

AGORA EXCAVATIONS

July-August 1954

The Excavation. The results of a short season of excavation in the area between the Tholos and the Southwest Fountain House have now been collated by Mrs. Thompson. The region was occupied from the sixth into the first century B.C. by a succession of comparatively small buildings of irregular plan that do not correspond to any familiar type of public building and are most likely to be thought of as private shops, probably in combination with living quarters. One of the largest of the individual structures is the building which was partially cleared in 1953 and tentatively identified on the evidence of a graffito and a mass of hobnails as the house of Simon, the cobbler^{friend} of Sokrates. The whole complex lies behind the boundary stone of the Agora which stands at the southwest corner of the market square and so would appear to have been outside the official limits of the square.

Some work of conservation was done within the period. The corridor that leads back between the Tholos and the Metroon from the Propylon to the Plateia of the Bouleuterion has been cleared and made intelligible, and the plan of the very ruinous temple of early imperial date which stood in the southwest corner of the square is being outlined with ancient blocks.

Stoa of Attalos Project. Now that the laborious tasks of drainage and underpinning are completed, the actual reconstruction of the building is moving ahead rapidly. The concrete slabs have been completed above the basement storerooms below the terrace and the middle part of the colonnade. The back wall of the building has been carried up to approximately half its height and the first lintel blocks have been laid above the windows in the back wall. A good start has been made in laying the marble steps that will carry the Doric columns along the front of the building. And a goodly number of the marble blocks for the facade of the first storey have already been carved. A stock pile of marble is being accumulated against the winter months when quarrying is suspended.

Restoration of the Church of the Holy Apostles. The excavation of the interior of the church has now been completed, revealing that its foundations rest largely on the remains of the Nymphaeum of the second century after Christ and of the Mint of the fifth century B.C. The exploration has given no support, however, to the local traditions regarding the existence of a crypt beneath the church or of its use as a baptistery. Miss Alison Frantz and Mr. John Travlos are now studying the evidence for the restoration of the western apse and the narthex which is to be undertaken this autumn.

Studies. The many studies in progress during 1953-54 towards publication of Agora material were listed in detail in the report to the Chairman of the Managing Committee in May, 1954. Only a few items which have been of special interest during the past two months will be noted here:

Ancient Weights and Measures: Professor Mabel Lang of Bryn Mawr College, in Athens on a Guggenheim Fellowship, has completed two articles for Hesperia one entitled "Numerical Notation on Greek Vases", the other, "Dated Jars of Early Imperial Times". She has also presented a survey of other material studied. Her success in reading many hitherto incomprehensible graffiti and dipinti, and in relating them either to standards of measures, to prices, or to dates has gone a considerable distance towards bringing comprehensibility and cohesion into a field hitherto distinguished more by conjecture than by the use of first-hand evidence.

Plastic Lamps of Imperial Times: Miss Claireve Grandjouan has completed a long and detailed study of the plastic lamps in the Agora, and has demonstrated that this group of material, both in technique and in types, is one of the most interesting and instructive as well as the best documented, of the known collections of plastic lamps. This study will appear as a section of the volume devoted to Roman Lamps from the Agora in the Athenian Agora series, a volume on which Miss Grandjouan and Miss Judith Perlzweig are collaborating.

Seventh Century Vases: Miss Eva Brann, in connection with her study of several well-groups of this period, has completed a series of drawings, both restored motifs and sections, which will add greatly to the usefulness and interest of her article. This study, which she expects to complete before she leaves Athens for Yale in October, will appear in Hesperia.

Greek Lamps: Professor Richard H. Howland of the Johns Hopkins University in concluding his study of Agora lamps, determined that it would be advisable to trace the derivatives and descendants of types of Hellenistic times into the Roman period. This section of his work is now complete.

Sculpture: Miss Evelyn B. Harrison, while continuing her study of all Agora sculpture, has completed two special articles for Hesperia, one entitled "Fragments of an Early Attic Kouros", providing, by means of a number of Agora fragments, for the reconstruction of a kouros of the Dipylon type. The second article, written in collaboration with Dr. Frank Brommer, discusses the new fragment of "Amphitrite" (Figure O) from the Parthenon West Pediment.

Skeletal Material: Dr. J. Lawrence Angel, of the Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, has continued his study of anthropological remains from Greek excavations, working in Athens, at Corinth and at Mycenae. His work is supported by grants both from the American Philosophical Society and from the National Institutes of Health. With the aid of two assistants,

he has at the Agora cleaned, mended, photographed and examined the over 300 skeletons or parts of skeletons found in these excavations since his last visit in the summer of 1949. His study of the family groups found in some of the chamber tombs of the Mycenaean period promises to be of special interest. He has also gathered considerable new data on disease and longevity in antiquity.

Guide to the Excavations: Miss Mabel Lang and Mr. C.W.J. Eliot, in addition to their other activities, have compiled a Guide to the Excavations of the Athenian Agora drawing on all available sources. This guide, which will be printed in Athens in much the same format as the Corinth Guide, is now ready for the press. It will run to something over 100 pages and will contain 30 illustrations; it will sell in Athens for ₯ 1.00. Advance copies of the guide may be available, it is hoped, in time for the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute, in Boston in December.

Special Facilities and Services. By careful scheduling, it has been possible for the Agora darkroom to process a considerable amount of material from other excavations sponsored by the School or of special concern to its staff. For instance about 900 scale prints were made of the tablets of Linear Script B found at Pylos; the processing and printing for the excavation at Lerna has been undertaken; and scale prints have been made of the terracotta figurines found at Troy.

The number of scholars visiting the Agora always includes a generous proportion of epigraphists; those who in recent years have had to burrow beneath the dust on the shelves of the inscription store-rooms may be gratified to hear that during the summer our 6600-odd inscriptions have been removed from their shelves, checked, washed and returned to place, free of dust above and below.

The institution of regular tours of the Agora indoors and out, conducted on Wednesday afternoons by members of the staff, continues to provide for many visitors. During the summer these tours have been conducted for the most part by Mr. Eliot and Miss Perlzweig, with help also from Miss Lang and Miss Harrison. In addition, many specialized students and other groups of visitors need other or further guidance, and to this service, which the full utilization of our material increasingly requires, all members of the staff have given generously both of time and of effort.

Comings and Goings. The Agora has shared with the rest of the School community the exhilarating pleasure of visits from Mr. and Mrs. Canaday and Professor Charles Morgan. Many problems affecting the Stoa of Attalos Project, the landscaping of the area and the future of the Agora organization were discussed and many matters were clarified.

Miss Claireve Grandjouan, having completed her study of plastic lamps, left Athens on August 9th. Mrs. Evelyn L. Smithson who has spent the summer in the Agora completing her study of Protogeometric pottery, departed on the 19th. Miss Habel Lang sailed on the 21st. The undersigned and Mrs. Thompson will take off for the U.S.A. via Scandinavia on the 22nd.

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Athens,
August 21, 1954