THEMISTOKLES' SANCTUARY OF ARTEMIS ARISTOBOULE

(Plates 16-21, Plans 1-2)

The identification of ruins discovered in an excavation with a definite building known to us from ancient literary sources is not always possible. For this reason the discovery in June and July 1958 of a small temple just west of Theseion Square in Athens is particularly gratifying for it can be identified with virtual certainty as the temple of Artemis Aristoboule founded by Themistokles near his house in the deme of Melite¹.

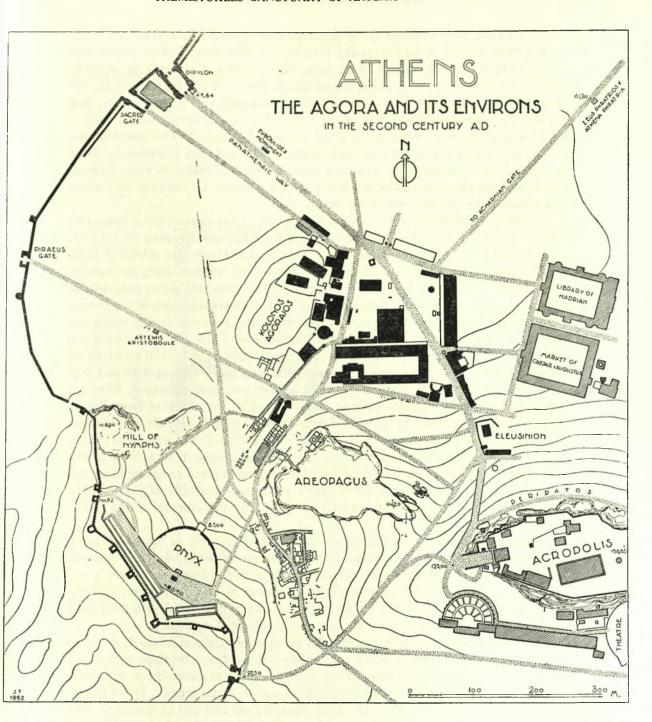
THE EXCAVATION

(Plates 16 - 19, Plans 1 - 2)

At the junction of Neleus and Herakleidai Streets, just west of Theseion Square and not far from the ancient Agora, workmen engaged in digging foundations for the house of Panayoti Deka (Ντέκα) came upon some ancient blocks which subsequent archaeological investigation showed to belong to one side of a small building. The building lay at a depth of only about a meter below the pavement of Herakleidai Street, and it is fortunate that the previous house on the site, which belonged to the same owner, had not completely destroyed it 2.

1. This article should have been written in its entirety by John Threpsiades, for it deals with one of the most interesting of the many chance discoveries made during the period when he was Ephor of Athens. It was a discovery in which he took a lively interest and one which he would surely have written up in full had he not been prevented by the pressure of day to day work. After his untimely death in September 1962, his widow found among his papers a large folder containing notes, plans and photographs of the excavation and also two draft manuscripts, one of three the other of four pages describing the remains that had been found. These manuscripts form the basis of the descriptive part of the present article, but as they were not in a finished state I have felt free to re-arrange the material and to add to it. I was myself in Athens at the time of the excavation and visited the site almost daily. With Mr. Threpsiades' permission I also kept a few random notes, took some photographs and worked on the inscription. I therefore have some first-hand acquaintance with the excavation. In preparing this article for publication I have discussed many points with John Travlos and Homer Thompson who also followed the excavation. Mr. Travlos drew a detailed plan of the remains in 1958 and has also contributed a general plan of the area showing the site in relation to other landmarks in western Athens. Mr. Threpsiades did not live to share the joy and satisfaction that we experienced in the summer of 1963 when we studied the pottery that has been gathered during the excavation and found among it the fragments of votive krateriskoi (Nos. 4 - 10 below). Prior to this discovery, although we believed that we had found Themistokles' temple of Artemis Aristoboule we could not actually prove that the sanctuary was earlier than the fourth century B.C. The krateriskoi gave us incontrovertible evidence that Artemis was worshipped on the spot in the time of Themistokles. Is there perhaps a lesson here for those who pretend that the Themistokles decree from Troezen and the portrait from Ostia are creations of the fourth century?

2. At the close of the archaeological investigation work was allowed to proceed on the new building, and the remains of the temple were buried beneath it and are no longer visible. They lie under the pavement of the stoa facing Herakleidai Street. The house is number 1 on that street.



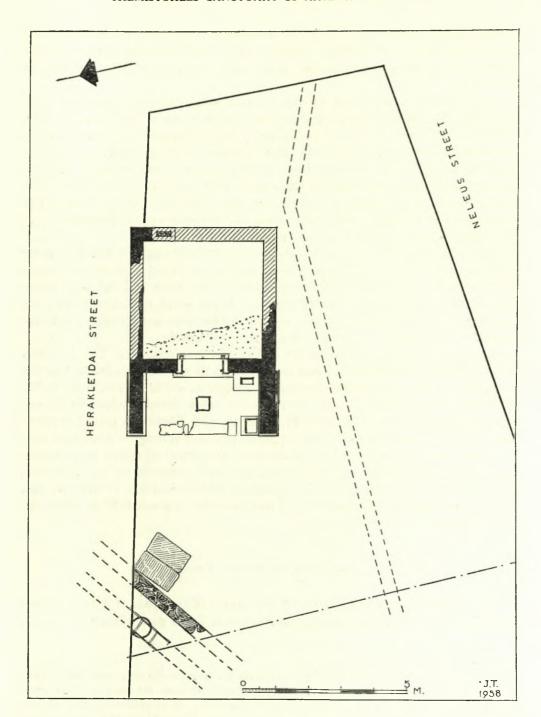
Plan 1. Athens showing the location of the Sanctuary of Artemis Aristoboule

The building, as can be seen in the accompanying plan by John Travlos (Plan 2), is a small temple. It faces west and consists of a cella about 3.60 m. square and an open porch between antae 1.85 m. deep. At a distance of about three meters in front of the temple are two poros blocks which served as the foundation for the altar, and the altar itself (No. 3 below), sadly damaged, was lying close by. Just beyond the altar foundation part of the temenos wall was found, and outside it an ancient street with a terracotta drain running beneath it. The temenos wall is built in a rough polygonal style with stacked work and may therefore be dated in the fifth or fourth century B.C. The drain is late Hellenistic or early Roman, and a large amphora of this period was put in to support the temenos wall which was undercut by the builders of the drain.

The best preserved part of the temple is the porch. Its southern anta is formed by a single large limestone block below which is the euthynteria resting on bedrock. The threshold was also found in situ. It is a large block of Hymettian marble (1.81 m. x 0.59 m, x, 0.21 m,) with cuttings for a two-leaved wooden door, for wooden sheathing for the jambs, and for an outer grill. The threshold shows considerable wear. The floor of the porch is of hard packed earth, a continuation of the ground level outside the temple. There were no columns, and no steps. In the porch two bases with cuttings to receive stelai were found in situ. The one in the southeast corner, to the right of the door, has a cutting in its top 0.37 m. x 0.19 m. x 0.07 m. deep. The other, beside the end of the southern anta, has a cutting 0.44 m. x 0.36 m. x 0.045 m. deep. The walls of the cella are not very well preserved. They are about 0.45 m. thick and are built in places of rubble, in places of larger blocks some of which are re-used; we note, for example, a stele base built into the east wall near the northeast corner which has the stub of the stele still leaded into place. Stucco is preserved on the inner faces of the walls in some places. Over a part of the floor of the cella near the door a cobble packing of small stones set in mortar is preserved, the underpinning for a mosaic pavement, probably of pebbles. The southeast part of the cella was entirely destroyed by the cesspool of the earlier modern house.

The area in which the temple stands was occupied as early as the eighth or seventh century B.C. if we may judge from the Geometric and Orientalizing sherds found in the earth immediately overlying bedrock in the few spots where it was tested. A scattering of Protogeometric sherds found in later layers may indicate even earlier occupation. There are no walls that can be associated with these early periods, however, nor are there any votives to suggest a sanctuary.

The earliest evidence for a sanctuary is given by a group of black-figured krateriskoi, obviously votive in character, which may be dated by their style in the period just after the Persian Wars. Fragments belonging to some fifteen or twenty of these vases were found at various points in and near the temple, but chiefly in front of it, near the altar. They are of an unusual form and will be described more fully in the catalogue below. For present purposes it is sufficient to note that vases of this type have been found in considerable numbers in the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron, though they are rare elsewhere, and that the excavator of Brauron,



Plan 2. The Sanctuary of Artemis Aristoboule

the late John Papadimitriou, recognized in them a type of sacred vessel used especially in the worship of Artemis³. These vases thus give us positive evidence that Artemis was worshipped on this spot in the years immediately following the Persian Wars.

To this earliest sanctuary of Artemis we may assign the large limestone block that forms the southern anta together with its euthynteria - foundation course. Fifth century sherds were found in the earth beside this part of the foundation, and the style and workmanship of the blocks themselves are appropriate to the period. The top of the big limestone block is irregular and it has obviously been damaged. Furthermore, beddings for three small stelai were noted in its top. This may be explained by supposing that the original temple was destroyed and lay in ruins for a time but that worship continued and votives were set up on top of this large block which, though damaged, remained in position.

The temple was rebuilt in the fourth century, probably around 330 B.C. as we shall see when we discuss the inscriptions, and to this period most of the remains belong, particularly the marble threshold, the mosaic floor and the walls where constructed of large blocks. The big limestone block, which had survived in a damaged state from the earlier period, was left in place but was trimmed down and squared off to receive the upright anta of the new temple.

The temple remained in use to the end of Classical Antiquity. This is clearly shown by a small bothros lined and covered with tiles which was found near the center of the porch. Its interior dimensions are 0.36 m. x 0.33 m. x 0.35 m. It was filled with charred material and contained two whole lamps (below Nos.11 and 12) and part of a third of the early third century after Christ 4. Some fallen stucco found on the floor of the cella and the porch probably belongs to this period also.

At some time later still the front of the porch was closed off with a rough rubble wall. A doorway was left near the center, and, as a threshold for this new door, the incribed votive pillar of the fourth century B.C. (below No. 1) was used face up. The ground level indicated by this new threshold is about 0.30 m. above the original ground level of the porch.

CATALOGUE OF MOVABLE FINDS

The movable finds were taken to the store rooms of the Ephor of Athens, located in the Library of Hadrian, and inventoried there. Three stone objects, Nos. 1 - 3,

^{3.} Ergon, 1961, p. 36 and fig. 41.

^{4.} A similar pit lined with tiles was found during the first season of the Agora excavations (1931) in front of the second room from the south of the Hellenistic Metroon, the room now identified as the sanctuary proper in this later structure. The pit was close to the large base that probably supported the altar in front of the temple. Like our pit it contained lamps of the second and third centuries after Christ, some of which have been published or mentioned in *Hesperia II* (1933), pp. 204-206, where they are described as coming from «a tile covered grave in Section E». See also J. Perlzweig, *The Athenian Agora*, VII, *Lamps of the Roman Period*, Nos. 550, 551, 552, 678, 1489, and 1545.

were deposited in the Agora Excavations just inside the gate on Theseion Square; these have received Agora inventory numbers.

1. An inscribed votive pillar of Hymettian marble with cavetto capital (Pl. 19, a - c; 20a).

Agora Inventory No. I 6969.

Preserved Height 1.425 m. Width of capital 0.37 m. Thickness of capital 0.25 m. Width of shaft, above, 0.275 m., below 0.33 m.

Height of letters: lines 1 - 4, 0.02 m.; line 5, 0,015 m., lines 6 - 27, 0.006 m.

Broken at the bottom but otherwise complete except for minor chips. The back is rough picked. The inscribed face was worn smooth when the pillar was re-used face up as a threshold block, and some of the letters have vanished completely, others are only partly or faintly preserved. Most of the readings have been made from latex squeezes. I have not been able to obtain satisfactory photographs.

The pillar was designed to support a votive offering, and the square dowel hole used to fix it in place is preserved near the center of the top. The pillar contains two inscriptions, one (lines 1-5) on the capital in large letters recording a dedication to Artemis by Neoptolemos, son of Antikles, of Melite when Chairylle was priestess, the other (lines 6-27) on the shaft in small letters recording a decree of the people of Melite in honor of Neoptolemos.

About 330 B.C.

Lines 7 - 26, non-stoichedon, 30 - 35

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Νεοπτόλεμος
     ['Α] ντικλέ [ο υ] ς
                    \mu \iota
     Έπὶ Χαιρύλλης ἱερείας
         θ
     ['Η] γήσιππος 'Ηγησίου εἶπεν' δεδόχθαι το [ῖς]
     [δη]μότ[α]ις: ἐπειδὴ Νεο[π]τό[λ]εμος 'Αντικλ[έ]
     [ο]υς Μελιτεύς [λέγων κα]ὶ ποῶν ἀγαθὸ[ν δ]
     [τι δ | ύναται τὸν τε δῆμον τὸν 'Αθηναί [ων ]
     [καί] τούς δημότας καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐπιμελ[ού]
     [μενος ἀπά]ντων [καὶ ν]ῦν τὰ τῆς ['Α]οτέμ[ι]
     [ δος -----] και [..]
     [-----]
     [----]
15
     [-----]
     [ - - - - - ἐστὶ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸ]ς περὶ το[ὺς ᾿Αθ]
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[ηναίους καὶ τον δῆμο]ν τον Μελιτέω[ν· ἀγαθεῖ]
[τύχει δεδόχθαι τοῖς δημόταις ἐπαινέσαι]
20 [Νεοπτόλεμον 'Αντικλέους] Μελιτέα [καὶ στε]
[φανῶσαι χρυσῶι στεφάνωι ἀ]ρετῆς ἔνεκα κ[αὶ]
[εὐνοίας τῆς πρὸς τὸν δῆμ]ον τὸν 'Αθηνα[ί]
[ων καὶ τοὺς δημότας. ἀ]ναγράψαι δὲ τόδ[ε]
[τὸ ψήφισμα] τὸ[ν δήμαρ]χον ἐν στήλει λιθ
25 [ίνει καὶ στῆσαι ἐν τ]ῶι ἰερῶι τῆς 'Αρτέμ
[ιδος ὅπως ἄν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι] φιλοτιμῶνται πρ
[ὸς τοὺς δημότας]. ναcat

Lines 1 - 3. Neoptolemos, son of Antikles, of Melite, a contemporary of Demosthenes, was a very wealthy Athenian known for his generous donations to many public works. His activity falls mainly in the thirties and twenties of the fourth century B.C. and our inscription too should belong to this period, though I see no way of fixing its date more precisely 5.

Line 5. This line has been erased and the existing inscription with the name of the priestess Chairylla has been added in letters about 0.015 m. high. Traces of an earlier inscription in letters about 0.02 m. high, i.e. similar to those of lines 1-4, may be seen at the left, $\mathring{e}\pi i$, and towards the right [---i] error [---i] error [---i] the last letters are closely spaced, and run over to the very edge of the stone. The first preserved letter here occupies the position of the second iota of the later i error [----i] the name of the priestess originally inscribed was, therefore, a long one, but I see no sure trace of any letters belonging to it.

Line 7. Hegesippos, son of Hegesias must be a demesman of Melite since he appears here as the orator of a decree of that deme. He is therefore not to be confused with the more famous man of the same name from Sounion. Hegesias of Melite who was diaitetes in 325 /4 B.C. was probably his father. (I.G., II², 1926 and 2383). Hegesippos of Melite who was a dockyard superintendent in 366 /5 B.C. may have been his grandfather (I.G., II², 1622 line 506).

Lines 11 - 16. What Neoptolemos actually did to deserve the honors accorded to him by his fellow demesmen was recorded in these lines but the stone is unfortunately heavily worn at this point and little can be made out. In line 11, where the letters though very faint are all reasonably sure, we read that he looked after the needs of the cult 6. Artemis is mentioned in the next line, and it was evidently her

^{5.} Literary and epigraphical references can be found in I. Kirchner, *Prosopographia attica*, no. 10, 652. See also *R.E.*, s.v. Neoptolemos, 2. Add *Hesperia* XXVIII (1959), p. 224, lines 216 - 217 and commentary p. 232. Cf. also *B.S.A.*, L (1955) p.35.

^{6.} The legà will be the sacred chores pertaining to the cult. They are defined thus by Hiller von Gärtringen in a note to Dittenberger, Syll.³ 1050: «Non templa indicantur, sed omnia quae ad cultum dei spectant sacra caerimoniaeque hac appellatione comprehenduntur».

sanctuary that benefitted from Neoptolemos' bounty. This of course is the very sanctuary in which our pillar was found, for the pillar carried a dedication to Artemis (line 4) and stood in her sanctuary (line 25). It is a reasonable guess that Neoptolemos was wholly or largely responsible for the fourth century reconstruction of the temple described above.

2. Stub of Votive Pillar. Pentelic marble. (Pl. 19a - c, 20a). Agora Inventory No. A 3372.

Preserved height 0.62 m. Width 0.335 m. Thickness 0.285 m. The lower part of a votive pillar similar to the last item.

3. Poros Altar (Pl. 20a).

Agora Inventory No. A 3373.

Height 0.56 m. Width 0.73 m. Thickness 0.50 m.

Some of the top surface is preserved, but the bolsters at either end are missing.

4-10. Fragments of Votive Krateriskoi (Pl. 21a).

Fragments of votive krateriskoi were found in seven of the twenty small lots of pottery gathered during the excavation of the sanctuary. A few came from in or near the temple, but the majority were found in the area of the altar. About 15 or 20 vases are represented by the fragments. A selection of typical pieces, including all the best ones, is published here.

The vases are small bowls. The handles, which are of various shapes, are attached to the wall of the vase throughout their length. No fragment of a foot was found. Most of the vases are decorated. Three have figures of dancing women in a late black-figure style without incision. The rim and handles are usually painted black, and there are black bands on the interior. Wavy white lines occur on two of the rims. Five fragments of unglazed vases of the same shape were also found.

Vases of this type are not common. Most of those known have been found quite recently in the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron in Attica where, as already noted, they have been recognized as ritual vases peculiar to the cult of Artemis. One of these vases is illustrated in Ergon 1961, p. 36, fig. 41. It is published, along with another similar vase, by Mrs. Lilly G. Kahil in Antike Kunst Beiheft I (1963) No. 25 and 26. There are fragments of literally hundreds of other similar vases from Brauron which are to be published by Mrs. Kahil. All belong to the late black-figure period. Two vases of this type were found in a cave near Eleusis and have been published by John Travlos in Deltion 16 (1960): Chronika, p. 55, note 20, and plate 43a. There are also two fragments from the Athenian Agora (P 128 and P 14550, unpublished). These were found beneath the Stoa of Zeus, one of them in a layer that can be associated with the Persian destruction of 480 B.C., the other nearby. Mrs. Kahil kindly informs me that vases of this type are represented among the pottery from the sanctuary of Artemis Mounichia in Piraeus, now stored in the National Museum in Athens.

5

4. Black-figured krateriskos.

Inv. 933. Preserved height 0.055 m. Estimated diameter, 0.13 m.

Six joining fragments preserve part of the upper body. Attached handle, broken except for lowest tip. Plain lip with glazed band inside and out. Another glazed band well down on the inside. No trace of foot.

Two dancing women wearing billowing dresses. The black silhouette is preserved. Details were rendered in white which has disappeared except for traces. A little white remains on the heads. Arms and feet were in white on the clay ground, and traces may be seen of this. The women hold wreaths formed by dots.

5. Black-figured krateriskos.

Inv. 934. Preserved height 0.05 m.

Three joining fragments from the upper body. A woman advancing to right and looking back. She holds a sort of staff in one hand, probably intended to represent a torch. White for arms and face. Rim thickened on outside. Band of glaze inside rim and another lower down.

6. Black-figured krateriskos.

Inv. 935. Preserved height 0.057 m. Estimated diameter 0.11 m.

Four joining fragments from the upper body. The fragment with the handle actually joins the rest over a small area but was left unattached in the photograph to show the shape of the handle more clearly.

Rim thickened on outside, glazed band inside rim and another lower down. Handle in the form of a double loop, attached throughout, and glazed.

A woman holding a sort of staff (torch) in either hand advances to right. The design is very faint. Traces of added white.

7. Krateriskos fragment.

Inv. 936. Preserved height 0.03 m.

A single fragment preserves part of handle and rim. Handle attached throughout. It is glazed and consists of two verticals joined at the top by a horizontal. Plain rim with narrow band of glaze outside and a broader one inside.

8. Krateriskos fragment.

Inv. 937. Preserved height 0.028 m.

Fragment of rim. Black band at top of exterior decorated with zig-zag white line. Another black band at top of interior. Upper surface of rim reserved.

9. Krateriskos fragment.

Inv. 938. Preserved height 0.018 m.

A rim fragment similar to the last except that the zig-zag line is less regular.

10. Krateriskos fragment.

Inv. 939. Preserved height 0.04 m.

Fragment preserving handle and part of rim and body. Handle, attached throughout, consists of two unconnected verticals of different lengths. No glaze or other decoration.

Four other fragments of unglazed krateriskoi were found.

11. Lamp. (Pl. 21b).

Inv. 911. Width 0.067 m.

From the bothros in the porch. The discus has a rosette with three overlapping tiers of petals. There is a signature on the reverse: Λουκίου. Buff clay.

12. Lamp. (Pl. 21b).

Inv. 912. Width 0.068 m.

From the bothros in the porch. The discus has a rosette with curving petals. Ovules on the rim. Signature on the reverse: Λέοντος. Pinkish buff clay.

IDENTIFICATION

The excavations have revealed a small temple with its altar and part of its temenos wall which was originally founded just after the Persian Wars but soon fell into ruin; which was renewed in the fourth century, and which remained in use to the end of Classical Antiquity. It was a temple of Artemis as we learn from the inscriptions on the votive pillar and from the little votive krateriskoi. The temple was located in the deme of Melite which, as has long been known, lay to the southwest of Kolonos Agoraios and included the area where our temple stood? The fact that the decree on the pillar found in the sanctuary is a decree of the demesmen of Melite is further confirmation.

No epithet of Artemis appears in the inscriptions, but we may be sure that it was Aristoboule for we know that Artemis was worshipped in Melite with that epithet. This information comes from two passages in Plutarch which are worth quoting in full. The first is from the *Life of Themistokles*, Chapter 22:

ἠνίασε δὲ τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ τὸ τῆς 'Αρτέμιδος ἱερὸν εἰσάμενος, ῆν 'Αριστοβούλην μὲν προσηγόρευσεν, ὡς ἄριστα τῆ πόλει καὶ τοῖς "Ελλησι βουλευσάμενος, πλησίον δὲ τῆς οἰκίας κατεσκεύασεν ἐν Μελίτη τὸ ἱερόν, οὖ νῦν τὰ σώματα τῶν θανατουμένων οἱ δήμιοι προβάλλουσι καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ τοὺς βρόχους τῶν ἀπαγχομένων καὶ καθαιρεθέντων ἐκφέρουσιν. ἔκειτο δὲ καὶ τοῦ Θεμιστοκλέους εἰκόνιον ἐν τῷ ναῷ τῆς 'Αριστοβούλης ἔτι καθ' ἡμᾶς καὶ φαίνεταί τις οὐ τὴν ψυχὴν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἡρωϊκὸς γενόμενος.

He also gave offence to the majority by founding the shrine of Artemis. He called the goddess Aristoboule, on the grounds that he had given the best advice to the city and to Greece, and he built the shrine near his house in Melite, where now the public officials cast out the bodies of

7. W. Judeich, *Topographie von Athen*², p. 168. R.S. Young, *Hesperia* XX (1951) pp. 140 - 143. D.M. Lewis, *B.S.A.*, L (1955) p. 17.

those who are put to death and carry out the nooses and garments of those who meet their death by hanging. A portrait of Themistokles stood in the temple of Aristoboule even in my day; and it is clear that he was a man heroic not only in spirit but also in appearance.

The second is from the De Malignitate Herodoti, 37:

εὶ γάρ εἰσιν ἀντίποδες ἡμῶν, ἄσπερ ἔνιοι λέγουσι, τῆς γῆς τὰ κάτω περιοικοῦντες, οἰμαι μηδ' ἐκείνους ἀνηκόους εἰναι Θεμιστοκλέους καὶ τοῦ Θεμιστοκλέους βουλεύματος, δ βουλεύσας τῆ Ἑλλάδι ναυμαχῆσαι πρὸ τῆς Σαλαμῖνος, ἱδρύσατο ναὸν 'Αριστοβούλης 'Αρτέμιδος ἐν Μελίτη, τοῦ βαρβάρου καταπολεμηθέντος.

If there are any Antipodeans, as some people say, living in the part of the earth below us, I think that not even they can have failed to hear of Themistokles and of the design of Themistokles. His advice prevailed upon the Greeks to fight before Salamis, and he established a temple of Aristoboule Artemis in Melite when the enemy had been beaten.

(Both translations are by R.E. Wycherley)

Our little sanctuary meets all the requirements of these passages. The votive kraters which furnish the earliest evidence for the worship of Artemis are to be dated in the period just after the Persian Wars so that the sanctuary could well have been founded by Themistokles; furthermore, it is a small, unpretentious sanctuary such as might have been established by a private individual near his house. Its subsequent abandonment could well be explained by the people's displeasure, and the exile and disgrace of Themistokles. Its renewal in the fourth century by Neoptolemos occurs in a period when Themistokles' fame was again a matter of national pride. It still stood in Roman times and so might have housed the portrait of Themistokles seen there by Plutarch. Finally, the street outside the temenos wall leads in a southwesterly direction towards the gate on the north slope of the Hill of the Nymphs which Judeich⁸ has postulated on the basis of wheel ruts and which he identifies as the Hangman's Gate ($\Delta\eta\mui\alpha$ Πii Πii). This road presumably led out to the Barathron where the bodies of criminals were disposed of and would thus suit the reference in the Life of Themistokles.

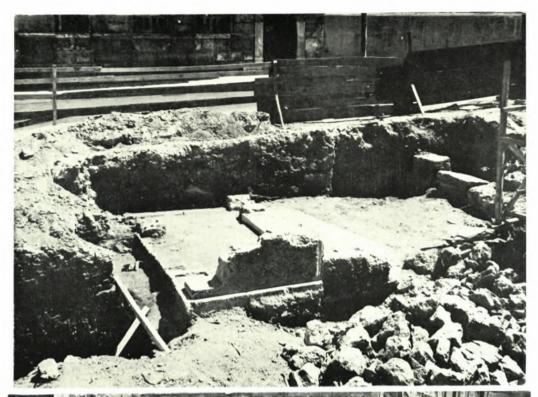
All these considerations make the identification of the ruins as those of the Temple of Artemis Aristoboule virtually certain.

J. THREPSIADES - E. VANDERPOOL

8. Judeich, op. cit., p. 140. J. Travlos, Πολεοδομική ἐξέλιξις των 'Αθηνών, p. 52 and p. 51, fig. 20.



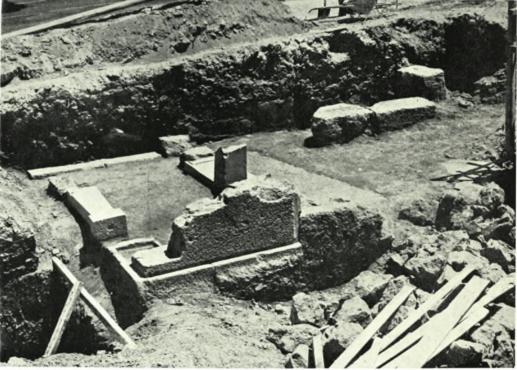
Athens. Artemis Aristoboule: General View of Excavation with Acropolis in the Background





Athens. Artemis Aristoboule: a. General View of Temple from Southwest, b. General View of Excavation from East





Athens. Artemis Aristoboule: a. General View of the Temple from Southwest and above, b. View from Southwest









Athens. Artemis Aristoboule: a-c. Three Views of Porch showing Inscribed Stele and Stub of Stele as found, d. Porch showing Bothros opened but not yet excavated

Athens. Artemis Aristoboule: a. Stub of Stele, Inscribed Stele and Altar, b. Detail of Anta Block, c. Foundation for Altar, d. Detail of Temenos Wall



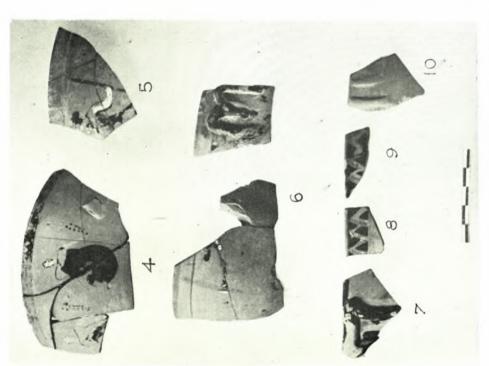






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Athens. Artemis Aristoboule: a-b. Fragments of Krateriskoi and Terracotta Lamps

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