

EXCAVATIONS AT CORINTH

Three areas of Ancient Corinth were excavated during the 1967 spring season of the American School of Classical Studies. The first was within the north half of the Peribolos of Apollo. This was a continuation of the American School dig of 1966. The second was immediately north of the Peribolos of Apollo, in the ruins of an early Roman bath. The third was in the area of a second, larger bath complex, which lies north of the plateia of the modern village of Ancient Corinth and which has been the scene of American School excavation activity since 1965. There was an introductory two-week period of training before the main excavation. This was in modern, Turkish, and Byzantine levels immediately south of the South Stoa of Corinth, in the area of Roman latrine J.

Peribolos of Apollo

Within the north half of the Peribolos of Apollo, excavation was largely limited to tests and minute examination of the dye-work complex. Enough material has been found to provide a good chronological history of the area, largely derived from the pottery-rich strata of earth and packing under the drying floors and in fills against various walls of the area.

The physical remains in the area of the dye-works consist of a partially subterranean rectangular structure, composed of a room with stone basin (perhaps a press room, at least in its later phase), and an adjoining reservoir. Both of these were cleared in the 1967 season. The room with the basin had a flight of steps along its west wall, leading up to drying floors at the west. The full extent of the drying floors has not been established.

The first and earliest drying yard yet identified lies immediately west of the reservoir building. It has a stone drain channel running along its north side and a second drain along its east side. Its south side is limited by a well-cut stone wall, probably the temenos wall of temple A which lies immediately to the south. Late 6th - early 5th century sherds were found on the drying floor. In a test under the floor the sherds were found to go no later than the Middle Corinthian period. Murex and shells similar to the *fusus tuberculatus* were

found in relative profusion. This perhaps indicates that dyeing was an industry here even before this floor was laid. The probable temenos wall that forms the limit at the south of the drying floor appears to have been the second one and the result of a slight enlargement of the north limits of the area around temple A. The fill that was dumped against the south side of the wall during its construction is synchronous with the fill under the first drying floor (Pl. 79 a-c).

The floor, perhaps built as late as 550, appears to have been in use at least 100 years before the reservoir building was erected. The reservoir structure was partially cleared in 1966 and its erection was dated to the third quarter of the 5th century B.C. More tests this year confirmed that conclusion.

The north temenos wall of temple A appears to have been abandoned in the second half of the 4th century with the encroachment of the dye-works into the sacred area. At that time a pebble drying platform was built immediately south of the temenos wall. It may also be at this time that temple A was made into a naiskos. Also, the stream which carried the overflow from Peirene as well as the rain water from the upper agora area was diverted from the foundations of the semi-circular altar of temple A and, as a result, was brought close to the west end of the reservoir building. This last change of the drainage channel appears to have caused damage to the end wall of the building and a new west end had to be built. This made the press room smaller almost by half. Apparently slightly later a new, polished cement drying floor with an enclosure of stone posts and panels was erected immediately west of the reservoir building.

The foundations of a «Hellenistic stoa»¹ lie immediately north of the reservoir; this building has been found to have no place in the history of the dye-works. The east wall of the structure was erected in the second half of the 4th century, perhaps as a terrace wall to hold back the hill that rises at the east. The rest of the structure, however, was added in the early Roman period (1st century before or early 1st century after Christ) and employed the earlier retaining wall as the east wall foundation for the stoa. With the

1. Stillwell, Scranton, Freeman, *Corinth*, I, II: *Architecture*, pp. 16 - 23.

building of this structure the ground level of the dye-works was abandoned and fill was added in order to produce a much higher, Roman ground level.

Roman bath north of the Peribolos of Apollo

North of the Peribolos of Apollo, where excavation was last conducted in 1929, activity was largely concentrated upon clearing to those levels that are to be associated with the Roman bath which lies in the area ². This involved the removal of numerous Byzantine walls and late drains. The area now shows more clearly the plan of the bath and the early Christian structures that were built into its ruins. Apparently the bath was entered from the Lechaion Road. The position for the entrance is suggested by a Lechaion Road paving gutter block *in situ*, which makes an apparent detour around what may have originally been the stylobate of the entrance portico. A pediment block, appropriate for such an entrance, was found built into a Byzantine wall not far away. From the entrance one went behind the row of shops, two rooms deep, which lined the east side of the Lechaion Road. The shop walls were pillaged in the Byzantine period. Once behind the shops one entered a colonnaded portico which ran north-south, later built over and altered for use as a private house and, possibly, a glass factory ³. The colonnade formed the west side of a court, which, in its first period, had a deep plunge or reservoir in its east-west axis. Later the plunge was filled and the whole court was paved with herringbone tiles.

A series of rooms was excavated in the 1920's at the east side of the paved court. These appear to have been an apodyterion, two caldaria, and a plunge. There are, however, certain facts that have become clear during the 1967 excavation season. One is that the bath is part of the early Roman occupation of Corinth. There are no apsidal-ended rooms, no exedras, no elaborate geometric plans. Much of the original fabric is large poros blocks. The bath may be as early as the 1st century after Christ. The second fact that emerged is that the bath fell into disuse in the second half of the 4th century, most likely with the earthquake of 375 or with

the devastation of Alaric rather than from the 365 earthquake. Thereafter the area appears to have been turned into a private house with part of the herringbone court used for the workshop of a glass-blower. Many fragments of glass vessels and glass wasters were found here.

Roman bath north of the Plateia

The third season of excavation within the Roman bath has produced a new picture of the plan, history, and early Christian occupations of the structure. The western part of the bath, near the Lechaion Road, appears to have been rebuilt in the 5th and 6th centuries after Christ and thereafter was covered over with earth and debris to a depth which later Byzantine occupation never penetrated.

The architectural remains of the bath as now exposed appear to open onto the east side of the Lechaion Road, or perhaps through an entrance which opened between a line of shops on the east side of that road. The entrance probably gave access to a portico which still has traces of its original mosaic paving. This entrance is attested by a line of stylobate with two marble steps which lead down onto the mosaic floor. From this room three more marble steps lead onto a large paved court, tiled in a herringbone pattern (P l. 79 d). An area of over 60 square meters of this flooring has been cleared.

East of this, but separated from it by a bulk of unexcavated earth, lies that part of the bath that was investigated in 1965-66. This year a second caldarium has been discovered here; it is apsidal-ended and has much of its flooring over the hypocaust preserved (P l. 79 e). This new room lies immediately southeast of the rectangular hypocaust first discovered in 1965.

In an area about 6 meters wide which was cleared immediately west of this newly discovered caldarium, there was found a series of fallen architectural members (P l. 81 a). These blocks are components of a two-story façade of the Corinthian order. Column bases *in situ* indicate the plan of the façade. One complete column of the lower tier of this façade, 3.63 m. high, helps determine the full height of this wall of decorated marble ⁴. The

2. R. Scranton, *Corinth, Mediaeval Architecture*, p. 16.

3. *Idem.*, pp. 17 - 21.

4. Stillwell, Scranton, Freeman, *Corinth I, Architecture*, pp. 61 - 85, for the Captives Façade of the Corinthian A-

architrave of the lower tier has a frieze of akanthos leaves (Pl. 80 b) crowned by a geison with dentils (Pl. 80 a).

The second tier was composed of plinth, columns of the Corinthian order, epistyle-frieze with anthemion-palmette design (Pl. 80 c); the crowning member was an elaborately decorated geison with consoles.

Evidence for occupation later than the original building period is clearly visible in the western part of the excavation. The mosaic-floored portico was covered with a new cement floor, probably in the 4th or 5th century after Christ. A 6th century habitation appears to have grown up after an accumulation of fall over this second floor. This is visible in the walls built over the eastern marble stylobate, in partition walls, a stairway, and in the addition of a column base (now in a re-used position but probably from the original bath structure) on the eastern stylobate of the portico. After a period of abandonment it appears that Byzantine contractors re-used the tops of earlier walls for their new building programmes.

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GYMNASIUM

The third campaign of excavations in Corinth by the University of Texas, under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and directed by Dr. J. R. Wiseman, not only gained much new information about the buildings with which we have already been concerned, but also discovered two important new constructions.

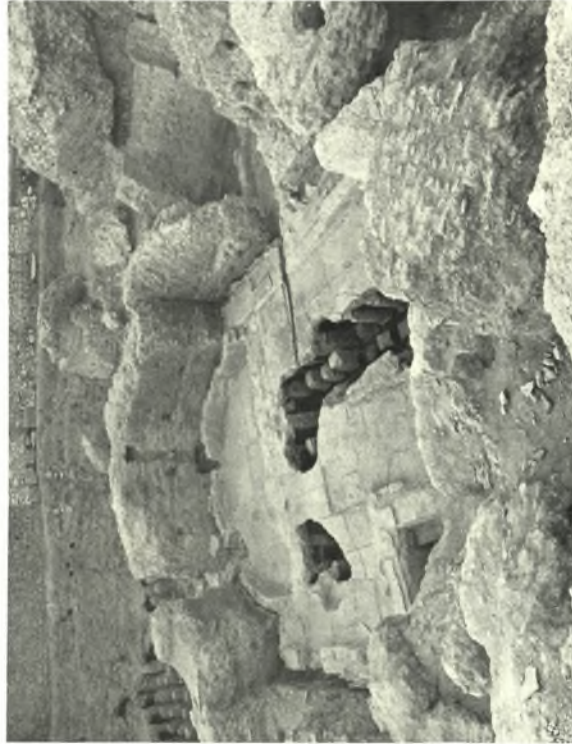
One of the new buildings is an apsidal construction which lies some distance to the south of our West Waterworks (Pl. 81 c). The apse, with a maximum width of 4.50 m., opens towards the west and is faced on the east (exterior) with eight well-cut, large marble slabs. A foundation wall of large, re-used blocks continues to the west from the apse on the south side after a shortgap; if the wall belongs with the apse, the building was 15.80 m.

gora, where decoration similar to that of the bath façade is used. The Captives Façade is dated to the mid-second century (p. 87). It should, perhaps, be dated to 195 or later and be considered as having been built to commemorate Septimius Severus' victories over the Parthians.

long. The foundation wall, however, may not be a part of the apse, since a large drain, covered with re-used marble slabs, runs along the north side of the foundation wall and empties through a marble drain slab over a great circular cutting in the bedrock (probably a cistern: as yet undug). Most of this area was covered by a deep (ca. 0.70 m.) deposit of pottery, animal bones, architecture and sculpture fragments of the 6th century after Christ, indicating the time of destruction. In this debris were found several fragments of marble sculpture and a life-size, terracotta mask, probably representing the «leading slave» in a Roman comedy (Pl. 81 b).

This building was probably constructed in the 4th century after Christ, but we have as yet been able to dig the setting trench of the apse only within the limits of a small test trench. In the setting trench, however, and therefore placed at the time of construction, we found a tightly rolled strip of lead, ca. 0.06 m. in height and (when it is unrolled) ca. 0.12 m. long. During later examination the lead strip was partly unrolled and it is possible to see that at least 7 lines of writing in a small, cursive script are on the interior. The work of unrolling the lead and reading it will be carried on during the winter. It is likely that the lead tablet records a curse and could very well carry specific information about the building and even the builders. Whatever the nature of the inscription, the lead tablet is a very welcome addition to the historical documents of Corinth where few inscriptions of any type have been found complete.

The second major discovery involving a new area is a bronze foundry that went out of existence in the 3rd century after Christ. A large area (6.85 m. × 7.40 m.) at the northwest corner of the West Water work was devoted to the construction or at least one life size bronze statue and already over 60 large tins of mould fragments have been removed from the casting pit. In addition there have been numerous pieces of bronze patches, drippings, and even bronze slag. Pumice for the smoothing of the statue after its completion has been found, and a few pieces of terracotta sculpture that may have been parts of the models for the statue. On the last day of excavation a very large part of a mould was found in place



Corinth : a-c. Peribolos of Apollo. Pottery from against south side of temenos wall of temple A, d.
 Roman Bath. Steps at west, leading into court with herringbone tile paving, e. Roman Bath.
 Newly discovered caldarium, from south

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Corinth. Roman Bath: a. Geison from lower order, b. Epistyle-frieze block from lower order, c. Epistyle-frieze block from upper order

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