

A P H R O D I S I A S  
Results of the 1968 Campaign

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The 1968 campaign of excavations at Aphrodisias in Caria, conducted under the aegis of New York University and with support from the National Geographic Society, the Old Dominion Foundation and the Ford Foundation, produced once more, as in previous seasons, most significant and interesting results. Work during this eighth season focused essentially on four important areas whose investigations were begun earlier, namely the theatre, or east slope of the acropolis, the Bronze Age settlements revealed on the west slope of the same acropolis, the Baths of Hadrian, and the area between the odeon and the Bishop's Palace. Simultaneously, sondages aimed at supplementing our information on various other points of the site were also initiated. All yielded a wealth of data and finds that further enhance the prehistory, the history and the layout of Aphrodisias at different periods of its life.

The acropolis of Aphrodisias, the prominent hillock in the approximate center of the site proved last year to have been the nucleus of a very important series of Bronze Age habitations, was the scene of major activity both on its eastern and western slopes, as well as its northern base. The excavation of the large theatre of Aphrodisias built probably in late Hellenistic or early Roman times on the eastern half of the hill was pursued extensively as well as intensively. Previous trenching had brought to light ten to twelve rows of seats of the *ima cavea* down to the *scaena*, the beginnings of the

*scaenae frons*, and of the north *parodos*. Our 1968 work concentrated on digging a *cuneus*-like or wedge-shaped portion of the building in its northern end from the *diazoma* down to the orchestra floor.

A number of ruined village houses built over this area had to be first dismantled. Many interesting architectural, sculptural and epigraphical items were extracted from the walls of these abandoned structures, among them, one must mention a fragment of an inscription which appears to be in Lydian. Faint traces of red paint appear still on some of the letters.

The subsequent excavations and study of the stratigraphy of the south profile of the trench provided interesting insight in the later history of the theatre. The accumulations seem to reveal that most of the lower *cavea* and the stage were buried in Early Byzantine times, possible as a result of an earthquake followed by intentional filling in order to avoid landslides. A series of walls of late facture, probably eleventh and twelfth century, was encountered in the upper strata. Many of these betrayed no clear plan or relationship, hence may have been intended as sustaining walls or dikes. Although the northern *summa cavea* suffered from the Byzantine transformation of the acropolis into a stronghold in or about the twelfth century, the state of preservation of the *ima cavea* proved to be quite exceptional. Twenty six tiers of seats were brought to light down to the orchestra floor and the stage, thus revealing a good portion of

the original theatre. A *conistra* arrangement became visible, very likely a result of late Roman modifications that are not without paralleling those to which the odeon was subjected probably at the same time. The lowest tier is actually a platform on which marble seats of honour, with high backs and occasionally dolphin arm-rests, were aligned. The orchestra floor showed no trace of paving, but a drainage channel was uncovered along part of it. The *porta postica* was entirely cleared and appears to have been once flanked by attractive coloured-marble miniature columns. The height of the stage (from the floor of the orchestra) is about 2.25 m. A statue base stood at the northern corner. An inscription carved on the upper moulding of the *pulpitum* betrays several *rasurae*: the elimination, for instance, of the name of Aphrodisias obviously indicates that these were perpetrated in Early Byzantine times. It will eventually be possible to restore the name of the emperor in the dedication when further blocks have been uncovered. At the present time, it seems to have been that of an early Antonine emperor. In any event, this inscription is to be associated with some transformation or repair work rather than an original dedication, since there are a number of data pointing to a relatively early date for the original construction of the theatre.

A large number of epigraphical fragments was discovered on and above the orchestra pit and examined by Miss Joyce Reynolds of Cambridge, our epigrapher. Several of these pertain to items found last year that manifestly form part of a letter written to the Aphrodisians, naming a certain Oppius, which dates the document to the Mithradatic wars. The forms of the letters, however, clearly indicate that the inscription was recut in later times, namely about the second century A.D. Several sculpture fragments were recovered from the theatre excavations: four female heads and one male head

were found at various depths. Two of the ladies, possibly also a third, are protraits of women of rank of the first century as indicated by their Julio-Claudian looking hairdos. The bearded and diademed male head, discovered on an upper tier of seat is undoubtedly later and possibly represents a poet or philosopher of *ca.* the third century. Several fragments, when assembled, produced the attractive, high relief figure of a Nike, slightly under life size. Finally, the repaired left leg of the nude male torso, probably a pugilist, found in 1967, was located near the *porta postica*.

On the west slope of the acropolis, investigations of the unusually rich series of Bronze Age settlements uncovered last year, were continued under the able supervision of Barbara Kadish. Two more trenches adjoining the 1967 trench, one to the east, the other to the north, were opened. Two Byzantine building levels, especially rich in pottery, and a Turkish stratum formed the accumulation above the Bronze Age occupation of the mound. Under the Byzantine levels in one of the trenches, scattered sherds of the archaic period could be identified. At a lower depth in the eastern trench, occupation levels of the second millennium B. C. could be identified. The representative small artificats recovered here were ceramic crescent-shaped objects known from Troy as well as Mersin. Predating these levels were those of Early Bronze III period, where an additional section of a building, first identified in 1967, was exposed. This structure still appears to present a megaron plan.

In the northern trench, located closer to the outside of the mound, indications of second millennium B. C. levels were fewer. Under the Byzantine levels, and a stratum which betrayed metal-working activities, no signs of dwelling were encountered for *ca.* 1.50 m. until the level just above Complex 1 (or 1967) which featured the megaron just mention-

ed. At this point, many small flat idols of both marble and other material were found. This area may have special significance since double mudbrick walls defined its limits on the north and south and a large, partly curvilinear bin still containing charred grain was found in it. A large amount of pottery came from this excavation, including a stone coated with a dried black substance that looks as if fingers had been drawn through it. This area lies in between Rooms 2 and 3 of Complex II, Trench 3 of 1967 and a large room exposed this year to the north. It is all very heavily burnt. A cut through the collapsed burnt fill of this Complex II shows the size of the destruction. The collapsed jumble of burnt debris also revealed in part sections of reed-impressed mud, probably from the roof. Twenty partially preserved or complete vessels were found on the floor of this northern room. They include brown burnished, small-necked globular vessels with a single handle and teapot-shaped specimens, as well as several small depas-types and wide-mouthed, two-handled vessels. Similar pottery had been already encountered in this complex in the 1967 excavations. A number of loom-weights lay on the floor of this room. They seem to have fallen in a row in the order in which they may have hung on the loom. Several spindle whorls, a stone celt and a complete stone axe were also found characteristically *in situ*.

To the west of this room, one other Complex II area was excavated. It contained three large mud and chaff storage bins containing remains of charred grain. There seems to have been a door-way between this area and the large room mentioned before. Between the grain storage zone and the northwestern section of the trench which was probably an animal pen, lay the charred remains of a fence or gate. Directly under, yet at a lower depth than the grain storage area, was another section also used probably for storage, but to be connected with our

Complex IV. A large storage vessel shown still embedded in the west trench wall was found at the close of the 1968 campaign. Only traces of walls pertaining to Complex IV have so far been identified. Differences in the pottery material recovered here appear in the highly polished red and black wares. Complex IV was the limit of excavations for 1968 on the western slope of the acropolis. Worthy of note among other recent finds here are three terracotta incised stamp seals and possibly a bronze one.

A sondage initiated at the northern base of the acropolis, on the other hand, intended to verify the depth of the wash and of the prehistoric fill here produced startling results. Late fortification walls which circled the hill at this point had been built out of architectural material pilfered from the nearby agora. However, behind these walls and below their foundations, indications of archaic strata were suggested by the pottery. Several interesting and almost complete vessels were discovered. The most unusual proved to be a painted krater-like vessel about 0.50 m. high and 0.55 m. at its greatest width, brightly decorated with meander patterns and guilloches. Its front panel consists of a beguiling group of two lions framing a bird and another undistinguishable animal (a dog?) behind the left-hand lion. The style of this krater is of the black on red variety and obviously connects it with the Lydian-type pottery. Consequently, one could tentatively assign it a date in the late seventh or early sixth century B.C. It is reasonable to assume that the acropolis of Aphrodisias was also used for habitation in the archaic period in addition to areas near the temple of Aphrodite where much material of similar type, but out of context, has been encountered in our earlier investigations. Below the presumed archaic levels of the north acropolis base, two Middle Bronze Age pot burials were uncovered.

Work on the Baths of Hadrian was continued, at first in the unidentified hall

entered through the lobby to the north. The western end of this room was excavated and proved to consist of a stepped basin, terminating into aspidal sides. A similar, though less elaborate and deeper, basin was uncovered at the west end of the *tepidarium* contiguous to the south. The whole of this *tepidarium* was cleared down to the hypocaust floor level. Subsequently, the excavation of the two southernmost galleries was initiated. Since these halls are not yet fully uncovered, it is still premature to suggest specific purposes for them. However, a small squarish room, off the *praefurnium* and connected via a door to one of these halls revealed the remains of a circular shallow pool in the center, quite similar to that of its symmetrical pendant to the north regarded as a *sudatorium* or *laconicum*. All the galleries of the Baths betray transformations and restriction of space to be connected with the Early Byzantine period. For instance, some of the arcades separating the halls were blocked off or modified. It is possible that such transformations may have been the aftermath of earthquake damage.

Among the items discovered here, a fragmentary head must be mentioned since it obviously belonged to a portrait of a magistrate or governor similar to the well-known Younger Magistrate found in 1905 by Gaudin in the east portico of the palestra of the Baths. Two extensive panels bearing parts of the *De pretiis* of Diocletian were also found in the southern galleries. They appear to pertain to the prices of textiles and timber, according to preliminary readings by Miss Reynolds.

The area stretching between the odeon and the Bishop's Palace, as well as the temple of Aphrodite to the north, was further investigated. The extensive nature of this area and the depth of the accumulation render a full evaluation of its layout as yet difficult. Several walls of very late date, probably from squatters' settlements particularly impede a satisfactory understanding of even the late history of this zone. The stylobate-like blocks encounter-

ed in 1967 appeared to form a corner, but stopped further east. The discovery of a Doric capital inscribed with late Hellenistic or early Imperial letters and referring to a gymnasiarch perhaps provide a clue to the identity of at least one building once located here, possibly connected with the stylobate, namely a gymnasium. Large quantities of small sculpture fragments and marble chips found strewn all over this area strengthen the theory already suggested last year that a sculptors' workshop was once situated here, perhaps in some of the back chambers of the odeon.

The western external wall of the odeon is now entirely cleared. Faint traces of painted letters on some of its lower blocks may be regarded tentatively as masons' marks. The buttressing pillars noticeable at intervals along the outside of the wall are equally interesting and require a satisfactory explanation. The most plausible one so far is their connection with a timber roofing which probably once covered the odeon.

Three additional areas were investigated in the so-called water-channel area, a sector nestled in a northeastern corner of the city wall of Aphrodisias where a populous quarter seems to have thrived in Byzantine times, the remains of a fairly rich and imposing house began to be uncovered. One of its doors opened unto a small paved street through a vestibule elaborately panelled with marble. This vestibule was connected with a chamber or room to the east, whose walls were brightly decorated with frescoes imitating marble veneer. To the south, the beginning of what could be a cryptoporticus is coming to light. Discoveries in this water-channel area in the past always proved to be exceptional. The 1968 finds were no less interesting since they provided new clues and fragments relating to sculpture previously unearthed nearby. Sculpture appears indeed to have been abundant here, and among them, one must mention the Zoilos frieze found

partly in 1956 by accident and later in 1961 and 1962. A small but crucial fragment pertaining to this monument was found last August: the upper part of the face of one of the figures of Zoilos himself, pertaining to the slab found in 1961 showing him being greeted and crowned by Demos and Polis. The significance of this fragment lies in the chronological definition it provided for this frieze. Indeed, on the basis of the few fragments found prior to the New York University excavations, a Hadrianic date was proposed by A. Giuliano (even an early Antonine recently by C. Vermeule). The letter forms of the inscriptions identifying the figure, however, did not tally well with such a date since they appeared earlier. The hairstyle of Zoilos in the newly found fragment strengthens the idea of an earlier date since the locks are brushed forward more in a first century A.D. fashion than in a later one.

Among other fragments discovered here, one must note one related to a handsome head of Athena found further to the northeast in 1964, and the head of a small smiling satyr or similar hybrid creature.

Nat far from the water-channel area (to its northeast, to be exact), outside the city wall, two trenches were dug along a wall protruding above ground. An elaborate facade came to light, consisting of a large, central rectangular niche flanked on either side by eight, shallow semicircular or rectangular smaller niches. Such a facade immediately suggests a *nymphaeum* of fountain-house. Water seepage unfortunately prevented excavation in depth in front of the wall in order to obtain further evidence. A large number of fourth century (mostly Constantinian) coins was discovered, however, as well as large quantities of very attractive, cut or shaped

fragments of multicoloured glass paste, which may pertain to the decorations of the niches or their basins. An original fourth century date corresponds well with the construction in small-stone technique of the facade wall. A trench perpendicular to this wall revealed a small paved area or court with another series of niches or arcades. This part of the *nymphaeum* remains, however, to be further excavated and studied.

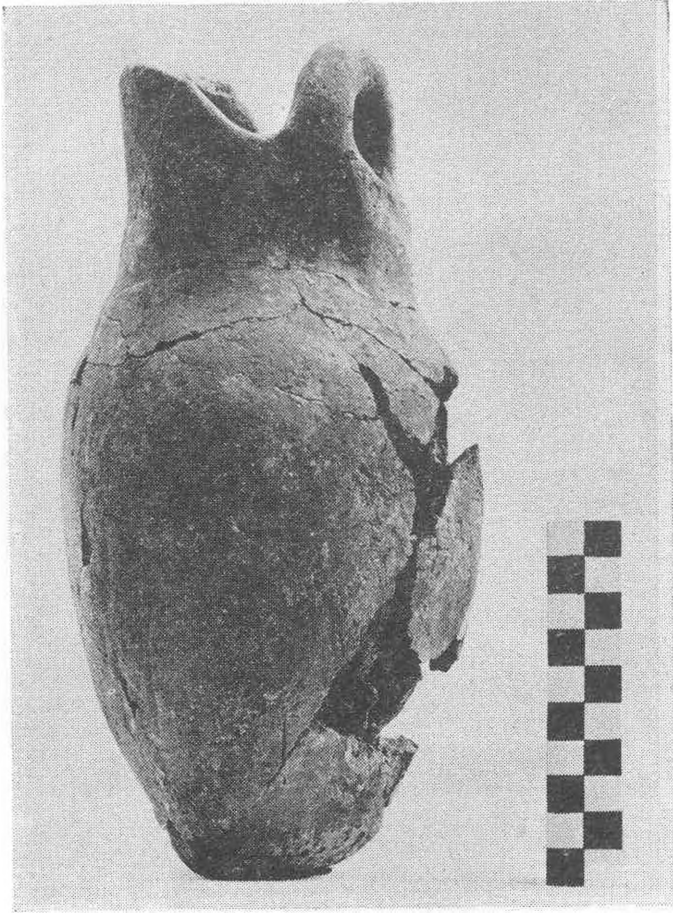
Finally, excavation was initiated along the southern edge of the well-preserved stadium of Aphrodisias, aimed at understanding the layout and construction of the building in this particular area. The tip of several arches were already barely visible above ground. A sustaining wall parallel to the stadium was traced, and in front of it, three interconnected smallish chambers were excavated. Two of the rooms terminate in an arcaded semicircular niche to the north, one (to the east) larger than the other. The smaller niche of the western chamber was more regularly built and decorated with frescoes. The recovered fragments and patches suggest floral motifs interspersed with leaves and birds. Communicating with this chamber to the west, but partially built underground, a kitchen or similar service area with traces of a hearth at one corner and a small niche-like ledge was cleared. Its roof was partly formed by a sloping arch of buttress still preserved in its great part. It is still premature to interpret the purposes of these chambers, except to state that the arcaded niches are probably the earlier constructions along the sustaining wall connected with the building of the stadium, while the compartmentalisation into rooms forms part of Early Byzantine or late Roman transformations, when the inhabitable area of the city was perforce restricted by the building of the fortification walls.



APHRODISIAS 1968 Acropolis Tr. 4. storage Jar still Embedded in wall (Complex IV)



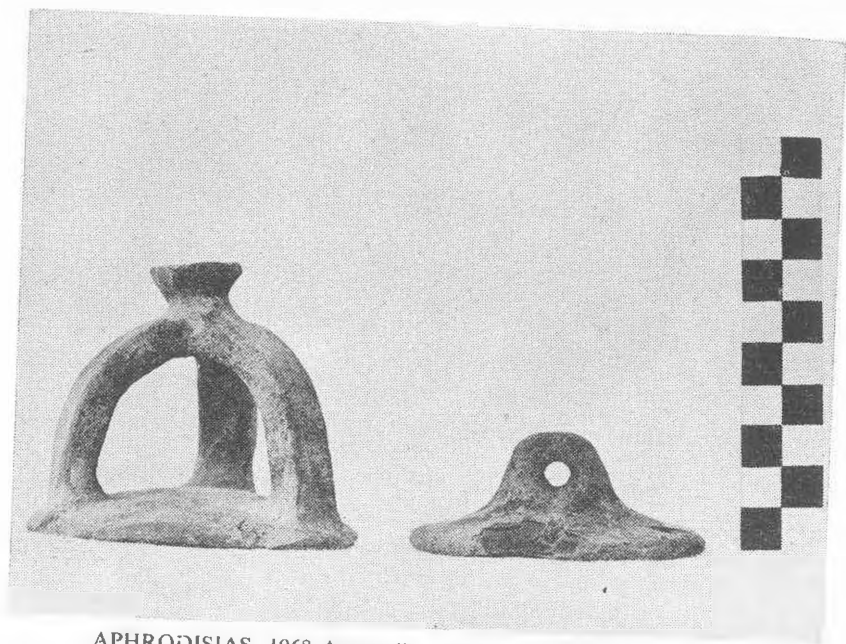
APHRODISIAS. 1968 Acropolis. Trench 4 Small E, B. Age pot



APHRODISIAS. 1968 Acropolis. Trench 4. "knobbed" Pot.



APHRODISIAS, 1968 Acropolis. Trench 4 Depas (From Complex II).



APHRODISIAS. 1968 Acropolis, Trench 4 2 early Bronze lids.

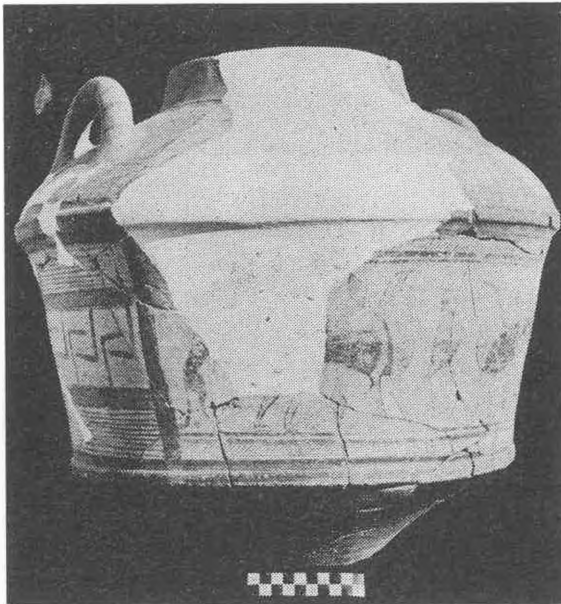


APRODISIAS. 1968 Acropolis, Trench 4 Single handled pot.

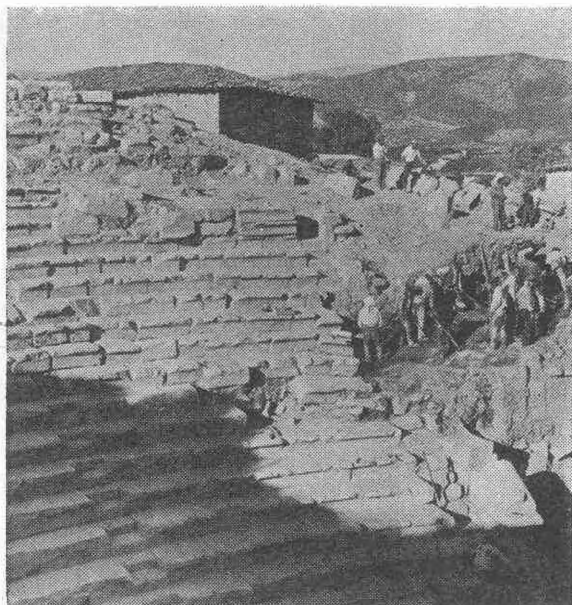




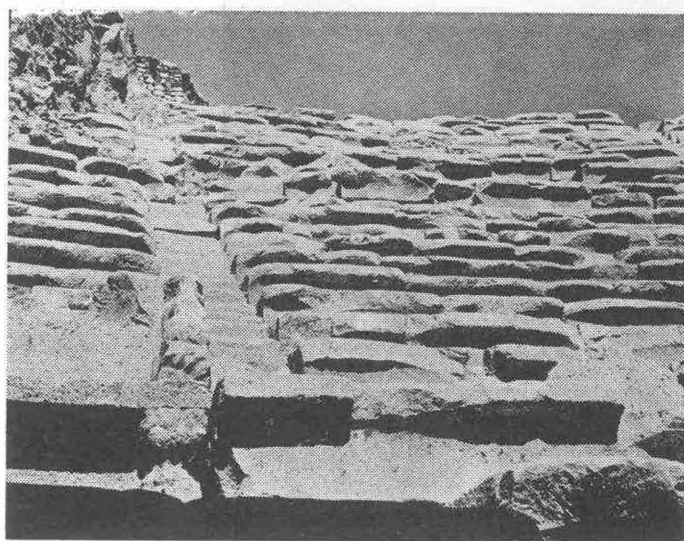
APHRODISIAS 1968 Acropolis. Lydian inscription Fragment found while dismantling Ruined Houses on site of theatre



APHRODISIAS Acropolis S. slope "Lydian", Vessel (Krater?)  
Late seventh-sixth Century B. C.



APHRODISIAS. 1968. Theatre General view.



APHRODISIAS 1968 Theatre Cavea



APHRODISIAS. 1968 Theatre. showing first tier of seats of honour.



APHRODISIAS. 168 Theatre Colossal Female Head.



APHRODISIAS. 168 Theatre nike relief found in fill above Cavea.



APHRODISIAS. 168 Theatre Female portrait head (first century).



APHRODISIAS. 1968 water channel athena head.



APHRODISIAS. 1968 From water channel. New Fragment of Face of zoilos  
tempyorlari fitted on pannel of zoilos frieze.



APHRODISIAS, 1968 General view N. E. Nymphaeum.



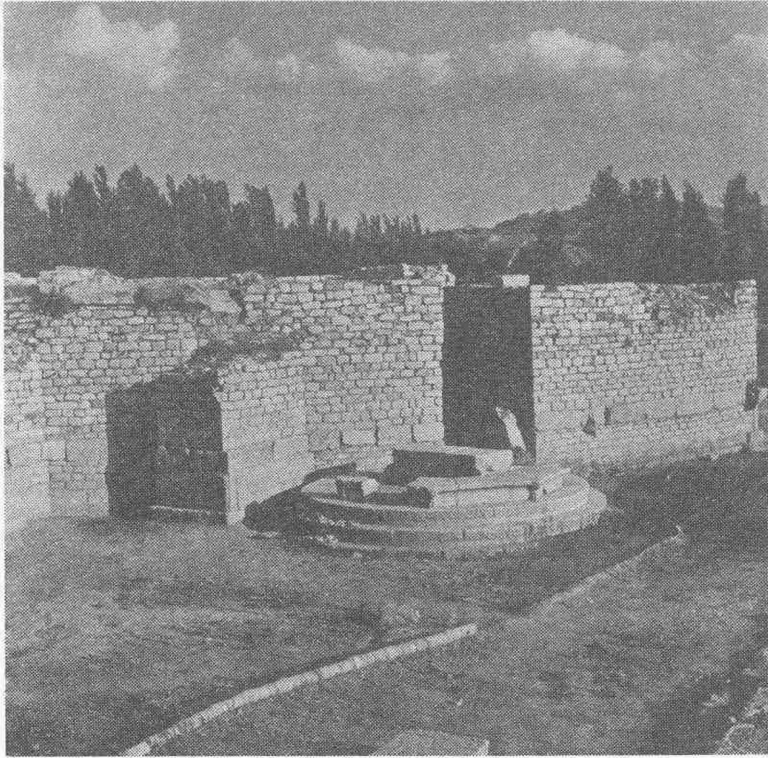
APHRODISIAS. 1968. To R. Façade of N. E. Nymphaeum.



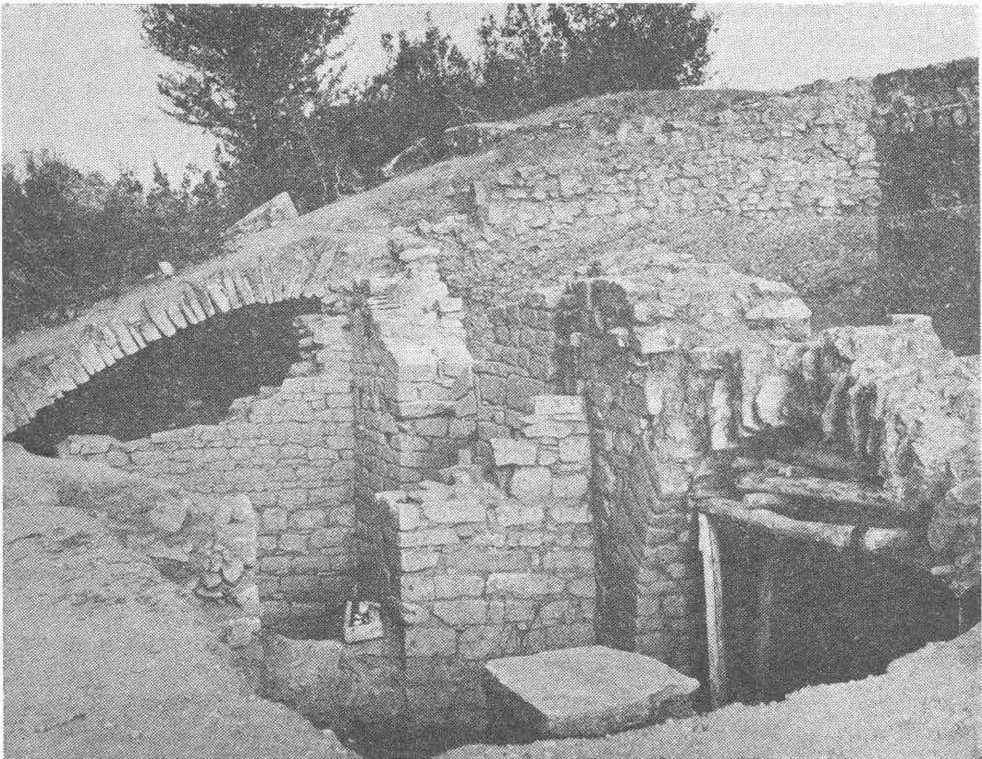
APHRODISIAS. 1968 Baths of Hadrian. General view of *TEPIDARIUM*



APHRODISIAS. 1968 Baths of Hadrian Fragment of Male head.



APHRODISIAS. 1968. Heroon and (to the left) back pillars supporting once roof of odeon



APHRODISIAS. 1968 stadium Trench. with 3 rooms.