

# ROADS AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE ATHENIAN AGORA

(PLATES 57-58)

TWO opportunities have presented themselves recently to fix the position and direction of roads outside the northwest corner of the Agora. The first came in 1956 when foundations were dug for a new building at No. 7 Hadrian Street. The second came in similar circumstances in 1958 at No. 11 Hastings Street.

A glance at the accompanying plan (Fig. 1) will show the importance of these discoveries in determining the general lay-out of the area. We see that three important roads converge on the northwest corner of the Agora, two of them from a north-westerly direction, from the Sacred Gate and the Dipylon Gate respectively, the third from the north. These roads enter the Agora at odd angles which must have made the architectural treatment of this corner of the square very difficult. The Eridanos too certainly passed this point, although its exact course is not known, and will have further complicated the situation. We will, of course, not know for certain how the problem was solved until the area is opened up by excavation, but we may perhaps form some idea from the analogous situation at the southwest corner of the Agora as it was before the construction of the Middle Stoa. Here we find, between the Tholos and the Southwest Fountain House, a wedge shaped area bounded by two streets and occupied by several buildings of irregular plan. In the similar areas at the northwest corner there were probably also small buildings; those known from literary sources which we might expect to find there are the Leokorion and the barber shop by the Herms which was frequented by the men from Dekeleia. In any case, it seems clearer now than ever before that no large building could have stood at the northwest corner of the Agora, and that the stoa with the projecting wings, already excavated, was the first building of importance on the right as one entered the Agora and must therefore have been both the Royal Stoa and the Stoa of Zeus.<sup>1</sup> The brief reports that follow give details of the excavations in the two lots.

<sup>1</sup> This idea, originally proposed by Valmin, was first set forth in detail by Thompson. Martin and Wycherley have been among its principal supporters. Those who oppose this idea and believe that the Stoa of Zeus and the Royal Stoa were two separate buildings generally identify the building with the projecting wings as the Stoa of Zeus; they differ widely, however, in their suggestions as to the location of the Basileios or Royal Stoa. Most are content to leave it vaguely somewhere to the north without specifying a definite position or a precise form for the building. Travlos once suggested setting it at an angle presenting a narrow end to the Agora and a long side to the Panathenaic Way, but he no longer shows it on the plans in his book on the development of the city. Rumpf and Orlandos see in the three aisled building on the shoulder of Kolonos Agoraios north



## INVESTIGATIONS AT NO. 7 HADRIAN STREET

WRITTEN IN COLLABORATION WITH MR. S. CHARITONIDES,  
EPIMELETE OF ANTIQUITIES

During the spring of 1956 a small two-storey house at No. 7 Hadrian Street was demolished for the purpose of erecting a new and larger building. The lot on which the house stood lies to the north of Kolonos Agoraios on the presumed line of the ancient Panathenaic Way or Dromos, the main street leading from the Dipylon Gate to the Agora (Fig. 1). Because of the significance of the location, the work of demolition and the subsequent digging of the basement for the new house were observed by the authors, at the request of Mr. John Meliades, Director of the Acropolis, and a trench was dug under their supervision to explore the deeper levels not reached by the house builders. Mr. John Travlos has kindly drawn the plan (Fig. 2).

The house which was demolished was built almost entirely of newly quarried stone and no re-used ancient blocks or fragments were noted in it. The cellar for the new building was dug to a depth of three meters over the entire lot. Down to this level the earth was soft and loose and nothing of interest appeared. Below this level eighteen pits of various sizes were sunk for another meter or so as foundations for the concrete piers for the new building.

In digging these pits, house walls and pithoi of Byzantine times began to appear just below the general cellar level, particularly in the western part of the lot. Along the entire southern edge of the lot the fill was sandy and quite hard, beginning at a

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N. Valmin, *Bull. Lund*, 1933-1934, pp. 1-7.

O. Walter, *Jahreshefte*, XXX, 1936-1937, Beiblatt, pp. 95-100.

H. A. Thompson, *Hesperia*, VI, 1937, pp. 64-76, 225-226.

A. Rumpf, *Jahrb.*, LIII, 1938, pp. 115-125.

R. E. Wycherley, *J.H.S.*, LX, 1940, pp. 95-96.

U. Kahrstedt, *Arch. Anz.*, 1941, cols. 92-99.

R. Martin, *B.C.H.*, LXVI-LXVII, 1942-1943, pp. 274-298.

R. E. Wycherley, *J.H.S.*, LXVIII, 1948, pp. 152-155.

J. Travlos, *Hesperia*, Suppl. VIII, pp. 389-390.

E. Vanderpool, *Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, p. 128.

R. Martin, *Recherches sur l'agora grecque*, 1951, pp. 319 ff.

*The Athenian Agora, A Guide to the Excavations* (1954), pp. 50-52.

A. K. Orlandos, *Ἡ Ἐνδόσ τε γος Παλαιοχριστιανικὴ Βασιλικὴ τῆς Μεσογειακῆς Λεκάνης*, Athens 1954, Vol. I, pp. 64-67, note 1; p. 66, fig. 39a.

H. Koch, *Studien zum Theseustempel in Athen*, 1955, pp. 10, 11, 32.

R. E. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora*, III, *Literary and Epigraphical Testimonia*, 1957, pp. 21-31.

G. R. Edwards, *Hesperia*, XXVI, 1957, pp. 334-337.

J. Travlos, *Πολεοδομικὴ Ἑξέλιξις τῶν Ἀθηνῶν*, 1959.

R. E. Wycherley, *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies*, II, 1959, pp. 31, 37-39.

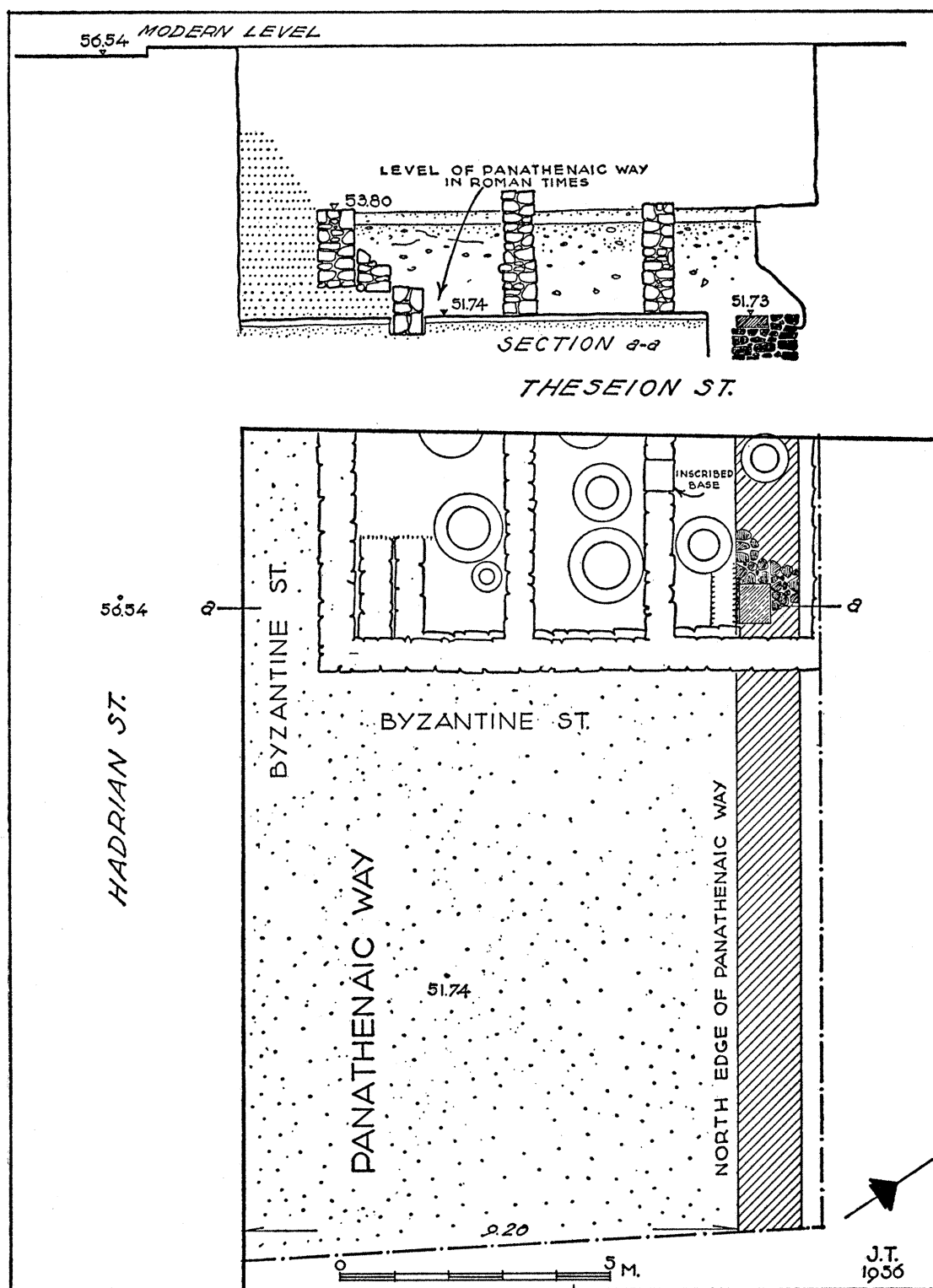


FIG. 2. Plan and Section of the Excavation at No. 7 Hadrian Street.

depth of about 2.50 m. from the surface, clearly indicating a road of Byzantine times running beside the houses. Since it seemed probable that this Byzantine road was the successor of the classical Panathenaic Way, it was decided to dig a trench into the deeper levels to fix the position of the earlier road if possible.

### THE BYZANTINE HOUSE

In the western part of the lot there were considerable remains of the foundations of a house of Byzantine times. The house as we uncovered it consisted of three rooms. Parts of the exterior walls on the south and east were preserved. To the north just at the edge of the lot the south face of a wall appeared which may have been the north exterior wall. To the west the walls continued under Theseion Street and no limit was fixed.

In the southern room three storage pithoi were noted. In the middle room there were also three. In the northern room there were two. Nothing of interest was found in any of the pithoi, and several of them were quite empty with their cover slabs in place. An inscribed base with a list of bouleutai, to be published by Mr. Charitonides, was built into the wall separating the central from the northern room.

Three building periods could be distinguished in the house. Very little was preserved of the walls of the earliest period; a pithos in the southern room whose mouth was at a very low level probably belongs to this earliest period. In the second period the house was completely rebuilt, and the main walls that we found belong to this period as do most of the pithoi. This house was destroyed and subsequently rebuilt on the same foundations but with a higher ground level. The mouths of some of the pithoi were raised by means of a cylindrical collar of masonry to adapt them for use in the latest house.

Some brown glazed pottery of the tenth century which was found in the area probably indicates the date of the first house. A bowl decorated with a bird dating from the late twelfth century found below the level of the floor of the last period suggests a date for the destruction of the second house and its subsequent reconstruction. The Byzantine houses excavated in 1936 and 1939 south of Hadrian Street at this point had a similar history.<sup>2</sup>

To the east of the house there appears to have been a street, the continuation of a north-south street noted in the excavation just mentioned south of Hadrian Street. East of this street a few bits of walls of Byzantine times were noted at various points in the lot, but no plan could be recovered.

Deep down below the east foundation of the Byzantine House, and with a slightly different orientation, there was a rubble wall that may date from late Roman times.

<sup>2</sup> *Hesperia*, VI, 1937, p. 342.

## THE PANATHENAIC WAY

In order to fix the position of the classical Panathenaic Way or Dromos we dug a north-south trench across the western part of the lot in the area of the Byzantine House. The trench (a-a on Fig. 2) was two meters wide at the top; lower down its width was reduced in places to as little as 0.30 m. because of the pithoi that were encountered.

Outside the house to the south our trench cut down through gravel road fill as far as we dug showing that there had been a road in continuous use here. We stopped at a very hard layer about five meters below the modern surface. Sherds above this layer were still late Roman, as late at the sixth century after Christ. Within the area of the house the fill was disturbed by the house builders for a depth of about two meters (five meters below the modern surface). Below this we came on an extremely hard road level. This road extended almost the whole length of our trench. At the north end of the trench, however, we found the edge of the road bordered by a wall of Roman times perhaps as early as the second century after Christ. The wall, 1.12 m. wide, was built of small rough stones set in cement and had in its euthynteria course a limestone block with drafted edge, re-used upside down (Pl. 57, a). There had clearly been similar limestone blocks to the right and left of the block found in position, but they had been removed. In front of the wall was a soft trench, 0.50 m. wide and 0.65 deep, perhaps for a drain.

A wall of exactly the same construction was found by Dörpfeld in 1897 when he made a small excavation at No. 3 Hadrian Street (Phinopoulos lot) some fifty meters to the west. Dörpfeld never published a detailed account of this excavation. A sentence in *Ath. Mitt.*, XXII, 1897, pp. 478-479 announces the start of the work; another sentence in *Antike Denkmäler*, II, 1899-1901, text to pl. 37, p. 1, reports the discovery of the Dromos; and the map, *ibid.* pl. 37, shows in squares C 1 and C 2 the remains he discovered.<sup>3</sup> In the files of the German Institute in Athens, however, there exist several photographs made at the time of the excavation which show the remains quite clearly.<sup>4</sup> We reproduce two of them here through the courtesy of Dr. Emil Kunze, Director of the German Institute. One of them (Pl. 58, a) shows a great depth of ancient road fill, and in the foreground the foundations of a building bordering the road.<sup>5</sup> The other (Pl. 57, b) shows another portion of the wall of the building bordering the Dromos with two poros blocks with drafted edges in position in a thick

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also W. Judeich, *Topographie von Athen*<sup>2</sup>, p. 185, plan I, D 3, D 4.

<sup>4</sup> The photographs in question are in the series *Athen Bauten*, numbers 151, 152, 153, 154, 155 and 158; see Margarete Bieber, *Verzeichnis der käuflichen Photographien des kaiserlich deutschen archäologischen Instituts in Athen*, 1912, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> No. A B 155. The title written on the Institute print reads "Ausgrabung des Dromos. Schichtungen der antiken Strasse (Grundstück Phinopoulos)."

wall built mainly of small stones and cement. In front of the wall part of a terracotta drain is preserved.<sup>6</sup> Since the walls found by Dörpfeld appear to fall in the same line as the wall we found, and since the two are of the same construction, it seems clear that we have to do with a large building that bordered the north side of the Panathenaic Way in late antiquity.

The south edge of the road was not located, either by Dörpfeld or by us, but it must lie quite near by under Hadrian Street.

Because our trench was by now so narrow on account of the Byzantine pithoi and walls, and because of the extreme hardness of the road surface that we had encountered, it did not seem feasible to dig still deeper to expose earlier classical remains.

The result of the excavation is to confirm the line of the Panathenaic Way as established by Dörpfeld and as shown on the current plans of the Agora area.<sup>7</sup>

## INVESTIGATIONS AT NO. 11 HASTINGS STREET

WRITTEN IN COLLABORATION WITH MR. JOHN THREPSIADES,  
EPHOR OF ANTIQUITIES

In July 1958 the opportunity presented itself of making a sounding in the area just north of where the northwest corner of the Agora must fall (Fig. 1). The owner of the lot at No. 11 Hastings Street<sup>8</sup> demolished the house existing there and prepared to erect a somewhat larger one. The new house was designed with a basement under it about seven by twenty meters in area, and this was excavated by the owner to a depth of about four meters below the present street level without encountering any substantial remains. A Byzantine pithos located at about the middle of the west edge of the lot and similar in construction to those found at No. 7 Hadrian Street serves, however, to establish the mediaeval level.

When a depth of about four meters had been reached, ancient walls began to appear. Three main lines could be made out running parallel to each other in a north-south direction, evidently a street with houses on either side. A small archaeological investigation was therefore initiated by Mr. Threpsiades, the results of which are set forth below (Fig. 3; Pl. 58, b and c).

The street, whose direction is a few degrees west of north is about 3.30 meters

<sup>6</sup> No. A B 151. The title written on the Institute print reads "Ausgrabung des Dromos. Stufe der Stoa. Weg von der Agora zum Dipylon."

<sup>7</sup> For example, *The Athenian Agora, A Guide to the Excavations*, fig. 1; Wycherley, *Testimonia*, pl. I.

<sup>8</sup> Ὅδὸς Ἀστυγγοῦ. W. Judeich, *Topographie von Athen*<sup>2</sup>, plan I, E 4. Named after Capt. Frank Abney Hastings (1794-1828), British Philhellene who fought and died in the Greek War of Independence.

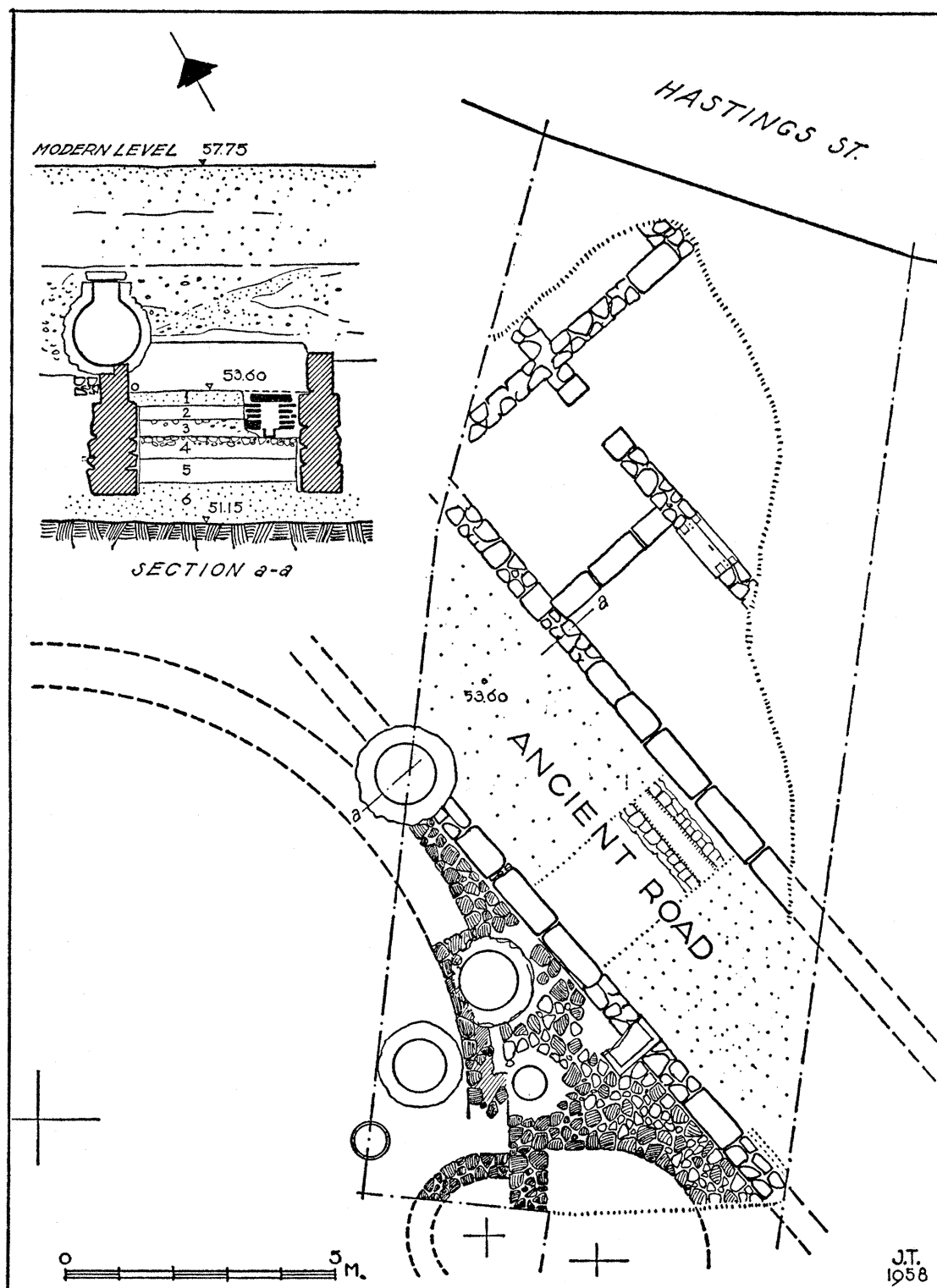


FIG. 3. Plan and Section of the Excavation at No. 11 Hastings Street.



wide. Along its east side is a drain built of tiles and rough stones and covered sometimes with irregular stone slabs, sometimes with large flat tiles about 0.50 m. square and 0.07 m. thick. The interior of the drain is choked with soft gray mud. The potsherds found around the cover slabs belong to very late Roman times, the sixth century after Christ, and the drain itself is probably not more than a century or two earlier, showing that the road was still in use at the very end of classical antiquity. Along the west side of the road is a round terracotta water pipe which carried water from south to north. Its fabric and especially its level show that it too is of late Roman times.<sup>9</sup>

In order to test the stratification, a trial cut two meters wide was made in the road, the results of which are most clearly seen in the accompanying section (Fig. 3). The upper layers of road gravel had been removed in the digging of the basement, and the first excavated layer contained pottery of the third and fourth centuries B.C. This layer ran up against the face of the house wall to the west. The second layer was very hard packed and had been cut through by the builders of the house to the west. The few sherds from the second layer seemed to be of the fourth century B.C. The third layer was also very hard and contained sherds of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. The surface of layer four was cobbled with good sized stones and probably represents the original improved road surface. Breaking through the cobbling, we found below it sherds of the sixth and seventh centuries B.C., which suggest a date for this earliest improved road. Lower down, in layer 5, there were a few sherds of the seventh and eighth centuries B.C. Layer 6 was sterile and probably represents a natural accumulation earlier than the time of the road. It rested on hardpan.

We thus have evidence for an important thoroughfare here which was in existence from at least the sixth century B.C. right on down through the sixth century after Christ.

Of the houses on either side of the street there is little to be said. In the narrow area to the west the wall bordering the street was of the fourth century B.C.; elsewhere there were concrete walls belonging to a large apsidal building of Roman times. To the east there were light house walls of both Classical and Roman times, but owing to the restricted space and limited time at our disposal no attempt was made to disentangle them.

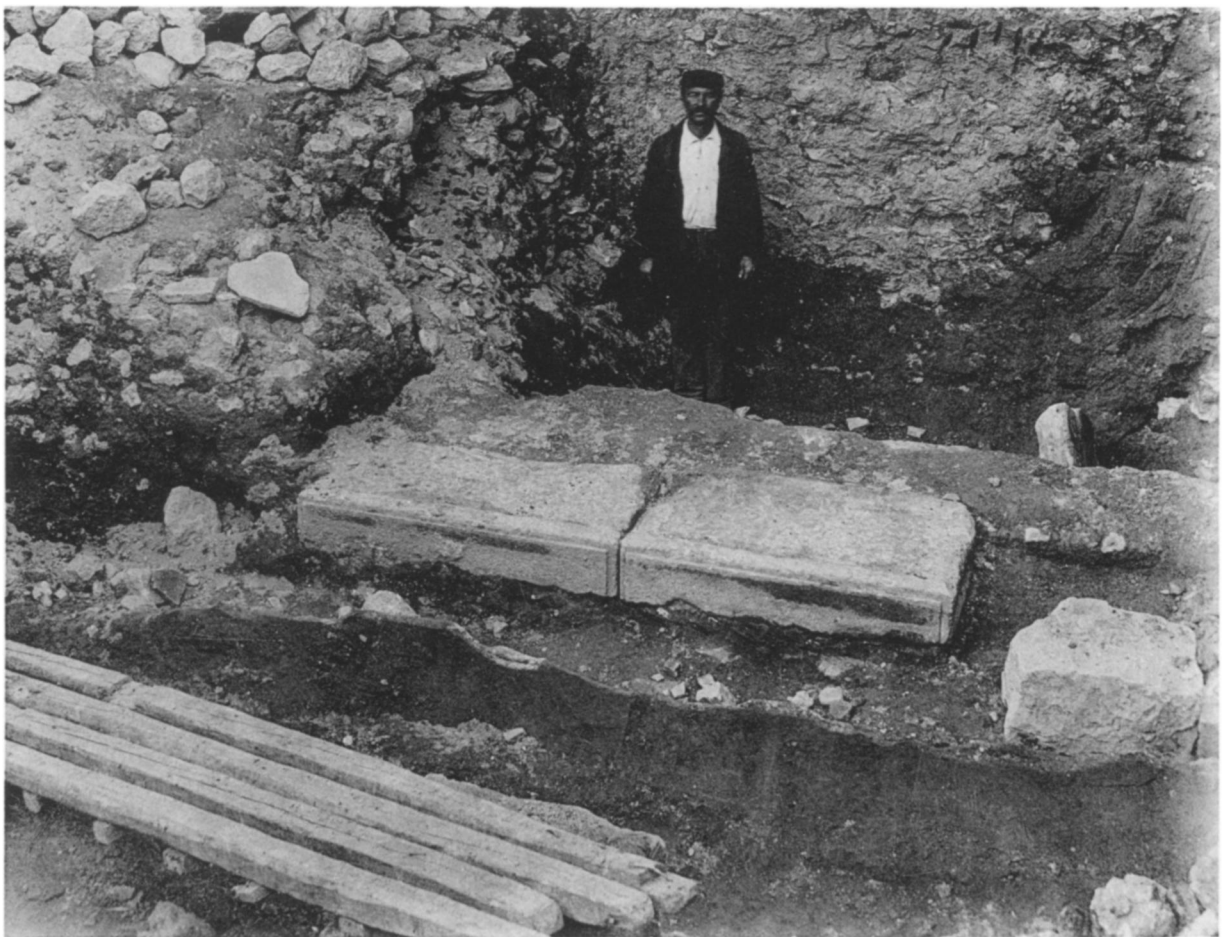
EUGENE VANDERPOOL

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<sup>9</sup> Interior diameter 0.11 m. Exterior diameter 0.14 m. Slight water deposit inside. Joints between sections of pipe sealed with white plaster.



a. Wall of Building on North Side of Panathenaic Way as Found at No. 7 Hadrian Street, from South.



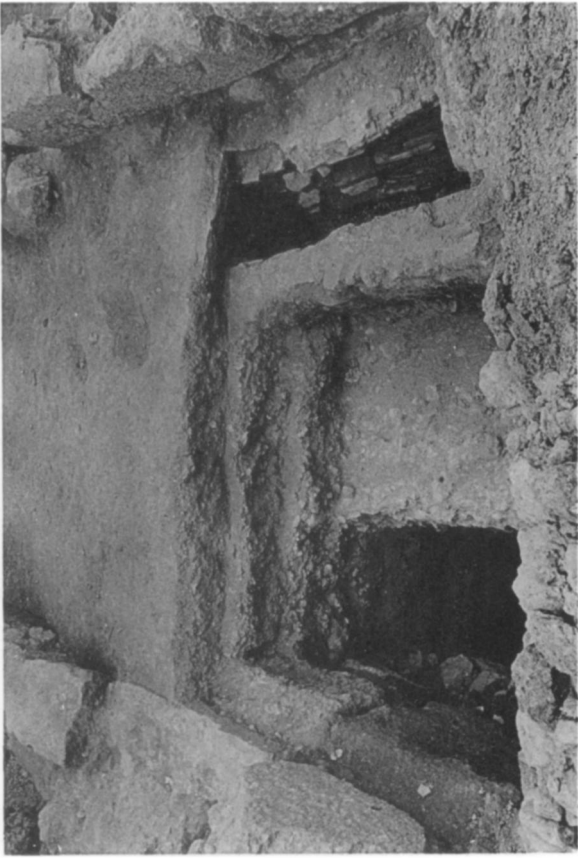
b. Wall of Building on North Side of Panathenaic Way as Found at No. 3 Hadrian Street (German Institute Photo).



a. Ancient Road Fill and Foundations of Building Bordering Road as Found at No. 3 Hadrian Street (German Institute Photo).



b. Ancient Road at No. 11 Hastings Street, from East. At Left, the Trial Cut. Upper Right, the Byzantine Pithos.



c. Detail of Trial Cut in Ancient Road at No. 11 Hastings Street, from South. At Right, the Roman Drain.