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**Ptolemais in Libya : the Warsaw
Institute of Archaeology excavations in
2002 and 2003 : report on two seasons
of fieldwork**

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PTOLEMAIS IN LIBYA.

THE WARSAW UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY EXCAVATIONS IN 2002 AND 2003.
REPORT ON TWO SEASONS OF FIELDWORK

(PL. 47-66)

Archaeologists from the Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology conducted two campaigns of fieldwork in Ptolemais (Libya): in April-May 2002 and October 2003¹, preceded by a 10-day reconnaissance in December 2001². The team was accompanied by conservators from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Work was carried out under the terms of a license for archaeological excavations issued by the Libyan authorities on July 22, 2001. The major objectives of the work were twofold: topographical measurements prerequisite to mapping the site of ancient Ptolemais (see report below, p. 117, **Fig 1, 4**) and excavations of an *insula* located east of the "Colonnaded Palace" (**Fig. 1, 2, 5**).

Archaeological testing in 2001

In December 2001, a 70-meter long trial trench was opened running E-W across the *insula*, cutting the line of prospective building walls at an angle of 45°. The trench, which was traced to establish the limits of the *insula*, was divided into seven sections (A-G, each 10 m by 2.5 m), leaving a baulk 1.50 m thick between them. By end season, the following results had been recorded:

Trench A: *insula* edge and road surface.

Trench B: fragments of mosaics, stuccos and painted architectural blocks (column, capital, two parts of architrave and multiple small fragments), apparently from a destroyed building, the walls of which were also found in trench C.

Trench C: architectural blocks in a destruction layer and a standing wall corner with painted decoration in the southwestern part of the trench; many fragments of mosaics, frescos and painted stuccos in the middle of the section.

Trench D: no architecture or other traces of human activity apart from potsherds in the first three layers; a concentration of pottery (Roman and Byzantine amphorae, coarse ware) in the western end, c. 29.70-29.90 m below sea level.

Trench E: occupational level (tamped floor with small stones) in the eastern end; however, only two layers (40 cm) were explored.

Trench F: occupational level continuing that from trench E at the western edge; in the eastern end, in the second layer, small wall running parallel to the edge of the *insula*.

Trench G: two superposed walls bordering the *insula* on the northeast (presumably late Byzantine wall covering partly an earlier, almost parallel wall, cf. **Fig. 6**).

* Apart from the authors and co-authors of the present article, the team in 2002-2003 consisted of the following: conservator Marcin Chmielewski; archaeologist-arabist George Yacoub; archaeologists J. Dynysiuk, P. Kobek, L. Merunowicz, M. Nowakowska, Z. Polak, J. Żelazowski; students: M. Baliszewski, K. Czajkowski, A. Dłuska, D. Dziedzic, W. Dzierzbicki, M. Jaxa-Chamiec, R. Pachocki, M. Tarkowski. Without their dedicated support, neither the fieldwork nor the documentation of the finds, including the preparation of this report, would have been quite as successful.

¹ We wish to thank foremost Mr. Ali al-Chadouri, General Director of the Department of Antiquities of Libya, for the kind permission to conduct archeological excavations in Ptolemais-Tolmeita. We would also like to thank Mr. Djuma Garsa for his help in organizing our stays in Libya. We are grateful to the Staff of the Antiquities Department in Benghazi, Mr. Jusuff Abdussalam-Ben Naser and especially Mr. Ibrahim at-Tawahni, for their considerate supervision and help. We

would like to express our gratitude to His Excellency Jakub Wolski, the Polish Ambassador in Tripoli, and the Authorities of the Libyan Embassy in Warsaw. Thanks are also due Mr. Igor Kaczmarczyk and Mr. Ryszard Szelaowski, Counselors of the Polish Embassy in Tripoli and Mr. Jerzy Chumek, Counselor of the Polish Consulate in Benghazi. The Polish team was accompanied by Mr. Faraj abd al-Karim and provided with all the needed facilities by Mr. Abd as-Salam Bazma – without their assistance and devotion our excavations in Ptolemais would not have been possible.

² See our preliminary report on the excavations in Ptolemais conducted in December 2001 (an abridged version in Polish was published as an appendix to: T. Mikocki, *Polskie wykopaliska archeologiczne w Libii. Wykopaliska Instytutu Archeologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Ptolemais (Tolmeita). Sondaze 2001 r.*, Światowit 3 (n.s.), 2001 [2002], fasc. A, p. 101 sq., esp. 116 sq., pls. 40-53, fig. 29-57

Archaeological works in 2002

Trenches B and C in the western part of the *insula* were extended to cover an area of 100 m² minus baulks and four new 10 x 10 m trenches were opened to the north and south. Trenches D and G were explored deeper but not enlarged (Fig 2). Trench designations were changed to fit into the measurement grid established for the mapping project (Fig 1)³.

Trench BC100 (square C enlarged)

The central part of a Hellenistic-Roman peristyle villa has been uncovered in this trench (Fig. 3, 7). The central courtyard (R6 with mosaic M5) was surrounded by a four-column portico (R19 with mosaic M4, Fig. 8); on ground level the courtyard was ca. 10 cm lower than the floor of the portico. Two column bases can be seen *in situ*; the shafts collapsed and broke, presumably in the aftermath of an earthquake (Fig. 9). The two remaining bases are still hidden in the baulks. Many fragments of architectural blocks (decorated blocks, column shafts, fragments of cornices, and others), probably from the upper floor of the building, are also visible. Based on the position of the central emblema of mosaic M5 (Fig. 9), the entrance to the peristyle is presumed to be located in the western wall of the portico (W3). The portico (R19) and its mosaics (M4) have also been recorded in the neighboring trenches: BC99 (where the outside wall of the portico [W3] was taken down) and BC90. The eastern corner of the portico was destroyed by a Byzantine blockhouse (R5, Fig. 10). Its foundations (walls W10 and W11) rest on the mosaic (M4, Fig. 8). The portico is surrounded by cubicoli. The largest room (R1 with mosaic M7, Figs. 11, 12) borders the portico on the south. The entrance to room R1 (a continuation of which can be seen in trenches EX10 and CXCI91) is located in the southeastern wall of the portico (W8). The central emblema of mosaic M7 lies opposite the entrance.

Walls W3 and W5 (running parallel to the streets) and probably the walls of the courtyard (W7, W9, W4, W6) belong to the earliest phase of the villa. Wall W8, the mosaics and the painted wall decorations are later than this earlier structure.

The interior walls of the portico were decorated with wall-paintings, traces of which have been noted on walls W3, W5, and most of all on W8.

Trench BC90 (new trench) (cf. Fig. 2, 3)

A mixed layer containing much coarse ware, glass and burnt bones was first removed from the entire surface of the trench. Subsequently another layer was excavated in the southern part of the trench, yielding more coarse pottery and architectural elements. Walls appeared, setting off six rooms. At the southern end a corner of the portico (R19) with perfectly preserved mosaic M4 could be seen. Two fireplaces, traces of which were noted on the mosaic pavement, may correspond to a later occupation phase observed in the neighboring R12 (Fig. 13).

Room R12 is separated from the portico by wall W12 (rebuilt and destroyed) and wall W21. The western wall of room R12 was less solid and had been dismantled (fragments of painted plaster found *in situ* constituted an imprint of this wall). The floor in the room was of mortar; traces of a fireplace are visible on it. In the southern corner of this room, four complete amphorae were found confirming its domestic function; in the northern corner a column base was found reused as a seat. The northern wall of R12 (W38) and the walls of neighboring R13 had been dismantled. The floor in R16 was also made of mortar.

Room R14 extends east of the portico and is presently outside the trench for the most part. A geometric mosaic M6 constitutes the pavement here (Fig. 14). An entrance furnished with marble doorstep was pierced through wall W5, giving access to the room from the portico (Fig. 14).

Trench CXCI91 (previous square D)

Further explorations in this trench, where huge amounts of coarse pottery had been found in the western part in 2001, now revealed a level of big blocks in the eastern end (probably the flagging of a courtyard or road). Again the layer above this floor yielded abundant coarse ware of Late Antique date. A section of a room traced in the western part of the trench may belong to a Byzantine blockhouse (R5).

In the southwestern corner of the trench, there is a wall with traces of murals on its western face (W13). This wall delimits room R1 on the east. A column reused as a mortarium is positioned centrally in the room (Fig. 15). Coarse wares of Late Antique date abounded in the fill, including some potsherds and animal bones bearing signs of fire.

³ The previous trench designations were changed as follows:

B = BC99 [B (kilometer) C (hectare) 99 (are)];
 C = BC100 [B (kilometer) C (hectare) 100 (are)];
 D = CXCI91 [C (kilometer) XCI (hectare) 91 (are)];
 G = CXCI94 [C (kilometer) XCI (hectare) 94 (are)];
 The new trenches opened to the north of the 2001 test pits

include:

BC79 [B (kilometer) C (hectare) 79 (are)];
 BC90 [B (kilometer) C (hectare) 90 (are)].
 Those to the south:
 EX9 [E (kilometer) X (hectare) 9 (are)];
 EX10 [E (kilometer) X (hectare) 10 (are)].

Trench EX10 (new trench) (Fig. 16)

Running diagonally across the trench is a solid, early *opus quadratum* wall (W3). It separates the main room of the villa (R1) from the rooms lining the street facade (a street surface was identified on the west side of the *insula* in test pit A of 2001; it now appeared in trench EX9, see below). Room R1, found also in trench BC100, is richly decorated with wall-paintings (W8, W13, W14, W3) and a mosaic (M7). The best preserved of the murals was a fragment of imitation marble revetment decorating the western wall. The disturbed layers in room R1 yielded much fragmented painted plaster and pieces of mosaic, which had likely collapsed from the upper floor; no architectural elements were found.

South of R1 is a domestic courtyard (R2) with a hatch (puteal) (Fig. 21) leading to a cistern. Near this opening, a column fragment reused as a seat was found. An open pipeline (aqueduct) was recorded in the south-east corner of the trench.

In the western part of the trench explorations revealed a well preserved room (R4) decorated with frescos (P11, P12, P13, P14, on walls W3, W16, W15, W18, Fig. 17) and a mosaic (M8, Fig. 18). The floor was partly destroyed by later occupation. Testifying to this later phase in the use of the room is a completely preserved vessel (found in the southeastern corner of the room) and some pieces of iron.

In room R8 situated northwest of R4, tumbled architectural blocks were revealed under the top mixed layer. This room, possibly the villa vestibule, will be explored next year (Figs. 19, 20).

Room R3 lying in the southern part of the trench is probably an inner courtyard.

The unexplored room R18, located in the southwest corner of the trench, is probably part of a corridor or portico running alongside the western street of the *insula*.

Trench EX9 (new trench, Fig. 22)

The trench is divided diagonally by a solid early wall W1, closing the villa from the west. Southwest of this wall is a road, the surface of which consists of tamped soil mixed with lime and small stones (already visible in test pit A in 2001). A channel, now destroyed and filled with burnt clay, earth and late pottery, runs between the road and wall W1 (Fig. 21).

The geometric border of a mosaic floor (M3) filling room R9 was recorded in the northern part of the trench. The murals decorating the southeast wall (P1 and P2 on wall W2) were found detached from the wall, but largely intact, including a stucco cornice (Figs. 24, 25); they were protected *in situ*.

Southeast of R9 was a room decorated with a mosaic ([M1] a fragment noted south of late wall W20) and wall-paintings (P15). In a later phase, south of wall W2, a new two-wall structure (W23, W20) was built. Connected with this structure is a Late Antique toilet.

Explorations of the fill of the channel in this facility yielded two almost complete vessels of Late Antique date (Fig. 25).

A section of wall W1 was dismantled, presumably during a renovation of the architecture in this part of the building. In the central part of the trench, the road surface was obviously destroyed leaving burnt clay and soil in evidence.

Trench BC99 (square B, enlarged)

In 2001, many architectural elements, some painted (spirally fluted columns, Corinthian capital, octagonal column base, large fragments of architrave, large supraporta, three elements of an arch and others, (Fig. 26), along with fragments of mosaics, painted plaster and stuccos were found in a destruction layer.

Further work brought to light a big room (R9), set off by two solid walls (W1, W3) on the east and west. Wall W3 and wall W40, delimiting the room on the north, had been dismantled.

Under a layer of destruction in room R9 a fragmentary, mythological mosaic was discovered (M2; Fig. 27, 28, 29). This mosaic had fallen from the upper floor of the villa, together with elements of architecture and pieces of decorative marble revetment. Mosaic M2 lies on another mosaic (M3; Fig. 27), once decorating the ground floor of the villa.

The northern part of the trench is occupied by another room, left unexplored, and by a corner of the portico R19.

Trench BC79 (new trench, Fig. 2)

A Byzantine blockhouse (R16), consisting of walls S-W22 and W-W27, built of stone blocks in the *opus quadratum* technique, was recorded in the northernmost of the trenches. The northern extremity of the blockhouse touches a late antique wall (W24) made of small, regular blocks. A typical solid wall built in *opus quadratum*, traced in the southwestern corner of the trench, probably represents the earliest phase of the villa. In room R16, like in other parts of the trench, layers of destruction and accumulation are visible, containing only late and differentiated archaeological material.

Trench CXCI94 (previous square G)

Two superposed Byzantine (?) walls (W33, W35) were found in this trench in 2001. Further exploration in the *intra muros* part reached a level of occupation (ramped floor). The fill contained Late Antique and Byzantine coarse ware and a Byzantine (?) coin. On the outside of these walls natural rock was reached in the excavation; the surface it formed was fairly horizontal – and it should be interpreted most likely as a Hellenistic road. To the east and parallel to this surface, a channel had been cut in the rock. On the other side of the channel, but at a much higher level, another surface made of regular blocks – a Late Antique and Byzantine road – can be seen. A sewage collector (*cloaca*) is suspected to exist

under this surface. Small channels leading to the collector were constructed on the rock surface, running perpendicular to the Byzantine road.

Only Late Antique coarse pottery was found in this trench.

Mosaics⁴ and wall-paintings

In 2002, fieldwork led to the discovery of eight floor mosaics. All were *in situ* with the exception of M2.

M1: EX9-R11

Geometric mosaic made of big *tesserae*, discovered east of wall W1, partly destroyed by later structures: walls W23 and W20. It decorates room R11 (probably part of R8). Quatrefoil motif; traces of repairs.

M2: BC99-R9

Preserved fragments of a mosaic that must have fallen from the first floor of the villa. The scene depicted is part of the Achilles myth (inscriptions: ΟΔΥC/EYC ΠΑΡΤΗΝΩΝ ΔΑΙΔΑΜΙΑ ΒΡΥCΕΙC etc.).

M3: EX9, BC99-R9

Preserved *in situ* in room R9, but still mostly concealed under the baulks and fallen fragments of mosaic M2. Only a wide geometric border made of medium-size *tesserae* was visible. The mosaic was repaired in antiquity and is probably earlier than the frescos decorating the walls.

M4: BC99, BC100-R19, BC90 R6

Bichrome mosaic with differentiated decoration, made of large *tesserae*, covering all of the portico of peristyle R19. Appears to be later than the walls of the portico.

M5: BC100-R6

Bichrome mosaic decorating the peristyle courtyard. Central medallion with inscription (EYT/YXΩC/ΔEYKA/KTIΩ)⁵ probably faced the entrance situated in the southwestern wall of the portico.

M6: BC90-R14

Geometric mosaic with wide, ornamental border, destroyed in the central part.

M7: BC100, EX10-R1

Very large mosaic made of *tesserae* of three different sizes: large ones for the wide geometric border, medium size for the internal part of the border

tesserae, fine ones for the figured *emblema* depicting a winged goddess or personification with inscription: EYTYXΩCAEYKAKTIΩ.

M8: EX10-R4

Small, geometric mosaic made of medium-size *tesserae*, destroyed in the central and western part by later occupation.

Fifteen frescos (or sets of frescos) were discovered *in situ*, documented and protected.

P1: W2 in R9

Small fragment of painting with geometrical motifs on the northern face of W2.

P2: W2 in R9

Large fragment of painted wall decorated with geometric and architectural motifs, preserved together with stucco cornice. The decoration was transferred to a store room.

P3: W21 in R12

Large fragment of fresco from the northern face of wall W21, from which it had become detached (preserving a negative impression of the wall structure on the back side). The decoration consists of geometric panels imitating marble revetment.

P4: W12 in R12

The lowest part of a painting similar to P3.

P5: W8 in R19

Very large painting preserved on the entire wall of the portico. Two layers of frescos are visible. The first layer is fragmentarily preserved. The second layer is decorated with colored vertical lines on a white background. The decoration of the upper part consists of panels imitating marble revetment. Inside every panel there is a diamond-shaped figure ornamented with a circle.

P6: W5 in R19

The lowest part of the painting, analogous to P5.

P7: W8 in R1

At least two phases of the painting are visible. The first phase resembles P5. The second phase is preserved in small fragments. The decoration consists of colored lines on a white background.

⁴ A fuller, although still provisional analysis of the villa's mosaics will be published in *Archeologia Warsz* in 2005. News of the discovery was presented with photos in periodicals in Poland and abroad: A. KRZEMIŃSKA, *Ruiny z widokiem*, *Polityka* nr 23 (2353), 8 June 2002, p. 78; T. MIKOCCI, A. KRZEMIŃSKA, *Skarby Ptolemais*, *Świat nauki*, nr 10 (134), October 2002, p. 58-65; T. MIKOCCI, A. KRZEMIŃSKA, *Villa mit Meerblick*, *Spektrum der Wissenschaft*, *Spezial 2/2003*, p. 50-57; T. MIKOCCI, A. KRZEMIŃSKA, *Mozaiki z pałacu Leukaktiosa*, *Archeologia Żywa* nr 1 (20) 2002, p. 8-12; *The Hero of an Archaeological Sensation*, *Welcome to Warsaw* nr 7 (136) July 2002, p. 4; P. A. WOLSKI, *Odkrycia polskich*

archeologów, *Emaus* nr 9 (47), September 2002, p. 24; J. BACHANEK, *Poszukiwane zaginionej mozaiki*, *Filipinka* nr 8 (1103), August 2002, p. 70, etc. See also the mission's homepage on <http://www.archeo.uw.edu.pl/ptolemais>

⁵ Two different readings have been proposed of the double inscription EYTYXΩCAEYKAKTIΩ, presumably giving the name of the owner of the villa: Loukios Aktios (Lucius Actius) or Leukaktios. The former was proposed by J. Kubińska (with the help of C. Dobias-Lalou), to be published in: *Mélanges C. Dobias-Lalou*; the latter by Dr. Adam Łajtar and Prof. Adam Łukaszewicz.

P8: W13 in R1

Small fragment of painted plaster from the lower part of the wall.

P9: W14 in R1

Three phases of the frescos can be discerned. Only a dark strip of the first phase resembling porphyry is visible. White plaster fragments belong to the second layer. The third layer resembles marble revetment and is analogous to P5.

P10: W3 in R1

Three phases of the frescos are visible. The first and third layers resemble marble revetment, but are differentiated. Fragments of white plaster belong to the second layer.

P11, P12, P13, P14: W3, W16, W15, W18 in R4

Uniform paintings resembling marble revetment on the four walls of room R9. Only one phase of murals observed. P12 was repaired in antiquity, similarly as P11 which was repainted in the central part.

P15: W20 in R8

Fragmentary geometric mural on the southern face of W20; resembles P1.

Small finds

The following groups of artifacts were distinguished in the excavations of 2002⁶:

- 1) Lamps: 81 items, mostly fragmentary. They are dated from the Hellenistic period to the 7th century AD. The material is currently being studied.
- 2) Coins: 77 items. Mostly illegible and in need of conservation. Most of these coins can be dated to the Roman period and later. Well preserved pieces were struck in the 3rd century AD for Severus Alexander and Aurelianus.
- 3) Glass: 124 items, mostly in poor state of preservation (mainly rims and bases).
- 4) Bronze: 29 items.
- 5) Stone and sculpture: 16 items. One interesting piece is a badly weathered, miniature sculpture depicting a sheep (Fig. 30, the upper part of a representation of the Libyan Ammon). Another piece of interest is a Greek votive relief depicting a man on horseback, a running boy and a standing woman (Fig. 31).
- 6) Other (bone, iron): 75 items.

Most of these artifacts were found in the mixed surface layer. Nevertheless, the findspots of several of the

coins can be treated as a *terminus ante quem* for these layers.

Pottery report for the 2002 season⁷

The pottery found in the 2002 season can be grouped as coming from two different groups of archaeological contexts: 1. destruction strata of the Middle Imperial building, and 2. reuse in the Late Roman/Early Byzantine period.

The first contains almost exclusively contemporary material, in one case completely or almost completely preserved four amphorae and two other vessels. The fill of a latrine discharge channel, in spite of belonging to a later building phase, contained two well preserved pots: a jug and a cooking pot, both dated to the Middle Roman period. Contexts belonging to the second group usually include many residual pottery sherds.

The pottery from the Polish excavations shares much in common with the finds from British excavations at Benghazi Sidi Khrebish⁸. Therefore we shall refer to types established in three volumes publishing fine wares, coarse pottery and lamps from that site. In the case of lamps, a well defined sequence of contexts makes it a better reference than the recently published catalogue of such finds from Italian excavations at Ptolemais⁹, which is unfortunately devoid of such data. In the following text type names are in most cases those from *Libia Antiqua Suppl. V*, and the numbers indicating particular analogous pots are those of Benghazi catalogues (Bnnn for fine pottery, Cnnn for lamps and Dnnn for coarse ware).

The description of the finds follows a topographical order starting with the southwestern square EX 9. Contexts with exclusively Middle Roman pottery contained, as latest, African Red Slip plates form 50A and the red-ware local amphorae with collar rim and round-sectioned handles. Above mosaic floor in R11 (: 45), the latest pottery included cooking wares of Middle Roman date, while the fill of the latrine (R10) discharge channel (: 44) contained two well preserved vessels: a cooking pot similar to Benghazi D502-504 and a Plain Ware jug similar to Benghazi D1151. Among smaller fragments a trefoil-rim jug similar to D1145 was also found, all belonging to the Middle Roman period.

The general mixed rubble strata and fills above: 18, 42, as well as the fill of R9 (: 41) are later. These should be dated to the 5th c. AD (ARS lamp Hayes f. I

⁶ A complete register of the finds is to be found in the preliminary report, copies of which can be found in the Department of Antiquities of Libya in Tripoli and Benghazi, as well as in the Institute of Archaeology at Warsaw University.

⁷ Contributed by H. Meyza.

⁸ J.A. RILEY, *Coarse Pottery*, in: Excavations at Sidi Khrebish, Benghazi (Berenice) [Libya Antiqua, suppl. V], vol. 2, Tripoli 1978; P. M. KENRICK, *The Fine Pottery*, in: ibidem, vol. 3, Tripoli 1985

⁹ E. FABRICOTTI, *Catalogo delle Lucerne di Tolemaide (Cireneica)* [BAR, Int. Series, no 962], Oxford 2001

(L/70/02), LRC /Phocaeen/ plate f. 3, LR Amphora 1) or even later in R9 (: 41) where a lamp as C1227 (L/74/02) has been found.

R4 fill in square Ex10 also contains late pieces such as a deep bowl with simple lip and over-hemispherical body comparable to Benghazi D568. A few centimeters above floor level an intact cooking pot (c093/02) was found. It seems to be similar to the Late Roman pot from Benghazi D550. The fill of R1 (: 71) contained a lamp similar to a 4th century lamp (Fabricotti no. 103), which finds the best parallels in the Athenian Agora (Perlzweig no. 1818). Similar dates can be attributed to fills above walls on the basis of ARS form 45B (c028/02). In the continuation of the fill from R1 in square Bc100 (: 62) pottery finds are confined to Middle Roman types, with numerous cooking pots such as D503, 515 or 523.

Three layers were distinguished in the peristyle court R6 with the middle one (: 21) containing late pottery of the 6th/7th c., such as ARS plate Hayes' form 105/106 (c091/02), Cypriot Red Slip form 9B (c092/02) together with dominating Middle Roman residual sherds. The lowest stratum (: 49), immediately upon the mosaic floor, contained solely Middle Roman material, including cooking pots such as D502, trefoil-rim jugs such as D1145 and amphorae of pinched-handle type (Mau 27/28). The layer connected with the preserved wall tops (: 72) contained numerous Late Roman Amphorae type 1 and type 5, Coarse handmade cooking pots such as D540-544, and a large jar of the same ware (unknown at Benghazi). These vessels place the upper level in the 5th/7th c. horizon. The adjoining R9 in square Bc99 was excavated to the level of the collapsed upper floor mosaic and the pottery of the fill (: 28) reflects a mixture of Middle and Late Roman types, including local imitations of Phocaean type 3 (such as B814), Late Roman *dolium* rim such as D750 and African Red Slip form 8A or Kapitän II amphorae. Middle Roman forms, such as cooking pots similar to D504/517, are represented only in a hollow in the middle of the collapsed mosaic (: 77). Such a sequence would suggest that the destruction occurred in the 3rd c. AD. This will be best verified by a careful study of the deposit between mosaics M2 and M3. North of peristyle R6 in trench Bc90 there are two rooms: R12 and R15. The former contained an important deposit of little damaged ceramic vessels, which included 6 pots: three imported amphorae and the rest manufactured locally. A Middle Roman amphora type 2 and another Cretan amphora (AC4?) of similar date were found in the southwestern corner. The third amphora in the set seems to be related to Gaulish transport vessels, between forms Gauloise 4

and 11, which should also be dated in the 2nd century AD. Another three vessels belong to local Middle Roman products. A *situla* with double handles seems characteristic of Ptolemais. A very similar one was published by Kraeling¹⁰, but was erroneously described as an amphora stand. These *situlae*, but with simpler handles are also known from Benghazi, such as D900 and 902. There were also two jugs in the group, one very similar to Benghazi D1151, the other wide-mouthed, only generally similar to D1153 (closer pieces are to be found at the Agora in Athens, deposit L). The condition of these vessels and their contemporary dating suggest that the destruction of the villa occurred in the 3rd c. AD. The superimposed layers of rubble (: 15, 16, 30) contained later pottery, including African Red Slip plates type 104, 105, 107, 108, Phocaean plates form 3E, imitation Phocaean form 3, Late Roman Amphorae forms 1, 2, 4 and 5, as well as Coarse Handmade cooking pots. This pottery dates to the 6th and 7th c. AD, and reflects a phase of wall-robbing in rooms R14 and R15 situated to the west. The same phase is represented in the northernmost trench Bc79, where wall W24 was built in Early Byzantine times. Both the rubble strata (: 60, 92) and the floor level accumulation (just above and below the foundation leveling course, : 84) contained 6th and 7th c. pottery including African Red Slip bowls form 103B, Phocaean form 3E, Late Roman Amphorae type 1 and *spatheia*. Lamps of the same period included an African Red Slip lamp form Hayes IIA/B and a local lamp base such as Benghazi C1125.

In the stratigraphic pit CXCI94 the bottom layers (: 89) in a pit between the wall and virgin rock can be related to the Middle Roman period with the best preserved Cooking Ware casserole such as Riley, D513-514. The layers relating to the channel (south of it, between channel and bedrock, :81) contain, among other finds, a rim of Cypriot Red Slip ware form 1B (4th-5th c.); above the channel (:79) an amphora similar to D382 also suggests a 4th-5th c. date. The fill of the channel (: 78), however, included exclusively Middle Roman Cooking Wares. Similarly, mixed layers above contain almost only Middle Roman Plain and Cooking Wares. Small body fragments of African Red Slip in its later ware variants (*terra sigillata chiara* D2 according to Carandini) suggest a later date for deposits between the paving of rectangular slabs and the external wall of the *insula*.

Inside the *insula*, in the mixed rubble layer in square CXCI93 (:86) again only Middle Roman pottery is represented with the ubiquitous in Ptolemais amphora with round-sectioned handles and recessed base. The

¹⁰ C.H. KRAELING, *Ptolemais. City of the Libyan Pentapolis*, Chicago 1962, pl. LXII:B middle bottom

situation is entirely different in square CXCI91 (:69 above pavement and :80 mixed rubble layer), where evidence of very late use predominates. A typical amphora form of that phase is the Late Roman Amphora 2, several examples of which occur. Coarse Handmade cooking pots with ledge handles or vertical ring handles like D 539 or D562 from Benghazi are also hallmarks of this time. The presence of Plain Ware pinched-rim jugs such as D 1198 confirm this picture.

Numismatic report for 2002¹¹

Seventy seven coins were found during fieldwork in 2002, including: 26 Hellenistic coins; 40 Roman coins (including Greek imperial coins); 3 Byzantine coins; 8 modern or illegible coins.

It is noteworthy that a large percentage of the coins found in the excavation date from the Hellenistic period. They represent three groups divided by the mints: Kyrene mint (as well as undefined Cyrenaican mints); Ptolemaic mints; and other centers.

The earliest struck coin is half of a bronze coin (AE 27) of Hieron II (275-215 BC), king of Syracuse, Sicily (BMC 2.216,570-574)¹². Next in chronological order comes an AE 21 struck in Kyrene, depicting a head of Zeus-Ammon on the obverse and a silphium plant on the reverse with the legend KO-IN-ON (BMC 29.69, 4-15)¹³. The remaining Hellenistic coins date from the 2nd-1st c. BC and represent the reigns of the following rulers: Ptolemy V (204-180 BC), Ptolemy VIII (145-116 BC), Ptolemy IX (111-106; 88-80 BC).

All the Hellenistic coins are bronze denominations. They were found in layers corresponding to the final destruction of the villa in the earthquake of 365 AD. It can be assumed that the large number of Hellenistic coins and the fact that they were found in archaeological contexts together with fragments of mud brick provides ground for future dating of the earliest phase of the villa. Special attention should be paid to two coins struck in local Cyrenaican mints in the early years of Roman rule (1st c. BC):

1. AE 27 of Cleopatra and Marc Anthony, Obv: BACIA/ΘEA/NE, Rv: ANTΩ/YΠA/Γ – both legends in three lines (Svoronos 1899)¹⁴;
2. Half of AE 25 of Augustus, Obv: head right, CAESAR TR POT, Rv: curule chair, SCATO PR (Cohen *Octave Auguste*, 797)¹⁵.

All Roman coins with the exception of one are bronze denominations and represent the reigns of the Julio-Claudian emperors (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula), the Flavians (Domitian), the adoptive emperors (Trajan, Hadrian), the Antonines (Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus) and Severans (Severus Alexander – the sole AR denarius among the bronzes); from the overthrow of the Severan Dynasty to the Tetrarchy Period (Gordian III, Philip I, Gallienus, Probus), and finally, the 4th c. rulers (Constantius I, Licinius, Constantine I – posthumous coin, Crispus, Constantius II).

All the Greek imperial coins found in 2002 (7 bronze coins of Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius) were struck in of the mint of Caesarea in Cappadocia. This interesting group of coins requires further research, and it seems necessary to single out other objects produced in these distant Cappadocian workshops (especially pottery finds).

Results of the 2002 campaign

During the 2002 season the central part of a Roman villa was discovered, decorated with extremely well preserved mosaics and wall-paintings.

Description and dating

The diverse chronology of pottery assemblages (see below), with a prevalence of Roman coarse pottery dating to the 2nd and 3rd c. AD (few Hellenistic fragments and a large group of late Roman pottery was also found), Roman and Byzantine coins (2nd-7th c. AD), architectural elements (e.g. capital dating to the end of the 2nd-3rd c. AD, reused Hellenistic elements, diagonally fluted columns, octagonal column bases, fragments of entablature similar to those appearing in other buildings in Ptolemais of the Constantine and Justinian periods), as well as mosaics with decorative borders typical of Cyrenaica (dating to the 2nd-4th c. AD), plus the classical iconography (typical rather of the 2nd-4th c. AD), wall-paintings imitating marble revetment (2nd-4th c. AD) and wall-paintings with earlier floral and geometric motifs (probably 1st - beginning of 3rd c. A.D.), indicate that we are dealing with a multi-phase building.

Signs of Hellenistic structures can be seen in trench CXCI94 (probably rock surface of a road), in trench EX10 where a cistern was discovered under the villa (the cistern's first phase?), and in trench BC100 and BC79, where elements of solid walls in *opus quadratum*

¹¹ Prepared by P. Jaworski. Cf. also P. JAWORSKI, *Ancient Coins from Polish Excavations in Ptolemais, Cyrenaica. Seasons 2002-2003*, ArcheologiaWarsz 2004 (in preparation).

¹² British Museum Catalogue of Greek Coins (BMC), vol. 2, Sicily, London 1876.

¹³ BMC, vol. 29, Cyrenaica, London 1927.

¹⁴ J. SVORONOS, *Ta nomismata tou kratous ton Ptolemaion*, Athens 1904-1908.

¹⁵ H. COHEN, *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'Empire Romain communément appelées Médailles Impériales*, vol. I, Graz 1955 (reprint).

(parallel to the street) have appeared [W3, W5, W29]. On this spot, perhaps on earlier, Hellenistic foundations, a large Roman villa (of a type referred to as Hellenistic-Roman peristyle villa) was built not later than in the 2nd c. AD. The peristyle (R6, R19) of the villa appeared in BC100. It is surrounded by rooms (R17, R12, R14, R1, R9) visible in trenches BC99, EX9, EX10, CXCI91, BC90.

The villa was rebuilt not later than in AD 365 – probably after the earthquake of 262 BC. During this phase – a date around AD 300 or earlier is viable – the room layout was altered. New walls were built with re-used blocks from the previous structure. The southern wall of the peristyle (W8), as well as others in EX10 (W14, W3, W16, W15, W18), were painted with frescoes.

Wall paintings and mosaics preserved *in situ* in BC90, BC99, BC100, EX9, EX10 from the point of view of style appear homogenous.

An earthquake (most probably in AD 365 but perhaps earlier, e.g. in AD 262) damaged the columns of the peristyle, partly destroying the building. The mythological mosaic (M2) and architectural elements found in BC99, BC100, EX10 collapsed with the ceiling of the ground floor. It seems, however, that the villa had been abandoned already some time before this date. After the destruction some of the rooms may have continued in use, as indicated by the assemblages from BC90, EX10, CXCI91 (R4, R8, R5, R12).

In the Byzantine period, small forts (blockhouses) were built in several parts of the *insula* (R16, R5). One of them (R5) was erected on top of the mosaic (M4) in BC100; another, found in BC79, was probably constructed on earlier foundations (an idea that requires further confirmation in field evidence). Related to this Byzantine (or earlier) occupation are traces of fire-places, late coarse pottery, etc. in BC90, BX9.

Archaeological works in 2003

In 2003, archaeological excavations and documentation of previous finds were continued and conservation works begun. Activities were limited particularly

to the area surrounding the fragmentary mosaic M2, which had fallen from the first floor of the villa onto mosaic M3 (room R9, trenches Bc99, Bc100, Ex9, Ex10). Excavations concerned the baulk separating trench Bc99 from Ex9 (Baulk 1, see plan) and room R8 in trench Ex10. Another objective of the season was to carry out a geodetic survey of the ancient town¹⁶.

Explorations (see Fig. 3)

Room R9 had been explored in part in the previous season. A baulk had been left cutting across it with the area to the south of it excavated to the level of the floor mosaic (M3) and the section north of it to the level of the fragmentary mosaic (M2), which was protected at the time. Work in 2003 consisted of removing the baulk and lifting mosaic M2. The digging was conducted by identified archaeological strata.

Room R9 (Bc99, Baulk 1, Ex9)

Six layers (five phases of accumulation) were differentiated:

1. surface layer (stratification unit no. 4: cultivation layer);
2. destruction layer (strat. unit nos. 5 and 6: layer with numerous fragments of fresco and stucco cornices, as well as architectural blocks from collapsed wall W2, probably from ground floor of building);
3. destruction layer (strat. unit nos. 23, 26, 27 distinguished by clay content): rubble and mixed material with prevalent fragments of paintings and mosaic M2, tumbles architectural blocks and mud-brick remnants, mainly from the upper floor of the building);
4. destruction layer (strat. unit nos. 21 and 28: layer with numerous fragments of mosaic M2);
5. accumulation layer (strat. unit no. 14: layer between mosaics M2 and M3, accumulated before the destruction);
6. mosaic M3 (strat. unit no. 32: Dionysiac scene depicting the thiasos of Dionysus encountering sleeping Ariadne (cf. Fig. 32, 33))¹⁷. Five of the seven mythological figures of the mosaic are shown standing in the upper part of the panel. This is a typical scene of presentation in which Dionysus, standing in the middle of the group, is accompanied by Sylenos (or Chiron, not certainly identified as only the upper part of his body is shown) and Pan, and surrounded by dancing Satyrs and Maenads. In the lower left side corner of the

¹⁶ The results of excavations were presented by T. Mikocki and other members of the archaeological team in several public lectures, e.g. in Warsaw (Institute of Archaeology, Annual Session; Committee of Ancient Culture, Polish Academy of Sciences); Lublin (T. MIKOCKI, M. GŁADKI, W. MAŁKOWSKI, *Badania urbanistyczne antycznego Ptolemais [Libia] z zastosowaniem tachimetru elektronicznego*, [in:] FNP dla Archeologii, konferencja 6-7.11.2003 UMCS Lublin, Lublin 2003, p. 64); Chieti (*Cirenaica, Nuovi dati archeologici da città e territorio*,

Convegno Internazionale di Studi, 24-26.11.2003, Chieti, in print); Poznań (*Polskie badania archeologiczne w Libii 2001-2004*, Xenia Posnaniensia, in print).

¹⁷ For photos of the mosaic, cf.: T. ZURADZKI, *Achilles do Polski*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 5.11.2003, p. 11; T. MIKOCKI, „Polskie Ptolemais” w libijskiej Cyrenaice, *Uniwersytet Warszawski* nr 5 (16), December 2003, p. 24-25; A.[gnieszka] K.[RZEMIŃSKA], *Mozaika z Dionizosem*, *Świat Nauki* 12 (148), December 2003, p. 26.

panel Eros is depicted restraining a panther; in the lower right side corner, resting on her elbow, the awakening Ariadne. The figural panel is surrounded by a complex border. The arrangement of the mosaic paving may suggest the function of the room as a *triclinium*.

As in other rooms of the villa, the floor mosaic here (M3) was covered by an accumulation layer (presumably once the building was abandoned) that protected it from more serious earthquake-related damage at a still imprecisely determined point in time.

A small cistern was discovered in the central part of room R9 (see **Fig. 32, 34**). Although the cistern itself was probably constructed before the mosaic, the stone slab covering the mouth of the cistern was built into mosaic M3 and points to an occupational phase later than the one in which the mosaic was laid.

Several richly decorated architectural blocks were found in the destruction layers of Baulk 1.

Extra muros area west of wall W1 (Baulk 1)

Four layers were distinguished:

1. surface layer (strat. unit no. 4: cultivation layer);
2. accumulation layer (strat. unit no. 10: loose soil and stones, small amounts of rubble);
3. accumulation layer (strat. unit nos. 16 and 31: tamped ground – possibly road surface);
4. layer of loose soil: channel (strat. unit no. 29: loose soil with evident layer of burning [strat. unit no. 30], rich in potsherds).

Further exploration is needed for conclusive evidence to appear.

Room R8 (trench EX 10)

Room R8, possibly adhering to room R9 in trench Bc99, was excavated this season in addition to the previously explored four (R1, R2, R3, R4; cf. **Fig. 3, 19, 20**). Some preliminary clearing was begun, but not completed in room R18.

In room R8, four levels (three layers of accumulation) were distinguished:

1. surface layer (strat. unit no. 4: cultivation layer);
2. destruction layer (strat. unit no. 1: mixed material, mainly fresco and pottery fragments, collapsed architectural blocks and mud brick remnants);
3. accumulation layer (strat. unit no. 8: directly above mosaic M9; layer accumulated before the destruction);
4. mosaic M9.

The pavement in room R8 was decorated with a well preserved black and white mosaic. In southeastern corner of the room, directly above the mosaic, a Late Roman jug and two stones, presumably seats, were found

(**Fig. 20**). Four chronologically differentiated coins were also discovered. There was a doorway in wall W18 dividing rooms R8 and R4 (threshold decorated with marble slabs, **Fig. 19**). Both walls of room R8 (W3 and W18) were covered with frescos, which are, however, in poor condition.

Pottery report for 2003¹⁸

The finds from the 2003 season – 230 diagnostic fragments – belong to the same types as those obtained in the previous season. Present are most categories of fine and coarse pottery ranging in period from the Hellenistic through the Roman and up to the Byzantine. All parallel types identified in the published assemblage from the British mission excavations at Sidi Khrebish. The following types have been identified in our material¹⁹:

I. Fine pottery:

- Black-glazed A Wares – B5 and B6
- Local Hellenistic Fine Wares – B123.13 to B123.17, B138.1
- “Ionian” Megarian bowls – B162

II. Coarse pottery:

- Hellenistic amphorae – D15, D47 to D49, D100
- Early Roman amphorae – D151, D152, D154, D192
- Mid Roman amphorae – D254, D281, D288, D296, D300, D313, D316, D319, D320
- Late Roman amphorae – D348
- Hellenistic Cooking Wares – D415, D417 to D420, D426, D433, D436, D438
- Early Roman Cooking Wares – D446 to D448, D450, D458, D462 to D464, D471, D498
- Mid Roman Cooking Wares – D501 to D522
- Late Roman Cooking Wares – D541, D550, D576
- Hellenistic Plain Wares – D606, D607, D611, D613, D644
- Mortaria – D658, D669, D671, D681
- Lids – D759, D798
- Early Roman Plain Wares – D801, D803, D805, D806, D835 to D840, D844 to D846
- Mid Roman Plain Wares – D876, D882, D890 to D895, D917, D944 to D947, D983, D988, D1010, D1011
- Late Roman Plain Wares – D1021, D1044, D1046
- Hellenistic Jugs – D1100, D1106 to D1108, D1119
- Early Roman Jugs – D1135
- Mid Roman Jugs – D1144, D1145, D1148 to D1150

The Mid Roman Coarse Pottery definitely forms the most numerous group of vessels. A complete vessel of

¹⁸ Prepared by Piotr Jaworski.

¹⁹ Based on the report from the excavations at Sidi Khrebish: cf. n. 8, supra.

this group was found in undisturbed archaeological context this season. It was a Mid Roman jug (Benghazi 1148), excavated in the southeastern corner of room R8 in trench Ex10, situated next to a seat constructed out of two stone blocks (the upper block had previously formed part of the entablature). It is a vessel contemporary to those found in the 2002 season *in situ* in room R12, trench Bc90, as well as to the jug uncovered in the fill of the latrine in room R10, trench Ex9. It is notable that both jugs are similar not only in form but are also contemporary and are dated from the end of the 2nd to the mid 3rd c. AD.

Numismatic report for 2003²⁰

In view of the limited archaeological work this season, it is hardly surprising that only 19 coins were found compared to the 80 proceeding from the previous campaign. All of these were bronzes. Of the 15 pieces that were cleaned and identified, 9 turned out to be Ptolemaic coins struck during the Hellenistic period, 5 Roman and 1 modern (Victor Emmanuel III, 1920, cn/013/03).

The Hellenistic coins represented three types (except for one which could not be identified due to off-center striking):

1. Bronze coin (AE 18) struck in Kyrene during the governorship of Magas (300-277 BC). The obverse depicts the head of Zeus-Ammon, facing right and a palm-tree with fruit on the reverse (BMC 29.61, 298).
2. Two bronze coins (AE 23) representing a type struck in the years 204-180 BC during the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, with a depiction of a diademed head of Ptolemy I to right on the obverse and a head of Libya to right on the reverse (BMC 6.77,95²¹; Svoronos 1268).
3. Five bronze coins (AE 14), representing a type struck in the years 116-106 BC during the reign of Ptolemy IX Soter, depicting a head of Zeus-Ammon to right on the obverse and a headdress of Isis on the reverse (BMC 6.107, 49-50; Svoronos 1722).

The Roman coins, generally in poorer condition than the Ptolemaic ones, are dated to different periods of the Empire as follows:

1. Caligula (AD 37-41), half an as depicting Vesta on the reverse (RIC 38²²);
2. Trajan (AD 98-117), difficult to identify, probably struck in Caesarea in Cappadocia;
3. Gordian III (AD 238-244), sestertius with a depiction of Felicitas standing to left on the reverse (RIC 328a²³);
4. Arcadius (AD 383-408), small bronze coin with

a depiction of Victoria on the reverse (references uncertain);

5. Small bronze coin of an unidentified emperor of the late 4th-5th century.

All but three coins (cn/006/03; cn/009/03; cn/015/03) were found in sound archaeological context. Two of the present finds are particularly noteworthy as dating evidence in view of their findspot. The Ptolemaic coin cn/016/03, found embedded in a piece of mortar, may point to the 2nd or possibly 1st c. BC as the date for the erection of the Hellenistic villa. Supporting this hypothesis is the number of Hellenistic coin finds overall. Cn/011/03, identified as a coin of Gordian III, was found in a layer of debris, between two fragments of plaster. It could therefore indicate the period when room R9 underwent a redecoration.

Conservation work in 2002-2003²⁴

The Achilles mosaic (M2) (Fig. 35)

The conservation effort was concentrated on the fragmented mosaic M2 bearing scenes from the myth of Achilles, which had fallen from the upper floor of the building. While no larger unbroken pieces could be found, the smaller fragments with figural decoration formed an evidently discernible layer. The figural scenes of the mosaic were executed in *opus tessellatum* using small *tesserae*, and the borders with large ones. The stone *tesserae* (only a few were made of glass) were set in a thin layer of sand and lime mortar.

The area in which the mosaic fragments were uncovered was divided into sectors, according to the figural scenes. Fragments concentrated in one area and forming a composition were numbered, photographed and removed as a whole, together with the mortar. Before lifting, gauze (or cotton fabric) was attached to cleaned pieces using a water dispersion of polyvinyl acetate (Mowilith DMC 2) as an adhesive. After drying, the adhering fragments were detached from the soil and placed on boards (Fig. 36, 37).

The back side of the larger fragments was now cleaned of soil and rocks down to the original thickness of the mortar and reinforced by impregnation with synthetic resin (Primal WS24). Cavities in the mortar and empty spaces between fragments were filled with new mortar (sand and slaked lime 1:1). Synthetic net textile was stuck on to the backside of the mosaic fragments for support (using Primal AC33) and filling (white cement). Afterwards, the fragments were turned face up and the protective gauze and cotton textile were removed using water. The surface

²⁰ Prepared by P. Jaworski.

²¹ BMC, vol. 6, Ptolemaic Kings of Egypt, London 1883.

²² The Roman Imperial Coinage (RIC), vol. I, London 1984

(revised edition).

²³ RIC, vol. IV.3, London 1968.

²⁴ Prepared by Krzysztof Chmielewski.

of the mosaic was then cleaned with a wet sponge. Loose *tesserae* were inserted (using Primal AC33). The edges of the fragments were reinforced and the empty spaces were filled with protective mortar (Primal WS24 and sand). This type of protection is only temporary, hence the mortar must be weak; in case of further conservation, the removal of the protective mortar will be necessary. As the glass *tesserae* were heavily damaged, they were reinforced and secured using synthetic resin (Paraloid B72).

All the preserved fragments were placed on boards and should not be transported nor stored in a humid environment. The smaller pieces of the mosaic were placed in plastic boxes.

Work on the paintings

1. Painting 2 (Room R9) (Fig. 38, 39)

In room R9 (trench Ex9), on wall W2, a large fragment of wall painting P2 was uncovered. The wall painting was executed on two layers of sand and lime mortar. It was painted immediately on the second layer, probably *al fresco*, using a wide range of pigments. Since leaving the painting *in situ* was hazardous due to its detachment from the wall, the painting was removed. After cleaning, the painting was disinfected (using a 3% Preventol R80 solution). The surface of the painting was preserved (with 3% solution of Paraloid B72 in acetone) and a cotton textile was attached to it (using a 20% polyvinyl acetate solution).

The painting was removed in one piece (*stacco* technique, the mortar being taken down as well) and placed face down on a board.

It is recommended that the painting be stored in dry conditions in preparation for further conservation.

2. Painting 9 (Room R1)

In room 1 (trench Cxc91), on wall W14, a fragment of wall painting P9 was exposed because of erosion. Treatment was similar with the sole difference that it remains *in situ*.

Work on stuccos

Large stucco fragments were found, lying face down, in baulk 1. The wall from which they had detached (W2) could be seen as imprints in the plaster on their back. They were removed after cotton textile had been stuck to them.

Survey report for 2001-2003²⁵ (Fig. 1-4)

The geodetic survey of the site was carried out using a Total Station Leica TC 1105 with prism GPR 111 (donated to the Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology by the Foundation for Polish Science) and the following software: Leica Survey Office (data

transfer), Winkalk (data calculation) and Autocad 2000 (final map drawing).

A grid was set up in the city area, following a NS-WE axis and covering 9 sq. km. The basic unit was 1 sq. km marked with letters from A to I. Each of these units was divided into smaller sectors of 10,000 sq. m each, the smallest survey unit, marked with Roman numbers from I to C (see general view of grid and plan of surveyed area). The basic excavation unit is an area of 100 sq. m marked with numbers from 1 to 100 within the sectors. The center point of the grid was established by resection from known points on a city building whose position was undoubtedly clear and stable. The azimuth 0-N direction was established with three different methods: GPS measurements, resection (as well as grid center), and a north-finder. Having the grid center and 0 azimuth and full Hz direction, it was possible to make a local resection and set up a grid on the ground.

Each point measured during the survey was recorded according to the Cartesian coordinate system with Easting and Northing distances directly connected to the NS and WE axes – references lines, with a middle point [0,0] placed in the center of the grid. The coordinates were transferred into the field using resection, free station or traverse software. Reference height was set using GPS measurements and calculated at 30 m above sea level. All height measurements taken during survey and excavations were connected directly with the reference height.

The goal of the survey was to measure and record any visible ground traces of ancient relics on the surface and to make a new city plan coupled with a field database.

Measurements in 2002 covered an area of 0.32 sq. km, which is about 5% of the total city area (2.5 km x 2.8 km along NS-WE axes). In October 2003, mapping was continued in the area southwest of the Colonnaded Palace.

In 2002, a total of 217 objects was measured, recorded and drawn during the survey. Also part of the original city grid and the spatial distribution of buildings were reconstructed. The deviation of the city grid from NS was measured and established at 40 g. An earlier plan by Wright (published by Kraeling) could now be revised. A database for all objects was created, allowing to determine function, chronology and dimensions of every single wall, well, building etc. in the city. A DTM was created for every *insula*.

In 2003, the survey covered the following: Hellenistic-Roman odeon, Monumental Street (*decumanus*) with the Arch of Constantine, public buildings along this street. The height points in the range were measured.

²⁵ Abridged from Marcin Gładki's report for 2002 and Wiesław Małkowski's for 2003

Program for future seasons

Program for archaeological works

In the next campaigns we would like to remove the remaining baulks and enlarge our excavations in order to uncover the entire villa and prepare it for reconstruction: theoretical, by means of modern computer possibilities, and practical – anastylosis of the preserved architectural and decorative elements in the field.

In the forthcoming year we hope to conduct the double programme of archaeological campaigns. The first will mainly concentrate on the conservation of the Achilles mosaic M2. In order to confirm that none of the pieces of the fragmentary mosaic still remain in the destruction layers, we need to explore the baulks in the adjoining trenches (balk between trench Bc99 and Bc100; balk between Bc100 and Ex10; balk between Ex10 and Ex9).

During the second campaign rooms surrounding the central courtyard (R6: atrium?) are to be explored. We plan to begin with room R1 decorated with the mosaic with the winged female figure (M7).

Program for conservation works

The focus of our next campaign will be the conservation of the destroyed Achilles mosaic, which fell from the first floor of the villa and broke in thousands

of pieces. This mosaic can only be saved in a highly qualified laboratory and a very large budget for conservation therefore required.

Program for topographical works

The topographical program needs to be continued until all major and minor buildings are measured. In the first place, we would like to concentrate on survey allowing for the localization of the Hellenistic agora. The results of measurements should be supplemented by a number of trial trenches, aerial and satellite photography. On the basis of these investigations a dissertation on the urban development of Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic Ptolemais – Tolmeita will be prepared.

Proposal for protection and exhibition

Upon completing the final stage of exploration of the *insula*, we plan to prepare a project of an exhibition of the discovered villa, its paintings and mosaics. We are convinced that an exhibition *in situ* of the entire ensemble will be the best solution. The extremely high quality of the discovered material guarantees enormous interest on the part of scholars and tourists. Hoping that such a reconstruction would be possible, we would like to begin anastylosis works during our next campaigns, preparing the uncovered rooms for future exhibition.

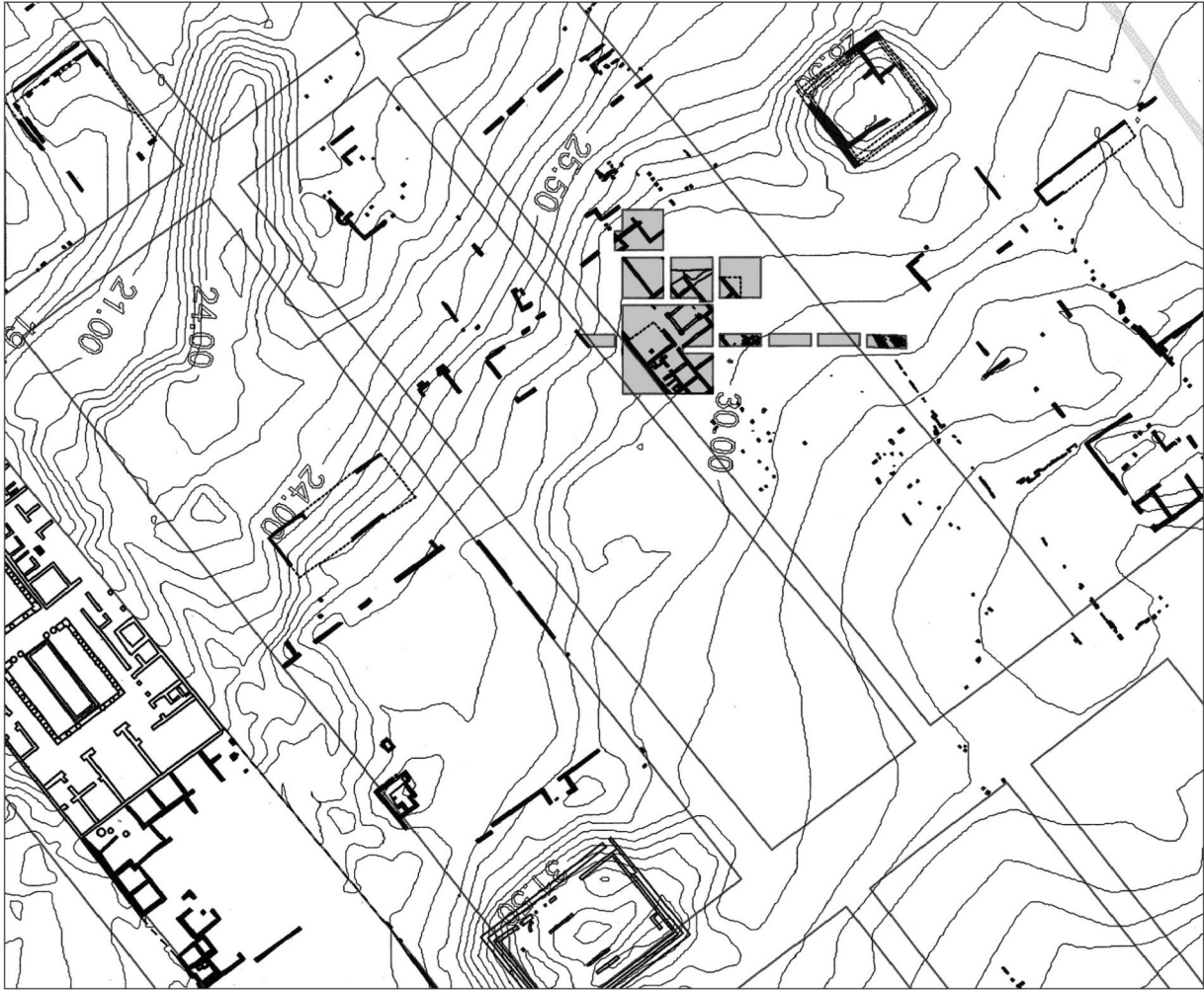


Fig. 1. Ptolemais. Plan of excavations area

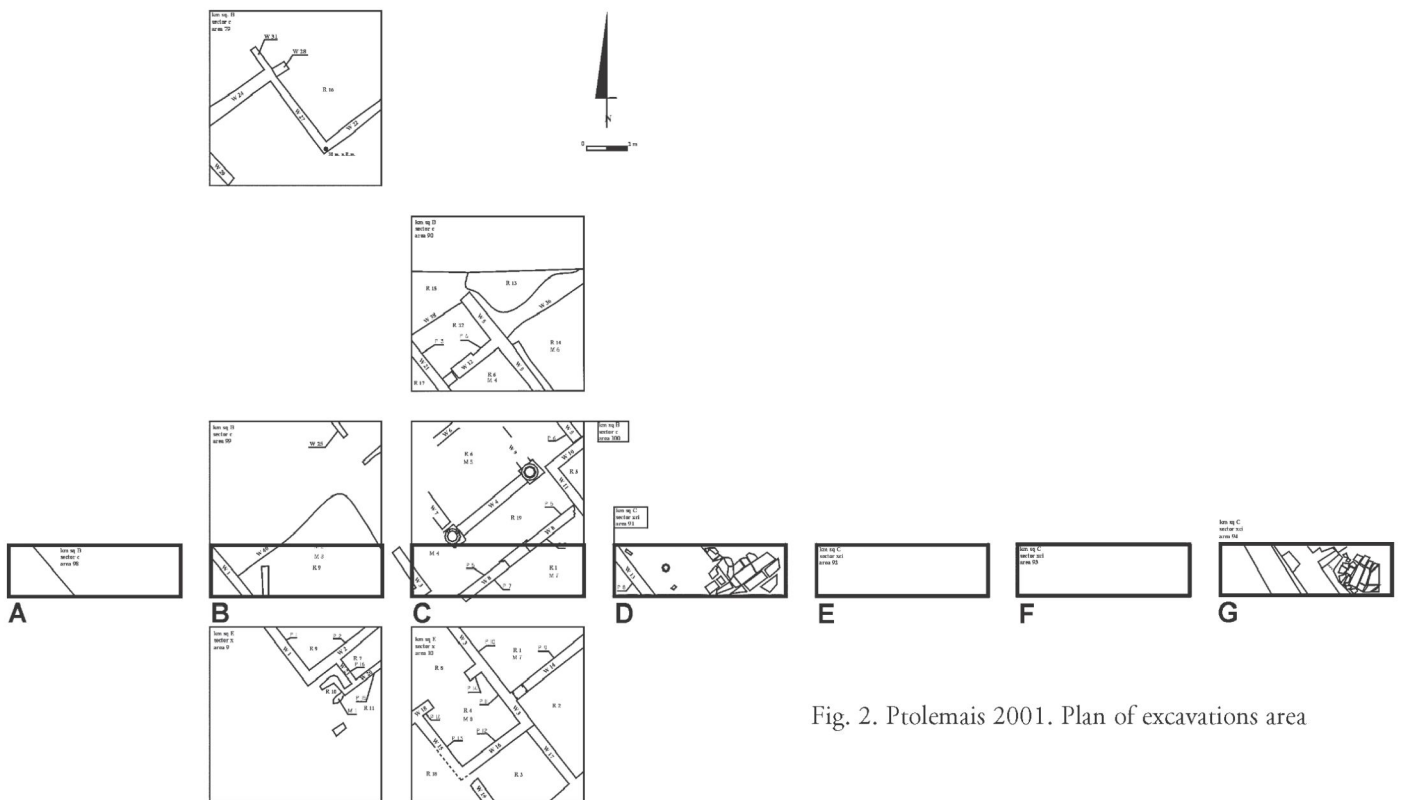


Fig. 2. Ptolemais 2001. Plan of excavations area

PLATE 48

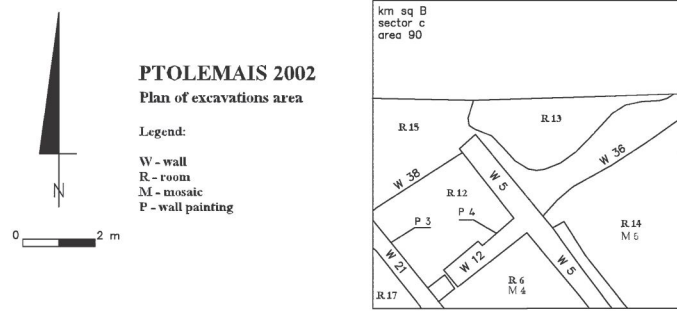


Fig. 3. Ptolemais 2002. Plan of excavations area

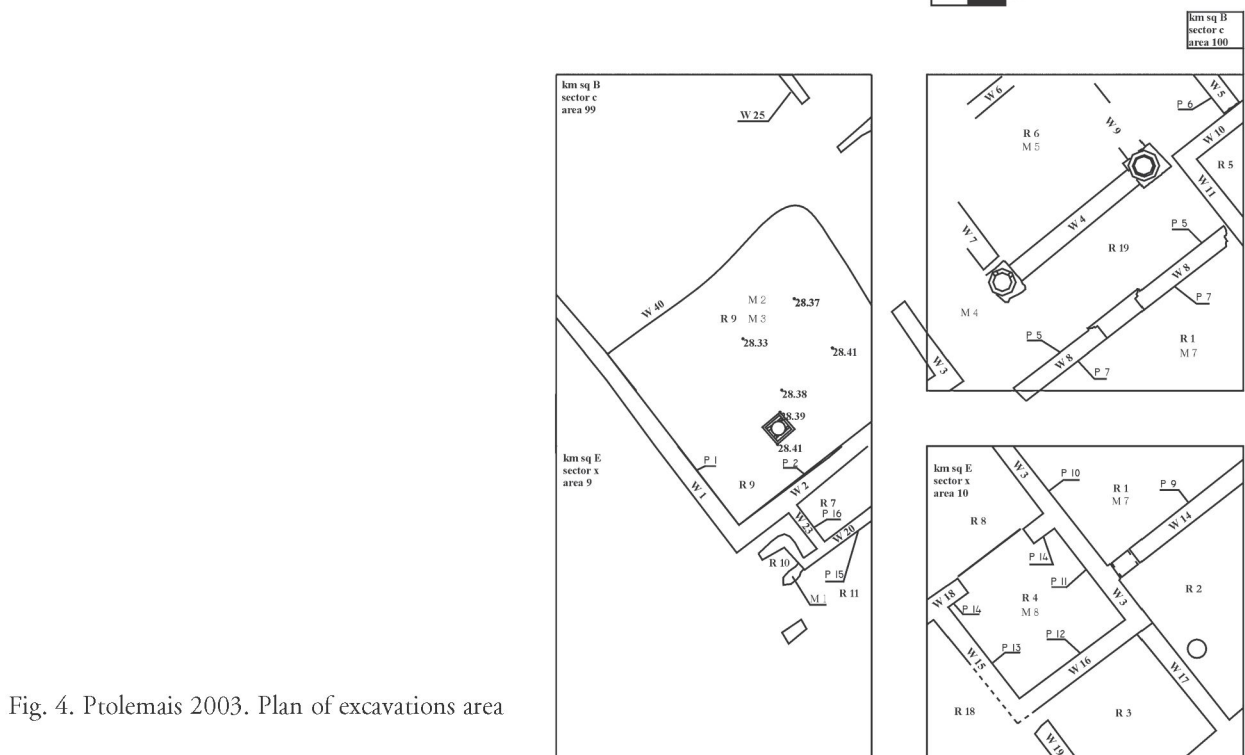
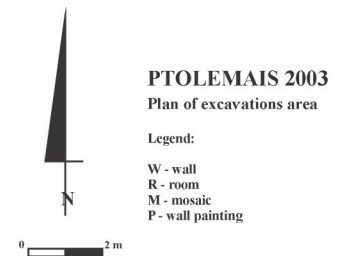
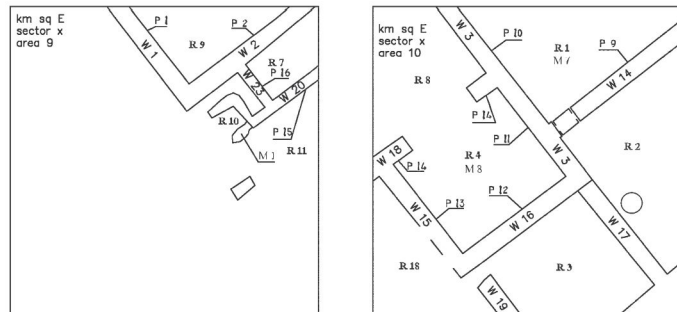
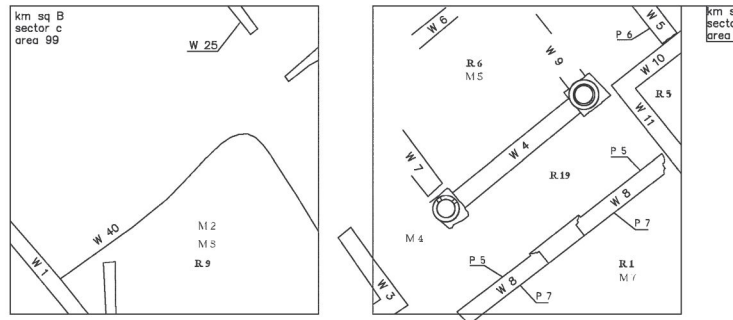


Fig. 4. Ptolemais 2003. Plan of excavations area



Fig. 5. Ptolemais 2002. General view of the excavations area



Fig. 6. Wall in trench G (CXCI91)

PLATE 50



Fig. 7. Peristyle of the villa uncovered during season 2002



Fig. 8. Mosaic floor in the portico of the peristyle



Fig. 9. Columns of the peristyle broken by an earthquake



Fig. 10. E corner of the Byzantine blockhouse built on the mosaic floor of peristyle

PLATE 52



Fig. 11. S corner of the room 1 (R1)



Fig. 12. Figural decoration of the R1 mosaic

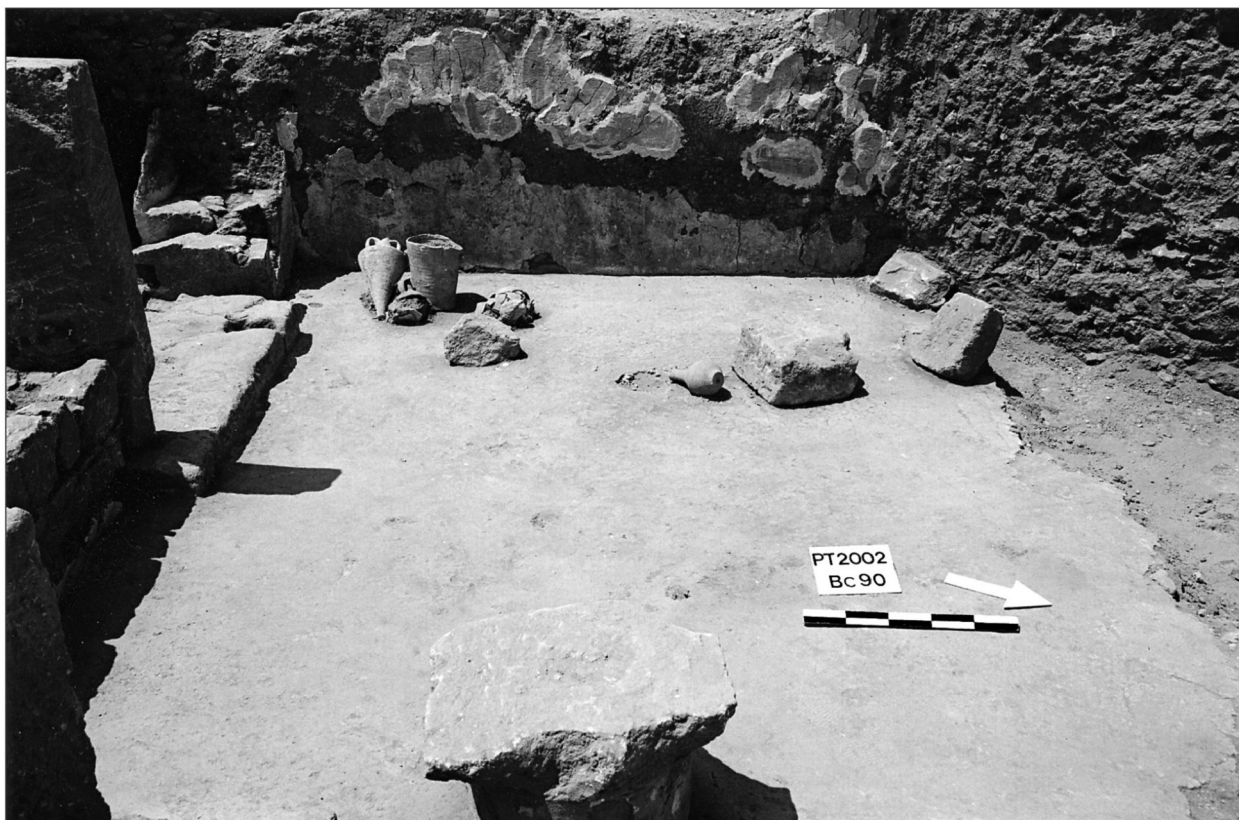


Fig. 13. Trench BC90, R12



Fig. 14. Trench BC90. Entrance to R14

PLATE 54

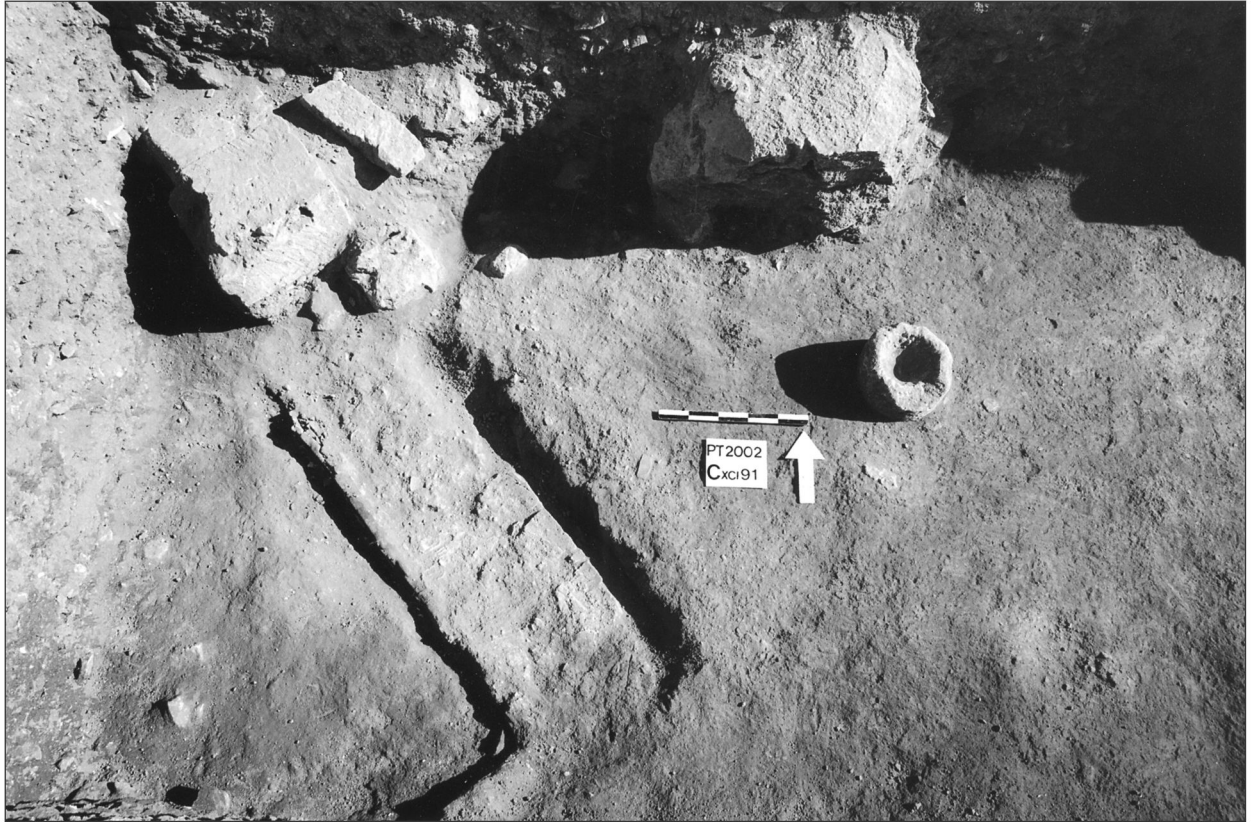


Fig. 15. Trench CXCI91. A column reused as a mortarium



Fig. 16. Trench EX10. A general view



Fig. 17. Trench EX10. Wall painting in R4



Fig. 18. Trench EX10. Mosaic floor of R4

PLATE 56



Fig. 19. Trench EX10. Mosaic of R8, partly uncovered in season 2003

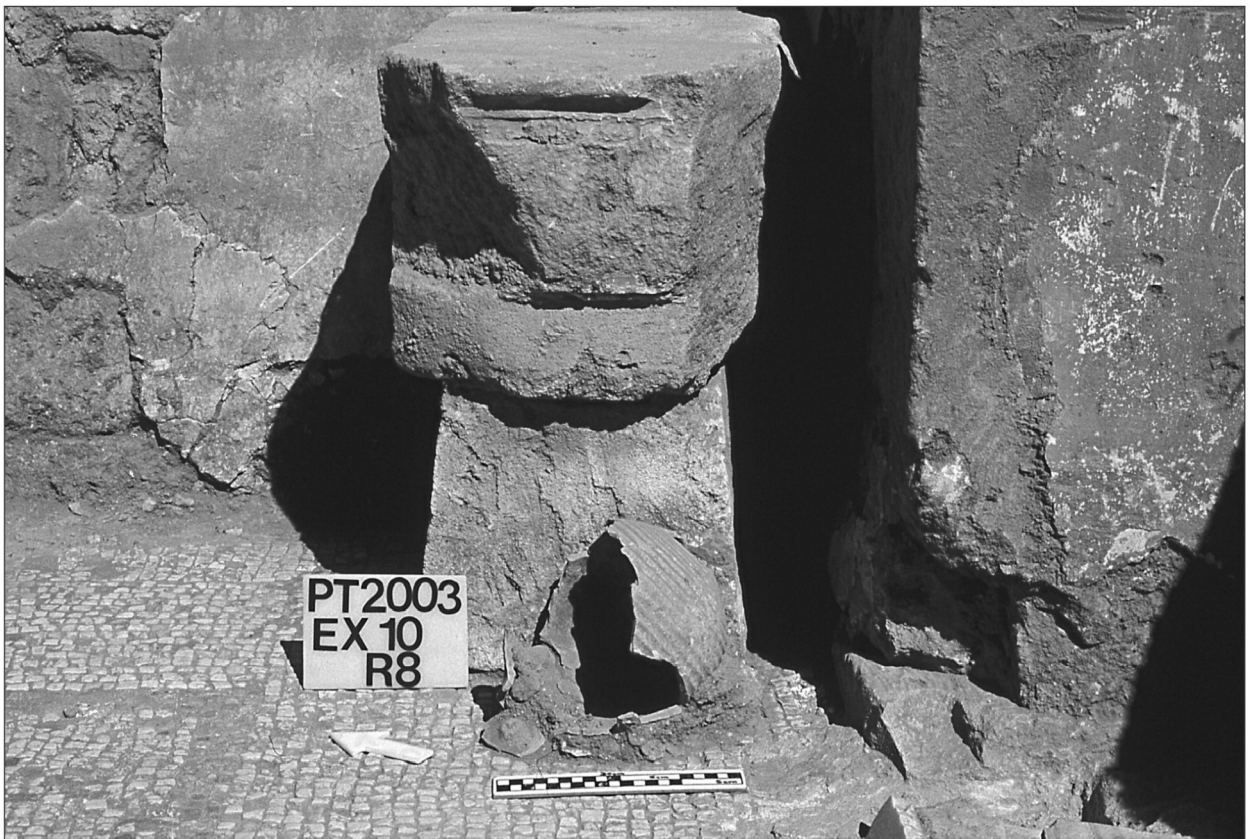


Fig. 20. Trench EX10, R8. Architectural blocks of the villa reused in Late Roman period



Fig. 21. Trench EX10, R2. Puteal leading to the cistern



Fig. 22. Trench EX9. NE part of trench during exploration

PLATE 58

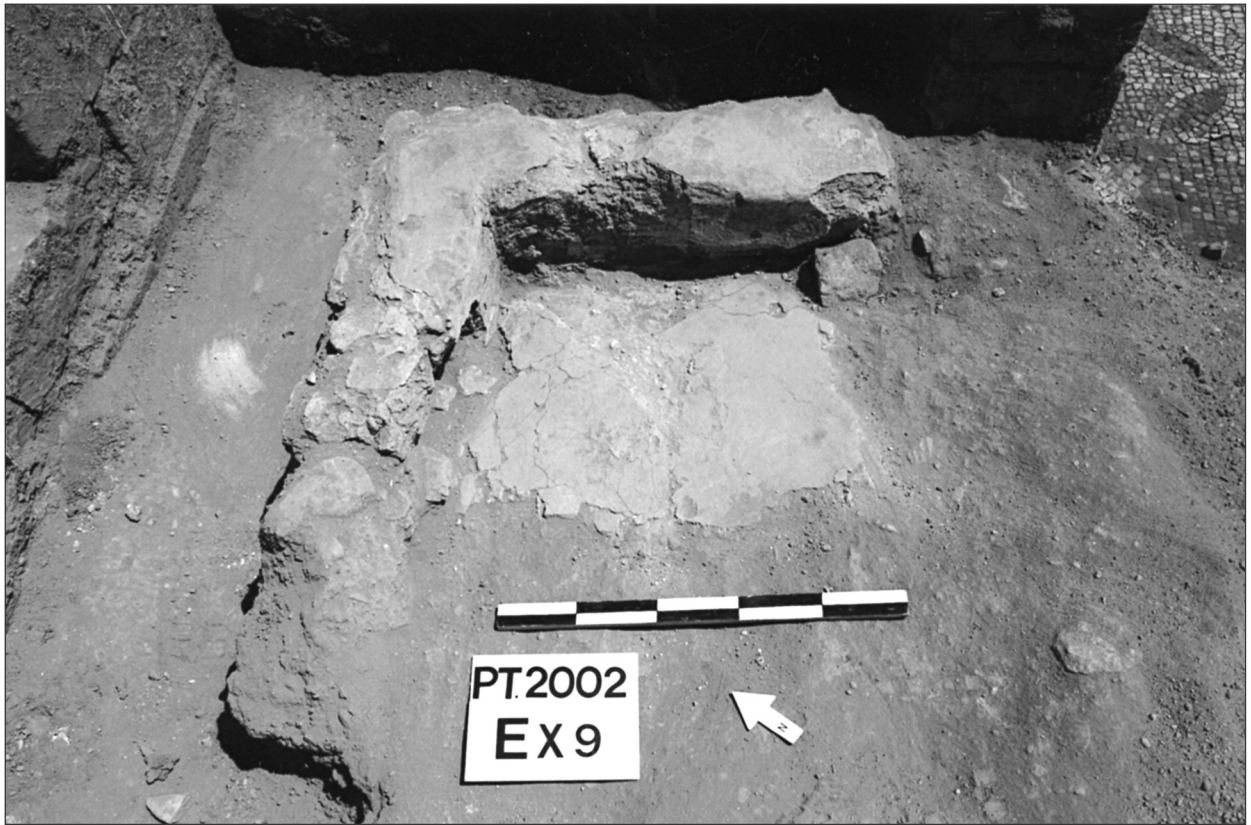


Fig. 23. Trench EX9. Late Roman construction surrounded by drain leading to the sewage collector and by canal of the road



Fig. 24. Trench EX9. Collapsed wall painting of the wall 2 (W2)



Fig. 25. Part of the wall painting of W2



Fig. 26. Painted decoration of the element of arch

PLATE 60



Fig. 27. Trench BC99. Mosaic of Achilles from the first floor of the villa, lying above mosaic floor of R9



Fig. 28. Trench BC99. Mosaic of Achilles from the first floor of the villa, lying above mosaic floor of R9



Fig. 29. Detail of Achilles mosaic



Fig. 30. Small sculpture depicting a sheep (upper part of Libyan Ammon representation)

PLATE 62



Fig. 31. Greek votive relief depicting a man on horseback, a running boy and a standing woman



Fig. 32. Trench BC99. Mosaic floor of R9



Fig. 33. Trench BC99, R9. Decoration of a mosaic floor depicting the thiasos of Dionysos encountering sleeping Ariadne



Fig. 34. Trench BC99. Cistern in the central part of R9

PLATE 64



Fig. 35. Ptolemais 2003. Conservation works on the Achilles mosaic



Fig. 36. Ptolemais 2003. The Achilles mosaic during conservation works



Fig. 37. Ptolemais 2003. The Achilles mosaic during conservation works



Fig. 38. Trench EX9. Part of the wall painting of W2

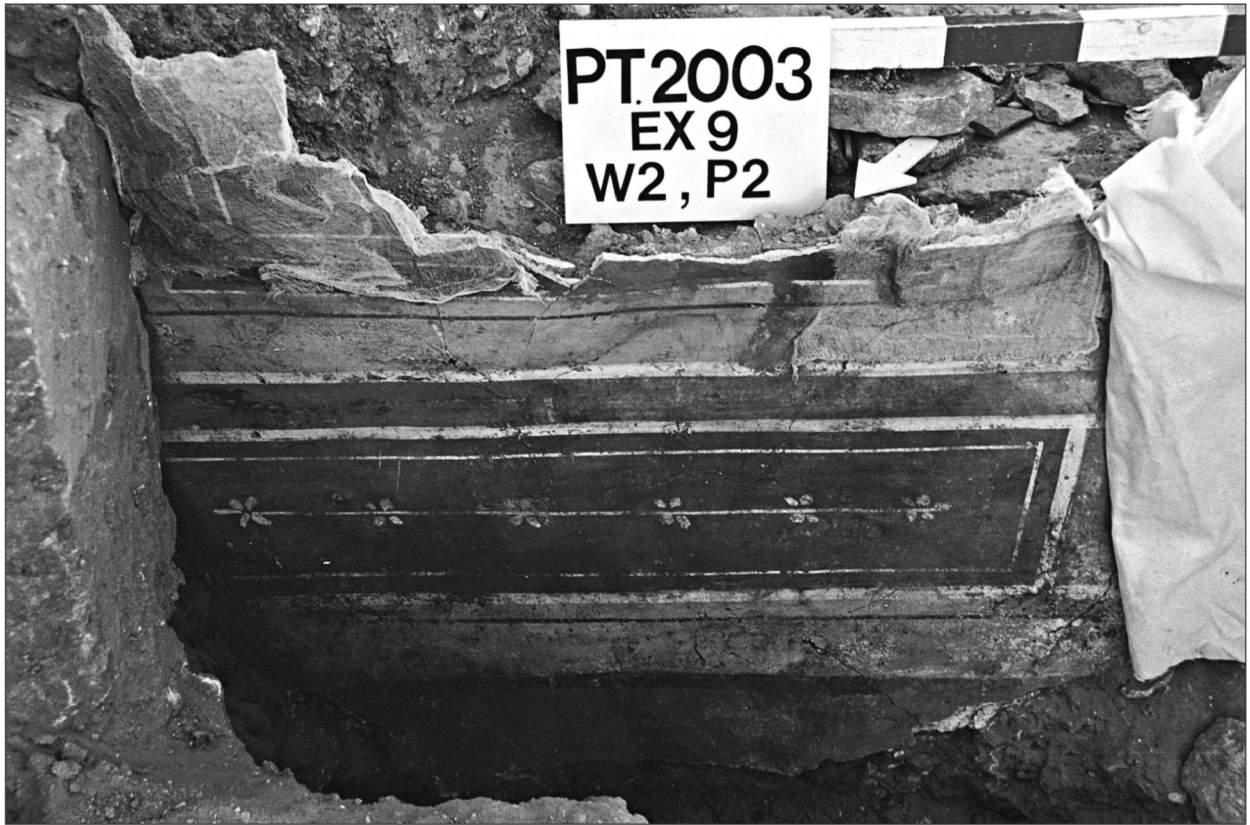


Fig. 39. Trench EX9. Part of the wall painting of W2



Fig. 40. Trench BC99. Detail of the Dionysos mosaic in R9