

NICOPOLIS  
AD ISTRUM

POULTER

EXAMIN





*NICOPOLIS AD ISTRUM:*  
A ROMAN, LATE ROMAN, AND  
EARLY BYZANTINE CITY



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A ROMAN, LATE ROMAN, AND  
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EXCAVATIONS 1985–1992

BY

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## CONTENTS

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| <i>List of figures</i>  | vii   |
| <i>List of plates</i>   | xi    |
| <i>Abbreviations</i>  | xv    |
| <i>Bibliography</i>   | xix   |
| Preface by Sir William Harpham, KBE, CMG                          | xxiii |
| Foreword by The Hon. Sir Steven Runciman, CH, CLitt, FBA, FSA, MA | xxv   |
| Acknowledgements  | xxvii |
| Notes on the report   | xxix  |
| <br>  |       |
| I. Introduction   | 1     |
| II. Summary and Conclusions                                       | 21    |
| III. Area A: The Northern Defences                                | 53    |
| IV. Area B: The Roman Road  | 67    |
| V. Area C: The Roman Gate   | 77    |
| VI. Area D: The Workshops   | 113   |
| VII. Area E: The South Gate                                       | 129   |
| VIII. Area F: The Large Basilica                                  | 145   |
| IX. Area K: The Small Basilica                                    | 175   |
| X. Area M: The Roman House and Early Byzantine Building           | 187   |
| XI. Area P: The Rectangular Tower                                 | 207   |
| XII. Area R: The Pentagonal Tower                                 | 219   |
| XIII. Area S: The East Gate                                       | 227   |
| XIV. Cuttings H, L, and N   | 237   |
| XV. The House in Area M: Internal Decoration (T.F.C. Blagg)       | 243   |
| XVI. The Geophysical Programme (P. Strange)                       | 259   |
| XVII. The Coins (Kevin Butcher)                                   | 269   |
| XVIII. The Inscriptions (Joyce Reynolds)                          | 315   |
| <br>  |       |
| <i>Index</i>  | 329   |
| <i>Plates I–XLV</i>   |       |



## LIST OF FIGURES

|         |   |     |
|---------|---|-----|
| Fig. 1  | Summary chronology of excavated deposits, by area and by period   | xxx |
| Fig. 2  | Nicopolis and the British site  | 2   |
| Fig. 3  | The Roman City  | 3   |
| Fig. 4  | Nicopolis and its territory   | 5   |
| Fig. 5  | Site plan   | 6   |
| Fig. 6  | The lower Danube in the late Roman period   | 9   |
| Fig. 7  | Reconstruction drawing of the site, c. 150  | 23  |
| Fig. 8  | Reconstruction drawing of the site, c. 200  | 26  |
| Fig. 9  | Reconstruction drawing of the site, c. 350  | 30  |
| Fig. 10 | Interpretation of the resistivity survey  | 41  |
| Fig. 11 | Area A. Early pits, the house, Period 1; location of paved road and the defensive ditch, Period 2                                 | 54  |
| Fig. 12 | Area A. Stepped section of the east side of the cutting and eastern baulk <span style="float: right;"><i>facing p. 55</i></span>  | 55  |
| Fig. 13 | Area A. A: the Roman house, north section. B: the Roman house, north section after cleaning revealed the west/east wall, Period 1 | 55  |
| Fig. 14 | Area A. North/south wall of the Roman house above a backfilled well or pit, Period 1  | 57  |
| Fig. 15 | Area A. Collapsed roof-tile within the building and post-holes cut through the destruction deposit, Period 1                      | 58  |
| Fig. 16 | Area A. West/east mudbrick wall ( <i>proteichisma</i> ) on the berm, immediately behind the defensive ditch, Period 3             | 61  |
| Fig. 17 | Area A. Oven and paved surface over the backfilled ditch, Period 5  | 63  |
| Fig. 18 | Building in south-eastern corner of Area A, Period 5  | 64  |
| Fig. 19 | Area B. Period 1 pits, the <i>in situ</i> road slabs of Period 2, and the Period 3 pit and ditch                                  | 68  |
| Fig. 20 | Area B. North section of the primary area (1985)  | 69  |
| Fig. 21 | Area B. Section through the ditch (294), along the northern baulk   | 72  |
| Fig. 22 | Area B. The Period 4 cobbled surface packed around the remaining <i>in situ</i> slabs of the Period 2 road                        | 74  |
| Fig. 23 | Location diagram, Area C  | 78  |
| Fig. 24 | Area C. Principal features excavated  | 79  |
| Fig. 25 | Area C. Periods 1 and 2   | 80  |
| Fig. 26 | Area C. North/south section from the curtain-wall to the south foundation of the east building                                    | 81  |
| Fig. 27 | Area C. North/south section across the defensive ditches, showing fills, and inset showing ditch cuts                             | 82  |
| Fig. 28 | Area C. East/west section; Period 1 pit and butt-end of Ditch 5   | 83  |
| Fig. 29 | Area C. The southern extension: <i>in situ</i> road slabs and Period 4 cobbled surface  | 84  |
| Fig. 30 | Area C. The Roman gate and curtain-wall, Period 2   | 86  |
| Fig. 31 | Area C. Elevation of the facing blocks for the Roman gate, Period 2   | 88  |
| Fig. 32 | Area C. Axonometric view of the Roman gate, looking south-east  | 89  |
| Fig. 33 | Area C. Plans of Ditches 1–5, east of the causeway, Periods 3–4   | 92  |
| Fig. 34 | Two alternative reconstructions of the inside of the Roman curtain-wall   | 94  |
| Fig. 35 | Area C. Reconstruction of the Roman gate, c. 200  | 96  |
| Fig. 36 | Area C. Period 4  | 99  |
| Fig. 37 | Area C. North/south section from the curtain-wall to the southern section of the main area  | 101 |
| Fig. 38 | Area C. Reconstruction of the gate and the <i>propugnaculum</i> , c. 350  | 103 |
| Fig. 39 | Area C. Reconstruction of the gate, c. 425  | 105 |
| Fig. 40 | Area C. West/east section, north side of the Roman gate   | 106 |

|         |   |                      |
|---------|---|----------------------|
| Fig. 41 | Area C. Period 6  | 108                  |
| Fig. 42 | Area C. Period 7  | 111                  |
| Fig. 43 | Area D. A. Tree roots in the natural ground surface and the early pits, Period 1.<br>B. The cobbled floor and pits, Period 1. C. The north/south ditch and<br>associated occupation surface, Period 3 | 115                  |
| Fig. 44 | Area D. The Period 3 building, beneath the Period 5 workshops   | 117                  |
| Fig. 45 | Area D. Elevations  | 119                  |
| Fig. 46 | Area D. The Period 4 pits, above the Period 3 building and below the Period 5<br>workshops  | 122                  |
| Fig. 47 | Area D. The workshops, Period 5, above the Period 3 building  | 125                  |
| Fig. 48 | Area D. The post-medieval house, Period 6   | 127                  |
| Fig. 49 | The early Byzantine gate, Area E  | 130                  |
| Fig. 50 | North section, Area E   | <i>facing p.</i> 131 |
| Fig. 51 | Area E. Elevations of the north side of the curtain-wall  | 133                  |
| Fig. 52 | Area E. Elevations of the south side of the curtain-wall  | 134                  |
| Fig. 53 | Area E. Eastern section across the curtain-wall   | 138                  |
| Fig. 54 | Area E. Mortared foundation for the hearth, Period 2  | 139                  |
| Fig. 55 | Area E. Reconstruction of elevations: A. Inside face of the defences; B. Outside<br>face of the defences  | 141                  |
| Fig. 56 | Area F. Location diagram, showing the areas of excavation, Slav and post-<br>medieval occupation  | 146                  |
| Fig. 57 | Area F. Western section of the north/south cutting  | 147                  |
| Fig. 58 | Area F. Interpretative section, west side of north/south cutting  | 148                  |
| Fig. 59 | Area F. The north/south cutting   | 154                  |
| Fig. 60 | Area F. The Large Basilica  | <i>facing p.</i> 157 |
| Fig. 61 | Area F. Reconstruction plan of the Large Basilica   | 157                  |
| Fig. 62 | Area F. The brick floor of the Large Basilica and the distribution of brick signatures  | 160                  |
| Fig. 63 | Area F. Perspective reconstruction of the Large Basilica, showing internal features   | 165                  |
| Fig. 64 | Area F. Plan and section of the Slav <i>grubenhau</i> s   | 167                  |
| Fig. 65 | Area F. Perspective reconstruction of the Slav <i>grubenhau</i> s, looking south  | 169                  |
| Fig. 66 | Area F. The post-medieval <i>grubenhau</i> s  | 171                  |
| Fig. 67 | Area K. Section, north side of the cutting  | 177                  |
| Fig. 68 | Area K. The early building, Period 2, and the Small Basilica  | 178                  |
| Fig. 69 | Area K. Post-medieval occupation, Period 5  | 184                  |
| Fig. 70 | Area M. A: the hypocaust-heated room, Period 1. B: the Roman house, Period 2  | 188                  |
| Fig. 71 | Area M. Elevation of the northern face of the Period 4 foundation, above the<br>peristyle (Room 3) and Room 4 of the Period 2 house   | 192                  |
| Fig. 72 | Area M. Section, east side of the area, between the two, west/east foundations of the<br>Period 4 building  | 195                  |
| Fig. 73 | Area M. Perspective reconstruction of the excavated rooms of the Period 2 Roman<br>house  | 196                  |
| Fig. 74 | Area M. Tentative reconstruction of the plan of the Roman house, Period 2   | 197                  |
| Fig. 75 | Area M. The pits, Period 3  | 200                  |
| Fig. 76 | Area M. The early Byzantine building, Period 4  | 202                  |
| Fig. 77 | Area M. Post-medieval pits and buildings, Period 5  | 204                  |
| Fig. 78 | Location of excavation, Area P  | 208                  |
| Fig. 79 | Area P. The road, column-base, and ditch, Period 1  | 209                  |
| Fig. 80 | Area P. West/east section through the tower   | 210                  |
| Fig. 81 | Area P. The primary floor and foundations of the tower and adjacent curtain-wall,<br>Period 2   | 212                  |
| Fig. 82 | Area P. Reconstruction plan of the tower and adjacent curtain-wall  | 213                  |
| Fig. 83 | Area P. The tower and secondary floor, Period 3   | 216                  |
| Fig. 84 | Area R. The pentagonal tower and inset showing location of the excavations within<br>the 'triangular'-shaped robber-trenches, east of the curtain-wall  | 220                  |

|          |  |     |
|----------|--|-----|
| Fig. 85  | Area R. West/east section through the centre of the pentagonal tower   | 221 |
| Fig. 86  | Area R. Reconstruction of the pentagonal tower's ground-plan   | 223 |
| Fig. 87  | Location of Area S   | 228 |
| Fig. 88  | Area S. West/east section through the east gate  | 229 |
| Fig. 89  | Area S. The eastern gate   | 230 |
| Fig. 90  | Area S. Reconstruction plan of the gate and adjacent section of the curtain-wall   | 233 |
| Fig. 91  | South section, Cutting H. North section, Cutting L. West section, Cutting N  | 238 |
| Fig. 92  | Location plan of the walls and rooms of the Roman house  | 244 |
| Fig. 93  | Elevations of the walls, Room 1  | 245 |
| Fig. 94  | Elevations of the walls, Room 2  | 247 |
| Fig. 95  | Elevations of the walls, Room 3 (the peristyle)  | 248 |
| Fig. 96  | Elevations of the walls, Room 4  | 250 |
| Fig. 97  | Stucco moulding with fluting (Type 1), SF 12390  | 251 |
| Fig. 98  | Stucco moulding with bulls heads and garlands, SF 12391  | 251 |
| Fig. 99  | Stucco moulding with fluting (Type 2), SF 1250   | 252 |
| Fig. 100 | Stucco moulding with fluting (Type 2, variant), SF 1300  | 252 |
| Fig. 101 | Reconstruction of the niche fragments from Room 1  | 253 |
| Fig. 102 | Drawing of the column from Room 1, SF 12150  | 254 |
| Fig. 103 | Areas surveyed 1985–1988   | 260 |
| Fig. 104 | Dot-density plot of the resistivity survey showing major positive anomalies  | 261 |
| Fig. 105 | Interpretation of major anomalies in the resistivity survey  | 263 |
| Fig. 106 | Location B, geophysical surveys on the north-east side of the site   | 264 |
| Fig. 107 | Location C, resistivity survey outside the eastern defences of the early Byzantine site and, to the north, outside the Roman city's eastern curtain-wall.<br>Location D, resistivity survey outside the western curtain-wall of the early Byzantine defences | 265 |
| Fig. 108 | Location E. A: resistivity survey of the south-eastern corner of the Roman city.<br>B: interpretation  | 266 |
| Fig. 109 | Nicopolis: age of civic coins at deposition  | 305 |
| Fig. 110 | Nicopolis: 'annual loss' per 1,000 coins   | 308 |
| Fig. 111 | Origins of provincial coins found at Nicopolis   | 310 |
| Fig. 112 | Mints supplying Nicopolis, A.D. 250–296  | 310 |
| Fig. 113 | Nicopolis coin finds. Number of coins per mint, Periods 15–19  | 311 |
| Fig. 114 | Mints supplying Nicopolis, A.D. 296–330  | 312 |
| Fig. 115 | Mints supplying Nicopolis, A.D. 330–388  | 312 |
| Fig. 116 | Mints supplying Nicopolis, A.D. 388–402  | 313 |
| Fig. 117 | The inscriptions   | 324 |
| Fig. 118 | The inscriptions   | 325 |



## LIST OF PLATES

- Plate I Reconstruction painting of the early Byzantine city, c. 500.
- Plate II Aerial view of Nicopolis, taken with a radio-controlled kite, looking west, 1987. Roman city right, early Byzantine defences left.
- Plate III Aerial photograph of the early Byzantine defences (centre) and the excavations within the Roman city around the *agora* (bottom left), looking south-east, taken from a helicopter, courtesy of the Jacques Cousteau Foundation, 1991.
- Plate IV The Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking north-west, 1991.
- Plate V The south wall of Room 1 of the Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking south, 1989. Note the red dado and plain white plaster above.
- Plate VI A. Detail of the fresco painting of a column from Room 1, SF 12150.  
B. A tentative arrangement of a niche (fragments from Room 1).
- Plate VII Aerial view of the south-eastern corner of the Roman city (top) and the north-eastern corner of the early Byzantine defences (bottom), taken with a radio-controlled kite, 1986.
- Plate VIII Aerial photograph of the early Byzantine defences, looking east, taken with a radio-controlled kite, 1986.
- Plate IX A. The north/south foundation of the Roman house inserted into an early pit (2272) and cut through the 'well' (2268), Period 1, Area A, looking north, 1988.  
B. The foundations of the Roman house, Period 1, Area A, looking north, 1988.
- Plate X A. The early Byzantine oven, Period 5, Area A, looking east, 1988.  
B. The remaining *in situ* road slabs, Area B, looking north along Area C southern extension, towards Area C central area. Note the capstone which has fallen into the inspection shaft (bottom centre) and the cobble surface (Period 4) in section above the backfilled Period 3 ditch, 1988.
- Plate XI A. Photomosaic of the Roman road Area B and Area C southern extension, taken with the 'Holmes boom', 1991.  
B. Photomosaic of Area C (main area and eastern extension), taken with the 'Holmes boom', 1991.
- Plate XII A. The Roman gate and road, Area C, looking south, 1991.  
B. The *in situ* road slabs in the southern extension (top centre) and the repaired causeway of Period 4 (centre right), Area C. Note, southern foundation of the eastern wall for the *propugnaculum* (bottom), looking south-west, 1988.
- Plate XIII A. The southern entrance to the gate and *in situ* slabs of the Roman road, Area C, looking north, 1991.  
B. Eastern gate-socket of the Roman gate, Area C, looking north-east, 1991.
- Plate XIV A. Bolt-sockets for the outer, two-winged door of the Roman gate, Area C, 1991.  
B. The foundation of the blocking-wall, within the Roman gate, Period 6, Area C, looking north, 1991.
- Plate XV A. Portcullis slot in the western respond at the northern entrance to the Roman gate, Area C, 1991.  
B. The pilaster, foundation and superstructure, Area C, looking south, 1991.
- Plate XVI A. The northern face of the foundations for the blocking-wall, within the Roman gate, Period 6, Area C, looking south-west, 1987.  
B. Tree roots cut by a Period 1 pit (718), Area D, looking north, 1988.
- Plate XVII A. Eastern room of the Period 5 workshops, Area D, looking north, 1987. Note the surviving portion (545) of the early building's wall (Period 3), cut by the Period 4 pit

- (596) (left), and the junction between the two sections of wall (728, 730), forming the rear wall of the workshops (top centre).
- B. The central section (728) of the west wall of the Period 5 workshops, Area D, looking east, 1987. Note the west wall (721) of the Period 3 early building under the medial wall (441) of the workshops. Stone fill of Pit 695 (centre left) and Pit 606 (right), Period 4.
- Plate XXVIII A. General view of the Period 5 workshops, Area D, looking north-east, 1987.  
B. The south gate, Area E, looking north-east, 1989.
- Plate XIX A. East face of the western gate foundation, projecting north of the gate, Area E, looking north-west, 1990.  
B. North face of curtain-wall (left) and junction with northern projection of the eastern gate foundation, Area E, looking south-west, 1989.
- Plate XX A. Northern entrance to the drain and east face of the eastern gate foundation's northern projection, Area E, looking south, 1989.  
B. Northern entrance to the drain, below the central foundation of the gate, Area E, looking south, 1989.
- Plate XXI A. The north face of the central foundation for the gate, on the east side of the drain, Area E, looking north, 1989. Note the change in alignment of the bricks used in the drain vault.  
B. Lime mortar rendering on the inner face of the curtain-wall, east of the gate, Area E, looking south-east, 1987.
- Plate XXII Photomosaic of the Large Basilica, taken with the 'Holmes boom', 1987–9.
- Plate XXIII A. The destruction deposit on the north-west side of the Large Basilica's nave, Area F, looking west, 1987.  
B. The central paving of the Large Basilica's nave and the beam-slots for the stairs on either side of the *ambo*, Area F, looking west, 1988.
- Plate XXIV A. The 'bird tile' (SF 15512) in the paving of the Large Basilica's nave, Area F, 1987.  
B. The robber-trench for the south-western corner of the Large Basilica's nave (bottom) and the brick paving within the nave (top centre), Area F, looking north-east, 1987.
- Plate XXV A. The Slav *grubenhaus* with pots *in situ*, Area F, looking south, 1988.  
B. The Slav pots (P 8018, P 8019) on the southern side of the *grubenhaus* below the remains of a clay fire-place (*podnitsa*), Area F, looking north-east, 1988.
- Plate XXVI A. The north face of the north wall (4413) of the Period 2 building, Area K, looking south, 1989.  
B. RT 4432, emptied of its fill, above the foundation for the north wall of the Small Basilica's nave (4472), Area K, looking south-west, 1989.
- Plate XXVII A. The Small Basilica, Area K, looking south, 1989. Note the paving of the nave and narthex (centre and top right), the robber-trenches following the annexe (top left) and the northern and north-western post-medieval *grubenhäuser* (bottom centre and right).  
B. The Small Basilica, Area K, looking south-west, 1989. Note the paving of the nave, beam-slots for the stairs of the *ambo*, the reliquary setting (centre) and the upper foundation for the north side of the main apse (bottom right).
- Plate XXVIII A. The Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking north-west, 1991. Note the northern foundation of the Period 4 building (top right).  
B. The Roman house, Area M, Room 2, Period 2, looking west. Excavation of the destruction level of roof-tiles, overlain by wall-plaster which collapsed during demolition of the building in Period 3, 1991.
- Plate XXIX A. The steps leading down from Room 2 into the peristyle (Room 3) of the Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking north-east, 1991. Note the destruction spread of tiles in the east section (centre right).  
B. The column-base, column, and raised edging blocks in the peristyle (Room 3) of the Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking south-east, 1991.

- Plate XXX A. Destruction spread of tiles and portions of stucco mouldings over the threshold between Rooms 3 and 4 of the Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking north, 1990.  
B. Excavation of the fill within Room 1, Area M, looking south, 1989. Note the destruction deposit of broken roof-tiles over the clay floor and below the demolished remains of the pisé wall, mixed with fragments of wall-plaster and stucco mouldings.
- Plate XXXI A. Central west/east section through Tower 1, Area P, looking north-west, 1989.  
B. The west/east section through the centre of Tower 1 above the ground surface (5020) from which level the tower was constructed, Area P, looking north-west, 1989.
- Plate XXXII A. The Period 1 destruction level and the foundations of curtain-wall and Tower 1, Area P, looking east, 1989.  
B. The foundation of the curtain-wall (left), the south wall of Tower 1 (top), and the Period 1 column-base (centre), Area P, looking south, 1990.
- Plate XXXIII A. The northern half of the primary floor of Tower 1, Area P, Period 2, looking west, 1990.  
B. The northern half of the secondary mudbrick floor of Tower 1, Area P, Period 3, looking north-west, 1990.
- Plate XXXIV A. The floor of Tower 8, Area R, looking north, 1990. Note the central ash deposit (5207).  
B. The southern platform within the gate-chamber and the cobbled roadway (5274), Area S, looking north-west, 1990.
- Plate XXXV A. The southern platform and cobbled surface within the gate-chamber, Area S, looking east, 1990. Note the limestone block (5273) used in the plinth for the southern wall of the gate with mortar adhering to its surface (bottom right).  
B. The fallen stone blocks over the paving of the gate-passage, Area S, looking north-west, 1990.
- Plate XXXVI A. Stucco moulding, showing reed impressions in the core, SF 12391.  
B. The stucco moulding with bulls' heads and garlands, SF 12391.
- Plate XXXVII The resistivity survey within the early Byzantine defences.
- Plate XXXVIII Coins and coin casts, 1:1.
- Plate XXXIX Coin casts, coins, and cast of coin decoration used on a vessel produced in local red-slip ware (bottom right), 1:1.
- Plate XL Casts of the two portions of a funerary inscription (No. 1).
- Plate XLI A. Fragment of a Greek inscription (No. 2).  
B. Lead curse tablet (No. 4).
- Plate XLII Inscribed paving brick from the floor of the Large Basilica, Area F (No. 5).
- Plate XLIII A. Rubbing of a mortarium stamp (No. 6).  
B. Stamped mortarium rim (No. 7).
- Plate XLIV A. Stamped amphora handle (No. 9).  
B. Stamped amphora handle (No. 10).  
C. Stamped amphora handle (No. 11).
- Plate XLV Inscribed sherd (No. 15.ii).



## ABBREVIATIONS

- AÉ* *Année épigraphique: supplement annuel à la revue archéologique* (Paris).
- Ancient Bulgaria* A. G. Poulter (ed.), *Ancient Bulgaria: Papers Presented to the International Symposium on the Ancient History and Archaeology of Bulgaria I–II* (Nottingham, 1983).
- Apulum* *Apulum: Acta Musei Apulensis, Arheologie – Istorie – Etnografie* (Alba Iulia).
- Arheolog. Otkrit.* V. Velkov (ed.), *Arheologicheski Otkritiya i Razkopki* (Sofia). (Annual reports on archaeological research, published by the Komitet za Koulтура, Sofia).
- ANRW* H. Temporini (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung* (Berlin).
- Arheologiya* *Arheologiya: organ na arheologicheskiya Institut i Mouzei pri Bulgarskata Akademiya na Naoukite* (Sofia).
- BAR* British Archaeological Reports (Oxford).
- BMCRE* *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* (various authors, 1923–).
- Blockley* R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire II* (Liverpool, 1983).
- Bulgarian Historical Review* *Bulgarian Historical Review: Research Quarterly, Organ of the United Centre for History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences* (Sofia).
- Byzantion* *Byzantion: International Journal of Byzantine Studies* (Harvard).
- Caričin Grad I* N. Duval and V. Popovič (eds), *Caričin Grad I*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 75 (Rome, 1984).
- Caričin Grad II* B. Bavant, V. Kondič and J.-M. Speiser (eds), *Caričin Grad II*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 75 (Rome, 1990).
- CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin).
- Dacia* *Dacia, Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne* (Bucharest).
- Eirene* *Eirene: Studia Graeca et Latina, Comentarii consilii Eirene* (Prague).
- Eos* *Eos: Commentarii Societatis Philologiae Polonorum* (Warsaw).
- Epigraphica* *Epigraphica, Revista italiana di epigrafia* (Florence).
- Études Historiques* *Études historiques, Academie Bulgare des sciences, institut d'histoire* (Sofia).
- FGrH* F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (1923).

- GMSB* *Godishnik na Mouzeite ot severna Bulgaria* (Varna).
- Grierson P. Grierson and M. Mays, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, 1992).
- Hermathena* *Hermathena: Papers on Literature, Science, and Philosophy* (Dublin).
- Historia* *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* (Stuttgart).
- IAI* *Izvestiya na Arheologicheskiya Institut* (Sofia).
- Iatrus I* V. Dimova *et al.*, *Iatrus-Krivina: Spätantike Befestigung und frühmittelalterliche Siedlung an der unteren Donau. I. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen (Iatrus-Krivina)* (Berlin, 1979).
- Iatrus III* M. Wendel *et al.*, *Iatrus-Krivina: Spätantike Befestigung und frühmittelalterliche Siedlung an der unteren Donau. III: Die mittelalterlichen Siedlungen* (Berlin, 1986).
- IDR* D. M. Pippidi and I. I. Russu (eds), *Inscriptiile Daciei Romane, Inscriptiile antice din Dacia și Scythia Minor* (Bucharest).
- IGBulg.* G. Mihailov (ed.), *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria Repertae I–IV* (Sofia, 1956–71).
- IGL* E. Popescu (ed.), *Inscriptiile Grecești și Latine din Secolele IV–XIII descoperite în România* (Bucharest, 1976).
- ILBR* B. Gerov (ed.), *Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae* (Sofia, 1989).
- ILS* H. Dessau (ed.), *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*, Vols 1–5 (Berlin, 1892–1914).
- IMYB* *Izvestiya na Mouzeite ot yuzhna Bulgaria* (Plovdiv).
- JRS* *Journal of Roman Studies* (London).
- Klio* *Klio: Beiträge zur alter Geschichte* (Berlin).
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## PREFACE

When I was asked to join, and to become chairman of the committee which included distinguished archaeologists, who were helping Dr Poulter to organize his projected excavations in Bulgaria, I had no hesitation in accepting the invitation.

Although I am not an archaeologist myself, I was confident from the outset that, with his academic and other qualifications and his links with Bulgaria, Dr Poulter would bring this exciting project, which he himself had initiated, to a highly successful conclusion, as he has now done. My interest in this project arose from the fact that, from 1964 to 1980, I had been privileged to have increasingly close contacts with Bulgarian government ministers, officials and others, in my capacity first as British Ambassador to Bulgaria and subsequently as Director of the Great Britain/East Europe Centre (now the British Association for Central and Eastern Europe). During that period, I had learned to appreciate the value of close personal links with our Bulgarian friends and, in particular, the importance of encouraging contacts between young people with common interests.

At that time, Bulgaria, by virtue of its linguistic and historical as well as political ties, looked more to the East than to the West. Bulgaria was therefore largely denied the regular academic and social links with Western Europe which were even then possible for other states in Eastern Europe. Bulgaria's comparative isolation was equally reflected in a general ignorance on the part of many in the West about the country and its people, despite attempts to awaken interest.

The celebrations held in Britain in 1981 to commemorate the 1300th anniversary of the foundation of the Bulgarian State represented one such attempt. They included the *International Symposium on the Ancient History and Archaeology of Bulgaria* held at Nottingham University. It was clear that in the field of archaeology Bulgaria's sites and the significant discoveries made there were of more than regional interest and were of considerable importance to all those concerned with our common European heritage. I was therefore happy to assist with Dr Poulter's initial proposal, made at the Bulgarian conference in Nottingham, that funds should be raised to allow young Bulgarian scholars to study at Nottingham University and, later, to help to create six-month research fellowships for Bulgarian archaeologists. Two of the young Bulgarian research fellows have since become leading lights in Roman archaeology.

The spirit of mutual respect and collaboration engendered by the conference and the subsequent exchanges of research staff established Nottingham University as a centre for Roman and Late Roman archaeology in the Balkans. It paved the way for the joint Anglo-Bulgarian archaeological programme, a central component of which was the fieldwork carried out by the British team of professional archaeologists, students and specialists on the site of the ancient city of Nicopolis. In addition, the programme achieved even more, in terms of representing a bridge between East and West, than had been anticipated. During each year of the project, university students, not only from Bulgaria, but also from the former Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, excavated with the British archaeologists, sharing the experience of working together. This, in the years to come, is the kind of practical co-operative venture which will surely contribute to the development of a new Europe, dispelling the old antagonism, suspicion and ignorance created by the divisions of the Second World War.

It is to Dr Poulter's credit that not only was the archaeological programme a success in academic terms but that he was also remarkably successful in enlisting the support and sponsorship of so many academic and commercial organizations. Without their assistance, the project could never have been undertaken on such a large scale, the post-excavation research could not have been carried out so intensively and completed in so short a period, nor could publication have followed so rapidly after the end of the field-work. His understanding of the Bulgarian people and his fluency in their language in part accounts for his success in establishing the necessary basis of friendship and trust with Bulgarian archaeologists. Equally, the contribution of his charming Bulgarian wife to the overall success of the programme should not be underestimated.

To date, as at 20 January 1995, a total of about £220,000 has been raised to fund the excavations, exchanges of Bulgarian and British research staff, post-excavation work and publication. The sums required would have been still greater had not the British Council, the British Academy and the Royal Society regularly provided exchange grants for individual members of the team. The Leverhulme Trust funded two major research grants, one to study the pottery and the other to complete the drawings: these were part of two innovative studies on the ceramic sequence for the Lower Danube and the development of new approaches to archaeological illustration. The role of the British Academy, both in signing the initial agreement for the excavations and in its substantial and unswerving support for the programme, deserves particular commendation. The contributions made by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office underline the wider significance of the project in establishing academic links between Britain and Bulgaria. The Trustees of the British Museum not only donated substantial funds but also generously allowed the participation of members of the museum's photographic staff to record finds and to operate the 'Holmes Boom', a new method of site photography designed and built at Nottingham University for the project. Notable also was the support of the following academic bodies and institutions: the Craven Fund (University of Oxford), the Robert Kiln Trust, the Society of Antiquaries of London, the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, and last but by no means least, the University of Nottingham. In addition to private donations in support of the excavations, a crucial role was played by commercial and industrial sponsors who contributed to the costs, some of whom also provided equipment: APV, British Gas Exploration, Cadbury Schweppes, Courtaulds, EMI, Enterprise Oil, ICI, Rank Xerox, Rothschild and Sons, Shell and Wimperys.

I would like to express my personal gratitude and the thanks of my fellow members of the Organizing Committee to all the sponsors who have given their support to such a worthwhile and successful enterprise.

William Harpham

## FOREWORD

Advances in archaeological methods and techniques over recent decades have obliged historians of the Middle Ages as well as of ancient times to recognize how important archaeology is for their studies and to be grateful for its help. In the past the medieval historian has relied on written sources, contemporary documents or later compilations, and, more cautiously, upon tradition or even legend. But there have always been areas in the world, some of them of vital geographical importance, for which it has been impossible to trace a continuous history of events.

One such area is the Balkan peninsula during the early centuries A.D. There had long been Greek colonies along its Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts; but the interior, with its wild mountains and great forests, interspersed with fertile valleys, was little known. Its inhabitants, mostly Thracians in the south with Moesians and Sarmatians further north, and Illyrians in the west, had now and then produced local monarchs of some wealth and with a veneer of Greek civilization. But with the expansion of the Roman Empire, the greater part of the peninsula was taken over to form for the most part the provinces of Thrace and Moesia. The importance of the frontier formed by the great river Danube on the north was recognized; beyond numerous barbarian tribes were gathering, eager to break into more civilized lands, not only the Getic Dacians but Germanic tribes from the north, headed by the Goths, and, further to the east, the Huns and other Turkic nations.

Roman rule meant the foundation of cities, for which the emperor Trajan was mainly responsible. After he had, as he hoped, safeguarded the Danube frontier by establishing the province of Dacia beyond its northern bank, he established organized cities in his provinces of Thrace and Moesia. It was probably in 110 that he founded on the northern edge of the province of Thrace a city which he called Nicopolis, in honour, so the historian Ammianus Marcellinus tells us, of his recent victory over the Dacians. Nicopolis was clearly intended to be a centre of some importance; but in fact the historians only mention it very fitfully during the following centuries. Henceforward it is to the archaeologists that we must look for its story.

As this volume shows, the archaeologists have carried out their task with remarkable thoroughness and skill. Together with the few historical references, episcopal lists have provided help. But it is essentially the study of the buildings themselves, their methods of construction, their inscriptions, and such evidence as coins and artifacts may provide that has made it possible to trace the city's vicissitude throughout the Roman period past the disasters of the Gothic and Hunnic invasions and the temporary recovery under Byzantium, up to its decline under the Slavs and the Bulgars: though, as the late medieval life of St John of Rila shows, it was still mentioned as a town during the Second Bulgarian Empire.

Thanks to this work we now have a far clearer knowledge of how a city under the Roman emperors was planned, what public buildings were thought necessary, how dwelling-houses were sited, and what fortifications were required. Furthermore, scrupulous analysis of pottery, bones, and seeds will give us a picture of how the inhabitants of the city actually lived, what they wore, and what they ate: so that in the end we may well know more about the living conditions of the inhabitants of Nicopolis than we do of the citizens of centres better known to history. Perhaps even more important is the difference shown by the excavations between the city that Trajan founded, which followed the usual pattern of Roman cities, and the early Byzantine city that was built on the site when the area came back under imperial control after the Gothic and Hunnic invasions. The latter seems to have been built to house a military garrison and to provide a safe centre for the local ecclesiastical organization. Farming must have declined owing to the invasions. The area had become part of a frontier province, with no place for civilian officials. It was presumably for the Church to bring order back to the local countryfolk and some sort of civilization to the Slavs who were beginning to infiltrate into imperial lands. This is a period in Balkan history for which scarcely any written evidence exists. There can be few better examples of the help that archaeology can give to history.

Altogether the results of these thorough and meticulous excavations will be of immense value for anyone interested in the story of the Balkans throughout the Christian era.

Steven Runciman

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the help and encouragement of many individuals and organizations, the excavations at Nicopolis could never have been undertaken, the post-excavation completed, or the results published. There will be those who have contributed to the programme but whose names do not appear in this summary account. To them, as well as to those singled out for mention, I owe a profound debt of gratitude.

The late Professor Velizar Velkov, the former Director of the Institute of Archaeology, Sofia and Vice-President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, welcomed the British proposal to excavate at Nicopolis. He actively supported all aspects of the programme, visited the site during every field-season, offering advice and practical help. His premature death is an incalculable loss to European archaeology. Apart from his scholarship, his legacy includes the international co-operation, until recently unusual in Eastern Europe, which he fostered in Bulgaria and which he advocated with passion and enthusiasm. The members of the British organizing committee gave freely of their time and provided sound advice and encouragement; Sir William Harpham, Professor J. J. Wilkes, Professor J. Evans, Mr J. Fawcett, Professor S. S. Frere, the late Professor M. Harrison, and Dr R. Jones. At Nicopolis, there was full co-operation between the British and Bulgarian archaeologists: we worked as a team. I am especially indebted to our Bulgarian colleagues and friends in the Institute of Archaeology, Sofia and the Veliko Turnovo Historical Museum, in particular, Professor Ludmila Slokoska, Dr Petko Georgiev, Dr Krasimira Vacheva, Dr Rumén Ivanov, and Ivan Turov. Their patience and concern for the welfare of the British members of the team helped immeasurably, especially in the way they coped with the administrative burdens our presence involved and in their practical support, as in the provision of a workforce, often at the expense of their own excavations. The personnel of the Veliko Turnovo Historical Museum were always prepared to comply with our frequent requests for equipment and materials. The members of the conservation department spent many days each year conserving every one of our metal-finds so as to ensure that drawing and analysis could be carried out during the following season. They also provided assistance on site in the lifting and conservation of frescoes and glass finds. The Municipality of Veliko Turnovo and the County Council not only generously provided a house, garden, and laboratories for use by the British team, but even repaired roads to ensure that the team minibus suffered no damage travelling to and from the site.

The efforts of our labour-force were astonishing. We worked alongside undergraduate students (*brigadieri*) from Veliko Turnovo University, Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic), Germany (from former East Germany), and from the republics of the former Soviet Union, and Bulgarian students from the High School of Classical Languages, Sofia. They learnt quickly, under the guidance of British supervisors, and showed remarkable dedication, often putting up with long hours and extreme temperatures with a determination and enthusiasm which impressed us all.

For the British field-officers and specialists, I have nothing but praise. I am certain that few directors have been so fortunate in possessing a team in which each member maintained the highest standards of archaeological field-work and personal responsibility while working for as long as eight weeks at a time in often arduous conditions, but with cheerful enthusiasm. My vice-director, John Shepherd, and Rob Falkner, in charge of the pottery analysis, were pillars of support throughout the programme. Mark Beech, who carried out the analysis of the animal bone, also co-ordinated with distinction the other elements of the environmental programme. All team-members were volunteers, often taking unpaid leave to participate in the excavations. The following deserve particular commendation; Dr T. Blagg, I. Blair, H. Bridson, M. Brustia, S. Buckingham, J. Burrows, K. Butcher, O. Carbin, T. Carbin, R. Cleale, J. Dawson (née Barton), M. Dawson, M. Dixon, J. Egan, J. Elders, G. Evans, G. Falkingham, R. Goffin, P. Grace, I. Greig, Dr K. Griffiths, N. Guest, J. Harold (née Lovett), R. Harold, D. Hubbard, B. Irving, C. Jamfrey, I. Kerslake, A. Kynoch,

K. Lee, N. Harriss, A. Holmes, H. Jeffries, N. Kite, D. Kennet, S. Mitford, P. Nicholls, G. Mounteney, K. Norman, A. Powell, D. Price, J. Reynolds, A. Roberts, I. Ruben, A. Shepherd (née Gatineau), E. Shepherd, Dr P. Strange, P. Stroud, T. Sturge, R. Sturge, D. Watkins, M. Whyman, P. Williams. One measure of the success of long-term projects is the lasting friendships which they engender. In particular, the Nicopolis excavations have resulted in six marriages, between members of the team and between British staff and students from the former republics of Czechoslovakia and East Germany, Bulgaria, and Russia. David Taylor, who was responsible for the final illustrations used in this volume, dedicated many years to the programme which culminated in a full-time commitment over the final twelve months. Paul Stroud, after a season as illustrator, spent nine months collaborating on the detailed reconstruction painting of Nicopolis in the sixth century, incorporating the results of excavation, geophysical survey, and environmental analysis.

Colleagues and friends commented on, and improved the presentation of this report, although I remain wholly to blame for any errors the reader may detect. In particular, Professor S. S. Frere read every sentence and footnote and offered valuable suggestions as well as providing the encouragement which I needed to persevere with the task. I am also grateful to Dr Lynn Pitts, the Publications Secretary of The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, without whose expert advice, attention to detail, and patience in dealing with countless difficulties, this volume could never have been published.

The sacrifices made by my parents, Lilian and Frank, and their support were invaluable and without their tolerance and help, I would never have seen Nicopolis, let alone embarked on a career in archaeology. My family have put up with my enforced absences and patiently accepted the many hours of research and other duties which kept me so preoccupied over the last ten years. Without the help and understanding of my wife, Margarita, this report would never have been written.

By no means least, all members of the team owe a particular debt of gratitude to the villagers of Nikiup who took us to their hearts, with whom we have formed lasting friendships, and for whom we all have the deepest affection. Among these, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our friend and ally, Bai Marin, the 'mayor of Nicopolis', without whom those long hot summers in Bulgaria would never have been so successful and so enjoyable.

A.G.P.

24 September 1994

## NOTES ON THE REPORT

### **The structure of the report**

Except for the trial cuttings, which are discussed in the final chapter of the report, each of the excavation areas is described in turn and in alphabetical order.<sup>1</sup> The archaeological sequence for each area is divided into periods, each of which is considered to represent a significant phase in the history of that part of the site. Consequently, the periods assigned to a particular area, as well as the relative and absolute length of time they represent, do not necessarily correspond to those used to describe any other (Fig. 1). For each area, a preliminary summary is followed by an introduction on the aims and progress of the excavation. In the main body of the report, each period is described in turn: first the results of the excavation, then the dating evidence (pottery, coins, and datable small-finds) and finally discussion. Note that coin-dates are given in the excavation report and approximate dates where an issue cannot be fully identified or where the coin is a forgery (e.g. *c.* 100/200 or *c.* 378–400). Exceptionally, where a period contains a complex sequence, the description of the results is subdivided into phases, each of which is immediately followed by its own dating evidence.

At the time of going to press, the drafts of the specialist reports have all been submitted, with the exception of the final report on the molluscs. The results are incorporated into the relevant sections of this report and are discussed in the conclusion. Publishing all volumes simultaneously would have entailed further delay; it was therefore determined to proceed with the publication of this first volume. The pottery and glass, followed by the finds and environmental evidence, will be published in two volumes by the Society of Antiquaries of London. It is hoped that the reader will not be unduly irritated by this procedure. It should at least demonstrate the importance of these specialist contributions and should arouse interest in these studies which will be published as soon as final editing is completed. They include: animal bones (M. Beech), architectural finds (T. Blagg), bird bones (Zl. Boev), ceramic small-finds (R. Falkner), a copper-alloy statuette (P. Georgiev), glass (J. Shepherd), human bones (H. Bush), fish bones (B. Irving), flints (J. Kenworthy), intaglios (M. Henig), metal-finds (A. Poulter), plaster and mortar analysis (G. Morgan), pottery (R. Falkner), seeds (J. Buysse), slag analysis (C. Salter), small mammal bones (S. Parfitt), worked bone and glass beads (A. Roberts).

### **The archive**

Copies of the full site archive are held in the Institute of Archaeology, Sofia, the Veliko Turnovo Historical Museum, and in the Department of Archaeology, the University of Nottingham. A computerized database of context and small-find data is held at the University of Nottingham on the mainframe computer. It is planned to allow consultation of this primary database and secondary datasets, compiled for the specialist reports, via INTERNET. Application for copies of subsets of data can be addressed to the Department of Archaeology, University of Nottingham. Data can be supplied on disk or as hard copy.

<sup>1</sup> There was an inherent risk that I, J, O, and Q might be confused on pottery or samples bags so these letters were not used as site codes. Area G, in the north-west corner of the site, was started but aborted after topsoil was removed but before stratigraphy was reached. Consequently, this area is not included in the report, see ch. 14, p. 237 note 1.

### Conventions used in the text

Context numbers (in round brackets) are noted in the text only when they appear in the published drawings. References in square brackets are to the pottery type series catalogue numbers. Coin dates are followed by their published catalogue numbers in round brackets. Publication catalogue numbers are used also for the following groups of finds; worked-bone, glass beads, and inscriptions. Metal-work, glass, and architectural finds are here referred to by their small-find numbers and, when the relevant reports are published, they will include an index by small-find number to facilitate cross-reference with the excavation report. Where a figure or plate is of particular relevance to a section of the report, this is noted beside the introductory heading. Additional figure and plate references are included in the text. References to publications cited refer to the bibliography and are by author and date of publication, the only exception being where a source is mentioned only once, in which case the full reference is included in the relevant footnote. RT is an abbreviation for robber-trench and is invariably followed by its context number. SF in the text precedes a small-find number.

| AREA | 100-130 | 130-150 | 150-175 | 175-250 | 250-350 | 350-400 | 400-450 | 450-500 | 500-600 | 800-900 | 1750- |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| A    | 1       |         | 2       |         |         | 3       | 4       | 5       |         |         | 6     |
| B    | 1       | 2       |         | 3       | 4       |         |         |         |         |         | 5     |
| C    | 1       |         | 2       | 3       | 4       |         | 5       | 6       |         |         | 7     |
| D    | 1       |         |         | 2       | 3       | 4       |         | 5       |         |         | 6     |
| E    | 1       |         |         |         |         |         |         | 2       | 3       |         | 4     |
| F    |         |         |         |         | 1       |         |         | 2       | 3       | 4       |       |
| H    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         | 1       |         |         | 2     |
| K    |         |         |         | 1       | 2       |         | 3       |         | 4       | 5       |       |
| L    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         | 1       |         |         | 2     |
| M    |         |         | 1       | 2       | 3       |         |         | 4       |         |         | 5     |
| N    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         | 1       |         |         | 2     |
| P    |         |         | 1       |         |         |         |         | 2       | 3       |         | 4     |
| R    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         | 1       |         |         | 2     |
| S    |         |         |         |         | 1       |         | 2       | 3       | 4       | 5       |       |

Fig. 1. Summary chronology of excavated deposits, by area and by period.

### Dating

Within the report, unless otherwise indicated, the period descriptions refer to specific phases in the history of the site:

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Roman, from the foundation of the city | c. 110 – c. 296  |
| Late Roman                             | c. 296 – c. 450  |
| Early Byzantine                        | c. 450 – c. 600  |
| Slav                                   | c. 800 – c. 1000 |
| Post-medieval                          | c. 1750 –        |

The chronology of the archaeological sequence is site-based. This decision was taken because there exists no universally acceptable chronology for pottery on the lower Danube. Where there is

general agreement, the chronological limits are so ill-defined that they are of no practical help in dating periods of occupation (e.g. fourth to sixth centuries A.D.). In order to create the site-based chronology, the following procedure was adopted. Once the relative sequence was established and the final matrices completed, absolute dates for ceramic finds were determined, in the case of the second century, partly using datable finds and coins and partly on the premise that major phases in the development of the city could be determined with reasonable probability (e.g. the foundation of the city, the paving of the roads, the construction of the defences). For the late Roman, early Byzantine, and post-medieval periods, absolute dating relied upon coins and datable small-finds. For Slav occupation, there was no means by which the pottery could be dated other than by reference to the chronology already established on other sites. Finally, when the results were compared with the evidence provided by well-dated imported wares, it was evident that the essential chronology of the site was correct. However, a site-based chronology presents particular dangers; arguments for dating may become elliptical, if not circular, if incautiously applied. Where the pottery is dated by the context in which it was found, either by finds or by an assumption concerning the history of the site, this is explicitly stated in the relevant section. Where pottery has been used to date the context, it is based upon an assessment of the absolute sequence using information from areas other than the one under discussion. Where appropriate, references are made to the introduction which details arguments used to date the site sequence. Future excavations will no doubt refine the chronology. Some of the criteria used to date a particular period may prove unfounded and the absolute chronology will have to be amended. Even so, the relative chronology should remain valid and there is no reason to doubt the general validity of most of the dates presented in the text and discussed more fully in the report on the pottery.

### Conventions used in the drawings

Even though only contexts referred to in the text are numbered in sections and plans, all contexts described on site are represented in the published drawings. For each context, the constituents of the deposit and their relative proportions are included: the information has been taken directly from the context records. This 'realistic' representation of the stratigraphy has consequently reduced the need to provide detailed descriptions of excavated deposits. Where judged necessary, an interpretative section is provided in order to explain the sequence. Standard conventions used in the drawings are described below. In a few cases, where a drawing departs from these conventions, a separate key is included with the relevant illustrations. Small-find numbers in drawings are preceded by the letter S.



Mortar - Plans  
Sand to Silt - Sections



Ash



Clay



Tile



Mud-wall



Limestone blocks



Mortar



Pebbles



Charcoal



Cobble spread

## CONVENTIONS

**Transliteration of Bulgarian**

There exists no internationally accepted method for the transliteration of Bulgarian into English. The method adopted here has the virtue of avoiding subscripts and superscripts and is a reliable phonetic guide to pronunciation. Only when there exists a commonly accepted alternative transliteration, notably in the case of personal names or place-names (e.g. Sofia not Sofiya) is the common spelling preferred. I am grateful to Mr M. Holman of Leeds University for his help in compiling this system.

|   |     |   |    |   |     |
|---|-----|---|----|---|-----|
| А | А   | К | К  | Ф | Ф   |
| Б | В   | Л | Л  | Х | Х   |
| В | В   | М | М  | Ц | TS  |
| Г | Г   | Н | Н  | Ч | CH  |
| Д | Д   | О | О  | Ш | SH  |
| Е | Е   | П | Р  | Щ | SHT |
| Ж | ZH* | Р | Р  | Ъ | U   |
| З | Z   | С | С  | Ь | Y   |
| И | И   | Т | Т  | Ю | YU  |
| Й | I** | У | OU | Я | YA  |

\* Except for words of Turkish origin already accepted in English where DJ is preferable.

\*\* When this letter occurs within or at the end of a word, Y when it occurs initially, eg. ЙОВКОВ = Yovkov.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### THE SITE AND THE AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

To undertake a comprehensive study of a city in late antiquity constituted the primary objective of the research programme. Achieving this aim required not only ascertaining the layout of the site, its defences, and the function of its buildings but also estimating the population it contained, investigating its economic role, the palaeo-ecology of its surroundings and the city's relations with its hinterland.

The nature of urbanism in the late Roman and early Byzantine period remains largely unknown. Reliance upon ancient literary sources and the results of small-scale excavation provide an inadequate basis upon which to reconstruct the physical appearance of a city in this period, let alone its function. Most ancient cities are today buried beneath their medieval or modern successors; limited excavation cannot be expected to contribute significantly to an understanding of any particular site. Even where there has been no subsequent occupation, late Roman cities almost invariably occupy the sites of earlier foundations where neither excavation nor geophysical survey can provide any general insight into the character of urbanism in a particular period. A site was required which existed only in late antiquity and consequently was uncontaminated both by earlier and later occupation. Nicopolis seemed to qualify on both counts. It appeared to offer a unique opportunity to combine the results of physical and geophysical surveys to identify the general layout of the interior which could then be followed by selective excavation to examine particular buildings and quarters within its defences.

The site of the British excavations comprised a rectangular area of 5.74 ha, surrounded on all sides by robber-trenches which clearly followed the line of a defensive circuit (Fig. 2, Plate II). This fortification, known as the *castellum*, had never been excavated but was believed to have been a military annexe, attached to the city's south wall in the late Roman period.<sup>1</sup> There was reason to doubt this interpretation. Certainly, short sections of curtain-wall, which had survived robbing, were built of mortared stone and brick-courses, suggesting that the *castellum* belonged to the late Roman or early Byzantine period but the course of the robber-trenches indicated that large towers had been built along the northern wall of the 'annexe', projecting north into the Roman city (Figs 2, 3 ; Plate VII). If the Roman defences were still in use, it seemed improbable that the northern curtain of the 'annexe', which also served as the southern wall of the city, would have required external towers. It appeared more likely that the *castellum* was constructed after the walls of the Roman city had been abandoned. If this proved to be the case, then it followed that the *castellum* was the late Roman or early Byzantine successor to the Roman city.<sup>2</sup> It also seemed reasonable to suppose that the site of the *castellum*, outside the Roman defences, would contain few if any Roman buildings. Moreover, there was no sign that this site had been occupied since antiquity. Fortunately, these presumptions proved to be largely correct. Excavation demonstrated that the *castellum* did replace the Roman defences in the early Byzantine period. However, some of the surface depressions, visible on site,

<sup>1</sup> The first person to interpret this second fortification as a *castellum*, built in the late Roman period to protect the city, was S. Bobchev, 'Nicopolis ad Istrum, snimki i opiti za restavratsii', *IBAI* 5 (1928–29), 56–76 and pl. 6. Subsequently, the term and the interpretation of the site were accepted: T. Ivanov (1967), 12, 19–21.

<sup>2</sup> Poulter (1983), 95–6.

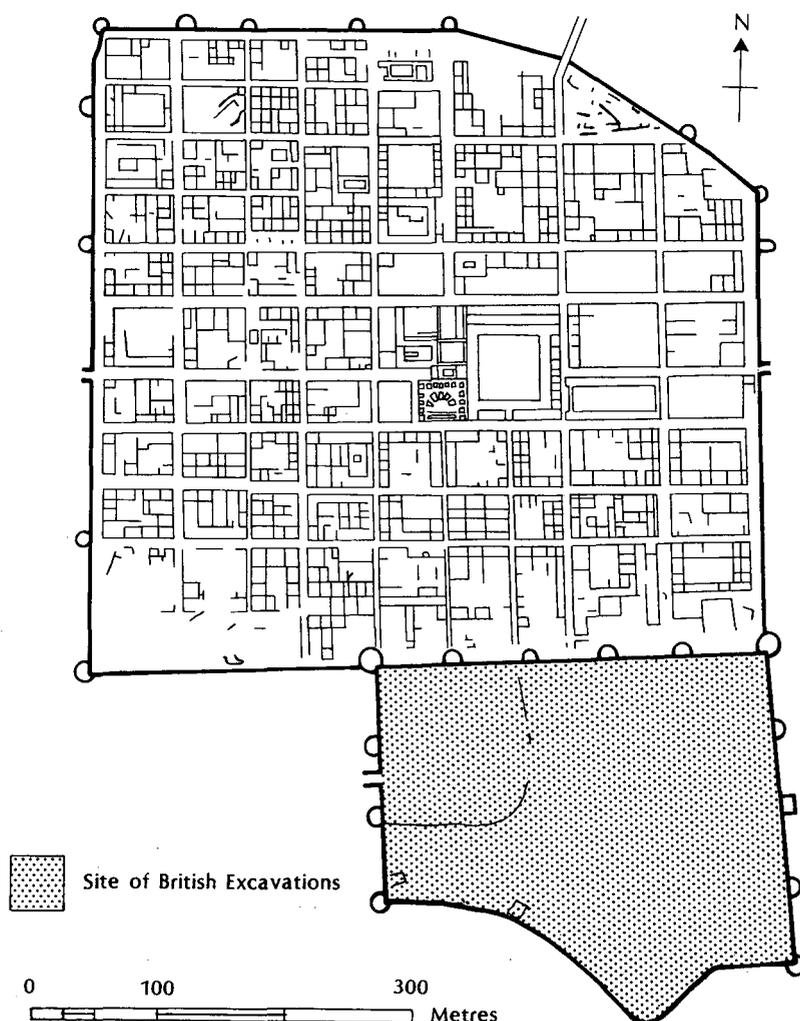


Fig. 2 Nicopolis and the British site.

turned out to be post-medieval *grubenhäuser* and sporadic occupation in the ninth/tenth centuries was also identified. Totally unexpected was the discovery that much also remained of the suburbs of the Roman city and an extramural settlement of the late Roman period. This allowed the scope of the project to be widened to include the full history of Nicopolis from its foundation in the early second century down to its abandonment in the early seventh. Even so, since the Roman and late Roman buildings were deeply buried, their existence did not diminish the value of the geophysical surveys which, for the most part, located only structures contemporary with the early Byzantine defences, providing a general 'plan' of buildings across the site and information which could be used in the selective exploration of different areas within the enclosure.<sup>3</sup>

A second aim was to establish a reliably dated sequence of pottery and small-finds, based upon the site's own stratigraphic sequence. Few excavations on the lower Danube have been fully published, and even fewer contain adequate pottery and small-find reports from well-dated contexts. Rather than rely upon unproven data, it was considered of fundamental importance that the research programme should include the full publication, for the first time, of a reliably dated ceramic sequence and a complete corpus of stratified small-finds.

A third and no less central component was the environmental programme which, it was hoped, would help to reconstruct the palaeo-environmental and economic history of the site for all periods of occupation, down to and including the post-medieval period.

<sup>3</sup> See ch. 16, p. 263 and ch. 2, pp. 40–2.



Fig. 3 The Roman city. W = west gate. E = east gate. N = north gate. P = postern. A = *agora*. T = *thermoperipatos*. B = baths. F = section of fortifications excavated by Professor Slokoska.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

An agreement signed under the auspices of the British Academy and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in 1984, provided for a five-year programme of excavation and research by a British team (1985–1989). This was extended, to complete excavation and to undertake on-site post-excavation. The second agreement, signed on behalf of the University of Nottingham and the Bulgarian National Institute of Archaeology, allowed for an additional three years (1990–1992), with the proviso that the programme could be terminated before the expiry of the agreement if the research objectives were achieved. The final, full season of field-work was completed, ahead of schedule, in 1991 and was followed by a short and limited inspection of the site by the director in 1992.<sup>4</sup>

## CLIMATE, SOILS, AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site of ancient Nicopolis is in northern Bulgaria, 3.5 km south of the village of Nikiup and 20 km north of the nearest modern town, Veliko Turnovo, Lovech district. The region possesses a moderate, continental climate with a mean summer maximum rainfall of 170 mm and average winter precipitation of 100 mm. Summer temperatures regularly rise to 35 degrees centigrade and not infrequently exceed 40 degrees. Winter temperatures, particularly in January, fall well below zero and can drop as low as –20 degrees. To the north and west, fertile chernozem soils are well-irrigated by tributaries of the Yantra and Osum (Fig. 4). The alluvial flood-plains, formed from redeposited chernozem, are no less fertile.<sup>5</sup> Today, the region has a justifiable claim to be one of the most productive market-gardening areas in Bulgaria; a reputation which reflects the region's comparatively favourable climate and its rich agricultural resources.

The soils in the immediate environs of the site are derived from loess deposits, the result of aeolian erosion of the chernozem soil, and have a high phosphate content. The light, aeolian deposits are remarkably porous: even after torrential thunderstorms, which are not infrequent during the summer months, the soil dries rapidly and, when exposed without the protection of vegetation, is rapidly deflated. The early Byzantine occupation level, where it survived, was found to be immediately below topsoil on the northern (A, C), central (D, M), and eastern (F, K) sides of the site (Fig. 5). It is probable that clearance of vegetation after reoccupation in the post-medieval period has been responsible for the rapid erosion of topsoil and the loss of the soil build-up which accumulated since the end of the early Byzantine period. Today, the site is grassland; only a few stunted and isolated trees cling to the sides of the mounds of spoil left after the robbing of the defences.<sup>6</sup>

The soft, yellow loess stone crops out close to the site. Since the stone cleaves easily along its bedding planes, it was quarried as angular blocks which were used in antiquity, as they are today in the village of Nikiup, as a readily available building-stone. Good-quality limestone, used for the road paving and monumental buildings in the Roman city, was mined at Hotnitsa, 10 km to the south (Fig. 4).

The ancient site, known in the locality as 'Stari Nikiup', occupies a plateau which slopes gently to the north (Fig. 3). To the south, it overlooks the river Rositsa, which flows east for c. 8 km to join the Yantra (*Iatrus*), a right-bank tributary of the Danube (Fig. 4). The modern course of the Rositsa lies c. 500 m south of the city. Where the river's flood-plain extends up to the foot of the escarpment below the ancient site, fluvial erosion has cut into the hillside. This accounts for the precipitous slope along the southern edge of the plateau (Fig. 3). The river may well have been closer to the site in antiquity than it is now. Certainly, its course has been restricted in modern

<sup>4</sup> Apart from reports, produced each year, an interim report was published on the results of the first three seasons: Poulter (1988), 69–89.

<sup>5</sup> I. P. Gerasimov and Zh. S. Gulubov (eds), *Geografiya na Bulgaria I: fizicheska geografiya* (Sofia, 1966), *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> The drawings and description of the site in the late nineteenth century suggest that the landscape has changed little during the last hundred years: Kanitz (1882), 180–92.

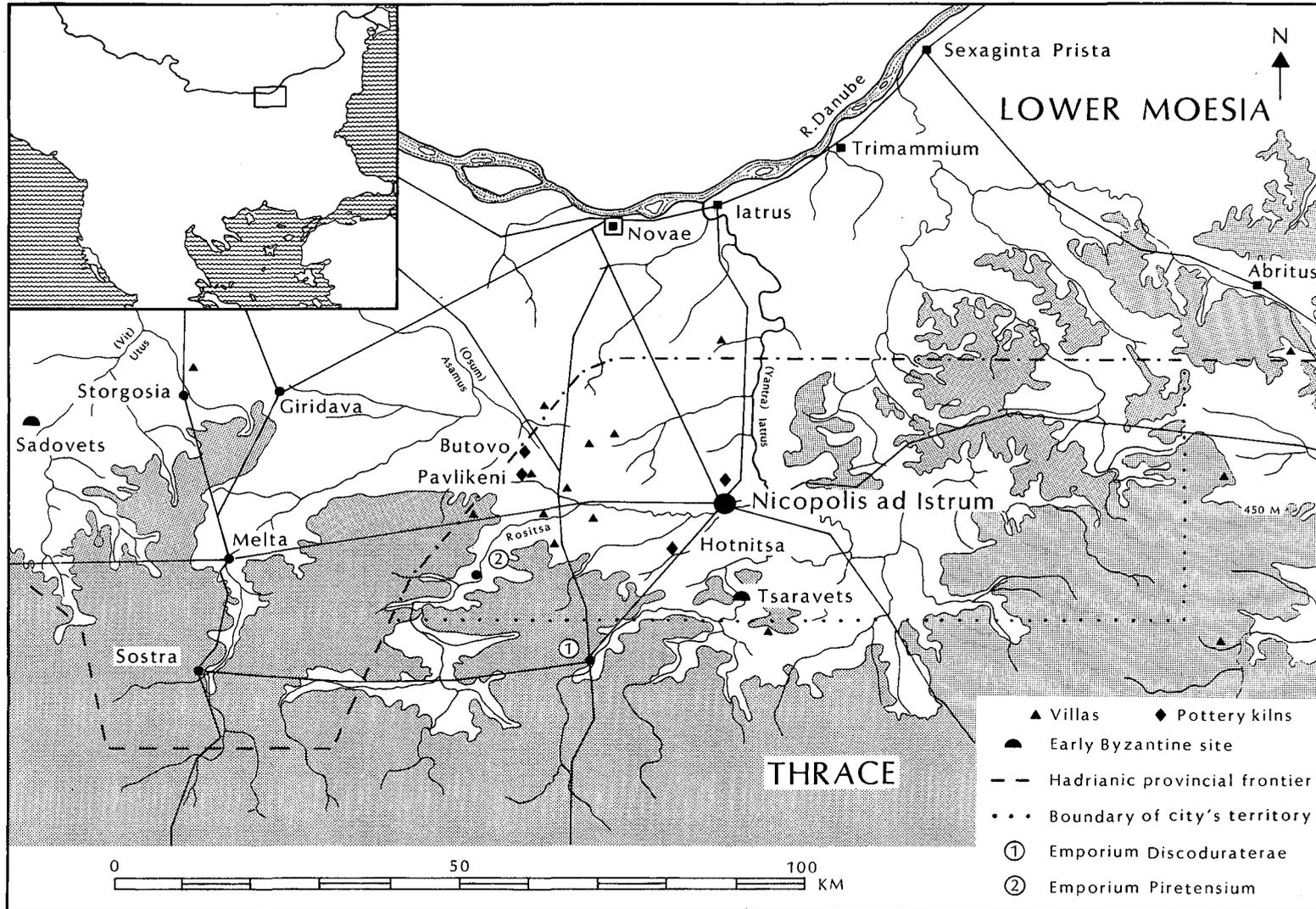


Fig. 4 Nicopolis and its territory.

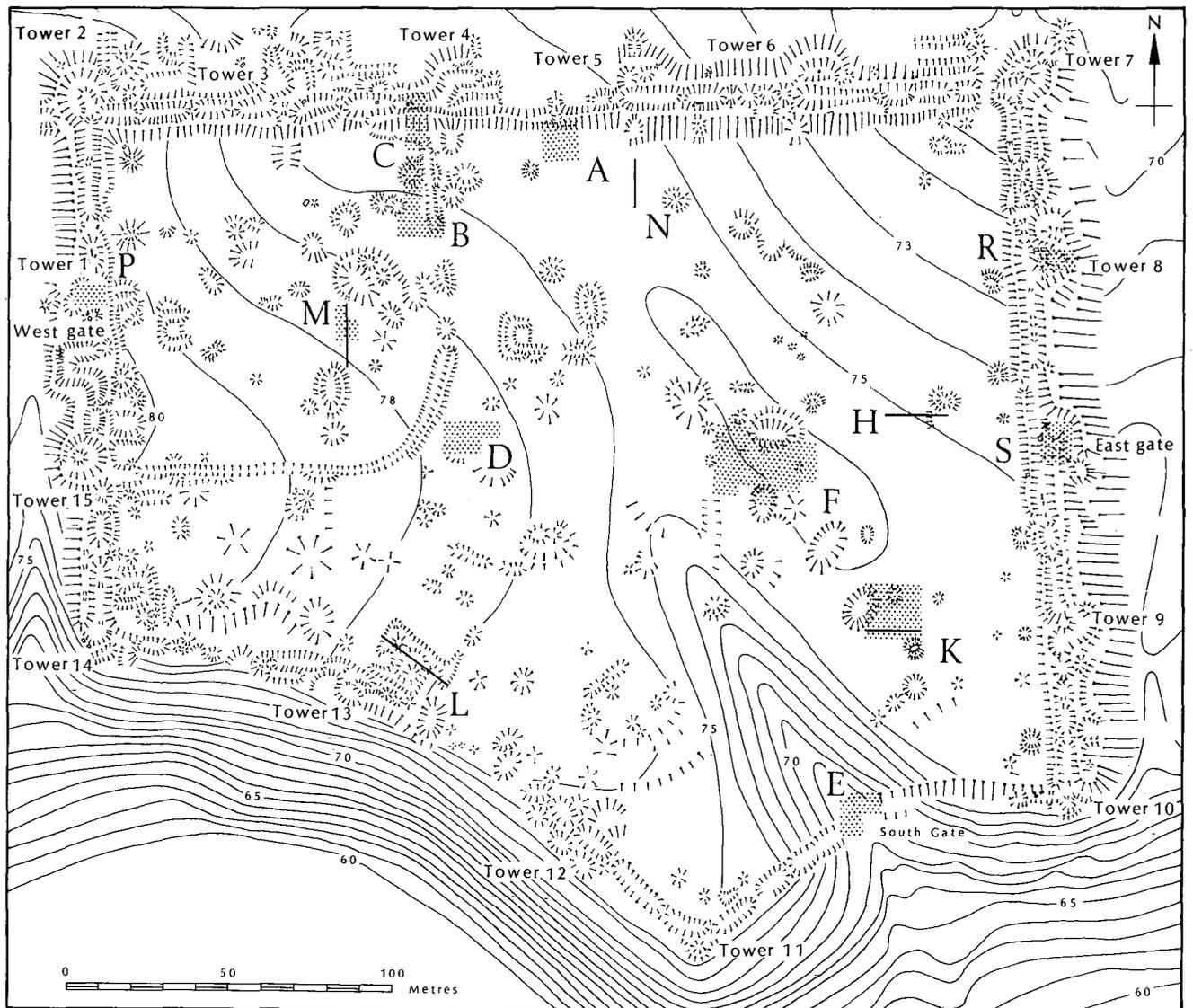


Fig. 5 Site plan.

times; it must have been wider and no doubt shallower than it is today. There may well have been an ancient bridge, but it is probable that the river could have been forded easily in the Roman period.

In addition to wells, four aqueducts are known to have supplied the city, coming from the north and from the hills of Musina to the south-west; the latter was carried over the river Rositsa near the village of Resen south-west of the city, and continued north-east to the *castellum aquae*, which still stands to full height, immediately outside the west gate of the Roman city.<sup>7</sup> Fresh water is also available from a spring at the foot of the southern escarpment and was no doubt used in the Roman period.

In the early Roman period, the site was probably almost flat, as is the continuation of the plateau to the west, beyond a modern ravine created by the rapid erosion of a footpath leading down to the Rositsa. Today, immediately south of the robber-trench which followed the northern defences of the *castellum*, the ground is almost level, only sloping gently to the east from 77.81 m above sea-level, near the north-west corner of the site, to 70.58 m above sea-level, at the north-east corner (Fig. 5). However, at a distance of *c.* 50 m south of the northern curtain-wall, the ground rises sharply by two

<sup>7</sup> T. Ivanov, 'Vodosnabdyavane i kanalizatsiya na gradove ot rimskata i kusnoantichnata epoha v Bulgaria', *Arheologia* 9/2 (1967), 15-26; Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 42-51.

to three metres, forming what appeared to be a shallow 'valley' running west/east along the north side of the enclosure. This feature, clearly visible on site, but less obvious in the contour survey, was explained by excavation. Within the 'valley', no buildings were constructed after the erection of the Roman city walls. However, to the south, there was a notable build-up of occupation levels, partly due to the demolition of buildings towards the middle of the third century and partly a consequence of extensive occupation and dumping in the late Roman period. These deposits formed a 'tell' which extended across the southern two thirds of the site, a topographical feature maintained during the early Byzantine period and down to the present time. To the east of the early Byzantine defences, a stream flows south and has created a steep-sided defile leading to the Rositsa. In antiquity the stream did not exist: it cuts rubbish dumps of the Roman period and was probably a recent creation, used as an overflow for a modern fish reservoir immediately north of the Roman city.

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT NICOPOLIS (Fig. 3)

The location of Nicopolis was first identified by Felix Kanitz in 1871.<sup>8</sup> After the Russo-Turkish war of liberation, the site was plundered for building-stone, and not only for the village of Nikiup.<sup>9</sup> Exploration was first carried out, probably in the centre of the ancient city, in 1899 and inscriptions, mostly on statue-bases, were published.<sup>10</sup> In 1900 G. Seure continued excavations and published more inscriptions found in the centre of the city.<sup>11</sup> T. V. Dobrouski (1906–1909) dug in the vicinity of the *agora*: his results were not published. In 1928, S. Bobchev surveyed and recorded the ground-plan of the buildings uncovered during earlier campaigns.<sup>12</sup> The first fully documented excavation, carried out by Professor Ivanov, was undertaken in 1945: the northern part of the public baths was discovered, close to the north wall of the Roman city.<sup>13</sup> Professor Ivanov resumed excavation in 1966–1968 around the *agora*, and from 1970, together with colleagues from the Institute of Archaeology, Sofia, and the Veliko Turnovo Historical Museum, began a programme of annual excavations. The *agora* and its surrounding public buildings were uncovered, including the *bouleuterion*, the basilica and an *odeion*, the north and east gates of the Roman city, the paved *cardo* from the north gate as far south as the southern side of the *agora*, and a large public building, opposite the south-east corner of the *agora*, probably the *thermoperipatos* mentioned in a building inscription. Trial excavations identified a peristyle court, perhaps a *palaestra* attached to the baths immediately to the north. Since 1985 when the British team began work at Nicopolis, the Bulgarian team, under the direction of Professor Slokoska, continued excavation within the *agora*-complex, extended the excavation of the baths, and began work on a private house on the north-west side of the town. After examining the poorly preserved remains of the east gate of the Roman city, Professor Slokoska also began excavation along the southern fortification wall, exposing an internal rectangular structure, identified as a tower, north of Area A, a well-preserved section of curtain-wall (between Areas A and C) and a rectangular tower (Tower 4) belonging to the early Byzantine defences, immediately east of Area C.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See above, note 6.

<sup>9</sup> The results of stone-robbing can be seen in the modern village, where inscriptions, columns, bases, and other architectural fragments, including part of a statue have been reused in modern houses. In 1891, 2,000 blocks of stone were taken from the site for the construction of a new stone bridge over the Rositsa on the road from Gorna Oryakovitsa to Rusé: Ivanov (1988b), 51.

<sup>10</sup> V. Dobrouski, 'Materiali po arheologiya na Bulgaria', *SBNOu* 18 (1901), 704–49.

<sup>11</sup> G. Seure, 'Nicopolis, Étude historique et épigraphique', *RA*<sup>4</sup> 11 (1907), 257–76, 413–28; 12 (1908), 33–95.

<sup>12</sup> See above, note 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ivanov (1952), 215–41.

<sup>14</sup> For a full survey of past archaeological research at Nicopolis, see Ivanov (1988b), 48–72; Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 11–18.

## THE HISTORICAL AND EPIGRAPHIC SOURCES

### NAME AND COMMUNICATIONS (Figs 4 and 6)

‘Trajan’s city of Victory near the Danube’ (*Oulpia Nikopolis pros Istron*) was the city’s official title which served to distinguish it from the other Trajanic and homonymous foundation in the same province of Thrace, *Nicopolis ad Nestum* (Gurmen) in the valley of the Mesta.<sup>15</sup> Ptolemy (*Geogr.* III.11.7) refers to the city as *Nicopolis ad Haemum*, a name which was geographically as appropriate but one which is not otherwise attested, probably because it was soon realized that the Hister (Danube) served as a better known point of reference than the Haemus mountains.<sup>16</sup>

The Peutinger Table places Nicopolis north of the *Haemus* (Stara Planina) and on a west/east road 130 miles from the city of Marcianopolis (Reka Devniya) to the east and 50 miles from Melta (Lovech); the latter was also a posting-station on the main road which came south from the *colonia* of Oescus on the Danube, crossed the *Haemus* over the Trojan Pass, and continued due south to Philippopolis.<sup>17</sup> A second route shown in the Peutinger Table connects Nicopolis with Sostra (Lomets), the next station south of Melta on the Oescus to Philippopolis highway.<sup>18</sup> This was probably a western continuation of the road which linked Nicopolis with *emporium Discoduraterae* (Gostilitsa), on the upper reaches of the Rositsa, where it crossed the road coming north from Beroe and Philippopolis over the Shipka Pass, and which then headed north to Novae.<sup>19</sup> To the north-west, a road led from Nicopolis directly to the legionary fortress of Novae and another continued north, following the west bank of the Yantra to reach the Danube close to the fort of Iatrus.<sup>20</sup> From Nicopolis, a Roman road also headed south-east, crossed the Stara Planina over the Vratnik Pass and continued on to Cabyle (Yambol).<sup>21</sup>

The Yantra, as far upstream as the Rositsa, is navigable for small craft. Shallow-draft boats were probably able to sail up the Rositsa as far as the city and upstream at least as far as *emporium Piretensium*, close to the western limit of the city’s territory. Nicopolis no doubt had harbour installations on the north bank of the Rositsa.<sup>22</sup> River craft, travelling down the Rositsa and then the Yantra, could reach the Danube, where trans-shipment of goods to larger vessels was probably the way local products were exported up the river to Pannonia or downstream to the Black Sea. Equally, this was no doubt the route used for the import of luxury items and goods not produced locally, such as olive oil.

### THE FIRST CENTURY A.D.

Very little archaeological research has been carried out on the late Iron Age settlements in north, central Bulgaria.<sup>23</sup> The local population comprised Getic-speaking Moesi (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*

<sup>15</sup> Its full title is recorded on the earliest dated inscriptions: cf. *IGBulg.* II.601, dedicated to Hadrian in A.D. 136.

<sup>16</sup> The city is situated 50 km south of the Danube and a similar distance north of the Stara Planina (*Haemus*). In inscriptions and on its coins, the city is always referred to as ‘Nicopolis near the Danube’, never as *Nicopolis ad Haemum*: *IGBulg.* II, p. 71; Pick (1898), 328–9.

<sup>17</sup> *Nicopolistro*, Miller (1916), 587.

<sup>18</sup> Miller (1916), 495, VIII.2.

<sup>19</sup> Soultov (1977), 14.

<sup>20</sup> The course of the road following the Yantra has been established: Stefanov (1956), 72–3. The road to Novae is reasonably certain: Jireček (1967), 154; B. Soultov, pers. com.

<sup>21</sup> Jireček (1967), 151. Also, B. Soultov, pers. com.

<sup>22</sup> On the coins of Nicopolis, a common obverse shows a river god, sometimes depicted with the prow of a ship or a rudder: Pick (1898), 342–3. This no doubt reflects the importance of the river for navigation.

<sup>23</sup> Very few Thracian settlements have been located and none has been excavated: Stefanov (1956), *passim*. The only discoveries have been made during rescue excavations in the foothills of the Stara Planina where tumuli, dating to the fourth century B.C., have been examined, one containing imported Greek pottery and jewellery: *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1991, 52.

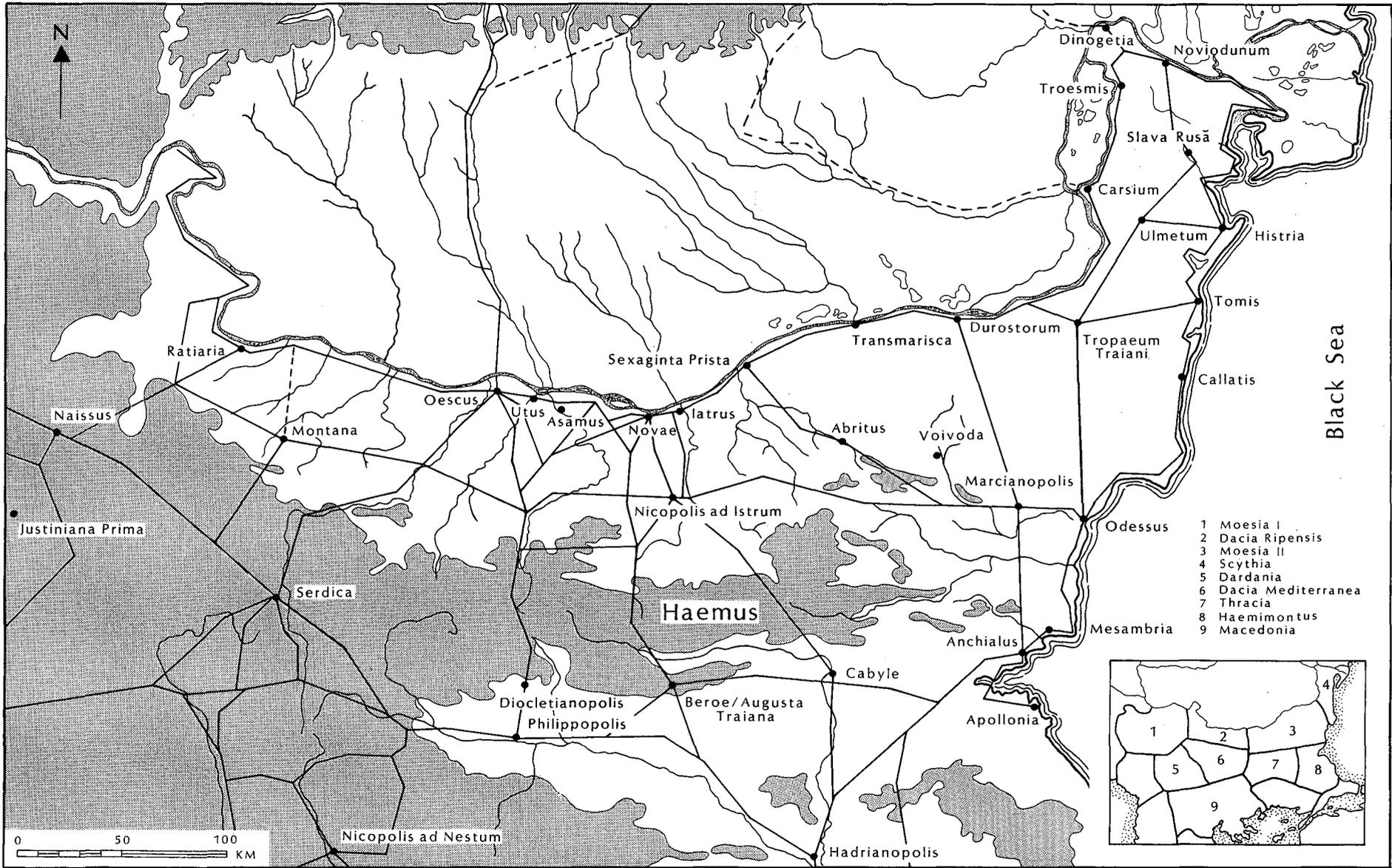


Fig. 6 The lower Danube in the late Roman period.

IV.11.42), considered to be of Dacian (Getic) origin (Dio LI.22.7), in close contact with Getae living north of the Danube (Strabo, *Geog.* VII.3.13).<sup>24</sup> Under Augustus (Strabo, *Geog.* VII.3.10) and under Nero (*ILS* 986) transdanubian Getae were resettled in Moesia. It would appear that there was no large tribal confederation in the region during the late Iron Age. Districts, some with tribal, others with toponymic names, were created after the Roman occupation and these were not granted self-government but were placed under military control: both the Moesi and Triballi were supervised by *praefecti*, detached from service with Legion V Macedonica at Oescus (*ILS* 1349).

The site must have assumed strategic importance after the annexation of Thrace *c.* A.D. 45 and the establishment of a second lower Danubian fortress at Novae (Svishtov), controlling main roads leading south and south-east into Thrace. In A.D. 61, *viae militares*, connecting the Danube with Thrace, were provided with imperial posting-stations (*tabernae et praetoria*) and it would be surprising if the direct route from Novae to Cabyle, via Nicopolis, was not one of these, equipped with posting-stations and probably garrisoned by auxiliary units.<sup>25</sup> The site is an ideal location for a first-century fort. The plateau, overlooking the crossing of the river Rositsa, has a commanding view south as far as the foothills of the *Haemus*. Although it is likely that there was a military garrison here during the second half of the first century, there is, at least as yet, no evidence to support the suggestion that the city's name commemorated a Roman victory which took place on or close to the site during the First Dacian War.<sup>26</sup>

#### FOUNDATION

According to Jordanes (*Getica* 18.101), Nicopolis was founded by Trajan to commemorate his victory over the 'Sarmatians': '[Nicopolis] quae iuxta Iatrum fluvium est constituta notissima quam devictis Sarmatis Traianus et fabricavit et appellavit Victoriae civitatem.' The reference to Sarmatians need not be taken literally: Ammianus Marcellinus (XXXI.5.16) observed that the city's name was awarded in honour of Trajan's victory over the Dacians: 'Nicopolis quam indicium victoriae contra Dacos Traianus condidit imperator'. The title *Ulpia* confirms its Trajanic origin (cf. *Ulpia* in *IGBulg.* II.601, A.D. 136). The creation of cities in Thrace can hardly have taken place until after the final conquest of Dacia in 106. In the new province of Dacia, *Colonia Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa*, probably amongst the first cities to be established, was founded *c.* 108/109 *IDR* III/2, 1). South of the Danube, the victory monument at Adamclisi was dedicated in 107/8 (*CIL* III.12467) and the decision to replace equestrian with senatorial governors in Thrace *c.* 109 was probably connected with the decision to establish cities in the province.<sup>27</sup> It is therefore likely that the city of Nicopolis was founded *c.* A.D. 110.

<sup>24</sup> Getic not Thracian place-names occur north of the Stara Planina: V. Georgiev, *Trakite i tehniyat Ezik* (Sofia, 1977), 181–7.

<sup>25</sup> Two Claudian inscriptions, dating to A.D. 61 are known, one from western Thrace and another from Mihiltsi on the main road linking Philippopolis (Plovdiv) with the first-century legionary fortress at Oescus (Gigen): Dim. Tsonchev, 'La Vie romaine Philippopolis-Sub Radice', *Latomus* 18 (1959), 154–70.

<sup>26</sup> Although Nicopolis in Epirus was founded by Octavian in commemoration of his naval victory at Actium and the ancient city is only a few kilometres north of the site of that battle, in the absence of corroborative evidence there is no reason to presume that the choice of location for either of the two Trajanic cities of victory in Thrace had any topographical relevance to the Dacian Wars, particularly as Nicopolis ad Nestum, close to the south-west corner of the province, is surely too far from the scene of conflict to have been the site of any military engagement at this time. Some commentators have suggested that the reliefs of Trajan's Column (Scenes XXXi–XXXViii) depict the Dacians counter-attacking, crossing the Danube and then besieging a fort, perhaps Novae, before being defeated by Trajan at Nicopolis, where the victory was commemorated by the foundation of the city: R. Vulpe, 'Dion Cassius et la campagne de Trajan en Mésie Inférieure', *Studia Thracologica* (1976), 239. For a review of the various arguments, see Lepper and Frere (1988), 87. However, this interpretation of the reliefs is open to question and it seems to the author that the sequence may better refer, not to a Dacian invasion at all, but to an incident in Trajan's advance against central Dacia: A. G. Poulter, 'The Lower Moesian *Limes* and the Dacian Wars of Trajan', *Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms III* (1986), 519–28; idem, review of Lepper and Frere, *Britannia* 23 (1992), 331–3.

<sup>27</sup> The first senatorial governor was probably P. Juventius Celsus *c.* 109–114, cf. Lepper and Frere (1988), 326–9.

Nicopolis was organized on the Greek model. Its official language and constitution were Greek, its status probably that of *civitas stipendiaria*.<sup>28</sup> A number of its leading citizens came from Asia Minor, amongst whom immigrants from the two cities of Nicomedia and Nicaea were particularly prominent.<sup>29</sup> Not surprisingly, the plan and architectural features of the *agora* are most closely paralleled by public building in the Greek cities of western Turkey.<sup>30</sup>

#### THE HADRIANIC AND ANTONINE PERIOD

The provincial frontier between Thrace and Lower Moesia, defined by boundary stones set up in A.D. 136, passed *c.* 20 km north and *c.* 30 km west of Nicopolis and must have been coterminous with the limits of Nicopolis' territory (Fig. 4).<sup>31</sup> The same year, two statue-bases, both dedicated to Hadrian, were erected on the western side of the *agora*, either side of the entrance into a peristyle court south of the *bouleuterion*.<sup>32</sup> Presumably the *agora* and its surrounding porticos had been built by 136, although the western entrance from the *decumanus maximus* was not completed until the reign of Antoninus Pius (*IGBulg.* II.604, A.D. 145/161).<sup>33</sup> The streets of Nicopolis, paved with large, interlocking slabs, represent a major engineering achievement. Work may well have begun under Hadrian but it is improbable that it would have been completed, at least on the periphery of the city, before *c.* 150: priority must surely have been given to finishing the public buildings around the *agora*.<sup>34</sup> It was also under Antoninus Pius that Nicopolis commenced minting its own coins.<sup>35</sup>

During the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the city's prosperous development was abruptly checked; no statue-bases or building inscriptions date to this period and the mint temporarily ceased production. The Costoboci were probably responsible. They broke through the Danubian frontier, probably in 170, and pillaged the undefended cities of Thrace.<sup>36</sup> A public building on the east side

<sup>28</sup> Unlike the Roman coins issued by the Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast, the coins of Nicopolis bore the names of provincial governors, which suggests that the city had a lower legal status: Pick (1898), 79–80. Nicopolis had a *boule* and *demos* (the citizens organized in *phylae*), *archontes*, gerousiasts, priests, chief-priests, and an *agoranomos*: Poulter (1992a), 84–5.

<sup>29</sup> Poulter (1992a), 76–85. Also of interest are second-century inscriptions which record the presence of a college of stonemasons from Nicomedia (*IGBulg.* II.674) and a house-builder (*domotektos*) from Nicaea (*IGBulg.* II.690).

<sup>30</sup> Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 69–71, 122.

<sup>31</sup> 'Antius Rufinus inter Moesos et Thracas fines posuit': *ILBR* 386 (Hotnitsa), 184 (between Roman and Staro Selo), 357 (found near Svishtov), 358 (Maslarevo), 390 (Polski Senovets), 429 (Butovo). Also, a seventh fragmentary text from Novae: *Arheologiya* 27 (1985), 39–46; Poulter (1983), 92–4. To the south, the city's territory did not extend as far as the foothills of the *Haemus* until the third century; *emporium Discoduraterae* (Gostilitsa) was controlled by Augusta Traiana during the second century. The eastern boundary is uncertain. It is here presumed that the territory between Nicopolis and Marcianopolis was divided equally between both cities.

<sup>32</sup> *IGBulg.* II.601 still stands on its plinth. Its companion had toppled off its base and into a robber-trench: *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1988, 68.

<sup>33</sup> No Trajanic building inscriptions have yet been found; the earliest attested is for a temple constructed under Hadrian: L. Slokoska, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1986, 86. It seems likely that major public buildings were still under construction during the reign of Antoninus Pius (cf. *IGBulg.* II.605, 652).

<sup>34</sup> The roads on the southern side of the city were certainly constructed before the fortifications were erected: L. Slokoska, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1986, 123–4. Even so, Nicopolis was notably quick to acquire its elegant streets. At Philippopolis (Plovdiv), the city's limestone paving was not laid down until after the completion of its defences in 172: L. Botoucharova and E. Kesjakova, 'Sur la topographie de la ville de Philippopolis dans la provincia Thracia', *Pulpudeva, Semaines philippopolitaines de l'histoire et de la culture Thrace* 3 (1980), 126–30.

<sup>35</sup> Pick (1898), 79–80, 332.

<sup>36</sup> On the invasion see B. Gerov, 'Die Krisis in den Ostbalkanländern während der Alleinregierung des Marcus Aurelius', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der römischen Provinzen Moesien und Thrakien, Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Amsterdam, 1980), 259–72; E. Popescu, 'Epigraphische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Tropaeum Traiani', *St. Cl.* 6 (1964), 185–203. The city of Tropaeum Traiani was probably burnt during the invasion: Poulter (1983), 83. A local Thracian and a *duumvir* from Tropaeum Traiani were killed by the Costoboci. The *duumvir* was possibly in charge of a local militia: *ILS* 8501 and Popescu, *ibid.*, No. 2, 192–9. The invasion of Lower Moesia probably occurred in 170 and the Costoboci continued south to cause further destruction in Greece during the following year: W. Scheidel, 'Probleme der Datierung des Costoboceneinfalls im Balkanraum inter Marcus Aurelius', *Historia* 39/4 (1990), 493–8.

of the *agora* was destroyed, perhaps during the invasion, and was replaced by a new monumental structure (*thermoperipatos*), dedicated in 184/5.<sup>37</sup>

#### THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN FORTIFICATIONS

During the decade which followed the invasion of the Costoboci, the fortifications of the Black Sea cities were repaired and new ones constructed for the inland cities of Thrace.<sup>38</sup> These urban defences followed a standard design and employed large limestone blocks joined with iron clamps, pilasters to support the wall-walk, and internally projecting gate-chambers.<sup>39</sup> Since the programme was implemented in each of the two provinces of Thrace and Moesia Inferior during the same period it was probably organized and carried out by imperial directive, but apparently paid for by the cities themselves, as was certainly the case at Callatis (Mangalia).<sup>40</sup> The use of Greek craftsmen accounts for the manner of construction, but similarities in planning between the late second-century urban defences and contemporary fort design on the lower Danube suggest that military architects may have been involved.<sup>41</sup> No building inscription from Nicopolis has yet provided an exact date for its walls. However, the close similarities between its defences and those provided for other cities of Thrace in the 170s strongly suggest that the walls of Nicopolis were part of the same programme. If so, they must have been erected *c.* 175.<sup>42</sup>

#### THE SEVERAN PERIOD

Between 187 and 197, probably in 197, the northern frontier of Thrace was moved south to the northern foothills of the *Haemus*, thereby transferring Nicopolis from Thrace to the enlarged province of Moesia Inferior.<sup>43</sup> More official inscriptions, both statue-bases and building inscriptions, were set up in the city in the Severan period than ever before, and the mint, which had reopened late in the reign of Commodus, was most active in this period.<sup>44</sup> At least some citizens

<sup>37</sup> *IGBulg.* II.615; T. Ivanov, 'Termoperipatut v Nicopolis ad Istrum', *Arheologiya* 22/2 (1980), 13–14; Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 144–5.

<sup>38</sup> Serdica A.D. 176/180: *IGBulg.* IV.1902. Also a second building inscription of the same date: G. Mihailov, 'Une nouvelle inscription de l'enceinte de Serdica', *Epigraphica* 38 (1976), 21–4. Philippopolis A.D. 172: *IGBulg.* III/1.878. Callatis A.D. 169/175 and probably *c.* A.D. 172: *AE* 1937, Nos 153 and 246. Pautalia (Kiustendil) also under Marcus Aurelius: Slokoska (1989), 106–7. Augusta Traiana (Stara Zagora): Nikolov (1987), 97–8; G. Mihailov, 'La fortification de la Thrace par Antoninus le Pieux et Marc Aurèle', *Studi Urb.* n.s. B 35/1–2 (1961), 42–56.

<sup>39</sup> Slokoska (1989), 84–106.

<sup>40</sup> *AE* 1937, 246: '... curam agente exactionis pecuniae et operis exstrutionisq. murorum praeside provinciae consulare M. Valerio Bradua leg. Aug. pr. pr. civitas Callatianorum muros exstruxit'.

<sup>41</sup> In Dacia, apart from Bumbesti, which is considered Severan, the stone forts, many of which must date to the later second century, have internal pilasters supporting the wall-walk and narrow curtain-walls; the new fortress of Potaissa, built for V Macedonica *c.* A.D. 167/8, had a curtain-wall, in places as narrow as 1.10 m, externally faced with masonry, internally built from small stone blocks bonded with mortar: I. B. Căţănciu, *Evolution of the System of Defence Works in Roman Dacia*, *BAR Int. Ser.* 116 (1981), 46–52. These are features shared with the urban defences of Thrace. This style of fort construction was introduced after the mid-second century: Trajanic stone fortifications at Novae and along the southern foothills of the Carpathians were of different construction; the curtain-walls comprised an earth rampart reveted internally and externally by mortared stone walls: T. Sarnowski, 'La forteresse de la légion I Italica à Novae et le limes du sud-est de la Dacie', *Eos* 71 (1983), 265–76.

<sup>42</sup> For the archaeological evidence for the dating of the walls and details of planning which strongly suggest a connection with the defences of Augusta Traiana, see Area C, pp. 91, 94–5.

<sup>43</sup> *Emporium Discoduratae*, 30 km south-west of Nicopolis, remained in Thrace and was still under the control of Augusta Traiana in the Severan period, but by the reign of Aurelian it belonged to Nicopolis. The southern boundary of the province must have been moved south for a second time, perhaps to the crest of the *Haemus*: G. Mihailov, 'Septimius Severus in Moesia Inferior and Thrace', *Acta Antiqua Philippopolitana, Studia Historica et Philologica* (Sofia, 1963), 113–26; B. Gerov, 'Die Grenzen der römischen Provinz Thracia bis zur Gründung des aurelianischen Dakien', *ANRW* II.7.1, 212–40.

<sup>44</sup> Pick (1898), 332; Poulter (1992a), 74 and fig. 47, p. 73.

could afford to be generous; Septimius Severus wrote to the citizens of Nicopolis thanking them for a substantial donation (*IGBulg.* II.659). Whatever disaster had been inflicted upon the city and its territory during the invasion of the Costoboci, Nicopolis would seem to have soon recovered its economic prosperity.

The boundaries of Nicopolis' territory encompassed some 4,000 square kilometres. Outlying districts were administered through *emporium* and probably villages.<sup>45</sup> Villas, many owned by Latin-speaking veterans from the Danubian frontier, clustered along the tributaries of the Yantra and Rositsa, especially north and west of the city (Fig. 4).<sup>46</sup> Pottery production at Butovo, Pavlikeni, and Hotnitsa, developed by immigrants from Asia Minor, supplied the city with coarse and fine wares, the latter of remarkably high quality.<sup>47</sup>

### THE THIRD CENTURY

There are signs that the prosperity of the city declined towards the middle of the third century. The number of official inscriptions dropped sharply during the second quarter of the third century, the series terminating with three statue-bases set up under Gordian III, the latest in 241/244 (*IGBulg.* II.644). The Nicopolis mint also ceased production under Gordian III.<sup>48</sup> A bronze head of the emperor, perhaps from the city, was defaced and thrown into the Yantra.<sup>49</sup> Jordanes' account of the Gothic invasion of 250 (*Getica* XVIII.101) includes factual detail which would seem to come from a reliable source.<sup>50</sup>

Cniva, exercitum dividens in duas partes, nonnullos ad vastandum Moesiam dirigit, sciens eam negligentibus principibus defensoribus destitutam; ipse vero cum LXX milibus ad Eusciam, id est Novas conscendit. Unde a Gallo duce remotus Nicopolim accedit . . . ubi Decio superveniente imperatore tandem Cniva in Hemi partibus, quae non longe aberant, recessit. Unde apparatu disposito Philippopolim ire festinans.

Cniva was repulsed from Novae by C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus, governor of Lower Moesia, and the Goths moved south to Nicopolis but, with the approach of the emperor Decius, they withdrew to the *Haemus*. A fragment of the *Chronica* by Dexippus, preserved in the Chronicle of Syncellus, describes the same event.<sup>51</sup> When the Goths crossed the Danube, they besieged Nicopolis to which 'Moesians' had fled for safety.<sup>52</sup> Decius is reported to have killed 30,000 Goths in a battle, fought close to the city, which he is nevertheless said to have lost, with the result that Cniva and his army were able to continue south to besiege and then sack Philippopolis. A fragment of the same author's *Scythica*, preserved in the *Excerpta de Sententiis*, gives a slightly different version of the same event.<sup>53</sup> In a letter from Decius, read out to the citizens of Philippopolis, the emperor urged them to

<sup>45</sup> For *emporium Discoduratae* see above, note 43; *emporium Piretensium* (Gorsko Kosovo): *IGBulg.* II.695.

<sup>46</sup> Poulter (1992a), 77–81; Poulter (1983), 92–4.

<sup>47</sup> Soultov (1983), 119–28; Poulter (1992a), 84–5. Perhaps related to the kiln-site, a certain Agathadorus, from Nicaea, is attested in a bilingual funerary inscription from Butovo: *IGBulg.* II.600.

<sup>48</sup> Pick (1898), 82, 332.

<sup>49</sup> The nose of the statue (from near Radinovo) had been slit and the ears cut off: V. Dobrouski, 'Materiali po arheologiyata na Bulgaria', *SbNOu* 18 (1901), 722. One would not expect such treatment of an imperial statue to have been carried out by the citizens of Nicopolis, who would surely have recycled the valuable metal. Perhaps, therefore, if it did not come from a fort on the Danube, it was looted by Goths from a rural shrine or from Nicopolis itself.

<sup>50</sup> Gallus is C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus, then governor of Moesia Inferior. His presence in the legionary fortress of Novae at this time is hardly surprising. From Novae, the Goths must have travelled south along the main road to Nicopolis. Admittedly, Jordanes confuses Oescus (Gigen) with Novae (Svishtov), perhaps because the Goths had crossed the Danube at Oescus, where there must have been a bridge, before moving east to Novae: Poulter (1983), 76.

<sup>51</sup> *FGrH* 2A, 465.

<sup>52</sup> It is uncertain who the 'Moesi' were; possibly civilians but they could have been Moesian troops who retreated to the city. Dexippus plays down the role of the military, often avoids mentioning the part played by the army, stressing instead the contribution made by civilians (like himself) in defending the Empire against the invaders: cf. F. Millar, 'P. Herennius Dexippus: the Greek world and the third-century invasions', *JRS* 59 (1969), 25.

<sup>53</sup> *FGrH* 2A, 468.

await the arrival of the army and not to resort to arms. The news from Nicopolis was used as an argument to persuade the inhabitants of Philippopolis to do as the emperor requested. The report must have been encouraging; either because it was believed that Decius had defeated the Goths and halted their advance, in which case the information was incorrect, or else that the battle between the imperial army and the Goths had at least prevented Cniva from taking Nicopolis, which may well have been true since neither the account in the *Chronica* nor that provided by Jordanes need mean that Nicopolis was captured.

In 270, according to the *Historia Augusta*, an attempt was made to capture Nicopolis and Anchialus (Pomorie) on the Black Sea coast (SHA *vit. Claud.* XII.4): ‘sub hoc barbari qui superfuerant Anchialum vastare conati sunt, Nicopolim etiam obtinere. Sed illi provincialium virtute obruti sunt’. Anchialus is a long way from Nicopolis (Fig. 6). However, both cities again appear together in connection with one, or more probably a series of Gothic invasions, in a cryptic and chronologically confused passage by Ammianus Marcellinus. Both the *Historia Augusta* and Ammianus were probably using the same or a similar account, even though Ammianus believed that both cities were captured (XXXI.5.16): ‘Anchialos capta et tempore eodem Nicopolis’. Surprisingly, in this instance the version provided by the *Historia Augusta* is likely to be a more reliable summary of the original account, almost certainly culled from Dexippus.<sup>54</sup> The same veracity cannot be credited to another passage in the *Historia Augusta* which purports to cite a letter written by Valerian, in which the emperor orders Aurelian to deal with the Goths around Nicopolis (SHA *vit. Aurel.* XI.2).<sup>55</sup>

Threatened by the Gothic army of Cniva in 250 and besieged in 270, Nicopolis appears to have survived both attacks. This does not mean that the city could not have been sacked during other invasions: simply we have no historical record to prove it one way or the other. Even if Nicopolis was secure behind its defences throughout the third century, there is no doubt but that the Gothic incursions had a catastrophic effect upon the rural economy; none of the villas excavated within the city’s territory survived the third century.<sup>56</sup> The latest civic inscriptions known to have been erected by the city of Nicopolis are two statue-bases. One was set up in the *emporium Discoduraterae* under Aurelian (*IGBulg.* II.734, A.D. 270/71), by which time the city’s territory must have been extended south to include the *emporium*, which was still administered by Augusta Traiana under the Severi.<sup>57</sup> The other was a dedication of the same date which must have stood within the city itself.<sup>58</sup>

#### THE FOURTH CENTURY

Historical sources only rarely refer to Nicopolis in this period; the city is mentioned in connection with the settlement of Ulfila and the Goths towards the middle of this century, then again during the Gothic wars of the later fourth century and their aftermath. Nevertheless, there was notable imperial interest in the region, particularly after the foundation of Constantinople, when the lower Danubian frontier protected not only Thrace but also the hinterland of the new imperial capital. Under Diocletian, Nicopolis was assigned to the province of Moesia II, within the Thracian diocese. A series of identically-worded Diocletianic inscriptions record the construction of *praesidia* in Moesia II, along the right bank of the Danube, between 298 and 299.<sup>59</sup> Urban fortifications, notably those of

<sup>54</sup> The reference, in the *Historia Augusta*, to an attempted siege and the valour of the provincials is just what one would expect from Dexippus. In a passage, which may well have come from Dexippus’ account, Jordanes (*Getica* XX. 108–9) also refers to an attack on Anchialus but makes no mention of its capture. Ammianus may have been confused by the fact, also reported by Jordanes, that the Goths then occupied the hot springs: these were not in Anchialus but twelve miles away.

<sup>55</sup> The other references in this text are otherwise unsubstantiated: the letter is probably fictitious.

<sup>56</sup> Poulter (1983), 92–4.

<sup>57</sup> See above, note 43.

<sup>58</sup> Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), No. 7, 150–1. Another statue-base from the city may have been dedicated to Aurelian although the text is fragmentary and the reading uncertain: *IGBulg.* II.645.

<sup>59</sup> They come from Transmarisca, Sexaginta Prista, and Durostorum: J. Kolendo, ‘Une inscription inconnue de Sexaginta Prista et la fortification du Bas-Danube sous la Tétrarchie’, *Eirene* 5 (1966), 139–54.

Abritus in Moesia II and Tropaeum Traiani in Scythia, the latter completed in 315/317 (*JGL* 170), had impressive walls, built of well-dressed stone, with external towers, which were amongst the largest ever constructed in the late Roman period.<sup>60</sup>

Ammianus Marcellinus, in his cursory description of the lower Danube (XXVII.4.12), lists Nicopolis along with Durostorum and Odessus as the cities of Moesia II. A late Roman inscription from the city praises a certain Basilianus Macedonius, perhaps a provincial governor.<sup>61</sup> Since it was inscribed on a lintel, it presumably commemorates the construction or repair of an official building (*IGBulg.* II.656). Heliodorus, who attended the Council of Serdica (342/3), may have been Bishop of Nicopolis ad Istrum.<sup>62</sup>

In 347/8, Constantius II permitted Ulfila and his Gothic followers to cross the Danube. Jordanes (*Getica* LI.267) observed that in his day (towards the middle of the sixth century) the descendants of Ulfila's Goths were living in the neighbourhood of Nicopolis in the foothills of the Stara Planina:

Erant si quidem et alii Gothi, qui dicuntur minores, populus inmensus, cum suo pontifice ipsoque primate Ulfila, qui eis dicitur et litteras instituisse. Hodieque sunt in Moesia regionem incolentes Nicopolitanam ad pedes Emimonti gens multa, sed paupera et inbellis nihilque habundans nisi armenta diversi generis pecorum et pascua silvaeque lignarum; parum tritici citerarumque specierum terras fecundas. Vineas vero nec, si sunt alibi, certi eorum cognoscent ex vicina loca sibi vinum negotiantes: nam lacte aluntur plerique.

Although Jordanes does not explicitly say so, it is likely that Ulfila's Goths had originally been settled in the same region they occupied two centuries later, perhaps, by then, centred upon the fortified citadel of Tsaravets, Veliko Turnovo.<sup>63</sup>

In 378, shortly before the Battle of Adrianople, the Goths, alarmed by the approach of Valens, retreated north to join forces with their countrymen left in garrison near Beroe and Nicopolis (Amm. Marcell. XXXI.11.2): 'Qui motu imperatoris cum abundanti milite cognito, popularibus iungere se festinant, circa Beroeam et Nicopolim agentibus praesidiis fixis'. Both garrisons had been stationed on the road linking eastern Thrace (Haemimontus) with Moesia II (Fig. 6).<sup>64</sup> These forces may have been placed there to prevent or deter the return of Gratian's general, Frigeridus, who had probably used this route to reach Beroe, where he had set up camp before carrying out a strategic withdrawal back over the mountains when confronted by the Gothic army.<sup>65</sup> Fritigern probably anticipated the arrival of Gratian and the western army and it would have been reasonable

<sup>60</sup> The character of the urban defences closely resembles contemporary military architecture along the lower Danubian frontier: Poulter (1992b), 116–17; *Tropaeum Traiani* 1, 47–77.

<sup>61</sup> It has been suggested that Basilianus was governor of the province of Rhodope: *PLRE* I, 527. However, it is wrongly presumed that Nicopolis was in this province. If the man was a *praeses*, he was presumably governor of Moesia II. A second fourth-century inscription was found during the British excavations, see report on the inscriptions (Cat. No. 1), pp. 315–16.

<sup>62</sup> Mansi, *Collectio*, III, 39, 42. Which Nicopolis is not stated. Local bishops were well-represented at the Council of Serdica and this Nicopolis was the closest to Serdica. However, it is possible that Heliodorus came from either Nicopolis in Epirus or from Nicopolis ad Nestum in southern Thrace: Zeiller (1918), 175–6.

<sup>63</sup> Auxentius, Bishop of Durostorum and disciple of Ulfila, must have known precisely where the Goths had been settled and there is no reason to doubt his statement that they inhabited mountainous country: *Migne PL*, suppl. I, 706 (59). This must refer to the Stara Planina and probably the same locality described by Jordanes. For the attractive suggestion that Tsaravets was occupied by the Goths, see V. Velkov, 'Wulfila und die Gothi minores in Moesien', *Klio* 71/2 (1989), 525–7. Jordanes' description of their location is quite specific and fits well with the wooded slopes of the *Haemus*.

<sup>64</sup> The term *praesidia* suggests that these were military forces and not groups of Goths, including women and children, who had been left behind in Moesia. The Gothic *praesidium* cannot be the Goths settled in the *Haemus* under Constantius; Ulfila was still active as leader of his group until his death in 382/3 and there is no suggestion that he or his followers proved disloyal at this time: Thompson (1966), 158.

<sup>65</sup> Frigeridus had been dispatched to the lower Danube (Amm. Marcell. XXXI.7.3–5). When forced to withdraw from Beroe (Augusta Traiana), he returned over the mountains (surely the *Haemus*) to Illyricum and must have followed the road north towards Nicopolis (Amm. Marcell. XXXI.9.1–2), presumably taking the same route he had used to avoid the Goths when he had slipped into Thrace. When Fritigern returned to the lower Danube, he followed the main road from Illyricum to Serdica: his aim ostensibly being to fortify the pass of Succus in order to prevent the Goths from reaching north-west Thrace (Amm. Marcell. XXXI.10. 21).

for Fritigern to presume that Gratian would follow the same route as that used by his general, Frigeridus, with the intention of outflanking the Goths in central Thrace and joining forces with Valens, then advancing from Constantinople.

In the account of the revolt of the Goths under Valens, there are general inferences which can be drawn. The failure of the Goths to capture cities is frequently noted in Ammianus' account (cf. XXXI.8.1; XXXI.6.4) and there is certainly no reason to presume that the Gothic *praesidium* stationed close by made any attempt to take Nicopolis by assault. Fritigern's primary concern was to pillage villages for supplies (XXXI.6.5; XXXI.11.5). The Roman response was to deprive the Goths of those same supplies by driving the enemy into areas where food was not available and by securing foodstuffs within fortified cities (XXXI.7.3; XXXI.8.1). This tactic would only have been effective if the movement of supplies was supervised by the military. It is therefore likely that there were urban garrisons at this time and that it was probably the presence of these forces, rather than the walls themselves, which explains why the Goths failed to capture cities, which had regularly fallen to Goths during the third-century invasions.<sup>66</sup>

Under Theodosius I, probably in 379 or 380, the citizens of Nicopolis ignored the wishes of the emperor and took measures for their own protection without waiting for a military force to be sent to assist them (Eunapius, Frag. 47, *Exc. de Sent.* 50). Ambiguous as the surviving fragment of text is, the most likely interpretation would be that the citizens took up arms against Gothic *foederati* living within the city's territory.<sup>67</sup>

#### THE FIFTH CENTURY

There exist only one certain and one possible reference to Nicopolis in the fifth century, and both concern its bishops. However, for the period, the ancient sources provide an unusually detailed account of events on the lower Danube, which were of singular importance to the Eastern Empire. During the 440s the region was devastated by the Huns under Attila. The first invasion occurred in 441. Amongst the cities sacked were Sirmium and Naissus in Illyricum and Philippopolis in Thrace. In 442/3 Attila plundered the cities of the Thracian Chersonese. Only a temporary respite was achieved for the region by the peace treaty of 443, under the terms of which the Huns received a substantial tribute.<sup>68</sup> In 447, Attila again invaded and this time, after defeating the imperial army on the banks of the Vit (Utus) in Dacia Ripensis, sacked Marcianopolis and probably Serdica, as well as cities in southern Thrace and northern Greece.<sup>69</sup> By the treaty signed with Attila in 448, peace was purchased again, but at a price: imperial forces were required to withdraw from a swath of territory along the Danube from Singidunum (Belgrade) as far as Novae and for a distance of five days journey south of the river.<sup>70</sup> The departure of the Huns for the West in 451 may have allowed a temporary reassertion of imperial authority on the lower Danube.<sup>71</sup> Between 475/6, when the Amal

<sup>66</sup> Urban garrisons may already have been common along the Danube by the middle of the fourth century; Poulter (1992b), 103–23.

<sup>67</sup> It is possible to interpret this passage in the sense that the citizens opened their gates to the enemy: Thompson (1966), 103. However, Blockley (*The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* (Liverpool, 1982), vol. 2, 142, note 107) observes that it is equally possible that the inhabitants decided to fight against the Goths. This seems the more reasonable deduction since this account recalls a passage in Zosimus (IV.40) which describes an incident which had similar consequences; Gerontius, the commander of a Roman garrison in Tomis, attacked Gothic *foederati*, then living around the city. This action angered Theodosius, even though Gerontius' gallant initiative is supposed to have saved the province of Scythia from the depredations of the Goths. The source for Zosimus' account, clearly hostile to Theodosius, was probably also Eunapius: F. Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire nouvelle* II (Paris, 1979), 430–1. Probably it was Eunapius who described both episodes and for the same reason: to illustrate what he believed to have been the disastrous consequences of the emperor's policy towards the Goths.

<sup>68</sup> Stein (1959), 291–2.

<sup>69</sup> Stein (1959), 292.

<sup>70</sup> On this treaty and its relevance to Nicopolis, see ch. 2, pp. 34–5.

<sup>71</sup> This is discussed in connection with the likely date of the early Byzantine walls at Nicopolis, see ch. 2, pp. 35–7.

Goths under Theoderic, son of Thiudimir, seized Novae, and 488/9, when the Goths followed in the footsteps of the Huns and went west, the region was nominally still under Byzantine rule. However, the effective rulers on the lower Danube in this period were Theoderic the Amal and his namesake, Theoderic Strabo, and cities, such as Nicopolis, must have been under their control. At the end of the fifth century, during the reign of Anastasius (491–518), both the frontier forts and cities on the lower Danube were in need of reconstruction.<sup>72</sup>

Socrates (*Historia Ecclesiastica* VII.36) notes that the bishop Polycarpus was translated from Sexaginta Prista in Moesia to Nicopolis in Thrace, probably in the 430s, although, since Nicopolis ad Istrum was also in 'Mysia' (Moesia II), it is perhaps more likely that the Nicopolis in question was Nicopolis ad Nestum.<sup>73</sup> In 458, a certain Marcellus was certainly Bishop of Nicopolis ad Istrum: he replied to the encyclical letter issued by the emperor Leo.<sup>74</sup>

#### THE SIXTH CENTURY

Justinian waged long and ultimately successful wars in Africa and Italy, but this would seem to have been at the expense of providing adequate defences on the lower Danube against the increasing threat from Bulgars and Sklaveni (Slavs). In 529 and 530 there were invasions and in 535 a praesental field-army fought with the Bulgars on the banks of the Yantra. Throughout the 540s and 550s Bulgars, Slavs, and Kotrigurs repeatedly swept through the northern provinces of Thrace. During the 570s and 580s, Avars and Slavs broke into Scythia and Moesia II; amongst cities captured in 586 were Durostorum, Marcianopolis, and Tropaeum Traiani. Imperial control must have been restored, at least partially, by the 590s since Maurice Tiberius was able to launch a campaign north of the Danube in 602. However, the army, forced to winter in Muntenia, revolted and proclaimed Phocas emperor.<sup>75</sup> During the reign of Heraclius (610–641), the collapse of the eastern frontier required urgent attention; Byzantine control over the lower Danube and north of the *Haemus* may just have been maintained until the beginning of Heraclius' reign and, only at Callatis, the most southerly of the coastal cities of Scythia, is there reason to suspect that Byzantine control may have continued as late as the second quarter of the seventh century.<sup>76</sup>

Literary sources tell us very little about Nicopolis in this period, but equally there is no suggestion that there was any break in continuity between the late Roman and early Byzantine city, or that Nicopolis was any less a city than its neighbours on the lower Danube. Amantius was Bishop of Nicopolis in 518.<sup>77</sup> If Procopius is to be believed, Justinian was responsible for the reconstruction of the city (*De Aedif.* IV.11.5).<sup>78</sup> Hierocles (*Synecdemus* 636), writing in the early years of Justinian's reign, lists Nicopolis as one of eight cities of Moesia II and, as noted previously,

<sup>72</sup> Anastasian brick-stamps indicate rebuilding in Scythia; Dinogetia (*IGL* 246): *Dacia* n.s. 11 (1967), 355–6; Sacidava: C. Scorpan, *Limes Scythiae*, BAR Int. Ser. 88 (1980), 70; and at Histria (*IGL* 113) which also produced an Anastasian building inscription (*IGL* 112). Most eloquent of major building under this emperor is the discovery of a large stone inscription which was probably the lintel above the western gate at Ratiaria (Archar) in *Dacia Ripensis*. The text is remarkably optimistic: 'Anastasiana Ratiaria semper floreat': V. Velkov, 'Buzpomenatelen nadpis za imperator Anastasius ot Ratiaria', *Arheologiya* 26 2/3, 92–4.

<sup>73</sup> Zeiller (1918), 166<sup>z</sup>7.

<sup>74</sup> Mansi, *Collectio* VII, 546, 790.

<sup>75</sup> For an account of the sixth-century invasions, see P. Lemerle, 'Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque romaine jusq'au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *RH* 211 (1954), 265–308.

<sup>76</sup> Byzantine control, north of the Stara Planina survived, if precariously, into the seventh century but was lost, at latest, during the reign of Heraclius: A. G. Poulter, 'The End of Scythia Minor; the archaeological evidence', in M. Mullett and R. Scott (eds), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition, University of Birmingham Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Birmingham, 1979), 198–204.

<sup>77</sup> Mansi, *Collectio* VIII, 1048.

<sup>78</sup> There is no epigraphic evidence for any Justinianic building north of the *Haemus*. This is probably significant, given that there is evidence for rebuilding under Anastasius. Procopius appears to list all cities and towns and his assertion that Justinian was responsible for their reconstruction would seem most improbable. See above, note 72.

Jordanes refers to the foundation of Nicopolis by Trajan and describes the Goths then living south of the city. The last historical reference to Nicopolis dates to 598 when Comentiolus, general of the emperor Maurice, passed the city on his way to an ignominious defeat at the hands of the Avars (Theophanes Simocatta VII.13.8).<sup>79</sup> Even if the city survived the consequences of Comentiolus' defeat and withdrawal south of the *Haemus*, it is unlikely to have remained in Byzantine hands after the collapse of the Danubian frontier under Phocas (602–610).

#### THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

In 1469 the remains of Saint John of Rila were removed from Tsaravets (Veliko Turnovo), the former capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, and were taken to Rila monastery in south-west Bulgaria. Writing less than a decade after the event, Vladislav Gramatik appended to his first edition of the 'Life of Saint John' a detailed account of the first stage of the journey.<sup>80</sup> The cortège left Turnovo, crossed the Rositsa and arrived at the 'city of Nicopolis' where they were met by a certain Bogdan Zhoupan who escorted the relics into the city where he had a palace and private chapel. The Bulgarian inhabitants came to the 'palace' and celebrations continued into the night. The next day, the cortège was escorted by the Bulgarians as far as the river Osum after which the procession continued first to Sredets (Sofia) then south to Rila monastery.<sup>81</sup> The geographical detail is compelling: the Nicopolis in the Saint's Life can hardly be other than the site of ancient Nicopolis. The description of Nicopolis as a city (*grad*) implies that it was fortified: probably the early Byzantine walls were still standing. It is tempting to suppose that the 'palace' of Bogdan Zhoupan may have been an early Byzantine building which had been repaired and reoccupied. Certainly, there would seem to have been a Bulgarian community living either on the early Byzantine site or close by.

#### THE POST-MEDIEVAL PERIOD

When the site was first identified by Kanitz in 1871, it was known, as it still is, as Eski (Stari) Nikiup (Old Nikiup), distinguishing it from the present village of Nikiup.<sup>82</sup> North of the Stara Planina, 'Nikiup' is a rare instance of the survival of an ancient place-name. The toponym 'Stari Nikiup' also suggests that the modern village had moved to its present location from the ancient site. According to local legend, Stari Nikiup was abandoned during the Turkish period and the inhabitants founded the modern village in what was then a forest because they wanted to escape a burdensome obligation imposed by the Turks. This involved conveying official travellers across the river Rositsa.<sup>83</sup> Unfortunately, it has proved impossible to verify this tradition and enquiries in the Veliko Turnovo Museum failed to discover relevant documentary evidence for the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Nevertheless, it is probable that evidence, in the form of tax-returns or census information from the Turkish period, does exist. For reasons which were never fully explained, Nikiup celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of its foundation in 1989 although it was admitted at the time that the festivities did not exactly coincide with the true anniversary. I am grateful to the village mayor, who allowed me to see a copy of the speech, delivered on 9 September 1989 during the celebrations by Mr Christo Lazarov, in his capacity as chairman of the local communist party, a

<sup>79</sup> On the dating of this passage, see M. and M. Whitby, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (Oxford, 1986), 196–7.

<sup>80</sup> *Zhitiya na Sv. Ivana Rilski*, ed. I. Ivanov, Godishnik na Sofiiskiia Ouniversitet, Istoriko-filologicheski Fakoultet XXXII.13 (Sofia, 1936).

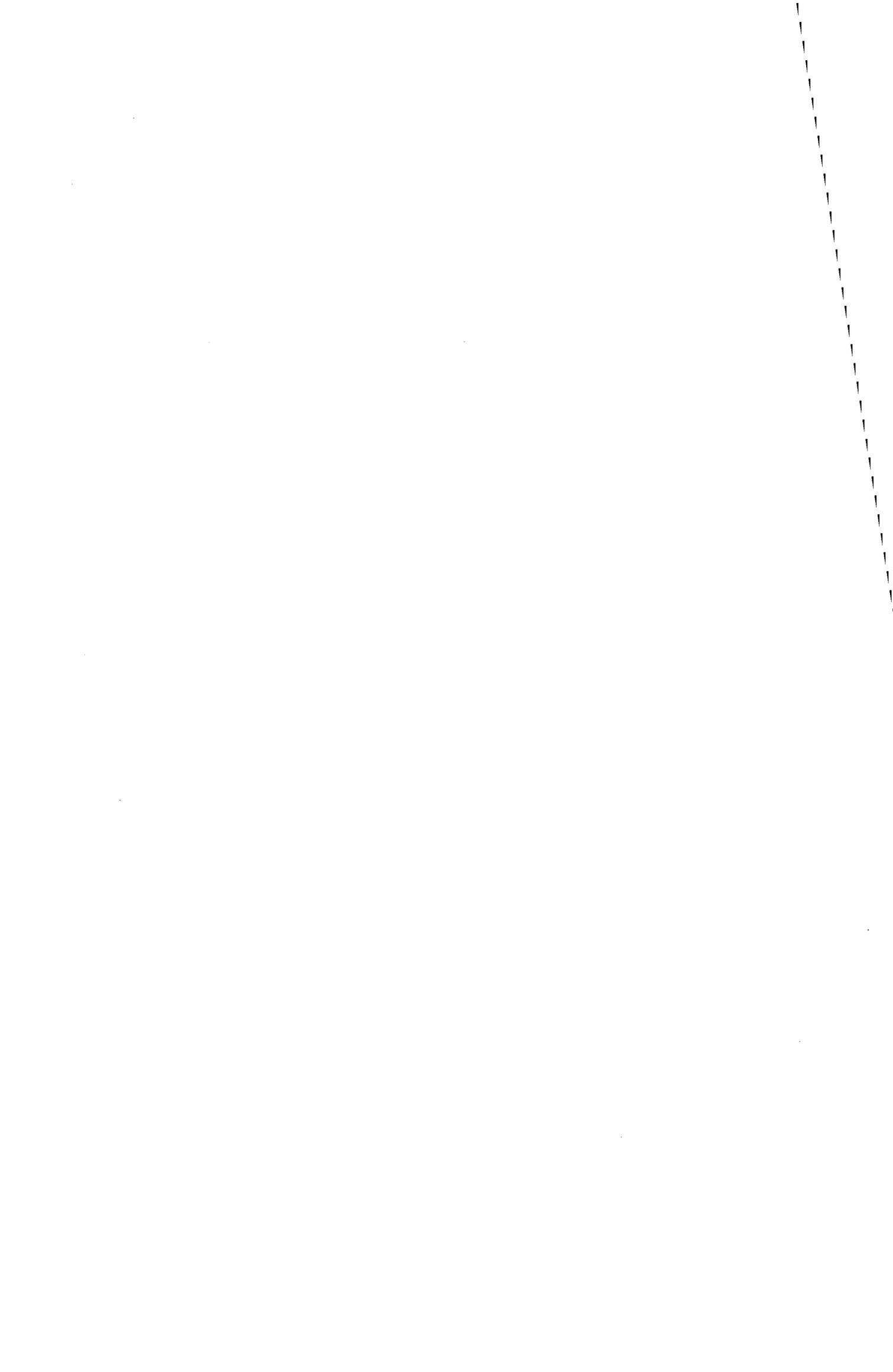
<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, 80–1.

<sup>82</sup> Kanitz (1882), 181, 190–1.

<sup>83</sup> A similar tradition was also recorded by Kanitz. According to this version, current in the later nineteenth century, Old Nikiup had been inhabited at the end of the eighteenth century but had been abandoned by the oppressed villagers, who founded the modern village.

function he combined with his duties as village doctor. The text included more or less accurate references to the early history of Nicopolis and to the Life of Ivan Rilski, as well as plausible information on the history of the village and its institutions during the nineteenth century which seem to have come from a not untrustworthy source.<sup>84</sup> Of particular interest were the following details; one 'Turkish document' records that the village of Nikiup (i.e. Stari Nikiup) contained forty eight Bulgarian households in 1618 and another that there were thirty nine households in 1634/35. The modern village of Nikiup was founded in 1785, but Stari Nikiup continued to be occupied 'for a long time'. Taken at face value, it appears that these facts must have come from contemporary records and that the ancient site was inhabited in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Possibly, the old village was not immediately abandoned after the foundation of its modern successor. It would also appear that the villagers were right to believe that the bicentenary celebrations were not held in the appropriate year: they were four years late.

<sup>84</sup> The mayor believed that the historical information came from the former director of the Turnovo Museum, now a resident of Nikiup. However, this was denied by the man in question. Mr Lazarov could not recall who had provided the historical notes which he incorporated into his speech.



## CHAPTER TWO

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### INTRODUCTION

To use the results of excavation to explain the evolution of the site over more than 1,900 years is a task bedevilled as much by uncertainties as by the patent limitations of the data. The sequence for each of the areas and the interpretations proposed remain tentative. No doubt the site-based chronology will be refined by future research.<sup>1</sup> Problems are compounded when the results are combined, particularly since the process involves extrapolation from a body of evidence which still relates to only a fraction of the total area of 5.74 ha, and consequently provides an insubstantial foundation upon which to reconstruct the history of the site as a whole. Comparison between different periods of occupation is particularly hazardous: not only does the quantity of information excavated vary markedly from one period to another, but there are significant differences in the extent to which the layout of the site can be confidently inferred in different periods (Fig. 1). Only in three areas was it possible to excavate down to the natural ground surface. Comparatively little is known of the early history of the site before the middle of the second century. The late Roman period was by far the most productive in stratified archaeological deposits whereas excavation and geophysical survey together provide the most comprehensive evidence for the layout of the site and its buildings in the early Byzantine period. Slav occupation appears to have been limited but was probably more extensive than the fortuitous discovery of just one *grubenhaus* might suggest. Surface topography and excavation offer a reasonably convincing impression, both of the extent and character of occupation in the post-medieval period. Once they have appeared in print, interpretations, no matter how cautiously expressed, almost invariably acquire an acceptability which can so easily fossilize as dogma. These considerations should not deter the reader from examining the following conclusions, no more than they deterred the author from writing them; but if they encourage caution, then that is no more than the discipline of archaeology deserves, and is a view with which the author would whole-heartily concur. *Caveat lector!*

### THE ECOLOGY OF THE SITE AND ITS HINTERLAND IN ANTIQUITY

Although major changes in the density and character of settlement occurred between the Roman and early Byzantine periods, the natural appearance of the site probably changed little from the second through to the end of the sixth century A.D.<sup>2</sup> Microfauna associated with human occupation (notably the black rat and house mouse) occur in all periods, suggesting more or less continuous settlement throughout the Roman and late Roman periods. The prevalence of rodents (common hamster, Romanian hamster, lesser mole rat, and souslik) indicates grassland, lacking dense vegetation, even during periods of limited occupation, when flash fires probably prevented the regeneration of woodland. At least from the third century, the pasturing of pig, sheep, and cattle no doubt also helped to maintain the open aspect of the plateau, much as it does today. Waterfowl, including

<sup>1</sup> See Notes on the Report, p. xxix–xxxii.

<sup>2</sup> The following is based upon the following specialist studies: the seeds, molluscs, fish, bird, small-mammal, and animal bones. Pollen analysis proved unsuccessful since the remains were poorly preserved.

species of wild geese and duck, suggest that fowling was carried out to supplement the diet of the citizens, and that there must have been open water or marshland close by, probably along the valleys of the Rositsa and Yantra. In the Roman period pheasant was hunted, probably in deciduous mixed woodland, which has now largely disappeared from the surrounding countryside, but which was no doubt more extensive in antiquity, particularly along the valley of the Yantra and its tributaries. The same habitat would have been suitable for red deer and wild boar which were also occasionally hunted. By the second half of the second century, when crop-processing was carried out on the plateau, there were probably fields close to the city, providing a habitat for other game birds, notably partridge and quail which would have been found in pastures or open cultivated land. Sparrowhawk and goshawk, perhaps trained as hunting birds, would have preferred woodland clearances or open spaces with sparse bushes or trees. Brown bear, beaver, and badger were no doubt killed for their skins but are likely to have lived further afield, along the upper reaches of the Rositsa or on the densely wooded slopes of the Stara Planina (*Haemus*).

### THE SITE BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE CITY

With fresh-water springs along the foot of the escarpment, the site, commanding a naturally defensive bluff overlooking the river, would seem to have been an ideal location for pre-Roman settlement. Surprisingly, there was no sign of Thracian occupation. Moreover, the few Epipalaeolithic and late Neolithic/early Bronze Age flints which were found would all seem to have been brought to the site in the Roman and post-medieval periods, probably for use as strike-a-lights.<sup>3</sup> Not only was there apparently no occupation in the Iron Age, there was equally no evidence for a Roman military presence during the second half of the first century A.D. If there were a late Julio-Claudian or Flavian fort, its remains may lie beneath the Roman city to the north.<sup>4</sup>

### THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY c. 110–175 (Fig. 7)

Throughout this period the site lay on the southern periphery of the Roman city, well south of the public buildings erected around the *agora* in the Hadrianic and early Antonine periods.<sup>5</sup> Initial land clearance, including the felling of trees, took place during the early years of the second century, probably soon after the city was established (D). Down to the middle of the second century, there would seem to have been little or no occupation on the plateau. Pits were used for the disposal of domestic and industrial waste, including construction materials, possibly derived from building activity closer to the centre of the city (A, C, D).

However, by c. 150, no doubt after the completion of the *agora* and its surrounding buildings, paved roads were built on the plateau.<sup>6</sup> Two *cardines* were identified (A and B/C), and a third, the *cardo maximus*, apparently continued south along the western side of the site (P).<sup>7</sup> It seems likely that the full width of the street-grid was extended for at least 50 m south of the later defences.<sup>8</sup> The construction of the roads, paved with massive interlocking limestone slabs, covering central drains, represents a major undertaking and one presumably carried out in anticipation of further urban

<sup>3</sup> Whereas flints from Roman and late Roman contexts were Neolithic or early Bronze Age in date, Epipalaeolithic flints were found in post-medieval contexts. This suggests the exploitation of different prehistoric sites in the two periods.

<sup>4</sup> See ch. 1, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 11–12.

<sup>6</sup> See ch. 1, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Here, and in the following discussion, the roads of the city are described as *cardines* and *decumani*. Although the terminology is, strictly speaking, not appropriate to a city and sounds particularly odd when applied to a Greek foundation, it is here employed simply for convenience.

<sup>8</sup> The roads may have extended further: any southern continuation of the surviving *cardo*, running through Areas C and B, would have been masked in the geophysical survey by the third/fourth-century build-up of deposits across the southern half of the site.



Fig. 7 Reconstruction drawing of the site, c. 150.

expansion. A side drain probably served a private dwelling (B), and a ceramic water-pipe, leading south-east onto the plateau, must have supplied water to one or more buildings on the eastern side of the site (C). One building, probably a private house, contained a hypocaust-heated room, possibly part of a private bath-suite (M). Another, on the northern side of the plateau, possessed carefully built, low mortared walls, supporting a superstructure of pisé or mudbrick (A). Nor is it unlikely that there were only private dwellings: it seems that a colonnade flanked the west side of the *cardo maximus* and may have fronted public buildings in this quarter of the city (P). Even so, no systematic programme of building followed the construction of the roads: development was sporadic and piecemeal. No buildings lined the east side of the *cardo* coming south from the *agora* (B, C). Further south, dumping of domestic and industrial waste continued and occupation surfaces in the centre of the plateau probably belonged to out-buildings, serving an industrial or agricultural function (D). A cobbled trackway, leading down the valley to the south-east, was used by wheeled vehicles, perhaps bringing goods up to the city from harbour installations, which must have existed along the northern bank of the Rositsa (E).

Local industries were founded and agricultural exploitation of the city's territory was rapidly established. As would be expected, ironsmithing was carried out from the earliest period of occupation but, remarkably, specialist craftsmen were also engaged in working 'natural steel' as early as the second quarter of the second century.<sup>9</sup> Hand-made vessels, representing a continuing Thracian tradition of pottery-making, appear (though in small quantities only) in the very earliest deposits dated c. 100–130. Even then they were associated with locally produced Roman red-brown coarse wares and red-slipped fine wares; the latter were of high quality, often with appliqué decoration. Before the middle of the century, the red-brown coarse wares had been replaced by Roman grey wares and the native Thracian pottery was no longer supplied to the city. Local production also quickly replaced an initial dependence upon imports: pottery lamps were imported during the early years but were supplanted by local products by the middle of the second century. Fish, notably pike, roach and particularly carp, may well have been caught in the Rositsa or Yantra, although catfish must have come from the Danube. Only oysters, as a luxury import, were certainly brought to Nicopolis from the Black Sea. Possibly, too, mackerel came from the Black Sea, albeit infrequently. Where local supply was either impossible or of inferior quality, imports continued: olive oil for cooking and lighting or perhaps wine arrived in African and Aegean amphorae, and some amphorae from Asia Minor may have reached Nicopolis in this period.<sup>10</sup> Bread wheat and millet were supplied to the city, presumably from its agricultural hinterland. The range of meat available at Nicopolis from the early second century was typical of a fully developed classical economy; sheep/goats and pig are represented in approximately equal proportions, closely followed by cattle. Wild animals, notably deer, were hunted but probably for sport rather than as a regular source of food. During the second century, at least some of the citizens of Nicopolis ate partridge and quail, perhaps because it was particularly appreciated at the time or perhaps because these birds were in more plentiful supply in the second century than they later became. Of particular importance, from the earliest years of the city, was the consumption – and presumably the breeding – of domestic fowl, especially chicken, but also geese.

The rapid development of a full Roman agricultural and industrial economy within the first thirty years of the city's foundation is striking. Local production of coarse wares had completely replaced native wares by c. 130 and the manufacture of high-quality fine wares must have commenced only a few years after the city's foundation. Significantly, the fine ware is closely related to late Hellenistic and Roman pottery produced in Asia Minor. It was from this same region that immigrants, both artisans and prominent citizens who became members of the city's council, came to settle at Nicopolis; of those whose place of origin is known, the majority were from the two cities of Nicomedia and Nicaea. Villa-owners in the city's territory were predominantly from the Greek East, some of whom had clearly settled at Nicopolis after service in the lower Danubian army. The

<sup>9</sup> This is the first evidence that this method of producing steel was used as early as the Roman period.

<sup>10</sup> The climate is too cold in winter for olive cultivation, see ch. 1, p. 4.

architectural planning and decoration of the city's public buildings was also derived from traditions which can be traced to Asia Minor.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, there is no archaeological or epigraphic evidence which suggests that Nicopolis contained a large indigenous population. Nor, as noted above, is there any reason to suppose that there had been a Thracian settlement on the site before the foundation of the city. It would therefore seem likely that the creation of the city of Nicopolis was carried out, not by granting civic status to a native community, but by the settlement of immigrants from the western coast of Asia Minor.

Towards the end of the Antonine period, shortly before the construction of the defences *c.* 175, a house on the northern side of the plateau was destroyed by fire before its roof tiles could be salvaged (A). The Costoboci broke through the frontier and devastated the cities of Lower Moesia and Thrace in 170. The two events were possibly connected. The hypocaust-heated building to the south was abandoned and dismantled before the Severan period (M). It may have been damaged during a destruction of the city which almost certainly occurred during this brief but catastrophic invasion.<sup>12</sup>

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DEFENCES AND SEVERAN EXPANSION, *c.* 175–250

(Fig. 8)

After the defences were built, *c.* 175, the site became an extramural area, bounded to the north by the southern wall of the city and to the south by the steep cliff overlooking the Rositsa. The southern gate, constructed from massive limestone blocks, was probably the work of local Greek craftsmen; the curtain-wall, on the other hand, with its regular succession of internal projections for arcading to support the wall-walk, may have been inspired by contemporary military architecture (Fig. 35). Indeed, it is quite probable that Roman military architects were employed in the design of urban defences erected throughout Moesia Inferior and Thrace under Marcus Aurelius (C).<sup>13</sup> A V-shaped ditch defended the approaches to the curtain-wall (A, C). Paving slabs were taken from the roads, perhaps as building material for reconstructing the defences (A, P), and the only street on the plateau which remained in use was the *cardo* which passed through the south gate (B, C).

The western and eastern gates were both located on roads which lay on the west/east axis which ran through the centre of the *agora*. The south gate was built on the corresponding *cardo* which led north to the *agora*'s southern entrance, that is on an alignment which intersected the west/east axis at the centre of the *agora* (Fig. 3).<sup>14</sup> The location of the gates is curious since there was no access across the *agora* for wheeled traffic. It would have seemed a better choice to have built the south gate astride the *cardo maximus* which ran past the '*propylon*' (propyleion), the main entrance to the *agora*, and so allow traffic to continue into the northern part of the city. In any case, axial symmetry could not be applied in the location of the north gate because, north of the *agora*, the existence of double-sized *insulae* meant that there was no *cardo* which corresponded to the north/south axis chosen for the south gate. Even so, instead of building the north gate one *insula* to the west on the *cardo maximus*, it was located one *insula* to the east and at the end of the *cardo* which continued south to skirt the east side of the *agora* – a road which, given its lesser width, was clearly of lesser importance than the *cardo maximus*. It is tempting to suppose that there was a reason, apart from a desire for symmetry, which determined the location of the gates, and, in particular, the decision not to build them at either end of the *cardo maximus*. Perhaps the position of the north gate was selected because it was from this *cardo* that a link-road set out to meet the main west/east highway which passed to the north of the city. It is certainly evident that, at least from the time of the construction

<sup>11</sup> See ch. 1, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> For the probability that Nicopolis was sacked *c.* 170, see ch. 1, pp. 11–12.

<sup>13</sup> On the date and character of the fortifications, see ch. 1, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> For the identification of the *cardo maximus* and *decumanus maximus*, see ch. 1, p. 11 and ch. 11, p. 210 note 3.

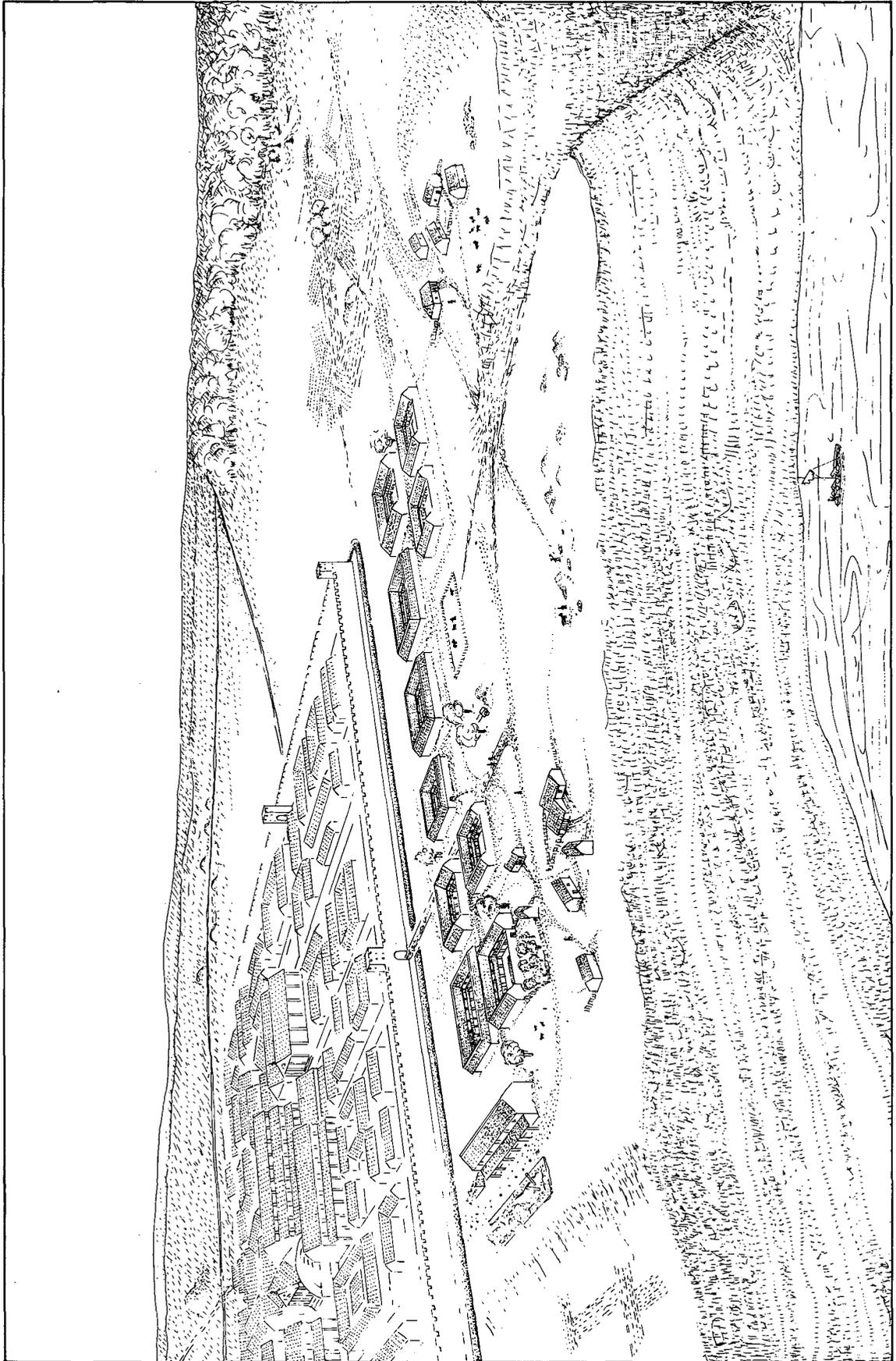


Fig. 8 Reconstruction drawing of the site, c. 200.

of the fortifications, the *cardo maximus* was not used as a main thoroughfare for wheeled vehicles coming into Nicopolis. It may be true that this was also the case before the fortifications were built. Perhaps from the foundation of the city, it was considered more appropriate to divert traffic away from the public buildings, which lay west of the *agora*, reserving the civic centre for pedestrians.

In the Severan period, there was renewed activity in the extramural area. A substantial town-house was constructed well south of the defences in the early third century (M). Its fine internal portico with columns and its rooms decorated with frescoes and stucco cornice-mouldings were presumably paid for by a wealthy owner who had no qualms about constructing his residence outside the protection of the fortifications. It would be surprising if this was the only extramural house: the sharp increase in slope, where the remains of the demolished house contributed to a build up of occupation, continues west and east across the full width of the site and may well indicate the location of other *villae suburbanae*, constructed in this same period.<sup>15</sup> However, the modern ground-level is conspicuously lower on the northern side of the site, and there would seem to have been very little sign of occupation for a distance of *c.* 50 m south of the city wall. Here, no buildings existed (B, N), probably because none were permitted on this strip of land, within bow-shot of the defences, which was maintained as a 'free-fire' zone. Further south there were no such restrictions: agricultural activity and dumping of waste continued and probably buildings, serving an agricultural function, were in use at this time (D, P).

The agricultural economy appears to have recovered quickly after the barbarian invasion of 170, whatever its immediate consequences for the city and its territory may have been. A greater variety of crops is attested than before, including millet, bread wheat, barley, rye, lentil, bitter vetch, various pulse species, grape, blackberry, and peas. That the primary stages of crop-processing were carried out on the site may well mean that land in the immediate vicinity of the city was now being cultivated. Stocks of fish from the Rositsa and Yantra may have proved adequate: barbel, roach, pike, and trout were caught, although the supply was perhaps supplemented by fish-farming (carp) and perhaps also by catfish from the Danube. However, the frequency with which catfish spines were found suggests that it may have been the spines, rather than the fish, which were brought to the city, although for what purpose remains uncertain. As for livestock, there was a marked increase in the importance of pig, followed by sheep/goat, and a relative decline in cattle, perhaps towards the end of this period. The explanation could be that, as the threat from barbarian raids increased, there was a change in favour of keeping animals which could be more easily brought within the city's defences. Very little samian from the East Gaulish kilns reached Nicopolis, no doubt because local pottery was of such quality that there was little demand for imported Western fine wares. The fact that the economy was, generally speaking, self-sufficient may explain why so few coins minted in other cities, particularly from those beyond the *Haemus*, reached Nicopolis.<sup>16</sup> Only in the case of amphorae is there some reason to suspect a growth of imports from Africa and the Aegean, bringing olive oil, possibly fish sauce, or wine to the city.

Economically, the city would seem to have imported few if any basic necessities, and there is good reason to believe that Nicopolis enjoyed its greatest period of prosperity in the late second and early third centuries A.D. Moreover, the construction of the *villa suburbana* denotes a renewed confidence in the security of the frontier; it may also perhaps reflect an increase in the urban population and the investment of wealth in private building, comparable with the lavish public expenditure within the city at this time.<sup>17</sup> It is more likely to have been during this period than any other that peacocks were imported, an example of the ostentatious display of wealth that could be afforded by at least the leading citizens of Nicopolis.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 6–7.

<sup>16</sup> See ch. 17, p. 309 and Fig. 111.

<sup>17</sup> See ch. 1, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> The evidence for peacocks at Nicopolis came from an early sixth-century context but is almost certainly residual.

**THE ROMAN CITY: DESTRUCTION AND ABANDONMENT OF THE EXTRAMURAL  
AREA, c. 250–300**

Towards the middle of the third century, as the Danubian frontier proved increasingly ineffective in resisting Gothic raids and subsequent invasions, there was an understandable concern to improve the city's defences.<sup>19</sup> The road slabs outside the gate were removed and the defensive ditch was continued across the front of the gate-chamber; no longer used as an entrance into the city, it was probably blocked (C). Further south, leaving the large central slabs *in situ*, the smaller, portable road slabs were removed, perhaps for use in the reconstruction of the walls (B, C). The extramural house was stripped of its furnishings, and probably of its floor paving as well, before it was converted to agricultural use and probably used for blacksmithing (M). Subsequently, the house caught fire and its tiled roof collapsed; soon afterwards the walls were systematically demolished and the site levelled. On the west side of the plateau, at least one other building burnt down, and it may have been at this time that the colonnade, flanking the *cardo maximus*, collapsed (P). An accidental fire could account for this destruction, but since Nicopolis was besieged by Cniva in 250 and a major battle between the Goths and the imperial army took place in the vicinity, it is not improbable that these events explain the destruction of extramural buildings.<sup>20</sup> Barbarians were not necessarily to blame, but possibly the citizens themselves were responsible, their action perhaps a precautionary measure to deny cover to the enemy.

Finds of armour hint at a military presence (B, P). The road was cut by a west/east ditch, impressive enough to have served a defensive function (B), and another, this time running north/south, was identified near the centre of the site (D). Neither ditch could have improved the city's own defences. They may have been part of one or more military encampments, established at Nicopolis to protect the inhabitants and secure a strategic communications centre behind the Danubian frontier.<sup>21</sup>

During the remainder of the third century, conditions were apparently too insecure to encourage a reoccupation of the extramural area. The west/east ditch was used for the disposal of domestic waste and gradually silted up (B). The north/south ditch, perhaps following the burning then demolition of buildings to the west of it, was backfilled (D). Rubbish pits were dug on the site of the demolished house (M). Apparently there were also no buildings on the western and eastern sides of the site where dumping of domestic and agricultural waste took place at this time (P, F).

**THE LATE ROMAN CITY, c. 300–450 (Fig. 9)**

During the fourth century, there was more activity across the plateau than ever before, although the character of the settlement was very different from the extramural development which had occurred in the Antonine and Severan periods. In front of the gate, the defensive ditch was backfilled, restoring communication between the city and the extramural area. Against the southern portal of the gate a rectangular building probably served as a guard-chamber where vehicles and people seeking admission to the city could be checked (Fig. 38). Although the road coming south from the city was reinstated, no effort was made to restore its fine limestone paving: instead the west/east ditch was backfilled and a metalled surface of broken architectural fragments and cobbles was laid down either side of the central road slabs which had remained *in situ* (B). This surface kept subsiding into underlying pits and the west/east ditch: it required frequent repair, as did the causeway which, throughout the fourth century, slumped down into the eastern terminal of the

<sup>19</sup> See ch. 1, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 13–14.

<sup>21</sup> It would not be surprising if military garrisons were assigned to the task of protecting cities towards the middle of the third century. A *burgus* was constructed at Montana (Mihailovgrad) in 256 'propter tutelam castrensiū et civium Montanensium' (*CIL* III.12376). On the importance of Nicopolis as a communications centre, see ch. 1, pp. 8–9.

defensive ditch and had to be cleaned repeatedly (C). South of the gate, the cobbles continued east well beyond the roadway and would seem to have formed part of a more extensive surface. The high rate of coin-loss suggests that the area may well have been used as an extramural market (B). It also appears to have served other purposes, including metal-working (recycling of lead and copper alloy), probably glass-working, and the manufacture of bone implements. The area may have served as a convenient place for slaughtering cattle, brought to the site 'on the hoof'. However, there were no buildings and there was no sign that rubbish was dumped here, probably because both were prohibited so close to the defences, as they appear to have been in the Severan period.

To the south, across the plateau, there was a marked increase in activity. Domestic rubbish was still dumped in pits on the site of the house demolished in the third century (M). On the eastern side of the plateau, rubbish was tipped out across the land surface; this site may have been used for unpacking goods, perhaps including barrels of oysters, transported to the city by river (K). The central and southern parts of the site were reoccupied. A large building with a tiled roof and with a store-room or workshop to the rear was used both for crop-processing and for the manufacture of bone objects (D); another more probably served an agricultural function (K). A cobbled road, flanked by buildings, ran east/west across the site (F). No doubt the cobbled trackway leading down to the river was still in use (E). It may have continued north-west to join the road emerging from the south gate, where a high resistance anomaly suggests that a side-road forked left, heading towards the valley (Fig. 10,7). Only on the west side of the plateau is there reason to suspect retrenchment: the southern continuation of the *cardo maximus* was not repaired and the area, if it was used at all, was given over to cultivation (P). Even so, it seems likely that there existed an extensive extramural settlement which may explain the marked increase in the number of black rats in this period.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike other cities on the lower Danube, no substantial improvement was made to the defences of the Roman city in the fourth century, and certainly none to compare with the extraordinary fortifications provided for such cities as Abritus or Tropaeum Traiani (C).<sup>23</sup> In itself, this need not imply any greater decline in civic organization or the availability of funds than elsewhere in the region, where there is little to suggest that any urban revival took place at this time, but it probably does reflect a lack of imperial interest; Nicopolis was not a military or administrative centre of any importance in the late Roman period.<sup>24</sup> Even so, as with most cities in the Empire, and in the Balkans in particular, the custom of erecting inscriptions declined from the middle of the third century. Of only two late Roman stone inscriptions from Nicopolis, one came from a funerary monument of some importance, probably erected by a wealthy family, but was nevertheless crudely cut.<sup>25</sup> This surely means that there was no longer the demand for the services of stone-cutters, skilled in their craft, who had certainly been employed at Nicopolis as late as the third quarter of the third century.

Copper-working and ironsmithing were practised, perhaps on a larger scale than before, and 'natural steel' was probably still being worked. The pottery centres in the city's territory were abandoned by the fourth century and production may have been transferred to a new kiln site outside the city's north gate. Grey wares continued to be made, although the manufacture of local red-slipped wares declined, especially from the middle of the fourth century; nor was there any corresponding increase in imports of North African fine ware, little of which reached Nicopolis. North African and probably Aegean amphorae were still imported, but the demand seems to have decreased, particularly during the second half of the fourth and the first half of the fifth century. Despite these apparent signs of economic recession, there is no evidence that there was any change in the range of crops being grown, neither in the fourth nor during the first half of the fifth century;

<sup>22</sup> The black rat (*rattus rattus*) appeared in Roman and early Byzantine levels but was by far the most common in the late Roman period.

<sup>23</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 14–15.

<sup>24</sup> On the role of cities as military and administrative centres in the fourth century, see Poulter (1992b), 117–23.

<sup>25</sup> See ch. 18, No. 1, pp. 315–16. The other late Roman inscription commemorated the repair or construction of a building, perhaps carried out by a provincial governor, see ch. 1, p. 15.

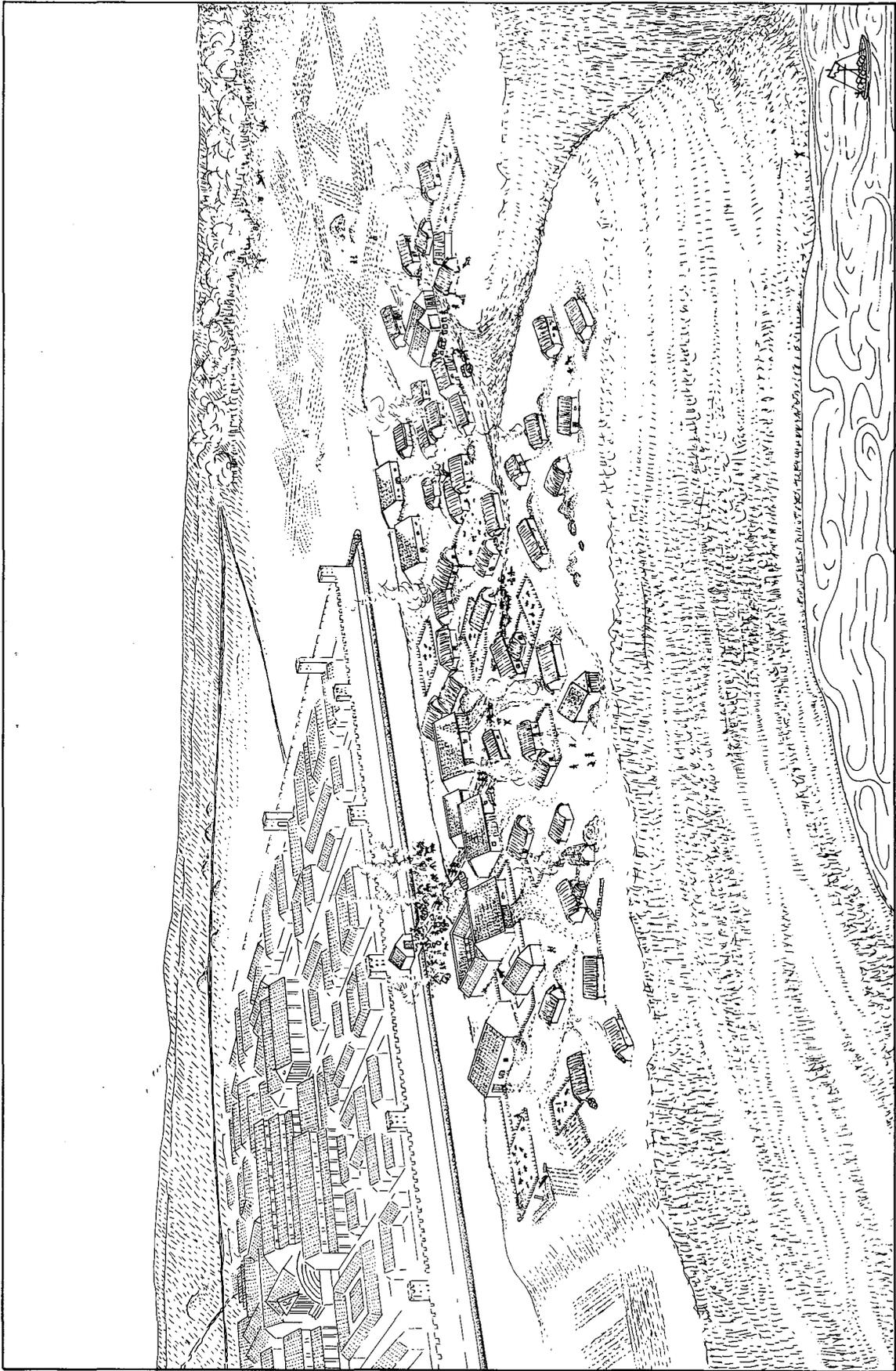


Fig. 9 Reconstruction drawing of the site, c. 350.

bread wheat, barley, rye, millet, pulses, grape, and blackberry were all reaching the city in the late Roman period. Poultry, sheep or goats as well as pigs were kept and probably reared in the city or in the extramural area. Pork, followed by mutton, continued to be more important than beef. This may be significant because cattle continued to be relatively more important than other livestock in the late Roman legionary base of Novae and in the fort of Iatrus: perhaps the inhabitants of Nicopolis had different tastes, or perhaps the amount of cattle levied in kind for the military (*annona militaris*) reduced the supply. The citizens had become less discriminating in their choice of fish: although carp and catfish were still the dominant species, and trout was still an item on the menu, the inhabitants would seem not to have objected to eating chub, pike, bleak, and asp. Of note by the first half of the fifth century is the presence of camel, presumably not as an item on the menu, but for use as a draft animal.

The evidence for occupation across the plateau during the fourth century represents a curious amalgam of apparent contradictions: a gradual decline in the economy but a marked increase in the extramural population, the same range of crops as before and no obvious sign that agricultural production had declined, but buildings were modest structures, lacking the mortared walls of the Antonine houses. Cattle, unusually for a city, appear to have been of lesser importance than other kinds of livestock and the inhabitants, whether from choice or necessity, were less fussy about the kinds of local fish they ate. Even so, some citizens could still afford to import oysters from the Black Sea and luxury glassware (*diatreta*) from the Rhineland (P, R).

That agricultural productivity shows no signs of a decline, as late as the early fifth century, is particularly surprising. All the excavated villas around Nicopolis seem to have been abandoned during the third century. The sample is still small and it would be unreasonable to presume that there were no late Roman villas in the city's territory but it does seem probable that there had been at least a marked decline in the number of villa estates.<sup>26</sup> If, as seems likely, the villas had played an important role in the exploitation of the city's agricultural territory, it might be expected that the disruption caused by the Gothic invasions and the failure of the villa-economy to revive in the fourth century would have adversely affected the city, reducing its ability to maintain agricultural production in this period.<sup>27</sup> It is clearly impossible to be sure that there had not been a reduction in the quantity of food available, but the expansion of the extramural settlement and the range of crops still brought to Nicopolis do not suggest that agricultural supplies were proving more difficult to obtain. A partial explanation may be that the land in the immediate vicinity of the city was more intensively exploited: primary crop-processing was certainly an important activity across the extramural area, and this suggests that grain and vegetables were grown close by. But this was already the case by the late second century and it is improbable that intensive crop cultivation immediately outside the city walls could have compensated for any decline in production in the countryside. However, elsewhere in the region there were fourth-century villas, fewer in number, but conspicuously larger than the modest farms of the second to early third centuries. Some had substantial and multiple granaries. This points to the existence of large estates and large-scale grain production.<sup>28</sup> It may be hazarded that the third-century invasions led to the abandonment of many of the smaller villas, perhaps also to a dramatic fall in the value of land, which allowed a few villa-owners to amass substantial land-holdings. If this was what happened, it might explain the apparent absence of villas around Nicopolis in this period and at the same time account for a continued high level of agricultural production, providing a surplus for sale to the inhabitants of Nicopolis and its extramural area. That wealth – and probably land – was concentrated in the hands of a relatively small number of families in the late Roman period gains some support from the layout of the city in this period. The thorough robbing of the mortared foundations of buildings within the city, probably carried out as late as the nineteenth century, provides a remarkably complete ground-plan of

<sup>26</sup> Poulter (1983), 92–4.

<sup>27</sup> This is not to deny that rural settlements might have profited by exporting goods to Nicopolis. The *emporion*, located on navigable rivers, may well have served both as market centres and trans-shipment points for produce brought to the city and supplied from rural settlements. This remains a factor which requires research before it can be added to the equation.

<sup>28</sup> Poulter (1983), 89.

Nicopolis as it must have appeared in the fourth to early fifth century (Fig. 3).<sup>29</sup> Apart from public buildings (which constituted some 26 per cent of the urban area), at least 35 per cent of the interior was occupied by substantial town-houses, each taking up a full *insula* or, on the southern side of the city, the equivalent of two average *insulae*.<sup>30</sup> The plans of the houses closely resemble those of villas in the countryside, particularly in that they appear to have had annexes, perhaps outbuildings, which could have served an agricultural function.<sup>31</sup> Possibly, these houses were not simply urban residences but farms, from which the owners exploited the land outside the city. What is striking is the absence of any humbler dwellings and little sign of shops or workshops. Within the fortifications it seems that there were no more than thirty or so households, all of which occupied substantial houses.

The apparently low density of housing within the city and the apparent wealth of its inhabitants is in marked contrast to the extramural area where settlement would seem to have been extensive, although here the occupants clearly did not have the resources available to the families living within the defences: all the buildings had low walls of stone, bonded with earth, supporting mud-walls. Even a house which, in size, comes close to the dimensions of the intramural houses, and which boasted at least a tiled roof, was built from stone and earth (D). Possibly the extramural settlement was occupied by citizens of humbler status, displaced from within the city by those few wealthy citizens who could afford to build their own houses in stone and brick. However, there is some reason to suspect that not all the inhabitants of the site were of native origin. Towards the end of the fourth century a new, distinctive grey ware was introduced. Some of the vessels in this fabric were traditional forms but others have no counterpart in local pottery but are most closely paralleled by pottery used by the Sîntana de Mureş / Tcherneakhov Culture, north of the Danube. If this so-called 'foederati ware' represents the arrival of people from beyond the frontier, it might be connected with the settlement of the Goths.<sup>32</sup> Although, in 347/8, the Gothic followers of Ulfila were not granted land in the immediate vicinity of Nicopolis, but further south towards the foothills of the Stara Planina, by the late fourth century Goths were apparently living close to the city. Probably, they were amongst those who had crossed into Roman territory during the Gothic Wars under Valens and were permitted to remain by Theodosius.<sup>33</sup> If the extramural settlement did contain or was largely populated by Gothic settlers, it is likely that their movements were restricted and controlled. This might explain why a new guard-chamber was added to the outside of the gate (C): it may have been required to supervise closely those seeking admission within the defences (Fig. 38). Perhaps trade with the Goths was limited to the extramural area and these potentially dangerous new arrivals were discouraged or prevented from using the *agora*. This could account for the development of the market outside the city's south gate (B, C).

It is quite possible that Nicopolis was not initially affected by the rebellion of the Goths under Valens, despite the temporary presence of a Gothic garrison in the vicinity in 378.<sup>34</sup> However, it would be surprising if the city, and in particular its extramural settlement, remained immune from the consequences of the Battle of Adrianople. That the citizens of Nicopolis determined to take

<sup>29</sup> Since the city was destroyed c. 447, the plan probably largely reflects the layout of the city during its final period of occupation, see below, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Note, some small two-roomed blocks may well have been workshops or modest accommodation but they comprise only c. 4 per cent of the urban area. See further Poulter (1992a), 75–6.

<sup>31</sup> The geophysical survey of the houses in the south-eastern corner of the city demonstrated that the long building attached to the eastern side of one of the houses did not have a paved floor unlike the rooms in the main block; this was probably because it served as an out-building, see ch. 16, p. 267.

<sup>32</sup> It is notable that all the metal-work in use in this period is Roman, but it does seem to be true that for 'Gothic' settlements north of the Danube, Roman pottery, metal-work, glass, and amphorae were imported in bulk from the Roman Empire: there are very few finds which can be convincingly described as being of Germanic or Gothic origin: M. Comşa, 'Zur Romanisierung der Gebiete nördlich der Donau im 4 Jh. u.z.', *Dacia* n.s. 9 (1965), 283–98; idem, 'Dacia în epoca lui Constantin cel Mare și a urmașilor săi', *Pontica* 10 (1977), 215–28; Gh. Diaconu, 'Nordnordöstliche Elemente in der Tschernjachow-Sîntana de Mureş-Kultur', *Dacia* n.s. 9 (1965), 299–306.

<sup>33</sup> See ch. 1, p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 15–16.

action against the Goths, thereby incurring the wrath of Theodosius I, suggests that relations with the Gothic settlers remained at best strained.<sup>35</sup> For the most part, the archaeological evidence is ambiguous. Coin-loss on the cobbled road south of the gate continued with no sign of interruption into the fifth century (B, C). On the eastern side of the plateau, coin-loss on the west/east trackway may not have continued beyond the reign of Valens but pottery from its surface suggests that the area remained in use into the fifth century (F). Only in the centre of the site was there a clear break in occupation at about this time: a large building was destroyed by fire and its tiled roof collapsed. Thereafter, the area was not reoccupied but the dumping of domestic waste continued from the late fourth century and into the fifth (D). There may have been a cemetery on the eastern side of the plateau by the early fifth century (S). However, even after 400, there was continued agricultural activity, if not occupation, on the south-eastern side of the site (K). If the extramural settlement had declined, or even disappeared, by the early fifth century, this would not be surprising, given the renewed insecurity on the lower Danube at this time.

### Preparations to resist attack, c. 400–450

During the first half of the fifth century, improvements were made to the city's defences. The V-shaped defensive ditch was filled in and replaced by a wider ditch, clearly a more substantial obstacle than its predecessor. This new ditch was dug further out from the wall, probably to widen the berm so as to make room for a secondary outwork in front of the curtain-wall (A). Running immediately behind the defensive ditch, this *proteichisma*, built of mudbrick, would have provided cover for defenders on the berm and perhaps for *ballistae* which could have been deployed behind it, shooting from ground-level straight out across the ditch (Fig. 39).<sup>36</sup> Finds of armour suggest that the city may have had a garrison (P).<sup>37</sup> It was probably at this time that the guard-chamber, which did nothing to improve the defence of the gate, was demolished, allowing defenders, coming out of the gate, direct access onto the berm which was cobbled, presumably because it had become an integral part of the defences (C).

Certainly, the improvements to the defences suggest a renewed concern that the city might be attacked. The *proteichisma* may have been intended also as a countermeasure against siege-machines, since it was known that mudbrick was capable of withstanding the blows of a battering-ram and would thus protect the main city wall from being breached.<sup>38</sup> That this defensive measure was only judged necessary in this period may be a consequence of the invasion of the Huns in 441: unlike the Goths, who proved unable to capture cities by assault in the late fourth century, the Huns were the first barbarian invaders capable of prosecuting siege-warfare.

<sup>35</sup> See ch. 1, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> It was recommended, in the Hellenistic period, to mount arrow-shooting *ballistae* behind the *proteichisma*: Philon, *Par.* 82 (32) in H. A. Diels and E. Schramm, 'Herons Belopoiika', *Abh. Berlin. Akad.* 16 (1918), 25. This overcame the problem of 'dead ground' close to the defences, not covered by machines, mounted in towers or on the curtain, which could shoot at angles of depression only slightly, if at all, below the horizontal. This disposition was used to good effect against Roman forces during the siege of Syracuse in 213/211 B.C.: E. W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery, Historical Development* (Oxford, 1969), 109, 117–21; Lawrence (1979), 277–8. When *proteichismata* were again employed in the Eastern Empire, during the fifth century A.D., it would not be surprising if the Hellenistic tactic was again used, particularly where, as here at Nicopolis, few external towers were provided to give covering fire along the outer face of the curtain. Although no other outworks of mudbrick have been identified for this period, *proteichismata*, built of stone and dating to the fifth or sixth centuries A.D., have been found at several cities on the lower Danube: along the northern side of the defences at Hisar (K. Madzharov, 'Severnata porta na Hisarskata krepost', *Arheologiya* 16/1 (1974), 57–66; idem (1993), 54–8); at Beroe/Augusta Traiana (Nikolov (1987), 99); at Voivoda, probably only on one side of the defences (At. Milchev and St. Damyanov, 'Arheologicheski Razkopki na kusnoantichnata krepost pri s. Voivoda, Shoumenski okrug prez 1970 g.', *Razkopki i Proouchvaniya* (Sofia, 1984), 43–83. At Abritus, a secondary wall probably functioned as a partial outwork: Ivanov (1980b), 98. See also, Ovcharov (1982), 52–7.

<sup>37</sup> See also, ch. 1, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> See Lawrence (1979), 212–13, 276–88.

### The destruction of the late Roman city c. 447 and the subsequent period of dereliction

The mudbrick *proteichisma* was destroyed by fire; its remains collapsed into the defensive ditch (A). Charcoal, probably the remains of burnt timbers from the upper storeys, covered the floor of the gate-chamber (C). Within the city, the same destruction level, represented by a thick deposit of burnt mudbrick and collapsed stone walls, extended north from the curtain-wall and has been identified in the *agora*-complex, in the baths, and on the western side of the city.<sup>39</sup> An accidental fire might account for this destruction but could not explain how the fire circumvented the city wall to destroy the *proteichisma* on the berm. Nor was there any subsequent attempt to restore the defences: burnt debris was left in the ditch (A). No vehicle ever again passed through the gate-chamber; the wheel-ruts remained filled with charcoal (C). This amounts to compelling evidence that the city had been sacked and destroyed. Quite probably, there was resistance: a spear-head was found in the ditch beneath the collapsed remains of the *proteichisma* (A), arrow-heads and a bolt-head came from the cobbled roadway outside the gate (C). The sequence of destruction, followed by abandonment, was not confined to the city and its defences: the same was true of buildings in the extramural area (F).

The date of the destruction must have been later than the first decade of the fifth century, when the cobbled surface south of the gate was still in use (B, C). The make-up for the early Byzantine rectangular tower contained burnt debris, probably brought in from the late Roman city, and provides a *terminus post quem* of 430 for the catastrophe (P).<sup>40</sup> That occupation came to a violent end towards the middle of the fifth century is no surprise. Even though Moesia II may have escaped devastation after Attila's first invasion of the Eastern Empire, the Huns defeated a Roman army on the banks of the *Utus* in 447, then advanced east to capture and probably sack the provincial capital, Marcianopolis, following a route which would have brought them close to, or even right past, Nicopolis (Fig. 6).<sup>41</sup> At a time when large and probably well-garrisoned cities (such as Marcianopolis, Philippopolis, and Serdica) were destroyed by the Huns, it is improbable that Nicopolis was spared.<sup>42</sup>

Dereliction followed the fire; as silt accumulated in the bottom of the ditch, bushes or small trees took root on its sides (A). South of the city, across the plateau, the remains of burnt mud-walls dissolved and silts covered the west/east roadway (F). Soil built up over the cobbled surface outside the gate (C). Probably it was during this period that another building was abandoned (K). Even so, the site was not totally deserted: a fireplace was built against the inside of the gate, perhaps because the gate-chamber served as a temporary shelter or because the gate was converted into make-shift accommodation. If the city was destroyed in 447, the site remained neglected for at least a couple of years: a coin of Marcian (450/457) was found in the soil which had accumulated over the roadway in front of the gate (C). It is remarkable that no attempt was made to repair the fortifications. A possible explanation is provided by the terms of the agreement between Attila and Theodosius II in 448, under which the king of the Huns demanded that the Romans should cease cultivation of the soil and surrender a broad tract of territory from Singidunum (Belgrade) in the west to Novae (Svishtov) in the east, and for a distance of five

<sup>39</sup> Slokoska (1991), 302. See also below, note 91.

<sup>40</sup> Amongst the latest issues were a coin of Galla Placidia (425/430) and another of Theodosius II (430–440), which provide a *terminus post quem* of 430, possibly 435, see ch. 17 (Cat. No. 614).

<sup>41</sup> *Chron. Pasch.* s.a. 447; see also, *Marcell. Com.* s.a. 447; Jordanes, *Rom.* 331; Stein (1959), 291–2. Given the uncertain chronology and fragmentary state of our primary source, Priscus, it is just possible that Nicopolis did fall to the Huns a few years earlier, soon after Attila crossed the Danube. A detachment of Huns, perhaps not a large force, reached Asamus on the Danube, north-west of Nicopolis, perhaps in 442: Priscus, *Frag.* 9.3 (Blockley); Thompson (1948), 85–6. However, an attack on Nicopolis at this time would seem improbable: the Huns proved singularly unsuccessful in their encounter with the inhabitants of Asamus, a small Roman fort. This eastern advance was probably an exploratory raid, not a major invasion.

<sup>42</sup> For the capture of cities, cf. Thompson (1948), 92–4.

days' journey south of the Danube.<sup>43</sup> If the terms were strictly applied, Nicopolis, 50 km south of the Danube, would have been left to the Huns.<sup>44</sup>

### THE EARLY BYZANTINE CITY c. 450–600 (Plate I)

#### The reoccupation of the site

Dating the reoccupation of the site and the construction of the early Byzantine defences is no easy task. Although the city and its defences were left derelict for long enough to allow vegetation to grow in the ditch and for silts to accumulate over the roads, this evidence is equally compatible with a period of abandonment which lasted a couple of years or one which extended over several decades.<sup>45</sup> Not until the end of the fifth century and the reign of Anastasius is there firm evidence for reconstruction on the Black Sea coast and on the Danubian frontier which represents indisputable proof that the region was again under Byzantine control.<sup>46</sup> Even so, it is not likely that the reoccupation was delayed for as much as half a century.

The strongest evidence for an early reoccupation of Nicopolis is the fact that the local fabrics and vessel forms in use during the first period of early Byzantine occupation, immediately after the construction of the new defences, represent a continuation of pottery traditions from the first half of the fifth century. If a significant interval had elapsed between the destruction of the late Roman city and the early Byzantine reoccupation, it would be reasonable to suppose that a new industry would have had to be established and that there would have been recognizable differences between assemblages of the two periods. Because no such differences can be observed, it is probable that manufacture was not interrupted for more than a few years, a short enough interval to allow workshops which had supplied the late Roman city to resume production.

There is also archaeological evidence which indicates that other sites in the region were occupied during the second half of the fifth century. Abritus, which, like Nicopolis, was probably sacked by the Huns, had a bishop in 458, and was reoccupied before the reign of Anastasius.<sup>47</sup> The large fortification at Voivoda (c. 7 ha), 125 km east of Nicopolis, built during the fourth century, was certainly in use during the last quarter of the fifth, only to suffer destruction at a date apparently before the accession of Anastasius (Fig. 6).<sup>48</sup>

Another valuable piece of information also suggests that the site was not abandoned for long: Marcellus, Bishop of Nicopolis, signed the encyclical letter issued by the emperor Leo in 458.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Priscus, *Frag.* 11.1 (Blockley); Stein (1959), 292–3; Thompson (1948), 97–8. Since Priscus was himself involved in the negotiations with Attila, he must have been fully acquainted with the terms of this agreement and is therefore an unusually reliable source.

<sup>44</sup> It may be doubted whether this provisional agreement, even if fully implemented, had any effect upon the local population. However, its primary objective must have been to force an evacuation of the frontier forts along the right bank of the Danube and it seems certain that any reconstruction of fortifications within the prescribed region would have been interpreted by Attila as a breach of the treaty. The evidence for some continued occupation after the destruction is not at all surprising, and is comparable with the first-hand description of Naissus (Niš). This city had been sacked by the Huns and its walls were not immediately restored, presumably because the terms of the treaty were respected by the Romans: Priscus 11.2 (Blockley).

<sup>45</sup> On the rapid accumulation of silts, see ch. 1, p. 4 and Area F, p. 152.

<sup>46</sup> See ch. 1, p. 17.

<sup>47</sup> A hoard of 835 gold coins, dating from Theodosius II to Leontius (484–8) was found within the fortifications: Ivanov (1980b), 75; T. Ivanov and St. Stoyanov, *Abritus* (Razgrad, 1985), 53–5. Admittedly, such a large hoard of pre-Anastasian gold may not necessarily prove early Byzantine occupation: it could have been tribute paid to the Goths.

<sup>48</sup> A hoard of ninety two bronze coins, including issues of Theodosius II, Marcian, and Leo, came from the guard-chamber attached to the outer defences (*proteichisma*) flanking the main gate. This provides a *terminus post quem* of 475 for the subsequent destruction: At. Milchev and St. Damyanov, 'Arheologicheski razkopki na kusnoantichnata krepost pri s. Voivoda, Shoumenskiya okrug,' *IAI* 33 (1972), 263–77.

<sup>49</sup> See ch. 1, p. 17.

True, Canon 28 of the encyclical letter refers to parts of the Thracian diocese which were occupied by barbarians and it could be argued that Marcellus was not resident in the city at the time, but living in exile, were it not that the bishop of Tomis in Scythia and the bishops of Marcianopolis, Odessus, Durostorum, Novae, Appiaria, and Abritus in Moesia II all appended their signatures to the document. This remarkably complete list is difficult to explain unless the ecclesiastical organization in both these two provinces was operating normally. If true, it seems reasonable to presume that the bishops, including Marcellus at Nicopolis, were resident in their respective cities. This is in notable contrast to Illyricum where no bishops signed the encyclical letter. Indeed, no letters were sent in 457 to any bishops in either Moesia I or Dacia Ripensis, presumably because ecclesiastical authority had not been restored in either of these two provinces.<sup>50</sup> It would therefore seem that imperial control over Illyricum was, at best, fragile, but that at least an appearance of normality had been restored in the Thracian diocese. That Byzantine authority over Dacia Ripensis in the 450s was conspicuously precarious, is also supported by Jordanes' observation that, after the death of Attila (in 453), Oescus, Utus, and Almus, all forts in that province, remained under the control of the Huns (Fig. 6).<sup>51</sup> It seems fair to conclude that, although Moesia II was devastated in 447, and probably abandoned to the Huns in 448, the province was effectively again under Roman control by 457. Further precision can be suggested; Roman authority in the region is unlikely to have been reimposed before 451.<sup>52</sup> It follows that a revival of Roman fortunes in north-eastern Thrace can be ascribed, with reasonable probability, to the period between 451 and 457. When this occurred, Marcianopolis, the provincial capital, which had certainly been sacked by the Huns in 447, was no doubt the first city to be reoccupied and have its fortifications restored. However, at Nicopolis it is certain that the late Roman defences were never repaired and it is most unlikely that a bishop would have put his faith entirely in the hands of God and returned to an undefended site. It seems reasonable to conclude that the early Byzantine walls were built before 457. This programme of construction represented a major undertaking, one which would only have been possible if imperial rule over the province of Moesia II was firmly established.

Fortunately, it is not difficult to identify a political and military context which might account for the reoccupation of Nicopolis and the erection of its new defences. There is reason to suppose that the Eastern Empire did achieve significant successes on the lower Danube in this period. Dire though the situation was in 447, an opportunity for restoring Roman authority occurred, not as a result of any military success won by Theodosius II, but as a consequence of Attila's new ambitions. Although the treaty of 448 left all land north of the Stara Planina to the Huns, by 449/50 Attila had renounced suzerainty over territory south of the Danube, no doubt because he had already determined to move against the Western Empire.<sup>53</sup> After the departure of the Huns for Italy in 451, Theodosius' successor, Marcian, was in a position to take the offensive without running any risk of immediate retaliation. His decision to do so may well have been affected, not only by his assessment of the favourable military situation and the need to consolidate his succession to the Empire, but also by personal considerations: as a Thracian himself, recruited into the army at Philippopolis, it is reasonable to suppose that he was sympathetic to the plight of the Thracian population, which had suffered during the recent Hunnic

<sup>50</sup> Zeiller (1918), 361–2; Maenchen-Helfen (1973), 159–60.

<sup>51</sup> *Getica* L.266. The statement is likely to be correct: Jordanes was well-acquainted with the political geography of the lower Danube at this time. His grandfather had been secretary to Candac, ruler of a group of Alans which, along with Sciri and Sadagarii, was settled in Lower Moesia (Moesia II) and Scythia (*Getica* L.265–6). Nor need he have relied upon his father for information: he himself had been *notarius* to the same tribal group. That Jordanes' history was partial and favoured the Amal Goths has been cogently argued: Heather (1991), 3–67. Notwithstanding Jordanes' bias, his statement that forts in Dacia Ripensis remained under the Huns during the 450s had no relevance to the Goths, and there is no reason to suspect his motive in pointing out the limits of Byzantine rule at this time.

<sup>52</sup> No bishops from Moesia II attended the Council of Chalcedon in that year, probably because the province was one of those areas overrun by barbarians: Maenchen-Helfen (1973), 131; E. Honigmann, 'The original lists of the members of the Council of Nicaea, the Robber-Synod and the Council of Chalcedon', *Byzantion* 16 (1942–3), 20–80.

<sup>53</sup> Priscus, *Frag.* 15.4 (Blockley); Thompson (1948), 123–4, 130.

invasions.<sup>54</sup> From the start of his reign, it is significant that Marcian determined to discontinue the tribute promised to the Huns by Theodosius II, and that he subsequently reimposed restrictions on trade which Attila had compelled the Eastern Empire to relax.<sup>55</sup> In 451 the emperor himself was probably on campaign in Illyricum and in Thrace.<sup>56</sup> Shortly before 453, Ardabur, son of Aspar, *comes rei militaris*, achieved some success in Thrace against barbarians, presumably Huns.<sup>57</sup> About 453/4, the future western emperor, Anthemius, probably then *comes rei militaris per Thracias*, carried out an inspection of the forts on the Danube and, since there is no mention of military action, the frontier would seem to have been peaceful.<sup>58</sup> Although Marcian may not have undertaken any large-scale military operations in the region, it seems likely that he had achieved enough in the early years of his reign to ensure that the Danubian frontier of Thrace was once more firmly under Byzantine rule.<sup>59</sup>

Given the nature of the evidence, it would be unwise to presume that the date of the early Byzantine reoccupation of Nicopolis can be established with certainty. Even so, the most likely date for the construction of the early Byzantine defences falls in the early 450s, probably after 451, at a time when the aggressive policy of Marcian and the disintegration of Attila's empire combined to provide an appropriate historical context. A date of c. 453 for the reoccupation of Nicopolis may not be far wide of the mark.

### The defences (Fig. 5; Plates III, VIII)

Flanked by mounds of spoil, the deep trenches dug to rob the curtain-wall foundations helpfully define the course of the early Byzantine defences.<sup>60</sup> They enclosed an area of 5.74 ha, little more than one quarter the size of the Roman and late Roman city (21.55 ha). Since the eastern half of the late Roman city's southern curtain was incorporated into the new fortifications, the late Roman walls were presumably still standing at the time of the reoccupation. It is surprising, therefore, that a new fortification was judged necessary when it would surely have been an easier undertaking to reuse one corner of the existing defences. However, the southern wall of the early Byzantine circuit followed the southern edge of the plateau where the steep descent to the valley floor afforded a naturally defensive position, denied to the late Roman city. Moreover, the new defences had other tactical advantages: they overlooked the river-crossing, and probably also harbour installations on the north bank of the river, and commanded a clear view south as far as the foothills of the *Haemus*. Apparently the advantages of the new location were judged more important than the easier alternative of refortifying part of the original city.

<sup>54</sup> He was probably born close to the city of Philippopolis: Priscus, *Frag.* 18 (Blockley). There is no doubt that, unlike Theodosius II and his successor Leo, Marcian was primarily concerned with the defence of the lower Danube, even at the expense of leaving the Vandals in possession of North Africa: E. A. Thompson, 'The foreign policies of Theodosius II and Marcian', *Hermathena* 76 (1950), 58–75; R. L. Hohlfelder, 'Marcian's gamble: a reassessment of eastern imperial policy toward Attila A.D. 450–453', *American Journal of Ancient History* 9/1 (1984), 54–69.

<sup>55</sup> Priscus, *Frag.* 20.1 (Blockley). It was probably Marcian who denied the Huns access to markets on the Danube which had been established under Theodosius II: Priscus, *Frag.* 46 (Blockley, also note 169, p. 397). This would be consonant with his policy. In 455/6 Marcian also forbade the export of Roman arms to barbarians, surely another measure directed against the Huns: *Cod. Justin.* IV.41.2; Thompson (1948), 179–80.

<sup>56</sup> On his presence in Illyricum, see Mansi, *Collectio* VI.560; Thompson (1948), 143–4. He was also in Thrace in that year: Theod. Lector I.4 (*Migne PG*, vol. 86/1, p. 167).

<sup>57</sup> Suda, *Frag.* A 3803 = Priscus, *Frag.* 19 (Blockley); *PLRE* II, Ardabur 1, p. 136.

<sup>58</sup> Sid. Apollin., *Carm.* II.199–201; *PLRE* II, Anthemius 3, p. 96.

<sup>59</sup> A still more ambitious expedition across the Danube has been claimed for Aetius, the eastern *comes Domesticorum*: Hydatius Lem., *Chron.* 154; *PLRE* II, Flavius Aetius 8, p. 29; Thompson (1948), 148. However, the veracity of this source is highly questionable: R. W. Burgess, 'A new reading for Hydatius Chronicle 177 and the defeat of the Huns in Italy', *Phoenix* 42 (1988), 357–63. (I am grateful to Dr H. Elton for drawing this article to my attention.) So far only one inscription attests building or reconstruction carried out by Marcian in the region and this comes from Aetos (Ajtos) in eastern Thrace, inland from Anchialus: Beševliev (1964), no. 184.

<sup>60</sup> On the robbing, carried out in the post-medieval period, see below, p. 51.

The west wall ran due south to the edge of the plateau. However, from the north-east corner of the defences, the eastern curtain deviated to the south-east. This was perhaps carried out so as to avoid an awkward junction with the southern wall, as it ascended the east side the valley from the south gate (E). In doing so, it also took advantage of the north/south valley, immediately east of the site, which offered additional protection to the south-eastern corner of the defences.

Apart from the three gates, robber-trenches suggest that there were fifteen externally projecting towers. Along the western, northern, and eastern walls, they were regularly spaced, *c.* 55 m apart. The successive phases of robbing, although they provide a reasonable guide to the location of towers, are less helpful in determining their original size and shape. None of the corner towers has been excavated but they were most probably circular: the robber-trenches for Towers 2 and 7, respectively at the north-western and north-eastern corners, suggest as much and, although their shape is less certain, circular towers probably protected the south-western and south-eastern corners (Towers 10 and 14). Tower 4 was rectangular, its superstructure built upon a continuous plinth of limestone blocks laid directly upon the upper course of its foundations (as was Tower 8 and the east gate).<sup>61</sup> Towers 3, 5, and 6, which shared the same curtain-wall, were probably also rectangular. Even though robbing suggested that the two towers built along the western curtain might have been circular or semi-circular, Tower 1 proved to have been rectangular (P). It was 9.30 m wide and projected *c.* 6.70 m beyond the curtain-wall and was similar in size and form to Tower 4. Symmetry recommends that the unexcavated Tower 15, which flanked the west gate on its south side, followed the same plan. However, the robber-trenches which denoted the location of Towers 8 and 9, either side of the eastern gate, suggested a triangular structure; in the case of Tower 8, they proved to represent the triangular end of a massive pentagonal tower, projecting no less than 11.20 m beyond the curtain-wall (R). Unlike the modest rectangular towers, where the ground chambers had simple clay floors, this tower, at least during its latest period of use, was paved with bricks and, at its eastern end, had a store-room, separated from the rest of the ground-floor chamber by a wooden screen. In addition, it probably had glazed windows, the evidence for which, in the form of window-glass, was conspicuously lacking in the case of Tower 1. Possibly, the reason for this provision was that the pentagonal tower, apart from its defensive function, also served as accommodation, perhaps for soldiers. Its unexcavated twin (Tower 9) no doubt shared this same 'prow-shaped' design. The easier approach to the fortifications on this side of the site may have required more imposing towers than elsewhere along the circuit. On the southern curtain, which followed the crest of the plateau, the location of towers is reasonably certain but robber-trenches are less helpful in determining their form: this is apparently because, when the foundations were robbed, spoil was tipped down the steep southern slope and not left as banks of debris, as elsewhere along the defences. Given that the towers here commanded a naturally defensive position, above the precipitous drop to the floodplain of the Rositsa, it is most likely that they were of modest size and probably rectangular. Tower 11 was located at the most southerly point of the plateau and conformed to the normal spacing, being *c.* 55 m from the south gate and at a similar interval from Tower 12 to the north-west. However, as the curtain-wall curved west towards the south-west corner, the deep re-entrant, as far as the south-western corner of the site, was protected by only three towers (12, 13 and 14), each separated from its neighbour by sections of curtain *c.* 80 m in length.

Three gates can be identified. The smallest commanded the only convenient approach to the site from the south where a narrow valley led north-west up onto the plateau from the floodplain of the Rositsa (E). Its well-preserved foundations, projecting equally north and south of the defences, must have supported a tower above the gate, as is also indicated by its location, equidistant from Tower 10, at the south-eastern corner of the defences, and Tower 11, dominating the heights to the south-west. The east gate, a rectangular structure, *c.* 12.50 m in length, which projected 10 m east of the wall, no doubt also functioned as a tower-gate: it occupied a central position on the eastern curtain between the two pentagonal towers (8 and 9). This gate contained a central roadway, either side of which were raised platforms, perhaps guard-chambers. The west gate, apparently like the east gate,

<sup>61</sup> For Tower 8 see, Slokoska (1991), 302.

a rectangular structure, was positioned half-way along the shorter western curtain.<sup>62</sup> Since, unlike the other gates, it was flanked by towers (1 and 15) this entrance would seem to have been of singular importance, probably because it was the principal entrance into the enclosure.<sup>63</sup>

Within the early Byzantine circuit, the southern ditch of the late Roman city was backfilled and the eastern half of the Roman city wall, where it was included in the northern curtain of the new defences, was widened to 2.64 m (A, C). The northern side of the Roman gate was dismantled and the gate-chamber blocked (C). Along the rest of the circuit, the walls were constructed upon a foundation, 2.60 m wide on the southern curtain (E), 2.54 m wide on the eastern perimeter (S). All foundations were built with a mortared rubble core, faced with small limestone blocks and bonded with thick rafts of solid mortar. Above ground, the mortared rubble core of the walls was faced with regular courses of small limestone blocks alternating with bonding courses, five bricks thick, built immediately over the foundations and without offset (E). Where the curtain-wall descended the steep slope down to the southern gate, the foundations were stepped; sections of wall were set in separate foundation trenches (E). Although all the excavated gates and towers were included in the original building programme and were bonded with adjacent sections of curtain-wall, the manner of construction varied. Particular care was taken at the south gate where the foundations of the gate structure and those for the adjacent section of curtain-wall were built from monolithic limestone blocks. Work had begun on the superstructure before a start was made on the next section of curtain-wall to the east; when it was, the alignment of the inner face of the primary curtain had to be changed to bond fully with the length of wall descending the slope, leaving an offset above foundation level on the inside of the curtain immediately east of the gate (E). The eastern gate and the curtain-wall foundation were constructed at the same time and within a continuous foundation trench (S). However, the lower foundations of the eastern curtain were completed before the foundations for the pentagonal tower. Here, only the upper part of curtain and tower foundations were fully bonded (R). On the western side of the defences, the method of construction was different again. Even though the foundations of Tower 1 and the curtain were built at the same time and were fully bonded, only the lower portion of the tower's foundations was trench-built: the upper foundations were constructed free-standing, probably because the western curtain and its towers were recessed into the scarp above the north/south valley running immediately west of the defences (P). After the foundations had been laid, dumps of destruction debris, brought in from the abandoned city to the north, were used to level up the interior of the towers (P, R). Both the inner and outer faces of the curtain-wall were carefully rendered and the limestone mortar facing scored to represent regular courses of ashlar masonry (E).

A wall height of 10 m to the parapet-walk would seem reasonable.<sup>64</sup> In the towers, the first floor would probably have been below the level of the wall-walk and is more likely to have had arrow-slits than windows, which were more probably reserved for the upper storeys.<sup>65</sup> A second floor at the same height as the wall-walk can be presumed and at least a third floor for the towers and main

<sup>62</sup> Although not excavated, its rectangular shape, defined by robber-trenches which followed its foundations, was located opposite a causeway leading west, where the outer ditch was interrupted, and this confirms its identification as a gateway. See ch. 16, pp. 266–7.

<sup>63</sup> It is probably no coincidence that the main gate of the Roman and late Roman city was also located on the west side of the defences, see above, p. 25.

<sup>64</sup> At Abritus (Razgrad), the lower steps of a staircase were sufficiently preserved to indicate that the southern wall must have been c. 10 m to the wall-walk: Ivanov (1980b), 103–4. The walls of Diocletianopolis (Hisar) still stand to full height in places, where the fighting-platform varied between 9.50 and 10.5 m above ground-level: K. Madzharov, 'Arheologicheski proouchvaniya na antichniya grad pri Hisar prez poslednite dvadeset godini,' *Arheologiya* 7/3 (1965), 21–31; Madzharov (1993), 21, 24, 26. Both fortifications date to the fourth century, but there is no reason to suspect that the still more massive foundations of early Byzantine Nicopolis supported a lower curtain-wall.

<sup>65</sup> This arrangement is best seen today in the well-preserved early Byzantine fortifications of Nicopolis in Epirus which probably also date to the second half of the fifth century: H. Hellenkemper, 'Die byzantinische Stadtmauer von Nikopolis in Epeiros. Ein kaiserlicher Bauauftrag des 5. oder 6. Jahrhunderts?' *Nicopolis I: Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Nicopolis* (Preveza, 1987), 243–51; T. Gregory, 'The early Byzantine fortifications of Nikopolis in comparative perspective', *ibid.*, 251–61.

gates.<sup>66</sup> Possibly the lesser dimensions of the south gate may have supported only two storeys. Tower 1 and the east gate were roofed with tiles (P, S); no doubt so were the others. Apart, perhaps, from the south gate, towers and gates would have stood at least *c.* 17 m high, a not improbable size.<sup>67</sup> An *ascensus*, attached to the inner face of the curtain, probably led to the wall-walk and to an entrance into the east gate-tower at second-floor level (S). It would be surprising if staircases were not spaced at regular intervals along the curtain to provide access to towers and to the wall-walk.<sup>68</sup>

A defensive ditch probably existed beyond the eastern curtain and another outside the opposing wall, except where it was interrupted by a causeway leading out from the west gate. To the south none would have been needed, but the absence of a ditch to the north is surprising.<sup>69</sup>

The defences of the late Roman city could not have functioned after the construction of the early Byzantine circuit: the foundations of Tower 4 overlay buildings in use down to the destruction of the late Roman city and, apart from the section incorporated into the early Byzantine defences, the late Roman walls must have been levelled (Fig. 3).<sup>70</sup> Since the Roman gate was blocked when the new defences were constructed, it seems improbable that there was any direct communication between the early Byzantine fortification and the ruins of the late Roman city to the north (C).

### The interior of the early Byzantine defences (Fig. 104 and Plate XXXVII)

The Large Basilica, built at the highest point on the east side of the enclosure, with its entrance facing towards the main west gate, must have been the dominant feature within the defences (F). Although modest in size and in its use of timber instead of marble for internal fixtures, it was presumably the principal basilica, despite the fact that the church stood in isolation and was not connected, as one might expect, with an episcopal residence (Fig. 10, 1).<sup>71</sup> Its internal arrangement, with central *ambo*, aisle screens, chancel, and chambers either side of its polygonal apse, conforms to a plan common to many early Byzantine churches in Thrace. The existence of another, smaller church is no surprise (K, Fig. 10, 2). However, the discovery of parallel foundations, each 1.20 m wide and 3.50 m deep, spaced *c.* 6 m apart, is remarkable (M). In the geophysical survey, they clearly represent a line of buildings running west/east across the centre of the site, perhaps divided into three blocks, each *c.* 80 m in length (Fig. 10, 3). At least one of the blocks was subdivided by a party-wall (M). These foundations must have supported massive walls, the lower parts of which were probably built from earth and stone, with the main

<sup>66</sup> The small late Roman fort at Koula, in north-western Bulgaria, had a corner-tower which must have been at least 17 m high to the roof: it still stands to a height of 16 m and is three storeys high: I. Antanassova, 'Quadriburgium de la fortèresse Castra Martis', *Actes du IX congrès sur les frontières romaines* (Bucharest, 1974), 167–72.

<sup>67</sup> This was the height of the corner-towers of the small late Roman *burgus* at Koula and can be regarded here as a conservative estimate, see note 66.

<sup>68</sup> At Hisar, for example, staircases were regularly spaced around the curtain, especially where rapid access to towers and gates was required; Madzharov (1993), 30–3; Ovcharov (1982), 49–51.

<sup>69</sup> See the geophysical report, pp. 265–7. Also, excavation by Professor Slokoska within the late Roman city demonstrated that the paved road, continuing north of Area A, was intact for a distance of *c.* 10 m north of the defences and was not cut by an early Byzantine ditch: Slokoska (1994), 171–5.

<sup>70</sup> Slokoska (1989), 302; *idem* (1994), 174. It is also notable that when the south wall of the Roman city was robbed in the post-medieval period, no external towers were apparently discovered along the western half of the Roman city's south wall. This was probably because they had been levelled in the early Byzantine period and were not visible when post-medieval robbing chased the Roman curtain-wall foundation beyond the limits of the early Byzantine defences.

<sup>71</sup> Episcopal residences were regularly located close to a city's principal basilica; Novae: A. B. Biernacki, 'Remarks on the basilica and episcopal residence at Novae', in A. Fol (ed.), *Acta Associationis Internationalis Terra Antiqua Balcanica* (Sofia, 1990), 187–208; Stobi: Wiseman (1984), 305. At Justiniana Prima there were buildings around the episcopal basilica but, in this case, these were perhaps workshops and stores, not part of an ecclesiastical residence: Duval (1984), 417–19.



Fig. 10 Interpretation of the resistivity survey.

1. The Large Basilica (F). 2. The Small Basilica (K). 3. West/east range of buildings (M, H). 4. Workshops (D).
5. Building with mortared foundations (L). 6. Building with mortared foundations (N). 7. Paved Roman road (B, C).
8. Large building ? (unexcavated). 9. Buildings ? (unexcavated). 10. Large building ? (unexcavated). 11. Post-medieval ditched enclosure (B). 12. Post-medieval trackway (H).

superstructure completed in mudbrick (H). Two storeys would seem likely. They certainly occupied a central location within the defences and must have been of particular importance. As to their purpose, their regular layout and massive construction would be appropriate to barracks or store-rooms; perhaps they combined both functions. In the centre of the site there was a two-roomed structure, open-ended to the south, perhaps workshops, crudely constructed from limestone blocks and reused architectural fragments, bonded with earth and supporting mud-walls, in notable contrast to the carefully constructed 'herringbone' buildings of stone and earth which existed in the late Roman period (D, Fig. 10, 4). Apart from the two basilicas, there were other buildings of stone and mortar, none of which, given their orientation, are likely to have been churches. A substantial, rectangular building, orientated north-east by south-west, lay close to the southern defences (L), and another (N), similarly orientated, occupied a central location in the 'valley' on the northern side of the site (Fig. 10, 5 and 6).

The early Byzantine occupation level lies just beneath the modern turf-line, so it is no surprise that, where excavated, all high resistance anomalies proved to date to this period (D, F,

K, L, M, N).<sup>72</sup> It is therefore reasonable to presume that the resistivity survey provides a remarkably clear guide to the location of stone buildings of this period, except around the perimeter of the defences where post-medieval robbing spoil has masked the early Byzantine occupation level.<sup>73</sup> In the south-western quarter of the site, high resistance anomalies suggest buildings, although extensive robbing precludes the identification of individual structures (Fig. 10, 9). On the western side of the valley, leading down to the south gate, surface depressions, created by recent robbing and a concentration of high resistance features, suggest the presence of a large building, orientated north-west by south-east; this in turn was perhaps connected with a larger structure, or more probably an enclosure, continuing still further to the north-west (Fig. 10, 8). Along the northern side of the site, the ground-level, close to the curtain-wall, was raised c. 1.0 m above the late Roman roadway and to the same height as the contemporary ground-level north of the defences, above the deep destruction deposit which covered the remains of late Roman buildings (A, C). Here, a long rectangular building with roughly mortared foundations was built up against the blocked Roman gate and the inner face of the curtain-wall (C). It may have served as a store or perhaps, given its proximity to Tower 4, as barracks. Further east, no early Byzantine occupation level survived robbing (A).

Within the west/east 'valley', left open when the area was within range of the Roman and late Roman defences, the resistivity survey identified very few signs of occupation apart from two probably large structures (Fig. 10, 6 and 10), an impression supported by excavation (B, N). Although an area of 200 sq. m was excavated, extending south from the northern curtain, it contained only one early Byzantine feature, an oven, although two buildings, both of stone and earth construction, were identified in the baulk and continued to the east (A). Moreover, a magnetometer survey replicated the results of the resistivity survey and failed to identify any more buildings.<sup>74</sup> Since the final period of occupation ended in destruction by fire, collapsed mud-walls should have been found by magnetometer even if little or no stone was used in their construction. Therefore, it would seem that the 'open spaces' apparent in the resistivity survey, not only along the north side of the site but also on the west side of the enclosure and around the basilicas, contained no buildings.<sup>75</sup> Apart from the 'store buildings' and the Large Basilica which represent the principal planned elements within the enclosure, other buildings were scattered almost randomly across the site. Road surfaces were elusive. Even the road which must have run south of the 'store buildings' between the west and east gates left no obvious traces in the centre of the site (M). At the east gate, where it was identified, it comprised only a lightly cobbled surface (S).<sup>76</sup> Outside the early Byzantine buildings, including the churches, no paved or metalled surfaces were found. The absence of domestic buildings is particularly surprising, although the towers may have doubled as accommodation: Tower 1 was probably used for storing foodstuffs and, as noted above, the superior flooring and glazed windows in Tower 8 suggest that it may have housed a military detachment (P, R). Only in the south-western quarter was there probably a greater concentration of buildings, west of two large structures which, from their orientation, would seem to have served secular functions and may have been administrative or military buildings (Fig. 10, 5 (L) and 8).<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup> The only exception was the paved road leading south from the Roman gate which was no longer used in this period (B, C, Fig. 10, 7). Where Roman and late Roman occupation levels were found across the centre of the plateau, the remains were too deeply buried to be detected in the resistivity survey. The existence of post-medieval and Slav buildings can be recognized as low-resistance features, where *grubenhäuser* cut stone structures or rubble spreads.

<sup>73</sup> Barracks were often constructed against the inner face of curtain-walls, as at Hisar: K. Madzharov, 'The barrack buildings of Diocletianopolis', *IMIB* 8 (1982), 77–96; Madzharov (1993), 101–17.

<sup>74</sup> See ch. 16, p. 262.

<sup>75</sup> There is no evidence that timber was used for buildings in this period. Apart from the most important buildings, invariably built of mortared stone, all other buildings had mud-walls, usually with stone and earth foundations, cf. D. Mitova-Ddjonova, 'Rannovizantiisko zhilishtno stroitelstvo v kastela Iatrus', *Arheologiya* 10/3 (1968), 13–23.

<sup>76</sup> Note, however, that the road here was only in use during the first period of early Byzantine occupation, before the gate was blocked.

<sup>77</sup> A military headquarters building is likely to have existed within the defences in the early Byzantine period, as at Justiniana Prima, see below, p. 46. Either of these two large buildings might have served such a function.

### **Reconstruction during the early Byzantine period**

Although it is possible that the *atrium* and the southern annexe were secondary additions to the Large Basilica, it is more likely that they were part of the original design and were built immediately after the foundations for the main walls had been completed (F). The Small Basilica was probably not modified after its construction; certainly its southern annexe and probably the narthex were built at the same time as the nave (K). There was no evidence that any of the minor buildings (A, C, D), or the 'store buildings' (H, M) were ever rebuilt, nor that they replaced earlier structures belonging to the early Byzantine period. However, this impression may be deceptive: apart from the workshops (D), where the stone and earth walls survived largely intact, any rebuilding on the same foundations would not have been detected during the excavation of buildings where no traces of the superstructure survived post-medieval robbing.

Two distinct periods of occupation were identified along the western, eastern, and southern curtain-walls. The first period at the east gate ended in destruction: burning planks, timbers and roof tiles collapsed onto the floor of the gate-chamber. Subsequently, the gate-chamber was repaired but during its second period of use it no longer served as a gate and the entrance was probably blocked; evidently the need to strengthen the defences was considered more important than maintaining access to the city on this side of the circuit (S). Tower 1 and nearby buildings were also damaged by fire and then repaired (P). At the south gate there was no evidence to prove that the first period ended in destruction, but the subsequent blocking of the main drain at the beginning of the second may well have been a defensive precaution (E). In the case of the pentagonal tower, the second period of occupation is distinguished only by the replacement of a simple clay floor with brick paving (R). There is no way of proving whether or not the two periods attested at each of these three sites were synchronous. However, the sequence of partial destruction followed by reconstruction applies equally to Tower 1 and the east gate. Moreover, since it seems that new defensive measures were taken at both the south and east gates at the beginning of the second period of occupation, it is likely that the reconstruction of both was part of the same programme of rebuilding. It is therefore probable that the second period at all three locations denotes a general refurbishment of the fortifications which also involved taking new defensive precautions. Perhaps this happened after the city had been attacked. If this is the explanation, even though towers on opposing sides of the circuit may have been damaged by fire, it still remains uncertain whether the assault was successful, given that, as noted above, there is no way of determining whether or not internal buildings had been damaged and then rebuilt on the same foundations.

### **The economic character of the early Byzantine city**

As noted above, there would seem to have been no break in local pottery production between the late Roman period and the early Byzantine reoccupation. Even so, the declining importance of local red-slipped wares, already apparent in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, continued in the early Byzantine period and was not followed by a corresponding increase in imports; African Red Slip Ware, 'Phocaeen Red Slip Ware', Late Roman C, and Cypriot Red Slip Ware reached Nicopolis, but only in small quantities. However, in comparison with preceding periods, there was an apparent rise in imports of amphorae from the Aegean and North Africa. Metal-working, both blacksmithing and copper-working, was carried out, but, to judge from the amount of slag found, production was not on a large scale (E).

Carp and catfish were still the most popular fish eaten at Nicopolis but, as in the late Roman period, a wide variety of local fish was consumed (including barbel, chub, roach, trout, and pike). This suggests that the inhabitants were not fussy about what fish they ate, provided it was tolerably palatable. There was no obvious change in livestock: cattle were still brought to the site, or perhaps kept there, but sheep/goats and pig continued to be the most important sources of meat. However, it is in agricultural production that there is the strongest evidence for a significant change in the early Byzantine period. From at least the late second century down to the destruction of the late Roman city in the middle of the fifth, there was no obvious difference in the agricultural products reaching

Nicopolis, no doubt coming from its fertile territory. But there is no sign that large-scale grain cultivation, which had been such a conspicuous feature in the economy of the Roman and late Roman city, continued in the early Byzantine period. Instead of bread wheat, barley, and rye, the most important cereal would seem to have been millet. At the same time, there was a notable increase in the range of other foodstuffs, especially pulses (bitter vetch, lentil, and field bean); also grapes were cultivated – or else imported – and consumed in the sixth century (E). There appears to have been a shift in emphasis away from winter-sown cereal crops towards spring-sown and/or garden cultivation of millet and legumes which could have been grown close to the city or, conceivably, in the open land which existed inside the defences. The repeated invasions of Avars and Slavs in the sixth century could account for a decline in large-scale cereal cultivation and this may also explain why it proved difficult to supply the lower Danubian army. By 537, so serious had the problem become that radical measures were needed: a new command, the *quaestura exercitus*, was created, uniting the provinces of Moesia II and Scythia with Caria, the Cyclades, and Cyprus. This was a curious union but one which facilitated the import of military supplies (*annona militaris*) from the agriculturally prosperous Aegean, well away from the insecure conditions prevailing along the Danubian frontier.<sup>78</sup> It may equally explain why more Aegean amphorae were imported and perhaps why Cypriote fine ware reached Nicopolis in the early Byzantine period. The disruption caused by the barbarian invasions probably also accounts for the construction and reoccupation of hill-top fortifications, which clustered along the banks of the Yantra, Osum, and Vit, and along the foothills of the *Haemus*. They contained churches, sometimes houses, and often empty outer enclosures, possibly for the protection of livestock; some may have been used as temporary refuges. Others, like those at Sadovets, either served a local peasant community or functioned as forts (Fig. 4).<sup>79</sup>

### The end of early Byzantine occupation

The final period of occupation ended in destruction. At the south gate, burnt timbers collapsed over the clay surface behind the curtain-wall. So intense was the fire that it caused the wall revetting the hillside to collapse, its stones fractured and turned red by the heat (E). Carbonized timbers and broken roof-tiles covered the floor of the east gate-tower (S). The workshops burnt down (D); so did the large buildings on the southern and northern sides of the enclosure (L, N). The timber roof of the Large Basilica was burnt and the Small Basilica probably also suffered destruction (F, K). Fire swept through the central range of buildings; the mudbrick superstructure collapsed (H). Whether buildings along the inside of the northern curtain-wall were burnt down is unknown (C), but some parts of the defences appear to have escaped the conflagration. No destruction levels covered the floor of Tower 1 nor the brick paving in the pentagonal tower (P, R).<sup>80</sup>

There is reason to suspect that occupation ended with a planned evacuation and not with a sudden or necessarily violent catastrophe. No metal fittings were found within the destruction deposits in either the Large or the Small Basilica and only tiny fragments of roof-tile (F, K). The concentration of glass fragments (chandelier-, vessel-, and window-glass) in the south aisle of the Large Basilica and east of its apse may denote areas where metal-work was salvaged before the basilica's roof timbers were set alight. The *ambo* was possibly hacked out of the tile floor and removed before the

<sup>78</sup> Just., *Nov.* 41. Nor was this a new problem: guaranteeing military supply in Thrace was already difficult under Anastasius (*Cod. Just.* X.27.2.10).

<sup>79</sup> Poulter (1983), 97–100; of the two fortifications excavated by G. Bersu and I. Velkov in the 1930s, it now seems that Golemanovo Kale probably contained a native community, not Gothic *foederati*. The neighbouring site of Sadovsko Kale, however, with its barracks, may have housed a local garrison, perhaps protecting rural settlements in the valley of the Vit: J. Werner, 'Zur Funktion der frühbyzantinischen Festungen bei Sadovec', in Uenze (1992), 411–17.

<sup>80</sup> It would seem likely that the final destruction of all buildings took place at the same time. However, it remains just possible that some of the interior buildings were destroyed at the end of the first period of early Byzantine occupation. If so, they were left derelict during the final period of occupation – which would seem improbable.

Small Basilica's roof was destroyed (K). In the Large Basilica the *ambo* may also have been dismantled before the church burnt down (F). In Tower 1 there would seem to have been an attempt to collect roof-tiles, perhaps also to dismantle structural timbers; if true, this would explain why there was no sign that this tower was damaged by fire (P). The evidence is not conclusive but, such as it is, suggests that buildings were systematically stripped of valuable or reusable items before the final destruction and consequent abandonment. If roof-tiles were considered worth salvaging, it follows that they were intended for reuse elsewhere, probably at no great distance from the site.

The coin-series ends with an issue of Tiberius II, dated 578/582 (Cat. No. 639). The site may have been evacuated shortly afterwards, conceivably in 586, when other cities in Moesia II were sacked.<sup>81</sup> Even if occupation continued as late as 598 when Comentiolus led a Byzantine army to Nicopolis, it is unlikely that the city survived beyond the early years of the seventh century.<sup>82</sup> Surprisingly, nowhere was there any sign that the site was reoccupied during the next three hundred years.

### The character and function of the early Byzantine city

If the early Byzantine defences were constructed *c.* 453, and since the site was apparently occupied until the last quarter of the sixth century, it was in use for no more than one hundred and fifty years. However, it is equally certain that early Byzantine Nicopolis in no economic or physical sense resembled its late Roman predecessor, which had been destroyed by the Huns in the middle of the fifth century. There was no regular street-grid, no *agora* surrounded by public buildings. There was also remarkably little sign of occupation, which no doubt accounts for the discovery of so few early Byzantine coins.<sup>83</sup> Large areas of the interior remained open spaces and were never used for building. Nor would the site seem to have been intensively used. Even at the east gate, the roadway comprised a single layer of cobbles which showed no signs of repair. The only element of planning involved the location of the Large Basilica and the range of massive buildings which traversed the centre of the site from west to east. Two explanations can be proposed.

One would be that the city failed to develop. Although it has been suggested that the new site was constructed as early as *c.* 453, Byzantine control over the region for most of the second half of the fifth century was nominal: the effective rulers were the Goths.<sup>84</sup> How a city such as Nicopolis would have survived under Gothic hegemony is difficult to determine, although it is unlikely that relations were as unamicable as the literary sources might otherwise suggest.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps the city failed to attract an urban population. The only evidence which hints that the site did not develop as expected is provided by the excavations at the south gate (E). As initially constructed, its main drain was no doubt provided to dispose of waste water supplied to the site by an aqueduct. Whether or not the aqueduct was ever in operation, the drain functioned during the first period of occupation but not during the second, when it was robbed and blocked. The provision of a piped water-supply – or the intention to construct one – suggests that a resident population was envisaged from the start; but the abandonment of the drain implies that, at least during the second period of occupation, a piped

<sup>81</sup> See ch. 1, p. 17.

<sup>82</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 17–18.

<sup>83</sup> Striking is the contrast with the small hill-top settlement of Golemanovo Kale, which, apart from its gold coin-hoards, produced 111 folles and half-folles from two seasons of excavation, which suggests that that site was fully integrated into the early Byzantine monetary economy. Its inhabitants may have acquired their income from selling an agricultural surplus to the military and civilian settlements on the Danube: J. Werner, 'Zur Funktion der frühbyzantinischen Festungen bei Sadovec', in Uenze (1992), 413–15.

<sup>84</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 16–17.

<sup>85</sup> Although the course of relations between the Byzantines and the Goths during the fifth century can be reconstructed in some detail, very little can be deduced about conditions within cities under Gothic rule. However, Goths had, from the 440s, held military commands and Gothic forces served in the Byzantine army: Heather (1991), 256–63. By the second half of the fifth century, they must have been well-acquainted with the political and economic structure of the Byzantine state and it is not unreasonable to suppose that cities fared no worse under Gothic hegemony than they did under Byzantine rule.

water-supply was no longer necessary. It would be convenient to conclude that, after the fortifications had been constructed, the site was not fully populated before being abandoned when the Goths effectively took control of the lower Danube. The site might then only have been reoccupied in the sixth century. However, there is no reason to suspect that there was any long interval between the two periods of early Byzantine occupation. Even if there was a period of abandonment, this would still not explain the character of the site in the sixth century. It has been suggested that the inhabitants were transferred to the well-defended site of Tsaravets soon after A.D. 500, an attractive idea in as much as this site possessed churches which were demonstrably better-furnished than the basilicas within the early Byzantine defences at Nicopolis.<sup>86</sup> Against this, Jordanes, who would surely have known if the ancient site had been abandoned, believed that the city, founded by Trajan, was still occupied in the middle of the sixth century; his description clearly refers to the city on the banks of the Rositsa and not to Tsaravets in the foothills of the *Haemus*.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, although the coins are few, it is clear that the early Byzantine fortifications continued in use into the third quarter of the sixth century.

The alternative is to suppose that Nicopolis performed the functions of a *polis* in the early Byzantine period but that these functions, to judge from the character of the site, were very different from those of the classical city it replaced. That this might have been so is supported by evidence from other cities in the region which appear to have shared some of the characteristics of Nicopolis. Tropaeum Traiani in Scythia is notable, not only for its sixth-century churches of remarkable size, but also for the absence of civic buildings, at least in the central sector where excavations have been systematically carried out.<sup>88</sup> Justiniana Prima (Caričin Grad), founded by the emperor Justinian, had churches, possibly barracks, and a *principia*: it had no municipal buildings and scant evidence for an intramural population, although there was an extensive settlement outside its walls.<sup>89</sup> The contrast with the Black Sea coast and the cities of southern Thrace is striking. Here, there is good evidence for a greater degree of civic and commercial activity in the early Byzantine period and for the construction of new buildings in the sixth century.<sup>90</sup>

On balance, the second of the two explanations appears the more plausible. By the sixth century, it seems likely that there had been a fundamental change in the character of urban life in the frontier zone, and that, in the case of Nicopolis, this had already taken place by the time the city was rebuilt in the years following the Hunnic invasions. The city's fortifications protected churches. They also defended a range of buildings which could have contained stores on a scale apparently out of proportion to its normal resident population, even allowing for the presence of a permanent garrison. What it certainly did not contain was a significant civilian population. One existed, but, like Justiniana Prima, it was not protected by the defences, but here was located to the north, within the ruins of the late Roman city.<sup>91</sup> It would seem reasonable to conjecture that the defences were built to protect ecclesiastical and probably military personnel, and that provisions, which may have been collected there, were for use by imperial forces operating on the lower Danube. The open areas within the walls may have been reserved for use as temporary accommodation for the field-army or may have sheltered civilians, in the event of a crisis, or even were used for growing crops.

The *polis* of Nicopolis, as it existed in the sixth century, appears to have functioned essentially as an imperial establishment: a centre of ecclesiastical and probably military organization. It may be

<sup>86</sup> *Tsarevgrad Turnov* I, 270–337 and III, 10–14.

<sup>87</sup> See ch. 1, p. 15.

<sup>88</sup> *Tropaeum Traiani* I, *passim*.

<sup>89</sup> *Caričin Grad* II, 1–160; Bavant (1984), 283–4.

<sup>90</sup> cf. Poulter (1992b), 127–32.

<sup>91</sup> For continued occupation on the site of the city into the late fifth and probably sixth century, following destruction, see for the baths: Ivanov (1952), 215–39; P. Georgiev, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1987, 85–6; idem, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1988, 69; in the *agora*-complex: T. Ivanov and I. Tsurov, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1979, 96; P. Georgiev, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1986, 121–2; R. Ivanov, P. Vlaklinova and S. Soutlova, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1989, 66; Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 60, 97–101, 117, 123; also on the site of a late Roman house, on the north-western side of the city: I. Tsurov, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1987, 86; idem, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1988, 69; and over the paved roads: Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 34, 40–1, 118.

suspected that the civilian population, far from being included within the confines of the defences, was actually excluded. Whether this was the result of imperial policy, and therefore perhaps typical for the period, or whether it was due to the collapse of the agricultural economy in the Danubian provinces, and therefore a phenomenon restricted to the eastern Balkans, is a question which can only be resolved by the excavation of other sites, both in this region, and in other parts of the early Byzantine Empire.<sup>92</sup>

### THE SLAV PERIOD: NINTH TO TENTH CENTURIES A.D. (Fig. 65)

A Slav *grubenhaus*, immediately north of the Large Basilica, contained pots full of millet, and must have served as a food store (F). This was the only Slav building discovered by excavation, but pottery, though in residual contexts, at the east gate (S) and immediately east of the Small Basilica (K), points to sporadic occupation. This was possibly confined to the eastern half of the site, perhaps the periphery of a Slav settlement, the centre of which lay east of the early Byzantine defences.<sup>93</sup> Given that the early Byzantine walls were probably still standing, it is strange that the fortification does not appear to have been reused at a time when early Byzantine fortifications elsewhere on the lower Danube housed substantial Slav communities.<sup>94</sup> The destruction of the *grubenhaus* by fire, before the pots and their contents could be retrieved, may be significant: occupation of Slav sites in the region often ended in destruction, a probable consequence of the repeated invasions of northern Bulgaria during the tenth century, first by the Magyars, then by Svjatoslav of Kiev and his Pecheneg mercenaries, and finally by the Byzantines under John Tzimisces, who crushed the First Bulgarian kingdom and annexed eastern Bulgaria to the Byzantine Empire in 972.<sup>95</sup>

### THE SECOND BULGARIAN KINGDOM AND THE LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

From 1185 until the Ottoman conquest in 1393, Veliko Turnovo was the medieval capital of Bulgaria and its almost impregnable fortification of Tsaravets was the residence of the Bulgarian kings.<sup>96</sup> As in the preceding period, it is curious that the early Byzantine fortifications of Nicopolis, which were almost within sight of Turnovo, only 15 km to the south, were not reused.<sup>97</sup> Nor is there

<sup>92</sup> At Aphrodisias in Caria, the custom of erecting inscriptions revived in the later fifth and sixth centuries and this not only suggests that some of its citizens were prosperous but that they were prepared to contribute generously, as their forebears had done, towards municipal expenditure: C. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London, 1989), 85–152. It would be interesting to learn if the archaeological research into the character of Aphrodisias in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. has produced results equally at variance with the evidence for Nicopolis where no inscriptions of this date have been found.

<sup>93</sup> A copper-alloy cross, dating to the ninth/tenth century, and surface finds of pottery and coins, suggest that the nucleus of a Slav settlement may have existed c. 200 m east of the Roman and early Byzantine defences: I. Turov, 'Novootkriti bronzovi srednovekovni krustove', *GMSB* 10 (1984), 55–8.

<sup>94</sup> Early Byzantine fortifications were often reoccupied in this period, as at Iatrus: *Iatrus* III, *passim*. Forts in the Dobrogea have also produced Slav pottery and metal-work, although here termed 'Early Feudal' and ascribed to the tenth to twelfth centuries. This dating is suspect since it rests upon the presumption that the reoccupation of the forts occurred only when Byzantine suzerainty over the lower Danube was restored by John Tzimisces, cf. Barnea (1969), 28–54.

<sup>95</sup> The settlement at Houma (Razgrad district) was occupied from the ninth century until its abandonment, perhaps as late as the middle of the eleventh century: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 87–9. At Iatrus, the Slav settlement was finally destroyed by fire during the second half of the tenth century; *Iatrus* III, 197–200. The Magyars (who invaded in 934, 943, 958–60), Svjatoslav of Kiev in 967–9, and John Tzimisces in 972 were all responsible for widespread devastation in northern Bulgaria. During any one of these incursions, the settlement at Nicopolis could have been destroyed. On the invasions and their consequences for Bulgaria, see R. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria* (London, 1975), 69–75.

<sup>96</sup> *Tsarevgrad-Turnov* I, *passim*.

<sup>97</sup> A single residual coin of Ivan Alexander (1355–1371, Cat. No. 652) was found in a post-medieval context. North of Nikiup, surface finds of glazed medieval pottery ('Sgraffito ware') prove occupation at Novgrad, Paslavets, and Klimentovo: Stefanov (1956), 11–12, 58, 61. At Nicopolis, only a few possible medieval sherds of this distinctive ware were found, which strongly suggests that the site did not contain a permanent settlement at this time.

any archaeological evidence that the early Byzantine defences functioned in the late fifteenth century, even though there is good reason to suppose that a Bulgarian community existed close by and that the early Byzantine walls protected the residence of a local magnate.<sup>98</sup>

### THE POST-MEDIEVAL PERIOD

In the absence of a firm chronology for pottery from this period, it is not possible to differentiate between assemblages of the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Post-medieval metal-work can be confidently ascribed to this same period but offers no further precision.<sup>99</sup> However, a date earlier than the mid-eighteenth century for the beginning of this period is unlikely: no finds of demonstrably earlier date have been found in excavation.<sup>100</sup>

#### Robbing and the settlement of Stari Nikiup

The northern curtain-wall of the early Byzantine fortifications, even after substantial demolition of its superstructure, was still standing high enough to be used as the back wall for buildings in this period (C). Along the western, southern, and eastern curtains, the robbing of foundations occurred in the post-medieval period (A, C, E, P, S). Since this operation, in at least some areas, followed directly upon the dismantling of the superstructure (P, R, S), it is likely that the walls were still largely intact as late as the eighteenth century. Robbing was systematically carried out: the trenches, flanked by impressive mounds of spoil, each *c.* 2 m high and *c.* 5 m wide, followed the foundations of walls and towers, in places robbing them to a depth of 2 m or more (Plate VIII). Solid rafts of mortar were usually ignored by the stone-robbers and large blocks were left *in situ* or were moved to one side, helpfully contributing to the survival of substantial portions of the early Byzantine walls and sections of Roman masonry where monolithic blocks of stone were employed in their construction (C, E, P, R, S). Perhaps tile, and certainly small limestone blocks, easily extracted and portable, were enthusiastically robbed, no doubt for reuse in local buildings, a notable proportion of which have since found their way into the walls of the modern village of Nikiup.

The walls of the Large Basilica were probably still standing at the beginning of this period when the superstructure was demolished and the upper foundations for the eastern end of the church were robbed. Here, the second phase of robbing, when the foundations of the western end of the building were robbed to an appreciable depth, perhaps immediately preceded the construction of *grubenhäuser* on the site, the builders of which were clearly unaware that their work would involve cutting through the surviving southern foundation of the basilica, left intact during the primary phase of robbing (F). After demolition of the superstructure, the foundations of the Small Basilica were robbed – and a body disposed of in one of the open trenches – before the site was levelled and post-medieval *grubenhäuser* were constructed (K). The partial demolition of the large building close to the southern curtain-wall (L), and probably the robbing of the building on the northern side of the site (N), occurred at this time. Although a ready source of building-stone, early Byzantine foundations of stone and earth (which had originally supported a mudbrick superstructure) survived much better than mortared foundations, presumably because they were not visible as surface features in this period (D, M).

Following this first phase of demolition of early Byzantine stone buildings and the defences, the site was occupied by a settlement, its buildings scattered across the plateau. Close to the northern curtain-wall, the foundations of an early Byzantine building were discovered during robbing and were reused.

<sup>98</sup> See ch. 1, p. 18.

<sup>99</sup> The coins from the post-medieval occupation all date to the late eighteenth century; see below, p. 49.

<sup>100</sup> Conventionally, therefore, the post-medieval period is here considered to begin *c.* 1750. This would appear to conflict with evidence that there was already a settlement at Stari Nikiup in the seventeenth century: see ch. 1, pp. 18–19. However, as noted below, the centre of the village would seem to have been to the west and the site may well have been occupied only during the final years of the settlement's existence.

Another structure, without foundations, was erected west of it and on the same alignment (C). A house with raised fireplace occupied the centre of the site (D). However, most of the dwellings excavated were *grubenhäuser*, their walls of mudbrick or wattle-and-daub resting upon low foundations built from limestone blocks bonded with earth, which also revetted the sides of the cuts. These buildings had one or more central posts to support the roof and so could have had no upper storey; some contained raised platforms, perhaps for sleeping, and an alcove for storage or use as a fireplace (F, K, M). That *grubenhäuser* should be built at this time is no surprise: as late as the early years of the twentieth century, *grubenhäuser* were still used for housing in northern Bulgaria. They were easily insulated and heated in the winter months, especially if livestock were brought inside, and required no technical expertise to erect, nor expensive timber in their construction.<sup>101</sup> Before excavation, *grubenhäuser* were visible as oval depressions (F, K) and similar hollows, scattered across the site, suggest that there may have been some thirty or more houses of this type (Fig. 5). However, on the plateau to the west, many more depressions suggest a greater density of occupation, probably because it was closer to the centre of the settlement which can be reasonably identified as Old Nikiup (Stari Nikiup); the ruins were still visible, on the banks of the Rositsa west of the ancient site, in the early twentieth century.<sup>102</sup> Probably the early Byzantine site lay on the eastern edge of the settlement.

A wide variety of fish was consumed in this period, notably carp, chub, and catfish. The most common crops would seem to have been millet and lentils, although bread wheat, rye, barley, and grapes were also cultivated. Pigs were perhaps the most important source of meat although cattle and sheep and/or goats were eaten and presumably kept in the village.

Occupation ended in an unexpected destruction: houses contained domestic metal-work, pottery, and stored food when they were burnt down (C, D, F, M). The evacuation was not only sudden but almost certainly violent: a sword and an axe, found on the cobbled surface outside one building, were buried in the collapse of its superstructure. Close by, a *grubenhäuser*, filled with burnt debris, contained a cannon-ball (C). Another, together with three primitive hand-grenades, one of which had successfully exploded, came from the destruction level which covered the *grubenhäuser*, cut into the foundations of the Large Basilica (F). It is improbable that solid cannon-balls and these grenades remained in use beyond the middle of the nineteenth century; so the destruction is unlikely to have occurred as late as the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78.<sup>103</sup> Coin-finds prove that the settlement was still occupied as late as 1774 but suggest that it was abandoned either during the last quarter of the eighteenth or early in the nineteenth century.<sup>104</sup> Nor was Stari Nikiup the only village in the region to be destroyed and abandoned about this time.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>101</sup> They ranged from single-roomed structures to elaborate multiple-roomed houses: N. Spasova, 'Ouzemnoto zhlishte v Nikopolsko i Plevensko', *Monoumenti i Pamenitsi na Kultura* 16/3 (1976), 26–34.

<sup>102</sup> K. Shkorpil, 'Materiali dlya Bolgarskih drevnostei Aboba-Pliska', *Izvestiya Rousskago Arheologicheskago Institouta v Konstantinopol* (Russian) 10 (1905), 473 and fig. CL, 4b.

<sup>103</sup> Russian forces crossed the Danube at Svishtov and divided into three armies, one of which pressed south and encountered little opposition on its way to liberate Turnovo: K. Sharova (ed.), *Istoriya na Bulgaria* vol. 6 (Sofia, 1987), 435–8. The site lay on the road leading south to Turnovo, and the crossing of the Rositsa may well have been of tactical importance. However, artillery on both the Turkish and Russian sides used high explosive shells at this time. Primitive cannon may have been employed in the defence of Turkish fortifications – but not as field guns – and there was no Turkish garrison in the immediate vicinity of Stari Nikiup.

<sup>104</sup> Two coins dated 1774–1789 came from the destruction-level and collapsed remains of buildings (M). Another of the same date was found in robber-spoil on the site of Tower 1 (P). A fourth post-medieval coin, dated 1788/9, was recovered from demolition rubble overlying the Small Basilica but could have been lost during late robbing, after post-medieval occupation had ended (K). Nevertheless, the fact that all the coins date to the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and none to the nineteenth, is probably significant, even though they cannot be taken as indicating that the settlement must have been destroyed before 1800: all the coins were silver and could have remained in circulation for some time. Two were pierced for suspension, probably to decorate the traditional Bulgarian necklace, and are unlikely to have been lost soon after they were minted.

<sup>105</sup> Vehototo Selo and Brestova Palanka were burnt down by the Turks, according to local tradition, because the villagers refused to hand over to the authorities a local priest turned bandit. The remaining villagers were resettled close by in the new village of Tsenovo, c. 35 km north of Stari Nikiup, perhaps between 1804 and 1809: Stefanov (1956), 48–50. Other villages in the vicinity of Stari Nikiup were also abandoned and perhaps burnt in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century; *ibid.*, 34–5, 54.

This was a turbulent period for Bulgaria and particularly for this region, close to the Danubian frontier of the Ottoman Empire; central government was unable to control the local warlords (*ayans*) whose loyalty to the sultan was, at best, nominal. Even when there was no immediate threat of invasion, Russian political intrigue fomented rebellion and banditry was endemic. Such a chaotic situation provides a bewildering choice of possible explanations for the destruction of Stari Nikiup. During the last years of the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–74, a Russian army crossed the Danube and captured Silistra, Tutrukan, and Rusé.<sup>106</sup> From 1785, during the frequent ‘Kurdjali uprisings’, Turkish bandits carried out attacks on villages and towns, and their raids continued unchecked until the end of the century.<sup>107</sup> East of the Yantra, an uprising took place around Rusé in 1787.<sup>108</sup> In that same year hostilities were resumed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire: it was probably the Russians who encouraged the rebellion, which was no doubt harshly suppressed as soon as the conclusion of peace between Russia and Turkey in 1792 provided the opportunity.<sup>109</sup> During the last decade of the eighteenth century, the sultan was powerless to control the *ayans*, notably the rebellious Pasvanoğlu Osman Paşa at Vidin and Tirsinklioglioğlu Ismail Ağa, ruler of Nicopol, Svishtov, Rusé, and Silistra, both of whom resisted attempts by Selim III to reimpose his authority.<sup>110</sup> To raise funds, villages were destroyed and their property sold to wealthy land-owners by Pasvanoğlu. By 1797, he had extended his rule east as far as Svishtov and Turnovo and at Tirsinklioglioğlu’s expense, a territorial dispute which may well have had unfortunate consequences for villages in the region.<sup>111</sup> The most ambitious Russian invasion occurred during the Russo-Turkish war of 1806–12: a Russian army crossed the Danube and a force, advancing from Rusé to Turnovo in 1810, must have crossed the Rositsa close to Stari Nikiup. The following year, a battle was fought at Batin, c. 10 km east of the mouth of the Yantra.<sup>112</sup> Bulgarians spied for the Russians and reported on the movement of Turkish transports in the direction of Nikiup.<sup>113</sup> Bulgarians actively supported the Russian invasion, enlisting in the Russian army and instigating local uprisings against the Turks.<sup>114</sup> The hasty disengagement of Russia, faced by Napoleon’s invasion in 1812, and the equally hasty conclusion of peace, provided the sultan with an unexpected opportunity to subdue the Danubian pashalics. At the same time he exacted retribution upon supporters of the rebellious *ayans* and those suspected of assisting the Russians during their invasion.<sup>115</sup>

Since local tradition firmly links the end of Stari Nikiup with the foundation of the modern village of Nikiup, an event otherwise assigned to 1785, the primary settlement may have been destroyed in that year, perhaps by bandits.<sup>116</sup> However, given the chaotic situation prevailing in the region in this period, Turkish bandits, one or other of the *ayans*, or the Ottoman army could each have been responsible for the destruction of the village. Of all the possibilities, the least likely is that the site was the scene of a battle between Russian and Turkish forces. The real reason may never be known, but the tradition that the inhabitants fled from Stari Nikiup and founded the new settlement to escape the Turks would seem an entirely plausible explanation for

<sup>106</sup> E. M. Shoukov (ed.), *Sovetskaya Istoricheskaya Entsiklopediya* (Russian) (Moscow, 1969), 376–9.

<sup>107</sup> Kosev (1985), 163, 167.

<sup>108</sup> Kosev (1985), 96.

<sup>109</sup> Encouraging rebellion in Bulgaria proved a useful tool of Russian diplomacy in this period: Shaw (1976), 271.

<sup>110</sup> Kosev (1985), 166–8; Shaw (1976), 253–4, 267, 271–2.

<sup>111</sup> Kosev (1985), 43, 166–7. For protection during this period of anarchy, villages around Lovech, to the west of Stari Nikiup, were abandoned, and the inhabitants sought refuge in the town and prepared their own defences: *ibid.*, 169. The reoccupation of ‘local defences’ is a remarkably similar response to the disintegration of central authority and the construction of hill-top defences in the early Byzantine period.

<sup>112</sup> E. M. Zhoukov (ed.), *Sovetskaya Istoricheskaya Entsiklopediya* (Russian), vol. 12 (Moscow, 1969), 382–3.

<sup>113</sup> Kosev (1985), 178. Whether this was Stari Nikiup or the new village is apparently unknown.

<sup>114</sup> Kosev (1985), 178–81.

<sup>115</sup> D. Kosev, ‘Les rapports agraires et le mouvement paysan en Bulgarie de la fin du XVIII siècle à nos jours’, *Études Historiques* 5 (1970), 69.

<sup>116</sup> To complicate matters further, Stari Nikiup may have continued to be occupied after the foundation of the new village: see ch. 1, p. 19. If this was so, the destruction may have had no direct connection with the foundation of the new settlement.

the abandonment of Stari Nikiup, one in keeping with the circumstances prevailing in northern Bulgaria at the time.<sup>117</sup>

After the destruction of the village, the site was no longer inhabited. Robbing continued, if sporadically, along the defences (A, C, and E, and probably P, R, S). During the nineteenth century the robber-trenches, still visible today as surface depressions, were dug to remove the last standing remains of early Byzantine buildings, some of which almost certainly survived so late because they had been reused in the post-medieval period (L).<sup>118</sup> Animals may have been corralled within a ditched enclosure in the north-western quarter of the site (B) and a north/south trackway was probably used to take away building materials (Fig. 10, 11, and 12).<sup>119</sup> The pasturing of animals no doubt accounts for the failure of tree cover to regenerate after the destruction of the post-medieval settlement and for the open aspect of the plateau, as it exists today, and as it was when the site of ancient Nicopolis was rediscovered by Kanitz in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

<sup>117</sup> However, it is likely that a study of documents of the period, notably census returns, would provide a date for the final abandonment of Stari Nikiup, and it is not improbable that research will also discover the real reason for the destruction of the settlement: see ch. 1, pp. 18–19.

<sup>118</sup> The Roman *castellum aquae*, west of the city, still stands to full height, probably because it was converted into a house in the post-medieval period: see ch. 1, p. 6.

<sup>119</sup> In 1891, 2,000 stone blocks from Nicopolis were taken for use in the construction of the nearby bridge across the Rositsa: Ivanov (1988b), 51.



## CHAPTER THREE

# AREA A: THE NORTHERN DEFENCES

### Summary

*A second-century house, destroyed by fire c. 170, was buried within the berm of the Roman defences, constructed c. 175. A V-shaped defensive ditch was replaced by a deeper and wider successor in the late fourth or early fifth century and reinforced with a mudbrick proteichisma on the berm. After a mid-fifth-century destruction, silt accumulated in the ditch until it was backfilled when the early Byzantine fortifications were built. Early Byzantine occupation in this area was limited to a hearth, although two, possibly three, buildings, visible in the baulk, extended east of the area. The foundations of the curtain-wall were robbed in the post-medieval period.*

### INTRODUCTION

Excavation began in 1985 and continued for three further seasons (1986–8). The area (10 m west/east and 15 m north/south) was laid out in the first season and was not extended, but weathering of the eastern section during the winter of 1988/89 revealed an early Byzantine wall, which was recorded in 1989.<sup>1</sup> In 1985, Professor Slokoska commenced excavation immediately north of the area, and established that beyond Area A's northern section only the lowest portion of the foundations of the Roman and early Byzantine curtain-wall survived post-medieval robbing.<sup>2</sup>

### PERIOD 1: PRIMARY PITS, THE ROAD, THE HOUSE AND ITS DESTRUCTION (Fig. 11)

The earliest features identified were two shallow rubbish pits in the north-eastern corner of the area: one (2274), partly within the eastern section, containing a sandy silt fill and lenses of pure ash (Fig. 12); the other (2272), containing a clayey silt backfill (2259), a Roman lock-bolt (SF 5310), fragments of burnt mud-wall and charcoal, cut into a clean, natural deposit (2275) of clayey silt (Fig. 13A). A third pit (2268), 1.10 m in diameter, was unusual; in plan it had a regular, circular shape, it had vertical sides, and was 3.17 m deep (Plate IXA). It may have served as a well.<sup>3</sup> The lowest fill of clean silt contained a large quantity of pottery, including two almost complete vessels; a two-handled cup [764] and a crude hand-made cup [3]. The hole had been backfilled with clayey silt and ash (2260), including fine-sieve products from the preparation of bread wheat, and animal bone.

<sup>1</sup> Area A was located at the southern end of the *cardo* which continued north to reach the north gate of the Roman city (Fig. 3). Since it was presumed that the north and south gates were, like the west and east gates, axially positioned, it was anticipated that the south gate of the Roman city would be found on the north side of Area A. This presumption proved incorrect. Instead, the south gate of the Roman city was located one *insula* further west, see Area C, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1985, 85–6; *ibid.*, 1989, 300–2; *ibid.*, 1994, 171–2. The intention was to extend Area A for a further 5 m to the north to include the full width of the southern robber-mound. However, since Professor Slokoska commenced excavation immediately to the north, it was judged unsafe to do so. As it turned out, the effort involved in removing the dump of robbing spoil would have achieved little: the foundations of the curtain-wall had been so deeply robbed that it would have been impossible to establish any direct stratigraphic relationship between the defences and the excavated deposits within Area A.

<sup>3</sup> Well-head stones have been found within the Roman city: Ivanov (1988b), 59; Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 46–9.

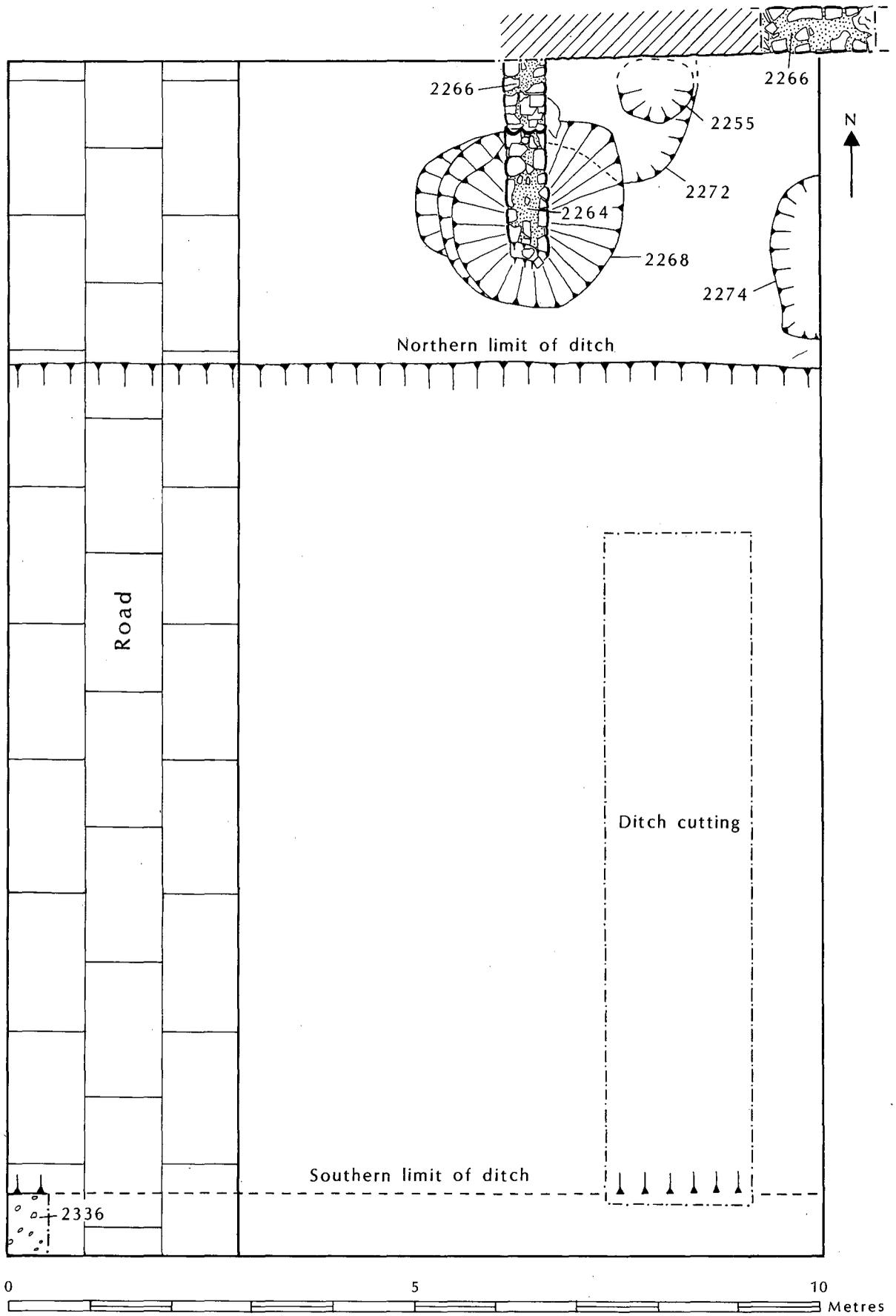


Fig. 11 Area A. Early pits, the house, Period 1; location of paved road and the defensive ditch, Periods 2 and 3.





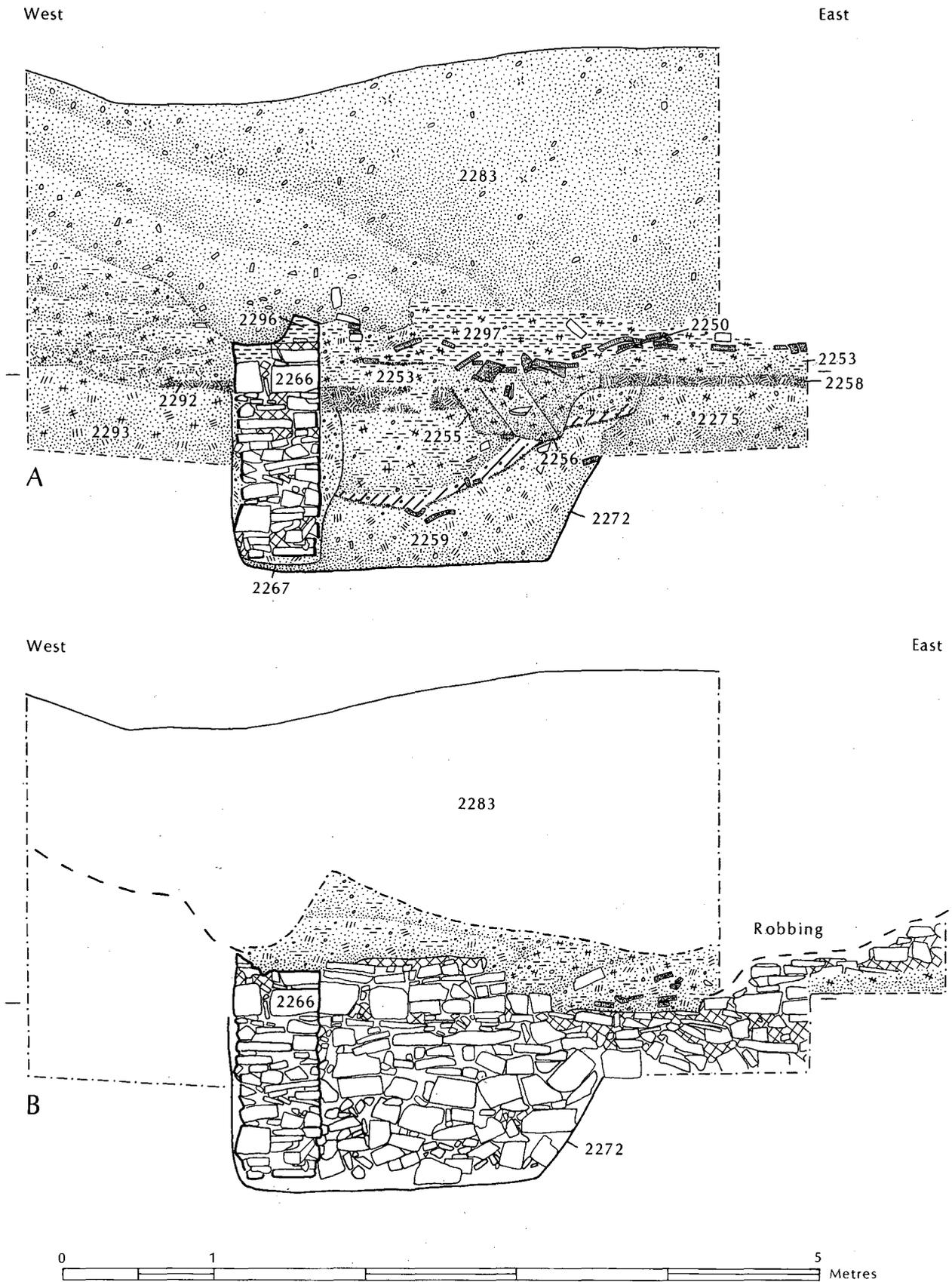


Fig. 13 Area A. A: the Roman house, north section. B: the Roman house, north section after cleaning revealed the west/east wall, Period I.

Above the backfilled rubbish pits, a thin band of white mortar (2301) represented the construction-level for a building (Fig. 12). The southern end of a north/south wall (2266), which protruded from the northern section, had been inserted into a foundation trench (2267), dug down through the backfill (2259) of the underlying pit (2272) (Plate IXA, Fig. 13A). Cleaning back the northern section revealed that the wall turned at right angles *c.* 0.10 m into the northern section and continued east into, and beyond, the eastern baulk (Plate IXB, Fig. 13B). The foundations for this west/east wall were 0.40 m deep where they cut the underlying natural (2275), but, like those of the north/south wall, were 1.10 m deep where the builders, aware of the danger of subsidence, had taken care to cut the foundation trench down to the bottom of the backfilled pit (2272). The foundations were built from irregularly coursed, limestone blocks, bonded with an off-white mortar with occasional pebbles. The superstructure of the building stood to a height of 0.30 m and was built from courses of more regularly laid limestone blocks, bonded with the same off-white mortar. Both these low stone walls served as footings for a superstructure of mudbrick or pisé, a burnt portion of which (2296) survived *in situ* on top of the north/south wall (Fig. 13A). The building had a simple clay floor (2258). The walls were preserved because they had been buried within the berm of the Period 2 defences, although *c.* 3.50 m south of the west/east wall the building had been destroyed by the Roman defensive ditch (2237), which had also sliced through the building's clay floor (Fig. 12). Unfortunately, it was not possible to examine the western half of the northern section in order to establish whether or not the building continued to the west.<sup>4</sup> However, it seems probable that it did so; a clay surface (2292), which sealed the foundation cut for the north/south wall, continued west and probably represented a continuation of the clay floor (2258) found on the east side of the north/south wall (Fig. 13A). The north/south wall (2266) stopped on the north side of the 'well' (2268) and the wall's foundations did not appear in the west side of the cut. Perhaps there was a doorway immediately south of the butt-end of the north/south wall. If so, it was subsequently blocked by a roughly coursed and mortared wall (2264) which abutted the north/south wall (2266). This late wall (2264) was notably cruder than the primary structure: it lacked foundations and had subsided into the backfilled 'well' (Fig. 14).

A post-pit (2255), 0.80 m wide, cut through the clay floor (2258), close to the west/east wall of the building. It contained a post-pipe (2256) for a timber upright, *c.* 0.25 m in diameter, which had been subsequently levered out of its hole (Fig. 13A). A vertical timber, so close to the north wall of the room, is difficult to explain since it served no obvious function.<sup>5</sup>

The *cardo*, immediately north of Area A and within the Roman city, had been cut by the Roman defences of Period 2 (Fig. 3).<sup>6</sup> The road had continued south, at least as far as the southern end of Area A: a robber-trench (2336), which following the central road drain, was located in the south-west corner of the area, cut on the north side by the Roman defensive ditch of Period 3.<sup>7</sup> No road-slabs were found: they were probably removed when the defences were constructed.<sup>8</sup> North of the city wall, where the paving of this *cardo* survived intact, the road was 5.0 m wide. With its side slabs, the full width was 6.0 m.<sup>9</sup> Since the drain, like all the other streets within the Roman city, must have been under the middle of the road, the eastern limit of the roadway can be determined with confidence. It follows that the north/south wall (2266) must have been *c.* 3.40 m east of the road. As suggested above, the building probably extended west of the north/south wall (2264), which, consequently, must have been a party-wall between two rooms and it is likely that the building extended as far as the east side of the *cardo*.

<sup>4</sup> Immediately north of the western half of Area A, Professor Slokoska extended her excavation to within 2 m of our northern baulk. It was judged too dangerous to reduce the baulk between the two areas.

<sup>5</sup> This post-pit was covered by the destruction level of tiles and would not seem to have been cut after the destruction of the house as were the series of post-holes noted below, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> L. Slokoska, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1986, 123–4; Slokoska (1994), 172.

<sup>7</sup> There is no doubt that this was the robber-trench for the drain: it is on exactly the same alignment as the surviving portion of the drain, immediately north of the area and within the Roman defences.

<sup>8</sup> Note that the geophysical survey clearly indicated that the *cardo*, coming south from the southern gate of the city (and excavated in Areas B and C), was the only road to retain its paving after the construction of the Roman defences. See further, ch. 2, pp. 22 and 28.

<sup>9</sup> Ivanov (1988), 56–7; L. Slokoska, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1985, 85–6.

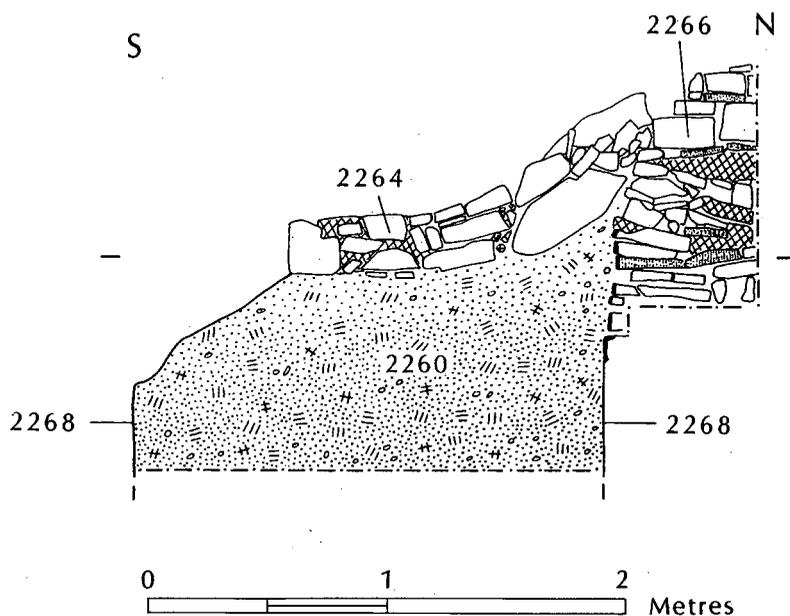


Fig. 14 Area A. North/south wall of the Roman house above a backfilled well or pit (2268), Period 1.

An iron grid-iron (SF 5087) was found on the building's floor, which was covered with a sandy silt deposit (2253), containing ash, charcoal, and fragments of burnt mud-walls (Fig. 13A). Immediately above, and sealing this deposit, were the fragmented remains of a collapsed roof of Laconian tiles (2250), which contained large nails of Type N/1 (Figs 12, 13A, and 15).<sup>10</sup> This, in turn, was overlain by the collapsed and burnt remains of the building's mudbrick or pisé superstructure (2297).

Cutting into the tile destruction deposit and, west of the building, cutting into collapsed mud-wall which was probably part of the same destruction level, but sealed by the berm of the Period 2 defences, were four post-holes (2074, 2070, 2078, 2077), which appeared to form an irregular line running immediately south of the northern section (Fig. 15).<sup>11</sup> Their position in the sequence is clear: they postdated the destruction of the building and predated the construction of the berm and, presumably, the completion of the Roman defences. However, their purpose is uncertain. Possibly, they represent building activity, perhaps derrick-holes for scaffolding, used during the building of the curtain-wall. They might have formed part of a timber palisade, predating the erection of the Roman defences, but the posts would seem too few and too widely spaced for this to be a likely explanation.

## Dating

*Pottery.* From Pit 2272 Ware 30/31 jars [21, 24] and plain lids [25]. The deep pit or well (2268) contained a large quantity of pottery, c. 700 sherds, including in Wares 30 and 31 large jars [11],

<sup>10</sup> Of six nails recovered from this context and the underlying deposit (2253), all were Type N/1. Presumably, either the roof-timbers had been nailed together or the tiles were secured with them.

<sup>11</sup> The mud-wall collapse, into which the western post-holes were dug, ran west/east and extended c. 0.60 m south from the northern baulk. It may well have come from the superstructure of the west/east wall of the building, presumed to have been immediately behind the northern section.

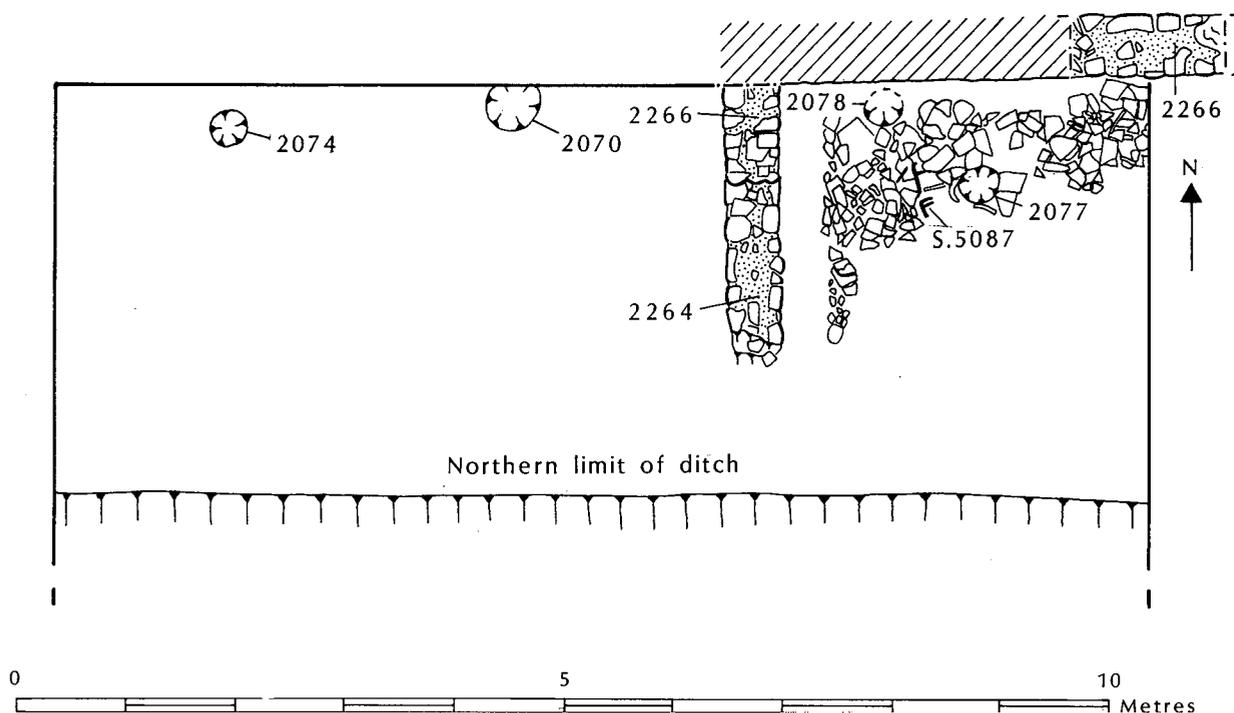


Fig. 15 Area A. Collapsed roof-tile within the building and post-holes cut through the destruction deposit, Period 1.

collared jars [16, 19], and thickened-rim lids [26], dated to *c.* 100–130. The destruction deposit and the fills of two of the post-holes (2070, 2077) cut through the tiled-roof collapse produced little pottery but included no examples of Wares 30 and 31 but some sherds of Ware 1, dated later than 130.

*Coin.* 96/98 (Cat. No. 97) from the upper fill of the ‘well’ (2268).

### Discussion (Fig. 11)

During the earliest years after the foundation of the city, the area was used for digging rubbish pits and perhaps for a well (2268), which were then backfilled towards the middle of the second century. This was probably carried out in preparation for the construction of the building. Sufficient survived of one room to prove that the superstructure comprised a low mortared wall, *c.* 0.30 m high, completed in mudbrick or pisé.<sup>12</sup> Despite its simple clay floor, the quality of the primary walls and its tiled roof suggest that it was not an outbuilding, but probably part of a private house, fronting the road which ran down the west side of the area. As in Area B, the road may have been built as late as *c.* 150, about the time the house was constructed, although it is possible that this *cardo* was paved earlier in the second century.<sup>13</sup>

The destruction of the house by fire, before its tiled roof or timbers could be salvaged, can be dated no earlier than the middle of the second century. Moreover, since the remains of the building

<sup>12</sup> Mudbrick construction was used both in the second century (see Area C, p. 78) and in the early Byzantine period (Cutting H, p. 237). Pisé was the method employed in the Severan house in Area M, which also had mortared stone footings, p. 191. Not enough of the mud-wall survived *in situ* to determine which of the two methods was used in this case.

<sup>13</sup> This road led to the eastern entrance to the *agora* and may well have connected the street-grid with the main Roman road, which by-passed the city to the north, see ch. 2, p. 25. It was probably used as a direct route from the city, down the ‘valley’ on the south-east side of the site, to the river. By 136, the *agora* was built and the most important roads were probably constructed, perhaps including this *cardo*. Those on the southern periphery of the city were probably not built until the middle of the second century, see ch. 1, p. 11.

were preserved within the berm of the Roman defences, constructed *c.* 175, and, in particular, since traces of the mudbrick or pisé superstructure were still *in situ* when the ruins were buried, it is probable that a period of no more than a few years elapsed between the destruction of the building and the construction of the city wall.<sup>14</sup> The building was probably destroyed towards the end of the third quarter of the second century. An accidental destruction cannot be discounted. However, the Costoboci invaded Lower Moesia in 170 and are known to have sacked towns in Moesia and Thrace.<sup>15</sup> Given the probability that the building was destroyed at about this time, it is not unlikely that the two events were connected. It may have been destroyed by the Costoboci or it might have been fired by the citizens themselves, particularly if the line of post-holes, cut through the debris, and apparently running along the northern section, was part of a hastily erected defensive palisade. However, as noted above, a more mundane explanation, connected with construction of the defences, is more likely to account for the erection of vertical timbers after the destruction of the house.

### PERIOD 2: THE PRIMARY DEFENCES (Fig. 12)

All but the lower foundations of the city wall, immediately north of Area A, had been robbed out, although substantial remains of a secondary internal tower were preserved north and immediately west of the area (Fig. 3).<sup>16</sup> Within Area A, a deposit of clayey silt was dumped over the remains of the Roman house to create the berm between the city wall and a V-shaped ditch (2237) which, heavily truncated by the Period 3 ditch (2238), was at least 3.0 m deep. It cut through the clay floor (2258) of the Period 1 house and had totally destroyed the southern end of the building.<sup>17</sup> The ditch passed through the area from west to east, running south of, and parallel with, the southern wall of the city (Fig. 11). At the end of Period 2, this ditch was backfilled with silty clay (2248) in preparation for the cutting of the Period 3 ditch (2238), which replaced it.

### Dating

*Pottery.* From the backfill of the ditch (2237), a mixture of second- to fourth-century types, including third/fourth-century amphora sherds in Ware 96, but also examples of Ware 14 and angular-rim cooking-pots [142], dated *c.* 400.

*Coins.* From the make-up for the berm: 347/348 (Cat. No. 219), 348/361 (Cat. No. 282). From the backfill of Ditch 1, a silver coin of Licinius, 321/324 (Cat. No. 160).

*Finds.* The backfill of Ditch 1 produced a fibula (SF 5281), datable to the second half of the fourth century.

### Discussion

It was no doubt during the construction of the defences *c.* 175 that the southern section of the road, cut off from the Roman city by the curtain-wall, was deprived of its paving slabs, perhaps for use in building the fortifications, and the drain was robbed out.<sup>18</sup> The ditch (2237) would seem to have been retained in use throughout the third and fourth centuries, without apparent improvement: its V-

<sup>14</sup> Once the tiled roof had collapsed, and the walls were exposed to the elements, the mudbrick superstructure would have rapidly begun to dissolve, cf. Area F, p. 152.

<sup>15</sup> See ch. 1, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> L. Slokoska, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1985, 85–6; idem, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1988, 86; Slokoska (1989), 301.

<sup>17</sup> It is just possible that this was not the first defensive ditch: an earlier ditch located further from the curtain-wall would have been completely removed during the construction of Ditch 2 in Period 3. In Area C, five phases of ditch digging and repair have been identified, see pp. 91–104.

<sup>18</sup> For the use of road-slabs in the construction or reconstruction of the defences, see Area C, p. 94

shaped profile suggests that it was regularly cleaned.<sup>19</sup> The backfilling of this defensive ditch, before the cutting of its larger, Period 3 successor, could not have been carried out until the end of the fourth and may well date to the fifth century.<sup>20</sup>

### PERIOD 3: IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DEFENCE OF THE LATE ROMAN CITY (Fig. 16)

The second defensive ditch (2238) had a rounded profile but was altogether a more impressive feature: it was c. 4.0 m deep and c. 12 m wide (Fig. 12). On the outer edge of the berm, and running parallel with the ditch, were the burnt remains of a mudbrick wall (2021), c. 0.50 m wide, built over a rough base of limestone blocks. Within this structure were the carbonized remains of two substantial wooden beams (2041, 2042), each c. 0.08 by 0.22 m in section. These appear to have been laid horizontally along the sides of the mudbrick wall. However, since the feature had collapsed and had been disturbed by levelling of the site in Period 4, it remains uncertain whether the timbers were used as secondary strengthening of the structure, or had formed part of the superstructure. The mudbrick wall continued west and east beyond the baulks; it would seem to have been a linear feature, constructed on the very edge of the ditch, into which it finally collapsed; its remains cascaded down the north side of the ditch and were clearly visible as a line of clay (2190), burnt to a deep orange and red colour by the intensity of the fire which destroyed it (Fig. 12). The debris was never cleared away.

#### Dating

*Pottery.* The collapsed remains of the mud-wall (2190) included Ware 14 pattern-burnished sherds of fifth-century date.

*Coins.* From the collapsed mud-wall (2190): 395/408 (Cat. No. 495), 408/419 (Cat. No. 603).

#### Discussion

The large defensive ditch (2238) postdated the backfilling of the Period 2 ditch (2237) in the late fourth or early fifth century. Stone walls, forming a first line of defence, on the outer side of the berm (*proteichismata*) are well-attested, in the eastern Balkans, during the fifth and sixth centuries; an innovation believed to have been introduced after the construction of the double walls at Constantinople during the reign of Theodosius II.<sup>21</sup> The mudbrick wall probably functioned as such an outwork: *proteichismata* in mudbrick were commonly used in the Hellenistic period and were effective defence against siege machinery.<sup>22</sup> The wall could also have protected defenders and *ballistae*, set up on the berm (Fig. 38).<sup>23</sup> The latest coin from the remains of the mudbrick wall provides a *terminus post quem* of 408 for its construction.

The provision of a deeper and wider ditch, late in the fourth or early in the fifth century, is hardly surprising: these were troubled times.<sup>24</sup> However, there is reason to suspect that Ditch 2 was cut at the same time as the *proteichisma* was built. The backfilling of the earlier ditch (2237) must have

<sup>19</sup> The berm was maintained during Period 3 and finds from it do not provide a *terminus post quem* for the primary ditch (2237). No doubt the berm was periodically repaired during Period 2 and Period 3.

<sup>20</sup> If, as seems likely, the digging of the second ditch (2238) was connected with the construction of the *proteichisma*, then the first ditch (2237) was retained in use at least into the early years of the fifth century.

<sup>21</sup> See ch. 2, p. 33 note 36.

<sup>22</sup> Mudbrick was presumably the method of construction although no individual bricks were recognized in the collapsed remains of the structure. See further, ch. 2, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> The presence of artillery would presuppose the presence of a military garrison, which, by the late fourth century, is more than likely, see ch. 1, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> See ch. 1, p. 16.

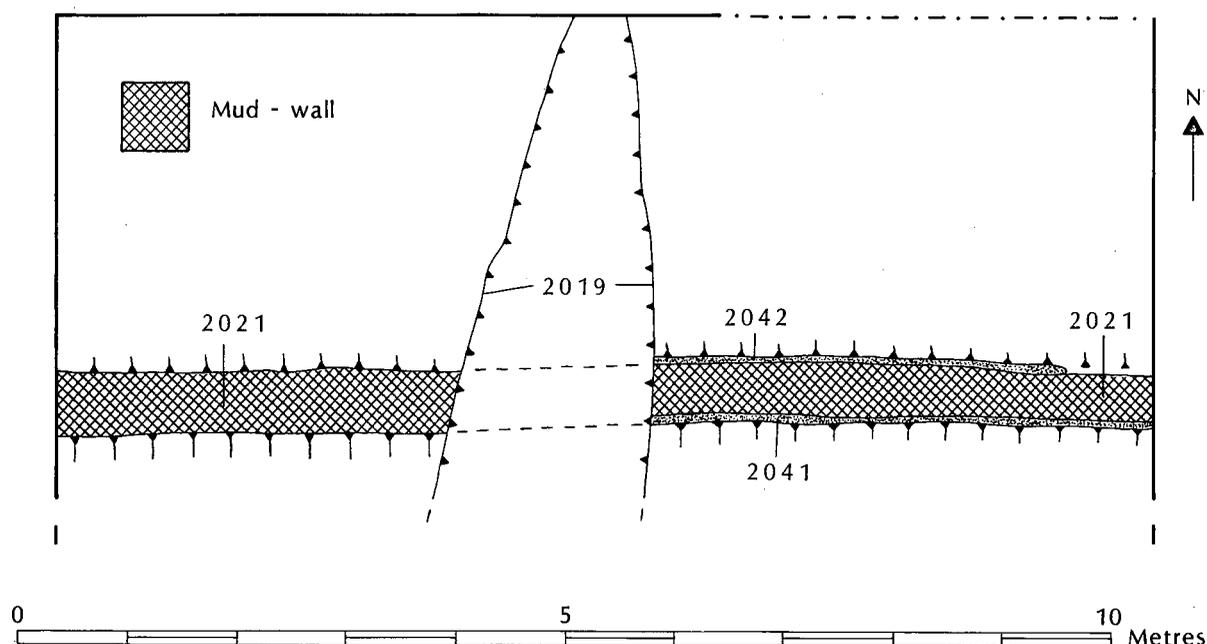


Fig. 16 Area A. West/east mudbrick wall (*proteichisma*) on the berm, immediately behind the defensive ditch, Period 3.

involved considerable effort. Probably, the intention was to widen the berm: the northern side of the second ditch (2238) was *c.* 2.0 m further away from the curtain-wall than the northern side of its predecessor (2237). It seems likely that this was carried out in order to provide more space for the *proteichisma* and for defenders to pass freely between the ditch and the city wall.<sup>25</sup> These improvements to the defences would have been sensible countermeasures to take if there was reason to believe that the city might be attacked by an enemy capable of deploying siege machinery. It is therefore perhaps no coincidence that the wider ditch and *proteichisma* were provided at this time and not during the fourth century: unlike the Goths, the Huns, who invaded in the 440s, proved adept at besieging and successfully capturing cities.<sup>26</sup> If the digging of the larger ditch (2238) and the construction of the *proteichisma* were a response to the Hunnic invasion, neither proved an adequate defence. The destruction of the mudbrick wall by fire can hardly have been accidental. A spear-head (SF 5214) was found in the bottom fill of the ditch. Still more compelling as evidence for the sack of the city was the failure to clear the destruction debris from the berm or from the ditch and the subsequent abandonment of the defences during Period 4. The destruction, followed by abandonment, evidenced also in other areas across the site, strongly suggests that the occupation of the late Roman city was violently terminated towards the middle of the fifth century.<sup>27</sup>

#### PERIOD 4: ABANDONMENT (Fig. 12)

After the destruction of the *proteichisma*, there accumulated a silty clay deposit (2230) in the bottom of the ditch (2238), followed by a clayey silt deposit (2224) to a height of *c.* 0.50 m.

#### Dating

None.

<sup>25</sup> It was also in the first half of the fifth century that the berm was cobbled, presumably because it was then used as a walk-way. See Area C, p. 104.

<sup>26</sup> See ch. 1, p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> See ch. 2, pp. 34–5.

## Discussion

The destruction of the late Roman city can be dated to *c.* 450.<sup>28</sup> It is more difficult to estimate how long the period of abandonment lasted. The molluscs, recovered from the bottom of the ditch, suggest that long grass grew in the accumulating sediment and irregular depressions (probably root-holes) were identified on the outer side of the ditch; it seems that this period lasted long enough for vegetation, including bushes or small trees, to take hold. There is therefore clear evidence for a period of abandonment or, at least, a period during which no attempt was made to reinstate the defensive ditch. Similar evidence for dereliction has been noted in other areas at this time.<sup>29</sup> Here, the accumulation of silt deposits and the growth of vegetation suggest that there may well have been no activity in the area for several years.<sup>30</sup>

### PERIOD 5: THE BACKFILLING OF THE DITCH AND EARLY BYZANTINE OCCUPATION (Fig. 12)

Successive tips of rubble and stone (2213), followed by clayey silt (2123), which contained ash, mortar, pieces of burnt mud-wall, and architectural fragments, including part of a column (SF 5308), were thrown into the ditch. This debris had probably been taken from the latest occupation level within the Roman city: it included animal bones, tiles, and numerous small-finds.<sup>31</sup>

Above the backfilled ditch, an oven (2261) was carefully constructed (Plate XA). The central chamber, 0.80 m in diameter, was encircled by a foundation of limestone blocks and tile, 0.11 m high, and the remnants of collapsed mud-walls, probably part of its domed superstructure (Fig. 17). It had a clay floor, slightly concave in profile; this was covered by a thick deposit of powdery ash and seeds, perhaps the remains of fuel. Immediately west of the chamber, ten roof-tiles (2271) had been carefully laid on a clay foundation (2278), 0.90 m north/south and at least 1.0 m west/east, which, like the floor of the chamber, had been scorched by intense heat. The roof-tiles must have been complete when positioned in front of the chamber, with their convex sides upwards, four laid north/south and six west/east, slightly overlapping each other. The tiles were covered by fragments of burnt mud-wall which may have come from an enclosed flue, built over the tiled floor or, if the tiles represented an external hearth, they may have come from the domed roof of the oven. Certainly, the tiles had been broken *in situ*, as if someone had stood upon them which rather suggests that they formed a cooking hearth just outside the oven. This 'paving' extended into the western section. Animal bones were found in and around the oven, probably from cooking. To the south of the oven, an irregular spread of broken tiles and limestone fragments (2270) formed a roughly paved surface. Also extending south from the oven, there was a concentration of larger tile fragments (2276) which may well have been discarded, perhaps surplus to requirements when the paving (2271) was laid down (Fig. 17). Amongst the collapsed remains of the oven, and over the rubble surface, a variety of small-finds were found, including an iron file (SF 5285), a knife-blade (SF 5289), a fifth/sixth-century fibula (SF 5262), and a billhook (SF 5267).

Weathering of the eastern section, during the winter of 1988/89, revealed a wall (2335), sealed by the Period 6 robber-spoil (2283), its foundations cut into the final backfill (2310) of the second

<sup>28</sup> See ch. 2, pp. 34–5.

<sup>29</sup> For similar signs of abandonment, almost certainly dating to the same period, see Area C, pp. 104–5, Area F, p. 152, and Area K, pp. 178–9.

<sup>30</sup> However, it is probable that this period lasted only a few years and no longer, see ch. 2, p. 37.

<sup>31</sup> Finds included: bone pins (Cat. Nos 4, 44, 72), a bone needle (Cat. No. 130), an iron knife-blade (SF 5121), 15 Type N/1 nails (SF 5127, 5130, 5131, 5134 (3 examples), 5139, 5155, 5170, 5202, 5246 (2 examples), 14056, 14082 (2 examples)), 1 copper-alloy nail Type 14 (SF 5137), *opus sectile* (SF 5120, 5122), copper-alloy objects (a decorative boss (SF 5200), a pin (SF 5118), a spatula (SF 5138), and two *styli* (SF 5117, 5226)). For similar deposits, probably also brought in from the abandoned Roman city and used in the construction of the early Byzantine defences, see, in particular, Area P, pp. 214–15 and Area R, p. 221.

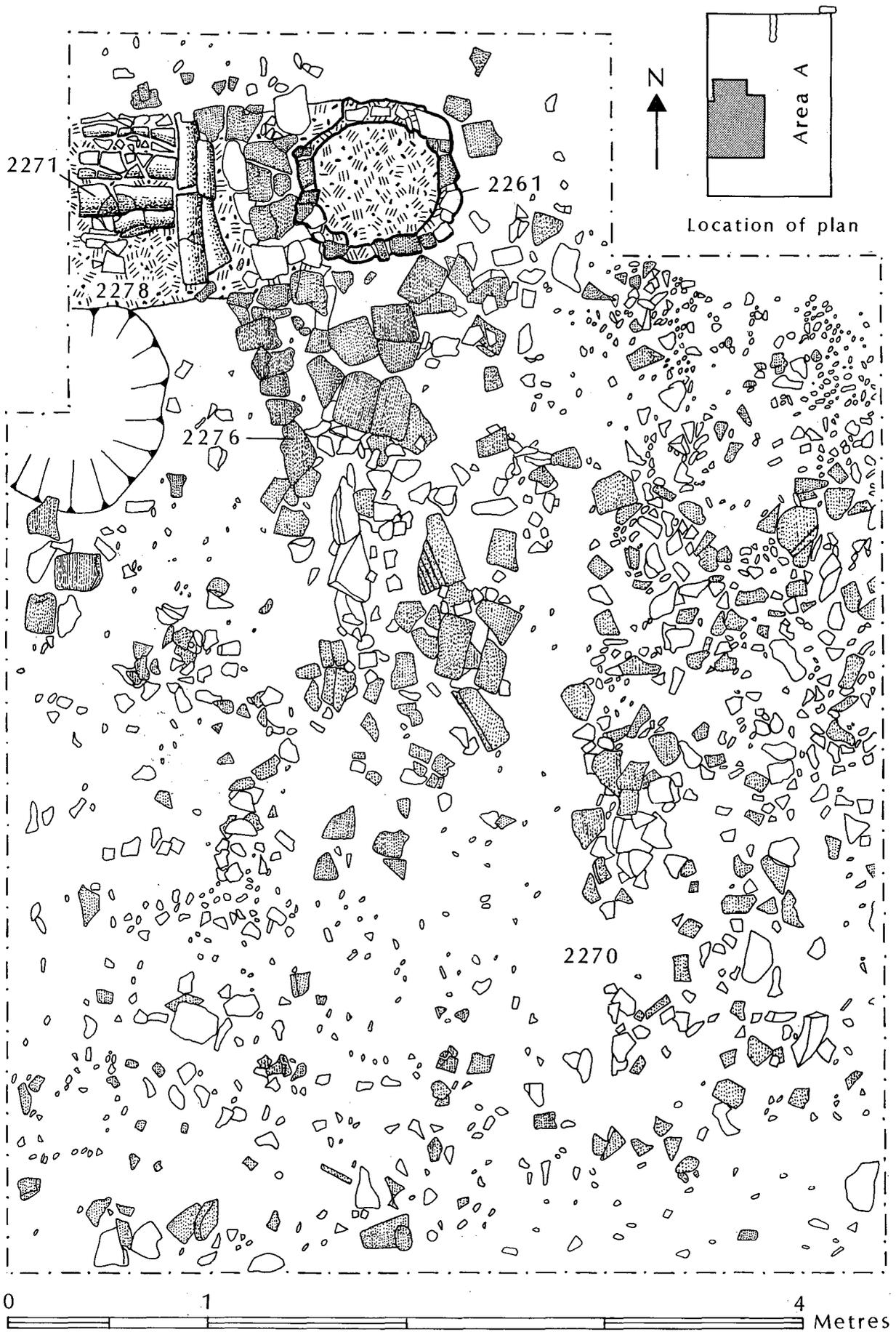


Fig. 17 Area A. Oven and paved surface over the backfilled ditch, Period 5.

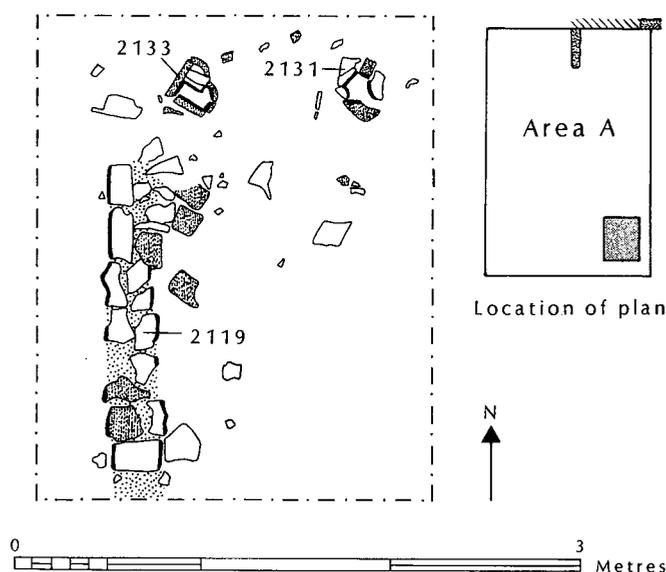


Fig. 18 Building in south-eastern corner of Area A, Period 5.

ditch (2238). It was well-built from limestone blocks and tile, bonded with a sandy silt. The wall survived *c.* 0.60 m above its foundations which were *c.* 0.50 m deep. Since no trace of the building had been found within the area, and since its northern and southern ends were built of larger blocks, which formed convincing ends to the structure, this 2.20 m length of wall was probably the western end of a building which continued beyond the eastern baulk.

In the south-eastern corner of the area, a single foundation of limestone and soil (2119) extended *c.* 1.70 m north of the southern section (Fig. 18). It had been inserted into the latest backfill of the ditch and appears to have been the west side of a building, which continued south and east of the area. Immediately east of its northern end there were two post-holes (2133, 2131), 0.90 m apart. Probably, the structure was open-ended to the north, fronted by a timber colonnade. Rubble in the eastern section (2308), may well have come from this building.

Less certainty attaches to another wall foundation (2312), only identified in the eastern section. It comprised a roughly coursed structure of stone with earth bonding. Like the wall (2335) to the south, the foundation cut into the final backfill (2310) of the large ditch (2238) and to a similar depth. If this was another early Byzantine structure, it also must have continued east of the area.

## Dating

*Pottery.* From the highest backfill (2310) within the large ditch (2238): thin-walled jars [220] and everted-neck cooking-pots with internal ledge [119], dated 450–600. From the earth bonding in the wall (2335) in the eastern section: a sherd of an everted-neck cooking-pot [119], dated 450–600. From the rubble spread (2270): Ware 14, Ware 1 thin-walled jars [220], everted-neck cooking-pots with internal ledges [110, 114, 115, 119, 120, 123], and triangular-rim cooking-pots [136], all dated 450–600.

*Coins.* From the highest backfill (2310), within the large ditch (2238) and immediately below the foundations of the building (2335), in the eastern section, 518/522 (Cat. No. 636); from the rubble spread (2270), *c.* 300/450 (Cat. Nos 573, 576), 364/378 (Cat. No. 423).

*Finds.* From the backfill of the large ditch (2238), an inscribed pot-lid of fifth/sixth-century date (SF 5126).<sup>32</sup> From the rubble spread (2270), an iron fibula of fifth/sixth-century type (SF 5262).

<sup>32</sup> See ch. 18, No. 13, p. 322.

## Discussion

The large ditch (2238) was backfilled with debris which probably was brought in from the ruins of the late Roman city. This must have been carried out during the construction of the early Byzantine defences when the eastern half of the late Roman city wall was reused in the new defended enclosure.<sup>33</sup> Given the size of the excavation area (150 square metres), it is remarkable that so little evidence for structures dating to the early Byzantine period was found. Only along the north side of the site, had Period 6 robbing cut down to the top of the Period 1 house and would have destroyed any early Byzantine structures, built close to the curtain-wall, if they had existed (Figs 12 and 13B). The hearth and its associated rubble surface were the only signs of occupation fully within the area, although the quantity of early Byzantine pottery which came from this surface clearly indicates use of the site, if only for the disposal of rubbish, during the late fifth or sixth century. The impression, provided by the geophysical surveys, that this side of the early Byzantine enclosure was not occupied by many buildings, would certainly seem to have been true in this area.<sup>34</sup> Frustratingly, only two (and possibly three) buildings were located, all going east, beyond the section. One building (2335), only 2.10 m wide, was probably not of any size: it can be assigned to the sixth century, and later than the reign of Justin I (518–22).

### PERIOD 6: POST-MEDIEVAL ROBBING OF THE DEFENCES (Fig. 12)

No post-medieval structures were found and activity would seem to have been confined to robbing the defences. A west/east trench followed the course of the curtain-wall, no doubt dug to rob the foundations. This sliced through the upper part of the Period 1 building and was then backfilled with rubble (2317). Two major periods of robbing were clearly visible in the eastern section (2283, 2306): deposits of powdery rubble and stones formed tip-lines, slanting south as they covered the early Byzantine buildings. For no obvious reason, the mound of spoil was cut, from topsoil, by a late funnel-shaped ditch (2019), only 0.60 m wide in the northern section, but which widened and deepened where it cut through the mudbrick *proteichisma* of Period 3, and petered out 5 m south of the northern section (Fig. 16).

## Dating

*Pottery.* From the robber-spoil (2283), post-medieval glazed pottery.

*Finds.* From the robber-spoil (2283): a calkin (SF 3), a donkey-shoe (SF 1001), a piece of copper-alloy binding (SF 15), and a chisel (SF 1002), all of post-medieval date.

## Discussion

Architectural fragments of Roman date (SF 14, 16, 17) and a column-base (SF 13) came from the robber-spoil (2283). Presumably, they had been salvaged from the Roman city for use in the Roman or early Byzantine walls. The robbing of the foundations of the city wall and probably also the demolition of its superstructure were carried out in this period.

<sup>33</sup> See Area C, p. 107 and ch. 2, p. 39.

<sup>34</sup> See ch. 16, p. 262 and ch. 2, p. 42.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# AREA B: THE ROMAN ROAD

### Summary

*Pits, dating to the earliest period of Roman occupation (c. 110–150), were sealed by the slabs of a paved road, running south from the Roman city. During the third century, the road was cut by a wide ditch which was backfilled when, late in the third or early in the fourth century, the road surface was repaired with cobbles. This cobbled surface, at least 15 m wide, perhaps the site of an extramural market, probably continued in use down to the middle of the fifth century. In the post-medieval period a north/south ditch probably formed the eastern perimeter of a stock enclosure.*

### INTRODUCTION

During the first season of excavation (1985), this area was selected to examine two features. The first was a discontinuous ditch, visible as a surface depression, which enclosed the north-western quarter of the site (Fig. 5).<sup>1</sup> The second was a north/south linear feature, identified as a high-resistance anomaly, leading north to the defences.<sup>2</sup> The primary area (10 m west/east by 3 m north/south) was positioned to section the ditch and to extend west as far as the eastern side of the linear feature, which proved to be the remains of a paved Roman road. In 1986, the western 7 m of the area was extended north by 3 m and the full width of the area then extended west by 5 m. In 1987, the size of the area remained unchanged and excavation was completed. The natural silty clay was reached only c. 0.70–1.0 m below topsoil. The sequence in this area proved of singular importance for dating the Roman pottery.

### PERIOD 1: EARLY OCCUPATION, c. 108–150 (Fig. 19)

Two pits represented the earliest activity in this area: both were cut into the natural silty clay and predated the Period 2 road, the central slabs of which survived *in situ* (Plate XI). The larger of the two was oval in plan and bell-shaped in section (264), 1.90 m deep and 1.40 m in diameter at the top, widening to 2.20 m at the bottom (Fig. 20). Its lower fill (352), a silty loam with small lumps of clay and charcoal flecks, was followed by a silty loam (265) with tile fragments and bands of sandy silt, the latter deposited by natural weathering of the sides of the pit. The hole was used to dispose of domestic waste: it contained quantities of fine-sieve by-products, probably from food preparation, together with pottery and animal bones, a deposit quite distinct from the upper fill (224) of clayey silt and building debris used to backfill the pit and level up the ground for the paved road, one slab of which (233) still covered the west side of the pit (Fig. 20). A smaller, oval pit (322), 1.20 m in diameter and 0.65 m deep, was cut by the Period 2 side-drain (325) which joined the main road drain beneath the paving slabs. The bottom fill comprised a silty clay. Both pits must have been completely covered by the paving for the Period 2 road.

<sup>1</sup> It also showed clearly as a negative anomaly in the resistivity survey, see Plate XXXVII and Fig. 10.

<sup>2</sup> See ch. 16, p. 263.

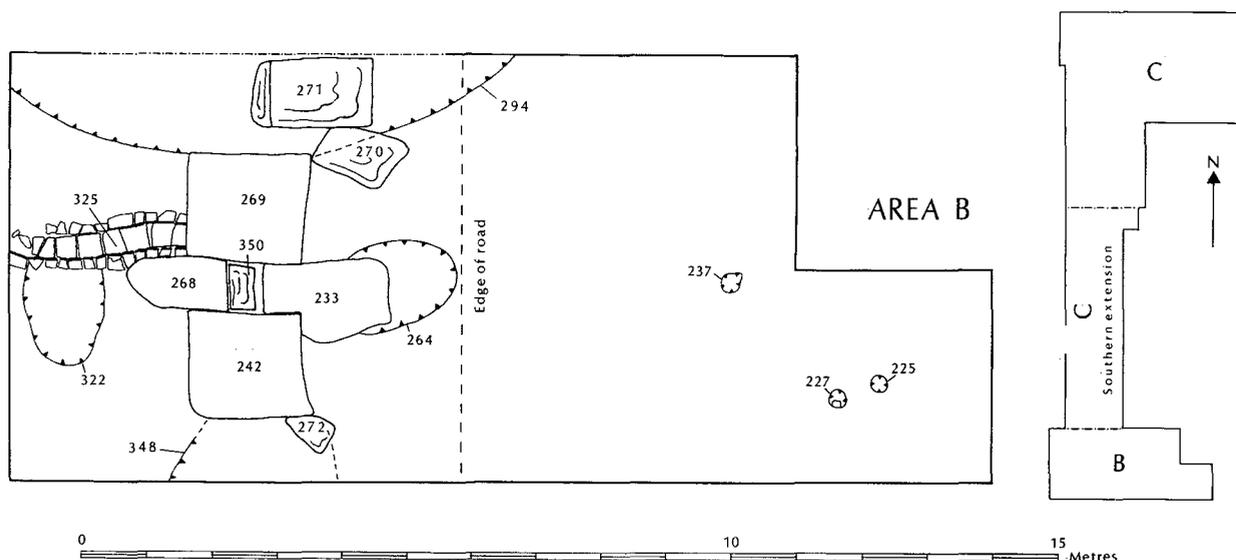


Fig. 19 Area B. Period 1 pits, the *in situ* road slabs of Period 2, and the Period 3 pit and ditch.

No other features cut the natural silty clay soil, except for three post-holes on the eastern side of the area (225, 227, 237), all sealed by the Period 3 cobble spread (250): they belonged either to Period 1 or Period 2.

### Dating

*Pottery.* The primary fills (352/265) of the bell-shaped pit (264) and the bottom fill of the smaller pit (322) produced red-slipped Roman types [Ware 8], numerous sherds of orange/brown Wares 30 and 31 [13], and a few sherds of native coarse pottery in Ware 25. The final backfill (224) of the bell-shaped pit (264) contained local Roman grey ware [Ware 1].

### Discussion

Both pits (264, 322) predated the construction of the paved road *c.* 150.<sup>3</sup> The primary fills (352, 265) of the bell-shaped pit (264) and the bottom fill (318) of the smaller pit (322) produced a pottery assemblage which included rare examples of native coarse ware [Ware 25], red-slipped Roman forms [Ware 8], and orange/brown coarse wares in the Thracian tradition [Wares 30, 31], but no examples of Ware 1.<sup>4</sup> The final backfill (224) of the bell-shaped pit, deposited in preparation for the laying of the road slabs, contained the local Roman grey ware [Ware 1] which was evidently being produced by the end of Period 1 and would seem to have replaced the orange/brown coarse wares [Wares 30, 31]. However, since it is probable that the Roman road paving was laid down *c.* 150, both assemblages can be dated to the first half of the second century. The earlier assemblage has been assigned to the period *c.* 100–130 and the later, contemporary with the backfilling of the pits, to *c.* 130–150.<sup>5</sup>

There was no sign of any pre-Roman occupation in this area. The pottery from the early pits suggests that Roman wares were in use from the foundation of the city and that by the middle of the

<sup>3</sup> For the dating of the road, see ch. 1, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> This is significant since Ware 1 is the most common ware found in later Roman contexts.

<sup>5</sup> The contexts of Period 1 were used to date the pottery: the pottery does not date the contexts. The form and fabric of both assemblages suggest that they were produced at the kiln-sites of either Pavlikeni or Hotnitsa.

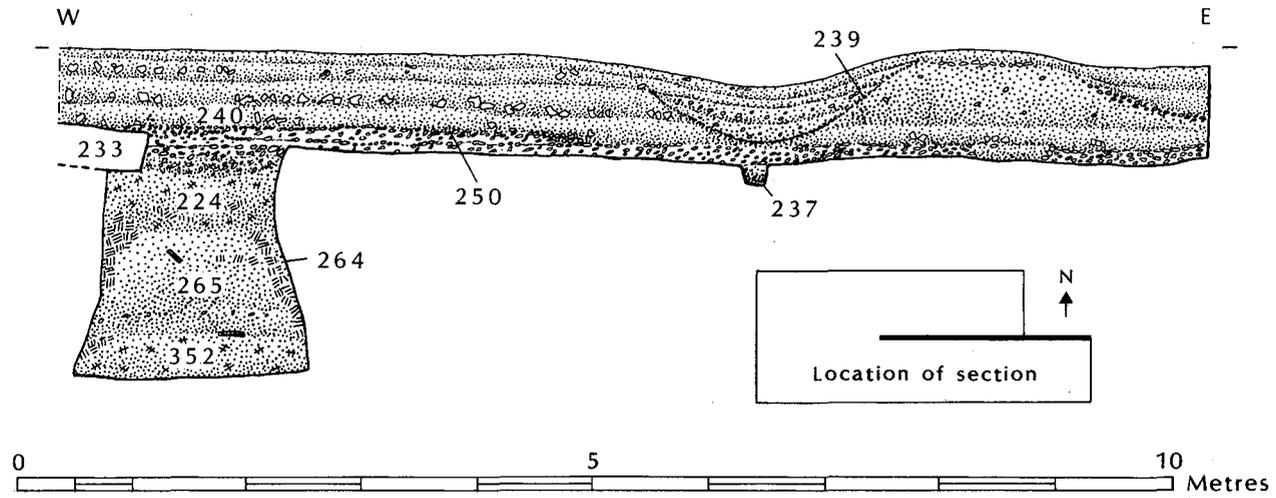


Fig. 20 Area B. North section of the primary area (1985), from the eastern side of Road Slab 233 to the eastern section.

century an initial dependence upon coarse-wares, which reflected a continuation of native forms, was rapidly being replaced by Roman types.<sup>6</sup> It appears that this area, on the southern periphery of the city, was not built-up in this period: apart from its use for the disposal of domestic refuse, the post-holes more probably denote fencing, perhaps for temporary stock-enclosures, rather than permanent structures.

## PERIOD 2: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PAVED ROAD AND DRAINS (Fig. 19)

The north/south resistivity anomaly was created by the survival *in situ* of the central slabs of a paved Roman road (Plate XB). Two massive limestone slabs (269, 242) lay directly over a central drain and two smaller stones (268, 233) were positioned over the drain's side walls. Both of these smaller slabs were carefully cut to fit between the two larger blocks, leaving a central, rectangular hole (0.70 by 0.70 m) as an inspection shaft into which the covering stone (350) had fallen when the adjacent road slab (233) subsided into the fill of the Period 1 pit (264). The road slabs, 0.22–0.33 m thick, were roughly dressed on their lower sides but had carefully smoothed upper surfaces. The stones were similar to the well-preserved paving provided for the streets within the city.<sup>7</sup>

Beneath the road slabs, the main drain ran north/south. Thanks to the Period 3 ditch (294), which cut the drain on the north side of the area, it was possible to examine its structure in section. Both sides of the drain were 0.55 m thick and were built from limestone rubble and white mortar, set hard up against the western and eastern sides of a construction trench. The channel between them was 0.85 m wide. Under the north end of one of the *in situ* slabs (269), the eastern wall of the drain survived to its full height of 1.43 m above the drain floor (353), paved with three rows of bricks set in a sandy yellow mortar (Fig. 21).

A side-drain (325) entered the main conduit immediately north of the inspection hole. It was 0.20 m deep and its walls were carefully built, each with two rows of limestone blocks, capped by a single row of bricks. The drain was floored with a row of large, square bricks (36 by 36 cm). The drain curved northwards to avoid the *in situ* slab (268) on the west side of the inspection hole before entering the main drain. Possibly, the road paving was already in place when the side-drain was constructed and care was taken not to displace the slabs already positioned around the capstone (350). The drain continued west and into the baulk.

### Dating

The paved road was probably constructed *c.* 150.<sup>8</sup>

### Discussion

The road represented the southern extension of the *cardo*, which started from the southern entrance to the *agora* and which continued south through Area C. It must have been *c.* 6.30 m wide.<sup>9</sup> The side-drain, which may have been added after the road and its main drain had been built, presumably came from a building west of the area. Probably, the street-grid was extended in anticipation of future development. The road, identified in the resistivity survey, continued south of Area B for at

<sup>6</sup> However, it should be noted that some continuity of tradition is apparent in that some Ware 1 types also occur in Wares 30 and 31.

<sup>7</sup> See ch. 1, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> See ch. 1, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> The road, where it met the *decumanus*, opposite the entrance to the *agora*, is preserved to its full width of 5.10 m and flanked by stone edging-blocks, each 0.60 m wide. The road presumably maintained this width as far south as Area B.

least 30 m.<sup>10</sup> However, buildings certainly had not been constructed along the east side of the road: there was no trace of any building in the eastern end of the area, which would have been beyond the eastern side of the roadway.<sup>11</sup> Development on this, the southern edge of the city, would seem to have been sporadic and not intensive during this period.<sup>12</sup>

### PERIOD 3: THE ROBBING OF THE ROAD (Fig. 21)

Immediately north of the *in situ* slabs, the road was cut by a large ditch (294) which extended beyond the northern baulk (Fig. 19). Its excavation, within the confines of the area, was restricted and made still more difficult by the presence of a large road slab (271) which had been used to backfill it. The ditch had sliced through the walls of the drain down to its paved floor and, for a distance of *c.* 7.0 m, extended south of the northern baulk. Since the bottom of the ditch was still sharply inclined as it entered the northern section, it must have been in excess of 1.70 m deep. The width of the ditch can be estimated at *c.* 5.90 m, the distance between the *in situ* slabs of the Roman road in Area B and the resumption of paving stones within the southern extension of Area C (Plates XB and XI, Fig. 29).

The primary, sandy silt fill (344) within the ditch was followed by a deposit of silty clay with limestone and mortar fragments and charcoal flecks (343, 288), derived from the initial silting of the ditch and the collapse of robbing debris north from the mouth of the drain. South of the north section, above the intact floor of the drain, two glass vessels (SF 2669 and SF 2670) were found within the sandy silt which had accumulated within the drain before it was cut by the ditch (294). There was no immediate attempt to backfill the hole (294). A lens of black organic silt (333) produced fine-sieve by-products, chaff and seeds, the first of successive deposits of domestic refuse, interleaved with naturally accumulating lenses of silt and dump deposits of clayey silt (337, 331, 312, 329). Bands of fine silt alternated with thin black, organic deposits (304), containing sieved by-products which formed successive tip-lines, produced by the regular dumping of domestic waste. The upper fill (280), a coarse sandy loam, included tile and stones as well as large lumps of clay (315), a small road slab (270), and another slab (271) which must have been used to pave the side of a road: its western edge had been chiselled down to retain an edging block (Fig. 19).<sup>13</sup> This final backfill was probably dumped into the pit to level up the ground for the cobbled road (250) of Period 4.

To the south of the *in situ* slabs, a pit (348), *c.* 1.60 m in diameter, was backfilled with silty clay and contained a small road slab (272), no doubt deposited at the same time and for the same reason as the two road slabs (270, 271) were thrown into the upper fill of the ditch on the north side of the area (Fig. 19).

### Dating

*Pottery.* The sequence, within the ditch (294), was used to date the pottery. The lowest fills (343, 288) which included robbing debris must date later than 175 and probably before 250.<sup>14</sup> As suggested below, the dumping of domestic waste appears to have been carried out during a

<sup>10</sup> See ch. 16, p. 263.

<sup>11</sup> The only possible indication of activity is represented by the three post-holes (237, 227, 225) which, as noted above, may equally belong to Period 1.

<sup>12</sup> See also Area C, p. 85. For a building which was probably contemporary with the road, see Area M, pp. 190–91.

<sup>13</sup> Where fully preserved, close to the *agora*, this road, like many within the city, was flanked on each side by a line of stone blocks which were located over the recessed edges of the paving slabs laid along the sides of the roadway: Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 24–41.

<sup>14</sup> The lower date is secure since the ditch could not have been dug before *c.* 175 when the Roman defences were built when the road was still in use, see Area C, p. 90. For the dating of the ditch to *c.* 250, see following discussion.

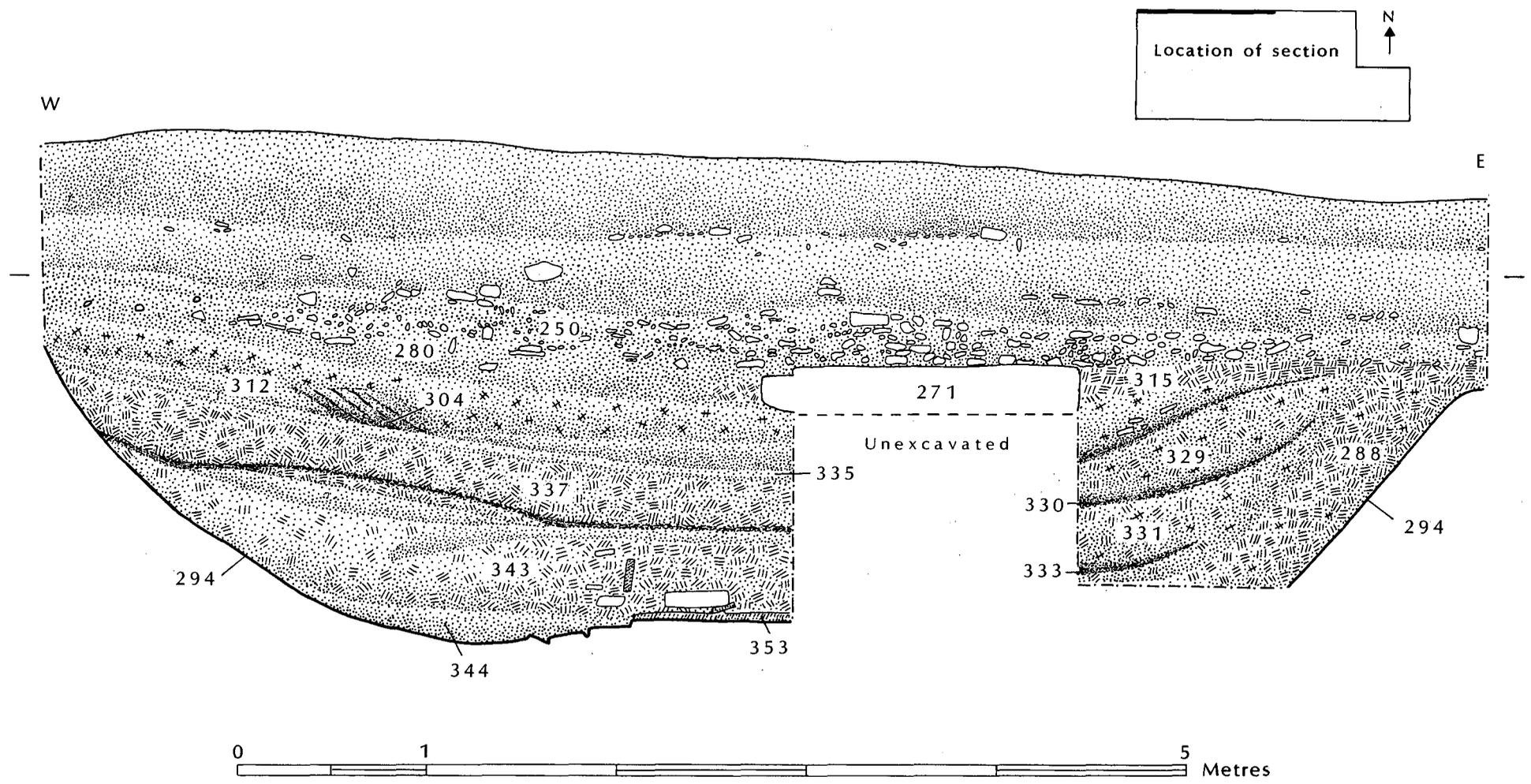


Fig. 21 Area B. Section through the ditch (294), along the northern bank.

relatively short period and pottery from these contexts (331, 337, 335, 329, 312, and 304) is accordingly dated 250/275. Pottery from the final backfill (280, 315) is dated 250/350.

*Coins.* From the lower fill (331) of the ditch (294), 193/211 (Cat. No. 17); from the organic lens above (330), 217/218 (Cat. No. 47); from the central fill (312, 335), 244/249 (Cat. No. 124), 238/44 (Cat. No. 42); from the upper organic lenses (304), 260/68 (Cat. No. 127); from the final backfill (280), c. 150/250 (Cat. No. 91).

## Discussion

Once the ditch (294) began to silt up and was used for the disposal of domestic waste, the lower and middle fills must have accumulated rapidly at a date no earlier than about the middle of the third century. The absence of fourth-century coins, even from the final backfill (280), suggests that preparations for laying the Period 4 cobbled surface were made before fourth-century coins were in general circulation.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the use of the ditch for the disposal of domestic waste can be assigned to the second half of the third century and its final backfill to the late third or early fourth. Why such a massive ditch should have been dug remains difficult to explain. It could not have been cut before the construction of the defences c. 175, after which this road still continued to function and led north to the Roman gate, nor is it likely to have been dug through a road which served at least one extramural house in the early third century.<sup>16</sup> Since only its southern edge extended into the area, where it may well have been cut back a little further as it sliced through the drain, it remains uncertain whether it extended for any appreciable distance to the west or east. Its size would seem excessive for a robbing-pit: the effort involved in removing the slabs, and digging to a depth in excess of 1.70 m, was hardly justified by the amount of building material which could have been extracted from the drain. Equally, its size suggests that its primary function was not for the disposal of domestic rubbish. Since it was probably cut during the second or third quarter of the third century, it may have served a defensive function: it was in this same period that the defensive ditch, immediately south of the Roman city, was cut across the causeway in front of the gate.<sup>17</sup> Once this had occurred, the road no longer provided access to the city. This would seem the most likely context for the digging of the ditch in Area B, and for the removal of the smaller, and more easily portable, side-slabs. Its width (5.90 m) was certainly appropriate for a defensive ditch. However, it was 30 m south of the Roman gate and would surely have been too far from the Roman curtain-wall to have improved the city's defences. Of interest, was the discovery of fragments of *lorica squamata* (SF 2648) in the primary fill (288) and other fragments, probably also of scale-armour, from the fills above (SF 2644 from 331, SF 2637 from 330).<sup>18</sup> Another, similarly impressive ditch, also of third-century date, was identified in Area D.<sup>19</sup> The two ditches may have served similar functions: it would not be surprising if this extramural area was occupied by one or more temporary, military encampments during the course of the third century.<sup>20</sup>

Whatever its primary function may have been, the ditch proved to be a convenient place to dispose of rubbish during the second half of the third century and its final backfilling was no doubt carried out in preparation for the laying of the cobbles which repaired the road surface in Period 4.

<sup>15</sup> On coin circulation, see ch. 17, pp. 309–14. Note, in particular, the high rate of 'coin-loss' in Period 4, see following, p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> See Area C, for the gate, p. 90, also, Area M, p. 195, for the Severan house which probably fronted the road on its west side.

<sup>17</sup> See Area C, p. 97.

<sup>18</sup> Fragments of armour, in themselves, do not represent evidence for a military origin for the ditch since, as noted, the fills also included domestic finds and the deposits accumulated only after the ditch ceased to serve its original function. Even so, the discovery of armour suggests that there might have been a military presence in or close to the city in the third century.

<sup>19</sup> See Area D, p. 116.

<sup>20</sup> Nicopolis featured in the military campaigns of the third century, notably in 250 when the city was besieged, and the Roman army, under Decius, fought a battle at, or close to the city, see ch. 1, pp. 13–14.

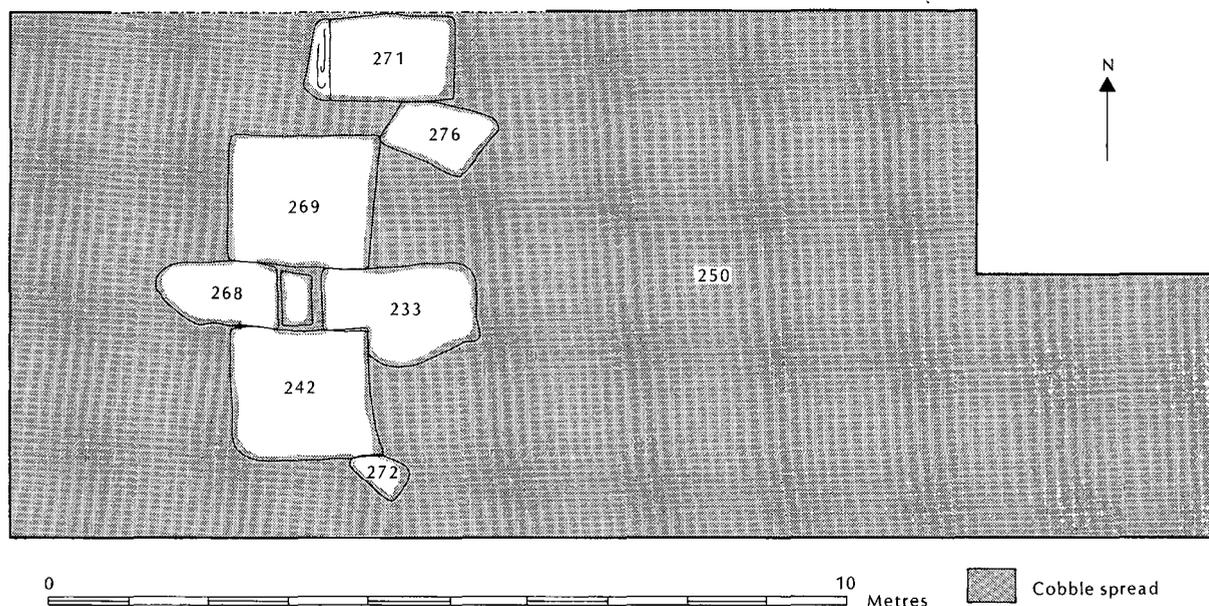


Fig. 22 Area B. The Period 4 cobbled surface packed around the remaining *in situ* slabs of the Period 2 road.

#### PERIOD 4: THE COBBLED ROADWAY (Fig. 22)

Over the backfilled pit (348) and ditch (294), a surface of cobbles (250), including architectural fragments, was deposited around the remaining *in situ* road blocks and packed into the top of the inspection shaft, above the capstone (350), which had fallen into the drain (Plate XB).<sup>21</sup> This layer of cobbles, 0.05–0.10 m thick, although more tightly packed close to road slabs, extended east of the slabs for at least 10 m; it continued beyond the eastern baulk. Where they had subsided into the fills of the underlying pit (264) and ditch (294), the cobbles formed a notably thicker horizon, probably because the surface was repeatedly repaired.

#### Dating

*Pottery.* Little pottery was recovered from the cobbled surface (250) and there were insufficient diagnostic sherds to provide dating evidence.

*Coins.* The cobble spread (250) produced a total of ninety-one coins: two indeterminate coins (Cat. Nos 92, 641), c. 193/238 (Cat. No. 80), 119/138 (Cat. No. 104), 177/192 (Cat. No. 44), 228/240 (Cat. No. 121), 238/244 (Cat. Nos 43, 55, 56, 69), 260/268 (Cat. No. 130), 270/275 (Cat. Nos 139, 141), c. 300/450 (Cat. Nos 536, 537, 546, 548), 301/302 (Cat. No. 157), 317/320 (Cat. No. 162), 326/328 (Cat. No. 176), 330/337 (Cat. No. 209), 330/363 (Cat. Nos 364, 365), 336/337 (Cat. No. 194), 337/340 (Cat. Nos 191, 195, 196, 198), 341/346 (Cat. No. 222), 346/350 (Cat. No. 244), 347/348 (Cat. Nos 220, 225, 226, 235, 239, 249), 348/350 (Cat. Nos 241, 246, 261, 280), 348/361 (Cat. Nos 272, 273, 281, 287, 288, 318, 319, 320, 321, 327), 351/354 (Cat. No. 274), 351/355 (Cat. No. 270), 355/361 (Cat. Nos 260, 312, 330, 335, 337, 341, 342, 349, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355), 361/363 (Cat. Nos 370, 373), 364/367 (Cat. No. 379), 364/378 (Cat. Nos 389, 400, 401, 408, 419, 420), 378/383 (Cat. No. 437), 383/388 (Cat. Nos 438, 482), 388/392 (Cat. No. 453), 388/395 (Cat. Nos 444, 452), 388/402 (Cat. Nos 458, 461, 463), 395/408 (Cat. Nos 494, 502), c. 400/500 (Cat. No. 611), c. 400/600 (Cat. No. 619), 402/408 (Cat. No. 513), 408/419 (Cat. Nos 525, 599, 600).

<sup>21</sup> Architectural fragments included two pieces of the same Ionic capital (SF 2216, 2221), two other Ionic capital fragments (SF 2207, 2475), part of a cornice moulding (SF 2112), and a quern fragment (SF 2609).

## Discussion

Although the extent of the cobbled surface (250) excavated in Area B was modest (c. 81 sq. metres), the quantity of small-finds is remarkable. The coins it contained were evenly distributed across the area and within the cobbles. Since the final backfilling of the Period 3 ditch (294) has been assigned to the late third or early fourth century, and was no doubt carried out in order to level the area in preparation for the new surface, the first cobbles were probably laid down c. 300. The higher rate of coin-loss for the second half of the fourth century, compared with the first half of that century, is unlikely to be of any particular significance: it simply reflects the general increase in coin-loss at Nicopolis in this period.<sup>22</sup> It would seem that this cobbled area continued in use into the fifth century and probably down to c. 450 when the late Roman city was destroyed.<sup>23</sup>

At the beginning of this period, the road was repaired, not with monolithic slabs but with a cobbled surface.<sup>24</sup> There was no attempt to reinstate the main drain which had been cut by the ditch (294).<sup>25</sup> The high rate of coin-loss in Area B was equally apparent in the finds from the cobbled roadway outside the Roman gate.<sup>26</sup> However, the continuation of the cobbled layer at least 10 m east of the remaining *in situ* road slabs, and with no decrease in the concentration of cobbles, suggests that this surface was not simply intended to repair the roadway. The cobbles contained many small glass vessel fragments, suggesting that the surface had been heavily trampled.<sup>27</sup> The high rate of coin-loss, as well as the extent of the cobbling, might be explained if this area was used as an extramural market.<sup>28</sup> The cobbles produced numerous pieces of corroded iron, mostly nails, and also copper-alloy finds, some of which were certainly scrap, prepared for recycling.<sup>29</sup> The only object of intrinsic value was a silver spoon (SF 2208). Apart from metal-working, the manufacture of bone objects may well have been carried out in the area.<sup>30</sup> Glass-working was probably also carried out in the vicinity.<sup>31</sup> Articulated bones from the cobbled surface suggest that cattle, probably brought in 'on the hoof', were slaughtered here or close by.

During this period, the cobbled area east of the road appears to have been used for a variety of industrial purposes and perhaps as a market area. However, the absence of buildings is probably significant, particularly as there would seem to have been much building activity to the south, across the plateau during the fourth century.<sup>32</sup> Quite possibly, it was prohibited to construct buildings so close to the defences.

<sup>22</sup> See ch. 17, pp. 309–14.

<sup>23</sup> Although no coins can be positively dated beyond the first decade of the fifth century, this probably reflects the sharp decline in coin-circulation at this time. It need not mean that the cobbled surface did not continue in use as late as c. 450, see ch. 17, pp. 309–14. On the destruction of the late Roman city see ch. 2, p. 34.

<sup>24</sup> See also Area C, p. 98.

<sup>25</sup> See, however, Area C, where it appears that the main drain, where it had been cut by the extension of the defensive ditch across the front of the gate, was repaired at this time, p. 100.

<sup>26</sup> See Area C, pp. 102–4.

<sup>27</sup> The majority of the glass fragments were of vessel glass and notably smaller than those recovered from elsewhere on the site.

<sup>28</sup> As noted below, metal-working and particularly the recycling of copper-alloy would seem to have been carried out in the area. Just possibly, the bronze coins were also waste intended for recycling. However, this seems improbable: none of the coins had been 'clipped'. See ch. 17, p. 306.

<sup>29</sup> Iron finds included punches (SF 2255, 2297, 2442), probably chisels (SF 2162, 2480), a knife-blade (SF 2182), several hooked objects (SF 2071, 2310, 2315, 2474), a double-spiked loop (SF 2212), an iron fibula (SF 2127), a chain-link (SF 2326), a clamp (SF 2496), 39 large nails (N/1), one Type N/2 (SF 2244), 13 hobnails (N/5), and 45 indeterminate nails as well as 149 corroded iron objects, the majority of which were probably also nails. There were 9 copper-alloy and 6 lead objects which were cut and folded: these were certainly intended for recycling as scrap. Probably, some of the other copper-alloy finds were brought to the site for the same purpose; a pin and ring (SF 2464), a link (SF 2165), pins (SF 2239, 2251, 2365), a needle (SF 2499), a handle, perhaps from a metal vessel (SF 2007), a decorated fitting (SF 2150), pieces of broken fibulae (SF 2144, 2220, 2356), a key (SF 2031), a strap-end (SF 2580), a toilet spoon (SF 2275), small nails and tacks, probably used for upholstery (SF 2285 (N/9), SF 2412 (N/10), SF 2250 (N.11)), and 25 other fragments of copper-alloy.

<sup>30</sup> Die (Cat. No. 146), mounting for inlay (Cat. No. 160), a bone comb (Cat. No. 134), possibly part of a handle (Cat. No. 168), unfinished worked bone (Cat. No. 186).

<sup>31</sup> Pot metal and glass droplets were identified. The only other finds were a glass bead (Cat. No. 36) and a stone hone (SF 1247).

<sup>32</sup> See ch. 2, pp. 28–9.

### PERIOD 5: THE POST-MEDIEVAL DITCH (Fig. 20)

Above the Period 4 cobbled surface (250), there accumulated a silty loam (240). A shallow north/south ditch (239), c. 1.80 m wide and 0.50 m deep, was cut from just below topsoil, clearly visible both as a surface depression and in the northern section, the upcast from which was dumped on its eastern side. Its southern butt-end was found 0.20 m from the northern baulk, immediately south of which was a post-hole still containing the remains of a partly burnt wooden post, 0.60 m in diameter.

#### Dating

*Pottery.* The silty loam (240), the fill of the ditch, and the upcast mound produced glazed, post-medieval pottery.

*Finds.* The lowest fill of the ditch produced a post-medieval metal binding (SF 2003). The silty loam, which comprised the upper fill of the ditch, produced a donkey-shoe (SF 1013), a clay pipe (SF 2001), and a knife with bone handle (SF 2002), all of post-medieval date.

#### Discussion

With its upcast on the outer, eastern side, this ditch, which encompassed the north-western side of the site, clearly did not serve a defensive function (Fig. 5).<sup>33</sup> The ditch was discontinuous and may not have been dug where it proved difficult to cut through the underlying rubble of buildings.<sup>34</sup> Possibly, the gaps between the sections of ditch were fenced. The solitary post-hole, south of the butt-end of the ditch in this area, may have held a fence post. Where the ditch approaches the northern defences, it turns west before petering out, apparently respecting the southern mound of spoil produced during post-medieval robbing, which it therefore appears to postdate (Fig. 5). The enclosure existed before 1945, when it appeared on the aerial-photographs of the site. It may well have been a stock-enclosure, probably post-dating the abandonment of the village of Old Nikiup in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Before excavation, it had been suggested that this ditch might have been a robber-trench which had followed the foundations for a reduced fortification, occupying the north-west side of the early Byzantine defences: Poulter (1983), 97. This must now be discounted.

<sup>34</sup> Compare the places where the ditch is absent with the presence of high-resistance anomalies in the resistivity survey, suggesting the presence of rubble, Figs 5 and 104.

<sup>35</sup> On the aerial photographs taken by the Luftwaffe during the Second World War, see Ivanov (1967), 19–20. Within the area of this enclosure (1.1 ha), there were houses which belonged to the post-medieval settlement; see Area M, pp. 203–5. If this ditched enclosure was used for corralling livestock, it probably post-dates the abandonment of this settlement and belongs to the nineteenth or early twentieth century.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# AREA C: THE ROMAN GATE

### Summary

*During the first half of the second century, the area was used for dumping domestic and industrial refuse. After the construction of the paved road c. 150, the curtain-wall and the gate were built c. 175. The road was maintained in use and was flanked by the first defensive ditch. During the third century, the ditch was extended across the front of the gate, which was probably blocked until the causeway and road were reinstated early in the fourth century. A propugnaculum was added to the front of the gate, but was dismantled before the end of the fourth or early in the fifth century. Towards the middle of the fifth century, the defences were abandoned and a fire-place was built within the gate-chamber. With the early Byzantine reoccupation of the site, the curtain-wall was doubled in width and the Roman gate was blocked. A rectangular building was constructed against the inside of the curtain-wall. In the post-medieval period, following robbing of the defences, two buildings were erected, butting up against the remains of the curtain-wall. Occupation ended in destruction and was followed by further robbing of the curtain-wall foundations.*

### INTRODUCTION (Figs 23–24)

The robber-trench, which followed the northern wall of the early Byzantine defences, was interrupted for a distance of c. 8 m, where four limestone blocks (159) appeared to be *in situ*. These proved to be stones used to block up the Roman gate in the early Byzantine period. An area (7 m west/east and 15 m north/south) was opened up in 1985 to include the stone blocks and to extend south into the site. At its northern end the area was extended east by 2 m and south by 2.20 m to examine the curtain-wall foundation. In 1986 the full width of the area was extended by 2.50 m to the north which was correctly judged sufficient to expose the full extent of the Roman gate, identified in the first season. Excavation was continued in 1987 with no change to the size of the area, but in 1988 an extension (5 m north/south and 7 m to the east) enlarged the area to uncover the full length of the east building. That same year, a southern extension, 20 m in length and 5.5 m wide, joined the southern end of the main area with Area B. Here, excavation exposed the road slabs and cobbled surface of Period 4, which were planned, but not excavated: the full excavation of this level in Areas B and C was judged sufficient. The enlarged area remained unchanged during the 1990 season and the excavation was completed in 1991.

### PERIOD 1: PRIMARY OCCUPATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN ROAD (Fig. 25)

In the eastern extension, above the natural silty clay (4137), a second silty clay deposit, which included charcoal and iron slag, probably represents the dumping of industrial refuse (Fig. 26). Above, another spread of silty clay (4123) included domestic refuse, pottery, animal bone, and glass. This was cut by a rectangular pit (4127), 2.15 m deep. The bottom of the pit sloped sharply downwards to the north, where it was cut by the foundations for the city wall. The lower fill

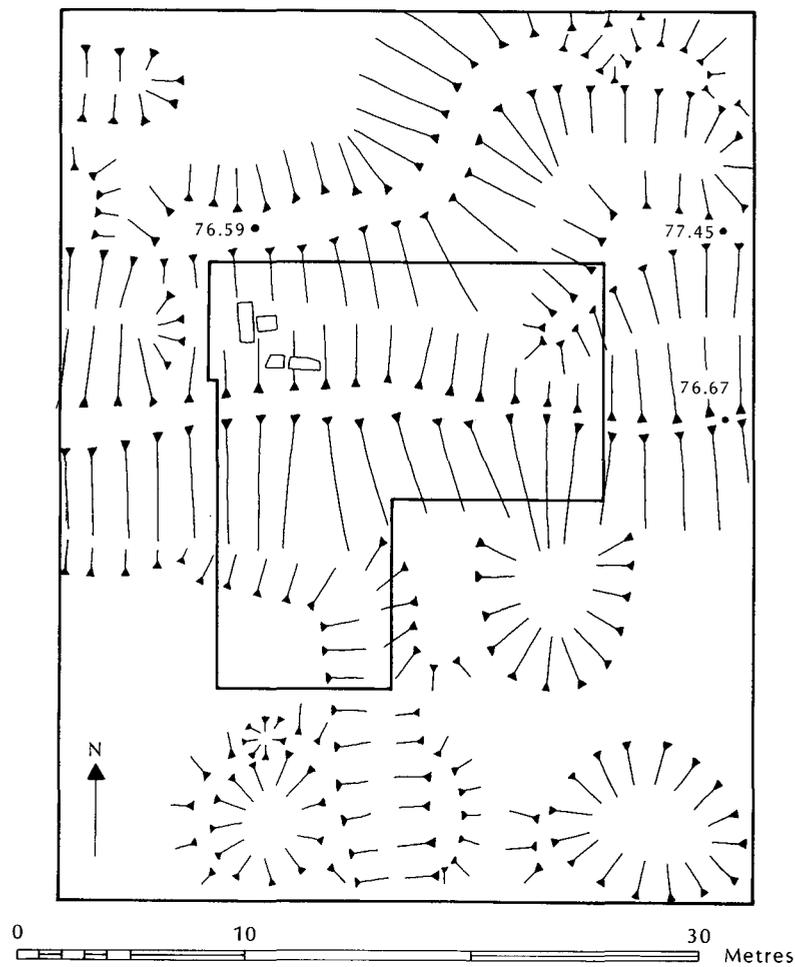


Fig. 23 Location of excavation, Area C (excluding the southern extension).

contained pottery and a few finds.<sup>1</sup> Silt accumulated in the pit before it was backfilled with silty clay, slag, glass, and mortar fragments. A second pit (4070) in the eastern extension was also cut by the foundations for the city wall. Its fill contained broken water-jars. The fill (4116) of a third pit (5310), which cut into natural clay (5319), and which must have been subsequently covered by the paving of the Roman road, contained a dump of slag, hammer scale, a billet of carbon steel, and pottery above a primary fill (4140) of unburnt mudbricks (each measuring *c.* 0.30 by 0.20 m and 0.15 m thick), perhaps refuse from building-work within the city (Figs 27–28).

The early dump deposit (4123) in the eastern extension was cut by a trench (4125), 0.7 m wide and 0.44 m deep, which contained an *in situ* section of a ceramic water-pipe (SF 6561), heading south-east and away from the gate (Fig. 26). The joints between each of the ceramic pipes were carefully sealed with white mortar. To the north-west, the water-pipe was cut by the foundation for the *propugnaculum* of Period 4 and to the south-east by the foundation for the east building of Period 6.

Traversing the site from north to south were the impressive remains of a paved Roman road (Plates XI and XIII A). The road continued into the southern extension, through Area B and beyond.<sup>2</sup> As all the roads within the Roman city, it was built from massive limestone slabs, carefully cut and fitted together. South of the gate, for a distance of 6.80 m, the central main slabs (4193) over the drain, flanked on the east side by smaller slabs, were apparently still *in situ* (Plate XIII A). Where a

<sup>1</sup> Apart from corroded iron metal fragments, finds included a glass bead (Cat. No. 13), a bone pin (Cat. No. 113), and a fragment of marble, probably wall-veneer (SF 6625).

<sup>2</sup> See ch. 2, p. 22.

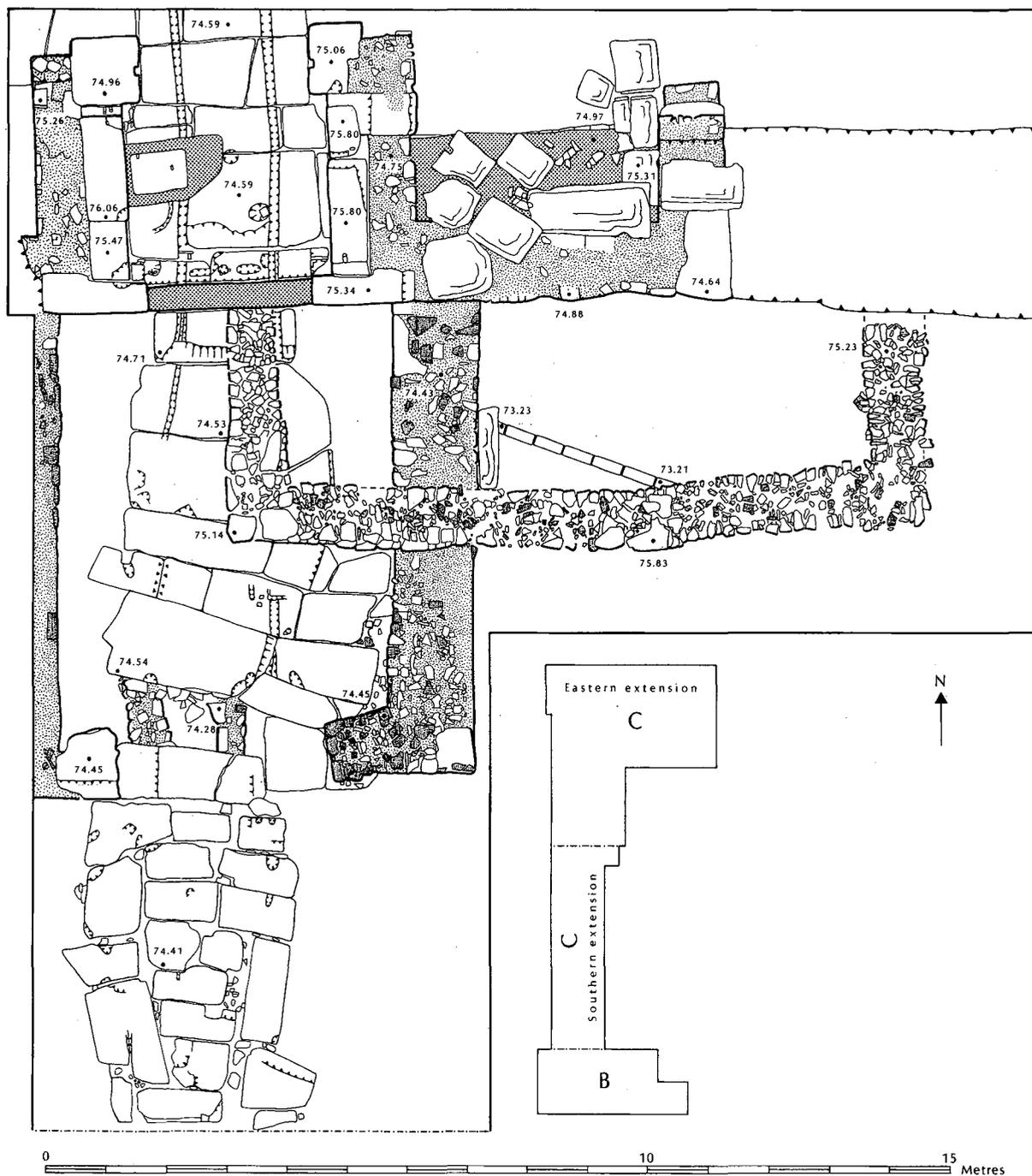


Fig. 24 Area C. Principal features excavated.

road slab was missing, the sides of the main drain (4120) were visible, built from limestone blocks and white mortar, each 0.50 to 0.60 m wide and 0.80 m apart. To the south, the original slabs had been removed for a distance of 6.40 m where the road surface was cut by Ditch 2 (Period 3). At the northern end of the main area, the foundations for the west side of the gate (141) were built directly above a paving slab which, together with the large slab at the northern entrance to the gate-chamber, was probably part of the original road surface.<sup>3</sup> In the southern extension, the central slabs (4020) were *in situ*; eight covered the central drain for a distance of 13 m (Plates XI and XIIB; Fig. 29).

<sup>3</sup> The road slabs inside the gate overlay the foundations for the side walls of the gate-chamber and had been moved to their present location during the construction of the defences, see below, p. 88.

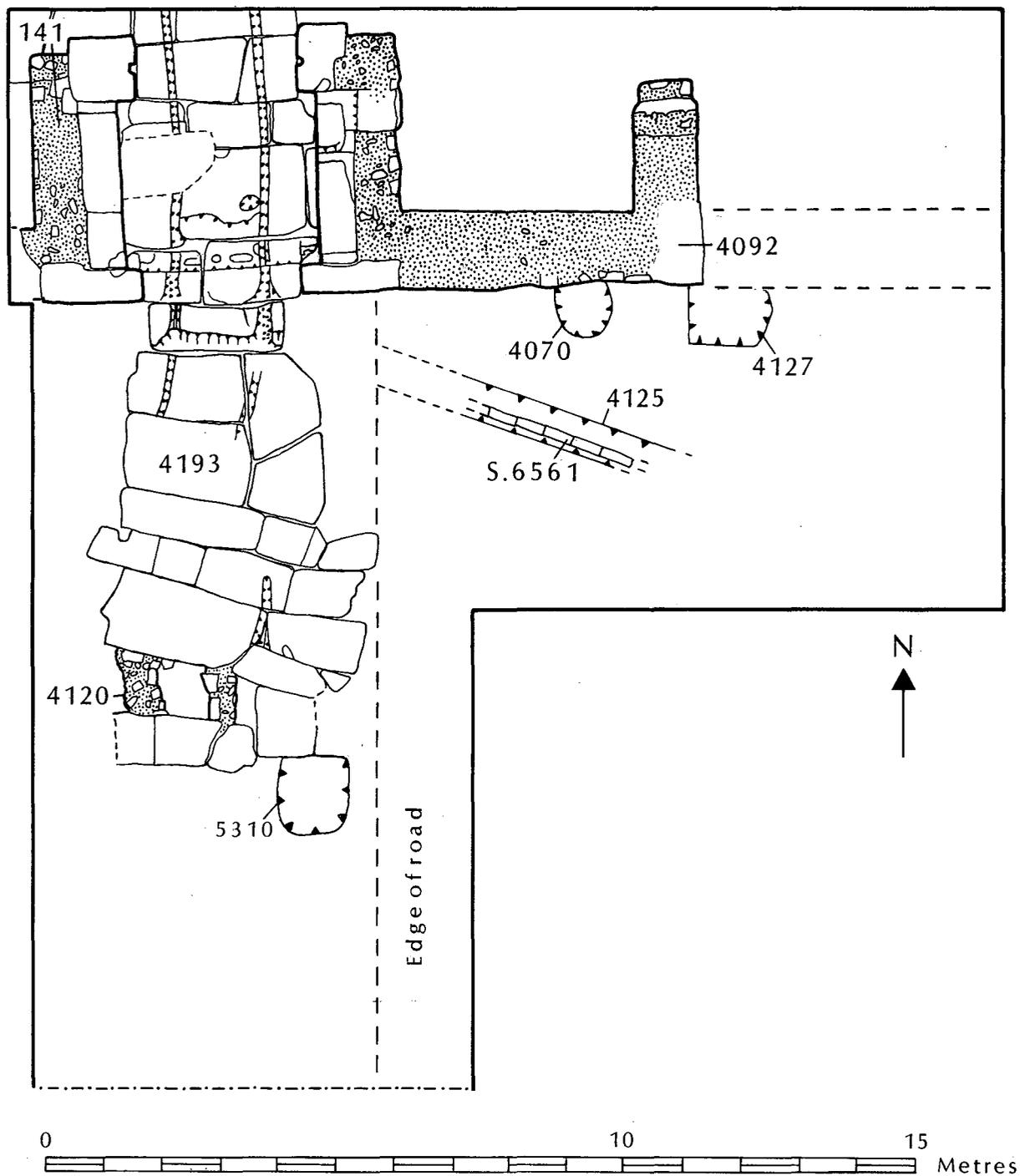
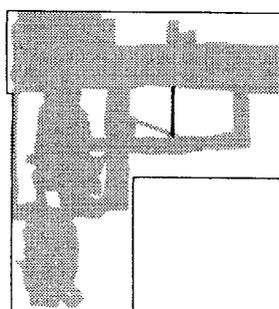
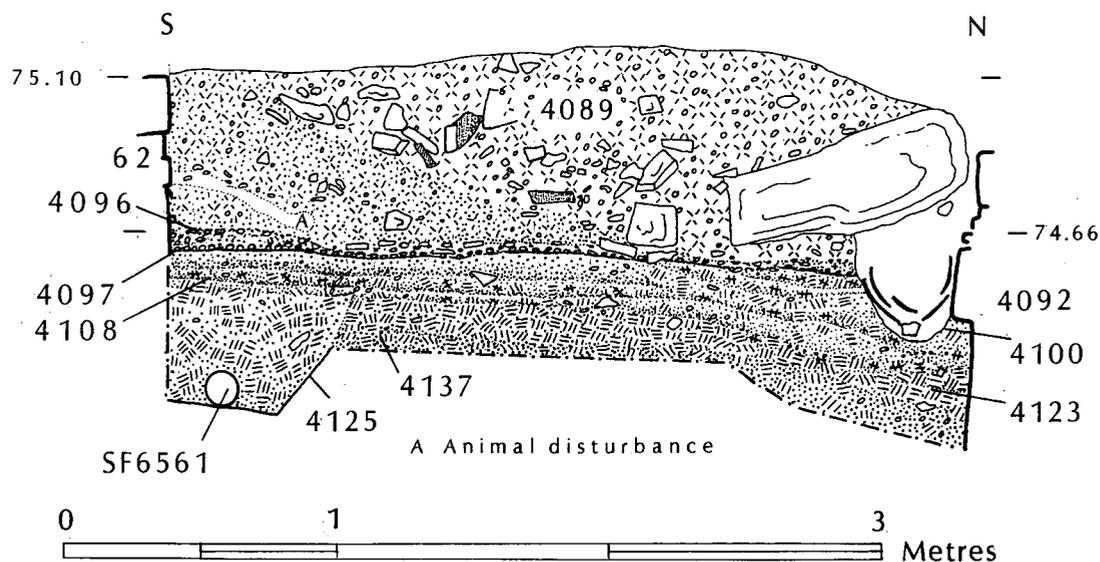


Fig. 25 Area C. Periods 1 and 2.

Here, most of the smaller side slabs had been removed although seven were still in position at the north-west side of the extension. In the centre of the roadway, there was a rectangular gap in the paving (4010), 0.65 m square, which probably had been filled by a capping block and had allowed access to the central drain, 14 m north of another inspection hole located in Area B.<sup>4</sup> At its southern end, the road was again cut and the slabs removed, this time by the ditch (294), 5.90 m wide, excavated in Area B.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See Area B, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> See Area B, p. 71.



Location of section

Fig. 26 Area C. North/south section from the curtain-wall to the south foundation of the east building.

### Dating

*Pottery.* The fill of Pit 4070 contained plain rim cooking-pot lids [251], flat-rimmed craters [686], and a carinated bowl with rounded rim [432], dated 130/200. The fill (4116) of Pit 5310 contained a large assemblage of pottery; ledge-rim cooking-pots [47], cooking-pots with out-turned rim [79], plain rim lids [243], bowls with out-turned and turned-down rims [400], carinated bowls with rounded rims [429], and collared craters [699], dated 130/200.

### Discussion

During the first half of the second century, there were apparently no buildings in this area. Instead, it proved a convenient location for pits, used to dump domestic and industrial waste. Not only is it certain that blacksmithing was carried out but, remarkably, high quality steel was being produced in the vicinity.<sup>6</sup> The road was probably paved towards the middle of the second century.<sup>7</sup> The slabs placed over the central drain were of impressive proportions, the largest 2.80 m in length and c. 1.30 m in width. The side slabs which, for the most part, both in the main area and in the southern extension

<sup>6</sup> For the significance of this discovery, see ch. 2, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> On the dating of the road, see ch. 1, p. 11.

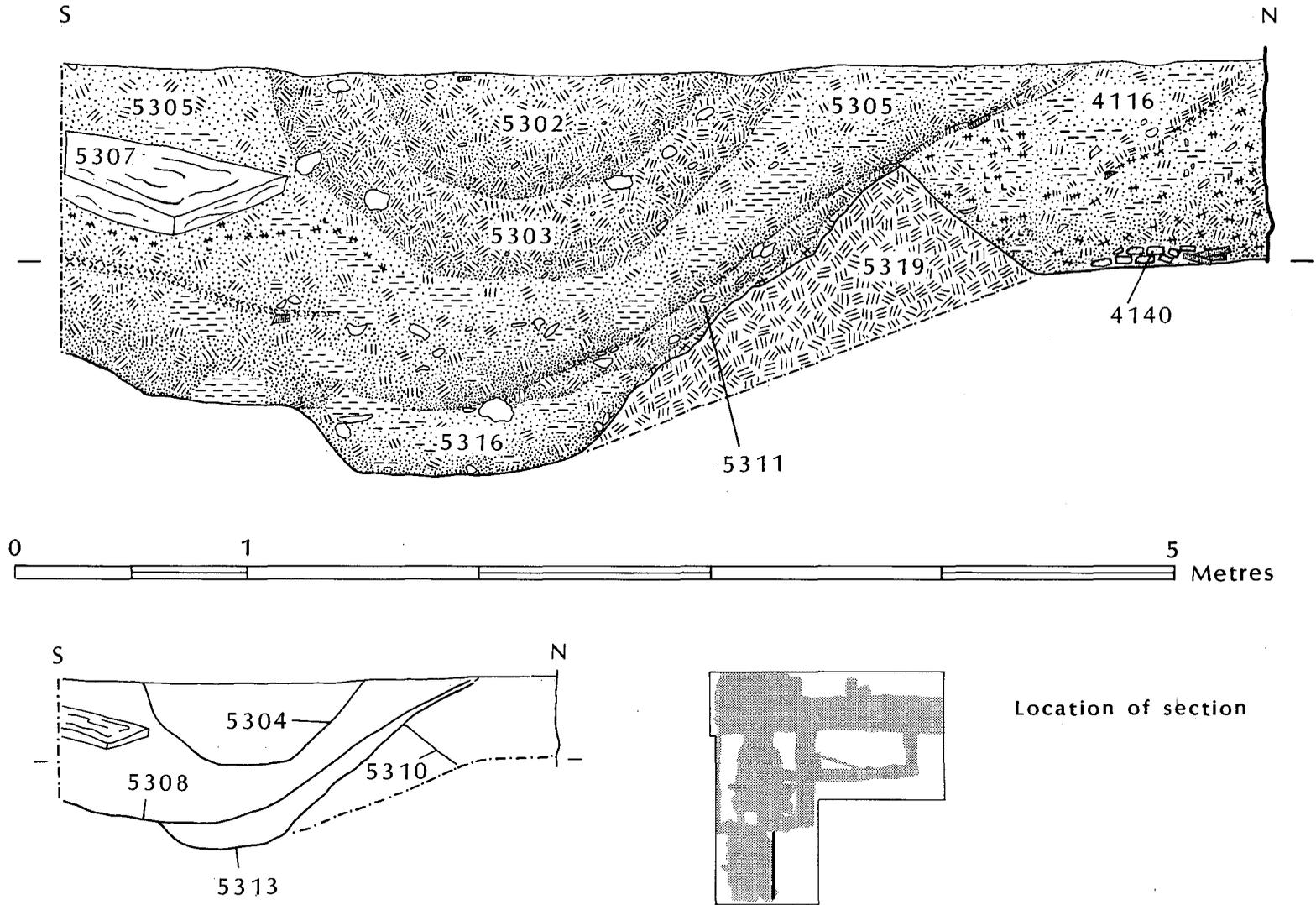
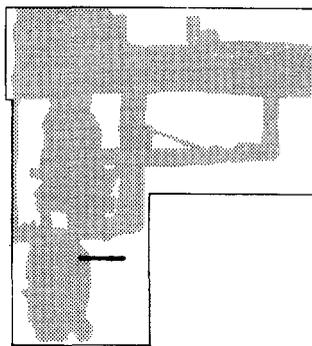
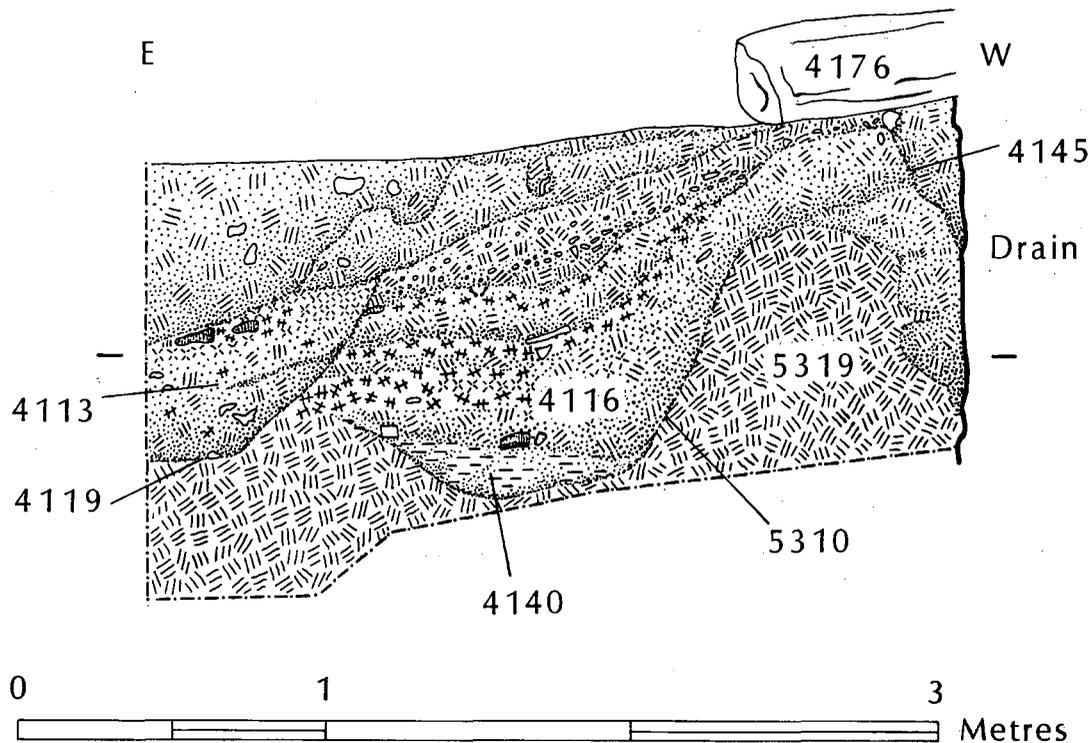


Fig. 27 Area C. North/south section across the defensive ditches, showing fills and inset showing ditch cuts.



Location of section

Fig. 28 Area C. East/west section; Period 1 pit (5310) and butt-end of Ditch 5 (4119).

had been robbed in Period 2, were much smaller, averaging *c.* 1.0/1.50 m in length and *c.* 0.50/0.80 m in width. Although of irregular shape, each paving slab had been carefully cut to interlock with adjacent blocks.<sup>8</sup> The road continued due north to the southern entrance of the *agora* (Fig. 3). Where this *cardo* met the *decumanus*, which flanked the southern side of the *agora*, it was *c.* 5.10 m wide and possessed raised stone borders on either side, each 0.60 m in width.<sup>9</sup> Since the main drain (4120) must have been on the central axis of the road, the eastern side of the roadway, as it passed through Area C, can be located even though only one of the eastern side slabs remained *in situ* (Fig. 25).

Since its trench cuts a dump deposit (4123), the water-pipe was apparently not laid immediately after the foundation of the city. As the male ends of each section of pipe were aligned to the south-east, it must have brought water south from the city. Probably it had been laid under the road's

<sup>8</sup> On the character of the roads at Nicopolis, see Ivanov (1967), 15–18; Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 24–53.

<sup>9</sup> See further, on the planning of the road-grid, ch. 2, p. 22.

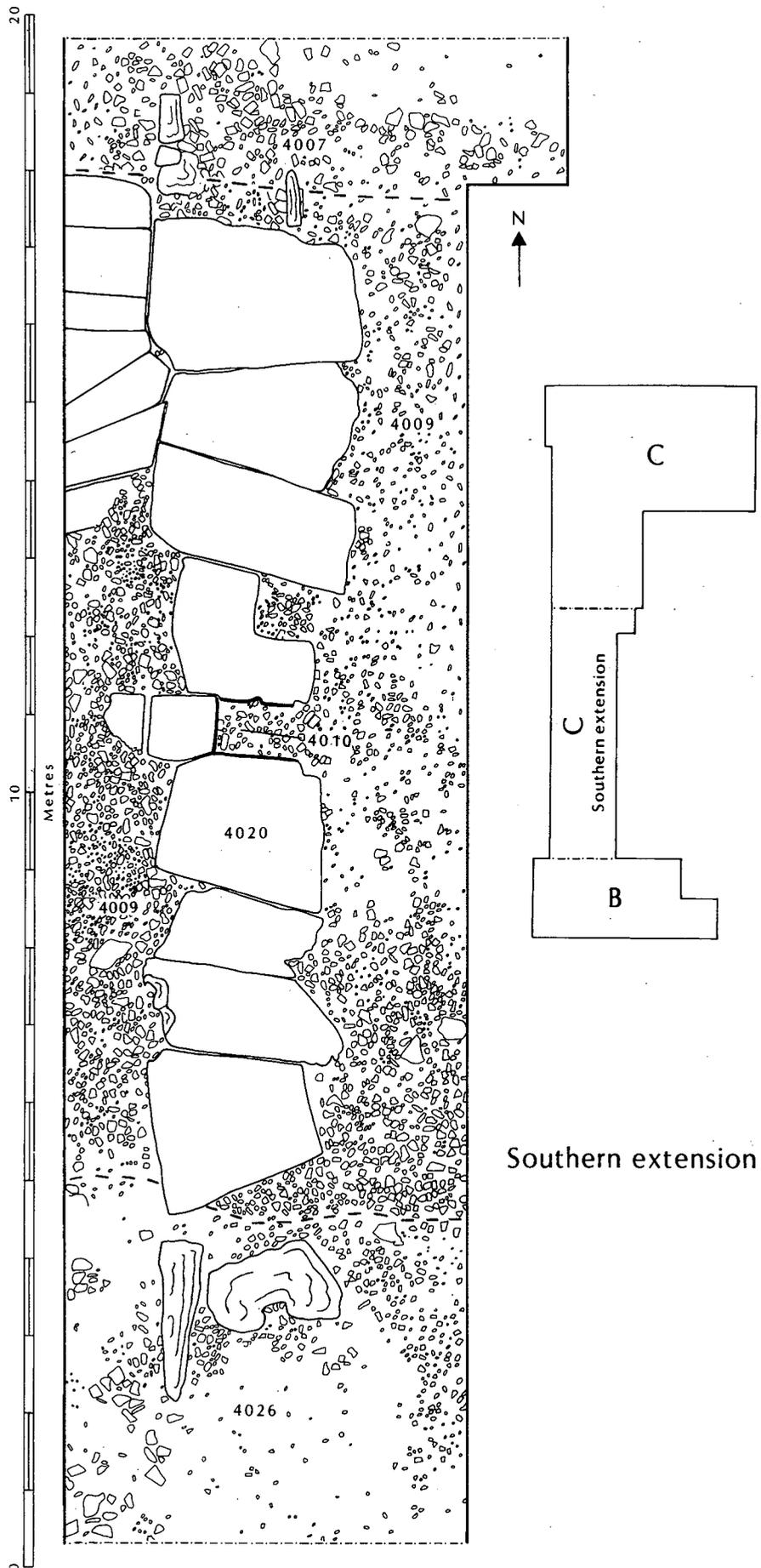


Fig. 29 Area C. The southern extension: *in situ* road slabs and Period 4 cobbled surface.

paving slabs but its orientation indicates that it was here diverted away from the road, presumably to supply a building south-east of the area (Fig. 25). The water-pipe must have been cut by the defensive ditch *c.* 4.50 m south of the eastern extension and is therefore unlikely to have continued in use after *c.* 175, when the fortifications were built.

By the late Antonine period, it would seem that buildings were being constructed on the southern periphery of the city, well south of the late second-century defences, although, since there was no sign that buildings had been erected along the east side of the road in this area, development would seem to have been piecemeal and not part of any regular expansion of the urban area.<sup>10</sup>

## PERIOD 2: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN GATE AND CURTAIN-WALL

### The gate structure (Figs 30–32)

The Roman gate comprised a single chamber, built from large ashlar blocks of limestone, not bonded with mortar but joined by iron clamps (Plates XI and XIII).<sup>11</sup> Its northern, inner entrance was 2.75 m wide, its southern portal 2.65 m in width. One pair of responds, on the southern, outer side of the gate, protected the settings for a two-winged door and the inner faces of the northern responds were cut by vertical grooves to retain a portcullis. The interior of the gate-chamber was 3.30 m wide and 2.80 m deep.

The walls of the gate survived to a maximum height of 1.50 m. Most, if not all of the limestone blocks used in the gate must have come from imposing and probably public buildings.<sup>12</sup> Particular care was also taken to provide a solid foundation of limestone blocks for the sides of the gate-chamber. One large block (4202), 0.75 m wide, underlay the primary course for the south-western respond (359). Similarly, beneath the south-eastern respond, a block (370), 0.50 m high and 0.88 m long, formed the upper foundation, constructed over a roughly coursed layer of mortared rubble, which was of one build with the foundation for the curtain-wall to the east. The lowest block (367), at the southern end of the east wall of the gate-chamber, rested upon another foundation block (369), 1.28 m long, which protruded slightly to the west, below the floor of the gate-chamber. On the opposing side of the gate, beneath the primary course of stones (359, 360), a limestone block (362) extended into the chamber to form a solid foundation for the road slab, running along the west side of the gate-chamber and for the western threshold slab (382). The northern edge of another block (387) was just visible, emerging from beneath the eastern threshold slab (383). It seems likely therefore that the whole gate structure was constructed over a solid foundation of large limestone slabs, above the lower foundations of mortared rubble.

The south-west corner of the gate survived two courses high and to a height of 0.90 m. The lower T-shaped stone (359), 0.50 m high, 0.50 m wide, formed the south-west face of the gate and the south-western respond. Its longer side (1.40 m) projected north as the first section of the lower course for the western face of the gate-chamber. The superimposed rectangular block (356), 0.41 m high, was laid with its longer side (1.68 m) west/east, forming the outer, southern face of the gate and was 0.65 m wide except where it had been cut back to a depth of 0.15 m, so that the adjacent block (357), in the second course of the western side of the gate-chamber, could be rebated into it.

<sup>10</sup> See ch. 2, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> No clamps joining any of the exposed blocks remained *in situ*. Although some of the clamp-holes may have been cut when the blocks were used in city buildings before the stones were reused in the gate, rectangular clamp-holes which correspond on adjacent blocks (364/365, 179/366 east wall, 356/357 west wall) indicate that clamps were also used in the gate structure. In each case, stone-robbing had commenced with the removal of the clamps, hence the damage sustained to stones, especially around the paired clamp-holes. Even the remaining block (355), used in the third course of the west wall, had been levered up to allow the clamp joining Blocks 357 and 358 in the second course to be hacked out.

<sup>12</sup> In particular, one block (364) in the second course of the east wall was the only rusticated example and, although chiselled back, the blocks at the south-eastern (368) and south-western corners (359) retained traces of decorative carving.

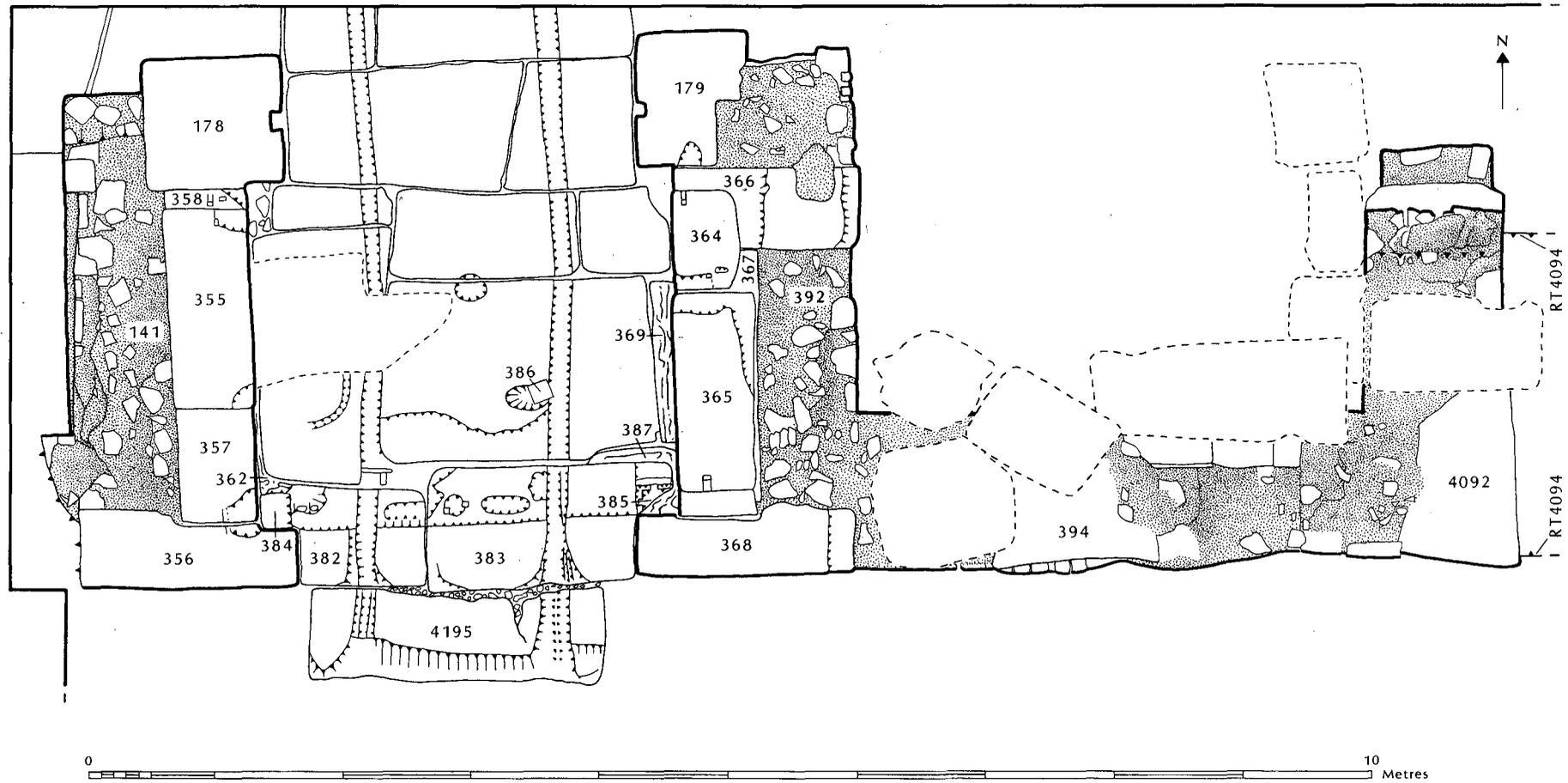


Fig. 30 Area C. The Roman gate and curtain-wall, Period 2.

The second block (360), used in the construction of the lowest course for the west side of the gate-chamber, was 2.20 m in length, 0.65 m wide and 0.40 m high.<sup>13</sup> Above the junction between the lower blocks, 359 and 360, and rebated slightly into 359, another large stone (357), 1.18 m long, 0.64 m wide, and 0.50 m high, continued the second course and was butted by the block (358) used for the northern end of the wall's second course (1.53 m long and 0.66 m wide, 0.50 m high). The northern end of the lower course of the wall (360) butted the north-western respond, represented by a single surviving *in situ* square block (178), 1.07 m square and 0.56 m high. Partly dislodged during robbing, a single stone (355), 1.60 m long, 0.68 m wide and 0.50 m high, from the third course remained more or less *in situ*; it had probably been levered northwards from its original position, otherwise all three courses for the western wall of the chamber would have butted against the northern respond, a structural weakness carefully avoided elsewhere in the gate structure (Plate XVIA).

The eastern side of the gate survived in almost as complete a condition as its western counterpart. A large block (368), 1.65 m long, 0.52 m wide, and 0.80 m high, was used for the south-eastern respond's first course, replicating the method employed for the second course of the south-western respond: it was laid with its longer side extending across the southern end of the east wall of the gate-chamber, projecting west to form the respond, and east, as the outer, south-eastern face of the gate. Like Block 356, it was carefully cut back on its northern side, to allow the adjacent first block (365) in the second course of the east wall of the gate-chamber to be recessed into it. Butting the south-eastern respond, the lowest block (367), 2.06 m long, 0.64 m wide, used in the eastern wall of the gate-chamber, was as notable for its length as 368 was for its height. It was 0.50 m high, 0.30 m less than the primary block (368) in the adjacent respond. The first block (365) for the second course, 1.81 m long, 0.60 m wide and 0.73 m in height, overlapped the join between Blocks 367 and 368 and, as noted above, was dovetailed into the shallow recess in the rear face of 368. This overlap between the first and second courses, where the respond joined the east wall of the chamber, was clearly also prepared for the block which must have been positioned over the lowest course of the respond (368); the southern end of 365 had been cut back by 0.21 m to allow the missing block, which must have been 'T-shaped', to sit on top of 368, with its 'stem' projecting north to overlap the junction between 365 and 368. At the northern end of the gate-chamber, a small block (366), 0.66 m wide and 0.46 m high, was positioned with its longer side (1.43 m) at right angles to the inner face of the gate passage so that only its western, shorter end formed the northern face of the gate passage. This header strengthened the bonding between the gate blocks and the limestone and mortar eastern face (392) of the gate-chamber, and this was further improved by cutting down the western end of the block to 0.50 m in height, consequently reducing it to the same height as the adjacent southern block (367), leaving the eastern end standing higher by some 0.05 m, where it was bonded into the rubble and mortar core of the wall. Above, a block (364) 0.82 m north/south and 0.73 m high, covered the join between the two stones (366, 367) in the first course of the wall. The stone was roughly broken on its east side, probably during Period 7 robbing, and continued in this direction for only for 0.50 m. Unlike all the other faces of blocks visible in the gate, this stone was rusticated.<sup>14</sup> The lowest block for the north-eastern respond (179), 1.07 m long, 0.52 m high and 0.82 m wide, had been inset 0.02 m into the road paving, which was here cut away, so that the top of the block was level with the adjacent northern block (366) in the eastern side of the gate-chamber. Clearly the lost block, which must have formed the second course for the north-eastern respond, projected south, overlapping the join between Blocks 179 and 366.

The limestone blocks, which faced the inside of the gate-chamber, were bonded into a core of mortar and rubble, which increased the width of each of the walls of the gate to 1.44 m. The mortared west side of the gate (141) survived, at most, 0.50 m above its foundations, without offset and with a western face of small limestone blocks. On the east side of the gate, only the foundations

<sup>13</sup> The central part of this block is obscured by the remains of the gate-blocking of Period 6.

<sup>14</sup> Another rusticated block, perhaps taken from the superstructure of the gate when it was dismantled, was used in the blocking-wall of Period 6 (Plate XVIA).

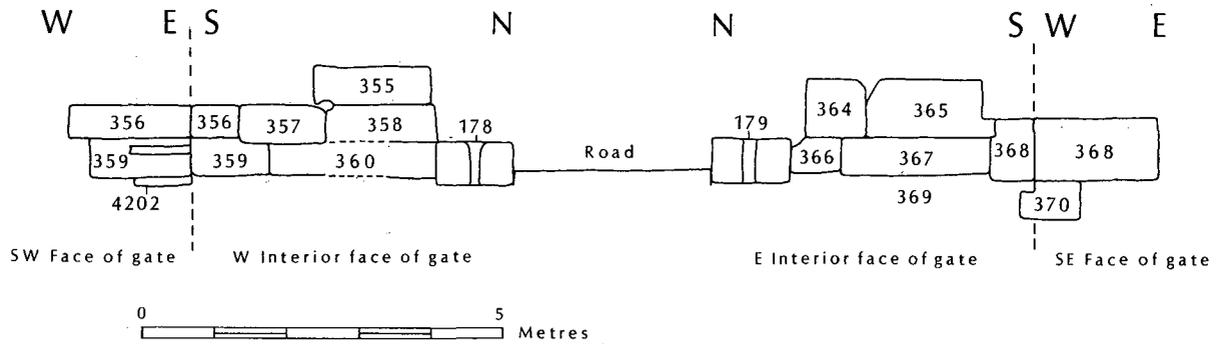


Fig. 31 Area C. Elevation of the facing blocks for the Roman gate, Period 2.

(392) survived, butted to the east by the early Byzantine foundation for the widened wall-curtain of Period 6 (Fig. 24). Both the primary mortared foundations extended north and were bonded with the portcullis blocks (178, 179) at the north-west and north-east ends of the gate.

### The interior of the gate (Fig. 30)

Although the road slabs, immediately north of the gate, were probably part of the original paving of the road, those within the gate, lying over the upper foundation course of large limestone blocks, and roughly fitted together and up against the inside of the gate-chamber, must have been inserted after the gate had been built. Their dimensions and polished surface suggest that they were originally road slabs and had not previously served another function. The large, central slab was cut by a socket (386), 0.17 m square and 0.11 m deep, orientated north/west by south/east. Similar slots, although always aligned along the axis of the road and always located in the centre of the roadway were cut into the paving which remains *in situ* on the *cardo*, flanking the east side of the *agora*. Whatever the function of the socket may have been, it clearly served no purpose after the paving stone had been used in the gate-chamber. No doubt, the road slab had been taken from the centre of another road for re-use in the gate.<sup>15</sup>

At the southern entrance to the gate-chamber, two slabs (382, 383) formed the southern threshold, both cut back on their northern sides leaving a raised sill, 0.08 m higher than the paving within the gate-chamber and against which the outer door could be closed. The stones fitted somewhat awkwardly into the paving of the gate and into the space between the southern responds. At either end of the two threshold slabs, protected by the southern responds, were gate-post sockets for a double-winged door. The western socket (384) was broken, although the outer setting for the turning-plate (0.26 by 0.29 m) was just discernable. The setting on the east side (385) was also damaged, but was somewhat better preserved (Plate XIII B). The outer cut (0.29 by 0.32 m) was 0.06 m deep and within it a second cut (0.26 by 0.25 m and incised 0.02 m into the flat bottom of the outer cut) must have contained a metal pivot-base, which would have had a circular cavity in the centre to support the lower tenon of the door.<sup>16</sup> The inner cut had an expansion 0.07 by 0.03 m, centrally positioned on the north side and another, 0.06 m by 0.02 m, half way along its eastern edge. No doubt all four sides had such expansions to retain lugs on the sides of the pivot-base to

<sup>15</sup> The regularly spaced sockets in the centre of the *cardo* east of the *agora* presumably retained wooden posts. They may have been used to direct traffic to one side or other of the roadway; Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 29–30. Alternatively, the posts may have supported temporary awnings over the street. The socket (386) was worn on its south-west side, as if an upright had regularly been inserted and withdrawn. It clearly did not serve any purpose within the gate; it was cut by the eastern wheel-rut, which must have been incised into the paving when the gate was first built, see following, p. 90

<sup>16</sup> This was a common technique used in Greek fortifications: Lawrence (1979), 250–3. See also, W. H. Manning and I. R. Scott, 'Timber gateways, with a note on iron fittings', in P. Bidwell, R. Miket and B. Ford (eds), *Portae cum Turribus*, BAR Brit. ser. 206 (1988), 17 and fig. 1:10, no. 3.

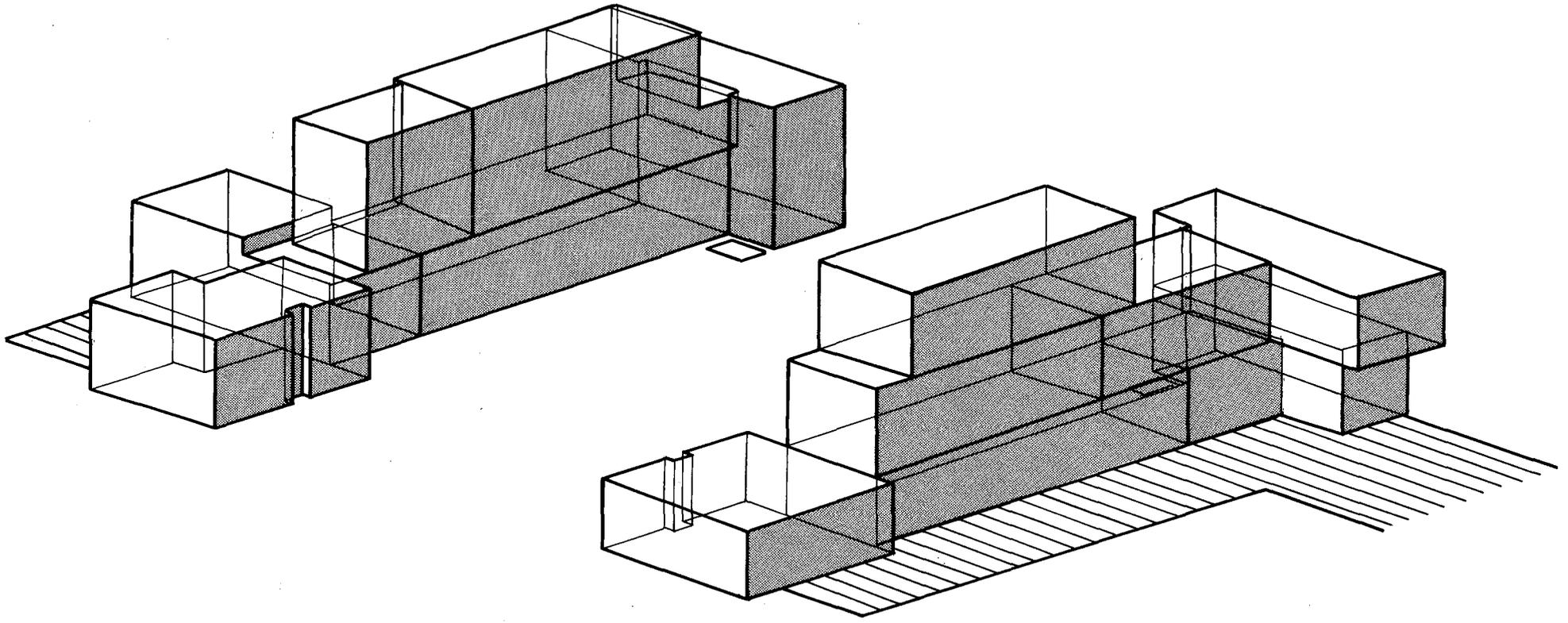


Fig. 32 Area C. Axonometric view of the Roman gate, looking south-east. Scale approximately 1:30.

prevent movement of the plate within its socket. Approximately in the centre of the threshold, cut into Slab 383, two square slots must have been for bolts to secure the closed doors (Plate XIVA). The eastern slot (0.03 m square and 0.02 m deep), 1.45 m from the centre of the eastern pivot socket, presumably secured the eastern leaf of the gate and was displaced, 0.10 m north of the other bolt-hole (0.05 m square and 0.03 m deep), located 1.37 m from the centre of the western cut for the turning-plate. If both doors were the same size, *c.* 1.45 m wide, probably the western leaf was secured first so that, when closed, the eastern leaf overlapped the western half of the door.

At the northern end of the gate, there were no sockets for a second, two-winged door. Instead, each of the *in situ* blocks, which formed the lowest course of the responds for the northern gate arch, was cut by a vertical slot. That on the eastern face of the western block (178) was *c.* 0.09 m deep and 0.12 m wide (Plate XVA). The slot on the opposing western side of the eastern respond block (179) was 0.08 m deep and 0.11 m wide. Neither were particularly well cut. Such vertical slots can only have been for a portcullis (Fig. 32).

Within the gate, a pair of wheel-ruts, 1.45 m apart, though worn by the passage of traffic, must have been intentionally cut into the paving slabs and into the southern threshold (382, 383) to guide vehicles passing through the gateway (Plate XIIA).<sup>17</sup> Immediately outside the entrance, one centrally positioned, large slab (4195) had been carefully cut, leaving flanking bosses to channel vehicles into the wheel-ruts, thereby avoiding damage to the corners of the gate (Plates XIIA and XIVB). Gradually fading out, the wheel-ruts continued south of the gate for 4.80 m (Plates XI and XIIA, Fig. 24). The wheel-ruts were not aligned north/south but entered the gate at an acute angle, from the north-west, continued straight through the gate-passage, then turned south-west re-adjusting to a true north/south alignment. This diversion was required because the gate, for no obvious reason, had been positioned *c.* 0.70 m east of the north/south axis of the original road.

### The curtain-wall (Fig. 30)

The wall foundations were only preserved for a distance of 0.80 m to the west of the gate-chamber, where they were protected from robbing by the two *in situ* blocks (359, 356), used in the first and second courses of the south-west respond. However, to the east of the gate, for a distance of 5.9 m, the foundations and portions of the superstructure, up to a height of 0.60 m, remained intact and as far as a pilaster, projecting north of the curtain; beyond this the wall, and all but the lowest course of the foundations, had been completely robbed out by RT 4094. No foundation cut for the curtain-wall was identified: the foundations must have been built hard up against the sides of the construction trench. The abrupt cessation of the robber-trench (4094), east of the pilaster, helpfully provided a cross-section of the foundations, here 2.20 m deep and built from angular, limestone blocks bonded with a hard white, gravelly mortar. There was no sign of a regular offset on either the inner or outer faces of the wall, separating superstructure from foundations.<sup>18</sup>

West of the gate, where the thickened foundations for the early Byzantine rebuild of Period 6 had been removed by post-medieval robbing, the limestone and mortar foundations for the curtain-wall were bonded into the lower facing block (359) for the south-west corner of the gate-chamber and were also of one build with the western, mortared foundation (141) for the west side of the gate. Just sufficient was preserved to prove that the width of the curtain-wall was here 1.28 m. East of the gate, the primary curtain was also 1.28 m wide, where it joined the gate structure, and essentially the same width (1.27 m), where it was bonded with the pilaster foundation.

<sup>17</sup> Similarly, wheel-ruts appear in the northern gate. The axle-width for vehicles would seem to have been remarkably standardized. For example, the distance between the wheel-ruts at Nicopolis is the same as that between the wheel-ruts in the east gate of Housesteads on Hadrian's Wall.

<sup>18</sup> For a distance of 1.0 m east of the foundation (150) for the Period 4 *propugnaculum*, a single row of tiles projected, at most, 0.10 m from the curtain and was overlain by a limestone block (394), which formed part of the first course of the superstructure. Even so, this is unlikely to represent a regular offset because it was not continued beyond Block 394, at least as far as the pilaster foundation.

The core of the superstructure of the wall, east of the gate, was identical to that used in its foundations. Its surviving southern face was roughly built from small limestone blocks, a large limestone block, and tiles. Other slabs, abandoned during robbing, and left above the remains of the wall foundation, may either have been incorporated in the primary Roman wall or used in the early Byzantine rebuild of Period 6 (Fig. 24).

At the eastern end of the surviving section of wall foundation, and at right angles to it, there was a north/south foundation, 0.81 m wide and 2.05 m in length, fully bonded into the Roman curtain-wall. A reused road slab (4092), 0.30–0.60 m thick, was mortared to the top of the foundation and extended through the curtain-wall to project c. 0.10 m beyond its outer, southern face. The slab, wider than the pilaster's foundation, was set back by 0.30 m from its northern end. Set back a further 0.20 m from the northern edge of the reused road slab, three courses of limestone blocks and tile formed the northern face of the pilaster's superstructure, 1.06 m wide and still standing to a height of 0.66 m (Plate XVB). The superstructure of the pilaster projected 1.56 m north of the curtain-wall.

### **The first defensive ditch (Figs 27 and 33)**

At a depth of 2.39 m beneath the level of the *in situ* road slabs, south of the gate, and on the east side of the area, Ditch 1 (5318), heavily truncated by the later ditches, cut natural clay (5319). It may well have been the first ditch, constructed c. 175, and maintained in use until replaced by Ditch 2 in Period 3. Since the butt-end of the ditch was found, clearly the roadway must then have been maintained in use, providing access into the city through the gate.<sup>19</sup>

### **The berm (Fig. 26)**

Since the city wall was trench-built, it was not easy to distinguish between pre-defences deposits and those contemporary with the first phase of the fortifications. However, the primary berm was probably formed by a compacted surface above a deposit of silty clay (4108), abutting the outer face of the curtain-wall and cut to the south by the foundations for the early Byzantine east building (62).

### **Dating**

*Coins.* From the make-up (4108) for the berm, 138/61 (Cat. Nos 3, 4).

### **Discussion**

The Roman fortifications postdated the paving of the road c. 150 and were probably erected c. 175.<sup>20</sup> The construction of the gate is a mixture of careful planning and careless or hasty execution. Care was taken in the selection of stones of appropriate and differing sizes, which were frequently positioned so that taller blocks could be partly cut back to allow blocks in the next course not only to cover the join between the lower blocks, but also to recess into them.

<sup>19</sup> It does remain possible that this was not the first ditch cut: any deepening of the ditch, on the same alignment, would have removed any trace of a predecessor. Subsequently, as the causeway subsided into the eastern butt end, successive recuts of the ditch (at least where excavated, on the east side of the roadway) involved moving the ditch terminal progressively eastward, thereby helpfully contributing to the survival of the sequence.

<sup>20</sup> For the dating of the fortifications, see ch. 1, p. 12.

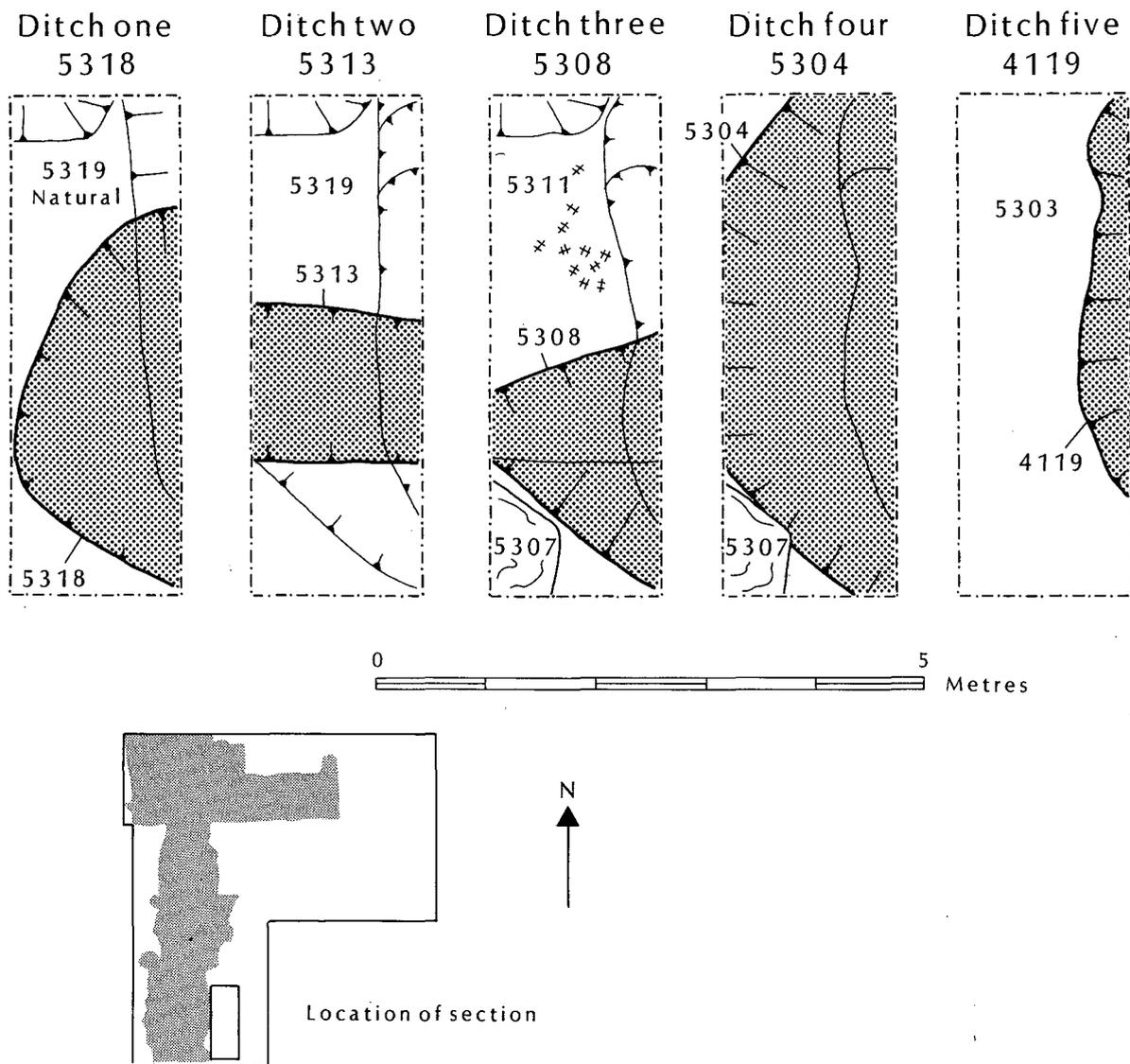


Fig. 33 Area C. Plans of Ditches 1-5, east of the causeway, Periods 2-4.

Particular attention was paid to the walls of the gate-chamber and the southern responds, where alternating courses of blocks were laid 'header-and-stretcher' fashion, across the junction between the two parts of the structure; where a stretcher was used in the western respond, the corresponding stone in the same course for the eastern respond was a header. There was also a conscious attempt to balance the size of stones used for the walls of the gate-chamber: whereas the longer block (360), used in the first course on the west side of the gate, butted the northern respond, the block of equivalent size (367), used in the eastern wall, was located hard up against its southern respond. There was less interest in providing a similar bonding between the blocks used for the inner sides of the gate-chamber and the mortared walls which formed their western and eastern sides (141, 392): only one of the surviving blocks (364) served as a header in the second course of the eastern wall. Still less attention was paid to the north-western corner of the gate: both blocks used in the first and second courses for the west wall (360, 358) butt the northern respond: there was no overlapping of alternate courses as at the southern responds and at the north-eastern corner of the gate-chamber.

The full width of the foundations for the curtain-wall (*c.* 1.28 m), less *c.* 0.50 m for the thickness of the parapet, would have allowed for only a narrow wall-walk. However, the pilaster foundation (0.81 m wide and 2.05 m in length), at the east end of the surviving section of curtain-wall, was the first of nine such foundations, each projecting north from the inner face of the wall and found east

of the gate (Fig. 34).<sup>21</sup> No doubt these pilasters supported arcading which, in turn, supported an extension to the wall-walk, running along the back of the curtain.<sup>22</sup> The Area C pilaster was of similar size to its closest neighbour to the east.<sup>23</sup> The other seven pilasters each had two structural periods. The primary foundations were 0.75 m wide and projected 0.80 m north of the curtain-wall with which they were fully bonded. Subsequently, two of the pilasters were reused in the construction of a tower, abutting the inner face of the curtain, and the next pilaster to the east of this tower was incorporated in an *ascensus* which led up from the *cardo* north of Area A. It was probably during this same programme of reconstruction that the other small pilasters along the curtain were enlarged to 1.27 m in width and 1.60 m in length.<sup>24</sup> However, neither the foundations of the pilaster in Area C nor those of its eastern neighbour were enlarged, presumably because, as originally built, they were already of a size more or less equivalent to the other pilasters after their reconstruction. Vaulting between the primary small pilaster foundations would have allowed for a fighting-platform c. 1.50 m in width. Why, as first planned, the first two pilasters east of the gate were of abnormal size is more difficult to explain. Perhaps it was simply considered useful to have a wider fighting-platform close to the gate. Alternatively, if the width of the fighting-platform, immediately east of the gate, was no greater than that further east, then the extra length of the two large pilasters may have been used to support wooden ladders which allowed direct access to the wall-walk from the roadway, which passed through the gate: no trace of any foundations for a stone and mortar base of an *ascensus* was found. However, not only are the first two pilasters larger than the primary pilasters to the east, there was a notable difference in spacing. The interval between the smaller pilasters ranged between 4.50 and 4.75 m.<sup>25</sup> Although only 4.0 m east of the gate, the pilaster in Area C was 5.60 m from its neighbour which, in turn, was 6.80 m west of the first of the primary small pilasters. This wider spacing, clearly part of the original design, may be explained if the arcading between the large pilasters rose higher than the arches which connected the small pilaster foundations. This could also account for the more massive construction of the two large pilasters. If so, then the wall-walk, adjacent to the gate, was higher than the wall-walk to the east, at least as originally constructed (Fig. 34A). That the height of the wall-walk and consequently the height of the curtain-wall may have been greater close to the gate, may have been considered a useful precaution, particularly since the gate was not provided with flanking towers.<sup>26</sup> Alternatively, a different explanation is suggested by the excavation of the north gate of the city. Here, immediately east of the gate-chamber, the first 'pilaster' was bonded with a short wall at right-angles to it, forming a room on the east side of the gate.<sup>27</sup> No such T-shaped projections were found on the excavated section of the southern defences but it remains possible that the larger two pilasters east of the gate not only supported the wall-walk but were also foundations for walls, extending north from the inner face of the curtain, and here forming two rooms, perhaps serving as guard-chambers or store-rooms on the east side of the gate (Fig. 34B).

Although there is no way of proving it one way or the other, it is also possible that the arcading

<sup>21</sup> L. Slokoska, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1990, 67; Slokoska (1994), 172.

<sup>22</sup> In the Hellenistic period, arcading was used along the back of curtain-walls to support the wall-walk: Lawrence (1979), 366–7, 372. Pilasters, interpreted as supports for internal arcading, have also been identified in the construction of the Roman fortifications of Pautalia and Augusta Traiana, built at about the same time as the walls of Nicopolis, see ch. 1, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Slokoska (1994), 172.

<sup>24</sup> Slokoska (1989), 301–2; idem (1994), 173.

<sup>25</sup> Slokoska (1994), 172.

<sup>26</sup> The height of the wall-walk of the Severan fort of Gheriat El-Garbia in Tripolitania was c. 5.30 m above ground level at the north-east gate but only 3.60 m high at the northern angle tower – a reminder that the height of a curtain-wall may have varied, depending upon the topography of the site and the need to provide extra security for vulnerable sections of the defences, particularly at gates where the approach was not interrupted by a ditch: D. Welsby, 'The defences of the Roman forts at Bu Ngem and Gheriat El-Garbia', in P. Bidwell, R. Miket and B. Ford (eds), *Portae cum Turribus*, BAR Brit. Ser. 206 (1988), 63–82.

<sup>27</sup> Ivanov (1988a), 103–5. A second chamber appears to have existed on the east side of the gate and another was identified flanking the west side of the gate.

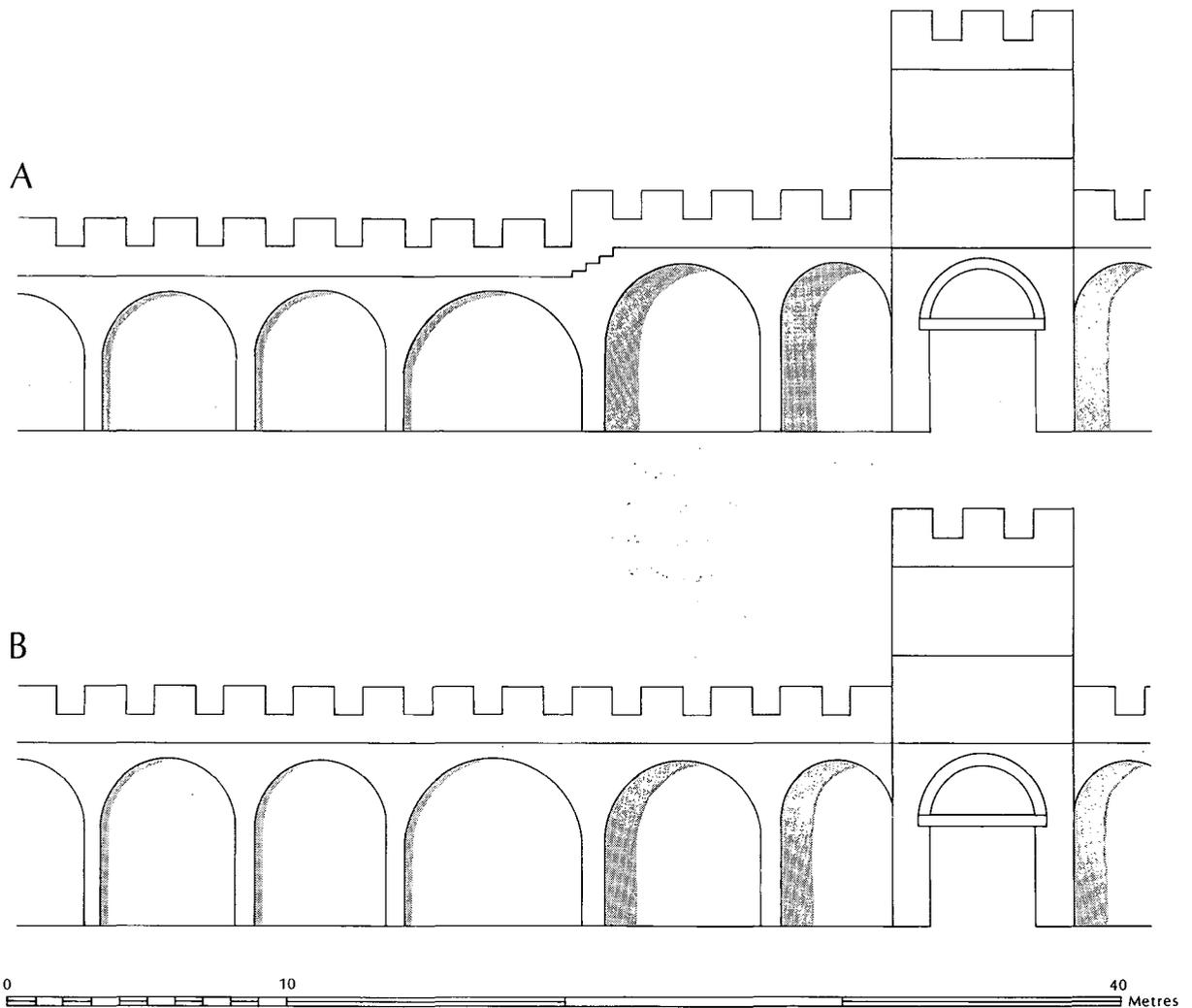


Fig. 34 Two alternative reconstructions of the inside of the Roman curtain-wall. A. To support a higher wall-walk close to the gate; B. To support dividing walls for chambers either side of the northern portal.

supported a gallery below the level of the wall-walk, as certainly was the case in some Hellenistic fortifications where arcading was employed.<sup>28</sup> If so, the provision of embrasures below the level of the parapet may have compensated, to some extent, for the apparent absence of external towers along the southern curtain and from them enfilading fire could be directed towards the causeway in front of the gate.

Even though the foundations of the pilaster in Area C (and the next pilaster to the east) and the foundations for the curtain-wall had not been rebuilt it remains possible that the superstructure was subsequently reconstructed, perhaps at the same time as the small pilasters were enlarged. The reused road slab, which represented the surviving first course of the pilaster's superstructure, sat awkwardly over its foundation, projecting beyond the southern face of the wall and ending short of its northern end. Certainly, road slabs were used in the reconstruction of the small pilasters and, at least in one case, this would seem to have involved the demolition of the curtain-wall to the top of its foundations for the insertion of two road slabs, one over a rebuilt pilaster, the other over the curtain-wall foundation.<sup>29</sup> The crude construction of the southern face of the wall in Area C contrasts with the careful facing provided for the gate-chamber. If the wall and pilaster had been rebuilt, the reconstruction must have first involved the demolition of the existing curtain to the top of its foundations.

The use of large ashlar blocks, the arcading along the inside of the curtain, and the settings for the

<sup>28</sup> cf. Lawrence (1979), 370–4.

<sup>29</sup> Slokoska (1994), figs 8 and 12.

door-pivots are characteristic features of Greek planning and engineering.<sup>30</sup> In size and construction, the gate closely resembles that built on the north side of the Roman city.<sup>31</sup> Both gates had double-winged outer doors, and a portcullis closing the inner side of the gate-chamber. The anomalous position of the portcullis has no parallel in other urban fortifications, except for the contemporary city gate at Augusta Traiana (Stara Zagora). This strongly suggests that the same architects were employed in the building of the gates for both cities. Even so, it is difficult to account for such a strange location, which would not have allowed the portcullis to perform its normal function: to protect the outer entrance to a gate, and prevent the use of a battering-ram against wooden doors, which usually closed the inner end of the gate-chamber. If it was not simply a mistake, it may have been an experimental design, but one which clearly proved to have no advantage over the usual arrangement since it was not employed in later fortifications in the region or elsewhere.<sup>32</sup>

### The appearance of the Roman gate (Fig. 35)

The first coin struck by the Nicopolis mint to depict fortifications, an issue of 202/205, has a singular claim to provide a fairly accurate representation of the city's fortifications.<sup>33</sup> It shows a single portalled entrance, constructed from large stone blocks, with a lintel surmounted by a relieving arch. The gate is flanked by two round towers, and was probably therefore intended to depict the main west gate.<sup>34</sup> The single portal and the use of limestone blocks for the superstructure are features shared with the excavated gate in Area C and it would seem reasonable to follow the coin in reconstructing the gate's original appearance. A lintel over the entrance and a relieving arch above, as shown on the coin, are features common to Hellenistic gates.<sup>35</sup>

Since the gate was clearly used by wheeled vehicles, the lintel is unlikely to have been lower than 3.50 m above the carriageway. Allowing for a lintel *c.* 0.50 m thick, the height from the top of the lintel to the intrados must have been *c.* 1.35 m (half the width of the carriageway). To which can be added another 0.50 m for the thickness of the relieving arch. This suggests that the first floor of the tower could hardly have been lower than 5.85 m above ground level. Another row of facing blocks (0.50 m thick) above the top of the gate-arch would seem reasonable, before the first-floor level, which was probably, therefore, *c.* 6.35 m above the floor of the gate. This corresponds quite closely to the height of the wall-walk which is unlikely to have been less than *c.* 6.50 m above ground-level.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> cf. Lawrence (1979), 250–4.

<sup>31</sup> Ivanov (1988a), 97–108.

<sup>32</sup> At Augusta Traiana, but not at Nicopolis, the inner portcullis was subsequently abandoned and a new one located at the front of the gate-chamber: Nikolov (1987), 100–1.

<sup>33</sup> Pick (1898), no. 1331, p. 370. This coin also depicts a large monumental building and a small temple. The former, with its triangular pediment with spear and shield decoration, is strikingly similar to the pediments of the *thermoperipatos*, east of the *agora*, erected in 184/5, a few years after the fortifications were constructed, see ch. 1, pp. 11–12. The design was popular and was re-issued later under Septimius Severus *c.* 209/212 and again under Caracalla: Pick (1898), nos 1339, p. 372, and 1585, p. 412. Cities of the eastern provinces struck coins, some of which certainly did depict local buildings: M. J. Price and B. L. Trell, *Coins and Their Cities; Architecture on the Ancient Coins of Greece, Rome and Palestine* (London, 1977), 33 and, for Nicopolis, *ibid.*, fig. 70, p. 49. Later, in the third century, Nicopolis struck other 'city gate' issues but these were clearly 'standard motifs', which were also produced in other cities on the lower Danube and are unlikely to have local significance.

<sup>34</sup> The robber-trenches around the unexcavated west gate suggest that it was flanked by towers, a provision not found at the north and south gates (Fig. 3). The west gate, commanding the entrance to the *decumanus maximus* which led directly to the *propyleion*, the principal entrance into the *agora*, must have been the most important entrance to the city and was probably therefore the gate depicted on the coin.

<sup>35</sup> For Greek gateways which did not employ the Roman arch but lintels with a relieving arch, cf. Lawrence (1979), 256–7.

<sup>36</sup> The wall-walk would have to be 8.50 m above ground level for a defender to see the bottom of the defensive ditch (Ditch 1). If the wall-walk was less than 6.50 m high, attackers in the ditch would have been hidden from view. It would seem improbable that the existence of such a blind spot would have been permitted. The late second-century defences at Pautalia (Kiustendil) were certainly *c.* 8.50–9.0 m in height: Slokoska (1989), 98. Although steps could have allowed access into the first floor of the gate-tower from the wall-walk, it is likely that wherever possible both would have been at the same height. For the height of the curtain-wall after its reconstruction, see below, p. 97.

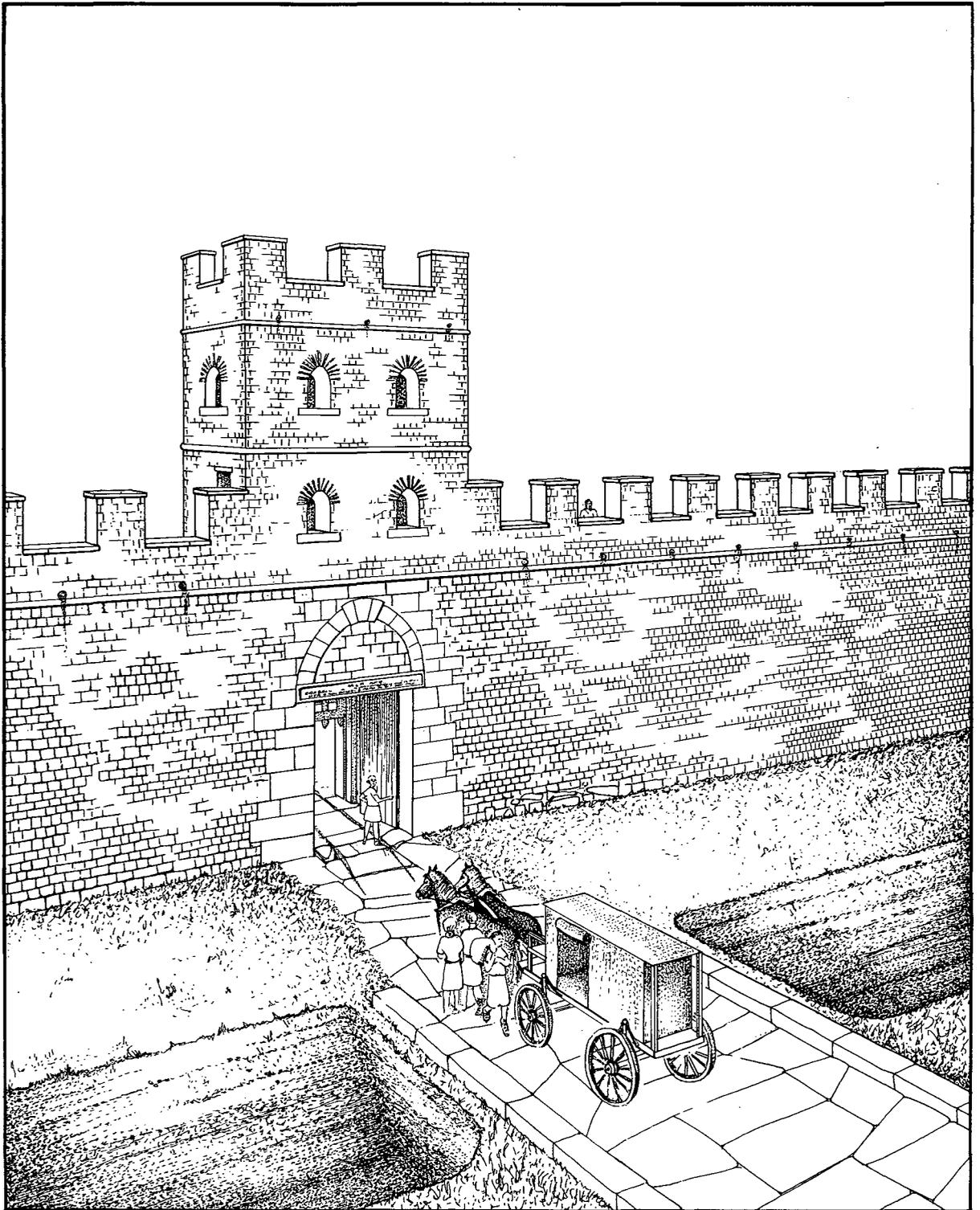


Fig. 35 Area C. Reconstruction of the gate, c. 200.

Given the width of the gate, there would have been only enough space for two windows at first-floor level. Presumably, when the gate was open for traffic, the portcullis would have been drawn up into the first-floor chamber and the bottom of the portcullis raised to the height of the lintel. Consequently, with a drop of 3.50 m, the top of the raised portcullis must have been c. 0.65 m above the floor of the gate-tower's first storey. No doubt it was attached to a windlass fixed to the north wall of the gate-tower and below windows in the rear wall, the sills of which were presumably c. 1.0 m above the floor.<sup>37</sup> A second

<sup>37</sup> For a similar and near contemporary arrangement, cf. E. Gose, *Die Porta Nigra in Trier* (1969).

floor for the gate can be presumed and three storeys would seem reasonable, particularly in the absence of flanking towers to protect the entrance. The upper floor could have had a gabled roof, but a flat roof and crenellations is more likely: the coin, discussed above, suggests that the towers flanking the city gate had crenellations, not conical roofs. If first and second storeys were each 3 m high, then the full height of the gate to the crenellations, would have been c. 14.50 m.

### PERIOD 3: NEW DEFENSIVE MEASURES (Figs 27 and 33)

Ditch 2 (5313) had no butt-end: it continued west, below the Period 4 causeway. The road slabs must have been removed and, when the causeway was repaired (Period 4), the rough surface of limestone blocks and cobbles subsided slightly into the backfill of Ditch 2 (Plates XI and XIIB). The distance between the southern end of the *in situ* road slabs (4193), immediately south of the gate, and the first *in situ* slabs in the southern extension was c. 7.40 m, which must correspond to the width of this new ditch.

#### Dating

The surviving backfill within Ditch 1 produced no coins and insufficient diagnostic sherds to date the cutting of Ditch 2.

#### Discussion

The backfilling of Ditch 2 and the cutting of Ditch 3 can be assigned to the early fourth century.<sup>38</sup> Since Ditch 2 follows Ditch 1, which can be no earlier than c. 175, it is reasonable to presume that Ditch 2 belongs to the third century. Nor is it likely to date as early as the first quarter of that century because the road was presumably still in use when an extramural house was constructed to the south, its east side probably fronting onto this same road.<sup>39</sup> The continuation of the ditch in front of the gate must have first involved the removal of the road slabs, some of which may have been used in the reconstruction of the defences.<sup>40</sup> If it was at this time that the smaller pilasters were enlarged and the wall rebuilt from its foundations, the curtain was probably heightened: the *ascensus*, leading up from the *cardo* within the city (and north of Area A), was probably constructed at the same time as the other small pilasters were rebuilt. The inclination of the steps suggests that the wall-walk was then c. 7.30 m above ground-level.<sup>41</sup> After the ditch had cut the causeway, the gate probably no longer provided access to the city and may well have been blocked. This must have been carried out in order to improve security on the south side of the city, an understandable precaution, particularly from the middle of the third century, when barbarian incursions threatened the lower Danubian provinces and Nicopolis in particular.<sup>42</sup> The removal of the side slabs from the road in the southern extension probably occurred at this time.

<sup>38</sup> See below, pp. 100–2.

<sup>39</sup> See Area M, pp. 194–5

<sup>40</sup> As noted above, road slabs were used in the enlargement of the pilasters. The excavator suggests that the rebuilding may have taken place towards the middle of the third century: L. Slokoska, *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1986, 123–4; *ibid.* (1990), 67; Slokoska (1991), 301–2; *idem* (1994), 173–4. If the curtain-wall and the pilaster in Area C were rebuilt, this may well have been the occasion.

<sup>41</sup> Slokoska (1994), 173.

<sup>42</sup> Decius fought the Goths close to Nicopolis in 250 and the city was besieged in 270, see ch. 1, pp. 13–14.

## PERIOD 4: THE ROAD, *PROPUGNACULUM* AND DEFENSIVE DITCHES

### The restoration of the causeway and the road (Fig. 36)

Ditch 2 was backfilled and a causeway was constructed across it (Plates XI and XIIB). This was roughly paved with small road slabs and architectural fragments (4172), including parts of a finely carved stone bowl and a fragment of an early imperial inscription.<sup>43</sup> Between the causeway and the front of the gate, where the central road slabs remained *in situ*, the gaps left by the removal of the side-slabs were filled with cobbles. Also cobbles (120) were used to level up the surface of the causeway. In the southern extension, cobbles and stone blocks (4007) were used to repair the road surface over the southern side of the backfilled ditch and more cobbles (4010) were packed around the remaining road-slabs (Plate XI, Fig. 29). At the southern end of the southern extension, the cobbles continued, but had here subsided into the fill (4026) of the west/east ditch, excavated in Area B.<sup>44</sup> The thickest concentration occurred over the central section of the road, where it crossed the backfilled ditch, and where subsidence must have required regular repair. It was possible to distinguish, in localized areas, successive periods of cobbling, separated by thin spreads of sandy silt.<sup>45</sup> In addition to a remarkable concentration of 135 coins, the cobbled surface produced a variety of small-finds, including lead and copper-alloy waste, intended for recycling as scrap.<sup>46</sup>

### The *propugnaculum* (Fig. 36)

Two mortared 'L-shaped' foundations (160, 150) butted the western and eastern sides of the gate and continued south, supporting what must have been an outer extension to the gate (Fig. 38). Where the foundations for the eastern wall were examined, immediately north of the defensive ditches, they were 1.30 m deep, trench-built, and constructed from roughly coursed limestone blocks and tile, bonded in a strong, white mortar. The eastern foundation (150), where it turned west, partly overlay an *in situ* road slab, which had slumped forward towards the ditch. Although the full width of the western foundation (7.40 m in length) was not fully within the area it no doubt closely resembled the eastern foundation (7.20 m in length) which was 1.40 m wide. The two foundations must have been built for a rectangular chamber, *c.* 5.40 m wide and extending *c.* 6.30 m south of the gate. The gap, left for access, between the two ends of the structure, formed an entrance *c.* 1.70 m wide. There were no pivot-sockets for a door. No certain traces of the building's superstructure survived although clay was packed into the south-eastern corner of the eastern foundation (Fig. 37). But this is more likely to have been used to level the foundation after the structure was demolished than to represent the remains of mud-walls: quite probably the building had low walls of mortared rubble completed in pisé or mudbrick.

When the structure was built is more difficult to determine. It was clearly not part of the original construction of the gate, which it abutted. It is unlikely to have been used in the third century, at

<sup>43</sup> See ch. 18, No. 2.

<sup>44</sup> See Area B, pp. 71–3.

<sup>45</sup> On the east side of the causeway, particularly prone to subsidence, three successive phases of cobbling were identified. Usually, only one or two coins could be recognized and none of these successive layers of cobbles produced any distinctive group of coins; the majority in each context dated to the second half of the fourth century and, although there was a tendency for the majority of fifth-century coins to concentrate in the latest cobble spreads, two of the lowest levels of cobbles (149, 151) produced two fifth-century coins: 402/408 (Cat. No. 515), 408/419 (Cat. No. 523). Since the spreads were thin and localized, and the depth of these deposits was usually only *c.* 0.10 m, the smaller coins could easily have slipped down to the bottom of the cobbles from the latest surface.

<sup>46</sup> Apart from the coins and fragments of iron, finds included a bone comb (Cat. No. 137), a strap-end (SF 6428), an ear-ring (SF 6419), a brooch (SF 6217), an iron knife-blade (SF 6193), two spatulas (SF 6194, SF 6427), nails of various types (18 of N/1, 9 of N/5, and single examples of N/3, N/10, and N/11). Of twenty-eight finds positively identified as scrap, twenty-one were of copper-alloy and seven of lead.

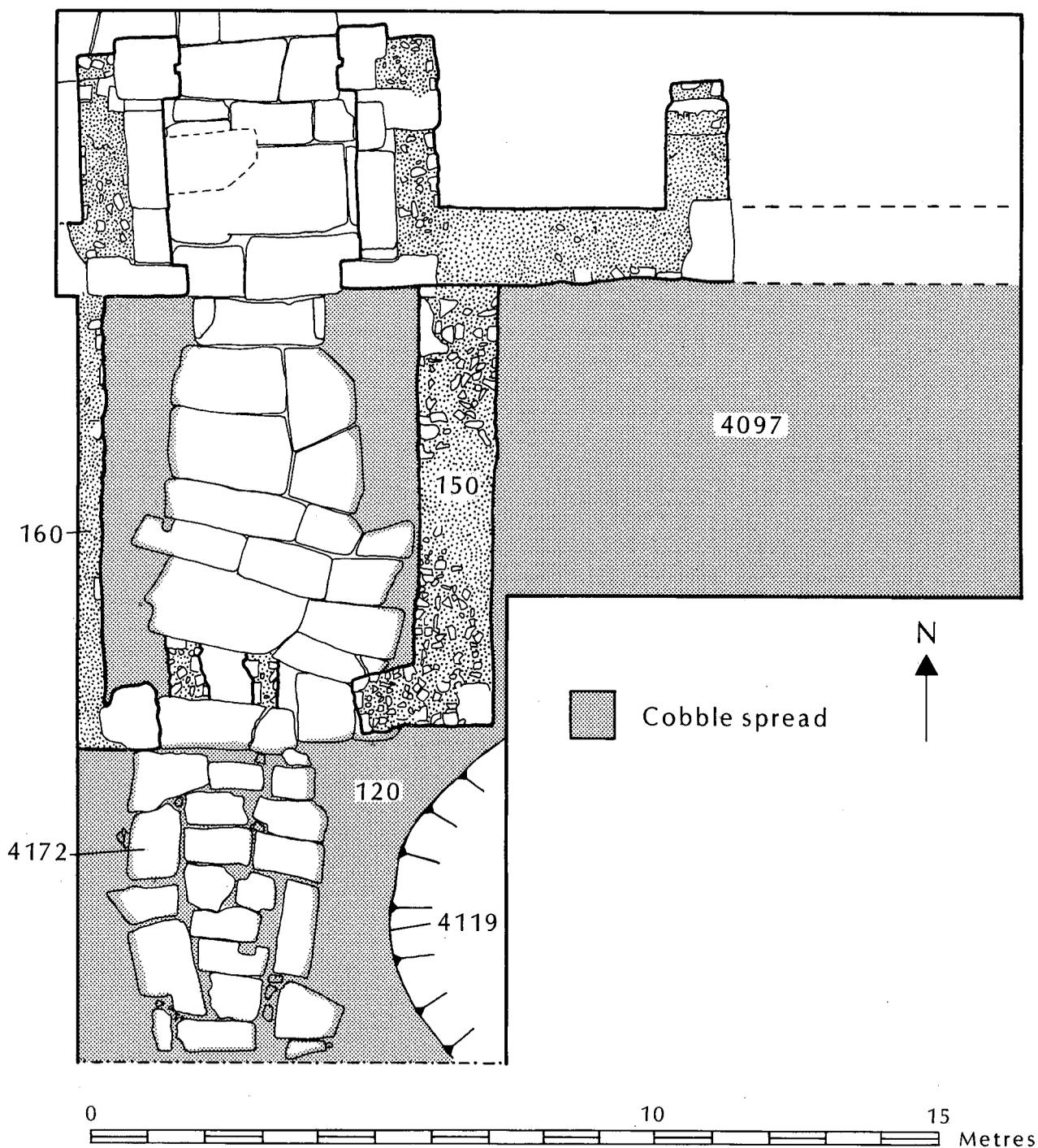


Fig. 36 Area C. Period 4.

least not when Ditch 2 (Period 3) cut off access to the gate and when such a chamber would have been superfluous. Probably, therefore, it postdates the restoration of the causeway and belongs to this period. Even so, it was dismantled before the end of Period 4: its foundations were partly covered by the cobble spread.

**Modifications to the defences (Figs 27 and 33)**

At the end of Period 3, Ditch 2 (5313) was backfilled, first with a deposit of silty clay and mudbricks (5316), then with a dump of silty clay (5311), containing charcoal and burnt material, in order to reinstate the causeway in front of the gate. This was immediately followed by the cutting of

Ditch 3 (5308), the eastern terminal of which respected the eastern edge of the repaired roadway. Ditch 4 (5304) would seem to have involved no major redigging of the ditch, but the infilling of the butt-end close to the road, where blocks used to repair the surface of the causeway (especially 5307) had started to subside into the ditch. The terminal of Ditch 4 was cut slightly further back from the roadway, presumably to avoid further subsidence. Ditch 5 (4119) was cut still further east of the road, its western terminal corresponding to a north/south line of small limestone blocks, roughly consolidated with mortar, which then marked the eastern side of the cobble-spread on the causeway and was no doubt intended to prevent stones from its surface falling into the ditch. By the time Ditch 5 was in use, the causeway had been extended by c. 1.50 m to the east. Like each of its predecessors, the ditch continued beyond the eastern section (Fig. 37).

Under the north-east corner of the causeway, the east wall of a drain, inserted into its foundation trench (4145) cutting the backfill of Ditch 2, continued south beneath one of the relaid slabs (4176) (Fig. 28). At its northern end, the new drain wall, roughly built with a sandy white mortar, butted against the eastern side of the primary main drain (4120), preserved under the road slabs which remained *in situ* outside the gate. The road drain must have been cut by Ditch 2 (Period 3) and then rebuilt at the beginning of Period 4. Why the drain should have been recommissioned is unclear: no similar repair was carried out to the drain in Area B to the south.<sup>47</sup>

The berm (4097), immediately south of the city wall, within the eastern extension, was also provided with a cobbled surface (4097), which was subsequently repaired with a second layer of cobbles (4096). It extended south from the curtain-wall as far as the southern section (Figs 26 and 36).

This period ended in destruction. A deep deposit of collapsed and burnt mud-walls covered mortared stone buildings to the north of the curtain-wall.<sup>48</sup> The floor of the gate-chamber was covered by a spread of charcoal and ash which filled the wheel-ruts.

## Dating

### *Ditch 3 (5308)*

*Pottery.* The backfill (5316, 5311) of Ditch 2 (5313) contained a mixed assemblage, including second-century residual sherds, but also ledge-rim bowls [389] and thickened, ledge-rim cooking-pots [27, 35], dated 250/350. An amphora sherd [1058] and a small bowl with flattened, out-turned rim [608] suggest a date within the fourth century for the backfilling of Ditch 2 and the cutting of Ditch 3.

*Date.* Early fourth century.

### *Ditch 4 (5304)*

*Pottery.* The backfill (5305) of Ditch 3 (5308) contained sherds of amphorae [1050], which date from the late third century and others [1057] of fourth-century date, flaring-neck cooking-pots [154], dating to the middle of the fourth century, a small jar with offset rim [734], dating later than 300, and a small bowl with flattened, everted rim [613], also datable later than 300.

*Date.* Mid- to late fourth century.

<sup>47</sup> See Area B, p. 75.

<sup>48</sup> See ch. 2, p. 34.

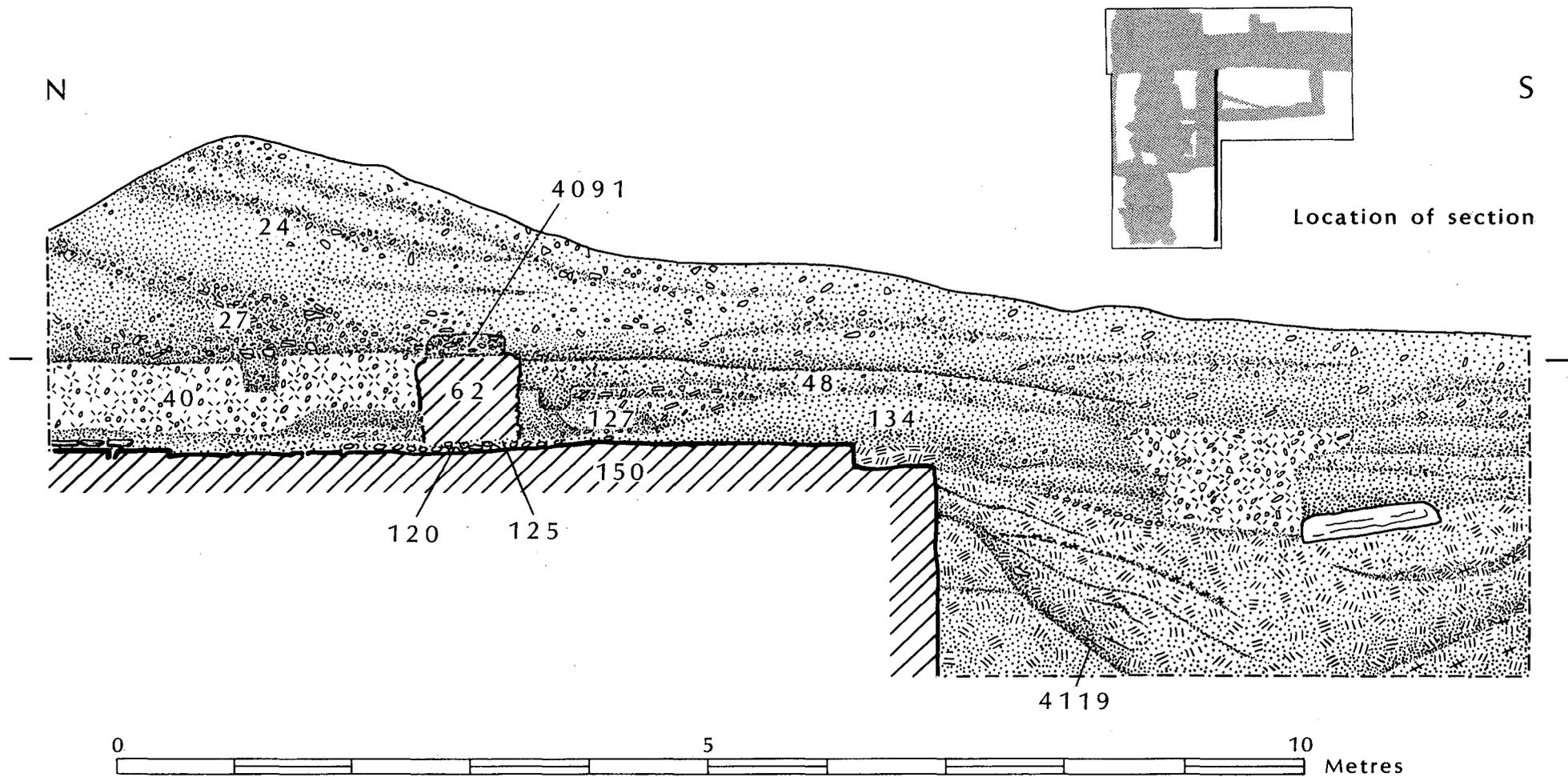


Fig. 37 Area C. North/south section from the curtain-wall to the southern section of the main area.

*Ditch 5 (4119)*

*Pottery.* The backfill (5303) of Ditch 4 (5304) contained Ware 14, including ledge-rim water-jars/amphorae [305], dated to the fifth century, amphora sherds [1039] and a twisted amphora handle [918], no earlier than fourth century in date and probably fifth century.

*Date.* Early to mid-fifth century.

*The berm*

*Pottery.* The first cobbled surface (4097) contained sherds of Ware 14, dating to the first half of the fifth century. The second cobbled surface (4096) contained Ware 14, including a pattern-burnished jug [302] and a sherd of Late Roman C Ware, Form 4 [1042], the latter dated 425/450.

*Coins.* From the first cobbled surface (4097), c. 400/600 (Cat. No. 632); from the second cobbled surface (4096), three illegible coins (Cat. Nos 647, 649, and 650), 193/211 (Cat. No. 13), 364/378 (Cat. No. 425), 408/419 (Cat. No. 530).

*Date.* Early to mid-fifth century.

*The cobbled roadway (120)<sup>49</sup>*

*Coins.* 135 coins: one of indeterminate date (Cat. No. 644), 138/161 (Cat. No. 1), 175/250 (Cat. No. 109), 193/211 (Cat. No. 14), 217/218 (Cat. No. 49), 238/244 (Cat. No. 85), 270/275 (Cat. No. 145), c. 300/450 (Cat. Nos 532, 533, 538, 539, 541, 542, 543, 551, 553, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570), 317/320 (Cat. No. 164), 330/333 (Cat. No. 210), 330/363 (Cat. Nos 367, 369), 331/334 (Cat. No. 187), 333/335 (Cat. No. 184), 333/336 (Cat. No. 182), 335/337 (Cat. No. 202), 337/340 (Cat. No. 192), 347/348 (Cat. Nos 227, 228, 229, 236, 237, 247), 348/350 (Cat. No. 251), 348/361 (Cat. Nos 256, 257, 264, 276, 289, 292, 304, 323, 325), 350/355 (Cat. Nos 258, 262), 351/355 (Cat. No. 271), 355/361 (Cat. Nos 314, 332, 340, 345, 356, 357, 358, 363), 360/362 (Cat. No. 371), 364/367 (Cat. No. 378), 364/375 (Cat. Nos 382, 383), 364/378 (Cat. Nos 386, 390, 391, 393, 395, 403, 415, 421, 422), 365/366 (Cat. No. 375), 367/378 (Cat. No. 407), c. 378/400 (Cat. Nos 434, 436), 378/383 (Cat. No. 430), 383/388 (Cat. Nos 480, 481), 388/392 (Cat. No. 450), 388/395 (Cat. Nos 447, 448, 456), 388/402 (Cat. Nos 460, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471), 395/408 (Cat. Nos 488, 490, 491, 493, 499, 500, 503, 504, 505, 506), c. 400/500 (Cat. Nos 612, 617), c. 400/600 (Cat. Nos 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 630, 631, 400/404 (Cat. No. 511), 402/408 (Cat. Nos 515, 516, 610), 408/419 (Cat. Nos 521, 523, 526, 527, 528, 529, 591, 593, 594, 604, 605).

**Discussion**

The infilling of Ditch 2 (5313) and the restoration of the causeway, at the beginning of this period, suggest a return to more peaceful conditions, when access through the gate was considered more important than the security which Ditch 2 presumably provided. A date in the early fourth century, perhaps as early as the Tetrarchic period, would seem probable. Notable, however, is the absence of any sign that the defences of the city were substantially improved, as they certainly were for other cities on the lower and middle Danube at this time. Even if the enlargement of the pilasters dates to Period 4, rather than the third century, this would still represent only a modest improvement, when compared with the massive defensive circuits, with large external towers, provided for other cities in the region.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Little pottery came from the cobbled surface and there were insufficient diagnostic types to provide dating evidence.

<sup>50</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 14–15.

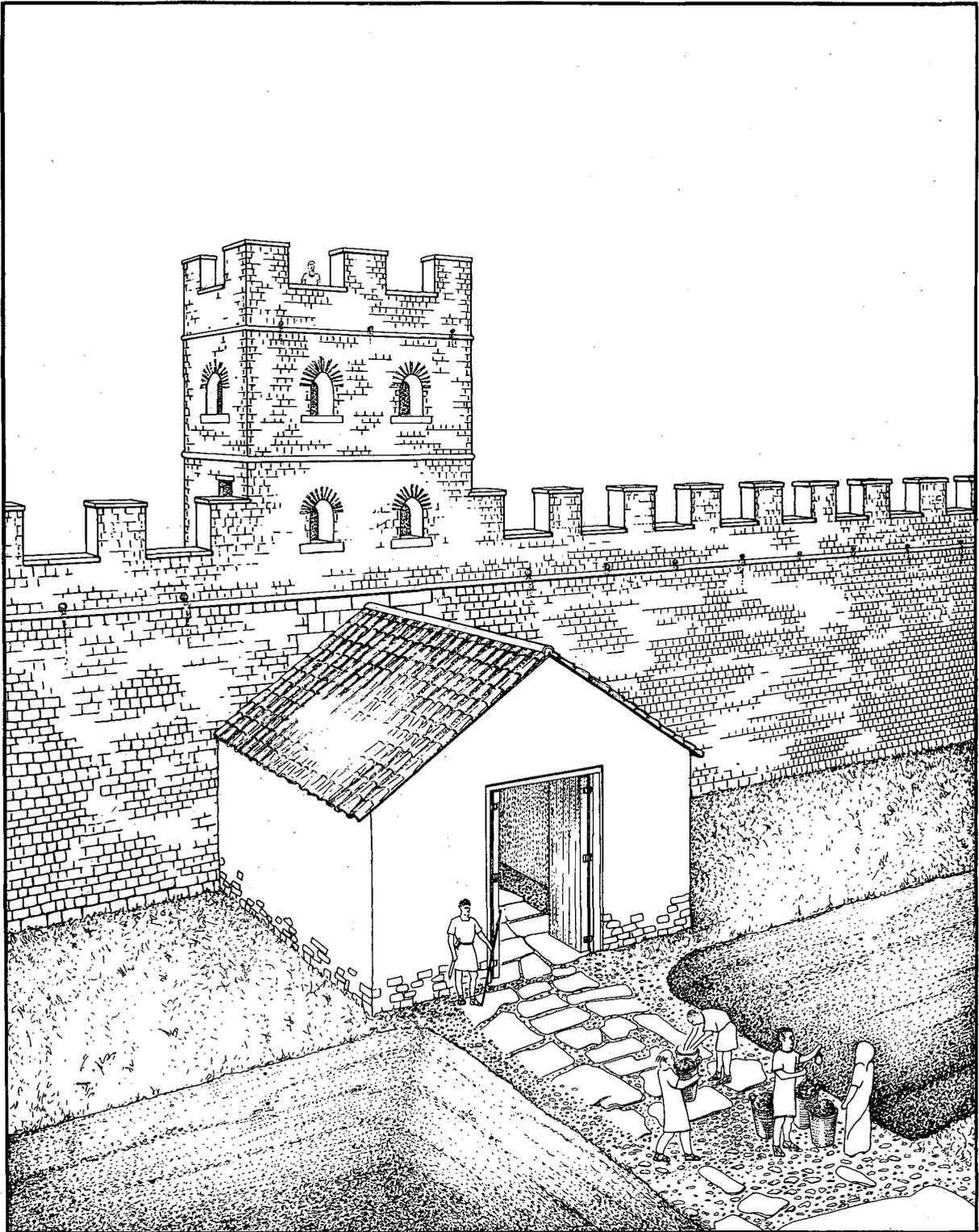


Fig. 38 Area C. Reconstruction of the gate and the *propugnaculum*, c. 350.

The addition of the *propugnaculum* can hardly have been intended to improve the defences. The term is, perhaps, inappropriate. Its southern entrance had no pivot-sockets and could only have been secured by a timber-framed door which would not have presented a serious obstacle to a determined enemy. The width of the entrance was as wide as that of the main gate-chamber, presumably to admit wheeled traffic. Since the primary gate-chamber was so small, this additional room may have been used as a guard-chamber, where vehicles and pedestrians could be checked, before they were allowed to enter the city (Fig. 38). Since it was dismantled before the

end of Period 4, it may well have impeded, rather than improved, the defence of the entrance. Certainly, by the late fourth century, there is reason to believe that security must have been of renewed importance.<sup>51</sup>

Throughout the fourth and into the fifth century, the causeway was retained in use and the eastern terminal of the defensive ditch repaired, where the roadway was prone to subside into the butt-end. Given the limited area available for excavation, it proved impossible to determine whether, as seems likely, Ditch 5 represented the construction of a wider and deeper ditch, equivalent to Ditch 2 excavated in Area A.<sup>52</sup> However, it is of interest that the berm was provided with a cobbled surface, both phases of which date to the fifth century, presumably because it was then used as a pathway. Access to the berm would have been required after the construction of the fifth-century *proteichisma*, identified in Area A, which no doubt continued at least as far west as the gate (Fig. 39).<sup>53</sup>

The remarkable number of coins, recovered from the cobbled surface outside the gate, suggests a high rate of coin-loss during the fourth century and on into the fifth. As in Area B, the explanation may be that the roadway also functioned as part of an extramural market (Fig. 38).<sup>54</sup> Also, like Area B, the cobbles produced a variety of metal-fragments, including copper-alloy and lead scrap, which indicates that metal-working was carried out in the vicinity.<sup>55</sup>

Period 4 continued into the reign of Theodosius II. The destruction level within the gate-chamber was contemporary with the final destruction level immediately to the north and within the Roman city. Since it is likely that the Roman city was destroyed by the Huns towards the middle of the fifth century, it is possible that the arrow-head (SF 6430) and bolt-head (SF 6175) from the cobbled roadway, outside the gate, were connected with this event.<sup>56</sup>

## PERIOD 5: ABANDONMENT OF THE DEFENCES AND ROADWAY

Across the cobbled road surface and within the gate, there accumulated a dark brown loam (125), 0.10–0.15 m deep (Figs 32 and 40). Surrounded by this deposit, a hearth built of limestone blocks and tile was constructed against the north-west corner of the gate-chamber (Plate XVIA).

### Dating

*Pottery.* Little was found in the soil build-up (125), but what there was included sherds of Ware 14, datable to the fifth/sixth century. There was also an ARSW, Hayes Form 104, dated c. 530, here regarded as intrusive, since the early Byzantine occupation level was c. 1.0 m above this context (see Period 6).

*Coins.* From the soil build-up (125): c. 300/450 (Cat. Nos 552, 549), 364/375 (Cat. No. 381), 364/378 (Cat. No. 385), 383/388 (Cat. No. 473), 402/408 (Cat. No. 514), 408/419 (Cat. No. 602), c. 400/500 (Cat. No. 616), c. 400/600 (Cat. Nos 620, 622). The latest closely datable coin was an issue of Marcian: 450/457 (Cat. No. 615).

<sup>51</sup> See new defensive measures in the late fourth or early fifth century, ch. 1, pp. 15–16.

<sup>52</sup> See Area A, p. 60.

<sup>53</sup> See Area A, pp. 60–1.

<sup>54</sup> See Area B, p. 75 and ch. 17, p. 306.

<sup>55</sup> That the coins were themselves brought to the site as scrap, intended for recycling, remains possible but less likely than that they are the result of 'coin-loss'. See Area B, p. 75. The coins were evenly distributed across the area and throughout the cobbled surface and could not represent a dispersed coin-hoard.

<sup>56</sup> On the dating of the end of the Roman city and the probability that it fell to the Huns, see Area P, pp. 214–15 and ch. 2, p. 34.

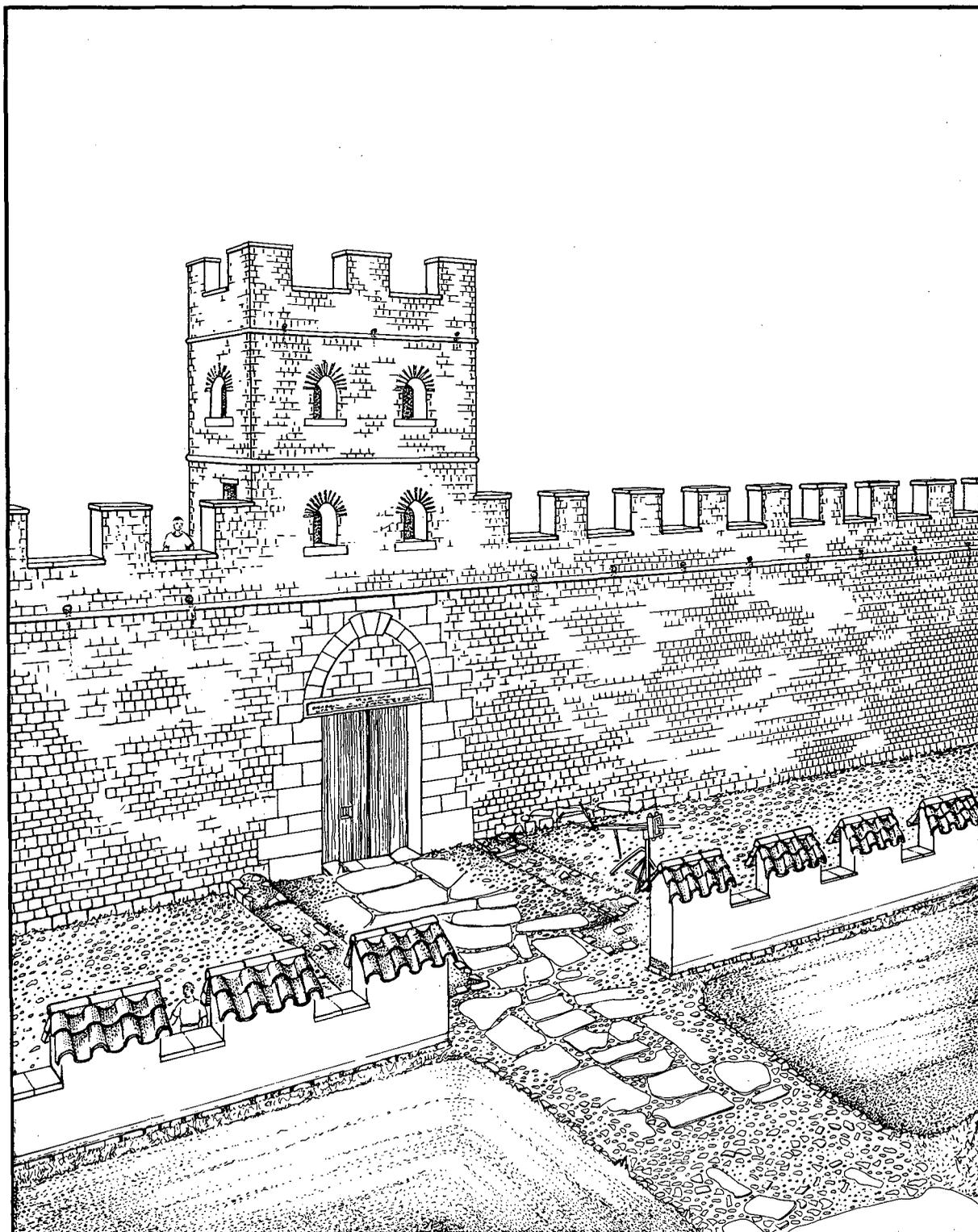
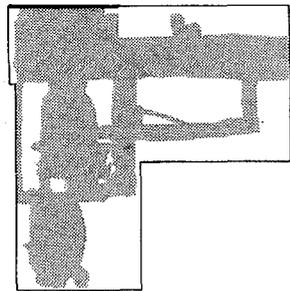
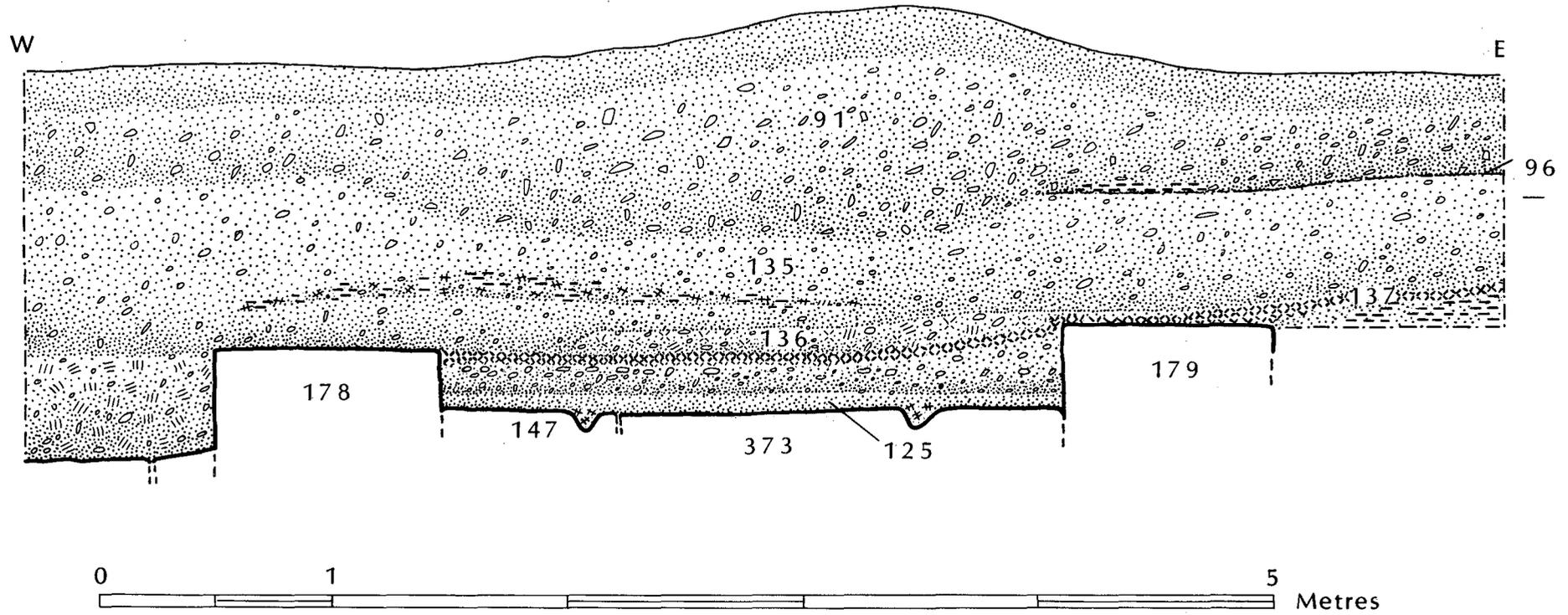


Fig. 39 Area C. Reconstruction of the gate, c. 425.

### Discussion

This accumulation of soil (125) would seem to represent a period of partial abandonment. The road was not repaired. The hearth in the gateway may indicate casual use of the gate, or it may be that the gate-tower was converted into living accommodation. Certainly, the survival of its remains proves that the gate was never recommissioned.

Since Period 4 ended in destruction, probably towards the middle of the fifth century, it would seem that this period of dereliction intervened between the sack of the city and the construction of the early Byzantine defences in Period 6. The coin of Marcian suggests that this period ended no earlier than 450.



Location of section

Fig. 40 Area C. West/east section, north side of the Roman gate.

**PERIOD 6: THE EARLY BYZANTINE DEFENCES AND OCCUPATION (Fig. 41)**

Above the soil build-up (125) of Period 5, immediately south of the gate, a mortar spread (137) represented the first sign of building activity. This same thin mortar level extended north over the soil which had accumulated in the gate-chamber, and north of the gate, filling the bottom of both portcullis slots. In the northern section, above the soil build-up of Period 5 (125), this lens of mortar ran across the entrance from the top of the surviving western respond block (178) and covered the top of the remaining *in situ* block (179) of the eastern respond; both ends of the gate must have been dismantled to this level before building-work commenced (Fig. 40). Immediately above the mortar, a backfill of rubble (136) was cut by the foundation trench for a limestone and mortar foundation (157), running west/east inside the gate, 1.60 m south of the northern end of the chamber (Plate XVIIA). The southern face (159) of the same foundation abutted the sides of the southern entrance into the gate (Plate XIVB). They formed the northern and southern sides of a wall which blocked up the gate, the central core of which had been robbed out in the post-medieval period (Fig. 24). Both sections of the foundation were preserved beneath limestone blocks, which probably denote the height at which the foundations of the blocking wall were replaced by superstructure, *c.* 1.0 m above the floor of the Roman gate. To the north, after the insertion of the foundation, more rubble and soil (135) were backfilled against it and over the two surviving respond blocks, and levelled off for a compacted silty clay ground surface (96), which survived post-medieval robbing on the east side of the gate and abutted the eastern side of the guard-chamber, 1.0 m above the paving for the abandoned Roman road (Fig. 40).

There is no doubt that the insertion of the blocking-wall within the gate was carried out as part of the rebuilding of the southern curtain-wall of the late Roman city for use in the early Byzantine defences. The mortar construction level (137) was visible, rising in the northern section to the east and continuing upwards until it met the offset between the foundations and superstructure of Tower 4, projecting north of the wall and which belonged to the early Byzantine defences (Fig. 5).<sup>57</sup>

A second foundation abutted the east side of the gate, the west side of the pilaster, and the north face of the Roman curtain-wall (Fig. 24). No trace of the superstructure survived, but it must have been built to widen the original wall from 1.24 m to 2.64 m. The new wall-core was built from mortared rubble and, where the northern face of the foundation was visible, it was regularly faced with small limestone blocks but included a large block from a stone pressure pipeline, here roughly wedged up against the foundation for the pilaster and broken where it projected beyond the wall foundation (Fig. 24).<sup>58</sup> A second similar block, dislodged by robbing, lay to the north: probably it had been used in the superstructure of the wall. The new foundation was on the same alignment as the northern face of the blocking wall (157), inside the gate, and can be ascribed to the same building programme. To the west of the gate, and east of the pilaster, the foundations of the early Byzantine wall had been removed by post-medieval robbing.<sup>59</sup>

The late Roman ditch (4119) was backfilled with successive dumps of silty clay and limestone blocks (Fig. 37).

<sup>57</sup> This tower was excavated by Professor Slokoska: *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 1991, 69; Slokoska (1991), 302. Included within the primary course of the superstructure for this tower was a limestone block, 1.08 m in length, 0.90 m wide and 0.43 m high and with a slot on its longer side, 0.90 m deep and 0.12 m wide. This corresponds well with the dimensions of the eastern respond (179) and its portcullis slot, in the Roman gate. Probably, the dismantling of the northern side of the gate provided an additional source of building material for the construction of the tower. Another portcullis block was abandoned during robbing of the defences, over the foundation of the curtain-wall, east of the gate (Fig. 24); it had a slot, 0.10 m deep and 0.11 m wide. It may well have been incorporated into the early Byzantine wall. For a third portcullis block (4087), reused in the east building, see following p. 109.

<sup>58</sup> Such hollow stones were used in aqueducts to allow water to be passed under pressure across low-lying ground. This stone block is similar to those used in syphons in Asia Minor: J. J. Coulton, 'Roman aqueducts in Asia Minor', in S. Macready and F. H. Thompson (eds), *Roman Architecture in the Greek World*, Society of Antiquaries Occ. Papers (n.s.) X (1987), 72–84.

<sup>59</sup> A small portion of the early-Byzantine foundation survived, butting close up to the east side of the pilaster. On the date of the robbing, see following, Period 7.

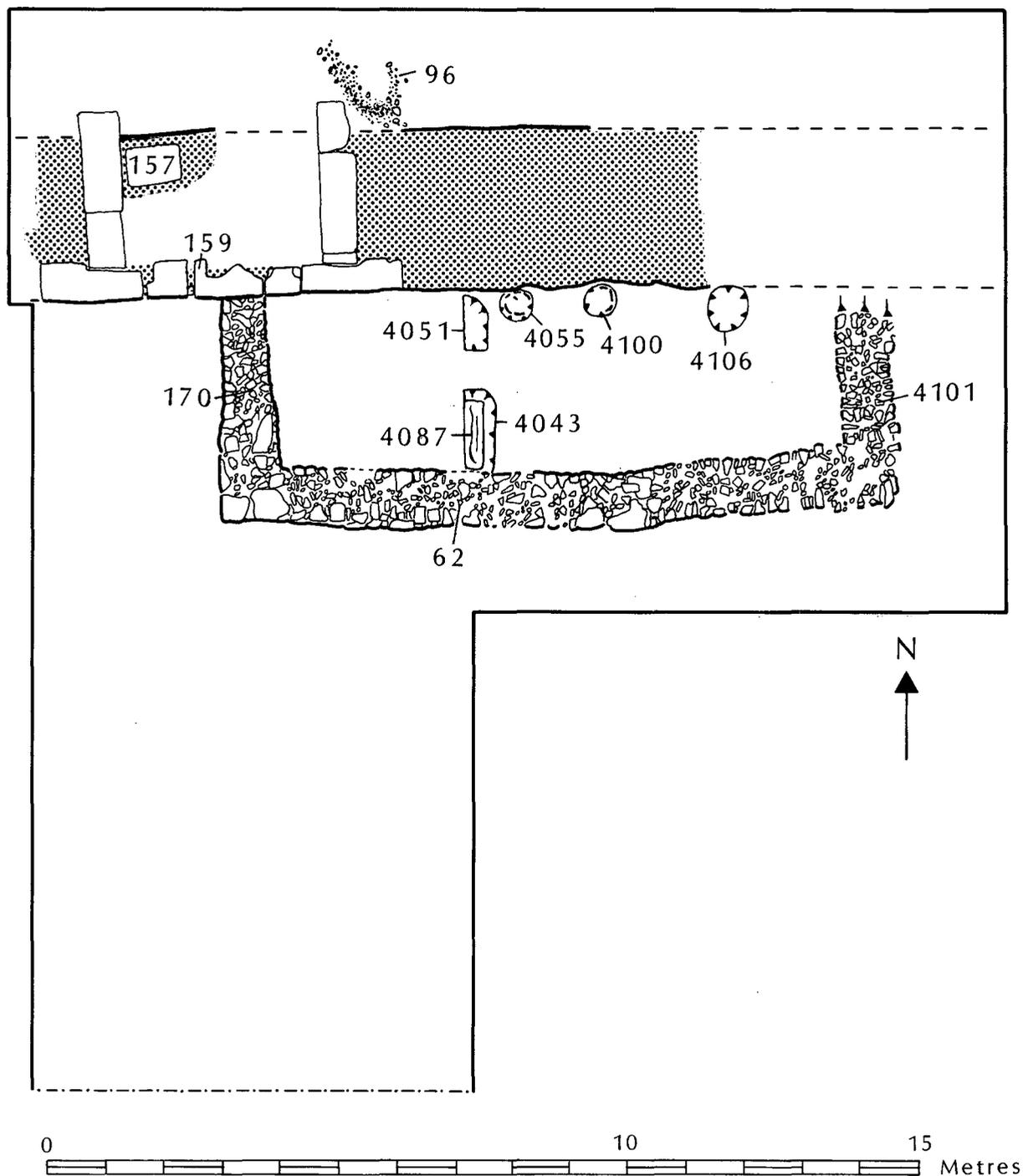


Fig. 41 Area C. Period 6.

A rectangular building, 3.60 m north/south and 11.50 m east/west, was constructed up against the inner face of the new defences. The western foundation of the building (170) butted up against the southern face of the blocking-wall (159) within the gate. The eastern foundation (4101) was cut, at its north end, by the post-medieval robber-trench, which had removed the curtain-wall's foundations east of the pilaster. The foundations, preserved to a depth of 0.50–0.60 m, were made of roughly coursed limestone blocks, bonded with a mixture of white mortar and earth with the frequent use of bricks to fill gaps between the stones. At the top of the foundation for the south wall (62) there was a rough brick course, visible at the west end of the building, above which the superstructure was offset at a height of 0.61 m above the level of the Roman road. At its western end, the foundation overlay the cobbled roadway (120) and the subsequent soil build-up (125) of Period 5 (Fig. 37). On its south side, the foundation cut through a dump of rubble, soil, and mortar (127), probably used to

level up the surface after the blocking of the gate, which, in turn, overlay a silty loam deposit (134) which extended south over the backfill of the late Roman ditch (4119). Within the building, post-medieval robbing had cut down almost to the level of the Roman road, removing all traces of the occupation surface, before it was backfilled with powdered limestone and rubble (40) from the robbing of the wall's superstructure (Fig. 37). In the eastern extension, post-medieval robbing, though not so deep, had also destroyed the floor level inside the building (Fig. 26). Even so, some elements of the internal arrangement within the building can be reconstructed. A reused portcullis block (4087) stood in a trench (4043) which cut into the soil build-up, over the cobbled berm (4096) and was supported, on its western side, by the dismantled foundation of the east wall of the *propugnaculum* (Fig. 24).<sup>60</sup> Immediately north of this vertical stone, a robber-trench (4051) 0.40 m wide and 0.70 m long, suggested that a second stone or foundation had been removed. Probably, the east building had an internal partition wall and a central entrance between the two sections, 0.80 m wide, sufficient to allow communication between the smaller, west room and the longer room to the east. Within the eastern room, close to the inner face of the curtain-wall, were the lower portions of two amphorae, set in pits (4055, 4100), their tops truncated by post-medieval robbing. The surviving portion of the amphora in Pit 4100 was *c.* 0.40 m below the presumed level of the early Byzantine floor (Fig. 26). Both amphorae must have been set into the floor of the building and were probably used as storage vessels. A third pit (4106), also up against the north side of the building, may well have been dug for an amphora, although only the lower 0.10 m of fill survived and no trace of its original contents.

### Dating

*Pottery.* The amphora [1068] from the western pit (4055) is dated from the early fifth to early seventh century. The second amphora [1089], from the eastern pit (4100) is dated to the fourth or fifth century. The backfill of the latest defensive ditch (4119) contained cooking-pots with triangular-sectioned rims [135], Ware 14 water-jars/amphorae [308], cooking-pots with rounded, grooved-rim [127], cooking-pots with ledge-rim and internal groove [162], and bowls with ledge-rim and upturned edge [435], dated to the mid-fifth century.

*Coin.* A coin of Leo or Zeno, dated 474/475 (Cat. No. 618) came from the bottom fill of the third pit (4106).

### Discussion

The early Byzantine occupation level was *c.* 0.60 to 1.0 m above the road and the soil build-up of Period 5, which provides a *terminus post quem* of 450 for the reconstruction of the defences.<sup>61</sup> The sequence for the reconstruction of the wall and its incorporation into the early Byzantine defences is unusually clear. Probably, the first step was to backfill the ditch with occupation debris from the abandoned Roman city.<sup>62</sup> Building-work commenced with the preparation of mortar, which was liberally scattered south, north, and within the gate. The northern responds of the gate-chamber were dismantled and its blocks used in the construction of Tower 4, possibly the curtain-wall, and another as a dividing-partition within the eastern building. The gate was walled up with large limestone blocks resting upon a mortared foundation 1.0 m deep, and the curtain-wall was widened

<sup>60</sup> This rectangular block, 1.10 m in length, had a portcullis slot 0.09 m deep and 0.11 m wide, located 0.65 m from one end and 0.35 m from the other. It was probably taken from the north side of the gate, when it was dismantled during the reconstruction of the defences at the beginning of this period.

<sup>61</sup> Here, this rests upon the single coin of Marcian see above p. 105 but see also ch. 2, pp. 34–7.

<sup>62</sup> The quantity of pottery suggests that this deposit came from within the late Roman city or, less probably, from a nearby dump. Compare Area P, pp. 214–15.

by constructing a second foundation along the northern, and now external, side of the defences. Finally, a backfill of rubble was dumped both north and south of the gate, levelling up the ground surface, over the late Roman road.

The widening of the early Byzantine wall, to a width of 2.64 m, meant that the curtain must have been easily wide enough to support a wall-walk and crenellations. The raising of the ground-level, within the defences, must have been required to provide easy access to the adjacent Tower 4, where its floor was above the buildings and burnt mud-walls, which constituted the final destruction level of the late Roman city.<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, extensive robbing of the defences in the post-medieval period destroyed the early Byzantine occupation level. What is clear is that the Roman gate was no longer in use and had been blocked and could not have been used in the early Byzantine period. Since only the foundations of the east building survived, little can be said about its function except that the amphorae in their pits were probably used for the storage of foodstuffs and such a building, built up against the curtain-wall and immediately west of Tower 4, might have served as a barrack.

## PERIOD 7: POST-MEDIEVAL OCCUPATION AND THE ROBBING OF THE DEFENCES

(Fig. 42)

### Primary robbing

Immediately north of the gate, the Period 6 occupation level (96) was overlain with robbing debris (91), consisting of rubble and powdered mortar (Fig. 40). The central section of the blocking-wall was robbed down to the Period 6 mortar construction level (137) within the gate-chamber and the hole was then backfilled with an homogeneous fill of limestone fragments and powdery mortar (40), leaving *in situ* the southern (90) and the northern faces (92), where they were protected by the limestone blocks, used in the Period 6 blocking-wall within the gate. The foundations of the eastern building were also left intact although, to the west and immediately south of the gate, the same homogeneous deposit of limestone fragments, occasional larger blocks, and loose, white mortar (40) was backfilled after the early Byzantine occupation level had been dug away. Robbing had only stopped when it reached the *in situ* paving slabs of the road which evidently proved too difficult to remove. This backfill appeared to represent a single phase of demolition: no soil was present within the context nor was it separated by soil lenses as was the case in the sporadic final phase of robbing. Probably, this robbing included the destruction of most of the curtain-wall's superstructure. At the west end of the eastern building, robbing had also penetrated down to the Roman road surface, leaving only a small deposit of soil build-up close to its southern foundation, and was then backfilled with the same powdery mortar and stone (40), used to fill up the hole left by robbing within the gate (Fig. 37). To the east, robbing also destroyed the Period 6 floor level and reached the top of the berm belonging to Period 4. Rubble and powdered mortar (4089) was then used to backfill the trench (Fig. 26).

### Occupation

After the backfilling of the robber-trench within the eastern building, the top of the loose mortar backfill (40) was trampled to form a compacted floor within the eastern building, the foundations of which (62) were reused in this period for a roughly built superstructure (4091) of earth and stone (Fig. 37). Upon the compacted surface (40) a wall, built of rubble and earth (69), reinforced the west side of the building. The southern wall (4091) survived as a single course of limestone blocks bonded with earth which lay directly upon the early Byzantine foundations. On the eastern side of

<sup>63</sup> Slokoska (1991), 302.

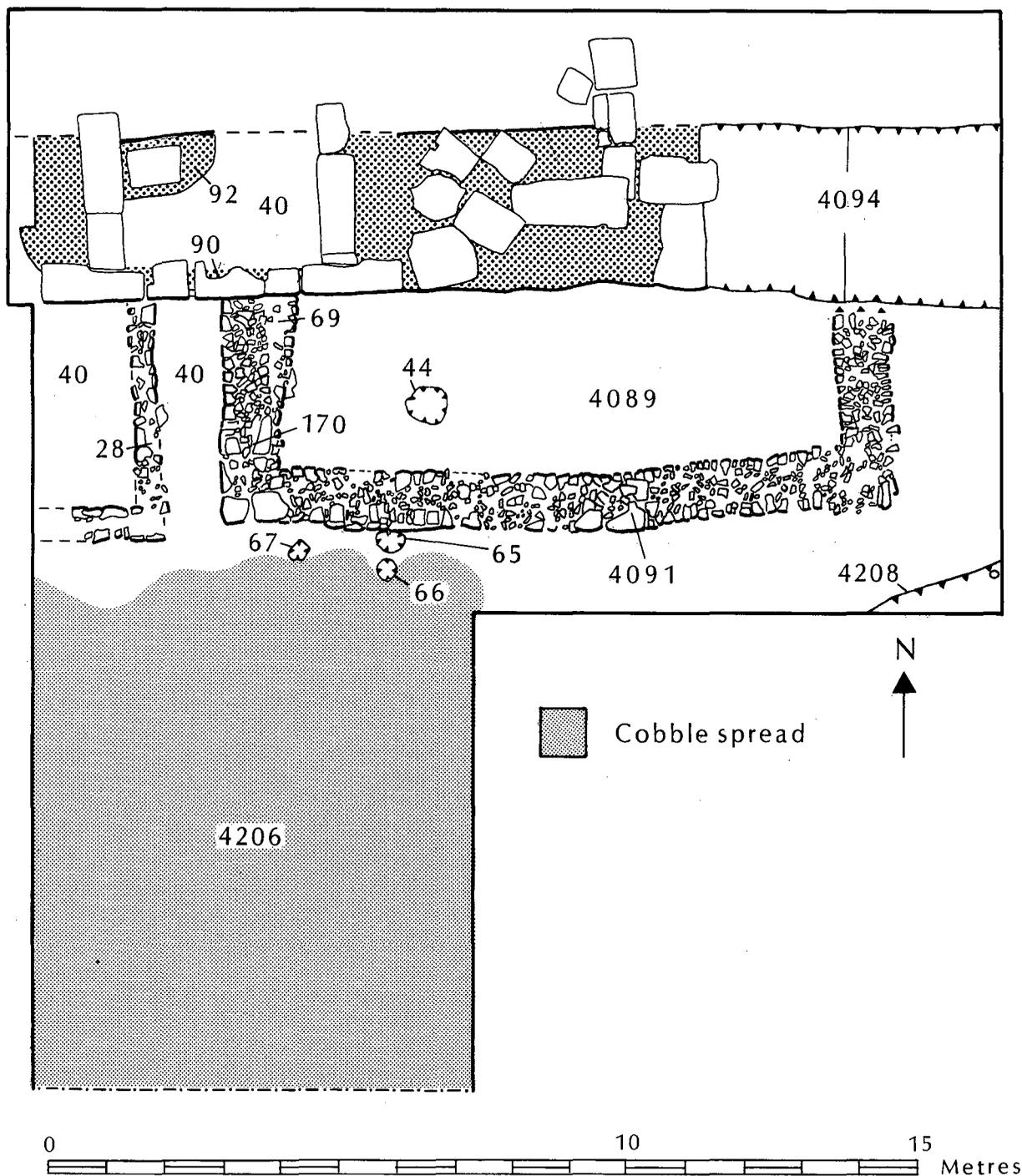


Fig. 42 Area C. Period 7.

the building, a silty clay surface mixed with powdered mortar (4089) represented the continuation of the floor. At the west end of the building, the floor was cut by a post-pit (44), 0.43 m wide, and three additional post-pits (65, 66, 67) were dug immediately south of the building. The internal post-pit may well have contained a vertical timber to support the roof-structure. The function of the others remains uncertain. To the west, a second building was constructed. The surviving first course of earth and stone (28), without foundation, was laid directly on top of the robber backfill (40). The north end of its east wall butted up against the southern face of the Period 6 blocking-wall (90) within the gate-chamber. This west building, like the east building, measured c. 4.40 m north/south, and was separated from it by a narrow alleyway 1.20 m wide. It continued beyond the western baulk.

South of the buildings, a roughly cobbled surface (4206), extended as far as the southern baulk.

Since the northern side of both buildings backed onto the curtain-wall and the blocking-wall, it seems probable that, despite extensive demolition, the curtain-wall was still standing to a serviceable height during this period of occupation.

In the south-east corner of the eastern extension, a clay-lined feature (4208), probably a *grubenhaus*, contained a silty loam fill, burnt charcoal, and a cannon-ball (SF 6642). A destruction level outside the eastern building comprised burnt timbers and fragments of burnt mud-wall. Within the west building, a similar destruction deposit covered the floor.

### Final robbing

After the abandonment of the buildings, there were successive phases of robbing, indicated by tip-lines of mortar and stone (27, 24), interspersed with soil, probably thrown up during the robbing of the curtain-wall foundations and forming a mound of robbing debris, c. 2.0 m high (Fig. 37). The limestone blocks used in the gate remained *in situ* and large limestone blocks, abandoned above the curtain-wall foundation immediately east of the gate, probably discouraged a renewed assault upon this surviving portion of the foundations. At the east end of the area, beyond the pilaster, there would seem to have been no such constraints and a robber-trench (4094) had completely removed the curtain-wall foundations. Immediately below topsoil, robber-spoil of crushed brick, stone, and powdered mortar covered the east building (Fig. 26).

### Dating

*Pottery.* The spoil (40) from the first period of robbing, the silty loam deposit immediately above the floor (4089) within the east building, the rubble spread north of the gate (91), and the rubble spread (4206) south of the two buildings produced post-medieval pottery. The final period of sporadic robbing (27, 24) contained sherds of glazed, post-medieval pottery.

*Finds.* From the silty loam deposit on the floor (4089) of the east building a Turkish pipe (SF 6653). Immediately south of the east building, lying on the trampled, crushed mortar surface (40), was a post-medieval axe (SF 76). An iron sword (SF 6101) of post-medieval date was found lying on the collapsed remains of the eastern building's south wall. From the spoil dumps (24, 27) which represented the final period of sporadic robbing, a calkin (SF 1104), Turkish pipes (SF 1106, 1114), a donkey-shoe (SF 1110), and an iron lock (SF 1107), all of post-medieval date.

### Discussion

The first phase of robbing, the construction of the west building, the reconstruction of the east building, and the final phase of robbing all date to the post-medieval period. The first phase of robbing involved major demolition of the gate and probably the robbing of the foundations for the Period 6 blocking-wall. The subsequent occupation is only remarkable for the reuse of the early Byzantine foundations of the east building, no doubt fortuitously encountered during the first phase of robbing south of the gate. Occupation ended with the destruction of both buildings and probably the burning of a *grubenhaus* (4208) in the south-eastern corner of the eastern extension. The discovery of the sword and the axe in the destruction deposit is notable; so, too, is the cannon-ball in the demolition debris within the *grubenhaus*: not the only weapons to come from the destruction level of the post-medieval settlement.<sup>64</sup> Thereafter, there is no evidence for occupation but intermittent robbing of the curtain-wall and its foundation continued, particularly east of the pilaster.

<sup>64</sup> See also Area F, p. 172 and ch. 2, p. 49.

## CHAPTER SIX

# AREA D: THE WORKSHOPS

### Summary

*Tree clearance in the early second century was followed by the dumping of waste and then by occupation surfaces. During the third century, a north/south ditch passed through the area. This was subsequently backfilled and a large building was constructed in the first half of the fourth century, the southern room of which probably served both an agricultural and industrial function. The building was destroyed by fire towards the end of the fourth century and the area was again used for the disposal of rubbish in pits. These were backfilled with rubble before the construction of a small two-roomed building, probably workshops, in the early Byzantine period. A post-medieval house was built over the east end of the demolished early Byzantine building.*

### INTRODUCTION

A high resistance anomaly in the geophysical survey suggested the presence of a rectangular structure in the centre of the site.<sup>1</sup> In 1985, the primary excavation area (5 m north/south by 10 m east/west) was opened up to examine both the eastern side of the anomaly and an apparently unoccupied area to the east. The anomaly proved to be an early Byzantine building, here referred to as the 'workshops'. Although the insubstantial remains of a post-medieval house were found immediately below topsoil and above the eastern side of the workshops, no traces of any other early Byzantine structures were identified within the eastern half of the area. In 1986, an extension was made to the west, 5 m east/west and 10 m north/south. In 1987, again the area was enlarged beyond the western baulk for a distance of 3 m to include the full extent of the early Byzantine workshops. In 1988, excavations were confined to examining the north-eastern side of the area, a late Roman building (the early building), and earlier levels down to natural. On the western side of the area, beneath the workshops, excavation was limited to investigating the late Roman pits (Period 4), which predated the workshops (Period 5), and the western side of the early building (Period 3).

### PERIOD 1: TREE CLEARANCE, PITS AND OCCUPATION

The natural sandy, clay soil was only reached in a restricted area, 3.90 m below the modern ground level and c. 2.40 m below the floor of the early building (Fig. 43A).<sup>2</sup> The root-holes of a large tree were visible in the bottom of a pit (718), roughly cut and with an irregular base (Plate XVIB). The pit was probably dug to extract the stump. The sandy silt and clay backfill within this pit (718) was truncated by the cut of a later pit (700), c. 3 m in diameter and in excess of 1.25 m deep.<sup>3</sup> It was filled with silty clay and domestic waste, including lenses of ash, animal bone,

<sup>1</sup> See ch. 16, p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> Given the depth at which natural was found below the modern ground surface, the excavation had to be stepped, reducing the area available for examining the earliest levels. A further restriction was imposed by the need to preserve the remains of both the early building and the workshops.

<sup>3</sup> For reasons of safety, it proved impossible to excavate the fill completely.

pottery, and small-finds.<sup>4</sup> A dump deposit of silty clay and ash sealed the pit and was compacted to form an occupation surface. This was subsequently covered by a layer of cobbles (686), only a limited area of which survived later pit intrusions (Fig. 43B). No structural remains were found but the cobbled surface was probably the floor of a building. Above, a firm sandy silt surface contained charcoal and burnt mud-wall fragments. There then followed a further series of pits. The upper fills of two (671, 680) produced only burnt fragments of mud-wall, little pottery and a sandy clay fill but another (684), c. 2 m in diameter and 2 m deep, contained pottery and metal waste.<sup>5</sup>

### Dating

*Pottery.* The fill of Pit 700 produced a large assemblage, including bowls with down-turned rims [419, 423], carinated bowls with thickened, rounded rims [428, 429], ledge-rim craters [692, 698], and small cups with appliqué decoration [766], dated 130–150. The dump level, beneath the cobbled surface, also produced a large assemblage, including ledge-rim cooking-pots [47, 49, 52], cooking-pots with out-turned rims [77, 81], and ledge-rim craters [686, 697], dated 150–200. The big pit (684) contained another large assemblage of pottery, notably lids with plain rims [243, 251], ledge-rim cooking-pots [47], hemispherical bowls with pointed rims [547], carinated bowls [480], and collared craters with flat rims [707], dated to the early third century. The upper fill of Pit 671 contained less pottery but the presence of hooked-rim lids [245] suggests an early third-century date.

### Discussion

It seems likely that the earliest activity on the site, the clearance of tree cover, occurred at the time of the city's foundation or shortly afterwards.<sup>6</sup> By the middle of the second century, the area was used for the dumping of waste in pits. The three consecutive floor surfaces, dating to the second half of the second century, denote either occupation or, more probably, the presence of an agricultural building.<sup>7</sup> By the early third century, the building was abandoned and the area was again used for the disposal of waste in pits. However, given the limited area available for excavation, this localized change from occupation back to dumping, need not have involved any significant change in the function of this part of the site.

### PERIOD 2: THE BIG DITCH (Fig. 43C)

A north/south ditch (678) was cut through the Period 1 occupation deposits and the fills of the Period 1 pits (684, 680). Because of the presence of the Period 3 building only the west side of the ditch could be examined. It was in excess of 2.60 m wide and was at least 1.55 m deep.<sup>8</sup> Its western side sloped steeply down and then abruptly steepened again, just short of the eastern limit of excavation. Immediately to the west of the ditch, a compacted, sandy clay surface, which included

<sup>4</sup> Most notable amongst the small-finds was the copper-alloy handle of a *patera* (SF 4714).

<sup>5</sup> At this depth, in proximity to standing foundations, it proved unsafe to fully excavate these pits.

<sup>6</sup> On the absence of evidence for occupation before the foundation of the city, see ch. 2, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> The compacted clay surface (691) contained millet, probably from food preparation, perhaps in the immediate vicinity, but by-product waste from this level also suggests that crop-cleaning may have been carried out close by.

<sup>8</sup> It was not possible to remove the foundations of the early building and the north-east corner of the area could not be excavated down to this level: the eastern side of the excavation was the only point of access into this part of the area.

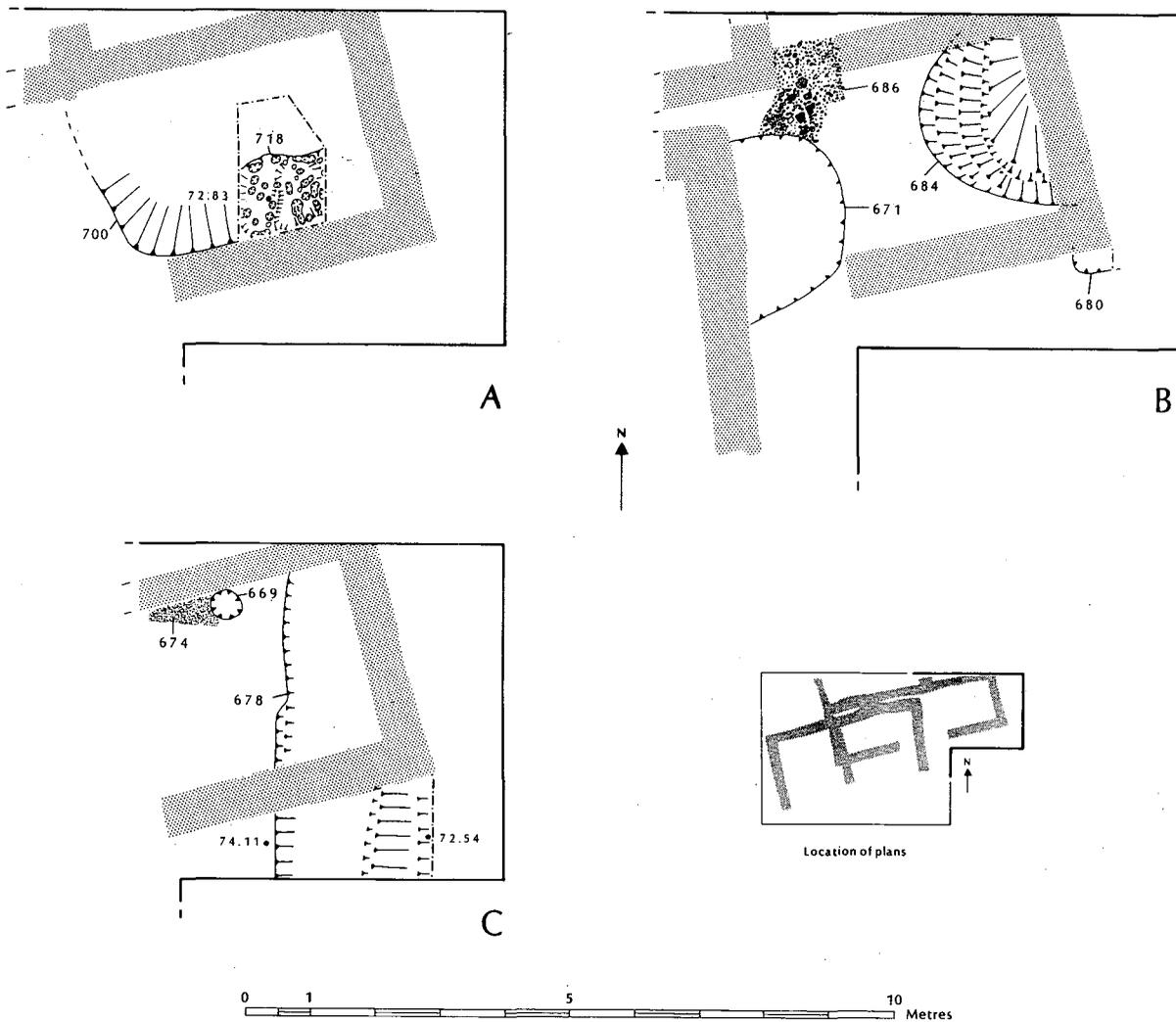


Fig. 43 Area D. A. Tree roots in the natural ground surface and the early pits, Period 1. B. The cobbled floor and pits, Period 1. C. The north/south ditch and associated occupation surface, Period 2.

charcoal and burnt mud-wall fragments, was cut by a post-hole (669), 0.47 m in diameter, surrounded by a concentration of ash (674): a vertical timber may have partially burnt *in situ*. Ash also spread down the western side of the ditch. The lowest excavated fill comprised sandy clay lenses and concentrations of almost pure white ash.

The ditch (678) was first backfilled with a dump of sandy clay silt, mixed with pottery and more ash, followed by a second deposit which completely filled the ditch and which also covered the occupation surface to the west of it. This latest fill contained a dump of sherds from large jars, perhaps for industrial use.

## Dating

### *The lowest ditch fill*

**Pottery.** A dump of pottery, which included rounded-rim, carinated bowls [429, 440], pointed-rim bowls [547], small cups with offset rims [756], hooked-rim cooking-pot lids [256], and plain lids [243], dated to the first half of the third century.

**Coin.** 154/155 (Cat. No. 107).

*The final ditch backfill*

*Pottery.* The final ditch backfill, which also covered the occupation surface to the west of it, produced sherds of large jars [1002, 1003, 1004, 1005], a few ledge-rim bowls [381, 391], and many hooked-rim lids [256], dating to the first half of the third century but probably nearer 250 than 200.

*Coin.* 193/211 (Cat. No. 21).

**Discussion**

Despite the limited area available for the examination of the ditch, its size is remarkable. Since it was cut through the Period 1 occupation and dump deposits, it is unlikely to be earlier than the end of the first quarter of the third century. The spread of charcoal to the west of the ditch and within it may represent destruction debris from buildings in the vicinity or, less probably, the dumping of waste before the ditch was finally backfilled.<sup>9</sup> Its dimensions would seem excessive for a stock enclosure.<sup>10</sup> Possibly, the ditch had a defensive function. If so, it could not be connected with the Roman city, the southern wall of which was *c.* 95 m to the north, too far to be associated with it. Moreover, the ditch ran north/south and not parallel with the city's southern defences. Another large ditch, also dating to the third century, but aligned west/east, cut through the Roman road to the north.<sup>11</sup> Both ditches may have been part of the same or successive defensive enclosures: a military presence in the third century, particularly from the middle of the century, would not be surprising.<sup>12</sup> Probably during the second half of the third century, the ditch was deliberately backfilled, perhaps levelling the site in preparation for the Period 3 building.

**PERIOD 3: THE EARLY BUILDING (Fig. 44)**

Above the backfilled Period 2 ditch, a clay dump formed a make-up deposit for a building which had at least three rooms (A, B, and C). Orientated north/east by south/west it extended west beneath the Period 5 workshops and north beyond the limit of excavation. Only the lowest course of the northern wall (477) of Room A survived. A short section of the south wall (545), beneath the floor of the Period 5 workshops and cut to the west by a Period 4 pit (596), stood to a height of 0.35 m (Plate XVIIIA). The eastern (552) and western (721) walls, the latter reused as a foundation for the medial wall (441) of the Period 5 workshops, were better preserved and survived to a maximum height of 0.60 m (Plate XVIIIB). The eastern end of the southern wall (551), although cut by a Period 4 pit (603), stood to a maximum height of 0.64 m. The walls were 0.65 to 0.70 m wide. Their lowest courses, to a height of *c.* 0.40 m, were built from small limestone blocks, bonded with a sandy silt, their faces carefully constructed from pitched courses of limestone blocks, laid 'herringbone fashion', with the frequent use of red and yellow tile. Notable was the pronounced slope upon which the building was constructed: the floor of the building at its western end was 1.0 m higher than the floor level at the eastern end. Although the walls were built from horizontally laid courses of stone and tile, they were completed in separate sections, each bonded together, thereby maintaining the stability of the building upon the sloping ground surface.<sup>13</sup> The west and east walls were sufficiently preserved to prove that the pitched courses formed the lower section of each wall and that they both supported a row of

<sup>9</sup> For the possibility that there were buildings to the west of the ditch, the levelling of which may account for the pronounced west/east slope in Period 3, see below, p. 120.

<sup>10</sup> Moreover, such a deep ditch is unlikely to have been used for such a purpose. Rapid erosion and the rapid accumulation of wind-blown deposits would have required continual maintenance, see ch. 1, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> See Area B, p. 73.

<sup>12</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 13–14 and ch. 2, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> The stepping of the foundations is also seen in the Period 5 workshops, below p. 124.

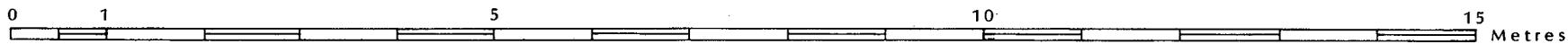
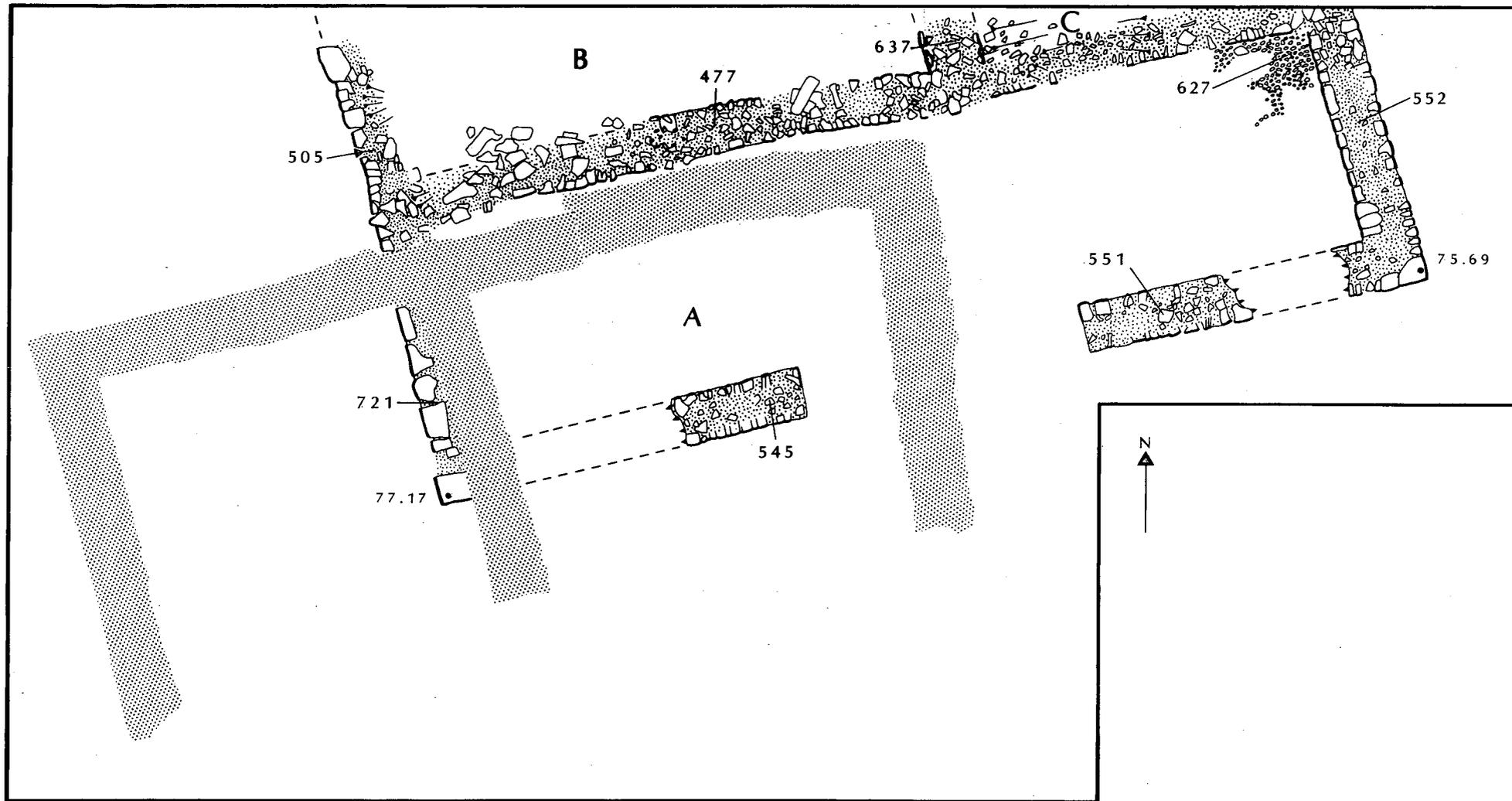


Fig. 44 Area D. The Period 3 building, beneath the Period 5 workshops.

limestone blocks. In the case of the west wall, four courses of herringbone construction (505), standing *c.* 0.40 m high, were capped by a row of limestone blocks (721), which probably formed the base for a mud-wall (Fig. 45A).<sup>14</sup> A single course of stones served as a foundation.<sup>15</sup>

Room A extended the full length of the building (12.0 m) but was no more than 2.80 m deep, entered on the south side through a centrally located doorway, 3.80 m wide.<sup>16</sup> North of the back wall (477) of Room A, two other rooms extended north-west beyond the northern section. The western room (B) measured internally 6.10 m west/east and was in excess of 2.60 m deep. The eastern room (C) was 3.80 m wide. There were no gaps in the partition wall (477) and there would seem to have been no direct communication between the larger southern room and the two rooms to the north.

The floor surface of Room A, badly disturbed by Period 4 pits, survived only within the western half of the building beneath the Period 5 workshops, and at its eastern end. Proximity to the northern baulk prevented excavation of the floor within Room C and no occupation surface in Room B survived the intrusion of post-medieval pits. A compacted clay surface within Room A continued to the west and south-east of the building. Surviving only in the north-east corner of Room A, there was also an internal cobbled floor (627) which would seem to have been confined to the eastern end of the building.<sup>17</sup> A destruction level covered the floor of Room A and was traced *c.* 2 m west and *c.* 2 m south-east of the building. It contained broken roof-tiles, carbonized remains of roof timbers, ash and fragments of burnt mud-wall. Finds included ten large (Type N/1) nails, a latch-lifter (SF 4551), and an iron punch (SF 4548).<sup>18</sup> N/1 nails, found within destruction deposits which also contained roof-tiles, have been noted elsewhere on the site and it seems probable that these large nails were either used to secure the tiles or else to connect roof timbers.<sup>19</sup> Worked bone was found in the make-up for the floor of the building.<sup>20</sup> The destruction deposit contained small-finds made of bone as well as unfinished bone objects, probably waste discarded during the manufacture of implements.<sup>21</sup> Also present was crop-processing waste.

## Dating

### *The make-up for the floor of the early building*

*Pottery.* This contained a significant quantity of pottery, including ledge-rim bowls [367, 389, 388], hemispherical bowls with out-turned rims [771, 782], cooking-pots with out-turned, thickened rims [84, 87], and ledge-rim casseroles [166], all of which date 250–350. The context also produced a stamped mortarium (SF 4611), datable to the second or early third century.<sup>22</sup>

*Coin.* 364/375 (Cat. No. 405).

<sup>14</sup> Note below the burnt fragments of mud-wall in the destruction deposit which no doubt came from the building's superstructure.

<sup>15</sup> No foundation cut was identified for any of the walls of the early building. In each case, the floor level butted up against the lowest course.

<sup>16</sup> The western end of Wall Section 551 and the eastern end of Section 545 both had regular faces and no sign of a continuation of the wall was found either side of or under the east wall (461) of the Period 5 workshops.

<sup>17</sup> The cobbled surface (629) extended south and west from the north-east corner of Room A. Cut by Period 4 pits, it was not possible to determine its original extent although it did not continue west as far as the entrance into the building.

<sup>18</sup> N/1 nails; SF 4340 (2 examples), 4352, 4353, 4378, 4449, 4465, 4477, 4532, 4610. Also present were two copper-alloy finger-rings (SF 4455, 4379), two iron knife-blades (SF 4591, 4584), an iron loop-headed spike (SF 4383), a copper-alloy spoon probe (SF 4588), and a pair of copper-alloy tweezers (SF 4445). For the coins, see following, dating for this period.

<sup>19</sup> *cf.* Area A, p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> A bone handle (Cat. No. 163) and bone pins (Cat. Nos 45 and 46).

<sup>21</sup> Pins (Cat. Nos 5, 15, 74, 75, 100), a needle (Cat. No. 123), a cosmetic spoon (Cat. No. 141), and a worked fish vertebra, possibly used as an amulet (Cat. No. 174). Unfinished bone objects comprised; a sawn sheep's horn core (Cat. No. 188), a sawn and smoothed section of long bone (Cat. No. 189), and a sawn section of antler (Cat. No. 192).

<sup>22</sup> See ch. 18, No. 7, pp. 319–20.

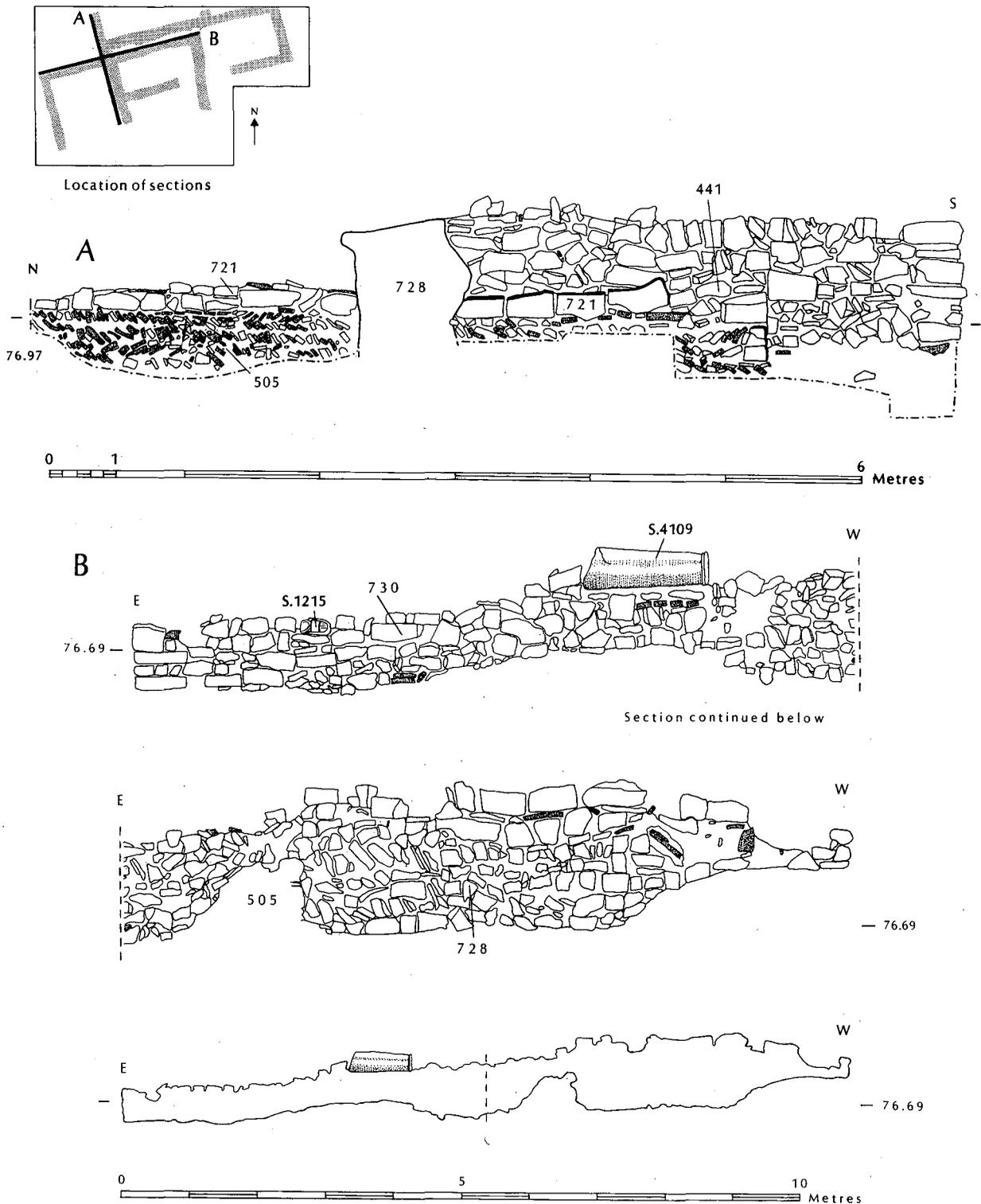


Fig. 45 Area D. Elevations. A. The west wall of the Period 3 early building under the medial wall of the Period 5 workshops. B. The north face of the north wall of the Period 5 workshops.

*The destruction deposit*

*Pottery.* This also produced a large pottery assemblage, including many ledge-rim bowls [382, 389, 394] and rolled-rim lids [257], dated 250–350. However, there were also types, though in smaller quantities, which date later than 350; some Ware 14, a jar with out-turned rim [72], a jar with squared ledge-rim and internal lip [158], ledge-rim bowls with upturned edge [339], and a bowl with thickened, angular rim [584], dated c. 375.

*Coins.* Seventeen coins came from the destruction level; one coin of uncertain date (Cat. No. 651), 134/138 (Cat. No. 102), 138/161 (Cat. No. 5), 193/211 (Cat. No. 18), 198/217 (Cat. No. 25), 200 (Cat. No. 73), 217/218 (Cat. Nos 29, 32, 48), 218/222 (Cat. Nos 60, 76), 218/222 (Cat. No. 60), 226 (Cat. No. 120), c. 300/450 (Cat. Nos 540, 550), 355/361 (Cat. No. 344), 364/387 (Cat. Nos 399, 402).

## Discussion

The deposits dating to Periods 1 and 2 were identified in too restricted an area to ascertain whether the pronounced west/east slope, upon which the Period 3 building was built, already existed in the second to third centuries. However, it seems likely that the natural land surface was originally more or less as flat across this part of the plateau as it is today.<sup>23</sup> The demolition of mud-walled buildings could account for a significant, but localized build-up of the land surface in the subsequent period and a consequent slope away from the site of earlier occupation.<sup>24</sup> If this explains the west/east slope in Area D, there may well have been buildings, probably in Period 2, to the west of the north/south ditch, which were roughly levelled before the construction of the Period 3 building.<sup>25</sup> Without further excavation, this cannot be verified, but remains a possibility.

The building was constructed during the late third or more probably the first half of the fourth century.<sup>26</sup> The 'herringbone' construction used in the lower part of the walls would seem to have been peculiar to late Roman buildings: it was also employed in the fourth-century building beneath the Small Basilica, but has not been observed in any structures of the early Byzantine period.<sup>27</sup> At the time of its destruction, the building had a tiled roof. The wide entrance into the long west/east room (A) would have allowed carts or vehicles to be brought into the building. The absence of any sign of communication between this longer room and the rooms to the north (B and C) suggests that Room A served a function separate from the rest of the building. Possibly it was used for storage, perhaps for vehicles or for agricultural use: the crop-processing waste, found in the destruction level, may have been kept there to feed livestock or it may have been there because crop-cleaning was carried out within the building. The presence of bone objects and partly worked bone or waste in the destruction level, can be explained if Room A was also used as a workshop. The size of the building, the number of rooms and its tiled roof would seem unusual for an outbuilding which served simply an agricultural or industrial function.<sup>28</sup> Possibly, the northern range of rooms (B and C) comprised living accommodation with a workshop or store-room (Room A) to the rear, replicating, in simpler fashion, the typical arrangement of domestic and ancillary rooms in houses built within the late Roman city.<sup>29</sup> It may be during this period that an aqueduct was constructed to bring fresh water to the area, south from the Roman city.<sup>30</sup>

The destruction of the building by fire, before the tiled roof could be salvaged, may have been accidental but the failure to reoccupy the site in the subsequent period is perhaps significant. The late fourth century, following the revolt of the Goths, was a turbulent period for the lower Danube and, in particular, for Nicopolis.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See ch. 1, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> See especially, Area M, Period 3, p. 201.

<sup>25</sup> See above for the possible destruction of buildings to the west of the Period 2 ditch, p. 116.

<sup>26</sup> The single coin of 364/375 from the floor make-up does not necessarily prove that the building was erected as late as the second half of the fourth century. The absence of pottery dating to the second half of the fourth century from this deposit suggests that the building was built earlier. The coin may be intrusive or, more probably, it denotes a late repair of the floor surface.

<sup>27</sup> See Area K, p. 176.

<sup>28</sup> For a building of simpler design, possibly provided with a thatched roof, see Area K, pp. 178–9.

<sup>29</sup> See ch. 2, p. 32 and Fig. 3.

<sup>30</sup> See below, Period 4, p. 121.

<sup>31</sup> A Gothic force was stationed near Nicopolis in 378 and the citizens probably had to take action against Goths under Theodosius I. See ch. 1, p. 16.

**PERIOD 4: LATE FOURTH-CENTURY PITS** (Fig. 46)

After the destruction of the Period 3 building, there followed no reoccupation of the area. Instead, pits were dug and used for the disposal of domestic and perhaps industrial waste. In the eastern area, two pits (603, 655), both of which contained charcoal, slag and pottery, cut, respectively, the wall and floor of the early building. On the west side of the area, a curious linear trench (690) cut through the fill of one pit (697) but predated three others which can be confidently assigned to Period 4 (587, 606, 683).<sup>32</sup> Orientated north-west/south-east, the trench was 1.20–1.40 m deep and 0.40 m wide. Its base, sloping gently to the south-east, was too irregular to have contained a horizontal timber. The vertical sides of the trench suggest that it had been immediately backfilled after it had been dug. No ceramic water-pipes nor iron collars, which might have connected wooden sections of pipe, were found to prove that it had contained an aqueduct, bringing water south from the Roman city. Even so, this would seem the most plausible explanation. Because the trench had been truncated by the later pits, it was not possible to determine from what level it had been cut. Consequently, it remains uncertain if it predated or postdated the Period 3 building. Since it shares the same north-west/south-east alignment, it may well have been contemporary with it. Certainly, it predated the major phase of Period 4 pit-digging. Two vertical-sided and flat-bottomed pits (587, 695) contained broken tile, pottery, and animal bone. The fill of Pit 587 also produced a lead curse tablet.<sup>33</sup> Pit 606 was c. 2.20 m in diameter and 0.50 m deep. However, in this case, two distinct fills were identified. The lowest comprised a deposit of clayey silt, mixed with charcoal, tile, ceramic and metal fragments, suggesting that its primary function was for the disposal of domestic waste, but the upper fill was mainly rubble and included an architectural fragment (SF 14486). Close to the southern baulk, also cutting the trench (690), another pit (683), which partly underlay the medial wall of the Period 5 workshops, was backfilled with rubble and worked limestone blocks, including a column capital (SF 4688). Cut by the medial wall (441) of the Period 5 workshops, a large pit (596), 0.96 m deep and c. 2 m in diameter, was notable for its finds and a similar sequence of fills (Plate XVIIIA). Its bottom fill contained a tip of burnt mud-wall fragments, some rubble, pottery, and small-finds, in particular part of a gold ear-ring (SF 4420) and a copper-alloy spatula (SF 4274). Its upper fill contained larger stone blocks and architectural fragments. The biggest pit (514) c. 3 m in diameter and 0.40 m deep, resembled its neighbour (596): the lowest fill also contained fragments of burnt mud-wall below a loose silty backfill, mixed with rubble and architectural fragments as well as pieces of tile and burnt mud-wall.

**Dating***Pit 514*

*Pottery.* An everted, bevelled-rim jar [112] of fifth-century date.

*Pit 587*

*Pottery.* Two distinct assemblages. The lowest fill contained rolled-rim lids [257], thickened-rim jars [95], small bowls with flattened, out-turned rims [614], and ledge-rim bowls [372], dated 250–400. However, some Ware 14 and a Gaza amphora sherd [1048] were also present which points to a late fourth- or early fifth-century date. The upper fill contained common third- and fourth-

<sup>32</sup> The fill of Pit 697 produced no diagnostic sherds. Although the earliest in the sequence, it remains uncertain whether it belongs to this period. It could be earlier.

<sup>33</sup> See ch. 18, No. 4, p. 317.

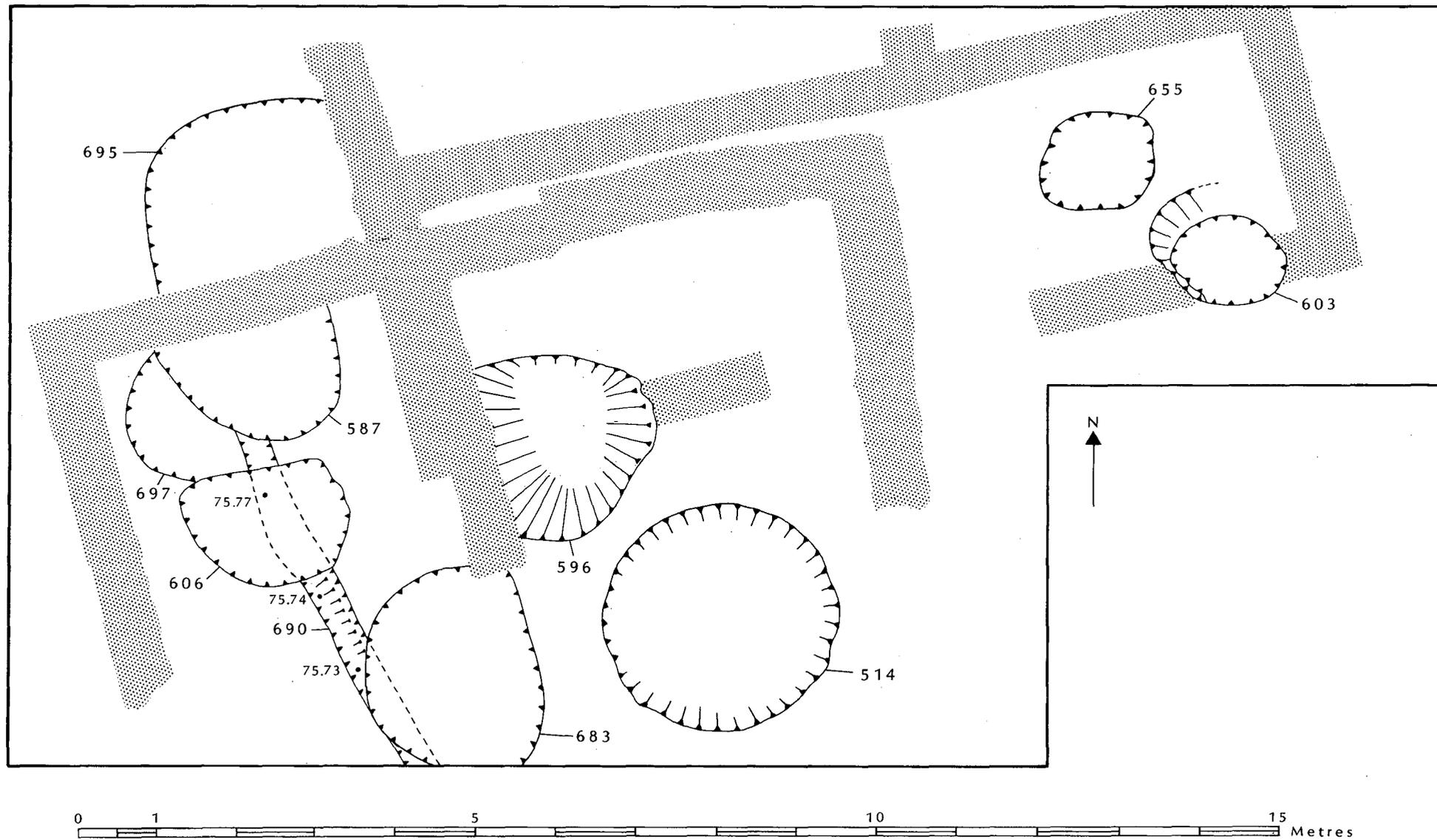


Fig. 46 Area D. The Period 4 pits, above the Period 3 building and below the Period 5 workshops.

century types, notably ledge-rim bowls [368, 385, 389], but also jars with triangular-section rims [141] and jars with everted, bevelled rims [110], dated to the early fifth century.

*Coin.* 208/217 (Cat. No. 117).

#### *Pit 596*

*Pottery.* Numerous second- and third-century types but also Ware 94 amphora sherds [1059] and Ware 14 water-jars/amphorae [314], probably dating to the very late fourth or fifth century.

*Coin.* 364/378 (Cat. No. 387).

#### *Pit 603*

*Pottery.* Rolled-rim lids [257], jars with out-turned, thickened rims [89], jars with plain, thickened rims [96, 97], and ledge-rim bowls [353] are dated *c.* 250–400, but the presence of Ware 14 in small quantities suggests a late fourth-century date.

#### *Pit 606*

*Pottery.* There were two distinct assemblages. That from the bottom of the pit contained many second- and third-century types, but also some Ware 14, small jars with offset necks [751], a black slip ware bowl [986] in Ware 78, and bowls with flattened, out-turned rims [605 and 614], dating to the fourth and late fourth century. There was also a Late Roman C Ware sherd [1042] which Hayes (Form 4 bowl) dated to 425/450, although here this dating would seem too late since the rest of the assemblage does not include fifth-century types. The upper fill contained a small bowl with flattened, out-turned rim [624], small jars with offset neck [752], ledge-rim bowls with upturned edge [342], and jars with concave ledge rims [132], dated to the late fourth century.

*Coin.* 332/335 (Cat. No. 188).

#### *Pit 655*

*Pottery.* Concave-rim lids [249, 260], cooking-pots with concave ledge rims [132, 133], and small amounts of Ware 14, dating to the late fourth or early fifth century.

#### *Pit 683*

*Pottery.* A large assemblage, including residual second- and third-century types as well as some Ware 14, small jars with offset, ribbed neck [750], small bowls with out-turned rims [621, 623], and jars with a straight neck [153], dated to the late fourth century.

### **Discussion**

The relative position of these pits in the sequence, with the possible exception of Pit 697 and the trench (690), is secure; they postdate the destruction of the Period 3 early building and predate the construction of the Period 5 workshops. Moreover, although they contained appreciable quantities of residual pottery, they can be dated to the very late fourth and first half of the fifth century. All of the pits shared common characteristics; they were vertical-sided, oval or semicircular in plan and their lower fills contained domestic waste, including by-product waste from crop-processing. The presence of fragments of burnt mud-wall, some rubble and a high proportion of residual pottery in

the lower fills may partly represent the redeposited remains of the Period 3 building. There was no sign that the area was occupied in this period. However, the final filling of the pits with dumps of rubble and architectural fragments may well have been carried out when the remains of the Period 3 building were levelled and the ground prepared for the construction of the Period 5 workshops.

### PERIOD 5: THE EARLY BYZANTINE WORKSHOPS (Fig. 47)

The downward slope from west to east, evident in Period 3, was maintained in this period when a two-roomed rectangular building, orientated south/east by north/west (10.90 by 4.60 m), was constructed. Unlike the Period 3 building, the walls, 0.70–0.80 m thick, were built, not from reused tile, but from blocks of limestone, roughly coursed and bonded with a sandy clay (Plate XVIII A). The majority of the stones were roughly hewn, although a fragment of a marble relief (SF 1215) and, awkwardly, part of a column shaft (SF 4109) were also employed in the construction of the north wall (730) of the building (Fig. 45B). The walls of both rooms were identical in build to the foundations which were c. 0.50 m deep, except for the medial wall (441) which incorporated the west wall (505, 721) of the early building in its foundations (Fig. 45A and Plate XVIII B). Where preserved to its highest extent (1.20 m) at the western end of its rear wall (728), large limestone blocks were used in the upper two surviving courses, probably, as for the early building, forming a base for a mud-wall superstructure, traces of which were found in the destruction level which covered the floor of the building (Fig. 45B). Because the building had been constructed on a slope, the foundations and superstructure of the back wall were stepped in three sections. The eastern wall (461) was of one build with the eastern half of the north wall (730) and was set in a shallow foundation trench 0.30 m lower than the foundation trench for the western half of the back wall (728). Although bonded and clearly contemporary, the two sections of wall created a slight offset, visible in plan and in the interior elevation of the eastern room (Plate XVIII A). The back wall of the western room was also constructed in two parts; the west wall (565) and the western end of the north wall (728) were built first and the eastern end of the room's north wall abutted it, forming a sharp, diagonal offset between the two sections, clearly seen in elevation on the inner face of the wall (Plate XVIII A).

The west room measured internally c. 3.90 by 4.20 m and was slightly smaller than the eastern room, which measured c. 4.60 by 4.20 m. Both rooms were open-ended to the south-east. Two small post-holes (709, 711) in the west room and a single post-hole (593), close to the south-east corner of the building, had no obvious structural function. Both rooms had clay floors, sloping gently downwards to the north-east, following the slope upon which the building had been constructed: at most, the western end of the western room was c. 0.80 m higher than the lowest, eastern part of the floor surface within the east room. A compacted silty clay occupation level continued south of the building and a hard clay surface abutted the rear wall (728/730) of the workshops and sealed the underlying remains of the Period 3 building (505, 477). To the east, above the eastern end of the early building, there was no sign of structures, nor was any occupation surface identified.

A thin layer of pure ash covered the floor of the east room, extended south of the building and into the west room. It was covered by a layer of silt, charcoal, fragments of burnt mud-wall, and limestone blocks, which probably represented the collapse of the superstructure.

### Dating

*Pottery.* The clay surface, immediately north of the workshops, contained some Ware 14, sherds of cooking-pots with ledge rim and concave top [132], cooking-pots with triangular section rims [141], and carinated cooking-pots with ledge rims [163], probably all of fifth-century date. The floor make-up contained Ware 14 and other typical mid- to late fifth-century forms: Ware 14 water-jars/amphora sherds [312, 313, 315], concave ledge-rim jars [134], and jars with squared rim and internal lip [138]. In the destruction level within the building, there were sherds of Ware 14 vessels and jars with everted, bevelled rims [110], jars with triangular section rims [141, 142, 146], some

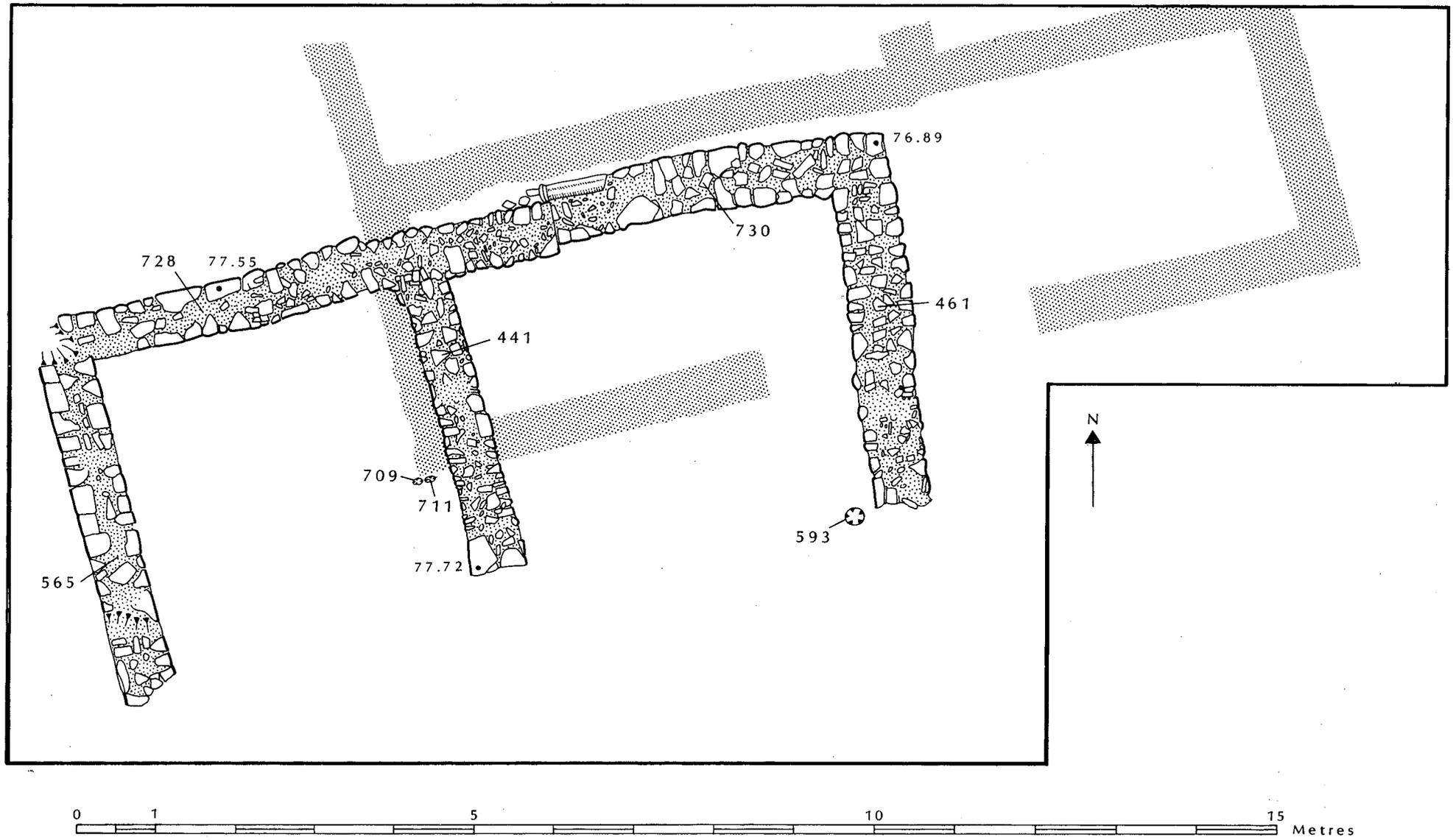


Fig. 47 Area D. The workshops, Period 5, above the Period 3 building.

with internal lip [137], collared jars [210], and concave rim lids [249], also amphora sherds [1061], dated 450–600.

The rubble collapse, immediately above the primary destruction level, contained Ware 14, everted bevel-rim cooking-pots and sherds of amphorae [1047, 1057, 1099] of fifth/sixth-century date.

*Coins.* A third-century coin came from the make-up for the floor of the building (Cat. No. 26). Two fourth-century coins came from the primary ash destruction deposit, 335/336 (Cat. No. 215), 337/340 (Cat. No. 197), and one dated 408/419 (Cat. No. 601). In the upper destruction horizon and the rubble collapse within the building seven other residual coins were found: 253/268 (Cat. No. 126), 317/326 (Cat. No. 173), 347/348 (Cat. No. 248), 348/361 (Cat. No. 285), 392/395 (Cat. No. 483), two coins of 408/419 (Cat. Nos 592, 598). An issue of c. 538/600 (Cat. No. 640) was found on the clay floor of the west room and another of 568/569 (Cat. No. 638) came from the rubble collapse above the floor of the east room.

## Discussion

This early Byzantine building was the only structure of this period within the area. Its roughly built but solid walls of stone and earth probably supported a mud-brick superstructure. No roof-tiles were found in the destruction level and the spread of ash across the floor may represent the destruction of a thatched roof of straw or reeds.<sup>34</sup> The designation of the building as workshops would seem appropriate to this open-ended structure although there were no finds from within the building to add weight to this interpretation. It can hardly have proved suitable as living-accommodation but it might conceivably have been used as stables. Given its position within the early Byzantine defences, it is remarkable that such a central location possessed only one structure. However, another high resistance anomaly, to the south, and of similar size to that which identified the workshops, suggests that at least one other building may have stood in the immediate vicinity, c. 5 m to the south, beyond the limit of excavation (Fig. 10). The building had evidently been destroyed by fire.

## PERIOD 6: POST-MEDIEVAL OCCUPATION (Fig. 48)

Immediately below topsoil and partly overlying the eastern wall of the Period 5 workshops, were the remains of a house, orientated north/west by south/east, 2.70 m wide and at least 4.0 m in length. Its rectangular clay floor (415) was bedded on a foundation of limestone rubble. At its north-west end, the floor abutted a clay platform (411), c. 0.07 m higher than the floor and an apsidal extension (439) to the west wall was similarly raised slightly above the floor of the building and was paved with reused Roman or early Byzantine bricks (457). The floor was sharply defined on its north-western and north-eastern sides but no post-holes were found along its outer edge. However, on its south-west side, there survived a row of angular, undressed limestone fragments c. 0.25 m wide, carefully aligned to present a regular internal face. Traces of another line of stones edged the north-western end of the raised platform. This probably formed a foundation for the superstructure of the building. The apsidal feature was cut into the collapsed rubble and earth mound which covered the Period 5 workshops. Upon the raised platform was a circular deposit of pure ash (408), probably where there had been a fireplace. However, in the north-east corner, a concentration of carbonized seed suggests the destruction *in situ* of grain, probably stored in a sack or other perishable container. The floor itself was covered by a destruction deposit of charcoal and ash, sealed by a spread of burnt clay, fragments of which bore the impression of wattle, probably from

<sup>34</sup> However, the absence of tiles is not conclusive. Roof-tiles were also conspicuous by their absence in the destruction deposit overlying the Large Basilica. Probably, they were removed, either immediately before or soon after the destruction of the church, see Area F, p. 166.

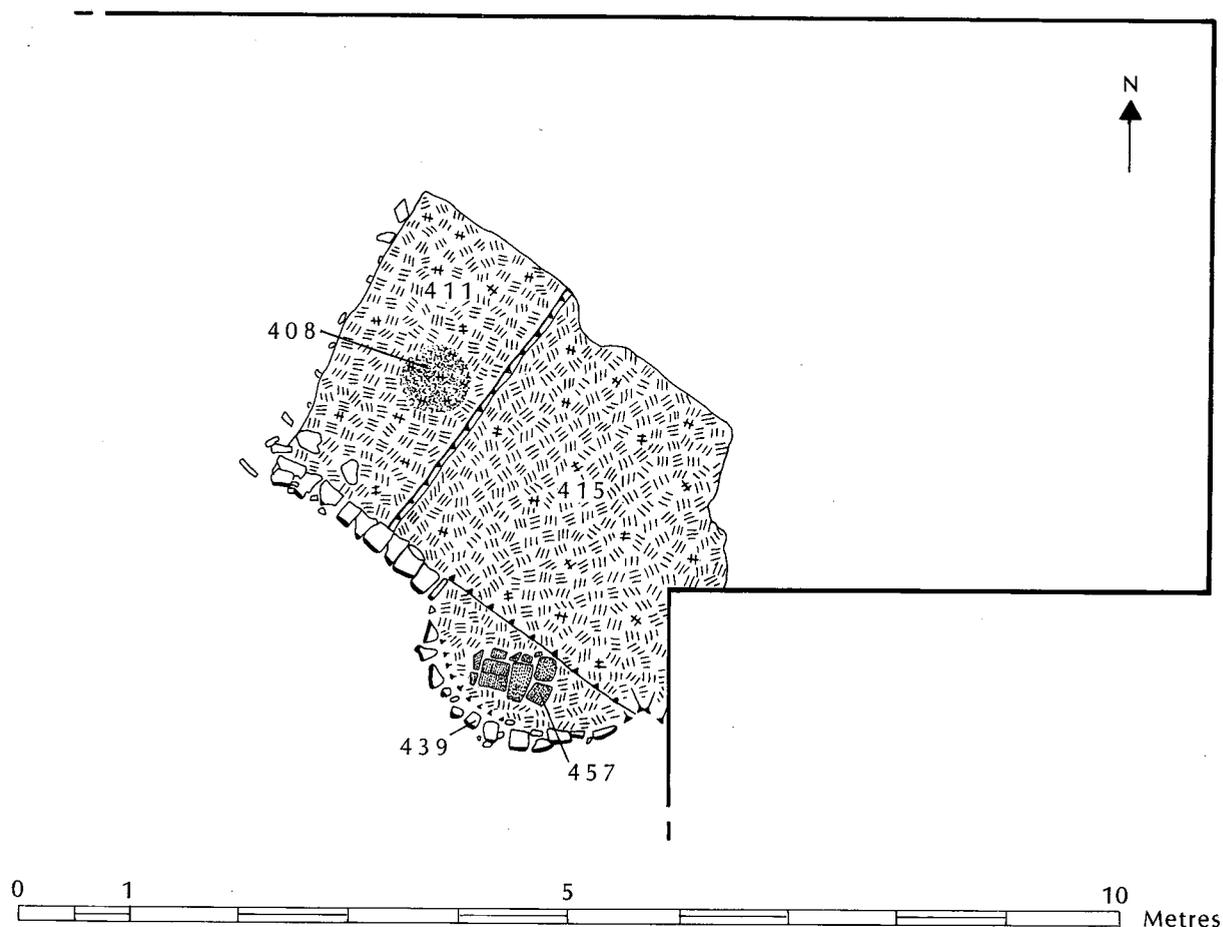


Fig. 48 Area D. The post-medieval house, Period 6.

the collapsed remains of the walls. The only other sign of activity in this period was a series of shallow pits and dump deposits close up to the northern section and below topsoil, north of the Period 5 workshops. Notable finds from the rubble south-east of the workshops were fragments of a sculpture, depicting a gladiator (SF 4107), and two halves of a fourth-century funerary inscription, which may well have been reused in the superstructure of the Period 5 workshops, the upper walls of which were probably levelled in this period.<sup>35</sup>

### Dating

*Pottery.* The floor of the building (415) produced sherds of post-medieval pottery and so did the destruction level above it.

*Finds.* From the floor of the building and sealed by the destruction level, a knife (SF 1053), a staple-and-latch (SF 1050), a trivet (SF 4010), and a pair of scissors (SF 4011), all of post-medieval date.

### Discussion

The house, with its partly subterranean apsidal extension, perhaps used as a store, and its raised platform at one end, possessed features shared by the post-medieval *grubenhäuser* built on the site of

<sup>35</sup> See ch. 18, No. 1, pp. 315–16.

the Large Basilica.<sup>36</sup> However, apart from the apsidal extension, which was revetted into the collapsed debris overlying the Period 5 workshops, the rest of the building was free-standing. The stone footings, surrounding the floor, probably formed a setting for wooden sill-beams which held the uprights supporting walls of wattle-and-daub.<sup>37</sup> The domestic finds from within the building suggest it was occupied up to the time of its destruction by fire.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> See Area F, p. 172.

<sup>37</sup> During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both in Bulgaria and southern Serbia, outbuildings and some houses were constructed upon a rough base of stone blocks, supporting a timber-framed superstructure, the walls completed either in mudbrick or in wattle-and-daub. *Pers. Obs.*

<sup>38</sup> For discussion of post-medieval occupation and possible causes of destruction, see ch. 2, pp. 49–51.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# AREA E: THE SOUTH GATE

### Summary

*During the Roman and probably late Roman periods, a cobbled roadway led down the valley on the south-eastern corner of the site, providing access from the city south to the river. During the first half of the fifth century, crop-cleaning may have been carried out in the area. Subsequently destruction debris, perhaps brought from the Roman city, was used to backfill a pit before the construction of an early Byzantine gate-tower, built over a vaulted drain and projecting both north and south of the curtain-wall. During the first of two periods of early Byzantine occupation, iron-working took place immediately north of the defensive wall and east of the gate. After the drain was blocked and the ground-level raised on the north side of the curtain-wall, industrial activity continued with the working of copper-alloy until occupation ended in destruction by fire. The superstructure of the gate and the curtain-wall were robbed in the post-medieval period.*

### INTRODUCTION (Fig. 49)

A narrow valley leads south-east from the plateau down to the flood plain of the Rositsa (Fig. 5). It probably offered the only direct and convenient route down to the river from the Roman city to the north. The robber-trench, following the southern wall of the early Byzantine defences, here descends from the west and then climbs up towards the south-eastern corner of the defended enclosure. A small section of masonry, which included part of a brick course (34), was visible on the east flank of the valley before excavation began and it seemed reasonable to expect that excavation might identify the site of an early Byzantine gate and discover an intact occupation level against the north side of the surviving section of curtain-wall. In both respects, the results exceeded expectations.

Excavation started during the first field season in 1985. South-west of the upstanding section of wall (34), a second section of the defensive curtain (1102) was found bonded with the foundations for a gate-tower. Excavation continued for four additional seasons (1986–1989) and was directed primarily towards examining the structure of the upstanding masonry and occupation levels to the north of the curtain-wall. During the winter of 1989/90, weathering of the western section unexpectedly exposed the north-western corner of the gate structure, which had not only survived robbing but was still standing to a height of 2.91 m. During the 1990 season, the area was extended to the west to include the full width of the gate. At no time during the excavations was natural reached in any part of the area.

### PERIOD 1: ROMAN AND LATE ROMAN ACTIVITY IN THE AREA (Fig. 50)

Immediately north of the Period 2 gate, a post-pit packed with stones, 0.60 m deep and 1.20 m wide, cut a silty clay deposit (1180), perhaps a levelling dump. This clay level was covered by a cobbled surface (1133) and cut by shallow north/south depressions (1153, 1159, 1161), probably wheel-ruts.

A pit (1188), 2.30 m wide and at least 1.90 m deep, cut through a clay deposit (1187), immediately north of the curtain-wall (Fig. 49). It was filled with successive tips of ash, silt, burnt



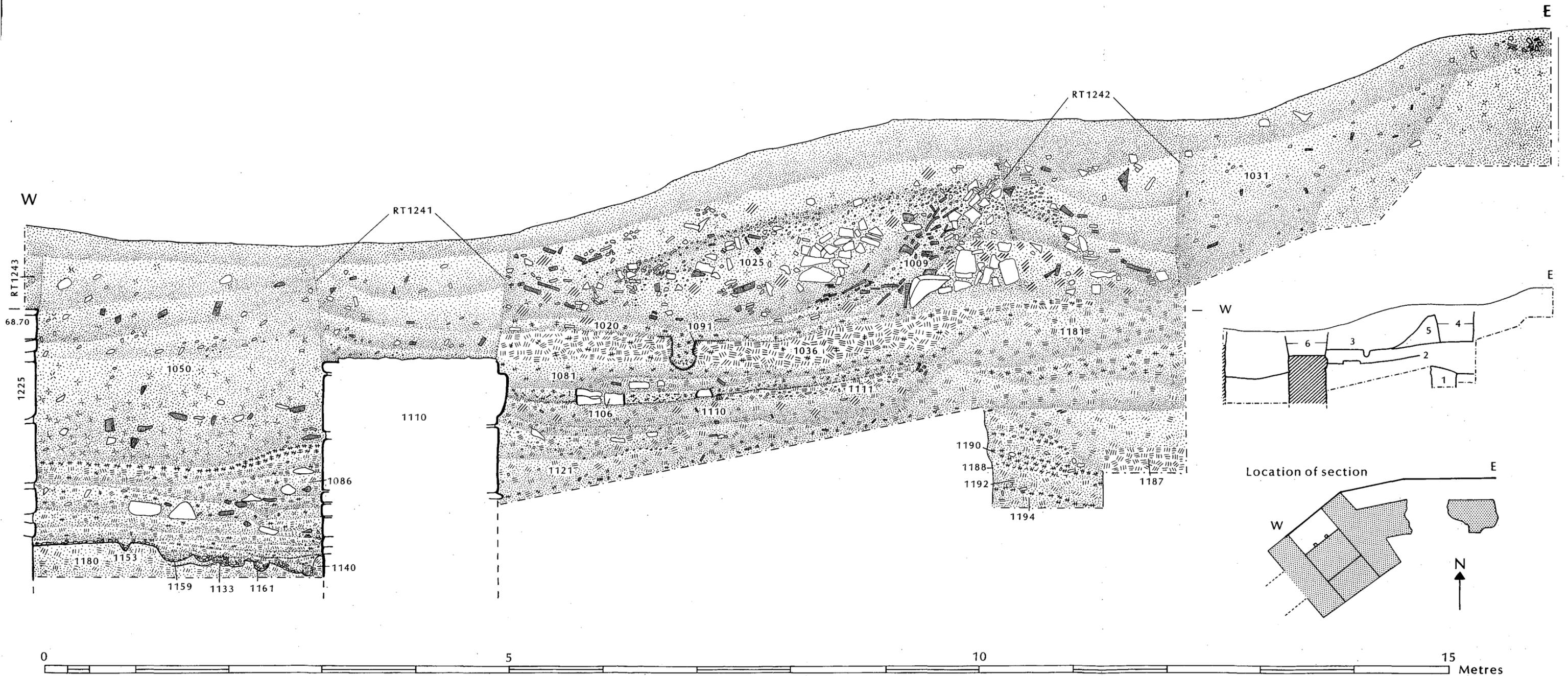


Fig. 50 North section, Area E. Key to interpretative section; 1 = Period 1 pit; 2 = Period 2 occupation level; 3 = Period 3 occupation level; 4 = robbed revetting wall, Period 3; 5 = collapsed remains of Period 3 revetting wall; 6 = Period 4 robber-trench.



## Discussion

The valley leading down through Area E to the river was evidently used during the Roman period.<sup>2</sup> From the plateau, the gentle slope down to the river was provided with a cobbled surface, apparently rutted by wheeled vehicles. The trackway may well have been used for transporting gravel and other raw materials up to the city from the river. It was surely also the most direct route between the city and its harbour.<sup>3</sup> Probably, it continued in use during the late Roman period. A pit (1188), east of the trackway, was not dug before the end of the fourth century and was filled no earlier than 408. The successive dumps within the pit may have been domestic waste and rubbish from crop-cleaning, possibly carried out in the vicinity during the first half of the fifth century. However, in the quantity of small-finds it contained and in the amount of burnt material, especially fragments of burnt mud-wall, the deposit resembles levelling dumps used elsewhere in the construction of the early Byzantine fortifications and probably brought in from the site of the Roman city, destroyed and abandoned c. 450.<sup>4</sup> It is not unlikely that the final backfilling of the pit was carried out when the site was levelled in preparation for the construction of the early Byzantine defences at the beginning of Period 2.

### PERIOD 2: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EARLY BYZANTINE GATE AND THE FIRST PHASE OF EARLY BYZANTINE OCCUPATION (Fig. 49)

The foundation trench (1140) for the gate structure cut the Period 1 cobbled road surface (1133) to the north and, on its east side, cut into another clay deposit which contained tile fragments and charcoal, probably also used as make-up (Fig. 50). Within the angle formed by the junction of the curtain-wall (1102) with the gate structure (1110), the trench was 0.70 m wider than the foundation it contained but quickly narrowed to the east to become only 0.10–0.20 m wider than the foundation for the adjacent section of curtain-wall (1102). The butt-end of this foundation trench was identified 4.80 m east of the gate.

After the Period 1 pit (1188) had been backfilled, a mixed deposit of clay and silty clay, containing lumps of mortar and fragments of burnt mud-wall, formed a thick deposit (1181), c. 1.0 m high and piled up against the hillside at the eastern end of the area (Fig. 50). This was then cut by the foundation trench (1146) for the eastern section of the curtain-wall (34). Although the junction between the two preserved sections of curtain was removed by RT 1018, the foundation trench (1146) for the eastern section of wall cut the trench (1140) dug to contain the foundations of the gate and its adjacent section of curtain. Consequently, whereas the construction of the gate and the first section of curtain-wall (1102) were part of the same building operation, this must have been carried out before the foundation for the eastern section of curtain-wall (34) was laid.

South of the gate, there was more dumping. A clay dump, at least 1.50 m deep, was deposited south of the entrance.<sup>5</sup> Probably, the intention here was to counter the natural slope to the south by raising the ground-level. To the depth excavated, no foundation cuts were identified along the front of the gate structure nor along the outer face of the adjacent section of curtain-wall (1102). Probably, after the completion of the foundations, clay was packed up against the outer face of the curtain and gate: excavation did not reach the level below which the foundations must have been trench-built and cut into the earlier land surface.

<sup>2</sup> Whether this valley was natural or man-made remains uncertain. West of the site, where modern trackways have exposed the sandy sub-soil, erosion has rapidly widened paths creating 'valleys' leading south to the river. A similar process of erosion may have widened and improved access down to the river from the plateau.

<sup>3</sup> On the probability that there were harbour installations on the north bank of the Rositsa, see ch. 1, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> For similar deposits see Area P, pp. 214–15 and Area R, p. 221. On the destruction of the Roman city see ch. 2, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> This largely sterile dump of redeposited clay was not bottomed during excavation.

### The gate (Fig. 49)

The gate was designed as a rectangular, almost square structure which measured 6.90 m west/east and 6.80 m north/south. It comprised three primary elements: a central west/east section of masonry (1059), through which passed a vaulted drain, and two rectangular north/south foundations, each 1.90 m wide and projecting 2.10 m south and *c.* 2.10 m north of the central section of masonry (Plate XVIII B). Each of these three primary elements, the central foundation (1059), the western foundation (1225/1233), and the eastern foundation (1110/1060) were bonded together to form an 'H' plan. The structure was executed with remarkable precision.<sup>6</sup>

The junction between the eastern foundation (1060) and the curtain-wall (1102) presented a particular difficulty: the gate itself was aligned north-west by south-east along the axis of the valley whereas the adjacent section of curtain turned eastward as it ascended the steep slope. This meant that the projected alignment of the outer, southern face of curtain-wall (1102) met the outer face of the east foundation (1060) at an awkward acute angle. This was resolved by changing the alignment of the eastern foundation's southern projection (1060), turning it further to the south and by adjusting the course of the foundation for the curtain-wall (1102) slightly to the south-west so that the two sections of masonry met at more or less an angle of 90 degrees. Where the northern projection of the eastern foundation (1110) met the curtain-wall (1102) at an oblique angle, no corresponding change was considered necessary to readjust the orientation of either part of the structure. As a result, the inner and outer sections of the eastern foundation were not exactly aligned. At worst, this may have resulted in a slight bulge in the superstructure of the gate on its east side but, since all parts of the foundations were carefully bonded, it presumably had no adverse effect upon the stability of the gate. Quite probably, the gate's eastern wall was set back from the eastern side of its foundation which would have allowed the superstructure to regain its regular orientation.

The western foundation (1225/1233) was especially well-preserved, particularly its northern projection (Plate XIX A). Here, its lower rubble and mortar foundations, at least 0.90 m deep, were trench-built and fully bonded with the foundation for the central section of the gate structure (Fig. 51 F). Its eastern side, which faced the entrance to the drain, was built from three courses of massive reused limestone blocks to a height of 1.70 m, which corresponded to the top of a reused pilaster (1044), laid horizontally across the northern side of the central foundation (Fig. 51 E-F). Above ground-level and without offset, the superstructure was preserved to a height of 1.25 m.<sup>7</sup> Up to a height of 0.90 m it comprised five courses of small limestone blocks, each row differing in thickness, but each of the three courses, which retained their facing blocks, were of equal height and the joints between them were carefully pointed. Back from its eastern face, the core for the western foundation was preserved *c.* 0.40 m above the upper course of stone blocks, here built with bonding courses at least three bricks thick. The western side of the foundation was also faced with massive limestone slabs. Between the western and eastern sides of the foundation and below the bonding courses, the interior was filled with white mortar and limestone rubble, bonded with the core of the central foundation (1059). The core of the western foundation's southern projection (1233) was robbed to a level 0.87 m below the top of the limestone blocks which faced its west, east, and south sides. Robbing had stopped where three reused limestone blocks were laid horizontally over the lower foundations and were well-bedded in white mortar.<sup>8</sup> To the north, the sides of the foundation were bonded into the central foundation's core.

The eastern foundation, excepting the re-alignment of the southern projection, closely resembled its western counterpart. Each side of its northern and southern projections was faced

<sup>6</sup> The northern projection of the eastern foundation was identical in size to the southern projections of both the western and eastern foundations. Only the western foundation just fails to meet the exacting plan: it projected 2.0 m to the north.

<sup>7</sup> That this represented superstructure above the primary occupation level and the entrance into the gate, see below, p. 142.

<sup>8</sup> One slab had previously served as a threshold slab: a pivot-socket was visible in its surface. Another, with its rectangular cut on one side, resembled the portcullis blocks used in the Roman gate, see Area C, p. 90.

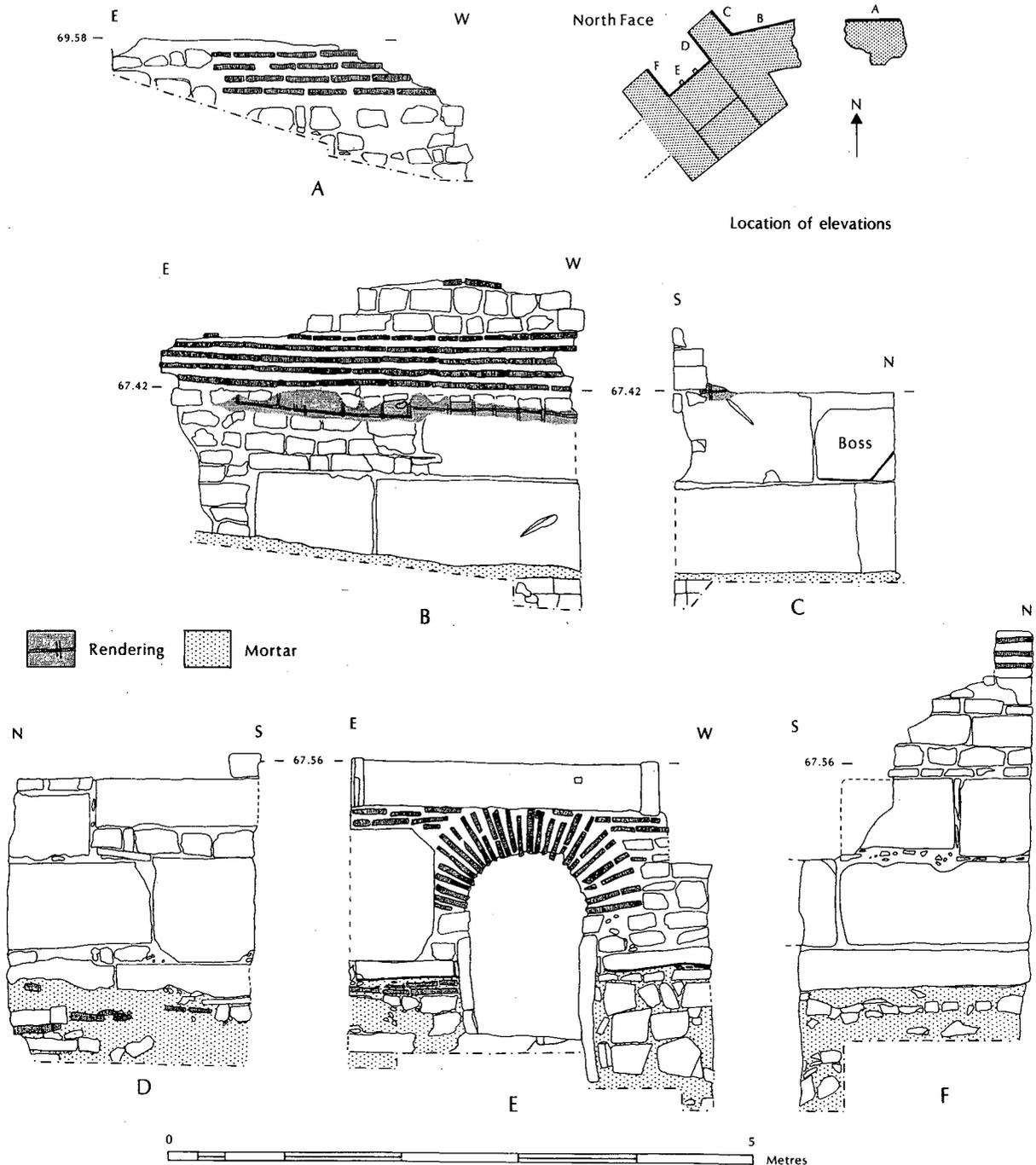


Fig. 51 Area E. Elevations of the north side of the curtain-wall.

with massive limestone slabs, the intervening space filled with a core of limestone blocks and mortar. The eastern face of the southern projection's foundation (1060) retained an additional row of blocks and survived to full height although no trace of the superstructure was preserved (Fig. 52G-H; Plate XVIIIB). The blocks used in its eastern face abutted the curtain-wall foundation (1102) but the blocks used in the western face extended into the masonry core of the central section (Plate XXIA). The exposed western and eastern faces of the foundation for the northern projection (1110) were both preserved to full height and the foundation's core of mortared rubble was unrobbed. The west side of the eastern foundation's northern projection (1110) was constructed upon a rough lower foundation of limestone blocks and mortar bonded with the east side of the central foundation (Fig. 51D). Above the floor of the drain, the foundation was carefully faced except that here the use of broken and irregular sized blocks of

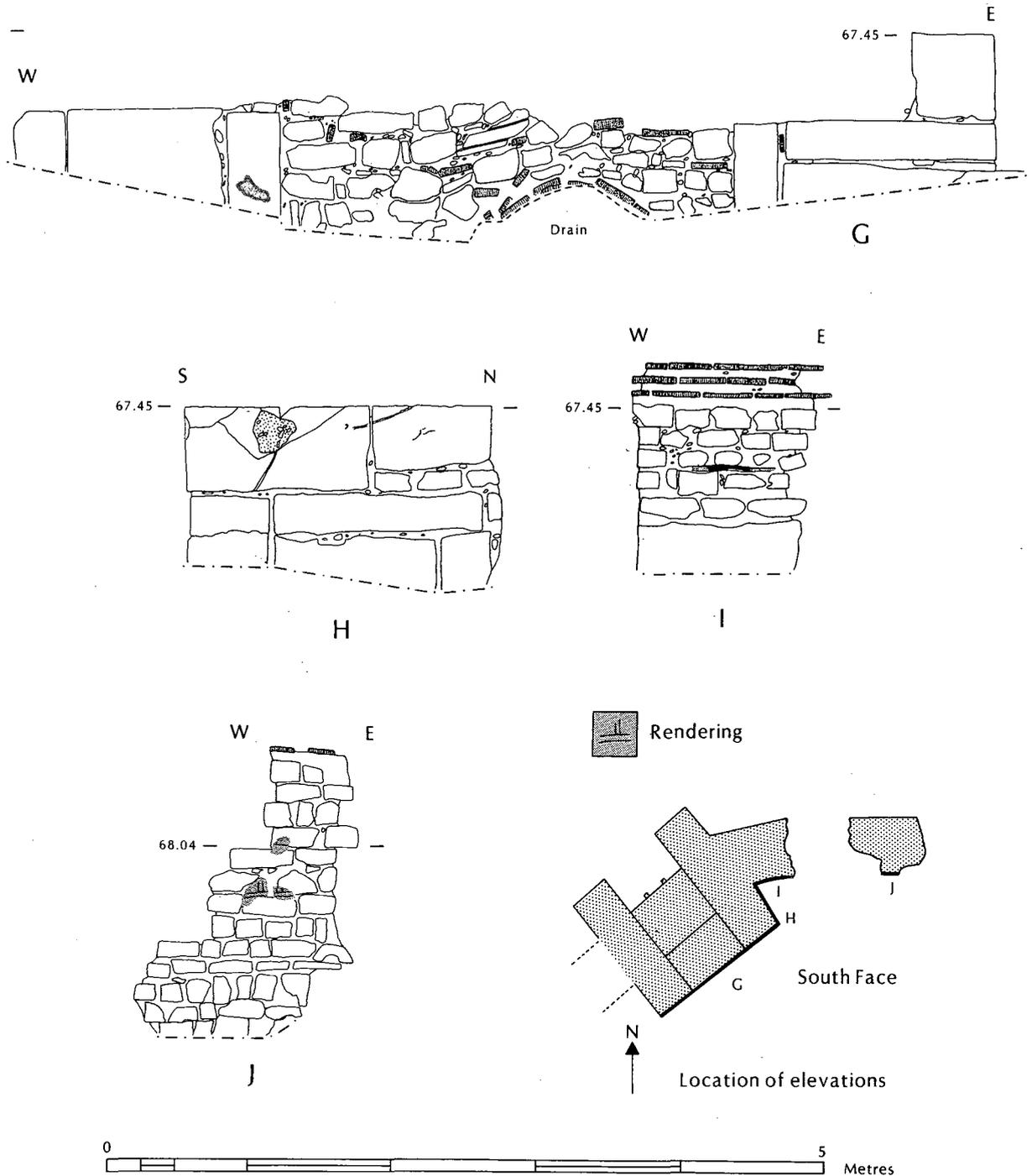


Fig. 52 Area E. Elevations of the south side of the curtain-wall.

limestone required the insertion of small limestone blocks to fill gaps between the larger stones. The north-eastern face of the eastern foundation was constructed from two courses of massive, reused blocks of masonry offset slightly above a facing of small limestone blocks and separated from them by a raft of mortar which continued east below the foundation for the adjacent section of curtain-wall (Fig. 51B-C; Plate XIXB). The blocks which formed the face of the eastern foundation abutted the curtain-wall foundation. The southern of the two blocks used in the upper course had clamp-holes at either end: like most, if not all of the large stones used in the gate, it must have been taken from a building within the late Roman city. Neither of these holes had been filled with mortar, presumably because, during construction, it was known that this block would form part of the substructure of the gate and would not have been visible once building operations were completed. The adjacent block at the northern end of the foundation presented a

still more irregular face where a boss of unworked masonry had not been chiselled back but was left projecting. Only a small portion of the superstructure was preserved, close to its junction with the central section of masonry, and faced with small limestone blocks, standing without offset one course high on the western side and two courses high on the eastern side of the foundation (Fig. 51C–D).

The central section of the gate's foundations, extending between the two north/south foundations, measured 2.50 m north/south and 3.10 m west/east. As noted above, the lower foundation of the central section was of one build with the foundations for the north/south foundations and it was similarly constructed from roughly coursed and mortared limestone blocks which supported upper foundations, partly faced with large limestone blocks and partly with smaller stones and brick but always with carefully pointed, vertical faces. Beneath the central section of the gate foundation was a drain, its floor paved with limestone blocks set in mortar and its sides revetted by large limestone slabs (Fig. 51E; Plates XXA–B). On the east side of the northern entrance to the drain and at a height of 0.80 m above the drain's floor, a horizontal limestone slab jutted out from the foundation and separated the lower, roughly built courses from the upper foundation which here was faced with a large flat slab set vertically on edge (Plate XXA). Another ledge at approximately the same height, but comprising a row of small limestone blocks, separated the lower from the upper foundations on the west side of the drain entrance. A brick vault, springing from the bottom of the upper foundations, covered the drain and was in turn capped by a reused pilaster (1044). The drain was 0.92 m wide and its floor 1.50 m below the highest point of the vault which continued beneath the central foundation for a distance of 2.25 m. Where robbing had exposed the southern face of the central foundation its upper east side was faced with a massive limestone slab, no doubt replicating the construction used on the north side of the gate. As on the northern side of the central foundation, the outside of the brick vault was carefully pointed. However, here, abutting against it, a second section of vaulting (1079) was preserved and formed the top of the drain as it continued south between the southern projections of the north/south foundations and then south beyond the gate. Except for an initial row of bricks which formed the top of the vault, this section of vaulting was not built from bricks laid with their longer sides parallel with the axis of the drain but at right-angles to it and crudely bonded with mortar (Plates XVIII B and XXIA). Inside the drain, this formed an irregular roof unlike the smooth, semicircular vault below the central foundation. At the southern end of the gate structure a foundation, roughly faced with small limestone blocks and tile, abutted the projecting ends of the two north/south foundations and was carried over the roughly vaulted drain (Fig. 52G; Plate XVIII B). South of the central foundation (1059), the spaces between the inner sides of the north/south foundations and the drain were filled with a mortar and rubble core of masonry (1070). Whereas the floor of the drain, as it passed through the gate, was horizontal, once it had reached the southern side of the gate structure, it sloped abruptly down at an angle of 1:7. The drain continued south-east of the gate for 3.60 m, beyond which was a ditch, the greasy clay fill of which (1078) was traced south-east as far as the baulk. Presumably, the vaulted drain was no longer necessary once it had channelled water under the gate and away from the road which no doubt continued south towards the river. Only a fragment of the mortared floor of the gate-chamber (1045) survived where it abutted the south side of the reused pilaster (1044) and a row of three small limestone blocks (1245) was all that remained of the eastern face of the gate-chamber.

The two slabs facing the inside of the northern end of the drain projected 0.20 m north of the drain mouth, no doubt to ensure a water-tight bond with the drain coming south-east down the valley (Fig. 51E, Plate XXA). No remains of the drain continuing up the valley were found. As far as the northern section, a distance of 2.10 m, it had been entirely robbed out at the beginning of Period 3. Presumably, it resembled the drain which was preserved abutting the south side of the central foundation and was built with vertical limestone slabs supporting a rough brick vault. A dump of mortar, rubble and clay (1082) survived either side of the entrance to the drain. Probably, this had been used to pack in behind the sides of the drain's walls which had originally continued up the valley. Extending north from the drain mouth, a greasy clay deposit with decayed tile and

pebbles represented the disturbed remains of the robbed drain's fill.<sup>9</sup> Beneath the central foundation and within the preserved section of drain, a similar deposit of greasy clay and gravel had accumulated while the drain was still in use and formed a deep deposit 0.60 m high, rich in small-finds.<sup>10</sup>

South of the gate-chamber and above the clay levelling dump, a mortar spread (1069) sloped down from the west section and was cut on its eastern side by the drain (1079). This dump of mortar must have been deposited during building, after the site had been levelled but before the southern extension of the drain was constructed. Moreover, it must have been quickly covered by a dump of silty clay which was also deposited over the drain vault (1079) and was used to make up the ground surface to the top of the foundations on the south side of the gate.<sup>11</sup>

### **The curtain-wall (Fig. 49)**

East of the gate, two sections of curtain-wall were preserved, separated by a robber-trench (1018) which had removed the intermediate portion of foundations.<sup>12</sup> The first section (1102) was bonded to the gate structure and, on its north side, as noted above, was built within a continuation of the foundation trench (1140) dug for the north-eastern side of the gate structure. The second section of curtain-wall (34), at the eastern end of the area, represented the surviving portion of wall, the top of which was visible before excavation began.

Immediately east of the gate structure, on the north side of the curtain-wall, the lowest section of foundation examined was faced with two courses of small limestone blocks covered by a structural raft of mortar *c.* 0.12 m thick which continued beneath the eastern foundation of the gate (Fig. 51B–C). Above, three large blocks of limestone were used in the lower two courses of the wall section adjacent to the gate (Fig. 51B). To the east, the curtain-wall foundation was faced with courses of rectangular limestone blocks. The outer, southern face of the curtain-wall foundation was built with regular courses of small rectangular limestone blocks above a single large slab of limestone (Fig. 52I). Above and without offset, the superstructure of the wall had a solid core of mortared limestone blocks and preserved on the northern face there were two courses of small limestone blocks which retained traces of mortar rendering, incised with parallel lines in imitation of ashlar masonry (Fig. 51B; Plate XXIB).<sup>13</sup> Above, there was a level of bonding courses, five bricks thick. The outer face of the wall was only preserved to the top of the third brick course (Fig. 52I). To the west, the brick courses abutted the east side of the gate foundation and, along the inside of the curtain, curved as the wall realigned towards the eastern section of wall (34). Clearly, not only the foundations but also the first courses for the superstructure of the curtain (1102), to the top of the highest brick bonding course, were constructed at the same time as the foundations for the gate. However, above, two rows of limestone blocks, which formed the inner face of the curtain-wall, were progressively set back from the outer edge of the underlying brick course towards the east (Fig. 51B). This change in direction brought the northern side of the curtain-wall (1102) into

<sup>9</sup> Although no traces of the drain survived north of the central foundation, the accumulated fill both within the preserved drain under the gate and to the north of it demonstrates that the drain had functioned and, while it did so, the northern side of the entrance must have been covered to the height of the threshold slab to allow access into the gate. Whether or not a vaulted drain was preserved further up the valley could not be determined from the resistivity survey: rubble collapse down the sides of the valley would have masked any evidence for its continuation, see ch. 16, p. 259.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to indeterminate fragments of iron and copper alloy, finds included a fifth/sixth-century iron fibula (SF 3194), an iron loop-ended latch-lifter (SF 3204), six large nails (N/1) (SF 3236, 3242, 3254, 3255, 3259, 3273), a 'Sucidava' type belt-buckle of sixth-century date (SF 3266), an iron knife-blade (SF 3294), and 4 coins (see below, dating for Period 2).

<sup>11</sup> After it was exposed by excavation, this deposit of mortar rapidly eroded and had all but disappeared by the beginning of the following season.

<sup>12</sup> This robber-trench was not bottomed.

<sup>13</sup> This represented the change from foundation to superstructure see below, pp. 140–2

alignment with the north face of the eastern section of curtain (34). The oblique angle between the northern projection of the gate's eastern foundation and the curtain-wall had proved necessary to change the orientation of the wall as it turned for the ascent up the slope and the curving northern face of the inside of the curtain had increased the turn – but not sufficiently to meet the inner face of the eastern wall foundation (34) as it descended the hillside. It seems likely that the need further to alter the orientation of the primary section of curtain-wall (1102) became apparent only after building had reached the top of the brick bonding courses and when work had begun on the eastern wall and its own foundation had been laid. No such problem affected the outer face of the curtain-wall which aligned with the outer face of the east section of foundation. Above the two courses of limestone blocks was another brick course which, on its north side, survived as far as the inner face of the curtain, only 0.35 m above the primary level of bonding courses (Fig. 51B).

At the eastern end of the area, the second section of wall (34) had been inserted into its own foundation trench (1146), cut from a level *c.* 1.50 m higher than the foundation trench (1140) used for the lower, western section of curtain (1102). Moreover, as noted above, since this foundation trench (1146) postdated the cutting of the foundation trench (1140) for the gate and its adjacent section of curtain (1102), it follows that the foundation for this eastern section of the fortification wall (34) was only built after the foundations for the gate had been laid. An offset on the inner face of the wall corresponded to the level below which the foundation of the wall had been trench-built. Above, no occupation level was found. Instead, above the foundation trench, a rough layer of mortar (1026), 0.60 m thick had been dumped along the inner face of the wall and descended sharply to the west. This construction level had not been exposed long enough to be weathered: it must have been quickly covered with the building debris, including limestone blocks and brick fragments, which overlay it and then by the silty clay make-up deposit (1031) which continued up to the modern ground surface (Fig. 50).<sup>14</sup> Given the steep slope along the inside of the curtain, it is unlikely that there had been any direct access to the foot of this section of wall from inside the fortifications. Indeed, because of the abrupt change in height at the point of junction between the two sections of curtain, it is probable that a revetting wall ran north from the face of the curtain and was built against the hillside. This would have prevented direct access from the occupation level immediately east of the gate to the bottom of the eastern section of the wall (34) as was the case in Period 3.<sup>15</sup> The southern side of the curtain-wall (34) was faced with regular courses of small limestone blocks (Fig. 52J). Against this face, a dump of clay mixed with lumps of mortar (1012), levelled off with a secondary clay dump (1013) probably formed the top of the berm (Fig. 53). Unlike the inner face of this section of curtain, there was here no offset between the foundations and superstructure. At a height of 1.20 m above the berm, and surviving probably to its full height within the core of the wall, there was a series of bonding courses five bricks thick. Included within the core were both red and yellow bricks, all *c.* 4 cm thick and ranging from 28 to 35 cm square. Some of the yellow bricks were broken and may well have been salvaged from buildings within the ruins of the Roman city.<sup>16</sup> The wall was here 2.60 m wide. Above and below the brick courses, the exposed wall-core comprised limestone rubble bonded with a hard white mortar.

### **The lime mortar facing for the walls**

Traces of fine lime mortar rendering survived on both the inner and outer faces of the gate and curtain. On the inside of the curtain-wall (1102), immediately east of the gate and above the primary early Byzantine occupation level, but protected by the make-up deposit for Period 3, traces of

<sup>14</sup> After excavation, this dump of mortar (1026) was eroded over one winter. Had the mortar remained visible for a similar length of time after the construction of the curtain-wall, it is unlikely to have survived. Similarly, the mortar dump (1069) would not have survived if it had not been immediately covered by the make-up deposit in front of the gate.

<sup>15</sup> See below, p. 143. No remains of this revetting wall were found but, if it was constructed against the slope without foundation, it would have left no trace when dismantled during the Period 3 reconstruction.

<sup>16</sup> Yellow bricks were certainly used in buildings in the Roman city.

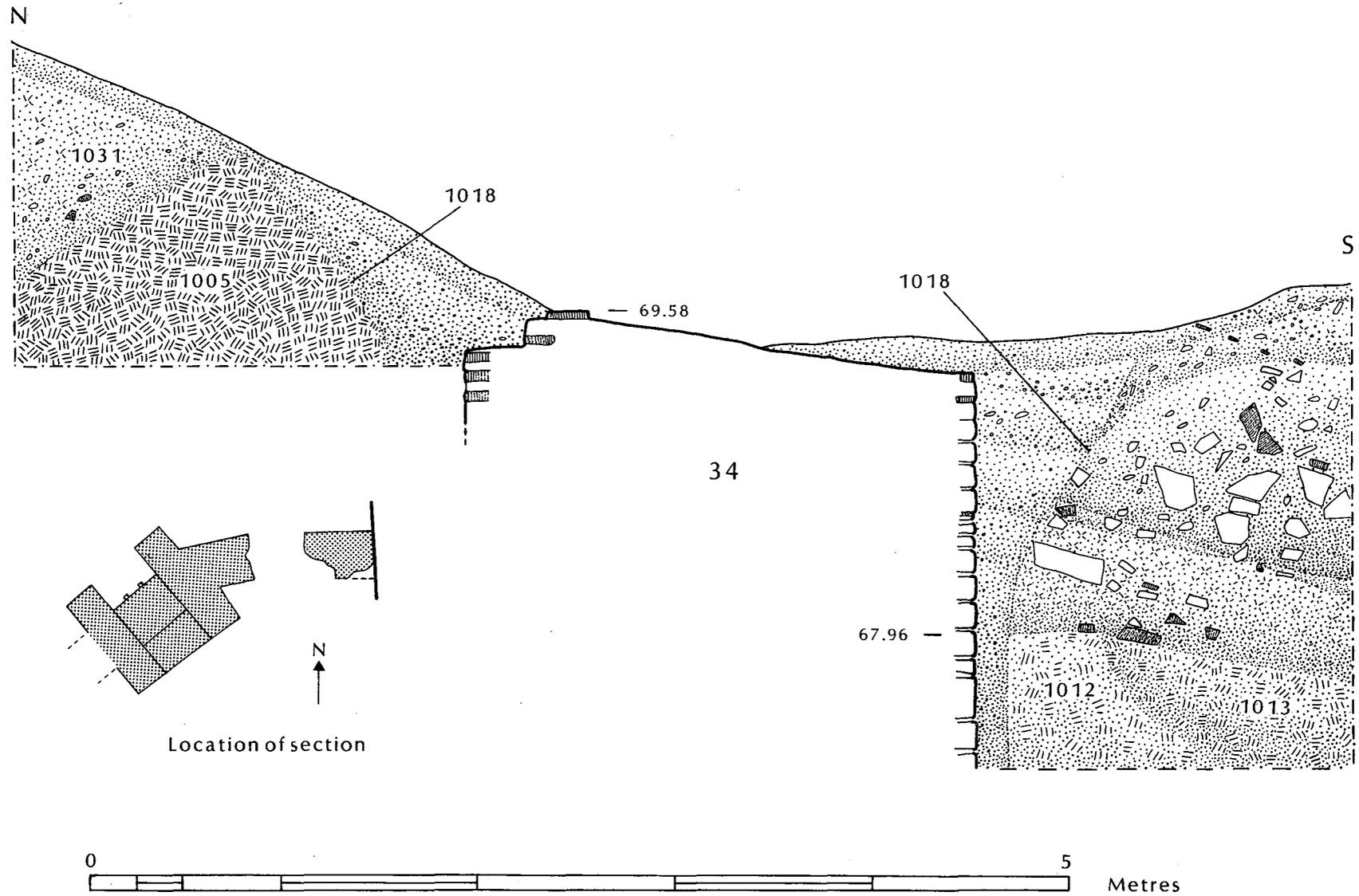


Fig. 53 Area E. Eastern section across the curtain-wall (34).

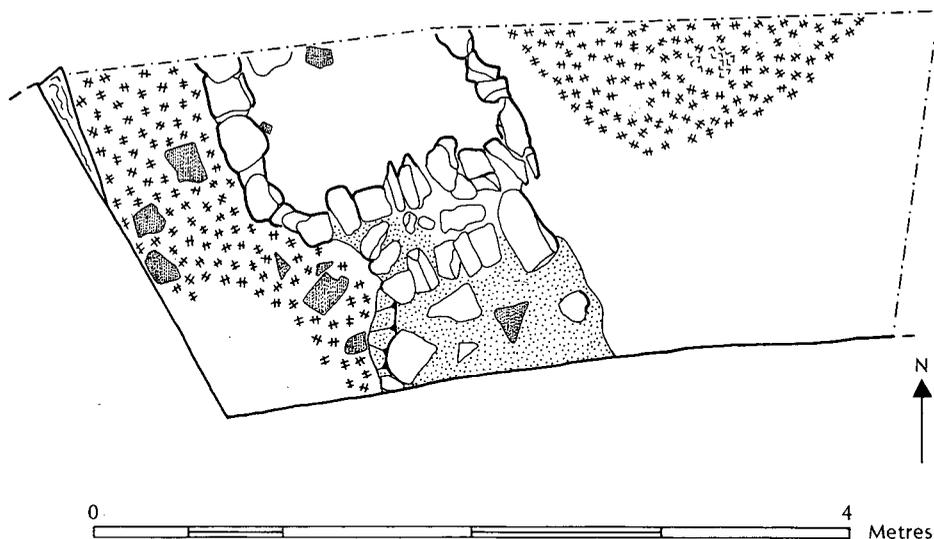


Fig. 54 Area E. Mortared foundation (1106) for the hearth, Period 2.

mortar adhered to the limestone blocks below the brick bonding courses (Fig. 51B). While still wet, parallel lines were incised in the mortar facing to represent regular courses of limestone blocks (Plates XIXB and XXIB). A fragment of incised rendering was preserved at the same height on the southern end of the adjacent face of the gate's northern projection (Fig. 51C). Others were found on the south face of the western gate foundation and on the outer face of the curtain-wall immediately east of the gate (Fig. 52G and I). On the external face of the eastern section of curtain-wall (34) there were more traces of rendering, similarly incised to represent regular courses of rectangular stone blocks (Fig. 52J).

### Primary occupation (Fig. 50)

Immediately east of the gate and up against the curtain-wall foundation (1102), a mortar and rubble dump (1121) was followed by a dump of silty clay (1110) up to 1.0 m deep which formed a make-up deposit for the primary occupation level (1111); this level continued east as far as a clay mound (1181) piled up against the hillside.

Abutting the curtain-wall (1102) to the south and extending north into the section, a foundation of mortared limestone blocks (1106) formed the base of a rectangular hearth, 1.50 m wide, which was covered with a layer of charcoal, ash, iron slag, and the remains of vitrified clay hearth-lining. The hearth was used for blacksmithing, forging, and welding (Fig. 54).

South of the gate, above the silty clay levelling dump which covered the drain, surviving only against the southern face of the gate's eastern foundation, were several bricks laid flat (1061). Probably, they had formed part of a paved surface extending across the southern entrance to the gate (Fig. 49). Consequently, the ground-level just outside of the gate was *c.* 0.40 m lower than the horizontal slab (1044) laid across the top of the central foundation. Probably the floor of the gate-passage sloped gently to the south.<sup>17</sup>

### Dating

*Coins.* From the clay dump (1181), 355/361 (Cat. No. 338); from the primary fill of the drain, 270/275 (Cat. No. 144), 348/361 (Cat. No. 324), 351/354 (Cat. No. 309), 355/360 (Cat. No. 313);

<sup>17</sup> It seems improbable that the gate floor would have been stepped even though the absence of wear on the horizontal slab (11044) suggests that the gate was not regularly used by wheeled vehicles.

from the make-up dump north of the eastern section of curtain-wall (1031), 295/305 (Cat. No. 154); from the make-up deposit (1110) north of the curtain-wall (1102), *c.* 100/150 (Cat. No. 113); from the rubble and mortar make-up deposit (1121), 395/408 (Cat. No. 492).

*Finds.* A 'Sucidava' belt-buckle (SF 3266), dated *c.* 550/600, from the primary drain fill under the central foundation; a fifth/sixth-century fibula (SF 3194) from the fill of the ditch (1078) which took away waste-water from the drain, south-east of the gate.

## Discussion

The construction of the gate and the curtain-wall postdated the infilling of the Period 1 pit and could be no earlier than the beginning of the fifth century. Excavations on the western side of the site proved that the defences were not erected until after *c.* 435 and probably no earlier than the middle of the fifth century.<sup>18</sup> The finds from the drain fill suggest that Period 2 may have continued into the second half of the sixth century.

The gate with its central drain and vaulted roof was well-constructed and, in particular, massive limestone blocks were used to provide a solid base for the superstructure. In external appearance, the gate comprised an almost square chamber, projecting equally north and south of the curtain-wall (Fig. 49).

Preliminary work involved the dumping of considerable quantities of clay, especially south of the gate, in order to create a level construction surface before the foundation-trench was cut for the gate and the adjacent section of curtain-wall (1102). The superstructure of the curtain had probably reached the top of the first level of brick bonding courses before work began on the foundation for the eastern section of curtain-wall (32). Although the western section of curtain-wall (1102) curved as it aligned on the slope up to the east, the superstructure above the brick bonding courses had to be slightly offset back from the lower face of the wall in order to meet the eastern section of curtain (34) descending the steep slope. For the construction of the curtain-wall, the core was faced with small limestone blocks set in regular courses alternating with bands of bonding courses, probably all five bricks thick. Each layer of bricks was separated by a layer of mortar *c.* 0.4 cm thick, the equivalent thickness to the bricks used in the bonding courses. The mortar used in the core contained coarse gravel and pebbles but was remarkably hard. The eastern section of curtain (34) was constructed within its own foundation trench (1146) from a level *c.* 1.50 m above the construction level for the western section of curtain (Fig. 49). Although the junction between the two sections of wall had been robbed, the point at which the eastern wall met the lower portion of curtain can be identified as the point where the two foundation trenches met. Evidently, as the wall ascended the steep slope, the foundations of the curtain-wall had been stepped and the wall constructed in convenient sections. There would seem to have been no access from the occupation level along the north face of the curtain-wall (1102) to the foot of the eastern section of curtain and a low revetting wall probably abutted the curtain and then continued north-west up the side of the valley.

Traces of mortar rendering survived on both the northern and southern sides of the walls and gate structure. The mortar facing had also been scored in imitation of ashlar masonry and probably white-washed or possibly painted.<sup>19</sup> Apart from providing water-resistant protection for the exposed masonry faces of the curtain, it would have masked weaknesses at the junction between sections of curtain-wall. The surviving fragments of the lime-mortar rendering on the inner face of the wall were found only above the primary occupation level. Either the inside of the wall was rendered after

<sup>18</sup> See Area P, pp. 214–15 and also ch. 2, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Rendering of curtain-walls was probably more common than the limited published evidence might suggest. On the German Odenwald *limes*, stone walls were plastered and painted: D. Baatz, 'Research on the *Limes* of Germania Superior and Raetia 1983–89', in V. A. Maxfield and M. J. Dobson (eds), *Proceedings of the XVth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies* (Exeter, 1991), 176; also a lime-mortar rendering has been recognized on Hadrian's Wall: J. G. Crow, 'Construction and reconstruction in the central sector of Hadrian's Wall,' in *ibid.*, 46; *Britannia* 19 (1988), 433. Repeated coats of white-wash were applied to the Roman curtain-wall at Colchester; *Britannia* 19 (1988), 458; 20 (1989), 302.

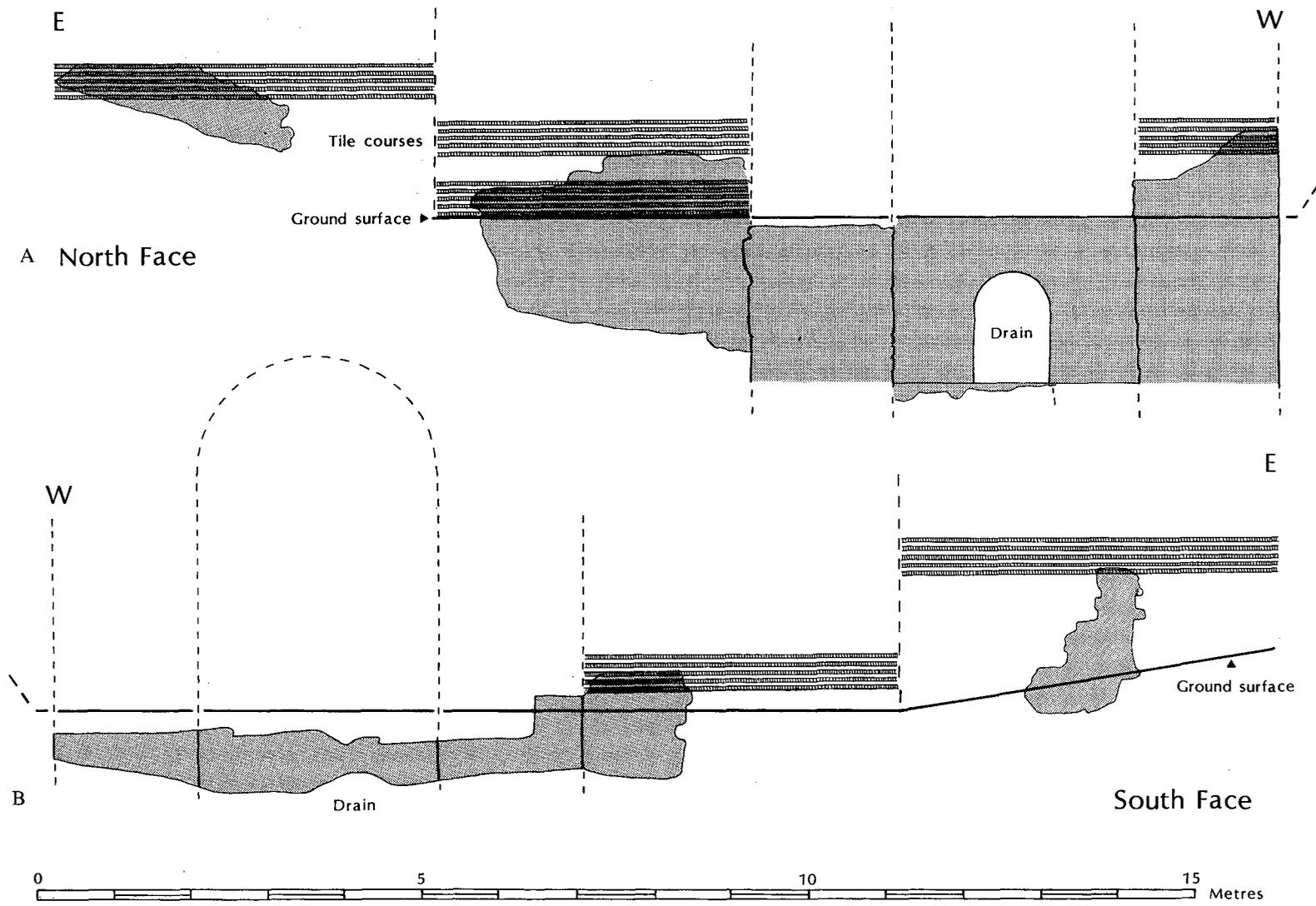


Fig. 55 Area E. Reconstruction of elevations: A. Inside face of the defences; B. Outside face of the defences.

the occupation surface had been created or the builders were already certain where the occupation level inside the defences would be when they rendered the masonry. This level corresponds to the top of the threshold block (1044) at the northern entrance to the gate-passage, the change to superstructure on the preserved eastern face of the gate's western foundation (1225) and the bottom of the preserved east face of the gate-passage (Fig. 55A). The ground-level immediately outside the gate is probably represented by the layer of tiles (1061), hard up against the outer face of the eastern gate foundation and lay probably just below the first brick course in the adjacent section of curtain-wall (Figs 49, 55B). However, the outside of the foundations for the south wall of the western gate foundation had been rendered even though this face would have been below ground-level after the completion of building work and the raising of the ground surface above the drain (Figs 52G, 55B). Probably, the lime-mortar facing, which survived on the outer face of the curtain-wall (1102) immediately east of the gate, would also have been below ground-level when the gate was in use (Figs 52I, 55B). Consequently, the rendering of the outside of the gate and the curtain must have occurred before the final levelling up of the ground surface outside the gate had been carried out. To the east of the gate, silty clay had been packed back against the outer face of the curtain to raise the ground-level and, as the wall ascended the hillside, the berm must have followed the wall upwards until, at the eastern end of the area, it was *c.* 1.0 m higher than ground-level in front of the gate.

The massive north/south foundations probably supported the sides of an arched vault over the gate-passage (Fig. 55B). Presumably the northern side of the gate, between the projecting north/south foundations, was infilled with mortared rubble, either side of the drain, as was the corresponding space south of the central foundation and between the southern projections of both north/south gate foundations. The gate-chamber measured 4.70 m in length and was 3.10 m wide. Probably it was closed on the northern side by a double-winged door and by another double-winged door or by a portcullis at its southern entrance. The absence of wear or wheel-ruts on the stone (1044) laid across the north side of the central foundation suggests that the gate was not regularly used by vehicles.<sup>20</sup> No flanking tower was found to the east of the gate and the steep ascent of the curtain-wall to the west would have made such a provision impossible. It must have been a tower-gate, at least two storeys high. No doubt, as was certainly the case at the east gate, it also had a tiled roof.<sup>21</sup> The gate was sufficiently wide to have had a pair of arrow-slots at first-floor level and a pair of windows for the second floor.<sup>22</sup> However, the slight projection of the gate structure of only 2.10 m beyond the curtain would have allowed for only single arrow-slits or windows on the outer west and east sides of the gate at first- and second-floor level: probably enfilading fire along the curtain was considered unnecessary given the steep approach to the fortifications on either side of the gate (Plate I).<sup>23</sup>

Under the central foundation, the drain silted up almost to the top of its vertical sides, by which time it could no longer have functioned efficiently. It is unlikely that it would have been required just to prevent water, draining down the valley, from undermining the foundations of the gate.<sup>24</sup> It is more likely that the drain was built to discharge waste-water supplied by an aqueduct. Possibly, the Roman aqueduct was repaired and diverted south into the early Byzantine defences.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Compare the Roman gate where wheel-ruts were incised into the floor of the gate-chamber to channel vehicles away from the sides of the gate-chamber, Area C, p. 90.

<sup>21</sup> See Area S, p. 233.

<sup>22</sup> On the reasons for suggesting arrow-slots for the lower level and windows for the second storey, see ch. 2, p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Unlike the larger east gate, the south gate may have only had two storeys but it remains equally possible, particularly given its massive foundations, that it was the same height as the other towers and the east gate, where three floors are considered likely. For further discussion of the defences see ch. 2, pp. 39–40.

<sup>24</sup> Had this been its primary function, it is unlikely to have been blocked at the beginning of Period 3. Given the rate at which water is absorbed by the porous soil, it is improbable that water would have flowed down the valley in such quantity as to undermine the foundations, see ch. 1, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> None of the early Byzantine buildings excavated would seem to have been supplied by piped water. However, on the north side of the Roman city, a ceramic aqueduct pipe was found coming south but cut into a soil build-up above the Roman *cardo*, immediately to the west of the baths. This suggests that this aqueduct brought water south at a time when this road was no longer in use, possibly therefore after the destruction of the late Roman city and during the early Byzantine period: Poulter (1983), 96.

**PERIOD 3: THE SECOND PHASE OF EARLY BYZANTINE OCCUPATION (Fig. 50)**

At the beginning of Period 3, the vaulted continuation of the drain, which must have abutted the north side of the central foundation, was robbed and the hole backfilled with a mixed dump of tile, architectural fragments (SF 3218, 3191), and burnt fragments of mud-wall as well as iron-working slag and pieces of vitrified hearth-lining (1086). Beneath the central foundation, the drain was backfilled with stone and rubble, a deposit which contained a fine copper-alloy fibula of sixth-century date (SF 3293). A clay surface, abutting the north side of the central foundation, either formed a secondary floor for the north end of the gate or, more probably, represented a make-up level for paving which was subsequently robbed.

East of the gate a deposit of silty clay and rubble (1081) was dumped over the demolished remains of the Period 2 hearth and was covered by a black greasy dump of clay (1036), which formed a make-up deposit for a second occupation level 1.0–1.20 m above the Period 2 surface. Although the primary clay and rubble contained no finds, the black clay make-up, which closely resembled the fill within the drain, was similarly rich in the variety and quantity of small-finds it contained.<sup>26</sup>

At a distance of *c.* 6.0 m east of the gate, a roughly-built retaining wall of earth and limestone blocks was constructed against the east slope, at the point of junction between the two sections of curtain-wall.<sup>27</sup>

A small rectangular hearth (1091), +0.60 in length, 0.45 m wide, and 0.22 m deep, was inserted into the occupation surface. It extended into the northern section. Its sides were burnt red by intense heat and it contained pure white ash and charcoal. Copper-alloy casting waste from the occupation surface immediately east of the hearth probably denotes its function. The only other feature of note was a small pit, 0.14 m in diameter and 0.25 m deep, also cut into the clay surface (1036). It contained grape seeds.

A layer of charcoal and ash (1020) covered the occupation surface north of the curtain-wall (1102). The retaining wall, its stones burnt red by the heat (1009), collapsed to the west and sealed the primary destruction deposit. Timber beams of Turkey oak had fallen and burnt upon the clay floor. Probably they came either from an upper storey of the gate-tower or else represent the remains of a timber gate.<sup>28</sup>

**Dating**

*Pottery.* This occupation level was used to date the pottery.<sup>29</sup>

*Coins.* From the make-up level (1036), 268/270 (Cat. No. 132), indeterminate second/third century (Cat. No. 83).

*Finds.* A copper-alloy fibula (SF 3293), dated 550/600, from the backfilled mouth of the drain (1086).

**Discussion**

Period 3 followed Period 2 apparently without intermission. A date late in the sixth century would seem most likely. The iron slag and hearth-lining dumped into the trench, probably dug to rob the continuation of the drain north of the gate, was so similar to the debris from the Period 2 hearth,

<sup>26</sup> Bone pins (Cat. Nos 37, 41, 56, 103, 104, 105, 167) and a bone needle (Cat. No. 33), 2 coins (see below, dating for Period 3), gold leaf, probably appliqué decoration for a box (SF 3182), beads in glass and semi-precious stones and a glass bracelet (Cat. Nos 38, 44 and 57), 3 iron knife-blades (SF 3211, 3250, 3251), nails including 8 large nails Type N/1 (SF 3014, 3154, 3169, 3183, 3186, 3214, 3217, 3219), 3 Type N/5 (SF 3128, 3199, 3267), 1 Type N/6 (SF 3093), a padlock bolt (SF 3212), as well as fragments of vessel glass, pottery, and small fragments of copper alloy and corroded iron.

<sup>27</sup> The collapsed remains of this wall (1009) covered the occupation level. The surviving remnant of the wall, after its destruction by fire, was robbed in Period 4 by RT 1242.

<sup>28</sup> Identification of the timbers was made by Dr C. Salisbury.

<sup>29</sup> As noted below, this period probably dates to the sixth century. However, erring on the side of caution, pottery types (which were not residual) from contexts belonging to this period were dated *c.* 450/600.

immediately east of the gate, that it seems likely that the remains of the latter were used to backfill the robbing-hole. Moreover, the greasy clay, dumped to the east of the gate as make-up for the Period 3 occupation surface, closely resembles the Period 2 drain-fill and probably came from the demolition of the drain and was perhaps dumped to level the surface if the underlying rubble deposited over the Period 2 surface represents spoil thrown up during the robbing of the drain. It therefore seems very likely that the robbing of the drain and the construction of the Period 3 occupation level were carried out at the same time.

Even if the drain had been clogged by debris and was no longer serviceable, it is curious that so much effort was expended on its demolition. At Diocletianopolis (Hisar), a vaulted drain, emerging from the city beneath the curtain-wall, was deliberately blocked in the sixth century. It is possible that there was a concern that, in the event of an attack, an enemy might gain access to the city through the drain-system.<sup>30</sup> Conceivably, the same anxiety explains the blocking of the drain with debris and the demolition of the continuation of the drain to the north of the central foundation. Moreover, if, as seems likely, the drain had been constructed to discharge waste-water supplied to the site, the aqueduct, even if it had functioned in Period 2, was probably no longer used in this period.

The hearth north of the curtain-wall indicates that the area continued to be used for industrial purposes, although iron-working appears to have been replaced by the casting of copper-alloy.

This period ended in destruction and the collapse of the retaining wall; no attempt was subsequently made to repair the defences.

#### PERIOD 4: POST-MEDIEVAL ROBBING OF THE DEFENCES (Fig. 50)

To the west and east of the area, trenches indicate that the curtain-wall's foundations have been deeply robbed (Fig. 5). No doubt the use of large limestone blocks in the construction of the gate deterred attempts to demolish its foundations. However, a robber-trench (1018) had removed the wall-curtain foundations between the surviving western and eastern sections of wall (Fig. 49). Its fill contained a human skull.<sup>31</sup> Robbing here, where the two sections of curtain met, may have been easier and encouraged a concerted assault on the foundations. To the north, a robber-trench (1242), visible in the northern section, continued north of the area, following the remains of the Period 3 wall built against the hillside. Robber spoil of mortar and rubble (1025) covered the surviving masonry and the collapsed remains of the revetting wall (1009). Rubble and powdered mortar (1050) were used to backfill the north side of the gate following robbing. Late trenches (1241, 1243) were subsequently cut to rob the superstructure above the north/south gate foundations (1225, 1110).

#### Dating

*Pottery.* The fill of RT 1018 produced sherds of white-painted pottery of post-medieval date.

#### Discussion

After the destruction at the end of Period 3, there is no sign that the area was again used for occupation.<sup>32</sup> The robbing of the curtain-wall foundations and probably the superstructure of the gate can be assigned to the post-medieval period.

<sup>30</sup> Madzharov (1993), 100.

<sup>31</sup> Whether ancient or not is unknown. Given the fate of one individual during the robbing of the Small Basilica, a post-medieval date for this gruesome find is not improbable, see Area K, p. 183.

<sup>32</sup> However, had the gate-structure been used in the Slav or medieval periods, no evidence is likely to have survived post-medieval robbing. Only immediately north and east of the gate, along the curtain-wall, is it certain that no occupation occurred later than Period 3.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# AREA F : THE LARGE BASILICA

### Summary

*A road, buildings, and occupation levels, dating from the third to fifth centuries were identified below a three-aisled, early Byzantine basilica. A Slav grubenhaus (ninth/tenth centuries A.D.), with pots in situ on its floor, was found immediately to the north of the church and three post-medieval grubenhäuser were also located, at least one of which, built over the robbed foundations of the southern wall of the basilica, was destroyed by fire.*

### INTRODUCTION (Fig. 56)

The most extensive, high-resistance anomaly apparent in the geophysical survey suggested the presence of a rectangular building, orientated west/east and centrally located within the early Byzantine defences, on the eastern side of the plateau (Fig. 5).<sup>1</sup> Preliminary excavation in 1986 uncovered, immediately below topsoil, an undisturbed destruction deposit overlying a brick floor within the nave of a basilica. The area examined (23 m west/east and 10 m north/south) contained the central and eastern end of the nave, the chancel and, east of the apse, a rubble spread dumped during post-medieval robbing. In 1987, before the destruction deposit was removed, the area was extended by 10 m to the west to examine the remainder of the nave and the narthex. The area was also increased by 5 m to the south and for the full length of the building to include the south aisle; to the north, the section was taken back by 5 m to uncover the north aisle from the new west section as far east as a post-medieval *grubenhaus* (3033), which had cut deeply through the foundations of the basilica at its north-eastern corner. Although the new area encompassed the main structure of the church, in 1989 a further extension (12 by 8 m) was made on the south side of the basilica to excavate an annexe, attached to the south aisle, and another (4 by 4 m) was required, that same year, for the full examination of a Slav *grubenhaus*, identified in 1988 hard up against the northern section. During the final season in 1989 a cutting was made across the width of the church to examine construction levels for the basilica and earlier deposits. As work progressed, during the last three seasons of excavation in this area, the 'Holmes boom' was used to record the remains of the basilica (Plate XXII).<sup>2</sup>

### PERIOD 1: OCCUPATION, PREDATING THE BASILICA (Figs 57–58)

A section, 2 m wide and 18.30 m long, was cut from the northern side of RT 3100 (which had robbed the south wall of the basilica) and as far as the northern section (Fig. 56). The foundations

<sup>1</sup> See ch. 16, p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> It was fortunate that this procedure was carried out. The Veliko Turnovo museum omitted to cover the basilica's floor during the winter of 1988/9 and the bricks were shattered and destroyed by frost before the 1989 season when the southern annexe, where no traces of a brick floor had survived post-medieval robbing, was photographed with the 'boom'. On the 'Holmes Boom' and its use at Nicopolis, see *The Journal of Field Archaeology* (forthcoming).

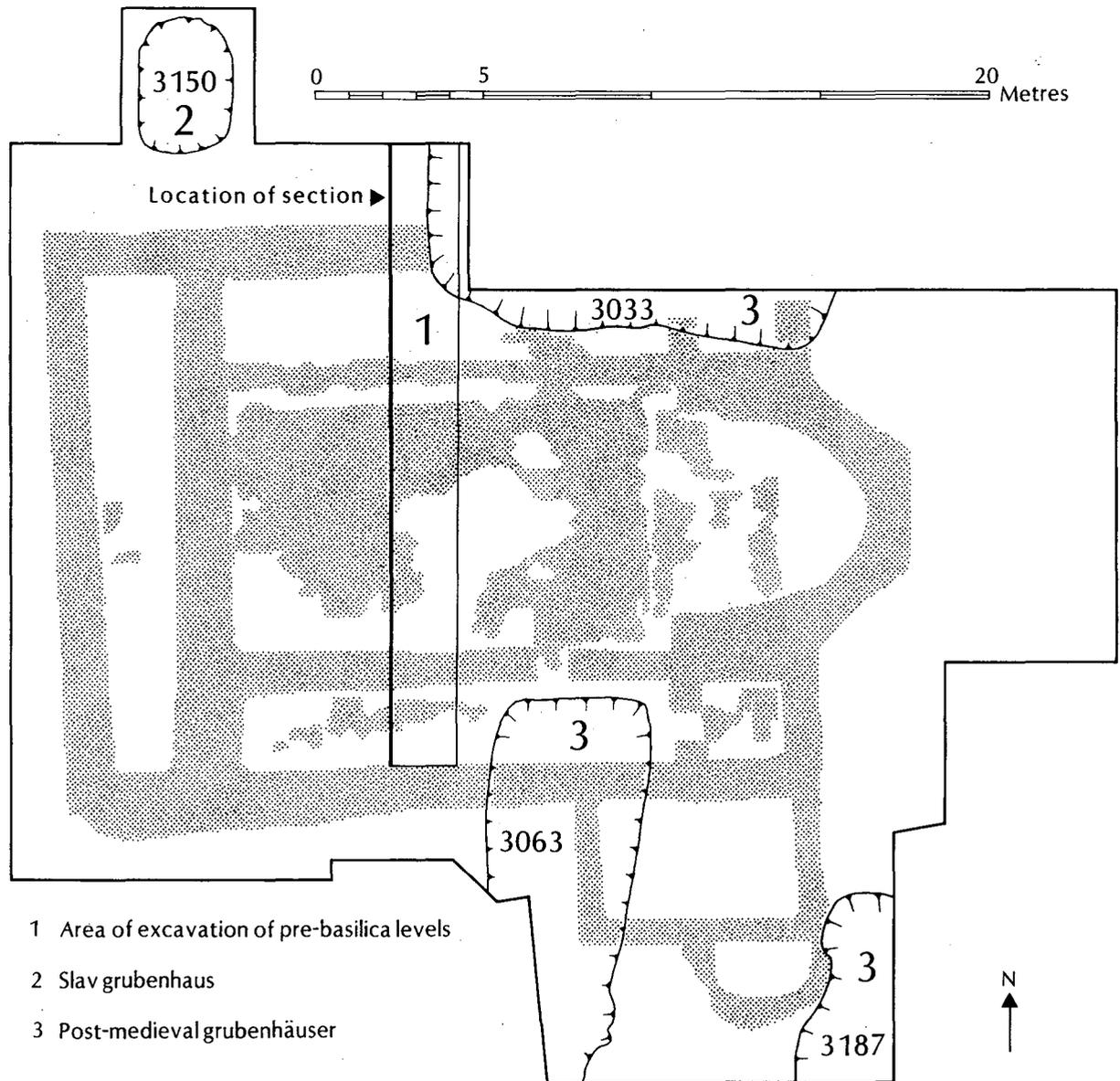


Fig. 56 Area F. Location diagram, showing the areas of excavation, Slav and post-medieval occupation.

for the northern and southern stylobates (3306, 3106) and the robber-trench (3072), which had removed the foundation for the north wall of the basilica (3081) to a depth of 1.60 m, divided the cutting into four sections; deposits beneath the south aisle (A), beneath the nave (B), beneath the north aisle (C), and north of the basilica (D). Consequently, it was not always possible to equate activity within one section with any other. Although stratigraphic relationships can be inferred (e.g. C1/D1), particularly for higher deposits and those within adjacent portions of the cutting, context numbers used for each division of the section have not been amalgamated in the following discussion, even when they are here considered to represent the same level.

The section across the nave was excavated to a depth of 0.60 m to examine in detail the construction deposits, except on the south side; here the cutting was continued down to a depth of 1.30 m below the basilica's floor to reach the northern continuation of the cobbled surface which had been discovered below the south aisle, where excavation was stopped at a depth of 1.25 m below the paving of the basilica. Here, the foundations of the southern stylobate (3106) were intact and it proved necessary to reduce the width of the excavation. Consequently, at the bottom of the cutting, it was only possible to expose a limited part of the cobbled surface either side of the foundation (Fig. 59/1). Beneath the north aisle and beyond the basilica, it was safe to excavate to a depth of 1.65 m for the full width of the cutting. Nowhere did excavation reach natural.

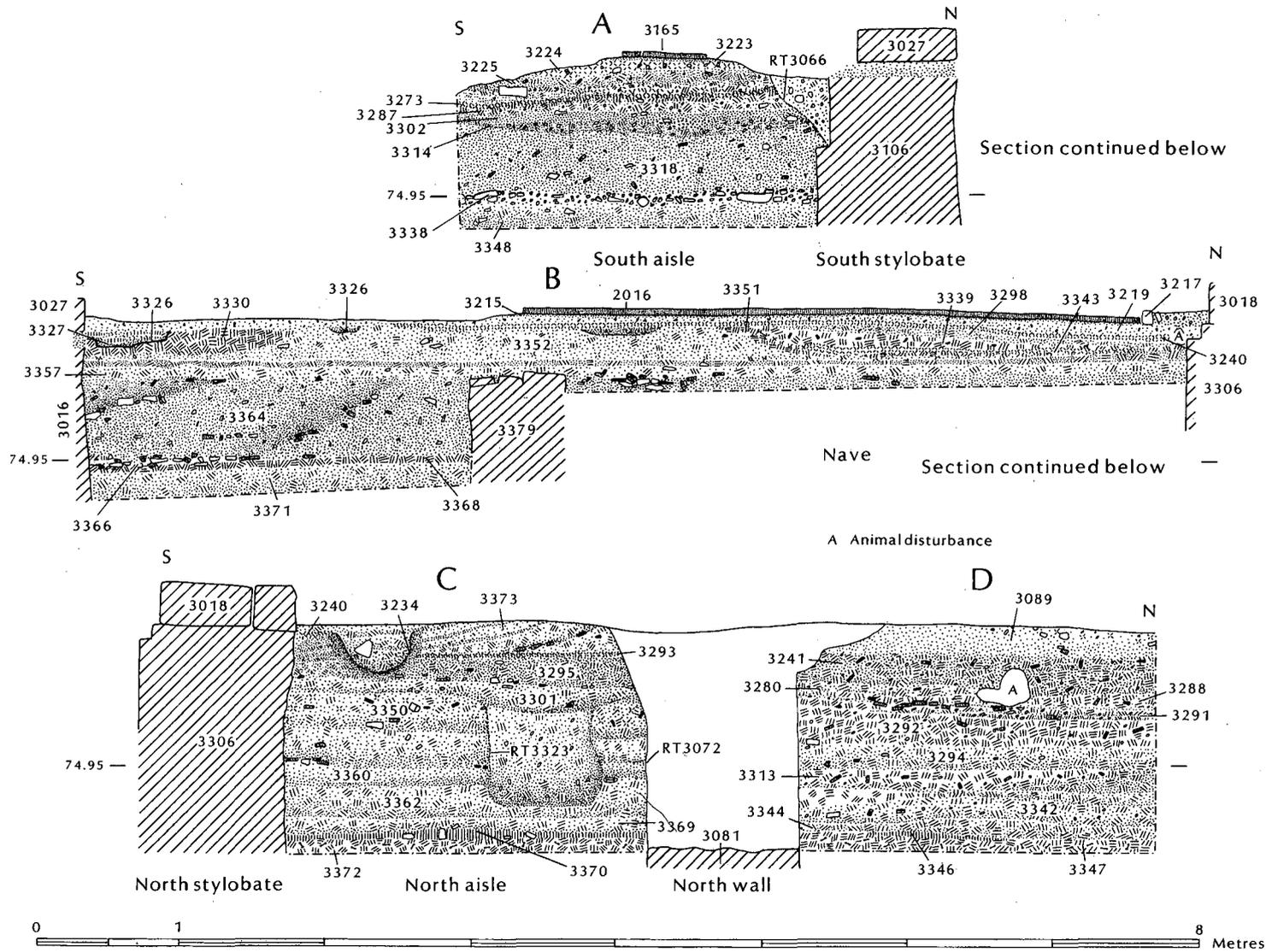


Fig. 57 Area F. Western section of the north/south cutting.

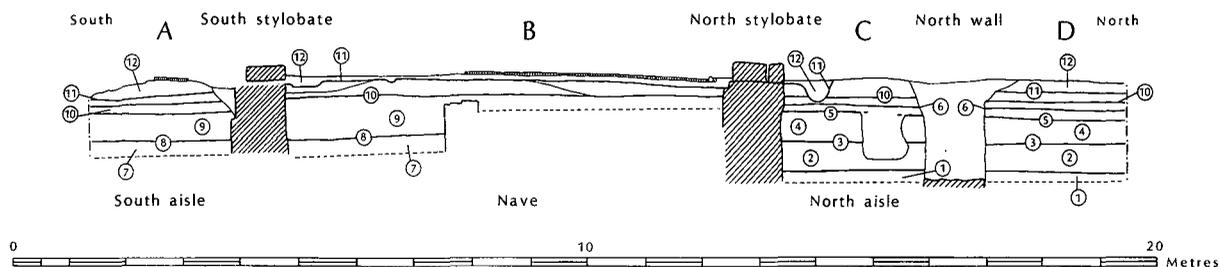


Fig. 58 Area F. Interpretative section, west side of the north/south cutting.

### **C1/D1. The earliest deposits beneath the north aisle and north of the basilica**

The lowest excavated deposit (3372/3347) comprised a dump of dark grey clay, containing slag, pottery, and glass, covered by a degraded spread of plaster (3370/3346) which continued, patchily, beyond the north wall foundation.

### **C2/D2. A make-up deposit below C3/D3 floor**

A spread of silty clay (3369/3344), included slag, lumps of plaster, metal fragments, and worked bone. There followed another layer of uncompacted dump material, a silty clay with pottery and animal bones (3362/3342) and including pieces of painted plaster and fragments of mud-wall; this was taken to be either construction debris or the remains of a demolished building, used as a make-up deposit.

### **C3/D3. Occupation surface, beneath the north aisle and north of the basilica**

A surface of clay containing fragments of burnt mud-wall (3360/3313) was covered, below the north aisle, by a thin layer of mortar which was cut by the robber-trench (RT 3323) which had largely taken out the foundations (3320) of the later building. Little survived of this surface and no traces of a contemporary structure were identified, but it seems likely that this was an internal floor.

### **C4/D4. Dump deposits beneath the north aisle and north of the basilica**

There followed successive deposits of silty clay mixed with refuse of bone, tile, limestone fragments, pottery, and decomposed mud-walls (3350/3294). Since a high proportion of the pottery was residual, this deposit probably represented the redeposition of material used as make-up for the next occupation surface.

### **C5/D5. Occupation-level and building, beneath the north aisle and north of the basilica (Fig. 59/1)**

A clay spread (3292) with pot, bone, and small-finds formed the make-up for a floor surface (3291), cut by RT 3323, which had robbed out all but a fragment of a wall foundation (3320), built of roughly-shaped limestone blocks bonded with soil.<sup>3</sup> The robber-trench entered the cutting at its

<sup>3</sup> The clay make-up and the floor (3292/3291) contained 5 iron fragments, part of a ceramic wheel from a toy, glass, 2 nails (Type N/1), 2 fragments of a small iron chain (SF 8183 and 8185), and a worked piece of antler (Cat. No. 196).

north-east corner and then turned at an oblique angle, before disappearing into the western section. It would seem that RT 3323 robbed the foundations for the south-eastern corner of a building which continued west of the section.

#### **C6/D6. Occupation-level, beneath the north aisle and north of the basilica**

At the north end of the cutting, the foundations of the building (3320) were robbed before another make-up deposit (3288), rich in large pottery fragments, was dumped across the floor of the building and underlay a clay deposit with a pebbled surface (3280) which continued south over the backfilled robber-trench (RT 3323). North of the basilica, there was a north/south ditch, 0.60 m wide and 0.33 m deep, cut through the pebble floor and partly covered by a stone slab – probably a drain. Beneath the north aisle, a silty clay (3301) accumulated in the depression left after the robber-trench had been backfilled.

#### **B7. Deposits predating the road, below the southern end of the nave**

The lowest level excavated comprised a fine silty clay soil (3371) overlain by a clay spread (3368), with no structural features, but which was probably a dump or levelling deposit.

#### **A8/B8. The roadway and wall under the south aisle and below the southern end of the nave** (Fig. 59/1)

Beneath the south aisle, a silty clay deposit (3348) was covered by a compact layer of sandstone blocks (3338) which formed a roughly metalled surface. This was cut by the foundation for the southern stylobate (3106), continued north below the nave (3366) and halted abruptly 1.0 m short of a rough wall built from unmortared limestone blocks (3379), 0.65 m wide, orientated north-east by south-west and preserved 0.45 m high. Too rough to have been an internal floor, this rubble layer is likely to have been a road surface. It was rutted and had been repaired with cobbles. The northern edge of the road would seem to have run parallel with the rough stone wall (3379) but was separated from it by a clay verge (3368) formed by the top of B7. North of the wall (3379), at the limit of excavation, a spread of limestone blocks and tile fragments comprised the remains of a destruction level which, though truncated by the primary levelling of Period 2, extended as far as the northern stylobate, the foundations for which had cut through it. The presence of burnt fragments of mud-wall within the debris, which probably came from the superstructure of the wall (3379), indicates that the building to which it belonged had been destroyed by fire.

#### **A9/B9. Abandonment: silting over the roadway below the south aisle and beneath the southern end of the nave**

Above the roadway, there accumulated a deposit of dark brown, silty clay (3318/3364), 0.50 m deep, including charcoal and small tile fragments. It sloped down to the south from the top of the wall (3379) and was separated by a dipping line of tile fragments from a higher deposit of clayey silt of similar composition but in which fragments of tile and limestone were smaller (never larger than 7 cm in size) and in which charcoal was less frequent. The deposit would seem to represent the accumulation of silts, building up over the abandoned road and derived from the natural solution of exposed mud-walls which, on the north side, was supplied by the erosion of the superstructure of the wall (3379). The higher silts were finer wash deposits, suggesting a slower rate of deposition which probably came from mud-walls of other buildings to the south of the roadway. This accumulation built up at least to a depth of 0.45–0.55 m: during subsequent levelling for the basilica (Period 2), this deposit and the top of the surviving wall (3379), were truncated.

**Dating***C1/D1*

*Pottery.* The lowest dump deposit (3372/3347, 3370), below the northern side of the basilica, produced little pottery, none of which could be dated later than c. 200/250. In particular, there were no rolled-rim cooking-pot lids or ledge-rim bowls which became common after the middle of the third century.

*Date:* 200/250.

*C2/D2*

*Pottery.* Contexts 3344 and 3362/3342 produced a homogeneous group of pottery including ledge-rim bowls [358, 367] and rolled-rim lids [257] and one piece of amphora [1059].

*Date:* 250/350, probably c. 350.

*C3/D3*

*Pottery.* This level contained ledge-rim bowls [345, 370, 354, and others] and rolled-rim lids [257] so was certainly later than c. 250. It also produced a piece of amphora [1059] dating to the mid-fourth century or later.

*Coin.* 393/395 (Cat. No. 484) was found on the occupation surface (3360) but this was probably intrusive; the overlying deposit (C4/D4) appears to date earlier than the end of the fourth century.

*Date:* 250/350, probably c. 350.

*C4/D4*

*Pottery.* This level contained a generally homogeneous group of ledge-rim bowls [367, 371, 385], rolled-rim lids [257], carinated bowls with angular rims [456, 472], ledge-rim cooking-pots [35, 40] and thickened-rim cooking-pots [82, 85], all dated 250–350. Also present were two Ware 96 amphorae [1051, 1052], dating to 250–350. Notable is the high proportion of residual pottery.

*Coins.* c. 140/161 (Cat. No. 108) and 331/334 (Cat. No. 186).

*Date:* c. 350.

*C5/D5*

No pottery or coins came from this occupation surface but, since it postdates the make-up layer (C4/D4) and predates the final surface on the north side of the cutting (C6/D6), it can be reasonably assigned to the second half of the fourth century.

*Date:* c. 350/400.

*C6/D6*

*Pottery.* This produced a fairly homogeneous assemblage which included cooking-pots with flat ledge-rims and internal lips [158, 163], red-slip bowls with ledge-rims and upturned edges, concave-rim lids [249], together with Ware 14 concave-rim lids [330], and straight flaring-neck jars, all of which date later than 350 and probably later than 400.

*Coins.* From the robber-trench (3323) which took out Wall 3320, 392/395 (Cat. No. 485); from the subsequent cobbled surface (3280), 364/378 (Cat. No. 426).

*Date:* early fifth century.

**B7**

*Pottery.* Contexts 3371 and 3368 contained rolled-rim lids [259] and hooked-rim lids [244], together with ledge-rim bowls [358], dating to c. 250–300.

*Coin.* From Context 3371, 210/213 (Cat. No. 115).

*Date:* c. 250/300.

**A8/B8**

*Pottery.* The silty clay (3348) beneath the road contained sherds of Ware 14, including pattern-burnished types. The road surface (3338/3366) produced types in Ware 14, including rounded, thickened-rim cooking-pots with a groove [130], Ware 14 amphorae/water-jars [312] all of fifth-century date, as well as residual pottery, especially from the lower part of the metalled surface, probably contaminated by B7.

*Coins.* From the silty clay (3348) beneath the road, 318/320 (Cat. No. 177) and 347/348 (Cat. No. 232). From the cobbled road (3338/3366), 218/222 (Cat. No. 39), 253/260 (Cat. No. 125), 335/340 (Cat. No. 200), 347/348 (Cat. No. 223), 348/361 (Cat. Nos 279, 283, 301, 317, 328), 355/361 (Cat. Nos 331, 348, 350), 364/378 (Cat. Nos 398, 413, 414, 417, 418).

*Date:* c. 375/450.

**A9/B9**

*Pottery.* Little pottery came from this level but Ware 14 amphora/water-jars and an amphora [1099] of fifth-century date were present.

*Coins.* From the build-up of dissolved mud over the roadway (3318/3364), 326/328 (Cat. No. 175), 348/361 (Cat. No. 303), 355/361 (Cat. No. 329), 408/419 (Cat. No. 524).

*Date:* c. 400/450.

**Discussion**

The lowest deposits excavated (B7 and C1/D1) date to the third century when it would seem the area was used for dumping although, given the limited area examined, it remains uncertain whether there were buildings in the vicinity or whether the area was simply used for the disposal of rubbish from the Roman city. The first occupation-level, only identified on the north side of the cutting (C3/D3), dated to about the middle of the fourth century and the second with its building (C5/D5) must have been in use shortly afterwards. This building and the subsequent third occupation surface (C6/D6) may well have been contemporary with the other wall and roadway (A8/B8) at the southern end of the cutting, in use from the late fourth and into the early fifth century. The roadway is of singular interest. Although, at this depth, the area available for examination was severely restricted, it produced a remarkable number of mid- to late fourth-century coins, suggesting a high rate of coin-loss: the coins were spread within the rubble and appear to represent individual finds, not a dispersed coin-hoard. In this respect the surface resembled the cobbled road leading south from the Roman city, but it may be significant that here fifth-century issues are absent; the latest coins were five issues of 364/378.<sup>4</sup> It is tempting to suggest that this abrupt termination in the coin series may have been connected with the Gothic wars; perhaps the buildings were no longer used for habitation. Even if this is true, the pottery from the roadway suggests that the area continued in use well into the fifth century.

<sup>4</sup> For the road coming south from the Roman gate, see Area B, pp. 74–5 and Area C, p. 104.

The successive phases of occupation and the depth to which occupation levels built up clearly indicates that the area was in intensive use, certainly from the mid- to late fourth century. The road was clearly not connected with the trackway which led south from the city towards the river.<sup>5</sup> It presumably served what may well have been an extensive area of settlement and perhaps agricultural buildings spread across the plateau.<sup>6</sup> The building (3379) was destroyed by fire and the road abandoned. The accumulation of silts over the roadway (A9/B9) denotes a period of dereliction. It seems likely that this abandonment occurred after the destruction of the Roman city towards the middle of the fifth century.<sup>7</sup> The depth of build-up is of little help in gauging how long the period of abandonment lasted: an exposed mud-wall could dissolve rapidly and create such a deposit over a period of months rather than years.

## PERIOD 2: THE BASILICA

The cutting across the nave identified three successive phases in the construction of the basilica. These will be considered first, then other aspects of the building programme and plan of the basilica before the evidence for its internal arrangements and decoration are described.

### **The construction of the basilica: primary building activity (Figs 57–58)**

Over the build-up of dissolved mud-walls below the south aisle, where the silt deposits had not accumulated to the same height as within the nave, a dump of silty clay and rubble (3314) was used to level up the ground surface. Below the nave, levelling truncated the top of the earlier wall (3379) which was then covered by a dump of clayey silt, including sand and mortar fragments (3357). On the north side of the basilica, levelling also took place, removing topsoil almost down to the underlying occupation level (C6/D6). The compacted surface which overlay these deposits extended the full width of the cutting (A10, B10, C10, D10) and probably represents the initial construction level for the basilica.

Next, a dump of silty clay loam (3352) was thrown up into the area of the nave and was followed by a deposit of clay (3330/3351) which survived subsequent truncation where it covered the flanks of the earth mound. Probably, this pile of earth was upcast from foundation trenches dug for the north and south stylobates. On the north side of the nave, work continued on the construction of the northern stylobate: an uneven spread of mortar (3343) was deposited on the levelled surface and successive thin spreads of clayey silt mixed with tile fragments (3339), followed by a spread of silty clay mixed with redeposited burnt debris, sandstone and tile fragments and including worked limestone blocks (3298), was dumped across the north side of the nave. All these deposits were then levelled, truncating the top of the upcast mound. It was probably then that sand and pebbles (3302) were spread across the area of the south aisle, forming a make-up deposit for a clay surface (3287). Within the north aisle, the ground-level was also raised with a deposit of silty clay and stones (3295), overlain by a spread of mortar (3293), perhaps from the construction of the stylobate (3306) or the north wall foundation (3081). Above, successive layers of clay, stones, and tile fragments (3373), all tipping south, away from the north wall, were probably dumped into the gap between the two foundations. North of the church, a spread of silty clay (3241) appeared to represent an extension of the make-up deposit (3295) within the north aisle. This second construction surface extended the full width of the basilica.

<sup>5</sup> See Area E, p. 131.

<sup>6</sup> See Area K, pp. 178–9 and Area D, p. 120.

<sup>7</sup> See ch. 2, pp. 34–5.

**An intermediate phase in the construction of the basilica: ovens and timber structures (A11, B11, C11, D11) (Figs 57,58,59/2)**

The next stage in construction involved the use of liberal quantities of mortar which were spread across the levelled surface within the nave and extending into the north aisle (3240); the mortar also appeared within the south aisle (3273), where it was the first level to incline upwards towards the north, suggesting that, on this side of the basilica, the foundation for the southern stylobate (3106) had already been built. Work may well have begun upon the superstructure of the building.

After the construction of the foundations, it seems that building activity may have been temporarily suspended. Cut into the levelled upcast of clay (3330) and silty clay loam (3352) on the south side of the nave and the mortar (3240), which covered these deposits, there were rectangular-sectioned slots (which must have contained horizontal timbers) running close to, and slightly offset from, the west/east alignment of the southern stylobate. The slots were 0.06–0.11 m deep and 0.25 m wide. Three of them appeared to form a rectangular structure (3326), measuring 1.50 m north/south which, extending west of the excavation, measured no less than 1.20 m east/west. Within the cuts there were concentrations of decayed mortar from the mortar spread (3240) which must have fallen into the slots when wooden beams were removed. Another slot (3327), 0.20 m wide and 0.15 m deep, immediately south of 3326, and cut by it, presumably relates to an earlier and similar structure. It emerged from the western section and continued for 1.0 m east on the same alignment as the later structure as far as the *in situ* foundation (3106) for the southern stylobate. The slots were filled with a grey-brown silt with mortar and burnt specks but with no traces of charcoal which would have suggested that the timbers had been burnt *in situ*. Within the area of the south aisle, another beam-slot (3395), 0.20 m wide and, at most, 0.20 m deep, cut through the mortar spread (3273). It crossed the area from south-east to north-west and was cut by RT 3100, which robbed out the foundations for the southern basilica wall and by RT 3066 which had disturbed the southern face of the stylobate foundation.

On the north side of the basilica, there were no slots; but two trenches were found, one partly within the nave, the other within the area of the north aisle. One with vertical sides and a flat base (3234), at most 0.40 m wide, crossed through the cutting. Orientated north-east by south-west, the trench sloped up towards its south-west end, its terminal identified in plan within the north aisle and just west of the cutting's western section. This trench, at least 3.50 m in length, was traced north-east, widening slightly before being cut by the post-medieval *grubenhäuser* (3013). The south side of the cutting, within the aisle, had been revetted with sandstone blocks and the fill consisted of almost pure charcoal. Its sides were heavily burnt, particularly towards the top where they must have been subjected to intense heat. The second rectangular-sectioned trench (3276) was found in the nave. It cut the mortar spread (3240). Clearly visible in the southern section, it had a flat base and vertical sides and sloped upwards to a butt end 0.50 m west of the eastern baulk. Like the northern cut, its sides showed the effects of intense burning. Rather more can be inferred about this feature. A circular hole (3123) was excavated in the brick floor of the basilica down to a depth of 0.30–0.40 m, where the missing portion of the brick floor was found to have sunk into an underlying circular chamber, c. 1.50 by 1.10 m in size (Fig. 60; Plate XXII). The sides of this hole showed the same signs of scorching as the trench (3276) which continued east as far as the west side of the chamber and was visible as a shallow depression where the brick paving had subsided slightly into its fill which, at the bottom, comprised ash and charcoal.

Both features were evidently ovens. No slag or pottery was found in the chamber (3123) or in either of the flues and it seems unlikely that they served an industrial function; presumably, they were domestic ovens, perhaps used for baking bread.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For a similar structure with chamber and flue, although here above ground, see Area A, p. 62.

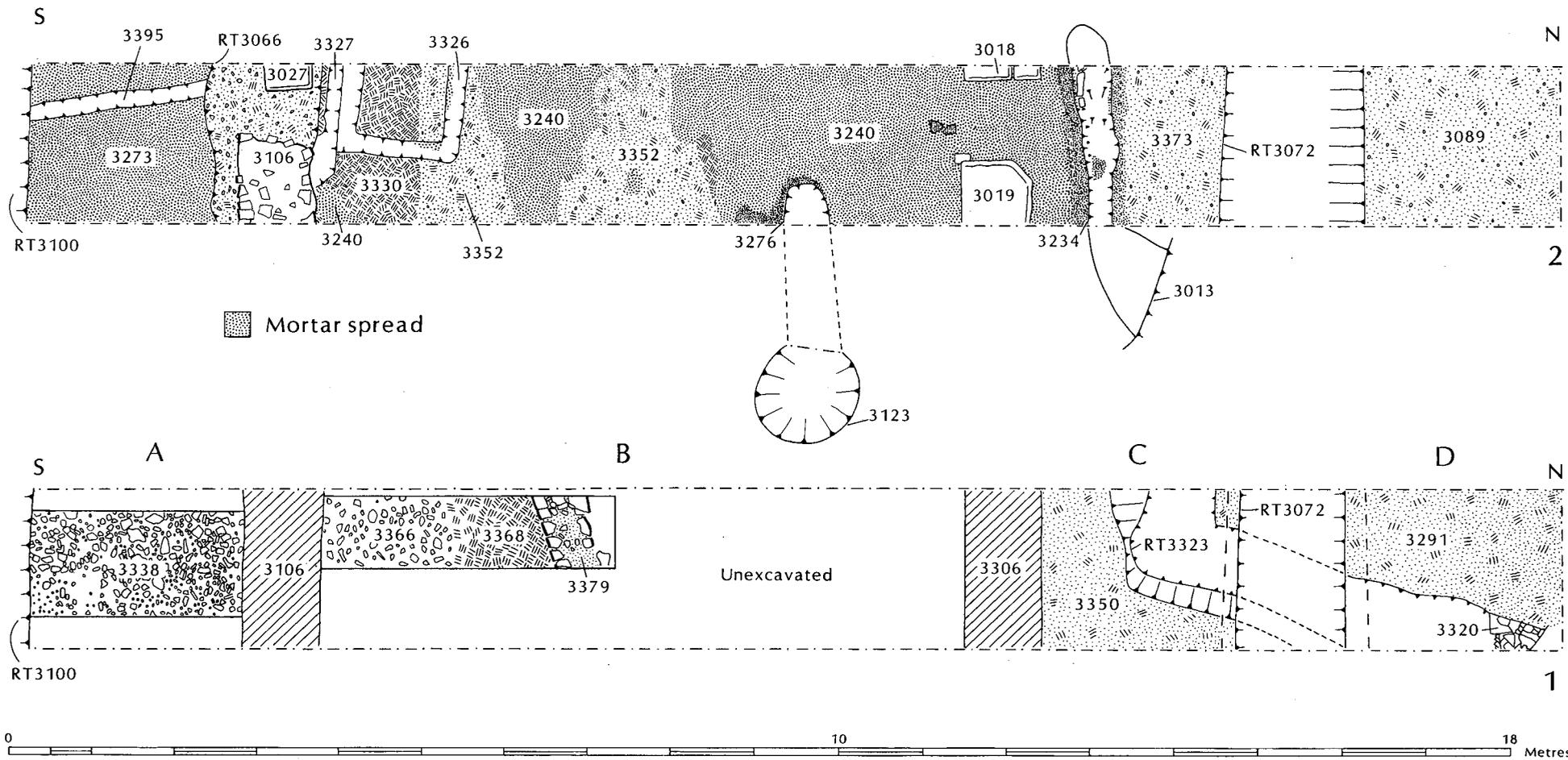


Fig. 59 Area F. The north/south cutting. 1 = A8/B8/C5/D5. 2 = A11/B11/C11/D11.

### The final phase of construction (A12/B12/C12/D12) (Figs 57–58)

The upper fills of the ovens and the fills of the beam-slots, within the south aisle and nave, contained the same silty clay with tile fragments which also formed the final make-up deposit across the nave (3219) and north of the basilica (3089). Beneath the south aisle, the sloping level of the preceding phase was raised by dumping clay with mortar and sandstone fragments (3225), followed by a compacted layer of mortar, tile and limestone debris (3224). Immediately above this and within the nave was a layer of clean yellow sand (3223/3215) which acted as bedding for the brick floor (3165/2016). This final phase of activity would seem to represent a continuous programme of building, during which the superstructure was completed and the floor was paved.

### The principal structure of the basilica (Fig. 60)

Nowhere did any of the walls survive, although most of the stylobate blocks for the northern colonnade and substantial portions of the brick floor remained *in situ* (Plate XXII). At the eastern end, the foundations were preserved in places almost to floor-level. However, to the west, the foundations had been quarried away, regularly to a depth of 1.70 m, and in places, to as deep as 2.40 m. The north-eastern side of the basilica had been badly disturbed by one post-medieval *grubenhau* (3033) and the foundations for the south wall had been cut by another (3063). The excavation method adopted was to identify the course of the walls by excavating the backfill of the robber-trenches to a depth of 0.60 to 1.0 m and then cutting sections at key points, particularly at junctions between separate foundations. The foundations for both the walls and the stylobates were trench-built with faces of roughly dressed limestone blocks, bonded with white mortar, and with a core of irregular blocks, bonded with the same limestone mortar. All the foundations for the main walls and stylobates were c. 1.10 m in width, except for the western ends of the apse, where they were 2.10 m wide, providing additional support, probably for a semi-dome over the apse.<sup>9</sup> Despite the thorough destruction of its superstructure, a coherent plan of the building was established and also salient aspects of its internal layout.

Overall, from the west wall of the narthex to the eastern apse, the basilica was 26.20 m in length and 17.18 m wide. The nave, from its west wall (3102/3103) to the chord of the apse, measured 16.50 m in length and was 7.85 m wide. The apse, 5.90 m in diameter, had a semicircular inner face and a polygonal exterior, forming three sides of an octagon. The northern and southern aisles were 2.50 m wide and the narthex 2.80 m deep. A rectangular room, measuring internally 2.50 by 2.50 m, flanked the south side of the apse. Two parallel north/south foundations, also 2.50 m apart, on the north side of the apse, indicate that there must have been a second chamber, replicating the arrangement at the east end of the south aisle. The foundations for both rooms were bonded into the foundation of the apse. Although the foundations themselves were well-constructed and tolerably well-aligned, the church narrows slightly towards the east and the west wall (3081/3093) of the narthex, as it continues north, is appreciably west of its true north/south alignment.

Abutting the east end of the south wall of the basilica, an annexe (7.50 by 4.85 m), with narrow foundations (3396/3270/3261) averaging 0.85 m in width, was itself butted by the remnants of a semicircular foundation (3388), perhaps an apsidal extension, largely robbed out by a deep pit (3387).

The foundations for the south wall of the narthex and south wall of the basilica were constructed on a continuous foundation (3093/3107), abutted on its north side by the foundation (3103) for the west wall of the nave. Although this demonstrates a structural sequence for the completion of the foundations, there is no reason to suspect that the dividing wall between nave and narthex was not part of the original plan. Similarly, the west wall (3396) of the annexe butts up against the south wall of the basilica but it is uncertain whether the annexe was a later addition: the slighter foundations suggest that it was not as high as the main walls of the church and the difference in load-bearing capacity between the foundations of the main church and those of the annexe may have been reason enough to provide the latter with separate foundations.

<sup>9</sup> See further, below pp. 157–8.

To the west of the basilica, there was probably another extension, attached to the outer wall of the narthex. At the north-west corner of the basilica, RT 3074 had taken out the junction between the west and north walls of the narthex to a depth of 1.32 m. Another shallow robber-trench (3112), 1.20 m wide but only 0.55 m deep, had totally removed a foundation which continued west and which had probably abutted the northern corner of the narthex.<sup>10</sup> A robber-trench (3144), 2.10 m wide and 0.75 m deep, was identified in the western section, north of the south-western corner of the narthex, the foundations for which had been robbed to a depth of 0.82 m. The fills of both RT 3112 and RT 3144 contained equal proportions of tile fragments and limestone chips, unlike those which followed the main walls of the church which contained only powdered mortar and limestone fragments. Probably the foundations for the structure were at least partly of brick construction. It is unlikely that such shallow foundations could have supported a substantial structure: an *exonarthex* would seem improbable. More likely, they supported the walls of an *atrium*. If so, the oblique angle, suggested for the alignment of the southern wall of the structure, may be explained by the need to avoid the steep slope to the south-west of the church (Fig. 5).

The stylobates for the northern and southern colonnades reached no higher than the paving of nave and aisles but supported rectangular and trapezoidal limestone slabs, all reused and no doubt salvaged from the Roman city.<sup>11</sup> The western end of the northern stylobate had been deeply robbed (RT 3103) but four of the bases (3098, 3018, 3019, 3021) remained *in situ* and two other probable bases (3022, 3023) had been dislodged during robbing and were found in the fill of RT 3017. On the upper surface of one of the *in situ* bases (3019), a circular area, 0.70 m in diameter, had been carefully pecked, probably to provide a more secure seating for its column-base.<sup>12</sup> The next base to the west (3018) comprised two stones laid side by side, presumably because the larger of the two was only 0.65 m wide and too narrow to support a column-base of similar size to that placed on Base 3019. The southern stylobate had been more extensively destroyed and only short sections (3106, 3183) were preserved to floor-level, no doubt protected by bases which were moved during subsequent robbing.<sup>13</sup> Two blocks (3027, 3028) were found in the fill of RT 3066, which followed the foundation, but another (3029) was still mortared to the eastern end of the stylobate and survived *in situ*, perched above the deeply-robbed foundations for the south side of the apse (Plate XXII).<sup>14</sup> The spacing of the *in situ* bases for the northern colonnade indicates an average intercolumniation of *c.* 2.20 m. This would allow for two additional bases east of 3021, the second of which corresponded to the position of the *in situ* base 3029 on the southern stylobate. Both the western ends of the stylobates had been deeply robbed but there is room for a seventh pair, as close to the west wall of the narthex as were the terminal bases at the eastern end of the stylobates (Fig. 61).

Nowhere does any section of the superstructure survive *in situ*, although a rubble spread east of the apse was probably the remains of a collapsed and heavily robbed wall; it suggests that the church was

<sup>10</sup> Although the corner of the narthex had been robbed to a level well below the point of junction with this robbed foundation, it would seem improbable that such a slight structure, at least at foundation level, would have been bonded into the west wall of the basilica. See above, the annexe and its separate foundations.

<sup>11</sup> Of the *in situ* bases, 3098, a trapezoidal limestone block has roughly chiselled edges and a smooth top: probably it had originally served as a road-slab. Base 3019 has a slot for a metal clamp on its southern edge which had been roughly filled with mortar. The northern of the two blocks used for Base 3018 had a clamp-hole on its northern face. Block 3021 was also clearly reused: it had a dowel-hole 4 cm in diameter, cut into its eastern side.

<sup>12</sup> A similar roughened surface on the raised stylobates in Basilica A at Philippi was probably intended to prevent movement of the column-bases: Lemerle (1945), 348.

<sup>13</sup> The central section of the stylobate (3106) is an appropriate location for a base replicating 3019 on the northern side of the nave. For a base over the eastern section (3183), see the following discussion of the number of bases and the intercolumniation.

<sup>14</sup> Block 3027 (1.35 by 0.60 and 0.25 m high) would seem singularly inappropriate as a base for a column. Its western side was flat but its eastern side was chamfered, forming a sloping surface with two small square holes, presumably for dowelling (each 2.5 by 2.5 cm) cut into its northern side. However, mortar, traces of which adhered to its top, may well have been used to level up the surface to support a column-base. 3028 (1.10 by 0.55 and 0.20 m high) would seem too small to have supported a column on its own; if it was so used, the base must have been widened by the addition of a second stone as happened in the case of Base 3018 on the northern stylobate.

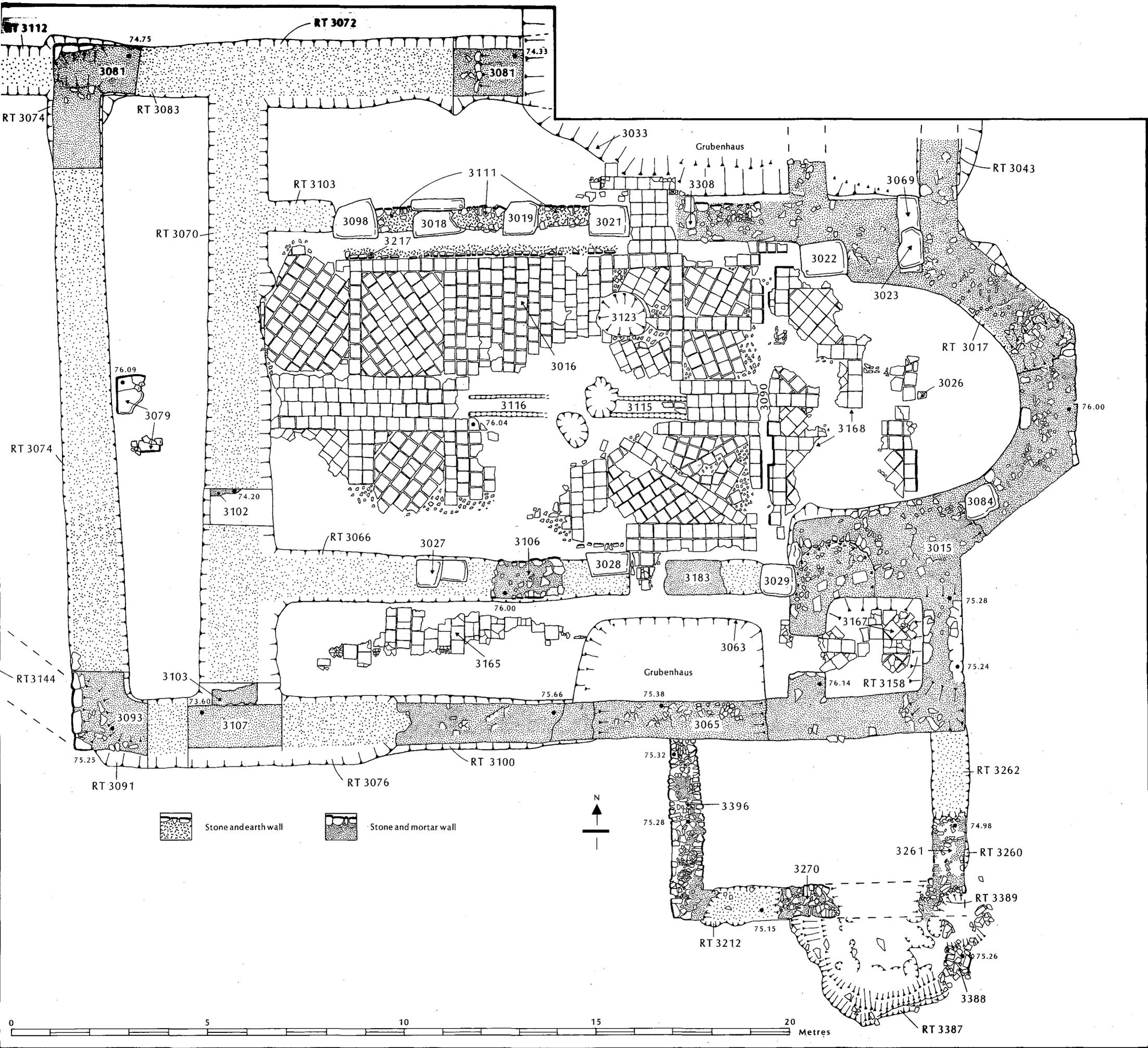


Fig. 60 Area F. The Large Basilica.



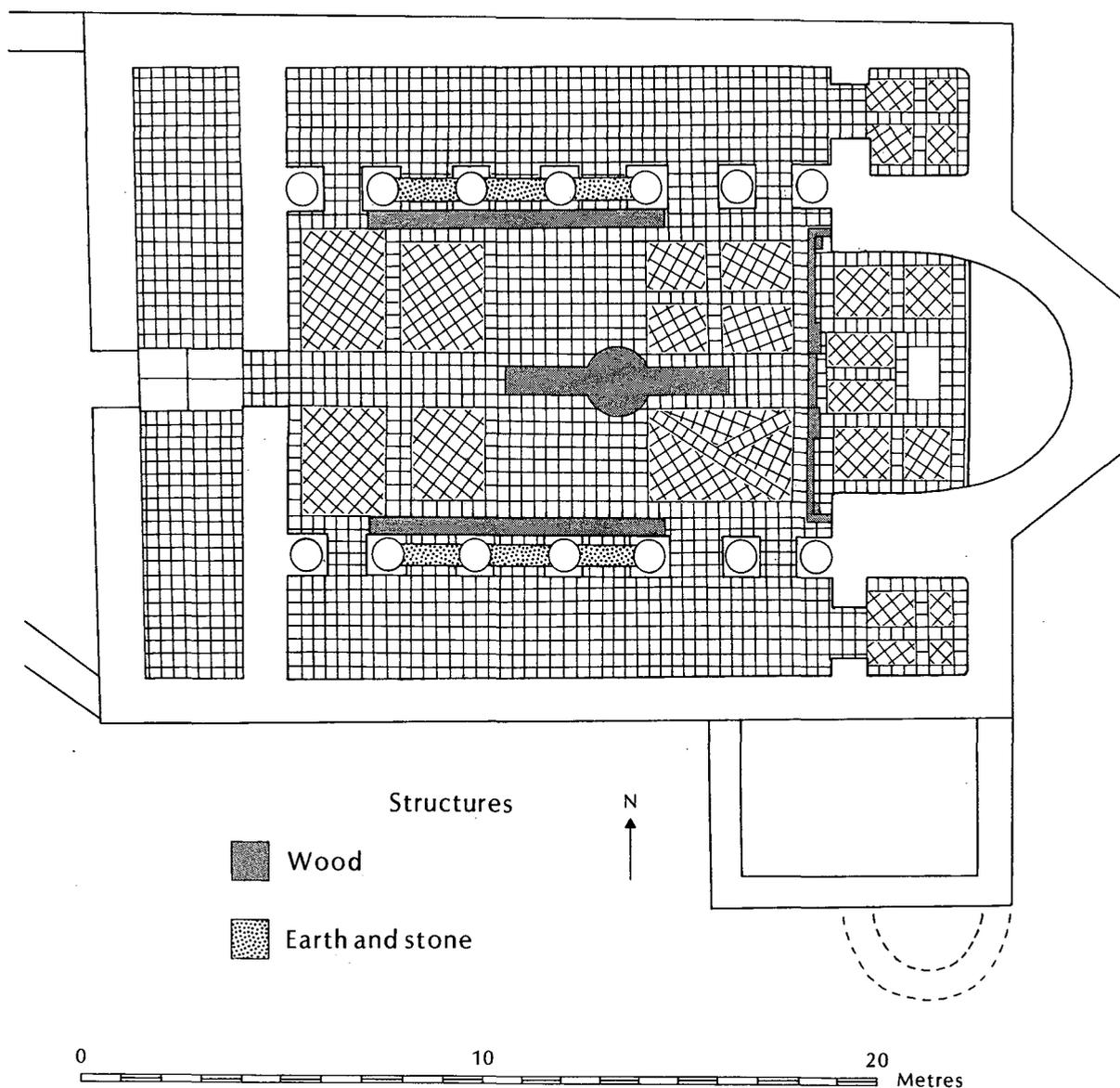


Fig. 61 Area F. Reconstruction plan of the Large Basilica.

built from roughly-hewn limestone blocks, bonded with white mortar. The worked stone 3069 (2.0 by 0.60 by 0.40 m), found lying within the fill of RT 3017, on the north side of the apse, was too large to have been a column-base but may have been used in the superstructure. Lying on the floor of the nave, a curved section of masonry, c. 0.80 by 0.40 m, made of bricks bonded with mortar, was all that remained of one section of arcading or a window-arch. Like other masonry structures of the late Roman period in northern Bulgaria, it seems that the walls were constructed from roughly coursed masonry, using angular limestone blocks; bricks were no doubt used in bonding courses, as well as for windows and arcading. A destruction level of ash and charcoal covered the nave and side aisles (Plate XXIII A). It did not extend east into the chancel where the brick floor (3168) was directly overlain by rubble. A timber roof for the nave seems certain and it must have been tiled, although, in the destruction level, only fragments of roof-tile were found, mostly less than 0.10 m in size and none larger than 0.20 m.<sup>15</sup> The absence of any sign of burnt timber within the chancel suggests, as

<sup>15</sup> It may well be that tiles were salvaged before the destruction of the basilica by fire. Only on the north-western side of the nave were there clear and undisturbed outlines of burnt timber beams. Elsewhere within the destruction level, no individual shapes of timbers could be discerned.

does the double width of the foundations, that it was roofed with a masonry semi-dome, springing from the walls of the apse.<sup>16</sup> A clerestory is a reasonable presumption but whether there were galleries above the aisles and the narthex remains impossible to determine.

Given the basilica's state of preservation, doorways were understandably elusive. Sufficient paving-bricks remained *in situ* to prove that there existed an entrance between the room south of the apse and the south aisle, and symmetry recommends that there was also a doorway to allow communication between the room north of the apse and the north aisle. Portions of a threshold slab (3079), within the narthex, suggest a central entrance into the nave. There may not have been any direct access from the narthex into either the north or south aisles. The interior of the southern annexe and its foundations were so deeply robbed that it was impossible to establish whether there had been an entrance from the annexe into the south aisle or direct communication from the annexe into the room at the end of the aisle.

### The internal arrangements (Figs 60–61)

Despite the destruction of the superstructure, the interior layout of the building can be reconstructed with confidence. Sufficient remained of the floor surfaces to prove that the nave, the southern room flanking the apse, the chancel, and both aisles were paved with bricks, bedded in yellow sand. Symmetry requires that the northern room, at the east end of the north aisle, was also paved. Whether the annexe had a brick floor is unproven but likely. Within the narthex, two fragments of the threshold slab (3079), which originally measured *c.* 0.90 by 0.75 m, stood 0.15 m proud of the underlying make-up and must have been incorporated within a brick floor which has not survived robbing.

The paving-bricks were arranged in simple geometric patterns (Plate XXII). An attempt was made to lay the floor brick-work fashion; the joins between bricks in one row were overlapped by the bricks in the adjacent row, but this was not rigorously applied for not infrequently rows of bricks were simply laid end on.<sup>17</sup> Where the execution was at its best, within the northern half of the nave and in the room south of the apse, a cross design was created by the intersection of two rows of bricks laid at right angles with the spaces infilled with rows of bricks offset at 45 degrees to the main design; this was a decorative method used in and around Tsarichin Grad (Serbia) and on the lower Danube.<sup>18</sup> The general design of the floor can be reconstructed.<sup>19</sup> The nave was divided into two halves, separated by a central west/east pathway, four rows of bricks wide. A paved area, fourteen bricks wide, occupied the centre of the nave, further dividing the nave's paving into four segments. Surrounded by a frame of single bricks, the north-east quarter contained a simple 'Latin cross' design and the south-east quarter probably a carelessly executed 'Greek cross'. The western end of the nave, although divided by the central pathway into two sections, had a single design. In the north-west quarter a north/south row of bricks was maladroitly replicated in the south-western quarter, forming a single 'Latin cross' pattern for the western end of the nave. It therefore seems that the arrangement of bricks within the nave divided the floor into five separate elements; the pathway along the west/east axis of the basilica, the central part of the nave, the north-eastern and south-eastern quarters and the western end. Within the chancel, the pattern was more complex with

<sup>16</sup> Timber roofs covering nave and aisles are common in Bulgaria well into the sixth century. The 'Old Metropolis', at Nesebur with its three-sided apse, timber roofing for the nave but a brick semi-dome over the chancel would seem a notably well-preserved example of a type which includes the basilica at Nicopolis and which was widely employed, particularly in northern Bulgaria: cf. Chaneva (1968), 21, figs 2 and 9.

<sup>17</sup> This is particularly true on the northern and southern sections of the nave floor (Fig. 60; Plate XXII).

<sup>18</sup> *Caričin Grad* I, 55–6 (The Cruciform Church); cf. also The Transept Basilica: Duval (1984), fig. 26, 443. Also close to Tsarichin Grad at Svinjarica: Hodinott (1963), fig. 102, 193. Brick floors are as common on the lower Danube, as they are in Serbia, and such patterning is not unusual, cf. Dolni Voden, near Plovdiv: Moreva (1983), 15–16, in the fort of Dinogetia (Gârvan) in the Dobrogea: Barnea (1969), 19 and pl. 16, and at Tsaravets (Veliko Turnovo): *Tsarevgrad-Turnov* I, 277–305.

<sup>19</sup> The bricks in the south aisle were simply arranged but with some attempt at a 'brickwork' layout. This has not been reproduced in the schematic reconstruction (Fig. 61) because elsewhere there was little concern to maintain the scheme for other parts of the basilica; cf. the bricks paving the entrance from the nave into the north aisle (Plate XXII).

a division into three principal elements. Two, on the north and south sides were distinguished by the simple subdivision of the space into two rectangular areas of paving each divided by a single north/south row of bricks. The third area, on the central, west side of the chancel, contained a west/east row of bricks, representing a continuation of the axial 'pathway' within the nave. The southern room, flanking the apse, possessed a simple 'Latin' cross within a frame of bricks; the pattern no doubt repeated within the northern room. In the south aisle, there was no sign of any complex design and it seems probable that both aisles were floored with simple rows of bricks. It may be conjectured that the narthex may well have had a patterned arrangement of bricks but, since none of the paving survived, there is no means of reconstructing the design. As will be discussed below, the division of the paving into separate sections has implications for the use of the basilica.

There were also notable differences in the manner in which the bricks were laid within the church. The paving in the southern half of the nave was crudely arranged. The south-western arm of the cross, in the south-east quarter of the nave, was not defined by an appropriate infill of bricks at an angle of 45 degrees. Instead the infilling bricks were laid on the same axis. In the south-western corner, two rows of bricks and not one – as on the north side of the nave – were used for the north/south arm of the cross and the bricks, infilling the design in the south-west corner, were asymmetrically aligned with the diagonal rows running north-east/south-west and not as they should have been, north-west/south-east as on the complimentary north side of the nave. Although the execution of the paving designs was markedly inferior within the southern half of the nave, it remains uncertain whether this represents later repair or the work of less diligent craftsmen. The twenty-eight signatures, identified on flooring-bricks, were randomly distributed throughout the basilica and none was limited to a particular element in the design or areas of superior or inferior workmanship (Fig. 62). There were differences in the size of bricks but again this appeared not to have had any connection with the type of signature used. The majority of the bricks in the nave (3016) measured 30/31 cm square and were 3.5 cm thick. A few larger bricks were used on the south-eastern side of the nave (33/36 cm square and 3.5/4.5 cm thick). The bricks in the south aisle (3165) and in the room south of the apse (3167) were all larger than in the nave, being 34.5 cm square and 3.7 cm thick. The only area where bricks of larger size (34/36 cm square and 3.7 cm thick) seem to have been purposefully used was within the paving of the chancel. Two bricks were of particular note: before firing, one (SF 15512) had been inscribed with a drawing of a bird (Plate XXIVA) and another (SF 15501) with an inscription in Latin.<sup>20</sup>

On the central axis of the nave, just east of centre, two pairs of parallel slots in the paving (3115, 3116), each slot 0.15 m wide, 0.13 m deep, and each pair set 0.50 m apart, must have contained horizontal wooden beams supporting wooden staircases either side of an *ambo* (Plate XXIII B). The *ambo* was inset into the brick floor; the surrounding bricks had been disturbed and the area of the *ambo* itself had been badly cut by shallow pits (Plate XXII). Wooden beams could not have been used to support an *ambo* of stone or marble: consequently, the *ambo* itself must have been made of wood. With its stairs, the *ambo* measured 5.60 m in length. The beam-slots contained a fill of burnt wood and charcoal but whether this means that the *ambo* was burnt *in situ* or merely represents the accumulation of ash from the destruction of the nave's wooden roof cannot be determined. However, the jagged edges to the brick floor around the *ambo* may be explained if the *ambo* was removed before the church burnt down.

Running north/south, in front of the apse, another slot (3090) separated the floor of the nave (3016) from the paving within the apse (3168). At the northern and southern ends, the slot turned at 90 degrees and continued east as far as the apse's foundations. Only 0.20 m wide and 0.20 m deep, it could not have supported a stone structure but must have contained horizontal wooden beams although, as in the case of the *ambo*, burnt charcoal within the slots may be the remains of the beams burnt *in situ* or may have come from the destruction of the timber roof. Expansions on the inside of the slot probably indicate the position of vertical timbers. Given its location, dividing the nave from apse, the beams it contained must have supported a chancel screen; the vertical timbers probably rose higher than the screen itself and, if these supported a horizontal lintel, this may well have been bolted into the sides of the apse, giving the structure the rigidity which its shallow foundations could not have provided.

<sup>20</sup> See ch. 18, No. 5, pp. 317–18.

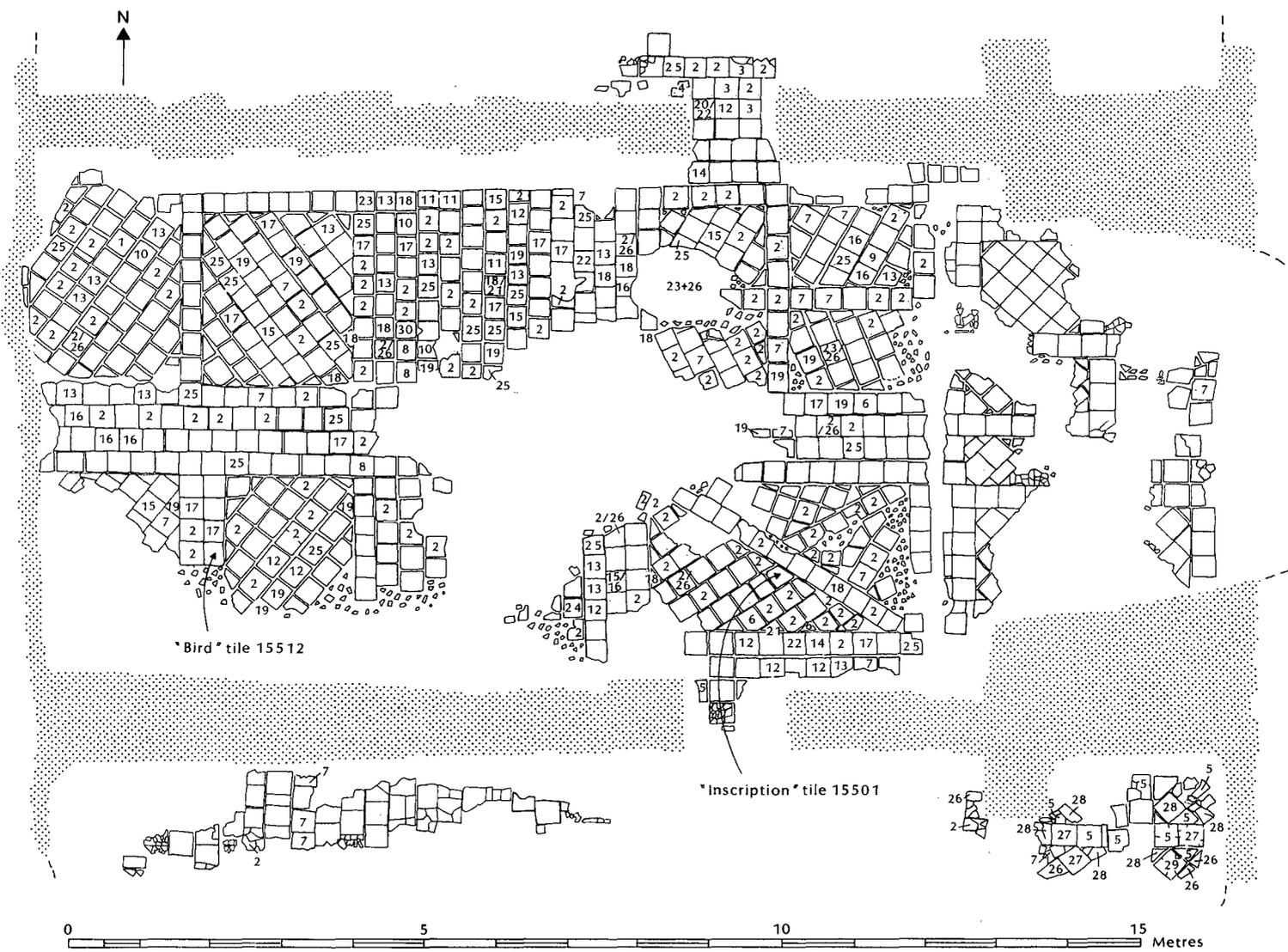
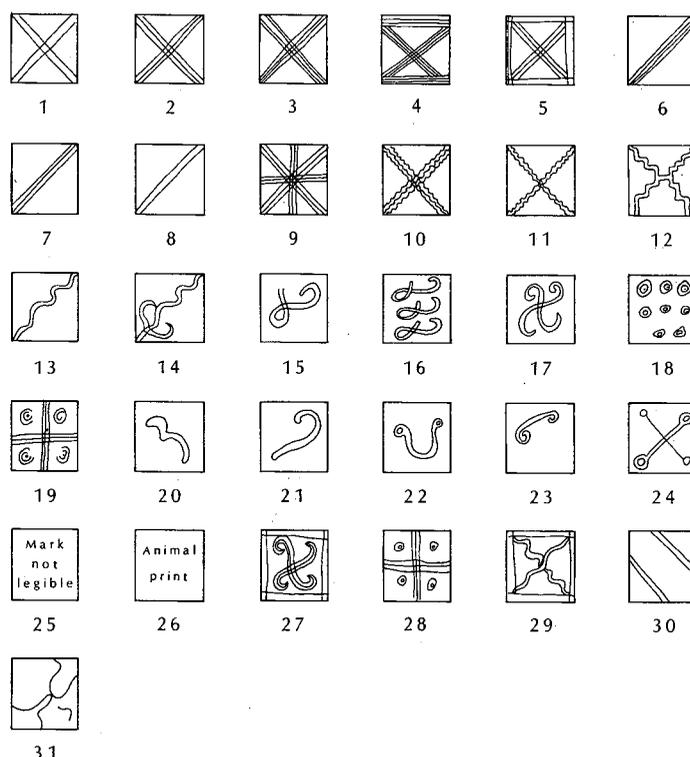


Fig. 62 Area F. The brick floor of the Large Basilica and the distribution of brick signatures. For key to signatures see facing page.



Key to signatures on Fig. 62.

If, as seems likely, the altar was also let into the floor, the only suitable gap in the paving within the chancel lies on the central axis of the basilica and fits neatly into the symmetrical pattern of the paving. If this was the position of the altar, then the surrounding paving suggests that it was a rectangular structure, c. 1.20 m by 0.70 m. At the eastern edge of the floor within the chancel, a single surviving stone block (3026), firmly bedded into the underlying make-up for the apse, abutted the eastern end of the chancel's paving. This probably denotes the position of a step, at least 0.10 m high, to a raised *bema*. Within the eastern end of the apse robbing had removed all traces of the floor. There may well have been a *synthronon* but, if so, it had been totally destroyed by robbing.

Between the *in situ* bases for the northern colonnade, a rough stone and earth wall (3111), 0.60 m wide and surviving 0.30 m high, covered the exposed stylobate foundation and partly overlay the eastern side of Base 3018. It did not extend east of Base 3021, where the paving continued north from the nave into the aisle. (The extension of the paving from the nave into the south aisle, immediately east of the disturbed base 3028, proves that there had also been a symmetrical arrangement providing access into the south aisle.) The fact that this wall respected the access from the nave into the north aisle suggests, in spite of its rough appearance, that it was contemporary with the basilica. Although the stylobate has been deeply robbed by RT 3103, the wall probably did not continue west of Base 3098, where the paving also extends north from the nave, indicating a second passage from the nave into the north aisle. The wall must be the remnant of a screen running between the columns on the north side of the basilica. Its unsightly appearance was no doubt improved by a plaster facing.<sup>21</sup> A complementary arrangement with a screen between the bases can be presumed for the southern colonnade.

A surprising feature of the basilica was an area of c. 0.40 m left unpaved between the stylobate for the northern colonnade and the northern side of the nave's paving, edged with a roughly mortared line of small limestone blocks (3217), set into the final make-up deposit within the nave (5219) before the sand bedding for the floor was laid down (Fig. 58; Plate XXII). This strip of earth continued for the full length of the colonnade between Bases 3098 and 3021 and, like the screen (3111), terminated at the point where the brick

<sup>21</sup> For similar rubble constructions improved with a facing of plaster, cf. the benches along the north wall of the 'agora basilica' at Thasos: Hoddinott (1963), 106.

floor of the nave continued into the north aisle at the western and eastern ends of the northern colonnade. A similar line of limestone fragments defined the southern limit of the nave's paving, immediately north of the disturbed base 3028 and immediately west of the paved passage from the nave into the south aisle (Plate XXII). Here too the earth strip did not continue any further east: in the south-east corner of the nave, where the bricks were better preserved, the paving continued south and almost up to the stylobate. On the north side of the nave bricks abutted the northern stylobate west of the disturbed base 3022. Consequently, it is equally improbable that the gap in the bricks along the inside of the northern colonnade continued further east than Base 3021. Although the primitive construction of the screen between the column-bases for the northern colonnade could have been masked with plaster, the gaps between the brick floor of the nave and the stylobates must have been concealed in some other way. Since both the *ambo* and the chancel-screen were made of wood, the missing structure provided along the inside of the colonnades was probably also of timber. This could hardly have been anything else but benches, providing seating within the nave (Fig. 63). Benches in the aisles and in the narthex are not uncommon but this would seem to be the first instance where seats can be identified within the nave of a three-aisled basilica.<sup>22</sup>

The destruction layer contained remarkably few metal items which could have come from the basilica. Two double-spiked loops (SF 7520, 7521) came from the demolition rubble in the narthex and one (SF 7403) from the destruction deposit over the floor of the nave; possibly they were used as hinges for window-shutters.<sup>23</sup> However, in excess of 1,500 fragments of window-, vessel-, and chandelier-glass were recovered. Each fragment was recorded as a small-find and a distribution plot identified concentrations of all categories of glass finds in the south-western quarter of the basilica and outside, east of the apse. This distribution has no obvious explanation unless it represents areas where the internal fittings of the church were broken up and the metal elements salvaged.

### Dating

*Pottery.* The make-up deposits (3314, 3302, 3357, 3330, 3287, 3298, 3295, 3241) contained Ware 14 with pattern-burnished decoration, thickened-rim cooking-pots with concave tops [133, 134], dated to the fifth century, angular-rim cooking-pots [142] and ledge-rim cooking-pots [160], dated to the early fifth century, and sherds of amphora [1056], probably of fifth-century date.

### Discussion

Period 2 commenced no earlier than the middle of the fifth century and it is reasonable to presume that the basilica was built after the erection of the early Byzantine defences.<sup>24</sup> There was no evidence for an earlier church on the site and the prominent location occupied by the Large Basilica suggests that it was included in the primary layout of the new enclosure and was probably constructed soon after the defences were completed. Since there were no comparable east/west geophysical anomalies which could be churches and since the building occupied such a central position within the enclosure, it seems reasonable to suppose that it was the episcopal basilica.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Apart from 'presbytery seats' either side of the altar, benches within transepts, aisles, and *atria* are well attested, cf. Duval (1984), 474–7. In the case of the single-naved basilica (Basilica J) at Tsarichin Grad, benches, 40–45 cm wide, line the north and south sides of the church; *Caričin Grad* I, 117. However, the position of benches within the nave of three-aisled basilicas has particular implications (see below, pp. 164–66). In the case of Basilica A at Philippi, it has been plausibly argued that the raised stylobate in front of the colonnade and screen was used for seating: Lemerle (1945), 351–2.

<sup>23</sup> Three more came from post-medieval contexts; one (SF 7479) from the robber-trench (3070) following the foundation for the west wall of the nave, a second (SF 7260) from the fill of the robber-trench (3017) which followed the main apse, and another (SF 8065) from the backfill of the post-medieval *grubenhaus* (3063).

<sup>24</sup> See ch. 2, p. 40.

<sup>25</sup> For the existence of a bishopric at Nicopolis in the fifth and sixth centuries, see ch. 1, p. 17. There may have been other small intramural basilicas but, since the floors of the two excavated churches were visible as conspicuous anomalies in the geophysical survey, it is reasonable to expect that the paving within any other large church would also have survived robbing and that it would have been equally apparent in the resistivity plot. None of the other high resistance features have an east/west alignment, see ch. 2, pp. 40–2.

To judge from the surviving foundations, with the possible exception of the *atrium* and the southern annexe, the original building would not seem to have been modified after its construction.<sup>26</sup> The process of construction appears not to have been continuous but may have involved two separate phases of building. During the first, the remains of Period 1 buildings were levelled and the foundations of the basilica were laid. Work may have commenced on the superstructure. However, the beam-slots, impressed into the primary construction level, and the ovens may represent a temporary break in building activity. The slots may have been created by heavy beams, laid on the construction surface, to support scaffolding. The ovens could have been used during a pause in building operations, perhaps over winter months when the outer walls of the basilica may have provided shelter, before work resumed on the superstructure. Alternatively, it is possible, though on balance less likely, that the beam-slots contained timber footings for structures used by the builders themselves. If so, then the ovens may have been in use for only a short period of time, presumably to prepare meals for the workforce during the early stages of construction.

The size of the basilica, by Balkan standards, was as modest as its internal decoration.<sup>27</sup> The roughly cut bases over the stylobate foundations contrast with the markedly superior craftsmanship evident for basilicas in the central Balkans and stand no comparison with the lavishly decorated churches on the Black Sea coast and along the Aegean littoral. Wooden *ambones* and chancel screens, by their nature, are understandably difficult to identify and no examples have been recognized at other sites on the lower Danube.<sup>28</sup> Brick floors, as noted above, were not uncommon in basilicas of the fifth to sixth centuries. The basilica at Dolni Voden, where the brick paving design was similar to that used in the Large Basilica, also had a similar range of signatures.<sup>29</sup> The small church of Kroumovo Kale, 90 km east of Nicopolis, has similarities with the Nicopolis basilica, not the least of which is the wide range of signatures found on its flooring bricks.<sup>30</sup> Although the signatures were probably used to identify the products of particular artisans, who travelled from site to site producing bricks for local use, only the simple forms occur at both Kroumovo Kale and in the Large Basilica: there is no reason to assume that the craftsmen working at Nicopolis also supplied the paving for the former site.

The Large Basilica has features shared by sixth-century basilicas in Greece and Serbia; the polygonal apse, the projection of the chancel screen into the nave, the *ambo* within the nave, the screens between the colonnades, separating aisles from the nave, and the raised platform within the apse.<sup>31</sup> The paving of the nave, with its central line of four rows of bricks, flanked to north and south by rectangular designs, suggests a central approach to the chancel from the narthex; an axial arrangement evident elsewhere in Bulgaria and at Tsarichin Grad.<sup>32</sup> However, there is a notable difference between the churches at

<sup>26</sup> The foundation for the south side of the apse has a curious, semicircular construction which suggests that there may have been an apsidal eastern end to the south aisle, perhaps subsequently modified during the construction of the southern room (Plate XXII): Poulter (1994), 257. However, examination in 1991 demonstrated that the foundation for the south side of the apse and that for the southern room were of one build and well-bonded.

<sup>27</sup> The Large Basilica is but half the size of the well-known basilicas of northern Greece or the episcopal basilica at Tsarichin Grad. The Transept Basilica at Tsarichin Grad (30 m in overall length, excepting the *atrium*, and 19 m wide) is only a little larger. However, the Transept Basilica had fine mosaics which certainly never existed in the Large Basilica at Nicopolis. Even in modest cities of the early Byzantine period, such as Tropaeum Traiani, the four excavated basilicas, though no better decorated than the Large Basilica at Nicopolis, were all more than 40 m in length.

<sup>28</sup> However, it need not be presumed that stone and marble were the normal provision for modest churches. Photographs of the church in the hill-top refuge of Kroumovo Kale, near Shoumen, show a similar gap of 0.20 m in the tiles running north/south in front of the apse: Ovcharov (1970), fig. 3, 19. Here, too, there was probably a timber screen dividing nave from chancel.

<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, the actual signatures are not illustrated but the descriptions suggest that they were analogous to those from the Large Basilica: Moreva (1983), 16.

<sup>30</sup> Ovcharov (1970), 18–20.

<sup>31</sup> The polygonal form of the apse, used in the Constantinopolitan basilica of St John Studios, remained popular in Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia during the sixth century: Chaneva (1968), figs 1, 2, 4, 7; Duval (1984), 453; Orlandos (1952), 206–10.

<sup>32</sup> For Bulgaria, cf. Dolni Voden: Moreva (1983), 15–16. For Tsarichin Grad: *Caričin Grad* I, 117–19 (Basilica J); Duval (1984), 449, 473.

Nicopolis and those in Serbia.<sup>33</sup> In the Large Basilica, the *ambo* was positioned astride the pathway leading to the chancel, an arrangement not seen in Illyricum – where the *ambo* is always off-centre – but preferred in the Eastern Prefecture, at Constantinople and in western Asia Minor. That the Large Basilica adhered to the Eastern arrangement further supports the observation, made by Sodini, that this difference in the location of the *ambo* follows the administrative division between the Prefecture of the East and that of Illyricum: Nicopolis was in Moesia II and within the Eastern Prefecture but only c. 80 km east of the frontier with Dacia Ripensis and Illyricum.<sup>34</sup>

Identifying the function of ancillary rooms is less easy. The arrangement, whereby the apse was flanked by two rooms, each entered from the east end of the side aisles, is a well-known feature of basilicas in Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia.<sup>35</sup> But, to presume that one was the *prothesis* and the other the *diaconicon* would be unwarranted.<sup>36</sup> The southern annexe, with its apsidal end, may have been a *baptisterium* but, since there is no evidence for a *piscina*, this cannot be proved.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, the internal arrangement of the basilica provides some evidence for how it was used (Fig. 63). Upon entering the nave from the narthex, there were two ways to proceed. The first was to continue down the central path to the *ambo*. This was presumably the route taken by the clergy and the bishop. The central location of the *ambo*, if it has liturgical significance, suggests that the entrance of the clergy involved an initial reading or statement from the *ambo* before the bishop proceeded into the sanctuary and to the altar; if this was not so, then the obstructive position of the *ambo* in the centre of the nave would have been, at very least, an inconvenience.<sup>38</sup> The alternative route from the narthex was immediately to turn left or right into the north or south aisles. Since the aisles were separated from the nave by screens, it seems reasonable to presume that this would have been the direction taken by the laity who were partitioned off from the centre of the nave, a space reserved for the clergy.<sup>39</sup> This might explain why the paving at the western end of the nave contained a unitary design. The termination of the screens before the east end of the basilica and the continuation of the paving from the nave into the aisles is normal for basilicas conforming to the ‘Greek plan’.<sup>40</sup> There was direct communication between the eastern end of the nave, a space used by the clergy, and the rooms either side of the apse as well as, presumably, access into the southern annexe. If the central part of the nave was reserved for the clergy, it seems to follow that the benches in the nave, either side of the *ambo* and in front of the colonnade screens, were intended for their use. There are no gaps in the paving within the chancel to indicate that the Large Basilica had presbytery seats either side of the altar. Perhaps the

<sup>33</sup> See also the Small Basilica, Area K, p. 182.

<sup>34</sup> J.-P. Sodini, ‘Note sur deux variantes régionales dans les basiliques de Grèce et des Balkans: le tribèlon et l’emplacement de l’ambon’, *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 99 (1975), 585–8. At Philippi, where the location of the *ambo* is known, it is off-centre. Philippi is within Macedonia I but just west of the boundary with the province of Rhodope, which belonged to the Eastern Prefecture. It would be tempting to see in the location of the *ambo* a difference in liturgical practice between that used within the Patriarchate of Constantinople and that prevalent (until the reign of Justinian) within provinces under the control of the papal legate of Thessalonica. However, more mundane explanations cannot be discounted. The planning of churches and the location of internal fixtures must have some bearing upon the liturgy but the location of the *ambo* may have been determined by other considerations. It may have been specified in a ‘standard formula’ determined by patriarchal decree or it may simply reflect differences in architectural traditions current within the two Prefectures. In neither case need there have been any particular liturgical explanation.

<sup>35</sup> In Bulgaria, cf. Pirdop, Pirinchtepe (Varna), Eleousa Basilica, (Nesebur): Chaneva (1968), 17–22; Kroumovo Kale: Ovcharov (1970), 17–22; Basilica 9, Hisar: Madzharov (1971), 34–9. In Greece, cf. Orlandos (1952), 210–11. In Serbia: Duval (1984), 454–5.

<sup>36</sup> It has been claimed that the two symmetrical rooms, either side of the apse, served as pastopheries (i.e. *prothesis* and *diaconicon*) cf. Dj. Stričević, ‘Diakonikon i protezis ou ranohrishtanski tsurkvata’, *Starinar* 9–10 (1958/59), 59–66; Krautheimer (1986), 255. However, there is no reason to presume that these rooms always performed this function, cf. Duval (1984), 454–5; *Caričin Grad* 1, 126–8.

<sup>37</sup> See also Area K, p. 182.

<sup>38</sup> The corollary might be that the *ambo* need have played no part in the initial stage of the liturgy in Illyricum where the central approach to the chancel was not interrupted by the *ambo*. Although it is here appropriate to suggest an explanation, interpretations remain inconclusive, see above, note 34.

<sup>39</sup> This explanation for the presence of screens separating nave from aisles in basilicas, following the ‘Greek model’, requires no elaboration here: Lemerle (1945), 350–7; Krautheimer (1986), 101.

<sup>40</sup> Lemerle (1945), 350–1; Hoddinott (1963), 227.

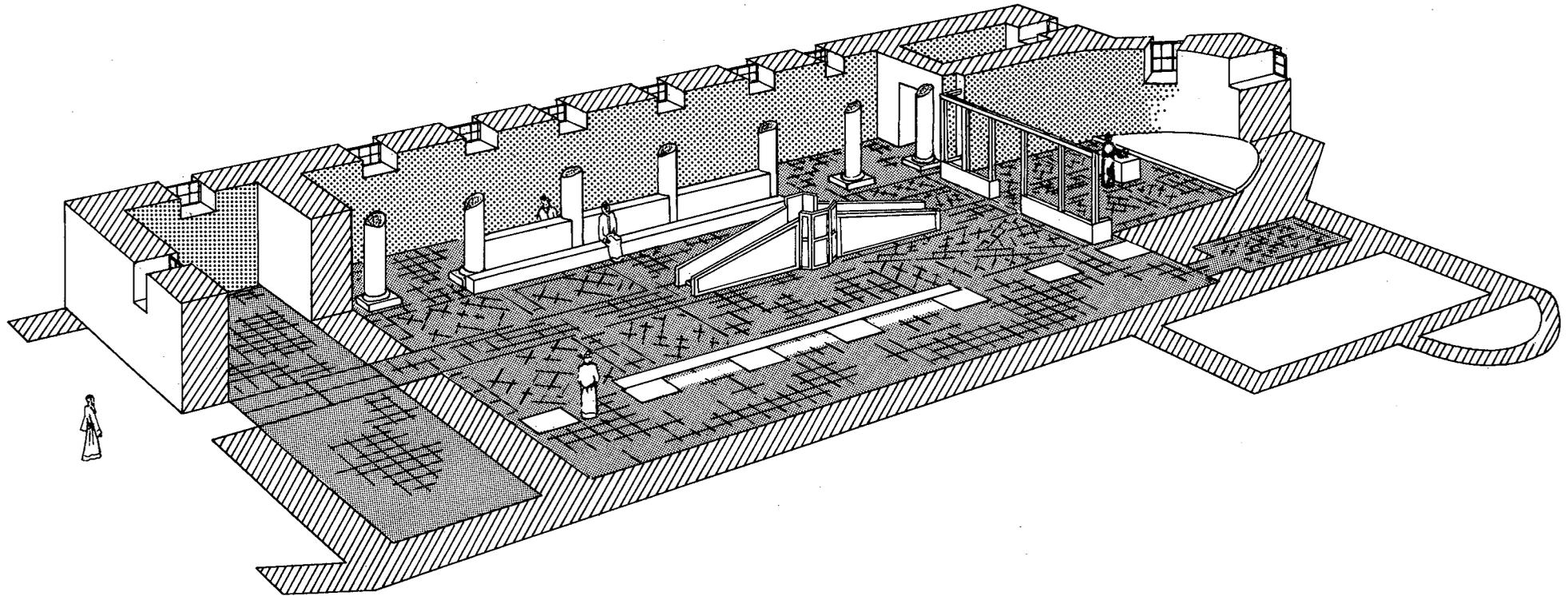


Fig. 63 Area F. Perspective reconstruction of the Large Basilica, showing internal features.

restricted space available between the raised *bema* and the chancel screen necessitated the relocation of the required seating into the nave. Even so, the function of the benches remains open to question. They could have seated as many as thirty people and this would seem an excessive provision simply for the clergy. The seating may also have been provided for the congregation, perhaps for those distinguished by status or gender.<sup>41</sup> Why the paving in the north-eastern and south-eastern quarters of the nave should be treated as separate areas cannot be explained although there may have been a liturgical reason. Since the central pathway is continued east beyond the chancel-screen, there was probably a central entrance into the chancel which led directly to the altar.

Apart from the probable *atrium* to the west of the Large Basilica, no sign of contemporary structures, attached to, or close to the church, were found by excavation, nor are any indicated by the geophysical survey (Fig. 104). This is strange: major churches, particularly episcopal churches, were regularly part of a larger complex which often included the bishop's own residence.<sup>42</sup>

The basilica was evidently destroyed by fire. Powdered ash and the remains of burnt roof timbers covered the floor of the nave. However, the absence of metal fittings and roof-tiles from the destruction level is difficult to explain unless the church had been systematically stripped of reusable materials before it burnt down.

### PERIOD 3: THE SLAV *GRUBENHAUS* (Fig. 64)

An oval depression extended 1.0 m south of the northern baulk. This proved to represent the southern side of a *grubenhaus* which contained Slav vessels *in situ* on its clay floor (Fig. 56).

The *grubenhaus* was rectangular, 3.95 m in length and 2.85 m wide, its longer sides orientated north/south. The corners of the cut were rounded, its western and eastern sides almost straight, and its shorter sides, especially that on the north, elliptical. The cut (3150), except where somewhat eroded, notably at the south-west corner, had vertical sides and was 0.25 m deep. Originally, it was probably deeper: later robbing of the basilica and natural erosion may have reduced its depth by c. 0.20 m.<sup>43</sup> The base of the *grubenhaus* had a flat, compacted clay floor, its surface scorched by fire although there was no stone-built fireplace nor any remains of a simple hearth.<sup>44</sup> Around the inner edge of the cut there was a shallow trench, 0.10 to 0.15 m wide and at most 0.15 m deep, within which were limestone blocks and tiles, set on edge, revetting the sides of the *grubenhaus*, but too insubstantial to have supported free-standing walls above ground level. The *grubenhaus* was cut through a thin spread of rubble and the underlying silty clay which represented the eroded ground surface contemporary with the church. Most of the destruction rubble from the basilica (3088) sealed the *grubenhaus* and covered the primary fill (3151) within the building.

Around the outside of the *grubenhaus*, there were no post-holes, but two cut the clay floor, on the eastern side.<sup>45</sup> The more northerly of the two post-holes (3230) was elliptical in shape (0.76 by 0.62 m) and penetrated 0.38 m into the clay floor and was filled with clay packing around the vertical post-pipe (3179), 0.19 m deep and 0.18 m in diameter. The second post-hole (3180) was severely disturbed by animal action but there was no sign of clay packing: the hole was 0.23 m deep

<sup>41</sup> For discussion of seating within basilicas and, in particular, those who might have been entitled to seating within the nave cf. Lemerle (1945), 351–2.

<sup>42</sup> See ch. 2, p. 40.

<sup>43</sup> On the erosion of deposits above the early Byzantine basilica, see ch. 1, p. 4. At Houma (Razgrad district), the average depth of *grubenhäuser*, below the contemporary ground surface, was mostly either 0.40–0.50 m or 0.70–0.80 m: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 45. At Dourankoulak, *grubenhäuser* averaged 0.40 to 1.00 m deep: Todorova (1989), 31. At Iatrus, they were regularly 0.40 to 0.50 m deep: *Iatrus* III, 113.

<sup>44</sup> Although simple hearths are found in Slav *grubenhäuser*, more commonly fireplaces were built from rough stone blocks and inserted into the sides of the cutting: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 51; Todorova (1989), 31, 40.

<sup>45</sup> A pit (0.46 by 0.36 m and 0.13 m deep), approximately on the longitudinal axis of the *grubenhaus* and 0.80 m from its southern end, had been backfilled with clay. Possibly, this had originally contained a vertical post: the *grubenhaus* may have been modified before its final period of use. Even single post-holes within *grubenhäuser* are not unusual: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 47.

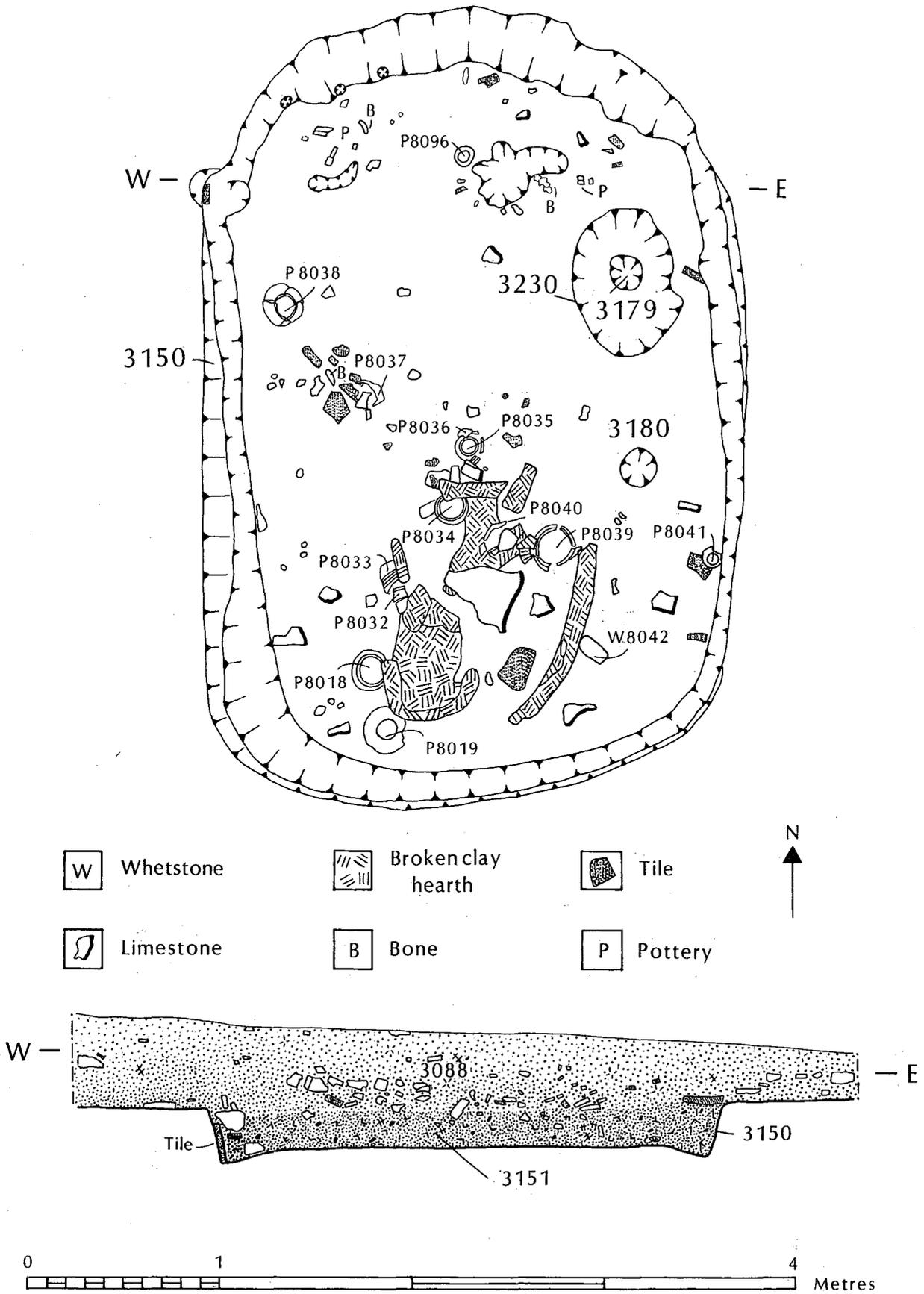


Fig. 64 Area F. Plan and section of the Slav grubenhaus.

and 0.20 m in diameter. Both post-holes were filled with the same silty clay and charcoal as the overlying fill (3151) of the *grubenhaus*.

On the floor were twelve complete pots (and fragments of another three), one inverted (SF 8019), the rest upright, set directly on the clay floor and all of typical Slav type, some with makers' marks on their bases (Plates XXVA–B). All contained millet, known to have been a staple food of the Slavs. The only other find from the floor of the structure was a whetstone (SF 8042).

The *grubenhaus* was filled with a silty clay, darkened by an admixture of charcoal which here and there formed lenses of pure ash (3151): taken together with the scorching, evident on the clay floor and the carbonized contents of the pots, it is clear that the building was destroyed by fire. Lying within the fill, and partly on top of the inverted pot (SF 8019), was a crudely moulded, rectangular baked clay fireplace surround, c. 0.30 m in width (Plate XXVB). It was broken into several fragments, one of which was a curved section 1.0 m in length which had a small slot midway along its side. Other fragments were concentrated in the *grubenhaus* fill, all in the southern half of the structure. This fireplace surround (*podnitsa*) is a characteristic find in Slav *grubenhäuser* and is thought to have been placed around internal fireplaces and used as a hot-plate on which to cook bread.<sup>46</sup> The rectangular slot on the side may have acted as a lifting handle; *podnitsi* with holes on each side or at each corner may have been portable; presumably they could have been hung up within *grubenhäuser* when not in use.<sup>47</sup> Since there is no sign of a fireplace, the *podnitsa* had probably never been used in this *grubenhaus*. Moreover, it was found, not on the floor, but within the destruction fill (3150) of the building; either it had been thrown into the depression left after the *grubenhaus* burnt down or else it had fallen from the superstructure of the building during the fire.<sup>48</sup>

Within the centre of basilica, in the nave, a shallow grave was found, cut through the destruction deposit. Being immediately below topsoil, it was not possible to determine whether or not it predated post-medieval robbing. It contained a child's skeleton, orientated south-west by north-east. No finds were associated with it. Possibly, the burial was contemporary with the *grubenhaus* but all that can be confidently maintained is that it postdated the destruction of the basilica by fire.

### The reconstruction of the *grubenhaus* (Fig. 65)

Not infrequently, stone post-pads were used to support timbers within Slav *grubenhäuser*.<sup>49</sup> In this example, since the *grubenhaus* was burnt and the destruction level not subsequently disturbed, they were evidently absent and it appears that only two vertical timbers were used in the structure. That the two post-holes should be eccentrically positioned is a not uncommon feature of this type of building.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, there seems to be no regular distribution or number of post-holes common to Slav *grubenhäuser*.<sup>51</sup> Some of medium size had no post-holes at all.<sup>52</sup> Consequently, the roof structure must have rested directly on the ground outside the building and was often, perhaps invariably, self-supporting and required no additional posts set within the structure to provide

<sup>46</sup> Sometimes, the clay fireplace was separate from the main hearth suggesting that it was intended for cooking and not heating cf. Houma: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 51, 56.

<sup>47</sup> One of the best preserved *podnitsi* from Houma measured 1.10 by 0.60 m with sides 4/5 cm wide and 7 cm thick. It had a smooth lower surface and holes 10–15 cm deep at three of its corners: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 37, 51. One *podnitsa* from Iatrus had holes at each corner, not on the sides of the object, but on the top where they may well have supported some form of cover: Mitova-Dzhonova (1970), fig. 7, p. 13.

<sup>48</sup> The only inverted pot (SF 8019) lay immediately under the *podnitsa*. Perhaps both had been stored on a shelf attached to the sloping roof of the building.

<sup>49</sup> Two buildings at Houma had vertical posts placed on stone pads (Nos 18 and 19): Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 32.

<sup>50</sup> An irregular distribution of post-holes was the norm, not the exception: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 46–7.

<sup>51</sup> cf. note 50 and also Todorova (1989), 39–40.

<sup>52</sup> At Houma, where post-holes were identified in most structures, some had no internal post-supports, cf. Houses 2 and 14: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 25, 32.

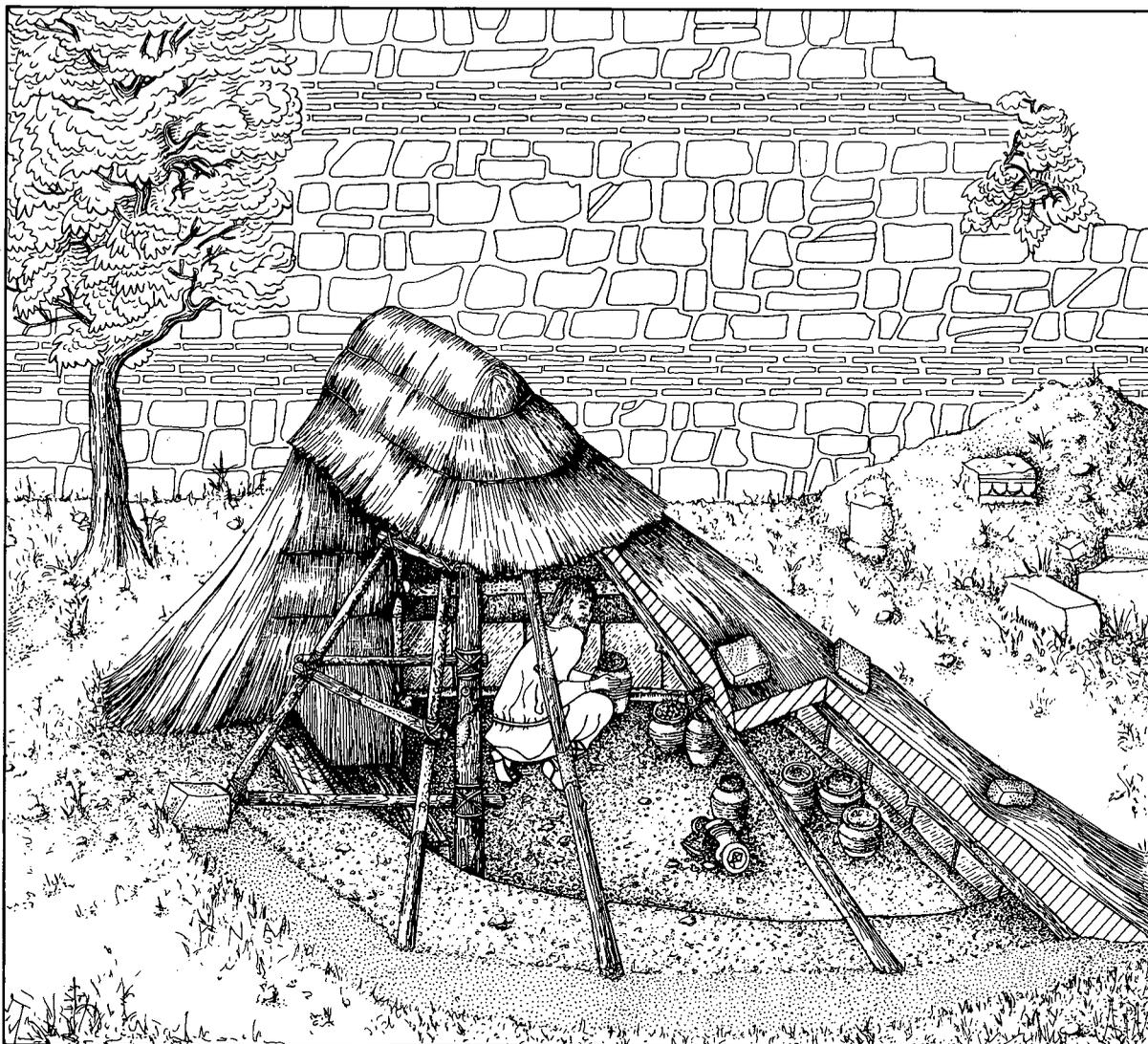


Fig. 65 Area F. Perspective reconstruction of the Slav *grubenhaus*, looking south.

bracing.<sup>53</sup> The *grubenhaus* at Nicopolis did not have stone walls nor were there any post-holes around the outside of the structure. Here, too, the roof structure must have rested directly on the external ground surface. Where two post-holes occur, eccentrically placed, the arrangement sometimes did have a specific function.<sup>54</sup> It seems most likely that the two vertical posts on the east side formed supports for a horizontal beam; the ends must have been lashed together: no nails were found in the *grubenhaus* fill nor on the clay floor. The circular post-pipes suggest the use of poles, not worked timbers, for the uprights, ruling out the use of jointed timbers and pegging. These vertical posts, 1.0 m apart, could have raised the roof on the east side, forming a convenient entrance and frame from which to hang a door or shutter. The clustering of the pots on the south, west, and north sides of the building also suggests that the entrance was on the east side; there was precious little room to enter the building from any other direction without disturbing the vessels. If the roof was pitched from a horizontal beam joining the two uprights then the storage jars would have been placed around the sides of the structure, where the roof was at its lowest above the floor,

<sup>53</sup> At Dourankoulak, the existence of some pitched roofs was inferred – at least a symmetrical arrangement of post-holes would allow it – but this arrangement was surprisingly uncommon: Todorova (1989), 39–40.

<sup>54</sup> At Houma, two post-holes were occasionally positioned either side of a hearth, constructed in the north wall of a *grubenhaus*, probably to raise the roof away from the fire: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 55. Since no traces of a fireplace were found in the Nicopolis *grubenhaus*, in this case there must have been another explanation.

whereas the roof over the vacant floor space in the central area and on the east side would have been higher and allowed convenient access to the building. Although the reconstruction, which follows this interpretation, results in an asymmetrical structure, the building would have been stable enough, provided it was braced by slanting poles set upon the ground surface.<sup>55</sup> The structure was probably thatched with reeds or straw: no tiles or slates were found in the destruction fill.<sup>56</sup> Two architectural fragments, part of a column ((SF 8092) and a piece of moulding (SF 8084), came from the fill and may have served as weights to stabilize the thatch. There must have been a step to allow access into the *grubenhaus* but, since no trace of one was found, it was probably made of wood.<sup>57</sup>

### Dating

*Pottery.* The complete pots from the *grubenhaus* were of characteristic Slav type and are attributed to the ninth/tenth centuries A.D. [1116–1131].

### Discussion

The *grubenhaus* was barely 2.50 m north of the north wall of the basilica (Fig. 56). Since it cut a thin band of rubble but was sealed by the major post-medieval demolition level, it is probable that the main walls of the church were ruinous but still standing during the ninth/tenth centuries when the Slav building was constructed.

The shape, the use of stones to revet the vertical sides and the dimensions of the *grubenhaus* are characteristic features of Slav *grubenhäuser* on the lower Danube.<sup>58</sup> The absence of a stone-built or even a simple hearth, usual in Slav *grubenhäuser*, suggests that it was not used as a house but as a store-room and, in particular, as a grain store, to judge from the number of pots full of millet found *in situ* on its floor.

Although this *grubenhaus* was the only Slav structure found during excavation, the discovery of Slav pottery in the demolition rubble from the basilica and in the robber-trenches which followed its walls suggests that this was not the only Slav building in the vicinity.<sup>59</sup> Elsewhere on the site, finds of Slav pottery indicate that either there was a small settlement here in the ninth or tenth centuries A.D. or that the early Byzantine fortifications lay on the periphery of a larger settlement.<sup>60</sup> The destruction of the *grubenhaus* by fire – and before the pots full of grain could be recovered – may not have been accidental. The hasty abandonment or destruction of Slav settlements is well-attested at many sites on the lower Danube during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Alternatively, since the irregular distribution of post-holes in Slav *grubenhäuser* suggest that the roof structure may have been self-supporting, poles may have been inclined and tied ‘wigwam’ fashion. In which case, the function of the two vertical timbers was simply to act as a door-frame and not to support the roof: a less satisfactory solution since entry then would have been through a very low door or hatch.

<sup>56</sup> Reeds would have been readily available from the banks of the Rositsa as an alternative to straw. Where available, reeds were probably used, as at Dourankoulak: Todorova (1989), 42.

<sup>57</sup> The absence of any sign of steps into *grubenhäuser* is not uncommon. Sometimes, single blocks of stone formed a rough step where entrances have been identified, cf. Dourankoulak: Todorova (1989), 33, 40; also at Houma: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), House 17, fig. 33, p. 33.

<sup>58</sup> Rectangular *grubenhäuser*, often with slightly elliptical walls, predominate at Houma where the average size is 6 to 15 metres square: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 35, 46. At Dourankoulak, the average size is 13 square metres: Todorova (1989), 40. The Nicopolis *grubenhaus* is c. 9.36 square metres. Stone revetments along the inside of *grubenhäuser* are a common feature, as at Houma, Building 1: Rashev and Stanilov (1987), 23, fig. 1, p. 102. However, there are also examples of rough limestone walls built against the sides of *grubenhäuser* which may have reached c. 0.40 m above ground-level: Todorova (1989), 31. Nor in this *grubenhaus* was there an sign that the sides of the cut had been plastered with clay, a feature which occurs elsewhere: Todorova (1989), 44.

<sup>59</sup> Slav pottery was found in robbing backfill immediately east of the basilica’s southern annexe and within the post-medieval robber spoil within the nave and the narthex.

<sup>60</sup> See ch. 2, p. 47.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

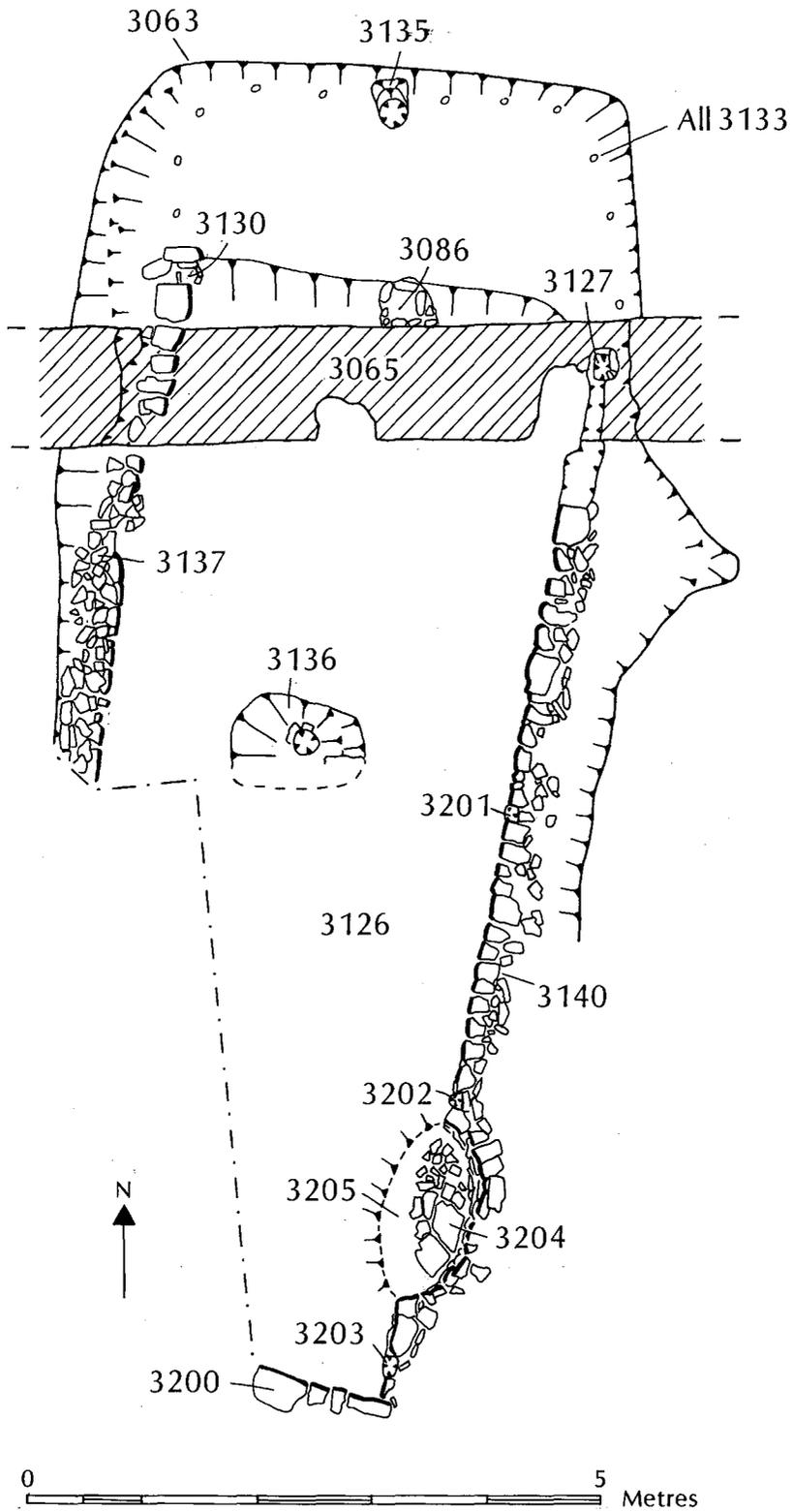


Fig. 66 Area F. The post-medieval grubenhaus.

#### PERIOD 4: POST-MEDIEVAL *GRUBENHAUSER* AND THE DEMOLITION OF THE BASILICA

##### The *grubenhäuser* (Fig. 66)

Three *grubenhäuser* of post-medieval date were located during the excavation of the basilica and one was examined in detail (Fig. 56).

Cut, no doubt with some difficulty, through the foundations for the south wall of the basilica (3065) was a *grubenhäuser* of notably more sophisticated construction than the Slav structure found on the north side of the area. A rectangular cut (3063), 12.50 by 5.0 m, penetrated *c.* 0.45 m into the make-up level beneath the basilica. The structure was divided into two sections: the smaller chamber, at the northern end of the building, was raised *c.* 0.20 m above the clay floor (3126) of the larger room. A line of stake-holes (3133), around the edge of the cut for the smaller chamber, probably held the uprights for a wattle-and-daub wall. The larger compartment had substantial dry stone walls of limestone blocks (3137, 3200, 3140), set up against the earth sides of the *grubenhäuser* and contained regularly spaced post-holes (3127, 3201, 3202, 3203, 3130) for vertical timbers. A large central post-hole (3136), 0.60 m in diameter and with a post-pipe 0.60 m deep, presumably supported the roof as no doubt did another (3086) at the north-eastern end of the main room. A third, centrally-placed post-hole (3135) may well have performed a similar function at the northern end of the smaller chamber. If so, the roof was pitched along the central axis of the building and could not have had an upper storey. Fragments of burnt mud-wall within the destruction fill prove that the dry-stone walls supported walls of pisé or mudbrick. Presumably, the sockets within the walls held vertical supports for a wall-plate holding up the sides of the roof. There was no obvious sign of an entrance; this probably existed on the south-western side of the building, beyond the limit of excavation. Close to the southern end of the *grubenhäuser*, an apsidal structure was included within the east wall. It contained a clay platform (3205), raised *c.* 0.20 m above the floor of the building, and was paved with Roman roof-tiles (3204). The tiles had been burnt, either during the destruction of the building or during its occupation if the niche was used as a fireplace.

Certainly, the building had been destroyed by fire. Finds, including a post-medieval ring (SF 7351) and a complete post-medieval jug, had been left on its floor. Of particular note, was the discovery of a cannon-ball (SF 7358) in the destruction level. A primitive grenade (SF 8030) came from the collapsed mud-walls of the building and two more (SF 7490, 7491) were found on the floor.

A second *grubenhäuser* (3033), also visible as a surface depression before excavation began, had cut through the foundations for the north-east side of the basilica. It had a simple clay floor and was *c.* 12 m in length and 6 m wide. Only the southern edge was included within the area of excavation. The upper fill of a third *grubenhäuser* (3187) was discovered immediately south-east and above the foundations of the basilica's southern annexe (Fig. 56).

##### The demolition of the basilica (Fig. 60)

Immediately below topsoil, the entire area was covered with a general demolition layer of rubble and powdered mortar which, in the nave, sealed the Period 2 destruction deposit. East of the basilica, an extensive spread of mortar, rubble, and brick fragments continued as far as the eastern baulk and appeared to indicate secondary robbing of fallen masonry.

All the robber-trenches had straight sides and closely followed the foundations. There was no sign that exploratory trenches were needed to locate the foundations. The trench-fills differed and can be ascribed to two separate phases of robbing. At the east end of the church, RT 3017, which robbed the upper foundation of the apse, and RT 3100, which followed the south wall of the

basilica, both contained an almost pure fill of mortar dust and limestone fragments. This phase of robbing only affected the upper foundations, in places to a depth of only c. 0.40 m below the brick floor of the basilica. The robber-trenches at the western end of the basilica had been dug with greater enthusiasm and pursued the foundations regularly to a depth of between 1.70 m and 2.40 m below the basilica's floor. Nor were the stylobates overlooked. RT 3066 took out the south-west end of the southern stylobate and a start was made by RT 3103 on robbing the northern stylobate. The fills of the deep trenches, RT 3070 (west wall of the nave), RT 3072 (north wall of the basilica), and RT 3074 (west wall of the narthex) all contained limestone fragments and powdered mortar but also a grey silt, which suggests that the soil backfill had not leached out and that, consequently, they were later in date than the shallower robber-trenches at the east end of the basilica. This distinction between two periods of robbing was further strengthened by the fact that RT 3076, which deeply robbed the south wall of the basilica to a depth of 2.44 m, also cut the fill of RT 3100 which had conspicuously failed to rob the eastern end of the same wall's foundations to a depth greater than 0.40 m.

Although the robbing of the foundations of the main basilica can be divided into two phases, excavation of the southern annexe also demonstrated that intermittent robbing had taken place during successive campaigns. All traces of the early Byzantine floor level and substantial sections of the lower foundations had been removed. Below the post-medieval *grubenhaus*, apart from pits, the southern wall foundation (3270) had been cut by two successive robber-trenches, the latest of which (3212) removed all remnants of the wall foundation (3270) at the western end of the annexe. The rubble foundation on the south side of the annexe (3388) had been largely robbed out by RT 3387 and partly by RT 3389. This second robber-trench (3389) was backfilled with rubble and was in turn cut by RT 3260 which left the lower foundations of the eastern wall (3261) intact. Yet another robber-trench (3262) cut the fill of RT 3260 and had completely removed the foundation for the northern half of the east wall.

## Dating

*Pottery.* Standing on the floor of the *grubenhaus* (3063) was a complete jug [1132], covered by the base of a broken bowl [1166], both of post-medieval date. Sherds of glazed post-medieval pottery came from the fill of an early robber-trench (3100) which robbed the foundation for the south wall of the basilica and from the fill of a later robber-trench (3074) which deeply robbed the foundation for the west wall of the narthex.

*Coin.* A single coin of Ivan Alexander (1355/1371) came from the collapsed mud-walls of the *grubenhaus* (Cat. No. 652).

*Finds.* The make-up beneath the floor of the excavated *grubenhaus* (3063) contained a draw-plane (SF 8082) and a file (SF 8083), datable to the post-medieval period. A Turkish pipe (SF 7377) was found on the floor of the same building (3063). The fill of one early robber-trench (3017) contained a calkin (SF 7314) and two more came from the robbing debris above the floor of the nave (SF 7056, 7322), all of post-medieval date.

## Discussion

Apart from the Slav *grubenhaus* and the grave dug within the nave, there was no sign of occupation after the destruction of the basilica by fire and before the post-medieval period: the single medieval coin clearly does not belong to any of the excavated structures. The first phase of robbing of the foundations probably followed directly after the demolition of the standing walls and was not pursued much below the level of the superstructure. However, during the second phase of robbing, the foundations of the western end of the basilica were robbed with much more determination. Both phases of robbing date to the post-medieval period. The northern *grubenhaus* (3033), that which was dug at the south-eastern corner of the basilica's annexe (3187), and the fully excavated *grubenhaus* (3063) all post-dated the first phase of robbing (Fig. 56). Whether they post-dated the

second and final phase of robbing is uncertain. Although the *grubenhaus* (3063) shares features in common with other post-medieval houses excavated elsewhere on the site, the finds from the fill and floor of the building are of particular interest. One cannon-ball is a coincidence. One cannon-ball and three primitive hand-grenades from a destruction level suggest that occupation did not end with a peaceable evacuation.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> For possible explanations for the destruction of the post-medieval settlement, see ch. 2, pp. 49–51.

## CHAPTER NINE

# AREA K: THE SMALL BASILICA

### Summary

*Above dump deposits of the third/fourth century, a building was constructed from rubble and earth; it was abandoned during the first half of the fifth century. Subsequently, in the early Byzantine period, the site was occupied by a small basilica with a narthex and nave, paved with bricks, and a southern annexe. It had a timber ambo in the nave and a reliquary setting at the entrance to the apse. Residual finds of Slav pottery suggest occupation in the vicinity during the ninth/tenth century and four grubenhäuser were built in the post-medieval period.*

### INTRODUCTION (Figs 67–68)

The geophysical survey located a high resistance anomaly in the south-eastern corner of the site (Figs 5 and 10). In 1987, a cutting, 18.6 m long and 1.0 m wide, demonstrated that the anomaly was created by a brick floor, flanked by robber-trenches. In 1988, an area (16 m north/south and 19 m east/west) was opened up either side of the primary cutting and this identified the building as a small Christian church. In 1989, modest expansions to the primary area (2 by 4 m to the west, 2 by 13 m to the east and by 1.5 by 15 m to the south) uncovered the full extent of the basilica. That year, excavations were terminated following the examination of levels associated with an earlier building in the south-eastern corner of the area and deposits immediately below it. Natural was not reached.

### PERIOD 1: REFUSE DISPOSAL AND MARINE IMPORTS

Excavation of levels predating the Period 2 building was limited to the south-eastern corner of the site, to the south of RT 4430 and to the north of RT 4431, which had robbed the foundations for the south wall of the nave and south wall of the annexe of the Period 3 basilica. At a depth of 1.50 m below the floor of the church a silty loam, mixed with black ash, formed a dump deposit, overlain by an irregular spread of cobbles and gravel, at most 0.10 m thick, and mixed with yellow clay, probably used to level the site. This was covered by two successive spreads of silt and yellow clay, which contained ash and domestic waste including pottery and glass.

### Dating

*Pottery.* The dump deposits contained ledge-rim bowls [359, 373, 381, 386] dated to the late third to fourth century.

*Coin.* 193/211 (Cat. No. 19) from the second dump deposit.

## Discussion

Possibly as early as the late third century, more probably during the early fourth, the area was used for the disposal of waste.<sup>1</sup> Within the restricted area excavated to this level, there was no sign of buildings. Closer to the city, pits were used in this period for the disposal of domestic waste, but here rubbish would seem to have been deposited in tips across the land surface, then roughly levelled. The gravel and cobbles probably came from the alluvial flood-plain to the south, and may have been required to prepare mortar for building within the city. Surprisingly, the dump contained two marine mussel shells and nine small oyster shells which must have been brought to Nicopolis from the Black Sea. However, it is most unlikely that marine mussels and such small oysters would have been valued as a luxury import.<sup>2</sup> Transporting oysters by road would have been impractical: the Black Sea is 250 km to the east of Nicopolis. They must have been conveyed by river, up the Danube and then the Rositsa, a distance of *c.* 700 km, and were probably shipped in brine to keep them fresh. The most promising explanation for these apparently worthless shells is that the deposit contained the discarded waste from containers, probably barrels, used to bring valuable oysters for sale in the city.<sup>3</sup> Area K is situated well south of the city walls but close to the southern edge of the plateau, overlooking the river Rositsa and the probable site of its harbour.<sup>4</sup> Containers, used for transporting seafood and other goods to Nicopolis by boat, may have been brought up the valley from the harbour and opened on the plateau, close to Area K, before the valuable contents were taken into the city for sale and the waste disposed of nearby.<sup>5</sup>

### PERIOD 2: THE EARLY BUILDING (Figs 67–68)

Two walls, bonded together, formed the north-western corner of a building in the south-eastern corner of the area. The west wall (4414) extended north 9.35 m from the southern baulk and was cut by the foundations for both the south wall of the nave (4409) and the south wall of the annexe (4455) belonging to the Period 3 basilica. The north wall (4413) of this building projected 5.2 m west of the eastern baulk and was overlain by the foundation (4486) for the apsidal east end of the basilica's annexe and cut by the foundation for the south wall (4409) of the nave. Both walls of the building were 0.60–0.70 m in width and were constructed from courses of angular limestone blocks laid 'herringbone fashion', bonded with earth and supporting a row of large limestone blocks (Plate XXVIA). The walls were truncated to the level of the church's brick floor, no doubt when the area was levelled for the construction of the Period 3 basilica, but unlike the foundations of the basilica they had escaped robbing in the post-medieval period. The building survived to a maximum height of 0.81 m above its clay floor (4509), beneath which a make-up deposit of silty loam, ash, and charcoal (4509) was cut by the foundation-trench for the west wall of the building. There was no sign that occupation ended in destruction but there was a deep build-up of silty loam (4504) above the floor. This included pottery and represented either dumping of refuse after abandonment or a make-up deposit dumped within the building to level the site before the construction of the Period 3 basilica.

<sup>1</sup> Note that natural was not reached and it is unknown whether the site was occupied in the second century. However, the robber-trenches, which followed the foundations of the basilica, produced sherds dating to the second/third centuries and this suggests, if not occupation, then earlier dumping on the site.

<sup>2</sup> The oyster shells measured only 30–40 mm in length. Larger oysters, no doubt imported as a delicacy, were found in a pit, Area C, dating to the second century. River mussels are readily available in the Rositsa today and were presumably available in antiquity. It would seem unlikely that there would have been a demand at Nicopolis for either marine mussels or small oysters.

<sup>3</sup> The small oysters and the mussels, though hardly large enough to have been eaten individually, may still have been edible. They could have been used for soup – but this would seem an improbable extravagance, unless they were accidentally brought to the site as part of a more profitable consignment. That commodity is unlikely to have been fish: almost all the fish consumed at Nicopolis came from the Rositsa, Yantra, or Danube, and there is little evidence that sea-fish was imported: local resources would appear to have been sufficient, see ch. 2, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> See ch. 1, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> For the route from the river up onto the plateau, immediately west of Area K, see Area E, p. 131.

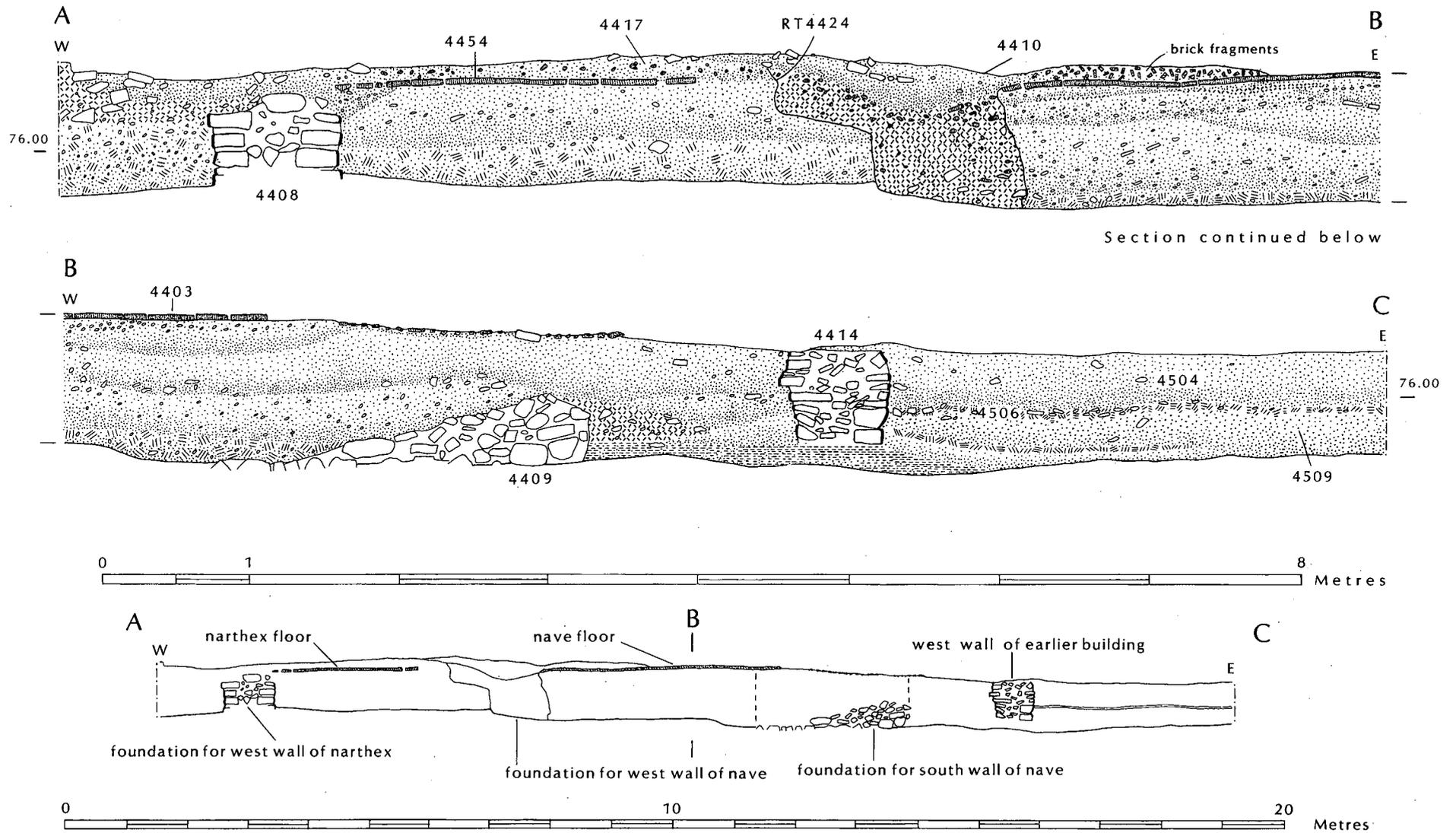


Fig. 67 Area K. Section, north side of the cutting.



walls probably supported a mudbrick superstructure, although, since this building would seem to have been abandoned and not destroyed by fire, it is not surprising that no remains were found: if not preserved by burning, mudbrick would quickly dissolve. No roof-tiles were found, possibly because the building was roofed with thatch.<sup>7</sup> No finds provided any clue to its function although its rough construction would seem appropriate to an agricultural building.

### PERIOD 3: THE SMALL BASILICA (Fig. 68)

Although none of the walls were preserved and the foundations had been deeply robbed, it proved possible to establish the complete plan of a small basilica (Plate XXVIIA). Its single nave, 10.45 m in length and 11.76 m wide, terminated in a semicircular eastern apse, 3.95 m in internal diameter. A narthex, 3.15 m deep, abutted the west end of the nave. An annexe, which measured internally 9.35 by 3.20 m, was attached to the south side of the nave and also possessed a semicircular eastern apse, 2.30 m in internal diameter. Overall, the basilica measured 18.50 m in length.

The foundations were 0.80–1.00 m wide, regularly faced with limestone blocks, which had been systematically robbed to their lowest courses, preserved at a depth of between 1.42 and 2.0 m below floor-level. Exceptionally, the foundations of both apses (4459, 4486) and the central section of the foundation (4408) for the west wall of the narthex survived to within 0.10 m of the basilica's floor (Fig. 67).<sup>8</sup> These sections of foundation probably owed their better state of preservation to the liberal use of a hard white mortar and the less frequent addition of limestone blocks to the core: when robbing was carried out in Period 5, the limited quantity of building-stone they contained was probably as much a deterrent as the strength of the mortar in which the blocks were bedded. There was another notable difference in the character of the surviving foundations. Those for the northern (4472), western (4473), and southern (4409) walls of the nave had a rubble core but no mortar, except for occasional lumps irregularly distributed along the length of the foundations, whereas the foundations for the narthex (4408, 4475, 4476), which, for the most part, were robbed to the same depth, possessed a solid core of limestone blocks and white mortar (Plate XXVIB). Moreover, the foundations for the north and south walls of the narthex (4476, 4475) abutted the western corners of the nave's foundations. The southern and western foundations (4455, 4456) for the annexe were of one build and resembled those of the narthex in that they had a well-built core of mortar and limestone blocks and also because the foundation for the west wall (4456) of the annexe abutted the foundation (4409) for the nave's south wall. It follows that work started on the foundations for the narthex and for the west wall (445) of the annexe after at least the lower foundations for the nave had been completed. Possibly, the better-quality foundations laid in the second phase of construction were prepared by a different workforce or perhaps simply larger quantities of mortar happened to be available by the time work commenced on the ancillary structures.<sup>9</sup> Although the structural sequence seems assured, the foundation for the annexe's apse (4486) was fully bonded with the nave's south wall (4409) and its apsidal east end (4459). Since the apsidal foundation (4486) of the annexe was also of one build with its southern wall (4455) and that foundation, as noted above, was fully bonded with the foundation for its west wall (4456), the annexe must have formed part of the original building programme.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, the roof-tiles may have been salvaged when the building was abandoned.

<sup>8</sup> See further, the robbing of the basilica, Period 5, p. 183.

<sup>9</sup> As noted above, care was taken to ensure that mortar was liberally used in the construction of the nave's apse, presumably because it was considered structurally desirable to have particularly solid foundations at this point to support a semi-dome of brick and mortar, see below, p. 181. However, at the depth to which the foundations survived, it is unlikely that the absence of mortar for the nave's foundations represented any significant structural weakness.

<sup>10</sup> In an article, written in the spring of 1992, it was suggested by the author that the narthex and the western half of the southern annexe may have been added after the construction of the primary basilica, comprising simply a nave with a smaller, southern annexe: Poulter (1994), 260–1. However, inspection of the junction of the foundations for the apsidal eastern end (4486) of the annexe and its south wall (4455) in the summer of 1992 demonstrated that both were fully bonded and consequently of one build.

The remains of the basilica's floor, paved with bricks, was preserved in the centre of the nave (4403) and in the northern half of the narthex (4454), bedded on a foundation of compacted clay and cobbles (4453, 4461, Plate XXVIIA). The bricks were all *c.* 32 cm square and 3.5 cm thick. None of them had a signature.<sup>11</sup> An attempt had been made to arrange them 'brickwork fashion'. However, the regular arrangement of bricks in overlapping rows broke down towards the western end of the nave and the northern end of the narthex. Probably, those responsible for laying the bricks within the nave laid rows north/south across the width of the basilica, starting from the apse and working back towards the narthex, whereas the bricks within the narthex were laid probably in rows aligned west/east from the south wall and back towards the north wall. In both cases, the workmen would seem to have quickly despaired of maintaining a regular pattern: bricks at the northern end of the narthex and western end of the nave were positioned end on.<sup>12</sup>

In the centre of the nave, two pairs of slots (4440, 4442 and 4450, 4448), each slot 0.10 m deep and 0.15 m wide, let into the brick floor, probably contained horizontal supports for the stairs either side of an *ambo*, the location of which was denoted by a roughly circular depression (4444) between the two pairs of slots (Plate XXVIIB). The diameter of the platform must have been *c.* 1.60 m and the stairs, to west and east, were both *c.* 1.20 m in length and *c.* 0.70 m wide. The slots and the central setting for the *ambo* contained charcoal. However, it seems unlikely that this represented the remains of the *ambo* itself. More probably, the charcoal accumulated in the holes left in the floor after the removal of the *ambo* and after the timber roof of the basilica was destroyed by fire.<sup>13</sup> Even so, the slots in the paving probably contained horizontal timbers which suggests that the stairs were probably also made of wood not stone.<sup>14</sup> If the stairs were of timber, it is reasonable to presume that the rest of the *ambo* was also made of wood.<sup>15</sup>

At the mid-point on the chord of the arc described by the inside of the apse, immediately below topsoil, a single brick was laid flat, against the eastern and southern sides of which two more bricks were set vertically on edge (4460). The bricks in no way differed from those used in the basilica's paving but the top of the vertical bricks must have been *c.* 0.10 m below the level of the floor (Plate XXVIIB). The bricks must have revetted the sides of a square hole, cut into the make-up deposit (4453). Given its position astride the central axis of the basilica and at the entrance to the apse, this square compartment, below the floor, presumably had contained a reliquary.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, the receptacle was empty.

Make-up deposits of silty loam and mortar fragments were deposited to the north and south of the basilica, probably to level up the ground-surface but no traces of an occupation level survived: the area was badly disturbed by post-medieval occupation. Also, the floor-level of the basilica was immediately below the modern turf-line: external occupation surfaces may also have been destroyed by natural erosion.<sup>17</sup> The eastern side of the high resistance anomaly, which lay immediately east of the area, would seem to have been of limited extent and was probably caused, not by the presence

<sup>11</sup> Considering the limited area of floor preserved in the nave and the poor condition of the bricks within the narthex, the absence of signatures does not necessarily suggest that there was any difference between the bricks paving the Small Basilica and those used in the Large Basilica where many, but not all, had signatures. The bricks used in the Small Basilica are slightly larger than the majority of those used in the nave of the Large Basilica but nor is this necessarily significant: bricks larger than those found in the Small Basilica were used in the Large Basilica to pave the south aisle and the floor of the chancel; see Area F, p. 159 and Fig. 62.

<sup>12</sup> For a similarly careless treatment of the floor in the Large Basilica, see Area F, pp. 158–9.

<sup>13</sup> The jagged edge around the position of the platform suggests that the structure may have been removed. A nail 10.22 cm long (SF 10098) was recovered from the fill of the north-western beam-slot (4440), two nails (SF 10101), one certainly Type N/1 and, as preserved, 6.74 cm in length came from the fill of the north-eastern slot (4448). Two more N/1 nails (SF 10099, 10100), one complete and 7.55 cm long, were found in the fill of the central hole (4444) where the platform must have been. These large nails would seem more appropriate to a timber roof than a wooden *ambo*.

<sup>14</sup> Where *ambones* were of stone, the stairs and the raised platform were invariably set upon a stone platform. As far as I am aware, Nicopolis is the first published site to provide direct evidence for the use of *ambones* in timber.

<sup>15</sup> See also, Area F, p. 159.

<sup>16</sup> No traces of mortar adhered to the edges of the bricks: probably they had been simply wedged into the hole.

<sup>17</sup> See ch. 1, p. 4.

of another building, but by the spread of demolition rubble which continued east of the basilica and into the baulk immediately below topsoil.

### Dating

*Pottery.* Concave-rim lids [249], a small jar with offset rim [733], bowls with angular rims [564, 565], and bowls with ledge rim and upturned edge [336] came from the make-up (4504) above the floor of the Period 2 building and beneath the floor-level of the Period 3 annexe, dating to c. 350–450.

*Coins.* 355/361 (Cat. No. 255) from the make-up deposit (4453) beneath the east end of the nave; 578/582 (Cat. No. 639) found in an accumulation of frost-shattered brick fragments and silty loam (4417), immediately above the floor of the nave.

### Discussion

The basilica is unlikely to have been constructed earlier than the middle of the fifth century and can be assigned to the early Byzantine period.<sup>18</sup> The single coin from the nave suggests that it may have been in use as late as the last quarter of the sixth century. The structural sequence implies that the foundations for the nave were built first together with the apsidal, eastern ends of both the nave and annexe and before the lower foundation (4456) for the west wall of the annexe was completed. Even though the foundations for the narthex abutted the west end of the nave, the similarity between the foundations of nave and annexe suggests that the narthex was probably not a later addition but was also part of the original design of the basilica; work must have started on its construction only after the primary foundations for the nave had been laid.<sup>19</sup> From its surviving remains, there was no sign that the building was modified after its initial construction.

The western ends of the foundation (4459) for the basilica's apse widen slightly and were offset from the ends of the north and south walls, probably where there were piers, which supported a brick semi-dome springing from the walls of the apse. A similar offset terminated the southern end of the apsidal foundation (4486) for the annexe, presumably because another pier was required to support the weight of a small brick semi-dome at the eastern end of the annexe. No similar provision was considered necessary for the northern side of the annexe's apse, perhaps because the double thickness of foundation between the two apses was here considered sufficient. The nave and annexe probably both had timber roofs.<sup>20</sup> A few large fragments of Laconian roof-tiles were found immediately south-west of the basilica in rubble from Period 5 robbing: if not brought in from elsewhere in the post-medieval period, they probably came from the basilica. Although no portion of the superstructure was preserved *in situ*, nor as fallen masonry, walls were no doubt built of limestone rubble and brick courses.<sup>21</sup> Within the area no other buildings or ancillary structures contemporary with the basilica were found: in particular, the small basilica certainly did not possess an *atrium*. The geophysical survey identified no other conspicuous anomalies in the vicinity and it would seem that the Small Basilica was the only building to occupy the south-eastern corner of the plateau (Fig. 10).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The brick paving and the timber *ambo*, features shared by the Large Basilica, suggest that, although the two basilicas were not necessarily built at the same time, they belonged to the same period.

<sup>19</sup> Unlike the annexe, it is just possible that the narthex was a later addition. However, in the case of the Large Basilica, foundations were not invariably bonded even when they were part of the same building programme, see Area F, pp. 155–6. No doubt the walls themselves were fully bonded. Perhaps, as in the construction of the eastern curtain-wall and the pentagonal tower, the upper foundations were also of one build, see Area R, pp. 221–2.

<sup>20</sup> See above note 13.

<sup>21</sup> See the Large Basilica, Area F, p. 157.

<sup>22</sup> See ch. 2, p. 42.

Although the narthex and the nave were paved, no traces of paving or a cobbled foundation for a brick floor survived within the apse: like the Large Basilica, it may have had a raised *bema*, constructed on a mortared foundation, but no trace of it survived. Nor is it certain that the annexe had a brick floor; but, given its appreciable size in relation to the nave which suggests it was of importance, this would seem likely. Although in the nave and narthex there was a half-hearted attempt to overlap the bricks in successive rows, there appears to have been no attempt to arrange them in more complex geometric patterns, as was done in the Large Basilica.<sup>23</sup> Whether there was a screen, separating nave from chancel, is unknown.<sup>24</sup> However, the discovery of the reliquary setting, at the entrance to the apse, is of some interest: it probably denotes the location of the altar which was presumably immediately above it.<sup>25</sup>

In size, this single-naved basilica was a more modest building than the Large Basilica to the north. It possessed no *atrium*, its simple semicircular apse was flanked by no side-chambers and its floors were simpler in design and cruder in execution. Nevertheless, like the Large Basilica, it had its own timber *ambo*, centrally located within the nave.<sup>26</sup> It also had an annexe, not appreciably smaller than that provided for the Large Basilica, the function of which remains no less uncertain.<sup>27</sup> The *ambo* implies that this basilica was used for the celebration of the liturgy, although the church could have accommodated only a modest congregation. Its central location within the early Byzantine defences suggests that the Large Basilica was included in the original layout of the site. No such argument can apply to the Small Basilica, located as it was in the south-eastern corner of the enclosure. However, there was no sign that the Small Basilica's paving was secondary and the use of a cobbled make-up for it, rather than sand as in the Large Basilica, suggests that the two churches may not have been built at the same time. Perhaps the Small Basilica was constructed later in the early Byzantine period.

No metal finds from the basilica were found and the rarity of roof-tile fragments suggests that the church may have been stripped of its internal fittings and perhaps its tiled roof.<sup>28</sup> The reliquary may have been removed from its setting and perhaps the *ambo* was dismantled. The accumulation of ash and charcoal within the beam-slots and central hole for the *ambo* probably represents the remains of a timber roof, destroyed by fire, possibly after the basilica had been abandoned.

#### PERIOD 4: SLAV OCCUPATION

No structural remains of this period were found, but post-medieval contexts on the eastern side of the area, which included the floor of a post-medieval *grubenhäuser* (4493), produced residual sherds of Slav pottery.

#### Dating

*Pottery.* Sherds of jars/cooking-pots in Ware 43 [1116–1131], dated to the ninth/tenth centuries A.D.

<sup>23</sup> See Area F, pp. 158–9.

<sup>24</sup> No trace of any setting for a screen was found west of the apse. However, the destruction of the brick floor at the eastern end of the nave and the loss of at least 0.10 m of the underlying make-up deposit may have removed the evidence. Had it existed, probably it would have been of timber, like the screen within the Large Basilica.

<sup>25</sup> It is remarkable that no similar setting was found within the Large Basilica.

<sup>26</sup> For the significance of the position of the *ambo* see Area F, p. 164.

<sup>27</sup> The early Byzantine Basilica 8 at Hisar (Diocletianopolis) had a rectangular annexe with apsidal eastern end which was a *baptisterium*; it contained a *piscina*: Madzharov (1968), 2526, 2529, fig. 8. Although in plan the *baptisterium* at Hisar resembles that of the Small Basilica, since there is no evidence that the latter possessed a *piscina*, it would be unwarranted to presume that this annexe also must have been a baptistry: apsidal ended annexes are common to many early Byzantine basilicas in the Balkans and they may have served other functions: *Caričin Grad* I, 111–13; Duval (1984), 476–8. See also Area F, p. 164.

<sup>28</sup> This would also seem to have been true of the Large Basilica, p. 166.

## Discussion

There would seem to have been Slav occupation in the vicinity, perhaps immediately to the east of the Small Basilica. But perhaps significant is the absence of Slav pottery from the basilica itself, particularly since the robbing of the basilica's foundations and probably its superstructure was not carried out before the post-medieval period.<sup>29</sup> Probably the basilica was still standing in the ninth/tenth centuries A.D. and, no doubt ruinous, its walls may have deterred occupation within it but offered some protection from the elements for Slav buildings, presumably *grubenhäuser*, close by.<sup>30</sup>

### PERIOD 5: POST-MEDIEVAL ROBBING OF THE BASILICA AND OCCUPATION

(Fig. 69)

The walls of the Period 2 building were preserved *c.* 1.0 m high but the foundations of the Period 3 basilica were robbed to a depth of between 1.0 and 1.50 m below its floor, leaving *in situ* only the lowest courses (Figs 67–68). The robber-trenches followed closely the foundations which suggests that at least the outline of the building was still visible: quite probably the robbing of the foundations immediately followed the demolition of standing walls (Plate XXVIB). Only the well-mortared foundations for the apsidal ends to the nave and annexe (4439, 4486), as well as the western foundation (4408) for the narthex were preserved almost intact (Fig. 68). As elsewhere, robbing was primarily concerned with the extraction of easily portable limestone rubble: one worked limestone block (4532), discarded above the junction of RT 4432 and RT 4439, on the north-eastern side of the area, had probably been used either in the foundations or in the superstructure of the basilica.

All robber-trenches contained a loose grey loam and limestone fragments. Those which followed the west and south walls of the nave (RT 4424, RT 4430) also contained an upper fill of brick chips, frost-shattered fragments of paving, which had slumped into the open trenches (Fig. 67). However, there was no difference in the character of the fills to suggest that there had been more than a single phase of robbing even though RT 4424, which followed the foundation (4473) separating the nave from the narthex, cut the fill of RT 4430, which had robbed the nave's southern foundation (4409).<sup>31</sup> RT 4424 was therefore later than the robber-trench which followed the south wall. This is of particular interest since RT 4424 contained the skeleton of a mature male (4420). It was found at the very bottom of the robber-trench and must have been deposited before the trench was backfilled or had been allowed to silt up (Fig. 68). The legs were flexed and the skeleton lay awkwardly on its back, the skull resting upon the remaining blocks of the wall foundation, suggesting that the body had been dumped into the trench. The corpse may have been naked: no small-finds were found close to the skeleton. The examination of the remains found no evidence that the deceased had received a fatal wound but the manner of his burial does suggest that he had been the victim of foul play.

At least four *grubenhäuser* were constructed after the robbing of the basilica's foundations. An oval surface depression, orientated north-east by south-west, measuring *c.* 14 m in length and *c.* 10 m in diameter, lay partly within the area. This proved to represent the cut of a *grubenhäuser* with a hearth (4482) at its southern end and was revetted, on its east side, by the remains of a wall built of earth and limestone blocks (4412). It cut the north-west corner of the tiled floor (4454) within the narthex of the basilica and truncated the top fill of RT 4476. Another *grubenhäuser*, *c.* 7 m wide and

<sup>29</sup> See below, Period 5.

<sup>30</sup> The same may be true for the Slav *grubenhäuser*, built immediately north of the Large Basilica, Area F, p. 170. On the severe winter climate of the region and, in particular, the cold winter winds, see ch. 1, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> This contrasts with the two phases, both post-medieval, recognized in the robbing of the Large Basilica, see Area F, pp. 172–3.

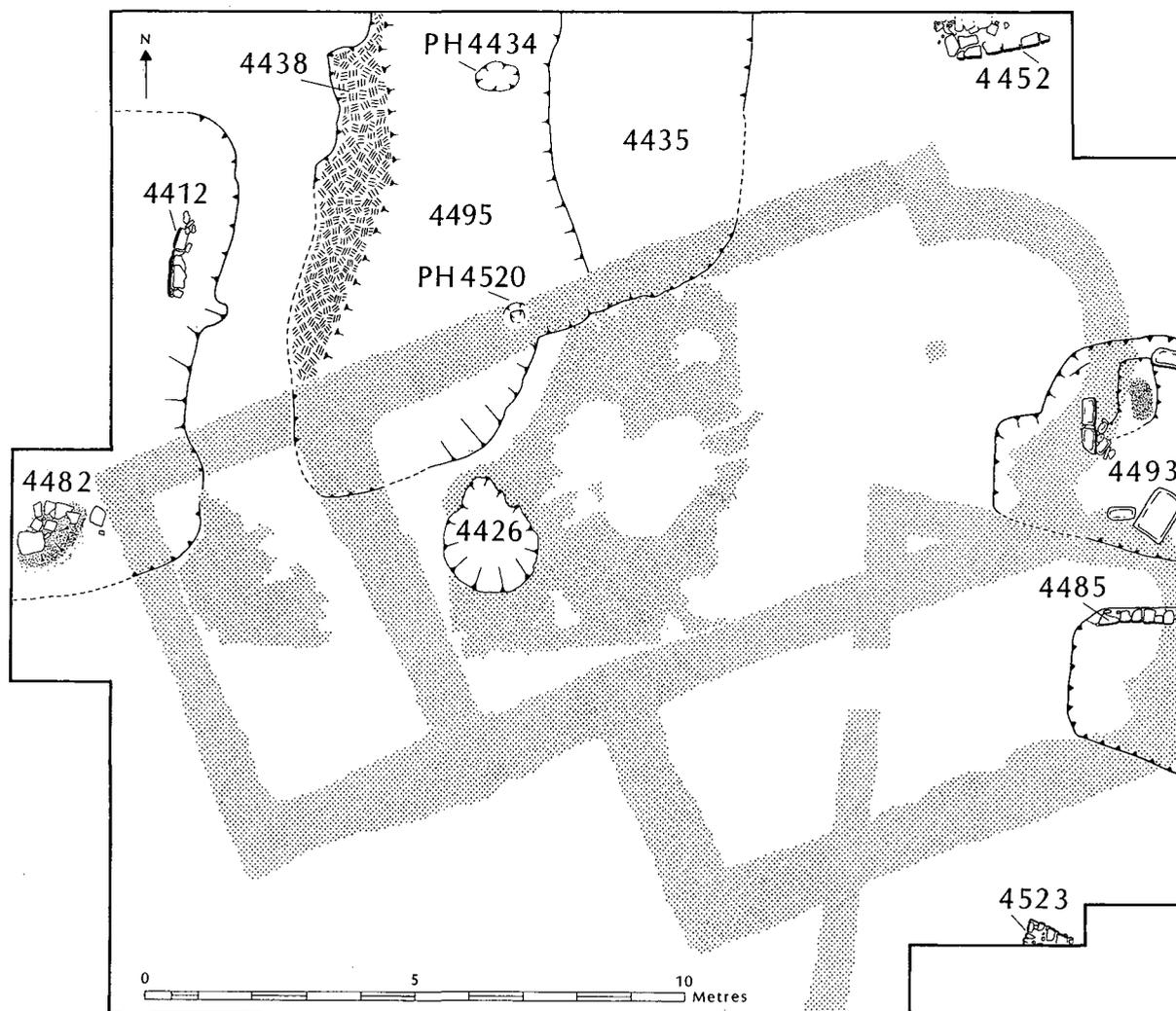


Fig. 69 Area K. Post-medieval occupation, Period 5.

at least 8 m in length, destroyed the north-western corner of the paving within the nave (4403), cut the fill of RT 4432 and RT 4424, and continued north beyond the section. Its western limit was clearly defined by the remains of a mud-wall (4438). Two post-holes (4434, 4520) on the central north/south axis of the building probably held vertical timbers to support its roof and one of them (4520) had been drilled, no doubt with some difficulty, through the surviving foundation for the north wall of the basilica (4472). A clay platform (4435), raised c. 0.20 m above the clay floor of the building (4495), continued north against the eastern side of the cut. Two more *grubenhäuser* were partly within the area and extended east beyond the baulk. One overlay the junction between the apse of the nave and that of the annexe, its western side most clearly visible where it had cut into the make-up deposit (4453) for the floor of the basilica. Its sides were revetted with mud and stone walls. The clay floor (4493) abutted a raised clay fireplace at its northern end. Immediately to the south, the second *grubenhäuser* truncated the southern side of the upper foundation (4486) for the apsidal east end of the basilica's annexe. A wall of earth and limestone blocks (4485) revetted its northern side. Short sections of unmortared walls (4452, 4523) probably represent the vestigial remains of other buildings continuing north and south of the area. A pit (4426), possibly a well, was dug through the brick paving (4403) in the nave of the basilica.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The vertical sides of the pit suggest that it may have been a well but the feature was not bottomed.

## Dating

*Pottery.* Post-medieval sherds came from the fills of RT 4430, following the south wall of the narthex, RT 4429 and RT 4431, which took out, respectively, the western and southern foundations for the annexe, RT 4432, which robbed the northern foundation of the nave, and from the demolition fills within both the northern and north-western *grubenhäuser*.

*Coin.* 1788/1789 (Cat. No. 656) from the demolition rubble immediately below topsoil.

*Finds.* From the demolition rubble around the *grubenhäuser* came a post-medieval donkey shoe (SF 10032) and a Turkish pipe (SF 14545). The fill of RT 4432 also produced a post-medieval buckle (SF 10164).

## Discussion

Probably, the robbing of the basilica's foundations was carried out soon after the final demolition of the basilica's superstructure. Unlike other areas investigated, where there was no appreciable density of settlement in this period, there were at least four structures which partly extended into this area. The raised platform for the hearth and the raised bench as well as the use of roughly built limestone revetments to the sides of the buildings are features well represented in other post-medieval *grubenhäuser*. The only remarkable difference between the post-medieval buildings in this area and elsewhere on the site is that here there were no clear signs that any of them had been destroyed by fire.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of this post-medieval settlement, see ch. 2, pp. 48–51.



## CHAPTER TEN

# AREA M: THE ROMAN HOUSE AND EARLY BYZANTINE BUILDING

### Summary

*A hypocaust-heated room, belonging to a second-century building, was demolished and a house was constructed on the site in the early third century: five rooms were identified, comprising the western wing of a villa suburbana, with an internal peristyle and paved courtyard. The walls were decorated with frescoes and moulded plaster cornices. Before the house was destroyed by fire, around the middle of the third century, it had been stripped of its internal furnishings and had been converted to agricultural and industrial use. The walls were levelled and the area was used for the disposal of rubbish, from the late third to the late fourth century. An early Byzantine building, with massive foundations, passed through the area from west to east. During the post-medieval period, a grubenhause and at least one other building were occupied and subsequently destroyed by fire.*

### INTRODUCTION (Fig. 70)

In 1987, a cutting (1.0 m wide, 1.0 m deep, and 22 m in length) was made north/south. The primary objective was to examine, at its northern end, the two parallel, high-resistance anomalies detected in the resistivity survey, which proved to represent the foundations of a range of buildings, running west/east across the site. Secondary aims were to investigate the apparently open area on the western side of the site, which conspicuously lacked high-resistance anomalies, and to intersect the presumed line of a road, connecting the western and eastern gates of the early Byzantine defences.<sup>1</sup>

The cutting located the northernmost of the two anomalies (4807), a rubble and earth foundation, which belonged to an early Byzantine building.<sup>2</sup> This foundation cut through the collapsed remains of a pisé wall (4880) belonging to a Roman house. The top of another pisé wall (4863), which proved to belong to the same building, was faced with plaster and ran west/east, 6.50 m from the northern end of the cutting. In 1988, the area was extended 1 m to the north and then 3 m to the west and for a distance of 11 m from the northern end of the cutting. Preliminary excavation, that same season, was limited to the exploration of a post-medieval structure, immediately below topsoil, south of the early Byzantine foundation (4807). In 1989, the area was increased to the west by another 2 m and for the full 11 m length of the area which had been opened up the previous year. A third pisé wall (4876), running north/south, was located. It was then apparent that the remains of this house comprised at least two rooms (Rooms 1 and 4) which shared the same west wall (4876) and which were separated by the west/east wall (4863) found in the cutting. The eastern side of the western wall (4876) and both sides of the medial wall (4863) were faced with plaster and both rooms contained a compacted clay fill which represented the demolished remains of mud-walls,

<sup>1</sup> For the west/east anomalies and the lack of any sign of buildings in the central, western part of the site, see ch. 16, pp. 261–3.

<sup>2</sup> Within the confines of the cutting, a post-medieval pit (4935) had removed the southern foundation (4936), which accounted for the southern of the two high-resistance features. The gap in the otherwise continuous west/east foundation was also identified in the geophysical survey.

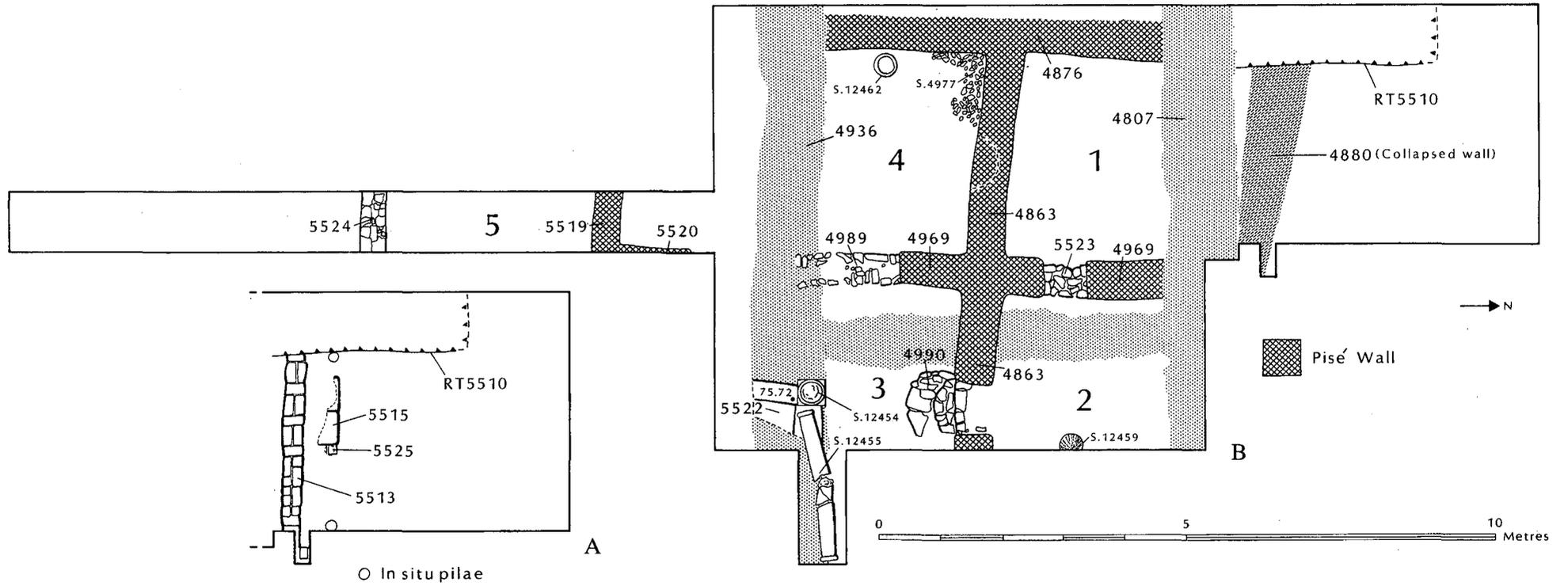


Fig. 70 Area M. A (inset): the hypocaust-heated room, Period 1. B: the Roman house, Period 2.

mixed with plaster fragments. The tops of the walls were defined but excavation was restricted to examining the fill of Room 1, south of the early Byzantine foundation (4807), which cut into the room on its northern side. The eastern side of Room 1 was located c. 0.10 m into the eastern baulk. Also, the second west/east anomaly identified in the resistivity survey proved to be a foundation (4936) for the south side of an early Byzantine building. This foundation had also cut through the remains of the Roman house. In 1990, the area was enlarged by 3 m to the east of the 1987 cutting and by 3 m to the south, the intention being to expose the full width of Room 1 and to allow excavation both within Room 4 and within any adjacent rooms which might be found to the east. Given the late stage in the programme, the depth of deposits over the building (c. 2.25 m from the modern turf-line to the floor of Room 3), and the need for careful recording and conservation of the substantial quantities of wall-plaster and stucco mouldings which could be expected (after the excavation of Room 1), it was determined that any more ambitious enlargement of the area was impractical. Another consideration, in widening the area to the east, was the discovery that no traces of a floor surface for the early Byzantine building had survived above Rooms 1 and 4 of the Roman house and it was hoped that a modest extension of the area east of the cutting might identify an intact occupation level. During the 1990 season, two more rooms were found: Room 2, to the east of Room 1, and Room 3, to the east of Room 4. The interiors of Rooms 3 and 4 were fully excavated and all but the lowest collapse of plaster in Room 2. The *in situ* painted plaster on the walls was recorded. In 1991, the remaining collapsed wall-plaster in Room 2 was recovered and the eastern half of the southern foundation (4936) was dismantled, revealing the corner of a paved court. The southern projection to the area, represented by the primary cutting, was excavated down to the surviving tops of two walls. The first (5519) proved to be the southern wall of Room 4, the second (5524) the foundation for the south wall of another room (Room 5). Given the restricted area available within the cutting, and the probability that the fill contained more frescoes and stucco, it was decided not to disturb the compacted fill of collapsed mud-wall within Room 5 nor that within the southern end of Room 4.<sup>3</sup> Cleaning north of the early Byzantine foundation (4807) during the last week of the excavation uncovered the south wall (5513) of a hypocaust-heated room. In 1991, the section was taken back to allow the recovery of the fallen column (SF 12455) within the peristyle (Room 3).

### PERIOD 1: THE HYPOCAUST-HEATED ROOM (Fig. 70B)

To the north of the Period 4 foundation (4807), and below the collapsed remains of the north wall (4880) of the Period 2 house, was a wall (5513), 0.40 m wide, running west/east, built from regularly coursed tiles (each c. 0.32 by 0.20 m). At the western end, pairs of tiles were laid lengthways along the wall, alternating with single tiles laid across the foundation. The wall had been cut by RT 5510, which was followed north for 3.10 m, where it had robbed out the building's west wall. The south-eastern corner of the room was reinforced with a vertical stone (0.18 by 0.18 m), set in the angle between the two adjacent walls. The preserved wall (5513), plastered with mortar on its northern side, continued down 0.65 m to a concrete floor. Standing *in situ* on this floor and 0.50 m north of the wall, was a row of three hollow, ceramic hypocaust supports (*pilae*), each 0.17 m in diameter and 0.57 m high, spaced 1.50 m apart. The central support was capped by square tiles (5525), one of which (0.15 m square) was complete and still *in situ*. Resting upon this tile-base, was a fragment of a *bipedalis* (5515), 0.55 m in length, broken on its south side, and next to it a second tile, of similar dimensions and similarly preserved, which retained on its upper surface the

<sup>3</sup> At the time of excavation, no firm decision had been taken on the future of the building or its frescoes. The participation of the conservator, Mr T. Sturge during the 1990 and 1991 seasons, allowed the on-site conservation and preliminary assemblage of the frescoes to be undertaken, see report on the frescoes, ch. 15. However, since the Veliko Turnovo museum did not have the financial resources to immediately continue work on the plaster and stucco finds, it was decided that excavation should be restricted to recovering material only from the rooms already under investigation.

degraded remains of an *opus signinum* floor. No other parts of the *suspensura* survived: to the north, it had been fully robbed away and the hole backfilled with robbing spoil.

The southern wall (5513) had been carefully dismantled to the same level as the *opus signinum* floor, which was also at the same height as the floor of the Period 2 house. Although the surviving remains of the *suspensura* had been covered by the north wall (4880) of the later house, the reduced wall must have been included within the clay floor of Room 1; its top was exposed when the Period 2 house was destroyed: it was covered with the same spread of charcoal and tile fragments as was found immediately south of the intrusive Period 4 foundation (4807) and as covered the floor of Room 2.<sup>4</sup> Excavation to a depth of 1.20 m within Room 1 found no evidence to suggest that the hypocaust-heated building had extended to the south.

## Dating

None.<sup>5</sup>

## Discussion

Even though so little of this building survived Period 3 robbing, it can be reasonably ascribed to the second century since it predated the construction of the Period 2 house in the early years of the third.<sup>6</sup> The hypocaust-heated room measured 3.90 m west/east and its western wall (followed by RT 5510) was at least 3.10 m in length. The height of the sub-floor chamber would seem more appropriate to a bath-building than domestic heating.<sup>7</sup>

No remains of the heating-ducts were preserved between the *opus signinum* floor and the south wall (5513). However, five hollow ceramic tubes were found beneath the demolished remains of the north wall (4880) of the Period 2 house.<sup>8</sup> Probably, these had been used as spacers to form a cavity for the hypocaust heating, separating the wall from marble wall-veneer or vertically placed tiles which formed wall-jacketing through which the hot air could circulate.<sup>9</sup>

This room could not have stood in isolation. The building, to which it must have belonged, was not found beneath the Period 2 house.<sup>10</sup> It may have extended north and/or west of the area. Quite

<sup>4</sup> Although the foundation of the hypocaust-heated room was exposed at the time of the destruction of the Period 2 house, no doubt it had been covered by the slab floor, probably provided for the house but removed when the Period 2 building was converted to agricultural and industrial use, see below, p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> The remains of the wall and the hypocaust were badly disturbed by robbing and no *in situ* levels were associated with them.

<sup>6</sup> There is no evidence for any occupation of the site before the foundation of the city, see ch. 2, p. 22. It is reasonable to conjecture that the hypocaust-heated room belonged to a late Antonine building, constructed after the roads had been paved c. 150.

<sup>7</sup> Pers. com., T. Blagg.

<sup>8</sup> The ceramic tubes had probably been dumped into the bottom of the hypocaust when the room was backfilled and levelled for the construction of the Period 2 house.

<sup>9</sup> Each ceramic tube was c. 10.5 cm long and 6.0 cm in diameter, with a central bore 2.5 cm in diameter. The excavation of the baths, within the Roman city, produced numerous examples, one of which still contained an iron holdfast, its 'T-shaped' head protruding from one end. The iron staples would have been inserted into the ceramic tubes, then driven into the wall of the building, while the 'T-shaped head' held the marble wall-veneer in position: Ivanov (1952), 225–6. Locally, they were manufactured at the kiln sites of Pavlikeni and Butovo: Soutov (1985), 82. Although often found in association with baths, they were also used in other buildings heated by hypocausts. They are common finds on the lower Danube, cf. at Romula: Tudor (1968), 333 and fig. 95. They were found in quantity within the hypocaust-heated building excavated at Nicopolis, south-east of the *agora*, the presumed site of the *thermoperipatos*: Ivanov (1980a), 13. In Britain and probably other West European provinces of the Roman Empire, the use of ceramic spacers would seem to have been much less common: E. W. Black, 'The dating of relief-patterned flue-tiles', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 4/3 (1985), 356, 372; idem, *The Roman Villas of South-East England*, BAR Brit. Ser. 171 (1987), 12.

<sup>10</sup> See also below, p. 191.

probably it did continue to the east and may have reached the *cardo*, coming south from the Roman city, as probably did the Period 2 house. Its location would seem to be too far from the centre of the city for it to have been a public building. More probably, it was part of a private dwelling, possibly a private bath-suite, constructed after the middle of the second century, and presumably before the invasion of the Costoboci in 170 and the construction of the fortifications c. 175.<sup>11</sup> The south wall of the hypocaust-heated room must have been dismantled to ground-level before the construction of the Period 2 house.

### PERIOD 2: THE ROMAN HOUSE (Fig. 70)

Excavation beneath the clay floor of the house encountered a thick make-up deposit of silty clay, at least 1.20 m deep. Before the walls were constructed, the Period 1 building must have been demolished to ground-level and the sub-floor chamber of the hypocaust backfilled. The walls of the new building were constructed from limestone rubble and mortar to a height of 0.65 m, with bricks used to strengthen the ends of walls either side of doorways (Plate IV). Irregularities in the faces of the mortared stone walls were infilled with mud. Above, the walls were continued upwards in *pisé*: there was no sign that individual mudbricks had been used in any of the walls which survived to a height of 1.20 m above floor-level and, in places, stood to a maximum height of 1.45 m. The width of the walls varied slightly from 0.54 to 0.65 m. The north wall of Room 1 (4880) was badly disturbed, but retained traces of a plaster face. All the other walls had been plastered on both sides, except for the western face of the west wall (4876) and the southern face of the wall (5524) located in the cutting, both of which were probably outer walls of the building. No traces of walls or foundations were found beyond the north wall (4880) of Room 1 which was probably the north side of the house. The walls had been painted with frescoes, extensive portions of which remained *in situ* and substantial quantities of fallen plaster were found within the building (Plate XXVIII B).<sup>12</sup>

The first room excavated (Room 1), in the north-west corner of the building, communicated with an adjacent room to the east (Room 2), in the south wall of which there was an entrance which led down a flight of steps to the north-west corner of a peristyle (Room 3), to the west of which was Room 4. At the bottom of the cutting (0.50 m below the modern ground surface) the southern wall of Room 4 (5519) and the southern end of its eastern wall (5520), were located and, beyond, another room (Room 5). Both Rooms 1 and 2 were at the same level but 0.40 m higher than the floor of the peristyle (Room 3) and the floor within Room 4.

#### Room 1

Internally, it measured 3.50 m west/east and from its south wall (4863) to the remains of its poorly preserved north wall (4880) c. 3.80 m. On its north side, the room was cut by the stone and earth foundation (4807) of the Period 4 building. On the east side, a doorway, through the eastern wall (4969), opened into Room 2. The threshold (5523), 0.74 m wide, formed a raised step, 0.07 m above the clay floor (Plates IV and XXVIII A). Its southern and western walls were painted with a red dado and, above, the plain white plaster was decorated at each corner with a swirling, red motif (Plate V). The room contained simple, moulded stucco cornices.

<sup>11</sup> The *cardo*, to the east, was probably paved by c. 150 and a side-drain, which headed west from the main drain, suggests that there may have been at least one other house to the north of Area M by the late Antonine period. See Area B, p. 70. It is possible, but less likely, that the building was erected at the very end of the second century and then dismantled before the construction of the Period 2 house, early in the third.

<sup>12</sup> See ch. 15, pp. 243–9.

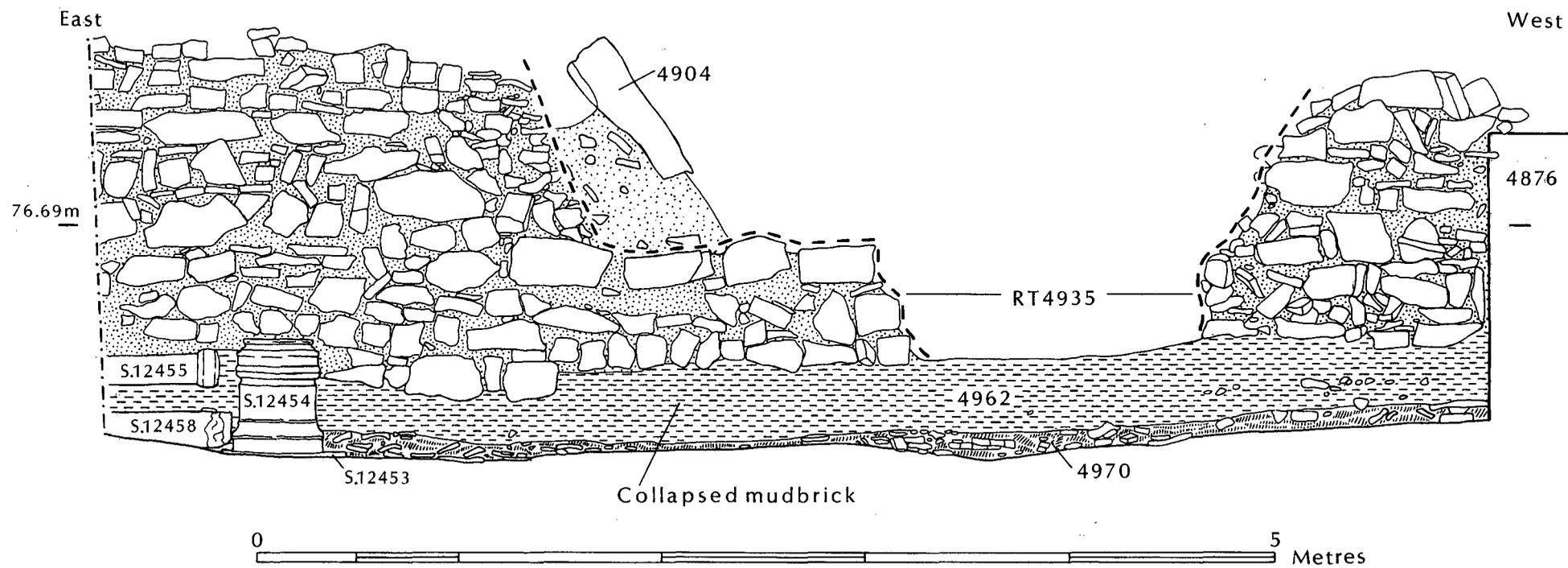


Fig. 71 Area M. Elevation of the northern face of the Period 4 foundation (4939), above the peristyle (Room 3) and Room 4 of the Period 2 house.

## Room 2

This room was not fully within the excavation area. To the north, it was cut by the Period 4 foundation (4807) and continued east beyond the baulk. It measured +2.90 m north/south and +2.55 m west/east. Its walls were painted with the same restrained decoration as Room 1. An entrance, in the south wall (4863), 0.90 m wide, allowed access into Room 3, down two steps (4990), built from clay, rough limestone blocks, and tile (Plate XXIXA).

## Room 3

It contained an *in situ* column-base (SF 12454), 0.58 m high and 0.44 m in diameter, its top (0.36 m in diameter) of appropriate size to support the column (SF 12455), 0.33 m in diameter and 2.37 m long, which lay in two pieces beside it (Plate XXIXB). Both must have been discovered when the foundation-trench for the Period 4 building was cut, and were incorporated into the lowest course of its foundations (Fig. 71). The removal of the eastern section of the Period 4 foundation (4936) revealed two rectangular stone blocks (SF 12458), which formed a raised border, 0.20 m high and 0.39 m wide, to the west and north of a stone slab (5522) which extended south and east into the baulk. The edging blocks also butted a rectangular plinth (SF 12453), 0.56 by 0.60 m, set into the clay floor at the corner of the stone slab and upon which sat the column-base (Plate XXIXB; Fig. 71).

Evidently, the column-base and its column had been erected at the north-west corner of a peristyle, with a paved central courtyard, surrounded by a raised border of stone slabs. The northern colonnade, entered from Room 2, was 2.20 m wide and that to the west, slightly narrower (1.60 m). The walls which formed the north-west corner of the peristyle were plastered and may have been decorated with frescoes, but no traces survived.<sup>13</sup>

## Room 4

From the peristyle, a doorway, 3.40 m wide (between 4969 and 5520), opened into another room to the west. The threshold (4989), of roughly mortared stone, was 0.06 m higher than its clay floor and the floor of the peristyle. Only the northern half of the room lay within the main area, although its north/south length (5.60 m) was determined by the location of its south wall (5519) within the cutting. The width of the room, from the outer wall of the house on the west side (4876) to the east wall (4969), which separated Room 4 from the peristyle, was 3.45 m. This room was the most elaborately decorated. Plaster, still adhering to the walls, was painted with panels and an architectural scene which included a column-base. It had a niche in its north wall, painted in imitation of marbling and had elaborate stucco string-course and cornice mouldings, the latter with bulls' heads in relief and imitating the relief decoration of stone architraves (Fig. 73).<sup>14</sup>

## Room 5

In the cutting, a mortared foundation (5524) represented the southern limit of another room, which must have been entered from the peristyle. Its *pisé* superstructure had collapsed south of the foundation. North/south (between 5519 and 5524) the room measured 3.30 m. Although its western wall was not within the excavation area, it was no doubt formed by the southern continuation of the west wall of Rooms 1 and 4 (4876). It was apparently smaller than Room 4, and was only about as

<sup>13</sup> As was apparent in Room 4, the frescoes, which remained *in situ* on the walls, had faded. Within the open peristyle, any frescoes on the plastered walls would have been exposed to sunlight and moisture and may well have disappeared.

<sup>14</sup> See ch. 15, pp. 249–55.

wide (fronting the peristyle) as it was deep (3.45 m). The southern side of its northern wall (5519) was roughly plastered and there was no sign of painted decoration. Probably, it was less well-decorated and served a more mundane function than Room 4.

In the southern end of the cutting, for a distance of 5.60 m beyond the southern wall of Room 5 (5524), no trace of other foundations were preserved, at least not to the same height as the two walls (5519, 5524) which were located.

### **The destruction of the building**

A layer of charcoal (5517) covered the clay floors in each of the four excavated rooms (Fig. 72). The charred remains of timbers, probably roof-beams, were found on the floor within Room 1 and across the threshold between Rooms 3 and 4. There was no accumulation of soil beneath the charcoal layer to suggest that the building had been left derelict for any length of time before its destruction. Immediately above the charcoal spread, in Rooms 1, 2, and 4 and within the peristyle (Room 3), a layer of broken roof-tiles (4970), all of Laconian type, none of the fragments larger than 0.40 m square, demonstrated that the roof was still intact until the building burnt down (Plate XXXA; Figs 71–72).<sup>15</sup> Amongst the finds from the destruction deposit, were large nails (Type N/1), probably used to secure the tiles or in the construction of the timber roof.<sup>16</sup>

### **Dating**

#### *The construction of the house*

*Pottery.* The make-up deposit, below the clay floor of Room 1, contained hooked-rim lids [256], which date later than *c.* 200, but no ledge-rim bowls [345–397], which were very common after *c.* 250, and were first introduced *c.* 230. The assemblage also contained three body sherds from a bowl (Soultov, Type 7), no other examples of which have been found in the excavations.<sup>17</sup>

#### *The destruction of the house*

*Pottery.* The destruction level within the house contained cooking-pots with thickened-rim and internal lip [106], jars with out-turned, thickened rims [89], large bowls [553], notch-rim bowls [553], and sherds of Ware 96 amphorae, dated *c.* 250–350.

*Coins.* On the floor of the building, sealed by the destruction deposit, an indeterminate second- or third-century coin (Cat. No. 90), 100/117 (Cat. No. 99), 193/211 (Cat. No. 89).

### **Discussion**

The house was built probably within the first quarter of the third century. The size of the building, its high standard of interior decoration, including its peristyle, as well as its frescoes and moulded

<sup>15</sup> Convex roof-tiles were invariably used, both in the Roman and early Byzantine periods, at Nicopolis. Cf. also Area A, p. 57: an example of the Greek influence on building practices at Nicopolis. By contrast, at Novae *imbrices* and *tegulae* were used in the legionary fortress, during the first to third centuries, but Laconian tiles in the early Byzantine period (pers. com., T. Sarnowski). Note that excavation in Room 5 was terminated before reaching the floor-level, see above, p. 189.

<sup>16</sup> See, similarly, Area A, p. 57.

<sup>17</sup> See Soultov (1985), 67.

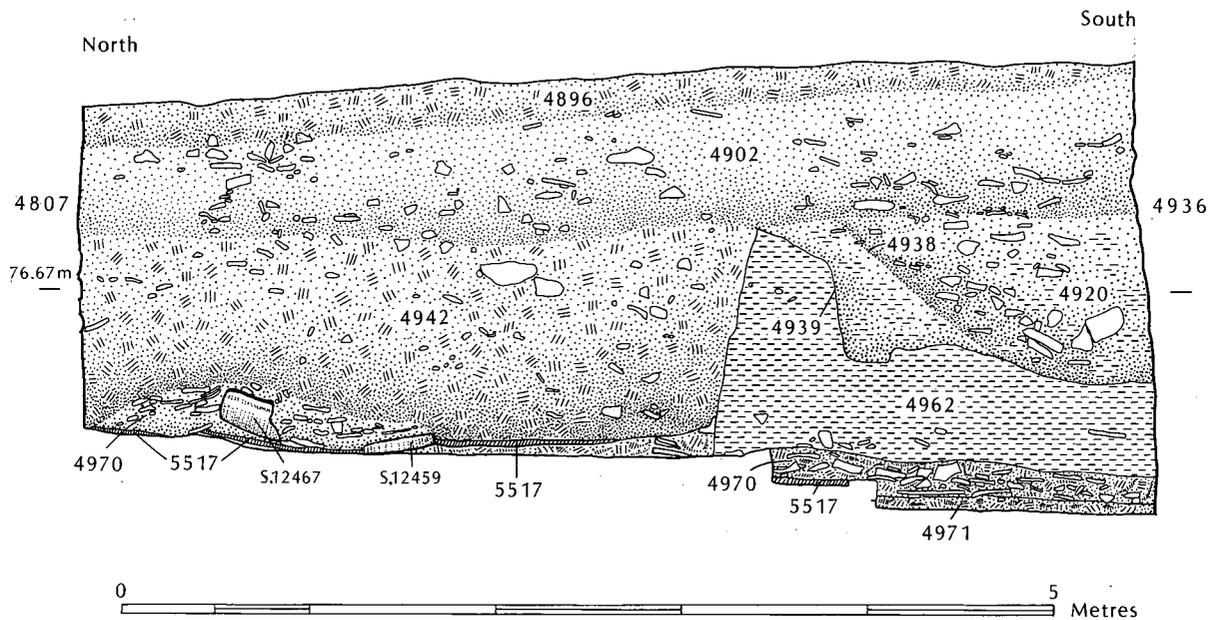


Fig. 72 Area M. Section, east side of the area, between the two west/east foundations (4807 and 4936) of the Period 4 building.

stucco cornices, point to a residence of some pretension (Fig. 73). The use of mortared stone for foundations and the lower parts of the walls, completed in pisé, would seem to have been the normal method of building both houses within the city and villas in the countryside, a method well-suited to the climate and perhaps to local resources.<sup>18</sup> Peristyle villas, with a central courtyard, surrounded on three, sometimes four sides by rooms, were built in the city's territory during the second and early third centuries.<sup>19</sup> During the late Roman period, large courtyard-houses occupied entire *insulae*, within the city (Fig. 3).<sup>20</sup> The house in Area M evidently conformed to this plan although whether it had a complete peristyle or whether the inner court was surrounded by colonnades only on three sides remains uncertain. Rooms 1, 4, and 5 formed the west wing, Room 3 the north-west corner of the peristyle, surrounding a paved central court, and Room 2 must have been at the western end of a northern range of rooms. The west wing, as excavated, was c. 15 m in length. The outer, west wall (4876) of the building lies c. 20 m west of the projected line of the *cardo*, excavated in Areas B and C. It would seem probable that the east side of the house fronted onto this road.<sup>21</sup> There was no evidence that the building had an upper storey.<sup>22</sup> A tentative reconstruction of the building's ground-plan can be suggested (Fig. 74).

In plan, as well as in decoration and pisé construction, the house followed the Greek tradition of domestic architecture, as would be expected for a city founded on the Greek model, and one which had Greeks from Asia Minor among its most eminent citizens and its skilled artisans.<sup>23</sup> Although there was no asymmetry in the location of the doorway into Room 4 to suggest that the room had been provided with couches, the lavish decoration indicates that it was of particular importance.

<sup>18</sup> Poulter (1983), 86 and note 73, 111. Timber may well have been in short supply. Even today, mud-walls on a stone foundation is the preferred building method in the village of Nikiup. It provides excellent insulation against summer heat and winter cold.

<sup>19</sup> Poulter (1983), 86–90; T. Ivanov, 'Das peristylhaus in Mösien und Thrakien,' *Eirene, Studia Graeca et Latina* 22 (1985), 61–9.

<sup>20</sup> See ch. 2, pp. 31–2.

<sup>21</sup> This *cardo*, paved c. 150, continued in use until the middle of the third century. See Area B, pp. 70–1 and Area C, p. 183.

<sup>22</sup> See ch. 15, pp. 254–5.

<sup>23</sup> Of particular relevance here is a second/early-third-century inscription, which records the presence in the city of a 'domotektos' from Nicaea, see ch. 1, p. 11, also ch. 2, pp. 24–5.

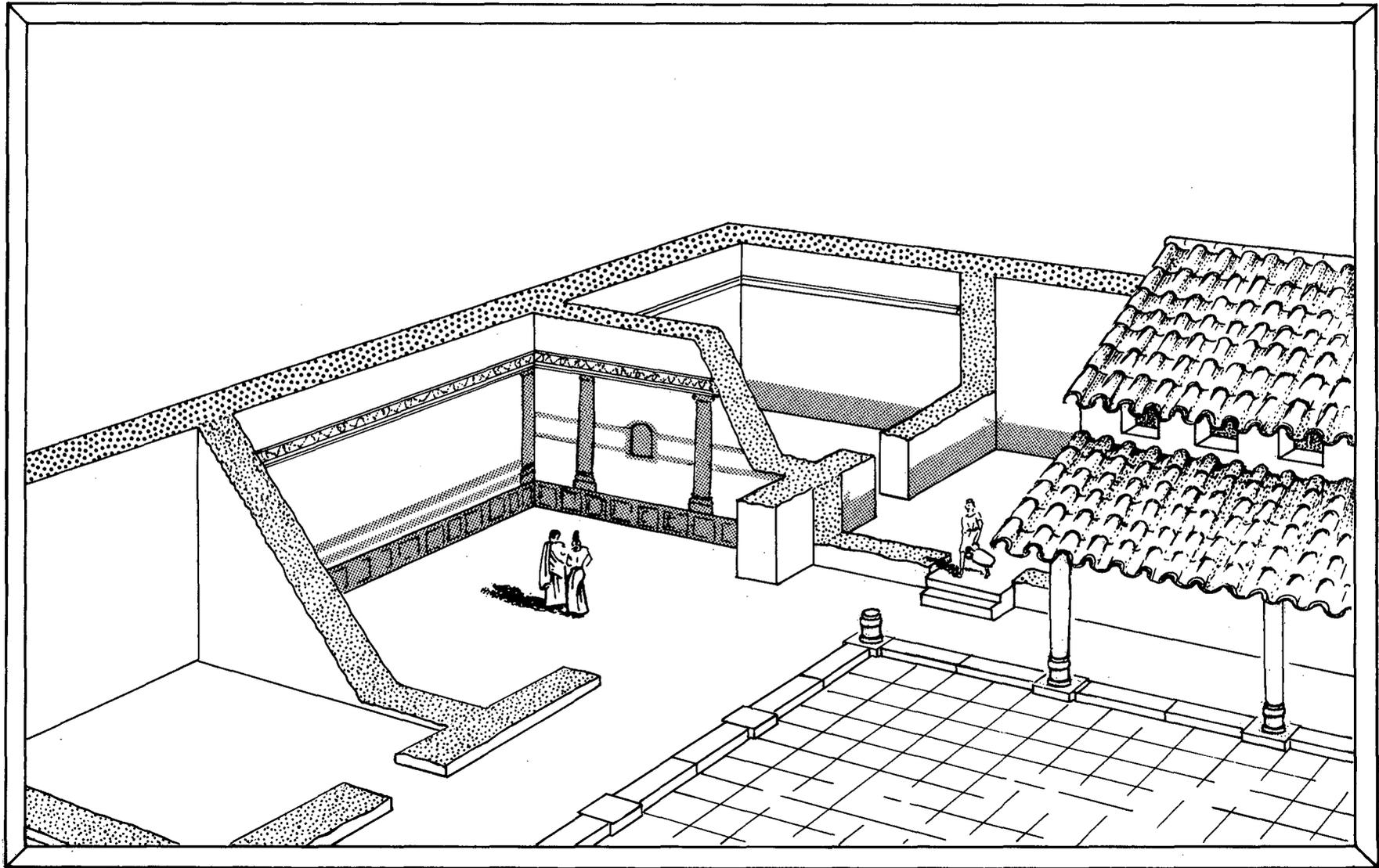


Fig. 73 Area M. Perspective reconstruction of the excavated rooms of the Period 2 Roman house.

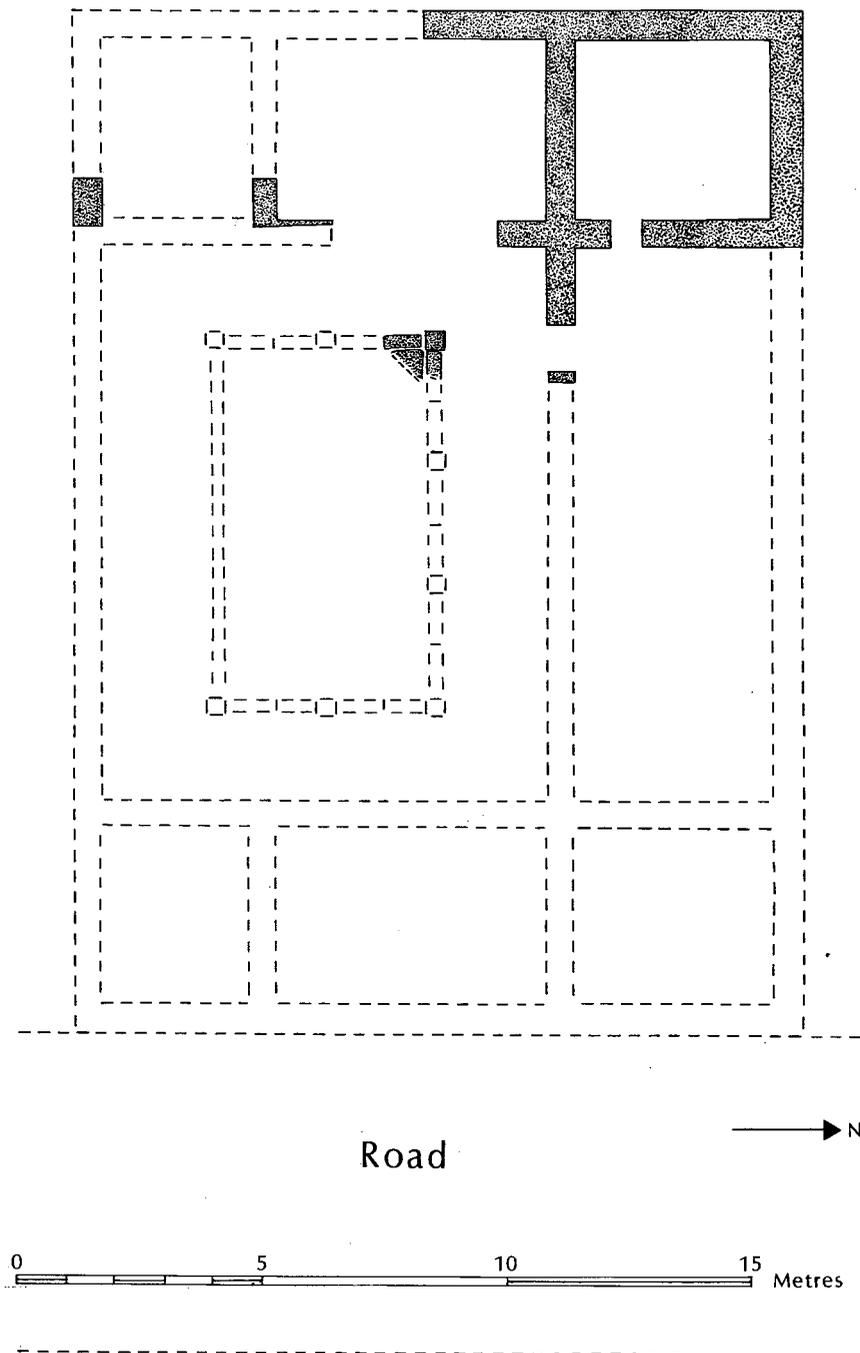


Fig. 74 Area M. Tentative reconstruction of the plan of the Roman house, Period 2.

Probably it was an *andron*. Given the width of its doorway opening onto the peristyle and the lack of underfloor heating, it is likely that the room was only for use in the summer months.<sup>24</sup> The house, built early in the third century, was outside the defences, erected *c.* 175. The character of the building supports the general impression that the city quickly recovered its prosperity in the Severan period, after the invasion of the Costoboci. Its location suggests that the inhabitants of Nicopolis in this period were no longer concerned about the security of the Moesian frontier but had begun to reoccupy the extramural area.<sup>25</sup> The building continued to be occupied for long enough for its

<sup>24</sup> The room would have been difficult to insulate during the winter. On the climate, see ch. 1, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> There may well have been other extramural houses, east and west of Area M, at a similar distance from the Roman defences, see ch. 2, p. 27.

frescoes to be renewed on at least one occasion: traces of earlier decoration survived at the bottom of walls in Rooms 1 and 4.<sup>26</sup>

The building did not continue in use as a private house down to the time of its destruction. Access to the peristyle from Room 2, was by way of a short flight of steps (4990), which were crudely constructed and are unlikely to have been original (Plate XXIXA). Clay floors, in themselves, may not have been unusual.<sup>27</sup> However, the steps, created by the raised thresholds between Rooms 1 and 2, and between the peristyle and Room 4, would have been potentially hazardous to all but the most wary of visitors. It is, therefore, likely that the floors of the rooms and the floor of the peristyle were originally paved. *Opus sectile* was commonly used in the Roman city but the height of the thresholds suggests a thicker medium – probably limestone slabs, which would also have discretely covered the remnants of the early plaster, which survived at the foot of the walls. The flooring and steps, constructed from easily portable limestone slabs, were probably removed when the house ceased to be used as a private residence. Thereafter, clay floors apparently sufficed and the roughly-built flight of steps restored communication between the peristyle and Room 2.

No finds were recovered from the floor of Room 1 but in Room 2 there was a small bowl (SF 12450), found inverted on the floor, fragments of another vessel (SF 12463), and, curiously, a ceramic hypocaust support (SF 12467), perhaps reused as a container, as well as a quern-stone (SF 12459), all immediately overlain by the destruction deposit (Fig. 72). In the peristyle, another complete cup (SF 12382) sat on the floor, close to the western wall (4969). Room 4 contained a limestone mortar, with everted sides and a pedestal base (SF 12462), probably used to grind cereals.<sup>28</sup> A curious find was a pile of water-worn pebbles (4977) in the north-west corner of this room (Plate XXVIII, Fig. 70). They can hardly have served as pestles: such a concentration of pebbles would seem an excessive provision. Seeds of bitter vetch and barley mixed with by-product waste, found in the destruction level, suggest that crop-cleaning was carried out in the house. No doubt the building, during the last phase of its use, served an agricultural function. Slag also implies that the house was used for metal-working.

By the second quarter of the third century, occupation outside the walls may well have been considered too dangerous and the threat of barbarian attack might have been the reason why the house was no longer occupied. It is impossible to determine how long the building served an agricultural function but it would seem to have been destroyed towards the middle of the third century.<sup>29</sup> The failure to retrieve the vessels from within the building and to salvage the tiles from the roof could be explained if the house was accidentally destroyed by fire. However, as the house was within bow-shot of the city walls, its hasty destruction may have been carried out by the citizens themselves, perhaps a precautionary measure, intended to deny an enemy cover in the event of an attack.<sup>30</sup>

### PERIOD 3: THE DEMOLITION OF THE HOUSE AND PITS (Fig. 75)

After the fire which destroyed its roof, the building may have stood as a ruin for a short time, long enough for some of the wall-plaster to collapse and for vegetal growth to establish itself on the

<sup>26</sup> See ch. 15, p. 249, Figs 93B and 96C. This method of replacing plaster decoration, appropriate for walls of *pisé* construction, would have been easy to achieve, unlike walls built entirely of stone or brick, where the primary plaster was regularly left in place and ‘pecked’ to provide a rough surface which could retain new plaster.

<sup>27</sup> See the second-century house in Area A, p. 58.

<sup>28</sup> Similar vessels have been found at Nicopolis and have been published (as Type 3) by I. Tsurov, ‘Kamenni sudove ot Velikoturnovski okrug’, *GMSB* 13 (1987), 33–5.

<sup>29</sup> The absence of mid- to late third- and fourth-century coins is probably significant. Period 3 may well have commenced before the end of the third century, see below, p. 201.

<sup>30</sup> The city was besieged in 250 and this would seem a not improbable context for the destruction of the building, see ch. 1, pp. 13–14.

walls.<sup>31</sup> However, the building was not left for long enough to allow the exposed walls to erode: no traces of dissolved mud-walls were found above the destruction layer.<sup>32</sup> The house was then systematically demolished; the upper part of the medial wall (4863) between Rooms 1 and 4 was toppled northwards.<sup>33</sup> The south wall (4863) of Room 2 was pushed in the opposite direction: its collapsed pisé superstructure (4962) covered the floor of the portico (Fig. 72). Each of the four rooms was filled to a height of *c.* 1.20 to 1.45 m with the compacted remains of the mud superstructure (4962), including portions of stucco mouldings and plaster fragments, thereby preserving the lower portions of each of the building's walls (Plate XXXB).<sup>34</sup> Within the peristyle (Room 3), this demolition deposit also surrounded the *in situ* column-base and underlay its fallen column (Fig. 71).

The remains of the house were covered by a thick deposit of clayey silt (4942), varying in depth from 0.65 to 1.25 m, which included fragments of tile, large pottery sherds, burnt mud-wall fragments, charcoal, and animal bone (Fig. 72). This rubbish deposit was itself cut by pits, clearly visible where they cut into the remains of the Period 2 house, but more difficult to identify higher up, where the fills were often indistinguishable from the soil into which they were cut.<sup>35</sup> The pits were usually steep-sided although one (4859) had suffered basal erosion, suggesting that it had been left open for some time. Apart from other domestic rubbish, the pits were used for the disposal of crop-processing waste.

The backfill of the robber-trench (RT 5510), which followed the west wall of the Period 1 building, included a column-base (SF 12106) and was cut by the foundation (4807) for the Period 4 building, as was another pit (4872), immediately to the south. A pit (4831), cut by the same foundation and backfilled with rubble, was probably dug to rob the Period 1 hypocaust and a small oval pit (4833) may have been dug for the same reason. Within Room 1, a series of intercutting pits (4850, 4842, 4859) were readily identified, where they cut into the demolition deposit of mud-walls within the Period 2 building. Above Room 4, only one pit (4858) can be confidently ascribed to this period: others may well have been destroyed by pits dug in Period 5 (Fig. 77). A solitary pit (5507) cut the mud-wall collapse beyond the southern wall (5524) of the Period 2 house. On the east side of the area, two pits (4952, 4956) were cut by, and therefore predated, the foundations for the Period 4 building. Notable were two successive pits (4939, 4938), also cut by the foundations (4936) of the Period 4 building. Both were *c.* 0.80 m deep and penetrated deeply into the demolition deposit of mud-walls (4962), within the peristyle of the Period 2 house (Fig. 72). The fill (4920) of the second pit (4938), in addition to domestic waste, bone and corroded iron fragments, included rubble and part of a column (SF 12356); perhaps it was backfilled in preparation for the Period 4 building.

<sup>31</sup> Notably, in the south-west corner of Room 2, sections of plaster, detached from the wall, had slipped vertically down to the floor. The fallen plaster from Room 1 included fragments which still retained traces of root action, presumably from a climbing plant such as ivy.

<sup>32</sup> Had the building been left standing for more than a year or so, the mud-walls would have quickly dissolved, cf. Area F, pp. 149, 152.

<sup>33</sup> The plaster from the upper part of the north wall of Room 4 ended up in Room 1, see ch. 15, p. 254.

<sup>34</sup> This demolition deposit comprised fragments of wall-plaster, both face up and face down, interleaved with compacted remains of the pisé walls, and mixed with chunks of stucco cornice, indicating that the upper parts of the walls had been pushed over then levelled, and had not simply collapsed.

<sup>35</sup> Despite repeated spraying, the rapid evaporation of moisture from the light porous soil explains why pits were difficult to define, particularly their upper limits. A concentration of limestone blocks and rubble fragments was often the first sign of a pit-fill. This level was excavated in spits, 0.05–0.10 m thick. Consequently, when pits were found, it was not always possible to establish whether or not they had been truncated during the removal of previous spits. Pits of Period 3 could be most readily identified where they were cut by the Period 4 foundations and where they cut into the underlying mud-walls of Period 2. Distinguishing between Period 3 pits and the deepest pits, dug in Period 5, where their upper limits could not be confidently identified, and where no direct relationship could be inferred between them and the Period 4 building, was difficult; they were ascribed to one or other of the two periods by the date of the pottery and finds they contained.

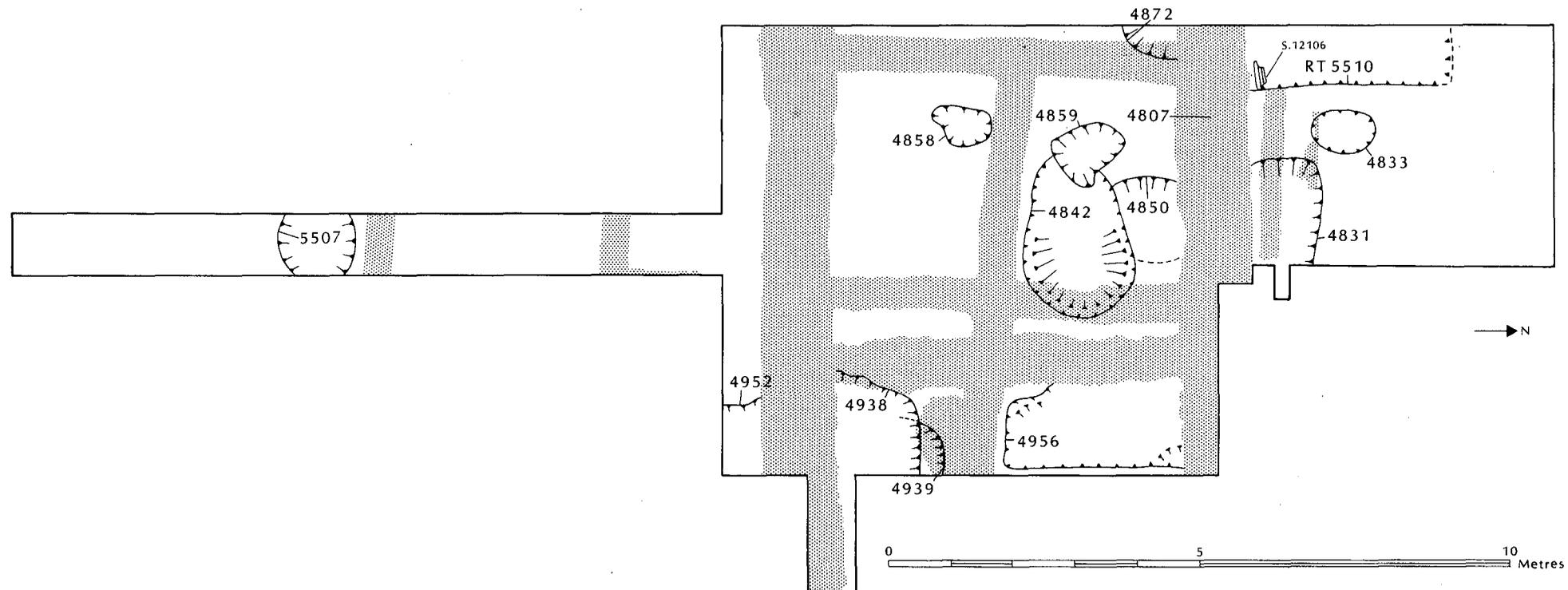


Fig. 75 Area M. The pits, Period 3.

### Dating

*Pottery.* Pit 4842 contained straight, flaring-neck jars [151] and amphora sherds [1053, 1057], dated later than *c.* 350. Pit 4956 contained sherds of amphorae [1057], a jar with straight, flaring neck [152], and a small bowl with out-turned rim [614], dated to the late fourth century. A dump of silty clay, which sealed RT 5510, produced a mixed assemblage, datable 250–400: late types represented were sherds of amphorae [1057] and an everted, bevelled-rim jar [119].

*Coins.* From the fill of RT 5510: 194/211 (Cat. No. 114), *c.* 300/450 (Cat. No. 582). From a dump deposit which sealed RT 5510, 294/305 (Cat. No. 156). From a silty, clay loam, representing the primary dump in Room 1 over the demolition deposit of collapsed mud-walls, 294/305 (Cat. No. 155). From the fill of Pit 4859, 348/361 (Cat. No. 302).

### Discussion

After the fire which destroyed the Period 2 house, the structure may have been left derelict for several months, but the upper walls were then systematically demolished and the site levelled. No new building was erected. Possibly from as early as the late third century and certainly during the fourth the site was used for the disposal of rubbish. The soil build-up reached a height of *c.* 0.65–1.25 m over the remains of the Roman house. However, on the northern side of the area, the amount of build-up decreases rapidly towards the northern section, where topsoil was barely 0.50 m above the floor-level for the Period 1 hypocaust (equivalent also to the floor-level of the Period 2 house). This suggests that there was a northern limit to the Period 3 dumping, which accounts for the pronounced downward slope of the present ground surface, to the north of the area. This slope also extends the full width of the site, parallel to, and *c.* 50 m south of, the Roman defences.<sup>36</sup> It may well be that the disposal of rubbish, north of the site of the Roman house, was prohibited in the late Roman period.<sup>37</sup>

### PERIOD 4: THE EARLY BYZANTINE BUILDING (Fig. 76)

Two wall-foundations (4807, 4936), both trench-built, passed through the area on a west/east alignment, 5.50 m apart.<sup>38</sup> The northern foundation (4807) was 1.20 m wide, built of angular limestone blocks bonded with soil. The sides of the foundation were constructed from large stones, roughly coursed, with some admixture of reused tile and soil. Only on the north side did the foundation narrow slightly towards the bottom, creating a slightly bowed profile. The foundation reached the floor of the Roman house (Period 2), slicing through its walls (4876, 4969). The foundation was 2.10 m deep and the uppermost course survived to within 0.50 m of the modern ground surface. Its irregular top indicated that it was not preserved to full height: no trace of superstructure remained.

The southern foundation (4936) was similarly built from regularly coursed, angular limestone blocks, bonded with soil, its sides almost vertical (Fig. 71). The dismantling of the eastern half of the foundation established that the core of the wall comprised limestone blocks and humic black soil in roughly equal proportions. Like 4807, the foundation was 1.20 m wide. Although the central section, within the area, had been robbed by a post-medieval trench (4935), its highest surviving course, on the east side of the area, had a flat top, preserved *c.* 0.20 m below the modern turf-line. It

<sup>36</sup> On this 'valley' between the Roman defences and Area M, see ch. 1, p. 6–7.

<sup>37</sup> See also, Area B, which was not used for building in this period, p. 75.

<sup>38</sup> That they were trench-built was particularly clear where the northern foundation (4807) cut through the west wall (4876) of the Period 2 house and where the foundation-trench for the medial wall (4927) cut through the top of the wall (4863) separating the peristyle (Room 3) from Room 2.

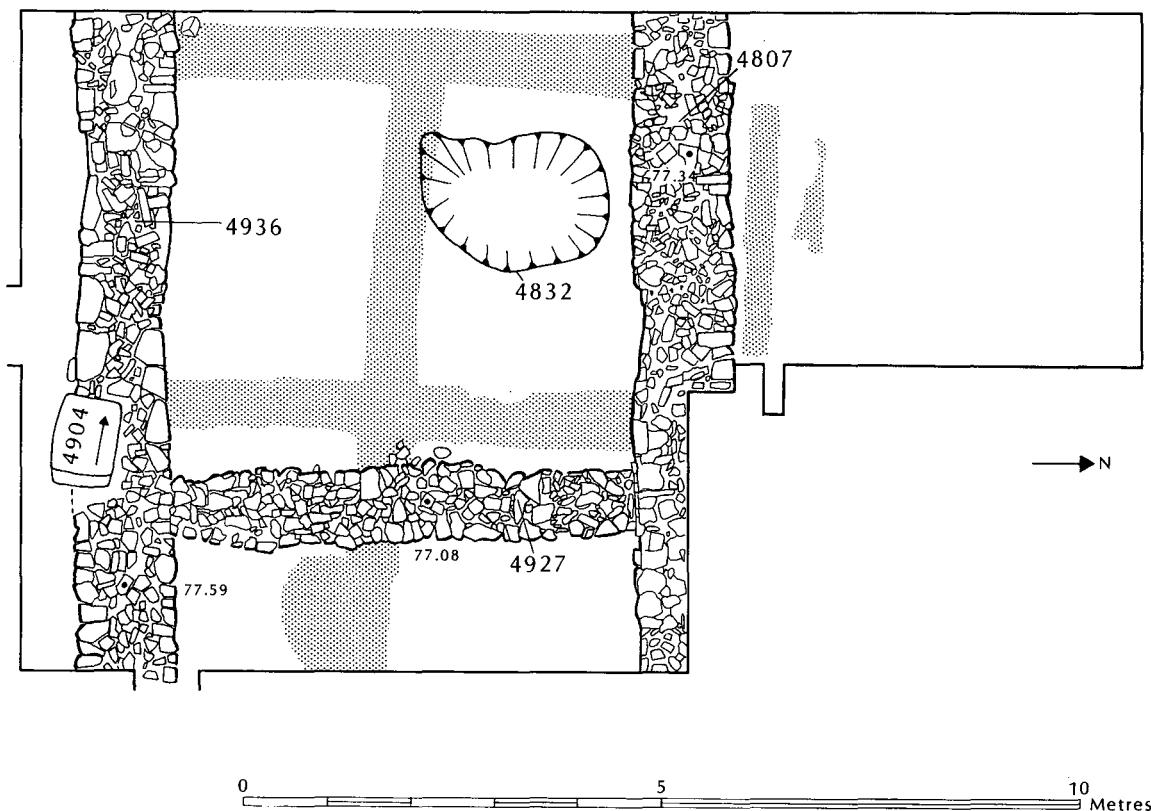


Fig. 76 Area M. The early Byzantine building, Period 4.

seems probable that this was the base for the superstructure of the building. Here, close up against the eastern section, the foundations were 2.25 m deep (Fig. 72). Where the construction-trench had encountered the *in situ* column-base and its fallen column, within the Roman house, they were incorporated into the lowest course of the foundations, which then continued west at this slightly higher level, cutting into the deposit which comprised the remains of the mud-walls (4962) within the peristyle (Room 3) and within Room 4, and penetrating to within 0.50 to 0.70 m of the floors of the Period 2 house (Fig. 71). Inclined sharply downwards, where it had slumped into the fill of RT 4935, a large limestone block (4904), probably a reused road slab, had fallen from the top of the foundation. It may have served as a threshold or may have been used in the building's superstructure.

A third foundation (4927) ran north/south between the two west/east foundations, butting up against 4807 and roughly bonded into 4936. Its foundation-trench cut through the top of the dividing-wall (4863) between the peristyle (Room 3) and Room 4. The foundation, 0.92 m wide, notably narrower than the two west/east foundations, was also *c.* 1.10 m less deep than 4807 and 4936.

Nowhere was there any surviving floor surface. Between both foundations, a spread of rubble and silty loam (4902) contained the remains of the upper foundations, lying immediately above the clayey silt build-up (4942) of Period 3 (Fig. 72).<sup>39</sup>

The only other feature which can be assigned to this period, was a large pit (4832), 1.80 m in diameter and 0.60 m deep, dug into the Period 3 build-up above Room 1 (Period 2). It was filled with rubble and fragments of a limestone column (SF 12053) and a column capital (SF 12056). Probably it was backfilled during the levelling of the site in preparation for the construction of the building.

<sup>39</sup> The rubble was evenly spread between the two walls, probably because the site had been roughly levelled in preparation for Period 4 occupation.

In the cutting, south of the main excavation area, above the surviving walls (5519/5520, 5524) of the Period 2 house and below topsoil, there was no discernable change in the character of a silty clay deposit and no sign of an occupation surface, contemporary with the Period 4 building, nor any trace of a metalled road.<sup>40</sup>

### Dating

*Pottery.* The lowest level of rubble collapse between the two west/east foundations (4936 and 4807) contained ledge-rim bowls with upturned edge [435], concave-rimmed lids [249], jars with flaring neck and flat rims [148], jars with everted bevelled rims [120], and jars with squared ledge-rims with an internal lip, dating *c.* 450. The upper rubble spread and the pit (4832) contained everted, bevelled-rim jars [113, 114] and jars with triangular section rims [138], dated 450/600.

### Discussion

The two early Byzantine foundations (4936, 4807), 1.20 m wide and *c.* 2.25 m deep, although not mortared, must have been built to support a heavy superstructure. Both in width and depth they have no parallel elsewhere on the site and no similar foundations have been published from any other site on the lower Danube. The walls of the building must have been *c.* 1.00 m thick. As noted above, the flat top to the foundation (4936) probably formed a platform upon which the superstructure was built. As elsewhere on the site in this period, the lower portion of the walls were no doubt built of rubble with earth bonding and excavation at the eastern end of this range of buildings indicated that large sun-dried mudbricks were used in the superstructure.<sup>41</sup> These west/east foundations, identified in the geophysical survey, would seem to have been part of one of perhaps three such structures, each *c.* 30 m in length, arranged in a line across the centre of the site, from the west gate as far as the eastern side of the fortifications and the north side of the east gate.<sup>42</sup> Insulation may have been one of the reasons why the walls were so thick, but it would seem probable that the foundations supported at least one upper floor. The north/south foundation (4927) must have been an internal partition wall. Given that the floor-level of the building must have been scarcely 0.20 m below the modern topsoil, it is not surprising that no traces of internal surfaces survived.<sup>43</sup> As to its function, it may well have been a store-building. If, as is likely, it had one or more upper storeys, it may also have provided accommodation. The partition-wall suggests that the building may well have been subdivided into smaller units. Conceivably it may have been used as barracks.

The absence of any sign of a west/east road is notable. Given the proximity of the early Byzantine occupation level to the present turf-line, any traces of a lightly metalled surface, such as the one identified at the east gate, may well not have survived.<sup>44</sup> However, it is equally certain that if there had been a paved road or any depth of metalling, this would have been found.

## PERIOD 5: POST-MEDIEVAL OCCUPATION (Fig. 77)

A large pit or trench (4935) cut through the southern foundation (4936) of the Period 4 building (Fig. 71). Since it fully removed the central part of the foundation but did not cut into the

<sup>40</sup> One of the primary objectives of the cutting was to locate the road, which presumably linked the west and east gates, and which must have been the principal route within the early Byzantine defences; see above, p. 187.

<sup>41</sup> See Area H, p. 237.

<sup>42</sup> See ch. 16, p. 263 and ch. 2, pp. 40–1.

<sup>43</sup> On the erosion of topsoil, above early Byzantine occupation surfaces, see ch. 1, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> See Area S, p. 231.

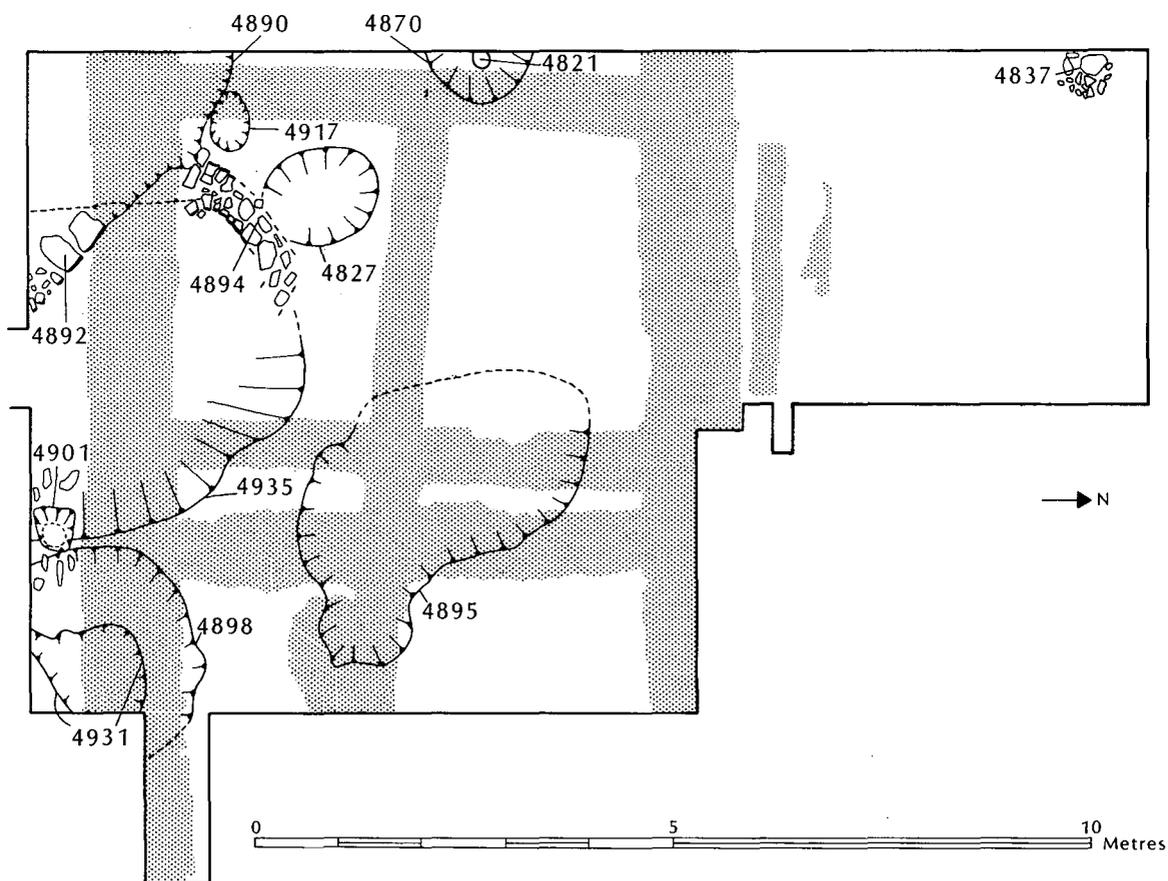


Fig. 77 Area M. Post-medieval pits and buildings, Period 5.

underlying Period 3 demolition deposit of collapsed mud-walls (4962), it was probably dug to rob the Period 4 foundations. Another small pit (4827) had been dug to the north-west. Both pits were backfilled before the erection of at least two buildings which continued beyond the southern baulk. In the south-west corner, the north-east side of a *grubenhaus* (4890), apparently orientated south/east by north/west, was revetted with a rough wall of limestone blocks and earth (4892). At right-angles to the north-eastern side of the *grubenhaus*, a short length of a stone and earth wall (4894) overlay the western lip of the backfilled trench (4935). The compacted, silty clay surface, west of this wall, was cut by a post-hole (4917), close to the edge of the *grubenhaus* and to the north-west by a substantial post-pit (4870), which cut deeply down to the wall (4876) of the Period 2 house. It had a central post-pipe (4821) containing burnt wood. A burnt wattle-and-daub wall, which may have been part of the superstructure of the *grubenhaus*, had collapsed to the north and overlay the occupation surface.

On the other side of the area, immediately above the foundations of the Period 5 building, the probable northern side of another structure was represented by a single post-hole (4901), found close to the southern section, and by another collapsed spread of burnt wattle-and-daub (4896) which extended north-east, immediately below topsoil, and above a compacted clayey silt surface (Fig. 72).

A concentration of tile and stones (4837) suggested the presence of another structure, only the eastern end of which was identified, in the north-western corner of the area.

Dug from immediately below the turf-line, there were shallow pits (4895, 4898, 4931), which cut into the destruction level of burnt wattle-and-daub on the eastern side of the area.

### Dating

*Pottery.* Both spreads of burnt wattle-and-daub, the fills of RT 4935, and Pits 4895 and 4898 contained post-medieval pottery.

*Coins.* Two issues of Abd-al-Hamid I (1774–1789) were found, one in the destruction level, the other in the upper fill of the *grubenhaus* (4885) (Cat. Nos 653, 654).

### Discussion

After the initial robbing of the Period 4 foundation (4936), RT 4935 was backfilled and a *grubenhaus*, perhaps with a superstructure of wattle-and-daub, was cut into its fill. The other structures, the stone and earth footing (4894) and post-holes immediately to the north, may either have been related to the *grubenhaus* or part of another structure extending beyond the western section. A second building, which also had wattle-and-daub walls, probably lay immediately south of the area, on its eastern side. The two coins suggest that the buildings were occupied in the late eighteenth century. As elsewhere across the site, these post-medieval buildings were destroyed by fire.<sup>45</sup> The only sign of later activity was represented by shallow pits, two of which (4898, 4931) removed the uppermost course of the Period 4 foundations (4936).

<sup>45</sup> For discussion of this destruction of the post-medieval settlement and possible explanations, see ch. 2, pp. 48–51.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# AREA P: THE RECTANGULAR TOWER

### Summary

*An in situ column-base, probably belonging to a colonnade flanking the west side of the cardo maximus, and a cobbled road surface were covered by a third-century destruction deposit. Subsequent dumping of burnt debris, probably during the second half of the third century, was followed by abandonment in the late Roman period and a build-up of soil, perhaps used for cultivation. A rectangular tower, contemporary with the early Byzantine curtain-wall, was constructed with foundations partly trench-built and partly free-standing: the interior was then backfilled with a dump of occupation and destruction material from the abandoned Roman city. The primary clay floor of the tower was covered by a destruction deposit, immediately overlain by a layer of burnt mud-wall fragments, levelled to form a secondary floor. Probably before the tower was finally abandoned, timbers were removed and perhaps some of the roof-tiles were salvaged. The tower's foundations and probably its superstructure were robbed in the post-medieval period.*

### INTRODUCTION

Although it was evident from the outline of the robber-trenches, flanked by mounds of spoil, that the defences had been extensively robbed, it was considered possible that *in situ* floors might have survived within towers (Fig. 5 and Plate VIII). In 1989, Tower 1, immediately north of the presumed site of the early Byzantine west gate, was selected for a trial excavation. The course of the curtain-wall and the outline of the tower were visible as surface depressions, surrounded by mounds of spoil and large limestone blocks, discarded during robbing (Fig. 78).<sup>1</sup> A preliminary cutting (1.30 north/south by 1.80 m east/west and 1.20 m deep) in the south-western corner of the central mound confirmed that the tower's floor was intact. The area was then laid out to extend from the curtain-wall to the west end of the tower and south from the central west/east axis of the tower as far as RT 5006 which followed the foundation for the tower's south wall. Excavation continued down to a depth of 2.50 m and into pre-tower levels (Plate XXXIA). In 1990, the northern half of the tower was excavated down to the pre-tower land-surface. Natural was not reached in either of the two seasons of excavation.<sup>2</sup>

### PERIOD 1: A SECOND-CENTURY COLONNADE AND ROAD AND A THIRD-CENTURY DESTRUCTION DEPOSIT (Fig. 79)

In the south-eastern corner of the area, the roughly dressed plinth of a column-base (SF 14718) was set into a clay make-up and to a depth in excess of 0.24 m (Plate XXXIIB). To the south it abutted a

<sup>1</sup> The outline of the robber-trenches suggested that Tower 1 had been circular or U-shaped: a presumption disproved by excavation.

<sup>2</sup> Given the restricted area of excavation and the depth of robber spoil close to the baulks, it was too dangerous to continue down to natural.

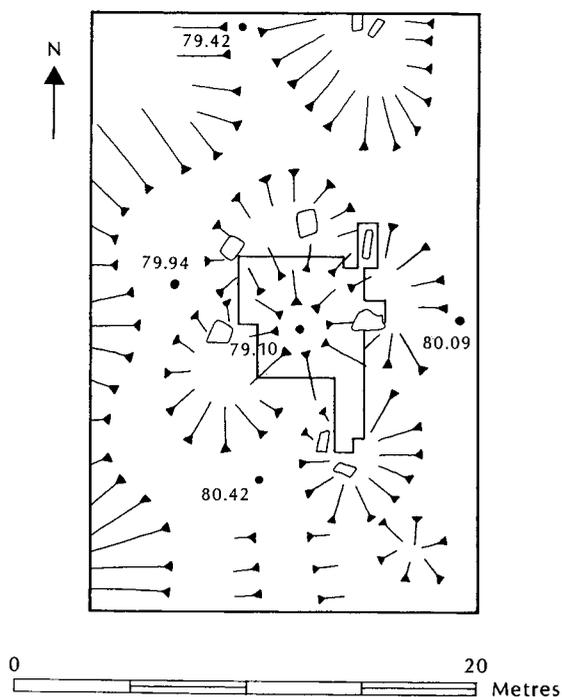


Fig. 78 Location of excavation, Area P.

burnt clay surface, covered by the remains of a burnt mud-wall (5052), cut to the south and east by the foundation-trenches for the Period 2 tower and curtain-wall. A layer of cobbles (5030) surrounded the top of the column-base and extended north into the section but abruptly terminated to the west where it met a silty clay surface (5053), which continued beyond the western section and which was apparently contiguous with the clay surface surrounding the column-base. On its northern side, this silty clay level was cut by a ditch (5004), orientated south-west by north-east, the south-eastern side of which was identified close to the northern section. A thick spread of broken roof-tiles and charcoal had slumped into the ditch and covered the clay surface (5053). A dump of silty clay (5029) overlay the roof-tiles within the trench (5004) and extended east across the cobbled surface (5030) above which a second deposit of silty clay loam (5025) filled the top of the trench (5004). This included lumps of burnt mud-wall, metal finds, notably an arrow-head (SF 14730), as well as fine-sieved crop-processing waste and architectural fragments, amongst which were part of a marble statue (SF 14343) and a column shaft (SF 14318). A final dump of silty clay (5024), 0.60 m deep, containing more fragments of burnt mud-wall, painted plaster, metal, glass, pottery, and seed-processing waste (Fig. 80).

Above these successive dumps of debris, there was a friable, crumbly silt deposit (5020) with a clear but irregular upper horizon (Fig. 80; Plate XXXIB). It contained few finds, amongst which were fragments of scale-armour (SF 14268). This would seem to have formed an irregular ground surface and the texture of the soil suggests that it may have been used for cultivation.

### Dating

*Pottery.* The dump of silty clay (5029) contained amphora sherds [1050], rolled-rim cooking-pot lids [257], thickened rim jars [94], ledge-rim bowls [355], and bowls with angular rims [564]. The dump of destruction debris (5025) produced rolled-rim lids [257], jars with out-turned thickened rims [83, 90], jars with thickened sloping ledge-rims [27, 43, 44], thickened-rim jars [94, 97], jars with squared ledge-rims [158], jars with thickened rim and internal ledge [96, 106], a small bowl with flattened out-turned rim [605], and sherds of amphora [1050], all dated 250–350.

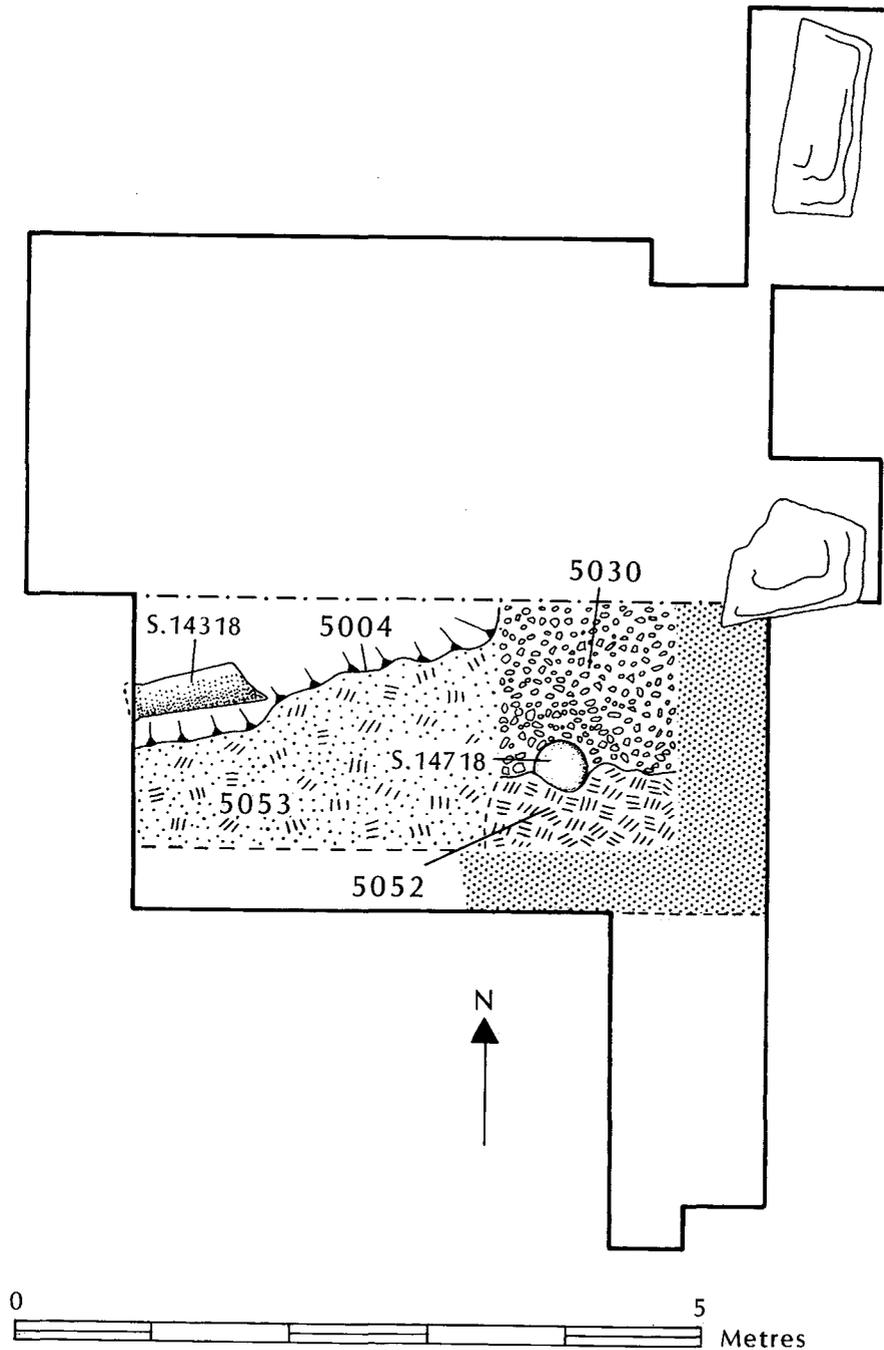


Fig. 79 Area P. The road, column-base and ditch, Period 1.

*Coins.* From the dump deposit within the ditch (5004), 218/222 (Cat. No. 34), 246/247 (Cat. No. 123); from the soil build-up (5020), 330/346 (Cat. No. 214).

### Discussion

The column-base (SF 14718) would appear to have been left *in situ* when it was incorporated within the cobbled surface (Fig. 79). It could not have stood alone: presumably, it was part of a colonnade and its fine tooling suggests a second- or early third-century date. Area P lies *c.* 70 m south of the late second-century defences. If, before the defences were erected, the *cardo maximus* had continued this far south, it would have passed immediately east of Area P. Its

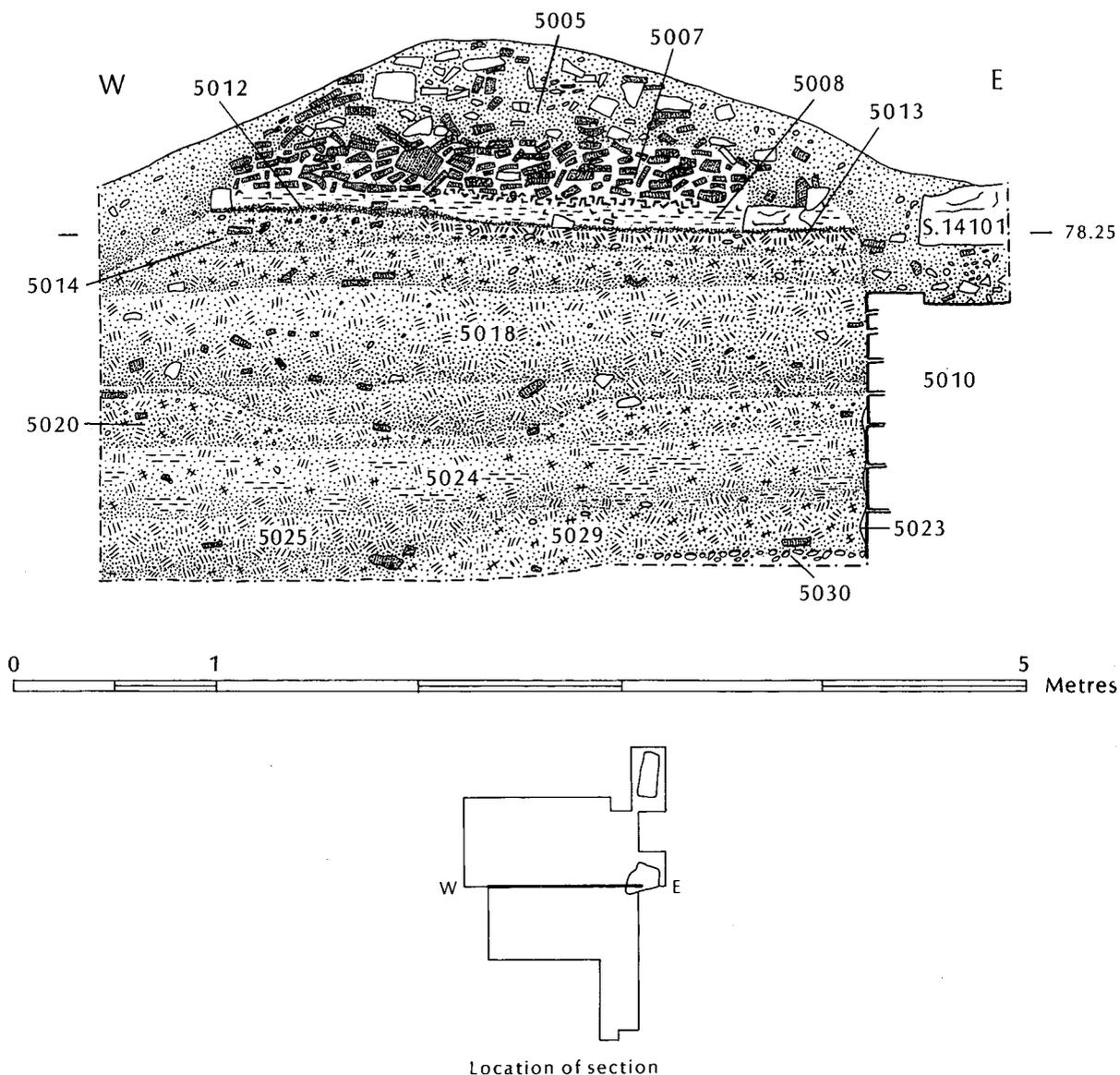


Fig. 80 Area P. West/east section through the tower.

north/south alignment corresponds exactly to the course of the western curtain-wall of the early Byzantine defences (Fig. 3).<sup>3</sup> Since, by the middle of the second century, other *cardines* were paved for a distance of at least 50 m south of the late second-century defences, it is not unlikely that the *cardo maximus* itself continued as far south as Area P.<sup>4</sup> A colonnade, running north/south along the west side of the main road, perhaps belonged to a public building.<sup>5</sup> The clay surface, which abutted the south side of the column-base would seem inappropriate for such a colonnade: it may represent either a secondary surface provided after the removal of paving or a make-up for a raised stylobate, running between the column-bases. The cobbled surface

<sup>3</sup> This road, 6.80 m wide, was the widest street within the city after the *decumanus maximus* which connected the west gate with the *propyleion*, the principal entrance to the *agora*. Moreover, the *cardo* skirts the west side of the *agora* complex and crosses the *decumanus maximus* immediately west of the *propyleion*; its identification as the *cardo maximus* is convincing: Ivanov (1988b), 56.

<sup>4</sup> See Area A, p. 36 and Area B, p. 70. How far south the street-grid did extend remains uncertain but it must have stopped short of the precipitous slope, overlooking the Rositsa, at the southern end of the plateau, see ch. 2, pp. 22–3.

<sup>5</sup> A similar colonnade, apparently running in front of buildings, flanked the south side of the *decumanus* immediately south of the *agora* complex: Ivanov (1988b), 70; Ivanov and Ivanov (1994), 145–6.

(5030), which continued north and east of the colonnade, would seem to have been part of a roadway which, given its clear western edge and its north/south alignment, was probably the southern extension of the *cardo maximus*. However, it could hardly have been the original surface: it overlapped the sides of the column-base, obscuring its finely carved base. Moreover, since other *cardines* which continued south of the second-century defences were paved, it is most improbable that the *cardo maximus* would not have been provided with limestone slabs. However, after the construction of the city walls *c.* 175, road slabs were robbed from the *cardo* which passed south of the defences in Area A and, since the southern continuation of the *cardo maximus* was no doubt cut off from the city after the construction of the Roman defences, it would seem likely that its paving was removed at the same time.<sup>6</sup> In which case, the cobbled surface was probably a secondary provision, laid down after the paving slabs had been removed, perhaps in the late second century. However, since the cobbled roadway respected the top of the column-base, it is possible that its column – and the colonnade to which it belonged – was still standing into the third century.

The function of the ditch (5004) remains obscure but the consequent spread of roof-tiles and fragments of burnt mudbrick or pisé must have come from a nearby building. Evidently, it was destroyed by fire. The subsequent dumping of burnt debris over the cobbled surface and into the ditch may well represent the demolition of the same building or others in the vicinity, although the inclusion of crop-processing waste, if it did not come from a grain store, suggests that this deposit also contained domestic waste. The column (SF 14318), found within the fill of the ditch (5004), may have come from the colonnade.<sup>7</sup> Another notable find from the ditch was a fragment of a marble statue (SF 14343), perhaps from a public monument. The destruction could have occurred no earlier than 246 and can be reasonably assigned to the second half of the third century.<sup>8</sup>

During the fourth and probably the first half of the fifth century, there would seem to have been no occupation in the area. The soil build-up (5020) may represent either a period of dereliction or possibly cultivation. The cobbled road surface was buried by the third-century dump of destruction debris and was not subsequently reinstated.

## PERIOD 2: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EARLY BYZANTINE TOWER (Fig. 81)

The foundation-trench (5023) for the curtain-wall cut through the Period 1 levels and was filled with a roughly coursed limestone foundation (5010), bonded with an off-white coarse, sandy mortar with pebbles, leaving only occasional voids against the west side of the trench (Fig. 80). The foundation was largely intact: it had only been robbed to a depth of *c.* 0.30 m and down to a solid raft of mortar and limestone blocks (Plate XXXIIB). It was in excess of 1.50 m deep.<sup>9</sup> The curtain-wall foundation was traced for a distance of 0.70 m to the east, where it was covered by the mound of robbing spoil: it continued east and was probably *c.* 2.60 m wide.<sup>10</sup> The west side of the curtain-wall foundation was faced with regular courses of angular limestone blocks. The lower six courses were more roughly built where they had been set within the foundation-trench (5023). However, above the top of the Period 1 soil build-up (5020), which represented the

<sup>6</sup> Note, however, that the *cardo* which passed through the south gate of the Roman defences remained in use, see Area B, p. 73. There is no reason to believe that there was another gate to the west which maintained communication between the section of the *cardo maximus* which remained within the city and its southern extension. Probably, the road coming south from the gate in Area C was the only one to retain its paving after the construction of the defences, see ch. 2, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> The column shaft (SF 14318) was 29.20 cm in diameter and would be of appropriate size for the column base (SF 14718), the top diameter of which was 40 cm.

<sup>8</sup> The coin of 246/247 provides a *terminus post quem* for the subsequent dumping of destruction debris. Although the pottery would allow a fourth-century date for its deposition, the absence of fourth-century coins suggests that it was deposited before or soon after 300. On coin circulation, see ch. 17, p. 309.

<sup>9</sup> Excavation did not continue below the level of the cobbled surface (5030).

<sup>10</sup> See ch. 2, p. 39.

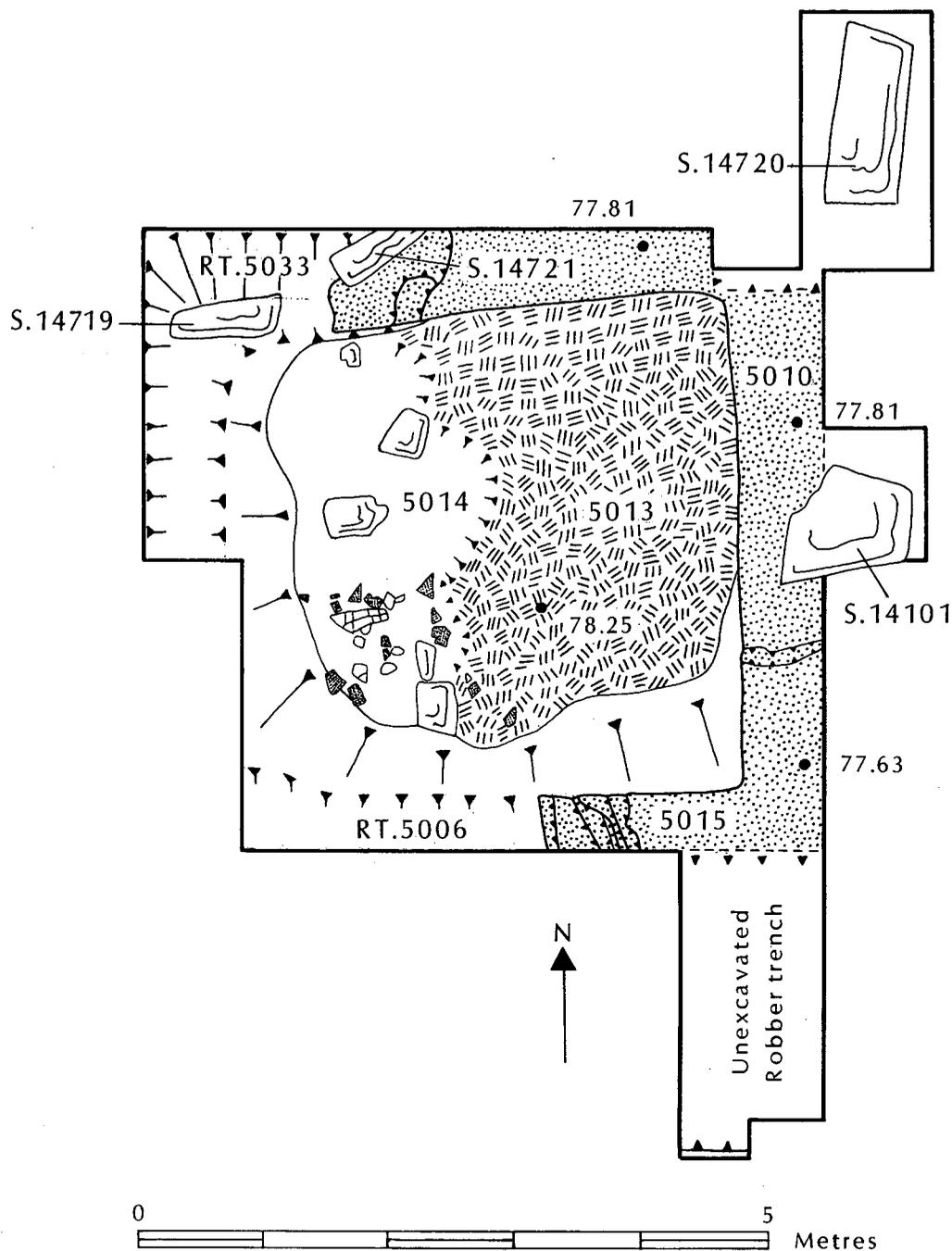


Fig. 81 Area P. The primary floor and foundations of the tower and adjacent curtain-wall, Period 2.

ground-level at the time of the construction of the tower, the upper four courses were more carefully arranged and mortared. Then a deposit of silty clay (5018) was dumped into the space between the foundations and tightly packed against them before a final dump of sandy silt (5014) formed the make-up for the primary clay floor (Fig. 80).<sup>11</sup> It would seem that the upper foundations, to a height of 0.80 to 1.00 m, were constructed 'free-standing' above the contemporary ground level (Plate XXXIB). The interior was then backfilled before the clay floor of the tower (5013) was laid.

<sup>11</sup> On the nature of this deposit, see below, pp. 214–15.

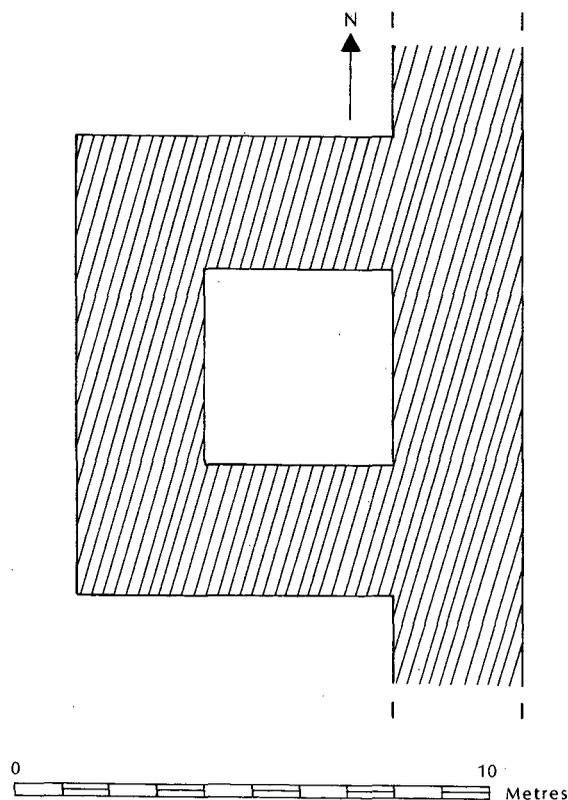


Fig. 82 Area P. Reconstruction plan of the tower and adjacent curtain-wall.

The foundation for the southern wall of the tower (5015) was fully bonded with the curtain-wall foundation (5010) and limestone blocks were carefully keyed in between them.<sup>12</sup> Like the curtain-wall foundation, the south wall of the tower had a foundation faced with regular courses of limestone blocks (Plate XXXIIB). It survived for a distance of 0.90 m west of the curtain, beyond which it was deeply robbed by RT 5006. The tower's north wall foundation, similarly bonded with the curtain, was preserved for a distance of 3.0 m west of the curtain-wall, thereafter deeply robbed by RT 5033 which turned south, following the foundation for the tower's outer wall.

Despite its poor state of preservation, the shape and approximate dimensions of the tower can be reconstructed (Fig. 82). Internally, the tower measured 3.90/4.0 m north/south and *c.* 4.0 m west/east, forming a roughly square chamber. The width of the south wall, to judge from the width of RT 5006 was *c.* 2.70 m.<sup>13</sup> Externally, the tower was *c.* 9.30 m wide and projected *c.* 6.70 m west of the curtain-wall.

The clay floor (5013) did not extend as far as the western end of the tower (Plate XXXIIIA). Here, the underlying make-up (5014) was exposed and formed a slightly lower surface, notably less compacted than the clay floor (Fig. 80). It was covered with burnt mud-wall fragments, ash and stones, possibly the remains of an internal foundation for a wall, dividing the west end of the tower

<sup>12</sup> At the point of junction with the curtain-wall, the foundation of the tower wall (5015) survived to the same height and was fully bonded down to the limit of excavation, 1.20 m below the top of the surviving portions of foundation and 1.50 m below the primary floor (5013) of the tower.

<sup>13</sup> The robber-trenches, as elsewhere, were vertical sided and probably provide a reasonably accurate guide to the dimensions of the foundations they were dug to remove. See below, Period 4, p. 218.

from the trampled floor-level at the east end of the chamber.<sup>14</sup> Alternatively, it may have been part of the dump used to level up the west end of the tower for the Period 3 floor.

The clay floor (5013) was heavily burnt and was covered by a layer of ash and carbonized sections of timbers (5012), the largest measuring *c.* 0.20 by 0.20 m and 0.60 m in length. The depression at the west end of the chamber was covered by the same destruction debris. In the north-west corner, a concentration of seeds (legumes, notably field bean, and millet) suggests that foodstuffs were either stored there or had fallen from an upper storey when the timber floors of the tower were destroyed by fire.

### Dating

*Coins.* The make-up deposit (5018/5014) within the tower produced a total of forty-four coins: 200/235 (Cat. No. 77), 238/244 (Cat. No. 71), 283/284 (Cat. No. 148), 295/296 (Cat. No. 153), five coins of the fourth or early fifth century (Cat. Nos 580, 583, 587, 588, 589), 313/324 (Cat. No. 161), 314/315 (Cat. No. 165), 320/321 (Cat. No. 169), 321/322 (Cat. No. 167), 330/333 (Cat. Nos 181, 213), 347/348 (Cat. Nos 238, 240), 348/361 (Cat. Nos 277, 297, 305, 306, 3080), 351/354 (Cat. No. 310), 355/361 (Cat. Nos 266, 336, 361), 364/378 (Cat. Nos 388, 424), *c.* 378/400 (Cat. No. 435), 383/395 (Cat. No. 454), 388/392 (Cat. No. 443), 388/395 (Cat. Nos 445, 451), 388/402 (Cat. Nos 459, 476, 477), 395/408 (Cat. Nos 501, 509), two coins of indeterminate fifth/sixth-century date (Cat. Nos 633, 634), 408/419 (Cat. Nos 606, 608), 425/430 (Cat. No. 609), 430/440 (Cat. No. 614).

### Discussion

The rectangular, almost square tower, built at the same time as the western curtain-wall, was similar in its dimensions to Tower 4, excavated on the northern side of the early Byzantine defences.<sup>15</sup> Today, there is a steep incline immediately to the west of Area P; it seems likely that this feature already existed when the early Byzantine curtain-wall was built along the crest of the slope. This would explain why the upper foundations were constructed above ground level. A construction level for the tower was probably made by cutting into the western side of the scarp, creating a working-platform, below which the foundations were trench-built. In order to raise the floor of the tower to the same height as the interior of the defences east of the scarp, the foundations were continued up as free-standing walls and then the space between them was filled with a soil dump *c.* 1.0 m deep which was then levelled for the clay floor of the tower's lower chamber. No doubt the lowest course for the outer, western wall of the tower was built from the level of the working-platform and the north and south walls were revetted into the scarp.

The make-up deposit (5014/5018) used to backfill the tower is of particular interest. It comprised an homogeneous dump of *c.* 12.25 cubic metres of soil. Larger stones were concentrated close to the foundations probably because they had rolled down the sides of the mound of earth as successive tips of soil were deposited. Although the east side of the deposit was packed up against the curtain-wall foundation, the centre of the tower contained clods of earth and was notably less compacted. The top of the primary dump (5018) was domed, probably because the last consignment of fill had not been levelled before the final make-up deposit was brought to the site. The deposit contained fragments of brick and burnt mud-wall, limestone blocks, roof-tiles, pieces of painted plaster, architectural

<sup>14</sup> For a partition-wall dividing the main chamber from the west end of a tower, see Area R, p. 223.

<sup>15</sup> North-east of Area C, excavated by Professor L. Slokoska: *Arheolog. Otkrit.* 33 (1987), 86; *ibid.* 36 (1991), 69; Slokoska (1994), 302.

fragments, pottery and bones, and a total of three hundred and twenty four small-finds including corroded iron and copper-alloy fragments, small pieces of marble wall-veneer, nails, flint strike-a-lights, beads, worked bone, and vessel-glass, amongst which was a concentration of fragments from a *diatretum*.<sup>16</sup> Other notable finds included, a copper-alloy toilet spoon (SF 14135), a *ligula* (SF 14683), a strap-end (SF 14406), and at least two portions of scale-armour (SF 14216), which had been cut, probably for recycling as scrap.<sup>17</sup> Scrap metal, both lead and copper alloy prepared for recycling, constituted a significant proportion of the finds.<sup>18</sup> The deposit also contained forty four copper-alloy coins, the majority dating to the late fourth and early fifth century.<sup>19</sup> The homogeneity of the deposit suggests that it was collected from an area rich in finds and containing substantial quantities of building materials, including burnt mud-walls and roof-tile. This is unlikely to have been a dump of domestic rubbish but may well have come from a destruction deposit.<sup>20</sup> It seems quite probable that this deposit came from the latest levels within the abandoned Roman city to the north.<sup>21</sup> The coin series extends into the fifth century and the latest dated issues include one of Galla Placidia 425/430 (Cat. No. 609) and another of Theodosius II 430–440, probably dating to 435 (Cat. No. 614). If the origin of this dump is correctly identified, then it provides a *terminus post quem* for the destruction and subsequent abandonment of the late Roman city. A likely context, after c. 430, for that destruction is provided by the Hunnic invasions of the 440s and in particular the destruction of cities in Moesia II in 447. Moreover, since the tower was built at the same time as the curtain-wall, the early Byzantine defences could not have been erected earlier than c. 435 and probably no earlier than 450.<sup>22</sup>

The burnt wood and charcoal which covered the floor of the tower suggest that the period ended in destruction. Notable, however, is the absence of roof-tiles.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the roof survived intact or else, as seems more probable, some of the debris, including roof-tiles, was cleared away before the Period 3 reoccupation.

### PERIOD 3: THE REPAIR AND REUSE OF THE TOWER (Fig. 83)

Lumps of burnt mudbrick or pisé and limestone rubble filled the depression at the west end of the chamber, levelling up the surface to the same height as the clay floor. Lying directly over this backfill and sealing the Period 2 destruction deposit was a layer of mudbrick fragments, c. 0.30 m thick, spread evenly across the interior of the tower and trampled to form a new floor surface (5008). Although cut by a shallow post-medieval trench (5041) on its east side and truncated by post-medieval robbing along the western and southern sides of the tower, it had probably covered the full extent of the

<sup>16</sup> The majority of the iron fragments were too corroded and small to be identified but there were four nails of indeterminate type (SF 14177, 14204, 14236, 14237), six large N1 nails (SF 14130, 14131, 14162, 14239, 14240, 14251) and a single iron nail Type N/5 (hobnail, SF 14138); eleven beads of semi-precious stone and glass (Cat. Nos 5, 9, 10, 14, 22, 23, 24, 31, 39, 43, and 45); nine worked-bone items – part of a comb (Cat. No. 136), a die (Cat. No. 147), a spoon (Cat. No. 139), a toggle (Cat. No. 178), a counter (Cat. No. 156), and four bone pins (Cat. Nos 8, 95, 101 and 115). There were also two fragments of quern-stones (SF 14137, 14681) and two prehistoric flints (SF 14151, 14285), almost certainly used as strike-a-lights in the Roman period. Twenty-three fragments of a 'cage-cup' were recovered.

<sup>17</sup> Other copper-alloy fragments, possibly from scale-armour: SF 14194, 14221, 14665.

<sup>18</sup> Fragments which had been cut and folded were positively identified as waste scrap. In addition to the two fragments of scale-armour there were five items of scrap copper-alloy (SF 14153, 14176, 14206, 14257, 14259) and three of lead (SF 14152, 14198, 14214).

<sup>19</sup> The association of scrap finds with coins has also been noted elsewhere, see Area C, p. 104. However, none of the coins were clipped and there is no reason to presume that the coins themselves were intended for recycling. On this problem, see ch. 17, p. 306.

<sup>20</sup> Note, the presence of fourth- and fifth-century coins means that this material could not have come from the Period 1 destruction deposit, beneath the tower.

<sup>21</sup> See also the similar dump used to level up the interior of the pentagonal tower, Area R, p. 221.

<sup>22</sup> See ch. 2, pp. 35–7.

<sup>23</sup> Roof-tiles were found in both early Byzantine destruction levels associated with the east gate, see Area S, pp. 232 and 234.

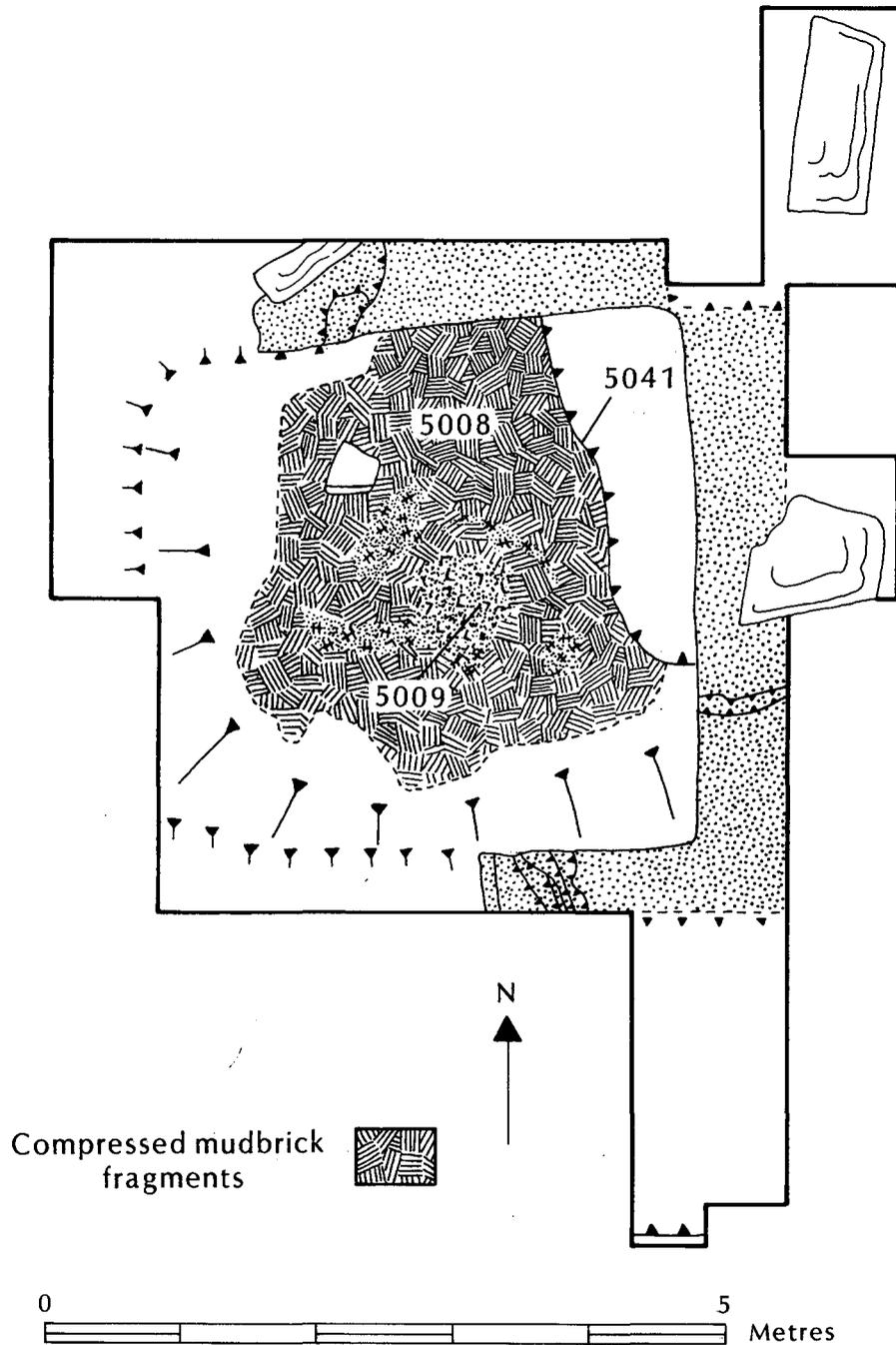


Fig. 83 Area P. The tower and secondary floor, Period 3.

chamber (Fig. 80; Plate XXXIIIB).<sup>24</sup> A circular deposit of white ash, surrounded by fragments of burnt wood (5009) may well have come from a brazier positioned in the centre of the chamber and used for cooking or heating.<sup>25</sup> The only find from the floor was a complete pattern-burnished jug.

<sup>24</sup> Mixed with the mudbrick were small pieces of Roman bricks and iron fragments, at least one of which (SF 14096) was a large N1 nail.

<sup>25</sup> The absence of any edging of stones around this deposit of ash suggests that it was not a fireplace. See also a similar deposit in the pentagonal tower, Area R, p. 223.

Immediately above the floor (5008) was a pile of Laconian roof-tiles, a few bricks, and undressed stones (5007). There was no trace of ash or burnt timbers. Most of the tiles were broken and formed an irregular mound as if they had been carelessly stacked or else dropped from higher up within the tower (Fig. 80).

### Dating

*Pottery.* A jug in Ware 14 (SF 14366 [325]) was found on the floor, dated 450/600.

### Discussion

There was no accumulation of soil between the destruction level which terminated Period 2 occupation and the laying of the Period 3 floor which suggests that the tower was quickly repaired.<sup>26</sup> The crushed fragments of burnt mudbricks, used as make-up for the new floor, are most unlikely to have come from the superstructure of the tower or the curtain-wall. They must have been taken from a building which had burnt down shortly before the Period 3 reconstruction was carried out.<sup>27</sup> It seems likely, therefore, that it was not just the tower which was set on fire at the end of Period 2. The range of early Byzantine buildings extending across the centre of the site from the east gate terminated close to the western curtain, c. 20 m south-east of the tower (Figs 5 and 10). Mudbricks were used in the construction of these buildings and at least the eastern end of the range burnt down.<sup>28</sup> The remains of these buildings might have provided a readily available source of burnt mudbrick for the Period 3 reoccupation. If this was so, then Period 3 occurred not only after the tower was damaged by fire but also after the destruction of buildings within the early Byzantine fortifications. Period 3 may then date later than the general destruction and abandonment of the fortifications towards the end of the sixth or early in the seventh century.<sup>29</sup> However, a shorter chronology must be considered. The tower would seem to have been roofed with tiles in Period 3 and this is more likely to have occurred at a time when the defences were still fully maintained. At the east gate, there were also two periods of early Byzantine occupation, both of which ended in destruction.<sup>30</sup> Although it is impossible to be certain, it is most likely that the Period 2 destruction level was contemporary with the first destruction attested at the east gate.<sup>31</sup> If true, then the burnt structure, which provided the mudbrick for the tower's floor, was probably not part of the west/east range of buildings, but lay elsewhere, perhaps outside the defences.<sup>32</sup> On balance, it seems more probable that the repair to the tower dates to within the early Byzantine period and that the tower continued to function after the Period 2 destruction. Period 3 may well correspond to the final period at the east gate when the entrance was blocked and it functioned simply as a tower.<sup>33</sup>

However, Period 3 did not apparently end in another destruction. The pile of roof-tiles upon the floor suggests that either the tiles had been stripped from the roof and were being salvaged or,

<sup>26</sup> Also, had the interior of the tower been exposed to the elements for any period, the destruction deposit would almost certainly have been washed away.

<sup>27</sup> As pointed out elsewhere, even burnt mudbricks would not survive for very long when exposed to the elements but would be quickly dissolved by rain, see Area F, p. 152. The deposit of broken mudbricks contained no admixture of soil to suggest that they had come from a dump deposit which contained burnt material.

<sup>28</sup> See Area H, p. 237.

<sup>29</sup> On the end of early Byzantine occupation, see ch. 2, pp. 44–5.

<sup>30</sup> See Area S, pp. 233–4.

<sup>31</sup> See ch. 2, p. 43.

<sup>32</sup> Early Byzantine houses existed within the ruins of the Roman city to the north of the fortifications, see ch. 2, p. 46 note 91. It seems likely that the clearly important range of buildings running across the site was still in use down to the end of early Byzantine occupation, see ch. 2, pp. 40–1.

<sup>33</sup> See Area S, pp. 233–4.

perhaps more likely, given the careless way in which so many of the tiles were broken, they were dropped or fell from the top of the tower, as the timber superstructure was dismantled.<sup>34</sup>

#### PERIOD 4: POST-MEDIEVAL ROBBING (Fig. 81)

The upper foundations for the curtain-wall (5010) and the eastern ends of the tower's foundations survived to almost full height but RT 5006 and RT 5033 had robbed out the western side of the tower's foundations to a depth of at least 2.0 m.<sup>35</sup> The trenches contained architectural fragments, including part of a column capital (SF 14354), part of a marble statue (SF 14089), and worked blocks (SF 14721, 14719) which had probably been used in the construction of the foundations. Two large blocks of limestone (SF 14101, 14720) were amongst seven large stones, abandoned during robbing and which were lying on the surface before excavation (Fig. 78). They had probably been salvaged from the Roman city and been reused in the superstructure of the tower or the curtain-wall. Above the Period 3 pile of tiles (5007), there was a spoil dump of silt, stone, tile fragments, and mortar lumps (5005), no doubt upcast from the robbing of the tower's foundations (Fig. 80).

#### Dating

*Pottery.* Both RT 5033 and RT 5006 produced sherds of post-medieval pottery and so did the upcast of robber spoil (5005) within the tower and immediately below topsoil.

*Coin.* 1774/1789 (Cat. No. 655), found in robber-spoil.

*Finds.* The upcast of robber-spoil (5005) contained a ring (SF 14329) and a calkin (SF 14093), both of post-medieval date.

#### Discussion

There is no sign of any reoccupation of the tower after the end of Period 3. The robbing of the foundations of the tower and the curtain-wall appears to have been confined to the post-medieval period and may well have followed directly upon the robbing of the superstructure: no sign of a soil build-up was found within the upcast of spoil debris (5005) to indicate successive phases of robbing and the vertical-sided robber-trenches (RT 5033, RT 5006) followed the course of the foundations, probably because they were still visible during the final phase of robbing.

<sup>34</sup> The absence of roof-tiles in the destruction deposits for the Large and Small Basilicas suggests that the tiles may have been taken down before the building was destroyed by fire, see Area F, p. 166 and Area K, p. 183. Here, if a similar operation was carried out, those responsible were evidently either more selective in the tiles they chose to take away or more careless in their work.

<sup>35</sup> The robber-trenches were not bottomed during excavation.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# AREA R: THE PENTAGONAL TOWER

### Summary

*A pentagonal (prow-shaped) tower was constructed for the eastern curtain of the early Byzantine defences. It had two periods of use, during the second of which the primary earth floor was replaced by brick paving. The foundations of the tower and the curtain-wall were robbed in the post-medieval period.*

### INTRODUCTION

The robber-trenches which followed the eastern side of the early Byzantine fortifications suggested that the curtain-wall had been provided with a central, rectangular gate (S) and two towers, both of which, unlike those spaced along the other curtains, appeared to have been triangular (Figs 5 and 84). Following the successful first season (1989) on the site of Tower 1, a rectangular tower on the western curtain (P), it was decided to excavate one of the two 'triangular' towers in 1990. The intention was to investigate occupation contemporary with the tower, to establish its form and relation to the curtain-wall, and to provide, if possible, dating evidence for its construction from deposits beneath its floor. Tower 8, the northern of the two towers, was selected because two (5201, 5202) of the four large limestone blocks, visible on the north side of the tower, appeared to be still *in situ* and indicated that at least the foundations were here preserved to full height (Fig. 84).<sup>1</sup> The northern half of the central mound was first excavated down to the latest floor (5208) and it was established that the north side of the tower did survive to foundation level. The robber-trench (RT 5219), which followed the northern foundations of the tower, was traced east and the fill excavated as far as the tower's triangular eastern end. The course of the robber-trench for the south wall (5209) was defined but its fill was not excavated. The deposit overlying the southern half of the tower was then excavated down to the latest floor (5208). Finally, deposits under the floor (5208) in the northern half of the tower were excavated down to a second floor level (5215) and through the make-up deposit (5218) to a sterile, silty clay (5224), which here formed the natural land surface before the construction of the defences. Excavation was completed in a single season.

### PERIOD 1: THE EARLY BYZANTINE CURTAIN-WALL AND TOWER

#### **The construction of the curtain-wall and tower (Figs 84–85)**

The natural, silty clay surface (5224) beneath the tower sloped gently to the east, with a fall of 1:12 (a drop of 0.90 m from the line of the curtain-wall to the east end of the tower). It was cut by the

<sup>1</sup> In the case of the southern 'triangular' tower (Tower 9), the robber-trenches were continuous and appeared to have deeply robbed its foundations as well as the adjacent section of curtain-wall.

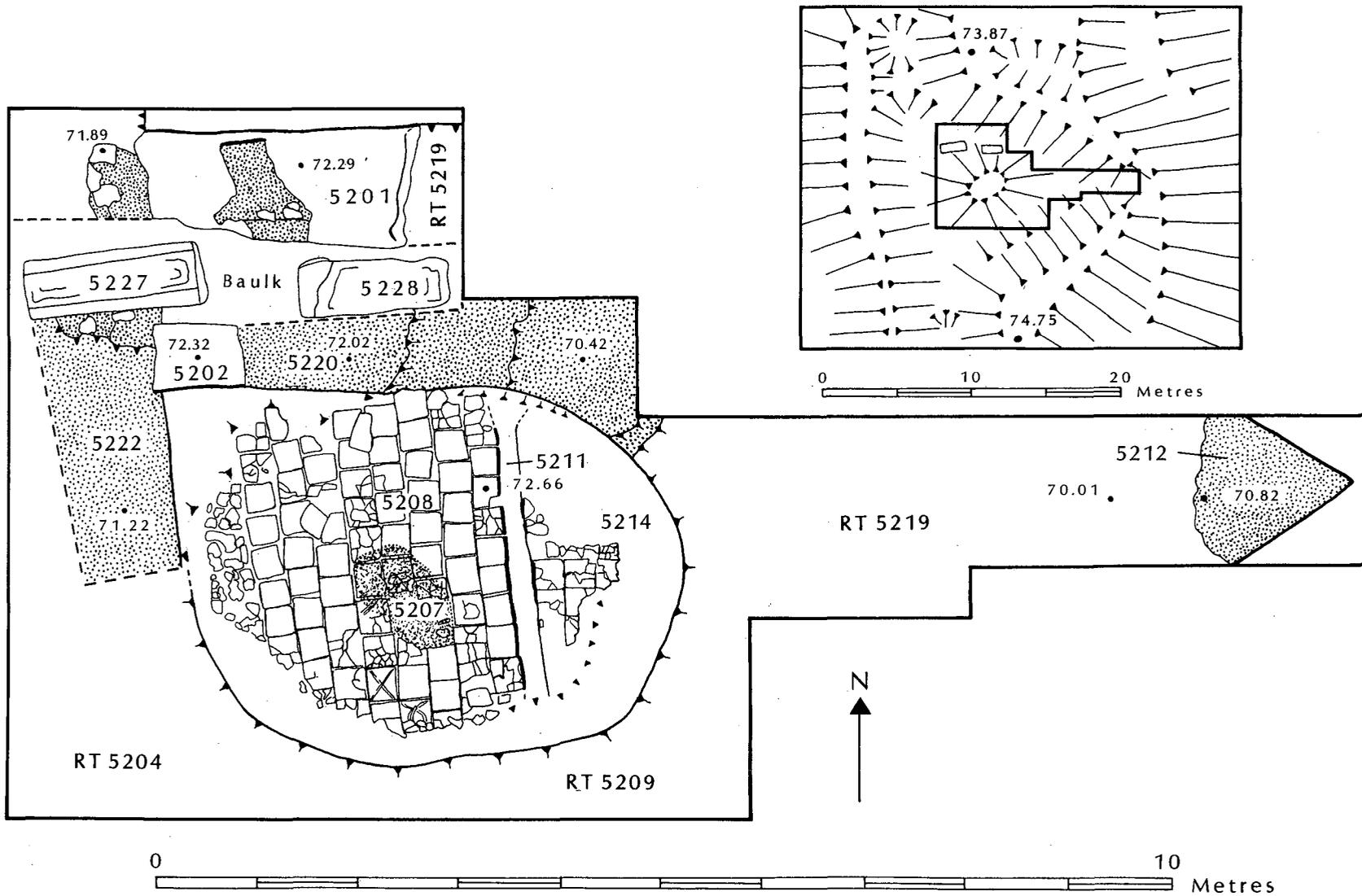


Fig. 84 Area R: The pentagonal tower and inset showing location of the excavations within the 'triangular'-shaped robber-trenches, east of the curtain-wall.

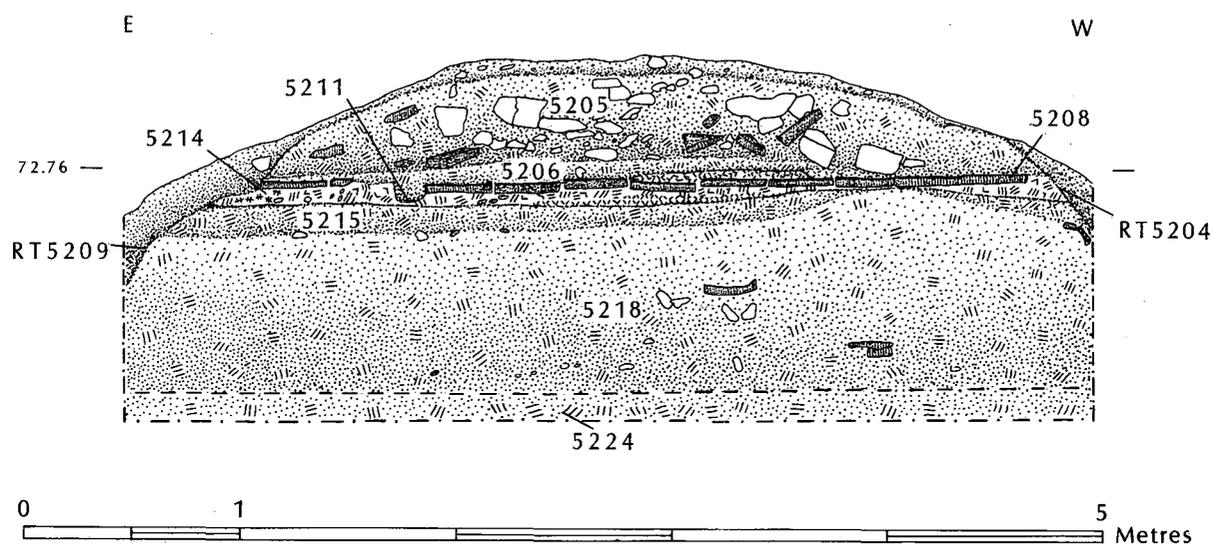


Fig. 85 Area R. West/east section through the centre of the pentagonal tower.

foundation-trench for the city wall, which had been trench-built: the foundation filled the full width of its trench but had been robbed to a depth of 1.40 m below the primary tower floor (5215), and down to a solid raft of mortar (5222). A 1.10 m wide section of the surviving foundation was uncovered between the north-western corner and the mid-point of the tower. The lower foundation for the curtain-wall may well have survived to the south but it was not found in the excavated upper portion of the robber-trench (RT 5204). Its orientation, unlike the western curtain of the defences, was not north/south but north-west by south-east (Fig. 5).

A clayey silt dump (5218), c. 0.60 m deep, beneath the eastern and central part of the primary floor, increased in height to c. 0.80 m towards the western end of the tower, probably where it had been packed up against the foundations of the curtain-wall, which had already been constructed.<sup>2</sup> This deposit resembled the make-up deposit within Tower 1 (P): it contained fragments of pottery vessels and lamps, and twenty-nine small-finds including a ring (SF 13026), fragments of a *diatretum* (SF 13034, 13036), coins, scrap fragments of copper alloy and lead, nails, a fibula (SF 13045), and an iron caltrop (SF 13048). Since there was no sign that there had been occupation in the area before the construction of the tower, it seems likely that this deposit was brought in from elsewhere, probably from the abandoned site of the Roman city.<sup>3</sup>

The foundation-trench for the north side of the tower was 2.60 m wide and 2.00 m deep, cut directly through the pre-tower land surface. The foundation (5220) was preserved to full height at its point of junction with the curtain-wall, protected by two limestone blocks (5227, 5228), dislodged during robbing, and by two other limestone blocks (5201, 5202) which remained *in situ* and were mortared to its upper surface. At the point where the curtain-wall and the tower met to form the internal corner for the tower, the foundation for the curtain-wall (5222) was also preserved to full height. The upper 1.0 m section of this foundation was built from limestone rubble and mortar, below which it comprised a thick raft of mortar, which continued down for at least a further 1.0 m.<sup>4</sup> The mortar had not spilled east into the construction-trench for the tower and its eastern face

<sup>2</sup> This seemed the most likely explanation particularly since, as noted below, it was established that the lower part of the foundation was butted by the north-western corner of the tower. However, since the curtain-wall had been robbed deeper than the bottom of the make-up deposit (5218), no direct relationship between curtain-wall and make-up within the tower could be established.

<sup>3</sup> For a similar derivation for 5018 dump in Area P, see pp. 214–15. It must be noted that the number of finds is significant, given that only the northern half of this deposit within the tower was excavated.

<sup>4</sup> Excavation did not reach the bottom of the foundation for the curtain-wall. For its probable depth, see Area C, p. 90.

was butted by the tower's northern foundation (5220). However, from the top of this mortar 'raft' (5222), the foundations of curtain and tower were fully bonded. Similarly, at the point of junction between the external northern face of the tower's north wall and the curtain, the upper 1.0 m of both foundations were of one build. Consequently, although the lower mortar 'raft', which formed the lower foundation for the curtain-wall, was constructed before the foundation-trench for the north wall of the tower was cut, the upper foundations and the superstructure of both curtain and tower were completed at the same time. To the east, the foundation for the north wall had been robbed, and only at the extreme east end did another solid 'raft' of mortar (5212), 0.90 m thick, represent the lowest foundation for the triangular point of the tower. No trace of the upper foundations of the tower's south wall survived within the robber-trench (RT 5209), which was responsible for its destruction.

Cemented to the top of the tower's northern foundation were two large limestone blocks. The northern block (5201), 2.50 m by 1.20 m, had a smooth upper surface and was probably a road slab, salvaged for reuse in the early Byzantine fortifications. It formed a plinth upon which the superstructure of the wall had been built: traces of mortar and the impression of limestone blocks survived on its upper surface, but set back 0.10 m from its northern, outer face, which probably formed an off-set between the plinth and the superstructure of the wall. Also *in situ*, a second reused road block, of lesser dimensions (5202), was mortared to the top of the foundations on the inside of the tower at its extreme west end and appeared to represent a plinth for the internal face of the tower's north wall. On the assumption that there was a similar off-set inside the tower, the wall would have been *c.* 2.30 m thick. The full width of the lowest course of the superstructure, including the plinth, was 2.50 m. The wall core was built from rubble and white mortar, identical to that used in the curtain-wall.

At least in the construction of its foundations and plinth, the planning of the tower was not precisely executed. The north wall formed a slightly acute angle with the curtain, springing from it at an angle of 85 degrees, not the 90-degree angle which must have been intended. The triangular east end of the tower foundation (5212) had an internal angle of 70 degrees between its diverging north and south faces, instead of the 60-degree angle which was presumably planned. Presumably, these inaccuracies in the layout of the foundations, were not replicated in the superstructure.

The shape and dimensions of the tower can be reconstructed with confidence (Fig. 86). The north and south walls, roughly at right-angles to the curtain, but with a triangular eastern end, formed a 'prow-shaped' tower. Its ground-floor chamber was 3.60 m north/south and, at maximum, 4.80 m west/east. From its junction with the curtain-wall to its pointed end, the tower projected 11.20 m. A solid block of masonry, 6.40 m thick, must have separated the inner face of the guard-chamber from the peak of the tower. To judge from the curving, western end of the robber-trench (RT 5219), which had robbed its triangular projection, the eastern internal face of the chamber was probably semi-circular.

### **The primary floor of the tower (Fig. 85)**

Within the tower, and above the irregular surface of the make-up deposit (5218), a second, silty clay make-up (5215), this time cut by the foundations of the tower and the curtain-wall, contained frequent mortar and tile fragments, probably from construction, and its surface formed a compacted floor, 0.10–0.20 m higher than the top of the plinth (5202) and *c.* 0.60 m above the contemporary ground-level to the north of the tower. A hearth, bordered by two tiles on its north side, was set directly upon this earth floor, and placed in the centre of the chamber. It was surrounded by ash.

### **The secondary tiled floor (Figs 84–85)**

The clay floor (5215) and its hearth were sealed by a clay make-up deposit, which included ash, fragments of burnt mud-wall, and tile (5214) below a brick floor (5208). The rows of bricks were laid north/south and an attempt was made to ensure that the joins between adjacent bricks in each row were overlapped by the bricks in the next. This 'brick-work' arrangement was clearest

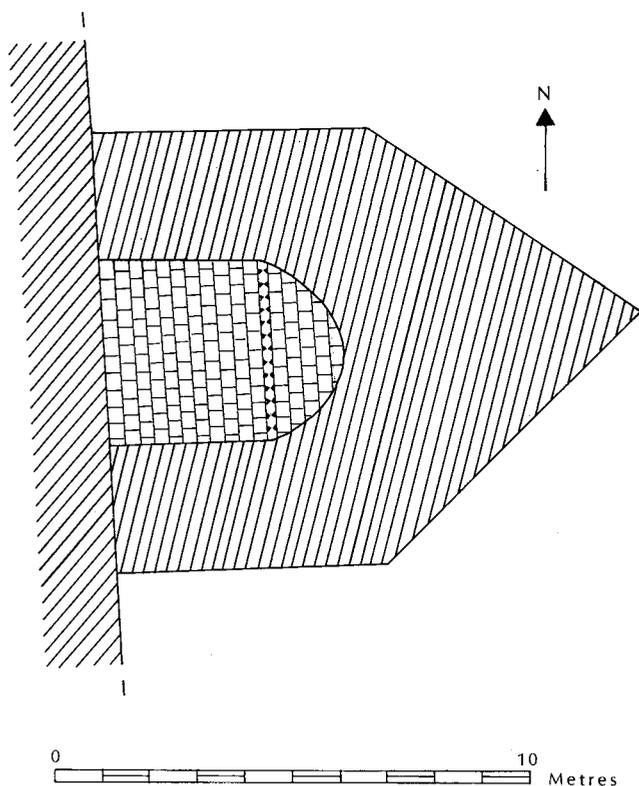


Fig. 86 Area R. Reconstruction of the pentagonal tower's ground-plan.

immediately west of a north/south slot (5211), which separated the floor of the main chamber from its apsidal, eastern end. Probably a start was made laying bricks along the side of this slot and west towards the curtain-wall, where the pattern was rapidly lost before the paving reached the western end of the chamber. The bricks were all of similar dimensions (0.30 m square and 0.04 m thick) and resembled, in size, the bricks used in the nave of the Large Basilica. Moreover, the two types of signature used on bricks in the tower floor were also found in the church.<sup>5</sup> The slot (5211), 0.15 m wide and 0.13 m deep, contained charcoal and fragments of burnt mud-wall. Presumably, it had originally contained a horizontal timber.<sup>6</sup> A beam in this position is unlikely to have supported stairs leading up to a first floor. The most likely explanation is that it was the base for a wooden partition, dividing the main chamber from the eastern end of the tower. Given its modest dimensions (3.0 m north/south and, at maximum, 1.50 m east/west), this smaller compartment could hardly have served any other function than that of a store-room. Like its predecessor, this floor also had a concentration of pure white ash in the centre of the chamber (5207) and the paving bricks beneath were cracked and broken from exposure to heat (Plate XXXIVA). But, as no trace of a fireplace was found, heating was presumably provided by a brazier. The brick floor was overlain by a thin deposit (5206), only 0.01–0.15 m thick, of silty clay, containing some fragments of burnt mud-wall and the blade of an iron knife (SF 13012). Unlike the excavations in Areas E, P, and S, there was no convincing evidence that the tower had ever been damaged by fire.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The tower floor contained two examples of a simple cross signature (Fig. 62, No. 1) and a single 'figure of eight', which is similar to one of the church signatures (Fig. 62, No. 15). For the size of the bricks used in the Large Basilica, see Area F, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup> As in the case of the *ambones* provided for the two basilicas and of the altar rail in the Large Basilica. See Area F, p. 159 and Area K, p. 180. The charcoal in the slot might have come from the burning of a timber beam *in situ*, but the charcoal only represented c. 30 per cent of the fill.

<sup>7</sup> The charcoal in the slot (5211) was insufficient proof that the tower burnt down (see above, note 6). No traces of destruction debris were found on the floor.

## Dating

*Pottery.* There were few diagnostic sherds from the make-up deposits (5218 and 5214), although none need date later than 450.

*Coins.* From the make-up dump (5218), underneath the primary floor of the tower, 319 (Cat. No. 166), 346/361 (Cat. No. 275), 395/408 (Cat. No. 496).

## Discussion

Although there is only the latest coin from the make-up below the floor to prove that the tower was built later than 395, it was clearly contemporary with the construction of the early Byzantine curtain-wall.<sup>8</sup>

The late start to the construction of the tower, only after the primary foundations for the curtain had been completed, is notable, particularly as the foundations of Tower 1 (P) were fully bonded with the foundations for the western curtain-wall. The reason may have been the different manner of construction. The foundations for the pentagonal tower were trench-built from the contemporary ground-level, not partially 'free-standing' as were those of Tower 1, where the ground sloped steeply to the west of the defences.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the levelling dump (5218) required for the pentagonal tower, although similar in character to the dump deposit used to level up the interior of Tower 1, was less deep: there was here no need to infill the tower from its lower foundations. Perhaps because the slope to the east beyond the eastern defences was only a gentle incline, there was also less need to ensure a close bond between the lower foundations of the curtain and the tower: work first proceeded on the foundation for the curtain before the tower was added. Even so, care was taken to ensure that the upper foundations of tower and wall were fully bonded.

Whether the primary earth floor was only a temporary surface, used during the construction of the tower, or represented its first period of use, remains uncertain. However, clay floors, as in Towers 1 and 4, would seem to have been normal and the presence of the hearth suggests that it was used as an occupation surface. The brick floor with its partition, separating the main chamber from a probable store-room, would seem to have been a later embellishment.

'Prow-shaped' towers were used in the Near East and at Nicopolis in Epirus.<sup>10</sup> However, on the lower Danube in this period few examples have been identified and, in each case, they were gate-towers and not, as at Nicopolis, provided along the curtain-wall.<sup>11</sup> Although a limestone plinth for the north and no doubt the south side of the tower was provided with a rubble and mortar core, the curved line taken by the robber-trench suggested that the east end of the chamber was semi-circular and is more likely to have been constructed from bricks than limestone blocks.<sup>12</sup> One characteristic feature of early Byzantine fortifications on the lower Danube, and a rare example of a tower-type which can be dated with probability only to the late fifth or sixth century, is the triangular tower,

<sup>8</sup> See ch. 2 for the date of the defences, pp. 35–7.

<sup>9</sup> See Area P, p. 214.

<sup>10</sup> The towers of Nicopolis in Epirus, considered to date to the second half of the fifth century, are prow-shaped but were so formed by adding triangular ends to earlier square towers: H. Hellenkemper, 'Die byzantinische Stadtmauer von Nikopolis in Epeiros. Ein kaiserlicher Bauauftrag des 5. oder 6. Jahrhunderts?' in *Nicopolis I: Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Nicopolis (23–29 September 1984)* (Preveza, 1987), 243–51.

<sup>11</sup> The dating of prow-shaped towers is by no means secure. At Mesembria, they flanked the main west gate and were probably constructed in the late fifth century: I. Venedikov *et al.*, *Nessèbre I* (1969), 41–53. They were used in the east gate of Serdica, built in the late fifth or early sixth century: S. Boyadzhiev, 'Prinos kum istoriyata na krepostnata stena na Serdica', *Arheologiya* 1 (1959), 35–45. A similar date is likely for the prow-shaped towers, either side of the main gate, of a small early Byzantine fort at Madara: I. Velkov, 'Razkopki v Madara,' *Sbornik Madara* 1 (1934), 123–37.

<sup>12</sup> The fine ashlar fortifications of the early fourth century at Tropaeum Traiani, Abritus, and Capidava have carefully rounded U-shaped towers with an apsidal end to the tower chamber. However, the quality of masonry, used in the early fourth century at these sites, is far superior to the early Byzantine fortifications at Nicopolis and a straight end for the tower chamber, as in Tower 1, would be more likely if mortared stone had been used.

constructed from a solid mixture of mortar and brick.<sup>13</sup> In the case of this tower, a change in construction to brick and mortar for the triangular end would seem not improbable and would account for the curved inner face of the chamber, which was regularly provided for the triangular brick towers.

The 'triangular shape' of the robber-trenches for Tower 9, south of the east gate (Area S) suggests that it was of similar design and presumably also 'prow-shaped'. Why two pentagonal towers should have been provided for the eastern curtain-wall – and apparently nowhere else, since excavation and robbing suggests that both the western, northern, and probably southern walls were provided with simple square towers – is not easy to explain. Certainly, the massive size of this tower – with its solid core of masonry, more than 6 metres thick, which formed the peak of the tower – would have been less susceptible to undermining than the less formidable rectangular towers. As noted above, the natural land surface slopes only gently to the east of the defences: perhaps the eastern side was considered more vulnerable to attack.

Another unusual feature of this tower was the discovery of notable quantities of window-glass, both in the primary robbing deposit (5205) and within the soil build-up (5206) over the brick floor. It seems probable that the tower had glazed windows.

## PERIOD 2: POST-MEDIEVAL ROBBING OF THE DEFENCES

Above the surprisingly modest soil build up (5206) within the tower, a spread of broken building bricks, angular fragments of limestone, and roof-tiles, mixed with silty clay (5205) represented the upcast from the cutting of the robber-trenches (5204, 5209, 5219) which followed the foundations for the curtain-wall and the walls of the tower. The most notable find from this deposit was a white marble pilaster fragment, incised with a cross (SF 13010).

### Dating

None.

### Discussion

Although the fills of the robber-trenches and the upcast over the floor of the tower produced no dating evidence, given the proximity of the site to Area S, where robbing of the defences can be dated to the post-medieval period, as it can elsewhere on the site, the demolition of this tower and the robbing of its foundations can reasonably be assumed to have taken place in the same period. The *in situ* limestone blocks used in the northern plinth (5201, 5202), and the dislodged blocks (5227, 5228), which were probably also from the plinth, discouraged the robbing of one section of the foundations of both tower and wall. Elsewhere, notably towards the east end of the tower, the foundations had been completely robbed out. The mortar raft, which formed the lower foundations for the curtain-wall (5222), and the triangular point of the tower (5212) were clearly less attractive. The rubble core no doubt proved easier to excavate and a richer source of building-stone.

<sup>13</sup> cf. Ovcharov (1982), 46–9.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# AREA S: THE EAST GATE

### Summary

*After the destruction of a building with mud-walls and a tiled roof, the area was used for burials during the first half of the fifth century. During the construction of the early Byzantine defences a rectangular tower-gate was built, projecting east of the curtain-wall with a central cobbled roadway flanked by side-chambers. A rectangular foundation against the inner face of the curtain-wall probably formed the base for stairs leading up to the wall-walk. After the gate was damaged by fire, the eastern entrance was probably blocked and the structure functioned simply as a tower until it was again damaged by fire and abandoned. Although there was occupation in the vicinity during the ninth/tenth centuries A.D., the gate-tower remained derelict until its superstructure and foundations were robbed in the post-medieval period.*

### INTRODUCTION

At the mid-point along the eastern curtain-wall of the early Byzantine defences, robber-trenches suggested that there had been a rectangular projecting tower or gate (Fig. 87).<sup>1</sup> Excavation was here complicated by the considerable depth of robber-spoil; a western mound flanked the inside of the curtain-wall foundation, a central mound covered the interior of the gate-chamber, and an outer mound of robber-spoil lay beyond the eastern wall of the gate (Fig. 88). Each mound was *c.* 2.0 m high and *c.* 6.0 m wide. Removing such quantities of rubble by hand proved both time-consuming and difficult. The excavation was planned to extract as much information as possible about the structure while only removing as little of the overburden as was necessary. The central mound was sectioned and the southern half of the gate-chamber was excavated down to the primary construction level. The foundations of the curtain-wall were examined and the robber-trenches following the southern and eastern walls of the gate structure were identified. The north/south length of the gate was established by cleaning the eastern section of RT 5251, following the curtain-wall foundation. Excavation along the eastern side of the central and west side of the eastern robber mounds established the width of the cobbled roadway within and immediately east of the gate. Only at the south-eastern corner of the gate were pre-fortification levels examined. Excavation was started and completed during the 1991 season, except for a limited exploration in 1992 of the foundation (5289), identified in section in 1991.

### PERIOD 1: THE DESTRUCTION OF A BUILDING AND BURIALS (Fig. 88)

Levels predating the construction of the gate were investigated at the south-eastern corner of the gate-chamber, on the eastern side of the central robbing mound. At a depth of 2.0 m below the gate entrance, a deep deposit of clayey silt (5296), possibly a make-up dump, had a compacted surface, probably a floor, sloping gently to the east; this was covered by a thick layer of broken, curved roof-

<sup>1</sup> Note that the southern side of the rectangular structure was not visible as a surface feature, see below, p. 235.

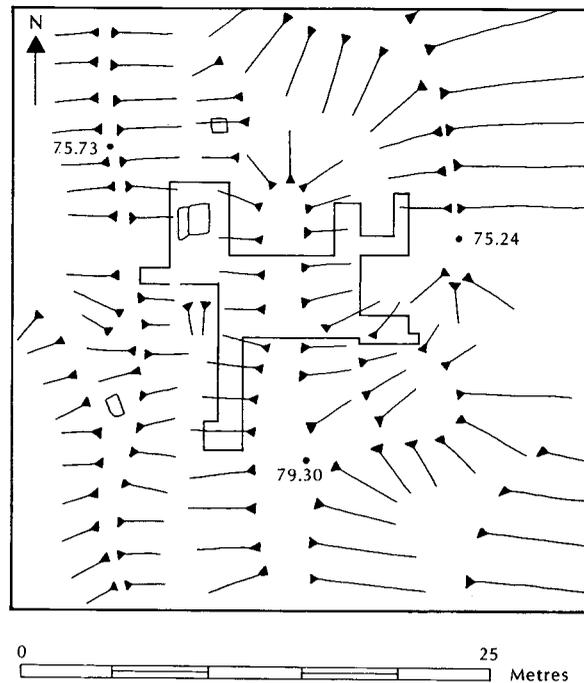


Fig. 87 Location of excavation, Area S.

tiles, burnt mud-wall fragments, and charcoal (5293). This deposit appeared to represent the collapse of a building and not the redeposition of destruction material: its upper horizon was clearly defined and there was little or no soil within the context. This was overlain by a clayey silt dump (5288), cut by a grave which contained the skeleton of a mature individual, probably a female, and part of a child's skeleton. The adult skeleton was orientated east/west. The eastern end of the grave was destroyed by Period 5 robbing: only the thorax and lower spine survived *in situ*. The grave-cut also disturbed earlier burials, contained within the silty dump deposit (5288).

### Dating

*Pottery.* The dump deposit (5288) contained concave rim cooking-pot lids [249] and jars with rounded thickened rims with a groove at the top [127], dated to the fifth century.

*Coin.* 351/354 (Cat. No. 252) from the dump deposit (5288).

### Discussion

The destruction level, which appears to represent the collapse of a burnt building, produced no dating evidence. Since the building predated the abandonment of the area and the fifth-century burial, it may have been destroyed during the third or fourth century.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently there was no sign of reoccupation. Perhaps the area was part of a cemetery. The orientation of the *in situ* skeleton and the absence of grave-goods suggests a Christian burial. Although the deposit (5288) into which the grave was dug can be assigned to the fifth century, the latest interment predated the construction of the early Byzantine defences, narrowing the probable date of this burial to the first half of the fifth century.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For destruction levels of the middle of the third and late fourth centuries see ch. 2, p. 28 and p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> For the dating of the early Byzantine defences, see ch. 2, pp. 35–7.

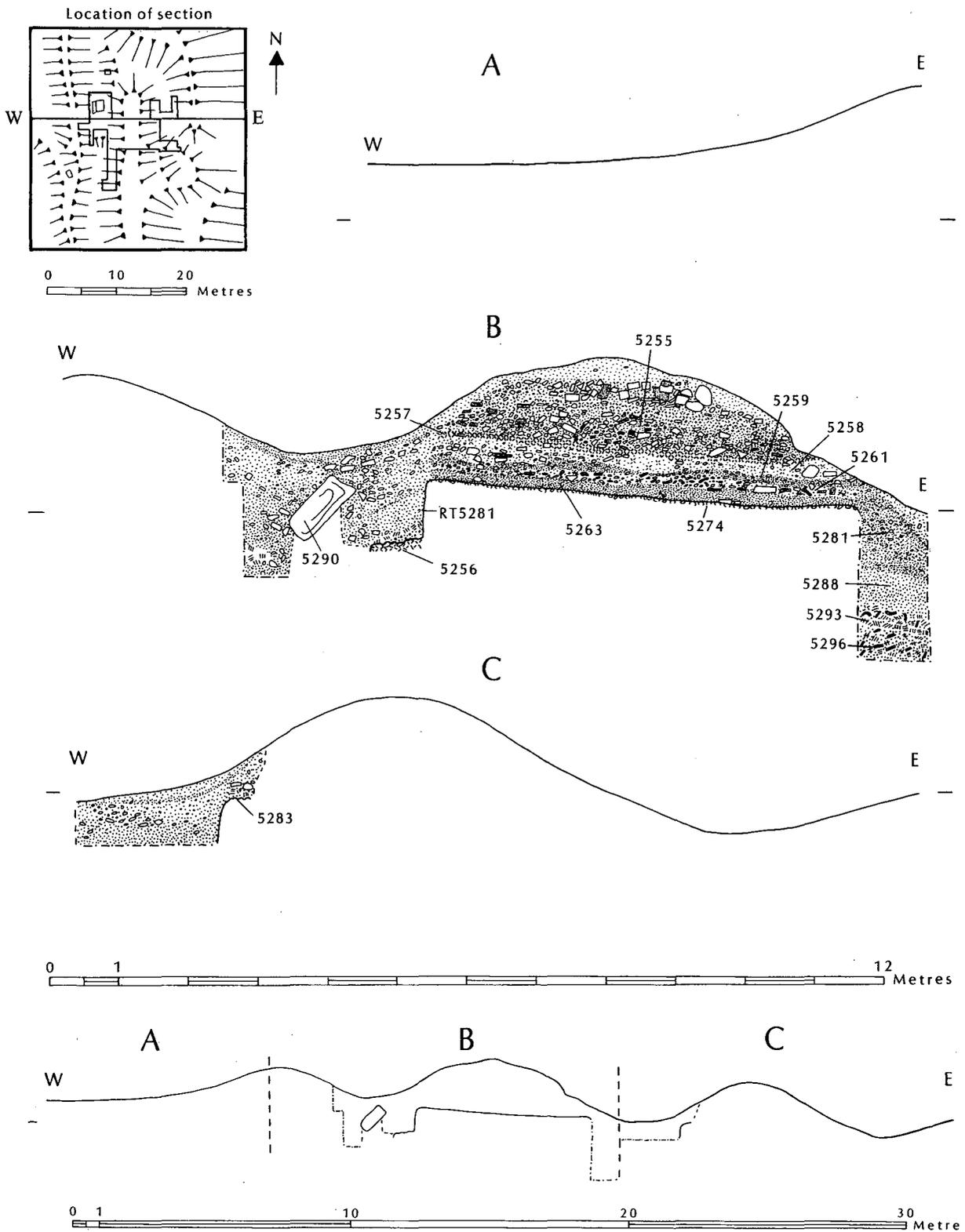


Fig. 88 Area S. West/east section through the east gate.

**PERIOD 2: THE EARLY BYZANTINE GATE (Fig. 89)**

A silty clay deposit (5281) was dumped and levelled (Fig. 88). At the south-western corner of the gate-chamber this make-up level was cut by a continuous foundation-trench for both the city wall and the south wall of the gate. The trampled surface of this deposit, covered by a discontinuous mortar spread 0.03–0.05 m thick, probably represents the construction level for the curtain-wall and the gate structure.

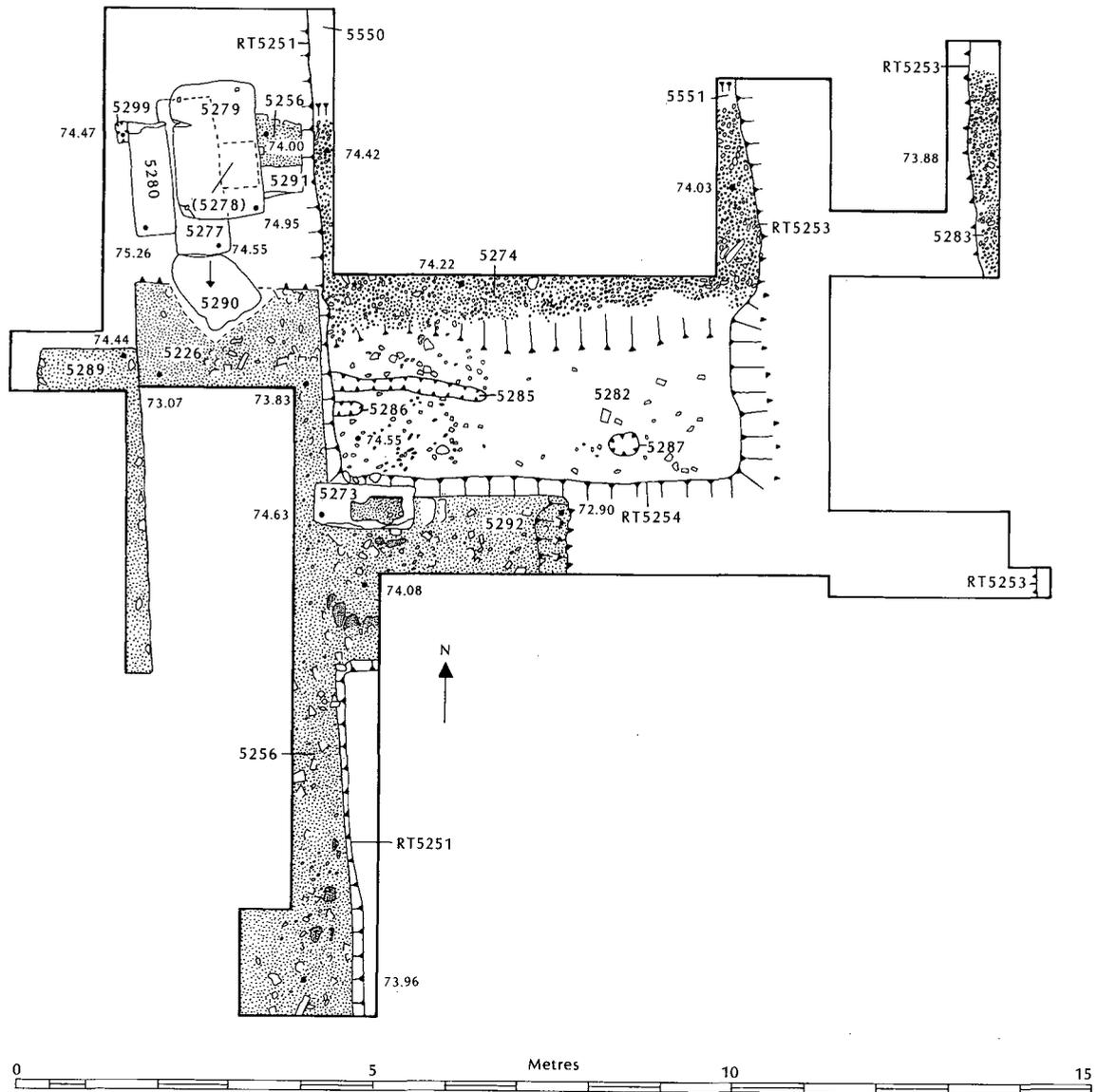


Fig. 89 Area S. The east gate.

The foundation for the curtain-wall (5256) was 2.54 m wide, where exposed and preserved to its full width immediately west of the gate-chamber. The eastern side of the foundation, robbed down to a solid raft of white mortar, was traced south of the gate for 4.50 m. To the north, the foundation was deeply robbed by RT 5251, except where it survived to full height beneath two massive stone blocks (5279, 5280). Here, a limestone slab (5291) with a smooth upper surface was mortared into the foundations: probably it was a paving slab brought from the Roman city and may have been intended for reuse in the floor of the gate-passage but it was rejected and used in the core of the curtain-wall foundation.<sup>4</sup> The curtain-wall was evidently aligned north-west by south-east and not north/south, an orientation adopted for the full length of the curtain-wall on the eastern side of the defences (Fig. 5).<sup>5</sup>

The western end of the foundation for the southern wall of the gate-chamber (5292), 2.30 m wide, survived to full height where it was bonded with the curtain-wall foundation and was capped by an *in situ* limestone block (5273) which projected west and must have been bonded with the now

<sup>4</sup> See following, for the paving of the gate entrance with reused road slabs.

<sup>5</sup> See also for the pentagonal tower, Area R, p. 221.

robbed lower course of the curtain-wall. Still adhering to the top of the stone, a layer of mortar with a sharply defined northern edge suggests that the next course for the superstructure had been offset by *c.* 0.12 m from the side of the block. No doubt the wall had a primary course of limestone blocks, facing both the inner and outer sides of the gate-chamber, forming a continuous plinth, upon which the superstructure was built, probably set back from the outer as well as the inner sides of the primary course of limestone blocks.<sup>6</sup> The foundation for the south wall continued east for 3.30 m, beyond which it was robbed to a depth in excess of 3 m by RT 5254, which joined the north/south robber-trench (5253), following the foundation for the outer wall of the guard-chamber, at a distance of *c.* 6.20 m from the eastern face of the curtain-wall.

Immediately above the construction level (5281), a lightly metalled cobbled roadway (5274), 3.0 m wide but only 0.03 m deep, bedded in a thin make-up of clay, passed through the gate-chamber (Plate XXXIVB). A continuation of the same cobbled surface (5283) was found outside the gate, beyond RT 5253 on the inner flank of the eastern mound of robber-spoil (Fig. 88). On the south side of the gate-chamber, a bank of silty loam with a compacted, stony surface (5282), formed a platform 2.10 m wide, raised *c.* 0.25 m above the cobbled surface (5274). At its western end, a shallow beam-slot (5285) may have supported a partition-wall, separating the western end of the platform from the cobbled surface to the north (Plate XXXVA). Less probably, it held the timber base of a ladder leading to the first floor of the gate.<sup>7</sup> A single post-hole (5287), 0.24 m in diameter, on the eastern side of the platform can be assigned no obvious function. The south-west corner of a second earth bank (5550) was found and its south-eastern corner (5551) was identified at the eastern end of the gate-chamber. Where it was visible in the eastern side of RT 5251, this second platform continued north for a distance of *c.* 2.00 m from the northern edge of the cobbled surface (5274) before it was cut by the west/east robber-trench which continued east from RT 5251, following the northern foundation of the gate. Apparently, therefore, the cobbled surface was flanked by another platform on the north side of the gate-chamber.

Where the central portion of the curtain-wall foundation was preserved to full height, north of a stone (5290) dislodged during robbing, a rectangular slab (5277) was mortared to the top of the foundations, as were two other blocks (5278, 5299), protected from robbing by large blocks (5279, 5280) which had fallen on top of them. The three *in situ* stones would seem to have been used as paving, covering the continuous foundation of the curtain-wall within the gate-passage.

The two massive blocks, which covered the paving stones, proved too large for the stone-robbers to move (Plate XXXVB). Both lay side-by-side as if they had toppled forward into the gateway. The central, flat slab (5279), 1.84 by 1.20 m and 0.30 m thick, had cramp-holes at three corners of its exposed upper face, which suggests that it had been brought from a building within the Roman city for reuse in the early Byzantine defences.<sup>8</sup> If this stone had fallen southwards from a vertical position, its base would have been roughly aligned with the northern edge of the cobbled surface (5274) within the gate-chamber. In such a position, its purpose could only have been to face the inside of the gate passage. If the same explanation applies to the other block (5280) it would have stood at the north-west corner of the gate-passage, its rectangular base flanking the north side of the paving slabs, and must have been bonded into the curtain-wall. Since this stone measured 0.55 m by 0.67 m and was 1.46 m in length, its dimensions suggest that it may have been built into the wall to support the inner side of an arch which no doubt covered the gate-passage.

<sup>6</sup> See also in the pentagonal tower, Area R, p. 222.

<sup>7</sup> The slot (5285), 0.06 m deep, 0.20 m wide, and 2.13 m in length, was cut, at its western end, by RT 5251. It obviously postdated the construction of the bank (5282) and was sealed by the Period 3 make-up deposit (5263). A similar slot (5286), 0.04 m deep and 0.18 m wide, extended only 0.40 m east of RT 5251; this one is difficult to explain unless it belonged to the construction phase. For similar beam-slots, interpreted as having been formed by scaffolding used during construction of the Large Basilica, see Area F, p. 153. If then this 'beam-slot' was connected with the building of the gate and not the use of the gate-chamber, the longer cutting (5285) may just have served a similar function.

<sup>8</sup> Nowhere in the early Byzantine defences were blocks joined by clamps. They were always bonded by mortar. However, second- and third-century buildings within the city were regularly constructed from massive blocks, joined by metal clamps, as were stones used in the construction of the Roman gate, see Area C, p. 85.

Abutting the west side of the curtain-wall's foundation (5226), another foundation (5289) was preserved almost to the height of the *in situ* paving slabs within the gate-passage and continued down at least to a depth of 1.37 m and below the limit of excavation. To the west it was traced for a distance of 1.28 m where it abruptly terminated with a vertical face. To the south it continued for a distance of at least 4.30 m beneath the eastern flank of the western mound of robber-spoil.<sup>9</sup> The eastern side of the foundation presented a roughly vertical face; this must have abutted the west side of the curtain-wall foundation which, to the level of excavation, had here been removed by RT 5251. The northern end of the foundation was intact: it could not have continued across the rear of the gate-passage. Since the northern side of the gate-passage appears to have coincided with the northern limit of the cobbled surface (5274) within the gate-chamber, symmetry recommends that the southern side of the gate-passage was aligned with the southern edge of the same cobbled surface. It follows that the foundation (5289) terminated just short of the south side of the entrance into the gate-tower. Since it only continued west for 1.28 m and had no northern return, it could not have formed part of an internal extension to the gate structure.<sup>10</sup> It must have butted up against the inner face of the curtain-wall. Probably, it was the foundation for an *ascensus*, which allowed access to the wall-walk and no doubt also into the gate-tower.<sup>11</sup>

The clay platform (5282), scorched by burning, and the cobbled surface (5274) were covered by a layer of shattered roof-tile, stones, and ash.

### Dating

*Pottery.* The make-up deposit (5281) and the bank of silty loam (5282) within the southern half of the gate-chamber contained small quantities of pottery, including sherds of Ware 14, dated 400–600. *Coin. c.* 300/450 (Cat. No. 586) from the cobbled surface (5274).

### Discussion (Fig. 90)

The rectangular gate-chamber was of one build with the early Byzantine curtain-wall.<sup>12</sup> The southern wall of the gate-chamber and no doubt its northern and eastern sides were constructed upon a plinth of limestone blocks, above foundations 2.30 m wide. Internally, the gate-chamber measured *c.* 7.20 m north/south and 6.20 m west/east. Externally, the gate was *c.* 11.80 m in length and projected *c.* 8.50 m east of the curtain. Passing through the centre of the gate-chamber was a cobbled road surface which continued east of the defences. Within the gate-chamber, the central roadway was flanked by raised platforms, perhaps for guard-chambers or store-rooms, possibly separated from the cobbled road by timber partitions. To the west, the entrance into the defences, probably no wider than the width of the cobbled road, was paved with reused limestone slabs and the inner sides of the probably vaulted passageway were faced with massive limestone blocks. No evidence survived to indicate how the gate-chamber was closed: a portcullis at the eastern, outer end of the chamber and a two-leaved door at the western end of the gate-passage would have been

<sup>9</sup> This foundation, discovered in 1991 when it was visible in the western baulk, was examined during a short visit to the site in 1992. I was only able to trace the foundation south for a distance of 2.48 m and I am grateful to Professor Slokoska for continuing the excavation and identifying its southern limit. However, it remains uncertain whether the southern end of the foundation was found or whether it had been robbed out beyond that point.

<sup>10</sup> It is inconceivable that the foundation was for an internal projection of the gate-tower, as provided for the south gate where the internal part of the foundations were fully bonded with the rest of the structure: any attempt to construct two halves of the gate on separate foundations would have been, to say the least, foolhardy.

<sup>11</sup> At Pautalia (Kiustendil), the *ascensus* were contemporary with the curtain-wall and were constructed on separate foundations, 8.40–8.50 m long and 1.05–1.10 m wide: Slokoska (1989), 95–7. As noted, it is uncertain whether the foundation (5256) was only 4.30 m in length. If it was to support a staircase, it was surely longer: late Roman and early Byzantine *ascensus* in the eastern Balkans were regularly *c.* 8–10 m in length: Ovcharov (1982), 50–1.

<sup>12</sup> On the date of the defences, see ch. 2, pp. 35–7.

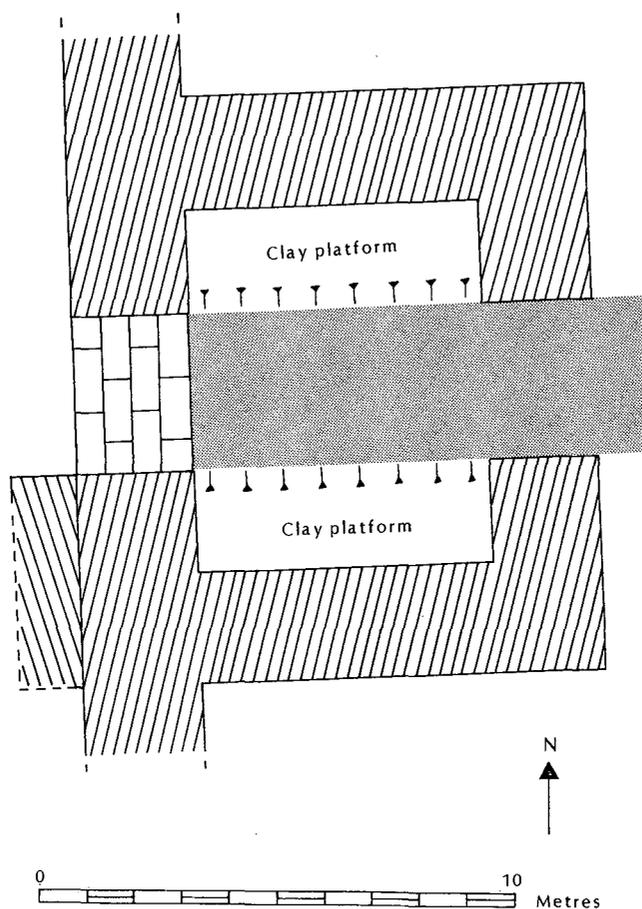


Fig. 90 Area S. Reconstruction plan of the gate and adjacent section of curtain-wall.

the usual arrangement. Immediately south of the entrance and abutting the inner face of the curtain-wall, a foundation probably supported an *ascensus*, allowing direct access to the wall-walk and probably to an upper floor within the gate-chamber.<sup>13</sup> The broken tiles found on the roadway and on the clay platform suggest that the gate had possessed a tiled roof. Located mid-way along the eastern curtain-wall, flanked to north and south by multi-angular towers, the structure no doubt took the form of a tower-gate and was probably three storeys in height.<sup>14</sup>

The broken roof-tiles and burnt debris scattered across the roadway and the southern platform within the guard-chamber indicate that Period 2 probably ended in the destruction of the timber roof and presumably the wooden floors above the gate-chamber. It seems quite possible that the destruction was not accidental but occurred during an attack on the early Byzantine defences. This would explain the new precautions taken during the subsequent reconstruction in Period 3.<sup>15</sup>

### PERIOD 3: THE CONVERSION OF THE GATE INTO A TOWER (Fig. 88)

A silty loam deposit (5263) covered the Period 2 destruction debris above the southern platform (5282) and was dumped across the cobbled surface (5274), then levelled to form a compacted floor within the gate-chamber. No attempt was made to provide a new cobbled surface which suggests

<sup>13</sup> The wall-walk may well have allowed direct access to the second floor of the gate-tower, see further, ch. 2, p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> On the appearance of the gate, see ch. 2, pp. 39–40.

<sup>15</sup> An arrow-head (SF 15502) came from the cobbled roadway within the gate-chamber. A second (SF 13522), unhelpfully, was recovered from RT 5251.

that traffic no longer passed through the gate. Probably, the outer side of the gate-chamber was blocked and the structure was then used simply as a tower.<sup>16</sup>

This period also ended in destruction. The floor was covered in a thick deposit of charcoal, ash, numerous broken roof-tiles, and fragments of burnt wood (5261). Towards the south-west corner of the gate-chamber, the carbonized remains of beams and planks (one 0.45 m by 1.40 m) probably represent the collapse of burning roof and floor timbers. In the centre of the chamber, a layer of burnt daub with wattle impressions (c. 2.20 m by 1.0 m and 0.20 m thick) may have come from a plastered ceiling or internal wall within the tower.<sup>17</sup>

### Dating

No diagnostic sherds or datable finds came from either the make-up deposit (5263) for the Period 3 floor, nor from the subsequent destruction level (5261).

### Discussion

Although there is no direct dating evidence for Period 3, it must have begun soon after the destruction which ended Period 2: there was no soil build up between the burnt debris lying on the Period 2 road and the southern platform before the level was made up for the Period 3 floor. Since the tiled roof was replaced, Period 3 presumably still dates within the early Byzantine period. The function of the structure as a tower, but no longer as a gate, implies a new concern for the security of the defences, a reasonable response, particularly if the destruction of the tower at the end of Period 2 was due to hostile action. Whether the destruction, which terminated Period 3, occurred during an attack on the defences or whether the gate-tower was deliberately set alight when the early Byzantine defences were finally abandoned, cannot be determined.<sup>18</sup> The destruction debris remained undisturbed and was never cleared away. Probably the end of Period 3 dates to the final abandonment of the site late in the sixth or early in the seventh century.<sup>19</sup>

## PERIOD 4: DERELICTION WITHIN THE TOWER-GATE AND SLAV OCCUPATION (Fig. 88)

The Period 3 destruction deposit (5261) was covered by a layer of silty loam, small stones mixed with fragments of mortar, and tile chips (5259). It covered the full width of the gate-chamber and sealed the Period 3 destruction level.

### Dating

RT 5253, following the eastern foundation of the gate, and RT 5251, which robbed out the curtain-wall, produced body sherds of Slav vessels, dated 800/1000.

<sup>16</sup> The gate occupies a central position on the eastern curtain between pentagonal towers to north and south. Even though it would seem no longer to have been used as an entrance, so long as the defences were maintained, it would be required to function as a tower.

<sup>17</sup> Small fragments of burnt clay were also found in the surrounding destruction level of charcoal and ash. However, the material did not form a continuous nor homogeneous level and had not been dumped into the tower to level up the ground surface as happened in Tower 1, see Area P, pp. 215–16.

<sup>18</sup> For the possibility that the site was abandoned after its structures had been systematically stripped of reusable items and before they were set on fire, see ch. 2, pp. 44–5.

<sup>19</sup> See ch. 2, p. 45.

## Discussion

The build-up within the tower appears to represent the natural accumulation of soil and the gradual weathering of the gate's superstructure. The inclusion of small tile fragments could be explained if the deposit was trampled but there was no sign that the interior of the gate-chamber was reoccupied after the fire at the end of Period 3. Even so, the discovery of Slav sherds points to occupation in the vicinity during the ninth or tenth centuries A.D.

### PERIOD 5: POST-MEDIEVAL ROBBING (Fig. 88)

Above the Period 4 accumulation of soil within the gate-chamber, a dump of limestone rubble and mortar fragments (5258) was covered by a thick layer of crushed and powdered mortar (5257), probably a trampled surface. The first deposit contained small quantities of silty loam, the second none at all. It seems that both were dumps of debris which came from the robbing of the superstructure of the gate-tower. Without any discernable break, this phase of robbing was followed by a deep deposit of rubble, tile, and silty loam (5255) which formed the central mound of spoil, presumably upcast from the robber-trenches following the foundations of the gate and city wall. Included within this deposit were two fragments of Roman architectural mouldings (SF 13503, 13504), probably salvaged from the Roman city for use in the early Byzantine defences.

## Dating

RT 5253 produced post-medieval sherds.

## Discussion

The successive dumps of spoil within the gate-chamber suggest that robbing of the foundations followed immediately after the demolition of the superstructure. Both phases of demolition and robbing can be assigned to the post-medieval period.<sup>20</sup> Even so, the robber-trench (5254) which took out the southern wall foundation of the gate was not visible as a surface feature (Fig. 87). It was probably dug and backfilled with spoil from RT 5251, following the curtain-wall and RT 5253 which robbed out the outer, eastern side of the gate structure. The stone-robbers conspicuously failed to remove the fallen blocks (5279, 5280) within the gate-passage and, perhaps because it was covered by spoil during the digging of RT 5251, they also ignored the foundation (5289), the east side of which must have been seen when the foundations for the curtain-wall were robbed out. As elsewhere, the primary interest of the stone-robbers must have been the removal of small limestone blocks and bricks used in the superstructure and foundations.

<sup>20</sup> Although the exiguous dating evidence from the robbing in this area is not itself conclusive, nowhere else on the site is there any sign that robbing was carried out before the post-medieval period, see ch. 2, pp. 48 and 51.



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# CUTTINGS H, L, AND N

### Summary

*One of the range of early Byzantine buildings, which crossed the site from east to west, was located in Cutting H together with a shallow, north/south 'ditch', possibly a post-medieval trackway. Cutting L identified the robbed foundations of a large early Byzantine building with mortared foundations, close to the southern curtain-wall, possibly reoccupied and certainly robbed in the post-medieval period. The southern side of an early Byzantine building was examined in Cutting N.*

### INTRODUCTION

In 1987, five machine-cuts were made to explore both positive and negative anomalies identified by resistivity survey.<sup>1</sup> Two of these cuttings (K, M) were subsequently extended and the results of the trial excavations are described in the reports on these areas. Three other cuttings (H, L, N) were not continued and are described here.

### CUTTING H (Fig. 91)

This west/east cutting, 1.20 m deep and 24 m in length, intersected the north/south negative anomaly which ran from the north-east corner of the site almost as far as the southern edge of the plateau at the point where this feature appeared to cut through the southern of the two parallel high resistance anomalies which represented the foundations of a range of early Byzantine buildings running west/east across the centre of the site (Fig. 5).<sup>2</sup>

At the east end of the cutting, at the limit of excavation, a clay surface (4306), probably an internal floor, was covered by a thick, loose deposit containing burnt mudbricks, each c. 5 cm thick, charcoal, and tile fragments (4305). A loose layer of silty loam and rubble (4303) probably represents the upper fill of a robber-trench which, since it was not found in the eastern half of the section, apparently did not share the same west/east orientation as the cutting. The most conspicuous feature was a shallow 'ditch' (4301), 8.50 m wide, its bottom filled with rubble and silty clay (4302), below a silty loam (4307). This feature cut the robber-trench fill (4303) to the west and to the east the clay floor (4306), destruction debris (4305), and the overlying build-up of silty loam (4304).

### Discussion

The robber-trench fill (4303) probably followed the southern wall of the early Byzantine range of buildings, which the cutting was located to bisect. The line of buildings in the resistivity survey was

<sup>1</sup> Another area (Area G) was started by hand on the north-west side of the site but was abandoned after the topsoil had been removed when it was discovered that the apparent geophysical anomaly was created by a mismatch between two adjacent survey squares.

<sup>2</sup> See ch. 16, p. 263.

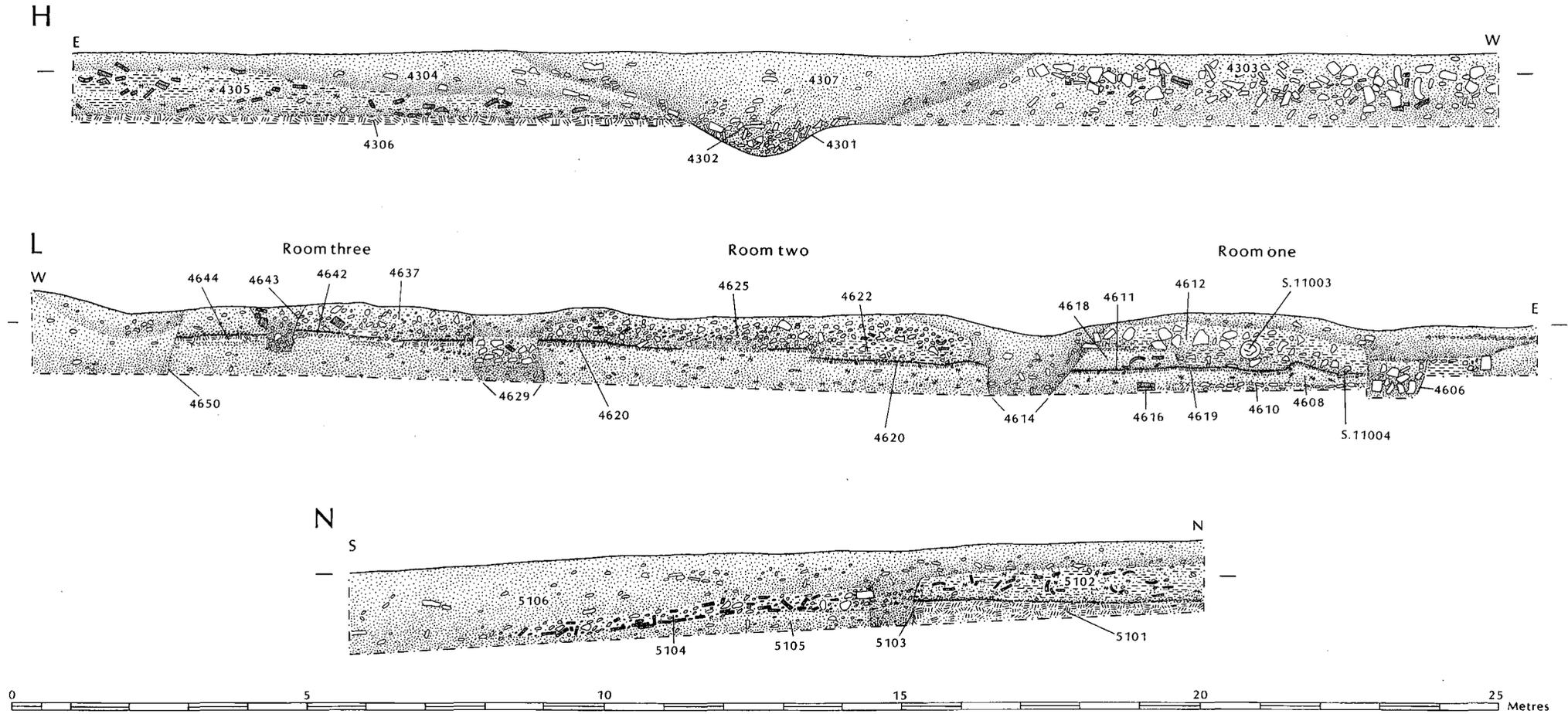


Fig. 91 South section, Cutting H. North section, Cutting L. West section, Cutting N.

here not orientated west/east like the cutting but followed a north-west by south-east alignment (Fig. 10). This would explain why the robber-trench was not found at the eastern end of the excavation. The wall, probably still followed by the robber-trench, probably continued south of the eastern half of the cutting. The clay floor (4306) presumably belonged to the same building. The large mudbricks in the destruction debris (4305) were no doubt used in the superstructure, which had collapsed when the building was destroyed by fire.<sup>3</sup>

The shallow cut (4301) with its silty clay fill (4307) accounts for the linear negative anomaly in the resistivity survey. Explaining its purpose is more problematic. It was cut from immediately below topsoil and post-dates both the destruction level (4305) and the consequent and probably natural soil build-up (4304). It also postdated the robbing of the building: it cut through the robber-trench fill (4303). A post-medieval date seems probable. At its bottom, the ditch appeared to deepen sharply and this lower section was filled with stones. Possibly, the 'ditch' truncated the fill of a north/south robber-trench, perhaps dug to rob a partition wall within the early Byzantine building, or else the bottom of the 'ditch' had been simply packed with rubble. The upper, shallow profile of the feature certainly does not resemble a robber-trench.<sup>4</sup> It may have been a sunken trackway, perhaps used for transporting robbed stone from the south side of the defences: at its northern end, a gap in the mounds of robber-spoil provides the only convenient way for wheeled vehicles to reach the interior of the site.

#### CUTTING L (Fig. 91)

A high resistance anomaly (c. 22 by 14 m), close to the southern defences, coincided in the physical survey with a rectangular area, flanked on each side by linear surface depressions, clearly robber-trenches which followed the foundations of a rectangular building (Figs 5 and 10). Orientated north/east by south/west, this building appeared to run parallel with the adjacent section of curtain-wall which here followed the crest of the plateau towards the south-western corner of the early Byzantine defences (Fig. 5). The cutting, 25 m in length and c. 1.20 m deep, sectioned the full width of the feature from north-west to south-east.

Close to the bottom of the cutting, 1.20 m below ground-level and only visible in the northern section, were the remains of a mortared brick wall (4616), abutted by a rubble spread (4610) which continued east for 3.60 m and probably represented the demolition or collapse of a building. Since no other traces of foundations or an occupation level at this depth were found elsewhere in the cutting, this was presumably the southern wall of a building which extended north of the cutting.

At a depth of between 0.80 m and 1.0 m below the modern turf-line, clay floors (4619, 4620, 4644) formed a continuous horizon, their surfaces distorted and dipping where they had subsided slightly. These floors were cut by four robber-trenches (4606, 4614, 4629, 4650) which had robbed a building's foundations to a level below the limit of excavation. RT 4606 and RT 4650 appeared to follow foundations for the outer walls of the building: no continuation of the clay floor-level was found beyond them at the western and eastern ends of the cutting and they can be confidently identified with the surface depressions which flanked the north-western and south-eastern ends of the resistivity anomaly. The two other robber-trenches (4614, 4629) removed the foundations of internal walls dividing the building into three rooms. West of RT 4606, the clay floor (4619) of Room 1 overlay a silty loam deposit (4608) which covered the earlier demolition spread (4610) to a depth of 0.30 m. The floor (4619) extended west for 5.20 m and as far as RT 4614, responsible for robbing the foundation for the west wall of Room 1. Beyond, the clay floor (4620), provided for Room 2, continued for 7.20 m before it was cut by RT 4629, which separated Room 2 from Room 3. Room 3 had its own clay floor (4644), 4.70 m wide, delimited on its western side by RT 4650 which, as noted above, probably followed the foundations for the western and outer wall of the

<sup>3</sup> See Area M, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> Post-medieval robber-trenches were regularly vertical-sided and none had the shallow profile of the 'ditch' (4301).

building. All the robber-trenches passed through the cutting at right-angles and indicate that the walls of the building all shared the same north-east by south-west orientation as the resistivity anomaly. The floors, since they represented the only continuous occupation level identified within the cutting, can be confidently associated with the robbed foundations. Although no walls survived robbing and, to the depth excavated, no *in situ* foundations were preserved, the vertical-sided robber-trenches suggest that the walls were *c.* 1.0–1.20 m in width. The contents of the robber-trenches suggested that the walls were built of mortared rubble. The full width of the building measured *c.* 22.00 m, a distance which corresponds to the extent of the high resistance anomaly.

A small amphora (SF 11004) lay on the floor (4619) of Room 1 and was covered by a destruction level of ash and charcoal (4611). A similar destruction level (4622) covered the floor (4620) of Room 2 and another (4642) lay directly upon the floor (4644) of Room 3.

Within Room 1, a deposit of silty loam (4618), which had survived later robbing, overlay the primary destruction deposit (4611). This contained Laconian roof-tiles and was sealed by a layer of rubble, including worked stone (SF 11003) and powdered mortar (4612), probably upcast from the robbing of the building. A similar deposit of rubble (4625) covered the destruction level (4622) within Room 2 and continued at the western end of the cutting (4637), cut by a later intrusion (4643), and no doubt represents the dumping of robbing spoil from the walls or foundations of the building.

A wall, made of bricks but bonded with clay, collapsed across the floor of Room 1 from a rough foundation of stone and earth, 0.60 m wide, built over the destruction deposit (4622) in Room 2, only 1.10 m west of RT 4614.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, this earth-bonded wall post-dated the destruction level within the building. Moreover, the dividing wall between Rooms 1 and 2 could not have been standing to any appreciable height at the time when this secondary wall was destroyed, or else its remains could not have collapsed into Room 1.<sup>6</sup> Since the fallen remains of this earth-bonded wall were cut by RT 4614 and by RT 4606, it must have collapsed before the mortared foundations of the building were robbed out.

## Dating

*Pottery.* The amphora (SF 11004 [1054]), lying on the floor of Room 1 and covered by the destruction deposit, is dated 450/600.

## Discussion

This building can be reasonably ascribed to the early Byzantine period. Since the building does not follow an east/west alignment, it is improbable that the building was a Christian basilica. Rather, it would seem to have comprised two rooms, one either side of a large central chamber. The south-western wall of the building must have been close to the curtain-wall, a circumstance which no doubt accounts for the building's north-east by south-west orientation. North-west to south-east, the building was *c.* 22 m broad and continued at least *c.* 14 m to the north-east. Although the high resistance anomaly, apparently created by the robber-spoil over the building, did not continue further to the north-east, the robber-trench (4606) following the south-east outer wall of the building appears to continue both as a negative anomaly in the resistivity survey and as a surface feature (Fig. 5). Two robber-trenches, visible as linear depressions, both run parallel with the north-eastern end of the building at distances of *c.* 20 and 30 m from it. Possibly, the

<sup>5</sup> This wall was only visible in the southern section.

<sup>6</sup> The construction of the clay-bonded wall, so close to the east wall of Room 2, would also seem inexplicable unless this mortared wall had already been dismantled.

building did extend further to the north-east or perhaps had a courtyard attached to it, surrounded by a wall (Fig. 10).<sup>7</sup>

The proximity of the building to the curtain-wall might suggest that its function was in some way connected with the defences. Its size indicates a structure of importance and its wide foundations could have supported a two-storied building. It also commands a central location along the southern perimeter of the defences and from an upper floor, overlooking the wall-walk, it would have been an excellent vantage point, affording a clear view south to the river and beyond, as far as the northern foothills of the *Haemus*.

The robber-trenches were cut from the turf-line and, since they are still visible as surface depressions, the robbing of the building can be ascribed to the late post-medieval period, most probably to the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> The robber-trenches followed closely the line of the foundations, which suggests that the walls, or sections of walls, were still standing when the final period of robbing was carried out. The secondary wall in Room 2, probably made of bricks salvaged from the primary destruction of the building, but bonded with mud, suggests that part of the building (but probably not the wall separating Rooms 1 and 2) was still standing and may well have been reused. If this reoccupation of the early Byzantine building dates to the post-medieval period, it would explain why the final robbing of the foundations, which postdated the collapse of the mud-bonded wall, was carried out perhaps as late as the nineteenth century, probably after the abandonment of the post-medieval settlement on the site.<sup>9</sup>

#### CUTTING N (Fig. 91)

Although the northern third of the site was conspicuous for the absence of high resistance anomalies, one rectangular feature (c. 20 m east/west by 10 m north/south), south-east of Area A, implied that there was one notably large structure.<sup>10</sup> A cutting, 14.30 m north/south and 1.30 m deep, was located both to examine the southern end of the anomaly and to extend south into the apparently open area, devoid of high resistance anomalies.

At a depth of c. 1.0 m below topsoil, a clay level (5101) formed a make-up deposit for a floor which continued beyond the northern baulk and south for a distance of 5.5 m. Its surface was covered by a layer of charcoal and ash, in turn overlain by a thick deposit of roof-tile and burnt mudbrick or pisé (5102). At its southern extremity, both the clay surface and the destruction deposit were cut by a robber-trench (5103), orientated north-east by south-west, presumably following the foundation for the south-eastern wall of the building to which the clay floor belonged: the clay surface did not continue to the south of the robber-trench where a trail of mud-wall fragments and bricks (5104) sloped away, apparently down a natural incline, above a silty clay deposit (5105) the top of which probably formed the ground surface at the time of the building's destruction. It was overlain by an apparently natural build-up of silty loam (5106).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The building would clearly repay further investigation. However, when excavations in 1988 identified the Roman house in Area M and the walls, decorated with frescoes, it was determined that the programme allowed insufficient time to open up this area on a scale which would do justice to its evident size and importance.

<sup>8</sup> This is a rare case where the plan of a stone building is clearly outlined by robber-trenches, still visible as surface features. In the case of the basilicas, although the robbing of stone foundations was carried out in the post-medieval period, it occurred early enough for the trenches to have silted up completely, see Area F, pp. 172–3 and Area K, p. 183. But compare the robbing of the foundations of buildings within the Roman city, see ch. 2, pp. 31–2.

<sup>9</sup> The reuse of standing ruins in the post-medieval and modern period would not be surprising. The survival of the Roman *castellum aquae*, almost to full height, is probably because it was reused in a post-medieval building, see ch. 1, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> See Figs 10 and 104, also ch. 16, p. 263.

<sup>11</sup> This seems likely even though the cut of the robber-trench (5103) was not visible in the silty loam deposit (5106) above the rubble spread (5104).

## Discussion

The clay make-up (5101) would seem to have been laid to level up the sloping ground surface for the floor of a building which possessed mortared rubble foundations and a tiled roof. The destruction deposit (5104) contained bricks slightly thicker than most of those used for paving within the early Byzantine basilicas.<sup>12</sup> Given its location, close to the southern curtain-wall of the Roman city, it is unlikely to be Roman and can be reasonably assigned to the early Byzantine period.<sup>13</sup> The size of the building and its manner of construction suggest a structure of some importance although too little is known of its extent and planning to determine what its function may have been (Fig. 10). Like other buildings within the early Byzantine defences, occupation ended in destruction. The robbing of the wall no doubt took place in the post-medieval period.<sup>14</sup>

Notable also is the sloping ground surface in the southern half of the cutting, suggested by the inclined level of debris (5104), which probably represents a continuation of the destruction level (5102) over the floor of the building. This slope may explain the need for a thick make-up deposit (5101) used to create a nearly level floor within the building. Also notable is the lack of any sign of other structures or occupation surfaces in the southern half of the cutting at the same level as the building. This would appear to corroborate the evidence from Area A and the geophysical surveys which suggests that, apart from the large building examined at the northern end of the cutting, there were no other buildings in this part of the site in the early Byzantine period.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> They were 0.5 to 0.6 cm thick, slightly thicker than those used in the floor of the Large Basilica. Probably, they were building bricks and not intended for paving.

<sup>13</sup> The building was situated *c.* 30 m south of the fortification wall which represented the southern curtain of the Roman fortifications and the northern wall of the early Byzantine defences. For a distance of *c.* 50 m, buildings south of the city were levelled when the defences were constructed in the late second century and no occupation would seem to have been permitted within this 'free-fire' zone during the late Roman period, see Area B, p. 75 and Area M, p. 201. Although destroyed by fire, there was no sign that the building had been levelled and an early Roman date would therefore seem most improbable. Moreover, no buildings with mortared foundations have been found during subsequent occupation of the site in the Slav or post-medieval periods.

<sup>14</sup> Nowhere is there any evidence to suggest that the robbing of buildings and the defences was not carried out exclusively in the post-medieval period, see ch. 2, pp. 48 and 51.

<sup>15</sup> See further, ch. 2, pp. 42 and 45.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# THE HOUSE IN AREA M: INTERNAL DECORATION

By T. F. C. Blagg

The excavations in Area M uncovered the north-west corner of a portico and three rooms adjacent to its north and west sides (Fig. 92). The walls survived to a maximum height of 1.45 m above floor-level. Painted wall-plaster remained *in situ* on all the exposed wall surfaces. Fragments of decorated stucco mouldings were also found during the excavation of Rooms 1 and 4, in addition to fallen wall-plaster found mainly in Rooms 1, 2, and 4. Large areas of ceiling plaster were also found where they had fallen in Room 2. With variations, the painted decoration consisted of a painted dado c. 0.5 m high and, above it, representation of architectural features on a white background, including fluted columns and moulded bases. The stucco mouldings were in the form of an entablature, in two versions, decorated with fluting, bead-and-reel, dentils, and a bucranion-and-garland frieze. The building is dated to the Severan period, and was destroyed towards the middle of the third century.<sup>1</sup>

This report on the internal decoration is arranged as follows:

1. Description of each room:

- a. Painted plaster *in situ*, wall by wall.
- b. Fallen painted plaster found within the room.
- c. Stucco mouldings found within the room.

(NB The collapse of a wall into one room is likely to bring with it plaster which decorated the wall surfaces of the adjacent room.)

2. Analysis and reconstruction of decorative schemes.
3. The stucco techniques.
4. Technical analysis and notes on the recording of the plaster (by Theo Sturge).

### ROOM 1 (Fig. 93)

North wall: not preserved.

East wall (4969): in two sections either side of doorway to Room 2.

D (left). Patches of white-painted plaster, the largest 0.70 by 0.30 m (4987).

A (right). Red dado 0.50 m high, rising slightly in the corner, with a curved tendril leaning back from it forming a schematic half-palmette. White plaster above, to a maximum height of 0.45 m (4987).

South wall (4863).

B. Red dado preserved along the whole length of the wall, with similar schematic half-palmettes at the corners (Plate V). White plaster above as on the east wall (4862). There was a gap of c. 60 mm at the base of the plaster, perhaps indicating the former presence of floor-slabs. In the south-east

<sup>1</sup> On the excavation of the house, see Area M, pp. 191–8.

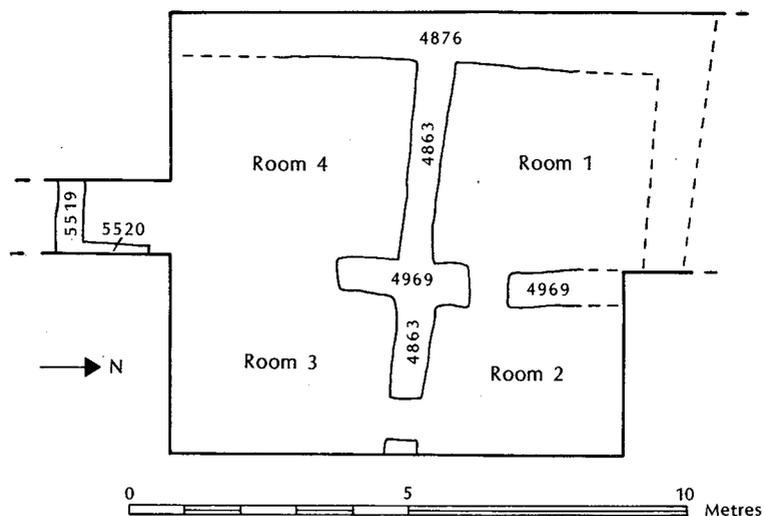


Fig. 92 Location plan of the walls and rooms of the Roman house.

corner a sheet of white plaster with a little red decoration appears to have slid down from higher up 4987/4862.

West wall (4876): Sporadic patches of white under-plaster (4862).

### Fallen plaster

SF 12150. Column base, 0.12 m high, the shaft 0.15 m in diameter (Fig. 102 and Plate VIA). The column is white with fluting and mouldings indicated by light and dark yellowish-brown lines. The mouldings are silhouetted against a red vertical strip, to the left of which is a red line and palmette. Vertical lines were incised to guide the painting of the column shaft. Just below the column base there were scored horizontal lines and a slightly raised ridge about 10 mm high. These could be the result of contact with a horizontal shelf such as is suggested for the niche, SF 12292–5 below.

SF 12167. Lower part of another column shaft, with the bottom of two flutes and base moulding. Similar colouring and size. Plain white plaster to the right. A vertical guide-line was made by the impression of a cord coated in red pigment.

SF 12170. Part of a panel with a narrow (7 mm) red band and a red border, cf. SF 12399 and 12400 in Room 2. Red areas up to 75 mm wide. Red dot and double leaf motif on white. Much white. Some greenish-grey.

SF 12290. Painted in stripes of yellowish-brown alternating with white, probably fluted column shafts. One of these has a red string line similar to that on SF 12167 above. On some pieces the bands are curved and may come from an arched feature. The rest of the surface is cream or buff with splashes of green marbling.

SF 12292–5. Plaster from a curved niche or niches, somewhat flattened at the back, painted in vertical panels to imitate marble. The curvature indicates a diameter of 0.77 m, but not enough fragments join for the height of the niche to be estimated (Fig. 101; Plate VIB). It is not possible to make a definitive reconstruction of the niche, but the following deductions can be made. There appears to be a recessed shelf at the top of the niche, painted green, to judge from the juxtaposition of curved and flat surfaces on external corners. There is also one fragment (SF 12293) with the internal corner between flat green and curved red surfaces, which may be attributed to the base of the niche. Pieces with external angles between two flat surfaces may belong to a continuation of the shelf to the side of the niche. The niche is painted in five panels. The central one was at least 0.107 m wide, red with white spots and wavy lines, some paler buff or yellowish areas and faint tinges of purple. It may be imitating Numidian or Settebasi marble. The adjoining panels are c. 0.24 m wide, white with purple and yellow diagonal streaks, reminiscent of Pavonazzetto or Africano. The

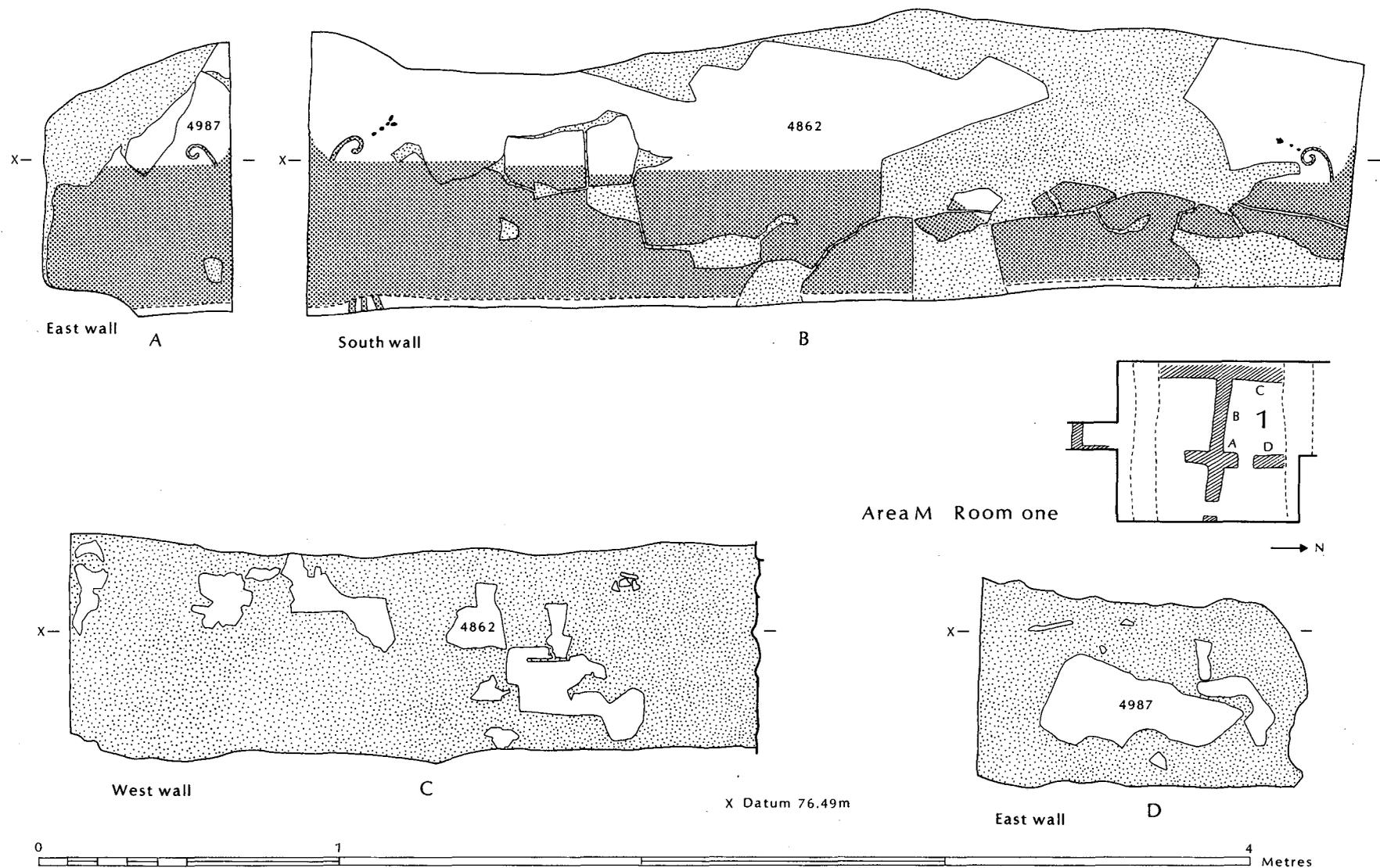


Fig. 93 Elevations of the walls, Room 1.

outermost panels were probably of similar width, dark greenish-grey with cream marbling, resembling Carystian. Vertical setting-out lines separated the panels from one another. The walls to each side were white with yellow-brown lines bordering the corners of the niche.

SF 12163, 12164, 12296–7. Several pieces with double curvature in various colours (white, red, yellow-brown) are likely to have come from a half-dome at the top of another niche set in a green-painted wall.

SF 12298. Two pieces with double concave curvature, painted with narrow white and pale red curved lines on a pinkish background, radiating as if to imitate a shell canopy.

### Stucco mouldings

Entablature moulding 178 mm high, projecting 90 mm at the top. The upper surface is flat, indicating that the moulding projected from the wall at some distance below the ceiling. The topmost moulding is a cyma recta, followed by three fillets, a smaller shallower cyma recta, a fillet, and a fascia at the bottom. There is a band of red paint 24–28 mm wide below the fascia, the colour poorly-preserved since it was painted on plaster which was dry or nearly so. The thicker upper part contains potsherds and bears the impressions of reeds used to give the moulding cohesion (Plate XXXVIA). One piece with a bevelled fascia and a red-painted band below (SF 12468) is from a replastering, covering over a previous plaster layer, also with a red band but with no moulding. A group of fragments from the middle part of the profile appears to have a yellowish wash (SF 12289, from the robbing backfill in the sub-floor chamber of the Period 1 hypocaust).

## ROOM 2 (Fig. 94)

North wall: not exposed.

East wall: not exposed.

South wall (4863).

A. Plaster preserved to a total maximum height of 0.96 m (4985). Red dado, max. ht. 0.55 m, preserved for a total distance of 1.54 m from the south-west corner, ending just short of the doorway to Room 3. It rises to a peak in the corner, with a curved half-tendrill, similar to the eastern and southern walls in Room 1. White-painted above the dado.

West wall (4969): in two sections either side of doorway to Room 1.

B (south). Similar red dado with half-palmette in the corner, counterpart to that on adjacent south wall (4863).

C (north). The red dado and a little of the white above is preserved, with a curvilinear motif in red extending above the dado: a fragment (SF 12405), with a curved tendrill, was found nearby and joins with the *in situ* plaster, forming a surface curving in towards the door jamb (4986).

### Fallen plaster

SF 12399. White with red band at least 73 mm wide and a parallel 6 mm red line 27 mm from it.

SF 12400. Similar to the above. Also, an area 0.08 by 0.17 m of white with part of a blue column at least 70 mm wide.

SF 12435. Flat ceiling plaster with reed impressions on the reverse. Areas of white with red lines each 7 mm wide. Blackened, perhaps by smoke from a fire.

SF 12402. Similar ceiling plaster, also with areas of dark grey.

SF 12422. Piece from the angle of the ceiling and the wall, painted with a red line and a band similarly to SF 12399 above.

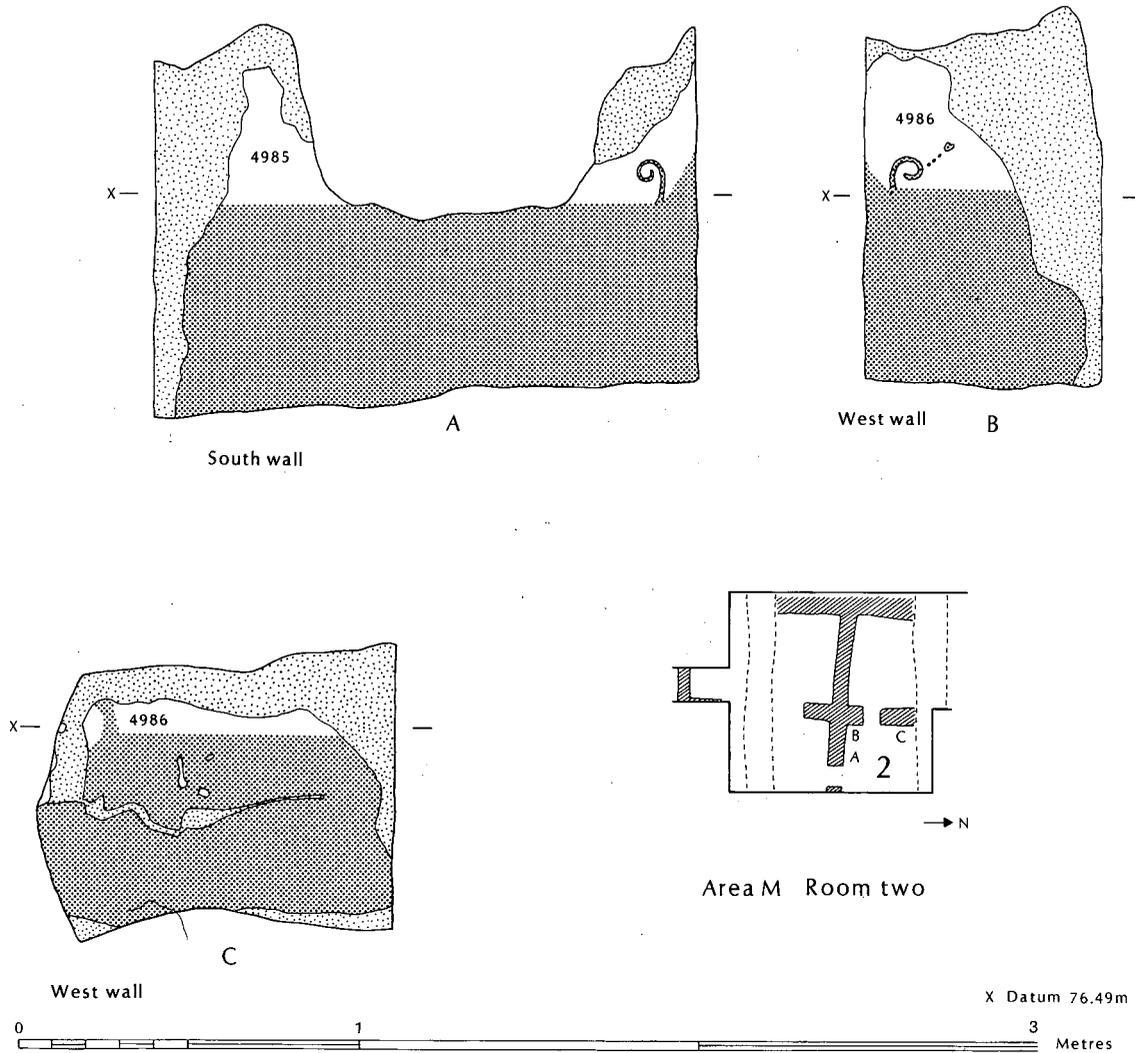


Fig. 94 Elevations of the walls, Room 2.

**Stucco mouldings**

Fewer fragments than in Room 1, and with a similar but not identical profile. There are fragments from the upper and lower parts, but they do not overlap, so the complete profile cannot be reconstructed. The upper part has a cyma or cavetto, the lower part an astragal, a bold cyma (taller than its counterpart in Room 1) and a fillet. One piece has a horizontal curvature suggesting that it formed a corner.

**ROOM 3 (the peristyle courtyard, Fig. 95)**

West wall (4969).

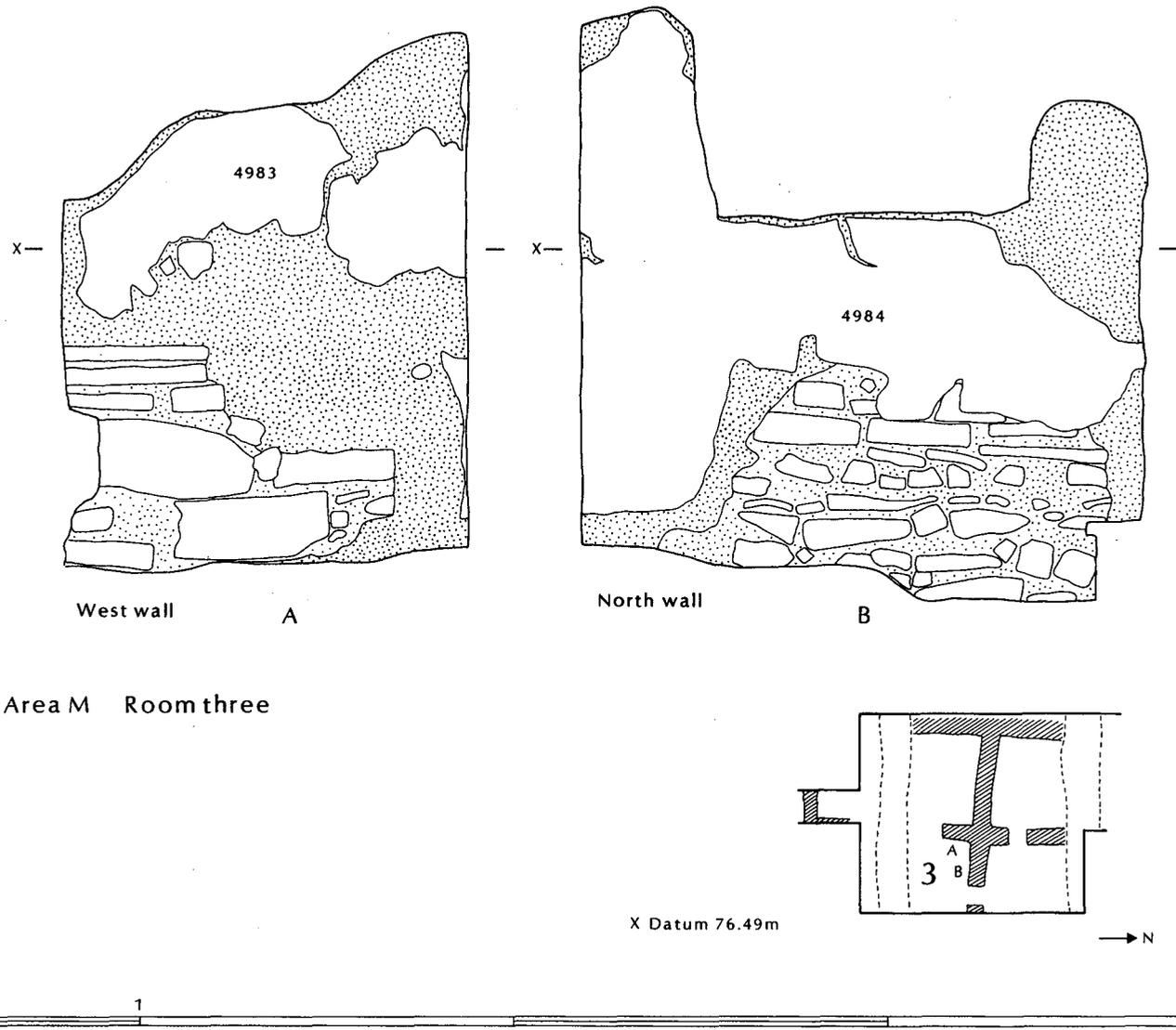
A. Patches of plain white plaster (4983).

North wall (4863).

B. To the west of the doorway to Room 2. Plain white plaster remained to a height of 1.46 m above the floor. No designs were visible (4984).

East wall: not exposed.

South wall: not exposed.



Area M Room three

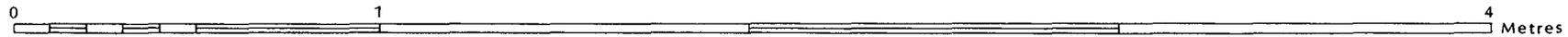


Fig. 95 Elevations of the walls, Room 3 (the peristyle).

**Fallen plaster**

SF 4962. Pieces of white plaster with red bands 6 and 16 mm wide and broader red areas (maximum dimension 57 mm).

SF 4984. Fallen from north wall.

**Stucco mouldings**

None.

**ROOM 4 (Fig. 96)**

West wall (4876).

A. The best-preserved decorative detail survived at the north end of this wall, with a moulded column base at the corner, as if standing 0.5 m above floor-level. To the south of this were horizontal bands and stripes of red, above which white plaster was painted with ?schematized floral motifs up to the top of the wall, which here survived 1.1 m above floor-level (4972).

North wall (4863).

B. Areas of plain white plaster remained in places along the whole length of the wall. At the east end, up to a height of 0.64 m above floor-level, two broad greenish-brown bands define a panel which has a narrow horizontal band and part of a vertical band within it. The plaster has slipped down the wall slightly in relation to that on the adjacent east wall (4981).

East wall (4969).

South end (5520). White plaster, no designs visible.

C. North end (4969). At the base of the wall a strip of white plaster with red splashes survived up to 0.09 m above floor-level. At c. 0.6 m south of the north-east corner of the room were two 6 mm vertical bands 10 mm apart. Above the break line of this strip, the wall had been replastered and painted with the same design as on the north wall, white with narrow vertical and broader horizontal greenish-brown bands outlining a panel. At 0.91 m above the floor was a small patch of red (4982).

South wall (5519).

Remains of white plaster, no designs visible.

**Fallen plaster**

4972, from west wall. Pieces with double curvature, from a domed feature, painted with purple and yellow streaks. Red, yellow, purple, and white pieces, cf. central panel in Room 1 niche. Some bright green, one with a 5 mm black band. Drab green lines and bands on dull cream. Red, green, and brown panels separated by black or light grey lines. Red curvilinear decoration including red and grey spirals on a dark pink background. The colour was less faded on the fallen plaster than on that which remained *in situ*. This may be because, as T. Sturge notes below, paint was better preserved on the thicker plaster (such as that of the niched and domed features).

**Stucco mouldings**

Two types:

1. Fascia with dark band along the top, then edged fluting with tongues, bead-and-reel, dentils, bulls-head and garland frieze, cyma moulding and fillets. The decoration was impressed by stamps (Figs 97–98; Plate XXXVIB).

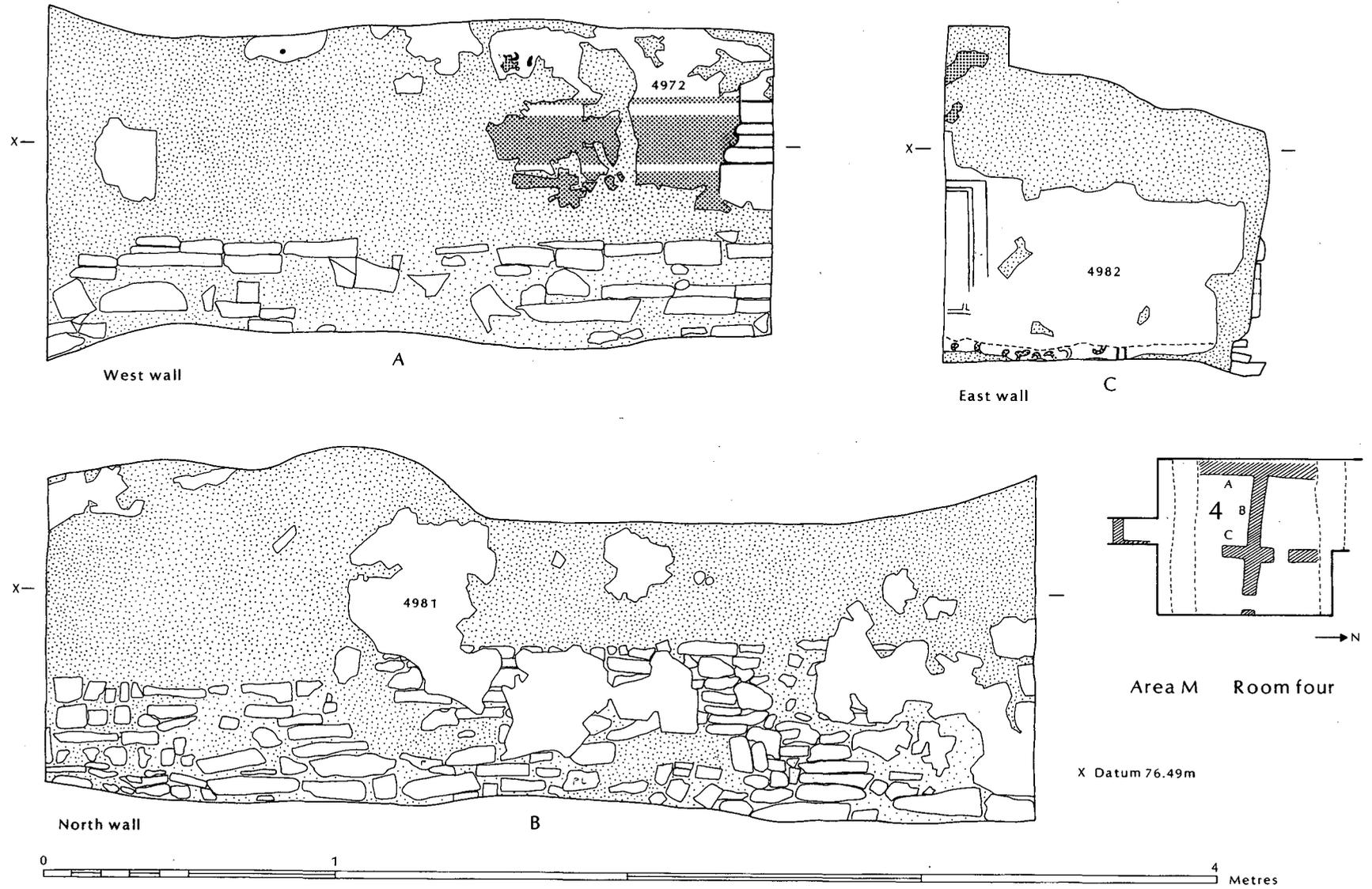


Fig. 96 Elevations of the walls, Room 4.

2. More crudely modelled than 1. The definition of fluting and astragal was less finely cut in the mould, and likewise the detailing of the foliate motifs. The plaster was also modelled when still too wet resulting in suction marks from the withdrawal of the mould. Decorated with (from the top): palmettes with alternately upturned and downturned tips; fluting, of which there are two different versions; an astragal with holes pierced between the beads and the discs of the reels; an ovolo with scrolled leaves and tongues; a second row of fluting, broken at the bottom (Figs 99–100).

### THE DECORATIVE SCHEMES

The decoration of Rooms 2 and 3 is easy to define. Room 3, the peristyle courtyard, produced the least evidence. Only white plaster remained *in situ*. Fallen plaster painted with red bands was also found, and even that could have come from an adjacent room. It is just possible, however, that

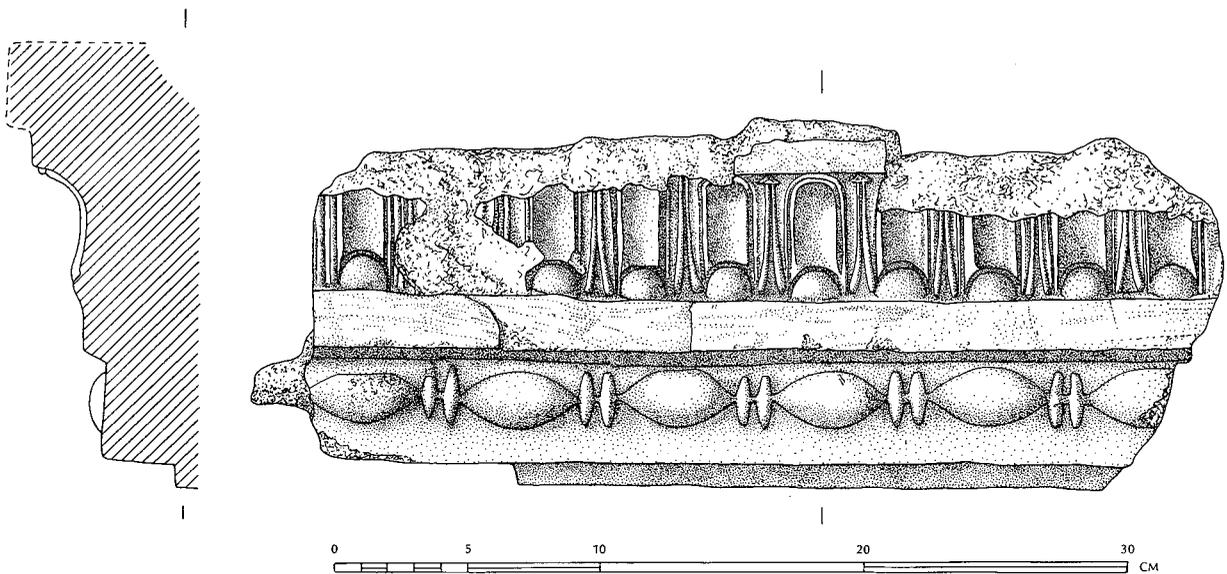


Fig. 97 Stucco moulding with fluting (Type 1), SF 12390.

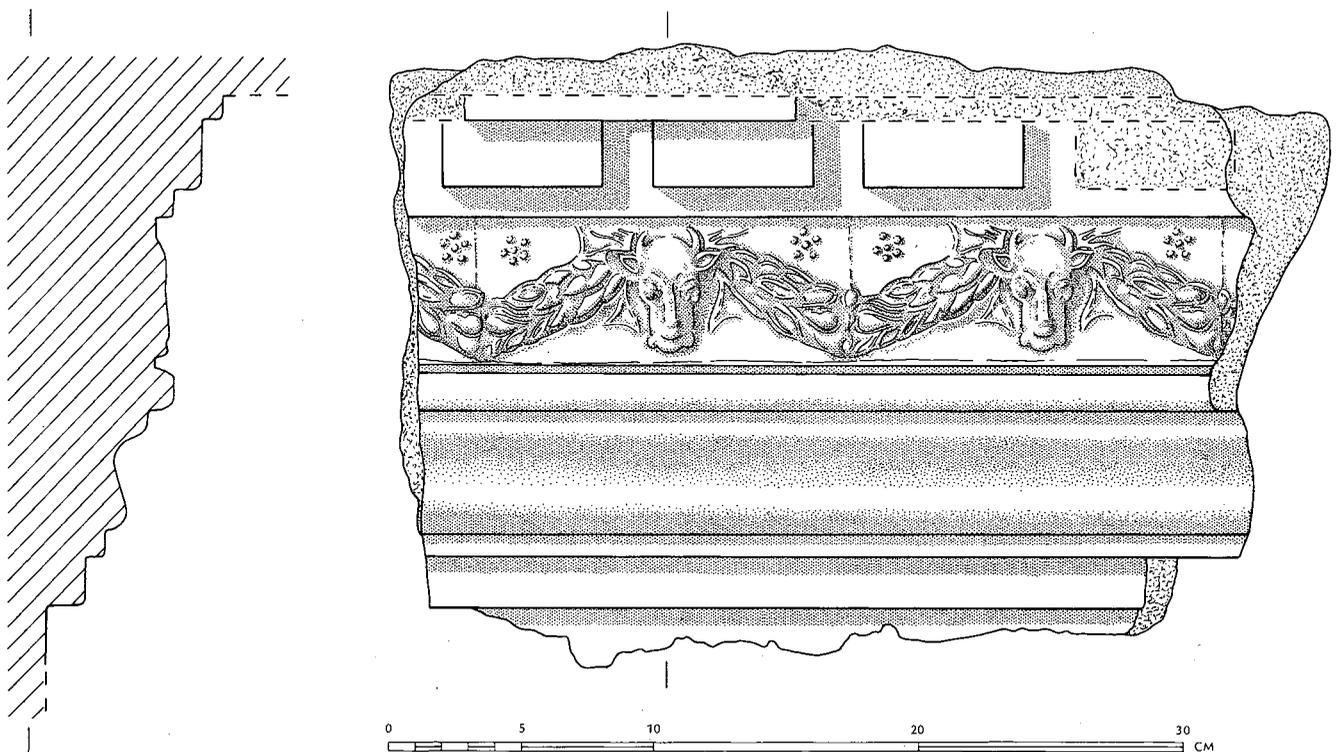


Fig. 98 Stucco moulding with bulls' heads and garlands, SF 12391.

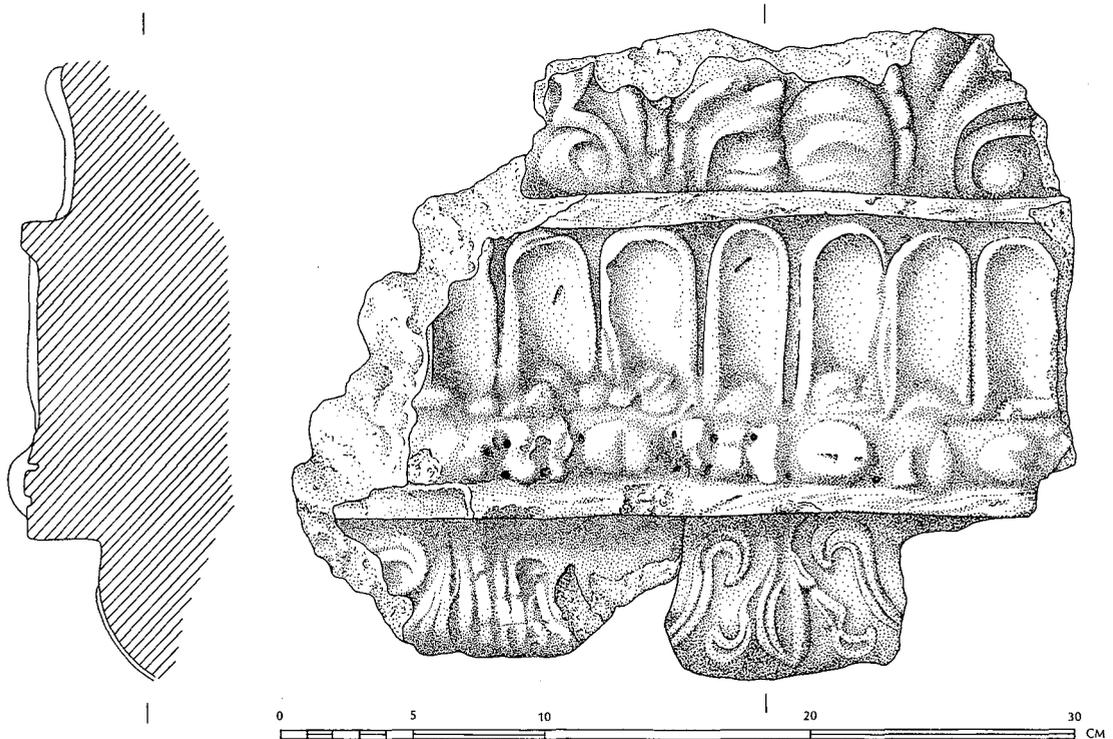


Fig. 99 Stucco moulding with fluting (Type 2), SF 1250.

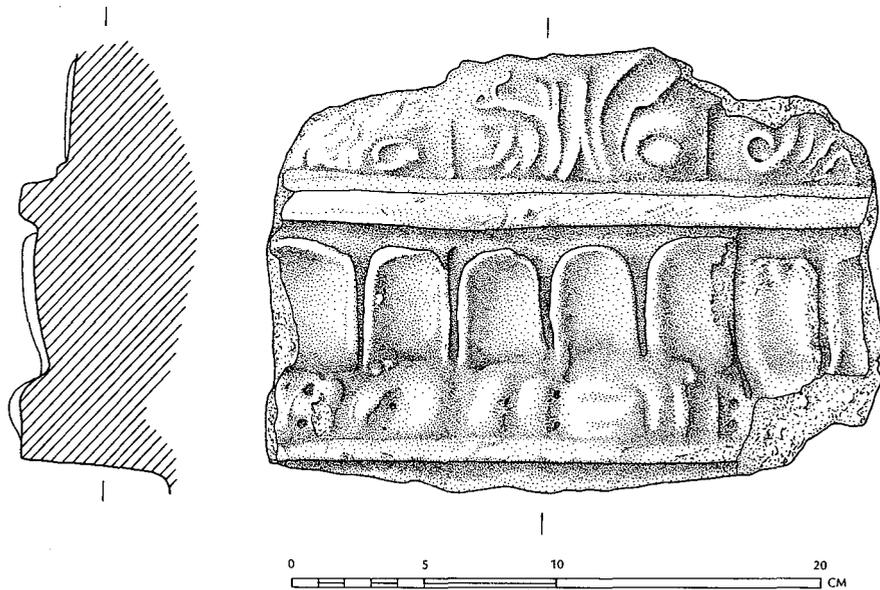


Fig. 100 Stucco moulding with fluting (Type 2, variant), SF 1300.

apparently blank *in situ* plaster had decoration which has now faded altogether, since, as noted above for Room 4, fallen plaster tended to preserve its colour better.

In Room 2, the south and west walls were painted with a red dado up to *c.* 0.5 m above the floor, with rather sketchy curved tendrils in the corners, motifs which also decorated Room 1. There were also pieces with red bands and lines, one at least of which appears to have come from the ceiling. Apart from these, the only piece which might hint at the decoration of the upper wall is one with part of a blue column. The fragments of plain stucco moulding found in Room 2 are likely to have belonged to it, since they differ from the stucco in other rooms. They probably formed a string course. The decoration of Room 2 was therefore very simple.

The problems arise with Rooms 1 and 4, because pieces from more than one decorative scheme were found in both, notably the representations of fluted columns and the marbled panelling from at

least two niches. At the same time, each room has unique elements which make it most unlikely that they shared similar decorative schemes. An obvious alternative explanation is that, if the upper part of the wall between the rooms collapsed into one of them, any plaster remaining on both sides of that wall would be found in that one room.

The elements which Room 1 has but Room 4 does not are, first, a red dado with corner tendrils surviving *in situ* on the south and east walls. They are similar to those in Room 2, with which Room 1 was connected by a door. There were also plain stucco mouldings of a similar but not quite identical profile to those in Room 2. If the decoration of Room 1 had no features which were not also attested in Room 2, the following items found there remain to be accounted for: fallen plaster with representations of at least two column bases (SF 12150, 12167), further fragments of column shaft (SF 12290), and the marbled plaster from at least two curved niches. Had such elements existed in Room 1, they would have had to be at least 1 m above floor-level, and quite unconnected with the decoration which survived in the room up to that height.

Room 4, however, did have the painting of a column base *in situ* on its west wall, an area painted red alongside it, and some possible floral motifs on the white plaster at a higher level. The north and east walls were painted, up to a height of 0.5 to 0.65 m above floor-level, with open-panelled designs, differing therefore from the scheme on the west wall as they do from Rooms 1 and 2. Room 4 also had, among the plaster fallen from the west wall, some curved plaster surfaces with imitation marbling similar to that found in greater quantity in Room 1 and attributed to one or more niches. It also had two sets of stucco entablature decorated with fluting, foliage, and other

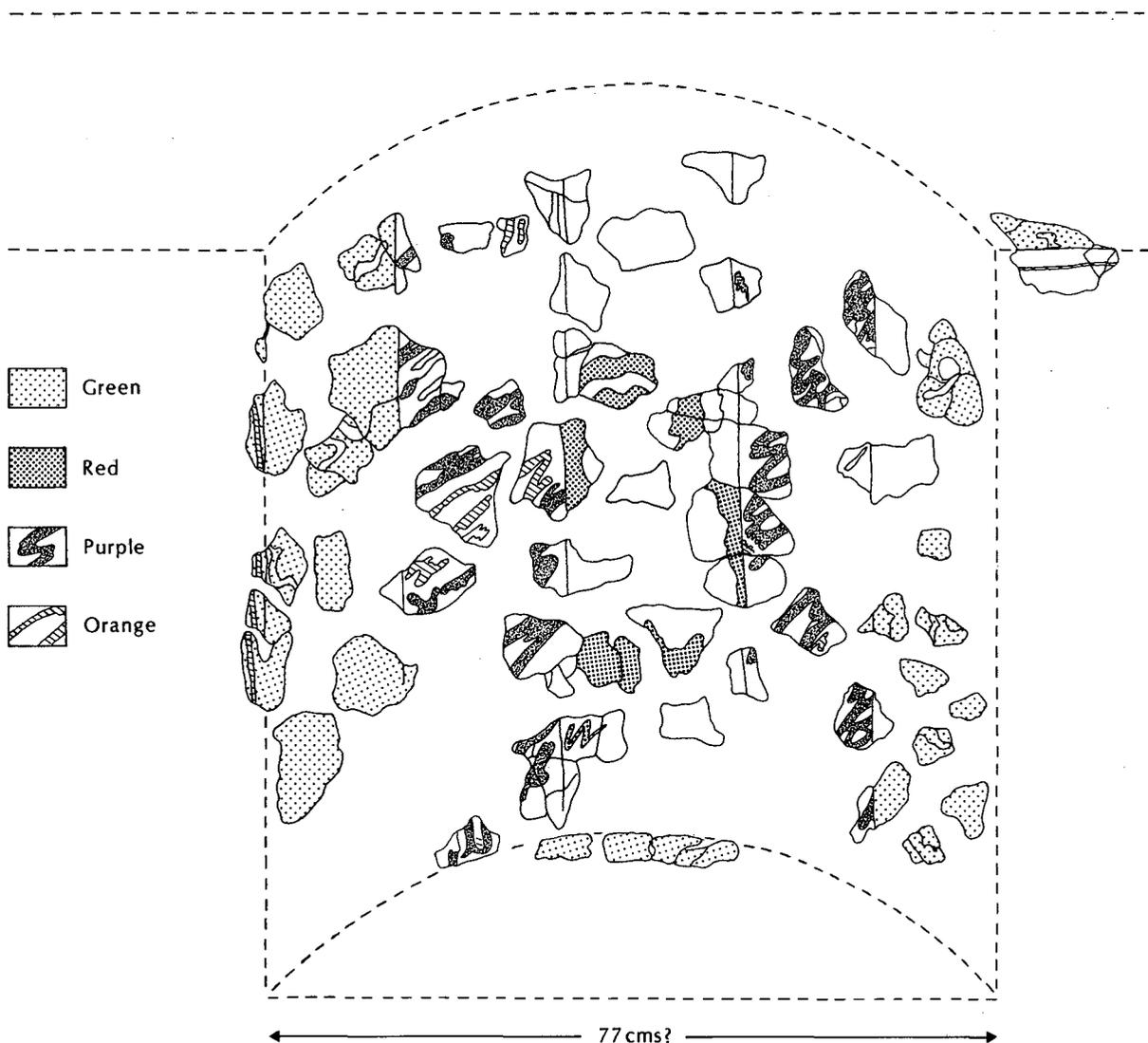


Fig. 101 Reconstruction of the niche fragments from Room 1.

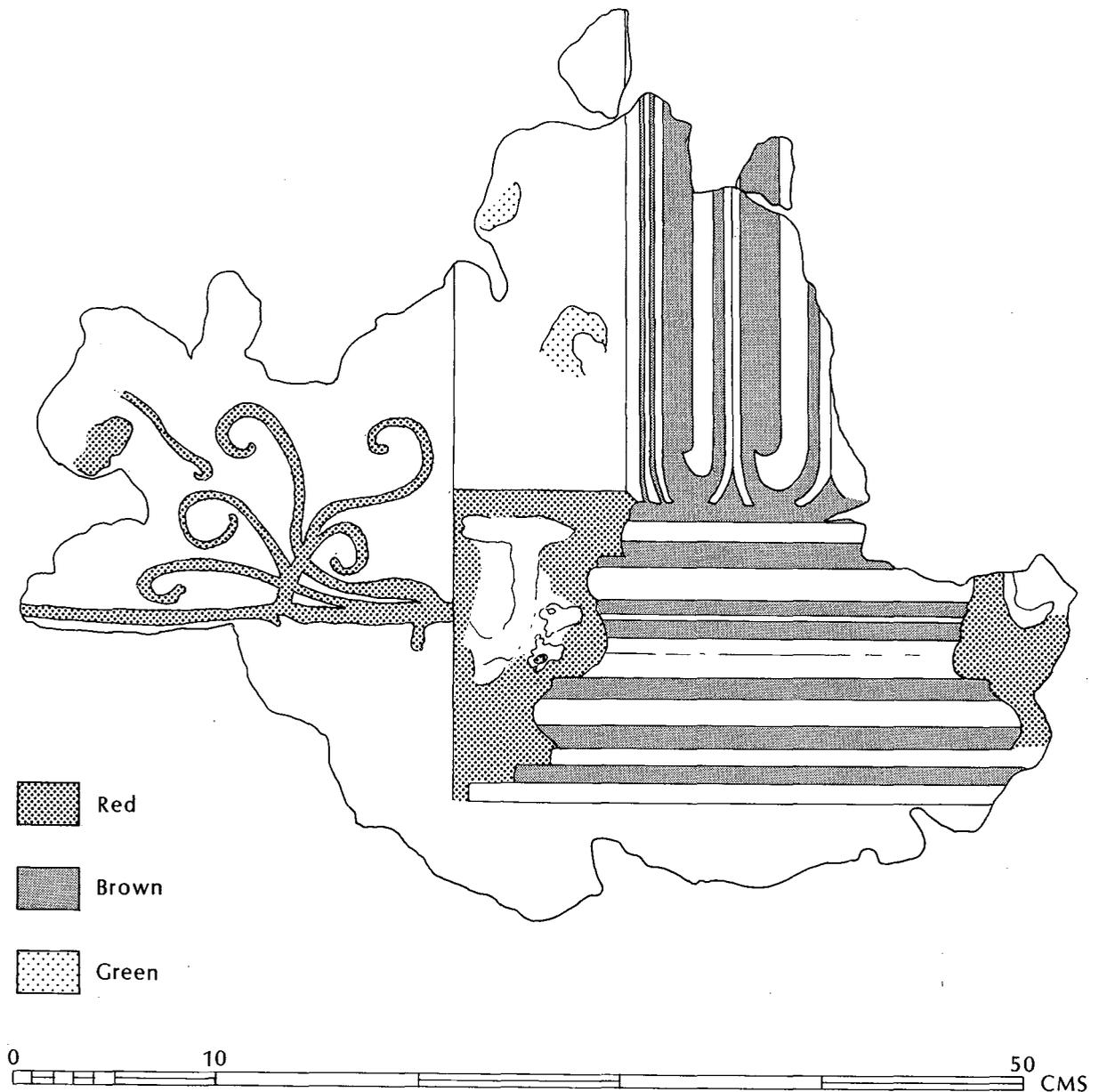


Fig. 102 Drawing of the column from Room 1, SF 12150.

ornamental motifs, not found in any other excavated room, though a fragment was found in the cutting south of Room 5. Room 4 was clearly the most elaborately decorated of all the rooms explored. It might therefore appropriately be suggested that the fluted column and niche fragments found in Room 1 had originally decorated the south side of the party-wall in Room 4.

Admittedly, if that were so, for the column plaster found in Room 1 to have been in a position to have fallen into it, the columns would have to have been painted at least 0.7 m higher up on the north wall of Room 4 than the column which remained on its west wall. Also, the column base painted on SF 12150 was freestanding, whereas the one *in situ* was a half column in the north-west corner. Given that, the scheme of decoration would not have been architecturally homogeneous. The niche would also have to have been higher up than the surviving top of the wall, *c.* 1.25 m above floor-level (Fig. 101). It is clear, however, that Room 4 was redecorated at least once, and the discrepancy between the columns may have resulted from that, supposing columnar designs in both periods. That might also explain why there were two versions of ornamental stucco entablature in Room 4, though it is also possible that one came from just below the ceiling and the other from a string course at a lower level, or that different moulds were used for different walls. A further possibility is that there was a room with wall-paintings on an upper floor. The overall quantity of

wall-plaster might tell against that, however, and, as there is no structural evidence to support the hypothesis of a two-storey building, it seems preferable to discount it.

No doubt other hypotheses could be contrived, but the above seems as far as it is possible to go in reconstructing the internal schemes of decoration on the evidence available (Fig. 73).

### THE TECHNIQUES OF THE STUCCO

The plain mouldings in Rooms 1 and 2 were built up on bundles of reeds and pieces of tile. The buff-coloured backing mortar contained a filler of grog particles and black sand, with fine organic material which has decayed away, leaving a porous appearance. The reed cavities have a white surface, suggesting that the reeds may have been coated with lime before being overlaid with the backing mortar. The surface of the backing layer was modelled to a rough profile, over which fine white plaster 2–3 mm thick was laid and modelled with a template. A yellow or brownish colour on the surface of some mouldings may be the result of soil-staining rather than pigment. There is evidence for re-plastering and re-painting over an earlier layer of painted plaster in some rooms. Quantities of plaster from Room 1 had reed impressions on the reverse, suggesting that plaster may have fallen from the ceiling, as the angle piece SF 12422 confirms. Much of this plaster was smoke-blackened.

The decorated mouldings from Room 4 also contained organic filler, and the core was built up round two bundles of reeds with pieces of tile between them for added support. The decorative motifs were impressed into the plaster by stamps. In Type 1, that for the fluting was 33 mm wide, containing one flute and one tongue; that for the bead-and-reel, 118 mm wide; that for the bulls' head frieze, 142 mm wide. Motifs do not align with one another vertically. Striations at the top and bottom of the frieze suggest that the profile had been moulded with a template before being stamped. One fragment of the bead-and-reel, detached from the backing, also has a smooth rear surface, showing that it had been prefabricated and inserted into the preparation layer of fairly fine plaster, which had been applied to the surface of the core and moulded to fit the back of the decorative pieces.

Fragments of Type 2 are smoothly curved at the back, showing that they had been prefabricated in two stages. A preparation layer of relatively coarse plaster was formed, probably in a hollow trough lined with cloth which has left impressions of its creases. To that plaster the elements with stamped decoration were added. These had been separately prefabricated, as is indicated by the way in which the scrolled ovolo breaks off cleanly, having been applied to the underside of the astragal. The stamps for the palmettes were 98–105 mm wide, those for the fluting 140–144 mm: overlaps resulting from inaccurate stamping show that the flutes were impressed in groups of four.

### TECHNICAL ANALYSIS AND NOTES ON THE RECORDING OF THE PLASTER (BY T. STURGE)

#### The plaster

The lime plaster varied in quality from very good and strong to poorly compacted weak plaster. The plaster on the walls was thin and relatively weak. It appeared to have been applied in only one or at most two coats. It also had a layer of lime applied to the surface to give a white finish. This was probably applied with a trowel: there are no brush strokes visible. The plaster of the niche(s) is much more substantial because it was used to smooth out a relatively crudely shaped mudbrick niche. As a result it has been more heavily worked and more layers were applied. This produced a high quality, strong and dense plaster. The ceiling plaster is of similar quality. It was plastered onto reeds so it had to be worked into them and a substantial layer had to be built up to form a level surface.

### **The painting, its laying out and the justification for identifying it as fresco**

Where the plaster is thick, the paint is of good quality. It is waterproof (it can be safely washed) indicating that the pigment was applied immediately after plastering, before carbonation of the surface and while there was still a substantial quantity of slaked lime (calcium hydroxide) in solution within the plaster. This would have come to the surface with the water as the plaster dried and would have been deposited on the surface and within the pigment. This then turned to calcium carbonate and bound the pigment rendering it waterproof. This indicates that the technique of working in fresco was fully understood. Had other binding material been used this would not have provided such a durable waterproof finish.

Where the plaster is thin the paint is not as well attached to the plaster as it is to the thicker plaster. This is to be expected as the thin plaster cannot hold such a substantial reservoir of slaked lime in solution so there is less to come to the surface and bind the pigment. Had this not been fresco it would be normal for the paint layer to be of similar quality on both the thick and the thin plaster.

The designs were laid out on the plaster in ways wholly typical of fresco. This was carried out using two different methods: (1) Lines were scribed into the wet plaster with a pointed implement such as the tip of a trowel. This was common practice in producing fresco, not just in the Roman period; (2) more unusually, a cord was also used. An 'S' spun cord had a red oxide pigment applied to it and this was then twanged onto the surface to make a line. As far as I am aware, this is the first time this method of laying out lines has been identified on Roman plaster.

### **Conservation**

#### *Lifting*

The plaster found in 1989 was mainly lifted by the archaeologists on site. Associated fragments were boxed together and assigned small-find numbers. Also, some work was carried out by the Bulgarian conservators who lifted some groups using polyvinyl alcohol and butter muslin. They also faced some of the standing plaster in the same way. Little plaster was lifted in 1990 until the end of the season when it was also excavated by field-officers on site. In 1991 there was a considerable amount of plaster to lift throughout the field season. On site, the face-up plaster was treated in a different way to the face-down plaster.

Where the plaster was face up and it was strong enough to handle, no facing was used. Instead, the positions of the associated fragments were traced onto Melinex (polyester film). The tracing was then turned over and laid on a tray. The fragments were then lifted one at a time and laid out face down on the tracing. This ensured that the pieces were not displaced and the process was relatively mechanical with limited room for error. A plaster support was then made to hold the pieces in place. Polythene sheet was laid over the back of the fragments and plaster of Paris and scrim were spread over it. The weight of the plaster of Paris brought the polythene sheet into close contact with the back of the plaster. Once the plaster of Paris had set it could be lifted off and the polythene removed. This made a tray so that the fragments could be laid out on in their correct relative positions.

Where the face-up plaster was thin and fragile a facing was applied: the Bulgarians treated some with polyvinyl alcohol and other pieces were lifted with 30% Paraloid B72 acetone. A facing of scrim or butter muslin was used. In 1991, large areas of face-down ceiling plaster were found. Where time allowed, this was lifted with 40% Paraloid B72 in acetone with scrim. The weather was very hot and it was dry enough to lift with care after about thirty minutes. In order to speed up the rate of recovery, some fragments were lifted piece by piece and laid out on trays. As far as possible their relative positions were preserved.

Photographs were taken at all stages and the relative positions of the groups was recorded on site plans.

*Cleaning*

The plaster was, on the whole, in good condition as was the paint surface. Because the painting had been executed in fresco the paint surface was waterproof so it could be washed carefully. The only parts that were difficult to wash were those on very thin poorly-compacted plaster. Where possible washing was done with running water so that no residue was left as would have been the case if a bowl of inevitably not very clean water was used. Soft brushes/fingers were used to dislodge the dirt. The stucco was very fragile. After it had dried out, it was cleaned with dry brushes. Water could only be used with extreme care so this was left for future work in the laboratory.

*Assembly*

Fragments that fitted together were joined into groups with an adhesive based on Paraloid B72 made by H. Marcel Guest. This was done for two reasons: to preserve clear joins between fragments and to enable groups of fragments to be handled as one.

No permanent work was carried out. Some groups were held together by making a plaster of Paris support as described in the lifting section above. The largest group supported in this way comprised the fragments which belonged to a niche. The curvature of the fragments was measured as far as possible and a diameter was calculated. It proved impossible to produce a definitive reconstruction, however the fragments were laid out in as reasonable a way as possible in order to indicate the most probable arrangement of the original design (Plate VIB).



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# THE GEOPHYSICAL PROGRAMME

By P. Strange

## INTRODUCTION

The development of low power and compact geophysical instruments specifically designed for archaeological use as well as the availability of micro-computers with high resolution displays and large, fast-access data storage facilities has now made it possible to readily store and display the results of large-scale geophysical surveys (data readings at 1 m intervals involve 10,000 readings per hectare). Fast computers and the application of various algorithms for data conditioning now also allow interactive display of the data image.<sup>1</sup>

At Nicopolis ad Istrum, in the absence of any surface evidence for systematic robbing within the early Byzantine defences (5.74 ha), the initial results provided by a rapid geophysical survey were of primary importance in determining excavation strategy. The haphazard nature of the visible robber-trenches within the early Byzantine defences was in marked contrast to the Roman city, where wall foundations of brick and stone had been systematically removed, leaving visible trenches which provide a remarkable plan of the city's buildings (Fig. 3).<sup>2</sup> Of the two rapid geophysical techniques readily available, magnetic and resistivity, the split-dipole resistivity method was chosen for ease and speed of use.

Assuming that any foundations would be of the order of 0.5–1.0 m in width, a reading interval of 1 m was chosen, using the split dipole electrode arrangement. The method involved taking about fifty thousand readings to cover the site. This allowed the survey to be carried out rapidly (typically four hundred readings an hour). As it was correctly presumed that many of the buildings, including those which had a mudbrick superstructure, would have been built on rubble foundations, it was considered to be the method most likely to produce results. A magnetic survey would have been just as easy and quick to carry out, but was considered less likely to provide a high resolution image capable of identifying foundations or walls.

### THE RESISTIVITY SURVEY WITHIN THE EARLY BYZANTINE DEFENCES (Figs 103–4)

Using the survey points of a 50 m grid, already established for the site, a secondary survey grid of 20 m by 20 m squares was laid out. Measurements were taken at 1 m intervals, i.e. 400 readings were made for each full square. Initial trials demonstrated that the spoil, thrown up during the robbing of the defences, masked the underlying stratigraphy around the edges of the site. Consequently, the survey was not extended right up to the line of the walls and some squares, around the perimeter of the survey area, were only partially surveyed. Similarly, it was ascertained that spoil on the steep slopes either side of the valley running down towards the south gate (Area E) produced no useful information and these areas were also omitted from the survey. Approximately half the interior of the site (squares A01 to N05) was completed during the first season in 1985 and the remaining squares were surveyed in 1986.

<sup>1</sup> I. Scollar, K. Weidner and K. Segeth, 'Display of archaeological magnetic data', *Geophysics* 51/3 (1986), 623–33.

<sup>2</sup> See ch. 1, pp. 31–2.

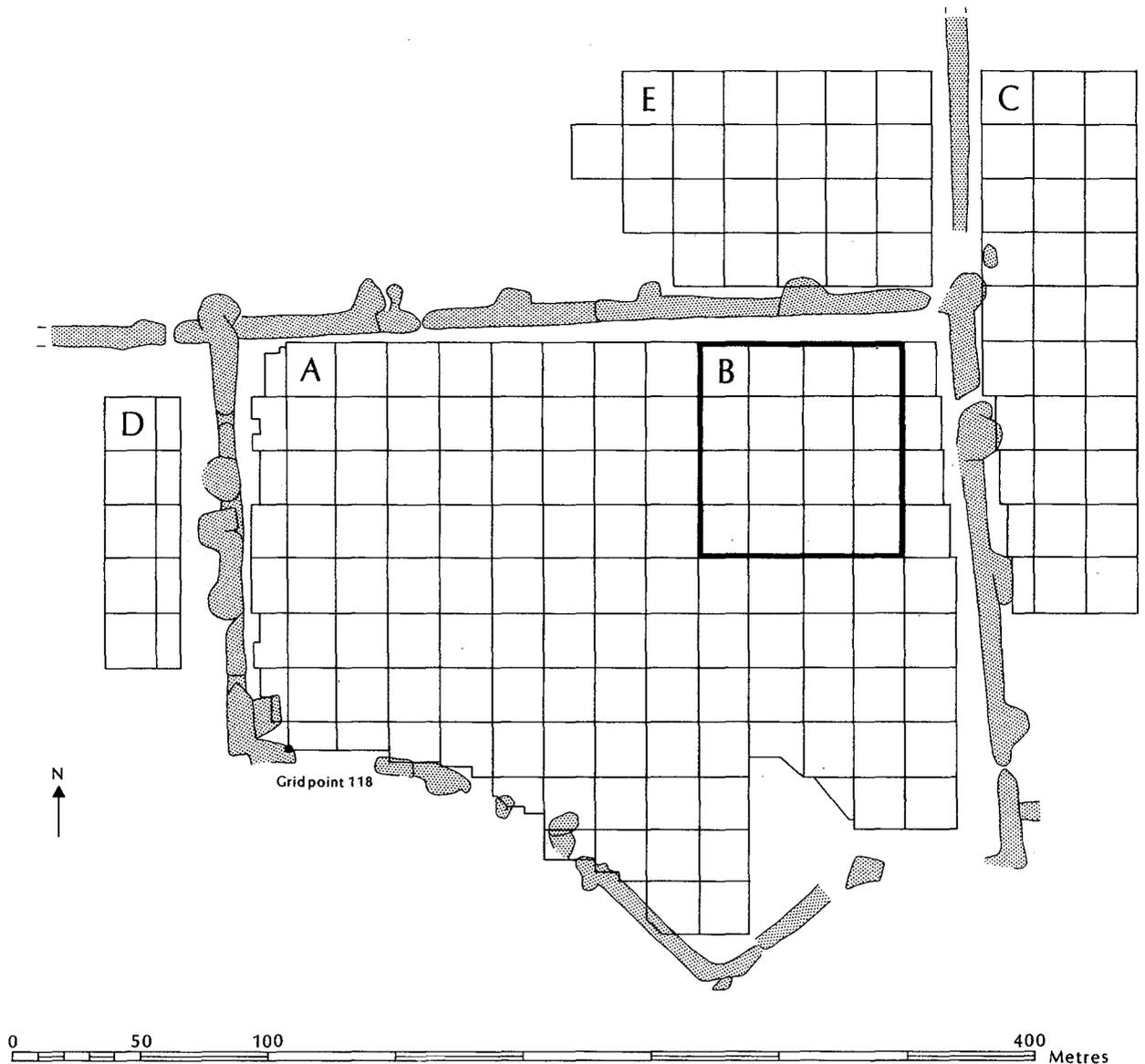


Fig. 103 Locations surveyed 1985–1988. A = Resistivity survey of the interior of the early Byzantine site. B = Location of magnetometer survey. C = Resistivity survey outside the eastern defences of the Roman and early Byzantine sites. D = Resistivity survey to the west of the early Byzantine defences. E = Resistivity survey within the south-eastern corner of the Roman city.

The data was recorded in the field by hand followed by daily keying into the on-site computer. Initially, the data for each survey square was stored as a file comprising a string of four hundred data values. The interior of the early Byzantine defences included in the survey comprised a 14 by 11 matrix of 20 m by 20 m squares, most completely surveyed, but some comprising in part, or totally, dummy data (a series of '1's) where, as noted above, debris masked archaeological features.

Once set up, the split dipole arrangement involved moving the frame with its two electrodes, 0.5 m apart, to take readings at each of the four hundred points within each survey square. The second, fixed pair of electrodes was spaced between one and two metres apart and at a distance of c. 30 to 40 m from the square where measurements were taken with the moving electrodes. Aspinall and Lynam have discussed the properties of the split dipole arrangement over archaeological features, stressing, in particular, the high resolution obtainable with small 'moving' electrode separations and the simple response form over complex structures.<sup>3</sup> Linear

<sup>3</sup> A. Aspinall and J. T. Lynam, 'An induced polarization instrument for the detection of near-surface features,' *Prospezioni Archeologiche* 5 (1970), 67–75.

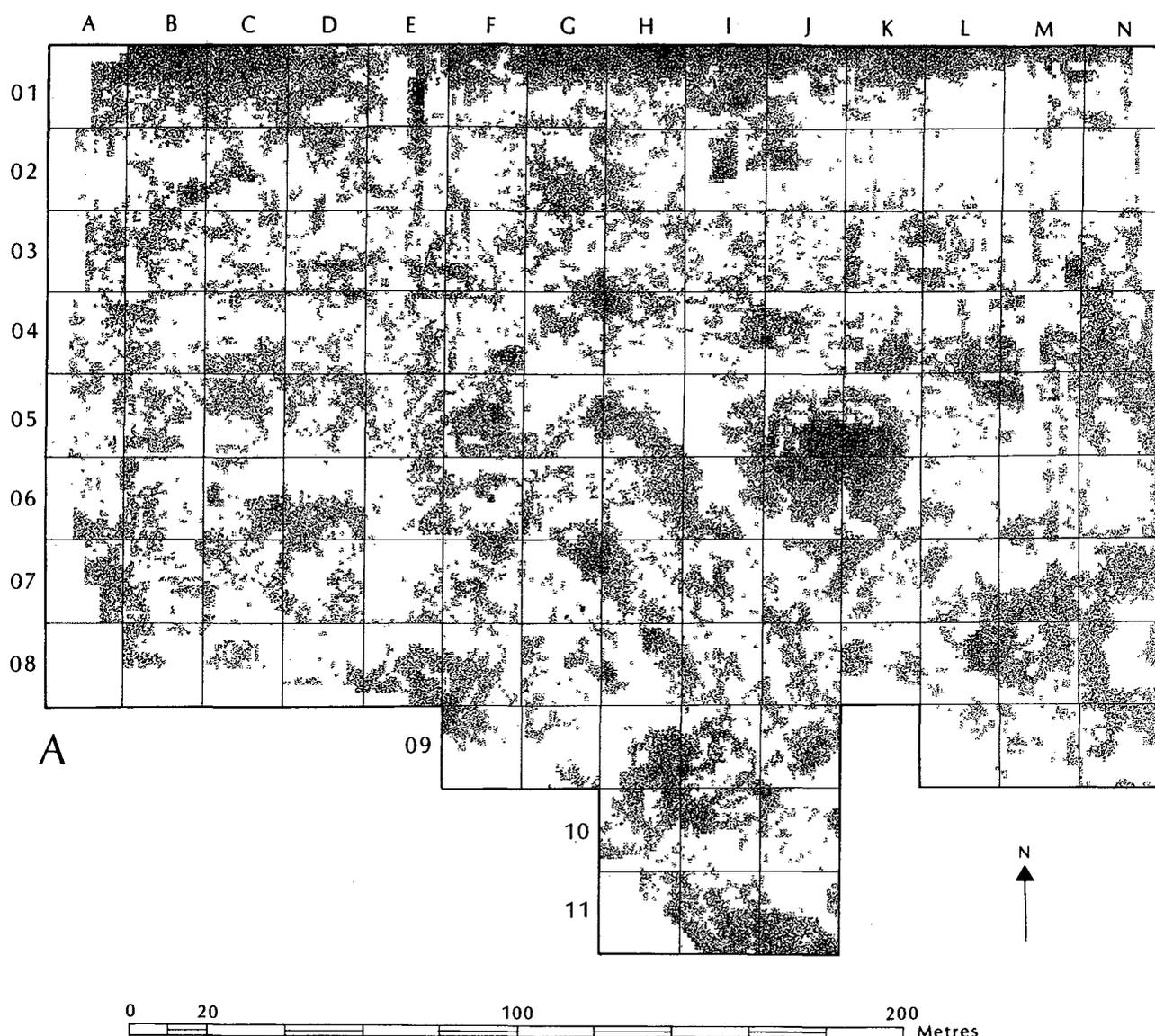


Fig. 104 Dot-density plot of the resistivity survey showing major positive anomalies.

features, such as walls or foundations, produce a geophysical signal that is simple and easy to interpret without the need for transformation algorithms. It can be shown that at separations of this order between the 'fixed' and 'moving' electrodes, the variations in reading (in homogeneous earth) due to movement of the 'moving electrodes' with respect to the 'fixed' electrodes within a 20 m survey square will be of the order of 1.8–2.0 per cent.<sup>4</sup> A further advantage of the method, which produces relative, rather than absolute, values of resistance, is that the background value can be adjusted over a range typically 2:1 by varying the 'fixed' electrode spacings. This proved especially valuable when trying to maintain a constant background value after moving between survey squares or when weather changes affected its absolute value. The main disadvantage of the method is the relatively low variation in readings with respect to the background value in the vicinity of a feature as compared with the more traditional electrode arrangements i.e. Wenner or Schlumberger.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> N. Nenov and P. Strange, 'A large scale geophysical survey – Nicopolis ad Istrum', *Proceedings of the Second South European Conference in Archaeometry, Delphi, April 1991* (forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup> On the relative merits of different electrode configurations see A. J. Clark, *Seeing Beneath the Soil – Prospecting Methods in Archaeology* (London, 1990).

### PROCESSING AND INTERPRETING THE IMAGE GENERATED FROM THE GEOPHYSICAL DATA

The formal definition of 'image' is a 2-dimensional matrix with elements usually, but not necessarily equally spaced and which represent points spatially in the geophysical field. This represents the internal format of the data within the computer but not necessarily the format of the display. Problems which may arise in establishing the image include:

- (a) Assigning values to the elements of the matrix, if the measurements are unequally spaced, if there are missing measurements, or if the matrix is too coarse to give an acceptable image.
- (b) Identifying true anomalies when the dynamic range of measurements varies markedly.
- (c) Comparing results between different squares where discontinuities occur at the boundaries between them.

These and related problems can be overcome by the application of various mathematical techniques. Initially, relatively simple techniques (largely constrained by the limited memory, speed and screen display of the computing equipment available on site in 1985) were applied to the data in order to determine the nature and location of major anomalies. The problems under heading (a) hardly affected the Nicopolis data because the geophysical survey was carried out on a comparatively large scale and the number of readings taken provided adequate coverage of the site. Linear dynamic range compression was applied by subtraction of the median value of the measurements from each data value followed by linear scaling. The problems presented by discontinuities were reduced to an acceptable level by interactive scaling of adjacent groups of squares to give a visually acceptable image which shows areas of high resistance representing a wide variety of archaeological features (Fig. 104). Major anomalies were readily interpreted and provided the basis for the programme of selective excavation.<sup>6</sup>

There is a remarkable correlation between the geophysical data image and the physical survey of the site (Figs 5 and 104). Whereas major features were evidenced by strong positive anomalies, numerous minor pits and depressions, some of which were visible as surface features, were identified, after removal of the median value, in the negative data image as low resistance features. By combining the results of the physical and geophysical surveys, it proved possible to identify the presence of buildings and apparent open spaces within the enclosure (Fig. 104; Plate XXXVIIA–B). Paved-floor surfaces and foundations showed as high resistance anomalies (Fig. 104). Trenches dug to rob foundations were defined by low resistance anomalies and surface depressions (Fig. 105; Plate XXXVIA–B).

### THE MAGNETIC SURVEY

Surprisingly, the results of the resistivity survey suggested that there were large areas of the site apparently devoid of structures, notably on the west side of the site, east of the west gate (Squares A04–E05), and in the north-east corner of the site (Squares K01–N03) (Fig. 104). During the 1988 season these two areas were surveyed using an FM9 Fluxgate Gradiometer. As with the resistivity survey, measurements were taken at 1 metre intervals. The results confirm that, at least down to about 2 m below topsoil, there are no structures other than those apparent in the resistivity survey. Nor did the magnetic survey identify any significant areas of major burning except where they corresponded to buildings, the foundations for which had been located by resistivity (Fig. 106). Since excavation demonstrated that the early Byzantine occupation level was immediately below topsoil and that the final period of use ended in destruction by fire, it would seem improbable that any buildings of mud-brick, even with slight foundations, existed either on the western or the north-eastern sides of the site.

<sup>6</sup> See ch. 1, p. 2.

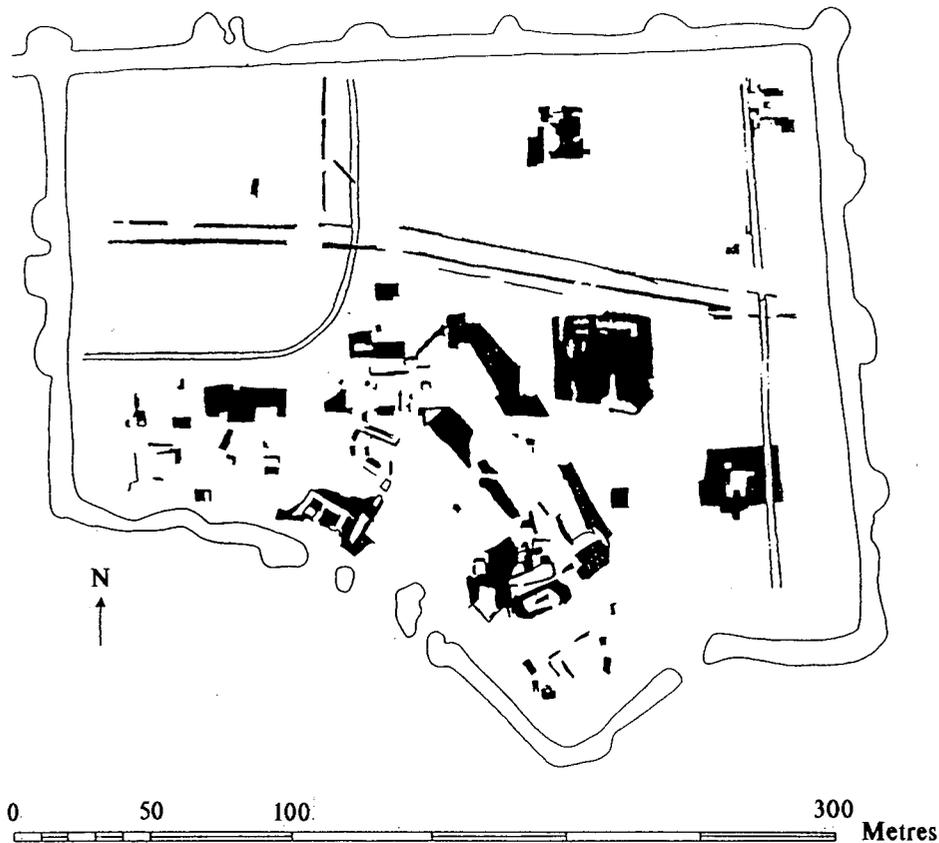


Fig. 105 Interpretation of major anomalies in the resistivity survey. (See also Fig. 10.)

### MAJOR ANOMALIES CONFIRMED BY EXCAVATION

Table 1 summarizes the character of the anomalies identified in the geophysical survey and established by excavation.

TABLE 1

| Square No(s) & (area letter) | Archaeological feature   | Average depth below present gl (m) & average reading wrt background ( ) |               |
|------------------------------|--|---|---------------|
| A01 – N01<br>(Areas A, C)    | Loose debris representing spread of the inner spoil banks associated with post-medieval robbing of the fortification wall.   | 0 m   | (x 2 – x 4)   |
| E01 & E02<br>(Areas B,C)     | North-south road comprising massive limestone slabs. Extends at least 50 m south of north defences. May extend further south but obscured by increasing depth of overburden. | 0.2 – 0.5 m   | (x 2 – x 5)   |
| I02 (Area N)                 | Spread of destruction material, mostly broken tiles.   | 0.3 m   | (x 3)         |
| D03 – M04 (Area M)           | Line of buildings in 2 or 3 blocks represented by massive foundation walls.  | 0.25 m  | (x 2)         |
| F05 (Area D)                 | Superimposed buildings represented by rubble foundation walls and destruction material spread.   | 0.3 m   | (x 1.5 – x 3) |
| M04 (Area H)                 | Wide ditch or sunken track.  | 1.2 m   | (x 0.5)       |
| J05 – K06 (Area F)           | Tile floor, robbing trenches of Basilica walls. <i>Grubenhäuser</i> to north and south cut through foundations.  | 0.2 m   | (x 3 – x 5)   |
| L07 – M08 (Area K)           | Tile floor, destruction rubble.  | 0.1 m   | (x 2 – x 3)   |
| E08 & F08 (Area L)           | Destruction material, mostly tiles, of a large building.   | 0.4 m   | (x 1.5 – x 2) |

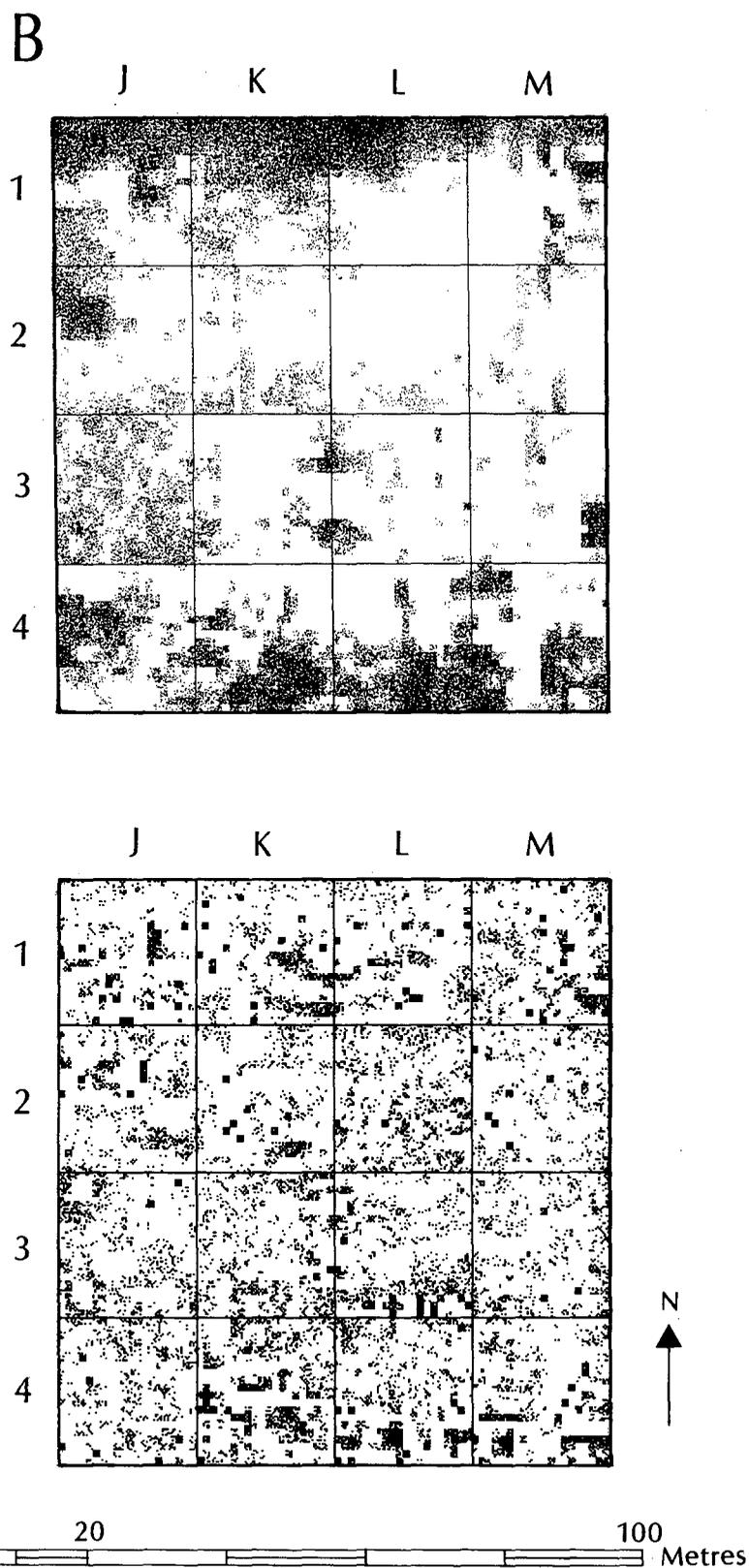


Fig. 106 Location B, geophysical surveys on the north-east side of the site. Top = resistivity of Squares J01 – M04. Bottom = magnetic survey of Squares J01 – M04. Note that the remains of the west/east range of early Byzantine buildings picked up along the southern edge of the surveys but the generally low readings from the rest of the area, except where the robber-spoil from the defences has been identified by resistivity.

## RESISTIVITY SURVEYS OUTSIDE THE EARLY BYZANTINE DEFENCES

During the 1987 season, three areas outside and immediately to the north, east, and west of the early Byzantine defences were surveyed (Fig. 103). The principal objective of these surveys was to ascertain whether there were defensive ditches outside the early Byzantine curtain-walls and whether approach roads, leading to the site could be identified. A secondary objective for the survey

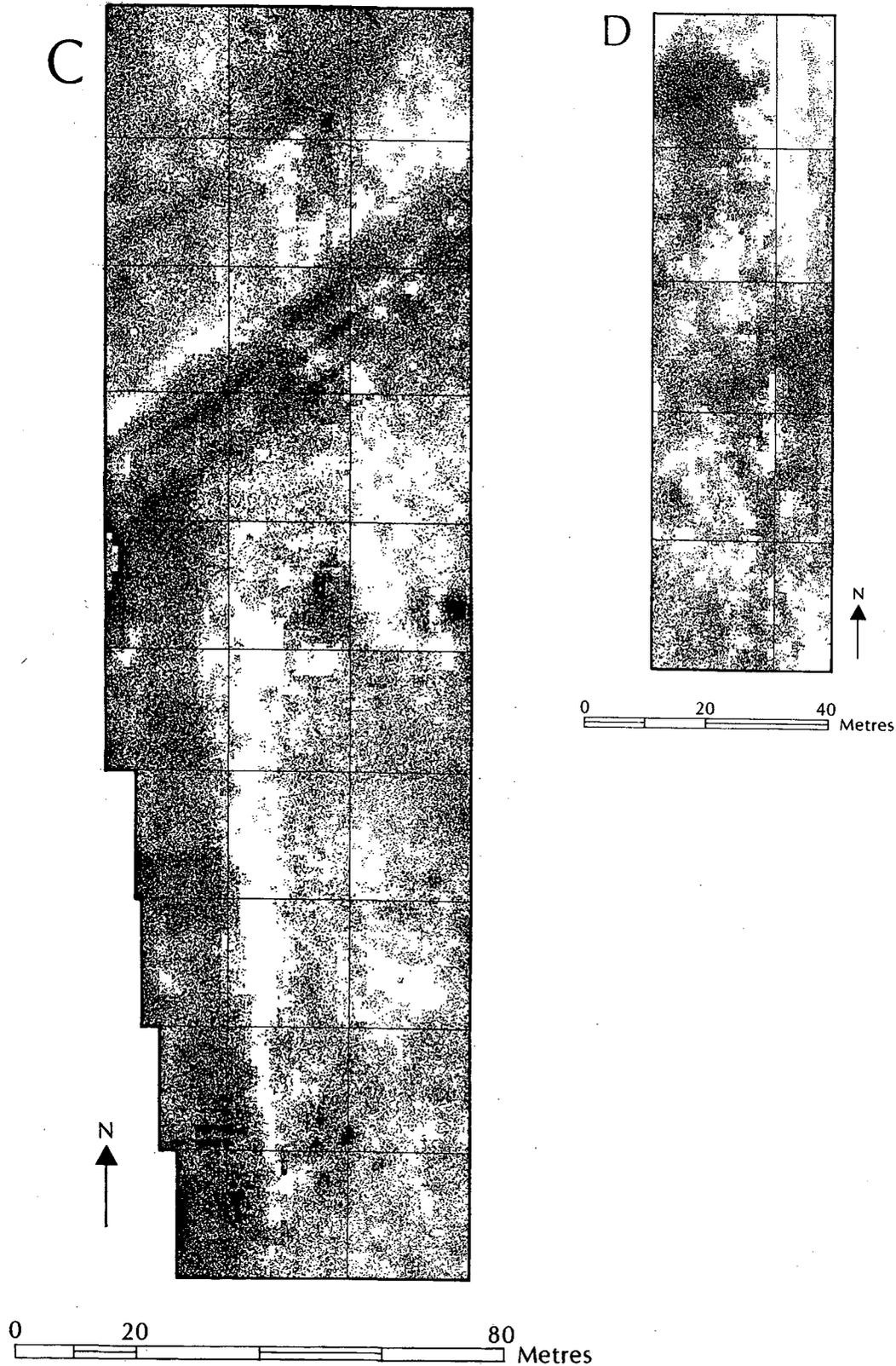


Fig. 107 Location C, resistivity survey outside the eastern defences of the early Byzantine site and, to the north, outside the Roman city's eastern curtain-wall. Location D, resistivity survey outside the western curtain-wall of the early Byzantine defences.

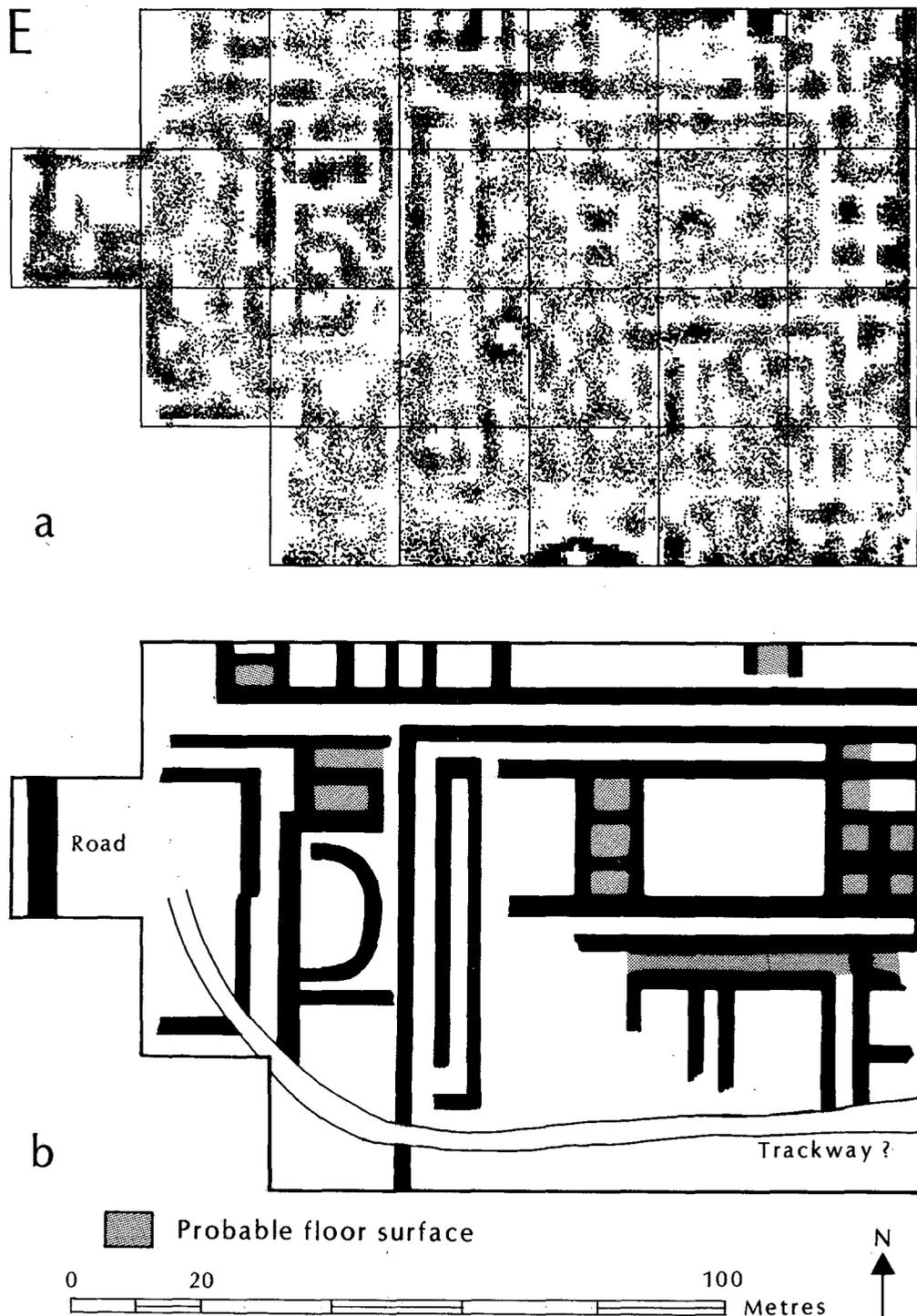


Fig. 108 Location E. a = resistivity survey of the south-eastern corner of the Roman city. b = interpretation.

carried out immediately beyond the northern curtain-wall was to determine whether resistivity survey could provide additional information about the planning of *insulae* within the Roman city.

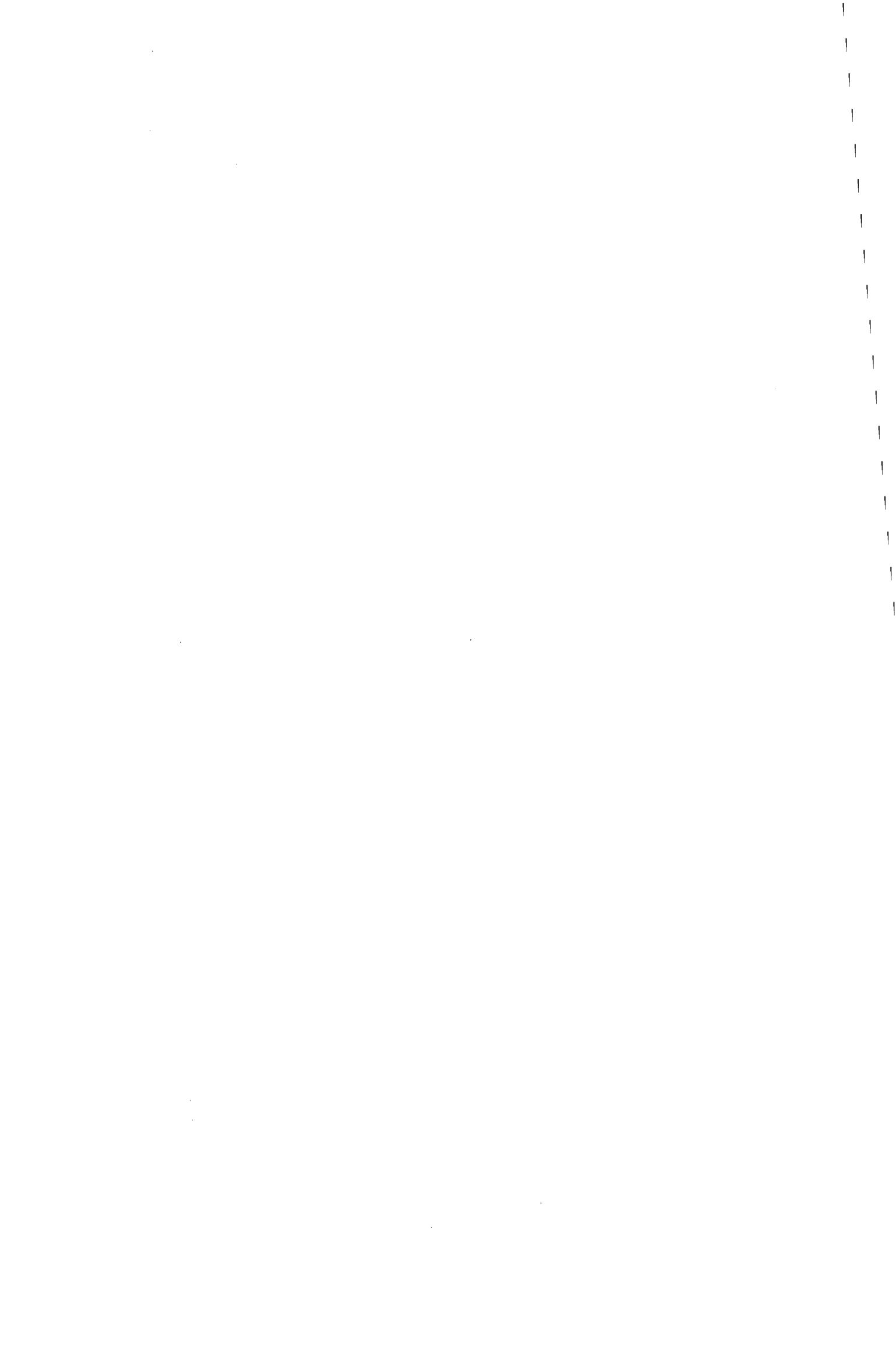
The results of the geophysical surveys on the east and west sides of the defences suggested the presence of ditches but were not conclusive. Destruction material immediately west of Tower 2 and debris from the robbing of the defences on the west side of the site restricted the area available for a meaningful survey along the probable course of any ditch (Fig. 103D). The results of the survey taken over an area 100 m north/south and 28 m west/east, running parallel with the line of the curtain-wall, suggest the presence of a hard surface or causeway immediately in front of the west gate and it is possible that the low resistance anomaly to the north and parallel to the defences may

represent the line of a ditch (Fig. 107D). To the south of the causeway, the evidence for the continuation of the ditch is much less clear. An area 200 m north/south by 60 m west/east, outside the eastern defences, extended north, to the east of the Roman city (Fig. 103C). This suggested that there had been a ditch, c. 10 m wide, east of the early Byzantine curtain-wall, although there was no sign of a ditch outside the Roman city wall (Fig. 107C). A well-defined trackway headed north-east from the corner of the early Byzantine defences. A number of such trackways, visible and still in use, exist around both the early Byzantine site and the Roman city and all would seem to be post-medieval in date.

The results of the survey along the north side of the site were particularly interesting (Fig. 103E). Immediately north of the defences, there appeared to be a linear low resistance feature along the anticipated line of a ditch, but since this curves away from the curtain-wall to the north-west, this is most likely to represent a continuation of the post-medieval trackway, referred to above (Fig. 108). This survey also included parts of two *insulae* in the south-east corner of the Roman city and confirms that resistivity was able to locate buildings and differentiate between solid floors and probably earth floors. The basic outline of two buildings, each here occupying a separate *insula*, confirmed the evidence presented by the visible course of robber-trenches which indicated that each *insula* was occupied by a single building, presumably houses (Fig. 3). However, the survey also appears to have found hard floors within the main blocks of both houses but suggests that there was no similar hard floor within the long room attached to the eastern side of the western house. Both houses would seem to have had central courtyards and the eastern range of the western house appears to have contained what may be an apsidal structure. To the north, the foundations of another building were also located. The survey also appears to have picked up another range of buildings, closer to the defences which, since they appear not to have been included in the post-medieval robbing of buildings within the Roman city, may well have been demolished at an earlier date, perhaps when the early Byzantine defences were built or even earlier, when the walls of the Roman city were first erected.

Another resistivity survey was carried out at the request of the Bulgarian team. This included an area 80 by 60 m around the *castellum aquae*, c. 100 m to the west of the Roman city, and confirmed the line of the supporting structure for the aqueduct bringing water to the *castellum aquae*. The survey also suggested that there were other buildings in the area and possibly identified the course of a second aqueduct.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The geophysical programme (1985–1989) was supported by The Royal Society through its Exchange Agreement with BAN (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), the Institute of Archaeology, Sofia, and the Veliko Turnovo Archaeological Museum. Further enhancement of the data images was carried out by Dr Nikolai Nenov whilst developing his GII computer programme as visiting researcher in the Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering, University of Nottingham, May–July 1991. This work was made possible by a further special grant from the Royal Society: their continued support for the project is gratefully acknowledged.



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# THE COINS

By **Kevin Butcher**

Six hundred and fifty-six coins, from the reign of Nerva (A.D. 96–98) to the eighteenth century were recovered during the excavations. Most were Roman, of the fourth century A.D., and most were from sealed contexts. Unstratified coins, or pieces from the uppermost levels, have been included in the catalogue since they help to build up a picture of coin loss at the site.

The earlier coins from Nicopolis are interesting in that they show some interplay between the western imperial currency system and the eastern provincial coinages. Nicopolis lay on the western edge of the eastern system of localized production of bronze currency, where cities often produced their own coinage. This contrasts sharply with the system in the West, where for the most part the provinces were supplied with bronze coinage from the mint at Rome. Although the city was founded by Trajan, it did not strike its own coinage for at least another three decades, and it is to this period, prior to the issue of coins at Nicopolis, that most of the bronze coins from the mint at Rome found in the excavations belong. This suggests that before the city mint came into operation there was some level of use of Roman imperial bronze coinage at Nicopolis.

Areas B and C produced the largest number of coins, most of which came from the cobble spreads. The 221 coins from these contexts range from Hadrian (A.D. 117–138) to Theodosius II (A.D. 402–450). Whether the earlier ones were residual or still in use at the time of deposition will be discussed below. The actions of burrowing mammals, reptiles, and amphibians might explain some anomalies, but this would be more likely to explain contamination of earlier contexts by later coins than vice-versa.

The catalogue begins with a listing of the local, civic coins produced at Nicopolis and other mints, and then moves on to the regular Roman imperial coinage. The civic coins are described in more detail than the imperial coinage since the references for these are often imprecise or lacking entirely. The site catalogue number/area/context/small-find number follows each coin description. All of the coins have been photographed and the negatives are kept in the Department of Archaeology, University of Nottingham.

### CIVIC COINS

The cities are arranged beginning with Nicopolis and Marcianopolis, the two mints most frequently represented among the civic coins found in the excavations. Pick references are to B. Pick (1898). The remaining cities are then listed in traditional order as in B. V. Head, *Historia Nummorum. A Manual of Greek Numismatics* (1887). Names in bold type are those of the emperors to whose reign individual coins belong; names which appear in italics are those of Roman governors. Casts have been made of almost all of the civic coins; these are stored in the Department of Archaeology, University of Nottingham and may be consulted with the permission of the curator of the departmental museum.

## NICOPOLIS

**Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138–161)**

1. AE 20mm. Obv: Bare (?) head r. [ ]NEINO-[ ].  
 Rev: Artemis standing r., drawing arrow from quiver over shoulder, holding bow in l. hand. ΝΙΚΟΠΟ-[ ].  
 Axis: 6  
 435/C/4060/14055 (Plate XXXVIII)
2. AE 18mm. Obv: Laureate (?) head r.; details illegible.  
 Rev: Dionysus standing l., holding cantharus and thyrsus. Legend illegible.  
 Axis: 5  
 McClean 4389 582/K/4522/10264
3. AE 16mm. Obv: Bare head r. ΑΥΤΑΙΑΔΡ[ ]ΤΩΝΕΙΝ.  
 Rev: Dionysus as last; panther before him. [ ]ΟΛΙΤ[ ].  
 Axis: 6  
 Pick 1223 559/C/4108/6631
4. AE 17mm. Obv: Laureate (?) head r. [ ]-ΑΝΤΩΝΕΙ[ ].  
 Rev: Bunch of grapes. ΝΕΙΚΟΠΙ-ΟΛΙ  
 Axis: 12  
 547/C/4107/6615 (Plate XXXVIII)
5. AE 18mm. Obv: Bare head r. ΑΝΤΩΝΚΑΙ-CAIPCEB.  
 Rev: Demeter (?) standing l., holding corn ears and long torch. ΝΕΙΚΟ-[ ].  
 Axis: 6  
 366/D/659/4597 (Plate XXXVIII)

**Marcus Aurelius, Caesar under Antoninus Pius***Zeno*

6. AE 19mm. Obv: Bare headed, draped bust r. ΑΥΡΟΥΗ-ΡΟΚΚΑΙC.  
 Rev: Artemis standing r., drawing arrow from quiver over shoulder, holding bow in l. hand. ΗΓΕΖΗΝΩΝΟC-ΝΕΙΚΟΠΟΛΕΙΤ.  
 Axis: 6  
 621/C/5314/11043 (Plate XXXVIII)
7. AE 16mm. Obv: Bare head r. [ ]ΥΗΡΟC-ΚΑΙC[ ].  
 Rev: Tyche (?) standing l., holding cornucopiae and uncertain object. [ ]-Ο..Ο..ΙΤ[ ].  
 Axis: 11  
 636/C/5314/11042 (Plate XXXVIII)

**Commodus (A.D. 177–192)**

8. AE 17mm. Obv: Laureate bearded head r. [ ]Κ[ ]ΜΟΔΟ-C[ ].  
 Rev: Female figure (Nemesis?) standing l., draped, holding veil in r. hand and bridle (?) in l. ΝΕΙΚΟΠΟ-ΛΕΙΠΡΟCΙCΤ.  
 Axis: –  
 Pick 1246  
 655/F/6003/15106

**Septimius Severus (A.D. 193–211)***Issued under Aurelius Gallus*

9. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. ΑΥΤΑCΕΙΠΙΤΙ-CEΟΥΗΡΟC[?].  
 Rev: Cybele seated l. ΥΠΑΥΡ[ ].  
 Axis: 6  
 Pick 1316 151/B/275/2572
- Legate's name illegible*
10. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate head r. ΑΥΚ[ ]CΕΥ[ ].  
 Rev: Naked male figure standing (?). Details illegible.  
 Axis: 2  
 457/M/-/12052

*Without legate's name*

11. AE 26mm. Obv: Laureate head r. [ ]CEΠ-CEYHP[ ].

Rev: Athena standing l., holding uncertain object in r. hand, resting l. hand on shield, behind which spear. Altar to l. In exergue, ΠPOCI.

Axis: 6

Pick 1364var. 447/M/4824/12034

12. AE 16mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. AYKAICE-CEYHPOC.

Rev: Hermes standing left. ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙ-ΠΡΟCICTP.

Axis: 8

Pick 1373 107/-/1240

13. AE 16mm. Obv: As last.

Rev: As last. ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙ-T-[ ].

Axis: 7

Pick 1373-4 45/C/4096/6572

14. AE 20mm. Obv: Laureate draped (?) bust r. AYKA-CEYHPOC.

Rev: Head of Serapis l., wearing modius. [ ]ΠPOC[ ].

Axis: 12

Pick 1348 289/C/130/6336

15. AE 18mm. Obv: Head r., details illegible.

Rev: Bust of Heracles l., details illegible.

Axis: -

Pick 1385 350/K/-/10008

16. AE 17mm. Obv: Laureate head r. [ ]KAI-CEYH[ ].

Rev: Nike running l., holding wreath. ΝΙΚΟΠΟ-ΛΙΤΩΝ[ ?].

Axis: 7

SNG (Cop.) 264 352/C/-/14001

17. AE 18mm. Obv: Laureate head r. AYK-CEYHPOC

Rev: Nike running l., holding wreath and palm branch. ΝΙΚΟ-ΠΟΛΙΤ.

Axis: 7

173/B/331/2641 (Plate XXXVIII)

18. AE 16mm. Obv: Laureate head r. AYTKAI-CEYHPOC.

Rev: Crescent and star. ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝΠΡΟCICTP.

Axis: 5

Pick 1431-44 591/D/636/4571

19. AE 20mm. Head r., details illegible.

Club. ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤ[ ]-ΠΡΟCICTP.

Axis: 12

Pick 1425var. 556/K/4516/10256

20. Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. Legend illegible.

ΝΙΚΟ/ΠΟΛΙΤ/ΠΡΟC/IC in wreath.

Axis: 12

Pick 1447 548/C/-/6621

21. Laureate head r. AYCE-CEYHPOC.

Capitoline wolf r., suckling Romulus and Remus. ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙ ΠΡΟC/ICTΩ (sic).

Axis: 12

Pick 1395var. 390/D/667/4641

**Julia Domna**

22. AE 19mm. Obv: Draped bust r. Legend illegible.

Rev: Crescent and star. ΝΙΚΟΠΟ[ ]ΤΡΟΝ.

Axis: 7

Pick 1485-8 108/-/1241

**Caracalla (A.D. 198-217)***Flavius Ulpianus*

23. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate head r. [ ]ΝΤΩΝΙΝ.

Rev: Uncertain figure standing facing, holding sceptre in r. hand, drapery (?) over l. arm. ΥΠ[ ]ΠΙΑ[ ]ΝΙΚΟΠΟ[ ].

Axis: -

645/M/4927/12333

*Legate's name illegible*

24. AE 25mm. Obv: Draped bust r., other details unclear. AYK[ ]-ANTΩNIN.

Tyche or Cybele seated l. on throne, wearing turreted head-dress. [ ]I-KOΠOAI[ ]. In exergue, [ ]CTP[ ].

Axis: 6

As Pick 1554

437/M/4803/12017

*Without name of Legate*

25. AE 18mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. AYKM[ ]-ANTΩNIN.

Rev: Crescent and star. NIKO[ ]OCI.

Axis: 6

Pick 1614

162/D/559/4361

**Plautilla***Aurelius Gallus*

26. AE 27mm. Obv: Bust r., draped. Legend illegible.

Rev: Temple facade. YΠAAYPΓAΛΛOYNIKOΠO-ΠPOCI.

Axis: 7

Pick 1635var.

140/D/511/4275

**Geta***Flavius Ulpianus (?)*

27. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. Legend illegible.

Rev: Dionysus, naked, standing l., holding bunch of grapes in r. hand and thyrsus in l. [ ]NIKOΠOAI-ΠPOCI.

Axis: 2

As Pick 1671

28/D/405/4007

*Without name of Legate*

28. AE 15mm. Bare head r. [ ]-ΓETAC.

Rev: Lioness walking r. [ ]O-CICTP.

Axis: 6

454/K/4405/10131 (Plate XXXVIII)

**Macrinus (A.D. 217–218)***Marcus Agrippa*

29. AE 29mm. Obv: Laureate cuirassed bust r. AYKOΠΠEΛC-EVHMAKPINO C.

Rev: Nike standing l., holding wreath and palm. YΠMAPKATPITΠ-ANIKOΠOΛITΩN-ΠPOCIC/TPΩ

Axis: 6

Pick 1691

163/D/559/4359 (Plate XXXVIII)

30. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate cuirassed bust r., drapery (or aegis?) on shoulder. AYKOΠΠEΛCE-YMAKPINOC.

Rev: Dionysus standing l., holding bunch of grapes in r. hand and thyrsus in l.; panther leaping l., at feet. YΠATPITΠ ANIKOΠO-ΛITΩNΠPOCICTP-[?].

Axis: 5

444/F/-/8051(Plate XXXVIII)

*Staius Longinus*

31. AE 26mm. Obv: Laureate head r. Legend illegible.

Rev: Tyche standing l., holding rudder in r. hand and cornucopiae in l. YΠCTAΛONΓINOYNIKO[ ].

Axis: 7

Pick 1780var.

465/F/3005/8081

**Diadumenian***Marcus Agrippa*

32. AE 26mm. Obv: Bare head r. KMOΠΠEΛΔ [ ].

Rev: Asclepius standing facing, resting on serpent-staff with l. hand. [ ]A..PI[ ]

Axis: 6

Pick 1805

164/D/558/4365

33. AE 27mm. Obv: Bare head r. ΚΜΟΠΠΕΛΑΝΤΩΝΙΔΙΑΔΟΥΜΕΝΙΑΝΟC.  
 Rev: River god seated l. ΥΠΑΓΡΙΠΠΑΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝΠΙ[-] ]CICTPON.  
 Axis: 12  
 Pick 1806var. 175/F/3045/7301

### Elagabalus (A.D. 218–222)

#### *Novius Rufus*

34. AE 25mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. Legend illegible.  
 Rev: Zeus standing facing, holding sceptre in l. hand and thunderbolt in r. ΥΠΝΟΒΙΟΥΡΟΥΦΟΥΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙ[-], across field, TP-ON.

Axis: 7

SNG (Cop.) 281var (same obv. die) 528/P/5020/14266 (Plate XXXVIII)

35. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. [-]ANTΩ [-]

Rev: Nemesis/Aequitas standing l., holding scales in r. hand and cubit rule in l. ΥΠ-ΝΟΒΙΟΥΡΟΥΦΟΥΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝΠΙΡΟCIC, across field, TP-ON.

Axis: 12

Pick 1959 385/C/4033/6527

36. AE 25mm. Obv: Similar to previous.

Rev: As last. [-]ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝΠΙΡΟC[-], in exergue, [-]CTP[-].

Axis: 12

592/-/-15516

37. AE 28mm. Obv: Laureate head r. [-]MAYP-ANTΩ [-].

Rev: Tyche standing facing, holding rudder in r. hand and cornucopiae in l. ΥΠΝΟΒΙΟΥΡΟΥΦΟΥ-ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛ[-]

Axis: 1

Pick 1972–8 317/C/152/6378

#### *Legate's name illegible*

38. AE 26mm. Obv: Laureate (?) draped cuirassed bust r. [-]AN[-].

Rev: Female figure standing facing, head l. [-]NI-KO[-].

Axis: 7

615/M/4928/12318

39. AE 21mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. [-]ANTΩ[-].

Rev: Figure standing l. with transverse sceptre, r. arm extended. [-]ΠΙΡΟCICTPON.

Axis: 6

587/F/3365/8348

### Gordian III (A.D. 238–244)

#### *Sab. Modestus*

40. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. Legend illegible.

Rev: Dionysus standing l., holding thyrsus in l. hand and bunch of grapes in r. ΥΠCAB[-] ]ITΩΝΠΙΡΟCΙ.

Axis: 6

199/A/2188/5221 (Plate XXXVIII)

41. AE 28mm. Obv: Head r.; details illegible.

Rev: Athena standing l., holding shield in r. hand and spear in l. ΥΠCABΜΟΔΕCΤΟΥΝΙΚ-ΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝΠΙΡΟCIC, in field to r., vertically, T/P/O/N.

Axis: 12

Pick 2051 631/M/-/12252

42. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. ΑΥΤΚΜΑΝΤΩ-ΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟC.

Rev: Nemesis standing l., holding bridle in r. hand and cubit-rule in l., wheel at feet. ΥΠCABΜΟΔΕCΤΟΥΝΙ-ΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝΠΙΡΟCΙ, in field to r., vertically, C/T/P/O.

Axis: 6

Pick 2077var. 172/B/312/2646 (Plate XXXVIII)

43. AE 26 mm. Same obv. and rev. dies as previous.

Axis: 7

Pick 2077var. 132/B/249/2458

## MARCIANOPOLIS

**Commodus (A.D. 177–192)**

44. AE 24mm. Obv: Bare headed draped bust r. [ ]-KOMOΔOC.

Rev: Draped figure (Dionysus?) standing l., leaning against column with l. arm, holding thyrsus (?) in r. hand. [ ]KIAN[ ] ΔEITΩN.

Axis: –

62/B/243/2169 (Plate XXXVIII)

**Septimius Severus (A.D. 193–211)***Flavius Ulpianus*

45. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. [ ]-CE[ ].

Rev: Eagle standing to front, wings spread. [ ]Y-MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩ [ ].

Axis: 12

McClellan 4366 (same dies)

650/C/-/14734

**Caracalla (A.D. 198–217)***Julius Faustianus*

46. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. [ ]MAYP-ANTΩNINOC.

Rev: Eagle standing facing, wings spread, head l., wreath in beak. YΠΦAYCTINIANO[ ]MAPKIANOΠOΛI.

Axis: 7

Pick 621

347/K/-/10005 (Plate XXXVIII)

**Macrinus (A.D. 217–218)***Pontianus*

47. AE 25mm. Obv: Laureate cuirassed bust r. AYTOΠI [ ]AKPEINO[ ].

Rev: Tyche standing l., holding rudder in r. hand and cornucopiae in l., resting l. arm on column (?). YΠI[ ]PKIANOΠOΛIT[ ].

Axis: 7

Pick 711var.

167/B/330/2620 (Plate XXXVIII)

**Macrinus and Diadumenian***Pontianus*

48. AE 26mm. Obv: Laureate bust of Macrinus r., facing bare headed bust of Diadumenian l. [ ]OΠEΛCEYMAKPEI[ ].

Rev: Naked male figure (Hermes?) standing facing, head l. Details unclear. [ ]MA-PKIANO[ ].

Axis: 6

Pick 741?

304/D/636/4570

49. AE 26mm. Obv: As previous. [ ]MAKPIN[ ].

Rev: Coiled snake with radiate halo. YΠΠONTIAN-OYMAPKIANO-ΠOΛIT. Large E in field to r.

Axis: 6

Pick 782

312/C/151/6367

**Elagabalus (A.D. 218–222)***Julius Antonius Seleucus*

50. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate head r. AYTKMAYPH-ANTΩNINOC.

Rev: Hera standing l., holding phiale in r. hand and sceptre in l. YΠIOYΛANTCEΛEYKOYMAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN.

Axis: 12

Pick 815

348/K/-/10006

51. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. AYTK[ ]-TΩNEINOC.  
 Rev: Aequitas standing l., holding scales in r. hand and cornucopiae in l. YΠIOYΛANTCEΛE-YKOYMAPKIANOΠIO[ ]  
 Axis: 12  
 Pick 849 518/M/4843/12117
52. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate bust of Elagabalus r., details and legend illegible.  
 Rev: Athena (?) standing, holding shield (?) to r. at feet. YΠIOY [ ]  
 Axis: 12  
 433/M/4803/12016

*Sergius Titianus*

53. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate head r. AYTKMAYPHΛIOCANTΩNEINOC.  
 Rev: Hygieia standing r., holding snake. YΠICEPTIT[ ]NOYMAP [ ]  
 Axis: 6  
 Pick 889 431/M/-/12033

*Without legate's name*

54. AE 13mm. Obv: Laureate head r. AYTK[ ]-ANTΩNIN[ ].  
 Rev: Lion walking r. MAPKIANOΠOΛI-TΩN.  
 Axis: 8  
 Pick 914 446/K/-/10122

**Gordian III (A.D. 238–244)***Menophilus*

55. AE 25mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r., facing draped bust of Serapis wearing modius l. Below, AYTKM;  
 around, ANTΩNIOCΓOPΔIANOCAYΓ.  
 Rev: Tyche seated l. on throne, holding rudder in r. hand and cornucopiae in l. [ ]ΦIΛO-MAPKIANOΠI[ ]. In field l.,  
 large E.  
 Axis: 12  
 Pick 1164–5 74/B/247/2280 (Plate XXXVIII)

## VIMINACIUM

**Gordian III (A.D. 238–244)***Year 2*

56. AE 22mm. Obv: Radiate draped cuirassed bust r. [ ]RD[ ].  
 Rev: Moesia standing between lion (on r.) and bull (on l.) PMSCO-LVIM. In exergue, AN.II.  
 Axis: 1  
 Pick 77 90/B/247/2316

*Year 5*

57. AE 29mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. IMPGORDIANVSPIVSFELAVG.  
 Rev: As previous. PMSC-OLVIM; AN.V.  
 Axis:  
 Pick 92 517/F/3238/8132 (Plate XXXIX)

## ODESSUS

**Elagabalus (A.D. 218–222)**

58. AE 25mm. Obv: Laureate head r. AYTKMAYP-ANTΩNEINOC.  
 Rev: The Great God standing l., holding phiale in r. hand and cornucopiae in l., small altar to l. at feet. OΔHCC-EITΩN.  
 Axis: 6  
 Pick 2294 401/F/3139/7813 (Plate XXXIX)

59. AE 25mm. Obv: Same die as previous.  
 Rev: Same type as previous; different die.  
 Axis: 6  
 Pick 2294

356/C/4007/6445

### Severus Alexander Caesar

60. AE 26mm. Obv: Bare headed draped cuirassed bust r. ΜΑΥΡΑΛΕ-ΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ.  
 Rev: As previous.  
 Axis: 12  
 Pick 2310

393/D/653/4648

ANCHIALUS

### Septimius Severus (A.D. 193–211)

61. Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. [ ]ΗΡΟCΠΕΡ.  
 Rev: Homonoia standing l., holding phiale in r. hand and cornucopiae in l. ΟΥΛΠΙΑΝΩΝ-ΑΓΧΙΑΛΕΩΝ.  
 Axis: 12

Strack 473 521/K/4479/10184

62. AE 27mm. Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. ΑΥΚΛΑCΕΠΙΤ-[ ].  
 Rev: As previous.

Axis: 12  
 Strack 473 599/C/5306/11023

63. AE 17mm. Laureate head r. ΑΥΤΚ[ ].  
 Rev: Homonoia standing l., holding phiale in r. hand and cornucopiae in l., sacrificing over altar to l. ΑΓΧΙΑ- ΛΕΩΝ.  
 Axis: 7  
 Strack 500 305/M/4801/12001

### Caracalla (A.D. 198–217)

64. AE 29mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. ΑΥΤΜΑΥΡΗΛΑΝΤΩΝΕΙΝΟ[ ].  
 Rev: Table, on which two prize crowns. ΟΥΛΠΙΑΝ-ΩΝΑΓΞΙΑ-ΛΕΩΝ. Under table, CEBEPΙΑ/ΝΥΜΦΙΑ.  
 Axis: 7  
 Strack 541 535/F/3209/8160 (Plate XXXIX)

### Geta (A.D. 209–212)

65. AE 29mm. Obv: Bare headed draped bust r. ΑΥΤΠΙCΕΠ-Γ [ ].  
 Rev: City gate with two towers. ΟΥΛ[ ]ΝΧΙΑ-ΛΕΩΝ.  
 Axis: 12  
 Strack 559 32/D/-/1205 (Plate XXXIX)

### Maximinus (A.D. 235–238)

66. AE 28mm. Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. ΑΥΤΜΑΧΙΜΙΝΟCΕΥCΕΒΑΥΓ.  
 Rev: Asclepius standing facing, leaning on serpent-staff with r. hand. ΟΥΛ[ ]-ΑΓΧ[ ].  
 Axis: 6  
 Strack 580 205/C/127/6203

**Gordian III (A.D. 238–244)**

67. AE 28mm. Obv: Radiate draped cuirassed bust r. ΑΥΤΚΜΑΝΤΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟC[ ].

Rev: Naked athlete standing facing, holding crown in r. hand and palm branch in l. ΟΥΛΠΙΑΝ-Ω-Ν-ΑΓΧΙΑΛΕΩΝ. In field l., Ε.

Axis: 11

Strack 630

546/F/3264/8260 (Plate XXXIX)

## DEULTUM

**Caracalla (A.D. 198–217)**

68. AE 24mm. Obv: Radiate draped cuirassed bust r. [ ]ΝΙΝVSPΙVΣ.

Rev: Homonoia standing l., holding phiale in r. hand and cornucopiae in l. COL[ ].

Axis: 6

J. Jurokova, *Die Münzprägung von Deultum* (Berlin, 1973), 17 B/II.

222/D/628/4506

## HADRIANOPOLIS

**Gordian III (A.D. 238–244)**

69. AE 25mm. Laureate cuirassed bust r. ΑΥΤΚΜΑΝΤ-ΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟC[ ].

Rev: Hera standing l., holding patera in r. hand and sceptre in l. [ ]-ΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ.

Axis: 7

SNG (Cop.) 576 (same dies)

114/B/249/2364 (Plate XXXIX)

70. AE 28mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. ΑΥΤΚΜΑΝΤ-[ ].

Rev: Coiled serpent. ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ.

Axis: 7

SNG (Cop.) 589var.

154/B/275/2574 (Plate XXXIX)

71. AE 26mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. [ ]-ΔΙΑΝΟCΑΥ.

Rev: Apollo standing facing, holding phiale in r. hand and olive branch in l. ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΠ-ΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ.

619/P/5050/14618 (Plate XXXIX)

## SERDICA

**Septimius Severus or Caracalla (?)**

72. AE 16mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. Legend illegible.

Rev: Uncertain male figure, naked (?), standing facing. [ ]-ΔΩΝ.

Axis: 5

The ethnic CΕΡΔΩΝ was used on certain small bronzes of Serdica instead of the more usual CΕΡΔΙΚΗC; see SNG (Cop.) 801–803 and N. Mouchmov, *Les monnaies et les ateliers monétaires de Serdica* (Sofia, 1926).

24/D/419/4034

## AUGUSTA TRAIANA

**Geta as Caesar**

73. AE 18mm. Obv: Bare headed draped bust r. ΑCΕΠΙΤΙΜ-ΓΕΤΑΚΑΙ.

Rev: Artemis running r., holding bow in l. hand. ΑΥΤΟΥCΤΑ-ΤΡΑΙΑΝΗC.

Axis: 6

194/D/604/4442 (Plate XXXIX)

## NICAEA

**Severus Alexander or Gordian III (?)**

74. AE 20mm. Obv: Radiate head r. Legend illegible.

Rev: Three military standards. Legend illegible.

Axis: 12

As SNG (Cop.) 520 or 526

470/M/4825/12071

## ILLEGIBLE OR UNCERTAIN CIVIC COINS

75. AE 13mm. Obv: Illegible.

Rev: Bunch of grapes (?).

Axis: –

439/E/1138/3310

76. AE 16mm. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust of Elagabalus r. [ ]ANTΩNIN.

Rev: Type uncertain. [ ]PI[ ]

Axis: Uncertain.

Found adhering to coin no. 102 below.

478/D/540/15513

77. AE 16mm. Obv: Bare head of young Caracalla (?) r. [ ]-AYP[ ].

Rev: Serpent entwined around staff.

Axis: 1

632/P/5051/14695

78. AE 17mm. Obv: Laureate head r., of second- or third-century ruler. Details illegible.

Rev: Illegible.

Axis: Uncertain.

539/M/4860/12125

79. AE 18mm. Obv: Laureate head of Commodus r. Legend illegible.

Rev: Figure (?) standing facing, holding long torch or palm (?) in r. hand. Legend illegible.

Axis: 6

354/C/-/6436

80. AE 18mm. Obv: Draped bust of uncertain prince r., late second or early third century A.D.

Rev: Female figure standing facing. Details illegible.

Axis: 11

82/B/244/2200

81. AE 18mm. Obv: Head of Diadumenian, Elagabalus, Severus Alexander, or Gordian III r. Legend illegible.

Rev: Tyche standing facing, holding rudder in r. hand and cornucopiae in l. Legend illegible.

Axis: 7

4/D/402/2005 (Plate XXXIX)

82. AE 18mm. Obv: Bust of uncertain ruler (second or third century) r. Details illegible.

Rev: Illegible.

Axis: Uncertain

488/K/4480/10169

83. AE 19mm. Obv: Head of Heracles l. No legend (?)

Rev: Heracles standing facing, head r., resting on club with r. hand and holding lion-skin (?) in l. Legend illegible.

Axis: 6

136/E/1040/3096 (Plate XXXIX)

84. Lead cast, 19mm. Obv: Head of third-century ruler r. Legend illegible.

Rev: Female figure standing to front, leaning with l. arm on column (?) and holding cornucopiae (?). Legend illegible.

Axis: –

298/D/-/4573 (Plate XXXIX)

85. AE 23mm. Obv: Laureate or radiate head of Gordian III l. [ ]ΓOP[ΔΙΑΝOC?].

Rev: Illegible.

Axis: Uncertain

228/C/130/6237

86. AE 25mm. Obv: Laureate head of young Caracalla r. AYPCEV-ANTΩN[ ].

Rev: Serapis (?) standing facing, holding transverse sceptre. [ ]Π-O[ ].

This form of name, Severus Antoninus, is known for Caracalla at Istrus (Pick (1898), p. 174, 503) and Odessus (Pick (1898), p. 565, 2282–86).

Axis: –

389/C/4033/6529

87. AE 26mm. Obv: Head of second- or third-century ruler r., details illegible.

Rev: Figure standing, holding spear (?) [ ]O[ ]ΛOY[ ]

Axis: 6

The reverse legend is possibly ΜΗΝΟΦΙΛΟΥ, a legate in whose name coins were struck at Marcianopolis under Gordian III.

633/M/4902/12247

88. AE 27mm. Obv: Laureate head of young emperor (Caracalla, Geta, Elagabalus or Severus Alexander) r., wearing cuirass, with drapery on far shoulder, seen from front. Legend illegible.

Rev: Emperor on horseback r., thrusting spear (?). All other details illegible.

Axis: –

466/F/3191/8070

89. AE 28mm. Laureate draped cuirassed bust of Septimius Severus r. [ ]-CEYHP[ ].

Rev: Male figure (river god?) seated or reclining l. [ ]A[ ].

Axis: 6

583/M/4867/12182

#### UNCERTAIN CIVIC OR IMPERIAL BRONZES (SECOND TO THIRD CENTURY)

90. AE 16mm. Obv. and rev. illegible.

647/M/4967/12371

91. AE 18mm. Obv: Bust r., details illegible.

Rev: Illegible.

160/B/280/2588

92. AE 25mm. Obv. and rev. illegible.

134/B/249/2470

93. AE 25mm. Obv. and rev. illegible.

630/M/4906/12239

94. AE 26mm. Obv. and rev. illegible.

643/M/4957/12358

95. AE 28mm. Obv. and rev. illegible.

495/F/3195/8110

96. AE 28mm. Obv. illegible, rev. standing figure, S-C (?).

612/M/4907/12274

### ROMAN IMPERIAL ISSUES TO DIOCLETIAN

The coins are listed by emperor. All coins are mint of Rome unless otherwise stated. Those early coins which it has not been possible to identify fully have been described in more detail than those which can be assigned definitive references.

#### Nerva

97. A.D. 96–98. As/dupondius. Obv: Head r., crown unclear. IMPNERVACAESA[...].

Rev: Fortuna or Aequitas standing l.

414/A/2260/5301

#### Trajan

98. A.D. 104–111. Sestertius. Rev: Roma and Dacian.

*BMCRE* 772

379/C/4035/6524

99. A.D. 100–117. As/dupondius. Obv: Head r., details illegible.

Rev: Illegible.

578/M/4867/12171

100. Anonymous, probably reign of Trajan. Obv: Helmeted bust of Mars r.

Rev: Cuirass between S-C.

*RIC* II p. 218, 19–23

542/F/3301/8205

**Hadrian**

101. After A.D. 119. Base metal core of plated denarius. Obv: Laureate head r. IMPCAESARTRAIANHAD[...].  
Rev: Roma seated l.

As *BMCRE* 143 349/K/-/10007

102. After c. A.D. 134. Base metal core of plated denarius. Obv: Bare head r. HADRIANVS-AVGCOSIIPP.  
Rev: Female figure standing facing, holding cornucopiae in l.

Found adhering to coin No. 76 above. Possibly Felicitas.

As *BMCRE* 604 159/D/540/4347

103. c. A.D. 118. Sestertius. Obv: Laureate bust r. [...]TRAIANVS-HADRI[.....]

Rev: Fortuna seated l. FORTRED in exergue.

As *BMCRE* 1130 201/A/2191/5219

104. c. A.D. 119–138. As. Obv: Laureate head r. HADRIANVS-AVGCOSIIPP.

Rev: Annona standing. l. ANNONAAVG, SC.

As *BMCRE* 1574 65/B/243/2233

105. A.D. 119–138. Dupondius/as. AFRICA; Africa reclining l.

*BMCRE* 1713 367/C/4007/6462

106. A.D. 117–138. Dupondius/as. Obv: Laureate draped (?) bust r., details illegible.

Rev: Female figure seated l., holding cornucopiae.

529/C/4103/6586

**Antoninus Pius**

107. After A.D. 154/5. Hybrid denarius, probably ancient forgery. Obv: Laureate head r. ANTONINVS AVG-PIVSPTRPXVIII.  
Rev: AEQVIT[...]. Aequitas standing l. with scales and cornucopiae.

See *RIC* p. 64 412/D/676/4666

108. After c. A.D. 140. Base metal core of plated (?) denarius. Obv: Laureate bare bust r. ANTONINVS AVG-PIVSPTRPXV[?].

Rev: Female figure standing l. COS-[...].

576/F/3310/8322

**Marcus Aurelius?**

109. As. Obv: Laureate head r. [...]AVR[...]

Rev: Two figures standing, shaking hands?

See *BMCRE* pl. 72, 6, 8–9

217/C/130/6211

**Commodus**

110. After A.D. 190. Hybrid denarius, probably ancient forgery. Obv: Laureate head r. MCOMMANTP-[...]BRIT.

Rev: Libertas standing l. LIBAVGP[...]  
COSVI.

Reverse as *BMCRE* 278 158/A/2113/5114

111. After A.D. 192. Base metal core of plated (?) denarius.

Rev: Victory advancing l.

As *RIC* 237 579/K/4512/10265

112. After c. A.D. 180. Denarius. Divus Marcus Aurelius/Eagle.

*RIC* 264 469/C/-/6567

**Uncertain ruler, second century A.D.**

113. Dupondius/as. Head left. Rev. illegible.

403/E/1110/3292

**Septimius Severus**

114. After c. A.D. 194. Base metal core of plated (?) denarius, eastern mint. Obv: Laureate head r. [...]COSII.

Rev: Fortuna seated l. holding rudder and cornucopiae [...]N-R-EDV[.]

See *BMCRE* p. 92 ('Emesa')

523/M/4846/12105

**Caracalla**

115. A.D. 210–213. Denarius (fragment) [..]NINVS[...]/ MARTIP[ROPVGNATORI]. Mars advancing l.  
As *BMCRE* 87 585/F/3371/8347
116. A.D. 213. Denarius. Obv: Laureate head r. ANTONINVSPIVS-[...]  
Rev: Libertas standing l. PMTRPXVI-COSIIIIPP.  
*BMCRE* 54 56/E/1018/3022
117. After c. A.D. 208. Base metal core of plated denarius. Laureate head r. ANTONINVS[...]-A[.....].  
Rev: Type uncertain. [...]TRP[...]  
321/D/584/4575
118. A.D. 215–217. Antoninianus (fragment). Obv: Radiate bust r./Lion walking l., radiate, holding thunderbolt in jaws.  
As *BMCRE* 149 648/C/5306/14731

**Elagabalus**

119. A.D. 219. Denarius. PMTRPIICOSIIPP. Fortuna Redux seated l.  
*BMCRE* 96 460/K/4479/10145

**Severus Alexander**

120. A.D. 226. Denarius. AE[QVITA]SAVG.  
*BMCRE* 331 196/D/618/4459
121. After A.D. 228. Base metal core of plated denarius. Obv: Laureate draped cuirassed bust r. [...]ANDAVG.  
Rev: Felicitas standing l. FELICI[.....].  
As *BMCRE* 470 96/B/247/2308

**Gordian III**

122. A.D. 241–3. Antoninianus. LAETITIAAVGN.  
*RIC* 86 399/F/3139/7769

**Philip I**

123. A.D. 246–7. Antoninianus, Antioch. PMTRPIII[I?]  
*RIC* 75–75a 557/P/5022/14295
124. A.D. 244–249. Antoninianus. FELICITASTEMP.  
*RIC* 31 174/B/335/2650

**Valerian and Gallienus**

125. A.D. 253–260. Antoninianus, Milan. Valerian/VIRTVS AVGG.  
*RIC* 271 581/F/3366/8345

**Gallienus**

126. A.D. 253–268 Antoninianus, Milan. Radiate draped cuirassed bust r./ VICTGERM.  
*RIC* 404 40/D/445/4120
127. A.D. 260–268. Antoninianus. Radiate head r./ABUNDANTIAAVG. B in field to l.  
*RIC* 157 166/B/304/2616
128. A.D. 260–268. Antoninianus. Radiate head r./AEQVITASAVG.  
*RIC* 159 441/K/4439/10090
129. A.D. 260–268. Antoninianus. Radiate head r./ IOVICONSERVAT, N in field.  
*RIC* 210 146/B/-/2565

130. A.D. 260–268. Antoninianus. Radiate head r./ DIANAECONSAVG. Doe l.  
*RIC* 176–7 113/B/248/2362
131. A.D. 260–268. Antoninianus. Radiate head r./ VBERITASAVG.  
*RIC* 287 47/D/446/4129

### Claudius II

132. A.D. 268–270. Antoninianus. Radiate head r. ANNONA AVG.  
*RIC* 19 169/E/1024/3185
133. A.D. 268–270. Antoninianus. Radiate cuirassed bust r. IMPCCLAVDIVSAVG./IOV[IFVLGERAT?]. Jupiter walking l.  
*RIC* 51 427/K/4425/10051
134. A.D. 268–270. Antoninianus. FELIC-ITASAVG. No letter in field.  
*RIC* 32 418/F/3089/7830
135. A.D. 268–270 Antoninianus, 'SPQR' mint. Radiate head r./Fortuna standing l., holding rudder and cornucopiae, SPQR in exergue. Legend illegible.  
 See *RIC* p. 231, nos 231–4 620/M/4915/12306

### Quintillus

136. A.D. 270. Antoninianus, Milan. Fides holding two standards. In exergue, S.  
*RIC* 52 601/M/4888/12207

### Aurelian

137. Antoninianus. Radiate draped cuirassed bust r./IOVICONSER. Mm. B.  
*RIC* 48 416/K/-/10038
138. Antoninianus, Mediolanum. Radiate draped cuirassed bust r./ORIENSAVG.  
 1/A/1/5
139. Antoninianus, Siscia. Radiate cuirassed bust r./CONCORDIAMILITVM. Mm. \*P.  
*RIC* 216 133/B/247/2481
140. Antoninianus, Siscia. Obverse as last/Jupiter presenting globe to emperor, legend illegible. Mm. \*S.  
*RIC* 225 or 227 149/B/-/2569
141. Similar to previous. Mm. \*[.]  
*RIC* 225 or 227 69/B/244/2228
142. Antoninianus, mint uncertain. IMPCAVRELIANVSAVG. Types similar to previous.  
 346/K/-/10002
143. Antoninianus, mint uncertain. Types as previous.  
 430/K/4411/10058
144. Antoninianus, mint uncertain. Radiate bust r. IMPAVRELIANVSAVG./Victory (?) advancing l. [...]AV[G].  
 537/E/1088/3346
145. Antoninianus (broken), mint uncertain. Diademed bust of Severina r./Emperor and empress clasping hands.  
 314/C/151/6369

### Probus

146. Antoninianus, Siscia. ADVENTVSPROBIAVG. Mm. XXIB.  
*RIC* 632 423/K/4406/10044
147. Antoninianus, Siscia. Radiate draped cuirassed bust r. IMPCMAVRPROBVS AVG./CLEMENTIATEMP. Mm. XXIQ  
 394/K/4005/10020

### Numerian

148. Antoninianus, uncertain mint. Radiate draped cuirassed bust r. IMPNUMERIANVSPFAVG  
 /PROVIDENTIA[AVGG?] Providentia standing l. Mm. XXI.  
 As *RIC* 448 (Ticinum) 604/P/5051/14708

**Uncertain rulers, third century A.D.**

149. Antoninianus, before reform of Aurelian. Aequitas standing l. Details illegible.  
440/K/4439/10092
150. Antoninianus. Radiate head r. [...]NVS AVG. Reverse illegible.  
117/M/4835/12081
151. Antoninianus, after reform of Aurelian. Emperor on horseback l. [ADVENT]V[...]  
656/F/6002/15107

**COINAGE FROM THE REIGN OF DIOCLETIAN**

The coins from the reign of Diocletian onwards have been arranged by reverse type in order to avoid repetition. The officina marks have been noted where legible. For the coinage after A.D. 395, the dating follows P. Grierson and M. Mays, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, 1992).

**Radiates: CONCORDIA MILITVM**

Emperor receiving globe from Jupiter (Obv. busts radiate, draped, cuirassed r.)

*Heraclea*

152. Maximianus, pre-reform. *RIC* v.2, 595 207/F/3001/7316
153. Diocletian, A.D. 295/6. *RIC* VI, 13 515/P/5018/14215

*Uncertain mints*

154. Diocletian. 86/E/1031/3072
155. Galerius. GALVALMAXIMIANVSNBCAES 544/M/4864/12126
156. Ruler uncertain 471/M/4384/12070

**Folles: GENIO POPVLI ROMANI***Alexandria*

157. Diocletian, c. A.D. 301. *RIC* 32a (officina B) 131/B/249/2462

**Folles: GENIO AVGVSTI***Nicomedia*

158. Maximinus II, A.D. 311–313. *RIC* 72b (officina Γ) 426/F/3141/8025

**Folles: IOVI CONSERVATORI***Heraclea*

159. Licinius I, A.D. 321–324. *RIC* 49 (officina A) 425/F/3141/8024

160. Licinius I, A.D. 321–324. *RIC* 52 (officina A)  
 161. Ruler uncertain

200/A/2193/5220  
 505/P/5018/14175

*Nicomedia*

162. Licinius I, A.D. 317–320. *RIC* 24 (officina Δ)

73/B/247/2271

*Cyzicus*

163. Constantine I, A.D. 313–315. *RIC* 3 (officina B)

386/K/4405/10014

*Antioch*

164. Constantine I, A.D. 317–320. *RIC* 26 (officina A)

287/C/130/6349

**Folles: SOLI INVICTO COMITI**

*Ticinum*

165. Constantine I, A.D. 314–315. *RIC* 7 (officina S)

609/P/5051/14691

**Folles: VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP. Two victories**

*'Trier'*

166. Constantine I, after c. A.D. 319. Possibly an imitation. Mm. STR.  
 As *RIC* pp. 181–3

641/R/5218/13046

**Folles: BEATA TRANQVILLITAS. Altar**

*London*

167. Constantine I, A.D. 321–322. *RIC* 225

494/P/5018/14144

*'Ticinum'*

168. Constantine II, after c. A.D. 320. Possibly an imitation. Laureate bust l., wearing consular robes and holding eagle-tipped sceptre. CONSTANTINVS[...]. Mm. TT  
*RIC* p. 380 n. and 358 n.

3/A/1/9 (Plate XXXIX)

**Folles: Wreath containing Vota, imperial titles around**

*Ticinum*

169. Constantine I, A.D. 320–321. *RIC* 140 (officina S)

605/P/5051/14694

*Siscia*

170. Licinius I, A.D. 320–321. *RIC* 160 (officina B)

406/K/4418/10028

*Heraclea*

171. Constantine I, A.D. 324. *RIC* 56 (officina A) 308/N/-/13002

*Uncertain mints*

172. Constantine I (illegible) 109/-/-/1242  
 173. Crispus. CRISPVSNOBCAES/CAESARVMNOSTRORVM; VOT V (?) 119/D/491/4240

**Folles: PROVIDENTIAE AVGG/CAESS. Camp gate***Thessalonica*

174. Constantine I, A.D. 326–328. *RIC* 153 (officina E) 34/B/201/2055  
 175. Constantine I, A.D. 326–328. *RIC* pp. 518–19 (possibly officina E; obv. bust unclear) 553/F/3318/8236  
 176. Constantine II, A.D. 326–328. *RIC* 157 (officina Δ) 153/B/241/2558

*Heraclea*

177. Constantine II, A.D. 318–320. *RIC* 37var. (officina A) 574/F/3348/8277

**Folles: Helena/SECVRITAS REIPVBLICE***Heraclea*

178. A.D. 325–326. *RIC* 79 (officina B) 29/D/422/4045

**Folles: GLORIA EXERCITVS. Two soldiers, two standards***Thessalonica*

179. Constantius II, A.D. 335–336. *RIC* 200 (officina Γ) 157/F/3034/7185  
 180. Constantine II, A.D. 335–336. *RIC* 199 (officina B) 353/C/4006/6435

*Heraclea*

181. Constantine I, A.D. 330–333. *RIC* 111 (officina A) 603/P/5051/14714  
 182. Constantine I, A.D. 333–336. *RIC* 136 (officina B) 374/C/4013/6501

*Constantinople*

183. Constantine I, A.D. 330–333. *RIC* 59 (officina E) 58/D/447/4196

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 184. Constantine II, A.D. 333–335. As <i>RIC</i> 74, but bust I. (officina Γ) | 315/C/151/6371   |
| 185. Constantine II, A.D. 333–335. <i>RIC</i> 81                              | 639/M/4961/12362 |

*Cyzicus*

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 186. Constantine II, A.D. 331–334. <i>RIC</i> 80 (officina B) | 560/F/3350/8297 |
| 187. Constantine II, A.D. 331–334. <i>RIC</i> 85 (officina Γ) | 215/C/130/6213  |
| 188. Constantine II, A.D. 332–335. <i>RIC</i> 97 (officina Γ) | 211/D/607/4450  |

**Folles: GLORIA EXERCITVS. Two soldiers, one standard***Siscia*

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 189. Delmatius, A.D. 337. <i>RIC</i> VII 266 (officina A)    | 397/F/3139/7767 |
| 190. Constans, A.D. 337–340. <i>RIC</i> VIII 94 (officina E) | 377/C/4007/6486 |

*Thessalonica*

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 191. Constantine II, A.D. 337–340. <i>RIC</i> VIII 55 (officina A) | 38/B/241/2109  |
| 192. As previous coin  | 218/C/129/6210 |
| 193. Constantius II, A.D. 337–340. <i>RIC</i> VIII 56 (officina A) | 33/B/-/1206    |

*Heraclea*

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 194. Constans, A.D. 336–337. <i>RIC</i> VII 154 (officina E)       | 16/B/213/2020 |
| 195. Constantine II, A.D. 337–340. <i>RIC</i> VIII 15 (officina A) | 91/B/247/2319 |

*Cyzicus*

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 196. Constantius, A.D. 337–340. <i>RIC</i> VIII 16 (officina A?)    | 105/B/247/2311  |
| 197. As previous coin   | 137/D/473/4259  |
| 198. Constans, A.D. 337–340. <i>RIC</i> VIII 18 (officina A)        | 168/B/321/2615  |
| 199. Constantius II (Caesar or Augustus), A.D. 335–340 (officina H) | 651/C/-/14921   |
| 200. Constantius II (Caesar or Augustus), A.D. 335–340              | 565/F/3338/8285 |
| 201. Ruler uncertain, A.D. 335–340 (possibly a copy)                | 155/B/-/2573    |

*Uncertain mint*

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 202. Constantine II Caesar, A.D. 335–337                        | 244/C/130/6288  |
| 203. Constantine II Augustus, A.D. 337–341                      | 455/F/3062/8063 |
| 204. Constans Augustus, A.D. 337–340                            | 598/C/4210/6664 |
| 205. Similar to previous  | 450/F/3186/8054 |
| 206. Similar  | 504/F/-/8115    |
| 207. Uncertain Augustus, A.D. 335–340                           | 150/B/-/2570    |
| 208. A.D. 337–340. Obv. URBS ROMA, as <i>LRBC</i> p. 23 no. 941 | 522/F/3192/8139 |

**Folles: CONSTANTINOPOLIS***Thessalonica*

209. RIC VII 188 (officina E), A.D. 330–337

7/B/211/2011

*Constantinople*

210. RIC VII 579, A.D. 330–333

333/C/158/6399

*Heraclea*

211. Mm. [ ]SMHF [ ], A.D. 330–336

481/F/3224/8100

212. RIC VII 120 (officina Γ), A.D. 330–341

614/P/-/14716

**Folles: VRBS ROMA***Cyzicus*

213. RIC VII 90/1 (officina E), A.D. 330–333

607/P/5051/14700

214. RIC VII 105 (officina S), A.D. 330–346

533/P/5020/14271

215. RIC VII 118/9 (officina Γ), A.D. 335–336

138/D/473/4265

**Folles: VRBS ROMA/VOT XX MVLT XXX**

216. Uncertain mint, A.D. 337–340

474/F/3222/8085

**Folles: VIRTVS AVGVSTI. Emperor with shield and spear (A.D. 337–341)***Rome?*

217. Uncertain ruler

458/K/4478/10135

**Folles: VICTORIAE DD AVGG QNN***Thessalonica*

218. Constans, A.D. 347–348. RIC 100 (officina A)

177/C/106/6127

219. Constans, A.D. 347–348. Mm. uncertain

39/A/2017/5011

220. Uncertain ruler, A.D. 347–348

89/B/247/2330

*Uncertain mint*

221. Uncertain ruler, A.D. 341–346

376/C/4006/6469

222. Similar, possibly a copy

95/B/247/2302

**Folles: VOT XX MVLT XXX***Heraclea*

223. Uncertain ruler, Mm. SMHA, A.D. 347–348

588/F/3367/8349

*Cyzicus*

224. Constantius II, A.D. 347–348. RIC 48 (officina H)

391/F/3132/7543

*Uncertain mint*

|                             |                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 225. Constantius II         | 25/B/230/2039   |
| 226. As previous            | 48/B/241/2129   |
| 227. As previous            | 266/C/148/6296  |
| 228. As previous            | 294/C/130/6341  |
| 229. As previous            | 342/C/126/6415  |
| 230. As previous            | 355/C/4006/6442 |
| 231. As previous            | 372/F/3125/7473 |
| 232. As previous            | 573/F/3348/8298 |
| 233. Constans?              | 405/F/3139/7892 |
| 234. Uncertain ruler        | 2/A/1/6         |
| 235. As previous            | 67/B/246/2236   |
| 236. As previous (fragment) | 265/C/148/6297  |
| 237. As previous            | 278/C/130/6318  |

**Folles: Divus Constantinus/VN-MR***Constantinople*

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 238. RIC 75 (officina A), A.D. 347–348 | 512/P/5018/14191 |
|--|------------------|

*Uncertain mint*

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| 239.          | 116/B/247/2369   |
| 240. Fragment | 626/P/5051/14692 |

**FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Emperor and two captives***Constantinople*

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 241. Constantius II, A.D. 348–350. RIC 90 (officina A) | 21/B/213/2018 |
|--|---------------|

*Cyzicus*

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 242. Constantius II, A.D. 348–350. RIC 84 (officina Δ) | 135/F/3012/7019 |
|--|-----------------|

**FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Phoenix***Siscia*

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 243. Constantius II. Phoenix on pyre (officina E) | 170/F/3045/7259 |
|---|-----------------|

*Uncertain mint*

|                                       |               |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| 244. Constantius II. Phoenix on globe | 14/B/213/2015 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|

**FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Emperor in galley***Siscia*

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 245. Constantius II, A.D. 348–350. As <i>RIC</i> 197     | 31/A/1/1201    |
| 246. Constans, A.D. 348–350. <i>RIC</i> 234 (officina Δ) | 103/B/247/2305 |

*Thessalonica*

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|--|------------------|
| 247. Constantius II, A.D. 347–348. <i>RIC</i> 119 (officina A) | 219/C/129/6209   |
| 248. As last (officina E)                                      | 120/D/491/4253   |
| 249. Constans, A.D. 347–348. <i>RIC</i> 120                    | 112/B/247/2353   |
| 250. As last   | 424/K/4423/10046 |
| 251. Uncertain ruler, Mm. TES[.]                               | 271/C/130/6329   |

**FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Soldier spearing fallen horseman***Siscia*

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 252. Constantius Gallus, A.D. 351–354. <i>RIC</i> 351 (officina Γ)      | 646/S/5288/13525 |
| 253. Constantius II, A.D. 351–355. <i>RIC</i> 352 (officina A)          | 351/F/-/7453     |
| 254. Constantius II, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 361 (officina A)          | 148/B/-/2568     |
| 255. Constantius II, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> pp. 376–8 (mm. M/ASIS[.]) | 531/K/4502/10206 |
| 256. Constantius II, A.D. 348–361. Mm. ASI[.]                           | 331/C/158/6391   |
| 257. As previous, mm. ΘSI[.]  | 284/C/149/6354   |

*Sirmium*

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 258. Constantius II, A.D. 350–355. <i>RIC</i> 48 (officina B) | 311/C/151/6368   |
| 259. Constantius II, A.D. 351–355. <i>RIC</i> 52 (officina A) | 540/M/4843/12130 |
| 260. Constantius II, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 73 (officina A) | 76/B/247/2281    |

*Thessalonica*

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 261. Constantius II, A.D. 348–350. <i>RIC</i> 123 (officina B) | 53/B/240/2125    |
| 262. Constantius II, A.D. 350–355. <i>RIC</i> 189              | 281/C/130/6321   |
| 263. Constantius II, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 211 (officina Γ) | 368/F/3125/7462  |
| 264. Constantius II, A.D. 348–361. Mm. [.] /SMTS               | 434/C/4060/14050 |

*Heraclea*

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 265. Constantius II, A.D. 351–355. <i>RIC</i> 90 (officina A) | 36/D/434/4091 |
|---|---------------|

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 266. Constantius II, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 93 (officina B) | 520/P/5018/14224 |
| 267. Julian Caesar, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 97               | 524/F/3240/8149  |
| 268. Constantius II, A.D. 348–361. Mm. SMHA                   | 413/K/4406/10031 |

*Constantinople*

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 269. Constantius II, A.D. 348–351. <i>RIC</i> 79 (officina A)     | 147/B/-/2566   |
| 270. Constantius II, A.D. 351–355. <i>RIC</i> 118/19 (officina A) | 100/B/247/2337 |
| 271. Constantius II, A.D. 351–355. <i>RIC</i> 119 (officina E)    | 344/C/126/6416 |
| 272. Constantius II, A.D. 348–361.                                | 12/B/213/2014  |
| 273. Similar  | 127/B/249/2378 |
| 274. Constantius Gallus?, A.D. 351–354                            | 80/B/247/2260  |

*Nicomedia*

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 275. Constantius II, A.D. 346–361. <i>RIC</i> 96 (officina A) | 640/R/5218/13037 |
| 276. Constantius II, A.D. 348–361. Mm. SMN[.]                 | 302/C/130/6362   |
| 277. Constantius II, A.D. 348–361. Mm. [..]NB                 | 543/P/5018/14323 |

*Cyzicus*

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 278. Constantius II, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 110 (officina Γ) | 23/D/416/4027   |
| 279. Constantius II, A.D. 348–361. Mm. SMK[.]                  | 563/F/3338/8286 |

*Uncertain mint*

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 280. Constans   | 10/B/213/1075    |
| 281. Constantius II. Mm. E/[...]  | 9/B/213/2019     |
| 282. Constantius II, Δ behind bust. Rev Mm. S/[...]. Possibly Heraclea. | 64/A/2023/5056   |
| 283. Constantius II, Mm. Γ/[...]  | 586/F/3367/8350  |
| 284. Constantius II   | 26/D/419/4036    |
| 285. Similar  | 54/D/451/4150    |
| 286. Similar  | 55/A/2024/5031   |
| 287. Similar  | 61/B/240/2164    |
| 288. Similar  | 93/B/247/2304    |
| 289. Similar  | 320/C/120/6384   |
| 290. Similar  | 359/A/2245/5275  |
| 291. Similar  | 363/C/4007/6458  |
| 292. Similar  | 370/C/4013/6494  |
| 293. Similar  | 417/F/3089/7822  |
| 294. Similar  | 448/M/4824/12039 |
| 295. Similar  | 473/M/4835/12072 |
| 296. Similar  | 490/F/3211/8101  |
| 297. Similar  | 516/P/5018/14227 |
| 298. Similar  | 541/A/2176/5313  |
| 299. Similar  | 545/F/3250/8219  |

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 300. Similar                             | 561/F/-/8280     |
| 301. Similar                             | 562/F/3338/8288  |
| 302. Similar                             | 584/M/4856/12183 |
| 303. Similar                             | 590/F/3364/8372  |
| 304. Similar                             | 600/C/4217/6674  |
| 305. Similar                             | 606/P/5051/14709 |
| 306. Similar                             | 610/P/5051/14707 |
| 307. Similar                             | 634/S/5258/13506 |
| 308. Similar                             | 637/P/5051/1466  |
| 309. Constantius Gallus. Mm. S/[...]     | 208/E/1088/3224  |
| 310. Constantius Gallus                  | 611/P/5051/14705 |
| 311. Similar                             | 421/F/3151/8022  |
| 312. Julian Caesar                       | 102/B/247/2325   |
| 313. Similar                             | 221/E/1088/3253  |
| 314. Similar                             | 232/C/130/6224   |
| 315. Similar                             | 527/F/3289/8175  |
| 316. Similar                             | 361/C/4006/6449  |
| 317. Uncertain ruler, A or Δ behind bust | 566/F/3338/8291  |
| 318. Uncertain ruler                     | 8/B/211/2012     |
| 319. Similar                             | 19/B/213/2026    |
| 320. Similar                             | 79/B/247/2261    |
| 321. Similar                             | 92/B/247/2329    |
| 322. Similar                             | 141/F/3002/7044  |
| 323. Similar                             | 216/C/130/6212   |
| 324. Similar                             | 223/E/1088/3258  |
| 325. Similar                             | 283/C/130/6313   |
| 326. Similar                             | 395/F/3139/7766  |
| 327. Similar, half of coin. Irregular.   | 51/B/241/2136    |
| 328. Similar. Irregular?                 | 567/F/3338/8292  |

## SPES REIPVBLICE

### *Siscia*

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 329. Constantius II, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 408 | 555/F/3318/8222 |
| 330. Constantius II, Mm. pellet/[.]SIS[.]         | 71/B/247/2265   |

### *Thessalonica*

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 331. Constantius II, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 213 (officina A)     | 551/F/3337/8245 |
| 332. Uncertain ruler, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 215–16 (officina A) | 340/C/130/6407  |
| 333. Constantius II, Mm. SMTS[.]                                   | 30/D/401/1202   |
| 334. Julian, Mm. SMT[..]   | 432/M/-/12005   |

### *Constantinople*

|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 335. Constantius II, Mm. CONS[.] | 94/B/247/2340    |
| 336. Julian, Mm. CON[.]          | 618/P/5050/14400 |

### *Nicomedia*

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 337. Constantius II, A.D. 355–361. <i>RIC</i> 112 (officina Δ) | 81/B/247/2262   |
| 338. Julian? Mm. SMN[.]  | 429/E/1124/3303 |

*Uncertain mint*

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 339. Constantius II. Mm. pellet in l. field. | 43/A/2024/5030   |
| 340. Constantius II. Mm. pellet in r. field. | 313/C/151/6366   |
| 341. Constantius II                          | 75/B/247/2264    |
| 342. Similar                                 | 130/B/249/2455   |
| 343. Similar                                 | 181/A/2161/5212  |
| 344. Similar                                 | 202/D/540/4475   |
| 345. Similar                                 | 297/C/130/6337   |
| 346. Similar                                 | 388/K/4406/10016 |
| 347. Similar                                 | 550/-/15515      |
| 348. Similar                                 | 564/F/3338/8290  |
| 349. Julian                                  | 128/B/249/2453   |
| 350. Similar                                 | 571/F/3338/8287  |
| 351. Uncertain ruler                         | 20/B/213/2028    |
| 352. Similar                                 | 78/B/247/2267    |
| 353. Similar                                 | 83/B/247/2259    |
| 354. Similar                                 | 87/B/247/2288    |
| 355. Similar                                 | 101/B/247/2348   |
| 356. Similar                                 | 247/C/130/6283   |
| 357. Similar                                 | 261/C/130/6265   |
| 358. Similar                                 | 290/C/130/6307   |
| 359. Similar                                 | 402/F/3139/7895  |
| 360. Similar                                 | 472/E/1191/3332  |
| 361. Similar                                 | 508/P/5018/14200 |
| 362. Similar (fragment)                      | 22/B/218/2030    |
| 363. Similar (fragment)                      | 327/C/130/6403   |

**Unidentified House of Constantine (reverses obliterated)**

|                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 364. Uncertain ruler, bust r. | 13/B/213/2016   |
| 365. Similar                  | 143/B/248/2494  |
| 366. Similar                  | 180/C/106/6162  |
| 367. Similar (fragment)       | 337/C/126/6413  |
| 368. Similar                  | 408/F/3088/7938 |
| 369. Uncertain ruler, bust l. | 288/C/130/6335  |

**Julian: SECVRITAS REIPVB. Bull (A.D. 361–363)***Thessalonica*

|                                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 370. RIC 224 or 226 (officina B) | 124/B/249/2415 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|

**Julian: VOTIS V MVLTVS X in wreath***AR Siliqua, uncertain mint*

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 371. Obv: Diademed draped bust r., beardless. FLCLIVLIA-NVSPFAVG | 250/C/130/6277 |
|--|----------------|

**Julian: VOT X MVLTVS XX in wreath (A.D. 361–363)***Heraclea*

|                           |                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 372. RIC 105 (officina A) | 358/C/4007/6446 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|

*Cyzicus*

373. RIC 131 (officina Γ) 152/B/-/2552

**Jovian: VOT V in wreath (A.D. 363–364)***Heraclea*

374. RIC 108 (officina B) 468/K/4463/10152

**Procopius: REPARATIO FEL TEMP. Emperor standing (A.D. 365–366)***Uncertain mint*

375. Fragment 371/C/4013/6495

**RESTITVTOR REIP. Emperor standing (A.D. 364–367)***Sirmium*

376. Valens. Officina illeg. RIC 6b 499/K/4431/10175

*Thessalonica*

377. Valens. Officina Δ. RIC 17b 326/F/3092/7383

*Constantinople*

378. Valentinian I. Officina Γ. RIC 20a 280/C/130/6320  
379. As last, but ruler uncertain 126/B/249/2408

**GLORIA ROMANORVM. Emperor dragging captive (A.D. 364–378)***Siscia*

380. Valentinian I. RIC 5 (a), p. 140 i 443/A/2307/5309  
381. Valentinian I. RIC 14 (a), p. 141 xiii 602/C/4215/6672  
382. Valentinian I. RIC 14 (a), p. 141 xvii 277/C/130/6317  
383. Valentinian I. RIC 14(a), p. 143 xxix 245/C/130/6287  
384. Gratian, Mm. Δ/[.]ISC (probably RIC 14 (c) p. 141 xi–xiv) 453/F/-/8058  
385. Uncertain ruler, Mm. FSISC 332/C/125/6394  
386. Uncertain ruler, Mm. ASIS[.] 341/C/148/6410

*Thessalonica*

387. Valens. RIC p. 168 i (officina Γ) 186/D/541/4424  
388. Valens. RIC p. 171 xxviii (officina Γ) 496/P/5018/14146  
389. Valens. RIC p. 172 xxxviii (officina B) 15/B/213/2021  
390. Valens, Mm. TES[.] 322/C/151/6364  
391. Uncertain ruler, Mm. TESA 251/C/130/6250

*Heraclea or Nicomedia*

392. Valens. Mm. SMHA or SMNA

364/C/4007/6460

*Constantinople*393. Valens. *RIC* 16 (b) Mm. CONSPA

409/C/130/14032

394. Valens. *RIC* 16 (c) Mm. CONST

589/F/3285/8355

395. Valens. *RIC* 16 (c) Mm. CONSZ

182/C/129/6185

*Nicomedia*

396. Valens. Mm. SMN[.]

525/F/3240/8146

*Uncertain mints*

397. Valens

400/F/3139/7770

398. Similar.

568/F/3338/8289

399. Valentinian or Valens

195/D/613/4439

400. Uncertain ruler

11/B/213/2013

401. Similar.

18/B/213/2023

402. Similar.

161/D/559/4360

403. Similar.

330/C/158/6390

404. Similar.

422/F/3132/8021

**SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE (A.D. 364–378)***Aquileia*405. Valentinian I. *RIC* p. 92 xiii (officina illeg.)

239/D/635/4540

*Siscia*406. Valentinian I. *RIC* p. 140 i (officina A)

68/D/468/4214

407. Gratian. Mm. [.] / [.] / ASIS[?]

299/C/130/6359

*Constantinople*408. Valens. *RIC* 21b (officina illeg.)

106/B/247/2303

409. Valentinian I. *RIC* 42a Mm illeg.

575/F/3327/8324

410. Valens. *RIC* 42b Mm. 1

407/F/3089/7986

*Cyzicus*411. Valentinian I. *RIC* 11a or 13a

171/F/3054/7289

412. As last

629/S/5259/13507

413. Valens. *RIC* 11b or 13b

569/F/3338/8278

414. As last

572/F/3337/8279

415. Uncertain ruler. *RIC* p. 241

243/C/130/6289

*Uncertain mints*

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 416. Valens          | 536/F/3130/8217  |
| 417. Similar         | 552/F/3337/8246  |
| 418. Similar         | 570/F/3338/8281  |
| 419. Probably Valens | 77/B/247/2249    |
| 420. Uncertain ruler | 35/B/240/2090    |
| 421. Similar         | 310/C/151/6365   |
| 422. Similar         | 338/C/126/6417   |
| 423. Similar         | 392/A/2251/5288  |
| 424. Similar         | 483/P/5014/14125 |
| 425. Similar         | 487/C/4096/6579  |
| 426. Similar         | 526/F/3280/8153  |
| 427. Similar         | 649/C/-/14732    |

**REPARATIO REIPVB. Emperor raising turreted woman (A.D. 378–383)***Siscia*

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 428. Valentinian I. <i>RIC</i> 26a Mm. 1 | 593/C/4210/6661 |
|--|-----------------|

**CONCORDIA AVGGG. Roma seated facing (A.D. 378–383)***Cyzicus*

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 429. Gratian. As <i>RIC</i> 18a, Mm. 3, but officina Γ | 463/E/1189/3322 |
|--|-----------------|

*Uncertain mint*

|                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 430. Uncertain ruler | 212/C/130/6216 |
|----------------------|----------------|

**Vota (A.D. 378–383 and later)***Siscia*

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 431. Gratian. <i>Vot xv mult xx. RIC</i> 31a Mm. 1 | 325/M/-/12003 |
|--|---------------|

*Cyzicus*

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| 432. Uncertain ruler. <i>Vot xx mult xxx. RIC</i> 22 Mm. 1 | 511/F/-/8125 |
|--|--------------|

*Uncertain mint*

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 433. Arcadius. <i>Vot v</i>             | 497/F/3233/8111  |
| 434. Uncertain ruler. <i>Vot v</i>      | 316/C/151/6372   |
| 435. Uncertain ruler. <i>Vot x[...]</i> | 622/P/5051/14656 |
| 436. Uncertain ruler. <i>Vot [...]</i>  | 276/C/130/6331   |

**GLORIA ROMANORVM. Emperor on galley (A.D. 378–383)***Constantinople*437. Theodosius I. *RIC* 52c Mm. 6

17/B/213/2022

**GLORIA REIPVBLICAE. Camp gate (A.D. 383–388)***Thessalonica*438. Uncertain ruler. *RIC* 62 (officina Γ)

85/B/247/2246

*Uncertain mint*

439. Uncertain ruler

594/C/4095/6656

**GLORIA ROMANORVM. Emperor dragging captive (A.D. 383–388)***Uncertain mint*440. Uncertain ruler. As *RIC* p. 130, 55

595/C/4095/6658

**SALVS REIPVBLICAE (A.D. 388–402)***Thessalonica*

441. Uncertain ruler, Mm. SMTS?

360/C/4006/6448

*Heraclea or Nicomedia*

442. Valentinian II. Mm. SMHA or SMNA

445/K/4405/10123

*Heraclea*443. Valentinian II. *RIC* 26a Mm. 1

613/P/5051/14644

*Constantinople*444. Arcadius. *RIC* 86c Mm. CON[...]

84/B/247/2270

445. As last

507/P/5018/14193

446. Uncertain ruler, Mm. CONSA

456/F/3001/8064

447. Uncertain ruler

253/C/130/6269

448. As last

343/C/126/6414

449. As last

459/K/4405/10141

*Cyzicus*450. Valentinian II. *RIC* 26a or 30a Mm. 2

225/C/129/6281

451. Theodosius I. *RIC* 26b or 30b Mm. 1

628/P/5048/14370

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 452. As last, but Mm. 2                  | 144/B/250/2502 |
| 453. Arcadius. <i>RIC</i> 26c or 30c Mm. | 166/B/246/2235 |

*Nicomedia*

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 454. Valentinian II? <i>RIC</i> 45a Mm. 1 | 493/P/5018/14143 |
|---|------------------|

*Uncertain mints*

|                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| 455. Probably Valentinian II | 436/F/3166/8031  |
| 456. Theodosius I            | 282/C/130/6312   |
| 457. As last                 | 652/C/-/14920    |
| 458. Arcadius                | 97/B/247/2323    |
| 459. As last                 | 510/P/5018/14190 |
| 460. Honorius                | 220/C/129/6208   |
| 461. Uncertain ruler         | 60/B/240/2143    |
| 462. As last                 | 70/D/-/1238      |
| 463. As last                 | 122/B/249/2373   |
| 464. As last                 | 203/C/128/6202   |
| 465. As last                 | 204/C/133/6205   |
| 466. As last                 | 213/C/130/6215   |
| 467. As last                 | 226/C/129/6282   |
| 468. As last                 | 230/C/130/6239   |
| 469. As last                 | 246/C/128/6292   |
| 470. As last                 | 273/C/130/6324   |
| 471. As last                 | 285/C/149/6352   |
| 472. As last                 | 303/C/136/6363   |
| 473. As last                 | 335/C/125/6397   |
| 474. As last                 | 365/C/4007/6461  |
| 475. As last                 | 449/K/4465/10125 |
| 476. As last                 | 506/P/5018/14192 |
| 477. As last                 | 509/P/5018/14186 |
| 478. As last                 | 558/K/4432/10258 |
| 479. As last                 | 362/C/4007/6451  |

**VICTORIA AVGGG. Two victories holding wreath (A.D. 383–388)***Probably Rome*

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 480. Uncertain ruler. As <i>RIC</i> p. 130, 57 | 224/C/129/6280 |
|--|----------------|

**VIRTVS AVGGG. Emperor on galley (A.D. 383–388)***Thessalonica*

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 481. Valentinian II. <i>RIC</i> 61a Mm. 1 | 279/C/130/6319 |
|---|----------------|

**VIRTVS EXERCITI. Emperor with standard; foot on captive (A.D. 383–388)***Nicomedia*

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 482. Valentinian II. <i>RIC</i> 44a, Mm. SMNA | 125/B/249/2416 |
|---|----------------|

**GLORIA ROMANORVM. Emperor with labarum and globe (A.D. 392–395)***Constantinople*

483. Arcadius. *RIC* 88b 49/D/445/4154

*Nicomedia*

484. Honorius. *RIC* 46c Mm. 1 580/F/3360/8341

*Uncertain mint*

485. Theodosius I 532/F/3297/8190

**VIRTVS EXERCITI. Emperor crowned by Victory (A.D. 395–408)***Constantinople*

486. Arcadius. *LRBC* 2205 Mm. CONSB 415/K/4416/10035  
 487. Similar to previous, Mm. CON[...] 111/-/-/1244  
 488. Similar to previous 229/C/130/6230  
 489. Similar 383/C/4031/6518  
 490. Uncertain ruler 227/C/130/6236

*Cyzicus*

491. Arcadius. *LRBC* 2580 Mm. SMKA 267/C/130/6275  
 492. As last, but Mm. SMK 420/E/1121/3297  
 493. As last but Mm. SMKA $\Delta$  236/C/129/6245  
 494. Honorius. *LRBC* 2581 Mm. SMKB 129/B/249/2452  
 495. As last 198/A/2190/5269  
 496. As last, Mm. uncertain 642/R/5218/13033

*Nicomedia*

497. Arcadius. *LRBC* 2436 Mm. SMNA 145/E/1035/3117  
 498. As last 398/F/3139/7768  
 499. Honorius. *LRBC* 2437 Mm. SMNA 256/C/130/6252

*Uncertain mints*

500. Honorius 339/C/130/6406  
 501. Similar 513/P/5018/14202  
 502. Uncertain ruler 72/B/247/2258  
 503. Similar 248/C/130/6276  
 504. Similar 255/C/130/6253  
 505. Similar 268/C/148/6295  
 506. Similar 292/C/130/6345  
 507. Similar 428/F/3078/8026  
 508. Similar 462/E/1187/3328  
 509. Similar 498/P/5018/14149  
 510. Similar 514/F/3182/8107

**GLORIA ROMANORVM. Eudoxia seated facing (A.D. 400–404)***Constantinople*

511. Eudoxia. LRBC 2218 Mm. CONSA 369/C/4013/6493

**SALVS REIPVBLICAE. Victory inscribing shield (A.D. 400–404)***Uncertain mint*

512. Eudoxia. Fragment 476/-/15514

**GLORIA ROMANORVM. Three emperors standing (A.D. 402–408)***Nicomedia*

513. Uncertain ruler. Mm. SMNA 52/B/241/2135

*Uncertain mint*

514. Arcadius 191/C/101/6200  
 515. Theodosius II 309/C/151/6374  
 516. Uncertain ruler 259/C/130/6267  
 517. Similar 484/E/1194/3340  
 518. Similar 538/F/3302/8200

**CONCORDIA AVGG. Constantinopolis holding victory and spear seated facing (c. A.D. 402–408)***Uncertain mint*

519. Uncertain ruler 597/C/4207/6659

**GLORIA ROMANORVM. Two emperors standing (A.D. 408–419)***Nicomedia*

520. Honorius. LRBC 2454 Mm. SMNA 404/F/3139/7814

*Alexandria*

521. Uncertain ruler 249/C/130/6278

*Uncertain mints*

522. Honorius 452/K/4405/10130  
 523. Theodosius II 286/C/149/6353  
 524. Similar 554/F/3318/8235  
 525. Uncertain ruler 98/B/247/2328

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 526. Similar | 176/C/126/6160  |
| 527. Similar | 179/C/121/6161  |
| 528. Similar | 231/C/130/6240  |
| 529. Similar | 324/C/120/6382  |
| 530. Similar | 482/C/4096/6571 |

### Unidentified fourth/early fifth century

#### Unidentified vota

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 531. Uncertain ruler. Vot. xx mult xxx | 577/F/3384/8299 |
| 532. Uncertain inscription             | 264/C/148/6298  |

### Emperor standing (?) 15mm diameter

|                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 533. Uncertain ruler | 185/C/128/6182 |
| 534. Similar         | 263/C/127/6300 |

#### Reverses obliterated

|                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 535. Obverse bust r.     | 5/D/405/4006    |
| 536. Similar             | 6/B/212/2008    |
| 537. Similar             | 50/B/240/2128   |
| 538. Similar             | 184/C/129/6183  |
| 539. Similar             | 193/C/133/6197  |
| 540. Similar             | 209/D/553/4514  |
| 541. Similar             | 234/C/129/6244  |
| 542. Similar             | 318/C/120/6386  |
| 543. Similar             | 319/C/120/6385  |
| 544. Similar             | 419/F/3088/8015 |
| 545. Obverse obliterated | 44/A/2024/5024  |
| 546. Similar             | 88/B/247/2327   |
| 547. Similar             | 110/-/1243      |
| 548. Similar             | 123/B/249/2424  |
| 549. Similar             | 139/C/101/6051  |
| 550. Similar             | 165/D/558/4369  |
| 551. Similar             | 183/C/128/6184  |
| 552. Similar             | 189/C/101/6199  |
| 553. Similar             | 192/C/130/6195  |
| 554. Similar             | 206/D/537/4488  |
| 555. Similar             | 210/A/2193/5218 |
| 556. Similar             | 233/C/130/6232  |
| 557. Similar             | 235/C/130/6220  |
| 558. Similar             | 237/C/130/6231  |
| 559. Similar             | 240/C/130/6259  |
| 560. Similar             | 241/C/130/6260  |
| 561. Similar             | 254/C/130/6270  |
| 562. Similar             | 257/C/130/6272  |
| 563. Similar             | 258/C/130/6271  |
| 564. Similar             | 269/C/130/6330  |
| 565. Similar             | 291/C/130/6346  |
| 566. Similar             | 295/C/130/6343  |
| 567. Similar             | 296/C/130/6342  |
| 568. Similar             | 300/C/130/6360  |
| 569. Similar             | 323/C/151/6373  |
| 570. Similar             | 345/C/130/6408  |
| 571. Similar             | 375/F/3078/7482 |

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| 572. Similar | 380/C/4031/6508  |
| 573. Similar | 384/A/2251/5287  |
| 574. Similar | 387/K/4406/10015 |
| 575. Similar | 396/F/3139/7765  |
| 576. Similar | 442/A/2251/14085 |
| 577. Similar | 451/F/3001/8061  |
| 578. Similar | 461/K/4405/10144 |
| 579. Similar | 475/F/-/8087     |
| 580. Similar | 485/P/5014/14122 |
| 581. Similar | 489/F/3182/8105  |
| 582. Similar | 500/M/4846/12103 |
| 583. Similar | 501/P/5018/14165 |
| 584. Similar | 502/C/-/6580     |
| 585. Similar | 519/M/4853/12114 |
| 586. Similar | 608/S/5272/13516 |
| 587. Similar | 616/P/5051/14628 |
| 588. Similar | 623/P/5051/14660 |
| 589. Similar | 625/P/5050/14617 |
| 590. Similar | 654/M/5501/12397 |

### Cross in wreath (probably all Theodosius II, A.D. 408–419)

#### *Constantinople*

|                               |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| 591. Theodosius II. LRBC 2238 | 272/C/130/6325 |
|-------------------------------|----------------|

#### *Uncertain mints*

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 592. Theodosius II   | 59/D/451/4185    |
| 593. Similar         | 262/C/130/6261   |
| 594. Similar         | 301/C/130/6361   |
| 595. Similar         | 382/C/4031/6517  |
| 596. Uncertain ruler | 37/D/434/4105    |
| 597. Similar         | 41/D/453/4122    |
| 598. Similar         | 42/D/445/4113    |
| 599. Similar         | 99/B/247/2346    |
| 600. Similar         | 104/B/247/2347   |
| 601. Similar         | 121/D/473/4257   |
| 602. Similar         | 190/C/101/6201   |
| 603. Similar         | 197/A/2190/5216  |
| 604. Similar         | 214/C/130/6214   |
| 605. Similar         | 275/C/130/6332   |
| 606. Similar         | 486/P/5018/14136 |
| 607. Similar         | 549/C/-/6622     |
| 608. Similar         | 624/P/5051/14654 |

### Cross; legend around

#### *Rome?*

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 609. Galla Placidia. SALVS REIPVBLICAE. In field I., P or Γ. (A.D. 425–430) As LRBC 854 | 491/P/5018/14142 |
|---|------------------|

#### *Nicomedia*

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 610. Theodosius II. CONCORDIA AVG. LRBC 2453, Grierson p. 140 (A.D. 402–408) Mm. SMNB | 252/C/130/6249 |
|---|----------------|

*Uncertain mints*

|                                 |                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 611. Legend and ruler uncertain | 57/B/243/2174   |
| 612. As last                    | 328/C/158/6395  |
| 613. As last                    | 381/C/4031/6516 |

**VT/XXX/V in wreath (Theodosius II, A.D. 430–440)***Uncertain mint*

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 614. Grierson 392–394 (there dated A.D. 435) | 627/P/5051/14625 |
|--|------------------|

**Monograms***Uncertain mints*

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 615. Marcian. As LRBC 2248 (A.D. 450–457) | 156/C/125/6105 |
| 616. Uncertain monogram                   | 188/C/101/6198 |
| 617. Similar                              | 242/C/130/6264 |

**Figure standing holding cross (?) (Leo or Zeno: c. A.D. 474–475)***Uncertain mint*

|                           |                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 618. As LRBC 2278 or 2471 | 530/C/4105/6581 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|

**Fifth-century and later nummi, illegible**

|      |                  |
|------|------------------|
| 619. | 115/B/249/2359   |
| 620. | 142/C/101/6057   |
| 621. | 178/C/106/6164   |
| 622. | 187/C/101/6065   |
| 623. | 238/C/130/6227   |
| 624. | 260/C/130/6257   |
| 625. | 270/C/130/6338   |
| 626. | 274/C/130/6333   |
| 627. | 293/C/130/6308   |
| 628. | 329/C/158/6389   |
| 629. | 334/C/132/6400   |
| 630. | 336/C/158/6396   |
| 631. | 373/C/4013/6500  |
| 632. | 534/C/4097/6606  |
| 633. | 617/P/5051/14652 |
| 634. | 635/P/5051/14658 |
| 635. | 653/C/-/15079    |

**BYZANTINE**

There are no legible Byzantine coins later than the end of the sixth century. The standard catalogue followed here is Hahn, *Moneta Imperii Byzantini* (3 vols, Vienna 1973, 1975, 1981).

**Justin I***Nicomedia*

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 636. Follis (possibly an imitation), A.D. 518–522. Officina illegible. Hahn <i>MIB</i> 1, table 4, 36 | 644/A/2310/5317 |
|---|-----------------|

**Justinian I***Constantinople*

637. Follis, year 18, A.D. 544–545. Officina E. Hahn *MIB* 1, table 7, 95a  
438/M/4808/12028

**Justin II and Sophia***Constantinople*

638. Follis, year 4, A.D. 568–569. Officina A. Hahn *MIB* 2, table 2, 43a  
6/D/458/4141

**Tiberius II***Constantinople?*

639. 5 nummi, A.D. 578–582. Hahn *MIB* 2, table 5, 33a  
410/K/4417/10029

**Uncertain ruler***Uncertain mint*

640. 20 nummi, year 4, A.D. 538 or after. As Hahn *MIB* 1, table 7, 36. Officina illegible  
118/D/486/4241

**ILLEGIBLE ROMAN/BYZANTINE, DATE UNCERTAIN**

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 641. AE 28mm     | 27/B/213/2009   |
| 642. AE 16mm     | 63/C/4098/6574  |
| 643. AE fragment | 307/A/2164/5236 |
| 644. AE 14mm     | 411/C/4050/6547 |
| 645. AE fragment | 464/E/1189/3323 |
| 646. AE 15mm     | 467/E/1191/3330 |
| 647. AE fragment | 477/C/4096/6573 |
| 648. AE 24mm     | 480/C/4099/6576 |
| 649. AE fragment | 492/C/4096/6575 |
| 650. AE fragment | 503/C/4096/6582 |

**LEAD TESSERA**

651. Illegible, 14mm  
See also no. 84. 479/D/636/4553

**SECOND BULGARIAN KINGDOM****Ivan Alexander, sole reign, 1355–1371**

652. AE 17mm. Obv: King standing, holding cross and globe.  
Rev: Ornate cross, design unclear.  
See N. A. Mouchmoff, *Numismatique et sigillographie Bulgares* (Sofia, 1924), 131–4.  
357/F/3119/7455

### OTTOMAN EMPIRE

#### Abd al-Hamid I, 1774–1789

653. AR para. Obv: Tughra.  
Rev: 'Constantinople'. Date 11[...]. (pierced)  
306/M/4802/12002
654. AR para. Obv: Tughra.  
Rev: 'Constantinople'.  
596/M/4885/12200
655. AR akche. Obv: Tughra.  
Rev: Illegible. (pierced)  
638/P/-/14351

#### Uncertain (Selim III?)

656. AR. Para. Egypt? Obv: Illegible.  
Rev. Uncertain ('Misr' or 'Sanati'?) except for date 1202 or 1203 (A.D. 1788–9). See Sultan, 2613–48.  
378/K/4401/10012

### DISCUSSION

There are few detailed studies of site finds from the Balkan region. The most relevant ones for comparison with Nicopolis are the coin reports from Iatrus on the Danube and Histria on the Black Sea coast. For the fourth century, a survey of the Danube region has been provided by Duncan, and a general overview has been supplied by Reece.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the legible coins found at Nicopolis belong to the period A.D. 330–419. There are quite a number of illegible fifth- (and perhaps sixth-) century nummi, many of which may be later than 419. One would hope that there is some relationship between the ratio of legible and illegible specimens from one issue to another, but fifth-century nummi may be made of heavily leaded bronze and are therefore more subject to corrosion than earlier issues, thus creating a bias in favour of the earlier coins in the archaeological record.

#### AGE OF CIVIC COINS AT DEPOSITION

In the middle of the third century the coinage being produced in the Roman Empire underwent a dramatic change. The imperial coinage, struck almost exclusively at Rome since the first century A.D., had been composed of denominations in gold, silver, brass, and copper; by about A.D. 260 all but the gold and silver coinage had virtually ceased to be struck, and the only coinage to be issued in any quantity was a single denomination, probably of low value, the base silver radiate or antoninianus. In the East, a similar situation prevailed; branch mints producing radiates opened up in various cities and the civic coinages, issued in the cities of the provinces, went into decline. By A.D. 275 civic coinages had ceased in the Roman world. It is generally thought that the change to a currency composed almost entirely of radiates made the civic coinages superfluous, and that because they ceased to be produced, they were also no longer in circulation. If this is the case, then

<sup>1</sup> E. Schönert-Geiss, 'Die Fundmünzen von Krivina', in *Iatrus I*, 167–209; C. Preda and H. Nubar, *Histria III. Descoperirile monetare 1914–1970* (Bucharest, 1973); G. L. Duncan, *Coin Circulation in the Balkan and Danubian Provinces, A.D. 294–578* (London, 1993); R. Reece, 'Coinage and Currency', *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology* 15 (1977), 167–78.

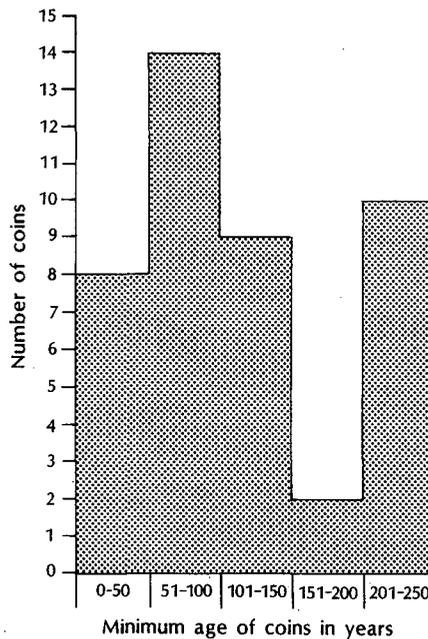


Fig. 109 Nicopolis: age of civic coins at deposition (from dated contexts).

all of the civic coins from post-A.D. 250 contexts at Nicopolis must have been residual and presumably had no economic or commercial value. A high level of residuality is to be expected on urban sites such as Nicopolis. However, it is possible that late second-century and early third-century coins were deposited along with fourth- and fifth-century coins because the old coins were still in circulation as currency alongside the later pieces, or that they were being used for some other purpose alongside the later pieces. The circulation argument would run contrary to the generally accepted model of currency use in the later Roman Empire, but the possibility should be borne in mind.

The number of securely dated civic coins from dated contexts is small. Forty-three belong to this category. Other coins could be assigned to particular reigns but came from post-Roman contexts or were surface finds. The interpretation suggested here is necessarily tentative, but it could be that the earlier coins were still available for up to two hundred years. Most of the contexts were deposited after civic coinage had ceased being produced, but some were contemporary with the issue of the coins. The figures used are the likely minimum age of the coins at the time of their deposition, i.e. the likely earliest date of the context minus the latest possible date for the coin (Fig. 109). Could a coin of Antoninus Pius have been used at Nicopolis under Theodosius II? The site finds suggest that it could have been, but there are other factors to consider. The question of longevity will be discussed in more detail below.

#### COIN 'LOSS'

The problem of the relationship between coin finds and coin circulation has been discussed many times before, but never satisfactorily resolved. 'The implicit assumption at present is that all "found coins" are lost coins'.<sup>2</sup> If most of the coins found at Nicopolis were 'lost' whilst in circulation, and relate in some way to the contemporary monetary economy, then the problem of groups of coins from the second to fifth centuries coming from single contexts has to be explained in terms of circulation. As I have stated above, it is not impossible that a coin of Antoninus Pius could still be

<sup>2</sup> R. Reece, 'Coins', in H. Hurst and S. P. Roskams, *Excavations at Carthage: The British Mission*, Vol. 1, 1 (London, 1984), 173.

circulating under Theodosius II, but if this were the case we should have to radically rethink our ideas about Roman monetary policies in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. The 'collapse' of the early Roman currency systems in the third century, both eastern and western, and successive monetary reforms after that period should have removed Nicopolitan coins of Antoninus Pius from circulation long before Theodosius II. It may be the case that by the late fourth and fifth centuries Nicopolis was on the periphery of the east Roman monetary economy, and as such was a zone where the dictates of coinage reforms and regulations were overridden by local requirements. Unfortunately, there is very little evidence with which to compare the Nicopolis material, since few coin reports from eastern cities have dealt with the material with regard to their excavated contexts.<sup>3</sup>

There is a way out of the 'Antoninus Pius/Theodosius II' problem, which may explain the presence of so many coins of different dates. Most of the coins came from the cobble spreads in Areas B and C, which also produced significant quantities of lead and copper-alloy scrap.<sup>4</sup> It may be the case that this area was given over to metalworking, and the coins, far from serving any monetary function, were being converted into other objects. A similar association of coins with scrap metal was apparent in the case of the dump deposit used to level up the interior of the early Byzantine tower on the western side of the defences.<sup>5</sup> Also, a notable concentration of coins came from a cobbled roadway in the centre of the site.<sup>6</sup> However, in the first case there were very few residual early coins and, in the second, the coins recovered were all fourth-century. The association of coins and cobbled road surfaces in two different locations is curious, and may suggest that those places were given over to activities where transactions or metalworking took place; an alternative explanation might be that the make-up for the cobble spreads in Areas B and C (and perhaps Area F) were brought from somewhere else where transactions or metalworking had been going on.

The possibility that some or many of the coins from the site were actually scrap metal would mean that no economic function need be assigned to many of the second-century coins from fifth-century contexts. The implications for economic studies would therefore be limited, although what was deposited must reflect a portion of what was available for deposition. Against this argument it may be pointed out that whilst scrap metal is defined as being cut pieces of metal, the coins are not cut. Furthermore, even if the coins in these areas were being used as scrap, their presence means that they were still available, and hence possibly still in circulation.

The preponderance of base metal issues and base metal cores of (plated?) silver coins parallels site finds from other parts of the Roman world.<sup>7</sup> Out of fifteen denarii and antoniniani from Hadrian to Severus Alexander, only six are probably regular, full-silver, official issues. Even some of these might be forgeries struck in base silver; it is extremely difficult to tell from an observation of a coin's surface. The rarity of true silver coins on sites is of some interest. Silver denarii were issued in large numbers, and hoarded in large numbers, yet the number recovered from sites (excepting those destroyed in some calamity, e.g. Pompeii or Dura-Europus) is small, and many appear to be plated forgeries; that is, spurious pieces which were difficult or impossible to use once their fraudulent character had become apparent through loss of part of their silver coating. All too frequently site finds are adduced to be evidence of what was in circulation rather than what was thrown away as useless, but site finds seem to represent the dregs of coin circulation and little else. The plated coins, of course, might have continued to circulate as bronze coins once their silver coating had started to come away. Other base metal cores might not have been plated at all, and were perhaps intended to circulate as bronze small change, filling a gap which the official currency failed to do in its provision of currency.

<sup>3</sup> At Iatrus there is no evidence for occupation of the site before the end of the third or early fourth century, but civic coins are present among the finds: Schönert-Geiss, *op. cit.* (note 1), 175–6.

<sup>4</sup> See Area B, p. 75 and Area C, p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> See Area P, p. 214.

<sup>6</sup> See Area F, p. 151.

<sup>7</sup> Note, for example, the small number of silver denarii recovered from the excavations at Antioch: D. B. Waage, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes 4.2, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Crusaders' Coins* (Princeton, 1952).

It is clear that not all early coins found in late contexts are associated with copper-alloy waste. These coins may simply be residual; or some may have been pressed into service again after a period of obsolescence. That earlier coins did sometimes survive to be used in circulation later is evident; for example, the first- and second-century Roman aes countermarked in the late fifth and early sixth centuries.<sup>8</sup> Neither these nor the provincial coins from late contexts at Nicopolis need have been in continuous circulation since their first issue. The similarity of size and module of the provincial coins to Byzantine denominations after the reform of Anastasius may have facilitated their re-use as coinage in the sixth century. However, even if re-used, their deposition might have occurred more readily once they became obsolete once again.

A standard method for presenting coin loss is that devised by Alison Ravetz.<sup>9</sup> The total issues of coins found at Roman sites in Britain are divided into twenty seven periods. Some of these periods are inappropriate for the Danube region, and I have instead divided the coinage into twenty seven 'alternative' periods. These are:

|              |                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. A.D. 1–64 | Julio-Claudian                      |
| 2. 64–96     | Flavian                             |
| 3. 96–117    | Nerva + Trajan                      |
| 4. 117–138   | Hadrian                             |
| 5. 138–161   | Antoninus Pius                      |
| 6. 161–193   | Late Antonine                       |
| 7. 193–217   | Severus and family                  |
| 8. 217–222   | Macrinus + Elagabalus               |
| 9. 222–238   | Alexander + Maximinus               |
| 10. 238–253  | The 'Military Anarchy'              |
| 11. 253–260  | Valerian + Gallienus                |
| 12. 260–270  | Gallienus, Claudius and Quintillus  |
| 13. 270–296  | Aurelian to Diocletian's reform     |
| 14. 296–317  | Diocletian and successors           |
| 15. 317–330  | Constantinian (I)                   |
| 16. 330–348  | Constantinian (II)                  |
| 17. 348–364  | Constantinian (III)                 |
| 18. 364–378  | Valentinianic                       |
| 19. 378–388  | Theodosian (I)                      |
| 20. 388–395  | Theodosian (II)                     |
| 21. 395–408  | Theodosian (III)                    |
| 22. 408–419  | Theodosian (IV)                     |
| 23. 419–450  | Theodosian (V)                      |
| 24. 450–498  | Marcian – Anastasius                |
| 25. 498–527  | Anastasius (post-reform) – Justin I |
| 26. 527–565  | Justinian                           |
| 27. 565–602  | Justin II – Maurice                 |

Using the formula

$$\frac{\text{Coins per period}}{\text{length of period}} \times \frac{1000}{\text{total for site}}$$

<sup>8</sup> In either Italy or Africa; P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage* (Cambridge, 1986), 28–31; C. Morrison, 'The re-use of obsolete coins: the case of Roman imperial bronzes revived in the late fifth century,' in C. N. L. Brooke *et al.*, *Studies in Numismatic Method Presented to Philip Grierson* (Cambridge, 1983), 95–111.

<sup>9</sup> A. Ravetz, *Roman Coinage of the Fourth Century in Britain* (University of Leeds Ph.D., 1963); *ibid.*, 'The fourth-century inflation and Romano-British coin finds: I. Patterns of fourth-century coinage on Romano-British sites', *Numismatic Chronicle* 1964, 201–31.

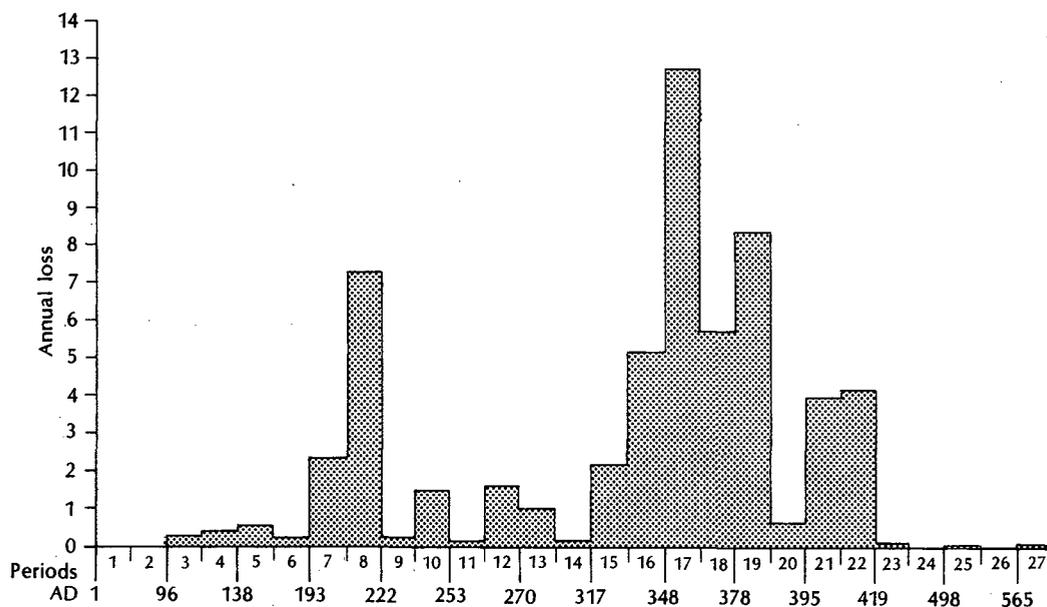


Fig. 110 Nicopolis: 'annual loss' per 1,000 coins.

we arrive at an 'annual' loss per 1,000 coins for the site (Fig. 110). In some senses the concept of 'annual loss' is a misnomer.<sup>10</sup> Most of the coins 'lost' at Nicopolis were deposited in a few contexts which can only be dated between A.D. 300 and 450, regardless of issue period. What we are really reviewing is a palimpsest of coin production skewed by coin supply, with a further bias in favour of base metal coins, or plated forgeries of silver coins, and perhaps scrap coins, all of which make up the deposits. There is no reason to expect numbers of gold or silver coins, even though these were probably in circulation, simply because these were not the sort of coins that would be deposited. Casey suggests that the reason for a lack of gold and silver coins in proportion to bronze on sites reflects the value of the former two, i.e. people would spend more time trying to recover gold and silver coins when dropped than they would low-value bronze.<sup>11</sup> Whilst this approach would seem a logical one, I am less certain that it explains the large number of fourth-century billion and bronze (at least 350 coins) and almost total absence of fourth-century silver (1 coin). The recovery of fourth-century gold and silver – if 'dropped' – was therefore almost total, whereas there seems to be no relationship between different denominations of base metal and the numbers deposited.<sup>12</sup> For example, the base metal coinage of A.D. 348–361 comes in two denominations, the larger most commonly represented by the FEL TEMP REPARATIO 'falling horseman' issues (77 of them) and the smaller by SPES REIPUBLICAE (35 specimens). The bias seems to be in favour of the larger, more 'valuable' one, rather than the smaller. This is, I suspect, because it was issued for a longer period and in larger quantities. The quantities available for 'loss' no doubt have a relationship with deposition, but I am uncertain whether the deposits reflect accidental loss of coin or deliberate discarding of unwanted or valueless coin, and whether most of the 'loss' has a direct relationship to coin use. We presume that gold and silver must have been present at Nicopolis, but it was hardly ever lost, deliberately or accidentally; perhaps in a like manner the current bronze coinage was hardly ever lost either, and much of what is present at Nicopolis is coinage that had lost the function of coinage, and was simply thrown away or kept to be turned into something else.

<sup>10</sup> Note the criticisms offered by H. Williams, 'Coin supply in Britain in the late third century as evidenced by a mathematical interpretation of site finds', *Numismatic Chronicle* 1992, 49–56.

<sup>11</sup> P. J. Casey, *Understanding Ancient Coins* (London, 1986).

<sup>12</sup> Duncan, however, suggests that there was a scarcity of fourth-century silver in the Balkan region, except in Romania: *op. cit.* (note 1), 166.

Production and supply was biased even more in the second and third centuries by a phenomenon which is unknown for sites in western provinces such as Britain: Nicopolis itself produced its own official coinage, and there may have been little or no need for supply of bronze coin from outside. Indeed, the denominations produced at Nicopolis may not have been fully compatible with those produced at Rome anyway. The peaks naturally reflect the periods when Nicopolis was producing coinage, and the troughs when no coinage was being struck. Since the pattern of production of civic coinage was often unique to the issuing city, we need not expect anything significant to emerge from comparisons of the peaks in this coinage with those from other sites, although it is possible that some pattern may eventually become discernable.

The early peaks, A.D. 193–222 and the smaller one of 238–253, are caused by issues of civic coinage. After 253 the coins are regular imperial issues. Aes coinage from Rome seems to be represented only by coins issued up to the point when Nicopolis gained its own provincial mint. For the period 253–260 there are few coins, and this modest supply improves a little through the century, with a dearth of issues between 296 and 317. The ‘annual’ loss between 317 and 388 is high, culminating in a peak which corresponds to the FEL TEMP REPARATIO and SPES REIPUBLICAE issues of Period 17, 348–364. There are few coins for 388–395, then two further peaks for the periods covering 395–419, before the legible issues tail off into the later fifth and sixth centuries. There are very few coins which can be assigned to the period after the reform of Anastasius in 498. In this respect the pattern of coin finds at Nicopolis resembles that from Iatrus-Krivina, and is distinctly different from Histria on the Black Sea coast and the hill-top fortification of Sadovets, c. 100 km west of Nicopolis, both of which were comparatively rich in coins down to the reign of Phocas (A.D. 602–610).<sup>13</sup> It would appear that in spite of continued occupation of the site in the sixth century, very little new coin was either reaching or being lost at Nicopolis. The follis would appear from the very small sample to be a little commoner than other denominations, confirming the picture for the Danube presented by Reece. However, the general picture for the fourth to sixth centuries given by Reece in his survey of material from Balkan Museums is quite different. He detected a peak c. 295/6 and a decline after 340, rising again in the sixth century – quite the opposite of the Nicopolis finds. Iatrus-Krivina’s pattern, as stated above, resembles Nicopolis more closely, with perhaps a slightly less strong bias towards Constantius II and more in the early fifth. There are fewer civic coins, which might be expected of a site which was not a mint.

#### MINTS AND SUPPLY

Most of the early coins found at Nicopolis were issued in the city itself. The absence of large numbers of coins from Rome or from other cities suggests that Nicopolis’ coinage sufficed for its needs. However, some coins of other cities are present; the coins of Marcianopolis being commonest after those of Nicopolis itself. Apart from a single coin from Nicaea in Bithynia, all other identifiable pieces come from the Balkan region (Fig. 111).

The oldest coins from the site are aes issues from the mint of Rome. Only one coin of Nerva predates the foundation of the city. There are no legible Roman aes coins contemporary with the provincial issues. Fully identifiable bronze issues end with Hadrian. From the reign of his successor, Antoninus Pius, Nicopolis began issuing its own coins, and the lack of later bronze coins from Rome may reflect the establishment of a mint at Nicopolis. Evidence for the presence at Nicopolis of at least one Rome coin of Antoninus Pius comes from an unexpected quarter: the moulded impression of a sestertius obverse on a sherd of local pottery (Plate XXXIX).<sup>14</sup> Later Roman aes

<sup>13</sup> J. Werner, *Zur Funktion der frühbyzantinischen Festungen bei Sadovec in S. Uenze* (1992), 411–17 and *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> Obverse: Laureate draped bust right. [ANTONINVS]SAVGPI-VSPPTRPCOSIII. It is interesting to note that the coin was not simply impressed into this vessel, produced in local red slip ware [Ware 8]. A mould of the coin had been made first and then used to make a ceramic copy of the original which was then applied to the pot.

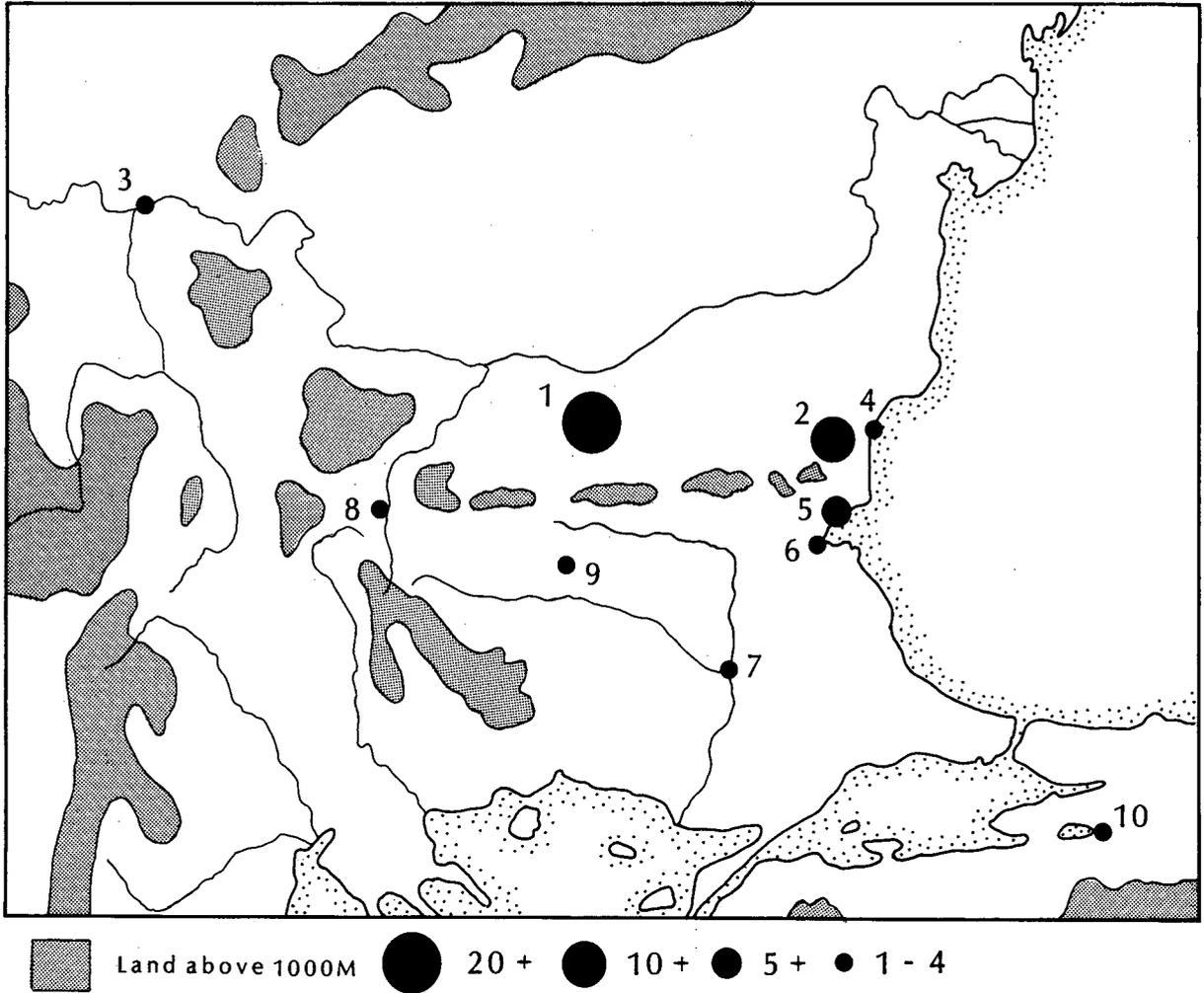


Fig. 111 Origins of provincial coins found at Nicopolis: 1. Nicopolis; 2. Marcianopolis; 3. Viminacium; 4. Odessus; 5. Anchialus; 6. Deultum; 7. Hadrianopolis; 8. Serdica; 9. Augusta Traiana; 10. Nicaea.

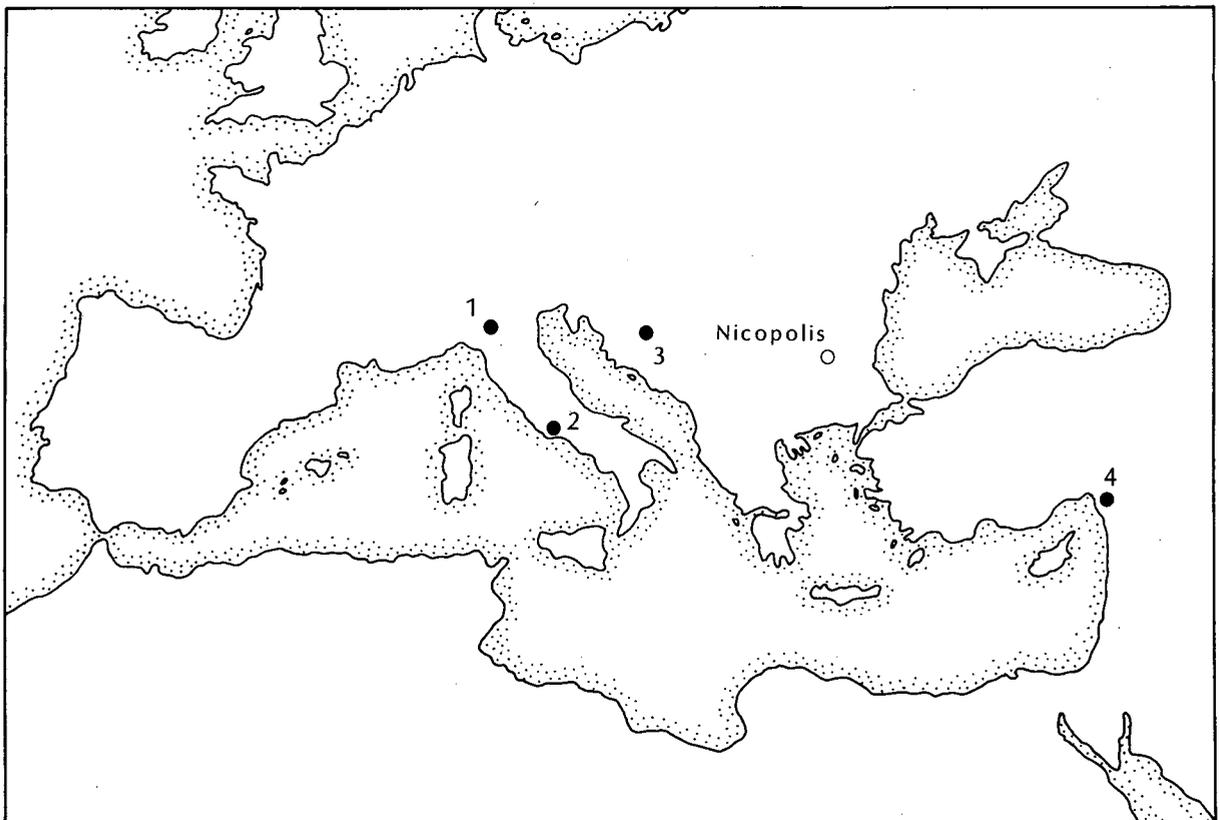


Fig. 112 Mints supplying Nicopolis, A.D. 250-296: 1. Milan; 2. Rome; 3. Siscia; 4. Antioch.

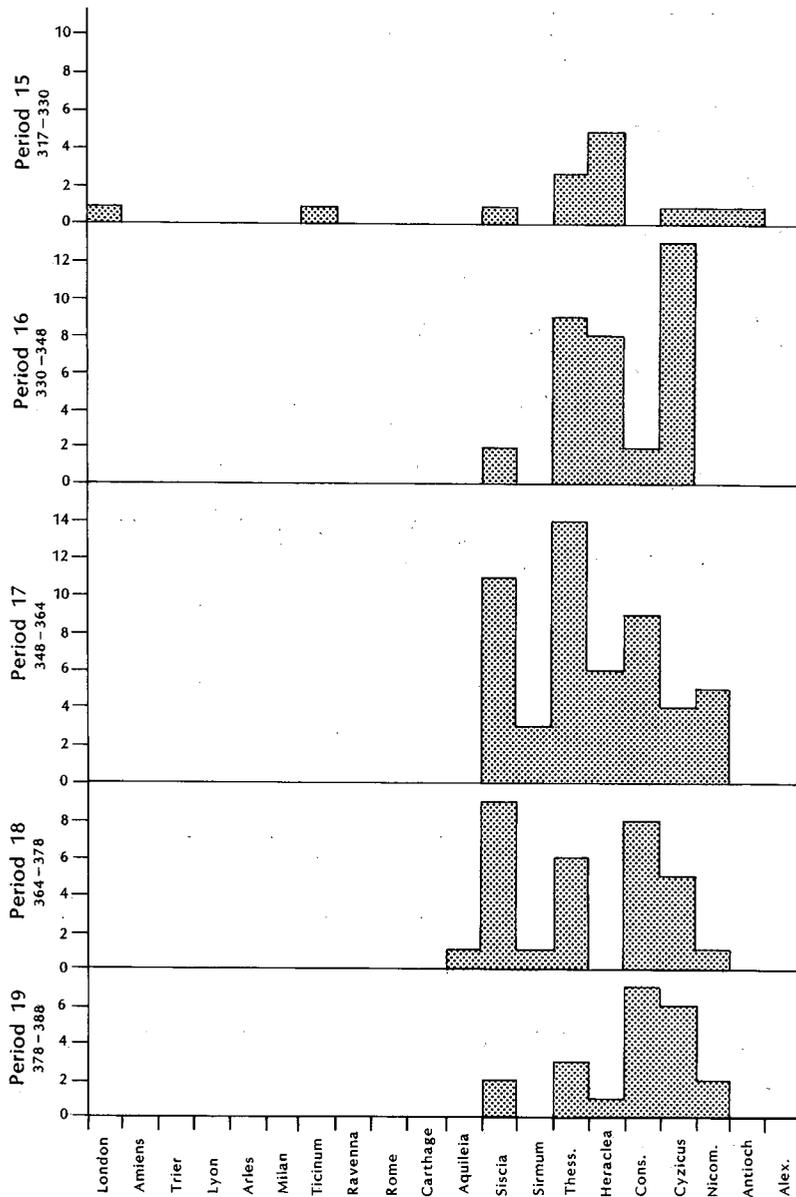


Fig. 113 Nicopolis coin finds. Number of coins per mint, Periods 15-19.

coinage is noticeably absent.<sup>15</sup> The expansion of localised production of civic coinages in this area during the second century may indicate the creation of a currency system which excluded Roman aes coinage. It would be interesting to study the relationship between Roman and provincial denominations in this region in the light of a larger body of securely stratified finds. Silver coins in the second century are all Roman denarii. Later issues, of third-century antoniniani or radiates, come from a variety of mints, including the so-far unlocated 'SPQR mint' (No. 135). In the second half of the third century the products of Siscia predominate. For third-century mints supplying Nicopolis, see Fig. 112.

From the fourth century there are sufficient numbers of coins to examine the supply by periods. Five coin periods, between A.D. 317 and 388, contain sufficient numbers of coins from identifiable mints to be significant (Fig. 113). Even so, the number of coins with legible mint marks is very small, and the conclusions that can be drawn from this material remain tentative. Of the mints supplying Nicopolis with coin, only four (Siscia, Thessalonica, Cyzicus, and, after its foundation,

<sup>15</sup> A similar pattern may be noted at Iatrus, where Roman aes coinage extends to the reign of Hadrian, and civic coinage begins with Antoninus Pius (unlike Nicopolis, Iatrus did not produce its own coins). Roman aes at Histria seems to extend over a longer period, but with a concentration in the early second century; the large number of local civic coins begins with Antoninus Pius.

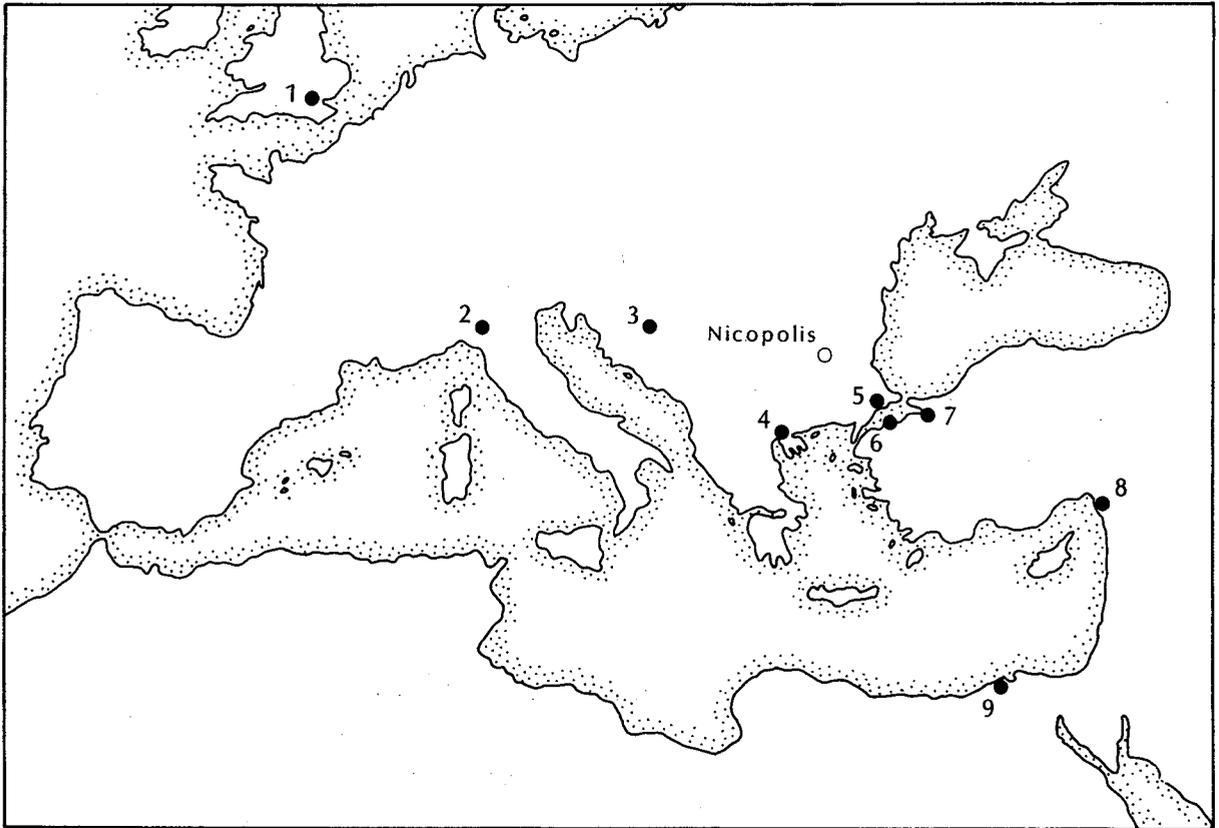


Fig. 114 Mints supplying Nicopolis, A.D. 296–330.

1. London; 2. Ticinum; 3. Siscia; 4. Thessalonica; 5. Heraclea; 6. Cyzicus; 7. Nicomedia; 8. Antioch; 9. Alexandria.

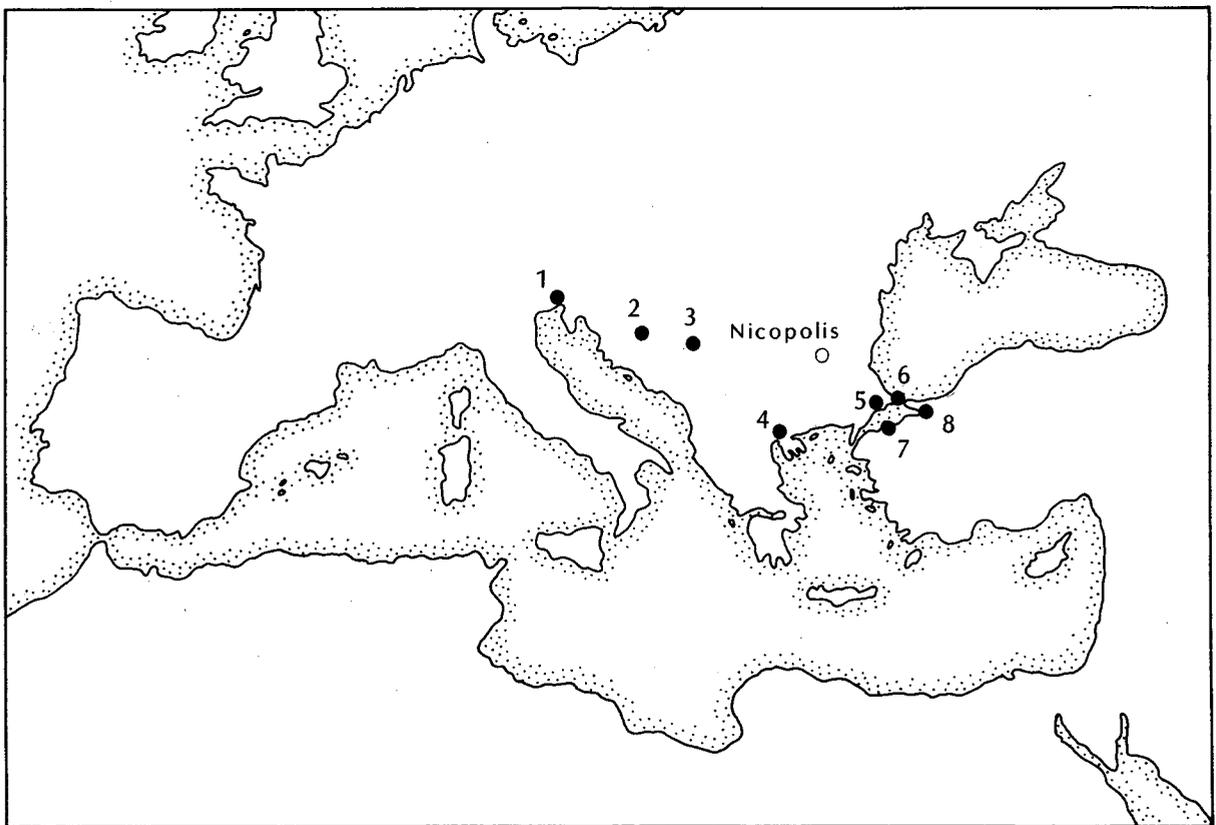


Fig. 115 Mints supplying Nicopolis, A.D. 330–388.

1. Aquileia; 2. Siscia; 3. Sirmium; 4. Thessalonica; 5. Heraclea; 6. Constantinople; 7. Cyzicus; 8. Nicomedia.

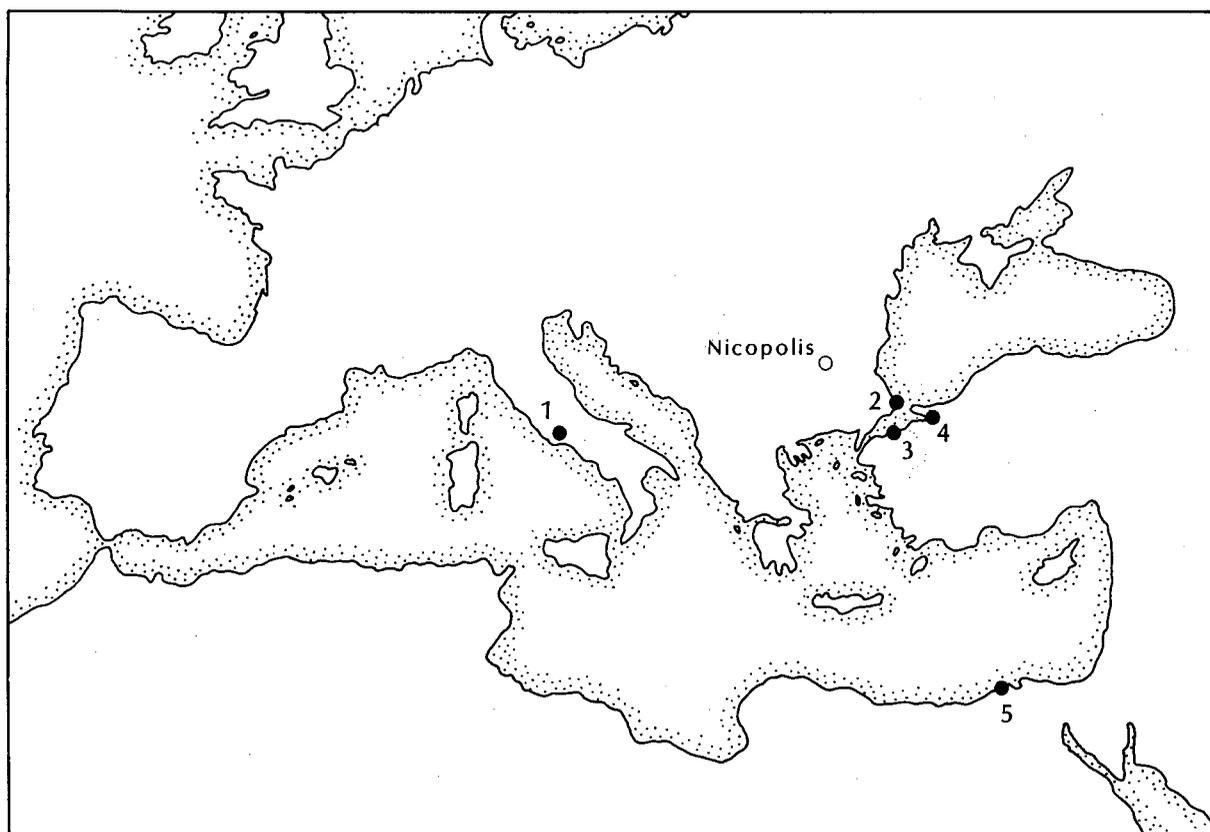


Fig. 116 Mints supplying Nicopolis, A.D. 388–402.  
1. Rome; 2. Constantinople; 3. Cyzicus; 4. Nicomedia; 5. Alexandria.

Constantinople) are constant suppliers in these periods. The important mints before A.D. 348 are Thessalonica, Heraclea, and Cyzicus. Constantinople is not a major supplier until after 348, when neighbouring Heraclea seems to become less important. Thessalonica continues to provide a large quantity of coin until the last of the five periods. Of the two mints in Asia, Nicomedia and Cyzicus, the latter is usually predominant, and of the two main mints to the west, Siscia and Sirmium, it is the former which is more important, no doubt reflecting its continuous output when compared to the intermittent production at Sirmium. During the periods of low supply, up to 330, the coins came from diverse sources, including distant mints like London, Ticinum, and Antioch (Fig. 114).<sup>16</sup> The nearest mint to Nicopolis, Serdica, which operated for short periods in the early fourth century, between about 308 and 314, is not represented at all among the legible finds. After 330 and before 388 the mints supplying Nicopolis are concentrated in the East (Fig. 115); after 388 this concentration becomes even more marked (Fig. 116), but with two coins coming from the distant mints of Rome and Alexandria.<sup>17</sup> The overall pattern of mints among the finds from Iatrus is much the same by period, although there are more western mints represented between 330 and 388 than at

<sup>16</sup> Histria has a coin from London, of the same type as the Nicopolis coin. See Preda and Nubar, *op. cit.* (note 1), 179, No. 1339. In general, a similar pattern of mints can be seen at Sucidava, Duncan, *op. cit.* (note 1), 136. There, coins of Siscia, Thessalonica, Heraclea, and Cyzicus predominate during the early periods of the fourth century, with some western mints also present in these early periods. Although Siscia is better represented at Sucidava in the earlier periods, it is less strong in the later periods, in contrast to the Nicopolis finds. Constantinople becomes the dominant supplier to Sucidava only after A.D. 378, paralleling the finds at Nicopolis.

<sup>17</sup> Note a coin of Galla Placidia from Rome also at Histria. Preda and Nubar, *op. cit.* (note 1), 197, No. 1667. At Sucidava there are a number of coins from distant mints like Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria for the period 378–408: Duncan, *op. cit.* (note 1), 136.

Nicopolis. A similar pattern may be observed at Sucidava, and the fourth-century coins from Histria also demonstrate a similar pattern to Nicopolis. The only certain mints among the Nicopolis finds after the reform of Anastasius (A.D. 498) are Constantinople and Nicomedia (Cyzicus is only represented in the finds down to 408), but the number of coins is too small to draw any conclusions. The Byzantine coins from Iatrus are apparently all from Constantinople, but Histria's abundant sixth-century finds come from a variety of Byzantine mints.<sup>18</sup>

The differences between the finds from Nicopolis and Iatrus-Krivina, and those of Sucidava or Histria, or the finds recorded by Reece, suggest that there is much work still to be done on coin finds from the Balkans before even a general picture can be formed. The similarity between the Nicopolis and Iatrus finds indicates a possible pattern for the middle Danube, but evidently much evidence remains to be gathered.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Sucidava has only a small number of Byzantine coins, but these come from several different mints. Duncan, *op. cit.* (note 1), 136.

<sup>19</sup> I should like to thank Venetia Porter of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum for offering comments on the Ottoman coins.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

# THE INSCRIPTIONS<sup>1</sup>

By Joyce Reynolds

The number of inscriptions found was small – three on stone, one on lead, one on tile, the rest on other ceramics; but that is hardly surprising since no part of the area dug was at any time a centre of civic activity or a cemetery of the kind in which ancient texts were commonly displayed; and in any case, over most of the period of its ancient occupation, the ‘epigraphic habit’ was declining in vigour throughout the Roman world. With the presumed exception of the Christian tile (No. 5) no inscribed object was found in a position related to its primary purpose; and the potsherds were often in late contexts, quite irrelevant to the date of their manufacture and original use. Every object has been damaged, and the sherds are usually so small that little or nothing can be made of their texts. Most are local wares and the main interest of their texts is, therefore, as evidence for some literacy in Greek among their users. Literacy in Latin is more rarely attested, but, interestingly, in several more complex documents (Nos 1, 4, 5). Inscriptions on the imported wares, especially the stamped mortaria lips (Nos 6–8), the amphora-handles (Nos 9–11), and the bowl (No. 14), are of potential interest for study of the movement of manufactured goods and of the produce carried in the amphorae; but their meaning cannot be fully assessed until more catalogues of stamps are available, with clear illustrations and analyses of fabrics, especially for the eastern half of the Roman world.

Left and right in the following descriptions refer to the point of view of the beholder. All measurements are in metres and, where listed, describe the width, height, then depth or thickness of the object.

## INSCRIPTIONS ON STONE

1. Plate XL. Two adjoining pieces (one accidentally broken in two while in store) from the upper part of a rectangular block of local limestone (together, w. 0.74 by ht. 0.60 by d. 0.10) inscribed on one face. The upper left corner and left side are substantially complete, the upper right corner and right side damaged, but in ll.4,5 the inscribed line-ends seem to be complete so that the edge is nowhere far off; the bottom is broken away, but well below the final inscribed line. It must have been brought from an original position in one of the cemeteries for reuse, possibly, but not provably, in the early Byzantine workshops (see Area D, p. 127). SF 4215 and 4108, D 451, rubble spread, 1750+.

Letters, rough Latin capitals showing some influence from cursive, third or, perhaps, fourth century A.D.: l.1, ave. 0.05; l.2, 0.025–0.035; l.3, 0.04–0.045; l.4, ave. 0.04; l.5, ave. 0.045.

<sup>1</sup> I am very grateful indeed to the friends and colleagues who have helped me with their expert advice and techniques; especially Professor Virginia Grace of the American School of Archaeology at Athens (amphora stamps), Dr Sergei Tokhtasyev of St Petersburg (amphora stamps), the late Professor Velizar Velkov of Sofia (Bulgarian epigraphy), Mrs Kay Hartley of Leeds (mortaria stamps), Professor R. G. Coleman, Drs Janet Fairweather, William Horbury, Janet Huskinson (the Christian brick inscription), Mr Richard Sword and Mr Nigel Cassidy (photography), all of Cambridge; not least to Professor Ludmilla Slokosaka and to Dr Andrew Poulter and their teams on site. All faults in the text are my own responsibility.

The face is now badly rubbed, chipped, and scratched, but was probably not efficiently smoothed before inscription, since some letters, e.g. in l.2, seem to have been cut in depressions. The letters were designed freehand and incised lightly, without any attempt to shape or polish the trenches; if overpainted, they would, nevertheless, have been reasonably legible, although they are now barely discernible in many lights. Letter-shapes are rough and variable; uprights may be crooked and often slant rightwards; horizontals on E and F are usually slight so that confusion with I is easy, while on L they may slope sharply downwards and on T upwards to the right; bowls of B, P and R are small; O may be diamond-shaped; C and G may be very broad; there are occasionally overlapping strokes, as apparently DV in l.2, and occasional small letters, as e.g. V of CVM in l.3, which were perhaps added to supply the cutter's omissions. A fair parallel, although not an exact one, may be seen in *ILBR* I, No. 8a (pl. II, no. 2), dated there in the early fourth century.

MAVRELIISAM [ · 3 or 4 · ]  
 ITERQVICONDVCEŃSVITAMPE[?·]  
 PEREGITCVMPALINAFILIASVA  
 ? leaf EṬINHOCMONVMENTO vac.  
 5. leaf v. AMBORECEPTISVNT leaf

L.1. The genitive case for the name of the deceased suggests that something may be lost above; it is likely that a funerary formula, probably *D(is) M(anibus)*, was cut on an upper block.

The presence of the praenomen is not absolutely clear; the interpretation of the cognomen is uncertain, but *Sambas* (cf. *Sambatis*, *IGL*, No. 17) or *Sambation* (cf. *SGLI*, No. 7a) may be suggested.

Ll.2,3. Apparently the cutter began to write PEREGIT at the end of l.2 and repeated himself at the beginning of l.3.

The natural meaning of ll.2,3 seems to be that the subjects died while making a journey, but *iter conducens* is an unexpected expression for that; perhaps acceptable, however, since *conducere*, 'to undertake a contract for', was probably sometimes used to mean no more than 'to undertake' (*OLD* s.v., No. 5).

L.3. The final three letters are far from certain. Palina is presumably for Paulina, cf. Pallina, presumably for Paullina, in *CIL* VI.15528.

L.5. *Recipere* is an uncommon verb in pagan funeraries but does occur, as in *ILS* 8237 at Compsa in Italy '... in quem dum receptus (*sic*) fuerit corpus meum'; it appears more often in Christian texts, but then in the formula *receptus/a in pace* which is certainly not here.

M(arci) Aurelii Saṃ [·c.5·]  
 iter qui conducens uitam <PE[R]>  
 peregit cum Pa(u)lina filia sua  
 ?leaf eṭ in hoc monumento vac.  
 leaf v. ambo recepti sunt leaf

(Tomb) of Marcus Aurelius Sam[bas?], who, while making a journey, completed his life, together with Paulina his daughter; and in this monument both have been received.

The absence of an ethnic suggests that the family probably belonged to Nicopolis, the size of the block that it was a reasonably wealthy one. It is disappointing that there is no explanation of the two deaths, e.g. an attack by brigands, such as seems to be implied by the fragmentary Nicopolitan inscription *IGBulg.* II.686, or some other accident.

2. Plate XLIA. Fragment without edges, probably of local limestone (w. 0.11 by ht. 0.07 by d. 0.03), inscribed on one face. Stolen from the store before full examination. SF 6060, C 93, cobbled roadway, A.D. 300–450.

Letters, Greek monumental capitals, probably late second or early third century; c. 0.04.

There were at least two lines of text. In the upper one only the bases of three letters are visible, each either E, Δ, Z, Ε or Σ.

···]  
 L.2 stop EKAIN [···

Presumably from a past tense of a verb such as *καινίζω*, *καινουργέω*, implying innovation or renewal; they are not very common in inscriptions, but cf. *καινουργία*, of restoration of a bath-building at Ephesus, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* (Inschriften griechische Städte aus Kleinasien XII), II, No. 453, ll.5–6.

3. Fig. 117/1. Fragment from the bottom of a small block of local stone with bottom, back and front face surfaces, broken on three sides (w. 0.15 by ht. 0.078 by d. 0.05), inscribed on one face. SF 13502, S 5251, robber-trench fill, 1750+.

Letters, Latin figures, neatly but not very formally cut; 0.012–0.015.

*vac.* XII *vac.*

The purpose is not clear; just possibly one of a set of boundary-markers.

4. Plate XLIB. Two pieces of a lead tablet, the larger (max. w. 0.045 by ht. 0.051) found rolled round the smaller (probable max. w. 0.055 by ht. 0.021, but it is impossible to be certain which is the upper edge); the larger broke in two when unrolled, the smaller consists of two layers which it has proved impossible to separate. The context, despite its date, included a high proportion of third- to fourth-century residual pottery, (see Area D, p. 121–3). SF 4413, D 584, lowest fill of Pit 587, A.D. 375–425.

Letters, small Latin capitals showing some cursive influence (perhaps of second–third centuries), very lightly incised; *c.* 0.004. Since they were scratched on the inside surfaces, nothing can be read from the smaller piece which remains folded; on the larger piece signs of nine lines are visible, but comparatively few letters can be read with any confidence.

... ]ARC[...  
 ... ]MI[...  
 ... ]I v.I[...  
 ... ]ANQ[...  
 5 ... ]CVNQS[...  
 ... ]APE .. NIA[...  
 ... ]AP[...  
 ... ]A[...  
 [...

This is certainly a curse tablet, rolled up and buried for ritual reasons. For recent brief accounts of texts of this category see H. S. Versnel, *RHD* 65 (1987), 5–22, R. S. O. Tomlin in Barry Cunliffe (ed.), *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath* II (1988), 59f.

L.4 recalls *cunus*, ‘female pudenda’, in Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (1892), No. 135, B, 1.6, where the curse sets out a list of the physical parts of the body of the cursed, which are to be bound or destroyed. That would imply that the cursed here was a woman too (possibly more than one). Women might be cursed for refusing their favours and/or for giving them elsewhere, but also for legal opposition to the curser or for crime. L.6 suggests that *pecunia*, money, may have been involved, so that perhaps a dispute over property or a theft had occurred. But it must be remembered that the readings are very conjectural.

## INSCRIPTIONS ON CERAMICS

5. Plate XLII. Paving brick (w. 0.30 by ht. 0.305 by d. 0.035), inscribed on one face before firing; the right side was trimmed away in order to fit it into the paving of the nave of the basilica, close to the chancel screen. SF 15501, F 3016, brick paving in the Large Basilica, A.D. 450–600 (Fig. 62).

Letters, Latin, combining uncial and cursive forms, written in the wet clay with an instrument capable of making a trench of triangular profile: 1.1, 0.04–0.07; 1.2, 0.04–0.055; 1.3, 0.03–0.075; 1.4, 0.05–0.06; 1.5, ave. 0.03.

Cross DOMIN[· ·]  
 ADIVVA[· ·]  
 FECITNOBI[S]  
 SENPERA[·]  
 5. P̄N̄EN [· up to 4·]S

The number of letters lost at the right side can only be calculated roughly, since letter-breadths are very variable.

L.1. N is certain, although incomplete.

L.3. The second I is small and inserted between the bowls of B.

L.4. A might perhaps be V.

L.5. The first letters are very unclear; P̄N̄ could be taken for M̄; the traces of the final letter may be part of an ivy leaf or other closing device.

Paving bricks carrying Christian texts inscribed before firing form a recognizable category of items, dated rather imprecisely between the fourth and the sixth centuries; for examples in Bulgaria see *SGLI*, Nos 38, 43, two Latin acclamations, dated in the fifth to sixth centuries, at Kiustendil and Samokov, and 83, a Greek acclamation, similarly dated, at Marcianopolis.

None of the recorded texts provide much help with restoration here, although the common phrase Κυρίε βοήθη, 'Lord give help', on an example found near Varna (*SGLI*, No. 146, dated in the sixth century) is clearly relevant. Two possibilities for ll.1,2 are:

|                     |           |                      |            |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|------------|
| <i>a</i> + Domiñ[e] | Lord      | <i>b</i> + Domiñ[us] | The Lord   |
| adiuua[v.]          | give help | adiuua[t]            | gives help |

Either could be followed by an example of his help:

|               |                              |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| fecit nobi[s] | He has made (or done) for us |
| senper . . .  | always [ . . .               |

A quotation or adaptation from a sacred text might have been expected, but I have found nothing in any that I have searched (including the Psalms) that fits the reading of ll.4–5. Indeed, I have found no satisfying word at all for this position (I have thought of *q[ug]men[tum]*, increase, or *u[a]len[tiam]*, strength, but without conviction); so conclude that I am either misinterpreting what survives, or that what was written was something uncommon, uncommonly spelt, or uncommonly abbreviated. An alternative approach might be to posit a noun *adiuua* (unattested but not incredible), so that ll.1–4 read 'Domiñ[us]/adiuua[m]/fecit nobi[s]/senper', 'the Lord has provided help for us always', and ll.4–5 expressed some such concept as 'from the beginning' or 'in times of trouble' – or even A [v]-/MEN [*vacat*]; but *adiuua[m] fecit* seems a clumsy phrase and the unnecessary division of the word AMEN between two lines is awkward.

Since part of the text was trimmed away by a workman in laying the floor (he could easily have found a position in which this brick could have been used complete), its display in the church cannot have been a particularly significant factor either in its production or in its location. It presumably expressed the sense in one craftsman (? the master brickmaker) of grateful dependence on God's help; but was something between himself and God which did not need to be publicly visible. The brick is, of course, evidence for the genuine literacy as well as the Latin speech of that craftsman.

6. Plate XLIIIA. Fragment of a mortarium with a stamped text on the lip (for description and an account of the fabric see the Pottery report (forthcoming)). The stamped surface is broken away at the right side (diameter surviving, 0.06–0.07) and defective where the stamp, carelessly applied, left little or no impression; it can be restored from examples found elsewhere. SF 3127, E 1036, make-up for occupation surface, A.D. 450–600.

Letters, neat Latin capitals in relief, 0.014; arranged in two lines divided by a palm branch (or, as some think, a corn ear, see V. Culiça, *SCIV* 16 (1965), 373f.).

Març[us A]-  
 r[etio fec(it)]

Examples are reported from near Apulum, and at Buridava, Drobeta, Durostorum, Romula, Sarmizegethusa, Sucidava, Pavlikeni in the territory of Nicopolis, and, just possibly, Brigetio; while a closely related stamp, *Filemon/Aretio fec(it)*, is reported from Durostorum, Istria, Oescus, Pavlikeni, and on the Black Sea coast at Tyras and Olbia (summaries of the evidence by C. C. Petolescu, *Pontica* 17 (1984), 67f., 18 (1985), 157f., C. L. Balută, *Apulum* 15 (1977), 243f., and C. L. Balută and I. Serban, *RCRFA* 19/20 (1979), 203f., add A. Frova, *Izvestija Sofia* 17 (1950), 55, V. Culiça, *SCIV* 16 (1965), 373f., Petolescu, *SCIV* 39 (1988), 408, No. 446, E. Staerman, *Kratkie Soobscenija* 36 (1951), 48f., and possibly *CIL* III.6010 No. 276 for the Brigetio stamp which is very incomplete).

For the date of production no precise evidence seems to be offered, but there is general agreement that it is likely to be in the second century, possibly continuing into the early third.

The distribution of finds suggests that the pottery should be on or near the Danube and perhaps in Pannonia. Olbia (much too far to the east) has been suggested but without serious argument (Staerman, cit. above) and Durostorum (Balută, *Pontica* 14 (1981), 263f.) which is more plausible, but still wholly conjectural; see also on No. 7. The fabric is not consonant with an origin at Pavlikeni or any other pottery centre in the territory of Nicopolis.

The meaning of the two stamps merits discussion. If Aretio is the personal name Ἀρητίων (see F. Preisigke, *Namenbuch* (Heidelberg, 1922) s.v.), both craftsmen were using two personal names, which is abnormal in this kind of context, as is the coincidence that one of these was common to them both. If both intended it to indicate their father's name or, since patronymics are rare on mortarium stamps, their master's name, it is surprising that they omitted the genitive case-ending which is crucial to expression of the relationship; of course, if the stamps were primarily used for purposes of workshop administration (e.g. to mark items or batches to the credit of particular workmen) this would be unimportant, since those involved would know exactly what was meant. If the stamps were directed at the purchasing public, however, it would seem more natural to take the word as a latinization of a place-name in the locative case, 'at Aretium' (Staerman suggested 'from Aretium', but this would be abnormal too in the context). It might, no doubt, be a name of local, Danubian, origin; but we should not, I suggest, precipitately exclude a name chosen to recall the Italian Arretium, not because we can suppose that memory of it as a pottery-producing site survived on the Danube in the mid-second century but because there is some evidence that Arretium and Arretinus came to signify quality-production of pottery (C. Bémont, A. Vernhet, and F. Beck, *La Graufesenque . . .* (Dieppe, 1987), 22).

7. Plate XLIIIB. Fragment of a mortarium with stamped text on the lip (for description and an account of the fabric, see Pottery report (forthcoming)). The stamped surface is complete (diameter, 0.047–8), and legible, although the stamp was not pressed in deeply. SF 4651; D 665, clay make-up deposit for the floor of the early building, A.D. 250–350.

Letters, Latin capitals in relief, showing strong cursive influence, 0.007; arranged in two lines divided by a palm branch (see under No. 6), the second line upside down to the first and above it.

LIWA  
THEO

Theotimu, probably for Theotimu(s); the final letter appears on some of this craftsman's stamps, sometimes in vestigial form.

The name Theotimus figures in a number of mortarium stamps from Danubian provinces, but only those in which it stands by itself can be considered as relevant here. At least three different stamps fall into this category, all showing a strong likeness in layout and, above all, in the degree of influence of cursive forms on the letters. They are reported from Apulum and Colonia Nova Apulensia, perhaps Drobeta, Romula, Sucidava, and, recently, Barboși and Slăveni (to the surveys by C. L. Balută, *Apulum* 15 (1977), 243f., C. L. Balută and I. Serban, *RCRFA* 19/20 (1979), 203f., S. Sanie, *SCIV* 34 (1983), 161 (cf. *AE* 1983, No. 870), C. C. Petolescu, *Pontica* 18 (1985), 157f., add C. C. Petolescu, *SCIV* 32 (1981), 283, No. 1, 34 (1983), 368, No. 110).

For the date of production there is no more precise evidence than the association of one example

with a coin of Septimius Severus (Balută, *Apulum* 15 (1977), 247f.); there is general agreement in favour of the second century and perhaps the very early third.

For the place of production Balută proposed the area of Apulum which she defended with a reference to the fabric (*Apulum* 15 (1977), 243f.), but more evidence is needed to prove the point; D. Tudor suggested either Romula or Sucidava, but without compelling grounds (*SCIV* 21 (1970), 314f., No. 12). A similarity with the fabric of No. 6 is noted by K. Hartley of Leeds (for whose expert help I am most grateful) which is another point to be taken into account. A systematic study of fabrics and of deposits of potters' clay in the Danubian area seems to be urgently needed.

8. Fig. 118/15. Fragment of a mortarium with incised text on the lip, written before firing. SF 12035, M 4824, topsoil, 1750+.

Letters, Greek, incised in a running hand, but not true cursives.

[Τρ]οφίμου  
Of Trophimus

No other examples have been reported. Other mortaria are known with names incised in this manner, both in Greek (*IDR* II.543) and in Latin (C. L. Balută, *Apulum* 15 (1977), 254, No. 1), each, so far, unique. There is no precise evidence for the production date but the second century is a reasonable guess for the letter forms. There is no evidence for the production centre either, except that the fabric probably indicates that it was different from that of Nos 6 and 7.

9. Plate. XLIVA. Fragment of a stamped amphora handle (Ware 19, for fabric description see Pottery report (forthcoming)). The stamped area is broken away at the right side (max. surviving width, 0.04), but very probably almost complete. SF 3020, E 1008, robber-trench fill, 1750+.

Letters, Greek capitals in relief, 0.06.

Ἡρακλα[...]  
? Of Heraclas

The only likely name is Ἡρακλᾶς. Other names opening like this (see W. Pape and G. E. Benseler, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen* (Braunschweig, 1911), s.v. and F. Preisigke, *Namenbuch* (1922), s.v.) are so rare as to be most improbable, while Heraclas occurs quite commonly in other contexts and on amphora-stamps, both in the West (M.H. Callendar, *Roman Amphorae* (Oxford, 1965), No. 160) and in the East. The western examples are not to be associated with the Nicopolis stamp. Eastern examples which, where illustrated, closely resemble it, are reported at Drobeta, Potaissa, and Romula (D. Tudor, *Apulum* 7 (1968), 391f. with C. C. Petolescu, *SCIV* 35 (1984), 380f.), where a production date in the second to third centuries has been suggested; but also at Olbia (Pridek, *Inventarnii Katalog . . .* (Leningrad, 1917), 112, No. 248), and in late contexts in the Agora at Athens (three handles, information by letter from Dr V. Grace, for whose help I am most grateful). Pridek and Grace believe their stamps to be Hellenistic in date (not later than the first half of the first century B.C. according to Grace), which seems to me difficult to accept either for the other Danubian examples or for the Nicopolis one. Greek letter forms on amphora-stamps are notoriously difficult to date (J. B. Brashinsky, *Eirene* 11 (1973), 111f.); for those of the Nicopolis stamp, as of the illustrated examples from Dacia, a date in the middle Roman Empire seems to me possible. Since several have been found on Dacian sites, in an area believed to have received very few Hellenistic imports, a date during the Roman occupation seems likely; the *terminus ante quem* should be the Roman withdrawal from Dacia in A.D. 270. Tudor noted that the find at Romula was associated with other sherds which he dated in the third century and it would be plausible to suppose that the production was at the lower end of the time bracket for the ware (c. A.D. 250–600) proposed in the pottery report.

A production centre in Cos is proposed by Dr Grace, but whether that is tenable if these amphorae were being produced in the third century A.D. needs further research.

10. Plate XLIVB. Two adjoining fragments of a stamped amphora-handle (Ware 19, for fabric description see pottery report (forthcoming)). The stamped area is complete but damaged by the break; the fourth letter, although not clear on the photograph, can be seen on the sherd to be almost certainly K. SF 3287, E 1105, occupation surface, A.D. 450–600.

Letters, Greek capitals in relief, some, especially *mu*, showing influence of cursives, *rho* written backwards (ϱ), *omicron* diamond-shaped; 0.005–6.

ΜΑΡΚΟΥ  
Of Marcus

Another example has been found at Romula (D. Tudor, *Apulum* 7 (1968), 391f.) along with an example of No. 9 and other sherds of the third century. For date and place of production see No. 9.

11. Plate XLIVC. Two adjoining pieces of a stamped amphora-handle (Amphora Type 1093, Ware 116; for fabric description, see the Pottery report (forthcoming)). The stamped area is complete (w. 0.054) but damaged at the centre. *Non vidi*. SF 11021, C 5305, backfill of Ditch 3 (5308), A.D. 350–400.

Letters, Greek capitals in relief; 0.01.

ΚΥΡΙΑ  
? Of Kyrias, or, perhaps, Of Kyria(kos)

The *rho* is reasonably clear on the rubbing. The name may be Kyrias; but, since this is rare, is perhaps the commoner Kyriakos in abbreviation. I have not found another example of this stamp. No parallel has been found for the fabric either, but the comparatively late date of the context accords well enough with the period in which the name came to be current.

12. Five fragments from the bellies of amphorae carrying painted texts (for a brief account of the category see R. I. Curtis, *Ancient Society* 15–17 (1984–6), 209f.). Nos i and ii might be from the names of those who produced the contents of the jars and ii could also be from the name of a consul in the year of its production, but the rest cannot be interpreted even on a conjectural basis. The lettering seems likely to be of the second or third centuries A.D.

i. Fig. 118/7. SF 14900, C 4110, backfill of Ditch 2 (5313), A.D. 250–350.  
Greek capitals, Ϛ for *sigma*.

vac. ΒΑΞΙΑ[...]

Perhaps from a name such as Βάσιλλος or Βασίλος.

ii. Fig. 117/5. SF 11040, C 5306, backfill of Ditch 3 (5308), A.D. 350–400.  
Greek capitals under cursive influence; approximately lunate *sigma* or *epsilon*.

...]ΑΛΕΚΟΥ vac. or ...]ΑΑϚΟΥ vac.

The first letter is vestigial only, Α, Λ, Μ. The second and third are difficult to interpret – there seems to have been a correction here – which confuses the obscurity.

Probably the end of a name in the genitive case.

iii. Fig. 117/8. SF 14473, C 4118, fill of pit (5310), A.D. 100–150.  
Probably Greek letters, lunate *epsilon*.

...]ΙΕΜ[...]

I might be Γ, Η, Μ, Ν, Π.

iv. Fig. 118/8. SF 14901, P 5051, make-up deposit, c. A.D. 450.

Neither letter is complete; each could be Latin or Greek.

...]MA[

v. Fig. 118/6. SF 14741, C 4071, make-up for the berm of the Roman defences, A.D. 175–250.

The painted letters are too faint to decipher.

13. Fig. 117/9. Fragment of a circular lid, of a type generally dated in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. The lettering is part of a stamped decoration giving a relief of concentric circles, the outermost containing dots, the second letters, with more dots in what survives of the third. SF 5126, A 2126, backfill of Ditch 2 (2238), A.D. 450–600.

Letters, Greek capitals in relief with lunate *epsilon* and possibly W for *omega*, if the first letter is not *mu*; some letters upside down to others.

...]WEKVΛ[...]

It seems possible that ...]με κατ[α... was intended, but quite uncertain; published lid inscriptions, such as *SGLI*, No. 196 at Sofia, and *IGL*, Nos 63, 119, 120, 122–4, 128, 199, 214–18, 251, vary in content from praise of wine to prayers for God's help, and sometimes combine both. I have found none which provides a clue to what stood here.

14. Fig. 117/10. Stamped base of a moulded pot (Dragendorf 37), probably E. Gaulish and of the second century A.D. SF 10246, K4414, earth bonding in the walls of the 'early building', A.D. 300–450.

Letters, good Latin capitals in relief, which, like the fabric, suggest a second-century date.

Firmu[s]

E. Gaulish stamps with the name Firmus are attested, F. Oswald, *Index of Potters' Stamps on Terra Sigillata* (1931), 124, 386 (Firmus ii); but without illustration it is impossible to be sure that any correspond with the example here.

15. Potsherds of local wares carrying incised letters; all probably manufactured in the second and/or third centuries A.D.; but the date of the graffiti may well be later. Even conjectural interpretation is impossible in many cases.

i. Fig. 117/6. Local Ware 8, inscribed just below the rim. SF 14902, B 311, waste deposit in a ditch (294) cutting the Roman road, A.D. 250–275.

Greek capitals, only the tops surviving.

ΔΙΩΝ vac.

Δ might be Α or Λ and Ω might be Ο; but a likely interpretation is Δίων, a well-attested personal name – presumably the owner's.

ii. Fig. 117/11. Plate XLV. Inscribed just below the rim. SF 1223, D 414, occupation surface, 1750+.

Greek letters showing cursive influence, with lunate *sigma*.

vac. ΔΕΓΟϚ[...]  
...]ΑΡΑ v.[...]

L.1. Γ or, perhaps, Υ (?Y), seems to have been written over Ο (it would be possible to interpret the letter as Φ): there has, perhaps, been a correction of an original Ι (ΔΕΙΟC? for ΔΕΟC, corrected to ΔΕΓΟC, ΔΕΥΟC or ΔΕΦΟC).

L.2. Α might be Δ or Λ.

- iii. Fig. 118/22. Inscribed a little above the base. SF 14743, M 4906, rubble spread, A.D. 450–600.  
Greek capitals, very roughly shaped.

...]ΑΓΑΒΑΑ[...]

The letters might suggest a Semitic name (cf. Elagabalus); but the second three could also be from the transliteration of a Latin name, e.g. Βαλέριος, Βάλενς.

- iv. Fig. 118/19 SF 14736, P 5024, dump deposit, A.D. 250–350.  
Probably Greek letters, with lunate *epsilon*.

...]ΚΑΤΕ[...]

- v. Fig. 118/13 SF 14745, C 5306, backfill of Ditch 3 (5308), A.D. 350–450.  
Greek letters, roughly scratched; only the lower (or upper) parts of the letters survive.

...] or ...]ΙΝΟΥ vac.[...]  
] vac. ΛΟΝΙ[...]

Just possibly from an owner's name, Λόνυ[ος], or ...]inos.

- vi. Fig. 118/21. SF 14747, E 1036, make-up deposit, A.D. 450–600.  
Greek letters.

...]ΠΙΓ[...]

- vii. Fig. 118/1. SF 14471, K 4506, floor of the early building, A.D. 250–450.  
The language is not ascertainable.

...]Ε[...]  
...]ΤΕ[...]

- viii. Fig. 118/2 SF 14550, D 662, make-up deposit, A.D. 150–350.  
Greek letters, *hypsilon* rather elaborately serifed.

...]ΤΥΧ[...]

Probably from a name such as Eutychos, but an acclamation for good luck, εὐτυχῶς, is also possible.

- ix. Fig. 118/3. Three sherds from the same pot. SF 8308, F 3335, make-up deposit below the Large Basilica, A.D. 250–350.  
Greek letters.

a ...]Α[...]  
b ...]Δ[...]  
c ...]ν. ΦΗ[... or ...]ΗΦ ν.[...]

b The letter might be Φ or ΓΔ (ΔΓ) in ligature.

- x. Fig. 118/4. SF 4513, D 550, make-up deposit for occupation surface, A.D. 450–600.  
Greek letter.

vac. Δ[...]

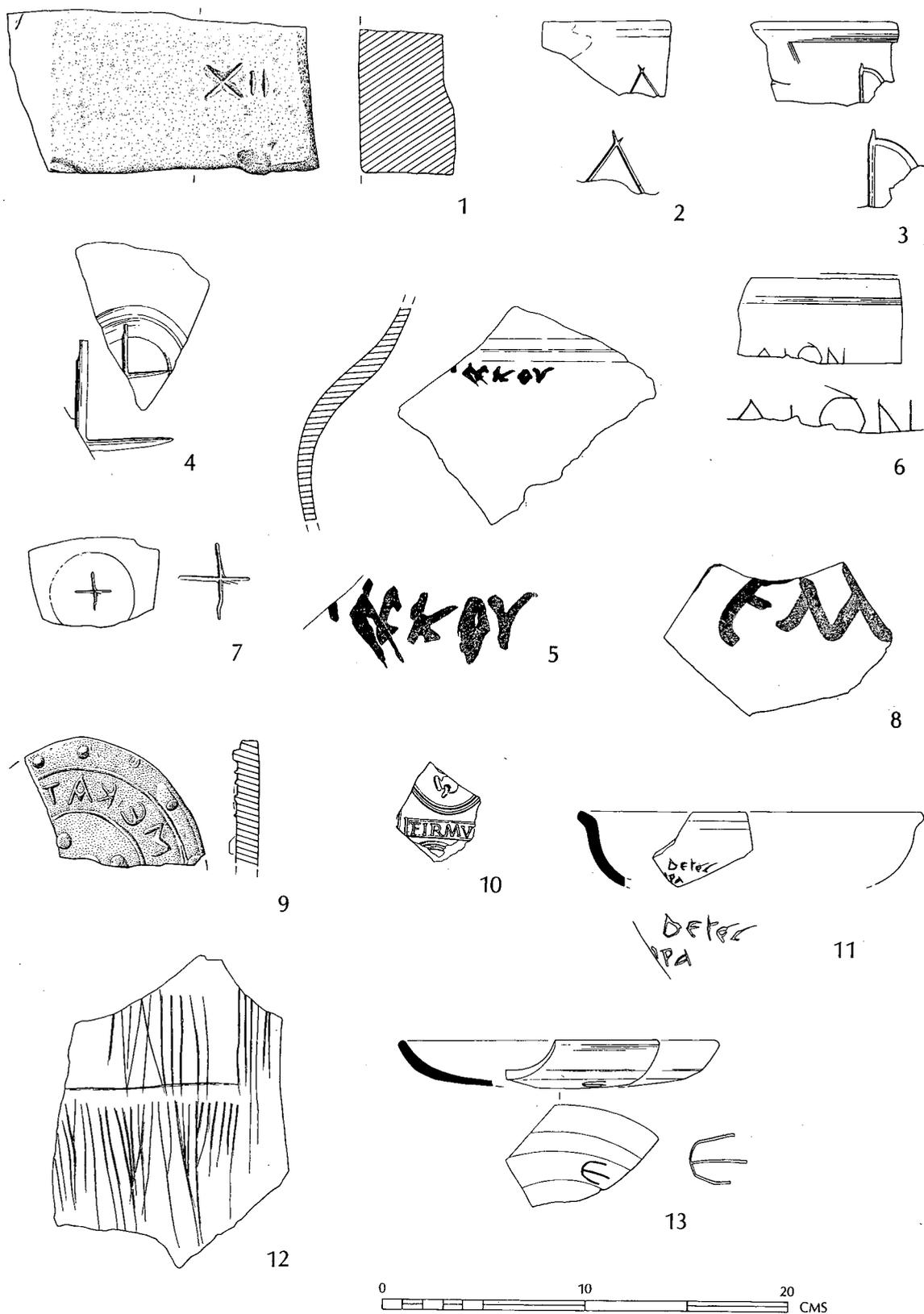


Fig. 117

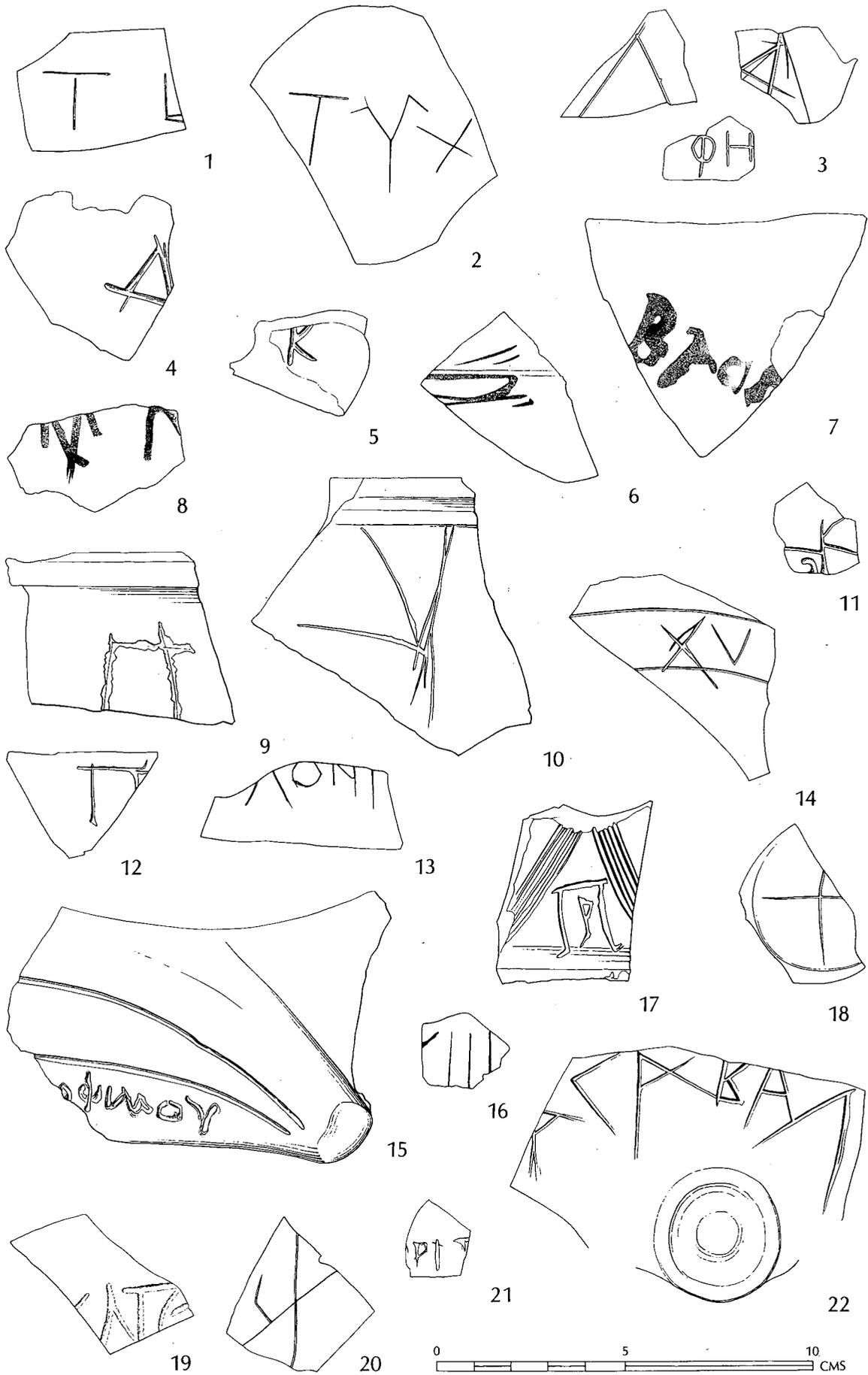


Fig. 118

- xi. Fig. 117/2 SF 14740, M 4866, destruction level, *c.* A.D. 250.  
Greek letter, incomplete below.

Δ[· · · or Δ[· · ·

- xii. Fig. 117/13 SF 6506, C 4032, backfill of Ditch 5 (4119), *c.* A.D. 450.  
Greek letter, lunate.

*vac.* E[· · ·

- xiii. Fig. 118/5. Fragment of a toy wheel of Fabric 8 (see pottery report (forthcoming)) inscribed between the hub and two spokes. SF 3349, E 1072, backfill of drain, A.D. 450–600.

*vac.* K *vac.*

- xiv. Fig. 118/12. SF 14744, F 3250, robber-trench fill, 1750+.  
Greek letter.

*stop* Π[· · ·

- xv. Fig. 118/9. SF 14746, K 4504, dump or make-up deposit, A.D. 450–600.  
Greek letter, carelessly written.

*vac.* Π[· · · or, perhaps, Γ I[· · ·

- xvi. Fig. 117/3. SF 14438, K 4515, rubbish dump, A.D. 250–400.

*vac.* P[· · · (or B or R)

16. Potsherds of local wares carrying ligatured letters or monograms. Manufacture may be of the second and third centuries A.D., unless otherwise noted, but all the graffiti may be, and those indicating Christianity must be, later.

- i. Fig. 118/11. SF 14738, F 3034, robber-trench fill, 1750+.  
Greek letters.

· · · ]HK[· · · for ]HK[

- ii. Fig. 118/10. SF 10216, K 4504, dump or make-up deposit, A.D. 450–600.  
Greek letters, probably written upside down to the rim.

· · · ]Ξ[· · · probably for KĒ, K(υπi)e

- iii. Fig. 118/17. The decoration of the sherd suggests a late, even a medieval date. SF 14739, C 4204, robbing debris, 1750+.  
Greek letters.

⊠ for Πρ, perhaps πρεσβύς or πρεσβύτερος abbreviated.

- iv. Fig. 117/7. Base only. SF 14297, P 5022, dump deposit, A.D. 250–350.  
Probably Greek.

Ϙ Perhaps for X (ρίστο)υ, cf. also Nos vi, vii.

- v. Fig. 118/18. Base only. SF 14735, C 133, cobbled road-surface, A.D. 300–450.

⊠ Presumably for Χρ(ίστου).

vi. Fig. 117/4. Base only. SF 4287, D 451, collapsed rubble walls of the workshops, A.D. 450–600.

† Presumably for X(ρίστου).

17. Potsherds of local wares, probably manufactured in the second and/or third centuries, incised with Roman figures.

i. Fig. 118/16. SF 14742, C 4061, make-up for the berm of the Roman defences, A.D. 175–200.

...]XIII[...

ii. Fig. 118/14. SF 1059, D 405, rubble spread, 1750+.

vac. XV[...

iii. Fig. 118/20. SF 14737, D 682, fill of pit (683), A.D. 350–450.

...]LX v.[...

iv. Fig. 117/12. SF 14748, D 402, rubble spread, 1750+.

Two rows of incised lines, some upright and some slanted (perhaps intending X and V). They suggest that the writer was keeping a score.



## INDEX

References in bold refer to the introduction or conclusion (chs 1 and 2). Others refer to the main report or specialist contributions. Where a subject represents a notable part of the excavation the area is included. This index provides cross-references for archaeological features, principal finds, and other sites mentioned. (For historical references see the relevant chronological sections in chs 1 and 2.)

- Abritus (Razgrad), **15, 29, 33** n. 36, **35, 36, 39** n. 64, 224 n. 12  
 Actium, **10** n. 26  
 Adamclisi, *tropaeum*, **10**  
 Aetos (Ajtos), **37** n. 59  
 agora, **7, 11–12, 22–4, 25, 27, 32, 34, 45, 46** n. 91, **45, 46** n. 91, 58 n. 13, 70, 83, 88, 95 nn. 33 and 34, 210 n. 3  
 Alans, **36** n. 51  
 Almus (Lom), **36**  
 altar, in Christian church, 161  
 ambo, **40, 44–5**, Area F 159, 163–4, Area K 180  
 amphora stamps, 320–1  
 Anchialus (Pomorje), 14  
*annona militaris*, **31, 44**  
 Aphrodisias, **47** n. 92  
 Appiaria (Ryahovo), **36**  
 Apulum (Alba Iulia), 319, 320  
 aqueducts, **6, 24, 45–6**, 78, 83–4, 107, 120, 121, 142, 144.  
   See also *castellum aquae*  
 architectural fragments and finds, **28, 41**, 62, 65, 74 n. 21, 78 n. 1, 85, 98, 121, 124, 127, 132, 143, 170, 193, 199, 202, 207–11, 214–15, 218, 225, 231, 235  
 armour, *lorica squamata*, **28, 33**, 73, 208, 215  
 arrow-heads, see weapons  
 Asamus, fort on the Danube, **34** n. 41  
 Asamus (Osum), river, **18, 44**  
*ascensus*, **40**, 93, 97, 232–3, 97, Area S 232–3  
 atrium, of basilicas, **43**, 156, 163, 181  
 Augusta Traiana (Stara Zagora), **8, 11** n. 31, **12** nn. 38, 42, and 43, **15, 33** n. 36, 93 n. 22, 95  
 Avars, **18, 44**  
  
*ballistae*, **33**, 60  
*baptisterium*, 164, 182 n. 27  
 Barboși, late Roman fort on left bank of the Danube, 319  
 basilicas, civic, **7**  
 —, Christian, the Large Basilica (Area F), **40, 43, 44–5, 48**, 145–66; the Small Basilica (Area K), **40, 43–5, 48**, 179–82  
 baths, **7, 24, 34, 46** n. 91, **34, 46** n. 91, 142 n. 25, 190 and n. 9  
 beads, semi-precious, 130 n. 1, 143 n. 26, 215 n. 16. See also glass (beads)  
 belt-buckles ‘Sucidava’ type, 136 n. 10, 140  
*bema*, 161, 182  
 Beroe, see Augusta Traiana  
*bouleuterion*, **7, 11**  
 bill-hook, early Byzantine, 62  
 bishops, of Nicopolis, **15, 16, 17, 35–6**; of other cities on the lower Danube, **15** n. 63, **35–6**  
 bolt-heads, see weapons  
 bonding courses, see bricks, bonding courses of  
 bone objects, 62 n. 31, 75, 78 n. 1, 98 n. 46, 118, 120, 130 n. 1, 143 n. 26, 148, 215 n. 16  
 bone-working, **29**, 75, 118, 120, 148 n. 3  
 bricks, bonding courses in construction, **39**, 132, 136–7, 140, 157, 189–90, 242; paving **38**, 155, 158–9, 163, 180, 222–3, 262, 317–20  
 Brigetio (Szöny), 321  
 buildings, late Roman, **29, 32, 33, 34**, Area D 116–20, Area F 148–9, 151–2, 210, Area S 227–8; early Byzantine, Area A, **42**, 62–5; ‘store-buildings’, Area M 201–3, Area H **40–1**, 237–9, 263; ‘workshops’, Area D **41, 43, 44**, 124–6, 263; ‘barracks’, Area C, **42**, 108–10; large building on south side of site, Area L, **41–4, 48, 51**, 239–243, 263; large building on north side of site, Area N, **41–4, 48**, 241–2, 263; unexcavated buildings, **41–2**. See also houses, Roman and basilicas, Christian  
 Bulgars, **17**  
 Bumbesti, fort of, **12** n. 41  
 Buridava (Stolniceni), 319  
 Butovo, kiln site, **11** n. 31, **13**, 190 n. 9  
  
 Cabyle (Yambol), **8, 10**  
 Callatis (Mangalia), **12, 17**  
 cannon-balls, see weapons  
 Capidava (Calachioi), 224 n. 12  
*cardo*, see roads and street-grid  
 Caričin Grad, see Justiniana Prima  
*castellum*, site of British excavations, **1**  
*castellum aquae*, **6, 27, 51** n. 118, 241 n. 9, 241 n. 9, 267.  
   See also aqueducts  
 cemetery, late Roman, **33**, Area S 232–3  
 chancel screens, 159, 163, 182 n. 24  
 chisels, iron, 75 n. 28  
 churches, see basilicas, Christian  
 clamps, iron, **12**, 75 n. 29, 85, 231 n. 8  
 climate, **4**  
 Constantinople, 164, 314  
 Costoboci, invasion of, **11–12, 13, 25**, 59, 191, 197  
 curtain-walls, Roman to late Roman, **7, 12, 25**, 53, 54, Area C 85–97; early Byzantine, **37–9, 48**, Area C 107–12, Area E, 129–31, Area P 211–13, Area R 221–2, Area S 230–1  
  
 Dacians, **10**  
 Dacian Wars, **10**  
 Dacia Ripensis (late Roman province), **16, 36** n. 51, 164  
*decumanus*, see roads and street-grid

- defences, Roman to late Roman, **25, 28, 33–4, 39–40**; early Byzantine, **35–40**, 129. See also curtain-wall, ditches, towers, gates
- diaconicon*, 164
- diatreta* (cage-cups), **31**, 215, 221
- Dinogetia (Gârvan), 158 n. 18
- Diocletianopolis (Hisar), **33** n. 36, **39** n. 64, **40** n. 68, **42** n. 73, 144, 164 n. 35, 182 n. 27
- ditches defensive, Roman to late Roman **25, 28–9, 33, 34, 39**, Area A 59–62, Area B 71–3, Area C 91–107, Area D 114–16; early Byzantine, **40**, 265–7
- Dolni Voden, basilica, 158 n. 18, 163
- double-spiked loops iron, see spiked loops
- Dourankoulak, Slav settlement, 168–70
- drains, under roads **24, 56, 59**, Area B 67–70, Area C 79–83, 100; under early Byzantine gate, **43, 45**, Area E 132, 133, 135–6, 140–4
- Drobeta (Turnu Severin), 319, 320
- Durostorum (Silistra), **14, 15** n. 58, **17, 36, 319**
- ear-rings, 121
- earth-bonded walls, **32, 40, 41, 43, 48–9**, 108, 110–11, 116, 120, 124, 148–9, 172, 176, 183–4, 201, 240
- ecology, of the site, **21–2**
- Emporium Discoduraterae* (Gostilitsa), **8, 11, 12** n. 43, **14**
- Emporium Piretensium* (Gorsko Kosovo), **8, 13** n. 45
- fibulae*, 59, 62, 64, 75 n. 29, 98 n. 46, 136 n. 10, 140, 143, 221
- figurine (ceramic), 130 n. 1
- file, Roman, 62
- flints, **22**, 215 n. 16
- fort, on the site during first century A.D. ?, **10, 21**
- fortifications, see defences
- frescoes, **27**, Area M 189–98, ch. 15, 243–57
- gates, Roman to late Roman, **7, 12, 25, 28, 34, 39–40**, 53 n. 1, 73, Area C 77–112; early Byzantine, **38–40, 43, 44, 45**, Area E 131–42, Area S 277–35
- Getae, **10**
- glass, beads, 75 n. 31, 78 n. 1, 143 n. 26, 215 n. 16; vessels, **44, 71, 75, 162, 215**; window-glass, **38, 162, 225**
- glass-working, **29, 75**
- Golemanovo Kale, **44** n. 79, **45** n. 83
- Goths, 3rd century, **13–14, 28, 31**; 4th century, **14–16, 32–3**, 61, 120, 151; 5th century, **16–17, 35** n. 47, **45–6**
- grid-iron, Roman, 57
- Grubenhäuser*, Slav **21, 47**, Area F 166–70, 183; post-medieval, **1–2, 48–9**, 112, 171–2, 183–5, 204–5
- Haemus* (Stara Planina), **8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 22, 32, 36, 37, 44, 46, 241**
- harbour, presumed site of, **8, 24, 37**, 131, 176
- hearths, **34, 104, 139, 143, 183, 216, 222, 223**
- Histria (Istria), 304, 309, 314, 319
- Holmes' boom, 145
- Hotnitsa, kiln-site, **13**, 68 n. 5
- Houma, Slav settlement, **47** n. 95, 168–70
- houses, Roman to late Roman, **24, 27, 29**, Area A 53–9, Area M 187–201; within the Roman defences, **7, 31–2, 40, 46** n. 91, 195, 267. See also buildings
- Huns, **16, 33–5, 36–7**, 61, 104, 215
- hypocaust, **24–5**, 189–90. See also spacers
- Iatrus (Krivina), fort, **8, 31, 47** nn. 94 and 95, 168–70, 304, 309, 314
- Iatrus*, river, **8, 13, 17, 22, 27, 44, 50**
- Illyricum, late Roman diocese, **36, 37**
- Justiniana Prima (Tsarichin Grad), **40** n. 71, **46**, 158, 162 n. 22, 163
- keys, iron and copper-alloy, 53, 75 n. 29, 118, 136 n. 10
- knives, 62 n. 31, 75 n. 29, 98 n. 46, 118 n. 18, 136 n. 10, 143 n. 26, 223
- Koula, late Roman *burgus*, **40** n. 66
- Kotrigurs, **17**
- Kroumovo Kale, early Byzantine 'refuge site', 163, 164 n. 35
- lamps, ceramic, **24**
- Legion V Macedonica, **10, 12**
- ligula*, 215
- Madara, early Byzantine fortification, 224 n. 11
- Marcianopolis (Reka Devniya), **8, 11** n. 31, **16, 17, 34, 36, 309, 320**
- market, extramural, late Roman, **29, 32**, Area B 75, Area C 104, 306
- Melta (Lovech), **8**
- Mesembria (Nesebur), 158 n. 16, 164 n. 35, 224 n. 11
- metal-working, iron, **24, 28, 29, 43**, 139, 198; copper-alloy **29, 43, 143**
- mint, at Nicopolis, **11, 12, 13, 95**
- Moesi, **8–9**
- Moesia Inferior, Roman province, **11, 12, 13, 25, 59**
- Moesia II, late Roman province, **14, 15, 17, 36, 44, 45**, 164
- mortar, limestone vessel, 198
- mortaria, 318–20
- mud-walls, see mudbrick and pisé
- mudbrick, **33, 41**, 58 n. 12, 78, 99, 203, 215–17, 237
- nails, iron, 57, 62 n. 31, 75 n. 29, 98 n. 46, 118, 143 n. 26, 148 n. 3, 180 n. 13, 194, 215 n. 16, 216 n. 24, 221; copper-alloy, 62 n. 31, 75 n. 29
- Naissus (Niš), **16, 35** n. 44
- Nicaea (Izник), **11, 13** n. 47, **24**, 195 n. 23, 309
- Nicomedia, in Bithynia, **11, 24**
- Nicopolis (in Epirus), **10** n. 26, **15** n. 62, **39** n. 65, 224
- Nicopolis ad Nestum (Gurmen), **8, 10** n. 26, **15** n. 62, **17**
- Nikiup, village of, **18–19, 48, 50**, 195 n. 18
- Novae (Svishtov), **8, 10, 11** n. 21, **12** n. 41, **13, 16, 31, 34, 36, 40** n. 71, 194 n. 15
- odeion*, **7**
- Odessus (Varna), **15, 36**
- Oescus (Gigen), **8, 10** n. 25, **13** n. 50, **36, 319**
- Olbia, on the river Bug, 319, 320
- opus sectile*, 62 n. 31, 198
- opus signinum* floor, 190
- ovens, 62, 153
- palaeoecology, see ecology
- palaestra*, attached to public baths, **7**
- Pannonia, **8**
- pastopheries, see *diaconicon* and *prothesis*
- patera*, 114 n. 4
- Pautalia (Kiustendil), **12**, n. 38, 93 n. 22, 95 n. 36, 232 n. 11, 318

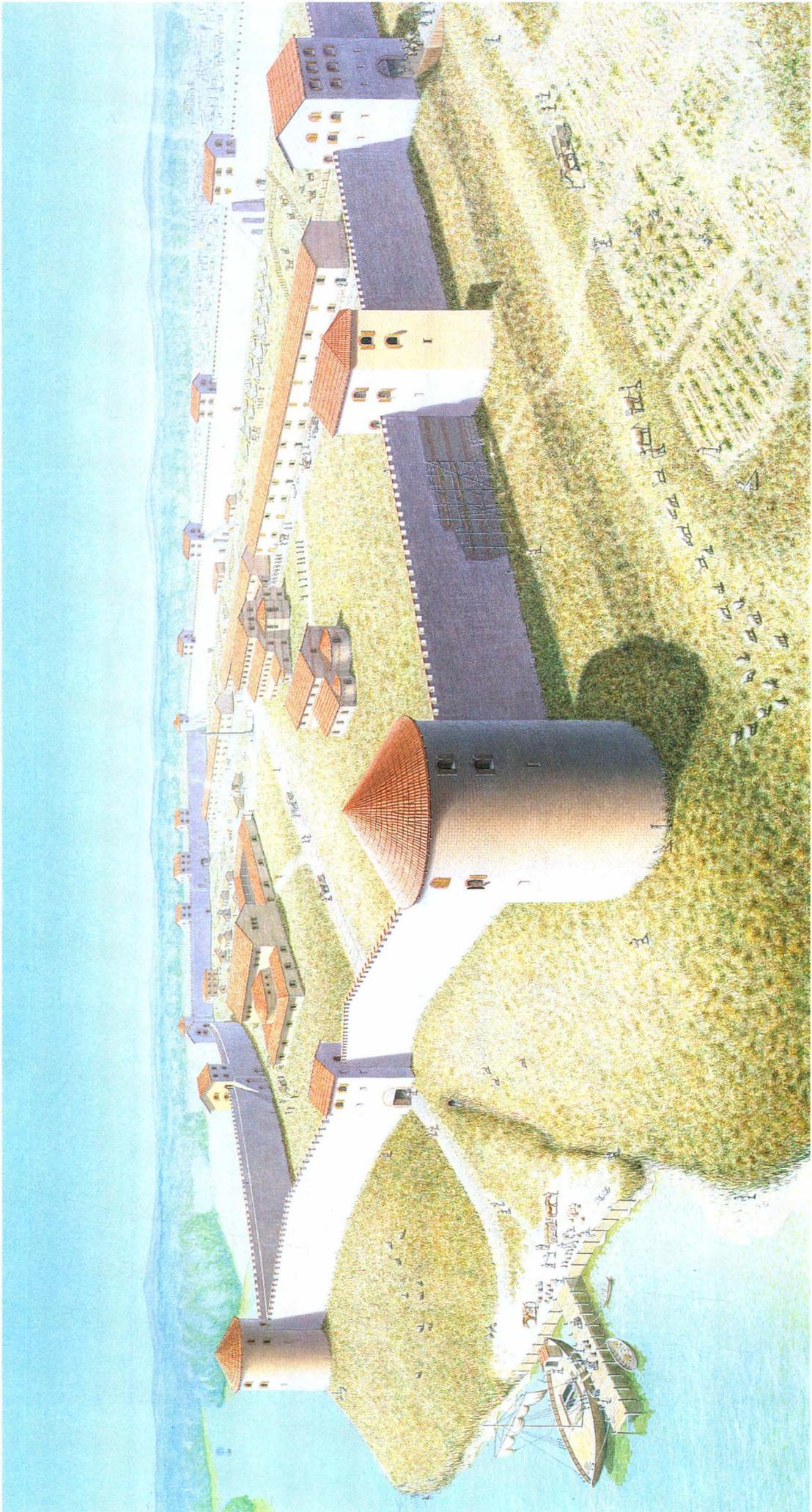
- Pavlikeni, villa and kiln-site, **13**, 68 n. 5, 190 n. 9, 319  
 Philippi, 162 n. 22, 164 n. 34  
 Philippopolis (Plovdiv), **8**, **10** n. 25, **11** n. 34, **12**, n. 38, **13–14**, **16**, **34**, **36–7**  
 Pirdop, basilica, 164 n. 35  
 Pirinchtepe, basilica, 164 n. 35  
 pisé, **24**, 58 n. 12, 191, 193, 195  
*podnitsa*, fire-place surround, 168  
 portcullis, Roman defences, Area C 90, 95–6, 107  
 Potaissa (Turda), **12** n. 41, 320  
 potlid, ceramic, early Byzantine, 64  
*praesidia*, late Roman along the Danube, **14**  
*propugnaculum*, late Roman defences, **28**, **32–3**, 77–85, Area C 98–9, 103–4  
*propulon*, propyleion, **25**, 95 n. 34, 210 n. 3  
*proteichisma*, **33–4**, **35** n. 48, Area A 60–1, 104  
*prothesis*, 164  
 prow-shaped towers, see towers, pentangular  
 punches, iron, 75 n. 29, 118  
  
*quaestura exercitus*, 44  
 quern-stone, 74 n. 21, 198, 215  
  
 Ratiaria (Archar), **17** n. 72  
 rendering, of the curtain-wall, **39**, 136–42  
 rings, copper-alloy, 75 n. 29, 98 n. 46, 118 n. 18, 221  
 roads, cobbled, **24**, **28–9**, **33**, **34**, **38**, **42**, Area B 74–5, Area C 98–104, Area E 129–31, Area F 149 and 151–2, 203, Area P 210–11, Area S 231–2; paved, **7**, **11**, **22–5**, **28**, **29**, **40**, **42**, n. 69, **46** n. 91, 53 n. 1, 56, 58, 59, Area B 70–5, Area C 77–85, 191; road slabs, **28**, 71, 88, 91, 94, 97, 195, 202, 209–11, 222, 230–1. See also street-grid  
 Romula (Reşea), 190 n. 9, 319, 320, 321  
 roof-tiles (Laconian), **25**, **40**, **44–5**, 57, 62, 118, 120, 194, 157, 172, 181, 182, 194, 208, 214–15, 217–18, 225, 227–8, 232–4, 240, 241–2  
 Rositsa, river, **4–7**, **8**, **10**, **13**, **18**, **22**, **24**, **25**, **27**, **38**, **46**, **49**, **50**, 129, 176  
  
 Sadovets, **44**, 309. See also Golemanovo Kale and Sadovsko Kale  
 Sadovsko Kale, **44** n. 79  
 samian, **27**, 322  
 Sarmatians, **10**  
 Sarmizegetusa Ulpia Traiana Dacica (Sarmizegetusa), **10**, **319**  
 scrap metal, lead and copper-alloy, 75, 98, 104, 215, 221  
 Scythia (late Roman province), **17**, **36**, **44**, **46**  
 Serdica (Sofia), **12**, n. 38, **15** n. 65, **16**, **34**, 224 n. 11  
 Serdica, Council of, **15**  
 Sexaginta Prista (Rusé), **14** n. 59  
 Singidunum (Belgrade), **16**, **34**  
 Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovitsa), **16**, 313  
 soils, **4**  
 Slăveni, fort in Dacia, 321  
 Slavs, **17**, **21**, **44**, **47**  
 Sostra (Lomets), **8**  
 spacers (for hypocaust heating), 190 n. 9  
*spatuala*, 62 n. 31, 98 n. 46, 121  
 spiked and double-spiked loops, 75 n. 29, 118 n. 18, 162  
 spoons, silver, 75; copper-alloy, 118 n. 18  
 Stara Planina, see *Haemus*  
 steel-working, **24**, **29**, 78, 81–2  
 Stobi, **40** n. 71  
 stone, local and ancient quarries, **4**  
 strainer, copper-alloy, 130 n. 1  
 strap-ends, 75 n. 29, 98 n. 46, 215  
 street-grid, **11**, **22–3**, **25–7**, 53 n. 1, 58 n. 13, 70–1, 83, 209–11  
 stucco mouldings, **27**, Area M 189–99, ch. 15, 243–57  
 Sucidava (Celei), 321, 322  
 styli, 62 n. 31  
 sword, see weapons  
  
*tabernae et praetoria*, 10  
 Thasos, 161 n. 21  
*thermoperipatos*, **7**, **12**, 95 n. 33, 190 n. 9  
 Thrace, Roman province of, **10**, **11**, **12**, 59; late Roman diocese, **14**, **25**, **37**, **40**, **44** n. 78  
 tiles, see bricks and roof-tiles  
 toilet spoons, 75 n. 29, 215  
 Tomis (Constanța), **16** n. 67, **36**  
 topography of the site, **4–7**, 120  
 towers, Roman to late Roman, **15**, 56, 94, 95; early Byzantine, general, **1**, **7**, **38–40**, **42**, **43**, **44–5**, 107, 109; rectangular, **34**, **38–9**, Area P 207–18; round **38**; pentagonal **38–9**, Area R 219–25  
 Transmarisca (Tutrukan), **14** n. 59  
 Triballi, **10**  
 Tropaeum Traiani (Adamclisi), **11** n. 36, **15**, **17**, **29**, **46**, 163 n. 27, 224 n. 12  
 Tsaravets, Veliko Turnovo, late Roman site and early medieval capital of Bulgaria, **15**, **18**, **46**, **47**, 158 n. 18  
 Tsarichin Grad, see Justiniana Prima  
 Turks, **18**, **49–51**  
 tweezers, copper-alloy, 118 n. 18  
 Tyras (Bjelgorod), 319  
  
 Utus (fort on Danube), **36**  
*Utus* (Vit), the river, **16**, **34**, **44**  
  
 villas, around Nicopolis, **31**, 195  
 Voivoda, late Roman to early Byzantine fortification, **33**, **35**  
  
 wall-painting, see frescoes  
 weapons, arrow-heads, **34**, 104, 208, 233 n. 15; bolt-head, **34**, 104; cannon-balls, **49**, 112, 172; caltrop, 221; grenades, **49**, 172; spear-head, **34**, 61; sword (post-medieval), **49**, 112. See also *ballistae*  
 wells, **6**, 53–4. See also aqueducts  
 wheel, ceramic (from a toy), 148 n. 3  
 wheel-ruts, Area C 90, 131, 142  
 whetstone, 168



# PLATES



PLATE I



Reconstruction painting of the early Byzantine city, c. 500.



Aerial view of Nicopolis, taken with a radio-controlled kite, looking west, 1987. Roman city right, early Byzantine defences left.



Aerial photograph of the early Byzantine defences (centre) and the excavations within the Roman city around the *agora* (bottom left), looking south-east, taken from a helicopter, courtesy of the Jacques Cousteau Foundation, 1991.

PLATE IV



The Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking north-west, 1991.



The south wall of Room 1 of the Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking south, 1989. Note the red dado and plain white plaster above.

PLATE VI



A. Detail of the fresco painting of a column from Room 1, SF 12150.



B. A tentative arrangement of a niche (fragments from Room 1).



Aerial view of the south-eastern corner of the Roman city (top) and the north-eastern corner of the early Byzantine defences (bottom), taken with a radio-controlled kite, 1986.

PLATE VIII

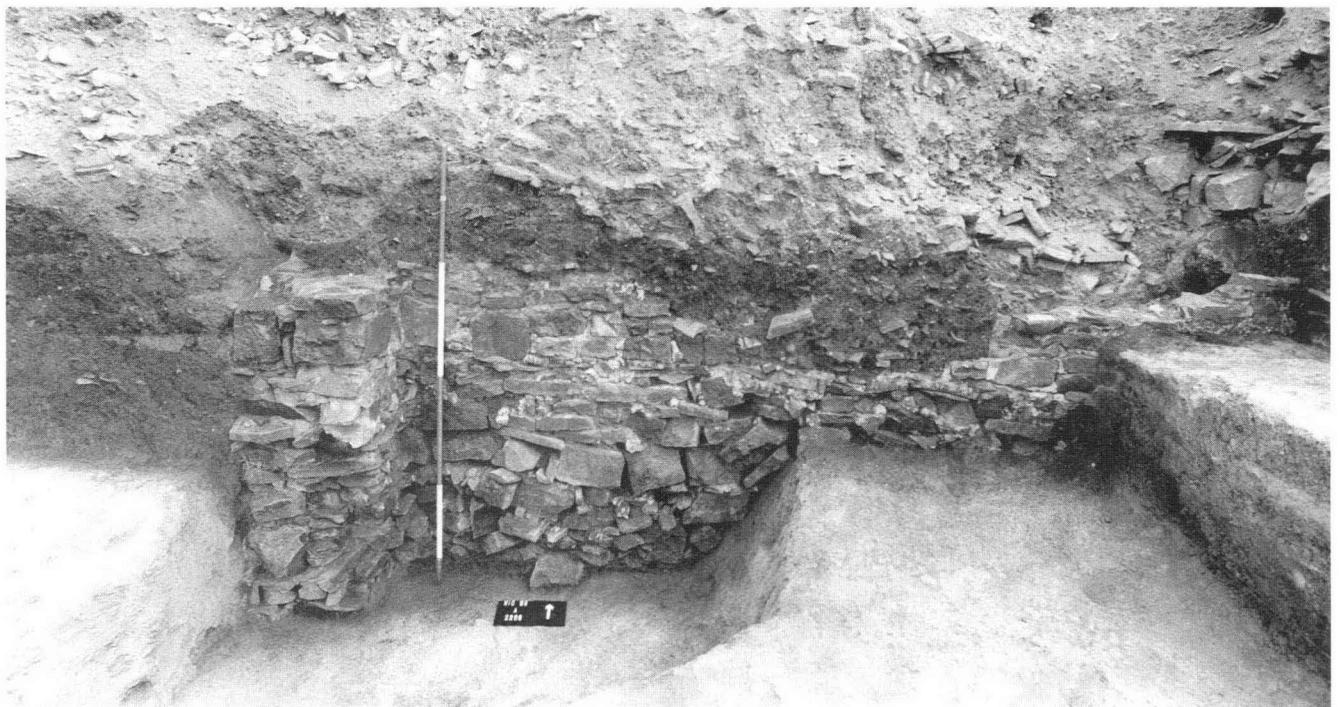


Aerial photograph of the early Byzantine defences, looking east, taken with a radio-controlled kite, 1986.

PLATE IX



A. The north/south foundation of the Roman house inserted into an early pit (2272) and cut through the 'well' (2268), Period 1, Area A, looking north, 1988.



B. The foundations of the Roman house, Period 1, Area A, looking north, 1988.



A. The early Byzantine oven, Period 5, Area A, looking east, 1988.



B. The remaining *in situ* road slabs, Area B, looking north along Area C southern extension, towards Area C central area. Note the capstone which has fallen into the inspection shaft (bottom centre) and the cobble surface (Period 4) in section above the backfilled Period 3 ditch, 1988.

PLATE XI



*Above:* Photomosaic of Area C (main area and eastern extension), taken with the 'Holmes boom', 1991.

*Left:* Photomosaic of the Roman road Area B and Area C southern extension, taken with the 'Holmes boom', 1991.



A. The Roman gate and road, Area C, looking south, 1991.



B. The *in situ* road slabs in the southern extension (top centre) and the repaired causeway of Period 4 (centre right), Area C. Note, southern foundation of the eastern wall for the *propugnaculum* (bottom), looking south-west, 1988.

PLATE XIII

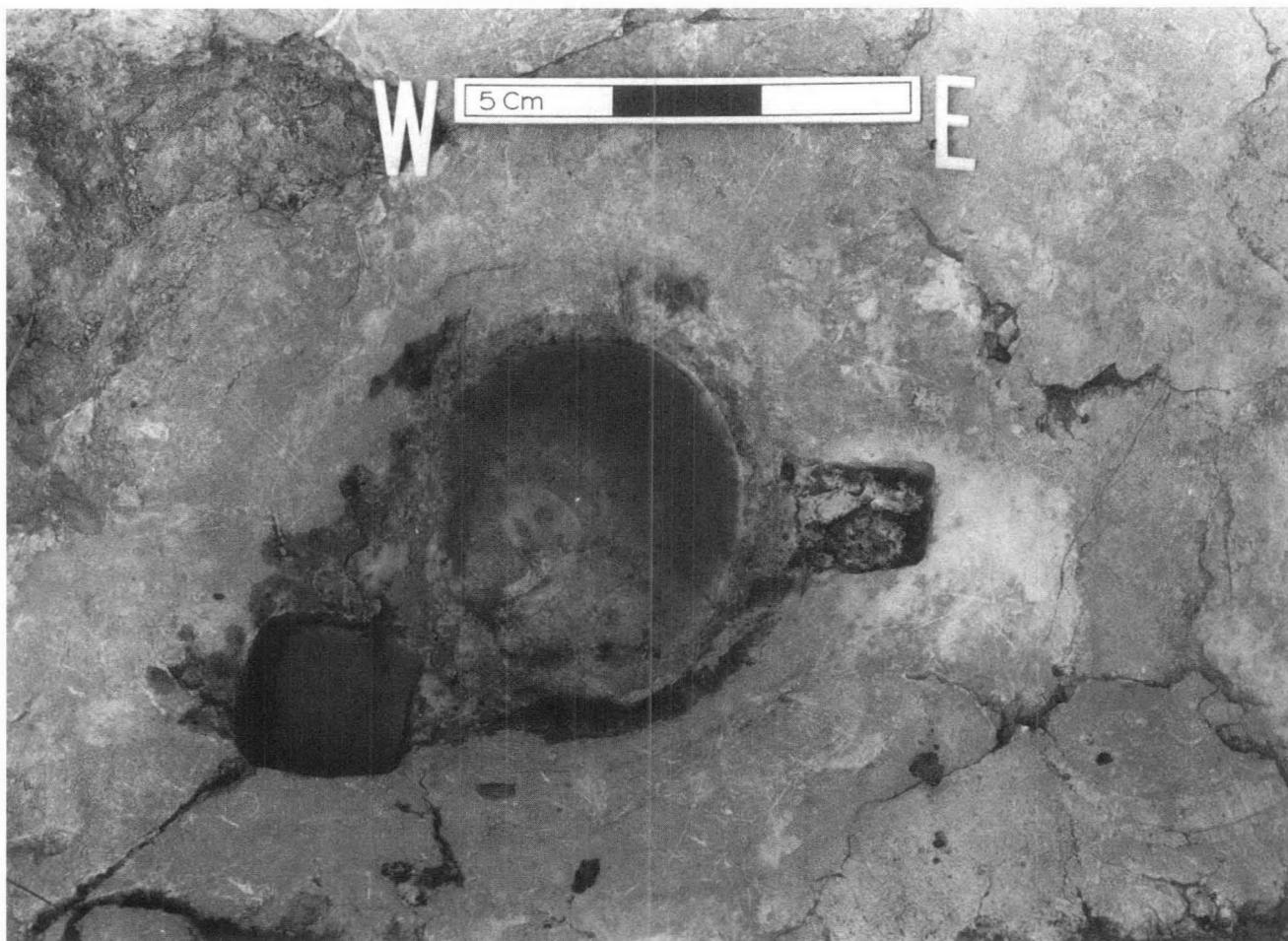


A. The southern entrance to the gate and *in situ* slabs of the Roman road, Area C, looking north, 1991.



B. Eastern gate-socket of the Roman gate, Area C, looking north-east, 1991.

PLATE XIV



A. Bolt-sockets for the outer, two-winged door of the Roman gate, Area C, 1991.



B. The foundation of the blocking-wall, within the Roman gate, Period 6, Area C, looking north, 1991.



A. Portcullis slot in the western respond at the northern entrance to the Roman gate, Area C, 1991.

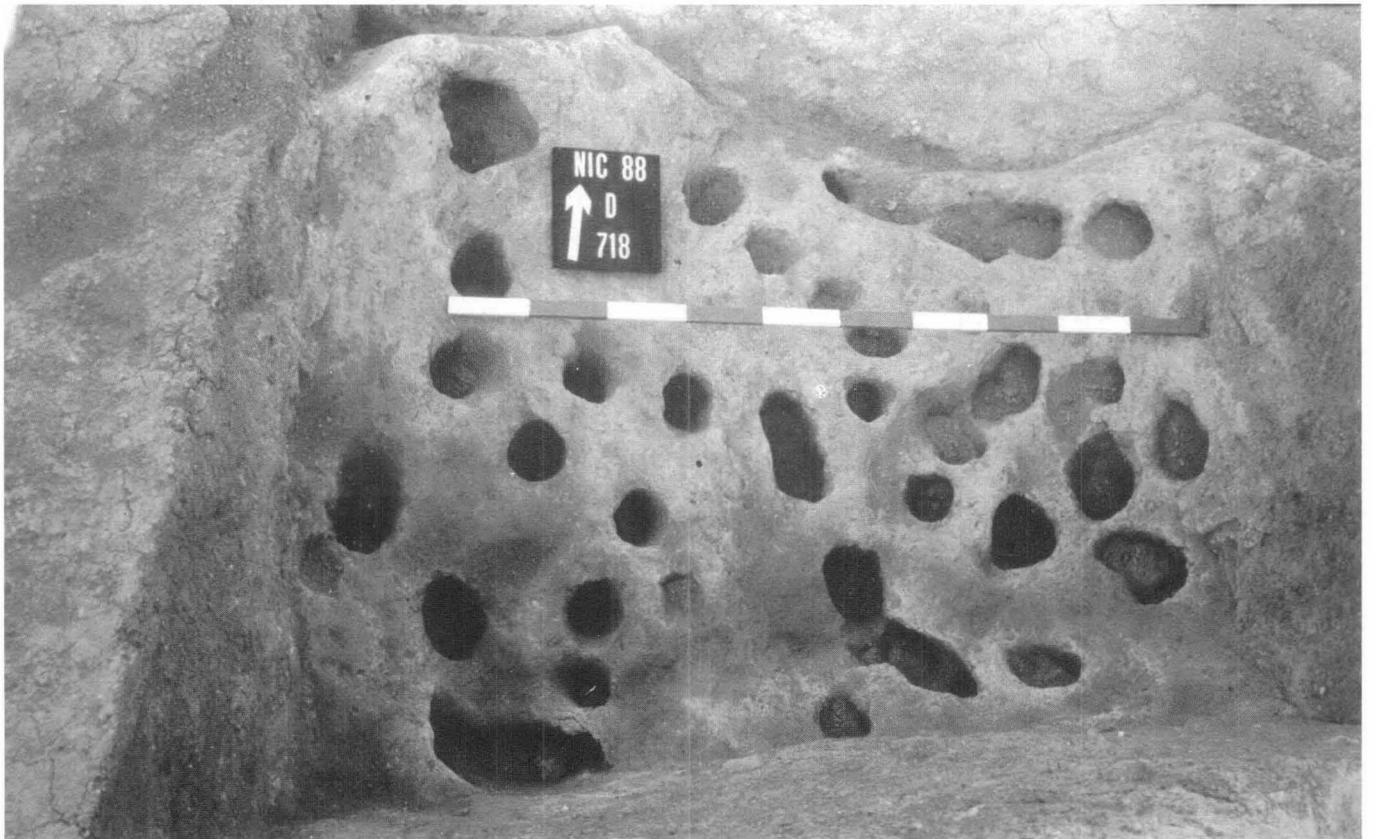


B. The pilaster, foundation and superstructure, Area C, looking south, 1991.

PLATE XVI



A. The northern face of the foundations for the blocking-wall, within the Roman gate, Period 6, Area C, looking south-west, 1987.

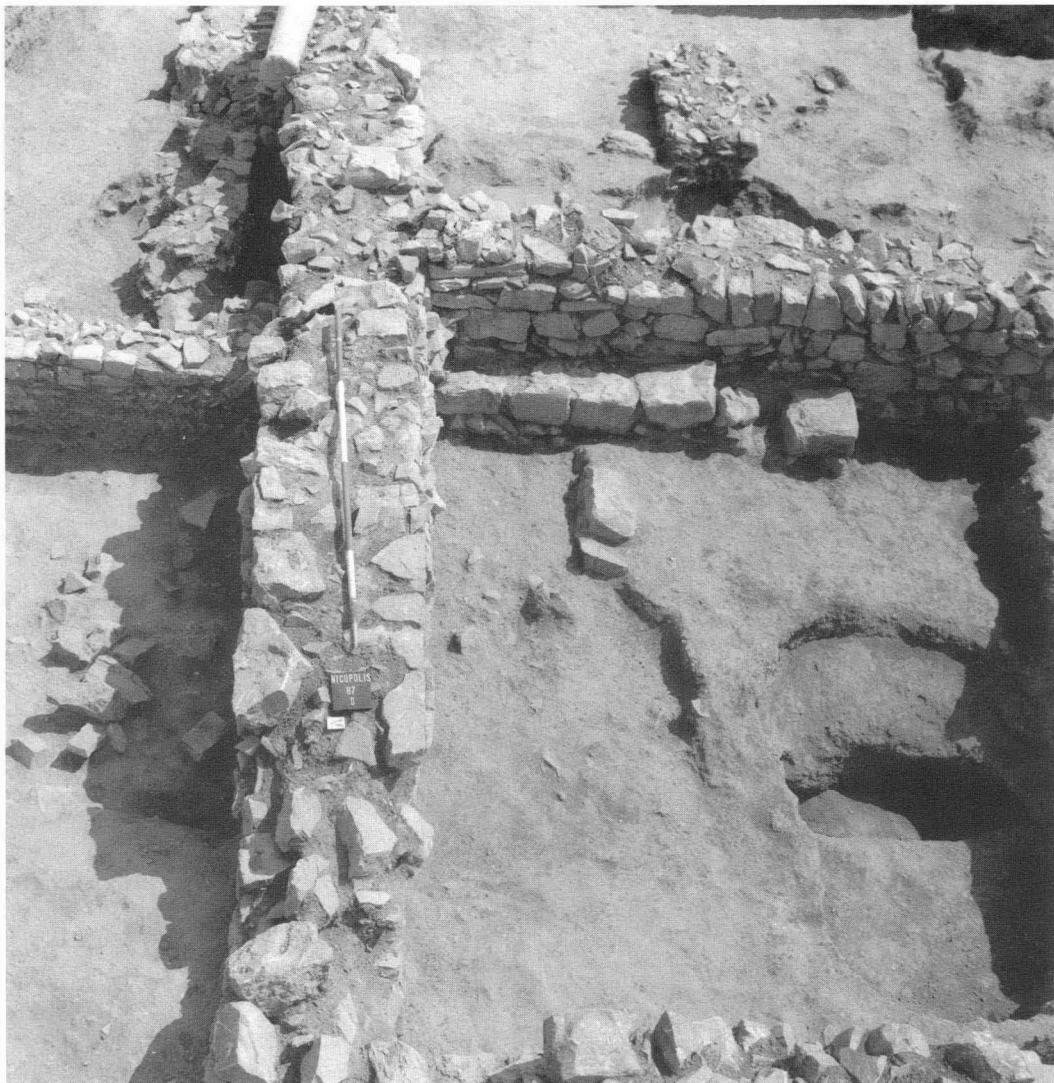


B. Tree roots cut by a Period I pit (718), Area D, looking north, 1988.

PLATE XVII



A. Eastern room of the Period 5 workshops, Area D, looking north, 1987. Note the surviving portion (545) of the early building's wall (Period 3), cut by the Period 4 pit (596) (left) and the junction between the two sections of wall (728, 730), forming the rear wall of the workshops (top centre).



B. The central section (728) of the west wall of the Period 5 workshops, Area D, looking east, 1987. Note the west wall (721) of the Period 3 early building under the medial wall (441) of the workshops. Stone fill of Pit 695 (centre left) and Pit 606 (right), Period 4.

PLATE XVIII



A. General view of the Period 5 workshops, Area D, looking north-east, 1987.



B. The south gate, Area E, looking north-east, 1989.



A. East face of the western gate foundation, projecting north of the gate, Area E, looking north-west, 1990.



B. North face of curtain-wall (left) and junction with northern projection of the eastern gate foundation, Area E, looking south-west, 1989.



A. Northern entrance to the drain and west face of the eastern gate foundation's northern projection, Area E, looking south, 1989.

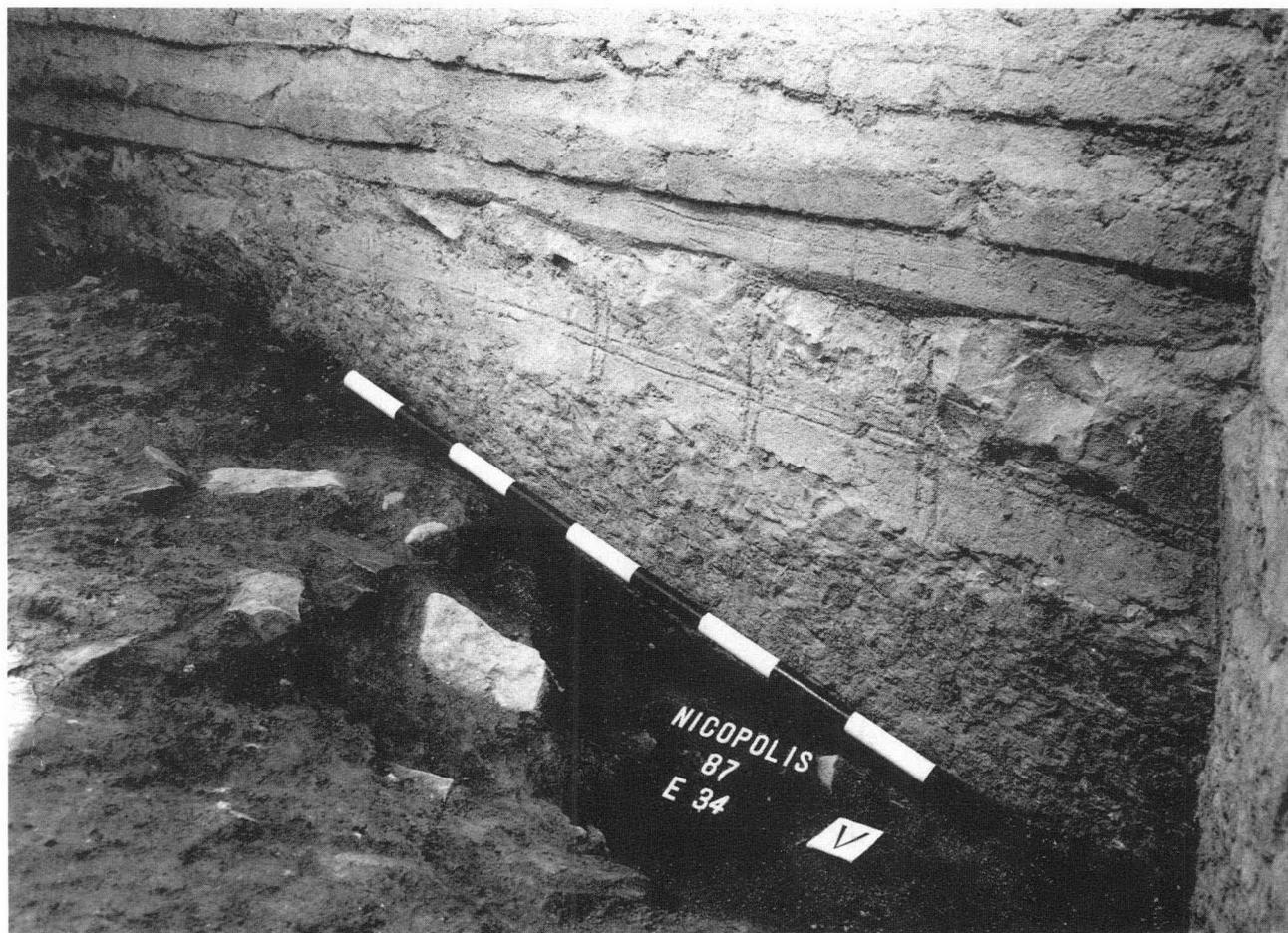


B. Northern entrance to the drain, below the central foundation of the gate, Area E, looking south, 1989.

PLATE XXI

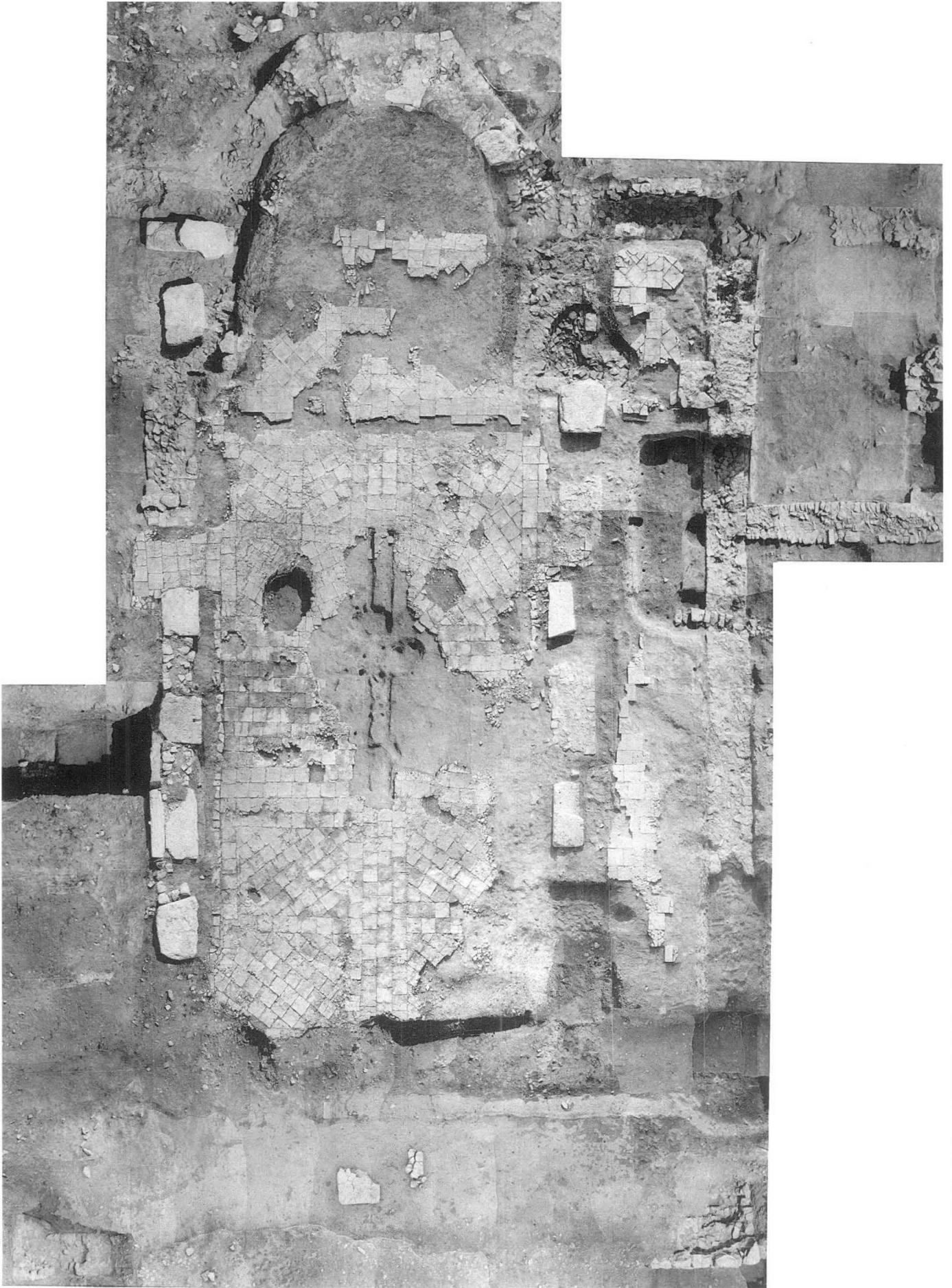


A. The north face of the central foundation for the gate, on the east side of the drain, Area E, looking north, 1989. Note the change in alignment of the bricks used in the drain vault.



B. Lime mortar rendering on the inner face of the curtain-wall, east of the gate, Area E, looking south-east, 1987.

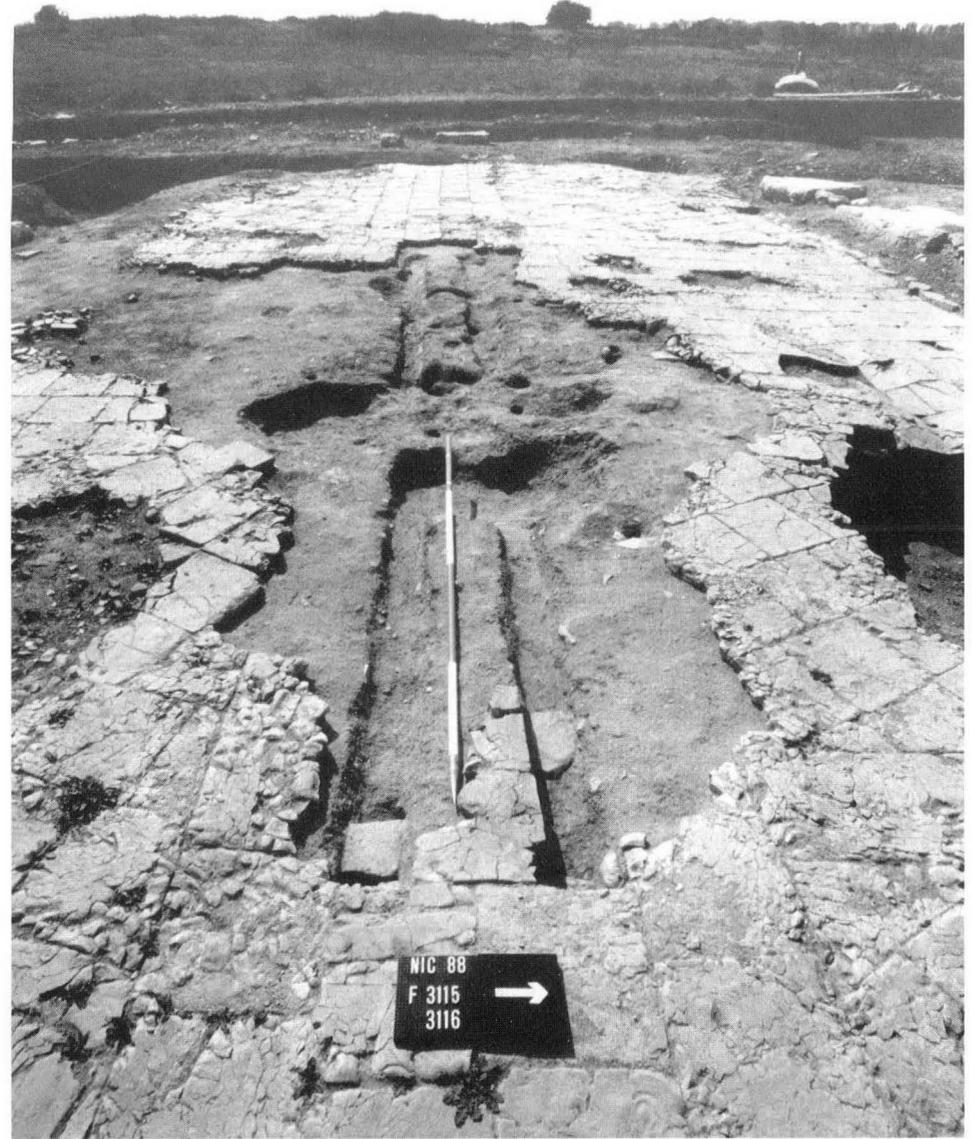
PLATE XXII



Photomosaic of the Large Basilica, taken with the 'Holmes boom', 1987-9.



A. The destruction deposit on the north-west side of the Large Basilica's nave, Area F, looking west, 1987.



B. The central paving of the Large Basilica's nave and the beam-slots for the stairs on either side of the *ambo*, Area F, looking west, 1988.

PLATE XXIV



A. The 'bird tile' (SF 15512) in the paving of the Large Basilica's nave, Area F, 1987.



B. The robber-trench for the south-western corner of the Large Basilica's nave (bottom) and the brick paving within the nave (top centre), Area F, looking north-east, 1987.



A. The Slav *grubenhaus* with pots *in situ*, Area F, looking south, 1988.



B. The Slav pots (P 8018, P 8019) on the southern side of the *grubenhaus* below the remains of a clay fire-place (*podnitsa*), Area F, looking north-east, 1988.

PLATE XXVI



A. The north face of the north wall (4413) of the Period 2 building, Area K, looking south, 1989.



B. RT 4432, emptied of its fill, above the foundation for the north wall of the Small Basilica's nave (4472), Area K, looking south-west, (1989).

PLATE XXVII



A. The Small Basilica, Area K, looking south, 1989. Note the paving of the nave and narthex (centre and top right), the robber-trenches following the annexe (top left) and the northern and north-western post-medieval *grubenhäuser* (bottom centre and right).



B. The Small Basilica, Area K, looking south-west, 1989. Note the paving of the nave, beam-slots for the stairs of the *ambo*, the reliquary setting (centre) and the upper foundation for the north side of the main apse (bottom right).

PLATE XXVIII



A. The Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking north-west, 1991. Note the northern foundation of the Period 4 building (top right).



B. The Roman house, Area M, Room 2, Period 2, looking west, 1991. Excavation of the destruction level of roof-tiles, overlain by wall-plaster which collapsed during the demolition of the building in Period 3.

PLATE XXIX



A. The steps leading down from Room 2 into the peristyle (Room 3) of the Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking north-east, 1991. Note the destruction spread of tiles in the east section (centre right).



B. The column-base, column, and raised edging blocks in the peristyle (Room 3) of the Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking south-east, 1991.

PLATE XXX



A. Destruction spread of tiles and portions of stucco mouldings over the threshold between Rooms 3 and 4 of the Roman house, Area M, Period 2, looking north, 1990.



B. Excavation of the fill within Room 1, Area M, looking south, 1989. Note the destruction deposit of broken roof-tiles over the clay floor and below the demolished remains of the pisé wall, mixed with fragments of wall-plaster and stucco mouldings.

PLATE XXXI



A. Central west/east section through Tower 1, Area P, looking north-west, 1989.



B. The west/east section through the centre of Tower 1 above the ground surface (5020) from which level the tower was constructed, Area P, looking north-west, 1989.

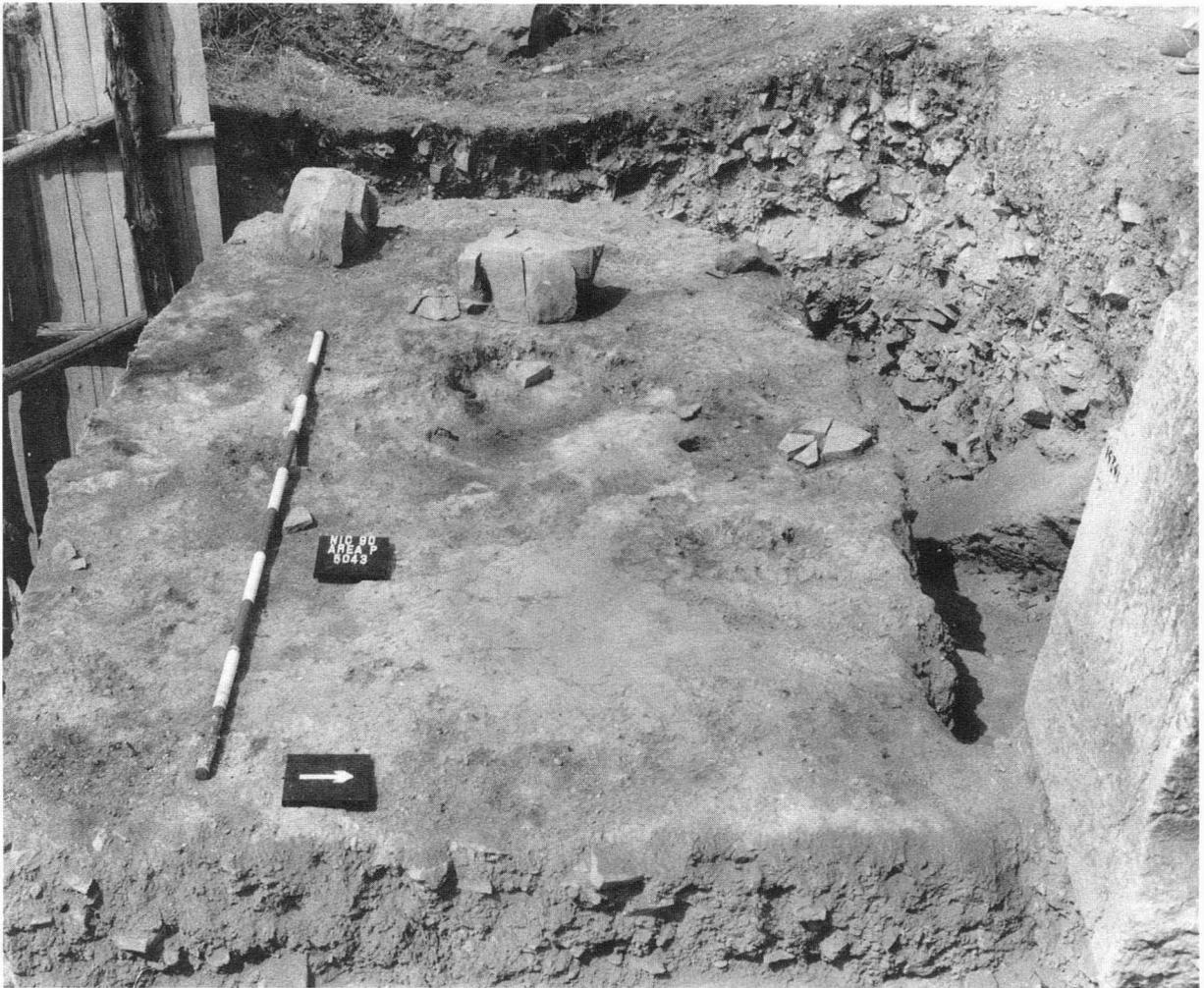


A. The Period I destruction level and the foundations of the curtain-wall and Tower 1, Area P, looking east, 1989.

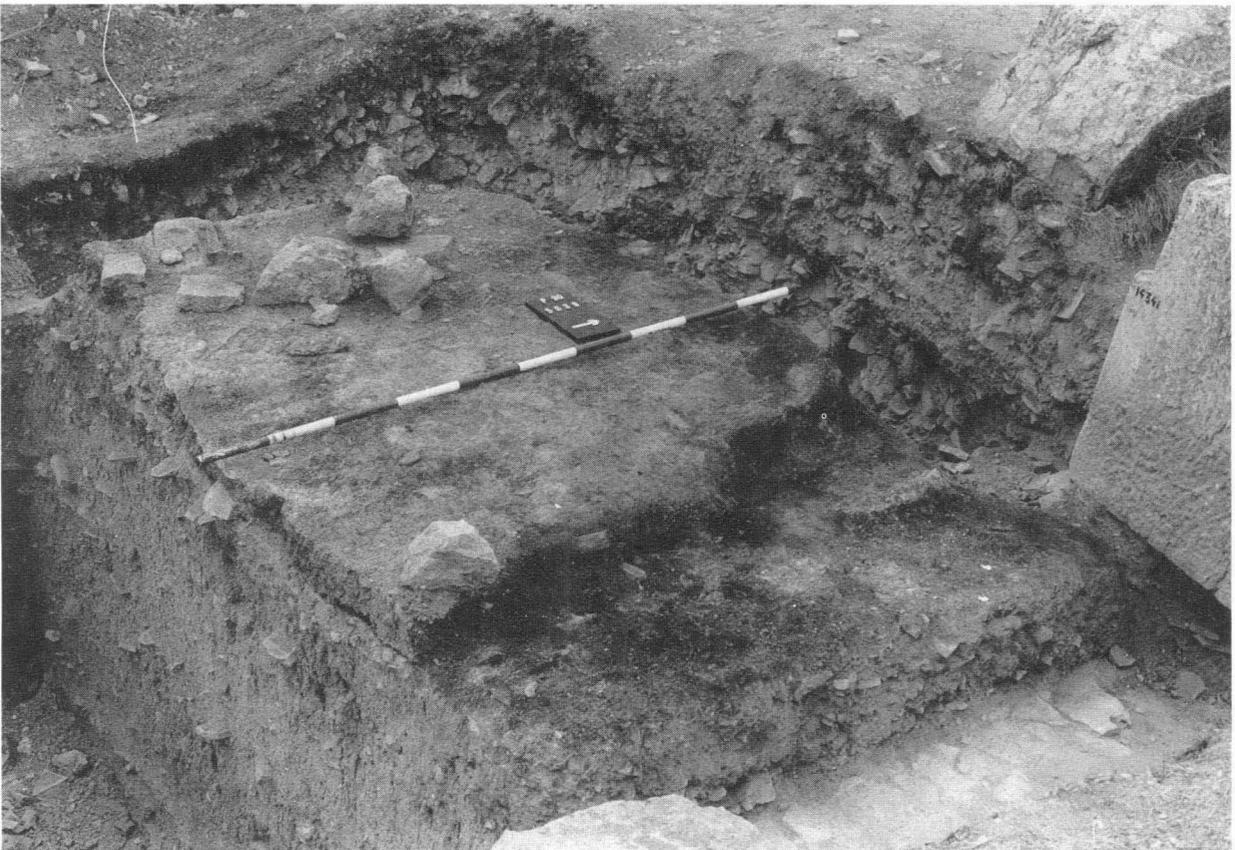


B. The foundations of the curtain-wall (left), the south wall of Tower 1 (top), and the Period I column-base (centre), Area P, looking south, 1990.

PLATE XXXIII



A. The northern half of the primary floor of Tower 1, Area P, Period 2, looking west, 1990.



B. The northern half of the secondary mudbrick floor of Tower 1, Area P, Period 3, looking north-west, 1990.

PLATE XXXIV



A. The floor of Tower 8, Area R, looking north, 1990. Note the central ash deposit (5207).



B. The southern platform within the gate-chamber and the cobbled roadway (5274), Area S, looking north-west, 1990.

PLATE XXXV

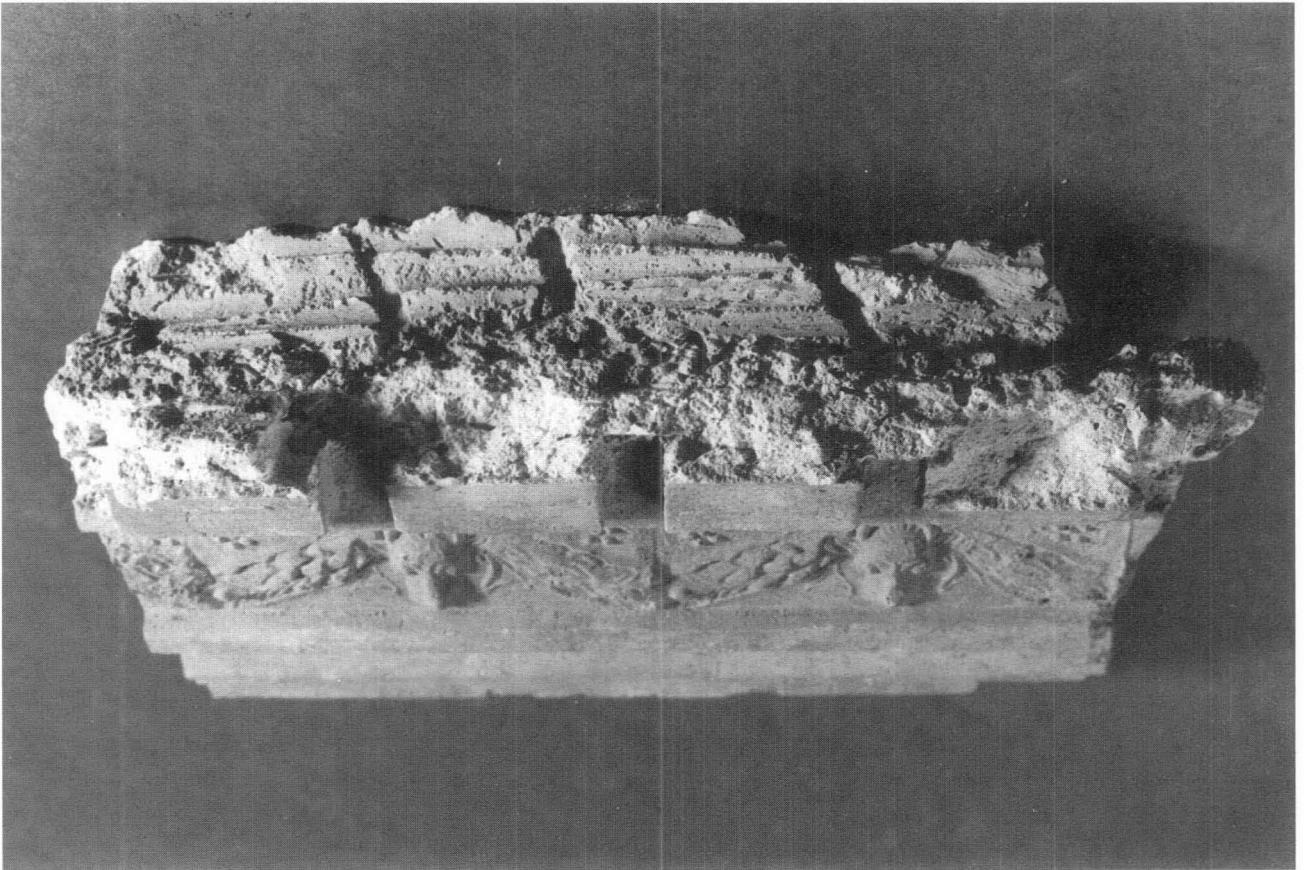


A. The southern platform and cobbled surface within the gate-chamber, Area S, looking east, 1990. Note the limestone block (5273) used in the plinth for the southern wall of the gate with mortar adhering to its surface (bottom right).

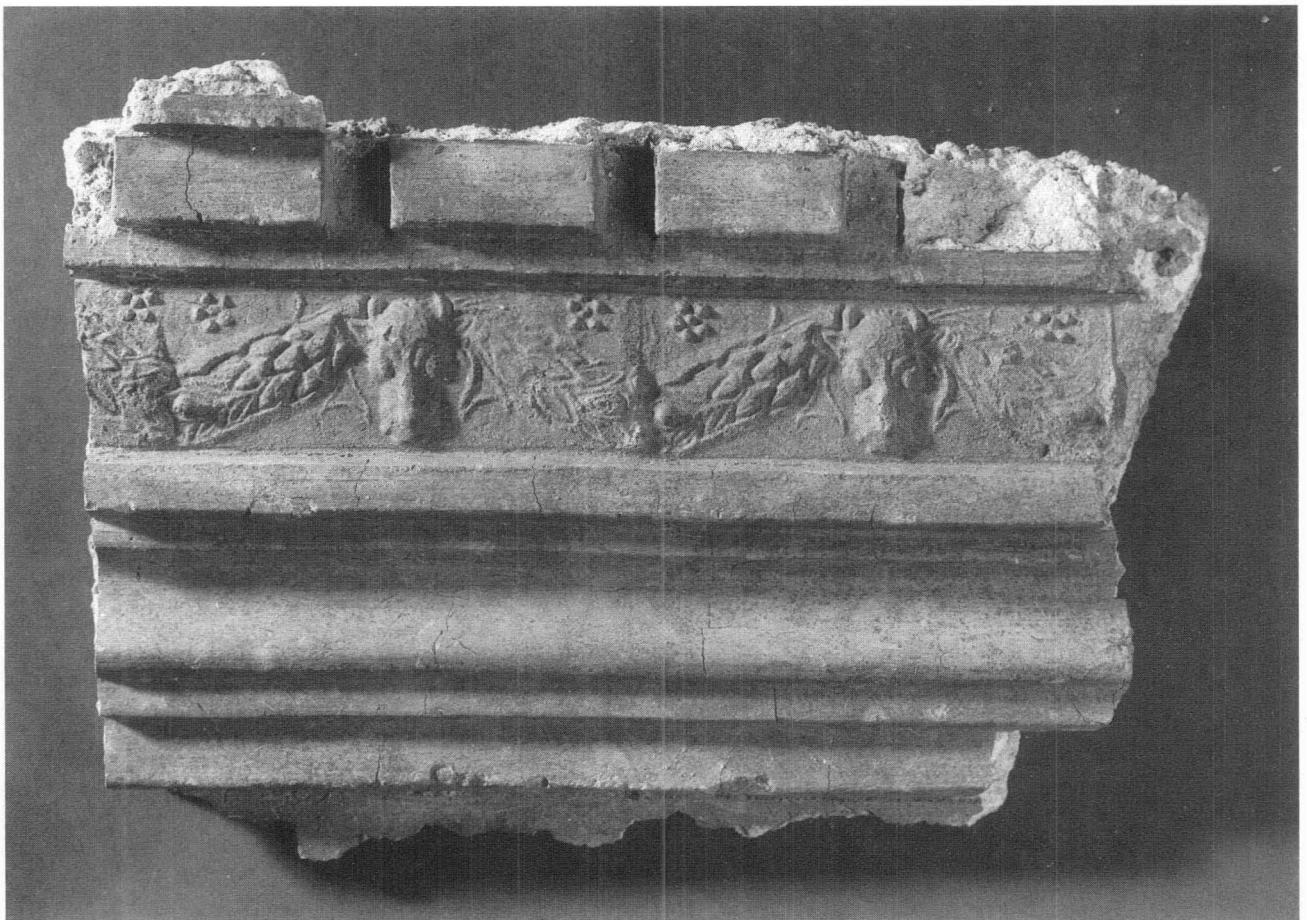


B. The fallen stone blocks over the paving of the gate-passage, Area S, looking north-west, 1990.

PLATE XXXVI



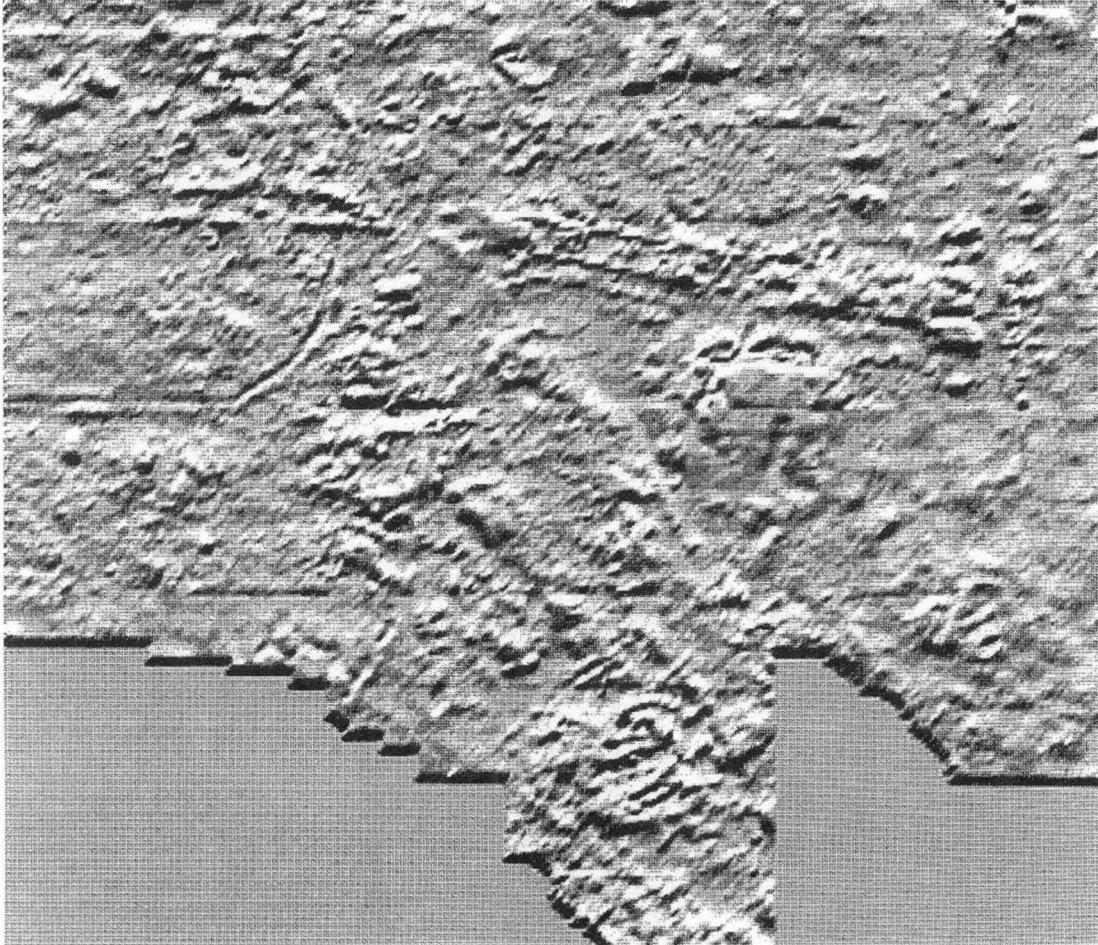
A. Stucco moulding, showing reed impressions in the core, SF 12391.



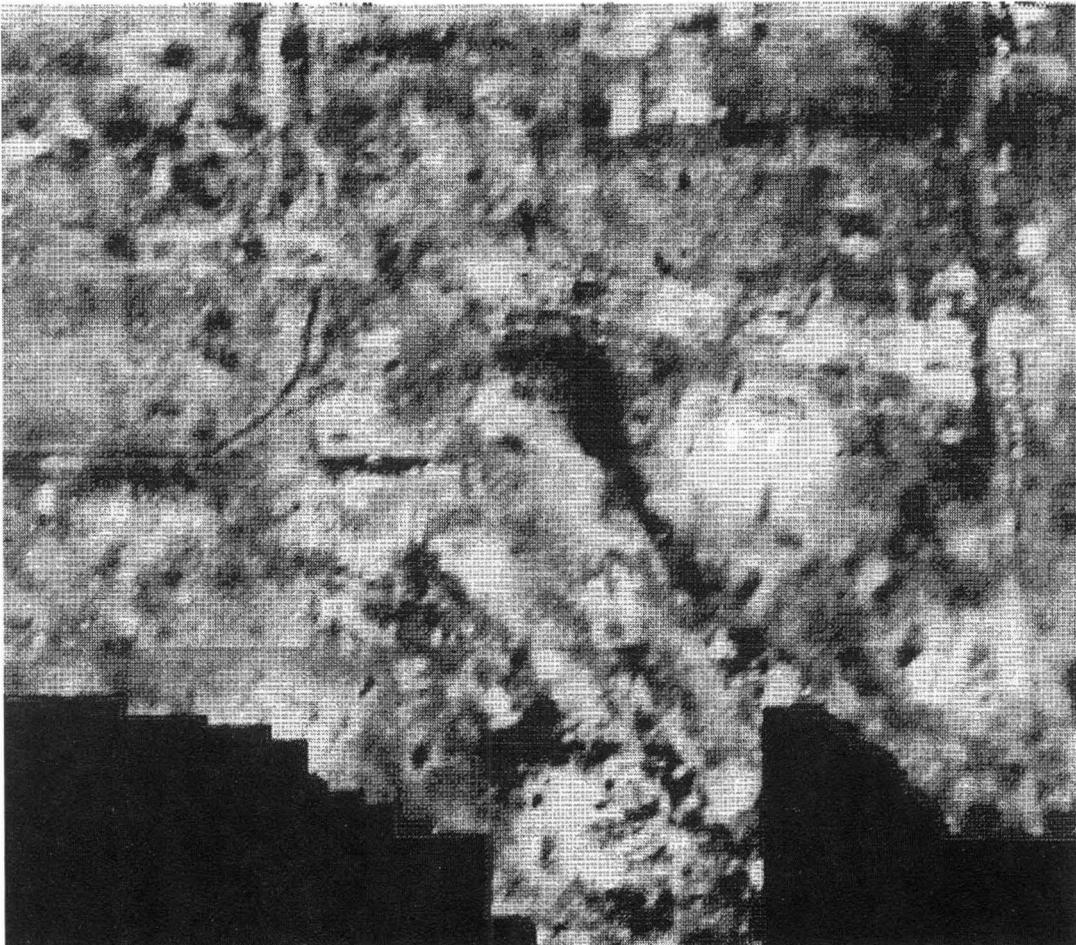
B. The stucco moulding with bulls-heads and garlands, SF 12391.

PLATE XXXVII

The resistivity survey within the early Byzantine defences.



A. Grey scale image with east/west edge detecting.



B. Grey scale image of resistivity data. (Light areas = high resistivity. Dark areas = low resistivity).

PLATE XXXVIII

