

A GEORGIAN MONASTERY FROM THE BYZANTINE PERIOD AT KHIRBAT UMM LEISUN, JERUSALEM

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The remains of a monastery from the Byzantine period in the neighborhood of Umm Leisun, southeast of the Old City of Jerusalem, were excavated in 1996 (map ref. 22323–5/62735–7; Fig. 1). The excavation (Area A; Plan 1) uncovered sections of a small monastery, consisting of a chapel with mosaic floors and a series of rooms (Seligman and Abu Raya 2002; Plan 1). The position of the monastery, and especially its geographical relation to other identified monasteries, suggested that it should be identified as the monastery of Eustathius (*Paul El.*; Vailhé 1900:22; Seligman and Abu Raya 2002:137). As we shall see below, new finds at the site now make this proposal untenable and a new identification should be sought.

Excavation of this endangered site has been impeded by the fact that the remains are located on land that is split between multiple owners, and divided by two roads and subterranean infrastructure. This situation required that we take advantage of scholarly opportunities that arose during development works at the site.¹ Furthermore, damage to the site from illicit development cut out the center of the complex, resulting in a jigsaw puzzle with many missing pieces. Nevertheless, based on the structure of other *coenobia* around Jerusalem, it is possible to suggest a coherent plan for the original monastery. This report has a dual purpose: to provide a comprehensive understanding of the finds, and to serve as a final report for Areas B through E. Area A had been published (Seligman and Abu Raya 2002).

The site of Umm Leisun is located 4.5 km southeast of the Old City of Jerusalem, on a spur

between the short valleys of Wadi el-Khas to the west and Wadi Dhiyab to the east—both of them tributaries of the Naḥal Qidron (Wadi el-Nar), one kilometer to the east. The monastery lies between the arable lands surrounding Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and the monasteries on the fringe of the desert. In the immediate vicinity were the monasteries at Khirbat Abu Ghanem, Bir el-Qaṭṭ, Umm el-Asafir, Khirbat Luqa, Khirbat Mazmuriya(?), Khirbat Deir el-‘Amud, Khirbat Bureikut and Shepherds’ Field (Beit Saḥur, Siyar Abu Ghannem; Corbo 1955:111, Fig. 29; Hirschfeld 1992: Map 1). The large *coenobium* of Theodosius was only 3 km to the southeast, and the ancient pathway leading to it from Jerusalem along the spur would have passed beside the monastery at Umm Leisun.

THE *COENOBIMUM* AT UMM LEISUN

From the scattered remains and the disparate excavation areas we can suggest that the monastery was a rectangular structure, measuring around 65 m from east to west and 40 m from north to south (Plan 2). Entry was through a passage on the eastern side (Area D), which led to a central paved courtyard, probably measuring 30 × 20 m (Area C). The topography of the site, with a slope rising from east to west, required the construction of a number of terraced levels. Although no stairs were found, the entry passage was one story below the courtyard, indicating that a staircase gave access to the center of the monastery. Channels beneath the flagstones of the courtyard directed runoff water into two underground cisterns.

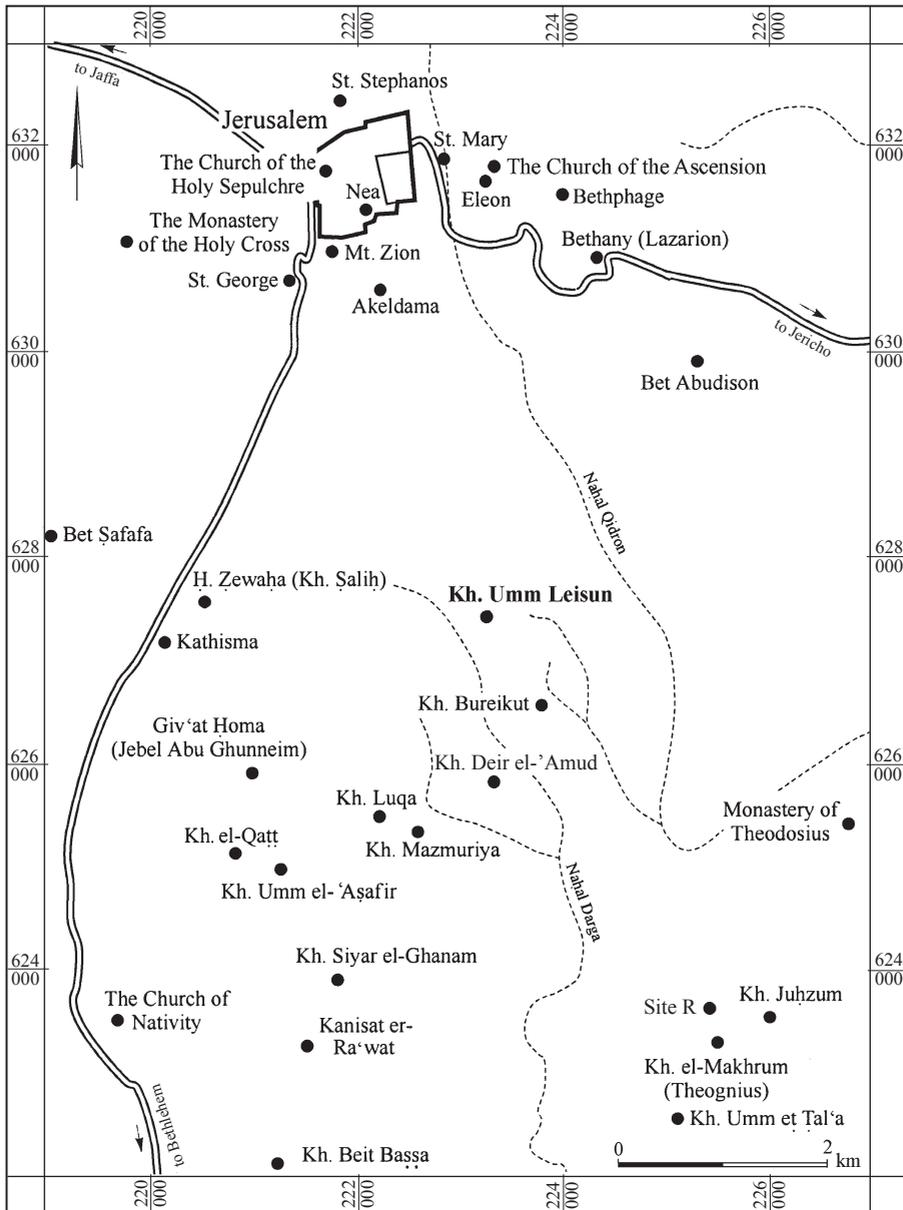


Fig. 1. Map of the Byzantine-period monasteries in the Jerusalem area; Khirbat Umm Leisun is located southeast of the city.

An additional reservoir was situated beside the entrance. To the south of the courtyard were a number of rooms of unknown function (Area E), while to its north was a magnificent burial crypt, probably belonging to the founder of the monastery (Area B). On the western edge of the courtyard (Area A) was the chapel and

a number of rooms, all paved with polychrome mosaics.

Area D: The Entrance Passage and the Reservoir (Plans 1, 2)

On the eastern edge of the site was an entrance passage and beside it, a reservoir for water that

served the monks and possibly, pilgrims who passed by the site on their way to the Monastery of Theodosius and other monasteries. A small excavation of this area was conducted on the grounds of a recently built house, which had damaged part of the site, leaving only limited remains.

The entry passage was uncovered in the northern part of Area D. It was aligned with the center of the courtyard in Area B to the west. The chapel, farther west in Area A, was set on the same axis (Plan 2). The passage (L313/318) was flanked by W320, preserved to a height of six courses, to the south, and W319, preserved to a height of four courses, to the north. Both walls are constructed of ashlar masonry, some of the stones dressed with a smoothed edge around a picked central boss. The passage was 2 m wide. The floor was covered by a crushed chalk surface (L312; Plan 1: Section 2–2). This floor, abutting W319 from the south, is similar to a contemporary fill (L314) that abuts it from the north. Below surface L312 was an earlier destruction layer of charcoal and ash (L313) containing large quantities of ceramics, glass, five coins and small finds. Interestingly, W319 cuts through the burnt debris, showing it to be later than the destruction layer. The opposing wall, W320, which was the northern wall of the reservoir (see below), abuts L313, indicating that the reservoir existed at the time of the conflagration. Under the destruction layer, the foundation trench of W320 consisted of a narrow channel cut in the bedrock (L318).

Directly south of the entrance passage, topographically at the lowest part of the monastery, was a large reservoir. The location suggests that the water was channeled into it from the west, though the system remains unidentified. The reservoir was partially excavated, in two sections—L317 on the southeastern corner and L315 at the opposite, northeastern corner. The reservoir is rectangular in shape, with rounded corners. It measures internally 8.2 m from north to south and at least 3 m from east to west. The maximum depth excavated is 3.6 m. The reservoir is set in a

space cut into the bedrock and reinforced with walls. On their upper part, the external facings of the walls were constructed of well-dressed ashlar masonry (W305, W320, W321). The inner faces, however, are constructed of rubble set in gray mortar. This surface, which forms the casing of the pool, is sealed with at least two layers of smooth hydraulic plaster containing crushed ceramics that give it a pinkish hue.

An unrelated rock-cut channel (L309), 0.5 m wide and 0.9 m deep, was located to the south of the reservoir. The channel was not plastered. A further section of this channel can be seen in the section below the road to the west of Area D. This channel, which runs from Area E to the west, passes beside the reservoir, probably leading to a now unknown pool or cistern located further east.

The reservoir forms the third water-collection facility on the grounds of the monastery (the others being Cisterns 118 and 130 in Area A; see Seligman and Abu-Raya 2002: Plans 1, 2). Yet another cistern is known in a plot to the north of Area D, and it too probably belongs to the complex. The reservoirs establish that the water needs of the monastery were quite substantial, indicating the existence of a large monastic community. Reservoirs of this type are a regular feature of Byzantine monasteries and have been noted numerous times (Hirschfeld 1992:158–161). Notable examples are the reservoirs at the Monastery of Theodorus and Cyriacus on Mount Scopus (Amit, Seligman and Zilberbod 2003:145–146) and the Monastery of Martyrius at Ma'ale Adummim (Magen and Talgam 1990:107–108).

In summary, two distinct phases are evident in Area D, both datable to the Byzantine period. The first phase consists only of the reservoir, whose relation to the other buildings of the monastic complex is not clear. In the second phase, a wall was built opposite the reservoir (W319), forming a corridor, which we believe to have been the entrance passage to the monastery from the east. This proposal, however, is difficult to confirm due to its fragmentary state.



Fig. 2. Area B, Room 204.

Area B: The Courtyard and Adjacent Rooms
(Plans 1, 2)

Like most Byzantine *coenobia*, an open courtyard was the central internal space of the monastery at Umm Leisun. The fragmentary state of the remains allows only a glimpse of the original form of the area, showing that a number of rooms flanked the courtyard.

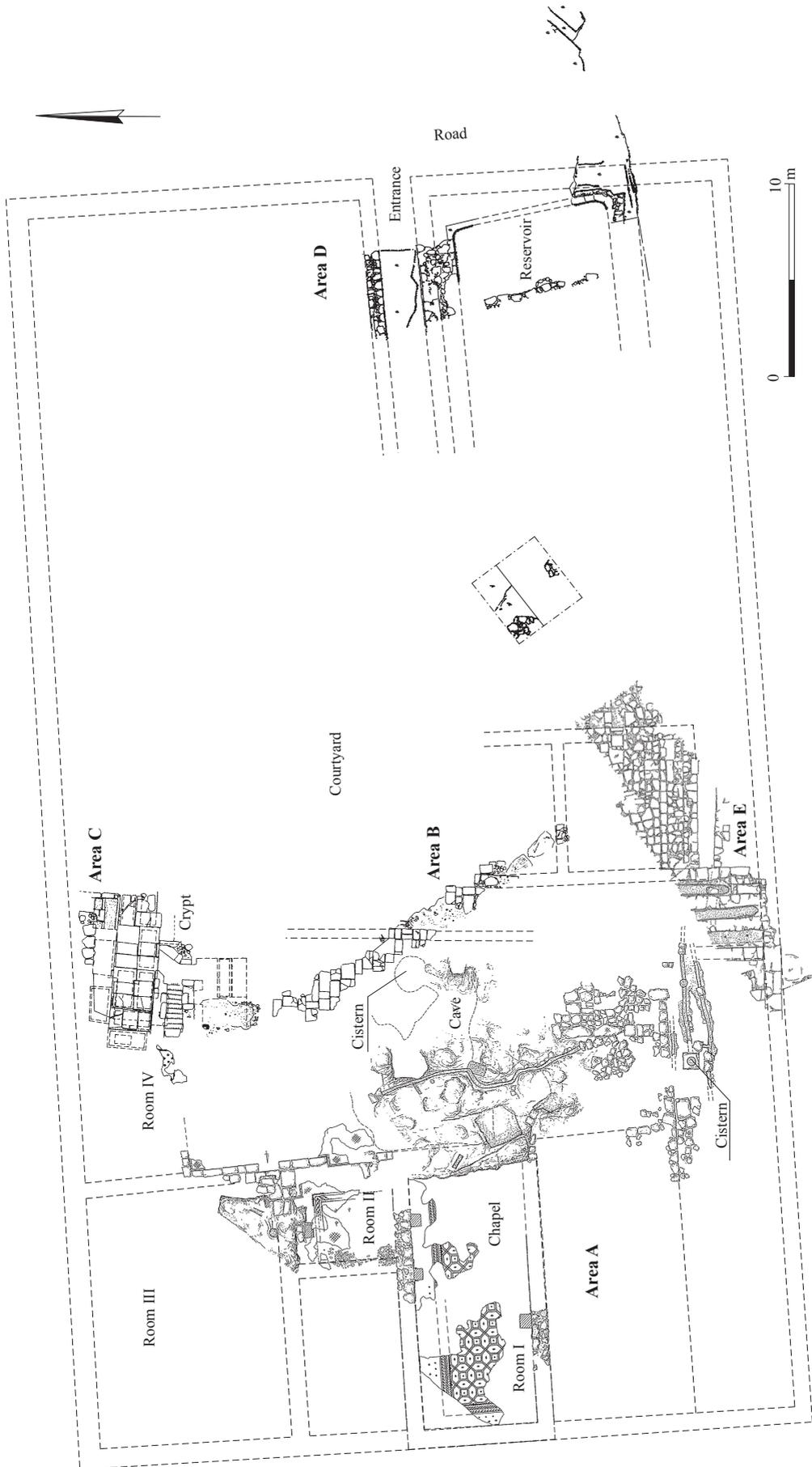
A diagonal strip across the area was exposed, uncovering the remains of a paved surface divided by a series of walls. The walls and the paving were laid on a north–south axis, exactly parallel to the crypt to the north and the chapel to the west. Three paved spaces were located, none of them complete. From south to north they are: L205 (between W9 and W10), L206 (between W9 and W8) and L204, the largest area, defined on its eastern side by W8 (Fig. 2). The walls, all of which survived to a height of one or two courses, were approximately 0.5 m thick, and built from roughly dressed ashlar blocks. The paving was of large

limestone slabs of different sizes. The slabs were skillfully trimmed to fit the surface. All were set parallel to the surrounding walls. The paving was set upon a buff-colored base of crushed limestone and gravel. In some sections (L205) only this base survived. Below L205, passing under W9 and set upon bedrock, was an earlier white mortar layer (L207). The ceramics from L207 included Early Roman sherds, suggesting that this locus may be associated with the remains of the same period that were found in the cavern excavated in Area A (L129) and in particular, with *Miqveh* L130 (Seligman and Abu Raya 2002:132–133, Plan 2).

The large, paved space (L204) and the unpaved area between it and W2, the wall of the chapel to the west, are probably part of the central courtyard of the monastery. Indeed, L204 is located close to two underground cisterns (L103 and L118), which may have been cut under its surface, as was common practice. The plastered channels (L210 and L211) beneath floors L204 and L206, and the rock-cut channels (L114, L120 and L121) between W2 and the paved area (Seligman and Abu Raya 2002:131–132), would have led runoff water from the courtyard into the cisterns.

A section on the southern edge of Area C, comprising the vestibule above the crypt, had been paved with mosaic (L209). Only a small area of the foundation—constructed of gravel, ash and crushed lime—survived, but at the far end of L209, just west of the top of staircase L262, a small piece of mosaic is preserved (L208; Fig. 3). It was of the same style as the mosaics found in Room 111 (Seligman and Abu Raya 2002:136), which consisted of red and black florets framed by a double lined black border. We could not assess the original size of the mosaic, or of the room in which it was contained, but we found a corner section of the floor that should be delimited by the line of W1 and W2 of Area A and W11 of Area C, south of Staircase 262 (Plan 3).

The important role that the enclosed courtyard plays in almost all monasteries has been commented upon by both Hirschfeld



Plan 2. Proposed reconstruction of the monastery.

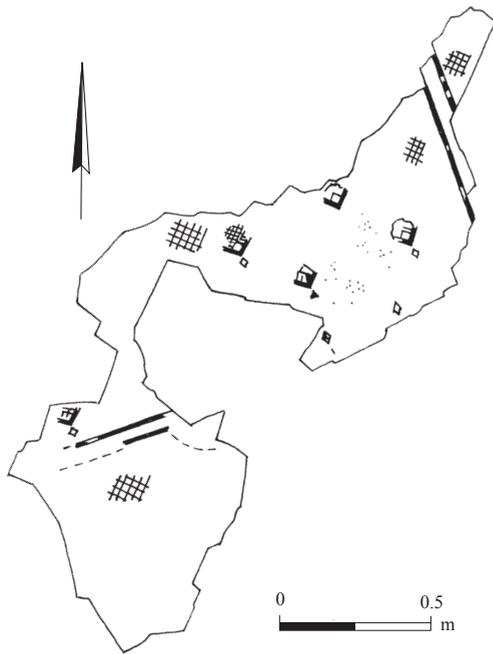
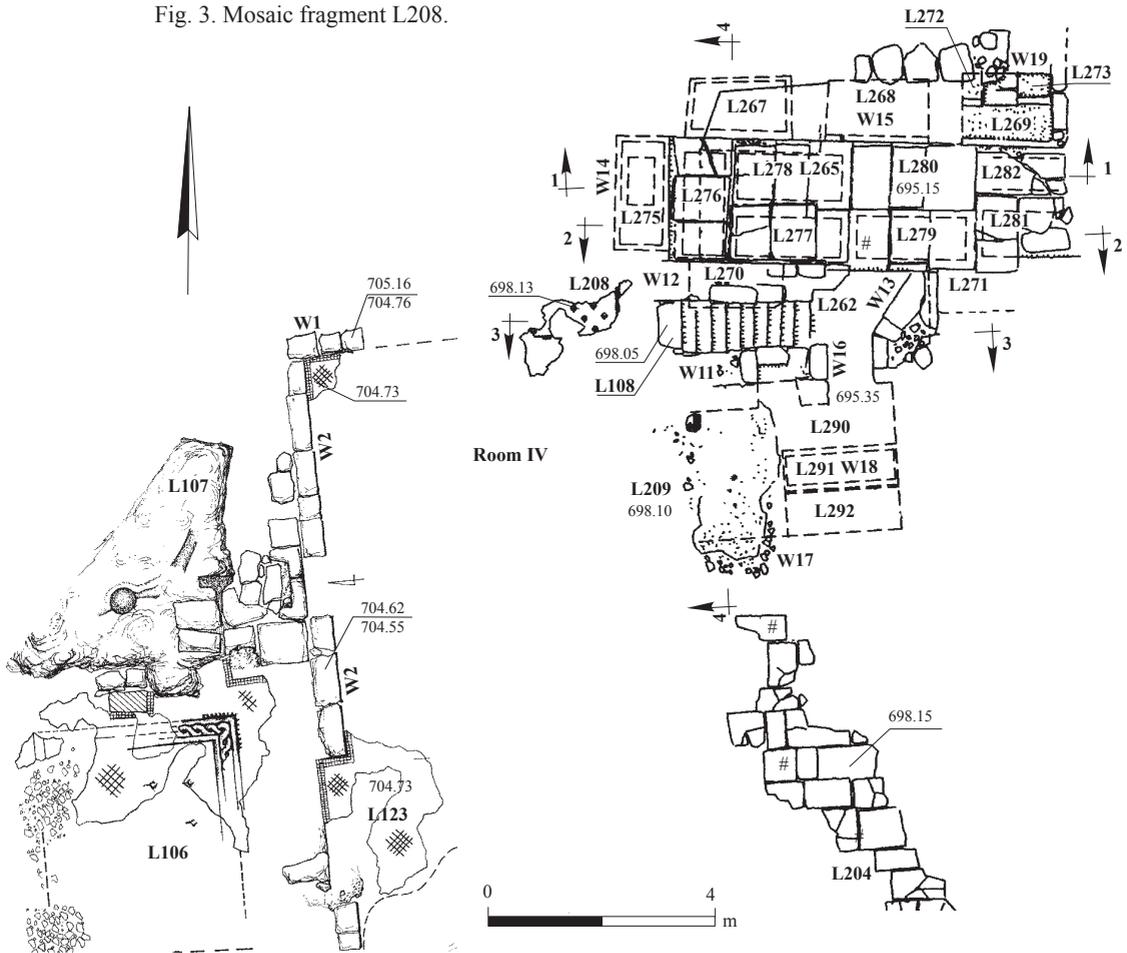


Fig. 3. Mosaic fragment L208.

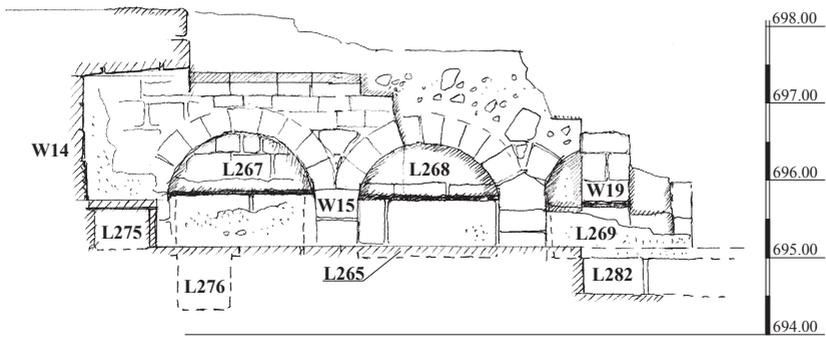
(1992:166) and Taxel (2009:204–205). Courtyards, the functional counterpart of the farmyard found at the center of most estate farms, were the focal point of the monastery, a place in which ceremonies were conducted and a crucial link between the secular and religious sections of the establishment. The surface of these clear open spaces was also important for collecting runoff into the cisterns that supplied water to the inhabitants and livestock of the monastery.

Area C: The Burial Crypts (Plans 1, 3)

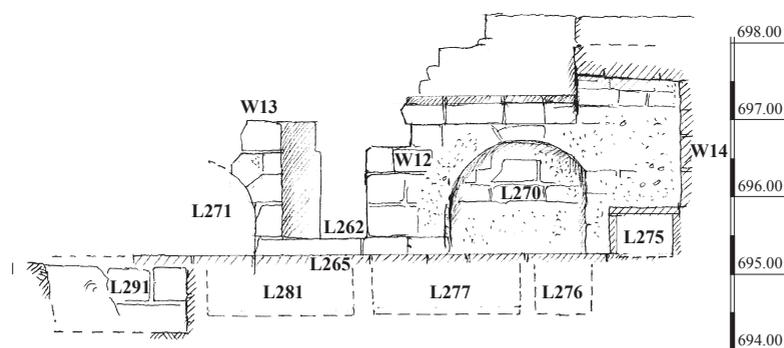
On the northern edge of the courtyard, two burial vaults were cut to a depth of 3.1 m into the bedrock on either side of a central staircase.



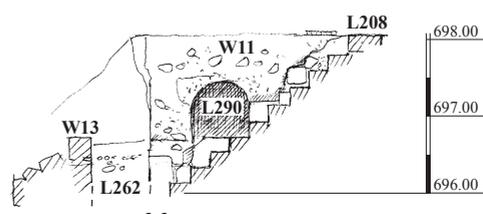
Plan 3. The crypt in Area C, plan and sections (on opposite page).



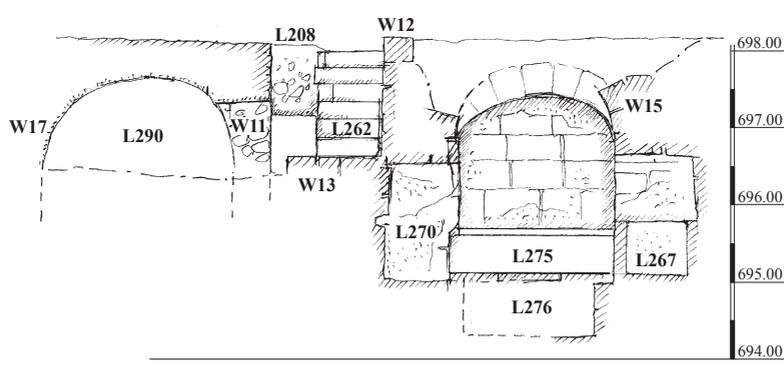
1-1



2-2



3-3



4-4



Fig. 4. The steps leading to the burial crypts.

For reasons that are not clear, each vault was constructed completely differently.

Staircase L262 descends 2.9 m from mosaic Floor 208 to the level of the burials. It has eleven steps, each made from a single limestone slab (Fig. 4), 20 cm high, 25–30 cm long and 0.8–1.0 m wide. The steps were set between two walls (W12 and W11/16) built of ashlar blocks and covered with lime and gravel plaster. Remains of red paint were found on the plaster (Fig. 5). At the base of the staircase it is possible to turn south or north to one of the two vaulted crypts. This area was rich in finds that tumbled down the stairs with the destruction or abandonment of the site. Among the finds were pieces of marble, including parts of the chancel screen, colored plaster, glass and a rich ensemble of ceramics from the Byzantine period. Especially common here, as in the fill of the crypt, were roof tiles.

The Northern Crypt (Figs. 6–8).— A short passage, bordered on the east by W13, led at an angle from the base of the staircase into the magnificent northern crypt (Figs. 4, 6). A

final step of 20 cm dropped from the landing to the floor of the vaulted crypt, which was constructed in a space that had been cut into the bedrock. It was built of beautifully cut ashlar masonry set into the bedrock, in regular courses approximately 35 cm in height. The central floor area measured at least 7.0×2.1 m, but the eastern end of the crypt was damaged and it may well have been longer. Including the six arcosolia set in the walls of the crypt, the structure measured 8.3×4.1 m.

The preservation of the crypt varied. The western end was intact, while the eastern end was destroyed down to floor level. The height of the vault from floor to apex was 2.3 m. The crypt was not a true vault, but rather a rounded ceiling sprung from straight side-walls at a height of 1.7 m above the floor to form the vaulted ceiling.

In a niche at the western end of the crypt, a single raised tomb was set (L275). It was lined with four 8–10 cm thick stone slabs and measured internally $1.80 \times 0.75 \times 0.50$ m. The tomb was covered by a single limestone slab measuring 2.00×0.95 m, which rested upon

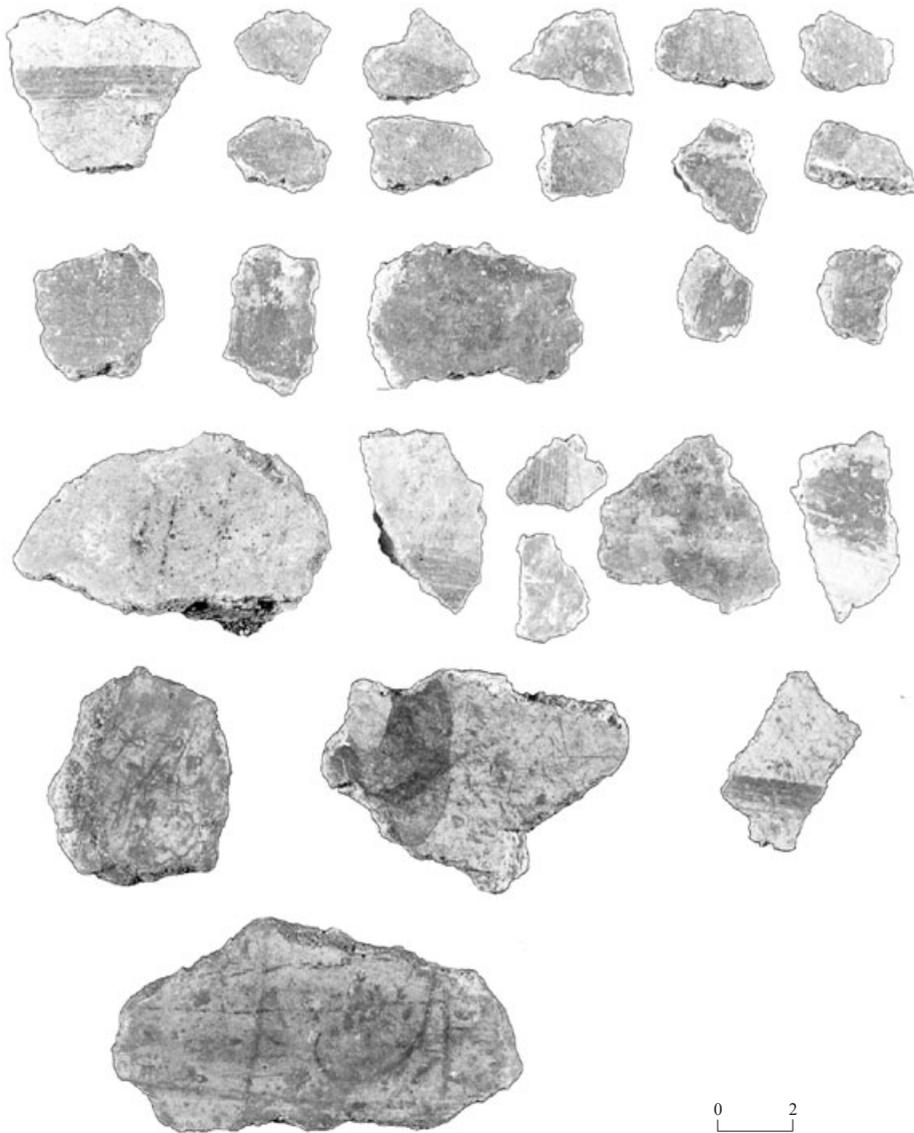


Fig. 5. Fragments of painted plaster from L262.

the four lining stones, and was sealed with a limestone and ash mortar. A slot in W12, along the top of the lining stone on the southern edge, was used to lower and place the tombstone. This slot was also sealed with mortar. On the top surface of the tombstone was a five-line inscription in Georgian *Asomt'avruli* script (Fig. 9, and see below).

The southern wall of the crypt (W12) is preserved to a length of 4.05 m. Along it were two niches that were used as arcosolia for burial. Only the western niche (L270) survived. It has an arch 1.5 m high and 1.75 m long, constructed of ashlar stones. The depth of the niche was 0.8 m, so that it extended behind W12 into the space under staircase L262.



Fig. 6. The burial crypts, looking west.



Fig. 7. The northern crypt with the inscribed grave cover in place.

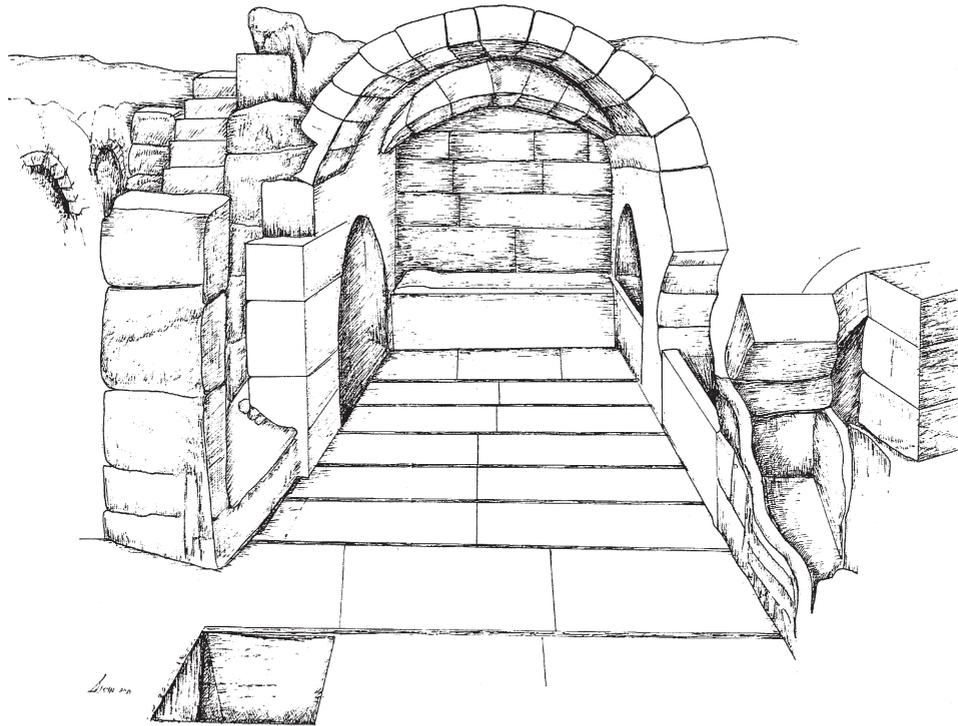


Fig. 8. An artist's impression of the northern crypt.

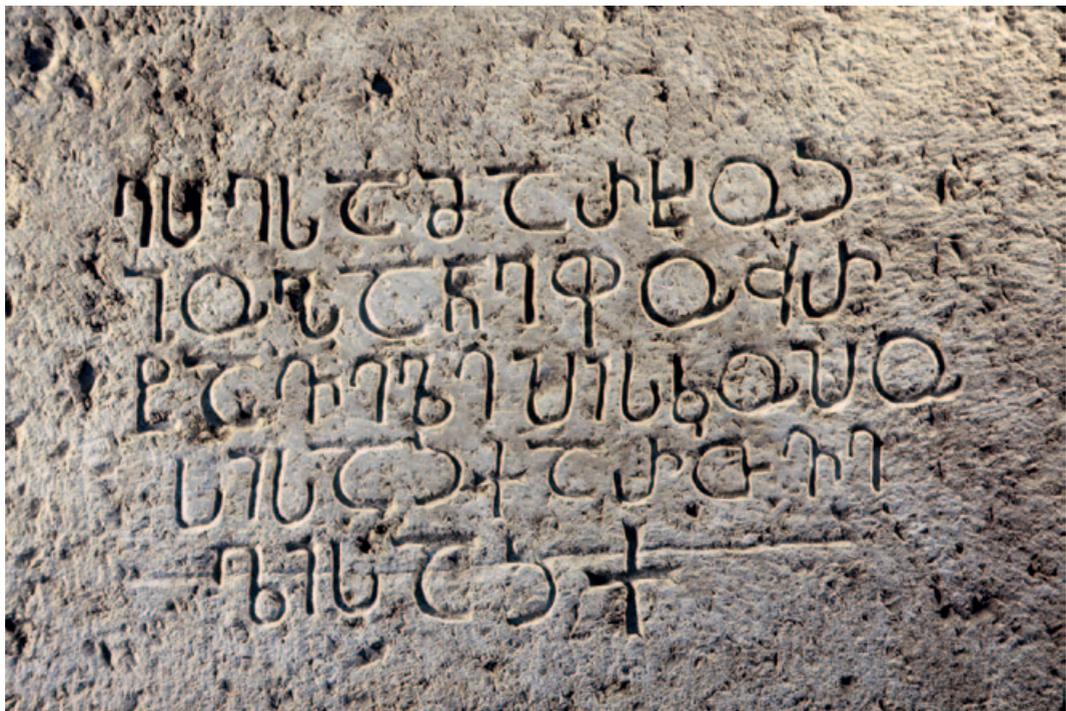


Fig. 9. The Georgian inscription.

Remains of plaster on the walls showed that it had once been covered with plaster. A slot was cut into the stones of the three internal faces of the niche at a height of 0.7 m. No remains of a limestone slab survived at the front of the niche, although the burial trough would have been covered with a tombstone that slid on top of the front wall and into the three slots. A few small fragments of the tombstone were found in the slots. The doorway from the crypt into the landing area of Staircase 262 was 1.1 m east of arcosolium L270. Beyond this doorway, which showed no signs of bolt holes and door sockets, was a short section (0.6 m) of W13. All that remained of this eastern part of the crypt wall was an arched stump, which was part of the second arched arcosolium, L271. As in arcosolium L270, a slot on the inside of the wall was used to fix the tombstone in position at a height of 0.7 m above the floor. This grave was not excavated.

The northern wall of the crypt (W15) was well-preserved to a length of 7.8 m, and much of it, to a height of 2.2 m. Within the wall were three arched, recessed arcosolia (L267–269; Plan 3: Section 1–1), very similar to the ones in the opposite wall (W12). An interesting feature of these niches is the gradual drop in their height from west to east—1.5, 1.35 and 1.25 m respectively. Unfortunately, the fragmentary state of the southern portion of the crypt did not allow a full understanding of the architectural design. The burial trough of the western arcosolium (L267) was constructed from three walls lining the niche, and a front wall of two plastered limestone slabs some 10–15 cm thick. All the surfaces were covered with plaster. The height of the niche arch was 1.5 m, and the interior of the trough measured 1.6–1.7 × 0.8–0.9 m, and it was 0.6–0.7 m deep. The tombstone would have been placed on top of the lining walls, as in tomb L275. The next arcosolium (L268) had, like arcosolia L270 and L271, three slots in the wall and a front panel of two stone slabs to support the now missing tombstone. It measured 1.8 × 0.9 m and was also 0.65 m deep. The arch rose 1.35 m above

the floor. Plaster covered all the surfaces except for the front panel.

The last, eastern arcosolium (L269), was different from the others. A supporting pier (W19; Plan 3: Section 1–1) was set in the center of the space, and the burial trough was divided by means of this pier and limestone-slab panels into three separate troughs, L269 at the front and L272, L273 at the rear. Remains of plaster were found on many of the surfaces. The top part of the arch was missing, but the original height could be reconstructed as 1.25 m. The main trough, L269 at the front, measured 1.60 × 0.65 m, and was sealed by a now missing tombstone set upon the front wall, the dividing wall, and into a slot in pier W19. Troughs L272 and L273 were situated on each side of the pier behind L269. No evidence of a cover for either compartment was apparent.

The floor of the crypt (L265) was paved with large flagstones (Fig. 10), 1.0–1.1 × 0.6–0.8 m and 7–10 cm thick. The flagstones covered seven burial troughs, which were cut into bedrock and subdivided by walls of limestone blocks. Three flagstones covered each trough, and over each trough one of the flagstones had an iron ring attached to a spike that was set in a hole drilled into the stone and fixed in position by molten lead. The ring was used to lift the flagstone, allowing access for burial in the trough below. In all cases, the flagstone with the ring was set over the head of the interred body.

The seven burial troughs (L276–L282) were all similar in size and shape (Fig. 11). They were rectangular, measuring internally 1.80–1.90 × 0.70–0.75 m. The depth of the five western troughs (L276–L280) was 1.4 m each, L281 was 1.7 m deep, and L282, 0.9 m. The western trough (L276) was set widthwise across the floor of the crypt, while the other six were laid in pairs along the axis of the vault. The width of the dividing walls was 30 cm, allowing a surface 15 cm wide to place the flagstone covering.

The Southern Crypt.— The style and construction of the crypt located to the south

of staircase L262 are completely different from those of the northern one (Fig. 12). Although two burial troughs were excavated in it, the structure (L290) does not seem to have been originally designed for burial. The crypt is set in a space cut in the bedrock, and has a barrel vault built of rubble set in a thick gray mortar. It measures internally 3.6×2.7 m and is 2.4 m high at the apex. Access to the vault is via a short passage from the base of the staircase to its northeastern corner. Walls 16–18 clearly define it on the north, east and south sides, but the eastern edge is broken and no wall is visible. A gap in W16 provided a window overlooking Staircase 262 from the interior of the vault. In the southwestern corner of the vault there are two built burial troughs (L291, L292). Only L291 was excavated. Its sides were constructed of 10 cm thick limestone slabs set in mortar,

supporting four limestone covering slabs. Internally it measured 1.85×0.50 m and it was 0.5 m deep. A layer of mortar, earth and lime, 45 cm thick, sealed and covered both tombs.

The Interments (Table 1).— A total of 24 interments were discovered in the northern crypt, and at least 2 were located in the southern one (see Nagar, this volume). In compliance with the restrictions on physical-anthropological research, the bones were studied on site and then reburied. Gender identification was possible for 11 skeletons, all of them male. All were buried in a supine position. The individual graves contained up to four interments, most of them in primary burial, although some had been moved to one side to allow subsequent burial. The population-group matches the function of the site. Of the clearly



Fig. 10. The floor of the northern crypt during excavation.



Fig. 11. Burials under the floor of the northern crypt.



Fig. 12. View toward the southern crypt.



Fig. 13. The rooms in Area E, looking northwest.

identifiable interments, most were adult males, as would be expected in a monastery. The occupant of the most important tomb (L275), beyond being the only individual identified by an inscription, was also the oldest, his age accentuating his special status.

Area E: Rooms South of the Courtyard (Plans 1, 4; Figs. 13–15)

Jon Seligman and Iulon Gagoshidze

The discovery of an important Georgian-language inscription at Umm Leisun generated excitement among Georgian scholars, as well as the public. Following initial contact with Dr. Tamila Mgaloblishvili of the Georgian Institute of Manuscripts, a joint project was inaugurated between the IAA and a Georgian team under the leadership of Dr. Iulon Gagoshidze of the Janashia State Museum of Georgia in Tbilisi. The aim of this project was to excavate the only area of the site still untouched by modern

Table 1. Table of Burial Loculi and Interments in the Crypt at Umm Leisun

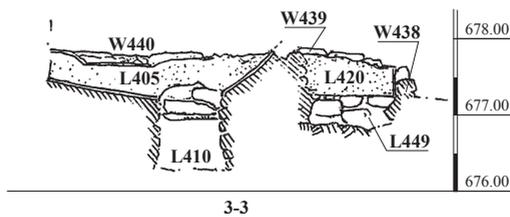
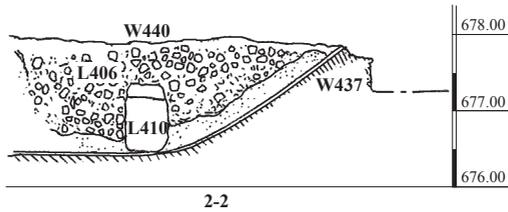
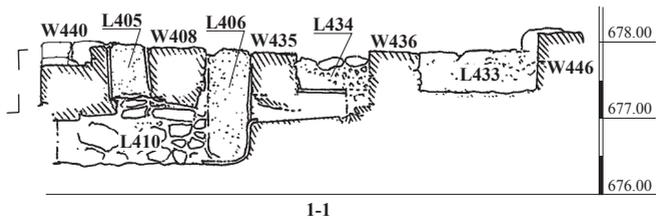
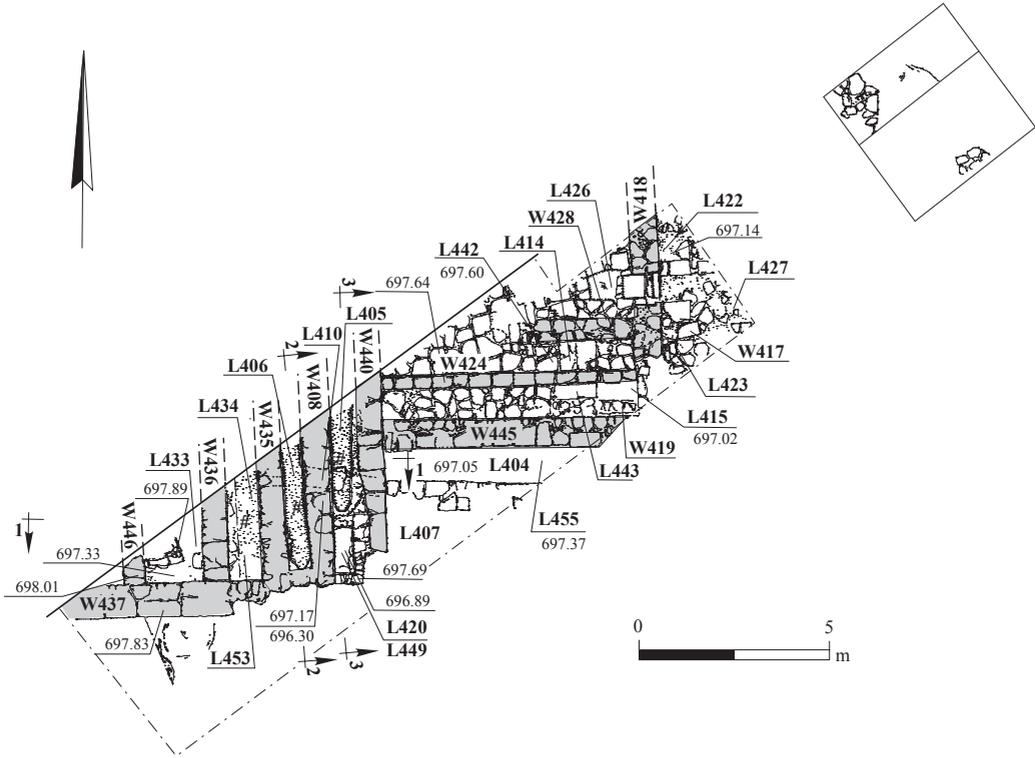
Locus	Size (m)	Depth (m)	Type	Interments	Findings
267	1.7 × 0.9	0.60–0.70	Trough	2 adults, 15–20 and 40–50, primary burial, supine, head at west	Glass
268	1.8 × 0.9	0.65	Arcosolia	1 juvenile, >15, sex unknown	
269	1.65 × 0.55	0.50	Arcosolia	1 juvenile, >10, sex unknown	
270	1.75 × 0.70	0.60	Arcosolia	1 juvenile, >15, sex unknown	
271	Not excavated		Arcosolia		
275	1.80 × 0.75	0.50	Arcosolia	1 adult male, >60, primary burial, supine, head at north	Inscribed tombstone
276	1.8 × 0.7	0.70	Trough	2 adults, 1 male 40–50, 1 >40; primary burials, supine, head at north	Glass
277	1.85 × 0.70	0.70	Trough	4 adult males, 2 20–30, 2 40–50; supine, head at west	Glass
278	1.90 × 0.85	0.70–0.80	Trough	2 adults, 1 male 20–30, 1 >30; supine, head at west	
279	1.90 × 0.75–0.80	0.60–0.70	Trough	4 individuals; 3 adult males, 2 >20, 1 40–50; 1 child, 6–10; 2 primary burials, supine, head at west; 2 bones shifted to side	
280	1.8–1.9 × 0.8	0.70	Trough	4 individuals; 3 adult males, 2 >20, 1 40–50; 1 child < 5; 2 primary burials, supine, head at west; 2 bones shifted to side	Tiles
281	1.8 × 0.8	0.85	Trough	Non indicative bones	Tiles, ceramics
282	1.8 × 0.6	0.75	Trough	2 individuals; 1 adult (female?) 40–50; 1 child < 3	
291	1.8 × 0.5	0.45	Trough	1 individual, no physical anthropological examination	
292	Not excavated		Trough		

development, in the southern part of the monastery.

A section measuring 19 × 5 m was excavated along the edge of the plot (Area E; Plan 1). A myriad of interconnecting walls set on the same alignment as the remains excavated in previous seasons were found immediately below the surface. The east–west/north–south alignment of all the structures of the monastery shows them to belong to a single, planned complex (Fig. 13). The walls formed a series of rooms that clearly showed that the monastery was built in a number of phases whose understanding will require future excavation.

The area was divided into two spaces by W440, which crosses it from north to south. These two sections were not connected, and

probably opened onto the courtyard in the center of the monastery (Area B). Wall 440 is in fact part of the western section, forming a corner in the south with W437, which we assume to be the outer wall of the monastery (Fig. 14). Four other walls aligned north–south (W446, W436, W435 and W408), closely clustered, cross the internal, western space, north of W437. Between these walls there are plastered surfaces and installations whose function is enigmatic. The most interesting of these are two long basins covered with reddish hydraulic plaster (L406 and L405; Fig. 14). Their curved edges slope down to gutters that lead to an interconnecting plastered subterranean tunnel (L410), which passes from west to east below the walls and rooms of Area E. We have yet to



Plan 4. Detailed plan of Area E.

assess the function of this installation, although it is clearly related to collecting or storing water. If it were to continue directly east, the line of this tunnel would drain into the reservoir of Area D. On the inside corner of W440 and W437 is an additional small rectangular plastered installation (W449).

East of L404 was a room defined on the south by W419—originally 7.3 m long—and on the east and west by W428 and W435, which flank a threshold 70 cm wide, with a door socket visible on its northern edge (Fig. 15). The room was paved with parallel rows of flagstones that were divided into separate bands during the



Fig. 14. The water installation in the western part of Area E, near the corner formed by W437 and W440, looking northwest.



Fig. 15. Room 422, east of the water installation, looking northwest.

excavation (L455, W445, L415/443, W424, L414/442, L426), although we now consider them to be a single floor. The flagstones differ in size and quality, from well-cut ashlars to roughly formed fieldstones. Determining whether these separate rows of stones represent different phases of construction requires further excavation. Wall 428 belongs to a later phase of the site, as is set upon the paved floor.

Another doorway, near the northern corner of Area E, between W417 and W418, opens east onto a poorly paved area that seems to have been a small external courtyard. Set against W417 is a *ṭabun* (L423), and this may well have been a kitchen area. A service area set in the structures surrounding the internal courtyards was a common feature of the functional division of space of Byzantine *coenobia*.

THE INSCRIPTION (Fig. 9)

A full epigraphic and historic review of the inscription on the stone covering tomb L275 has been published (Mgaloblishvili 2005; 2006–2007:533–537; Gagoshidze 2005; Tchekhanovets 2009:110–114) and is the subject of articles by Gagoshidze (this volume), Mgaloblishvili (this volume) and Tchekhanovets (this volume). Only a short summary is provided here. The Georgian-language inscription (transcribed below), is inscribed in the Georgian *Asomt'avruli* script, and covers an area of 81 × 49 cm. It consists of five lines cut into the tombstone, and is surrounded by a frame that cuts through the last line:

ገገገ ገገገገገገገ
 ገገገገገገ ገገገገገ
 ገገገገገገ ገገገገገገገገ
 ገገገገገ ገገገገገገገ
 ገገገገገ †

Translation:

“This is the grave of Iohane Bishop of P’urtavi, a Georgian (Kartveli)”

Analysis of this inscription led to the following conclusions:

1) Paleographic analysis dates the inscription to the end of the fifth or the first half of the sixth century CE. The ceramic and glass finds on the other hand, date between the late sixth and the eighth centuries. The discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the inscription is probably attributable to the founding of the monastery, while the finds are on the whole associated with its abandonment.

2) The spelling of the name Iohane (ገገገገገገ) is typical of the fifth–early seventh centuries. Later spelling would have been Ioane (ገገገገገ). This further supports the date that was determined on palaeographic grounds.

3) The ethnonym ‘*K’art’ve*li’ (ገገገገገገገገ)—Iberian or Georgian—indicates that the occupant of the tomb came from eastern Georgia, from the region of *K’art’li*.

4) This is the earliest known example of this ethnonym on any archaeological artifact both in the Holy Land and in Georgia.

5) The monastery at Umm Leisun cannot be associated with any of those known in the Georgian written sources. However, recent research indicates that the name Ioannes does appear in Albanian sources, although a definite connection is far from being confirmed (Tchekhanovets 2009:114; this volume).

6) The location of Purtavi (ገገገገገገገገ), the place of origin of Bishop Iohane, is not entirely clear. According to Mgaloblishvili (2005; 2006–2007:533–537; this volume) and Gagoshidze (2005; this volume), the name may be a compound word of mixed Semitic and Georgian origin, deriving from the Hebrew term for a winepress, or the Aramaic for ‘a small part’ (of a larger whole). The latter may even indicate that the monastery was subordinate to a larger establishment, possibly the nearby

Georgian monastery of Bir el-Qatt. However, Tchakhanovets has recently proposed that the inscription may relate to a Georgian bishop from the city of Purtav (Barda in modern Azerbaijan) in Caucasian Albania, and that his Georgian ethnicity is emphasised because he served in Albania, away from his place of origin (Tchekhanovets 2009:110–114; this volume).

7) The fact that L275 was the most prominent tomb on site, that the Georgian language was used and that the nationality of the deceased is specifically stated, indicates that this was probably a Georgian monastery and not simply a monastery that numbered Georgian monks amongst its occupants. Nevertheless, the possibility that it was a monastery led by a Georgian, in which monks of a number of nationalities cohabited, cannot be ruled out.

8) It is noteworthy that the only title given to Bishop Iohane is ecclesiastic, and no monastic position is noted. The significance of this omission is not clear, but it is possible that Iohane was not the abbot of the monastery, but retired there once he had finished his duty at Purtavi.

THE ŞUR BAHIR TOMB (Fig. 16)

In 1895 two members of the Palestine Exploration Foundation—F.J. Bliss and A.C. Dickie—accompanied by the Ottoman Imperial Commissioner Ibrahim Effendi, visited a tomb on the ridge of a hill 1.6 km east of Şur Bahir, which is in fact the location of Umm Leisun (Bliss and Dickie 1898:239–243). The architecture of the tomb (Bliss and Dickie 1898: Pl. 24) is so similar to that of the crypt that we uncovered, that we initially thought the two were one and the same. However, the differences in measurements made it clear that Bliss and Dickie's tomb is a third crypt belonging to the monastery at Umm Leisun, whose exact location is now lost. Due to its relevance and the difficulty of accessing the original publication, the description of this tomb is reproduced here.

The measurements do not correlate exactly with the plan, but the differences do not hinder an understanding of the tomb.

The tomb was an underground vault, cut in the bedrock and partially built from well-dressed ashlar blocks in courses of 38 cm. The height of the vault was 2.84 m from floor to apex. Six arcosolia were set in semicircular arched recesses on either side of the floor area. The central floor area measured 15.01×1.85 m, but the width, including the arcosolia, was 3.65 m. Under the missing flagstones of the floor were twelve trough tombs, with average dimensions of 1.84×0.85 and 0.78 m deep. Bliss notes that the tombstones that covered the 24 tombs and their contents had been robbed prior to his arrival.

The tomb was found under the remains of a quadrangular building measuring about 64 m on each flank (Bliss and Dickie 1898:242). Together with details of the masonry of the walls, there is a description of a large rock-cut cistern, plastered and decorated with a Latin cross molded in plaster. It is likely that these remains were part of the monastery, although it is impossible to relate them to the information gleaned during our excavations.

BYZANTINE BURIAL CRYPTS

As Tzaferis (2001:320) noted, in early monasticism no clear physical division was made between the living and the deceased. Departed monks continued to be a physical part of the monastic community, their remains often entombed within the monastery walls. Consequently, crypts, including burial crypts, were a relatively frequent feature of Byzantine monastery-churches (Goldfus 1997:30–34, 247–251), although there are few built burial vaults of the type discovered at Umm Leisun. Avni's analysis of the cemeteries of Jerusalem and Bet Guvrin identifies a limited number of burial crypts of this specific type, which he classified as "rectangular or square rock-cut or ashlar-built halls, with burial troughs in the floor, and sometimes also loculi or *arcosolia* in the walls" (Avni 1997:58–59, 486).

To face page 239.

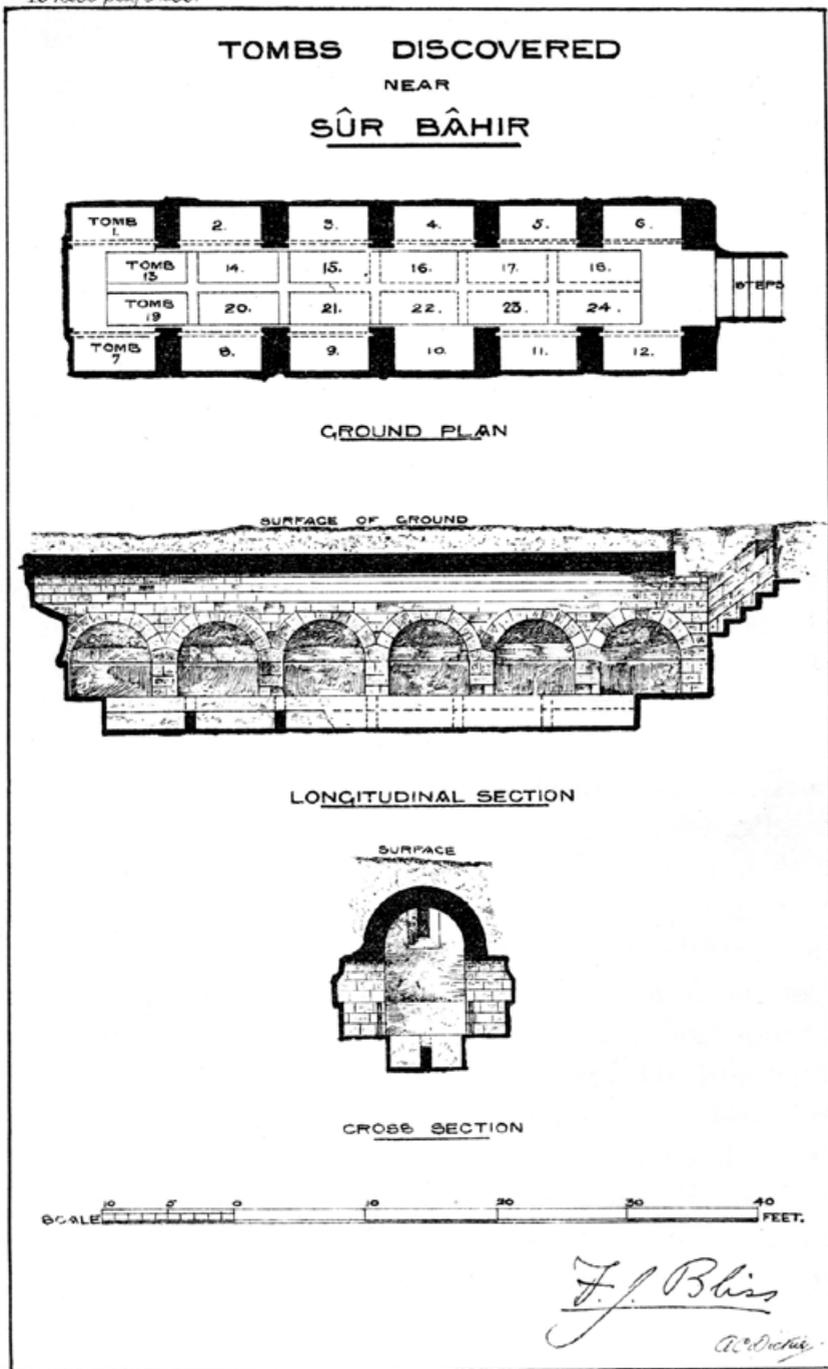


Fig. 16. Plan of the Şur Bahir tomb (see Bliss and Dickie 1898: Pl. XXIV).

Access to tombs of this type is usually, as at Umm Leisun, via staircases from courtyards or rooms of buildings constructed on the surface. Similar tombs in the Jerusalem area include one beneath the Schmidt School north of the Damascus Gate (Dunkel 1902:403–405); two crypts in the complex of St. Stephen, also north of the Damascus Gate (Vincent and Abel 1926:777, 781–785); a further group of three tombs along the line of the Third Wall (Burrows 1932; Amit, Wolff and Gorzalczy 1993:80, 82); and tombs at Gethsemane (Corbo 1965:59), Sheikh Bader (Arubas and Goldfus 1993:76–77), Abu Tor (Montgomery 1921–1922), Beit Şafafa (Landau 1957) and the nearby Georgian monastery at Bir el-Qaṭṭ (Corbo 1955:122–125, Figs. 34, 35). Outside Jerusalem we should note a tomb at Bet Guvrin (Bliss and Macalister 1902:58); the Monastery of Euthymius at Khan el-Aḥmar (Hirschfeld 1993:429–430); Migdal Ashqelon (Kogen-Zahavi 1996:94–97); and Tomb VI at Yasileh in Transjordan (Tarrier and al-Muheisen 1992:231, Fig. 5). Most of the examples of this type of burial architecture are datable to the Byzantine period, and found in the context of monastic or ecclesiastical sites (Avni 1997:59).

THE FINDS

The finds from the site had a limited range of types and chronology, and were of poor quality. This study presents finds that were discovered during the excavation of the courtyard rooms and the burial crypt (Areas B and C). The ceramics and other finds from Areas D and E are of the same types, making further study superfluous. Of interest were a number of marble pieces of chancel-screen pillars (Fig. 17) and many fragments of painted wall-plaster that were found at the base of the stairs in a burnt fill (L262; Fig. 5) with glass vessels and window panes, ceramics and ceramic roof tiles. These finds had tumbled down the stairs into the crypt during the conflagration that most probably caused the abandonment of the site, and they indicate that the room above the burial



Fig. 17. Chancel screen pillar.

crypt was significant and probably beautifully decorated.

Ceramic Vessels (Fig. 18)

The majority of the ceramics date without doubt to the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods, although some sherds from the Early Roman (Fig. 18:5, 8, 14) and Medieval periods (Fig. 18:9) were also identified. A full ceramic assemblage from the Byzantine–Early Islamic periods, the main period of occupation of the extant site, had been uncovered during the 1996 season and was subsequently published (Seligman and Abu Raya 2002:133–136). Much of the ceramics were gathered from L262, the area at the base of the stairs leading to the crypt where pieces of charred wood were found among the finds. It represents the destruction layer of the site. This assemblage is of the type extensively discussed by Magness (1993), and is typical of the Jerusalem area in the Byzantine

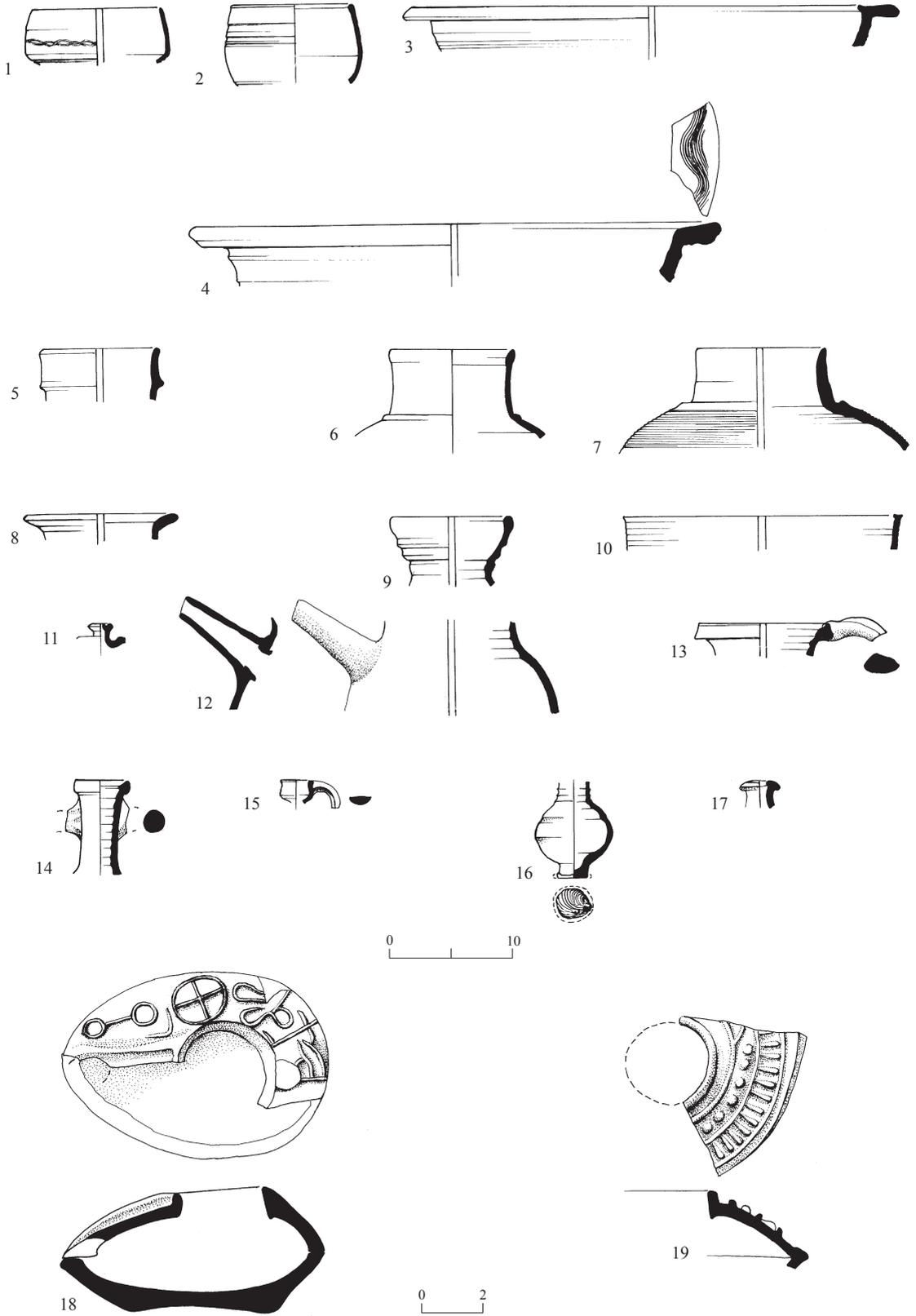


Fig. 18. Ceramic finds.

◀ Fig. 18

No.	Vessel	Locus	Basket	Description	Parallels (Date)
1	Bowl (FBW)	262	2018/1	Wavy line decoration	Magness 1993:193–194, Form 1A (mid. 6th–late 7th/early 8th c.) Bir el-Qatt: Corbo 1955: Fig. 40:12
2	Bowl (FBW)	260	2065/1		Magness 1993:193, 195, Form 1B (mid. 6th–late 7th/early 8th c.) Bir el-Qatt: Corbo 1955: Fig.40:13
3	Arched Rim Basin	261	2015/8		Magness 1993:204–206; Form 1:5 (late 3rd/early 4th–6th c.)
4	Arched Rim Basin	262	2042/6	Combed decoration on rim top	Magness 1993:206–207; Form 2A (6th–late 7th/early 8th c.) Umm Leisun: Seligman and Abu Raya 2002: Fig.10:10
5	Storage jar	207	2010/4	Elongated square rim	Bar-Nathan 2002:29–30, Pl. 3:20–23, Type J–SJ4A2 (end 2nd c. BCE–1st c. CE) Umm Leisun: Seligman and Abu Raya 2002: Fig. 10:6
6	Storage jar	262	2042/18	Fold on int. of rim	Magness 1993:223–224, Form 4A (3rd–4th c.) Bir el-Qatt: Corbo 1955: Fig. 41:2
7	Storage jar	262	2021/11	Low neck with plain rim	Magness 1993:226–227, Form 5A (late 6th–early 8th c.)
8	Storage jar	261	2015/7	Everted rim	Bar-Nathan 2002:32, Pl. 6:36–37, Type J–SJ6 (1st c. BCE–1st c. CE)
9	Storage jar	207	2014/1	Jerusalem ridge neck jar, flared rim	Jerusalem: Tushingham 1985: Fig. 42:12 Qubeibeh: Bagatti 1993: Figs. 25:1, 4, 8; 26:14 (late 13th–14th c.)
10	Casserole	262	2023/2	Bevelled rim	Magness 1993:211–213, Form 1 (late 3rd/early 4th–8th/9th c.)
11	Casserole lid	262	2042/27	Central knob handle	Magness 1993:247–248, Form 2:6 (6th–mid 8th c.)
12	Jug	262	2042/17	With long spout	Bir el-Qatt: Corbo 1955: Fig. 41:11
13	Jug	262	2042/10	Everted triangular rim	Magness 1993:236–238, Form 1A (3rd–6th c.)
14	Flask	281	2039	Rounded rim, two handles attached to neck	Bar-Nathan 2002:169–170, Pl. 26:473, 474, Type J–FL1 (1st c. BCE–1st c. CE)
15	Juglet (FBW)	207	2012/10	Narrow neck with swollen stepped rim	Magness 1993:239–240, Form 2A:1 (mid 6th–early 8th c.)
16	Juglet base	262	2042/8	Stump base, string cut	Magness 1993:246, Form 6A (late 3rd–early 8th c.) Umm Leisun: Seligman and Abu Raya 2002: Fig. 10:17
17	Juglet	207	2012/9	Cooking ware?	Magness 1993:245, Form 4 (4th–5th c.)
18	Lamp	205	2012/4	Channel nozzle, channel from wick hole to filling hole, raised decoration	Magness 1993:255–257, Form 4B:2, 3 (7th–early 8th c.) Rosenthal and Sivan 1978:130–2, Variant Ac (6th–11th c.) Umm Leisun: Seligman and Abu Raya 2002: Fig.10:18
19	Lamp	262	2042/9	Channel nozzle, channel from wick hole to filling hole, raised decoration	Magness 1993:255–257, Form 4A:2 (7th–early 8th c.) Rosenthal and Sivan 1978:130–2, Variant Aa (6th–11th c.) Umm Leisun: Seligman and Abu Raya 2002: Fig. 10:19

period. It includes Fine Byzantine Ware bowls (Fig. 18:1, 2), arched-rim basins (Fig. 18:3, 4), casseroles and casserole lids (Fig. 18:10, 11), jars (Fig. 18:6–8), jugs and juglets (Fig. 18:12, 13, 15–17) and lamps (Fig. 18:18, 19). As the types are common ones, presentation is confined to the figure tables. Parallels have been drawn from Magness's corpus, from the nearby Georgian monastery at Bir el-Qatt (Corbo 1955) and from the previous publication of Umm Leisun. These three publications, together with the references within them, establish a firm foundation for the chronology. Although the range of dates extends from the fourth to the eighth centuries CE, the main overlap period is the sixth–seventh centuries.

Tiles (Fig. 19)

Tile fragments were ubiquitous throughout the site. Hundreds were found, with concentrations on pavement L204, at the base of steps L262, in the crypt and even within the fill covering the arcosolia. Similar quantities of tiles were found in the previous excavation (Seligman and Abu Raya 2002:133, 136), and clearly they had covered the roofs of the monastery buildings above the crypt. The association between roof tiles and ecclesiastical construction had previously been noted (Hirschfeld 1990:3; Seligman and Abu Raya 2002:137).

Regrettably, roof tiles do not generally receive wide discussion. Indeed, they are often discarded or given only a passing reference, as Landgraf noted in a rare exception, his chapter on tiles from Tel Kisan (Landgraf 1980:83). *Imbrices* (convex cover tiles) and *tegulae* (flat roof tiles), first used in ancient Greek architecture, remained in use throughout the Umayyad period, as for example at Tel Kisan, in a church that dates between the first half of the sixth and the mid-seventh centuries CE. Both types of tiles were found at Umm Leisun.

The *tegulae* (Fig. 19:1–3) were usually rectangular, with flanged edges, raised approximately 1.5 cm along their long side. The short sides were simply finished, with no rim (Fig. 19:1). The upper face of the tile

was coarsely smoothed prior to firing, while the underside was rough, so that the thickness of the tile was not uniform. Some of the tiles retain an imprint, most probably of a wooden mold used for their fabrication.

The *imbrices* (Fig. 19:4–14) were also rectangular, and like the *tegulae*, their upper side was smoothed and the underside rough. The short side of the tile had a folded rim raised approximately 1 cm above the upper surface, while the long side had no rim.

Remains of the mortar that was applied to fix the tiles in position were common on both types of tiles, a feature noted also at Tel Kisan (Landgraf 1980:87).

Geometric designs were stamped into the surface of some tiles after they were formed. Similar tiles and stamps have been found at a number of sites, all in Jerusalem or the surrounding area, indicating local production. Stamped tiles were found at the excavations of the North Wall of Jerusalem (Hamilton 1940:11, Fig. 10:2), Bethany (Saller 1957:324–325, Pl. 130a); the church at Dominus Flevit (Lombardi 1956–1957:187–190, Figs. 8, 9); Locus X of the Church of St. John's at 'En Kerem (Saller 1946:137–138, 176–177, Pl. 36:1); the 'Palaeo-Kathisma' church of Stratum II at Ramat Raḥel (Aharoni 1962:3, Fig. 2); the City of David (Magness 1992: Pl. 12:8, 9); the 'Ophel (Macalister and Duncan 1926:166–170, Figs. 172, 173; Peleg 2003:133–134, Pl. 1.20); the Monastery at Deir Ghazali (Avner 2000:45*–46*, Fig. 24); the church at Ḥorbat Berakhot (Tsafirir and Hirschfeld 1979:309–310, Fig. 27); the monasteries at Shepherds' Field, Khirbat Makhrum and Khirbat Abu Ghanem (Corbo 1955:82–83, Pl. 74:1); and the round church at Bet She'an (Fitzgerald 1931:6). All these sites date to the Byzantine period, and most have an ecclesiastical function.

In total, five distinct types of impressions were distinguished at Umm Leisun:

1) A circle divided into quarters (Fig. 19:4–6). Tiles with such designs were uncovered at Ramat Raḥel (Aharoni 1962:3, Fig. 2:5), the

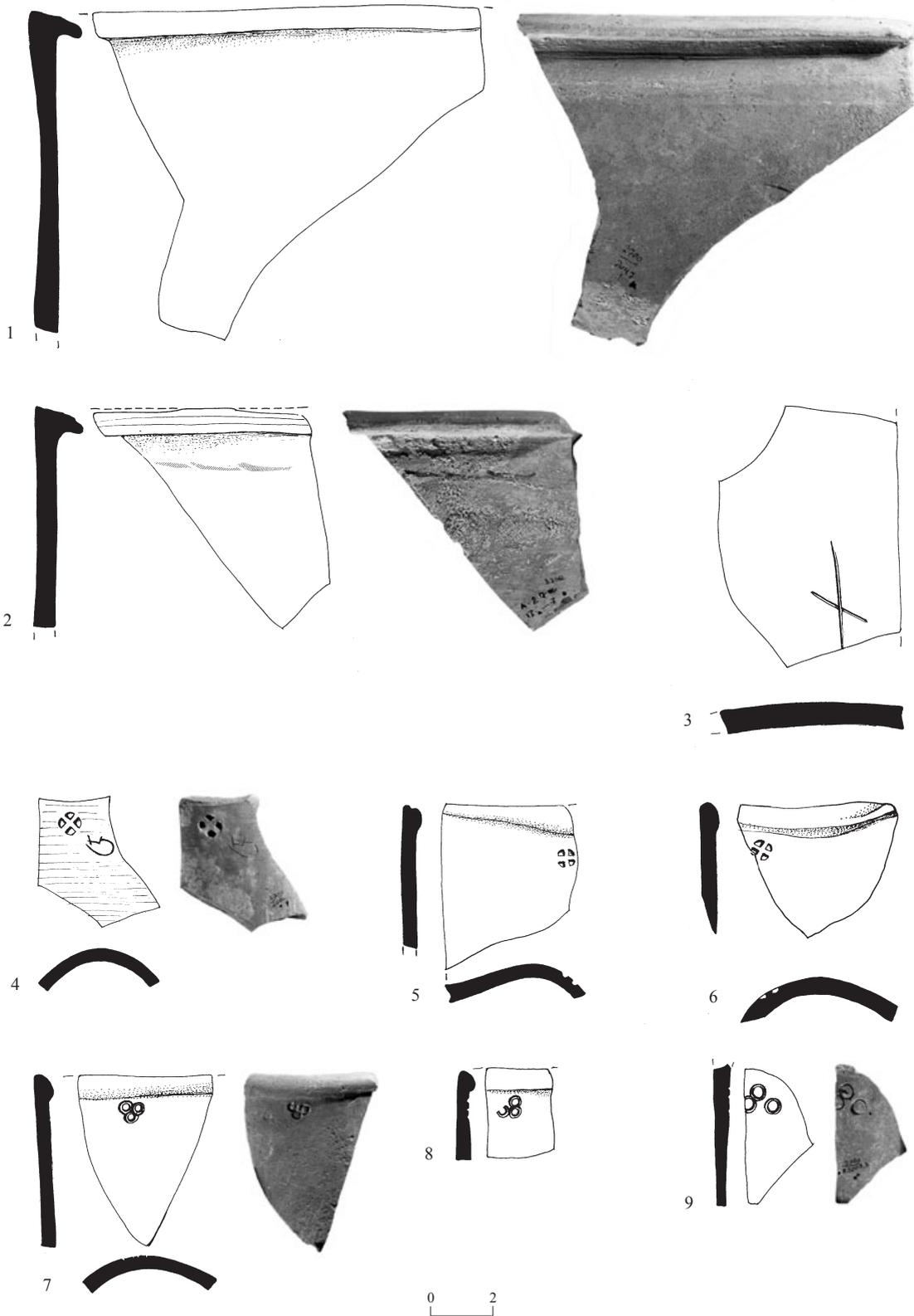


Fig. 19. Roof tiles.

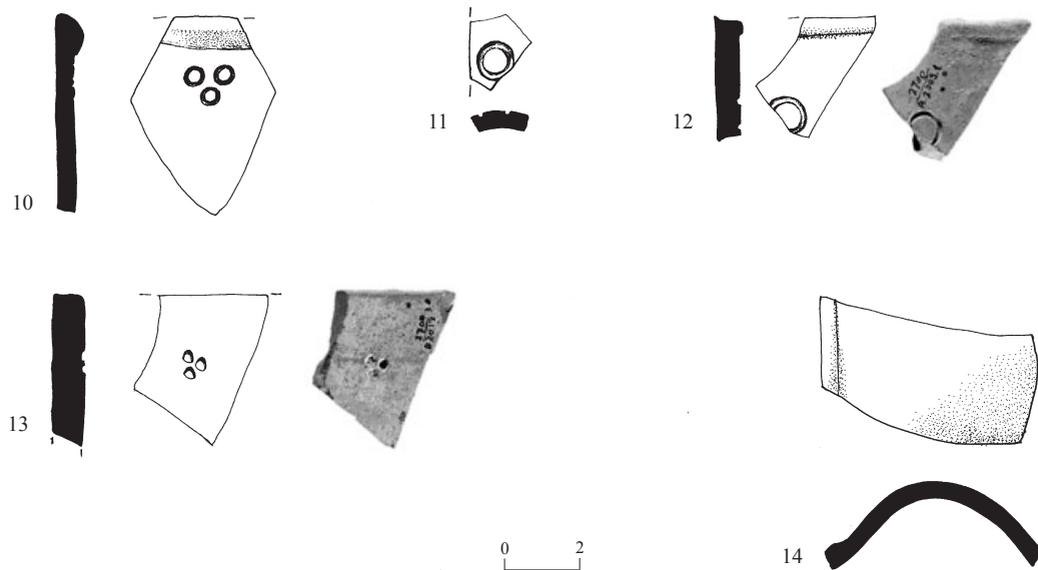


Fig. 19. (cont.)

No.	Locus	Basket	Ware Description	Design	Tile Type
1	290	2047	Light brown and orange, small and medium grits	None	<i>Tegula</i>
2	260	2062/2	Light brown, white grits	Painted lines	<i>Tegula</i>
3	262	2042/3	Light brown	Incised X	<i>Tegula</i>
4	260	2064	Reddish brown, white grits	1 circle in four quarters	<i>Imbrex</i>
5	268	2025/12	Reddish brown, white grits	1 circle in four quarters	<i>Imbrex</i>
6	267	2024/2	Reddish brown, white grits	1 circle in four quarters	<i>Imbrex</i>
7	262	2021/8	Light brown, pink core	3 attached rings	<i>Imbrex</i>
8	268	2025/13	Light brown-orange, pink core	3 attached rings	<i>Imbrex</i>
9	204	2009/3	Pink, gray core, white grits	3 attached rings	<i>Imbrex</i>
10	290	2047/1	Dark pink, white grits	3 separate rings	<i>Imbrex</i>
11	267	2024/1	Buff, small black grits	Single ring	<i>Imbrex</i>
12	204	2009	Light brown	Single ring	<i>Imbrex</i>
13	209	2013/3	Reddish brown, white grits	3 separate rings	<i>Imbrex</i>
14	280	2032/4	Buff	None	<i>Imbrex</i>

‘Ophel (Macalister and Duncan 1926:167, Fig. 172; Peleg 2003:133, Pl. 1.20:1), the City of David (Magness 1992: Pl. 12:8), Dominus Flevit (Lombardi 1956–1957:187–189, Figs. 8:1, 7; 9:1, 2) and Ḥorbat Berakhot (Tsafrir and Hirschfeld 1979:310, Fig. 27).

2) Three adjoining rings (diam. 7 mm each) forming a triangle (Fig. 19:7–9). This design

was also found at the ‘Ophel (Peleg 2003:133, Pl. 1.20:4), Deir Ghazali (Avner 2000: Fig. 24:1), Shepherds’ Field (Corbo 1955:82, Pl. 74:10) and Ḥorbat Berakhot (Tsafrir and Hirschfeld 1979:310, Fig. 27).

3) A group of three non-joining rings, each 1 cm in diameter (Fig. 19:10). Tiles with similar designs were excavated along the North Wall

of the Old City of Jerusalem (Hamilton 1940: Fig. 10:2), Ramat Raḥel (Aharoni 1962:3, Fig. 2:6), 'En Kerem (Saller 1946: Pl. 36:1:18) and Ḥorbat Berakhot (Tsafirir and Hirschfeld 1979:310, Fig. 27).

4) A single ring (Fig. 19:11, 12), with a diameter of 2 cm. This design was found at Dominus Flevit (Lombardi 1956–1957: Fig. 8:7), Ramat Raḥel (Aharoni 1962:3, Fig. 2:8) and Shepherds' Field (Corbo 1955:82, Pl. 74:3, 4).

5) Three separated rings, each with a diameter of 7 mm (Fig. 19:13).

Some designs were scratched into the wet clay. These include an X-shaped inscription (Fig. 19:3); a tile with the same inscription was located at Dominus Flevit (Lombardi 1956–1957:188–189, Figs 7:4; 8:4). An unidentifiable inscription was found next to a stamped circle divided into quarters (Fig. 19:4). One of the tiles displayed three red painted lines (Fig. 19:2).

Tsafirir (1988:306) proposed that the designs were used to keep tally during purchase. They may also represent markings of different production centers operating in the Jerusalem area, although one would expect all the tiles from Umm Leisun to have a single source, rather than a mixture of producers.

Glass

The glass that was collected in Areas B and C was studied by Natalya Katsnelson (this volume). Most of the small collection came from L262, and like the ceramics, dates to the late Byzantine and Early Islamic periods. Identical glass fragments that were collected in Areas D and E are within the same timespan (Yael Gorin-Rosen, pers. comm.). Of particular interest are the relatively large number of fragments of windowpanes that probably originated in the monastery rooms above the crypt. Window panes were noted in the contemporary adjacent sites of Khirbat Ṭabaliya and the Kathisma (Gorin-Rosen 2000:92*–93*), but they are usually not published.

KHIRBAT UMM LEISUN AND BIR EL-QAṬṬ: TWIN GEORGIAN COMMUNITIES

While there is a considerable number of written sources concerning the life of the Georgian community in the Holy Land after the Byzantine period (Peradze 1937), written sources from the Byzantine period itself are sparse. The most important is without a question the treatise 'The Life of Peter the Iberian,' written at the end of the fifth century by John Rufus. Unfortunately, physical remains of the Georgian community in the Holy Land in the Byzantine period are also few and far between. While this is not the place to provide a summary of the little that does exist, the proximity of Umm Leisun to the important remains of a Georgian monastery at Bir el-Qaṭṭ requires some attention.

Bir el-Qaṭṭ, excavated by Corbo (1955:112–134), is only 3.5 km southwest of Umm Leisun and 1 km north of Shepherds' Field. The monastery consisted of a rectangular building (35 × 30 m) with a guarded gate, set around a central colonnaded cloister paved with mosaics. In the western portico was a mosaic divided into 28 squares, each with a different design, among them goblets, amphorae, vases and flowers (Ovadia and Ovadia 1987:45). Three of the squares contained dedicatory inscriptions in Georgian *Asomt'avruli* script identical to that at Umm Leisun. Another inscription was placed in a *tabula ansata* in the center of the mosaic. The floor of the cloister covered a huge vaulted underground cistern. On the northern side of the cloister was a long room, that may have been a funerary chapel, and beyond this a church with an internal apse, again paved with mosaics. Burial crypts were found below the church and the room to its south.

A series of rooms flanked the cloister to the west. The northern room, probably the *refectorium*, was also paved with a mosaic, with geometric designs of crossed *scuta* separated by diamonds and florets (Ovadia and Ovadia 1987:44). A dedicatory inscription was set in a *tabula ansata* at the eastern end of this room.

The southern rooms contained installations of wine- and oil-presses.

Bir el-Qaṭṭ is a typical agricultural *coenobium* (Seligman 2011:515–524, 532–533), situated on the edge of the Judean Desert, and dated by the pottery finds to the Byzantine period (Corbo 1955:129). This conclusion was strengthened by the epigraphic analysis of the inscriptions (Tarchnišvili 1955:139), which dated them to the sixth century. The inscriptions suggest that the monastery was named after St. Theodore, and Corbo goes as far as to propose that this monastery was the one mentioned by Procopius (see above) as the monastery of the Lazi (Corbo 1955:130). Clearly the occupants of this monastery were Georgian, although the artistic style, architecture and technology of the agricultural installations are typical of Byzantine Palestine as a whole. The proximity of the two sites probably points to an attempt by the Georgian monks to congregate in close proximity. This proposal is supported by evidence of a substantial Georgian presence in the nearby Laura of St. Sabas in the Kidron Valley during the first half of the sixth century. We should not be surprised by future discoveries related to this monastic movement in the area between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, or farther out in the adjacent parts of the Judean Desert.

DISCUSSION

Umm Leisun is a small monastery on the route from Jerusalem to the *laurae* and *coenobia* of the Judean Desert wilderness, and from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Such monasteries are common, and have been discussed in detail, especially by Corbo (1955), Chitty (1966), Hirschfeld (1992) and Patrich (1995). Like Umm Leisun, many of them cannot be firmly correlated with any particular monastery or known event, although probable identifications were suggested, based on hagiographical, toponomic and archaeological data.

In the region between Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the Great Laura of St. Sabas there are numerous monasteries. These rural monasteries on the periphery between the towns and villages of the Hill Country and the Judean Desert, are all of the *coenobia* type, as we suggest to be the case for Umm Leisun. These small *coenobia* (unlike the larger Shepherds' Field and Bir el-Qaṭṭ) typically included a chapel, a *refectorium* and a number of cells around a walled courtyard under which was usually a cistern. The economy of these *coenobia* was based on the cultivation of their immediate surroundings, and they were the functional successors of the farmsteads of the preceding Roman period, often using the same site. The *miqveh* that was found in a cave under the monastery strongly suggests that Umm Leisun was no exception, and that a Jewish farm from the early Roman period existed here previously (Seligman and Abu Raya 2002:137).

Paleographic analysis dates the inscription that was found on the tombstone at the site to the end of the fifth or the first half of the sixth centuries. It joins the Georgian inscriptions discovered by Corbo in the nearby site of Bir el-Qaṭṭ as one of the earliest Georgian inscriptions uncovered not only in the Holy Land, but anywhere, including Georgia itself. This date is confirmed by the ceramics, mosaics and other finds, which clearly place the site in the Byzantine period.

Unfortunately, Georgian and foreign written sources do not list the name of Iohane, the Bishop of Purtavi, among the Georgians living and working in Palestine of the Byzantine period. The tomb of Bishop Iohane in the crypt of the monastery was set apart from the others, indicating his prominent position in the life of the monastery. Taken in conjunction with the Georgian inscription of the main tomb in the crypt, it indicates a Georgian affiliation for the monastery.

APPENDIX 1: List of Loci and Walls

Locus	Locus Above	Locus Below	Description	Baskets ⁱ	Period
<i>Areas B and C</i>					
200		201	Surface debris	2000	Modern
201	200	202, 204, 208, 209	Fill above floor	2005	Byzantine
202	201	206	Fill above floor L206, W8 and W9	2002, 2003 (glass), tiles	Iron II, Byzantine
203	201	207, 205, 207	Fill between W9 and W10		
204			Pavement visible on surface, W8	2007, 2009, tiles	Byzantine
205	203	207	Fill beside W9		
206	202		Pavement between W8 and W9	2008	Unknown
207	205		Layer under L205, W9	2010, 2012, 2014	Iron II, Early Roman, Byzantine
208			Mosaic floor		
209			Mosaic foundation layer	2013, tiles	
210	206		Plastered channel		
211	204		Plastered channel		
220			Fallen fill from section	2001	Unknown
250		251	Square opened above northern crypt		
251	250	252, 253	Fill above field stone wall W20		
252	251		Fill south of W20	2005, tiles	
253	251		Fill north of W20	2006	Early Islamic
260		261	Fill in northern crypt, removed in part by mechanical machinery	2011, 2060, 2062–2066, tiles, marble	Byzantine
261	260	266–282	Fill above arcosolia	2015, 2016 (glass), 2017	Byzantine
262			Staircase south of crypt and fill	2018, 2020–1, 2023, 2026, 2031, 2041 (glass), 2042, 2043–6, tiles, marble, plaster	Early Roman, Byzantine
265	260	276–282	Paved floor of northern crypt	2018, 2019 (glass), tiles	
266/ 275	260		Main arcosolium with inscription on tombstone	2036 (plaster), bones	
267	261		Arcosolia	2024, 2030 (glass), bones	
268	261		Arcosolia	2025, 2027 (animal bones, bones, tiles)	
269			Arcosolia	Bones	
270	261		Arcosolia	2022 (animal bones), bones	
271			Arcosolia		
272			Compartment behind arcosolium L269		
273			Compartment behind arcosolium L269		

ⁱBaskets without content noted contained only pottery.

APPENDIX 1 (cont.)

Locus	Locus Above	Locus Below	Description	Baskets ⁱ	Period
276	265		Burial trough	2034 (glass), bones	
277	265		Burial trough	2035 (glass), bones	
278	265		Burial trough		
279	265		Burial trough	2029 (animal bones), bones	
280	265		Burial trough	2032, tiles	
281	265		Burial trough	2039, tiles	Byzantine
282	265		Burial trough		
290		291, 292	Fill in southern crypt	2047, tiles	Byzantine
291	290		Burial trough		
292	290		Burial trough		
<i>Area D</i>					
300		304	Topsoil; fill, adjoins L301–L302	3000, 3024	Modern
301		303	Topsoil	3001	Modern
302		311	Topsoil	3002, 3006, 3009, 3013	Modern
303	301	307, 310	Mixed fill	3003, 3004, 3007, 3011, 3018 bones	Byzantine, Modern
304	300	308	Fill in upper part of pool	3005, 3008	Byzantine
W305	301		W3; rubble wall at NE corner of pool		Byzantine
W306	301		W2; late fieldstone wall		Byzantine
307	303	W320	Fill above W320	3010, 3015, 3020S	Modern
308	304	315	Fill in pool, from top of W305	3012, 3023, 3030, 3035M, 3040	
309			Fill in rock-cut channel	3014, 3016B, 3017G	
310	303	312, 314	Fill under modern disturbance; between W320 and W319	3019, 3021, 3022G, 3027 stone, 3029	Byzantine
311	302	316	Fill from bedrock edge above W5	3020, 3031	
312	310	313	Light fill, between W320 and W319	3025, 3026S, 3028S	
313	312	Bedrock	Carbonised layer on bedrock	3038, 3043–7CH, 3048M, 3049 small finds, 3050M, 3051M, 3052 glass, 3053 bones, 3055, 3057, 3058 stone, 3059, 3060 glass, 3061, 3063M, 3064CH, 3065	Byzantine
314	310	Bedrock	Light fill north of W319 down to bedrock = L312	3039.	
315	308		Fill from top of plastered surface of W305	3041P, 3054M, 3055CH, 3061	
316	311	317	Fill in SE corner of pool	3042	
317	316		Fill from top of plastered surface of W321	3062	
318	313	Bedrock	Foundation trench of W320	3065	

APPENDIX 1 (cont.)

Locus	Locus Above	Locus Below	Description	Baskets ⁱ	Period
W319			W1; between 313 and 314		
W320	307		W4; north wall of pool		
W321	311		W5; south wall of pool		
<i>Area E</i>					
401		405, 406, 407	Topsoil; agricultural fill	4004,4005 glass, 4022 glass	Byzantine
402		412, 413, 414, 415	Topsoil; agricultural fill	4002, 4013, 4014 glass, 4025, 4033 glass	Byzantine
403		430	Topsoil; agricultural fill	4001 glass, 4003, 4015, 4017 glass, 4026, 4043, 4053	Iron II, Byzantine
404	401	W445	Fill between W440 and W419	4007, 4021, 4036M, 4038, 4041, 4052, 4055	Byzantine
405	401	410	Plastered channel between W409 and W408	4008, 4009, 4010 glass, 4011 bones, 4018S, 4019 small finds, 4024, 4028M, 4030 small finds, 4031 bones, 4032 glass, 4034, 4046	Byzantine
406	401		Plastered installation between W435 and W408	4012, 4016 glass, 4023	Byzantine
407	401		Fill between walls W419, W409, W439	4006 small finds, 4020	Byzantine
W408	401	410	Wall abutting W437 and W409		
W409	401		Wall abutting W439 and W408 = W440		
410	405, W408		Plastered installation joining 406	4035 glass, 4037, 4039, 4040 glass, 4045 bones	Byzantine
411			Niche in side of 406	4027 glass, 4029	Byzantine
412	402	426	Fill between W428, W418	4044 stone, 4047 glass, 4048, 4049M	Byzantine
413	402	427	Fill east of W417 and W418	4042, 4062 stone, 4063 glass	Byzantine
414	402		Fill between walls W424, W417, W428		
415	402		Fill behind W424 and W417	4051, 4097, 4098 glass, 4099 stone	Roman, Byzantine
416			Cancelled		
W417	402		Wall abutting W424 and W428 = W418		
W418	402		Wall abutting W425 and room 426 = W417		
W419	401		Wall abutting W440; between 407 and 404		
420	407	449	Fill of compartment 449	4079	Byzantine
421		432-7, 446-7	Topsoil	4050, 4054, 4061 glass	Byzantine, Mamluk
422	402		Fill between W425 and W418	4057, 4060M	Byzantine
423	402	427	<i>Tabun</i> on floor 427, abutting W417	4056	

APPENDIX 1 (cont.)

Locus	Locus Above	Locus Below	Description	Baskets ⁱ	Period
W424	402		Wall abutting W417 and W440		
W425	402		Wall on floor 427, abuts W418		
426	412	441	Paved floor between wall W418, W428 = 444		
427	413		Partially paved floor east of W417 = 422		
W428	402		Rough wall on floor 414–426		
W429	402	427	Wall abutting W417, upon floor 427		
430	403	Bedrock	Technical locus in part of 403	4058, 4059 glass, 4068	Iron II, Byzantine, Mamluk
431		450, 442, 443, 444	Topsoil	4062, 4067, 4076M	Byzantine
432	421	448	Fill south of W437	4066, 4077, 4092	Byzantine
433	421		Fill between W436, W437, W446, W447	4065, 4073 small finds	Byzantine
434	421	453	Fill between W435, W437 and W436	4074, 4075 glass	Byzantine
W435	401, 421		Wall between installation 406 and 434, abuts W437		
W436	421		Wall abutting W437		
W437	421		External(?) wall of complex, abuts W408, W435, W436, W446.		
W438	402	449	South wall of compartment 449		
W439	402	449	East wall of compartment 449, abuts W409		
W440	401, 404		Massive wall, corner with W437	4081, 4082 glass, 4083 small finds	
441	426	Bedrock	Sounding under pavement 426	4069, 4090 glass, 4071C, 4072 small finds	Byzantine, Roman
442	402		Pavement between W424, W428 and W440.		
443	402		Irregular pavement between W424 and W456.	4080	Byzantine
444	402		Irregular paving north of W428 = 426.	4086, 4088 glass	Byzantine
W445	401		Wall abutting W440 from east		
W446	421		Wall abutting interior face of W437		
W447	421		Wall abutting W446		
448	432	Bedrock	Pit cutting 432 and W437	4078, 4084 glass, 4091C, 4093, 4100 glass	Byzantine
449	420	Bedrock	Compartment between W438, W439, W408 and W409	4085, 4090 small finds	Iron II, Roman, Byzantine

APPENDIX 1 (cont.)

Locus	Locus Above	Locus Below	Description	Baskets ⁱ	Period
450	401		Fill south of W419	4087, 4089 glass, 4095, 4104 glass	Byzantine
W451	W408		Rubble wall on north side of 410		
W452	W408		Rubble wall on south side of 410		
453	434	Bedrock	Foundation trench of W436 in floor 434	4994, 4096 glass, 454	Byzantine
454	432	Bedrock	Foundation trench of W437	4101, 4102SF, 4103 small finds	
455	401		Irregular paved floor at east end of 450		
456	W456		Wall beside pavement 443		

NOTE

¹ The excavation of Area A (Permit No. A-2567) was conducted over a period of two weeks in November 1996. The excavation, under the auspices of the Israel Antiquities Authority, was jointly funded by the IAA and the owner of the plot, Daoud Khasasne. The excavation was directed by Jon Seligman and Rafa Abu Raya (Seligman and Abu Raya 2002) with the assistance of Baha Jouba. The plans were drawn by Raz Nicolescu and Natalia Zak, photography, by Tsila Sagiv, and ceramic drawing, by Ronald Greenberg. This salvage excavation was conducted due to the construction of a new house on the plot. Following the excavation, the mosaics were removed for preservation by Jack Nagar and Ghaleb Abu Diab of the IAA Conservation Department. The other remains were released for development.

The excavation of Areas B and C (Permit No. A-3700) was conducted over a period of a week in July 2002, under the auspices of the IAA, jointly funded by the IAA and the owner of the plot, Dr. Daoud Hamdan. The excavation was directed by Jon Seligman and Zubeir Adawi. The anthropological report was prepared by Dr. Yossi Nagar. The excavation was aided by Gideon Solimany, Tawfiq Da'adli, Tzafrir Shifman and Amit Re'em. The plans were drawn by Vadim Essman, Tania Kornfeld and Natalia Zak; photography, by Jon Seligman; ceramic drawing, by Noga Ze'evi. This salvage

excavation was conducted following damage to antiquities at the site by the construction of a new house. Following the excavation, the mosaics were removed for preservation by Ghaleb Abu Diab of the IAA Conservation Department. The inscribed tombstone was removed from the site and is now installed in the garden of the Israeli Knesset. The crypt was preserved.

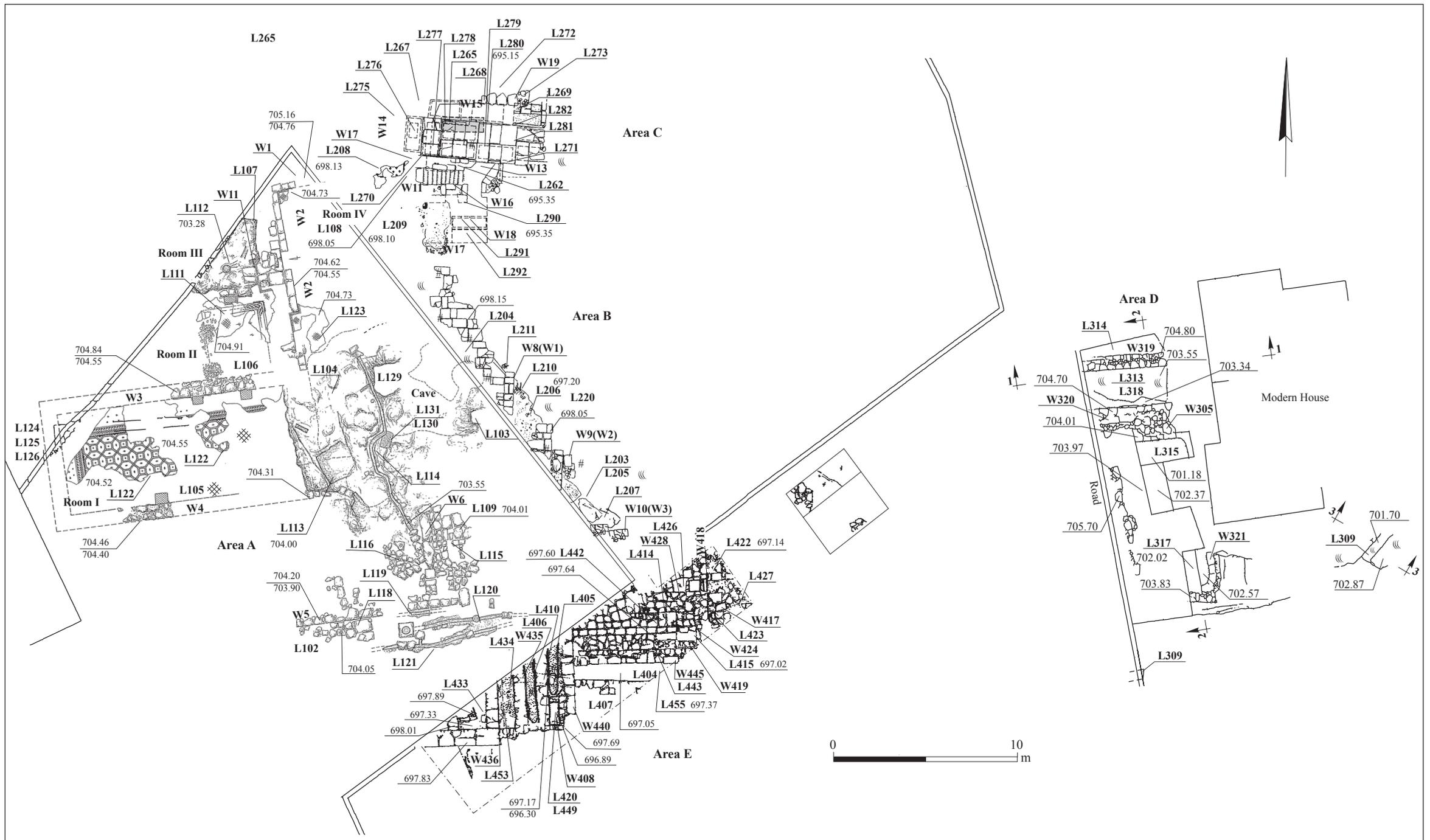
The excavation of Area D (Permit No. A-4098) was conducted over a timespan of two weeks in February 2004. The excavation was directed by Jon Seligman and Tawfiq Da'adli. The plans were drawn by Vadim Essman and Viatcheslav Pirsky; photography, by Tsila Sagiv. This salvage excavation was conducted following the discovery of antiquities at the site during the construction of a new house.

The excavation of Area E (Permit No. A-4098) was conducted over a period of two weeks in July 2004. The excavation was directed by Jon Seligman of the IAA and Iulon Gagoshidze of the Janashia State Museum of Georgia in Tbilisi and jointly funded by the IAA and the Georgia Institute of Manuscripts. The plans were drawn by Vadim Essman and Viatcheslav Pirsky; photography by Tsila Sagiv. This salvage excavation was conducted as a pre-emptive action on a plot adjacent to Areas A and B, in a bid to uncover antiquities at the site before future construction.

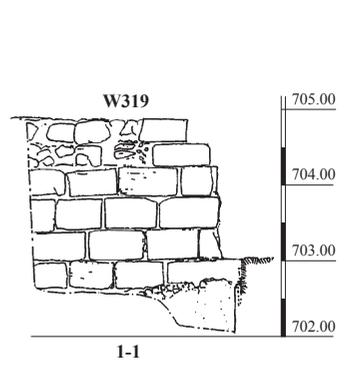
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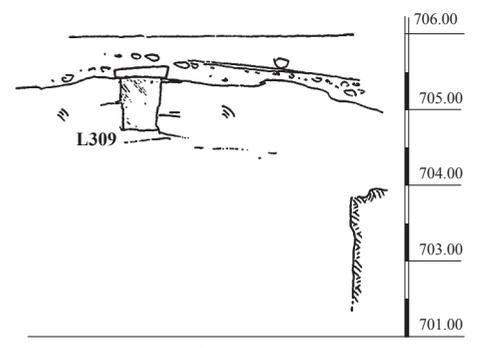
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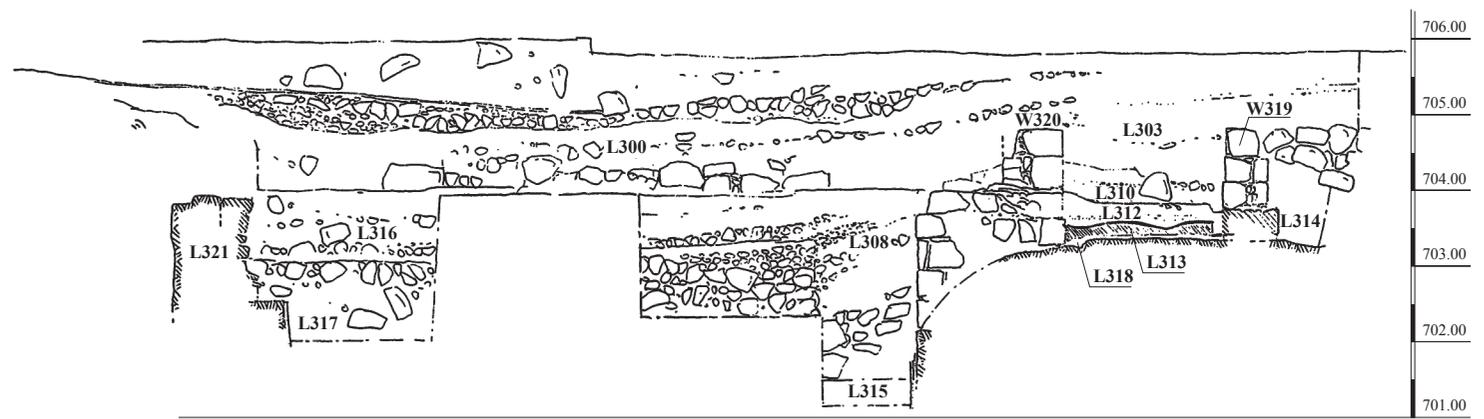
Plan 1. General plan and sections (on back).



1-1



3-3



2-2