IN THE CRYPT UNDER THE NORTH PORTICO
OF THE ERECHTHEUM

In the summer of 1947, the late Dr. Leicester B. Holland requested permission to
remove a small amount of plaster and rubble to investigate the crypt beneath the
North Portico of the Erechtheum. Permission was granted by the Ephor of the
Acropolis, Mr. John Miliades, to open a space of thirty centimeters square.

The plaster and rubble concerned belonged to the remains of a draw-hole for a
cistern constructed under and to the east of the North Portico. Examination showed
the fabric to be principally brick, with scraps of poros, marble, etc. in mortar. In
part it was tight against the earlier masonry which it concealed, but elsewhere pockets
and seams of earth intervened. There was no mortar between the old blocks. In
the rubble removed three sherds were found, one from a large, nondescript jar of
course ware, red surfaced with a black core; it was judged by the staff of the exca-
vations in the Athenian Agora to be Byzantine rather than Turkish.

Upon removal of a small portion of the draw-hole wall, the marble block E
(Fig. 1) was more fully exposed, together with the poros block F below it. Between
the latter and the poros block G to its left, or east of it, is a gap of 0.01 m., or 0.006 m.
from the anathyrosis on G. This anathyrosis was cut back 0.002 m. to fit tightly
against block E. The upper corner of block E is worn in a curve extending some
0.26 m. from this tight joint. All three blocks are cut to finished faces on their outer
or northern sides, but F and the poros block below it are weathered rough. By probing
between F and G Dr. Holland found the gap to run inward (to the south) at least
1.30 m. from the face of the blocks, while E extended westward some 0.60 m. and F
about 0.50 m.

If, as shown in the reconstruction, the crypt was lined with poros blocks in the
late fifth century B.C., a block of the wall on the west side would have met the anathy-
rosis on G, and hidden E and F to which it would run at right angles. The presence of
a marble block in the position occupied by E seems to be explained only by assigning it
to the Cimonian structure of poros with marble trim. The now visible remains
replaced the Cimonian work in the late fifth century.

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1 The notes and measurements left by the late Leicester B. Holland were carefully kept by
Louise Adams Holland who encouraged Marian Holland McAllister to check them on the Acropolis
in 1952, to prepare this statement and to make the drawings which conform as far as possible with
those of The Erechtheum, published by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in
1927. The plan is based on pl. II; the elevation is similar to that of fig. 66(C); cf. pl. VIII. The
block here marked D is so indicated in fig. 66(A).

Hesperia, XXVII, 3
PLAN AT LEVEL OF BLOCK 'E'

ELEVATION LOOKING SOUTH

SECTION THROUGH BLOCK 'E' AT X-X

THE ERECTHEUM: THE NORTH PORTICO CRYPT