

SECTIONS RHO AND ETA

1937



SECTIONS RHO AND ETA

1937

INTRODUCTION

These two adjoining sections are summarised together because the Byzantine settlements in both form a continuous whole, and the temple of Ares, first brought to light in 1935, extends throughout both of these arbitrary areas.

In Rho during the past season we dug a long narrow strip which is on the west of the section, under modern Eponymon Street. The results consisted almost exclusively of the Byzantine Rooms and street, with the east end of the temple beneath them.

In Eta little actual digging was done, but the Byzantine rooms here overlying the temple area, dug in 1935, were removed at the same time as their neighbors in Rho, thus completely exposing the foundations of the temple.

BYZANTINE SETTLEMENT

The most salient feature is the road, running approximately north and south, largely underlying Eponymon Street, and serving as the main thoroughfare in this neighborhood from the earliest Byzantine times until the present era.

Below the modern and Turkish filling at the top, 1.25 m. of which was removed by Sophokles Lekkas during



the summer of 1936, we found a mixed layer of late Byzantine and early Turkish sherds and coins, varying from 0.50 m. to 1.35 m. in thickness. Below this, in general, there was a fairly thick Byzantine layer, with 11th and 12th century fill in it. This was approximately at the level of the tops of the room-walls on either side, somewhat higher than the interior floor levels of the houses.

By far the greatest part of the road fill, however, was a deep layer, in many places 2.00 m. thick, of Vandal sherds and coins. This sometimes contained very early Byzantine fragments, and an occasional early Byzantine coin, but the bulk of this fill may probably be dated in the fifth and sixth centuries after Christ, with but a little from the "Dark Ages". In most places this accumulation had no stroses in it, but was one continuous fill. It covered the eastern portion of the temple foundations, as well as the good early Roman stroses to the north and south of them.

It is not probable that this area was used as a road until after most of this Vandal filling had been thrown in. Some of it shows traces of having been washed down by rains from a higher level at the south.

Before the latest Roman and Vandal times, this section formed part of the open Agora, simply an open



area around the Temple of Ares, somewhat cluttered by statues and monument bases.

The Byzantine rooms to the east of this road were largely cleared in 1936, their western walls only appearing this year, bordering immediately on the road. To the west we found remains of a large settlement, some of the walls of which extended over to the Byzantine rooms already cleared in Section Eta.

Altogether about thirteen rooms appeared, some with fairly well-preserved walls, and stroses, others badly disturbed by the latest Byzantines and Turks. Almost every room had traces of one or two large storage pits sunk in the floor.

These constructions were not well enough preserved to be definitely grouped into houses or multicellular structures.

In their demolition, together with the destruction of those in Eta, it seemed from the pottery and coins that there were two great periods of building, one in the late eleventh century, the other in the thirteenth. The eastern group of rooms suffered more from later disturbances than the others. Since in some cases the highest stroses preserved in the rooms were considerably below the street level, it may be assumed that some of these may have been basements with storage



pits sunk in the dirt floors, and that the main floors were supported on wooden beams at a higher level.

When the rooms were demolished we found beneath the walls and stoses, wherever they did not rest directly on the temple's foundations, the same Vandal fill that underlay the Byzantine stoses on the road.

The character of the later walls was similar to that of most 13th century Byzantine construction, with considerable use of large vertical blocks of stone (in this case seized from the temple's foundation) together with smaller bits of stone, with no emphasis on larger blocks at the corners. The earlier walls, where preserved, seemed to be of smaller rubble, put together with less care, and with the occasional larger blocks in less profusion.

#### TEMPLE OF ARES

Of this temple none of the superstructure is preserved in situ. Parts of the foundations, together with cuttings for the complete rectangular outline of the temple, are well preserved and were lying beneath the Byzantine settlement, occasionally with a layer of fifth and sixth century A.D. Vandal fill between the Byzantine remains and the actual blocks. The best preserved parts are at the east end, in Rho, discovered during the present season. A small fragment of this portion together with the cuttings for the absent blocks in the centre and west end were brought to light in Eta, during the 1935 campaign.



We have, then, the traces of a large rectangular building, on practically the same axis as the Odeion, situated just north of it, opposite the West Buildings of the Agora.

The cuttings in bedrock and the blocks still in situ show that the course below the euthynteria of the building measured ca. 36.36 m. by 16.76 m. These foundations were apparently solid, formed of large blocks of Piræus poros set in carelessly-laid courses throughout the whole temple area. Most of these blocks were removed, probably in very late Roman times; we have parts of five courses preserved, the top one being just below the euthynteria. The bottom blocks of the temple are not set on bed-rock, but upon a hard-packed layer of small stones, ca. 0.20 m. thick, which lies in turn upon the rock. In a few small places, however, where the bed-rock was probably higher and stronger, parts of it were allowed to remain, as a setting for the upper foundation courses.

Many of these large blocks in the foundations possess anathyrosis, drawn edges, lewis-holes, etc., but not at appropriate places, showing that they were mostly re-used; one of them bears a mason's mark.

The ground level that went with the temple is partly preserved in a hard-packed stratum against the topmost blocks in situ, on parts of the northern and



eastern sides. It seems at the present time that this is an early Roman level.

Of the superstructure there exist probably several small fragments, found during the last few years in this neighborhood, some this year, usually built into late walls or in otherwise unimportant fills. One bit was found in Section Theta Theta this season.

These Pentelic marble fragments seem to have good fifth century B.C. workmanship, are all of the same scale, and apparently belong to a large Doric building of the size approximately of the Theseion; (this temple is only slightly larger than the Theseion). Furthermore, most of these members have another bond in common; they bear mason's marks, letters which seem to date from the time of Augustus.

No other building of sufficient size has appeared to claim them. Since most of the bits were found in the immediate neighborhood of this temple, it is probably unnecessary to look very far away for their original home.

The parts preserved include various bits of the cornice, with mutules; bits of triglyph, a fragmentary ceiling beam, and other pieces. From the spacing of the mutules it is possible to estimate the intercolumniation of the sides as 2.80 m. This will permit a



restoration on the foundations as existing of six columns on the front with thirteen on the sides, allowing ca. 1.10 m. all around for the steps and euthynteria. Of the interior arrangement of the temple we can say nothing with certainty.

The workmanship of the marble fragments certainly shows a fifth century B.C. date, but the mason's marks, together with the Roman type of construction in the foundation, utilizing a thin layer of small stones between rock and blocks, point to a complete rebuilding in the early Imperial times. The fact that the temple is oriented on the same axis as the Odeion may hint that the two are nearly contemporary. The Greek site from which the temple was removed in toto still must remain a matter of conjecture.

The identification of the temple as that of Ares rests solely upon remarks of Pausanias and the pseudo-Aeschines. The former mentions it in the neighborhood of the statue of Demosthenes, the Tyrannicides, and the orchestra, with various statues nearby, including one of Pindar. Pseudo-Aeschines says that the statue of Pindar was in front of the Royal Stoa.