

At Home in Athens

Since his student days as a Regular Member, Professor Alan L. Boegehold of Brown University, now Chairman of the ASCSA Managing Committee, has returned to Greece many times, most recently with his wife Julie for the academic year 1990-1991, as he writes here.

From last October until this past July I spent most of my time in Athens and Old Corinth, participating in the life and work of the School, and I look back now on some memorable moments.

Time spent with William Coulson in the Director's office, as might be expected, provided more than a few. There were sessions, for instance, with discussion given over to the Blegen Library extension and to the examination of contracts, stipulations, and endless details. ASCSA Trustee Rob Loomis, if not physically in the office, was always a presence, his excellent preparatory studies consistently shaping our deliberations.

In spring, the entire instructional staff met in the Director's office to rank advanced students' applications for continuing support; their quality and attainments proved a strong affirmation of the School's essential role in classical studies. Thanks to a generous subvention from Trustee Ladislaus von Hoffman, we were able to give more support than in previous years, but even so, not all deserving students could be included.

In early December, I spent two weeks with WGBH Boston producer Austin Hoyt and his crew, in Greece doing ground work for a documentary film on the origins of democracy, which will be a central feature of our "Democracy 2500" Celebration. It was wonderful how often a single question — such as "What did Kleisthenes have in mind?" — sparked passionate colloquies at lunch in Loring Hall, or wherever else in the School he happened to be. It was almost as good as a seminar, although not perhaps as good as Bob Lamberton's "Plutarch's Athenian Lives," or that given by David Mitten (valiantly in view of a broken ankle suffered on the slippery slopes of Lykabettos) on Greek bronze statuettes, vessels, and armour, or Leslie Shear's now regularly offered (and prized) seminar, "Greek Architectural Inscriptions."

I remember also one December afternoon in Loring Hall, when some fifty of us assembled to give a critical hearing to four students who offered a preliminary reading of papers they were to present at the December meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America and the American Philological Association. Every



Julie and Alan Boegehold, Spring 1991.

paper, I would say, was improved by the keen (and always benevolent) observations and criticisms offered by the audience.

Throughout the year, talks with Donald Nicol, Director of the Gennadius Library, were of immense value, especially when we considered books, paintings, documents, the direction of the Library, and the place of Byzantine and later Greek studies in the School purview. In her lecture at the Gennadeion honoring Alison Frantz, Doula Mouriki showed us stunningly beautiful slides of thirteenth century icons from Mt. Sinai.

At the Blegen Library, always a scholar's joy, soft reflected light still glows on the golden oak of the library tables. The energy and good will of the library users minimized disruptions occasioned by the final breakthrough to new and ampler dimensions. In addition to her immense work reorganizing the collection in the new space, Nancy Winter, Blegen Librarian, is in the forefront of an effort to link by computer the library holdings of all the foreign schools in Athens.

In the Agora, excavations continue in the area of the Stoa Poikile, with student volunteers under expert instruction working out the basic procedures of archaeological research. I wish I could have been present when two whole inscribed stelai were brought to light. At Corinth, Charles K. Williams II, Director, and Nancy Bookidis, Assistant Director, again gave two training sessions for Members of the School before resuming their regular excavation. The focus of interest there now is an emerging Frankish structure of noble proportions, quite a new direction for the School. In an analogous development, Fred Cooper, who at Neochori showed me

some of the wonders his electronic mapping and recording implements can do, has begun a survey of Frankish structures in the northwestern Peloponnese.

After the beginning of the Gulf war, the School was advised to take special security measures; hence a great sigh of relief when at the war's conclusion we no longer had to show identification to an efficient-looking guard at the entrance to the parking lot of the School.

In March, John McK. Camp II, Mellon Professor of Classics, led a two week School trip to Karia and Ionia — with Mustafa Uz contributing helpful details, especially on architectural mouldings. At Ephesos, arriving in a soaking rain, we witnessed a heartening display: when the students, comfortably seated in a dry, warm bus, were told that they were on their own for the next three hours, all were out the door in a minute, fanning out in the wet and the wind to pursue their own explorations, with not one returning to the bus early. Again at Klaros, where remains of the Apollo temple are visible rising at odd angles from the water of a sump, all proved admirably agile scrambling (in a light rain) from one slippery, irregular marble surface to another, seeking the best vantage point to view the ruins.

My own studies — having to do with lawcourt, graffiti, gestures, and Cavafy — progressed, and the year went by very fast. A number of talks with Oscar Broneer, Professor Emeritus of Archaeology, now confined pretty much to Ancient Corinth, helped one's longer perspective. It is remarkable how little over the years the essential School has changed.