

The late Roman insula from Maloutena district in Nea Paphos (Cyprus) in light of recent documentation studies

The aim of this project is to study the architecture of buildings from the late Roman insula in Nea Paphos. The research will concern the House of Aion and the North-Eastern House which were found in this location. During research, the relative chronology of the buildings, the range, functional and spatial arrangement of both buildings and the functions of the House of Aion will be explored. During realization of this project several research objectives will be pursued. The relative chronology of the House of Aion and the North-Eastern House will be studied. The aim is to gain information about: the buildings phases prior to the House of Aion and North-Eastern House; the time and circumstances of the origin of these buildings; rebuilding phases of these buildings; the time of the final occupation of this insula together with what happened to the buildings after the owners had left. Another task will be to define the boundaries of these residences at various stages of development. New information about the layout of the insula in Nea Paphos will be gained. The next goal is to analyse and reconstruct the functional and spatial arrangement of buildings and rooms. Studies will include: possible variants of the communication system in the buildings; lighting sources; water supply and drainage system; documentation of several phases of construction and analysis of decorative architectural elements. The research also aims at interpreting the function of rooms in the House of Aion and the North-Eastern House.

The project will be carried out in: 1) Poland, in the archives of the Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of Warsaw University and the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and 2) Paphos, on the archaeological site, during the works of the Polish Archaeological Mission, which are held there every year. In the first instance, I will conduct the analysis of documentation collected during 1982 - 2008. I will undertake a synthesis of data on the stratigraphic layers, the walls, the artifacts and the decorations. Subsequently, during the works in the House of Aion and North-Eastern House, I will work on the inventory of the walls, floors and thresholds. In Excel, I will assign numbers to these elements and describe them. The photographic documentation and the use of software such as Agisoft PhotoScan, AutoCad and 3D Studio Max will provide a three-dimensional visualization of the solid objects. I will then create the orthophotomaps of the walls and the drawings of the walls with the marked phases. In 3D Studio Max, the 3D visualizations will be subsequently generated. This type of documentation methods has not been used during the research of the House of Aion and the North-Eastern House to date. In order to obtain a complete picture of the history of these residences and the functions of the House of Aion, it is necessary to make a comparative analysis. The residences similar to the House of Aion and the North-Eastern House will be studied and the comparisons made to add to the existing knowledge on the topic. The results will be compiled in the form of a text ready for publication as a research paper, with the attachments in the form of tables, charts and illustrations. The findings will also be presented at the International Cypriot Archaeology Postgraduate Conference.

The proposed project will expand the knowledge on the fascinating and as yet unexplored insula from the Nea Paphos. This city has attracted great interest among the researchers from around the world. While the entire quarter in late Roman period was abandoned, the House of Aion and the North-Eastern House functioned until 6th century A.D. This insula, for some reason, was distinguished from others. At this territory unusual features, not seen before in other buildings from the area of Nea Paphos, such as the divisions in this insula run along the urban area, rather than across it, as in other insulas. In the House of Aion a complex of rooms decorated with mosaics (including a monumental mosaic with representation of Aion), which were accessible from the street; a room where benches and wall paintings of high quality were discovered; a complex of rooms with probably a wooden floor, which does not occur often in the architecture of this region are worth mentioning. It is indicated that the House of Aion could have served public functions. The proposed research will bring new data on the history of this part of the city and on the plan of the insula in Nea Paphos; it will clarify the role of this insula in the late Roman period. Information concerning not only the architecture but also the culture which developed in this area will be obtained. The project will shed the light on the social and administrative changes that took place in Nea Paphos. The data gathered as part of the proposed project will enrich the scientific knowledge of the archaeologists from around the world and the students of the Polish research centers whose placements are held in Nea Paphos every year. The results will also be of interest to the tourists visiting the Paphos Archaeological Park.