## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITS FROM RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN ATHENS

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Over the past ten years, the *Archaeological Reports* have summarized the principal publications of an enormous body of evidence collected from excavations for major building programmes in Athens and Attica. Principal among these projects in the city itself were the works ahead of the construction of the New Acropolis Museum and for the extension of the metro system. Both have now appeared in preliminary publications in the *Archaiologikon Deltion* (now up-to-date for the excavations of 2004), while the metro was the subject of an exhibition and catalogue by the Goulandris Foundation. No excavations in the city have ever been conducted on such a scale: the museum plot at Makriyanni investigated an area of around 10,000m$^2$ and the metro works nearly 80,000m$^2$. As a result, our understanding of the city's urban fabric, its road and water systems, cemeteries, sanctuaries and fortifications has rapidly expanded from the Neolithic through to the early modern period; full publication of these sites is eagerly awaited.

This year, the Athens section of *AR* takes a tour of what can now been seen of the results of such excavations around Athens: archaeological areas which have been left open and prepared for public display, and the small collections of finds included in the halls of a number of metro stations.

Construction of the **New Acropolis Museum** within a plot in Makriyanni, to the south of the Sanctuary of Dionysos, necessitated major excavations in part of the city known to be densely occupied in many periods up to the Late Byzantine. The principal works took place between 1997 and 2005 (see *AR* 52 [2005–2006] 8; **ID1705**, **ID2116**), although several sections of the plot had previously been investigated, particularly on the north side, beneath the Weiler Building and in the 2,500m$^2$ area to the east, excavated for the Acropolis metro station. There was scarcely a year since 1980 when trowel did not break ground here (see *ADelt* 54 [1999] 45 for a history of investigations in the area). Following the excavations, the design of the museum was altered so as to disturb the antiquities beneath as little as possible, partly by raising the structure on high concrete pillars, while much of the remaining archaeology was prepared for public display through open areas outside of the building and within through glass panels in the floor. An exhibition about the excavations is planned for the future.

Occupation on this site has been traced back to the Early Helladic, while many burials were discovered from the Middle Helladic through to the Protogeometric period. From the eighth century BC, the area became predominantly residential, with several Classical houses, Hellenistic workshops and much relaying of roads and building extensions in Roman times. During the fourth to sixth century AD the plot housed imposing villas, bath complexes and workshops. Following its abandonment in the seventh century, the road network which crosses the site was not rebuilt, and during the Middle Byzantine era the area included a cemetery of vaulted tombs.

The excavated area is divided by a series of roads into building blocks. Entering the plot from the pedestrianized Dionysiou Areopagitou, the first section of excavations visible shows the Roman **West Baths**, bounded to the west by Road II and to the south by the smaller Road IV, in use from the third century BC to the fourth century AD and now only partially preserved beneath the circular hall of the later Building E. The bath complex comprises *frigidarium*, *caldarium*, *tepidarium* and *praefurnium*, and has an open courtyard with a well. Following a period of abandonment, the complex was repaired in the fourth to fifth century, probably becoming a house with frescoed walls and imitation marble revetments. A large room to the east paved with marble mosaic appears to have been destroyed at the end of the fifth century.

**Road II**, dating from the end of the fifth century BC, runs along the whole length of the west side of the visible remains, and is best seen from the gardens at the side of the museum. The block to its east provides the principal display through the open floor of the museum's covered entrance, with the remains of two large Roman houses in the southern half, Houses Γ and Στ, partly covered by the more prominent Building E at the north.

**House Γ**, occupying the southeast corner of the block, is a Late Roman/Early Byzantine dwelling with a central peristyle court, the floor paved in *opus sectile* of diamond-shaped marble plaques, best seen from the garden at the west. As preserved today, the form of the house dates to the fifth century AD, being then abandoned towards the end of the sixth century.

Further east, **House Στ** is less well preserved. It is on a higher level than House Γ and built around a colonnaded courtyard with clay tiled floor. The north part of the house comprises a series of small rooms, clustered around a large central *triclinium*. The house is also Late Roman/Early Byzantine, but may have been laid out by the Roman Imperial if not the Late Hellenistic period. Access to the house was via a narrow corridor leading out to Road I.

The principal structure visible through the viewing platform over the northern section of this block is the Early Byzantine **Building E**, most readily identifiable by the large circular hall at the far north of the block. The complex consists of a large central apsidal hall (25 × 9.5m), with series of rooms to the south and east, while access from the north was by six preserved steps which lead into a small chamber with entrances to the apsidal hall and the circular hall (7m diameter). Between the apsidal and the circular halls is a small triconch hall, perhaps a dining area. Coins of Heraclius (AD 610–641) and Constans II (AD 641–668) in the foundation trenches of the apsidal hall give a *terminus post quem* of the seventh century. During the eighth and ninth centuries, sections of the structure were used as a ceramic workshop, and by the tenth century further hydraulic installations and a kiln indicate industrial activity.

**Road I**, dating back to the late fifth century BC and abandoned at the end of the third century AD, serves as the southern boundary of this building block, and continues to run east–west across the Makryianni plot into the metro excavations. It is best viewed from the gardens to the west of the museum, where its intersection with Road II is clearly visible.

From this point, as well as through glass panels in the floor of the southwest corner of the museum's ground floor, can be seen the Classical **House Θ**, founded at the end of the fifth century BC and containing a well-preserved *andron* with a mosaic floor of marble and pebbles in separated panels. The house remained in use

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over a long period and underwent many repairs and alterations. In the Hellenistic period, a workshop was established in the courtyard with a system of three connecting rectangular tanks, arranged on different levels. A pipe drained water into an underground cistern, while the unclean or surplus water was removed to Road II through a built drainage channel. The workshop was probably a fullery or washery of some form. In the second century AD the house was extended towards the east. Its rooms were arranged around an interior courtyard with a floor of marble gravel. Final destruction came at the end of the third century.

To the south of the Weiler Building – a military hospital and barracks built in 1836 – is the small **Central Baths** with *frigidarium*, *tepidarium*, *unctorium* and *caldarium*. It operated from the end of the fifth century AD and reached its final form in the seventh century with the addition of rooms to the south, including a *sudatorium*.

The eastern part of the Makriyanni plot was excavated in 1993–1996 for the construction of the Acropolis metro station. A reconstructed cross-section of **Road I** is on display in the station's lower hall, dating back to the fifth century BC, as evidenced by a carefully constructed terracotta water conduit set within a rock channel. A total of 16 road surfaces date from the second half of the fourth century – associated probably with the rebuilding of the Theatre of Dionysos around 330 BC – down to its abandonment in the seventh century AD. A number of cases display pottery from the Middle Helladic, Mycenaean and Protogeometric cemeteries in the area. The exhibition continues with various household objects: lamps, toys, cooking equipment, loomweights and amphorae.

North of the Arch of Hadrian, along Amalias Avenue, a sheltered section of the excavations for a metro shaft has been preserved adjacent to the Zappeion Gardens. A large **bath complex** dates from the late third to early fourth century, after the Herulian invasion, including *caldarium*, *tepidarium* and *frigidarium*. The structure was enlarged in the fifth to sixth centuries with four paved pools, one of them subterranean with a vaulted roof and on its walls graffiti of birds, crosses, fish and human figures from a later date, when the place was a refuge or *martyrium*. In Byzantine times nine built clay storage pithoi were sunk into the bath and 29 silos for grain. One oblong interior has a floor supported by 17 re-used marble grave columns as hypocausts, some of them inscribed.

In a tunnel near the shaft at a depth of 20m, wells were uncovered with abundant pottery; a number of late second- to early first-century BC wine amphorae are now in the exhibition space of the **Syntagma metro**, along with finds from the metro excavations beneath the square. Several exhibition cases display inscribed funerary kioniskoi and stelae, mosaics and a Late Hellenistic/Early Roman beehive. A long cross-section of the excavation is reconstructed here, including a section of the **Peisistratid aqueduct** dating from the first half of the fifth century BC, 70m of which was found during the excavations. A branch is also on display in an open area at the eastern side of Syntagma Square, the pipes in a deep channel carved into the schist bedrock, painted with black bands, sealed together with lead and with openings for cleaning (**ID2177**). The system here seems to date to the first half of the fifth century BC, a later branch of the original later sixth-century network found in the Irodou Attikou shaft within the National Gardens and in the Evangelismos metro excavations. In the park outside **Evangelismos**, a section of the aqueduct has been preserved, with some pipes on display in the metro foyer, with painted letters of the late sixth century. The aqueduct here runs east–west from the Ilissos springs on Mount Hymettos along a main road, which leads from the Diochares Gate in the Themistoklean wall to the Mesogeia, outside the eastern limits of the Lyceum complex on Rigillis Street. The display in the park includes a large fourth-century grave enclosure and a number of Roman marble sarcophagi. Other exhibits in the foyer include Classical marble funerary vessels, and a reconstruction of a first-century BC to first-century AD pottery kiln which was founded after the enclosure went out of use, when the area housed several pottery workshops.

A small exhibition in the **Panepistimio metro** displays finds from the excavations for the station and a shaft on Amerikis, principally from graves of the fifth century BC to the fourth century AD.

Works to pedestrianize Aiolos Street and Kotzia Square have included a programme of display of the probable **Acharnai Gate** and the **Acharnai road** (**ID 2198**, **ID2208**). Beneath the National Bank building and on Aiolou Street a stretch of the city fortification included the wall, its inner circuit road, the *proteichisma*, the ditch with its retaining walls and the outer circuit road. An ancient road with preserved wheel-ruts crosses the peripheral road of the circuit wall, and is identified as the road leading to Acharnai, a long stretch of which can be seen in nearby Kotzia Square. The Acharnai road was laid out around 480 BC and remained in use until the third century AD, when pottery workshops were built in the area after the Herulian invasion. Six hundred and eighty graves were excavated here, dating from the ninth century BC to the third century AD. This area also went out of use after the sack. During the fourth century AD over 30 pottery kilns were in use across the area.

An impressive vaulted section of the **Eridanos river** has been left *in situ* within the Monastiraki metro station. In the Late Classical period the river was bounded on both sides by conglomerate blocks and paths, and in Hadrianic times was roofed with a brick vault, covered with earth and transformed into a sewer.

The building complex in Kerameikos housing the Islamic art collections of the Benaki Museum displays in its basement an impressive section of the **ancient city wall** of the fourth century BC, with additions during the reign of Valerian.

Along the corridors of the Aegaleo metro station is a series of displays from the excavations of the Profitis Daniel and the Spyrou Patsi shafts, which uncovered a section of the **Sacred Way** and its associated cemeteries. Parts of a votive-offering deposit can be seen, which contained heads of Archaic figurines and many Eleusinian kernoi, as well as sculptural elements from grave monuments lining the road (**ID2191**).

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