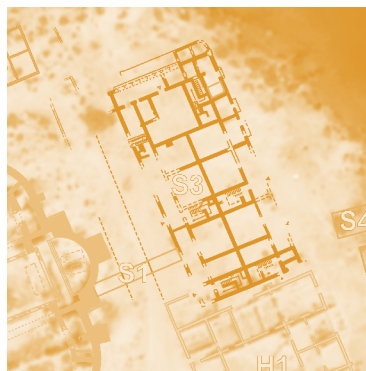


Development of a settlement on the northeastern promontory at 'Marea'



Abstract: The ancient topography of the settlement on the northeastern promontory at 'Marea' (North Hawariya) was the subject of investigations carried out at the site in 2018 within the frame of a broader excavation project. Fieldwork established the date of some structures recognized along an ancient road. The oldest remains turned out to be from the Roman period, when the promontory became a rubbish dump for production waste, mostly sherds of AE 3 and AE 4 Egyptian amphorae, from the nearby pottery kilns. Two superimposed occupation levels were recognised, an earlier one from the beginning of the 3rd century AD or later, and a later one from the 5th–6th century. The buildings followed a regular grid that fits into the overall plan of the town. The research has resulted in a better understanding of the changes occurring in this part of the settlement at 'Marea'.

Keywords: Marea, Egypt, Roman period, early Byzantine period, early Islamic period, latrine, pottery, urbanism, streets, church

The settlement known as 'Marea'¹ is located on the southern shore of Lake Mareotis (currently Lake Maryout), roughly 40 km southwest of Alexandria. This place was first inhabited in the Hellenistic period and continued to be so after the Arab conquest (until the 8th century) (Pichot 2010; Gwiazda and Wielgosz-Rondolino 2019). Fieldwork in 2018 was focused on the area east

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¹ For a discussion of the ancient name of 'Marea' and its identification, see Rodziewicz 2010; Wipszycka 2012.

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Dates of work: 14 October–15 November 2018 (19th season)

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The area of the Basilica continued to be excavated by Dr. Krzysztof Babraj and his team from the Archaeological Museum in Kraków in cooperation with the PCMA UW within the frame of the extended Marea project.

of the Byzantine Great Basilica, where six different trenches were excavated [Fig. 1].² Two of these (trenches S1-1 and S1-2) were intended primarily to confirm the existence of a street running northwards just behind the apse of the Basilica. The remaining four, further east and north (S3-1, S4, S5, L1), provided data on the chronology of the architecture and the stratigraphy of underlying layers (S-1, S1-2 and S3) leading to a better un-

derstanding of the landform and earlier architecture.

Earlier excavations in the sector had uncovered House H1, latrines L1 and a quay (Babraj et al. 2013: 67–73; Babraj, Drzymuchowska, and Willburger 2014: 48–52; Wielgosz-Rondolino and Gwiazda 2016; Gwiazda and Pawlikowska-Gwiazda 2019). Also wall tops visible on the surface were documented in previous research (Kościuk 2012).

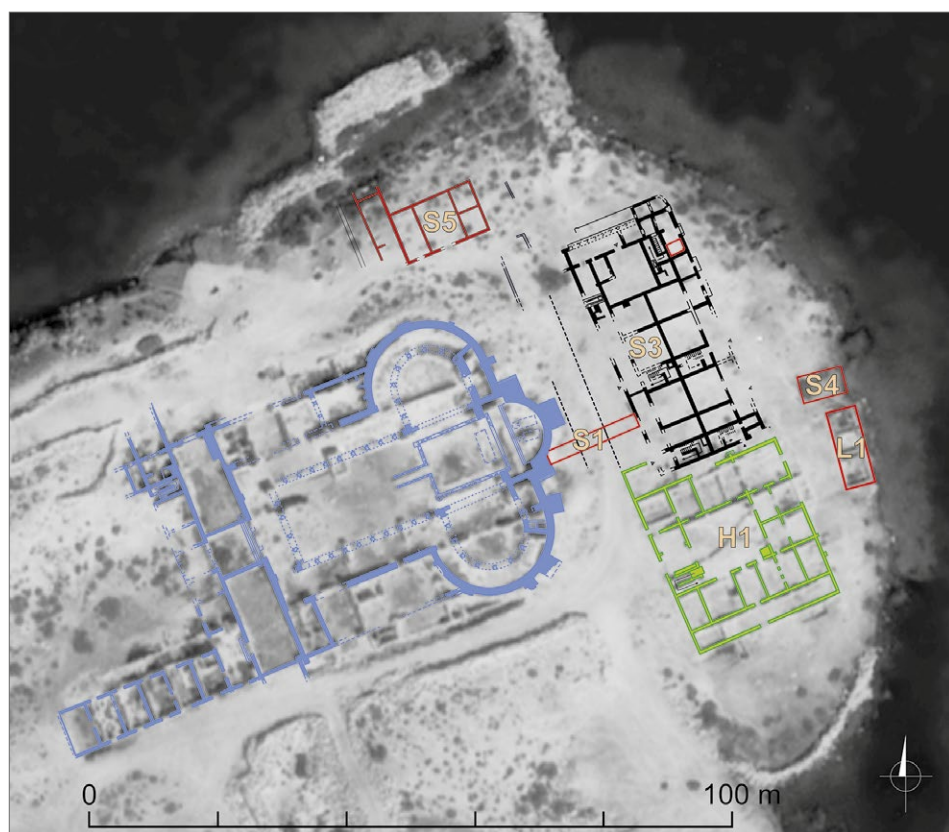


Fig. 1. Urban architecture on the northeastern promontory at 'Marea' showing trenches excavated in the 2018 season (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | processing M. Gwiazda after J. Kogut, D. Tarara, J. Kościuk, A. Kutia)

- 2 The results of a mission from the Archaeological Museum in Kraków working in the Great Basilica and a separate team conducting magnetic and electrical resistivity surveys in the southern part of the settlement will be reported separately.

RESULTS

TRENCH S1

Trench S-1 comprised the eastern end of the trench (S1-1; 2 m N-S by 5 m E-W), which was traced perpendicular to the facade of Building S3, and an extension aligned with the first part, extending west across the road all the way to the back of the apse and the outer east wall of the Great Basilica. The extension was 9.80 m long [Fig. 4]. A half-meter baulk was left between the two trenches.

S1-1

The earliest structure uncovered in the trench was a stone wall (S1-1-22), 0.60 m wide [Fig. 2]. It was built using

limestone of irregular shape and various size (0.40 m x 0.37 m x 0.15 m to 0.20 m x 0.10 m x 0.09 m) with no traces of bonding mortar. The layout of this feature did not line up with the later architecture.

A concentration of unworked limestone (S1-1-23) of different size (from 0.13 m x 0.10 m x 0.70 m to 0.42 m x 0.33 m x 0.20 m) was found west of this wall, on the same level. It covered an area 1.10 m (east-west) by 1.00 m (north-south). The collected data is still insufficient to determine function and date of these features.

A mud-brick wall (S1-1-16) in the central part of the trench was made of bricks measuring roughly 0.40 m x

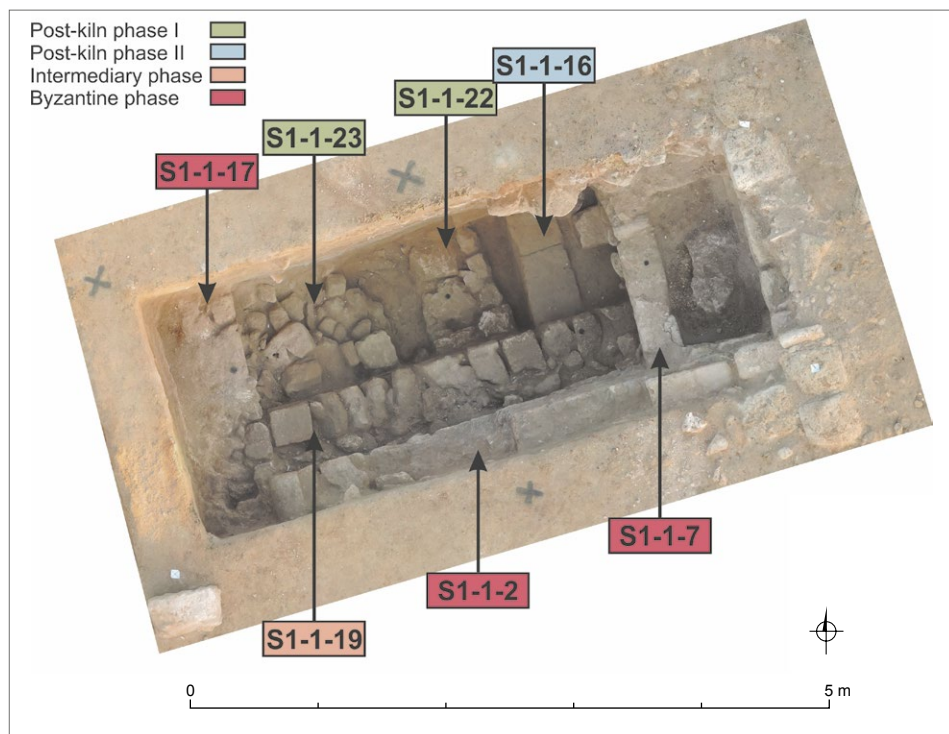


Fig. 2. Trench S1-1: plan showing the architecture identified in the trench (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | orthophoto M. Gwiazda)

0.20 m x 0.70 m [see *Fig. 2*]. It was oriented north–south and its overall width was about 0.80 m. Some of the collapsed bricks were superimposed on the remains of the earlier wall S1-1-22, which, however, does not seem to have acted as a foundation for it. Bricks were also observed below the foundation (S1-1-19) of Building S3.

This foundation wall ran alongside the southern side of the trench. It was very regular and wide [see *Fig. 2*]. It might even be the remains of an earlier structure, the ruins of which were reused as a foundation. On the west, it abutted at right angle to the inside of the west outer wall (S1-1-17) of Building S3, which acted at the same time as the eastern boundary of a street running between the Great Basilica and this complex (see below).

Lining the southern side of this foundation was a similarly oriented wall (S1-1-2) [see *Fig. 2*]. It was partly dismantled prior to the destruction of Building S3. A thinner and more poorly preserved wall (S1-1-7) formed a compartment of unknown purpose at the eastern end of the trench. The enclosed space, 1.00 m by 1.50 m, preserved traces of a simple mortar floor.

Contrary to expectations, there was no stone pavement or mortar floor associated with these structures, although the dismantling of the south and west walls of Building S3 may have contributed to its destruction. A tamped earth layer was found in places.

When this structure went out of use, it was covered by rubble composed of mostly small-sized cobbles (the biggest



Fig. 3. Layer of rubble from the collapsed wall of Building S3, looking west; scale = 50 cm (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | photo A. Pawlikowska-Gwiazda)

measured 0.25 m x 0.20 m x 0.13 m). The debris yielded lumps of mortar, pottery (jug, bowl, plate, LRA 1 amphorae as well as numerous fragments of AE 5/6 and AE 7 containers), glass vessels, an iron nail and one illegible coin. The rubble was delimited in part by wall S1-1-2, overrunning however the more destroyed western end of this partly dismantled wall. The tumble was very thick on the eastern side (approximately 0.20 m), and sloped down to the west before disappearing entirely.

The youngest occupation layer connected with Building S3 before its ultimate destruction consisted of a thin continuous layer of silt, 0.10 m thick, discovered throughout the trench. The pottery assemblage from this layer included a bowl, a lid, sherds of LRA 1 and LRA 4 amphorae, AE 5/6, AE 7 and residual Roman-period AE 3 amphorae (Pieri 2005: 69–84, 101–131; Dixneuf 2011:

97–134), broken glass, three coins, an iron nail and some animal bones. The upper courses of the west outer wall (S1-1-17) of the building managed to be dismantled before the structure of the building ultimately collapsed.

Rubble from the destroyed walls of Building S3, which included pseudo-ashlars with attached mortar, was spread over the occupation layer [Fig. 3]. Ceramics (kitchenware, tableware, amphorae, jugs) from this level reflect a rubbish dump deposit. The uppermost layer consists of windblown silt from the last habitation phase and the post-abandonment period. An ostrakon from this deposit turned out to be a short but complete trading-administrative text from the 7th–8th century.

S1-2

The lowest layer, reached in three test pits dug by the southern baulk of the trench,

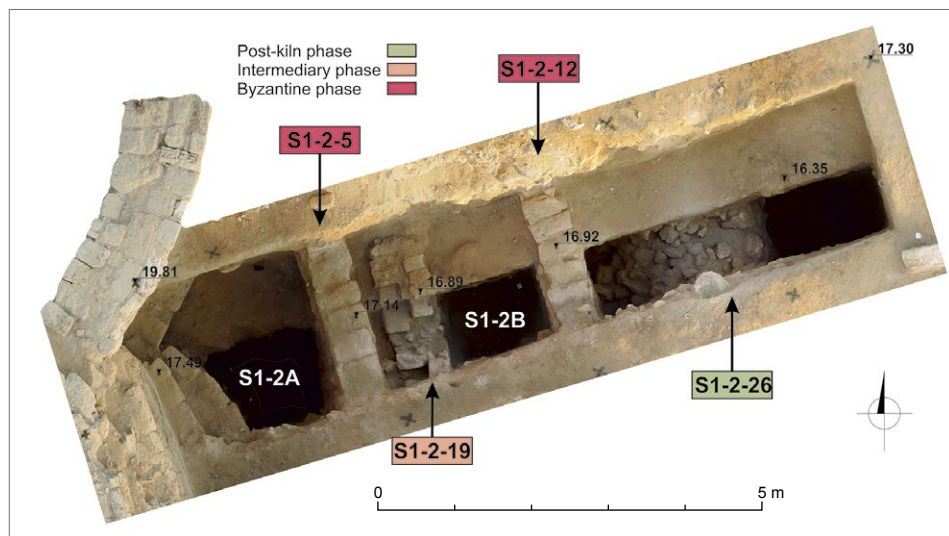


Fig. 4. Trench S1-2 (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | orthophoto M. Gwiazda)

was ginger red in color, full of fragmented Roman-period AE 3 and AE 4 amphorae. A north–south wall (S1-2-26) was recorded at the eastern end [see *Fig. 4*]. It was built of unworked limestone pieces, measuring up to 0.40 m x 0.25 m x 0.20 m. The estimated width of the wall is 1.20 m (the west face is partly obscured by rubble, but there is no doubt that the cobblestones originated from a collapsed part of the wall). The structure of which this wall was part was covered with another ginger-red layer with a huge quantity of Roman-age AE 3 and AE 4 amphora wasters, separators used in pottery kilns and much later sherds of LRA 1 and AE 7 containers. This deposit, which was traced in all three test pits, was most probably a terrace fill, levelling the ground under the construction of the Great Basilica.

Wall S1-2-19 (corresponding to S1-2-26) cut through this ginger-red layer [see *Fig. 4*]. It was composed of pseudo-ashlars measuring from 0.20 x 0.15 x 0.8 m to 0.38 x 0.30 x 0.20 m, bonded in mortar. The upper part of the wall was intentionally dismantled to make way for the architecture of the next phase.

Parallel walls S1-2-5 and S1-2-12 were built in the next construction phase [see *Fig. 4*]. The masonry was quite typical: limestone pseudo-ashlars of a maximum width of 0.58 m and maximum height of roughly 0.40 m, laid on a foundation made of smaller unworked limestones (maximum size 0.22 m x 0.30 m x 0.15 m), all bonded in mortar. Mortar floors between these two walls and next to the wall of the Great Basilica indicate the presence of two rooms. The bedding of



Fig. 5. Surface of the street between the Great Basilica and Building S3, looking west; scale = 50 cm (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | photo A. Pawlikowska-Gwiazda)

this floor yielded several sherds of LRA 1 and AE 7 amphorae, as well as a single coin from the 5th–6th century AD.

A street surface was recorded on the level of the mortar floors on the eastern side of wall S1-2-12 (overlying the earlier wall S1-2-26). It was, as expected, a north–south street [Fig. 5]: a level of tamped earth, significantly rising up toward the west. A layer of crushed mortar and plaster that must have flaked off the face of wall S1-2-12 was recorded on the surface, explaining the significant difference in thickness.

A pit was sunk into the street surface in the southeastern corner of the trench. It measured at least 1.10 m by 0.88 m, its eastern and southern sides disappearing into the baulk. It was almost completely filled with ash, burnt animal bones and pottery sherds, including LRA 1 and AE 5/6 amphorae, bowls and jugs, as well as residual AE 3 and AE 4 containers). The considerable size of this feature suggests that it was probably a hearth used for a fairly long period of time.

The occupation layer on the street surface yielded many sherds of LRA 1 am-

phorae, some AE 5/6 containers, plates, bowls, jugs, glass, animal bones, an oil lamp and, last but not least, a fragment of a limestone game board [Fig. 6]. Limestone pseudo-ashlars piled up on the western side of the street represent gradual natural collapse of the wall. A similar tumble filled the two compartments west of the street. Six coins from this layer, once they have been cleaned and studied, may date the abandonment of this part of the church.

TRENCH S3-1

Complex S3 sits between the lake on the north and east, the Great Basilica on the west and House H1 on the south, the latter cleared in the previous season. The trench was dug to examine the stratification under the building in an effort to determine the date of its construction [Fig. 7]. It was delimited by the east, south and west walls of a room (unit 80 on earlier plans, see Kościuk 2012: 32–34, Fig. 2). The northern boundary was arbitrary, imparting an almost square outline on the trench (2.00 m N–S, 2.32 m E–W).

The lowest excavated layer is an occupation level consisting of light brown silt (S3-1-20) [Fig. 8]. Superimposed on it are four phases of dumped deposits (S3-1-18A, B, C, D) with numerous fragments of broken AE 3 and AE 4 amphorae, as well as separators and bricks used in the pottery kiln structures. There was also a significant amount of characteristic black ash. The lack of any other material led to the identification of this deposit as a Roman-age pottery dump.

A series of horizontal layers in the next phase appear to be ground-leveling deposits. They were composed of earth mixed with lime/gypsum production

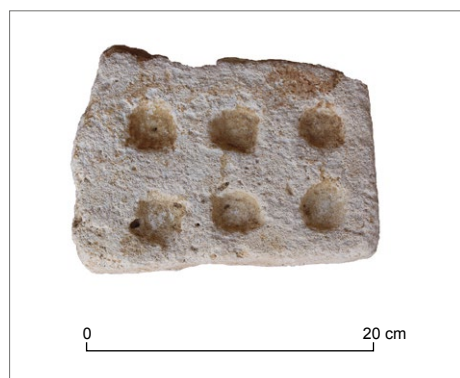


Fig. 6. Board game found in a street behind the Great Basilica (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | photo A. Pawlikowska-Gwiazda)

waste, potsherds (LRA 1, AE 5/6 with residuals sherds of AE 3 and AE 4), separators and a coin provisionally dated to the 5th–6th century.

The wall foundations of the room cut through the levelling layers described above. The eastern foundation was roughly 1.75 m deep from the pavement

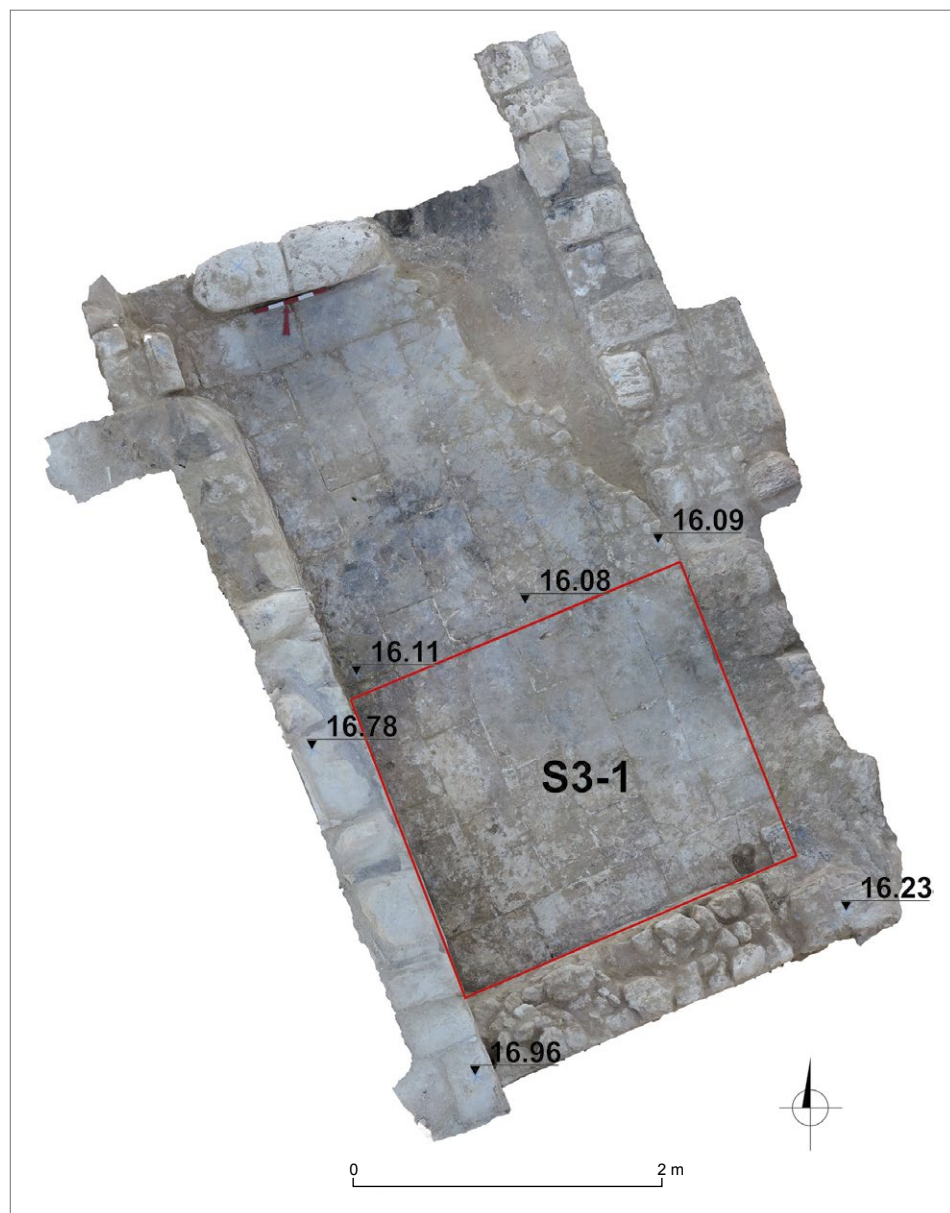


Fig. 7. Pavement in room S3-1 (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | orthophoto M. Gwiazda)

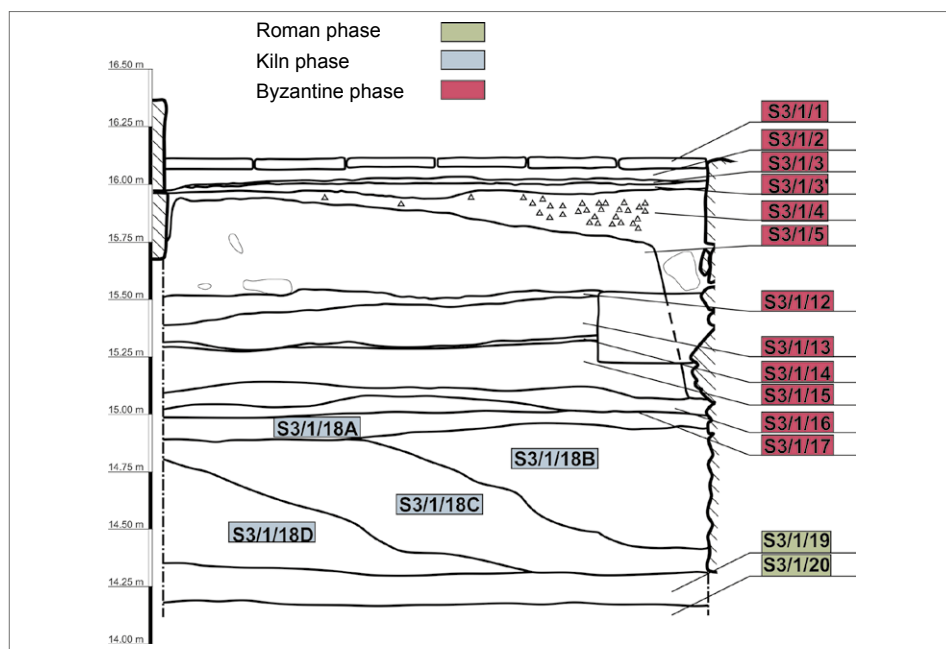


Fig. 8. Room S3-1: northern trench section (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | drawing M. Gwiazda)

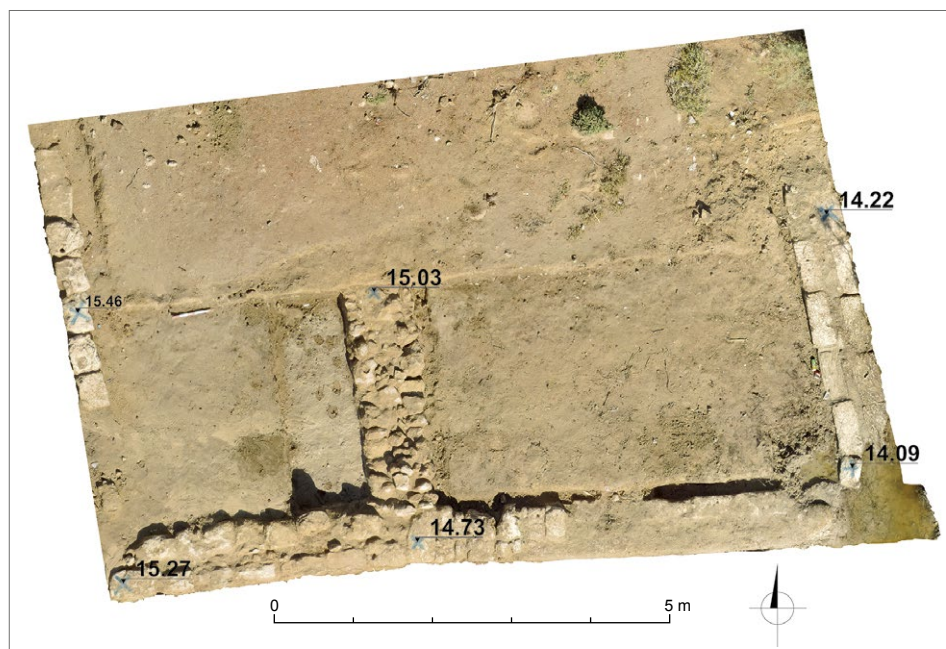


Fig. 9. Foundation walls of Building S4 (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | orthophoto M. Gwiazda)

surface. It consisted of pseudo-ashlars and unworked limestone (maximum size 0.15 m x 0.13 m x 0.70 m), the upper part only bonded in mortar. The western foundation was built in similar fashion, although it was only half as deep (0.80 m below the surface). The difference is due to a natural downward slope toward the lake: the deeper foundation was aimed at preventing a catastrophe.

Both foundation trenches were filled with a layer that extended also across the trench, indicating that the two walls were contemporaneous [see *Fig. 8*, S3-1-4]. It was composed mainly of ash and pottery sherds (AE 3 and AE 4, LRA 1). The south wall of the room was not interlaced with the rest of the building.

TRENCH S4

An unidentified building stands on the lakeshore, east of Building S3 and 1.50 m north of latrine L1. The excavation focusing on the southern part of the structure, traced first the internal layout of the building. There were at least two rooms there, as indicated by the presence of three N-S foundation walls [*Fig. 9*].

The original occupation levels appear to have been completely destroyed. Only the wall foundations have survived along with the levelling layer between them. The natural surroundings forced a trapezoid plan of the building. The south wall appears to run east beyond the line of the east wall. However, this part of the building is already underwater in the lake. The foundations of the outer walls were made of ashlars, pseudo-ashlars and unworked limestone, arranged in rows, whereas the foundation of the inner wall was built exclusively of unworked limestone cobbles,

the largest of which were 0.20 m x 0.16 m x 0.70 m in size. Both the south and east walls drop off toward the lake owing to the gradual subsidence of the building, but it is impossible to say how long this process has been going on. It may have started in antiquity.

Testing in the central part of the building yielded dating material, that is, sherds of LRA 1 and LRA 4 amphorae, indicating that Building S4 was founded either in the 5th–6th century AD or later.

LATRINE L1

Latrine L1 is located east of House H1, on the lakeshore. It was excavated in 2012, hence the current work focused on an architectural inventory of the remains and on searching for evidence to date its construction. With this in mind, the building was thoroughly cleaned and the central ‘platform’ (L1-2) was explored. The latrine seats made of blocks were originally placed on this ‘platform’, the upper surface of which was paved with limestone slabs. Testing under this level revealed a brown-colored layer containing lumps of mortar and broken limestone floor slabs. The pottery assemblage included numerous fragments of LRA 1 amphorae, as well as 5th–6th century coins indicating *terminus a quo* for the building foundation.

Cleaning of the building identified some previously unexplored archaeological deposits. A sewage channel along the eastern side of L1-2 room contained a deposit that was first interpreted as a structural element of the central platform [*Fig. 10*]. Its upper part consisted of rubble from the walls of the dilapidated building. Sealed under the tumble was

a concentration of broken amphorae (LRA 1 and LRA 4, AE 5/6 and AE 7) and jugs accumulated there when the latrine was in use [Fig. 12]. A fill of white silt was found in the lower parts of the channels.

A water supply channel was discovered in the northwestern part of the latrine [see Fig. 10]. Beside rubble, the fill contained a large amount of silt and fragmented pottery (including LRA 1 and LRA 4, and AE 5/6 and AE 7 amphorae, as well as a Late Roman D Ware dish, see Hayes 1972: 382, Form 9B, about 580/600 to end of 7th century).

The narrow area between the building and the lake was also explored, uncovering remains of a structure made of stone blocks [see Fig. 10]. It was cut by channels emptying sewage directly into the lake.

TRENCH S5

Building S5 was recognized north of the transept of the Great Basilica. Its layout and chronology were not known. Clearing of the building identified six compartments of different size [Fig. 11]. No door openings between the units could be traced.

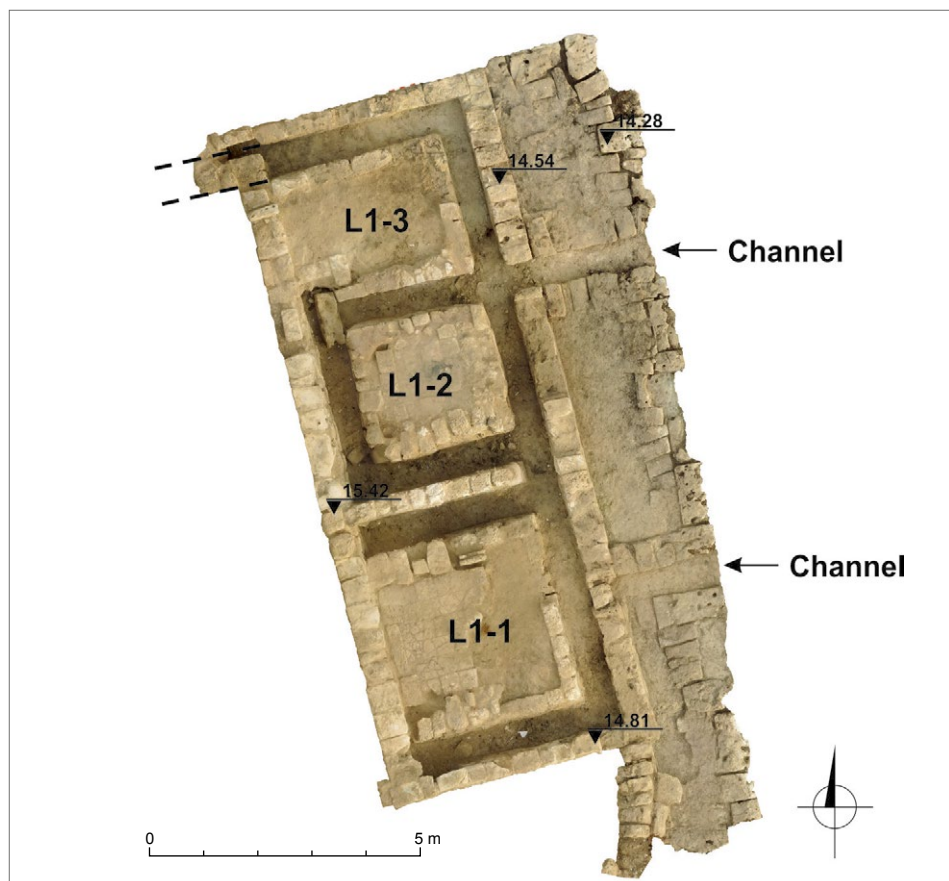


Fig. 10. Latrine L1 (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | orthophoto M. Gwiazda)

Two of the rooms on the eastern side were cleared of rubble originating from the disintegrated walls. A floor made of limestone slabs was uncovered in the northern of the rooms (S5-2B). A very limited set of finds suggested intentional clearing of the room before abandonment.

The second room was not fully excavated before the end of the season. Excavations uncovered several layers of sediments. The lowest exposed level in room S5-2A was a row of amphorae (AE 3?) running at a distance of 1.50 m from the south wall of the room and extending westward at least 1.50 m. Lumps of resin were found in this layer (possibly for impregnating amphorae). 200 small bronze Byzantine and early Islamic coins were found in a superimposed layer in the southeastern part of the room. Another concentration of objects was found by the west wall; it comprised well-preserved

jugs, fragments of LRA 1 amphorae bearing *dipinti*). Moreover, six ceramic artifacts identified as wick-holders were found inside the room (see Foy 2011: 272–275, Figs 1, 2).

The finds dated the latest use of Building S5 to the 8th century AD. Interestingly, there was no tumble from the walls of the building in the topmost layers.

A trial pit was opened in the northern part of the building S5 in order to verify a hypothesis about the presence of a portico in this place (Kościuk 2012: 35). A floor level was cleared north of the presumed portico. One of the faces of the alleged stylobate was also cleaned, revealing that the top of the column base is on the same level as the rest of the presumed stylobate. Therefore, the base must have been reused in this place, casting doubt on the supposition that this had been the support of a column.

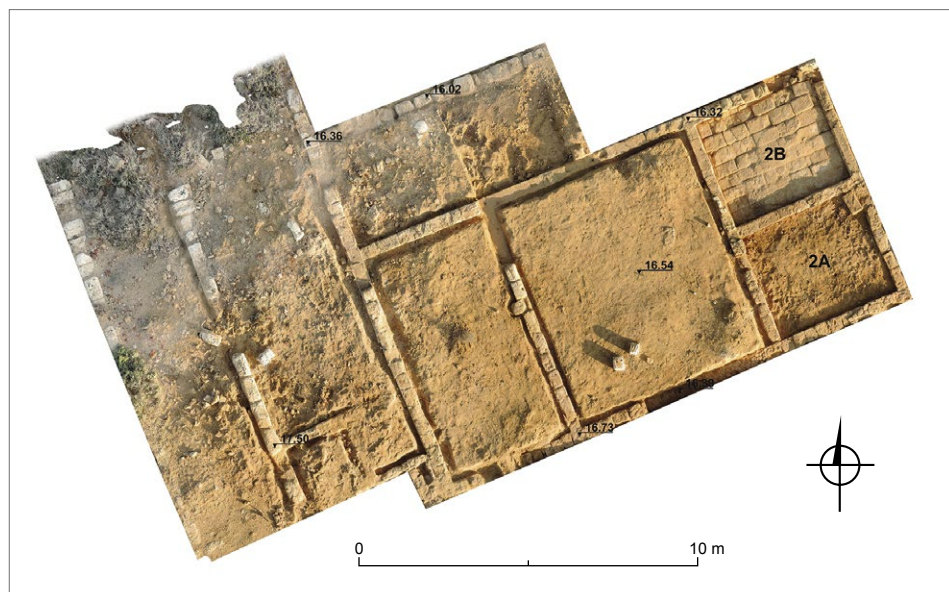


Fig. 11. Building S5 (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | orthophoto M. Gwiazda)

DISCUSSION

The most notable discovery of the season were deposits connected with the functioning of the pottery kiln or kilns in Roman-period 'Marea' (see Babraj and Kogut 2015; Gwiazda and Wielgosz-Rondolino 2019). Finds included an abundance of broken AE 3 and AE 4 amphorae, as well as bricks from the kiln structure and separators used in the ceramic firing process. Significant amounts of ash were also encountered. The pottery dumps in trench S1-2 were located close to the kiln uncovered under the apse of the Great Basilica, whereas others were positioned 30 m further northeast (trench S3-1). Similar remains were found earlier under House H1 (Gwiazda and Pawlikowska-Gwiazda 2019; Gwiazda and Wielgosz-Rondolino 2019).

The next phase above the dumps comprised the first architectural remains of unidentified structures: foundations of stone walls (S1-2-26, S1-1-22) and a mud-brick wall S1-1-16 in trench S1-1 a. These remains correspond in date to the 5th-century baptistery and some mud-brick structures discovered previously under the Great Basilica (Szymańska and Babraj 2007: 57, 59–62, Figs 3, 4). Other wall foundations from this phase were recognized in 2016 underneath the pavements of House H1 (Gwiazda and Wielgosz-Rondolino 2019).

In the 5th–6th century, the construction of new buildings (Building S3) was preceded by the dismantling of old walls and a levelling of the ground. A series of levelling layers corresponding to this phase were found in trench S3-1.

The present investigations have determined the contemporaneity of the east-

ern wing of the building and its central part, disproving an assumption presented by Jacek Kościuk (2012: Fig. 2), based on his analysis of elements of the plan observed on the surface, that this part was a later addition. Excavation in trench S1-1 revealed an additional row of rooms west of it, but the status and chronology of these rooms is unclear [see Fig. 1]. All in all, Building S3 has been shown to be much bigger (roughly 22 m wide) than initially assumed and its western façade was in line with the western face of House H1.

Two walls (S1-2-5 and S1-2-12) in trench S1-2 east of the Great Basilica were also dated to the 5th–6th century as a *terminus a quo*. The walls are parallel to the transept of the Great Basilica and they are linked to mortar floors, indicating the presence of at least two rooms (S1-2A and S1-2B) [see Fig. 4]. Their function could not be defined. Hypothetically, if wall S1-2-5 were continued northward, it would eventually meet with the apse, whereas wall S1-2-12 would join the wall visible on the surface, approximately 24 m away (Kościuk 2012: Fig. 2). Furthermore, the floor in room S1-2A abutted the outer face of the apse, so it should be assumed that there was a connection between these structures. It is not clear whether these rooms were contemporary with the Great Basilica, but such additional rooms near church apses are known from Abu Mina and other sites in Egypt (Grossmann 2002).

A street oriented north–south was marked already on earlier plans of the area between the Great Basilica and Building S3 (Kościuk 2012: Fig. 2). Iden-

tifying the western outer wall of the latter building has now placed a dimension on this street. The total width was about 5 m. Oddly enough, there was no street paving or drainage channel. Another section of this street was discovered in 2017 west of House H1, but there it had a sewage system covered with limestone slabs (Gwiazda and Pawlikowska-Gwiazda 2019). The channel carried waste from the northwest (from another presumed street running along the southern side of the Great Basilica) in a generally southern direction toward the lake.³

A closer examination of latrine L1 demonstrated that the two platforms located to the south and to the north (L1-1 and L1-3) adjoined the west wall of the structure and were surrounded by channels on the other three sides [see Fig. 10]. Parallels from other archaeological sites present similar arrangements: the platform abuts a wall on one side, while rows of seats with a channel below run along the other sides (Grossmann 1977: 35–37, Pl. 8a; Grossmann et al. 1991: 474–475; Szymańska and Babraj 2008: 35–38; Czerner et al. 2016: 152, Fig. 6). In the case of latrine L1, it seems that the entrance or entrances were not on the western side, but directly opposite. There were no doorways in the east wall, but the remains of stairs on the eastern side support this idea. The stairs consisted of an outer frame of limestone pseudo-ashlars filled inside with soil. The closest parallel is from a 6th-century

funerary chapel situated in the southern part of ‘Marea’ (Babraj and Szymańska 2008: 177–178, Fig. 65). It also argues in favour of locating the entrance to the latrine on the lakeside (Kościuk 2012: 34, Fig. 2), although this would require some form of stepping stone across from the top of the stairs to the platforms.

Interestingly, a secondary wall between the southernmost and central platforms divided the latrine into two compartments of different sizes. This could be sex-related, although as an arrangement it is fairly unique. Parallels from other types of public buildings include, for instance, two independent sectors, one for males and the other for females, in the neighboring southern baths contemporary with the latrine (Fournet and Redon 2017: 285, 307–309).⁴ Considering different examples of ancient latrines (Hoss et al. 2011: 52), an estimated 18–25 individual users could have been using the facility at a given time. In view of this, it should be interpreted definitely as a public rather than private latrine.

The channel for washing away the excrements entered the latrine from the outside, in the northwestern corner of the latrine. Here it joined the cloaca surrounding all three platforms. The egress for the sewage was on the opposite side as indicated by the lakeward direction of the channels underneath the stairs.

The most distinctive pottery coming from the latrine sewage consists of large fragments of AE 5/6 amphorae and

3 Other parts of the Byzantine sewage system were identified by an Egyptian archaeological mission in the northern part of ‘Marea’. These channels were connected with the biapsidal bath complex, el-Fakharani 1983: 178–179, Figs 1, 2.

4 A latrine, likewise divided into two parts for the two sexes, is supposed to have been located next to the hemicycle in Abu Mena, Grossmann et al. 1991: 474–475.

small jugs [Fig. 12].⁵ Fresh water might have been stored in the bigger vessels, while the more handy jugs would have been used for ablutions. Jugs of this kind were rather multifunctional, especially if we take into consideration that they were found in different contexts all over the site.⁶ When latrine L1 was in use, the stink would have been dealt with by

throwing lime on the faeces (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012: 172). Traces of this procedure were noted in the form of a white sediment filling the sewer.

Ceramic sherds and coins found in Latrine L1 as well as in trenches S1-1, S1-2 and S5 provide data for the claim that the abandonment of 'Marea' was a relatively long and gradual process taking place in

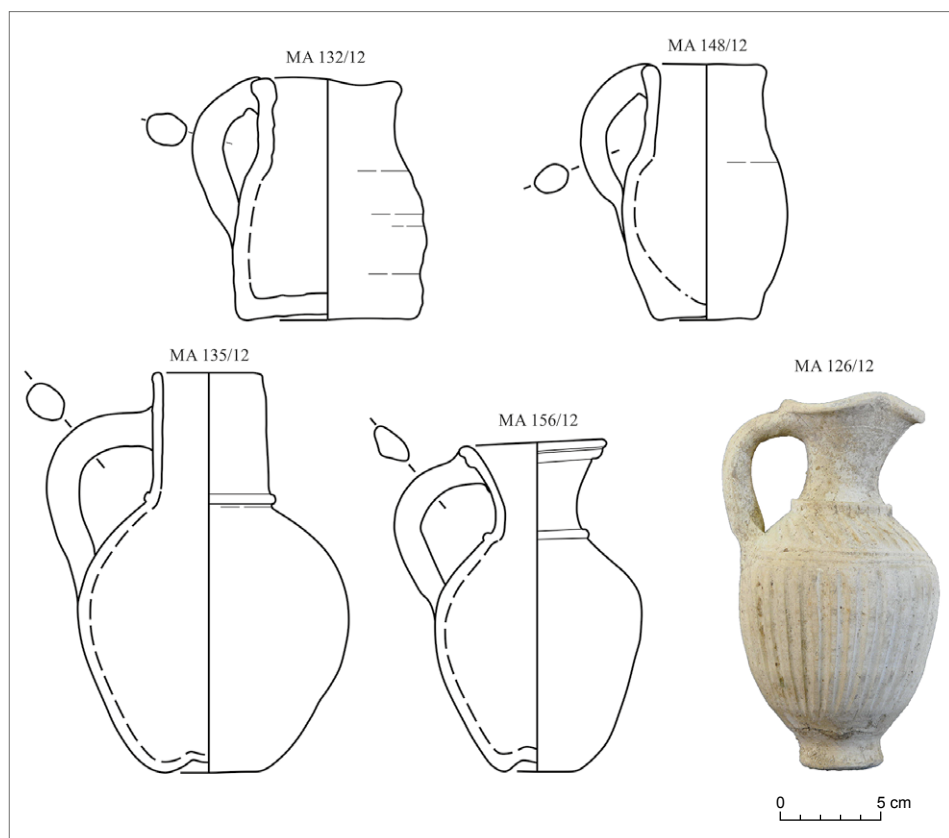


Fig. 12. Selected jugs from the sewage channels of Latrine L1 (University of Warsaw Faculty of Archaeology Marea Project | drawing J. Faucher, digitizing M. Gwiazda)

- 5 Over 30 examples of identical jugs were found here during previous seasons. For other pottery deposits in latrines, see Majcherek 2008: 107; Szymańska 2010: 402; Petznek et al. 2011: 103 (with further references); Czermer et al. 2016: 153, 158.
- 6 The same jug types were uncovered during the excavation of Building S5. More on such jugs and their function in Drzymuchowska 2012: 73–76, Fig. 2. In Abu Mena, they were encountered in deposits dated from the 6th to the 9th century, see Engemann 2016: 97.

the late 7th–8th century. Dismantling the walls (as in Building S3) and then reusing the building material was common in this period. Urban waste started to be

discarded in the deserted ruins, hence the animal bones and broken pottery. Natural deposits accumulated over the whole area after the last occupation phase.

CONCLUSIONS

First and foremost, three phases have been distinguished in the northeast sector of ‘Marea’. The earliest one, the so-called “kiln phase”, produced large pottery dumps, comprised of AE 3 and AE 4 amphorae fired on-site. The size of these deposits was quite impressive: their overall width was up to 30 m and they were at least 1.70 m thick. The changes to the natural landscape of the promontory were significant, affecting later building activity.

The purpose of the first architecture built on top of the pottery dump is uncertain, but the chronological framework at least is clear: amphora production ended in the 3rd century (*terminus a quo*) and another phase of building activity was initiated in the 5th–6th century or later (*terminus ante quem*).

A well-planned quarter of diverse function was raised on the promontory in the Byzantine period. It includes Building S3 (houses with shops?), latrines, the Great Basilica and House H1. An ostraka deposit located in earlier seasons by the wall of House H1 (Babraj, Drzymuchowska, and Willburger 2014: 53–54) is considered part of a “building corporation” archive. The corporation’s office is likely to have been located in one of the

rooms of House H1. An ostrakon with a trading-administrative text from trench S1-1 may indicate a similar office nearby, an attractive idea to be explored in future investigations.

Building S3 was shown to be much bigger than expected and the contemporaneity of all its parts was confirmed, rejecting an earlier hypothesis about the eastern wing being added later. Buildings S4 and S5 were demonstrated to be contemporary with S3, even though their function continues to be somewhat enigmatic. Overall, the architecture on the northeastern promontory of ‘Marea’ in this period seems to have been quite dense.

The street behind the Great Basilica belongs to this period as well. Its width at roughly 5 m is less than was previously assumed, and it was a dirt road without paving or in-built sewage. The street ran in a straight line, fitting perfectly the overall plan of this part of the town.

In the 7th–8th century, this part of ‘Marea’ started to change, hence the intentional demolition or gradual destruction of the walls. Dumps of urban waste were the last trace of human activity in this area. By the 8th century the area was permanently deserted.

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