

NEA PAPHOS 1994

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The 1994 season of excavations lasted from August 29 till the end of September.¹ Field activities were preceded and followed by study work on pottery and coins for publication.

The actual excavations were carried out on different sites within the license area. The main efforts were concentrated upon exploration of the Hellenistic House (HH) and the nearby Roman structure (RH). Stratigraphic trenches were opened within the Villa of Theseus.²

Inside the Hellenistic House, the south part of the east portico and two adjacent rooms were cleared of debris (Fig. 1). The west walls of two rooms, which had fallen upon the floor of the portico during an earthquake, were found under a layer (50-60 cm) of brown soil mixed with particles of lime plaster and small stones. Upon the walls of the northern room (no. 6N) fragments of painted plaster were preserved in places, revealing decoration which recalls the so-called First Pompeian Style. Three horizontal bands of red, white and grey-blue (almost black) delimited a socle above which the wall was left white with imitation of masonry blocks in white plaster. Similar

¹ The Mission directed by the present author included: Prof. Dr. Zofia Sztetyło, Dr. Barbara Lichočka, Dr. Evdoksia Papuci-Władyka, Mr. Henryk Meyza, archaeologists; Dr. Stanisław Medeksza, architect. Students of archaeology from Warsaw University and the Jagiellonian University of Cracow as well as students of architecture from the Technical University in Wrocław also took part. Taking this opportunity the Mission would like to express its gratitude to the Director of the Department of Antiquities Dr. Demos Christou and to Dr. Sophocles Hadjisavvas for the help they were kind to extend to the Mission during its work in Paphos.

² Cf. *PAM V* 1993 (1994), pp. 101-110 and especially Fig. 1.

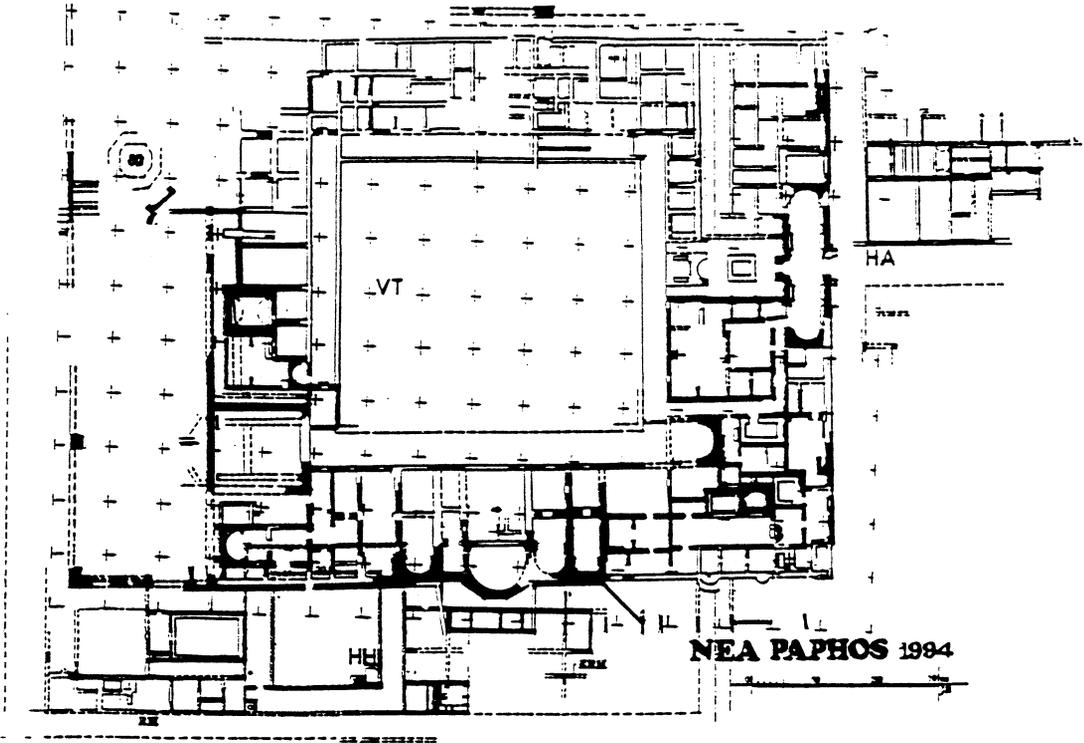


Fig. 1. Structures discovered in the Polish sector at Nea Paphos.
VT - Villa of Theseus, HA - House of Aion, HH - Hellenistic House, RH - Roman House.
All drawings S. Medeksza.

decoration was found previously in other parts of the house, notably in Room 10. Pottery sherds from the area were of Late Hellenistic and Roman date, the latest examples coming from the early 2nd century AD.

The other room (no. 6) had a different character. The walls were left plain, the floor was made of large rectangular blocks of stone. Individual slabs were heavily cracked and fissured. In the southwest corner of the room an opening in the floor gave access to an underground water cistern from where water was drawn to be used in the neighboring Room 7 situated further south. Waterproof mortar used to consolidate the interstices between the floor slabs suggest that the room may have been a washroom or a laundry. The cistern dates to the Hellenistic period. Under the floor of Room 6 many fragments of Hellenistic storage vessels were found including an early amphora from Samos. However, the pottery found within the upper part of the shaft of the cistern (the only excavated section) was of a more recent period. The youngest fragments of CS can be assigned to the early 2nd century AD. They indicate the latest period in which the cistern remained in use.

With a view to finding the north wall of the north peristyle of the Hellenistic House, a large trench was opened along a north-south axis in Room 29 of the Villa of Theseus. Directly under the floor of the room, pottery sherds of the first half of the 2nd century AD were uncovered. They reconfirmed the date of the construction of the Villa sometime in the course of the second half of the century. Further below, in the earth fill, three east-west walls and one north-south wall were found (Fig. 2). It seems that the northernmost of the east-west walls could indeed have belonged to the portico. It delimited the northern edge of the House adjacent to the nearby street. The southernmost wall was earlier. A large breach in the middle was filled with loose soil. A few sherds of Hellenistic pottery and a Rhodian amphora handle with a stamp of Mersias (179 BC) were found there. These findings

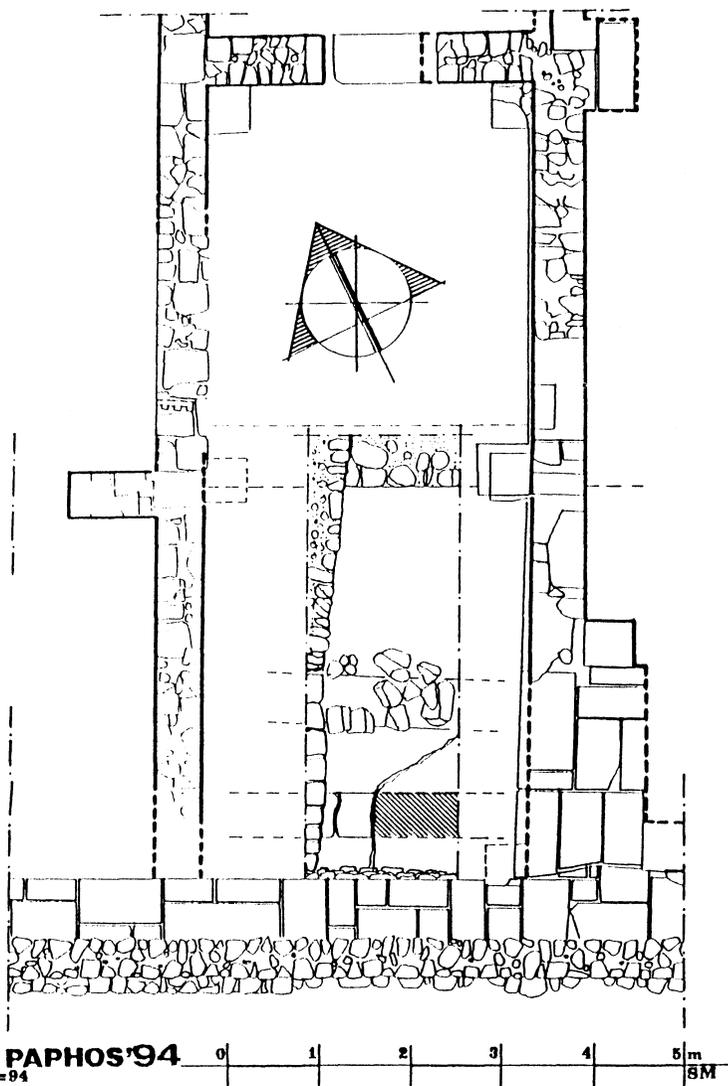


Fig. 2. Room 29 of the Villa of Theseus.

confirm our earlier hypothesis that the Hellenistic House had developed in two directions only, i.e., to the east and west of the peristyle court. To the north and south, the outer wall of the court was limited by two streets running east-west (Fig. 1).

In view of this conclusion, further excavations were carried out to the east and west of the building.

On the east, south of Room 44 of the Villa of Theseus, a large square pit was opened. Excavations revealed two rooms which seem to conform to the general layout of the Hellenistic House (Fig. 1, ERH 1-2). Room 1 (5 x 3.70 m) had an earthen floor reinforced with lime mortar. The walls, especially the east and south ones were preserved to about 1 m above floor level. They were made of semi-dressed stones and fragments of architectural decoration including parts of fluted columns. The walls were plastered and painted. Many fragments of colored plaster were found in the fill. On the east and south walls, the plaster was well preserved revealing decoration segmented into large horizontal fields (98-101 cm wide) divided by vertical bands of 23.5 cm. The colors were preserved only upon pieces found in the fill: traces of white, black, yellow and red bands and some fragments with yellow, red and yellow-green fields. Some fragments revealed two different layers of painting, indicating different periods of execution.

The second room (no. 2) located further south was excavated in its northwest section only. The room was provided with a fine floor of lime mortar and walls consisting of large blocks. A door 1.25 m wide opened to yet another room further south. Pottery sherds and fragments of oil lamps found upon the floor date from the 1st and 2nd century AD. The building itself appears to have been older. In the upper part of the fill above the floor, pottery of the 3rd century AD was also found, but it is unrelated to the building itself.

To the west of the Hellenistic House, explorations continued in an area west of the water basin and of Room 2 with the Aphrodite mosaic. This part of the building forms a Roman addition or extension of the Hellenistic edifice.³ Three more rooms were identified this season. Directly to the west of the basin, a small compartment adjoins two rooms with evidence of a heating system (hypocaust). This part of the building was so heavily destroyed that any further identification is now impossible. However, large quantities of ashes and traces of burning suggest that we may be close to the praefurnium of the bath. The walls of this part of the edifice were made of huge blocks, some of them reused and bearing traces of architectural decoration. The south and west walls of the outer courtyard of the Hellenistic House (no. 13) were reused as a foundation for the walls of the Roman construction of the bath. A door found near the west corner of the courtyard appears to have been reused in the Roman period. It gave access to a small compartment located between the water basin and the rooms further west adjoining the praefurnium. Pottery sherds collected in the area suggest that the construction of the Roman bath took place probably in the late 2nd century AD.

VILLA OF THESEUS

New investigations were carried out within the octagonal construction located in the northwest part of the enclosure (Fig. 1, no. 80). The edifice which was explored some years ago was identified as an early Roman watch tower. A detailed analysis of the foundation walls and of the few preserved blocks of the top part allowed for a more precise reconstruction of its form and identification of successive phases of construction. The final form of the building was probably related to Hellenistic prototypes from Egypt. The lower, octagonal part was relatively high. Upon it there was a cylindrical section, which was lower. The total height of the

³ PAM V, pp. 105-108.

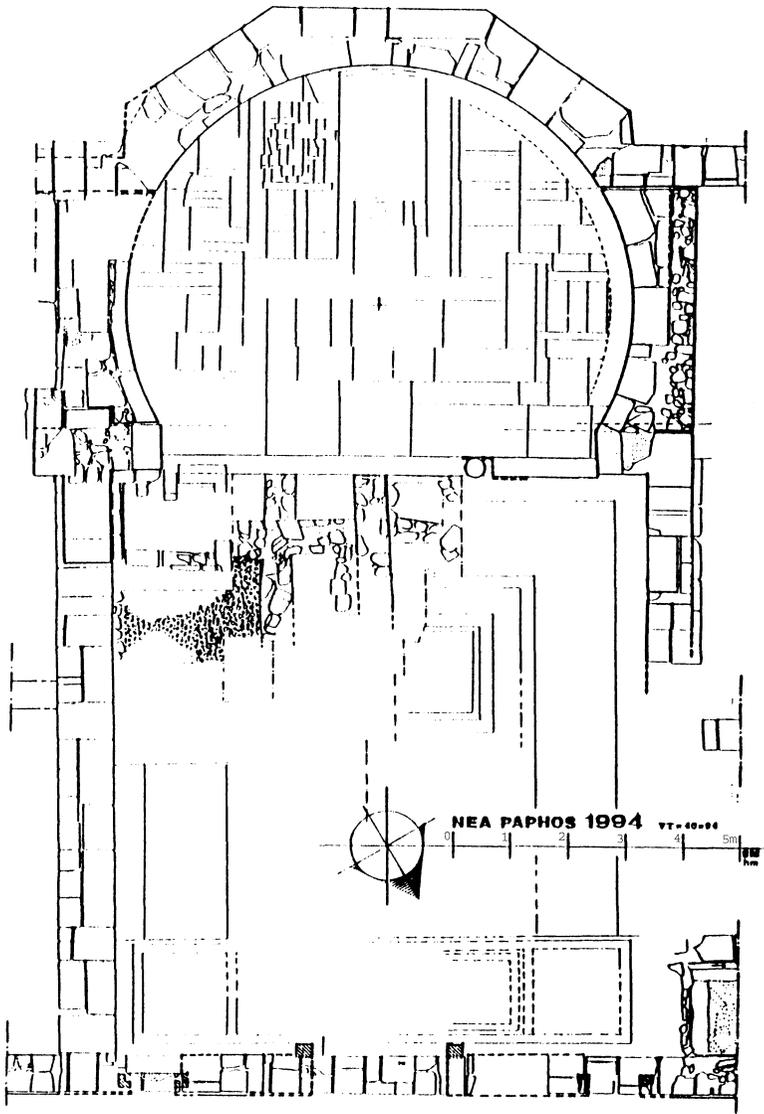


Fig. 3. Room 40 of the Villa of Theseus.

tower may have exceeded 20 m. Its form and size recall the so called Tower of the Arabs erected in the late Hellenistic period east of Taposiris Magna.⁴ The tower at Taposiris is usually considered to have been modeled upon the Alexandrian lighthouse on Pharos island. Whether the tower at Taposiris Magna was a lighthouse or a monumental decoration of a large underground tomb has never been proved satisfactorily. It may have been used for both purposes. The tower in Paphos could well have had a double function as well-watch tower and lighthouse. Its location on the peninsula would have made it dominate over the whole Paphian coastline.

Further excavations within the Villa of Theseus were conducted in Room 40, which was the main hall of the residence. Since a part of the Achilles mosaic was lifted for conservation, a large pit could be opened in the southeastern part of the room. A detailed pottery review was prepared by Mr. Henryk Meyza in a separate report below. What is noteworthy is that the pottery found directly under the mosaic floor originated from the 2nd century AD. The mosaic itself seems to be much later. On stylistic grounds it was assigned to the late 5th or even 6th century AD. In the trench below the east section of the floor, near an earlier trench opened here in the 1970s, a coin of Tiberius Mauricius (580-602 AD) was found together with a sherd of an amphora (spatheion) of the 6th century. It cannot be excluded that both the coin and the sherd found their way under the floor when the mosaic was laid or when it was being repaired.

Small finds included fragments of terracotta figurines, oil lamps, metal and bone objects, as well as coins of Hellenistic and Roman date.

⁴ A. Adriani, *Annuaire du Musée Greco-Romain* III (1940-1950), Alexandrie 1952, pp. 133-139.