

NEA PAPHOS 1993

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The 1993 season at Nea Paphos lasted for five weeks starting on August 23.¹ A brief study session concerning the pottery from the site preceded the actual excavations, which concentrated on continuing the exploration of the Hellenistic House (HH) and the nearby Roman structure (RH), identified in the previous season,² a stratigraphic trench was also dug in the Villa of Theseus.

The Hellenistic House is located directly to the south of the Villa of Theseus (Fig. 1). Originally, it occupied a space limited on the north and south by two parallel latitudinal streets.³ As for the eastern and western boundaries, they remained indefinite, although it had been assumed that the building occupied a whole insula, meaning that on the east and west it touched upon streets belonging to the regular town network. The building was destroyed in an earthquake in the seventies of the 1st century AD. Several years later its northern part along with the adjacent street disappeared under the walls of a new villa (=Villa of

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² Cf. W.A. Daszewski, *PAM IV*, 1992 (1993), p. 93.

³ Cf. W.A. Daszewski, *PAM III*, 1991 (1992), p. 60, fig. 1.

Theseus); the oldest, southern wing of this villa was constructed sometime in the second half of the 2nd century AD.

The remaining parts of the Hellenistic House (i.e. the southern and middle sections) were gradually uncovered in recent seasons of fieldwork.⁴ This year the goal was to study the chronology of the structure and to trace the earlier phases of habitation in this part of the ancient town. Of the three trenches opened for this purpose, the first was located on the axis of the main hall (R10), on the side closer to the peristyle, that is along the eastern wall (cf. Figs 1 and 2). The earlier stages in the development of this area were distinguished before bedrock was reached at a depth of 1.45 m below the walking level in the peristyle. The oldest structures preserved only as the lowermost parts of walls were made of rectangular stone slabs in earth mortar. They can be dated to the early period of Ptolemaic rule, considering the evidence provided by the finds: Late Classical and Early Hellenistic tableware, as well as a coin of Ptolemy II from the years 284-280 BC. It should be noted that the orientation of these early walls is in strict accordance with the direction taken by streets in the Hellenistic network. This structure was destroyed in the late 3rd century BC, providing room for a building which in turn disappeared not later than in the third quarter of the 2nd century BC. This is proven not just by the Hellenistic pottery from the period, but also by a coin from the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (after 129 BC). The Hellenistic House was erected shortly afterwards, as the third stage in the development of the area. The youngest pottery found in the upper layers of the

⁴ W.A. Daszewski, *PAM II*, 1989-90 (1991), pp. 82-84; *PAM III*, 1991 (1992), pp. 63-66; *PAM IV*, 1992 (1993), 88-91.

trench, that is the walking level of the western peristyle, comes from the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st century BC. Included are early ESA forms and fragments of Megarian bowls of the Delian type, as well as stamped Rhodian amphora handles from the years 130-90 BC.

Another trench was opened in the southeastern corner of the portico, adjacent to the stylobate. Three channels were discovered with the topmost one almost level with the portico floor. It was rectangular in section and faced with waterproof lime mortar. The pottery found with it was from the first half of the 1st century AD. The other two channels below this one were made of terracotta pipes and were accompanied by pottery from the late 2nd and early 1st century BC. Below the channels there was a filling which contained Early Hellenistic pottery and immediately above bedrock, that is at a depth of about 1m below the level of the peristyle, Late Classical pottery predominated.

The chronological determinations in both trenches are thus obviously similar. They suggest a similar architectural development and indicate that the area was inhabited from the very beginning of the existence of the town of Nea Paphos.

Slightly different results were obtained in the trench opened at the northern end of the stylobate of the eastern peristyle, that is in the spot where the southern wall of the Villa of Theseus cut through the peristyle of the Hellenistic House. It turned out that the bottommost parts of the foundation trench, dug when the stylobate was being built, rest on layers containing pottery from the 3rd and early 2nd century BC. The layers presumably reflected the presence of earlier structures on the spot. The lower parts of the stylobate foundation came together with pottery of the late 2nd and early 1st century BC. At a depth of c. 0.68 m below

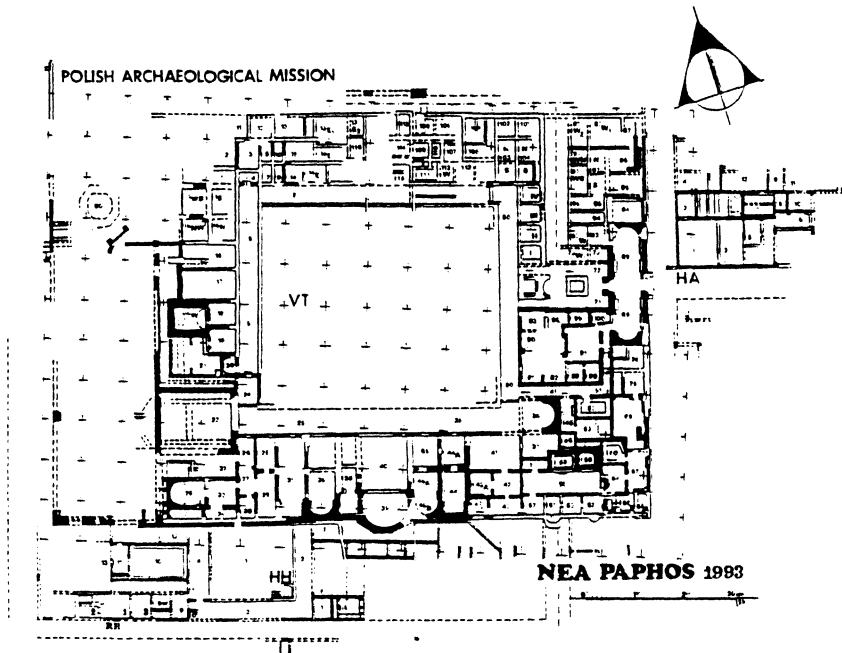


Fig. 1. Structures discovered in the Polish sector at Nea Paphos.
 VT - Villa of Theseus, HA - House of Aion, HH - Hellenistic House,
 RH - Roman House.
 All drawings S. Medeksza.

the level of the peristyle, the stratigraphy of the layers changed radically. On the courtyard side, a thick homogeneous layer of soil was found against the foundation and foundation bench of the stylobate; the pottery material in this layer was from the first half of the 1st century AD. This would suggest that at some point in its existence the inner courtyard of the Hellenistic House was probably filled with garden soil to create an inside garden.

Further investigations in the Hellenistic House involved the Roman House (RH) and were carried out at the junction of the two structures. The western wall of room no. 9 HH was uncovered. It was preserved to about 1 m in height along two-thirds of its length. Only the northern corner had been completely dismantled in antiquity along with the southern wall of the corridor separating this room from the main hall of HH, i.e., R10 (cf. Fig. 2). The white, originally two-layered lime plaster was better preserved only in the lower parts; it served as a priming coat for the upper, painted layer. In the tamped floor which was the room's habitation level, sherds of 1st century AD pottery and an oil lamp from the middle of the century were found. The fill immediately above this level contained pieces of amphorae of the Mau 27/28 type and ESB tableware form 76A. A new room (9W) was discovered west of room 9 (4.8 x 3.42 m) and in it two occupational levels. The first was connected with the Hellenistic House. The second indicated that the room had been renovated and incorporated into the Roman structure. A latitudinal wall, 0.40-0.55 m thick was built to divide room 9W into two unequal parts. From the northern part an entrance led to room no. 3 of the Roman House. A robber's pit was also found in this room; its digging caused the northern wall to collapse.

The latest pottery, connected with the occupation of this room already as a part of the Roman House, can be dated to the 2nd century AD. Below this layer there was fill also found above the occupational level in HH. The pottery from this fill is earlier, from the late 1st and early 2nd century AD. The southern part of room 9W did not remain in use parallel with the northern end, but was closed off at an earlier point in time. The next room (no. 3 RH), the third in a row, was found to be a large room undoubtedly belonging to the official wing of the structure (the other two

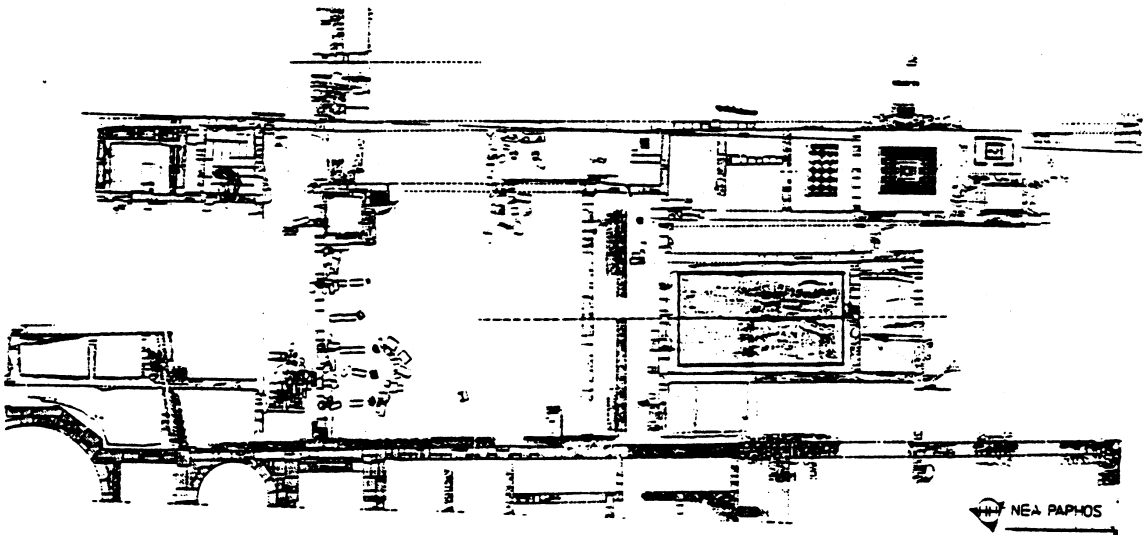


Fig. 2. Superimposed remnants of the Roman House and Hellenistic House south of the Villa of Theseus.

are nos 1 and 2). The walls dividing these rooms were 0.52 m thick on average and made of large rectangular blocks, at least in their lower parts. The floors consisted of mosaics with geometric ornaments and figural representations. In room no. 3, inside a grey frame which filled the remaining space there was a rectangular panel filled with a chessboard pattern made up of grey, wine-red and creamy-white colored rhomboids.

The largest room discovered so far is the next one, room no. 1 (4.80 x 6.05 m). Its floor is decorated with a figural mosaic, the central part of which was uncovered last year.⁵ It represents the three Seasons (Horae) inside a geometric frame.

Trenches opened west of room no. 1 led to the discovery of room no. 2, the last of the rooms of an official nature, as well as a number of smaller and heavily damaged rooms with a different function. Room no. 2 is relatively small (3.32 x 2.05 m). It is decorated with a fine geometric and figural mosaic. The figure of a half-naked young woman is depicted against a light creamy background, inside a geometric frame which is rich but not overdone. The woman has a mantle which covers her head and flows down her shoulders and back, while revealing the shapely torso, hips and thighs. The lower parts of the legs above the feet are covered. With her right hand raised to her face, the woman holds the mantle in place; the left which is bent at the elbow rests upon a small column. In her hand she holds a long lance. It is presumably a very rare representation of Aphrodite with a lance that we are dealing with here.⁶

On the north there was a rectangular basin or water reservoir adjacent to room no. 2 (its dimensions: 2.36 x 1.58 m, 0.38 m deep). Its walls, which were 0.25 m thick, were covered with a waterproof lime mortar; they were severely damaged and even

⁵ Id., *PAM IV*, pp. 92-93, fig. 2.

⁶ Id., *RDAC 1982*, pp. 95ff; *RDAC 1983*, 281f.

completely taken apart in places. The outlet was at the bottom of the eastern side and led to a channel, which ran under the mosaic floor of room 1 toward a settlement tank located next to the outer wall of this room on the street side (Fig. 2). On the north, the foundation of the basin rested upon an earlier wall belonging to the Hellenistic House which had served as the southern wall of the inner courtyard (No. 13) of this structure.

The rooms which adjoined the basin and room no. 2 were almost completely dismantled already in antiquity. What has remained are some heavily damaged parts of the lower floor of a hypocaustum consisting of terracotta tiles and the remains of pillars supporting the upper, heated floor. It was presumably part of a bath, since in Nea Paphos official rooms and living quarters were devoid of heating installations, while baths were heated.

Two trenches located in places where the streets delimiting the insula on the south and west were expected to be found yielded positive results. In both cases edges of rooms adjoining the street were uncovered. A number of levels was also observed on both streets, starting in the Late Hellenistic period. The earlier levels need yet to be explored but it can be determined at the present stage that the streets of Nea Paphos belonging to the Hellenistic network were still in use in the early Roman period. The Hellenistic House (HH) as well as the Roman House (RH) operated within this network.

The pottery discovered in the debris filling the heated rooms belongs to the 2nd century AD, including CS form 40 (large), ESB form 80, sherds of African I amphorae, late versions of ESA.

To recapitulate, research carried out so far in this area would indicate that the ruins of the Hellenistic House (HH) were shortly after its partial destruction in the late 70s of the 1st century AD, covered with a new structure, the Roman House (RH), using to

some extent the preserved parts of the earlier building. The Roman building presumably survived until the 3rd century when it, too, was destroyed. Its walls were soon almost completely dismantled leaving in situ only elements which could not be reused elsewhere. Thanks to this the mosaic floors were preserved.

Another trench was opened on the south side of the latitudinal street limiting the Hellenistic House on the south. The trench was located opposite the southeastern corner of the peristyle of HH. The spot was found to have been densely inhabited in the Roman period (layers from the 1st and early 2nd century AD) and in Hellenistic times (remains of a pebble floor in a waterproof mortar adjacent to a longitudinal wall, dated by pottery from the early 1st century BC). In the eastern and southern sides of the trench a robber's pit of immense dimensions is visible, reaching well below the level of the floor.

Stratigraphic research was continued inside the Villa of Theseus taking advantage of the conservation of the Theseus mosaic in room 36 (the mosaic was removed for this purpose), the layers below were explored down to bedrock which appeared at about 1.80 m depth. Some 20 cm under the mosaic an earlier occupational level was identified and it was also found that the room had the same plan at the time, that is it was a square with an apse in the east wall. This level rested upon a debris fill, which covered a massive north-south wall 0.70 m thick. The pottery in the fill, which included CS sherds of an early form, 40, provided a *terminus post quem*. The massive wall under the fill was made of rectangular blocks and was undoubtedly the wall marking the western side of a Hellenistic street. Its course had been identified previously in the northern end of the eastern wing of the Villa of Theseus, parallel to rooms I-IV.⁷ East of the wall the street surface was uncovered

⁷ Id., *PAM III*, 1991 (1992), p. 60, Fig. 1.

along with a channel made of terracotta pipes, previously observed under room 83. It should be assumed this wall was dismantled in the Late Hellenistic period. A *terminus post quem* or *ad quem* is provided by a coin of Ptolemy VIII. The period in which the wall was constructed is indicated by a layer which the wall foundations reached and which included early Hellenistic pottery. The dating is further confirmed by a coin of Ptolemy I.

It should be said that explorations in room 36 have confirmed the findings from the Hellenistic House as far as the early settlement in this area is concerned. Maloutena, the area where all the buildings mentioned in this report are located, became inhabited at the time the city was established, from the first Ptolemies strictly speaking. It was then that the Hellenistic street network was traced and the buildings were planned accordingly. The next phase of settlement came in the second half of the 2nd century BC. In the early Roman period, the area underwent significant transformation with sections of the streets being cut off from the city network and used as additional building space.