

THE EARLY BYZANTINE CIRCULAR FORUM IN DYRRACHIUM (DURRËS, ALBANIA) IN 2002 AND 2004–2005: RECENT RECORDING AND EXCAVATION

I. INTRODUCTION

A. DYRRACHIUM: ADRIATIC PORT AND BALKAN GATEWAY (BY JOHN WILKES)

The settlement of Dorian Greeks from Corinth and its colony Corcyra established in the last quarter of the seventh century BC lay at the sheltered southern tip of a virtual island of low hills then linked to the Illyrian mainland by sandbars. A safe anchorage for shipping heading north along the east shore of the Adriatic, Dyrrachium (originally called Epidamnos) was also the preferred port for the south Adriatic crossing to Italy (the currents were less dangerous than in the narrows further south). To the east the settlement appears from the outset to have enjoyed close links with the Illyrian peoples of the interior.

The wider political horizons of the Hellenistic era made the port a prized possession for the ruler of Macedonia to the east, then for Epirus to the south, and again for the emerging Illyrian state to the north. When Roman forces first crossed the Adriatic in 229 BC their first act was to occupy Dyrrachium, a possession they were never to relinquish. A century later, when included within the Roman province of Macedonia, the city became the western terminus of the Via Egnatia, the great Roman highway constructed to link Italy with the east. Now Dyrrachium gained a reputation often attached to major ports of transit, ‘tavern of the Adriatic’ and ‘a place through which no goods passed intact’. Yet Cicero endured its discomforts for the better part of his year in exile (57 BC) because it was the best place to get the latest news from Italy. Soon afterwards Dyrrachium was the scene of the first major collision in the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. Finally whatever remained of the ancient Greek settlement was submerged within a Roman veteran colony (*colonia Iulia Augusta Dyrracinorum*) established after Octavian’s victory at Actium in 31 BC.¹

During the centuries of Rome’s unified Mediterranean empire Dyrrachium shed its global role for that of a prosperous regional port. In the reorganization of provinces early in the fourth century the region west of the watershed was detached from Macedonia and became New Epirus (Epirus Nova) with Dyrrachium as its principal city. The increasing separation between east and west following the death of Theodosius I in AD 395 and the disruptive presence of Goths in the Balkans saw the city recover some of its old strategic importance. Though apparently unaffected by the presence of Alaric and the Visigoths in the regions early in the fifth century, Dyrrachium was twice seized by the Ostrogoths, by Valamer in 457 and by Theodoric in 479. The departure of the latter for Italy was followed by an imperial recovery throughout the Balkans, marked by the proliferation of fortifications. In this regard it was an exceptional stroke of fortune that the emperor Anastasius (491–518) at this time was a native

¹ On the history and topography of Dyrrachium in the Graeco-Roman eras, see Cabanes and Drini 1995, 19–49.

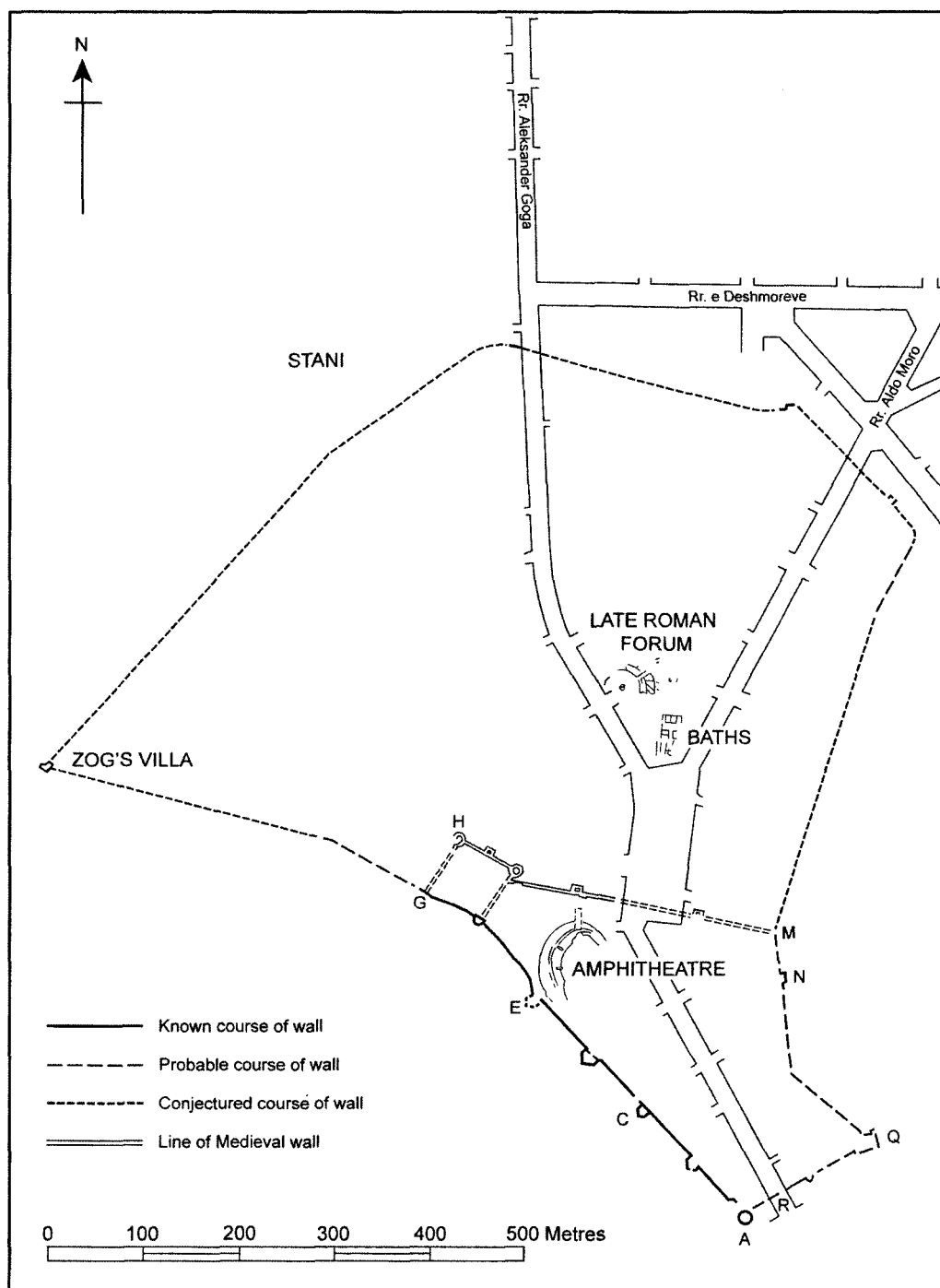


FIG. 1. Location map of forum (based on *JRA* 14, 393).

of the city (born c.439); he is recorded to have embellished his birthplace with a hippodrome and other public buildings. In the light of recent research it seems reasonably certain that the same ruler was responsible for the massive fortifications that now enclosed the city. Based in part on earlier defences, the visual impact of the great façade of walls and towers constructed in solid brick must have been immense, all the more so because Dyrrachium was now gateway to the empire. In the words of an authority on the defences: 'They are an act of both monumental and martial display as a statement of imperial potency, and the origin of Anastasius himself from Durrës only strengthens the image of imperial presence and architectural iconography' (Gutteridge 2003, 31).

Little has survived from the archaic and classical city, though a recently completed field survey has yielded traces of its impact on the surrounding territory in these eras. The Greek-speaking city is visible in a harvest of inscriptions, notably the large number of small columnar funeral monuments from cemeteries north of the city. The Roman colony is represented, characteristically, by the great amphitheatre and a large complex of civic baths. The rapidly accelerating construction in many areas of the modern city reveals many traces of the ancient city but rarely allows enough time for a full investigation. Until recently it seemed that, except for the walls, nothing had survived of the early Byzantine city embellished by Anastasius. Now that gap appears to have been filled though the discovery of the remains of the *Macellum*/Forum close to the centre of the modern city (FIG. 1).

In the following section (I. b) the excavations of 1987–2001 are described in summary, since a full account must await the clearance of modern structures to permit an examination of the entire monument. The focus of this report is recent work on the Forum, a circular colonnade enclosing a paved area, and a central rotunda. The first part is an account of the architectural remains completed in 2002, along with brief notes on the early medieval levels and burials (II). The second part (III) describes the completion in 2004 and 2005 of two unfinished trenches of the earlier excavations below the level of the Forum adjacent to the Rotunda, undertaken with the specific goal of obtaining stratified dating evidence for construction of the monument. A concluding section (IV) summarizes the new evidence for the earlier structures on the site and for the character of the Forum.

The work in 2002, 2004, and 2005 was supported by the Packard Foundation for the Humanities through the International Centre for Albanian Archaeology in Tirana, and was undertaken under the auspices of the Archaeological Museum of Durrës.

B. EXCAVATIONS OF THE MACELLUM/FORUM 1987–2001 (BY AFRIM HOTI)

The *Macellum*/Forum first came to light in 1987 when an area behind the A. Moisu Theatre was excavated to a depth of 2.40 m prior to the construction of a public square. This revealed a part of the circular colonnade and Forum paving at a level above that of the adjacent baths, along with an enclosing courtyard and an outer circle of smaller rooms identified as belonging to a Roman market (*macellum*), similar to those known in other parts of the Roman world (PLATE 40). The finds indicated a date for the structures in the fifth or sixth centuries. In this first season were also found some of the early medieval burials that covered the entire site (see below II. j). In the following year further excavation east of the colonnade revealed more of the outer structures, a complex of shops (A–C), an entrance (FIG. 2; PLATE 41 a), and yet more burials (FIG. 4). Further work in the same area revealed a room identified as a workshop, with a large drainage channel. By now it was clear that this was a structure entirely

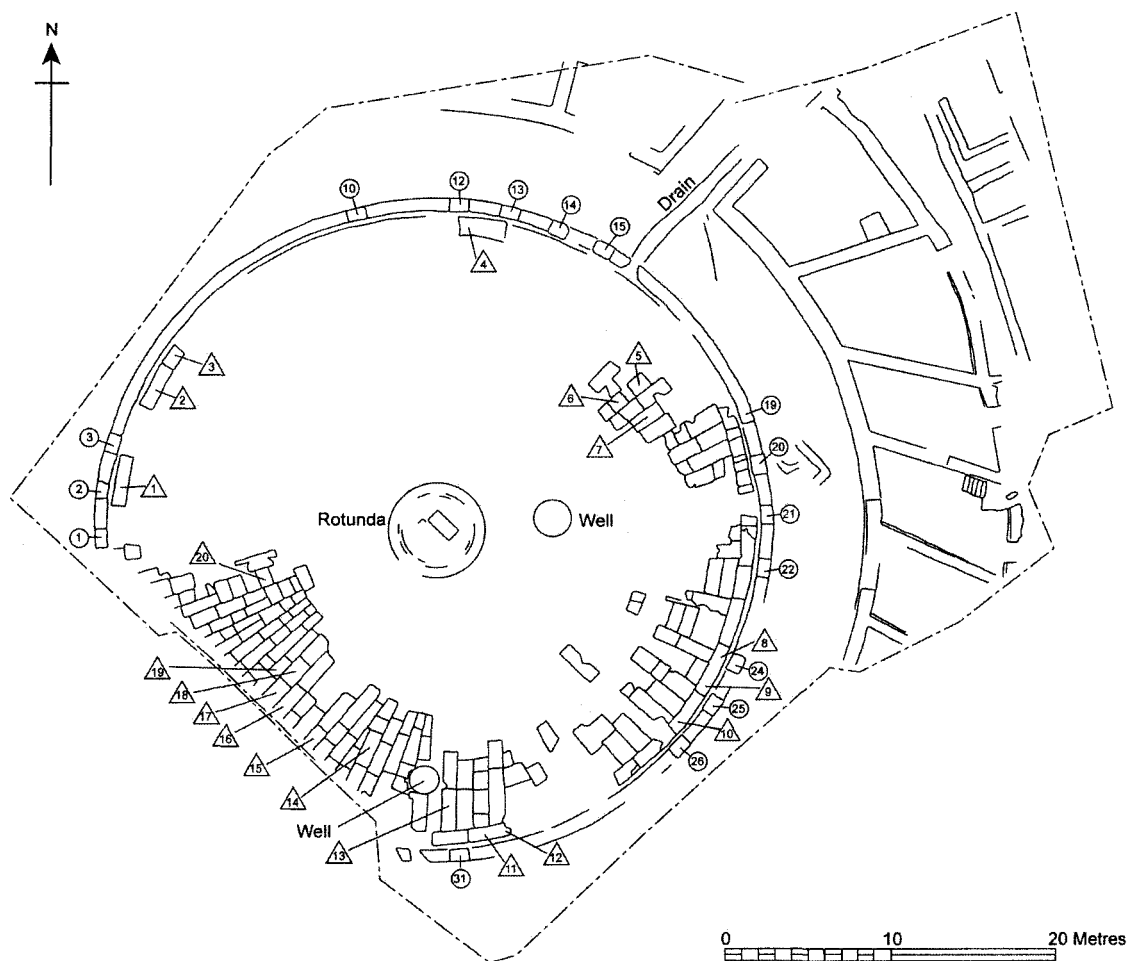


FIG. 2. Circular colonnade with locations of plinths (numbered circles) and inscriptions (triangles).

separate from the baths which it partly overlay. In 2000–1 the excavations of two further rooms in the outer circle (D and E), also identified as shops, yielded a ceramic deposit of 56 kg from the Late Roman/Early Byzantine period. This important deposit, including imported fine wares, amphorae and coarse wares, is the subject of a study by Shkodra (2006). Evidence recovered from the site as a whole indicates a date for the construction of the Macellum/Forum to the late fifth century, suggesting that it was one of the many buildings bestowed by the emperor Anastasius (AD 491–518) upon his native city.²

Hitherto it has not been possible to locate precisely the market complex and the civic baths within the little that is known of the ancient street grid of Durrës. Remains of a Roman street that headed north from the modern port entrance towards the area known as ‘Parku sportiv’

² For summary accounts of the earlier excavations see Hoti 1987, 1988, and 1989; Hoti *et al.* 2004, and on the

monument in its wider context Muka 2003. On the pottery from the site see Shkodra 2005b, 2006.

(Alexander Goga Street) were traced in 1960 at the west entrance to the city markets at a depth of 2–2.20 m (Toci 1965). It seems likely that this was the principal north–south axis of Roman Durrës within an orthogonal street grid (FIG. 1). Structures aligned with this line have been located on both sides of the road, near the former Maliq Muco school (Tartari and Myrto 1988). Remains of a second north–south Roman street were identified on the west side of the civic baths (Kabashi 1989, 286), while it is also judged to be significant that the long axis of the nearby amphitheatre appears to coincide with the line of these two streets (Gutteridge *et al.* 2001).

II. THE CIRCULAR COLONNADE, PIAZZA, AND CENTRAL ROTUNDA (FIG. 2; PLATE 41 *b*) (BY JOHN WILKES)

By 2001 excavations of the Macellum/Forum had reached the limits imposed by the topography of the modern city. Yet enough had been done to demonstrate that the paved area and Rotunda enclosed by the circular colonnade was a monument of great importance from the Late Roman/Early Byzantine era and directly comparable with similar structures at Constantinople and elsewhere. The following sections offer a record of the surviving architectural elements and other remains in the Forum area (A–H), along with a record of the surviving medieval levels compiled in 2002 (I), and a summary account of the early medieval burials in the Forum area recorded during the earlier excavations (J).³

A. PERIMETER WALL AND DRAIN

The raised podium of the circular piazza has a diameter of 40 m and is defined by a brick-faced wall of rubble concrete of inferior construction (0.76–0.80 m wide) (PLATE 43 *a*). In some places the wall was constructed in short, straight sections with changes of direction more or less coinciding with the columns of the colonnade, although the outer face has throughout a regular curved profile. The limestone plinths supporting bases, shafts and capitals were set into the upper courses of the wall at intervals that vary between 1.78 and 2.06 m. There is no evidence for how the original exposed top surface of the wall in the spaces between the plinths might have been covered. The recesses and make-up for the bases that are now missing can be detected in the top of the wall, whose upper surface consists now of bricks and eroded mortar. Throughout the entire perimeter there are no traces of repairs or alterations, nor any indication of structures attached to the outer face of the circle.

Between the inner face of the perimeter wall and the outer edge of the marble paving there ran a shallow drain (0.25–0.36 m wide and c.0.20 m deep). In some areas on the east and west the base of the channel was formed of stone slabs but elsewhere bricks were used. The variations in width were caused by the slabs of the marble paving that formed the inner edge of the drain not being cut to a circular profile but simply left with straight sides. The outflow of the channel lay on the east where a stone-lined culvert led out of the colonnade between bases **15** and **16**, the location of the presumed entrance.

³ Bold figures in parentheses refer to the catalogue of architectural elements in the Appendix below.

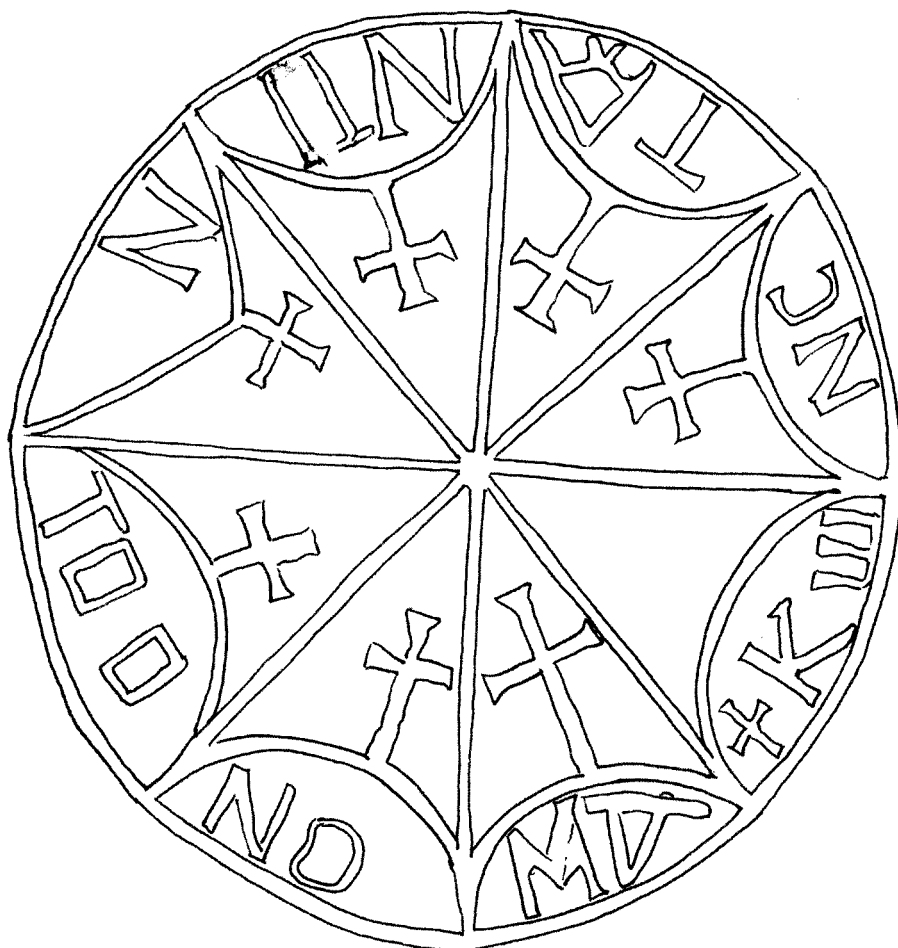


FIG. 3. Circular inscription and design on forum paving (Section 6 no. 16).

B. LIMESTONE PLINTHS (PLATES 42 and 43)

Seventeen survive, of which sixteen remain still *in situ* set into the upper levels of the perimeter wall described above (1-3, 10, 12-15, 19-22, 24-6, 31), while another (18) has recently been levered from its position and lies near the outer face of the perimeter wall. Set at intervals of between 1.78 and 2.06 m, the plinths consist of rectangular blocks 1.18-1.20 m long of fine-grained cream limestone available from quarries in the vicinity of the city. All exhibit the marks of use in an earlier structure. In width they fall into two groups, a larger of c.0.86-0.89 m (3, 13-15, 18, 20, 24-6) and a smaller with a width of 0.73-0.75 m (1-2, 10, 12, 19, 21-2, 31), while both groups have a similar thickness of 0.20-0.23 m.

All the blocks have an upper surface rendered smooth through prolonged pedestrian wear (1 and 3 were inverted at the time of their reuse in the colonnade). All blocks also have traces of anathyrosis bands of c.80-100 mm on both the long and the short sides (PLATE 43 a),

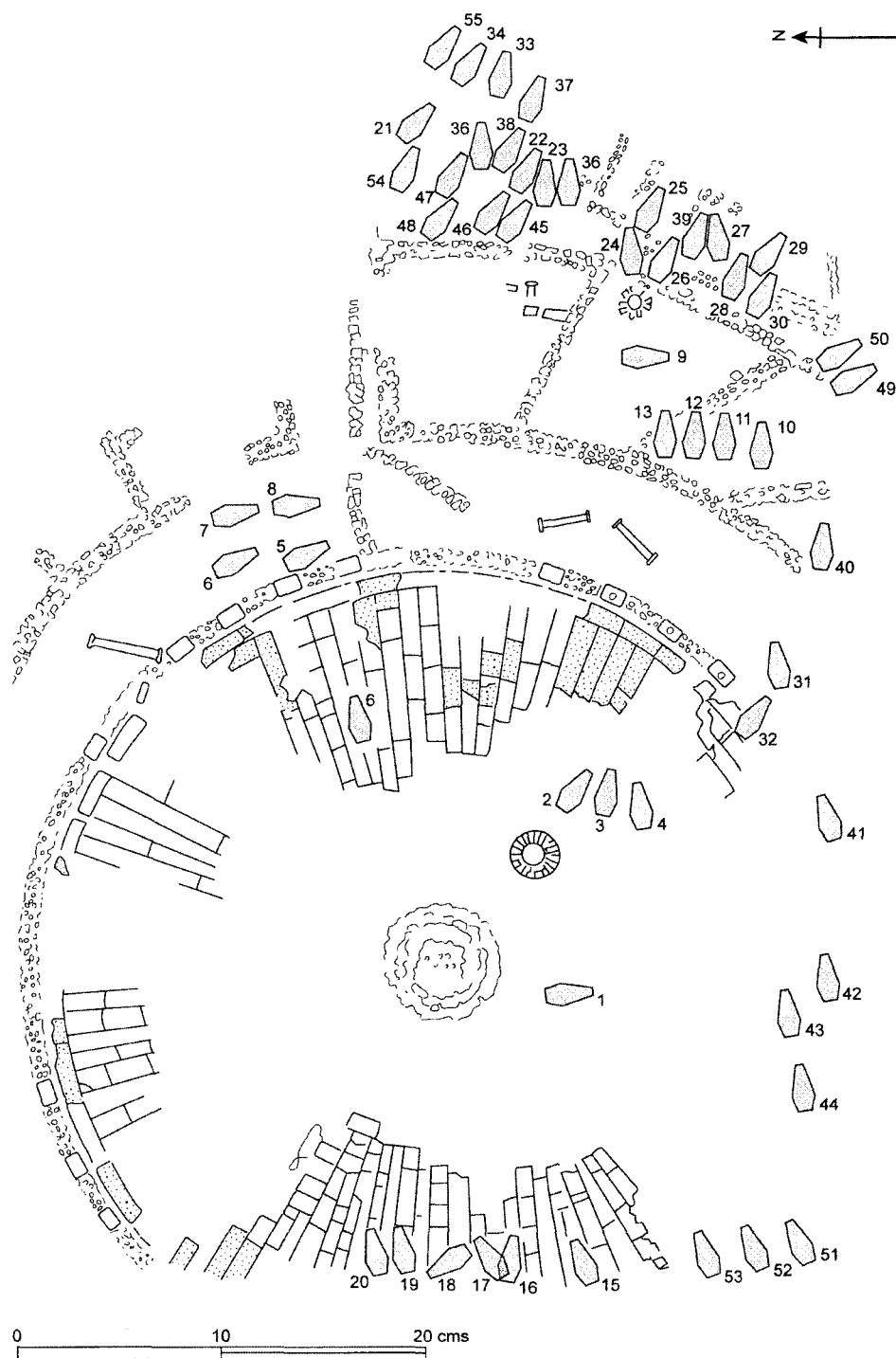


FIG. 4. Late burials in area of Forum and Macellum.

indicating their use in a horizontal surface of closely fitted blocks in rows 0.86 and 0.75 m wide. On the long side the band of anathyrosis has a roughly central downward extension that indicates the join between the blocks of the adjacent row. On many blocks there is also visible an incised mason's line at the precise centre of the long side. One can only speculate as to the origin of these blocks. The large number (probably 40) and consistent dimensions in two sizes suggest they were removed from a single public space. One possible source is the, by then disused, amphitheatre around 300 m away. There some of the heavy paving blocks that remain *in situ* in the lower gangway appear to be of the same stone and were laid in an arrangement similar to that in which the colonnade blocks were originally employed.

Some of the plinths are damaged at the corners and on the sides, and two adjacent blocks (**25** and **26**) have a similar shallow channel cut into the upper surface on the long axis (30–40 mm deep, 180 mm wide and 220 mm from the edge), indicating a later structure erected on the line of the demolished colonnade but when the plinths were still *in situ*. In one of these blocks (**26**) a lead-filled socket close to the edge of one of the long sides indicates the presence of a barrier or balustrade perhaps belonging to the period of original use. The cut or fracture of another plinth block (**31**) some 200 mm from one of the long sides may also belong to its original phase of use.

The function of the plinths was to provide a level and stable base for the architectural elements of the circular colonnade. The upper surfaces of those on the north (**10–12**) are within 100 mm of those on the south (**24–5**) but a subsidence in the east part of the circle has left the levels of the bases in that area up to 300 mm lower than the rest, though whether this occurred during the existence of the colonnade remains uncertain.

C. MARBLE BASES (PLATES 42–43)

Upon each of the plinths a pad of coarse pink mortar was spread over the upper surface on which was placed a base 0.27–0.29 m high carved in grey-white marble, probably originating from the quarries of Proconnesus in the Sea of Marmara. Some remain *in situ*, or have been relocated in the course of recent reconstruction (**1–2**, **12**, **14**, **22**, **31**; **10** and **14** are no longer in place while **20** has recently been displaced and now lies upside down near the perimeter wall). An unfinished base in blue-grey marble (now on plinth **20**) may have been rejected because of a natural flaw, although the stone is different from that of the others. In form the bases resemble an inverted Doric capital resting on its square abacus (sides 0.72–0.75 m and 0.10 m high), on which is a chamfered lower torus and a plain scotia c.0.55 in diameter. On the upper surface there is a dowel socket (70 mm diameter) with a V-profile lead channel 25 mm wide. All of the bases are roughly dressed in similar fashion with the chisel, perhaps carried out at the quarry, and there is no indication that any was finished in the manner one might have expected. Several bases have Greek letters (c.50 mm high) inscribed on the side of the abacus, PAT (**1**, **13**, **14**) (PLATE 42 *a*), EY (**22**) and a possible ΣΡ (**24**), all possibly applied in the quarry. The upper torus of a base in the Attic-Ionic tradition is here cut as a plain band (c.100 mm) on the base of the shafts.

D. COLUMN SHAFTS (PLATES 42 *b*, 43 *a*, 44 *c*)

Each base was intended to support a plain circular shaft of marble. One example that has survived intact and that has been set on a base (**12**) is 3.45 m high with a lower diameter of c.0.55 m and an upper of 0.45 m. The base is decorated with a plain torus mould and there

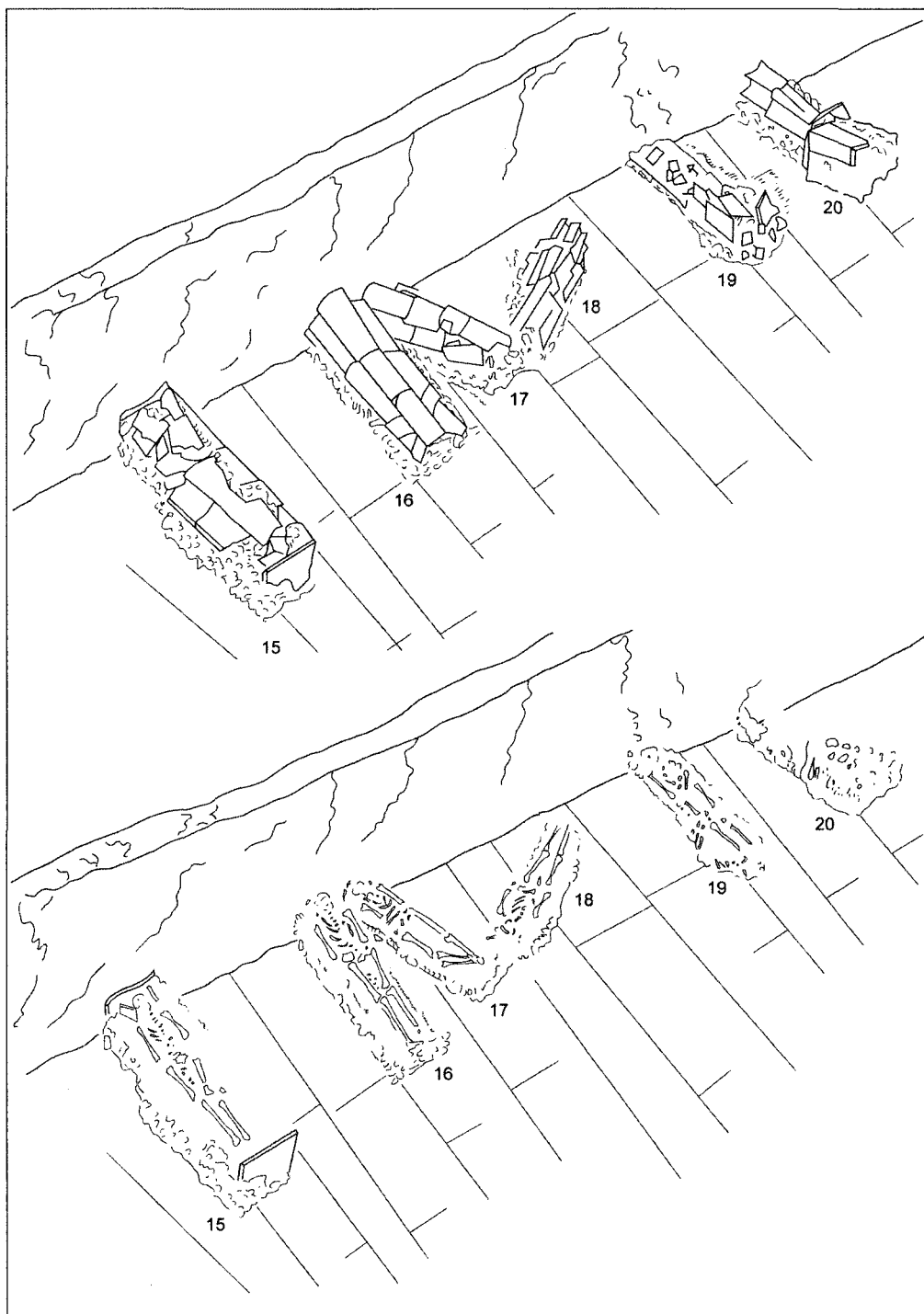


FIG. 5. Projection drawing of burials 15–20 against west profile above forum pavings.

is a plain double moulding at the top. The fragments of three other shafts have been reconnected (3.52 m high) and set on bases (**2**, **13**, **22**).

Among fragments of other shafts that remain within or near to the colonnade that adjacent to base **12** is almost complete. While its general proportions do link it with the other re-erected shafts the actual dimensions (base diameter 0.42 m, upper 0.37 m and height 2.28 m) indicate a different series. The fragment of another shaft adjacent to base **15** has similar dimensions (2.25 m long, with upper and lower diameters 0.38 and 0.44 m) and is likely to belong to this second group. The base fragment of a shaft in grey granite with a torus moulding and a base diameter of 0.60 m appears too large to have belonged to the colonnade, unless perhaps it figured somehow in the nearby entrance to the circular piazza.

As far as can now be determined the intercolumniation in most of the colonnade was c.3.00 m, possibly varying by up 0.15 m. An entrance to the piazza on the east appears to be indicated by the wider spacing between shafts **15** and **16**, while an overall calculation of the intercolumniation of the 40 m perimeter suggests there may have been a corresponding entrance on the west between the as yet unexcavated column locations (**35–6**).

There is a presumption that, like the plinths, the bases and shafts were *spolia* extracted from existing buildings elsewhere in the city but none of the many cuts and incisions into the shafts appears likely to antedate their incorporation into the colonnade.

E. CAPITALS (PLATE 42c)

Three marble Corinthian capitals remain on the site, two of which have been placed on re-erected shafts (**12**, **15**). These are 0.57 m high and 0.72 m across at the top. The third remains adjacent to plinth **16**. Carved from the same grey-white marble as the bases and shafts, the Corinthian scheme is produced in rather squat proportions. Fleuron stem and helices are damaged on all three examples and the volutes on two. The bell is cased with two tiers of spiky acanthus, achieved by cutting the leaves as facets and resulting in the loss of naturalistic appearance. The angular effect is softened by the very rounded voids between the follicles. Overall the form is typical of the late Roman/early Byzantine period, probably mass-produced in a finished state at the quarries that remained productive in this period.

Despite a modern reconstruction that includes a faceted architrave above the restored shafts and capitals, there is no evidence from the site or from the vicinity for any form of entablature. The possibility that such a feature was present cannot be entirely ruled out but currently there is no evidence of any kind that this was the case.

F. FORUM PAVING, DRAINAGE TANK, AND WELL (FIG. 2; PLATE 41a)

The area between the inner face of the colonnade and the foundation of the Circular Rotunda has a radius of 16.90 m. The outer band of this area (11.70 m wide) was paved with slabs of grey-white marble, some of which still remain *in situ*. Whether or not the inner part of the piazza (5.20 m) was paved in a similar fashion remains uncertain, since the inner limit of the surviving paving on the west appears to be defined by a circular edge that may indicate a change in level for the inner surface area of the piazza. At the same the excavation profiles revealed in 2004 and 2005 (see below, section III) indicate that the floor of the piazza in the vicinity of the Rotunda was at or near the same level as the existing paving.

The slabs have a thickness of c.60 mm and are laid on a bed of white mortar and crushed brick. They are closely fitted and none bears signs of having been already used in another

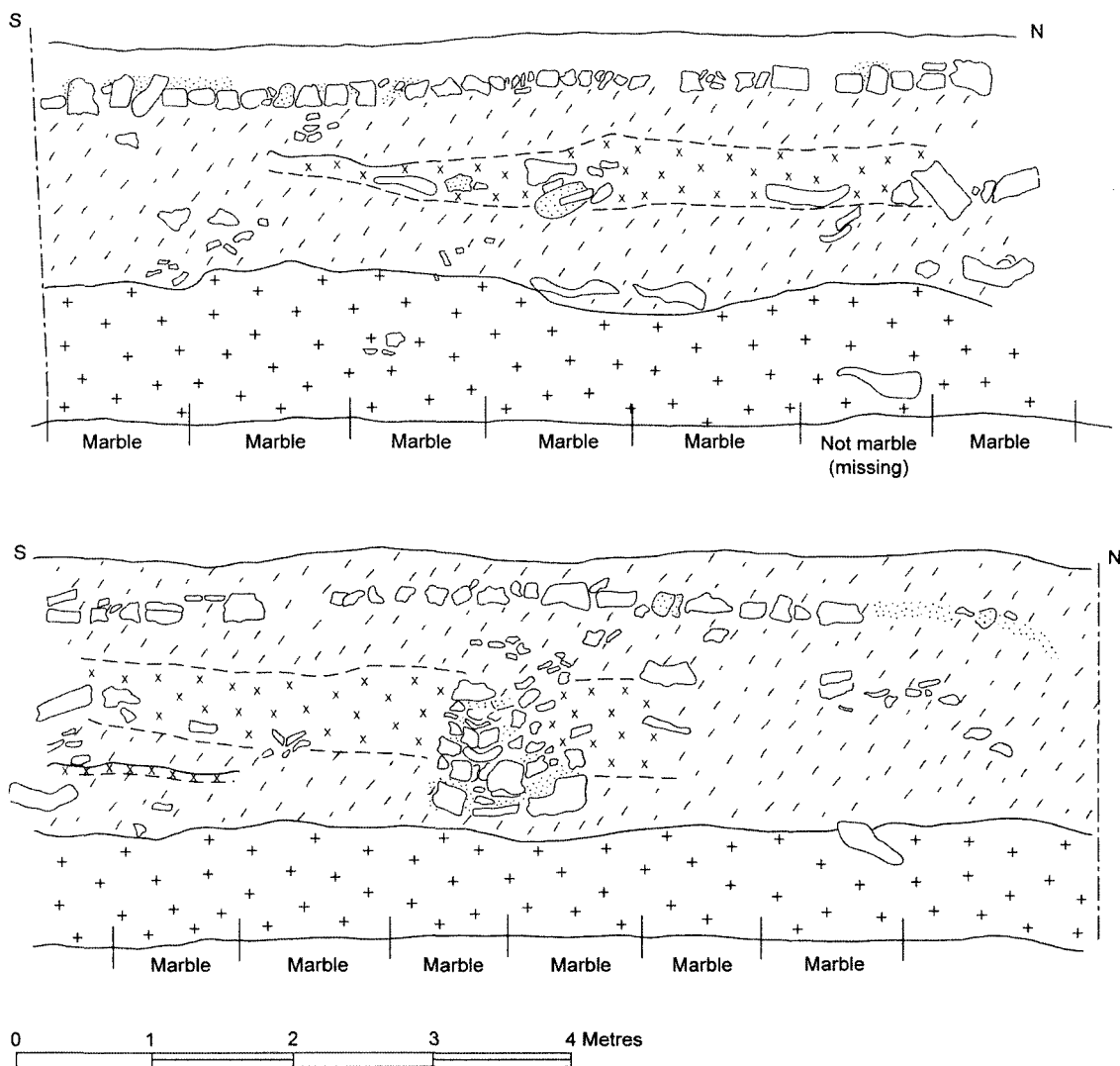


FIG. 6. Profile of levels on west between forum paving and modern street level.

context. Most of the slabs are laid in a concentric radial arrangement, except for the outer ring adjacent to the perimeter colonnade which consisted of larger slabs (0.82–0.90 m wide) laid lengthways along the inner side of the perimeter drain. In some places the outer edges of these slabs were cut to the curvature of the drain but in other places this was not done. Within this outer circle the slabs were tapered to fit the radial pattern until the point where a second circle of slabs laid lengthways marked the inner limit of the paving leaving the unpaved area at the centre (5.20 m wide) around the Rotunda.

Close to the colonnade in the south-west of the piazza a square drainage tank or sump with sides of 0.65 m, constructed in stone and brick, was probably an original feature for use in cleaning the paved area and the perimeter drain. The date of the well c.2.75 m south-east of

the Rotunda (PLATE 41*b*) is less certain. The interior diameter is 1.20 m. For a depth of c.1.30 m the sides are lined with bricks ($0.20 \times 0.27 \times 0.37$, $0.31 \times 0.23 \times 50$ mm) then to a depth of 2.40 m with stones set in mortar, below which again are courses of bricks set in mortar. The material recovered from the fill does not rule out a Roman date but the balance of evidence suggests a medieval date.

G. INSCRIPTIONS ON THE FORUM PAVING (FIG. 2; PLATES 44–45*b*)

A number of Greek letters and other markings were cut into the paved surface, apparently while the circular piazza was in use (height and width in mm):

1. 'Benchmark motif', 40×80 (PLATE 44 *a*)
2. Cross, 70×66 (PLATE 44 *b*)
3. Cross, 50×70
4. Cross, 60×60
5. Theta, 50×60
6. Theta, 60×50
7. Theta, 60×50 (PLATE 44 *c*)
8. Cross, 50×40
9. Cross (damaged), 50×40 (?)
10. Cross (damaged), 50×40
11. Cross, 50×60
12. Cross in semicircle (theta?), almost erased
13. Theta, 60×60
14. Theta, 70×50
15. Circular design, very worn, 450 diameter
16. Circular design, well preserved, 550 diameter (FIG. 3; PLATE 45 *a*)
17. Circular design, worn, 500 diameter (PLATE 45 *b*)
18. Incised rectangle, 1200×900 , with cross, 50×40
19. Cross, 50×50
20. Iota (?) and omega, 40×100

These include eight simple cross-marks incised mostly in the outer ring of paving slabs (nos. 2–4, 8–11, 18–19) and five examples of what appears to be the Greek letter theta on some of the radial slabs (nos. 5–7, 13–14). The most intriguing consist of three circular motifs (c.500 mm diameter) carved into the radial slabs adjacent to the present west edge of the excavation and seemingly located close to the axis between the known entrance through the colonnade on the east and the presumed entrance (unexcavated) from the west (FIG. 3). The three designs 15–17 appear to be identical and the varying degrees of wear suggest that only one of these was in use at any one time, having had to be replaced on a different slab as required. Within a circular pattern of semicircles (domes?) surmounted by crosses a Greek inscription reads: /TO O/NO/MA/+KΩ/NΣ/TA/NTI/N/ ('The Name of Constantine?'), whose significance remains uncertain (FIG. 3).

Consultation with specialists in the epigraphy of this era has yielded no close parallel with this circular design. *Prima facie* its appearance in the same area of the Forum, where it was renewed at least twice after heavy wear, suggests that it may have served some popular

recreational function rather than one linked with official ceremonial. This also seems to be confirmed by the crude carving of the design using the point of a chisel.⁴

H. CENTRAL ROTUNDA (FIGS. 2–13; PLATES 45*c*, 47*b*)

At the centre of the piazza is the circular foundation of mortared rubble, brick, and stone with a diameter of 5.75 m and which excavations in 2004 and 2005 revealed to be set on a square podium of similar dimensions and construction, making a foundation for the monument that extended for at least 3 m below the level of the marble paving. Above the level of the paving the surviving core indicates the existence of two concentric steps (each 0.25 m high). In the top surface of the rubble concrete are embedded two massive limestone blocks once held together by dovetail clamps (now removed), although whether this was their original situation seems unlikely. The visible dimensions of one block are 1.82 m long, 0.90 m wide, and at least 0.32 m deep and this, along with the other, appears to have formed a square plinth (sides 1.80 m) at the centre of the monument. The clamp sockets are 210 mm long and 50 mm deep tapering towards the join from 100 to 80 mm. It seems unlikely, though not impossible, that these blocks belonged to an earlier structure later incorporated into the monument and most likely they are another example of architectural *spolia* brought from elsewhere in the city for this project, while the correspondence of the clamp sockets can only be coincidental.

Whatever stood on this circular foundation must have been the central focus of the entire complex. A statue or group of statuary is possible but the massive podium on which it rested (PLATE 48*b*) suggests something taller, perhaps a column surmounted by a statue, comparable with that in the round forum at Constantinople.

I. OCCUPATION LEVELS ABOVE THE CIRCULAR FORUM (BY ELVANA METALLA)

No record was available of the levels removed by excavation from above the colonnade and piazza, except for that of the early medieval burials described below. In order to retrieve some form of record a length of c.15 m along the western limit of the excavation (FIG. 2) was dressed back to produce a profile of the post-Roman deposits c.2.50 m high, between the level of the paving and that of the modern street (FIG. 6).

Between 9 and 10 m from the south (left), cleaning revealed in section a wall on a north-west-south-east axis, constructed of small stones and mortar, and another possible wall around the 6 m point along the section, aligned on a similar axis.

Above the marble paving was a layer of dark soil c.1.00 m high, containing a few fragments of residual pottery and bricks. Above this a brown to yellow deposit of clay c.1.00 to 1.15 m contained quantities of tile and pottery, some of which probably comes from the burials. Indications of more burials within the section, including an infant skull, and the remains of an adult burial at the southern limit of the section, could not be examined further. Between this and the make-up for the modern street, a level of brown soil contained pottery and brick fragments.

It proved difficult to separate the pottery recovered from cleaning the section. In addition to residual material that included late antique amphorae (LR 1 and LR 2), there were Apulian amphorae of the eleventh to twelfth centuries. Domestic wares included protomaiolica of the

⁴ There appears to be no obvious parallel to this design or text: we are grateful for comments by Charlotte Roueché, Cyril Mango, and Denis Feissel. A similar

design, though devoid of letters, was recently noted (J.W.) in the Forum paving at Timgad in Algeria.

thirteenth century originating from Brindisi, and an example of Corinthian sgraffito, a green-glazed bowl with a fish motif of the twelfth century.

J. EARLY MEDIEVAL BURIALS (BY AFRIM HOTI)

At least fifty-six inhumation burials were located in the course of the earlier excavations, extending across the entire area (FIG. 4). Some lay directly on the Forum paving, others in the surrounding court and above the remains of the shops in the outer circle. Most graves were constructed of reused curved ancient roof tiles (*imbrices*), a form of burial known elsewhere in Durrës (Hoti 1996). Most are oriented west-east, with head to the west, but others are aligned north-east-south-west and north-west-south-east, and one (17) is an exception with head to the south. The skeletons were laid supine, with arms and hands in various positions, forearms across the chest, hands resting on abdomen or pelvis, arms alongside the body, right forearm on the chest, left on the abdomen.

Few of the burials contained grave goods (4, 14, 21). One (4) contained beads of millefiori glass and others resembling pearls, and two bronze head ornaments. A number of other finds, buckles, iron knives, etc., from the same horizon may have come from disturbed graves. The burials were evidently deposited over a long period. If a buckle of Sicilian type does come from a grave then burial on the site had commenced by the early seventh century. The beads and bronze ornaments noted above also indicate the same date. The latest object is a bronze cross (22) dated to the twelfth-thirteenth century. Twenty graves lay within the area of the Forum (1-4, 14-20, 31-2, 41-4, 51-3), of which six (FIG. 5) were adjacent to the section on the west of the site described above (Section II. i).

APPENDIX: ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE CIRCULAR COLONNADE (FIG. 2; PLATES 42-43) (BY JOHN WILKES)

These elements are identified by location numbers, beginning with the first visible location at the north-west corner of the site and then proceeding clockwise, including in the sequence both notional and actual remains. A total of 32 locations lie within the excavated area, the remaining eight (33-40) lying beneath the modern street that borders the site on the west.

In the following catalogue 'inner face' and 'outer face', 'left side' and 'right side', are as seen from within the circle of the Colonnade.

1 Plinth (PLATE 42 *a*), inverted ($1.16 \times 0.74 \times 0.18$ m), damaged on the upper edges and corners; anathyrosis on lower inner face (80 mm), at damaged left end of inner face (30 mm), on outer face along lower edge (90 mm) with vertical band (80 mm) near centre, on right face (80 mm). Base, set on pink mortar (0.71 m square, 0.30 high) with lead-filled dowel socket and Greek letters PAT (alpha with dropped bar) on right of base.

2 Plinth (PLATE 42 *b*), damaged on left side with right inner corner broken away ($1.14 \times 0.73 \times 0.23$ m); anathyrosis on upper edge of inner face (110 mm), vertical band (80 mm) near centre with inscribed mason's line, on damaged right face (110 mm). Base, now replaced ($0.74 \times 0.74 \times 0.30$ m), with

Greek letters EY on right of face. Shaft, restored from fragments (3.45 high, 0.42 m diameter with dowel socket on top).

3 Plinth, inverted ($1.19 \times 0.86 \times 0.20$ m); anathyrosis on all four faces (90-100 mm), upper surface damaged, with parallel setting lines 0.72 m apart.

4-9 No surviving remains.

10 Plinth (1.18×0.74 m); anathyrosis on inner face (120 mm) with vertical band (70 mm) at centre, on outer face (120 mm) with vertical bands (50 mm) at either side, on left face (100 mm) with vertical border (60 mm), on right face (100-120 mm) with vertical borders (70-80 mm); a cut into the upper surface (20 mm deep) probably post-Roman. Base,

unfinished in blue-grey marble (0.64×0.64 m, 0.25 m high), with dowel socket (65 mm) and pouring channel.

11 No surviving remains.

12 Plinth (PLATE 42 *c*) ($1.18 \times 0.89 \times 0.22$ m); anathyrosis on inner face (100 mm) with bands (40 mm) at either end, also possible on side faces, on outer face (100 mm) with vertical band (90 mm) near centre with incised mason's line. Base; in grey-white marble (0.73×0.73 m, 0.29 m high). Shaft; in grey-white marble (3.45 m high). Another shaft in similar marble in vicinity (2.29 m high, 0.42 and 0.36 m lower and upper diameter) with square dowel socket (*c.* 60 mm) and vertical bands of chiselling (*c.* 25 mm wide), probably secondary. Capital, acanthus in grey-white marble (0.57 m high, 0.73 wide).

13 Plinth (PLATE 42 *c*) ($1.19 \times 0.75 \times 0.23$ m); anathyrosis on inner and outer faces (100 mm) with vertical bands (70 mm) at right ends, left face (110 mm) with border (80 mm) at outside left, on outer face a vertical band (80 mm) with incised mason's line. Base, in grey-white marble (0.74×0.74 m, 0.28 m high), on right face incised Greek letters PAT (alpha with dropped bar). Shaft; now restored in plain marble (3.45 m high). Capital; acanthus in plain grey-white marble (0.57 m high, 0.70 m square).

14 Plinth ($1.19 \times 0.89 \times 0.23$ m), damaged at right side; anathyrosis on inner face (110 mm) with band (100 mm) at centre, on left face (100–110 mm) with inner (right) border (40 mm), on outer face (100 mm) with vertical band (40 mm) at right side. Base; in grey-white marble (0.74×0.74 m, 0.28 m high) dowel socket (75 mm) with pouring channel, Greek letters PAT (alpha with dropped bar) on left face.

15 Plinth ($1.19 \times 0.89 \times 0.23$ m), with chiselled cutting in upper surface (0.14 wide and 1.03 from inner edge), probably secondary; anathyrosis on left (120 mm) and right (110 mm) sides with vertical band (60 mm) at right, and on outer face (110 mm) with vertical band (70 mm) at centre. Shaft, (i) lying in vicinity, incomplete in grey-white marble (2.35 m long, base diameter 0.46 m) with dowel socket (60 mm), with chiselled facets similar to shaft **12** above, (ii) base fragment in grey granite (0.77 m long, base diameter 0.60 m) with dowel socket (30 mm).

16 Capital in vicinity of **15**, acanthus in grey-white marble not *in situ* (0.54 m high, 0.46 m diameter, top 0.72×0.72 m).

17 No remains.

18 Plinth, recently removed from position (1.19×0.89 m); anathyrosis, left side (100 mm) and outer face (100 mm) with vertical band (40 mm) at edge.

19 Plinth ($1.20 \times 0.75 \times 0.21$ m); anathyrosis on left side (110 mm) with vertical band (60 mm) at left (outer) edge, outer face (100 mm) with vertical band at right (outer) edge, on inner face (110 mm) with vertical band on right side. Base (0.61×0.61 m base, 0.26 m high) in grey-white marble (not *in situ*) with dowel socket (70 mm) and pouring channel.

20 Plinth (PLATE 43 *b*) ($1.19 \times 0.89 \times 0.22$ m); anathyrosis on inner face (100 mm) with vertical band on left (outer) edge with inscribed mason's line at centre, on left side (110 mm) with vertical band (90 mm) on left (outer edge) and on damaged right side (100 mm) with vertical band on inner (left) edge, on outer face (100 mm) with vertical band (50 mm) at outer (right) edge, but with no incised line. Base, in grey-blue marble, unfinished, possibly abandoned (0.65 m square, 0.26 m high) with dowel hole.

21 Plinth ($1.18 \times 0.75 \times 0.17$) with pad of pink mortar and imprint of removed base; anathyrosis on inner face (100 mm) with vertical bands (50 mm) at either edge, on outer face (100 mm) with vertical band (90 mm) at centre with inscribed mason's line, on left and right faces (100 mm) both now obscured by mortar.

22 Plinth ($1.18 \times 0.75 \times 0.17$ m); anathyrosis on inner face (75–80 mm) with vertical band (0.50 mm) at left edge, on right face (damaged, and once 75–80 mm) with vertical band (30 mm) at right (outer) edge, on outer face (80 mm) with incised mason's line at centre and vertical band (100). Base, in grey-white marble (0.75 m square, 0.28 m high) with incised Greek letters EY on outer face. Shafts, (i) plain marble (3.52 m high, diameter 0.46 m) with dowel socket (70 mm), (ii) intact shaft lying outside perimeter (2.23 m high, diameter 0.44 m base, 0.38 m top) with square dowel socket (55 mm), vertical bands of chiselling (*c.* 35 mm wide) intended to suggest faceting, possibly secondary.

23 No remains.

24 Plinth ($1.18 \times 0.89 \times 0.22$ m) still embedded in mortar; anathyrosis on inner face (110 mm) with vertical band (45 mm) near centre, on outer face (110 mm) with vertical band (60 mm) at left edge, left face hidden by mortar. Base, in grey-white marble (0.73 m square, 0.26 m high) with dowel socket containing lead plug and pouring channel. Greek letters ΣP incised on right face of base.

25 Plinth ($1.19 \times 0.89 \times 0.23$ m), with shallow cut (180 mm wide, 35–40 mm deep), anathyrosis on left and right faces now concealed by mortar, on inner face (120 mm) with vertical band (90 mm) and incised mason's line near centre.

26 Plinth ($1.20 \times 0.89 \times 0.23$ m) with channel cut into upper surface (20 mm deep, 200 mm wide) with lead-filled socket (55×85 mm); anathyrosis on inner face (120 mm) with vertical bands (90 mm) at edges,

on right side (120 mm) with vertical band (60 mm) at right (inner) edge, on outer face (110 mm).

27–30 No remains.

31 Plinth ($1.20 \times 0.76 \times 0.20$ m), with cut or fracture near back edge; anathyrosis on right side but left side buried in mortar on inner face (100 mm) with vertical band (50 mm) to the right of centrally inscribed mason's line, on right side (70 mm) with vertical band (60 mm) at left (inner) edge, outer face (80 mm) with vertical band (50 mm) at right (inner) edge. Base, in grey-white marble (0.72 m square, 0.28 m high) with dowel socket (65 mm) and pouring channel.

32 No remains.

33–40 Presumed locations of plinths, bases, shafts and capitals, in unexcavated west sector of Colonnade beneath the modern street.

III. EXCAVATIONS IN 2004 AND 2005 SOUTH AND NORTH OF THE ROTUNDA (BY ELVANA METALLA AND BRIKENA SHKODRA)

In 1998–9 two trenches were excavated below the level of the Forum paving adjacent to the north and south faces of the Rotunda at the centre (PLATE 40) but could not be completed. In 2004 and 2005 these trenches were re-excavated and slightly enlarged, with the specific purpose of obtaining uncontaminated dating evidence for the Forum that would strengthen the late fifth-century date for the Macellum/Forum based on the earlier excavations, with the building programme of Anastasius as the most probable historical context. In spite of modern disturbance it proved possible to record a succession of earlier structures of the early and middle Roman Empire. It was also possible to establish a connection between the remains in the two trenches (FIG. 13). The following account of the two trenches describes the levels in descending order, followed by the phasing of each based on ceramic evidence beginning with the earliest, all with reference to relevant plans, sections and pottery profiles (FIGS. 7–12; PLATES 45c–48).

A. EXCAVATIONS IN 2004 SOUTH OF THE ROTUNDA

In May 2004 a trench of the earlier excavations on the south side of the Rotunda was re-excavated and enlarged to dimensions of $c.4 \times 3$ m (FIG. 7; PLATE 45 c). Most of the upper levels in the four conjoining profiles (FIG. 8 a–d) had been removed across the trench by the earlier excavation to a depth of $c.2$ m, making it necessary to employ a separate recording sequence for the north, south and west profiles (a–c) from that for the east (d).

In the west profile (b) the level representing the make-up for the Forum level was a much-contaminated deposit of dark soil (Context 1) but a lighter and cleaner deposit towards the south of the section (C3) contained fragments of brick and tile, wall plaster and marble fragments, while a compacted mortar level separating these two (C2) may be of modern origin (PLATE 46 a). In the south (c) the first uncontaminated level was a deposit of mortar

mixed with sand (C16) above the first floor level in the west section (C12), where two levels of compacted mortar (C12 and C20) were separated by a thin deposit of light brown clay (C18).

Below these levels were deposits of architectural debris, deriving from the demolition of the last buildings to occupy the area prior to construction of the Forum, visible in both west (*b*) and south (*c*) sections. In the former these levels were cut by the robbing trench (C36) whose fill was sealed by the levels of the Forum make-up (C12 and C20). To the north of this feature the architectural debris (C28) contained a significant deposit of pottery in the north (*a*) and west (*b*) profiles. South of this robbing trench the levels of architectural debris (C33–35) included deposits of green, brown and yellow clay, along with tile, stone and plaster, that are also visible in the north profile.

Similar deposits were present on the south (*c*) and east (*d*), including roof tiles (C19), plaster (C21) above a deposit of burnt material containing mortar fragments (C24), and others (C25–26) containing many bricks, tiles and clay deposits. In the west (*b*) the lowest courses of the robbed-out wall (C42) survived to a height of c.0.45 m and consisted of mortared bricks and stone (FIG. 7) that appear to have defined on the south a floor of heavy

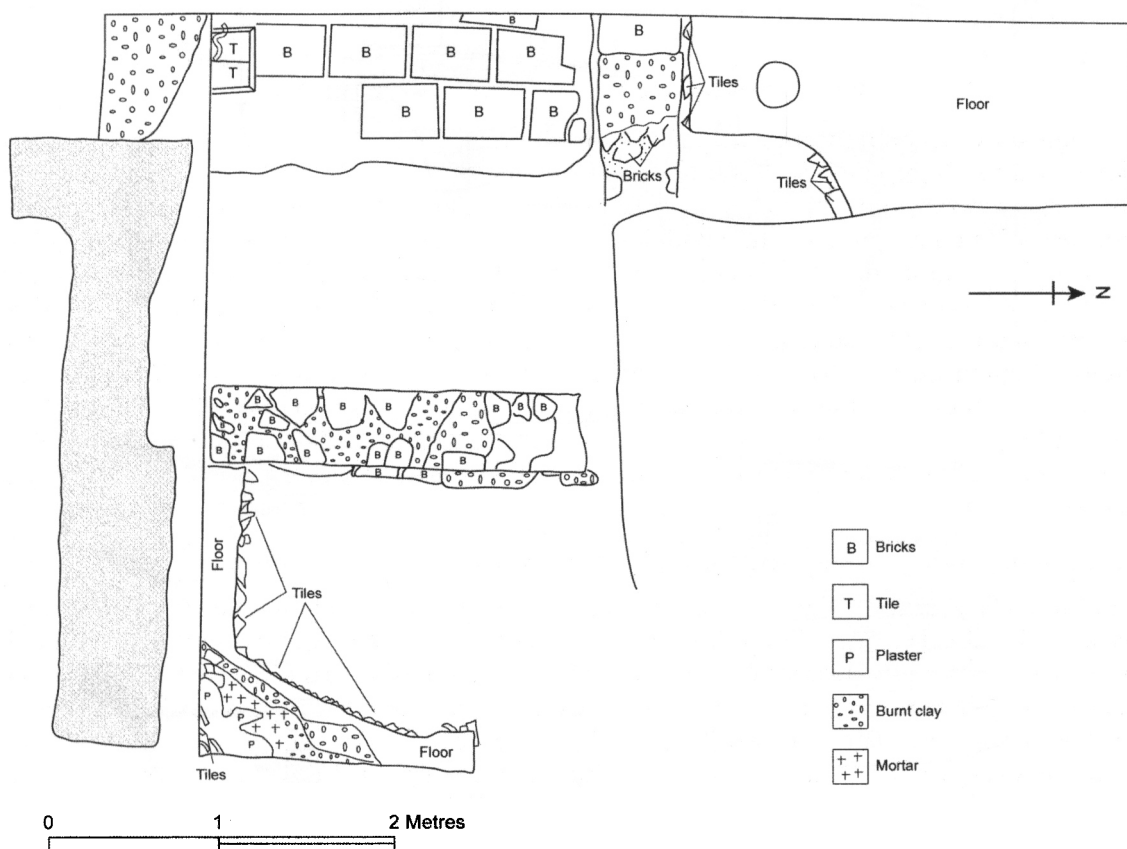


FIG. 7. Plan of 2004 excavations south of Rotunda.

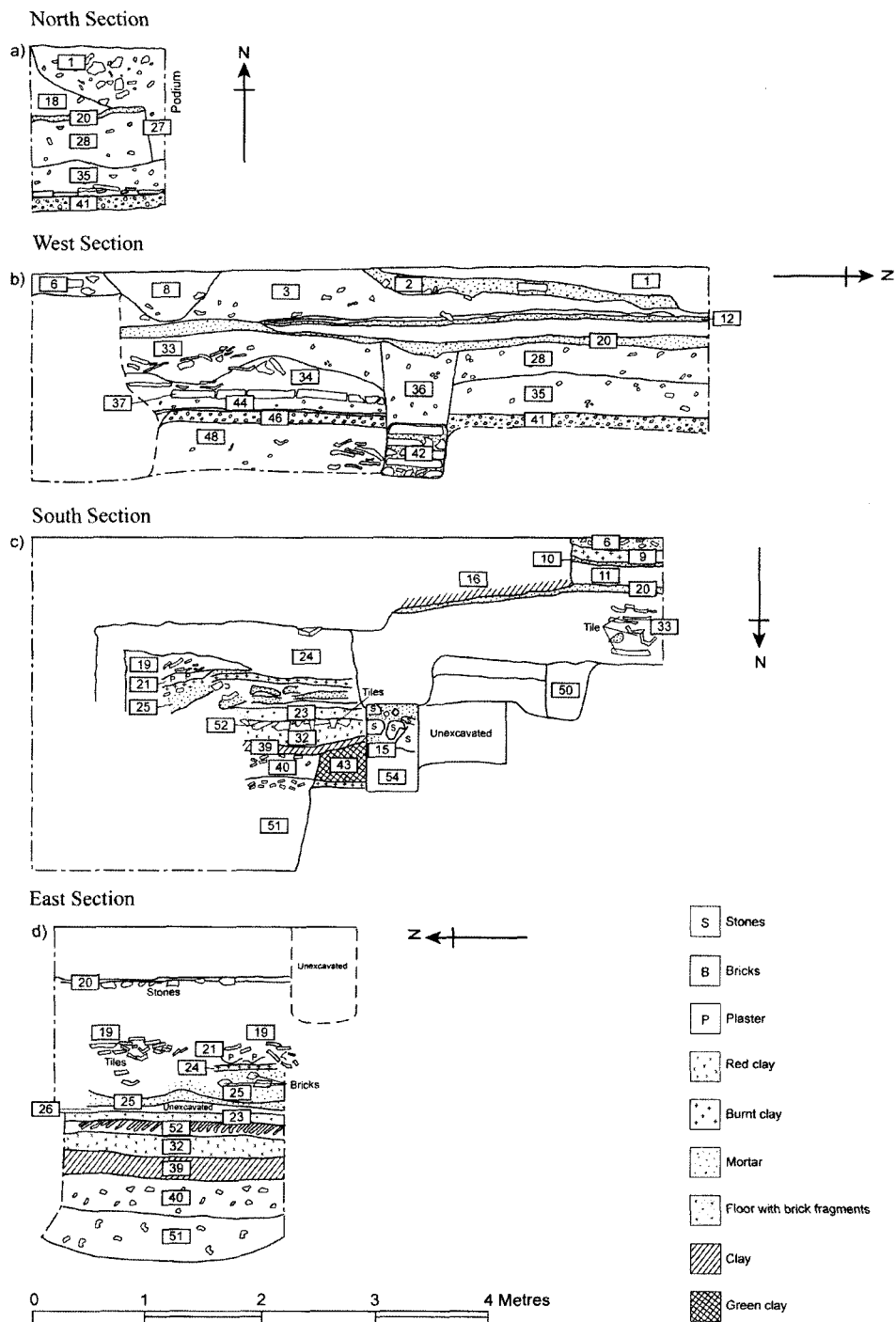


FIG. 8. Section profiles of 2004 excavation: (a) north section; (b) west section; (c) south section; (d) east section.

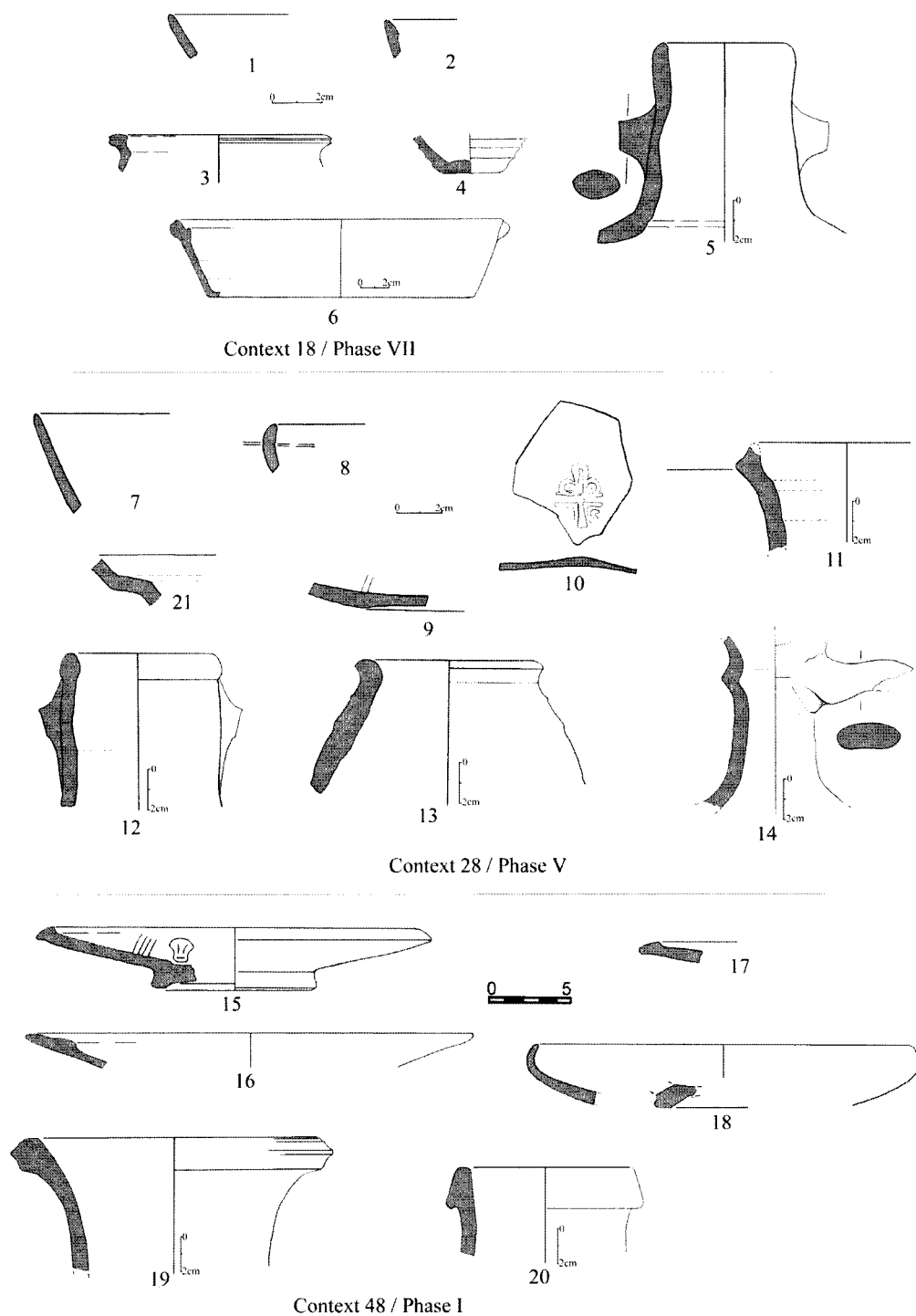


FIG. 9. Pottery evidence from 2004 excavation.

Roman bricks (*sesquipedales*, $0.45 \times 0.30 \text{ m} \times 70 \text{ mm}$) laid at a depth of *c.* 1 m (C37) (PLATE 46 *b*).

To the east (*d*) a well-preserved floor of *opus signinum* (C23) was laid on a bed of diagonally pitched bricks (C52) about 1.50 m below the Forum level (FIG. 7). This floor surface appears to have been defined to the west by the north–south wall (C15), constructed of mortared bricks on a foundation of round stones and pebbles bonded with clay (PLATE 46 *c*). Most of the floor within this area of the trench had been removed by an excavation of uncertain date (PLATE 46 *c*). Within the resulting pit a level of yellow-green clay (C40) contained a quantity of Roman pottery and a denarius of the late second to early third centuries (FIG. 8 *c, d*). Below this again another deposit of clay (C51) contained, in addition to brick and tile fragments, a deposit of early Roman pottery, though this was contaminated by material of the late second to third centuries.

In the south-west of the trench the floor of large bricks (C37) already described was found to have been laid above a demolition deposit containing brick, small stones and burnt material (C44). Below this, and on either side of the robbed east–west wall (C42), was a floor of *opus signinum*, mortar and crushed bricks, laid on a bed of diagonally pitched bricks (FIG. 8 *b*). That to the north (C41) was a compact solid surface (FIG. 8 *a–b*) but that on the south (C46) was much less compact and contained some clay and may have been the make-up for a surface subsequently removed. Below the latter on the south was yet another demolition deposit (C48) of brown clay with burnt material, tiles, bricks, pottery and animal bones (FIG. 8 *b*). The earliest levels located in 2004 lay deep in the large pit cut into the floor in the eastern part of the trench (FIG. 7; PLATE 46 *c*) and consisted of a deposit of green clay (C43), almost devoid of artefacts, the only sign of activity being a deposit of burnt material adjacent to the north–south wall (C15).

Despite the problems encountered during the excavation, it proved possible to construct a sequence of phasing based on deposits of pottery from reasonable secure contexts.

Phase I (FIG. 9. 15–20) consists of the pottery recovered from the lowest levels of the deep pit in the east of the excavation (FIG. 7). Amphorae include Lamboglia Type 2 (second/first century BC–early first century AD; Bruno 1995, 95, 96, 103, 106; Shehi 2003, pl. 2 fig. 7–8; Sciallano and Sibella 1991, p. 35) (FIG. 9. 20), a neck fragment of Mana Type C2B (*c.* 125 BC–AD 30/50; Sciallano and Sibella 1991, p. 73) (FIG. 9. 19). Fine wares include several vessels in an inferior black slip, typical of late Hellenistic types at Durrës (third–first century BC; Hidri 1976, 249, Tab. 1, FIGS. 11–13) (FIG. 9. 16–17) and a plate in red slip that is a local imitation of a Hellenistic form (FIG. 9. 15). These replaced black glaze from the first century BC and continued to be produced in traditional forms (Hidri 1976, 249, pl. 1 fig. 13). The early deposit included also Eastern Sigillata from Syria Palaestina, in a cream fabric with reddish-brown slip (FIG. 9. 18), in a form that is rare at Durrës (*Atlante* 1981–5, ii, form 38, pp. 31–2, pl. 5, 15), and a thin-walled bottle from central Italy (mid second–mid first century BC; *Atlante* 1981–5, ii, type 1/1, 1/359, pp. 243–4, pl. 78. 1–3). The small number of cooking wares, most modelled in Hellenistic forms, included a fragment of Pompeian red ware (late first century BC to early first century AD; Goudineau 1970, 168, pl. 2, fig. 21) and the neck fragment from a biconical vessel with signs of vitrification on the inner surface caused by overfiring.

Phase II is represented by the east–west wall (C42), later robbed out (FIG. 7), whose original construction of stone bonded with mortar is typical of the Hellenistic period in Durrës (for

example at nearby Parku Rinia, and in the Hellenistic necropolis; Tartari 1988), while a later reconstruction in brick belongs to the early Roman period (first–second century AD). The better preserved north–south wall (C15) (FIG. 7) is part of a single Roman construction of the mid-1st century (AD 30/40–60/70; Tartari 1988), to which a wall located in 2005 (C12) that continues the same north–south line (FIGS. 10, 13) seems likely to belong.

Phase III is represented by the levels of demolition (FIG. 8*b*) on the earlier floors (C44 above C46, C35 above C41), both rich in pottery, painted wall plaster and architectural debris. Pottery forms include Hayes 50A (AD 240–325) and Hayes 23 (second–third centuries AD), plain wares with a red slip on the outer surface, amphorae (LR1 and LR4) and some Tunisian products. Together these identify a deposit of the late third or early fourth centuries.

Phase IV is represented by the floor of large bricks (C37), possibly a later phase of occupation within the earlier building, though no occupation material associated with it could be identified (FIGS. 7, 8*b*).

Phase V (FIG. 9. 7–14, 21) is the demolition deposit of the previous phase and consists of three levels (C33 and C34 in the south = FIG. 8*b*), C28 in the north = FIG. 8*a*), rich in pottery (ARS and Phocaean products) and other occupation material. Diagnostic items include Hayes 50(A–B) (FIG. 9. 7), Hayes 67 (AD 360–470) (FIG. 9. 21), Hayes 61 (B) (AD 400–50) (FIG. 9. 9), Hayes 27 (AD 160–220) (FIG. 9. 8), Hayes 23 (mid second–early third century; Hayes 1972, 69–73; 112–16, 100–7, 49–51, 45–8). Phocaean products include a base fragment impressed with a Greek cross (mid-fifth century) (FIG. 9. 7) and two others of the same period (Hayes 1972, 363, figs. 78 no. 67*j*) (FIG. 9. 4). Residual items included Eastern Sigillata A and B, and black glaze. Many of the numerous amphora fragments could not be identified but rim and body fragments of Keay Type 52 (FIG. 9. 12) common in the fourth–fifth centuries but rare in the sixth, were present (Keay 1984, 267–8, fig. 114/4; Robinson 1959, pl. 32, M323; Pacetti 1998, 185–205). Unidentified amphorae forms include one with external roll rings above a band of grooves at the join of rim and neck (FIG. 9. 12) and another on which the grooves are barely visible. Other amphorae included LR4 (FIG. 9. 13) and there were indications of the presence of LR1, 2 and 3 (Riley 1981, 115–22; Arthur 1998, 157–79; Reynolds 1995, 71–83). Among plain wares there were many fragments with red and brown paint (FIG. 9. 14) and several types of cooking vessels not readily identifiable.

Phase VI is the fill (C36) of the robbing trench (FIG. 8*b*) of the west–east wall (C42) which yielded no datable finds (FIG. 7).

Phase VII represents the material deposited before the construction of the piazza, but subsequent to the excavation of the Rotunda foundation, in order to establish a level surface on a site that slopes naturally from west to east. Most of the pottery consists of residual items, fine wares including Black glaze and Eastern Sigillata (A and B), ARS types including Hayes 50 (A and B), 23 (B) (FIG. 9. 1–2), amphorae (LR2–4), and cooking pans with flat base (Semeraro 1992, 67 no. 4: 1/291; Riley 1979, 243–4, fig. 98) (FIG. 9. 3), high concave rim with seating for a lid, a cooking pot with grooved rim, a second–third-century type common in Durrës (Semeraro 1992, 69 fig. 4: 2/312; Reynolds 2003, 374).

B. EXCAVATIONS IN 2005 NORTH OF THE ROTUNDA

In May 2005 the earlier trench north of the Central Rotunda was re-excavated and extended to 3.70 m on the west (FIG. 11*a*), 5.50 on the north (*b*), 3.00 on the east (*c*), while the south limit consisted of the podium of the Central Rotunda (FIG. 10; PLATE 47*a*). It proved

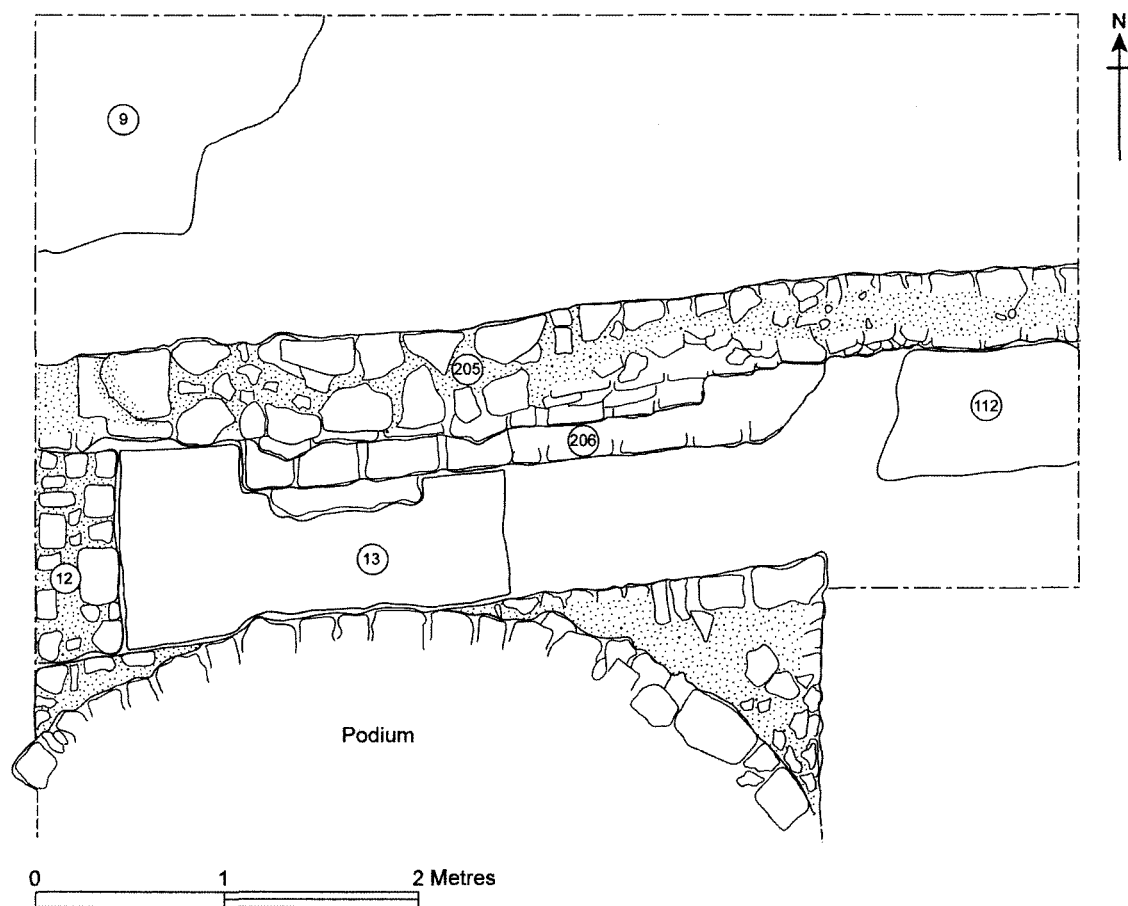


FIG. 10. Plan of 2005 excavations north of Rotunda.

impracticable to examine the north area of the trench on account of the complexity of structural remains, and examination of the deeper levels was confined to the area adjacent to the Rotunda that was defined on the north by the east–west wall (C205/206). As in 2004 because of the removal of levels by the earlier excavation it proved necessary to make separate records of the strata on the west (C1+), east (C101+) and north (C201+) sides of the trench.

The principal structure within the trench were the two phases of an east–west wall, the earlier (C206) constructed in coursed bricks (0.26 – 0.32 m), the later in larger bricks (0.44 – 0.32 m) that also blocked two entrances of the earlier phase (FIG. 10; pl. 20). It also proved impossible to investigate and record the lowest strata between this wall and the north face of the Rotunda podium, since both west (FIG. 11 *a*) and east sections (FIG. 11 *c*) were occupied by the faces of the wall and robbing trenches above these. That on the west (C12) (FIG. 10 and PLATE 48 *a*) butted on the north against the east–west wall (C205) and to the south had been cut by construction of the podium. This wall has the same alignment as a wall located in 2004 (C15) on the other side of the Rotunda (FIGS. 7 and 13; PLATE 48 *a*). At the east the section

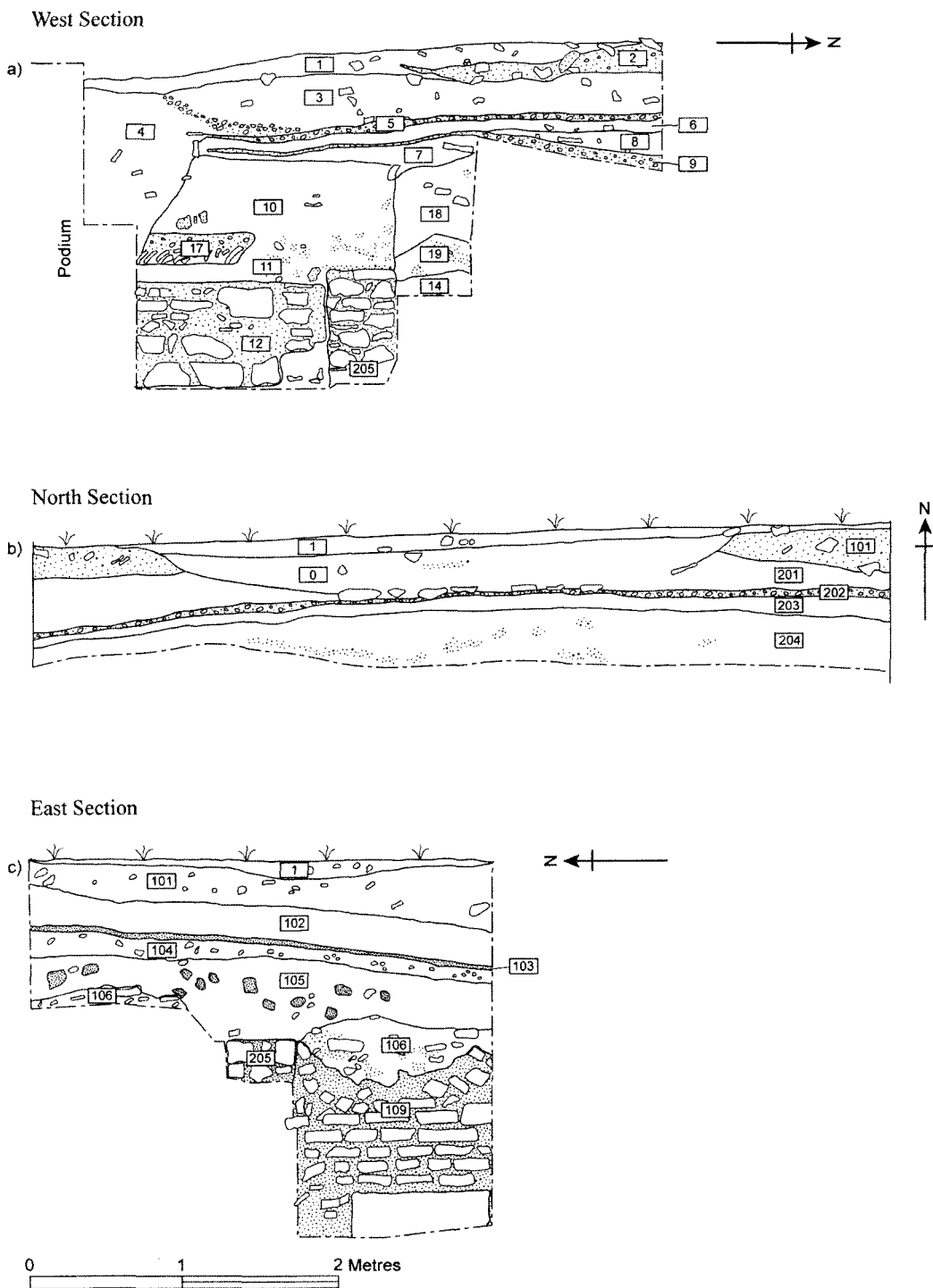


FIG. 11. Section profiles of 2005 excavation: (a) west section; (b) north section; (c) east section.

(FIG. 11 *c*) coincided with the face of another north–south wall (C109), the upper surviving part of which appears to have been faced with the familiar net pattern of small bricks (*opus reticulatum*) (PLATE 48 *b*).

The backfill of the earlier excavation (Context 1) was present in all three sections as a thin capping above the make-up for the Forum surface, that consists of two levels, one of white mortar (C2 = 101), above a thicker layer of greenish-brown clay containing architectural debris, bricks, tiles and burnt material (C3 = 102 = C201) visible in all three sections (FIG. 11 *a–c*). These sealed the construction trench of the Rotunda podium (C4) visible in the west section (FIG. 11 *a*). Below these, and cut by the podium construction trench, were levels of architectural debris (C5 = C103 = C202), a deposit of brown soil (C6 = C104 = C203) and a compact level of green clay containing many fragments of mortar (C8 = C105 = C205), also visible in all three sections. In the north-west angle of the trench (FIG. 10) a solid mortar surface (C9) was observed also in the west section (FIG. 11 *a*) above what proved to be a significant occupation deposit (C7) of brown soil containing some architectural debris, pottery and animal bones.

Further excavation of deeper levels was confined to the area in the south of the trench between the east–west wall (C205/C206) and the north face of the podium (FIG. 10; PLATE 48 *b*). Below the occupation (C7) already noted was a solid deposit of architectural debris (C10 = C106), present in both sections (FIG. 11 *a, c*), and containing entire roof tiles (*imbrices* and *tegulae*) and fragments of painted plaster above a solid floor of *opus signinum*, above a bed of diagonally pitched bricks visible only in the west section (FIG. 11 *a*), similar to that located in 2004 (C23) (FIG. 8 *d*; PLATE 46 *c*). An adjacent deposit visible in both east and west sections (C11 = C107) contained many roof tiles fired in yellow clay but seems likely to be a part of the other deposit on the evidence of conjoining pottery fragments. These levels clearly represent the collapse of a structure whose partly robbed walls they overlie (C12, C205 and C109). In the west section (fig 11*a*) the filling of a later robbing trench (C14, C18 and C19) north of the east–west wall (C205) contained material similar to that of the destruction already described (C10 and C11). In the west half of the trench within the angle formed by the walls (C12 and C205) was a second floor (C13) of *opus signinum* (FIG. 10), below which lay yet another layer of architectural debris (C15), not visible in either section, containing roof tiles, bricks and wall plaster. At the east end in the angle formed by two walls (C109 and C205), was a surface of grey-white mortar (C112) (FIG. 10), laid upon a bed of diagonally pitched bricks containing some burnt material. Removal of both these surfaces revealed a large deposit of greenish clay containing pottery and burnt material (C16 = C111), not recorded in either profile, being enclosed within standing structures on all four sides (podium on the south, wall C12 on west, C205/C206 on the north and wall C109 on the east).

In the matter of phasing there was a broad correspondence between the phases identified in the 2005 excavations and those of 2004.

Phase I (FIG. 12, 16–20) is represented by an occupation deposit (C16 = C111) alone with no associated structures. This contained a plate of type 4A in Eastern Sigillata A from Syria Palaestina (end of second century BC – c.AD 10/20 (FIG. 12, 17); *Atlante* 1981–5, ii, p. 16, pl. 1. g; Shehi forthcoming), accompanied by a number of possible local red-slip wares (FIG. 12, 16, 18–20), a pan in Pompeian Red ware (c.90–50 BC), amphorae of Lamboglia Type 2 (late second century BC–early first century AD; Bruno 1995, 95–6, 103, 106; Shehi 2003, pl. 2 figs.

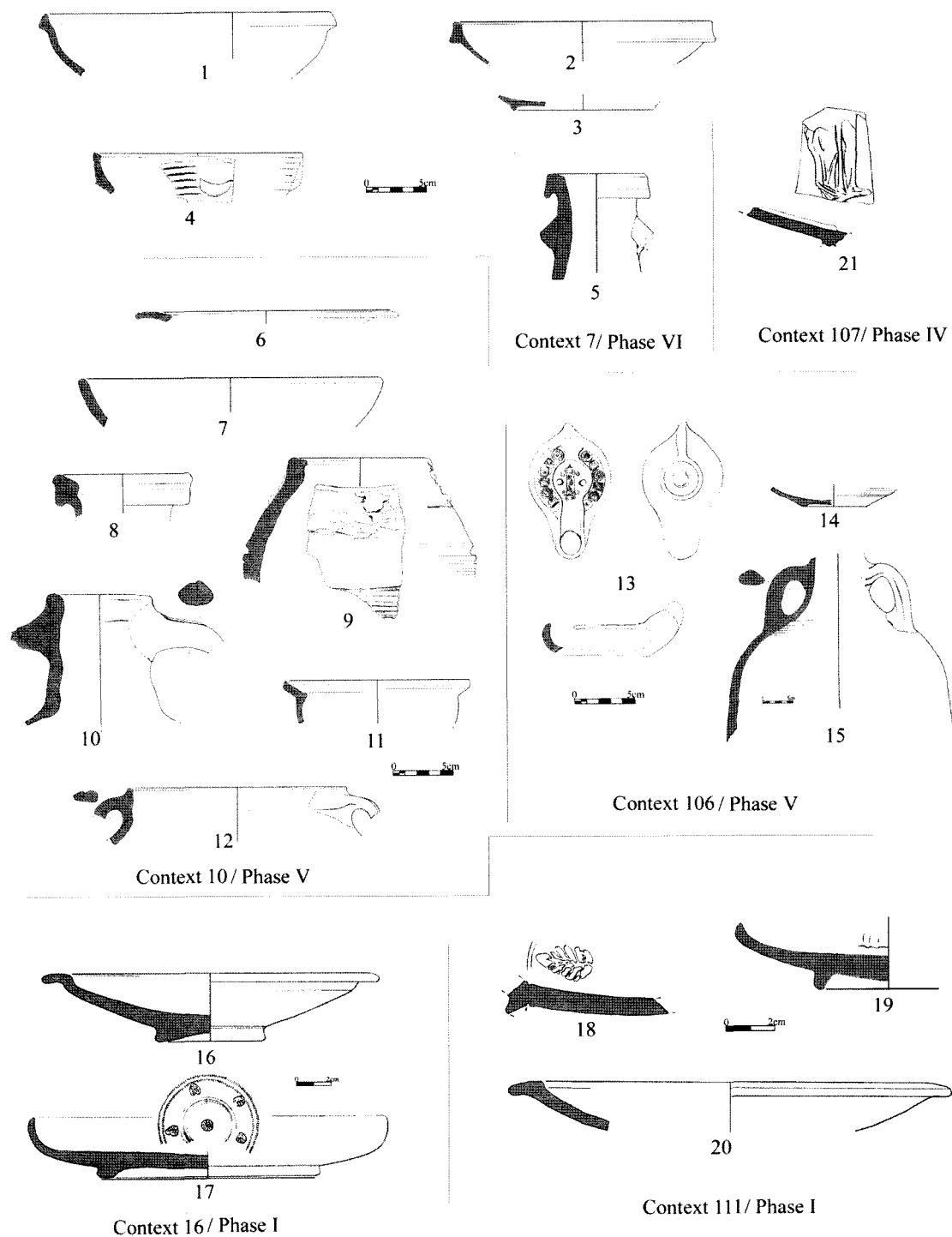


FIG. 12. Pottery evidence from 2005 excavation.

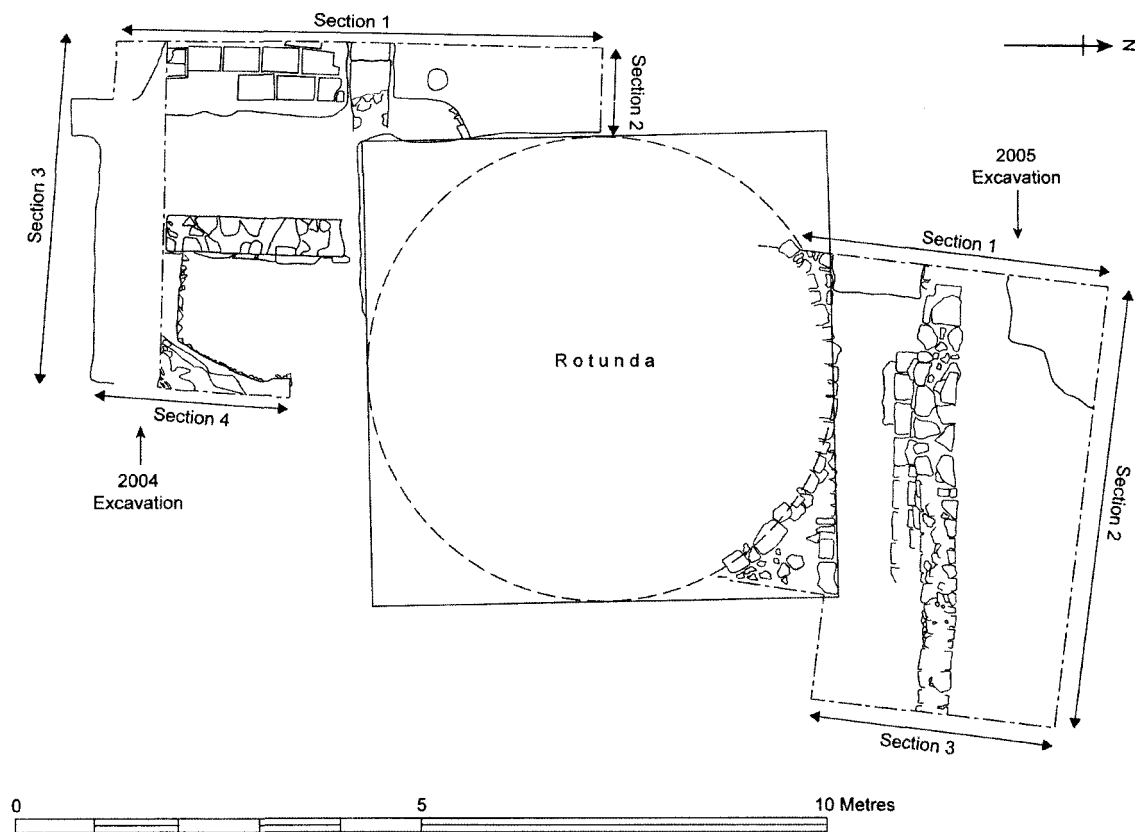


FIG. 13. Consolidated plan of earlier structures in vicinity of Rotunda.

7–8; Sciallano and Sibella 1991, 35), Dressel 2–4 and Greco-Italian products, which together indicate a date in the first half of the first century BC.

Phase II is represented by the earliest Roman structures, consisting of walls and floor surfaces above levelling deposits (C15 and C113), and these include the earlier phase of the east–west wall (C206), a floor surface (C112) that may be associated with the wall in *opus reticulatum* (C109), a floor (C13) and the later blocked entrance following the reconstruction of the east–west wall (C205). Unfortunately the associated deposits do not provide good dating evidence for this first structural phase. Locally produced vessels in poor quality black slip (third to first centuries BC) and red slip, also probably a local product, are associated with Dressel 2–4 amphorae and appear to indicate a date late in the first century BC (Hidri 1976, 249, pl. I FIGS. 11–13; Shehi 2004, 22–26). On the other hand, locally produced cooking ware with grooved rim (Shehi 2004, Form 3, 46–49), along with an Aegean casserole (second century AD), indicate a later date. On balance these structures seem likely to belong in or after the middle decades of the first century AD, that is following a general change in building methods that is known to have taken place in Durrës (Tartari 1988, 91–108; Hidri 1986, 99–113).

Phase III was marked by the cutting away of the existing floor surfaces (C13 and C112) but the associated levels, evidently contaminated, did not provide firm dating material (black and

red slip, and a Phocaean red cup of Hayes 3C). The principal element of this phase is the reconstruction of the east–west wall (C205), on a line parallel with a similar reconstruction noted in the 2004 excavation (C42), while that of the north–south wall (C12) is aligned precisely with that of 2004 (C15). Also belonging to this second structural phase in the 2005 excavation were a floor (C17) of *opus signinum* laid on a bed of pitched bricks, identical in character with that recorded in 2004 (C41 and C23). While dating evidence for this phase was lacking in 2005, that which was recovered in 2004 (C35 and C44), indicating an abandonment in the late third or early fourth centuries (Phase IV below), can be taken as valid for the remains in both trenches.

Phase IV (FIG. 12, 21) represents the demolition material (C11 = C107) from the structures of the preceding phase and can be linked with the larger deposits recovered in 2004 (C33 and C34). In both areas there were signs of damage on a large scale that occurred at some time during the fourth century, possibly the major earthquake known to have struck the area in AD 346. The small amount of dating evidence recovered in 2005 included an ARS form with appliqué decoration (FIG. 12, 21; Hayes 53A, dated AD 350–430; Hayes 1972, 82; Shkodra forthcoming).

Phase V (FIG. 12, 6–15) is represented by a deposit of roof tiles (C106) from earlier structures that contains securely stratified pottery of the late fifth and early sixth centuries that is a key for the date of the circular piazza (Shkodra forthcoming). The material includes an African lamp (*Atlante* 1981–5, i, Form X, pp. 200–3; Ennabli 1976 no. 1258; Bonifay 2004, 382–6, FIG. 214, 28) (FIG. 12, 13), a dish in Phocaean red slip (FIG. 12, 14) (Hayes 3; Hayes 1972, 336–7), whose variants (A and B) emerge before AD 450, and African amphorae (FIG. 12, 15) common in the western Mediterranean in the mid fifth–mid sixth centuries (Panella 1993, 645; Bonifay 2004, 135 fig. 72a, 1; Keay 1984, 240 fig. 100). The robbing trench (C10) of the east–west wall (C205) was backfilled with a mix of the earlier demolition deposit (C106) and contained residual material. This included fine wares (Hayes 44 = FIG. 12, 6, dated mid–late third century, and Hayes 9), a fragment of Eastern Sigillata, black glaze and local imitations of sigillata but also a fifth-century type (Hayes 50B/64 = FIG. 12, 7; Shkodra forthcoming). Amphorae included a small form (*spatheion*) of African origin (FIG. 12, 8) (Bonifay Type 2/variant A; Bonifay 2004, 125–7, fig. 68, 5–6) and among coarse wares an Aegean casserole (FIG. 12, 11) (a version of Fulford Casserole 35), first recorded in the late fifth century at Marseilles (Bonifay 1986, Period 2A1), and another with a vertical rim in a hard grey fabric matching an example from Butrint found in a sixth-century context and with a proposed origin in Samos, a type also present in the sixth-century levels of the Macellum (FIG. 12, 12) (Reynolds 2004, 234 fig. 13, 235; Shkodra 2005a, 144, fig. 12, 3).

Phase VI (FIG. 12, 1–5) consists of a deposit of brown soil (C7) which sealed the earlier wall-robbing trench and which also contained a securely stratified deposit of the late fifth–early sixth centuries (Shkodra forthcoming). Pottery in this level included ARS forms (a late version of Hayes 61 B) (FIG. 12, 1), East Mediterranean Red Slip (Hayes 3E; Bonifay 2004, 170–1; figs. 91, 33; Fulford and Peacock 1984, 49 fig. 1) (FIG. 12, 2–3), both common in deposits of the late fifth and early sixth centuries, a form of small amphora (*spatheion*) with square-section rim (FIG. 12, 5) (Bonifay Type 2A; Bonifay 2004, 125–7 fig. 68, 5–6), also characteristic of the second half of the fifth century, a casserole fragment (Fulford 38) (FIG. 12, 4), recorded in late fifth-century contexts at Marseilles and at Carthage in the mid-sixth (Fulford and Peacock 1984, 189, Period 1).

Phase VII is the fill of the construction trench of the Rotunda podium (C₄) which cut through a spread of mortar and brick fragments (C₅), representing the ground surface at the time of construction. Above this were later spread deposits (C₂ and C₃) that served to make up the level for the piazza floor. In addition to many residual items (Hayes 50A 181B, 196; also Eastern Sigillata B), along with a bronze coin of the early fourth century (Constantinople, minted AD 330–3), from earlier phases these deposits contained some types from the period of the construction of the Rotunda and piazza (amphora types: Keay XXV, LR 1–4; Shkodra, forthcoming).

IV. CONCLUSIONS (BY JOHN WILKES)

The detailed record of the surviving architectural elements (Section II) and the completion of two earlier trenches adjacent to the Rotunda at the centre of the circular Forum (Section III) mark a further stage in the study of what is unquestionably a major public monument of the Early Byzantine era at the heart of a city that more often than not was close to the main current of imperial history.

The two trenches adjacent to the Rotunda revealed structures that had existed on the site prior to the construction of the Forum, from the period between the founding of the Roman colony (c.30 BC) and some major catastrophe, perhaps the earthquake of AD 346. Then a wholesale destruction in the area was apparently followed by a period of abandonment. If the earthquake was the occasion of this destruction, the period of dereliction lasted for a century and a half until the imperial recovery of the late fifth century, a period of impoverishment as regards the urban fabric and its renewal. At the turn of the fifth century Alaric and the Visigoths were certainly in the area, while later in the same century Dyrrachium was seized more than once by the Ostrogoths.

Before the construction of the Forum, the earliest deposit (C₅₁) came from the deep pit in the 2004 trench (FIGS. 7, 8 *a*) and dates to the late Hellenistic era (*Phase I*). The earliest from the 2005 trench (C₁₆ = C₁₁₁) appears to be slightly later (*Phase I*). Neither can be associated with any surviving structure. The earliest structure appears to be the first phase of the east–west wall (C₄₂) in the 2004 trench, constructed in a stone and mortar technique characteristic of the late Hellenistic period in Dyrrachium, though the later rebuild belongs to the early Roman era (*Phase II*). This is likely to be contemporary with the north–south wall (C₁₅) in the same trench and appears to have continued north beyond the later Rotunda podium (FIG. 13) where it was located in the 2005 trench (C₁₂) and belonged to a second structural phase (*Phase III*). The first structural level in the latter trench (FIG. 10) is represented by the floor surfaces (C₁₅, C₁₁₃), the earlier phase of the east–west wall (C₂₀₆) and a floor associated with the wall in *opus reticulatum* (C₁₀₉), that seem likely to belong to the middle of the first century AD (*Phase II*).

The first demolition level in the 2004 trench (*Phase III*) and in 2005 (*Phase III*) are dated in the former to the late third century, although there is no definite context for the floor of large bricks (C₃₇) in the south-west of the 2004 trench (FIG. 7). A second phase of demolition present in both trenches, in 2004 (*Phase V*) and in 2005 (*Phase IV*) is most likely to be linked with a major destruction in the fourth century, possibly the earthquake of AD 346.

The deposits prior to the construction of the Forum, in 2004 (*Phase VII*) and in 2005 (*Phases V* and *VII*), contained stratified pottery of the late fifth–early sixth century and must

now represent the firmest evidence for a probably link of the entire complex with the building programme of Anastasius.

The Dyrrachium Forum can be compared with the Curved Forum constructed by Constantine on the main axial street of his new capital on the Bosphorus, c.600 m west of the great imperial square (Tetrastoon). The only relic of this is the great porphyry column surmounted by his statue that stood at the centre and now survives in a much mutilated condition (Fowden 1991). The parallel between Dyrrachium and Constantinople now appears all the closer, with the discovery in 2005 that the foundation of the Rotunda podium was a massive structure that extended at least 3 m below the level of the Forum. That must point to a more massive superstructure than the imperial statuary group that has been suggested earlier and it would be an appropriate gesture for Anastasius to place a monumental column at the heart of his native city, in emulation of Constantine.

The discovery, excavation and continuing study of this significant monument is a major achievement by Albanian archaeologists, working at times in difficult conditions. Along with its walls, the circular Forum places Dyrrachium in the first rank of cities in the revived Byzantine world of the late fifth and sixth centuries.

Archaeological Museum, Durrës
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University College London/Wolfson College, Oxford

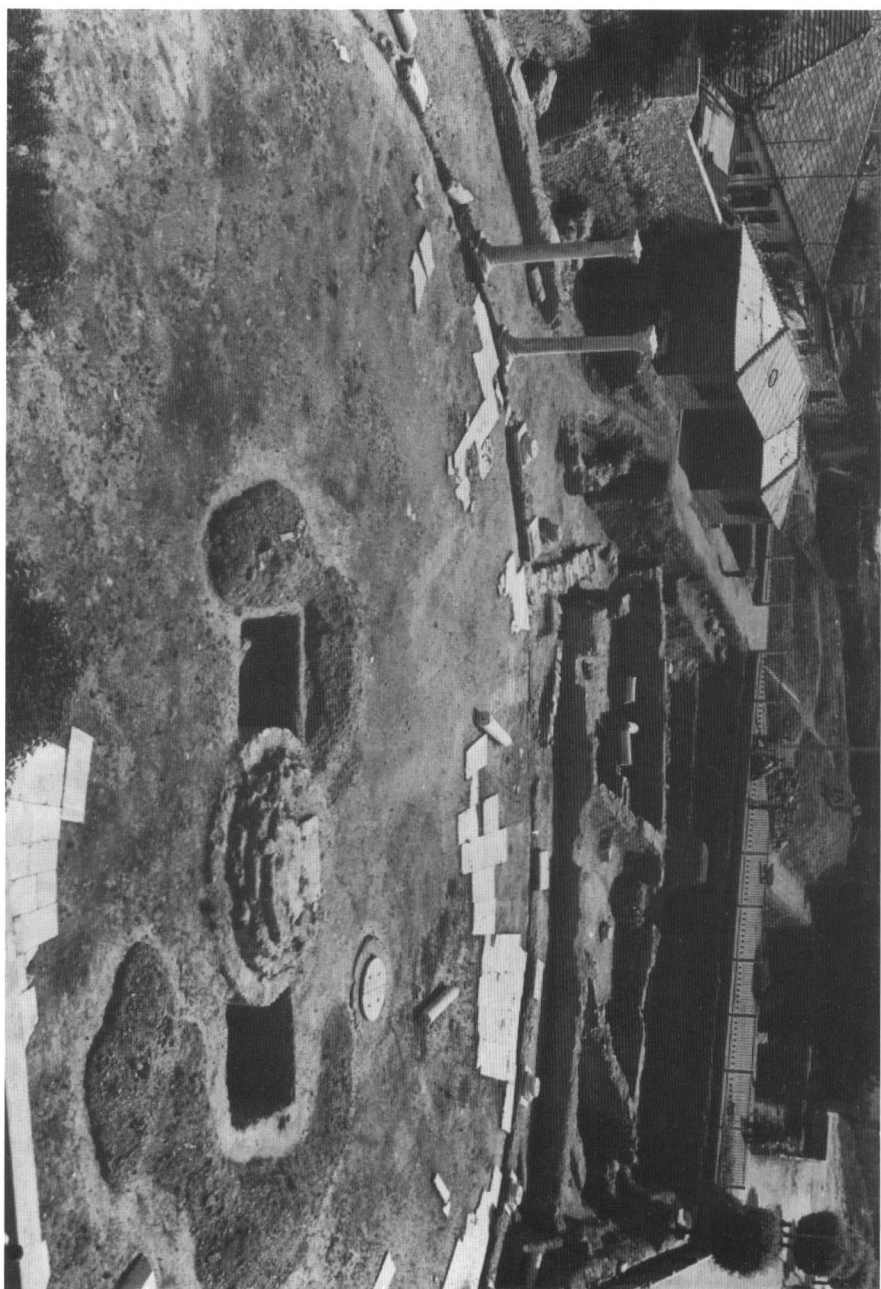
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ELVANA METALLA
BRIKENA SHKODRA
JOHN WILKES

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THE EARLY BYZANTINE CIRCULAR FORUM IN DYRRACHIUM (DURRËS, ALBANIA) IN 2002 AND 2004–2005: RECENT
RECORDING AND EXCAVATION
Forum and Macellum from north after excavations of 1998–9.



a. Macellum structures from north.



b. Forum colonnade, paving and Rotunda from north.

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2004–2005: RECENT RECORDING AND EXCAVATION



a. Plinth and base 1.



b. Plinth, base and shaft 2.



c. Plinths, bases, shafts, and capitals 12 (left) and 13 (right).



a. Perimeter wall, plinth and base 20.



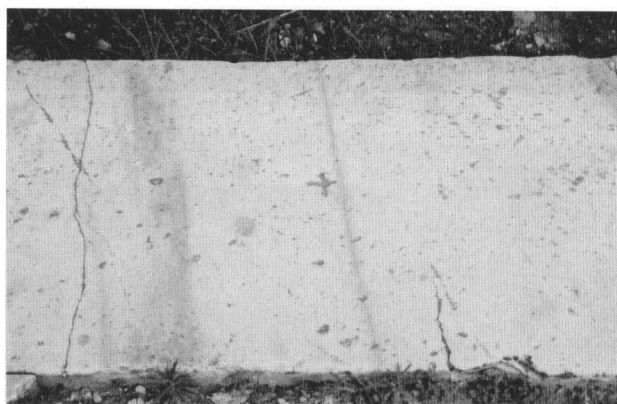
b. Plinth, base and shaft 22.

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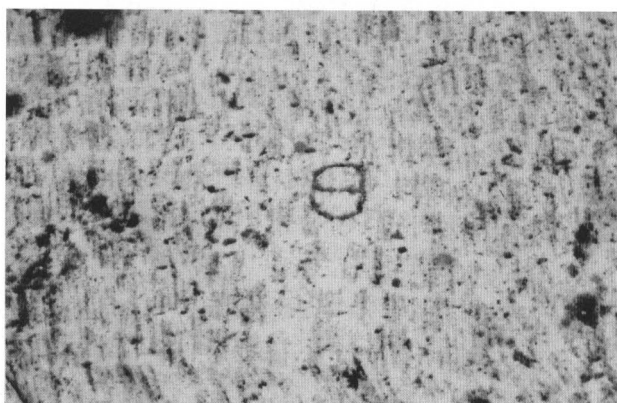
THE EARLY BYZANTINE CIRCULAR FORUM IN DYRRACHIUM (DURRËS, ALBANIA) IN 2002 AND
2004–2005: RECENT RECORDING AND EXCAVATION



a. Inscription 1.



b. Inscription 2.



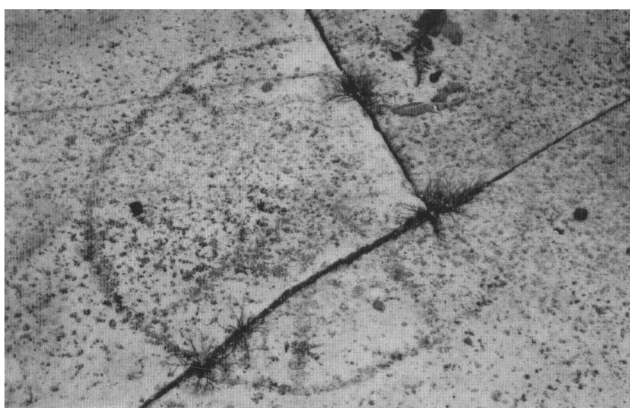
c. Inscription 7.

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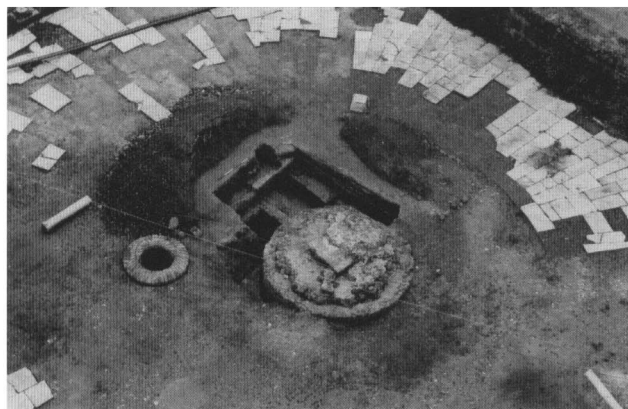
THE EARLY BYZANTINE CIRCULAR FORUM IN DYRRACHIUM (DURRËS, ALBANIA) IN 2002 AND
2004–2005: RECENT RECORDING AND EXCAVATION



a. Inscription and symbol 16.



b. Inscription and symbol 17.

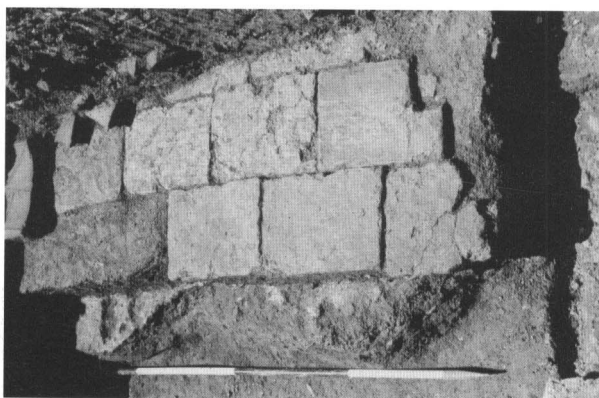


c. The 2004 excavations from north-east.
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THE EARLY BYZANTINE CIRCULAR FORUM IN DYRRACHIUM (DURRËS, ALBANIA) IN 2002 AND
2004–2005: RECENT RECORDING AND EXCAVATION



a. West and north profiles and Rotunda from south-east (2004).



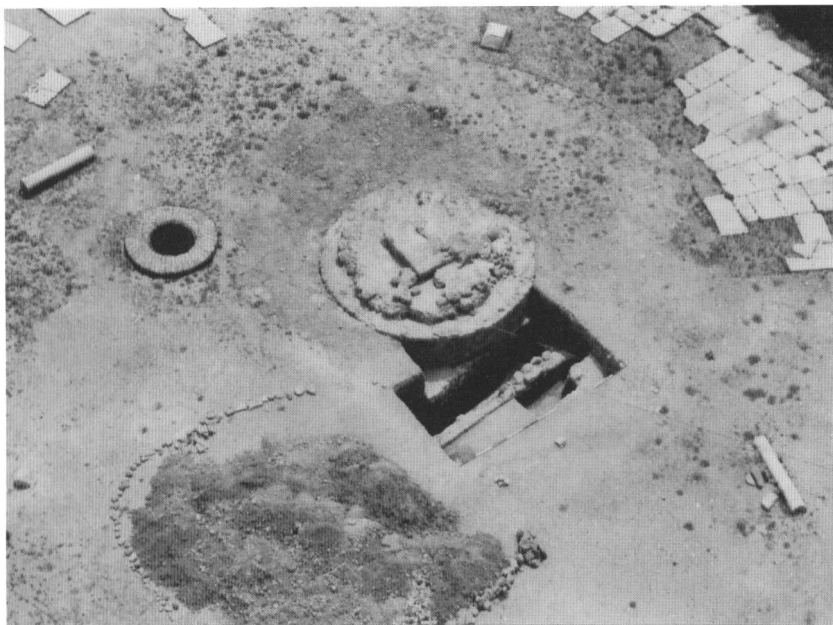
b. Tile floor (context 37) from north (2004).



c. North-south wall (context 15) and partly removed *opus signinum* and wall (context 23) above earlier levels from north-west (2004).

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THE EARLY BYZANTINE CIRCULAR FORUM IN DYRRACHIUM (DURRËS, ALBANIA) IN 2002 AND
2004-2005: RECENT RECORDING AND EXCAVATION



a. The 2005 excavations from north-east.



b. Rotunda base and podium from north-east (2005).

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THE EARLY BYZANTINE CIRCULAR FORUM IN DYRRACHIUM (DURRËS, ALBANIA) IN 2002 AND
2004–2005: RECENT RECORDING AND EXCAVATION



a. East-west wall (contexts 205-6) and north-south wall (C12) from east (2005).



b. East-west wall (context 205), north-south wall (context 109) in east area of excavation, Rotunda, and podium from north-west (2005).

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