

THE ODEION (section ΩΔ)

Season of 1939

The exploration of the Odeion was resumed for a brief three weeks toward the close of the past season. In this time it was possible to remove the remainder of the late accumulation from around the foundations of both the Odeion and the superincumbent building of the late Roman period, and also to expose the pre-Odeion ground levels throughout the area of the building so far as they had not been cut away by the builders of the Odeion. A little supplementary digging to the north of the building will permit of its final study and the completion of its plans.

Beneath the entire south part of the Odeion, under the floor of its cellar corridor to east and west, deep under the packing for its stage and scene building one may now distinguish the floor of the market-square as it had been before work began on the Odeion. At some time not yet determined, but probably in the second century B.C. after the construction of the great double stoa, bedrock was cut down so as to form a smooth floor that sloped down gently northward from the terrace wall of the stoa and sloped gently also from east to west. In many places the surface of bedrock was left exposed; elsewhere it was overlaid by a few centimetres of gravel; everywhere it had been worn smooth and hard by much traffic. This floor would seem to have formed but a part of the open market-square and, since the area in question was removed from the major lines of traffic, it was comparatively poor in monuments. Near the southwest corner of the inner rectangle of



the Odeion there has, however, come to light the lowest foundation of a sizeable monument, with a north-to-south dimension of 3.10 m. and an east to west length of 3.75 m.; its west end was broken away by the inner foundation of the Odeion. It lay to the north of the mid-point of the double stoa, at an interval of ca. 13 m. from the terrace wall of the stoa. The position of the base and its material (red conglomerate) suggests that it postdates the stoa. No clue to its purpose has yet been observed. To the north of the Odeion, and again beneath the ground level of that building, lie several porous blocks which must have supported one or more substantial monuments. They will be examined further next season.

Beneath the stairway that leads south from the great court of the late Roman complex, the place where Dr. Dorpfeld has placed the grave of Theseus, there is no trace of pre-Odeion foundations: the surface of bedrock lies smooth and unbroken above Dr. Dorpfeld's star, apparently a normal part of the floor of the market-square.

The recovery of the scheme of the interior arrangement of the Odeion itself has been facilitated by the appearance of two cross-walls undoubtedly intended for the support of the seats and of the roof. These walls ran east and west across the southern part of the interior rectangle of the Odeion. They are centered at intervals of ca. 7.50 m. from one another, from the south wall of the inner rectangle and also from the back, i.e. the south edge of the orchestra. It is to be noted that a similar interval separates the walls of the inner rectangle from the outer walls of the building. Between the northern of these two cross walls and the wall at the back of the stage there still remains a rectangle of ca. 17 m. north to south by 25 m. east to west. It is not impossible that further probing in the region of the orchestra (now



covered by a temporary roof) will bring to light traces of other interior supports. Of the two new cross walls only the lowest foundations remain; that of the northern is of re-used porous blocks, 1.20 m. thick; that of the southern is of broken-stone packing 1.80 m. thick. The difference in thickness may be explained by the greater stress exerted by the auditorium as it sloped up toward the south.

In the southwest corner of the inner rectangle of the Odeion are the fragmentary foundations of two slight buildings which would seem to have been erected and used by the builders of the Odeion and which were certainly demolished before the completion of that building. These lesser buildings utilized in part the walls of the inner rectangle of the Odeion; their own walls consisted some of a limestone core with crude bricks above, some of stone only, some of brick only. Masses of marble chips on their floors suggest that they served as shelters for the workmen during construction. Such shelters would also have been essential for the protection of tools and supplies here in the busy market-square.

A quantity of pottery found in the earth filling which was brought into the core of the building during construction will be valuable for fixing its date. A preliminary examination suggests that this material runs into the second half of the first century B.C. but not later. Hence the date in the Augustan period previously proposed for the building gains additional support.

The evidence gotten from the study of the stratification of the late filling in and around the building will be useful in recovering the history of the area between the destruction of the Odeion and the erection of the later building above its ruins.



Again the earlier conclusions are reinforced, viz. that the Odeion was destroyed by fire in the sack of 267 A.D. and that the great complex to which the Giants belong in their present position dates from early in the fifth century A.D.