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To my Mother and Father
for love of learning

•

"I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry rot. I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in a magnificent glow, than a sleeping and permanent planet. The proper function of life is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use the time."

Ian Fleming

THE PERSIAN AND ARABIC DESTRUCTIONS
OF CAESAREA MARITIMA:
THE HISTORICAL AND STRATIGRAPHICAL DATA

By

SARAH ELEANOR SYPHER

B.A. University of Waterloo, 1973

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree
Wilfrid Laurier University
1975

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I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Lawrence E. Toombs for his advice and encouragement throughout the research and the writing of this thesis.

I would also like to thank Marcella Roth of Inter-Library Loan and Ariel Barkley for their assistance and technical expertise.

Finally, I wish to extend my love and appreciation to my husband, Errol, for his unfailing encouragement without which I could not have completed this task.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the historical and stratigraphical evidence for the Persian and Arabic destructions of Caesarea Maritima. Its main purpose is to discover whether the stratigraphical data coincides with the historical information concerning the city in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D.

The archaeological data are the results of four seasons of excavation (1971, 1972, 1973, 1974) carried out by the Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima under the direction of Dr. R.J. Bull, Drew University, Madison, N.J. It is supported by a consortium of twenty-one Colleges, Seminaries, and Universities, including Wilfrid Laurier University, and is sponsored by the Albright Institute for Archaeological Research.

An analysis of the stratigraphy of the site produced considerable evidence for two destructions of the main Byzantine city. The first destruction was minimal in extent for only traces of its presence are still visible in excavation. The final or second destruction was complete in its devastation for the Later Arabic city has no relation to the Byzantine layout of the city. These two destructions are very close chronologically for the ceramic evidence remains the same before and after each destruction.

The historical sources provided adequate accounts to date the first destruction of the city to the Persian takeover in A.D. 614 and the second destruction to the later Arabic conquest in A.D. 640.

INTRODUCTION

The ruins of Caesarea Maritima are located on the coast of Palestine about half-way between Joppa and Acco. In Canaanite times, it was called Strato's Tower. The name suggests that it may have been built by one of the kings of Sidon who controlled most of the cities along the coast and on the Plain of Sharon in ^{the} fourth century B.C. The name 'Strato' represents 'Abd Astart' and is possibly a Hellenization of Migdol Astart.¹

For a number of centuries Strato's Tower remained in obscurity mentioned only by the Jews by the name, Migdal Sharshan. The Ptolemies at one time had possession of the city but in 66 B.C. Pompey incorporated it into the new province of Syria. Herod the Great refounded the city of Strato's Tower as Caesarea Maritima and refurbished it through a lavish building programme. An artificial harbour was constructed which provided a haven for ships plying trade along the coast.²

Caesarea Maritima was incorporated into the ethnarchy of Archelaus and the procuratorial province of Judaea. It was considered to be a pagan city, but it had a sizeable Jewish community.³

The city flourished as the metropolis of Palaestina Prima up to the fifth century. A number of important ecclesiastical schools, i.e., Origenes and Eusebius, were founded there and it was considered a seat

¹A.H.M. Jones, The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) p.271.

²A. Negev, Caesarea (Tel-Aviv: E. Lewis Epstein, 1967), pp.14-19.

of higher learning. However, about the sixth century the city again disappears from historical comment.⁴

This dissertation will attempt to describe the historical circumstances concerning the destruction of the Byzantine city of Caesarea Maritima in the seventh century A.D. It will also present the archaeological evidence for the cultural changes, e.g. modification in house structures, which occurred before and after each destruction of the city. The paramount question of the thesis is whether or not the historical and archaeological evidence coincides.

For obvious reasons the scope of this thesis is limited to the history and excavation of the last stages of the main Byzantine city, although on occasion some Roman data is introduced.

The first chapter is concerned with presenting the methodology of the dissertation. Both the archaeological and historical methods are discussed with respect to the site of Caesarea Maritima. Pertinent archaeological terms are explained briefly to provide some assistance to the reader. Particular consideration is given to the limitations and conclusions generated in the collection of historical data.

The second chapter reviews the existing historical and archaeological literature available for the site. This chapter considers the available historical sources and delineates their strengths

³Jones, Cities, p.272, see also Josephus for disputes with Nero over who should be in charge of administration of the city. Ant.XX. viii,7; Bell.II.xiii.7; xiv.4.

⁴S. Reifenberg, "Caesarea, A Study in a Decline of a Town", Israel Exploration Journal, I, (1950/1), 22.

and weaknesses. At the time of writing the archaeological data are a fairly recent phenomena for this site so there is a limited amount of information available.

The third chapter outlines a general history of the Byzantine and Persian Empires between the years A.D. 565 and A.D. 629. This is an historical prerequisite for it focusses on their decline from power in Palestine and Syria. A section is devoted to the factors for the Byzantine loss of this region.

The fourth chapter presents historical data on the Arabic conquest of Syria and Palestine. A considerable amount of information is available on the seige of Caesarea Maritima.

The fifth chapter analyses the archaeological data uncovered in the four previous seasons of excavation of Caesarea Maritima.⁵ Each field is discussed in relation to its stratigraphical significance during the Main Byzantine phase to the Byzantine Arabic. The one exception is Field C, which due to its complex nature, is discussed by zones and then by phasing. The archaeological material is presented in a general manner with specific information where warranted. Maps of certain fields are provided to give a better overall phasing of the site.

⁵These findings are the results of four seasons of excavation (1971, 1972, 1973, 1974) carried out by the Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima, under the direction of Dr. R.J. Bull, Drew University, Madison, N.J. It is supported by a consortium of twenty-one Colleges, Seminaries, and Universities, including Wilfrid Laurier University, and is sponsored by the Albright Institute for Archaeological Research.

CHAPTER ONE

Methodology

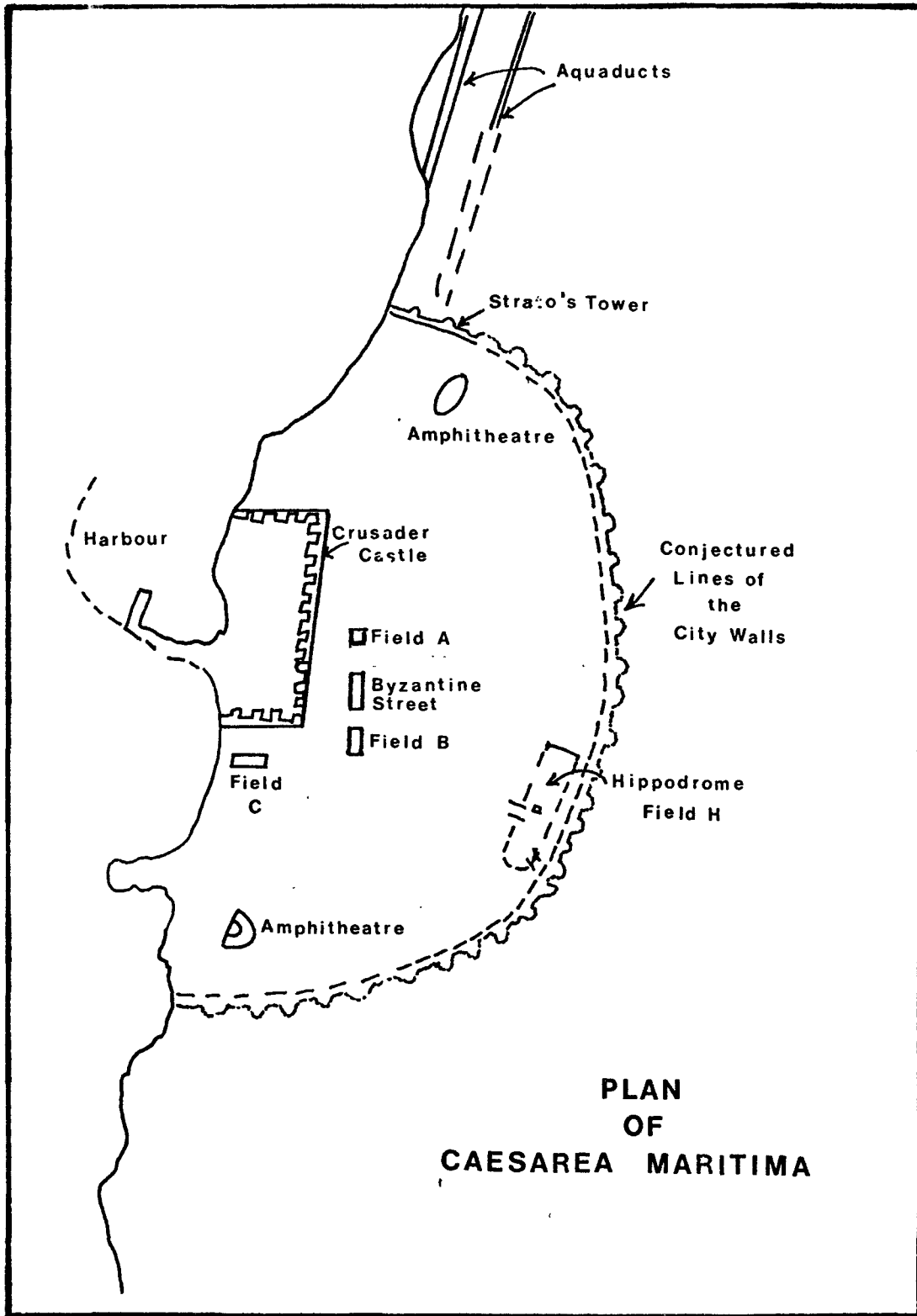


Fig. 1

METHODOLOGY

To understand the nature of the Persian and Arabic destructions at Caesarea Maritima and whether or not they corresponded to the known historical accounts of this area, it became necessary to examine this question from two different perspectives. The first direction of approach was through an examination of archaeological methodology or the procedures by which an archaeologist analyzes his data. The second direction of approach was through the critical assessment of primary and secondary sources in the historical accounts of the sixth and seventh centuries. The data from these two procedures was then cross-compared in search for similarities and differences.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY - AN OUTLINE

The initial problem in any study of archaeological field techniques is the presenting of its methods in a readable form, comprehensible to the layman. The following description of the procedures involved in the excavation of a site does not supply all the answers but it should provide a reasonable basis from which the chapter on stratigraphical data can be better understood. A limited number of technical terms are explained in this chapter to acquaint the reader with them before they appear in the remainder of the text.

* * *

When an archaeologist digs he often destroys completely, sometimes partially, the site he is excavating. By doing so he is conducting an unrepeatable experiment by systematically destroying most of the evidence. Since his interpretation of the finds depends on his complete knowledge

of the site, it is imperative that a thorough and extensive record of information be maintained. Intelligent reporting through the use of field notes, drawings, and photography is thus essential.

In archaeology, the only valid methodology is the study of stratigraphy. In this instance, the word 'stratigraphy' means the order and relative position in which certain strata (layers) are unearthed.¹ A system of scientific controls is necessary to understand the stratigraphic history of a site. One of these is the surveying of the site and establishing a grid system pattern over its surface. Certain areas of interest are then staked and mapped out, called fields. Even smaller units called areas are employed within the field. Areas at this site are eight metres square and are separated by internal balks or artificial walls of two metres.

* * *

At Caesarea Maritima, four fields were laid out to sample a number of areas in the city.

Field A was planned to uncover the area north of Yeivin's Byzantine street.² It consists of four eight by eight areas (squares) placed side by side in pairs so that including the two metre wide cross balks, a surface of 324 square feet was under excavation. In this field were found extensive remains of Roman and Byzantine rooms or small buildings and an industrial area.

Field B was planned to investigate the southern extension of Yeivin's Byzantine street. It consisted of four, eight by eight

¹ A stratum is the combination of loci which comprise a single level of deposit: occupational, debris or fill. See discussion of locus.

squares in its northern section and two, eight by eight squares in its southern section. A colonnaded area, paved ramp, upper courtyard and a number of shops were unearthed in this field.

Field C presents an enormous task in terms of the surface to be excavated. It started out as a clearance of the Byzantine public building or library, but was extended when a system of vaults were discovered in close proximity. To date a total of seventeen areas are in various stages of excavation.

Field H, the hippodrome, was just briefly explored in the 1973 and 1974 seasons. Since the full history of the hippodrome is unknown, it will be mentioned briefly.

* * *

To provide a more systematic approach to the excavation of an area, the term locus is employed.

"A locus is a specific location, narrowly delimited both horizontally and vertically, from which directly associated materials can be assumed to come, because of the homogenous nature of the soil or debris deposits, or because of the unified nature of the architectural phenomena encountered."³

Loci are then used to mark any distinguishable feature, whether it be a wall, occupational floor or destruction layer. They are numbered in a consecutive order as they are encountered in each area.

The stratigraphic method relies primarily on balk sections; those vertical readings which are taken from the artificial walls or

²For further information on this Byzantine street see section on review of existing literature.

³Dan Cole, "Balatah, The Pottery of Middle Bronze IIB", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Drew University 1965, p.5.

balks between areas. However, the horizontal component, the topographical plans of each area, must also be considered. In comparing the stratigraphy between fields a key level or basic reference point common to all fields is needed. Fortunately, for this study, the Arabic destruction level over the last Byzantine city, occurs dramatically in Fields, A, B, and C. The stratigrapher, using this level as a control, works up and down in the balk sections to discover a system of general phases. The results were checked against the ceramic and coin evidence and if they agreed with the stratigraphy, the two phases were considered as contemporary.

"Correlation of phases across the four fields is complicated by the physical distance between them, by differences in the history of their use, by the diversity of function of the different areas in the life of the city, and, especially, by the extensive and ruthless robbery to which the site was subjected. For this reason the phasing system is, at several points, conjectural, and it must be regarded as tentative. It is most accurate for the Byzantine and Early Arab phases, and least reliable for the Late Arab and Roman levels."⁴

Chapter IV examines Fields A, B, and C in relation to three phases - Main Byzantine, Final Byzantine and Byzantine-Arab and explains the cultural changes each field underwent before and after each destruction.

HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY

The main difficulty in examining the historical evidence for the Persian and Arabic occupation of Caesarea Maritima arose in selecting the appropriate texts. In order to expedite the time spent in preliminary research, a number of secondary books were consulted in which a certain amount of chronological information was available.

By studying these, the history of the sixth and seventh centuries for Byzantium and its provinces became clearer. General works, like A.A. Vasiliev's "History of the Byzantine Empire" had chapters in them regarding the literature, learning, and art of certain centuries. From these chapters and their bibliographies it was possible to find primary sources which were known to contain passages on the Byzantine history of Palestine in the sixth and seventh centuries. However, even with the services of the inter-library loan department, many of these early texts proved difficult to locate or were unavailable in Canada. Due to the postal strike and the general bureaucratic procedures of universities, these books took upwards of two to three months to arrive.

Although the Byzantine and some of the Syriac sources proved difficult to locate or consult, there were available a number of Arabic primary sources. The writings of al-Tabari and al-Baladhuri in many instances related directly to the history of Palestine and Syria in the seventh century. In contrast the Byzantine writers had often lumped the history of this area in with that of Asia Minor, and thus had made only occasional references to Palestine after A.D. 629. The Arab sources proved useful in balancing off some of the biased accounts of the Byzantine scholars. However, they were often caught up in the mystique of mythologizing their past, so were occasionally⁴ unreliable.

⁴Lawrence E. Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima" in the Festschrift for Kathleen Kenyon, in press, p.2. The reading of stratigraphy requires a considerable amount of experience and knowledge of technical data which is beyond scope of this paper to describe. However, it is sufficient to say that the stratigraphic method is a reliable and valid for this study.

In addition to the problems of acquiring the primary sources, there were a number of problems inherent within the texts. Some of these texts were available only in antiquated editions, which had not been edited or routinely done so. It appears that the critical editing of most Greek texts still lags far behind that editorial work which is devoted to the texts of the Hellenic period. Primary sources in Greek or Latin were occasionally used, and in order to expedite matters, English and French translations were preferred when available. For the Syriac and Arabic sources a decided preference was again given to English and French translations. A review of both primary and secondary texts will be given in Chapter II.

To understand the situation in the eastern part of the Byzantine Empire, which saw the rise of two great powers, the Persians and the Arabs, it became almost imperative to start an examination of its History circa A.D. 575. Thus, the historical section, Chapter III, begins with the reign of Justin II in A.D. 565. The next thirty-five years of history are presented as a preamble to those events which primarily concern this paper. They provide a setting for the decline of Byzantine power in the outlying provinces and the factors in the resulting loss of Palestine and Syria. The historical details of the latter part of the sixth century have been examined within the context of the reigns of the Byzantine emperors and from the viewpoint of military history. This method was necessary owing to the need for brevity and to make the events chronologically understandable.

In A.D. 614, the concerns of the Byzantine Empire are drawn towards the loss of Palestine and Syria and the seige of the Holy City of Jerusalem. Thus historical narratives are often focussed on Palestine, providing some information on the loss of cities here. It is at this point that a section on the economic, administrative and social factors for the decline of Byzantine control in this area is inserted in Chapter III.

By A.D. 634, due to the interest of the early Muslim historians in the origins of the Caliphate and the history of their religion, more chronicles are available recounting the conquest of Palestine and Syria in great detail. Accounts of the taking of Caesarea Maritima are well documented for the year A.D. 640. For this reason a separate chapter is devoted to the Arab conquest.

These two methodologies served their purpose in providing data from two different fields of knowledge. Thus the original excavation reports in conjunction with the primary historical sources supplied appropriate material for the investigation into the Persian and Arabic seiges of the city. As such they are the most valid and reliable methods of inquiry for this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Existing Literature -
Historical and Archaeological

REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

THE SECONDARY HISTORICAL SOURCES

To comprehend the history of the Byzantines a number of topical books were consulted to provide the necessary background in chronology. One of these was C. Dielh's, Byzantium: Greatness and Decline, translated into English by N. Walford. It gives a general sketch of Byzantine history and civilization, plus, an extensive bibliographic survey of major secondary sources. Also very useful was A.A. Vasiliev's, History of the Byzantine Empire (324-1453). However, its organization is very confusing to the novice and it is, on the whole, a far less effective general history than Ostrogorsky's History of the Byzantine State. The emphasis in the latter is focused upon political, institutional, social and economic development of the empire.

Once the basic chronology of Byzantine History was understood, the best books on sixth and seventh centuries were consulted and are as follows:

Byzantium in the Seventh Century by A.N. Stratos has by far the most detailed account of all phases of Byzantine history in this period. This was a valuable source for it provided considerable information on domestic and international affairs and investigated certain problems in the history of this century, e.g., the reliability of certain historians.

A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene (395 A.D. to 800 A.D.) by J.B. Bury is one of the few comprehensive treatments of this history after the age of Justinian I (A.D. 527 - A.D. 565). Its two volumes are well-indexed and footnoted, however, there is no bibliographic section.

The Later Roman Empire (284-602): A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey, by A.H.M. Jones combines a somewhat ill-balanced historical narrative with a series of analytical chapters on certain facets of the empire, i.e., the civil service. However, these four volumes were indispensable for they provided a wealth of information on topics not discussed in other books.

A History of Byzantine Civilization by H.W. Haussig appears to have the same defect as Jones' volumes yet despite its shortcomings provides a considerable amount of data on a wide range of topics.

Cambridge Mediaeval History, volume II, The Foundation of the Western Empire, edited by H.M. Gwatkin and J.P. Whitney (1957) was extremely useful for those historical areas where there was unavailable primary material.

Generally, the history of the Persian Empire was adequately covered for the sixth and seventh centuries in texts on Byzantine history. However, for chronology of the Persian kings and internal events in the Persian-Sassanid Empire, the book, A History of Persia by Sir P.M. Sykes was consulted. Certain periodicals and books are referred to occasionally in the footnotes but due to the limited amount of information they provided they will not be discussed.

A thorough investigation of Arabic secondary sources revealed a number of books which dealt mainly or in part with the Arabic conquest of Palestine and Syria. The historians of the early caliphate gave considerable attention to this problem. Three factual military-political histories of this early period in Islamic history are Philip Hitti's History of the Arabs ^{and} D.C. Dennett's Conversion and the Poll

Tax in Early Islam. Volume II of A.N. Stratos' Byzantium in the Seventh Century is mainly devoted to the problem of the Arab intrusion into the Byzantine provinces.

E.A. Belyaev's book, Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate, although it presented a Marxist view of Islamic history, is extremely well documented in terms of historical and anthropological data.

The Annals of Islam (Annali dell 'Islam) by Leone Caetani, provided another source of unusual information. Within its ten volumes are data compiled from the works of Arabic historians for the years A.D. 622 to A.D. 661.

Henri Lammens' La Syrie and J. de Goeje's Memoire sur la conquete de la Syrie supplied certain miscellaneous information on a number of obscure topics.

One of the more interesting books in terms of geographical data is Palestine Under the Moslems written by Guy Le Strange. It is a collection of every known city, village and town as was recorded by the Arabic geographers. There are a number of descriptions of Caesarea Maritima in this book which are not immediately available as primary sources.

A full description of these books, in regards to title, place of publication, publisher, date, etc., can be found in the bibliographic section at the end of this paper.

HISTORICAL PRIMARY SOURCES FOR THE LATTER HALF OF THE SIXTH CENTURY

A prolific amount of literature is available for the latter half of the sixth century, so much in fact, that the primary sources had to be selected for their historical viewpoint. No attempt is made in this section to enumerate the vast number of minor authors and anonymous works in this century. In choosing the primary sources, particular interest was given to those works written between the years A.D. 565 to A.D. 602.

Byzantine chronicles are a valuable source of historical information but since they were written generally by inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire, they are limited by the cultural and social preoccupations of the empire. The standard form of historiography in the sixth century was to present a narrative of world history from the Creation to some point before, or to the author's date of writing. In principal, the historical account was to follow the chronological order of the original events. However, any excursus into other points of interest was permitted for there are often long digressions in many of the chronicles. The grouping of events could be arranged in retrospect or whatever manner that would produce a more comprehensive history. For the Byzantine chroniclers, historical narratives had to be fitted into the theological framework of the time. Thus, history was recounted from the viewpoint of the Byzantine church, and treated in the orthodox manner, with all conflicting and dissenting ideas, labelled as heretical. As such, this type of history reveals a decided bias on the part of the writers. Some of the historical accounts from the eastern provinces are decidedly at odds with this view. For "one detects a

certain hatred or prejudice for anything Greek and in particular for the official Byzantine Church."¹

The works of Procopius of Caesarea supply vital information for all serious studies of this century. He wrote three main works, of which, The History in Eight Books is the most important to this paper. It contains a detailed account of Justinian I's wars with the Persians, Vandals and Goths. As a contemporary source, he can be relied upon for a certain amount of accuracy. His position, as advisor and secretary to the Byzantine general, Belisarius, provided him with considerable first hand information. His mode of presenting history is reminiscent of Thucydides and Herodotus.²

Procopius' history ends at A.D. 550; however, it was continued by Agathias of Myrrina who supplied five more books of history for the years A.D. 552 to A.D. 558. These were concerned with the Persian-Colchian wars and the early history of the Sassanids.

Menander of Constantinople ('The Protector'), under the patronage of the Emperor Maurice wrote a history, which was a continuation of Agathias' work for the years A.D. 558 to A.D. 582. According to Vasiliev, he is a better historian than Agathias.³

Theophanes of Byzantium wrote a history that covered the reigns of Justin II and Tiberius, but all that remains of his work is a summary of his books in the library of Photius.

¹A.N. Stratos, Byzantium in the Seventh Century (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1972), II, 10.

²J.B. Bury, A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene (395 A.D. to 800 A.D.), II, 178-179.

John of Epiphania began his history at the end of Agathias' work, describing events up to A.D. 591. Fragments of his writing were utilized by a later writer, Theophylactus Simocatta.

John of Ephesus supplied an important Syriac account of events in his work, Ecclesiastical History. Originally it covered the period from Julius Caesar to Maurice. However, only the section dealing with the years A.D. 521 to A.D. 585 is extant. It is one of the few works written from a Monophysite point of view that has survived. As well as providing valuable historical information, it furnishes some insight into religious, sectarian and local attitudes. The Syriac text lacks a complete critical edition, however, an English translation by R. Payne Smith is available.

Another source for the sixth century is Evagrius, a relation of John of Epiphania. He wrote an Ecclesiastical History that covered the years A.D. 431 to A.D. 593. This work is considered to be a sequel to the original Ecclesiastical History by Eusebius of Caesarea. Evagrius' Ecclesiastical History has been edited by J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (1898). An English translation of this work is also available in Bohn's Ecclesiastical Library (1854).

The monk Theophanes ('Confessor') wrote an extensive chronicle for the years A.D. 284 to A.D. 814. He apparently used earlier sources which have not survived the passage of time. Occasionally he is the only source of information for certain events, such as the later

³A.A. Vasiliev, History of the Byzantine Empire: 324-1453 (Madison and Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1952), I, 181.

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campaigns of Heraclios. He is often in error about dates and places so that in any comparative analysis of the literature there arise considerable problems in understanding the sequence of events. His work, Chronographia, in Greek is edited by C. de Boor in two volumes (1883-1885). There is no complete English translation of this work to the writer's knowledge.

For the western part of the empire, the writer relied on the secondary sources. Those books consulted have already been discussed in a prior section. However, F. Homes Dudden's, Gregory the Great and a translation of Paulus Diaconus' History of the Langobards by W.D. Foulke are two useful works to be considered in the history of this area.

Up to this point, most of the primary sources are concerned mainly with the general history of the Byzantine world. Scant attention is made in these works to many of the outlying cities as they are peripheral to the main problems of the empire. However, with the advent of Persian dominance, more information becomes available on Syria and Palestine.

HISTORICAL PRIMARY SOURCES FOR THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY

Dating the war between the Byzantines and the Persians in the reign of the Emperor Phocas (A.D. 602-610) is extremely difficult for there is no contemporary reliable source in existence. The basic works for the beginning of the seventh century are the Chronicle of Theophanes ('Confessor') and the Breva Historia of Nicephorus, the Patriarch of Constantinople. This latter work covers the history for the years A.D. 620 to A.D. 769. Despite its straightforward style, it

is not often reliable chronologically. Both of these works were written after the events. Possibly they both had used sources which have now been lost, for much of their information is similar.

Theophanes claims that the Persians captured the whole of Syria and Palestine in A.D. 606, whereas Sebeos maintains that the Persians took Syria in A.D. 609 and Palestine in A.D. 613-614. This latter historian, Sebeos, was an Armenian writer, who was more nearly contemporary with the events. He relates historical facts with some reliability but has a tendency to place them in a sequence that he thinks is correct.

For the later years of strife and dissension in the reign of the Emperor Phocas, only John of Nikiou supplies valuable information on the revolution of A.D. 610. His chronicle covers the period from Creation to the Arab conquest of Egypt. Originally it was written in Greek or Coptic but only a mutilated Ethiopic version survives to this date. An English translation by R.H. Charles for the Text and Translation Society of London (1916) is also available.

The only contemporary Byzantine sources for the reign of Heraclios (A.D. 610-641) are the Chronicon Pashale and the historical poems of George Pisides.

The Chronicon Paschale (Easter Chronicle) is a monkish compilation of historical events from Creation to A.D. 629. It was written in the time of Heraclios by an unknown author and mainly lists historical events of interest.

The historical poems of George Pisides are mainly panegyrics in praise of Heraclios. His poems, "Heracleas", "Exaameron", and

"Bellum Avaricum" not only extoll the good virtues of Heraclios but also do so in a bombastic and affected manner of style. The poem on the "Persian Expedition" is a long historical poem, the subject of which is the first successful campaign of Heraclios against the Persians. Unfortunately, these two contemporary sources are not readily available in Canada.

In addition to the Byzantine scholars, there were a few Syriac scholars who wrote history from a Monophysite or Nestorian point of view. Michael the Jacobite,⁴ Patriarch of Antioch (A.D. 1166-1199) wrote an extensive history from the Creation to A.D. 1195. He relied on a number of sources, such as Cyrus of Batna, John of Litarba, and Denys of Tell Mahre, which have been lost to us.⁴ He is generally straightforward in his presentation of historical events and is less given to fanciful interpretations than the eastern chroniclers.

Gregory Abu'l Faradj, who is commonly known as Bar Hebraeus wrote a general history from Creation to A.D. 1286. It is a chronological and historical encyclopaedia into which an enormous amount of miscellaneous information has been inserted. The English translation of this Chronography by E.A. Wallis Budge lacks any annotation but is a complete and thorough translation. This work provided an account of the Arab conquest of Caesarea.

Pertinent to this study are a number of eastern chroniclers who wrote in Arabic. The best of these is Agapius, Bishop of Hierapolis (Menbidj), who composed a general chronicle of world events in the tenth

⁴Michael le Syrien, Chronique, ed. and trans. by J.B. Chabot (1899; rpt. Brussels: Culture and Civilization, 1963), I, xxv.

century, called Kitab al-'Unvan. It is published in Patrologia Orientalis, under the title "Histoire Universelle", translated by A. A. Vasiliev.

Eutychius, a Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century, wrote a chronicle describing history from the Creation to A.D. 934. His work has survived in an Arabic translation and can be found in Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca, volume III.

The problem with many of these primary sources is that they are not contemporary with the events they describe. Often there is considerable borrowing or relying on similar sources, so that the chronological situation is further confused. Most of the Byzantine chroniclers relied on the work of Theophanes ('Confessor') and Nicephorus, adding minor details of interest where they felt it was warranted.

Many of the eastern historians resorted to a mythological interpretation of history, which further confounds the problem of understanding the order of events. Their tendency to exaggerate or add fanciful details is so great that they must be consulted carefully.

Unfortunately, for the study of the Arabic writers in the seventh century, there is no single contemporary source. Again, scholars from later centuries were relied upon for semifactual accounts. The two chief sources for this period are Origins of the Islamic State by al-Baladhuri and Annales and Chronique of al-Tabari.

In the search for information regarding Caesarea Maritima, it became readily apparent that any mention of this city for the later half of the sixth century was extremely limited. The city was occasionally

referred to by name in a number of minor sources but any pertinent details as to its history were non-existent. Thus it became difficult to place it within the context for the chronology delineated for study (A.D. 575-640). What history there is of Caesarea Maritima stops after the schools of Eusebius and tentatively begins again with the Persian invasion of Palestine in A.D. 614.⁵ Again, details of the period of Persian occupation of the city are non-existent. To this date, there are two Byzantine references for the Persian seige of the city. However, the name of Caesarea begins to occur with more frequency in primary sources after A.D. 634. This is mainly due to the Arab historians' interest in the conquests of the early caliphate. At this point, it is sufficient to mention, that there is an obvious void in regards to historical information concerning the city in the sixth and seventh centuries. Hopefully, this lacuna can be partially explained in chapters III and IV.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

Since the excavation of Caesarea Maritima is still very recent in time, only a limited amount of published materials are available for study. Some of them are in the nature of general accounts, like A. Reifenberg's Caesarea, A Study in the Decline of a Town and A. Negev's book, Caesarea. Others have focussed on certain aspects such as numismatics and Chinese ceramics.

⁵At the end of the fifth century, the Bar Kochba rebellion was centred in Caesarea Maritima. It was brutally crushed by the Byzantines (Romans).

One of the more important periodical articles for this paper is Yeivin's Excavations at Caesarea Maritima. As Director of Antiquities for the State of Israel, he excavated a Byzantine Street, located part way between the port area and the city wall. This street or esplanade possesses excellent tessellated surfaces, well preserved mosaic inscriptions and two large statues which flank its east and west sides. Fields A and B were laid out to investigate the northern and southern perimeters of this street, and it is for this reason that Yeivin's Byzantine street is of importance to this paper.

Since this thesis is concerned with the stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima (Field B), the main source of information is the original field notes, topography maps and balk drawings for the seasons of 1972, 1973 and 1974. For Fields A and C, an unpublished stratigrapher's report and The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima by Lawrence E. Toombs were relied upon for a certain amount of data. Since Dr. Toombs (Wilfrid Laurier University) was the stratigrapher for three seasons on this site, he was able to provide valuable assistance on certain technical problems that occurred in interpreting the original notes. Also at hand were a considerable number of architect's drawings on the various fields which contributed immensely to an understanding of the site.

For information on the hippodrome, John Humphrey's Prolegomena to the Study of the Hippodrome at Caesarea Maritima was utilized for its recent considerations. Again, Dr. Toombs provided more information on the history of the hippodrome and the recent excavations of 1974 in this area.

At the time of writing, the state of recent archaeological information regarding the site is relatively new and as yet unpublished. Chapters III and IV attempt to contribute to the existing field of knowledge by providing data on the later Byzantine phases of the city, specifically the Persian and Arabic destructions.

CHAPTER THREE

The History of Byzantium
and Persia (A.D. 575-629)

A LIST OF RULERS

BYZANTINE EMPERORS

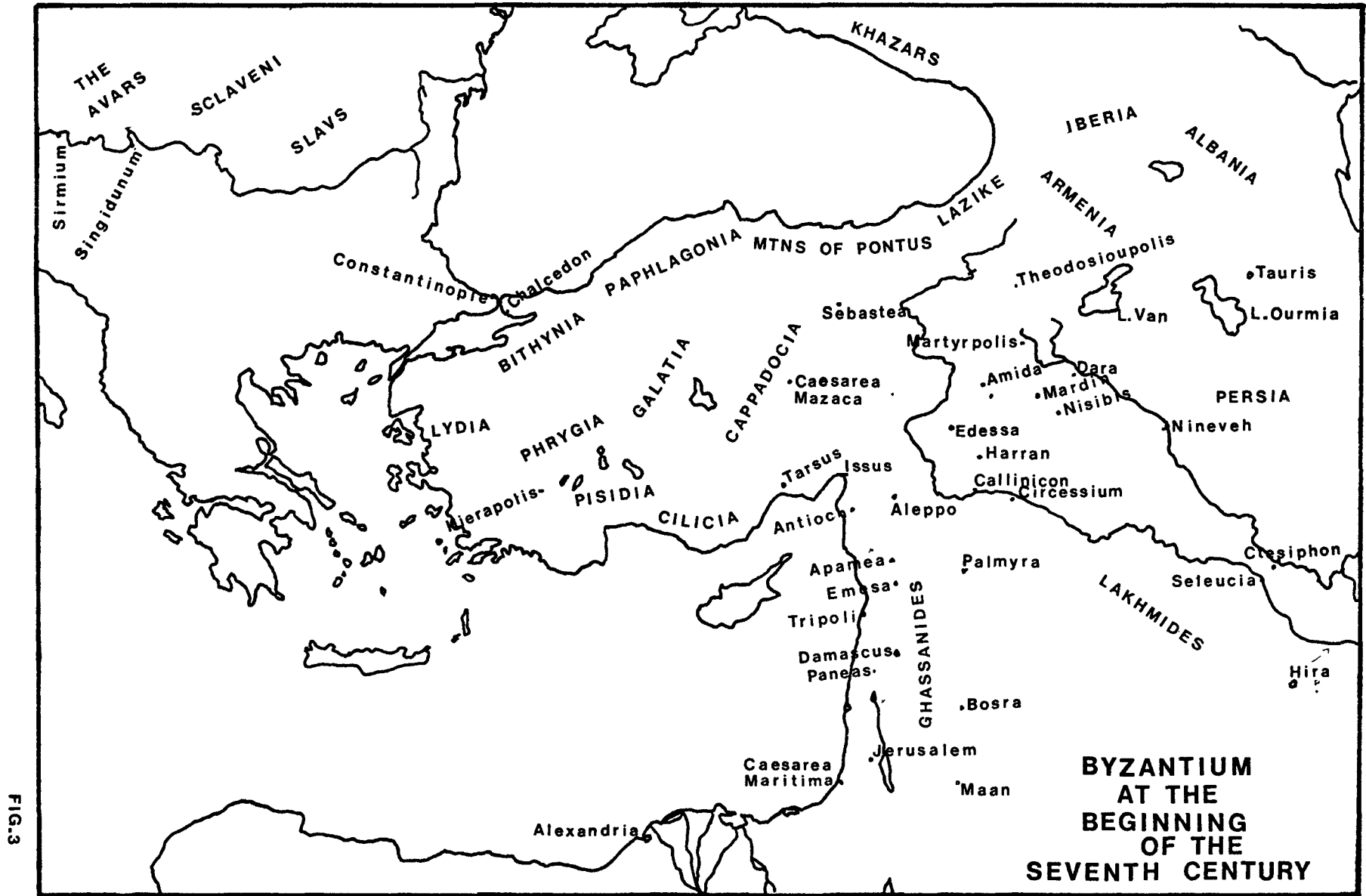
Justinian I (A.D. 527-565)
 Justin II (A.D. 565-578)
 Tiberius II Constantine (A.D. 578-582)
 Maurice (A.D. 582-602)
 Phocas (A.D. 602-610)
 Heraclius (A.D. 610-641)

CALIPHS

Abu Bakr (A.D. 632-634) (A.H. 11-13)
 'Umar (A.D. 634-644) (A.H. 13-23)
 'Uthman ('Osman) (A.D. 644-656) (A.H. 23-35)

PERSIAN/SASSANID KINGS

Chosroes I (A.D. 531-582)
 Hormisdas IV (A.D. 582-590)
 Chosroes II (A.D. 590-628)
 Khobad II (A.D. 628-629)
 Artaxerxes (Ardashir III) (A.D. 629)
 The Military Takeover of Sahrbaraz (A.D. 629)
 The Ten Pretenders to the Throne (A.D. 629-634)



JUSTIN II (A.D. 565-578)

The year A.D. 565 saw the ascension of Justin II to a bankrupt Byzantine throne.¹ By a shrewd combination of craft and violence he had forced his way to the monarchy, carefully removing the more legitimate heir. The financial plight of the empire did not deter him from adopting a belligerent foreign policy. Early in his reign, he had hoped to provoke war with the Avars, a people related to the Huns, and with the Persians, but he was unable to do so as they were both preoccupied with other frontier disturbances. By taking advantage of the border war of the Avars upon the Gepids in Pannonia Secunda and Dacia, Justin recaptured the town of Sirmium, which had been lost thirty years before^{to} the Avars.²

The fiscal policy of Justin II was such that it gave him the reputation of being a miser. He devoted considerable energy to hoarding monies of the treasury and eliminating expenditures whenever possible. By not appropriating enough funds to finance the army, he directly caused a serious reduction in manpower to occur upon the frontier of the empire. Taking advantage of this situation, the Lombards and their Germanic allies marched into Italy with comparative ease, and captured Venetia (A.D. 568), Liguria (A.D. 569, and Ticinum (A.D. 572)³

¹N.H. Baynes, "The Successors to Justinian", in the Cambridge Mediaeval History, ed. H.M. Gwatkin and J.P. Whitney (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), II, 263-264.

²Menander Protector, Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, ed. C. Mueller (Paris, 18), IV, 14-29, referred to in A.H.M. Jones, The Later Roman Empire, 284-602 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), I, 304-5.

³L.M. Hartmann, "Italy under the Lombards" in the Cambridge Mediaeval History, II, 194-198.

In North Africa numerous guerrilla raids by the Moors and the Berbers had reduced this land to a state of civil war. The Byzantine army stationed here lacked the troops and effective leadership that would have promoted domestic stability. Any concerted effort by the Moors and the Berbers could have driven them into the sea. But, these indigenous tribes were constantly warring among themselves and could not agree to a central command. Deprived of their pay, due to Justin's austerity programme, and demoralized by the ineffectual policy of their commanders, the Byzantine army looted the area. They became such a disciplinary problem that the empire held only a token line of defense in Africa.⁴

In the sixth century, the western half of the Byzantine empire was slowly being swept away by the waves of migratory peoples. The Visigoths and Ostrogoths had been pushed south into Spain by the Franks. The movement of the Avars, Bulgarians, and southern Slavs into the Balkan peninsula had produced a profound ethnographic change in that region.⁵ Their arrival had transformed the balance of power on Byzantium's northern borders. The presence of the Avars and their allies was seen as a threat to the security of the empire and determined the future military policy of the Byzantines towards that region.⁶

⁴J.B. Bury, A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene (London: Macmillan, 1889), I, 34-35.

⁵Peter Charanis, "Ethnic Changes in the Byzantine Empire in the Seventh Century", Dumbarton Oak Papers, 13 (1959), 1-21.

⁶A.A. Vasiliev, History of the Byzantine Empire: 324-1453 (Madison and Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1952), I, 176-79.

Realizing that most of the western provinces were lost, Justin proceeded to secure the eastern borders of Byzantium. The chief opponent of the empire at this time were the Sassanids of Persia, under the monarchy of Chosroes I.⁷ He had previously concluded two peace treaties with Byzantium, one in A.D. 533 and another in A.D. 562, and had violated both of them.⁸ Although he was approaching old age, Chosroes had managed to present the Sassanian kingdom as a serious rival to Byzantium.

"Rome [Byzantium] therefore, engaged in a large-scale diplomatic activity with the object of forming an anti-Iranian coalition that would virtually encircle the enemy. Ambassadors were sent to the western Turks and other peoples of central Asia who needed to form the north-east wing of the coalition; approaches were also made to the Abyssinians and the Arabs with the object of strengthening the south-west wings. It was thus hoped to secure the two flanks of the enormous frontier common to the two empires."⁹

Control of Armenia was to be the focal point around which Byzantium waged its next campaign. The plan was to capture Armenia quickly and then use it as a buffer zone against the Persians. According to Ostrogorsky, there was an ulterior motive necessitating the Byzantine capture of Armenia.¹⁰ Armenian mercenaries were needed to augment the dwindling military reserves of Byzantium. In previous decades, the Germanic peoples had provided this service, but, this source had disappeared when they migrated west.

⁷ M.J. Higgins, "Internal Relations at the Close of the Sixth Century", The Catholic Historical Review, 27 (1941), 279-315.

⁸ Procopius of Caesarea, Bellum Persicum, ed. J. Haury (Leipzig: Teubner, 1905), I.xxii.1-8.

⁹ Roman Ghirshman, Iran (Baltimore: Penguin, 1954), p.305.

Justin began his aggressive campaign against the Persians by taking advantage of an internal religious dispute in that country. For some time the Christian Armenian subjects of Persia had been appealing to Constantinople to save them from the oppression of the king. Chosroes I had attempted to force the Zoroastrian religion upon his vassals and they had finally revolted in defiance of his religious policies. When the Persian embassies came to collect the subsidies due to them from a previous peace treaty negotiated with Justinian I, Justin II refused to pay them or in any way honour the agreement. Furthermore, he announced that he would champion the civil rights of the Christian Armenians. With the promise of military backing, the Iberian Christian communities also revolted and drove the Persians from their lands.¹¹

Justin took immediate advantage of this situation and sent his cousin, Marcian, who was magister militum per Orientem, to secure Arzanene, an Armenian satrapy on the Persian border. While the Byzantines were besieging the town of Nisibis, Chosroes raised an army which marched south and invaded Syria. The Persians destroyed Apamea and the suburbs of Antioch and then, to the surprise and consternation of Justin, wheeled north to assist Chosroes in relieving Nisibis and besieging Dara.¹²

¹⁰George Ostrogorski, History of the Byzantine State (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1957), p.73.

¹¹Menander, IV, 36.
John of Ephesus, "Historiae Ecclesiasticae pars Tertia", Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Scriptores Syrii), iv, 24.

Upon hearing the news of the seige, Justin became deranged. His sanity suffered through the years of constant strife and turmoil and had finally deteriorated to the point where he could no longer manage the affairs of state. The Empress Sophia had convinced Justin to nominate Tiberius, comes excubitorum (commander of the imperial bodyguard) as Augustus. He immediately negotiated a truce with the Persians which entailed a payment of 45,000 gold solidi plus an additional lump sum payment for an extension.¹³

TIBERIUS (A.D. 578-582)

Realizing that he lacked the resources to engage in a war on two fronts, Tiberius attempted to stabilize the northwestern border of the empire by bribing the Avars with an annual payment of 80,000 solidi. The diplomatic negotiations were such a success that for a number of years the Avars assisted the Byzantines in controlling a common enemy, the Sclaveni. However, the Avars could not forget old grievances and in A.D. 580 they attacked Sirmium and forced Tiberius to hand over a lump sum of 240,000 solidi which had been in arrears from the previous treaty.¹⁴

In Italy, the Lombards had severed communications between Rome and Constantinople. The small enclaves of Christianity there had

¹² Evagrius Scholasticus, Historia Ecclesiastica, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London: Methuen, 1898), v.8-10.

John of Ephesus, vi.2-6.

John of Ephiphania, Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, ed. C. Mueller (Paris, 18), iv.273-276 as referred to in Jones, I, 306.

¹³ Bury, II, 76-79, 116-117.

John of Ephesus, iii, 2-5, v.13.

petitioned Tiberius to send them military aid. With his troops scattered on two fronts, he could ill-afford to assist them. A token force was sent but, in the main, they resorted to bribing the Lombard duces into a certain amount of non-action.¹⁵

Tiberius made some efforts to wind down the continuing war on the eastern front in order to induce the Persians to contract a long term peace treaty. His strategy was to engage in limited skirmishes, plead for a truce, and while awaiting a decision would deploy troops elsewhere. Eventually a truce of three years duration, based on annual payment of 30,000 solidi, was achieved. However, Tiberius continued military operation against the Persians, expending great sums of gold to attract barbarian mercenaries and to equip a new army.¹⁶ In charge of the eastern campaign, he placed his own comes excubitorum, Maurice. Under the threat of increased military action, Tiberius pressed Chosroes into a final settlement of the war. For this, Tiberius promised to cede Armenia, Iberia, and Arzarene to the Persians on condition that they would return the city of Dara. Chosroes refused to comply with these demands until the leaders of the Armenian insurrection were surrendered to him and Byzantine tribute was immediately resumed. Before any resolution was effected, Chosroes died and his son Hormisdas resumed hostilities with the Byzantines.

¹⁴Bury, II, 116-117.

¹⁵Jones, I, 308.

¹⁶John of Ephesus, vi. 8-14.

Theophylactus Simocatta, Historiae, ed. C. de Gotthard de Boor (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887), II.12.

Tiberius also died three years later having bequeathed the throne and the unresolved war in the east to Maurice.¹⁷

MAURICE (A.D. 582-602)

Through subsidies and diplomatic action, Maurice continued the military policy of Tiberius by maintaining a stationary front to the north. In this way he could give priority to the Persian war. However, he had to contend first with the Lombards who, at this time, were threatening the principates of Ravenna and Rome. Maurice secured an agreement with the Frankish king, Childebert II (A.D. 570-595), for a diversionary war in Italy. He had hoped that the Franks would set upon the Lombards and thus divert them from their plans of seizing entirely the western part of the empire. Childebert did make a number of campaigns against the Lombards but with the sole aim of capturing parts of Italy for himself. He succeeded in capturing a number of cities and acquiring tribute but in accomplishing this, he also caused the Lombards to become unified among themselves. Authari, the commander of the Lombards, arranged a temporary coalition with the exarch of Italy, Smaragdus, an ally of Childebert's. Later, Romanus, a succeeding exarch, was able to recapture the cities of Altinum, Mutina, and Mantua and to convince some of the Lombard duces to transfer their allegiance to the Byzantine Empire.¹⁸

¹⁷Theophylactus Simocatta, III.16.
Bury, II, 10505.
John of Ephesus, V.13.

¹⁸Jones, I, 309-11.
Paulus Diaconus, "Historia Langobardorum", Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum, III. 16-18, 29-9.

In A.D. 584, the Avars demanded an increase in their annual subsidy and when it was refused, took Singidunum and other cities in Moesia Prima. Maurice reluctantly paid the demanded sum, for his troops were widely scattered on the Persian front. However, the peace did not last long for the Avars and the Sclaveni, realizing the weakened position of the empire, carried out raids which penetrated to the Long Walls of Constantinople.¹⁹

In the eastern border of the Byzantine Empire, warfare continued with Persia. A succession of ineffectual commanders, appointed by Maurice, did not maintain the confidence of the troops. The treasury was depleted of funds and a proposed reduction in pay caused the army to mutiny. By A.D. 590 order was restored to the army with the execution of the mutineers and the replacing of Philippicus with the more popular Commentiolus.²⁰

Internal problems in Persia eventually provided the solution to the long war with Byzantium. Although Hormisdas IV was competent in military matters, he was less prudent in the domestic affairs of his country. Early in his reign, he had provoked the anger of the Zoroastrian priesthood by becoming involved with the Christians. In addition, he had made the mistake of defaming the military genius of Varanes, who had just previously won a series of victories against the

¹⁹Jones, I, 310.

²⁰M.J. Higgins, The Persian War of the Emperor Maurice (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1939), p.31-33.
Theophylactus Simocatta, I.9, 12-15; II.1-18; III.1-8.
Evagrius, VI.3-6, 9-13.

²¹Sir Percy M. Sykes, A History of Persia (London: Macmillan, 1963), I, 477-79.

Huns of the north and the Turks of the east.²¹ The troops rallied to Varanes after the battle of Lazica (A.D. 589) and with the help of the nobility, marched on Ctesiphon and assassinated Hormisdas. His eldest son, Chosroes II ascended the throne and attempted to win the support of Varanes. However, Varanes' ambition was for the throne, so he seized the capital and made himself king.²² Chosroes II immediately took refuge at Hieropolis under the protection of Maurice.

Within a year Chosroes was able to win back the throne with the assistance of an army given to him by Maurice. In return, Maurice gained a number of valuable concessions in a treaty concluded with Chosroes. Persemenia and eastern Mesopotamia, including the city of Dara, were given to Byzantium and more important, annual tribute was stopped.²³

With the war against Persia temporarily halted, Maurice moved his troops to other theatres. In Italy, the Lombards had extended their control into the central and southern portions of the country; Rome, despairing of Byzantine assistance, found a protector in Pope Gregory I, who had negotiated an armistice with the Lombards after several sieges of the city.²⁴ Other communities, especially religious ones formed coalitions and took up residences in fortresses. In an attempt to secure the remaining western empire, Maurice instituted a new form of martial law in Italy and Africa. He placed the civil

²²Varanes (Vahran Choben, Bahram Chubin) was of Arsacid descent but his lineage was such that he was not entitled to be king.

²³Bury, I, 111-113.
Theophylactus Simocatta, IV.1-16, V.1-15.

administration of Ravenna and Carthage under the supreme command of a governor-general, called an exarch. The exarch was given a wide range of powers, which were geared to meet the constant changes in the military situation of his area. Permanent garrisons were assigned to many cities to bolster their defense to meet any threat made by the Lombards. Most of these developments were continued and strengthened in the reign of Heraclius.²⁵

A similar system was later introduced in regards to the Persians as well as the Avars and the other tribes in the Balkan peninsula. This policy stabilized the military situation in Italy for only a short time but it was extremely effective in North Africa. Unlimited power in the hands of the exarch was to produce serious rivals to the Byzantine throne in the future as well as contributing to the eventual dominance of all civil authority by the military.²⁶

By A.D. 592 war had again broken out on the northern front. Maurice sent most of his troops, under the command of Priscus, to prevent the Avars from laying seige to Singidunum. Since the war was limited to the northern front, more effort was directed to its immediate success. Theophylactos narrates that Priscus and his troops relieved the garrison at Singidunum but were unable to stop the Avars from moving into Thrace. Through a ploy, the chagan of the Avars was

²⁴ F. Homes Dudden, Gregory the Great (London and New York: Longmans and Green, 1905).
Bury, I, 149-158.

²⁵ The basic work on this subject is C. Diehl's Etudes sur l'administration Byzantine dans l'exarchat de Ravenne (A.D. 568-751).

tricked into believing that his homeland was being attacked, upon which notice he promptly renegotiated his old treaty and departed.²⁷

With a numerically large army standing idle across the Danube, the problem of financing became desperate. To ease the burden on the treasury, Maurice ordered the army to set up winter quarters and forage off the land. When the treasury was unable to pay directly for their uniforms and weaponry, the troops threatened to mutiny. An imperial edict, providing pensions for veterans, was able to smother any resentment.²⁸

The Avars decided to move against Singidunum again but were rebuffed so successfully by the Byzantine army that they retreated from Dalmatia for a year. In A.D. 599, the Avars resumed hostilities and chose to attack Tomi. Priscus was able to contain them but his successor, Commentiolus, could not prevent them from again attacking Constantinople. A plague in the Avar encampment forced the chagan of the Avars to sue for peace. However, Maurice had no intention of keeping the truce and sent another army north to forage off the land. By A.D. 601-2 the Byzantines had engaged the Avars at Viminacium and had conducted raids on the Sclaveni.²⁹ When ordered to spend another winter in enemy territory, the Byzantine army rebelled. They chose as their leader, Phocas, and then marched on Constantinople to

²⁶Vasiliev, p.179.

²⁷Theophylactos Simocatta, V.16, VI.1-16.

²⁸Jones, I, 314-315.

²⁹Bury, I, 137-142.

depose Maurice. In desperation, Maurice made a number of overtures to various relatives to take the throne but none had the strength to secure the city in the face of the oncoming army. The circus factions and the senate proclaimed Phocas, Augustus, at Hebdomon and soon after Maurice and his family were executed.³⁰

PHOCAS (A.D. 602-610)

Phocas (A.D. 602-610) did not survive very long in the political arena for his ascension to the throne brought with it the spectre of civil war. Numerous conspiracies were uncovered and crushed brutally during his reign. A military rebellion under Narses forced Phocas to pull those few remaining troops off the eastern front. Realizing that the borders were inadequately defended, Chosroes II invaded Armenia and Mesopotamia. The Avars also had decided to resume hostilities and Phocas found that he was waging a war on two fronts. In order to expedite an end to the advance of the Avars, he quickly paid them off so that he could confront the more immediate Persian invasions.³¹

Early in the reign of Phocas, Chosroes II had successfully beseiged Dara and Edessa. Phocas had ordered the army to relieve the two cities and break the stranglehold of the Persians in the Euphrates area. The Byzantines were beaten by a tactically superior force, using heavy cavalry and elephants at Arxamound. Dara was then destroyed by the Persians and its inhabitants forcibly transferred to a new land.³²

³⁰ A.N. Stratos, Byzantium in the Seventh Century (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1972), I, 30.

Michael le Syrien, Chronique, ed. and tr. J.B. Chabot, (1901; rpt. Brussels: Jos. Adams, 1963), II, 374-381.

Confident of their military strength, a number of forays were made by the Persians into Armenia, wreaking havoc and chaos in that province. In the years A.D. 607 to A.D. 609, Chosroes prepared and executed two invasions, one of which took the lower half of Armenia, including the cities of Mardin, Amida, Rezaina, Harran, Callinicon, and Circessium. By A.D. 610, Hierapolis (Menbidj), Zenobia, and Aleppo had fallen. The second Persian invasion culminated in the Battle of Dou, where the Byzantines were defeated and the capital of Armenia, Theodosioupolis, was captured. The final thrust of this invasion sent one army, "North from Satala towards Sebastea and one from the south from Samosata towards Melitene and Caesarea Mazaca."³³ The Byzantines tried in vain to check the advance of the Persians in Cappadocia but remained unsuccessful.

HERACLIOS (A.D. 575-640)

In A.D. 610 Phocas was overthrown by Heraclios (A.D. 575-640), the son of the exarch of Carthage, who had been accumulating power and support from the political factions in Constantinople. He took command of an empire which bordered on anarchy in both its domestic and international affairs.³⁴

³¹ Stratos I, 57-68.

Theophanes, Chronicle, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883), pp. 291-293.

³² Theophanes, p. 292.

Bury, II, 197-206.

Jones, I, 315-316.

³³ Stratos, I, 63-65

Michael le Syrien, II, 379

Theophanes, P. 253, 292

Theophylactos Simocatta, I.96.

The downfall of Phocas should have satisfied Chosroes II, for his benefactor, Maurice, had been avenged. But he was deluded by dreams of recreating the empire of Darius. In 611 A.D. Sahrbaraz, one of Chosroes' generals, spearheaded an invasion into Syria and captured Antioch and Apamea.³⁵ He accomplished this feat with relative ease since the Byzantine army or what remained of them in the garrison towns, offered minimal resistance. Syria at this time was protected by a series of forts called the Strata Diocletiana and the limes of Chalcis. These outposts had originally been entrusted to Byzantine field army regulars, the limitanei or the castrensi.³⁶ Lack of regular pay and funds for the upkeep of these garrisons reduced their ability to secure the borders. The limitanei then were not an effective deterrent to an invasion force of any size in this time period.

Niketas, a Byzantine general, was able to put a temporary halt to the Persian advance south near Emesa but by then they had devastated the surrounding country side of Syria. Heraclius did not want to lose the remainder of the empire for Sahrbaraz's army had severed overland communication with Palestine, Egypt and Africa. The area of Cappadocia was temporarily stabilized so that Heraclius could use it as a base for operations against the Persians. He then recalled Philippicos from his monastic studies to active service and had him provide strategy for a

34

Stratos, I, 69-96.

Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, Breva Historia, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880), p.4-5.

John, Bishop of Nikiou, "The Chronicle", ed. and tr. H. Zotenberg, Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliotheque Nationale, 24 (1883), 551-553.

new offensive. Philippicos distracted the Persian forces, which were poised to strike at Palestine, by using his own army as a diversion. Meanwhile Heraclius' forces swept south but were unable to relieve Antioch due to strong Persian garrison there. The Byzantines were again routed causing Heraclius to return to Constantinople in defeat.³⁷

LIMES PALAESTINAE

Palestine had a similar system of forts and military roads which served to protect small communities from the raids of the Saracens. In the south was the limes Palaestinae, which consisted of a line of fortresses connected by a military road, which ran from the Mediterranean west to the Dead Sea. Across the Jordan River, on the east bank, the Arabian limes controlled the territory that spanned from Bosra south to the Dead Sea. This garrison defense line of forts had been upgraded in the time of Diocletian (A.D. 284-305) and maintained with some exception up until the reign of Heraclius.³⁸

In Late Roman time, it was possible to reinforce the eastern garrisons from the central field armies or palatini. But successive military disasters had seriously weakened both the Byzantine army and its finances. The stipends, annonae, and the rations for the limitanei

³⁵G. Downey, A History of Antioch in Syria (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), p.572.

Theophanes, p.299.
Stratos, II, 104-105.

³⁶Michael Avi-Yonah, The Holy Land From the Persian to the Arab Conquests (536 B.C. to A.D. 640) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1966) pp.120-121. See also R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, Le limes de Chalcis (Paris: Guethner, 1945).

and their families were often delayed or never arrived.³⁹ This situation helped to foster a dangerously low level of morale among those who manned the outposts of the empire. Thus, it can be inferred from the quick advance of the Persians, that very little resistance on the part of the limitanei was shown.

THE PERSIAN CONQUEST OF CAESAREA MARITIMA

In 613-614 A.D. Sarhrbaraz seized control of Damascus and then crossed into Palestine via Panea (Caesarea Philippi). He took all the coastal towns to prevent reinforcements arriving by sea for inland defense. The Persians realized that they had to isolate Palestine from Byzantine assistance and destroy the limitanei and their fortresses.

Caesarea Maritima at this time was a thriving industrial city, an excellent seaport and a nexus for many military roads. As the administrative centre for Palaestine Prima, it was also the main supply centre of this province. It was known to be well-fortified and contained a sizeable garrison. Yet it too was captured by the Persians. The details concerning the exact manner of its capture are scarce and in the main, they just refer to the taking of the city.⁴⁰ The occupation of the city lasted from sixteen to nineteen years.

³⁷ Stratos, I, 104-7.
Sebeos, Histoire d'Heraclius, ed. and tr. F. Macler (Paris, 1904), pp.65-68.

³⁸ Avi-Yonah, pp.118-124.

³⁹ Jones, I

⁴⁰ Stratos, I, 108.

Theophanes, p.300.

Known to be in the Chronica Minora, p.146/113.

THE SEIGE OF JERUSALEM BY THE PERSIANS (A.D. 614)

Jerusalem was then beseiged and taken at a tremendous cost in lives of the inhabitants. The Persians sacked the city and enslaved or killed the remaining populace. For their assistance in the capture of the city, the Jews were placed in charge of its administration. Many Christians, recognizing the Persian threat, had fled to Egypt and thus avoided the bloody aftermath. They carried with them some of the sacred relics but many of these treasures were taken as loot by the Persians or destroyed by the Jews. Over three hundred Monasteries and ecclesiastical foundations were destroyed. After awhile, Chosroes mellowed towards the plight of the Christians and permitted them to rebuild their religious edifices and took the right to govern away from the Jews.⁴¹

Another front of the Persian Army very easily took Nikiou and Alexandria by sea. Stratos believes that the actual occupation of Egypt lasted from 616 to 620 A.D. The Persians now held control of the grainary, 'the bread basket' of the Byzantine Empire.

To the north a second Persian army under the command of Sahin had outflanked the Byzantines in Cappadocia and were bearing down on the city of Chalcedon near Constantinople. Sahin and Heraclios agreed to a truce and embassies were given to Sahin in evidence of Heraclios' good intentions. Even though they were accorded safe conduct, Sahin, in

⁴¹F.C. Coneybeare, review of N. Marr's translation of Antiochus Strategus, The Capture of Jerusalem by the Persians in the year 614, in the English Historical Review, 25 (1910), pp.502-517.

⁴²Stratos I, 111-114.
Ostrogorsky, p.86.

order to court Chosroes' favour, threw them into prison. Finally Chalcedon fell in 617 A.D. and the Persian-Sassanid Empire had almost regained the territory it once had held under the Achaemeniad dynasty.⁴²

THE PERSIAN WAR - CAMPAIGN OF CAPPADOCIA AND PONTUS (A.D. 622-623)

According to Nicephorus, Heraclios, perceiving that the empire was reduced to the control of a few border cities, decided to flee to Carthage for safety. He was ready to board his ship, when the people of Constantinople and the Patriarch Sergios made him swear that he would not abandon them. To bolster the emperor's confidence and to save the state, Sergios made a politically astute move. He gave up the treasures of the Church, i.e. silverplate, to help finance the army and to pay off the Avars, who were once again menacing the borders.⁴³

Heraclios, with the backing of the people and the necessary financial support, decided to reorganize the army in order to destroy the Persians. Studying "Maurice's Strategicon", he made a number of changes in the military composition of the forces, weighing them heavily in favour of the cavalry. Within two years he had mustered enough officers and trained men to return with confidence to the battlefield. Heraclios had one distinct advantage in war: his navy controlled the sea. He had never made effective use of this power until this campaign of A.D. 622. Taking advantage of this continuing command of the sea, Heraclios sailed from Constantinople with a force of fifty thousand. He then marched south through Galatea and set up headquarters at

⁴³ Nicephorus, p.15.
Theophanes, p.303.
Stratos, I, 125-127.

Caesarea Mazaca. Here he continued to train his troops in war games, until he was certain of success in battle. The Persian army encountered the Byzantines first at Issus and then at Halys. The Byzantines won both battles; the first victories since the death of Maurice.⁴⁴

Realizing that he had dealt the Persians a crippling blow, Heraclios put his army in winter quarters and then returned to Constantinople to personally supervise its defense against the continuing threat of the Avars. According to Stratos, "he had neither the time nor the means" to reconquer Syria or Palestine.⁴⁵

The details of the next five campaigns are inadequately recorded. However, the events are known but the military details are unclear.

THE CAMPAIGN OF AZERBIYAN (A.D. 623)

Leaving his son, Constantine, in charge of defense, Heraclios spearheaded an attack into the heart of Media to the capital of Tauris. Chosroes was unable to respond with any concerted action and abandoned the city to Heraclios. The Byzantines then repaired to winter quarters in the Araxes Valley of Albania.⁴⁶

CAMPAIGN OF ALBANIA AND ARMENIA (A.D. 624)

In the third campaign against the Persians, the Byzantines penetrated so deep into Persian territory that Chosroes was forced to

⁴⁴Bury, II, 227-230.
Theophanes, p.305.

The Strategicon of Maurice was a military manual written in the reign of Maurice and possibly revised in Heraclios' time.

⁴⁵Stratos, I, 126.

withdraw his troops from Chalcedon. Although he had three great armies in the field, the Byzantines were able to elude them and create considerable havoc in the provinces of Siounia and Persarmenia. With winter's arrival, Heraclios retired to the area around Lake Van. A surprise attack on the camp of Sahrbaraz near the village of Ali or Salvani confused the Persians. Sahrbaraz was forced to flee so quickly that he abandoned his personal belongings and harem.⁴⁷

CAMPAIGN OF CILICIA (A.D. 625)

In A.D. 625 Heraclios began his fourth campaign in Corduene (Kurdistan) and Mesopotamia. With an enormous amount of booty and prisoners in tow, the Byzantines made a forced march south. This action seemed to confuse the Persians and they were unprepared to retaliate over the retaking of Amida (Diyarbakir) and Martyropolis (Maiafarkin). Heraclios encountered Sahrbaraz at the Sarus River, where he defeated him a second time.

THE SECOND CAMPAIGN OF AZERBIYAN - THE SEIGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE (A.D. 626)

Chosroes, in retaliation for the loss of Persian territory, prepared all winter for a massive attack on Constantinople. He negotiated an alliance with the chagan of the Avars so that a double assault from different directions would take the city. Learning of this plan,

⁴⁶ V. Minorsky, "Roman and Byzantine Campaigns in Atropatene Azarbaijan", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, LL (1944), pp.248-251.

⁴⁷ Bury, II, 232-235.
Theophanes, pp.309-311.
Sebeos, pp.82-83.

Heraclios returned to Constantinople to organize its defense and entrusted its security to his son, Constantine. He then returned to the field, to his own army and awaited the first move by the Persians. Chosroes had three armies at his disposal. One, under the command of Sarablangas, he sent to contain Heraclios; another, under the command of Shahin was to ensure the separation of the two main Byzantine armies in Asia Minor; the last, under Sahrbaraz, was to join forces with the Avars and beseige Constantinople. When Byzantine intelligence had informed Heraclios of this, he divided his army into three sections to confront the Persian armies.⁴⁸

Between June 29 and August 10, A.D. 626 the Avars made a number of sorties into the suburbs of Constantinople. Finally, Sahrbaraz arrived and a combined offensive was launched. The Avars continued the land seige while the Persians attempted a naval assault. Due to Byzantine pre-eminence on the sea, the Persians were destroyed in the Bosphorus and abandoned the seige.⁴⁹

Meanwhile Heraclios with only thirty thousand men was on the defensive in Pontus. He was successful in luring the main Persian army into Lazike (Cholcis) so that Theodore could attend to the Persian army under Sahin. Heraclios then moved his forces into the Balkans in order to arrange an agreement with Ziebel, khan of the Khazars. The Khazars were to conduct raids into Armenia and Media, keeping the Persians distracted from the main Byzantine offensive.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Bury, II, 235-241.
 Stratos, I, 168-172.
 Theophanes, pp.312-314.

CAMPAIGN OF ASSYRIA (A.D. 627-628)

In A.D. 627 Heraclios embarked on his sixth campaign against the Persians. He advanced easily through Syria and southern Armenia, recapturing most of the cities that had been lost to the enemy ten to fifteen years before. Sahrbaraz surrendered at Chalcedon when he realized his position was untenable and that the king was planning to have him executed for incompetancy. Later in that year, Heraclios wheeled his forces towards the heart of Persia. For unknown reasons, the Khazars did not uphold their bargain and returned to their homeland.⁵¹ At Nineveh, the decisive battle of the last war between the Byzantines and the Sassanids was fought. Heraclios suffered wounds but he refused to leave the field. Instead he pursued the remnants of the Persian army across the Zab River to Ctesiphon. Owing to the speed of his pursuit, his seige train had not accompanied him, so he did not lay seige to the city but withdrew his forces to Tauris and proposed peace to Chosroes.⁵²

THE DECLINE OF PERSIAN CONTROL

When Chosroes refused the offer of peace, the war weary Persians revolted and placed his son, Khobad II, on the throne. A peace treaty was then negotiated, which was acceptable to both sides. But within a

⁴⁹ Vasiliev, I, 197.
Stratos, I, 181-196.
Nicephorus, pp.17-18.

⁵⁰ The Khazara were western Turks of Mongolian ancestry.
Stratos, I, 199-202.
Nicephorus, pp.18-22.

⁵¹ Stratos, I, 206-208.
Bury, II, 241-243.

year, Khobad had died of the plague (A.D. 629), leaving only the infant Artaxerxes (Ardashir III) to succeed him on the throne. The Persian commander Sahrbaraz, taking advantage of the weak leadership and confusion in the land, seized the throne from its rightful heir. Sahrbaraz restored to the Byzantines the sacred relics of the church, including the Holy Cross, in return for their assistance in his takeover.⁵³ In addition, Sahrbaraz agreed to evacuate all territory occupied by the Persians, a process which probably took a number of months.

Heraclios returned to Jerusalem to formally return the Holy Cross. There are so many conflicting stories of this event that it is difficult to recount it unless miracles are included. He then toured many of the Palestinian towns to set up a new form of civil/military administration. This was based on the old exarchate system, founded by Maurice, in which the land was divided up into themes. The military was to hold control of the land and draw among the local populace for the militia. In this way, the defense of the frontiers could be partially the responsibility of the inhabitants, and not entirely entrusted to mercenaries, which the empire could ill-afford.⁵⁴ More important to the

⁵² Stratos, I, 204-222.
Theophanes, pp.318-324.

⁵³ Sykes, I, 488-489.

The peace terms between Khobad II and Heraclios are unknown. Theophanes writes that they just declared peace and exchanged prisoners.

⁵⁴ Ostrogorsky, pp.86-88. Instead of an exarch, the themes were placed under the control of a strategus. The limitan ei received inalienable grants of lands.

Romilly Jenkins, Byzantium, The Imperial Centuries A.D. 610-1071 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), pp.16-17, 22-23.

welfare of Syria and Palestine, he made certain exemptions from taxation and allotted funds for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.⁵⁵

Sahrbaraz was deposed for his murder of the rightful heir. Thus followed a period of anarchy in Persian history in which there were no less than ten pretenders to the throne in the space of ten years.⁵⁶

FACTORS IN THE SUCCESS OF THE PERSIAN TAKEOVER OF PALESTINE AND SYRIA

The causes for the success of the Persians in Syria and Palestine in A.D. 610 are manifold and complex - the actual historical predisposition for their success had in fact been prepared many centuries in advance.

The paramount reason lies in the inability of the Byzantine rulers to surrender the western empire to the inevitable barbarian takeover. Instead they poured armies and war materials into Italy, Spain, and Africa in an attempt to thwart the migrations of displaced tribes, i.e., Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Huns, Slavs, Avars, southward. By doing so they dissipated the wealth of the empire over a distant and enormously large frontier, in propping up the western half of the empire. Vasiliev notes that,

"the gap between the East and the West in the sixth century was already so great that the mere idea of uniting the two was an anachronism. A real union was out of the question. The conquered provinces could be retained by force only, and for this the Empire had neither the power nor means. Allured by his delusive dreams, Justinian I failed to grasp the importance of the eastern border and the eastern provinces, which embodied the really vital interests of the Byzantine Empire."⁵⁷

What the rulers of the Byzantine Empire did not realize until the reign of Justin II was that the centre of gravity of the empire had shifted

⁵⁵Stratos, I, 255.

east, to the areas of Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine. The east possessed more cities and denser urban populations. In economic terms, industrial production and a stable monetary system for the empire required this large population and developed urban society. Survival of the Byzantine Empire should have been from the onset focussed on Constantinople and the eastern provinces.

Imperial interests in the West were still in evidence during the time of Maurice when the exarchates and their troops became "the outposts of Byzantine power". Maurice's last testament stipulated that his second son should rule in Rome over Italy. Ostrogorsky states, that "the idea of an universal empire still survived, as well as the conception of a single 'imperium romanum'".⁵⁹

"The vitality of the East is further demonstrated in the fact that the eastern half of the Empire survived the Germanic invasions, whereas the Latin West succumbed in the fifth and sixth centuries. This indicates that the East was now the more vital portion of the imperial organism ..."⁶⁰

This eastward orientation, if it had been considered seriously, could have, over the centuries, directed the military effort totally against the Persians and the Slavo-Avars who were the more immediate enemies, and probably could have saved Palestine and Syria from the disastrous invasion by the Persians and later the Arabs.

⁵⁶ Sykes, I, 489.

⁵⁷ Vasiliev, I, 142.

⁵⁸ Speros Vryonis, "Hellas Resurgent" in Byzantium: Its Internal History and Relations with the Muslim World: Collected Studies (London: Variorum, 1971), pp.107-111.

⁵⁹ Ostrogorsky, p.74.

DECLINE IN ECONOMIC GROWTH

Population studies in Palestine, prior to Justinian, show a tremendous increase in the number of people residing in Palestine during the early Byzantine period.⁶¹ Settlements even occurred in the Negev desert as evidenced by the revitalization of such caravan towns of Elusa, Rehoboth, Nessana, Subeita, Eboda and Mampsis (Kurnub). It can be surmised from the increase in population that something of importance was attracting immigrants and settlers to Palestine. This phenomena can, in the main, be attributed to a marked economic upsurge in the financial disposition of the land. Palestine was experiencing a surge of popularity among the Christian devotees of the Byzantine Empire. As the Holy Land, she was blessed with much private and public investment as each emperor tried to build the finest churches and ecclesiastical buildings to the glory of God. An increase in building activity produced a considerable increase in employment, so much that foreign artisans and craftsmen had to be imported to supply the demand for help. In addition, numerous wealthy individuals gave most of their fortune to the church and entered monasteries or retreats. The rich from other lands made numerous pilgrimages to the holy places, and even just one transient visit often brought some capital into the country. A very important source of income for Palestine was the export of sacred relics. Caesarea Maritima was famous for its copies of sacred scriptures and this undoubtedly kept many calligraphers profitably occupied.

⁶⁰Vryonis, p.103.

However, problems ensued with the tremendous influx of capital. So much investment was made in the unproductive building of churches and monasteries that the labour force was obliged to move on when the job was completed. Charitable institutions, which had evolved out of the beneficence of generous patrons, tended to attract a great number of paupers and beggars, thus discouraging employment. To balance off these negative factors, public investment from the imperial coffers helped to build and repair the limes. This increase in frontier security promoted the growth of new settlements.

About A.D. 460 investment in Palestine diminished and there was a general hiatus in the influx of revenue. As investment was not forthcoming, a number of appeals were made for tax relief. It can be inferred from this that when the interest of the Byzantine investor diminished so did the capital imports. The decline in economic growth became another factor in the growing alienation of the Palestinians from the Byzantine government.

CORRUPTION IN THE BYZANTINE ADMINISTRATION OF SYRIA AND PALESTINE

To finance the wars against the Persians and the northern invaders, Justinian I spent the estate of Anastasius I (A.D. 491-518). However, Procopius claims this was not enough for all the campaigns and had exhausted itself in nine years.⁶² Taxation was increased on the

⁶¹For the ideas in the following section I am indebted to M. Avi-Yonah, "The Economics of Byzantine Palestine", Israel Exploration Journal 8 (1958), 39-51. The relative population density of Canaanite: Israelite: Byzantine sites was 1: 1 : 5-6.

⁶²Procopius of Caesarea, Historia Arcana, ed. J. Haury (Leipzig: Teubner, 1905-13), XIX.7-8.

provinces but its collection must have been very irregular in such far off places as Italy and North Africa. Justinian attempted to upgrade the salaries of certain officials but not enough that it prevented graft and extortion. To gain his office, a governor had to resort to borrowing campaign funds and this often placed him in a position of debt to his benefactors. Normally he would recoup his losses while in office and even make a profit. The safest way was to extort more taxes than the central government demanded. This could be done by juggling the weights and measures system, inflating the price of levies, or making false receipts on local purchases of government supplies. The best manipulators of the tax system appeared to be the curial collectors and their emissaries, the canonicarii and the palatii. Nothing was overlooked to turn a profit, bribery, blackmail, ^{and} outright intimidation. In addition, judicial corruption was rampant and systematic in the courts. At the higher offices, patronage reaped untold profits.⁶³

The outlying provinces of Syria and Palestine had to contend with this fiscal extortion in the seventh century. As the burden of the state grew heavier with the increasing number of wars, so did the taxes on the people. Whole villages became impoverished and eventually depopulated as the inhabitants fled the tax collectors. The land remained idle and brigandry flourished. On a number of occasions Justinian debased the currency but he quickly rescinded this policy when the people rebelled. The most disastrous austerity measure in this

⁶³ Jones, I, 396-341, 462-469.

vicious circle was to economize on the military. This meant cutting back on the frontier guard or refusing to pay or delay payment to the mercenaries. The inevitable results soon followed; the Saracens and Persians, seeing poorly manned garrisons, started to attack frontier towns; the soldiers rebelled and looted the land they were sent to protect. Diehl notes that "the absence of soldiers necessitated more money to buy off the enemies"⁶⁴, and thus the circular pattern continued.

According to Stratos, by Heraclios' reign there was a tremendous decline in the economy.

"The main reasons for this were, apart from maladministration, the laying waste of considerable areas and the falling off in the working potential. Peasants migrated to the cities or Monasteries to obtain security and avoid tax pressure. The inhabitants of the land between the Aegean and the Adriatic seas had become fewer. Large areas were uncultivated and it was natural for their income to be reduced. Asia Minor had been ravaged by two Persian invasions: Mesopotamia and part of Syria had been lost. Egypt had suffered disasters ... In Italy, wars with the Lombards and the need to find money to renew the truce drained the economy. Only in Africa was the economy flourishing but this Province had financed two campaigns, those of Niketas and Heraclios. On account of incursions, revolts, insurrections and the feelings of insecurity, trade had come to a standstill."⁶⁵

Even after the Persian withdrawal in A.D. 629, the tax situation did not change. Heraclios still had to repay the church for the money he had spent on the campaigns. With the returning Byzantine army came the tax collectors and all the chartularii. They insisted on the payment of back taxes for nineteen years in Syria and for fifteen years in Palestine. These taxes had previously been collected by the Persian

⁶⁴Vasiliev, I, 161.

⁶⁵Stratos, I, 99-100.

assessors.⁶⁶ The tyrannical tax system in conjunction with an unstable economic situation was bound to rouse the hatred of the people for the Byzantines.

THE PARTIAL HELLENISATION OF SYRIA AND PALESTINE

About the seventh century, the Byzantine Empire began to undergo a change in character: that is from Roman to Greek. This process was very gradual, taking almost a century to complete. Hellenism was not a new phenomena to the peoples of Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria. They had experienced an active policy of colonization by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C.⁶⁷

This metamorph^{is} in imperial character can best be understood in the realm of language. In the A.D. second and third centuries, Latin was the official language of the Roman Empire, since the heart of empire lay in the west at Rome. By the sixth century, the Roman Empire was an isolated minor power in the west; while its eastern counterpart was strong and secure. Both Greek and Latin were in use in this century, showing the bilingual stance of the empire. By the seventh century the Byzantine Empire was limited to Asia Minor, the Balkans, Africa and a small section of Italy. Greek-speaking peoples were now the ethnic majority. Thus all laws, decrees, and administrative acts were written in Greek as this was the dominant language of the empire.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Eutychios, 1089.
Stratos, II, 261.

⁶⁷ A.H.M. Jones, The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp.237-253, 294.

⁶⁸ Bury, II, 167-174.

Although the Byzantine Empire was caught up in the mystique of Hellenism its effects upon Syria and Palestine remained very transitory. The people of this land were basically from Semitic stock and felt more akin to the Persians and Arabs than to the Greeks.

In regards to the status of Hellenism in Syria, Vryonis states:

"... it [Hellenism] was strongest in the towns and weakest in the countryside of Syria ... where local traditions remained largely unchanged in the face of the Graeco-Roman political domination for a better part of a millennium."⁶⁹

Both Syria and Palestine showed a continuous preference for their native languages. Theodore Noldeke writes:

"if even in such a world city as Antioch the common man still spoke Aramaic, i.e. Syriac, then one may safely suppose that inside the provinces the Greek language was not the language of the educated class, but only of the language of those who made a special study of it."⁷⁰

The most widely dispersed legalistic text of this era was the Syriac and Aramaic translation of the Syrian-Roman lawbook. No Greek text of the original remains from before the Persian period, which prompts Vasiliev to conclude that, "the mass of people were still unacquainted with Greek and Latin and clung strongly to their native Syriac tongue."⁷¹

However, some aspects of Hellenism became pervasive and all-embracing in Syrian and Palestinian communities, i.e. coinage, road system, administration. Survivals of this Byzantine legacy can be seen in all phases of culture up to and including the Umayyads and Abbasids.⁷²

69

Vryonis, p.112.

70

Vasiliev, I, 90.

THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS DISSENSION

In addition to cultural factors, which had encouraged feelings of alienation towards the Byzantines, there was the problem of religious dissension. The majority of population of the Byzantine Empire did not adhere to the 'orthodox' or ^{the} state view of the church. Those Syrians who were Christians, were predominantly Monophysites or Nestorians, whose religious stance was considered heretical. For centuries they had been persecuted and ostracized for their religious beliefs. In Palestine, there were a few Monophysites but an active and hostile Jewish population. The Jews, especially the Samaritans, sought to undermine Byzantine control of the area by collaborating with the Persians in the takeover in A.D. 610. There is much evidence that the Jews did their very best to destroy everything that was Christian, especially during the seige of Jerusalem.⁷³

By the reign of Heraclios the effects of centuries of religious dissent within Palestine and Syria were at a zenith. Both the Monophysites and Jewish populations wanted to be finally rid of their Byzantine oppressors. The Persians, known for their religious tolerance, came to be regarded as liberators.

The unstable domestic situation in Palestine and Syria was the deciding factor in the Persian takeover of these lands.

"In Syria, the Greeks or Hellenized Syrians, who were far more numerous in the towns, as they lacked the support of the Monophysite agricultural populace, were unable to withstand the

⁷¹Vasiliev, I, 90.

⁷²Speros Vryonis, "Byzantium and Islam, Seven-Seventeenth Century" in Byzantium: Its Internal History and Relations with the Muslim World; Collected Studies (London: Variorum, 1971), pp.212-223.

Persians alone. The fierce encounters of the demes ... the insurrection of the Jews, very numerous in those parts, had utterly debilitated the Province's defences. The people's morale was low and the Monophysites were glad to be quit of the Byzantine yoke."

"In Palestine, the state of affairs was roughly the same despite the Christian population, which was mostly orthodox, being friendly to the Byzantines. But there, too, the internal strife of the Demes and the large Jewish factor made the defense of the region extremely difficult. The regular army was very small and usually the troops were inexperienced having only performed simple police duties."⁷⁴

Even after the Persians had withdrawn in A.D. 629, attempts at religious pacification in this area were mainly ineffectual. The same problems of ethnic and religious dissension were to be the crucial concerns in the later occupation by the Arabs in A.D. 640.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE BUFFER STATES

On the frontiers of both Persia and Byzantium there lived a number of Bedouin tribes. Some attempts were made by the two super powers to organize them into buffer states. The Lakhmids became the clients of the Persians manning the frontiers against raids from the Hedjaz Bedouins. In return for this they received annual subsidies from the Persians. They also had agreements with the Byzantines to secure the roadways and the passes from other marauding Arabs.

The Byzantines had also organized the Ghassanides, a federation of Arabic tribes, for similar purposes. At this time the limitanei had been taken over by the militia.

⁷³Vasiliev, I, 195.

⁷⁴Stratos,

When Persia and Byzantium were at war in the seventh century, the funding for these buffer states was neglected. Consequently, the Ghassanides and the Lakhmids resorted to plundering the frontier they were once paid to protect. With the disappearance of the buffer states, the limitanei could not hold the border against the Arabic raiders. Stratos believes,

"... if only the Persians and still more the Byzantines had managed to maintain the cohesion and force of the Christian Arabs on their borders, they would have protected the frontiers with the greatest of ease against the Hedjaz Bedouins. Then Mohammedism would probably have been a small adventure perhaps with no future in it, just another heresy."⁷⁵

⁷⁵Stratos, II, 313.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Arabic Conquest of Palestine
and the Seige of Caesarea
Maritima (A.D. 629-640)

KAISARIYYAH (CAESAREA MARITIMA)

"Kaisariyyah lies on the coast of the Greek Sea. There is no city more beautiful, nor any better filled with good things; plenty has its well-spring here, and useful products are on every hand. Its lands are excellent, and its fruits delicious; the town also is famous for its buffalo-milk and its white bread. To guard the city is a strong wall, and without it lies the well-populated suburb, which the fortress protects. The drinking-water of the inhabitants is drawn from wells and cisterns. Its great mosque is very beautiful.

Mukaddasi

A.D. 985

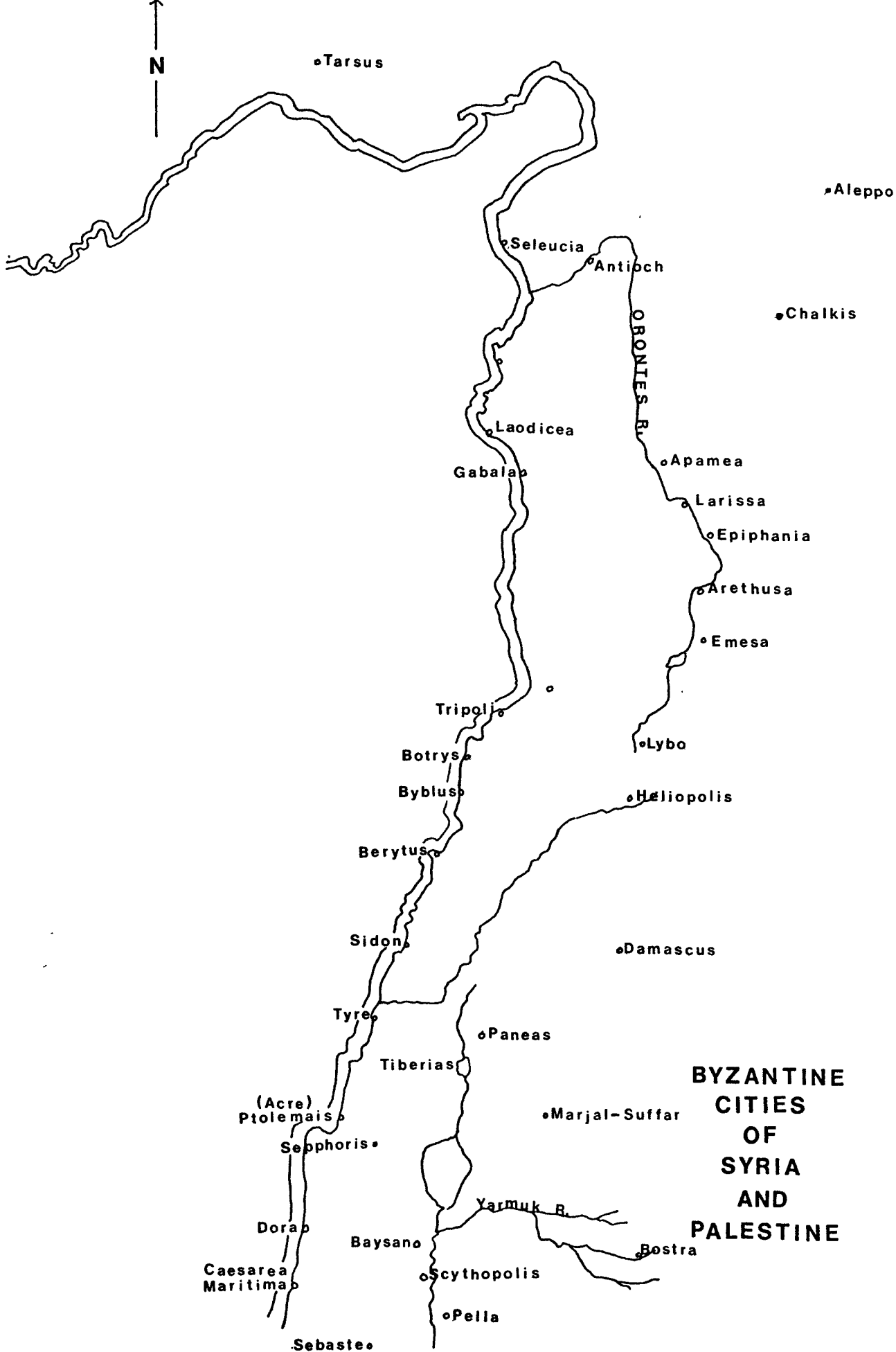
A.H. 375

"Kaisariyyah lies seven leagues distant from Acre. It is a fine city, with running waters, and palm gardens, and orange and citron trees. Its walls are strong, and it has an iron gate. There are fountains that gush out within the city; also a beautiful Friday mosque, so situated that in its court you may sit and enjoy the view of all that is passing on the sea. There is preserved here a vase made of marble, that is like to Chinese porcelain, and it is of a size to contain one hundred Mann's weight of water (or about thirty-four gallons). On Saturday, the last day of the month of Sha'aban (February 29), we set forth again, travelling over the sand, and came shortly to a place where I saw many fig-trees and olives; for all the road here lies through a country of hills and valleys."

Nasir-i-Khusrau

A.D. 1047

A.H. 438



**BYZANTINE
CITIES
OF
SYRIA
AND
PALESTINE**

Fig. 4

THE ARABIC CONQUEST OF PALESTINE

The long war with Persia had exhausted the Byzantine Empire. In twenty-six years of war, some two hundred thousand men had died and untold riches in gold and church treasure had been squandered or destroyed. Scarcely had Heraclios begun to repair the disastrous economic and social effects of this war when a new foe appeared on the horizon - the Arab/Islamic peoples.

Before Mohammed's death in A.D. 632 and even before the consolidation of his control over Arabia, the new religious tide of Islam had swept over the outposts of the Byzantine and Persian Empires.

An expedition guided by Zayd ibn-Harithan, Mohammed's emancipated slave, had undertaken a razzia into Syria in A.D. 631.¹ This had been prompted by the disrespectful and abusive treatment certain Arab emissaries had previously received while visiting the governor of Balka. Upon hearing the news of the impending raid from an informer, the Byzantine governor laid an ambush for the Arabs at Mutah. Here most of the Arabic raiders were slaughtered, but a few escaped with the assistance of the amir, Khalid ibn-Walid.²

A number of Arabic chroniclers insisted that Mohammed, himself, had decided to undertake another razzia into Syria in order to avenge the massacre at Mutah and to head off an upcoming invasion of the Byzantines and the Ghassanides. When he heard that the Byzantines had

¹A razzia or raiding for plunder is a common element of desert culture. Hunger is ever present in a land where subsistence is barely minimal.

abandoned the idea of invasion, he, too, discarded his plans for retaliation. However, Stratos insists that no invasion was ever planned by the Byzantines in this year and that this story is ". . . an attempt by later Muslim chroniclers to glorify Mohammed," by producing "an imaginary threat" for the Arabs to overcome.³

There is some historical evidence that Mohammed did order a military expedition to invade the Byzantine frontier near Bosra (A.D. 632), and that he had placed it under the command of Usumah-ibn-Zayd.⁴ However, he was unable to complete his plans of conquest for he died in June of that year from malaria. To avoid the dissolution of this newly-formed Muslim community, a triumvirate was agreed upon to settle all claimants to leadership. Abu Bakr (A.D. 570-634) assumed the title of the first caliph and was called "Khalifah Rasul Allan" ("successor of the delegate of God"). He wanted to fulfill the wishes and commands of Mohammed. Yet, numerous Muslim leaders cautioned him against committing his entire forces to a distant border war without providing adequate defense for the home front. The troops that had been amassed before Mohammed's death were still awaiting the command to raid the border regions. Abu Bakr finally gave the order to march, but precisely where they went is the subject of much speculation. Some sources say that they might have skirmished with the Ghassanides

² Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, (London: Macmillan, 1964, p.147.

Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Annales, ed. de Goeje (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1879-1901), I, 1016.

³ Stratos, II, 28.

who had refused to co-operate with them in the razzias on the Byzantine and Persian frontiers.⁵ Mirkhond believed that they proceeded to the Gaza region but could find no enemies.⁶

In the meantime, a rebellion (riddah) by several tribes and towns in central Arabia and Yemen had broken out against the Muslim leadership. Abu Bakr had to effectively quell the insurrection before he could consider any future campaigns. According to Stratos, the causes of the defection were, "firstly economic, and second a matter of authority and reputation, and then religious". With the assistance of Khalid ibn-Walid, Abu Bakr was able to suppress the revolts of the false prophets, Tulayha and Musaylim.⁷

At the same time as the Byzantine Empire was experiencing the first razzias of the Arabs, the Persian-Sassanid monarchy had been thrown into anarchy by the death of Kavadh II. Taking advantage of this confusion, Al Muthanna ben Haritha made a raid into Persia. He prevailed upon Abu Bakr to send him reinforcements and received eighteenth thousand men under the command of Khalid to continue the campaign. Prostrated by the wars with Byzantium, the Persians offered only a token resistance to the direct military assault. Muthanna and Khalid were thus at liberty to systematically loot the countryside. They quickly took the cities of Hira and Anbar, extorting gold from

⁴Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Chronique, ed. H. Zotenberg (Paris: Besson et Chantemerle, 1958) III, 357.

⁵J. de Goeje, Memoire sur la conquete de la Syrie, (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1900), p.20.

them in return for their safekeeping. Disturbed by a new upsurge of resistance on the part of the Persians, Muthanna remained in Persian territory to secure the land. Khalid, under the order of Abu Bakr, marched his army south to participate in the upcoming grand razzia into Syria and Palestine.⁸

When interpreting Muslim accounts of this period, certain problems occur. Most of the chroniclers of the early caliphate wrote more than two hundred years after the events. Since there are no contemporary Muslim or Arabic writers extant for this period, it appears that the later chroniclers had to base their accounts on oral tradition. These ninth and tenth century writers tended to describe the raids into Palestine and Syria in terms of a 'holy war', one which was cleverly organized and commanded by competent leaders.⁹ Stratos believes that these forays were in the nature of "grand razzias and nothing more."

"The report that the expedition was prepared with great detail and care, is in my opinion, erroneous. Since it involved plundering raids and nothing more serious, and such minute preparation would seem unnatural and purposeless. As sufficient volunteers were assembled at Medina. He [Abu Bakr] would designate a leader and dispatch the force in the direction of Syria and Palestine."¹⁰

⁶ Muhammad ibn Khavand shah Mir Khavand, Rusat-us-Safa, (Garden of Purity), ed. and tr. F.F. Arbuthnot and E. Rehatsec (London, 1894), p.12-13.

⁷ E.A. Belyaev, Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate (London: Praeger, 1969), pp.121-124.

Stratos, II, p.38-39.

Goeje and Caetani both agree with this explanation.¹¹ But, at this point, it is important to note that there also exist discrepancies in the accounts of the Byzantine and Syriac chroniclers. There appears to be as many different versions of the events as there are authors. This early phase of Muslim history has taken on a mystical aura in time, which is quite in keeping with the mythologizing that went on around Mohammed after his death.

When these primary sources are consulted, the details concerning this first expedition are conflicting. There was some confusion by all of them as to who the leader was of this first razzia. It was said that the first contingent under Yazid ibn-abi-Sufyan followed the Tebuk-Maan-Amman road and then the Roman road from Damascus to Bosra. Two other contingents under Amir ibn-al-As and Shurahbil ibn-Hasanah took the route leading to Petra and then west to the Gaza region, where they were to join up with the forces of Khalid, who was marching from Persia.¹² According to Baladhuri and Tabari, a skirmish between the Byzantines and the Arabs occurred near Dathin (Dathina).¹³ Another account records that an earlier battle had taken place at

⁸ Ahmad ibn-Jabir al-Baladhuri, The Origins of the Islamic State, tr. Philip Hitti, Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, vol. LXVIII, no. 163 (Columbia University), (London: Longmans, Green, 1916), pp.387-401.

⁹ Baladhuri, p.165.
Theophanes, p.336.
Michael le Syrian II, 413.

¹⁰ Stratos, II, pp.46-47.

¹¹ Leone Caetani, Annali dell' Islam (Rome, 1907), II, 1168.

Wadi al-Arabah in which most of the Byzantines were trapped and then slaughtered.¹⁴ Thus, the skirmish at Dathin was then in the nature of a final cleanup operation on the part of the Arabs.

The Arabs then raided the southern part of Palestine. Only the garrison towns and the fortified cities were able to defend themselves. A tradition exists from this time that Caesarea Maritima was put under seige.¹⁵ Stratos believes that they merely raided into Palestine and did not enter the coastal area.¹⁶

On receiving the news of this disastrous engagement, Heraclios, who had stationed himself at Emesa (Homs, Hims), commissioned his brother, Theodore, to take command of a newly mobilized army.¹⁷ Intending to secure the safety of Damascus, the Byzantines pitched camp at the strategic site of Djillik, overlooking the city.¹⁸ Reconnaissance of the area proved futile, for the Arabs were raiding in random and unplanned fashion. For reasons unknown, the Byzantines abandoned this position and headed south-west. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr

¹²Stratos, II, 48-49.

¹³Baladhuri, pp. 167-168.

¹⁴Gregory Abul Faradj Bar Hebraeus, The Chronography, ed. and tr. E. Wallis Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p.93. The patricius Sergius set out from Caesarea Maritima with a force of five thousand to secure the district around Wadi al-Arabah. However, the Arabs outnumbered the Byzantines three to one. Sergius died or was captured during the battle.

¹⁵C.H. Becker, "The Expansion of the Saracens," in Cambridge Medieval History, II, 340.

¹⁶Stratos, II, 50.
Caetani, II, 1137.

continued to send reinforcements to Palestine. When the escalation of troops in this area had reached a satisfactory level, he ordered Khalid to take over the co-ordination of the razzia.¹⁹ Khalid had to make a forced march from Persia to Syria in order to assume this new command. He apparently did so in record time and with much hardship, although there is some question as to what date he departed and what route he took. The direction of his advance was such that he outflanked the Byzantines in Palestine to the north.

For three months the two armies engaged in skirmishing actions. Driving the Byzantines south, the Arabs attempted to run them into the forces of 'As and Shurahbil. A major battle was fought at Adjnadayn (A.D. 634) in which the Byzantines again lost.²⁰ Details as to the precise location, the number of soldiers and the name of the Arab leader are unclear. However, the Byzantines were able to regroup behind the marshes of Bay San.²¹ Meanwhile, the Arabs had a free hand in the disputed area and with the first flush of victory, proceeded to loot and destroy southern Palestine. Again, most of the better fortified cities escaped, but the smaller villages quickly surrendered and agreed to pay poll taxes to the Arabs.²²

¹⁷Lammens, I, 53.

¹⁸Djillik, also identified with Kiswe, or a peak of Shohoura. See also Michael the Syrian II, 418 and Bar Hebraeus, p.230.

¹⁹Baladhuri, pp.169-170.

²⁰ Adjnadayn exact location is unknown, but there is still much historical quibbling about its position.

²¹The site is near Scythopolis (Beit Shean).

The imperial forces, reinforced by the east Jordanian garrisons, engaged the Arabs at Fihl. This battle was heavily contested and both sides experienced great losses. As Khalid moved north up the Jordan Valley he took the city of Bosra.²³ He then directed his forces to cross the Yarmuk (Heiromyax) River and headed for Damascus. Meanwhile, at Mardjal-Suffar, another theatre of action saw the defeat of the Byzantines for a third time.

THE CONQUEST OF DAMASCUS

Khalid, by then, had drawn up his ranks and encircled Damascus. He did not lay seige to the city in the traditional manner but merely restrained the movements of the populace outside its limits.²⁵ There is some historical opinion that the Arabs "were totally ignorant of the techniques of seige warfare and possessed no seige engines."²⁶ To prevent reinforcements from arriving from Emesa, the Arabs built a fortress at Berze to control the main road north. Heraclios had ordered a detachment of Byzantine cavalry to relieve the garrison at Damascus but they were routed at Bayt Lihya. The Arabs then pursued the stragglers of this battle to Emesa and in turn blockaded the city.²⁷

²²Generally, those 'people of the book', i.e. Jews were permitted to practise their own religion if they paid for it.

²³Agapius, p.209.
Bar Hebraeus, p.93.
Michael le Syrian, II, 417.

²⁴The reports of the Battle of Mardjal-Suffar in the primary sources are very confusing. See Stratos II, pp.206-208.

²⁵Baladhuri, pp.186-193.
Also known to be in the Chronicle of 1234, pp.192-194.

However, an imperial army, under the command of Vaanes, was able to halt the advance of the Arabs north and secure Emesa. He then marched south to the Bardenesius River but quickly retreated when he realized that this position was untenable. When the inhabitants of Damascus realized that assistance was not forthcoming, they arranged for a treaty of capitulation with the Arabs. The terms of the surrender provided for the safe conduct of the departing garrison and safety of the city. In return, the Arabs received an annual payment of one hundred thousand dinars, which was to be collected in the form of a poll tax.²⁸

THE BYZANTINES ABANDON PALESTINE AND SYRIA

Khalid then marched north and forced Heliopolis (Baalbek) and Emesa to surrender under similar terms. Tabari relates that the Arabs then set up winter quarters near Damascus.²⁹ Meanwhile, Heraclios feverishly attempted to conscript a new army. Both mercenaries and raw recruits, numbering forty thousand, were placed under the command of Vaanes and Sacellarius Theodore (Trithurius). With such a great army advancing on them, the Arabs quickly pulled out of Damascus and Emesa and fled south.³⁰

²⁶Stratos II, 59.

²⁷Theophanes, p.337.
Goeje, p.90.

²⁸Stratos, II, 59-62.

²⁹Baladhuri, pp.198-201.
Tabari, Chronique III, 361-364.

³⁰Bury, II, 264-267.

"Confronted with a numerically superior enemy, the strategy of Khalid was to use delaying tactics to gain time in order to assemble all the Arab forces available and to receive additional reinforcements. But he also wished to be nearer the desert country wherein he would have tremendous advantages. The Byzantine army had no camels and was burdened by heavy weaponry less suitable for battle in the areas bordering on desert country. In the event of an unfavourable turn of the battle operations, it would be easier for him to save his forces through the desert in which the Arabs felt at home."³¹

The two armies met at the Battle of Yarmuk where they fought it out over a period of two months. For the Byzantines, this was the deciding battle which forced their retreat from the provinces. By now, Heraclios realized that Palestine and Syria were lost to the empire. Accompanied by many Syrians, who had abandoned their homes, he left Antioch and returned in defeat to Constantinople.³²

In their pursuit of the retreating Byzantine army, the Arabs again beseiged Damascus. After its surrender, the leaders of the various Arab contingents decided on a policy for conquering the remaining Byzantine cities and territory. In quick succession, Baalbek, Emesa, Chalkis (Qinnersin), Aleppo, Hama (Epiphania), Shaizar (Larissa) and Antioch fell to the invaders. According to Caetani and Stratos, Syria was occupied from A.D. 637 to A.D. 638. Most of the fortified places were taken only after long seiges or blockades.³³

³¹Stratos II, 67

³²Bury, II, 266

³³Caetani, III, 817
Stratos, II, 76

Theophanes and Baladhuri both relate that the imperial forces attempted to reoccupy Syria, regaining temporarily the cities of Antioch, Aleppo, and Chalkis. However, they were unable to hold them, and as a consequence of their reoccupation by the Arabs, the cities had imposed on them stronger garrisons and more taxation.³⁴

According to tradition, Shurahbil occupied Tiberias, Scythopolis (Baizan), Acre, Tyre, Sephoris (Saffuriyeh), Sidon, Jarash (Geraza) and all the neighbouring region, that was later to comprise the military djund of Jordan under the Abbaysids.³⁵ Amr took Neapolis, Lydda, Emmaus (Amwas), Eleftheropolis (Bayt Djibrin), Joppa, and Sebasteia.³⁶ Stratos states that Caesarea Maritima, Ascalon, and Gaza were, "the principal supply route[s] of Palestine."³⁷ The Arabs had to take these coastal towns in order to sever all communication and supply routes to the beleaguered cities of the interior.

THE FALL OF CAESAREA MARITIMA

Traditions concerning the fall of Caesarea Maritima are well documented but are often conflicting in their claim to historical fact. According to Baladhuri, the city was first put under blockade and then attempts were made to take it by direct assault by Amr ibn-asi in A.D. 634. However, the city was not taken immediately for Amr ordered most of his force to assist the other Arab contingents in

³⁴Theophanes, p.339
Baladhuri, p.228

³⁵Guy Le Strange, Palestine under the Moslems (1890; rpt. Beirut: Khayats, 1965), pp.411-12, 328-334, 342-45, 525, 345-48, 462.
Goeje, p.133

the seige of Jerusalem (A.D. 637-638). After Jerusalem had negotiated a treaty of capitulation, Amr resumed the blockade of Caesarea.³⁸

Wakidi relates that it was his son, Abdullah and the newly appointed governor of Palestine, Yazid ibn-abi-Sufyan, who finally took the city.³⁹ By far the majority of sources relate that it was Mu'awiyah, the brother of Yazid who succeeded in taking the city.

There is some confusion in all renditions of the event as to the actual numbers and to names of the contestants in this seige. Tabari records that five thousand Arabs confronted one hundred and fifty thousand Byzantines, under the command of Fiqar outside the walls of the city. This battle resulted in the loss of eighty thousand men for the Byzantines.⁴⁰ Baladhuri recounts similar exaggerated figures for combatants but provides additional information on the taking of the city by treachery.

"A Jew named Yusuf came to the Moslems at night and pointed out to them a road through a tunnel the water in which would reach a man's waist; in consideration for which information, safety was guaranteed him and his relatives. Mu'awiyah

³⁶ Stratos, II, 78.

³⁷ Stratos, II, 77.

³⁸ Baladhuri, pp.216-217.

³⁹ Baladhuri, p.216.

⁴⁰ Tabari, III, 409-410. The governor of the city was probably Sakellarius not Fiqar at this time. See Stratos II, 210.

⁴¹ Baladhuri, pp.217-218.

⁴² Bar Hebraeus, p.97.
Michael le Syrian, II, 430.

sanctioned the conditions (made to Yusuf) and the Moslems entered the city by night, calling 'Allah is great'. The Greeks [Byzantines] seeking to flee through the tunnel found it occupied by Moslems. The Moslems opened the city gate and Mu'awiyah and his men went in."⁴¹

Most of the Syriac sources substantiate Arabic accounts of the siege but tend to use more realistic figures in regards to the number of combatants. However, Bar Hebraeus recounts the siege of the city in a slightly different version.

"At this time Mu'awiyah, the captain of the host of the Arabs, came and encamped against Caesarea of Palestine, and he invested it by sea and by land. And from the beginning of the First Kanon (December) to Iyar (May) he attacked it fiercely. And although seventy-two engines of war were hurling stones at its walls, no breach was made in it. Then the Arabs dug a hole under or, in the wall and some of them entered, and others scaled the wall by means of ladders. And the Arabs remained three days on the wall and were unable to descend into the city. Then, when the Arabs became masters of the city, seven thousand Rhomaye [Byzantines] who were guarding the city escaped in boats. And Mu'awiyah captured the riches that were in it, and he laid the inhabitants thereof under tribute."⁴²

Edward Gibbon narrates that Caesarea Maritima was defended by Constantine, the son of Heraclius, who fled by ship when he realized his position was untenable.⁴³

Dating of the fall of the city has proven difficult since the primary sources disagree. They are listed as follows:

Agapius - A.D. 641 ('the year Heraclius died')
 Elie Bar Sinaya - A.D. 640 (the year 951)
 Anonymous Chronicle of 1234 - A.D. 639 (the year 950)
 Yakubi - A.D. 639 (the 18th year of the Hegira)
 Wakidi - A.D. 640 (the 19th year of the Hegira)
 Ibn-Ishak - A.D. 641 (the 20th year of the Hegira)
 Eutychius - A.D. 640-641 ('the seventh year of the Caliph Umar')⁴⁴

⁴³ Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (New York: A.L. Burt, 1845), IV, 441.

Modern scholars such as Caetani and Gibbon claim the year is A.D. 641 while others like, Hitti and Lammens believe the year for the fall of Caesarea Maritima is A.D. 640.

With the fall of Gaza (A.D. 640), Ascalon (A.D. 644), and Tripoli (A.D. 647) all of Palestine and Syria was under the control of the Arabs.

⁴⁴Most of the information on dating of the fall of Caesarea Maritima may be found in the footnotes of Stratos, II, 80-81.

CHAPTER FIVE

An Analysis of the Stratigraphical Data as it
Pertains to the Main Byzantine, Final Byzantine
And Byzantine-Arabic Phases of Caesarea Maritima

AN ANALYSIS OF THE STRATIGRAPHICAL DATA FROM
THE BYZANTINE TO THE BYZANTINE-ARAB PHASE

The first concern of this chapter is the presentation of the stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima, especially in relation to the three phases, Main Byzantine, Final Byzantine, and Byzantine/Arab, excavated in Field B. The second is to demonstrate the manner in which the stratigraphic evidence corresponds to the known historical accounts of the city.

To facilitate the understanding of the stratigraphic phases in question, it is necessary to place them in the context of the overall stratigraphy. A clear chronological perspective of the phasing of the site can be seen in APPENDIX 1.¹ In brief, the sequence is as follows:

General Phase

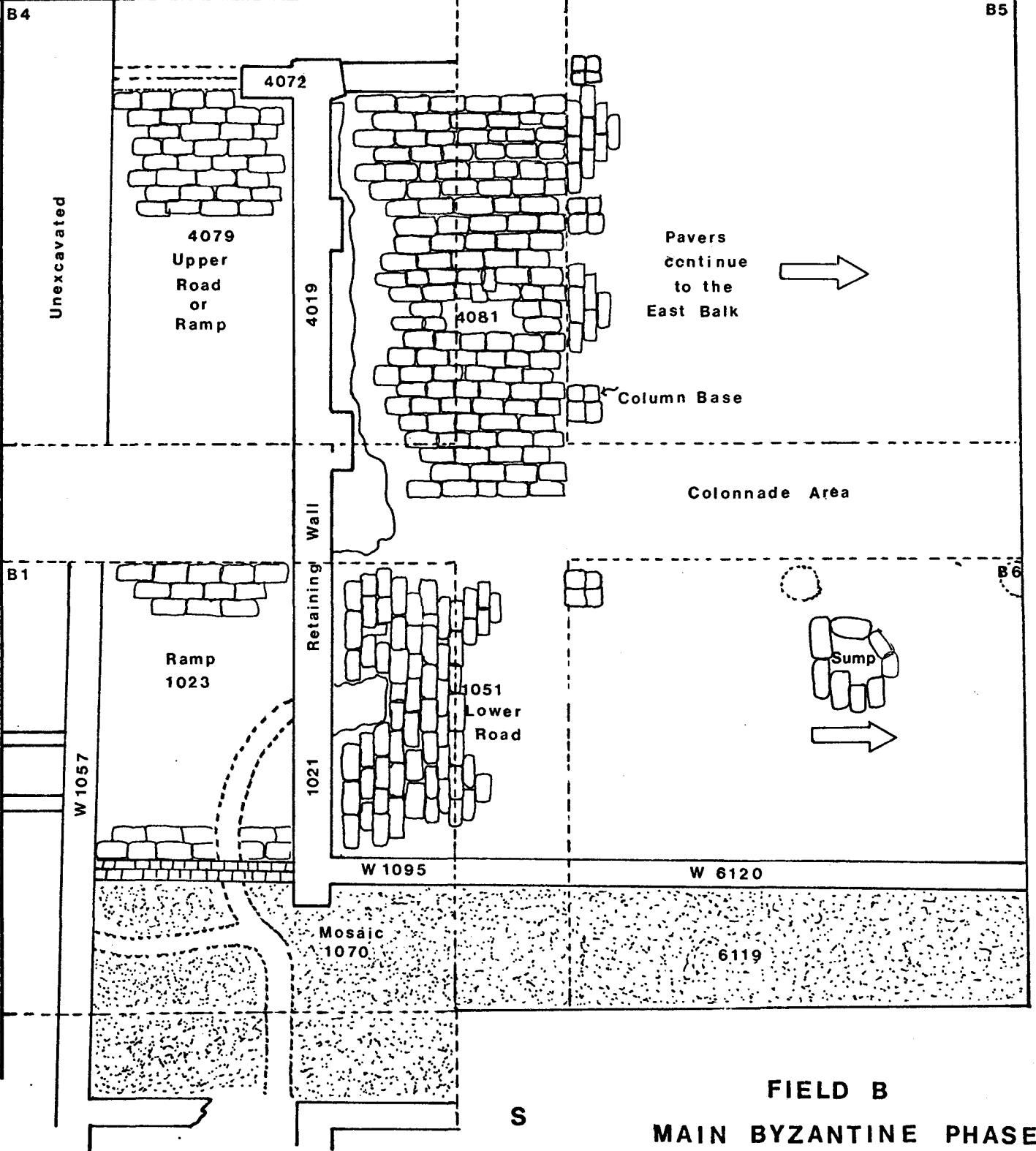
1	Modern
11	Crusader (A.D. 1200-1300)
111	Arab (A.D. 640-1200) - 3 sub-phases
IV	Byzantine/Arab (A.D. 640)
V	Final Byzantine (A.D. 614-640)
VI	Main Byzantine (A.D. 330-614) - possibly 2 sub-phases
VII	Roman (10 B.C.-A.D. 330 - possibly 3 sub-phases)

As Field B commands the interest of the writer, particular reference is made to the stratigraphy of this field. Some attention will also be given to Fields C, A, and H.

¹Lawrence E. Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima", in The Festschrift for Kathleen Kenyon, in press, fig.7

N

East - West Road



FIELD B
MAIN BYZANTINE PHASE
 NORTHERN SECTION

Fig. 5

FIELD B (GENERAL)

Upon excavation, Field B appears to be a southern continuation of Yeivin's public promenade (see figure 1).² It was apparently designed as a civic showplace for it possessed a colonnade, fine tessellated floors and statues as decoration. On its northern edge, an east-west road passes its two entrances. A stone pier separates the two roads that lead into the public area. The road on the west side of the pier is an elevated roadway or a gently sloping ramp which leads to a tessellated court or piazza on an upper level. The road on the east side of the pier runs parallel to the ramp but quickly terminates or abutts at a retaining wall for the second level. On its eastern side is situated a colonnade, which possibly provides access to another public square or market place. On the south side of the upper level piazza are the remains of a number of rooms or shops.

THE MAIN BYZANTINE PHASE IN FIELD B

The northern sector of Field B reveals the remains of two roads, a colonnade and an upper level court area in the Main Byzantine phase (fig.5). The upper road or ramp (L.4079/1023) is paved with dressed stones, laid out in an east-west direction in header fashion. A large number of flat marble slabs may indicate that the ramp or part of the neighbouring colonnade was covered in a marble sheathing similar to that of Yeivin's Byzantine street to the north. The ramp is partially bounded on its west side by wall (L.1057) and on its east

²S. Yeivin, "Excavations at Caesarea Maritima". Archaeology, 8 (1955), 122-129.

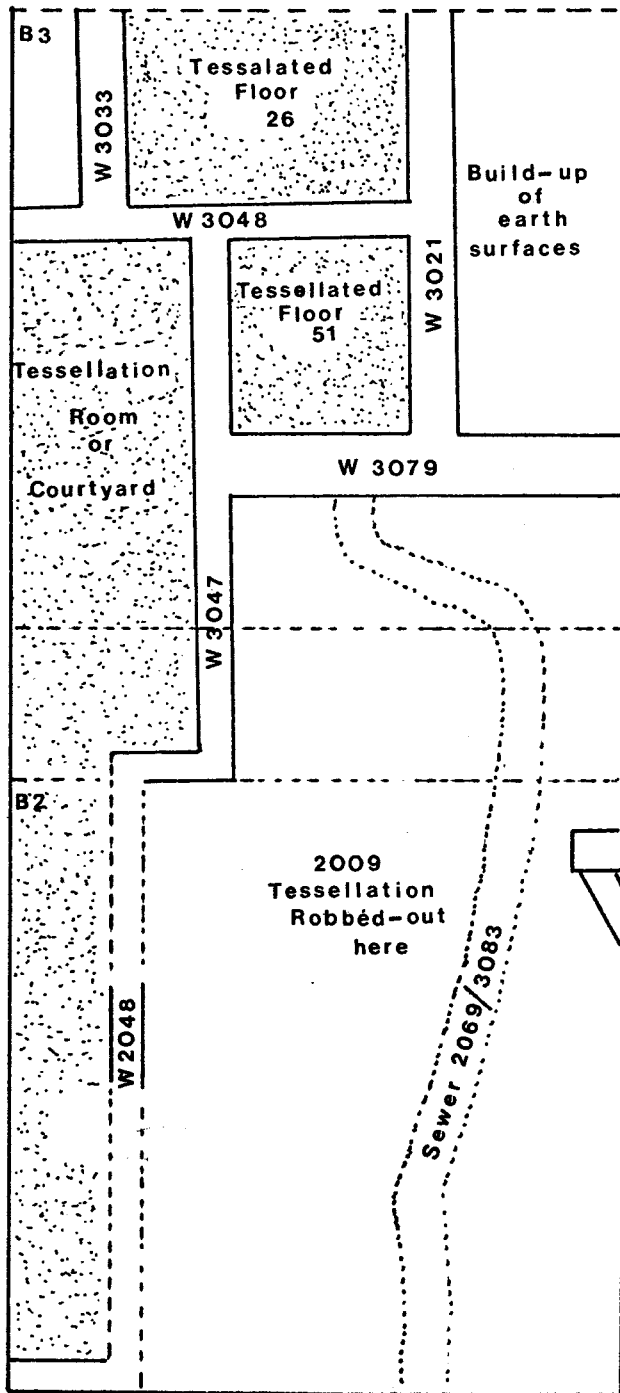
side, by the retaining wall (L.4019/1021). The far northwestern corner of this sector remains unexcavated, but it can be safely assumed that the wall (L.1057) continues into this area. The retaining wall alongside the ramp (L.4019/1021) exhibits a number of niches, and deep soil depressions along its borders. The removal of a number of pavers in its vicinity led to the speculation that the retaining wall of the ramp was utilized as a display area for statues. This is verified later in a destruction phase in which the remains of two statues were uncovered.

The second road or lower road (L.4081/1051) was constructed on a lower level running parallel to the ramp. It abutts wall (L.1095/6120). The pavers in the first section of the lower road are laid out in an east-west direction (L.4081) and in the next section (L.1051) are laid out in a north-south direction. Thus, the traffic would enter the lower level, continue south, and then turn east to enter a colonnaded area.

At the top of the ramp there is a patterned tessellated surface (L.1070/6119), similar in design to that at the foot of the stairway in Yeivin's excavation.³ This mosaic is four metres in width and extends into the east balk, so its limits are unknown. It is possibly part of a court or piazza and may have channelled traffic to another part of the city. Plaster fragments found on the face of wall L.1095 and a large piece of worked marble may indicate the presence of a fountain in this area.

³Yeivin, p. 126

N



FIELD B
MAIN BYZANTINE PHASE

SOUTHERN SECTION

Fig. 6

In the northern section there is a well preserved drainage system under the pavers, which was originally built in Byzantine times but underwent a number of later repairs. In addition, a number of sumps, manholes, and conduits are present.

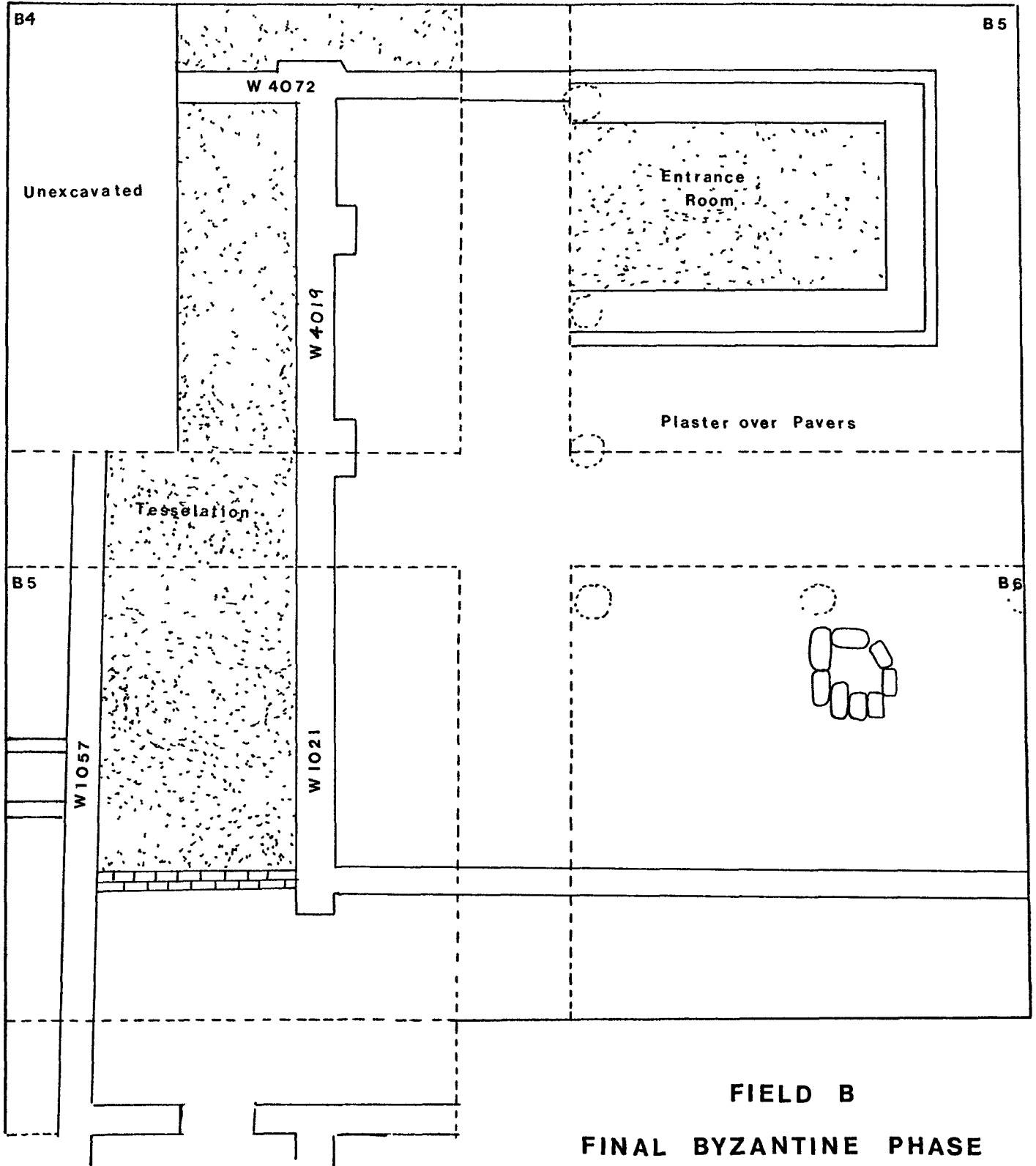
An examination of the surfaces below the Byzantine pavers in the northern section produced the following results:

"Three deep probes in Field B reached levels which produced pure Roman pottery. The two southernmost of these penetrated into sand underlying the earliest Byzantine surfaces, and Roman sherds were found in this sand to a depth of 1.5 to 2.0 metres. (Areas B1 and 6). The northern probe alone indicated the presence of Roman structures (Area B5). Beneath the Byzantine pavement were seventeen hard-packed layers, closely contiguous with one another. They were probably foundations for earlier Byzantine surfaces, now destroyed. Below them was 1.20 metres of packed fill, resting on a finely-made and extremely hard plaster surface. This plaster was founded on several layers of large field stones impacted in cement. The pottery in the field above the plaster and among the field stones of the foundation was Roman in date. This northern portion of Field B, is, thus, the only place within the Fields presently under excavation where undisturbed Roman structures appear to be preserved."⁴

The southern sector of Field B contains a number of rooms in which at least two-thirds of the total floor space is tessellated in the Main Byzantine Phase (fig.6). Originally Byzantine walls divided these rooms, for some of their lower courses were constructed in the typical Byzantine fashion of pyramidal steps (L.3079, 3047, 3021, 3033, 3048). One of the mosaic floors (L.2009), which was later robbed out, was constructed around an elaborate drainage system. The entire floor had been plastered and set with large tesserae, probably indicating an open area or courtyard, designed to handle water. The sewer (L.3083/2069)

⁴Lawrence E. Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima", pp.6-7.

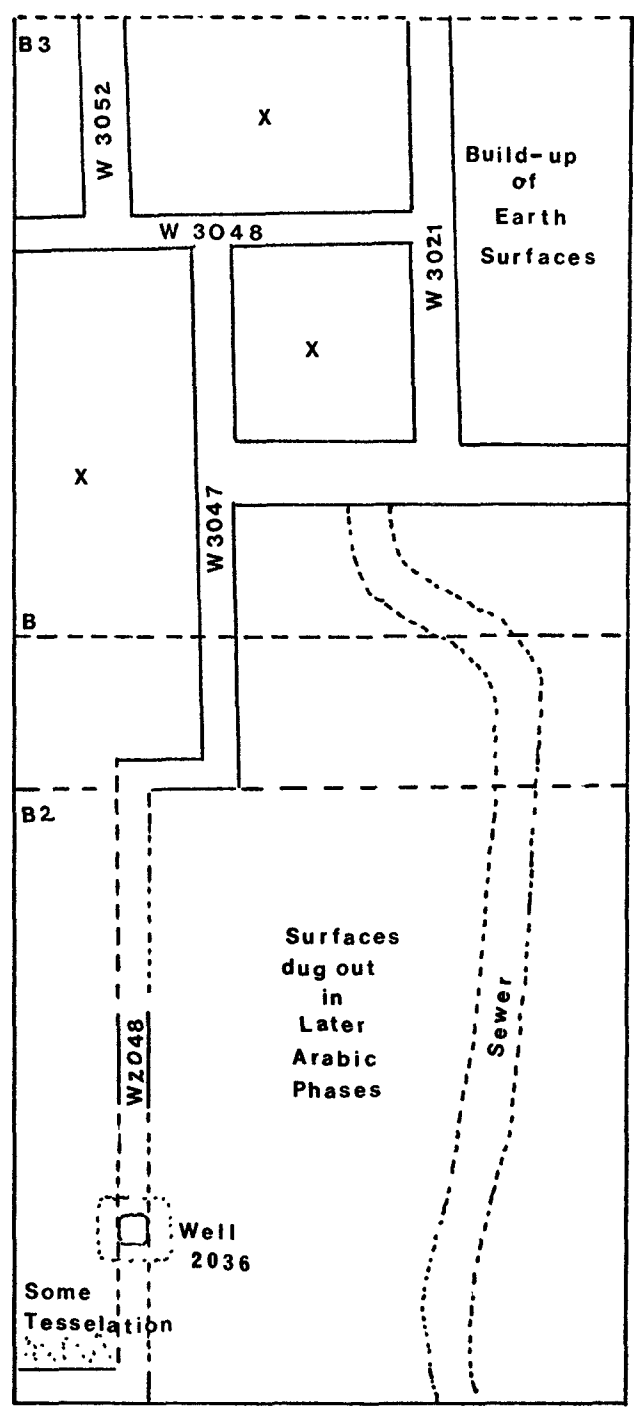
N



FIELD B
FINAL BYZANTINE PHASE
NORTHERN SECTION

Fig. 7

N



X=Dug-out by later phase

FIELD B
FINAL BYZANTINE PHASE
Southern Section

(L.3089/2069) and its auxilliary structures, the cistern and manhole, were probably partially constructed in Byzantine times but underwent so many repairs in a later Arabic phase that they are placed here in phasing. It is a possibility that this sewer system was constructed in Arabic times due to the fact that it had to by-pass an earlier Byzantine wall which it could not breach.

FINAL BYZANTINE PHASE IN FIELD B

A veneer of destruction debris is next evident over the entire Main Byzantine Phase of Field B. This can be easily seen in the east balk drawing (APPENDIX 2,3,4,5). Apparently, this area of the city suffered some damage, but, had recovered quickly to effect some repairs. There is no dramatic change in the layout or the floor plans of the southern sector, for the rooms in this area maintain the same orientation as the phase before (fig.8). Instead, there is a noticeable deterioration in the structure of the walls and the materials used to repair them. Often it was a matter of patchwork repairs on certain segments of the walls. The upper road or ramp was resurfaced with course tessellation and the lower road was covered with a thick plaster during this phase.

All this poor workmanship is evidence for a slippage of Byzantine control of the city. For, as it was noticed above, the Byzantines took great pride in the building and maintaining of provincial cities as showcases of their civilization. From the destruction debris and the shoddy repairs which are present in all

the fields so far excavated, it can be assumed that this phase belongs to the Final Byzantine Phase. The coins and pottery from these strata are still Late Byzantine in dating, providing further confirmation.

On this point of dating, the historical sources are also clear. There had been no seige or takeover of the city in Roman times for Caesarea Maritima was secured by Roman legions as the capital of the province and the seat of the Roman governors.⁵ Also, the primary sources present no evidence to the contrary of any cataclysmatic destruction of the city until the Persian takeover in A.D. 614.⁶ When the Persians abandoned Caesarea Maritima in A.D. 629, the Byzantines were left with another Palestinian city that had been neglected in its unkeep during its occupation. However, the city had not been totally destroyed nor had it experienced major damage during the Persian takeover. Like other cities in Palestine and Syria, it had been taken with a minimal amount of effort. Either the Byzantine garrison pleaded for a truce and left upon the arrival of the Persian forces or an informer had shown the Persians a secret way into the city. Both methods of taking a city were commonplace at this time. However, Caesarea Maritima did not distinguish itself in a long seige for the early chroniclers would not have failed to mention this fact.

Also, the Persians were interested in recreating the Achmenaid empire, not merely in ravaging the land (although this too occurred to

⁵Although the city had experienced Jewish rebellions, i.e., Bar Kochba, it was often saved by the proximity of Roman garrisons.

⁶There is a probability that the city occasionally suffered from the effects of earthquake, but this occurred only in limited areas.

some degree). The control of a great number of new cities meant increased revenues. They would not have destroyed these cities realizing their economic potential. Lammens notes that when Sahrbaraz completed the occupation of the captured territories, he organized their administration into satrapies.⁷ Again, there are scattered references to taxes collected by the Persians during their occupation of Syria and Palestine.⁸ However, it is Stratos who points out the scarcity of information regarding the period of Persian occupation:

"Throughout this whole occupation period we have little information about the state of the populace, their life and conduct under the Persians. But there is equally no information about the Persian's behaviour in these areas."⁹

The city's position in the Persian occupation was possibly one of a garrison town held for its strategic location on the sea. The Persians did not refurbish the city after its capture since the continuous wars with the Byzantines had also exhausted their treasury. Thus, it can be inferred that Persian repairs to the city would be minimal and that any improvements would be in the area of fortification. When Heraclios regained control of the city in A.D. 629, there was not enough money to rebuild or repair many of the occupied cities.¹⁰ Twenty-four years of continuous war had drained the treasury of funds. Instead of rebuilding the cities, Heraclios' first policy was to secure

⁷H. Lammens, La Syrie (Beirut, 1921), 1, 21

⁸Eutychios, Patriarch of Constantinople, "Chronicle" in Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca V, 111, 1089.

⁹Stratos, 1, 283-4.

¹⁰The exception to this was the rebuilding of Jerusalem, consult chapter three for details.

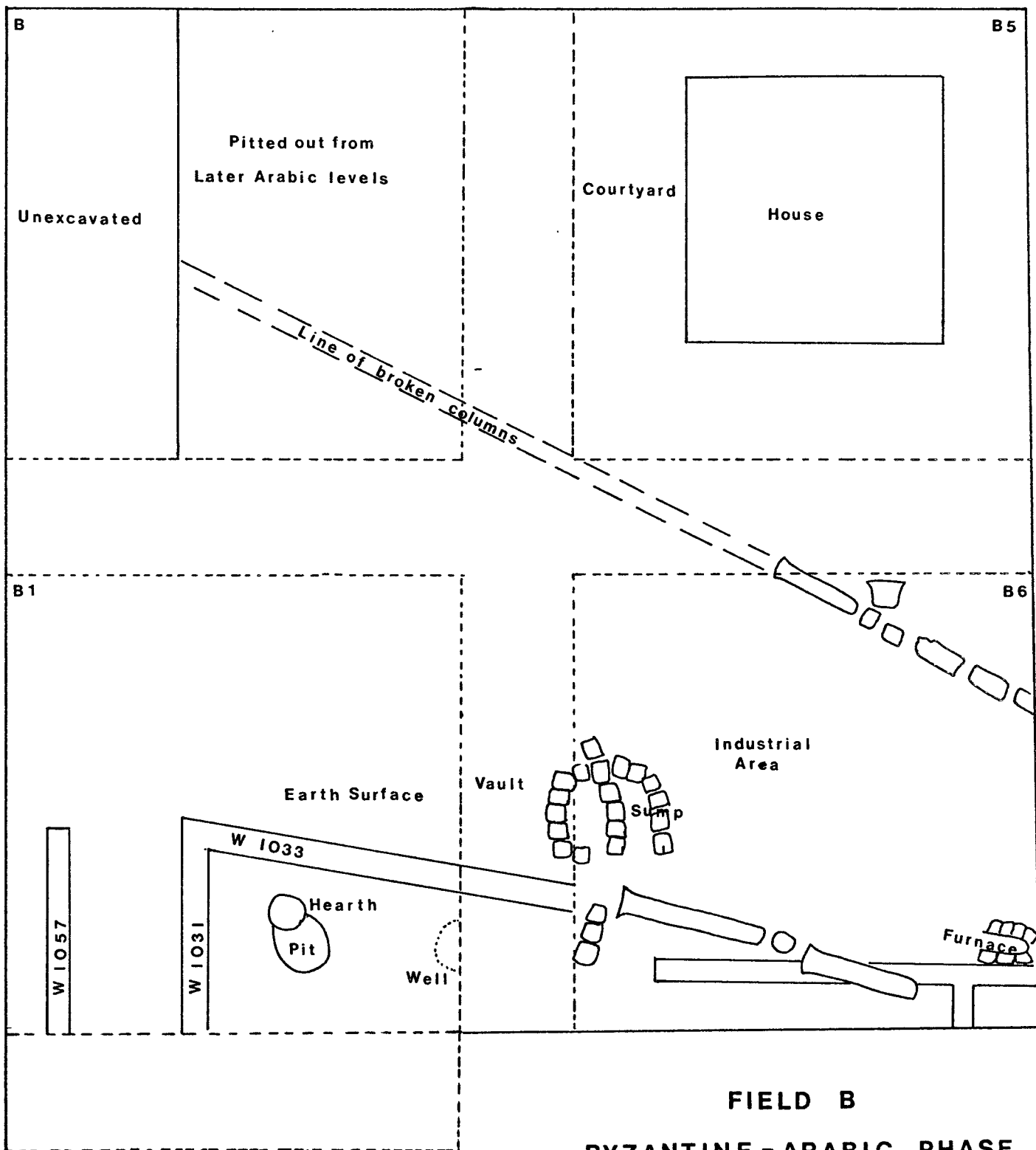
the occupied area. He did this by establishing a strong military administration in a designated theme and placed them under the command of a strategus. In this case, Caesarea Maritima and many other cities possibly assumed the complete burden of rebuilding through taxation.

The best evidence for the reconstruction in the Final Byzantine Phase in Field B occurs in a small building in the northern sector (fig.7). Just inside the entranceway leading to the lower road, this building had been erected on a platform resting over destruction debris. It had a tessellated floor and a connecting bench on the interior of three of its walls.

THE BYZANTINE/ARAB PHASE IN FIELD B

However, peace in Palestine and Syria lasted only eleven years, as a new enemy appeared to challenge the Byzantines for its possession. Evidence for the Arabic destruction can be readily seen in the stratigraphic bulk sections (APPENDIX 2,3,4,5). The Final Byzantine Phase of the city is overlaid with 0.75 to 1.00 metres of raw destruction debris. In Field B this is identified by a number of bright red/yellow ashy layers. This mottled-looking strata indicates that the area was fired, for, these strata are the remains of blackened timbers, crumbled plaster and partly decomposed roof tiles. The destruction of the city was complete. In Field B, the columns in the colonnade were pulled down, the statues dismembered and cast aside, and most of the upper courses of the Byzantine walls disappeared in the city. In Field B the silt and the fill had covered most of the area up to the level of the ramp and mosaic, so that the lower courtyard was obliterated from view.

N



FIELD B
BYZANTINE - ARABIC PHASE
 NORTHERN SECTION

Fig. 8

After the Arabic destruction of the city, some of its previous inhabitants may have returned for there is evidence of small crude dwellings occurring on isolated areas of the site. In Field B, the ramp (L. 1023) and the tessellated piazza area (L.1070) were picked as a place on which a house or a portion of a large dwelling was constructed (fig. 9). It contained a hearth, a shallow stone-lined pit and a well. Some walls were repaired but this was merely a feeble attempt to patch the broken stone face with miscellaneous pieces of tesserae and mud. Pottery from this strata is predominantly Late Byzantine in typology.

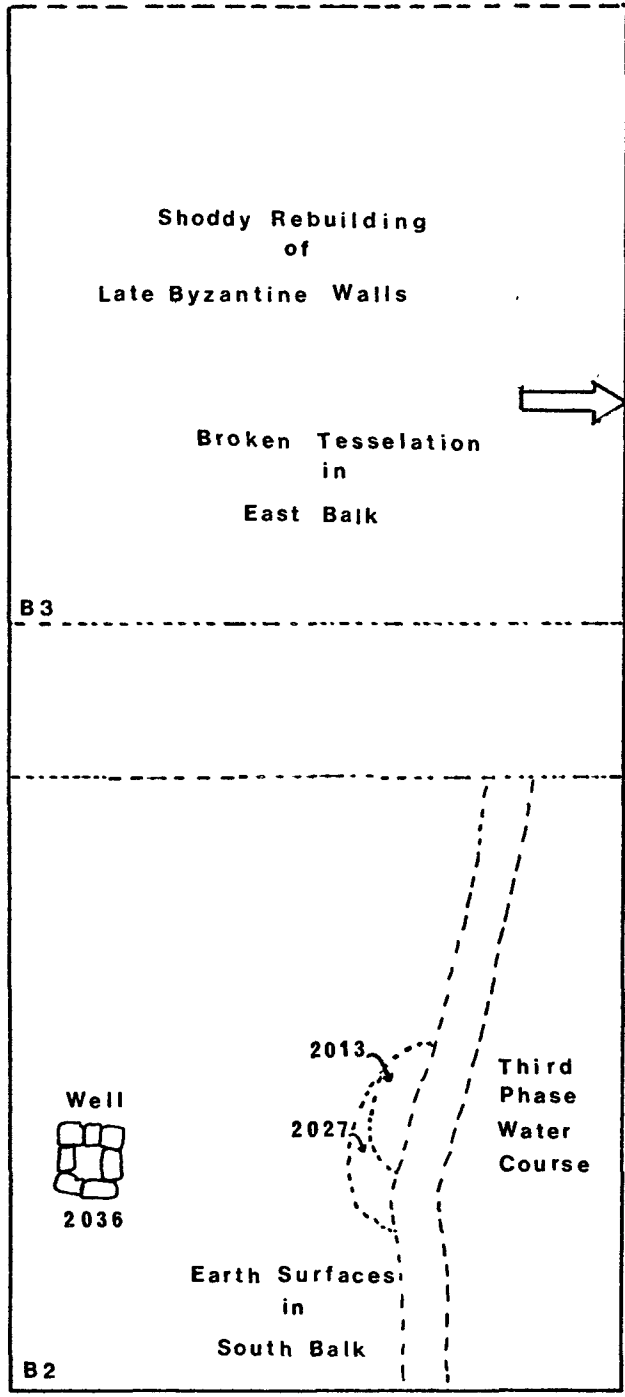
Even before the conquest of Syria and Palestine by the Arabs, small nomadic groups had wandered into these areas to settle on the outskirts of cities or to raid the weaker border towns. The lure of good lands and the booty from the Byzantine provincial towns had been their chief motivation. However, their movements to a certain extent had been restricted due to the presence of the limitan ei. With the disappearance of the garrisons and the military threat of Byzantine Empire in the middle of the seventh century, these migratory peoples moved in to occupy the abandoned cities and fertile areas. In regards to Caesarea Maritima they were very fortunate.

"The Arab occupation in Field B began as an exploitation of the destroyed Byzantine city. The new comers were living on top of a veritable mine of building material which if it could not be used directly, could be fired to lime."¹¹

The Romans and the Byzantines had invested considerable time and money in constructing and maintaining the city. The marble from the facing

¹¹Lawrence E. Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima", p.9

N



FIELD B
BYZANTINE - ARABIC PHASE
 Southern Section

of the buildings and the columns provided a valuable economic resource which could be easily utilized. Much of the stone and many of the columns were exported to build Jaffa and Acre.

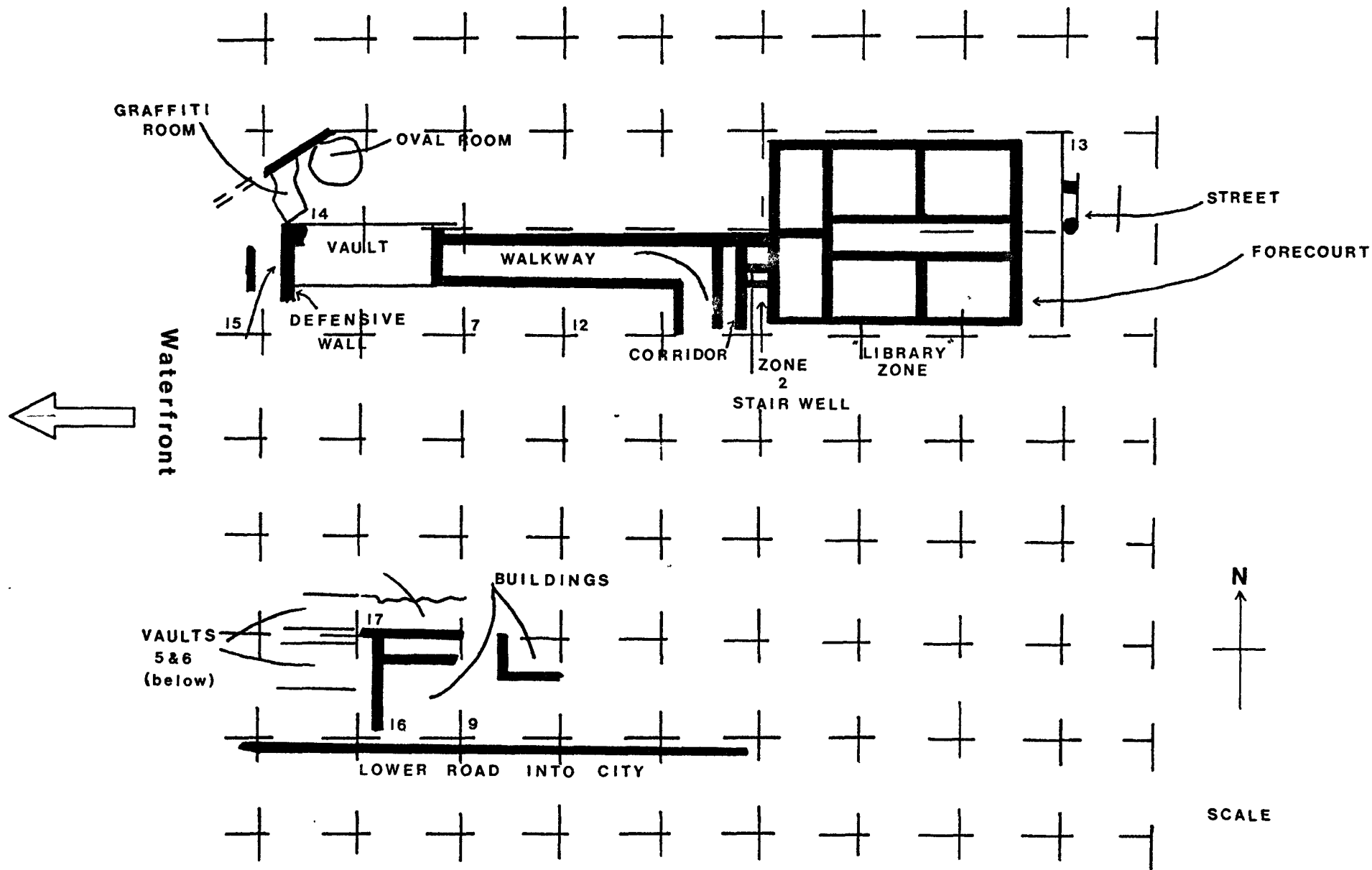
The house on the ramp continued in use (fig.9), however, and a transient surface (L.1060) replaced the tessellated floor (L.1070). The fact that a hearth and a pit are together in this one room may indicate that this was a courtyard, and that there is another structure close by. They also made use of the lower courses of a Byzantine wall (L.1057) by rebuilding the walls of mud and stone. The crudeness of the construction of the house generally reflects the poor quality of life at this time. A new wall (L.1031) was also constructed upon the ramp and served as part of the entrance to the house. Nearby were a number of middens, which had been laid out west to east through wind and water action.

In the area of the small rooms or shops in the southern sector, the Arabs had removed most of the fill down to some of the tessellated surfaces to make use of them (fig.10). The sewer (L.2069/3083) possibly belongs to a later Arabic phase, but its careful construction may date it to a Byzantine phase. It had been made of three courses of worked or reused stone and covered with capstones that had been plastered. In repairing the drainage system, the Arabs had robbed out one of the mosaic floors (L.2009). Pottery taken from above this floor is dated Roman and Byzantine; that recovered from a sealed locus below ranges in time from Roman to Early Arab. The Arabs had made use of the Byzantine pottery to reline the channel in the sewer. At this time a well (L.2036)

was in use. It exhibits well-dressed stone common in the Main Byzantine Phase, although these stones could have been removed from neighbouring walls. The sand at the well's bottom held some Byzantine pottery, although it did contain some Early Arabic pieces. Near the sewer system are two refuse pits (L.2013 and L.2027), which yielded Roman, Byzantine and Early Arabic pottery, (including numerous juglets) and as many as seventy-three coins. To the east of this system, (east balk of area 1) but apparently unrelated to it, is a third phase water course. It probably ran along the top of a foundation wall for a robbed out wall. However, the Arabs had completely destroyed most of this area in their search for building materials and in their repair of the sewer, so that it is difficult at this time to assess its purpose.

CONCLUSION - FIELD B

In Field B, there is considerable evidence for two destructions of the Main Byzantine city. From the archaeological and historical data the first one can be dated to the Persian conquest of the city in A.D. 614. A veneer of destruction debris and the shoddy rebuilding of the walls and associated structures mark its presence in this field. The second destruction of the city was so devastating in this part of the city that the Byzantine structures completely disappeared under the sand dunes. Again from the archaeological and historical data this destruction of the city can be dated to the conquest of the Arabs in A.D. 640.



THE NUMBERS REFER TO AREAS.

SCHEMATIC OF FIELD C

FIG. 10

FIELD C

Important to the study of the stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima is the archaeological excavation, partially complete in Field C. Here, the diversity of architectural remains has provided a number of settings in which to further verify the hypothesis of this dissertation. In order to understand the significance of these discoveries, it becomes necessary to analyze this data in terms of zones.

Zone 1) stone platform in the public building or 'library' area

Zone 2) the stairwell leading down to the hypocaust area

Zone 3) the vaults along the seashore

Zone 4) the buildings on top of the vaults

This method provides a more convenient means of presenting the phasing data and historical notes.

Zone 1

Field C contains the ruins of a large public building or archive, tentatively called 'the library', in its north-east corner. In Crusader times it had been robbed of its walls to provide building material for the castle's fortifications. Most of its northern sector had been obliterated for this purpose. However, from descriptions of its excavation, this building probably was a rather impressive structure. It had a large entrance with a portico resting on six columns and an east-west hall with several rooms opening onto it from both sides. Five mosaic inscriptions in Greek were found on the tessellated floor sections. From the inscriptions it is possible to assume that the

building had a civic function, i.e., public archive, library¹² (fig.11).

The building had been in use from the fourth century until the Arab conquest. From the general relaying of tessellated surfaces there appears to be a number of sub-phases below the Main Byzantine Phase.

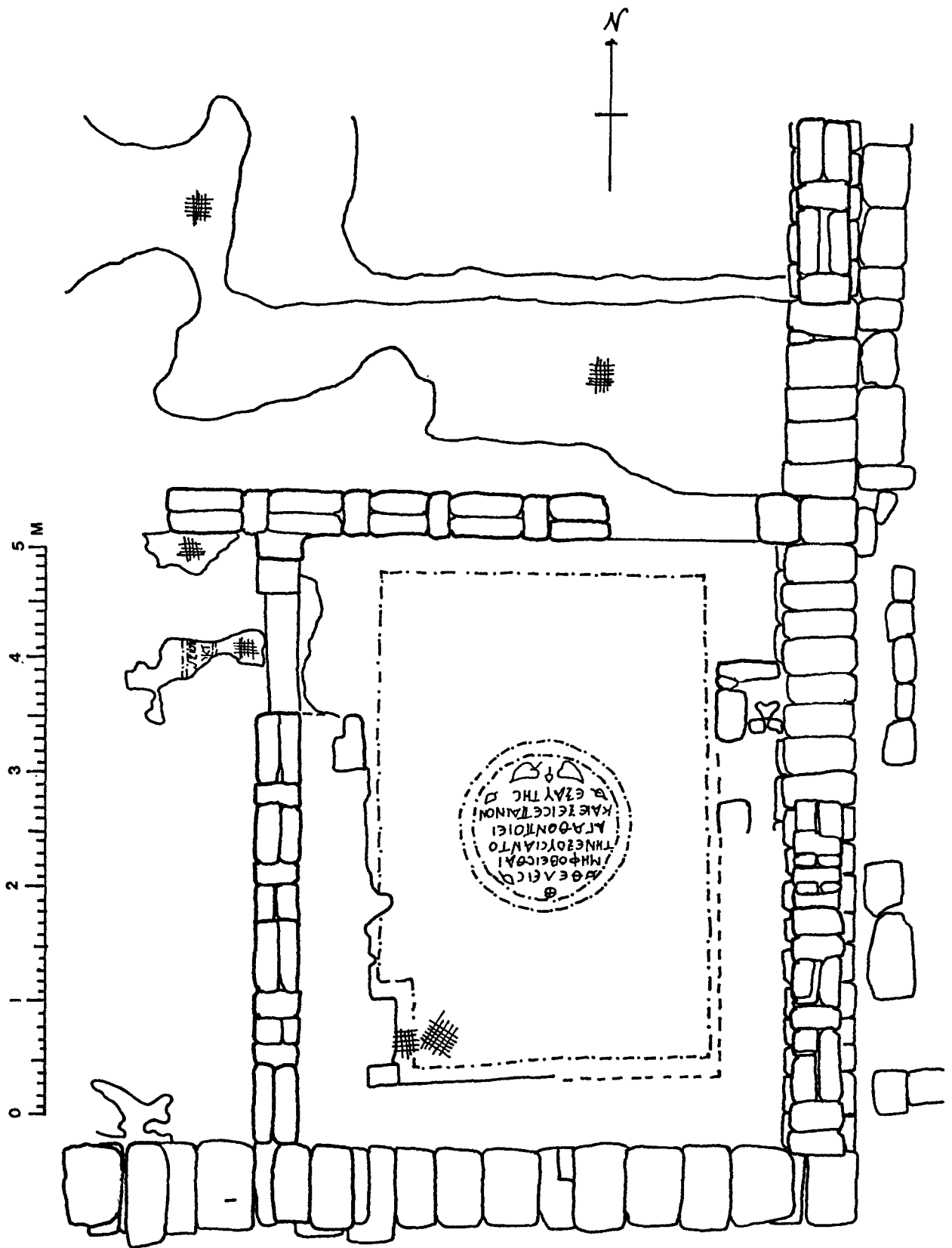
"When a new floor was laid, the remains of the damaged one were not removed, and in this way we are able to trace the decline of the mosaic art in Caesarea. Earlier floors those dating from the fourth and fifth century C.E. - are made of small stones and the simple designs were drawn with great delicacy. The upper layer, on the other hand, is composed of fairly large white stones whose only ornamentations are the inscribed medallions."¹³

To call the relaying of tessellated surfaces "sub-phasing" may be a misnomer, for the floors would be repaired when the need arose or renewed periodically. Nevertheless, due to the continuous maintenance of this building, the relaying of new floors provides an excellent means whereby the phasing sequence of the building can be studied.

The best preserved features of this building in the Main Byzantine Phase are the floor surfaces. A thin layer of destruction debris was uncovered over these floor surfaces which had been levelled off and was used as a base for resurfacing in the Final Byzantine Phase. A number of secondary walls were erected in the larger rooms and hasty repairs had been made to the destroyed benches. Over the surface of the entire building was the characteristic heavy destruction layer which occurs throughout the site at the end of the Final Byzantine Phase.¹⁴

¹²R.J. Bull and L.E. Toombs, "Notes and News - Caesarea," Israel Exploration Journal, 22 (1972), 179.

¹³Avraham Negev, Caesarea (Tel-Aviv: E. Lewin-Epstein, 1967), p.63.



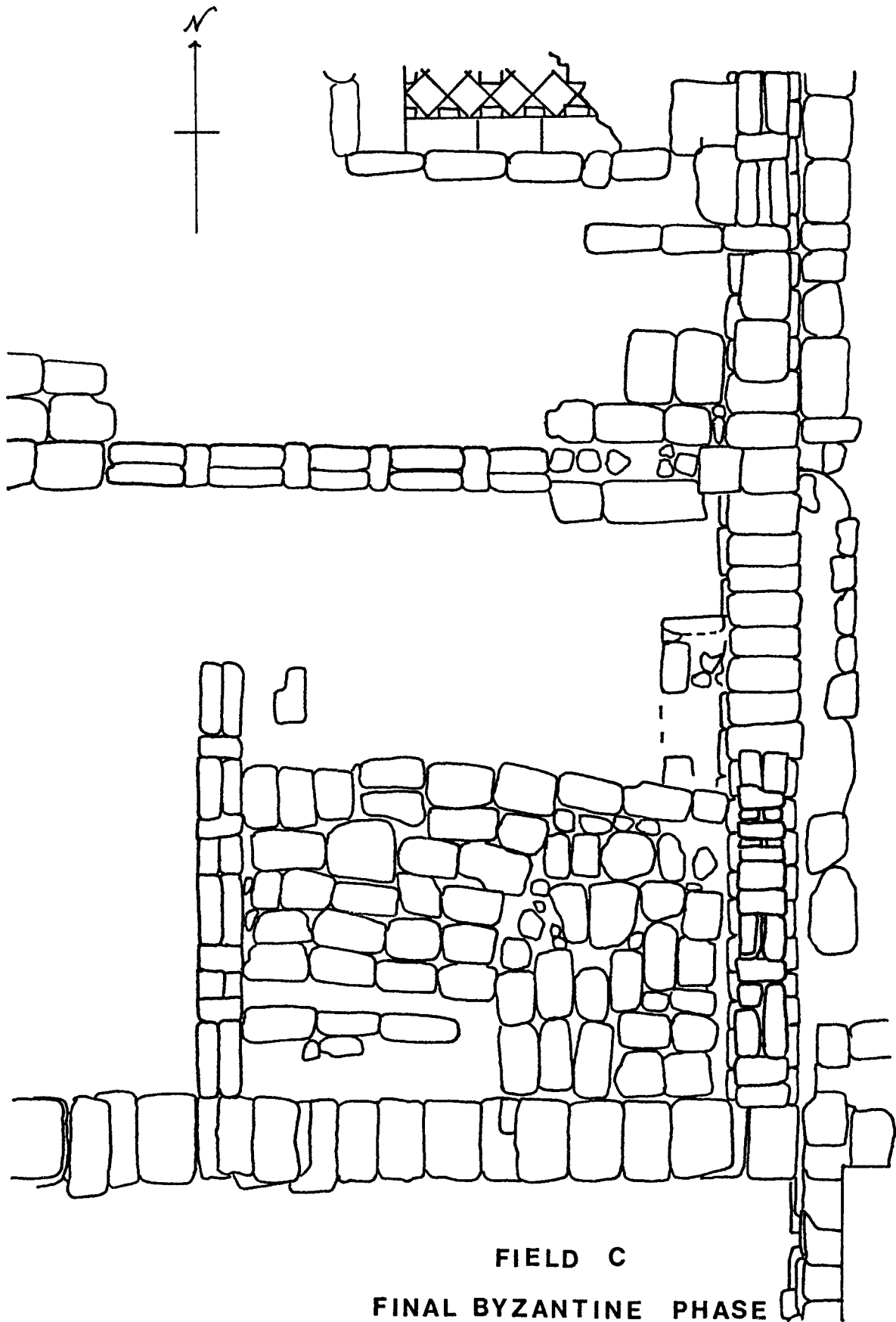
FIELD C
MAIN BYZANTINE PHASE
ROOM IN THE 'LIBRARY'

After the Arabic destruction of the building it apparently lay in a ruined state for some time for certain strata revealed a "heavy layer of decayed and water-distributed plaster".¹⁵ However, in time, like Field B, it too was systematically stripped of its marble facings, columns and stone by the Arabs. In comparing the stratigraphic sequence of Field B and C, the two destruction strata coincide very closely. It is possible to assume therefore that they are both contemporary.

The best proof for the two destructions is to be found in the first room, left of the entranceway to 'the library'. In the Main Byzantine Phase it has a fine white tessellated floor with a mosaic inscription enclosed within a red oval frame. The letters of the inscription are in black and the inscription, itself, is from the New Testament, Romans 13.1. As mentioned before, this floor surface is possibly one of many in the Main Byzantine Phase but it is important here as it is the last before the Persian destruction (fig.12).

Upon repairing this room, the workers levelled off the debris and instead of laying a new tessellated floor, they built a stone platform over the floor of the room and constructed a stone bench beside three of its walls. It is a possibility that the function of the building may have changed after the Persian occupation. Nevertheless the laying of a coarse stone platform after a succession of tessellated surfaces is indicative of a decline in capital outlay for maintenance (fig.13).

¹⁴Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima", pp. 13-14.



FIELD C
FINAL BYZANTINE PHASE

ZONE 2 - the stairwell leading to the hypocaust area

In addition, a neighbouring stairwell, leading down to a furnace room, (which provided heat for the library), was totally filled up with Arabic destruction debris. No Persian destruction debris is evident in this zone so it was cleaned up entirely and the furnace room restored (fig.11).

ZONE 3 - the vaults along the seashore

The third zone in Field C is a system of barrel-vaulted chambers, located along the shoreline, of which only a few have been excavated. The vaults have a similar stratigraphic history to the library (for the Byzantine and Arabic levels), however, due to the complexity of the ruins, it is necessary to describe them briefly. The vaults were built of local sandstone; their stones well-dressed and laid in the Herodian fashion. A series of rooms and walkways were then built above them, so that they have two distinct levels.

The accounts of Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century (A.D.), offer two descriptions of the vaults.

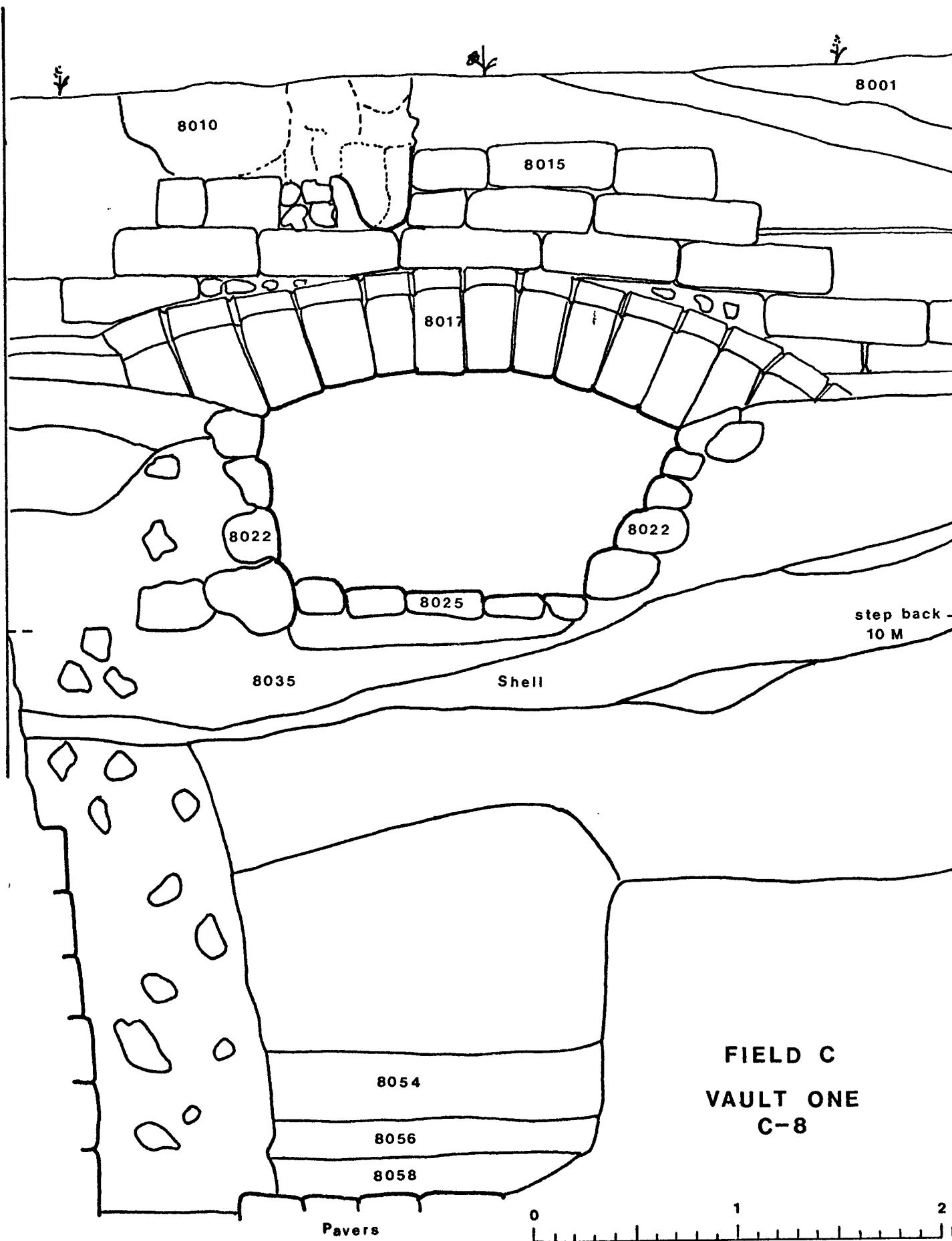
"There was also a great number of arches, where the mariners dwelt; and all the places before them round about was a large valley, or walk, for a quay or landing place to those that came on shore."¹⁶

"Now there were aedifices all along the circular haven, made of the most polished stone . . . nay, the very subterranean vaults and cellars had no less architecture bestowed on them than had the buildings above ground."¹⁷

¹⁵Toombs, "Stratigrapher's Report, Caesarea 1972, phasing notes, Field C, unpublished, no page.

¹⁶Flavius Josephus, War of the Jews, I.xxi.7

¹⁷Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XV.ix.6



FIELD C
VAULT ONE
C-8

Fig. 14

The vaults were probably used for warehouse space and storage for the shipping lines of merchants. Above the vaults the rooms or tiled walkways may have been used as business establishments.

"Viewed from a ship at sea the waterfront complex must have presented a magnificent sight. The vaulted chambers with their ornate facades towered above the shore to a height of more than fifty metres. Rising above them were the parapets, walls, and roadways of the buildings built over the vaults, all sheathed in marble and resplendent with brilliant colours. This impressive frontage was pierced at intervals by east-west roads, leading into the city from the waterfront."¹⁸

The vaults had been built in the Roman Period but due to the instability of the shoreline which had experienced seismic shocks, they had probably been repaired and fortified a number of times over the centuries.¹⁹

Evidence of two massive destructions can be found in the seaward end of vault 1. Here a defensive wall had been constructed over Persian debris with the Arabic destruction material piled against it (fig.14). Vaults 5 and 6 also had similar enormous walls constructed in front of them with a small door in each for access.

Since these walls had been built after the Persian takeover of the city, it can be surmised that they may have been erected to prevent the vaults from being used by an invasionary force. However, this can not be verified from historical accounts of the Persian assault on the city as there is very little direct information regarding its takeover. In the case of the Arabic conquest of the city, there is more historical

¹⁸Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima", pp. 11-12.

¹⁹Information related by Dr. Toombs on earthquakes.

evidence. Tabari claims that a Jew named Josephus showed the Arabs a path into the city through a water tunnel. According to Syrian sources, the Arabs were said to have entered the city by treachery and killed many of its defenders. The remainder of the garrison then embarked on ships and departed.²⁰

From the following description by Flavius Josephus, it can be seen that access to the city could indeed be afforded by the vault area. Its description probably refers to the barrel-vaulted sewers but the concept expressed applies also to the storage vault system.

"Some of these vaults carried things at even distances to the haven and to the sea; but one of them ran obliquely, and bound all the rest together, that both the rain and the filth of the citizens were together carried off with ease, and the sea itself, upon the flux of the tide from without, came into the city and washed it clean."
Ant. (xv. ix. 6)

These vaults, being quite high, would have provided an easy entrance to the heart of the city once the defensive walls were breached. However, it is the author's opinion that the water tunnel, referred to by Baladhuri (pp.217-218) is none other than the two aqueducts that brought fresh water into the city. On the other hand, this would have been guarded. The matter of the Arab's entrance into the city is still in question.

ZONE 4

The fourth zone reveals a similar stratigraphic history as the library, the stairway and the vaults. Vaults five and six are located south of vault one, near the lower road that enters the city (fig.11). The destruction of the Byzantine buildings above these vaults is attested to be the relaying of the tessellated floors upon a thin layer of destruction debris.

20

Michael le Syrian, II, 439, 431.
Bar Hebraeus, p.97.
Agapius, p.194/454.

"The preserved surfaces are Middle to Late Byzantine in date. They rest on fill layers which in turn are laid over large stones, set over the vault roofs, in order to provide a solid, level construction platform. The pottery from among these stones and from the lowest layers of the fill is Late Roman in date. Apparently, therefore, the original vaulting of Early Roman times collapsed, or was deliberately broken down, and was rebuilt in the Late Roman era. Subsequently, the surfacing above the vaults was replaced numerous times, the final surfacing being laid in the Late Byzantine period. These final Byzantine surfaces rest on leveled destruction debris, and are overlaid by the massive destruction layers which mark the end of the Byzantine period. They are associated with poorly-constructed rebuilds of earlier Byzantine structures. The final collapse of the vaults took place in connection with the nearly total destruction of the buildings above."²¹

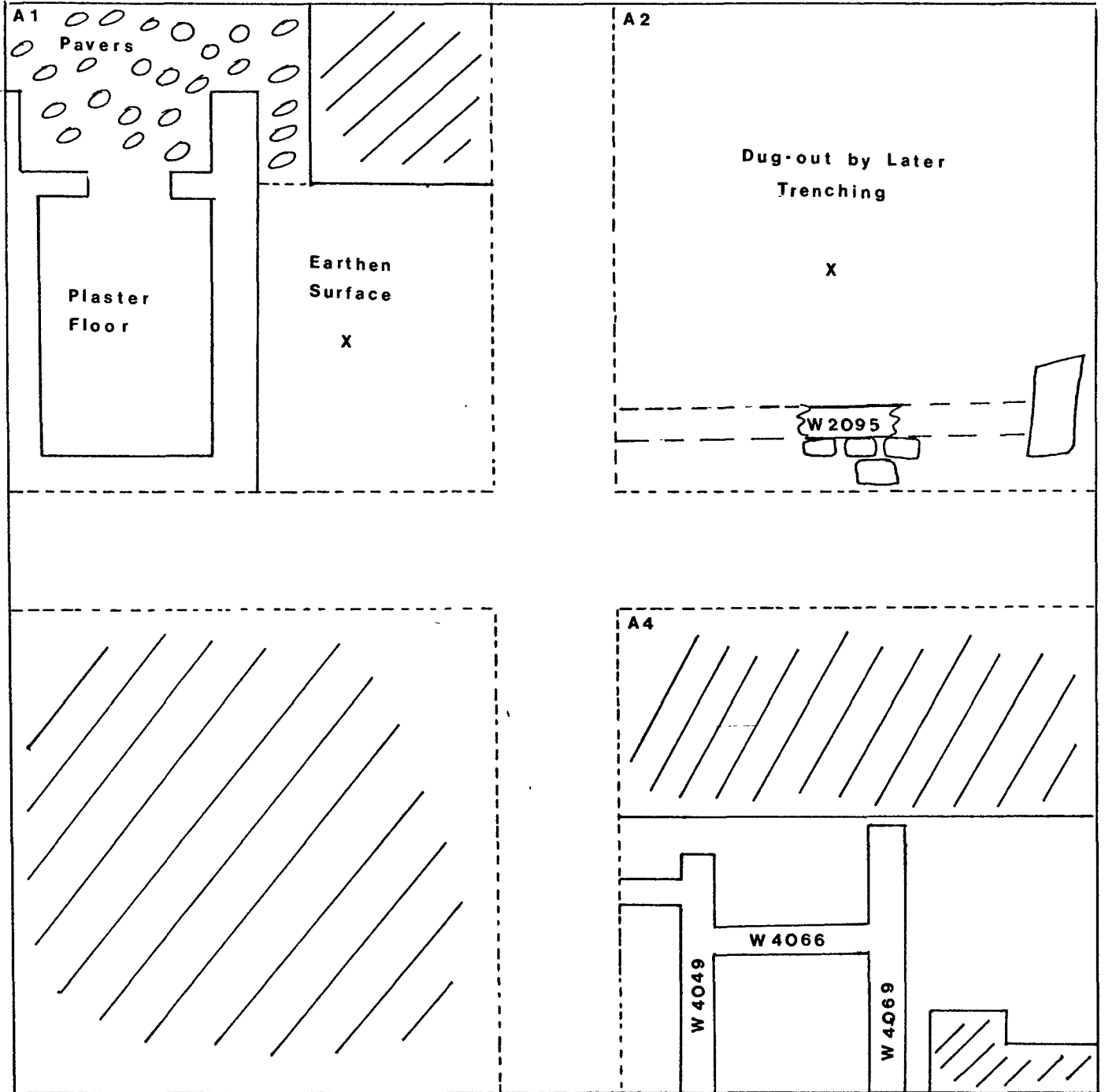
After the city was destroyed, squatters moved in and camped along the seaward side of vault one and in the ruins of the public building. Traces of their presence can be seen in the crude shelters, ovens, hearths and industrial installations they built. The pottery is essentially Late Byzantine from the vault area for this, the Byzantine-Arabic Phase.

FIELD C - CONCLUSIONS

These four zones in Field C, although they are constructed in diverse settings, have a similar stratigraphic history. Two destructions of the Byzantine city are indicated in the excavation of Field C. These two strata of destruction debris closely coincide with those presented in Field B and as such may be considered contemporary. In view of the historical evidence presented in this paper for Field B, it can thus be inferred that Field C has a similar history.

²¹Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima", pp. 12-13.

N



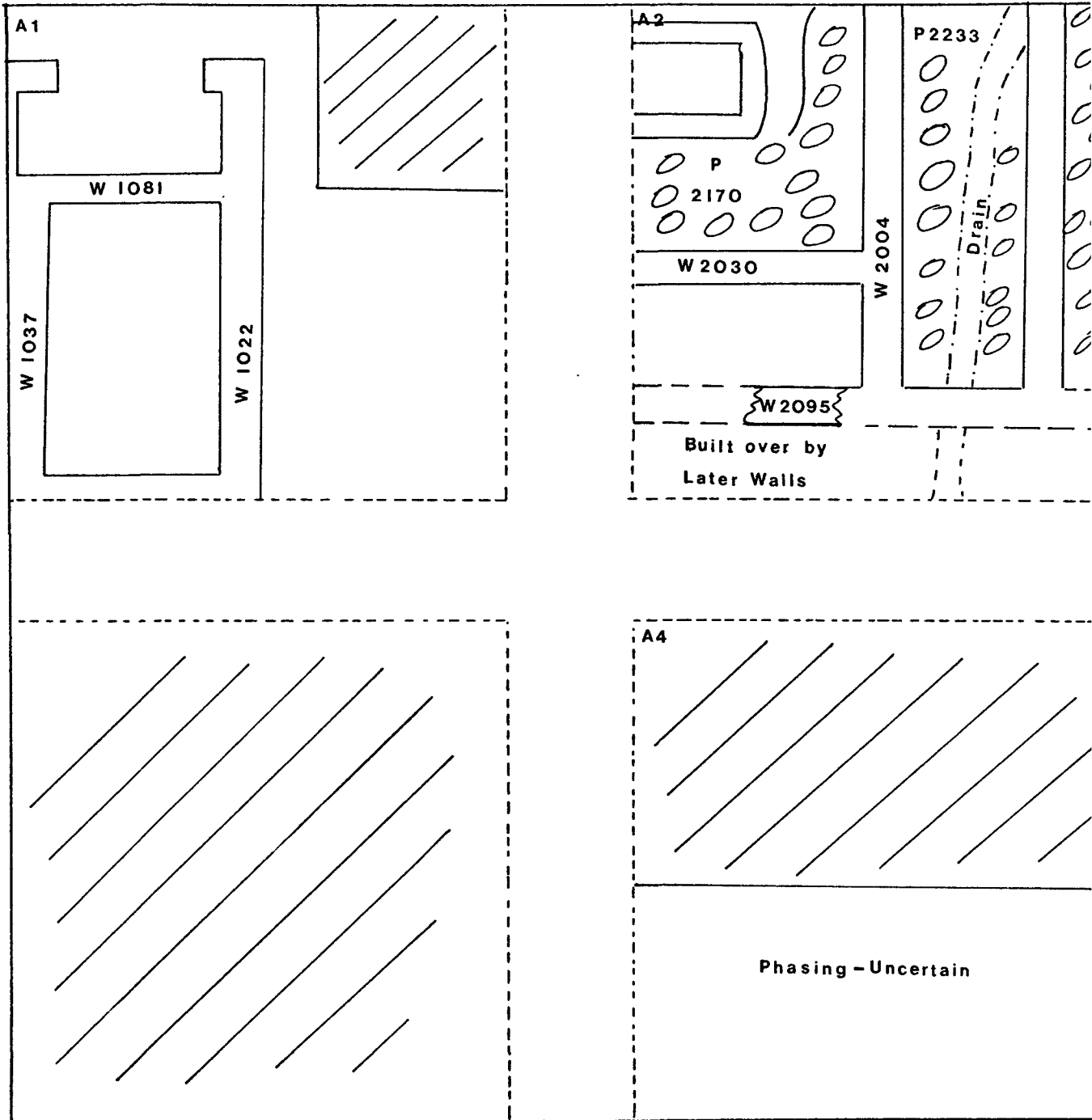
FIELD A

ROMAN PHASE

 Unexcavated

Fig. 15

N



FIELD A
EARLY BYZANTINE PHASE

 Unexcavated

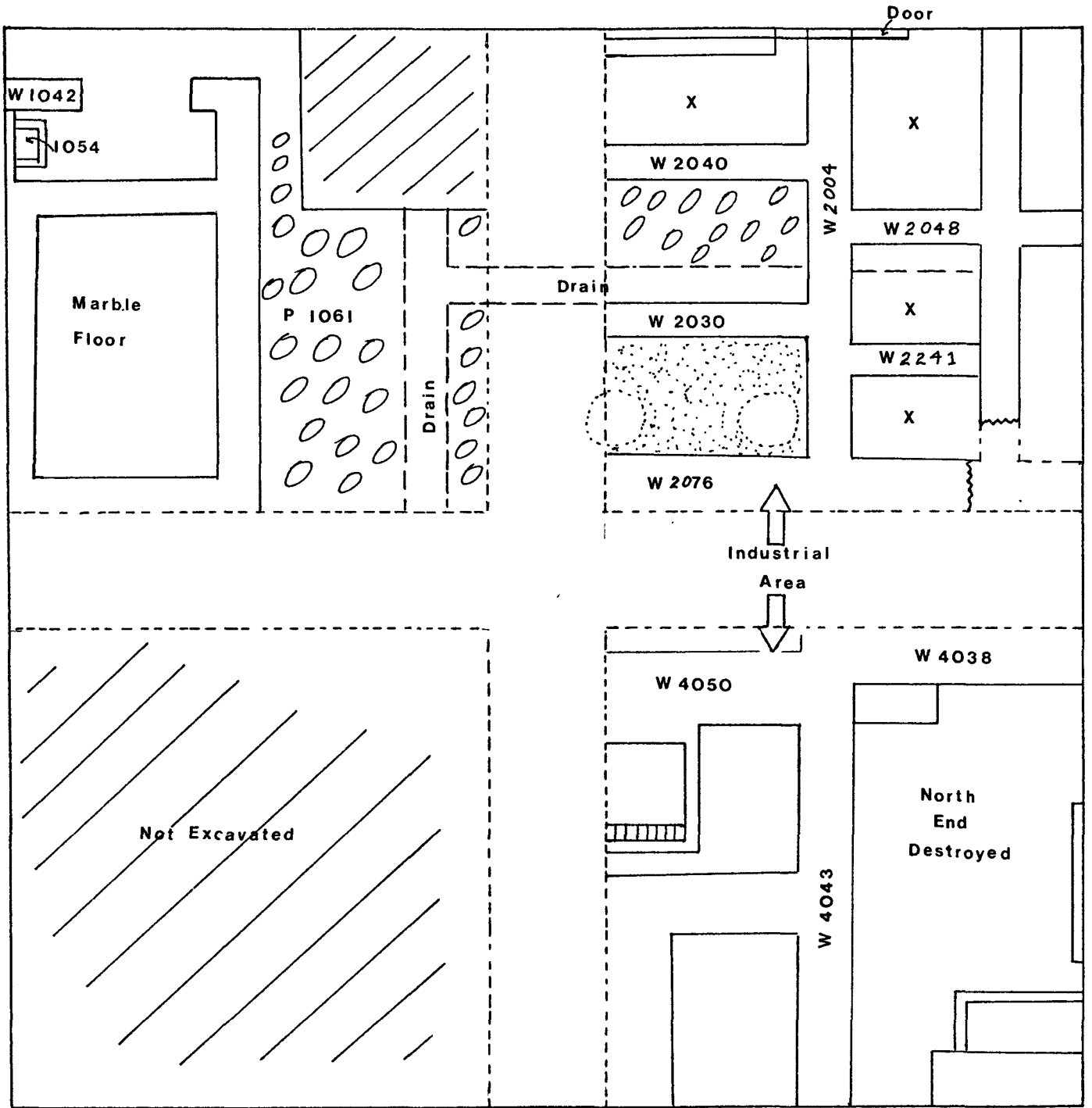
FIELD A

The material remains of Field A mostly relate to the Byzantine Period as there are three possible phases in evidence. The Persian destruction of the buildings in this field was thoroughly cleaned up, as there is little evidence that it ever occurred, except in limited areas. Again, the second destruction of the city, ascribed to the Arabs, is readily apparent in this field. This last destruction was so devastating in this area, that the city here had disappeared under the debris and the resulting wind-blown sand. There is no Byzantine/Arabic Phase in evidence at all in this field.

In Field A, there are fragmentary remains of a Roman phase. Unearthed in the north-west corner of the field was a rectangular building with a paved porch. The interior floor of this building had once been plastered; the sub-floor fill yielded numerous artifacts and quantities of Roman pottery. However, as mentioned before, most of the Roman Phase of this city has been completely dug out by the later Byzantine builders. There are a few walls remaining from the Roman Phase in the south-east corner of the field (L.4049, 4066, 4069), but their purpose is as yet unknown.

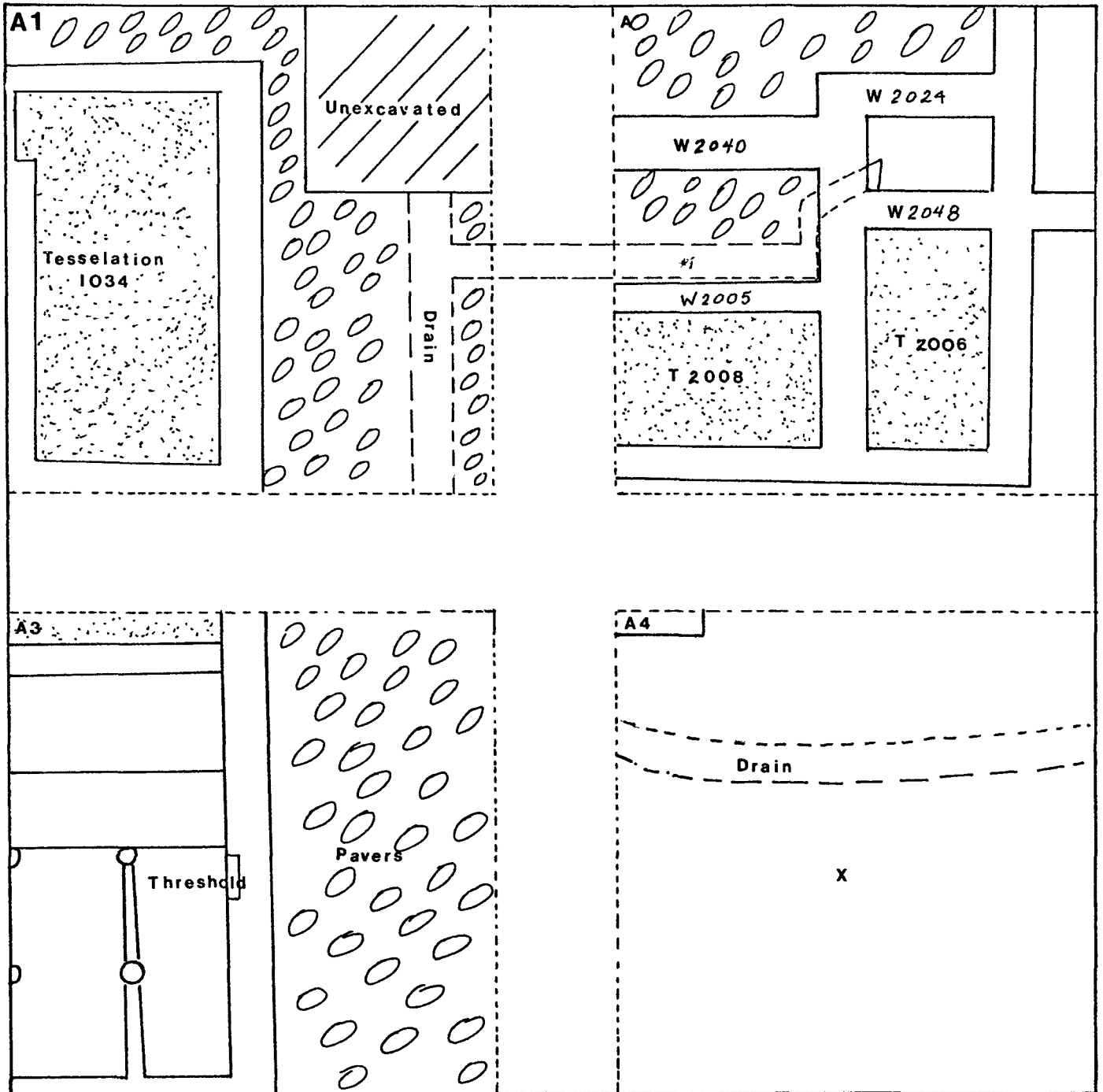
The Early Byzantine Phase was also nearly obliterated by the later rebuilding of this area. However, the basic pattern of the rectangular building (A.1) is maintained in this phase. A number of walls east of it appear to be the original constructs of the walls in the later phase (A.2).

N



FIELD A
MAIN BYZANTINE PHASE

X = Dug-out by later phase



FIELD A
FINAL BYZANTINE PHASE

FIELD A - THE MAIN BYZANTINE PHASE

In this phase, a narrow road appears in the centre of the field (fig.17). This road is apparently a northern extension of Yeivin's Byzantine Street. At this place, however, it has degenerated to an ordinary roadway, paved with heavy flagstones. Bordering its western edge is the same rectangular building from the Roman and Early Byzantine Phase. However, a number of small walls (L.1054, L.1042) have been added to the original walls and the interior floor is paved with marble. To the east of the road, "an industrial area, with ceramic bins, brick or plastered lined vats and a well-constructed drainage system" appeared.²²

FIELD A- FINAL BYZANTINE PHASE

Under the reconstructed floors and walls of the Final Byzantine Phase a thin layer of levelled or worked-over destruction debris is visible (fig.18). This occurs only in limited places, for in this field, it was ^{almost} completely eradicated after the destruction of the city. Possibly it was quickly repaired due to the valuable industrial area located in this area. However, this layer of destruction debris can only be tentatively dated to the Persian conquest for there is not enough evidence to prove to the contrary. Most of the floors were either tessellated or paved over in the industrial area. The marble floor in the rectangular building also underwent a similar tessellation process. The walls changed slightly in this phase ~~but~~ the basic pattern stayed the same.

²²Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima", p.4

This entire phase is in turn covered by a thick layer of destruction debris, composed of ash, pieces of marble and plaster, partially decomposed red brick, and a high concentration of Late Byzantine pottery. By a comparison with the stratigraphy of Fields B and C, these destruction strata can be dated to the Arabic conquest of the city in A.D. 640.

There is no Byzantine/Arabic Phase for this field as the Byzantine city disappeared under the destruction debris and was only later rediscovered by the Arabs in their pursuit of stone and columns.

FIELD A - CONCLUSION

The Roman building plan survived into the Final Byzantine Phase with only minor modifications, and it is only in limited areas that there is evidence of Persian destruction. It appears that it was cleaned up rapidly and repairs made on the structures that had been damaged. In contrast, the Arabic destruction of this area of the city was so complete, that no Byzantine/Arab Phase followed the Final Byzantine Phase.

FIELD H - THE HIPPODROME

The hippodrome is located just inside the city's walls in the east. It is readily visible in air photographs as a long field (agricultural), slightly rounded at one end, with measurements of four hundred and sixty feet long by ninety feet wide approximately. Not unlike the city walls, very little of it remains due to the extensive robbing of its structures in later periods.

Like all hippodromes, it had the characteristic spina, or centre stone embankment, which probably carried statues of divinities or emperors. Here, too, would be the septem ova, or the delphini, which signalled which lap was in progress. At the end of the spina were the metae, which were large granite cones that marked the inside turning point for the charioteers. At Caesarea Maritima, only the three lower halves of the metae secunda (at the northern edge of the spina) were found within the hippodrome; the upper halves of these cones are buried in the southern edge of the crusader harbour.²³ The exact measurements of the metae are thus unknown, but, placed on base above the spina, these Aswan granite cones would have exceeded the height of the other monuments, if convention was followed at this site. The obelisk, found in the hippodrome at Caesarea Maritima, originally sat on a base above the spina, but it had fallen down somewhere between A.D. 1230 and A.D. 1250, and had broken into two pieces upon impact. The base and the pyramidal tip of the obelisk have also been located in the hippodrome. Together, all the pieces of the obelisk reconstructed above the spina

²³ John H. Humphrey, "Prolegomena to the Study of the Hippodrome at Caesarea Maritima", Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, 213 (1974), 27-28

would have been taller than the metae.²⁴

The history of the hippodrome does not seem to co-ordinate with the known stratigraphy of the other fields. Apparently, it is Late Roman in foundation, about the second or third century A.D. and continued in use with minor modifications and repairs until its abandonment in the sixth century.

Excavation of an area across the spectators' seats (cavea) and the track on the west side of the hippodrome, produced only a Middle Byzantine date for one phase. When the hippodrome fell into disuse, the spectators' seats were covered over with fill and levelled off as platforms for small house structures. The tessellated surfaces from a room in one of these structures is dated to the Late Byzantine Phase.²⁵

The track levels afford a better record of the hippodrome's stratigraphic history.

"The destruction debris over the upper track level, and the track itself, contained late Byzantine sherds. The intermediate and lower track level contained Middle Roman pottery."²⁶

However, the question still remains: why did the hippodrome fall into disuse in the sixth century? This can be partially explained in terms of economics. Originally, hippodromes were constructed and maintained by the imperial coffers. By the sixth century the task of maintaining the races was clearly a public provision. Appointed racing officials

²⁴Humphreys, pp.20-30..

²⁵Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima", p.17; also personal communication with L.E. Toombs on March 14, 1975, provided more information on the later stages of the cavea.

²⁶Toombs, "The Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima", p.17.

(ἵπποτροφοί) were responsible for the management of the hippodromes and did so with the aid of certain factions or stables.²⁷ At the end of the sixth century, the Byzantine Empire was in dire economic straits,²⁸ which meant that private investment was scarce for the upkeep of hippodromes. Yet, the gambling profits of the races would have probably offset the losses that the hippodrome encountered.

Cultural differences should also be considered in a discussion of probable reasons for the disappearance of the hippodrome. Chariot racing was not a favourite sport in the eastern provinces of the empire. "The evidence for a strong continuity of interest in this sport from Hellenistic to Byzantine times is completely lacking."²⁹ In addition, the well-known antipathy of the Jews and the Monophysites for the races would have been evident at this time. However, there is no historical proof for this, only that a sizeable Jewish community lived in Caesarea Maritima, who would have probably made their feelings towards the races known to the local officials.

The hippodrome perhaps ceased to operate following one of the earthquakes that occurred in the sixth century. The destruction would have been serious enough, considering the financial situation of the time, to abandon the hippodrome and operate another one elsewhere.

The hippodrome has its own history and thus does not show the two destruction strata of the Persian and Arabic conquests of the city.

²⁷Humphreys, p.44.

²⁸See chapter III in this paper.

²⁹Humphreys, p.38.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation presented the historical and stratigraphical data for two destructions of the main Byzantine city of Caesarea Maritima. These destruction levels are very close chronologically for the ceramic evidence shows no differentiation in typology, that is it remains Late Byzantine in date. The damage in the first destruction of the city appears to be minimal for in some areas only traces of destruction are visible. The historical sources, although scarce in detail recount a Persian conquest of the city in A.D. 614. Thus the first destruction of the city is dated to this period in history. The final or second destruction of the city is clearly dated to the Arabic Conquest of the city in A.D. 640 for the rebuilding that later occurred had no relation to the basic Byzantine building features that had preceeded it. Regarding this destruction the historical descriptions are very clear. In the main the thesis is sound for the stratigraphic history coincides with the known historical accounts of the city.

However, additional research should be directed towards the exact nature of the Persian takeover of the city. The historical sources are noticeably absent in recounting details of the Persian occupation of the coastal cities. As well there is unavailable to the western world a vast corpus of Arabic literature. What Meyerhof stated over forty years ago still holds true today.

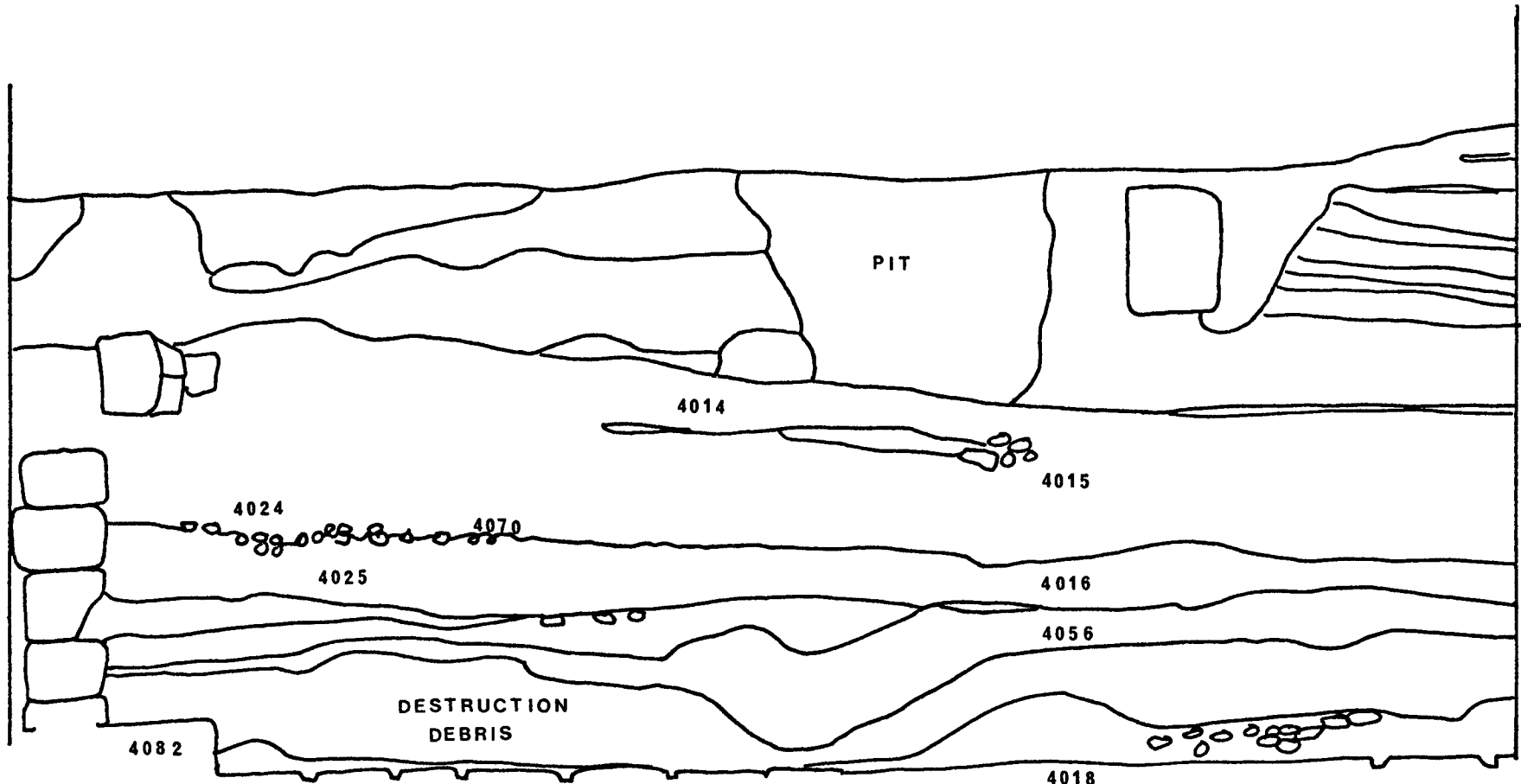
"The treasure houses of Islamic science are just beginning to be opened. In Constantinople alone there are more than eighty mosque libraries containing tens of thousands of manuscripts. In Cairo, Damascus, Mosul and Baghdad, as well

as in Persia and India, there are other collections. Few have been listed, much less described or edited. Even the catalogues of the Escorial Library in Spain, which contains a large part of the wisdom of western Islam is not yet complete.¹

An inquiry into these historical works as they begin to appear may help to clarify the discrepancies in the Arabic sources.

In conclusion it is important to note that archaeology is at best a helping science and is useful only when it is made contributory to other fields of learning, such as history. Its chief function is to provide an objective leverage by which the bias of ^{written} records can be corrected or verified. In this thesis, archaeology provided evidence for the two destructions at Caesarea Maritima and thus confirmed the historical accounts of the city.

¹Max Meyerhof, "Science and Medecine" in The Legacy of Islam, ed. Sir Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume (London: Oxford University Press), p.311.



PIT

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DESTRUCTION
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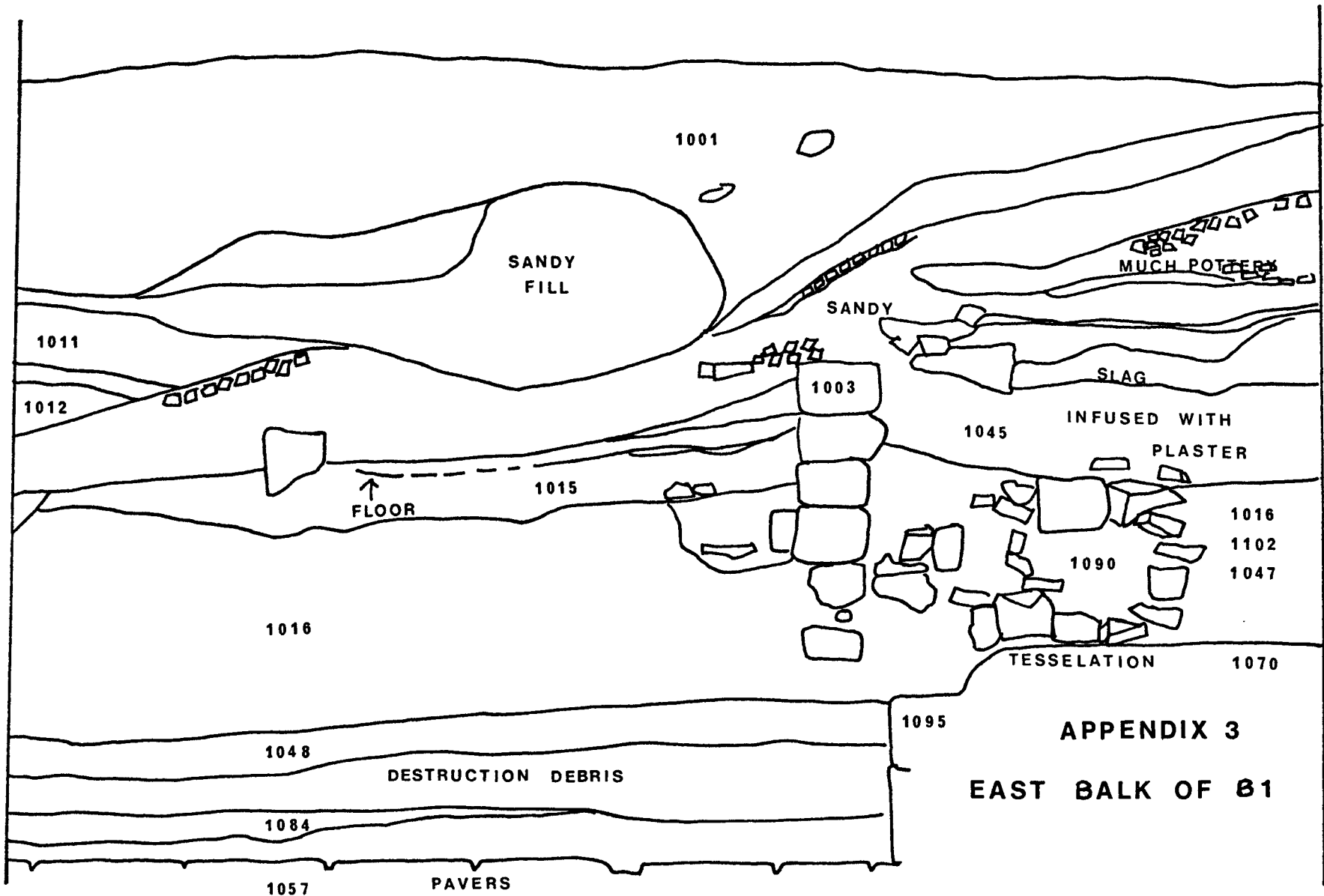
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APPENDIX 2

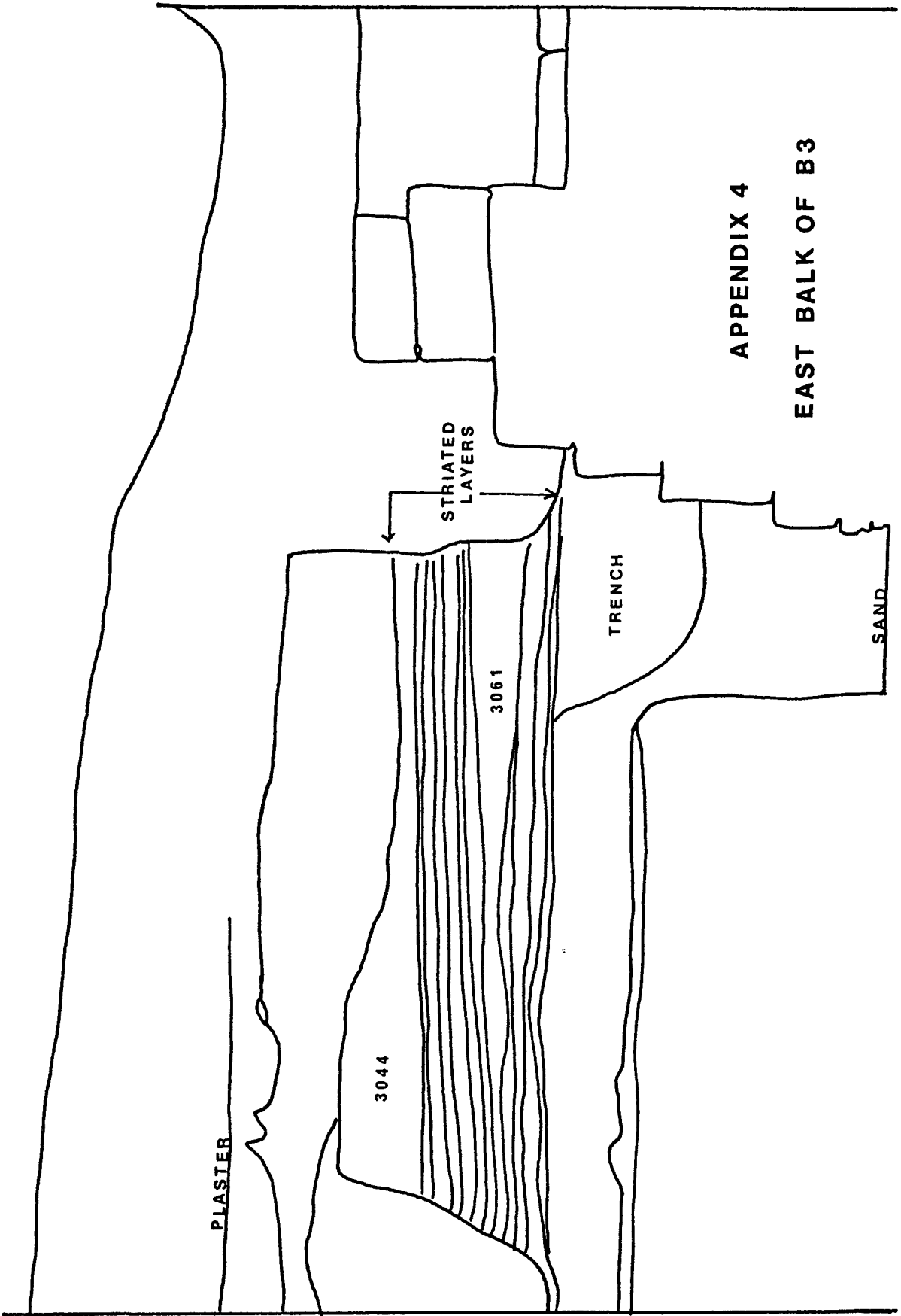
EAST BALK OF B4

GENERAL PHASE	DATE	FIELD A	FIELD B
I MODERN		Missing	Missing
II CRUSADER	A.D. 1200-1300	Missing	Missing
III ARAB	A.D. 640-1200		
1. LATE		Fragmentary pavements and deep well	Industrial and den use
2. MIDDLE (ABBAYSID)		Fragmentary pavements and deep well	Deep well use Industrial cor roadway, public buildings or residences, furnaces, storage facilities, drainage systems
3. EARLY (UMMAYYID)		Housing and industrial occupation	Crude industrial complex, developed into more sophisticated form
IV BYZANTINE / ARAB	A.D. 640	Missing	Impoverished of Phase V
V FINAL BYZANTINE	A.D. 614-640		Final use of Phase VI poor quality walls and Sealed by heavy destruction
VI MAIN BYZANTINE	A.D. 330-614		
1		Paved road with shops to west and industry to east. Well-built drains	E-W road, large public prominent Complex drainage system
2			Earlier surfaces associated with VI.1
VII ROMAN	10 B.C.-A.D. 330		

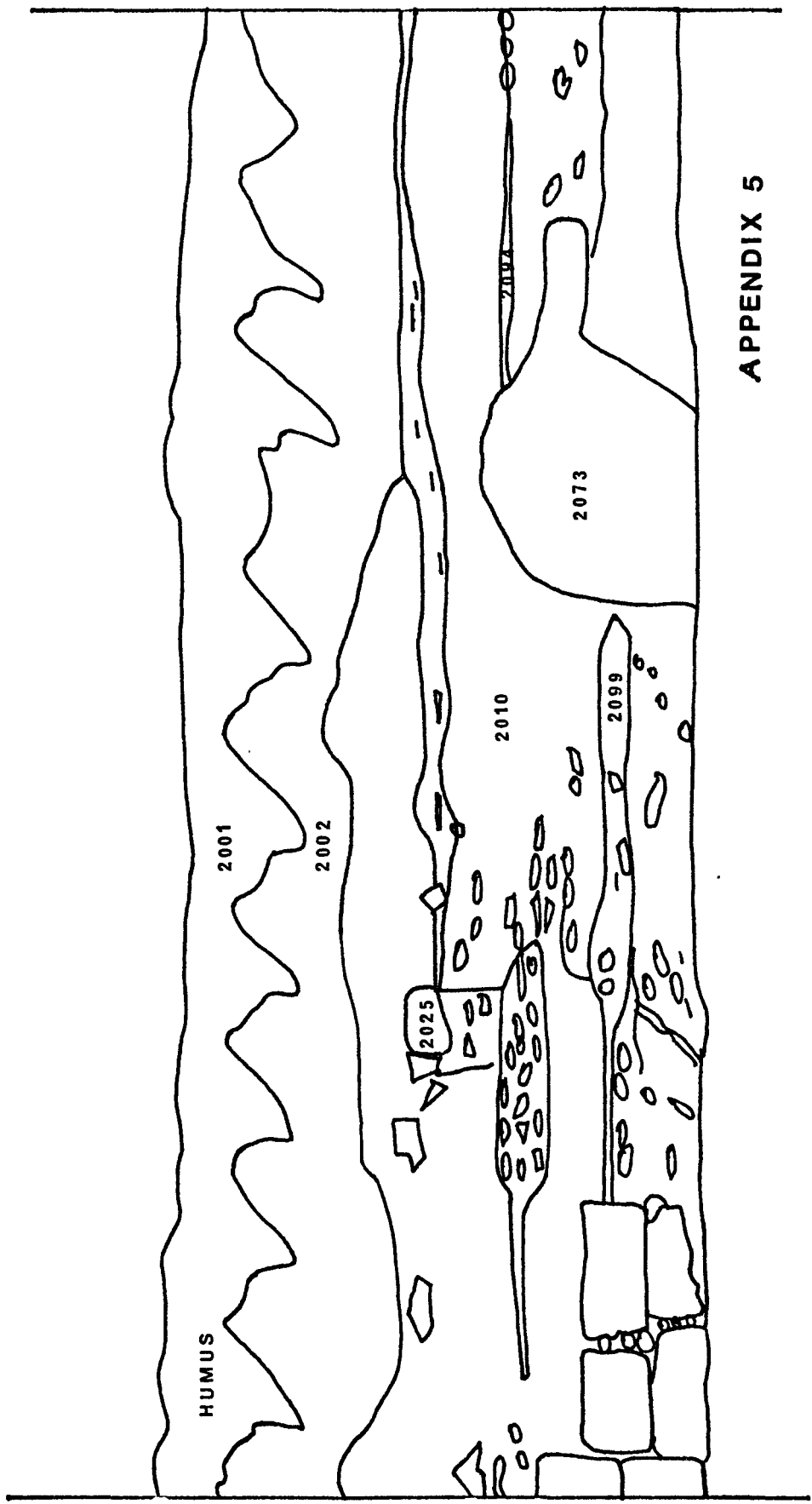
	FIELD B	FIELD C	FIELD H
	Missing	Arab Cemetery	Placing of debris piles along hippodrome walls to clear area for cultivation
	Missing	Christian Cemetery	Cultivation and small buildings in track area
Improvements	Industrial and garden use	Arab Cemetery	Agriculture ?
Improvements	Deep wall in III.1 Industrial complex: roadway, public buildings or residences, furnaces, storage facilities, drainage systems	Cemetery	Agriculture ?
Industrial	Crude industrial complex, developing into more sophisticated form in III.2	Lime kiln, and industrial installation	Agricultural use of track area. Crude buildings over seating. Robbery of hippodrome Structures.
	Impoverished reuse of Phase V walls	Shelters and poor installations in ruins of Phase V building.	Missing
Final use of Phase VI buildings with poor quality walls and tessellation. Sealed by heavy destruction layer.			Missing
North and in-t. Well-	E-W road, leading to public promenade. Complex drainage system	Vaults with buildings above, and public buildings to east and north. Street system.	Hippodrome goes out of use before end of VI.1. Tessellated surfaces built over seating. City wall filled over at end of period.
Surfaces associated with same wall system as VI.1			Hippodrome in use with repair and reconstruction. City wall built.



APPENDIX 3
EAST BALK OF B1



APPENDIX 4
EAST BALK OF B3



APPENDIX 5
EAST BALK OF B2

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