

ARCHAEOLOGY

Ruins of Greek Building Found Under Modern Homes

Sculptures and Inscriptions also Discovered During Summer's Excavations in Market Place of Ancient Athens

AMERICAN archaeologists excavating at the Agora, the market place of ancient Athens, have concluded a highly successful summer's work, and have begun to take stock of their discoveries. After demolishing two complete blocks of small modern Greek homes and shops, the archaeologists and workmen probed ten feet below the ground, locating in the process the ruins of old buildings and also sculptures and inscriptions, as well as many small objects.

In the northern part of the market place have been uncovered foundations of a large building, says Prof. T. Leslie Shear of Princeton University in a special statement to *Art and Archaeology*. Prof. Shear is field director for the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

Identifying the buildings in the Athenian Agora is a matter of keen interest to classical scholars. Prof. Shear has identified the large, new-found building as one of the stoas, or covered colonnades of the market place. The building was long and narrow and had two rows of columns, of which only foundations remain.

Office of Chief Magistrate

In the shelter of the stoas the Athenians conducted business, held trials and meetings, and engaged in philosophical discussions. The newly excavated stoa has been specifically identified as the Stoa Basileios, which was the office of one of the chief magistrates of Athens, known as the Archon Basileios. This stoa, according to the Greek writer Pausanias, stood on the right of the entrance to the Agora.

In the southern area of excavation, the digging showed another building which appears to have been one of the important edifices of the market place. The building was narrow, with steps and column bases of Hymettus marble. Part of the ruins still lie hidden beneath modern structures, but Prof. Shear tentatively identifies the building as the Stoa of Zeus Eleutherios.

While exploring a large water-channel, apparently in the wide street which ran through the Agora, the excavators discovered a colossal statue of the Emperor Hadrian. The statue had been thrown head first into the channel.

Regarding this statue, which has not yet been dislodged from its position, Prof. Shear writes:

"Pausanias states that a statue of Hadrian stood by the Zeus Stoa. As the statue which has been found is too large and heavy to have been transported far

in later times, it is probably lying close to the place where it was originally erected. This provides further evidence that the building on the west of the area is the Stoa of Zeus."

A broken statue of a woman found near the steps of the Zeus Stoa is pronounced a fine piece.

"The beauty of the work and the technique of the execution suggest a Greek original of the fourth century B. C.," Prof. Shear reports.

Special Method of Cataloguing

A special method of cataloguing the objects removed from the sites has been devised by Prof. and Mrs. Shear, and is said to be so accurate and complete that in future any investigator, referring to this collection of objects and the card catalogue, will be able to find all the known facts about any object. Such a system as this has rarely been attempted in archaeological history.

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Courtesy of T. Leslie Shear

STOA BASILEIOS

A government building of ancient Athens is here having its foundations uncovered. The temple at the right is the Theseum.