

THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON¹

(PLATES 39–50)

INTRODUCTION

THE British School at Athens and the 5th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities at Sparta is undertaking a project of cleaning, recording, and planning the basilica church known as that of Osios Nikon, on the Acropolis of Sparta.² The basilica is located to the east of the hill that formed the Acropolis of ancient Sparta (FIG. 1), situated to the north west of the modern town and better known for the extensive remains of the theatre and Athena Chalkioikos' sanctuary.

THE MONUMENT

The monument is a three-aisled basilica with a triapsidal sanctuary projecting to the east (FIG. 2). On the west, there exist a narrow narthex and a porch (PLATE 39 *a*). Immediately to the

¹ We wish to thank the Archaeological Service for permission to carry out the campaign; in particular Mr Kakouris, director of the Directorate of Byzantine and Postbyzantine Monuments of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Mrs Kavvadia, director of the Department of Byzantine Sites of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. We also wish to acknowledge the support and assistance of Mrs Bakourou, Ephor of Byzantine Antiquities for Lakonia, Arcadia, Argolid and Messinia in the 5th Ephorate at Sparta, and of Mr Blackman, director of the British School at Athens. Funds to meet the cost of the fieldwork were provided by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and we should like to thank the British Academy and the British School at Athens for their generous grants. Thanks are also due to the British School for the loan of the equipment and the 5th Ephorate for the personnel. We would also particularly like to acknowledge Dr K. O'Connor and Mr N. McGuirk, who took on the task of the architectural planning of the basilica and producing the version of the plan published here. Elevations, drawings and site recording were supervised and undertaken by Dr R. Sweetman, E. Katsara, and P. Gleeson and the following members of the team supervised work in specific areas of the basilica and we are grateful for the good humour with which they worked long hours: Dr M. Boyd, P. Gleeson, A. Michael, G. Middleton, and B. Millis. The cleaning work was carried out under the supervision of E. Katsara by the following workmen of the 5th Ephorate: T. Andritsakis, Y. Katranis, and D. Sakellaropoulos. End-of-season photographs were taken by R. Sweetman, and E. Katsara, while M. Boyd took over 2000 digital images in preparation for the creation of a 'Quick Time Virtual Reality' tour of the basilica. Discussions with and comments on this text from Ms A. Bakourou, Dr G. Sanders and Mr D. Turner have contributed to our further understanding of the monument and its location in the Spartan topography and we should like to acknowledge their continuing encouragement and support for this project. Dr M. Boyd, Dr P. Catling, Dr G. Sanders and Mr D. Turner

kindly read and commented on the text and we thank them for their time and comments. Ms A. Thomas skillfully inked the elevations and Dr L. Preston read versions of this text.

Works frequently cited are abbreviated as follows:

Adamantiou 1934 = A. Adamantiou, 'Ανασκαφαί ἐν Σπάρτῃ', *PAE* 1934, 123–8.

Kourinou-Pikoula 1998 = H. Kourinou-Pikoula, 'Ὁ ναός του Οσίου Νίκωνος του Μετανοεῖτε', *Lak. Spoud.* 14 (1998), 89–104.

Krautheimer 1986 = R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, revised edition by R. Krautheimer and S. Ćurčić (Yale, 1986).

Soteriou 1939 = G. A. Soteriou, 'Ανασκαφαί ἐν παλαιᾷ Σπάρτῃ', *PAE* 1939, 107–18.

Traquair 1905–6 = R. Traquair, 'Laconia. Medieval fortresses', *BSA* 12 (1905–06), 261–430.

Vokotopoulos 1975a = P. L. Vokotopoulos, 'Παρατηρήσεις στήν λεγόμενη Βασιλική τοῦ Ἁγίου Νίκωνος', *Πρακτικά του Ἀ' Διεθνoῦς Συνεδρίου Πελοποννησιακῶν Σπουδῶν, Σπάρτη, 7–14 Σεπτεμβρίου 1975* (Athens, 1976–8), 273–84.

Vokotopoulos 1975b = P. L. Vokotopoulos, 'Ἡ ἐκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική εἰς τὴν δυτικὴν στερεὰν Ελλάδα καὶ τὴν Ἡπειρον ἀπὸ τοῦ τέλους τοῦ 7ου μέχρι τοῦ τέλους τοῦ 10ου αἰῶνος' (Βυζαντινὰ Μνημεῖα, 2; Thessaloniki, 1975).

Waldstein-Meander 1893 = Ch. Waldstein and C. Meander, 'Reports on excavations at Sparta in 1893', *AJA* 8 (1893), 410–28.

Waywell-Wilkes 1994 = G. B. Waywell and J. J. Wilkes, 'Excavations at Sparta: the Roman Stoa, 1988–91. Part 2', *BSA* 89 (1994), 377–432.

Woodward 1923–4 = A. M. Woodward, 'Excavations at Sparta', *BSA* 26 (1923–4), 116–310.

Woodward 1925–6 = A. M. Woodward, 'Excavations at Sparta', *BSA* 27 (1925–6), 173–354.

² From now on, for the purposes of this article the so-called Nikon basilica is referred to as the Acropolis basilica.

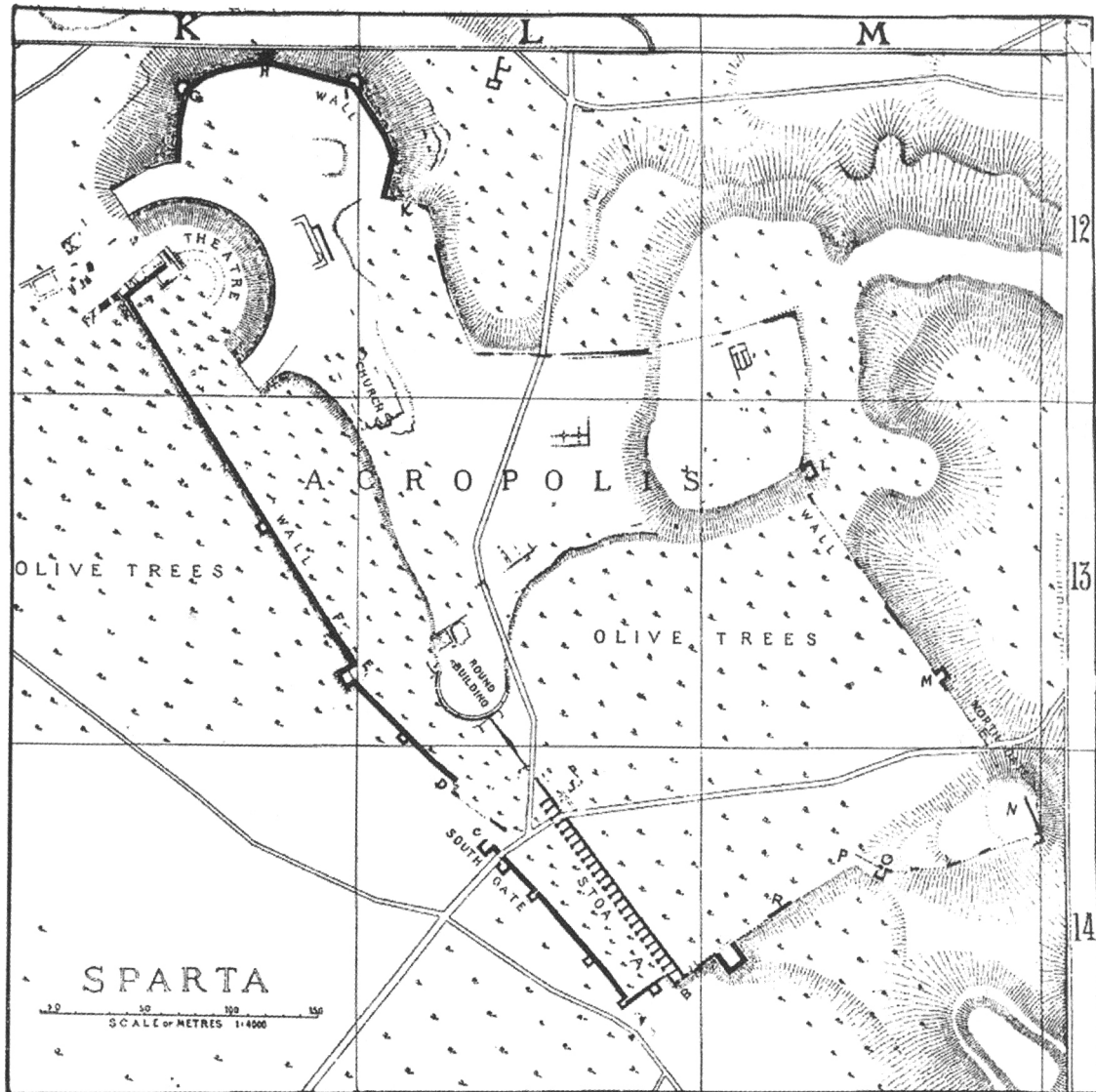


FIG. 1 Plan of Acropolis Area by Seik (courtesy of the British School at Athens).

west of the basilica is a cruciform building (PLATE 39 *b*) with several annexes attached to its south side and a long narrow extension on its western side.

While the church has the body of a standard Early Christian basilica, it is distinguished by the arrangement of the sanctuary. This consists of three subdivided rooms, the central, north, and south apses with a square room communicating to the west with each of the north and south apses.³ These rooms may be termed the *parabemata*. Each of the apsed rooms terminates

³ The traditional names for the rooms of the north and the south apse are the *prothesis* and the *diakonikon* respectively. However, these names imply particular functions; since as we

have yet to ascertain with confidence how these rooms functioned, we shall not apply such labels.

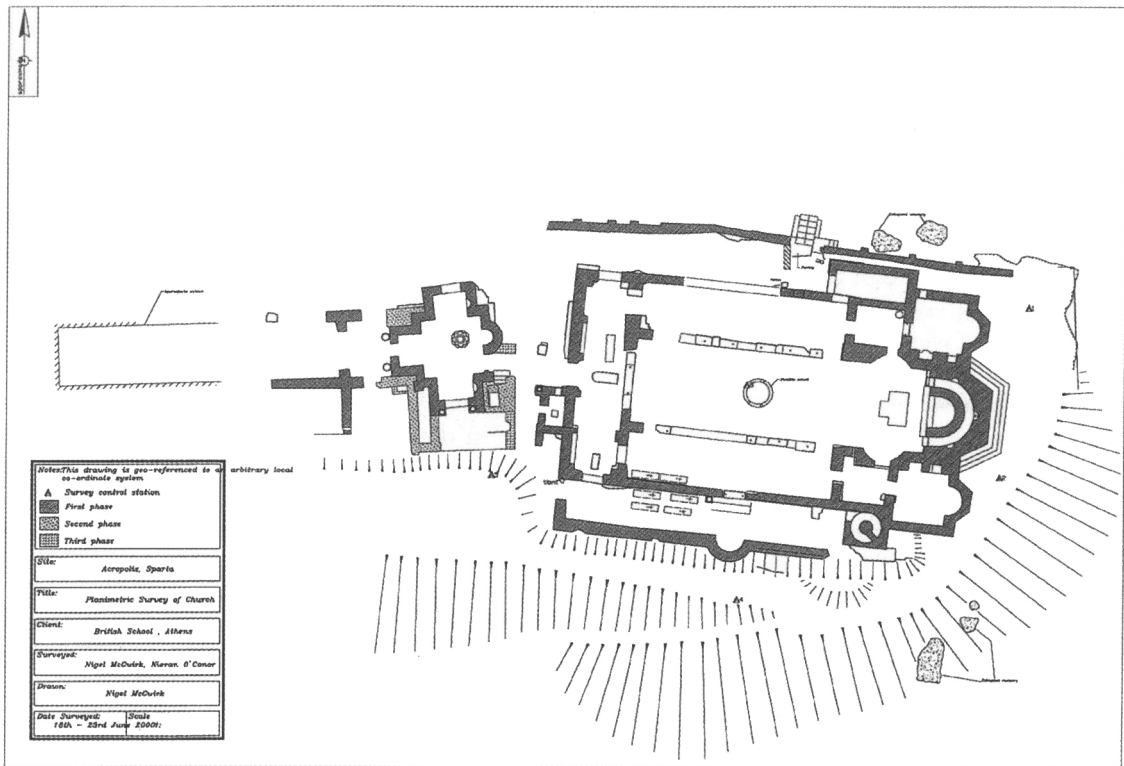


FIG. 2 Plan of Acropolis basilica and West Complex by N. McGuirk and K. O'Connor.

internally in a semicircular conch, with three-sided angular exterior apses. The central apse stands on a monumental three-stepped *krepidoma*.

The western rooms of the *parabemata* mediate access between the sanctuary area and the north and south apses, in addition to mediating access between these areas and the north and south aisles.

The tiered seating for the officiating clergy, the *synthronon*, is preserved in the central apse (PLATE 40 *b*). Between this and the wall of the apse there is a corridor, the *kyklion*, which may have facilitated access for the movement of clergy during the liturgy. Within the interior wall of the apse there are three niches, opening on to the *kyklion*. The central niche is constructed entirely of tile, while the other two use tile sporadically mostly in the conches. Each of the walls extending to the west and dividing the central apse from the western rooms of the *parabemata* contains a semicircular recess (FIG. 2), pierced in each instance by a doorway.

Originally Soteriou believed that the Acropolis basilica was of a transept type, which is not entirely correct.⁴ The total width from the exterior of the north apse to that of the south is broader along its north-south axis than any other point in the original church building. This means that the north and south apse extend past the line of the north and south walls of the

⁴ Soteriou 1939, 110.

church.⁵ The present remains of the church, however, preserve a rectangular annexe attached to the north side of the monument and a tower or staircase (the south tower) to the south side,⁶ immediately to the north and south of the respective western rooms communicating with the *parabemata*. These features occur at the very point where the walls of the north and south apses extend beyond the body of the main church.

The nave was originally separated from the north and south aisles by two six-column colonnades on stylobates. The column bases are square with dowel holes and each has a deep incision extending from it (PLATE 41 c). This reveals that a low balustrade would have originally existed between each of the columns.

The narthex communicates with the nave via a triple doorway, the *tribelon*. Attached to the narthex on the west is a small annexe with a low circular foundation in the centre. Its function remains a mystery. Incorporated into the north wall of this room is a column base with evidence for a second one just to the north flanking the west entrance of the narthex. The main entrances of the basilica must have been those in the south and west walls (PLATE 39 a), each of which preserves two propylae.

A peribolos wall bounds the basilica to the south, extending to the west wall of the narthex and then returning north. The north peribolos wall extends only as far as the narthex and there is no evidence for a return to this wall. The areas created within the basilica complex by the construction of the peribolos walls are termed the north and south terraces.

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

The Acropolis basilica has been excavated a number of times and its extant remains and extent were revealed in the first half of the twentieth century. From 1925 to 1926, excavations were carried out under the direction of William Cuttle as part of the British School's second Sparta campaign.⁷ While Cuttle exposed the ground plan, the remaining buildings on the western side of the monument were uncovered during excavation campaigns conducted by Adamantios Adamantiou in 1934 and by George Soteriou in 1939.⁸ In 1993, a trial excavation carried out by the 5th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities at the south peribolos brought to light a number of burials.

Cuttle never published the results of his two campaigns, but his notebooks are preserved in the archives of the British School at Athens (FIG. 3).⁹ As one of the aims of this article is to present a summary of Cuttle's unpublished notebooks in light of our recent research, more details are given on his work below. It seems likely that by 1926 Adamantiou had already run some trenches through the basilica, under the auspices of the Archaeological Society. The only evidence for this early work is that Cuttle occasionally mentions features such as 'Adamantiou's stone' or 'Adamantiou's graves' (FIG. 4). The extent of Adamantiou's work at this point is unclear, and brief references in the notebooks do not clarify whether Cuttle himself had a detailed knowledge of Adamantiou's work.¹⁰ Soteriou¹¹ clearly states that Cuttle was the first to

⁵ If the north annexe and the south tower were removed from the plan, one would be left with a plan very similar to the early 7th c. church at Aboba, now Pliska, in Bulgaria: N. Gkioles, *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία (600–1204)* (Athens, 1987), fig. 3.

⁶ During his original excavation, Cuttle termed this addition and the area surrounding, as 'the Minaret'. There is no evidence to suggest that this was a minaret; henceforward it will be referred to as the South Tower.

⁷ A. M. Woodward *et al.*, *BSA* 26 (1923–4), 116–310; *id.*,

BSA 27 (1925–6), 173–254; 28 (1926–7), 1–106; 29 (1927–8), 1–107; 30 (1928–30), 241–54.

⁸ Adamantiou 1934 and Soteriou 1939 respectively.

⁹ We are grateful to two BSA Archivists, Anne Sackett and Amalia Kakissis, for generously aiding our research in the archives. Unfortunately, none of Cuttle's photographs are contained within this archive.

¹⁰ We are currently undertaking research concerning Adamantiou's earliest activities at the Basilica.

¹¹ Soteriou 1939, 107.

"ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΩΝ" - 1925. [1925-See pp. 135-137; 145; 169-189]

Work was resumed on the large church on the Acropolis Hill on Friday, 21 May, and continued until the end of the dig, Saturday, June 5. The number of men employed was at first 3 ~~men~~, increased to 6 on May 24; to 9 on May 27; and to 12 on June 4. Efforts were made this year: (1) to establish the interior ground-plan. (2) to investigate further the possibility of there being Classical remains below the church, as promised by the finds of figurines at the end of last year's dig: also (3) the chance of adding to our collection of inscribed or worked marbles was kept in view. The sketch opposite shows the portions of the site investigated in the course of operations.

The most important contributions to the plan were made by the Northern Longitudinal Trench, dug from the North side of the main apse throughout the whole length of the church down to the southern wall. This trench, with its side branches, was in the

FIG. 3 Page from Cuttle's notebook.

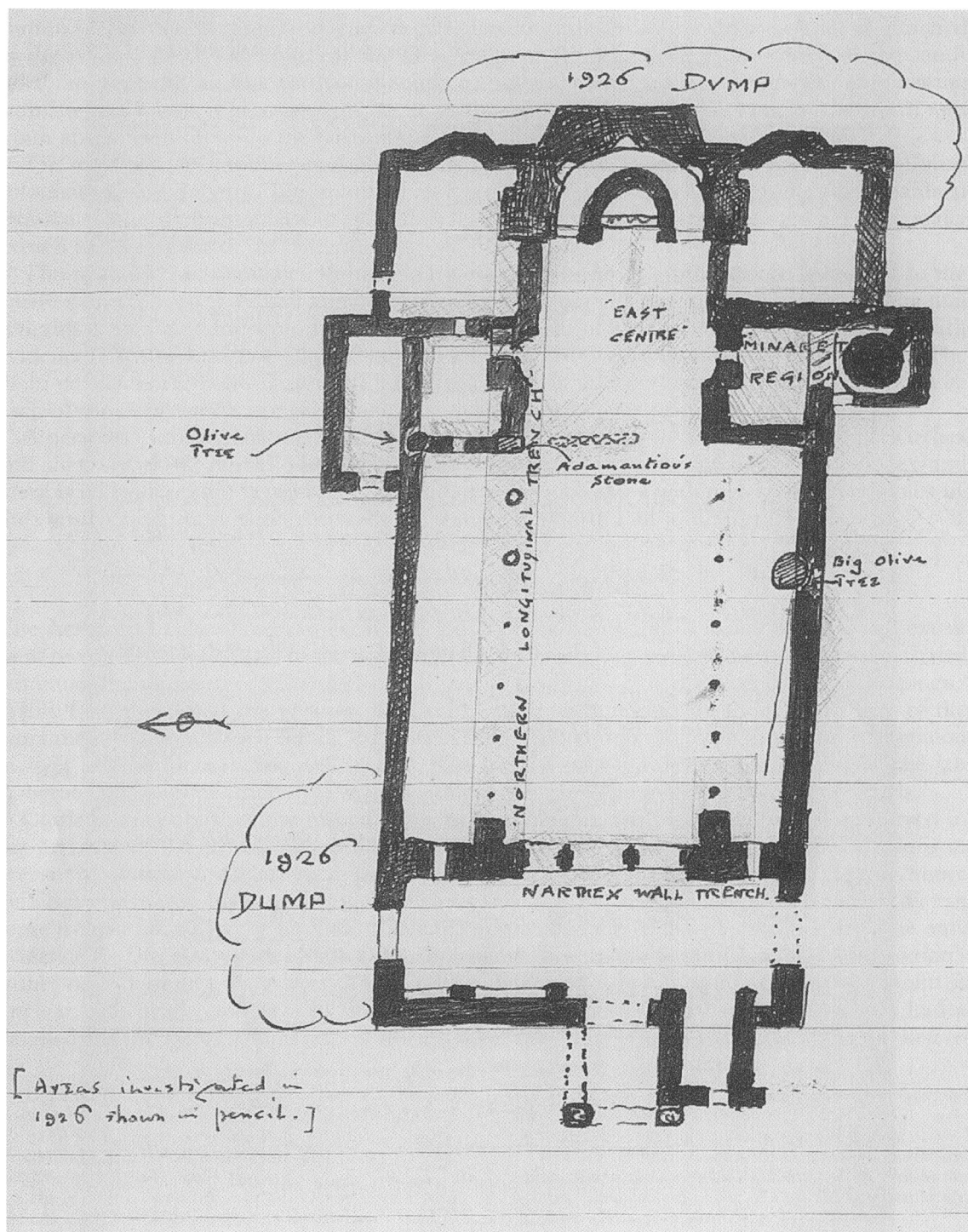


FIG. 4 Plan drawn by de Jong (from Cuttle's notebook).

excavate the basilica and that Adamantiou subsequently carried out more extensive excavations, suggesting that Adamantiou's early work should have been limited in scope.

Despite this confusion we know that Adamantiou excavated a large portion of the basilica in 1934. His brief publication¹² contains little detail, referring only to some finds such as bone and sculpture, and suggesting a late tenth century date for the church in accordance with its identification as St Nikon's church and monastery. The illustrations in his publication suggest that Adamantiou excavated the northern portion of the West Complex. Additionally, Soteriou's report suggests that Adamantiou spent much of his time clearing the area of stones and scrub and that he reconstructed parts of the basilica (for example, resetting the stylobate blocks). Although Adamantiou refers to his earlier ideas about the area, reports on previous seasons have not come to light.

The last major excavations at the basilica were those of Soteriou.¹³ He cleared the peribolos walls and completed the excavation of the West Complex. The published account of his findings¹⁴ include the only published plan of the basilica, until now.¹⁵ Soteriou also attempted to determine various architectural additions to and alterations of the church. He found the return of the south peribolos wall but was unable to verify whether the north peribolos wall, with its 3 m deep foundations, continued westwards or not. Following excavation of the narthex, Soteriou finished clearing the west building, as previously only the *right half* (which we assume to mean the northern half) had been excavated. Soteriou interprets the architectural style of the basilica in light of the literary evidence¹⁶ in order to postulate a date for the basilica (tenth century with eleventh century peribolos walls) and the function of the west building (a baptistery with a hostel attached).

PAST AND CURRENT SCHOLARSHIP

The Acropolis basilica has engaged the attention of scholars for three reasons: its attribution to Nikon, its architecture and its chronology.

ATTRIBUTION OF THE BASILICA TO OSIOS NIKON

The early excavators of the church initially identified it with the monastery erected by Nikon during the tenth century, on the basis of an interpretation of his *Life*.¹⁷ This suggestion has been reconsidered by several scholars,¹⁸ which has in turn provoked discussions concerning problems of the history and topography of Sparta in the Byzantine era.¹⁹

In recent years, the question of the attribution of the basilica to Nikon has been at the forefront of debate and the chronology of the basilica is pivotal to the argument of attribution. Despite some opposition at the time, all three early excavators of the Acropolis Basilica were

¹² Adamantiou 1934.

¹³ Soteriou 1939. We are currently working on Soteriou's archival material; however, it appears that nothing survives from this particular excavation but photographs. We intend in following publications to use the evidence produced from a study of this photographic material.

¹⁴ Soteriou 1939. This account is more a description of the monument than a detailed report of the excavation season.

¹⁵ This plan is not considered to be very accurate, although it has been a good basis for reference.

¹⁶ Primarily the *Life of St Nikon*.

¹⁷ Cuttle 1926 and Soteriou 1939, 117–18.

¹⁸ Vokotopoulos 1975a, 280–1; Waywell–Wilkes 1994, 425–8; Kourinou–Pikoula 1998, 89.

¹⁹ P. Velissariou, 'Η τοπογραφική θέση της Μητροπόλεως Λακεδαιμονίας', *Lak. Spoud.* 9 (1988), 114–16; id., 'Η Μονή του Οσίου Νίκωνος στην Λακεδαιμονία. Τοπογραφικός εντοπισμός', *ΧΑΕ* [= Χριστιανική Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία] 10° *Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης* (Athens, 1990), 19; id., 'Η Αρχιτεκτονική του Κοθολικού της Μονής Νίκωνος στη Λακεδαιμονία κατά της πηγές', *ΧΑΕ* 12° *Σεμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης* (Athens, 1992), 9.

convinced that it was dedicated to Osios Nikon. Waywell and Wilkes have summarized recent research on both topics.²⁰ They note the conflicting views of the early researchers: for example, Heurtley,²¹ Adamantiou,²² and Galanopoulos²³ believed the acropolis church to be that of Osios Nikon, against the views of Koukoules;²⁴ and then Soteriou²⁵ argued again that it was the church of Nikon. In 1975, Votokopoulos²⁶ published his architectural study of the basilica, where he argued for a much earlier date (late sixth century AD) with a middle Byzantine remodelling. Thus it could not be attributed to Osios Nikon.

With the discovery of a monastery church during the excavations of the Roman Stoa on the Acropolis by Wilkes and Waywell²⁷ under the auspices of the British School, there are now three known churches on the acropolis, including the one to the south of the Round Building (PLATE 42 a). Waywell and Wilkes argue,²⁸ on the basis of the *Life of St Nikon* and the topography of the Spartan acropolis, that the church on the acropolis could not be that of Osios Nikon and that the weight of evidence in the *Life* suggests that this is the Stoa church. Kourinou-Pikoula argued²⁹ on the basis of topography as well as an interpretation of the original Greek text of the Saint's biography that in fact neither the Acropolis basilica nor the Stoa church could be identified with Osios Nikon, suggesting that his church is located to the south-west of the round building.

The literary evidence suggests that Nikon's church was located near to the market place in a position above the 'exercise ground for ball players and horse-riders' (*Life* 39.14: καὶ γυμνάσιον ἦν τοῖς σφαιρίζουσι, κάκεισε συνέρρεον οἱ φιλιππόται ἐνερθεν τοῦ οἴκου τούτου· ἀνεῖ γὰρ τὸ τηνικάδε ὁ χώρος τὸ γυμνάσιον τοῖς σφαιρίζουσι).³⁰ Neither of these has yet been securely identified, leading to efforts to identify the market-place and ball-ground in order to support the various identifications of the church. According to the biography, in order to get to it, people gathered in the central church on the acropolis and then the market-place, where the foundations for Nikon's church were laid (*Life* 35.13–32). There is also a description of how it was constructed and many details are given about its grand decoration, and indeed its redecoration not long after its erection (*Life* 58). According to the biography, Nikon's grave is located in the vestibule of his church (*Life* 48), and was the scene of a number of miracles (*Life* 50).

As we have seen, the correct identification of Osios Nikon's church and monastery is tied up with the task of correlating the topography and evidence of the sources. Until a reasonable chronology and architectural history of the Acropolis Basilica is established, however, the question of its attribution to Osios Nikon should be put aside.

THE ARCHITECTURE

The architectural peculiarities of the Acropolis basilica (PLATE 39 a) (FIG. 2) are the subject of much discussion; in particular concerning the church's roof. Soteriou,³¹ Vokotopoulos,³² and Drandaki³³ compare the basilica with a series of monuments including the basilicas of Agios

²⁰ Waywell–Wilkes 1994 n. 109.

²¹ Woodward 1925–6, 265.

²² A. Adamantiou, 'Ἡ δημιουργία τοῦ Μυστρά ἐκ τῆς Λακεδαιμονίας', *Actes du III^{me} Congrès International Les études byzantines 1930* (Athens, 1932), 161–2.

²³ M. E. Galanopoulos, 'Βίος, πολιτεία, εἰκονογραφία, θαύματα καὶ ἀσματική ἀκολουθία τοῦ ὁσίου καὶ θεοφόρου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Νίκωνος τοῦ Μετανοεῖτε' (Athens, 1933).

²⁴ F. Koukoules, 'Ἀρχιτ. Μελετίου Εὐαγγ. Γαλανοπούλου', *Επετ.* 11 (1935), 464–5.

²⁵ Soteriou 1939.

²⁶ Vokotopoulos 1975a; 1975b.

²⁷ Waywell–Wilkes 1994.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 424.

²⁹ Kourinou-Pikoula 1998.

³⁰ D. F. Sullivan, *The Life of St. Nikon* (Brookline, 1987), 136–7.

³¹ 1939, 110, 114.

³² 1975a, 275–6.

³³ N. Drandaki, 'Εἰκονογραφία τοῦ Ὁσίου Νίκωνος', *Πελοποννησιακά*, 5 (1962), 306–19.

Leonidis in Lechaio (late fifth to early sixth century),³⁴ Ilissos in Athens (second half of the fifth century),³⁵ Aboba in Bulgaria,³⁶ Agios Titos in Gortyn,³⁷ and Agia Sophia in Korone.³⁸ These are often considered to be the predecessors of the architectural type of domed basilica, which heralded the subsequent evolution in Byzantine church construction throughout the transition from the Early Christian to the Middle Byzantine period. The question of how the church was roofed remains. It is not certain that there was a dome, and if there was, where it was actually located. Equally if there was no dome on the original building, it is unclear if the roof would have been of a simple pitched type or if there were elements of design such as barrel vaults over the apsidal areas. The closest parallel where part of the roof survives seems to be that of Agia Sophia.³⁹ Here a conch survives over the north apse, and Stampoltzis suggests that there would have been a dome over the nave and aisles of this church. Stampoltzis suggests a similar reconstruction of a dome over the nave and aisles for the Acropolis Basilica.⁴⁰ According to the 2000 plan (see below) the dimensions of the length of the nave and the width between the north and the south wall just about form a square although not as accurately as in Stampoltzis' plan.⁴¹ Moreover, the plan of the north and south apses is entirely square (with the exclusion of the conch area), which allows the possible reconstruction of a dome over these rooms. Also problematic is the question of whether or not there would have been a gallery level and, if so, whether the south tower functioned as a staircase for reaching it.

CHRONOLOGY

The issue of chronology is closely connected with discussions of the church's architecture and its attribution. It has been variously dated to the seventh⁴² and the tenth centuries,⁴³ while its adjacent buildings have been assigned to the eleventh century.⁴⁴ It would be extremely hazardous to attempt to date the monument on architectural or sculptural grounds alone,⁴⁵ as many of the architectural parallels drawn are with basilicas of uncertain date.⁴⁶ Some elements in the plan of the basilica are quite unusual (FIG. 2) and the masonry is not particularly identifiable as period-specific owing to the low height of the surviving walls (PLATE 39 *a*). An exception can be detected in sections of the west cruciform building that incorporate a crude cloisonné technique, implying a Middle Byzantine date (PLATE 39 *b*). Issues such as the

³⁴ D. I. Pallas, 'Ανασκαφή Βασιλικῆς ἐν Λεχαίῳ', *PAE* 1956, 164–78; id., 'Ανασκαφικαὶ ἐρευναι ἐν Λεχαίῳ', *PAE* 1965, 137–66.

³⁵ Em. Chatzidakis, 'Ανασκαφή ἐν Ἀθήναις κατὰ τὴν Βασιλικὴν τοῦ Ἰλισσοῦ', *PAE* 1945–8, 69–80; id., 'Remarques sur la basilique de l'Ilissos', *Cahiers archéologiques*, 5 (1951), 61–74; G. Soteriou, 'Παλαιὰ χριστιανικὴ Βασιλικὴ Ἰλισσοῦ', *AE* 1919, 1–31.

³⁶ The Aboba Basilica has been variously dated from the 6th to the 10th cc. For related bibliography see Vokotopoulos 1975*b*, 278–9, fn. 3, 6.

³⁷ T. Fyfe, 'The Church of St. Titus at Gortyna in Crete', *The Architectural Review*, 22 (1907), 60–7; A. Orlandos, 'Νεώτερα ἐρευναι ἐν Ἀγίῳ Τίτῳ τῆς Γορτύνης', *Epef.* 3 (1926), 301–28.

³⁸ I. Stampoltzis, 'Παρατηρήσεις ἐπὶ τριῶν χριστιανικῶν ναῶν τῆς Μεσσηνίας', *Πρακτικά τοῦ Α' Διεθνoῦς Συνεδρίου Πελοποννησιακῶν Σπουδῶν, Σπάρτη, 7–14 Σεπτεμβρίου 1975* (Athens, 1976–8), 268–70.

³⁹ Ibid., figs. 4–7.

⁴⁰ Ibid., fig. 9.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Vokotopoulos 1975*a*, 280.

⁴³ Cuttle; Soteriou 1939, 118.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Chronological evaluation of architectural elements and fragments is often based on vague criteria or erroneous premises. As there is a great variance from area to area, styles can remain in use or can be reintroduced, while the fragments themselves can often be reused, often within short periods of time.

⁴⁶ Aboba has been dated to the 6th and the 9th cc. by Krautheimer 1986, 318 and to the 7th c. by Vokotopoulos 1975*b*, 279. Agios Titos has been dated to the 6th by Krautheimer 1986, 255, the 7th by Vokotopoulos 1975*a*, 279, the 8th by P. Lemerle, *Philippe et la Macédoine orientale à l'époque chrétienne et byzantine* (Paris, 1945) and late 10th cc. by J. Christern, 'Die Datierung von A. Titos in Gortys (Kreta)', *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Γ' Διεθνoῦς Κρητολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου, Β'* (Athens, 1974), 37–43.

building's destruction date and final abandonment remain open, as the material revealed during the previous excavations awaits detailed attention.⁴⁷ Consequently, the value of the monument demands, if not a new campaign of research (including trial excavation), at least a re-evaluation of the data so far obtained in order to counterbalance the paucity of evidence.

Even a cursory glance at the basilica reveals that architectural features have been constructed at different periods (PLATE 39 *a*). A group of rooms lying directly to the west of the church (PLATE 39 *b*) (FIG. 2), now known as the West Complex, has been identified as either a baptistery or a martyrium and it is unclear how it was connected with the basilica. Although certainly not contemporary with the original phase of the basilica itself, it has a number of identifiable phases, the cruciform end being likely to represent the first phase, and the south annexes and the long narrow extension the last.

THE 2000 CAMPAIGN

In June 2000, a British and Greek team began cleaning, planning, and recording the basilica. A principal aim of the project is to determine the date of the foundation and subsequent phases of the basilica and its associated buildings, in addition to identifying the use of space within the complex. The issue of how the church differs from other contemporary churches and why these variations occur may be addressed only after close study of the monument. Ultimately our intention is to place the basilica within the context of contemporary Laconia and the broader Eastern Empire. Following the first preparatory season, the basic groundwork has been completed with many specific questions still to be answered, partly by future campaigns of targeted excavation.

For the 2000 season, these aims were addressed through the following fieldwork objectives. The primary one was to create a new and accurate plan of the basilica and the West Complex that would allow us to discuss with more confidence the various phases of the edifices. Although Cuttle arranged for the production of a plan of the basilica, to be drawn by the British School Architect, Piet de Jong, he never published it or his excavation results (FIG. 4), and the plan remains incomplete; the plan produced by Soteriou⁴⁸ is inaccurate.

One method of establishing a chronology for church architecture is to study the remaining masonry. Although this is not a foolproof method, this is useful when identifying phases and, in some cases, establishing chronology. The walls of the basilica and West Complex have never been drawn or examined in detail before. Therefore, in addition to creating a new plan of the basilica, elevations of the walls were drawn (FIGS. 5–6). These elevations contribute to a study of the chronological phases of the edifices in addition to a study of the type of masonry used. Additionally, the elevations provide a complete record of reused architectural fragments, (probably from nearby buildings including the theatre) found built into the walls.

Other aims of the project were to complete a full and detailed record of all the architectural members; those contemporary with the edifices, loose members, and those reused in the construction of the walls (PLATES 41 *a–b*). Additionally, given the number of times the area has been excavated, it was important to attempt to reconstruct the various different excavation trenches, their location and stratigraphy, and their find-records. We were fortunate enough to have the unpublished excavation records of Cuttle, in addition to the publications of Adamantiou and Soteriou, to aid us in this work. The ultimate aim of the practical work is to

⁴⁷ Steps have been undertaken in order to implement this work.

⁴⁸ Soteriou 1939.

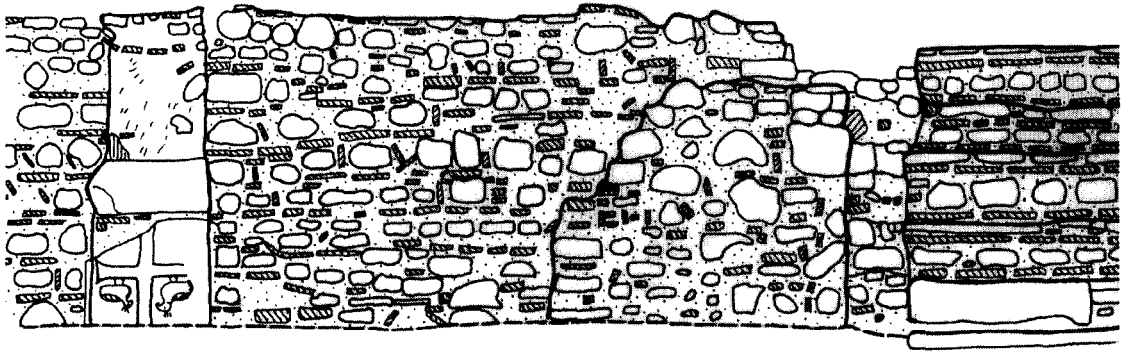


FIG. 5 Elevation of section of north peribolos wall (1:20).

prepare the area for excavation in order to define the chronology of the complex and its different phases, and the relationship of the buildings within the complex.

METHODOLOGY

Before any of the aims could be met the entire area of the basilica was cleaned. Many of the poorly preserved walls had been covered, as indeed had any evidence of previously excavated areas. To this end, topsoil, mostly a light brown compact clay, was removed to a level deep enough to expose the walls, and architectural and other features of the basilica so that they could be drawn.

The removal of the topsoil provided us with a number of previously excavated contexts, some of which we have been able to interpret, while others will have to remain unanswered pending further investigation. Various team members executed the drawing of the elevations of the walls, which assisted in identifying phases of the basilica (both ancient and modern) and in locating architectural fragments reused from buildings in the vicinity (PLATE 41 *a*). The survey team created the plan using a Sokkia Set 3 Total Station (PLATE 42 *b*). As can be seen from the plan (FIG. 2) some architectural phasing is suggested.⁴⁹ However, such phasing remains conjectural until we have the opportunity of testing our theories and chronology.

Detailed photography was undertaken and every wall of the entire complex was photographed.⁵⁰ All the loose architectural fragments were drawn, photographed and recorded in detail (TABLE 1).⁵¹

Each team member was assigned an area and equipped with the publications of Adamantiou, Soteriou (in particular his plan), and Cuttle's excavation notebook entries pertaining to that area. Every detail regarding both wall construction and phasing, and architectural features, whether reused in the walls or fragments from the basilica, was recorded (PLATE 41 *a-c*). Current preliminary interpretations of each area were noted and Cuttle's excavations (his finds and contexts) in the relevant areas were reconstructed.⁵² Cuttle did not actually describe or analyse

⁴⁹ More detailed suggestions of phasing will be proposed in the 2001 season.

⁵⁰ A QTVR tour (n. 1) of the basilica is now available on the BSA website (www.bsa.gla.ac.uk).

⁵¹ This work will form the basis of a future publication.

⁵² Since Adamantiou and Soteriou seem to have excavated primarily in the West Complex, we hope, following our second season with its focus on that area, to be able to include more evidence from the archives of Adamantiou and Soteriou in future publications.

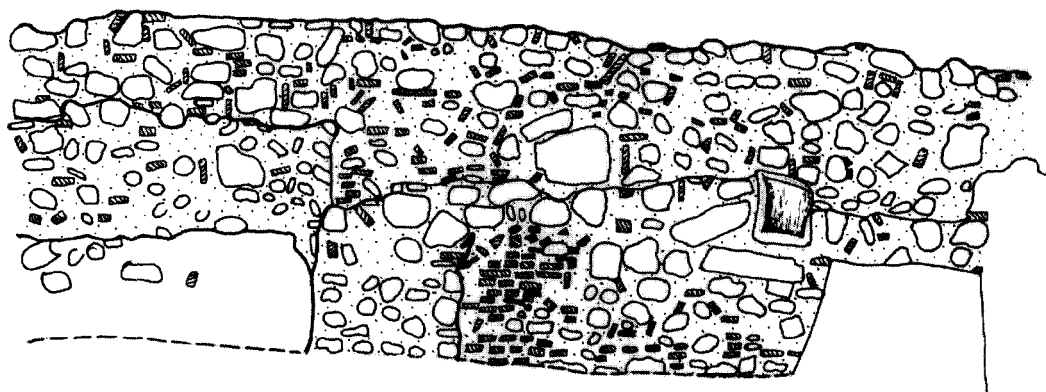


FIG. 6 Elevation of section of south wall of church (1:20).

TABLE 1 Architectural fragments found in the basilica and West Complex

Arch.Frag/ Area	Theatre Seat	Inscription	Column/ Pilaster Capital	Column /Pilaster Frag	Threshold	Mouldings	Loose Frags	Total
Nave							15	15
Central Apse	3(1 def)	1				2		6
North Apse								0
North						2	1	3
Annexe								
North Room					1	1	1	3
North Aisle			1				2	3
South Apse						1		1
South Room								0
South Aisle						1 triglyph/ metope		
South Tower	1 poss		1			2		3
Region								
Narthex	1 poss					1 cornice block with lion head spout	2	4
West Porch				1 (Base)				1
South	1			6 (incl. 1 base)	1	4 (incl 1 showing guttae)	7	19
peribolos wall								
North					1 doorpost	4 (incl. peacocks and stele)		5
peribolos wall								
Baptistry			2 (incl. 1 pilaster)	2 (pilaster)		2		6
Martyrium			1		1			2
West Building	2			2		2		6

in detail the stratigraphical evidence. It was only possible, using his notebook records and sketch plans, to reconstruct his stratigraphy to a limited degree. Additionally, discrepancies were noted between the current state of the standing remains and those noted by Cuttle, Adamantiou, and Soteriou. The purpose of highlighting these discrepancies was to avoid relying on previous

excavators' interpretations of the various features, while acknowledging the work that they had done. This paper is a forum for presenting the unpublished information from Cuttle's excavations, questions, and preliminary ideas and a new and accurate plan of the basilica.

RESULTS

Cuttle's initial intention regarding the excavation of the Acropolis basilica was to find evidence for a Classical temple below the remains of the church. By the end of the first season in 1925, however, Cuttle already felt that they were unlikely to find any evidence of the temple. He was none the less given the opportunity to undertake a second season in 1926 to try to uncover the full ground plan of the basilica. During the first season, Cuttle excavated four different pits within the church perimeter (FIG. 7).⁵³ He noted traces of burials everywhere and discovered large quantities of marble fragments, both reused Classical and Byzantine. By the end of the first season he had established the plan of the outer walls of the basilica. The aim of the second year was primarily to see if the interior ground plan of the basilica could be established. During this second season Cuttle had the expertise of Piet de Jong, and the latter's fine sketch plans of different areas (FIG. 4) contributed towards the reconstruction of Cuttle's stratigraphy. Cuttle regularly refers to reaching *stereo*, a label he attributes to a layer of soft yellow clay. During the 2000 season, this particular context was detected in several places which, being located above material culture-rich layers, could not be termed *stereo*.

The main areas examined in the 1925 season were (FIG. 7): transverse trench; central apse; peribolos walls; inside north church wall; *minaret* pit (area within south apse); west porch. The main areas examined in the 1926 season were: north longitudinal trench; nave; northern rooms; trench along narthex wall; *minaret* region (area of south tower); area between south wall of church and south peribolos wall; southern rooms; central apse. What follows is a discussion, area by area, of the work of Cuttle from his notebooks, and of later excavators from their publications, in the context of the results of the 2000 season. Reconstructions of Cuttle's trenches must remain slightly conjectural in the absence of detailed plans and photographs.

NAVE

Cuttle excavated two main trenches in the nave area. In 1925 the *Long Transverse Trench* was dug from 'Adamantiou's stone' to 'Adamantiou's burials' (FIG. 4).⁵⁴ In 1926, Cuttle ran a trench from the north side of the central apse ending at the eastern wall of the narthex, which he extended as required. This led to the excavation of the narthex wall trench in 1926.

In spite of the length of the 1925 trench and its placement diagonally across the nave, Cuttle has remarkably little to say about his discoveries here. He defined a floor level of the church, which seems to have consisted of marble flagging, some of which was preserved underneath a fallen column. He deduces that the evidence implies that the column fell when the floor was still preserved, at least partially.

Traces of burials were found in all contexts, above and below the floor level. The burial evidence consisted of bones, coffin nails, and handles.⁵⁵ Finds from the 1925 trench also included Byzantine coins and pottery.

⁵³ Cuttle 1925, 100. East end of the central apse, at the NW corner, at the SE corner and below the terrace (marked on FIG. 3).

⁵⁴ According to Cuttle, Adamantiou's stone is located in

the southwest corner of the north room and the burials are located in the western end of the south aisle.

⁵⁵ Cuttle does not record having excavated any graves or articulated skeletons.

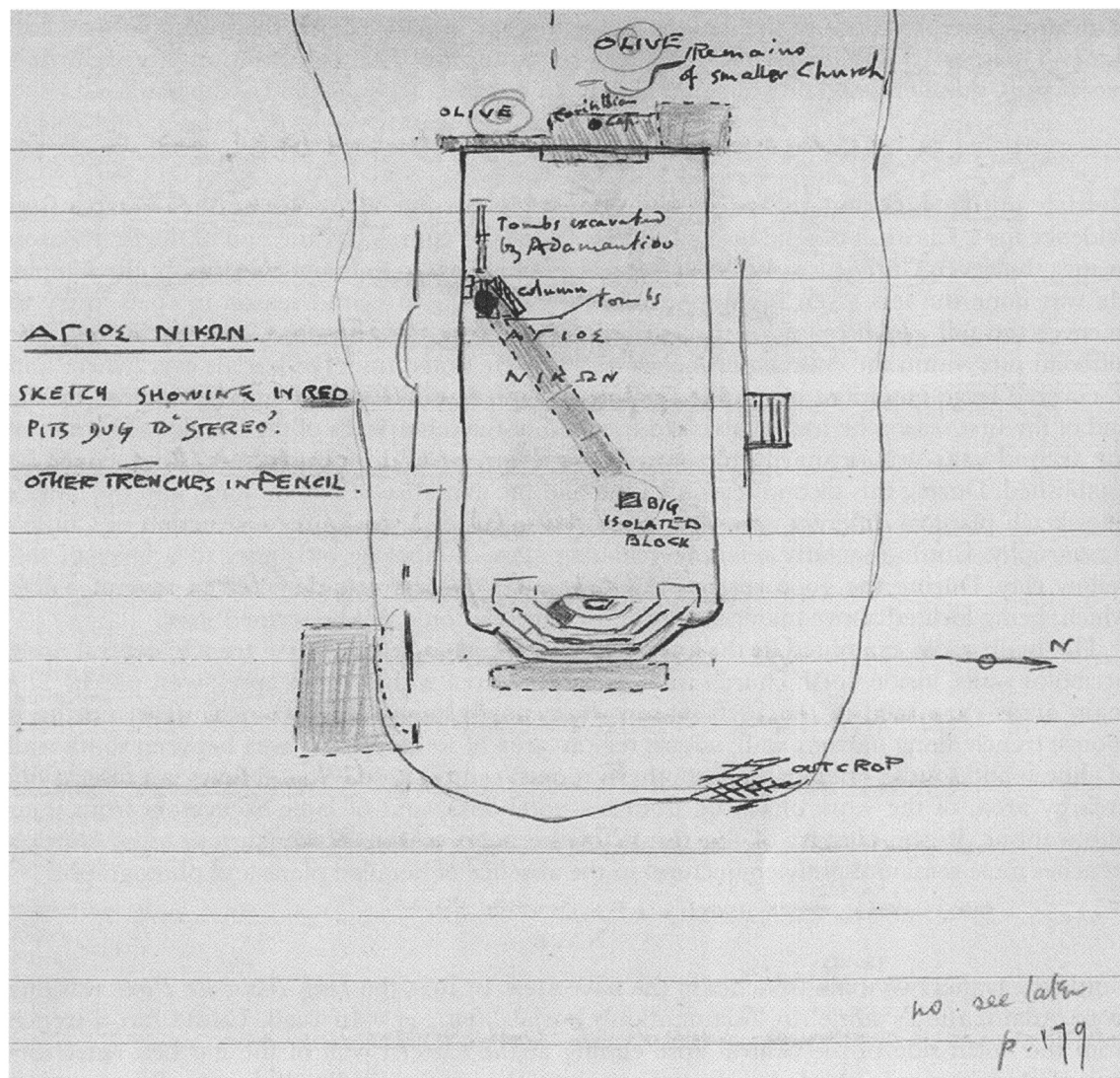


FIG. 7 Cuttle's plan indicating his excavation trenches.

The 1926 trench established the interior arrangement of the church. The north stylobate (PLATE 39 *a*) was found to consist of six columns spaced at equal distances. Bases of two of these columns were found *in situ* at the eastern end (PLATE 41 *c*), while dowel holes for three more were found. The stylobate block associated with the sixth dowel hole had evidently been robbed and would have originally been located at the western end of the stylobate. Cuttle notes that there were traces of red cement around the dowel hole (PLATE 43 *a*).⁵⁶ He was certain that there was a sixth column on the basis of the six on the south stylobate—evidently exposed and present at this time, presumably by the excavations of Adamantiou.

⁵⁶ This cement was still present in places in 2000.

Cuttle suggests that the stylobate blocks were reused because they vary in length. He also states that column bases are likely to have been reused, given that the two that were found were not identical. Furthermore, he found evidence for reuse of the nave. The space between the existing column bases was filled in with worked stones, and the space between the second base from the east and the space where the third would have been was also filled in with worked stones. The stone fill was photographed and removed.⁵⁷ This addition did not strictly follow the line of the stylobate: instead, it followed a line slightly to the north of the original stylobate. In support of Cuttle's theory of later reuse, there was evidence of later additions in the western end of the north aisle.

Cuttle notes that the line of the northern wall of the bema was not readily evident. Its plan is noted in some places by a thin line of mortar. Although the present wall in this area is obviously heavily reconstructed, it nonetheless corresponds to Cuttle's description.

While excavating a second trench, running north–south along the east wall of the narthex, Cuttle uncovered the entrance into the nave. This was a triple doorway of which only one doorpost survived, while dowel holes mark the position of the other posts. As with the stylobate, the threshold blocks were made up of reused masonry, as evidenced on the north side of the doorpost where a small slab was wedged in to fill the space created by ill-fitting reused blocks. The doorpost was removed at some later point and is among the architectural members recorded in the 2000 season.

2000 Season

The nave, *c.* 16.30 m × 6.80 m (from bema to narthex), is flanked on either side by stylobates. The northern stylobate (PLATE 41 *c*) is preserved almost intact with only the blocks of the east and western edges missing, while only five blocks are preserved on the southern example (PLATE 43 *a*). Cuttle accurately describes the stylobate and its cuttings but only four of the five column bases that Soteriou indicates on his plan are actually on site. The area on the south side, where the stylobate blocks had once been, was cleaned and the same smooth white cement as found in the apse (described below) was located where the blocks should have been, indicating that the stylobate terminated at the thick walls of the central apse and at the rectangular projecting walls of the east wall of the narthex (FIG. 2).

The entrance into the nave from the narthex remains as Cuttle described it, still bearing traces of red cement. The central threshold blocks are much more worn than the flanking ones, implying that the flanking doorways were used less frequently. Cuttle's peculiar doorpost is no longer *in situ*, but was located in the basilica and has been photographed and recorded along with the rest of the architectural features.⁵⁸ Several loose architectural fragments are now located in the nave.⁵⁹

During the cleaning of the nave an important discovery came to light. The remains of an almost circular feature composed of three flat tiles was identified (PLATE 43 *b*). Measurements taken and the plan drawn indicate that this feature is located in the centre of the nave on the same axis as the altar and the synthronon in the central apse. The position and shape of the tiles suggest that these are the very meagre remains of an ambo. Its position corresponds to

⁵⁷ We have yet been able to locate any photographs from either of Cuttle's seasons.

⁵⁸ Dr G. Sanders has suggested that this may have been of

Frankish date.

⁵⁹ These were recorded in detail and will be published in full in a forthcoming publication.

that in the seventh century basilica at Aboba.⁶⁰ Neither Cuttle nor Soteriou indicates any knowledge of the existence of an ambo, which may thus have been identified for the first time.

The current surface of the nave consists of closely packed earth with occasional tile inclusions. Additionally there are a number of different contexts visible. In places there are numerous patches of disintegrating cement overlying a layer of tile. Also visible are patches of lumpy cement, as seen in the central apse area. Patches of smooth cement occur particularly along the southern edge; in other areas a context consisting of a jumble of marble and ceramic tile cuts into the smooth cement layer (PLATE 40 *a*). Notably, this occurs in the south aisle and may be an indication of destruction. Perhaps these tiles are elements of the wall or vault decoration. However, the fact that the smooth cement layer is cut by the marble and tile context suggests that there were no floor tiles present at this point, which in turn implies that the church had gone out of use by the time of this destruction, or that the floor tiles had for some reason been removed. Further investigation is required here before this hypothesis can be confirmed.

Other contexts include hard yellow-orange clay, found along the west entrance and the east end of the north stylobate. Along the south edge of the stylobate is a context of loose brown soil. The former may indicate a foundation trench (which will need to be verified) and the latter may simply indicate tree pits or evidence of the first excavations at the church. The loose brown soil certainly would appear to be a fill.

CENTRAL APSE

In 1925, Cuttle cleaned the apse area, and in 1926 ran an east–west trench in a line from the synthronon to the western section of the altar base. This was later extended westwards to the western end of the bema in a search for the tempon balustrade. In the first season, the inner semi-circular passage (FIG. 7) was excavated until the cement floor was reached. Discovered on its south side, where the floor has partly collapsed, was burial evidence below floor level.

In 1926 the aim was to uncover the altar and the tempon screen. The east–west trench produced cement flooring which Cuttle considered to be the altar base (PLATE 40 *b*).⁶¹ No evidence of the screen being discovered, so Cuttle suggested that it had been made of wood. Levels were taken and a difference of 27 cm was found between the central apse and the western end of the nave. A pit to the south of Adamantiou's Stone was excavated and a wall was discovered consisting of dressed and unworked stones without mortar, together with tiles. The wall extended from the mid-point of the western edge of the bema northwards, ending around 7 cm from Adamantiou's Stone. The southern end of the wall was not found. Cuttle believed this to be the remains of a pre-church wall on the basis of its alignment and construction. The area along the wall was excavated to *stereo* but all he found associated with the church was a Greek lamp. This led him to connect the wall with a Hellenistic layer which he discovered in the south tower region (see later).

2000 season

The area of the apse was cleaned, and particular attention was paid to the place where the altar was located on Soteriou's plan, and the location where one would expect to find the

⁶⁰ Gkioles (n. 5).

⁶¹ Cuttle did not want to investigate any further as it would have meant sacrificing an olive tree in the area. He also left

olive trees in the area of the West Porch and in the south wall of the basilica.

remains of the screen separating the bema and the nave. The area of the synthronon and the *kyklion* was cleaned. Three steps on the west remain of the synthronon in addition to its well-preserved back wall (PLATE 40 *b*). The *kyklion* is reached by a step down from the main area of the bema, constructed using a single large dressed block. Cleaning exposed the floor of the *kyklion*, which consists of tiles and hard white cement and is largely preserved.

The shallow apses in the north and south walls of the bema have a radius of approximately 3.25 m. Each is pierced by a doorway (PLATE 45 *b*) leading into the *parabemata* (FIG. 2). Their outer corners are well built with smoothed, well-cut blocks. The north doorway is likely to have had a large slab serving as a threshold, whereas cleaning has shown that the south doorway had a tile threshold.

In the centre of the bema, the north and south foundation blocks for an altar were uncovered (PLATE 40 *b*). The interior space is filled with rubble and mortar. On the west side there is an extension (c. 1.35 m north–south and 0.70 m east–west), which may have been the foundation for a step up to the altar. Several contexts were exposed to the south of the altar, mostly consisting of floor and bedding levels.

Cuttle does not mention the discovery of different floor levels in this area, but evidence suggests that there may have been two floor types, one of slabs and another possibly of tile or *opus sectile* with patching made in the later floor type. At the highest level there is grey lumpy cement, which may indicate evidence for later floor patching. Preserved in some areas is the smooth, flat cement, probably bedding for floor slabs. This cement is badly disintegrating in many areas (PLATE 45 *a*). Below this is a tile layer which may be either a further bedding for the slab floor or a tile floor in its own right. Given its rough construction, the former seems more likely. It is unclear as yet whether the different floor types were contemporary and placed within different areas of the church or whether one type predates the other. It is unfortunate that Cuttle's descriptions of the two floor levels in the south room (see below) do not match those described above, as we cannot now firmly identify his findings with ours. Traces of wall plaster remain in patches along the apse wall and in the bema.

In the course of cleaning to find traces of a screen between the bema and the nave, a shallow trench (0.30 m) along the south side of the west edge of the bema revealed a north–south foundation made of stone, tile and mortar. Although the evidence cannot yet be said to be certain, the feature is a foundation either for a screen or for a step up. The presence of wall plaster on the eastern edge would support the possibility of a step at this point. This foundation is likely to be connected with that excavated by Cuttle when he investigated to the south of Adamantiou's Stone. The possibility of a step in this area would in part also explain Cuttle's differences in height between the western and eastern ends of the church.

If the foundation located by Cuttle, and then again during the 2000 season, is indeed that of a step, it still leaves us with the question of locating the screen. Following his two seasons, Cuttle buried many of the architectural fragments found during his excavation. It may be the case that any evidence for a screen has been buried, and that the recovery of these fragments will furnish our answer.

Wall Construction

The walls in this area are the standard for this basilica: built of stone (both unworked and reused), tile and cement, with the exception of the external *krepidoma*, which is made of poros and arranged in three steps with occasional tile, and small stone. Notable is a masonry style

that employs a small block surrounded by tile in a square arrangement imitating a cloisonné construction method. Although this is seen occasionally elsewhere in the basilica, it is more common in the central apse and in the Western complex than in other areas.

Discussion

There are a number of discrepancies between Soteriou's plan and the current evidence. The altar as suggested in Soteriou's plan is of a simple rectangular form. This is correct except for the addition of a small rectangular extension on its western side. On his plan, Soteriou notes foundations for four column bases around the altar, however no trace of these was discovered during the cleaning.⁶² Evidence for these columns would indicate the existence of a ciborium above the altar, whereas currently no evidence suggests this. Finally, Soteriou's plan suggests that the positioning of the altar is in line with the two eastern corners of the north and south conches in the bema, whereas it is actually located more to the east of these points.

NORTHERN ROOMS COMPLEX

NORTH APSE

Although in 1925 Cuttle began to clean the area of the north apse it was not until 1926 that he initiated any serious investigation of the area. Having established the line of the stylobate, he began to explore the area to the north of Adamantiou's Stone. Cuttle does not pay great attention to the north apse. He records a section of marble flooring in the south-west corner of the north apse. In this area, below floor level, he also discovered what he termed a vault, which he suggested might have been a repository for church vessels. Finds from this included a small bronze bowl, a silver(?)⁶³ pin with two beads, and fragments of glass mosaic, which is significant for the interpretation presented here.

2000 season

The current surface of this room is that of the standard hard-packed earth with occasional tile, although it cannot be assumed that this was the original floor of the room. Indeed, a floor of hard-packed earth and random tile seems most unlikely to represent the original floor. Small patches of terracotta flat tiles in cement bedding were exposed in the north-west corner of the room. A large limestone threshold block with two dowel holes is present in the west doorway between the two rooms of the complex. The narrow north doorway has a marble and tile threshold. The walls of the room are of the usual stone, brick, and mortar construction, while both doorways are articulated by massive squared blocks. The architectural features noted in the room are mostly of interest for the interpretation of the area's function. One of the features is the recessed apse in the south-east corner (PLATE 46 *a*). A lining of waterproof plaster suggests that this may have been used as a fountain lined with mosaic,⁶⁴ which may also explain why Cuttle found mosaic fragments in the area. Cuttle's repository, with its rounded mouth (PLATE 46 *b*), may in fact have been a well feature connected with the fountain

⁶² Soteriou 1939.

⁶³ Although for the most part Cuttle's notebook is legible, his description of the pin is not quite clear, although it is likely

that he is describing it as silver.

⁶⁴ Dr Kieran O'Connor alerted us to this possibility.

to the east via a possible pipe constructed below the wall separating the two features. It may be that there was drainage from this area via a pipe-system in the walls. Further support could come from a layer of gravel found between the north peribolos wall and the north annexe wall. Cuttle suggested this was for drainage, although he believed that it was from the roof rather than from the north apse. Large blocks are used more frequently than usual in the construction of this room, although at this point it is impossible to suggest why.

NORTH ROOM

Although it is likely that Cuttle cleaned this area of the basilica in 1925, there is no record of it in the notebooks. In excavating the 1926 North Longitudinal trench, the line of the apse, which continued to Adamantiou's Stone, was revealed. The wall was extensively robbed⁶⁵ but there was enough to show that it contained a conch with a doorway in the centre. Cuttle notes that this doorway provides access to the sanctuary from the north. In 1926, Cuttle cleared a portion of the eastern section of north wall of this room. The remainder of the wall was left unexcavated to protect an olive tree to the west. In following the north–south wall of this room, which divides it from the apse, he located an unfluted column fragment 0.55 m in diameter and surviving to a length of around *c.* 1 m. Within this north–south wall he discovered a doorway with its threshold in place, which had only soil below. As he worked to the north of Adamantiou's Stone, the western wall of the north room was revealed. Cuttle notes that it was slightly curved on leaving Adamantiou's Stone but then straightened up to join the north wall of the church. A little of the marble floor was preserved in the area of the doorway into the apse. In other areas, the cement flooring was occasionally preserved; elsewhere it was broken up or absent. Although Cuttle was prevented from excavating the full extent of the northern wall by the olive tree, digging in the north annexe allowed him to establish a full plan of the area.

2000 Season

Cuttle's supposition that the south wall of the north room and the north wall of the south room were particularly broad in order to support the weight of a dome may be correct. This hypothesis will be tested in a future season by creating images of possible architectural reconstructions of the basilica.

Of the three entrances into this room, two have been described already (see 'Central Apse'). The third entrance does not have a surviving threshold, although a photograph⁶⁶ shows a large slab as a threshold block in a doorway. This same photograph reveals that the area was very poorly preserved. The present walls have been heavily reconstructed. The west threshold is almost directly opposite the east and is of the same length and approximate thickness. The east threshold appears to rest directly on bedrock.

The south wall, i.e. the exterior part of the north conch of the central apse, is heavily reconstructed, which makes the exact identification of Adamantiou's Stone difficult. It may have been reset in a position different to its original one as defined by Cuttle. A cutting at the west corner of the wall of the south doorway may be the remnants of a niche but this remains unconfirmed. The continuation of the south wall to the west appears to lie on bedrock.

⁶⁵ In some areas Cuttle records that there were only a few cm of mortar where the stones would have stood. This is not the case now, which raises the question of the extent of

reconstruction in this area (see also the published plates in Soteriou 1939).

⁶⁶ Soteriou 1939, pl. 5.

NORTH ANNEXE

In 1925, Cuttle located north of the annexe a possible channel, already discussed above (see 'North Apse'), and to the east of the annexe evidence of several burials was recovered. In this area two architectural fragments were also recovered. Described tentatively in 1925 as a transept, in 1926 a section inside the southern wall of the north annexe was excavated in order to reconstruct the plan of the western wall of the north room. It was at this point that Cuttle realized that he had to deal with an annexe rather than a transept. Having dug the line of the south wall for about two metres from the eastern end of the annexe, the excavators had found no evidence for a doorway, which led Cuttle to believe that there was only a single entrance from outside the church. Soteriou's plan suggests that there was an entrance to the main church from this room; however, Cuttle's drawings of the church clearly indicate that there was no doorway.

2000 Season

An examination of the walls and their joins suggests that the north annexe is a later addition to the church. The eastern return of the north wall of the annexe clearly abuts the large north-west corner block of the northern apse (PLATE 47 *a*). The north wall of the north annexe does not contain the massive blocks of the north apse or the walls of the northern room;⁶⁷ instead there are finished and unworked stones and tile with mortar bonding. Given the level of restoration in all the walls of this area it is very difficult to judge phasing on masonry alone. Although the room's preserved floor surface is of the standard seen throughout the basilica, areas of rough tile flooring are found inside the west doorway and along the south wall. The tiles, tightly packed with no real evidence for cement, are not similar to floors levels found in other areas of the church. An entrance from the west is made of tile and flat stones. Although Soteriou specifies an entrance from the annexe into the north aisle, and on site an entrance here looks possible, further examination of this supposed doorway suggests there would have been a wall here, which may represent the original continuation of the east-west line of the north wall of the church. Cuttle clearly states that there was only a single doorway into this room from the west. The level of wall-reconstruction in this area makes it very difficult to say with any certainty whether there was a doorway from the north annexe into the main body of the church and if there was if this was created with the addition of the north annexe or after its construction. Although we have included this southern doorway on our plan until more testing can be done, the original existence of this doorway remains tentative.

THE NORTH AISLE AND NORTH TERRACE

Excavating in 1926 as part of the North Longitudinal trench, Cuttle discovered that there was a pier at the western end of the narthex wall, which is in line with the columns of the stylobate. This pier was heavily robbed on its northern side. Traces of wall plaster were discovered in this section, in front of which were found some poorly mortared bricks and tiles to a height of 0.20 m. Cuttle believed this to be the remains of a reuse of the area. Particularly he mentions the possibility of it having been converted into a 'Turkish' instructional side apartment. In the north aisle ash was uncovered around the stylobate (and also discovered in the nave), which Cuttle attributes to later use. Noted finds were bone and architectural fragments.

⁶⁷ Both of these walls have been heavily reconstructed (Soteriou 1939, pl. 5).

2000 Season

The area of the north church wall was heavily cleaned and no real traces of the exterior church wall are visible. Only a section at the eastern and western ends remains (FIG. 2). From the remains it seems that the wall was constructed using field stones and tile, bonded with mortar. A doorway in the north wall of the basilica marked on Soteriou's plan is no longer in evidence and is difficult to explain. Perhaps he found evidence for an original doorway here that was later blocked (PLATE 47 *b*). This suggests that Soteriou's primary aim in drawing his plan was to represent a single phase of the church's use. Later consolidation in this area makes it difficult to resolve this question.

Some light cleaning was carried out in the north terrace, to the north of the north church wall. The current surface consists of the standard hard-packed earth, though patches of hard lumpy cement occur throughout. The presence of cement in this area of the church may be connected with much later reuse of the area. Two areas of loose brown soil are likely to be fills of later pits. Cuttle's jumble of stone bricks and mortar abutting against the south-west corner of the aisle can serve as evidence. It appears to be a much later addition to the aisle but without excavation it is impossible to date this phase, since recent consolidation work has covered the masonry.

The eastern end of the aisle, once cleaned, proved to be of great interest. Although little can be confirmed as yet, the arrangement of a block and a small section of wall may indicate evidence for an earlier entrance into the church (PLATE 47 *b*), perhaps in association with the possible earlier steps (see below) (PLATE 48 *a*).

In a small section cleaned to the south of the north wall, traces of yellow sticky clay were uncovered which may indicate a foundation trench. There is little evidence now for the graves marked on Soteriou's plan; another inconsistency is that Soteriou does not indicate the clearly evident doorway that opens from the narthex into the north aisle.

SOUTHERN ROOMS

Cuttle had two objectives on the southern side of the basilica: to determine the lines of the walls, and to investigate the relationship of the south tower (his so-called minaret) to the main church building. Cuttle was convinced that the south tower was a later addition but that it reused the original south wall of the church in its construction. In excavating a number of pits he wanted to provide evidence in support of his theory.

THE SOUTH APSE

Cuttle clearly states that he did not excavate the interior of this room and that he did no more than follow the walls for the purpose of a plan. In other areas he appears to have investigated the rooms in more detail, in some cases by digging substantial trenches.

2000 Season

The walls of the south apse are constructed to the usual standard, with partly finished and unworked stones and brick with mortar (PLATE 44 *a*). Occasionally the brick is vertically aligned, but more often it is horizontal. The southern wall varies slightly in that rough cloisonné was used in its construction. The exterior of the apse is partially composed of well-worked squared blocks. Numerous reused blocks are found in its south and north walls and one large block is used to define the doorway between the two rooms of the south complex. Nothing remains of the threshold other than fragments of the bedding level. Two squared niches are cut into the south face of the north wall of the room. The westernmost one starts

from surviving ground level whereas the other is around a metre above ground level. Both niches extend to the surviving height of the wall. The surviving surface level of the apse after cleaning is of hard-packed earth with the occasional cement fleck.

Discussion

Cuttle did not spend much time in this area, but Soteriou indicates a doorway in the south wall of the south apse, whose existence cannot presently be verified, as the masonry is covered by modern consolidation work. It is easy to see why he may have contemplated a doorway at this location: it would have been directly opposite to a corresponding one on the north side and, on the evidence of the existing wall itself, it is just possible to make out an edge which could have formed the eastern edge of the doorway. In its current state however, this evidence is too intangible to use as conclusive proof.

It is likely that there are at least two phases of wall construction in the south apse: these will certainly be connected with the construction of the south tower. Different construction phases are visible at the point where the south wall returns to the north and then returns again to continue as the south wall of the church. If there was originally a doorway in the south wall into this room it may have been blocked off in order to accommodate the construction of the south tower after the original foundation of the church.

THE SOUTH ROOM

In 1925, a pit was dug on the inside of the south church wall in what is now known as the southern room (termed '1925 Minaret Pit' by Cuttle) (FIG. 8). The pit was located at the point opposite the entrance to the south tower. On the west side of the pit, and about 0.50 m behind the south church wall, some masonry was located which Cuttle interpreted as the lower part of a pier supporting the dome, although it was not in line with that excavated by Adamantiou (termed 'big isolated block' on plan) (FIG. 4). In 1926, they discovered that this so-called southern pier was totally isolated from both the southern church wall and the western wall of the south room. In its current state this is no longer the case and this will be discussed further below. According to Cuttle's findings, unlike the north side, the south wall of the church and the west wall of the south room do not directly connect, the space between is filled with earth and covered in plaster. Cuttle suggests that this pier may belong to an earlier construction, which was later incorporated into the church. The southern wall of the room was found to have been pierced by a doorway (corresponding to that in the northern room), the tiled⁶⁸ threshold of which rested on earth. A supposed buttress of stones and mortar (extending towards the north-west on FIG. 8) was also discovered. Cuttle does not offer an explanation for it in 1925, but in 1926, following more work in the area he suggests that the three courses of wall are related to an earlier Roman building to be associated with the large number of Roman finds from the immediate area. Several levels were located in this area: the church floor, which was indicated by a line of cement; a layer of yellow clay; and then a Roman level with many finds, which encouraged Cuttle in his theory of pre-Christian occupation on the site of the church. Finds here included mask fragments, terracottas, Roman pottery (Arretine), a stamped brick and several doll-like figurines (some Roman and some later). Cuttle believed that the reason why these finds were not so prolific elsewhere was because of levelling.

In 1926, work in this area was continued with the excavation of two other pits (FIG. 4). Whereas in the area along the church wall the floor was found to be in very bad condition, it

⁶⁸ Cuttle removed the tiles.

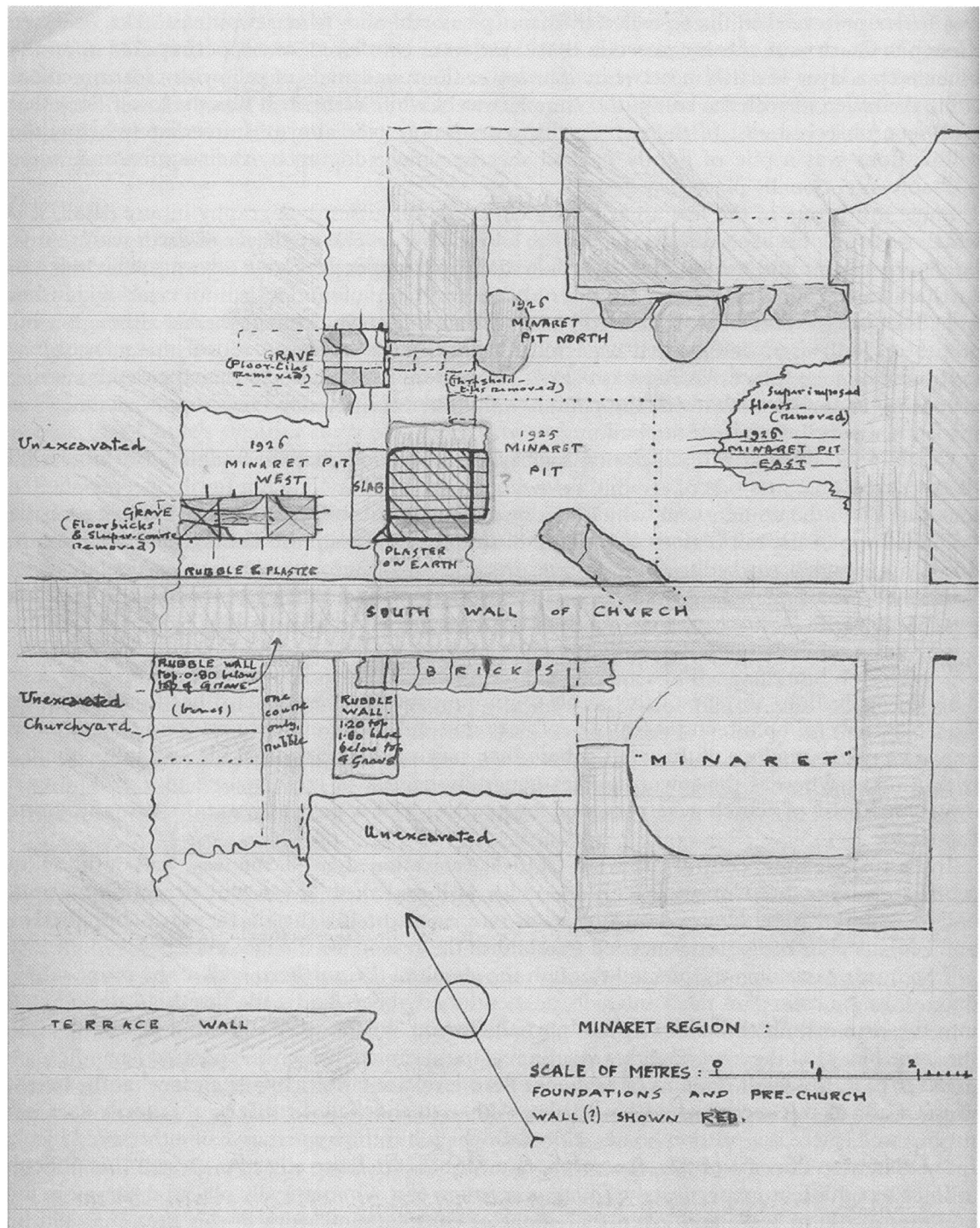


FIG. 8 Plan of the so-called Minaret Pit Complex (drawn by de Jong).

was better preserved in the so-called 'Minaret pit north' and 'Minaret pit east' (FIG. 8). From these pits Cuttle was able to ascertain that there were two floors, one superimposed upon the other with a layer of earth in between. The lower floor was made of yellowish-creamy cement while the other, as with the rest of the church, was of white cement. It was the lower floor that had been observed east of the pier in the years before (see above). Immediately below the yellow floor was a pile of tightly packed sherds, which judging by their appearance were probably intentionally placed.

Since this is one of the few areas for which Cuttle discusses stratigraphy in any detail, it is worth reporting his observations. Below the lowest floor level was a layer of earth with sherds, bone, terracotta, and ashes. This layer extended to a depth of about 0.30 m. After this the earth changed to look like *stereo*, but after an interval Cuttle found a 'fruitful layer' with ashes in its lowest part. He observed that this layer contained mostly Roman sherds, although some earlier of Hellenistic date, which occurred in a thin layer sitting on top of the *stereo* (yellow earth and in some places 'as hard as rock'). There were two 'fruitful' strips, the depth varying according to the distance from the church wall. The interposed yellow (supposed *stereo*) was thicker towards the north of the building.

Cuttle believed that this supported his earlier suggestion that the builders of the church banked up the sloping side of the hill, throwing up the soil they dug out for the deeply planted foundations of the church wall, which go down some way into *stereo*. Further evidence for the original slope of the hill is given by the use of stones to shore up the foundations at all points. Some are roughly worked and others are unworked. At various points, in particular in the 'Minaret' discussions, Cuttle talks about the slope and its levelling-off. At present it is not possible to verify Cuttle's analysis of a constant management of the slope.

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The surviving floor surface of the south room consisted of the standard hard-packed earth. There are several architectural features of note that differentiate the room from the northern one. The upper sections of the walls, where they survive, use horizontal tile and stone bonded with mortar, whereas the lower courses generally consist of large reused blocks. The west doorway, most of which was removed by Cuttle, had a partially extant tile and stone threshold.

In its current state, contrary to what Cuttle's excavation showed, the west wall of the south room appears to be connected with the south wall and there is no evidence of Cuttle's so-called isolated pier. Heavy consolidation can account for the discrepancy but further archaeological investigation is needed to establish the reason for the inconsistency.

The north-east doorway, pierced through the conch of the northern wall of the room, which defines the sanctuary on the south side, as mentioned above, had a tile threshold stepping up into the bema. Both tiles and step are partially extant. In the western end of the north wall, the large blocks of the lower courses form a rectangular niche which is 0.95 m wide and *c.* 0.70 m deep. In it, the scant remains of a cement floor level are visible. It is unclear what the height of the walls of this niche would have been. Although the wall directly to the north does not survive well, there is a portion of a marble slab which has the appearance of a threshold block. Immediately to the east of this, the surviving wall has a definite edge. At present it is difficult to interpret this feature accurately. There is no trace of a symmetrically placed doorway in the opposite northern wall, and given the extent of consolidation work in this area it would be difficult to prove its existence. Additionally, a second doorway in the lower courses of a broad wall would have considerably weakened it, particularly when taking into account that it may

have had to carry the weight of a dome (see below). There is a possibility that there were two phases in this area. The niche feature may have been the original doorway from the south room into the central apse, which may have subsequently been blocked or remodelled to accommodate the south apsidal wall of the sanctuary. Although an attractive explanation, this supposition is based on the possibility that the semicircular walls of the bema belong to a later phase, for which we have no tangible evidence.

Discussion

Cuttle discusses a so-called buttress (FIG. 8) which he discovered in 1926 and attributed to an earlier Roman building on the site. He developed this theory a little further to suggest that in combination with the evidence of the quantity of figurines found in this area, this represented evidence for a form of cottage industry for making terracotta figurines. However, he does not develop his theory nor does he suggest further evidence to support it. He does not offer any proposals for the stratigraphical or architectural relationship between the buttress and the rest of the area, nor does he define the relationship between the terracottas and the buttress. On this basis alone we cannot assume that Cuttle's theories carry any weight. In order to ascertain if there is evidence for a substantial Roman phase in this area, more archaeological investigation is required.

Regarding Soteriou's plan, it is difficult to relate it with the current state of the south room. He does not indicate the existence of the niche area and he indicates the east and west walls of this room in a hatched line as if they were not definitely there. It is not clear from the surviving evidence why he omitted the niche area, but more difficult to comprehend is why he had doubts about the existence of the west and east walls of the room. As Cuttle had found evidence for these walls and drew them on his plan (albeit without any doorways) there must have been some clear indications of their existence by the time Soteriou began his work on the church. Because of the opposing early evidence of the existence of the walls and doorways and the modern reconstruction work in this area, we cannot be completely sure of the original plan of the church. This is problematic for our discussions of use of space, given that doorways and access routes play such a key part in such a debate. There is a significant number of questions that have been raised concerning this area regarding phasing and architecture, at this point these questions can only be address following further archaeological investigation.

SOUTH AISLE

By the manner of its excavation, the south aisle (and specifically its eastern end) is to be associated with the work in the south room and the area Cuttle termed the 'minaret region' (FIG. 8). In 1925, during the excavation of the south wall, Roman pottery, terracottas and some coins were found; additionally, significant quantities of bone and coffin nails were also found in the fill. Cuttle believed that these finds may have originally been from Adamantiou's excavation of the graves in the south aisle. For the purposes of planning, walls were defined in the area of the doorway into the south aisle from the narthex and around the south apse. In the south-west corner of the south aisle, Cuttle's team excavated to below floor level. By the end of the 1925 season, the south wall had been cleared, which meant that only the eastern end of the south aisle awaited completion (at the south tower), where Cuttle says there was a higher depth of deposit than elsewhere in this region. Some architectural fragments were recovered.

During the 1926 season, Cuttle wished to extend the 1925 'minaret pit', which he did in the area of the south aisle (FIG. 8). A grave⁶⁹ immediately inside the south wall of the church was

⁶⁹ There were no bones.

discovered, somewhat impeding the investigation. Undeterred however, the excavators broke through the brick floor of the grave to reveal a bedding layer and below this, in a soft-yellow layer, a fair quantity of Roman pottery including amphora bases, two bits of figurines, and a bronze object (possibly a pin). Below this there was a row of three blocks, two of which had two holes each, associated with finds such as coarse pottery, black glaze pottery, metal objects, animal bone, and ash. This suggested to Cuttle that they had found more evidence for a pre-Christian domestic site, although he did note that the stones were not *in situ*; they may nonetheless have come from a single building. Later excavation showed that the stones which had been reused from a different context, were put there to support the basilica's position on a sloping site. The area then became too narrow for further testing. Cuttle's plan of the area indicates the location of a second grave to the north of the west doorway of the south room, which had been covered with floor tiles (FIG. 4).

2000 Season

(PLATES 40 *a*, 44 *b–c*). Despite the previous excavation of four graves, two by Adamantiou in the south-west corner and Cuttle's two in the east, following our season of cleaning only evidence for the easternmost of Adamantiou's graves remains, which was lined with tiles. Access from the narthex was through a doorway around 1.60 m wide where the remains of a flat tile threshold survive. Unlike those in other areas, these larger tiles could be considered flagging. In the south wall a doorway with a large marble threshold for double doors is still present. These doors gave access from the south terrace, where a column base survives, indicating the existence of a substantial propylon attached to the exterior of the south wall of the basilica. Remains of a stairway are also present.

Although the surviving surface is mostly of loose brown soil, which may be the backfill of previous excavation, several contexts came to light in the eastern area. A photograph published by Soteriou⁷⁰ shows that some of the original stone slabs of the aisle floor survived in his time. These are now nowhere in evidence; instead, cleaning brought to light the smooth white cement we believe to have been the bedding for the stone slabs (PLATE 44 *b*). Below this layer can be seen a patchy layer of crumbly cement. This is likely to be the disintegrating bedding cement. Cut into this smooth cement just to the south of the stylobate is a layer of tile and marble tile identical to that in the nave (discussed above). In another section, between the two types of cement just mentioned, there is a level of red pebbly material (tiny sherd fragments ?) (PLATE 44 *c*) which lies below a layer of dark ashy soil. The latter, in turn, abuts the smooth cement level. This looks like the bedding level for a different type of floor, which may have been of mosaic or *opus sectile*. Cuttle mentions finding occasional clumps of tesserae. It may be the case that an earlier mosaic floor went into disrepair, was cleared, and then replaced by the slab floor. These tesserae fragments might alternatively represent fragments of wall mosaics; their poor survival rate suggests that they could have been part of a floor which had been deliberately cleared to make way for a new floor.⁷¹ It is also possible to say that there were at least two floor levels and that there had been a destruction at some time after the removal of at least some of the floor plaques (PLATE 40 *a*) (discussed further below).

Although the southern room complex and the eastern end of the south aisle was one of the areas in which Cuttle excavated a number of exploratory trenches, as yet we have not been

⁷⁰ Soteriou 1939, 109 fig. 3.

⁷¹ If the tesserae were from wall mosaics it is likely that they would have survived in greater number, unless there

were specific areas of wall mosaic. Without an examination of the tesserae themselves, it would be difficult to say with certainty whether they were wall or floor mosaics.

able to define, through soil changes, their exact location on the ground. We hope with further investigation in this area to be able to do this.

South Tower Region

Excavated in 1925 and in 1926, this area was first examined to discover the relationship between the church and the south tower. Cuttle supposed that the eastern wall of the south tower belonged to the original construction of the church, corresponding to a similar wall on the northern side; he also believed that he could recognize earlier Byzantine work in the lower courses inside the south tower. He discovered a doorway on the western side of the squared tower that he believed had been blocked with a piece of mortared masonry which had been tightly fitted in. On the inside the walls were rounded, with the exception of the western side, which is part of the south wall of the church. He notes that this wall widens slightly opposite the entrance to the south tower. By 1926, Cuttle had decided that there was originally no transept on the south side and that he could not define any differences between possible Turkish and Byzantine masonry. However, he notes that on the south side of the south tower a small quantity of Roman pottery was used to fill the interstices between the stones of the wall.

2000 Season

The interior of the south tower is round with a circular pillar in the centre and a short connecting wall to the south-east outside corner (PLATE 49 *a*). This connecting wall is not bonded into the south-east corner. In the doorway identified by Cuttle in the west wall, there is no evidence of a threshold but it does have a face on the north edge. The entire construction is of smallish stones, both field and roughly squared, and bricks, virtually all horizontal and bonded with mortar.

Along the southern wall of the south tower, a wall not indicated on Soteriou's plan was uncovered during the cleaning work. Oriented east–west, it makes a return to the north at the south-east corner of the south tower. A second wall, attached to the north side of the first wall, extends along the same line to the east. The cleaning required to expose this wall was too extensive to be within the bounds of our permit, so that its size and nature are as yet unclear. The east–west wall appears to be an earlier feature and the south wall of the south tower clearly reuses this wall as a foundation level. Judging by the south face of the existing south peribolos wall, the east–west wall is not a direct continuation of it. It is possible, therefore, that this wall is to be associated with an earlier structure older than the south tower and perhaps also even than the basilica itself. Alternatively, this wall may represent evidence for a transept or part of an earlier peribolos wall. Indeed, the return of the wall to the south of the south tower seems to be in line with the doorway indicated on Soteriou's plan, in the southern wall of the south apse (FIG. 2). It is likely that the south tower is a later addition and in using a section of the south wall, part of the south wall was rebuilt to accommodate the later structure.

NARTHEX

In 1925, in the Narthex area Cuttle's team concentrated on clearing the west wall of the church complex (i.e. the west wall of the narthex). The western, exterior face was completely exposed, while the eastern, interior face was partly revealed. Through this investigation, Cuttle found that the wall had a core of brick and stone and a marble facing on the exterior,

much of which had been robbed. Cuttle notes the discovery of a marble carved fragment⁷² built into the wall and a fragment of an inscription which was found loose outside the church wall.

In 1926, a trench along the narthex wall (i.e. the east wall of the narthex) revealed the triple-doorway into the nave and a single remaining doorpost (FIG. 2). The doorpost stood on a base similar to that of the stylobate, and dowel holes mark the positions of the other posts. On the north side of the doorpost a small slab had been wedged in, as the threshold did not properly fit the dimensions. The position of the dowel holes indicated the position of the other posts. The narthex wall is better preserved on the southern than on the northern side. Many worked marbles were discovered in this wall; for example, Inscription no. 2873 and an unsculptured triglyph block.

A subsidiary doorway from the narthex into the south aisle was also uncovered: this had a tile threshold. Along this line (in the south aisle) going eastwards, Cuttle found two fragments of column 6 as well as the cutting for the stylobate. A similar column fragment had been found along this line in the 1925 transverse trench. No other evidence suggests that Cuttle excavated in the narthex proper.

2000 Season

The walls in this area are all constructed from tile, stone, and mortar. Heavy consolidation has been carried out in the past, placing in doubt any observations on the present state. There are three doorways in the east wall, discussed above, and one each in the north, south and west walls. The threshold of the west doorway does not survive, but a two-column propylon to the west incorporating this doorway would have formed a monumental entrance to the basilica. The southern threshold appears to have been heavily consolidated, if not relaid: it presently consists of large tile and stone tile fragments. The threshold in the north doorway is poorly preserved, but it seems to have been constructed with stone tile and tile bonded in cement. Three benches are incorporated in the west wall of the narthex: two internal, north and south, and one external, in the north. Although they have been consolidated, all appear to be original. Cuttle mentions only the external bench. To the north of the internal northern bench a niche structure is created. Here, Soteriou seems to have been accurate in interpreting this feature as blind niches. An equivalent southern niche seems to have been converted to a doorway on the addition of the west annexe (PLATE 49 *b*).

In cleaning the surface of the narthex several contexts were exposed. The main surface area is of hard-packed clay with occasional tile and cement flecks. A rectangular foundation of tile and cement is located in the centre of the narthex oriented in line with the east and west doorways. A slate slab in the south doorway of the church presently lies directly on the earth with no foundation, so that we cannot say whether or not it is *in situ*. A rectangular area of cement, lined in places with tile, survives to the north of the central east doorway. Other contexts in the area consist of a loose brown fill, hard lumpy cement and disintegrating cement. Scant remains of floor tiles with slash marks are found just to the east of the north bench, which Cuttle attributed to a floor level. There is evidence for at least two floor levels and perhaps also later patching. Likely excavation trenches were located along the walls, and other areas of loose brown soil may be indicative of tree pits. A number of different contexts were tentatively discovered which deserve further investigation in the future.

⁷² This piece was located in the 2000 season and will be discussed in full in a forthcoming article on the architectural

fragments of the basilica.

WEST PORCH

The entire plan of the west porch and west annexe was uncovered in 1925. As will be seen from the details of our 2000 study below, it seems that Cuttle misinterpreted this area right from the beginning. Starting from the south, the west annexe was cleared as far as possible without touching an olive tree located in the southern corner. A long strip of floor, originally thought to be a wall, was located on the east side of the west annexe, and a second patch was found to the north of the small doorway.

The porch was flanked on either side by a column base and along the west side a small doorway was found which had two slabs as a threshold, one of which was removed in the search for inscriptions. The wall of the south side of the porch (i.e. the north wall of the west annexe) was solid with no doorway. Eventually Cuttle determined that there was no north wall⁷³ but that to the west of the area where it should have been located was a row of flat bricks, perhaps related to a tomb. Evidence for a burnt layer, large amounts of debris, and a fragment of an unfluted column tilted to the north-east convinced Cuttle that stone robbers had used explosives which blew the sides of the porch outwards. In the fill of the porch he recovered fragments of painted wall plaster in blue and other colours, but no floor belonging to the porch was uncovered.

2000 Season

When Cuttle discussed the porch, he was referring to the area immediately west of the narthex entrance. This is rather confusing, given the paucity of substantial evidence for a constructed porch in this area. This porch would have formed the western monumental entrance to the basilica. Two bases for columns mark the north and south extent of the porch (PLATE 49 *b*). All that remains of the north line of the porch is a single squared block. Embedded in the wall of the west annexe is the southern column of the porch.

It would not be immediately clear that the west annexe is later than the construction of the narthex, especially because of the heavy consolidation, were it not for the apparent destruction of part of the west wall of the narthex to accommodate this building. The walls are not preserved to any great height: they go from a maximum of 1 m to as low as 0.15 m. They are mostly constructed using field stones and tile, in addition to some very large reused blocks (PLATE 49 *b*). Although the walls of the basilica are mostly made up of a combination of the above, the masonry of the west annexe walls bears similarities with the existing south peribolos wall.

There are likely to have been two doorways within this small room: one on each of the west and east sides.⁷⁴ There is no obvious explanation for the peculiar pier which extends southwards from the west wall of the west annexe. In the centre there is a circular feature 45 cm in diameter made of tile, fieldstones, and cement, which Cuttle does not refer to, despite having spent some time excavating the area. Soteriou suggested it was part of a staircase leading to the galleries. The surface is of loose brown soil, with two areas of hard-packed clay and occasional cement fleck in the west doorway and along the east wall. The latter is an area that Cuttle specifically noted as having a section of preserved floor.

It is possible that the west annexe is contemporary with the west building; even if this is not the case, it seems likely that it was connected with it architecturally. An arch may have been constructed between the east wall of the West Complex and the west annexe. Such a link may

⁷³ Cuttle originally believed that there was a wall here and that it had been badly robbed out; he later changed his mind.

⁷⁴ It is noted in the discussion on the narthex that it looks as though a wall had been removed in this area in order to create an access point between the narthex and porch.

at some point have provided access from the stairway in the western complex to the upper galleries of the basilica.

SOUTH TERRACE

In 1925, Cuttle suggested that the south peribolos was later than the rest of the church. He supported his argument by noting that the return of the south peribolos wall joins the west church wall at its south-west corner in a mortared but unbonded abutment (FIG. 2). He also noted a number of architectural fragments built into the wall, including a theatre seat. The south peribolos wall ends abruptly just to the west of the south tower.

Finds encountered in excavating to the base of the south peribolos wall included a clay communion chalice, a possible spearhead, and a drain pipe (the last located just to the west of the apse), in addition to two Ionic capitals and a possible unfinished Doric capital. The trench, although deep (2.35 m at the eastern end), extended only 1 m from the south peribolos wall. Cuttle recorded two buttresses built up against the lower courses of the south peribolos wall, although precise locations were not recorded.

While excavating the south wall of the church, Cuttle expected to find a transept wall from the south wall equivalent to the transept on the north side. However, instead he found the south wall of the south tower at just over 3 m away. In 1926, as part of the 'minaret pit' excavations, Cuttle examined an area between the south peribolos wall and the south church wall, uncovering a number of jumbled burials and building debris. Here the church wall was lined with a layer of mortar, stones and sherds to a thickness and height of *c.* 0.25 m, faced with plaster. On a plan of the area (FIG. 4), Cuttle noted the area of the bones in addition to a low rubble wall and a second rubble wall to the west of the south tower.

2000 Season

Owing to the presence of a number of graves in the south terrace area (PLATE 50 *a*), only very light cleaning was undertaken. Three graves excavated during mural consolidation in 1993 are still exposed in the western section. The western return of the south peribolos was exposed, and in doing so almost immediately a grave cut was located. An investigation at the eastern end of the wall was undertaken in order to reveal its continuation. The result was the discovery of the early wall below the south tower, discussed above. The south peribolos wall and the south church wall vary in height and construction along their lengths. Despite their heavy consolidation (PLATE 50 *b*), several architectural fragments built in into the walls are obvious (FIG. 1).

In the eastern section of the terrace, Cuttle's north-south rubble wall is still visible, although we cannot yet determine its function or, indeed, date (PLATE 50 *b*). It is located at a section of the south wall that appears to have undergone some reconstruction, perhaps even to be connected with the construction of the south tower.

It is clear that the upper portion of the south peribolos wall has been robbed and it is possible that some of the loose architectural blocks are rejects from the stone-robbing operation. The wall is constructed using large blocks placed upright; in the intervening spaces there is a filling of smaller stones placed together longitudinally (this also includes column fragments). Small interstices are filled with either whole or half bricks (the whole bricks placed longitudinally and the half bricks placed obliquely). The upper sections use smaller unworked stone, tile and mortar. A semicircular apse in the south peribolos wall, lying directly south of the south aisle entrance, is pierced by what appears to be a drainage channel.

Cuttle noted a similarity between the construction of the south peribolos wall and the Late Roman wall around the acropolis.⁷⁵ The inside face of the south peribolos wall is quite different as it lacks the large blocks and architectural fragments of the outside face. At varying heights the wall was pierced by square openings (putt-lug holes).

NORTH PERIBOLOS WALL

The north peribolos wall presented more difficulties than that of the south. Cuttle began work from the eastern end and found traces of it projecting 7.40 m past the eastern end of the north annexe. Burials were exposed between the north apse wall and the north peribolos wall and these seem to have been dug into stereo. Only 0.30 m separates the east wall of the north annexe and the north peribolos wall—not enough space for burials, and Cuttle suggested that this space was used rather as a water channel, conducting rain water from the roof. The evidence for this was a line of gravel which he felt was suggestive of this purpose. The only break in the north peribolos wall is for the stairway, occurring about 1 m after the return of the north wall of the north annexe.

East of the stairway, Cuttle suggested that the wall had been reinforced on the outside by another piece of masonry about 0.55 m broad and 1.65 m long. Its foundations, continuing east to an unknown extent, were not as deep as those of the wall itself. Cuttle implied that the masonry was later than the peribolos wall, perhaps built to counteract the stress at the opening of the doorway, but it seems more likely that these are the remains of an earlier stepped entrance into the basilica, as discussed in more detail below. The north peribolos wall continued west, beyond the stairway, on a slightly different line. In terms of excavation, the north peribolos wall was not as fully investigated as the south, a number of discrete pits having been dug east and west of the stairway.

A buttress occurs at 2.60 m west of the stairway and stands 2.10 m high. The foundations for this projects 0.30–0.40 m and is 0.10–0.20 m deep. West of the second buttress, the wall bends slightly southwards, continues for 3.40 m and then bends back 0.30 m, continuing with a slight southern slant. More burials were discovered immediately west of the stairway, on the inside of the wall.

Investigations along the length of the wall uncovered further buttresses. Cuttle noted that the north peribolos wall runs on past the north-west corner of the church, becoming less distinct after about 3 m, with the foundations nearer the surface. On the basis of the wall, he reconstructed the original slope as follows.

1. It begins to become steep by the west wall of the church (and it is from this point eastwards that the buttresses are present).
2. There would have been five buttresses in all, placed at regular intervals along the outside of the wall.
3. The peribolos wall becomes merged in a ‘confused mass of stones’, and so Cuttle did not attempt to follow it beyond the western point where a rough un-mortared field wall was found running north–south. In this mass of stones were found several worked stones, including an Amazon relief, a lion head spout fragment, a piece of fluted column and the gable top of a stele (this last piece was built into the wall) (TABLE 1).

Most of the wall was not dug deeper than 0.80 m, since in some places the surface was visible enough to trace the line of the wall.

⁷⁵ Although similarities can be drawn, little in terms of conclusive dating evidence can be deduced from this observation.

A pit was dug 10 m west of the stairway and *c.* 0.70 m down. Cuttle found a burial layer, and in it burnt bone and a clinker. Other finds included a bronze fragment and pottery (Arretine, Hellenistic, and one fragment of pottery preserved within its body an iron lead rivet).

A second pit was dug inside the north church wall (in the north terrace), 5 m east of the west wall. This established the inside line of the wall at this point and also the existence of a cross wall. There were traces of burials and also, lying face downwards, a slab with a cross in low relief. These were given museum numbers, and included one with a Byzantine carving of a bird, lion and cross (PLATE 41 *b*). Numerous marbles were reburied, although a list was kept.

2000 Season

During cleaning in the eastern section of the north terrace, a level of hard brown soil was revealed with some interesting features. In the north-east corner, directly south of the stairway in the north peribolos wall, a narrow wall with a single course was defined. This is the continuation of the west wall of the stairway. Just under 1 m to the south along the same orientation a large flat square cut limestone block was exposed against the north wall of the basilica. To the east, aligned with the eastern side of the north stairway, two architectural fragments were exposed at surface level: one is a column base, the other a broken block. This last would have been squared with a smooth flat surface, and the remains of a small ledge are visible (PLATE 47 *b*). It may represent a threshold block. The arrangement of these architectural fragments gives the appearance of a doorway. It may have formed an earlier entrance associated with a wall, incorporated in the north peribolos wall, directly east of the existing stairway. At first glance, the latter looks to be a reinforcing wall. However, on closer inspection it appears to be a flight of steps (PLATE 48 *a*), as identified by Kieran O'Connor. These steps may have been the original entrance into the church.

The north peribolos wall appears to have several phases with slight differences in construction. For example, the western end of the wall seems to contain less brick and less rough cloisonné than the eastern section, and the break seems to be at the point of the long buttress. The foundations of the buttress as uncovered by Cuttle are, notably, at exactly the same level as the foundations for the reinforcing wall. They suggest that further investigation of the peribolos wall is necessary to confirm that the western part is later than the eastern and is contemporary with the reinforcement block.

On his plan, Soteriou suggests evidence for between seven and nine buttresses. There are certainly three on the eastern side of the steps, one of which reuses the Early Christian carving of two peacocks (PLATE 41 *b*). To the west of the steps there is a single buttress, followed by the long buttress (FIG. 2) and three further smaller ones. At the point of the long buttress the peribolos wall makes a slight turn towards the south, which is not indicated on Soteriou's plan.

The wall's western extension from the point of the narthex does not survive and the eastern is also mostly destroyed. The remains here show that it would have sat directly on the rock outcrop. There is no trace of a return to the south, as suggested on Soteriou's plan; furthermore, research at the northern side of the *krepidoma* did not reveal any traces of an eastern peribolos wall, where Soteriou proposed that it terminated.

THE WEST COMPLEX⁷⁶

Cuttle did not excavate in this area at all, and he just comments that the walls may belong to a monastery complex. Both Adamatiou and Soteriou concentrated their excavations on the

⁷⁶ As Cuttle did not undertake any work in the West Complex, what follows is an account of observations made in the 2000 season.

western complex: Soteriou published an account of it in *PAE* 1939. The cleaning carried out in 2000 revealed only what had been previously exposed, while detailed recording highlighted certain features not marked on Soteriou's plan. The building complex can be divided into three main sections, the Cruciform building in the east with further attachments: the south annexes and the western extension. At least two phases of construction are easily visible, and the buildings seem also to have had several different functions. However the relationship of the West Complex to the basilica is not yet clear, save that it is clearly a later construction.

PHASE 1: THE CRUCIFORM BUILDING

The nearly symmetrical cruciform building with an apse projecting to the east has doorways on three sides (FIG. 2). Although Soteriou does not indicate a doorway on the northern side, and the wall is badly preserved, a rough surface of cement might be an opening, and therefore a fourth doorway, which is oriented in line with the south doorway. The eastern doorway may not have been part of the original edifice. It was probably constructed during the addition of the annexes to the south, which would have made the monumental entrance of the building extraneous. The south and west doorways are similarly constructed with short extensions of the wall forming a corner where a column stood at either side of the doorway (PLATE 48 *b*). The walls are constructed of brick and tile in the upper courses and the same with a number of large reused blocks in the lower courses (PLATE 39 *b*). The tile in the upper courses is carefully laid, often in horizontal rows. The eastern apse area, however, is different in that it has neat cloisonné work using medium-sized squared blocks. In the eastern walls flanking the north and south axis of the cross are two small niches at some 1.25 m above ground level. Both are almost entirely built of cement and small stones.

Each base corner of the apse was formed of a large reused block. Within the niche of the apse is a large semicircular limestone block, which may have been an altar. To the west of the niche are the remains of a possible font head (PLATE 48 *c*). This is octagonal, with geometric carvings of semi-circles with alternating elongated M-shapes. These designs form a deep groove in the upper surface, indicating that there may have been a screen projecting upwards from the upper surface of the feature. It is arguable that this font head is not found *in situ* since it is incomplete.⁷⁷

There is now no evidence for the grave excavated by Soteriou in the northern section. In this area the wall plaster is notable, surviving on the exterior of the step up to the north opening. The remaining internal floor surface mostly consists of a hard-packed clay with occasional tile and cement, although there are large patches of loose dark soil, particularly in the centre of the building. Fragments of marble paving may be *in situ* along the interior wall of the south doorway. The doorway in the east wall, directly to the south of the apse, gives access to the stairs in the south annexe (possible martyrion) complex, and to the passage between the cruciform building and the basilica.

PHASE 2: THE SOUTH ANNEXES

This complex of three annexes is composed of a series of additions to the southern and eastern ends of the cruciform building, which may have been constructed in different phases; how these are related is unclear. At the eastern end there is an annexe which encompasses a

⁷⁷ Perhaps, as in the font at Peruchtitzá detailed in A. Khatchatrian, *Les Baptistères paléochrétiens. Plans, notices et bibliographie* (Paris, 1962), no. 143, the font would have

surrounded the mouth of the eastern apse of the baptistery. This would explain the missing elements to complete the circle.

set of stairs, a possible crypt, and an apsidal area. The second annexe is likely to have been a cistern and the third is likely to have functioned as a font. The latter two annexes are located on the south side of the cruciform building.

The eastern annexe is likely to have been the earliest in the sequence and is well connected with the cruciform building. Soteriou indicates the walls making up this annexe on his plan as diagonal dashes, encompassing the east–west wall extending from the apse of the baptistery, a flight of stairs with a crypt below, attached to the south-eastern corner of the cruciform building and the walls surrounding them to the south. The walls are quite different in construction from the rest of the complex, with many reused, well-worked large grey blocks, all likely to have come from the same building. Surrounding these blocks are rows of horizontal tile all bonded with mortar.

As yet it is unclear if the stairs went to a second storey above the cruciform building or led up to a gallery in the basilica proper. Below the stairs is a sunken chamber, possibly a crypt contemporary with this early phase. South of the crypt, running north–south, is a wall incorporating a small apse, abutting the first phase wall of the stairs and delimiting the crypt on its eastern side. Extending west from the apsidal wall, there is an insubstantial line of a wall made of tile and mortar which may mark a grave or may simply be a small area of preserved floor. Within the niche there is mortar and a single marble tile, which may be *in situ*.

On his plan, Soteriou does not indicate the apse in the eastern end of the south annexe, but includes a return in the eastern wall to the west, joining up with the south wall of the cistern. There is no substantial evidence for this on the surface.

The second annexe, a rectangular sunken area abutting the south-west corner of the cruciform building, enclosed on three sides, may be a cistern. In it there are traces of possible hydraulic cement. Given their similar construction and relationship to the cruciform building, it is possible that the walls of the cistern and the apse area are contemporary.

At the west end of the complex is a third annexe: in its south-eastern corner a small L-shaped wall survives, its two walls attached to the south west corner of the cruciform building. Traces of water-proof cement lining this basin suggest that it may have functioned as a small cistern or a font. It is unclear, but it may be the case that the large cistern in the south was built over parts of the walls of the font which means that the font is likely to have been an earlier feature. It is likely that the south wall of the font would have turned to meet with the cruciform building just to the south of the east doorway, so it would originally have been quite a large space. The precise chronological relationship between the font and the cruciform building is unclear. They may be roughly contemporary, but it is clear that with the construction of the western extension the font went out of use.

The remains of a wall at the north-west corner of the cruciform building indicate the potential existence of other annexes to the north of it.

THE WESTERN EXTENSION

This long rectangular building abuts the west end of the cruciform building. The basic plan seems to be of a long rectangular building with a square room walled off at either end. Much of the south and north walls in the middle of the building is now destroyed to the foundations, making it difficult to ascertain whether there was any further internal plan. At the eastern end of the building there is a doorway to the north and another to the south. Soteriou suggests in his plan that there was another monumental entrance in the north wall of the central long room of the building, as well as a small one to the south. The latter would have led to a southern room, marked on his plan with a broken line. No traces of the door survive. The

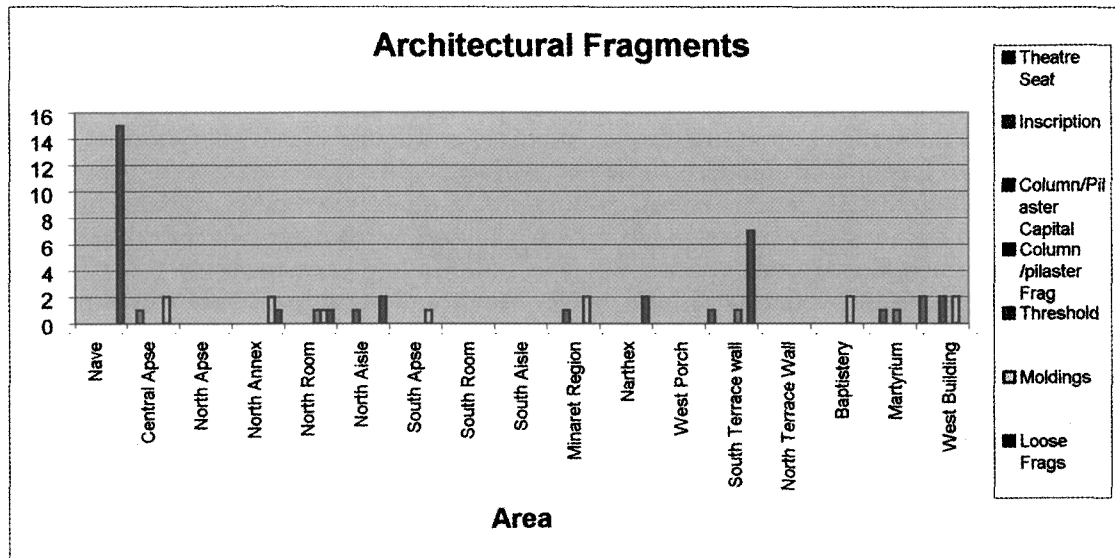


FIG. 9 Graph showing current location of different types of architectural fragments.

north doorway in the middle of the building is barely visible (FIG. 2), although there is no evidence for the connecting walls on either side. Two steps along the north wall are also still visible, but little else survives in this area. At the west end of the building Soteriou records two benches along the south wall, although now only the easternmost is visible owing to the presence of a huge eucalyptus at the south-west corner of the building.

It may be possible to identify this building as a hostel for guests, or perhaps even part of a monastery complex. Soteriou makes it contemporary with the last phase of the south annexe. The cistern of the second annexe may have supplied water to a hostel or monastery complex. But this is not certain as it may have also been associated with baptisms in the cruciform building.

The general shape of the west building resembles that of a stoa. The possibility that it rests at least partially on the foundations of an earlier stoa (especially since Pausanias implies the existence of several such buildings in this area), appears quite attractive, and would complement the continuity and reuse of material of the Acropolis buildings more generally.⁷⁸

ARCHITECTURAL FINDS

Several architectural fragments were studied in the 2000 season, both reused in the walls, and lying on the surface (see TABLE 1 and FIG. 9). The loose architectural fragments will be discussed in detail in a future publication. Reused fragments are classified in TABLE 1.

Since the height of the few surviving walls in the nave area is very low, it is not surprising to find that there are no architectural fragments reused in wall construction here. The large number of loose fragments here is to be expected, given that the stylobates on either side supported rows of columns. The high number of loose architectural fragments in the south terrace is likely to reflect its convenience as a place to deposit the material during previous

⁷⁸ We should like to thank Ben Millis for suggesting this.

excavations. It is worth noting that the only occurrences of reused theatre seats are in the south wall immediately to the west of the south tower, and in the West Complex. Of the other fragments, those of mouldings are clearly in the majority, the remaining reasonably evenly spread throughout the basilica and West Complex. It is worth noting that no reused fragments are built into the walls in the north apse, south apse, and south room. This point may, with future study, be helpful in defining construction-phasing.

CUTTLE'S SUMMARY

Cuttle believed, on the evidence of some pottery, lamps and possibly the rubble wall referred to above, that there must have been late Hellenistic occupation of the area below the basilica. He also suggests that subsequently there was a Roman domestic settlement, attested by the evidence of pottery, bones, and ash. He argues that this may be associated with some Roman walls that were then reused as foundations for the church, and even goes as far as to say that given the number of terracottas found in the area, it may have been a manufacturing area.

Cuttle believed there to have been at least two construction phases in the church, based on the evidence of the rebuilding of the floor, namely the evidence of the superimposed floors found in the area of the apse (PLATE 45 *a*). Below the lower floor was a layer of pottery of Roman date. Cuttle noted that the main apse was built with stones from the theatre's retaining wall. He also stated that the building was a basilica and that the number of columns along the length of the nave is exceptional. He tentatively suggested that the first church built on the site may have been a fifth–sixth century basilica, but then ruled out the possibility as he believed that the triple apse could not have been as early as this; he suggested further work to see if the apse is a later addition. He added that the earliest Greek basilicas had rounded and not angular apses but that the angular form occurs in other areas, such as in Constantinople. Cuttle was also worried that too few columns were preserved in the sanctuary walls to suggest such an early church.

Cuttle noted that the church is ascribed to the tenth-century St Nikon and therefore postulated an original church, rebuilt in the tenth century using Cretan models.⁷⁹ Regarding the West Complex, Cuttle refers to it only as possibly being the monastery known to have been associated with Nikon's church.

The relative lack of surviving superstructure hindered Cuttle's attempts to reconstruct the plan of the church. He postulated that the roof was an ordinary timber and tile roof,⁸⁰ citing in parallel the Mitropolis church at Mistras, with its belfry placed on the south side at the east end.

CONCLUSIONS

PHASING AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The northern area proved to be interesting in terms of phasing, as it became apparent that some of the walls there are later additions to the main superstructure of the church. For example, the north annexe is clearly an addition, while the tower region to the south seems also to be later. It is likely that the peribolos walls were constructed later than these two

⁷⁹ This, of course, would have seemed fitting in Cuttle's mind, given that Nikon had spent time in Crete before getting to Laconia.

⁸⁰ We hope in forthcoming seasons to learn more about how the basilica would have been roofed.

additions and the evidence of the wall construction, especially the architectural fragments, suggests that the two are not contemporary. In addition, it seems that the north peribolos wall is likely to have had at least two phases. Although Cuttle mentions the possibility that there was an earlier church on the site of the basilica, there is no evidence for it at present and this cannot be confirmed through architectural investigation alone.

As noted above, current architectural evidence suggests that there were two phases of wall construction in the south wall of the church in the area of the south *parabema*. The likelihood is that these phases are connected with the construction of the south tower. It is clear that the south tower is an addition and that part of the original south wall of the basilica was built up in order to accommodate the interior curve of the tower. Additionally, it may be the case that the tower itself was constructed on an earlier feature. It is not clear however, whether or not this feature consisting of a wall was originally connected with the Acropolis basilica.

It could probably be taken for granted that the West Complex (PLATE 39 *b*) was at some point connected to the basilica, and an examination of the phases here could help us distinguish further phases within the basilica. Differences in masonry make contemporary construction of church and West Complex unlikely.

In its earliest phase the West Complex is likely to have been used as a baptistery, since the possible font in the cruciform room (PLATE 48 *c*), as well as the arrangement of the doors and the apse, are typical of baptistery types found in Greece.⁸¹

A second construction phase is evident. This seems to consist of the construction of a tomb and perhaps a further construction enclosing a grave. It is possible, therefore, that in its second phase the West Complex (and specifically the south annexe) was used as a martyrion. It is unclear whether the steps belong to the second or to a third phase, and to where they would have led. Until more work can be undertaken in the area, the function of the long west room remains unclear, although a suggestion might be that it functioned as either a hostel or a bishops' quarters, or indeed both.

The basilica and West Complex are clearly connected. Tentatively we suggest that the west annexe was a slightly later addition to the church, perhaps serving as a staircase leading to the upper storey of the basilica. The two columns that form a monumental entranceway to the basilica (the west porch) are likely to have been added later to the annexe room, probably in connection with additions to the west building (PLATE 49 *b*). The lack of evidence for walls in the area to the north of the northern column is confusing; Cuttle suggested an explosion that blew all evidence of the wall to smithereens. A simple explanation for the lack of any walls associated with the northern column could be that there was an arched arrangement leading from each column and stretching towards the West Complex, creating a substantial porch and a connection between the two buildings (PLATE 49 *b*).

USE OF SPACE

Bearing in mind that there are a number of problems associated with ascribing functions to rooms, some postulations can be made regarding the use of space within the basilica complex. For the Early Christian period, many of these can only be conjectural. One problem is that the Early Christian liturgy is not so well defined,⁸² sometimes making it difficult to assign

⁸¹ I. Volanaki, *Tā Palaiochristianikā Baptisēria tēs 'Elládos'* (Βιβλιοθήκη τῆς ἐν' Ἀθῆναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Εταιρείας 84; Athens, 1976).

⁸² Vokotopoulou 1975a, 284.

certain functions to areas. Additionally the use of space may have changed over time within a single building complex and there is not a strict criterion for all the room functions within Early Christian architecture. A complete study of the contextual material found within individual rooms is also essential. Therefore, any theories on use of space presented here are based primarily on the existing architectural remains and for the present they remain tentative.

The north apse proved to be an interesting area in terms of definition of function. The east niche, likely to have been encrusted with mosaic, and evidence for a well-head, suggest a room used by the clergy for ritual cleansing and preparation of the communion elements. It was common to have a well near the *prothesis* (or north apse) but not so common to have the well contained within the room. The presence of the pebbles gives further support to this explanation: as noted by Cuttle, they would have aided drainage from the area of the west wall.

The double arrangement of the *parabemata* recalls Early Christian *pastophoria*, rooms where the congregation placed their offerings for the church. In fact in the north room, stands a fragment of a grey marble column, which could have served as a base for an offering table.

The north annexe, as a later addition, may have actually been completely separate from the main body of the basilica as the original existence of the doorway in its south into the north aisle is in doubt. If this is the case we may be able to postulate that this room could have been used as a room for the deposition of offerings and perhaps replacing an earlier room in such a function (FIG. 2).

The circular feature in the centre of the nave, although not conclusively identified, is likely to be the foundations of an ambo. Comparable ambos are not common, but can be found at Philippi Basilica B,⁸³ and at Aboba;⁸⁴ in the fifth century an example of an ambo can be found on Kos at Mastichari.⁸⁵

In Early Christian basilicas, the main entrance was usually located in the west or southern sides of the church. In the case of the Acropolis basilica, there is evidence for three entrances: the standard west and south ones in addition to the northern one. The northern entrance provides access through the north peribolos wall, whereas the southern entrance provided access only to the church proper. There is no entrance in the south peribolos wall. This should lead to further considerations regarding the topography and the location of the ancient road network on the Acropolis.

CONTEXTS

When Cuttle excavated the Long Transverse Trench in 1925 he found parts of a floor made of marble flagging, preserved under a fallen column. Other areas in the church, Cuttle noted, had cement floors, such as the *kyklion* and the northern porch. Although none of the marble flagging is now preserved, the bedding of the tiles and that of other floor levels is. It seems likely that there were at least two different floor types: the bedding for large plaques is clearly identifiable (PLATE 44 *b*), and there may have been an earlier floor type, possibly of mosaic, as indicated by some of the mortar bedding found in other areas (PLATE 44 *c*). In his excavation diaries, Cuttle notes that he found remains of mosaic in various trenches, some attached to a pink plaster. If an earlier mosaic floor was replaced by a later slab floor, this would explain why so little of the mosaic was preserved. Another explanation may be that the basilica had both *opus sectile* and tessellated floors.

⁸³ Krautheimer 1986, fig. 211.

⁸⁴ Vokotopolous 1975a, 278–9.

⁸⁵ Krautheimer 1986, fig. 60.

The floor also gives us an indication that there may have been quite a violent destruction (PLATE 40 *a*).⁸⁶ Fragments of broken tile at an angle and dents in the surface of the bedding itself in places suggest that something heavy fell from above, smashing into the floor level. It has affected the floor-bedding to such a degree that it seems to indicate that the floor of the church was already robbed out or destroyed at the time of this destruction.

CHRONOLOGY

It is not easy to attempt to date the basilica on a study of the architecture alone. There are too many contingencies involved, such as the problem of regionalism in architectural styles. Additionally architectural styles or elements of them from a certain period, such as the Early Christian period are not infrequently echoed in edifices of later periods.⁸⁷ Despite problems with attempts to reconstruct the stratigraphy of the previous excavators it has been possible tentatively to suggest a number of different phases; however, confirmation of these is awaited.

It is likely that the first basilica, as suggested by Vokotopoulos, was constructed some time between the middle and the end of the sixth century. The three-aisled type with the long narthex is indicative of this period. The width of the bema walls is such that they may have carried a dome, a feature encountered in ambitious monuments of the sixth century, but more suggestive of a later date (FIG. 2). As Cuttle suggested, it could be argued that there was a later basilica constructed during the tenth century on the foundations of an earlier three-aisled basilica. As yet there is no evidence to support such a theory. Moreover, until we are able to carry out further theoretical architectural reconstructions and sections through the basilica we will not be able to confirm how it was roofed. Once established, this should help in the debate regarding chronology.

The triple apse arrangement of the Acropolis basilica (FIG. 2) is certainly more common in later Byzantine periods, with examples from Kaisariani on Hymettos,⁸⁸ dated to the eleventh century, or Osios Loukas⁸⁹ of the tenth century. Although this apse arrangement is not common in the Balkans during the Early Christian period,⁹⁰ it is not unknown in important centres such as Gortyn (Agios Titos) on Crete,⁹¹ as well as in the Aboba basilica in Bulgaria, both of which are of indefinite date although they have been attributed to the seventh century by Vokotopoulos.⁹² Niches in the lateral walls of the central apse are also found in the basilica at Tigani, Mani (also dated to the seventh century), and in the Agios Titos basilica.⁹³ Although parallels throughout the Byzantine period can be found for most elements of the Acropolis basilica, Vokotopoulos points out that it has some unique elements such as the offering table in the north room and the columns on the stylobate in the nave.⁹⁴

As noted above there is an Early Christian architectural fragment inscribed with two peacocks built into the north peribolos wall.

The weight of the evidence seems to suggest a date from the mid sixth to the early seventh century for the Acropolis basilica on the basis of parallels for architecture and architectural elements. The fact that there is a reused Early Christian architectural fragment in the north peribolos wall certainly suggests that part of the church was constructed later than the early

⁸⁶ A violent destruction is certainly obvious from the huge parts of masonry belonging to the upper vaults that have fallen to the side of the monument.

⁸⁷ Vokotopoulos 1975*a*, 284.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fig. 354.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, fig. 297.

⁹⁰ Vokotopoulos 1975*a*, 283.

⁹¹ See n. 8.

⁹² Vokotopoulos 1975*a*, 278–9.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 283.

part of the Early Christian period. Additionally, the masonry of the 'Baptistry' in the West Complex is suggestive of a date in the Middle Byzantine period. As we tentatively suggest that the West Complex was constructed after the basilica itself, this may provide an approximate *terminus ante quem*. It is unlikely, given the threat of general demographic disruption and barbarian invasions that the basilica was constructed between the mid-seventh and early ninth century. For the proposed date we await confirmation through stratigraphic investigation.

FUTURE PLANS

This work is preliminary to more detailed study, in particular excavation, scheduled for future seasons. Further architectural studies, focusing mainly on the reconstruction of the church and how it may have been roofed, will also be undertaken, and geophysical work to the west may help us determine whether or not the West Complex is connected to buildings east of the theatre. It may indeed form part of a possibly extensive Byzantine settlement: we already know from work in the theatre that there are remains of a Late Antique settlement; however, the nature and extent of this is not yet known. Once the full extent and nature of the Basilica complex has been ascertained, detailed research will need to be undertaken on establishing parallels in the area of Byzantine religious architecture such as bishops' palaces. Numerous questions remain regarding chronology, development, and contextual relationships, which we hope to be able to answer during the course of our future work. In broader terms once we understand the basilica, we aim to be able to place it and its development within the context of the Sparta Acropolis and the Empire at large.

The British School at Athens
Sparta

REBECCA SWEETMAN
EVI KATSARA



(a)



(b)

SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
(a) Acropolis basilica from west. (b) West Complex from east.



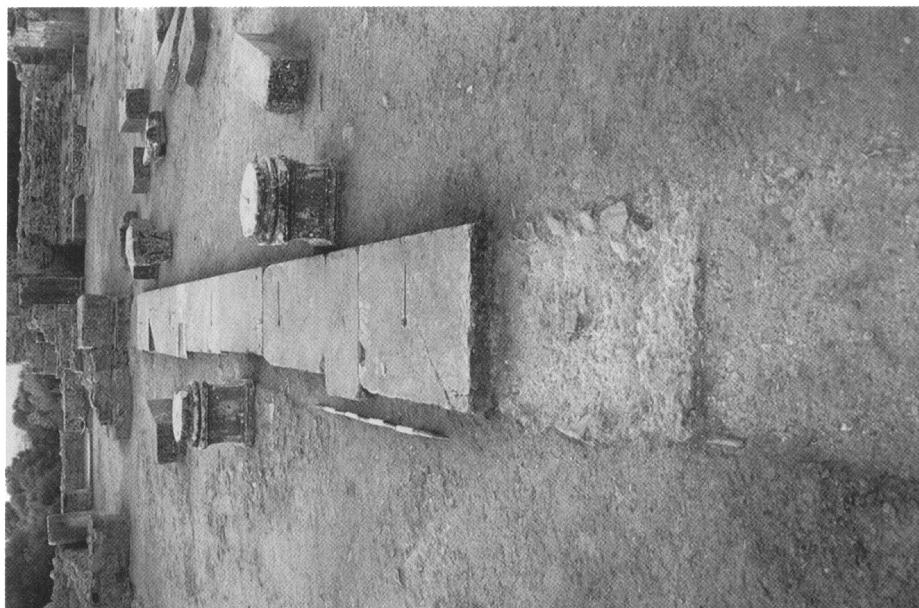
SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
(a) Broken tile context. (b) Central apse from west with altar in foreground.



(a)



(b)

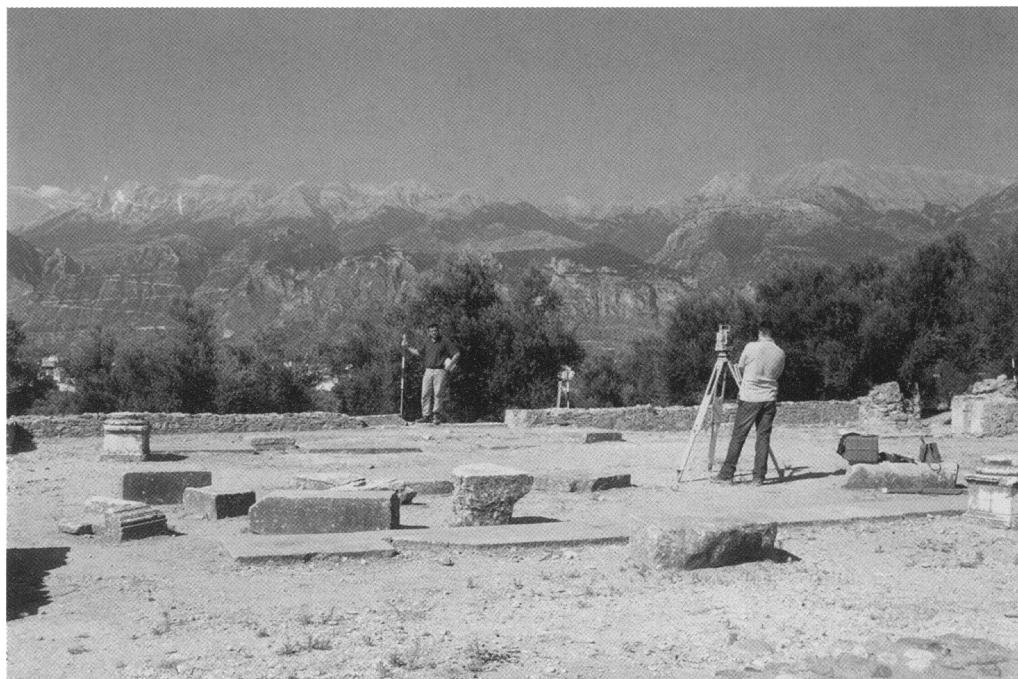


(c)

SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
(a) Reused theatre seat in south wall of church. (b) Detail of Peacock fragment built into north peribolos wall. (c) North Stylobate and column bases from west.



(a)



(b)

SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
(a) Round building church. (b) Architects at work.



(a)



(b)

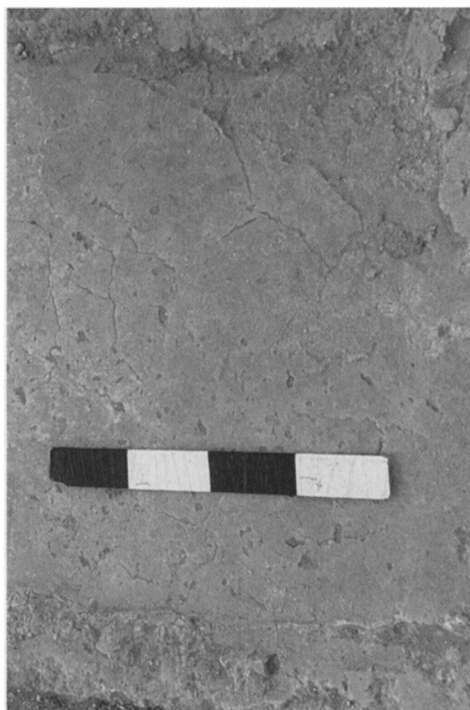
SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
 THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
 (a) South Stylobate, showing dowel hole from west. (b) Remains of possible ambo in the nave.



(a)

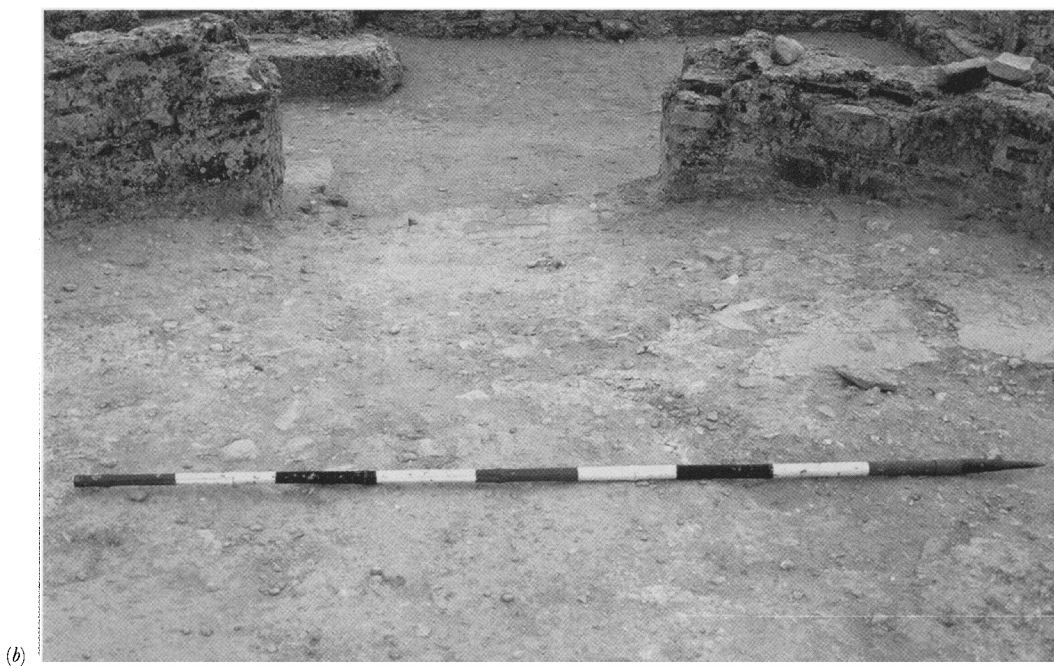


(b)



(c)

SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
(a) South apse from west. (b) Flat smooth cement context. (c) Red pebbly bedding context.



SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
 THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
 (a) Central apse floor contexts. (b) Doorway into north room from central apse.



SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
(a) North apse, east recess. (b) North apse, wellhead.



(a)



(b)

SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
(a) North annexe, showing extension. (b) North terrace, possible early entrance.



(a)



(b)



(c)

SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT
FOR THE 2000 SEASON

(a) Possible early steps (to left of reconstructed staircase). (b) Possible baptistery in West Complex from west. (c) Font in possible baptistery.



SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
(a) South tower from west. (b) West porch from north-west.



(a)



(b)

SWEETMAN AND KATSARA
THE ACROPOLIS BASILICA PROJECT, SPARTA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR THE 2000 SEASON
(a) Graves in south terrace. (b) South wall—Cuttle's buttress.