

## 2010

The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities, announces the completion of the thirteenth season (between the 6th October and 17th November 2010) of archaeological investigations by the University of Sydney at the precinct of the ancient Hellenistic-Roman theatre of Nea Pafos in Cyprus. The excavations were conducted under the direction of Emeritus Professor Richard Green, Dr Craig Barker and Dr Smadar Gabrieli for the University of Sydney.

In 2010, archaeological investigations were concentrated on the edges of the ancient theatre and to the south of the theatre – largely to explore the relationship between the building and the city's urban infrastructure. To this end, a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey was conducted to record a large area to the south of the theatre. A number of substantial structures were identified but the damage as a result of earthquakes meant it was difficult to detect the precise outline of the insula blocks of the ancient city.



Excavations continued to the south east of the theatre itself, where a long narrow building has been excavated in recent years. This building was over twenty metres long and five metres wide with thick masonry walls, a simple patterned mosaic, and with water-proofed chamfered interiors. The structure is almost certainly a nymphaeum – a Roman water fountain house that provided architectural order to the theatre precinct and a supply of fresh water to the city. Significantly it was located close to the suspected location of the ancient north-eastern city gate. Once the water supply system collapsed in the late fourth century AD earthquake, the ruins of the nymphaeum became a convenient dumping ground for stone-masons moving blocks from the theatre and other buildings – marble Corinthian capitals, column fragments, niches and other architectural fragments have been recovered from the debris dumped inside the building.

The southern edge of the nymphaeum faces directly onto a limestone paved Roman road. This road would have been one of the major thoroughfares for the city and for pedestrian traffic flowing into the theatre. The team was able to reveal two wheel ruts in the section of the road cleared.



The other main area of excavation in 2010 was in the west of the theatre, mainly in the parodos (or western entranceway to the theatre). Excavations in this area have exposed part of the edge of a deep bedrock quarry that had probably provided stone for the original phases of the theatre before the work was halted and the bedrock cut was filled to the point where it would become the base for the floor of the parodos. Excavations above the remains of the western analemma (or parodos retaining wall) have uncovered barrier walls whose function was to hold in place the soil that was built up for the artificial banking for the seating of the theatre, giving us valuable information on the way the architects constructed the theatre into Fabrika hill. Further south of the parodos the team excavated a geometric mosaic, measuring approximately 6.5 by 19 metres in size, and probably dating to the fifth century AD. If this dating is accurate, it provides some insight into the post-theatre activity on the site.

Work was also completed on the cataloguing of medieval finds from a well on the site, believed to be the rubble and debris from a devastating earthquake of 1303 A.D.

Future excavations will continue in the south of the theatre, and will hopefully reveal more of the road surface, and determine the size of the insula blocks of the ancient city.