

APPENDIX I

NEWLY DISCOVERED LATRINE ON
KOM EL-DIKKA (2005/2006 SEASON)

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Fieldwork in 2005/2006, designed to prepare the area for a reconstruction of the robbed out outer wall of the bath (in Area FE), brought to light in the eastern trench wall a surprisingly well preserved sewage channel from a big latrine.

The trench was located on the site of a medieval robbers' pit which had destroyed almost completely a longitudinal section of the east bath wall, running to the north facade of the block of cisterns. Extending work in the trench to the east uncovered badly damaged remains of a floor paved with severely cracked limestone slabs. Evident traces of feces on the pavement and the situation of the floor to the west of the sewage channel identified the remains as the inside of a latrine. The location of this unit on the plan of this sector suggests the builder's intent to place the latrine near one of the main communication passages inside the Late Roman Bath complex, running from a monumental gate opening on Street R4 in the east to the actual entrance to the baths and the gate at the western end which opened into the Theater Portico. This evident topographical link with the bath complex implies a date for the newly uncovered remains in connection with the baths as a whole, and more specifically with the first phase of bath operation, that

is, the end of the 4th and the early 5th century AD.

Further excavations traced the sewage channel also along the mostly unpreserved northern and southern walls of the facility [*Figs 1, 2*]. The width of this channel in the upper part was 0.50 m, but lower down it was made narrower by about 10 cm because of the projecting wall footing. The depth, based on measurements of the completely preserved inside wall of the channel in the western part of the room, was determined as 2.50 m from the level of the pavement. The other walls of the channel were completely robbed out, but an analysis of the preserved parts of the inside walls (the foundation walls of the carrying walls served as the outer ones) revealed that they were constructed of two rows of solid limestone blocks. The pavement extended over the inside row, nearer to the center of the room, while the other row presumably supported the blocks which had a narrow trough cut in them for supplying the water for soaking the toilet sponges. One of these blocks, preserved in very good condition, was discovered inside the southern sewage channel [*Fig. 3*]. As was to be expected, the channels were not paved, allowing the liquid component of feces to soak even 2 m through the ground. This manner of

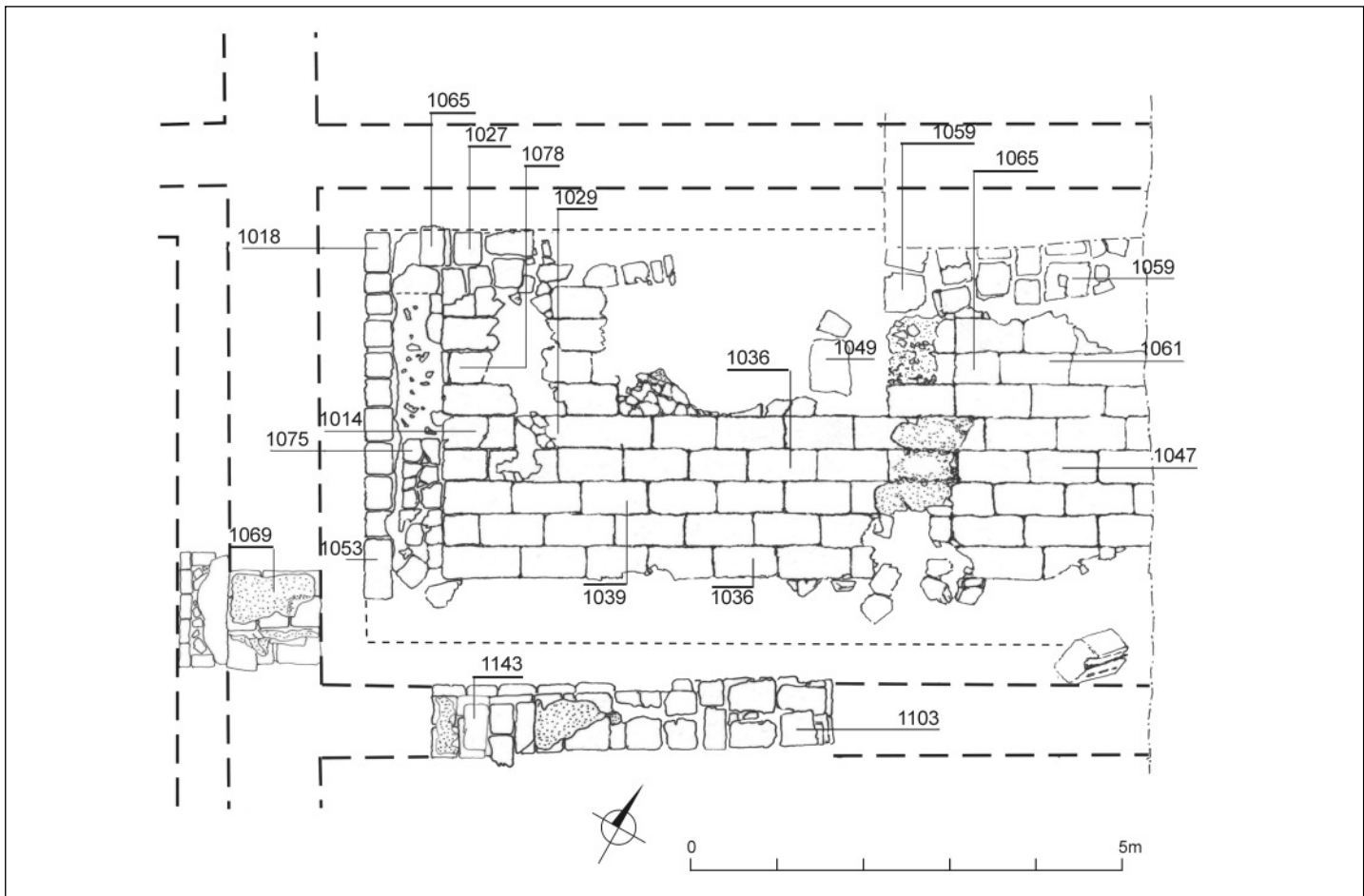
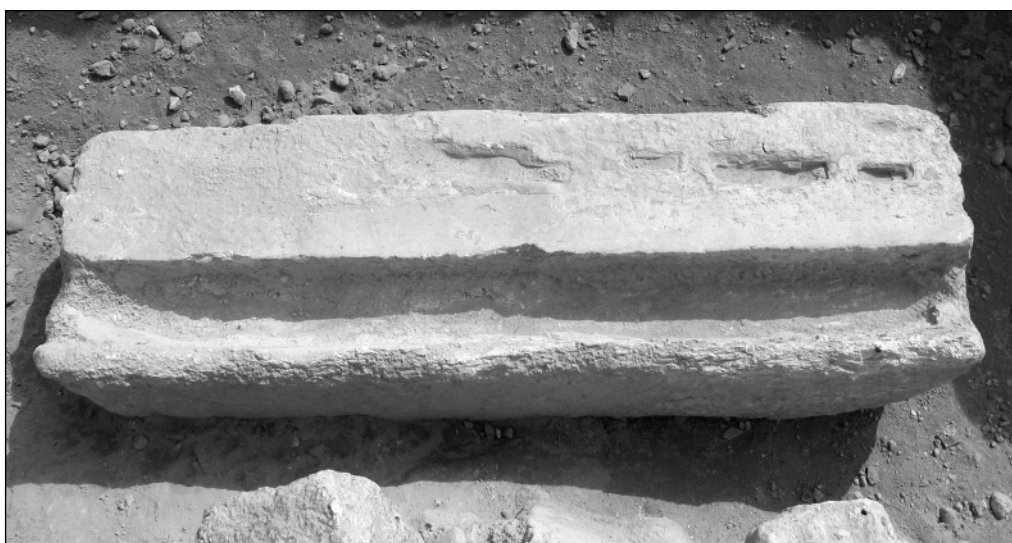


Fig. 1. Plan of the latrine in Area FE
(Drawing M. Woźniak)



*Fig. 2. The latrine in Area FE, looking west
(Photo W. Jerke)*



*Fig. 3. Block with trough-like channel from the latrine
(Photo G. Majcherek)*

construction solved the problem of emptying the latrine channels. The rest of the job had to be accomplished with more traditional methods, like water-sluicing, the sewage being emptied into a collector which would have been situated most probably under or next to Street R4.

Dividing the channel by the north wall was a kind of wide pavement made of regular limestone blocks, suggesting the location of the entrance to the facility in this spot. The evidence for a door is equally circumstantial, as all the walls with the exception of small parts of the foundations and a part of the south wall just above the ground, were completely destroyed by medieval stone robbers in search of building material on Kom el-Dikka.

The pavement of the latrine was composed of limestone slabs measuring c. 0.80-0.90 by 0.40 m and c. 4 cm thick. These slabs are now badly cracked and in many places completely destroyed. The slabs were laid in latitudinal rows, the only exception being one row alongside the western channel, which was laid with the short ends of the slabs to the north and south. The actual number of flagstones is difficult to calculate due to the damages.

The pavement suffered presumably because of the smaller soil fraction being washed out from under it in the direction of the robbers' pits. This phenomenon appears

to have been especially intense in the center of the room, resulting in the displacement of the ground toward the north where, unlike the western and northwestern part, no surviving walls could hold back the process. This ground displacement resulted in uneven settling of the floor, causing the pavement to crack and forming as a result three different levels. About 40% of the floor surface is still on the original or approximately original level. The lowermost level of the pavement is currently some 40 cm below it and is preserved at the western extreme edge of the pavement. The practically original level of the pavement in the northeastern part of the room is presumably due to the presence of the stone passage cutting across the northern channel, perhaps leading to the latrine entrance.

Despite extensive damages, the appearance of the facility can be reconstructed. The location of the channels clearly indicates the arrangement of the seating. The look of the block with the trough, as well as traces at the edge of the pavement will permit a partial reconstruction of the water installation inside the facility. It will be important for the reconstruction study of this public toilet facility to verify excavation data with parallels provided by exceptionally well preserved latrines discovered in Lepcis Magna, Scythopolis and other Roman-age cities of North Africa and the Near East.