

# OLD DISCOVERIES FROM OLD ATHENS

(PLATES 59–60)

**A**MONG the ancient monuments of Athens there are many the existence of which has long been known, but for which no adequate description, drawing, or photographic documentation has ever been made. The purpose of this paper is to present such a record, while the opportunity still exists, for the remains of the base of a choregic monument on the course of the ancient Street of the Tripods, and for a life-size marble relief of a bull.<sup>1</sup>

## THE CHOREGIC MONUMENT BASE

These remains<sup>2</sup> are situated in the cellar of the modern building at the northwest corner of Thespis and Tripod Streets (Figs. 1, A, and 2).<sup>3</sup> They consist of an eastward facing wall, which was the original front of the monument, with a maximum preserved depth of 1.45 meters and a length of 4.49 meters from its southeast corner to the point of juncture with the northern wall of the modern cellar (Fig. 2). It is impossible to know if, or how much, the monument originally extended further to the north.<sup>4</sup> Of the five extant courses of masonry (Fig. 3, Pl. 59, a), the lower course,

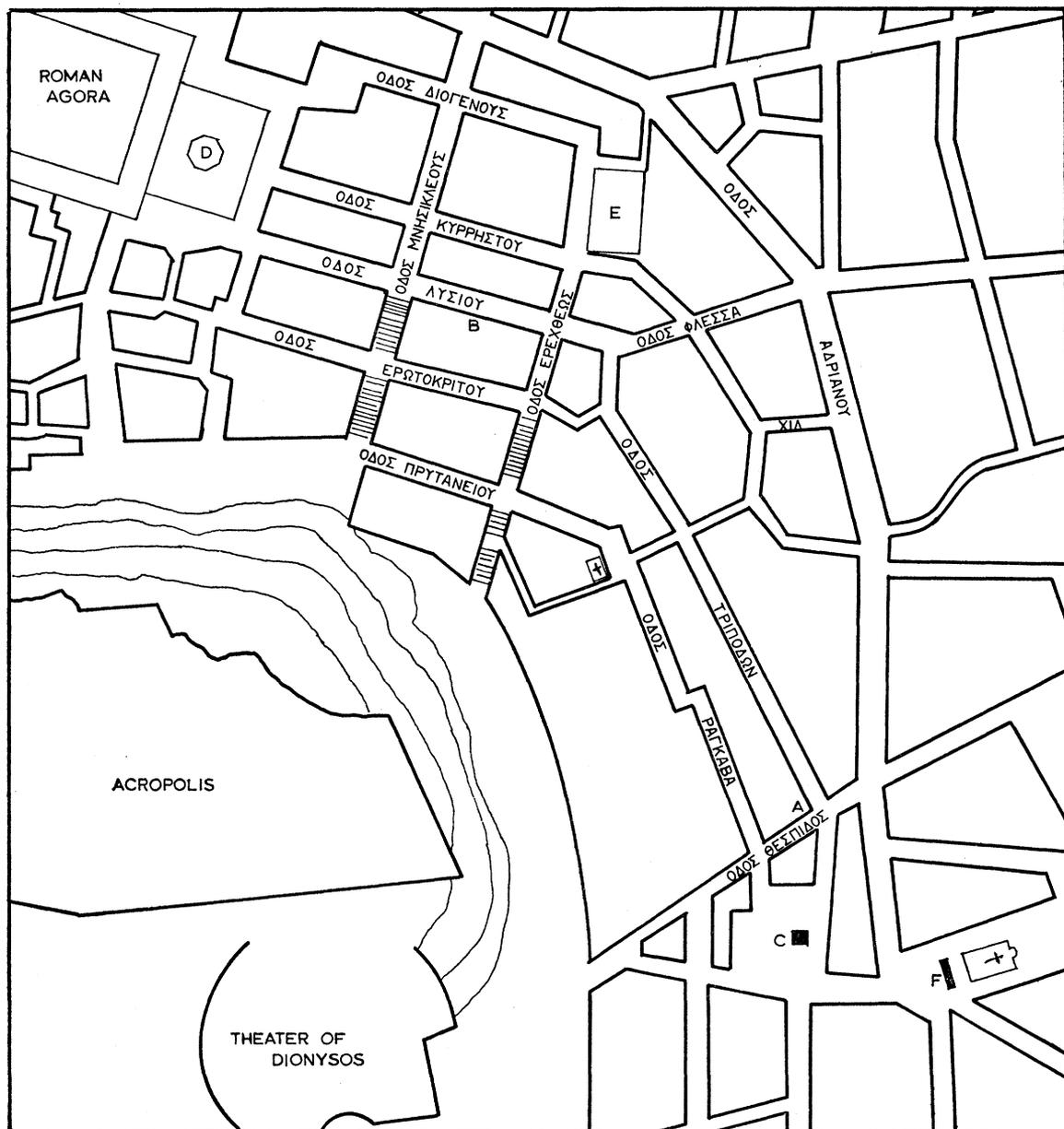
<sup>1</sup> For permission to study and publish these monuments, I would thank the Greek Archaeological Service and Mr. George Dontas, the Ephor of the Athenian Acropolis; for the drawings of the choregic monument, Mr. W. B. Dinsmoor, Jr.; and for helpful advice and suggestions, Messrs. T. L. Shear Jr. and E. Vanderpool.

<sup>2</sup> Although the discovery of this monument was reported long ago by E. Curtius (*Archäologische Zeitung*, XXXIII, 1875, p. 162), and mentioned a few times thereafter, it awaited Judeich (*Topographie von Athen*, 2nd Ed., Munich, 1931, p. 306, note 1) to present anything approaching a complete and accurate description of the remains.

<sup>3</sup> This cellar, beneath 34 Tripod Street, is presently used for wine barrel storage by the Zapheires Restaurant which is itself on Thespis Street, one door west of the building with the monument in its basement. The owners of the restaurant were most generous and patient in opening the cellar for the purpose of studying the remains.

<sup>4</sup> The present juncture of the ancient monument and the modern cellar wall is heavily encrusted with plaster, whitewash, etc., the removal of which would have exceeded the bounds of the owner's already generous hospitality. No help on this question can be gained from the house which adjoins to the north; it does not now possess a cellar, and may never have had one.

It is worth noting, however, that even if we could not see clearly the relationship between the ancient and modern walls, the monument may have gone no further to the north than it presently does. Such a possibility is suggested by the similarities of dimensions between the blocks at the southern end of the monument with those dimensions which can be recovered for the blocks at the northern end. Furthermore, while the core and back of the monument seem to have been cut through and removed to allow the setting of the western cellar wall, the northern cellar wall does no such damage to the ancient remains; this fact could be accounted for if one supposes that the monument extended no further in this direction and the cellar wall could be constructed against the original northern face of the monument.



## PLAKA AREA, ATHENS

- |   |                                 |   |                              |
|---|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| A | 34 TRIPOD STREET                | D | TOWER OF THE WINDS           |
| B | AG. KONSTANTINOS SAÏTA          | E | ΔΙΟΓΕΝΕΙΟΝ                   |
| C | CHORAGIC MONUMENT OF LYSIKRATES | F | UNIDENTIFIED ROMAN COLONNADE |

FIG. 1

now partially hidden by the modern cellar floor, is of rough blocks of breccia. Above this come four courses of a friable yellowish brown poros, worked into nicely squared blocks which vary in height from 0.385 to 0.40 meters and possess a drafting on their bottom edges, 0.005 meters deep and 0.035 meters high. The blocks are laid in alternate courses of headers and stretchers, the former varying in width from 0.595 to 0.690 meters, while the latter are consistently 1.290 meters long except at the corner where they shrink to 0.950 meters. The finished surfaces of all these blocks have been worked with a fine point which has resulted in a lightly stippled effect. The face of each course is set back 0.005 meters from the vertical plane of the course beneath it and thus a slight batter in the wall is created. Where visible, the ends of the blocks exhibit a fine anathyrosis, the band of which is 0.095 to 0.100 meters wide.

Although no clamps or dowels are present,<sup>5</sup> large pry holes do exist on the top course and indicate a fifth course of poros blocks, this one of stretchers. The consistent alignment of these pry holes slightly south of the joints of the lower stretcher courses show that the blocks were set beginning at the northern end with the southeast corner block being the last laid. This block was pushed into place by the use of a pry from the west.

The southern face of the monument is very roughly worked with the exception of a 0.10 to 0.15 meter return of both the finished surfaces and the drafted edges (Fig. 3, Pl. 59, b). Where they survive, the westward continuation of these masonry courses is of breccia, mostly now broken away. The southern side of the monument, with the possible exception of the first *ca.* 0.10 meters, can therefore never have been visible. One presumes an adjacent and pre-existing monument to the south up against which this monument was built. No physical trace of this southern neighbor has survived in the modern cellar.

The extant west side of the monument consists of four courses of breccia equivalent to the lowest four of the five courses of the eastern face.<sup>6</sup> These are very rough and uneven, and exhibit evidence of having been hacked through in a careless fashion. This is best understood as part of the core of the monument which was destroyed at a later time, most likely by the builders of the west wall of the modern building.

There is no evidence for the form of the element which surmounted this monument base, nor for its date or dedicator, although the base might be supposed to represent an expansion of the monuments along the ancient Street of the Tripods away from the Theater of Dionysos. Thus it would be somewhat later than the monument of Lysikrates, but there is no real evidence for such a chronological sequence.

<sup>5</sup> The close proximity of the modern ceiling to the top of the monument as preserved makes very difficult any study of the upper surfaces of the top course of blocks. Nonetheless, probing with fingers and trowels through the grime accumulated on these surfaces confirmed the absence of any such cuttings.

<sup>6</sup> Judeich's statement (*loc. cit.*, note 1) that the inner part of the monument had four courses of breccia and an upper one of poros is true today only if one counts the same upper header course from both front and back.

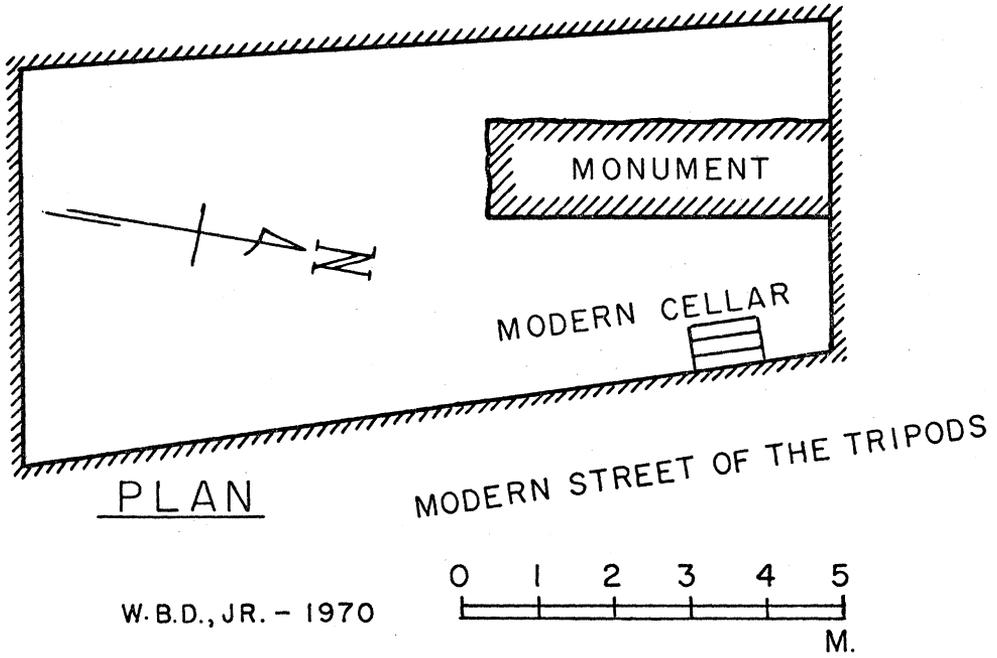


FIG. 2. Choregic Monument Base, Plan.

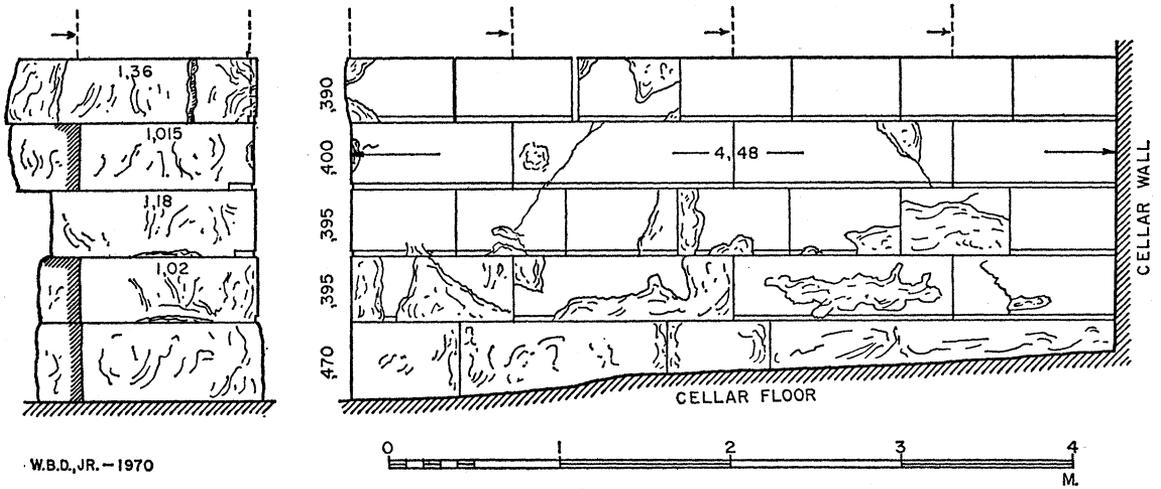


FIG. 3. Choregic Monument Base, Elevation.

The monument does give us the information that, at this point in its course between the Prytaneion and the Theater of Dionysos (cf. Pausanias, I, 20, 1), the ancient Street of the Tripods was about 2.25 meters lower than the modern Tripod Street, and that the ancient road was oriented slightly more east of north than is the modern road.

No ancient name can be attached to the monument, but it is not impossible that it survived into the seventeenth century and was then known as the Lantern of Diogenes which appears to have been another choregic monument distinct from that of Lysikrates (then known as the Lantern of Demosthenes).<sup>7</sup> Although there is no evidence that the Lantern of Diogenes was not some other, no longer extant, monument in the same area, Stuart saw some remains which could bridge the gap between the standing monument of the seventeenth century and that discovered in the nineteenth when the modern cellar was built:<sup>8</sup>

“Proceeding toward the arch of Hadrian <from the Tower of the Winds, Fig. 1, D>, and not far from it, there remains, in a yard belonging to the habitation of an Albanese, part of a basement, near seven feet high, and about nineteen feet in length; in the same place, and in all appearance part of the same building, lie many marble fragments; amongst them is a large piece of cornice, which appears to have been part of an Ionic entablature: from all which I concluded, that a building of no mean extent and elegance formerly adorned this place.”

Given the close correspondence of the dimension of the height (we do not know the length) and the topographic location, it requires no great imagination to identify our monument with that seen by Stuart.<sup>9</sup>

### THE BULL

This is a large plaque of Pentelic marble, 2.24 meters long, 1.218 meters high, and 0.11 meters thick in the unsculptured areas, which now resides in the Roman Agora.<sup>10</sup> Six joining fragments<sup>11</sup> comprise the whole relief with only a small piece

<sup>7</sup> See E. Reisch, *Griechische Weihgeschenke*, Vienna, 1890, pp. 102-103, for a discussion of the Lanterns of Demosthenes and of Diogenes, and for the suggested application of the latter name to the remains under discussion.

<sup>8</sup> J. Stuart and N. Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens*, III, London, 1794, p. 64. The additional note of W. Reveley, the editor of this volume, is very disappointing for us: “Of the above remains Mr. Stuart has left no drawings.”

<sup>9</sup> If such an identification of our monument base with that seen by Stuart would appear to require very heavy rise in the ground level in the last two centuries, we might note that recent excavations on the north side of the Athenian Agora have revealed seventeenth and eighteenth century habitation levels some three meters below the level of modern Hadrian Street.

<sup>10</sup> The plaque had been in the Library of Hadrian since 1851 until the early months of 1970

of the upper left corner now missing (Pl. 60, a). The back surface is worn very smooth and has three deep square cuttings along the bottom edge. These details are a result of the re-use of the stone, face down, as part of the paving of the Church of Agios Konstantinos Saïta (Fig. 1, B). The relief was broken up and removed from that location during the demolition of the church in 1851 (apparently only the alertness of Pittakes prevented the complete loss of the stone). Both top and bottom edges of the stone are rough-picked and the former has cuttings for two hook clamps which fastened the slab back to some element behind it. The side edges are beveled back for 0.013 meters at which point there is a 0.007 meter return parallel to the face of the slab. At this point there exists a bare hint of a concave curve, but generally the surface is rough and broken for the last 0.07 meters of the thickness (Pl. 60, b). The relatively uniform line of this break suggests, however, a somewhat more elaborate original border, now destroyed, for each side of the relief.

On the front side almost all of the original surface of the bull has been roughly cut off, apparently to give the plaque an even resting surface for its use in the church pavement. In spite of this, the outline of the bull is quite sharp and easily made out. He is striding to our left with fairly static hind legs between which hangs his tail; toward the fore he is more active with the left front leg bent and dragging behind the, for the moment, weight-bearing right front leg. The economy with which the artist has conceived the composition is well shown in the head which is lowered so that the back, neck, and top of head form a continuous line, neatly coinciding with the top of the marble slab. Thus the available working space is well filled, and the bull confined to a rectangular frame which is broken only at the upper left corner where the moulded frame of the relief is violated (Pl. 60, b).

Very little can be said regarding the date of the relief although the hook clamps, presumably original to the plaque, would indicate a date in the Hellenistic or Roman periods. Such a chronological placement would fit with the tooling of the preserved surface: the background is worked with a very fine point, but not polished; the skin of the bull is polished with a fine rasp. Furthermore, the whole plaque seems to have been used in a revetment fashion (i.e. clamped back onto a more substantial core) which is a more Roman than Greek technique.

There is no good indication of the type of monument to which the plaque originally belonged, but one might imagine a large structure one full dimension of which would be equal to that of the plaque; that is, the moulded edges of the plaque would

when it was taken to the Stoa of Attalos in order that it might be repaired. After these repairs the plaque was taken to the Roman Agora so that it might be nearer its original finding place. I would thank Mr. T. L. Shear Jr., Director of the Agora Excavations, and the Staff of the Agora Excavations for their assistance in this project.

<sup>11</sup> The only previous publication of this relief was by K. S. Pittakes, *Ἐφ. Ἀρχ.*, 1853, number 1813 (cf. 1854, number 2247) who reports its presence in the Library of Hadrian as of that date, but in three joining pieces.

represent the corners of the monument. There must have been another element above the plaque since its clamps and rough top edge ought to have been covered. This element would have been architectural rather than sculptural since the bull shows no evidence of an upper compositional member.

In fact, the plaque stands as a piece by itself, complete with moulded frame with only one exception. This occurs in the upper left corner, just below the missing fragment, where a small (0.015 meter) toros-like element runs out from the forehead of the bull and breaks through the frame to turn the corner (Pl. 60, b). Although this element might appear to be too small to be a part of the right horn of the bull, it can not be understood as something like a rope fastened to the bull's head by which he is either tethered or led. The other end of such a rope would have been on another panel, on another side of the monument, at a right angle to the position of our plaque. But such a position for another plaque, compositionally connected to ours, is prohibited by two considerations. Firstly, as this toros-like element turns the corner, it bends quickly upwards to a degree which would not allow it to have any tie with another plaque since, at the point of this bend, we are already only 0.225 meters from the top of the relief.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, the moulded frame of the plaque effectively breaks up any larger composition and emphasizes a distinction between our plaque and any other plaque to such an extent as to preclude a continuous narrative compositional style.

This corner-turning element must, then, be interpreted as the right ear of the bull. The manner in which it bends upwards would correspond nicely with the lower part of an ear and, if the element appears disproportionately small relative to the size of the bull, we must remember that it would not have been visible due to the presence of the no longer preserved left horn.<sup>13</sup> Thus the bull was a completely independent and, therefore, predominant element of the monument to which he once belonged.

Although nothing more can be said about the nature of a monument of which the bull might have been a part, he does have possible topographical associations which ought to be noted. Because of the size of the plaque and the obvious relative importance of the bull (whether or not in a larger composition), one might be tempted to connect him with some bull-oriented cult known to have been in this part of Athens. Furthermore, as Pittakes pointed out long ago, the plaque almost certainly was not moved far from its original placement. The Church of Agios Konstantinos Saita (Fig. 1, B) where the bull was re-used is too high on the slopes of the Acropolis and too entangled in narrow streets, to imagine that it arrived there in one piece from any great distance.

<sup>12</sup> A presumed adjacent plaque could not, moreover, have contained any adult human beings since they would have been taller than the bull and could not be fitted, at the same scale, into the restricted height of the supposed plaque which is necessarily equal to ours.

<sup>13</sup> That this element, the right ear of the bull, was not meant to be seen is shown by its less well finished surface compared, for example, with the area of the stomach behind the left foreleg.

Starting from this reasonable assumption, Pittakes identified the bull with the Apis Bull, and the Church of Agios Konstantinos Saïta with the site of the ancient Sarapeion. There are, however, two objections to such an interpretation. First of all, there are no iconographical marks on the bull to indicate such an identification. Although the surface is much battered, such symbols as the disc between the horns could not have been present in the space available on the piece. Secondly, the Sarapeion could not have been so high up on the slopes of the Acropolis. This is apparent from the testimony of Pausanias who places the Sarapeion in the lower parts of the city relative to the position of the Prytaneion which he has just visited (I, 18, 4: *ἐντεῦθεν ἰούσω ἐς τὰ κάτω τῆς πόλεως Σαράπιδός ἐστιν ἱερόν*). The latter building is located by Pausanias on the Street of the Tripods (I, 20, 1: *ἔστι δὲ ὁδὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ πρυτανείου καλουμένη Τρίποδες*).

A glance at the map (Fig. 1) will show that, assuming the Street of the Tripods to have been about level (i.e. following the contour of the Acropolis slope around from the theater of Dionysos in the same manner as the Peripatos, but at a lower level),<sup>14</sup> and projecting the line of the street westwards from the monument of Lysikrates (Fig. 1, C) and the previously discussed monument base (Fig. 1, A), the Church of Konstantinos Saïta was about on this line, that is, nearly on the course of the ancient Street of the Tripods at a level about equal to that of the Prytaneion. The Sarapeion will have been lower down the slopes (i.e. to the north).<sup>15</sup>

There is, however, another possible topographic association for the bull. Since it was found near the course of the Street of the Tripods and thus not far removed from the Prytaneion,<sup>16</sup> one might assign the bull to the Boukoleion which is known to have been in the immediate vicinity.<sup>17</sup> Not only is there an obvious nominal connection, but there might be yet another tie between the bull and the Boukoleion through the intermediary of Dionysos who is not infrequently identified in literature as the "bull-

<sup>14</sup> Such an assumption for the course of the Street of the Tripods is partially justified by the use of this street as a promenade, which ought to have been fairly level, by fashionable Athenian youths; cf. Athenaeus, XII, 542 f.

<sup>15</sup> For the diverse locations where have been discovered epigraphical and sculptural artifacts pertaining to the cult of Sarapis and the Sarapeion see R. E. Wycherley, "Pausanias at Athens, II," *Gr. R. Byz. St.*, IV, 1963, pp. 161-162. We might add to Wycherley's list a recently discovered dedication to the Egyptian deities at 4 Xenophon Street (i.e. near Constitution Square); cf. *Δελτ.*, XX, 1965, *Χρον.*, p. 97.

<sup>16</sup> That there was only one Prytaneion in Athens, and that it was located from the beginning in this area, has been shown by D. Levi, "Il Pritaneo e la Tholos a Atene," *Annuario*, IV, 1923, pp. 1-6, and by J. Charbonneaux, "Tholos et Prytanée," *B.C.H.*, XLIX, 1925, pp. 159-175. Thus the problem of which Prytaneion the Boukoleion was near (implied by Judeich) is non-existent.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.*, III, 5: *τὸ νῦν καλούμενον Βουκολεῖον πλησίον τοῦ πρυτανείου*.

The identification of the Boukoleion with the Bouzygion by K. O. Müller, *Kleine Schriften*, II, p. 156, is ill-founded and contradicts Aristotle's evidence for the former's proximity to the Prytaneion, whereas the Bouzygion must be southwest of the Acropolis near the sanctuary of Demeter Chloe; cf. O. Kern, "Demeter Chloe," *Ath. Mitt.*, XVIII, 1893, pp. 192-198.

shaped" god (*ταυρομόρφος, ταυροφνής*).<sup>18</sup> One of the few facts known about the Boukoleion is that a ritual marriage took place there between the wife of the Archon Basileus and Dionysos.<sup>19</sup> As pointed out by Judeich,<sup>20</sup> weddings ought to take place in the home of the bridegroom and thus the Boukoleion might be considered as a cult place of Dionysos.<sup>21</sup> In this regard we should note that Dionysos himself is at least once called Boukolion.<sup>22</sup> If the suggested connection between the plaque, Dionysos, and the Boukoleion is too tenuous to be regarded as more than a possibility, it is a possibility to be remembered with regard to the topography of this area of ancient Athens.

STEPHEN MILLER

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES  
ATHENS

<sup>18</sup> For sources relating to the Bull-shaped Dionysos see E. Thrämer in Roscher's *Lexicon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, I, Leipzig, 1890, columns 1150-1151.

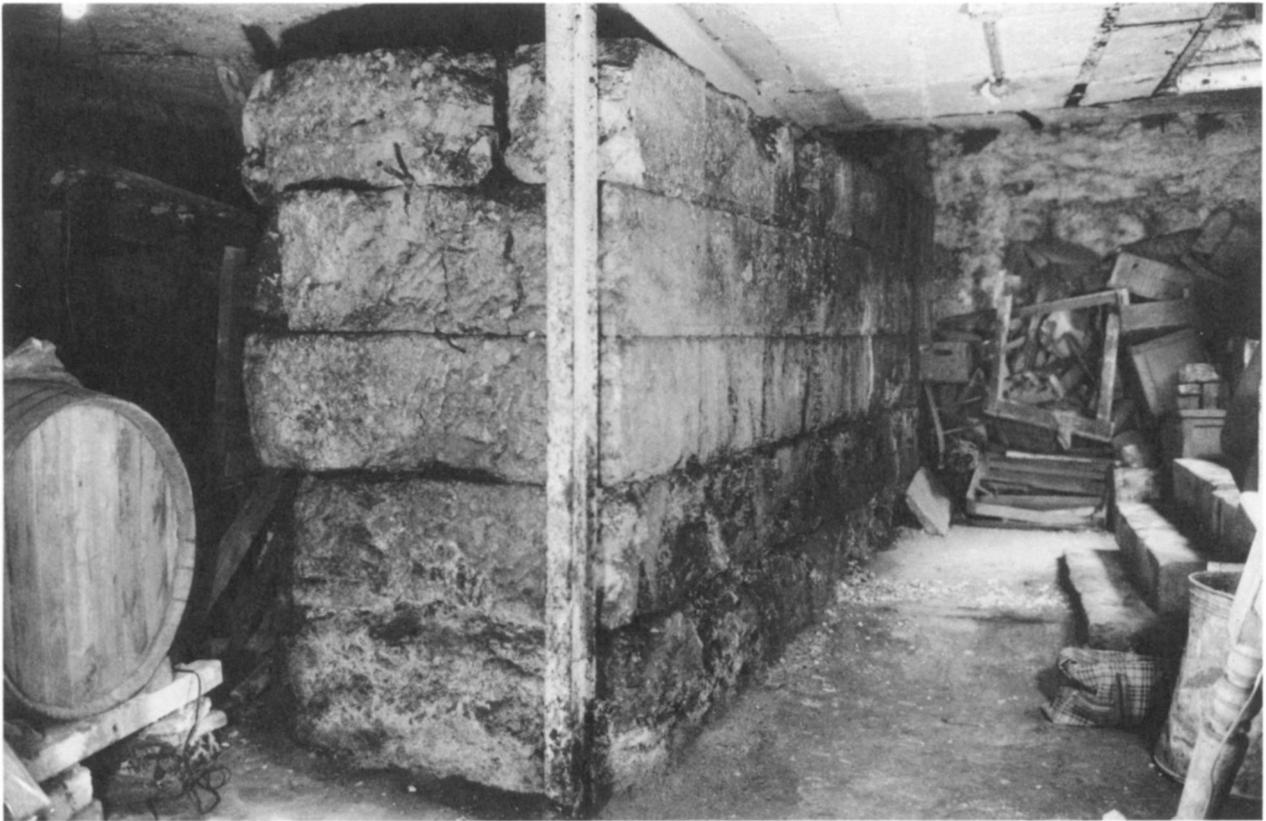
<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.*, III, 5: *ἔτι καὶ νῦν γὰρ τῆς τοῦ Βασιλέως γυναικὸς ἢ σύμμειξις ἐνταῦθα γίνεται τῷ Διονύσῳ καὶ ὁ γάμος.*

Although the inscribed law concerning this marriage was to be set up in the Sanctuary of Dionysos in the Marshes (Demosthenes, LIX, 76) there is no compelling reason to associate the Boukoleion topographically with this sanctuary as Dörpfeld, "Die Ausgrabungen am Westabhange der Akropolis," *Ath. Mitt.*, XX, 1895, pp. 188-189, has suggested.

<sup>20</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 298, note 2.

<sup>21</sup> The further Dionysiac connection of the Boukoleion with the Thalamos of Semele by U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen*, II, Berlin, 1893, p. 42, note 13, is unfortunately based only upon an emendation in the text of a fragment of Euripides' *Antiope*; cf. A. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 2nd Ed., Leipzig, 1926, number 203.

<sup>22</sup> Nonnos, *Dionysiaca*, XV, 377 (of a Naiad): *μή πω Βουκολίωνος ὀμιλήσασα χαμένη.*



a. Choregic Monument on Tripod Street, from Southeast



b. Choregic Monument, Detail of South Side with Return of Drafted Edge



a. Relief of a Bull



b. Relief of a Bull, Detail of Upper Left Corner