

à l'occasion

*Hommage de l'auteur
Tp 155 m / 7*

VOTIVE RELIEFS IN THE ACROPOLIS
MUSEUM

BY
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VOTIVE RELIEFS IN THE ACROPOLIS MUSEUM.

[PLATES VII., VIII.]

THE Terra-cotta reliefs which form the subject of the present article have been for some years one of the minor attractions of the Acropolis Museum, and I am indebted for permission to publish them to the kindness of the Ephor General M. Cavvadias, and of the Ephors, MM. Stais and Castriotis. The latter as superintendent of the Museum most obligingly put at my disposal all the information in his possession and afforded me every facility for photographing the tablets. No single tablet in the collection is perfect and of the 73 fragments¹ which comprise it, the great majority came to light during the systematic excavations of the Acropolis which were carried on from 1885-1890; they were all found at some depth below the surface and as far as could be learnt, to the north, the east and the south-east of the Parthenon. The rest have been in the Museum since 1863; these were all found on or near the surface and it is possible that others were carried away by visitors and are now hidden in private collections. The publication of the Museum fragments may lead to their identification and the completion of some of the tablets whose design cannot at present be determined.

As already stated no complete tablet has been preserved, but a sufficient variety of fragments exists to show that they were of uniform size, clay and technique, about 22 centimetres long by 16 wide and 1 thick, bordered top and bottom by a rim projecting $\frac{1}{2}$ a centimetre beyond the background, from which the relief rises to a height not exceeding $1\frac{1}{2}$ centimetres. They are pierced by three holes, usually one in each of the upper corners and another in the centre of the lower edge. The clay is very hard and fine, of a pale red colour which on fracture shows brighter red streaks; the firing is well done and very few of the fragments have any trace of the warping common in the reliefs from Epizephyrian Locri. The tablets are all covered with a layer of white lime-wash as a basis for the colour used, pale blue for the background, bright red, green (?) black, brown and yellow for the different portions of the relief. The border, the outside edge and, in one case, the back were painted crimson red, so that the general effect must have been brilliant in the extreme; the colouring, however, though vivid, was much more carefully done than is usual in terra cotta work, and we do not find that the green

¹ Reg. Nos. 1318-1391.

border of an aegis is continued on to a red robe or that the red of the chariot wheels has trespassed on to a blue background.

In style the designs are archaic, but it is an archaism due more to conservatism than to want of skill. Those who have studied the cases of terra-cotta figures in the Acropolis Museum or Dr Winter's account of them¹ will remember that they are distinguished by the same fineness of clay, perfection of firing and precision of colouring. Another technical peculiarity which they share with the tablets is the use of lines of pale grey colour to sketch in that portion of the design which is not rendered in relief. The statuettes and the tablets must therefore come from one and the same locality, and the reasons which caused Dr. Winter to describe the statuettes as of local, *i.e.* Athenian, origin derive fresh force from the evidence supplied by the tablets. In subject as in technique the latter are extremely local. All the designs, save three, one of which is too fragmentary for interpretation, refer to various conceptions of Athena as Ergaué, Polias, Archegetis or Promachos, nor is this to be wondered at. It is impossible to separate Athena from her chosen city; the one idea includes the other. In other states she was worshipped as *one* of the divinities; in Athens she was *the* divinity, her reputation and cultus increased in proportion as the reputation and power of the city grew, her nature underwent the same transformation as did the nature of the state; originally she was a goddess of agriculture, the goddess to whom the earliest corn sowing and the fields² were dedicated, but as the leader of an ambitious race, fighting its way to power, she became a goddess of war. The complete transformation of a divinity to suit the character of a particular set of worshippers is not uncommon in Greek mythology, witness the warlike Aphrodite of Sparta, but the development of Athena proceeds on logical lines. The central point of the conception is *mind* or rather intelligence, the practical mind which turns matter to the best account and subdues brute force, therefore not only every art but every craft however humble was under her protection; as Athena Ergané she invented the flute, she helped to build the Argo, she wove wondrous garments for herself and Hera, she taught the Rhodian artists to people the island with statues which seemed to live and breathe; as Archegetis or Polias, by her wise counsel she protected the fortunes of the state and if necessary armed herself in its defence. The conception of Athena as a goddess of wisdom does not come within our province; it is a later one which arose when Athens, no longer paramount in the political counsels of Greece, sought and obtained a wider and less disputed sway in the intellectual world.

We have therefore two distinct sides to her character, the peaceful and the warlike, and the latter assumed undue prominence because the existence of a Greek state depended on its fighting power—therefore the popular idea of Athena Polias was of a combative goddess, though originally her function was both peace and war. Eustathius³ describes the Ilian palladion thus:

¹ *Arch. Anzeiger*, 1893, pp. 140-148.

³ Eustath. on Z 91, p. 627.

² Suidas, *s.v.* Procharisteria.

διοπετῆς μὲν εἶναι, στέμμα τε ἔχειν καὶ ἡλακάτην, ἐν δὲ τῇ κεφαλῇ πῖλον (πόλον) καὶ δόρυ ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ. Apollodorus gives much the same description of it, τῇ μὲν δεξιᾷ δόρυ διηρμένον ἔχον, τῇ δὲ ἐτέρᾳ ἡλακάτην καὶ ἄτρακτον.¹ It is under this form that it appears on late silver coins of Novum Ilion.² Again the Athena Polias of Erythrae,³ an archaic wooden statue ascribed to Endoios, had a distaff in either hand; in the *Iliad*, though Athena mainly appears as an active partizan of the Greeks and therefore in her warlike character, attention is also drawn to her skill in womanly arts⁴ which are again insisted on in the Homeric Hymn⁵ Ἡ δέ τε παρθευικὰς ἀπαλόχροας ἐν μεγάροισιν | ἀγλαὰ ἔργ' ἐδίδαξεν, ἐπὶ φρεσὶ θεῖσα ἐκάστη. Later on the two conceptions were somewhat sharply sundered; the arts of peace were allotted to Athena Ergané who took a lower position and was worshipped only by craftsmen, for Plutarch⁶ in contrasting the worshippers of Athena Ergané who work with their hands, with those of Athena Polias who use their brains quotes from Sophocles:⁷

πᾶς ὁ χειρῶναξ λεῶς
οὐ τὴν Διὸς γοργῶπιον Ἐργάνην
. προστρέπεσθε.

At the period to which our reliefs belong (the end of the sixth century and beginning of the fifth) the difference had not been emphasized and in this indistinctness of thought it seems to me that we should seek the solution of the problem as to whether Athena Ergané had a special temple on the Acropolis or not. I do not think she had. Pausanias states⁸ that the Athenians boasted of having been the first to worship her, and inscriptions to her have been found on the Acropolis, to the north, south and west of the Parthenon, among them a grave inscription⁹ wherein the relatives of one Euanthé state that they have dedicated 'a painted tablet in the precinct of Pallas the laborious' (εἰκόνα μὲν γραπτάν...θήκαμεν ἐργοπόνου Παλλάδος ἐν τεμένει), but there is no reason why this description should not be applied to Athena Polias. Most of the inscriptions to Athena Ergané are set up by the relations of women whose special interest in the Polias was obviously the peplos woven for her, and to whom she might well be ἐργοπόνος, as the robe was begun at the feast of Athena Ergané under the supervision of her priestess and of the Errephoræ; therefore offerings to Ergané might well be placed in the Polias temple and the latter goddess be described as ἐργοπόνος.

The reliefs fall naturally into two main divisions: (A) those which represent Athena, and those (B) which, so far as we can tell, represented some other personage. The latter division which only includes 3 fragments out of a total of 73, is figured under numbers 8, 9, 10.

¹ Apoll. iii. 12, 3.

² *Brit. Mus. Cat. Coins of Troas*, Plate XI.

3-7.

³ Paus. vii. 5, 9.

v. 735; xiv. 178.

⁵ iii. in *Venerem*, lines 14-15.

⁶ *Praec. de rei. ger.* 5.

⁷ *Soph. Frag.* Dindorf 724.

⁸ Paus. i. 24, 3.

⁹ *C. I. A.* iii. 1330.

Division *A*, *Representations of Athena*, contains four clearly marked types :—

- (1) Athena Ergané, a seated figure spinning (Fig. 1 and Plate VII. 1).
- (2) Athena Polias, seated, unarmed in gala array (Fig. 2 and Plate VII. 2).
- (3) Athena Polias, seated armed but not combative (Fig. 3).
- (4) Athena Promachos. (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7 and Plate VIII. 1, 2).



FIG. 1.

Of the two aspects under which the reliefs represent Athena, armed and unarmed, seated and standing, the unarmed seated type is the more attractive and gives rise to several interesting problems. One type of it is shown in Fig. 1 and Plate VII. 1.¹ A young girl dressed in the ordinary house costume, an

¹ Two examples.
 (1) Reg. No. 1327; length 0·19 cent. × 0·16. Traces of black on chair. See Plate.
 (2) 1330; length 0·22 × 0·16. Drapery incised. Traces of red on footstool, kerchief, and rim, and of blue on background. Found 1886 'near

the old wall' in the forecourt of the museum. All the drawings in the text have been skilfully put together by Mr. F. Anderson from my photographs. The left hand in Fig. 1 is restored from a vase-painting.

Ionic chiton of fine material, her hair concealed by a handkerchief, seated, in a somewhat inelegant attitude on a long bench, her feet resting on a foot-stool. Two examples exist, the less perfect of which is represented on Plate VII. as it supplies the key to the action; the peculiar turn of the right hand and the spindle seen below it show that the girl is spinning; the left hand is missing but the raised forearm is in the position required for holding a distaff (cf. Steph. *C.R.* 1863. Plate II. 17). Given the locality of the find, and the special circumstances which connect Athena Ergané with spinning and especially with the manufacture of the peplos, there seems little doubt that the tablet represents her in the likeness of one of the *ἐργαστήριαι*, a young girl spinning in the women's chamber and therefore represented in indoor costume and an easy attitude which form a piquant contrast to the prim position and elaborate costume shown in the second type (Fig. 2). The strong resemblance to the 'Peitho' of the Parthenon frieze is of course evident, but the attribute of the spindle seems to allow no room for doubt as to the person depicted. The dedication may have been made either by a young girl or perhaps it was the gift of her relations who, like Euanthé's friends, offered an *εἰκόνα γραπτῶν* in memory of her, not of course a portrait as these tablets were made by the dozen.

An interesting point in connexion with this figure is the possible light it throws on the subject of the 'catagusa'¹ statue. It is now generally admitted that *κατάγειν* means 'to draw out the thread,' and Förster (*Phil. Supp. Bd.* IV. pp. 720, 21) has already made the suggestion that the 'catagusa' might prove to be a representation of Athena Ergané; therefore in our relief we may have an indication of the main lines of the subject. The 'catagusa' was of course a statue in the round, but its novelty is as likely to have consisted in the adaptation of the 'motif' of a relief as in an original conception.

Fig. 2 gives another representation of Athena² in a dignified somewhat hieratic pose, corresponding to her elaborate gala costume. In her right hand she holds a bowl, the left is tightly clasped over some object which was not indicated in relief and has therefore disappeared. The treatment of the face (Plate VII. 2) shows less of archaism than the preceding and there is a dignity and nobility about the figure which, to compare the infinitely small with the infinitely great, recalls the Parthenon frieze and is shared by one other head in this collection (Fig. 3). There is no direct evidence to prove that this figure is an Athena at all, still less an Athena Polias, but the very absence of any distinctive attribute is in favour of the attribution, and the obvious connexion between Figs. 1 and 2 helps to strengthen it. An Athena Polias seated in much the same attitude and costume and holding a dish in her outstretched right hand is shown on an Etrurian hydria where the goddess is

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxiv. 'Praxiteles fecit item catagusam.' For *κατάγειν* in this sense see Plat. *Soph.* p. 226^b, Pollux, vii. 29, &c. See also Förster, *loc. cit.* p. 719.

² Two examples :

Reg. No. 1338 (Pl. ix. 2). Upper part of relief 0·15 × 0·16. Stephané red, background blue. Hair and chiton incised. Traces of burning.

Reg. No. 1337; 0·14 × 0·15. Slight traces of blue on background and of red on chair.

identified by her helmet, spear and snake.¹ Further, an inscription² found to the west of the Parthenon recounts how the Boulé was approached by the fathers of the maidens who span the wool for the peplos of Athena Polias, with the request that as they had fulfilled all their duties creditably and accompanied the procession, they might now offer a silver phialé, value 100 drachmas, to the goddess as a mark of piety to her and goodwill to the Demos. This inscription is assigned by MM. Köhler and Foucart to 98-97 B.C.,



FIG. 2.

but the custom of the dedication of a silver dish by the *ἐργαστῖναι* can hardly have been instituted for the first time at that date, and under like circumstances this tablet would be an especially appropriate offering.

Only three small fragments³ exist of a tablet which shows the goddess

¹ Gerh. *A.V.* iv. 242, 1. This vase has disappeared and has apparently not been seen since the publication by Gerhard. It is not in Berlin.

² *C.I.A.* 477. Completed *B.C.H.* vol. xiii. pp. 170, 1, No. 6.

³ Reg. No. 1321; 0.10 x 0.9. Background blue, hair red.

No. 1318; 0.4 x 0.2.

No. 1355; 0.6 long x 0.2.

accoutred with helmet, aegis, and gorgoneion (Fig. 3), but her elaborately-dressed hair and fine Ionic tunic prove that she is the victorious Polias enjoying the blessings of peace for which she fought. The scale on which the helmet and head are given show that the figure was a seated one, and we may restore the design by placing a spear in one hand and an owl either in the field or in the left hand (cf. Gerh. *Trinkschalen u. Gefässe*, Pl. XIII., 1.)

The most popular representation of the goddess was as Athena Promachos in her war chariot (Figs. 4, 5, 6, Plate VIII., 1, 2). The design is common on black figured vases, but its peculiarity here lies in the absence of the horses, which are left to the imagination, though the goddess' right hand is outstretched to hold the reins, and rests on the front rail. Two variations of the design exist; in one, the goddess with a spear in her right hand is mounting the chariot,¹ in the other, she has already mounted and holds a shield or a



FIG. 3.

spear on her left arm.² The face, probably for religious reasons, is more emphatically archaic than in any of the reliefs already discussed, with a thick nose, prominent eyes and chin. One fragment (Fig. 5) shows heavy features and coarsely incised locks of hair, and further differs from the others in having no owl in the field.³ The owl was adopted as Athena's crest probably because

¹ Fifteen large fragments, of which the most important are: Reg. No. 1333. Plate viii., Fig. 1. 0·22 × 0·16.

Background blue, chariot and robe red, aegis black border.

Casquo of helmet black, crest red, lips red.

Owl yellow-brown, details in black.

Reg. No. 1335; 0·22 × 0·16.

Reg. No. 1341, showing left side of tablet;

0·18 × 0·8.

Reg. No. 1322; zigzag pattern in grey lines on the aegis.

² Two specimens:

Reg. No. 1334. Plate viii. 2. 0·15 × 0·16.

Reg. 1340. Fig. 4. 0·10 × 0·9.

³ Reg. No. 1336; 0·12 × 0·14.

Colouring as in ². Relief 1½ cent. high.

it abounded on the Acropolis, for otherwise it was a bird of evil omen,¹ but under her protection it flourished so much that *γλαῦκα εἰς Ἀθήνας* was the Greek equivalent of 'taking coals to Newcastle.'² Attention may be drawn to the care with which the bird is represented; the feathers are first incised in the clay, and then carefully picked out in black; in fact, one of the most striking points about these little reliefs is the care expended on details, the most perfect specimen being shown in Fig 6, where the scales of the aegis are outlined in black and coloured alternately red and blue, the inside of the aegis green, the robe red and the chariot rail black.



FIG. 4.

The main interest of the Promachos design centres in Athena's accoutrements, helmet, aegis, and shield. The helmet is of the high-crowned Attic type, the shield also Attic, the aegis cloak-like in form and edged with a double wavy line which does duty for a snake border, (the elaborate scale aegis [Fig. 6] has a nearly straight edge), the gorgoneion does not appear on it at all, though the seated Athena (Fig. 3) has one. The aegis in this

¹ *Ael. de Nat. Anim.* x. 37.

² Schol. ad Arist. *Equites*, 1102.

form is that worn in all archaic representations of her, and much more closely resembles the Homeric conception of it than the scale gorget of later

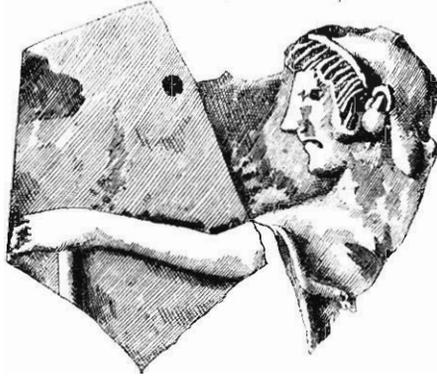


FIG. 5.

art. Curiously enough, the tradition as to the aegis is extremely confused and uncertain. Homer states that she received it from her father Zeus, ac-

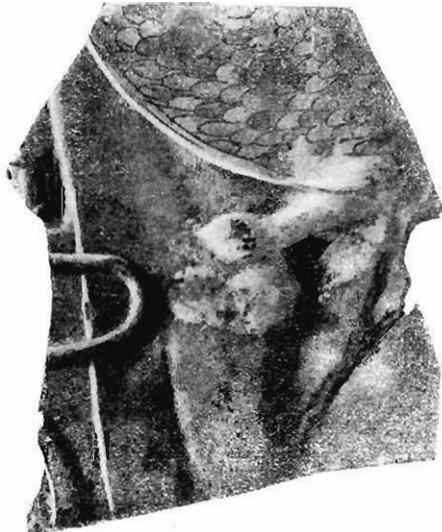


FIG. 6.

ording to Euripides¹ it was the skin of Gorgo, and according to a still later tradition² it was the skin of the Titan, Pallas, whom she slew. Probably,³

¹ *Ion* 1000, and a gem in the Brit. Mus.:
Murray, *Handbook of Arch.* Pl. XII. 9.

² *Apoll.* i. 6, 2.

³ For a discussion of this question see Reichel,
Homerische Waffen, pp. 65-72.

it and the lion skin of Heracles were the sole survivals of a time when the only thing available for protective armour was a skin, worn as a cloak in time of peace, and brought round over the left arm in battle *ἐν προβολῇ*.¹ An unsuccessful attempt to represent the tufts of hair on the skin may be the basis of the scales, for the fleece on an early Rhodian pinax² is rendered by a series of triangular lines which are not unlike rough scales, but the main



FIG. 7.

reason for them arises from the combination of the aegis and the gorgoneion. This took place when the general acceptance of the Argive version of the Medusa story (according to which Perseus was inspired by Athena to slay the Gorgon), led to the Gorgon's head becoming as essential an attribute of the goddess as was the aegis. At a very early stage we find that the fringes of

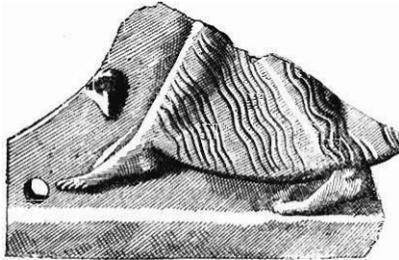


FIG. 8.

the aegis had developed into writhing serpents, either mechanically, or to increase its terrifying power; but when the gorgoneion was transferred to it from the shield where Athena first placed it,³ this power centred in it and the Medusa legend with its snakes dominated the conception. The archaic

¹ Gerh. *A. V.* ii. 127.

² B.M. First Vase Room, Case A, No. A 750.

³ Apoll. ii. 4, 3, 7.

Ionian (*i.e.*, Attic) Gorgon type is that shown in Fig. 7, broad, full, and fleshy, with little or no trace of snakes,¹ the lines of the mouth are horizontal but the eye teeth do not show and few of the steps have been taken by which a simple mask grew into the snake-wreathed horror of later times.

It will thus be seen that the design is consistently archaic in all its details: where the gorgoneion appears at all it is on the shield, and that only in 2 fragments out of 40, while the shield on Plate VIII. has none at all. It therefore belongs to the archaic Athena type reconstructed by Studniczka,² and assigned by him to the 6th century.

I have no suggestion to make for the restoration or interpretation of the fragments shown in Fig. 8.³

The draped male figure, standing by a bench⁴ of which a portion is shown in Fig. 9 can be completed by the help of Fig. 9A, a tablet seen by

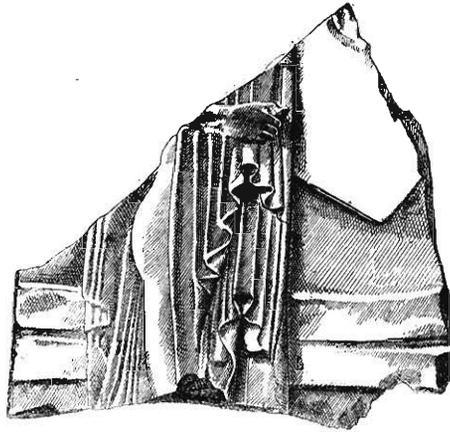


FIG. 9.

Stackelberg and published in his *Graber der Hellenen* (Plate LVI. 4). Both he and Overbeck (*Kunstmythologie* III. p. 68) interpret the figure as Apollo, and there is a striking resemblance in the treatment of the hair to the colossal Apollo head of the West Pediment at Olympia, but as the same treatment is shown by a head of Hades in two terra-cotta reliefs from Locri, now in the British Museum, the evidence in favour of this identification is not conclusive. The hind, in Fig. 9A, is an unusual attribute for Apollo, but I cannot vouch for this detail as I have not succeeded in tracing the tablet.

¹ Two examples :
Reg. No. 1367; 0.10 × 0.7. Shield black, vim
red. Found 1886.

Reg. No. 1372; 0.8 × 0.7. Gorgon's eyes out-
lined in black.

² Studniczka, *Ath. Mitt.* xi. 185.

³ No. 1391.

Feet of draped figure moving to left; 0.11 × 0.7.

⁴ No. 1389.

Draped figure standing against a bench ;
0.10 × 0.11. Pink in folds of drapery.

The Heracles relief¹ (Fig. 10) has already been published and discussed by Dr. Reisch, and is only included here to complete the series. I differ,



FIG. 9A.

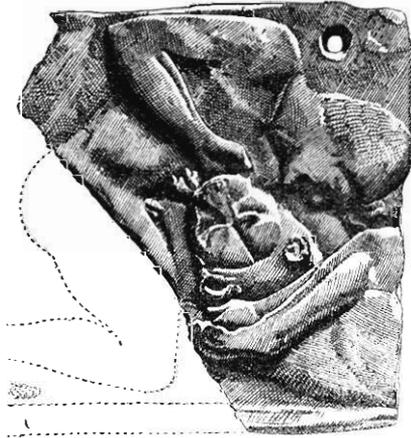


FIG. 10.

however, from him in regarding it as an offering to Heracles, and think that like the other tablets, it was offered to Athena. Ample evidence of the

¹ Reg. No. 1323; 0.12 x 0.9.

Hair incised. Found in 1886. παρά τείχου

H.S.—VOL. XVII,

τῆς Ἀκροπόλεως. Reisch, *Ath. Myth.* 1887.

custom of dedicating to one divinity the image of another is afforded by the temple favissae.

In describing these tablets I have said little about their artistic charm; though photography does not reveal it, they have all the graceful precision of line and somewhat prim beauty, which finds its highest expression in the sculptures of the Treasury of the Athenians at Delphi, and I, therefore, assign them on stylistic grounds, to the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century, a conclusion which is strengthened by Dr. Reisch's attribution of the Heracles-cum-lion schema to the end of the 6th century, and by the consistently archaic treatment of Athena's panoply in Fig. 4. They certainly afford interesting evidence of the high artistic level of the age, for the potter was a craftsman who followed, but did not guide, the public taste, and they also serve to illustrate the varied aspects under which the Athenians regarded her to whom they prayed

Παλλάς Τριτογένει', ἄνασσ' Ἀθηνᾶ,
 ὄρθου τήνδε πόλιν τε καὶ πολίτας
 ἄτερ ἀλγέων καὶ στάσεων
 καὶ θανάτων ἀώρων σύ τε καὶ πατήρ.

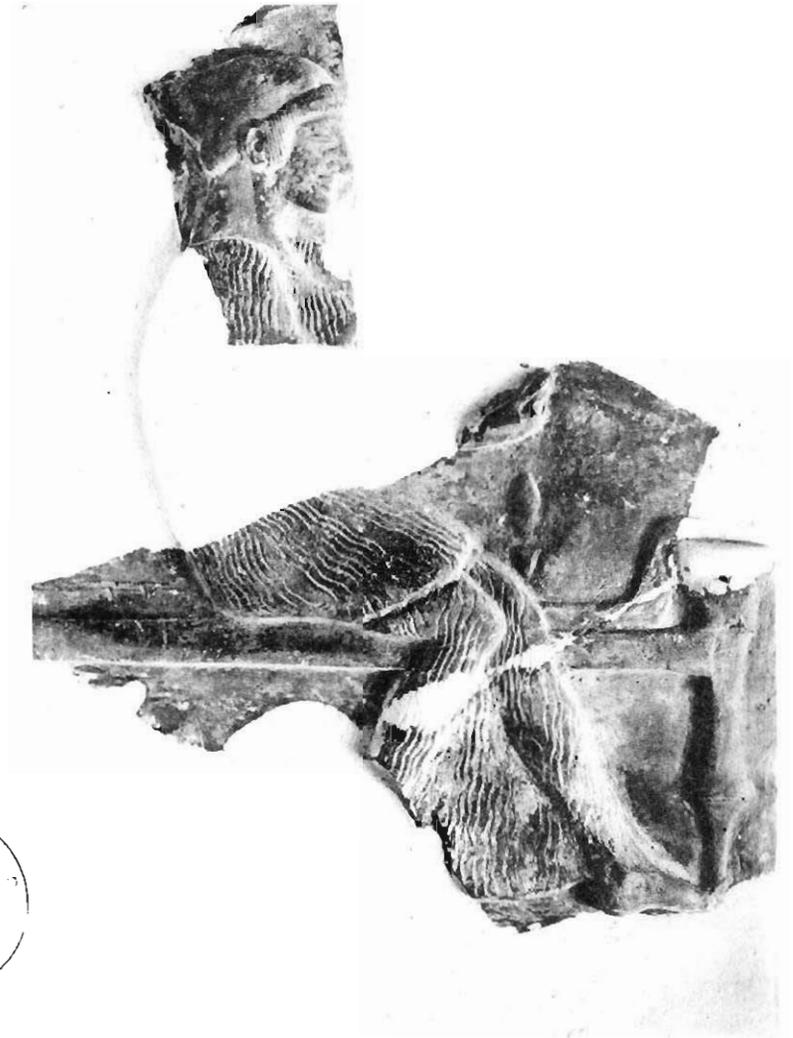
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ATHENIAN VOTIVE RELIEFS.



2



1



ATHENIAN VOTIVE RELIEFS.



2



1



