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SILISTRA, BULGARIA

and

ULANCI, MACEDONIA

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During the 1991, 1993, and 1994 seasons the Texas Foundation For Archaeological and Historical Research (TFAHR) conducted excavations at three sites: Zur Natan, Israel; Silistra, Bulgaria; and Ulanci, Macedonia. We would like to acknowledge below those individuals and organizations by whose efforts we came to work at these sites.

The invitation to excavate at Zur Natan came to TFAHR from Mr. Etan Ayalon, a curator at the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv, who had previously conducted a ground survey of the area. TFAHR accepted the offer to collaborate in excavations at the site and began work in 1989. Work continued at the site in the 1990, 1991, 1993 and 1994 seasons.

For several years TFAHR had been exploring opportunities to excavate in newly accessible areas in eastern Europe. In the spring of 1993 an offer from Dr. Stefka Angelova of the University of Sofia, Bulgaria was relayed through Mr. Andrew Davidson to TFAHR to participate with the University of Sofia in an ongoing excavation at the site of Silistra. The offer was accepted for the 1993 season. While working at Silistra, TFAHR archaeologists became acquainted with Silvana Blaževska, a Macedonian student participating in that excavation, who contacted Dr. Dragi Mitrevski of the Museum of Macedonia in Skopje and told him of TFAHR's desire to continue excavating in the Balkans. Dr. Mitrevski extended an invitation to TFAHR to share the site of Ulanci, which he had discovered the previous year, with his Museum team for the 1994 season.

Introduction to the Excavations at Zur Natan
by Etan Ayalon, Eulah Matthews, and William Neidinger

Research at Zur Natan, ancient Antesion, started in 1987 as an ecological-archaeological survey of the numerous agricultural and industrial installations found around the ancient settlement. The main purpose of the survey was to investigate and reconstruct the ancient ecological and economic systems during the different periods of occupation of the site.

The modern moshav of Zur Natan is located in the center of a low ridge, almost on its highest point. The hill is about three kilometers long (east-west) and 1.5 kilometers wide. Its height at the ancient site is about 170 meters above sea level. This ridge is a part of the foothills of the Samaritan Hills which overlook the coastal plains (see Figure 1).

Because of its position the site enjoys several advantages. Primarily, it has an unobstructed view of the whole central coastal plain as far as the Mediterranean Sea, which gave it strategic importance as a watch-point on the nearby routes. Just west of the hill, for example, passed the main north-south international road of the Levant in ancient times, the "Via Maris" or "Sea Road", and along the ridge, at the edge of the site, passed a regional road which connected the Samaritan Hills with the coast. Thanks to its elevation the site also enjoys mild breezes that help mitigate the depression of the summer heat. Moreover, a variety of local ecological niches provided for the possibility of a diversified economy - the plain and its alluvial soils for raising grain, the hill for vine and olive orchards, the rocky areas for grazing.

The bedrock of the hill also proved to be an asset: it was a source for quarrying building stones and enabled the cutting of innumerable installations for various uses. The Zur Natan ridge is partially made of a certain type of limestone which was especially suitable for hewing and quarrying. This rock formation is not found in other hills in the vicinity. The soil formed by erosion of the bedrock is especially good for vines and olives, which are grown there even today by the local Arabs. Among the vines and olive trees the ancients could raise wheat and legumes, as attested by historical sources. Water storage was facilitated by collecting rainwater into cisterns, which were easily carved into the bedrock of the hill. In addition, Ein Dardar (The Springs of Dardar), located at the eastern foothill, is in fact four ancient wells cut deep into the hill's water-bearing rock layer. This was the only permanent water source in the vicinity.

Because of these advantages the site at Zur Natan had a more continuous occupation than other sites in the area, being occupied from the Chalcolithic to Ottoman period, with only a few interruptions.

The mapping and recording of hundreds of installations during the survey revealed two different settlement patterns. First, in the Iron Age (10th-7th centuries BC) there existed two small villages on the hill, Hurvat Dardar in the east and Hurvat Migdal in the center. The agricultural installations of this period included small olive and wine presses, which were all found close to the villages. It seems that the scale of land use and crop production in this period was rather limited and utilized only the area immediately around the settlements.

In the Roman and Byzantine centuries (2nd - 5th centuries AD) a change occurred. The survey showed that almost all of the hill was intensively cultivated. Numerous installations were found during the survey: about 120 wine presses, 50 oil presses, 50 cisterns, dozens of tombs, agricultural terraces, and quarries. Among these installations could be identified a certain pattern, a grouping of installations which constantly included the same components: wine press, oil press, water cistern, and tomb. These groups were repeatedly found every 100 - 200 meters, most dating to the Roman and Byzantine periods. It was thus concluded that in this period the settlement was inhabited by farmers who owned their own land and cut their own installations into their individual plots. This resulted in a large diffusion of these remains all over the hill, instead of a concentration of a few large installations in the village itself, as was typical in other sites. The average size of a family tract was about 4 - 12.5 acres, and the survey revealed about 50 - 60 such groups of installations or family farms. But since approximately 20 - 30% of the hill area has been destroyed by modern cultivation, quarrying, and construction operations, we may presume that the original number of such family groups was about 70 or 80.

In addition to agriculture, which was the core of the village economy, a small industrial zone also operated on the hill. It was found in the survey northwest of the village and was partly dug by the TFAHR team in 1989. The remains discovered hint to the existence of potters' kilns, glass blowers' kilns, and possibly installations for wool and leather works. The location of the industrial zone on the northwest ridge allowed for efficient exploitation of the winds which carried the smell, heat, and smoke away from the village.

Although the survey was able to give us tantalizing glimpses into the agricultural and industrial orga-

nization of the region, we felt that some hard stratigraphic evidence was needed to confirm our hypotheses. To this end we placed a series of exploratory trenches across the hill. In Area A we found a cluster of farmhouses dated to the Roman and Byzantine periods. In Area D we cleared the potters' kiln, a 7 m. x 10.5 m. wine press and a columbarium which had been noted in the survey. In Area C we unearthed the remains of an olive oil plant. And in Area B we found an apsidal building and a complex of adjoining rooms and courtyards, which became the main object of our excavations for the next three seasons, and is the focus of the following discussion.

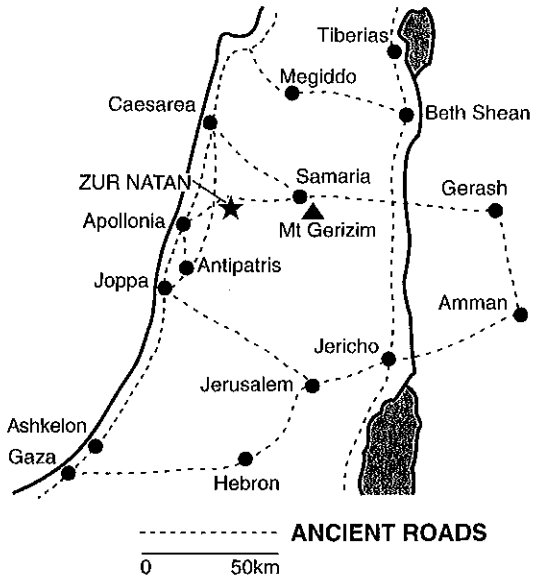


Figure 1. Map of ancient Palestine.

A Brief History of the Samaritans
by William J. Neidinger

If the word "Samaritan" conjures up any image at all for the modern reader, it is undoubtedly that of the "Good Samaritan" from Jesus' parable in *Luke* 10:30-37. What most people do not realize is that the Samaritans have had a long, rich, important, and often tragic history outside this single Gospel account. A brief summation of Samaritan history might prove useful to the reader in so far as TFAHR's excavation at Zur Natan, Israel is located in the heart of the Samaritan homeland and the results of the excavation bear directly upon our understanding of the Samaritans in the 5th to 8th centuries AD.

Any discussion about the Samaritans inevitably bogs down in the continuing debate about the most controversial aspect of Samaritan history - their origins. The general historical setting in which the debate about Samaritan origins is set is the rise of the Kingdom of Assyria, the collapse of the northern Jewish Kingdom of Israel, and the subordination of the southern Jewish Kingdom of Judah in the 8th century BC. In the Assyrian military campaigns of the late 8th century BC, Tiglath Pilesar III, Shalmanesar V, and Sargon II conquered almost all of the Land of Canaan; the Kingdom of Israel was reduced to a tribute-paying vassal state. In 727 BC Israel unwisely rebelled against Assyria, whose response was quick and harsh, a punitive invasion, sack of the capital city (Samaria), and the deportation of a portion of the population. Assyrian records state that 27,280 people were led away into exile; they would never return to their homeland and their disappearance is probably what gave rise to the legend of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. The land was then resettled by deportees from other areas of the Kingdom of Assyria, who as the Bible (*2 Kings* 17:29) states, "brought their gods with them."

The critical questions are how thoroughly was Israel depopulated and how thoroughly was it resettled? The answers to these questions bear directly upon the debate about the origins of the Samaritans. The traditional Jewish response has always been that the Samaritans are the pagans who resettled the vacated Kingdom of Israel and came to the worship of Yahweh in an imperfect and adulterated manner. The Samaritans have always maintained that they are the descendants of the population of Israel which was not carried off into captivity. Who is right?

There is ample evidence to suggest that not all of the population of Israel was deported. The general Assyrian practice was to deport only the upper classes of a rebellious society, the ones most likely to instigate unrest; the peasantry was left intact to work the land. A new aristocracy, "along with their gods," would then be imported from another probably rebellious province. *Jeremiah* and *II Chronicles* both suggest that there were still Yahweh-worshippers in what had been the Kingdom of Israel after the general deportation. It is not hard to imagine, then, that the remaining descendants of Israel and the newcomers began to intermarry, and the newcomers soon came to the worship of the god of the land, Yahweh, a worship that may well have been contaminated by imported

and alien practices. The Yahweh-worshipping Jews of the Kingdom of Judah would naturally have been horrified by this intermarriage and contamination, in their eyes, of the worship of Yahweh. And so began the undying hatred between Jews and Samaritans.

Although originally springing from the same stock and worshipping the same god and sharing a common language, the Samaritans and Jews would drift farther apart over the course of the centuries. They would still worship the same god, Yahweh, share certain holy books, the *Pentateuch*, build similar houses of prayer, synagogues, and celebrate common festivals, the Passover. Jewish worship would be centered in Jerusalem and Samaritan worship would come to be centered upon their holy mountain, Mount Gerizim. Their geographical proximity would ensure that their histories would be similar. But the relations between the two peoples would be one marred by violence, hostility, and hatred, a hatred that became so proverbial that Jesus undoubtedly shocked his Jewish audience with his parable of "The Good Samaritan," in which he suggested that a Samaritan would extend aid to an injured Jewish traveller. The details of this historic antipathy are amply documented in the works of Flavius Josephus.

Of particular importance to our understanding of the excavations of Zur Natan are the facts that the Samaritans participated only to a limited extent in the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (66-70) and not at all in the Second Jewish Revolt (132-135). As a consequence, the Romans did not subject the Samaritans to the same harsh treatment that they did the Jews. In fact, as many Jews were deported from their homeland as captives taken during the two revolts, the Samaritans came to occupy this vacated land; they expanded their territory at the expense of their traditional enemies, the Jews.

The Samaritans grew in numbers, increased their settlements, and prospered in the Roman Empire of the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. Their semi-legendary hero, Baba Rabbah, lived at this time and is credited with consolidating Samaritan culture. He was both High Priest and an able military commander. He founded many new synagogues and schools and revitalized many that had fallen into decay; he reorganized the Samaritans into new districts, each with its own courts and administrative apparatus; he urged young Samaritan men to get military training in the Roman army; and he encouraged the Samaritans to preserve the material relics of their past, like ancient manuscripts. He left the Samaritans adequately prepared to face their greatest danger - Christianity.

The good fortunes of the Samaritans came to an end with the Christianization of the Roman Empire. Under the relatively tolerant rule of Constantine I (324-337), the Samaritans had to confront only the threat from zealous Christian missionaries, something they had undoubtedly been used to since the inception of Christianity. But in the later 4th century, as the emperors grew less tolerant and Christianity became the official religion of the Empire, the threat became more severe. The Samaritans, like their Jewish and pagan neighbors, suffered under laws passed against the free exercise of their religion, found their temple and synagogues often ransacked by Christian mobs, and frequently became the victims of forced baptisms. The Samaritans rebelled.

The Samaritans not only rebelled but they did so frequently and with great ferocity. Written records tell of Samaritan rebellions against the Christian Roman Empire in 415, 451, 484, 498, 529, 556, 572, 613, and 636. The most serious revolt was that of 529 and mention is made of it in the *Anekdota* of Justinian's court historian, Procopius. For the other revolts details are few and the evidence paltry. It seems, however, that they were all probably instigated under pressure to bring the Samaritans into the Christian fold, by whatever means. The vanguard of these attempts at forced Christianization was the army and the monastery. The monks would convert the unwilling Samaritans to the new faith and the soldiers would ensure their fidelity at the point of the sword. It didn't work.

The constant rebellions of the Samaritans indicate two things: one, they did not take willingly to the new religion; and two, they must have had substantial material resources to have been able to rebel so often. It is the second point that is most baffling. To launch a revolt requires not only the spiritual will but also the economic power. War necessitates not only war materiel but also food reserves and a sound economic foundation that provides for the necessities of war. What was the basis of Samaritan economic power? Our recent excavations at Zur Natan have shed light upon the answer to this question.

Excavations at Zur Natan:
Stratigraphic, Architectural and Historical Report
By William Neidinger, Eulah Matthews and Etan Ayalon

The major find of the four excavation seasons at Zur Natan (ancient Antesion) has been a large complex of rooms comprising an apsidal building and set of adjoining halls and courtyards dated to the Byzantine period. This complex was located, in part, beneath an Ottoman graveyard surrounding the tomb of Sheik Musharef (see Insert: Plan A). We designated this area of our site "Area B." As excavations in Area B progressed it became apparent that even the olive oil press in what we had called Area C (discovered in 1989) was actually part of this gigantic complex (see Figure 2). The ceramic and numismatic evidence indicated that the complex had a rather long lifespan, from the 5th to the 8th centuries AD.

Whereas the dating of the complex was rather easy, the question of who built it was more problematic. Initially it seemed that there was sufficient evidence to attribute it to either the Christians or Jews or Samaritans, but finally all evidence pointed to the Samaritans. Despite three marble chancel posts inscribed with crosses (see Figure 3) and the fact that the whole complex looked very much like a Christian church and monastery, enough evidence indicated that the origins of the complex were non-Christian. First, three *mikvaot* (2124, 2094 and 2151), ritual baths used by both Samaritans and Jews, were unearthed in the complex (indeed, *mikvaot* 2124 and 2094 are integrally associated with one of the major walls of the complex, B46, indicating that they belong to the earliest phase of the construction). Second, one of the basalt grinding stones was incised with a menorah (see Figure 4), a symbol sacred to both Samaritans and Jews; oil lamps have also been discovered, depicting the menorah. Third, the large apsidal building has been identified as a synagogue, a type of structure utilized by both Samaritans and Jews. But while the symbols and architecture are common to both Samaritans and Jews, we know from literary sources that the area around Antesion was solidly populated by Samaritans from the 3rd century AD on. Since the Samaritans were firmly ensconced in this region by the 5th century, when the complex was constructed, we have concluded that it was the Samaritans who built this complex.

But deep soundings in Area B revealed earlier structures of the 1st and 2nd century AD beneath this

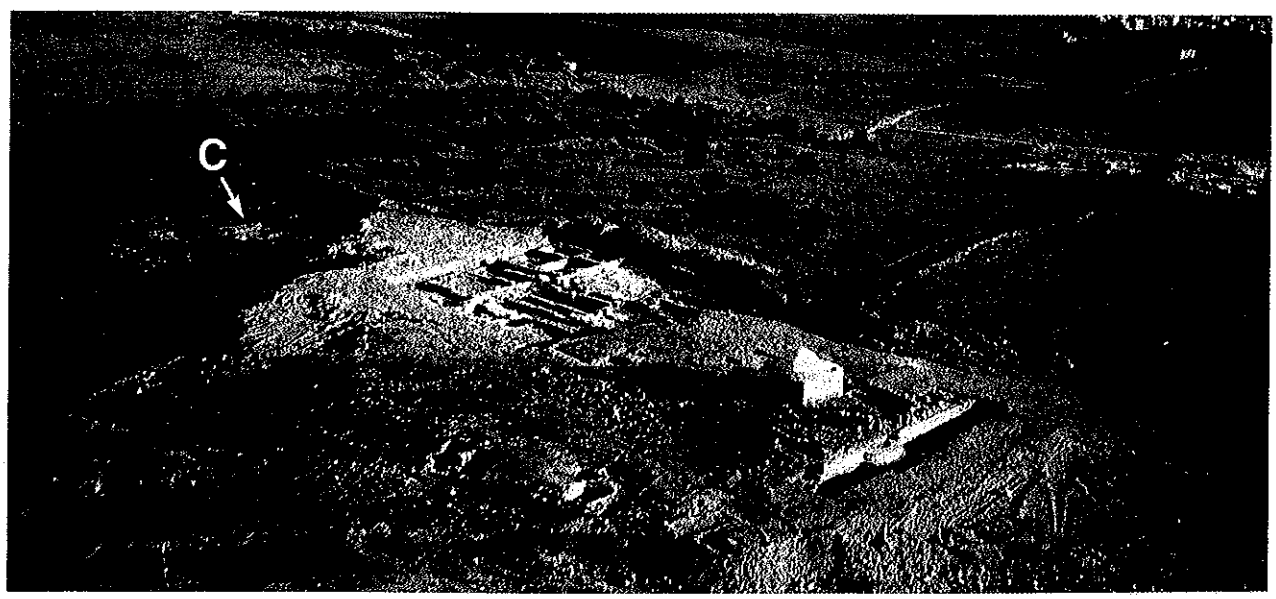


Figure 2. General view of Zur Natan excavations at the end of the 1991 season. Tomb of Sheik Musharef (center) atop synagogue - church. Area C to left (center).

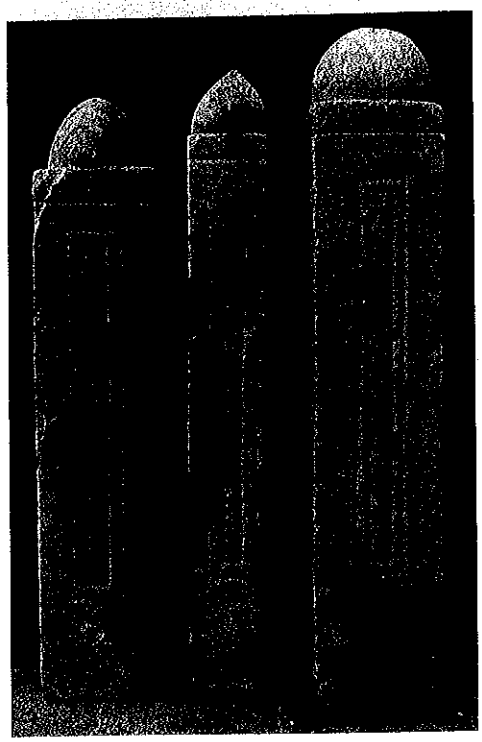


Figure 3. Three marble chancel posts. Note holes in bulbs to afix crosses.

Figure 4. Basalt grindstone as reconstructed in the Eretz Israel Museum. Note menorah inscribed on base.

complex. After the site's abandonment in the mid-8th century the site was slowly pillaged throughout the Mameluke and Turkish periods for building material for houses and Sheik Musharef's tomb, which was the only Ottoman building visible when we began excavations in 1989. Modern terracing operations destroyed most of the Mameluke and Turkish buildings. Our discussion of the excavation will be organized around the stratigraphical and historical phases of the site: Roman (1st - 2nd centuries AD); Byzantine/Early Arabic (5th - 8th centuries AD); and Medieval/Modern (8th - 17th centuries).

PHASE I - ROMAN

The decision to preserve as much as possible of the complex precluded the possibility of digging extensive probes beneath the floors to determine whether there might be substantial earlier remains. But north of the atrium wall (B60) we found that the Byzantine remains had been considerably damaged by modern terracing and farming operations, so the decision was made to conduct a deep sounding in this area. At a depth of approximately two meters below the level of the atrium we came upon the remains of several rooms which we have attributed to the Roman phase. These rooms (2149, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2157, 2159) are formed by the intersection of a number of north-south walls (B58, B118, B115, B113, B112, B111, B106) and walls B28, B116, and B105.

(Walls B105 and B116 run immediately beneath where atrium wall B60 would have been had it survived.) The ceramic finds point to a 1st or 2nd century AD date, but do not offer us any evidence as to the function of these rooms.

Of particular interest was room 2153. A cobblestone floor was uncovered at a depth of 173.69 (all depths in this article only are to be read as "meters above sea level"). To the west the pavement was destroyed by the later Byzantine complex, but to the east, through wall B115, a doorway was discovered which connected rooms 2153 and 2149. To the south, directly beneath the atrium wall (B60), was another doorway (B116) whose jambs were preserved to a height of approximately 1.5 meters, leading to an area covered by the later atrium (see Figure 5). We decided to open a small (3 x 3 m.) probe (2156) within the atrium to further explore this room. Almost immediately below the atrium surface we encountered seven graves containing five adult and two child burials. Their orientation towards Mecca and the nature of the beads, glass bracelets, and coinage indicate that these burials date to the Ottoman period. Beneath the graves lay a half-meter layer of heavy rubble, which ended on a beaten earth floor at the same depth as the cobblestone floor of room 2153. On the eastern side of the probe a continuation of wall B115 was found; thus, this room (2156) was bounded by walls B115, B116, and probably B58. The fact that the north and

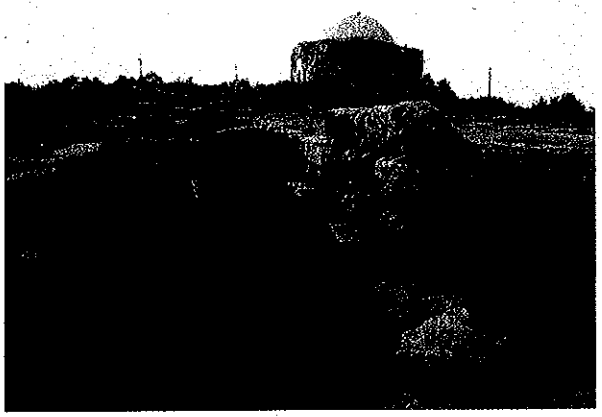


Figure 5. Room 2153. Note door jambs (right) leading to adjoining room beneath atrium.

Figure 6. Note difference in levels of floors of atrium (person above) and western complex rooms (persons below).

west walls of the atrium follow so closely the orientation of walls B116 and B58 indicates that there is probably a substantial set of 1st century ruins beneath the atrium. This would explain why the atrium is elevated more than 2.5 meters above the rest of the associated complex (see Figure 6). Although we have been unable to determine the function of these rooms, their date is fairly well established by the ceramic finds. It is likely that they were destroyed in the First or Second Jewish Revolt, as were the buildings previously discovered in Area A.

In 1994 a last-minute sounding conducted beneath the cobblestone floor of room 2047 revealed a thick ash layer surrounding a *tabun* (terracotta oven) immediately beneath the floor. Both the ceramic and numismatic evidence point to a 1st or early 2nd century AD date for this destruction layer.

The only other structure in Area B which may date to the 1st or 2nd century is a set of underground rooms and tunnels beneath the northern part of the later Byzantine complex. We believe that the original entrance to the underground complex was down a stairway (2073) hewn into the bedrock (see Figure 7); above this stairway was a roof consisting a stone slabs set into ledges also cut into bedrock. What has been mapped so far are three large round chambers (approximately 10 meters in diameter), each of which has smaller side chambers, narrow tunnels connecting these circular halls to one another, and some tunnels leading to what we believe to be other chambers, as yet unexcavated (see Figure 8). Underground chambers and tunnels such as these were commonly used as hideaways by the Zealots during the First Jewish Revolt. While it is tempting to hypothesize that the underground complex was one of these hideouts, we do not yet have any hard evidence as to the exact date and original function of the complex.

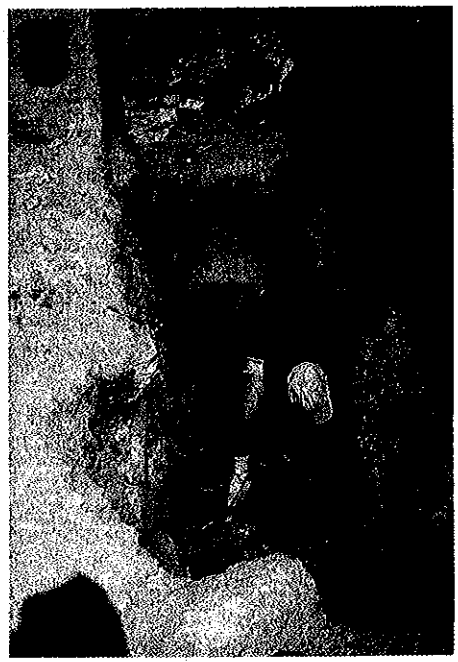


Figure 7. Clearance of steps leading into the underground complex.

PHASE II - BYZANTINE/EARLY ARABIC

As we have proposed above, the buildings of the Roman period in Area B went out of use some time in the 1st or 2nd century AD. Although there is no direct evidence, we suggest that the buildings' abandonment was due to events surrounding the Jewish revolts. The finds indicate that Area B remained unoccupied until the late 5th or early 6th century. Again, we depend on literary sources to explain this gap: from literary sources we know that after the Second Jewish Revolt the region around Antesion was depopulated of its Jewish inhabitants and was gradually repopulated by Samaritans, who would have been at the height of their power at the time when an apsidal building and

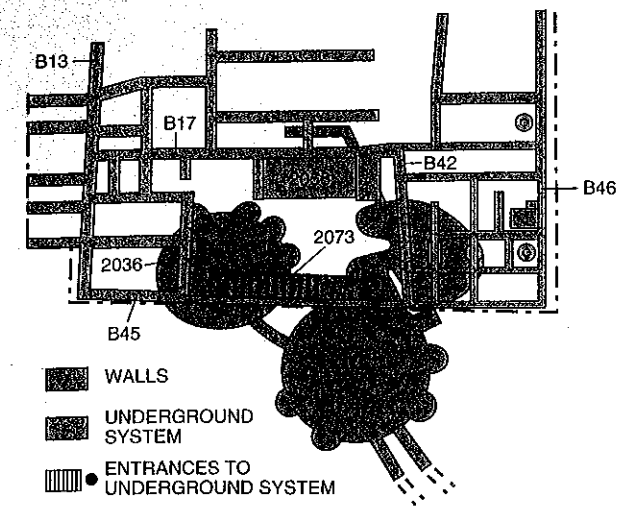


Figure 8. Schematic diagram showing known underground chambers and tunnels in relation to upper walls.

atrium were constructed on top of and following the orientation of the 1st century buildings. To the west of these structures and at a lower level a large complex of adjoining rooms was built concurrently.

The Apsidal Building and Atrium

In the eastern part of our excavation area lies an apsidal building (defined by walls B83, B36, B85, and B84) and a courtyard (2070), standing atop the 1st century ruins discussed above (Phase I). We have identified these structures as a synagogue and its atrium, both of which were built concurrently with the western complex (see below) and show evidence of several phases of construction.

The synagogue and atrium are laid out in a simple rectangular plan (see Figure 9). The atrium is essentially a square roughly centered around a cistern, with remnants of a colonnade still preserved on two of its three sides (2070). A covered channel brought the run-off water from the roof of the colonnade to the cistern. The floor of the colonnade is covered with mosaic decoration (see following article, "The Mosaics of Zur Natan"); however, it is doubtful that these mosaics belonged to the floor of the colonnade in its original phase. The floor of the courtyard itself seems to have been beaten earth and plaster. From the atrium one passes to a narrow rectangular room (2081), whose floor is of large white mosaic tesserae. This room was probably the vestibule or narthex of the synagogue.

To the north of this vestibule we found a *mikvah* (2151) which would have been used by the worshippers to purify themselves before entering the synagogue (see Figure 10); we were unable to determine the exact nature of the access from the *mikvah* to the vestibule, since modern ploughing has obliterated any surfaces which might have connected the two. The *mikvah* has two steps down, covered with white mosaic, as well as an unusual sump in the southwest corner. Since *mikvaot* do not customarily have sumps, it is possible that either the floor and sump belonged to an earlier installation which was incorporated into the *mikvah*, or that they were added to the *mikvah* when it was modified for some other use.

Access to the synagogue from the narthex was through one major and two minor entrances in wall B83. In front of the major, central entrance there is a dedicatory inscription in colored mosaic tesserae; colored mosaics may have covered the entire floor of the synagogue's nave, but since the tomb of Sheik Musharef rests directly upon the floor, it is impossi-

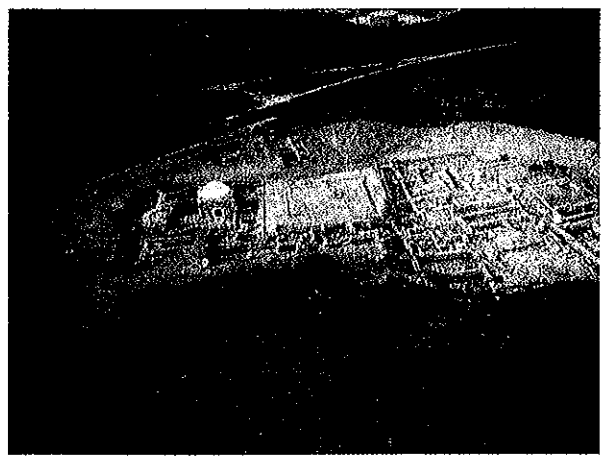


Figure 9. General view to south showing synagogue (beneath tomb of Sheik Musharef) and atrium (courtyard to right) and western complex (further right).

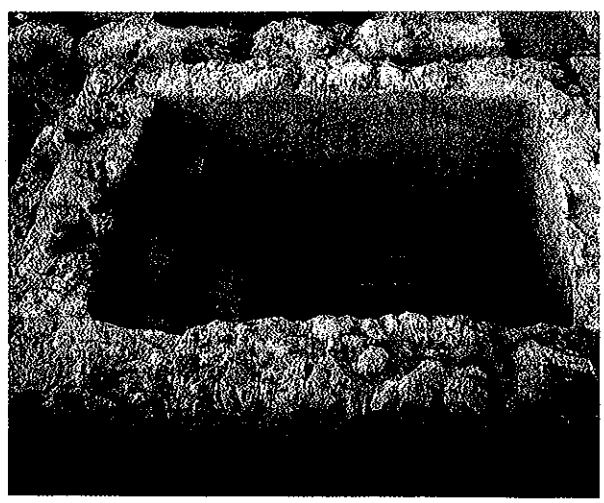


Figure 10. Mikvah. Note "sump" in corner.

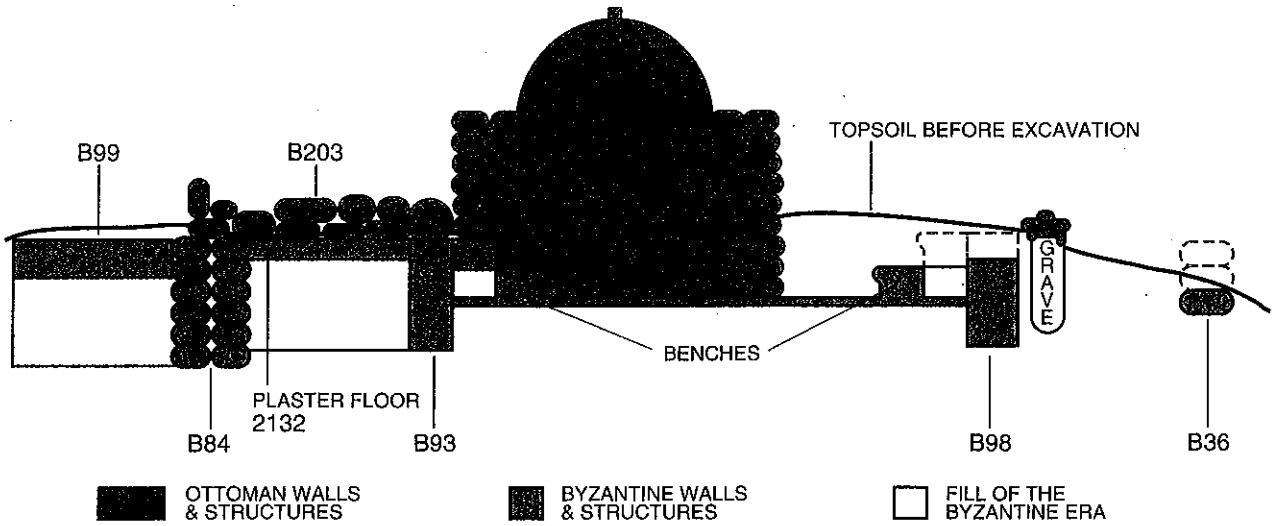


Figure 11. Schematic cross section showing how tomb of Sheik Musharef rests directly atop synagogue benches and floor.

ble to conduct a complete excavation of the nave. From the side entrances one ascended two steps to the stone benches which flanked the open space of the nave. The benches are best preserved on the northern side of the synagogue, where parts of the benches were used as the foundation for the sheik's tomb (see Figure 11). Two levels of benches, whose stones have a curved profile, have been preserved. Behind the northern set of benches a thick plaster floor (2132) extended from the topmost bench to wall B84; this was probably an area for standing. It was in the sealed fill beneath this plastered surface that we found a critical piece of evidence for the dating of the construction of the structure: a coin of Justin II from the Antioch mint was found in this sealed stratum. As Justin II reigned from 565-578, the benches could not have been installed before 565 AD.

The eastern wall of the synagogue (B85) contains a semi-circular apse (2106), which was separated from the nave by a chancel screen (see Figure 12). The grooves for the chancel screen and the settings for the chancel posts are still *in situ*; fragments of the stone chancel screen have also been found in the excavation. The apse, as one would expect in a Samaritan synagogue, is oriented toward the east, toward Mount Gerizim, the holy mountain of the Samaritans.

To the north of the main hall of the synagogue there is a long narrow room (2113), whose function is uncertain. The best preserved of the exterior walls of the synagogue is the eastern wall, B85 (see Figure 13). This wall is preserved to a height of 1.25 meters and consists of finely cut limestone ashlar blocks laid out in header and stretcher fashion. The southern wall B36 has been largely destroyed, with only some foundation stones remaining. The northern wall B84 is made of large ashlar blocks, but these blocks are not as finely dressed as those in wall B85. Of the synagogue's western wall, B83, only the threshold stones remain. The abundance of roof tiles uncovered in the excavation indicates that the synagogue was probably

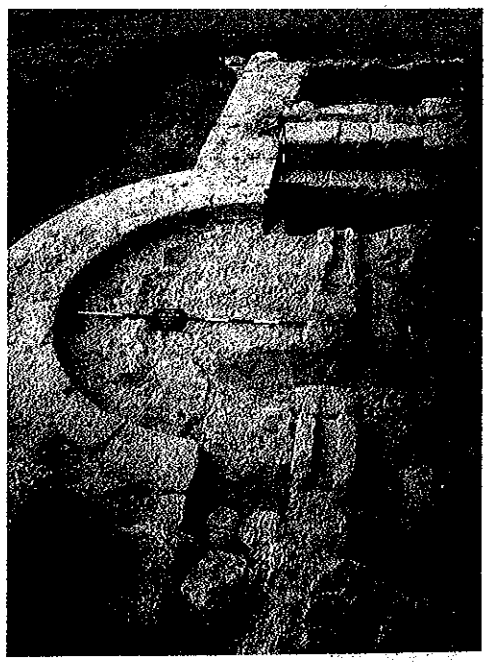


Figure 12. Apse of synagogue. Note grooves for chancel screen. Pits are later burials.

roofed by a simple A-frame covered with tiles.

There is substantial evidence which suggests that both the synagogue and the adjacent western complex, although originally built and used by Samaritans, were at some time taken over by Christians. The primary evidence for this contention is the discovery of three marble chancel posts with crosses inscribed in them. In addition, *mikvaot* 2124 and 2094 in the western complex were deliberately sealed and put out of use. Moreover, the mosaic decoration of the atrium (2070) employs some "Christian-like" symbols. Further, when a probe (2220) was conducted in the southeast corner of the atrium, it was discovered that the stones beneath the mosaic decoration were of the same type (profiled) as those used for the benches of the synagogue, suggesting that they were re-used during a period when the synagogue underwent substantial reconstruction, as, for instance, when it was changed into a Christian chapel. This brings us to one possible scenario regarding this holy structure (see Figure 14): in its first phase it may have been a synagogue with benches lining two sides (north and south). When converted into a church, the benches could have been removed and some re-used in the reworked atrium, and an apse built into the eastern wall. Another possibility is that the apse was added by the Samaritans themselves (a common adaptation due to Christian influence) and

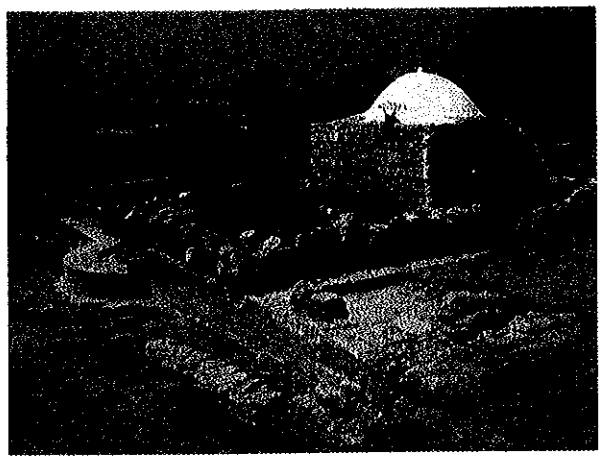


Figure 13. Wall B85 with apse. Note how enclosure wall of Sheik Musharef's tomb rests directly upon earlier walls.

the excess bench stones simply tossed aside and later found and re-used by the Christians. Such an apsidal synagogue has basically the same ground plan as a church and there would have been little in the way of structural change necessary to convert it into a church, other than perhaps removing Samaritan religious symbols and adding Christian symbols (for instance, incising the chancel posts with crosses). Conversion into a church might explain why there are

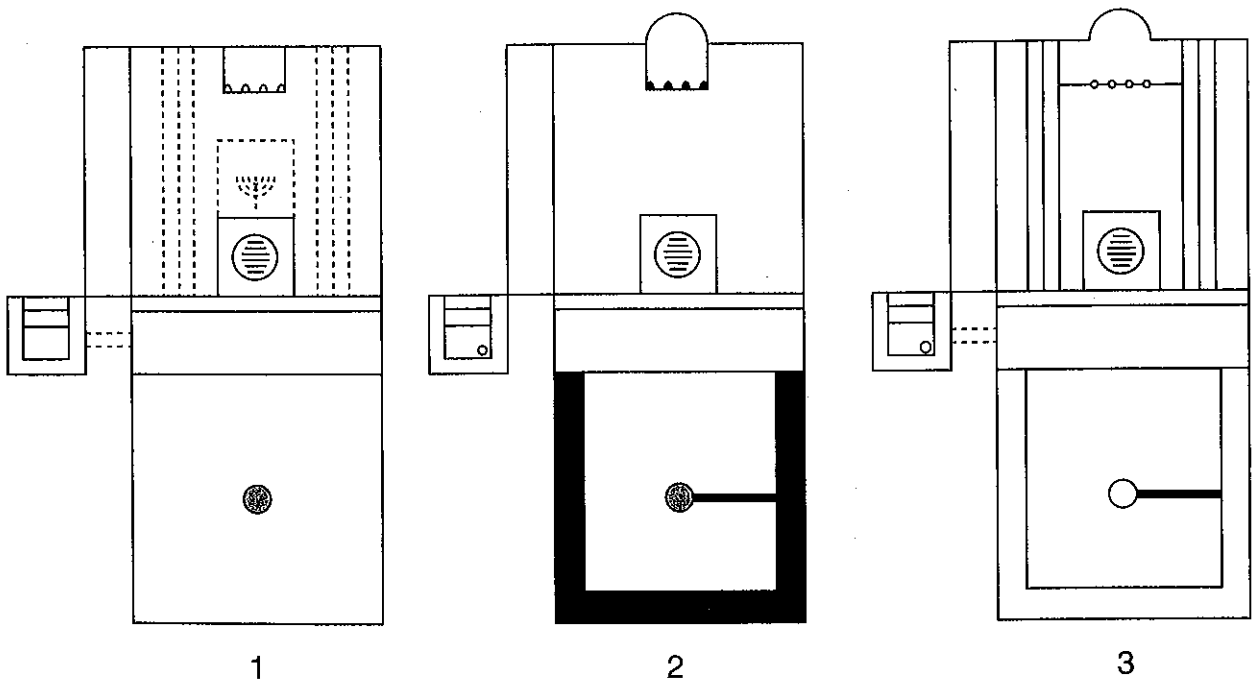


Figure 14. Possible scenario of changes in synagogue - church. 1. Synagogue with benches. Probable mosaic with Samaritan symbols - connection with Mikvah. 2. Church with apse. Benches removed and used as foundation for atrium colonnade. Crosses inscribed in chancel posts. Mikvah reworked. Mosaics partially destroyed. 3. Cross-inscribed chancel posts replaced. Benches re-installed. Connection with Mikvah re-established.

no remains of Samaritan religious symbols in the mosaics of the nave, only the innocuous inscription and border decorations remaining. How and when the apsidal building ceased functioning as a church are difficult to ascertain. The latest pottery from the floors of the entire complex suggest an abandonment in the 8th century. But the particulars of the abandonment are uncertain. In the apsidal building and throughout the western complex there was very little pottery found on the floors themselves, most of it was recovered from cisterns (2036), pits (2021), or deliberately constructed "waste bins" (2086). This would indicate that there was a purposeful cleaning of the site by the last people who used it. But who were they? Certainly not Christians, for the cross-inscribed chancel posts were not found *in situ* in the church; they were found discarded in room 2029, perhaps on their way into the cistern (2036), where much pottery from the last days of the complex was thrown. But whether this final cleaning and occupation of the complex was done by Samaritans, who may have recaptured the area from imperial Christian troops, or by Arab Islamic settlers is impossible to tell.

The Western Complex

The exact extent of the western complex is uncertain. The eastern closing walls of the complex are B58 (which is the western wall of the atrium) and B13. The northern closing wall is probably B45, which contains a large threshold block which appears to have been used for a gate; however, we remain uncertain whether we do have the north closing wall, as we have not received permission to excavate in the field north of these walls. Excavations to the south have not yet revealed any wall we could call a closing wall. We had previously thought that wall B46 was the western closing wall of the complex, but excavations further to the west in the 1993 season uncovered a wall (B200) parallel to B46, constructed in the same manner and at the same level as B46, with a plaster surface connecting them. In fact, it now appears that the olive oil press uncovered in 1989 in Area C is part of the western complex. How far to the west the complex extended cannot be determined, as modern terracing operations have destroyed all remains to the west of the olive oil press. But from the eastern closing wall (B58) to the olive oil press is a distance of approximately 80 meters.

What has been uncovered of the western complex to date consists of approximately two dozen rooms (for the most part long and narrow) and a courtyard 2032. The walls of the rooms are constructed either of well cut limestone ashlars bound by mortar, or of small fieldstones with mortar bonding and plastered surfaces. Most of the rooms have floors of roughly cut limestone flagstones, while one (2029) uses the bedrock as a floor surface, and a few (such as 2021, 2023 and 2068) have beaten earth floors, though they once might have had flagstones that have since been quarried away.

During the lifespan of the western complex there were minor alterations to many of these rooms: some (for example, the one enclosed by walls B13, B16 and B17) were subdivided, forming smaller rooms; others (2037, for instance) had their doorways blocked; the walls of others (B31, for example) were reinforced by the addition of a thin line of small stones bonded to the original with mortar. Some rooms went out of use when later structures were built upon them, as when the mosaic floor of room 2056 covered and obliterated three small, earlier rooms, or when the so-called *kasr*, defined by walls B75, B42, B43 and B46, was built on top of an earlier olive oil press.

The organization of the rooms and the associated finds suggest that the western complex was originally an agricultural and industrial center of the Samaritans built in the 5th or 6th century, encompassing diverse economic endeavors. The existence of an olive oil industry is proved by the discovery of stone weights, vats and crushing stones *in situ* within the complex (in the *kasr*: 2046 and 2091; in Area C: 3019 and 3021). (See the following article, "The Olive Oil Presses at Zur Natan".) A wine industry is suggested by the numerous wine storage and transport jars which have been found in the complex, and by the massive winepress excavated in Area D in 1990. Although the exact center of the glass production has not been located, the large quantity of raw glass and glass slag indicates the existence of a glass kiln somewhere near or within the complex. That flour was produced in the complex is proved by the discovery of two large nearly complete basalt "Pompeiian type" grindstones and the fragments of several others.

Evidence suggests that the complex was not a family farm, but rather a center of economic activity organized under some central authority. The major arguments in support of this conclusion are that the complex is far larger and more solidly built than any farm excavated in the area to date (including a farm excavated by TFAHR in Area A in 1989). Secondly, the size of the oil presses, wine press and flour mills suggests large industrial and not small familial operations; dozens of small installations for family use have been surveyed in the area, and none of them even approach in size the ones associated with this complex. Finally, such a concentration of economic activity would be consistent with what we know from literary sources concerning the growth and consolida-

tion of Samaritan power which began under the leadership of Baba Rabbah in the early 4th century and continued into the mid-6th century.

The *Kasr* or Tower

In the northwest corner of the excavated section of Area B there is a later construction resting directly atop the olive oil press and *mikvah* of the original phase of construction of the western complex (see Figure 15). This area was originally set aside by the Samaritans as an olive crushing and pressing area with an attendant *mikvah*. Some of the original walls of this olive oil production area are still extant, B70 and B71. But the construction of the *kasr* put the olive oil press out of commission. The *mikvah* was filled in and covered with a cobblestone floor (see Figure 16); an internal dividing wall of the *kasr* (B44) crossed and rested directly atop the circular collecting vat of the oil press; and a great mass of debris, including fragments of the crushing stone and the charred remains of the beam, was thrown in as fill for the floor of the *kasr*.

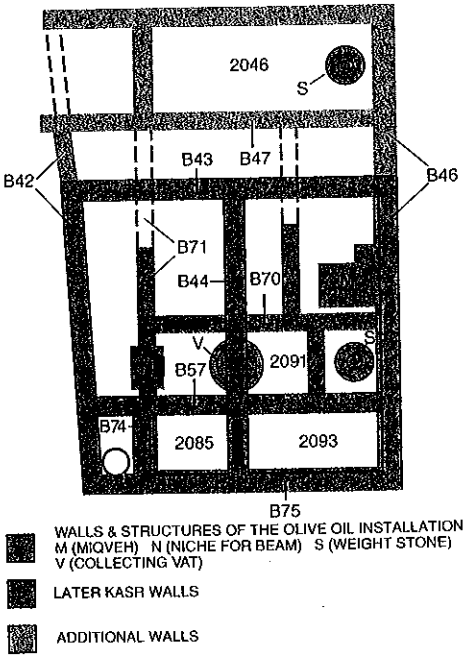


Figure 15. Schematic diagram of later kasr walls resting directly atop earlier olive press installation.

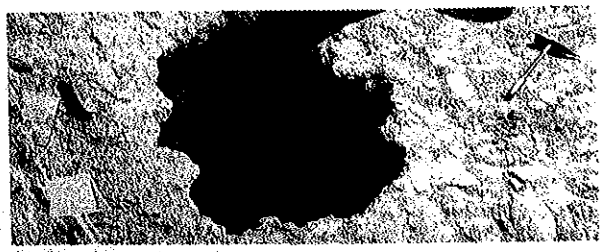


Figure 16. Breaking through later cobblestone floor which covered mikvah. Note mikvah steps to right.

A succession of floor levels in the northern-most rooms of the *kasr* shows that it was repeatedly renovated during its lifetime, but to ascertain the precise dates of the phases of construction is difficult. The pottery from the last, upper floors of the tower suggest that it, too, went out of use when the rest of the complex did in the mid-8th century.

It is, however, problematic both to fix a construction date and determine who built the tower. The destruction of the *mikvah* would suggest that it was built when Christians took over the complex from the Samaritans. But in the foundation trench of wall B47, a fragment of a chancel post was discovered; the post was not, however, of marble, like those incised with crosses, but of common limestone. If it were a chancel post of the original synagogue of the Samaritans that was discarded when the Christians installed their marble, cross-incised posts (assuming that they did not merely inscribe with crosses the marble posts that were already there), then it points to the possibility that the Christians destroyed the *mikvah* and built the *kasr*. If, however, it were a chancel post the Samaritans used in the apsidal building when they replaced those inscribed with crosses (assuming that they regained control of the complex from the Christians), then it would indicate that the *kasr* was built after both the Christians and the Samaritans lost control of the complex to the Arabs in the 7th or 8th century.

Whoever may have built the *kasr*, its function is known from its form. Without any entrances near ground level, it was undoubtedly entered by means of a ladder at a higher height. Such is the typical construction of a *kasr* or tower that can been seen in almost all monasteries of the Byzantine era in Egypt and Palestine. The structure served as a combination of lookout tower and redoubt, last place of refuge in time of attack. Such a defensive structure would be most necessary in such unsettled times as the 5th - 8th century AD.

The "Plastered Rooms"

In the 1994 season we unearthed a set of three contiguous rooms (2213, 2214, and 2215) all of which had finely plastered walls and the remnants of cobbled floors. The rooms were originally all connected to one another by doorways in walls B201 and B202. But at a later date the doorways were blocked and the walls plastered over. We conjectured, though proof is in short supply, that these well-plastered rooms could have served as either storage rooms or even, perhaps, as living quarters during the last days of the complex. The purpose of the plaster would have been to make the rooms impervious to insects

and rodents; it does not appear to be the type of plaster that could have made the rooms water-tight. We mention this last thought because immediately to the south of the plastered rooms we uncovered a large circular stone platform (2211) that was connected with a finely cut row of well-fitted stones to a cistern opening (2225). The circle was probably some sort of floor in whose center a water raising devise was installed and around which some beast of burden turned the device, much like the water-drawing wheels still found along the Nile today (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. Water wheel circle (center) and two plastered rooms (top).

Exploration of the cistern yielded some sherds of both the 8th and 16th centuries, indicating that it was in use during the last days of the complex and again in the Mameluke or Ottoman period. The cistern was, like all the other cisterns discovered at Zur Natan, carved into the bedrock; this particular cistern had, however, two openings. One was at the end of the line of stones connecting it with the circle; the other was beneath unexcavated ground. Directly beneath that second opening we found the skeleton of an individual approximately two meters in height whose ankles had been bound together and whose wrists were crossed upon his chest; his skull was crushed. Undoubtedly this poor soul had been bound, executed, and discarded down the cistern. The poor state of preservation of the skeleton and our desire to let him rest in peace precluded his removal and examination.

A Possible Mosque?

It has already been mentioned that to the south of courtyard 2032 there is a late mosaic floor in room 2056 that covers three earlier rooms (delineated by walls B40, B37, and B38) and is noticeably higher than the surrounding floor and courtyard levels (see Figure 18). It is, very obviously, a late addition to the complex. The particular design is common to the late Byzantine and early Arabic period, making it possible that it was installed when the complex passed into the hands of the Arabs. There is, moreover, a slight niche or recess in wall B17, a wall on the south side of the room, in the direction of Mecca. But it would take more than such coincidence and our hoping to turn the niche into a *mihrab* and the small room into a mosque.

Date of Abandonment

As mentioned earlier, remarkably little pottery was found on the floors of the complex; most of the artifacts we recovered were found in the cisterns or specially constructed waste pits. Whoever the last inhabitants of the complex may have been, they saw fit to make a thorough cleaning of the place before using it; and when they left, they left little behind. But whether the pottery we found came from the floors or the cisterns or the pits, it all dated to the same era, the mid-8th century AD; the numismatic evidence is the same. Who actually controlled the complex in its last phase is uncertain. The only piece of evidence is a fragment of a Mafjar water vessel with a badly preserved Arabic inscription; it, too, was found thrown down a cistern. But it does indicate that some of the last inhabitants were Arabic speaking.

PHASE III - MEDIEVAL TO MODERN

Until TFAHR began excavations at Zur Natan (Antesion) in 1989, a number of archaeologists had associated the ruins on the hill with "Casal Moyen," a village known from written records to have been donated to the Knights Hospitallers by King Baldwin IV in 1176. But five seasons of excavation and extensive survey work have failed to uncover any Crusader coins, pottery, or buildings. It seems that after the

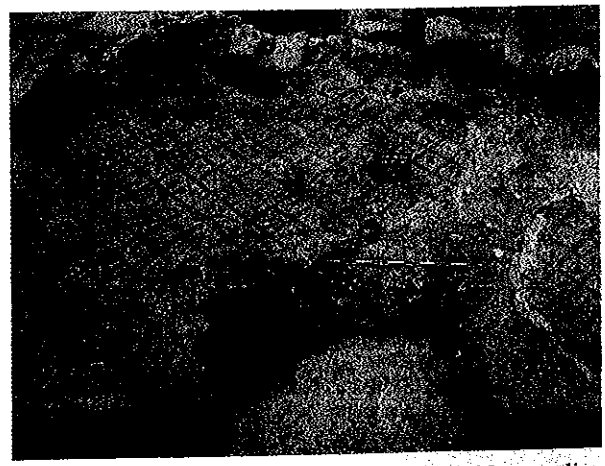


Figure 18. Mosaic floor of later "mosque". Note earlier floor (center).

complex was abandoned in the 8th century, it remained unoccupied until the Mameluke era, the 13th century. At that time a small village was built atop the ruins, which were probably still visible and utilized as a convenient quarry for the medieval village. A few walls of this medieval village were noted on the surface as we began our excavations in 1989, but the remains were not substantial enough to reconstruct any coherent groundplan for the site in this era.

The ruins of the synagogue-church must have been either clearly visible or re-discovered during the Mameluke-Ottoman period when the tomb of Sheik Musharef was built. The sheik's tomb rests directly upon the floor of the synagogue-church and utilizes the northern bench of the structure as the platform for its small courtyard. In addition, a number of columns of the complex were reused in the construction of the tomb, probably in the 16th or 17th century.

At that time not only was the sheik's tomb built, but the Islamic faithful came to bury their dead in a small graveyard around the sheik's tomb. All the burials were simply constructed: a pit with a row of upright stones surrounding the corpse and a set of flagstones covering it; the pit was then filled and a circle or pile of stones set over the burial at ground level. Many of these tombs were cut right through the floors of the synagogue-church and atrium. Few burials had any grave goods; occasionally some glass or bronze bracelets and a few beads were found. All the corpses were aligned east-west. The only abnormality we discovered amongst the burials was one in which the skull was missing from an otherwise well-preserved skeleton, perhaps, as we ghoulishly speculated, an indication of an execution for an especially heinous crime or some rite to deprive the deceased of his power in the hereafter. An infant burial in a jar typical of the 16th century and resting directly atop the mosaic inscription in 2108 seems to mark one of the earliest burials at the site.

Much of the medieval village might have been preserved had not modern terracing operations and road building destroyed most of this stratum; only the area immediately around the sheik's tomb was preserved, because it was a functioning cemetery.

SUMMARY

The TFAHR excavations at Antesion have shed some light upon a very confusing period in Middle Eastern history, that transitional period between Byzantine Christian rule and Arabic Islamic rule. The excavations have illuminated in particular the economic position of the Samaritans. It has always been known from literary sources that the Samaritans rebelled repeatedly against Constantinople. What was never known was how the Samaritans managed to economically sustain these military insurrections. If we have interpreted the information from Antesion correctly, then we now have the answer. The Samaritan complex at Antesion was a product of the Samaritan's concentration and consolidation of their agricultural-economic activities in the hands of some central authority or some very powerful Samaritan warlord; it is a marked intensification of such activities as compared to preceding centuries. It also provided the sound economic base for the Samaritan rebellions. It is hoped that future excavations in the lands of the Samaritans might bring further evidence to bear upon this era.

The Oil Presses of Zur Natan
by Yeshua Dray

During the four seasons of excavation at Zur Natan three olive oil presses were unearthed. The first was uncovered in Area C during the 1989 season and the other two were discovered during the 1992 season in Area B. Despite the distinct area designations, the presses are actually part of the same complex of buildings of the Byzantine period (5th-6th century AD). The rooms around the Area C press were very badly damaged by modern terracing operations but the layout of the rooms around the Area B presses can be reconstructed, despite the extensive damage from buildings constructed over them in later periods.

A single building housing the two Area B presses consisted of a crushing room, two olive oil presses, and a *mikvah*. Similar layouts have been found in a number of other sites of the same period. The crushing room (where the olives were crushed beneath a large circular stone) was situated in the eastern part of the building, the two presses (where the oil was squeezed from the olives) in the west, with the *mikvah* in between the two presses. The outside walls have been preserved up to a height of .60 m., the paved floor is still intact. Enough of the original elements of the press are still extant to enable us to reconstruct the manner in which the press operated.

The successful operation of the press depends primarily upon maintaining a constant pressure on the

load of olives (see Figure 19). The operational basis of the press is that of a beam (A) secured to a weight-stone (B) by a screw (C); the turning of the screw exerts pressure upon the baskets of olives (D) which forces the oil from them. This is accomplished by means of "floating" rather than a fixed pressure, that is, the weight-stone is not fixed to the floor and the beam is not fixed in the wall-niche (E). A description of the pressing process may clarify this principle.

Baskets of olives (D) are loaded between the pressing board (F) and the pressing stone (G). This pressing stone (G) rests upon a cylindrical stone vat beneath floor level; the vat has a capacity of about 200 liters. A block of wood is then inserted between the beam end (A') and the top of the niche (E) to create a type of fulcrum. The screw (C) is attached to the weight-stone (B) by means of a screw-board (I) which is fastened to the weight-stone (B) by funnel-shaped slats (J) which fit into funnel-shaped mortises on either side of the weight-stone. As the screw is turned by means of a lever (K) pressure begins to be put on the load of baskets (D). When the amount of pressure on the baskets becomes equal to the weight of the weight-stone (B), the downward movement of the beam (A) stops and the weight-stone (B) begins to rise, creating the maximum possible pressure on the baskets. This pressure remains constant regardless of the height of the weight-stone from the floor. The weight-stone (B) is raised to the end of the screw (C) and pressure is maintained until the end of the process by the force of gravity and the decreasing resistance from the baskets of crushed olives (D); this is accomplished without further intervention by the workers. They are thus freed to do other tasks as the press continues its work on its own. When the process is finished, another block of wood is inserted between the beam end (A') and the bottom of the niche (E) and the screw (C) is opened until the stone-weight (B) rests on the pit floor, releasing the pressure on the load (D) and allowing the baskets to be unloaded. The screw is returned to its original position and the process repeated. Since the beam end is not fixed in the niche, the fulcrum point can float, that is, be moved up or down by the insertion of blocks of wood above and below the beam end, according to the size of the load.

It should be noted that the press can be loaded Friday before the beginning of the Sabbath and the pressing process can then continue during the Sabbath without human intervention, fulfilling instructions given in the *Mishna* A:9. This would allow for the production of "Sabbath oil" without the violation of the proscription against work on the Sabbath.

The presence of the *mikvah* between the two presses can be explained by the fact that the Samaritans adhered strictly to purification rituals which demanded a complete separation between the areas employing animal labor (the crushing room) and human labor only (the pressing room). A man going to work in the pressing room was required to go through a purification ritual before beginning work in the pressing room.

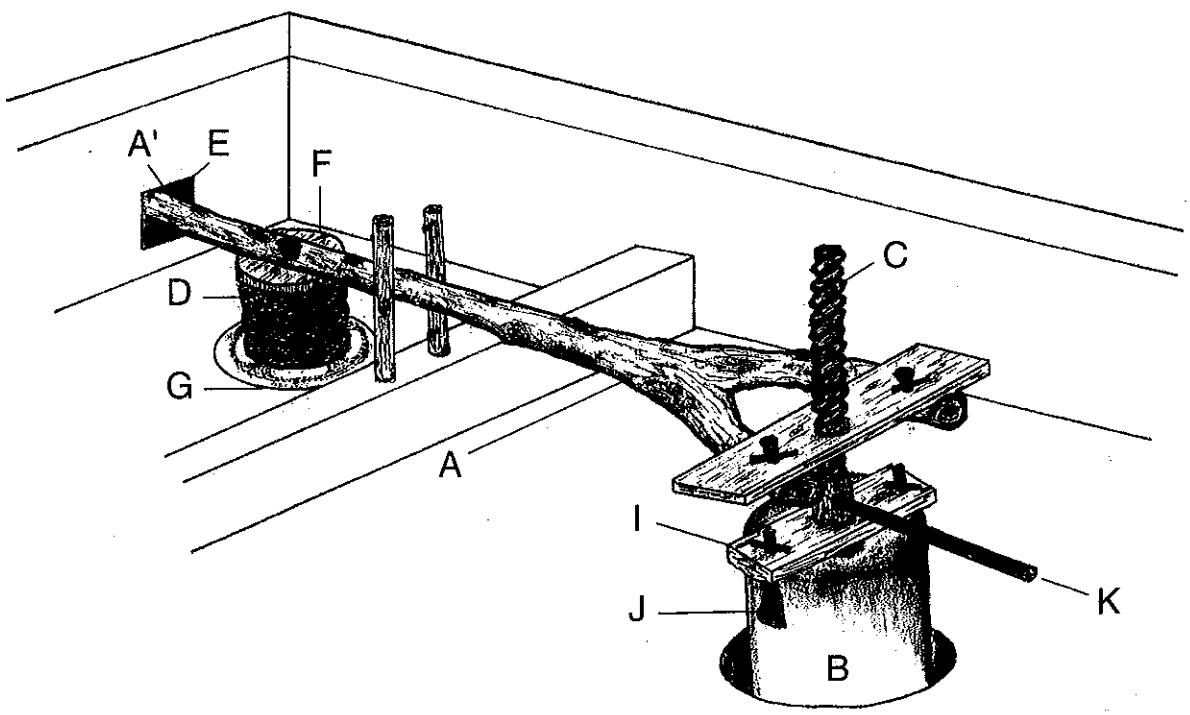


Figure 19. Reconstruction of an olive oil press.

The Mosaics of Zur Natan
by Eulah Mathews

Mosaic pavements were found in three areas in the complex at Zur Natan: in room 2056 in the center of the Western Complex, in the atrium of the synagogue, and in the synagogue itself.

The Mosaic in the Western Complex

Excavations in room 2056 in the Western Complex revealed the first mosaics to be discovered at Zur Natan (see Figure 18). The decoration consists of a diagonal grid pattern in red and black tesserae against a background of white mosaic. In the center of each of the diamonds formed by the grid is a cross made up of red and black tesserae. This pattern is quite widespread in the late Byzantine/early Arabic period, used in both Christian and Islamic buildings. The mosaic offers no clue as to the use of the room, but to date room 2056 is the only room excavated in the Western Complex with this type of decoration.

The Mosaic in the Atrium

As noted in the article on the stratigraphy at Zur Natan, the atrium of the synagogue was surrounded on three sides by a roofed colonnade. Our excavations of the atrium uncovered fragments of mosaic on the floors of this colonnade on the west and south sides of the atrium.

The outside edge of the mosaic was bordered with a braid pattern in red, black, gold and white tesserae. Scattered remains of a border on the inside edge were found; they appears to be part of a band of interlocking circles (see Figure 20). Between the borders we noted two types of geometric images in red against white mosaic: one type represents either a cross on a pedestal, or a cross atop an anchor; the other is a simple rosette (see Figures 21 and 22).

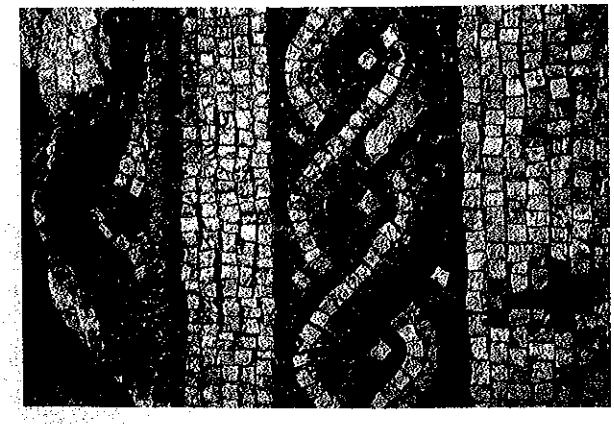


Figure 20. Atrium mosaic showing braid pattern and interlocking circles.

This floor is probably not the original floor of the atrium colonnade; a small sounding just inside the south side of the atrium revealed two of the benches of the synagogue in secondary use in the foundation of this floor. Whether the benchs were deliberately removed from the synagogue by Christians, or simply found as debris and reused in the building of the atrium colonnade, is uncertain. But the iconography of the atrium mosaics (that is, the crosses) does provide further evidence that the synagogue-atrium complex underwent some renovation at the hands of Christians.

The Mosaic in the Synagogue

Two types of mosaic are represented in the synagogue. In the narthex, or entrance hall, large white tesserae are laid diagonally to form the floor. This

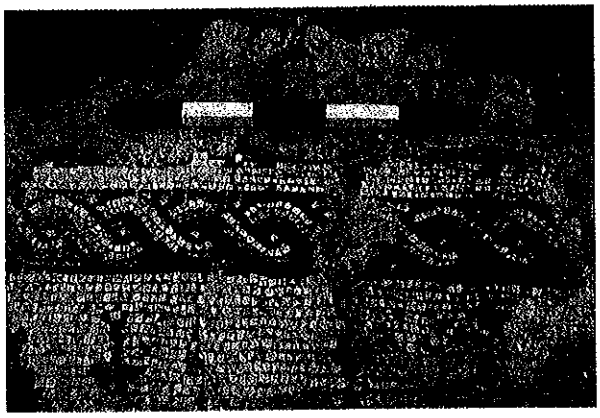


Figure 21. Cross and rosette patterns.

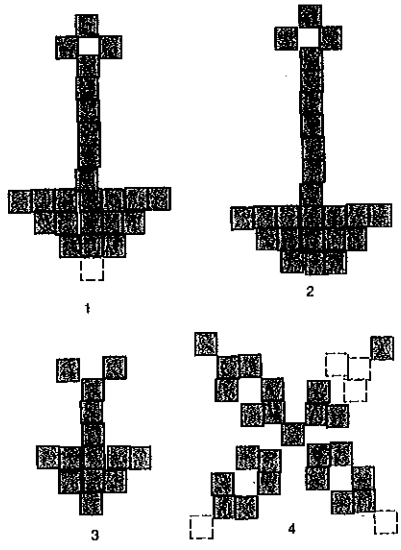


Figure 22. Patterns in atrium mosaics. 1-3 cross patterns, 4 rosette.

Figure 23. Synagogue mosaic.

floor is broken in places by graves of the Ottoman period. The white mosaic pavement of the narthex extends the length of the narthex and goes right up to the wall which forms the threshold between the narthex and the central hall of the synagogue.

The floor of the hall directly before the entrance and in front of the benches of the synagogue is covered with a multi-colored mosaic of tesserae slightly less than 1 cm. square laid into grayish-white cement. Most of the tesserae are colored stones; however, there is some use of glass for some of the blues and greens. Much of the mosaic is badly damaged or missing, and the greater part of the mosaic pavement is unexcavated, as the tomb of Sheik Musharef rests squarely atop the center of the carpet.

What has been excavated can be described in two parts: 1) the dedicatory inscription just inside the entrance of the synagogue; and 2) the carpet of medallions on the edges of the central hall of the synagogue.

Just over the threshold of the synagogue a dedicatory inscription in Greek was placed (see Figure 23). The inscription is in the center of a medallion and is made up of black letters against a white background; the individual lines of the inscription are separated by red lines one tessera thick (see Figure 24). The dedication reads as follows:

Μνηςἰτουσιν υ τἰ[ο]υ χωριου [
]ἰΑντεσουου[ ]ἰνιτεωτιεκγἰΙουλος
κε[.]
Let them be remembered, the sons of the village of Antesion, Theotis and Julos and ...

Figure 24. Synagogue inscription.

This dedication, naming perhaps the builders of the synagogue, Theotis, Julos and at least one other, bears the marks of having been executed by a provincial craftsman in its inconsistencies of spelling. More telling is the use of the υ where one might expect an ι or οι, evidence that in the local dialect these vowels were losing their distinct character and some may have been pronounced interchangeably as /ē/. Similarly, the τ is used where we would expect θ in standard Greek spelling, and ε replaces αι. What we have in this inscription, in fact, is in no way standard. Although it is formulaic (the verb μνηςθουσιν introduces several dedicatory or commemorative inscriptions in Palestine, including one at Beit Alpha), the inscription seems to recall spoken, rather than written language. The substitutions of the vowels and consonants noted above are not egregious spelling mistakes, but are perhaps close to phonetic spellings and evidence of the way Greek was actually prononunced in the area in the Late Byzantine period.

The inscription is enclosed within a black circle, around which is a meander border of black, white, red, gold, and blue tesserae. The entire medallion is contained within a square outlined in black and white; in the arcs of each corner are floral designs in red and white. On either side of the medallion within the square we can see remains of mosaics representing columns upon high bases. While the column to the north of the central medallion is badly damaged (but clearly depicts a spiral column in blue and black), that to the south is well preserved and shows a fluted column with pomegranates rising from its urn-shaped capital; above the four pomegranates is another bowl or urn.

East of the central medallion flanked by the depictions of columns the mosaic disappears for the most part under the tomb of Sheik Musharef. Excavations along the west edge and south side of the Sheik's tomb have revealed scant remains of mosaic - a meander border perhaps framing a large rectangular carpet of mosaic, and patches of floral or vegetal decoration in black, white, red, and gold tesserae, and blue glass. Reddish-orange bunches of grapes can be seen among this decoration, as well as sheaves of grain emerging from golden cornucopias.

The synagogue mosaics are quite similar in style and execution to the mosaics in the Samaritan synagogues at el-Khirbe (near Sebastiya) and Khirbet Samara. The pomegranates and spiral column of the Zur Natan mosaic reflect similar motifs in the el-Khirbe mosaics, while the medallions framed by sheaves of grain springing from cornucopias recall a like pattern at Khirbet Samara. The mosaics at both el-Khirbe and Khirbet Samara included representa-

tions of the Holy Ark and ritual implements. It was in the hope that we would find similar images in the center of the synagogue at Zur Natan that we dug a small sounding through the courtyard of Sheik Musharef's tomb, just west of the synagogue apse. This sounding ended on the floor on which mosaics would have rested, but there was no evidence whatsoever of mosaic left. Whether it was the Christians who removed the mosaics (perhaps because they contained images distasteful to Christians) or the Moslem builders of the Sheik's tomb, we cannot tell.

A Luster-Painted Cup from Zur Natan
by Gusta Lehrer Jacobson

During the 1991 excavations at Zur Natan, a dumping pit (2086) was discovered in the ruins of a building of the Early Arab-Late Byzantine period. The pit contained pieces of broken pottery and glass dating from the time of the building's last phases. Among them were found some fragments of an outstanding luster-painted cup - not enough to restore the vessel completely, but sufficient to reveal its shape (see Figure 25).

The vessel, a roughly cylindrical cup of bluish glass, is approximately 9 cm. high and 7.5 cm. in diameter at the mouth. The rim is fire-polished; the base is flat and bears a pontil mark.

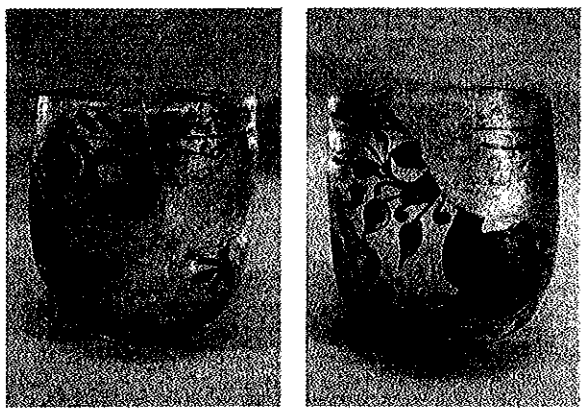


Figure 25. Both sides of luster-painted cup.

Unfortunately, most of the missing parts belong to the wall of the cup; consequently, most of its decoration is lacking. It is evident from the remaining decoration that the cup was painted in shades of chestnut brown and yellowish-green, inside and out, using the luster method - a technique which uses pigments containing silver and/or copper applied on glass or glazed ceramic. The objects are then fired at relatively low temperatures under special conditions. Results of an analysis performed by The Israel Institute of Geology indicate the colors on the subject vessel contain silver and copper.

The decoration surrounding the vessel immediately below its rim comprises a band of oblique yellowish strokes - a simplified version of the classic rope pattern. Underneath, bordered by upper and lower lines, is the main scene: animals among stylized vegetation. The headless forequarters (neck, chest, and front legs) of a cloven-hoofed animal, possibly a deer or gazelle, are preserved; it is lying down, facing left. In front of it is the hind leg and tail of a dog or beast of prey or another deer, running to the left, and a very small part of the head (?) of a third animal, picking at a flower (see Figure 26).

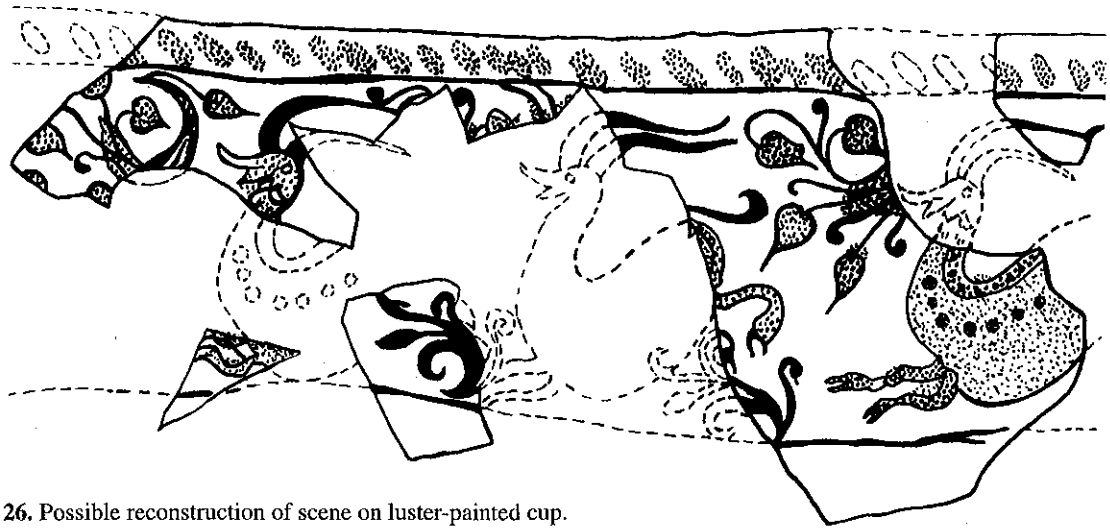


Figure 26. Possible reconstruction of scene on luster-painted cup.

The bodies of the animals are drawn in brown contour lines filled in with yellowish-green. Rows of small brown dots follow the contour lines of the bodies and, on the body of the ungulate, a row of larger dots continues down the middle. Scrolls, shaped like cornucopiae with leafy branches coming out of them, painted brown and green, suspend from the upper border line; inclined half-palmettes painted in brown rise from the baseline. The bottom of the cup is decorated with an eight-petaled flower, painted with greenish pigment on the inside.

The ornamentation of this cup, although done in classical pre-Islamic (probably Coptic) tradition, already exhibits characteristics of early Islamic art. The individual motifs are rendered in a style found in both the major and minor art of the Ummayad period of the late 7th and the 8th centuries. The half-palmette, in particular, is very close the palmette frieze on a luster-painted glass cup found at Fustat (Egypt) and dated to the second half of the 8th century by an Arabic inscription written on it; this cup is the earliest example of luster glass of proven date.

The technique of luster-painting, used on glazed ceramic from the 9th century onward, is considered one of the greatest achievements of Islamic craftsmanship. It has been attested, however, that this technique was first used on glass at an earlier date. According to some scholars, its origins should be sought in Coptic pre-Islamic Egypt. Others attribute it to either Syria or Iraq or Persia after the Arab occupation. Though luster-painted glass has indeed been found in Iraq, Syria, Persia and Israel, the greatest quantities so for excavated come from Egypt.

The cup found at Zur Natan can be dated by the context of the pit and by iconographic parallels to the 8th century, and was probably made in Egypt. It represents an important addition to the as yet little-known group of luster-painted glass.

The Zur Natan Capital
by Moshe L. Fischer

During the TFAHR excavations of the 1991 season, while clearing the debris from the floor where the mosaic inscription was found, a large capital was found on the mosaic floor wedged into the corner of the room; it clearly was intentionally placed there, although in secondary use.

The Zur Natan capital is not only an interesting piece of architectural decoration, but as such it is rather unique among decorated architectural items uncovered until now in Israel (see Figure 27).

Its surface is carefully divided into three sections (see Figure 28). The lowest section is decorated by a range of acanthus leaves which cover almost 2/3 of the *calathus* (basket) height. Then the volutes and the *helices* (whorls) follow, growing together from above the upper tips of the acanthus leaves on the top of a *caulis* (stalk) which is visible behind the acanthus tips. Finally comes the abacus.

The acanthus range is not divided into lobes, the tips are perpendicularly arranged in parallel rows

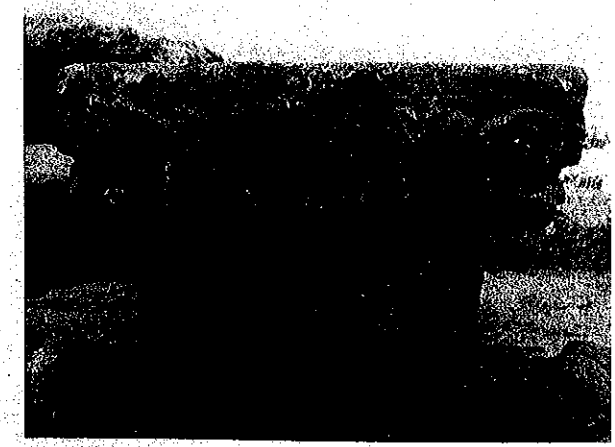


Figure 27. Capital.

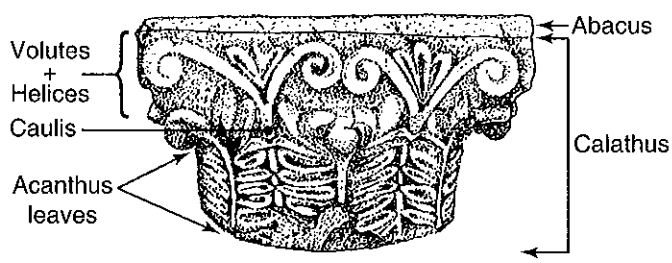


Figure 28. Drawing of capital.

touching each other and creating various geometric patterns such as rhombi, rectangles and a trapezium. The same design occurs in 4th and 5th centuries AD capitals from Syria and examples have been found in the Western Church of Mampsis in the Negev. The acanthus has elongated and sharply pointed tips which are shallowly ridged, reminiscent of the "Syrian acanthus." The midrib is strongly emphasized and highly profiled. Only the central tip is curled forwards, thus forming one swollen bulk with the midrib, whilst the two lateral tips remain pointing upwards, attached to the *calathus*. The *caules*, however, are slightly carved behind the attaching tips of the acanthus range. This reminiscent of the "classical" capitals also occurs in Syrian capitals of the 5th century AD. Volutes and *helices* are both shaped like ropes, and also attached to the *calathus*. They grow up from a common stem which closes the interval between the acanthus tips and are slightly rolled under the *abacus*. In the space between the volutes, the *helices* and the *abacus* there is a trefoiled flower. The *abacus* front is a direct continuation of the surface of the *calathus* being accentuated only by an incised line; its center only is decorated by a flower.

Taking into consideration the features as described above, we cannot really relate this capital to any one of the defined types of the Later Roman and Byzantine periods, but it is obviously an expression of "post-classical" architectural decoration.

A tendency towards a clear division of the capital components, as demanded by Vitruvius in *de Architectura* IV:1, is visible only from the 2nd century AD onwards. During the Hadrianic and Antonine architectural flowering, based as it was on marble, the standardized principles of the 'Normal Capital' were often given up, especially for the new smaller capitals and heterodox tendencies became visible. Thus, for example, double ranges of acanthus leaves and regular *caules* and *calyces* (outer whorls) supporting volutes and *helices* no longer appear invariably. The upper part of such capitals is often used for complicated vegetal or figural decoration. In some ways, we are faced in this period with a sort of forerunner of the later Roman 'two-zoned capital.' Developed in Asia Minor, such capitals occur with different variations in Greece, North Africa and Syria, but are rather rare in Palestine. Here, however, a local type seems to have been developed, either due to a tendency towards a certain degree of schematization and stylization of vegetal elements in Corinthian capitals of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, or to a local tendency to "heterodoxy" going back to the Hellenistic period.

The general trend is the almost total renunciation of *caulis* and *calyx*. In Palestinian examples, the move from an emphasized *calyx* to its total elimination occurred in the period between the mid-3rd and mid-4th century AD. This seems to have happened in Asia Minor also. A large group of pilaster panels in Corinthian style from the synagogue in Sardis has this tendency too. Perhaps they are based on a development in this direction which started in smaller pilaster capitals from around 200 AD or somewhat later. This type was revived later on during the 5th century in various art centers in Greece, Macedonia, and Asia Minor.

As to the acanthus of the Zur Natan capital, it has much in common with the plain acanthus occurring in complexes in Northern Syria. Here a plain network of folioles is also typical, which is to be considered a reaction to the plastic leaves in the style of Aphrodisias which used to protrude from the *calathus* mass. An interesting process of the decay of the traditional concept of the use of the acanthus and of its shape is evident. In such capitals, the special design of the overlapped midlobe fusing with the midrib and creating a single unit, was also common. These works should be dated mainly to the 5th century AD, perhaps up to the beginning of the 6th century. Some of the main features of the Zur Natan capital occur in some mid-5th century AD capitals from Abu Menas, Egypt.

In summary, the design and the decor of the Zur Natan capital do not derive from any marble prototype from one of the main art centers of the Eastern Mediterranean, as was often the case for 2nd and 3rd century AD capitals. On the contrary, this capital seems to be a result of a rather pluralistic evolution which characterized the "post-classical" reaction to 2nd and 3rd century examples. Some of its features seem to point towards local precedents, which strengthens the impression that it is indeed a product of a local decorative development, based on the interchange between imported marble decoration and its local imitations, which occurred during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.

Accordingly, this capital could well be placed into the mid-5th century AD, before the revival of marble imports, including the "Theodosian capitals", and their impact on local production.

Catalogue of Oil Lamps from Zur Natan
by Yonel Charvit

This catalogue describes the oil lamps found in the TFAHR excavations at Zur Natan, ancient Antesion. Many of them, especially those found in area A, came from pottery dumps, and so they have only limited stratigraphical value. Others were found in places where they are important to the accurate dating of the various strata. Each lamp is identified by its basket number. The lamps are described by groups and organized according to periods and types.

A. Herodian Lamps (1st-2nd century AD)

The bodies of these lamps were made on the wheel; the nozzle was made by hand and added later to the body. The body was sometimes sculpted by a knife. The lamp has neither a handle, nor is it slipped. Sometimes it bears simple decorations.

1. No. 10347. Round body, wide nozzle with an incision along itswidth, shelf around the reservoir hole.
2. No. 20073 (piece). Nozzle with an incision to its width.
3. No. 10339 (piece). Same as No. 2.

B. Provincial Roman Lamps (2nd-4th century)

Usually locally made, the lamp is flat with a short round nozzle, concave neck, round body, and sunken discus. The base is a "false" ring base with several circles around it. The lamp is usually slipped. The decoration includes mainly waves on both sides of the nozzle, "double-axes" on the rim, and images on the discus. Many times the discus has been broken purposefully, indicating that perhaps the lamp was made by a pagan potter but then used by either a Samaritan, Jew, or Christian who objected to the idolatrous image contained on the discus.

4. No. 20085. Red slip. Raised decoration on the rim. Discus broken.
5. No. 20562. Pale pink clay with grey slip. Discus broken.
6. No. 10201. Piece. Upper part of lamp, with red-brownish slip. Discus broken. Long nozzle.

C. Regional Yavne-North Lamps (3rd-5th century)

These lamps are a regional sub-type of the late Roman round lamp. The body is round and flat, the nozzle round and projecting fromthe body, small knob handle, concave base. The reservoir hole is again often broken on purpose. The body is usually decorated.

7. No. 10086. Orange clay. Strip of triangles between the reservoir hole and nozzle. Decoration is asymetrical, consisting of zigzag lines on one side of the rim and bows on the other.
8. No. 10176. Decoration: double half-bows and dots. Nozzle center is lined with double diagonal lines. (See Figure 29)
9. No. 20555A. Orange clay. Mold-made, no decorations. Close to the Herodian type. (See Figure 29)
10. No. 10284 (piece). Rim decorated with half-bows filled with small dots, which appear also among the bows. On the nozzle, three diagonal lines.

D. Regional Slipper Lamps (3rd-5th century)

The reservoir hole is sunken and surrounded by a ridge. It has a small raised handle and a concave ring base. The decoration consists of simple geometrical patterns.

11. No. 20419. Pink clay. The rim is surrounded by straight and diagonal lines. The spout is separated from the body by two lines along the width of the nozzle. A worn linear design can be seen between the spout and the reservoir hole. The bottom of the nozzle is emphasized by two inscribed lines. (See Figure 29)
12. No. 20437. Pinkish-orange clay. The spout is divided from the nozzle by an inscribed line. The nozzle is decorated with criss-cross design and the rim with bows. The bottom of the nozzle is emphasized by two lines.

E. Samaritan Lamps (3rd-8th century)

These lamps are divided typologically and chronologically into four types. They have been called 'Samaritan' because of their abundance in the regions settled by the Samaritans, as well as by Samaritan inscriptions and symbols found on these lamps. At Zur Natan these lamps are the majority of all those discovered.

E1 - Type 1. Round lamp, 3rd-4th cent. Usually it is completely decorated with a main design between the spout and the reservoir hole.

13. No. 10036. Yellowish-orange clay. Design: semi-circle ladder strips on both sides; diagonal lines on rim; on back part, two semi-circles with fork design. Bows on both sides of base bottom.
14. No. 10040. Pink clay. Two double bows on nozzle, and on its center a ladder design and triangle with a circle inside. On rim, two double semi-circles with lines in different directions. Four concentric circles.
15. No. 10045. Orange clay. On nozzle, double bows and on its center, two diagonal ladders and between them a circle inside a triangle. On rim, two semi-circles with ladder design and concentric circles. (See Figure 29)
16. No. 10046. On nozzle, bow-like ladder design and in its center a wheel with three pairs of concentric circles divided by diagonal lines on both its sides. On rim double semi-circles with a fork design. Double bows on both sides of bottom of nozzle. (See Figure 29)
17. No. 10049. Pale orange clay. On nozzle ladder design and bows, and on its center a rectangle divided to three lined strips. On rim, semi-circles of ladder design, inside of which is a vertical ladder. Also large and small concentric circles. Two bows on nozzle bottom. (See Figure 29)
18. No. 20011. Orange clay. On nozzle and rim, bow-like ladder design and semi-circles with semi-rosettes, dots and circles. Two bow-like lines ending in tendrils on nozzle bottom. Four ridges around the base.
19. No. 10032. Pale yellowish-orange clay. On nozzle center, a fork design, and diagonal lines on both its sides. On rim, fork design inside ladder semi-circles. Straight ladders on both sides of the small handle. Bows on nozzle bottom. (See Figure 29)
20. No. 10044. On nozzle, channel divided along the center by aline. Y-shape small handle. On rim, date palm leaf design. Two bow-like lines on nozzle bottom.
21. No. 10048. Pale yellow clay. Fan design on rim. Broad projecting handle. Concentric circles. (See Figure 29)
22. No. 10054. Pale brown clay. On nozzle, menorah symbol. Two rings around reservoir hole. On rim vertical date palm leafs with dividing lines inside semi-circles; large and smal lconcentric circles. (See Figure 29)
23. No. 10038. Pale grey clay. The whole body is decorated with fish scales designs made by a compass. (See Figure 29)
24. No. 10033. Spout is divided from body by incision the width of the nozzle. Three raised dots are above the cut and in nozzle center an eight-branched menorah. Date palm leaves on rim from handle to nozzle. Bows on both sides of nozzle bottom. (See Figure 30)
25. No. 10034. Pale yellowish-orange clay. Large rosette on nozzle. On each side of rim semi-circle with fork symbol inside, also concentric circles. On each side of handle is a wheel. Bow on each side of nozzle bottom. Three rings on base. (See Figure 30)
26. No. 10037. Reddish-orange clay. On nozzle center is a semi-circle of ladder strip with rosette inside. On rim, double semi-circle with vertical ladder and concentric circles. Ladder strip from handle to spout. On nozzle bottom two lines ending with tendrils. (See Figure 30)
27. No. 10035. Reddish-orange clay. Bow-shaped ladder design. On nozzle, cross-hatch design. On rim, semi-circles with lines to both directions. Two bows on nozzle bottom.
28. No. 10085. Orange clay. Bow-shaped ladder design on nozzle. Around spout are three double bows with lines, and concentric circles. On nozzle base, two lines ending with tendrils.
29. No. 10055. Piece of upper part of lamp. On rim, semi-circles in ladder design with lines to both directions. Large and small concentric circles.
30. No. 10055C. Broken. Yellowish-orange clay. Two date palm leaves emerge from handle and encircle the reservoir hole, along with fish scales design. Base with three concentric rings and central dot, two bows on nozzle bottom.
31. No. 20011B. Piece of nozzle. Ladder design on top, two bows and date-palm leaves on base.
32. No. 10055D. Piece of rear part of lamp. Orange clay. Ladder design on both sides and line of circles with central dots.

E2 - Type 2. Elongated piriform lamp, which resembles Type 1, but with a narrower nozzle and a channel between reservoir hole and spout.

33. No. 10039. Pale orange clay. Half-circles with lines on shoulders, date palm leaves between shoulders and nozzle. Wide high handle and two concentric circles and lined strip on both its sides. (See Figure 30)
34. No. 10042. Ladder strip on both sides. Two ridges around reservoir hole which continue along channel and around spout. Strip of concentric circles between ladder design and reservoir hole. (See Figure 30)
35. No. 10043. Line of dots between two strips of ladder design which encircle reservoir hole. Ridge around reservoir hole and along channel.
36. No. 10047. Date palm leaves around reservoir hole. Ridge along channel and around spout. Wide and high

handle with lines. Two bows on nozzle bottom.

37. No. 10050. Red clay. Date palm leaves design ending in concentric circle. Three closed ridges around reservoir hole. Three rings on base and two double bows on nozzle bottom.
38. No. 10051. Orange clay. Ridge along channel and around spout. Two lined circles on shoulders. Two date palm leaves between handle and reservoir hole. Wide high handle. On shoulders, line of dots on left, diagonal line with dots on right.
39. No. 10052. Pale orange clay. Two ridges around reservoir hole and along channel. Around reservoir hole are line of concentric circles between two strips of ladder design. Two double bows on nozzle bottom. Three rings around base.
40. No. 10053. Red slipped ware. Ridge along channel. Triangles design between handle and reservoir hole.
41. No. 10053B. Orange clay. Date palm leaves design around reservoir hole. Bows on nozzle bottom, and three rings on base.
42. No. 10292. Two double bows on nozzle. Date palm leaves design around reservoir hole. Two rings with compass dots on base.
43. No. 10285/10291. Pale red clay. Reservoir is closed (unbroken) with compass dot in center. Two ridges around it, opening towards the channel. Ladder design bows. Body is covered with concentric circles and dots. (See Figure 30)
44. No. 10055A. Pale yellow clay. On shoulders, two half-circles of fork design. Concentric circles and double bows on nozzle base.
45. No. 10055B. Pink clay. Bowed ladder strips on nozzle sides. Criss-cross design around body. Star handle.

E3 - Type 3. Broad piriform lamp, with ovoid body and channel between reservoir and spout holes. It has a tongue handle and a ring base. The decoration is simple - usually horizontal or diagonal lines on the sides. Dated mainly to the 5th-7th centuries.

46. No. 10004. Pale reddish-brown clay. Lines along nozzle, two ridges around reservoir hole. Ladder design bows on shoulders.
47. No. 10118. Lines along nozzle, date palm leaves on shoulders.
48. No. 10130. Pale orange-red clay. Lined bows on nozzle and shoulders, with five dots between them. (See Figure 30)
49. No. 10145. Pale red clay. Reservoir hole is closed (unbroken). Date-palm leaves on nozzle sides. Lined bows on shoulders.
50. No. 10153. Lines on nozzle sides, lined bows on shoulders. Two ridges around reservoir hole and on base. Menorah design between handle and reservoir hole.
51. No. 10156. Orange clay. Large dots in bowed lines on nozzlesides. Large concentric circles on shoulders.
52. No. 10158. Pale gray clay. Menorot on nozzle sides. Lined bows on shoulders. Menorah between handle and reservoir hole.
53. No. 10183. Date palm leaves on nozzle sides. Lines on body. Two ridges around reservoir hole and base. (See Figure 30)
54. No. 20299. Partly broken. Pinkish-orange clay. Vertical lines on shoulders and nozzle sides with date palm design among them.
55. No. 10121. Piece. Bowed ladder design on shoulder. Date palm leaves between handle and reservoir hole.

E4 - Type 4. Oval lamp, 7th-8th century. It has a high handle, horse-shoe reservoir hole with ridge around, trapezoidal channel along nozzle.

56. No. 20311A. Pinkish-orange clay. Strips of diagonal lines along nozzle. Ladder design in the shape of a triangle in channel. Hexagon design and radial lines on shoulders. Flat base. (See Figure 30)
57. No. 20310A. Orange clay. Date palm leaves along nozzle. Diagonal lines in channel and triangle with dots in the shape of human face.
58. No. 20139. Pinkish-orange clay. Square designs on shoulders, date palm leaves along nozzle, three dots in channel. Flat base. (See Figure 30)
59. No. 20637B. Only upper part preserved. Pink clay. Date palm leaves along nozzle, strip of dots, hexagonal design and radial lines. Eight-branched menorah in channel. (See Figure 30)

F. Early Arabic Lamps

Umayyad and Abbasid oil lamps are of two types: a) with a conical handle, oval body and a round ring base, dated to the 7th century; and, b) with a tongue handle, pointed-oval body and a base which follows the shape of the

body. It is dated to the 8th century and known as the "Mefjar" type, from the site of Khirbet Mefjar, near Jericho, where it was first discovered.

60. No. 20440. Pink clay. Two ladder design on shoulders. Geometrical design on nozzle sides. Three dots forming a triangle in channel. Two dots behind handle. (See Figure 30)
61. No. 20165. Pale yellowish clay. Two lines of dots around body. Branch design in channel.
62. No. 20419. Pale yellowish clay. Tendril design on the wholebody. Handle is incised. (See Figure 30)
63. No. 20116. Pale yellowish clay. Handle missing. Lines along channel. Double circles with flowers inside, around body. Birds on nozzle edge.

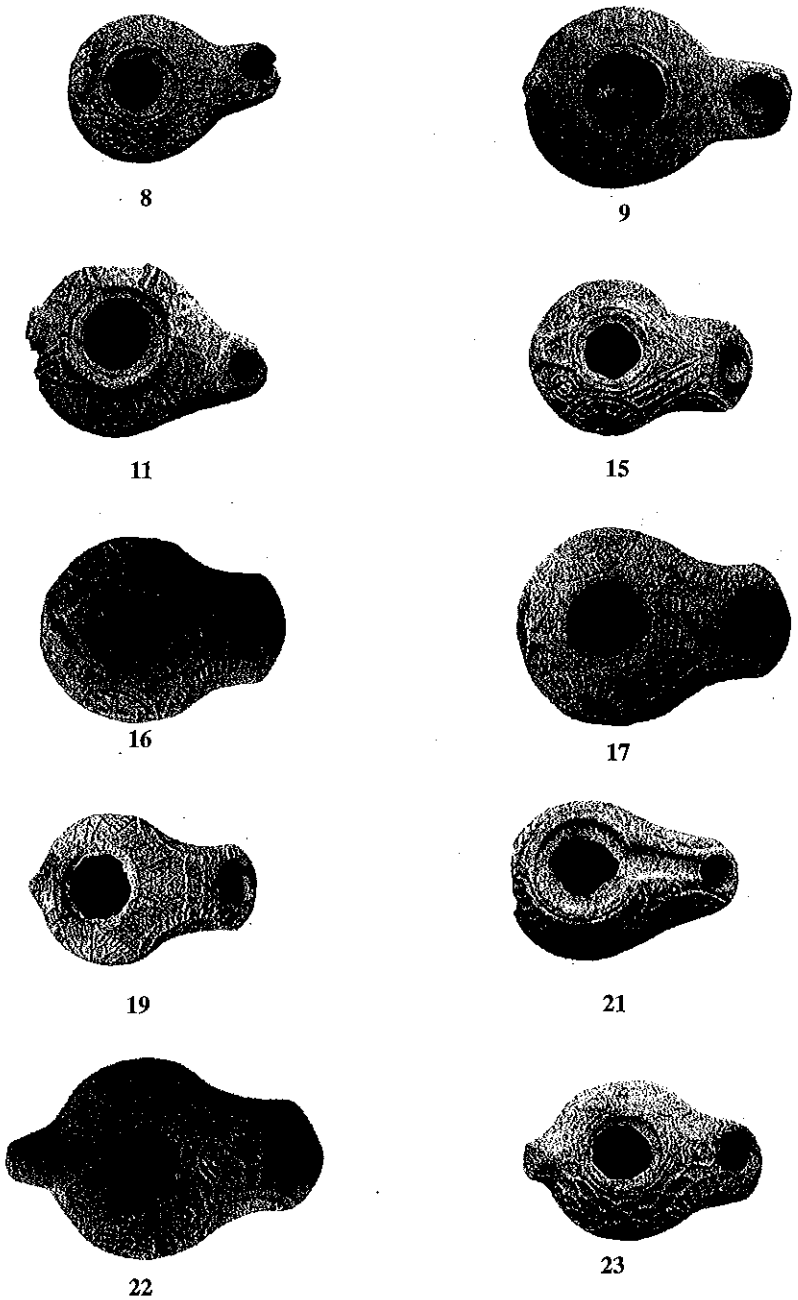


Figure 29. Zur Natan oil lamps (1:2).

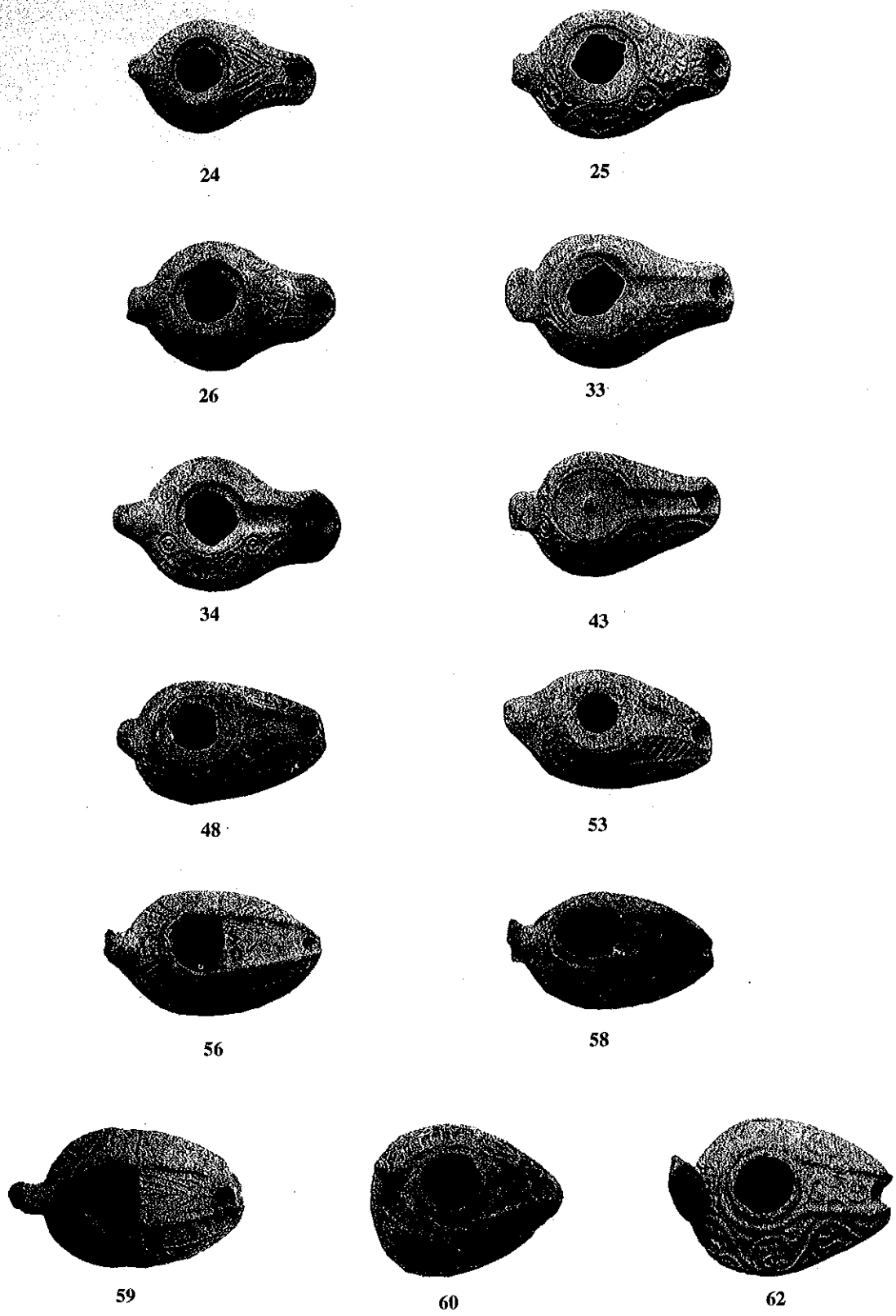
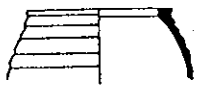


Figure 30. Zur Natan oil lamps (1:2).

Catalogue of the Pottery from Zur Natan
by Ann Fowler

Most of the rooms of the western complex were found virtually clean of complete vessels, excluding the occasional find of an intact oil lamp. Mainly sherds were found on the floors, which of course, are equally valuable for dating purposes. The greater majority of the restorable pottery was thrown by the last inhabitants of the complex into cisterns (2036) or into waste pits (2021 and 2086). The cisterns led into the underground complex, and since the complex is geologically unsound, we could only do quick, preliminary diggings into the vast mounds of rubbish thrown therein. But even from these cursory soundings we were able to determine from the ceramic evidence the date of the complex, 5th - 8th century AD. Most of the *Mafjar* sherds here depicted were recovered from the olive oil press of Area C in 1989.

Jars



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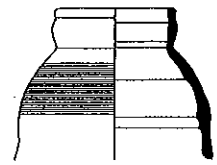

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Storage Jars

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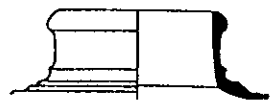

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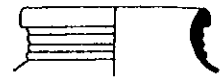

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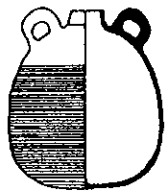

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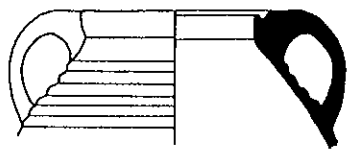

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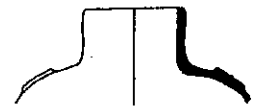

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Storage Jars (Continued)

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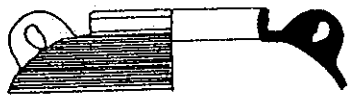

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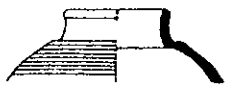

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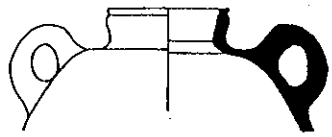

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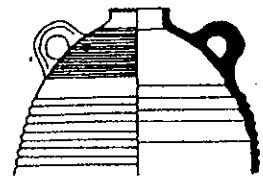

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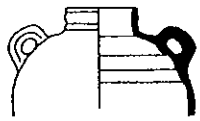

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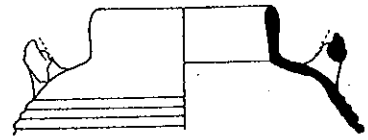

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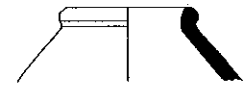

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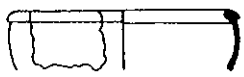

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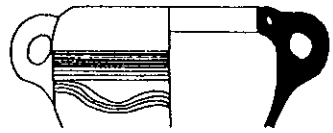

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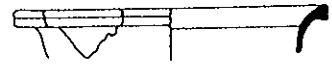

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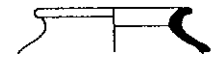

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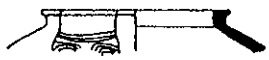

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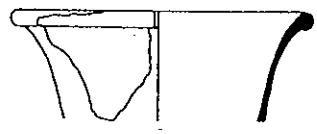

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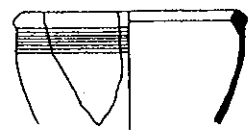

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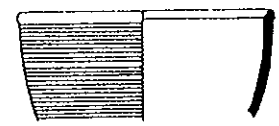

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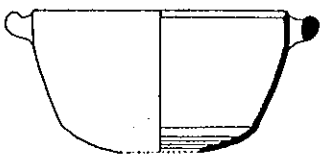

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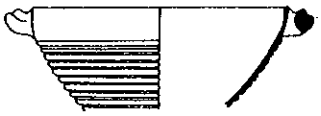

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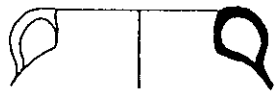

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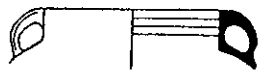

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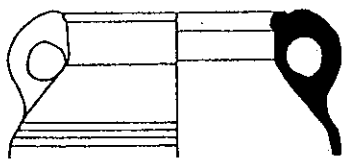

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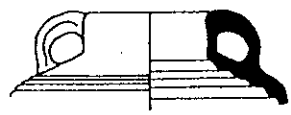

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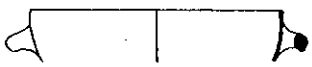

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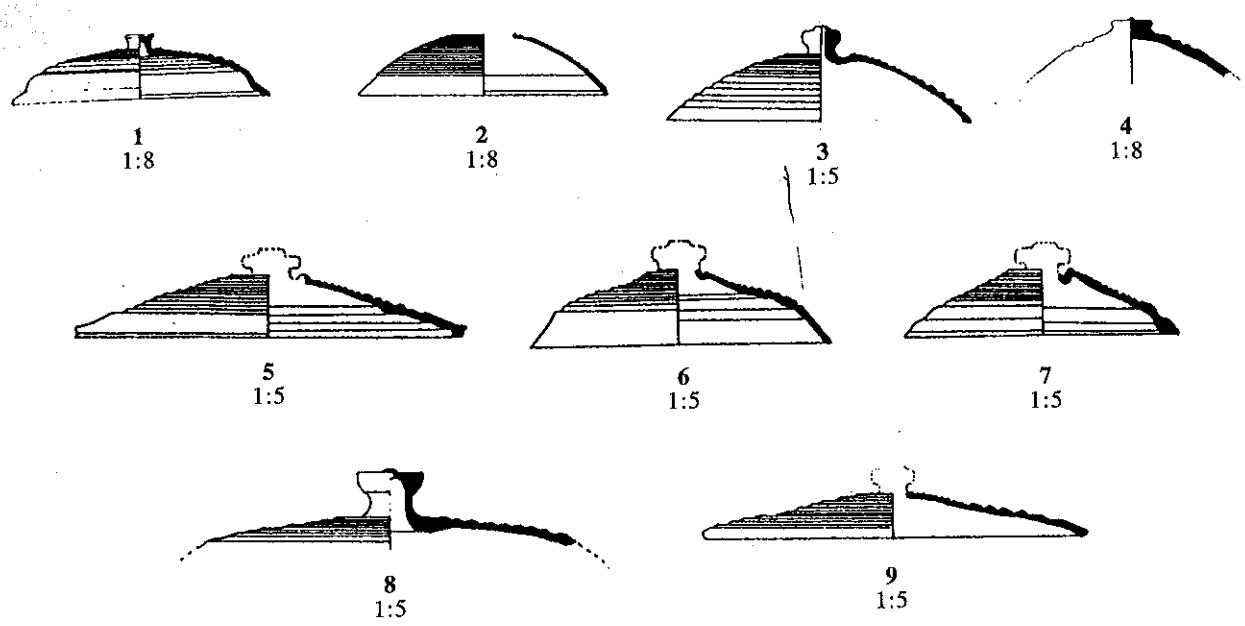

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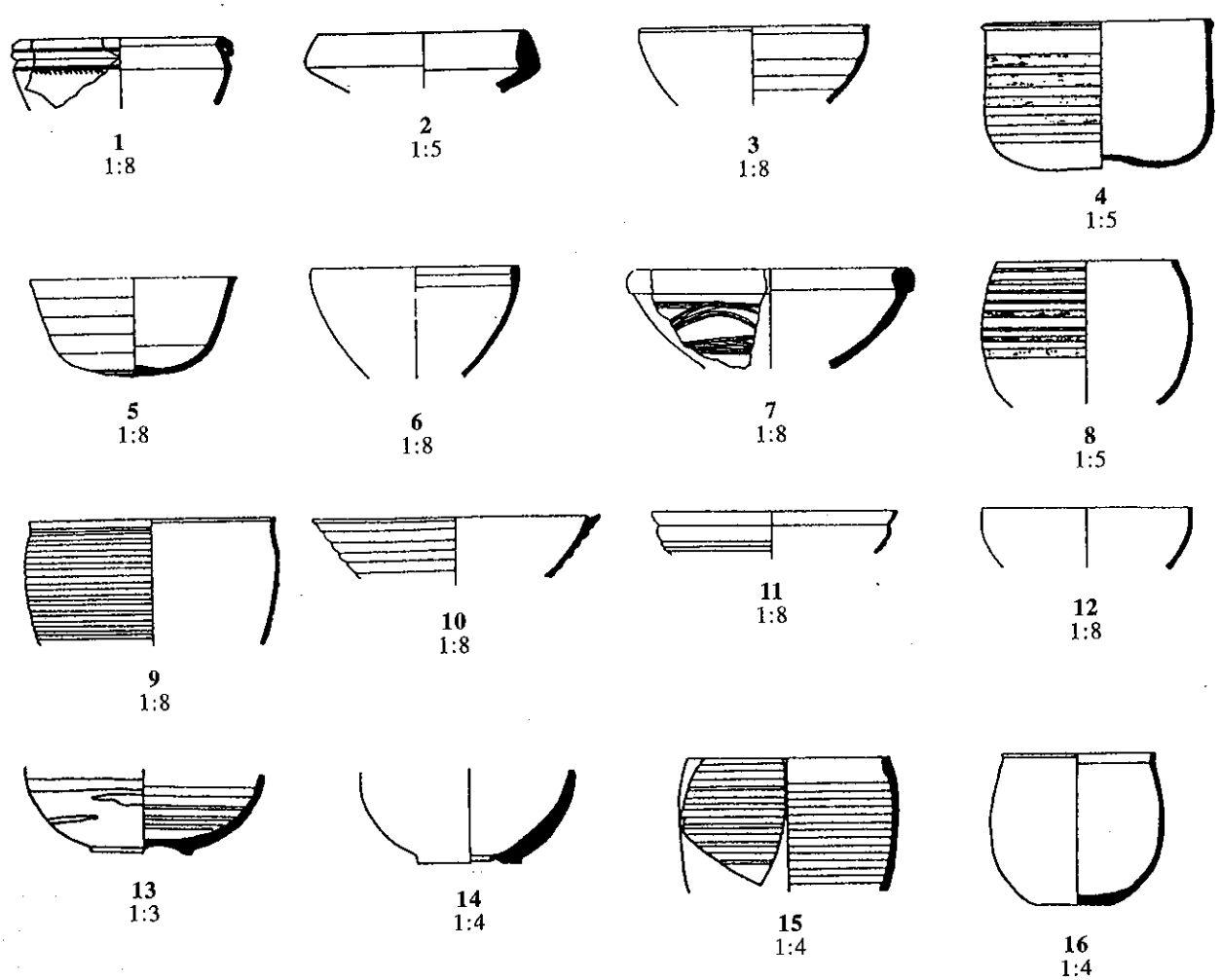
Bowls



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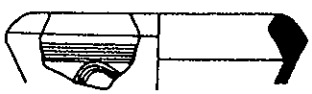
Bowls (Continued)



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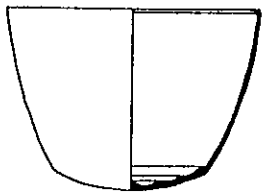

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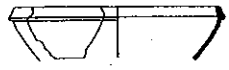

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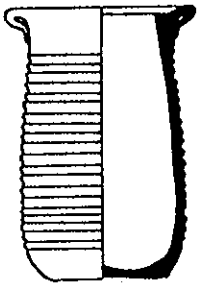

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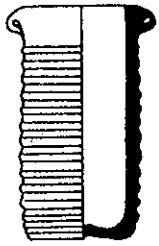

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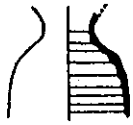

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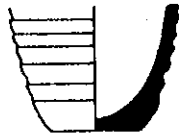

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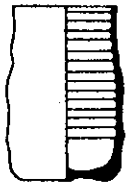

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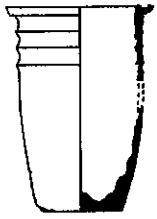

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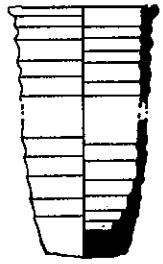

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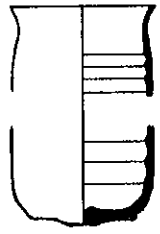

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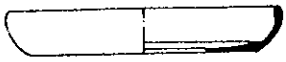

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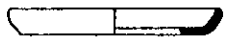

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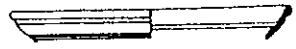

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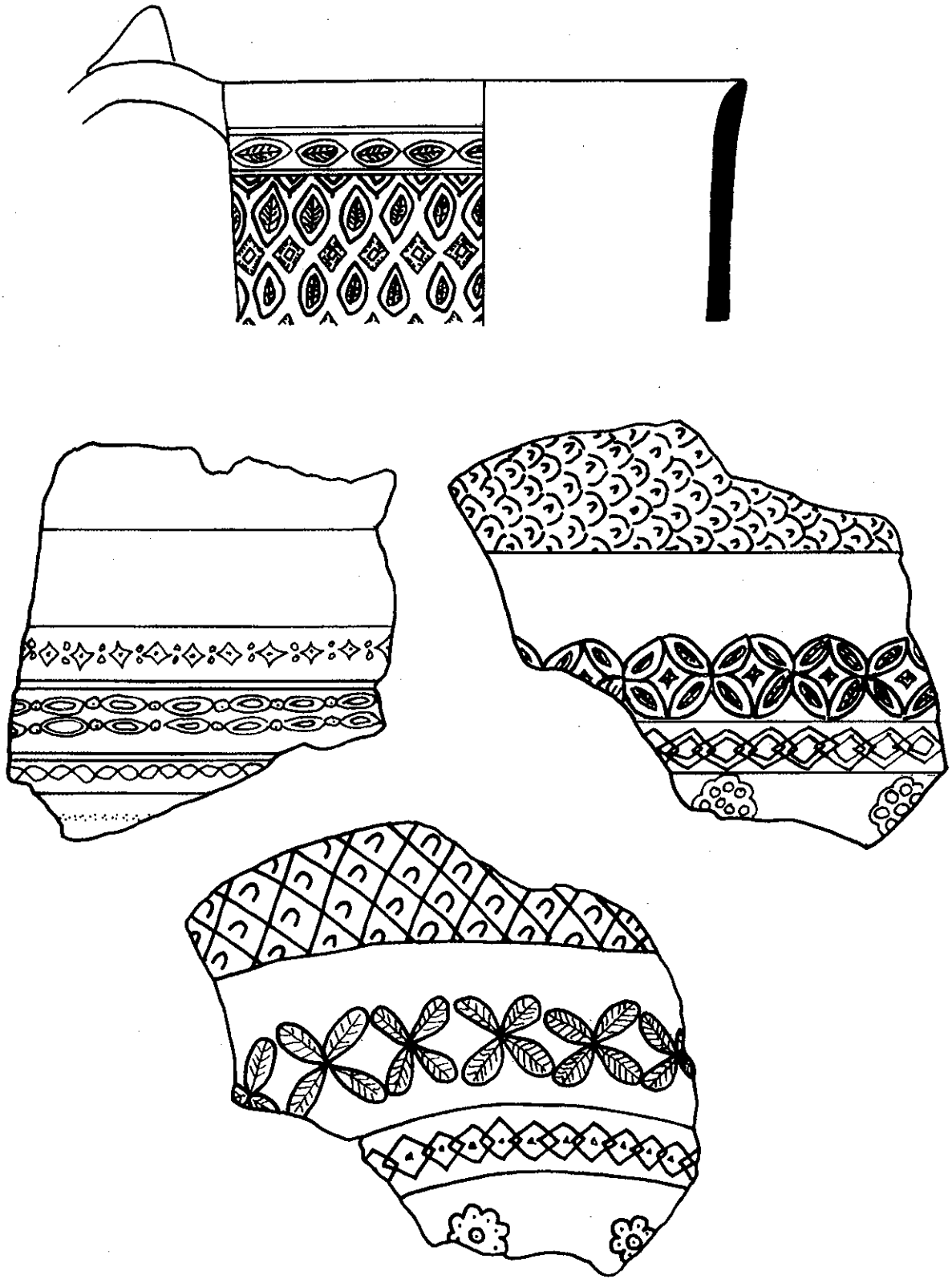

A Brief History of Silistra
by Don Reindl

Silistra is located in the northeastern corner of the Razgrad Oblast of Bulgaria (see Figure 31). It is situated on the south bank of the Danube, at the point where the southern Romanian border crosses the river. The site was inhabited over 2000 years ago by a Scythian tribe, the Gets. The area of Silistra was occupied by the Romans in AD 105-106, when the 11th Claudian legion was transferred from Panonia and stationed here. The legion remained through the 4th century, and the history of the settlement during this period is closely connected with its presence. The Romans knew the city by the name of "Durostorum," which may be derived from an earlier tribal name of the site. The name Durostorum was first recorded in the writings of Claudius Ptolemeus. Alongside the fortified camp, located about one kilometer from the bank of the Danube, there developed two settlements: a *canabe* (settlement) and a *vicus* (hamlet). The former was known by the name *Canabae Aeliae*, derived from the name of the emperor Publius Aelius Hadrianus (118-138), and its name is recorded in an inscription dating from the time of the emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161). It was located to the north of the camp. Artisans, merchants, and other immigrants settled in the *canabe*. The other population center, the *vicus*, was not designated by any particular name, this lack of a name indicating that the *vicus* was simply the old, local settlement. An inscription dating from 209 reveals that the *vicus* was a community which, although inhabited by Roman citizens, lacked urban ordinances. A necropolis was located to the west and south of the fortified camp.

During the 2nd to 4th centuries, Durostorum was a highway station along the strategic Danubian bank road. The road led out of the city to Marcianopolis (modern Devnja), with branches connecting to Tropeum Trajani. The fortress at Durostorum was one of the strongest defenses in that part of the Roman *limes* and was even visited by the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and Valens (364-378). Part of its strategic importance was its use as a base for the transfer of Roman troops across the Danube to battle various tribes that were raiding the area during this period, tribes like the Uzbeks, the Karps, and Goths.

A wide variety of cults were practiced in ancient Durostorum. Excavations have found evidence of the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus, Heracles, Mithras, and the Thracian Heroes. Christianity entered sometime during the middle of the 3rd century, and produced at least two martyrs in Durostorum, Dazius and Emilian.

Figure 31. Map of Balkans.

The beginning of the late Roman period of Durostorum's history is characterized by the building of new, massive structures over the sites of many of the older buildings. This conforms to a general tendency of urban restructuring throughout the empire at this time. At the beginning of the 4th century a new fortress was constructed on the bank of the Danube, probably next to the harbor. Archaeological evidence shows that the military probably relocated to this new fortress soon thereafter, and the old territory of the camp was occupied by a civilian population during the 5th and 6th centuries. In the middle of the 5th century the city was attacked by the Huns. In 578 the Avars invaded the area, and in 594 and 596 struggles between the Avars, Slavs and Byzantines took place near the city. As a result, part of the population fled south to Thrace.

Christianity became well established in Durostorum during the 4th century, and the city became a bishopric. The Arian bishop Aucsencius, a disciple of Wulfila, authored a series of works in Durostorum. It was about 600 that the last bishop of the city, Dulcisimus, moved to Odesos (modern Varna) when Durostorum was threatened by the Avars and Slavs. It was also during this time that the remains of the martyr Dazius were transferred to a church of Ancona in Italy for safety's sake.

The end of the 6th century and most of the 7th was a time of great transition in the history of the city. The Bulgars, led by Khan Asparuh (668-700), attacked the city, resulting in damage to the fortress wall and the burning of the basilica and many dwellings. In addition, Slavic settlers had already begun to infiltrate by the beginning of the 7th century.

By the time of the establishment of the First Bulgarian Kingdom in 681, the city had been renamed Drŭstŭr by the Bulgars and refortified. As such, it was the most significant Bulgarian fortress of the lower Danube. In the 9th century a great portion of Drŭstŭr was rebuilt according to a unified urban plan; many buildings from the previous century were demolished, and the entire area of the fortress was carefully reworked. Much of the architectural decoration of the period is of the same type as is found in the capitol city Preslav.

Drŭstŭr continued to be attacked during the period of the First Bulgarian Kingdom. A surprise attack by the Hungarians was met at Drŭstŭr in 895 by Tsar Simeon (893-927). The Byzantine emperor John Tzimisces (969-976) besieged Drŭstŭr for several months in 971 and succeeded in conquering it. Bulgaria was divided into the Eastern and Western Bulgarian Kingdoms in 963, with Drŭstŭr belonging to the former. With the capture of the city, the Eastern Kingdom fell to the Byzantines. Finds indicate that there was a Bulgarian population well-established in Drŭstŭr by the end of the early medieval period.

After the collapse of the First Bulgarian Kingdom in 1018 and the re-establishment of Byzantine control of the area, a great fire occurred in Drŭstŭr sometime between 1035 and 1042 and enveloped the entire area of the fortress. It is believed that this fire may be connected with the great Pecheneg invasion of 1036. The city was quickly rebuilt after the fire. During this time Drŭstŭr served as the capitol of the Byzantine province of Paristrion, which included lands north of the Balkans and was the seat of great secular and religious power.

Soon after the Second Bulgarian Kingdom was established in 1186, the early medieval buildings of Drŭstŭr were remodeled, with the larger buildings being partitioned into smaller, residential quarters. These buildings were also destroyed by a general fire, perhaps connected with the Tatar invasions of northern Bulgaria in 1242, after which the city was then largely abandoned until the beginning of the 14th century.

The Ottoman Turks added the area of Bulgaria to their kingdom in 1393 and continued to rule over the Bulgarians until 1878 when the Bulgarians regained their independence. The territory of southern Dobrudža, which includes Silistra, was awarded to the new state by the Treaty of San Stefano on February 19, 1878. Southern Dobrudža remained part of Bulgaria for several decades, and then passed back and forth between Bulgaria and Romania during the early part of the 20th century. The Treaty of St. Petersburg, concluding the First Balkan War, awarded southern Dobrudža to Romania on April 26, 1913. However, it was less than two months until the Second Balkan War broke out. After the conclusion of this war, southern Dobrudža was again awarded to Romania by the Treaty of Bucharest on June 28, 1913. It remained part of Romania until World War I, when it was captured by the Bulgarian army in September, 1916. At the end of the war, southern Dobrudža was initially given to Bulgaria by the Treaty of Bucharest on May 7, 1918. However, it was returned to Romania on November 27, 1919 by the Treaty of Neuilly. This was an unsatisfactory solution for the Bulgarian government, as the territory contained a majority of Bulgarians, 54.34%, while only 2.57% of the population was Romanian. The remainder of the population at the time was Islamic. Silistra also had a Bulgarian majority between the two World Wars, during which time ethnic tension was high. On July 11, 1926 Romania, Yugoslavia and Greece issued a protest to the Bulgaria against armed bands of

Bulgarians in southern Dobrudža and Macedonia. Two weeks later, Romanian police massacred a number of Bulgarians in the Silistra area. During February and March of 1936 there were mass arrests of Bulgarians in the territory.

During the initial stages of World War II, while Bulgaria maintained its neutrality, southern Dobrudža was acquired through negotiations with Romania which culminated in the Treaty of Craiova on September 7, 1940, ceding southern Dobrudža to Bulgaria. Bulgarian troops occupied the territory on September 21, 1940, simultaneous to a withdrawal of Romanian troops, and Silistra was once again in Bulgarian territory. Silistra and all of southern Dobrudža have remained part of Bulgaria since that time. Bulgaria withdrew from the war and severed its alliance with Germany on September 4, 1944, but within five days the USSR declared war on Bulgaria, crossed the Danube, deposed the government, and established a communist government led by Georgi Dimitrov. Soviet troops entered the Silistra itself on September 9, 1944. The communist regime survived until the elections of November, 1991.

Excavations at Silistra
by William Neidinger and Eulah Matthews

NOTE: Due to a breakdown in the international communications between Bulgaria and the United States, much of the information from the Silistra excavation never reached Houston, Texas. Consequently, only the briefest of summaries can be offered regarding the work of the 1993 season.

Along the southern bank of the Danube River in the northern part of modern day Silistra, an area in the local park was set aside for the TFAHR excavation in the summer of 1993. Before our arrival a clearing approximately 12.5 x 25 meters and three meters deep was made by the municipal authorities. The depth of the cut removed all the modern accretions from the area and brought the trench down to the level of the stratum of the 14th century AD. One month's worth of excavation uncovered four historical strata: 1) Roman (2nd century AD); 2) early Byzantine (6th century AD); 3) Medieval (12th century ?); and, 4) 13-14th century. (See Insert: Plan B)

STRATUM I - ROMAN

Towards the last days of the excavation, the top of a well-built wall was uncovered beneath the floor of a stratum IV building. Previous excavations by the University of Sofia further to the north of our trench had uncovered more of this wall which projected right into the waters of the river. Numismatic and ceramic evidence from these earlier trenches dated the building to the 2nd century AD. Due to a lack of time in the 1993 season, we were unable to accomplish anything more than merely expose the top of this wall in our trench.

STRATUM II - EARLY BYZANTINE

The main structure uncovered in the 1993 season was the western end of a Christian basilica (see Figure 32) that we can only tentatively date to the period of Justinian I (527-565). Only trenches dug into the foundations of the basilica will allow us to date it with any certainty. The excavations uncovered the narthex or vestibule and the western portion of the nave and two side aisles. Although the large mounds of ashlar stones of the basilica found in the southern part of the trench indicate that at some time the church was purposefully demolished, enough remained of the groundplan for us to ascertain that it underwent a second restructuring sometime in the Middle Ages.

In the earliest, initial stage of construction, there were three entrances into the narthex and one each from the narthex into the nave and two side aisles. Large piers (two of which were uncovered) separated

Figure 32. General view of Silistra excavations.

the nave from the side aisles. On one of the piers the remnants of a fresco were found showing the bottom of a robed figure (see Figure 33). A grave set into the floor of the narthex was probably that of some important ecclesiastical figure associated with the city or the church itself (see Figure 34).

At some time in the Middle Ages there seems to have been a rebuilding or at least a reinforcement of the basilica. The space between the piers was filled in with large stones as were some of the entrances into the narthex itself. In one filled-in doorway, a stone with an inscription was used to block up the passage (see Figure 35). In addition, the fresco fragment was covered over with a layer of plaster, but no painting was done upon this covering layer of plaster.

STRATUM III - MEDIEVAL

Stratum III is tentatively dated to the 12th century, until the numismatic evidence returns from the labs of Sofia University. At this time the area to the west of the basilica and the basilica itself became a massive graveyard; over fifty graves were unearthed in the 1993 season. Some of the graves were dug into the floor of the basilica, indicating that by this time the church had ceased functioning.

Aside from a general east-west orientation, there seem to be no generalizations that can be made about the burials. Most burials are single burials, although in one instance two children were laid to rest, one atop the other (see Figure 36). Most burials were without any grave goods, although some were buried with beads (see Figure 37) coins, or, in one instance, a bronze crucifix around the neck (see Figure 38).

Figure 33. Fresco of robed figure. Nicks in fresco are for re-plastering.

Figure 34. Stone-lined crypt in narthex.

Figure 35. Blocking stone with graffito showing a church façade and crosses.

Figure 36. Two infant burials.

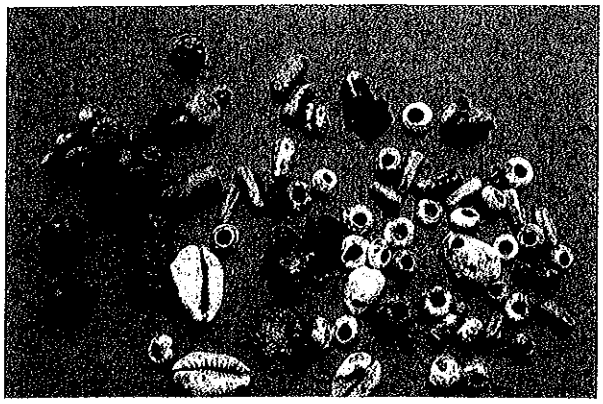

Figure 37. Various beads and shells.

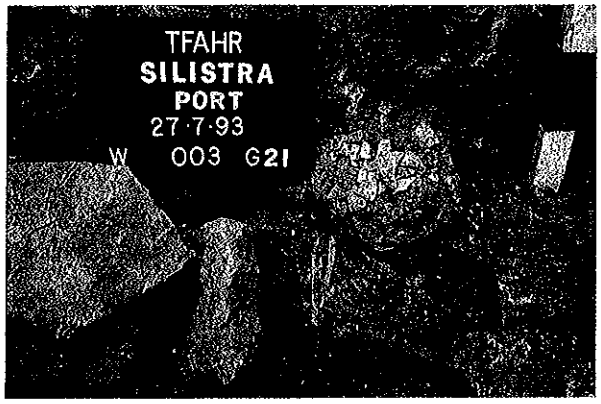

Figure 38. Note bronze cross near skull.

Most were placed directly into the earth, but in one case we were able to trace the outline of the remains of a wooden coffin (see Figure 39). In another grave the feet of the deceased were severed from the body and placed atop the thighs (see Figure 40); this may be a ceremony designed to keep the spirit of the deceased from wandering about (haunting) the living.

The arms of most of the bodies were crossed over the chest and in a few instances the fragile remains of egg shells were discovered amidst the finger bones. The significance of the egg is uncertain, but it has been theorized that this may be a burial habit peculiar to the Bogomils. The Bogomils were a heretical Christian sect, believing in a dualistic philosophy, rejecting the material world, and avowing a creed of strict asceticism. They, being the guardians of Good, believed in their eventual triumph over Evil and in their final resurrection to righteousness. The eggs we found amongst the hands of some of the burials might be a symbol of that resurrection. Moreover, the Bogomils were known to have rejected most of the external aspects of Christian worship: vestments, an established hierarchy, the use of images, etc. Might not the covering of the fresco in the basilica have been done under the influence of or at the hands of the Bogomils? Silistra was known to have been a Bogomil center in the Middle Ages.

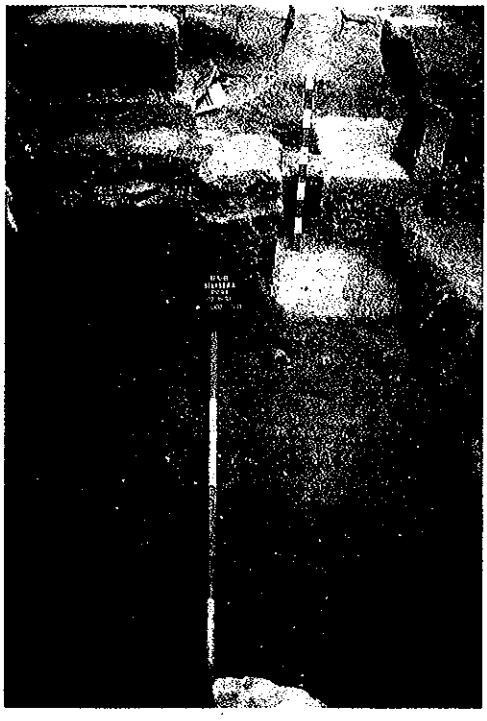

Figure 39. Burial showing outline of coffin (black line).

Figure 40. Burial showing severed feet on thighs.

STRATUM IV - 13TH - 14TH CENTURY

The stratum III cemetery was covered with a .10 meter layer of soil representing a period of abandonment of this area of medieval Silistra. In the late 13th or early 14th century a small rectangular building (see Figure 41) was constructed just to the west of the Byzantine basilica, whose ruins surely must have been visible and perhaps even served as a convenient source of stone. Only the stone foundation of this later building remains and in a number of instances the foundation cut through the burials of stratum III. The superstructure of the building was of reed and a type of waddle and daub, as was indicated by the impressions the vegetal material left in the soil. A conflagration destroyed the building sometime in the 14th century.

This stratum IV building was dated by the numerous *sgraffito* (inscribed) sherds found on its floor and in the ashes around the outside of the building (see Figures 42 and 43, 1-5).

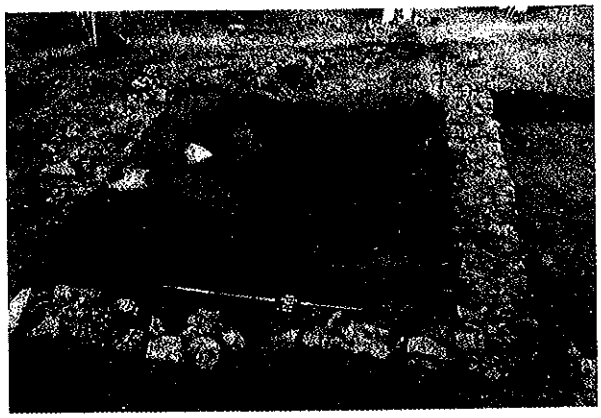

Figure 41. Foundations of medieval building.

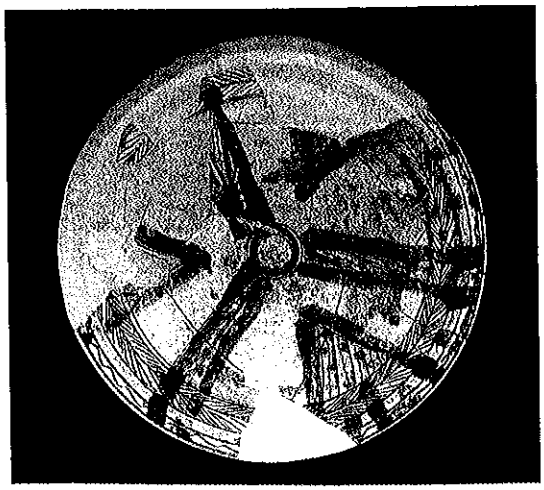

Figure 42. Restored sgraffito plate.

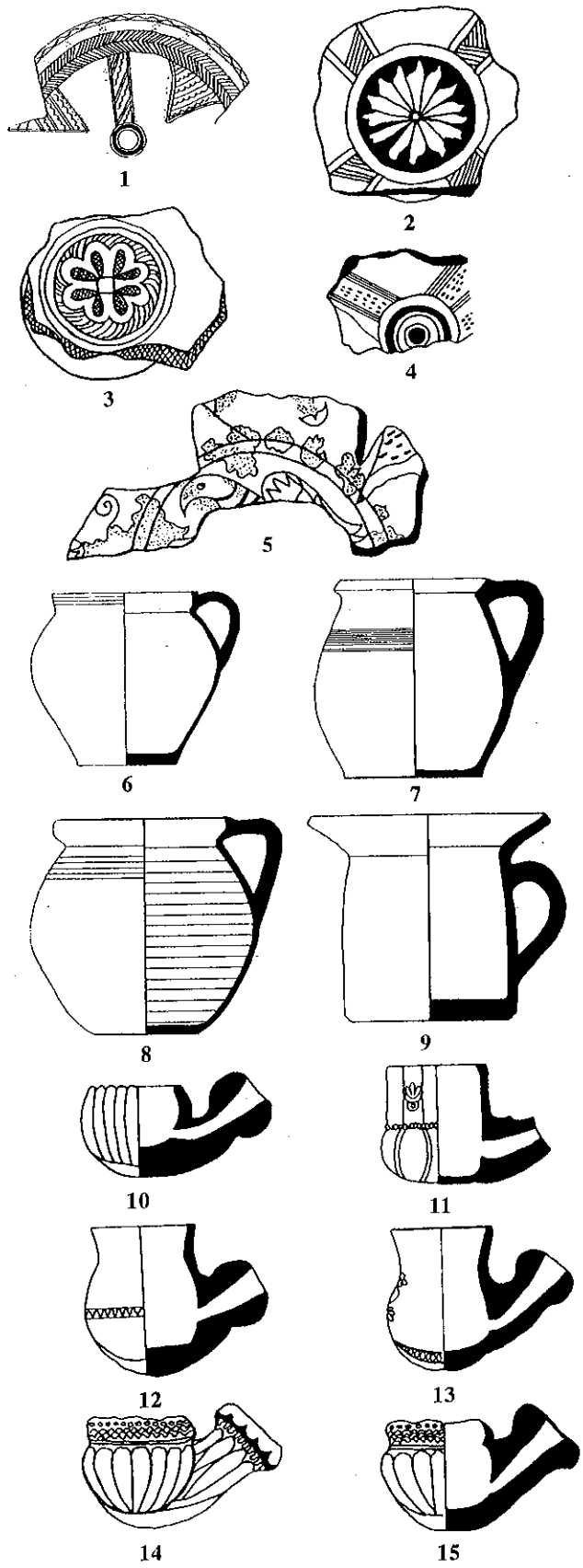

Figure 43. Sgraffito sherds, Ottoman pottery and clay pipes.

Figure 44. Later Turkish pit cutting through earlier burial.

The remains of later periods were, as mentioned, bulldozed away before our arrival. But in certain areas of the trench the remains of garbage pits sunk from these later, upper levels intruded into our lower strata (see Figure 44). A great deal of pottery from the time of the Ottoman occupation of Bulgaria was recovered from these pits (see Figure 43, 6-15). In the western side of the trench, in the trench wall itself, the remains of an Ottoman drainage ditch were uncovered and one of the stones the Turks used in constructing the drain was a Roman tombstone (see Figure 45).

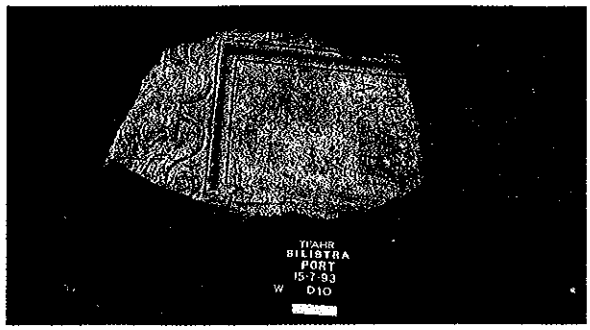

Figure 45. Re-used Roman tombstone. Reading "_ _ _ MAE VIXIT ANNXXIIII. That is "_ _ _ mae lived 24 years."

Excavations at Ulanci
by William Neidinger and Eulah Matthews

In 1994 TFAHR undertook joint excavations near the village of Ulanci with a team from the Museum of Macedonia. Ulanci is a small agricultural village 18 km. south of Tito Veles on the banks of the Vardar River (ancient Axios River). The Vardar/Axios was the central artery of ancient Macedonia, but prior to Macedonian hegemony over the region, the area was occupied by numerous tribes which ancient authors referred to collectively as the "Paeonians." Among modern scholars there is a consensus that the Paeonians spoke an Indo-European language, but there is debate as to whether they should be grouped with the Hellenic, Illyrian, Thracian or Phrygian tribes.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the Paeonians moved into the Vardar valley in the early Bronze Age. Homer mentions the Paeonians as inhabiting the Axios River valley and being allies of the Trojans. Herodotos and Thucydides refer to the Paeonians as occupying the area between the Axios and the Strymon valleys, as far north as the modern cities Skopje and Sofia, and extending to the Aegean in the south. This area of Paeonian settlement was considerably reduced by the Persian invasion of the 6th century BC, when some tribes were decimated, some eliminated, and some forcibly relocated to Asia Minor. This depopulation of Paeonian territory resulted in two circumstances: first, it created an opportunity for the neighboring Macedonians to settle the lower Vardar basin; and second, it forced the remaining Paeonian tribes to form a tighter confederation for their survival. As the Macedonians expanded their territory up the Vardar River, the Paeonians were forced further north. After initial conflicts between Paeonians and Macedonians, the Paeonians became allies of the Macedonians and served as contingents in Alexander the Great's army. With the collapse of Alexander's kingdom the Paeonians briefly regained their independence; however, the Paeonian state suffered near-fatal damage with the invasion of the Gauls in 279 BC, and lived in an almost constant state of conflict with their Macedonian neighbors. Both Macedonian and Paeonian independence was ended when the Romans conquered the region in the 2nd century BC, and subsequently added these lands to their empire as the provinces of Macedonia and Upper Moesia.

Excavations in the south Vardar basin began with German military excavations in 1917. Almost no work was conducted in this area until just after World War II when Greek archaeologists began excavating in the area of the Vardar valley which fell to the Kingdom of Greece, and Yugoslavian archaeologists began work in the area which fell to the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. To this day Greek archaeologists have continued their excavations of the lower Vardar valley, and in 1977 Yugoslavian (later, Macedonian) archaeologists began a systematic survey of the region north of Gevgelija. As a result of the Macedonian survey, numerous sites have been identified and a number of excavations have taken place. One of the sites identified by this survey was Ulanci.

One kilometer upriver from Ulanci are two small sites discovered by the survey, know to local residents as Dimov Grob and Stolot. In 1993 archaeologists from the Museum of Macedonia began excavating the site of Dimov Grob, uncovering some 27 graves dating from the late 13th and 12th centuries BC. The strategy of the 1994 season was to expand excavations of the necropolis of Dimov Grob, including what appeared to be a tumulus located uphill from the necropolis, and to begin excavations on the neighboring hill of Stolot, where abundant pottery sherds

dating from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period suggested the existence of a settlement (see Figure 46).

In the 1993 and 1994 seasons a total of 50 graves were uncovered in the necropolis of Dimov Grob on three ridges of farmland overlooking the Vardar River (see Figure 47). The graves, known as "cist graves," are of simple rectangular construction: four thin upright slabs form a box into which the body or bodies are placed; the box is then covered with one large or several small rectangular slabs. In one instance (Grave #32) one of the side slabs was a reused stele carved with the figure of a man (see Figure 48).

Although in most cases the bones are poorly preserved, it is possible to ascertain that most burials were single burials (see Figure 49), but there were a number of double burials and one possible triple burial. In the case multiple burials, two different types of burial can be observed: in one type, two bodies (male and female) are buried side by side, suggesting more or less contemporary burials (see Figure 50); in the second type of multiple burial, the bones of the earliest body are pushed to the foot of the cist and the newer body is laid in the place of the first (see Figure 51).

In most of the excavated graves a small pot (or pots) was found. A number of these small vessels appear to be local imitations of Mycenaean pottery of the Bronze Age (see Figure 52). In addition to these small vessels, other grave goods, usually knives and whetstones with the men and jewelry with the women, were also found. Sometimes, in addition to the grave goods within the grave, small broken vessels were found outside the cist. The most likely explanation for the small pots being outside the cist is that the breaking of the vessel was part of the funeral ceremony.

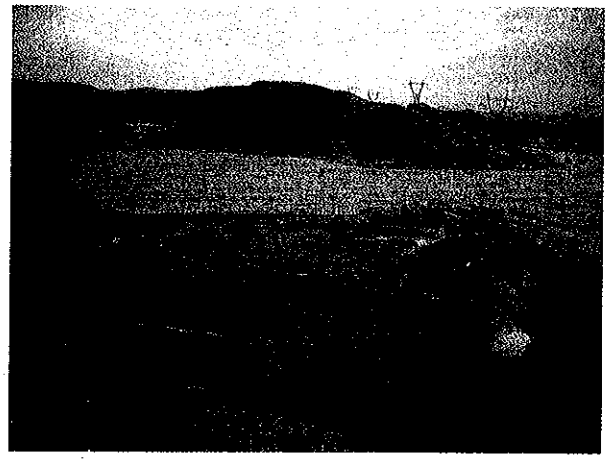

Figure 46. View from necropolis towards Stolot.

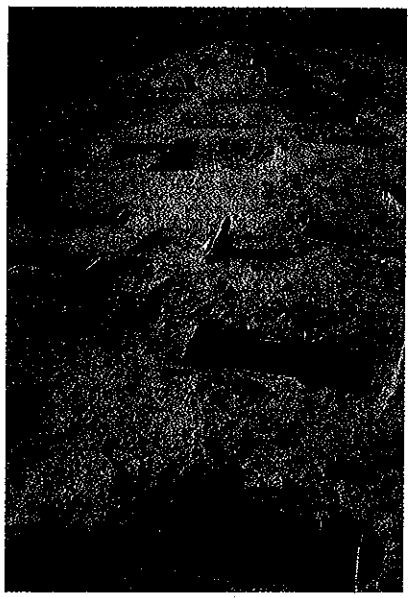

Figure 47. General view of Dimov Grob necropolis.

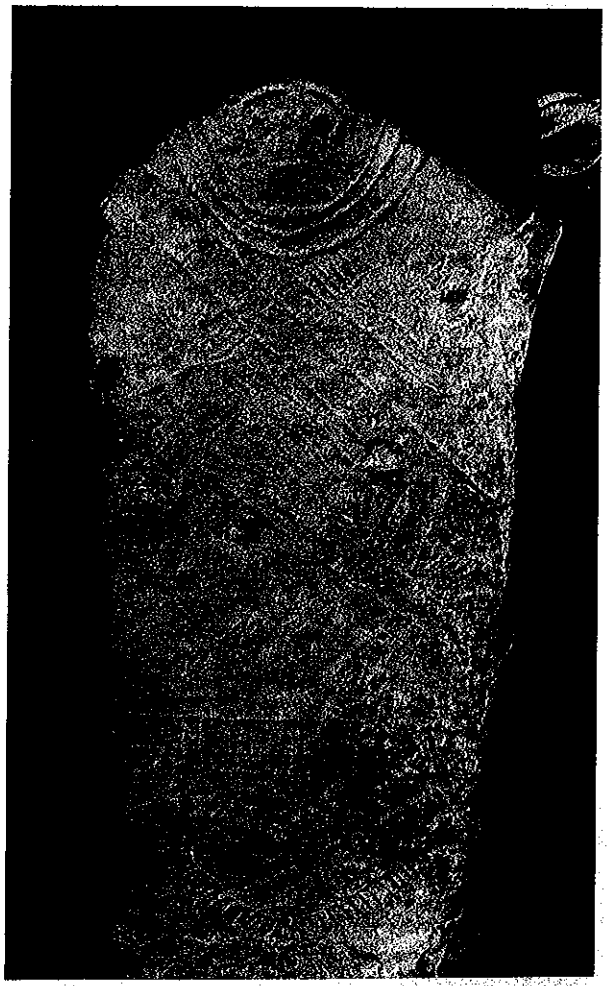

Figure 48. Stone inscribed with human figure re-used in tomb.

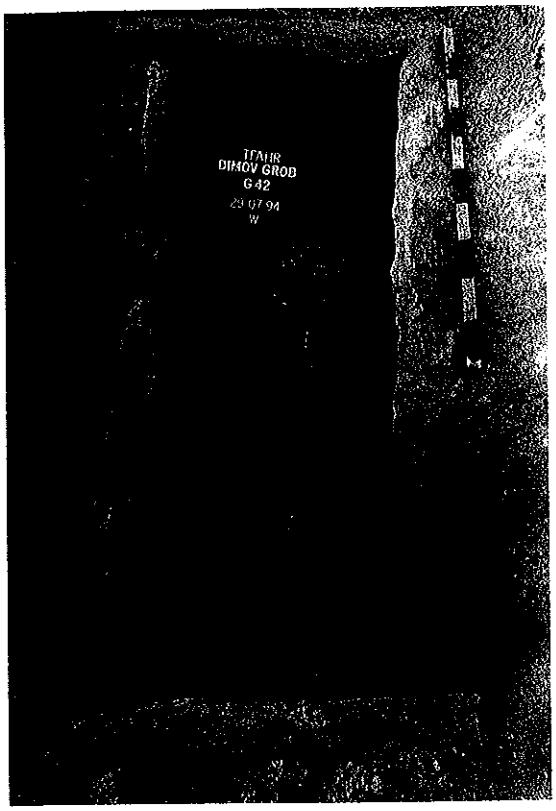

Figure 49. Single burial.

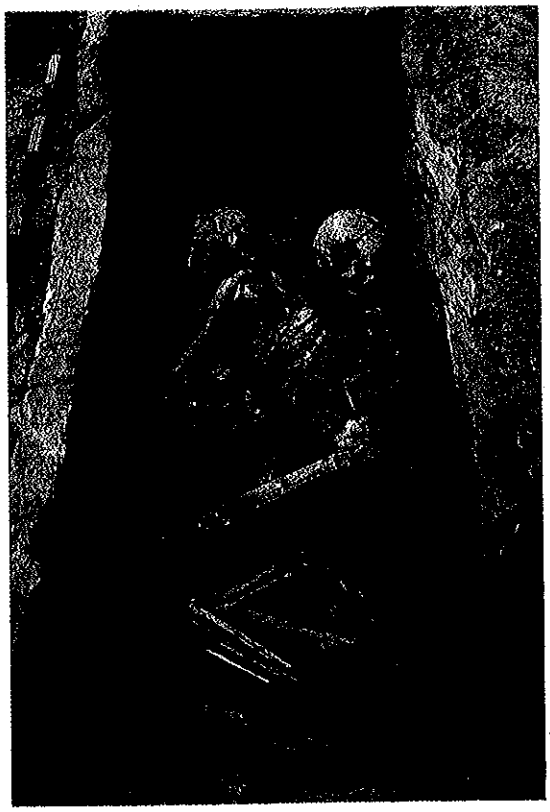

Figure 50. Double burial.

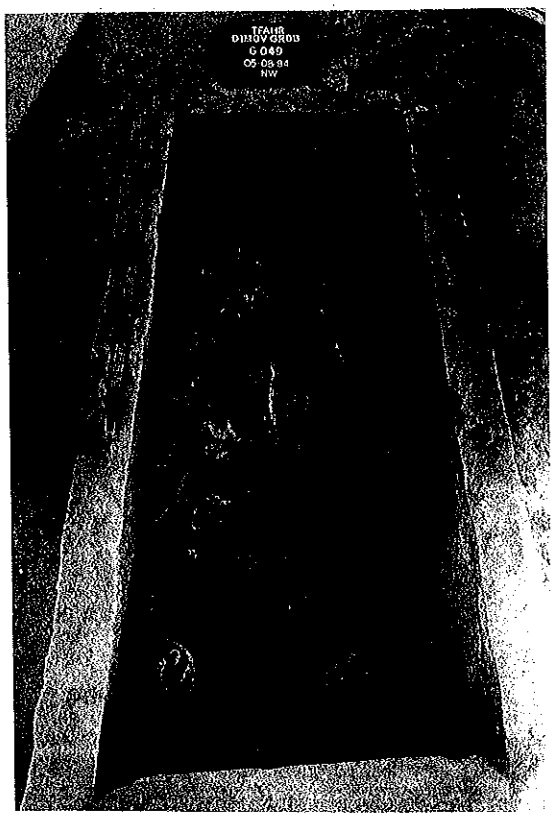

Figure 51. Cist grave with bones of first burial pushed to top. Skull of later burial at bottom.

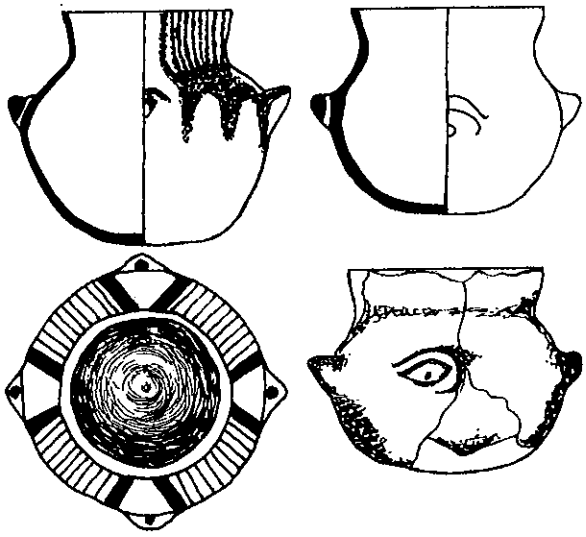

Figure 52. Local imitations of Mycenaean Greek pots.

In the case of many of the graves, the covering slabs have been broken or pushed in, suggesting break-ins and robbery (see Figure 53). This might explain the paucity of metal objects found in these fifty graves.

Although the graves are fairly regular in their manner of construction and burial custom, the graves do not display any consistent orientation within the necropolis.

To the north of the three ridges upon which the graves are located a small mound in the ploughed wheat fields was noted by the survey team; this suggested a tumulus, a type of burial monument well-attested in the region.

The tumulus was located in a wheat field to the northwest of the necropolis excavations. Most of the remains were destroyed by a plough. In fact, the tumulus may have been merely the dirt which piles up as a plough turns around and the graves found merely an extension of the nearby necropolis. Two graves of the same form found in the necropolis were uncovered. The first grave had only the bottom of the cist and a small section of the sides preserved. The rest of the cist was found in a jumble a short distance away where the plough had dragged it. A few bones were associated with this grave, but no other finds were made. The second cist was in a better state of preservation, although it also lacked a skeleton. Near this grave a heavy bronze bracelet was found which has been dated to the Iron Age base on style. A small bronze spiral belonging to a pin or a necklace was found in the grave itself. The area excavated was almost completely sterile of pottery. Other finds came from metal survey and were primarily modern (i.e., a steel needle and a Turkish button).

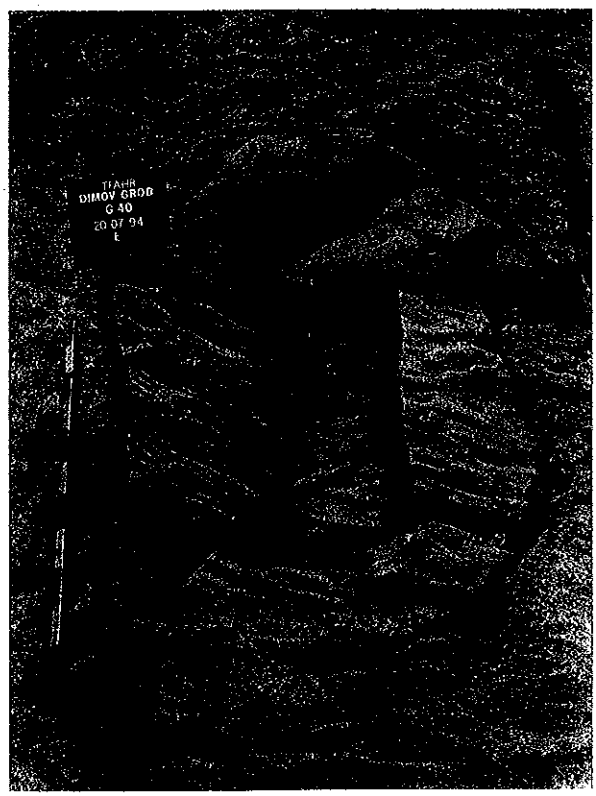

Figure 53. Grave coverstone showing signs of ancient break-in.

Approximately 200 meters south of and 12 meters higher than the necropolis is the hill known to the local villagers as Stolot. During the 1994 season a number of soundings were made in the center and on the southern end of this hill, as well as a metal detector survey of the entire hill. Although the surveys produced pot sherds and coins indicating occupation of the hill from the Bronze Age to the Roman period, structures from only two periods were unearthed: Stratum I - Transitional Period from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age; Stratum II - the Hellenistic Period (see Figure 54).

STRATUM I - TRANSITIONAL PERIOD (13TH - 12TH CENTURY BC)

From Stratum I the scant remains of three structures were discovered in the 1994 season. In Square E1 the remains of a stone wall and associated beaten earth floor were unearthed just above bedrock. On the floor pottery of the Transitional Period was found, and numerous remains of wattle and daub construction hardened by the fire which destroyed this building. Equally sparse remains of a contemporary building were excavated in Square F10, where a wall of 7 courses of thin flat stones was found in association with a surface, upon which many sherds and a bronze knife blade were found. A third building was discovered running through Squares F10, F11 and E11. This oval shaped building consisted of a two layers of thin flat stones bordered by a ring of thin upright stones. Since most of this building was either under the balks of the excavation or destroyed by the later Hellenistic building, its full extent is not known. The oval building rested on top of an ash layer which probably marks the destruction of the building discussed earlier in Square F10, suggesting two phases of Stratum I.

In the excavated squares we noted a gap in the structural and ceramic evidence between the Transitional and Hellenistic periods.

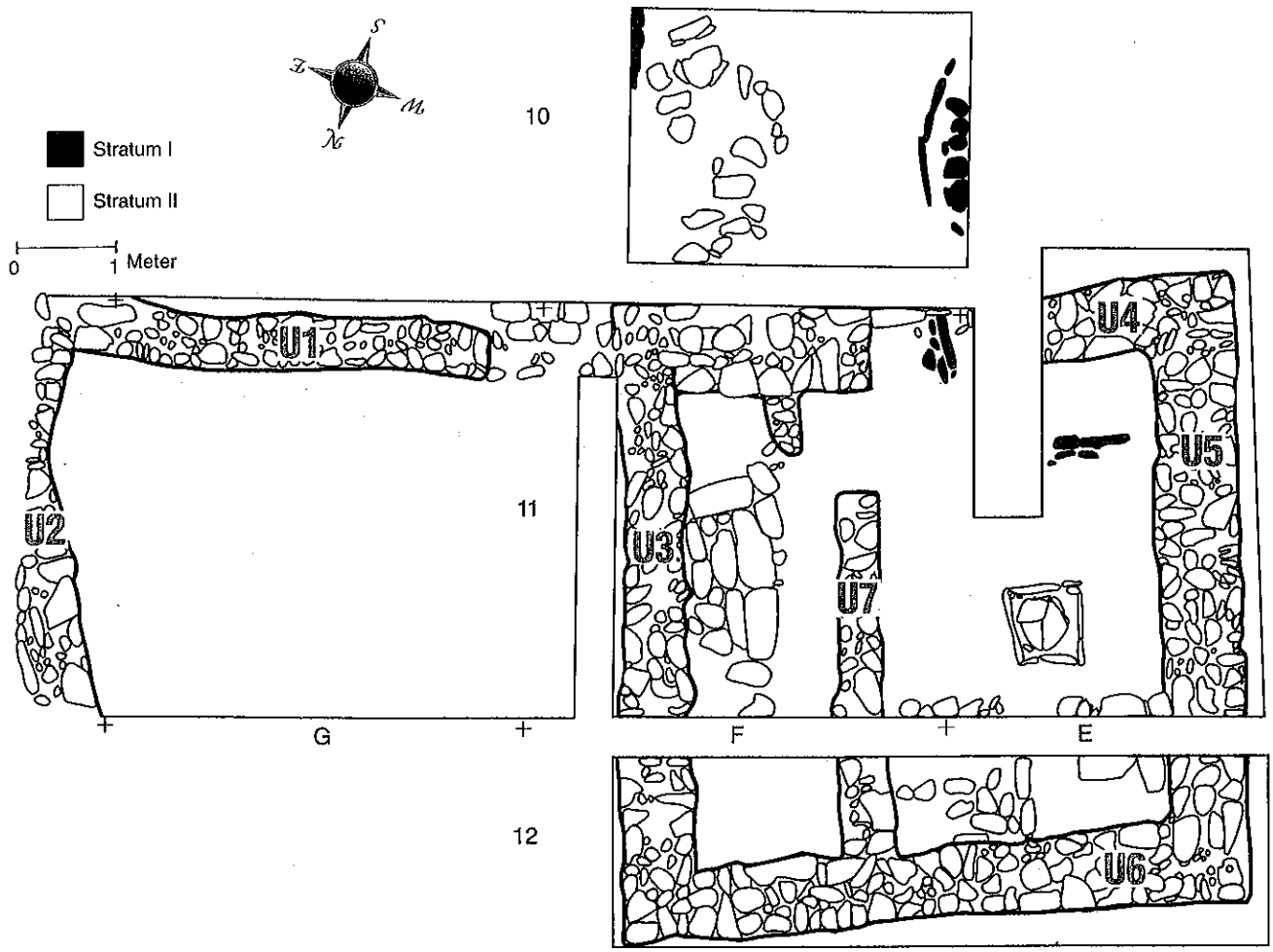

Figure 54. Plan of Hellenistic building on Stolot.

STRATUM II - HELLENISTIC PERIOD (4TH CENTURY BC)

Substantial remains of the Hellenistic period were found in two major soundings conducted on top of Stolot. From both soundings came clearly identifiable architectural remains, as well as numerous ceramic and numismatic finds. In the first sounding (Squares E6, F6, G6, E7, G7) we uncovered a wall approximately 0.75 cm thick running east-west across the entire width of the hill. Although only 3 courses of the wall remain in situ, a substantial fall of stones in Square E7 indicates that the wall stood to a considerable height. The original length of the wall is not preserved, as serious erosion has occurred on the east and west slopes of the hill. A plaster floor associated with this wall was found in Square G7; its easternmost extent has also eroded down the hill. On this floor, which clearly shows signs of conflagration, we found a great deal of Hellenistic pottery. Although no structure can be definitively reconstructed from these remains due to the erosion, we believe that the building might have served as a defensive bastion guarding the southern, gentlest approach up the hill. As for the northern approach up the hill, we determined that it would be fruitless to conduct a sounding, since the entire area was torn up by modern Yugoslavian army trenches.

The largest sounding was dug at the hill's greatest east-west width through Squares E10, F10, E11, F11, G11, and E12. Here we uncovered a complex whose enclosing walls still stood at the easternmost and westernmost extremities of the hill. The portion of the complex which we uncovered appears to consist of two distinct parts: in Square G11 an unroofed courtyard or barnyard (as the almost complete absence of rooftiles in this part of the complex would indicate), and a small rectangular structure which we determined was roofed, due to the heavy concentration of roof tiles found in the excavation. Both the courtyard and the rectangular building had their entrances to the south.

The courtyard is enclosed on the south by wall U1 in which the threshold is located; this wall abuts the rectangular building. The easternmost wall of the courtyard (wall U2) follows the contour of the hill. Wall U3 of the rectangular building serves as the western wall of the courtyard. The excavating season ended before we were able to determine the extent of the courtyard to the north and how it was enclosed.

Outside the threshold in wall U1 a number of small flat stones served as an entrance ramp to the courtyard, while the living surface of the courtyard itself consisted of a hard-packed beaten earth floor. Above and on the beaten earth floor were numerous Hellenistic sherds and some coins from the Hellenistic period. A probe beneath this floor revealed only sherds from the Transitional period (late 13th - 12th centuries).

The rectangular building is defined by walls U3, U4, U5 and U6, and appears to have two construction phases (see Figure 55). In the first phase it was a single roomed structure paved with thin sandstone slabs. Scant remains of these sandstone slabs were found in Squares F11 and F12. Resting directly atop these sandstone flags was a wall (U7) which, in the second phase, divided the rectangular building into two rooms. In the second phase the small sandstone flags were nearly all completely removed and replaced by a hard-packed plaster floor in the western room, and in the eastern room a floor of hard-packed plaster and large, thick, irregularly shaped sandstone blocks. In the eastern room of the second phase we found several deposits of carbonized grain, perhaps wheat. Because we found no ceramic containers for the grain, we suggest that the grain was stored in leather

Figure 55. General view of Hellenistic building. Altar at upper right.

or burlap containers which perished in the fire which destroyed the rectangular building. Also found in the easternmost room were a large water jug and a crudely painted "beer jug" with built-in strainer (see Figure 57, 5).

The main feature of the western room was a small altar set into the plaster floor (see Figure 56). The altar consisted of a sandstone disc encompassed by a square of upright rectangular blocks. On the floor around the altar we found two iron knives, one of which has a curved blade which was traditionally used to slit the throats of sacrificial animals. Ceramic finds included a large amphora which rested against the western wall, two smaller flat-bottomed amphorae found along the western side of the altar (see Figure 57, 7-8), three one-handled jugs from the same location, one of which was filled with grain (see Figure 57, 1-3), and a small fine two-handled cup (kylix) found on the altar itself (see Figure 57, 9). A heavy deposit of ash covered the altar in the western room and the floor of the eastern room. The ash was not, however, from any burnings which took place upon the altar (the sandstone disk being too fragile to sustain any type of fire), but from a large conflagration which destroyed the entire rectangular building. This fire destroyed the building but preserved by hardening the vestiges of the upper courses of the walls, which consisted of mud brick and wattle and daub construction. As the pottery found on the floors of the building indicates, the brief lifespan of the building dates to the mid to late 4th century BC. Probes beneath the floors in the eastern and western rooms yielded no Classical remains, but only sherds from the Transitional period (late 13th - 12th centuries), and Roman terra sigillata and coins found in the topsoil above the walls of the building were not associated with any walls or floors.

With its commanding view of the Vardar Valley and located as it was in a bend in the river, Stolot may have served as a military outpost or watch tower. However, more excavation of the hill would be necessary to substantiate this hypothesis.

Figure 56. Altar (in process of excavation) with vessels at top. Right one contained carbonized seeds.

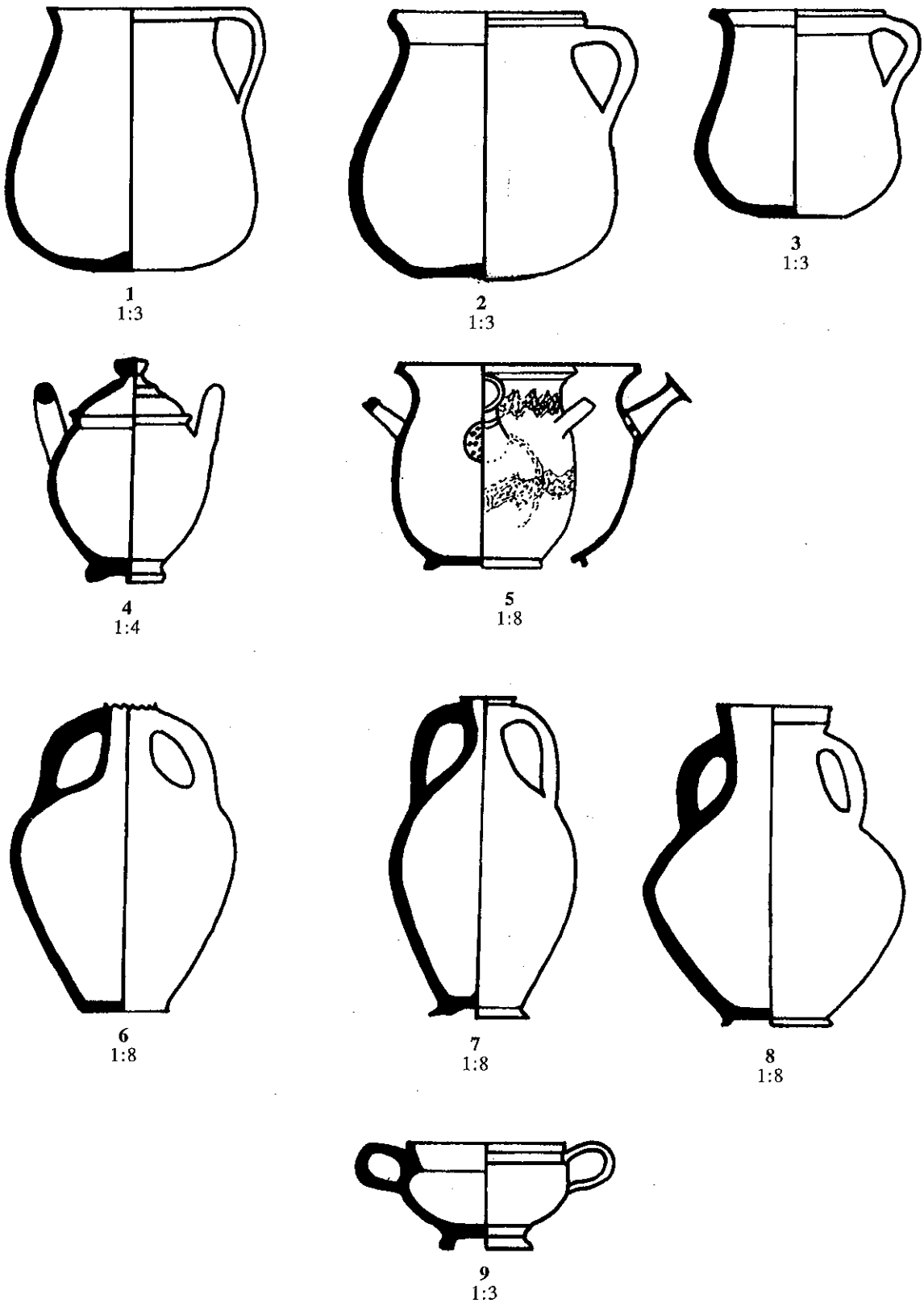

Figure 57. Hellenistic pottery found at Stolot.

CREDITS

Introduction to the Excavations at Zur Natan by Etan Ayalon, Eulah Matthews, and William Neidinger. The survey of the Zur Natan area was conducted by Etan Ayalon, Yonel Charvit, and Amnon Qidron. Map by William Neidinger.

Excavations at Zur Natan: Stratigraphic, Architectural, and Historical Report by William Neidinger, Eulah Matthews, and Etan Ayalon. Photographs by Tanja Peterson, Norma Wood, William Neidinger, and Etan Ayalon. Plan by Catherine Dodson. Schematic diagrams by William Neidinger. Metal detection by Yeshua Dray. See inside back cover for excavation team.

The Oil Presses of Zur Natan by Yeshua Dray. Drawing by William Neidinger.

The Mosaics of Zur Natan by Eulah Matthews. Photographs by Tanja Peterson and Norma Wood. Mosaic drawing by Eulah Matthews, Norma Wood, Nadine Slader, Žaklina Kalajdžieska, and Silvana Blaževska.

A Luster-Painted Cup from Zur Natan by Gusta Lehrer Jacobson. Photographs by Eretz Israel Museum. Drawing by Dorothy Neidinger.

The Zur Natan Capital by Moshe L. Fischer. Photograph by Eretz Israel Museum. Drawing by Ann Fowler.

Catalogue of Oil Lamps from Zur Natan by Yonel Charvit. Photographs by Etan Ayalon.

Catalogue of the Pottery from Zur Natan by Ann Fowler. Pottery profiles by Ann Fowler, Dorothy Neidinger, Don Riendl, and Nadine Slader. Pottery identification by Etan Ayalon. Pottery restoration by Robert Neidinger.

A Brief History of Silistra by Don Reindl. Map by William Neidinger.

Excavations at Silistra by William Neidinger and Eulah Matthews. Photographs by Tanja Peterson. Plan by William Neidinger and Etan Ayalon. Metal detection by Yeshua Dray. Pottery profiles by Dorothy Neidinger. Pottery restoration by Robert Neidinger. See inside back cover for excavation team.

Excavations at Ulanci by William Neidinger and Eulah Matthews. Photographs by Norma Wood. Plan by Gene Ryan. Metal detection by Yeshua Dray. Pottery profiles by Ann Fowler and Don Reindl. Pottery restoration by Eulah Matthews, William Neidinger, Don Reindl, Scott O'Neal, and Catherine Dodson. See inside back cover for excavation team.

THE TEXAS FOUNDATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL RESEARCH THANKS THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE 1991-1994 EXCAVATIONS IN ZUR NATAN (ZN), SILISTRA (SL) AND ULANCI (UL).

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Rick Stauffer (ZN, SL, UL)
David Warden (SL)
Becky Watts (ZN)
Benjamin Watts (ZN)
Daniel Watts (ZN)
Michael Watts (ZN)
Norma Wood (ZN, SL, UL)
Bernard Yudowitz (ZN)