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ARTEMIS LEMNIA


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In 1885 a substantial cache of decrees issued by the 'demos of the Athenians at Myrine' (one of the two towns of cleruchs on Lemnos) was published (see IG XII.8. 2, with notes). The decrees had been found through chance digging in what was evidently a sanctuary a little way north of the town on the coast (see C. Fredrich, AM 31 [1906], 244). To whom was this sanctuary dedicated? Even when the discovery was made, that question admitted of an almost certain answer - which seems, none the less, never to have been given. IG II² 1224 is a decree of Myrine of the second c. B.C. found in Athens; it provides for its own publication in two copies, of which one is to be displayed on the acropolis and the other έμ Μυρίνης έν τῷ Ιέρῷ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος (line 24). A community of the size of Myrina is unlikely to have had two such places of display; and the site where the decrees were found, on the coast outside the settlement, is admirably suited for a temple of Artemis. Artemis' importance on Lemnos was already visible: indeed, it has been suggested (Fredrich, ibid., 72-9) that she inherited some of the functions of the indigenous 'Great Goddess' (for whom see Aristophanes, fr. 384 K/A). According to Galen (xii. 169, 173 K.), it was a priestess of Artemis who collected and sealed the famous red Lemnian clay of Mount Mosychlos (on the other side of the island), while Segré in 1942 published 5th century horoi from two separate temene of Artemis in the Myrine region.¹ (The relation of these to the one mentioned in IG II² 1224 is unclear.) We now see that hers was probably the chief civic sanctuary of the town. The possibility has gone unnoticed simply because, it seems, the short fragment of IG II² 1224 (an inscription assembled from several pieces) which names Artemis first appeared only in the addenda (p. 422) to Koehler's IG II.I (1877).

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¹ ASAA xv-xvi (1932-3), 296-7 nos. 4-5; cf. L.H. Jeffery, Local Scripts of Archaic Greece (Oxford, 1961), 299.