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EXCAVATIONS ON GERONISOS ISLAND, THIRD REPORT: THE CIRCULAR STRUCTURE, THE SQUARE HOUSE, AND EAST BUILDING

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INTRODUCTION

A day's walk from the Hellenistic capital of Paphos, a short sail across a narrow straight, the island destination of Geronisos presented a special opportunity for pilgrimage in the last years of Ptolemaic rule on Cyprus (Figs 1, 2).[1] Departing from the urban centre, travelling the rural landscape and then, the sea, worshippers experienced a kind of ritual purification in crossing the water that enabled them to enter the holy precinct in a clean state. Nineteen years of excavation and study on Geronisos have revealed something of the special character of ritual activity on the island. Here, young boys seem to have celebrated rites under the protection of the god Apollo, born himself on the island of Delos and ever at home in an island setting.[2] The sanctuary building at the west end of Geronisos (West Building) and a complex of walls in the South West Sector were published in our *First Report*.[3] The series of rooms comprising the Central South Complex, a center for food preparation, distribution, dining, and, perhaps, for sleeping, was published in our *Second Report*.[4]

In this, our *Third Report*,[5] we examine a

1. This article is dedicated to James Ottaway and Bill Murray in thanks for their generosity to the Yeronisos Island Excavations over many years of work and for their welcome visits that have brought much joy to the team.
I am indebted to Richard Anderson, Mariusz Burdajewicz, Charalampos Chotzakoglou, G.J.R. Maat, Paul Croft, and Jolanta Młynarczyk for their insights and efforts that have contributed so significantly to this report.
2. J.B. Connelly, "Ptolemaic Sunset: Boys Rites of Passage on Late Hellenistic Geronisos" in *From Evagoras I to the Ptolemies: The Transition from the Classical to the Hellenistic Period*, P. Flourentzos, ed., (Nicosia 2007), 35-51; "Twilight of the Ptolemies: Egyptian Presence on late Hellenistic Yeronisos," *Egypt and Cyprus in Antiquity*, L. Kassianidou, R. Merrillies and D. Michaelides, eds., Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute and the University of Cyprus, Archaeological Research Unit (Nicosia 2009), 194-209.
3. J. B. Connelly, "Excavations on Geronisos (1990-1997): First Report," *RDAC* (2002), 245-68.
4. J.B. Connelly, "Excavations on Geronisos: Second Report, The Central South Complex," *RDAC* (2005), 149-82.
5. I thank the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus and its Directors under whom we have been licensed to excavate: Dr. Athanasios Papageorghiou, Dr. Demos Christou, Dr. Sophocles Hadjisavvas, and Dr. Pavlos Flourentzos for their generosity in facilitating our work. We are indebted to the three hundred strong Friends of Yeronisos who have so generously financed our fieldwork, especially James Ottaway, Jr., Bill Murray, Carl S. Forsythe III and the de Coizart Perpetual Charitable Trust, the A.G. Leventis Foundation, the Board of Directors of the Coca Cola Hellenic Bottling Corporation, especially George David and Samir Toubassy, Salvatore and Raquel Jiminez, Lo-Marie and Robert O'Brien, Nicholas S. Zoullas, William R. Rhodes, Martha Sutherland, Michael and Judy Steinhardt, George Lucas, Lloyd Cotsen, Gilbert H. Lamphere, Savas Tsivicos and the Pan Paphian Association of America, Inc., the Explorers Club, and our honorary chairmen, the Hon. John Brademas, Ambassador and Mrs. Andrew Jacovides, and Anastasia P. Vournas. I am further indebted to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for generous support of my work during the years of excavation and study.
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structure of central significance to the local rites: a large circular platform of pale, imported silt, ringed with two concentric walls (Figs 3-9, 15). The construction of this great circular feature represents an enormous expenditure of effort and attests to the central importance of this structure within the sphere of activity on the island. Evidence points to its identification as a *choros* or *pista* (dance floor), the setting for choral dancing, a vital component of Greek ritual practice, especially within sanctuaries of Apollo.

With the defeat of Cleopatra at Actium in 30 B.C., the subsequent end to Ptolemaic rule on Cyprus, and the devastation of Geronisos by an earthquake in 15 B.C., the Geronisos sanctuary went out of use, buried like a time capsule beneath the fallen stones.[6] But during the 6th-7th century A.D., and again in the 13th century, intrepid visitors sailed out and made a life on Holy Island, this time under the banner of Christianity. This *Third Report* also presents the results of our work on one of three Byzantine houses at the centre of the island (Figs 22-25), as well as our investigation of East Building (Figs 31-45), a structure that was clearly ecclesiastical in function. It will be argued here that East Building may, in fact, represent the vaulted undercroft of the narthex of a basilica church that collapsed

Veronique Dassin, Irene Papaoikonomou; *human skeletal analysis* George Maat; *animal bone study* Paul Croft; *shell study* David Reese; *Chalcolithic chipped stone, ground stone and ceramic study* Carole McCartney; *glass study* Mariusz Burdajewicz, David Grose; *water supply study* Andrew Wilson; *conservators* Julia Burdajewicz, Christos Christofides, Andreas Georgiades, Brigitte Bourgeois, Raphaelle de Cointet, Sharon Taylor Papadopoulou, Dana Heminway, Wendy Partridge, Marc Walton, Jessica Pace; *geomagnetic survey* Glen Dash; *underwater survey* Jonathan Cole, Andrea DeGeorgi; *computing and database* Jason Ackerman, Rebecca Schindler, Marina Thomatos, Lauren Pierson, Scott Lasak, Ben Schwaid, David Rismiller, Edgar Castillo, Myung Jin Shin; *registrars* Megan Frost, Daniella Bono, Mary Di Lucia, Casey Seideman, Alicia Cahill, Adrienne Gordon, Sarah Reason, Elizabeth Doering; *boatmen* Andreas Pistendis, Andreas Siampis, Lefkos Kapitzis, Savvas Theodosiou, George Tsefoutis; *foreman* Andreas Michaelides; *field assistant* Jason Governale; *trench supervisors*: Lauren Aurrichio, Joanna Batista, Sophie Crawford-Brown, Paul Croft, Simret Dhesi, Lauren Drew, Megan Forbes, Benjamin Fraker, Russell Frelinghuysen, Caroline Fox, Megan Gannon, Adrienne Gordon, Victoria Grinbaum, Erin Hayes, Stephanie Haffner, Liejie Huang, Ann Marie Knoblauch, Christine Koutnouyan, Andrew Lacovara, Catherine Mastrangelo, Thomas Milbank, Bridget Moriorty, Liam Moriorty, George Marshall Peters, Margaret Rubick, Zach Santucci, Mark Smith, Benjamin Schwaid, Makenzie Smith, Molly Snyderman, Marina Thomatos, Rhys Townsend, Brian Shelburne, Pippa Vanderstar, and Catherine Weyland; *trench assistants*: Jason Ackerman, Jing An, George Anastasian, Norbert Baer, Jr., Brigitte Bourgeois, Lydia Brandt, Benjamin Britton, Alicia Cahill, Per Chilstrom, Louise Connelly, Max Davies, Amy Griffin, Claire Fitzgerald, Adrienne Gordon, Joseph Haldeman, Nancy Hess, Will Holden, Seimi Huang, Roger Kamholz, Lina Kassianidou, Katie Kreida, Jill Lingenfelter, George Maat, Leslie Mertz, Ludovich Lustier, Jessica Pace, Helen Park, Gregory Pepin, David Rismiller, Amanda Sroka, Anastasia Seeley, Casey Seideman, Evan Sung, Joseph Termini, Marina Thomatos, Alexandra Tsocanos, Christos Tsirogiannis, and Laura Wooley; *excavators*: Matthew Bogdanos, Linda Carter, Emily Chang, Barnaby Conrad III, Simon Demetropoulos, David M. Porter, David Goodall, Alicia M. Grace, Raquel and Salvatore Jiminez, Edwin La Mance, Bill Murray, Carol Neville, Lo-Marie O'Brien, James Ottaway, Jr., Sherie Jacobsen, William R. Rhodes, Kenneth Silver, Clarke Slade, Martha Sutherland, A. Richard Turner, Deborah Warner, John B. Watts III, Richard Wiese, Susan Young, Webster Stone; *study season assistants* Chiong Han, Natalie Dupecher, Morgan Newhoff, Myung Jin Shin, Megan Fannon, Anastasia Davis, Ariel Kearn, Sacha Meisel, Perrin Lathrop, Anne Cross, Victoria Grinbaum, Joelle Nivens, Edgar Castillo, Dale Eadeh, Laura Mathis, Emily Smidlap, Megan Frost, Jessica Hornach, Erin Hayes, Johanna Goldfeld, John Kyratzis, Diana Ng, Ashley Parrish, Lauren Pearson, Marina Thomatos, Christos Tsirogiannis, Tiffany Tsu, Michael Eng, Marissa Macari, Derek Kelly, Emily Talbot, Jean Tsao, Sara Wytrycze, Scott Lasak, Jori Klein, Amy Clark, Nicole Parr, Sebastiano Varoli, Sabrina Worth, Molly Frame, Danielle Norris, and John Randolph. We warmly thank the following *consultants* and friends who gave valued advice on site and on finds: A.H.S. Megaw, Charalambos Barkirtzis, Demetra Papanicolaou-Barkirtzis, Hans-Gunter Buchholz, Charalampos Chotzakoglou, Veronique Dassin, Andreas Demetropoulos, Timothy Gregory, Phryne Hadjichristophi, Michael Savvides, John Hayes, Eleni Loizidou, Henry Maguire, Sandrine Marquie, Irini Papaikonomou, George Petrides, Jean Francois Salles, Stuart Swiny, G.R.H. Wright, and Costas Xenophontos. We are indebted to Athena and Stravros Stavrou who have looked after us through many seasons in residence at the West End Hotel in Agios Georgios-tis-Pegeias.

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6. See Młynarczyk 1990, 33-35 (reference by Dio Cassius LIV, 23).

long ago into the sea, along with the entire east end of the island.[7] Thus, Holy Island continued in its sacred aspect with the coming of Christianity. Across the way, at Agios Georgios, three basilicas, a bath complex, and what is believed to be a bishop's residence were built in years leading up to the 7th century, attesting to the vibrancy of this place as a seat of Christian worship.[8] A small community of monks may have crossed over to Geronisos at this time, seeking the isolation of an island hermitage to sustain them in their devotions.[9]

THE CIRCULAR STRUCTURE: A DANCE FLOOR?

Grid Squares: R23n/S23s, R24/R25, R24w, S24sw, S24/S25s, T 21, T21nwprobe, T 21a probe, T22nw probe, T22/T23 probe, T24n/U24s, U21, U21e/U22w sounding, U22/U23, U24ne, U24n/V24s, U25sw, V 24

The most enigmatic feature on Geronisos is a large circular platform of pale silt contained within two concentric ring walls, located within the North Central Sector of the island (Figs 7-9). Traces of the innermost circular wall have been found in our excavations within grid squares T21, T24, U22, U23, U24, S23, and S24 (Figs 5, 7-9, 15). This wall is made of two courses of calcarenite stones and stands roughly 0.30m. in height. The more substantial, outer ring wall is much wider in section than the inner wall and measures approximately 1.10m. in thickness, (Figs 7-9). It is made of smaller, more tightly packed stones. Stretches of this outer platform wall have been found in grid squares and R24, T21, U21, U24/S24, and V24. The upper surface of the inner ring wall sits at an average height of *ca* 21.00m. above sea level, approximately 0.65-0.70m. higher than the top of the outer ring wall. One must imagine a kind of "wedding cake" configuration, with a smaller circular platform measuring 13m. in diameter, sitting atop and 0.65m. higher than a larger, outer platform that measures 21m. in diameter (Figs 7-8).

The fill contained within these two ring walls is unlike earth encountered elsewhere on Geronisos. It is made of a pale, yellow-white to buff, fine, gritty silt that has hardened to a cement-like consistency (Fig. 9). This hard earth is so painstakingly difficult to excavate that we were forced to investigate the platform at a slow pace over a long number of years. Digging through the 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 2005, and 2006 excavation seasons, and further cleaning during the 2007 and 2008 study seasons, has brought us to understand this cement-like fill to be imported earth, deliberately introduced to Geronisos from elsewhere. It will be argued here that this silt is, in fact, marine sediment, dredged from the sea floor and brought with great effort up the cliffs of Geronisos for the construction of the great circular platform.

Let us first consider the location of this feature. The platform sits just to the south of what appears to be the remains of the northern entranceway to the Geronisos precinct, as approached from what must have been a substantial northern ascent route, now fallen away (Figs 3, 5-7). That there was a stone-built ascent on the north face of the island is certain (Figs 2, 4-6). One might imagine a gently zig-zagging ramp that could have led up from the tiny "harbour" below. Indeed, its collapse into the sea, probably brought on by earthquakes during the 4th century A.D., may be responsible for the great scar that is conspicuously visible on the north face of Geronisos today, where the white marl core of the island is exposed (Figs 2, 4).

A number of fallen, limestone ashlar blocks at the very base of the island's northern slope are all that survives of the once-impressive ascent route. When we began our work on Geronisos in 1990, a single course of ashlars could be seen

7. As reconstructed by architect Richard Anderson.
8. Bakirtzis 1995, 247-54; Bakirtzis 1997, 327–32; Bakirtzis 1999, 35-48; Megaw 1974, 71-72; Megaw 1985, 173-98; Megaw 1997, 343-52; Michaelides 2001, 43-56.
9. Connelly and Wilson 2002, 280, 289.

still *in situ* at the base of the northern cliffs, just up from water level. These blocks stretched along a horizontal line comprising an east-west wall set just up from the sea. The wall was preserved to a length of approximately 10m. in 1990, though former Director of Antiquities A.H.S. Megaw informed us that, in the 1950's, it was preserved to a length of roughly twice this size.[10] Today, blocks from this wall have fallen completely out of *situ* and lie in a pile amongst the boulders at water line (Fig. 4). Twelve ashlars are inscribed with mason's marks showing letter-forms that include: AI, E, IΓ, IE, IΛ, Θ, ΘI, and N. Similar mason's marks have been observed on ashlars used atop the island, notably in West Building (N and I), at the east end of the island (H and HA), and in the Central South Complex (HΓ), indicating that the stone-built ascent on the north of Geronisos was contemporaneous with the period of the sanctuary's construction in the last years of Ptolemaic rule (*ca* 50-30 B.C.)[11] Indeed, the letterforms, which include the broken bar *alpha*, are consistent with a 1st century B.C. date.

What may well be the remains of the northern gateway to the precinct are preserved just above the "harbour" and ascent route, atop the island's northern cliff (Figs 4-7). Here, over a dozen ashlar blocks, some measuring as large as 1.25×40m., are preserved. Some of these are scattered helter-skelter and are clearly out of *situ*. But others are set along a clear north-south/east-west axis and seem to be in their original placement, giving some indication of what may have been the northern gateway (Figs 6-7).[12]

The Circular Structure is prominently positioned just to the south of this entranceway and would have been one of the first monuments seen by visitors arriving *via* the northern ascent. Years of excavation and study have taught us a great deal about its construction. Ancient builders were confronted with many difficulties on Geronisos, including the very shallow deposits of sediments and *terra rosa* that rest upon the irregular surface of the bedrock. The sediment atop Geronisos measures just 20-50cm. in depth in most places. This leaves little earth into which foundation trenches could be dug for walls, so builders took to using plaster or mud mortar setting beds, placing wall blocks directly into these.[13] In many cases, bedrock itself was cut to serve as wall foundations.[14] Levelling bedrock was a high priority for builders seeking to create suitable horizontal surfaces onto which foundations could be set. We, therefore, find constructional fills used all across the island as leveling courses.[15] Often, these fills are comprised of stone chipping and stone dust, most likely waste material generated from the dressing of blocks for building. Good soil was always at a premium in the heavily built up environment on top of Geronisos. What little soil was available was probably reserved for making mud bricks, mortar rendering, roof tiles, or even saved for gardening soil, rather than being used for levelling bedrock.

And so, it is not surprising that a number of constructional fills were introduced for the building of the Circular Structure. The first of these is composed of stone chippings and stone dust, dumped to level the surface of the bedrock. These gravelly deposits were notably encountered in grid squares R23n/S23s, S24, T21, and T24/U24. Contemporaneously, a fill of pale, sandy earth was brought in, apparently imported up the cliffs of Geronisos. This gritty buff coloured silt is contained within the inner and outer ring walls of the circular platform and, in some cases, can be seen

10. Personal communication, A.H.S. Megaw.
11. Connelly 2002, 255; Connelly 2005, 157.
12. One of the blocks in this group shows a distinctive long rectangular cutting sunk into its upper surface (Fig. 6). This cutting somewhat resembles the setting beds for inscribed *stelae* observed at shrines throughout the Greek world where inscriptions were set up to inform pilgrims of sanctuary rules and regulations. To be sure, no such inscribed *stelae* have been found to date and it is very possible that this cutting served another purpose altogether.
13. Connelly 2002, 255-56 and Connelly 2005, 159, figs 14 and 15.
14. Connelly 2002, 255-56; Connelly 2005, 152, figs 6, 9. For cutting of bedrock to be used as wall foundations see White and Wright 1988.
15. Connelly 2002, fig. 9.

to seep under the walls themselves, as if it had been poured in while still wet. The contemporaneity of the inner and outer ring walls of the platform has been established through careful investigation of the constructional fills deposited between and beneath them. The surfaces of both the stone chipping and the marine silt fills can be seen, in places, to run continuously at the same level, suggesting that they were deposited as part of the same construction effort.

Just to the south of the inner ring wall in R23n/S23s, three large Hellenistic ashlars were unearthed, apparently chucked in as part of the filling process (Figs 15, 16). Dressed stone blocks such as these appear to have come from the rectilinear architectural phases on the island and may have been salvaged from old dumps. Indeed, these perfectly serviceable ashlars seem to have been rather "wastefully" employed here as part of the constructional fill. This would suggest that other building projects were not going on at the same time that the platform was being made. Interestingly, one of the ashlars bears the mason's mark "HΓ," a mark that is also found on two blocks within the South Central Sector, on one block retrieved from the fill of the early Byzantine cistern, and on one block found in the vicinity of East Building.[16]

We can reconstruct the sequence of events in the building of the inner ring wall. In some few places (including T22/U22), cuts in pre-existing soil represent shallow foundation trenches into which stones were set. In other places, we see an orange gritty mud mortar that was laid down as a setting bed to receive the stones. After the first course of stones was laid, the pale silt fill was poured in behind them, filling up the circular space contained therein. In this process some of the silty sediment leaked under and around the stones of the ring wall. Then, the second course of stones was set upon the wall, and yet more sandy sediment was poured in behind it, bringing the fill of the platform up to the level of the top of the wall. The ragged interior side of this wall proves that it was, indeed, a terrace wall, one-faced and designed to retain the deposits behind it rather than having been a free-standing (two-faced) wall of a building. The uppermost level of constructional fill was then capped off with compact sand. It is possible that the sand may have formed the original surface of the platform or, alternatively, it may have been the bedding substance for a surface of some other material (plaster or flagstones?) now lost. Whatever the case, it is clear that the inner ring wall was constructed with more care than the dodgy appearance of its stonework might suggest today. A sounding that measures 1×2m. was excavated at the very center of the innermost circle in grid square T22/T23 (Fig. 10). This established the depth of the silt fill at its thickest level to be nearly 1.50m.

The distinctive pale silty character of this deposit is fascinating enough, but the material contained within is equally intriguing. Little of the pottery found within the silt could be properly mended; the sherds are uniformly small and unrelated to one another, as if dumped here in a secondary usage. Most extraordinary, sherds show very smoothly worn edges that have been abraded into triangles, diamonds and rounded shapes (Fig. 11).[17] They very much resemble what we call "sea glass" today, when speaking of broken glass that has been smoothed at its edges by the action of waves and the sand of the sea floor. The presence of these apparently marine-abraded sherds within the silty white sand of the circular platform perplexed us for some time. But once we concluded that this sediment was dredged from the sea floor and imported to Geronisos, things fell into place.[18]

A second, distinctive feature of this level is the abundance and variety of seashells found

16. Connelly 2005, 155-57, figs 9-10; Connelly and Wilson 2002, 283.
17. Many of the marine-abraded sherds have been inventoried: from V24: P.97.34-36; from R23n/S23s: P.94.82-83; from T21: P.95.01; from T24n/U24s: P.96.05-10; and from T24: P.96.01-13.
18. We owe this insight to Dr. Paul Croft of the Lempa Archaeological Field Unit whose contribution to the excavation and interpretation of this monument is invaluable.

within it: murex, cowries, tritons, turret shells, cockles, and limpets, to name a few (Fig. 12). This is perfectly consistent with the identification of the sediment as marine in origin. Finally, three black glazed/gloss sherds have been recovered from within this fill, representing a large percentage of a very small handful of black glazed sherds found across the entire site. These fragments represent the very earliest iron age sherds unearthed on Geronisos, probably dating to the 4th-3rd century B.C.[19] The fact that these early sherds comes from sediments that have been imported to Geronisos helps to explain their presence on a site that otherwise has produced ceramics dating overwhelmingly to the 1st century B.C. It reinforces the identification of this fill as one that has been introduced from elsewhere.

Within the innermost ring wall were found two small limestone plaques (Fig. 13), each pierced with holes at the upper corners (St.96.17, St.96.33). These appear to be votive plaques or *pinakes*, on which dedications in painted script, or painted images, may have offered the prayer of the worshipper. Their presence here underscores the ritual nature of activity on Geronisos. The area within the circular platform has also yielded many fragments of broken up stone architectural members including a cornice moulding (StA.96.03) and an echinus-shaped moulding (StA.96.05). A stone basin fragment decorated with a flower drawn by a compass (St.96.21 in T24n/U24s) and other stone basin fragments (St.94.03, St.96.30, St.96.32, St.96.34) have also been recovered. An iron nail (MI.96.01), a bronze nail (MB.96.01), some lead fragments (ML.96.01.2) and several fragments of glass (G.93.11-12, G.96.04, G.96.08) were recovered from these levels. Three lamp fragments were unearthed, including one of Paphian regional ware (L.96.01), one import (L.94.03) dating not later than the mid 2nd century B.C., and one from a very worn mould of Egyptian or Athenian origin (L.08.01), dating to the mid 1st century B.C.[20] All of this material appears to have been dumped here in what surely represents a secondary usage.

A total of 3707 sherds were collected from the North Central Sector of which 57% are fine wares, 26% cooking wares and 17% coarse and storage wares. Altogether, 136 vessels could be estimated from surviving fragments. Chalcolithic wares represent 20.20% of the total number of sherds retrieved. From the Hellenistic repertory, we have fragments of Eastern Sigillata A bowls (P.94.79), including a body sherd of a footed hemispherical bowl (P.93.71), a bowl inscribed with the letter *nu* on its bottom (O.93.02), and fragments of moulded-relief bowls (P.93.42, 44, 46). Cypriot sigillata ware is also represented, as well as local pink powdery ware (P.96.72), including a lagynos handle (P.96.40), all dated to the 1st century B.C. Fragments of a late Hellenistic plate with infolded rim (P.96.81) and a Coan/Knidian carinated bowl (P.94.40) of 1st cent. B.C. date were also recovered here. From the cooking ware repertory, we have one casserole fragment (P.96.80).

The date of the construction of the circular platform probably lies in the in the third quarter of the 1st century B.C. This is supported by the discovery of a coin of Cleopatra VII and her son Ptolemy XV Caesar (47-44 B.C.), found just at the base of the inner ring wall on its interior face (C.96.02; elevation 20.847). It should be noted that of the fifteen coins found to date on Geronisos, ten are of this type and two others date to the sole reign of Cleopatra VII (44-30 B.C.). Seven of the Cleopatra issues have been found in the Central South Complex which would suggest that the Circular Structure is contemporaneous with the series of dining rooms located just to the south of it.[21] But the story is not so simple. Further evidence suggests that the circular platform slightly postdates the rectilinear phase of the Central South Complex and the 45m. long north-south wall that stretches from it all the way to the

19. P.07.01 from U22, level 6.1, dated to the 4th-3rd century B.C.; P.08.06 from S24/S25, a krater or lekane fragment with marine-abraded edges and heavily encrusted; and P.08.03 from R24w.
20. Connelly and Młynarczyk 2002, 310 (fig. 13), 313.
21. Connelly 2005, 166.

"entranceway" at the northern edge of the island (Figs 3, 5, 6, 7, 9).[22]

Two additional coins of Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XV Caesar were found just to the east of Circular Structure. One of these (C.96.01) was recovered at the very base of the foundations of the north-south wall in square T24n/U24s (Figs 7, 9), at an elevation of 19.92m. above sea level. This is some 0.92m. lower than the coin of the same type found just metres away, just inside the inner ring wall of the platform (Figs 7, 9). While the discovery of these coins would suggest that the north-south wall and the circular structure are contemporaneous, the constructional fills of the circular platform clearly lie atop the foundations of the north-south wall. The relationship of the inner and outer ring walls to the north-south wall can be seen in the upper right-hand corner of the photograph in Fig. 9, where the inner face of the outer ring wall can be seen to lie at a higher level than the north-south wall. This suggests that the circular platform postdates the north-south wall. The building of the north-south wall, its abandonment, and the construction of the circular monument atop it must have occurred with a very narrow margin of time. The numismatic and ceramic evidence associated with both constructions are identical in character and date.

A third coin of Cleopatra VII and Caesarion was found in this area, just to the east of the north-south wall in trench R24/R25 (Fig. 7). Coin C.06.01 (Fig. 14) was recovered at an elevation of 20.00m., consistent with the elevation (19.92m.) the coin (C.96.01) found near the same north-south wall in grid square T24n/U24s (Fig. 9).

The construction of the circular platform was nothing short of a Herculean Labour. We can roughly estimate that some 33 cubic metres of sediment would have been needed to fill the uppermost circle. An additional 213 cubic metres of fill were needed for the construction of the lower platform. This kind of marine silt would probably weigh about 1.75 metric tons per cubic metre. If this was the case, then the upper platform required about 57 tons of silt fill and the lower platform needed 372 tons, yielding a combined total of 429 tons.

The bringing of 429 tons of marine silt atop Geronisos is a breathtaking achievement. Sediments of this sort do not exist around the contemporary coastline since the sea is too energetic to permit them to form. Such sediments would have been acquired from the protected, relatively low energy environment of a harbour, possibly that resting immediately below on the north coast of Geronisos. One might imagine teams of donkeys zig-zagging their way up the northern ascent, heavy with their burdens of bitumen-lined baskets or giant sacks filled with the sand. It is clear that this impractical and labour-intensive construction effort was a high priority for those developing the Geronisos sanctuary.

What was the purpose of the Circular Structure, engineered and constructed with such ingenuity, expense, and hard labour? It is our belief that this circle of imported sand is appropriate —in size, shape, and materials— for use as a dance floor. The relatively soft bedding would provide an excellent surface for dancing while the size and shape of the platform could accommodate circle dances involving a dozen or more participants. We know from literary and epigraphic sources that dance was a central component of ritual practice, particularly in the worship of Apollo. We also know that dance floors were constructed in sanctuaries during the 1st century B.C. An inscription of late 2nd/early 1st century date, found in the Asklepieion at Lebena on Crete, documents the moving of a dance floor (*choros*) from its original location, near the *adyton*, to a new spot within the sanctuary.[23] The inscribed text instructs the *naokoroi* (temple attendants) to facilitate this move.

22. To date, this wall has been unearthed in grid squares N24/25, O24/25, P24/25, R24/25, S24, T24, U24, and V24.

23. Kritzas 1998, 275-90. 1403. Lebena. Building inscription of a dancing ground in the Asklepieion, late 2nd/early 1st cent. B.C. Lower part of a stele reused as the cover of a grave, originally from the Asklepieion.

While we know that dance floors were prominent in ancient sanctuaries we have been hard pressed to identify actual platforms that survive to this day. The best, and only, candidate in Cyprus is the circular complex found at the sanctuary of Apollo Hylates at Kourion. This sanctuary shares many features with the shrine on Geronisos: a small temple to Apollo, dining and sleeping facilities for pilgrims, evidence for the presence of young boys, and what has been identified as a dance floor.[24] While the remains at Kourion date to the Roman period when the sanctuary was extensively re-built, the function of its surviving structures duplicates that of their Hellenistic predecessors. The circular platform at Kourion lies just to the west of the Sacred Way as it approaches the temple of Apollo. Remarkably, this dance floor measures 13m. in diameter, exactly the same as the inner circular platform on Geronisos.[25] The dance floor at Kourion, however, is notable for the series of nine planting pits for trees found within it. This could suggest that the ring dancing was performed here around a small, sacred grove. Archaic terracotta figures found in Cypriot sanctuaries show votaries, with hands joined, dancing around trees.[26] Tree dancing would have been a most appropriate form of worship for Apollo Hylates, whose very name means "of the Woodlands."[27]

We cannot know if there is special significance in the use of marine sand for the construction of the Geronisos dance floor. It is not impossible that there was a cultic motivation behind this effort.[28] It should be remembered that the long tradition of male youths dancing in honour of Apollo goes back to the very foundation of Delphi. The Homeric hymn to Apollo tells how the god turned himself into a dolphin and commandeered a Cretan ship, forcing it to land at Krisa, the port of Delphi on the Corinthian Gulf (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, 388-543). Here, the young Cretan crew was instructed to erect an altar on the beach to Apollo Delphinious (Dolphin). The young men sacrificed at seaside before processing up to the sanctuary at Delphi, following the lyre-playing god up the mountainside, singing paeans all the way.

A similar formula for worship is attested at the sanctuary of Apollo Delphinious at Miletos. Thanks to the survival of the famous Molpoi Decree (*Milet I* 3, no. 133), we now know that local youths called "Molpoi" marked their entry into citizen status with sacrifices, song, and dances in honour of Apollo. Starting at the sanctuary of Apollo at Miletos, they processed down the Sacred Way some 18km. south to the oracular shrine at Didyma, stopping at stations along the way for singing-dancing competitions.[29]

Tradition has it that the god Apollo Delphinios himself landed on the beach of Oikous-Miletos while riding on a dolphin (Callimachus, Branchos fr. 229, 12f.). And, indeed, recent excavations by the German Archaeological Institute along the beach edge of the so-called "Lion's Gate Harbour" at Miletos have unearthed a single stoa and a small (2×2m.) altar built directly upon sandy soil. Geo-archaeological deep-drillings in the area have made possible the reconstruction of the local holocene transgression peak of the Aegean Sea. They have established that a shallow marine and littoral ecosystem persisted here for several centuries before constructional fills were dumped on this sandy surface at the end of the 6th century B.C.[30]

It appears that the singing and dancing processions of young men from Miletos to Didyma, began, like the procession of the Cretan youths in the Homeric Hymn, with a beachside sacrifice at an altar of Apollo Delphinious. We cannot know

24. Swiny 1982, 63-64; Christou 1996, 73; Wright 1992, 270; Dietrich 1996, 38-39; Buitron and Soren 1981, 102-103; Soren 1987, 49.
25. See photos in Swiny 1982, 63 and Christou 1996, 73.
26. Ohnefalsch-Richter 1893, 29-221, pl. 76.
27. Birge 1982.
28. I thank Prof. Christopher Faraone of the University of Chicago for suggesting what follows during his visit to Geronisos in June, 2008.
29. Herda 2006, especially 259-389.
30. Herda 2006.

whether marine sand was intentionally brought atop Geronisos so that local boys could dance upon it, just like the Cretan youths of the Homeric Hymn and the Milesian Molpoi. But it is worth speculation.

THE BURIAL

Grid Squares R23n/S23s

In 1994, while excavating the circular platform in R23n/S23s, a shallow grave was encountered, cut through the hard white surface of the marine silt deposit (Figs 15, 17-18). The grave is dug through the constructional fills between the inner and outer ring walls of the Circular Structure and long postdates the period of its construction and use. The burial was carefully positioned facing east/southeast. The skeleton was laid out with great care, hands placed upon the upper part of the legs and head lowered toward the chest (Figs 18, 19). The shoulders and collarbones were pulled up unnaturally towards the neck, as if the body had been bound tightly with a winding cloth.

The skeleton was found in extremely fragile condition. What little remained of the pelvic bones was the consistency of tissue paper. The cranium was brittle and frail and in great danger of falling apart in the course of excavation. We, therefore, covered it in tin foil and built a plaster helmet around it. When the plaster dried, we block-lifted the skull together with the earth around and beneath it, leaving the cranium for "excavation" back at our Field Station at Agios Georgios.

Dr. G.J.R. Maat of the Faculty of Medicine, Leiden University Medical Center, undertook the excavation of the cranium and the reconstruction and study of the skeletal remains during our 1996 and 1997 seasons. Results show that the skeleton belonged to a woman who had died between the ages of 43-58 years old (95% certainty). She was in excellent health and had lost only one tooth at the time of her death. Her only readily recognizable ailment was an enthesopathy known as Diffuse Idiopathic Skeletal Hyperostosis (DISH) involving the hardening of the connective muscles, joint tissues, and vertebrae at the base of the neck. This is a form of degenerative arthritis characteristically associated with flowing calcification along the sides of the vertebrae of the spine and the tendons at their attachment points to bone. When experienced in the vertebrae at the back of the neck it can lead to difficulties in turning the head from side to side. DISH is generally related to life style and nutritional patterns and it is believed to be associated with high levels of protein in the diet.

No grave goods whatsoever were found within the grave. In the fill just beneath the skeleton (level 6.3.4.2) a handful of body sherds, a handle, and a rim fragment of a Coan looking amphora with pale slip were recovered (P.94.81), along with a few red sherds from another amphora. Nineteen fragments of an interesting courseware table jar (P.94.39, Fig. 21) were found in the fill just above the burial (level 5.1.4.1), churned up from the surrounding levels during the digging and closing of the grave. These belong to an Egyptian import of a type known from Tel Atrib, dated to the 2nd-1st century B.C.[31] All in all, the burial was a very modest one: a shallow grave, no jewellery, and no funerary gifts.

Carbon 14 dating of the skeleton was undertaken at the University of Utrecht's Faculteit Natuur-en Sterrenkunde on 28 Sept. 1996. Results show that the skeleton dates to 128-233 A.D. (with a confidence of 68%) or to 23-338 A.D. (confidence 95%). This date poses a number of problems. The woman buried on Geronisos belongs to a period for which we have virtually no other finds. Following the devastation by earthquake in 15 B.C., Geronisos was abandoned until the 6th century A.D. It would appear that this Roman lady was deliberately buried here in isolation, separated from her contemporaries who may have been interred in the rock-cut tombs just opposite Geronisos on the mainland.[32] The island

31. Hayes 1991, fig. XLVII:39, group lambda alpha.
32. Bakirtzis 1999.

must have been a ruinous place during the late 1st and early 2nd centuries A.D., a great jumble of tumbled rocks and stones from long-collapsed buildings.

The eastward facing orientation of the grave suggests that the woman was a Christian. The condition of her skeleton may suggest that she was an elite. Indeed, the survival of all but one of her teeth, her affliction with DISH —possibly the result of a high protein diet— as well as her relatively advanced age at time of death, all argue for her good health and possibly for her elevated social status. The woman's decision to live, or to be buried, in the humblest of graves in the most desolate of places may have been a personal one. We may have here an early Christian holy woman ascetic who deliberately removed herself to Geronisos as an ideal hermetic setting.

Christianity came early on to Paphos, with the arrival of Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, sometime in the late 40's A.D. Their conversion of the Proconsul Lucius Sergius Paullus during their visit to Paphos opened the way for the spread of Christianity among the local population.[33] Whether or not a local woman may have chosen to live a hermetic life on the island of Geronisos in the decades that followed we cannot know. But we do have a parallel in the person of St. Thecla, a virgin of noble birth from the city of Iconium, modern Konya in Turkey. When Paul and Barnabas preached here in central Anatolia later during this same trip, Thecla was deeply moved and decided to devote the rest of her life to following Paul and spreading the Christian gospels. She is said to have lived for periods of time as a hermit among the rocks, "partly in a monastic life in the cave," (*Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 11:15).[34] Though it certainly cannot be proven, it is possible that the woman buried atop Geronisos may have chosen, like Thecla, to live among the rocks as a Christian ascetic. Indeed, it is otherwise very difficult to explain how an apparently elite woman came to be buried in a simple grave, with no gifts, facing east, on an utterly desolate island.

EARLY BYZANTINE SQUARE HOUSE

Grid Square M18

At the centre of Geronisos, toward its east end and near the great cavernous hole that probably represents a quarry, the foundations of three square stone buildings rest upon ground level (Figs 3, 22-24). The one-room structures measure roughly five metres square with walls as thick as 0.70m., marked with entranceways on their east sides. They appear to be the remains of small houses.

In October and November 1982, Dr. Sophocles Hadjisavvas excavated these structures on behalf of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, designating them as Buildings A', B', and Γ'. Pottery recovered at that time dates mostly to the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. and includes late antique combed ware, Palestinian combed ware, Cypriot red slipped ware, sherds of a *galaphteri* (milking tub), and fragments of cooking pots. Most importantly, a sgraffito ware footed bowl dated to the 13th century was recovered here in Building A' (Yer 82/32), together with fragments of a second glazed bowl that can be placed in the 14th-15th century. These fragments suggest that the square houses were re-inhabited during the later Byzantine period.

In 1997, the NYU Yeronisos Island Expedition re-excavated portions of the southernmost of these three buildings, one that stretches through grid square M18 (Fig. 3). The trench includes the northern half of the interior of the room as well as the area just outside of the building to the north (Figs 22-25). The foundations are preserved to a height of roughly 0.60m. and measure some 0.70m. in width. They show the snecked masonry technique that is so typical of 6th century A.D. building practice in Cyprus, in which

33. Delicostopoulos 1977; Ramsey (and Wilson) 2001, 66.

34. *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 11:15: "Thus suffered that first martyr and apostle of God, and virgin, Thecla; who came from Iconium at eighteen years of age; afterwards, partly in journeys and travels, and partly in a monastic life in the cave, she lived seventy-two years; so that she was ninety years old when the Lord translated her."

large stones are set and then smaller rectangular stones arranged in horizontal courses filling the interstices between them (Fig. 25). This construction technique was also employed on the water collection platform that fed into the 6th century cistern (Cistern 2) at the eastern end of Geronisos.[35] Indeed, this snecked masonry technique can be seen employed to this day in stone houses throughout Cypriot villages.

Just outside the square building in grid M18, two stone steps belonging to an exterior staircase are preserved to a height of 0.50m. and a width of 0.80m. (Figs 23, 24, 26). The steps abut but do not bond with the north wall of the room. Presumably, they carried on up *via* a wooden staircase or ladder to an upper storey or storeys. Within the building, along the south wall of its ground floor, the remains of a fireplace are preserved within a shallow alcove (Figs 23, 24). The doorway lies on the building's east side where a threshold block sits at an elevation of 21.20m. The highest point on the building's north wall is preserved to an elevation of 21.49m., while the west wall stands to a height of 21.80m. The floor level within the building averages approximately 21.06m. above sea level.

Hellenistic and early Byzantine sherds were recovered from within the building and from the area just to the north of it. The total number of sherds collected here was 1094. Fine wares make up 25% of this total, cooking ware 6%, and storage and coursewares 69%. A total of 20 vessels could be estimated from these sherds. Among the diagnostic Hellenistic sherds are Eastern Sigillata plate fragments (P.97.17), fragments of local colour coated ware bowls (P.97.14-16), and a jug (P.97.10). Among the early Byzantine ceramics are fragments of the base of a large jar or amphora decorated with distinctive red dribbled paint (P.97.02, Fig. 28) and dated from the 2nd-6th century. Fragments of a Byzantine amphora (P.97.20) were discovered along with pieces of a pilgrim's flask (P.97.19), again, dated to the 6th century A.D.

Not surprisingly, very few finds were encountered within this previously excavated structure. A glass rim fragment (G.97.17, Fig., 27), a bronze hook (MB.97.06, Fig. 29), a fragment of a stone bowl (St.97.93), a stone architectural fragment (St.97.15) and many small pieces of roof tiles were retrieved.

The thickness of the walls, the smallness of the room, and the presence of an exterior staircase, all argue for a further storey or storeys in the original building. If we look to the foundations of the identical structures just to the north, we see that the central of the three houses is equipped with mangers for feeding animals, one on its eastern exterior and another at its southwestern corner (Fig. 3). The door jambs of the entranceway on the east side are marked with simple cuttings to accommodate wooden timbers that would have been set horizontally in round sockets, blocking the door (Fig. 30). This would be consistent with an arrangement for keeping animals, probably sheep or goats, on the ground floor. After all, fragments of a milking tub were recovered from the structure in the 1982 excavations. Interestingly, bones found within the M18 house include a fragment of the skull of a caprid. This may well date from the period of the house's use in Byzantine times. It must be said, however, that the bones could belong to an animal of much later date. Villagers have informed us that sheep and goats were brought to Geronisos throughout the first half of the 20th century. Here, they were hidden in the tall grasses from British authorities during the time of the annual census when headcounts on livestock were taken for taxation purposes.

It seems likely that the square houses on Geronisos accommodated animals on the ground floors with living quarters for human inhabitants on the upper storeys. The roofs of these tower-like structures could well have served as look-

35. Connelly and Wilson 2002, 281, fig. 21. Similar cisterns have been unearthed at Kalavasos-*Kopetra* (used till the 7th cent.), at Maroni (used till the 7th cent.), in Paphos and at Kalavasos-*Syrmata*, see Chotzakoglou 2005, 547 with further bibliography.

outs. Similar cubic, tower-like structures have been found at sites in Egypt, notably, at the Coptic town of Djeme, the former Kastron Memnonion, and at Medinet Habu.[36] Of course, such houses were already known in the Ptolemaic period when they stood two, three, and even more storeys high.[37] We cannot know with certainty but it is likely that the square houses on Geronisos accommodated a small community of residents whose presence may have been seasonal. That these residents were monks associated with the three basilicas just opposite on the mainland seems likely. The Byzantine inhabitants of Geronisos seem to have engaged in tending flocks, gardening, and, perhaps, milling as suggested by the great mill stone, found near the 6th century cistern.[38] As we shall see in what follows, these residents may also have looked after a basilica church, long lost in the sea with the collapse of the east end of the island.

EAST BUILDING: A CHURCH?

Grid Squares P50n/Q50s, Q50e/Q51w, Q50n/R50s, Q51, R46, R49, R50e, R51, S50, S51

The easternmost tip of Geronisos, that which is visible from the mainland, has seen multiple periods of occupation spanning some five millennia (Fig. 31). Here, we find the very richest layers of Chalcolithic material (3800 B.C.) recovered to date on the island.[39] Atop the Chalcolithic level rest Hellenistic ashlar blocks from a substantial structure that may have stood here in late Ptolemaic times (Figs 31-36). The greatest quantity of material dates, however, to the Byzantine period. It was then that the Hellenistic ashlars were re-used for the construction of a highly significant building. That this building was a church seems likely, based on material recovered from our excavations as well as from indications on 16th century maps that show a structure here with a cross, labeled "S. Zorzi," or, St. George (Fig. 68).[40]

The foundations of East Building preserve a long rectangular room set on a north-south axis and measuring 11.5m. in length and 4.6m. in width (Figs 31-34, 66). The walls range in elevation from 18.276 to 20.429m. above sea level and are preserved to a height of nearly 4m. along the well-preserved south side of the building (Fig. 35). The northeast corner of East Building has completely collapsed down the cliffs and into the sea (Figs 31-33, 65). That the structure originally extended further to the east is strongly suggested by a substantial south-west pier foundation preserved just to the east of the eastern wall (Figs 32, 33, 66). The interior of East Building was completely cleared out during the 1982 excavations of Sophocles Hadjisavvas. Quantities of tumbled ashlar blocks were removed from its floor and are now lined up on the surface of the island along its northern edge. Most importantly, Hadjisavvas recovered a number of *voussoir* blocks, establishing that East Building once had a vaulted roof.

Our investigations of the structure began with drawing, mapping, and excavations in 1997, further cleaning of the interior of the building in 2007, and digital surveying and further excavation in 2009.[41] These efforts have enabled us to understand better the construction, use, and date of the building. Its well-preserved east, south, and west walls show three distinct construction techniques. The lowest course comprises well-cut Hellenistic ashlars (Figs 36, 37). These are consistent with the Ptolemaic construction seen elsewhere on Geronisos and are clearly re-used here to support the later building. Above the ashlars rests a course of smaller rectangular limestone blocks shimmed with pieces of tile and

36. See Hölscher 1954, 45-51, pls 41-43; and Arnold *et al.*, 2003, 172-90, figs 111-17.
37. Grossman 2007, 103-36; Rautman 2006, 132.
38. Connelly and Wilson, 2002, 286, fig. 23.
39. Connelly and McCartney 2004, 22-23, figs 2-10, 37-38.
40. A. and J. Stylianou 1980, entry 40, fig. 43, p. 219; entry 41, fig. 44, p. 220; entry 42, fig. 47, p. 223; entry 53, fig. 57, p. 234.
41. Drawing of ground plan and elevation undertaken by A. Wixom in 1997; digital survey undertaken by R. Anderson assisted by J. Ackerman in 2009.

slate (Figs 36, 37). A third course of entirely different masonry lies atop this. Here, small stones set in cement mortar once sprang up to form a barrel vault spanning the north and south walls of the room (Figs 37-39).

Cleaning of East Building's interior during the 2007 season revealed dozens of fragments of thin gypsum floor paving, indicating that the original flooring of the structure was fairly upscale in nature (ST.07.1-13, Fig. 47). Excavation on the exterior of the west wall in 1997 recovered fragments of plaster (Pl.97.01-04) that once covered the exterior face of the wall (Figs 32, 33, 43, 44). Indeed, some fragments were found still affixed to the western face of the wall in Q50n/R50s where at least two phases of gypsum plaster are preserved. A few large chunks of plaster show the impressions of wood beams or fittings, giving some idea of superstructure of the building (Pl.97.01, Fig. 46).

Importantly, two fragments of square or rectangular glass windowpanes were recovered near East Building, one on the surface (G.97.64) and another nearby in grid square R49 (G. 97.31). A third windowpane was found much further to the west near the early Byzantine cistern (G.96.41).[42] As Mariusz Burdajewicz has explained in this volume, such windowpanes are known from ecclesiastical buildings across the Eastern Mediterranean dating from the 5th century A.D. on.[43] In Cyprus, they have been found at Maroni-*Petrera*, Kalavasos-*Kopetra*, and Kourion, as well as at the basilica of Campanopetra, Salamis.[44] Glass windowpanes are also known from churches and chapels much further afield, from Syro-Palestine, to Sinai, Egypt, and Nubia.[45] The presence of glass windowpanes in the vicinity of East Building strongly argues for its function as an ecclesiastical structure.

In 1997, we opened two trenches along the western exterior face of East Building (Figs 32, 33). The southernmost of these trenches, in grid square P50n/Q50s, wrapped around the southwest corner of the building (Figs 32, 33, 41, 65). Here, we found a destruction level with wall fall and the collapse of a deep red course of mud bricks (Figs 41-42). Broken tile fragments, chunks of wall plaster, and decomposed mud brick opened onto an occupation level of light brown earth. Quantities of glass (G.97.04-8, 10-16, 18-29), including the base of a wine goblet (P.97.21), many fragments of Cypriot red slip ware, and small bits of iron, bronze, and lead (MI.97.01-05; MB.97.02, 05, 09; ML.97.01) were recovered from this level.

Two objects found here are of particular interest. The first, a small bronze buckle marked with a Christian cross (MB.97.01, Figs 55-57) is of a type that has been found at Salamis-Constancia in the 5th-century A.D. luxury residence known as "l'huilerie."[46] Similar buckles are also found at various sites across Cyprus and date into the 6th and 7th centuries.[47] Parallels are also known further afield at Corinth and Athens in Greece and at Apamea in Syria.[48] Again, the Christian symbolism of the buckle points to an ecclesiastical context for the building at the east end of Geronisos.

The second object of interest is an S-shaped link from a bronze chain (MB.97.09, Fig. 53) that may have once supported a hanging chandelier or *polycandelon*. Such installations were composed of a ring of goblet-shaped glass lamps set in a metal tray suspended from a ceiling on three chains. They are known at Syro-Palestinian sites from the early 5th century on and remain popular throughout the Byzantine period. Mariusz Burdajewicz presents his reconstruction of one such glass and metal chandelier found by the Polish excavations at the North-West Church in Hippos (Sussita) in this volume (Fig. 54).[49] In Cyprus,

42. See Burdajewicz 2010; Connelly and Wilson 2002, 280-86.
43. Burdajewicz 2010.
44. Burdajecwicz 2010; Chotzakoglou 2005, 692, fig. 672a-b, with further bibliography.
45. Burdajewicz 2010.
46. Chavane 1975, 162, no. 466, Sal. 2728=B 85, pl. XLI; Argoud, Calot and Helly 1980, 43-45.
47. Chotzakoglou 2005, 740, fig. 779, with further bibliography.
48. Chavane 1975, 162.
49. Burdajewicz 2009, fig. 4, 33b; Burdajewicz 2006.

similar metal parts for *polycandela* have been found at the early Christian sites of Cornos and Soloi.[50]

That the chain link found at East Building once belonged to a *polycandelon* seems likely, especially in view of the fact that two long stemmed glass lamp fragments have been found here, one in 1982 by Hadjisavvas (Yer. 82/16) and another in our 1997 excavations in R49 (G.97.38, Fig. 52).[51] These are precisely the kind of long-stemmed lamps that would have fit into the hanging metal disks of chandeliers suspended from the ceilings of churches (Fig. 54). Since *polycandela* of this type are known overwhelmingly from ecclesiastical contexts, the presence of the chain link and stemmed glass lamps at East Building further argue for its identification as a church.

The neighboring trench to the north, Q50n/R50s, similarly revealed a destruction level of collapsed rubble, plaster, and decomposed mud brick opening onto a good floor (Figs 32, 33, 43, 44, 65). A foundation trench was revealed running along the western face of the wall to a width of *ca* 0.15-0.20m. (Figs 43-45). This trench is roughly 0.30m. in depth and cuts through to the purple-red earth of the Chalcolithic stratum beneath. Very little material was found within it. The few combed ware body sherds and a piece of glass (G.97.69) that were recovered from this foundation trench are consistent with the early Byzantine material found in the occupation level associated with it.

The early Byzantine floor that stretches out from the western face of East Building in Q50n/R50s was strewn with fragments of glass (G. 97.22, 30, 33, 34, 38, 41, 47, 48, 50-59, 61-63, 65-70, 67, 69, 70), including a suspension handle for a lamp (G.97.63) and the base and stem of a wine goblet (G.97.38, Fig. 51). Bits of bronze and iron (MB.97.07-08, MI.97.06) were also recovered here, along with fragments of wall plaster (PL.97.01-04). From the ceramic repetoire, a variety of 6th century A.D. coarse combed and painted wares were recovered. Especially interesting are fragments of a local amphora showing a basket-like, cross-hatched painted decoration (P.97.01, Fig. 50) and a Coptic amphora with dribbled red paint and splattered dots (P.97.03, Figs 48-49). Pithoi found at Alassa and dated to the 6th-7th century A.D. show similar decoration.[52] Good parallels for the shapes of these amphorae can be found in examples from Salamis dating to the 6th-7th centuries.[53]

The total number of sherds recovered from East Building and its surrounding area is 6485 from which an estimate of some 90 vessels can be reconstructed. Of the total, 37% represent fine wares, 22% are cooking wares, and 41% represent coarse and storage wares. An impressive 53% of all sherds recovered from the area are Chalcolithic in date, showing the greatest concentration of prehistoric material that we have encountered across the entire island. Hellenistic fine wares include fragments of local colour coated ware bowls, plates, jugs, lagynoi, table amphorae, and kraters. Casseroles and cooking pots, as well as coarse ware jugs and bowls, were also retrieved.

For the Early Byzantine period we have a fine representative corpus of tablewares, mostly of Cypriot Red Slip ware bowls and dishes (P.97.22, 23, 24, 26) and late Roman C wares, all dating from the late 5th through the 6th century and into the 7th century A.D.[54] Of special interest is a fragment of Cypriot Red Slip Form 11, a type of milking bowl or *galaphteri*, dating to the late 6th-early 7th century (P.97.26). A rim of a late Roman amphora, probably from Gaza, dates to the 6th-7th century (P.97.25), as do fragments of yet another late Roman amphora (P.97.21). Most of the

50. Chotzakoglou 2005, 738, with further bibliography.
51. Burdajewicz 2009, no. 33, fig. 5.
52. Chotzakoglou 2005, 709-10, fig. 732, with further bibliography.
53. Chotzakoglou 2005, 706-7, fig. 722, with further bibliography.
54. For tableware and pithoi of 5th-6th century date see Chotzakoglou 2005, 701-11 with further bibliography.

sherds recovered here belong to bowls, dishes, and jars. Notably, no cooking pots were found.

Some 4m. to the west of East Building, in grid square R49, were found the remains of what may have been a storage area that once serviced East Building. A rough rubble wall (Fig. 32) running irregularly along a north-south axis may define the western edge of the complex. Here, a destruction level of broken tiles and mud bricks opened on to a floor. This contained the remains of two large, thick-walled pithoi (Figs 58, 59) found together with the heavy stone jar lids that once sealed them (St.97.16, St. 97.17, Figs 60, 61). Each of the lids is inscribed with a Christian cross, possibly indicating that the contents (no doubt, oil) belonged to the liturgical supplies. Quantities of early Byzantine glass (G.97.31-32, 35-37, 40, 42-46, 49) were also recovered here, along with fragments of Cypriot red slip ware (P.97.23, 27) and coarse combed ware pottery (P.97.41, 43).

This early Byzantine occupation level rests directly atop a Chalcolithic floor of trampled earth that yielded a rich variety of chipped stones, ground stone tools, and a chalcedony bead.[55] The lifting of two boulder-sized stones (Figs 31, 32) from the centre of the trench revealed a circular pit measuring roughly 110cm. in diameter and 20-25cm. in depth (Fig. 63). Within it, imported ash, heat-fractured stones and an assemblage of chipped and ground stone tools, a stone cup, a piece of jasper, and a female figurine were deposited (Fig. 64).[56] The stone figurine, which fits nicely into the hand, shows a long neck, full shoulders, a nipped-in waist, and rounded hips. The legs were deliberately damaged prior to the figurine's discard, a practice that has been observed for other Chalcolithic deposits in which figurines were intentionally "disempowered" before deposition.[57]

We cannot know the circumstances behind the selection and burial of the objects in the Chalcolithic pit dug on Geronisos. That these actions were symbolic or even "ritual" in nature seems likely. If this is so, Geronisos may have been regarded as a sacred place even longer than we knew. That the Chalcolithic female figurine sits just 0.30m. beneath the stone jar lids inscribed with Christian crosses is quite extraordinary. A time span of some 4300 years, represented in a thin layer of earth, separates two highly evocative symbols of human ritual practice.

While the cumulative evidence points overwhelmingly to an ecclesiastical function for East Building, the remaining foundations, with their north-south orientation, have never fit easily with its identification as a chapel. Convention would require that churches be built facing east. But if we look at East Building as only a part of a much larger structure, now fallen away down the eastern cliffs, its identification as a church becomes more plausible (Fig. 66).

Architect Richard Anderson, who has undertaken a comprehensive digital survey of the structure, offers a compelling restoration of East Building as the vaulted undercroft of the narthex of a basilica (Figs 35, 66). A good parallel can be found at Kalavasos-Syrmata where a crypt has been revealed beneath the vaulted narthex of the church. Graves found within this crypt establish that the church was used until the middle of the 7th century.[58] A similar undercroft was recently discovered for the three-aisled basilica of the Holy Athanasios Pentaschoinites.[59]

For Geronisos, Anderson restores a three-aisled church, some 11.5m. in width but of unknowable length (Fig. 66). The reconstructed rectangle for the basilica (including the narthex but without the apse) shown in his drawing is an economical guess, making for a modest basilica with four or five columns. There is, of course, no telling of the design for the east end of the church with a prothesis and diakonikon flanking the

55. Connelly and McCartney 2004, 22-23, figs 9, 35.
56. Connelly and McCartney 2004, 23, 34, 35, figs 5-10, 26, 33, 37-38.
57. Goring 1991, 49-50, 55; Goring 1998, 162-63.
58. Chotzakoglou 2005, 543, figs 22, 275, with further bibliography.
59. Chotzakoglou 2005, 543, note 608, figs 233-34, 301.

apse. In Anderson's reconstruction, the partial remains of the south-west pier foundation that survive today are matched by an exactly symmetrical north-west pier. The symmetrical spacing of these piers, actual and reconstructed, works out perfectly with reference to the length of East Building's western wall. These would have supported the first columns or piers within the colonnaded central aisle of the basilica that carried on to the east (Fig. 66). The restored columns shown here are not placed on any particular module though they are quite similar to those of the baptistery at Kourion.

Though this reconstruction is not without its problems, it does seem likely that such a basilica once stood at the very eastern tip of Geronisos. Our efforts to find an eastern extension of the building's southern wall during the 2009 season proved futile. In grid square Q51, we dug a 1.75m. wide trench stretching out from the southeast corner of East Building for a distance of some 2m. Absolutely no stones were found here, just deep red earth opening onto bedrock. It is, of course, possible that a continuation of the wall was torn away with the rest of the basilica during some violent collapse, brought on by an earthquake or stone robbing.

The architecture and its associated finds point to a date in the 6th century for the building of the church, contemporary with the vibrant period of activity just opposite on the mainland at Agios Georgios. No fewer than three basilicas were built at Agios Georgios in the years leading up to the 7th century, and it is likely that a small community of monks came over to Geronisos at that time to do the same.[60] Whether or not this church was renewed and repaired in the 13th century is not known. But the presence of sgrafitto ware bowls on Geronisos and the cleaning and reuse of an old Hellenistic cistern at this time, strongly suggests that the island was re-inhabited in later Byzantine days.[61]

Indeed, 16th century maps show a church with bell tower on Geronisos, labeled "S. Zorzi." These include Giovanni Francesco Camocia's map, made before July, 1570, for "Cipro insula nobiliss(im)a..la principal citta regia e Nicossia distante di Famagosta mill. 38," (Fig. 67),[62] as well as an anonymous map from *Cyprus Insula, In Pamphylia mari..*, Venice, 1570, and Matthes Zündt's map in "Y Cypern, Die Insel Cypern den Venedigern...Gott welle den genedig bey sten noyder den Thiran" of 1570.[63] A map made by the Venetian Leonida Attar, dated to 1542, names the island of Geronisos as "S. Zorzi" but shows no church or bell tower.[64]

These documents strongly argue for a church on the spot and may explain a long tradition, enduring to this day, by which Geronisos is also called St. George's Island. With a late Hellenistic temple to Apollo at its western tip,[65] and a church to St. George at its east, Geronisos is well named as "Holy Island," a title first given in Strabo (*Geographies* 14.6.4) and Pliny (*Natural Histories* 5.129-31). The fact that a Chalcolithic ritual deposit lies beneath its Hellenistic and Byzantine levels attests to the symbolic character of this place long before the historical period. Islands beyond islands are special places, indeed, and have always held a particular fascination for humankind. They provoke an irresistible desire to

60. Megaw 1974, 1985, 1997; Michaelides 2001; Bakirtzis 1995.
61. P.96.37 was found at the bottom of Cistern 1, clearly attesting to its reuse, see Connelly and Wilson 2002, 280-81, 277, 286, figs 9-10. Sgrafitto ware bowls were also found in the 1982 excavations on Geronisos conducted by Sophocles Hadjisavvas: Yer/82/32 from Room A' of the Square Houses and Yer/82/31 in the Southwest Buildings.
62. Stylianou and Stylianou 1980, entry 42, fig. 47, p. 223, Giovanni Francesco Camocia, "Cipro insula nobiliss(im)a..la principal citta regia e Nicossia distante di Famagosta mill. 38." Made before July 1570, *Venetia alla libraria del segno di S. Marco, ca* 1575.
63. Stylianou and Stylianou 1980, Anonymous, fig. 43, p. 219, from "Cyprus Insula, In Pamphylia mari...Venetiis MDLXX", MS., Prov. *BN C* et *P SH*, 102/6/2; see also, entry 41, fig. 44, p. 220, Nadal(e) S(ibenisensis), "Cyprus Insula, In Pamphylio mari..., Venetiis MDLXX" Nadal Bonifacio S. F(ecit)." Prov. *BL ML Maps 47685* (15); and Matthes Zündt's map, entry 53, fig. 57, p. 234, from "Y Cypern," "Die Insel Cypern den Venedigern...Gott welle dne genedig bey sten noyder den Thiran," 1570. Prov.: Enosis Club Limassol, Cyprus.
64. Chavane 1975, 162, no. 466, Sal. 2728.
65. Cavazzana-Romanelli 2006, 68, pl. 2.

cross the waters and know the unique experience of island life. This may explain, in part, the continuity of Geronisos as a holy place, a sacred destination for generations who left behind the ordinary of the mainland for the extraordinary of the island.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η *Τρίτη Έκθεση* παρουσιάζει τα αποτελέσματα των ανασκαφών του Πανεπιστημίου της Νέα Υόρκης στη Γερόνησο. Συγκεκριμένα, το άρθρο αναλύει τρεις ξεχωριστές κατασκευές: μια κυκλική πλατφόρμα στο βόρειο-κεντρικό τμήμα του νησιού, που πιστεύουμε ότι πρόκειται για Ελληνιστική πλατφόρμα χορού, μια τετράγωνη βυζαντινή οικία στο κέντρο του νησιού και ένα ορθογώνιο κτίσμα στο ανατολικό άκρο του νησιού που πιστεύουμε ότι πρόκειται για το θολωτό νάρθηκα Παλαιοχριστιανικής βασιλικής.

Η 'πλατφόρμα χορού' περιλαμβάνει δύο κυκλικές πλατφόρμες, η μια πάνω στην άλλη. Αυτή που βρίσκεται σε πιο ψηλό επίπεδο είναι περίπου 0.65μ. πιο ψηλά από τη χαμηλότερη. Ο εσωτερικός δακτύλιος έχει διάμετρο 13μ. ενώ ο εξωτερικός 21μ. Μεταξύ των δύο αυτών κυκλικών τοίχων τοποθετήθηκε γέμισμα από χαρακτηριστική ανοιχτόχρωμη κιτρινωπή λάσπη. Πιστεύουμε ότι το γέμισμα αυτό πρόκειται για εισηγμένο θαλάσσιο καθίζημα που συλλέχθηκε από το θαλάσσιο βυθό και στη συνέχεια μεταφέρθηκε με μεγάλο κόπο στα υψώματα του νησιού. Ένας πρόχειρος υπολογισμός δείχνει ότι χρειάστηκαν περίπου 429 τόνοι θαλάσσιας λάσπης για να γεμίσει ο χώρος της πλατφόρμας. Έτσι, φαίνεται ότι οι τελετουργικοί χοροί ήταν αναπόσπαστο μέρος της λατρείας του Απόλλωνα στη Γερόνησο. Νομίσματα και κεραμική χρονολογούν την πλατφόρμα στον 1ο αι. π.Χ.

Ακριβώς στα νότια του εσωτερικού δακτυλίου και μέσα στο στρώμα του θαλάσσιου καθιζήματος βρέθηκε ταφή η οποία είναι σίγουρα μεταγενέστερη της πλατφόρμας. Περιείχε τα οστά γυναικός που απεβίωσε σε ηλικία 43-58 ετών (95% πιθανότητα). Αναλύσεις με διοξείδιο του άνθρακα (C14) που έγιναν έδειξαν ότι ο σκελετός χρονολογείται στα 128-233 μ.Χ. (68% βεβαιότητα) ή στα 23-338 μ.Χ. (95% βεβαιότητα). Ιδιαίτερα ενδιαφέρον είναι το γεγονός ότι η ενταφιασμένη γυναίκα έζησε σε μια περίοδο για την οποία δεν έχουμε εντοπίσει σχεδόν καθόλου στοιχεία στο νησί. Η κατεύθυνση της ταφής (που βλέπει προς ανατολή) δείχνει ότι η γυναίκα θα ήταν Χριστιανή.

Τα θεμέλια τριών Βυζαντινών οικιών είναι ορατά ακριβώς στο κέντρο της νήσου. Είναι περίπου πέντε τετραγωνικών μέτρων, με φαρδιούς τοίχους, διαδρόμους στην ανατολική τους πλευρά, ενώ κάποιες περιέχουν ταΐστρες για ζώα. Το άρθρο επικεντρώνεται στη νοτιότερη οικία η οποία διέθετε τζάκι στο νότιό της τοίχο και εξωτερική κλίμακα στο βόρειο. Η κεραμική που βρέθηκε στην οικία χρονολογείται κυρίως στον 6ο και 7ο αιώνα μ.Χ. και περιλαμβάνει και κεραμική της ύστερης αρχαιότητας με κτενωτό διάκοσμο, Παλαιστινιακή κεραμική με κτενωτό διάκοσμο, Κυπριακή ερυθρόχριστη κεραμική, γαλευτήρια και αγγεία για μαγειρική. Ένα κύπελλο sgraffito φανερώνει ότι η οικία χρησιμοποιήθηκε ξανά κατά το 13ο αιώνα.

Τα θεμέλια του Ανατολικού Κτιρίου σχηματίζουν ένα μακρύ ορθογώνιο δωμάτιο με κατεύθυνση Βορρά-Νότο και διαστάσεις 11.5μ. μήκος και 4.6μ. πλάτος. Ολόκληρη η βορειο-ανατολική γωνία του κτιρίου έχει καταρρεύσει και βυθιστεί στη θάλασσα. Μια καλοκτισμένη

θεμελίωση αποβάθρας στα ανατολικά του ανατολικού τοίχου αποτελεί σοβαρή ένδειξη ότι το κτίσμα αυτό προχωρούσε προς τα ανατολικά. Λίθινοι θολίτες που βρέθηκαν στο εσωτερικό του κτιρίου μας πληροφορούν ότι το κτίσμα ήταν στεγασμένο με θόλο. Στο άρθρο υποστηρίζεται ότι το Ανατολικό Κτίριο ίσως να πρόκειται για θολωτή υπόγεια κρύπτη του νάρθηκα μιας βασιλικής η οποία έχει προ πολλού καταρρεύσει μέσα στη θάλασσα μαζί με όλο το ανατολικό άκρο του νησιού.

Το υλικό που βρέθηκε μέσα και κοντά στο Ανατολικό Κτίριο υποδηλώνει τον εκκλησιαστικό του χαρακτήρα. Τα υάλινα θραύσματα παραθύρων ανήκουν σε τυπικά παράθυρα εκκλησιών της Κύπρου, της Σύρο-Παλαιστίνης του Σινά Όρους και της Αιγύπτου. Βρέθηκαν επίσης δύο θραύσματα από λύχνους με μακρύ στέλεχος οι οποίοι θα κρέμονταν από τους μεταλλικούς δίσκους των πολυκάντηλων της εκκλησίας. Επίσης στο Ανατολικό Κτίριο βρέθηκε και μια αλυσίδα που πιθανώς να χρησιμοποιείτο για την ανάρτηση των πολυκάντηλων. Τέτοιου είδους πολυκάντηλα έχουν βρεθεί κατά πλειοψηφία σε εκκλησιαστικού χαρακτήρα κτίρια. Τέλος, βρέθηκε και μια χάλκινη πόρπη που φέρει σταυρό. Η πόρπη αυτή ομοιάζει με παρόμοιες που βρέθηκαν στη Σαλαμίνα-Κωνσταντία και που χρονολογούνται στον 5ο αιώνα μ.Χ.

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Fig. 1. Geronisos and coastline at Agios Georgios tis Pegeias, from south (photo: J.B. Connelly).

Fig. 2. Aerial view of Geronisos, from south, 2004 (photo: J.B. Connelly).

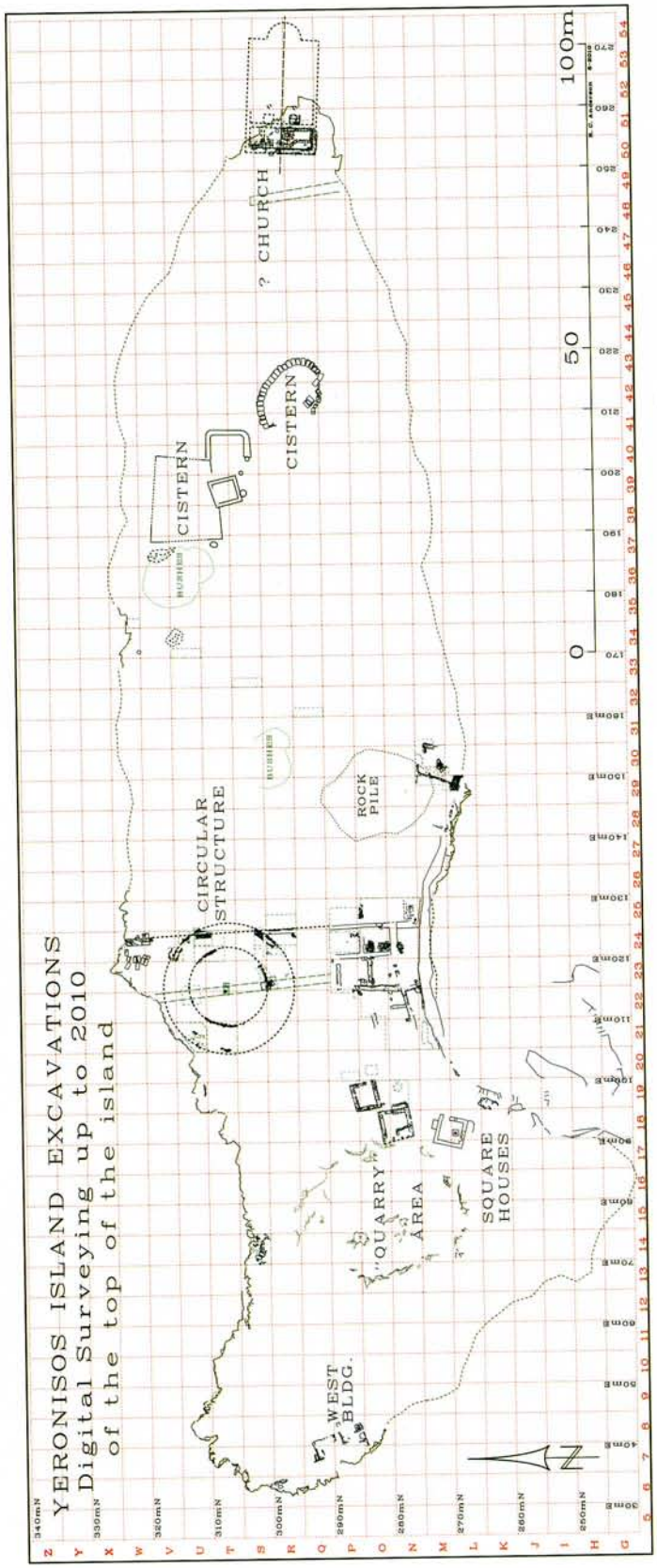

Fig. 3. Geronisos Island site plan, digital surveying through 2010 (Richard Anderson).

Fig. 4. Northern cliffs and site of northern ascent route, grid square V 24, 1997.

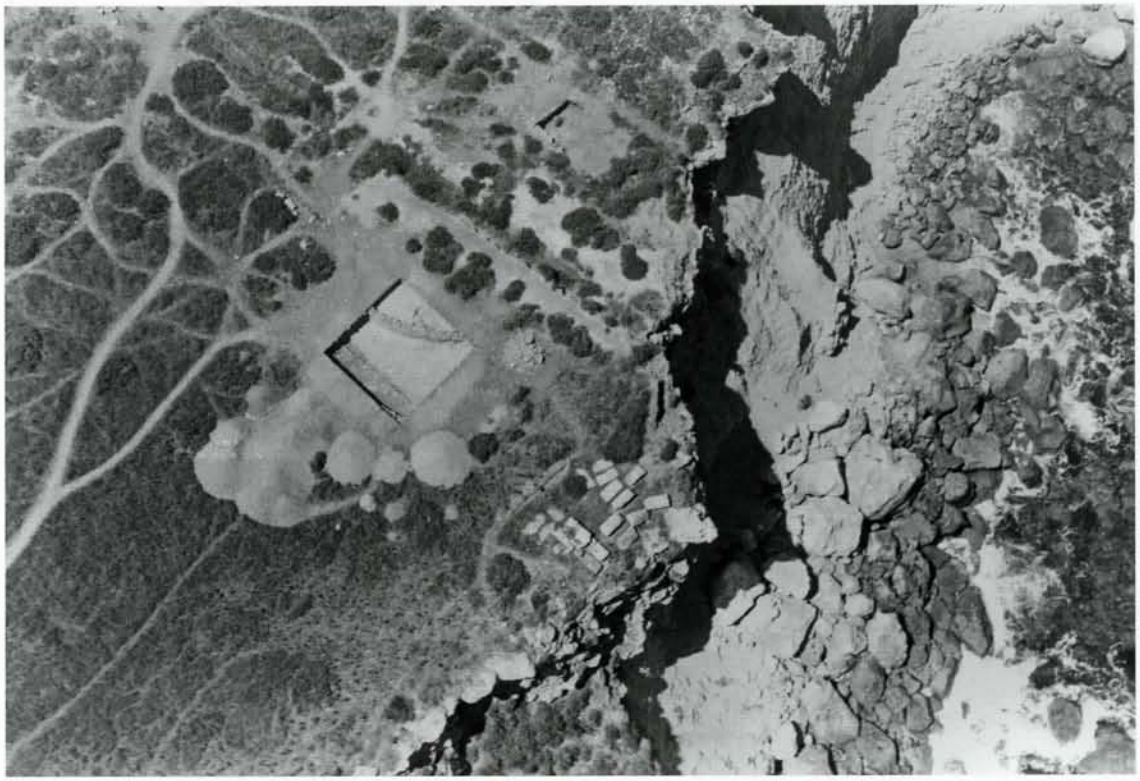

Fig. 5. Northern cliffs with grid square T 24n/U24s, 1996.

Fig. 6. Northern cliffs with grid square V 24, 1997.

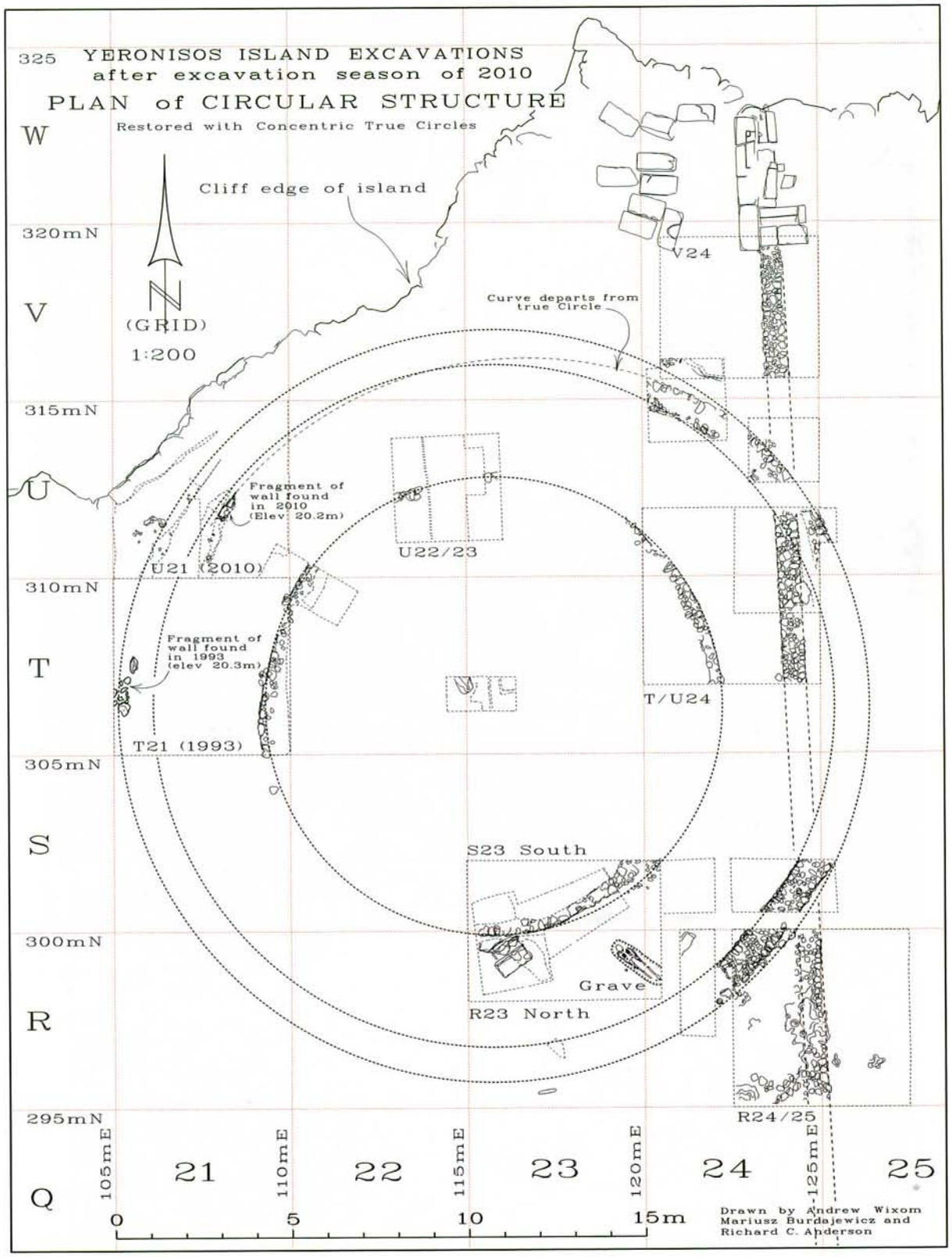

Fig. 7. Plan of Circular Structure, 2010 (Richard Anderson).

Fig. 8. Circular structure, inner and outer ring walls, in grid square U24, facing west, 2008.

Fig. 9. Inner ring wall of Circular Structure, outer ring wall, and north-south wall, grid square T 24n/U24s, facing north, 1996.

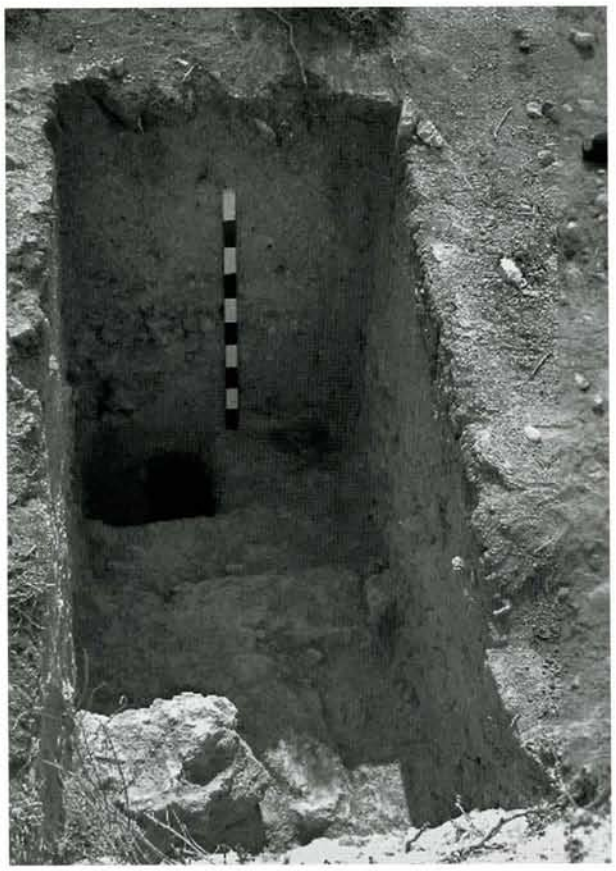

Fig. 10. Center of Circular Structure, T22/T23 probe, facing east.

Fig. 11. Marine abraded sherds from sediment fill within Circular Structure.

Fig. 12. Marine shells from sediment fill within Circular Structure.

Fig. 13. Stone *pinakes* from sediment fill within Circular Structure.

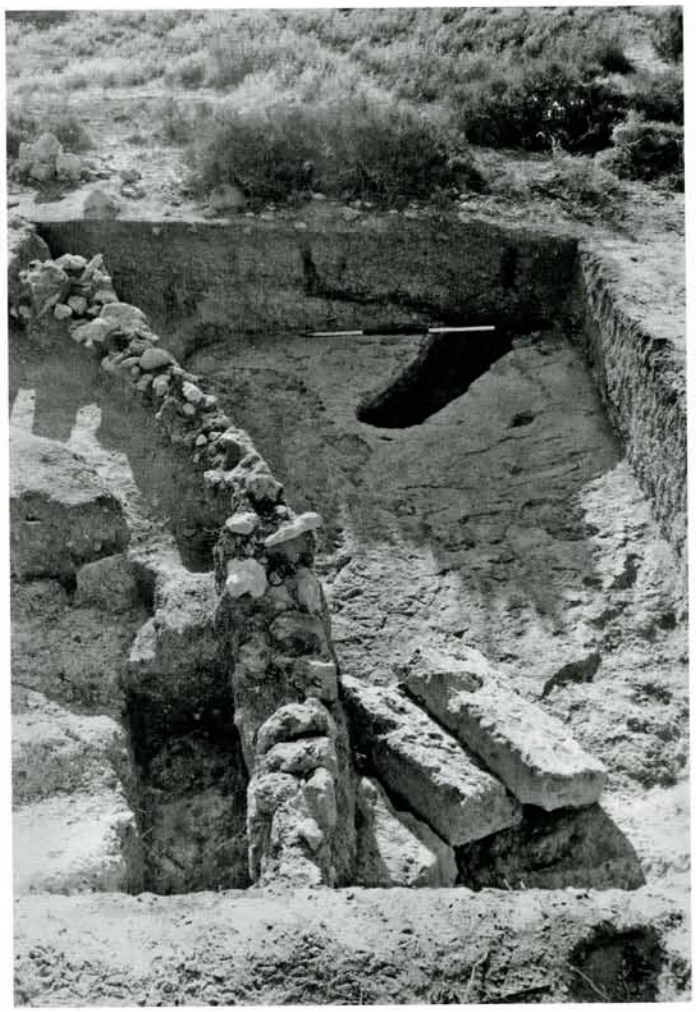

Fig. 15. Grid square R23n/S23s: inner ring wall of Circular Structure, hard pale surface of marine sediment fill showing grave cut into it, facing east, 1994.

Fig. 14. Coin of Cleopatra VII and Caesarion (47-44 B.C.), C.06.01 from grid square R24/R25.

Fig. 16. Ashlar block with HG inscription, grid square R23n/S23s, 2007.

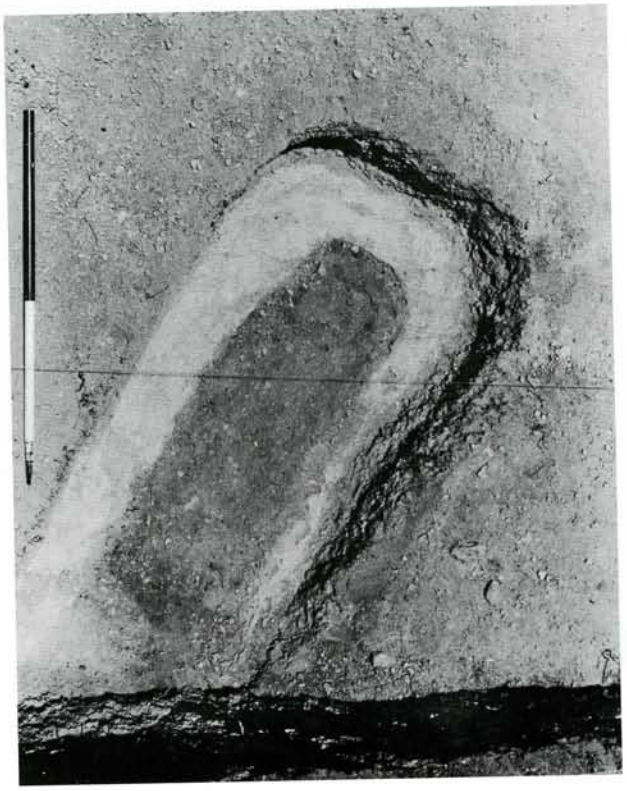

Fig. 17. Grave in R23n/S23s, prior to excavation, 1994.

Fig. 18. Skeleton exposed in grave, R23n/S23s, 1994.

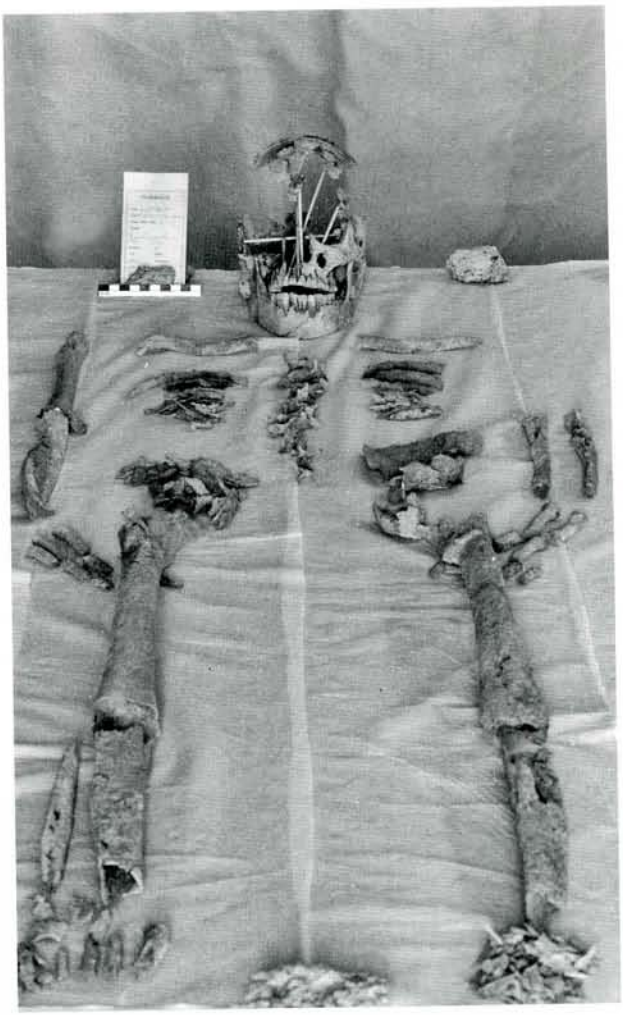

Fig. 19. Skeleton as reconstructed by G.J.R. in 1996.

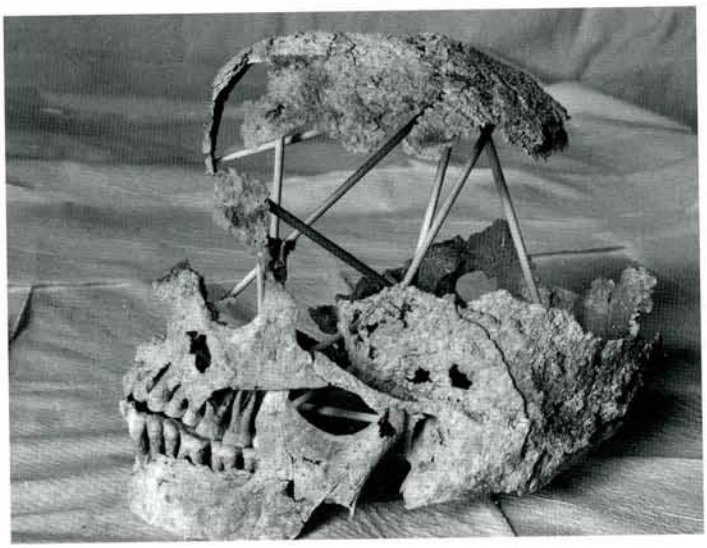

Fig. 20. Detail of Cranium, as reconstructed by G.J.R. Maat, 1996.

Fig. 21. Egyptian table jar, P.94.39.

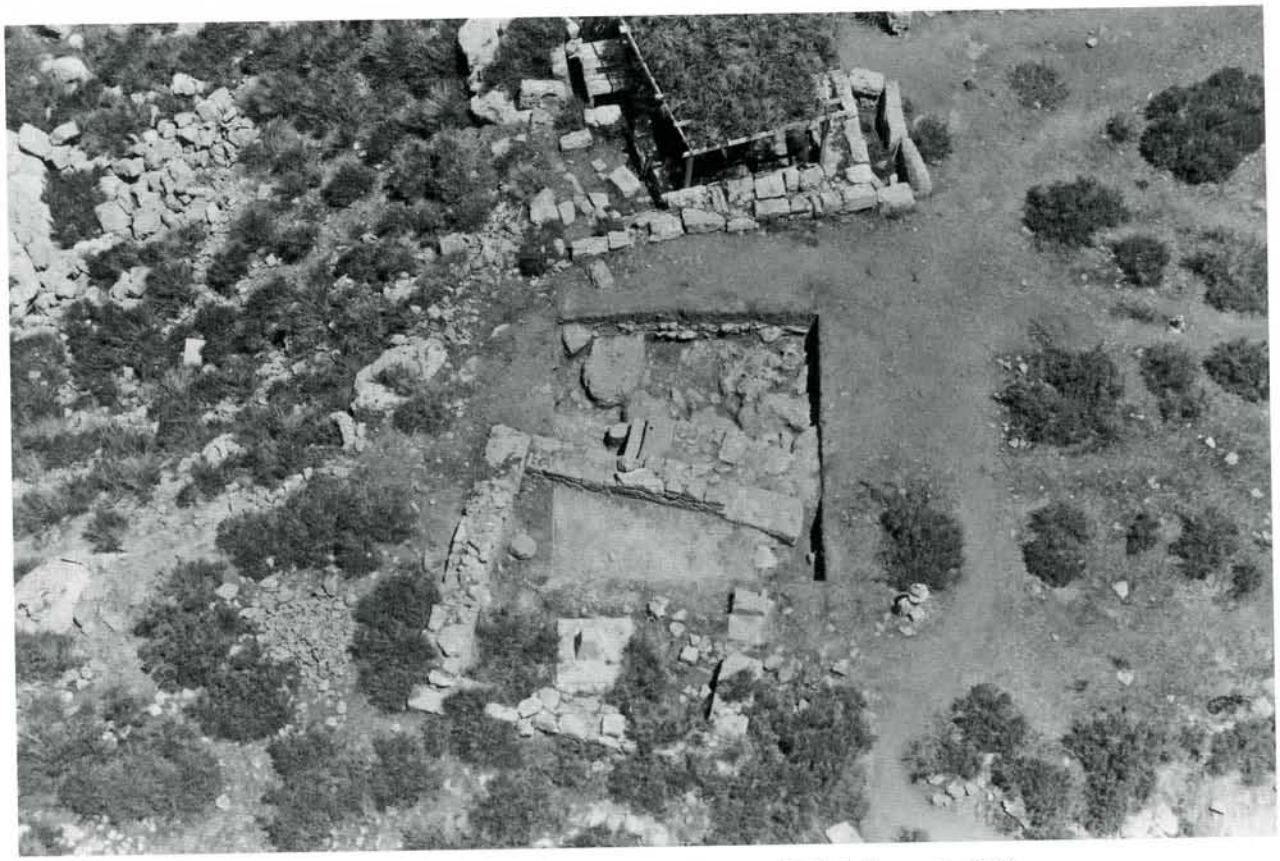

Fig. 22. Aerial view of Square House in grid square M18, facing north, 1997.

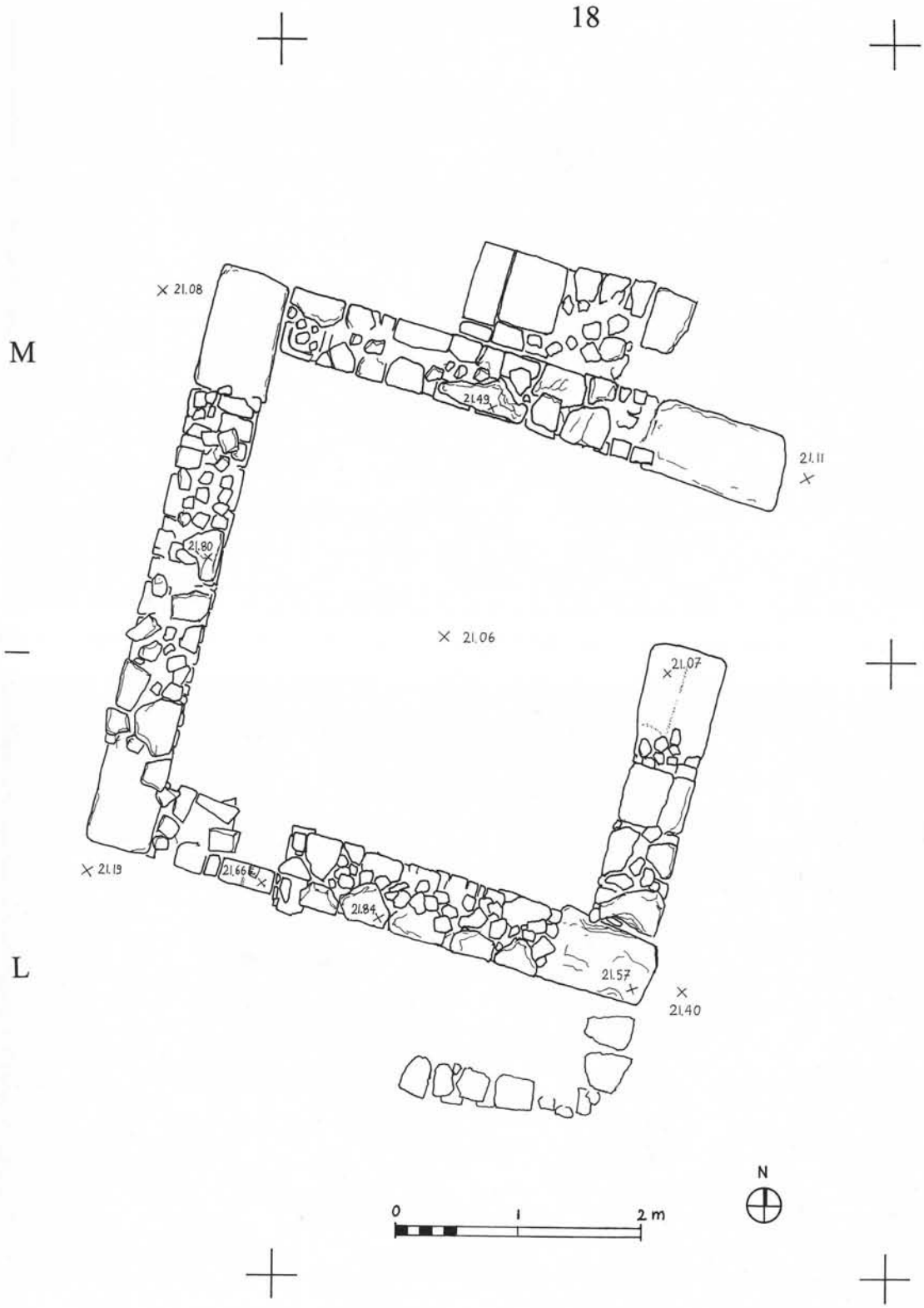

Fig. 23. Plan of Square House in M18 (drawn by Mariusz Burdajewicz).

Fig. 24. Square House, M18, view of room facing south: fireplace alcove at southwest, step of exterior staircase in foreground.

Fig. 25. Snecked masonry on west wall of Square House, M18.

Fig. 26. Exterior staircase outside north wall of Square House, M18, facing east.

Fig. 27. Rim fragment of glass bowl, G.97.17.

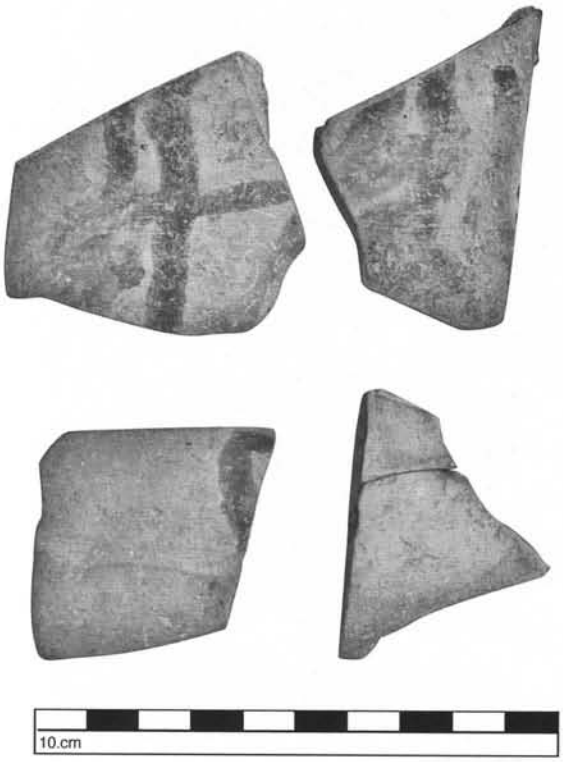

Fig. 28. Large jar or amphora with red dribbled paint, P.97.02.

Fig. 29. Bronze hook-like implement, MB.97.06.

Fig. 30. Doorjamb with cuttings for timber barrier, centremost Square House in N18/O18.

Fig. 31. East end of Geronisos with East Building, facing north, 1997.

Fig. 32. East Building, facing south, 1997: grid squares P50n/Q50s, Q50n/R50s, R49, and R46.

Fig. 33. East Building, facing east, 1997: grid squares P50n/Q50s, Q50n/R50s, R49.

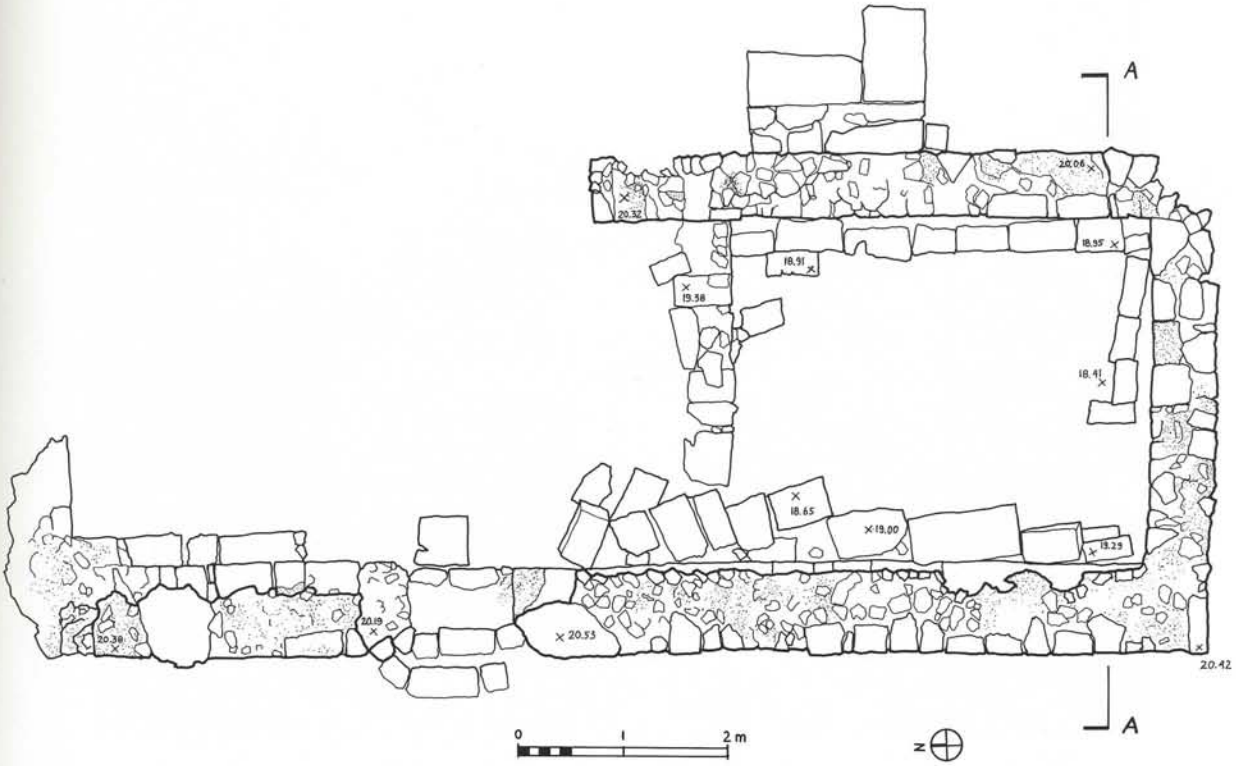

Fig. 34. Plan of East Building (drawn by A.W. Wixom).

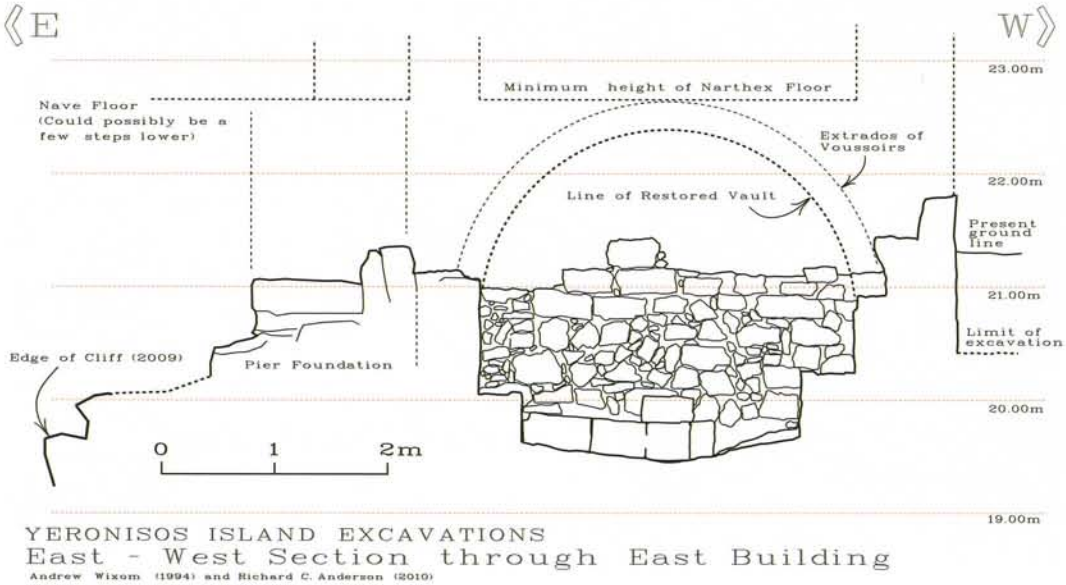

Fig. 35. East-West Section through East Building (drawn by R. Anderson, using A.W. Wixom).

Fig. 36. Interior of eastern wall of East Building showing three levels of masonry, facing east, 2007.

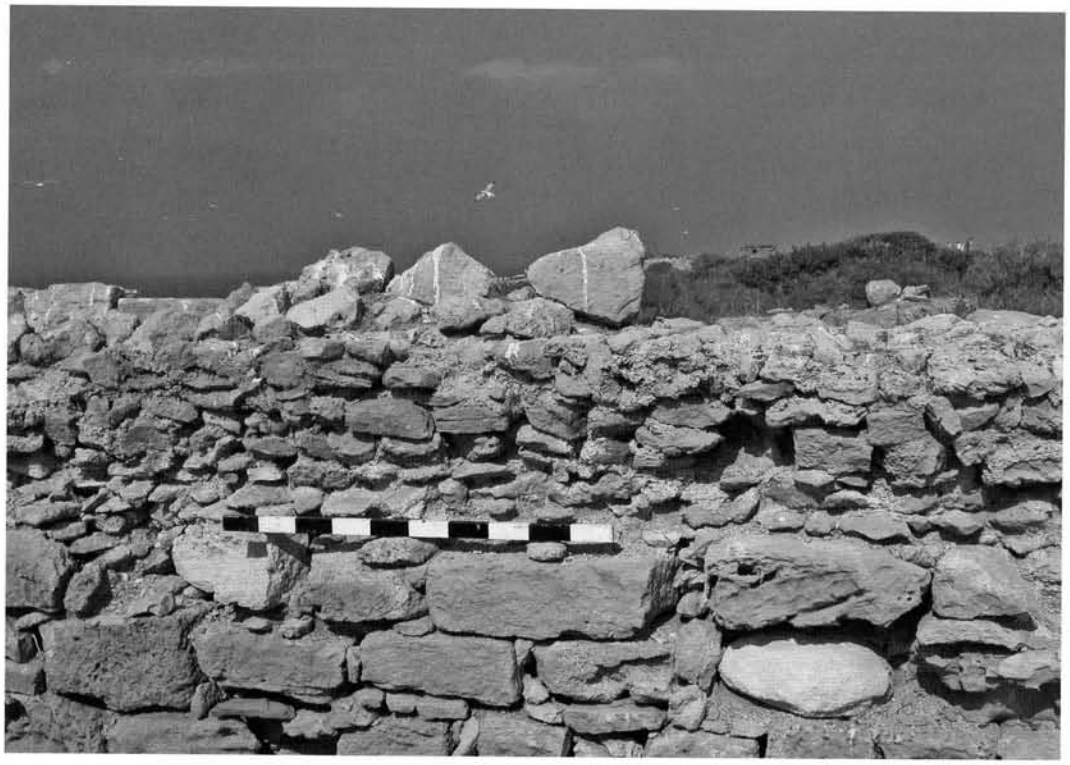

Fig. 37. Interior of western wall of East Building showing level of rectangular blocks with topped by level with small stones and cement mortar, facing west, 2007.

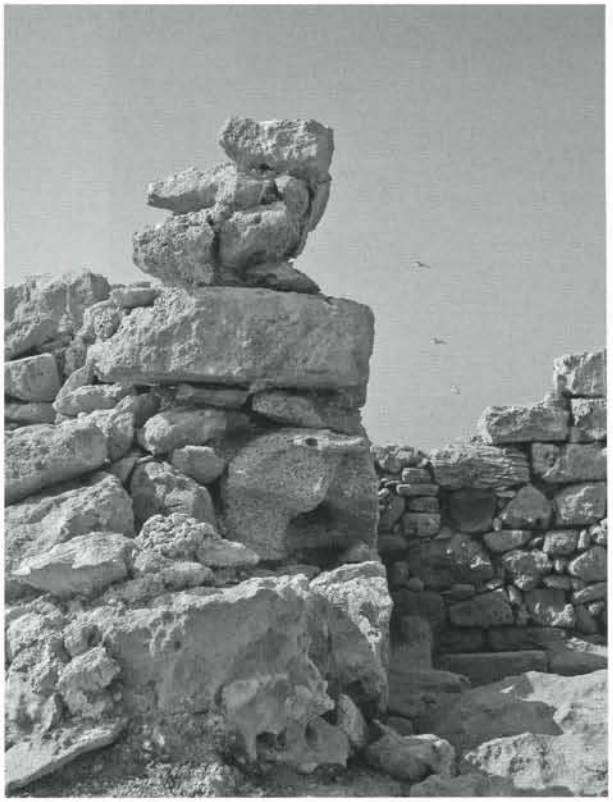

Fig. 38. Eastern wall of East Building, fragile remains of stone and cement vaulting, facing south, 2007.

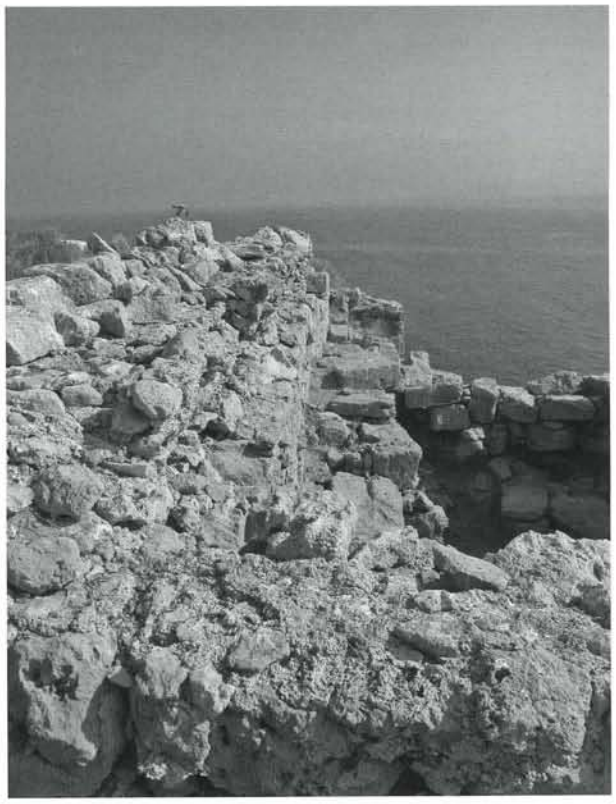

Fig. 39. Western wall of East Building, uppermost course showing cement mortar with small stones for vaulting, facing north, 2007.

Fig. 40. Northeast corner of East Building, grid squares R5/S51, facing east, 1997.

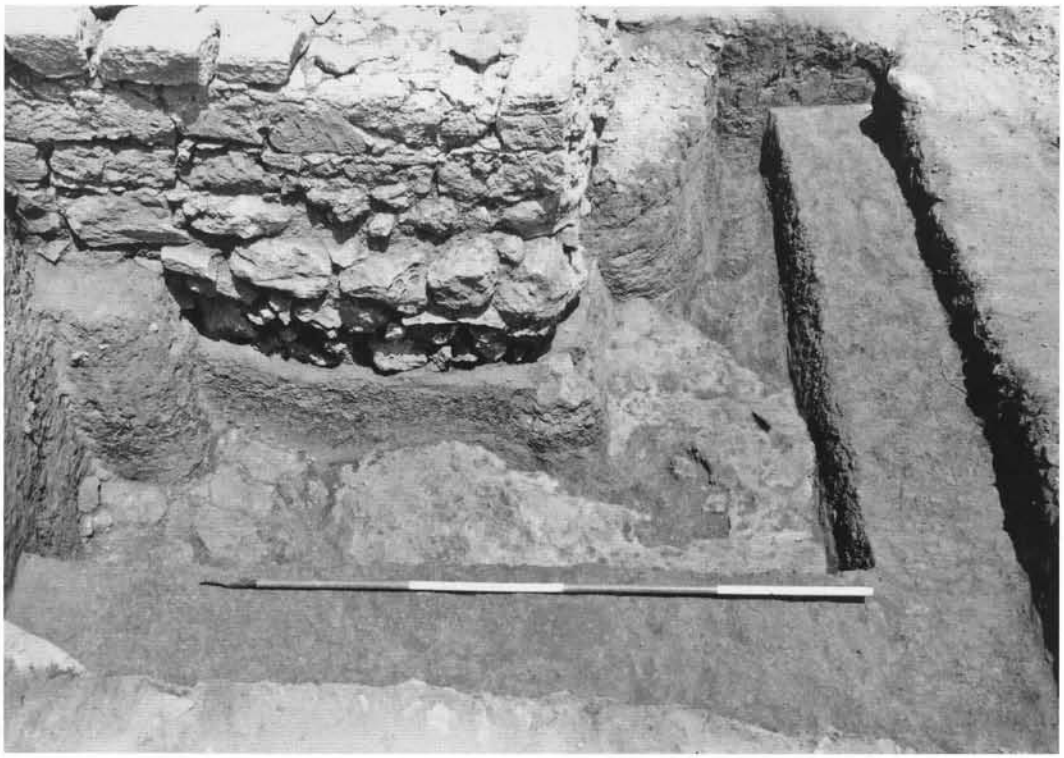

Fig. 41. Southwest corner of East Building, grid square P50n/Q50s, facing east, 1997.

Fig. 42. Stratigraphy against western wall of East Building, grid square P50n/Q50s, 1997.

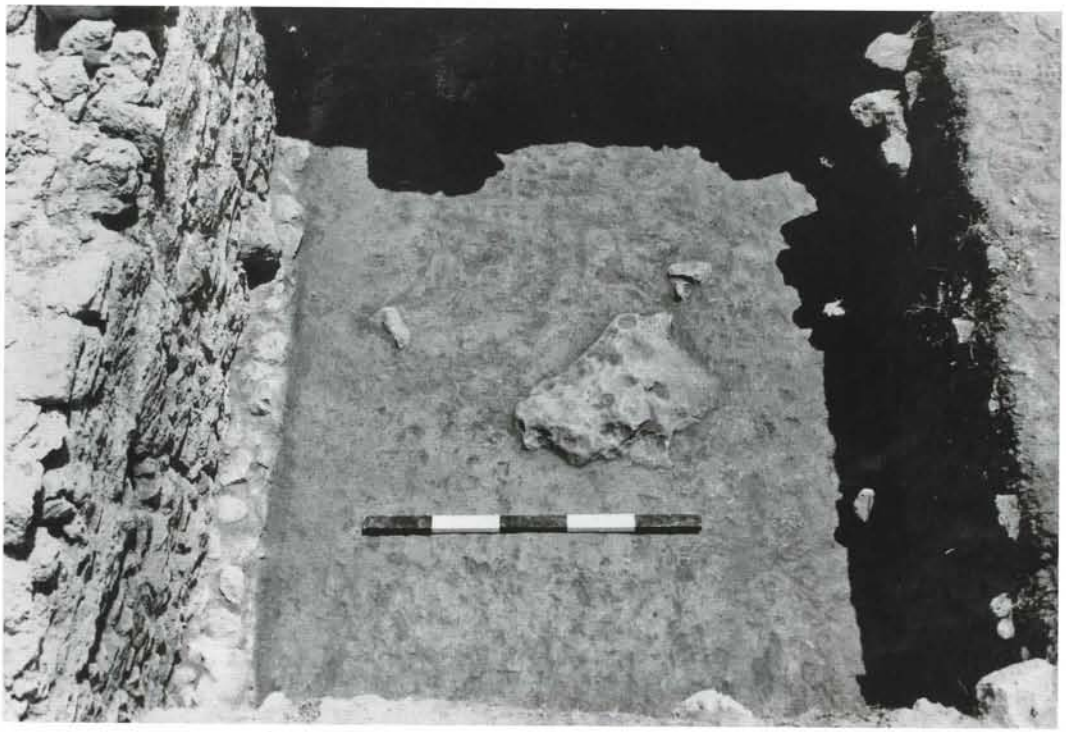

Fig. 43. Foundation trench prior to excavation, grid square Q50n/R50s, facing south, 1997.

Fig. 44. Foundation trench after excavation, grid square Q50n/R50s, facing east, 1997.

Fig. 45. Stratigraphy showing pale earth of foundation trench cut through deep red earth of Chalcolithic level, stone packing at base of trench, southern scarp Q50n/R50s, facing south, 1997.

Fig. 46. Plaster (Pl.97.01) with impression of wood beam or fitting, from trench Q50n/R50s.

Fig. 47. Fragments of gypsum floor paving, PL.97.01-04, from within East Building.

Fig. 48. Coptic amphora with dribbled red paint decoration, P.97.03.

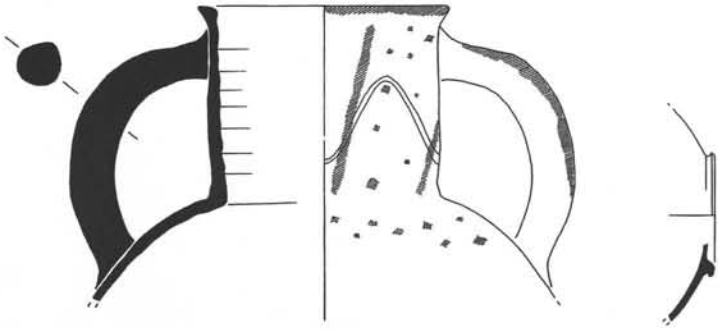

Fig. 49. Profile drawing of P.97.03.

Fig. 50. Local amphora with basket weave decoration, P.97.01.

Fig. 51. Stem and base of glass wine goblet, G.97.38.

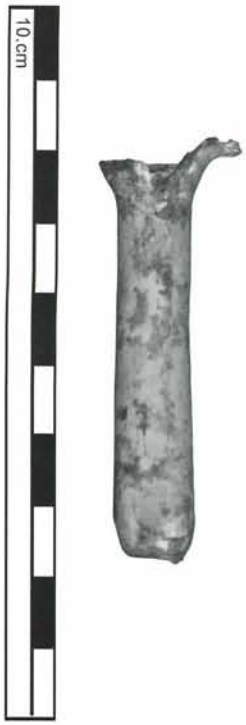

Fig. 52. Long stem of glass lamp, G.97.42.

Fig. 53. Bronze chain link, MB.97.09.

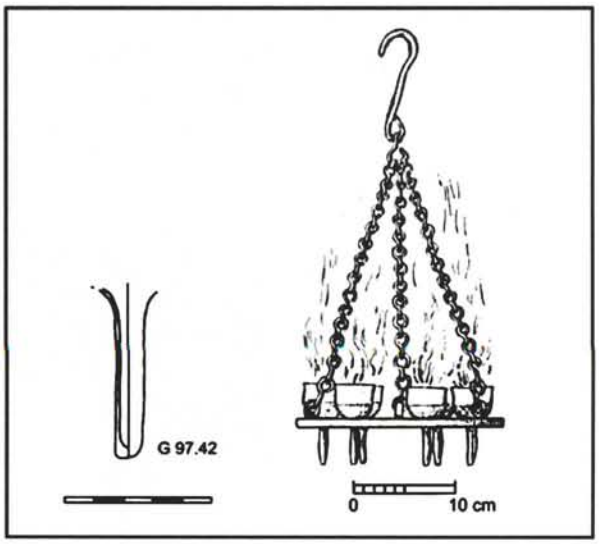

Fig. 54. Reconstructed *polycandelon* from Hippo-Sussita; long-stemmed glass lamp fragment from Geronisos (reconstruction and drawing by Mariusz Burdajewicz).

Fig. 55. Bronze buckle, MB.97.01.

Fig. 56. Bronze buckle, MB.97.01.

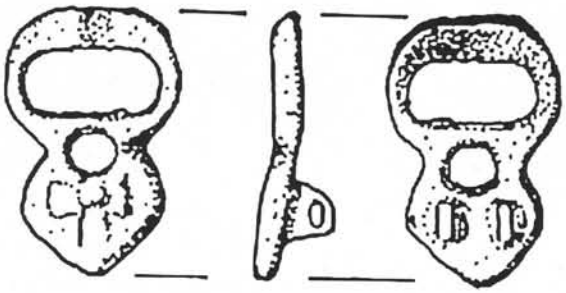

Fig. 57. Drawing of bronze buckle, MB.97.01 (by George Marshall Peters).

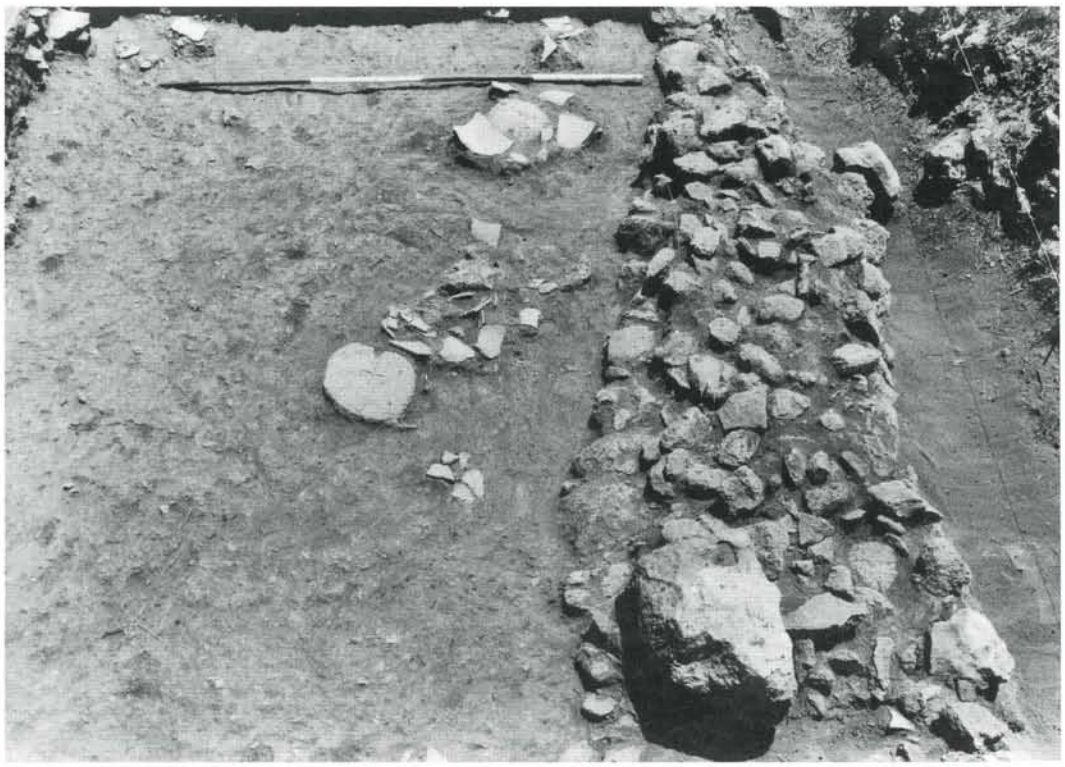

Fig. 58. Broken pithoi and stone jar lids, grid square R49, facing south, 1997.

Fig. 59. Broken pithoi and stone jar lids, grid square R49, facing south, 1997.

Fig. 60. Stone pithos lid with cross, St.97.17.

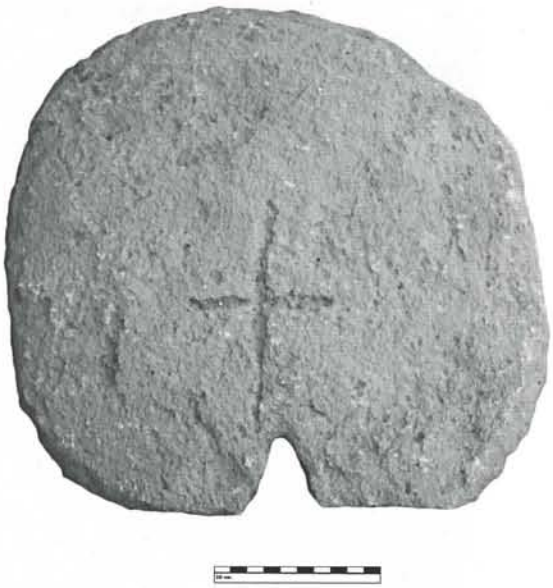

Fig. 61. Stone pithos lid with cross, St.97.16.

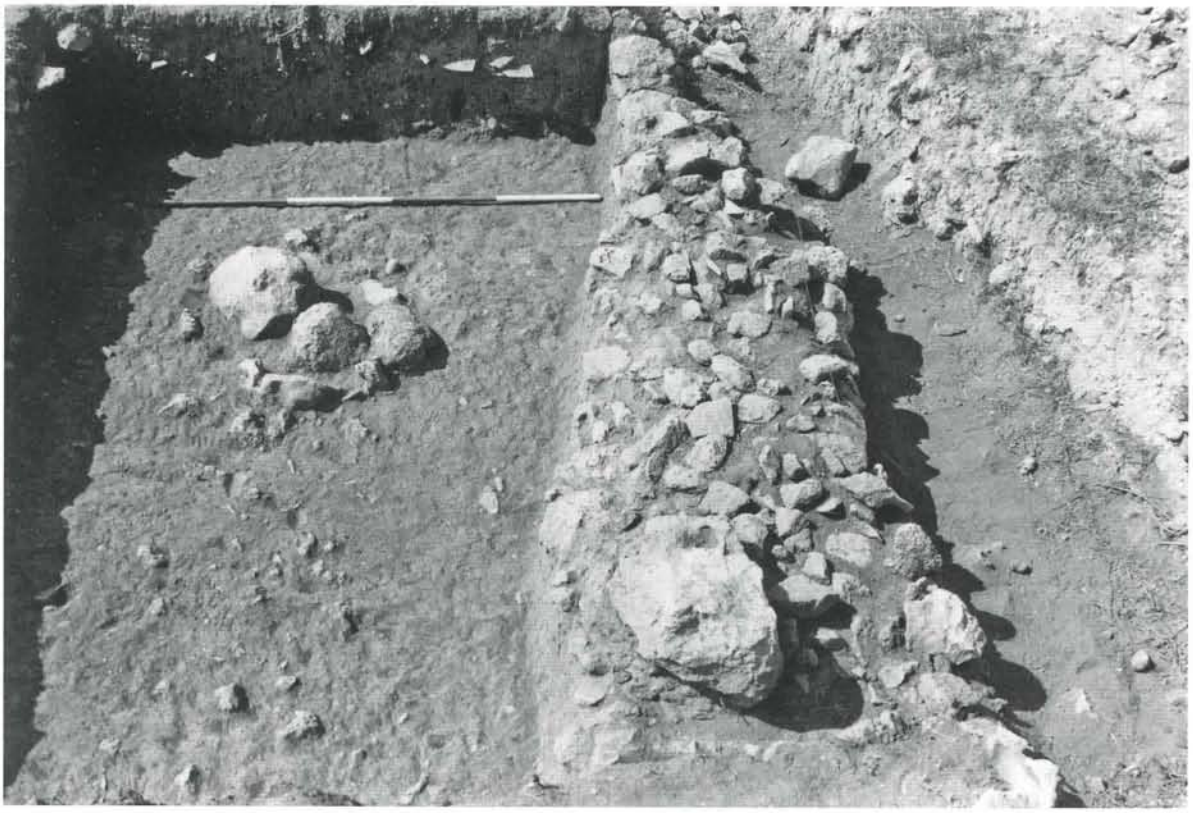

Fig. 62. Boulders sealing Chalcolithic pit, grid square R49, facing south.

Fig. 63. Chalcolithic pit, following excavation, grid square R49, facing south.

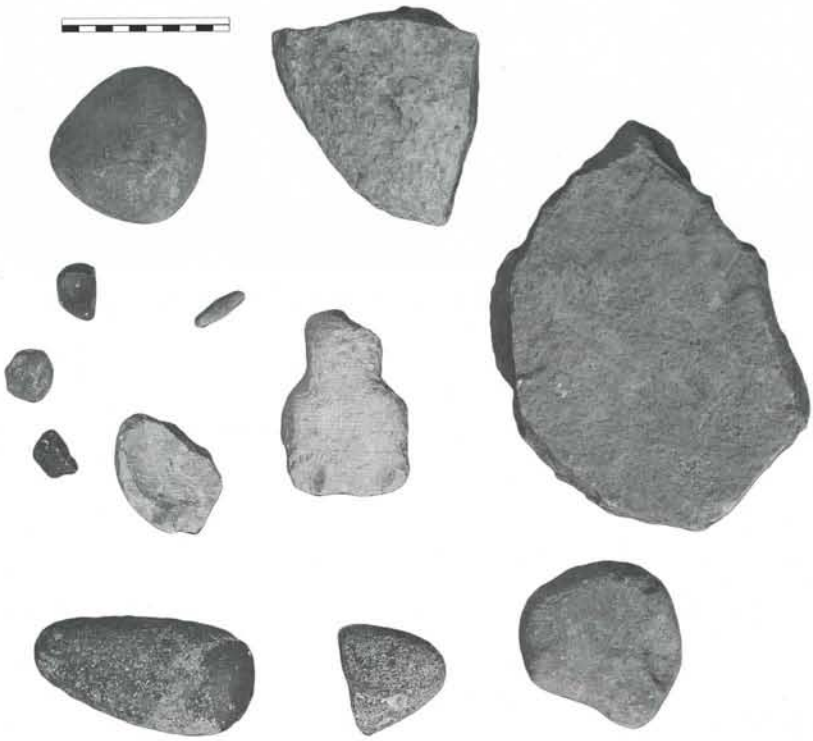

Fig. 64. Assemblage of stone tools and figurine from pit deposit, grid square R49.

Fig. 65. East Building, showing south-east pier foundation, facing east, 1997.

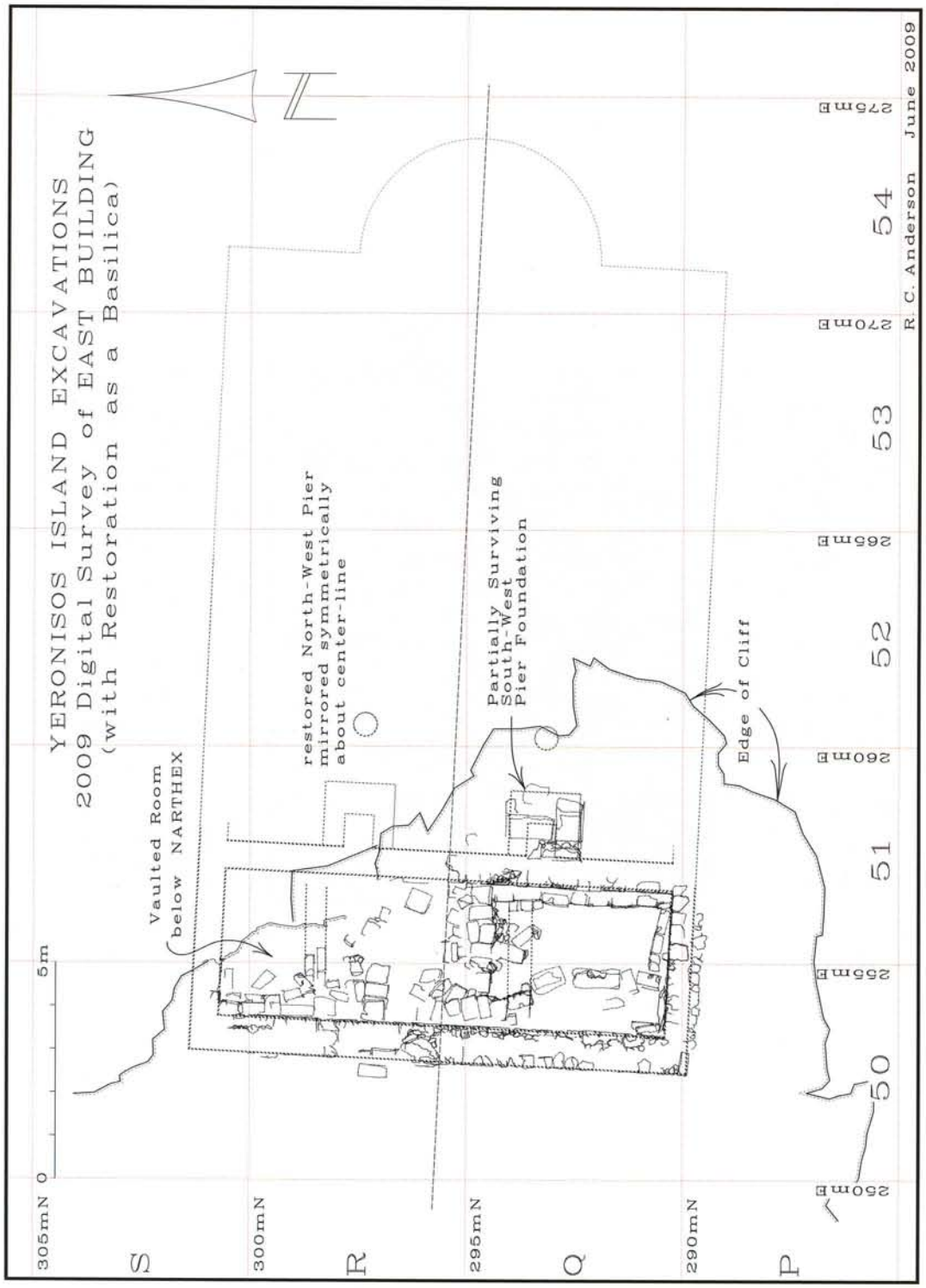

Fig. 66. Digital Survey of East Building with restoration of basilica, 2009 (Richard Anderson).

Fig. 67. Detail, map showing Geronisos labeled "S. Zorzi," by Giovanni Francesco Camocia, before July 1570, from Stylianou and Stylianou, 1980, fig. 47.