

APHRODISIAS 2023

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SEASON



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Field work at Aphrodisias in 2023 consisted of anastylosis, site conservation, excavation, and sculpture restoration, focused in six main complexes: (1) Civil Basilica, (2) Urban Park / Place of Palms, (3) Tetrapylon Street, (4) House of Kybele, (5) North Temenos House, and (6) Sebasteion Temple. Work in the House of Kybele and the North Temenos House are part of a larger new programme of geophysical and archaeological research into the long history of urban living, private residences, and workshop structures in Aphrodisias. Much other conservation, geophysical, and publication work was also undertaken. Our team worked from 30 May to 14 September and consisted of sixty-seven archaeologists, architects, conservators, epigraphists, photographers, and numismatists – both senior staff and students. Fifty-three local workers were employed in excavation and site conservation, thirty-one in excavation and twenty-two in conservation. The government representative was Okan Cinemre from the Ankara Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi.

1. CIVIL BASILICA AND DIOCLETIAN'S PRICES EDICT (Figs. 1–12)

The Basilica project, begun in 2018, has restored parts of the building's entrance and made a complete display of Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices inscribed on the façade's marble panelling in AD 301. In earlier seasons, the building was cleared of overlying architectural blocks; the marble and mosaic floors inside the building were conserved and documented; work was begun to repair the columns from the front of the building for anastylosis; and ten panels of the Prices Edict were installed on the east side of the complex. The Basilica and Edict project is funded by pladis and Mr. Murat Ülker.

In 2023, the five-year project was brought to completion. The remaining ten panels of the Edict's tariff-list were set up on custom-designed metal mounts in Latin, Turkish, and English on the line of the Basilica's west wall (Figs. 3–7). They include the texts of Chapters 50 to 70 of the Edict. The display includes plastered masonry walls above the niches in the Basilica side-walls on which have been placed information panels, large-scale 1:1 images of the original inscribed stones of the Edict panels, and a fragment of one of the reliefs from the Basilica's upper storey reliefs. The fragment represents an eagle with a large hare in its talons – a typical oracular sign in city foundation legends. New coloured 3D digital models were also made of the Basilica's interior (Fig. 8).

At the same time, intense work was carried out to complete the anastylosis of the four colossal double half-columns of the building's vestibule (Figs. 9–12). Large architectural members were again brought from the Basilica to the Blue Depot-Workshop (Fig. 9) where they were repaired, dowelled, and glued. Missing parts of the columns were added in steel-reinforced artificial stone which was then hand-carved. The repaired column parts and the restored architraves were taken back to the Basilica and mounted and doweled in their correct ancient positions (Figs. 10–12). The anastylosis includes Ionic capitals, two four-meter architraves, and two blocks of the mask and garland frieze.

The anastylosis was supervised by Thomas Kaefer and Gerhard Paul. The Edict display was designed and its installation supervised by Harry Mark. The texts for the Edict were prepared and translated into Turkish by Serra Somersan. The Latin and English texts are based on those of Michael Crawford that will appear in a volume dedicated to the Edict (*Aphrodisias XIII*). The 3D reconstructions were made by Ece Savaş and Phil Stinson.

2. URBAN PARK, called THE PLACE OF PALMS (Figs. 13–15)

The full excavation of the city's second public square, formerly called 'The South Agora' (215 x 70 m) in 2012–2017 was funded by Mica and Ahmet Ertegun. It showed that the complex in fact was an Urban Park with a long water-basin (170 x 30 m), surrounded by palm trees and Ionic colonnades. In a sixth-century poem inscribed on its eastern gate or Propylon, the complex is called 'The Place of Palms'. Current work is focused on the restoration of the pool (Fig. 13) and a collaborative monograph on the whole Urban Park. The conservation work on the pool is sponsored by Mr. Ömer Koç and the Geyre Vakfi.

In 2023, restoration work focused on the middle part of the north side of the pool's marble perimeter (Figs. 14–15). Strong progress was made under the supervision of Hikmet Apaydın. The marble seating around the pool carried an abundance of important graffiti – some 500 drawings, board games, and text messages. The collaborative volume on the Urban Park and its excavation, written by sixteen specialist authors and edited by Ben Russell and Andrew Wilson, was sent to the publisher. It will be *Aphrodisias XIV* in the site series.

3. TETRAPYLON STREET (Figs. 16–25)

The Tetrapylon Street runs north-south from the Tetrapylon to the Theatre (Fig. 1). Sections of the street were already excavated in the 1960s and 1980s. In 2008, a new excavation project started with the aim of investigating this key urban artery, to bring new information about Roman, Late Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk, Beylik and Ottoman Aphrodisias, and eventually to open it for visitors. The busy colonnaded street of the late fifth to sixth century was destroyed in the early seventh century, after which life resumed on top of its collapsed remains.

The project was brought to a conclusion this year, with final field investigations and preparations for the publication of the Street's history and excavation. Work was conducted to the north (NAve) of the Sebasteion (Fig. 17). The unexcavated baulk above the east colonnade was excavated down to the sixth-century floor (NAve 23.1) (Figs. 18–19). The south end of the portico to the west of the street was excavated down to the late fifth-century occupation level (NAve 23.1) (Figs. 22 and 24). Excavations answered remaining questions about the appearance and usage of the street in its Late Roman phases, and added to our understanding of the Emirate (Beylik), fourteenth-century occupation of the area and the importance of the Emirate settlement at Geyre as a whole.

The archaeological team was composed of archaeologists Jesica Arielle Dawson, Adrian Poe, Sean Paxton Silvia, and James Hua, led by Muhammed Özkan and Duru Yağmur Başaran. Excavations were supervised by Dr Ine Jacobs. The Street project was funded by the Friends of Aphrodisias Trust in London, the British Institute at Ankara, and the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research.

Excavation of the east colonnade (NAve 23.1, Figs. 17–21). NAve 23.1 was an area of 24.5 m N-S by 3.30 m E-W, above and just west of the eastern back wall of the Street. Located south of a trench examined in 2022 and north of the Sebasteion, it was the last large area in the street to be excavated (Figs. 17–19). Excavation of the back wall of the east colonnade is undertaken to remedy the high soil profile currently present to the east of the street, as well as to confirm hypotheses concerning the post-antique occupation phases of this area.

Even though the stretch of back wall excavated last year consisted of a regular alternation of piers with spaces between later blocked up, the back wall just north of the Sebasteion presented a much more irregular combination of short stretches of wall. Their internal

chronology is difficult to understand, but they should all date to the period between the late fifth and the late sixth century. In the late sixth century, only one large opening leading to the spaces east of the street remained (Fig. 18). These were probably commercial in nature, as suggested also by the find of a heavy weight standard in front of the door (Inv. 23-50, Fig. 21). The weight, a rectangular marble block of 64.5 kg, had an iron ring inserted into its top surface. A Greek inscription surrounding the ring can be translated as follows: *In the seventh indiction, I set up this up on command of Andr(onik)os* (I 23-04). A second text on the block's front face specified the weight: *double talanton*, or two times a Roman talent of 32.3 kg. The inscription has been dated to the fourth century by Angelos Chaniotis and may have been more than 300 years old when it was abandoned. A long life might explain why the block seems to weigh 100 gr less than it should.

This year's excavations confirmed that the upper storey of the colonnade collapsed in a fire in the early seventh century. A patch of preserved tile floor from the upper storey was found in front of the shop entrance. The debris layers were moved and piled together in an attempt to recover all usable materials, including intact roof tiles, metal artefacts and even the iron nails of the wooden ceilings and trusses (Fig. 19). Though traces of occupation in subsequent centuries are much humbler, the area was clearly never entirely abandoned.

The next large occupation phase uncovered in the trench Nave 23.1 can be placed in the fourteenth century, when a new water channel with NE-SW direction was created. The area to the north of this channel, was occupied by an elongated building, probably a warehouse, a small corner of which was excavated in 2023. To the south of the channel, there was a whole workshop area (Fig. 20).

The southern extent of this complex was already uncovered in the Sebasteion excavations in 1982, and its eastern border was excavated in 2014. This year, four further features could be added to its plan: a paved floor area with a workbench with integrated ceramic basin to the east and a wall with integrated cob oven to the west. Finally, a basin lined with lime on the interior was found to the southwest of the oven. Together with the fourteenth-century bath house discovered in the street area some 50 m further south and traces of a fourteenth- and fifteenth-century market area sixty meters to the north, this workshop area and warehouse testify to the prosperous nature of the settlement in these centuries.

The workshop area was apparently abandoned in the fifteenth century, even though the water channel remained functional for another 300 years.

Excavation of the west portico (NAve 23.2, Figs. 22–25). Investigation of the south end of the west portico where it abuts the Dark Age Complex shed light on the late antique occupation phases of the buildings west of the street. Underneath the remains of a late fifth-century floor, the ceramic supply of the Late Roman baths was uncovered. The back wall of the west portico, one of the rare remnants pre-dating the construction of the street, was rebuilt in its entirety in the late fifth century when a series of shops was installed at the back of the portico. The most southern shop was preceded by a wooden portal. Some scant remains suggest that the area immediately in front and potentially the entire portico in this period was paved with white slabs.

Not much remains of this initial late fifth-century phase, since the portico was renovated in its entirety once again in the later sixth century. The stylobate blocks were re-set and new drains evacuating water from the shops behind the portico in the direction of the main street drain were installed. The walking level was raised with deposits up to 60 cm thick, all of which were remarkably rich in ceramic and bone finds. Ceramics mostly consisted of local wares of sixth-century date. There were also several imported unguentaria (small narrow vessels probably containing a highly valued condiment, inv. 23-31 to 23-34). Moreover, the

layer contained sherds of a large and rare African Red Slip plate probably produced in the first half of the fifth century with appliqué decoration depicting an attacking bear and lion reminiscent of wild animal fights (inv. 23-30, Fig. 23). The plate may have been a precious heirloom, already some 200 years old by the time it broke.

The many seashells and fish bones found in these deposits hint at the presence of a fishmonger in the area. The seashells are remarkable for being found so far inland. Remains of narrow ceramic pipes and a ceramic water distribution box provide further confirmation that the west portico was well provided with running water. Cut marks on some of the animal bones suggest a butcher. Holes cut through the re-set stylobate blocks were no doubt used to tie animals, either belonging to customers of the shopping area, or for animals waiting for slaughter.

In the early seventh century, the south end of the west portico was used to pile up burned debris from the fire that destroyed much of the east colonnade as well as the furnishing of some of the rooms belonging to the Late Roman baths. A few decades later, this southern end was separated from the rest of the west portico by the north wall of the new Dark Age Complex. During cleaning of the top surface of this wall, a head belonging to a statuette of Dionysos was recovered (inv. 23-01, Fig. 25). It probably once belonged to the domestic inventory of one of the apartments above the east colonnade.

Much of the chapter writing by twelve collaborating authors was completed during the 2023 season for the monograph on the Tetrapylon Street that is being edited by Ine Jacobs.

4. HOUSE OF KYBELE (Figs. 26–36)

The House of Kybele sector is an extensive neighbourhood to the northeast of the city centre, immediately inside a small gate in the late antique city walls, investigated already partially by Kenan Erim between the 1960s and 1980s. It includes the large mansion itself, an east-west marble-paved street, a series of shops and workshops, and a large *horreum* or warehouse. Since 2022, a new project aims to study, conserve, and publish the older excavations and its finds, as well as to answer remaining questions by means of new field work.

Excavations in 2023 focused on a large baulk left by the older excavations, which overlay the southern third of the warehouse and parts of the shops, workshops, and street to its east (Figs. 26–29). The aims were to find more information on the character of this area and to better understand the chronology of this sector from late antiquity to the modern day. The field team in 2023 was led by Alis Gülfizar Altinel and Claire Davis, assisted by Meryem Konuş and Nellie Carobene. Excavations were overseen by Ine Jacobs. The House of Kybele project is funded by the Leon Levy Foundation and the Headley Trust.

Excavations confirmed that this city quarter remained highly vibrant until the second decade of the seventh century, after which it fell victim to a sudden destruction event that created a debris layer of more than 1.5 m thick. Occupation however resumed in the later seventh century, and this area of Aphrodisias appears to have been in use as an artisanal suburb also in Middle Byzantine times.

Late antiquity to the second decade of the seventh century. The warehouse and the workshops to its east were re-built after the earthquake that struck Aphrodisias in the late fifth century. As already discovered last year, rebuilding made ample use of unbaked clay and mudbrick. The eastern end of the warehouse was reconstructed using rubble and brick for its exterior walls and mudbrick for its interior, which has been preserved up to a height of ca. 1.6 m above the late antique occupation level in the area. The thick layer of

disintegrated silty clay found inside the entire warehouse underlines that its walls were largely reconstructed in unbaked clay. Inside the building, behind the entrance in the south wall, an additional room was added using more brick and mudbrick. All interior walls were decorated with painted plaster showing simple geometric motifs. The warehouse was apparently lit through high windows in its south wall, one of the mullions of which was found lying just above the late antique floor level (Fig. 29).

Excavation was stopped inside the warehouse and in the smaller rooms to its east above floor level to avoid a possible large number of finds at the end of the 2023 season. There is indeed reason to believe that the population had to flee the area unexpectedly, leaving their possessions behind. A wealth of finds inside the House of Kybele itself is described in the older notebooks, and this year a room was excavated with all its furnishing still inside.

This small structure (3.50 x 1.55 m) had been added in the street space itself at the very end of Antiquity, abutting the southern wall of the late antique workshop area (Figs. 30–31). Its preserved walls are of modest construction, and they were likely only a base for a wooden cabin in which cooked foods were sold to passersby. The base of the east wall includes a typical cooking stand (visible in Fig. 31).

Both on top of the floor and in the stratigraphy above, a wealth of ceramic finds was discovered, including at least a dozen cooking pots and associated lids, several vessels of local storage amphorae, a ceramic strainer, and a few table ware plates, both local and imported, which indicate that food was consumed here (Fig. 32). That the space was destroyed abruptly is underlined by the find of a (broken) cooking pot with bones (for a soup or stew) still inside. Finds of a marble pestle and mortarium fragment are also connected to food preparation. The room's assemblage was completed by a several ceramic lamps, six of which were still mostly intact (Fig. 34). A miniature head of a dog in blue marble was found lying on the floor of the room (inv. 23-63, W: 4.0 cm, Fig. 33).

This small restaurant came to a sudden end when it was hit by falling debris from surrounding structures, first and foremost the roof and upper wall sections from the House of Kybele across the street, which is known to have burned down in the second decade of the seventh century. The cause of the destruction of the warehouse remains unknown, but judging from the presence of bronze vessels immediately above its late antique floor level (inv. 23-50, Fig. 35), this space was also abandoned in a hurry.

Seventh century to Middle Byzantine. The area would never again be as densely occupied in post-antique centuries, but it was re-developed nonetheless. The very uneven destruction debris was levelled probably already in the later seventh century, and a new building was constructed. Even though its western continuation was destroyed by an Ottoman water channel that once ran through this area and other parts were probably excavated in the 1960s, enough remained to recognise that it was of impressive size. An up to one-metre thick wall began near the northeastern edge of the trench, curved south-westward, and then turned back to the southeast along the southern edge of the trench. The shape, size and position of this building, immediately inside the gate would make it suitable as a corral for animals. The presence of animals in the area was in any case confirmed by the large quantity of animal bones in contemporary layers, including a largely complete cow-skeleton.

In a next occupation phase, dated to the later ninth and tenth centuries, this area of the city was apparently used as an artisanal quarter where ceramics were produced. The 1964 excavations uncovered a kiln in the northeast corner of the warehouse above the debris, and this year's excavations found several ceramic sherds indicative of (unsuccessful) attempts to imitate international glazed wares of the period. Although the area was not entirely

abandoned after the Middle Byzantine period, the House of Kybele sector obviously lay at the outskirts of the post-Byzantine settlement. Traces of occupation are meagre, with houses only returning here in the nineteenth or twentieth century.

In addition to the rich ceramics and head of the dog (inv. 23-63, Fig. 33) from the food stall on the east-west street, finds included two bronze vessels, a pan (inv. 23-49) and a bowl, (inv. 23-51); a bronze cross pendant (inv. 23-20, Fig. 36); unguentaria fragments (inv. 23-21, 23-27); several well-preserved terracotta lamps (inv. 23-44, 23-53, 23-55, 23-60, 23-61, 23-62, 23-65, Fig. 34); a stray fragment of a Christian epitaph (inv. 23-22); and an unformed stone covered in a white opaque glass paste with further glass drops in blue and green, found in a deposit above the food stall's floor (inv. 23-57).

5. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY (Fig. 37)

A pilot season of new geophysical survey was carried out between 12 and 18 June. Its aim was to test the potential of ground-penetrating radar (GPR) in the north area of the city. This area had previously been explored using resistivity, but GPR has only previously been employed at Aphrodisias on a small scale, in various areas to the south of the Theatre Hill. (GPR is a 'non-destructive detection' method, which uses electromagnetic waves to investigate subsurface structures.) The survey was undertaken by Melda Küçükdemirci and Ben Russell.

A total of 5,000 m² was surveyed in two areas: (1) immediately east of the North Temenos House, as a precursor to further excavation in this sector, and (2) in the field north of the outer temenos of the Temple of Aphrodite (Fig. 37). The results indicated that the technique is well-suited to the site's soil and the nature of its subsurface features, much of which are of stone. High amplitude anomalies, that appear black on the GPR plots, indicate the presence of walls, and sometimes floors.

To the north of the North Temenos House, GPR revealed a large open area, possibly a courtyard, with a suite of structures, possibly rooms, along its northern and eastern flanks. The alignment of these features might suggest that the North Temenos House extended across this area, but excavation will be needed to test this hypothesis. Later, in August, a trench (NTH 23.2) was opened across the junction of two of the clearest anomalies identified by the GPR, specifically to control these results. It indicated high accuracy of the results and the presence of substantial Roman or Late Roman walls in this sector.

In the field north of the Temple of Aphrodite's outer temenos, a more extensive area was explored. Parts of five city blocks were revealed, with the road surfaces between most of them clearly visible. The position of these features conforms well to the hypothesized city grid in this part of the city, derived from the earlier resistivity survey.

At the southern edge of the area, the thick north wall of the outer temenos can be seen, the position of which previously had been only hypothetical. A possible entranceway can be identified midway along its length. A road surface to the north of this feature marks the southern edge of a city block containing high density, less formal buildings, perhaps of domestic, commercial, or industrial character. Particularly clear results came from the northern part of the sector: they show a threeroomed building constructed over an east-west road and, to the north of it, a three-sided portico, surrounding an open courtyard.

GPR survey of this kind distinguishes well between large public structures and domestic or commercial spaces, and its results are most easily interpreted over a large area. Based on the strong results of this year's work, a future program of GPR survey is planned.

6. NORTH TEMENOS HOUSE (Fig. 38–40)

New work in the North Temenos House, a town mansion located immediately north of the inner temenos of the Temple of Aphrodite, aims to understand its full extent and phasing, its chronology and function, and to study and publish the structure and its finds. Large parts of the house were excavated between 1965 and 1967, and further documentation work was undertaken in 1995 and 1996. The new project is part of a programme of research into housing and living in Aphrodisias from the Late Roman into the Byzantine period. Despite its size and prominent position, the house remains essentially unstudied and unpublished. New excavations, conceived in conjunction with geophysical survey, were directed by Ben Russell, with the assistance of Cemile Karaca. The project is sponsored by the Leverhulme Trust.

In 2023, two trenches were opened: (1) NTH 23.1 was located on the northern edge of the earlier excavations (Fig. 38–39), in the space between the 1966 Trenches 9, 10 and 11; (2) NTH 23.2 was located to the east at the point where this year's geophysical survey suggested that structures related to the house might be present (Fig. 40B). This second trench was effectively a test trench, to control the geophysical results.

Trench NTH 23.1. A series of service rooms had been partially excavated in this area in 1966, and two columns of a further structure, probably a courtyard, were uncovered. The columns, as elsewhere in the complex, were built of schist slabs cut into small 'pie slices' (Fig. 40A). The aim of the trench was to explore the connections between these parts of the house and attempt to uncover stratigraphic information about their use and destruction. Work between 2 and 15 August concentrated on the removal of the upper stratigraphic contexts in the area and the documenting of medieval walls that probably marked the boundary of a road (Fig. 39).

Between 15 and 18 August a series of mudbrick and roof tile collapses beneath these medieval structures were excavated, all of which resulted from the collapse of the North Temenos House. Patches of burning in these collapse layers—especially in the centre and east of the trench—suggest that at least part of the structure caught fire as it collapsed. However, these patches of burning were limited to the upper levels of the collapse layers; the building was not destroyed by a fire, therefore, but rather by an earthquake. Significant quantities of tiles, ceramics, and especially animal bones were recovered from the lowest layers of the collapse, where it fell on the floors. As these collapse layers were removed, a series of walls was revealed, some with parts of their mudbrick superstructures still standing.

Most of these walls had been partially exposed by the earlier excavations in this sector (in 1966), but several connecting walls were new. These walls define the extents of five rooms, three of which were excavated down to floor level this season. In the south-western corner of the trench, a room with a tile floor (N-1), partially exposed in 1966, was fully excavated. It had not been documented in 1995 and 1996, when the first state plan of the house was made. The tile floor here covers three-quarters of the room's overall area, but a strip of tiles along the eastern edge of the room was removed at some point and replaced by a packed earth floor. A large number of ceramic storage vessels, jugs and cooking pots, as well as some glass, were recovered from the collapse deposit on top of the floor.

The adjacent room to the east (N-2) extends further to the north. It is accessible from N-1 through a narrow doorway. It again had a tile floor, but preserved only at its southern end. To the north, the tiles were replaced by a packed earth floor, which is poorly preserved and

was perhaps dug away at a later date and replaced by a less compact rubble and earth fill (left unexcavated this season).

Floor level was also reached in N-5 to the east of N-2 but not apparently accessible from it. N-5 room runs along the west side of what was originally an open peristyle courtyard, surrounded by schist slab-built columns (N-6). Small walls and a threshold were added along the east of the space to separate it from the courtyard and turn it into an enclosed room. On the southern wall of N-5, remains of a mudbrick superstructure survive in situ, with wall plaster still attached to it. This plaster and fallen plaster recovered from the collapses on top of the floor show that the room was originally decorated with panels of painted, imitation marble. The original floor of the room was stripped at some point prior to its destruction and a packed earth floor laid down in its place (also left unexcavated this season). A drainage or supply pipe was discovered running through and under this earth floor at the northern edge of the trench. In the north-west part of the trench two further rooms (N-7 and N-8) were identified but not excavated.

Overall, NTH 23-1 has successfully revealed a series of service rooms belonging to the original house; excavations have also shown that the courtyard, with its slab-built columns, was certainly part of the complex, even if no direct access to it was uncovered. Finally, the ceramics—especially those on the floors of the rooms—indicate that this area of the building continued to be used for storage and other utilitarian purposes between the seventh and ninth centuries AD, once its floors (or some of them) had been stripped out. This provides important evidence for continued urban life in this part of the city in the ‘Dark Ages’.

Trench NTH 23.2. The trench was positioned over the point where the geophysical survey had suggested there was an intersection of two substantial walls, that could belong to an eastward extension of the North Temenos House. The trench was opened on 2 August and two walls were revealed within one day of excavation, immediately beneath topsoil (Fig. 40B). The north-south wall turned out to be a substantial Roman-era wall, standing over 1.5 m high, while the east-west wall was a later medieval wall, only two courses high. Further excavation, however, revealed that this later Medieval wall was not in fact the one identified on the geophysical results. After the excavation of several layers of rubble and collapse, it was discovered that the north-south oriented Roman wall turned westwards, following roughly the same alignment as the medieval wall.

To the east, a room was revealed with marble flooring and wall revetment, most of it stripped out. At the north-west of the trench, a further room, this time with terracotta tiles was uncovered. The space to the south-west was found to contain multiple fills extending down to a packed earth floor and the foundations of a platform or other structure, abutting the west face of the north-south wall. This wall originally had a doorway through it, blocked up before its east face was covered in marble revetment. Beneath this door, and post-dating its infilling, is a small arched opening, running beneath the floor level of the marble-paved room to the east. These features, the pink colouring of the mortar on the walls of the marble-paved room, and the discovery of a box tile in the area, indicate that a bathing complex existed in this area. A notable find from the lowest deposit in the south-west corner of the trench was a copper alloy brazier, probably medieval in date (inv. 23-64). Other finds included a terracotta lamp (inv. 23-56) and unguentarium fragment (inv. 23-29), and fragments from a glass unguentarium (inv. 23-58).

This trench revealed a range of features that confirmed the results of the geophysics and indicated the presence of a small bath complex. Further investigation, planned for 2024, is

needed to confirm whether this area was part of the North Temenos House complex or was simply adjacent to it.

7. SEBASTEION TEMPLE (Figs. 41–42)

A three-year project was begun in 2021, to study, document, and restore parts of the Corinthian temple that stood at the east end of the Sebasteion. The aim was to restore part of its Corinthian columnar façade that faced down the long relief-lined avenue in front of it. The temple stood on a tall podium and was dedicated to Livia and Tiberius: it was the culmination of the whole Sebasteion complex. In 2021, the architectural pieces of the Temple were collected and organized in their own block-field to the east of the excavation house by crane in order to study which elements could form part of an anastylosis. In 2022, work focused on repairing the temple platform and re-establishing the correct stylobate level and on making a detailed trial-mounting of parts of two columns. The anastylosis was supervised by Thomas Kaefer and Gerhard Paul, with the assistance of Phil Stinson. The project is sponsored by Caroline Koç.

In 2023, further blocks of artificial stone were placed over the foundations for Columns 4, 5, and 6, with masonry walls constructed between them. At the same time, work proceeded on the precision trialling, mounting, and eventual fixing of the bases and column drums of Columns 1, 2, and 3. A few missing pieces were carved from artificial stone. The lowest ancient drum of Column 2 was located in a different, overgrown storage area when an artificial-stone replacement for it had already been prepared (but not carved). The result at the end of the project is an anastylosis of three full columns (1–3) in their correct positions to their full height, with part of Column 6 at the south corner of the temple podium (Figs. 39–40). Further work might more parts of Columns 4, 5, and 6 and some of the surviving Corinthian capitals.

The three full columns of this restoration dramatically change a visitor's experience of the complex. The anastylosis has re-created an important aspect of the Sebasteion's original architectural effect: the temple façade matched the height of the adjoining North and South Buildings and functioned as the 'terminus' of the complex. It also restores the intended effect of 'closing' the sanctuary's east end. The temple was radically transformed in late antiquity, by the removal of its cella behind the façade and the substitution of a fountain basin against its front in place of its original access stairway. The anastylosis is then of this late antique phase, of a magnificent Corinthian columnar screen that continued to function as the culmination of the old Sebasteion complex that was now transformed into a public and commercial facility.

8. MUSEUM COURTYARD PROJECT (Figs. 43–44)

The project to make new covered interior museum spaces inside the existing courtyard of the Aphrodisias Museum, sponsored by Lucien Arkas, was begun in 2019. Detailed planning was carried out with the project architects, ARTI-3 of Izmir, in 2020; in 2021, the design was refined, and the sculptures for display were transferred from the Museum Depots to the Depot-Workshop. In 2022, a set of badly fragmented mythological reliefs from the Basilica and from the Propylon of the Urban Park (formerly known as the 'Agora Gate') were restored.

In 2023, conservation work focused on three portrait statues and ten portrait heads and busts, many of them discoveries of the last twenty years, which will be displayed in the new covered space of the courtyard. The heads and busts range in date from the first to the sixth centuries AD. They were all prepared for mounting on independent pillars after careful

assessment of the precise turn and position of their heads. Each portrait was matched to its bronze fixings which will be countersunk into the top of its stone pillar.

Three imperial statues, each surviving in several parts and fragments, were also restored. They came from the Propylon of the Sebasteion and represented the emperor Tiberius, his mother Livia, and the young imperial princess Aemilia Lepida (Fig. 44A-C).

Tiberius. The broken right foot and ankle of the statue were dowelled to the lower leg, and the missing part of the plinth was made up in artificial stone. The missing lower right leg beneath the himation was supported with a narrow steel dowel encased in a wider steel sleeve that gives the figure a stronger visual stability. The six surviving fragments of the badly shattered portrait head were doweled together with pins and attached to the body with a single exposed steel dowel (fig. 43A). An important discovery was made during the conservation process. The shattered head, which had been found in the same area, had long been thought to belong to the body, but in careful study and trialling of the head on the statue held upright in scaffolding it was found that a small preserved part of the neck fragment at the back of the head actually joins the statue. The head of Tiberius certainly belongs to this statue composed in the costume of a figure of Zeus (Fig. 44B).

Livia and Aemilia. The four-five main broken parts of the bodies were doweled together, and the surviving inscribed bases were repaired in artificial stone where necessary to create bearing surfaces for the statues. The statues can be seen to belong to the statue bases from the alignment of the cutting for the clamps that secured the statues to the bases (Figs. 44A and C). The missing shoulders and chest of each statue were modelled in clay and cast in plaster, and the heads were then attached to their bodies by dowels through the restored chest and shoulders of each figure. The head of Livia (Fig. 43B) belongs on this statue, even though it does not join, because the statue joins a base inscribed for Livia and the portrait is certainly of her and of the correct scale and manufacture. The head of Aemilia belongs on its statue because the lines of the clothing and veil line precisely between the two parts at the proper right shoulder.

The conservation and restoration work was carried out by Nick Barnfield, Tom Flemons, Alex Rickett of Cliveden Conservation, U.K., together with Hikmet Apaydın and his local team of stone conservators. The work was sponsored by Lucien Arkas.

9. OTHER SITE CONSERVATION

A variety of other conservation work was undertaken in 2023. Conservation of the blue-grey marble paving of the Tetrapylon Street was continued by Hikmet Apaydın (Fig. 45). New site information panels, designed by Harry Mark, were set up for the Agora, Bouleuterion, North Temenos House, Triconch House, and several at the newly restored Basilica. The city's marble quarries, located to the northeast of the site, were monitored by an archaeological team led by Ben Russell.

10. STUDY, DOCUMENTATION, PUBLICATION (Fig. 46–47)

Old and new finds were studied in the depots. Their documentation forms the basis for scientific publication, most notably this season for the collaborative monograph on the history and excavation of the Tetrapylon Street. A major re-organisation of the excavation house depots was undertaken in June, by a small team of Quinn Bolte, Muradiye Bursalı, Cemile Karaca, and Emre Şahinoğlu, led by Ulrike Outschar.

Marble. Intensive research on fragmentary statues was pursued by Julia Lenaghan and Nisan Lordoğlu. Carved marbles from the Street were written up by Roland Smith and Josh

Thomas for the Street monograph, and from the Sebasteion Propylon by Julia Lenaghan for a volume on the architecture of the Sebasteion (by Phil Stinson). Significant marble finds included the small blue-marble head of a dog from the floor of the restaurant on the street outside the House of Kybele (inv. 23-63, W: 4.00 cm, Fig. 33); and the head of a statuette of Dionysos, found in a secondary context (in a wall) at the Dark Age Complex on the Tetrapylon Street (inv. 23-01, H: 6.5 cm, Fig. 25). The Dionysos head was finished all round and has a small pin-sized dowel hole for its attachment or re-attachment to its body. The small figure was a high-quality work of probably the fourth-fifth century and probably came from one of the wealthy sixth-century apartments above the east colonnade of the Tetrapylon Street.

Inscriptions. Epigraphers Angelos Chaniotis, Takashi Fuji, and Özge Acar recorded new finds and continued research on earlier inscriptions and especially on the site's graffiti. Intensive documentation of mason's marks was pursued, notably in the Tetrastoon. Marks of Christian presence, mostly crosses, were recorded by Takashi Fuji in the Sebasteion and at the Tetrapylon.

New finds from the Street sector included a cornice fragment found in the block field east of the northern part of the Street and inscribed [...]OTHĒKĒN, probably referring to a structure with a built bookcase or library (*bibliothēkē*) (inv. 23-59, I 23.01) and the double-talent weight standard from the Street, described above (inv. 23-50, I 23.04, Figs. 21 and 47). New finds from excavation in the House of Kybele included fragments in secondary context: a small part of an inscribed statue base of the first-second century (inv. 23-10, I 23.02); a fragment from the upper part of a second-century base inscribed H BOUL[H] (inv. 23-07; I 23.03), recording a dedication by the Council probably of a statue of Demos; and a small fragment of a Christian epitaph (inv. 23-22, I 23.06).

Coins and ceramics. Numismatic study was pursued by Ahmet Tolga Tek and Ömer Can Taşpınar (Roman) and Betül Teoman and Gültekin Teoman (Islamic), with special attention to the finds from the Tetrapylon Street. Pottery study was pursued by Ulrike Outschar (Roman) and Muradiye Bursalı and Emre Şahinoğlu (medieval), focusing on material from the House of Kybele and the Tetrapylon Street (Fig. 46). A catalogue and study of unguentaria and their monograms was prepared by Eugenia Vitello.

Important finds included the new joining fragments of a large African Red Slip (ASR) platter of the late sixth or early seventh century with appliqué wild animals (bear and lion) from the western colonnade of the Tetrapylon Street, immediately north of the Dark Age Complex (inv. 23-30, Fig. 23). The surviving part of the platter is made up of four joining fragments, some found already in 2022 (in Nave 22.2). The inscribed rim of a large open vessel (inv. 69-76) was studied anew. The text addresses one Polymnia, the lady of the house (*kyria*) and can be translated as follows: *When you weave, Lady Polymnia, wash (the wool, here)!* (I 23.12).

Organic remains. Environmental samples from drains, latrines, and rubbish dumps in the Tetrapylon Street were studied by Erica Rowan for the Street monograph. Animal and human bones were studied by Vedat Onar and Yağmur Başaran respectively.

Metal, glass, mosaic. The study of the abundant glass finds from the Street and other areas was pursued by Üzlifat Özgümüş and Quinn Bolte. Detailed publication study of the finds of bronze-ware from the Tetrapylon Street was carried out by Feyzullah Şahin. Fragments of wall mosaic from the upper storey of the Street colonnade were studied by Tim Penn. The mosaics featured putti in a rich plant composition.

Ottoman. The study of Ottoman-period Aphrodisias was pursued by Miranda Gronow for her doctoral dissertation, focused on clay pipes and the bath-house on Pekmez Hill.

Publication. The volume by Michael Crawford, *Aphrodisias XIII: Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices at the Civil Basilica* will appear soon. The volume edited by Ben Russell and Andrew Wilson, *Aphrodisias XIV: The Place of Palms: An Urban Park at Aphrodisias* is at the publisher. Strong progress was also made on monograph texts for the Sebasteion (Phil Stinson), Stadium (Katherine Welch and Andrew Leung), the Bouleuterion (Ursula Quatember and Chris Hallett), and the City Walls (Peter de Staebler).

STAFF 2023 (Fig. 48)

Archaeologists: Mark Abbe, Alis Gülfizar Altinel, Duru Yağmur Başaran, Quinn Bolte, Muradiye Bursalı, Nell Carobene, Claire Davis, Jessica Dawson, Miranda Gronow, Christopher Hallett, James Hua, Ine Jacobs, Cemile Karaca, Allison Kidd, Mikayil Köroğlu, Julia Lenaghan, Andrew Leung, Nisan Lordoğlu, Ulrike Outschar, Esen Ögüş, Üzlifat Özgümüş, Muhammed Özkan, Timothy Penn, Adrian Poe, Ursula Quatember, Benjamin Russell, Ayça Sariönder, Sean Silvia, Roland Smith, Serra Somersan, Philip Stinson, Emre Şahinoğlu, Joshua Thomas, Eugenia Vitello, Katherine Welch, Bahadır Yıldırım, Ozan Yıldırım. **Archaeobotanist:** Erica Rowan. **Architects:** Batur Ecer, Ece Önder, Harry Mark, Santiago Patino, Ece Savaş. **Anastylosis Architects:** Thomas Kaefer, Gerhard Paul. **Conservators:** Büşra Arı, Nicholas Barnfield, Thomas Flemons, İslim Görür, Alexander Rickett, James Wheeler, Feyza Yıldırım. **Crane Operator:** Recep Köle. **Depot Manager:** Selcen Köroğlu. **Epigraflar:** Özge Acar, Angelos Chaniotis, Takashi Fujii, Selcen Köroğlu. **Geophysical research:** Melda Küçükdemirci. **Numismatists:** Ahmet Tolga Tek, Ömer Can Taşpınar, Betül Teoman, Gültekin Teoman. **Photographers:** Ian Cartwright, Alis Gülfizar Altinel. **Zooarchaeology:** Vedat Onar.

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R.R.R. Smith, Director
Ine Jacobs, Field Director
Serra Somersan, Assistant Director
October 2023

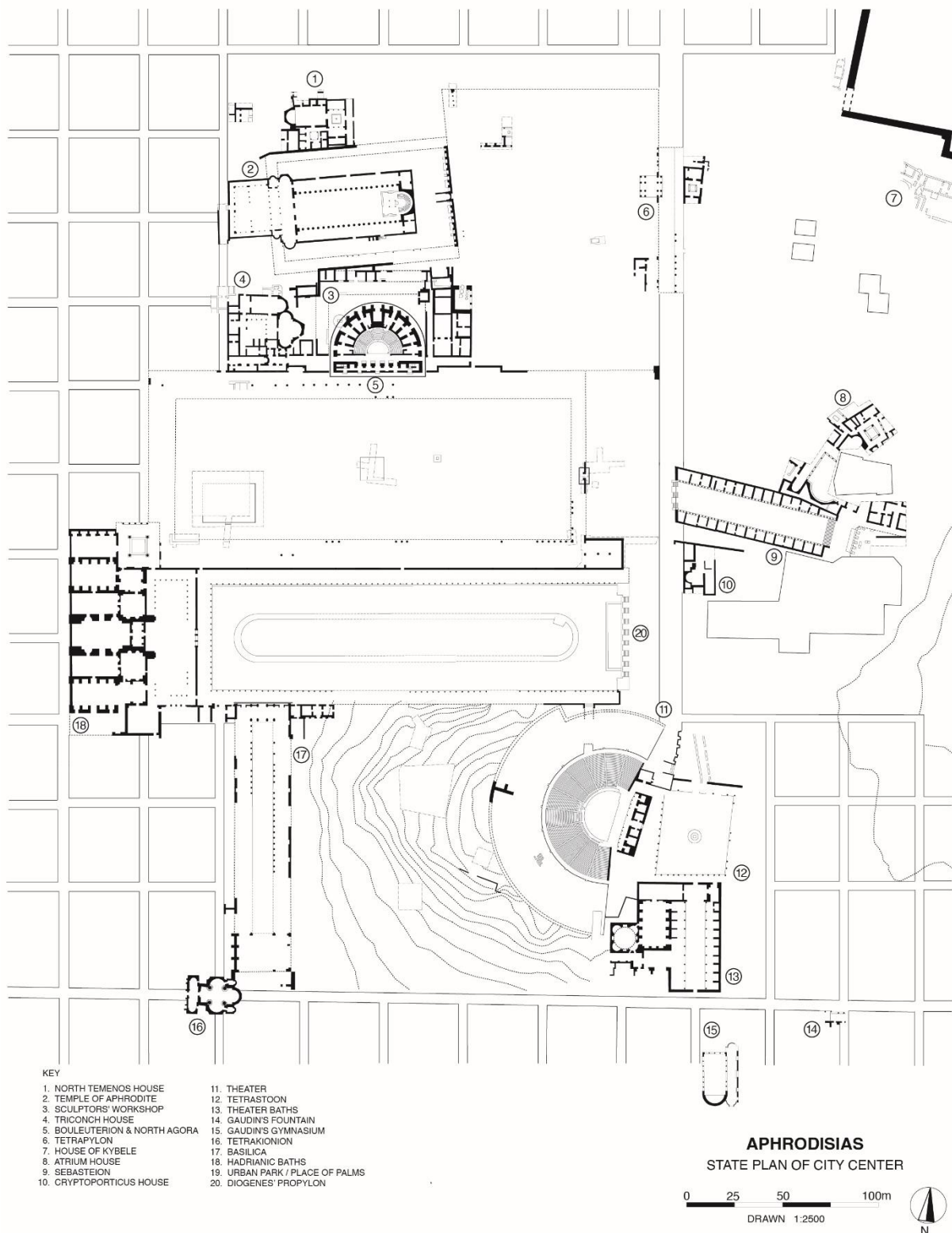


Figure 1: Aphrodisias, city centre, state plan.



Figure 2: Civil Basilica. View looking south-west, showing anastylosis of colossal columns (2023).



Figure 3: Civil Basilica. View of panels with Diocletian's Prices Edict on west side of building, looking south (2023).

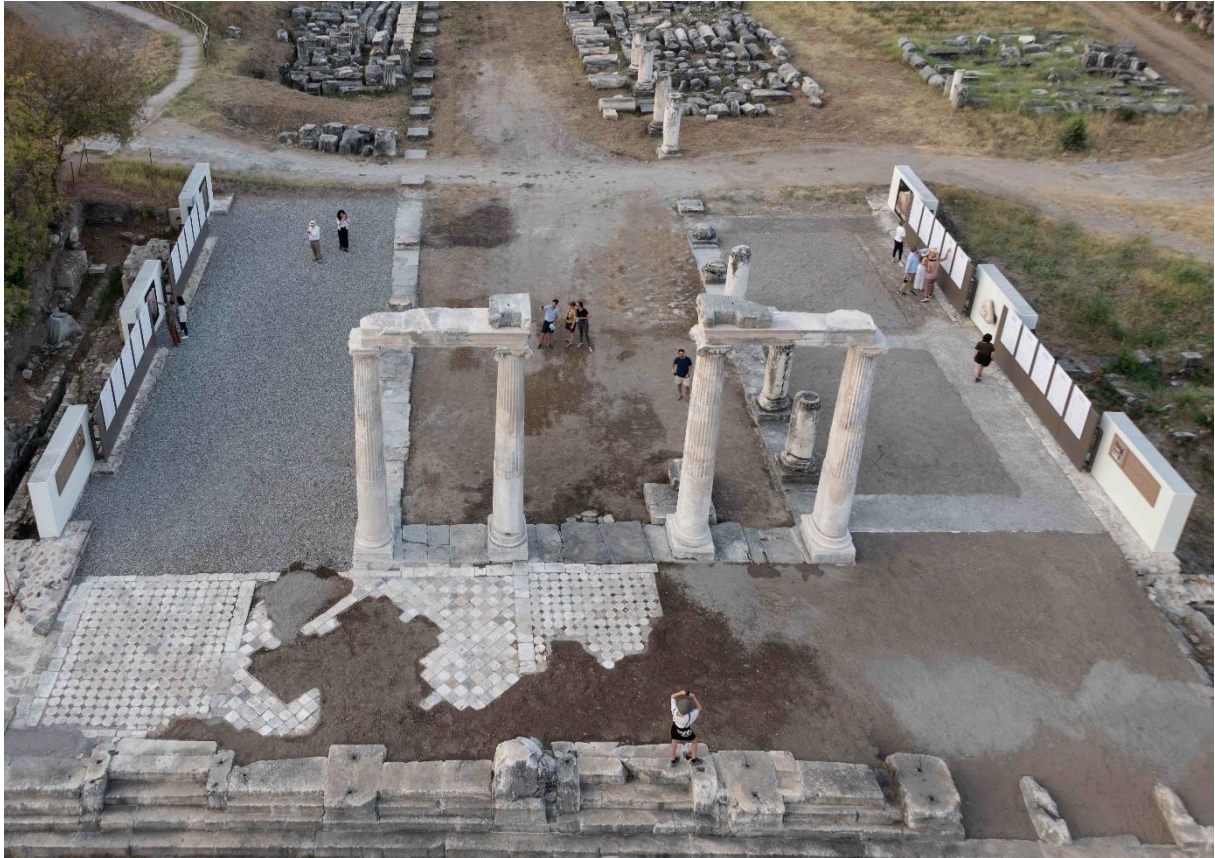


Figure 4: Civil Basilica. Anastylosis of columns and display panels with texts of Prices Edict, looking south (2023).



Figure 5: Civil Basilica. Panels of Diocletian's Prices Edict on west side of building, looking north (2023).



Figure 6: Civil Basilica. Visitors reading Prices Edict panels mounted on west side of building (2023).



Figure 7A-B: Civil Basilica. Prices Edict panels on east side (above) and west side (below) (2023).



Figure 8: Civil Basilica. 3D reconstruction of Basilica interior with monument of Troilos and Achilles, looking north (2023).



Figure 9: Civil Basilica. Study for anastylosis of colossal columns from vestibule of Basilica in depot-workshop (2023).



Figure 10A-B: Civil Basilica. Anastylosis work in progress on colossal double half-columns of vestibule (2023).

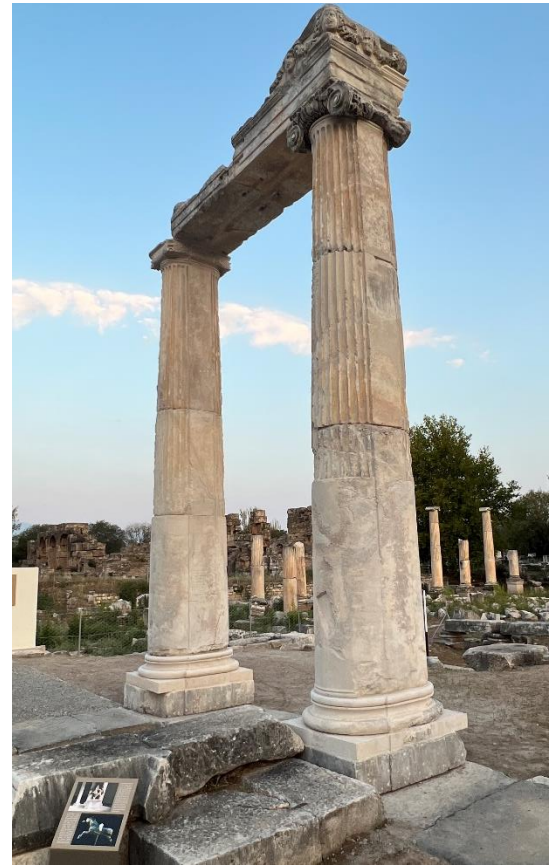


Figure 11A-B: Civil Basilica. Anastylosis of colossal marble order of vestibule (2023).



Figure 12: Civil Basilica. Completed anastylosis of colossal columnar order of vestibule (2023).



Figure 13: Place of Palms. Conservation of pool's marble perimeter, north side (2023).



Figure 14: Place of Palms. Conservation of pool's northern marble perimeter, detail of shattered inner foot-plate (2023).



Figure 15: Place of Palms. Completed conservation of pool's marble perimeter, north side at end of season (2023).



Figure 16: Tetrapylon and Tetrapylon Street, drone view looking south-west (2023).



Figure 17: Tetrapylon Street. Location of trenches in northern part of Street, Nave 23.1 and Nave 23.2 (2023).



Figure 18: Tetrapylon Street. Orthophoto of Nave 23.1, showing back wall and colonnade of street portico (2023).



Figure 19: Tetrapylon Street. During excavation of Nave 23.1, with thick tile deposits still at base of back wall (2023).



Figure 20: Tetrapylon Street. Beylik-period workshop area at the southern end of Trench Nave 23.1, looking north (2023).



Figure 21A-B: Tetrapylon Street. Late antique weight standard (64.5 kg), with inscription and iron ring (inv. 23-50) (2023).



Figure 22: Tetrapylon Street. Dark Age Complex (NAve 23.2), looking south-west (2023).



Figure 23A-C: Tetrapylon Street. Fragments of African Red Slip plate with bear and lion (inv. 23-30, W: 40 cm) (2023).



Figure 24: Tetrapylon Street. Orthophoto of Nave 23.2, south end of west street portico (2023).



Figure 25: Tetrapylon Street. Head of Dionysos (inv. 23-01, H: 6.5 cm), from wall at north of Nave 23.1 (2023).



Figure 26: House of Kybele. Drone view of whole neighbourhood (north at top) (2023).

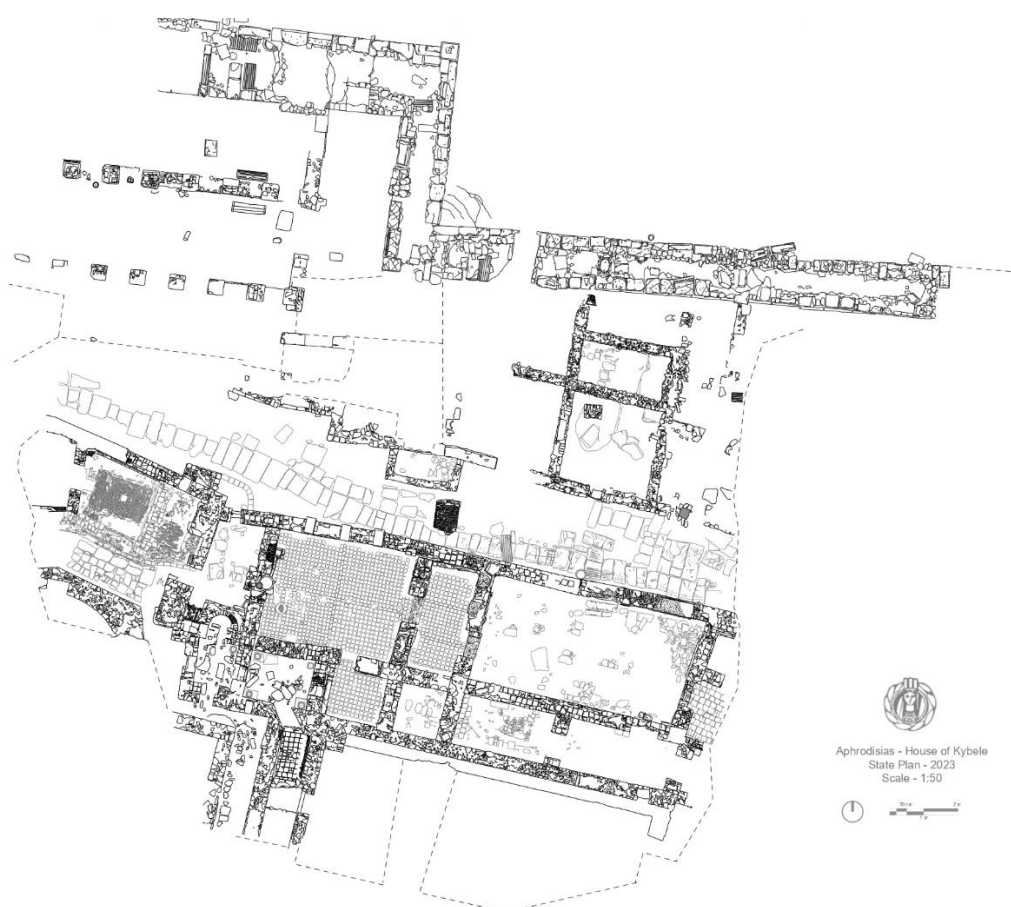


Figure 27: House of Kybele. State plan of whole neighbourhood (2023).



Figure 28: House of Kybele. View looking west, with house on left, street in centre, warehouse at upper right (2023).



Figure 29: House of Kybele. Warehouse, view looking east (2023).



Figure 30: House of Kybele. View across street, with restaurant on far side, looking north (2023).



Figure 31: House of Kybele. Drone view of small street restaurant encroaching on street (2023).



Figure 32A-C: House of Kybele. Diagnostic sherds of cooking pots, strainer, and table ware, from street restaurant (2023).

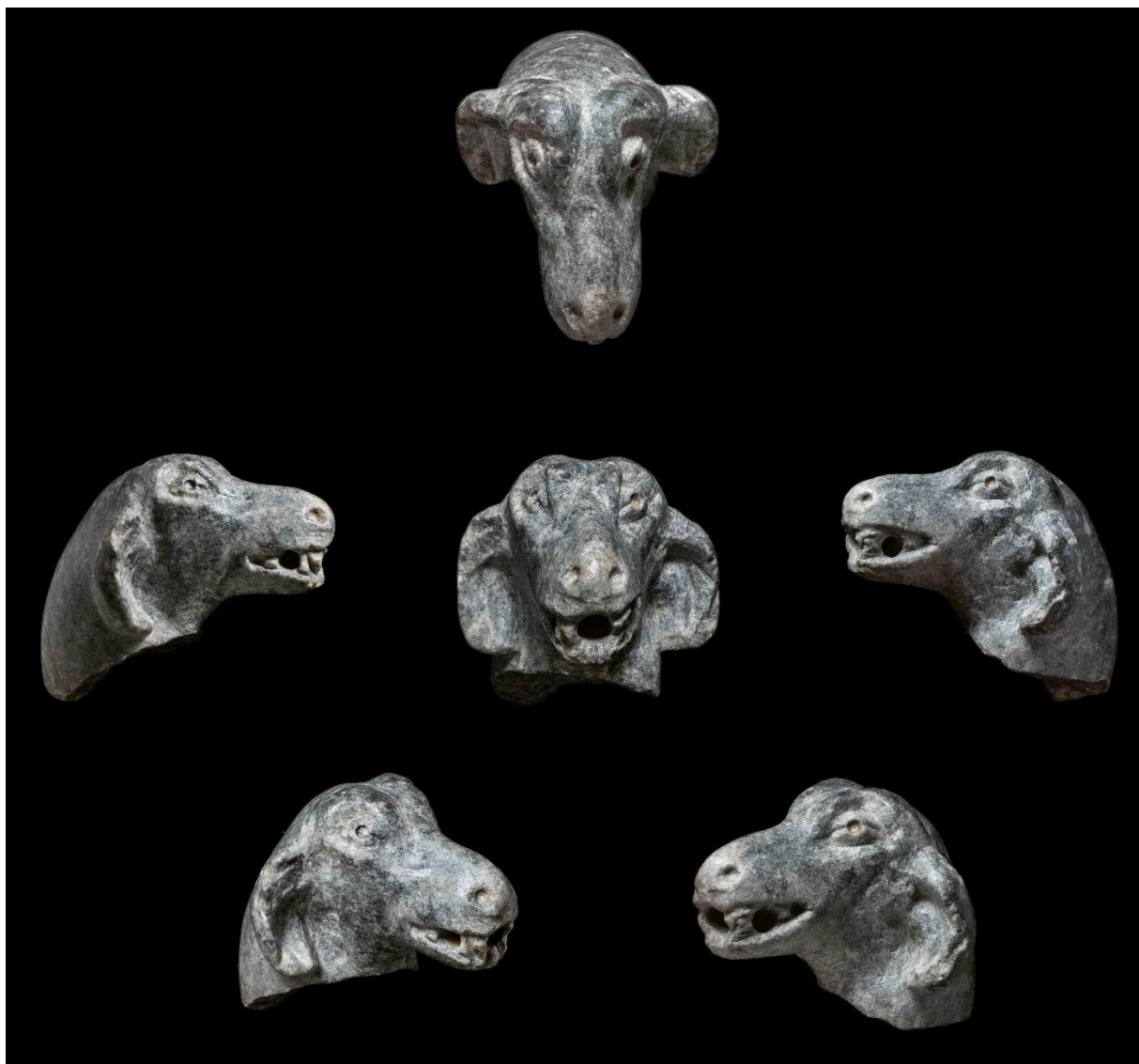


Figure 33: Small grey-marble head of dog from floor of street restaurant (inv. 23-63, W: 6.5 cm) (2023).



Figure 34: House of Kybele. Ceramic lamps used in street restaurant (inv. 23-55, 23-62, 23-61 and 23-65) (2023).



Figure 35A-B: House of Kybele. Bronze bowl (inv. 23-51, W: 24.5 cm), in-situ and after conservation (2023).

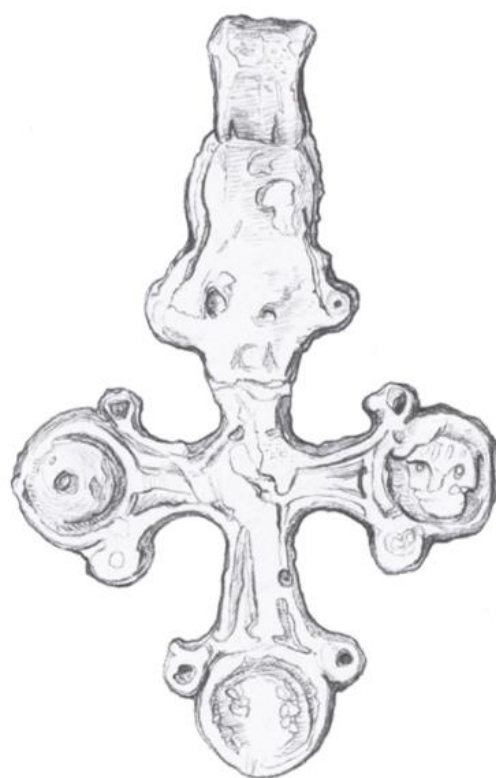


Figure 36A-B: House of Kybele. Byzantine bronze cross pendant (inv 23-20, H: 6 cm) (2023).



Figure 37: Geophysical survey, with North Temenos House at lower left (2023).



Figure 38: North Temenos House. NTH 23.1, excavation of northern range of house, looking south-west (2023).



Figure 39: North Temenos House. NTH 23.1, looking west (2023).



Figure 40A: North Temenos House. NTH 23.1, example of schist-built column.



Figure 40B: NTH 23.2, angle of building foundation north-east of house, detected in geophysical survey, looking south (2023).



Figure 41: Sebasteion Temple. Anastylosis of columns of temple façade (2023).



Figure 42: Sebasteion Temple. Anastylosis of columns of temple façade (2023).



Figure 43A-B: Marble conservation. Restoration of statues of Tiberius (A) and Livia (B) with their heads (2023).



Figure 44A-C: Marble conservation. Completed statues of Livia (A), Tiberius (B), and Aemilia Lepida (C) (2023).



Figure 45: Tetrapylon Street. Repair of street paving, looking south (2023).



Figure 46A-B: Ceramics from Tetrapylon Street. Beylik-period pot fragments (A), shallow green-glaze bowl – tableware of, Ottoman period (B) (2023)



Figure 47: Epigraphy. Students and epigraphers study inscribed weight standard (inv. 23-50) from Tetrapylon Street (2023).



Figure 48: Aphrodisias research, excavation, and restoration team, 2023, at Sebasteion Temple.

