



The Building B on the Patela of Priniàs

Eleonora Pappalardo
University of Catania, DISFOR

Building B: a new research project

Thanks to line action PIACERI 5, 'Co-funding of archaeological research activities and archaeological excavations abroad', promoted by the University of Catania, in 2021 the archaeological research and excavation activities of the UNICT Team (DiSFor) on the Patela of Priniàs resumed, after the forced pause imposed by the dissemination of Covid 19. On this occasion, it was possible to complete the excavation of room VD of the monumental building to the south of the sacred area and to inaugurate a new investigation route. This focused on a building of particular importance in the general urban context of the Patela, the so-called 'Temple B', whose non-sacred nature today requires us to rename it 'Building B'.

Discovered in 1908 by the Italian archaeologist Luigi Pernier, the building is located immediately to the south of Temple A, which is well known, among other things, for the sculptural decorations that adorned its architecture, and in relation to which new information and reconstructions have emerged from recent researches conducted by Antonella Pautasso (ISPC).

Building B

Of a different conception, it is characterised by a different general orientation, more markedly East-West, in line with the rest of the structures that make up the settlement on Patela, as well as the monumental building VA-VD. The building is divided into three successive communicating rooms, of which the central one features a rectangular eschara (hearth). It is older than Temple A, and its construction can reasonably be dated to the beginning of the 7th century B.C., while its function, certainly not sacred, can only be clarified once the excavation has been completed.

The new investigations

Restarting the investigations in this area has been of great importance and has certainly cleared up the many doubts that the accurate comparison between the plan drawn up by Stefani at the time of the discovery and the structural emergencies in situ had raised.

In addition to making the building almost completely accessible by freeing it from the heavy stone encumbrance built just above the prominence of the west and south walls, it was possible to recalibrate some measurements, redefine the reciprocal relationships of the structures and bring to light elements not present in the original survey.

It has been possible to restore internal coherence to the building's various structural elements that, at the time of the discovery, remained unexplained. Extraordinarily relevant evidence of relative chronology has, in fact, emerged. Some of them have made it possible to explain the orientation of certain walls, evidently not consistent with that of the whole building, while others have undoubtedly stimulated interest in the situation prior to the layout of the building itself.

The presence of a pre-existing structure datable to the Proto-Geometric period on which Building B was built, partly tracing its orientation, was noted. An opening along the north wall of the courtyard, which was closed at a later date, combined with the identification of an older floor than the one relating to the abandonment phase, explains its singular course. To the same reason, the existence of an older building, can be traced the non-alignment of the north wall of the west room.

Like most of the structures built on the Patela of Priniàs, Building B did not form an isolated complex. The 2021 survey campaign made it possible to intercept the westward continuation of the structure's northern wall, dispelling the idea that it was an isolated building, but placing it within the urban fabric in the same way as other architectural complexes on the site.

As part of the resumption of the investigations, a new plan of the building was drawn up by Dr. Livio Idà, and drone shots of the structure were taken for the first time free of the encumbrance of the dry-stone wall thanks to the Arch. Salvatore Rizza.

Picture captions

The unearthing of the oldest wall below the entrance

Westward continuation of the north perimeter wall of Building B

Patela, Temple B. General planimetry (by L. Idà)

Building B from drone (by Arch. Salvatore Rizza)

Temple A and Building B from the east during the excavations conducted by L. Pernier

Building B from the west at the end of the works