

1961: SEASON'S REPORT FOR SECTION K

During the four weeks July 24-August 19 field work was conducted with a force of 11 workmen with a view to completing the exploration of the Heliaia, the Southwest Fountain House and the southwest entrance to the Agora. At the same time some work of conservation and of path-making was carried out in the area. The detailed record of the season's work may be found in notebooks K, XX and XXI, the finds in XIX.

Heliaia

More of the ancient earth fill was removed from the central and west parts of the peristyle; indeed little earth now remains apart from a few martyres at strategic points. The season's exploration, in combination with the study of the plans and sections now being prepared by John Travlos, has cleared up a number of problems regarding the design of the building, and has elucidated its history. The sequence of developments on the site is now conceived as follows:

Early 6th century B.C. (ca. 575 B.C.)

A number of private houses were demolished and their wells closed. The area was presumably taken over by the state and may have been used for public purposes (assemblies?); but no structural remains of this period have been recognized.

Early 5th century B.C. (ca. 490 B.C.)

The stepped retaining wall was built across the north side of the area and its other three sides were enclosed by a substantial porous wall. All the elements of this wall have now been identified: underpinning, toichobate, orthostates, regular courses and crowning member, but the total height is problematic. We may assume that the north side was open but that admission could be controlled by a light barrier or a rope railing at the top of the stepped retaining wall. The floor level sloped gently down from south to north (ca. 1 m. in 33 m.).

Periclean Period

The entrance was narrowed by erecting walls in the east and the west parts of the north front, leaving a gap of ca. 11 m. in the middle. In front of this central entrance a supplementary flight of steps was now erected against the old stepped retaining wall. This measure was probably necessitated by the raising of the floor level in the north part of the enclosure, and this in turn is perhaps to be associated with the construction of a stone drain that led off from the east side of the building near its northeast corner; the rain water which must originally have flowed down over the stepped retaining wall was now canalized and directed toward the northeast corner of the enclosure. Two or three small rooms were erected within the enclosure against its back, i.e. south wall.

Third quarter 4th century B.C.

By this time the floor inside the enclosure had become very irregular and over large areas was very low. A mass of filling (field stones and firm earth) was brought in to level up the floor and to bring it back to the 5th - century level. The rooms along the south side were demolished and replaced by a series of three on the west side. In front of these western rooms was built a light portico which faced east across the remaining part of the old unroofed enclosure. Four of the column bases for this porch remain; they are very rough and irregular.

Second century B.C.

In the middle of the 2nd century B.C. when work on the Middle Stoa was far advanced, the entrance to the building was again modified in a way that necessitated the removal of the supplementary steps; their material was re-used in several buildings then under construction.

It appears probable that at this time too the narrow western colonnade was replaced by a complete peristyle, the underpinning for the column bases of which has long been familiar. From this peristyle probably comes a series of Doric column capitals of which four examples are known: one, A 2316 (a small fragment) was found in late Roman debris within the peristyle, a second, A 2199, was recovered from a marble pile in the area, a third, A 306, had been re-used nearby in a tomb of the Church of Saints Elias and Charalambos, a fourth, A 907, came to light in the north central part of the Agora at a high level. The capitals indicate for the columns an upper

diameter of 0.51 m. They are closely similar in style and workmanship to the capitals of the Stoa of Attalos.

Sack of 86 B.C. and subsequent desolation.

Additional confirmation of damage done to the building at this time is provided by the discovery of three more stone catapult balls, ST 706-708, in contexts of the early Roman period. And still more evidence came to light to show that the building was used for industrial purposes through the 1st and into the early 2nd century A.D., for instance a fragment of gilded bronze from an ancient statue that was probably being melted down for reuse.

Hadrianic (?) reconstruction

It seems increasingly probable that the building was rehabilitated in the first half of the 2nd century A.D., perhaps in the time of Hadrian. More precise evidence for the date of the cessation of industrial activity, and so presumably of the rebuilding, is given by a set of kitchen vessels found in the great clay store in the central court (P 26948-26950); they appear to be of the early 2nd century A.D. (parallel to Robinson Group G).

Southwest Fountain House

Since the main body of the building had already been thoroughly excavated, attention was concentrated on the Southwest and Northeast Annexes.

The Southwest Annex is now clearly seen to be part of the original construction, dating from the late 5th century B.C. Closer study has shown reason to believe that it was not, as previously supposed, a reservoir but a stone-paved room opening toward the north in the shelter of which the hydrophoroi drew water over a parapet out of the reservoir in the rear part of the main building. The approach to the room was protected against the road by a retaining wall that swung in an arc around the northwest corner of the fountain house.

The complete exploration of the Northeast Annex has brought out its plan. The compartment was set into the angle between the north wall of the main block of the fountain house and the west wall of the Heliaia. It consisted of a small room opening over its full width toward the west and sheltering two series of spouts, three in each, along its east and south sides. The spouts were fed from channels that drew their water from the main aqueduct; the surplus from each of these channels was carried in a lead pipe around the west end of the Middle Stoa into the Agora. The date of this annex cannot be as early as previously supposed, i.e. 4th century B.C. Since it contains material taken from structures, e.g. the Propylon of the Heliaia, that were demolished in the 2nd century, the Annex must be of that time; it probably continued in use until the Sullan destruction of 86 B.C.

The massive retaining walls that were erected in the 2nd century B.C. along the north and west sides of the main fountain house were examined closely. Their function is not yet certain, nor is it clear how access to the main fountain house was arranged after their erection.

The deep drain that led north from the north side of the fountain house was examined more thoroughly. It appears to date from the 2nd century B.C. and was presumably intended to carry off the rainwater that gathered behind the new retaining walls. It was extensively repaired in the 2nd century A.D. The more northern course of the drain had been established previously; passing around the west end of the Middle Stoa it poured into the West Branch of the Great Drain.

Road leading into the Southwest Corner of the Agora

By deep trenching it was possible to trace the history of the road back at least to the early 5th century B.C. From that time on care was taken to maintain a solidly cobbled road surface. Wheel ruts with the normal gauge of 1.50 m. (5 ft), give the line of traffic and emphasize its volume. The line of the west side of the early road was established this season by the discovery of sporadic remnants of the foundations of buildings that had bordered the road on that side. This line can now be followed northward beneath the Middle Stoa.

With the construction of the Middle Stoa in the 2nd century B.C. the line of the street was deflected westward so as to enable it to pass around the west end of the stoa. There are interesting indications of how a thoroughfare was kept open during the period of construction of the Stoa. With the construction of the Middle Stoa which required a much higher ground level along its south side the level of the road also rose rapidly; the resultant steepening of the grade necessitated the insertion of steps in the road, a measure that must have put an end to wheeled traffic on this entrance to the Agora.

In the area to the north and west of the Southwest Fountain House we have preserved the cobbled road surface that was established in the 4th century B.C. and that continued in use until the 2nd century. The exploratory trenches have been back filled.

A deep drain channel was explored beneath the earlier line of the road to the north of the Southwest Fountain House; its direction was roughly from southwest to northeast. The drain had been tunneled under the hard road metal. It would seem never to have been finished since it was unlined and its walls were unworn.

The silt in the channel yielded a quantity of fine pottery of the latest 4th - earliest 3rd century B.C. This channel appears to be the northern continuation of a drain that has long been known along the west side of the fountain house where it employed as one of its side walls the retaining wall that had previously protected the approach to the Southwest Annex. The chronological implications of this connection have not yet been fully worked out.

A light wall probably dating from the 2nd century B.C. is now seen to have run between the northwest corner of the Fountain House and the southwest corner of the Middle Stoa. It bordered the east side of the road in its new course and presumably permitted the control of admission to the south square that was formed by the Heliaia, Middle, East and South Stoas.

Conservation

Much refilling and levelling was done within the Heliaia. Retaining walls to support the scarps of soft bedrock were erected along the east and west sides of the Southwest Fountain House. Paths were laid out in the area to the west of the Middle Stoa permitting for the first time free circulation both north-south and east-west. The dump from the excavation carried out in the Heliaia in 1960 was removed by trucking. Iron grilles were inserted in the doorway and window left in the retaining wall built last winter over the poros aqueduct where it bordered the south side of the Heliaia. Through these grilles the visitor can see a characteristic section of the aqueduct as also the corner where it turns north to deliver its water into the Southwest Fountain House.

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at the top of the stepped retaining wall

Periclean Period

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Roads leading into the southeast corner of the Agora

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