

SECTION NU

1937

SECTION NU : SEASON OF 1937

General

This season we excavated for the duration of one month in the northern end of Section Nu, in general in the area just west of the apse of the Odeion complex. Most of the features found in Nu continued into Rno, immediately adjoining ~~the~~ north.

We did not start at the modern surface, for during the previous summer Sophokles Lekkas and his group removed the top 1 1/2 metres of modern or late Turkish fill from this section of Eponymon Street, beneath which lay the part of Nu excavated by us. In general, also, we did not go below the first classical levels found; most of the fill removed was Byzantine and very late Roman (sometimes referred to as Vandal, comprising the fifth and sixth centuries A.D.), which overlay the hard earlier Roman packing.

Summary

The strip of Byzantine and Vandal road was the greatest area exposed; besides this we dug in a late room with a rectangular trough adjacent at the east, and in a wall complex related to the Odeion. We cleared, in addition, the classical stroses in various places east and west of the road.

The Road
Area

The modern road, Eponymon Street, seems to be the topmost layer of a throughfare which was used almost continually in this area since late Roman times, kept

always within essentially the same limits. The depth of fill here from the modern surface to the early Roman layer left was from three to about three and one half metres, of which the upper metre and one half (approximately) represented modern and Turkish fill, with traces of slight stroses in various places.

We found throughout one rather thick Byzantine layer with consistent pottery and coins of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. In some places there were traces of another Byzantine strosis, but without uncontaminated fills. Most of the filling, however, was Vandal, extending below the eleventh century Byzantine level, and down to the classical or early Roman strosis. This fill was between one and two metres thick, with several well-defined stroses running through it. The pottery and coins from these several stroses did not seem to differ materially, however. The coins include those of Marcian, Justinian, Theodoric, Theodosius II, Honorius and Arcadius, as well as several identifiable only as 'Vandal'. The pottery produced no wholeshapes—merely scraps from the rims and bases of coarse vessels. Some black-glazed Greek sherds were always found in the Vandal fill.

The road area was bounded by walls on the east and west, all of which have been left. They seem to be of several kinds, the earliest probably synchronous with the Vandal filling, with later Byzantine and Turkish walls

following roughly the same lines. The modern basement walls of the nineteenth century houses deviated little from the same direction. The same road fills continued northward, throughout the length of the neighboring section, Rho.

Room with
Trough

At the east of the road we came upon the west and north walls of a large room with parts of a blue and white marble floor preserved, near a door-sill in the west wall. The chief feature of this room, however, is a rectangular trough or bin, measuring 1.10 x 2.20 metres. Its bottom is level with the room's floor, and its walls, made of small stones and mortar, are partially preserved to a height of about 0.45 m. The use of the trough has not been determined; it is similar to two others, found in the campaign of 1936, just to the south, in Nu, and all three may have formed a single establishment for a manufacturer of some sort.

The curving west-north wall of this room runs up to the apse of the Odeion; from the nature of its construction it is obvious that this room post-dates the apse; the fill found throughout on the floor and pavement consisted of Vandal sherds together with coins of Marcian, Honorius and Arcadius, as well as otherwise unidentifiable Vandal coins.

West of
Odeion
Apsse

The apse of the Odeion had been cleared in last year's campaign; this year we dug a bit just outside of it, to the west. We found part of a rectangular

extension to the Odeion, consisting of an east-west wall running out from the main building to the west, then forming a right angle and turning to the south. We could not locate definitely the third bit of east-west wall returning to the main building, but from other indications it is probable that this rectangular addition did not extend far to the south, but that the southern wall of it was not more than three metres distant from its northern wall. This small annex may have served as a stair tower.

The apse of the Odeion complex overlies this little extension, showing that it was completely out of use at the time of the apse's erection. The walls are heavy, built of small stones and good mortar, and probably can be assigned to the period of the Odeion's original building, or not long afterwards. Some burned destruction fill, containing many bits of stucco as well as pottery, was found packed against this wall, below the strosis which was synchronous with the apse. If we can assign this burned fill to the time of the rectangular annex's destruction, then that event must be placed somewhere in the late first century, or early second, after Christ, according to the sherds. The pottery, however, is chiefly coarse ware, with few easily recognizable shapes or profiles.

Miscellaneous

At the west of the road we cleared off some of the Agora floor here, removing a Vandal fill from the earth packing. This is at approximately the same level as the

lowest road strata to the east.

There were no wells in this part of Section Nu, with the exception of three very late ones, probably eighteenth or early nineteenth century. A few Byzantine pits were found, but all had been violated in later times.

At the extreme north edge of the section we re-dug and cleaned a very well-built Byzantine pit and a Byzantine ostiatheke, both of which had been previously explored by the modern Greeks. The ostiatheke utilizes as its south wall a very well-built series of stones which probably forms part of a structure synchronous with or antedating the adjacent Odeion. Further exploration of this bit disclosed was not practicable.