

32.

KAZI
SONUÇLARI
TOPLANTISI

3. CİLT



T.C.

KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI

Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü



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ELAIUSSA SEBASTE: 2008-2009 EXCAVATION AND CONSERVATION WORKS

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Emanuela BORGIA

During the 2008-2009 campaigns at Elaiussa Sebaste we continued excavating in the areas of the Byzantine Palace (n. 1), of the Northern Harbour Front (n. 2), of the Temple (n. 3) and of the Domestic and Artisanal Quarters of the southern port (n. 4) (Fig. 1).

1. BYZANTINE PALACE

The investigations in the Byzantine Palace's area are in the course of being completed. The research, ongoing since the 2000 campaign, is progressively revealing the great importance of this area not only in the 5th century, when the building of the palace must be dated, but also in the earlier and later occupation phases. The 2008-2009 campaign activities were concentrated in the south-western area of the palace (Fig. 2). All the rooms pertaining to the ground floor of this wing of the complex have been almost completely investigated.

2008 Campaign

The investigation was carried out inside and around a long corridor, oriented approximately north to south, which was originally subdivided in smaller rooms (A18, A19, A22; A23). This sector of the palace was probably characterised, at the first floor, by an impressive loggia with a portico facing the harbour, a feature which is distinctive of other representative buildings of the period. The existence of this colonnaded terrace, already assumed in 2007¹ because of the discovery, in the upper levels, of two marble Corinthian capitals of a very good workmanship and of some column shafts, has been confirmed: underneath a thick layer of rubble originating from the collapse of the palace, a group of architectural elements, among which marble column shafts and bases, has been brought to light. Among them a very rare example of a lead round shaped disc, formerly interposed between a base and a column shaft, is worth to be mentioned. The corridor was

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¹ E. Equini Schneider, "Elaiussa Sebaste - The 2007 Excavation and Conservation Season", *KST*, 30.4, 26-30 Mays 2008, Ankara, 177.

crossed by a series of arches aimed at supporting the terrace on the upper floor (Fig. 3).

The excavation area was enlarged to the south-west until the big cistern connected to the palace, in order to identify the limit of the Byzantine complex on this side: a very damaged ashlar masonry (*opus quadratum*) perimeter wall, running from north to south, has been partially uncovered. Its bad state of preservation made it necessary to build a modern retaining wall so as to contain the upper structures.

In the northern sector of the corridor (A23) a new kiln for the production of LR1 amphorae has been uncovered (Fig. 4): the structure clearly belongs to a phase later than the palace and is the evidence of a re-occupation and transformation of its structures for a different purpose in the first decades of the 6th century. The kiln is only partially preserved, due to the complete collapse of all the external walls, apart from the eastern one, which still rises for a height of approximately 1m. The whole superstructure of the kiln is therefore lost and the very few “*concolato*” debris which covered the area before the excavation may be pertaining only to a little part of the covering. The preserved lower part of the central corridor of the burning chamber and of the entrance had, as customary, a floor made by pressed clay and mortar, on which a large number of fragments of LR1 amphora together with ashes were found. Concerning the upper structure, only part of the eastern row of mud brick pillars, formerly supporting the arches on which the floor of the kiln proper was laid, remains. Through the analysis of the stratigraphic evidence we can argue that the kiln was in use from 530 to the first years of the 7th century A.D. when its entrance was closed with huge blocks. To the kiln must be related also the large square plastered basin (3.62 x 3.63 m) built inside room A18-A22, probably used for settling the clay. Both the rooms located immediately to the south of the kiln itself, present some arrangements connected to the ceramic production activities. Moreover a thick layer of wastes of LR1 amphorae filled the southern sector of the corridor (particularly rooms A22 and A19), therefore testifying the long and intense activity of the kiln.

Trenches executed in the vaulted rooms to the east of the corridor (A12; A17-A21) allowed us to identify different phases of occupation, from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine period. In room A12, under the 6th century layers pertaining to the kiln phase, the 5th century palace's structures have been uncovered and, beneath them, two intersected walls dating back to the Roman period. Such walls, made by little limestone blocks joined with strong mortar and partially reused as foundations for the Byzantine building, were grounded directly on the natural bedrock, whose gaps and cuts were filled with Early Roman and Hellenistic pottery. In the north-western corner of A17-A21 room, a terracotta round silos with a bottom made of tiles has been uncovered: the silos, partially buried in the ground, is similar to those already discovered in other sectors of the Palace².

² E. Equini Schneider, “Elaiussa Sebaste - The 2007 Excavation and Conservation Season”, *KST*, 30.4, 26-30 May 2008, Ankara, 178.

2009 Campaign

During the 2009 campaign the excavations concerned in particular rooms A1, A7, A17-21 (Fig. 2) and the nearby room A20. In room A1 the investigations brought to light, besides the foundations of the palace's supporting walls, a series of older structures going back to the imperial Roman age- and more precisely to the 2nd century A.D. From what has been brought to light, the room in its first function was a latrine of which is partially saved a channel coated with hydraulic mortar with a east-west orientation.

The latrine appears to have been clearly connected with structures channelling water from the neighbouring room A7: a basin dug into the rock, a draining pipe entirely coated with mortar and a channel functional to the supply of fresh clean water. These more ancient structures were dismissed and obliterated around the middle of the 5th century A.D., that is at the time of the palace's construction.

Also pit surveys executed in the vaulted rooms A17-A21 allowed us to identify different phases of occupation, from the Byzantine down to the Late Hellenistic levels. Despite the huge Byzantine transformation, which caused the destruction of a great number of pre-existing structures, the new data, which may be compared and integrated with those already collected during the last campaigns, allows us to begin to delineate the organization of this sector of the area in the Roman period and to identify the previous structures very probably as *horrea* related to the activities of the two ports.

In room A20, at the south-eastern end of the palace's wing, the removal of the layer of rubble from the collapse of the palace's upper storey has allowed to bring to light a very well preserved kiln built of limestone blocks, clay and bricks (Fig. 5). The kiln used for the manufacturing of LR1 amphorae of large dimensions (covering a surface of approx. 3.50 x 3 m) seems to have been in operation only for a short period around the second half of the 6th century.

Of particular interest is the fact that both the kilns found in the Palace, together with the big one found within the Domestic and Artisanal area and with an other one found in the south-western necropolis, are located alongside the southern harbour basin. We can then infer that all this area, in the early Byzantine period, was used to manufacture at a larger scale than it was supposed before, mostly for the production of Cilician LR1 amphorae, whose wide distribution throughout the Mediterranean basin is renowned. Also the presence of many cisterns in the whole area facing the port seems to confirm this assumption.

2. THE NORTHERN HARBOUR FRONT

A new excavation area has been opened in 2008 on the wide terrace east to the Byzantine palace, in order to outline the connection between the palace and the nearby quarters facing the northern harbour, as far as to define the extent of the colonnaded

portico flanking the port basin. The terrace (30.60 x 13 m) was retained on the south by a huge pseudo-polygonal wall resting directly on the bedrock, while its western limit is constituted by a little blocks wall. The western sector of the terrace has been investigated in 2008, while the 2009 campaign was finalized to bring to light its eastern sector.

The huge ashlar masonry (*opus quadratum*) wall closing the rear of the colonnaded portico facing out onto the northern port basin during the Roman Imperial Age divides the terrace in two different areas. After having excavated a deep layer of debris (1.50 m), a trench has been opened in the southern sector revealing the existence of a rectangular room, obliterated by the 7th century A.D. Inside the upper levels of filling of the area, among a huge quantity of stones, mortar and other elements pertaining to dismantled structures, a few incomplete chancel plaques in limestone have been discovered together with a large number of polychrome mosaic fragments, whose provenance is still to be cleared.

The northern sector revealed the most impressive remains, pertaining to the huge *opus quadratum* wall of Severian age closing on the rear the colonnaded portico and whose western sector, facing the Byzantine palace, had already been investigated. The removal of the modern agricultural earth layer allowed to expose the upper part of the wall until the terrace's eastern limit and the great collapse of its upper rows (Fig. 6) together with some architectural elements related to the colonnade (in particular two Corinthian capitals in proconnesian marble). Such elements have the same characteristics of those already found in the past campaigns in the collapse of the western sector of the monumental port front and can be dated to the second half of the 2nd century A.D. (the Antonine age or the first decades of the Severian age). After having cleaned and documented the collapsed elements (Fig. 6), we proceeded to remove them by means of a crane except for eighteen of them which were placed back in their original position. After concluding this phase, the excavation of the under-laying levels was undertaken. On the basis of the chronology suggested by the materials (second half of the 7th century A.D.) it can be assumed that the great collapse must have occurred in a period subsequent to the abandonment of the city.

The wall, uncovered for a length of 26 m is presently visible for a maximum height of 1.64 m (Fig. 7), but - as we can assume by the segments already brought to light - it must have reached 7,50 m which corresponds to the overall height of the colonnade. In the excavated section, there appeared four doors, each topped by an architrave, and five corbels at the same height of the architraves. As it can be understood from the collapsed blocks, a window opened above each door in the upper part of the wall. In correspondence to the corbels, but on the wall's southern side, we found four walls segments built of blocks with a north-south orientation; these structures seemed to have been built at the same time as the wall in *opus quadratum* with the function of dividing the rooms corresponding to

each door.

The ashlar wall was interrupted on the western edge, before reaching the Byzantine palatial complex, by an arched gateway, probably leading to a stairway which granted the access to the higher part of the promontory: of this passage only two Corinthian *anta* capitals with plain leafs (one of which still *in situ*), resting on pillars, have been exposed at the present time.

3. TEMPLE AREA

Concerning the temple area the investigations were aimed to determine, but with great difficulty due to the presence of also very recent plantations (lemon and olive trees) inside the archaeological area, the extension of the *temenos*. In the north-eastern area of the complex was brought to light an east-west orientated limestone wall (length of approximately 30 m) which most probably was a containment wall for the terrace overlooking the temple area (Fig. 8).

The wall, directly founded on the evened out rock bank and preserved for an average height of 1.15 m, presents various phases of construction, realized with different building techniques. On the basis of a preliminary structural analysis, it is possible to define a building sequence which, in a first phase, consisted of raising a wall in *opus reticulatum*, very probably pertinent to the first Roman imperial period and related to the construction of the temple. In a later period, to be dated after the end of the 3rd century A.D., probably after a collapse or in any case of a partial destruction of the wall, the structure was roughly cut down and rebuilt with a double curtain of irregular small blocks. To this phase should also be related a channel next to the western section of the wall, coated with hydraulic mortar and covered by irregular limestone slabs. The interruption of the investigations did not allow to defining the overall alignment of the conduit and its function: the most probable hypothesis is that it was a section of the rain water collection system draining into the sea, but it cannot yet be excluded that it could have been used for supplying clean water from the near-by aqueduct.

A trench (2.30 x 10.00 m) executed nearby the north-eastern corner of the temple's podium allowed us to acquire new data concerning the phases of transformation of the pagan temple into a church, occurred at the end of the 5th century. The Christian complex was later transformed at the end of the 6th or at the beginning of the 7th century, probably in order to be used - even if partially - also for different activities. The excavation confirmed that the definitive collapse of the building must be dated within the 7th century A.D.

Thanks to the collaboration of the *Orman Müdürlüğü of Erdemli*, it was also possible to proceed with the cleaning of bushes and cutting of trees in the north-western sector of the *temenos*; and it was therefore possible to bring to light new architectural fragments pertaining to the temple and a series of wall structures which for the time

being are difficult to understand. One of them, with an east-west alignment, seems to constitute the limit of the temple's terrace on this side. The next investigation in this sector will contribute to the understanding of the area's organisation during the Roman and Byzantine ages.

4. THE SOUTHERN PORT AREA – THE DOMESTIC AND ARTISANAL QUARTER

The complex, investigated since 2005, is arranged in different terraces following the slopes of the promontory overlooking the coast.

The southernmost terrace (area I) is being investigated since 2005, when the kiln for the production of LR1 amphorae was uncovered. The 2008-2009 excavation in this area was focused on defining the circulation system to and from the handicraft complex and between the latter and the uppermost terraces. On this purpose, excavation has been undertaken on the (until then) un-investigated eastern part of area I. This sector, quite remarkable in extension (about 12 x 10 m), is closed on its northern side by a Hellenistic polygonal wall, later undergone in deep changes, oriented approximately east-west. The removal of debris layers dating back to the mid 7th century allowed to uncover the last and more recent floor used in the area. In the central part of the terrace a quadrangular basin, arranged in very poor masonry and whose bottom is tile-covered, came to light; though no traces of water adduction pipes have been found, the presence of hydraulic mortar inside it suggests that the structure was intended as a fountain. The space between the central fountain and room Ig (which gave access to the handicraft complex) must have been a covered passageway, without an upper level, as suggested by a high concentration of roof and bent tiles found there: during the excavation, a great part of the blocks constituting the central arch of the ceiling were found on the ground. Two similar arches (oriented east-west) were meant to cover the space between the fountain and the northern wall of the terrace: also here the collapsed component blocks were found laying on the ground. Along the northern wall, another small basin was unearthed, leaning against the polygonal wall and plastered with hydraulic mortar, while the bottom is made of tiles; it collected water coming from a clay pipe inserted into the northern wall and connected to the water collection system of the mid-terrace (area IV).

The excavation of room Ig (Fig. 9) allowed to bring to light a series of different hardened clay floor levels, which can be dated from the end of IVth to the VIIth centuries, all pertaining to the workshop for the production of Late Roman 1 amphorae.

It was therefore possible to further precise the nature of the other rooms: they were not closed and isolated units, but were instead half-opened inter-connected spaces; the passing from one to the other was assured by two archways approximately oriented North-South and placed at different levels. It is most probable that the area consisted of

a vast ramp, marked by the archways, that led-up from Area I to the upper terrace (Area IV).

Digging activities in the uppermost terrace of the quarter were carried out in two different rooms (II f and II h) (Fig. 10). Room II f had been partly excavated during 2006 and 2007 campaigns, when in its southern sector a pavement made out of limestone slabs was brought to light. The 2008 investigation, consequently, have been focused in the northern part of the room, where the slabs were not preserved. The excavation revealed a complex system of water channels, originally running under the floor: three distinct channels, leaning along the foundations of the northern and the western wall and in the middle of the room and running, respectively, east-west, north-south and northwest-southeast, were brought to light. They all consist of the channel proper, rectangular in section, completely cut out of the natural bedrock with a tile-covered bottom. The rocky sides of the canal were reinforced by small irregular blocks, supporting the covering slabs, quite all of which are missing. The situation revealed in room II f is very relevant for the study of the water canalization system of the whole quarter.

Room II h, to the east of the latter, was completely filled with debris dating to the 7th century A.D., whose removal provided some interesting material like two small Byzantine capitals and other architectural fragments in marble and limestone. It appears quite likely that the room did not have a second floor, since a high concentration of roof and bent tiles was noticed during the excavation of these obliteration layers. During the period in which it was used, the room underwent some changes, as also an accurate observation of its walls revealed. Two different floor levels and their preparatory layers were brought to light; both were made out of well pressed clay soil. The most recent of them, dating to the mid 7th century A.D., must be ascribed to the last restoration of the room, while the older one, built around the end of the 6th century A.D., seemingly represents its original arrangement. Under this latter level, some traces of the Roman phases as well came to light: these traces consist of a wall, of which only a single row of blocks remains, with an associated floor made of clay. A large number of every-day objects, such as clay cups and vases, bronze locks, candle handles, fittings for furniture and boxes, which came to light within this area, have been cleaned and restored (Fig. 11).

In 2009 a complete excavation of the cistern discovered in room IV g during the 2007 campaign and of which only a preliminary photo documentation of its mouth-opening had been taken, was carried out. The structure, entirely dug into the rock, has a bell-like form with an overall depth of 4.20 m. Both its walls and floor were completely coated with hydraulic mortar of which extensive traces can be seen.

On the whole, the context of the cistern's findings (Fig. 12) has appeared to be, in a preliminary analysis, quite homogeneous from the chronological point of view, covering a period of approximately 30-40 years from the first half of the 7th century A.D.

(therefore during the last phase of the city's life): LR1 type amphora, undamaged or in large fragments; small jugs related to the same production of the amphora (except for one coming from Cyprus) and a balsamary of Palestinian production. Among the findings there were also a painted amphora with the representation of a shepherd with his sheep (and an engraved figure of a peacock) (Fig. 13), three terracotta lamps and two bronze objects: a *situla* with a handle and an interesting example of a jug cover with chain.

TOPOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

The research work carried out in 2008 by the research group of Palermo University (directed by prof. B. Villa) was aimed at the compilation of an archaeological support map of the site and its environs. The employed methodology is based on the use of a high resolution satellite QuickBird image; a GPS survey was focused at determining ground control points and spot heights used to georeference the image and to construct the DTM respectively. At last a digital orthophoto of the archaeological area was compiled thanks to the acquired data.

RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

As for the previous campaigns, the static and safeguarding restoration programs of the structures subject to excavation was continued as they are of primary importance for the preservation of the monuments and for the safety of the site. In the Byzantine Palace consolidation and restoration measures were carried out in different rooms. In the residential and handicraft area, besides the consolidation of walls, the cleaning and restitution of a floor made by square bricks, belonging to a shop or a warehouse, has been achieved.

THE SETTING UP OF THE TOURIST ITINERARIES

The program of implementing and safeguarding the Agora-Byzantine basilica complex has been achieved, thanks to the restoration of the last *opus sectile* panels and the final consolidation of all the structures. Thus, the planned visitor's itinerary inside the archaeological area has been realised, following the same model as that of the theatre, with a non fence protecting the central area - where the three different phases of the building are visible - and covering, when necessary, the mosaics by a metal grid. English-Turkish explanation panels, located in the most significant sectors of the building, will contribute to a better fruition of the complex by the tourists (Fig. 14).

The program for the tourist use of the archaeological area foresees also the setting-out of visitor's paths and targeted view points. For this purpose two new trilingual (Italian, Turkish and English) bill-boards have been positioned respectively outside the Harbour Baths and the Byzantine Palace pending the complete opening to the public of the two complexes.

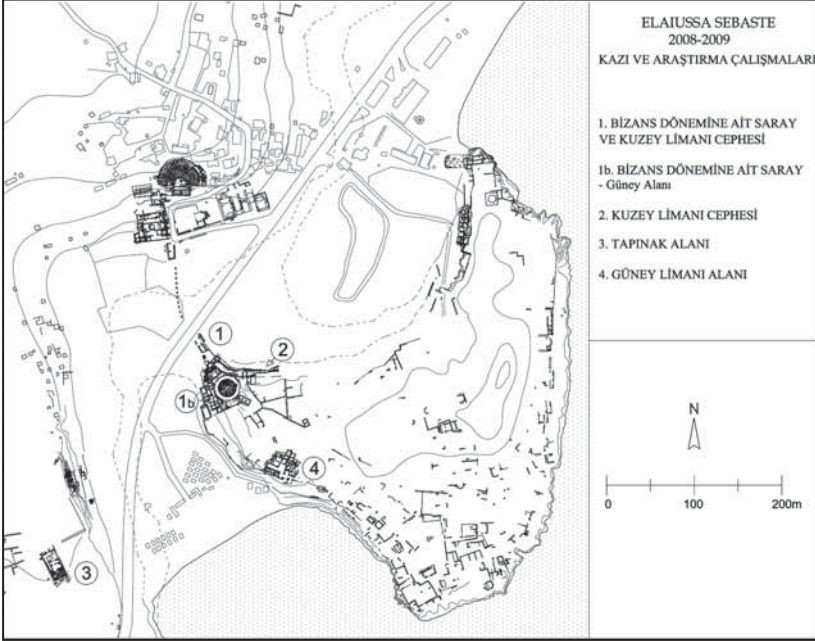


Fig. 1: General plan of Elaiussa Sebaste, with the areas investigated in 2008-2009 campaigns.

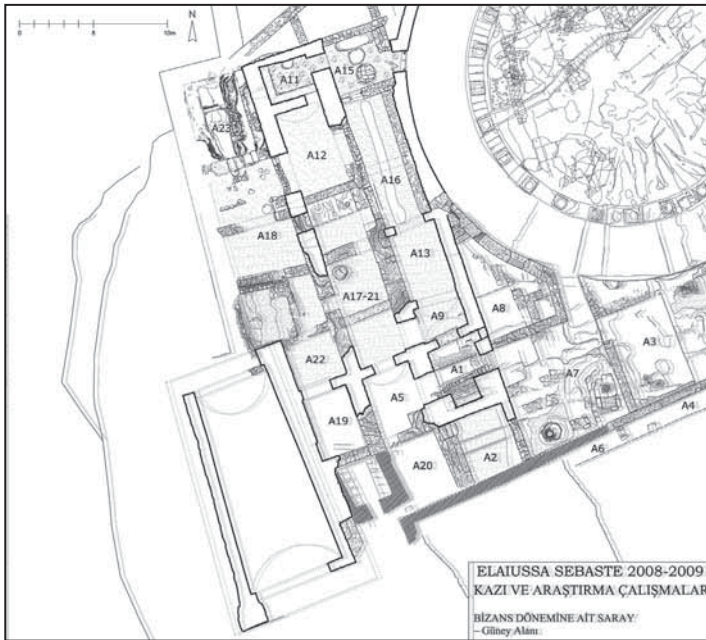


Fig. 2: Plan of the south-eastern sector of the Byzantine palace with 2008-2009 excavation areas.

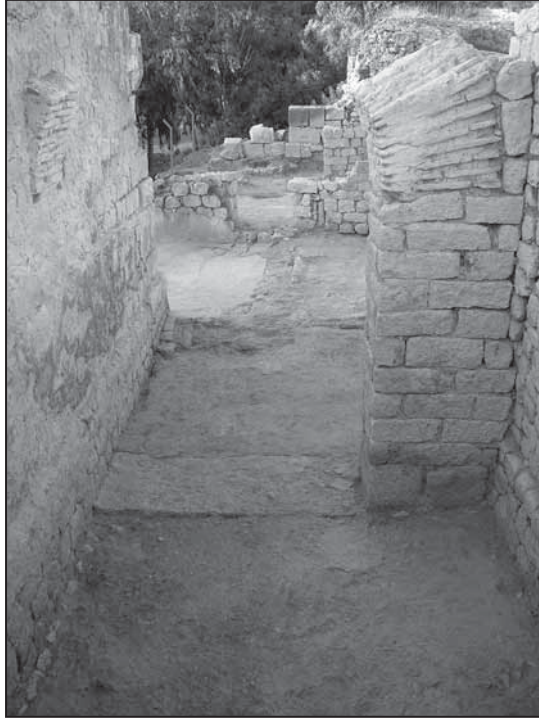


Fig. 3: Byzantine Palace: view of the ground floor of the corridor A18-A19-A22; in the background the plastered basin for clay settling.



Fig. 4: Byzantine Palace: the kiln for LR1 amphorae production in room A23.



Fig. 5: Byzantine Palace: the kiln for LR1 amphorae production in room A20.



Fig. 6: Northern Harbour Front: the collapse of the upper rows of the *opus quadratum* wall and, on the right some architectural elements pertaining to the portico.

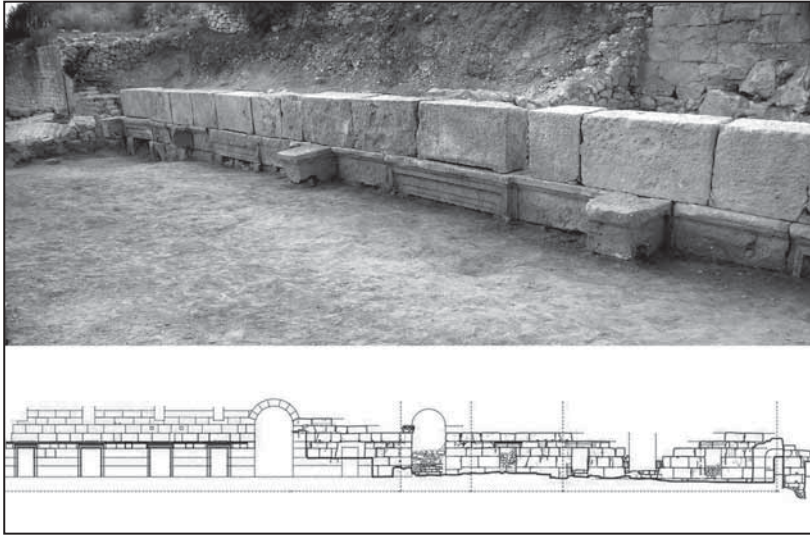


Fig. 7: Northern Harbour Front: the *opus quadratum* wall with doors and corbels (above); reconstruction of the overall layout of the wall (below).



Fig. 8: Temple area: View of the east-west wall supporting the terrace north to the temple and of the channel system.



Fig. 9: Domestic and Artisanal Quarter: room Ig with the different hardened clay floor levels.



Fig. 10: Domestic and Artisanal Quarter: room IIh with a section of the pavement in limestone slabs (to the right) and room IIg (to the left).



Fig. 11: Bronze objects found in the Domestic and Artisanal Quarter.



Fig. 12: Amphorae, other vessels and objects found into the cistern in room IVg.



Fig. 13: Figured painted amphora found inside the cistern in room IVg.



Fig. 14: Area of the Roman agora and Byzantine basilica: Visitor's itinerary with explanation panels.