

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1940

Work in the Agora was begun for the tenth season only late in the Spring, April, 22, because of the uncertainty of political conditions, and it was suspended after five weeks in order to facilitate the departure from Athens of the members of the staff, who desired to leave before Mediterranean waters were closed to American shipping. Even during the active period operations were conducted on a small scale with greatly reduced personnel of scholars and of laborers. The major part of the excavation of the site has been completed, except for the blocks on which stand the modern buildings which house the offices, the workrooms, and the temporary museum. These houses cannot be removed until their contents can be transferred to the projected new Agora Museum. It was obviously inexpedient to start construction of the museum during the present season, but since the site in the southwest corner of the area, designated for its location, had not been completely cleared in the preceding year it seemed wise to direct the main effort of the campaign to the completion of that task.

The excavation of the museum site, which was conducted under the supervision of Rodney S. Young, could not be completed in 1939 because of the large extent of the area and the deep deposit of covering earth, and also especially because of the discovery at the south end of the area of a cemetery with unrifled graves dating from the sixth century before Christ, which necessitated slow and careful clearance. A description of this cemetery is given in the report on the campaign of 1939 (*Hesperia*, IX, 1940, pp. 302-304). Its excavation was completed this year and resulted in the uncovering of three more graves of the second half of the sixth century, one of which contained seven vases (Fig. 1). The presence of a pyxis among the vases suggests that the occupant of the grave was a woman. The pyxis (P 16,591) contained a considerable amount of red material mixed with an infiltration of clay. A sample of the contents was examined by Professor E. R. Caley of the Department of Chemistry of Princeton University who pronounced the material red ferric oxide, which had evidently served as a cosmetic. Three of the remaining vases are lekythoi, of which the largest (P 16,586) is decorated with a representation of the combat between Herakles and Triton, a subject which is popular with black-figured potters. The other vases in the group are a phiale (P 16,589), decorated with four seated figures painted in crude and sketchy style on the interior of the bowl, a bowl of which the cover is missing (P 16,590), and a simple one-handed hand-made jug (P 16,592).

This area of excavation was so large that it was divided into two parts in order to facilitate its clearance during the present campaign, the line of division being

placed at the course of the great drain, with the work on the east side supervised by R. S. Young, and that on the west by H. S. Robinson. The continued clearance of the drain and of other neighboring water-channels brought to light an additional number of ostraka, of which the most interesting is a ballot with the name of Perikles, son of Xanthippos (Fig. 2. P 16,755). Although the letters are archaic in shape the ostrakon was probably cast at the ostrakophoria of 443, which resulted in the



Fig. 1. Vases from a Sixth Century Grave

banishment of Perikles' rival, Thucydides son of Melesias, one of whose ostraka has also been found in the Agora excavations. Eleven other ostraka of Thucydides had previously been found in the excavations at the Dipylon, but this is the first appearance of the name of Perikles. Since the majority of the ballots were cast against his opponent in 443, Perikles escaped banishment and was thus more fortunate than his father Xanthippos who was ostracized in 484. The Agora has produced fourteen ostraka of Xanthippos, one of which (P 6107) is illustrated in Figure 3 so that the lettering of the names of father and son may be readily compared. Another famous name appearing on a sherd is that of Alcibiades, son of Kleinias, and this ostrakon may be safely attributed to Alcibiades the Younger because of the late shape of the lambda; it was probably cast at the voting of 417 when Hyperbolos was ostracized.

Besides their historical value the ostraka, of which 500 are now listed in the Agora collection, often furnish useful incidental information. For example, this year an ostrakon of Kallixenos, son of Aristonymos, was found, with the name scratched on the inside of a fragment of a red-figured column krater. Since the ninety ostraka of Kallixenos in the collection have been usually found in association with those of Aristeides and Themistokles they were probably cast in the ostrakophoria of 482, and thus by that time the krater had already been reduced to sherds.

An important discovery of the year is a large disk (diameter: 0.275 m.) made of soft white poros, on which a scene is represented, carved in relief in handsome style (Fig. 4. S 1194). The scene is composed of two figures artistically grouped



Fig. 2. Ostrakon of Perikles

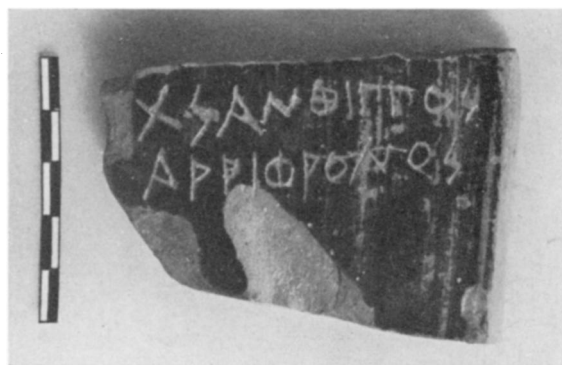


Fig. 3. Ostrakon of Xanthippos
Father of Perikles

on the circular area of the plaque. On the left a woman is seated on an elaborate throne, which has its arm supported by a winged beast and has turned legs of characteristic type. This unduly ornate type of leg with four superimposed turnings furnishes the evidence for fixing the date of the work in the Hellenistic period, because the throne of Zeus on coins of Alexander and of the Alexander type is often constructed with exactly similar legs (*Alexander the Great, McClean Coll.*, II, pl. 128). The woman is clad in a chiton, over which is an ample garment which is draped about her in graceful folds, and one end of which is held above her left shoulder by her left hand; in her right hand, which rests on her lap, she holds a large horn-shaped object which has the appearance of a cornucopia. In spite of the rubbing of the surface the shape of the object is evident, and in fact traces remain of small objects, like the customary fruit, protruding from the top of the horn. This woman of stately and dignified mien, seated on an ornate throne, is obviously a goddess, who should presumably be identified as Demeter because of the cornucopia which she carries.¹

¹ The cornucopia appears occasionally in Hellenistic tradition as an attribute of Demeter; it occurs on the reverse of a Thracian coin of the third century, of which the obverse shows the head

She is facing to the right towards Poseidon who stands, with his right foot raised and placed on a rock, holding a large trident upright in his right hand. Between the two deities the gnarled and twisted trunk of a tree is conspicuously in evidence. The



Fig. 4. Demeter and Poseidon on a Poros Disk

scene is delimited at the bottom by a raised horizontal ground line, below which the exergue is plain.

of Demeter (*Brit. Mus. Cat., Thrace*, p. 96, no. 34); and a symbol used on Athenian New Style coins of the second century is a standing figure of Demeter with an ear of grain and a cornucopia (J. Overbeck, *Griech. Kunstmythologie*, II, pp. 498-9).

An interpretation of this scene is suggested by the unusual juxtaposition of the two deities whose identity is clearly established by the attributes which they carry, and by the presence of a tree trunk in the centre of the background. The scene may be explained as a representation of the traditional gift of the fig tree by Demeter to Poseidon (Phytalmios), which was memorialized in the shrine of the sacred fig tree, situated near the bridge over the Cephissus on the Sacred Way to Eleusis (Pausanias, I, 37, 2; Roscher, *Lexikon Griech. u. Röm. Mythologie*, III, cols. 2490, 2848). It is difficult to understand the purpose for which this medallion with its artistic group was so handsomely executed in such fugitive and friable material as poros. If it had been intended as an independent decorative unit it would have been coated with painted stucco, no trace of which has been preserved; but perhaps it was a sample model for a work to be wrought in a more permanent medium.

A well with a deposit of the Hellenistic period produced a marble statuette of a woman, which has special interest because considerable remains of color are still evident. The figure, of which the head is missing, has a preserved height of 0.29 m. (Fig. 5. S 1192). The woman stands in relaxed position with her weight supported by the left leg, and with her right hand resting on a square column by her side; the left hand is placed against the hip with the palm outward. Both the pose of the figure and the arrangement of the woman's garments are typically Hellenistic, and can be paralleled by several statues of the period previously discovered in the Agora. The chiton, which is fastened by a girdle passing just below the breasts, is painted olive green, while lilac, set off by bands of bluish-green, is used for the heavy cloak which hangs over the left shoulder, and from there is brought across the back and is draped over the right thigh, where it precariously rests without support and without reason for remaining in place. Additional uses of color are red for the woman's sandals and for the base of the column, and red and black for decorative bands at the top and bottom of the column shaft. This example of painted marble statuary of the Hellenistic age furnishes an interesting contribution to our knowledge of the use of color on Greek sculpture.



Fig. 5. Hellenistic Statuette

Some additional miscellaneous discoveries made in this area of excavation deserve mention: an inscribed lead tablet (IL 836), on which the name of Persephone (Pherrephatta) is legible, was found in a stratum dated about 400 before Christ, and it is thus the earliest curse tablet which has been secured from the Agora; two pieces of sculpture are a marble statuette of a youth (S 1191), from a context of about 400 before Christ but of inferior workmanship, and a small marble head of a woman from a deposit of the Hellenistic period (S 1193). Another object secured from Hellenistic filling is the terracotta mould for the life-sized head of a bearded man (Fig. 6. T 2206). The material is coarse heavy red clay, but the technique of exe-

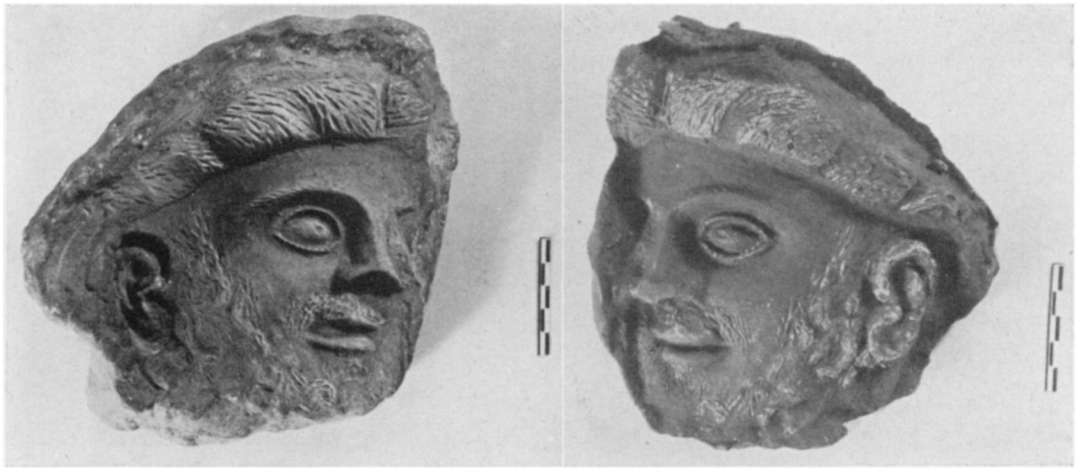


Fig. 6. Terracotta Mould and Cast of a Bearded Head

cution is good, the lines of the features are sharply marked, the modelling is carefully done, and the result is a head of distinctive character. The hair is combed back in rolls, the mustache and side whiskers are stringy, the brows are shaggy, and the pupil of the eye is clearly indicated, but no distinguishing attributes are present to assist in the identification of the man.

An important discovery made in a shaft which was filled up in Hellenistic times is a group of 113 coins, of which all but two pieces are bronze issues of the Hellenistic period from Athens, Aegina, Chalcis, Eleusis, Larissa, Locris, Megara, and Phocis. This group is being studied, in connection with other Agora numismatic material, by Miss Margaret Thompson for publication in a forthcoming article. She reports that all types of the bronze coins in the group, which can be approximately dated, fall in the century between 350 and 250 before Christ. The two exceptional pieces are silver coins, but their dates too are in accord with the same chronology, one being an issue of Lysimachus of Thrace made after 306 before Christ, and the other of Demetrius Poliorcetes, 306-283. This established chronology of the deposit is particularly im-

portant because the hoard also contains issues of Athens and Eleusis, the dates of which have not hitherto been firmly established.

Since only 487 coins were found this season Miss Thompson was able to turn her attention to the task of clearing up some of the accumulations of past years, and succeeded in identifying and cataloguing 3,000 pieces. About 20,000 coins still remain to be identified of the 90,000 pieces which have been found in the Agora. The newly identified coins include some silver pieces: a drachma and a triobol of Athens of the fifth century, five pieces of the Macedonian period, and three Roman denarii of the first and second centuries after Christ. There are also two silver-plated coins which are probably ancient counterfeits, one an early coin with the tortoise of Aegina, and the other a coin of Elis of the type dated 362-321 B.C. From the many bronze coins Miss Thompson selects two for special mention: a coin of Gela, struck before that city was destroyed by Carthage in 405 B.C., and a coin of the Roman Emperor Didius Julianus, who reigned only sixty-six days in the Spring of 193 A.D., and who had not been previously represented in the Agora collection.

In addition to the work on the Museum site careful investigation was continued by Eugene Vanderpool on the north slope of the Areopagus, west of the spot where the Mycenaean tomb was discovered by him in 1939, but although the rock was laid bare throughout the area no trace of any other tomb of that period was revealed. But several disturbed Geometric burials were uncovered, and some Hellenistic and Roman wells and cisterns were cleared. Also part of a house of the Roman period was excavated on the south edge of the area. This house, which was elaborately constructed with its courtyard paved with marble slabs, was not completely cleared because it extends beyond the Agora zone into the area of the Areopagus park.

Further investigation of the Klepsydra was conducted by A. W. Parsons in preparation of the publication of his study of that building, and resulted in the discovery of some new information in regard to its structural history. A large rectangular cutting in the bedrock beneath the floor of the forecourt, measuring 2.75 m. long by 2 m. wide by 1.60 m. deep, which had been noted in 1938, was entirely cleared and its contents proved to be purely of the late Mycenaean type. Besides fragmentary sherds one small complete jug was secured which is a characteristic specimen of the latest Mycenaean style (Fig. 7. P 16,758).

The area of the Agora has now been prepared, as far as possible, for any eventuality. The more important objects have been boxed and are held at the disposition of the Greek Government, the remaining objects have been placed in cellars protected by cement roofs; the archaeological records have been deposited in a bomb-proof shelter, and many duplicate records and a complete set of photographs have been brought to America. In order to make a duplicate set of the field notebooks which now number nearly four hundred, with their invaluable and irreplaceable records, Miss Frantz began in the Spring the immense task of photographing them in microfilm. Those

which were completed at the time of her departure from Athens in June were brought to America, but the work has been continued by a Greek technician on the staff who was trained by Miss Frantz and while the films subsequently made are still in Greece



Fig. 7. Late Mycenaean Jug

the duplication of the records lessens by half the risk of loss. Some material in the Agora workrooms is easily accessible for study by the several members of the staff remaining in Athens, but active work on the Agora project will not be resumed until after the conclusion of the war.

T. LESLIE SHEAR