



## **Nea Paphos. Season 2008**

Author(s): Henryk Meyza with Wiktor Andrzej Daszewski, Marzena Zarzycka, Joanna Michalska-Bartoszek, Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka, Olga Wasilewska and Monika Więch

Source: *PAM 20 (Research 2008)*, 283-294

ISSN 1234-5415 (Print), ISSN 2083-537X (Online)  
ISBN 978-83-235-0821-2

Published: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw (PCMA UW),  
Warsaw University Press (WUP)

[www.pcma.uw.edu.pl](http://www.pcma.uw.edu.pl) – [www.wuw.pl](http://www.wuw.pl)

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# NEA PAPHOS SEASON 2008

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**Abstract:** Three campaigns in spring and late autumn, conducted on behalf of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus and supervised by representatives of the Polish Mission, conducted salvage excavations in different places scattered all over the site, complementing or modifying the design of the projected shelter. The only regular excavations were carried out in front of the Villa of Theseus entrance, in September and October, uncovering the access to the cistern found in 2007 in the western courtyard of the so-called Hellenistic House. The last rooms in the southeastern part of the Hellenistic House (destroyed in the beginning of the 2nd century AD) were also explored, bringing to light a painted limestone bust of one of the *Dioskouroi*. The northern part of the Insula of the House of Aion was also excavated, uncovering two new rooms.

**Keywords:** Nea Paphos, Villa of Theseus, Hellenistic House (so-called), *Dioskouroi*, Insula of the House of Aion

The excavation campaign was not confined to September and early October, the standard time of our fieldwork, but started in March continuing through June and was resumed again in November through mid December, due to the requirements of a project aimed at building a roof shelter over a large part of the site. Salvage excavations in spring and late autumn, conducted on behalf of the Department of Antiquities and supervised by representatives of the Polish Mission, were mostly determined

by the changing shelter design, examining locations under roof supports. Many of these trial pits were only a meter square, dug to a depth of 0.50 m. Whenever larger structures appeared in neighboring pits or the locations were crucial for the construction project, individual pits were joined and depth of excavation adjusted to local needs. During these salvage works, the only planned excavation of larger extent was the trench in front of the entrance to the Villa of Theseus. The following areas

proved to be of greatest scientific interest:

- entrance to the Villa of Theseus — remains of a gate portico, of warehouses along the main street B and of a channel along the eastern facade of the Villa;
- southern wing of the Villa of Theseus, room 48B — a built cistern;
- outside the south wall of the Villa, at a crossing with a street running north-south under the eastern wing of the Villa (street 9);
- street south of the Hellenistic House (street A’);
- east end of the House of Aion close to room 19.

Regular excavations in the fall campaign extended the work to the following three

areas where broader research aims were pursued:

- access corridor to the cistern (found in 2007) in the western courtyard of the Hellenistic House;
- southeastern part of the Hellenistic House (clearing of baulks);
- northern part of the insula of the House of Aion (North-Eastern House) — rooms 37 and 38, as well as a cistern situated in the wall dividing rooms 36 and 32.

Excavations conducted in spring and late autumn/winter were of a salvage character and this bears upon the finality of the conclusions reached. The collected material could not be studied in any detail on the spot and has yet to be examined. Therefore,

#### Team

*Dates of work:* 7 March–12 June, 28 August–10 October, 6 November–12 December, 2008

*Director:* Dr. Henryk Meyza (Research Center for Mediterranean Archaeology, Polish Academy of Sciences)

*First season*

*Archaeologists:* Marzena Markowska, presently Zarzycka (PCMA scholarship holder), Olga Wasilewska (freelance)

*Architect:* Małgorzata Czapińska, presently Słowińska (Aura SC)

*Mining expert:* Dr. Zenon Duda (AGH University of Science and Technology, retired)

*Second season*

*Archaeologists:* Prof. Wiktor Andrzej Daszewski (Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, *emeritus*), Prof. Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka (Institute of Archaeology, Jagiellonian University, Kraków), Agata Dobosz (freelance), Katarzyna Meyza (Department of Archeology, Historical Museum of Warsaw), Joanna Michalska, presently Bartoszek (freelance), Paweł Rajski (PhD candidate, Wrocław University of Technology, Department of Architecture)

*Architect:* Prof. Stanisław Medeksza (Faculty of Architecture, Wrocław University of Technology), Aleksandra Brzozowska (PhD candidate, Faculty of Architecture, Wrocław University of Technology),

*Archaeologists and documentalists:* Dr. Meike Droste (Conti-Reisen GmbH, Palatina Kunst and Kultur)

*Student-trainees* from the University of Warsaw and Jagiellonian University in Kraków

*Third season*

*Archaeologists:* Zofia Kowarska (PhD candidate, Research Centre for the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe, University of Warsaw), Szymon Lenarczyk (PhD candidate, Research Centre for the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe, University of Warsaw), Monika Więch (freelance).

only the regular fieldwork (in September) provided reliable insight into dating of the strata. In all other cases, assessment of chronology was based on stratigraphic and architectural relations alone.

#### NORTHERN PART OF THE INSULA OF THE HOUSE OF AION (B9)

An extension northward of the excavated area towards the line of street C passing north of the Villa of Theseus did not reach

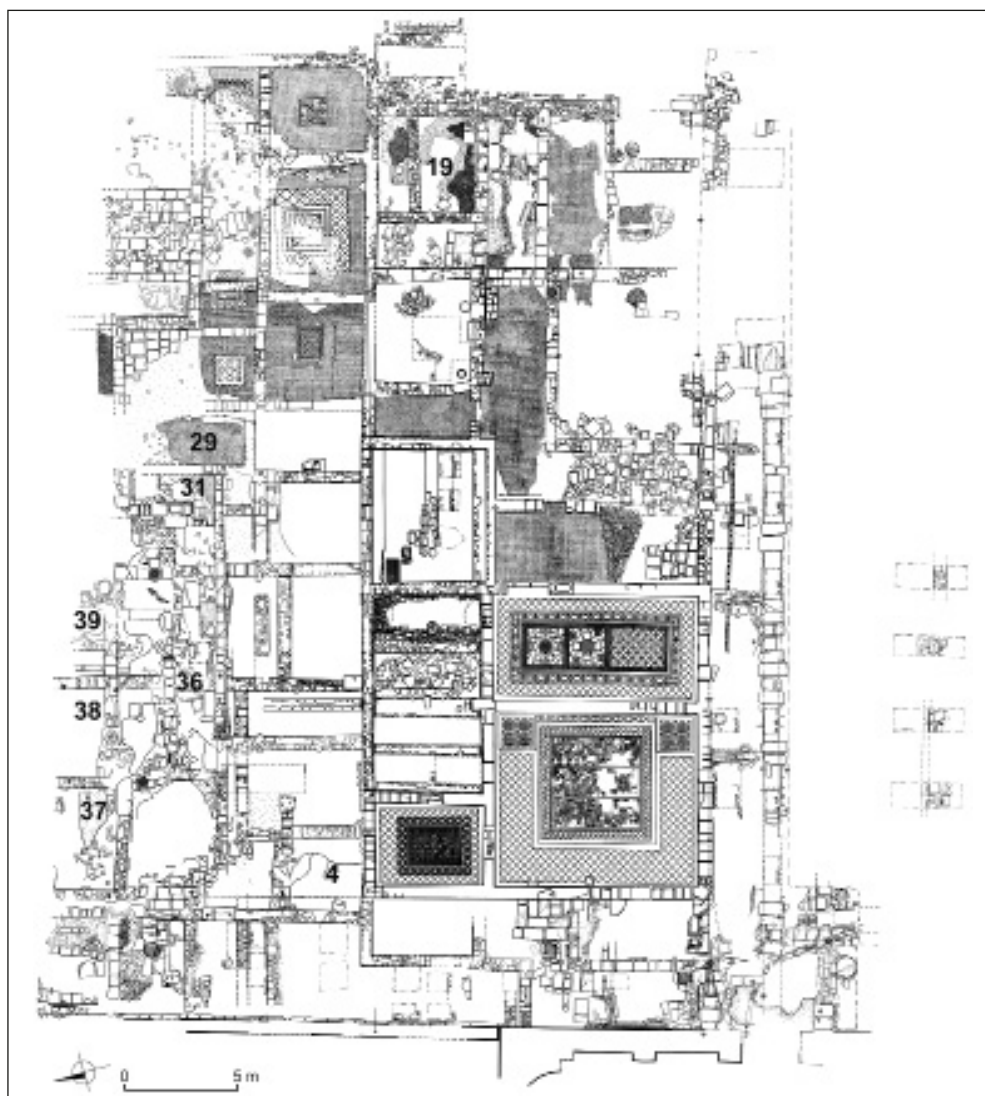


Fig. 1. *The House of Aion and the Northeastern House: Early Roman and late Roman structures*  
(M. Czapińska, A. Brzozowska, S. Medeksza)

the street, but it cleared further sections of rooms 37, 38 and 39 and another part of the kiln situated north of the eastern part of room 36. These units belonged to the Late Roman phase of the building dated to the 5th century. Remains of earlier walls visible at this level had encouraged exploration below Late Roman floors already in 2007 and more small trial pits were dug to disentangle the complicated sequence of reuse of earlier structures, particularly under rooms 4 and 36 [Fig. 1]. A cistern (S.16.3/08), fitted into the masonry foundation of a N–S wall or threshold south of the said kiln, was found to be filled with a homogeneous deposit from the end of the 1st/beginning of 2nd century AD. One of the finds was a complete plate of Cypriot Sigillata form P4B (Hayes) [Fig. 2]. The cistern had a built cylindrical well-head, a similar shaft cut in calcarenite crust (*kafkalla/havara* in modern Greek) and a widening pear-shaped reservoir excavated in a gray-green impermeable

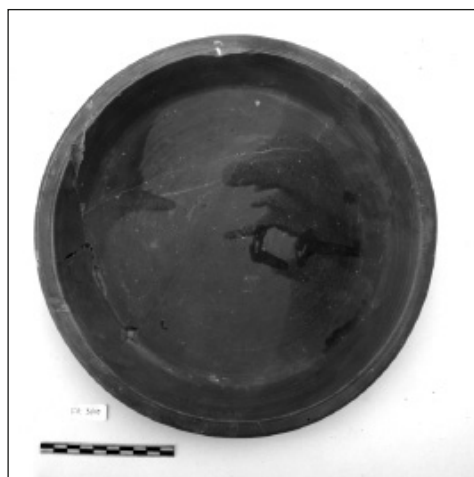


Fig. 2. Cypriot Sigillata plate form P4B  
(Photo K. Woszczyńska)

clay stratum (*khonnos*). The excavation was discontinued at 4.80 m below the well-head without reaching a clear bottom.

The fill of a late robbing trench was removed in the northeastern preserved corner of the mosaic in room 29 to verify the foundations of the east wall. An earlier room with a thick, impermeable hydraulic floor was demonstrated to extend eastward from an earlier wall, just east and below a wall dividing late Roman rooms 29 and 31.

An extension of the trench to the east of room 19 of the House of Aion uncovered a massive N–S wall, which may have been the external wall of this building.

#### LATE ROMAN STREET AND ENTRANCE TO THE VILLA OF THESEUS

An L-shaped trench was set out in front of the entrance to the Villa, 6.25 m long E–W along the south side of the entrance podium and 5.75 wide N–S in front of it. It encompassed a pit 2 m by 2 m, going down approximately 1.50 m, excavated by the Department of Antiquities in 2003 for an earlier version of the shelter project (pit Δ 11; Daszewski *et alii* 2004: 292–293, Fig. 6). The bigger trench covered the entire width of street B and the entire width of the Late Roman street in an effort to trace the development of the street system, including the construction of a street along the eastern wing of the Villa of Theseus. Only loose stones and soil were cleaned north of the podium. Several building levels were recognized, the latest being a cobblestone surface south of and 0.40 m below the entrance podium, continuing as a simple trampled surface with some lime further east on a lower level. Lying collapsed on this level were the remains of a tympanum from the entrance

portico. Added to fragments discovered in previous seasons, they provided sufficient data for reconstructing the element at least in part [Fig. 3]. A clay-pipe drain running under the podium was laid on this surface, while another vertical pipe carried water from under the podium into the main sewer of street B. The former pipe had already been located in a small pit (1 m by 1 m) excavated in 1975 (the year the entrance was uncovered) going down on the axis of the entrance to the slabs covering the main sewer (Daszewski 1976: 208–209, Pl. XXXIV,1).

Phases preceding the construction of the podium were found below, including

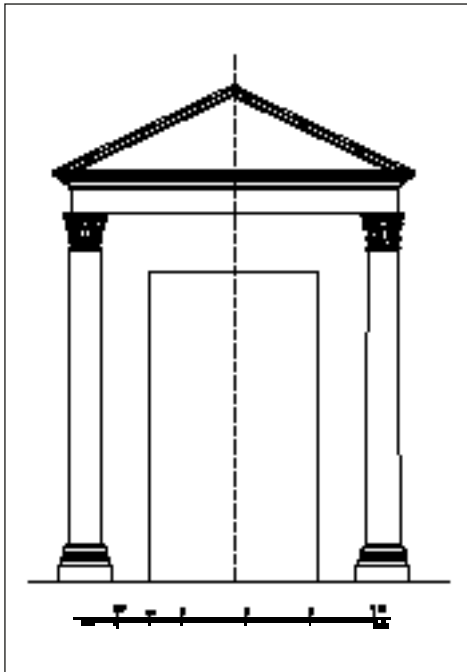


Fig. 3. *Reconstruction of the entrance portico to the Villa of Theseus (A. Brzozowska, consultation S. Medeksza, H. Meyza, M. Michiewicz)*

earlier curbs of street B. On the northern side of the same street very clear remains of successive road surfaces were excavated. Below the late level related to the entrance portico there is a N–S channel covered with slabs extending to the south along the eastern wing of the Villa. Its outlet to the main drain in street B could not be found in the partly filled drain and it seems to have been superseded in the last phase of use of the main drain by open subsidiary drains, similar to those known to have led from the House of Aion to the same drain on its northern side. The N–S slab-covered drain seems to have been closed well before the main drain fell out of use. There is no trace of closing of the main drain at the time the vestibule was constructed, meaning it may have continued in use until the end of the existence of the Villa of Theseus to collect water from the portico and probably from the house roofs.

Early-phase shops with round clay storage bins were discovered lining the southern side of the main street B. They seem to have been abandoned by the time the eastern wing of the Villa and the late Roman street east of it were constructed, that is, in the early 4th century AD, but quite probably already in the 2nd century, as was the case of shops along street 9.

In the street between the Villa of Theseus and the House of Aion 13 small trenches were excavated, all save two of them (459, 470) in the western side of the street and all save the two, which were extended, measuring no more than 1 m by 1 m and between 0.60 cm and 0.80 cm deep. Of the remaining 11 trenches two were made against the east wall of the Villa. The general result of these is that the walls, the tops of which were leveled when the Late Roman street was built, had corresponding



floors at 0.40–0.50 m below street level, and this was the original level of use of buildings preceding the street. Two unknown cisterns were located, one at the southern end (452), the other at the northern one of the excavated stretch of the Late Roman street. The fill of these and superimposed floors under the street belongs generally to the Early Roman period, with the latest pieces coming from the second half of the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century, but in some places (fill of the cistern in pit 459) contaminated in Late Roman times.

#### INSULA SOUTH OF THE HOUSE OF AION (A9) AND MAIN STREET B EAST OF THE VILLA OF THESEUS

Several trial pits were dug in the main drain uncovered in section in 2007 in the main east–west street B (Daszewski, Meyza 2010: 504). Excavations reached the bottom of the trough cut in the bedrock. The fill found after lifting the covering slabs contained very few finds, which suggests that the fill may be the result of accumulation during use. A series of four trial pits, extending over a stretch 10.60 m long and 2.60 wide, was also made south of this street, uncovering a sequence of two parallel and partly superimposed walls, with corresponding floors, belonging to the second line of rooms from the street in the building belonging to insula A9. The same wall was already found in a pit excavated in this area in 1992 (Daszewski 1993: 86), but evidently this is not a southern curb of the street B. This street, contrary to the opinion expressed in that report, is barely 5 m wide, that is to say, only approximately, 1.50 m wider than the other latitudinal streets (A, A, C), which are 10 Aeginetan feet wide (3.34 m). The width of street B was most probably 15 feet.

#### UNDER THE EAST WING OF THE VILLA OF THESEUS

Street 9, a Hellenistic and Early Roman street, was uncovered in 1981 north of the atrium of the Villa of Theseus. Early strata of buildings west of this street were excavated this season. Remains of structures with round clay bins, such as those known already from shops in the same area in square H9 excavated by the Department of Antiquities in 2003 (Daszewski *et alii* 2004: 291), were found under room 83, south of the atrium. On the eastern side of this street, a bone finger-ring with cameo bezel was found in its compacted surface. The cameo depicted the bust of a woman wearing a diadem, possibly a Ptolemaic queen [Fig. 4].



Fig. 4. Bone ring with cameo bezel bearing a female bust, before conservation (Photo H. Meyza)

### SOUTHEAST OF THE VILLA OF THESEUS (INSULA A'9) AND STREET 9

Both sides of the eastern curb of the same Street 9 were excavated further south. Earlier structures were detected below the southern elevation of the bath complex of the Villa, outside the palatial building (Daszewski 1976: Fig. 3). The 2008 trench (squares 340–343) extended the known stretch of the street to 2.60 m from the building. The street had a well or cistern on its side. A block, probably reused, in the curb had a bronze door socket. Two consecutive clay pipes were found, crossing this part of the street, possibly discharging into the main drain on the N–S axis of the street. Both belonged to a single late (1st–2nd century AD) level of street use. Another floor, dated to the 2nd century BC, bearing traces of burning, was found approximately 0.40 m below. The construction of the ashlar curb belongs however to later phases and cuts through the floor. The curb either does not belong to the original street layout or, more probably, there was a building preceding the street in this spot. It would put in doubt the dating of the street to just after the town foundation. The lower floor consisted of reddish clay daub superimposed on a leveled layer of gray-greenish clay (*khonnos*). Below there was red soil fill on uneven bedrock.

### SOUTH WING OF THE VILLA OF THESEUS

A series of trenches in rooms 28, 29, 38, 65, 48A+B, 41 in the south wing of the Villa of Theseus uncovered the remains of an east–west street A (some in re-excavated trenches of the 1970s, Młynarczyk 1990: 173–174) and the foundations of the northern limit of the Hellenistic House, as well as various

remains of hydraulic installations, including structures belonging to the early phases of the Villa, e.g. a bath in the eastern part of the wing. On the other hand, the cistern in room 48B was built into the existing structure at a relatively late phase, probably in the 3rd century or even later, when the construction of the hall had already been modified to create a deep horseshoe-shaped apse [Fig. 5]. The large hydraulic installation, the upper part of which protruded above the floors of surrounding rooms, requires a reconsideration of the character of the central part of the south wing, at least during the later phases of its use.

Nearby, under the steps leading from room 39 to room 40, a cistern was identified long ago and partly explored. It was



Fig. 5. Late cistern in room 48B of Villa of Theseus (Photo M. Markowska)



probably still in use at least as a sweep dump when an Egyptian Nile Mud Ware amphora form Egloff 172 was dropped into it, to be recovered broken but almost complete in 1970 (Daszewski 1972: 209–211, Fig. 7a). It would mean that both the presently discovered cistern and the one in the neighboring room may have been used simultaneously.

On the opposite side of the large audience hall, traces of earlier hydraulic structures, probably contemporary with the Hellenistic House, were uncovered at 1.30 m below the mosaic floors and seem to suggest, together with similar findings from room 29, that a large section of the northern part of the Hellenistic House had floors at levels corresponding to those known in the area of western courtyard 13.

A sloping dromos blocked by stones, found in the western enclosure of the Villa, explains how a large reservoir, 9 m long, in the western courtyard of the Hellenistic House (Daszewski, Meyza 2010: 511, Figs 8, 9) was accessed [Fig. 6]. The covered part of the dromos runs under the south wall of the western enclosure of the Villa of Theseus and is blocked at its northern end with large blocks. It continues north as a sloping ramp with built walls. The use of this dromos, clearly belonging to the original plan of the cistern, continued probably after the construction of the Villa of Theseus in the 2nd century AD. Surprisingly, there was 3rd–5th century pottery material in the fill of the dromos despite the fact that rooms north of the courtyard were filled with a mass of collapsed multi-layered



Fig. 6. Ramp leading to a cistern under the Hellenistic House  
(Photo Ł. Misk)

plaster, most likely from the first floor, already in the 2nd century. This cistern may have been used (also?) to supply a small bath belonging to the Roman House, i.e., a building reusing some parts of the western part of the Hellenistic House situated south and west of the courtyard.

#### WEST WING OF THE VILLA OF THESEUS

The northernmost trench in the west wing was excavated in room 18W, where the original floor of this cellar was found. In room 21, walls of buildings preceding the Villa of Theseus were found with a corresponding floor. The foundation of a portico of the rhysalite in room 22 was dismantled in spots planned under the shelter roof supports in order to verify the

date of construction of the first phase of the Villa. Pottery from pits in room 23 of the Villa produced a date in the 3rd century AD for the erection of the internal colonnade.

The south side of the east–west street A was explored in room 32W in the southwestern part of the Villa of Theseus. Remains of the curb and one room with a drain leading to the street were uncovered. Floors in the northwestern part of the Hellenistic House were found on a similar level as around the western courtyard. Above the floor a limestone naiskos [Fig. 7] and a bronze spoon for incense were collected.

#### SO-CALLED HELLENISTIC HOUSE

A trial pit down to the bedrock in the western part (room 20W) of the northern side of the western courtyard uncovered an earlier wall aligned on the same axis and a paved floor running even with the foundation leveling course of the wall. Below the pavement the strata contained Early Hellenistic and Late Classical pottery.

At the opposite end of the Hellenistic House, excavation of the remaining baulk, supervised by W.A. Daszewski, led to the uncovering of two further rooms 24 and 25. A sculptured bust made of painted limestone, representing probably one of the Dioskouroi, was uncovered in two parts almost on the floor in the first of the two [Fig. 8]. Room 25 situated between the southeastern corner of the Hellenistic House and the ramp, leading from street A' to a small court 8A with pebble floor, consisted of two parts: a wider western space (excavated in 1995) communicating northward with the courtyard by means of a door and a narrow passage leading to room 24 in its southwestern corner. The eastern, narrower part, situated in the very

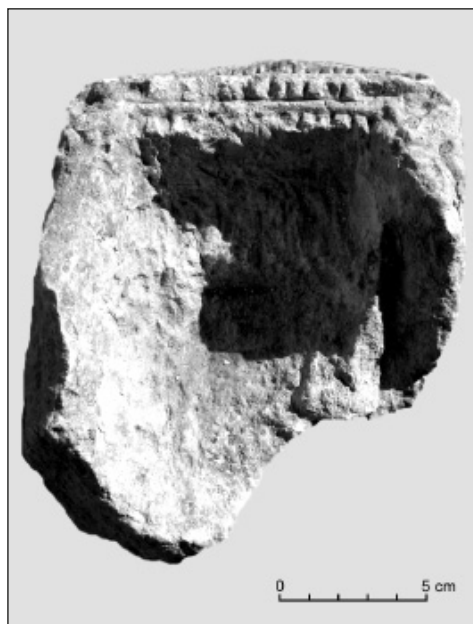


Fig. 7. Limestone naiskos found in north-western part of the Hellenistic House



*Fig. 8. Limestone bust of capped youth, probably Dioskouros (in situ)*  
(Photo K. Woszczyńska)



*Fig. 9. Drains of the street A'*  
(Photo S. Lenarczyk)

southeastern corner of the Hellenistic House, excavated in 2008, proved to be of a domestic nature. In the far right corner, a stone table was built of two upright blocks and a slab of *marmara*, i.e., alabastine gypsum. The finds included the upper part of a large jug of Early Roman Red Slip, half of a plate of Cypriot Sigillata (form 12) and three intact lamps datable to the second half of the 1st/early 2nd century AD, as well as small objects of personal adornment: a faience bead and a finger ring of iron with a bronze bezel.

#### STREET A'

##### SOUTH OF THE ROMAN HOUSE

A row of trenches excavated to bedrock uncovered a stone-built channel partly carved in bedrock, which has confirmed that this street belonged to the original urban grid of the Early Hellenistic period. The 1 m by 1 m trenches on the spots planned under shelter roof supports were in five cases joined in pairs, but at the ends

of the row four were joined to form a single trench. The trenches were sunk to the level of the drain channel covered by slabs, with voids underneath. To excavate that deep in squares 37–40 at the eastern end it was necessary to dismantle a late wall erected over the surface of the street. A clay pipe belonging to the late drain in the street (Daszewski, Meyza forthcoming) has also been removed. In some of the eastern trenches in this street (A'), up to three pipe drains were found at differing levels and located either at the center or along the northern curb of the street [Fig. 9]. As in the case of the trench at the western end of the street (points 51–54), a level corresponding to the original surface was found below respective successive road surfaces, comprising slabs sealing a built drain with its bed cut in the rock (same as used in previously excavated streets A and B). The rotating part of a *trapetum* made of black porous basalt was discovered above the slabs of the drain.

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