

ASCSA Excavations
in Ancient Corinth
2024 Report

Excavations Northeast of the Theater

The excavations of the 2024 season (April through June) took place again in the southern half of the field northeast of the ancient theater (where the current field campaign began in 2018) and in the adjacent field to the west (Figure 1). Work concentrated on the area of the Marble Room, a very large room – perhaps an *apodyterium* – which was first discovered in 2020.

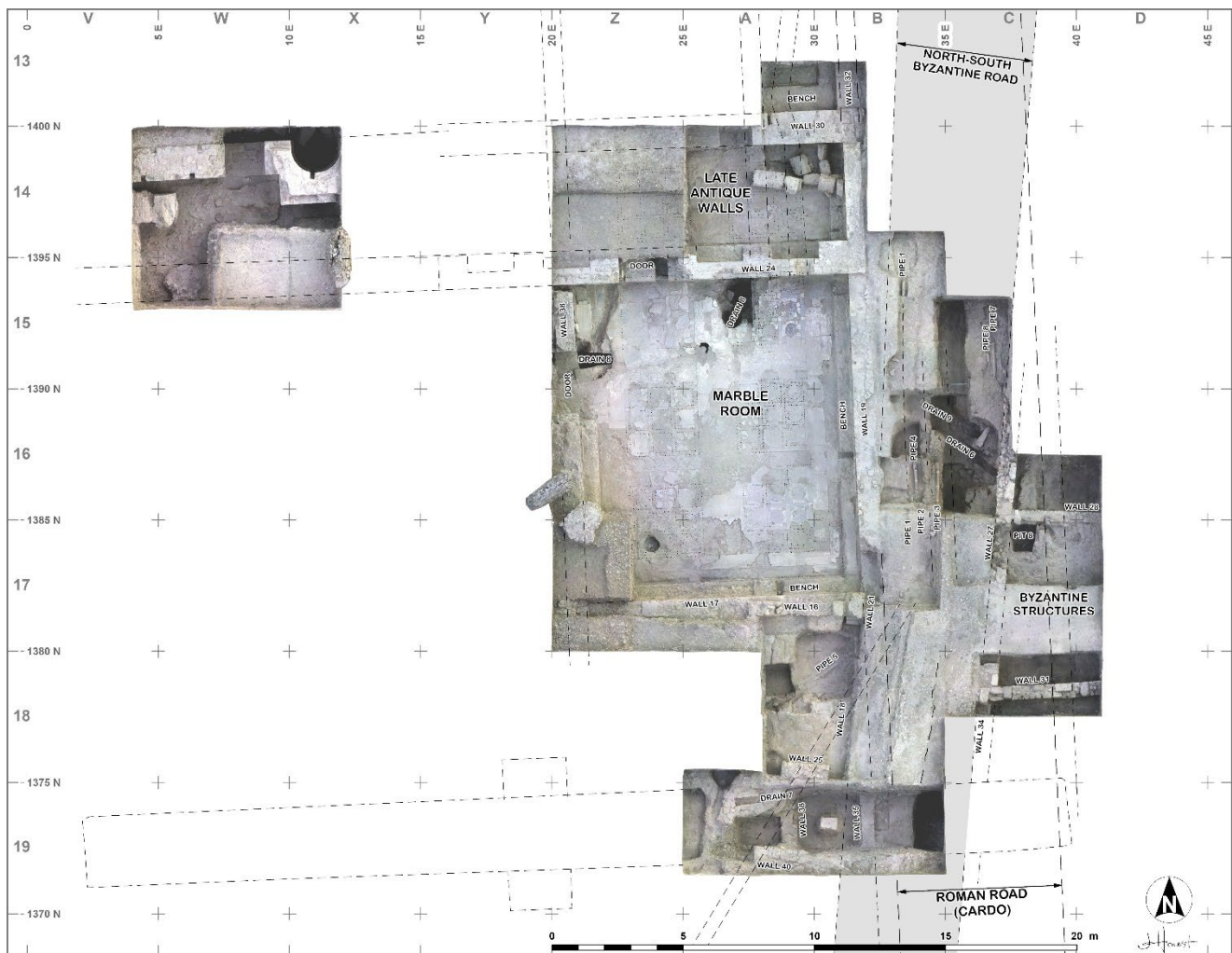


Figure 1. Northeast of the Theater area after the 2024 season (orthophoto J. Herbst)

Additional portions of its west wall and large (2.36 m wide) west doorway were exposed, and additional areas of its *opus sectile* floor were unearthed (Figure 2). Some of the floor still

preserved its original design of circles within square frames, but much had been subject to a rather haphazard Late Antique repair that incorporated fragments of reused marble revetment.



Figure 2. West wall and doorway of the Marble Room

As in other previously excavated areas of the Marble Room, a rather deep Late Antique (7th-century) fill covered the floor of the room. This fill contained building debris (bricks, tiles, mortar, marble revetment, and window glass) mixed with large quantities of fragmentary pottery and glass vessels as well as numerous animal bones and shells. Other rarer finds included a silver buckle, a few small fragments of Latin inscriptions, and a few pieces of marble sculpture (an under-life-size hand, part of an over-life-size hand, and part of a life-size female head) (Figure 3). This Late Antique fill was overlaid by another rather deep fill of Middle/Late Byzantine (12th- to early 13th-century) date.

Remains of a lime kiln came to light unexpectedly in the southwest quadrant of the Marble Room (Figure 4). It was created within a circular pit cut into the Late Antique fill that covered the Marble Room. The inner surface of the kiln was coated with lime mortar, and the upper part of the kiln, rising above a narrow interior shelf, consisted of a thin pisé wall. The chamber of the kiln had evidently been cleaned out, leaving no clear evidence for its floor or for the quicklime (calcium oxide) that would have been produced within it; nonetheless, evidence of

burning within the sides of the kiln and a broad, dense scatter of marble fragments outside the apparent stoke hole at the north side of the kiln support the identification of the structure. The



Figure 3. Sculpture fragments: under-life-size hand (left), life-size female head (right)

fact that the kiln was dug into the preexisting Late Antique fill that covered the floor of the Marble Room confirms that the kiln could not have been created and used prior to the 7th century. Fill within the kiln, which must reflect the time of its abandonment, contained



Figure 4. Lime kiln above the Marble Room

predominantly Late Antique pottery, but a few Middle Byzantine sherds would seem to push the date to the 12th century. It is unlikely that the fragile structure would have survived long if it had not been filled in soon after its use; therefore, the construction and use of the kiln was more likely associated with the Middle Byzantine period than the end of antiquity.

Northwest of the kiln, a coin hoard comprising 10 anonymous folles Class G (A.D. 1065-1070) was found within the Byzantine fill that covered the kiln, and to the south of the kiln, a robbing trench was revealed over the remains of the south wall of the Marble Room (Figure 5). This robbing trench marks the line of a Byzantine wall (wall 16), now very poorly preserved, that extended over 11 m westward from an adjoining wall that flanked the west side of the Byzantine road that overlay the Roman road (*cardo*) east of the Marble Room. The orientation of the Byzantine walls and road reflects a slight eastward rotation from the orientation of the earlier walls of the Marble Room and the Roman road. To the north of the robbing trench of wall 16, no evidence for an adjoining cross-wall or an associated floor layer came to light. The area south of the robbing trench remains to be explored for evidence of features that might shed further light on the purpose of the wall 16.



Figure 5. Robbing trench of Byzantine Wall, view from west

At the north end of the Marble Room, additional portions of two later (probably 6th-century) walls (walls 24 and 30) were uncovered. In the more northerly wall (wall 30), which was built with large poros ashlar, an apparent doorway was revealed opening onto the unexcavated area to the north (Figure 6). The nature of the building(s) to which these walls belong remains unknown, but the deep deposit of destruction debris (bricks, tiles, and crumbled mortar) that filled the space between the walls would seem to confirm that the building(s) suffered a violent destruction, most likely from an earthquake. The marked difference between this destruction deposit and the secondary dumped fill over the larger, southern portion of the Marble Room shows that the spaces to either side of wall 24 had strikingly different histories despite their proximity.



Figure 6. Wall 30 and doorway with overburden of destruction debris, view from south

To the west of the Marble Room, a test trench begun in 2023 was expanded to reveal more of a thick east-west brick-faced wall (wall 39) that must have separated two heated bathing rooms (Figure 1). This wall had been recorded by W. B. Dinsmoor in 1910, but the new excavations revealed some inaccuracies in his plan. The portion of the wall 39 revealed in 2024 includes a doorway, 1.56 m wide, and a semicircular niche, 1.90 m wide, located east of the doorway in the north face of the wall (Figure 7). A small portion of the floor of a hypocaust



Figure 7. Niche in north face of Wall 39, view from north

was revealed to the north of the wall, but none of the elevated floor (*suspensura*) was preserved here. To the south of the wall 39, a few of the supporting pillars (*pilae*) of the original elevated floor were partially revealed, but, again, none of the elevated floor itself was found in situ. Deep fill on both sides of the wall consists of building debris (bricks and crumbled mortar) that seems to have been deposited where it fell with the collapse of the structure. As observed in 2023, a fallen mass of masonry, which appears to represent a rectangular pier, came to rest just south of wall 39. Further excavation in 2024 revealed that this fallen masonry pier rested on an accumulation of destruction debris above the level of the now missing elevated floor (Figure 8). Further excavation will be needed to fully clarify the stages in the demise of the structure, but it is now evident that the heated rooms to either side of wall 39 had already been abandoned and their floors removed before building debris from collapsing walls (and perhaps brick vaulting) filled the hypocausts. After the falling debris had accumulated to some considerable depth, the masonry pier collapsed, and additional building debris fell on top of the pier and buried the adjacent wall.



Figure 8. Wall 39 and fallen masonry pier, view from east

The excavations of 2024 were carried out with the permission of the Archaeological Service of the Ministry of Culture and Sport and under the supervision of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Corinthia. We are grateful to the director of the Ephorate, Panayiota Kassimi, and the assistant Director, George Spyropoulos, for their cooperation and support.

– Christopher Pfaff

2024 Corinth Excavations of the ASCSA – Staff

Director: Christopher Pfaff

Associate Director: Ioulia Tzonou

Architect and Information Technology Specialist: James Herbst

Conservator: Nicol Anastassatou

Operations Manager and Collections Support: Manolis Papadakis

Assistant Conservator: Stephanos Spiggos

Steinmetz Museum Fellow: Taylor Cwikla

Foreman: Thanassis Notis

Assistant Foreman: Panos Kakouros

Domestic Staff: Vangelio Kondyli-Kakkava, Anna Kovalewska, Niki Kondyli-Kapetanou

Specialists:

Photographer: Petros Dellatolas

Illustrator: Christina Kolb

Numismatist: Mike Ierardi

Glass specialist: Tassos Antonaras

Roman pottery specialist: Kathleen Slane

Bioarchaeologists: Maria Liston, Evi Margariti, Kyriaki Tsirtsis

Trench Supervisors:

James Aglio

Sergio Alvarez

Isabela Blanton

Angel Bustamante

Maria Cecchini

Eric Del Fabbro

Ramon Diaz de Mayorga Arias

Leah Hetrick

Devin Lawson

Maaika Leeuwangh

Hannah Lents

Kathleen McGurty

Sidney Parkin

Caleb Whittington

Isabella Winton

Robyn Wood

Tianqi Zhu

Museum assistant:

Caitlin Mostoway Parker

Excavators:

Soula Anastasopoulou

Kostas Arberoris

Spyros Christou

Thanassis Christou

Elias (Hekuran) Coli

Marios Karbouniaris

Memo Karbouniaris

Vasilis Kollias

Phanis Kollias

Georgos Tsakalakis

Sotiris Raftopoulos

Argyris Tsirikis

Additional Photos from the Excavation Season



Beginning of excavations in April, from north



Kathleen McGurdy, Manolis Papadakis, Eric Del Fabbro, Hanna Lents at the commencement of the season's excavations



Eric Del Fabbro using the total station



Eric Del Fabbro inventorying finds in the Museum (photo Taylor Cwikla)



Hannah Lents inventorying finds in the Museum (photo Taylor Cwikla)



Robyn Wood, Elias Coli, and Ramon Diaz de Mayorga Arias recording the excavations at the north end of the Marble Room



Elias Coli, Robyn Wood, and Vasilis Kollias opening a new trench west of the Marble Room



Robyn Wood and Ramon Diaz de Mayorga Arias writing up their excavation report (photo Taylor Cwikla)



Sergio Alvarez and Kathleen McGurdy surveying a context.



Sergio Alvarez taking notes on the lime kiln in iDig



Thanasis Christou, Spyros Christou, and Panos Kakouros excavating within the lime kiln



Vasilis Kollias, Sydney Parkin, Isabela Winton, Sotiris Raftopoulos , and Argyris Tsirikis excavating next to the massive bath wall (wall 39)



ArgyrisTsirikis, Sydney Parkin, and Elias Coli measuring points around the Roman bath wall



Sotiris Raftopoulos, Elias Coli, and Argyris Tsirikis excavating the niche of the Roman bath wall



Isabela Winton, Maaik Leeuwangh, and Isabella Blanton with a marble hand from fill covering the Marble Room



Georgios Tsakalakis and Maaika Leeuwangh working the dry sieve



Maria Cecchini and Tianqi Zhu recording the lime kiln



Caleb Whittington recording destruction debris next to the Roman bath wall



Argyris Tsirikis, Sotiris Raftopoulos, and Elias Coli excavating destruction debris south of the Roman bath wall



Thanasis Notis, James Aglio, and Devin Lawson photographing masses of fallen masonry over the west side of the Marble Room



Kostas Arberoris, Memo Karbounieris, and Devin Lawson excavating Byzantine fill over the Marble Room.



James Aglio and Kostas Arberoris excavating Byzantine fill over the Marble Room



Leah Hetrick measuring points on fill over the Marble Room



Leah Hetrick, Angel Bustamante, Panos Kakouros, and Spyros Christou excavating Late Antique fill below the lime kiln



Angel Bustamante and Leah Hetrick counting window glass from Late Antique fill (photo Taylor Cwikla)



Stephanos Spiggos preparing to lift a deposit of fresco fragments on the floor of the Marble Room



End of the last day of the excavations



April Session



May Session



June Session (photo James Herbst)

Conservation

Throughout 2024, the work of conserving and restoring the wall paintings excavated in the 1980's in the area to the east of the Theater continued to be carried out by a team of conservators from the Centro di Conservazione Archeologica – Roma. One long wall, decorated with birds in yellow panels, was given its final surface treatment.



Wall with birds on yellow panels (photo Roberto Nardi)

A series of panels probably belonging to the back wall of the ambulatory space around the top of the cavea of the theater, were assembled and prepared for mounting. This wall, conforming to the 2nd Pompeiian Style, presents a colonnade of Corinthian columns supporting an abbreviated entablature with an egg-and-dart crown. Portions of a wall or walls decorated with a frieze of racing chariots was also prepared for mounting.



Assembly of panels from of the Second Style wall probably from the top of the cavea of the theater (Photo Roberto Nardi)

In the summer of 2023, cleaning and minor conservation work was carried out on an *opus sectile* floor of the fountain court of the Roman *domus* in the Panayia Field southeast of the Roman Forum.



Figure 12. *Opus sectile* floor and fountain of the *domus* of the Panayia Field after cleaning

The Students from Connecticut College participated in the project under the supervision of the Centro di Conservazione Archeologica.



Cleaning of the opus sectile floor of the *domus* of the Panayia Field

Educational Programs and Outreach

In April, the Corinth Excavations of the ASCSA, in collaboration with the Ephoreia of the Corinthia and the Professional Organization of Ancient Corinth (ΣΕΑΚ), provided a public tour of the current excavations and a temporary exhibition of recent finds in the Museum courtyard. This event, aimed at the local community, exceeded our expectations in drawing over a hundred visitors, primarily from Ancient Corinth and the city of Corinth.



Christopher Pfaff giving a tour of the current excavations (photos Miguel Palomino)



Manolis Papadakis and Ramon Diaz de Mayorga Arias (right) with visitors to the temporary display of new finds in the museum (photo Miguel Palomino)



Ioulia Tzonou and Taylor Cwikla interacting with visitors to the temporary display of new finds (photo Miguel Palomino)

In April, the Corinth Excavations collaborated with American College in Greece-Pierce, the Second High School of Corinth, the Ephoreia, Diazoma, and Olympia Odos in providing an educational program on the theme of “confinement” for high school students at Corinth. As part of the program Matthew Larsen provided a lecture on his recent study of the Late Antique prison at Corinth, including a 3D reconstruction of the prison created by his students.

In June and July, Taylor Cwikla, the Corinth Steinmetz Museum Fellow, provided a special program – Archaeology Alive – for visitors of all ages in the Corinth Museum. This program highlighted recent research projects at Corinth: Matthew Larsen’s study of the Late Antique Prison at Corinth, Julie Hruby’s study of ancient fingerprints on terracotta sculpture, and Hannah Lee’s study of skeletal remains.



Taylor Cwikla (center) speaking to visitors in the Museum courtyard as part of the Archaeology Alive program

ESPA Digitizing Project

Throughout 2024, the Corinth Excavations of the ASCSA participated in the EU-funded (ESPA 2014-2020) digitization project, Αναδεικνύοντας το πολιτιστικό περιεχόμενο της Αμερικανικής Σχολής Κλασικών Σπουδών στην Αθήνα με την βοήθεια της Τεχνητής Νοημοσύνης (Promoting the Cultural Content of ASCSA Through AI). As part of this project, all paper records and excavation drawings not previously digitized were scanned. With oversight from Ioulia Tzonou, the cataloguing of all objects for scanning was carried out by Nina De Clercq, Maria Farmaki, Laura Magno, Katerina Remma, and Rossana Valente.



Ioulia Tzonou and Nina De Clercq checking coin inventory cards for scanning (photo Taylor Cwikla)



Katerina Remma checking coin cards for scanning (photo Taylor Cwikla)



Maria Farmaki checking object inventory cards for scanning (photo Taylor Cwikla)

Collections Management/New Storage Facility

In anticipation of the planned repurposing of the Old Museum near the village plateia, all large inscriptions and architectural elements that had been stored in the yard around the museum were removed and temporarily deposited behind the Bookidis-Bouzaki Center. To provide permanent storage for these pieces as well as the rest of the epigraphic collection and other collections of finds, plans have been initiated to construct another new storage facility to supplement the Bookidis-Bouzaki Center.



Transferal of inscriptions and architectural elements from the Old Museum to temporary storage