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Nea Paphos: Season 2009

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NEA PAPHOS SEASON 2009

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in cooperation with

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Abstract: Three seasons of excavations (winter, spring and autumn) were conducted by the Department of Antiquities and on behalf of the Department under Polish supervision, implementing a program of salvage testing under the planned shelter (the design of which underwent successive modifications in the course of the work). The only larger planned trench was excavated in the southeastern part of the House of Aion, uncovering rooms 40–43. A regular excavation campaign was held by the Polish Mission in September. It focused on clearing the western part of the so-called Hellenistic House, uncovering rooms 13, 28, 31–33, aiding in the preservation of the cistern and restitution the colonnade of the portico.

Keywords: Nea Paphos, Villa of Theseus, Hellenistic House (so-called), House of Aion, "Nabatean" column, spear butt (*sauroter*)

As in the previous year the Polish Mission conducted excavations in September, but also supervised salvage work carried out on behalf of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus in March through April. The Department also ran salvage excavations in the winter. In principle, the salvage work addressed the needs of a modified shelter design, work on which had started in the previous season in 2008. Larger excavations were undertaken to consolidate the uncovered area in the southeastern part of the House of Aion (in winter) and the western courtyard of

the so-called Hellenistic House (in spring and autumn) [circled areas 1 and 2 in *Fig. 1*]. Regular excavations by the mission in September were also supported in part by the Department of Antiquities.

Of greatest scientific interest, apart from the two larger trenches mentioned above (1 and 2, see *Fig. 1*), were the following areas dug within the scope of the project:

- Trenches at the southern end of room 38 of the Villa of Theseus and in adjacent room 30 of the so-called Hellenistic House (3 in *Fig. 1*), uncovering earlier stages of

construction of the latter structure and aiding in tracing the relationship between this House and the Villa of Theseus;

- Testing under the bedding of the mosaic floors in Rooms 41–42 of the Villa of Theseus (4 in *Fig. 1*);
- Trial pits in the southern part of the eastern wing of the Villa of Theseus, in rooms bordering on the small courtyard 91 from the south, uncovering among others the partly filled cistern in room 89 (5 in *Fig. 1*);

Three main objectives other than excavations were pursued in the course of the regular fieldwork:

- A) Conservation of the inside of a cistern under the western courtyard (no. 13) of the so-called Hellenistic House. The project, carried out by a specialist Polish company PROP, permitted the Department's conservation services to re-erect a "Nabatean" style column in that courtyard.
- B) Review of the architectural record of the northern part of the insula of the House of Aion (B9), i.e., the area of the Late Roman North-Eastern House, connected with minor cleaning of remains of earlier structures. Similar work, on a basic level, was also carried out in the so-called Hellenistic House;

Team

Dates of work: (First season) December 16 – 19, 2008 and January 9 – February 4, 2009; (second season) 9 March – 17 April; (third season) 31 August – 3 October 2009

Director: Dr. Henryk Meyza (Research Center for Mediterranean Archaeology, Polish Academy of Sciences)

First season

Archaeologist: Dr. Angelos Papadopoulos (Department of Antiquities of Cyprus)

Second season

Archaeologist: Joanna Michalska, presently Michalska-Bartoszek (PhD candidate, Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw)

Architect: Małgorzata Czapińska, presently Słowińska (Aura sc)

Third season

Archaeologists: Prof. Wiktor A. Daszewski (Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, emeritus), Dr. Meike Droste (Conti-Reisen Gmbh, Palatina Kunst and Kultur), Agata Dobosz (PhD candidate, Institute of Archaeology, Jagiellonian University), Maciej Krzywka (PhD candidate, Wrocław University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture), Joanna K. Rądkowska (PhD candidate, Research Center for Mediterranean Archaeology, Polish Academy of Sciences), Olga Wasilewska (PhD candidate, Antiquity of Southeastern Europe Research Centre, University of Warsaw), Marek Woźniak (PhD candidate, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences)

Architects: Aleksandra Brzozowska (PhD candidate, Wrocław University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture), Karolina Rosińska-Balik (freelance)

Mining expert: Dr. Zenon Duda (AGH University of Science and Technology, retired)

Conservation: miners of the Underground Objects Revitalising Company "PROP"

Student trainees from the University of Warsaw and Jagiellonian University in Kraków

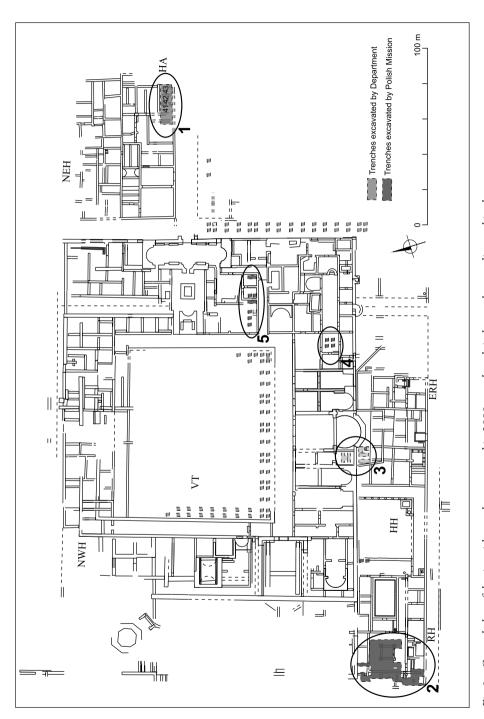


Fig. 1. General plan of the site with trenches excavated in 2009; numbered circles mark areas discussed in the report (S. Medeksza, A. Brzozowska, retracing H. Meyza)

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C) Ordering and documenting elements of architectural decoration, both fragments removed from the site by the Department of Antiquities and those found during the 2009 campaign, in preparation for establishing a lapidary at the site and for the purposes of reconstruction works.

It was impossible in 2009 to study in any detail the material collected during

the salvage excavations. Assessment of chronology is therefore based for the most part on stratigraphic and architectural relationships. The study of the finds began in 2010 and by the publishing date of this report (2012) all the coins, some of the lamps and several contexts excavated in 2009 have been inspected.

HOUSE OF AION: SOUTHEASTERN PART (ROOMS 41–43)

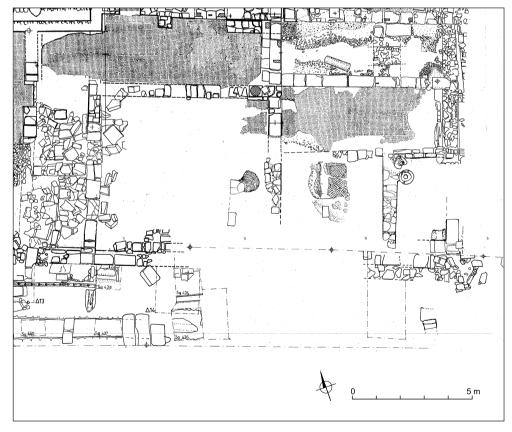


Fig. 2. Close-up plan of the southeastern part of the House of Aion (Drawing and updating S. Medeksza, A. Brzozowska, M. Słowińska)

A baulk between the excavated areas of room 17 and the trench along street B south of the House of Aion was removed, uncovering three rooms: 41–43, as well as the southern remaining part of portico 40 in courtyard 16E, belonging to the Late Roman building phase dated to the 5th century [Fig. 2]. Remains, particularly in the western part, were much disturbed and plain white mosaic fragments in rooms 41–42 were found moved, it seems, by heavy building equipment together with part of a wall between these two rooms. Although certainly displaced and no longer horizontal, they were found still almost

in situ [Fig. 3]. After testing to verify whether they have not collapsed from the upper floor, a decision to conserve them as found was made and the Department of Antiquities secured the remains. Two irregular column plinths were found in portico 40, as well as a fragment of floor made of amphora body sherds densely set in mortar, evidently in replacement of a damaged mosaic floor, like the one preserved in this portico further to the north. The best preserved room is the easternmost, numbered 43, where remains of household activity were found in the form of column drums reused as mortars.



Fig. 3. Remnants of mosaic floors on both sides of a wall between rooms 41 and 42 of the House of Aion (Photo H. Meyza)

HELLENISTIC HOUSE: WESTERN COURTYARD AND SURROUNDINGS

The area was first tested in 1991–1992, when room 11 was uncovered and exploration of courtyard 13 to the west of it was begun (Daszewski 1992: 64–65, Fig. 3; Daszewski 1993: 88–89). Earlier trenches sunk partly to the south of the south wall of the Villa of Theseus in 1976

were made without full understanding of the character of the remains uncovered, hence their evidence is not fully compatible here (Daszewski *apud* Karageorghis 1977: 771; Daszewski 1979: 278). A large trench was excavated just north and east of the courtyard in 2007, in rooms 20 to 23 of the

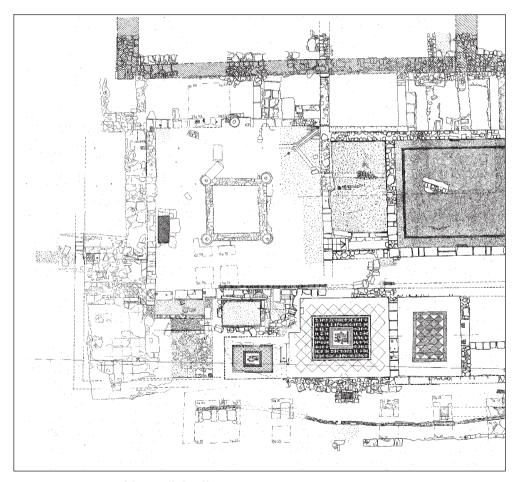


Fig. 4. Western part of the so-called Hellenistic House (Drawing and updating S. Medeksza, A. Brzozowska, M. Słowińska)

so-called Hellenistic House (Daszewski, Meyza 2010: 509–512). The uncovering of an access corridor to a large cistern extending below the courtyard encouraged extending excavations to enclose all test trenches opened in earlier years in this area (Daszewski 1994: 108, Figs 1, 2; 1995: 72, Fig. 1). The work in this area has been supported by the Department of Antiquities in many ways, including procurement of hired labor.

Uncovering most of courtyard 13 has shown that its central part was occupied by an open tetrastyle with rough walls connecting the columns, standing on a single row of large masonry blocks [Figs 4, 5]. The walls seem to have been built in a late phase, apparently necessitating the

recutting of the corner columns (drum diameter at base 0.58 m, base itself 0.67 m). The good quality hydraulic plaster on the floor and a pipe outlet in the western side of the masonry socle indicate the presence of a shallow impluvium. All the column bases, monolithic with a low drum, were preserved in place, and the northwestern column also had two drums collapsed northward and a capital lying approximately 1 m to the west of them. One drum of this column appears to be missing. The capital is of the socalled Nabatean type in the pseudo-Ionian variant from Petra (McKenzie 1990: 117, Diagr.14k, Pl. 149a) [Fig. 6]. This form has no immediate relation to the pseudo-Ionian capitals of Marina el-Alamein (Czerner 2009: 22–26, Fig. 39).



Fig. 5. The tetrastyle with impluvium remodelled into a basin in courtyard 13 of the so-called Hellenistic House, seen from the east; note the pipe outlet in the western edge of the impluvium (Photo H. Meyza)

The *impluvium* and the surrounding courtvard were thickly covered with included rubble, which numerous decorated blocks belonging to the roof entablature: triglyph frieze (9 pieces), large cornice with modillions (11 pieces) [Fig. 6, top right] and the most numerous element, counting a total length of over 15 m, probably a parapet cornice (40 pieces) [Fig. 6, bottom right]. Most of the latter elements were found around the impluvium. No evidently architrave blocks were found. The frieze blocks as usual bear a triglyph motif without the lowest part, i.e., *taenia* and *guttae*. It seems improbable, therefore, that the architrave blocks, if such existed, have left no telltale evidence of their existence, even if the otherwise undecorated blocks may have escaped attention. The intercolumnia in the impluvium are exceedingly wide,

wider than any proportions classified by Vitruvius (ratio 1:5.5) of shaft width above base vs. intercolumnium or (ratio 1:4.2) base width vs. intercolumnium. These two features make it most probable that the architrave was made of perishable matter, wood, which could support the very heavy limestone frieze and cornice. The cornice follows the Alexandrian style of a Corinthianizing order with modillions. On top there is a plastered trough along the outer edge and at the internal corners bulges with channel(s?) leading onto the roof. It seems probable that this cornice formed the edge of a platform with balustrade. The small cornice of the balustrade is slightly longer than the length of tetrastyle portico and has a plastered top. Most probably it had crowned the open-standing wall, as in the case of the uninterrupted parapet.

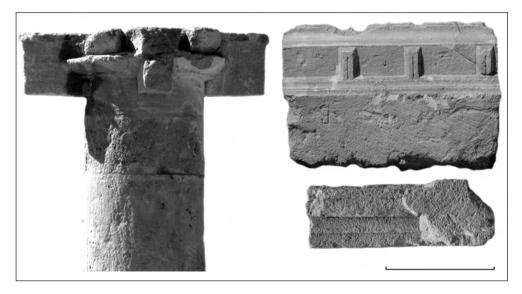


Fig. 6. Architectural elements from courtyard 13 of the so-called Hellenistic House: left, Nabatean capital of a tetrastyle column; top right, cornice with modillions from the lower entablature; bottom right, corner block from the upper entablature (Photo P. Srokowski; H. Meyza)

Conservation work in the cistern underlying the northern and central part of courtyard 13 [Fig. 7] was preceded by leveling of the strata filling the cistern. Stairs leading to it at the end of the access corridor were cleared at their lower end. The bronze butt of a spear was found there, differing from the standard sauroter by having a rounded knob instead of a spike at its end. The butt was decorated and retained inside remnants of a wooden shaft [Fig. 8]. The cistern roof was supported by filling its sides with openwork cribs made of wood and filled with local clay (khonnos) and slided rock fragments as well as lining the roof with planks. This

permitted safe restoration of the column at the northwestern corner of the tetrastyle.

Excavation west of the tetrastyle led to the uncovering of another cistern under the courtyard. It had a rectangular shaft and evidently collected water from the area. A channel led from the northern part of the courtyard and discharged into the upper northern side of the shaft. The shaft was cleared of large blocks fallen from nearby structures, but the chamber, hollowed under the canopy of *kafkalla* in the *khonnos*, was only partly excavated to enable a rough estimate of the space inside.

A set of blocks, parts of a stone siphon triple pipe, reused as a pillar, was found in



Fig. 7. Supported access corridor to the cistern under courtyard 13 (Photo H. Meyza)



Fig. 8. Bronze spear butt (sauroter) found in the cistern under courtyard 13 (Photo. H. Meyza)

place, collapsed northward on the eastern side of this cistern mouth, in the same direction as the only preserved column of the tetrastyle. The presumed purpose of this pillar was related to the rectangular shaft cistern. Between the siphon blocks there is one which suggests that they may have belonged to a castellum acquae, as its three pipes diverge in three directions [Fig. 9]. Between the rectangular head of the second cistern and the *impluvium* the courtyard floor was covered with a layer 5 cm thick in places, consisting of Plain Ware mugs/jugs crushed into small sherds. The anticipated use of these vessels was for pouring water over bathing persons in a bath.

Three rooms, previously tested in 1993–1994, were now almost completely uncovered to the west and south of

courtyard 13. The western end of Roman House room 4 was cleared and was found to be connected at the southern end, on the level of the floor of the hypocaust heating space, with the adjacent room to the west (No. 31), which had a large, 3.63 m by 4.90 m (EW-NS), hypocaust with only partly preserved terracotta tiles of the heating space floor [Fig. 10]. Its walls were mostly robbed out, down to the rubble fill foundation. A narrow space to the north, enclosed by two E-W walls, constituted a continuation of the channel, which cuts obliquely the pillar at the southwestern corner of the courtyard. This channel carried hot gases eastward to hypocaust spaces situated to the north and northeast (nos 31 and 27 respectively); the gasses originated from an oven either



Fig. 9. Collapsed pillar with drilled triple pipes from the area west of the Hellenistic House tetrastyle (Photo H. Meyza)

standing further to the west (i.e., already in street 10) or submerged below the floors of surrounding rooms. The wall between room 31 on one side and room 27 and Roman House room 4 on the other, eastern, side is in its northern part entirely robbed out to the level of its fill-in foundation. It is therefore only a conjecture that the hot air circulated from room 27 to Roman House room 4 (there is an approximately 20 cm difference between the heating space floor level and the floor in room 4, which is higher up) (Daszewski 1995: 72). The poor state of preservation of the remains has prevented the tracing of continuity between the main part of the socalled Hellenistic House and the Roman House. It is not clear whether the main part of the Hellenistic House was in fact in use simultaneously with the Roman House or whether it belonged to an earlier phase

(see Daszewski 1994: 108-109). This issue needs to be addressed separately, perhaps through the excavation (once the walkway for tourists is removed) of more of corridor 29 between the great hall (No. 10) and the rooms attributed to the Roman House. Earlier excavation at the western end of that corridor in 1993 (not mentioned in the relevant report, Daszewski 1994) has shown only that the floor there is heavily deformed perhaps due to an earthquake; the relationship of the floor to the walls was not clarified and no section was made through that floor at the time. A study of local stratigraphy in the robbed-out foundation of the wall between rooms 31 and 27 (and Roman House room 4) should help to resolve this question.

Room 32 was cleared to the west of the courtyard, failing as yet to establish the original floor level. A row of blocks

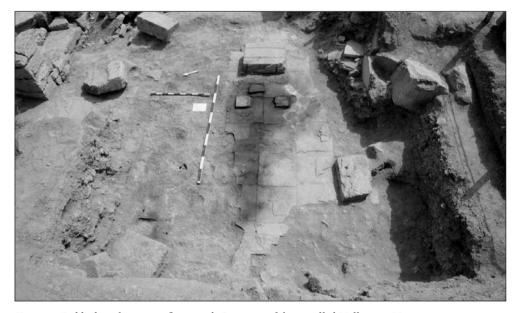


Fig. 10. Robbed out hypocaust floor inside Room 31 of the so-called Hellenistic House (Photo H. Meyza)

divided the unit into a higher-lying, narrow western part and a lower eastern one. The blocks formed a threshold with a cut for a door latch, but no jamb socket. In the southern part of the threshold there was another pillar built of reused blocks of the triple siphon pipe, still partly in place. The southern part had steps leading down at the eastern end of the room and was filled with thick layer of burnt matter and soot. A fragment of another block belonging to the siphon pipe was found. It merits note that there must have been two different sets of triple pipes. Apart from the present finds of blocks with three equidistant pipes, a test trench (dug in 1993, Daszewski 1994: 108) in the western part of room 32 produced a single block with pipes in the corners and stopped inspection holes.

The eastern part of two or possibly three other rooms, currently coded room 28, were traced further to the north and west of the courtyard. A section revealed remains of one E–W wall and traces of another E–W division in the floor. Fragments of a thick waterproof floor with bedding composed

of two layers of fist-sized stones fixed in mortar, lined with plaster and chamfered at the edges (very much like a basin north of Roman House room 2), were found in the rubble above courtyard 13 and room(s) marked as 28. This floor must have fallen from the first floor; if not, then it should have been situated at least as the basin just mentioned, both probably belonging to the bath in the southwestern corner of the insula.

Another room (33) was partly uncovered in the northwestern corner of the courtyard. It was furnished with a door leading to room 20W on its east. The south wall supported a compartment, constructed of narrow slabs in the upper part, set upright approximately 0.70 m away from the wall. The purpose of this installation is not clear (possibly a narrow The northeastern corner staircase?). of this room was damaged by the corner of the Villa of Theseus western enclosure perimeter wall. Large fragments of plaster were found on the daub floor of room 33.

VILLA OF THESEUS / HELLENISTIC HOUSE: SOUTHERN END OF ROOM 38 AND ADJACENT ROOM 30

Four partly interconnected pits were excavated at the southern end of room 38 after the heavy decorated blocks from the architectural decoration of the Villa of Theseus, which had been stored there, were removed. The corner of a N–S wall turning west was recorded; the wall was traced already in trenches from 2008, dug in the central part of room 38 (squares 193–196), south of longitudinal (E–W) street A (Meyza

et alii 2012: 289). The corner is partly superimposed over an earlier E–W wall, which shows that there existed at least three phases of building activity in insula 10A' before its border was transgressed during the construction of the southern wing of the Villa of Theseus. The last of these phases was connected with the so-called Hellenistic House. The earlier structures are little known, but such clear superposition permits an attempt



Fig. 11. Walls plastered below latest floors in room (courtyard?) 30 of the so-called Hellenistic House; Late Roman wall on top and south wall of the Villa of Theseus at right (Photo J. Michalska)



Fig. 12. Wall preceding the floor of Hellenistic House room 30 with superimposed southern elevation of the Villa of Theseus (Photo J. Michalska)

to attribute remains found in other pits when all the finds are studied.

Excavations on the southern side of the southern elevation of the Villa of Theseus, under the floor of courtyard 30 of the so-called Hellenistic House, have shown that the walls of that house were plastered below the level of that floor, but there is no clear floor corresponding to the lower edge of that plaster [Fig. 11]. Before that floor there existed also an earlier wall dividing courtyard 30, plastered deeper to approximately 1 m below the floor surface.

The southern elevation of the Villa of Theseus running against and superimposed over that wall had cut through the floor of courtyard 30 [Fig. 12]. All layers preceding the floor and its bedding contained solely Hellenistic material. Unfortunately, the early walls on both sides of the southern elevation of the Villa of Theseus do not run in the same line despite retaining a generally N–S orientation, as is the case of a wall found in the adjacent room 5 in trench $\Lambda 6$ of 2003 (Daszewski et alii 2004: 290).

VILLA OF THESEUS: ROOMS 41–42

Excavation at points 303–306 in room 42 of the Villa of Theseus confirmed the extent of the earlier bathing establishment under the eastern part of the later Villa. The N–S wall running below the floor, which continues almost exactly in line with a similar wall under room 41, divides the area with strata full of numerous remains of heating/bathing devices found on its west from that with standard fill on its

east. Bathing vestiges include separators, wall and hypocaustic tiles, as well as Plain Ware vessels used in the bath (for a deposit of similar vessels, see above, courtyard 13 in the so-called Hellenistic House — here they are preserved in larger fragments). These trenches were shallow, approximately 50 cm deep. Excavation in 2008 in room 43 to the south indicated that the said division did not continue further south.

VILLA OF THESEUS: ROOMS SOUTH OF COURTYARD 91

A series of pits related to the projected shelter roof was excavated under Late Roman floors of rooms 81, 82, 88 and 89 of the Villa of Theseus. This area had been explored partly in 2002/2003, in trench 19 in room 81 (Meyza 2003: 259, Fig. 1) and trench I10 in room 89 (Daszewski et alii 2004: 285–286, Figs 1–2). Another trench was opened in 2008 (at point 416) and a bone ring with a bezel depicting a Ptolemaic queen was found under

room 82 (Meyza et alii 2011: 288, Fig. 4; Meyza forthcoming). The same trench was continued and connected with the pit to its north, uncovering more remains of street 9 and later structures (possibly belonging already to early phases of the Villa of Theseus). It was excavated down to bedrock at the request of the roof construction designers. More pits were dug to the west, where (in pit 316) remains of terracotta pipes were uncovered (probably

the same as those appearing in a trench west of room 98, excavated already in 1982) (Daszewski *apud* Karageorghis 1983: 939, Fig. 62), just east of the 2008 trench under room 83 (Meyza 2011: 288) to its west. Traces of a subsidiary drain from the built channel running down street 9 were also found in the same trench. More trenches were sunk to the east, beyond the eastern

curb of this street. A cistern with a round head was uncovered, dug into *khonnos*, in the easternmost room 89. Its mouth was covered by a slab and it proved not fully filled. The cistern was partly explored, but excavation was discontinued at a depth of 3.50 m, due to technical difficulties and a sterile clayey fill in the lower part of the cistern.

ARCHITECTURAL RECORDING

Preparing the North-Eastern House and the Hellenistic House for publication necessitated a systematic inventory of architectural structures, which was begun by reviewing existing documentation, both visual and descriptive, and comparing these with remains *in situ*. It has been noted that a consolidation of wall remnants with mortar as part of conservation procedures has obliterated in many cases the relationships between these structures; this

caused problems in the face of insufficient primary documentation, alleviated in some cases by minor cleaning.

Full integration of the archaeological stratigraphic record with a study of the architecture will require also a corresponding review of the stratigraphy of soil deposits and relevant artifactual finds. This will be the object of separate research programs developed for each of the buildings involved.

ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION PROGRAM

Preparing the site for a new presentation under the planned shelter the Department of Antiquities removed many decorated and undecorated blocks scattered all over the site and a number of new members of architectural decoration found in 2009 in courtyard 13 of the so-called Hellenistic House. A program for documenting elements previously not photographed,

drawn and described, started in 2008, will be continued. Verification of labeling and of provenance of these pieces is carried on concurrently. The ultimate objective is to create a display of the more important examples on one side and a lapidary of stone decoration elements for study and reference on the other. This will also permit final publication of these finds.

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