

APHRODISIAS, 1966 CAMPAIGN

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The sixth campaign of excavations on the site of Aphrodisias in Caria, conducted under the aegis of New York University, was marked by several significant developments for our knowledge of the history of the site and of its monuments. Areas previously under excavation, namely the north temenos of Aphrodite, the "Bishop's Palace," the *porticus post scaenam* of the Odeion, the Baths of Hadrian, and the vicinity of the Water Channel, were continued and contributed impressive and handsome new discoveries. Further probes and trenches in the "acropolis" and the adjacent theatre, on the other hand, provided vital data concerning the remote past of the site.

Work in this "acropolis" area was indeed spurred by the interesting discoveries made *passim* in previous summers, and more particularly in 1965 concerning the theatre of Aphrodisias situated on the eastern slope of the hill. Supported by a generous grant from the National Geographic Society, an exhaustive survey and exploration of the "acropolis", now assuredly a formation of essentially artificial origins, were initiated. Their main objectives were the minute investigation of all remains above ground likely to pertain to the theatre, followed eventually by excavation, and the location of the early, presumed prehistoric, settlement thought to have existed on or near the hillock.

A careful exploration was conducted by Dr. Alois Machatschek, of the Technische Hochschule, Institut für Kunstgeschichte und Denkmalpflege at Vienna, and his assistant, Wolfgang Klien. All walls,

foundations, and remaining houses along the eastern slopes were painstakingly examined. Upon evidence either previously uncovered or revealed by Dr. Machatschek's investigations, several sondages, trenches, and clearing operations were undertaken at strategic locations.

The *summa cavea*, its galleries and *ambulacra* appear to be preserved especially in their southern portions. Tiers of seats here rest on the whole right on the ground. A northern trench brought to light the *diazoma*, which proved to be well-preserved at this point, but was apparently tampered with by later constructions and foundations in its south end. The *ima cavea*, on the other hand, is almost certainly in excellent condition judging from the 1965 discoveries of the *pulpitum* and part of the orchestra, as well as from the uncovering of five tiers of its seats, in a trench aimed, last summer, at reaching the north *parados* wall. The precise arrangement of the building in this area, especially the physical connections of the stage and the *parados* remain still unclear. However, preliminary conclusions based on the survey indicate that the *cavea* was horseshoe shaped and capable of holding an appreciably large audience of several thousand spectators. A complex building, probably a bathing establishment and a *nymphaeum*, flanked the southern end of the *analemma*. The stratigraphic and ceramic evidence so far available would suggest that the burial of at least the lower *cavea* may have occurred in the early Byzantine period. This could have resulted from an earthquake and could explain the conversion of the eastern semi-circular

end of the stadium of Aphrodisias into a theatrical as well as a gladiatorial area.

Much remains to be done, however, in order to obtain further conclusive data about the architectural peculiarities and the chronological position of this theatre. A significant epigraphic contribution extracted from the north parados trench was the transcription of a letter of Gordian III (238-244) that seems to deal with the rights and privileges enjoyed by the Aphrodisians in the third century.

In the course of earlier campaigns, between 1962 and 1964, several operations in the temple area and at southwestern foot of the "acropolis" had yielded many out-of-context finds of obsidian and flint flakes, parallelsided blades, as well as other stone implements. The obsidian appeared to be frequently of Melian, not Anatolian, origin, identifiable by its characteristic milky transparency. The presence of such artefacts in addition to the curiously regular shape of the cone of the "acropolis" led one easily to suspect some connection between the hillock and a prehistoric settlement at Aphrodisias. Two soundings were initiated, last summer, in an effort to determine the accuracy of such a hypothesis, the antecedents of the hill, and the location of the prehistoric site. One trench on the northwestern slope did not produce startling results although it reached a depth of more than 7 m. Water was hit before the end of some Hellenistic walls was revealed. Nevertheless, among the Roman, Byzantine, and Hellenistic material there came to light some dark burnished handmade sherds and a stone celt (Dickaxt) of the type common in Troy I and II. The second trench was excavated in the immediate proximity of the area known locally as Kuşkalesi, at the southwestern foot of the "acropolis." Below a rich Byzantine cemetery that is associated with a Martyrion situated nearby, levels of definite prehistoric date were reached. Three consecutive strata bearing sherds of the Early Bronze Age I and II, some parallel-sided obsidian

blades as well as several possibly Late Chalcolithic fragments were recognised here by Miss Stephanie Page, the excavator. The most specific evidence proved to be a pithos burial. Although badly smashed, this contained the well-preserved bones of a child and a small one-handed jug of buff, unburnished ware with a slightly sloping rim and ornamented knobs about its maximum diameter. The pithos was about 0.70 m. high, with two handles and made of very coarse, straw-tempered, crumbly buff fabric that had been unevenly fired, hence dark brown and red patches. Its mouth was originally covered with two flat stone slabs, one on top of the other. Pithos burials are widely known in the Early Bronze Age of Anatolia. The Aphrodisias find can be paralleled by discoveries made at Babaköy, near Balıkesir, at Kusura A, south of Afyon and also at Karataş Semayük in Lycia, where a Bryn Mawr expedition under Professor Machteld Mellink has been excavating for the past few years. The present sondage at Aphrodisias is still some what limited, however, to draw far-reaching conclusions. No building remains associated with these prehistoric levels are yet evident. The area of the main settlement could well have been located further up the slope of the "acropolis", outside the range of the trench. As to the pithos burial, it probably lay at the edge of a burial ground.

Another search for stratified prehistory at the northeast corner of the temenos of Aphrodite produced seventh and sixth century B. C. East Greek and Lydian, but no prehistoric sherds. However, an obsidian flake and a fine, long-tanged blade of luminous white stone still suggest prehistoric antecedents in this vicinity, as did previous discoveries.

Excavations in the north temenos of Aphrodite which had revealed part of an early Byzantine complex in 1965 were continued. The precise nature of the building remains uncertain. It is likely, however, to have been private or semi-private in character. On the other hand, its lavish

decoration and sizable dimensions intimate prosperous ownership at one time in the history of the building. The marble-paved courtyard, barely revealed by the 1965 excavations, proved to be of imposing dimensions and to have a western extremity terminating in an apse which was curtained off by means of a wall in a later phase of the history of the complex. Three chambers opened onto the court from the north. A larger, off-axis door to the east led to a second, smaller peristyle-type court, the porticoes of which were decorated with attractive mosaic pavements datable to the fifth century or so: though not too well preserved, the four corners of the court had medallions with heads, presumably symbolising the Four Seasons. A southern *oecus* included on its floor an attractive panel with a hunting scene showing a man spearing a furious lion. The central feature of the court was a charming shallow basin with moulded edges, flanked to the north and the south by a pair of slender blue marble columns on high bases. The two southern ones, found fallen in front of their plinths, were immediately re-erected. Other *opus-sectile*-paved rooms open further east, but their function is still uncertain. If the mosaic pavements point to a fifth or even sixth century date for the early stages of the building, later modification obscure the original plan. Mud-brick was certainly used in the upper walls of some of the smaller north and south chambers, and several Byzantine tombs were found in the upper strata.

Among the numerous finds recorded here, two altars, one bearing a fragmentary Latin inscription, and the other decorated with a beguiling satyr mask, require mention. So do a Julio-Claudian female portrait and several exquisite revetment pilaster capitals, including a figured one which belongs to the same group as the two found in 1965 decorated with Aphrodite figures; the new capital shows a familiar statuary type, the Apollo playing the lyre and leaning against the tripod.

Finally, a small hoard of Byzantine gold and silver coins of Michael III the Drunkard and Theodora (842-867) in almost perfect condition was found behind the apsidal end of the large marble-paved court.

Operations in the *porticus post scaenam* of the Odeion and in the "Bishop's Palace" were dictated, last summer, by the need to understand the physical relationship of the two buildings. The *porticus* extends westward to an as yet undertermined length. Its northern back wall appears to have been used as a wall for shops or chambers with north doors opening onto an alley or corridor. Extensive remodelling was undertaken here in Byzantine times, more specifically between the seventh and eleventh century: blocked doors, separation walls, re-use fragments and raised floors indicate often drastic modifications.

South of the "Bishop's Palace" and immediately northwest of the chambers in question, the remains of a chapel with an eastern apsidal end were brought to light close to the surface. The building had been erected over the walls and partitions of earlier structures between the western *porticus* and the Palace. The vaulted chambers lining the south portico of the peristyle of the Palace were also subsequent additions. Indeed, behind them, portions of three rooms encroached upon by the construction of the vaulted chambers were uncovered. The easternmost of them included a hypocaust arrangement. Though not directly connected with it (or at least not on the basis of the available evidence), a small bathroom annex also came to light behind the southern apse of the triconch unit of the Palace. Extensive use of water here necessitated both by such bathroom installations and need for water evacuation, is made obvious by complicated systems of drains, channels, and pipes.

In a small room of the southwestern corner of the "Bishop's Palace", a most attractive fresco decoration was discovered

still clinging to the walls. These fragments, probably of Late Roman date, appear to have been plastered over at a later time. The most beautiful and colourful remnant shows a Nike figure standing on a globe; it is masterfully executed, though most flimsily draped.

Of the abundant finds made in this general area, the area of the Odeion-Palace, the most satisfying was undoubtedly the portion of upper face of a male portrait that perfectly completed the head discovered in 1965 over 100 feet away in the western chambers of the Palace. The physiognomy of the man echoes a classical model (executed in the third century) of a so-called Pausanias type. Also noteworthy and charming is a bronze censer(?) in the shape of the head and upper body of a pensive-looking boy.

Continued activities in the imposing Hardrianic Baths of Aphrodisias are gradually allowing a better understanding of the plan and the function of the various units of the colossal building. The central gallery, or *calidarium*, stretching beyond the *praefurnium* and begun in 1965, was essentially cleared and the contiguously parallel, but smaller, hall to its north tackled. The latter is probably a *tepidarium* as its hot-air circulation and hypocausts would suggest. Communicating with this *tepidarium* to the east via a door and facing the main court or *palestra* excavated by Paul Gaudin in 1904-5, a large room was uncovered. A shallow circular pool all marble-revetted at its center, the hypocausts under its marble floors identify this unit as a possible *sudatorium* or *laconicum*. This chamber was connected by a northern door with another large and well-preserved hallway which was also accessible from the front court or *palestra* and could conceivably be an *apodyterium*. In excavations to the north of this *apodyterium* it appears plausible that the *frigidarium* unit of the Baths had been located. If the present evidence is correctly interpreted, the high ledge with large columns at its corners could belong to the

cold water swimming pool (*natatorium*). The state of preservation of all these halls and rooms is generally remarkable. One can presently only conjecture that the southern half of the bathing establishment may repeat the same arrangements as those of the northern part.

As is to be expected by now at Aphrodisias, an abundance of astonishing discoveries of sculpture was recorded in the Baths. The first and one of the most momentous of them perhaps was the bust portion of a male portrait uncovered in the *calidarium*. Upon careful examination, it proved to fit perfectly the Trajanic head found in 1965 quite a distance away in the underground corridor separating in half the *palaestra* of the Baths. From the western doorway of the so-called *apodyterium*, nicely fitted within the débris over the threshold, three colossal heads were extracted along with fragments of limbs and a portion of a fourth head. Two of these heads are masterfully executed, long-haired Aphrodites (or an Apollo?). The pupils, eyebrows, and the hair of one still bear remarkable traces of paint or red underpaint. Several patches of gilt are also noticeable in the hair itself. The third large head is the portrait of a handsome, middle-aged woman, probably a priestess judging from the star-studded diadem that she is wearing.

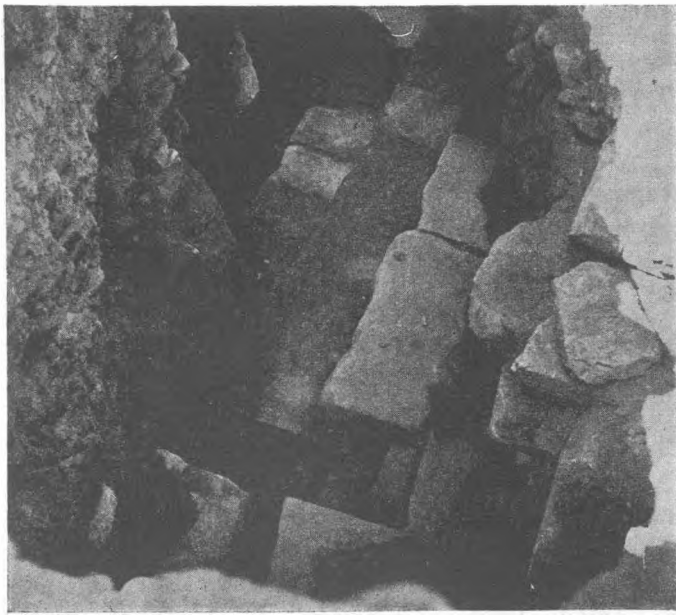
Further sculpture finds of quality and significance were made in the presumed *frigidarium*. They included an entirely new type of *chlamydatus* and a colossal nude male torso. The novelty of the *chlamydatus* resides not only in its posture, right hand raised towards the right, but also in the presence of two small figures flanking the main figure on either side of the oval plinth. Only the feet of these are preserved: those to the right are shown bare, those to the left wear pointed sandals. The torso of the latter, draped in a tunic, was discovered, though a fragment is missing for the upper legs. This figures may conceivably represent a child of the gentleman portrayed as *chlamydatus*.

As for the nude male torso, the twist of its muscles imply a fairly violent action and/or a striding position. First impressions, strongly re-inforced by the presence of the sword belt and fragments on the back, recall the Hellenistic Achilles-Penthesileia group. Comparisons with the Geneva and Rome torsoes and other fragments connected with this group are on the whole favourable. It is hoped that additional fragments pertaining to both statues may turn up in the unexcavated portion of the *frigidarium*.

Finally, investigations in the north-eastern city sector by the so-called Water Channel revealed further details about the Romano-Byzantine quarter nestled here along the fortifications. A street came to light and opening onto it, a large room,

part of an undetermined building, and appropriately labelled "of bronzes", yielded a large number of crushed bronze vessels, jugs, ewers, pitchers, plates, candlesticks, and tripods.

Last, but not least worthy of mention, an enormous bronze coin hoard, accidentally encountered by villagers in the immediate proximity of Aphrodisias, was salvaged by the expedition. The remarkable aspect of this hoard lies in its size and its state of preservation: over 7.000 specimens of bronze issues of several fourth century emperors, including Theodosius, Honorius, Arcadius, and Valentinian have been numbered and should shed interesting light on historical and numismatic problems of the latter part of the fourth century.



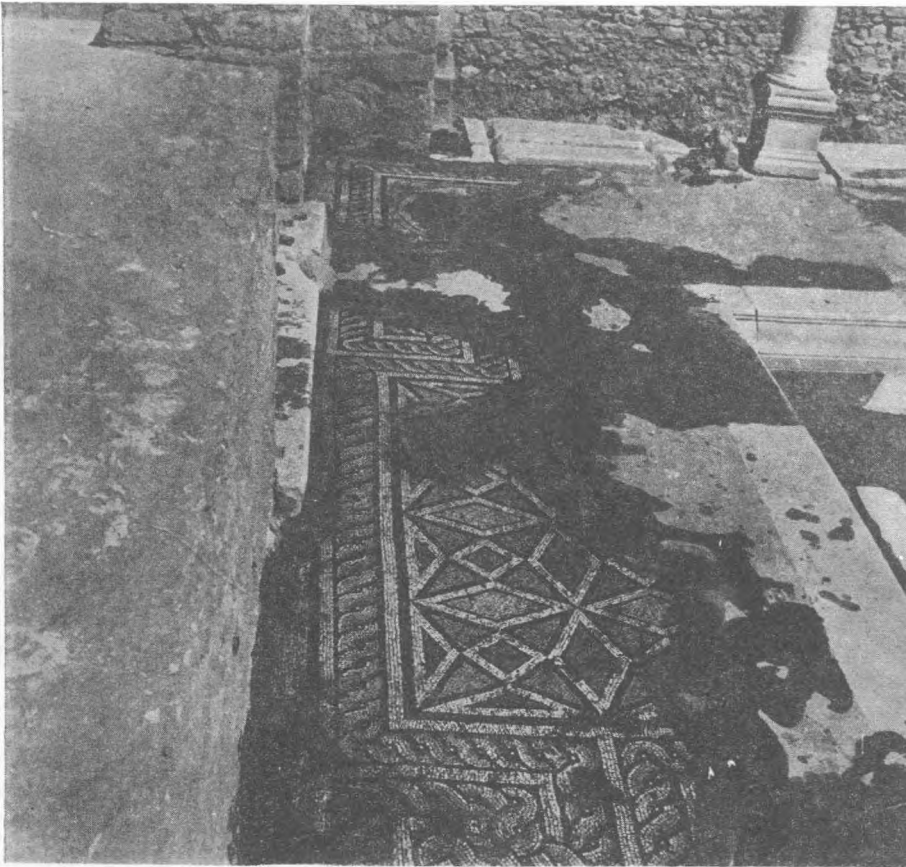
"Acropolis" ima cavea of theatre



North temenos complex general view of mosaic court and peristyle with shallow basin



North temenos complex looking west. Marble paved court and apsidal end



North temenos complex mosaic covrt



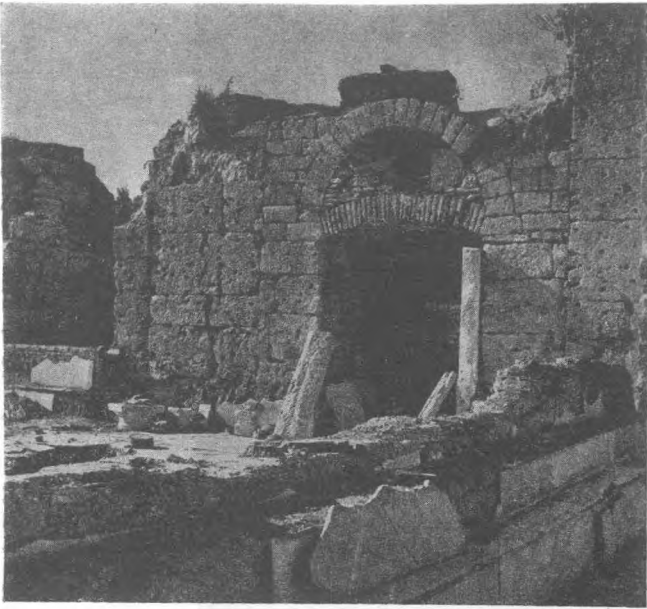
Odeion "Bishop's palace" area with *porticus post scaenam* (upper right)



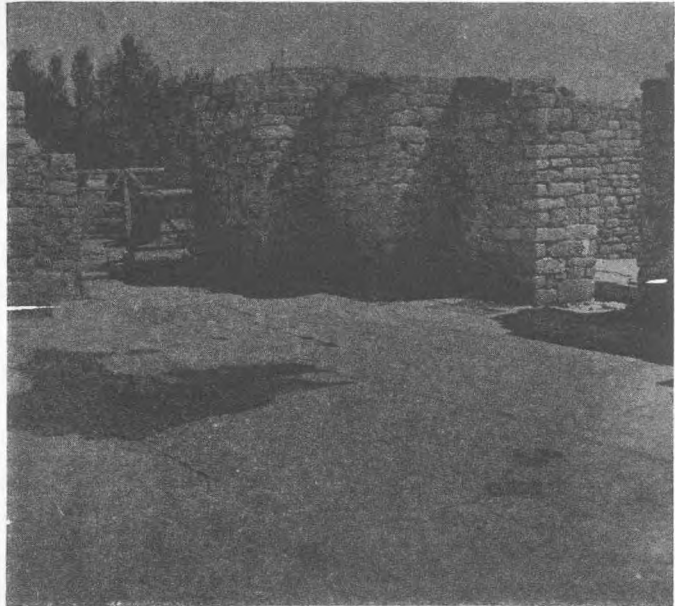
“Bishop’s palacea” fresco fragment
with nike on globe



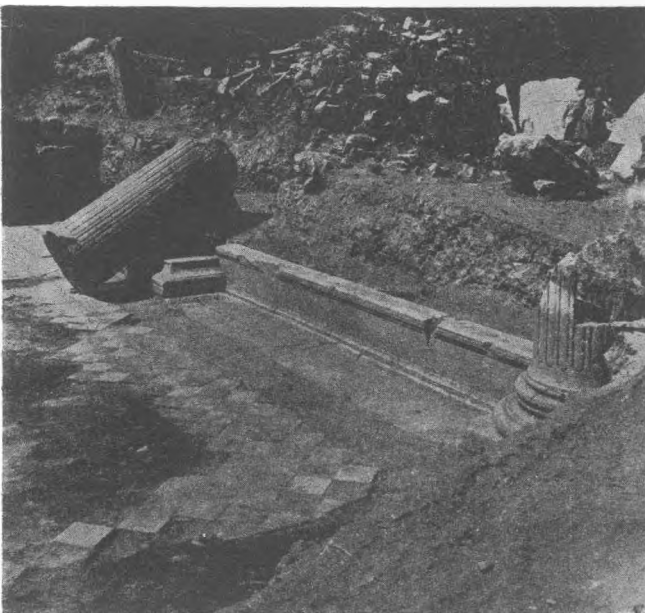
Completed portrait bust (III rd
century) of “Pausanias” type



Baths of hadrian east pool arrange-
ment and exedra of *Caldarium*



Baths of Hadrian Presume
apodyterium



Baths of Hadrian presumed
Frigidarium



Baths of Hadrian
Trajanic (?) bust



Baths of Hadrian. Colossal female head *in situ* as found in apodyterium



Baths of Hadrian colossal head of aphrodite or Apollo laund in presumed *apoyterium in situ*



Baths of Hadrian chlamydatus found in *Frigidarium*