

The House of Aion in Nea Paphos: seat of an artistic *synodos*?



Abstract: The article presents some archaeological observations based on recent publications and the author's survey *in situ* of the so-called "House of Aion" at Nea Paphos in Cyprus. The archaeological context (coins and pottery) dates the last phase of this building to the 320s, its partial destruction to the earthquake of 332/342, and its final annihilation by another quake to 365. The much-discussed mosaic with mythological decoration in the *triclinium* and the newly analyzed wall paintings in one of the rooms (No. 7), preserving the figures of Apollo and three of the Muses, are typical decorative elements of late antique Roman elite houses. And yet, the layout of the building, the *triclinium* located at the entrance to the house, and the presence of two rooms with a wooden floor, laid over an earlier water cistern converted into a cellar, possibly a treasury, suggest that the function of the complex was not residential at all. Indeed, the close proximity of the "Villa of Theseus", which was rebuilt in the same period and converted into the *praetorium* of the governor of the island in the first half of the 4th century, suggests that the so-called "House of Aion" could have been the seat of a Roman association, probably a *synodos* of Dionysiac artists (*ex-technitai*) who presented themselves in the theater of Paphos. Therefore, it would be better to call this building the *Synodeion* of late Roman Cyprus.

Keywords: *triclinium*, mosaics, paintings, Dionysus, Apollo, Muses, theater, associations

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To my friend,

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The House of Aion (HA) was discovered in Nea Paphos (Maloutena Quarter) in 1983 and until 1989 it was excavated by a Polish expedition from the University of Warsaw under the direction of Wiktor Andrzej Daszewski. The house took its name from one of the figures depicted in a famous mosaic, a figure damaged except for the head but subtitled as Aion, found centrally on the floor in the Triclinium (Daszewski 1984; 1985; Daszewski et al. 1984: 304–305).¹ For the sake of convenience and in view of many earlier studies, especially numerous published plans, the building will be referred to throughout this text by this designation (in its abbreviated form, HA), even though the building was most likely neither a private residence nor a house related primarily to Aion. The purpose of this paper is to propose a new and perhaps more accurate interpretation of the function of this complex, based on several studies published in the past 20 years.² Subject to general approval, a new and better suited name may yet emerge from this work.

The whole building measures 34 m by 17 m and occupies the southern half of a rectangular insula in the Roman town, longer on the east–west axis [*Fig. 1*]. The

northern part of the same insula contains the remains of the so-called North-eastern House divided into several smaller rooms (Lichocka and Meyza 2001: 151, *Fig. 1*; Jastrzębowska 2018: 529–540, *Fig. 1*; Mikocka 2018: 122–127, *Figs 2, 3*). In the 4th century, which is considered the main period of occupation of HA, the two parts of the insula do not seem to have been interconnected. The house layout is irregular and asymmetric with the entrance from the south, from street B (Brzozowska-Jawornicka 2016: 160), through a Vestibule (No. 2), which preceded from the east the largest room in the complex, that is, the said Triclinium (9 × 7.60 m, No. 1³) (Jastrzębowska 2018: 529, *Fig. 1*). There seem to have been two secondary doors to the complex, from the north and east, with long corridors furnished with simple, monochrome grey mosaic floors (Nos 8 and 17); these were blocked at a later date, forming closed elongated spaces. A regular Roman residential house would have had an entrance on the eastern side, in the case of HA, logically, the room designated as No. 17 on the opposite side of the building to the Triclinium would have been more in line with the traditional plan of a Roman house.⁴

1 For further reading, see Lichocka and Meyza 2001: 150; Daszewski, Meyza, and Papuci-Władyka 2007: 395, Note 2.

2 Lichocka and Meyza 2001 (coins and pottery); Brzozowska-Jawornicka 2016: 151–166; 2019: 92–93 (reconstruction of the house facade); Hadjistephanou 2016: 385–388 (conservation work on the wall paintings); Mikocka 2018 (recapitulation of excavations, but not entirely reliable); Tybulewicz 2018: 85–96 (incense burners); Jastrzębowska 2018 (wall paintings); Radpour, Fischer, and Kakoulli 2019: 4–6, 11–18, 20, 22, 26–29, 31 (wall paintings from HA in the context of other Cypriot painting); La Rocca 2021 (mosaics).

3 Room numbers indicate the chronology of their discovery.

4 It was my first supposition: Jastrzębowska 2018: 532 (with erroneous reference to No. 18 instead of No. 17).

The large Triclinium with the famous figural floor mosaic (No. 1) and the Vestibule with colorful geometric mosaics (No. 2) occupy the northwestern corner of the house (Deckers 1986: 147, Fig. 1; Lichočka and Meyza 2001: 151, Fig. 1; Jastrzębowska 2018: 529, Fig. 1). A coin of Licinius (321–324) in the bedding of the Triclinium mosaic sets a *post quem* date (Daszewski 1985: 47, “aus der Zeit zwischen 318 und 324 n. Chr.”; Lichočka and Meyza 2001: 182, coin No. 591). The floor level in the Triclinium is higher than in the Vestibule and, according to the excava-

tors, the two could have been separated by a monumental triple arcade with a larger central passage; however, nothing in the way of material evidence of the presupposed columns or pillars has survived. There are no Roman architectural parallels for a residence with such a location of the Triclinium,⁵ entered practically directly from a street through a wide-open vestibule (see Dunbabin 1991: 123–128; Özgenel 2007: 240–264; Cabouret 2008: 192–200; Uytterhoeven et al. 2010: 295–301; Danner 2014; Martz 2015: 165–180; Pensabene and Gasparini 2018: 93–104).

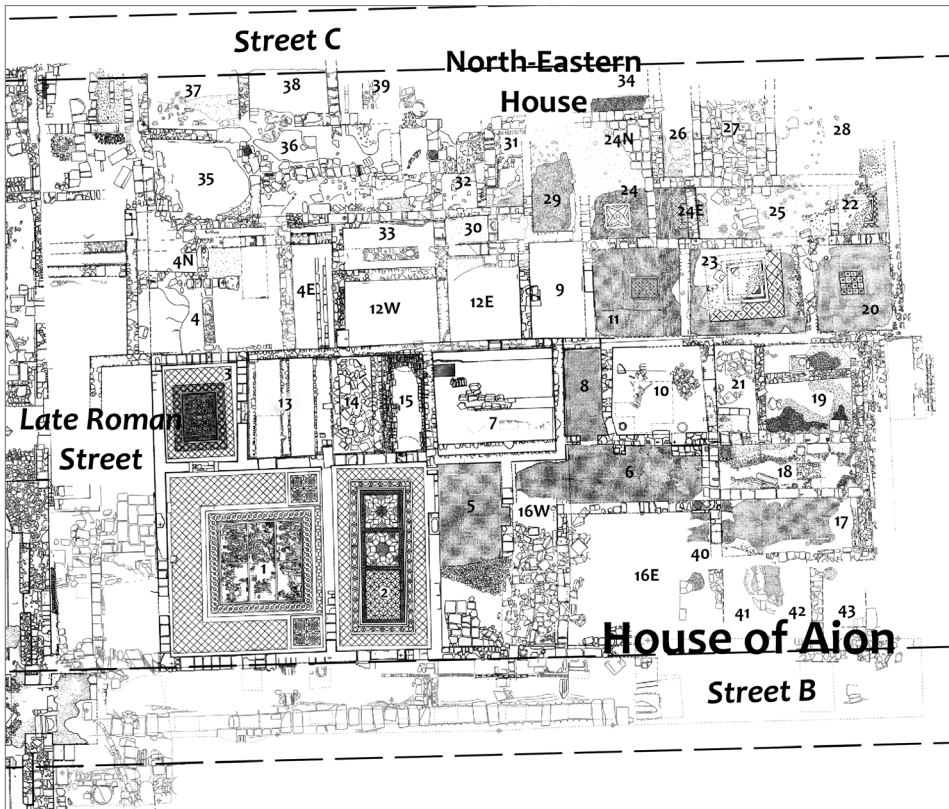


Fig. 1. Plan of House of Aion (HA) in Nea Paphos (PCMA UW | drawing S. Medeksza, 2005)

5 See a brief remark about the importance of the position of the triclinium inside HA without further comment, Brzozowska-Jawornicka 2019: 101.

A semicircular niche [Fig. 2] reconstructed in the back wall of the hall in the western side, which had once framed a now lost statue standing between two small columns with leaf capitals, belongs to the last building phase, probably already after the earthquake of 332 or 342 and before 356, when it was toppled definitely by a successive earthquake (Daszewski 1983: 942–943, Figs 65–66; 1986: 863, Fig. 96; Mikocki 1992; Brzozowska-Jawornicka 2019: 101, Fig. 11).⁶ As a matter of fact, a small marble head of Aphrodite, a Roman copy from the second half of the 2nd century of a Hellenistic original with an “archaizing look”, was found among the collapsed blocks of this niche,



Fig. 2. Reconstructed cult niche in the back wall of the HA Triclinium; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

on the so-called Late Roman Street west of the back wall of the Triclinium (Daszewski 1983: 942–943, Fig. 67; 1994: 154, 158, Pl. XLVI b, c; 1998a: 23, Fig. 14; Panayides 2016: 231, Pl. 5.1, No. 13) [Fig. 3]. Solely the lower parts of this wall, as well as some blocks in the northern wall of this hall, have survived; other Triclinium walls are known only by their foundations (Daszewski 1983: 942, Fig. 65; 1986: 863, Fig. 96; Jastrzębowska 2018: 532–533).

An enfilade of three rooms—Triclinium, Vestibule and court porticos (Nos 5 and 6)—extends in line from west to east. They are of the same width (4.80 m N–S) but of varying length (E–W). A small corner room (No. 3) with a geometric mosaic floor was accessible from the Triclinium; the floor level in this northwestern room is 45 cm lower than that of the triclinium

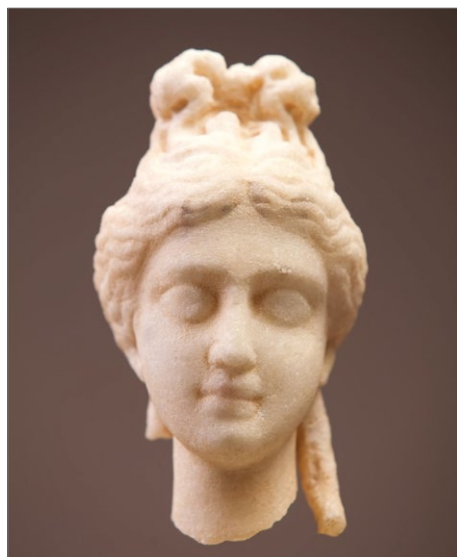


Fig. 3. Marble head of Aphrodite found in the context of the collapsed niche; Paphos, Archaeological Museum (Courtesy IKŚiO PAN Archive | photo W.A. Daszewski/PCMA UW)

6 For earthquakes, see Davis 2010: 9–10; Mavrojannis 2016: 338–339.

(Daszewski 1985: 20; Lichočka and Meyza 2001: 157; Jastrzębowska 2018: 534). The long central room, the so-called “Corridor” [Fig. 4: Nos 13-14-15), could be accessed from two doors, one leading from the vestibule and the other from the said corner room on the same floor level. It was fitted with an exceptional wooden floor, laid on joists resting on three low parallel support walls and on the vault of an older cistern adjacent to the east wall of the room; in this last building phase the cistern was reused as a dry cellar (Jastrzębowska 2018: 534–536, Fig. 4; forthcoming a). The eastern room [Fig. 5, No. 7] could be entered only from the

long room described above.⁷ It was also fitted with a wooden floor resting on low walls and preserved the entrance to the old cistern in the northern corner of the room. The entry was inside a small square doorway still open at the base of the west wall, which separated this room from the long chamber on the west (Jastrzębowska 2018: 537–539, Figs 3, 6; forthcoming a). In front of this doorway, a quadrangular shaft fitted with a wooden trapdoor and ladder led down into the cistern-turned-cellar (Jastrzębowska forthcoming a). The sides of this shaft were secured with stone blocks. Remains of a lockable cupboard with a shelf in the middle can still be



Fig. 4. Remains of a room (Nos 13-14-15) viewed from the west with three low walls (N-S), interpreted as supporting a lost wooden floor, and a cistern (No. 15) in the background along the east wall; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

7 The presumed remains of a door threshold in the southern corner of the wall between the two rooms would indicate an entrance located here rather than in the southern wall of the room (No. 7), as assumed earlier, see Jastrzębowska 2018: 537, Fig. 7.

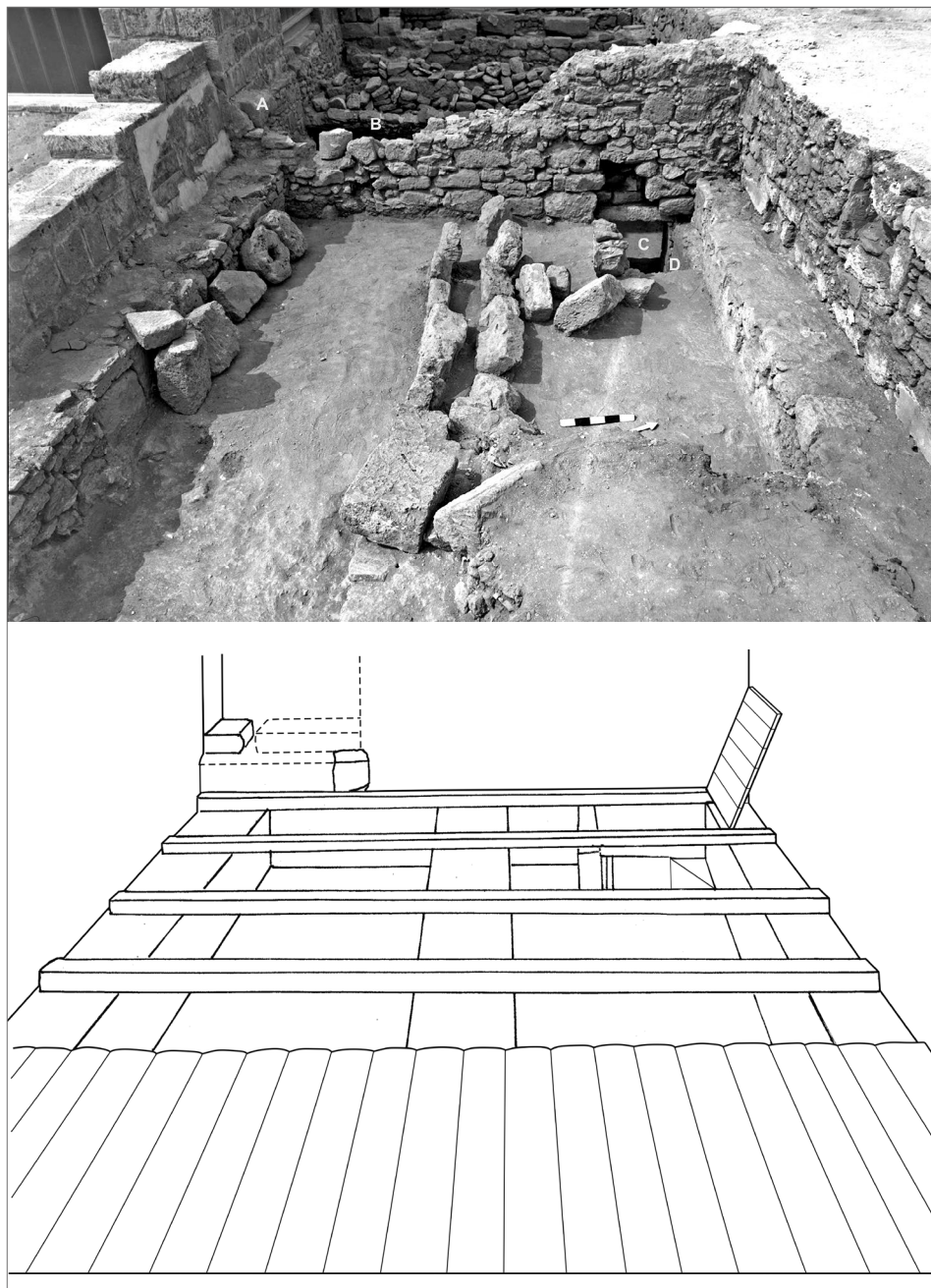


Fig. 5. Remains of a room (No. 7), viewed from the east, with three low walls (E-W) supporting a lost wooden floor: A – fragment of a stone threshold in a doorway of the room (Nos 13-14-15), B – cistern/cellar (No. 15), C – low square entry to the cistern; D – shaft in front of this entry; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park. Bottom: reconstruction of the appearance of the room (Courtesy IKŚiO PAN Archive | photo W.A. Daszewski 1988/PCMA UW; reconstruction E. Jastrzębowska, M. Puszkarski)



Fig. 6. Incense burner (Inv. no. 11/85) of limestone, from portico No. 5; Paphos, Archaeological Museum (Courtesy IKŚiO PAN Archive | photo K. Bajerowicz)

seen in the center of the north wall of the room (Jastrzębowska 2018: 537–538, Fig. 8). No clear function could be ascertained for either the cellar or the cupboard, but the 20 Constantinian coins (with a prevalence of issues of Constantius II from the years 347–361) found in the undisturbed fill of the cistern and the 11 similar coins discovered between the low walls supporting the wooden floor of the room indicate the date when this apparent “secret chamber” was fitted out (Lichočka and Meyza 2001: 182, 189, 195–196, 199–200).

Two porticos (Nos 5 and 6) lining a small open court (Nos 16W and 16E) on the north and west met at the corner,



Fig. 7. Remains of mosaics in the porticos (Nos 6 and 5) and the east vestibule wall with an oval “basin” incorporated into the wall of the modern shelter over the HA triclinium mosaics; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (PCMA UW | photo J.K. Rądkowska, 2011)

siding with the south wall of Room No. 7. The same grey mosaic floor was found in these porticos as in the two corridors described above [see *Fig. 1*: Nos 8 and 17] (Jastrzębowska 2018: 529, *Fig. 1*). The western portico (No. 5) is parallel to and has the same dimensions as the Vestibule (No. 2). The two are communicated by a large door at the north end of the wall between them, now incorporated in the east wall of a modern shelter protecting the mosaics in the triclinium.

Built into this wall between the vestibule and the portico (presently incorporated into the wall of the shelter south of the doorway to the vestibule) is an enigmatic oval basin [*Fig. 7*], preserved *in situ*. It was cut in a single stone block (54 × 30 cm), 30 cm high and was open toward the portico; it has no bottom, standing instead on a grey mosaic floor of the same kind as in the portico (No. 5), which is immediately next to it (Daszewski 1984: 950; 1985: 18; Daszewski et al. 1984: 304; Jastrzębowska forthcoming a). Purification with water, as suggested by the excavator (Daszewski 1985: 18), is not supported by any evidence of a water installation. However, a small *thymiaterion* of limestone [*Fig. 6*] was found in 1985 next to the door to the Vestibule, specifically “from or on the wall between R.5 and R.7”. This incense altar is cylindrical in shape, 17.80 cm high, and the cavity in its top preserved traces of burning (Tybulewicz 2018: 93, No. 1HA, Pls 1:6, 6:6).⁸ Perhaps it had something to do with the “basin” nearby. A fragment of another limestone incense burner, “originally in

the form of a deep circular vessel” on a slim stem rising from a larger circular base with three legs, dated broadly to the 1st–4th century, was found in 1986 outside the north wall of the long room (Nos 13–14–15) (Tybulewicz 2018: 95, No. 3HA, Pls 2:14, 6:14). It is not clear whether it was originally part of the HA furnishings and was displaced by the earthquake or had been part of the later North-eastern House from the start. Two other fragments of the damaged *thymiateria* were discovered in a room (No. 10) east of the corridor (No. 8), situated in line with the northern row of rooms in HA (Tybulewicz 2018: 85, 93, Nos 2HA; 95, 4HA, Pls 1:7, 2:15, 6: 7.). Stored in the same room were two pithoi and two amphorae sunk in the floor, accompanied by several other artifacts, mostly pottery, from the 4th century (Daszewski 1999: 170–171, *Fig. 8*; Lichocka and Meyza 2001: 152–153; Mikocka 2018: 125; Tybulewicz 2018: 85, 93, No. 2HA, Pls 1:7, 6: 7; 95, No. 4HA, Pl. 2:15). Grain storage was probably the primary function of this room, which was used also for the purpose of depositing other furniture, like altars or other vessels. The last room in the row (No. 19), severely damaged, yielded several larger fragments of architectural stone: a fragment of a column, a capital with leaves, similar to the capitals from the niche in the triclinium, a frieze with ovolo and *cyma recta*, an arch, an impost and two consoles, all from the 4th century (Daszewski 1998b: 128; Mikocka 2018: 126) [*Fig. 8*]. Aleksandra Brzozowska-Jawornicka recently used this set for a study

8 The chronological indication: “Context dating: 3rd c. AD” is proposed without any evidence in favor.

of the reconstruction of the entrance to the complex from street B (Brzozowska-Jawornicka 2016: 151–166). The small rooms (Nos 41, 42, 43) in the southeastern corner of HA, east of the eastern portico (No. 40) of the small court, are too destroyed for their function to be easily recognized. The presence of two “drums reused as mortars” in one of the rooms (No. 43) could testify to some kind of “household activity” (Meyza et al. 2012: 411).

The room layout of the complex may be unusual for late antique residential architecture, but the mosaic and painted decoration is typical of the times, in the eastern as well as western provinces of

the Roman Empire.⁹ This is true in particular of the floor mosaics in the Triclinium and the wall paintings in the room (No. 7). Fragments of painted plaster were discovered also during the excavations in other rooms in the northern wing, but since they were not preserved, they cannot be taken into consideration here (Jastrzębowska 2018: 535–536). The decoration of HA included the exquisite figural mosaic in the Triclinium, composed of five panels [Fig. 9], showing almost 50 gods and humans; some of these figures were destroyed, but all are signed with their names (Cayla 2018: 372–374, No. 302). Dionysus is the main hero of two scenes, as a newly born child sitting in the lap of Hermes, who presents him to the nymphs and the pleading educator Silenus Tropheus [Fig. 10, panel on the right, above]; then as the adult god sitting in a triumphal cart (damaged image) pulled by centaurs, accompanied by Tropheus, satyrs and maenads (left panel, below). There is also Leda and Zeus in the shape of a swan among other personifications and maids (left panel, above). In the scene with the largest number of figures (the central panel), the victorious Cassiopeia [Fig. 12] stands next to the personifications of judgement Krisis and fate Kleros, below a bust of Helios in a rare depiction of the beauty contest of Cassiopeia versus the three Nereids Doris, Thetis and Galatea, shown either floating or supported by tritons in a sea below the busts of the Olympians Zeus and Athena, among other deities and fantastic creatures of the earth and sea.



Fig. 8. Reconstruction of the main HA entrance under an arcade from street B; *50 Years of the Polish Mission in Paphos* exhibition, Nicosia 2017 (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

9 See foremost, Merrony 1998; Sfameni 2006: *passim*; Baldini Lippolis 2007; Özgenel 2007; Arce, Chavarría, and Ripoll 2007; Ghedini and Bullo 2007; Weiss 2011; Danner 2015; Görkay 2017.

anti-Christian gentile? It was definitely a reflection of the rich literary and philosophical heritage of antiquity embraced by the wealthy cultural elite of both parts of the Roman Empire, deeply rooted in the ancient iconographic tradition and even in Greek-Egyptian art and culture.¹¹ Faced with such a diversity of interpretations, I remain convinced about the evidently pagan character of the scenes and figures which have nothing to do with any kind of Christian influence or anti-Christian propaganda of the 4th cen-

tury.¹² The mosaics can be dated “shortly after 325” (Deligiannakis 2018: 38), but the identity of the individual who commissioned them remains unknown. The point is, however, that this issue has never been considered in the light of the archaeological, architectural and functional context of the discovery, not to mention the wall paintings that were found in the same house.

Even at first glance, the choice of scenes and figures for the mosaics in the Triclinium appears quite sophisticated.



Fig. 10. The child Dionysus presented by Hermes to the nymphs and Silenus, mosaic in the HA Triclinium, first half of the 4th century; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

11 See foremost: Deckers 1986: 151–167; Musso and La Rocca 2018: 132–145; Deligiannakis 2018: 36, 38; La Rocca 2018: 84–91, 94–141; 2021: 9–64; Jastrzębowska forthcoming b.

12 See recently Deligiannakis 2018: 35–38; Jastrzębowska forthcoming b; see La Rocca 2021.



Fig. 11. Apollo after the music contest, fragment of a mosaic in the HA Triclinium, first half of the 4th century; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)



Fig. 12. Cassiopeia (*stephanephora*) awarded a wreath of victory by Krisis in a beauty contest, fragment of a mosaic from the HA Triclinium, first half of the 4th century; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

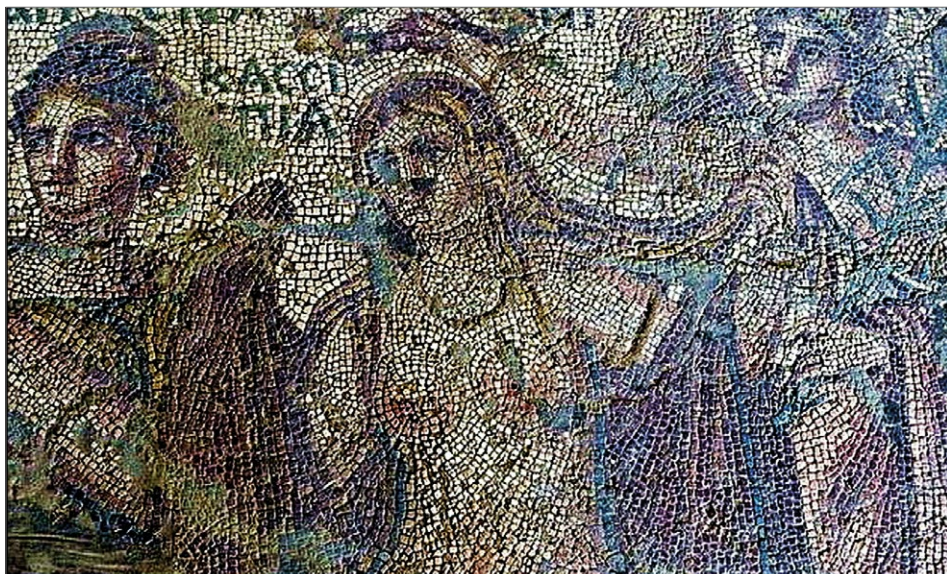


Fig. 13. Cassiopeia (*stephanephora*), awarded a wreath of victory by Krisis in a beauty contest, fragment of a mosaic from Apamea lost during the recent Syrian war (<https://alisariram.wordpress.com/2013/04/04/bearing-witness-list-of-damage-to-heritage-in-syria/>)

Models and parallels in painting and mosaic floor decoration of luxurious private Roman houses are noticeably less frequent. The composition of the five-panel mosaic reveals that it was intended to be viewed by those entering from the vestibule rather than those lying on couches in the Triclinium. These mosaics were meant to impress and delight arriving guests with the stories of the triumph of Dionysus, the erotic conquest of Zeus, the victory of a sensually naked Cassiopeia in a beauty contest with the Nereids, and the triumph of divine music over earthly sounds.

The main figure, celebrated twice in these mosaics, is undoubtedly Dionysus. The god is depicted according to models borrowed from imperial propaganda art as a divine child presented by Hermes to earthly beings, the nymphs and Silenus and as a victorious adult arriving from the Orient to Greece in a divine and human *thiasos*. This double image of a victorious Dionysus was supposed to be marked by a particular Neoplatonic philosophical influence—as Jean-Charles and Janine Balty proposed—but this intellectual aspect is immersed in such an evidently sensual context of the other mosaic scenes that it seems to be less important here (see Balty 1995: 285–286; Cayla 2018: 374). Possible cultural ties with Greek Egypt, inherited from Hellenism, i.e. references to the culture of the Ptolemaic royal court, seem to be much more significant from the point of view

of the iconography of this extraordinary Cypriot mosaic, as Eugenio La Rocca has recently and deservedly highlighted (La Rocca 2021: 57–59, 65–146).¹³

Feasting in the cult of Dionysus in the eastern Roman provinces inherited the traditional, Hellenistic form of artistic competitions (*agones*) that played a very important role in the life of Greek town communities and the united league (*koina*) of these towns, also throughout the Roman world. These festivals, together with cult ceremonies in honour of Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors, were held in theaters and were accompanied by processions, offerings, crowning winners with wreaths and ultimately banquets.

“From the Hellenistic period onwards contests in honour of rulers—first of Hellenistic kings, later of Roman emperors, occasionally for members of royal families and their friends or for members of the imperial family—the Goddess Rome (Romaia) and Roman provincial governors were added to the traditional contests organised for gods and for mortals of elevated status (heroes, war dead). Also, innumerable contests were endowed by individuals. This increased the number of contests tremendously. It has been estimated that by the second century A.D. about 500 *agones* are attested

13 La Rocca richly documents all possible aspects of references of mosaic images of Hermes presenting Dionysus to probable, but not preserved, models of official royal portraiture of Ptolemy III Euergetes and Ptolemy IV Philopator as Hermes-Thoth and/or New Dionysus. It would have been a very interesting and convincing interpretation were it not for the 500 years separating the reigns of these kings and the time of the Constantine dynasty, which is when the mosaics for the HA Triclinium were made (La Rocca 2021: 137–146).

in inscriptions and coins. Because of this increase in agonistic festivals, the Emperor Hadrian intervened in 134 A.D., establishing a strict sequence in which the most important contests should take place. The most prestigious contests were those that awarded crowns as prizes, not money” (Chaniotis 2011: 22).

Two of the scenes from the Triclinium mosaics represent a contest (*agon*) underway between gods and humans: a beauty contest between Cassiopeia and the Nereids in the central panel and a music competition between Apollo and Marsyas in the lower left panel. A victorious naked Cassiopeia is seldom depicted in ancient paintings and mosaics. Only two parallels have been recorded since the 1970s from the Roman floor mosaics and both are from Syria: one in Palmyra, in a luxurious private house next to the temple of Bel, and the other one in Apamea (J.-C. Balty 1972). The mosaic from Palmyra is differently composed, but it is also earlier, from the end of the 2nd–beginning of the 3rd century (Stern 1977: 32–33, Fig. 2; J. Balty 1995: 291–297, Fig. 5; Deplace 2013: 38–39, dating). The Apamean mosaic with the beauty contest of Cassiopeia [Fig. 13], which originates from a presumed public building, is more comparable to the mosaic in Nea Paphos both formally and in content, as well as because of the presence of similar headings. It is also contemporary with the Paphian mosaic (J.-C. Balty 1972: 112–123, Figs 4–11; Balty and Balty 1974: 276–278; J. Balty 1988: 17–18; Bowersock 1990: 49–50; J. Balty 1995: 265–289; 2014: 21–24, Figs 17–19).

Jean-Charles and Janine Balty argued that the Apamean floor must have come from one of the chambers of the famous school of Neoplatonic philosophers existing in the Syrian city in the 4th century (Balty and Balty 1974: 277–278; J.-C. Balty 1981: 115–116, 212–216; see recently Olszewski 2020: 237). The building itself has not survived, but three other figural floor mosaics are known from this complex: *Therapenides*, depicting the return of Ulysses to Ithaca where the hero is welcomed by a circle of dancing girls; a group of philosophers with Socrates and six wise men of Greece; and the third, an allegory of beauty *Kallos* (figure destroyed). There is also a mosaic with a symbolic image of a double decorative, expensive wreath of victory around the inscription $\epsilon\upsilon \chi\rho\omega$, meaning “use it well” on a table or altar cloth (Balty and Balty 1974: 271). The Baltys interpretation of this wreath with the inscription as a “sorte de jeu de mot”, written intentionally in opposition to the *signum Christi*, i.e., $\text{A XP}\Omega$, appears to go too far, considering the importance of the wreath as a prestigious award used in all kinds of Greek and Roman contests for a very long time. It was also the most popular decoration of official investitures and honours. The wreath was the pride of every benefactor or winner, the *stephanephoros* (Poland 1995: 2491, 2496, 2548–2552; Chaniotis 2005: 52–57). As a matter of fact, the personification of judgement, *Krisis*, awards Cassiopeia from the Paphos mosaic with a similar wreath, while two other wreaths are shown lying on a table next to her [Fig. 12], behind *Kleros* personifying fate. The presumed Apamean school of philosophers was replaced by the so-called

East Cathedral from the 5th century, rebuilt in the 6th century after an earthquake. Hence its layout and the number of rooms is unknown (J.-C. Balty 1981: 115–116, 212–216; J. Balty 1995: 362–363). Balty dated the preserved floor mosaics from this school to the beginning of the second half of the 4th century, corresponding to the time spent in Antioch by the Emperor Julian in 362–363. The emperor was known as a great admirer of the Neoplatonic philosopher Jamblichus, the founder of the Apamean school and in view of the length of his stay in Antioch, Balty even supposed that he could have visited Apamea on this occasion, but there is no mention of such an event in any source (Balty and Balty 1974: 270–277; J.-C. Balty 1981: 115).¹⁴ The chronological coincidence between the mosaics from Apamea and those from Nea Paphos will be considered later in this paper.

The entourage of the Apamean School is not known, but in the case of HA, the archaeological context inside and outside this house is sufficiently well preserved to make it possible to examine its function. Placing a triclinium as richly decorated as this one just inside the entrance was unlikely in a Roman dwelling due to privacy issues, among the Romans as much as among the Greeks (see above, page 342–343). Taking into account the size of the room (approximately 68 m²) and the Π-shaped area running around the room, marked by a black mosaic with a white rhomboidal net, where the rectangular banquet couches would have stood, one could calculate their dimensions. These wooden beds with the top

dropping toward the outside edges would have consisted of the main couch opposite the entrance and two side couches. The central couch could have been up to 6 m long counting the border of the mosaic composition or 9 m long counting the length of the west wall of the room. It could have been roughly 1.80 m wide and about 1 m high which is the average height of a Roman kline. The side couches, on the northern and southern sides, could have been 4.50 m long on the inside and 6 m on the outside, roughly 2 m wide and about 1 m high. This can be compared to the so-called Podiensaal, the banquet hall of a Dionysus cult association of the Boukoloi in Pergamon still in use in the 4th century [Fig. 14], which was more than twice as large (approximately 18 × 9 m = 162 m²) and contained two masonry triclinia facing each other. The Triclinium of HA in Nea Paphos was not only smaller, but also had different proportions (Schwarzer 2002: 231–235, Fig. 4; 2006: 154–155; 2008: 64–77, 80–102). The Podiensaal couches (about 2 m wide and 1 m high) could have accommodated a maximum of 70 banqueters, the Cypriot Triclinium, despite its different proportions, roughly 30 (Schwarzer 2002: 232; 2006: 154).

The statue in the architecturally adorned semicircular niche [see Fig. 2] in the back wall of the Triclinium in Nea Paphos would have been a cult image of the divine patron of the banqueters. The head of Aphrodite [see Fig. 3] found among the collapsed blocks of this niche (now in the Archaeological Museum in Paphos) could have belonged to this

14 For Julian's stay in Antioch, see Downey 1961: 380–396.

statue (see above, page 343). Its small size (18 cm high) suggests that the figure could have had a small incense altar placed next to it like—all things being equal—the famous contemporaneous statue of Victoria and her altar in the Roman Curia where the Senate sat and where each senator was obliged to offer a pinch of incense in honour of the goddess (see Sheridan 1966; Demandt 1989: 85, 134, 278, 288, 425; Ermatinger 2004: 37, 76; Jones 2014: 70–72, 109–110). A small cult niche was present also in the wall of the Pergamene Podiensaal, opposite the entrance, still in use in the 4th century, despite an earlier date for the two stone altars consecrated to Dionysus and Augustus that were discovered nearby (Radt 1988: 227, Fig. 94; Schwarzer 2002: 232; 2006: 154; 2008: 83, 236–237, Nos S 19 and S 20; Jastrzębowska 2017: 140).

Of greater interest for the present considerations are the studies of Holger Schwarzer, who compared the Cypriot banquet halls as well as the ordinary triclinia for pilgrims, discovered in the popular religious centers in Palea Paphos, Kourion and Soloi, with analogous rooms containing either podia (as those in Pergamon) or triclinia, stibadia and other couches found in religious centers of the Middle East, such as Petra or Palmyra (Schwarzer 2007; 2008: 104–160). Two large banquet halls (North and South Stoa) with two aisles and masonry podia along the walls in the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Palea Paphos as well as the great hall (Northwest Building) with five rows of columns and four long similar podia in the sanctuary of Apollo Hylates in Kourion are less comparable with the Triclinium in HA in Nea Paphos (Schwarzer



Fig. 14. So-called Podiensaal of the *Boukoloï* association in Pergamon, 2nd–4th centuries AD (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

2007: 95–101; 2008: 132–134). However, five single room-triclinia [Fig. 15] from the 1st–2nd century in Kourion are of the same type (Schwarzer 2007: 100, Fig. 2; 2008: 132). They form a row constituting the South Building in the sanctuary of Apollo Hylates. In layout they are comparable to the HA Triclinium, although the dimensions, proportions and masonry couches are slightly different. In Kourion as well as Nea Paphos, these rooms opened out through three doors or an arcade onto a common portico or vestibule accessed from outside. In the sanctuary of Apollo, it was the South Court, in Nea Paphos the street B running from the harbour in the east to the so-called Villa of Theseus in the west, but in Paphos there was no sanctuary anywhere near the house.

The communication of the triclinium hall with the small corner room [see Fig. 1: No. 3] in HA is also unlikely in a regular Roman residence. The mosaic floor in this chamber is on a level much lower than in the Triclinium, but comparable to the floor in the Vestibule and Triclinium. Indeed, the entire north wing of rooms in HA had floors level with the Vestibule mosaic. There are no indications as to the purpose of this corner room with its floor with a geometric mosaic. Perhaps it was used to store small tables or vessels for guests or incense burners (altars) for a divine patron? No objects or fragments thereof were found inside the room, only some undetermined pieces of wall paintings with vegetal motifs and marble imitation (Daszewski 1985: 20; Jastrzębowska 2018: 535). However, an incense burner



Fig. 15. Triclinium room in the Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates near Kourion, 2nd century AD (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

was discovered not far away, just beyond the north wall of the house, while three other displaced incense altars were found in the portico (No. 5) and in one of the rooms (No. 10) (see above) (Tybulewicz 2018: 93, Nos 1HA, 2HA, Pls 1:3,7, 6:6,7, 95, 3HA, Pls 2:14, 6:14, 4HA Pl, 2:15; see above, page 347).

From this corner room a second door located in the east wall led to a much longer room [see *Figs 1, 4*: Nos 13-14-15] fitted with a wooden floor on the same level as the last room [see *Figs 1, 5*: No. 7] in this enfilade. Both rooms had a wooden floor and, at least the last room, richly painted walls. They were obviously not suited to be a kitchen and yielded nothing in the way of evidence for a cooking function.

(If HA had a kitchen, then it would have had to be located at the other end of the house, in its southeastern corner, but no evident sign of such a function was ever found). Two features of the last room contribute to this functional analysis. Concealed under the wooden floor of the two rooms [*Fig. 16*] and with ensured and secured access from the last room was an old underground cistern (No. 15) turned dry cellar in the last phase of HA activity (Jastrzębowska forthcoming a). The 20 Constantinian coins, added to the pottery evidence, dated this phase to the second half of the 4th century. The discovery of a small fragment of what could have been a leather pouch, perhaps a money bag, suggests that the cellar could have been



Fig. 16. Cistern (in Room 15) on the left and the entrance shaft located in the neighbouring chamber (No. 7) on the right; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

- 15 The discovery of remains of a presumed leather object were brought to the author's attention by Henryk Meyza (personal communication); Jastrzębowska forthcoming a.



Fig. 17. Lockable cabinet in the north wall of Room 7; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

used as a kind of money vault (Lichočka and Meyza 2001: 160, 195–197).¹⁵ The content must have been either removed or robbed directly after the earthquake in 365 and the 20 coins found by archaeologists possibly lost somewhere in the rubble following the destruction. The room also had a niche [Fig. 17] in the center of the north wall, which is sufficiently well preserved to reveal holes in the front edges of the stone blocks on either side and a horizontal groove in the internal surfaces of these blocks corresponding to an inserted shelf. It is possible to envision here a wall cabinet with a closing door,



Fig. 18. The Muse Thalia, fragment of a wall painting from Room 7, first half of the 4th century AD; Paphos, Archaeological Museum (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)



Fig. 19. The Muse Euterpe, fragment of a wall painting from Room 7, first half of the 4th century AD; Paphos, Archaeological Museum (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

designed to hold objects of value, such as important documents, seals or insignia (Jastrzębowska forthcoming a). Therefore, considering the available archaeological evidence, this particular room could have served as a treasury-archive with a place for keeping important documents under lock and key and underground money vault (Jastrzębowska forthcoming a).

Before going into the larger functional context of the house, one should recall in brief the wall paintings from this room, which were destroyed most likely in the earthquake of 365 and lay sealed under the rubble until their discovery some 30 years ago (Jastrzębowska 2018: 550–565). They seem to have been painted in the second quarter of the 4th century, which could explain the freshness of the colors. Consolidation and reconstruction work restored the following images: a theater mask; a young woman robed in a white tunic and red mantle [Fig. 18], crowned with a leafy wreath and feathers, holding a rod in her hand; a mature woman also in a leafy crown and feathers on her head, dressed in a white tunic and purple cloak, and seated on a blue cushion; another young woman with a double flute in her hands, dressed in a rich red robe of a “theatrical” kind, decorated with gold ribbons and blue applications, also with the crown and feathers on her head [Fig. 19]; a semi-nude Apollo, face incomplete, preserved only as a small fragment of the chest with the right arm raised above the head and grasping a lyre in the hand. These images have been convincingly interpreted as, respectively, the Greek Muses Thalia with a *pedum* and theater mask—Muse of comedy and pastoral poetry; Urania sitting near a celest-

tial globe—Muse of astronomy; Euterpe with half of a *dioulos* (the other *aulos* from the set is very fragmentary)—Muse of lyric poetry and flute music; and, finally, Apollo, who does not require any interpretative explanation (Jastrzębowska 2018: 544–563, Figs 16, 17, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28). There were more figures painted on the walls, but the fragmentariness of the plaster remains makes their identification extremely hypothetical: possibly other muses, gods or even humans of both sexes, identified by name on an inscribed band running around the room below the figures, it, too, fragmentarily preserved (Jastrzębowska 2018: 542–544, Figs 12 and 13; 563–564, Fig. 30). A small fragment of a Hellenistic inscription, found in 1988 in the fill of the room, was either reused in the 4th century as a revetment slab or even intruded later in the ruins, hence it is irrelevant to the analysis of the original function of this room (Łajtar 2020: 209–210, No. 1).

This fairly small and dark room with just one inside entrance appears to have been decorated as a typical Room of the Muses. The theme was highly popular in the painting and mosaic decoration of Roman residential housing across the Empire from the 2nd to the 4th century (Jastrzębowska 2018: 26, 551–552, 567, 571, Figs 19, 20, 23, 25, 29, 32, 33), but it could also have had a symbolic and apotropaic sense, considering the presumed function of this closed, if not secret treasury-archive, containing the most valuable property of the collective owner of the house, which could have been an association under the patronage and care of the Muses. In any case, the sum of the above presented evidence coming from

HA indicates that the building in the 4th century was certainly not a regular dwelling. Instead, it may have been the seat of a new or reactivated, wealthy and important cult or professional association. The issue is to ascertain which kind of Roman *collegium* it could be.

Considering the presence of the Muses and Cassiopeia in the painting and mosaic decoration of HA, thematically comparable to the mosaics in Apamea and the statues of Muses from any ancient Mouseion, we could be dealing here with a so-called school of philosophers, who used to hold symposia connected with intellectual debate in the triclinium. Philip A. Harland, one of the best experts on Roman *collegia* in the eastern, i.e., Greek speaking part of the Empire (see Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg n.d., 2012; Harland 2014; 2015; 2018; 2019), considers these philosophers' schools as the "unofficial associations", otherwise "ongoing groups located between the structures of the family and the structures of the city that were relatively small, unofficial, and non-compulsory (more or less "voluntary"), usually consisting of about 5–30 members though sometimes larger" (Harland 2019: 210). Harland identified five functions or activities characteristic of these groups: "(1) honouring deities or heroes, (2) banqueting (often entailing sacrifice), (3) interacting with external or internal benefactors, and (4) engaging in mutual aid, including funerary functions. Another corporate activity that is closely related to the third point is attested for some associations, though certainly not all: namely, (5) involvement in diplomatic connections with civic or imperial authorities or organized attempts to gain

recognition or privileges for a group or its members" (Harland 2019: 210–211). The first three points of this characteristic could theoretically refer also to the HA owners in terms of the size of the group, meeting at banquets and their possible cult of Aphrodite. However, there is no mention in Harland's specification about gathering or owning money (*arca*) through this unofficial *collegium* and about its wealth and documents being stored, which in the case of the group in HA would have been placed in the end room (No. 7) and possibly entrusted into the care of the Muses and Apollo. Another major objection to the *Mouseion* hypothesis is that there are no sources or material evidence for such a hypothesis in the case of HA. No official or unofficial philosophers' association has been recorded as existing in Paphos in the 4th century and all things considered, it is enough to compare the modest house plan of HA and the scarce remains of its equipment to what is known about the component parts of the most famous *Mouseion* in Alexandria or the *Akademia* and other philosopher schools in Athens from late antiquity to see the evident differences between them, and not only in size and importance (Caruso 2013: 38–45, 65–76, 121–153, 157–163, 165–171; Jones 2014: 127–131; Caruso 2016: 17–52, 65–72, 221–218, 267–298). First, the building in Nea Paphos did not contain a library (or at least there is neither evidence nor room for it) and there are no signs of philosophers, either in name (inscriptions) or image (written, sculptured, painted or rendered in a mosaic), comparable to those found in Apamea, Athens or even Alexandria, where the *Mouseion* is known

only from the written sources (see Haas 2007; McKenzie 2007; Caruso 2011; 2016: 280–287, 291–298).

If not a philosophers' school, then could the HA have served a Dionysiac cult association, considering that Dionysus was so particularly honoured in the mosaics from the Triclinium? The today inexistent sanctuary of Dionysus *Trieterikon* on the Greek island of Milo, with its sculptures and inscriptions of the founders, was still active in the first half of the 4th century, as indicated by the circular trunk of a *perirrhaterion* or perhaps a *thymiaterion* (in my humble opinion) decorated with a Dionysiac *thiasos*, but none of the rooms excavated in the 19th century can be interpreted as a triclinium (Jaccottet 2003/I: 175–182; 2003/II: 273–276; Konstantinidis 2011: 297–304; Nielsen 2014: 52, 54, Fig. 3). However, to cite Marietta Horster,

“[f]rom classical to Roman times, nearly all imaginable kinds of combinations and hybrid forms of public and private organisation and funding are attested for Dionysiac cult activities, as well as the two ‘normal’ organisational forms, namely private cult associations and public polis cults. Elements of mixed forms are found in the import of maenads from Thebes to Magnesia and the setting up of four *thiasoi* associations; in the private associations of *Bakchoi* in Miletos, which were connected with the public priestess at least by payments of fees; and in the various cults of Dionysos in Pergamon that featured interactions between the official

cult of Dionysos *Kathegemon* and the cults of several private associations like the *Bakchoi* and *Boukoloi* and those of the international Dionysiac *technitai*, some of which had cult- and meeting-places next to the civic theater” (Horster 2011: 66–67).

Three tentatively identified seats of Dionysiac associations from Pergamon, chosen from among many others that are more or less hypothetical, are of particular interest for the purpose of the present comparison. One of these is the so-called House Z in the city center, north of the Main Street, above the Great Gymnasium complex, built in the first half of the 2nd century BC and rebuilt at least three times in the Roman period (Schwarzer 2002: 228–231; Nielsen 2014: 52–54, Fig. 4; Jastrzębowska 2017: 140–141; Radt and Bachmann 2017). This large peristyle house (38 m by 37 m) had a large central courtyard with a portico running around it and rooms opening onto it, surviving in different condition, with two rather well preserved floor mosaics. One of these is a composition of theatrical masks next to different animals inside a geometric grid [Fig. 20], adorning a small western room with cult niche. The other mosaic decorates the largest room, which could have been a banquet hall, and presents a bust of Silenus among other neutral motifs. Both floor mosaics date from around AD 100 (Schwarzer 2002: 229). In the first half of the 2nd century AD, a small atrium and adjacent small bath was added in the northeastern corner of House Z. The house appears to have been destroyed in an earthquake in the second half of the 2nd century. The large dimensions of the

complex, its luxurious architectural décor with stuccowork, mosaics and marble panelling, as well as the presence of several sacral deposits under the floors, have led scholars to argue against a private and residential character of this house and instead to propose that it was a seat of a *collegium* of devotees of Dionysus (Wulf 1994: 150–151; Schwarzer 2002: 230–231).

The second of the tentative analogies is the already mentioned Podiensaal, undoubtedly the most outstanding and best preserved seat of an association in Hellenistic and Roman Pergamon (Radt 1988: 224–228; Schwarzer 2002: 231–235; 2006; 2008: 64–67, 79–92; Nielsen 2014: 54–55, Figs 5–7; Jastrzębowska 2017: 140–141, Fig. 67). It was built in the second half of the 2nd century BC as a regular peristyle house, then reconstructed (seven building phases were identified) into a larger, elongated banquet hall preceded by a portico

and adjoined by small utility rooms in the north-western corner of the complex, as well as on the south side entering from the Main Street. The ‘Hall of Podia’ (16 m by 9 m) [see Fig. 14] remained in use until the mid 4th century (Schwarzer 2006, 153–161, Fig. 7; 2008: 72–73). The entrance to the Hall was on the west, in the center of the long wall, opposite a cult niche with traces of wall painting. The niche was located in a gap 1 m long and 2 m wide in the podium, which otherwise runs unbroken round the walls of the hall. The upper surface of the podium lowers slightly backwards, which means that it formed a stone couch intended for the many participants in banquets, a maximum of 70 as it was already said (Schwarzer 2002: 232; 2006: 154). We are dealing here with an arrangement of two triclinia on either side of the cult niche. Access to the stone couches was by means of small steps in the



Fig. 20. Mosaic with theater masks from House Z of the Dionysiac association in Pergamon, ca. AD 100; Bergama, Ancient City (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

middle of the long walls. It is commonly accepted today that the hall was used for cult banquets held by an association of followers of Dionysus (*Boukoloi*) (Schwarzer 2006: 155; 2008: 92–102; Nielsen 2014: 55; Jastrzębowska 2017: 140).

The third and possibly the oldest seat of an association in Pergamon, related traditionally to Dionysus but perhaps also to the royal cult of the Attalid family initiated in the reign of Eumenes II, that is, in the first half of the 2nd century BC, was discovered in the 19th century at the southern end of a long terrace below the auditorium of the Great Theater. The only surviving element today is the modest ruin of the so-called Building with the Niche, identified traditionally, but with reservations, as the seat of the college of *Attalistsai* (Radt 1988: 217–218, 222–225; Schwarzer 2002: 223–225; 2008: 64–67, 79–92; Jastrzębowska 2017: 138–139). The complex consisted of three rooms in an irregular enfilade on three levels, with a stepped entrance from the south opening into the lower room and a main hall (10.30 × 8.70 m) on the highest level. Next to it, in the northwestern corner of the hall, was a passage leading to a small adjacent chamber partly hewn in the rock. The special character of the main hall is indicated by the presence in the back wall of a deep, three-sided niche, originally marble-panelled and preceded by a podium for statues. The ceremonial character of this hall is suggested by two

shallow channels cut into the floor near the niche, running a meter away from the outer walls of the room, leaving enough room for wooden klinai placed side by side and parallel to the wall (Schwarzer 2002: 223). It is not clear what kind of ceremonies were accompanied here by banquets and whether the channel actually served the purpose of letting the wine offered as a libation to flow out (Schwarzer 2002: 223; Jastrzębowska 2017: 139). “Because of the close proximity of the building to the theater and the Dionysus Temple, it can be assumed that there was a functional connection between them. So, the idea suggests that the niche building represented the meeting place of the Pergamene Theater troupe, which was affiliated with the Dionysian Technites” (Schwarzer 2002: 224).¹⁶ This particular association of theater artists (*τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνῖται*) was responsible for the organisation and staging of theatrical performances, musical and poetical contests and, above all, of the important and very popular festivals (*koina*) in the Greek classical, Hellenistic and early Roman Eastern Mediterranean.

In context with the tentative money-saving function of the complex in HA, it is useful to take a closer look at the economic aspects of Dionysiac cult companies in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, namely, where did they obtain the income for their activities. According to Marietta Horster, “there were two main

16 Author’s translation (“Wegen unmittelbaren Nähe des Gebäudes zum Theater und zum Dionysos-Tempel ist zu vermuten, daß es zwischen ihnen einen funktionalen Zusammenhang gegeben hat. So liegt der Gedanke nahe, daß der Nischenbau das Versammlungslokal der pergamenischen Theatertruppe darstellte, die den Dionysischen Techniten angeschlossen war”); my only objection is the interpretation of this Dionysus Temple, which Filippo Coarelli would like to identify as a temple of Asklepios, see Coarelli 2016: 15–35; Jastrzębowska 2017: 137–138.

types of income, irrespective of whether the cult was publicly or privately organised: steady, regular, basic income; and sporadic, irregular revenues” (Horster 2011: 67; see Harland 2015: 14–16). The basic income was guaranteed by the real estate holdings of the sanctuary to which a given association belonged. These could be land leases and other ways of using the property of the sanctuary, for instance, “tax income from the villages and their inhabitants” (Horster 2011: 67–69). The revenues of this group included also mandatory financial contributions of any sort, in cash or goods: “fees for cult services or prescribed sums for slaves undergoing manumission” (Horster 2011: 73). However, for various reasons, mainly the randomness and incompleteness of the preserved sources (inscriptions and papyri), it is impossible to know how much of this income went to the temple treasury and how much to the cash register of the associations. In any case, the entry charges and other fees went to private associations in cash and in *spondai* of wine (one *sponde* = l. 38) (Horster 2011: 74), and cities and sanctuaries alike could also profit financially from donations, as well as from the great religious festivals and fairs (Horster 2011: 76–79, 81–83; see also Poland 1995: 2540–2546; Aneziri 2003: 195–202, 296–298; Le Guen 2004b: 293–295). On the one hand,

“even though deposits in money are well attested from classical to Roman times in the Greek-speaking world, there are no literary or epi-

graphic sources that connect such deposits with sanctuaries of Dionysos (Horster 2011: 80);

but on the other hand,

“the public festivals of Dionysos with dramatic performances and competitions, the dancing of maenads in nightly processions, the initiation, the secret objects and the secret knowledge as well as the banquets and rituals of private cults could be presented in a spectacular and impressive manner, with funding by various means, but probably often with a relatively large element of personal engagement compared to cults of other important divinities of the Graeco-Roman world. From the perspective of cult economy and finance, Dionysos was only a slightly ‘different’ god” (Horster 2011: 83–84).

This means that as a rule Dionysiac associations, including antique ‘guilds’ of artists, had at their disposal substantial sums of money from various sources, as well as important documents of their legality, hence the need for safekeeping. The small room (No. 7) in HA in Nea Paphos, with a tentative subterranean vault and an archive in a locked cupboard, could have been very useful for such a purpose and necessity.

Research on Dionysiac artistic associations is a broad and diverse topic with a long reference list,¹⁷ hence the decision

17 See foremost: Poland 1995: 2474–2558; Le Guen 2001a; Jaccottet 2003; Aneziri 2003; Le Guen 2004a: 87–94; 2004b; Petzl and Schwertheim 2006; Jones 2007; Aneziri 2009; Le Guen 2010; Jaccottet 2011; Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg 2012; Harland 2015; Veale 2017: 101.

to limit the discussion here to the functioning of these associations in Cyprus (Młynarczyk 1990: 135–142; Aneziri 1994; 2003: 119–120; Le Guen 2001b: 288–289; 2016; Cayla 2017; 2018: 211–221). There are ten known inscriptions quoting Cypriot artistic associations (τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνίται), but they all date to the Hellenistic period and the beginning of Roman rule in Egypt and Cyprus, i.e., 144–131 BC through 41–31 BC (Aneziri 1994; Le Guen 2001a: 300–315, Nos 62–71; Cayla 2017; 2018: 83–86, 211–221, Nos 91–96; for the dates see Cayla 2017: 324–331; 2018: 84–86, 213, No. 91, 216, No. 93, 218–219, Nos 94 and 95). Associations continued to exist after that, but the evidence is very poor, most of the honorific statues and their bases having been burned for lime in later times. In any case, the epigraphic texts can be informative concerning the situation on the island in the later Roman period, because the imperial *synodos* of the *technitai* of Dionysus is attested elsewhere in the Empire, Egypt included, into the 3rd century at the very least (Poland 1995: 2512–2515, 2521; Aneziri 2003: 119, 240–242; Di Stefano 2004; Le Guen 2004b: 292–293; Petzl and Schwertheim 2006; Jones 2007). Five Paphian honorific inscriptions and one decree were carved on the stone bases of statues and they all commemorate high officials of the Ptolemaic state and the late Roman Republic, as well as members of their families, i.e., benefactors of the Dionysiac *technitai* expressing in this way their gratitude for donations and financial decisions of undetermined form and value. Moreover, these benefactors were also honorary members of the same association (Aneziri 1994: 194, No. 1 [cited as found in Salamis], 196–198, Nos 5–9;

Cayla 2018: 83–84, 211–220, Nos 90–95). Of the five inscriptions discovered in Paphos one was found near the theater and four in the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Palea Paphos/Kouklia; three inscriptions originate from Salamis and the last one was a collector's item mentioning Paphos (Aneziri 1994: 194–198, Nos 1–9; Cayla 2018: 211–220, Nos 90–95). Nevertheless, they all relate to the common Cypriot *koinon* that should be *in praxis* operated by the same artistic group forming the Cypriot office (*grammateion*) of the *synodos*, first Egyptian and then imperial, of one global artists' association in Cyprus (Aneziri 1994: 183–184; 2003: 110–111; Cayla 2018: 83, 211–216, Nos 90, 91). The Egyptian link to Paphos is also attested by the lost inscription from 41–31 BC, “mentionant la confrerie dionysiaque de la Paphesienne”, carved on a gem from Egypt, which disappeared when many notable pieces from the important 19th century collection of Michał Tyszkiewicz were put on sale and dispersed after the owner's death (Cayla 2018: 220, No 96). There are three elements in these materials that could have survived or been developed under Roman rule: 1) Paphian Aphrodite, associated with Dionysus, as the chief patroness of the Cypriot *koinon* of artists (Młynarczyk 1990: 143; Cayla 2017: 334–335; 2018: 84, 216–220, Nos 93, 94, 95); 2) successive state rulers presented as equally important patrons of the association, i.e., Ptolemaic kings and Roman emperors fostering artistic life in Cyprus and being offered reciprocally dynastic and imperial worship (Aneziri 1994: 186–188; Le Guen 2001b: 288; Cayla 2017: 334–335; 2018: 84–85, 212–213); 3) a close relationship between

the association and the theater, proven by the place of discovery and the content of unfortunately only one inscription (Calya 2018: 211–213, No. 90). Therefore, “à Paphos, entre le théâtre (à Néa Paphos) et le sanctuaire poliade excentré (à Palai-paphos), entre Dionysos et Aphrodite, la topographie constitue deux pôles, deux espaces dans lesquels se sont figurées les relations du pouvoir au culte local. Des cortèges, des banquets, des spectacles et des discours, nous n’avons pas de trace sinon ces quelques inscriptions sur des bases de statues : les bribes d’une topique paphienne” (Calya 2017: 335).

A scarcity of written sources related to the *technitai* is characteristic of the entire antique world under Roman rule. The papyri from Oxyrynchos included copies of letters of five emperors (Claudius, Hadrian, Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Alexander Severus) (Di Stefano 2004; Petzl and Schwertheim 2006; Jones 2007; Harland 2009: 146–147, 152–156; Freu 2012: 234), showing that the old Hellenistic local and provincial artistic *koina* of Dionysiac *technitai* became a global imperial association (*synodos*) in the 1st century, strengthened in the 2nd and 3rd centuries by imperial privileges setting fixed prices and fees, obliging the beneficent *technitai* to promote and worship given emperors (Poland 1995: 2514–2520). This oecumenic *synodos* of Dionysiac artists was thus given a truly cosmopolitan character.

“Moving amongst other cosmopolitan groups, such as merchants, orators, philosophers and ambassadors, the Artists of Dionysus were the only professionals in the Hellenistic period who, through their associa-

tions, gave their cosmopolitanism substance and identity. Later, in the imperial period, this cosmopolitanism of the artists acquired a new dimension and an oecumenical character: artists no longer operated as members of (supra-)local associations in a politically fragmented world, but as members of a unified worldwide guild within the Roman empire” (Aneziri 2009: 233).

However, when state authority found itself in crisis in the 3rd century, with pretenders fighting for the imperial throne and natural cataclysms, plague and drought, trying society, conditions were not conducive to a thriving culture, including theater and music competitions, and therefore creating few or no opportunities for Dionysiac artists. This may explain the absence of any relevant evidence in the Cypriot archaeological sources from the second half of the 3rd century until the turn of the 3rd and 4th centuries.

The close relationship between HA owners and theatrical activity is clearly reflected in the mosaic and wall painting decoration of this house. Dionysus is the main hero, and the beauty or music contests are the main events imagined in the Triclinium mosaics. Similarly, Apollo is depicted twice in the decoration of the house, and in the wall painting he is accompanied by the muses. Apollo and the muses have wreaths on their heads and a wreath, a traditional prize in ancient theatrical contests, is figured prominently in the scene of the beauty contest in which Cassiopeia takes part. Furthermore, Apollo [see *Fig. 11*] in

the mosaic scene of Marsyas's punishment and the painted muse Euterpe [see Fig. 19] are dressed in the same rich red robe decorated with gold ribbons and blue applications that was a typical theatrical gown used by actors on the stage. A well-known relief from the second half of the 1st century BC, now in the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen of Dresden, shows an enthroned theater actor of mature age dressed in the costume of Dionysus [Fig. 21]. He wears a long, decorated gown of the kind described above, a mantle around his shoulders and a garland around his neck, high laced wedge shoes and an ivy wreath on his head; he holds a sceptre in his right hand (Treu 1911: 6–12, Pl. III; Recke 2007: 351–360, Figs 1–5, 11–13). Moreover, Aphrodite *Paphia*, associated with Dionysus, was the patroness of the *technitai* in Hellenistic Paphos and successively of the Roman *synodos* of

artists, hence her sculptured image in the cult niche in the HA Triclinium suggests that the building could have belonged to such a *synodos*.

One of the Hellenistic honorific statue bases mentioned above, raised by the Dionysiac *technitai*, was found near the Paphian theater, indicating that it could have traditionally been their stage (Green and Stennett 2002: 155; Green, Barker, and Stennett 2015: 325; Cayla 2018: 211–213, No. 90). HA was located in the southern, lower part of the city, near the Harbour, quite a distance from the Hellenistic-Roman theater in the northern part of Nea Paphos, near the Northeast Gate (see Brzozowska-Jawornicka 2019: Fig. 1:c – HA, i – theater). The modest remnants of this theater [Fig. 22], excavated by Australian archaeologists from the University of Sydney, can be seen on the southern slope of the so-called Fabrica hill. Its lay-



Fig. 21. Relief with an actor dressed as Dionysus, second half of the 1st century BC; Dresden Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen (Courtesy Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden | photo E. Estel)

out and building phases are well studied (see foremost: Green and Stennett 2002; Green and Handley 2010; Barker 2015: 34–48; Green, Barker, and Stennett 2015; Barker 2016; 2018; Cayla 2018: 100). The central part of the semicircular *cavea* was hewn in the rock, while the eastern and western wings (*analemmata*) were built on masonry substructures. The theater measures 88/90 m in diameter with the orchestra being 24.80 m long and it could accommodate about 8500 spectators (Green and Stennett 2002: 157, 160–169, 170–183, Figs 2–4; Green, Barker, and Stennett 2015: 322; Barker 2018: 9). The first fixed structure dates to the 2nd century BC; it probably consisted of a fully unfolded *cavea*, the orchestra taking the form of an elongated semicircle above a tunnel and a simple stage with a *proskenion* about 2.4 m high. However, the reconstruction is mostly hypothetical based on modestly preserved

remains, because the theater was rebuilt by Augustus after being damaged in the earthquake of 15 BC (Green, Barker, and Stennett 2015: 327; Barker 2016: 145). The stage owed the next large reconstruction to emperors from the Antonine dynasty. In the mid-2nd century, a new stage building was constructed, probably two stories high and decorated with marble and granite columns, as well as marble statues of the ruling emperors and their family (Green, Barker, and Stennett 2015: 325–331; Barker 2016: 145; 2018: 8–10, Figs 6–8). In this form the theater survived until late antiquity, although it seems that sometime in the second half of the 3rd century the orchestra was surrounded by a high wall to accommodate *venationes* events even with animals in water and gladiatorial fights (Green and Stennett 2002: 186–187; Barker 2016: 145).¹⁸ The disastrous earthquake of 365 brought down the building, turning



Fig. 22. Remains of the Hellenistic-Roman theater in Paphos; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

18 This structure excludes the possibility that gladiatorial fights took place at that time in the Paphian amphitheater, see Daszewski 2001b: 80.

the Paphian theater into a quarry site for building projects, including the church of Chrysopolitissa (Agia Kyriaki) in the neighbourhood (Green and Stennett 2002: 169–170, 187; Green and Handley 2010).

The evidence is extremely patchy when it comes to contests and festivals organized in the theater in honour of the Paphian Aphrodite and the emperors. The *synodos* of Dionysiac artists would have been responsible for the organisation of such and a host of other unrecorded events. In the early days of the Empire in Cyprus, the philosopher Plous, perpetual archpriest of the Divine Augustus and *agonothete* of the competitions, was honoured by a statue erected in Palea Paphos (Cayla 2018: 100, 272–273, No. 155). More can be gleaned from a better preserved inscription in honour of Rhodokles, also archpriest of Augustus and *agonothete*, which says that some years later Rhodokles received a statue from the Cypriot *koinon* in thanks for “les concours sacrés insulaires quinquennaux en l’honneur de César Germanicus, qui furent organisés pour la première fois par le Koinon des Chypriotes dans l’Auguste Paphos” (Cayla 2018: 275, No. 156). Therefore, in *Augusta Paphos*, the most important metropolis on the island from the reign of Augustus, the first festival in honour of the emperor, called the *Kaisarogermanikeia*, took place probably shortly after the death of Germanicus in the East, that is, in October/November of the year AD 19 (Cayla 2018: 89, 100, 119, 275, No. 156). The best testimony to festivities of this kind, which seem to have culminated in com-

petition in principle, comes from an inscription in honour of the archpriest and gymnasiarch G. Ummidius Pantauchus Quadratianus who founded the *Neroneia* festival in Paphos, famous in Rome, “avec [nombre?] des [cratères] et des vases, qu’il a laissées ouverts jusqu’à la nuit”, which is related to the banquets culminating the competitions (Cayla 2018: 87, 100, 119, 276–278, No. 157 citing other known sources about *Neroneia* at Rome, i.e., Dion Cassius, Suetonius and Tacitus). According to Suetonius (*Ner.* 12, 3), Nero “instituit et quinquennale certamen primus omnium Romae more Graeco triplex, musicum gymnicum equestre, quod appellavit Neroneia; dedicatisque thermis atque gymnasio senatui quoque et equiti oleum praebuit”. Returning to Cyprus, of the listed contests, only the music competition could be held in the theater, the gymnastic and equestrian events having to be hosted in the gymnasium in Nea Paphos, which has yet to be located.¹⁹ The last imperial inscription concerning the theater is only indirectly linked to the imperial cult performed in the form of festivities attended by the Cypriot *koinon*. The inscription is a dedication by the sacred metropolis *Augusta Claudia Flavia Paphos* of a new stage building dedicated to the Capitoline Zeus, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. This would have been the biggest and richest reconstruction of the theater in AD 139–161 (Cayla 2018: 88, 244–246, No. 120). The dedication indicates that the Roman emperors were honoured and worshipped in the theater alongside the highest deity of the Roman

19 For the hypothetical locations see Młynarczyk 1990: 213–215; Daszewski 2001b: 80; Cayla 2018: 278.

state, possibly also by the regular festivals of the Cypriot *synodos*. The adaptation of the orchestra to *venationes* and gladiatorial fights in the second half of the 3rd century, which would have probably limited the available space, is probably an indication of a lowered demand for traditional Greek literary and musical contests in the Paphian theater. It does not mean, however, that the *synodos* of Dionysiac artists was no longer active in Paphos.

There is nothing to suggest the location of the seat of the Hellenistic and early Roman *technitai*, the so-called *Grammateion*, in either *Nea* or *Augusta* Paphos (Cayla 2018: 83, 212, No. 90, 214, No. 91). However, the urban context of the HA neighbourhood in the 4th century seemingly sheds light on not only topographic but also chronological issues. HA lies to

the east to the so-called Villa of Theseus, on the other side of the so-called Late Roman street [Fig. 23] and on the northern side of street B which runs from the entrance of the Villa to the ancient (and modern) eastern port of Paphos. Thus, the topographical position of HA in the northeastern corner of an important road intersection in the city center was undoubtedly significant. The proximity of the two, the Villa and HA, seems particularly important, because these buildings are apparently the only still functioning part of the former residential quarter of the Greek-Roman city in the 4th century (Medeksza 1992: 30–42, 48–76; 1998; Mavrojannis 2016: 325–336; see Jastrzębowska forthcoming a). In antiquity, the district was destroyed repeatedly by more or less disastrous earthquakes (Davis 2010: 9–10)

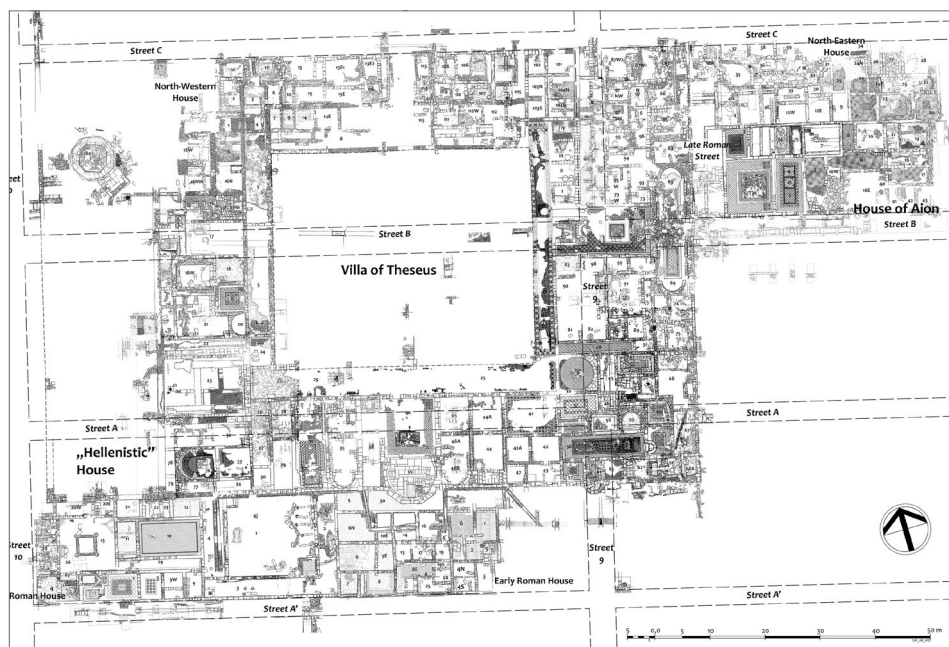


Fig. 23. Plan of the so-called Villa of Theseus and HA in Nea Paphos (PCMA UW | drawing S. Medeksza, 2005)

and each time the reconstruction of earlier structures took on a slightly different form, replacing the Hellenistic buildings with HA and the direct predecessor of the late Villa composed of a large, compact and rectangular Roman palace aligned east–west and furnished with two corner projections. However, the phase that is of importance for the present discussion is the last one, encompassing an even larger complex that Stanisław Medeksza dated to the 4th century (Medeksza 1998; see also Mavrojannis 2009: 235–236; 2016: 336–339). The earlier rectangular Roman palace was extended and renovated into a huge residential complex occupying an area of 120 m by 80 m (about 9600 m²) with more than one hundred rooms around a very large central courtyard-peristyle (60 m by 60 m) flanked by four porticoes. The residence served public functions as well. Medeksza identified three stages of development of this building phase dated before and after the earthquake of 365 (Medeksza 1992: 8, 30–42; 1998: 33–36, Figs 5, 6, 7).

The latest restructuring of the complex involved changing the southern wing into an official reception area of a public nature, which now incorporated an exedra with the mosaic of Theseus killing the Minotaur in a labyrinth [Figs 23: No. 36; 24]; this room at the eastern end of the southern portico gave the complex its modern archaeological designation (Daszewski 1977a: 14–28, Pls 1–9; Daszewski and Michaelides 1988: 57–60, Fig. 43; Lichočka 2001: 252; Mavrojannis 2016: 327–328, Fig. 5). A large bath was constructed next to it. The large hall in the center of the southern wing presumably served as an audience hall; it was rebuilt with a raised apse [Fig.

23: Nos 39–40] and decorated with a mosaic pavement depicting the first bath of Achilles [Figs 23: No. 40; 25] and other scenes from the hero's life (poorly preserved today) (Daszewski and Michaelides 1988: 60–63, Fig. 44; Daszewski 2001a; Lichočka 2001: 252, 255; Deligiannakis 2018: 36). The western end of the southern wing of the complex was occupied by another large, almost square hall (*vis à vis* the exedra with the mosaic of Theseus) ending in a smaller apsidal room decorated with a mosaic of Poseidon and Amphitrite (Daszewski 1977b: 773; Daszewski and Michaelides 1988: 60; Lichočka 2001: 252; Michaelides 2018: 216–217, Fig. 2; Deligiannakis 2018: 36, these mosaics seem to be contemporary work by different artists) [Figs 23: No. 76; 26].

The entrance to the complex, in the middle of the east wing, was restructured into a monumental transverse vestibule [Fig. 23: No. 69] with two apses at the short ends, an official atrium and a nymphaeum with three water basins flanking the two corridors of the passage from the atrium to the peristyle. The eight marble statues discovered in the villa date from this time. Artemis, Asclepius, Hygeia, Heracles, Silvanus, Dionysus, Satyr and one of the Muses may have all once graced the wall niches of the vestibule, even though they were cached at some point in two small rooms in the western wing of the complex (Daszewski 1994; Lichočka 2001: 260, Note 35; Fejfer 2006: 113–117, dated to the 4th century; see Panayides 2016: 229–235, Pl. 5.1). The main entrance to the building opened onto the intersection of street B with the so-called Late Roman street, just *vis à vis* the southwestern corner of HA with the large Triclinium hall.



Fig. 24. Theseus in the Labyrinth, mosaic pavement from the so-called Villa of Theseus (No. 36), 4th century AD; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)



Fig. 25. First bath of Achilles, mosaic pavement in the so-called Villa of Theseus (No. 40), 4th century AD; Kato Paphos, Archaeological Park (Photo E. Jastrzębowska)

According to Medeksza, the two buildings in the phase described here must have post-dated the earthquake of 365 (Medeksza 1992: 41, Fig. 22; 1998: 35, Fig. 7).²⁰ For Theodoros Mavrojanis and Georgios Deligiannakis there is no doubt, however, that the monumental reconstruction of the Villa and the construction of the Triclinium in HA are contemporary and should be dated to the first half of the 4th century, i.e.,



Fig. 26. Poseidon and Amphitrite, mosaic pavement in the so-called Villa of Theseus (No. 76), 4th century AD (Courtesy IKŚiO PAN Archive | photo W.A. Daszewski, 1977/PCMA UW)

before this catastrophe (Mavrojanis 2009: 235–236; 2016: 336–339; Deligiannakis 2018: 36). Mavrojanis's idea seems to be better secured historically in political events from the first two thirds of the 4th century i.e., from the second Tetrarchy through the reign of Constantine to the rule of his children and their cousins (Mavrojanis 2016: 336–339; see Mitford 1980: 1375–1383; Davis 2010: 9–10; Kantiréa 2013; Deligiannakis 2018: 33–35). Although his interpretation of the mosaic with the first bath of Achilles as alluding to the baptism of the emperor Julian, as the “new Achilles”, is excessively sophisticated (Mavrojanis 2016: 330, 337),²¹ his view of the historical events and his proposal to date the architecture and marble decoration to either 335–337 and/or 346–349 is more plausible and convincing (Mavrojanis 2009: 235, the date of 346–349; 2016: 338–339, the date of 335–337).²² According to Deligiannakis,

“the appearance of Peleus in the Achilles mosaic in the guise of a Roman consul may well be an additional reference to the official function of the building and also a key to the intended political and cultural symbolism of Achilles' circle not only by its initial commissioner, but also regarding its consequent ideological uses by succeeding ap-

20 According to Davis (2010: 9): “a series of quakes struck the south coast between AD 365 and 370”.

21 It is not the place here to explain in detail the error in this association; the scene of the baptism of Christ (a model for later images of the baptism of ordinary Christians) was well established in Christian iconography by the 3rd century, regardless of popular contemporary scenes of the first bath of Achilles or Alexander that also led to the creation of a scene of the first bath of Christ, but later, in the 7th/8th century.

22 For these earthquakes see Davis 2010: 9–10.

pointees of the provincial authority on the island for almost a century later” (Deligiannakis 2018: 37).

Interestingly, Jean-Charles Balty also dated the mosaic of Cassiopeia from the so-called school of philosophers in Apamea to the reign of Julian, more specifically, to the emperor’s stay in Antioch (362–363). This mosaic is the closest parallel for the mosaic of the triumph of Cassiopeia in the HA Triclinium, contemporaneous to the final phase of the Villa (see Balty and Balty 1974: 271; Cameron 1998: 681). One should also note “two almost new coins of Constantius II” discovered in 1976 under the floor mosaic with Poseidon and Amphitrite in Room 76 of this residence (Daszewski 1977b: 773).²³ The differences of mosaic “style” in both complexes are not of a chronological nature, but rather reflecting trends current in different artistic centers in the Eastern Empire.

Mavrojannis’s interpretation of the character and function of this palatial complex as a *praetorium* of the late antique metropolis, that is, the main official seat of the *praeses provinciae Cypri* is equally probable and acceptable (Mavrojannis 2016: 339–344; see Deligiannakis 2018: 36). A small fragment of a marble inscription in Latin from the east wing of the residence, found in secondary fill of a corridor (No. 51), is of capital importance for confirming Mavrojannis’s interpretation of the *praetorium*. Despite its

poor state of preservation, it has fuelled a major debate concerning its reading and date.²⁴ Again, Mavrojannis’s reading seems to be the most convincing with regard to the rulers hidden under the formula *Domini Nostri* common under the Tetrarchy and the reign of the Constantinian dynasty (Mavrojannis 2016: 343–344, Note 44). Whoever lived and ruled in this *praetorium* in the first half of the 4th century, he was accustomed to and demanded luxury and imposing splendour during the performing of public functions, this despite the assumed damages caused by two earthquakes in this period, in 332 (less strong in Paphos than in Salamis) and in 342 (stronger in Paphos than in Salamis), and before the disastrous earthquake in 365, which terminated everything (see Panayides 2016: 229; Deligiannakis 2018: 25).

Knowledge of names and religious affiliation (pagan or Christian) of the *praesides* or *consulares*, i.e., the governors of Cyprus in the 4th century, is very incomplete. According to Deligiannakis,

“Quirinus was a senator of Constantinople, an associate of Libanios, and probably a pagan. His term is placed in 351–354. ... We also know of two governors who were appointed during the short reign of Julian. The first’s name is not fully preserved, and the other was Honoratianus. The latter is known from a letter of Libanios to him asking

23 For Davis (2010: 12) this mosaic “was created in the last quarter of the 4th century” (sic?).

24 Lajtar 2011: Fig. 2: [nume]n . diui . Pr[obi] / [---]um . porticib[us---]; Cayla 2018: 281–282, No. 128, Fig. 143: [e.g. Germanico Iulio Ti(beri) Caesaris f(ilio)]? / [Aug(usti) n(epoti), Divi pr[onep(oti), Caesaris]]? / [tel édifice cu]m porticib(us) et ---?] / un proconsul ? e.g. erexit dedicuiquel ?

for a political favour around 363. Both are thought to be pagans” (Deligiannakis 2018: 34).²⁵

Not much more is known about the *praefecti praetorium* of the *praefectura Orientis*, to which the *presides* were subject, but these prefects from the 4th century were already Christian Arians and resided in Antioch, where Constantius II also had his main seat in the years 337–350 (Deligiannakis 2018: 33). Two of the praetorian prefects are mentioned in dedicatory inscriptions from Cyprus: Flavius Filippus (346–351) and Strategius Claudius Musonianus (354–358) (Cayla 2018: 269, No. 152; Deligiannakis 2018: 33–34). The first inscription is a commemorative marble slab remaining from a posthumously erected statue base of Flavius Filippus dedicated in Chytroi by Constantius II and Constantius Gallus and dated to 351–354 (CIL III, I, 214; LSA 863; Deligiannakis 2018: 34). On the second marble fragment Strategius Musonianus

“appears as *redditor* in an inscription from Paphos that concerns the restoration of an unspecified public building after a fire, together with the names of the *consularis* of Cyprus, Bassidius Lauricius, and the emperor Constantius II” (see Cayla 2018: 269, No. 152 with a date around 358 proposed for this inscription).

“The text can be dated to 354–357. Both officials in this inscription

were Christians and they had acted before as representatives of the emperor in ecclesiastical affairs. They were friends and correspondents of the pagan sophist Libanios. The latter praises Strategius for his mildness as a governor of Greece and his comment cannot be irrelevant to religious issues” (Deligiannakis 2018: 34).

The inscription of Musonianus, or rather the bottom left corner of a larger, rectangular slab, was found “in the harbour”, but it is not known which monument or building this dedication originated from. It would be tempting to suppose that it is linked to a major renovation, after the earthquake that caused the fire in 332/342 in the Villa and/or in HA (see Daszewski 1977b: 773; Mavrojanis 2009: 235; 2016: 338–339; Cayla 2018: 270, No. 152). Constantius II prevails on the 31 Constantinian coins from the years 347–361 found in the cistern (No. 15) and in the end room (No. 7) above the cistern. The wall paintings of the Muses from this room are both technically and artistically compliant with the first half of the 4th century, while their very good condition could indicate that they were destroyed only a few decades after their creation.

The picture that emerges of the hypothetical owners and function of HA in Nea Paphos is quite logical, despite no direct evidence in its favour. The archaeological context inside the House supports the deduction that it was used by a Cypriot *synodos* of artists. They would

25 For the list of Cyprus *presides* see Milford 1980: 1377; for the list of governors see Kantiréa 2013: 117.

have met there in groups for banquets or to make libations or burn offerings on small incense altars. The well protected back room would have held the funds and important documents of this association. The symposia in the Triclinium must have been of primary importance, the hall being the largest in the building and entered almost directly from the street, decorated with the richest mosaic that was intended to have the greatest effect on those just coming in. The goddess worshiped in the cult niche in the Triclinium would have been Aphrodite *Paphia*, the traditional patroness of the association of the Dionysiac *technitai* in the Hellenistic period and of the *synodos* of artists in Roman times. Also, the iconography of the mythological mosaics in the Triclinium and of the wall paintings in the back room, the presumed treasury, could indicate that the house was the seat of just such an association. Dionysus, the most important and most celebrated god represented in the Triclinium mosaic, was closely related to the Greek theater from a very early time in ancient Greek history. Cassiopeia and Apollo were winners of, respectively, beauty and music contests held in the theater. The rich, so-called theatrical robe of Apollo in the mosaics and of the muse Euterpe in the paintings, also refer to stage costumes, bringing to mind the high stage building of the *Augusta Claudia Flavia* Paphos spectacularly rebuilt in the second half of the 2nd cen-

tury. Apollo and the muses were painted in the back room, the presumed treasury, possibly taking on an apotropaic role as well.

Taking into consideration everything that has been discussed above, one is entitled to conclude that HA was the seat of an association dealing with theater and music competitions on the stage, that is, the Cypriot *synodeion* of artists in the Roman Empire. The traditional close connection of the cult of Aphrodite with the cult of emperors, practiced by such an association, is emphasized in Paphos of the 4th century also by the close vicinity of this *synodeion* and the *praetorium*, i.e., the residence and official seat of the governor of Cyprus. The *praetorium* was also enlarged and beautified at the same time, only to be destroyed shortly thereafter, like HA, by the earthquake of 365.²⁶ The same earthquake annihilated the Paphian theater. Even earlier, in the 340s, *Augusta Claudia Flavia* Paphos failed to find favour with the emperor Constantius II who rebuilt Salamis instead, renaming it Constantia. The governor of Cyprus moved there after the catastrophe of the 365 and practically the entire Paphian political, intellectual and artistic elite followed him, too. There was no one for whom to rebuild HA. Instead, a relatively modest dwelling, the Northeastern House, was built in the northern part of the same insula, adjacent to the ruins.

Translation by Iwona Zych

26 For developments in the "Villa" in the 5th–7th centuries, see Lichočka 2001: 258–260.

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Abbreviations

<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>LSA</i>	Last Statues of Antiquity Database (http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk)
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