

SECTION Y
1937
EXCAVATION SUMMARY

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Section Y, lying between sections ΣT to the west and Φ - X to the east, is a part of the rapidly descending North slope of the Areiopages. In consequence, it has suffered very much from levelling operations in modern times, by which it has been cut into three ascending terraces for the foundations and cellars of modern houses. The uppermost (southern) terrace and the central terrace as a result show no traces of antiquities, except for such wells, cisterns, drains, etc., as were too deep underground to be disturbed. At the southwest corner of the section there were three grave-cuttings faintly discernable in the rock, and a quantity of Proto-geometric sherds were found in and around them, undoubtedly from the graves which had been nearly obliterated. Along the west side of the area, at the west end of the two lower terraces, were found the foundations of a large rectangular structure, containing in one corner a well with a marble well-head, and beside it a large rectangular trough or tank lined with cement, into which water from the well could be dumped. As the foundations are light, and the area which they enclose is very large, with no signs of any interior supports, it seems impossible that the building could have been roofed. The well and tank suggest an open walled court, used perhaps as a garden or barnyard. The east and west walls continue under the modern houses toward the north; the house to which this court belonged must then lie under the excavation houses. The floor of this court was broken

Byz. House

through over most of the area, which was cleaned to bedrock. The fill to bedrock here was late, fourth century pottery and coins being found to bottom; this fill, however, yielded a gold daric. The pottery from under the floor and in the well was coarse early Byzantine, of the eleventh century; two coins from the well were also eleventh century, and many eleventh and early twelfth century coins turned up in the disturbed fills in the region nearby. The house then would seem to belong in that period.

The Well

The well, 25.00 metres deep, was lined with tiles, and, with its marble well-head, was clearly not Byzantine. The Byzantine^e fill in fact went to only -13.80 metres, where it changed to late Roman. The Roman fill was stratified from the fourth century A.D. to the first century A.D. A great quantity of coarse pottery was found of the third century with type XXVIII lamps. Further down, the lamps were Types XXVII and XX, many signed alpha; then at the bottom a fill with XVIII, XX and XXV lamps. From the third century level came a small head of a woman of island marble (Y 330, S 883); from the second, a relief depicting a banquet and inscribed X P Y Σ I Σ H P Ω I (I 4707), together with another small marble head (Y 351, S 884) and a ring (which disintegrated in cleaning) set with a carnelian which was carved intaglio with two standing figures, one carrying a cornucopia and the other perhaps a caduceus.

Just to the east of the well a Hellenistic cistern was dug. It was a chamber cistern, but its mouth and neck, as well as the upper part of the chamber, had been cut off in late levelling operations. It had apparently been filled all

at once, as there was no stratification; its fill was a hopeless mixture of third and second century pottery. Several Thasian and Rhodian amphora handles were found, and a number of terrae cottaee including four heads, a bearded mask, and a small altar with reliefs of Nikai decorating trophies. The lamps found in the cistern were Types VI, VII, IX, XII and XVIII.

To the east again of the cistern was found a shallow rectangular stone structure, entered at its east end by steps coming down from above, and floored with reused flat roof tiles. In it were found thirteen skeletons, laid in three layers; those of the lower two layers had been somewhat disturbed and pushed out of the way to make room for the later burials. No grave offerings were found beyond a pair of earrings of bronze wire, which disintegrated. Very late Roman and a few coarse early Byzantine sherds were found in a pocket in bedrock beside the wall of the tomb, which is certainly Byzantine. Its walls are preserved only .65 metres, and there is no evidence as to how it was originally roofed or covered.

The whole section is traversed from north to south, at a line a little to the east of its centre, by a drain tunneled through the rock. The drain is entered by manholes at various points; its fill was of sand, with much early Roman pottery and a little later; it may have gone out of use and been filled at the time of the Herulean incursion. Several Type XX lamps were found in it, and a Type XXVIII; also a considerable amount of Roman glass and a small marble woman's

head (Y 67, S 827). At the north end the drain is cut in a hard-packed sandy fill which is certainly a road fill. We have then about six metres of an ancient street preserved over the drain at the north edge of the section, and it seems safe to assume that the ancient street originally ran over the drain for the whole length of its course. This was probably merely a side street branching off another street running behind the Enneakrounos and the stoa in Section T, and gave access only to the private houses on the slope of the Areiopagos. Beside the street to the east, and in the northeast part of the section, part of an ancient east-west retaining wall of red breccia blocks is preserved; and behind it to the south, part of another of limestone built in a fourth century polygonal style. Both these retaining walls continue toward the east under Aeschines Street, which was left undug. In the late fill at the east edge of the area was also uncovered a skeleton, lying complete on its back with the head toward the west. With the skeleton were found a bronze seal and a seal ring set with a carnelian inscribed in Arabic characters, a tobacco box, and a number of Turkish coins. The bronze seal and the seal ring date respectively from 1798 and 1802; the supposition does not seem rash that we have here a victim of the Greek War of Independence, particularly since a lead sphere, that may have been a bullet, was found among the ribs.

Seven other wells, and a cistern, were dug in section Y. Of the wells, one was Turkish and another produced nothing but dug bedrock, innocent of sherds, from top to bottom.

A third, which lay at the west edge of the section, produced a little Byzantine pottery to a considerable depth, then had a handful of fourth century B.C. sherds at the bottom.

Another well, a shallow unfinished shaft only 3.10 metres deep, with depressions for footholds down opposite faces, produced seventh century pottery. Several sub-geometric skyphoi, some cups like the inscribed cups found on Mount Hymettus, two early lamps with unbridged nozzles, and imitation Proto-Corinthian kotylai were found; also a large basin with handles on the rim. Fragments of early figurines were also found, representing horses and columnar women. Fragments of late Proto-Corinthian kotylai, and of one of the "transitional" style, suggest as a date for this deposit the third quarter of the seventh century. The best piece found in the well was an Attic oinochoe decorated with widely separated vertical bands of rather metallic black glaze; the panel in front is filled with a picture of a large wine or oil amphora of an early type, easily recognizable in spite of the fact that its foot has been elongated the better to fill the space which it occupies.

A fifth well was covered at its mouth by a brick vault, and stood empty to below water level. It is lined with a beautifully built wall of small stones fitted closely together without mortar. This wall went to a depth of more than nine metres, at which level it rests on a tile kerbing. At the place where wall and tiles meet, a sort of window in the wall is opened by a large slab of stone, in the cavity behind, between tiles and well-cutting, were coarse Hellenistic

amphoras, used as a packing. One of these, which we were able to get out, had one handle broken away; the other had a Knidian stamp. We were able to dig only a short distance in this well, because we found the tiles to be cracked and falling, and the danger of a general collapse was too great. What fill we were able to dig was Hellenistic, and produced several Knidian amphora handles. We abandoned this well at a depth of 11.75 metres.

Another well, at the southeast corner of the section had also to be abandoned because its tile lining collapsed. We had dug to -12.00 metres, going through a late Roman fill (fourth century?) which produced a marble Triple Hekate (Y 304, S 862), and were finding a third century well deposit when we were compelled to stop.

The seventh well lay at the south edge of the section, a little to the east of the southwest corner. The well was 13.55 metres deep, with a mixed dumped fill to -8.50, where the well fill began. From the upper fill we had, with other later objects, some black-figured sherds, and two fragments of Archaic terracotta figurines. The upper part of the well fill was late second or early third century and evidently consisted largely of a dump from a sculptor's workshop. Among the marbles found were two reliefs, one (Y 225, S 851) showing a seated woman with a child standing in front of her, and the other (Y 249, S 857) with a bust of a draped woman, representing Selene, with the ends of the crescent moon showing behind her shoulders. In the round were a triple Hekate (Y 227, S 852), a seated Mother of the Gods (Y 231, S 853) and a Silenus (Y 239, S 856); some of the

other marbles indeed seem not to have had their finishing touches. Small bronzes also were found in this level; three statuettes (Y 241-244-245, B 409-412-413) of a standing draped woman, a seated draped woman, and a man in a short dress girded up at the waist; two small bronze cups; a small stag or deer; a plaque with a boukranion; and two flat plaques, pedimented at the top and tapering downward; also a dicast's ballot. Together with these small sculptures were found two human skeletons, possibly used by the sculptor in the study of anatomy. Unfortunately there were no tools. The lamps found at this level were Type XXVII; among the coarse pottery was a red glazed jug with the letters H O I N in added white; more letters existed, but have come off with the peeling of the glaze. Below the dump from the sculptor's workshop, the fill became gradually earlier, producing plentiful coarse pottery. The lamps were successively XXVII, XXV and XX, and XX with XVIII. The well fill at the bottom was thus first century A.D.; and very many early imperial coins were found to corroborate the evidence of the lamps.

These wells, with the Byzantine-Roman well, make a total of eight wells dug this year in Section Y. In addition to the cistern mentioned above, a second chamber cistern was dug; but its fill to within .50 metres of the floor was Turkish, and over the floor Late Roman with nothing of any great interest beyond Type XXVIII lamps.