

Building F in Athens: Palace, Workshop or Proto-Prytaneion
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Building F on the lower slopes of the Kolonos Agoraios in Athens has been variously identified as the palace of the Peisistratidai, a communal workshop for potters in Archaic Athens, or the predecessor of the public office buildings of Classical Athens. Proponents of the identification of this large complex as the home of Peisistratus and his sons have also suggested that the Peisistratidai were instrumental in focusing public attention on the valley at the base of the Kolonos Agoraios and the Areopagus and ultimately transforming it into the site of the Agora of Athens. An opposing view holds that the structure served as the workshop for a number of potters who labored in this part of Athens known as the Kerameikos.

This paper examines the physical evidence for Building F in order to refine our understanding of its plan, date, and possible use. Our knowledge of the plan is woefully incomplete, as this structure lies under the later Tholos. The sixth century date of Building F is more certainly known than its plan, which has been seen to parallel the plans of palaces elsewhere in the Mediterranean.

Understanding the plan, date, and purpose of Building F is critical to our understanding the date of the transference of political activity in Athens from an earlier location to this valley at the foot of the Kolonos Agoraios. More complete knowledge of the building also has an impact on our proper appreciation of the plans and architectural features of sixth century Athenian houses.