

EXCAVATIONS AT SARAÇHANE IN ISTANBUL, 1964

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Remains of the church of St. Polyuktos, built by Anicia Juliana probably in A. D. 524 - 7, were recognized in 1960: grading operations at Saraçhane in Istanbul had uncovered many large blocks of architectural carving, two fragments bearing part of an inscription which is known to have stood in this church. (1) The high quality of the carving and the fact that the building is securely dated to the crucial period before Justinian suggested that a detailed investigation of the site would yield important results. Accordingly, a preliminary excavation, generously authorized by the Turkish Department of Antiquities and sanctioned by the Municipal Authorities of Istanbul, was undertaken jointly by Dumbarton Oaks and the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, lasting from 3rd to 28th August, 1964. (2)

The site lies in the south - west angle of the Atatürk Bulvarı - Şehzadebaşı Caddesi intersection, in open ground west of the new Belediye Sarayı (Ill. 1). The conversion of this intersection to an underpass, requiring the deep mechanical excavation of a long stretch of the Atatürk Bulvarı, provided a unique opportunity to study the eastern edge of the site at considerable depth. During the short campaign our work fell naturally into two phases, first recording material

in the underpass - cutting south of the intersection, and later digging exploratory trenches in the gardens to the west, in order to assess future possibilities and requirements.

The western face of the underpass - cutting revealed the eastern ends of two adjacent structures, each 15 m. wide; the southern was called Building A, the northern (Ill. 2). Building B, and both were dated by pottery in their foundations to the first part of the sixth century. Elsewhere in the underpass traces of an earlier necropolis were recorded, including a plain, gabled sarcophagus, (3) Fortunately there were no other major buildings in this area of road - development.

Our trenches further west disclosed substantial remains of a third structure (called Building C), which lies north of, and parallel to, A and B. This is a complex of barrel - and cross - vaulted chambers, with much of the brick - vaulting intact (Ill. 3). Brick - stamps from C were identical with some recorded in A, referring to the third year of an indiction: this would suit the date (A. D. 524 - 5) proposed on historical grounds for the commencement of the church. A further corollary is that, A, B and C are contemporary, and perhaps indeed parts of the same building.

Further trenches to the south of C, and on a line with Building B in the underpass, yielded substantial walls buried in a thick layer of debris. This layer con-

(1) C. Mango and I. Ševcenko, «Remains of the Church of St. Polyuktos at Constantinople», *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* XV (1961), p. 243 f.

(2) The campaign was directed by the authors, assisted by Mr. G. R. J. Lawson, A.R.I.B.A. (architect), Mrs. Harrison (photographer), and Mr. J. W. Hayes (pottery - specialist). The constant practical help and encouragement of Mr. Necati Dolunay, Director of the Archaeological Museum, is most gratefully acknowledged.

(3) For a similar sarcophagus found containing a coin of Domitian, see N. Firatli, «Finds from the Çemberlitaş district», *Annual of the Archaeological Museum* 11 - 12 (1964), p. 207, pl. XXXIV, 4.

tained fragments of wall - and floor-mosaic and of painted wall - plaster, a great quantity of polychrome marble wall - veneer, and a large number of finely carved architectural fragments of marble, including window - mullions, a cross - in - arcade frieze (Ill. 8), and three fragments of a column - shaft elaborately inlaid with squares and triangles of green glass and amethyst (Ill. 7). There were also many small fragments of marble - carving in the same style as the blocks discovered here in 1960 : characteristic are vine - leaves with salient veins and drill - holes between the leaf - tips, and the practice of deep under - drilling.

Two further discoveries elsewhere are of exceptional interest. A large pier - capital of Proconnesian marble was found lying where it had fallen in a seventeenth - century rubbish - pit within Building B (Ill. 9). It is identical in form, decoration and measurement with a pair of capitals in Venice, which, together with their supporting piers, are believed to have come from Acre; it is now clear that all three capitals are of Constantinopolitan origin. (4) The intimate connection of the pair in Venice with Saraçhane is emphasised by the discovery at Saraçhane of a monogram (Ill. 10) which recurs on one of the piers at Venice. The important implications of this discovery will be examined by us on another occasion.

Although the elucidation of the architectural plan must there can be

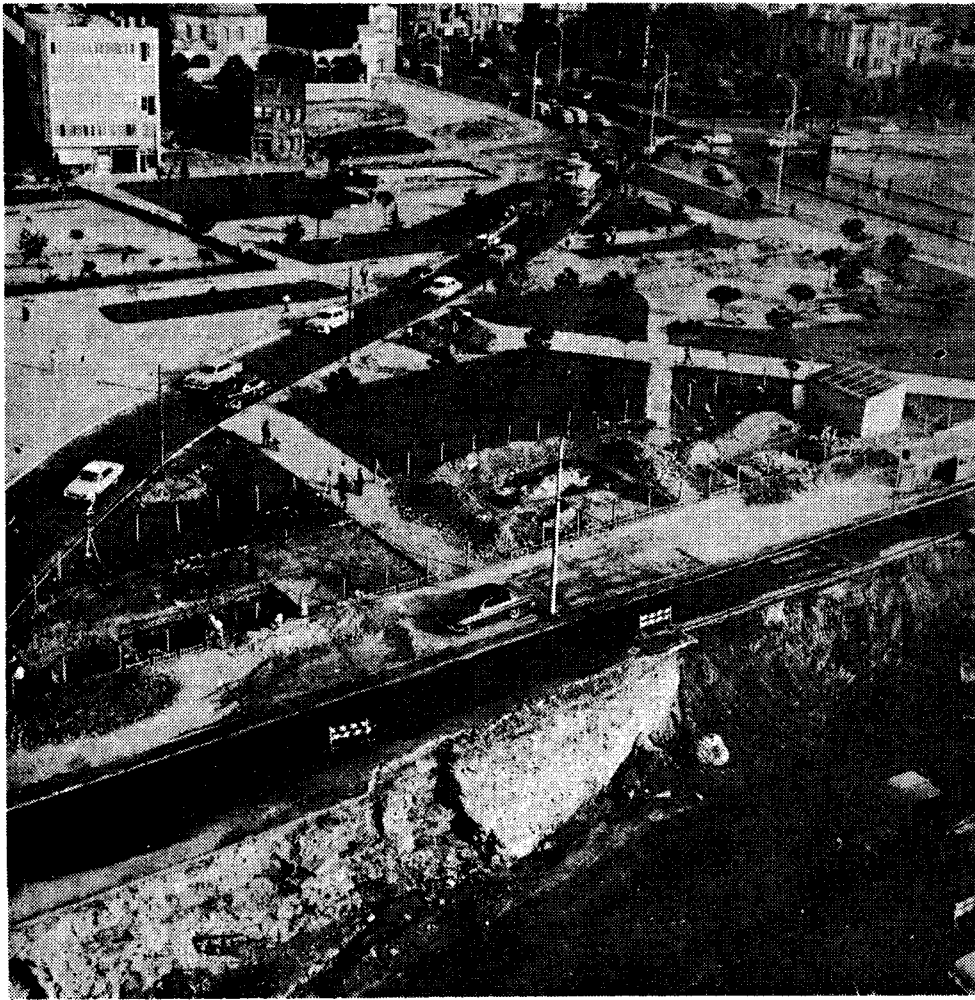
little doubt that the church of St. Polyuktos has been located. Moreover, earlier walls have been found to underlie it at several points, (Ills. 5, 6), and these may be part of the fifth - century church which is known to have existed on this site. (5) The later history of the area is attested by a fine sequence of Turkish and imported pottery from a series of intrusive rubbish - pits extending from the late - fifteenth to the twentieth century. The only structural remains of the Turkish period so far encountered are the foundations of the furnace of the furnace of a small **konak hamamı** (Ill. 4).

During the subsequent autumn and winter the roadworks at Saraçhane continued, under the constant scrutiny of N. FIRATLI, who recorded remains of the İbrahim Paşa Hamamı beneath the modern intersection; in its foundations was found a great quantity of re - used architectural elements, doubtless originally from the ancient colonnaded street which followed the line of the modern one. A large number of west - east conduits were noted at this point (6), and, nearer the Aqueduct of Valens, in the north - west angle of the intersection, a column, Theodosian capital and **opus sectile** pavement point to the presence of yet another church in this archaeologically important region.

(4) Cf. M. Kalligas in *Arch. Eph.* 1938 (1940), p. 70 f.; also W. F. Volbach, *Frühchristliche Kunst* (1958), pl. 208, p. 85.

(5) Of. Mango - Sevcenko, *loc. cit.* (note 1, above).

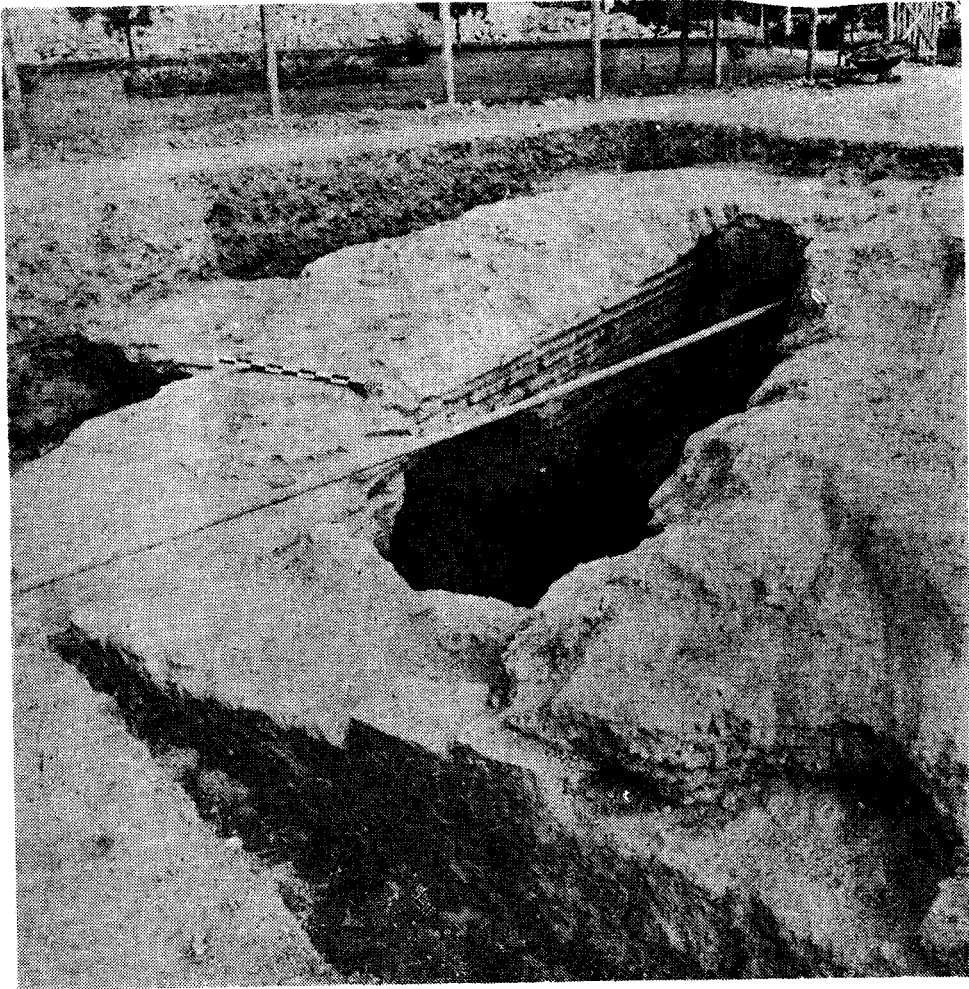
(6) One is a terracotta pipe (diam. 0.30 m.) with armatures of stone, as at Pergamon; cf. F. Graeber, *Die Wasserleitungen in Pergamon I*, 3, p. 367, fig. 4, pl. 89.



Res. 1.



Res. 2.



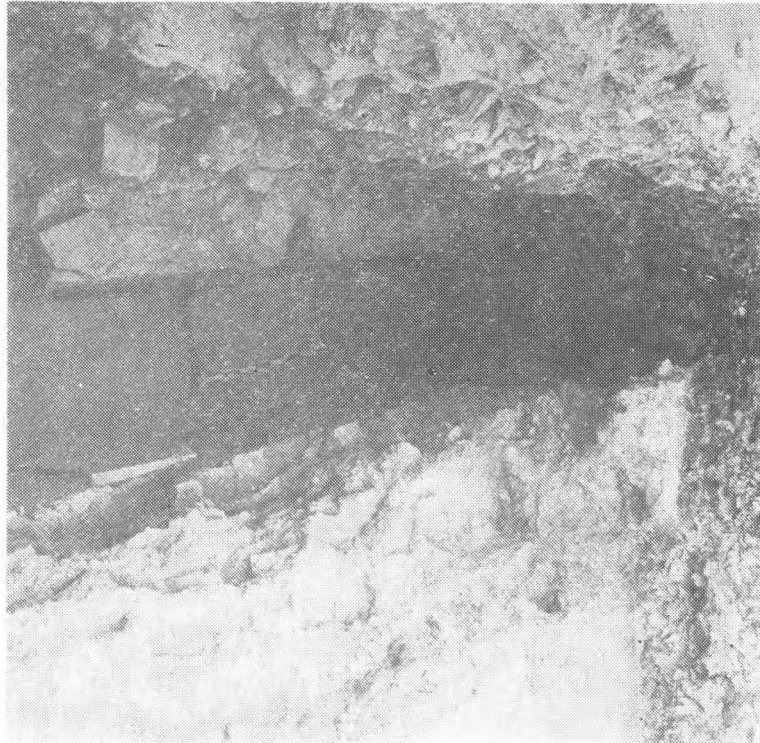
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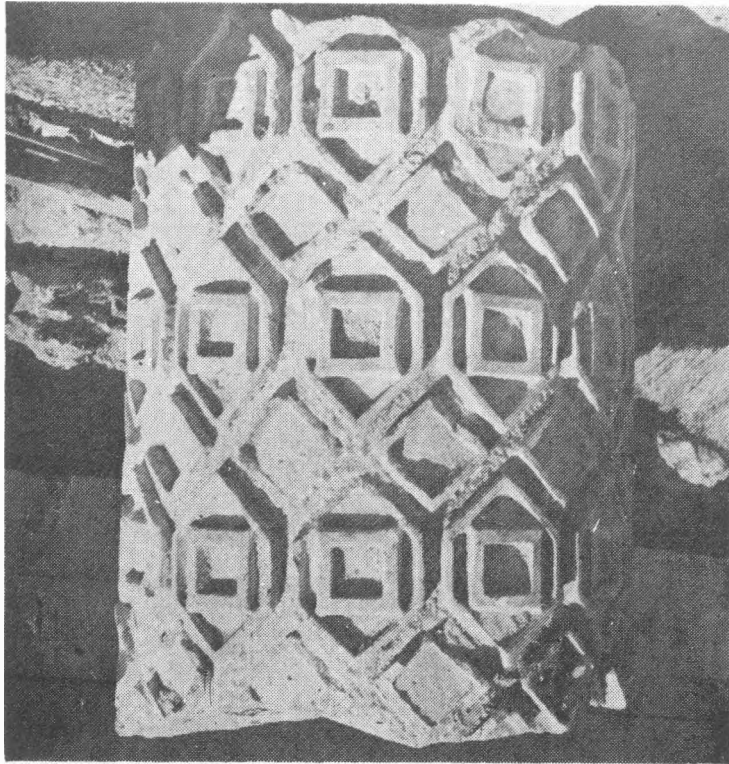
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Res. 5



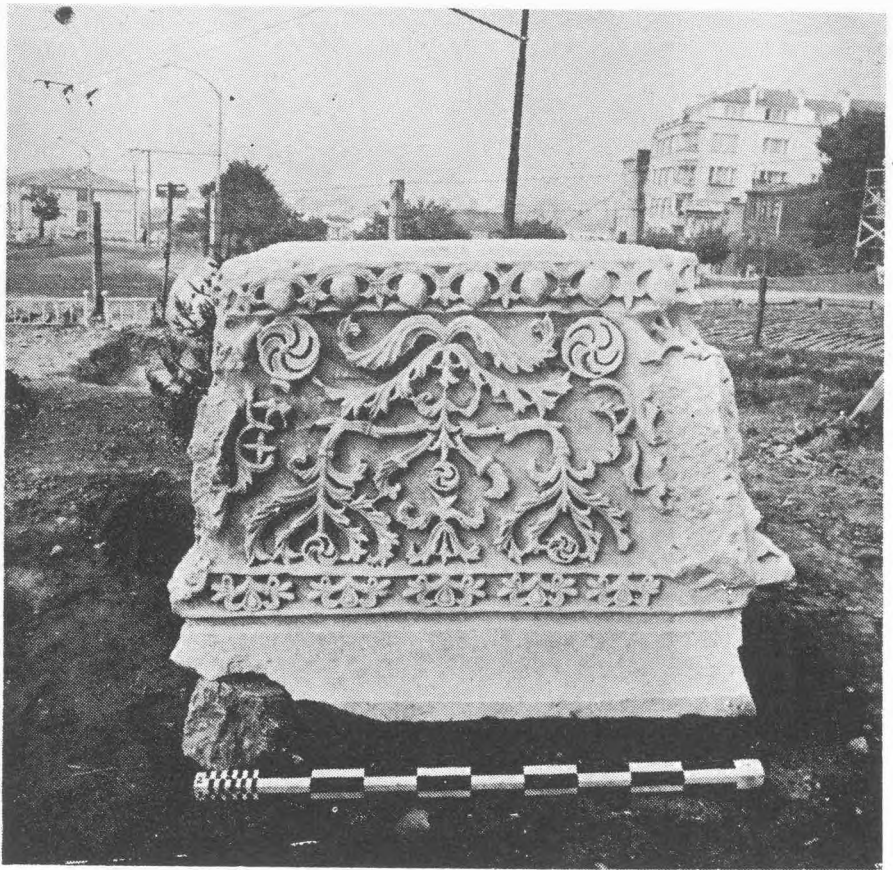
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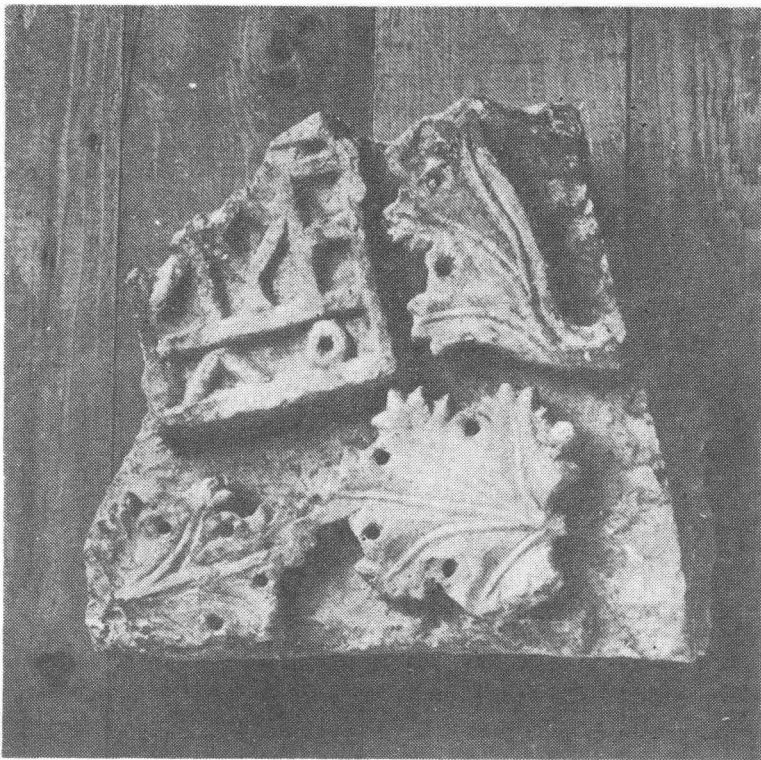
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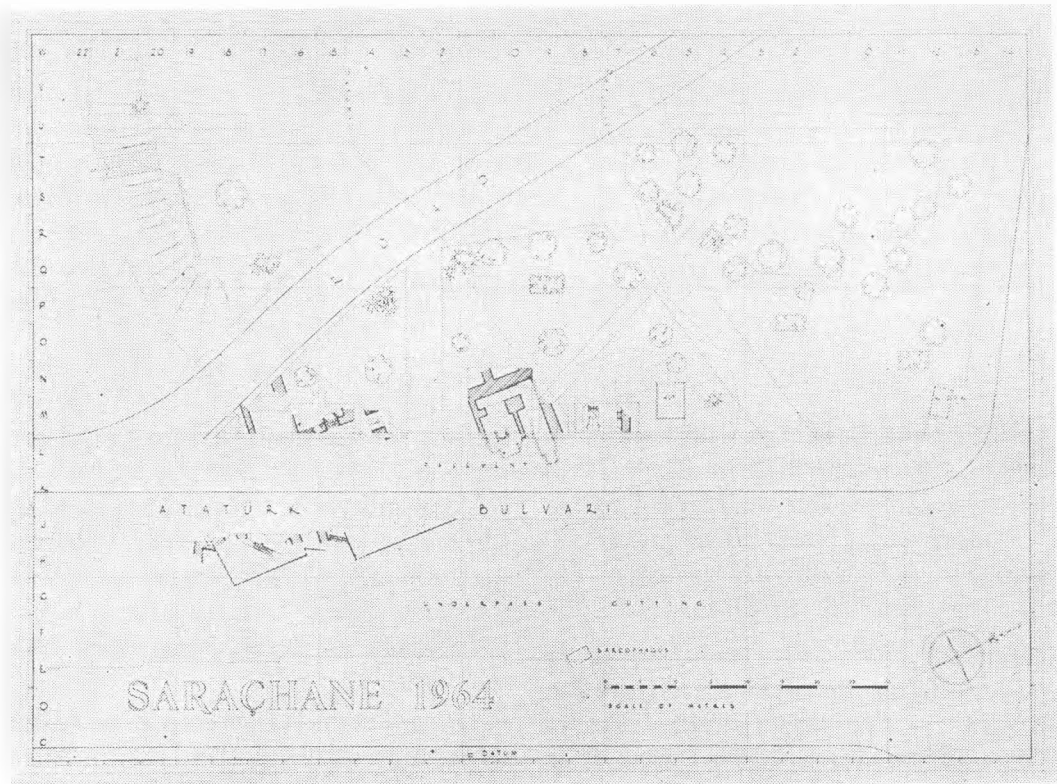
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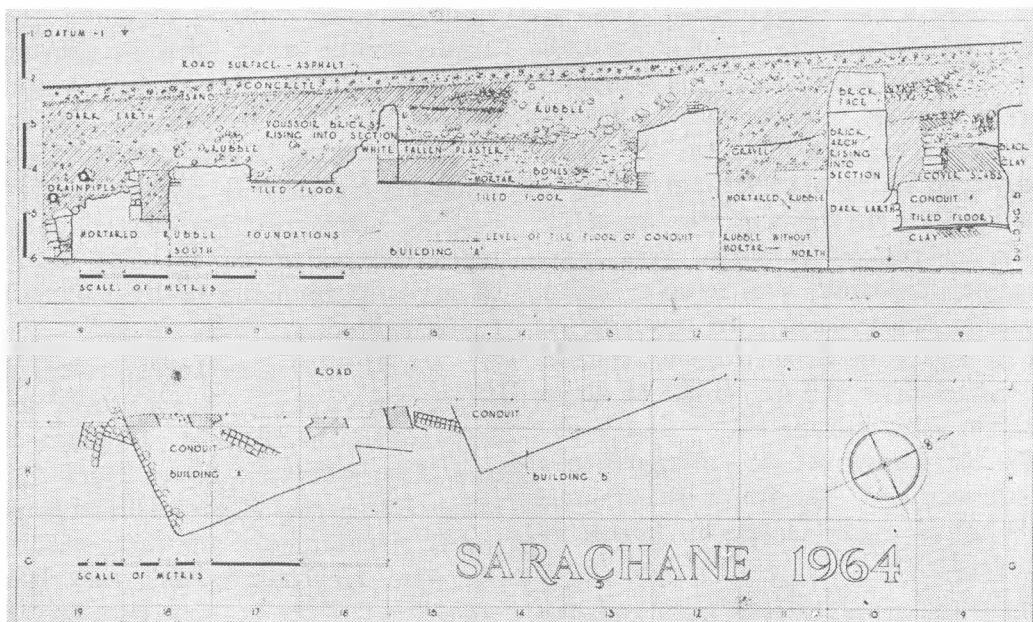
Res. 9.



Res. 10



Plan A



Plan B