

LACONIA.

II.—EXCAVATIONS AT SPARTA, 1906.

§ 13.—TOPOGRAPHICAL CONCLUSIONS.

IT is not intended in the present preliminary report to discuss controversial questions of Spartan¹ topography. The solution of some of these will be provided, it is to be hoped, by our future excavations on the site. It is permissible, however, to dwell for a short time on the position of the Acropolis and the Agora, since the information of Pausanias and the results of last year's work are sufficient, in my opinion, to establish their identity.

That the whole surface of the Palaeocastro hill should have been called the Acropolis is unlikely. A passage in Thucydides² renders its position on the theatre-hill, or western summit, almost certain. From this passage we learn that Pausanias, the king of Sparta during the Persian wars, was buried ἐν τῷ προτεμενίσματι, or, as the Scholiast explains ἐν τῷ προπυλαίῳ, ἐν τῷ πρὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ προαστείῳ. The *Hieron* referred to is the temple of Athena Chalkioikos on the Acropolis, and we know that the tomb of Pausanias was opposite the theatre. We may thus legitimately infer that the temple of Athena stood on the theatre-hill.

The only ruins on the hill at present are of mediaeval date, a large oblong, perhaps part of a palace in the city of Lacedaemonia. On the

¹ The most recent writers on Spartan topography are Nestorides, *Τοπογραφία τῆς Ἀρχαίας Σπάρτης* (Athens, 1892); Heinrich Stein, *Topographie des alten Sparta* (Glatz, 1890); and N. E. Crosby, 'The Topography of Sparta,' *Am. Journ. Arch.* vol. viii. No. 3, 1893.

² Thuc. i. 134 (Hitzig and Blümner, i.² p. 783.)

eastern slope can be traced the outline of a large Byzantine church¹ with three apses, into which several ancient marbles have been built. Proceeding further eastwards along the plateau we come to the round building, dug by the American school² in 1894, and beyond that, to the large Roman Stoa, which stretches to the eastern limit of the hill (pp. 415 f. above).

A second Byzantine church exists close to the round building, a third, known as Haghios Nikon or Haghios Sotéra, stood on a mound between the round building and the Stoa, and a fourth was discovered in our excavations on the central summit. Between the round building and the central summit are some further traces of mediaeval buildings, which are shown on the plan. For the rest there are various remains of columns and ancient blocks on the plateau, but no other traces of a considerable building. The back wall of the Stoa is prolonged until within 12 m. of the round building in the centre of the south slope of the Acropolis, but the continuation is built of stone not of brick, and clearly comes from a later period. The brick wall which runs to the east of the round building is of the same width as the Stoa, including the vaulted passage at the back, and must have been built in connexion with it. The wall which continues the line of the Stoa does not stop naturally, but has been broken through, apparently by a roadway running north. The brick wall itself rests upon a foundation covered with plaster, which extends to the lower edge of the 'Round Building.' Presumably therefore there has been a general remodelling of this area in late Roman times. We found in the trenches to the east of the round building a Corinthian capital, column, and base which perhaps belong to a decoration of the round building itself.

A roadway³ which was discovered at the south-east angle of the fortifications appeared to be turning in through the blocked-up gate in front of the Roman Stoa, and accordingly a trench was dug right across, from the Stoa to the fortification wall, in hopes of finding the road surface inside. This, however, we were unable to find. There is a network of drain-pipes and of beaten earth surface at various levels down to virgin soil at 4.70 m. but we found no paving.

With the fixing of the Acropolis, the position of the Agora on the flat land to the south of the Palaeocastro hill becomes indubitable.

¹ General Plan, junction of **K** and **L**, **12** and **13**.

² *Am. Journ. Arch.* viii. No. 3, 1893, pp. 410-428.

³ General Plan, **L 14**.

We know that the Agora was on a low level, and not, as Leake supposed,¹ on the Palaeocastro plateau, since Plutarch² uses the phrase *καταβαίνοντες εἰς τὴν ἀγοράν* on several occasions; that it was to the east of the theatre, since Pausanias³ remarks that the road from Agora to theatre runs westwards; and that it was of considerable proportions. Only two positions then are possible, the flat land south of the Acropolis, or the flat land to the east, between the Acropolis and the river.

The latter position cannot be reconciled with the topography of Pausanias.

(1) He only observed one monument of importance between the Agora and the theatre. From this we must infer that they were no great distance apart; but to get to the theatre from the river-bank, we have to make a circuit of the Palaeocastro hill.

(2) Between the Agora and the temple of Artemis Orthia he describes a large number of monuments. But the temple of Artemis immediately adjoins the flat land in question.

(3) It is on the outside of the town instead of in the centre, and no conceivable arrangement of roads leading from it will conform with the results described by Pausanias.

Three further arguments seem conclusive for the position south of Palaeocastro.

(1) Among our first finds on the site of Sparta were the four⁴ large inscription blocks with lists of *ἱεροθύται* and other officers connected with the *νομοφύλακες*, whose office was in the Agora. These blocks are too large to be easily portable, and they were found in the south-east corner of the Byzantine wall of fortification round the Palaeocastro hill.

(2) Along the base of the southern fortification wall, just to the west of the round building, we found a large number of fine honorary inscriptions built in, which presumably came from public buildings in the Agora. A view of this piece of the wall is given in Fig. 1.

(3) The fine Roman Stoa, already mentioned, is most naturally accounted for in the Agora. Its several divisions must clearly have been used as shops. It is possible that in it we have a late restoration or renewal of the great *Στοὰ Περσική* mentioned by Pausanias.⁵

We may therefore regard the position of the Acropolis and the Agora

¹ *Travels in the Morea*, i. p. 170.

² Plut. *Ages.* 29, *Lyc.* 25, *Agis.* 12.

³ Paus. III. xiv. 1.

⁴ P. 467, Nos. 22, 23, 26, 27.

⁵ Paus. III. xi. 3

of Sparta as practically certain, and further we thus obtain evidence for the direction of two of the routes taken from it by Pausanias: a western route to the theatre, and an eastern route to the Limnaeum and the temple of *Artemis Orthia*.

It is noticeable that the back-wall of the Roman Stôa is parallel with the axis of the theatre, and in the same straight line. Taken in connexion

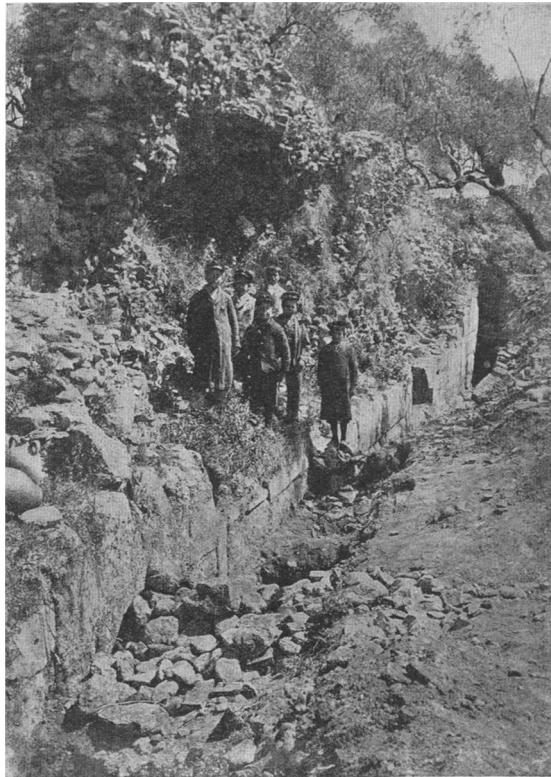


FIG. 1.—LATE ROMAN WALL WITH INSCRIPTIONS BUILT IN.

with the traces of road found in front of the theatre, this suggests that the road mentioned by Pausanias, as leading westwards from the Agora to the theatre, ran in a straight line from the south front of the Stoa to the south front of the theatre, past the round building, which is probably included among the buildings in the Agora.

The flat ground that extends south and west from the Acropolis to the

Magoula river is studded with small fragments of ancient remains, mostly in single blocks or broken columns. Only two buildings, with the modern names of Vasilopoula and Arapissa, are on a more considerable scale. Neither, so far as we can tell, contains any relics of the Hellenic period. Vasilopoula¹ and the domed building adjacent to it were found by Mr. Traquair to belong to a late Roman period. Arapissa² was excavated by Mr. Wace and proved to be part of a large Roman bath. There was another bathing-establishment³ close to the theatre, and excavations near the so-called tomb of Leonidas revealed traces of a third.⁴ The latter appears to have been of quatre-foil shape, and we found in it traces of a hypocaust and of carefully plastered walls. Traces of a road led in a northerly direction towards the theatre. Remains of two statues were found on the floor of this building:—the round base and feet of a female figure inscribed

ΚΛΑΥ . . ΑΠ . . . | ΚΑΛΛΙΣΤΟΝΕΙΚΗ . . . | ΘΥΓΑΤΕΡΑ⁵

and the upper part of a statue of the youthful Asclepios,⁶ of which an illustration is given in Fig. 2. The god is beardless and stands in a traditional attitude, leaning his left shoulder on a stick up which a snake is coiled, and resting the right hand on his hip. The hair is bound by a taenia, of which one end falls over the right shoulder. The free use of the drill in hair and drapery, and the poor execution, point to a late copy of the second century, A.D., but the expression preserves some of the force of the original. A few other small objects were found in the neighbourhood, but no trace of Hellenic remains. Trial-pits were dug in several parts of this area where the absence of crops made it possible, but no traces of Greek buildings were unearthed. The surface blocks, and indeed all the pottery and glass fragments found in the various excavations, seem to date clearly from the Roman era. It is probably to a period not earlier than the second century A.D. that the various Roman buildings should be attributed, so that we would seem to have evidence in this quarter, which agrees with that from the theatre and from the temple of Artemis Orthia, that there was a considerable revival of prosperity in Sparta under the Antonine and Aurelian emperors.

Perhaps the most important topographical work done last season was

¹ *J* 13.

² *Cf.* p. 407.

³ *K* 12.

⁴ *I* 15.

⁵ P. 467, No. 21.

⁶ *Cf.* Tod and Wace, *S.M.C.* Nos. 580 and 710.

the tracing of the city wall of Sparta for a considerable portion of its circuit. Traces of the wall, confirmed by the discovery of tiles inscribed *τείχεων*, have been found along the river-bank, from the Artemisium up to the remains of the ancient bridge just above the modern iron bridge over the Eurotas. Its course is marked on the general plan, starting in **O 16** and ending in **O 11**.

Further traces of it have been found, however, in the ravine north of



FIG. 2.—STATUE OF ASCLEPIOS.

the Acropolis, and on the *col* to the north-west, while tile-stamps with the inscription *τείχεων* have been found much further to the north-west. From Polybius we know that the circuit of the walls of Sparta was about 48 stades. 2000 metres or between 11 and 12 stades are accounted for by our discoveries between the temple of Artemis and the *col* north-west of the Acropolis hill, up to which point our knowledge of its course is fairly certain ; 18 more stades are added if we carry the wall southwards from

the Artemisium along the cliffs of the Eurotas, and viâ the hills of Kolospyrou to the cliffs of the Magoula as far as the Cathedral hill in **F 16**. The remaining 18 stades of wall probably traversed the flat land in the bend of the Magoula and included part of the north-western hills.

The ancient bridge¹ over the Eurotas, just above the modern iron bridge, is illustrated in plate 49 of the 2nd volume of the *Expédition de Morée* by a plan and an elevation of one of the arches. From these we learn that there were two side piers measuring 11·50 m. by 3·75 m., and two side arches measuring 13·78 m. in span. Between the two arches is a span of 29 m. Whether this was one large buttress against the stream, whose strength here is very great in flood-time, or two piers and a central arch, is not certain, but the latter is certainly more probable.

At the present day the only remains are part of the central piers, and a few blocks of the southern pier in the bed of the stream. The piers were faced with squared blocks, and filled with small stones. The workmanship is poor, and the bridge can hardly be earlier than the late imperial period. In all probability it is contemporary with the early Byzantine fortification on the Acropolis.

At the same time it is probable that this marks the site of the earlier bridge which Epameinondas was afraid to cross in 370 B.C.² The French saw traces of an ancient roadway coming down to the bank on the opposite side of the river, and trial-pits discovered some traces of a road approaching the bridge-head on the southern bank. There is a modern ford of the river just at this spot, which is undoubtedly the most natural place for the road from Mistra to cross the river.

Livy³ mentions that one of the gates of Sparta was in the direction of Mount Barboesthes, north of the Menelaum, and Pausanias⁴ also mentions a gate not far from the Limnaeum or temple of Artemis. No other bridge is known of until we come to Amyclae. Thus we can put one of the gates and roads out of Sparta with considerable certainty at this spot.

Just below the remains of the old bridge on the right bank there is a facing-wall (Fig. 3) of similar material and construction to the bridge. It starts 29 m. from the bridge-head, and continues for 36 m. down stream, following the line of the bank. It is 65 m. broad, and is strengthened with cross-walls at intervals, the interspaces being filled with earth and

¹ General Plan, **o 11**.

³ Livy xxxv. 27 and 30.

² Xen. *Hell.* vi. 5. 27 foll.

⁴ Paus. III. xvi. 4.

gravel. It must have been intended as a breakwater against the stream, to protect the city wall of which we have traces on the bank above.

Trial-pits on the bank revealed traces of the roadway mentioned, and of a late Roman house. Some vase-fragments of earlier date and a terracotta plaque of a horseman were found near it, and two tiles from the walls. Two blocks of the city wall appear *in situ* in the bed of the millstream, which here runs parallel with the stream of the Eurotas; and above them is a large platform 7 metres in length which had perhaps some connexion with the wall. Another block, which may also belong to the city wall, is

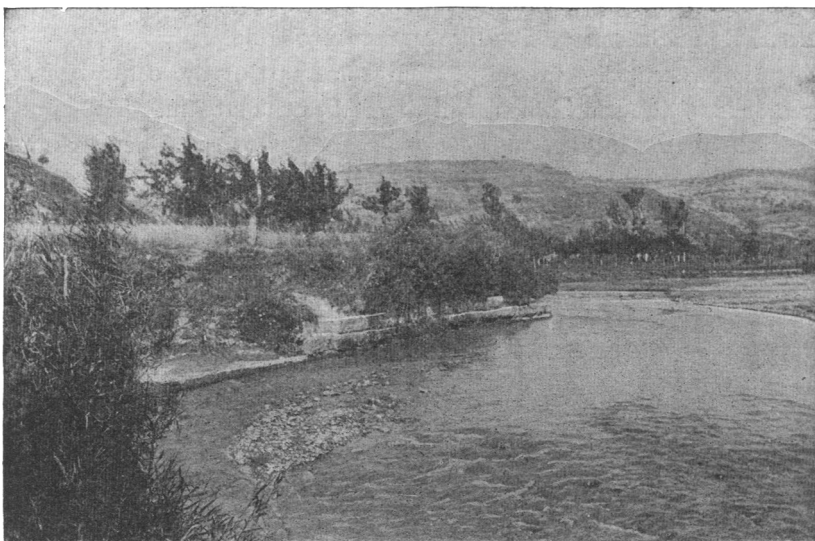


FIG. 3.—FACING-WALL NEAR SITE OF ANCIENT BRIDGE.

shown in the general plan **O 11**. The bank here makes a sharp turn inland, with flat marshy land to the north-west, and it is highly probable that the wall made a similar right-angled bend. The platform therefore may have formed part of some additional means of defence.

Below the iron bridge, and just above the great altar, is another piece of city wall 36 metres in length. At its eastern extremity it is 2.40 m. thick. There are some traces of its continuation on the other side of the mill-stream, which interrupts it at the western end. The construction here is different from that of the fragments found by Mr. Wace further south.

Instead of carefully joined blocks of limestone, we find a rougher layer of large blocks of a more sandy material. This points to a later restoration, a cause for which is suggested in the description of the altar. Beneath the wall three large unpainted jars and some diamond-shaped tiles were found, which seem to point to a Roman origin.

We have now therefore the following fixed points for studying the topography of Sparta :—

- (1) The Acropolis.
- (2) The Agora.
- (3) Pausanias' route westwards to the Theatre.
- (4) Pausanias' route eastwards to the gates and the Limnaeum.
- (5) The city wall from the Temple of Artemis to the old bridge.
- (6) Traces of the north-east road out of Sparta towards Tegea and Argos.

On such a basis it is to be hoped that subsequent excavations will provide material for a considerable reconstruction of the plan of the town.

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N.B.—Excavations conducted this spring (1907) have confirmed the supposition that the Temple of Athena Chalkioikos stood upon the theatre-hill. The 'Round Building' on the Acropolis, partially excavated by Dr. Waldstein, proves to be a semicircular retaining-wall built round a small projecting hill, embanked so as to form a platform. This core of hill is virgin soil. Part of the circuit has been restored in Roman times, but the greater portion seems to be good Hellenic work constructed without mortar.

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