

## EXCAVATION SUMMARY

Section  $\Omega$  : 1970

INTRODUCTION	p. 1
ROMAN HOUSE H	p. 1
<u>Peristyle</u>	p. 2
<u>Well P 21:2</u>	p. 4
<u>Well P 21:3</u>	p. 5
<u>Room 1</u>	p. 7
<u>Room 2</u>	p. 9
<u>Room 2A</u>	p. 11
<u>Room 3</u>	p. 12
<u>Room 3A</u>	p. 15
<u>East Tunnel</u>	p. 17
<u>Room 4</u>	p. 18
<u>Room 5</u>	p. 22
<u>Sculpture</u>	p. 22
<u>CONCLUSIONS</u>	p. 23
INSCRIPTIONS	p. 26
CISTERN P 20:2	p. 26

## EXCAVATION SUMMARY

### Section Ω: 1970

Excavations were conducted in section Ω from May 24 to August 22 with a crew that fluctuated from eight to forty-one men. Work was carried out in area P-Q 20-21 on the large grid. The detailed account of the excavation may be found in notebooks nos. XIII and XIV; see also PD #

### ROMAN HOUSE H

Work centered around a large late Roman complex now known as Roman House H. Its overall dimensions are ca. 34.80 m. north-south and ca. 28.15 m. east-west. Its state of preservation varies tremendously. At the north, modern cellars have cut deep into bedrock, obliterating all but the slightest traces of earlier remains; at the south, where the fill is deeper and the house was set into the hill, considerably more remains; and under the line of old Areopagos Street, which covered the southeast corner of the house, the walls stand as high as 3.30 m. The basic plan is a large rectangular courtyard with rooms opening onto it from all four sides.

The western rooms were first dug by M. Crosby in 1938

as the "Conglomerate Wall Area" (see  $\Omega$  I, pp. 186-7). These comprise a suite of five rooms, a large square one to the north, and four smaller ones to the south. More recently, these rooms were assigned to Philosophical School C, which lies immediately to the west, though at an appreciably higher level (see PD #1756 and  $\Omega$  XI, passim). This season's work, however, makes it clear that these rooms are to be associated with the peristyle of Roman House H, immediately to the east. Other than cleaning, no work was done on these rooms in 1970.

This season the courtyard and the rooms to the south and east were studied. In addition to the peristyle, we cleared seven rooms (nos. 1, 2, 2A, 3, 3A, 4 and 5) and two subsidiary areas (the tunnel east of 3A and the pools east of Room 4). The following is a room by room account.

PERISTYLE (  $\Omega$  XIV, pp. 2639-2651)

The peristyle of the house is oriented north-south, with five columns on the long sides and three on the short. The width is ca. 12.35 m., and we were unable to determine the full length, though it must be at least 15.90 m. and was probably around 18 m.

Three ionic column bases of Pentelic marble remain in situ at the southwest corner of the peristyle. They are ca. 0.16 high with a lower diameter of 0.64 m. and an upper one

of 0.53 m. Mason's marks (Θ and Β) on two of the bases suggest reuse; Mrs. L. S. Meritt has examined them and would assign them to the first century B.C.

A complete ionic capital of Pentelic marble (A 3866) was recovered from one of the wells in the courtyard (P 21:2), clearly of the same series as the bases; its mason's mark (Β) matches that of the second column from the south of the west colonnade.

Also from well P 21:2, we recovered a large piece of the top of an unfluted shaft of Hymettian marble which is of appropriate dimensions. Furthermore, throughout destruction fill in the south half of the peristyle numerous fragments of unfluted shafts were found, both of Pentelic and Hymettian marble.

Thus a peristyle of unfluted ionic columns seems certain. Evidence for the rest of the peristyle remains in the form of supports for the columns, either large conglomerate blocks or the packing for them.

A second storey seems possible. From destruction fill in Room 3 we have an ionic base of Pentelic marble (A 3868) ca. 0.34 m. in diameter; and in destruction fill in Room 4 we found an ionic capital (A 3867) ca. 0.38 m. by 0.36 m. with the same diameter of 0.34 m. Throughout the house, from both modern and destruction fill, we found fragments of other capitals of this same series.

Several hydraulic installations - three channels and two wells - were found in the courtyard.

In the south aisle of the peristyle there is a square settling basin of brick, ca. 0.36 m. by 0.36 m. by 0.52 m. deep, which is fed by channels from Rooms 1 and 2. From this basin a stone and tile drain leads off through the courtyard in a northeasterly direction.

A second channel starts just north of the fourth base from the south in the east colonnade. It runs eastward through the east aisle of the peristyle, under its east wall, and off to the main north-south drain in the east part of the house. This channel apparently drained water from the courtyard proper; traces of what seems to be a channel of large flat tiles are visible just west of the second column from the south of the east colonnade.

A third terracotta channel heads off from just west of the middle column of the north colonnade, heading northeast.

Well P 21:2 is located in the intercolumniation between the third and fourth columns from the south of the east colonnade. It was 0.80 m. in diameter, lined with heavily mortared tiles and stones, and was 5.25 m. deep.

In addition to the ionic capital mentioned above, we recovered three marble heads from the well. The first (S 2354) is a Nike related to the Nike of Paionios; the

second (S 2355), Alexander the Great, related to the so-called "Eubouleus type" with long flowing hair; and the third (S 2356) a portrait of a bearded man, perhaps a kosmetes. All three seem to date from the second half of the second century A.D.; the drilled pupils of the Alexander and the bearded head do not as a rule appear in Athens before A.D. 141/2 (Harrison, Agora, I, p. 36).

Very little pottery was recovered from the well, but it seems to have been filled during or just after the destruction of the house in the late sixth century A.D.

Well P 21:3 was located in the intercolumniation between the first and second column from the south of the west colonnade. It was covered with a fine marble well-head ca. 1.63 m. by 1.28 m. by 0.22 m. high, with an elaborately moulded collar and border. It shows signs of considerable wear. Below, the well was ca. 1.20 m. in diameter and ca. 6.75 m. deep, unlined and cut into bedrock.

At a depth of ca. 4.75 m., a deposit of several pots (P 28347, 28348) was found, dating to the seventh century A.D. These are probably to be associated with the reuse of the well after the house went out of use; a reuse represented by a crude collar of large stones built to raise the level of the mouth ca. 0.45 m.

Very little pottery was recovered lower down, but it does seem as though the well originally went out of use in

the late sixth century A.D.

### CHRONOLOGY

The court, especially to the south, was covered with about a meter of undisturbed late Roman fill. This seemed to divide into two fills, the lower ca. 0.30 to 0.50 m. thick. The questionable strosis which divides them is perhaps to be thought of as that which was in use after the house was destroyed, during its seventh century reuse. In the court, this late reuse is best illustrated by Well P 21:3; and elsewhere in the house (especially Rooms 1 and 4) further evidence was encountered.

Generally the pottery of the lower destruction fill, though not susceptible to close dating, would seem to suggest a date in the late sixth century A.D. for the initial destruction of the house, a date consistent with the supposition that the house was destroyed by the Slavic invasion of the 580's.

An attempt was also made to dig undisturbed fill of the floor in the court in order to get a firm construction date for the house. The fill was ca. 0.50 m. thick, resting on bedrock. The pottery from this lowest fill (Pottery Lot # S 388) seems to date from the very late fifth century A.D. to the early years of the sixth.

ROOM 1 (pp. 2653-2659)

Room 1 is a small room of irregular plan, built to accommodate the changes of course in the large conglomerate wall which makes up its west and south wall.

The room has two doors, one in the north wall, at the northeast corner, leading to the peristyle, and the other in the east wall, leading into Room 2. Bedrock in this room lies at a high level, and both thresholds are set somewhat high in relation to the surrounding rooms. In its present position the north threshold lies ca. 0.48 m. above the floor of the peristyle, and the east threshold lies ca. 0.45 m. above the floor of Room 2.

The room was first dug by M. Crosby in 1938 as Room 3 of the Conglomerate Wall Area (  $\Omega$  I, p. 186 and  $\Omega$  VI, pp. 1188-1190). She seems to have brought it down to the top of destruction fill, and a bit lower at the east.

The principal feature of the room is a brick and stone kiln resting on a bedrock at a high level in the southwest corner. It is ca. 1.70 m. in diameter, preserved to a height of 0.60 m. Its use - whether for lime, bread or pottery - is not clear.

To the northeast of the kiln is a crudely constructed catch-basin built of tiles; leading away from it in a



northeasterly direction is a channel of tiles and reused marbles which passes under the north door and into the peristyle.

The date of both the kiln and the channel has usually been put in the seventh century, on the basis of a coin of Heraclius, 615/6 A.D., found in the channel (coin 2,  $\Omega$  VI, p. 1078).

The early history of this room is far from clear. The extensive seventh century reuse has somewhat obscured the original plan: just north of the kiln there is a wall which was cut down and out of use by the seventh century, whereas the present north wall is of decidedly scruffy construction; also, the north threshold has been set in backwards. Yet the greatest problem in reconstructing the room during the period of use of the house is the high level of the bedrock, which slopes down from south to north and rises especially high in the southwest corner. Perhaps the easiest explanation is to assume that Room 1 was originally open to the sky, which would also account for the apparently untreated surface of the conglomerate wall at the south and west.

In a small pocket in bedrock at the southeast two lamps were recovered (L 5625, 5626), apparently corroborating the tentative construction date of late fifth to early sixth century for the house, as suggested by pottery from below the floors of Room 2A and the peristyle.

Two finds of interest were recovered from this room; a small statue of Asklepios (S 1068) found in the northeast corner in 1938, and the body of the sleeping Silenus (S 2363) found this season just north of the kiln.

#### ROOM 2 (pp. 2660-2667)

Room 2 is a large almost square room ca. 6.40 m. east-west by 6.80 m. north-south. In addition to the door in the west wall leading from Room 1, there is a large doorway ca. 1.65 m. wide in the north wall, just slightly off the axis of the peristyle. The north half of the east side of the room was open, separated from Room 3 by an open fence. The south half of the east side was walled, with a doorway leading to Room 2A.

Two large channels run northward out of the room. The western one is lined with large blocks of poros and marble. There is an inner lining, largely of bricks set in mortar, and a floor of square tiles. The channel itself is 0.30 m. wide by 0.30 m. deep. It runs from the great south wall straight through the room and under the north wall to the settling basin in the south aisle of the peristyle. The construction throughout is good.

The eastern channel is built on a similar scale, though the construction is inferior. It is lined with reused long marble blocks with an inner lining of bricks and stones set in mortar. The floor, at least as preserved, is of bedrock.

The channel is ca. 0.32 m. wide, but only 0.15 to 0.20 m. deep. At the north end it turns almost due west, passes under the door, and joins the west channel. A single stone slab in situ over the channel at the north is all that remains of the covering of either channel.

There is no obvious source of water as both channels start from bedrock below the south wall, and it seems possible that they were built merely to carry off ground water. It is also conceivable that Room 2 was open to the sky, though this is completely conjectural. No fallen vaulting was found in this room, and the additional light would be welcome in Rooms 2A and 3. If this were so, then the channels may well have carried off rain water.

Between the large paving slabs of the two channels there is a strip ca. 1.55 to 1.70 m. wide down the middle of the room; presumably this was once paved with stone slabs, though none now remain.

Against the west wall there was a bench ca. 0.60 m. high and 0.63 m. wide. Part of the packing of this bench is preserved to a height of 0.45 m. The bench is clearly later than the original construction of the room as it protected the stuccoing of the wall behind it. It is the evidence of this stucco which preserved the original dimensions of the bench.

Along the east, at the north, there is a similar packing of stones and earth, ca. 1.25 m. wide and preserved to a

height of 0.25 to 0.35 m. This packing too must be later than the original construction of the house as it completely covered the bedding of the fence between Rooms 2 and 3. The exact function of this packing, which is quite wide and not set against any wall, is not clear.

Finds of interest in this room include the head of the sleeping Silenus (S 2363) and a horseshoe-shaped "sigma table" (A 3869).

Fill in the room was 0.60 m. deep, M. Crosby having apparently stopped at the top of destruction debris. As in the peristyle, the fill divided, the lower fill being ca. 0.25 to 0.30 deep. The pottery was generally late sixth century A.D.

#### ROOM 2A (pp. 2668-9)

Room 2A is a small undistinguished room east of Room 2 and entered through it. It is almost square, measuring ca. 3.95 m. north-south and 3.65 m. east-west. The floor was of hard-packed earth, lying ca. 0.60 m. above the floor level of Room 2. As much as 2.50 m. of fill had accumulated over the floor.

This was the third place - along with Room 1 and the peristyle - where we cut through the floor in an attempt to get pottery to check the construction date of the house.

The floor was ca. 0.10 m. thick, resting on bedrock; once again, the pottery seemed to go into the early years of the sixth century.

ROOM 3 (pp. 2670-2677)

Room 3 is by far the most elegant room yet excavated in Roman House H. It is a sunken room ca. 5.80 m. east-west by 3.65 m. north-south. The east end of the room is apsidal. Happily, the state of preservation is excellent; it is the south wall of this room which stands 3.30 m. high.

The room was entered from the east aisle of the peristyle, down steps which were flanked by unfluted ionic columns on either side. The two bottom steps are in situ, and the packing for the upper two is visible, along with indications of the marble facing which covered them. The column at the east side of the entrance was found in situ, tilted about 25 degrees off its base. The other column, to the west, was found broken up and built into the walls of a Turkish pit which had been set down right where the column once rested. Both columns are of extremely friable, green-veined marble; ca. 0.31 m. in diameter, the shafts are 2.31 m. tall.

The west end of the room was left open, allowing visual access into Room 2. Because Room 3 is sunken, however, the floor levels of the two rooms differ by ca. 1.35 m. Along

the upper surface of the moulding which tops the low west wall of Room 3 we found indications of two large square fence posts, ca. 0.21 m. to a side. In destruction fill of the room we also found what seems to be part of the coping of this fence; a second piece was found built into the late drain in Room 1. Thus an open fence with two large supports can be reconstructed closing the opening between Rooms 2 and 3. The evidence of wear on the moulding and the dimensions of the coping blocks would seem to indicate that the middle of the fence was left open. If this is so, the reason behind it is far from clear.

It is tempting to suppose that the sleeping Silenus (S 2363), which is in the form of a support and was found in Rooms 1 and 2, may originally have served as one of the fence posts. The size is not inappropriate and there is no question that he was meant to be seen from below. Regrettably, the crucial linking element - the base into which the Silenus would be set which would then have rested on the moulding - is missing.

In the apse at the east there is a large arched opening leading into Room 3A. There is also an arched doorway providing access to a well which lies just southeast of the apse. The apse was further provided with three small niches - two rectangular, one arched - presumably designed to hold lamps or statuettes.

The walls of the room were originally revetted in marble. Almost the entire revetment of the west wall below the moulding remains in situ. It is three courses high, with the courses set off by narrow string courses. Nine or ten different marbles are distinguishable.

In addition, several pieces of revetment remain in situ along the north wall of the apse and along the south wall at the west. Where the revetment has disappeared from the south wall much of its arrangement can be reconstructed from the imprint lines left in the underpinning of mortar. Numerous large fragments of revetment were found in the digging of the room.

The floor in the west half of the room was a large mosaic of diamond patterns done in red, white and blue. A large central panel was set off by a guilloche in red, white, dark and light blue, and yellow. The central panel is opus sectile done with small plaques of various marble.

To the east, in the apse itself, was an apsidal pool done in waterproof cement and painted turquoise. Three narrow steps ca. 0.17 m. wide lead down ca. 1.10 m., and the floor, as preserved, is of bedrock, cut down an additional 0.50 m. No trace of even the bedding for a proper floor was found and there may well have never been one. The edges of the steps are defined in red paint. At some later date, the

steps were thickened at the northwest corner, presumably to afford easier access.

The pool was fed by a channel from the east which flows through Room 3A, and overflow was carried off into the cistern at the southeast and in a channel leading northward from the northwest corner of the pool.

The well outside the southeast of the apse is separated from Room 3 by a thin parapet wall which is preserved to a height of 0.24 m. Its upper walls are stuccoed, but it is cut into bedrock and unlined below. We went down ca. 3.50 m. below the top of the parapet wall, at which point we were forced to stop because of lack of time. In addition to access from Room 3, the well could be approached from a higher level outside the house where there is a stone and brick well-head.

The fill in the room was general accumulation down to ca. 0.70 m. above the floor, at which point real destruction fill appeared. At the west end, the bottom 0.05 m. just above the floor was almost solid ash and burning, more extensive than found anywhere else in the house.

#### ROOM 3A (pp. 2678-2683)

Room 3A is a rectangular room measuring 2.75 m. north-south and 3.00 m. east-west as preserved. It lies east of Room 3, though at an appreciably different orientation. The



walls are of very fine brick construction and the line of the low vaulted ceiling is preserved in the east wall of the room.

In addition to the arched passage from Room 3, 3A could be entered through a small arched doorway, ca. 1.68 m. high by 0.65 m. wide, which leads to a stairway in Room 4, to the north. At some later date this door was blocked up.

There are two large arched niches in the room, measuring ca. 1.50 m. high by 1.65 m. wide by 0.48 m. deep; one in the north wall and one in the south. Their floors lie ca. 0.40 m. above the floor of the room and they are probably to be thought of as benches.

There are also six small niches, three in the north wall and three in the south, perhaps used originally in the construction of the vault and later for lamps.

In the east wall there is a large arched niche into which is set a smaller arched doorway, leading east. This doorway has been blocked up, but with far greater care than the blocking of the north door.

The floor of the room is at the same level as that of Room 3 and is built of carefully laid bricks, ca. 0.12 m. by 0.51 m. Through the middle of the room runs a water channel, leading from under the blocked door at the east westward to the apsidal pool of Room 3. There is space for cover tiles ca. 0.30 m. wide, and the channel proper is ca.

0.075 m. wide by 0.26 m. deep. The small width of the channel and the fact that every cover tile has been removed suggest that originally the channel carried a lead pipe.

Chronology. There is reason to believe that Room 3A, together with the stairs leading out of it through Room 4, are to be thought of as an earlier establishment which was incorporated into Roman House H. Several indications can be noted. First is the difference in orientation already mentioned above. Second is the awkward way in which the apse of Room 3 is set into the west end of 3A. Third is the construction of 3A - almost entirely of bricks - which is without parallel elsewhere in the house. Fourth is the fact that the wall between Rooms 3A and 4 clearly has two phases. And fifth is the change in method of collecting water off the vaulted roof. This was originally done by a horizontal drain which ran east-west along the north wall of Room 3A which was supplanted by a vertical down-pipe, apparently during construction of Room 4. Further indications of two periods are visible in the stairway in Room 4.

#### EAST TUNNEL (pp. 2682-2683)

To the east of Room 3A, behind the blocked doorway, there is a vaulted tunnel ca. 2.45 m. high by 1.40 m. wide, leading to a manhole about 2.00 m. east of Room 3A. The upper part of the tunnel and the manhole have been largely

destroyed, particularly toward the east. There is, however, a well-built brick floor which continues further eastward, into the scarp.

Again largely on the basis of construction, this tunnel would seem to antedate Room 3A. Its original use is clearly that of an aqueduct of some sort, a function it continued to serve throughout the history of Roman House H.

Further excavation is necessary to the east to determine if the tunnel can be related to either the large "brick water system" found in section II in 1938 (Photographs # 8-73 through 8-76) or to the Hadrianic aqueduct along side the Panathenaic Way.

#### ROOM 4 (pp. 2684-2691)

Room 4 lies north of Rooms 3 and 3A. It measures 4.40 m. east-west and 4.70 m. north-south. Access to the room was provided by a door in the west wall, leading to the peristyle; by a door in the north wall leading to Room 5 (later blocked); and by the stairs which lead down to Room 3A at the south. The floor was of packed earth, at a slightly higher level than that of the peristyle.

Along the east wall, set into the floor, there is a large drain, rectangular and heavily mortared below, with inverted U-shaped tiles for covers. The overall height is 0.68 m., the width 0.45 m.; the channel proper is 0.37 m.

wide by 0.32 m. deep. The floor is large shallow curved tiles.

This drain can be traced for some 19.00 m. north of Room 4 and must surely have served as the main drain of the house. It collected water from a vertical down-pipe between the vaults of Rooms 3A and 4, from two small pools east of Room 4, and from the peristyle.

Covering the drain in Room 4 is a heavy packing of mortar and broken tiles, best preserved in the northeast corner. It rises ca. 0.42 m. above the floor and is ca. 0.85 m. wide. This would seem to have been used as a bench along the east side of the room, presumably revetted in marble. Pieces of suitable revetment were found in the room.

Along the east half of the north wall there is a line of stucco ca. 0.48 m. from the wall, perhaps indicative of a return of the bench against that part of the wall.

Along the south side of Room 4 there are six steps leading down toward the east, to the doorway into Room 3A. The steps presently are ca. 0.75 m. across. As mentioned above, there are several indications that they are earlier than the rest of Room 4. The stairs are not on the same orientation as the rest of Room 4, but seem to be set in relation to Room 3A. In addition, the construction of the arched doorway and

the wall along the south side of the stairs shows a concerted effort on the part of the builder of Room 4 to effect a graceful transition from the orientation of Room 3A to the orientation of Room 4. There are three arches in the doorway: the inner two follow the orientation of Room 3A; the outer arch follows the orientation of Room 3A below, but the orientation of Room 4 above. In fact, this outermost face of the south wall of Room 4 rests on the ends of the steps, which originally measured 1.00 m. across. A further indication of an earlier phase of the stairway is the fact that the wall along its north side originally continued westward, for a division is visible where it intersects the west wall of Room 4. Within the room itself, this wall was apparently cut down somewhat and several steps were removed to allow access to the stairway from Room 4.

Chronology. Room 4 provided much of our best evidence for the later history of the house. The stairwell was full of destruction debris of the house: loose dark fill, hunks of tile, signs of burning, and several datable objects (P 28346, L 5628, 5630) suggesting that it was filled in the very late sixth century A.D., a date consistent with a destruction by the Slavs in the 580's. Also in the stairwell we found a rather casual burial, apparently deposited there at about the same time.

After the stairwell was filled by destruction debris,

the ground level of the whole room rose ca. 0.70 m. At this upper level a crude structure of rubble - perhaps a latrine - was built in the southwest corner, with a channel leading off to a basin at the north. This late construction can be dated on the basis of a coin of Heraclius to after 629 A.D.

At a still later date the roof of the house fell in and was left. Numerous pieces of fallen vault were found at a very high level.

East of Room 4 is a rectangular chamber ca. 4.30 m. by 1.48 m. It was brick-lined, with hydraulic cement. At each end of the room, to the north and south, were remains of a small rectangular pool ca. 1.50 by 1.15 m., apparently plunges of some sort. In places the walls are preserved to a height of 1.20 m. Both pools were drained by small channels running through the east wall of Room 4 into the main drain. Bits of a lead pipe ca. 0.07 m. in diameter are visible in the channel of the northern pool. No supply channel for the pools was found.

Access to the room is something of a problem, as no trace of a doorway has been found leading into the area between the pools. One possibility is that the marble revetted channel (bench?) along the east wall of Room 4 served as a large step up to a doorway at a higher level, now lost. A second possibility will have to await further excavation.

The south wall of the southern pool continues eastward into the scarp, suggesting another room to the east, in which a clearer entrance to the pools may be found.

#### ROOM 5 (pp. 2696-2697)

Room 5, which lies north of Room 4, has a north-south dimension of 6.20 m. and we have yet to find its east wall. It was cleared of later fill and awaits further excavation.

Further north, modern cellars have cut deep into ancient levels. We have scraps of walls apparently of the Roman period and we also got what seemed to be the eastern part of Greek House G, the western part of which was encountered last year. A small room with a pebble mosaic floor was cleared, as well as a poros gutter which seems to indicate the line of an ancient road just outside the house to the east. As yet we have been able to recover none of the plan of the northern rooms, though there is a small stretch of the north wall in situ, first exposed years ago.

#### SCULPTURE

In view of the richness of the house in terms of sculpture, it might be well to provide a brief list of the major pieces found; several have already been noted in the room by room account: the three heads (S 2354, 2355, 2356) recovered from

well P 21:2 in the peristyle; the sleeping Silenus (S 2363) from Rooms 1 and 2; and the Asklepios (S 1048) found in Room 1. In addition, we found a small statue of Athena (S 2337) reused as a step in front of a threshold in the southwest corner of the peristyle, and a marble relief of Artemis (S 2361) from well P 21:3. Other pieces found in the house, but not necessarily directly associated with it, include a relief of Asklepios (S 2323), the head of an Amazon (S 2341), a female head (S 2365) and a small torso of Aphrodite (S 2367).

#### CONCLUSIONS - HISTORY

The basic history of the area in the Roman period seems clear; but until the house has been fully excavated the following conclusions must be regarded as somewhat tentative.

The earliest remains seem to be those of the tunnel east of Room 3A, bringing in water from the east. The original destination of this system is uncertain, for we found no trace of it west of where it joins Room 3A, all remains presumably having been obliterated by the later construction. Next season this channel will be followed to the east and an attempt made to determine its date.

At some later time Room 3A was constructed, incorporating the tunnel to the east. In its original period of use, Room 3A seems to have been a small fountain house or watering establishment of some sort, sunken well below the surrounding



ground level and entered by means of the stairway at the north. Originally the ground level was probably somewhat higher than at present and the stairs and stairwell continued further up toward the west.

Later still, the large complex of Roman House H was built, incorporating Room 3A. At this time, the original west end of Room 3A was cut away by the construction of the apse and pool of Room 3. To the north, the stairway and its north wall were cut down so as to provide access to the stairs from Room 4.

The date of the construction of Roman House H seems to be late fifth to early sixth century A.D. This date was arrived at from pottery recovered below the floor of the peristyle and Room 2A (Ω pottery lots S 388 and S 392), as well as from the two lamps (L 5625, 5626) from Room 1. Dirt floors can be relaid, however, and this date must be regarded as somewhat tentative until further exploration can be carried out. An absolutely secure date should be obtainable by excavating between the great south wall of Room 2 and the earlier conglomerate wall to the south.

Pottery from destruction fill over all the rooms of the house points to a destruction date in the late sixth century A.D., presumably to be associated with the Slavic invasion in the 580's.

Parts of the house (Rooms 1, 4, and the peristyle) were clearly reused sometime in the seventh century A.D., before the final abandonment of the house.

#### FUNCTION

The complex seems essentially to have been a private dwelling. Though it is far more elegant than any other late Roman house in the Agora area, nothing was found to indicate any public function. The various waterworks encountered thus far are far too small to have accommodated a large number of people. The significance of the "sigma table" (A 3869) and its possible cult connections will have to await further study, though it should be noted that nothing else of a religious nature was found.

The possibility must be considered that Roman House H served as one of the philosophical schools that flourished in Athens in late Roman times. There seems to be no difference in plan or any specific characteristic which would permit us to distinguish between a private house and one of these schools. Indeed, we are told by literary sources that some philosophers taught in their own houses. The surprisingly late date of construction is something of a problem, however, as it approaches the time of the closing of the schools in 529 A.D.

For the time being, Roman House H is perhaps best described as the richest, and among the largest, of the late Roman houses yet excavated in the Agora.

### INSCRIPTIONS

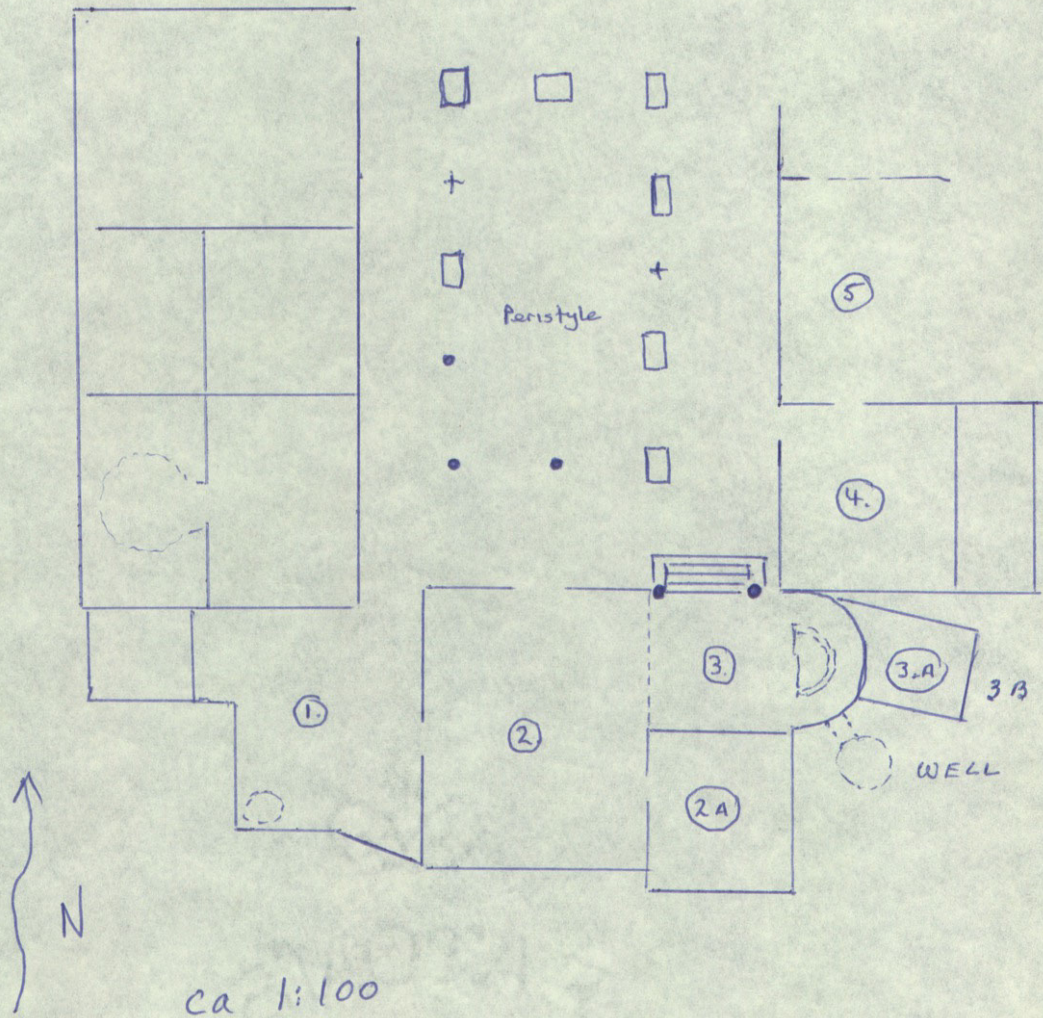
Four inscriptions found in the course of the summer are worth noting. The first is a fragment of the Didascaliae (I 7151), preserving the record of tragedies presented at the Lenaea of 364/3 B.C. The second (I 7156) is part of the heading of a decree (second half of the second century B.C.?) preserving some of the name of the secretary: ...ades Attalou Beranikides. The third (I 7173) is a large inscription of the Roman period (2nd century A.D.?), the exact nature of which eludes me. And the fourth (I 7178) is a proxeny decree of the fourth century B.C., honoring one Sopatros of Acragas.

### CISTERN P 20:2

In addition to the work outlined above, a late Hellenistic cistern was dug under the northwest corner of the house, at 72/Δθ on the old grid. It was of standard construction, bottle-shaped and lined with stucco, though much of it collapsed in the course of excavation. Because of the danger of further collapse we were unable to clear two tunnels which lead out of it, one to the east and one to the west. The main chamber was 3.75 m. deep and 2.00 m. wide at the bottom. Some fine pottery was recovered, all coming down into the third quarter of the second century B.C. (Thompson's Group D, with some long-petal Megarian bowls). An amphora handle and the coins seem to agree (!) with this date.

J.McK.C. II

To accompany 1970 Omega Report



Rough sketch plan showing 1970 room numbers of Roman House H.