

A NEW PARTHENON FRAGMENT FROM THE ATHENIAN AGORA

(PLATE 38)

THE Parthenon pediments have been so much studied and discussed that we tend to forget how much is still lacking in our knowledge of them. Carpenter's happy discovery of the figure U from the West pediment¹ was dramatic proof that important additions may still be made. Since the compilation of Smith's British Museum publication,² however, there has been no comprehensive review of the fragments already assigned.³ It seemed inevitable that a careful study of all the marbles in the original would yield valuable new evidence for the two gables.⁴ Unexpectedly, it was the storerooms of the Athenian Agora Excavations that produced the first major discovery (Pl. 38, a) in the present investigations.⁵

It is a large piece of Pentelic marble with a rounded surface entirely covered by drapery, which falls down to either side in soft folds, as of thin material, and converges below to a narrower mass hanging free of the body. The principal face is marked by heavier weathering and a more complicated pattern of the folds. At the top, next to the right-hand break, is the edge of an overfold, from under which short ridges curve down toward the left. The main folds are swept back toward the right. The shape of the fragment and the direction of the folds suggested that this was part of the thigh of a large female figure moving toward the left. Its style, its size, and the fact that it was weathered on one side made it seem probable that the fragment belonged to one of the Parthenon pediments. The surface is finished with the

¹ *Hesperia*, I, 1932, pp. 1-30.

² A. H. Smith, *Sculptures of the Parthenon*, London, 1910.

³ S. Casson, *Catalogue of the Acropolis Museum*, II, Cambridge, 1921, is for the most part uncritical in his acceptance of Smith's list.

⁴ The discovery and identification of the Agora fragment published in the present article was made by F. Brommer in the course of a study of all the fragments of the Parthenon pediments. E. Harrison assisted in the mechanics of confirming the join and of assembling the casts. The photographs are the work of Miss Alison Frantz. Thanks are due to Homer A. Thompson, Director of the Agora Excavations, and to John Meliades, Ephor of Athens and the Acropolis, for their help and cooperation.

⁵ Agora Inv. S 161. Found February 1, 1932 in a modern wall at the north foot of the Areopagus. P. H. 0.55 m.; P. W. 0.26 m.; P. L. 0.37 m. Broken at both ends and below. The marble has taken on a pale golden color on both sides and is much flaked and cracked. The tops of all ridges on the front of the fragment are chipped away. Those on the back are better preserved. The fragment has been transferred to the Acropolis Museum.

greatest care on both sides. The overfold at the top of the fragment is undercut with the stationary drill except at the back, where a corner of it lies flat against the leg. The forked ridges on front and back and the curved fold that bridges one of the broad furrows below the leg on the front are typical Parthenon tricks.

Further consideration showed that the East pediment, at least in the parts that are preserved, did not come into question. As for the lost parts of the same pediment, since there is no drawing by Carrey at our disposal, an attempt to place it there would have been difficult. There remained the West pediment, and specifically its right half, since the goddess was facing left. Carrey's drawing⁶ shows that in the right half of the West pediment only Iris and Amphitrite have a movement corresponding to that of the Agora fragment. As the right leg of Iris is preserved, only Amphitrite remained. A measured drawing of the break, when compared with the cast of Amphitrite that by good fortune exists in Athens in the Acropolis Museum, accorded so well that it seemed virtually certain that the fragment belonged. Nevertheless a cast of the broken surface was made in order to be entirely sure. It joined break for break, more exactly than one could have dared to hope. Thereupon a cast of the whole fragment was made and united with the cast of the torso (Pl. 38, b), from which the original had been separated at least since the time of Lord Elgin.

The right leg of Amphitrite appears still in position in the drawing made by Dalton in 1749,⁷ but we have no closer indication for the date and cause of its separation from the torso. That so heavy a piece should have wandered so far seems an even greater mystery, but to this we possess at least a clue. The thigh was recovered from the demolition of modern house-walls in the area between Asteroskopeion Street and the north foot of the Areopagus. In that same section was found an even larger piece of Pentelic marble, a fragment of a large architectural block of the classical period, which likewise came to light in the demolition of these houses.⁸ The remains of a large circular hole with rope-marks show that it was part of a modern well-curb before it was built into the house-wall. More interesting are the marks of a modern saw on one face of the block, marks that resemble those left on the backs of Parthenon frieze blocks when they were sawn off by Lusieri, Lord Elgin's agent, in order to lighten them for transportation. The height of the fragment, 1.015 m., and the treatment of the preserved ancient faces prove that it is a part of one of these blocks. Thus it is clear that at some time during or after the removal of the Elgin marbles at least one

⁶ H. Omont, *Athènes au XVII^e siècle, Dessins des sculptures du Parthenon attribués à J. Carrey*, Paris, 1898, pl. III; Smith, *Parthenon*, p. 15, fig. 27.

⁷ Smith, *Parthenon*, p. 4, fig. 6.

⁸ Agora Inv. A 2428. Found in 1932 in a modern house at the north foot of the Areopagus. H. 1.015 m.; P. L. 0.60 m.; P. Th. 0.43 m. Back rough-picked, with a broad, rough anathyrosis along the top edge. End rough-picked. Top and bottom smooth. Remains of a T-clamp cutting and a dowel hole in the top.

wagonload of heavy stone was brought down from the Acropolis to the area where Amphitrite's thigh was found.

The addition of the new fragment restores to the figure some of the fine, liquid movement of drapery that marked Poseidon's charioteer as a creature of the sea. The folds are those of her thin chiton, which was open on the left side and blown back by the wind, covering the right leg but leaving most of the left leg bare. A small bronze pin in the top surface of the thigh (visible as a black spot in Pl. 38, a) may have served to attach the free ends of the bronze reins which the goddess held in her right hand. Fragments of the sea serpent beneath her feet have also been identified in the Acropolis Museum.

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a. New Fragment of Amphitrite, West Pediment O, from the Athenian Agora



b. Cast of Amphitrite with Cast of New Fragment Attached