

σφραγισμένης συλλογής των οστέων θα
καταστή δυνατός και ο καθορισμός των χρόνων
καθ' ους επήλθεν αυτή.

Ε. ΠΡΩΤΟΝΟΤΑΡΙΟΥ - ΔΕΤ-ΛΑΚΗ

*

CORINTH EXCAVATIONS (1961)

The excavations of the American School of Classical Studies at Corinth were resumed on April 17 of 1961 and continued until June 10. The excavation was in charge of Henry S. Robinson, assisted by members of the School: William Berg, Steven Lattimore, Robert Schmiel, Theodora Stillwell and Ronald Stroud. Work was concentrated on the southern edge of the ancient Agora, south of the South Stoa and westward from the position of the South Basilica. Lesser projects were undertaken on the slopes of Acrocorinth and to the north of the north city wall.

In the major area we concentrated on removing the modern and Turkish fill in an effort to expose the level of Byzantine occupation; this project is a continuation of that undertaken in 1959 and 1960 when we excavated to Byzantine levels in the area directly west of the South Stoa. In the current campaign we cleared to Byzantine levels the eastern half of the area. Here we located the extension southward of the Kenchreai Road. This road, constructed in Roman times, was built directly through the South Stoa at the time of the Roman reconstruction of that building. The earlier excavations had exposed the pavement of the road for only a short distance south of the rear wall of the South Stoa. It is now apparent that the Roman road continued due southward, rising at one point in a broad flight of at least four steps as the natural ground level also rose. The road was originally paved throughout its entire length with slabs of hard limestone. Much of the paving material had been removed in the late Roman or Byzantine period; but the level of the roadway changed very slightly—except at its northern end—from Roman until Frankish times. There is now evidence to suggest that the road was first laid out and paved in the first half of the first century A.D.: the *terminus post quem* for the construction would appear to be approximately 35 A.D., the date at which an earlier well lying in the line of the road was

filled in and covered over. In the 12th and 13th centuries several large houses were built on both sides of the Kenchreai Road behind the South Stoa (Plate 67). In one of these we have found traces of a well-paved floor of tile; another is characterized by a large courtyard with well and a large storeroom equipped with a stairway leading to a roof or to an upper gallery. The courtyard of this latter house is entered from an alley extending due eastward from the Kenchreai Road; the alley, apparently a Byzantine rather than a Roman construction, was in part paved with re-used blocks of the Kenchreai Road surface. Opposite this alley there appears to have been in the 12th and 13th centuries another alley extending westward; it, however, was not paved and was in use for only a short time—not long after its construction it was blocked off and its eastern end was incorporated into the common courtyard of two houses lining the west side of the Kenchreai Road. In the southern portion of this area, where the natural ground level rises, we found very little difference in level among structures of Greek, Roman and Byzantine times. At one point a Roman mortared wall with traces of painted wall stucco appears to have been re-used in a 12th century house, the floor level of which is barely 2 centimeters higher than that of the late Roman structure. Near by, on the opposite side of the Kenchreai Road, late Roman floor levels lie almost directly upon Hellenistic mortared pavements. It is to be expected, therefore, that the plans of the Roman and Greek structures in this area will have been very seriously disturbed by the later constructions; it is not proposed to commence the removal of the Byzantine walls and the investigation of the earlier levels until the 1963 campaign.

The finds from the excavation south of the South Stoa are in general of minor interest; no significant fragments of sculpture or of inscriptions occurred and the pottery recovered was in general of familiar type. We did, however, open an unusually large number of wells, none of which are connected with the system of Peirene man-holes. At least ten wells were located and eight of these were excavated. None of those which still contained ancient fill was earlier than the first century after Christ. One well, of the early 13th century, contained a large amount of wood, including one object,

recovered apparently complete, which may be a wooden ladle or possibly a musical instrument, comparable to a modern *lyra* (Plate 70). In addition to the wells, we exposed one very elaborate cistern system of the 4th century B.C. which extends eastward from the line of the Kenchreai Road underneath the unexcavated areas lying east of the archaeological zone. Unfortunately this cistern had been re-used in Roman and again in Byzantine times; no original fill was recovered. It consisted originally of three tunnels with two man-holes plus a well; the latter served both as man-hole and as overflow shaft for the cistern. The cistern appears to have connected also with yet another network of tunnels lying to the southeast and at present inaccessible.

On the slopes of Acrocorinth above the fountain of Hadji Moustafa, we undertook a trial excavation for two and one half weeks in fields where surface investigation had revealed the probable presence of a sanctuary of Greek times. The limited work of this season was sufficient to show that the site is a large one which will require more extensive investigation in 1962. It is too early to attempt any suggestion as to the nature of the architectural remains uncovered, as we have not exposed any building in its entirety; we did, however, find two built *favissae* or pits, the filling of which consisted primarily of terracotta figurines and votive cups. The deposit of earth over the site was relatively thin and much disturbed by ploughing and by flooding from heavy rains; «pure» fill was rarely found except in the «favissae» and behind (i.e. above) some of the walls. It is clear from the finds that the sanctuary was in use in the early 6th century B.C. and that it continued to flourish through the 3rd and perhaps into the 2nd century; it was revived in Roman times and thrived for a period of perhaps two centuries, after which the buildings were destroyed (by the Herulians in A.D. 267?) and the site left desolate—except for herders and ploughmen—until our time. The most remarkable of our finds occurred in a well which adjoined the sanctuary at the west and which we presume belonged to the sacred area. We did not dig the well to bottom this season; but we found large quantities of votive cups and figurines comparable to those from the surface excavation near-by (Plate 69 a-c); and on the last day of digging we brought up three

fine marble heads—2 life-size portraits of young girl priestesses (Plate 68 a, c), wearing their hair in a style of the Antonine period; and a head of a goddess (Plate 68 b), over life-size, on the hair of which there still remain some traces of gilding. It seems more than likely that the large head belonged to the cult image of the sanctuary of Roman times and that it may represent Demeter. Pausanias mentions—among many others on the road to Acrocorinth—a shrine of Demeter and Kore (II 4.7); among the terracotta figurines discovered this year we have found a few pigs, part of a female figure holding a pig, two female figures each holding a torch—and all these suggest an association of the sanctuary with the Eleusinian deities. So far no inscriptions have turned up to assist in our identification.

A third excavation area lay north of the ancient north city wall, east of the Baths of Aphrodite and slightly west of the «tile works». In March a public works project here revealed the presence of a Roman family tomb; the investigation of it was begun by Miss Olga Alexandri, Epimeletria of the Ephoria of Argolidocorinthia. The Ephor of the area, Mr. Verdelis, eventually requested us to continue the excavation. We were glad to accede to his request. Four weeks of excavation revealed the presence of two built tombs. The larger of these had been constructed in the late 1st or early 2nd century after Christ and originally contained five sarcophagi, three of them built into niches in the rear (south) wall. The tomb walls were built of mortared masonry; the front walls of the niches were built up in brick. The front wall of the tomb itself is for the most part destroyed, but the original doorway, with its threshold and the bases of the two jambs, still remains in position. This tomb was remodelled on several occasions; at one time the front door was blocked by the insertion of a sarcophagus directly in front of it. At that period, we assume, the original courtyard in front of the tomb was converted into an additional tomb chamber. The second of the large tombs, adjoining the first tomb at the west, was slightly smaller and of later date; it contained three poros sarcophagi arranged on the east, south, and west sides of a tiled floor. This smaller tomb may have been built as late as the 3rd or 4th century. Both tombs were kept in use as places of burial until at least the 5th century

after Christ. Each tomb had a vaulted roof; but the vaults in their entirety and most of the walls had fallen as the result of earthquake or wash-out (the clay on which the tombs were built was subject to rapid erosion). The finds from these tombs were few. Among the significant ones are: three inscribed lead plaques, each folded but not pierced by a nail as is common with the lead curse tablets (these plaques have not yet been cleaned or deciphered); several gold bracteates which seem to bear in relief the figure of a dove in flight (as on the coins of Sikyon).

It is proposed that the excavations of Corinth be resumed in April of 1962, when work will be concentrated in the Byzantine levels south of the South Stoa, at the sanctuary on the slopes of Acrocorinth, and in the area of the ancient quarry to the south of the Odeion.

HENRY ROBINSON

*

DISCOVERIES AT ISTHμία (1961)

The Sanctuary of Poseidon

The excavation at Isthmia in the spring and summer of 1961 was largely supplementary. In the Precinct of Poseidon (Plate 72a) we finished the excavation, except for some cleaning that will be done in connection with the final study and publication of the Sanctuary. In the northeast corner an area in front of the entrance to the Northeast Caves (Plate 75a) was excavated, but nothing was found that would help explain further the use of the caves. Later intruders, who had used the underground chambers as storerooms, had brought changes that obscured the original condition.

One undisturbed corner of the area produced an unexpected discovery of three Persian gold coins (Plate 71c). They are of the kind first introduced by King Darius I (521-486 B.C.) and called after him 'Darics' (Δαρεικοί). Large numbers of these coins were brought to Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., but these are the first examples found in the excavations either at Corinth or at the Isthmia. Since they came out of debris from the Archaic Temple of Poseidon, which was destroyed by fire about 475 B.C., we may assume that they—like the many silver coins found in earlier campaigns—had

been brought by worshipers as gifts to the Temple.

The Theater

Further digging in the Theater (Plate 73b) resulted in valuable confirmation of the date of the original construction. A subterranean channel, designed as outlet for the rain-water that washed down into the orchestra, had been abandoned and filled up about the middle of the fourth century B.C. This drain would, of course, have served its purpose for some time before it was filled up, and we can now with confidence state that the Theater was built before 350, perhaps as early as the fifth century B.C.

The Later Stadium

In the area surrounding the Sacred Precinct, exploratory trenches led to the discovery of two new buildings, one—and possibly both—closely related to the Isthmian Games. In the conspicuous hollow to the southeast of the Sanctuary we dug several trenches in the Later Stadium (Plate 72b), which was found to be remarkably well preserved. In 1956, when the Earlier Stadium with its intricate starting line was discovered close to the Temple of Poseidon, it seemed reasonable to conclude that the Later Stadium was a creation from the time of the Roman colony of Corinth. It is now clear that the Early Stadium was abandoned long before the destruction of Corinth in 146 B.C., and that the Later Stadium was constructed in Hellenistic times, perhaps before the end of the fourth century. It is well preserved, except at one corner where a stream has washed away part of the structure. The starting line is of a type known from most Greek stadia, with a double groove to mark the position of the contestants' feet (Plate 71b). Vertical posts set in sockets of lead divided the starting line into 18 sections of ca. 1.505 m. each. On either side of the race track is a water channel opening at intervals into large basins (Plate 73a). A stone walk leading from each basin to the edge of the spectatory shows that the water in the basins was intended for the spectators as well as for the athletes. The sides of the Stadium rose in a series of broad steps on which the spectators sat or stood watching the games. There was a proedria with stone seats near the middle of the Stadium.



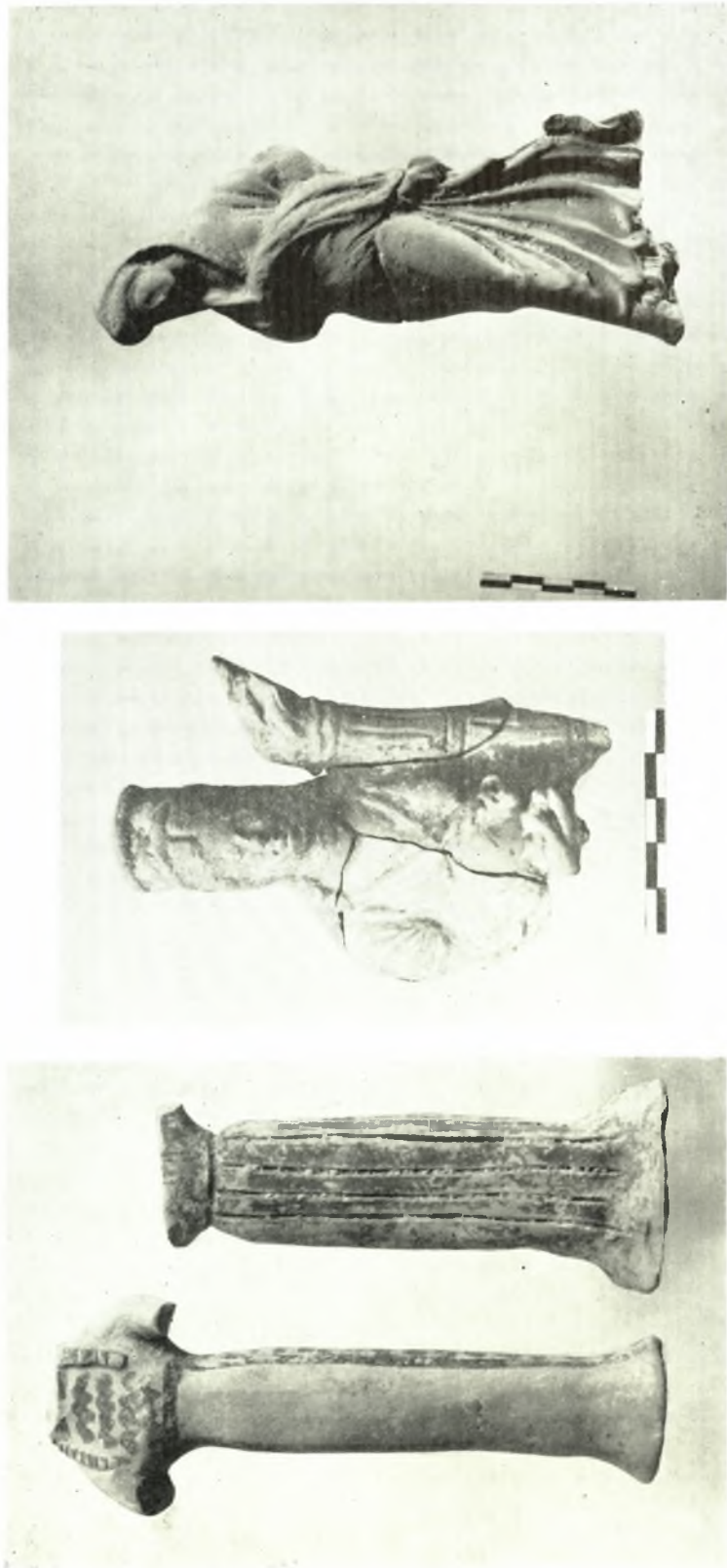
Corinth. Byzantine houses to east and west of the Kenchreai Road

H. ROBINSON



Corinth: a. Head of a priestess from the Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone, b. Head of a goddess from the Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone, c. Head of a priestess from the Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone

H. ROBINSON



Corinth Excavations 1961. Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone: a. Terracotta figurines of the 6th cent. B.C., b. Terracotta figure of Eleusinian goddess holding, torch and pig, c. Terrac. dancer, late 4th cent. B.C.

H. ROBINSON