

## 1971 EXCAVATIONS AT APHRODISIAS IN CARIA

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In the course of the 1971 campaign of excavations conducted at Aphrodisias in Caria under the aegis of New York University and once again supported by the National Geographic Society, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Robert O. Lehman Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Irvine Foundation, efforts were concentrated on pursuing investigations initiated during the past four summers. These included: 1) The Theatre (on the east slope of the Acropolis); 2) the Portico of Tiberius of the Agora complex; 3) the Temple of Aphrodite; and 4) the west slope of the Acropolis, in search of additional prehistoric data concerning this mound. Accidental discoveries made by shepherds also led to brief, but fruitful, investigations in the South Necropolis of the city.

The Theatre of Aphrodisias, built against the eastern slope of the Acropolis, witnessed once more intensive and extensive activities. Significant progress was made in its excavation and important finds recorded. Initial operations were focused on the enlargement of storage areas for the numerous architectural fragments found in the excavations. This was made possible by the purchase and subsequent demolition of several ruined houses and shacks to the east of the Theatre, behind the stage building. A more organised relocation of all seat fragments and various architectural elements was completed there.

Simultaneously, excavations were principally undertaken in the southern half of the *skene* building and of the *cavea*. The central *skene* investigations, especially in the south wing of the building, proved to be most productive and interesting. The plan of the stage here turned out to be exactly parallel to that of its northern half excavated last year. Two medium - sized rooms were cleared beyond the central tunnel dividing the building in two: one of these communicated by a door with the tunnel in the same way as its counterpart to the north. The other room had a door opening onto the stage corridor. A third, smaller chamber further south also communicated directly with the stage corridor. Next to its door, a cubicle similar to the north "chapel" arrangement had also been created here in early Byzantine times. Extensive fresco fragments covered its walls. Some of them showed traces of richly garbed figures, perhaps saints like the St. Michael found last year on the walls of the north cubicle. All three rooms of the south wing of the *skene* featured informally carved inscriptions on lintels or doorjambs naming individuals or performers qualified variously as "*Homerites*", "*Nemeikos*", "*Olympionikos*", or "*Asianikos*", who seem to have kept their gear in these dressing (?) -rooms.

Many of the half Doric columns of the *proskenion* screening these rooms and creating a stage corridor between them and the *pulpitum* were found *in situ* or collap-

sed in the debris. It is still uncertain whether this colonnade screen is in its original position or was removed from a lower location by the Antonine transformations epigraphically attested by the evidence uncovered in 1971 on the *conistra* and the *pulpitum*. The possibility of their relocation, however, appears more attractive for several aesthetic, though not fully conclusive, reasons. On the other hand, whether dismantled or not, this portion of the *proskenion* can be now dated with assurance. Indeed, all the inscribed architrave blocks supported by the half columns are now accounted for. They recorded the gift "to Aphrodite and the Demos, of the *logeion*, the *proskenion* with all their decorations by G. Julius Zoilos, ten times consecutively *stephanephoros*". Zoilos, already known through the handsome honourific frieze found near the northeastern section of the city - wall, is described as a "freedman of the son of the divine Julius (Caesar)". The implications of this formula are most interesting and thought - provoking. Zoilos was a generous and influential Aphrodisian who played a major role in managing the relations between Aphrodisias and Octavian ca. 39 B.C. and in the achievement of the city's privileges and rights, as indicated by one of the documents inscribed on the north *parodos* "Archive Wall". Another series of blocks partly recovered this year carries a text identical to the *proskenion* architrave. The original position of this inscription on the *scaenae frons*, however, remains uncertain.

In view of this evidence, the building of the stage must be dated sometime after 39 B. C., but before 27 B.C. The year may be eventually narrowed down following full evaluation of titles and terminology. The importance of this inscription cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Its relevance to the history of the Aphrodisias theatre and the chronology of several decorative elements of the stage, especially the *proskenion*, is paramount. A large amount of material was indeed found trapped in the

backstage corridor and on the stage itself.

The most unusual among them were several extraordinarily intricate corner *acrotéria* carved faultlessly out of one marble block. Another impressive decoration was an over - life - size Nike. Although headless and partially fragmentary, the figure, baroquely effective, showed the goddess carrying a trophy against her right shoulder, her right foot forward in a dancing motion. A much more fragmentary torso, obviously her pendant or vis-a-vis, was found in 1970 at a spot in the north wing of the *skene* parallel to the location of the present find. Other early decorative elements included several slabs belonging to a frieze adorned with rosettes and theatre masks.

A number of other sculpture pertaining to later additions to the stage building was recorded. The most noteworthy items included an extremely wellpreserved bust of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias in high relief bearing the dedication of a Theodoros; the body of the head of Demos found in 1970; an impressive full portrait of a notable Aphrodisian of Constantinian date; a small running Nike; the head of an Apollo and several portrait heads as well as fragments belonging to sculpture found the previous year. The latter featured several limbs of the pugilist statues found in 1967 and 1970, and above all, the missing portion of the face of a portrait of Domitian. The inscribed base, the body and head part of this figure were discovered in 1967 on the northern part of the stage. Precious new evidence can now be added to the slim dossier of the iconography of the Flavian prince.

The Byzantine history of the theatre continued to be provided with interesting testimonia. Numerous houses built occasionally with seat fragments and nested against the upper tiers were erected over the partly filled *cavea* in the eleventh to thirteenth century when the Acropolis was the ultimate stronghold against Turcoman

raiders. Much "sgraffiato" ware was extracted from their excavation and restored. Prior to the development of this "theatre quarter", the stage building had collapsed, possibly as a result of an earthquake that may have occurred in the sixth or seventh century. The whole area, especially the hollow, and slope of the *cavea* and orchestra seems to have been used as a garbage dump. Much mixed material, including a great amount of wood, timber, and implements survived in the wet, swampy soil trapped here. Three wooden combs were recovered in this context.

Some new evidence will also prove to be useful in interpreting and understanding activities in the theatre during the early Byzantine period. In addition to the cubicles or chapels at either extremity of the stage corridor, the intercolumniations of the *proskenion* were blocked and their exterior covered with frescoes. Originally, painted panels were probably inserted here. In several instances, the preserved early Byzantine fresco fragments showed the lower limbs of running and fighting (?) figures above the decorative and marble veneer imitation. Numerous graffiti naming the Blue or Green factions were also discovered on many seats and in some of the backchambers. The precise implications and interpretation of these inscriptions for understanding the nature of activities in the theatre in early Christian times are most significant.

Another partly Byzantine arrangement was uncovered in the lowest tiers of the central *cuneus*. A stepped platform, or *loggia*, was built here over an earlier Roman one. A stairway cut into the *conistra* wall at its axis and branched off into two flights of steps on either side, reaching the level of the row behind the *proedria*. This platform was probably used by certain officials presiding at performances or by important visitors. A roughly carved marble stool once probably used in this connection was found fallen in front of the platform.

The layout of the theatre behind the stage building remains uncertain. A solid wall built out of many architectural fragments in early Byzantine times blocked the entire back of the stage building. Preliminary soundings provided little specific evidence, but a street and a colonnaded piazza must have existed here. Several sculptured fragments were nevertheless recovered, including a number of blocks, doorjambs or lintels (?) decorated with "peopled scrolls."

The epigraphical harvest of the theatre operations was again noteworthy. Featured among the new items were several texts dealing with honours paid to local benefactors and gymnasiarchs, including Atalos Adrastus, Tib. Cl. Diogenes, Tib. Cl. Zelos, by the Boulé, Demos, Gerousia, and Neoi. A lintel block, belonging to the door of the vaulted room in the north *parodos*, bearing the inscribed word "Molossos" in Augustan or Julio - Claudian lettering, probably referred to Aristokles Molossos, one of the builders (along with Zoilos) of the theatre. It may even imply the existence here of a shrine to the Molossos family. A new block from the *pulpitum* inscription stated that the donor here, Tib. Cl. Zelos, was high priest for life of Aphrodite. Several statue bases to notable athletes, two sculptors' signatures, two bases for statues of Hygeia and Agathos Daimon were also recovered.

Practical as well as aesthetic considerations led to the initiation of a discreet restoration programme in the theatre. This was started late in the season with the assistance of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of Turkey. All of the half Doric columns of the *proskenion* were restored. Some were even topped by their attractive capitals. Simultaneously, damages suffered by the *cavea* during the Byzantine period were also tackled.

Clearance of the south colonnade of the Portico of Tiberius, part of the large Agora complex of Aphrodisias, was con-

tinued for ca. 18 m. eastward. Seven column bases were brought to light and, within the portico, three intercommunicating shops, as well as an elaborate drainage system, were discovered next to the so-called "temple" found in 1970. Judging from one evidence, this sector was rebuilt in the fifth or sixth century. An inscription naming a Philip, son of Herodian, records this restoration. Another epigraphic document found nearby implies the existence of a shrine of the Imperial cult in this area. This cannot be, however, the so-called "temple" since the form of the letters of the inscription is too undistinguished for a building of this size. Furthermore, extensive investigations near or in this "temple" clearly demonstrated that this structure featured a basilica plan. Its east and west aisles were furthermore decorated with geometric mosaic pavements. Column fragments protruding from unexcavated ground to the south suggest a basilica of size, perhaps over 100 m. in length.

There can now be little doubt that the panels inscribed with the Edict of Prices and Devaluation of Diocletian were displayed in front of the basilica. At least twenty new fragments of the *de pretiis* were recovered again last summer. They included parts of sections on shoes, pottery, glass, millstone, chalk, charcoal, woven goods, freight rates, and probably slaves.

Several fragments of the blue - greyish marble running horse and its white marble rider were found in the western part of the basilica, not far from the area where the major pieces were discovered in 1970. A series of columns and column drums were re-erected here in the South and west porticoes in the restoration programme jointly undertaken with the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums.

Preliminary re - examination of the vast amount of inscriptions found by our French and Italian predecessors in the west portico and the adjacent *palestra* of the Baths of Hadrian was initiated by the ex-

pedition epigraphers, Misses Joyce Reynolds and Charlotte Wrinch. Indeed, despite publication by Th. Reinach and G. Jacopi of some of this material, much collecting and new readings and new readings are mandatory. A number of texts, found in the Baths in 1905, for instance, was apparently never published. Among several documents, statue bases pertaining to Theodosius and his family require mention.

Work in the Temple of Aphrodite concentrated initially on a preliminary study and drawing of all architectural elements of the building and its dependencies. However, a limited investigation in the *pronaos* was subsequently undertaken and produced interesting results. The small sondage was dug under the rough tessera mosaic pavement found (and eventually removed) in 1965 near the *pronaos* foundations. The mosaic, which had been damaged by the building of these foundations in the late Hellenistic period, was originally dated to the third century B.C. The discovery of at least four coins of Antiochus II (261-264 B.C.) in the soil immediately below the pavement bedding confirmed this year the previous hypothesis. Further below, part of an isolated foundation fragment was encountered and subsequently, a substantial foundation running approximately north - south was hit. Ceramic finds near these remains suggested a late archaic date (ca. sixth century B.C.). The evidence is, however, too fragmentary to connect these foundations to an early shrine of Aphrodite.

Additional information of importance for the construction of the late Hellenistic temple was also recorded. In re-examining a decorated lintel in the atrium of the basilica - temple complex in proper light, an erased inscription was identified by Miss Reynolds. The name of Zoilos, referred to as *soter* and *euergetes* was recognisable. This evidence is to be probably connected with the asylum rights of the temple

which Zoilos was successful in obtaining according to other epigraphical sources.

Objectives in continuing excavations on the west slope of the Acropolis, the prehistoric mound of Aphrodisias, were dictated by the need for and consolidation of evidence for later Bronze Age occupation. Only inconclusive and fragmentary data had been recorded in trenches dug here previously, which were located too far down the hill slope, hence hampered by the easy erosion of all later levels. Two new trenches were, therefore, staked above, i. e., east of trenches 5 and 7. A complicated series of terracing and habitation of the Ottoman and Byzantine periods was recognised. The establishment of an accurate sequence of occupation was made difficult by the practice of each phase to use freely the remains of preceding settlements. Consequently, a considerable mixture of all historic and prehistoric material had resulted. Nevertheless, a substantial north-south wall built against the upper slope, numerous foundations, hearths, and plaster or packed floors were tentatively assigned from Byzantine to archaic occupations. Iron and Late - Middle Bronze Age levels were reached in at least two areas of the trenches and included mud brick foundations and relevant second millennium B.C. material. Some of the pottery was characterised by a gold or silver, metallic wash, or featured red - brown to black painted linear decorations. These features are reminiscent of similar material unearthed at Beycesultan in the upper Maeander valley by the British Institute excavations in the mid and late 1950's. A large amount of small finds was also associated with these levels. They included the ubiquitous spindle whorls, stone implements, pierced ceramic disks and crescents. All point to a Middle to Late Bronze Age, thus further enhancing the sequence of Bronze Age settlements in Aphrodisias as well as in other Anatolian districts.

An accidental find made by a village boy in July led to an investigation in a

field about 2 kms. south of the city wall. Clearance of two bramble - covered stone piles led to the discovery of two handsome, though mutilated, sarcophagi. Unfortunately, although the sarcophagi were more or less *in situ*, few traces of the sub-or superstructures of the tombs themselves remained. The better preserved sarcophagus belonged to the garland group and was decorated on three faces. However, instead of Erotes, two *himation* - draped youths supported the junctions of the swags in the front panel. Above them, three medallion portraits represented the deceased. The central portrait was that of a woman and was flanked by a broken male bust to the left, presumably her husband, and a younger man's to the right possibly her eldest son. The garland - supporting young men whose faces do not lack individuality may represent two other sons. The two short sides of the sarcophagus box were carved with the usual Medusa - head medallions and swag - holding Nike figures at the corners. An explanatory or dedicatory inscription on the upper right front panel was unfortunately erased by robbers or subsequent users. However, the hairdo of the woman clearly suggests a third century date.

All four sides of the second, more unusual sarcophagus, were carved. At the corners, Erotes in various poses and with diverse attributes symbolised the four seasons. The better preserved long side featured a scene with four figures: a semi-draped man seated to the right on an elaborate arm - chair, holding a scroll in his left hand and gesturing with his right towards a group of the women to the centre and left of the panel. One of the women is holding out a fat baby to the other who grasps some symbolic objects. A specific interpretation of this group remains to be elaborated though some suggestions come to mind. On the other long side, however, even the upper bodies of the four figures occupying it were broken by tomb - robbers, Herakles leaning on his club is easily identifiable in the centre. He is flan-

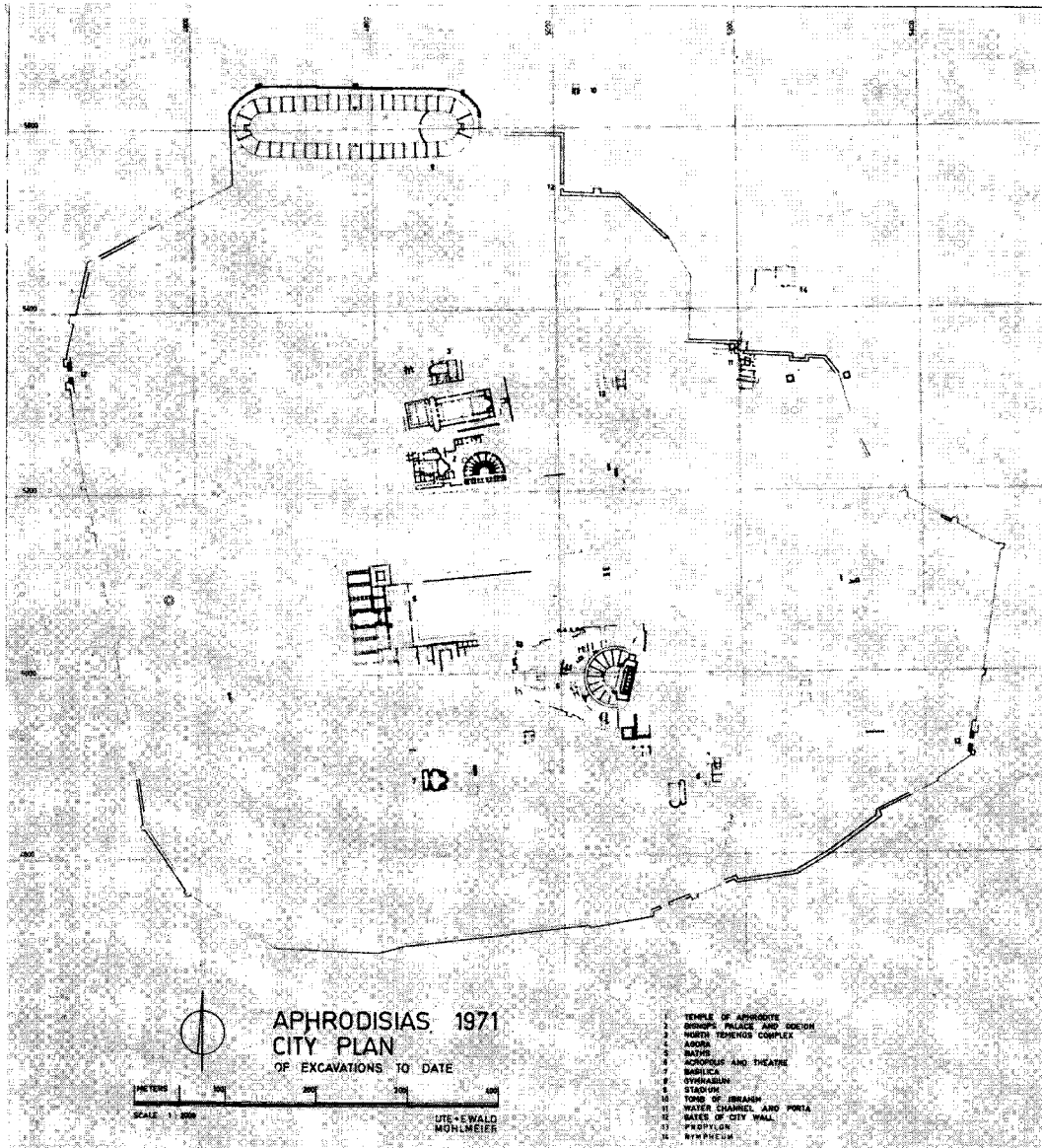
ked by a female figure to the left, and a male and female figure to the right. The short ends of the sarcophagus are decorated with sacrifice rituals performed by a woman and a man, probably the deceased couple, with the assistance of attendants.

The existence of a necropolis to the south of the city came as no surprise. However, preliminary investigations seem to indicate that the extent of this southern necropolis was not as large as that of the cemetery areas to the west and north of the city.

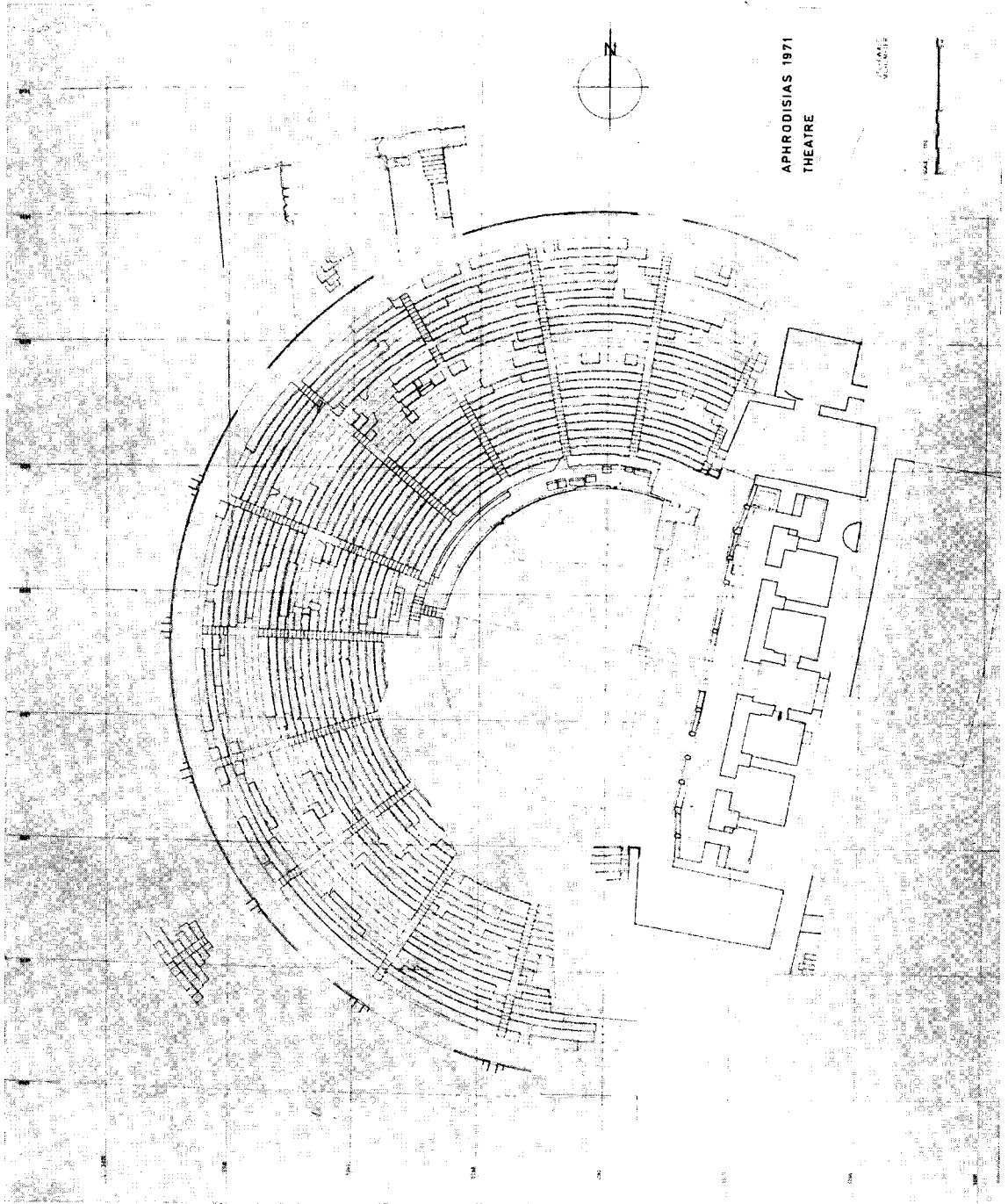
Another chance discovery made by a farmer in the early spring proved to be a

fine head of Epicurus, sensitively rendered and modelled.

A preliminary study of the Byzantine coins found during the excavations over the last ten years was initiated in September by Mr. Michael Hendy. According to this study, the overall pattern of Byzantine coin occurrence at Aphrodisias reflects evidence from elsewhere, especially Sardis, and naturally economic and historical developments. While the fifth and sixth centuries are well represented, the seventh to ninth are apparently not. Gradually increasing numbers of coins pertain thereafter to the tenth and eleventh centuries.



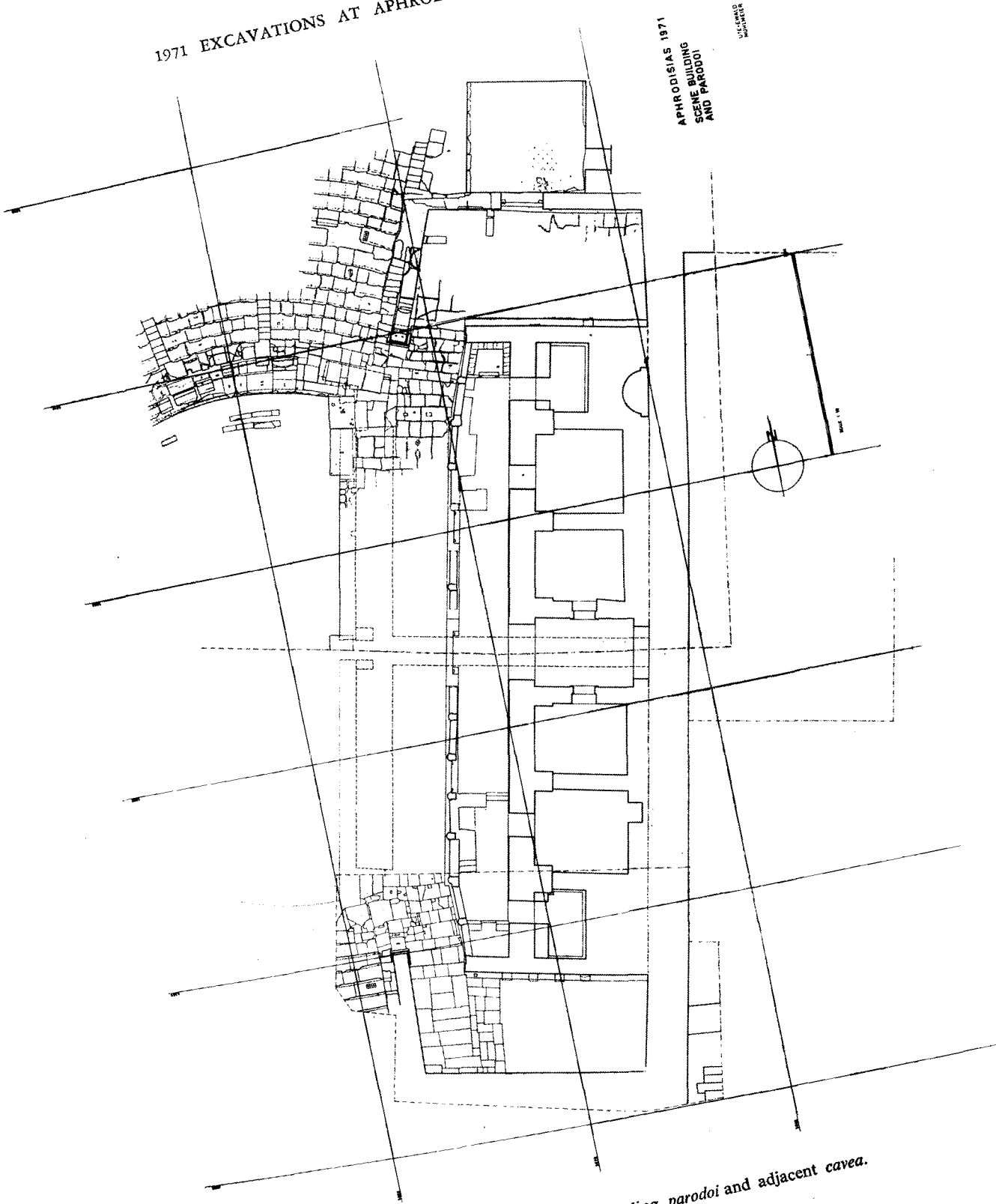
1 Aphrodisias. General City Plan. 1971.



2 Theatre. General Plan. 1971.



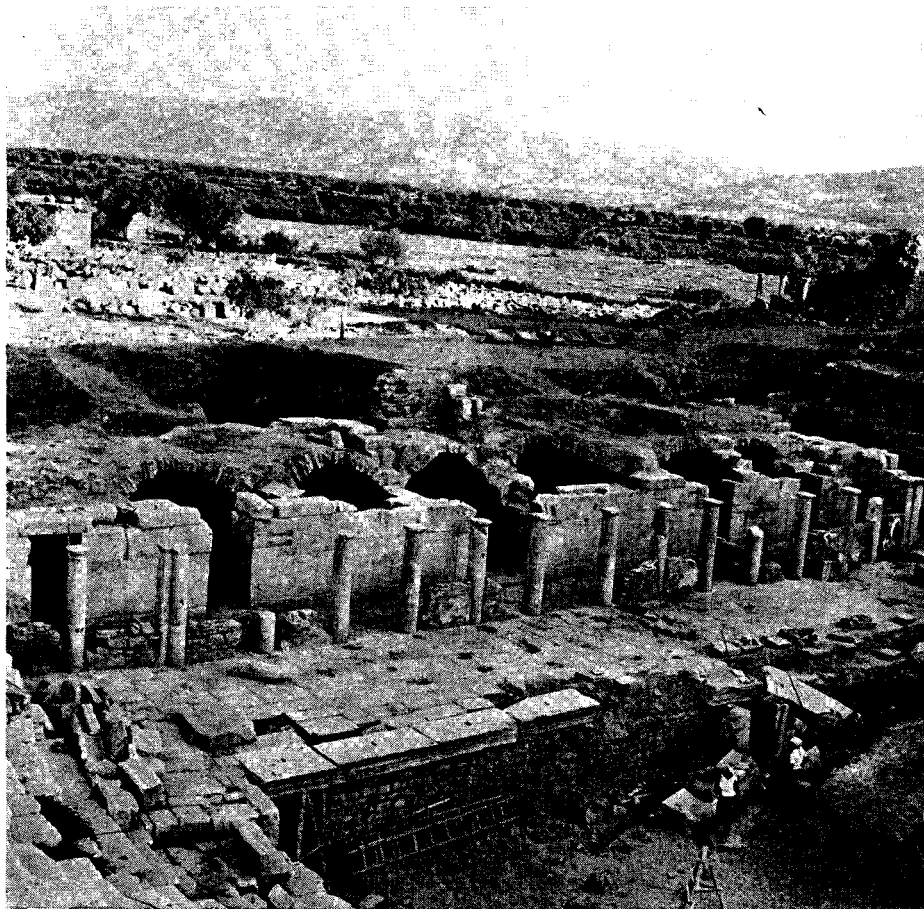
1971 EXCAVATIONS AT APHRODISIAS IN CARIA



APHRODISIAS 1971  
SCENE BUILDING  
AND PARODOI

PLAN  
SCALE 1:100

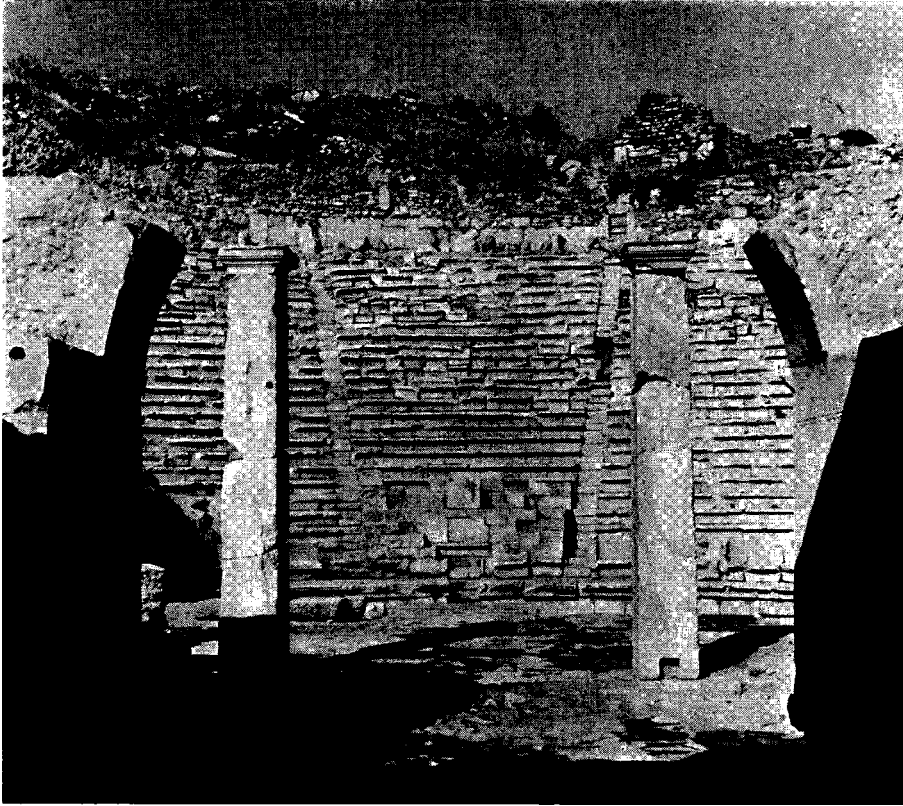
3 Theatre. Plan of the stage building, parodoi and adjacent cavea.



4 Theatre. View of the stage building.



5 Theatre. Central vaulted tunnel of the stage building with door (cf. lintel inscription) communicating with side chamber,



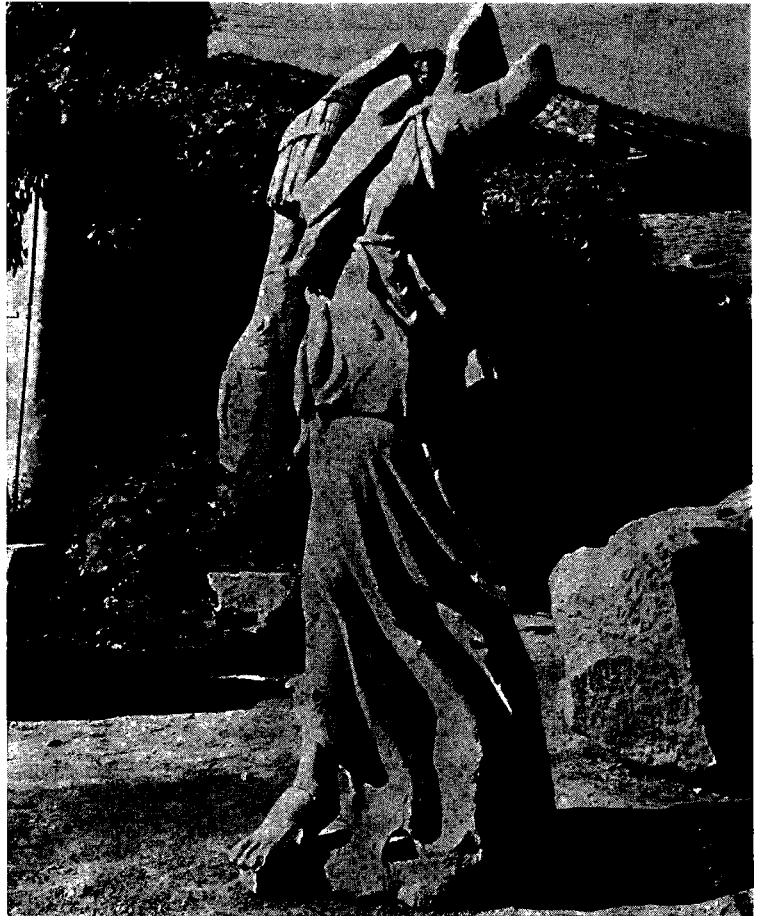
6 Theatre. View of *cavea* from central vaulted tunnel of stage. Central *cuneus* visible with platform, between the proskenia columns.



7 Theatre. Architrave block with inscription fragment stating dedication by Zoilos.



8 Theatre. Corner *acroterion* from stage building.



9 Theatre. Overslifesize Nike carrying trophy (From stage).



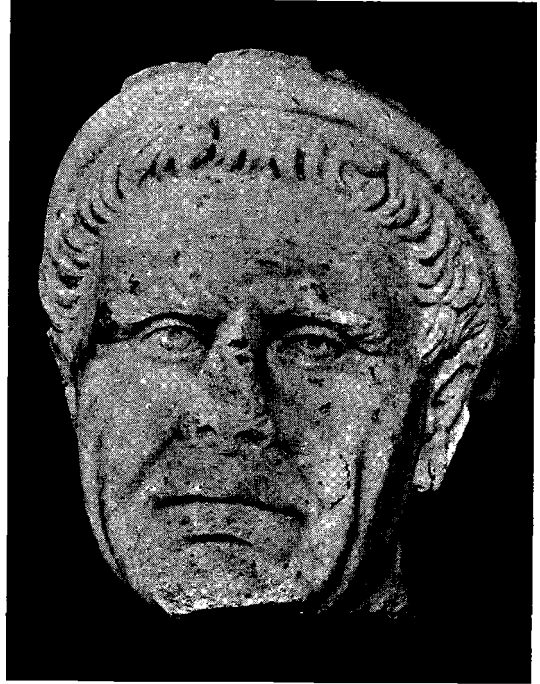
10 Theatre. Frieze fragment with theatre masks (From stage).



11 Theatre Relief bust of Aphrodite dedicated by Theodoros.



12 Theatre. Head of Demos, found in 1970, adjusted with recently found body.



13 Theatre. Portrait head of a priest (fourth century).



14 Theatre. Small running Nike, in foreground, with "Pudicitia" found in 1970, in background.

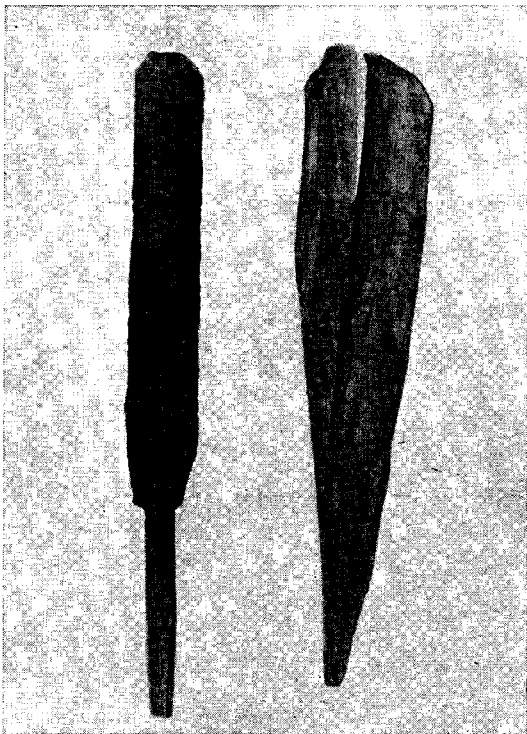




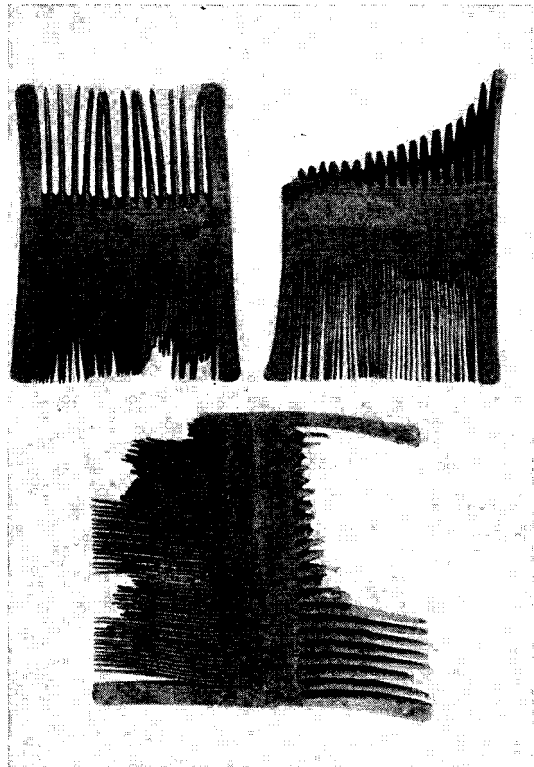
15 Theatre. Head of Apollo.



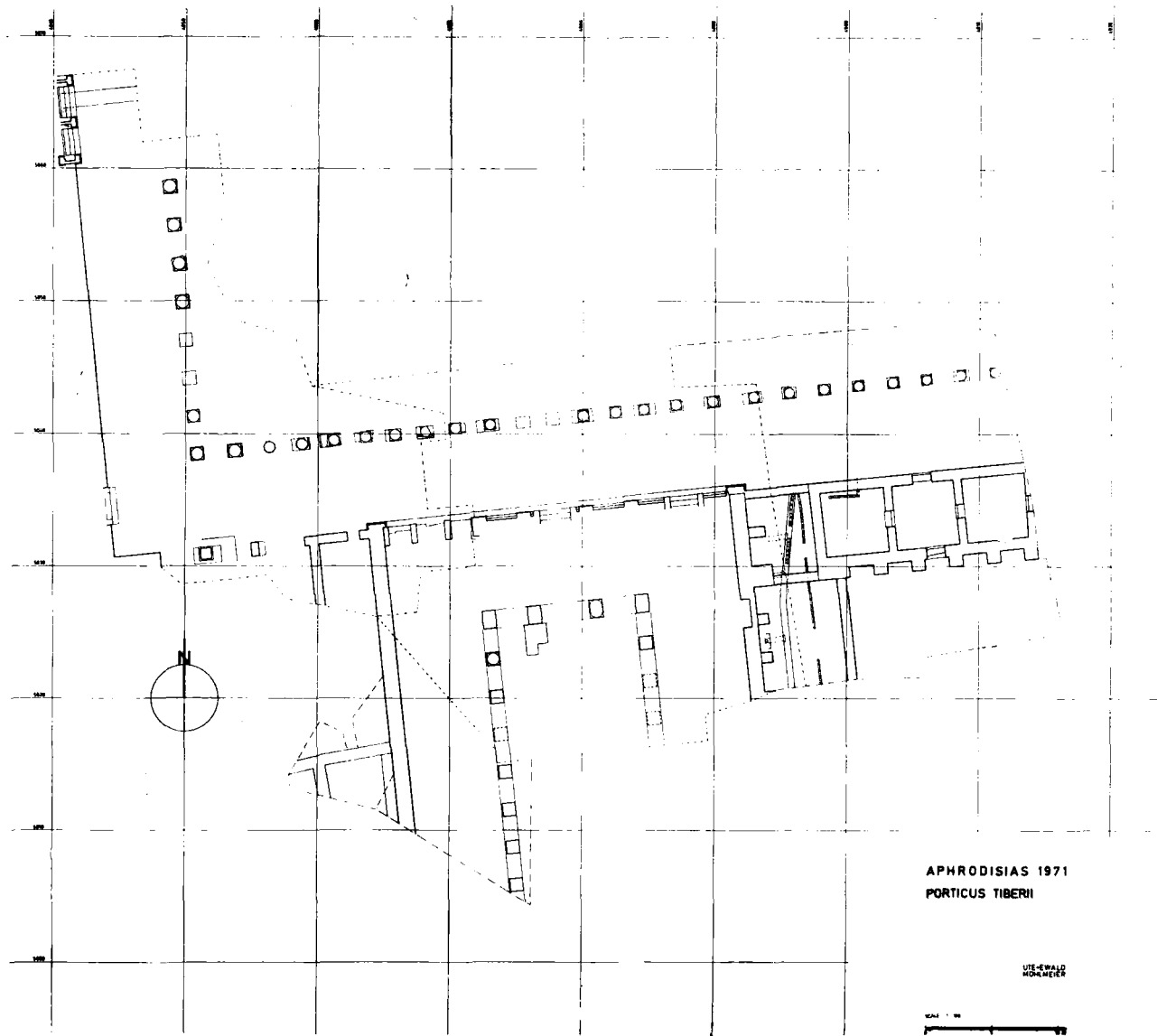
16 Theatre. Female portrait head (fourth century).



17 Theatre. Wooden implements, found in wet soil on top of orchestra area.

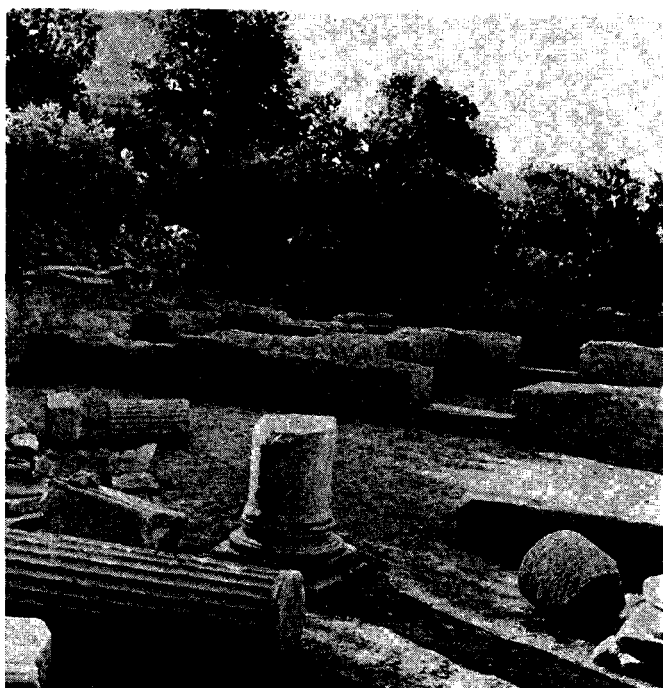


18 Theatre. Three wooden combs.

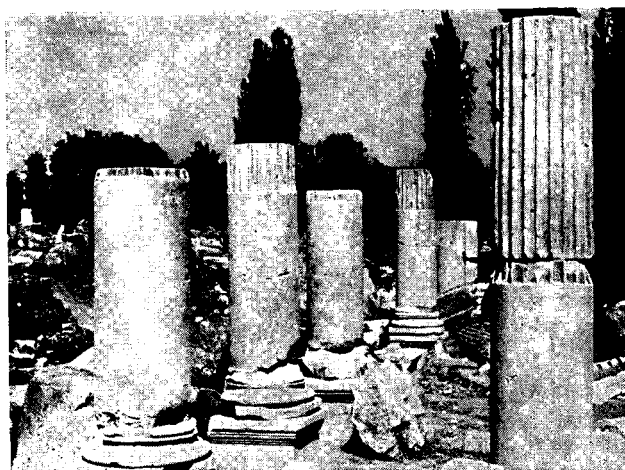


19 Portico of Tiberius. General plan of southwestern corner, with basilica.





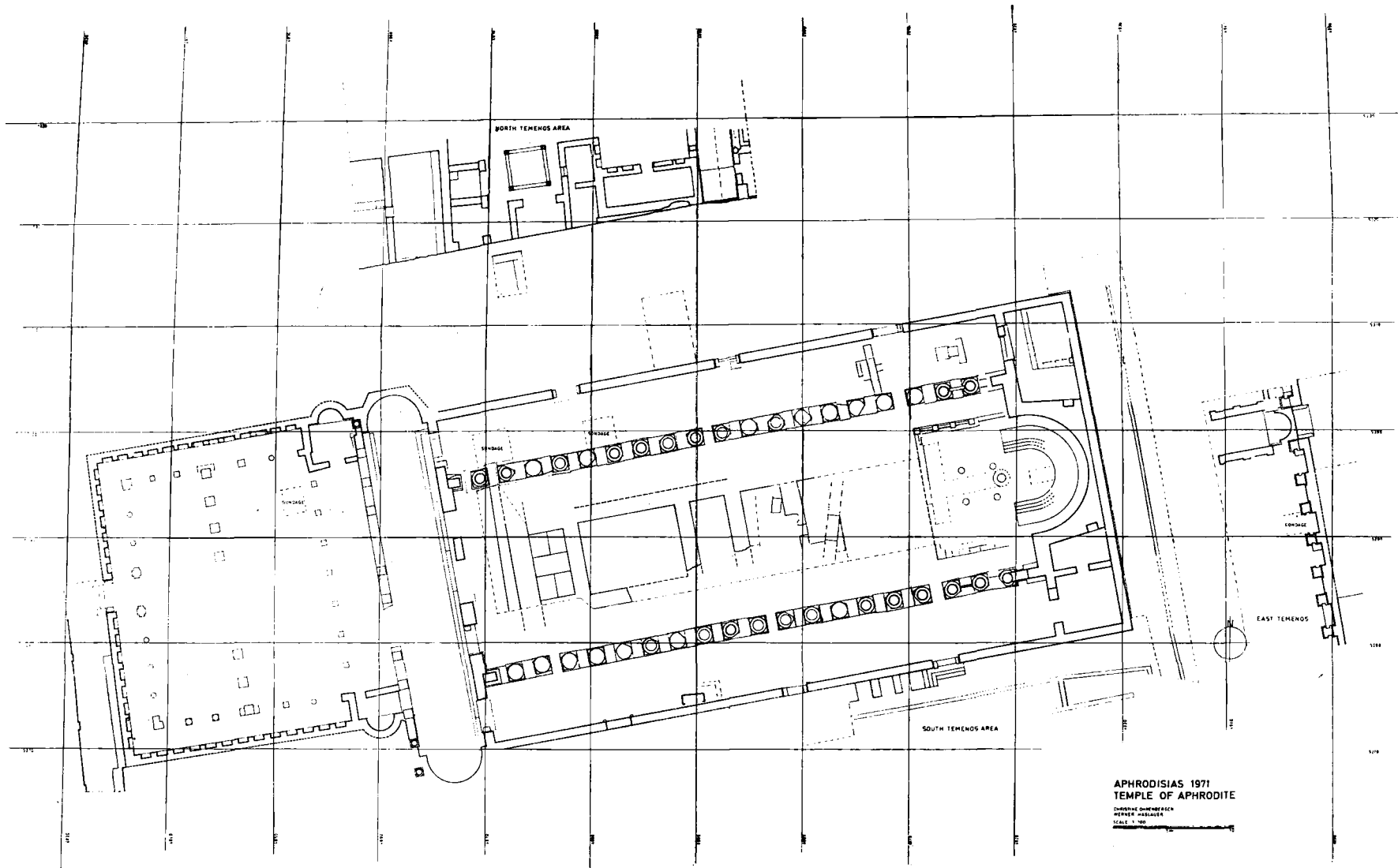
20 Portico of Tiberius. Colonnade with shop entrance rebuilt in Byzantine times.



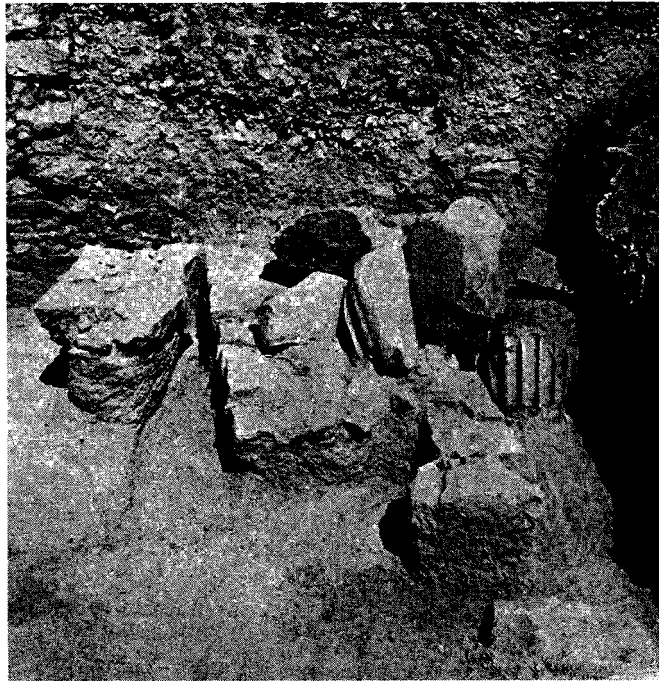
21 Portico of Tiberius Re-erected column drums of the southwestern corner of portico.



22 Portico of Tiberius. General view of restored area. Baths of Hadrian in background to the left.



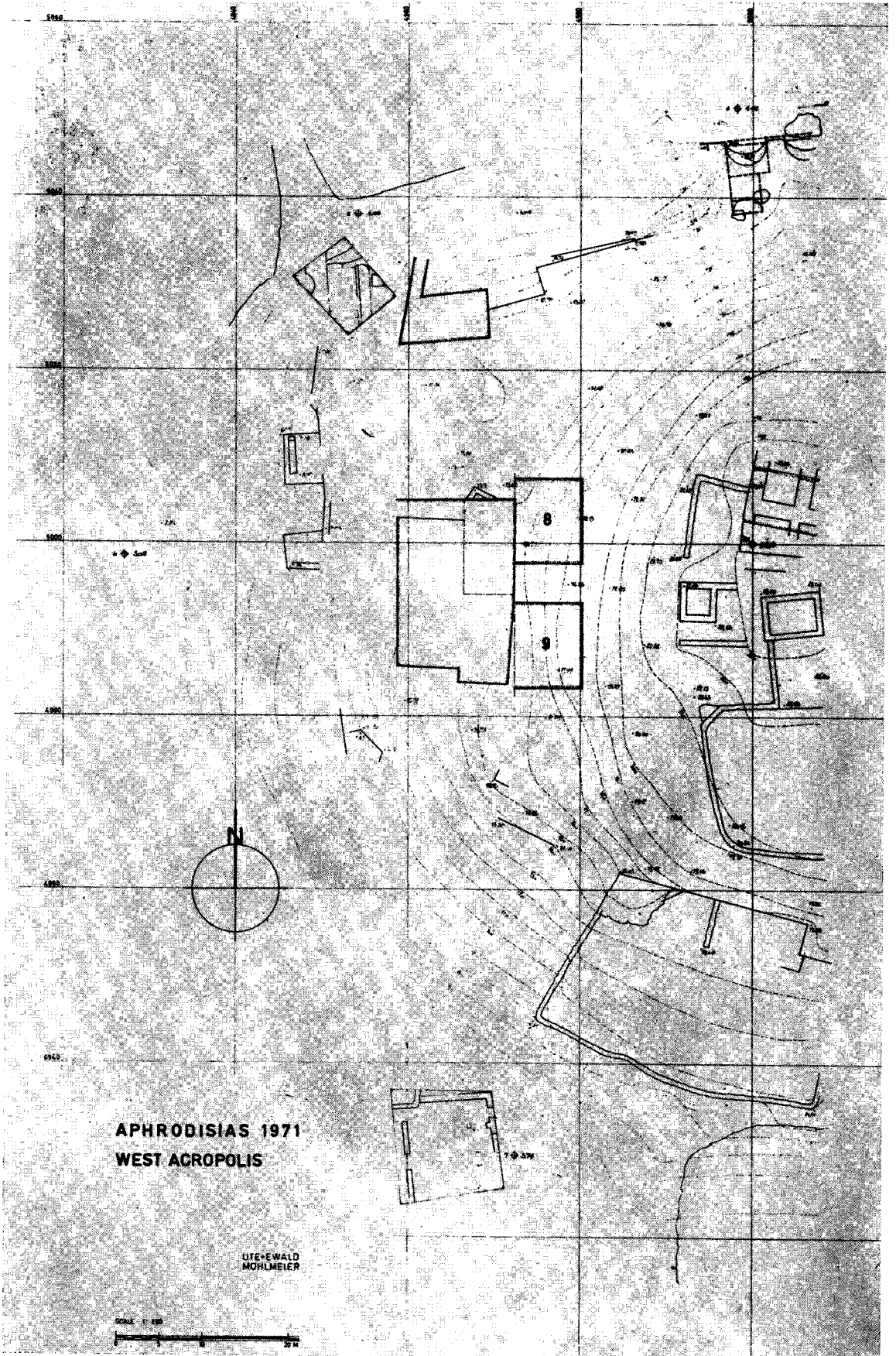
23. Temple of Aphrodite. General plan. 1971.



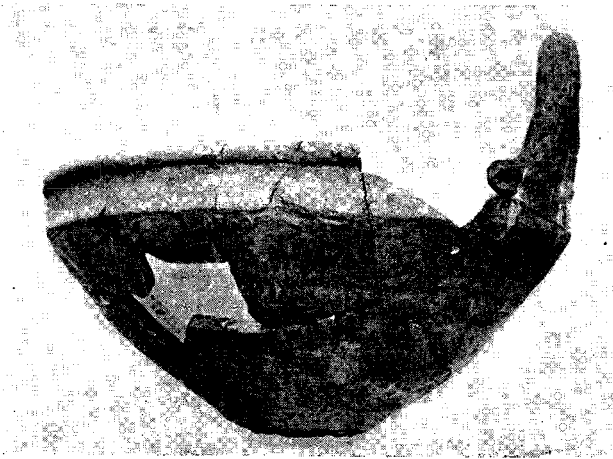
24 Temple of Aphrodite. Foundations in *pronaos* trench, probably archaic.



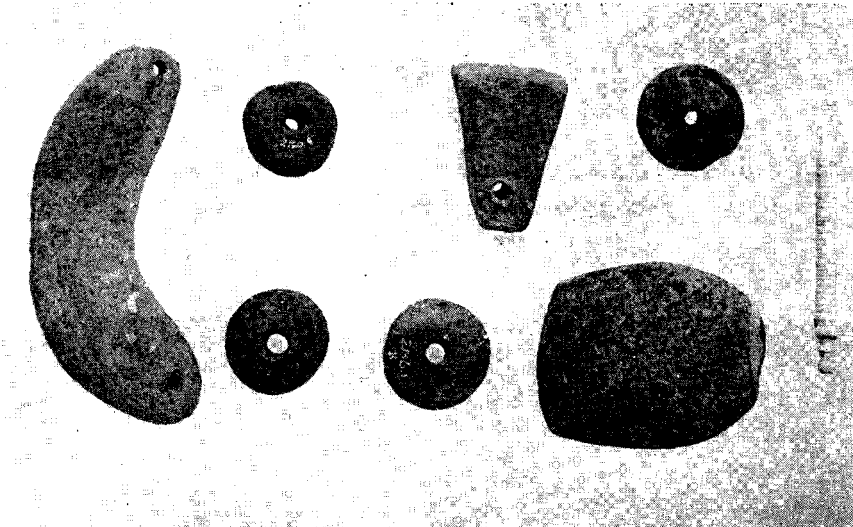
25 Temple of Aphrodite. Archaic sherd samples from *pronaos* trench.



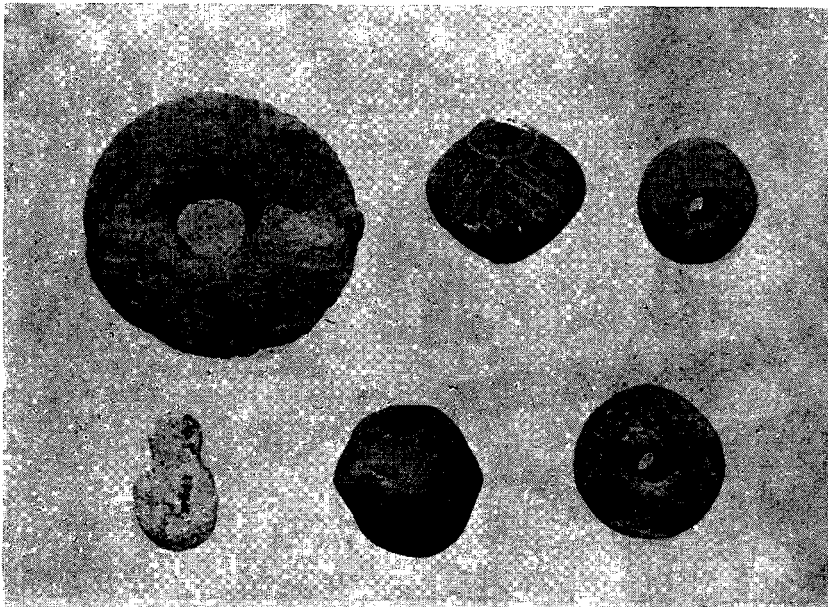
26 West Acropolis. Location of Trenches 8 and 9. 1971.



27 West Acropolis. Bronze Age vessel with metallic wash.

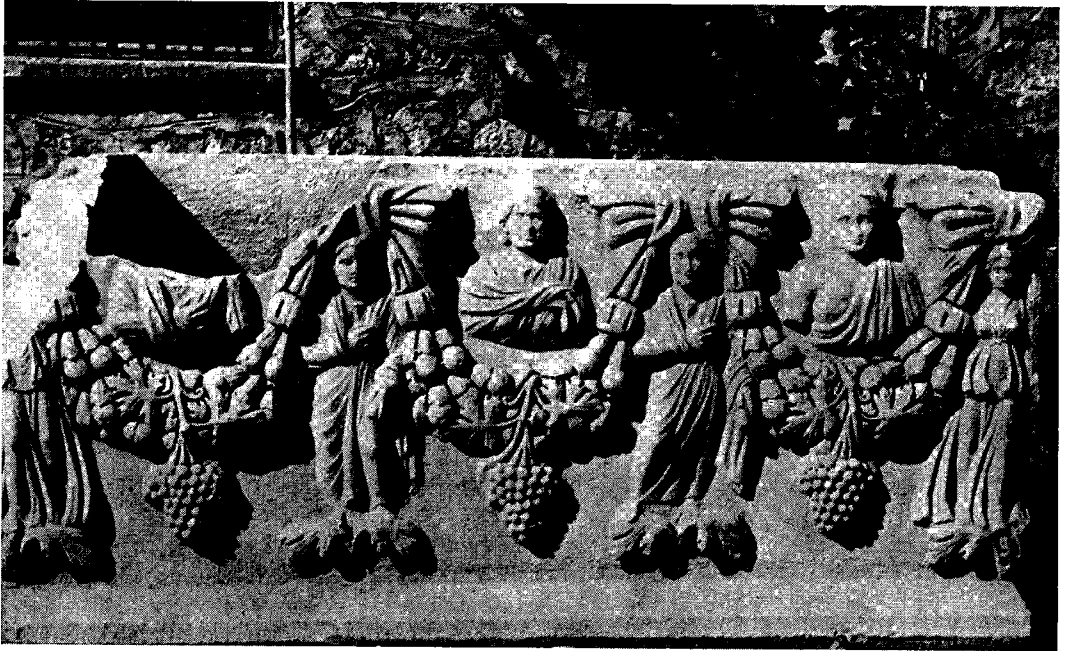


28 West Acropolis. Spindle whorls and ceramic crescents and loom - weights.



29 West Acropolis. Spindle whorls, pierced ceramic disks and idol.

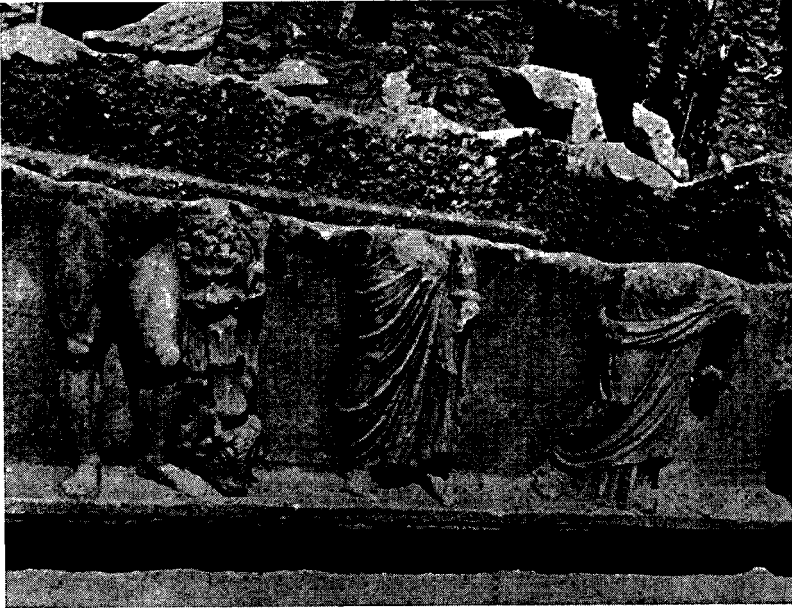




30 South Necropolis. Garland - type sarcophagus.



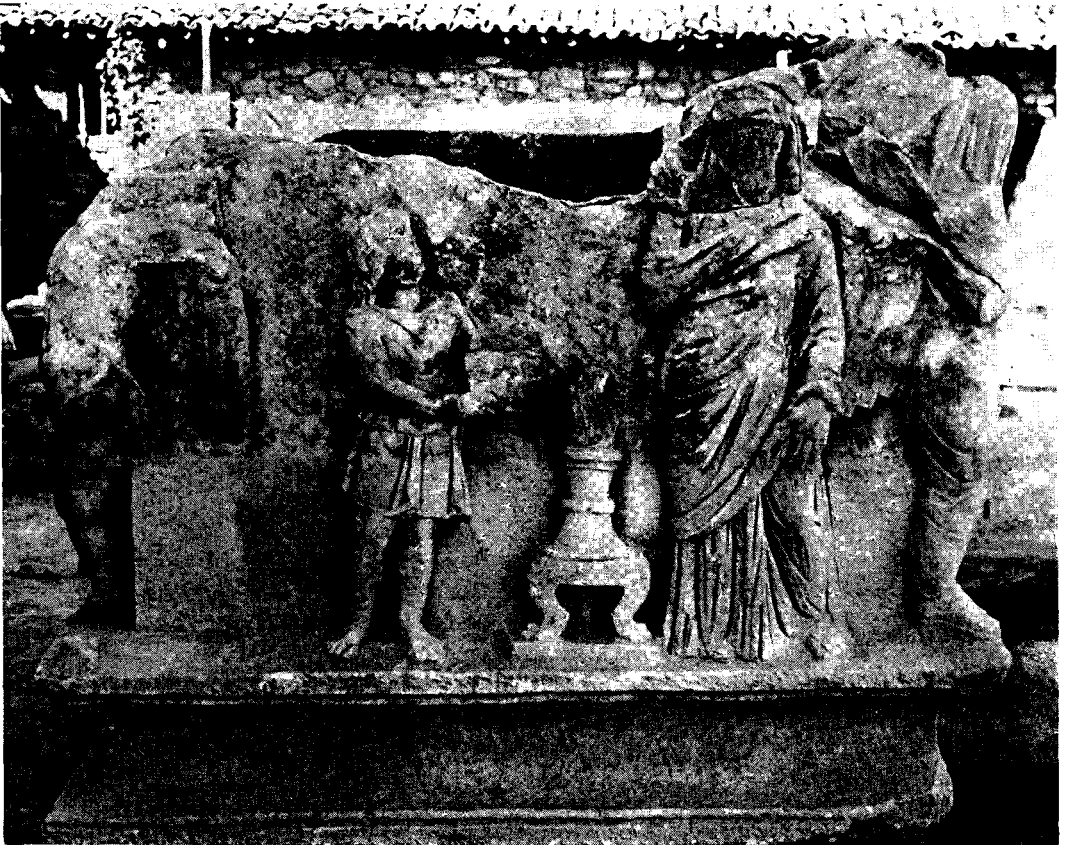
31 South Necropolis. Second sarcophagus, with Herakles figure in centre of panel.



32 South Necropolis. Second sarcophagus, with Herakles (detail).



33 South Necropolis. Second sarcophagus. Seated "philosopher" figure in centre of other panel.



34 South Necropolis. Second sarcophagus. Sacrificial scene at short end.



35 South Necropolis. Second sarcophagus. Sacrificial scene at other short end.





36 Stray Find. Portrait head of Epicurus.