

early stepped  
retaining wall

## SECTION K, 1953

Excavation was carried on in two main areas in Section K in 1953 :

1. The area south of the Middle Stoa where a large part of the filling thrown in at the time the building was built was removed; the earlier Agora floor beneath was thus exposed.

2. The area between the South Stoa and the Fountain House where remains of a large building, perhaps the Heliaia, came to light.

A little work was also done in the porch of the Fountain House which was found to be covered with a deep fill of Hellenistic times, showing that this part of the building had gone out of use when the Middle Stoa was built or soon afterwards.

A late Roman cistern which overlies the west end of the South Stoa was cleared and then incorporated in a new entrance stairway to the excavations.

The South Stoa itself was found to abut on the east wall of the Heliaia.

Three wells were dug, one Protogeometric, one Geometric, one Archaic.

### MIDDLE STOA BUILDING FILL

In the 1933 campaign much of the south foundation of the Middle Stoa was cleared. In 1934 the line of a stepped retaining wall about eleven meters south of it and roughly parallel to it was fixed. Some of the actual steps and some backers for steps remained in position towards the west. A pillaged trench

(Byzantine fill) with traces of steps cut in the soft bedrock continued the line to the east, ending just short of the Hellenistic Great Drain (Large photo 5-129). It was realized that these steps were early, perhaps of Archaic times, and that they had been covered over when the Middle Stoa was built.

In 1953 it was decided to remove the mass of Hellenistic filling between the Stoa and the Stepped Retaining Wall and to expose the floor of the Classical Agora. This was done over an area extending from the Hellenistic Great Drain westward to a line running south from Pier 1 of the Middle Stoa.

The late deposits had all been removed in the previous excavations. They were chiefly of Turkish and Byzantine times; there appears to have been no considerable late Roman deposit in this area. The Hellenistic fill remained, honeycombed with late wells and pits, late walls and pillaged wall trenches. It stood to a maximum height of a little above the top of the highest preserved step of the Stepped Retaining Wall, i.e. a meter or so below the level to which it originally rose.

As we dug it was quite clear that we had to do with an artificial filling that had been dumped into the area to raise the ground level. The earth was generally loose, and only occasionally did we find firm level layers - i.e. working floors - , notably in the southwest part of the area under consideration at about the level of the top of the Stepped Retaining Wall. More often the layers were sloping and in the area in front of the large monument (propylon) they sloped down both from the north and from the south showing that earth had been dumped in from

both sides. That the filling rose as work progressed on the building of the Middle Stoa was evident from the fact that layers of red conglomerate chips were found at different levels near the south foundation.

The earth used for the filling was of different kinds and had obviously been drawn from different sources. Conglomerate chips from the dressing of the foundation blocks of the Stoa have already been mentioned. There was a good deal of green dug bedrock, which usually contained only a few sherds and these chiefly early ones - archaic, geometric and even a few Mycenaean and prehistoric. Elsewhere there was brown or black earth often with ash or carbonized matter. This contained normal amounts of pottery, mostly of Hellenistic times. In the Water Basin in front of the Stepped Retaining Wall a vast amount of rubbish had been dumped; in some places there was more broken pottery than earth. This pottery was gathered and sorted fairly carefully at first, but when it became clear that the pots were already broken when they arrived at the dumping place and that there was practically no chance of making up any whole pieces, it was sorted in the field. Over ninety per cent of it was coarse, and most of this was discarded, samples of rims, handles and feet being kept. There were hundreds of stamped amphora handles, most of which were catalogued. The glazed pottery was kept for the most part, except for wall fragments of plain vases.

In undisturbed parts of the fill I saw no pottery that need be later than about the middle of the second century B.C. The Megarian bowls were in general of the normal figured variety

and there were none of the long-petalled variety which is common in later second century save one example and this not typical and undoubtedly early of its kind. (K 2705, P 23095). This was found in the settling basin in front of the west end of the Stepped Retaining Wall, not in the general filling, and, though covered to a considerable depth by the general filling, it may be later than most of the things in the general filling, for the settling basin seems to have been in use right down to the time of the filling; the bowl K 2705, P 23095 may therefore be a strictly contemporary piece that got into the settling basin in the last days of its operation shortly before the general filling started.


Two terracotta drains, called B and C, were set down into the Hellenistic fill. They appear to be contemporary with the fill. Drain B was made with two sets of U-shaped tiles, one inverted on top of the other. Although we have not yet found its start, it may have taken water from the NE corner of the Fountain House. We traced its course from just south of the Water Basin across the Water Basin and the earlier Agora floor until it emptied into the Great Drain just south of the Middle Stoa. It was not well preserved. At one point only were some cover tiles left, and these were broken. Some fragmentary lower tiles remained at several points. Elsewhere there was only the trench, and this was often difficult if not impossible to detect as the same loose Hellenistic fill was thrown back in when the tiles had been removed. The fortunate discovery of an almost complete amphora of early Roman times in the trench of this drain gives a clue to the date of its disuse (K 1781, P 22901).

Drain C was much better preserved. It consisted of rectangular lower tiles covered by U-shaped ones. Samples have been catalogued, K 2707-8, A 2282-3. Whence this drain took water is not clear. We first find it at the point where it crosses Drain B not far east of the Hellenistic Great Drain. From here it runs westward, poorly preserved at first then well preserved, to empty into the drain that passes west of the Middle Stoa. Stratification at one point showed clearly that Drain C was layed at the time the general filling was done. At other points we found early Roman sherds above it as if it had been repaired then or perhaps a start made in removing it as was the case with Drain B.

Underneath the Hellenistic filling south of the Middle Stoa the floor of the earlier Agora was found firm and smooth and rising gently towards the south and east. Its surface had evidently been carefully and deliberately prepared for it was very hard. Towards the west part of the area cleared, i.e. in front of the Fountain House, the stones were worn smooth by traffic.

### THE HELIAIA

Between the South Stoa and the Fountain House the remains of a large building came to light which may perhaps be identified as the Heliaia. It occupied an area some 32.40 m. from east to west and 28.30 m. from north to south. It was originally perhaps an open area surrounded by a peribolos wall and approached from the Agora to the north by a broad flight of steps; at least no interior walls or supports that can be associated with the earliest period have yet been located. At the south the peribolos wall was also a retaining wall against the E-W street some two or three meters higher. There was a small door or gate near the middle of the east side. This earliest structure is shown by the material and style of its masonry to date from the sixth century B.C.; ceramic evidence corroborates this and would permit a date as early as the second quarter of the century. The ceramic evidence is derived from two wells which were closed in the early sixth century, probably at the time the area was turned from private to public use. One of these wells, the well of the Cock Lekythos (P 3207, Well 38:KZ) was dug in 1934. The other well was dug in 1953 (Well at 58:KE). Early sixth century pottery was also found in the pillaged trench of a light wall cut off by the steps of the north side, and in some of the lowest deposits over bedrock elsewhere. The material used for the steps on the north and for the foundation packing on the other three sides is a hard creamy limestone. It is dressed with a pointed chisel; there is no sign of a toothed chisel having been used on any

of the original surfaces. Above the foundation packing the material is poros; several blocks are preserved near the south-east corner, one of them with a mason's mark  in archaic characters. There is no sign of a toothed chisel here either. All the evidence, then, goes to show that this large area was first laid out in the archaic period; it should therefore be one of the oldest and, from its size, one of the most important buildings on the Agora.

Some time in the fifth century B.C. large propylon or some sort of monumental entrance was added at the center of the north side. The soft yellow poros blocks of the core of this remain, and the pillaged trench of the facing blocks of limestone. Many fragments of the latter blocks were found in the trench.

About the middle of the fourth century B.C. a water basin was set in front of the north side towards the west. This had a small but deep draw basin, north of which was a narrow compartment with a flight of steps leading down into it from the west. This gave access to the outlet pipe of the draw basin and to the underground terracotta drain leading off to the north.

Both the water basin and the propylon went out of use at the time the Middle Stoa was built. Many of their blocks were removed, the rest covered up.

Within the area of the original peribolos the pillaged trench of an interior wall was partly cleared near the center of the area; a north-south stretch which turns eastward at its south end. An isolated poros pier a little to the SW of the corner may go with it. The wall is not set symmetrically in the area, as a

whole, but it is symmetrical with the (inside) later peristyle (see below). The date of this construction is uncertain, but if it can be associated with the fourth century B.C. fill in the area it may date from that period. It was perhaps removed in Early Roman times.

The clearest traces of an interior arrangement belong to the latest period, probably but not certainly Early Roman. In this period there was a peristyle of twenty columns (6 x 6) set considerably off center in the eastern part of the area as a whole; along the west side of the area was a row of four rooms. Little remains of all this save the pillaged pits and trenches, sometimes with a foundation packing of small rough stones, occasionally with a re-used block or two.

The building was finally destroyed in the Herulian raid of 267 A.D. Shortly after that a bronze foundry was established over its ruins, the waste from which was found all over the southern half of the area and extending eastward into the area of the South Stoa.