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## Nea Paphos: Excavations 1996

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## NEA PAPHOS

### EXCAVATIONS 1996

**Wiktor A. Daszewski**

Fieldwork began on August 30 and continued until the end of September.<sup>1</sup> The expedition's ceramologists worked for a fortnight before the actual season and for a week after it, studying the material from previous seasons and documenting new finds. The excavations were carried out as usual on different sites simultaneously, with special emphasis placed on research in the area south of the Villa of Theseus (VT), i.e., inside the so-called Hellenistic House (HH) and the Early Roman House (ERH) (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> Inside VT, archaeological exploration was conditioned by construction work for the Archaeological Park. Also explored was the southern part of the House of Aion (HA).

#### AREA SOUTH OF THE VILLA OF THESEUS

Two trenches were sunk in the eastern part of the Hellenistic House, to the north and east of Room 8E. This big room, which was partly uncovered during the previous campaign,<sup>3</sup> was bordered by the latrine on the west and closed on the

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<sup>1</sup> The mission directed by the present author included Prof. Dr. Z. Sztetyllo, archaeologist-epigraphist, Dr. E. Papuci-Władyka and Mr. H. Meyza, ceramologists; Dr. S. Medeksza, architect; Miss M. Droste, archaeologist-draughtswoman. Students of archaeology from the Universities of Warsaw, Kraków, Cologne, and Berlin, as well as students of architecture from the Technical University in Wrocław also took part. Several volunteers from the UK participated in the work, rendering unmatched service in the cleaning and marking of the pottery. Taking this opportunity we would also like to express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Demos Christou, Dr. S. Hadjisavvas and Dr. J. Jonas of the Department of Antiquities for their unflinching assistance during our work in Paphos.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *PAM VI*, 1994 (1995), pp. 67ff. and fig. 1; *PAM VII*, 1995 (1996), p. 91ff.

<sup>3</sup> *PAM VII*, 1995 (1996), p. 93f.

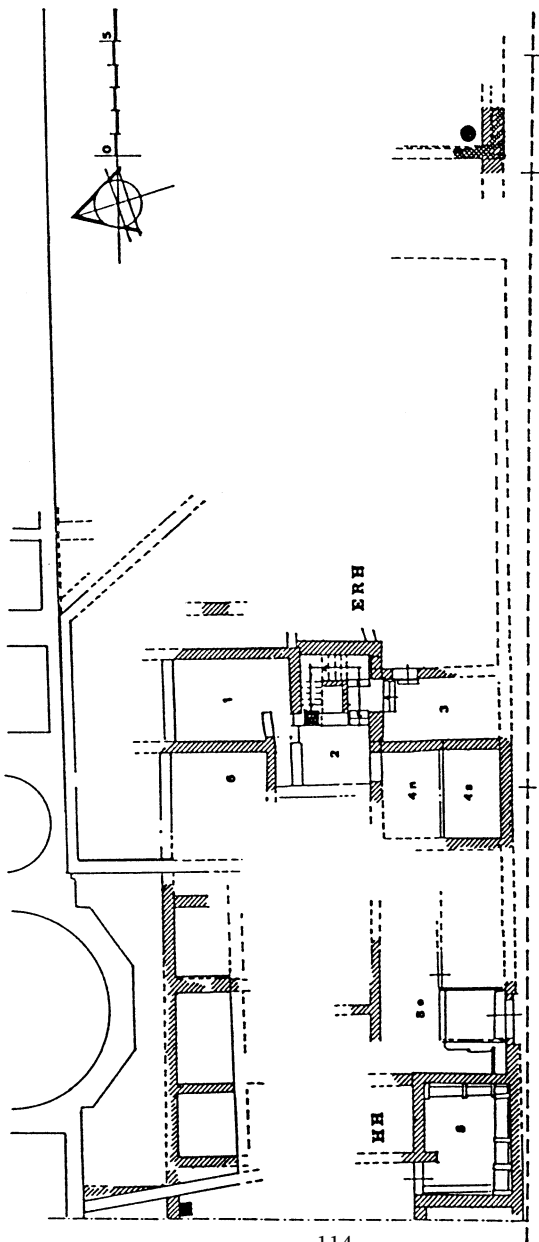


Fig. 1. Nea Paphos 1996. Hellenistic House (HH) and Early Roman House (ERH). Drawing S. Medeksza.

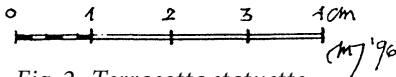


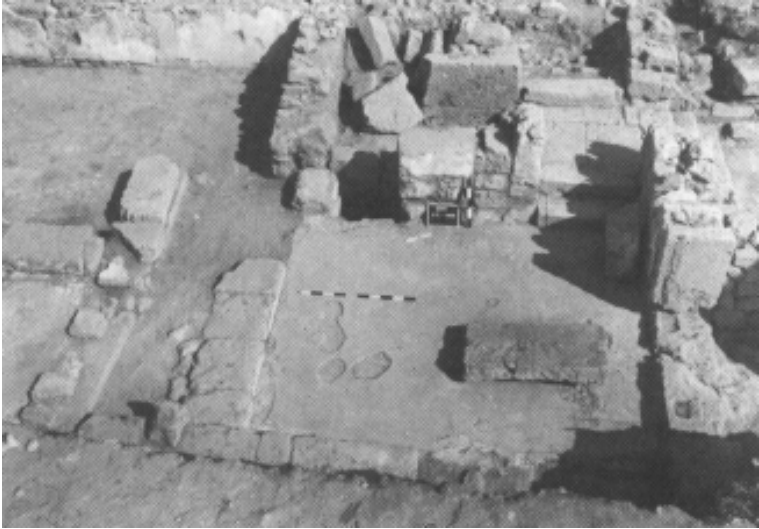
Fig. 2. Terracotta statuette of Aphrodite Anadyomene.

south by the building's outer wall which ran along a latitudinal street. A large door (1.55 m) in the south wall opened into the street. Inside the room, the central part was built up in the form of a large podium-like enclosure situated on the door's axis. This year's explorations were concentrated to the east and north of the podium.

On the east, brown soil with loose stones and potsherds constituted the fill down to a depth of about 0.60 m. The fill yielded

several fragments off terracotta figurines, including a fine statuette of Aphrodite Anadyomene (Fig. 2), a fragmentary stone mould for Hellenistic coins, and two small incense burners of stone. Below, there was a layer of large, dressed blocks apparently once belonging to the east wall of the room. The blocks rested pell-mell upon a grayish habitation level; a terracotta jug of Early Roman date had been crushed into the floor by their weight.

On the north the habitation level reached a narrow stone wall (0.20 m) which constituted the eastern extension of the podium's edge. A narrow door (0.82 m) was found in the wall adjacent to the northeastern corner of the podium. The entire area of the room north of the podium and the habitation level described above was paved with pebbles in a lime mortar. The floor in front of the narrow door had been damaged and then patched up with irregular pieces of differing marble. Such repairs were spotted earlier in other parts of the pebble floor.



*Phot. 1. Early Roman House (view from the west).  
Photo W.A. Daszewski.*

North of Room 8E an E-W wall of large rectangular blocks was uncovered. Only the lowest course of blocks, protruding a few centimeters above floor level, has been preserved. Two rectangular mortises for wooden door jambs testified to the presence of a door opening in the eastern part of this wall. The wall was adjoined by a partition wall of small irregular stones running practically along the room's N-S axis. A limestone column shaft was inserted in the corner, apparently with a view to reinforcing the entire structure. The western section of the wall, beyond the corner, was made of small irregular stones. Its westernmost end had been destroyed; the entire surrounding area, including the abutting pebble floor, had sunk deeply, probably as a result of the collapsing of some underground cham-

ber (cistern?). Several big finely dressed blocks were found in the pit; they bore traces of painted plaster with decoration in the form of red, white and black bands delimiting a white field of bigger dimensions. Found in the debris was a terracotta figurine of Harpocrates (?) standing upon a circular base and with only the right hand missing. Pottery finds repeated types uncovered in the past season in the southern part of the room,<sup>4</sup> suggesting a destruction date around the middle of the 2nd century AD.

Some 10 m to the east of Room 8E excavations continued in the so-called Early Roman House (Phot. 1). Several trenches were opened with a view to completing the clearing of rooms 6, 2, 3, and the area east of them.<sup>5</sup> Here again, the fairly homogeneous upper part of the fill consisted of brown soil mixed with loose stones and pottery sherds. Deeper down, the fill contained a few bigger blocks, the lowest of them resting directly upon the floor. Finds included several fragments of 1st century AD lamps, two complete examples that can be dated to around the middle of the century, and two stone *thymiateria*. Rooms 6, 2, 4, 3 were completely excavated along with the staircase between them. We now have a clearer picture of the house which had developed around a small courtyard (EW 2.66 m; NS 3.07 m) paved with a smooth waterproof lime mortar with gravel mixed in. To the north and west of the court two large walls (0.53 m) may have once formed a stylobate for the two limestone columns found previously in Room 4, immediately to the south of the court. Both columns were plastered and painted. On the east side of the court two steps led to a small square corridor and a staircase inside a square shaft with three flights of stairs preserved. Under the flight abutting

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 95f.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

the court (now destroyed) a square opening led to the shaft of a water cistern. Exploration of the shaft revealed that at a depth of 2.80 m it emptied into a large cistern which was hewn in bedrock. Originally, the cistern had another shaft, which opened directly into the court. This circular shaft was later closed with a slab when the court received its waterproof floor. The new square shaft was built of small stones. Poorly preserved, the cistern was left unexplored. Of the rooms to the north and northeast of the court, no. 1 has already been explored and its walls found to bear traces of painted plaster. The other room, no. 6 (3.80 x 3.88 m), had a floor made of small stones covered with fine lime mortar. The rooms on the south side of the court had tamped floors reinforced with mortar; walls (0.48-0.53 m wide) were made of small stones and plastered. Room 4, partly excavated last season, was bordered on the west by a wall of bigger blocks, preserved to a height of 1.20 m. A coin of Demetrios Poliorketes was found apparently out of original context on the floor in the southwestern corner, below the wall. The pottery material from the room points to a Roman date. All the rooms of ERH conform to the general layout of the Hellenistic House. It cannot be excluded that the two structures had been joined at some time to form one large edifice. Nor can it be excluded that it was their subordination to a pre-existing grid of streets that determined their conformity. Several alterations can be observed in ERH. Room 4 was partitioned at a later date and the cistern's opening was changed. The precise dating of these alterations is pending an analysis of pottery finds.

Yet another square, trench was opened about 20 m east of ERH, at the presumed location of the southeastern corner of the E-W and N-S street intersection, the N-S street being the one discovered under the east wing of the Villa of Theseus.<sup>6</sup> Two walls corresponding to this corner were uncovered.

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<sup>6</sup> PAMVI, 1994 (1995), p. 68, fig. 1; also J. Młynarczyk, *Nea Paphos in the Hellenistic Period, Nea Paphos III*, Warsaw 1990, p. 162, Fig. 16 and Fig. 21, street 9.

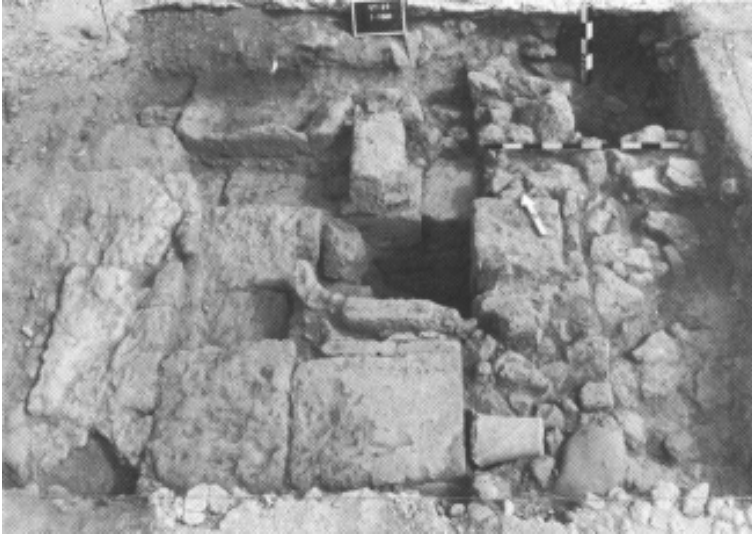


*Phot. 2. Water cistern blocked in Augustan time.  
Photo W. A. Daszewski.*

The E-W wall, which seems to border the E-W street, was preserved to the height of 1.15 m above the top of the foundations and comprised two distinct parts separated by a course of potsherds. The bottom part consisted of two or three courses of large rectangular blocks, the upper of smaller, mostly irregular, roughly dressed stones. A coin of Heraclius minted in Alexandria around AD 613, found just below the upper part, indicates the date of this alteration. There is no doubt, however, that the lower part comes from the Hellenistic period.

The other wall running along the N-S street is made of large regular blocks. Not far from the corner, in the space set apart by these two walls, the opening of a large water cistern (Phot. 2) was discovered (diam. 0.65 m) together with a corresponding habitation level. Exploration of the cistern revealed that





*Phot.3. Early structures under the mosaic floor in the Villa of Theseus (view from the south).  
Photo W. A. Daszewski.*

it must have been sealed sometime in the second half of the 1st century BC, possibly in the early Augustan period. A cooking pot closed with an ESA plate of form 28 was found just 0.38 m from the top, providing a *terminus ante quem* for the lower layers. The cistern has been explored to a depth of approximately 3 m, yielding quantities of pottery, oil lamps, stamped amphora handles, arrow heads, a *strigillum*, beads, and several coins. The material covers the period from the reign of Cleopatra VII to the early 2nd century BC. The other half of the cistern remains to be explored. This discovery is of major importance for the chronology, especially of the Hellenistic pottery which was found in great quantities.

Two trenches (each 2 x 3 m) were opened east of the currently excavated part of the House of Aion, more specifically

room 6. A wall of large blocks of limestone situated on line with the north wall of Room 6 was discovered just a few centimeters below the surface. South of the wall a narrow passage was cleared; it turned out to be paved with small irregular stones embedded in mortar. On the south, the passage was bordered by another wall, of which only a few stones of the lowest course have been preserved. To the south of this last wall a mosaic floor was uncovered, extending westward to the threshold of Room 6. It was made of rather big tesserae (2 x 2; 2.5 x 2 cm), of predominantly grey stone, but with some white, brown and black insertions. A marble base fragment with the foot of a statue was recovered from the fill. It is now clear that the building once extended further eastward and that the rooms in this part of the house were rather of household nature.

Finally, a small pit was dug inside the south portico of the Villa of Theseus, in the approximate position of a walled-up water cistern mouth discovered under the mosaic, roughly in front of Room 38 (Phot. 3). The purpose was to verify what earlier structure the cistern had belonged to and provide new evidence for dating the construction of the portico.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a description of this trench, see below, report by H. Meyza.