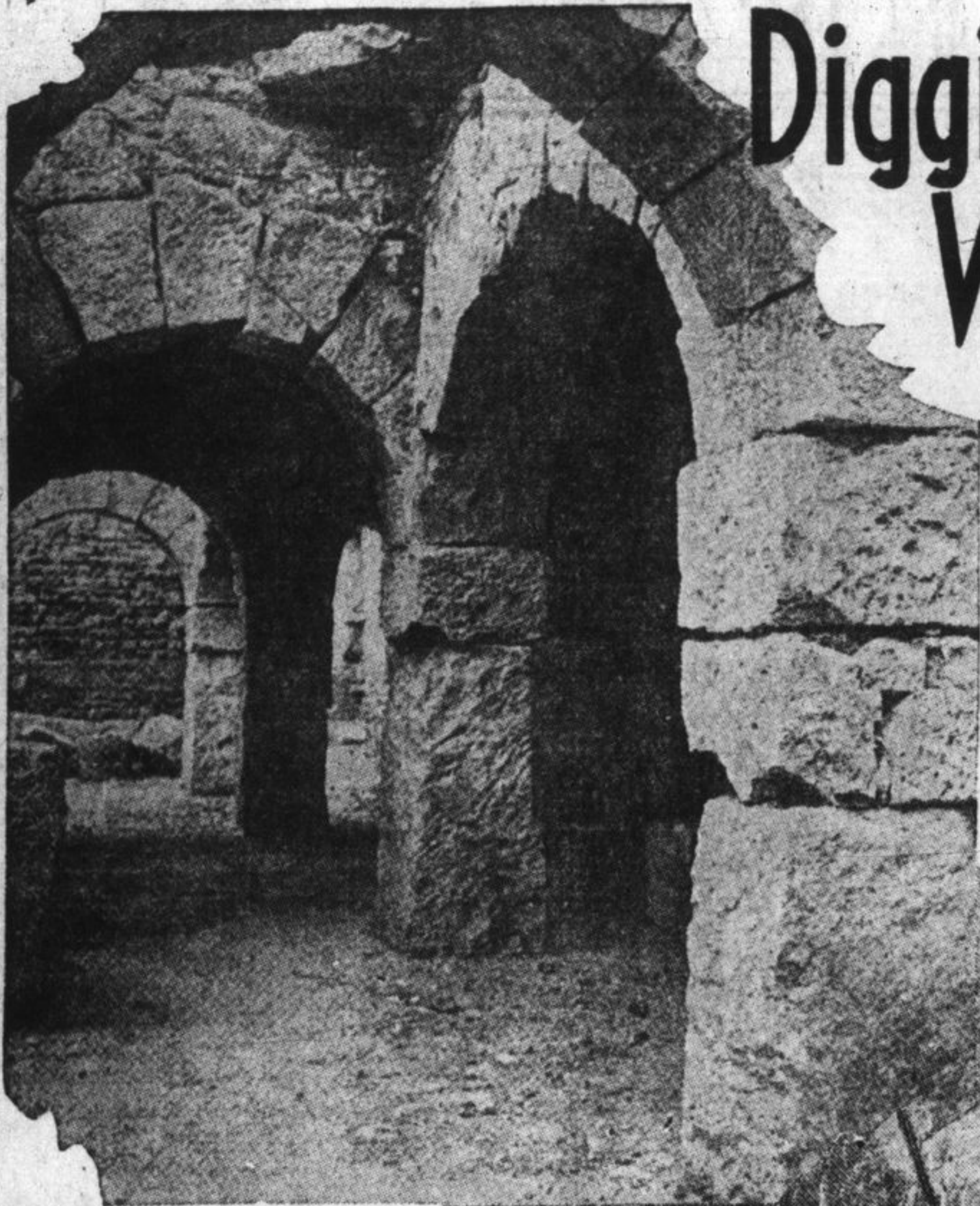


# Digging Up the Subterranean Palace Where Wicked Nero Held His Revels

And Where the Vandal King, Genseric,  
Turned Harems Into  
Dungeons for the  
Empress Eudoxia and  
Her Beautiful Daughters



These Majestic Roman Arches, Recently Unearthed in North Africa, Were the Main Entrance to the Gorgeous Subterranean Palace Which Nero and His Courtiers Used as a "Summer Resort."

**B**RITISH archeologists, digging near the modern city of Tunis, on the north shore of Africa, have unearthed the remains of a magnificent subterranean palace—the first of its sort ever found—which was built by the Romans as a "summer resort,"—a sort of ancient Deauville—at the height of their debauchery and glory.

They built it deep-down in the cool earth to escape the fierce rays of the sun, with winding passage-ways leading to superb underground banquet halls, baths, kitchens and dungeons.

Some of the big rooms, in which the fountains played, and which were magnificently ornamented with paintings, tapestries and mosaics, had windows looking out on sunken gardens, also below the level of the earth but open to the sky, in which wild moonlight bacchanals were held.

Some of the rooms of the palace are still in an excellent state of preservation, and tell a story of luxury and refined wickedness which no modern city or watering place can equal.

Nero himself, most cruel of all the Roman Caesars, occasionally repaired to the underground palace in Africa to participate in feasts and saturnalias and revels, the like of which Rome itself never saw.

Surrounded by courtiers, flatterers and boon companions, with the infamous Poppaea at his side—the beautiful woman to please whose whims Nero had murdered both his wife and mother—he steeped himself in the monstrous vices and cruel-



A Typical Roman Feast in the Time of the Decadence. From the Painting by Albert Baur.

this same secret palace which had been the scene of the triumphs and orgies of cruel Roman emperors and queens was to witness a poetic vengeance of a most appalling kind.

The Romans held Africa as a province from a time before the birth of Christ up to about the year 439 A. D.

At that period there arose in Eastern Germany a nation, or rather a set of tribes, called the Vandals, who threatened

Recently Unearthed Ruins of One of the Chambers in the Underground Palace in "the Decadent Deauville of the Ancient World."



and finally conquered Rome. One of their great leaders was the Vandal king, Genseric, lame, cruel, vicious, an able military leader, filled with a bitter and lasting hate toward the Romans.

Not content with laying waste Italy, Genseric led a horde of eighty thousand Vandals through Spain, by ships to the North Shore of Africa, and conquered the entire province, driving the Romans out.

The Roman capital in Africa was Carthage, the great city which Rome had captured from the Carthaginians centuries before, almost on the exact site of the modern Tunis, and consequently within a mile or two of this superb subterranean palace which had been the scene of so many imperial orgies.

Genseric, the Vandal king, made it his own. He moved in with his retinue, and learned the history of its secret underground chambers.

When he discovered how emperors and empresses had filled its dungeons not only with Christians but with captive members of his own race, to be brought out like animals and martyred for their cruel amusement, he conceived a savage and terrible vengeance.

At that time the Emperor Valentinian III was on the throne of Rome. His empress was Eudoxia, a proud, insolent and beautiful patrician lady, who had two equally beautiful grown daughters.

The lame and hideous Vandal king, who had meanwhile become the greatest pirate leader of his time, terrorizing the whole basin of the Mediterranean from his headquarters near Tunis, got together a fleet

of ships, loaded them with his cut-throat followers, and set sail for Rome.

While his other marauders were looting the city, Genseric, followed by his own chosen band, broke into the palace. He didn't take the trouble to murder Valentinian, the emperor. He didn't even bother to look for him. But he dragged the queen and her two daughters nude, by the hair, from their royal couches, loaded them with chains, and took them back as slaves to Africa.

The three unhappy women were thrown into the black dungeons, and Genseric gave a mighty banquet in the brilliantly lighted adjoining hall to celebrate his home-coming.

The tables were turned at last. A few more centuries, and the old subterranean palace was buried and forgotten—the entrances choked with sand, the surrounding country desolated.

Now, at last, it has been dug up again, revealing its hidden secrets to the archeologists. The palace, as they have discovered, was a series of connecting suites, each called a little "palace" in itself.

They were named from mosaic pictures on the walls, and include the Hunting Palace (or Palace of the Bear), the Fishing Palace, the Palace of Amphitrite, and the Palace with the Portrait of a Roman Lady.

They were made as luxurious and comfortable as any palace above ground; everything that could make life pleasant and easy was introduced, and the relics give a splendid synthetic picture of the luxuries of those far-off times.



Map of the African Coast, Where Nero's Palace Is Being Dug Up. Arrows Indicate the Path of the Conquering Vandals Under Genseric.

special object of preventing the dwellers there from feeling the heat of Summer, and in order to increase the coolness, trees were planted in the sunken courtyards, so that fresh air came in, and a subdued light filtering through the thick green leaves which no direct rays of the sun could penetrate. At the entrances to the sleeping apartments little fountains of water continually played to cool the air as it entered.

The palace still contains, in an excellent state of preservation, some magnificent specimens of Roman art.

The excavations are not yet completed, and it is believed that further digging will reveal additional works of art and may, as well, throw more light on the history of the secret palace where Nero played, and where later the Vandal king dragged the Roman Empress Eudoxia and her daughters to be his slaves.



The Empress Eudoxia, Who Was Held Captive in the Underground Palace by the Cruel Vandal King, Genseric.

ties which Suetonius and other historians of the time describe.

Seated drunk at the banquet table, Nero had himself crowned with vine leaves and worshipped as an immortal god, while Christian virgins were brought in and sacrificed in his honor.

While the revelers drank and sang psalms of praise and bowed down to Nero, captives were dragged from the dungeons, first made drunken and then tortured for his amusement.

The subterranean palace was used for banquets and revels by subsequent emperors of the decadence, including Diocletian, Theodosius and Valentinian.

But the time was soon to come when