

NEA PAPHOS

SEASON 2006

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in collaboration with

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The excavation season started on 31 August and lasted until 30 September 2006.¹ The work was concentrated in two areas, the so-called Hellenistic House, immediately south of the Villa of Theseus and the House of Aion. In the Hellenistic House, research was carried out in rooms numbered 9E, 10E, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19. The excavation in the House of Aion (HA) continued the work started in 2005 in the northern part of the building. Of the two sectors explored, one was located on the northern continuation of a courtyard (no. 27) with the expected rooms being found, no. 28 on the east and nos 29 and 31 on the west. These rooms have been deeply disturbed by a huge modern trench, removing walls, mosaic floors and the western part of a stone pavement. The other sector, further west in Rooms 12E, 12W and 33, proved better preserved and of greater interest.

1 The Mission, directed by Prof. W.A. Daszewski, included Prof. Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka, Dr. Henryk Meyza, Mr. Grzegorz Łączek, archaeologists; Prof. Stanisław Medeksza and Ms Aleksandra Brzozowska, architects; Dr. Meike Droste, archaeologist and documentalist; and Mr. Waldemar Jerke, photographer. The project provided training in excavation and documentation for a group of 17 students from the University of Warsaw and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

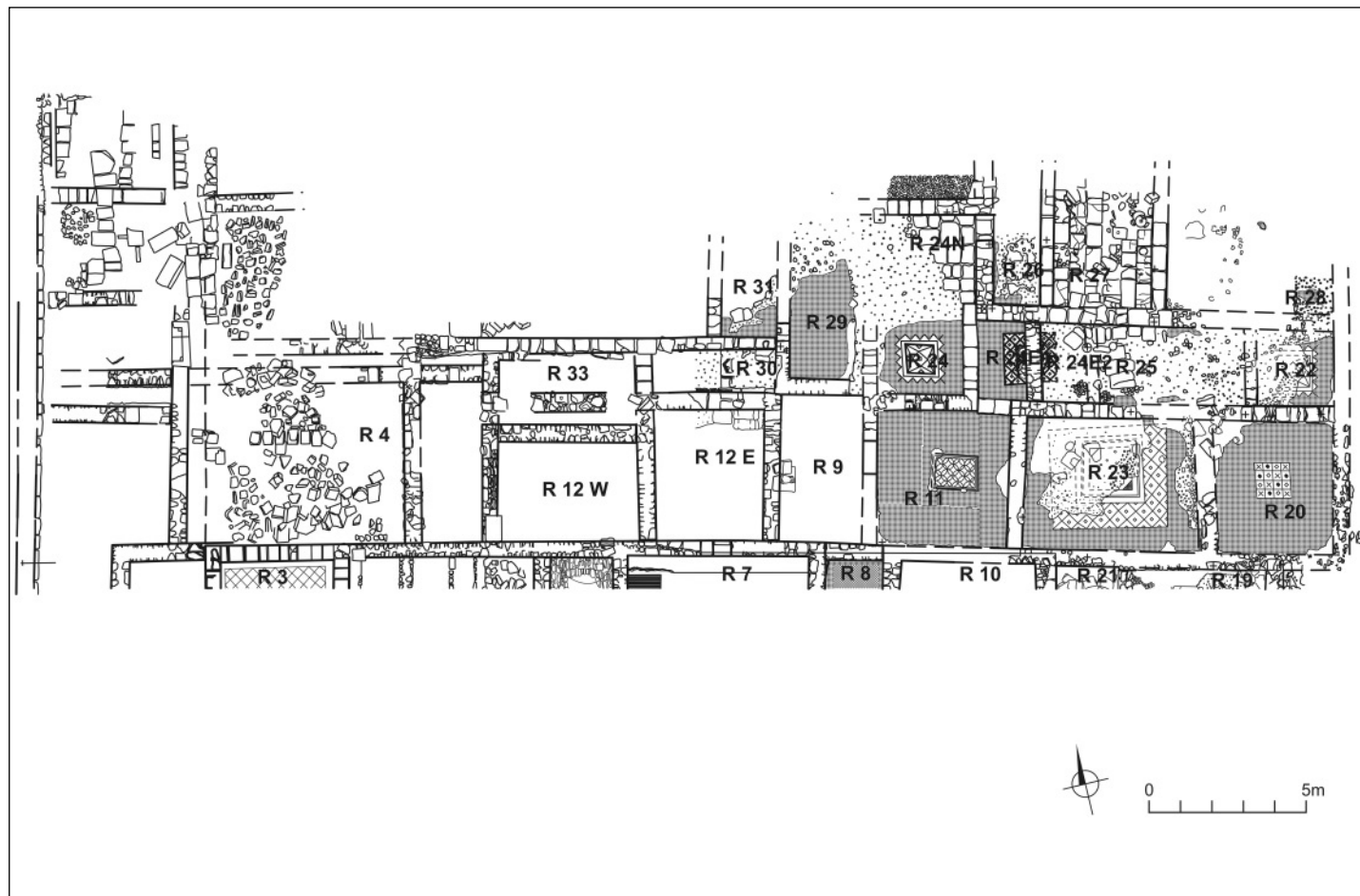


Fig. 1. Plan of the excavations in the northern part of the House of Aion
(Updated by A. Brzozowska, based on original plan by S. Medeksza)

NORTHERN PART OF THE HOUSE OF AION

Excavations begun in 2005 in the north-eastern sector of the House of Aion, were now continued in Courtyard 27 and Room

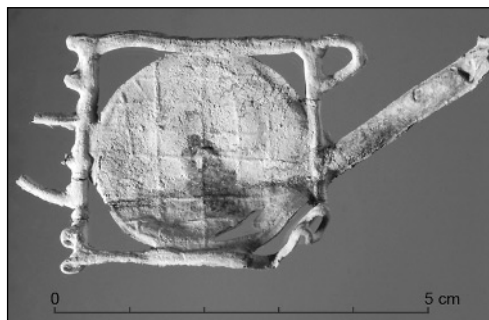


Fig. 2. Lead appliqué, AR 2/06
(Photo W. Jerke)



Fig. 3. Tripolitanian lamp, AR 6/06
(Photo W. Jerke)

28, where a large disturbance was encountered. It continued west of Room 34, into the northern parts of Rooms 29 and 31. Down to below the level of the floors in these rooms, mixed fill with remains of plastic bags and other modern objects gave evidence of the scope of destruction caused by the activities of the British Army [Fig. 1].

The central area of the northern part of the House of Aion, i.e., to the north of Rooms 7, 14 and 15, was separated from the southerly row of rooms by a stretch of well-preserved wall, in which an opening, either a blocked window or a cupboard 0.60 m wide, was found (in the middle of the north wall of Room 7). A deep trial pit, dug in 1990 in the southeastern corner of Room 12E on the northern side of this wall, revealed evidence for modifications of the north wall of Room 7. Its foundation

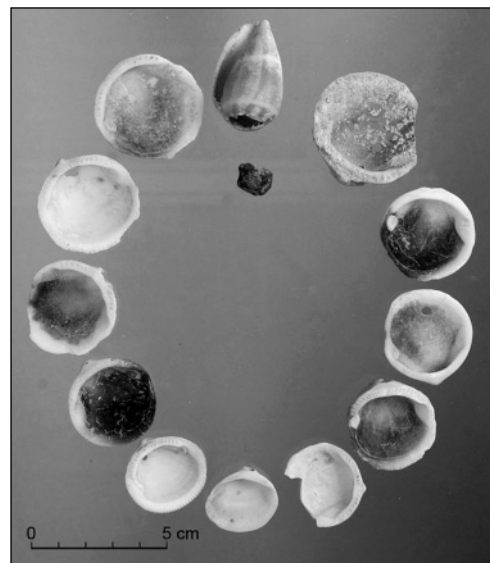


Fig. 4. Necklace of cardium shells, FR 3/06
(Photo W. Jerke)

was sunk to considerable depth (Papuci-Władyka 1995: 87, Fig. 5), unlike the wall separating Room 12E from Room 9, which had a shallow foundation. Traces of violent destruction, dated by numerous Late Roman coins, as well as intact and little-damaged pots, have been found on a floor connected with the latter wall (Lichocka, Meyza 2001: 172-176, 186, Ill. 15, Table 5). Further sections of the same floor were uncovered in 2006, extending westward to the wall of Room 4E (so-called Corridor).

Finds from Floor I which lies 35-50 cm below the preserved top of the northern wall of Rooms 7 and 14 – including a large collection of Late Roman coins (42 pieces), lead vessel and appliqué [Fig. 2] several

complete lamps of the 4th century, including a rare Tripolitanian lamp [Fig. 3] bronze pin and necklace of perforated shells [Fig. 4] support the catastrophic nature of the destruction in this area. Crushed pottery vessels (mendable) found in some quantity, including a small bowl of Phocaeian Hayes form 9, an African spatheion amphora, as well as a crater of uncertain origin, possibly also African, confirm this supposition (Meyza forthcoming). Some tiles and small flat stones used presumably as voussoirs are the remains of a collapsed roof.

Under the surface of a Late Roman floor in unit 12 (A+B), possibly a courtyard, a dividing wall (N-S) from an earlier phase



*Fig. 5. View of excavations in the House of Aion, seen from the west
(Photo W. Jerke)*

was uncovered. The finds from strata below the latest floor were significantly earlier, the latest pieces belonging in the Early Roman period (e.g., 2nd century AD bowl of Cypriot Sigillata form P22A and a pinched-handle amphora). A large component of residual Hellenistic finds was also uncovered, including numerous stamped amphora handles and several mendable vessels, such as a painted lagynos and a fish-plate of Campanian A fabric. An appliqué from a brazier was also found there.

North of Room 12W there was another room, no. 33, which was separated from it at a certain point in time in the Late Roman period. The finds on the upper level, including amphorae of types Kapitän II, Akko amphora Agora 273, belonged to

the 4th century AD. The southeastern corner of the room was obliterated by a pit, filled probably already in the Late Roman period, in the 5th century AD (Late Roman LR 2 amphorae sherds in the fill). An E-W wall recorded below the Late Roman level and aligned with the wall dividing Rooms 12E and 30 (its east end was damaged by the Late Roman pit), suggests that the original layout in this part consisted of a regular latitudinal row of rooms. The southern wall of Room 33 appears to have been built after the pit was filled [*Fig. 5*]. Strata on both sides of the earlier E-W wall were Early Roman, dated to the 2nd century at the latest, with finds similar to those from under the Late Roman level in Rooms 12W and 12E.

EASTERN PART OF THE HELLENISTIC HOUSE

The northern part of the Hellenistic House (HH) disappeared when the Villa of Theseus (VT) was erected north of it. The floors of the new building were laid below those of the HH, leaving nothing but the foundations. Excavations of the Hellenistic House (which began started in 1986) uncovered in the following years the collapsed walls with plaster decoration of two big rooms, 5 and 6N, destroyed in an earthquake (Daszewski 1987: 683ff.). Fragments of the walls dividing Rooms 5 and 6N were left standing, displaying their painted decoration in green, red and yellow bands separated by black and white fillets around a large space painted in ash grey. Above, the walls were decorated with alternating rows of relief rectangles.

More damage to early structures was inflicted by the building of an enclosure at the east end of Rooms 5 and 6N and further east, south of VT Rooms 38 and

39, during a late stage in the occupation of the Villa. In 2006, excavations in HH Rooms 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19, situated south of the damaged area [*Fig. 6*] led to the distinguishing of three phases of use of these structures. The latest phase was of Late Roman date: a dust floor recorded c. 1 m below the modern surface, stretching to the south of the VT, accessible from VT through an additional door opened in the south wall of Room 38. The curtain wall, allegedly “Byzantine”, built over Rooms 5, 6N, 10E, 14, 16 and 18, had a narrow passage 0.52 m wide, running above Room 14 and leading out from the enclosure (possibly for the sheep and goat herd); a daub floor ran across it. The southern part of the earlier Room 14 was reused, perhaps as a shed, with a threshold in the south wall at the same level, made of a large masonry block 1.02 m wide [*Fig. 7*].

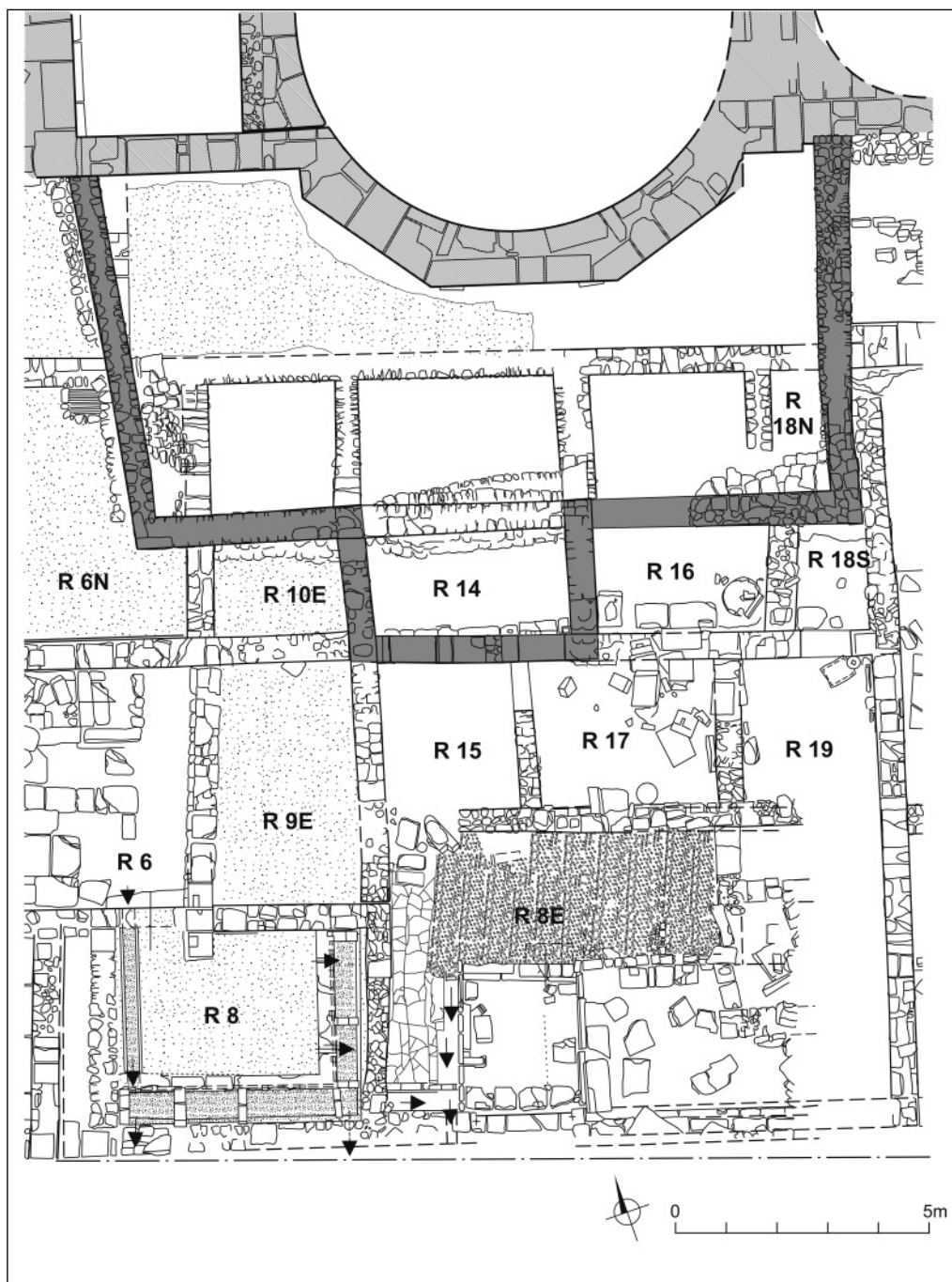


Fig. 6. Plan of excavations in the Hellenistic House
(Updated by A. Brzozowska, based on S. Medeksza)



*Fig. 7. View of the excavations in the Hellenistic House, seen from the southwest
(Photo W. Jerke)*



*Fig. 8. View of the excavations in the Hellenistic House, seen from the southeast
(Photo W. Jerke)*

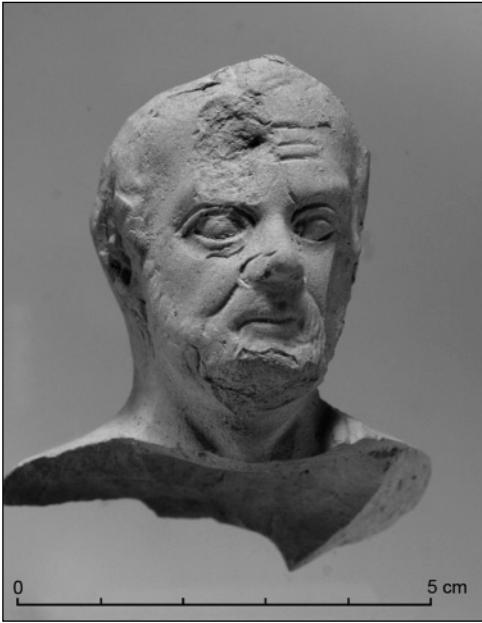


Fig. 9. Terracotta portrait head of a philosopher, FR 4/06 (Photo W. Jerke)

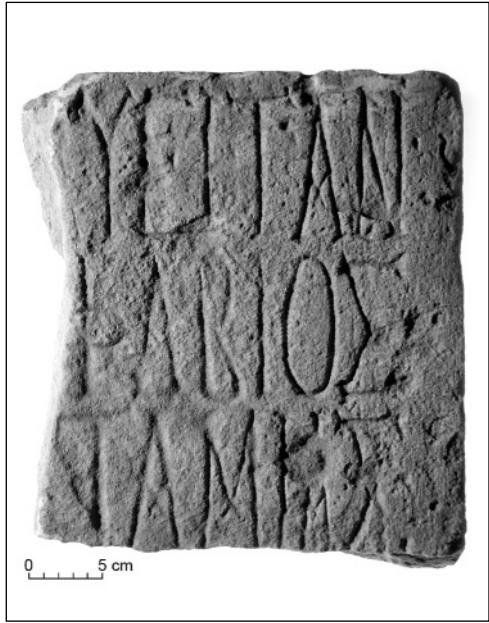


Fig. 10. Fragmentary inscription, FR 2/06 (Photo W. Jerke)



Fig. 11. Clay lamp, FR 41/06 (left);) and fragments of lamp discus with bull image, AR 37/06 (Photo W. Jerke)

This “Byzantine” wall was damaged in the area of the Early Roman Room 16, leaving only a small part at the eastern part end. Further east, above the earlier Room 18, this late wall turned north to hit the south wall of VT at the back of Room 48B [Fig. 8].

The Hellenistic and Early Roman floors were found here at a depth of about 2 m below ground surface. Original Hellenistic structures showed evidence of extensive rebuilding in Early Roman times, limited to the area south of a pebble paved courtyard damaged by VT. The first destruction was probably due to an earthquake at the end of the 1st century BC. The main wall, 20.40 m long, itself rebuilt in the Early Roman period, separated the pebble floor courtyard and a group of

rooms. The rooms formed two rows between the large wall and the entrance court (no. 8E): larger Rooms 10E, 14, 16, and 18 on the north, which are 4.97-5.06 m long N-S and smaller ones: 15, 17, and probably 19 (3.70-2.70 m wide) on the south, which are 3.07 m long N-S. The last of the rooms in the north row, Room 18, was altered. It is difficult to be sure whether its two parts, north and south of the “Byzantine” wall belonged to a single unit. Its southern part (Room 18S) is very narrow, only 1.55 m. A door between Rooms 15 and 17 is 0.90 m wide. At the eastern end of these rows, another large wall separated this part of the building from another Roman structure. A door leading from Room 19 eastward was blocked in the Roman period by four large and thin slabs,



Fig. 12. *Pithos in Room 16 of the Hellenistic House, seen from the west*
(Photo W. Jerke)



*Fig. 13. Uncovering the lamp stand FR 40/06 (left); lamp stand restored
(Photo W. Jerke)*

set one above another. The walls were heavily damaged by an earthquake, which can be dated by finds to the beginning of the 2nd century AD.

The Roman phase was represented by many walls and a large quantity of finds, including a fine portrait in clay of an aged man, 4.3 cm high, 2.4 cm wide (FR 4/06) [Fig. 9] and a fragmentary Greek inscription (FR 2/06) mentioning Fabios the cashier, 18.9 cm high and 16.7 cm wide (which is a subject of the study by A. Łajtar) [Fig. 10] long bronze nails and a large *Nautilus* shell were also found in the fill. Lamps uncovered in the rubble date to the beginning of the 2nd century at the latest; they were found together with earlier examples of the 1st century AD [Fig. 11]. Embedded in compacted plaster on the floor

of Room 17, there was a bronze candelabrum (FR 40/06), 35 cm high, dated to the 1st century AD [Fig. 13]. Close to it, a massive basalt quern or mortar (?) was unearthed. Witness to the cataclysm which destroyed the building was a heavily damaged and fragmentary male skeleton, found crushed under a large irregular stone in Room 14. By its side, an amphora from Kos was found also smashed by the collapsing walls. In Room 16, a large pithos was situated in the southeastern corner [Fig. 12].

The earliest phase belonged to the Late Hellenistic period and is currently known from some remains of walls and floors. The phase seems also to have ended in an earthquake, possibly the one of 14 BC, as smashed pots have been found in situ on the floors of Room 14.

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