Fig. 9

Pentelic marble. Height, 0.195 m.; Width, 0.43 m.; Thickness, 0.12 m.

In the top is a cutting for a small hook clamp leading back. One end is finished with a joint surface; the other carries the return of the ornament. The cymation is decorated by palmettes alternately closed and open, interspaced with leaves; bead-and-reel below.

## 10. Impost Block. Fig. 9

Pentelic marble. Height, 0.135 m.; Width, 0.375 m.; Length, 0.50 m.

Cuttings in the top for a door pivot and post must date from a re-use.

The two sides and one end are plain. The other end is decorated with a square cross between acanthus leaves, and flowers.

## 11. Marble Double Colonnade. Fig. 9

Pentelic Marble. Preserved height, 0.49 m.; Width, 0.365 m.; Thickness, 0.127 m. Broken away above.

A round shaft attached to either edge of a flat member.

**12. Marble Colonnette. Fig. 9**

Pentelic marble. Preserved height, 0.59 m.; Width, 0.125 m. Broken away below and behind. An octagonal shaft surmounted by a plain capital of the same width as the shaft.



Fig. 9. Architectural Marbles

**13. Marble Colonnette. Fig. 9**

Pentelic marble. Height, 0.28 m.; Width, 0.15 m.; Thickness, 0.20 m.

Capital and column were cut in one piece. The column is broken away just below the capital. On the front face is a double rosette and on either side a single rosette; the back is plain.

**14. Marble Centre Post. Fig. 9**

Pentelic marble. Height, 0.45 m.; Width, 0.24 m.; Thickness, 0.18 m. Broken away above and on both sides. Cut from a re-used block, some of the original surface of which remains behind.

The block originally had a vertical slot on either side, hence probably a post in an altar screen, supporting marble slabs. The front is decorated, in the surviving part with a rosette above a single panel of maeander.

**15. Crowning Member of an Altar Screen. Fig. 9**

Pentelic marble. Height, 0.185 m.; Width, 0.30 m.; Length, 0.40 m. Broken away at both ends. The top sloped roughly down toward the back. In the top a dowel hole with lead.

The sloping front face of the slab is decorated with an open braid pattern interrupted by a square cross with petals between the arms. Fair workmanship.

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