

SECTION K

1948

Street p. 1

Retaining Wall and Steps at SW Corner of
Middle Stoa p. 2

Drain p. 4

Well in Street West of Middle Stoa p. 5

Peribolos (?) Wall West of Middle Stoa p. 5

Late Roman (?) House p. 6

Fountain House p. 6

Tombs Belonging to Church of Elias and
Charalambos p. 7

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SECTION K : 1948

The work done in Section K in 1948 was a continuation of the work done there and in Section @ in 1947 and in Section @ alone in 1946. The main objective of the three campaigns was the removal of the long narrow dike formed by the modern Eponymon Street which ran from the southwest corner of the Fountain House down to the southwest corner of the Agora proper, (i.e. along the western edge of both sections). This job was finally completed in 1948, all the modern and late fill, a considerable amount of late Roman fill and a certain amount of early Roman fill having been removed and the ancient remains exposed. The Fountain House, the west end end of the Middle Stoa, the area between them, and the street to the west of them are now ready for detailed study and for the systematic exploration of the lower levels.

Street

The line of a street, which must have been one of the important thoroughfares of the ancient city, was cleared for a distance of some seventy metres. Starting at the southwest corner of the Agora, it runs south along the west end of the Middle Stoa, rises in a flight of three steps at the southwest corner of the building, turns slightly towards the west to pass the Fountain House and rises again in a

"Massive retaining wall" running S from SW corner of MS.

K - 2

flight of two (?) steps at the southwest corner of that building, then swings around the west end of the Areopagus towards the Pnyx and southern Athens.

The existence of this street in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods was established. It no doubt existed from an earlier period, though its exact course prior to the construction of the Middle Stoa has not been fixed. We may safely assume, however, that it was much the same except at the northern end. There is no trace of a street along this line in Byzantine times, and not until fairly late in the Turkish period does the predecessor of the modern Eponymon Street appear.

Retaining Wall and Steps at SW Corner of Middle Stoa

Running south from the southwest corner of the Middle Stoa is a massive retaining wall which served to make good the difference in level between the street at the west end of the building and the higher square to the south of it. Most of the blocks of this retaining wall are missing, having been removed in Turkish times. The trench, however, with a few blocks in its bottom, shows up clearly. It is not certain just how far south the retaining wall originally went. We have cleared the pillaged trench for some five meters south of the Stoa, at which point a terracotta drain made of a rectangular channel covered with U-shaped tiles cuts across it. This drain, which runs parallel to the south side of the Stoa for some distance, swings out to the south before reaching and crossing the retaining wall.

This swing may be either to get around the end of the retaining wall, or to pass through it at a point well south of (behind) the steps in the street so as to effect a more convenient junction with the drain under the street. In the latter event we may expect to find a southward continuation of the retaining wall, though at present there is no sign of this.

The steps in the street at the southwest corner of the Middle Stoa are apparently contemporary with the Stoa itself. There are three of them, made of re-used material of various kinds and bedded on earth filling. Only at the west end are they well preserved, the eastern half having been removed in Turkish times by the people who pillaged the retaining wall. The steps probably ran over to the retaining wall, in which case their width will be nearly seven meters. Possibly, however, they stopped short at the light foundation just west of the Middle Stoa and the retaining wall, in which case their width will be only about six meters. The purpose of the light foundation is uncertain. It may have been for a steep narrow stairway giving direct access to the southwest corner of the Stoa from the street, or it may simply have been intended for a monument of some sort tucked into this corner. It seems to have gone out of use in early Roman times, for fill of this period covered it.

The steps did not remain in use for any great length

of time, but gradually got covered over with gravel and silt. The lowest step shows almost no wear and may never have been really exposed to traffic. The middle step shows a moderate amount of wear, and the top one a great amount. A firm strosis at the level of the top step indicates that a sloping street soon replaced the steps. Subsequently, in early Roman times, the level was further raised to about a meter above the steps by a great mass of loose artificial filling. The level thus formed was maintained with little change until the destruction of the Stoa in the late third century A.D. when it again rose slightly.

Drain

The stone drain which leads out from the NW corner of the Fountain House runs in a straight line almost due north and presumably empties into the West Branch of the Great Drain. When the Middle Stoa was built and the steps were placed at its southwest corner across the street, the course of the stone drain was altered. From a point just behind (south of) the steps a terracotta drain takes off from the older stone drain, swings out to the east, passes under the steps and runs along the west end of the Middle Stoa. In its present state this drain appears to be late, and pottery of the third century A.D. was found in and above it. It must have been in constant need of repair however, and we may safely place its original construction in the

late Hellenistic period, when the part of the stone drain north of the steps appears to have gone out of use.

Well in Street West of Middle Stoa (18-19/MH)

A tiled well just west of the Middle Stoa was apparently filled up at the time the Stoa was built, for it could hardly have existed in the middle of the street which passed here after that time. It was only 4.80 m. deep, and contained no well deposit. Owing to its shallowness, it was probably kept clean. It produced only five boxes of pottery, which seems to belong to the advanced second century B.C. and may be a valuable check on the date of the Stoa. The southernmost block of the N-S peribolos (?) wall west of the Middle Stoa partly covered the mouth of the well.

Peribolos (?) Wall West of Middle Stoa

West of the Middle Stoa and at the level of the original street a long thin line of wall appeared. It is almost, but not quite parallel to the west end of the Stoa, being slightly nearer towards the north, farther away towards the south. The last preserved block of this wall at the south overlay the mouth of the well at 18-19/MH. Towards the north the wall can be traced almost to the northwest corner of the retaining wall in front of the Stoa. (But the northernmost three or four meters are at a slightly different angle.) The wall is build of re-used blocks of various kinds laid as a single row of stretchers. The tops of many of these blocks are polished by the traffic of the

street.

This wall from its position must be earlier than the Stoa. It will not be much earlier, however, if it is all contemporary with the southernmost block which overlay the mouth of the well at 18-19/MH. Is it possible that we have here part of a temporary building or enclosure used by the builders of the Stoa during the period of construction ?

Late Roman (?) House

The lowest foundations of a late house, probably of the late Roman period, appeared just west of the Middle Stoa. A long stretch of the east wall of the house, including the northeast corner, was exposed for the first time this season, other walls were traced to the west in Section Z. There was not time to work out a detailed plan of the house this season. Its walls are of rubble with an occasional ancient marble fragment. The preserved parts are exclusively foundation walls built by throwing stones into a trench. No cement is used.

Fountain House

A little work was done in and around the Fountain House. The biggest operation was the removal of the big retaining wall of large heavy blocks which had been hurriedly built in the southwest corner of the building in 1934 to prevent a collapse of Eponymon Street. The rectangular extension at the southwest corner of the building was thus cleared so that it can now for the first time be properly

measured and drawn. This extension proves to have been an integral part of the Fountain House in at least one of its periods.

Several more blocks of Kara stone which once belonged to the Fountain House were identified. One of them (actually found in 1947) is a parapet block from a water basin, another has a thick coating of hydraulic cement over which is a heavy lime deposit; others are step blocks.

A large drain west of the Fountain House was partly explored. The stretch along the northern half of the west side is well built of stone with stone cover slabs. One of these cover slabs was the inscribed stele of the archonship of Pytharatos (ca. 270 B.C.) honoring the sitonai of the archonship of Lysitheides. The drain appears to have been filled up in the Hellenistic period. What may be the upward continuation of this drain was found a little to the south. Here the construction is quite different, double U-shaped tiles, which had later been removed.

Tombs Belonging to Church of Elias and Charalambos

Twenty tombs connected with this Church had been excavated before the war. This season we found six more (U, V, W, X, Y, Z). They were rectangular chambers covered with a vault and were built of rough stones and stuccoed inside. Those that were more or less undisturbed contained quantities of bones lying in disorder, obviously

secondary burials. Only a few scraps of pottery and a few bronze trinkets were found in them. Built into the wall of Tomb U was the "Polykleitan" torso. It appears to have been originally built into the late Roman wall which was cut by the tomb builders.

The two westernmost tombs, W and Z, were overlaid by the Turkish street, predecessor of the modern Eponymon Street, which must thus date from fairly late in the Turkish period.