

EXCAVATIONS OF THE *PAPHOS AGORA PROJECT*

Press release

In 2012 the second season of excavations of the Department of Classical Archaeology of the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University (JU) in Kraków, Poland, took place within the new *Paphos Agora Project*, which aims at the exploration of the agora of ancient Paphos, the capital of Cyprus in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

The research took place between August 17th and September 28th, 2012. The expedition was led by Professor Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka, and the team (altogether 29 people) comprised researcher Dr Wojciech Machowski, doctoral students and undergraduate students of the JU Institute of Archaeology, as well as volunteers. The first week of this year's campaign was devoted to the work on material uncovered in the previous year. Numerous vases, mostly amphorae, were glued, drawings were made and photographs were taken; selected artefacts were elaborated. Fieldwork was conducted during the four weeks from August 27 to September 22. The last week was devoted to elaboration of uncovered material and the closing of the season.

This year exploration was conducted in Trench I and II, laid out last year, one in the central part of the Roman Agora and one in the central part of the east portico. In Trench I exploration focused on the chronology and function of structure, uncovered partly in the previous campaign, and described as cistern. Further research showed that this structure was not a cistern but a well, ca. 4.50 m deep from the upper edge of the opening. In the upper part of the well large stone blocks were found, and below it a uniform filing, which constituted a closed deposit. It consisted of soil, small amount of pebbles and large amount of movable material, mostly pottery, dated to the early Roman period, before mid 2nd century AD.

In Trench II exploration of sections uncovered last year was continued, and the trench was extended to the north, east and south. The area uncovered in Trench II had been used for a long period of time. The earliest structure in the southern part of Trench II was a N-S canal made of stone slabs, uncovered in Room 5, in which most likely a terracotta pipeline was placed, since slightly to the north from this canal a pipe was found, which probably belonged to it. It appears at present that the channel should be dated to the Hellenistic period. It was later destroyed by the construction of a large wall (channel?, stylobate?), uncovered during

season 2011, and running E-W. To the north no continuation of the alleged Hellenistic channel has been found so far, but destruction traces show that it ran in this direction.

Also in the northern parts of Trench II early remains were found, e.g. in Room 10, where exploration reached bedrock. The lowest layers contained purely Hellenistic material (mostly pottery), as well as walls, floors and habitation levels, which means that this area had certainly been in use during the Hellenistic period. In Trench II architectural remains of Roman period were also uncovered. In 2011 five rooms were uncovered and partly explored and during the current excavations further rooms were found; they are altogether 12 in this trench. Most of them possibly functioned as shops (*tabernae*) in the early Roman period. They were probably destroyed in an earthquake. Beneath a collapsed wall in Room 1 a bronze jug was found, and on the floor – broken vessels, including a finely preserved mortarium – a large bowl with two producer stamps and a graffiti with the owner's name. Among various other structures from the Roman period a large E-W channel in the north part of the trench draws attention. It can be contemporary with the podium of the east portico of the Roman Agora.

Large quantity of movable artefacts was found during the 2012 campaign, as in the previous season. The largest part of them are various categories of pottery: fine wares, plain wares, cooking pottery, transport amphorae, storage vessels, dated to the Hellenistic, early and late Roman, as well as Byzantine periods. The most spectacular finds are a golden earring (or pendant), ending in an ivy leaf, bronze objects such as a jug, a ladle with an iron handle, bronze ring, numerous coins, pins and other artefacts. The most notable artefact among the lead objects – apart from a ladle with an iron handle, similar to the one uncovered last year, and weights – is a small tablet with Greek inscription mentioning the official — Seleukos, son of agoranomos Ioulios Bathylos.



Fig. 1. Paphos Agora Project 2012 – general view of Trench II