

# NEA PAPHOS

## SEASON 2005

Wiktor Andrzej Daszewski

in cooperation with

Henryk Meyza and Eudoksia Papuci-Władyka

*The fieldwork proceeded in September 2005 concurrently in two locations within the area of our concession.<sup>1</sup> Emphasis was placed upon investigations of the northern part of the House of Aion (=HA), rooms nos 24-32, including 24E and 24N, and in the area immediately south of the central part of the Villa of Theseus, i.e., inside the Hellenistic House (=HH), rooms 9E, 10E, 14 and 15.*

1 The Mission, directed by Prof. Dr. W.A. Daszewski, excavated from September 5 to 28, and included Dr. Meike Droste, archaeologist and documentalist; Dr. Barbara Lichočka, numismatist; Dr. Henryk Meyza, archaeologist; and Ms Alexandra Brzozowska, student of architecture. Prof. Dr. Stanisław Medeksza, architect, and Prof. Dr. Eudoksia Papuci-Władyka, archaeologist, participated for a stretch of two weeks each. The project provided training in excavation and archaeological documentation for a group of 15 students and doctoral candidates from Warsaw University and Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

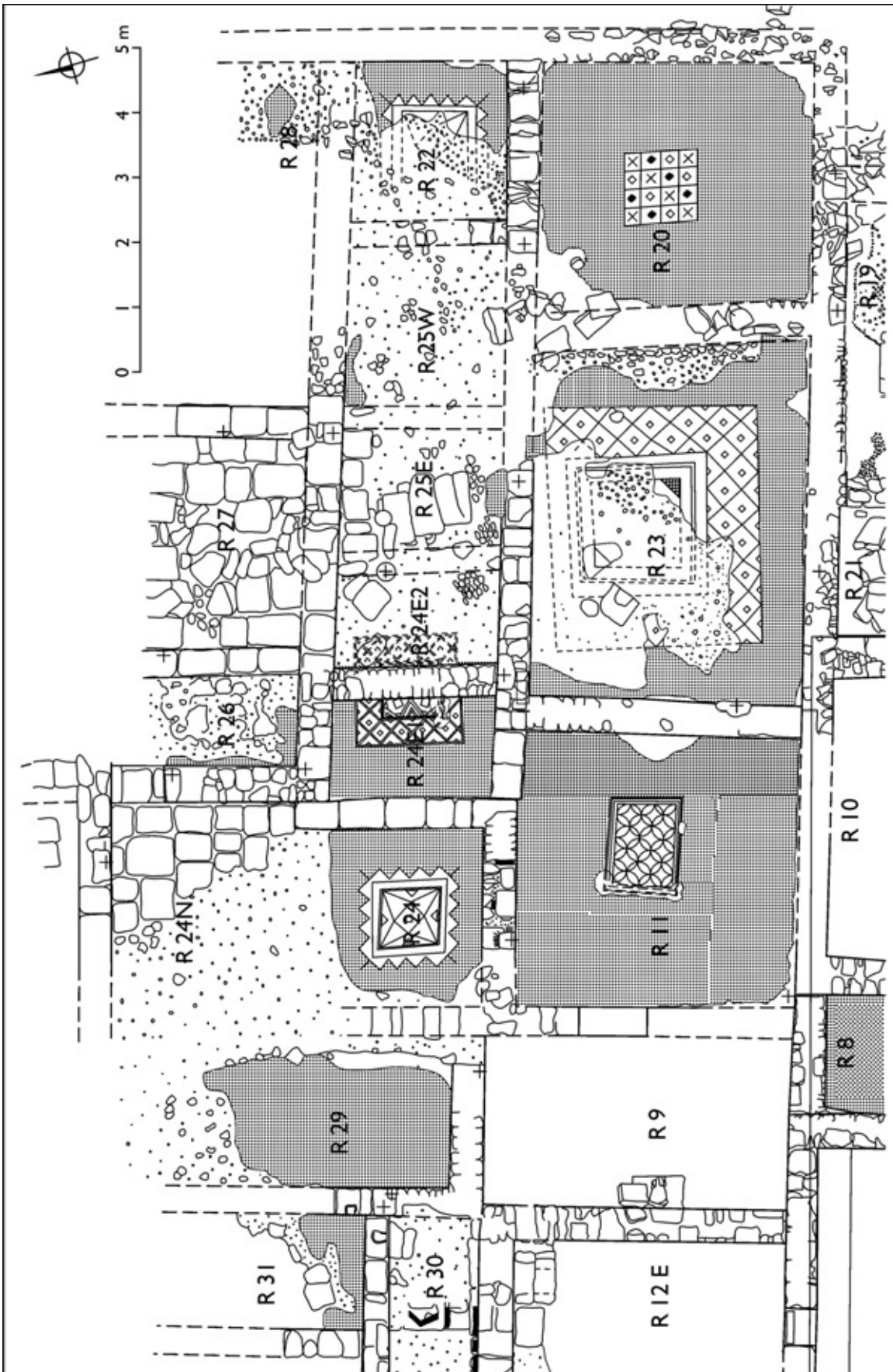


Fig. 1. Plan of the northern part of the House of Aion after excavation in 2005  
(Drawing A. Brzozowska, S. Medeksza)

## THE NORTHEASTERN AREA OF THE HOUSE OF AION

Excavations east of the Villa of Theseus, in the northern part of the House of Aion, were carried out in 1984-1998.<sup>2</sup> In 2005, excavations in the northeastern part of the area were again undertaken in three latitudinal rows of rooms beginning with the easternmost rooms 20, 22 and 28 respectively. Most of the southernmost row starting in the east with room 20 was uncovered during earlier campaigns [*Fig. 1*].<sup>3</sup> The walls proved to be for the most part plundered by ancient and modern stone-robbers, so that nothing but the mosaic and

paved floors remained in place to bear witness to the size and plan of these rooms. The floors also preserved the occupational level of these buildings. Later alterations and squatter activity in the ruins were also responsible for some damages to the paved floors.

Exploration of the western part of Room 23 completed the clearing of this unit, which turned out to be large (5.55 m E-W by 4.00 m N-S) and furnished with a geometric mosaic floor. The only fragment of wall not plundered by stone-robbers was



*Fig. 2. Rubble layer over Room 25 and the southern part of Room 27 with squatter structures in the northern part of the House of Aion. View from the east (Photo W.A. Daszewski)*

2 W.A. Daszewski, in: "Chronique des fouilles à Chypre en 1984", *BCH* 109 (1985), 954; 111 (1987), 687-689; 115 (1991), 823; 116 (1992), 823; 117 (1993), 743; 122 (1998), 691; id., *RDAC* 1992, 254; id., *EtTrav* XVI (1994), 313-315; id., *PAM II, Reports 1990* (1991), 80; *III, Reports 1991* (1992), 67; *IV, Reports 1992* (1993), 85; *VII, Reports 1995* (1996), 99; *IX, Reports 1997* (1998), 127, Figs 5,7; *X, Reports 1998* (1999), 171-173, Fig. 7; Daszewski et al., *PAM XV, Reports 2003* (2004), 297-300, Figs 9-10; B. Lichočka and H. Meyza, *EtTrav* XIX (2001), 169-178, Tables 2,5 (note different interpretation of individual house divisions).

3 *PAM X*, op. cit., 172 f., Fig. 7.



found in the northwestern corner [Figs 3, 4]. The stratigraphy was deeply disturbed in modern times and probably also before that. Unfortunately, about three-fourths of the center of the floor was damaged. The mosaic in grey, white and black consisted of a square central panel with geometric decoration, of which only the opposite two corners have been preserved. Surviving elements suggest a pattern of four intersecting circles and checkered ornaments in concave squares, surrounded by a double grey band and black serrated saw-tooth pattern. The rest of the space around the panel (on the east, south and west) was filled with an adjusting frame consisting of a band of white on grey *reticulatum* (double rows of white poised squares outlined by serrated filets and small white serrated squares inscribed in their centers on three sides and a zigzag of serrated fillet on the north).

Both in this room and the next Room 11, only the north walls were preserved to any height (maximum of 0.68 m). Built of stones of various size (e.g. 0.35 x 0.19 m; 0.30 x 0.35 m; 0.15 or 0.10 m thick), these walls were 0.50 to 0.52 m thick (plaster coating included). The masonry became more regular at the doors, where larger stones were used, e.g. threshold between Rooms 11 and 24N, measuring 0.42 by 0.33 m and 0.23 m thick. The central parts of these walls were made of small, roughly worked stones (0.09 x 0.11 to 0.10 x 0.14 m).

Excavations in the central part of Room 11 (4.32 m E-W by 4.12 m N-S) revealed a mosaic with geometric panel [Fig. 5], asymmetrically situated nearest to the northeastern corner of the room. The panel is filled with intersecting circles in three

colors (forming saltires of quasi-tangent white spindles with centrally inscribed smaller claret-red spindles on alternating widthwise light grey, dark grey and claret-red background), surrounded by saw-tooth and banded border, grey or claret-red respectively. The background field was set in four strips of varied cubes. The rarest alabaster cubes were 1.5 x 2.5 cm in size.

West of Room 11 there was Room 9 (4.70 m N-S by 2.65 m E-W), partly uncovered during earlier excavations in 1990.<sup>4</sup> No mosaic floor was found there and a large part of the daub floor (Floor I) corresponding to the mosaics in Room 11 was damaged by a robber's pit. Several coins, the latest ones of the Constantines, were found.<sup>5</sup> The foundation leveling course of the east wall was built of large but narrow (0.42 m) blocks, although little of it remains, as it was severely plundered. The west wall (0.50 m wide) is better preserved, but it must be from a late phase, as its foundation is very shallow, barely reaching below the daub floor.

Further west another room, 12E, was excavated in its northern part, uncovering a fragment of daub floor similar to the floor in Room 9 and on the same level. In the northeastern corner there was a box or cupboard (0.33 m wide inside, 0.28 m high, 0.60-0.63 m deep), built of stone slabs and covered with two slabs, 0.70 m long and 0.30 m wide. Inside the cupboard there were fragments of a bronze pentagonal stand on spherical feet, found together with a plain casserole in a grey ashly layer.

The easternmost room in the next row to the north, Room 22, was partly uncovered in 1998.<sup>6</sup> The remaining northwestern part was excavated this year and was found to be

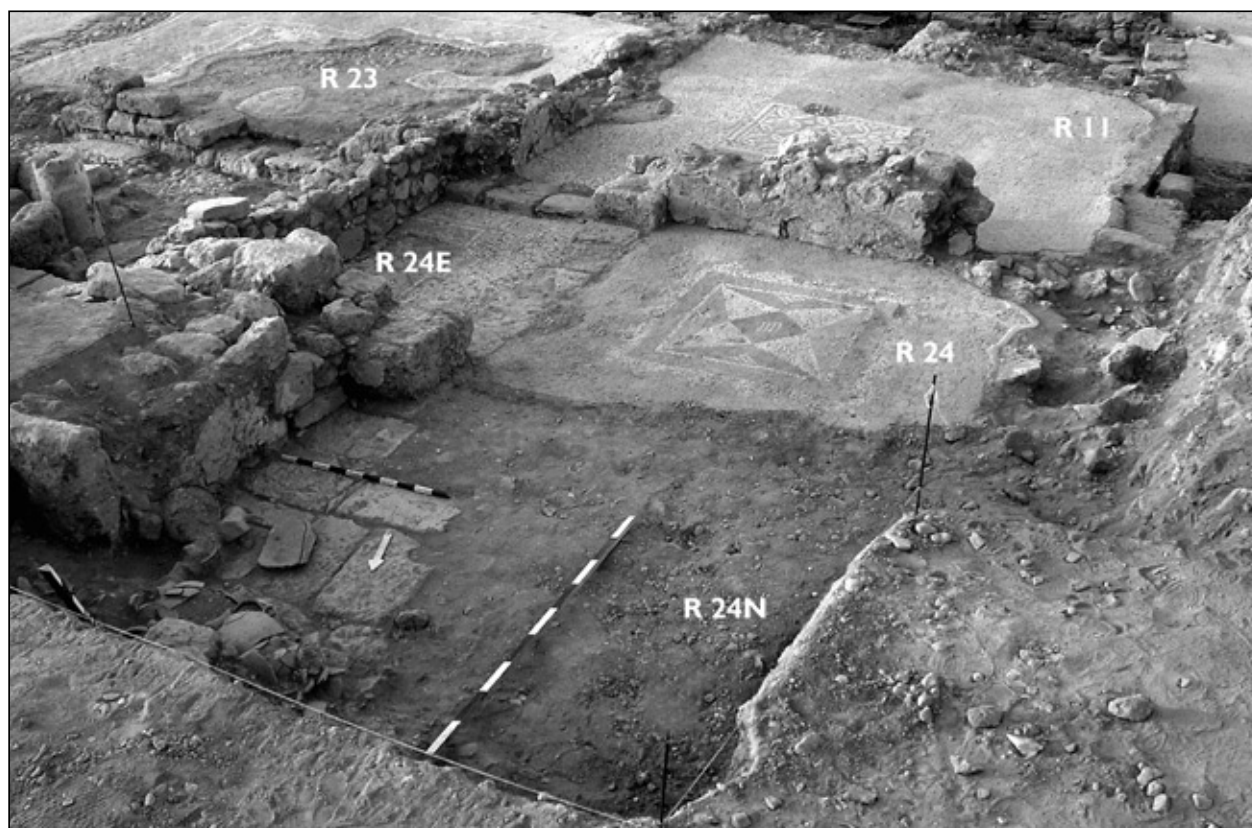
4 Daszewski, in: "Chronique des fouilles à Chypre en 1990 BCH 115 (1991), 823.

5 H. Meyza, B. Lichočka, *EtTrav* XIX (2001), 184, Table 2, 203, Table 5: 717,718.

6 PAM X, op. cit., 173, Fig. 7.



*Fig. 3. General view of the northern part of the House of Aion from the east after excavations in 2005*



*Fig. 4. Northern part of the House of Aion, Rooms 24E, 24, 23 and 11. View from the north (Photos W.A. Daszewski)*

completely robbed out. The dimensions of this room (c. 2.50 m E-W by 2.40 m N-S) are approximate as only the south wall has the foundation leveling course preserved over a longer stretch. The west wall, 0.35 m wide, is preserved only in the southern end, 0.55 m long. On the east and north, nothing but the lower fill of the foundations remains. Further west, the extent of the damage is even greater, since we cannot be sure if the area marked as Room 25 actually belonged to a single, relatively long room or two rooms. Remnants of a floor-mosaic border by the north wall in the eastern part and close to the south wall in the western part are on the same level and made of tesserae of the same size. The western part of this area was refurbished by squatters who arranged it for domestic use, building a primitive compartment of column drums, slabs and blocks, approximately oval in plan, directly upon a rough pavement made of large reused slabs. Later, the area was covered by a very thick layer (up to 0.90 m) of rubble, consisting of large blocks, irregular stones, etc., which had to be excavated with extreme care in order to identify any primitive, squatter structures [Fig. 2]. A bronze stylus, 10.8 cm long [Fig. 8], was found together with 4th/5th century pottery, such as a rim of Phocaeen Hayes form 1A plate, on the mosaic bedding preserved east of the squatter enclosure.

These later modifications extended further west and encroached onto the eastern part of Room 24E(2), separated from Room 24E(1) by a late wall 2.46 m long, 0.52 m thick, preserved 0.50-0.76 m high, and built upon the original mosaic floor, across its central panneau [Fig. 7]. The mosaic east of this wall was completely removed together with its bedding and

a mere 2-3 rows of tesserae can still be seen under the late wall all along. The east wall of the original Room 24E was completely dismantled, and therefore the dimensions of the room are in doubt, but the floor should have been approximately symmetrical. The surviving part of the mosaic in Room 24E(1) is 2.46 m long and 1.37 m wide. The frame is monochrome, made of grayish-blue cubes, and decorated with a typical pattern consisting of a row of white poised linear squares outlined by serrated filets, containing small white serrated squares in their centers with a single grey cube in the middle. The central square had a double grey border surrounding an orthogonal pattern of four contiguous squares, separated by truncated lozenges, adjoining a central lozenge. The claret-red squares contained obliquely set serrated and checkered white and light claret-red squares with a central cube of dark claret-red.

The entrance from that room to Room 24 led through a 2.05 m-wide entrance with stone threshold between two *antae* supported on large blocks. The orthostat blocks of the *antae* were c. 5 cm wider than the threshold.

Room 24 was partly uncovered during the excavation of test pits for roof supports completed in 2003 (trench A14).<sup>7</sup> It was 2.40 m long N-S and 2.85 m wide E-W. The mosaic floor consisted of a grey frame enclosing a square with an inscribed four-pointed white star around a violet-red square in the center [Fig. 6]. The rubble overlying the mosaic contained sherds of African Red Slip forms 50 and 67 found between the blocks.

A large modern trench had damaged completely the northwestern corner of Room 24, its north wall and the

7 PAM XV, op. cit., 299, Figs 9, 10.





Fig. 5. *Central part of a mosaic pavement with rectangular geometric multi-colored decoration, from Room 11 in the northern part of the House of Aion (Photo W.A. Daszewski)*



Fig. 6. *Mosaic panel from Room 24 in the northern part of the House of Aion (Photo W.A. Daszewski)*



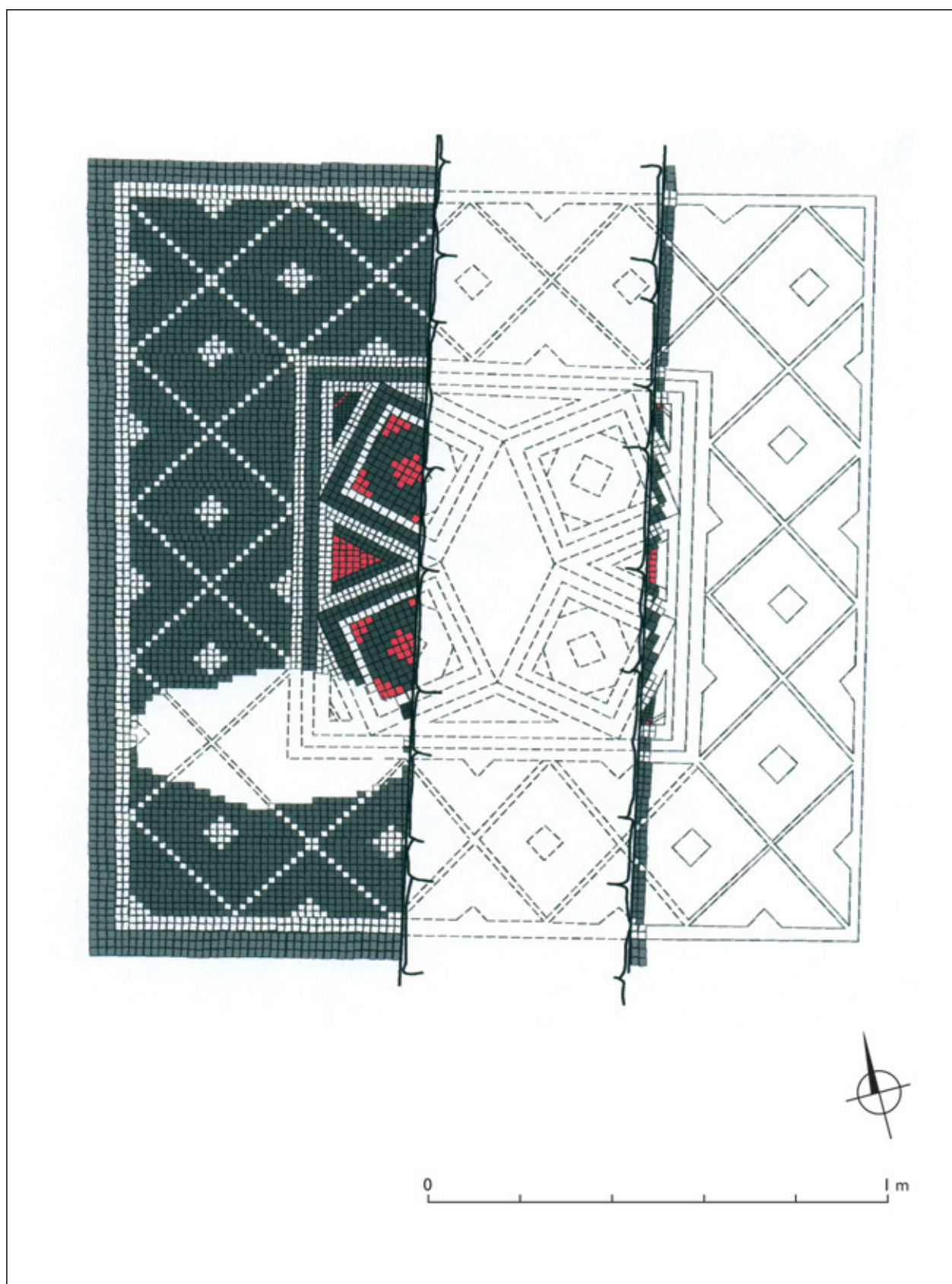


Fig. 7. Mosaic floor panneau from Room 24E in the northern part of the House of Aion (note late wall cutting across the middle) (Drawing A. Brzozowska)



southwestern part of Room 24N to the north [Fig. 4]. As the position of the west wall is pure conjecture, the exact dimensions of this room cannot be ascertained. The floor in Room 24N is different, having been made of rectangular slabs (measuring 0.75 x 0.60; 0.60 x 0.50; 0.55 x 0.40 m on average); this suggests its use as a courtyard. It is 3.17 m wide E-W and 2.85 m N-S. Crushed but intact pots were discovered by the north wall, including seven cooking pots of various sizes, one amphora of type Agora V 334 and a pithos [Figs 9, 10], a slab of porphyry 0.35 x 0.22 x 0.04 m, and a bronze pin with twelve-faceted head. A bronze coin of Constantius II was also discovered.

The entrance to the next room to the east was situated in the north corner, with the door jamb still *in situ*. (A bottle of Black&White whisky found between the stones blocking the entrance is proof of considerable disturbance of layers also in modern times.) The next two rooms (26 and 27) to the east of Room 24N were partly uncovered in the northernmost row [cf. Figs 1, 3] with Room 28 farthest to the east. Room 26 (1.45 m E-W and at least 2.20 m N-S, the northern extent to be established with further excavations in this

area) had a virtually totally destroyed mosaic floor. The bedding could be seen and in the southeastern corner, a large cylindrical altar was found upside down. The fill here yielded an iron fibula (FR 2/05) and hook, possibly from a *polykandylon*. Other small finds included a Late Roman lamp and a bronze coin of Valentinianus I/Gratian/Valens of AD 364-381.

The next Room 27 with a surface paved with large slabs could have been an open space used for domestic purposes. It measured 3.28 m E-W and, like the previously described unit, more than 2.20 m N-S. This area was reused by squatters, at that time forming a single space with Room 25. The damaged central part of the pavement in Room 27 was paved over with smaller slabs, and an enclosure was built of upright slabs and other elements. East of Room 27, its south wall, very damaged, extends further to the east, delimiting another large room or two, with traces of a mosaic floor preserved at its eastern end (Room 28).

West of Rooms 24 and 24N, a group of rooms was uncovered on a level higher by 0.22-0.25 m compared to floors further to the east.<sup>8</sup> The wall separating rooms 29-32



Fig. 8. Bronze stylus (FR 9/05) found in the House of Aion, Room 25, on the mosaic bedding (Photo W. Jerke)

<sup>8</sup> The floor of Room 29 was already noted in 2003, PAM XV, op. cit., 300.



*Fig. 9. Deposit of pottery in situ in Room 24N in the northern part of the House of Aion  
(Photo W.A. Daszewski)*



*Fig. 10. Mended Late Roman pottery from the deposit in Room 24N of the House of Aion  
(Photo H. Meyza)*



on the higher level was plundered by stone-robbers, making it impossible to reconstruct the exact room dimensions. The width was probably about 0.52 m. In such a case, Room 29, which is immediately to the west, extended 2.35 m E-W. Its length was probably 5.30 m, but its northernmost part is yet to be uncovered. The mosaic floor is preserved northward only 3.85 m from the south wall. The entire northern part of this room had been damaged by the same modern trench, which had disturbed the northern part of Room 24 and the western part of Room 24N. The west wall of Room 29 was 0.51 m wide. The mosaic floor consists of large blue and white tesserae, c. 2-3 cm in size.

Room 31, found further west, extends 1.80 m E-W; no more than c. 1.50 m of its length has been excavated so far. A similar plain mosaic floor was preserved at the

southern end of this room. Further west, the southeastern corner of another room (32) was partly excavated, but no floor was found.

A long narrow corridor, Room 30, extended between Rooms 31 and 12E; it was a mere 1.37-1.40 m wide N-S. Almost 4 m of its length were uncovered, but it seems to continue to the west, possibly joining a narrow space uncovered north of Room 12W. If so, it would measure 8.85 m E-W. A test pit dug in its eastern part uncovered a Roman wall and floor with traces of fire and below it, a Hellenistic stratum, yielding a virtually intact unguentarium of the Aegean type.

The layout explored so far suggests non-residential function for this part of the House of Aion. The structure appears to have been auxiliary with regard to the Roman palace (Villa of Theseus); it could possibly have been a school (?).

## EASTERN PART OF THE HELLENISTIC HOUSE

Excavation in the area south of the Villa of Theseus [*Figs 11, 12*] have shown that the ruins of the Hellenistic House were removed in the northern part when the Villa of Theseus was erected over it and north of it on a lower level. Much later, a Byzantine enclosure wall was built to the south of the Villa and above the Hellenistic House.<sup>9</sup> The southern face of the Byzantine wall was uncovered and a long block c. 0.75 m long, visible in the south face, interpreted as an entrance threshold 0.52 m wide. It was situated 1.20 m above the floors of the Hellenistic House. The foundation of the Byzantine wall is of the fill-in type, 0.90 to 1.00 m deep, and is much wider than the wall (c. 0.52 m). The layer, which contained

Late Roman pottery, was limited to the topmost 0.40-0.60 m, including humus and top fill. Pottery included Cypriot Red Slip Ware forms H2, H9/10, Phocaeen Red Slip Ware Hayes forms 1 and 3, and amphora fragments of the 4th century; some probably medieval coarse pottery was found in the top layer.

Two rooms of the Hellenistic House (9E and 10E), south of the Byzantine enclosure wall, were excavated. Room 9E is situated behind Room 6S (both are 4.75 m long N-S, while 9E is narrower on the north (2.60 m) compared to the south (2.95 m). Room 10E lies east of Room 6N. Both were 5 m long N-S, and again the northern side of Room 10E was narrower

<sup>9</sup> *BCH* 111 (1987), 683-685, Figs 34-38.

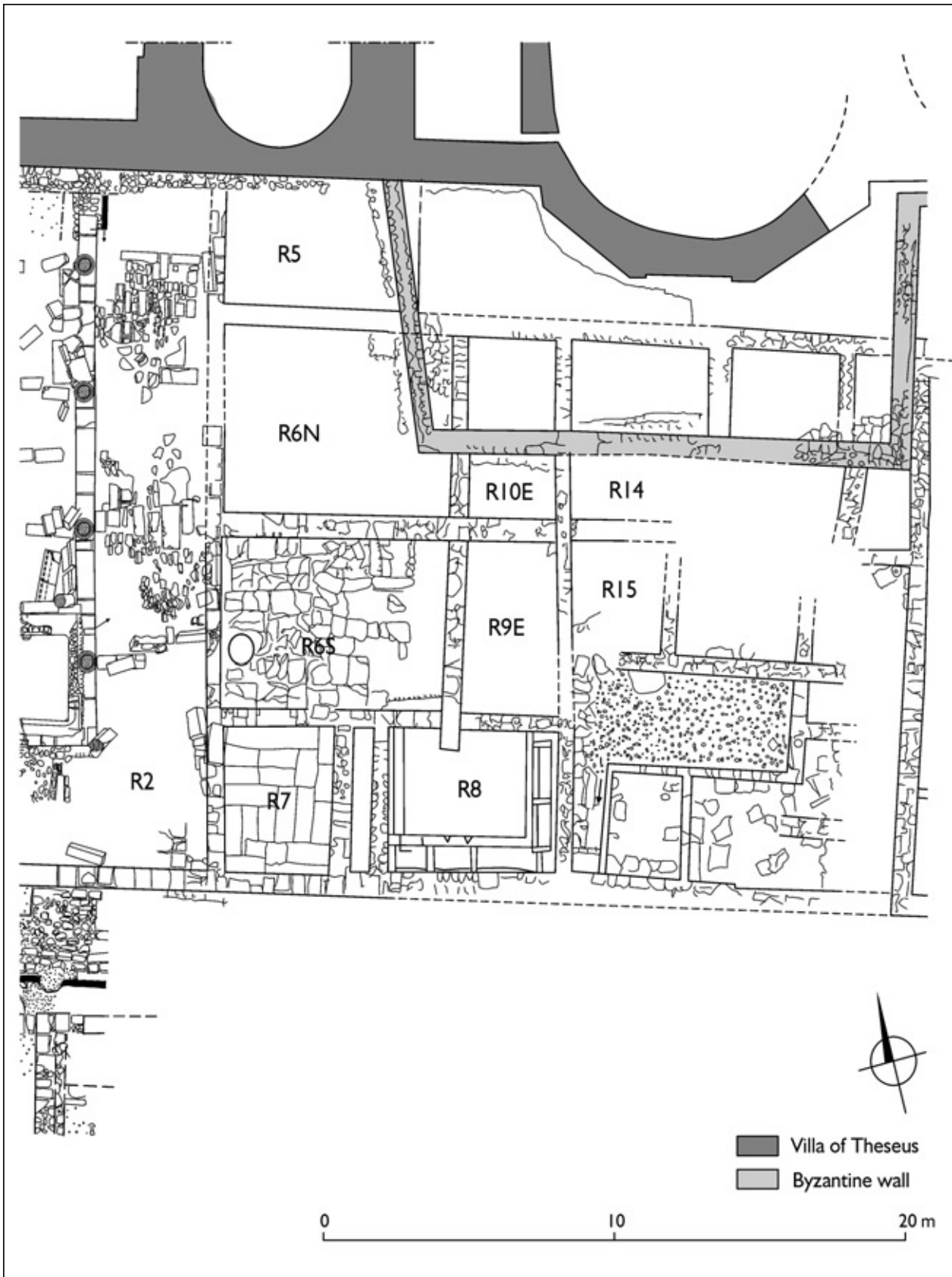


Fig. 11. General view of the eastern part of the Hellenistic House from the southeast  
(Photo W.A. Daszewski)



(2.55 m) than on the south (2.65 m). The northern part of this room was already excavated in 1986, when the first floors belonging to the Hellenistic House were found south of the apse of Room 39 of the Villa of Theseus.<sup>10</sup> The south and east walls of Room 10E preserved a coating of white plaster rising in places to 1 m above the floor; the fill of the room contained much plaster debris [Fig. 14].

Parts of units further to east were also cleared, belonging respectively to Rooms 14 and 15. The floors of these rooms were

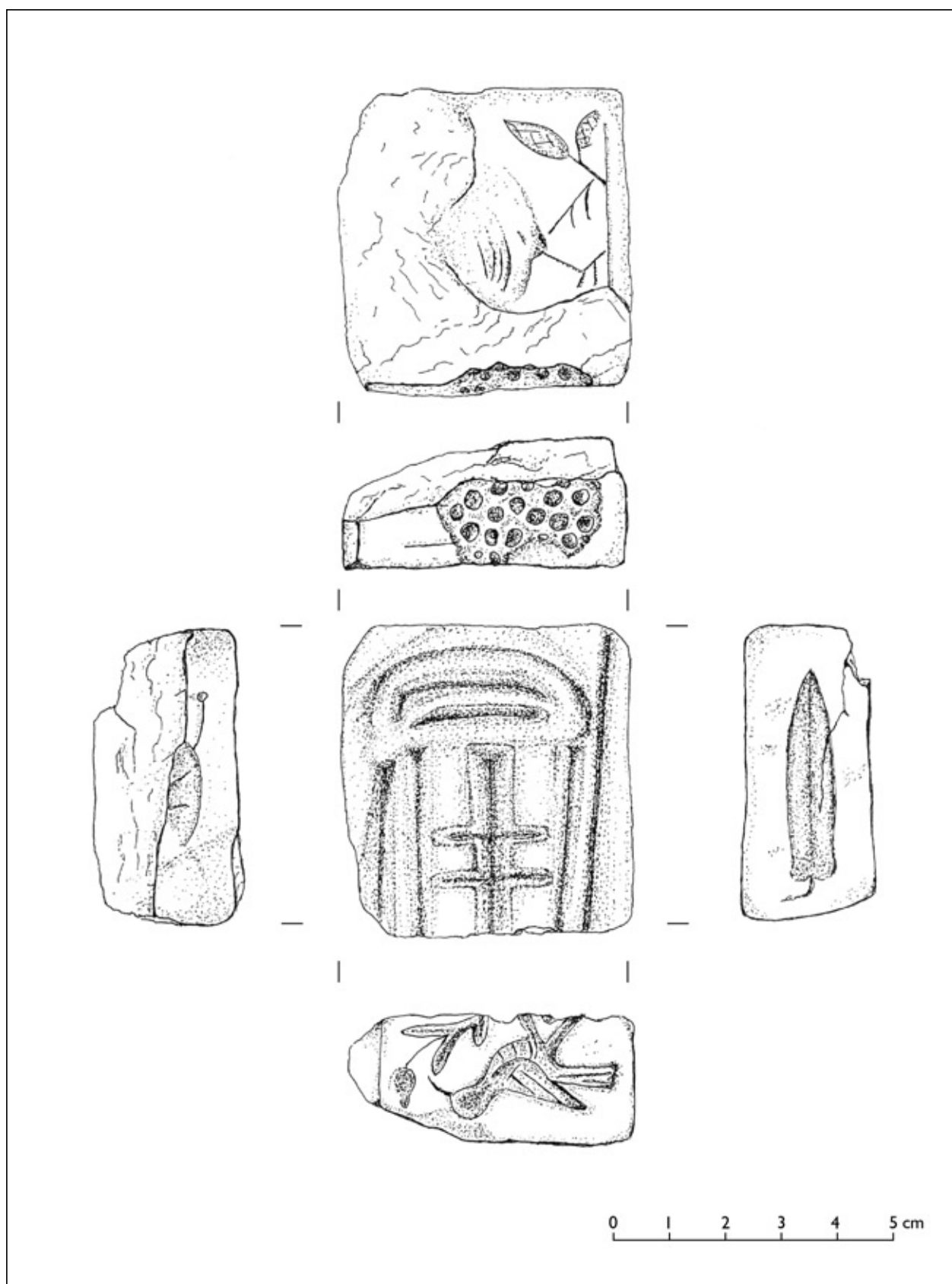
made of tamped earth mixed with lime, while the preserved height of the walls ranged from floor level to almost 2 m. The northern ends of all longitudinally oriented walls were dismantled to the Hellenistic/Early Roman floor level within the Byzantine enclosure [Fig. 15].

The fill between the Late Roman/Byzantine stratum and the Hellenistic/Early Roman floors of the Hellenistic House was homogeneous and contained mainly pottery dating to the end of the 1st and beginning of 2nd century AD. The best



*Fig. 12. General view of the eastern part of the Hellenistic House from the southeast (Photo W.A. Daszewski)*

10 Loc. cit.



*Fig. 13. Mould for printing relief decoration (FR 6/05), found in the upper layers of fill in the Hellenistic House, Room 15 (Drawing M. Droste)*



preserved example is a complete bowl of Cypriot Sigillata form P22B (AR 6/05), measuring 12 cm in diameter. Two volute lamps, dating from the second half of the 1st or early 2nd century AD were found in the fill, below the tops of surviving walls, together with a mould for printing relief decoration. The ornamental motifs included a chapel with closed doors, birds, leaves and grapes [Fig. 13]. A small Chalcolithic axe was also found there. Lower in the fill, there was a *thymiaterion* in the form of a miniature rectangular altar made of white limestone. Another object retrieved from the lower part of the fill was a stamped amphora handle with fragmentary inscription: ΕΠΙ ΑΡΙΣΤ.../ΤΟΥ/?. On the floor itself, there were two Egyptian ribbed beads of blue-glazed faience and a bronze Hellenistic coin of Ptolemy VI.



Fig. 14. Hellenistic House, Room 10E, south and east walls with preserved plaster (Photo W.A. Daszewski)



Fig. 15. Byzantine enclosure wall seen from the north, with underlying walls of the Hellenistic House (Photo W.A. Daszewski)