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## Nea Paphos: Excavations 1997

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## NEA PAPHOS

### EXCAVATIONS 1997

**Wiktor A. Daszewski**

As every year, the fieldwork began by the end of August and continued for five weeks.<sup>1</sup> The ceramologists remained for another week to study and document the new finds. The excavations were carried out concurrently in different locations, with special emphasis placed on the research in the area south of the Villa of Theseus, i.e. inside the so-called Hellenistic House (HH) and the Early Roman House (ERH). Exploration also continued in the area of the House of Aion (fig. 1).

#### AREA SOUTH OF THE VILLA OF THESEUS

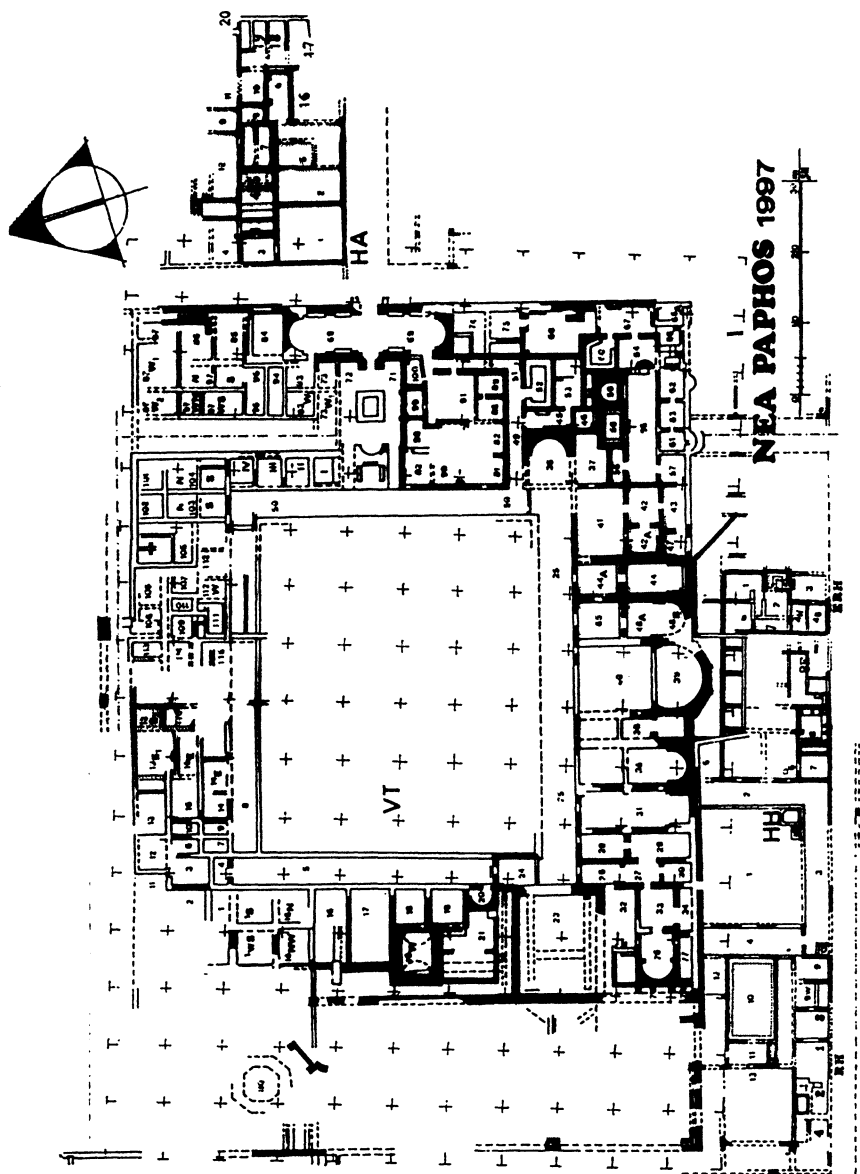
A trench some 7 m long and 3 m wide was opened to the east of the previously excavated section of Room 8E.<sup>2</sup> Four layers were distinguished before the floor was reached at a depth of about 1.40 m. On top, there was a layer of cultivated soil approximately 20 cm thick with few pottery sherds. The most recent were fragments of amphorae of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, such as Mau 27/28, Hayes type 45, "chocolate" ampho-

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<sup>1</sup> The Mission, directed by the present author, included Dr. E. Papuci-Władyka and Mr H. Meyza, ceramologists; Prof. Dr. S. Medeksza, architect; Miss M. Droste, archaeologist-draftsperson. Students of archaeology from the universities in Warsaw, Trier, Kraków, Łódź, as well as students of architecture from the University of Technology in Wrocław also took part. Several volunteers from the U.K., Sweden and Austria rendered valuable services, especially with regard to cleaning, mending and drawing pottery. The Mission is deeply indebted to Dr. S. Hadjisavvas, Curator of Ancient Monuments of the Department of Antiquities, who was of great assistance during our work. Taking this opportunity, we would also like to express our deep gratitude to Mr A. Ataliotis, former Mayor of Paphos, Mr A. Soteriades, Chief Educational Officer, and Mr Nicolas Eliades for their unflinching and friendly support of our researches.

<sup>2</sup> *PAM VII*, 1995 (1996), p. 91ff. and *PAM VIII*, 1996 (1997), p. 113ff.

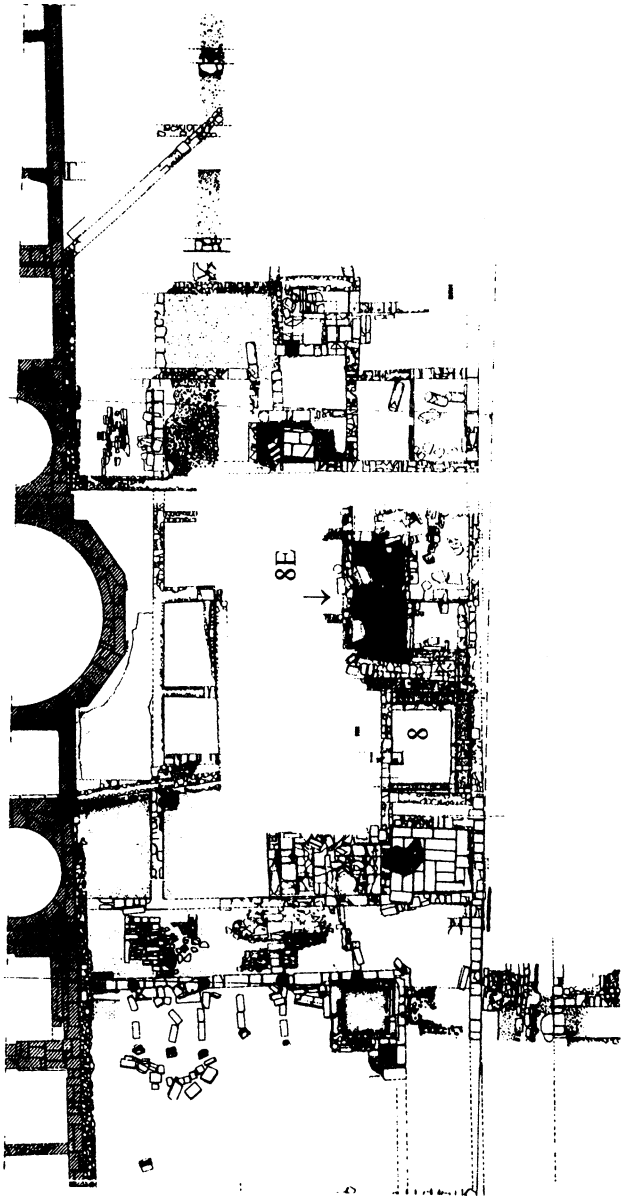
Fig. 1. General plan of the Villa of Theseus, House of Aion, Hellenistic House and Early Roman House.





*Fig. 2. Early Roman House. Room 8E.*

rae with mica (Peacock-Williams class 45) and sub-Coan amphorae Hayes type I, as well as a few sherds of CS f.40. There followed a layer about 50 cm thick of brownish soil with small stones. It contained sherds of pottery mainly of the 2nd century, but also, in the upper part, a few later ones including rare fragments of Byzantine vessels. In the lower part of the layer, no sherds later than the 2nd century were found. Of interest were numerous fragments of a frying-pan of Pompeian red ware and of yet another one with an orange-red slip, probably a local imitation of the ware. The successive layer, about 60-70 cm thick, was composed of dressed blocks, square or rectangular, apparently from a fallen wall (fig. 2). In between the blocks, a small altar of stone was uncovered and a few more pottery sherds of the same character as above. Upon being recorded, the blocks were removed, clearing a thin layer of soil and broken plaster that covered the actual floor of the room. A Red Slip jug of the 1st century AD was found on



*Fig. 3. Early Roman House.*

top of it. The layer was not homogeneous. On the south, it revealed a considerable concentration of lime plaster forming a solid mass upon the floor. A broken grinding mortar of buff ware of the first half of the 2nd century and some animal and human bones were found embedded in the plaster. Further north, soil of a grayish-green color indicated a habitation level of some sort. On the floor itself, the most recent finds were constituted by sherds of pottery from the first half of the 2nd century, again including CS f.40 (big and small) and some fragments of amphorae.

The plan of Room 8E is now more intelligible. One can distinguish several different parts which may have been independent units (fig. 3). On the southwest, there is a narrow passage with a channel and remains of seats. It was probably used as a small toilet. Further east, a large podium-like enclosure (a sort of platform) faces the main entrance pierced in the south wall of the building. Still further east, there was yet another compartment, approximately the size of the podium, bordered on the north by a narrow wall that had a door (1.04 m wide) in the middle. It had a hard, tamped earth floor. On the south, the compartment is bordered by the south wall of the building, made of large, reused blocks of limestone. There is no wall preserved on the east side of the unit. However, remains of a N-S wall found further to the north of Room 8E may indicate that the wall also continued southward. If that were the case, then the compartment would be 2.50 m wide (N-S) and 2.75 m long (E-W). Its eastern wall should be identified possibly as an extension of the east wall of Room 8E, which would thus be 6.50 m long (E-W). The entire length of the northern half of Room 8E is taken by one long compartment joined to the toilet on the southwest. Its pavement was made of pebbles set in lime mortar. In the places where the original floor was damaged, the pebbles were replaced by irregular slabs of various kinds of marble.

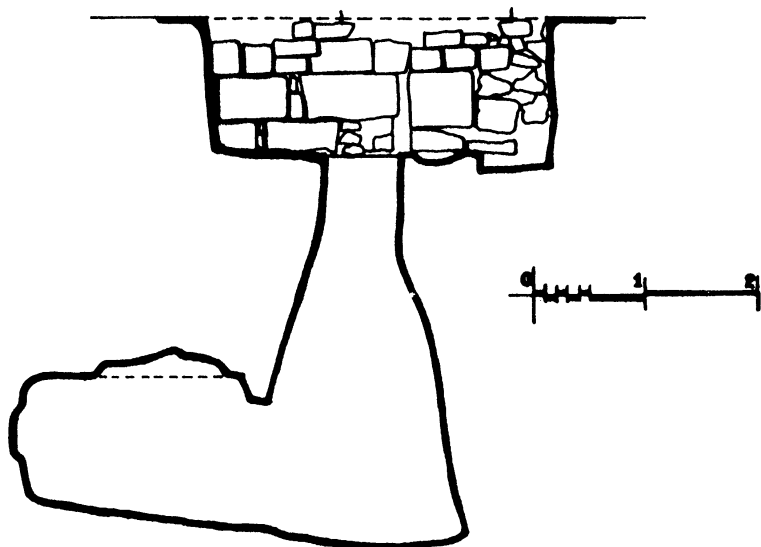


Fig. 4. *Bottle-shaped cistern.*

A wall, 0.50-0.53 m thick, borders the room on the north side. A door (1.04 m) leads to yet another room further north. To the east of Room 8E, there seem to have been three narrow passages or compartments separated by three parallel E-W walls. The first wall (0.58 m thick), preserved to a height of 0.70 m, is located 1.60 m to the north of the south wall of the building. It was made of small stones and a few larger blocks. The second one, 0.48 m thick and about 2 m distant from the first, was made of rectangular blocks of limestone. Its preserved height reaches 1 m above the floor level. The third wall is at a distance of 1.09 m from the second one and constitutes the eastern extension of the north wall of Room 8E. The space between the second and third wall was paved all over with small stones and closed on the west by a door. It appears to have been a sort of passage leading eastward from Room 8E.

## EARLY ROMAN HOUSE

Excavations were continued west of the court (no. 2).<sup>3</sup> The area (Room 7) was cleared of debris which consisted of brown soil and a few large blocks fallen from the walls. The floor was made of fist-size stones embedded in lime mortar. Lying upon it were big flat blocks, apparently from the fallen west wall of the room. The pottery, rather scarce, suggested the first half of the 2nd century AD as a possible date of destruction. Once again, alterations made to the original structure were observed. Since the rooms of the Early Roman House conform to the orientation of the Hellenistic House, it seems ever more likely that they had originally formed part of one larger structure, subdivided into independent units at a later time. The division between the two parts may have run along the west wall of Rooms 4, 7 and 6 of the Early Roman House. It is notable, however, that the three E-W walls found to the east of Room 8E of the Hellenistic House do not find continuation in the Early Roman House.

## CISTERN

Explorations of the remaining part of the fill were continued.<sup>4</sup> The finds, consisting of pottery, coins, lamps and other small items, proved to be as rich as during the previous season. The bottom of the roughly bottle-shaped cistern (fig. 4) was reached at a depth of 3.48-3.50 m from the top. On the east side of the cistern, opening of the bottom level was a side chamber 2.20 m long and 1.20 high. It was filled with greenish clay containing only a few sherds of pottery.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> PAM VIII, 1996 (1997), p. 113ff.

<sup>4</sup> For earlier finds, see PAM VIII, 1996 (1997), p. 118 ff. and fig. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Enclosed in this volume is a separate short report on the finds, prepared by Dr. E. Papuci-Władyka.



Fig. 5. House of Aton.

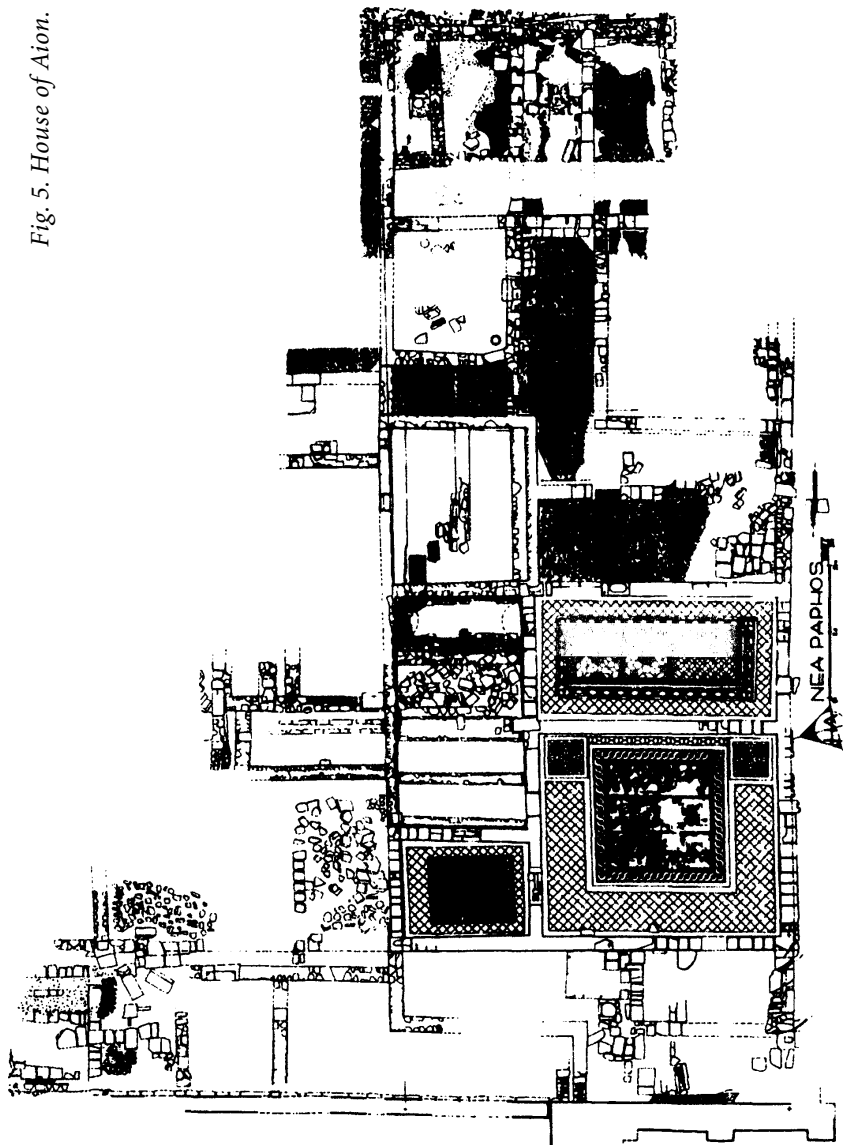




Fig. 6. Column with capital,  
from the fill of Room 19.

## HOUSE OF AION

Explorations were resumed east of Room 6, next to the two trenches opened in the previous season.<sup>6</sup> The whole area appears to have been disturbed in modern times. Traces of pits comprising modern refuse were located on several occasions. Altogether, three more rooms (nos 17, 18, 19) were completely uncovered and another two partly excavated (nos. 20 and 21). The rooms, all of equal length (E-W 6.75 m) were respectively 2.65 m; 2.25 and 4.25 m wide (N-S). They represent the final phase

of the building. Of the original walls, only the uppermost course of the foundations or the first course of blocks in the wall has remained in place. In some parts, for instance to the south of Room 17, only one or two blocks protrude above floor level. The entire upper wall to the east of Rooms 17, 18 and 19, as well as much of its foundation were plundered. The floors are in a much better state of preservation. They were of importance in tracing the successive alterations made to the building. The southernmost Room 17 was paved with a simple mosaic made of large gray tesserae and a few black, white and brown ones. The floor is of the same type as the mosaic found previously in Rooms 6 and 8. In Room 18, which appears to have been a corridor leading to the en-

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<sup>6</sup> PAM VIII, 1996 (1997), 120ff.

trance of Room 6 on the west and to yet another door leading to Room 19 on the north, the floor consisted of a layer of fist-size stones embedded in lime mortar. Room 19, the largest of the three, was paved with pebbles set in the same kind of lime mortar. The three rooms, as described above, represented the final phase before the ultimate destruction. Pottery finds suggest that this destruction may have occurred in the late 4th or in the 5th century. The fill from the floors, especially in Room 19, yielded a mass of big dressed blocks, including decorated fragments of the vaulting of a niche, all the blocks of a cornice and an engaged column with capital (fig. 6) recalling closely the columns and capitals of the niche in the west wall of the main *triclinium* (no. 1). The layer accumulated upon the blocks revealed pottery material of the 6th century: fragments of Phocian ware (f.1), CRS f.9 and probably 10, fragments of African amphorae of the *spatheion* class, imported Egyptian "chocolate" amphorae of Egloff type 172.

The pottery and coins found inside and right under the last floor of Room 18, and in a trench on the site of the plundered E-W wall in the northern part of Room 19, indicate that all the rooms were erected and the floors laid in the late Constantinian period at the earliest, probably even slightly later. All three rooms were erected on top of earlier structures. The pebble floor in Room 19 continues southward under the north wall of Room 18, indicating an alteration of the earlier arrangement and the existence here of a different and larger structure. In Room 17, traces of an earlier lime floor were found some 23 cm below the mosaic. To the east of the room, the early lime floor is bordered by a sort of a channel running south.

In Room 19, traces of earlier structures are well visible in the northern part (fig. 5). Now plundered, the E-W wall had originally been bordered on the south by a pebble floor; on the north, it had adjoined a small rectangular basin with a stone sink and yet another strip of pebble floor to the south of the basin (fig. 7). The



*Fig. 7. House of Aion. Room 19.*

pottery found in the fill inside the basin comes from the 1st century AD, indicating the time when these earlier structures fell out of use. Traces of earlier structures of late Hellenistic date were found in a trench cutting across Room 18.

Exploration of this part of the House of Aion is of great importance. It demonstrates that the plan of the building does not correspond to the usual arrangement and plan of a private house as demonstrated by several other houses discovered in Paphos. Chronological observations appear to confirm our earlier conclusions with regard to the erection of the building and its final destruction. The fragments of architectural decoration found in Room 19 betray the same stylistic features as found in Room 1. The extent of the building has yet to be determined. However, excavations have revealed further constructions to the north, where two more rooms with mosaics were located, and to the east.