

THE ROMAN ARCH AT ISTHμία

(PLATES 77–84)

DURING THE ROMAN IMPERIAL AGE a monumental triple arch was the principal easterly approach to the Sanctuary of Poseidon at Isthmia.¹ This arch was constructed, probably, in the second half of the 1st century after Christ, and its four piers were built into the Northeast Gate of the Fortress on the Hexamilion shortly after A.D. 400. The arch stood in a prominent position on a ridge overlooking the port of Schoinos, and any visitor who approached Isthmia from the north or east, either by land or by sea, would have

¹ This report is a result of excavations in 1967 and 1969 by the University of California, Los Angeles, on behalf of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens with the generous support of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Stuart E. M. Thorne, Esq., and the National Endowment for the Humanities. This study is the cumulative result of the work of many individuals over a number of years. Thanks are naturally due to the Greek Archaeological Service and to a succession of cooperative ephors of the Argolid and Corinthia. We wish also to thank Professor Paul A. Clement, Director, Isthmia Excavations (UCLA), for his suggestion that we publish the arch at Isthmia and for his constant support and good advice. William B. Dinsmoor, Jr. was responsible for the correct interpretation of his father's 1909 photographs, the identification of the large anta (12), and the final restoration of the arch (Fig. 3). Charles Peirce executed many of the final drawings and provided much assistance along with a fresh view of the material. We have also benefited from drawings of the architects Joseph Shaw and David Peck and the artists Diane Peck and Karen Hutchinson. Birgitta Wohl, Karen Knapp, and Suna Güven have helped us in various ways. Any errors, needless to say, are our own.

Works frequently cited below will be abbreviated as follows:

- Blake = M. E. Blake, *Ancient Roman Construction in Italy from the Prehistoric Period to Augustus*, Washington, D.C. 1947
- Broneer, II = O. Broneer, *Isthmia, II, Topography and Architecture*, Princeton 1973
- Clement, 1967 = P. A. Clement, "Isthmia 1967," *Δελτ* 23, 1968, *Χρονικά* [1969], pp. 137–143, pls. 83–90
- Clement, 1969 = P. A. Clement, "Isthmia Excavations 1969," *Δελτ* 25, 1970, *Χρονικά* [1972], pp. 161–167, pls. 125–143
- Curtis = C. D. Curtis, "Roman Monumental Arches," *American School of Classical Studies in Rome, Supplementary Papers* 2, 1908, pp. 26–83
- Fowler and Stillwell = H. N. Fowler and R. Stillwell, *Corinth, I, Introduction, Topography, Architecture*, Cambridge, Mass. 1932
- Kähler = H. Kähler, "Triumphbogen (Ehrenbogen)," *RE* VII A, 1934, cols. 373–493
- Monceaux, 1884 = P. Monceaux, "Fouilles et recherches archéologiques au sanctuaire des jeux isthmiques," *GazArch* 9, 1884, pp. 273–285, 354–363
- Monceaux, 1885 = P. Monceaux, "Fouilles et recherches archéologiques au sanctuaire des jeux isthmiques," *GazArch* 10, 1885, pp. 205–214, 402–412
- Prieur = J. Prieur, "Les arcs monumentaux dans les Alpes occidentales: Aoste, Suse, Aix-le-Bains," *ANRW* II.12.1, New York/Berlin 1982, pp. 442–475
- Richmond = I. A. Richmond, "Commemorative Arches and City Gates in the Augustan Age," *JRS* 23, 1933, pp. 148–174
- SAOR = *Studi sull' arco onorario romano (Studia Archeologica XXI)*, Rome 1979
- Travlos = J. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens*, London 1971
- Weinberg = S. Weinberg, *Corinth, I, v, The Southeast Building. The Twin Basilicas. The Mosaic House*, Princeton 1960
- Wiseman, 1978 = J. Wiseman, *The Land of the Ancient Corinthians (SIMA 50)*, Göteborg 1978

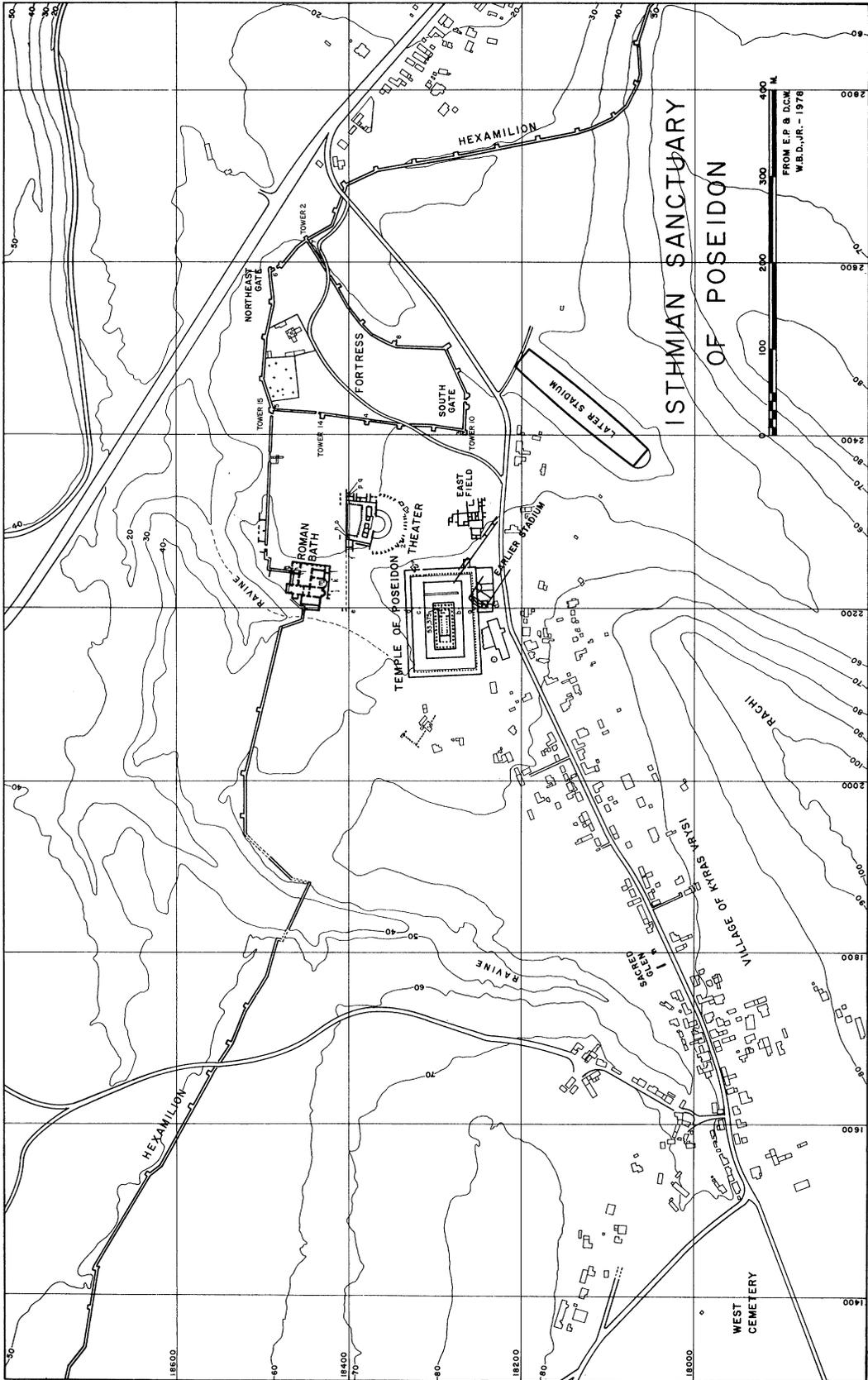


FIG. 1. Plan of the Isthmian Sanctuary of Poseidon

followed a road that ran through the arch.² Indeed, the primary coastal road from Attica and Central Greece into the Peloponnesos passed this way, making the Roman arch one of the most visible monuments in the area of the Sanctuary.

The arch is located on steeply sloping ground, *ca.* 380 meters northeast of the Temple of Poseidon (Fig. 1). Since the roadway through the arch was at a level approximately 22 meters below the stylobate of the Classical temple,³ the arch must have framed a remarkable view of the building, with both the east and the north façades of the temple visible from this vantage point. The East Stoa may have restricted this view from the 2nd century onward, but it had not yet been constructed when the arch was built, and the roughly contemporary, early Roman temenos wall was probably not high enough to interfere substantially with the view of the temple as one approached the arch.⁴

Unfortunately, there is no known ancient reference to the Isthmia arch; its existence was also unknown in modern times until the end of the 19th century. Although Pausanias approached the Sanctuary from the east, noting the Theater and the Stadium before the Temple, he made no mention of the arch.⁵ The early modern travelers, including the perspicacious Colonel Leake, also failed to note the remains of the arch, which were by their time completely covered with debris.⁶

Discovery of the arch came with the first systematic investigation of this area by Paul Monceaux, who laid out a large trench through the Northeast Gate in 1883.⁷ With Leake, Monceaux thought that the walls of the Fortress on the Hexamilion were those of the Classical sanctuary, and he accordingly identified the Roman arch as a later addition. At the time of his excavation Monceaux noted that the arches of the Roman monument had already collapsed but that the substructure was well preserved and stood to a height of four meters.⁸ Monceaux was able to record the over-all dimensions of the piers, and he observed that antas and anta bases were still *in situ*. He further identified fragments of anta capitals and a cornice lying loose in the area but made no further attempt to restore the superstructure of the arch. On the basis of the moldings Monceaux compared the arch at Isthmia with the arch at Autun and the tomb of Bibulus in Rome, and he dated it to the last years of the 1st century B.C. or the first years of the 1st century after Christ.⁹

² On the road system in this area, see Broneer, II, p. 88; Wiseman, 1978, pp. 17–20.

³ Elevation of 53.37 m. above sea level on the northeast foundation of the pronaos of the Temple of Poseidon (Broneer, *Isthmia*, I, *Temple of Poseidon*, Princeton 1971, p. 59, note 3). The elevation of the Roman roadway is *ca.* 31.61 m. above sea level, as shown on the reconstruction by W. B. Dinsmoor, Jr. (Fig. 3). For the temple, Broneer restores a colonnade 8.73 m. high and an entablature 3.658 m. high (Broneer, *op. cit.*, p. 102). If these figures are accepted, the top of the entablature of the temple was *ca.* 34.15 m. above the level of the Roman road.

⁴ Broneer, II, pp. 69–73, 83.

⁵ Pausanias, II.1.7. However, note G. Roux's assumption (*Pausanias en Corinthie*, Paris 1958, p. 92): "Pausanias passa donc vraisemblablement par cette porte [the Roman arch] en pénétrant à l'intérieur de l'ἄλσος πιτυῶδες." The *ἱερά εἴσοδος* of IG IV, 203 does not refer to the arch (as Fimmen thought [*RE* 9, 1916, col. 2262]) but presumably to the entrance to the actual temenos. L. Popilius Iuventianus, the donor of this "sacred entrance", is now dated to *ca.* 165–170 after Christ, far too late to have built the arch. Cf. J. H. Kent, *Corinth*, VIII, iii, *The Inscriptions, 1926–1950*, Princeton 1966, p. 89.

⁶ W. M. Leake, *Travels in the Morea* III, London 1830, pp. 285–305.

⁷ Monceaux, 1884, pp. 273–285, esp. 282–285.

⁸ Monceaux, 1884, p. 279.

⁹ Monceaux, 1884, p. 284.

In 1932, Harold N. Fowler published a brief study of the arch which added little to Monceaux's report, but which included several useful photographs showing the condition of the monument after Monceaux's time.¹⁰ In 1932 and 1933 A. H. S. Megaw and Romilly Jenkins carried out a new series of excavations at Isthmia; they noted that the circuit wall was not the temenos of the Classical sanctuary but a late Roman fortification.¹¹ They were able to show, therefore, that the arch predated the fortress wall in which it was later incorporated as part of the Northeast Gate. Despite these earlier studies, the Isthmia arch has been generally overlooked by subsequent scholarly literature on the genre.¹²

In 1967 and 1969 further excavations were carried out in the area of the Northeast Gate by the University of California at Los Angeles, under the direction of Paul A. Clement.¹³ These excavations removed the considerable debris left by Monceaux, and they completely cleared the Northeast Gate and its attendant structures, revealing many details not previously noticed. This work and subsequent study of architectural fragments in the area have allowed substantial reconstruction, on paper, of the arch as it was originally built.¹⁴

The primary remains of the arch still *in situ* are the foundations and the lower sections of the four piers that supported the superstructure of the monument (Fig. 2, Pl. 77:a). These piers are not entirely regular in dimension, but each is roughly 2.2 m. on a side. The central passageway is naturally the largest and is 3.23 m. wide, while the side passageways are 1.81 m. and 1.815 m. wide. The over-all width of the west façade of the podium of the arch is *ca.* 15.79 m.

When the arch was incorporated in the Fortress on the Hexamilion the piers were almost completely enclosed within the architecture of the Northeast Gate.¹⁵ Thus, the two side passages were blocked by the construction of large towers, while the central passageway became the main entrance through the gate. At the rear, reveals were built behind the central piers to house the gate mechanism, and in a final period, sometime during the Byzantine age, a blocking wall was built between the two towers, effectively closing even the central passageway to traffic.¹⁶

Today the piers of the arch are preserved only to the top of the podium, except in the case of the South Pier, which preserves one course of the superstructure (Figs. 3, 8). For the South Pier the foundations are only a single course, while for the North Pier there are three, nearly a meter deeper than those under the South Pier. The foundations of the piers had to be laid carefully and sunk deeper on the north than on the south since the arch was constructed on land which slopes steeply down from south to north. The foundation blocks

¹⁰ Fowler and Stillwell, pp. 64–66. Included among these are some Dinsmoor photographs of 1909.

¹¹ R. J. H. Jenkins and H. Megaw, "Researches at Isthmia," *BSA* 32, 1931/32, pp. 68–89. They had already been anticipated in the identification of the fortification as late Roman by Fimmen (*RE* 9, 1916, col. 2261).

¹² Note, for example, the lack of mention of the Roman Arch at Isthmia in Curtis, Kähler, Aupert (P. Aupert, *FdD*, II, *Le stade*, Paris 1979, esp. p. 132), Mansuelli (G. A. Mansuelli, "El arco honorífico en el desarrollo de la arquitectura romano," *ArchEspArq* 27, 1954, pp. 93–178), and *SAOR*.

¹³ Clement, 1967, pp. 139–143; Clement, 1969, pp. 164–167.

¹⁴ This restoration was largely the work of William B. Dinsmoor, Jr.

¹⁵ Clement, 1967, pp. 139–142; Clement, 1969, pp. 164–167.

¹⁶ P. Clement, "The Date of the Hexamilion," in *Essays in Memory of Basil Laourdas*, Thessaloniki 1975, pp. 159–164, pl. I.

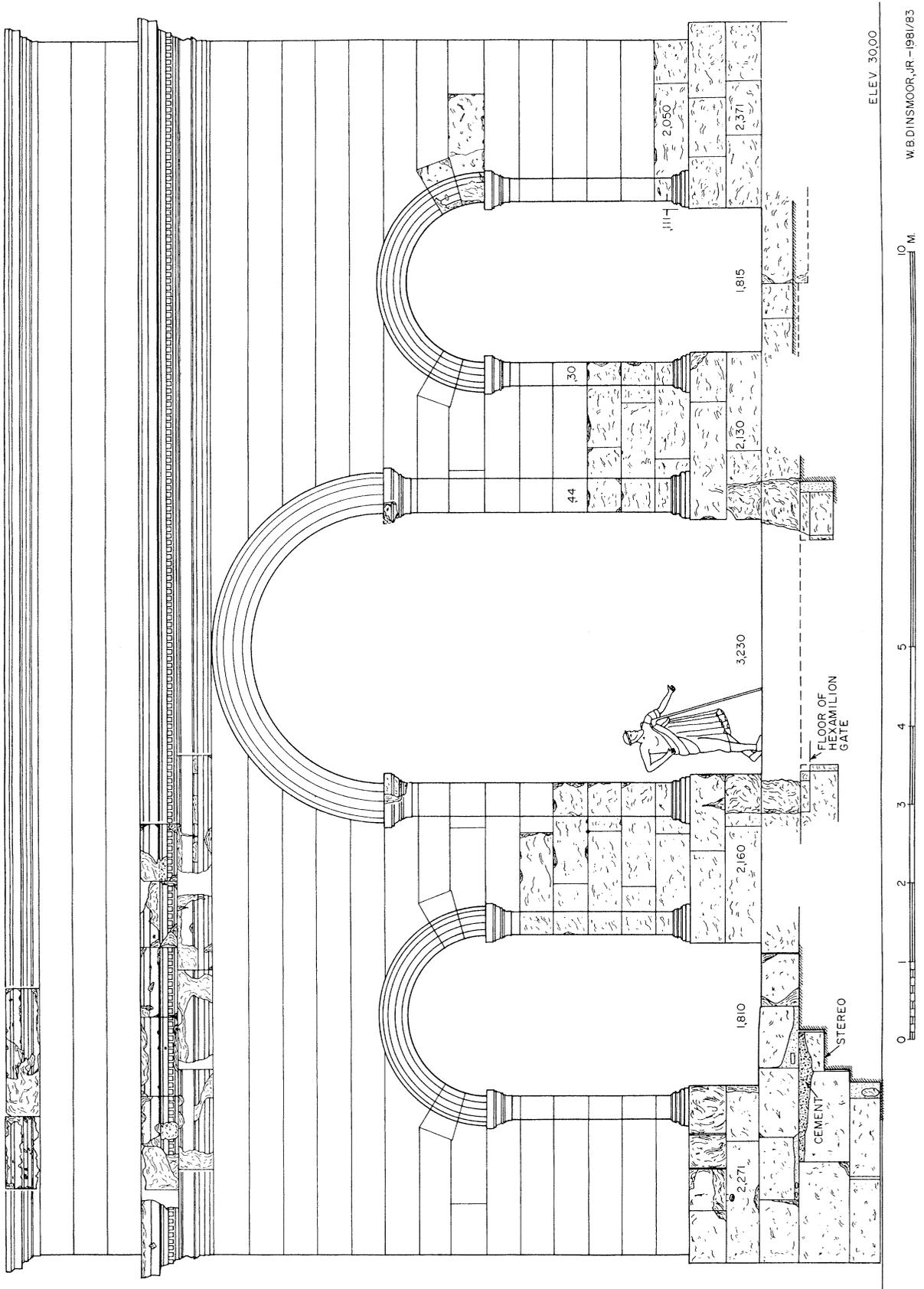


Fig. 3. Actual-state and restored elevation of the Roman Arch at Isthmia, west face

are set into a cutting made in the local hardpan (stereo), apparently without mortar or other bedding.

Just below ground level the piers of the arch were tied together by a euthynteria, the third course below the top of the podium, which leveled the arch construction over the uneven terrain and ran completely under the three passageways. In the central passageway the euthynteria was later cut through, either by the builders of the Northeast Gate or in some road-leveling project before construction of the Hexamilion. The original presence of the euthynteria under the central passageway, however, is clearly indicated by the roughly cut block which projects northward from the north face of the South Central Pier at this level (see reconstruction, Fig. 3). The arch, therefore, was not designed with freestanding piers but rather was built upon a solid mass of masonry tied together at the level of the euthynteria.

The piers of the arch are constructed of roughly finished, squared blocks of limestone, a building material familiar at Corinth and throughout the sanctuary at Isthmia. The blocks are characterized by a liberal use of the claw-tooth chisel and were undoubtedly designed to receive a final coat of white stucco, of which only the faintest traces survive today, on the east face of the North Pier, the north face of the South Pier, and on one of the anta capitals (14). The preserved blocks above the euthynteria are evenly laid in regular courses, *ca.* 0.44–0.46 m. high. There is no evidence that mortar was used, and the construction was solid throughout, made completely of ashlar masonry and without a veneer other than the stuccoed surface.

Nearly all the exterior blocks of the topmost extant course of the North and the South Piers are fitted with matching swallow-tail clamp cuttings (see Fig. 2). No cuttings are preserved in blocks *in situ* in the two Central Piers. In other Roman tripartite arches it is common to make the outer piers larger than the inner piers in order to counter the greater lateral stress exerted there, but at Isthmia, as we have seen, the piers are all about the same size. Perhaps clamps were meant to be used in the outer piers to help balance this potential structural weakness.

The visible clamp cuttings show no trace of metal, and there is no evidence of prying or other damage normally associated with the removal of metal clamps. It is possible, therefore, that the intended clamps were never inserted, either through a change of plan or the larceny of the contractors. Alternatively, wooden clamps may have been used, and these will have perished without leaving a trace. Wooden clamps have been suggested for the Odeion at Corinth, a building dated to the last third of the 1st century after Christ, although there the wooden clamps are said to have been set in mortar, while the arch at Isthmia was built completely without mortar.¹⁷ At Isthmia similar clamp cuttings, all without any trace of mortar, are found in the Theater and in many of the blocks re-used in the Hexamilion west of the Fortress.¹⁸

Nearly all the superstructure of the arch had fallen long before the first systematic investigation was made. Our reconstruction of it is based, first of all, on the architectural remains still *in situ*, such as the piers and two anta bases still in place on the south pier of the

¹⁷ O. Broneer, *Corinth, X, The Odeum*, Cambridge 1932, pp. 14, 38, figs. 14, 22. On swallow-tail clamps of wood in Roman buildings in general, see Blake, p. 187.

¹⁸ E. R. Gebhard, *The Theatre at Isthmia*, Chicago 1973, p. 79.

arch. In addition, many poros limestone blocks and fragments were discovered in the area of the Northeast Gate, and some of these may with some certainty be associated with the arch. The reconstruction of the arch is also aided by the comments of Monceaux, made when the arch was much better preserved than it is today, and the very important photographs taken by W. B. Dinsmoor, in 1909 (Pls. 77:b, 78:a).¹⁹ Finally, the reconstruction is based on analogies with other Roman arches, in Greece and elsewhere.

Today the South Pier preserves two anta bases (1 and 2; Fig. 9, Pl. 78:b, c), both *in situ* on the interior (northern) side of the pier. The surviving exterior (southern) side of this pier is plain, showing that (as Monceaux noted) only the three passageways of the arch were decorated with antas, while the ends of the structure were plain. In 1909 the South Central Pier was preserved to a height of three courses above the podium, while the North Central Pier stood to five above the podium (Pl. 77:b). From the Dinsmoor photographs we can conclude that in 1909 at least 10 of the original 12 anta bases were still *in situ*: four on the east façade visible in the photographs, four on the west façade implied by the height of the coursing, plus the two, not visible in the photographs, which are still *in situ*. The photographs and extant fragments also show that the antae and anta bases of the central passageway were larger than those of the side passageways, although the bases have similar moldings.

The antae decorated the corners of the piers, and they are salient on both the façade and the passageways. The moldings, however, are confined to the corners and do not continue through the length of the passageway, as they do, for example, on arches at Aosta and Pola. At Isthmia the anta-base moldings are those of the standard Attic-Ionic base of the Roman imperial period: two torus moldings on a low plinth, separated by a scotia, both the torus moldings crowned with a fillet (Fig. 4). Similar moldings can be found at Athens from the Odeion of Agrippa and the Library of Pantainos, at Corinth from the Julian Basilica, and at Isthmia on the Southeast and West Stoas.²⁰

The two anta bases still *in situ* are on the South Pier, decorating one of the small arches. Three other fragments of anta-base moldings (3–5; Figs. 8, 10, Pl. 79) come from the same series, while four other fragments (6–9; Figs. 8, 11a, 11b, Pl. 79) have slightly different dimensions and must come from the series of four large anta bases which were still in place in 1909. The larger anta base has essentially the same projection and profile as the smaller base, but the scotia is considerably taller, as is the upper torus molding. The difference in height between the two bases is therefore slight: the larger one is just over 0.03 m. higher than the smaller.

Above the bases the antae themselves as restored rise the full height of the piers on either side of all the passageways. The blocks still *in situ* on the South Pier show that the antae of

¹⁹ Original prints of these photographs were given to the Isthmia Excavations by William B. Dinsmoor in 1967. Other Dinsmoor photographs appear in Fowler and Stillwell (p. 66, fig. 31 and p. 68, fig. 33).

²⁰ Athens, Library of Pantainos, just after A.D. 100 (Travlos, p. 434); Athens, Odeion of Agrippa, ca. 15 B.C. (Travlos, p. 370); Corinth, Julian Basilica, ca. A.D. 40 (Weinberg, p. 89, fig. 10); Isthmia, Southeast and West Stoas, first half of 2nd century after Christ (Broneer, II, pp. 83–84, pls. 67, 68:a). See Lucy T. Shoe, "The Roman Ionic Base in Corinth," in *Essays in Memory of K. Lehmann*, L. Sandler, ed., *Marsyas*, Suppl. I, New York 1964, pp. 300–304.

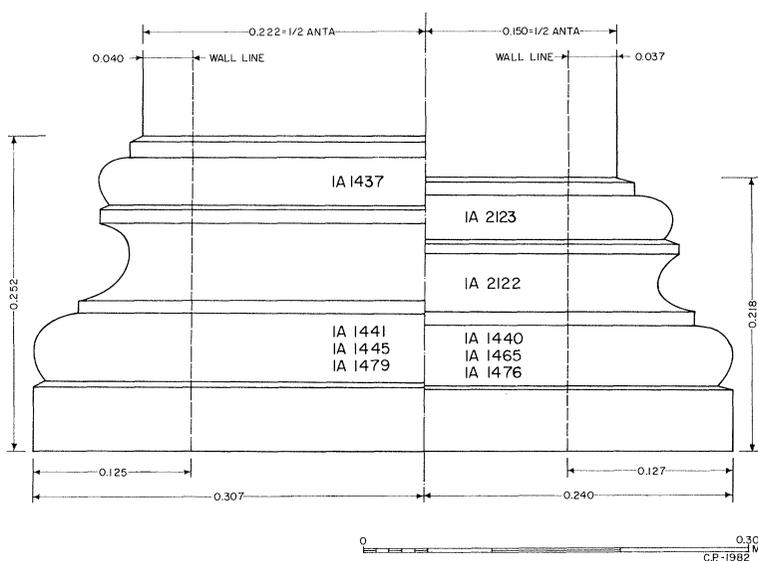


FIG. 4. Profile of large and small anta bases

the small passageways were 0.30 m. wide on either face, with a return of *ca.* 0.04 m. Besides these two examples, two other anta blocks from the small passageways were discovered in the course of excavation (10 and 11; Fig. 13, Pl. 80). One of these (10) has a swallow-tail clamp cutting on one surface, suggesting that these clamps were meant to be used in at least one of the piers at a level above the anta bases. In addition, yet another anta block was found (12; Fig. 14, Pl. 80), whose height of *ca.* 0.46 m. is approximately that of the preserved coursing of the arch. The widths of the anta faces of this block are *ca.* 0.44 m., with a return of 0.04 m., too large for the antae of the small passageways. This block must come from the large passageway, an association which is confirmed by the Dinsmoor photographs, where the faces of the two visible large antae scale at approximately 0.44 m.

As noted above (p. 413), the original road level through the arch was disturbed by digging through the central passageway at a later time. That the original roadway ran just on top of the euthynteria is indicated, however, by the finished surfaces of the piers above this level and the traces of stucco still preserved on the north face of the South Pier on the course directly above the euthynteria. While it is true that the preserved surfaces of the euthynteria blocks in the side passageways are not very worn, they were undoubtedly protected by some form of metaled road surface, and they were, in any case, designed only for pedestrian traffic.

With the determination of the level of the original road surface, the general form of the arch at Isthmia becomes clear. The superstructure rested on a low podium, two courses high. At the level of the top of the podium the face of the pier is set back from the face of the podium, creating a ledge on all sides of the four piers. This ledge is not everywhere the same width; it is *ca.* 0.111 m. wide on the north side of the south pier. As noted before (p. 414), the ends of the arch are undecorated, both at ground level and at the top of the podium, and there are no antae or columns to support the entablature. Within the passageways the arch

is undecorated at the level of the roadway. The corners of the piers flanking the passages are decorated with antae, whose bases rested on the ledge at the top of the podium.

None of the anta capitals is preserved *in situ*. Indeed, none is visible in the 1909 photographs, and all had, in fact, already fallen at the time of Monceaux's excavations. The 1909 photographs show the piers preserved to the fifth course above the top of the podium, so that all the anta capitals must have been above that level. The requirements of proportion, however, suggest that the capitals of the small arches cannot have been placed any higher than the sixth course, and Monceaux's identification of capitals in the debris of his excavation further supports the idea that they had fallen from a level just above what was preserved in his day. Placement of the anta capitals as the sixth course above the podium in the small arch would put the top of the capitals at a level of *ca.* 3.57 m. above the ancient roadway. This allows a proportion, of width to height in the small arch, of 1:1.75, comparable to other Roman arches of similar style (see table below). Placing the capitals another course higher would make the side passages too high and thin for Roman taste.

The height of the central passage can best be established by comparanda. In the reconstruction the anta capitals have been placed in the ninth course above the podium, with their top surface *ca.* 4.88 m. above the ancient roadway, giving a proportion of 1:1.41 for the width of the central arch compared to its height from euthyteria to top of anta capital. The following table gives some of the proportions restored for the arch at Isthmia and allows comparison with those of similar arches.²¹

	Width of Side Arch to Central Arch	Width to Height: Side Arch	Width to Height: Central Arch
Isthmia	1:1.70	1:1.75	1:1.41
Orange	1:1.65	1:1.76	1:1.23
Autun	1:1.67	1:1.34	1:1.17

In 1883 Monceaux identified several fragments of anta capitals in the debris around the arch. He noted that none of them were complete and that they were "formés de moulures et non de feuillages. Ils ressemblaient beaucoup aux bases."²² The anta capitals were thus not of the Corinthian order, found on most Roman arches, but rather of simple Ionic design. Two anta capitals of identical profile (13 and 14; Figs. 8, 12, 14, Pl. 81) were found in the area of the Northeast Gate, and these have been restored as capitals of the larger antae. They have proportions that are suitable for the arch and, so far as preserved, correspond well enough to Monceaux's description of the stones he saw in 1883. The large capitals have a broad, plain abacus (*ca.* 0.11 m. high), below which there is a cyma recta with base astragal, a fillet, and probably a cavetto. Neither block preserves the lower surface, but it may be restored by comparison with the anta-capital moldings of the Library of Pantainos in Athens.²³ No fragments which can be assigned to the smaller anta capitals have yet been

²¹ These proportions are based on plans and photographs of each arch. Orange: Piganiol *et al.*, *L'Arch d'Orange (Gallia, Suppl. XV)*, Paris 1962, pls. 3–5. Autun: P. M. Duval and P. Quoniam, "Relevés inédits des monuments antiques d'Autun," *Gallia* 21, 1963, figs. 8, 16.

²² Monceaux, 1884, p. 283, note 1.

²³ Travlos, p. 434.

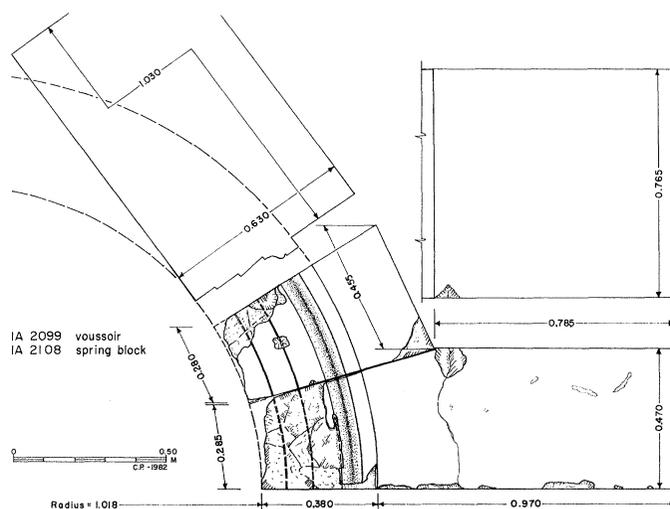


FIG. 5. 15 and 16. Voussoir and springer of small arch

identified, but we can assume that these would have been smaller versions of the same profile.

Three arches rose above the anta capitals, each with its span determined by the width of the passageways between the piers, the central arch higher and wider than the two side arches. Many battered voussoir blocks were found in the area of the Northeast Gate, and some of these undoubtedly came from the interior, undecorated surfaces of the arches. More important, one molded voussoir (15) and a springer block (16; Figs. 5, 8, Pl. 81) can with confidence be assigned to one of the smaller arches. These two blocks give a circle with a radius of *ca.* 1.02 m., or an arched span of 2.04 m. The springer blocks were certainly set up canonically, with the curve of the arch tangent to the anta below, so that the arch was *ca.* 0.11 m. wider on each side, or 0.22 m. wider than the distance between the piers at the bottom. This distance, as given by the arch, would be $2.04 - 0.22 = 1.82$ m., which is almost exactly the width of the passageways between the piers of the smaller openings.

The molded voussoir and springer blocks both preserve their original dimensions. Their profile shows triple fasciae crowned by a cyma reversa topped with a projecting fillet.²⁴ These moldings are quite common, but the technique used in carving them and relating the voussoir blocks to the coursing of the arch calls for special comment. Frequently both intrados and extrados of Roman arches were rounded, so forming concentric circles. This is the case, for example, at Aosta, Fano, Susa, and Rimini. At Isthmia, however, the extrados of the surviving voussoir is rectilinear, so indicating that the arch was a circle within a polygon. Such a practice is not unparalleled, and examples can be found at Pola and at Orange.²⁵

²⁴ Voussoir comparanda: Corinth, Julian Basilica (Weinberg, p. 96, figs. 19, 20); Corinth, Forum SW; Isthmia, E. Gateway (Broneer, II, p. 75, pl. 64:a); Isthmia, Palaimonion (Broneer, II, p. 106, pls. 74:a, 39:d).

²⁵ Closer to hand, the arch in the Stadium at Delphi and that in the southwest corner of the Forum at

Roman arches normally used backer blocks with oblique terminations to allow transition from the regular coursing to the voussoirs. Such blocks would be of the same height as the pier coursing (in this case 0.44–0.46 m.), with one rectangular end and one end cut at an angle determined by its placement in the arch. One such backer block (17; Fig. 15, Pl. 81) can certainly be attributed to one of the arches, and there are others which might also fit. No molded voussoirs have been found which can with certainty be attributed to the large arch. Presumably both the technique of construction and the moldings of the voussoirs were the same as those of the small arches.

The entablature of a Roman monumental arch will rest either directly on the voussoir ring or one or more courses above this point. Examples can be cited for both practices: directly on the voussoirs at Aosta, Susa, and Philippi; one or more courses higher at Orange and on the arch of Titus in the Forum at Rome. At Isthmia there is no direct evidence as to which practice was followed, but the proportions of the arch are already rather high and narrow, and so it seems best to restore the entablature resting directly above the voussoir ring.

The entablature of the arch at Isthmia is a simple version of the Attic-Ionic type. Four blocks (18–21; Figs. 8, 16a, 16b, Pl. 82) represent the combined epistyle-frieze course, while six poros geison blocks with dentils (22–27; Figs. 8, 17a–c, Pl. 83) represent the upper course of the entablature. The entablature presumably ran the full length of both facades and, on the basis of one preserved corner geison (22), along the ends as well.

The entablature had a total height of 0.98 m. The epistyle is composed of three fasciae and a cyma reversa with fillet crown, which exactly parallels the molding of the voussoirs (Fig. 6). The frieze is a cyma recta with fillet and ovolo crown. The combined height of the epistyle-frieze is 0.46 m. The geison is composed of a base fillet with dentils under a cyma reversa and fillet crown, the whole beneath a corona with fascia under a cyma reversa and fillet crown (total height 0.49 m.). The dentils are 0.06 m. wide and 0.07 m. high with intervals of *ca.* 0.03 m. A good parallel for the epistyle-frieze moldings is from the Julian Basilica at Corinth, while the geison with dentils of the South Basilica at Corinth is very similar to the entablature geison of the arch, although it is slightly less rich, missing two of the fillets.²⁶

Blocks representing two different series of geisa appropriate to an attic may be attributed to the Isthmia arch by their findspots and proportions. The series which is most suitable for the arch and which has been used in the restored elevation has two or three fasciae crowned by ovolo with base fillet the whole beneath a fascia with ovolo crown, all under a corona with fascia crowned by a cyma reversa with base fillet and fascia crown (Fig. 6). This course is represented by three blocks (28–30; Figs. 8, 18a, 18b, Pl. 84), none of which preserve their lower surfaces. The height of the geison above the fasciae is *ca.* 0.35–0.37 m., and so the entire course must have been *ca.* 0.57 m. high with a projection

Corinth (see p. 424 and footnote 33) represent a mixed type with circular extrados on all the voussoirs except the voussoir-springer, which has a rectilinear extrados.

²⁶ Corinth, Julian Basilica: Weinberg, p. 91, fig. 12. Corinth, South Basilica: Weinberg, pp. 92–93, figs. 14, 15, and see J. W. Hayes, "Roman Pottery from the South Stoa at Corinth," *Hesperia* 42, 1973 (pp. 416–470), p. 447 for the construction date of *ca.* A.D. 50–60.

of at least 0.19 m. We have found no exact parallel for the profile of this geison, but the geisa without dentils from the South Basilica at Corinth seem to be the closest.²⁷ One of the surviving geison blocks (30) is from a corner, which shows that the ends of the arch as well as the façades were decorated with these moldings. All three of the blocks from this series were discovered built into the South Tower of the Northeast Gate of the Hexamilion Fortress.

The three surviving attic geison blocks exhibit slight irregularities in profile, most noticeably on the corner block (30). On the longer side of this block three fasciae are preserved at the bottom of the molding, while on the shorter side the lower two fasciae are replaced by a single face. Although the stone is broken at the bottom, this transition is clear right at the corner (Fig. 7). This difference in profile suggests that either the final finishing of the monument was never carried out (see below) or that there was an intentional simplification of this detail on one or more sides of the arch. It is reasonable to suggest that this simplification took place on the short ends of the arch, where they would not readily be seen by passers-by. The other two preserved blocks (28 and 29) have only two lower fasciae; although these blocks are broken at their lower edge, the preserved height of the lower fascia does not permit a third. While it is possible that these two blocks and the short side of the preserved corner block all came from the short ends of the arch, it is more likely that one of the longer façades was also treated in the slightly simpler fashion described above and that the corners served as the points of transition from one style to the other. Thus, one may suggest that the eastern façade, which was undoubtedly the more important, had three fasciae in the attic course, while the western façade (that shown in the restored elevation) and the ends of the arch were treated in the more summary manner represented by most of the surviving blocks.

The surviving blocks of the attic geison present several other irregularities in profile. For example, the lower fascia of the double-fascia blocks is canted at an angle substantially different from that of the lowest fascia of the triple-fascia block, indicating that perhaps those with the simpler treatment were unfinished and had not yet been cut back in the final treatment of the fasciae. In addition, the heights of the fillet crowns on all three blocks are

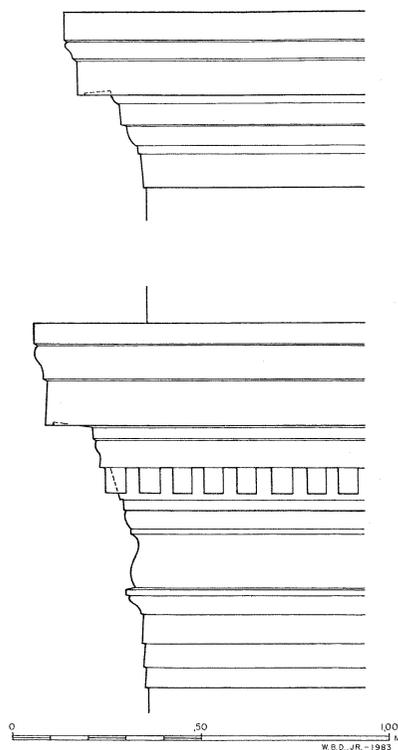


FIG. 6. Profile of entablature and attic moldings

²⁷ Weinberg, p. 94, fig. 17. Most of these geison blocks have a cyma reversa under the corona, but block U is restored with an ovolo. All have only one fascia under the corona. For other comparanda, see H. von Hesberg, *Konsolengeisa des Hellenismus und der Frühen Kaiserzeit* (*AthMitt*, Suppl. XXIV), Mainz 1980.

slightly different and the top surface of the corner geison block (30) slopes down 0.020 m. toward the façade of the arch, presumably to facilitate drainage.

There is another series of attic geison blocks which could conceivably have been placed on the arch instead of the series used in the reconstruction. It is represented by two blocks (31 and 32; Fig. 19, Pl. 84), found near the North Tower without any significant archaeological context. This geison is 0.47 m. high, with a projection of 0.28 m. The profile is similar to that discussed above, but it is plainer in that it has only a single ovolo in the moldings below the corona, and it is therefore slightly less elegant. In terms of over-all proportion and findspots, either series of attic geison blocks might have gone on the arch, but given the rather elaborate style of the entablature moldings, the richer set is probably to be preferred.

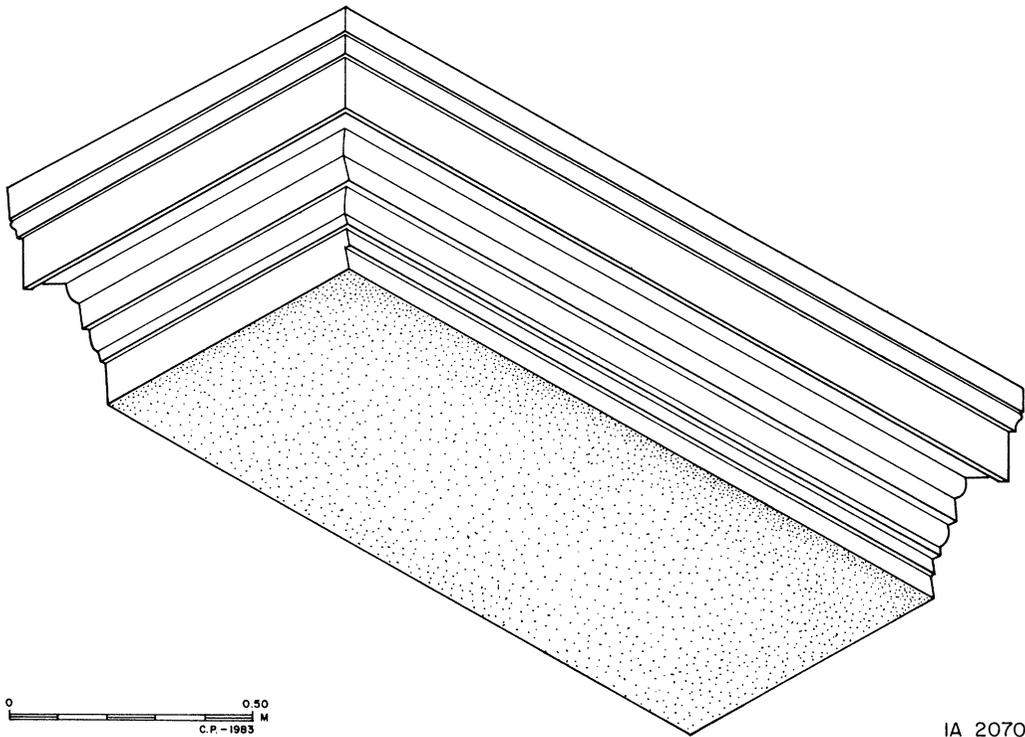


FIG. 7. 30. Isometric drawing of attic corner geison

The arch was once covered with white stucco, although little trace of this now survives. In addition, there may have been other decoration typical of freestanding Roman arches, although nothing of this nature found in the excavation can reasonably be attributed to the arch. Certainly, it must have carried a dedicatory inscription, but given the softness and unreliability of the limestone used, the letters cannot have been cut directly into the facing blocks. Instead, one can easily imagine a marble plaque attached to the coursing of the attic below the geison although none of the several inscriptions found in the area of the Northeast

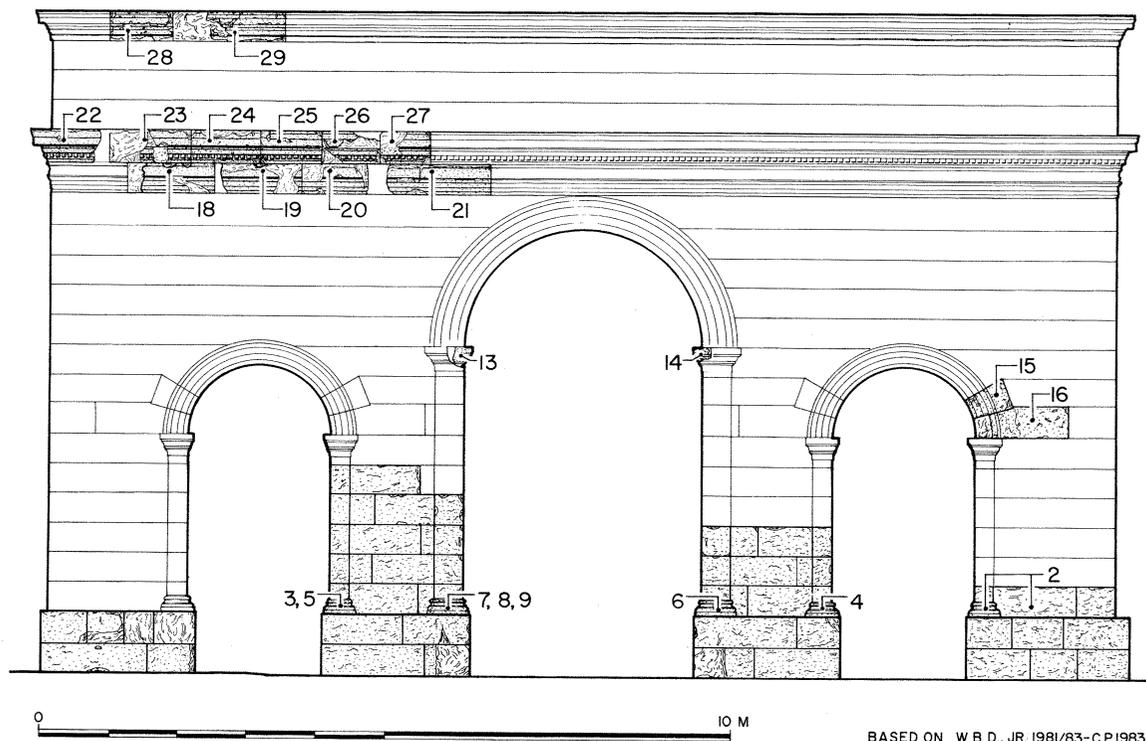


FIG. 8. Arch, west face, with actual and restored positions of catalogued blocks. (Note: The following catalogued blocks do not appear in Figure 8: 1 is *in situ* on the east face of the arch. 10–12 are either from the east face or from above the courses shown on the Dinsmoor photographs. The placement of 17 is uncertain. 30 has been restored to the southeast corner of the attic. 31 and 32 are alternatives to the series of attic geisa chosen for the restoration.)

Gate can be associated with the arch.²⁸ The façade of the arch between the piers is not broad enough to have carried architectural niches or sculpture, and the width and slope of the top of the arch, as well as the steepness of the line of sight from the easterly approach, seem to preclude any monumental group on top, as was present, for example, on the arch on the Lechaion Road in Corinth.²⁹

In terms of construction style and technique the arch at Isthmia exhibits several peculiarities, all of which testify to a certain carelessness and lack of attention to detail. Thus, as noted above, the profile of the attic geison was not the same on all sides of the arch. Indeed, substantial deviation in profile, from piece to piece in the same series and even on the same

²⁸ Clement, 1967, p. 140; Clement, 1969, pp. 166–167; Marjeta Šašel-Kos, "The Latin Inscriptions from Isthmia," *Arheološki Vestnik* (Ljubljana) 29, 1978, pp. 346–353, nos. 2, 3, 5–7.

²⁹ Pausanias, II.3.2: gilded statues of Phaëthon and Helios. F. Imhoof-Blumer and P. Gardner, *Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias*, Chicago 1964, p. 22, pl. F: xcvi, xcvi, xcix, c; Roux (*op. cit.* [footnote 5 above]), p. 116 (where for Verus and Antoninus read Domitian and Hadrian); Curtis, no. 23, p. 45; Kähler, col. 446.

block, seems to be a characteristic of the whole structure. For example, both sets of geison blocks exhibit considerable variation in their projection and in the pitch of their fasciae. Further, one of the large anta capitals (13; cf. Fig. 14), although not a particularly well-preserved block, exhibits a noticeable difference in profile from one face to the other. In fact, throughout the arch, whenever surfaces are well-enough preserved, the carving of the moldings displays the same apparent irregularities. These may have been the result of carelessness or an indication that the monument was never quite finished. In any case, the final coat of stucco would have covered many of these imperfections, which would have been difficult to see at a height well above the ground.

Another interesting characteristic of the Isthmia arch is its remarkable thinness compared to its width and probable height. Only slightly over 2 meters thick, the arch represented something of a façade rather than a solid, heavy monument, and in many places it was constructed only with the two facing blocks, without any interior core of other blocks. The following table presents some interesting comparative figures in this regard.³⁰

	Width of façade to depth	Width of central passage to depth
Isthmia	1:0.14	1:0.68
Rome, Arch of Augustus	1:0.24	1:0.93
Reims	1:0.18	1:1
Olympia	1:0.25	1:1.12

In style the arch at Isthmia has features in common with several other arches of the late 1st century B.C. and the 1st century after Christ. The plan is unusual for this period in that it had three openings, while most other contemporary examples had but a single passageway. Triple arches did exist in this period, however, as shown by the arch at Olympia (probably 1st century after Christ), the arch at Orange (dated to the reign of Augustus), the Porte de Mars at Reims (possibly built in the late 1st century after Christ), the Arch of Augustus in Rome, and the Arch of Titus in the Circus Maximus.³¹ Only the foundations survive of the Olympia arch and the two Roman examples, but the arches at Orange and Reims are elaborately decorated in a manner completely unlike the arch at Isthmia. Thus, the arch at Orange has pediments over the central passageway and gables on the two ends. Besides relief sculptures on all four sides, Orange has two sets of entablature moldings and Corinthian columns on projecting pedestals on both façades and ends. The arch at Reims has engaged columns with Corinthian capitals and braided guilloche decoration on the torus molding of the bases, in addition to decorated jambs and archivolts.

In terms of decoration, the arch at Isthmia has more in common with another series of rather simple, mostly single-passageway, Augustan and later arches. It does not bear much resemblance to very early Augustan examples, such as the arches at Aosta, Aquino, and

³⁰ These proportions are based on plans of each arch. Rome, Arch of Augustus: F. Tobelmann, *Römische Gebälke*, Heidelberg 1923, p. 26. Reims: Richmond, p. 169, fig. 10:2. Olympia: E. Curtius and F. Adler, edd., *Olympia I*, Berlin 1897, p. 61, pl. 45.

³¹ The plan of the Isthmia arch does not correspond exactly to any of Kähler's arch types, based on examples in the western half of the empire (pp. 485–486), but it may be seen as a variant of type three.

Rimini. Rather, it has more in common with later Augustan arches such as those at Susa, St. Chamas, and Fano. All these are characterized by simplicity of design and, where appropriate, by the full disengagement of the corner antae from any surrounding decoration. They all have relatively narrow voussoir moldings, and at Susa and St. Chamas the bases of antae supporting arches have been placed at the same level as the bases of columns or antae supporting the entablature, as opposed to Aosta and Pola, where bases of antae supporting arches are located higher up on the podium. Both Susa and St. Chamas have features of elaboration not found at Isthmia: acanthus, arabesques, and relief sculpture depicting contemporary events. In addition, the anta-base moldings in both cases were extremely simple, reflecting native Italian rather than Greek taste.

Most Roman arches have side columns designed to frame the arch as a whole and to support the projecting entablature. At Isthmia the arch had no such side decoration, but the moldings of the superstructure projected so little that they did not appear unsupported, resting as they did solely on the crown of the voussoir ring. Such an arrangement is unusual and suggests workmen who were perhaps unaccustomed to the monumental arch as an architectural genre. A similar treatment is visible in the arches at Fano and Autun, where there are no side columns and where the superstructure rests directly on the masonry of the arch itself. In both these cases, however, the simplicity of design has gone even farther than on the arch at Isthmia, as the arches rise above a capital whose anta is not delineated on the surface of the masonry below. Neither do these two arches have anta bases or any other decorative molding at the bottom of the pier. In terms of decoration and style, then, the arch at Isthmia seems to fall between the two extremes of basically Italian forms of monumental arches.

Closer parallels for our arch should naturally be sought in Greece itself. One such parallel, now almost completely destroyed, is the arch at Philippi, probably constructed during the Augustan age, either as a memorial of the battle or as an indication of the boundary of the colony. This monument was extremely simple, with identical antae, each with a simple acanthus capital, supporting entablature and arch. The superstructure was equally simple, with an attic geison much smaller than that of the entablature. The Philippi arch, however, is different from that at Isthmia in its use of voussoirs with circular extrados and Italian rather than Attic-Ionic anta bases, both suggesting a date slightly earlier than the arch at Isthmia.

In Corinth the Propylaia marking the northern entrance to the Roman Forum from the Lechaion Road were adorned with a monumental arch.³² Archaeological and numismatic evidence shows that the construction and reconstruction of this arch during the 1st and 2nd centuries varied between a three-passageway and a one-passageway structure. The date of the original arch and the details of its construction remain problematical. The arch first appears on coins in the reign of Domitian (see footnote 29 above), and this fact has led to the suggestion that in one form it was constructed shortly after the earthquake of A.D. 77. Unfortunately, the superstructure has completely disappeared, and no comparisons with the Isthmia arch can be made on the basis of style.

³² Fowler and Stillwell, pp. 159–192; Curtis, no. 23, p. 45; Kähler, col. 446.

Another monumental arch mentioned earlier (footnotes 24 and 25 above) has recently been discovered at Corinth, in the southwest corner of the Forum, where the road from Acrocorinth approached the civic center.³³ Only fragmentary remains of this apparently Neronian arch survive, but these reveal an arch with a single opening and voussoir and entablature moldings very similar to those of the arch at Isthmia.

The Isthmia moldings have an exact parallel in a voussoir block discovered by Oscar Broneer in his excavation of the Sanctuary and used by him in the reconstruction of an eastern gateway to the temenos of Poseidon.³⁴ Other Roman arches in Greece, many not far from Isthmia, have no information of interest to offer.³⁵

The foundations of the Hexamilion roadway and previous excavation in the area have destroyed, or destroyed access to, all stratigraphic evidence concerning the date of the arch at Isthmia. Chronology, therefore, must depend entirely on stylistic considerations and general historical probability. As we have seen, the arch bears the strongest resemblance to a series of simple arches of the 1st century after Christ. Closer chronological precision can be obtained by a consideration of the treatment of the voussoir moldings. The practice of cutting voussoir moldings on larger rectangular blocks seems to have come into fashion only after the end of the Augustan age, suggesting that the arch at Isthmia was built sometime after the death of Augustus.³⁶ On the other end of the chronological scale, it is also abundantly clear that the arch at Isthmia has little in common with the Arch of Titus on the Via Sacra in Rome, which displays much greater elaboration of detail and more concern for the decoration of the interior of the passageway. Even less does the Isthmia arch resemble 2nd- and 3rd-century arches, such as the Arch of Hadrian at Athens, with their three-dimensional showiness and almost theatrical effect. It is true that several 2nd-century arches, such as the bridge arch at Alcantara (dated 105/6), are plain and simple, but most of these were built by military engineers with practically no display of classical architectural vocabulary, while Isthmia, for all its faults, fits very well the classical architectural tradition.

Thus, in terms of over-all stylistic criteria the arch at Isthmia is probably to be dated sometime during the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasties (A.D. 14–96). Such a date is confirmed by a consideration of the moldings on the arch, which most resemble those of the Julian and the South Basilicas in Corinth and, to a lesser degree, the Library of Pantainos in Athens. The range of date can be further refined by the builder's use of the typical Attic-Ionic base moldings on the arch, instead of the Roman moldings used in the rebuilding of the Northwest Stoa and in the anta bases of the Julian Basilica at Corinth.³⁷ Lucy Shoe has suggested that the change from the Roman to the Attic-Ionic base molding took place sometime during the second quarter of the 1st century, and the construction of the arch should

³³ C. K. Williams, II, "Corinth, 1975: Forum Southwest," *Hesperia* 45, 1976, pp. 135–137. Quite similar is the marble arch built ca. A.D. 100 in the Athenian Agora, between the southeast corner of the Stoa of Attalos and the Library of Pantainos (H. A. Thompson and R. E. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora*, XIV, *The Agora of Athens*, Princeton 1972, p. 114).

³⁴ Broneer, II, pp. 74–75.

³⁵ Megara (Kähler, col. 448), Pagai (Kähler, col. 448), Patras (Kähler, col. 448), Rhion (Kähler, col. 449), Thasos (Kähler, col. 450).

³⁶ Blake, p. 208.

³⁷ Shoe, *op. cit.* (footnote 20 above), pp. 300–303.

therefore be placed sometime after the middle of the century. This is in keeping with archaeological evidence from other parts of the site at Isthmia, which suggests that large-scale Roman rebuilding of the Sanctuary of Poseidon did not begin until that time.³⁸

On grounds of historical probability, several events may be mentioned as possibly connected with the erection of the arch. The first of these was Nero's visit to Isthmia in A.D. 66 or 67, made famous by his grant of freedom from taxation to the Greeks.³⁹ In support of such a date is the contemporary construction in the Theater at Isthmia and inauguration of work on the emperor's ill-fated canal project. In addition, the arch in the southwest corner of the Forum in Corinth has been dated to the reign of Nero, showing that similar structures were being built in the area at that time. Perhaps the hasty preparations for an imperial arrival were responsible for the apparent carelessness in the construction of the arch.

The Flavian emperors were generally well disposed toward the city of Corinth, despite their reversal of many of Nero's policies and Vespasian's revocation of the privileges granted to Greece at Isthmia. Thus, we know that sometime before the end of the reign of Vespasian the name of Roman Corinth was changed by the addition of the imperial name *Flavia* to its title.⁴⁰ This modification may reflect imperial initiative or city gratitude, and it can perhaps be connected with Vespasian's well-attested help in rebuilding the cities that were damaged by the earthquake of A.D. 77.⁴¹ The erection of an arch in honor of the emperor, perhaps in connection with the refoundation of the colony, would have been an appropriate response for the city of Corinth.

Favorable conditions continued under the reign of Domitian, who might have supported the erection of an arch in honor of his father or brother. Although Domitian was generally condemned by the Roman historical tradition, he was well liked by his eastern subjects, particularly because of his many building activities.⁴² In Greece, for example, Domitian paid for the rebuilding of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, and at Corinth he was probably responsible for construction of the arch at the entrance to the Forum from the Lechaion Road, a benefaction which was commemorated on contemporary Corinthian coins.⁴³ Thus,

³⁸ Gebhard, *op. cit.* (footnote 18 above), pp. 84–87; Broneer, II, p. 4; J. M. Peppers, *Selected Roman Pottery, Isthmia Excavations 1967–1972*, diss. University of Pennsylvania 1979, p. 143. But see Kent, *op. cit.* (footnote 5 above), no. 153, pp. 70–73 and no. 306, pp. 119–121.

³⁹ Suetonius, *Ner.*, 24.2; *IG VII*, 2713; Dittenberger, *SIG³*, 814; Gebhard, *op. cit.* (footnote 18 above), pp. 86–87, note 51. Compare also the Parthian arch of Nero on the Capitoline in Rome, known from coins: H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum I*, London 1923, pls. 43:3, 11, 46:5; Kähler, col. 385.

⁴⁰ Kent, *op. cit.* (footnote 5 above), no. 82; B. V. Head, *Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum. Corinth*, London 1889, pp. 72–73; K. M. Edwards, *Corinth*, VI, *Coins, 1896–1929*, Cambridge, Mass. 1933, nos. 91–93, 96–106, 109. The original name was restored after Domitian's death: Head, *op. cit.*, p. 73, no. 588; Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–29.

⁴¹ S. Gsell, *Essai sur le règne de l'Empereur Domitien*, [1894], repr. Rome 1967, p. 149; A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*, Oxford 1940, p. 65; J. Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome I: 228 B.C.—A.D. 267," *ANRW II.7.1*, New York/Berlin 1979 (pp. 438–548), p. 506. Vespasianic aid: Plutarch, *de anim.*, frag. VII, no. 11; Eusebius, *Chron.* (ed. Schoene) II, p. 158; Jerome, *Chron.* (ed. Schoene) II, p. 159.

⁴² Suetonius, *Dom.*, 8; H. W. Pleket, "Domitian, the Senate and the Provinces," *Mnemosyne* 14, 1961, pp. 296–315; Gsell, *op. cit.*, pp. 135–155, 348. See Mansuelli, *op. cit.* (footnote 12 above), pp. 128–129, fig. 21, for a tripartite arch of Domitian at Alexandria in Italy restored from coins.

⁴³ Domitian at Delphi: *CIL III*, Suppl. II, 2316³⁸ (no. 14203²⁴), cf. Homolle, *BCH* 20, 1896, p. 717;

the arch at Isthmia was probably built during the second half of the 1st century after Christ, but on the basis of present evidence it is impossible to be any more precise than that or to single out any specific event that it celebrated.

Certainty is also impossible concerning the function of the arch at Isthmia.⁴⁴ It clearly was neither a “triumphal” arch nor an urban arch, and there is no evidence that it was connected with any wall earlier than the construction of the Hexamilion early in the 5th century after Christ. The arch was obviously not designed primarily as a setting for the display of sculpture, something which I. A. Richmond suggests was crucial in the use of the arch in Italy and the West.⁴⁵ On the other hand, Richmond’s argument that the three-passage arch was the result of the construction of a monumental façade over a grand street seems particularly appropriate at Isthmia.

In considering the function of the arch a comparison with other Roman arches in Greece may prove especially helpful. As we have seen, several of these arches were located in cities where they served to make important distinctions in urban topography, such as the boundary of the agora (as in Athens and Corinth) or the demarcation of a new area of the city (as at Athens). At Delphi a large arch was erected in the stadium, something paralleled at Philippopolis and Rome, while at Olympia a large triple arch marked the entrance to the Altis from the southeast.⁴⁶ This last structure, of which only the foundations are now preserved, is generally thought to have been built at the time of Nero’s visit, although there is no solid evidence to support this theory. It is the only known Roman arch in Greece which seems actually to mark the entrance to a major sanctuary. More commonly, when the Romans built or rebuilt monumental entrances into venerable Greek sanctuaries they followed tradition in the construction of Greek-style propylaea. Thus, in 54 B.C. Appius Claudius Pulcher erected the so-called Lesser Propylaea at Eleusis, while some two hundred years later either Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius built the Greater Propylaea as a copy of the Propylaea of the Akropolis in Athens.⁴⁷ In the latter instance the Roman builders did construct two monumental arches (copies of the Arch of Hadrian in Athens), but only to form side approaches to the square in front of the Greater Propylaea itself.

Monceaux thought that the arch was an entrance to the temenos of Poseidon, which he considered limited by the walls which enclosed the Hexamilion Fortress. Broneer, of course, has since with certainty located the temenos on the height some 380 meters west of the arch. It is, however, true that the arch marks the eastern approach to the Sanctuary area which, as we now know it, extends from the Later Stadium on the south to the series of large buildings

Domitian at Corinth: Fowler and Stillwell, pp. 184–186 and Imhoof-Blumer and Gardner, *op. cit.* (footnote 29 above), p. 22, pl. F:xcvii.

⁴⁴ A. J. Frothingham, “The Roman Territorial Arch,” *AJA* 19, 1915, pp. 155–174; A. J. Frothingham, “De la véritable signification des monuments romains qu’on appelle ‘arcs de Triomphe,’” *RA*, ser. 4, 6, 1905, pp. 216–230; Richmond, pp. 172–174; E. Weigand, “Propylon und Bogentor in der östlichen Reichskunst, ausgehend vom Mithridatestempel in Ephesos,” *Wien. Jahrb. für Kunstgesch.* 5, 1928, pp. 94–98.

⁴⁵ Richmond, p. 173.

⁴⁶ On Olympia, see also W. Dörpfeld, “Die Altismauer im Olympia,” *AthMitt* 13, 1888, pp. 327–336.

⁴⁷ G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries*, Princeton 1971, pp. 156–160, 166–167; and in general see H. Hörmann, *Die inneren Propyläen von Eleusia (Denkmäler antiker Architektur I)*, Berlin/Leipzig 1932.

on the north, which run from the vicinity of Tower 15 to the Roman Bath; and further to the west it extends past the "Sacred Glen" to the "West Foundation", the structure which presumably marks the Hippodrome.

Roman arches were commonly erected to mark boundaries, frequently of a territorial or political nature.⁴⁸ Thus, it was common Roman practice to mark the boundary of a colony's territory by the erection of a monumental arch, usually astride a main avenue of approach. Examples of this phenomenon can be found at Orange, Zama, Thugga, possibly St. Chamas and Alcantara, and closer to hand at Philippi.⁴⁹ Corinth was, of course, a Roman colony, and it is conceivable that the Isthmian arch was erected in some connection with a boundary of the *colonia laus Julia Corinthiensis* or its probable refounding by Vespasian.⁵⁰ The arch at Isthmia, of course, cannot have been placed along the *pomerium* of the city, which must have lain far to the west, and it does not seem to have been the boundary of Corinthian territory, which must have been further to the east. During the Roman imperial period, however, Krommyon, Corinth's neighbor to the northeast along the Isthmus, apparently enjoyed civic status, and the boundary between the two states may not have lain too far from the arch.⁵¹

Often Roman monumental arches represented the boundaries of larger territorial or administrative jurisdictions. In the present case the arch cannot have marked the boundary of the province of Achaia, since that territory extended far to the north toward Thermopylai. Perhaps the arch represented, instead, the "boundary" of the Peloponnesos.⁵² The idea of a boundary between the Peloponnesos and Mainland Greece was familiar to the Greeks under the Roman Empire. This concept is shown by a story, told by both Strabo and Plutarch, about a "marker" (στήλη) erected on the Isthmus to mark the boundary between the two regions.⁵³ According to Strabo the marker was set up as a result of a border dispute between the Ionians and the Peloponnesians during the heroic period, while Plutarch says it was erected by Theseus. On one side the marker bore the inscription τὰδ' οὐχὶ Πελοπόννησος, ἀλλ' Ἴωνία, while that on the other side read τὰδ' ἔστι Πελοπόννησος, οὐκ Ἴωνία. Such a monument never stood in historical times, and Strabo tells us that it was destroyed by the Herakleidai after their defeat at Athens. The idea of such a boundary marker, however,

⁴⁸ Frothingham, *op. cit.* (footnote 44 above), pp. 155–174; A. Pelletier, *L'Urbanisme romain sous l'Empire*, Paris 1982, p. 104; D. S. Corlàita, "La situazione urbanistica degli archi onorari nella prima età imperiale," in *SAOR*, pp. 29–72 (esp. pp. 55–72 on suburban and extra-urban arches); E. Weigand, *op. cit.* (footnote 44 above), p. 93, note 83, citing the arch on the Via Egnatia between Illyria and Macedonia mentioned by Strabo (vii.7.4; cf. Kähler, col. 451); Prieur, pp. 445–446, esp. note 8; A. Grenier, *Manuel d'archéologie gallo-romaine I* (= J. Dechelette, *Manuel d'archéologie préhistorique celtique et gallo-romaine V*, i), Paris 1931, pp. 567–572.

⁴⁹ Frothingham, *op. cit.* (footnote 44 above), pp. 155–174; Piganiol *et al.*, *op. cit.* (footnote 21 above), p. 12; Pelletier, *op. cit.*, p. 12: "L'emplacement de l'arc tenait donc compte du rite de fondation de la colonie . . ."; P. Collart, *Philippes, ville de Macedoine depuis ses origines jusqu'à la fin de l'époque romaine*, Paris 1937, pp. 321–323.

⁵⁰ See p. 425 above.

⁵¹ Hierokles, *Synekdemos*, 645.14, E. Honigmann, ed., Brussels 1939, p. 17; but cf. Pausanias (ii.1.3) who says that Krommyon lay in Corinthian territory.

⁵² It is clear from Pausanias' account (ii.1.3–7) that he considered the sanctuary of Poseidon as the boundary of the Peloponnesos. Thus, ἔστι δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἰσθμοῦ τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἔνθα ὁ ληστής Σίυις . . . waylaid travelers.

⁵³ Strabo, iii.5.5; ix.1.6–7; Plutarch, *Theseus* 25.3–5; Wiseman, 1978, p. 17.

obviously still appealed to Greeks in imperial times; hence the repetition of the story in our sources. Further, this idea was clearly the inspiration for the inscription which Hadrian prepared to commemorate his extension of the city of Athens and which can still be read on the arch which marked the boundary between one area and the other: on one side Αἰδ' εἰς Ἀθήναι Θησέως ἢ πρὶν πόλις and on the other Αἰδ' εἰς Ἀδριανοῦ κοῦχί Θησέως πόλις.⁵⁴

These suggestions are, of course, merely speculation, and the arch may simply have marked a grand approach to the Sanctuary. But it does appear to have stood astride one of the main roads into the Peloponnesos.⁵⁵ Further, in late antiquity the line of the Hexamilion

⁵⁴ *IG II²*, 5185; Schol. Aristeides, *Panathenaicus* III, p. 201, no. 32, ed. Dindorf.

⁵⁵ In antiquity there were probably three main routes by land into the Corinthia: along the Saronic coast over the Scironian rocks, through the pass over Mt. Gerania, and along the Halcyonic Gulf (Wiseman, 1978, p. 17).

The Saronic road was undoubtedly the most famous, associated as it was with Theseus' legendary journey from Troizen to Athens and marked with his heroic exploits at Isthmia, Krommyon, and on the Scironian rocks (Broneer, II, p. 18). The importance of this road in Roman imperial times is shown by Hadrian's widening of it to allow two chariots to pass (Pausanias, I.44.6). The pass through Mt. Gerania was probably more arduous, but it was also a more direct route from central Greece (Wiseman, 1978, p. 20). From the pass a traveler would descend to the vicinity of modern Myges and then either strike westward over difficult terrain to Therma (modern Loutraki) or make the more direct descent to Krommyon (modern Agioi Theodoroi) and there join the Saronic coastal road (Wiseman, 1978, p. 20; Pliny [*NH*, 4.23] lists the staging posts along these roads, from the Isthmus to Attica, but he does not indicate how the traveler went on the western segment of the Gerania route: *In ora autem portus Schoenus, oppida Sidous, Kremmyon, Scironia saxa VI longitudine, Gerania, Megara, Eleusin; fuere et Oenoe et Probalinthos*). The third route lay along the Halcyonic Gulf, from Pagai (modern Kato Alepochori) to the Perachora peninsula and thence into the Corinthia.

Of these various approaches the road along the Halcyonic Gulf and that through Gerania via Loutraki would have entered the Isthmus in the west, far from the arch at Isthmia. The other roads, however, which were certainly more important, would have approached the Isthmus at Schoinos. Near this point, either to the east or to the west of the Isthmia arch, the road must have divided, with a southward road going in the direction of Epidauros and Troizen and a westward road leading to Corinth and Sikyon (Broneer, II, p. 18). If this division took place to the east of the arch, then the arch may have spanned the westward road; if the division took place to the west, then the arch would have spanned the undivided road, and all travelers from Schoinos into the Peloponnesos would have passed under it (cf. footnote 52 above). It is clear that the important line of travel is the ancient road which ran from the Sanctuary at Isthmia to the city of Corinth (Monceaux, 1885, pp. 207–208; Fowler and Stillwell, pp. 69–70). This road is straight and direct, involving little grade and encountering no substantial natural barrier (Wiseman, 1978, pp. 64–68, noting also the ancient remains along this route). It presumably entered the city at the so-called “Kenchrean Gate” (Monceaux, 1885, p. 207; Broneer, II, p. 18, note 13). Another, more northerly, route may also be postulated from Schoinos to Corinth, passing through the east Long Walls of Corinth by the so-called “Isthmian Gate” and then through some unknown gate in the north wall of the city (A. W. Parsons, *Corinth*, III, ii, *The Defenses of Acrocorinth and the Lower Town*, Cambridge, Mass. 1936, pp. 94–99; cf. H. S. Robinson, *The Urban Development of Ancient Corinth*, Athens 1965, map on p. 5).

It is significant that the Peutinger Table (Konrad Miller, ed., Stuttgart 1916, reprinted 1962) shows the roads from central Greece and Attica meeting at Eleusis and continuing through Megara to the Peloponnesos. After Megara the road traveled for 23 miles to “Istamo”, which is probably the Sanctuary of Poseidon at the Isthmus (so identified by Stephanus Byzantius, *s.v.* Cf. Kent, *op. cit.* [footnote 5 above], no. 153; L. Robert, *Documents de l'Asie Mineure meridionale*, Paris 1962, pp. 102, 105). After “Istamo” the road went directly to Corinth in 8 miles. The linear distance between the Sanctuary at Isthmia and the Forum in Corinth is ca. 10.16 km. Using a Roman foot of 0.2942 m., this would accord very well with the distance shown in the Peutinger Table, suggesting that the road station at “Istamo” may well have been in the vicinity of the arch.

From the sea, any traveler landing at Schoinos would naturally have passed near the arch. Travelers

certainly marked the boundary of the Peloponnesos. In that age, the Roman arch served to help define the course of the fortifications, and its two central piers continued to stand astride one of the major routes of access to the region.

Overall, the arch at Isthmia represents an important monument of the Roman imperial age in Greece. Its reconstruction and study are an addition to our knowledge of Roman architectural types in Greece, and they provide significant topographical information about the Sanctuary of Poseidon during the Roman period. Further, like the black-and-white mosaic recently discovered in the Roman Bath at Isthmia, the arch represents the transformation of a basically Roman form within a traditional Greek milieu.⁵⁶ In the mosaic the placement and the basic design were Roman, but the work was carried out by artisans who were familiar with a Hellenistic tradition in mosaic art. The same can be said of our arch: the architectural form and its basic cultural overtones were overwhelmingly Roman, but the workmen were undoubtedly Greek. In their use of traditional Greek, rather than Roman, moldings and in the over-all simplicity of execution, they created a monument which may be said to symbolize the fusion of Greek and Roman cultures that was so very much a part of life in Corinth in the 1st century after Christ.

CATALOGUE OF ARCHITECTURAL MEMBERS

All these blocks are local limestone, and nearly all of them are in very battered condition. Many show the marks of the claw-tooth chisel which has been driven across the stone.

ANTA BASES, ANTAE, AND ANTA CAPITALS

1. IA 2122. Anta base from Fig. 9, Pl. 78:b, c
small arch

In situ on the northeastern corner of the South Pier.

L. 1.474 m.; H. 0.440 m.; W. 0.530 m.

Molding battered but preserves the full profile; swallow-tail clamp cutting on upper surface.

2. IA 2123. Anta base from small arch

In situ on the northwestern corner of the South Pier.

L. 1.492 m.; H. 0.449 m.; W. 0.505 m.

landing at Kenchreai (or *a fortiori* at Lechaion) would, of course, have journeyed to Corinth by a completely different way (note, however, Monceaux's road from the southeast into the sanctuary: Monceaux, 1885, p. 206).

Perhaps the strongest point in favor of the association of the Isthmia arch with a "boundary" of the Peloponnesos is that it almost certainly lay across the land route between Attica and Troizen (the southerly road discussed above), the route followed by Theseus, who Plutarch said was responsible for first marking such a boundary. On Theseus in the Corinthia, see Edouard Will, *Korinthiaka*, Paris 1955, pp. 191–204.

⁵⁶ P. M. Packard, "A Monochrome Mosaic at Isthmia," *Hesperia* 49, 1980, pp. 326–346: "The Isthmia mosaicist was probably a native Greek who used local pattern books to design a pavement in the Hellenistic tradition but in the current Italian monochrome style" (p. 345). Likewise, we know that local pottery production in Corinth in the early years of the Empire was far more influenced by Italian than Eastern imports (J. W. Hayes, *op. cit.* [footnote 26 above], p. 470).

The interplay of Greek and Roman elements in the art and architecture of Greece during the Roman period has been the subject of several works recently: C. C. Vermeule, *Roman Imperial Art in Greece and Asia Minor*, Cambridge, Mass. 1968; C. C. Vermeule, *Greek Sculpture and Roman Taste*, Ann Arbor 1977; M. Bieber, *Ancient Copies*, New York 1977. We await C. C. Vermeule's "Dated Monuments of Roman Imperial Provincial Art in Greece and Asia Minor, circa 100 B.C. to A.D. 500: Mainland Greece, the Peloponnesus, and the Islands," scheduled to appear in *ANRW* II.12.4.

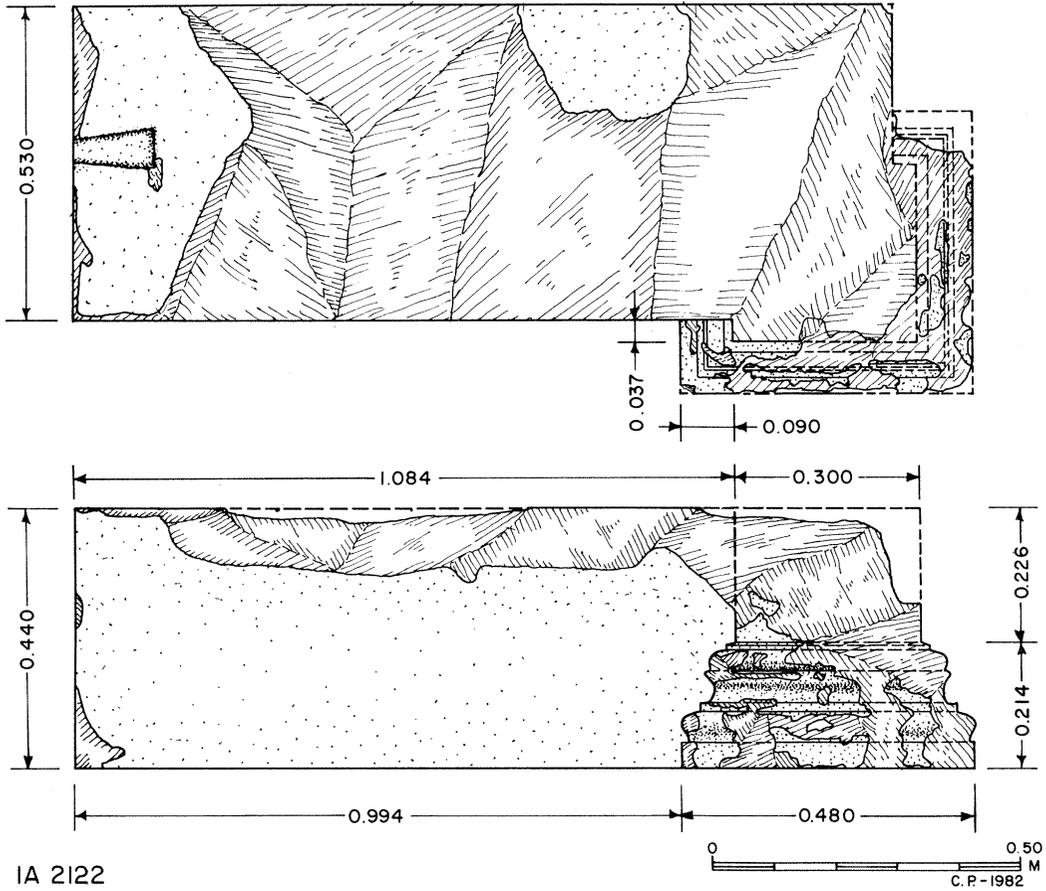


FIG. 9. 1. Small anta base

Moldings have been almost completely obliterated; two swallow-tail clamp cuttings on upper surface.

- 3. IA 1440. Anta-base molding Fig. 10, Pl. 79 from small arch

From fill in the central roadway of the Northeast Gate.

P.L. 0.152 m.; p.H. 0.140 m.; p.W. 0.104 m.

Corner molding preserved from plinth to bottom of scotia.

- 4. IA 1465. Anta-base molding Fig. 10, Pl. 79 from small arch

From surface fill in the central roadway of the Northeast Gate.

P.L. 0.188 m.; p.H. 0.139 m.; p.W. 0.112 m.

Corner molding preserved from plinth to bottom of scotia.

- 5. IA 1476. Anta-base molding Fig. 10, Pl. 79 from small arch

From the South Bay of the Northeast Gate just below surface level.

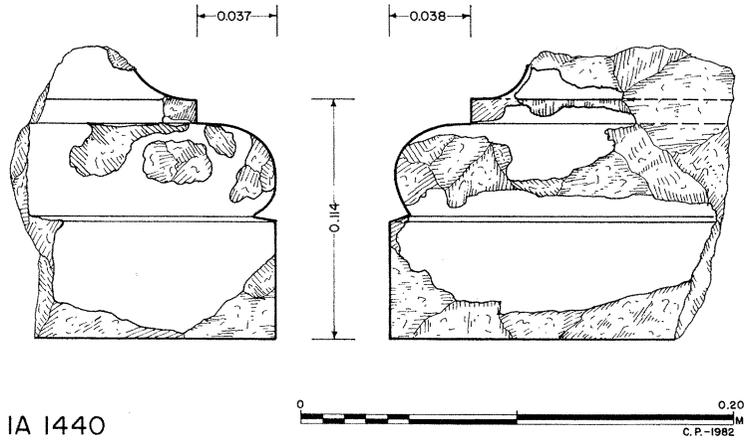
P.L. 0.204 m.; p.H. 0.135 m.; p.W. 0.115 m.

Corner molding preserved from plinth to bottom of scotia; one side preserves the return to the face of the wall.

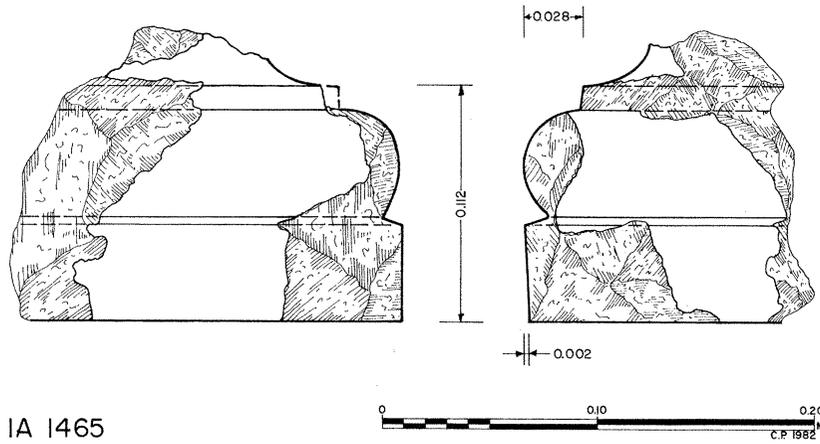
- 6. IA 1437. Anta-base molding Fig. 11a, Pl. 79 from large arch

From the central roadway in the Northeast Gate near the surface.

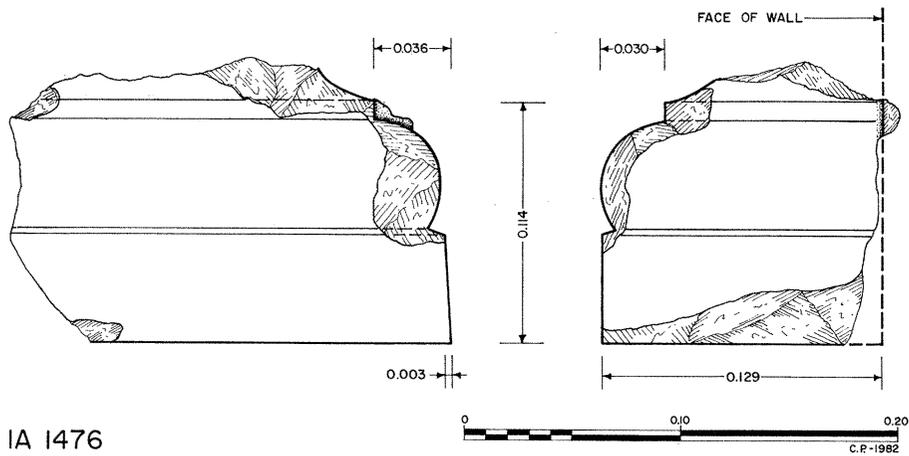
P.L. 0.096 m.; p.H. 0.0134 m.; p.W. 0.089 m.



3

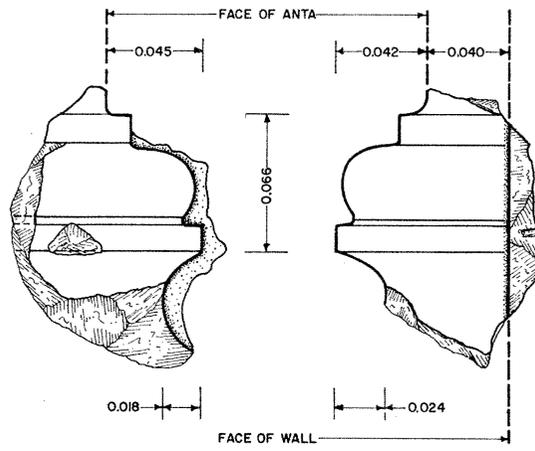


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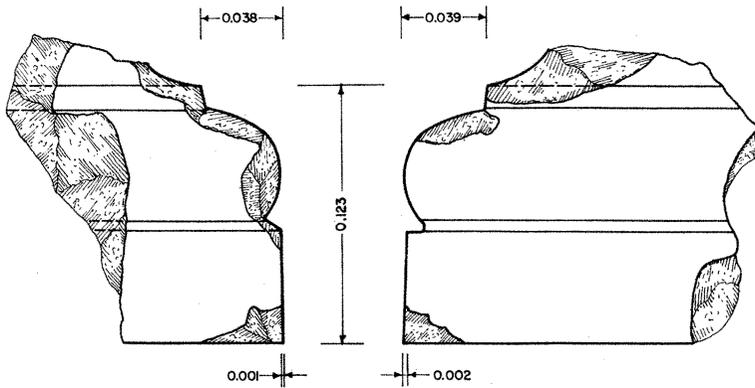
FIG. 10. Small arch, anta base fragments



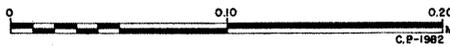
IA 1437



6

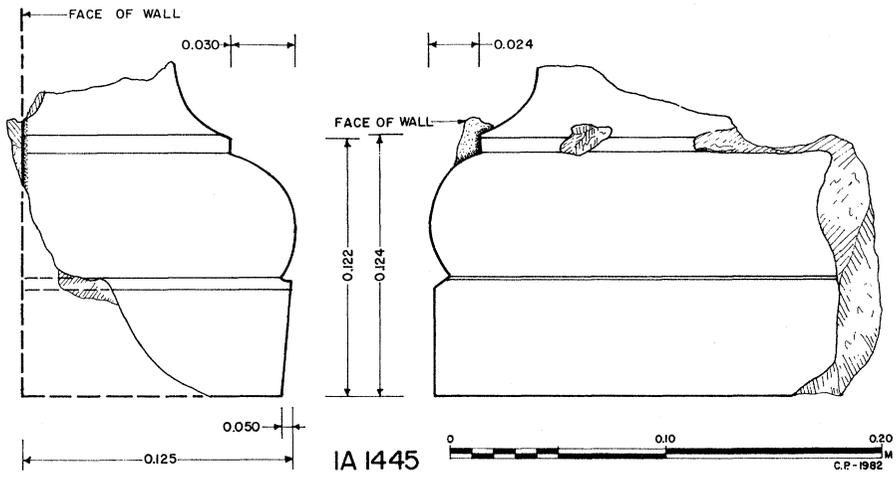


IA 1441

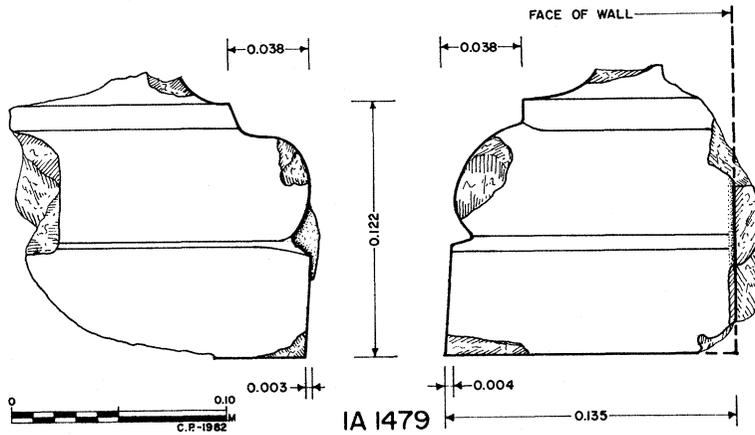


7

FIG. 11a. Large arch, anta base fragments



8



9

FIG. 11b. Large arch, anta base fragments

Fragment broken all around, preserving part of the scotia, upper torus molding, fillets, and part of the anta face; fragment preserves the return of the anta.

7. IA 1441. Anta-base molding Fig. 11a, Pl. 79
from large arch

From the central roadway in the Northeast Gate.
P.L. 0.154 m.; p.H. 0.141 m.; p.W. 0.115 m.

Corner molding preserved from plinth to bottom of scotia.

8. IA 1445. Anta-base molding Fig. 11b, Pl. 79
from large arch

From the central roadway in the Northeast Gate.
P.L. 0.207 m.; p.H. 0.156 m.; p.W. 0.122 m.

Corner molding preserved from plinth to middle of scotia; one side preserves the return to the face of the wall.

9. IA 1479. Anta-base molding Fig. 11b, Pl. 79
from large arch

From surface fill just north of South Tower foundations, Northeast Gate.

P.L. 0.142 m.; p.H. 0.137 m.; p.W. 0.138 m.

Corner molding preserved from plinth to bottom of scotia; one side preserves the return to the face of the wall.

10. IA 2074. Anta from small Fig. 13, Pl. 80
arch

From fill between South and South Central Piers.
L. 0.743 m.; H. 0.450 m.; W. 0.630 m.

Full dimensions of the block preserved: width of the anta 0.290–0.293 m. One swallow-tail clamp cutting on the upper surface of the block.

11. IA 2075. Anta from small Fig. 13, Pl. 80
arch

From fill between South and South Central Piers.
L. 0.675 m.; H. 0.445 m.; W. 0.552 m.

Block very battered but preserves the full dimensions; width of the anta 0.280–0.295 m.

12. IA 69-49 = IA 2076. Anta Fig. 14, Pl. 80
from large arch

From fill in central roadway, Northeast Gate.
P.L. 0.709 m.; H. 0.460 m.; W. 0.620 m.

Broken all around but preserves width of the anta, 0.440–0.445 m. One face of the anta has been

partially cut away, and there are traces of mortar in this cutting, suggesting re-use in the Hexamilion.

13. IA 69-36. Anta capital from Fig. 14, Pl. 81
large arch

From central roadway, Northeast Gate.

P.L. 0.384 m.; p.H. 0.290 m.; p.W. 0.198 m.

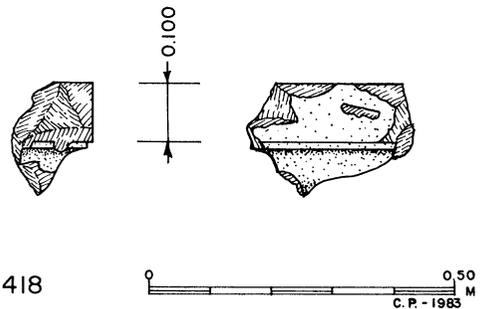
Broken on two sides, bottom of the block not preserved; moldings preserved down to top of cavetto. Profiles on the two sides of the block slightly different.

14. IA 1418. Anta capital frag- Fig. 12, Pl. 81
ment from large arch

From upper fill in area west of the North Pier.

P.L. 0.273 m.; p.H. 0.190 m.; p.W. 0.130 m.

Fragment preserves abacus and part of cyma recta. Traces of white stucco on cyma.



IA 1418

FIG. 12. 14. Large arch, anta capital fragment

VOUSSOIR AND RELATED BLOCKS

15. IA 2099. Archivolt voussoir Fig. 5, Pl. 81
block from small arch

From area east of the North Tower, Northeast Gate.

L. 0.630 m.; H. 0.280–0.455 m.; W. 1.030 m.

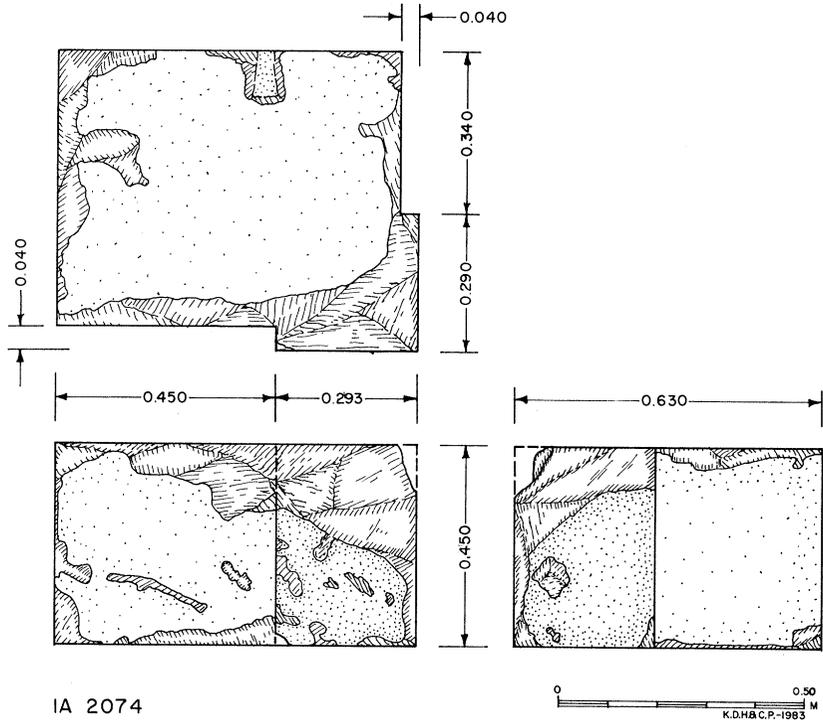
Broken around edges but preserves the full dimensions and profile of moldings, three fasciae beneath cyma reversa with fillet crown.

16. IA 2108. Archivolt springer Fig. 5, Pl. 81
block from small arch

From area east of the North Tower, Northeast Gate.

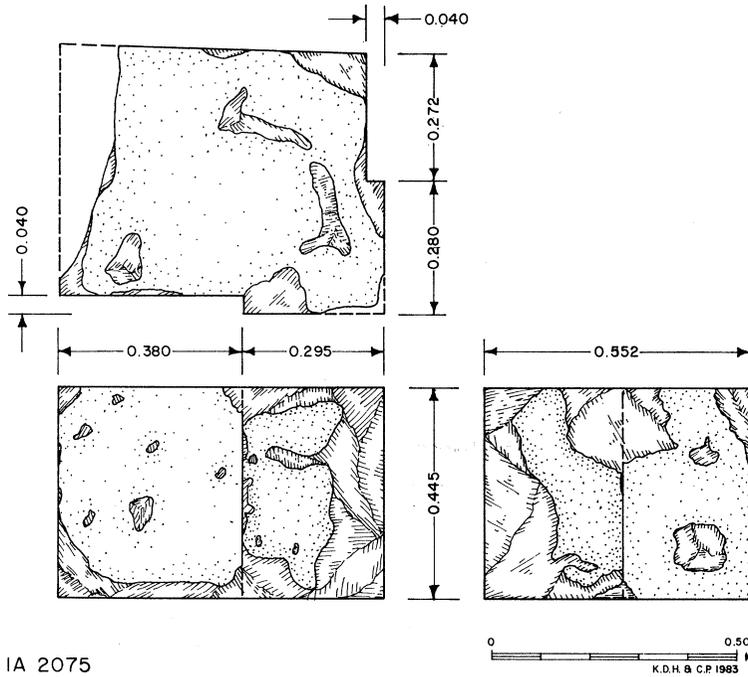
L. 1.350 m.; H. 0.470 m.; W. 0.765 m.

Broken slightly on face but preserves the full dimensions and profile of moldings as preceding.



IA 2074

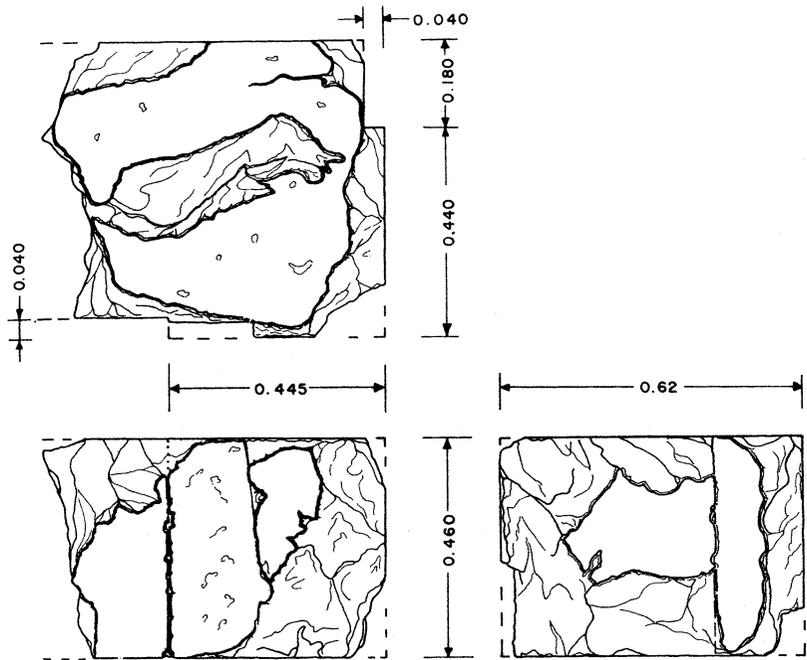
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IA 2075

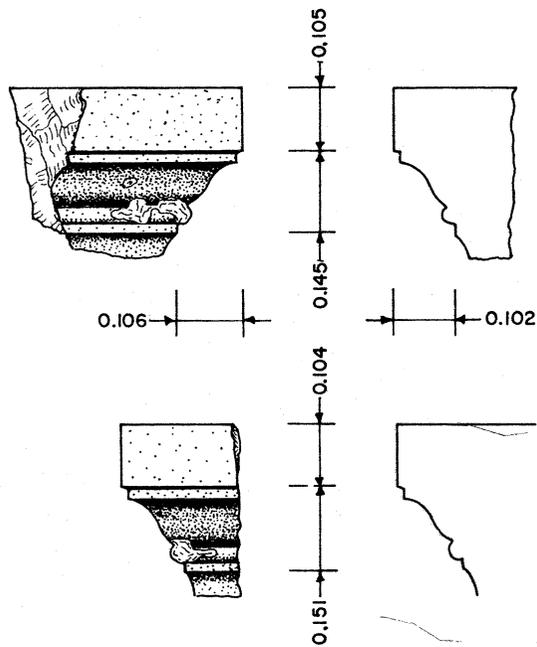
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FIG. 13. Small arch, anta blocks



IA 69-49

12. Anta block



IA 69-36

13. Anta-capital fragment

FIG. 14. Large arch, anta

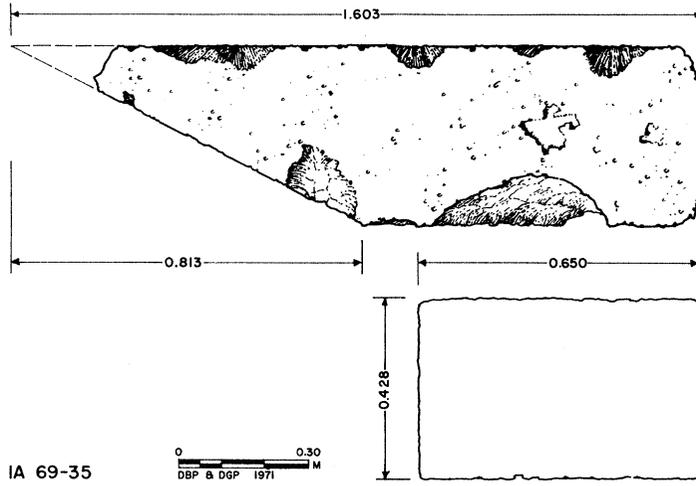


FIG. 15. 17. Voussoir backer

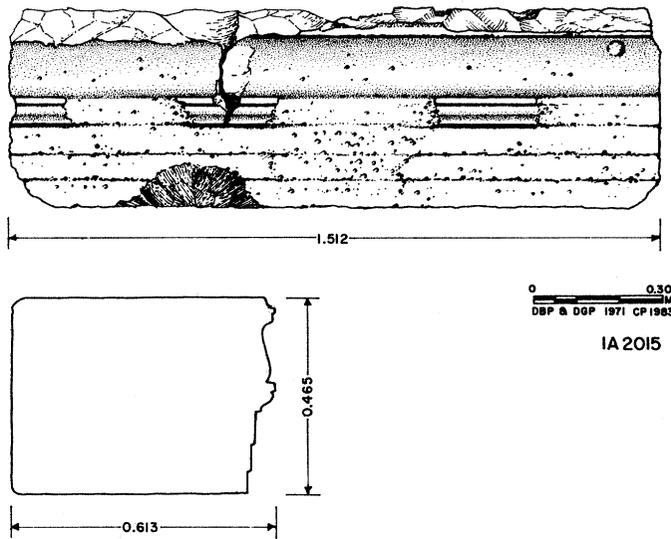
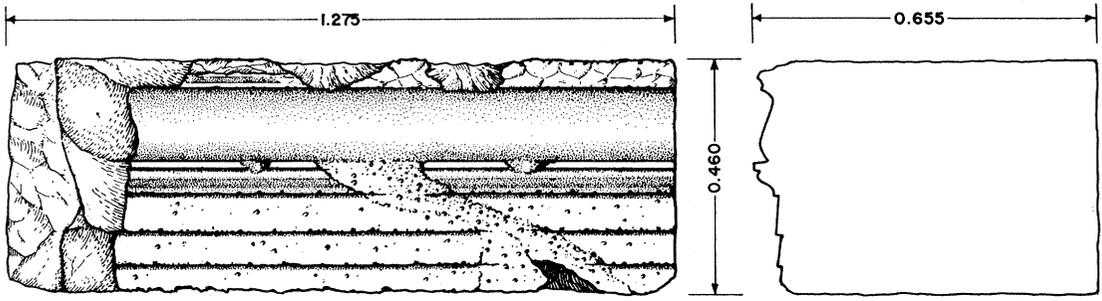


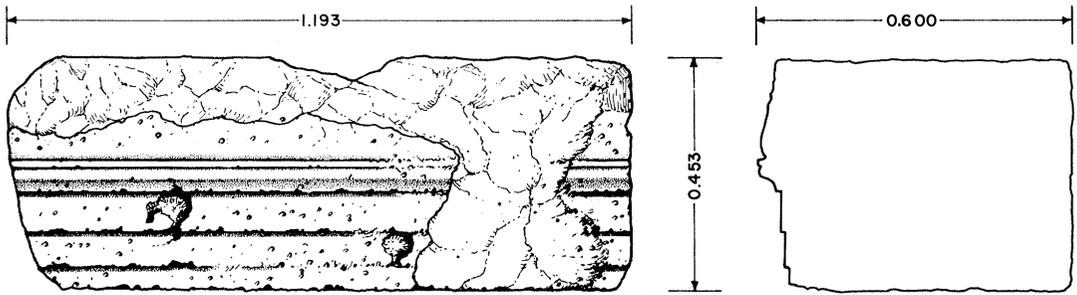
FIG. 16a. 21. Epistyle-frieze



0 0.30 M
DBP & DGP 1971 CP 1983

IA 2014

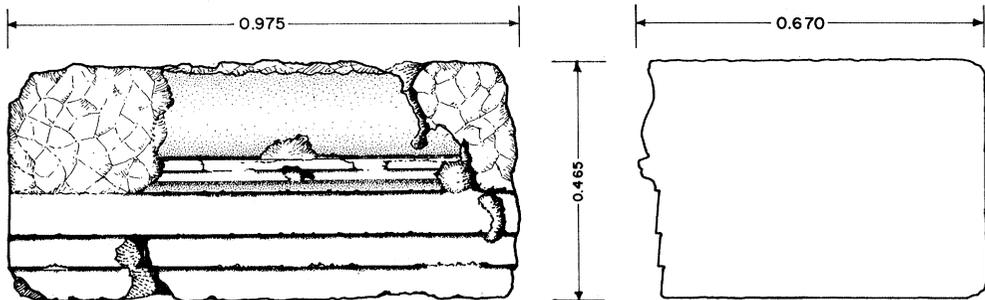
18



0 0.30 M
DBP & DGP 1971 CP 1983

IA 2012

19



0 0.30 M
DBP & DGP 1971 CP 1983

IA 69-27

20

FIG. 16b. Epistyle-frieze blocks

17. IA 69-35. Backer block Fig. 15, Pl. 81
From central roadway, Northeast Gate.
P.L. 1.413 m.; p.H. 0.428 m.; W. 0.650 m.
Broken near tip.

ENTABLATURE BLOCKS

18. IA 2014. Epistyle-frieze Fig. 16b, Pl. 82
block
Findspot uncertain; probably from the area north of the Northeast Gate in surface fill.
P.L. 1.275 m.; H. 0.460 m.; W. 0.655 m.
Broken on one end and along most of top; preserves the full profile except for crowning ovolo.
19. IA 2012. Epistyle-frieze Fig. 16b, Pl. 82
block
From surface fill west of the North Pier.
P.L. 1.193 m.; H. 0.453 m.; W. 0.600 m.
Badly worn and broken along top; preserves part of cyma recta and moldings below it.
20. IA 69-27. Epistyle-frieze Fig. 16b, Pl. 82
block
From central roadway, Northeast Gate.
P.L. 0.975 m.; p.H. 0.465 m.; W. 0.670 m.
Badly worn at edges and broken along most of top; preserves profile below the crowning ovolo.
21. IA 2015. Epistyle-frieze Fig. 16a, Pl. 82
block
From above the foundations of the North Tower, Northeast Gate.
P.L. 1.512 m.; p.H. 0.465 m.; W. 0.613 m.
Badly worn and broken at top and along one end; preserves profile below the crowning ovolo.
22. IA 2008. Corner geison Fig. 17a, Pl. 83
From surface over the North Tower, Northeast Gate.
P.L. 0.945 m.; H. 0.507 m.; p.W. 0.759 m.
Worn all around; broken on one end; preserves the full profile except for fillet crown.
23. IA 69-46. Geison block Fig. 17a, Pl. 83
From excavation fill north of the North Tower, Northeast Gate.
L. 1.188 m.; H. 0.455 m.; W. 0.748 m.

Broken along face and top; preserves full profile except for fillet crown.

24. IA 2081. Geison block Fig. 17b, Pl. 83
From fill between the North Central and the North Piers.
L. 1.013 m.; H. 0.508 m.; W. 0.810 m.
Broken along top and bottom; preserves the full profile except for fillet crown.

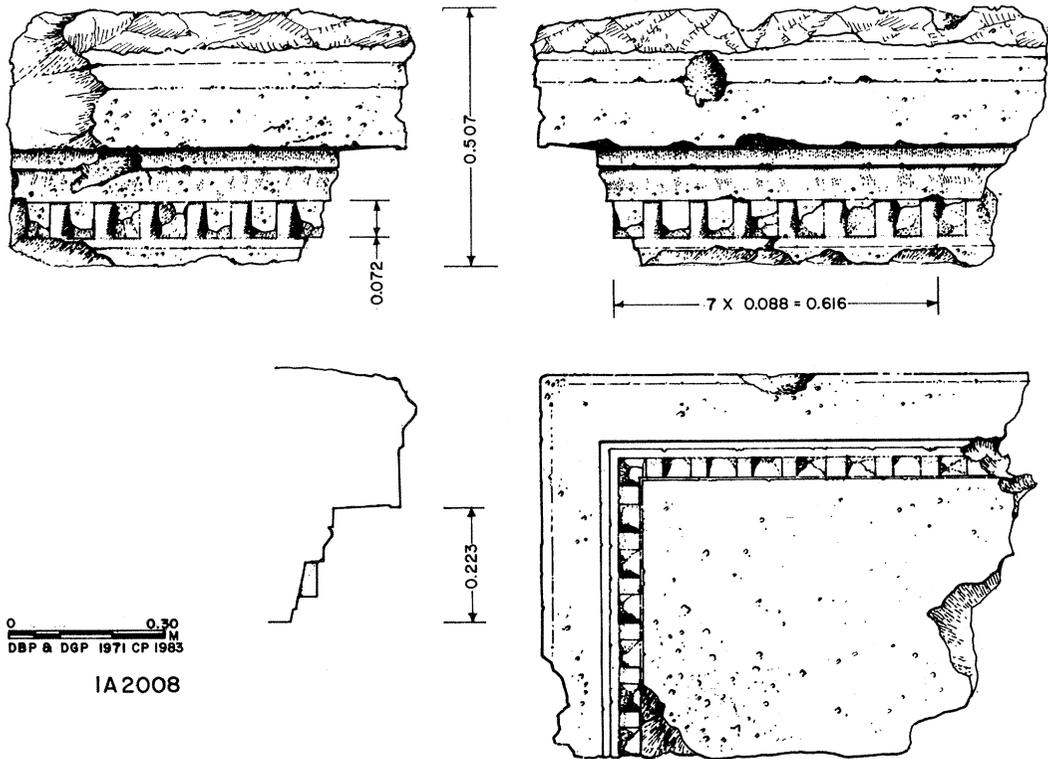
25. IA 69-13. Geison block Fig. 17b, Pl. 83
From excavation fill north of the North Tower, Northeast Gate.
L. 0.895 m.; H. 0.495 m.; W. 0.820 m.
Broken around top but preserves full profile and full dimensions of block.

26. IA 69-28. Geison block Fig. 17c, Pl. 83
From central roadway, Northeast Gate.
L. 0.835 m.; p.H. 0.490 m.; W. 0.735 m.
Broken all around but preserves full profile except for base fillet.

27. IA 2051. Geison block Fig. 17c, Pl. 83
From surface fill between South and South Central Piers.
L. 0.737 m.; H. 0.498 m.; W. 0.762 m.
Broken on top and on face but preserves the full profile except for fillet crown.

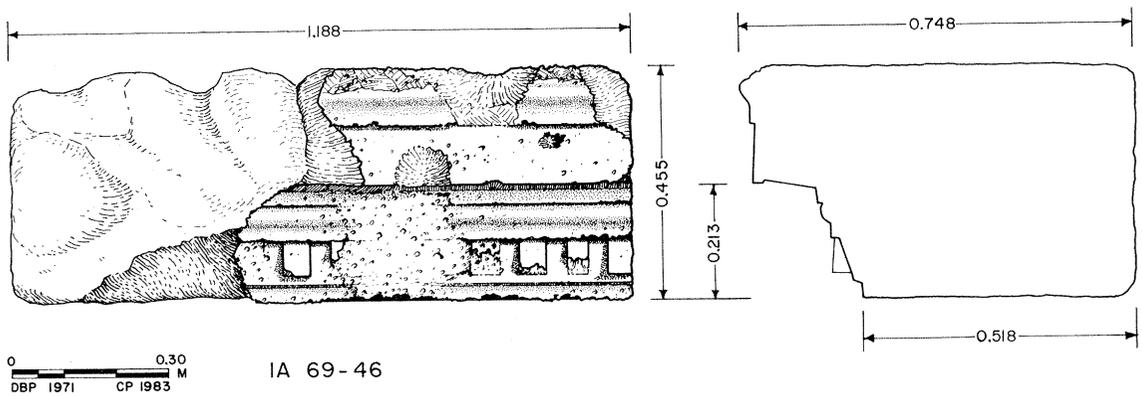
ATTIC BLOCKS

28. IA 67-1. Geison block Fig. 18a, Pl. 84
Built into the South Tower foundations, Northeast Gate.
L. 0.914 m.; p.H. 0.457 m.; W. 0.780 m.
Broken at bottom and along most of top; two fasciae; preserves the full profile to bottom of block. Bottom fascia canted inward from top.
29. IA 2069. Geison block Fig. 18b, Pl. 84
Built into the South Tower, Northeast Gate.
P.L. 1.625 m.; p.H. 0.442 m.; W. 0.817 m.
Broken at bottom and on one end; two fasciae; preserves the full profile to bottom of block. Bottom fascia canted outward from top. Mortar covers much of the top surface from construction of the South Tower.



IA 2008

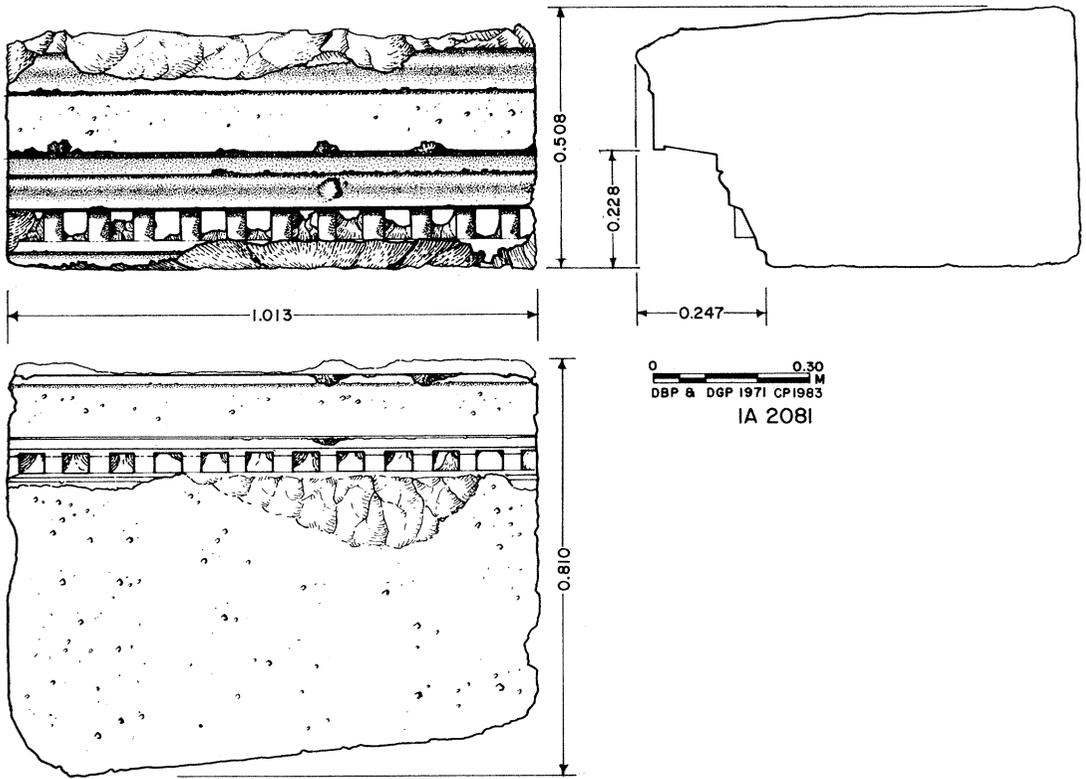
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IA 69-46

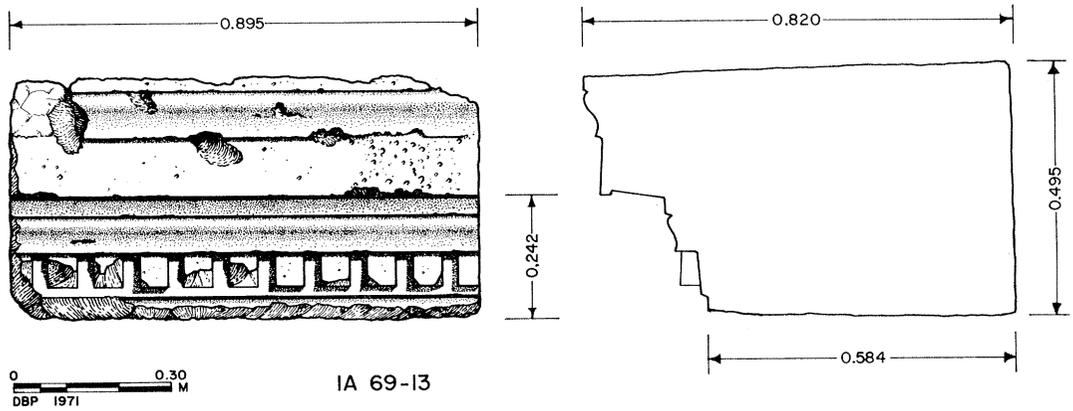
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FIG. 17a. Entablature geison blocks



IA 2081

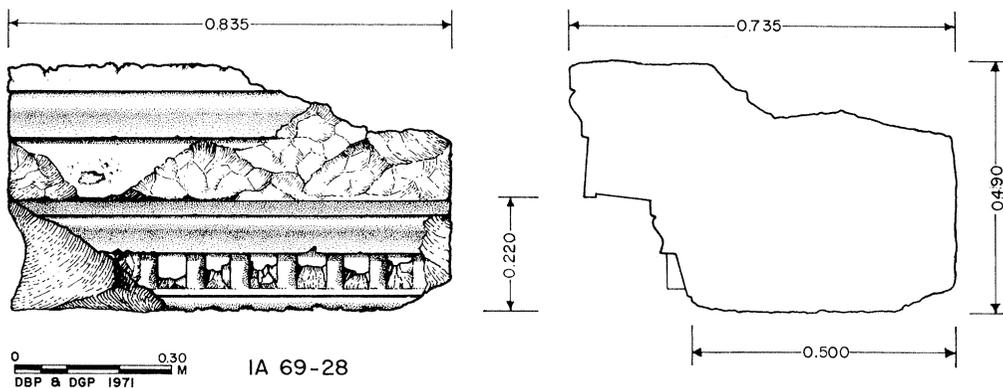
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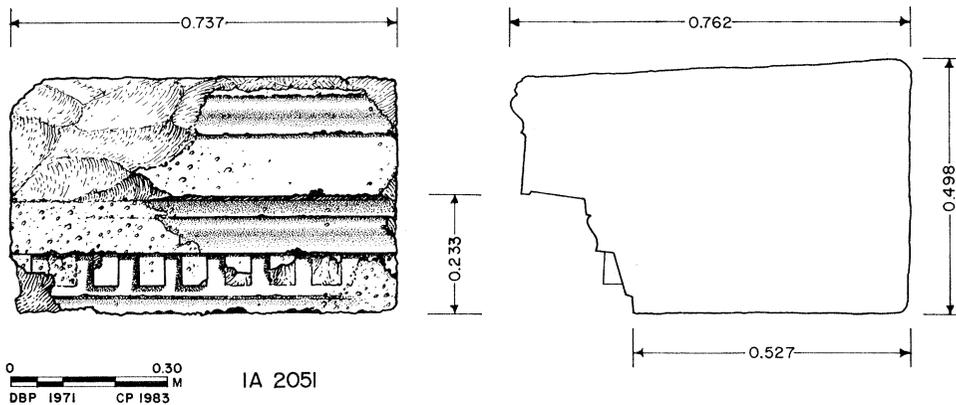
IA 69-13

25

FIG. 17b. Entablature geison blocks



26



27

FIG. 17c. Entablature geison blocks

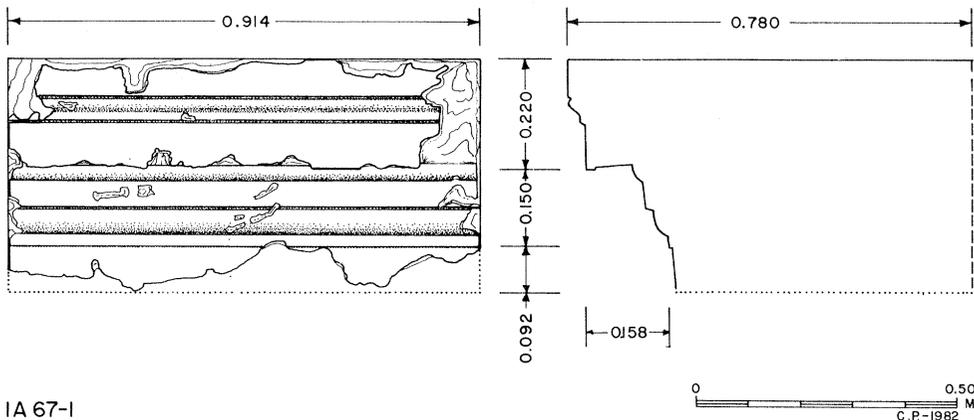
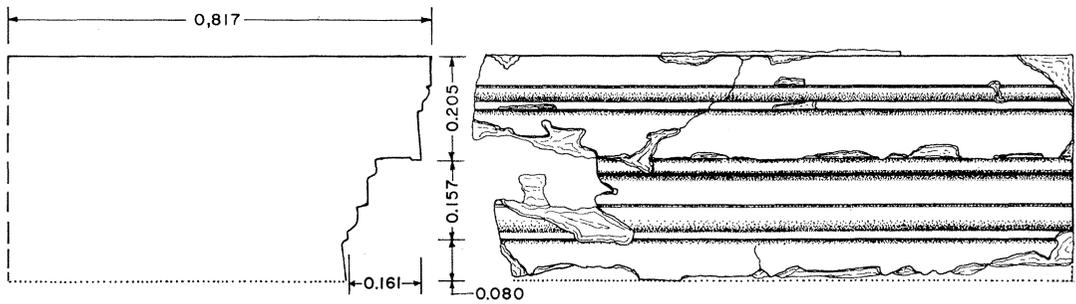
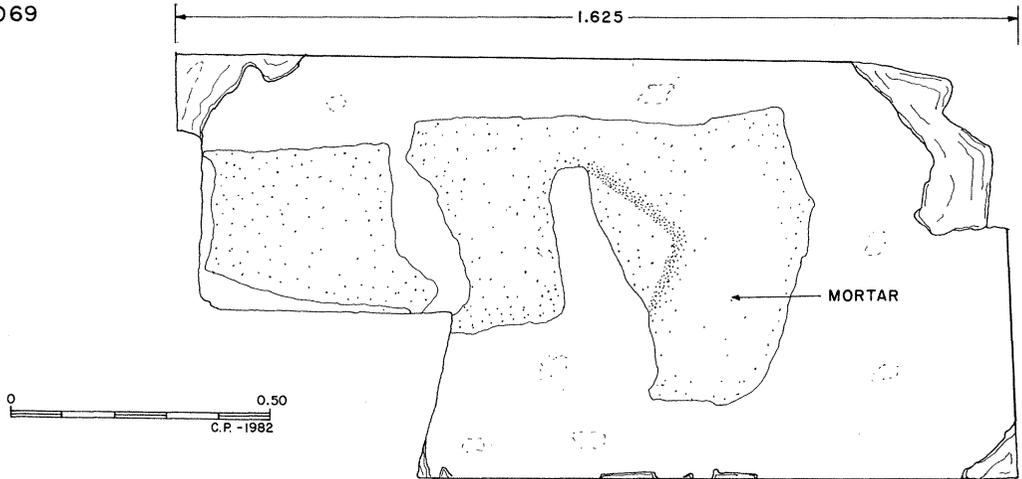
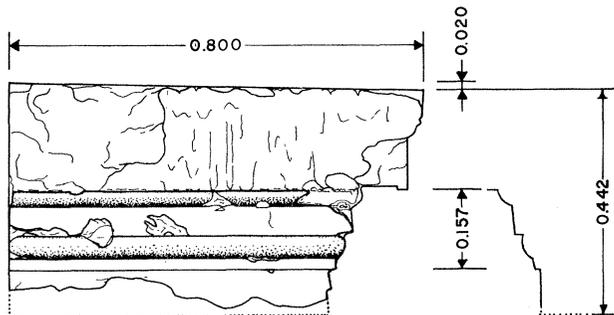
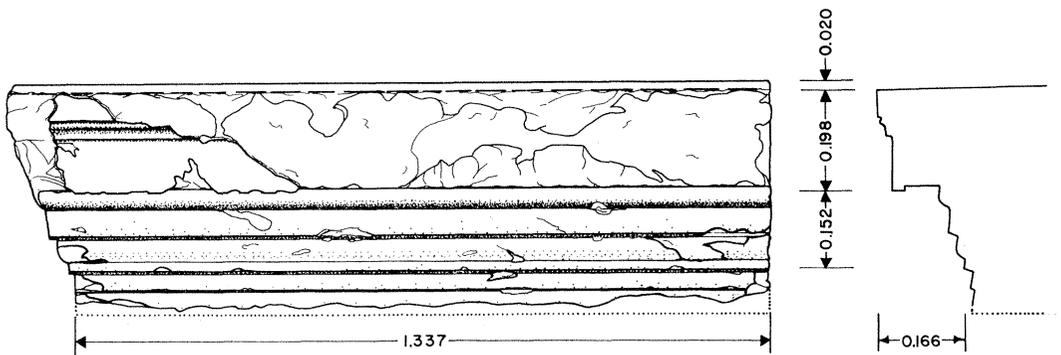


FIG. 18a. 28. Attic geison block

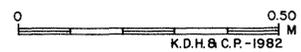
IA 2069



29

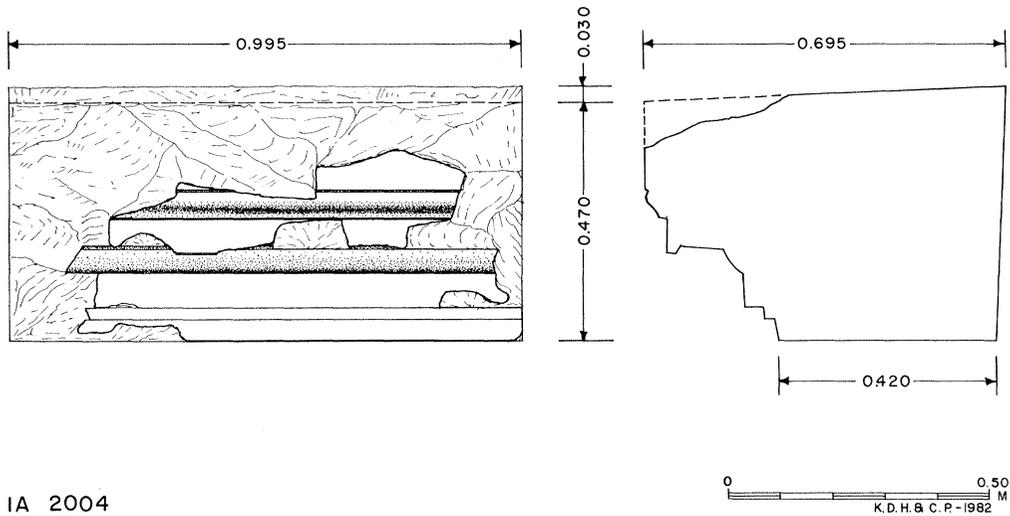


IA 2070



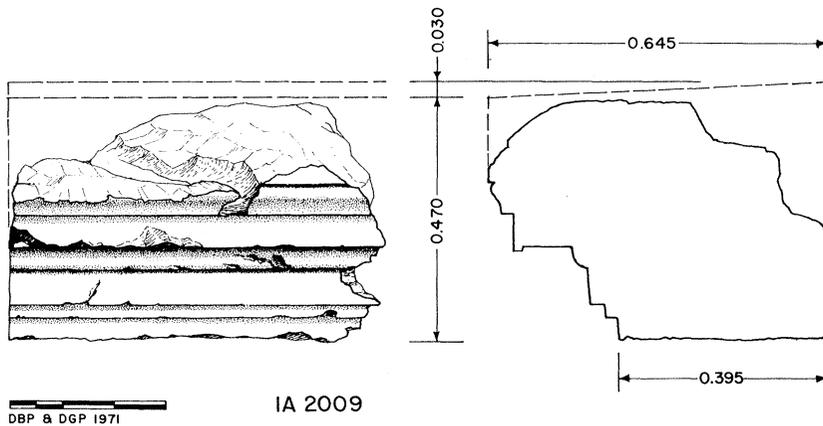
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FIG. 18b. Attic geison blocks



IA 2004

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IA 2009

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FIG. 19. Alternative attic geison blocks

30. IA 2070. Corner geison Figs. 7, 18b, Pl. 84

Built into the South Tower, Northeast Gate.

L. 1.478 m.; p.H. 0.438 m. (on face), 0.458 m. (back of block); W. 0.800 m.

Broken at bottom and much battered; three fasciae on long side and two on short side. Bottom fascia on both sides canted outward from top; top of block slopes upward 0.020 m. from both faces of block to back.

31. IA 2004. Geison block Fig. 19, Pl. 84

From surface over the North Tower, Northeast Gate.

L. 0.995 m.; H. 0.470 m. (on face), 0.500 m. (back of block); W. 0.695 m.

Block very worn but preserves full profile. Top of block slopes upward 0.030 m. from face to back.

32. IA 2009. Geison block Fig. 19, Pl. 84

From surface above the North Tower, Northeast Gate.

P.L. 0.722 m.; p.H. 0.455 m.; p.W. 0.645 m.

Block broken all around but preserves the profile except greater part of crowning fillet. Top of block slopes upward from face to back.

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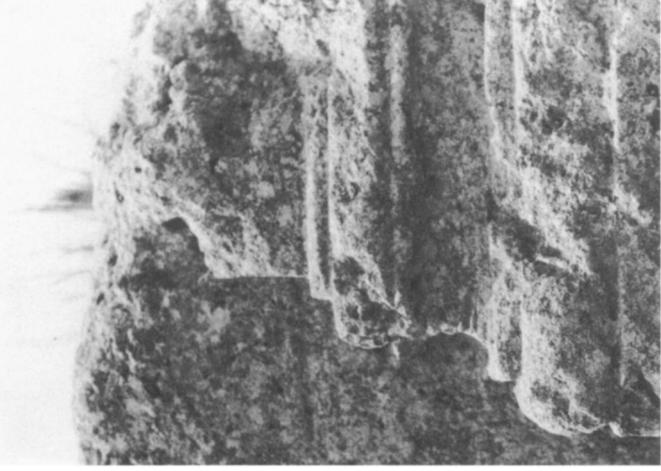
a. Northeast Gate from west



b. Central piers from southeast (photograph, Dinsmoor 1909)



a. Southeast corner of northern central pier from south (photograph, Dinsmoor 1909)

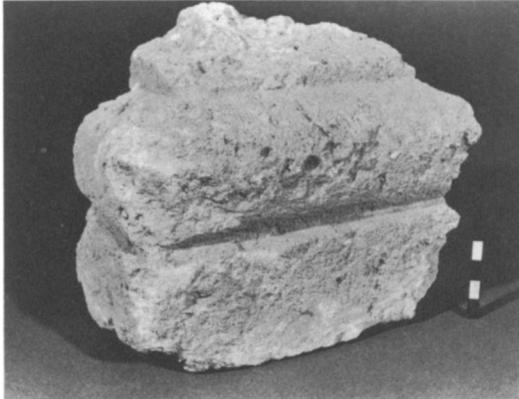


b. 1, detail





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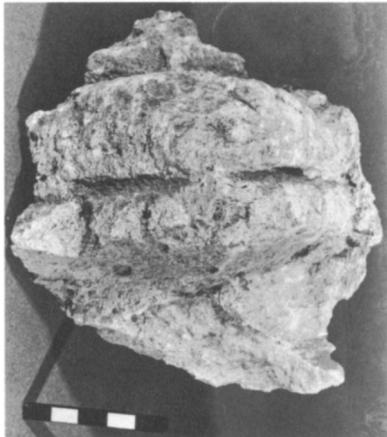
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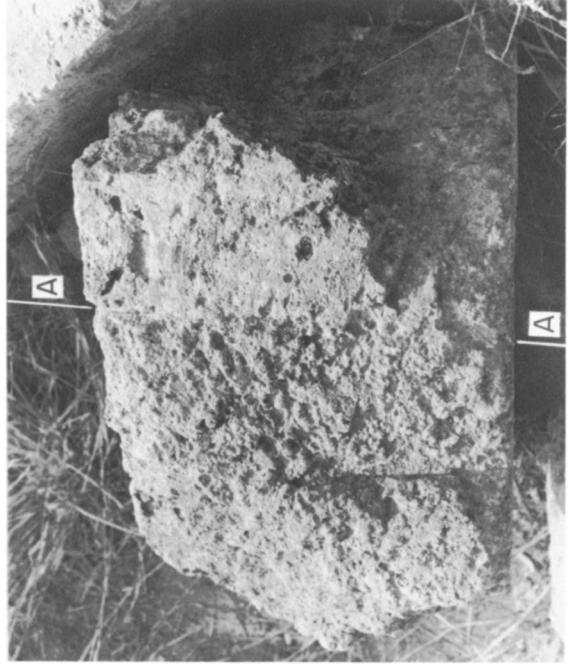
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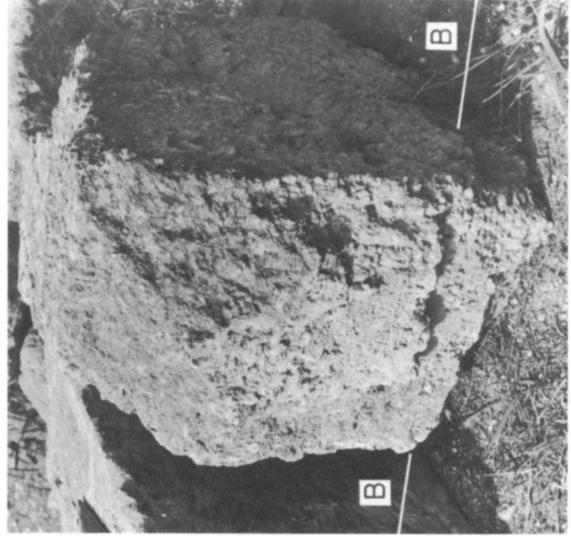
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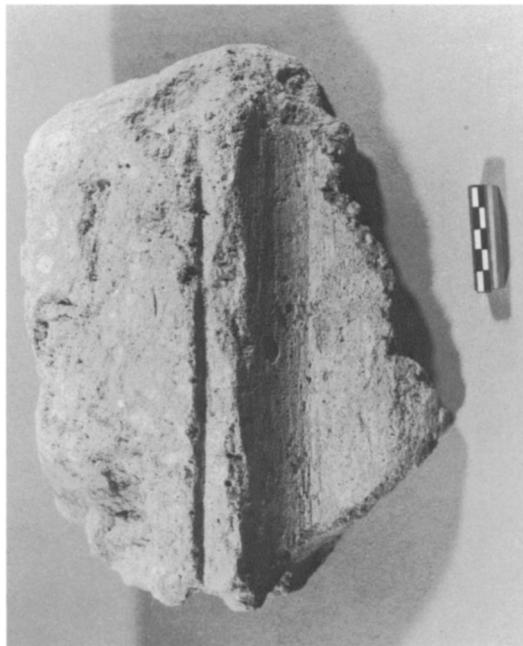
12. A-A is the termination of the face of the anta



12. B-B is the termination of the face of the anta



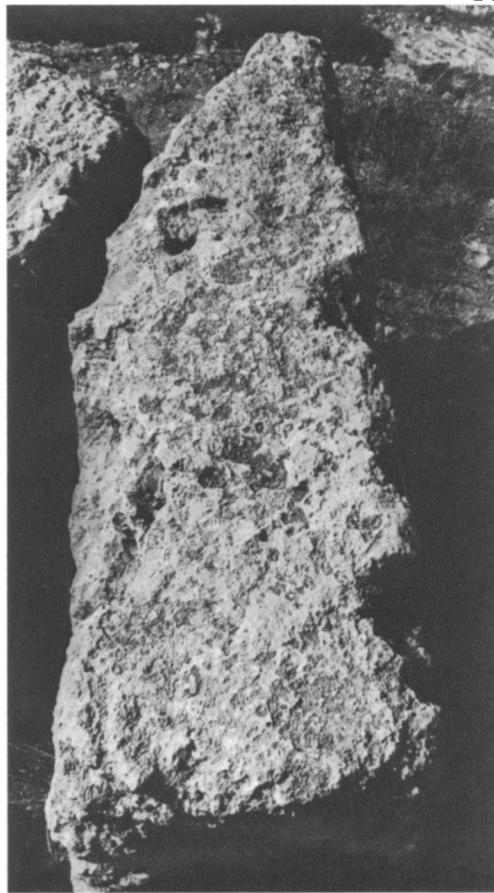
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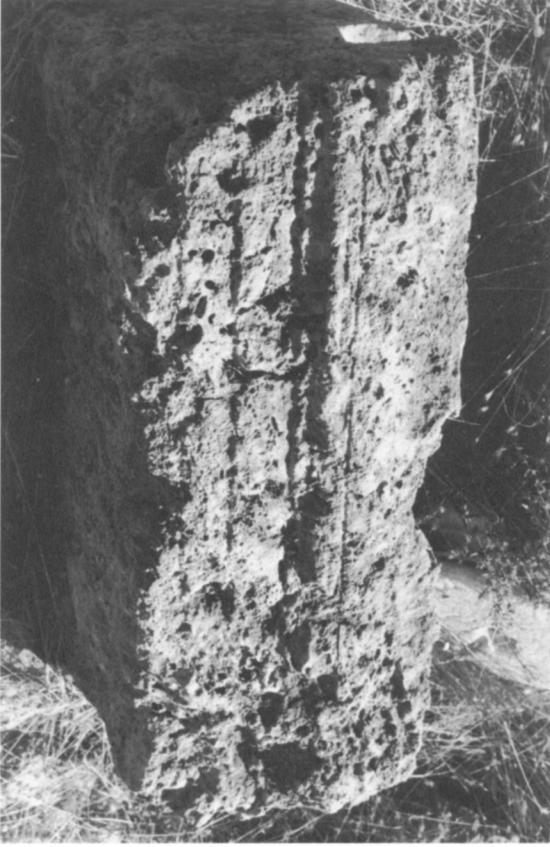
15 and 16



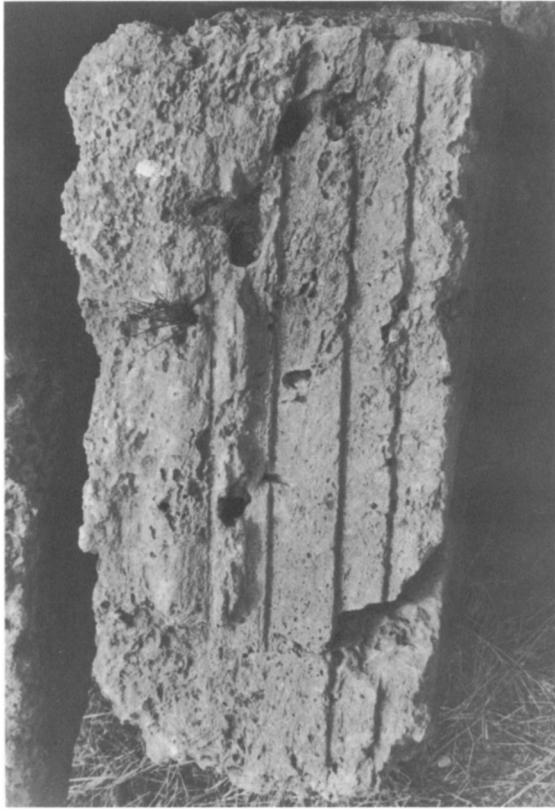
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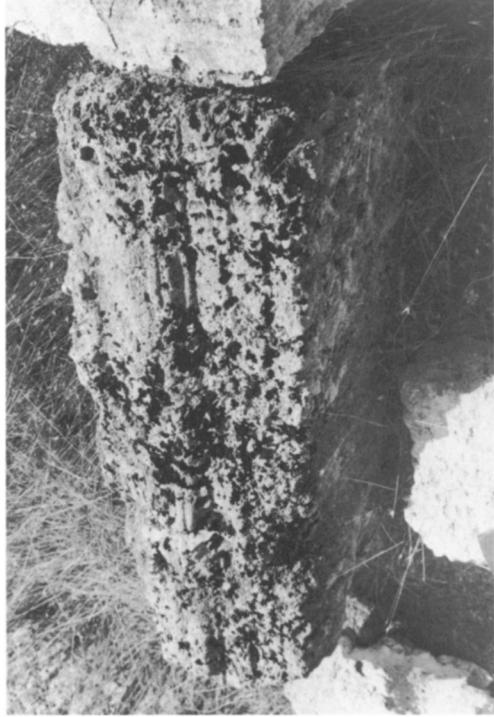
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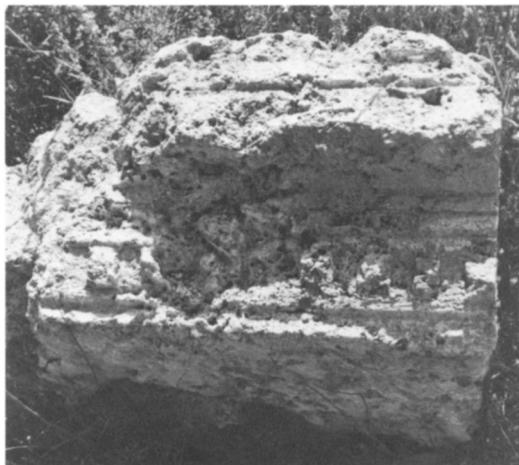
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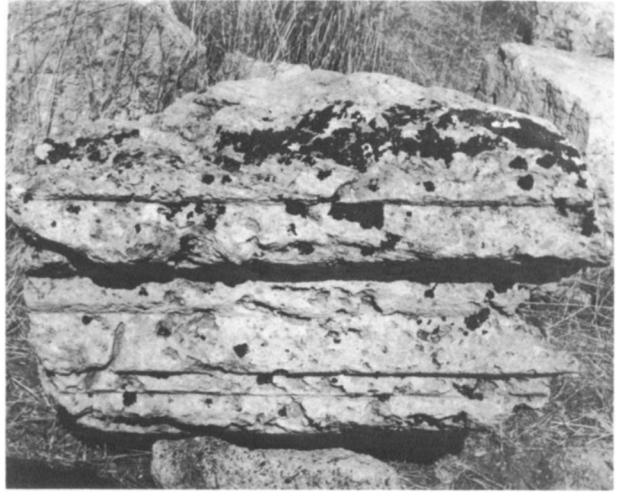
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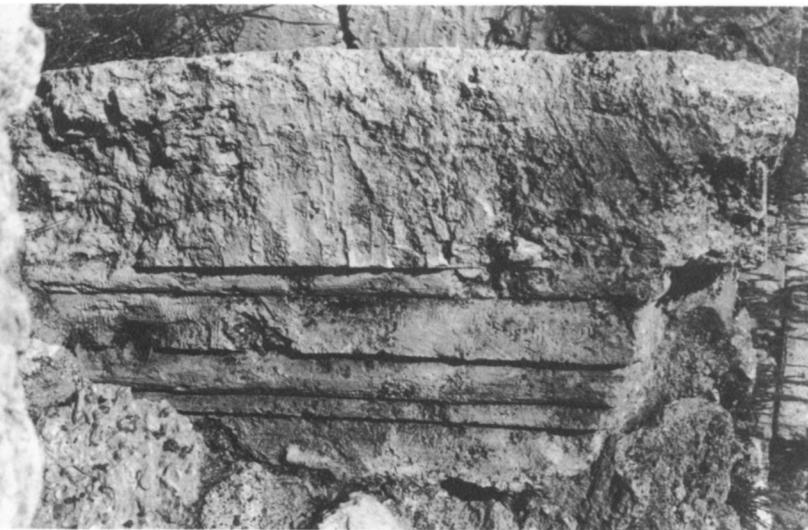
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