

EXCAVATIONS ON SAMOTHRACE
IN 1964

The Archaeological Research Fund of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, carried out excavations on Samothrace of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens between May and August 1964. The staff was headed by Prof. Phyllis Williams Lehmann, Acting Director of the Archaeological Research Fund.

Excavation of the South Nekropolis continued in a brief campaign of three and a half weeks in May and June. As in previous years, the work was under the direction of Mrs. Elsbeth Dusenbery, representing the Institute of Fine Arts, and Mr. Andreas Vavritsas of the Antiquities Service. The digging was chiefly concentrated in a small area where a number of fragments of marble tomb monuments had previously been found and some foundations had long been known. During the clearing of this area we found a fragment of the ancient terrace wall of the cemetery, as well as a number of tombs. The burials included cremations of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C., some of which utilized figured Attic vases, inhumation burials of the early and middle Hellenistic periods, which contained ceramics, jewelry, and other gifts, and cremation burials of the early Roman Imperial period, which yielded some fine glass vessels. Altogether, twenty tombs and a number of burial deposits were excavated. Other interesting finds came from the fill around the tombs and included an inscribed lead tablet of the late 4th century B.C. (P. I. 613 a).

In the Sanctuary of the Great Gods excavation in the areas of the Hellenistic Stoa and of the Propylon of Ptolemy II was carried out between June 22 and August 1, 1964, by Prof. James R. McCredie, Field Director, students of the Institute of Fine Arts and of the American School of Classical Studies, and the architects Alfred Frazer and Nicholas Ohly. Mr. Andreas Vavritsas represented the Antiquities Service.

Excavation of the entire interior of the Stoa and its immediate periphery to a level slightly below that of the top surface of the Stoa foundation was completed (P. I. 613 b) except for a strip along the inner side of the east foundation of the Stoa which has been left for any subsequent check of stratigraphy. Deeper tests have been made at selected points, and, in particular, the northernmost 12 m. of the building's

interior has been excavated to bedrock, 5.30 m. below the top surface of the foundation. In the process of clearing the building and its periphery, 1451 fallen blocks of the Stoa superstructure have been collected and recorded.

Deep excavation within the north end of the building showed that there the exterior foundations are as deep as ca. 5.30 m. and are built in 17 courses (P. I. 613 c), contrasting with the south foundation, which has only one course. Tests indicated that the increase in depth of the foundation from south to north is general and becomes more rapid in the northern part of the building. Before the Stoa was built, the Western Hill was considerably smaller and fell more sharply to the north, east, and west; it was artificially raised and extended to accommodate the long Stoa. Ceramic material found in the fill used in the creation of this higher level contained quantities of sherds as late as the first half of the third century B.C., but further study is needed to determine whether any later material is present. The fill yielded many vessels of the sort used in the rites of the Sanctuary, and one (P. I. 614 a - b) was stamped *Θεών*, confirming Karl Lehmann's interpretation of the abbreviations with which such vessels are often marked (cf. *Samothrace*, 2, II, p. 21). Fragmentary walls belonging to the earlier period of the hill appeared beneath the northern end of the Stoa, but none seems to belong to a monumental structure, and there is no evidence that the Hellenistic Stoa had a predecessor.

Four additional fieldstone platforms, which served as sub-foundations for the Ionic interior central colonnade of the building, appeared at levels of ca. 0,25 - 0,35 m. below the top surface of the outer foundations. There are, in all, seven such sub-foundations, spaced 6 m. apart (twice the intercolumniation of the Doric exterior colonnade), upon which cut-stone foundations (now entirely missing) would have rested; these platform-supported the seven northernmost columns of the colonnade over the artificially raised portion of the hill. No trace of sub-foundations for the remaining nine columns to the south was found, and the cut-stone foundations for these would have rested directly on virgin soil, which there lay at so high a level that no sub-foundations were needed (P. I. 614 c).

Excavation of the terrace walls which support higher ground to the south and west of

the Stoa revealed that they had been rebuilt and repaired several times. A succession of water-channels (P l. 615 a) was connected with them; the earliest system was well built and included an interesting pithos silt-trap at its corner (P l. 615 b), but the later channels were of poor workmanship. At least one phase of these walls and water-works can be assigned to a period after the Stoa had suffered partial destruction but before its total collapse. It attests the continued habitation of the Western Hill of the Sanctuary in late-antique and post-antique times.

Excavation in the area of the Propylon of Ptolemy II was carried out in the vaulted passage of the building's foundation, on the north and west sides of the building, and at the edge of the Eastern Hill of the Sanctuary, opposite the Propylon.

The interior of the vaulted passage was cleared to its original level (P l. 615 c), and remains of a fieldstone channel were uncovered both north and south of the passage. The passage slopes downward from south to north, and though no certain traces of the action of water are visible, its irregular floor makes it certain that the purpose of the passage was to carry part of the flow or overflow of the adjacent stream.

The northern side of the Propylon's foundation was exposed (P l. 616 a). Though its northwest corner had collapsed, the plan of the building is still preserved in its lower courses. To the west of the vaulted passage on this northern side of the building, remains of a rubble-packed platform or terrace, 1.45 m. wide, about the foundation, and traces of a corresponding structure appeared to the east of the passage. Though fragments of marble basins, of a marble male statue, and of at least one Corinthian capital were found in this area, the purpose of the terrace remains uncertain.

Investigation of the spur-walls bonded into the foundation of the Propylon and running westward from it indicated that they served to contain a stone and earth packing which formed a high platform to the west of the building proper, toward the river which separates the Propylon from the Sanctuary. This platform can be traced to 4.70 m. west of the Propylon, and it certainly continued further, but all trace of its western termination seems to have been swept away by the river.

Excavation of the opposite bank of the river, on the Eastern Hill of the Sanctuary, revealed the southeast corner of a similar platform, composed of earth and stone packing retained by poros walls. These two separate platforms must have served as supports for a wooden bridge which led from the Propylon into the Sanctuary proper across the riverbed, and the puzzling problem of the means by which the Propylon was connected with the Sanctuary is thus solved (P l. 616 b).

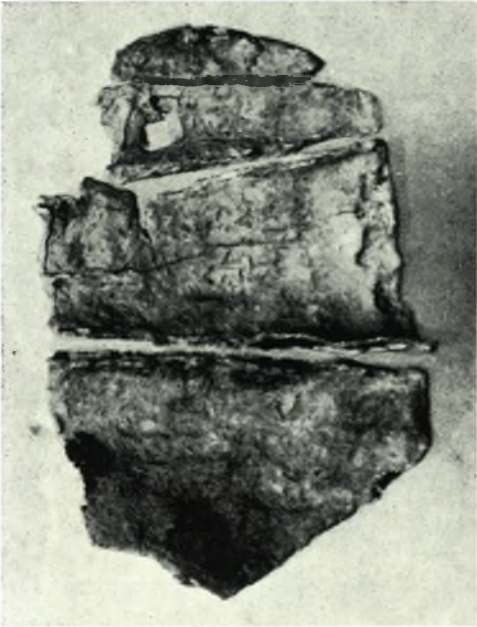
Incorporated in the platform on the Eastern Hill of the Sanctuary, and covered by it, were found two arcs of the foundation of a round building, ca. 14.60 m. in diameter, located on the very eastern edge of the hill. The foundation is of poros, and the single preserved wall-course of marine limestone. A course of marble, probably paving, lines the inner side of the foundation (P l. 617 a). While the building has been left for complete excavation in another campaign, it already seems possible that it will prove to be the immediate predecessor of the great Rotunda of Arsinoe, which was built at about the same time that the newly-discovered building was covered in the construction of the bridge belonging to the Propylon of Ptolemy II. If this hypothesis proves true, the building will be important both for the architectural and religious history of the Sanctuary and for the chronological link that it will establish between the Rotunda of Arsinoe and the Propylon of Ptolemy II.

In the same area were discovered fragments of a large-scale Doric entablature as well as fragments of Corinthian capitals (P l. 617 b). These elements would seem to come from a hitherto unknown structure or structures on the Eastern Hill of the Sanctuary opposite the Propylon of Ptolemy II, and they re-emphasize the need for our further exploration of this area.

Samothrace, 4, II, *The Altar Court* (Bollingen Series LX : 4, II) by Karl Lehmann and Denys Spittle was published in 1964. Work in the South Nekropolis is reported by Elsbeth Dusenbery in *Archaeology*, XVII, 1964, pp. 185 - 192, and a preliminary report on the excavations in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods in 1962 - 1964 appears in *Hesperia*, XXXIV, No. 2.

JAMES R. McCREIDIE

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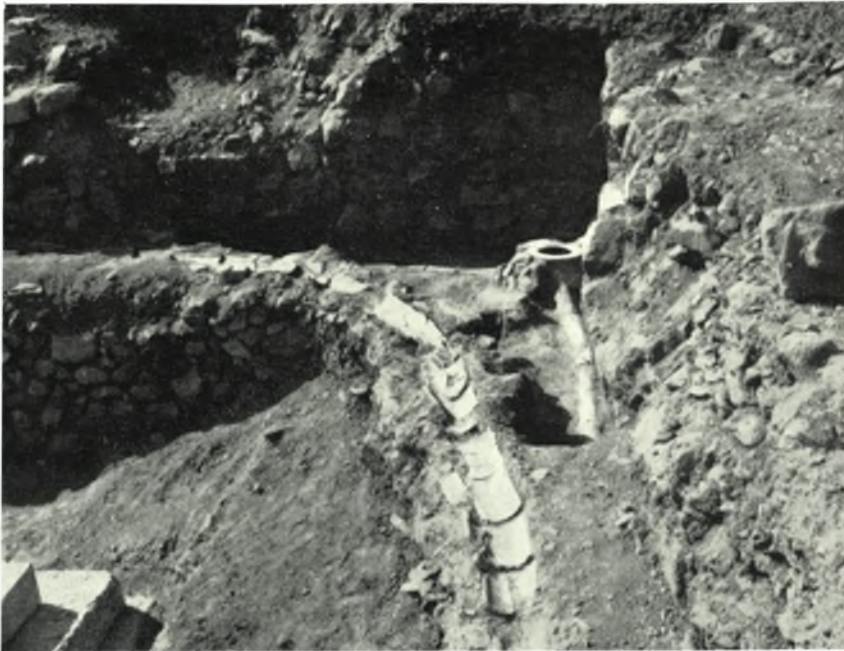


Samothrace: a. Inscribed lead tablet from South Necropolis, b. Northwest corner of Stoa Foundation, from East, c. Stoa Foundation, from South, 1964

J. McCREIDIE



Samothrace : a - b. Stamped bowl and its stamp, c. Sub-foundations for inner colonnade of Stoa, from South



Samothrace : a. Water channels at Southwest corner of Stoa, b. Silt-trap at Southwest corner of Stoa, c. Vaulted passage of Propylon, from North



Samothrace : a. Foundation of Propylon, from North, b. Propylon and Eastern Hill, from West



Samothrace : a. Round building, from West, b. Fragmentary Corinthian capital