



**PLATE I.** Mosaic from the Palace at Kourion representing a guinea hen in black, white and grey marble with wattles of yellow paste. Fourth Century.

# UNIVERSITY MUSEUM BULLETIN

VOL. 7

MARCH, 1938

No. 2

## EXCAVATIONS AT KOURION

THE purpose of the excavations at Kourion is to trace the history of that ancient city in the different sites it occupied from the earliest times to the break up of Roman Empire. Two of the sites have already been investigated; the Roman on the hill of Kourion, and the late Bronze Age at Pamboula just to the east of the modern village of Episkopi. Some Geometric and sub-Mycenaean tombs have been dug in the plain below the hill of Kourion. Also, part of the Sanctuary of Apollo belonging both to the Greek and Roman settlements has been cleared.

The staff of the expedition includes B. H. Hill, Field Director, George H. McFadden and John Franklin Daniel.

### THE BASILICA

THE excavations begun at Kourion in the Spring of 1934 were resumed in the Spring and Autumn of 1935, and in the Spring of 1936 and 1937. The walls laid bare in Trench I have proved to be those of a Roman basilica as suspected (Bulletin University Museum, January, 1935). The building is situated high on the bluff of Kourion overlooking the sea to the southwest, the orientation of the building being northeast. Most of the east end was excavated in the Spring of 1935, and the excavations revealed a large basilica with double aisles and three apses marking three distinct periods. The larger apse seems to have belonged to the earliest and larger building, some 64.50 by 35 metres. Large granite columns with white marble capitals and bases probably separated the nave from the adjacent aisles. Many such columns are said to have been removed from the site comparatively recently by natives. One example was found lying where it fell with a fine Corinthian capital belonging probably to the second century (Plate II). It is evident that this was second-hand material, as no doubt the capital also was, and belonged either to an earlier basilica or to another and earlier building. These columns may have supported galleries over the side aisles and above these would come the usual clerestory and timber roof. At the east end there are indications of a raised choir. Only a part of the west end has been excavated as it was found inadvisable at this point to proceed further with the work until after the expropriation of the land.

Trenches sunk here indicate that there was probably an atrium and narthex; and a font for ablutions was partly uncovered at the southeast end of the building.

The north stylobate of the nave is well enough preserved to determine the intercolumniation which was found to be 2.40 metres. Immediately to the south of the larger apse is a cistern which apparently antedates the basilicas and was not in use after the erection of these.

The walls of the basilicas are solidly built and consist of cut blocks of limestone, of which many are re-used blocks, and in most cases they were set together without the use of mortar.

Some fragments of the mosaics that covered many of the floors have been found. These are rather coarse and belong to a late period (Plate II).

The evidence of coins and other finds indicate that the last basilica was still in use as late as the sixth or seventh century.

G. H. McF.

## THE PALACE

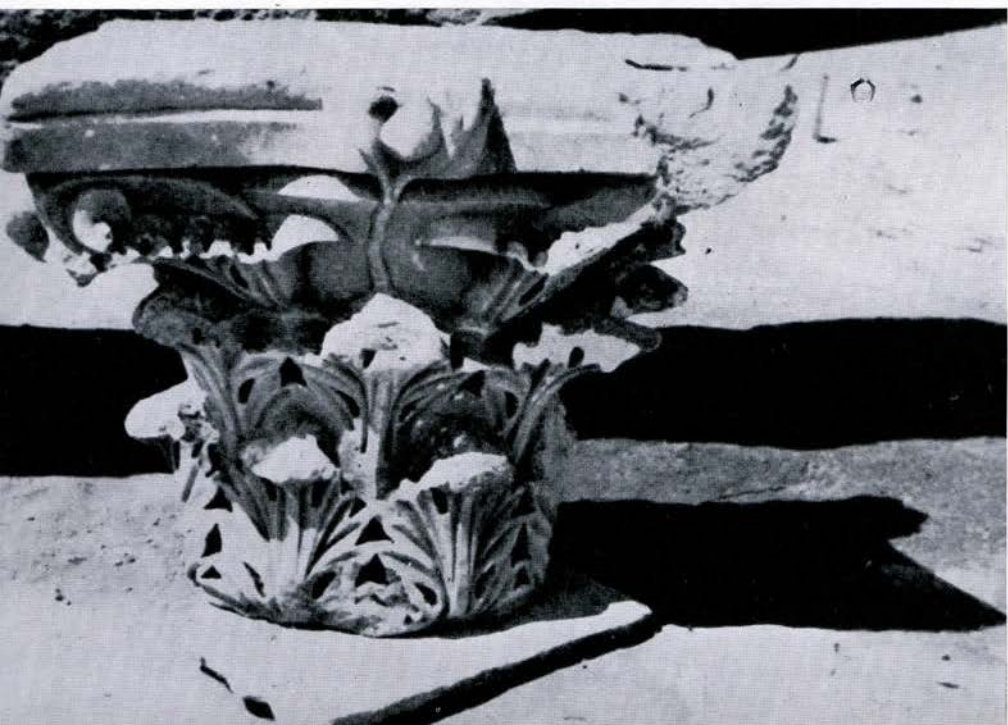
WE found the remains of a palace (Plate IV) at the southeast end of the Kourion plateau, seven minutes walk from the basilica. The palace was first built in early Roman times, and considerably remodelled in the third and fourth centuries A.D. It continued in use until the general desertion of Kourion at the end of the fourth century.

It is a complex of many rooms (30 have been cleared to date) grouped around two large interior courts. It is distinct in plan from the Roman peristyle house, which was usual at this time. The rooms fall into three fairly distinct groups. The northern court, just inside the main entrance and the rooms around it, were reserved for service and storage. A vestibule connects the outer court with the central part of the palace. The long halls and square southeast room of the central unit with their beautiful mosaic floors, center around an enclosed garden containing a fountain and fish-pond. These are the reception rooms of the palace. A few simpler rooms, with flagged floors, may be the men's bedrooms. A third wing of the palace was adjacent to the central section on the southwest, and ran to the edge of the cliff. It has suffered from erosion and much of it has rolled off into the plain below, so that only a few foundations remain to show the arrangement of the rooms. By a stroke of luck a mosaic inscription is preserved at the entrance of this section of the



**PLATE II.** *Above:* Mosaic from the Basilica.

*Below:* Corinthian Capital (Second Century) from the Basilica.



palace. It tells us that these were the women's quarters, and that they contained an "exedra," presumably a porch overlooking the cliffs and the plain below. A fourth unit, up the hill to the northeast, has not yet been cleared. Trial trenches indicate that it contains baths. It is very solidly built and probably belongs to the first period of the palace.

The chief interest of the palace lies in the seven mosaic floors of the state apartments. Those of the vestibule and the southeast room probably date to the third century B.C., but the finest are those of the long halls on the three sides of the garden, of the early fourth century.

The fourth century mosaics were carefully made of small stones; no less than fifteen colours were obtained through the use of various stones, pieces of brick, light green glass, and yellow paste. The plan is essentially the same in each of the three long halls. A wide border goes around the four sides of the room, and the space thus enclosed is divided into panels, mostly square. The decoration is primarily geometric. The southwest room is decorated with all-over patterns (Plate III), the others with intricate medallions. The panels are all different, except in the southwest room, where the arrangement is symmetrical. The patterns are those usual in the fourth century, but their variety and the skill with which they are welded into a unified whole place these mosaics among the best of the period.

The most interesting of the seven mosaics is that of the long hall on the southeast side of the garden (Plate I). A guinea hen, rendered in black, white, and grey marble, with wattles of yellow paste, occupies the center of the first panel. Fish and birds appear in smaller panels at the sides. The other main panels of this floor had similar representations. Only a few are preserved; the finest of all is the grey goose of the second panel.

Three poems were incorporated into the border of this mosaic before the doors leading out of the hall. They are in laborious archaistic Greek, and are undoubtedly contemporary compositions. One of these of three verses, in Homeric meter and vocabulary, proclaims that the palace is supported not by its great stones, strong iron, bright bronze, or even adamant, but by the much worshipped signs of Christ. The combination of Christian faith and pagan literary form furnishes a valuable index to the early Christian period. An inscription of six verses, elegiacs, stood at the entrance to the southeast room. It is incomplete and the continuity is lost, but we can see that it tells of the dignities of the family. Someone,

PLATE III.

General view of the Palace.



Mosaic floor of the long hall  
of the Palace.



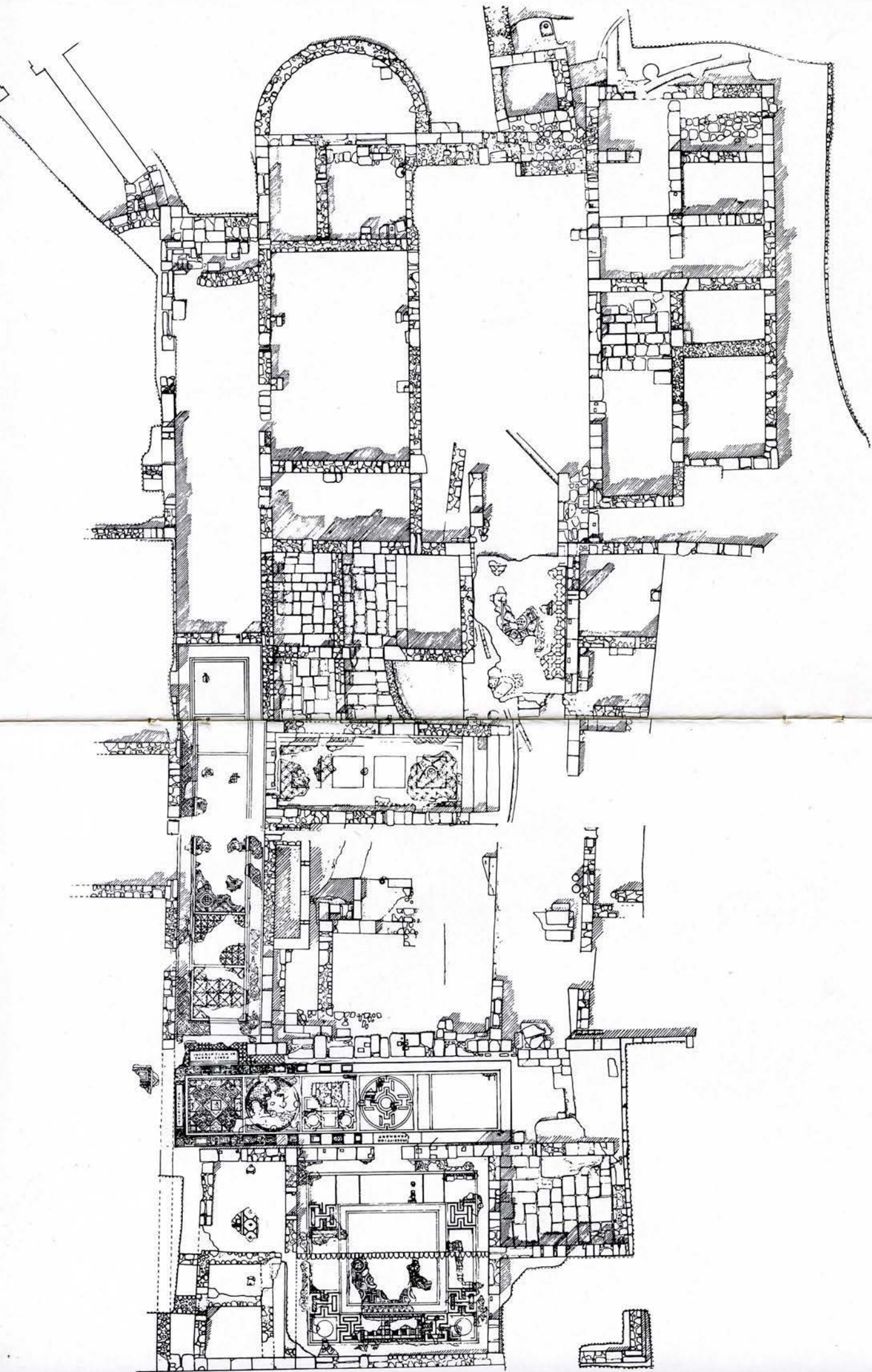


PLATE IV. Ground plan of the Palace.

perhaps Eustolios, forgot to fulfil a promise, but Arakaites seems to have adjusted the matter. Another member of the family built a bathing establishment. One line, though incomplete, is particularly important. It reads ". . . protects (?) Kourion as formerly Phoebus." This definitely establishes the name of the city and couples it with the name of its chief god of pagan days in such a way as to indicate that although his glory has been surpassed it has not yet been forgotten.

The third inscription at the southwest end of the hall, has been mentioned already. It consists of two verses of dactylic hexameter, and says that the "Thalamon," or women's quarters, and the "exedra" are tended by the sisters, Modesty, Prudence, and a third whose name is lost to us.

There was an inscription in the southeast room, but so little is preserved that its import is lost. A fifth inscription, in the vestibule, welcomes visitors to the house in a few simple words. It is enclosed in a gaily coloured wreath, tied with a red ribbon.

Next to the palace, and perhaps with direct access from it, we have discovered a theatre. It was partly cut out of the bed-rock, but the upper part of the cavea was supported on huge semicircular walls. Trial trenches show that the supporting walls are well preserved, and that some at least of the seats and of the stage remain. The excavation of the theatre has been postponed pending the expropriation of the site. When completely cleared it will be one of the most striking monuments of Kourion.

J. F. D.

## THE SANCTUARY OF APOLLO

TWO miles west of Kourion, along the sea, on another imposing site, is the ancient Sanctuary of Apollo. This sanctuary was well known in ancient times, and Strabo writes in his Geography (xiv, 683) that the impious who touched the altar of the god were hurled headlong from a promontory into the sea. In the Spring of 1935, the Cyprus Museum was kind enough to give us a permit to excavate this sanctuary which had never been well investigated, although Cesnola dug here for a short time on a limited scale in 1876.

Excavations began on the site of the sanctuary on the 6th of November, 1935, and the first find in the early morning of the same day, just after digging had begun, was a stone post, or stele, inscribed in Greek on three sides. On the front the following inscription greeted us:



ΤΕΜΕΝΟΣ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ (ΟΣ)	or	"Sanctuary of Apollo"
and on the right side,		
ΚΑΛΩΣ ΕΡΧΗ	or	"Welcome"
and on the left side,		
ΚΑΛΩΣ ΥΠΑΓΕΙΣ	or	"Farewell."

The second find was even more remarkable. This was a sherd of a large water jar or storage vase of a coarse red, Roman ware. It is inscribed by incision in two lines running around the neck of the jar. One can easily make out the letters A-P-O-L-L of Apollo. It was noticed that a similar sherd, found by Cesnola on or near the same site, was listed in the catalogue of the Cesnola Collection of the Metropolitan Museum. A squeeze was forthwith despatched to the Museum and within six weeks, word came from New York that the two sherds, one found in 1876, and the other in 1936, fit perfectly and so belong to the same jar. The inscription on the sherd found by Cesnola reads:

Απ]όλλωνι Υλάτη κα[ι πο]λυκτ[εανῶ] Τιριων[ . . . Σ'υ]χην.  
 "To Apollo Hylates and to him rich in possessions Tirion offers a prayer."

This is significant as it establishes beyond doubt that this is the Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates of which mention is made by ancient authors, and to which there is reference in ancient inscriptions. Now Hyle is the Greek word for wood or forest, and Aelian tells us the sanctuary in ancient times was surrounded by woods. Hence the "Apollo Hylates" of the inscription. The same "Hylates" appears in another inscription subsequently found on six fragments of a broken marble slab.

During the first two weeks we sunk three trenches. The splendid view of the sea and the country round about the site from the point where we began the first trench, and the traces of walls appearing above the surface of the ground not far from where the stone post lay, gave us a good hint where to dig. It was not long before these trenches disclosed what appeared to be a rather large sized temple. In the course of our excavations we had found many handles of small terracotta vases inscribed with the letter A. We named the temple, therefore, Temple A, A for Apollo, or A with the hope that we might later find Temple B. Recent excavations of this building have uncovered the upper courses of the foundation walls of the temple, the plan of which is not altogether clear. As with many Cypriote temples, this disregards the usual orientation, for it faces south and not east. The building belongs to the Roman era; later,



**PLATE V.** *Above:* Archaic altar before the removal of the surface soil

*Below:* Altar after the dirt had been removed

*Left:* The first find. The inscription reads  
Sanctuary of Apollo



however, under the foundations, we discovered traces of walls having a different orientation and, therefore, belonging to another and earlier building. This may have been the Greek temple. The dimensions of the later building are 35 by 15 metres. The conjectural plan is an unusual one for a temple. The interior seems to have been divided into two naves by a wall or colonnade running down the centre of it, and each of these two naves had a continuous colonnade running along the north, east and west sides. The columns were of stone and composed of drums and were covered with a coating of stucco; they were unfluted and had Doric capitals. Examples of these have been found in the naves. The foundations on which the stylobates for these columns rest are very weak and could not have supported much weight. The temple walls, however, and the wall running down the centre of the cella rested on very solid foundations. The walls where preserved are of cut blocks of limestone set together without the use of mortar. A stairway of which twelve steps are in part preserved leads up to the temple from a street below. Probably only three upper steps have not been preserved. At this end there was possibly a portico with two columns in antis. It is not yet clear to what century this building belonged.

In the second trench begun in the first season appeared a rock-cut water conduit, and just northeast of it and about a metre above it, a terracotta water pipe, of later date, which was found to lead from a large rectangular cistern. We traced the conduit and pipe in a northeasterly direction from Temple A by sinking small pits at various intervals for some fifty metres. Here it was found to make a sharp turn eastward toward a mound some fourteen metres away. We soon had two trenches dug across this mound and laid bare a small temple, Temple B, 13.50 metres long by 8.35 metres wide. Like Temple A it faces south. There is a cella and pro-naos. The walls are constructed of rectangular blocks of limestone set together without mortar. The stylobate has two steps over which there is a moulded base that runs around the south, east and west sides of the temple. On the north side there is a perpendicular course to substitute the moulded base. Over this comes a horizontal course surmounted by another perpendicular one. A number of the blocks of this course are still standing on the west wall. The temple has at least two periods. At a later period a stairway of eleven steps, still well preserved, led up from a street to the entrance on the south side and the floor level was raised in the interior. It is not clear yet whether the earlier temple



*Left:* Steps leading from the street to the south end of Temple B.



*Above:* General view of the mound containing Temple B.



*Left:* Roman statue of a draped female figure.

is Hellenistic or Roman. The later one is undoubtedly Roman. The temple is surrounded by a precinct wall, the foundations of which are well preserved. Directly in front of the Roman stairway on the stone paving of the street stands the ancient altar. The street runs in a southerly direction and is lined on either side by walls and buildings. Its entire length, some 74 metres, has been recently excavated along with parts of buildings the plan or use of which are not yet apparent. On the east side of the street about 11 metres south of the temple, we uncovered an Archaic altar-pit belonging to about the middle of the sixth century B.C. which yielded a good quantity of ex-voto terracotta figurines. In the northern part of the pit was a terracotta slab upon which once were fixed the terracotta horses and chariot of which now only the painted chariot wheel and legs of the horses standing upright on the slab and the plumes that adorn the heads of the horses remain. Near these were found the greater number of figurines many of which are in a good state of preservation, including a long-robed priest (h. 46 cm.) with the head lying just where it had broken off from the body, warriors in full armour, riders, horses, squat figures of men in long robes playing the lyre; centaurs, falcons, and many animals. One of the more interesting finds here was that of Corinthian jugs upon which were inscribed by incision in Cypriot letters the words  $\tau\tilde{\omega}$   $\Theta\epsilon\tilde{\omega}$  or "to the God."

The Autumn season closed on the 23rd of December. We resumed work again, however, on the 16th of March and continued to clear a very large building, part of which had been excavated at the close of the previous Autumn. By the second week in April we had laid bare almost the entire structure. It measured 60 metres long by 18 metres wide. This we named the South Building. It consists of five large rooms of which at least three had interior colonnades. Between each of the rooms are long narrow corridors running the whole width of the building. Two of the rooms have floors paved in stone. Columns were found in three of the rooms lying where they fell after the earthquake which probably destroyed the building. At the close of the season, we set up two columns in one room, and one in another on their original bases in situ. As two of these columns were adjacent it was easy to determine the columniation. This was found to give each room 12 columns, six on the east, and six on the west side. Each room has one main and two smaller doors to either side of the central one. The thresholds of almost all of these doors are well preserved. These lead to a stoa, or long portico,

which runs the entire length of the building on the north. Many of the large unfluted drums that supported the stoa lie among the ruins north of the building, and the north wall is now lying on the ground and can be seen with the great door jambs just as it was when it stood upright before it fell.

The South Building has at least two distinct periods. Traces of one of the earlier floors were found in one of the rooms. This earlier period was probably not later than the first Century A.D. The later period belonged undoubtedly to the Roman era, and possibly to the first or second century A.D. It is likely that the building served as administrative offices for the priests of the sanctuary.

In one of the rooms of the South Building we found a life-sized marble statue of a draped female figure lying just under one of the colonnades. It is in a fairly good state of preservation, though the marble is somewhat weathered. The head is of a different marble than the body but apparently belongs to it. The statue is Roman and not of bad workmanship.

Among the interesting finds was that of a small conical object in marble 20.6 centimetres high. It was a problem as to what this was until it was noticed that it very much resembled a conical object in the cella of the Temple of Aphrodite depicted on a coin of Septimius Severus that had been recently found while digging Temple A. This is considered to have been a representation of the goddess.

The walls rest on solid foundations and consist of rectangular blocks set together without mortar. The south wall, however, does not appear strong enough to have supported anything other than a wooden superstructure. The roof was covered with tiles, a great quantity of which have been found. Terracotta pipes drained water from the roof into a nearby underground cistern north of the building. A section of these pipes can still be seen on the northwest corner of the building, and the pipes leading from it to the cistern are in almost a perfect state of preservation and might still be used today (Plate V).

Across the paved street that runs the whole length of the building, and toward the west end of it, rise the many steps of Temple A. Toward the east end, this street meets the street that comes from Temple B, and toward this end of it, and on the north side opposite the South Building, we uncovered another altar-pit very similar to the first but belonging to a later period. Here we found a great quantity of terracotta figurines of all periods from Archaic down to Roman times, many of which are of exquisite

workmanship; also a number of statuettes in stone and marble among which are two very fine heads probably belonging to the Hellenistic era.

In the Spring of 1937 we continued to clear Temple A and the street leading from Temple B with some of the buildings along it, the plans of which are not yet clear. On the east side of this street, toward Temple B, we uncovered a marble floor. Fixed to the centre of one of the marble slabs was a bronze ring to lift it. This was a re-used block taken from elsewhere and probably at one time covered some of the prized possessions of the god. Inscribed upon the bronze ring were the names of five Archons. This is interesting, as we may remember the South Building contains five rooms and it is possible that each of the Archons presided over one of them.

On the north side of the street, a little further to the south, we found among the debris of a building a number of Greek bronzes. Among these was a fine lamp, a Hellenistic statuette of Artemis in a good state of preservation, an archaic Satyr, and an Egyptian amphora. The Satyr is particularly interesting not only because of its fine workmanship but because of its unusual type. Its preserved height is just 11 centimetres; only the feet are missing. His left hand, supported by his thigh, holds a wine jar by one of its handles; and his right hand is raising a cup to his lips. He has a pointed beard and wears a conical cap so unusually long that one wonders whether it is a cap at all; and he has a long tail that he is flaunting behind. The fine workmanship is particularly noticeable in the left thigh where the corrosion has not marred the surface. The Egyptian amphora, 11. centimetres high, is interesting because of the hieroglyphics running around the rim, and the Cypriote characters incised below them which are the same as those on the Corinthian jug found in the Archaic altar, and which were read to mean τῶ Θεῶ or "to the god."

G. H. McF.



**Note:** The Graeco-Roman inscribed sherd of a water jar shown above has been ceded to the Metropolitan Museum of Art which possesses a similar sherd excavated in 1876.