

THE 1976 CAMPAIGN AT APHRODISIAS IN CARIA

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The 1976 campaign at Aphrodisias in Caria, once again generously supported by the National Geographic Society, included a programme of continued excavations in several areas already under investigation in previous years (Fig. 1) as well as of study and organisation of excavated material and preparation of the new museum exhibitions.

Explorations along the South Fortification Wall of the city, initiated in 1975, were extended (Fig. 2). Two points particularly were excavated and provided new evidence and discoveries. Several trenches were dug on the inner side of the city wall, east of an area which was briefly explored, last year. The extensive inward collapse of the fortification was again apparent here, as well as the incorporation of sculptural, epigraphical and architectural blocks into the wall and structures built against it. A gladiatorial stele (Fig. 3), a fine frieze block featuring a sensitively carved youthful male head in a Phrygian-type cap and flanked by floral patterns or rosettes (the fragment had been inserted as a step for a stair leading to the top of the ramparts), and the body of a young boy clutching a bird (a cockrel?) against his chest were among the numerous items recovered (Fig. 4 and 5).

Below the collapse of the wall, the remains of structures built or nestled against the fortifications were traced (Fig. 6). Though their exact character remains uncertain, it is probable that they formed part of the domestic quarters of a private residence of some size. Two such utility rooms were identified. One may have served as a kitchen or a pantry. Communicating with these rooms to the north, part of a more elaborate and larger hall was unearthed. Its floor consisted of a handsome mosaic pavement (Fig. 7) featuring the usual, but most satisfactorily arranged, series of geometric motifs and patterns (Fig. 8). Two reserved polygonal areas, however, had figurative scenes. Unfortunately only one of these proved to be well-preserved. The other, including parts of the first, betrayed repairs featuring cruder, larger tesserae. The precise nature of the scene portrayed in the well-preserved polygon remains uncertain because of damage in crucial areas. It may represent a market scene. A well-dressed man ac-

accompanied by a small boy is shown stretching his right hand towards a now obliterated, but surely also male, figure. On a table behind him, a fish can be seen (Figs. 9 and 10).

Over 40 m. west of this house complex, a sounding was undertaken in a gap breaking the south stretch of the wall, about 30 m. east of the present dirt road cutting through the fortification which was probably the location of the south gate of the circuit. The main objectives here were the investigation of the construction of the wall and/or its chronology as well as the location of the original ground level. No specific evidence of an earlier building phase or even subsequent repairs was uncovered. The collapse of the wall at this point was probably precipitated by earthquakes, the effects of which appear to have been particularly destructive because of weaknesses in the construction. Among numerous items recorded in this sondage, large chunks of the box of a handsome garland sarcophagus of a type rather uncommon so far at Aphrodisias or even elsewhere in Anatolia require mention. The unusual features of this sarcophagus included altar-like pilasters instead of the usual Nike and Eros figures at the corners and the junction of the swinging garlands, and elaborate stylized floral motifs or rosettes above the garlands in lieu of satyr, Medusa heads, masks or small relief scenes. One must tentatively date this variant to the first half of the second century and include it among the early specimens of garland sarcophagi (Fig. 11).

The environs of the theatre, more specifically the Theatre Baths (formerly the Aula termale complex) and the «piazza» extending behind the theatre stage building were again the scenes of major excavations (Fig. 12). The eastern end of the «piazza» was entirely revealed (Fig. 13). The columns forming a portico here appeared to rest on low bases, and not on high plinths as those of the other three porticoes. Several of these bases, with fragments of their columns nearby, were discovered in situ (Fig. 14). As anticipated, however, their stylobate was interrupted at about the middle of the portico for a width of ca. 5 m. A small sondage dug eastward brought to light large, well-cut slabs. The size and nature of these stones clearly suggested a street pavement which probably continued towards the east.

Another, less elaborate, passage, more a narrow alley than a street, was discovered of the southern portico of the «piazza» in the course of extensive investigations in the Theatre Baths. It seemed to separate the basilica hall complex to the west from a series of rooms, including an unclear apsidal structure, stretching along its east flank. The precise character of these rooms remains uncertain as excavations were not extended further to the east (Fig. 15).

Investigation of the elaborately decorated hall in basilica plan discovered in 1975, on the other hand, made considerable progress and yielded interesting finds and data concerning its architecture (Fig. 16). Most of the length of this hall contiguous to the «nymphaeum» unit with which it communicated to the west is now excavated, including its east aisle which is adjacent to the alley mentioned earlier (Fig.17). This aisle featured small recesses or compartments parallel to those of the west aisle (Fig. 18 and 19). The fallen columns and their bases separating the aisle from the nave were found in good condition. Three of these bases proved to have been carved in two units which were subsequently clamped together (Fig. 20). It seems safe to assume that the basilica hall extended further to the south (Fig. 21). No clear evidence about its character in this direction and beyond was produced by the excavations which, therefore, remain to be completed. The eastern limit of the complex, however, was clearly established by the masonry of its walls and the presence of the alley already mentioned above (Fig. 22).

The arcuate doorway decorated in the «peopled scrolls» style which formed the northern end of the nave of the basilica was entirely cleared and its communication with the nearby «piazza» revealed (Fig. 23). A room, niche or oecus of size was located beyond the doorway (Fig. 24). Its well-preserved pavement consisted of black and white marble slabs. At a later time (probably Late Roman or Early Byzantine) a door was cut into its north wall and featured a reused lintel block (Fig. 25). It opened directly into the southeast portico of the «piazza.» Similar, late transformations obscured the original plan of the room adjacent to the oecus to the east and aligned with the east aisle of the hall. A kiln or oven was found to have been fitted into this space in Middle Byzantine times and obliterated the earlier layout, except for the door communicating with the north end of the east aisle. A doorway opening here into the «piazza,» however, was probably part of later modifications.

A rich harvest of sculptural and epigraphical fragments was recorded in these extensive excavations. Most noteworthy among them was an interesting head of a young boy, skilfully reworked (probably in the fourth century) from an earlier portrait (Fig. 26). The head of Penthesilea, from a small version of the Achilles - Penthesilea group (Fig. 27) was found in the south end of the nave of the basilica not far from the spot where its body was discovered in 1975 (Fig. 28). Other fragments may well be found in this area in the course of future investigations.

A fortuitous reexamination of several blocks reused by the Byzantines in blocking the back of the theatre stage while converting the Acropolis into a stronghold led to a most interesting series of discoveries near the

area of the north parodos (Fig. 29). Subsequent, partial dismantlement of this wall produced several important fragments of the imperial letters carved on the nearby Archive Wall (including parts of a new (?) letter of Gordian III) and a series of six column shafts, almost certainly pertaining to the colonnade of the «piazza» and bearing painted Early Byzantine inscriptions. Unfortunately, these inscriptions had been plastered and repainted several times and were therefore difficult to decipher. Two of them at least may have been connected with acclamations, while other longer phrases could be parts of biblical quotations. Several sculpture fragments were also extracted from the wall. They included the upper torso and a portion of the head of an overlifesize nude male figure (Fig. 30) and, among many smaller items, the cranium of the head of the statue of the pugilist found in 1967 at the north end of the pulpitum (Fig. 31). The presence of this fragment, along with that of those of the imperial letters, clearly indicates that the stage facade had already collapsed when the backstage blocking wall was constructed by the Byzantines who hastily utilized all fragments available in the immediate vicinity.

A most interesting but accidental epigraphical discovery made in the vicinity of the grounds of the Aphrodisias Museum requires mention. A tall, rectangular pilaster of uncertain origin proved to have two of its faces covered with long inscriptions. Close examination revealed that these were lists of names of the members of the local synagogue and, along with them, those of a group described as *theosebeis*. Apart from the significant evidence this provides for the existence of a Jewish community at Aphrodisias, this inscription also gives unusual additional data by referring to the occupations of some of the listed individuals, e.g., a goldsmith, coppersmiths, fullers and a sausage-maker, and thus sheds welcome light on the social and economic life Aphrodisias below the level of the ruling classes.

Epigraphic studies were continued, as in past years, by Miss Joyce Reynolds, Mr. and Mrs. Mossman Roueché and Dr. Michael Crawford. Work was concentrated on a fuller reconstruction of the fragmentary areas of the Archive Wall. The more recent discoveries pertaining to the Diocletianic Price Edict, especially sections on water transport, were also reexamined in the light of information gathered from the copy of the edict from Aezani. The record of Byzantine epigraphic material studied in earlier years was consolidated and collection of the graffiti of the theatre completed. Verification of classical inscriptions reported reused in the city wall was continued and also included trips to the surrounding countryside, as far as Eymir and even Karacasu. As usual, these investigations proved to be most rewarding and led to the discovery of new inscriptions or the rediscovery of old texts reported by earlier scholars and travellers. One of them, located in Karacasu, honoured a member of the *Carmini*, a prominent family

of the third century and the subject of another new inscription also found this year in the excavation of the «piazza.» The Carminii were probably associated with the laying out and construction of that «piazza.»

The study and computer analysis of prehistoric pottery from the Acropolis and Pekmez trenches progressed most satisfactorily. Mrs. Martha S. Joukowsky, Professor Anna S. Benjamin and Miss Nina Joukowsky focused their attention on the material collected from five Late Bronze to Iron Age strata of Acropolis trenches. Over 7,500 sherds were classified and a type series of 300 factors, including forms, ware, fabric and decoration was added to the type series already established in 1975.

The organisation of the material to be exhibited in the Aphrodisias Museum, preparation of displays and restoration of statuary were among the main objectives of the 1976 campaign (Fig. 32). Unfortunately, due to the slow progress in the completion of the construction of the building, only a limited amount of this work could be accomplished in the course of the summer. Some restoration could be initiated by Mr. Reha Arican in the cramped space of the old depot. Despite seemingly unsurmountable obstacles, however, the enormous task of transporting all the sculpture stored in the old depot and excavation house into the exhibition halls and store-rooms of the museum was begun in late October and completed by mid-November (Figs. 33 and 34). The main pieces of sculpture were placed in their approximate location and restoration was continued at a more rapid pace (Fig. 35). The bulk of the study material, on the other hand, was roughly organised in the new store-rooms located in the still incomplete administrative wing of the building (Fig. 36). The unfinished state of the ground surrounding the museum did not permit preliminary arrangement of the larger items intended for display there. These were temporarily stored and protected in the garden of the lodgings of the current museum assistant.

The 1976 staff included : Mr. Layik Altınmakas, Mr. Tevfik Balcioğlu, Professor Anna S. Benjamin, Mr. Bruce Bruckmann, Mr. William Bruckmann, Mr. Ali Ceylan, Mr. Levent Civelekoğlu, Dr. Michael Crawford, Mr. George Cronin, Mr. Recep Düğenci, Mr. Akif Gaffaroğlu, Mrs. Martha S. Joukowsky, Miss Nina Joukowsky, Miss Joyce Reynolds, Mr. and Mrs. Mossman Roueché, Mr. Adnan Şakar, Dr. and Mrs. Jochen Twele, Mr. Charles White and Mr. Güray Yasa. As in past years, Mr. Reha Arican was in charge of conservation and restoration. Mr. M. Ali Düğenci again attended to photography through the courtesy of the Türk Tarih Kurumu. Mr. David Brill was once more delegated by the National Geographic Society to record photographically some of our activities. Finally, the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of the Ministry of Culture was represented by Messrs. Atilla Tulga, Gür Karasu and Kadir Yanık.

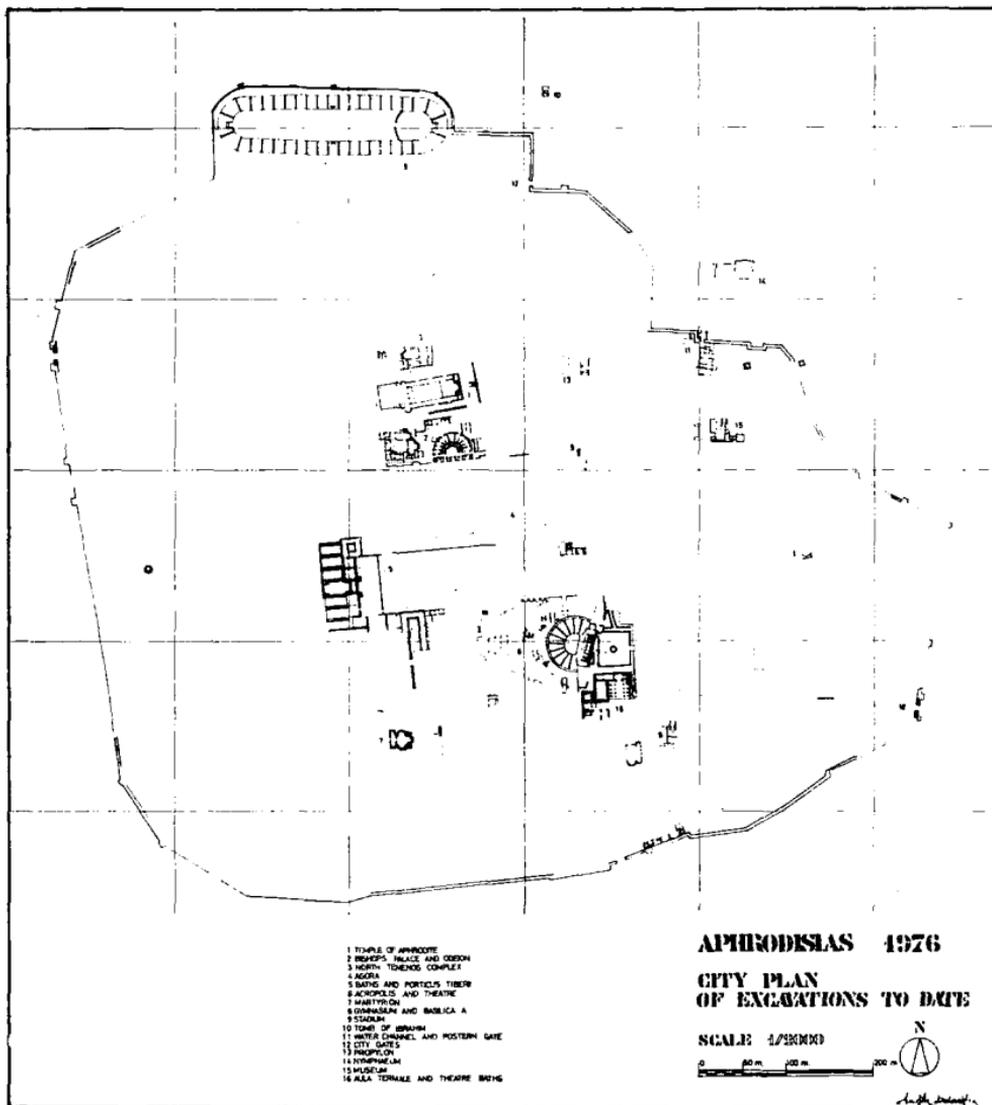


Fig. 1 Aphrodisias. City Plan. 1976.



Fig. 2 South City Wall. Looking west



Fig. 3 South City Wall. Gladiatorial stele.



Fig. 4 South City Wall. Architectural block.



Fig. 5 South City Wall. Statue of boy with bird.

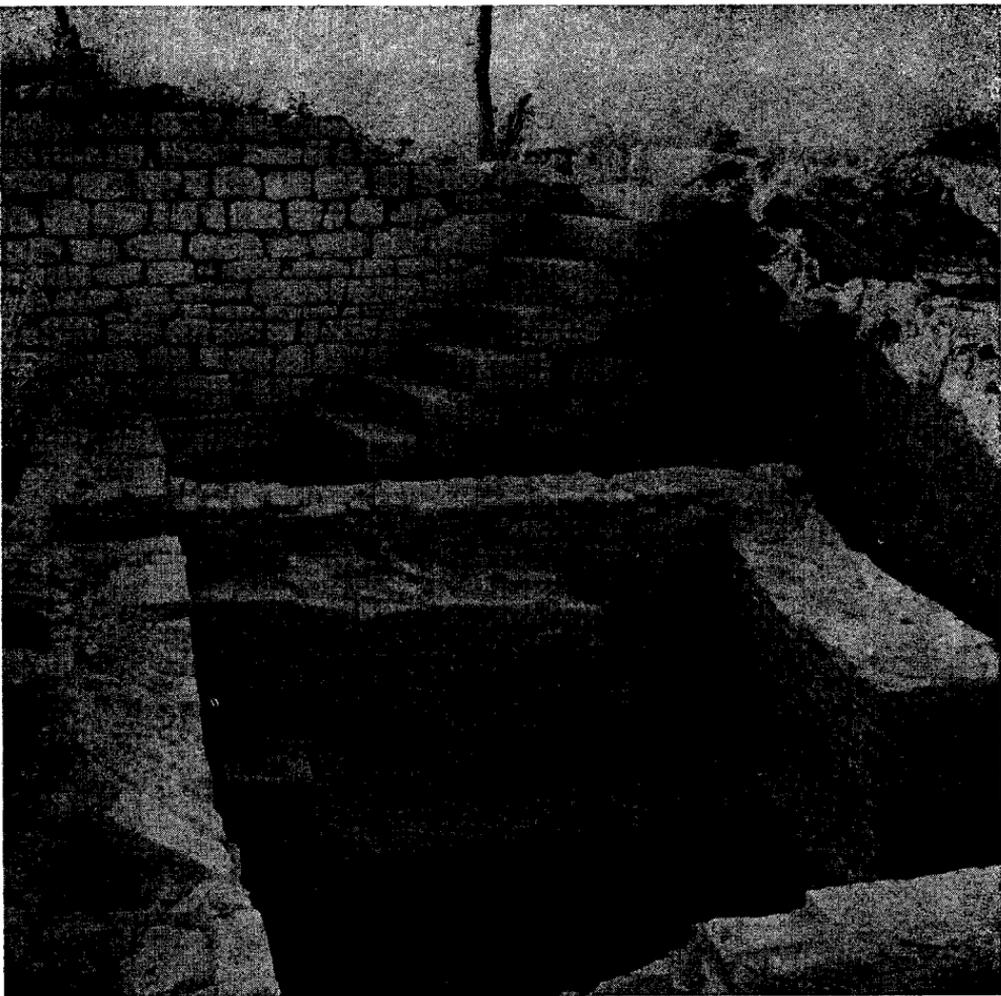


Fig. 6 South City Wall. Utility rooms and steps leading up the rampart.



Fig. 7 South City Wall. Hall with mosaic floor.



Fig. 8 South City Wall. Detail of mosaic with ornamental design.

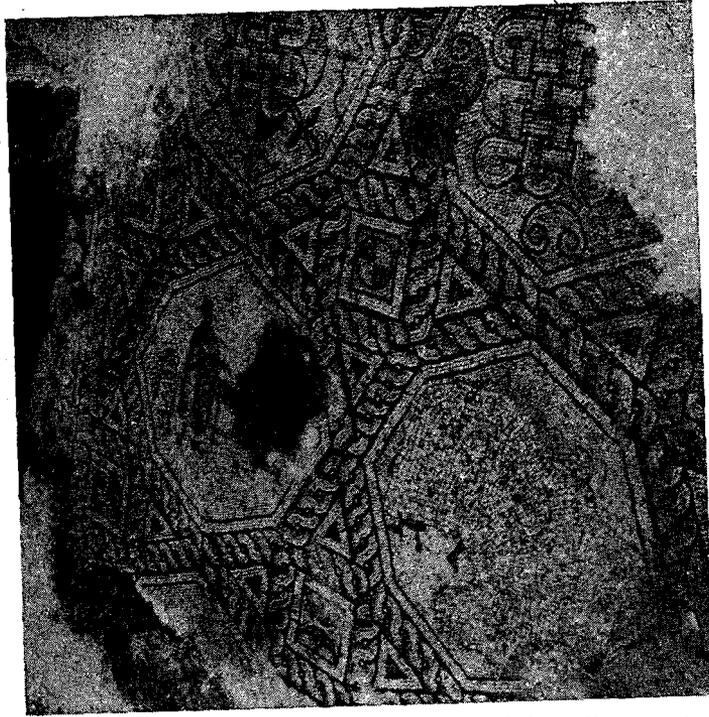


Fig. 9 South City Wall. Detail of mosaic with figurative scene.



Fig. 10 South City Wall. Detail of mosaic with figurative scene.



Fig. 11 South City Wall. Gap. Garland sarcophagus fragments.

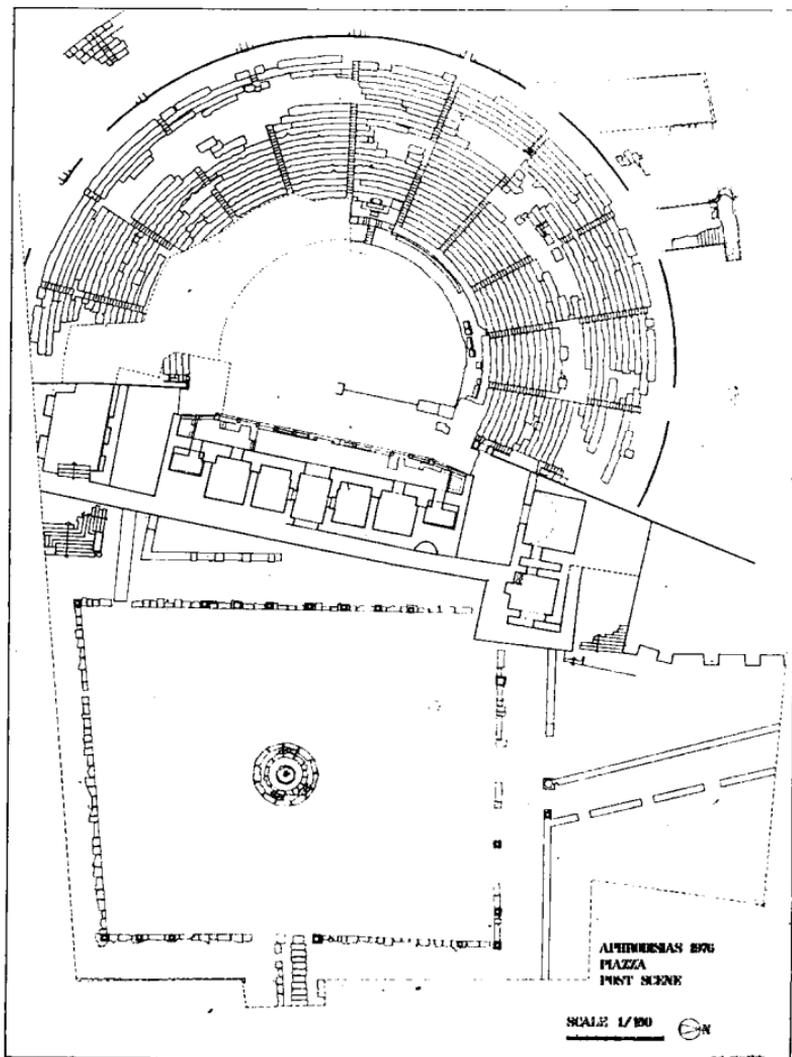


Fig. 12 Plan of Theatre and «plazza.»

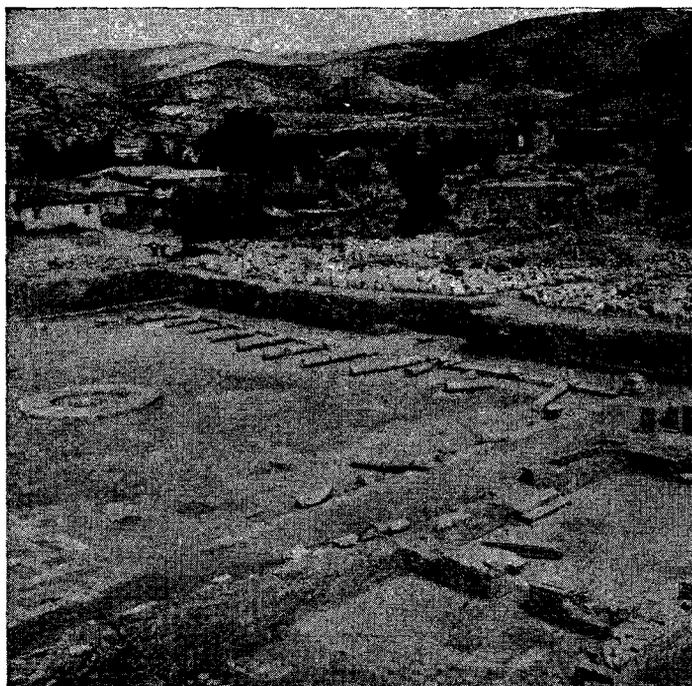


Fig. 13 «Piazza.» looking northeast.

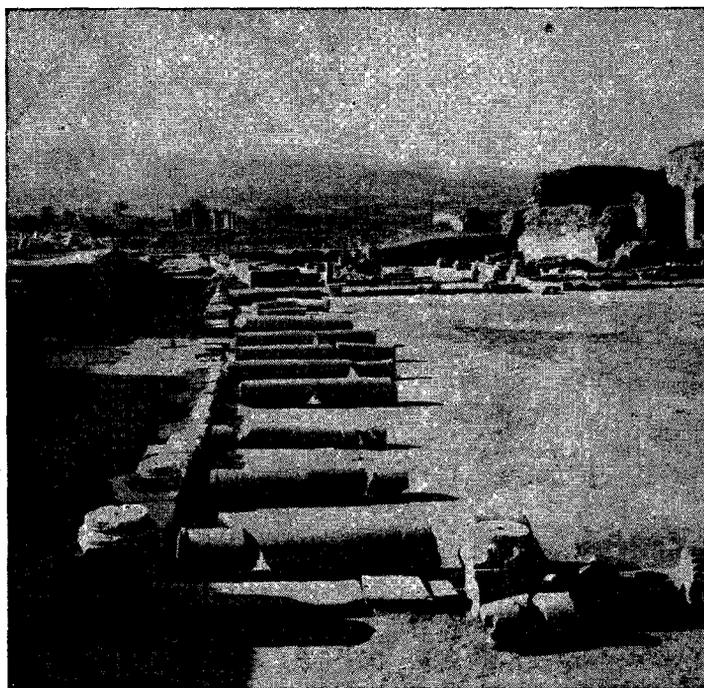


Fig. 14 «Piazza.» Eastern stylobate and portico with column fragments and street (to left).



Fig. 15 Alleyway off «piazza» leading south. To right, basilica hall of Theatre Baths.

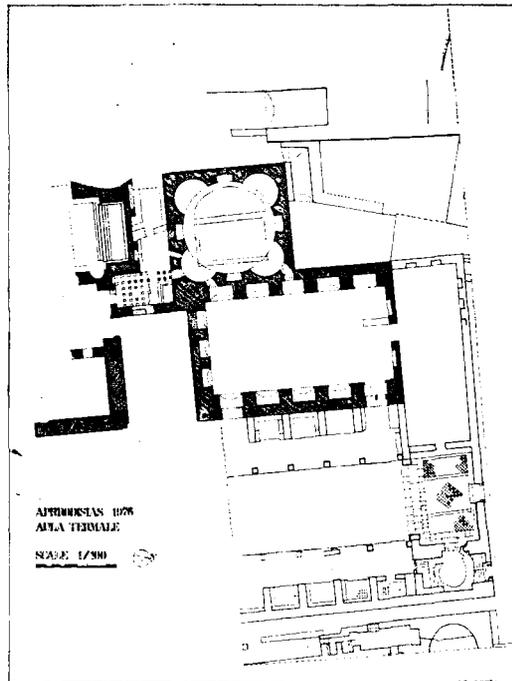


Fig. 16 Plan of Aula termale or Theatre Baths.



Fig. 17 Theatre Baths, Basilica hall.



Fig. 18 Theatre Baths, Basilica hall. East aisle.

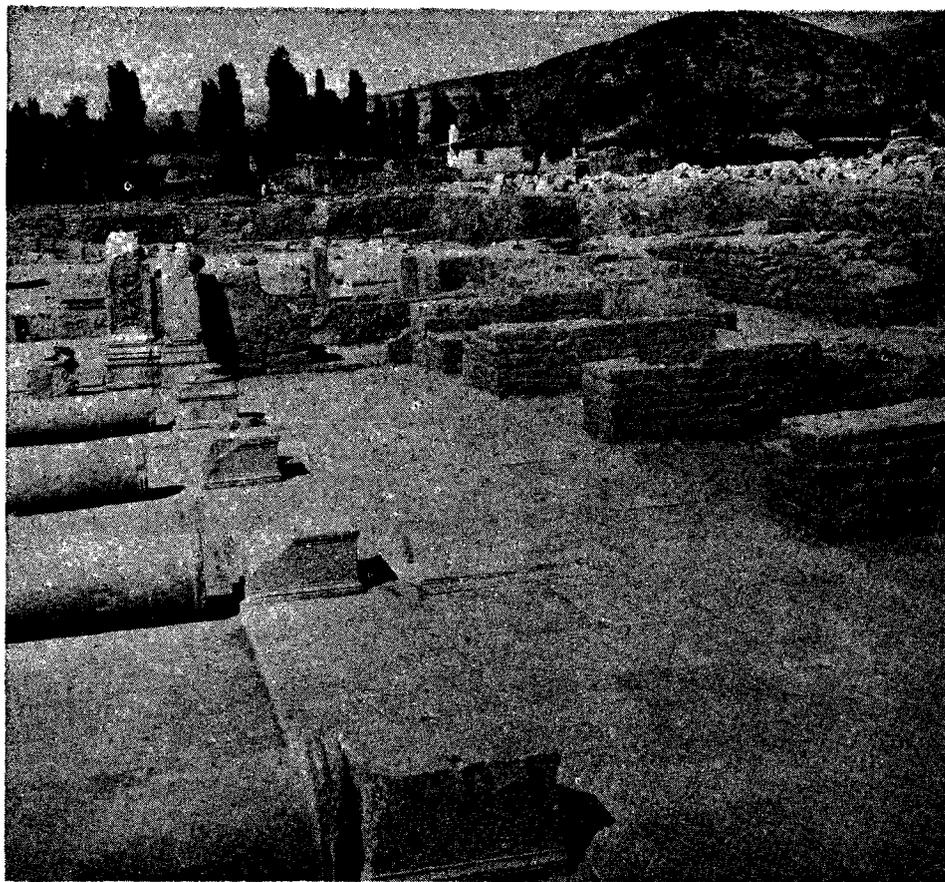


Fig. 19 Theatre Baths. Basilica hall, East aisle.

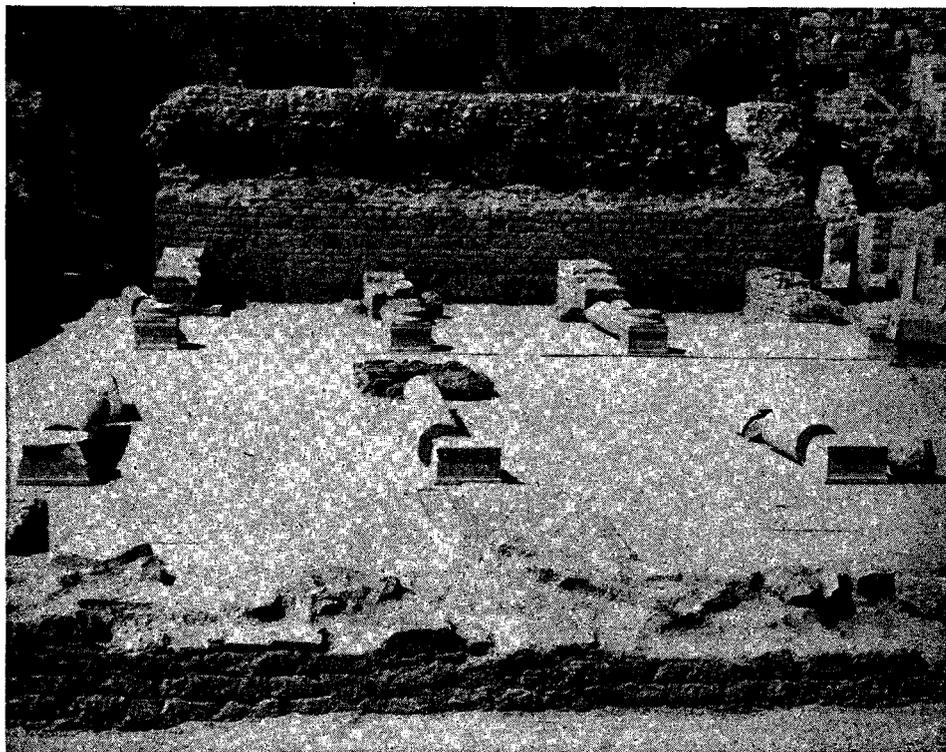


Fig. 20 Theatre Baths. Basilica hall, East aisle with bases.

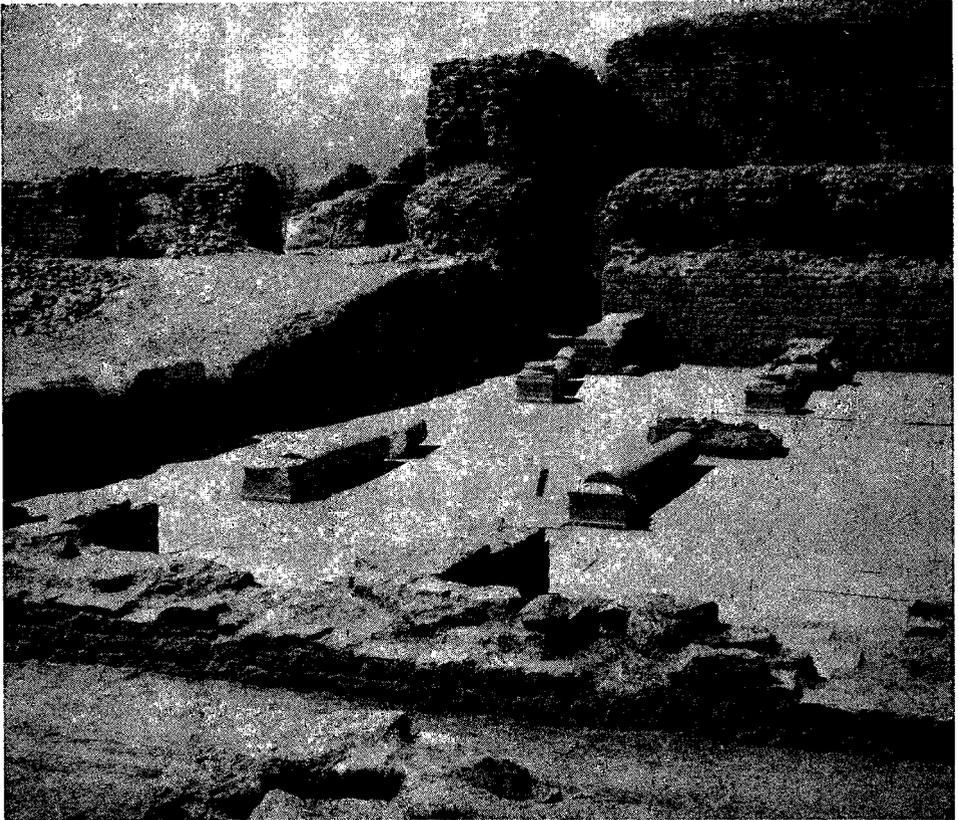


Fig. 21 Theatre Baths. Basilica hall. Southern end.



Fig. 22 Theatre Baths. Basilica hall, to left. Alley in centre.

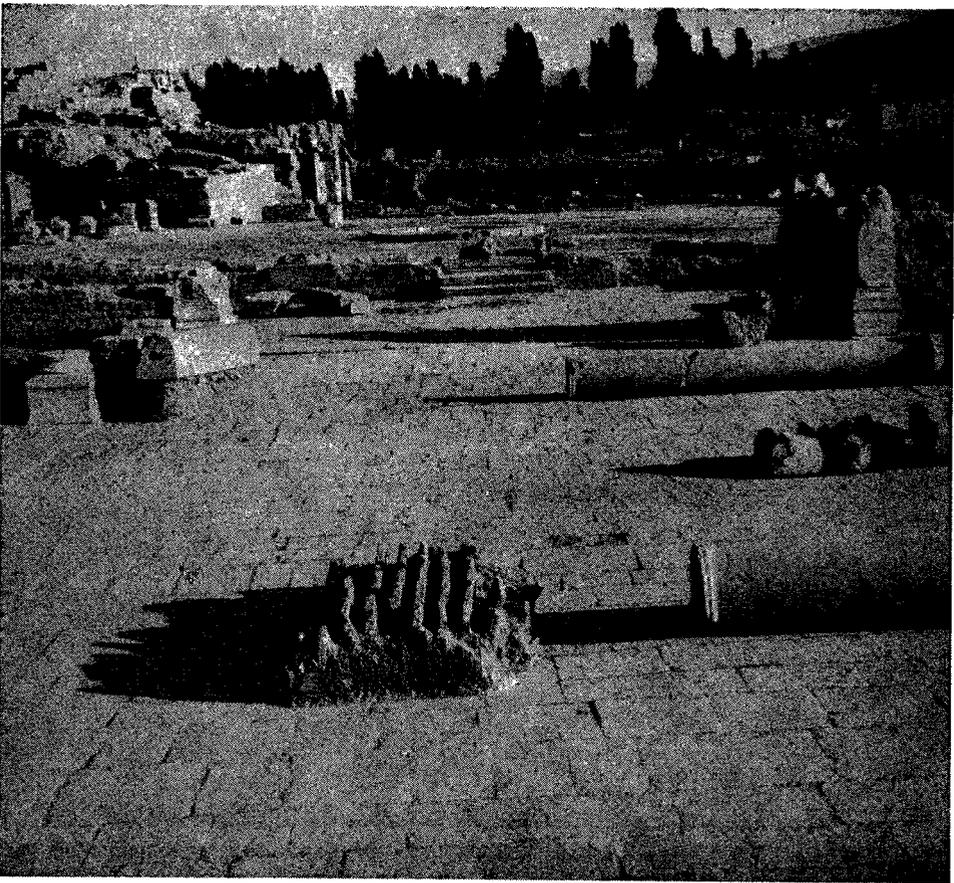


Fig. 23 Theatre Baths. Basilica hall. Nave with oculus at end.



Fig. 24 Theatre Baths. Basilica hall. Oculus.

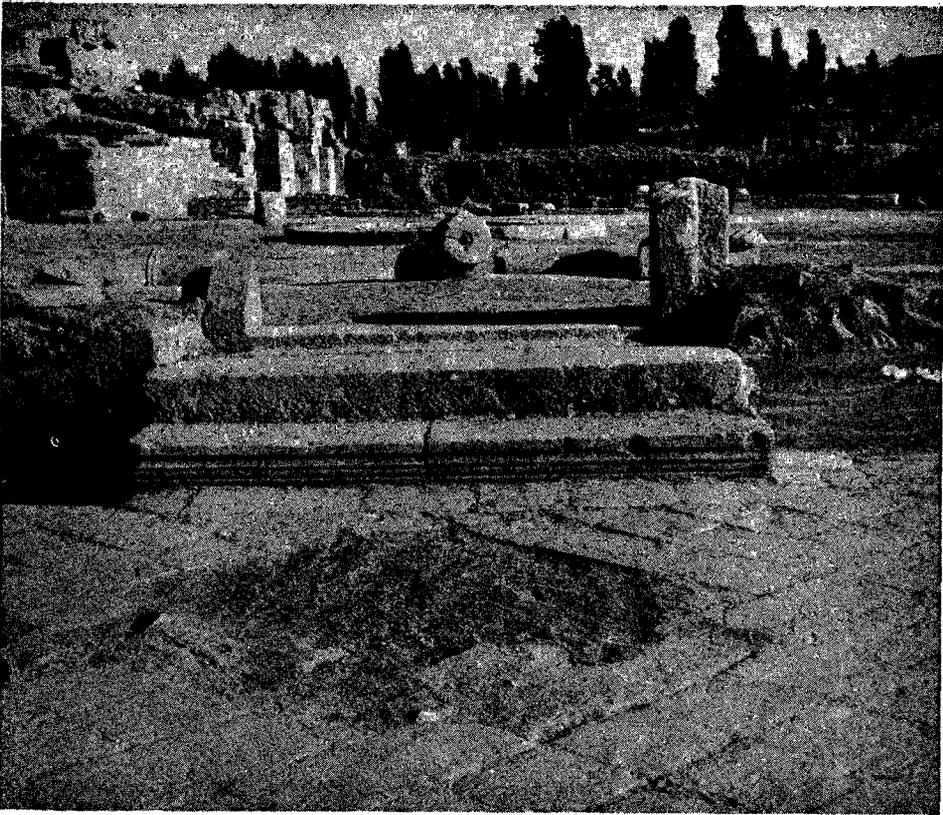


Fig. 25 Theatre Baths. Basilica hall. Reused lintel of north door communicating with «piazza».



Fig. 26 Theatre Baths. Basilica hall. Head of young boy (reworked?).



Fig. 27 Theatre Baths, Basilica hall. Head of Penthesilea.

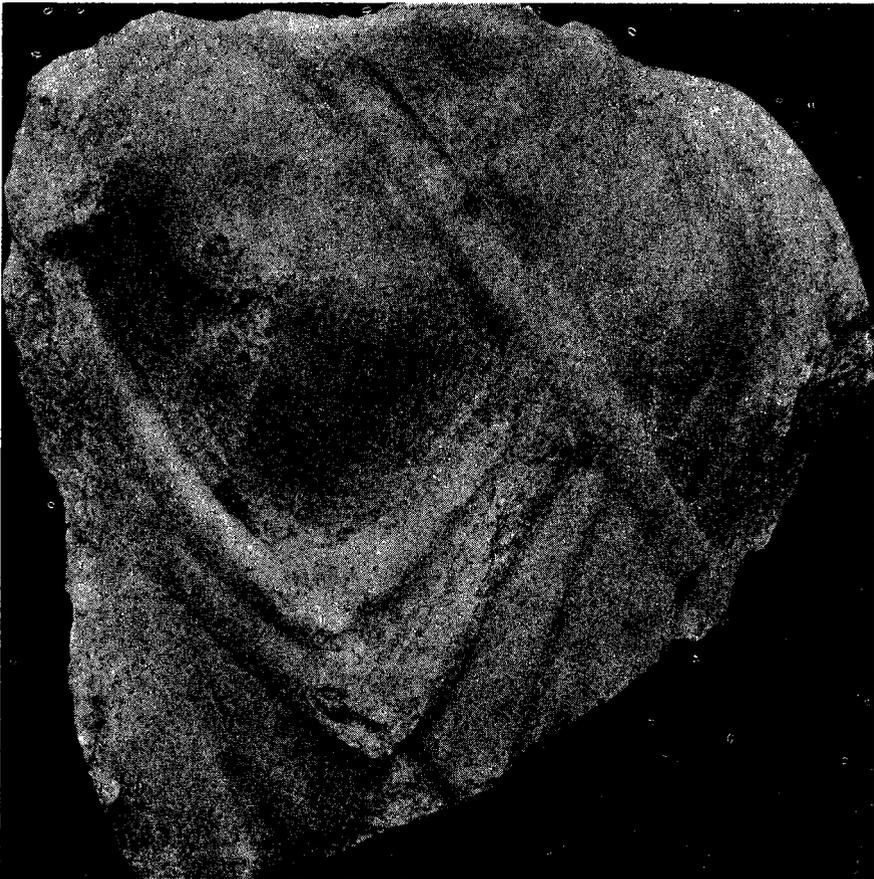


Fig. 28 Theatre Baths, Basilica hall. Body of Penthesilea found in 1975.



Fig. 29 Theatre. Stage blocking wall. Dismantled portion near north parodos and Archive Wall.

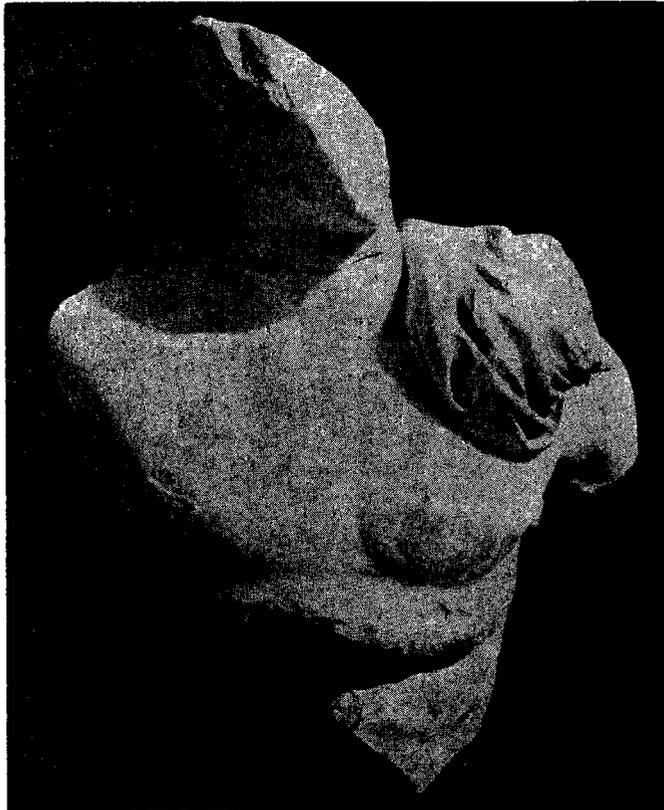


Fig. 30 Theatre. Stage blocking wall. Overlifesize nude male torso.



Fig. 31 Theatre. Stage blocking wall. Cranium fragment of pugilist.

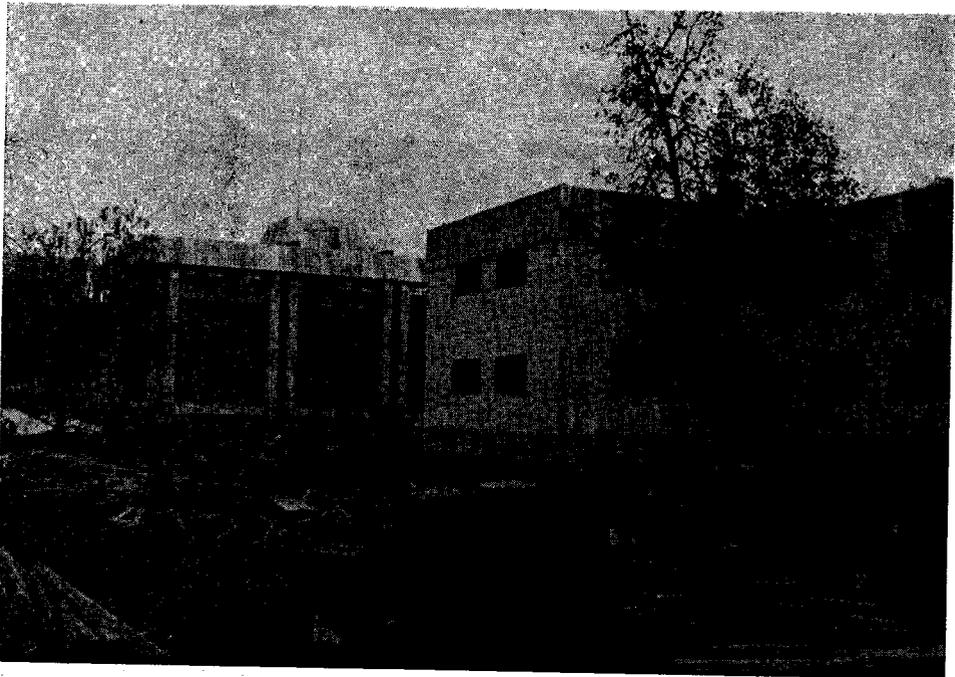


Fig. 32 Aphrodisias Museum. Administrative wing to right.

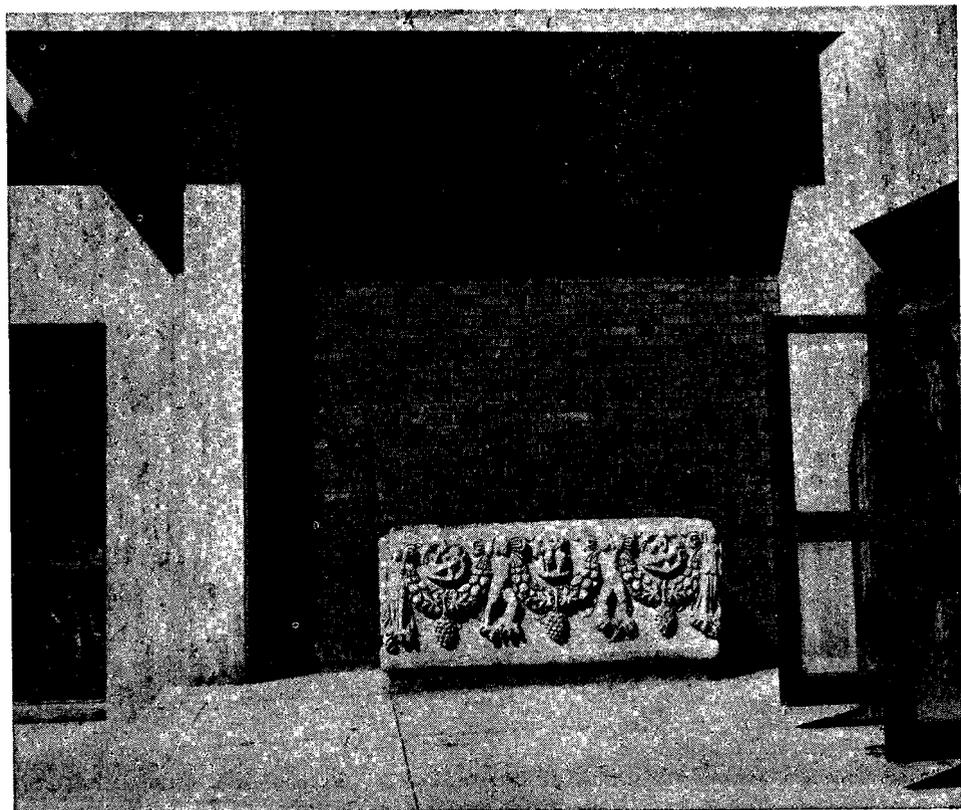


Fig. 33 Aphrodisias Museum. Central court.

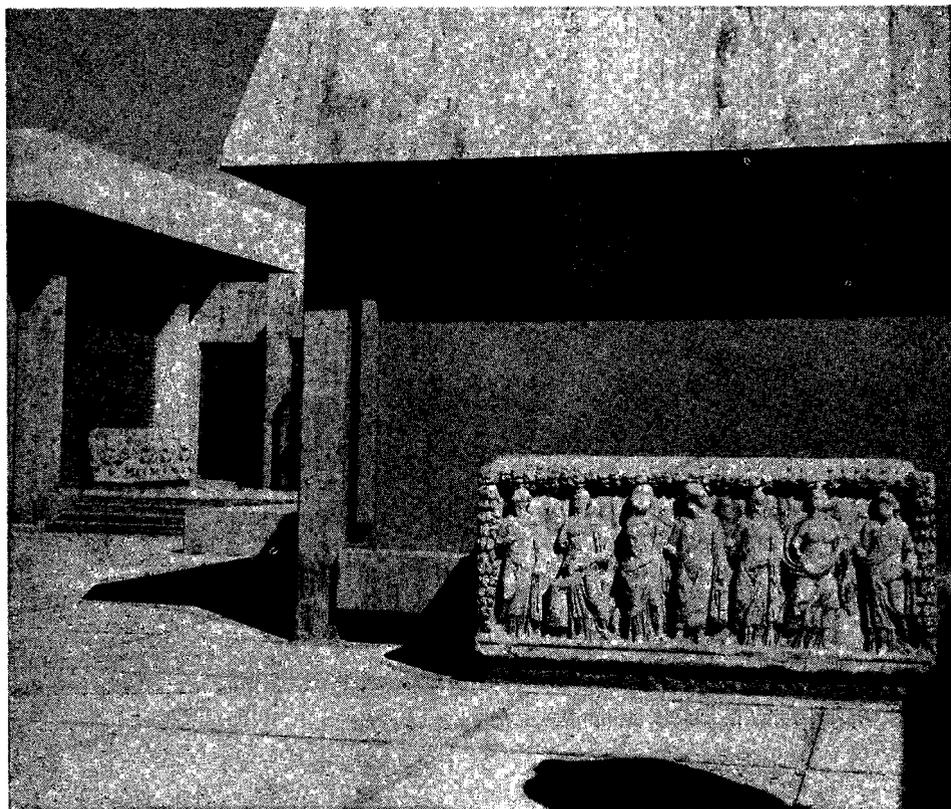


Fig. 34 Aphrodisias Museum. Central court.



Fig. 35 Aphrodisias Museum. Exhibition hall.



Fig. 36 Aphrodisias Museum. One of sculpture storerooms of administrative wing.