

Excavation Summary - 2002

Excavations were carried out from June 10 to August 2, 2002, with a team of up to 32 students and six supervisors. This very preliminary report is intended for those who participated in the season's field work. It comes with my thanks for both the hard work and the good will shown by all of you throughout the season. Whatever success these excavations enjoy is due largely to your efforts. The preparation of this report owes a great deal to the digital wizardry of Craig Mauzy and Bruce Hartzler.

Section BZ: *Marcie, Mike, and Floris.*

In the northwest corner we continued down, exploring the transition between the 10th/11th AD Byzantine settlement and the late Roman remains which underlie it. Most of the features of the Medieval settlement had been known, but our understanding of several was refined by this season's work. The large plastered cistern in Mike's area proved to have been lined with mudbricks, and a paved platform was encountered around the mouth of Marcie's well. A large coarse-ware jar buried in the corner of a room in Floris' area contained the skeletal remains of an infant, buried under the floor of the house (*Figs. 1 and 2*). The Byzantine walls, made of assorted stones and tiles set in mud, have a fair admixture of ancient material built in, including some very large blocks. Several of the marbles, though fragmentary, clearly come from funerary monuments (CGMs, sarcophagos lids, grave reliefs), which must have been brought in from beyond the city walls, some 500 meters to the northwest. The late Roman walls, recognizable from their lower levels and the use of a lime mortar, should tie in with similar walls found to the southeast. Thus far no clear plan or obvious function has been identified for the Roman remains, though a terracotta water channel and large rectangular settling basin were found in what should be a courtyard around Marcie's well. Floor levels, thresholds, and the well all seem to fall fairly consistently between 53.25 and 53.75 masl for the latest Roman floors. Both Floris and Mike produced an assortment of small terracottas (*Fig. 3*), reliefs and figurines; similar pieces, dating from early Hellenistic to late Roman times, have been a common find in the immediately adjacent area. A mould for an alpha-globule lamp (*Fig. 4: ca 100 AD*) was also encountered, but generally there are no signs of kilns or other

industrial activity which would suggest that the material was actually being made in the vicinity.

Following the standard rule of thumb that significant finds rarely occur before the last possible moment in a season, a handsome Roman head made its appearance in a late Roman pit in Floris' area on Wednesday, July 31 (*Figs. 5 and 6*). It shows a long-haired, heavily bearded individual wearing a rolled and twisted fillet ornamented with some sort of central medallion. Such fillets are often interpreted as indicating that the individual depicted is a priest, though the unusually long locks and somewhat idealized features perhaps suggest that we are dealing here with a deity or barbarian, rather than a portrait.

Section BE: *David*

In the adjacent area we explored various levels in, around, and under the Classical Commercial Building. This area was most directly affected by the torrential downpour on our free day off, Monday July 8th, causing us to alter our plans for the season somewhat (*Fig. 7*, panorama from the south). Thirteen centimeters of rain fell in about 2 hours, leaving this trench under as much as two feet of water until Craig resurrected our overworked pumps. The fill under a pedestaled wall became completely saturated, causing the wall above to collapse.

Despite these difficulties, a round shaft lying under the south wall of the Classical Commercial Building was partially excavated. It seems to be the shaft of a well dating to the Protogeometric or early Geometric period (ca. 1000-900 BC) making it the earliest evidence of habitation in this area north of the Eridanos River. The well should have served the needs of a house now long gone, while the earlier Mycenaean remains found nearby are all from graves. In the upper part of the well we encountered the well-preserved skeleton of a robust young man, loosely flexed, lying on his right side (*Figs. 8, 9, and 10*). A preliminary analysis of the bones by Maria Liston suggests that he was 25-35 years old, muscular, and must have suffered from severe back pain. The pose and the full complement of bones in their correct relative position suggest that the burial was intended rather than accidental and that after its collapse and/or abandonment the upper part of the well was deliberately used as a grave. We reached a depth of about 2 meters, at which point the regular collapse of soft, saturated bedrock from the sides of the shaft persuaded us to cease operations.

Panathenaic Way: *Kevin*

A small trial trench was opened up along the east side of the Panathenaic Way, to the west of the bema in front of the Stoa of

Attalos. Earlier excavations in the area had been carried down to the late Roman levels, but not earlier. It is clear that the width and course of the road varied somewhat over the centuries. The southwest side of the street is well defined in the Hellenistic and Roman periods by a handsome stone gutter, but the northeast edge is generally far less well defined. In places the maximum width of the road can be measured where it is limited on either side by buildings, but its full width has not been determined where it passes through the open square. We hoped to find the ancient shoulder and therefore the edge of the road, and several hard-packed surfaces were encountered, though further digging will be necessary before we can confidently restore the width and history of the Panathenaic Way, the major street of Athens, its main processional way, and the training-ground for the cavalry.

Eleusinion: *Laura*

Work continued also in the area just south of and uphill from the Eleusinion. Here the depth of fill has left almost no surviving architectural remains, and our understanding of the use of the area in antiquity (residential, sacred, industrial?) will probably have to come from wells, cisterns, and/or other deposits in pits in the bedrock. This season we excavated more of a well first encountered last season. It was 1.15 m. in diameter and over 12 meters deep, cut through hard bedrock and unlined. The fill seems to date late 6th /early 5th BC and produced a bronze measure for dry goods (*fig. 11*), the skeletons of several dogs, a fair number of loomweights, assorted fragments of painted pottery (*fig. 12*), and the palmette finials of a stone altar (*fig. 13*).

Scraping bedrock also resulted in the surprise of the season: a handsome, well-preserved, marble portrait head, described in a separate report, which forms the subject-matter of this year's T-shirt.

John Camp
August 2002

Section BZ



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Fig. 10



Fig. 9

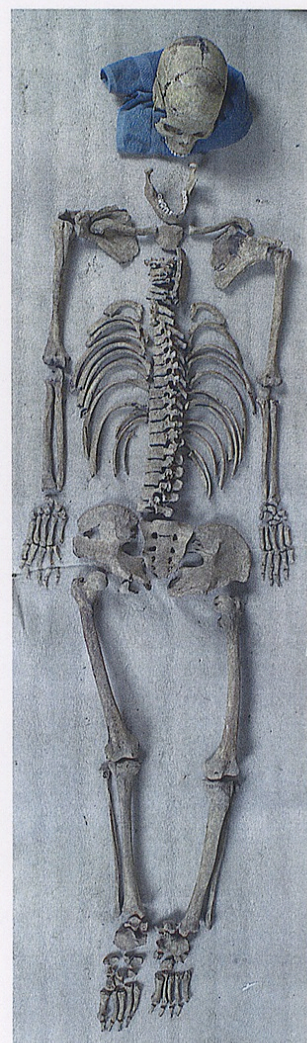


Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13