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# NEA PAPHOS: SEASONS 2010 AND 2011

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with

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**Abstract:** The campaign of 2010 was mainly a study season devoted to analysis of finds collected during three previous years of intensive salvage excavation. The study was focused on finds from the 2007 campaign. The only fieldwork undertaken was cleaning necessitated by inundation of trenches during the very wet winter of 2009/2010, especially in room 1SW of the Villa of Theseus and rooms 19, 25, 31 and 32 of the "Hellenistic House". In 2011, the western limit of the Hellenistic House was excavated, with hot-air exhaust channel between rooms 31 and 32, paved room 28S, cistern/basin pedestal, staircase 28N and corner room 33. The other main area of excavation was the northwestern corner of the main courtyard where remains of an aboveground cistern(?) were found. Indications of the existence of a lower courtyard level were uncovered in the form of balustrade fragments well below the late surface.

**Keywords:** Nea Paphos, Villa of Theseus, "Hellenistic House", House of Aion, Ganymedes, theatrical mask, bath, Corinthian capital

One of the chief archaeological tasks in the two reported seasons was a dig extension to form a closed block of excavated space with a view to preparing this part of the Maloutena site for the implementation of a shelter, the project aiming at protecting

the mosaics and other structures uncovered by the University of Warsaw mission and Department of Antiquities team. The most important aspects of the fieldwork and selected finds are presented herewith separately for the two seasons.

## SEASON 2010

In 2010, the bottom of a trench under room 1SW of the Villa of Theseus, first

excavated in 2007 (Daszewski *et alii* 2010: 513, Fig. 10), was cleared. In compart-

ment 2, a floor of an Early Roman (i.e., 1st–2nd century AD) building preceding the Villa was fully cleared [Fig. 3] and a carved plaque was found alongside an iron saw. A local stone called *marmara* was used to make it. It is a soft, laminating rock, classified as medium-grained gypsum, with small addition of calcium carbonate. Both in Cypriot antiquity and in modern times, it has served as material for paving, thresholds, slabs for table-tops etc., but it is ill-suited for carving. The plaque is barely 19.2 cm high and 4 cm thick. One of its larger faces features a scene in low relief showing an eagle and a boy in conical cap with his right arm stretched over his head

[Fig. 1, right]. There is only one myth corresponding to this representation, which therefore poses no interpretational challenge (Meyza 2010). Images referring to the myth of the rape of Ganymedes by Zeus show the god as an eagle as early as the 4th century BC, however, this theme gains popularity in the 1st century AD. In Paphos, other examples of this type of image were found in the 3rd century AD House of Dionysos.<sup>1</sup> Still, the plaque must be earlier, as other objects from the room where it was found were dated to the late 1st or beginning of the 2nd century AD. It is therefore the earliest relief representation of this scene found in Cyprus.

#### Team

*Dates of work:* 16 August–3 October 2010; 30 August–29 September 2011

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<sup>1</sup> For example: Sichtermann 1949, 1988, Cat. 170, 173, 178, 198, 199, 204, 212 (Paphos, House of Dionysos), 214, 242, 250. The bronze sculpture by Leochares (*LIMC*, Cat. 200, close copy Cat. 251), described by Pliny, was the prototype for the Paphos mosaic (Daszewski 1988: 31, Fig. 13; Kondoleon 1995: 133–141; Christou 2008: 89).

In room 19 of the Hellenistic House, excavated in 2006, heavy winter rainfall had washed out a fragment of a marble statue remade into an image of a theatrical mask, 16.9 cm long and 16 cm wide (Meyza 2011: 379–386). It was found during cleaning of a previously uncovered floor; the piece protruded from an even, consolidated layer of earth but was actually embedded in an underlying layer of ash, probably debris of a preceding phase of the building. One side of the object retained its original shape, allowing it to be identified as a fragment of a large, possibly life-size human statue, with polished surface. The other side, that is, the broken-off surface, has been roughly remodeled into a crescent of curly hair over a coarsely sculpted face, with protruding, gaping mouth and deep-set eyes, made by multiple drilling

[Fig. 1, top]. The mask seems to have been unfinished, abandoned and finally reused in a wall, as parts it were in places caked with plaster.

In room 31, the east face of the west wall was cleared. The wall had been dismantled, but a levelling layer for its foundation remained in place. The room had a hypocaust floor, but most of the terracotta tiles forming the surface of the lower floor had been removed. Close to the west wall there remained a rectangular area without tiles [Fig. 2], perhaps a gap left by a dismantled podium. Both here and in the southwestern corner of this room a floor paved with massive flagstones, approximately 15 cm thick, could be seen beneath the tiles. It may have been an element of the hypocaust floor construction, supporting the considerable weight of the structure.



*Fig. 1. Theatrical mask in marble (top) and plaque with a representation of the rape of Ganymedes (Photo K. Bajerowicz-Dolata)*



Fig. 2. Room 31 (*Villa of Theseus*) robbed out flagstone pavement under probable second podium (Photo H. Meyza)



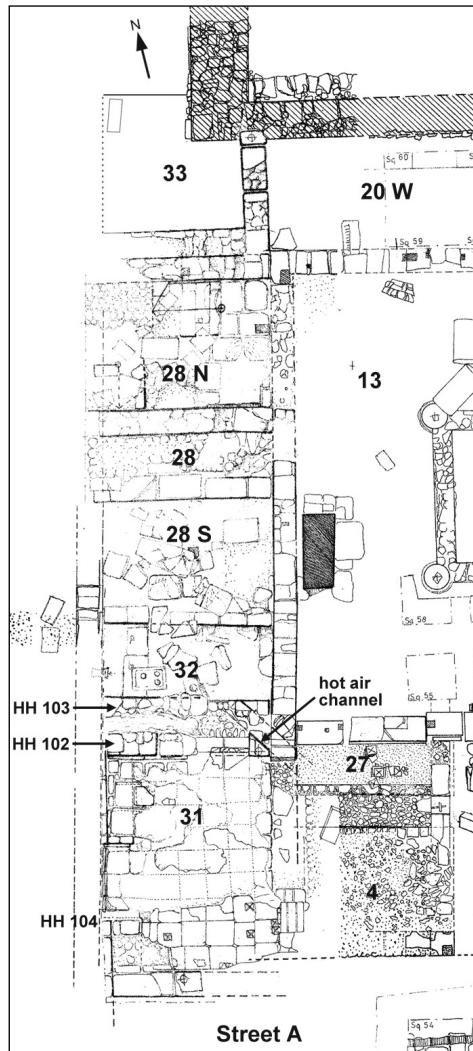
Fig. 3. Compartment 2 under room 1SW (*Villa of Theseus*), floor level with finds (Photo K. Woszczyńska)

## SEASON 2011

The 2011 campaign had two aims: excavation and study, with only four archaeologists active in the field and the remaining staff working on analysis of finds from salvage excavations in 2007–2009. Excavations concentrated in two parts of the so-called Hellenistic House: rooms 28N and 28S, 32 and 33 in its western part [Figs 4, 5] and in the main courtyard (1).

In the so-called Hellenistic House, a narrow space between rooms 31 and 32 north of it, belonging to the final phase of the building, was further explored (it had been excavated in two earlier seasons; Meyza *et alii* 2012: 416–418). The space was created when a parallel wall (HH103) was built at a distance of just 0.74 m to an earlier wall (HH102) separating room 32 from the hypocaust room 31. Wall HH103 was built of medium-sized, irregular stones occasionally strengthened with larger blocks, some of them reused decorated ones. Only the north, outer face of the wall was smooth; the inner one was left uneven. However, the narrow space had a plastered floor, which was covered by a layer of ash [Fig. 6]. This suggests that the narrow space, along with the doorways in its north and south walls was used as a channel for directing hot air under the hypocaust floor and that the heat source must have been nearby. The channel got filled by rubble in its upper part, while lower there was a layer of grey, ashy soil. It seems most probable that a praefurnium was located in room 32, as indicated by the floor deposit of soot and ash. It was at its thickest in the south-eastern corner of the room and was overlain by a layer

of brown soil with small stones. This layer penetrated below steps leading down from the courtyard (13), evidencing a change in the room's function [Fig. 7]. The furnace,



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



Fig. 5. Southwestern part of the so-called Hellenistic House with hypocaustic floor in room 31, heating area 32, and heavily disturbed pavement in room 28S (Photo H. Meyza)



Fig. 6. Inside of a hot-air channel with ash deposit on the floor (arrow)  
(Photo M. Woźniak)



Fig. 7. Eastern part of heating area 32 with remains of thick ash and soot deposit abutting stairs leading to courtyard 13  
(Photo M. Woźniak)

however, was not found. A source of heat located west of the building, in street 10, seemingly suggested by the direction of the channel, has to be ruled out, as the channel walls (HH102 and HH103) were clearly set against the west wall of the building (HH104, presently robbed out) rather than cut across it [Fig. 8]. At the eastern end of the channel, an oblique slit in a masonry pillar directed the hot air into the hypocaustic space of room 27. A previously entertained hypothesis concerning the existence of a vertical channel in this masonry pillar had to be abandoned, as the oblique channel proved to have a solid stone



Fig. 8. Western edge of heating area 32: reused siphon and water pipes. In the background, a heating channel abutting the west wall of the complex, now dismantled (Photo K. Bajerowicz-Dolata)

bottom. Therefore, the question of the location of the heat source remains unsolved.

The paving in room 28S (HH108), situated north of heating area 32, was very disturbed, most probably by an earthquake, with broken and displaced slabs resting in two layers and standing on end [Fig. 9]. A massive masonry wall north of this pavement, together with the south wall of stairwell 28N, supported a platform made of packed, medium-sized unworked stones (S.6/11) and accessible by steps. This structure seems to have supported



Fig. 9. Room 28S: lowest remaining level of disturbed pavement, wall and southern part of podium; southern and central parts of courtyard 13 with remodelled tetrastyle impluvium in the background (Photo H. Meyza)



Fig. 10. Western staircase 28N with a fragment of collapsed basin floor tipped over from a podium south of it (Photo K. Bajerowicz-Dolata)



Fig. 11. Room 33 of the so-called Hellenistic House, situated below the southwestern corner of the Villa of Theseus (Photo M. Woźniak)

a basin with a plastered floor of peculiar construction, a large fragment of which was found further to the northeast [Fig. 10]. Two other fragments of a similar plastered floor were found in 2009 further east. The earthquake that displaced these heavy floor fragments, consisting of two layers of bedding made of fist-sized stones covered by a thick plaster layer with a smooth outer coat, must have been of enormous force. The staircase itself (S.5/11) was also affected; it was further damaged when blocks from its walls were robbed out, leaving *in situ* only the remains of (all?) five steps of the lowest flight ascending from courtyard 13 east of it. The first two steps are heavily worn. The (presumed) paving of the landing had been totally robbed out, while another two steps of the middle course running north-south were found loose. Most probably, another course existed there, taking off eastward from the second landing to the upper floor, above the peristyle of the courtyard.

Further north, room 33 (partially uncovered in 2009) was fully cleared [Fig. 11]. A corner of the Villa of Theseus is superimposed over its northeastern corner. Its west wall, being also the west wall of the Hellenistic House, was completely robbed out, as was its north wall, of which only the remains of the foundation leveling course remained in place. However, the fill immediately above the floor was little disturbed and consisted of large fragments of plaster from the walls; higher the deposit was mixed with medium stones loose in soil. A preliminary study of the finds from the sector suggests that the earthquake which brought about the destruction occurred in mid-2nd century AD.

Another excavated area was a 5 m by 5 m square in the northwestern part of the main courtyard of the 'Hellenistic House'. The floor was covered with a 1.60 m thick deposit consisting foremost of modern spoil. The only stretch of a hydraulic floor (made of tamped earth with special marine clay rich in chlorite) was cut off by later trenches from all other structures, largely obliterating its stratigraphic relationships; however, surprisingly, it seems to continue by the stylobate of the western portico of the courtyard peristyle. A similar kind of plaster was used in a cistern built over the southeastern corner of the peristyle, but the apparent extent of this floor, as indicated by the occurrence of the hydraulic plaster over almost the entire length of the western portico stylobate, suggests a different use.

Above the final usage level of the courtyard, a Corinthian capital was uncovered, almost exactly matching one



Fig. 12. Corinthian capital from the main courtyard of the 'Hellenistic House' (Photo K. Bajerowicz-Dolata)

found in 1989 close to the southwestern corner of the peristyle [Fig. 12]. It differs from the latter in that it still has preserved a part of fluted shaft. This find and its location support a reconstruction, put forward previously, according to which the columns in the western portico of the peristyle were much higher than those in the remaining two or three porticos.

A trial pit made on the courtyard side of the western portico stylobate uncovered its very shallow foundations, unsuited for the large Corinthian columns, and below the foundations, fragments of a slab railing, similar to that closing the intercolumnar spaces in the eastern portico of the same courtyard [Fig. 14].

This find seems to indicate that there had been an earlier colonnade at a lower level; its destruction took place probably in the 1st century AD, a hypothesis to be verified in further excavation).

Apart from these main areas of exploration, limited cleaning for the purpose of rectifying the documentation was conducted in the eastern part of the so-called Hellenistic House.<sup>2</sup> One area was a threshold leading from street A', on the south, to a small courtyard 8E, and another was a hollow between rooms 8E and 15. Limited work was also undertaken in the Late Roman street between the Villa of Theseus and the House of Aion, and in room 7 of the latter.



*Fig. 13. Foundation of the stylobate of the western courtyard peristyle ('Hellenistic House'); note the shallow foundation and fragments of railing below (Photo H. Meyza)*

<sup>2</sup> Documentation of structures in the House of Aion and in the so-called Hellenistic House is being revised and new, general numbers for rooms/areas are being generated. These are prefixed by building abbreviations (VT – Villa of Theseus; HH – so-called Hellenistic House; HA – House of Aion; for example HH103). At the moment, both the year by year system and the general one are still employed. The current numbering is reflected in the plan with structure numbers.

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