

SOKNOPAIΟΥ NESOS
PROJECT · II

Greek and Egyptian Texts I

(2003-2014)

A CURA DI

MARIO CAPASSO E PAOLA DAVOLI



Soknopaiou Nesos Project II

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(2003-2014)

a cura di

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*A Mario Capasso
che ha saputo sognare l'impossibile
e renderlo reale*

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I.

The Archaeological Contexts: a Synthesis

PAOLA DAVOLI

1. INTRODUCTION

An initial excavation report concerning the period 2003-2009, with detailed descriptions of each stratigraphic unit, including their content and interpretation, has been published (DAVOLI 2012). Given the rich variety and large number of items recovered that are still under study, the report published only limited catalogues of the materials found. The papyri and *ostraka* recovered in those seasons are remarked specifically, with their inventory number, in the above-mentioned report. Preliminary catalogues with distribution diagrams have also been published (CAPASSO 2012a; STADLER 2012a).

Since then other texts (papyri, *ostraka*, epigraphs) have been recovered in three excavation seasons (2010, 2012 and 2014)¹ for which scientific reports have not yet been published.² This chapter presents a short overview of the methods and archaeological contexts in which the texts were found to better understand their meanings and uses within the temple precinct and beyond.³

Ostraka, papyri and some inscriptions on stone, as well as the other materials found in the excavations, are preserved in the regional SCA magazine in Kom Aushim.

¹ It was decided to limit this volume to the 2003-2014 finds because they were found in an internally consistent context within temple ST 20. Trench 10 has been included although it is located outside temple ST 20. However, the excavation was carried out in 2014 and the extension of this trench is not a priority for future campaigns. The 2016 and 2017 excavation campaigns concentrated on ST 203 and ST 18 and their exploration will be expanded in the future. Also Trench 2 is included, although it is located west of the *temenos*. It is one of the trenches opened by Zucker in 1910 and rich in *ostraka*.

² 2011 and 2013 saw no field campaigns for security reasons. Two other volumes of the Soknopaiou Nesos Project series are in preparation: an object catalogue and the archaeological and architectural report. Short preliminary reports are available at: [www.museopapirologico.eu/sok_rep.htm]; an overview of the architecture of temple ST 20 can be found in DAVOLI 2015 and DAVOLI 2016. See also CAPASSO-DAVOLI 2013a; CAPASSO-DAVOLI 2013b.

³ It should be stressed that not all the fragments of papyri found and recorded during the excavation seasons are informative enough to warrant publication. In this chapter I will mention all the recorded texts, but specific reference numbers are assigned only to those published in this volume.

2. METHODS

The archaeological excavation followed the stratigraphic method,⁴ although we were aware from the beginning of the work that the area had already been the object of numerous undocumented excavations as well as spoliations, which began as early as the abandonment of the settlement (mid 3rd century AD) and continued until recent times. From the very beginning, therefore, we did not expect to find sealed and uncontaminated stratigraphic contexts throughout the area. However, we are convinced that this is the only method that offers the possibility of understanding the nature and formation of the deposition stratigraphic units (DSUs) and the relations between them and the surrounding architecture. The designation and numbering of the DSUs allow us to keep track of the location of all the materials found, not only selected pieces, with the precise place of discovery marked on the plans. Accurate documentation and the presence on site of a range of specialists working together and exchanging information about the materials and the contexts enable spatial, quantitative, and contextual analyses at the end of the excavations.

Positive and negative DSUs, such as walls and floors, pits, and cuts, follow the same type of numbering as positive DSUs. The excavation was carried out in sectors of varying size, where possible delimited by the presence of walls along their perimeter (FIG. I.2). This approach was mostly dictated by practical factors, such as the loose consistency of most of the DSUs, which prevents the formation of vertical or long-lasting edges. The base matrix of most of the deposition units is loose sand, mixed with debris from collapses and the spoliation of mud brick and stone walls.

The documentation was carried out on paper in the field and was then digitized in a Data Base named *Kemet*. Total Station, photogrammetry and photomodelling techniques were used to produce plans, prospects, and cross sections.⁵ The elevations were calculated in metres above sea level, taking as a reference point Station G established by the University of Michigan in 1931, located north of the *temenos* (elevation 30.71 m: BOAK 1935, Plans I-II).

The photographic documentation of the buildings, stratigraphic units and objects is almost completely digital and is of high quality. Infrared techniques were also adopted for texts and drawings traced with black ink.

In the following descriptions, dimensions are expressed in metres, north-south by east-west, and elevations are in metres above or below sea level (DAVOLI 2012, p. 121).

3. BUILDING NAMES AND INVENTORY NUMBERS

Buildings, feature stratigraphic units (FSUs), DSUs, sectors, trial trenches and objects are all defined by numbers.

Buildings are identified by an alphanumeric code that is intended to provide general information about the building's location. Thus, the code ST is adopted for buildings located

⁴ HARRIS 1983; CARANDINI 1991.

⁵ Until 2017, plans were drawn by hand (1:20 scale) in the field and then digitized using AutoCAD, following the graphic and terminological conventions of the *Archaeological Site Manual. Museum of London Archaeology Service*, London 1994³. From 2017 onwards, plans were drawn on orthophotos in order to speed up the process of documentation in the field using advanced recording techniques.

inside the *temenos* of Soknopaiou Nesos (e.g. ST 18). The rooms within the building are named in capital letters (e.g. ST 18A).

For the same reason, the DSUs and FSUs located inside the *temenos* retain the code ST, followed by the last two digits of the excavation year in which they were numbered (e.g. ST03), followed by / and then the progressive number of the stratigraphic unit (e.g. ST03/1). The numbering is progressive and, for convenience, the numbers of the units discovered in each excavation season begin with the following hundred (e.g. ST03/1, ST04/100, ST05/200 etc.). Since the numbers of the DSUs and FSUs are consecutive and unique, there is no possibility of confusion or double numbering. In graphic documentation, such as drawings and plans, only the progressive number is used. For objects found on the surface outside the excavation areas, the DSU is expressed as /-/ (e.g. ST01/-/1). It is therefore easy to identify those objects found not in excavated layers.

The field inventory number of the objects is composed of the number of the DSU in which the object was found, followed by a new progressive number separated from the DSU number by / (e.g. ST03/1/1).⁶ Subsequently, on publication in a catalogue, the object is assigned a new number in accordance with type.

In this volume, texts are typologically divided into groups indicated by the following codes:

PSN I G + no. = Papyri Soknopaiou Nesos I Greek + no.

PSN I D + no. = Papyri SN I Demotic + no.

PSN I H + no. = Papyri SN I Hieratic + no.

PSN I F + no. = Papyri SN I Figured + no.

PSN I C + no. = Papyri SN I Coptic + no.

OSN I G + no. = *Ostraka* SN I Greek + no.

OSN I D + no. = *Ostraka* SN I Demotic + no.

OSN I C + no. = *Ostraka* SN I Coptic + no.

OSN I F + no. = *Ostraka* SN I Figured + no.

ISN I G + no. = Inscription SN I Greek + no.

4. THE *TEMENOS* AND THE STRUCTURES INSIDE IT (FIGS. I.2-3)

The *temenos* occupies around 5% of the entire archaeological area (DAVOLI 2007). The precinct walls describe a perimeter of irregular shape: the north side measures 86 m, the south 88 m, the east 114.5 m and the west 124.5 m. The thickness of the walls is about 3.8 m measured at the base, as was observed in Trench 10 where the bottom of the wall was reached at an elevation of 25.17 m. The lower, inner part of the *temenos* exposed in this trench was in a good state of preservation and there was no mud plaster covering its surface.

The entrance to the temple area was located in the middle of the south side, in front of the *dromos*. Nevertheless, it has been hypothesized that there was another entrance in the middle of the north side, where today there is a wide gap, just in front of the contra temple (ST 203). The southern gateway, probably constructed with limestone blocks, has disappeared, along

⁶ The consecutive numbers that identify the objects are not necessarily related to their place of discovery, but rather to the recording process. In other words, two objects with consecutive numbers may have been found at some distance from each other, even if they were found in the same DSU. The absolute and relative positions of discovery can only be deduced from the stratigraphic plans.

with a columned building, possibly a kiosk (SD 205), originally located on the *dromos* in front of the gateway itself. The spoliation of buildings and structures in limestone blocks is easily recognizable throughout the site and the area of the temple in particular. The gateways in the *temenos* and the doorways in ST 18 suffered the same fate. The date, method, and scope of this spoliation are no longer clear, but it is certain that much of it was carried out before 1819, the year of G.B. Belzoni's watercolour, which is the oldest graphic evidence of the state of preservation of the site (SNP I, Tavv. 2-3).

In the area inside the precinct there are more than 20 buildings still visible (FIG. I.3), but many others lie under the sand and debris, as demonstrated by the geomagnetic survey carried out along the western side by T. Smekalova (SMEKALOVA 2012). In the middle of the area there are three temples built on a north-south axis (ST 18, 20, 203), but what are probably other temples and chapels are beside them, such as ST 19, 5, 6, 7.

Temple ST 18 (FIG. I.4) is on an axis with the southern gateway in the *temenos*. It is a small building (13.6 x 13.15 m) constructed with slabs of local brown limestone, preserved to a height of at least 7 metres and surrounded by a mudbrick *temenos* (32.5 x 18.6 m). The stone walls were originally covered with a thick white plaster that is only partially preserved. The plan is very similar to that of other small temples of the Ptolemaic Period, with a precinct wall, courtyard, vestibule, and internal staircase. Fourteen rooms are still recognizable, though the roof and the second floor of the building have collapsed, and the rooms are currently obstructed by fallen material. No scientific excavation has ever been carried out inside this sanctuary, except in room P in the southeast corner of the building during season 2016. The current state of the building suggests that the temple was transformed into a monumental passageway or *propylon* by adding a door in the centre of the rear wall of the *naos* (ST 18A). With the opening of this door, the temple was extended northward, and the *naos* was relocated to the new sanctuary ST 20 (FIG. I.5).⁷ The stratigraphy revealed by Trench 4, in the middle of Courtyard C1 located between ST 18 and ST 20, demonstrated that the door in the rear wall of ST 18 was opened after the new temple ST 20 was built (DAVOLI 2012, p. 210). We can therefore suggest that the cult and related furnishings were transferred to ST 20 only after its completion at the beginning of the Roman period. Why the old temple (ST 18) was retained, albeit with different functions, is not easily discernible.⁸ It is possible that the change of function also determined a change in the structure, especially on its central axis, along which the image of the god would pass during the procession (DAVOLI 2014, pp. 54-55). The demotic text of the Roman period known as the "Daily Ritual" describes the ritual performed by the priests every morning in front of the doors⁹ in ST 18 (STADLER 2022).

The new building ST 20 was probably founded at the end of the Hellenistic period and completed at the beginning of the Roman period (FIGS. I.6-7). The lower part of the external walls was restored and new paving in grey limestone slabs was installed around the temple, probably during the 2nd century AD. This chronology is based on the data collected from the deep

⁷ Additions and extensions to temple buildings, which for the most part affected the front of the sanctuary and involved adding rooms, courtyards with porticoes and pylons, are common enough in Egypt. There are nevertheless some cases in which an extension was created in the rear, with the consequent relocation of the *naos*. The opening of a door in the back wall of the *naos* is attested at Philae in the *mammisi* of Isis, the temple of Arsenouphis and the temple of Hathor. In all three cases, the extension is dated to Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II.

⁸ The dismantling of such a building would have required great effort, far in excess of what was invested in its renovation.

⁹ See STADLER 2017, pp. 139-154.

exploration trenches excavated below this paving (Trench 8 and 9). In fact, few sealed and reliable stratigraphies have so far been found in the area. Other trenches are needed, to collect data that will enable more precise dating of the building and restoration sequences.

Of temple ST 20 (27.40 x 19 m) only the ground floor is preserved, with 17 rooms, two staircases leading to the upper floors positioned east and west of the main axis, four small staircases hidden in the walls leading to subterranean crypts and the so-called mysterious corridor (FIG. I.8). Two other crypts were hidden under the floor of the eastern staircase.¹⁰ The floors are well preserved only in the central rooms,¹¹ in which grey slabs were used; in the lateral rooms and corridors the floors were made with yellow limestone slabs that are only partly preserved. In some points in the floors, restorations have been recognized, executed with mud bricks and reused stones. These were probably carried out during the Late Antique phase, when the temple was reused for other purposes. As already stated, the floors in the rooms located on the central axis are made of different, greyish limestone with respect to the other floors in the temple. They are probably the result of the replacement of the original paving in the 2nd century AD during the restoration (Phase V: DAVOLI 2015, p. 120). The temple was accessed through the main door in the middle of the south wall, and through a side door in the west wall. This minor door opened into room D, from which one could directly enter the first central hall (room A) or the “offering room” (room F), by means of a passage in the west staircase, or the small room C in the southwest corner of the temple. The side door was probably used by the priests to introduce offerings into the temple that were prepared in the buildings to the west of it (DAVOLI 2015, p. 126). The door is surrounded by a relief cornice on its external side whose surface was not smoothed. The surface of each wall block is decorated with bosses surrounded by four flat cornices. On one of these flat cornices there is a graffito with the name Eirenaios (ISN I G 8, CAPASSO, Ch. III this volume).

A pavement of grey slabs is believed to have been installed on west and east sides of ST 20 during the 2nd century AD. The same kind of pavement is seen in courtyard C1. It was probably laid together with the paving of some of the central rooms in ST 20. The two buildings ST 23 and ST 200, respectively to the west and east of C1, seem to have been built before the installation of this paving.

The pavement on the east side of ST 20 was removed in Late Antiquity, while that on the west side (ST12/810) is well preserved (FIG. I.10). On that side of the building, an intact stratigraphy with organic deposits and new Late Antique paving (ST10/717) with related features was found in 2010 (FIG. I.11). These features were built in front of and around the side door of the temple with reused stone elements including fragments of statues and cornices. The presence of a Late Antique pavement (2 x 2.57 m) immediately in front of the lateral door suggests that it was conceived for a specific purpose that cannot be related to a generic or temporary reoccupation of the temple. Five *ostraka* and a scrap of papyrus found in separate stratigraphic units in the temple bear Coptic texts (see CARLIG this volume), but their fragmentary condition does not allow us to reach any conclusion, although the presence of Christians is attested by a cross painted on a door jamb in contra-temple ST 203 and by an *ostrakon* with a *staurogram* from Trench 10 (OSN I F 4) (CAPASSO 2015a).

The evidence for the presence of people in the *temenos* from the 4th until the 7th or 8th cen-

¹⁰ Looters had already found and partly dismantled all the crypts.

¹¹ The floors were heavily damaged following the revolution of January 2011. Since those events, ST 20 has been almost completely backfilled for conservation reasons.

ture, after the abandonment of the settlement and of the cult, does indicate a plurality of activities such as squatting, spoliation of valuable, possibly remote housing for Christian monks, and the demolition of the temple. The recent discovery of a Late Antique and Byzantine phases in Dime is of great interest and can contribute to the understanding of the fate of Egyptian temples after their abandonment (CAPUTO 2023).

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS OF THE TEXTS

The archaeological contexts in which papyri and *ostraka* were found in seasons 2003-2009 are fully presented in the volume SNP I, and the DSUs will thus not be described in detail in this chapter. The repeated episodes of re-occupation, destruction and plunder in and around ST 20, occurring from Late Antiquity onwards, had three main effects on the objects originally present in the temple: their destruction (such as the wooden objects used for fires) or dismemberment (such as the statues and other stone artefacts); the scattering of fragments belonging to the same object or monument across several locations and DSUs; the theft of the more valuable objects and papyri. As a result of these processes, papyri and *ostraka* were found scattered¹² rather than in their place of primary deposition. There are a few exceptions however, sealed below the floors, and these contexts will be described in detail. The locations of discovery of the texts examined in this volume are shown in the distribution plans (FIGS. I.20-24).

Two major concentrations of *ostraka* and papyri are worth mentioning because their places of primary deposition can be deduced from the dynamics of formation of the DSUs in which they were found (DAVOLI 2012, pp. 132-143). In Sector 1, east of the courtyard C1, inside and overlying rooms ST 200A and C, there was a heap of sand and debris (DSUs ST03/6, ST03/45, ST04/100, ST05/212) clearly the result of previous excavations carried out in the courtyard and inside the rooms of building ST 200 itself. The written materials discarded or unnoticed by the looters consist of about 60 fragments of papyri in Greek,¹³ Demotic,¹⁴ Hieroglyphic and Hieratic;¹⁵ 10 papyrus amulets;¹⁶ 80 Demotic,¹⁷ and one figured *ostraka*. The materials found in these DSUs are consistent with those found in the courtyard and in rooms ST 200C and B and thus their places of primary deposition may have been within Sector 1. However, several fragments of stone monuments found in the same DSUs, including classical cornices and fragments of small capitals, clearly originate from contexts not associated with the courtyard. We may conclude that for many objects found in this looters' discard heap, the courtyard was

¹² The infill of the rooms was mainly composed of wind-blown sand mixed with limestone and white mortar debris resulting from the demolition of the building. In this infill, several robbery pits had been dug in the past, some reaching the floors, others cutting through the floors to the layers below. In a few areas, anthropic brown dust rich in the refuse of the last occupational phase (Late Antique) was found. Cf. CAPASSO 2012, p. 232 Fig. 1, p. 234 Fig. 2; STADLER 2012a, p. 265 Abb. 1.

¹³ Cf. CAPASSO Ch. II this volume: PSN I G 3-4, 7, 10.

¹⁴ Cf. STADLER this volume: PSN I D 1-14; 27-28.

¹⁵ Cf. STADLER this volume: PSN I H 1, possibly of the Roman period.

¹⁶ Cf. CAPASSO Ch. II this volume: PSN I F 1-2, 4, 10, 12, 14-17, 20.

¹⁷ Cf. ARLT this volume: OSN I D 27-28, 33-35, 38, 46-70, 75, 91, 117-118, 120-121, 123, 386, 388, 402-404, 409-410, 416, 418-420, 431, 433, 437-444, 446-452, 454-455, 457, 459-461, 463-469, 474. The text on *ostrakon* D 446 was written on a diagnostic fragment of an amphora AE 2/3 (end of 1st century BC-beginning of the 1st century AD): see CAPUTO this volume.

neither their original place of use nor their place of primary deposition; probably some of them were reused within Sector 1 or nearby areas in Late Antiquity. Figured papyri can be ascribed to the group of the amulets, perfectly coherent with others found in several others DSUs in Sector 1; Greek and Demotic texts are very fragmentary and in many cases their content is not clear. They are dated according to palaeography from Ptolemaic period until 2nd-3rd century AD. Documentary and literary texts seem to relate to the life of the sanctuary. The numerous Demotic *ostraka*, dated according to palaeography to the Roman period, are mainly administrative texts, except for OSN D 433, which relates to the astrological sphere. 34 name *ostraka* are from DSUs ST03/6 and ST04/100: their high number in these dumped layers suggests that their original place of use or of storage may have been one of the room in the mud brick building ST 200.

In Sector 1, to the west of building ST 23, is another similar, but smaller, heap of debris (from top to bottom, DSUs ST03/39, ST10/706, 710).¹⁸ Originating from previous excavations, it contained 120 demotic *ostraka*,¹⁹ 1 Greek and 1 Demotic-Greek *ostraka*,²⁰ and 13 fragments of Demotic and Greek papyri.²¹ This heap was only partially excavated (8.5 x 8 m) and part of it is still *in situ* because it supports the west wall of building ST 23 (ST03/9), which leans significantly westwards. The materials found in these DSUs showed that the heap originated from the excavation of ST 23 and ST 204, a mud brick building (Trench 4, DAVOLI 2012, pp. 207-212) of the Hellenistic period over which the floor in courtyard C1 was built following its demolition. The *ostraka* are consistent with those found in the infill of the rooms in ST 23, especially the name-*ostraka* from room D (DAVOLI 2012, pp. 140-145). Most of the *ostraka* are dated to the Roman period, some between the 1st and 2nd century AD, one to the 3rd century AD, and attest mainly names. Papyri are mainly documentary (custom's receipt, receipt, contract), but few fragments bear religious texts, one of which has been dated to the Ptolemaic period (PSN I D 78).

These two clusters of *ostraka*, and the name-*ostraka* in particular, were plausibly stored in either ST 23 or ST 200 or both. It is thus possible that the other name-*ostraka* found in the temple area also originally belonged to the same group(s).

During seasons 2010 and 2012, an area measuring 25 x 4 m was excavated along the western side of ST 20 (in Sectors 2-5), north of the above-mentioned looters' heap. It revealed the pres-

¹⁸ From 27 m to 25.55 m elevation. Worth mentioning in connection with the written materials is a wooden scribe's tablet ST03/39/216: CAPASSO 2012b. Other objects include four Ptolemaic coins (ST10/706/3278, 3290, 3388, 3389), a coin of Vespasianus (ST03/39/267), glass inlays (ST10/706/3383, 3396, 3400, 3436, 3458, 3459, 3606, ST10/710/3603, 3608), one figured mud seal (ST10/706/3421), a few beads (ST10/706/3207, 3384), one bronze arrowhead (ST10/706/3346), various bronze objects (ST10/706/3391, 3274, 3279, 3403, ST10/710/3622), fragments of wooden furniture, ropes, sandals, fragments of stone elements and sculptures (ST03/39/231, ST10/706/3250, 3420, 3492), iron nails (ST10/706/3324), three mud stoppers for amphorae (ST10/706/3286, 3387, 3554), and pottery datable to the period from the 2nd or 1st century BC to the 7th century AD.

¹⁹ Cf. ARLT this volume: they are mainly name-*ostraka* of the Roman period OSN I D 30, 36-37; OSN I D 125-129, 131-132, 134-135, 137-194, 196-201, 210-211, 216-221, 226-231, 239-250, 252, 261, 390-395; 195, 225, 234-235; and some uncertain texts OSN I D 479-485. OSN I D 182 is written on a sherd identified as amphora AE3 subtype 3.1, made in Magdola between the first and the second century AD: see CAPUTO this volume.

²⁰ Cf. in this volume ARLT: OSN I D 169; PELLÉ: OSN I G 8-9.

²¹ Cf. in this volume STADLER: PSN I D 73-75, 77-79; CAPASSO: PSN I G 5.

ence of a pavement composed of grey limestone slabs (ST10/725+ST12/810) (FIG. I.10), quite well preserved and not subject to spoliation, unlike a similar pavement on the east side of the temple, or damaged by recent excavations. The stratigraphy above this pavement is quite uniform along the whole area, but the DSUs were distinguished by Sectors (FIG. I.2), and the analysis proceeded from top to bottom and from south to north. Initially, there was a surface layer of windblown sand²² mixed with debris excavated from inside the temple's rooms by looters. *Ostraka* and papyri were found only in DSUs 700 and 701 (Sectors 2 and 3 west) and can be interpreted as materials scattered northwards from debris heap 706: 15 Demotic *ostraka*, 1 Greek *ostrakon*, and 2 fragments of Demotic papyrus.²³ A fragment of local grey limestone (ST10/800/3745) is probably part of object ST09/634/3005, an unidentified sculpture bearing a Hieratic inscription.

The underlying layer was composed of debris mixed with mortar resulting from the dismantling of the walls of temple ST 20. It was very compact and difficult to remove and did not yield any texts, although it did contain architectural elements in stone, such as two gutters and the lions above them.²⁴ This concrete-like layer helped to preserve the stratigraphy buried beneath it and prevented the looters from destroying evidence of the building's reuse in Late Antiquity. A thin layer of sand²⁵ covered a floor (ST10/717) made of reused stones and pieces of statue in front of the temple's side door (FIG. I.11).²⁶ These reused elements belong to statues,

²² DSUs ST10/700=701=800=801, from 27 m to 25.55 m elevation. Objects in these DSUs include beads (ST10/700/3185, 3200, ST10/701/3256, ST10/800/3814, ST10/801/3785, 3815), a Bes amulet (ST10/801/3789), mud seals (ST10/700/3197, 3209), painted wooden boards (ST10/700/3205, ST10/800/3914, ST10/801/3892), glass inlays (ST10/701/3183, 3187, 5056, ST10/800/3782, 3784, 3829, 3830, ST10/801/3759, 3779, 3780, 3831-3832), architectural stone elements (ST10/701/3192-3194, 3195, 3228, 3235, 3295, 3239, ST10/800/3758, 3740, 3751, 3737, ST10/801/3736, 3739, 3757, 3788), paving slabs (ST10/801/3773, 3778, 3792), fragments of statues (ST10/800/3738, 3741, 3742), bronze objects (ST10/800/3934, 4040), a mud stopper for an LRA 7 (ST10/801/3917), flint tools (ST10/800/3754, ST10/801/3816, 3817), fishing tools (ST10/800/3772, ST10/801/3890), fragments of sandals and wooden furniture and pottery vessels dated to various periods up to the 7th-8th century (CAPUTO 2023).

²³ Cf. STADLER this volume: PSN I D 72, 76, Roman period. ARLT this volume: OSN I D 130, 136, 202-203, 213-215, 254-260, 398, all names dated to the Roman period, some of which already present in *ostraka* already mentioned and found in the DSUs of the looters's dump east and west of the courtyard, and also from Trench 2 to the west of the *temenos*. As noted by Arlt, there are several *ostraka* mentioning members of the same family: see commentary in ARLT this volume OSN I D 18.

²⁴ DSUs ST10/704=705=ST12/802=803. Gutters: ST10/802/3743, 3748, 3749, ST10/803/3744, 3753, 3750. Other objects recovered from these layers include a fragmentary head of a female statue (ST10/803/3805), a fragment of a statue (ST10/802/3806, which joins with ST09/607/2727) and an offering table (ST10/704/3407).

²⁵ DSUs ST10/712 = 715 = ST12/804 = 805. Texts were recovered only from ST10/715: 3 Greek papyri and 2 Demotic *ostraka*, cf. ARLT this volume: OSN I D 262, 396, both name-*ostraka* of the Roman period. Among the other objects found were fragments of statues such as: ST10/715/3502 representing a priest, of which several other fragments have been found in various DSUs (ST05/203/887, ST12/800/3741, ST10/717/3508 and 3427, ST07/400/2234, ST12/807/3809); another fragment of a male statue (ST10/804/3804) that combines with several fragments from several other DSUs (ST03/42; ST06/342; ST07/403, 407, 432, 459; ST09/602; ST04/100/765, ST07/407/2230, ST05/233/1174, ST05/203/1184, ST03/26/384); and a fragment of a female statue (ST10/804/3808, which relates to ST07/432/3157).

A fragment of a stela (ST10/712/3440) that joins with ST08/504/2451 and ST10/731/3533, beads (ST10/712/3474, ST10/715/3473), glass inlays (ST10/712/3475, 3600-3602, ST10/804/3833-3835, 3864), nails (ST10/712/3626, ST10/715/3621, 3623) and fragments of wooden furniture were also found.

²⁶ Floor ST10/717 was roughly executed and of limited size (2 x 2.60 m); its upper surface is at an elevation

buildings and monuments that had already been at least partly broken up and dismantled before the floor was built. It was laid probably in the 6th century on a layer of sand and debris about 30 cm thick, the upper part of which was rich in organic sediments due to the presence of animals and people. The best-preserved part of this layer is below floor ST10/717 (DSUs ST10/729+730), while to the north and south of it (DSUs ST10/718=719), it was more contaminated, having been used as a soft walking surface beside the stone pavement ST10/717 (FIG. I.11). Built on ST10/719, immediately south of the door and the stone floor ST10/717, was a feature made of reused monuments that was possibly used as a manger. It was composed of three rectangular basins (ST10/720). These late features and layers (DSUs ST10/718=719=729=730=ST12/807=808) were above the Roman period stone floor (ST10/725+ST12/810). At least in part, the materials found in these sandy deposits can be considered refuse, including demolished parts of temple furnishings, which accumulated over time outside the temple. Hellenistic pottery fragments were found beside pottery dated to the 6th and 7th century AD, while fragments of broken statues, stone *naoi*,²⁷ and pieces of wooden furniture and their inlaid glass decoration imply the pillage of the interior of the temple after its closure in the mid third century AD. 15 Demotic *ostraka*, 8 Greek papyri, 1 Greek-Demotic papyrus, 2 Demotic papyri, and one Hieroglyphic papyrus were found.²⁸ An interesting mud seal with an impression from a ring bearing a double hieroglyphic cartouche (ST10/719/3503) is unfortunately very worn and difficult to read.

Below these layers there was a layer of windblown sand 20 cm thick (723=724=731=809) overlying the floor composed of grey limestone slabs (ST10/725+ST12/810) built along the west side of the temple during the restoration phase (ca. 2nd century AD) (FIG. I.10). In this sand were scattered limestone blocks from the temple, stelae²⁹ and floor slabs originating from the temple itself, attesting to some sort of ancient scavenging,³⁰ and dismantling prior to the demolition phase proper, during which most of the walls were systematically dismantled. The

of 25.69 m. Among the stones used for this floor there are fragments of statues that are believed to represent priests, such as ST10/717/3427+3508 (see above DSU 715), the feet of another basalt statue ST10/717/3506 joining with a fragment from ST10/718, and a cavetto cornice in basalt (ST10/717/3509) that was part of a cornice of the pseudoperipteral chapel in the contra-temple ST 203. Elements from the same chapel were found in ST10/719, including two pieces of a hathoric capital (ST10/719/3526) and another basalt cavetto cornice (ST10/719/3493).

²⁷ Pieces of a limestone naos with a Demotic inscription were recovered from ST10/718 (3449) along with a small fragment (ST10/718/3463) belonging to a seated limestone statue (ST06/300/1445). Other fragments of statues include ST10/719/3464 and 3522. Numerous glass inlays and pieces of wooden temple furniture (ST10/718/3536, 3605; ST10/719/3535, 3550, 3561-68; ST10/719/3539; ST10/719/3653, 3669, 3670) again constitute evidence of the pillage of the sanctuary after its closure. Glass and faïence vessels are well attested. Beads are found in almost every DSU: ST10/729/3552, ST10/718/3479, ST10/719/3480.

²⁸ Cf. STADLER this volume: PSN I H 2, possibly Roman period; PSN I D 80, Roman period, religious text. Name-*ostraka* cf. ARLT this volume: OSN I D 204-209, 222, 232-233, 236-238, 251, 253, 397. One *ostrakon* of uncertain content is Coptic (end of 7th-beginning of 8th century AD): cf. CARLIG this volume OSN I C 4, written on a sherd from a Late Roman 7 amphora, as well as a Greek *ostrakon* OSN I G 11, in PELLÉ this volume.

²⁹ CAPASSO this volume: ISN I G 2. Stele ST10/731/3533 is partially preserved and bears a Greek inscription possibly from the reign of Augustus. Stele ST12/809/3844 was not completed. Beads (ST10/723/3547, ST10/724/3499), glass inlays (ST10/724/3569, 3604, ST10/809/3881), a fragment of a statuette representing a lion (ST10/724/3658), glass and pottery vessels and nails were also recovered.

³⁰ In floors ST10/725 and ST12/810 two pits were dug in antiquity. In DSU ST12/809 the pottery includes Hellenistic, Roman and Late Roman vessels.

materials present are of the same kind as those found in the layers above. They include 2 Demotic *ostraka*,³¹ 1 figured *ostrakon* and 1 Greek papyrus, all of which may be intrusions from the above DSUs.

Objects and texts found in these layers accumulated above the Roman period pavement clearly belong to different primary contexts (templar and late reuse of the building) on a wide chronological range. Certainly, they accumulated on the Roman period floor before the demolition of ST 20 walls.

6. THE DEEP TRENCHES IN FLOOR ST12/810

Two deep trenches – 8 and 9 – enabled exploration of the layers sealed below the well-preserved floor composed of local limestone slabs on the west side of ST 20. The trenches, located in Sectors 5 and 3, aimed to explore the foundations of temple ST 20 and the previous phases, in order to better define the building's date of construction.

Trench 8 is the more interesting and informative, and the only one in which texts were found: it was opened in 2012 and enlarged in 2014, measuring 8.20 x 3.10 m with a maximum depth³² of 4.94 m (FIG. I.12). It revealed that floor ST12/810 was part of a renovation and restoration project datable, with reference to the pottery, to the 2nd century AD. It involved the construction of a stone revetment (ST12/806) at the base of the external walls of ST 20 in order to cover and repair erosion damage to the wall. During this project, a previous floor (ST12/813) composed of grey sandstone slabs was partly removed, together with a monument, possibly a chapel (ST 219), built on this earlier floor against the wall of ST 20. Of this monument, only a column base (ST14/910) and a possible impression of a second one survived. Three walls made of rough-hewn brown stones and mud mortar, similar in terms of materials and technique to ST 18 and ST 21 and to other buildings visible on the surface in various areas of the *kom*, were found in the trench. The limited exploration of this area does not allow for exhaustive interpretation: the walls rest on top of the *gebel* and may have been parts of Hellenistic period buildings demolished in order to enable the construction of ST 20. If so, the materials found in the filling among the three walls and below floor ST12/813 seem to suggest that they were completely exposed during the excavation of the foundation trench of temple ST 20, cut at the same height and used as part of the filling of the temple's foundations. The filling is quite uniform and originate from a domestic dump: the datable objects span from the Ptolemaic to the beginning of the 1st century AD.

The stratigraphy in the trench attests to four main construction phases in the area:

Phase 1: Hellenistic building (ST 216) resting on the bedrock.

Phase 2: Destruction of the Hellenistic features and building of ST 20, possibly between the end of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD.

Phase 3: Construction of the chapel ST 219 and possible initial repair of the erosion damage with plaster (ST12/824).

³¹ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 223-224, name-*ostraka* of Roman period.

³² From the floor ST12/810 (25.33 m) to the bedrock ST14/929 (20.39 m).

Phase 4: demolition of the chapel ST 219 and creation of revetment ST12/806 and floor ST12/810 during the first half of the 2nd century AD.

In accordance with these phases, from top to bottom, the DSUs can thus be grouped as follows (FIG. I.13):

Phase 4: ST12/806 and 810, 811=900, 812=901, 814=903, 816=904.

Floor ST12/810 lies on a layer of white mortar which in turn lies on a compact, flat layer, 15 cm thick, of sand, limestone debris and potsherds (ST14/900), in which 1 Greek and 3 Demotic *ostraka* were found.³³ DSUs 901, 903 and 904 covered the oldest floor ST12/813, of which only a strip 50 cm wide along the wall of the temple³⁴ and the base of column ST14/910 remain. From these DSUs, 1 Greek and 2 Demotic *ostraka* were recovered.³⁵ These layers were used to raise the floor level. They are composed of sand mixed with materials of unknown provenance, probably domestic waste. The coin ST14/903/4044 is badly damaged and illegible. Most of the materials are fragments of pottery vessels whose shapes were common from the Hellenistic to the Roman Imperial period. They include commercial amphorae of the AE 2, AE 3 and AE 2/3 types, jars, dishes, cups and cooking pots. The most recent pottery in these dumped materials was produced in the 2nd century AD.³⁶ Demotic *ostraka* are dated to the Roman period and both prosopography and palaeography of the Greek one (OSN I G 16) suggest the 2nd century AD. Bones displaying butchery marks³⁷ are common in all these DSUs. Very few objects were recovered: a fragment of a choroplastic statuette (ST14/900/4636), a flint tool (ST14/900/4091), a pierced stone weight (ST14/904/4498) and a tool made from a bone of *Bos Taurus* (ST14/904/4969).

Phase 3: Building of chapel ST 219 (with column ST14/910) on top of floor ST12/813 and application of white plaster ST12/824 to the bottom of the west wall of ST 20. No evidence has yet been found that might help to establish the date of this phase.

Phase 2: The foundation of temple ST 20 was preceded by the demolition of some Hellenistic buildings.³⁸ The three walls (ST12/821, ST12/822 and ST14/905) in Trench 8 may have been part of Hellenistic period buildings but according to the stratigraphy so far excavated in this limited trench they may be part of the building-yard facilities of ST 20, whether new construction or reuse of older walls. These walls have the same height, the same construction materials, and were artificially covered in sand, debris and dumped materials (DSUs 906=907 and 908). Major concentrations of Demotic *ostraka* were found here in two superimposed layers, 907 and 908, respectively containing 20 and 88 Demotic³⁹ plus two Greek

³³ Name-*ostraka* of the Roman period. PELLÉ this volume: OSN I G 16; ARLT this volume: OSN I D 283, 289, 428.

³⁴ The remains of floor ST12/813 have been recognized in Trench 8, Trench 9, and further south in a pit in floor ST12/810.

³⁵ PELLÉ this volume: list of payments for wheat OSN I G 13. Name-*ostraka* of the Roman period ARLT this volume: OSN I D 285, 488.

³⁶ I'm grateful to Clementina Caputo, who is responsible for the study of the pottery, for this information.

³⁷ The study of the bones from the excavation has been entrusted to Salima Ikram and Louise Bertini.

³⁸ An example is ST 204 below the floor of the courtyard C1: cf. Trench 4 in DAVOLI 2012, pp. 207-210.

³⁹ ARLT this volume, mostly name-*ostraka*: OSN I D 212, 265-275, 286-296, 297-353, 362, 380-385, 399-400, 489, 494-495, 500-501, all dated to the Roman period. In OSN I D 301 Herieus son of Satabous son of

ostraka.⁴⁰ Their position suggests they were collected and thrown together into the infill of the foundation trench of the temple, from which only potsherds and butchery bones were recovered. The building site was covered by a solid flat layer composed of mud, mud bricks and mud brick rubble (ST14/902), which formed the base of floor ST12/813. The pottery consists mainly of AE 2/3 amphorae, cups, jars, dishes and cooking pots datable between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD. Demotic *ostraka* seem to be datable to the Roman period, which is quite generic, and the Greek ones between the 1st BC and the 1st AD. These dates are all based on palaeography and cannot give us a precise date for the foundation of the temple ST 20, which may have been between the end of the Ptolemaic period and the reign of Augustus.

Phase 1: The three walls in Trench 8 can be interpreted provisionally as part of structures built as foundation facilities used during the construction of temple ST 20. Because of the limited area excavated it is difficult to guess the use of these walls during the building phase. The central wall was at right angles to the other two and in the space between a number of thin sloping layers of dumped waste were recognized, forming a filling of the space (FIG. I.13). These layers meet in the middle of the area, those abutting wall ST12/821 apparently having been dumped from north to south, and those abutting wall ST14/905 from south to north. The north-south oriented wall ST12/822, which the other two walls and the dumped layers in between abutted, is built beside and parallel to the west wall of ST 20.

The composition of the sloping layers⁴¹ varies little, except in terms of concentrations, consisting of mud brick rubble, mud and pebbles, potsherds and domestic waste including ash, charcoal and bones. They seem to have the same origin: some potsherds from different DSUs matches. 41 *ostraka* were found scattered throughout these layers: two Demotic in DSU 909;⁴² seven Demotic in DSU 914=826;⁴³ seven Demotic in DSU 912;⁴⁴ eight Demotic in DSU 913;⁴⁵

Lous is mentioned: according to Arlt he can be a brother of Tesenouphis son of Satabous son of Lous mentioned in OSN I D 92 and 241, which seems not so feasible from stratigraphic point of view, unless we admit that the original location of 92 and 241 were in building ST 204 below the floor in Courtyard C1. In this case also other *ostraka* found in unreliable DSUs excavated by looters and located around C1 may belong to a phase of demolition pre-dating the building of temple ST 20: Trench 4 in DAVOLI 2012, pp. 207-210. Looters in fact excavated through the floor in C1.

⁴⁰ PELLÉ this volume: OSN I G 14 (name list possibly of the 1st century AD) and OSN I G 15 (an alphabet dated between the 1st BC and the 1st AD).

⁴¹ DSUs ST14/909=823, 914=826, 915=826, 912, 913, 916=828, 917=828, 919=828, 920=828, 924, 925, 918, 922.

⁴² ARLT this volume: OSN I D 354, a name-*ostrakon* dated to the Roman period, written on an amphora sherd type AE 2 produced between the 2nd century BC and the first half of the 1st century BC. The second *ostrakon* is too faded to be read ST14/909/4294.

⁴³ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 363-364 (name-*ostraka*), 436 (*dipinto* on a table amphora of which other fragments were in DSU ST14/909, 912, 916 and ST12/828), 496 (possible school exercise), of the Roman period; ST14/914/4290, 4359, 4360 are too faded to be read.

⁴⁴ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 279 and 356 (name-*ostraka* of the Roman period but written on an amphora sherd type AE 2 dated between the 2nd and the first half of the 1st century BC); 355 (name-*ostrakon* of the Roman period written on an amphora sherd type AE 2/3 dated between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD); ST14/912/4271, 4279, 4285, 4286 are too faded to be read.

⁴⁵ ARLT this volume: name-*ostraka* OSN I D 280-281, 357-361 dated to the Roman period (some written on an amphora sherd type AE 2 dated between the 2nd and the first half of the 1st century BC, and some on AE 2/3 dated between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD); ST14/913/4312 is illegible.

one Demotic in DSU 916 (illegible); two Demotic in DSU 917;⁴⁶ four Demotic in DSU 918;⁴⁷ four Demotic in DSU 919;⁴⁸ one Demotic in DSU 920 (illegible); and six Demotic and one figured in ST12/828.⁴⁹ One of the *ostraka* (ST14/914/4295) is part of a small table amphora (ST14/912/4151), fragments of which have also been recovered in DSU 909, 916 and 828. Sherds belonging to a cooking pot (ST14/916/4574) were also found scattered in DSUs 912 and 914. The typology of the vessels suggests waste from domestic contexts datable between the last quarter of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD. Most of fragments of amphorae found in these layers belong to type AE 2 and AE 2/3. Only one other object has been found in this dump: an illegible coin ST12/824/3990.

DSUs ST14/923, 928 found below ST14/922, a layer of compacted mud different from the other in composition and hardness, are very similar to the layers above it, but with the presence of rough brown limestone slabs similar to those used in the three walls. One Greek⁵⁰ and 14 Demotic⁵¹ *ostraka* were collected in these two DSUs, which can be dated on the basis of the potsherds, mainly fragments of amphorae AE 2/3 between the last quarter of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD. One illegible coin was recovered too (ST14/923/4423).

The bedrock at the bottom of Trench 8 (ST14/929), on which the three walls 821, 822 and 905 are directly founded, is uneven (elevation 21.80-20.30 m asl).

Trench 9 was excavated in 2012. In this area, a pit in floor ST12/810 was found and enlarged (1.5 by 2 m; ca. 2 m deep) in order to explore the deepest layers. The stratigraphy found is similar to that of Trench 8, with the same sequence of phases. However, due to the limited area investigated, the excavation stopped at an elevation of 23.20 m without reaching the bedrock. No texts were recovered from this trench and thus it will not be described in this chapter.

7. TRENCH 10 IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE *TEMENOS*

The excavation of Trench 10 started in 2012 and was finished in 2014. The aims of this test trench (10 x 10 m) were to explore the foundations of the *temenos* walls and to verify the Late Antique use of the area. Certain Greek Christian manuscripts now part of the Freer Gallery of Art in the Smithsonian Institution at Washington DC are said to have been found in this place at the beginning of the 20th century during illegal excavations (CAPASSO 2017). The area was clearly damaged by the random excavation of several pits of varying dimensions and depths and by the presence of squatters. The modern objects and fireplaces found here are unquestionable evidence of the presence of people involved in the excavation of the cemeteries,

⁴⁶ ARLT this volume: name-*ostraka* OSN I D 365 and ST14/917/4372 (illegible), both on an Egyptian amphora sherd type AE 2/3.

⁴⁷ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 366 (name-*ostrakon*), 405 (account of money on AE 2/3 amphora sherd), 430 (list on AE 2/3 amphora sherd), and ST14/918/4371 illegible.

⁴⁸ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 367 (name-*ostraka* on a AE 2/3 amphora sherd), 491 (account or list on a AE 2/3 amphora sherd), 502; ST14/919/4367 illegible text.

⁴⁹ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 434-435 (possibly school exercises of the Roman period), 486 and 498 (uncertain texts).

⁵⁰ PELLÉ this volume: OSN I G 17 (1st BC-1st AD).

⁵¹ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 282, 368-373, 492-493; 374-377. These texts are mainly name-*ostraka* written on amphora sherds, type AE 2 and AE 2/3.

temporarily sheltering in a well-protected space inside the *temenos*. Parts of mummified human bodies and funerary amulets suggest spoliation⁵² of the mummies on site. Despite this substantial disturbance, evidence of Late Antique/Byzantine use of the area including a stable, pottery sherds and an *ostrakon* with a *staurogram*⁵³ has been identified. No traces however have been found that can confirm the presence of Christian manuscripts in this part of the *temenos* or at least in the investigated area.

Two heaps of rubble deriving from looter excavations were clearly visible on the surface of the southern part of the temple area. The easternmost heap, lying within Trench 10, covered the poorly conserved ruins of house ST 217. Originally abutting the *temenos* to the south and extending to the north and west, only part of the walls of a staircase with a central pillar remains (FIG. I.14).⁵⁴ The surface DSUs (850, 952, 953, 959) have been disturbed and mainly consist of windblown sand mixed with organic substances and materials excavated from deep pits, including Hellenistic and Roman pottery, Ptolemaic and Roman coins,⁵⁵ two Demotic *ostraka* and several fragments of Demotic papyri.⁵⁶ A paper with a short text in Arabic mentioning a church (ST14/952/4058), probably of the early Mamluk period, was also found. Three wide looter pits (963, 978 and 986) were still recognizable despite being filled with sand. From the infill of pit 963 (DSU 962 and 976),⁵⁷ one Demotic *ostrakon* and two Demotic and Hieratic papyri⁵⁸ were recovered.

Only part of the staircase of Room A in ST 217 (3 x 3 m) survived the robbery. It was made of white mud bricks (25 x 13 x 9 cm) and had very shallow foundations. The looter excavations in and around the structure caused its destruction and the collapse of the walls. Only three steps are still in place, together with part of the floor of a space located below the staircase. The few walls still *in situ* and visible in Trench 10 are preserved to a height of ca. 1.2 m and have partly collapsed (ST14/960) both inwards and outwards. In the collapsed material, mixed with sand, there were 2 Demotic *ostraka* and one Demotic papyrus.⁵⁹ A large quantity of collapsed mud bricks from walls of building ST 217 sealed the stratigraphy to the north of the stair (FIG. I.14). The stratigraphy found below these collapses (ST14/966, 969, 970) has not been dis-

⁵² This practice is attested in several DSUs in the *temenos*.

⁵³ CAPASSO 2015a; and CAPASSO Ch. 7 this volume: OSN I F 4 (dated possibly to the 4th century AD).

⁵⁴ In this short report, I will focus on the DSUs with texts, their nature and phases.

⁵⁵ Coins ST12/850/4038, ST14/952/4081, 4088; ST14/959/4099. Other objects found include beads (ST12/850/3883, ST14/951/4077, ST14/952/4084, ST14/959/4064), an amulet (ST14/959/4063), parts of wooden furniture, sandals and basketry, potsherds and fragments of glass vessels. Also worth mentioning is a piece of a wax tablet used for a codex (ST14/953/4476).

⁵⁶ Cf. STADLER this volume: PSN I D 81-82, 84-86, Roman period. ARLT this volume: OSN I D 379, 487 (Roman period).

⁵⁷ All the DSUs mentioned are disturbed and hence unreliable, as the texts and objects found in them are not in their place of primary deposition and yield no information concerning their original provenance. Other materials found in DSUs 962 and 976 include beads (ST14/962/4117, ST14/976/4066), baskets, sandals, pieces of wooden furniture, a possible musical instrument (ST14/9576/4815), ceramic statuettes (ST14/962/4638, 4639, 4644), a classical limestone frieze (ST14/962/4183) and a weaving comb (ST14/976/4810).

⁵⁸ Cf. STADLER this volume: PSN I H 3 is the Hieratic text on the verso of Demotic text PSN I D 88, literary texts of the Roman period; and PSN I D 87. ARLT this volume: OSN I D 406, account of money of the Roman period.

⁵⁹ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 378, 412, dated to the Roman period; STADLER this volume: PSN I D 83. Other objects found in this layer include wooden furniture fragments, glass vessels and a ceramic statuette (ST14/960/4643).

turbed in recent years. However, some layers found below these extensive collapses were already contaminated by modern objects. One of these DSUs is ST14/955, in which two Demotic *ostraka* and three Demotic papyri were recovered.⁶⁰

A very roughly built wall (977, FIG. I.16) of loose stones and reused limestone blocks, oriented east-west, was built between the *temenos* wall (ST14/1030) and ST 217, bordering a wide space (ca. 5 x 6 m) in the southeast corner of the *temenos*. This wall had been raised further with the addition of mud bricks, found in a collapsed position (ST14/984) to the north. In this collapse, one Demotic *ostrakon* was found.⁶¹ The paving (ST14/983) associated with this wall was made of compacted mud, on top of which several layers (ST14/982) of sand and organic material, mainly animal dung, had accumulated. The potsherds found are from various periods, but the presence of an *ostrakon* with a *staurogram* (OSN I F 4) confirms the late phase of use of this space, which was probably a stable.⁶²

Wall ST14/977 and the staircase in ST 217A were not removed by our excavation, which continued in the form of two trenches nearby: in the corner of the *temenos* (Trench 10.2; 2 x 4.5 m) and north of ST 217 and wall 977 (Trench 10.1; 2.5 x 5.5 m). In Trench 10.1 (FIGS. I.15-17), below the above-mentioned collapsed walls, a series of superimposed layers (DSUs ST14/1031, 987, 993, 1001), composed of sand and debris clearly derived from the demolition of mud brick buildings and rich in timbers and reeds used in flat roofs, covered the remains of previous buildings. The latter, composed of mud bricks (walls ST14/1005, 1007) and stones (walls ST14/1008, 1009), were exposed in the trench, but given the limited space, they cannot be fully interpreted. However, these features can be attributed to buildings of at least two phases predating the construction of building ST 217. A wide looter pit (ST14/1000) had been dug through the layers of rubble to reach the stone structure ST14/1009, a section of the upper surface of which, measuring 2.2 x 1.5 m, was exposed in Trench 10.1. This wide wall (or platform) was oriented north-south and is probably the same stone feature as ST14/1021, partly visible at the bottom of Trench 10.2 (FIG. I.18), below the foundation course of the south wall of the *temenos* (ST14/1029). It thus predates the construction of the *temenos*⁶³ and its demolition can be related to this great building project. The infill of this ancient spoliation pit (DSUs 988 and 991) was composed of sand and broken mud bricks and predates the construction of house ST 217.⁶⁴ One figured *ostrakon* was recovered from ST14/988.

The stone wall ST14/1009 is the oldest feature found in Trench 10 and determining its function and date will require further investigations. On its west side was a mud brick building ST 221, of which only a portion of a room formed by walls ST14/1007, 1005 and 1012 has been excavated. The floor, composed of compacted mud, is quite well preserved (ST14/1010). Another floor (ST14/1013) in this same building, to the north of wall ST14/1012, suggests the presence of a second room. ST 221 was demolished to a height of 50 cm and covered by new mud floors (ST14/1004, 1002), mud brick walls (ST14/1011, 1016) and a wall made of

⁶⁰ STADLER this volume: PSN I D 89, Roman period, and ARLT this volume: OSN I D 411. Fragments of glass vessels, sandals, ropes, wooden furniture and two pottery statuettes were also recovered (ST14/955/4150, 4637).

⁶¹ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 407, a Roman period account of money.

⁶² A Roman coin was also found: ST14/982/4177.

⁶³ According to the so-called stele of the sheep breeders (BERNAND 1975, 73, pp. 143-44) the *temenos* was built in 24 BC.

⁶⁴ The foundation trench (ST14/989) of wall ST12/856 in ST 217 cuts through the rubble ST14/988.

stones (ST14/1008). Structure ST 221 is poorly preserved due to its thorough demolition. The demolition debris was used to level the area (ST14/1001, 999, 993) on which there is a sort of paving ST14/987. All in all, the layers of sand and debris used to cover the ruins of the previous period and raise the surface on which building ST 217 was built are 1.6 to 1.8 m thick. Only one figured *ostrakon* was found in these layers (OSN I F 2) together with a small bronze earring (ST14/993/4189), sandals and baskets.

In summary, in Trench 10 four occupation layers or phases were recognised:⁶⁵

Phase 4: Late Ancient presence of people probably using house ST 217 and an adjacent stable.

Phase 3: Building of house ST 217 in the Roman period. Possibly a house for priests with at least 2 storeys.

Phase 2: Demolition of house ST 221 and construction of stone wall ST14/1008 and building ST 220, possibly in the second half of the Hellenistic period.

Phase 1: Construction of building ST 221, possibly contemporary with or slightly later than stone wall ST14/1009, during the Hellenistic period.

8. OTHER CONTEXTS OUTSIDE THE *TEMENOS*

The work of the Soknopaïou Nesos Project included the survey of the settlement, the survey of the surroundings, the documentation of the *dromos* and the identification of areas excavated by previous expeditions.⁶⁶ During these activities, texts, inscriptions and other objects were found on the surface and documented.

On two slabs of the pavement of the *dromos*, two Greek names (ISN I G 4-5) were engraved, together with single letters and symbols used as marks by workmen, either in the quarries and/or during the building of the road.⁶⁷ These inscriptions and marks are concentrated in the central part of the *dromos*, named Segment II, which is believed to be the first southward extension of the Hellenistic *dromos*. It can be tentatively dated to the beginning of the Roman period, but the two names may have been traced even later.

Most of the written materials found outside the *temenos* came from an area immediately west of the *temenos* wall, identified as Area 10 of the Zucker and Schubart excavations (FIG. I.19).⁶⁸ In this area, the two German papyrologists found a considerable number of Demotic *ostraka* now in Berlin Museums.⁶⁹ Trenches 2 and 3 were opened in 2009 in two of the dumps created during those excavations in order to recover missing texts, to better understand the contexts of the materials found in 1910 and to clarify the nature of the buildings visible on the surface and the high dune bordering the settlement on its west side.⁷⁰ Three Demotic *ostraka*

⁶⁵ The chronology of these phases is still vague because of the limited exploration of the deepest layers and the objects still under study.

⁶⁶ For an overview of the history of previous excavations at Dime, see CAPASSO-DAVOLI 2012a; CHIESI ET ALII 2012, pp. 31-68.

⁶⁷ MINAYA 2012, pp. 103-106, Tav. 5.

⁶⁸ CHIESI ET ALII 2012, pp. 52-54, Figs. 44-45.

⁶⁹ LIPPERT-SCHENTULEIT 2006a.

⁷⁰ DAVOLI 2012, pp. 210-217.

were found on the surface,⁷¹ and 24 in Trench 2, in DSUs SN09/2 and SN09/6.⁷² These were missed during the Zucker and Schubart excavations and should be connected with those in the Berlin collection. A Greek papyrus (SN09/31/2774) and a figured *ostrakon* (SN09/31/2677) were recovered, together with an illegible coin (SN09/31/2773) from DSU 31 below the artificial modern dump and not previously excavated.

⁷¹ ARLT this volume: OSN I D 417 (a list of names of Phyles, Roman period), 401 (account, Roman period), 422 (list, Roman period).

⁷² ARLT this volume: OSN I D 3-25 (name-*ostraka* of the Roman period), and a list 421. Some names and a family are also on *ostraka* found in DSUs west of courtyard C1, in a looter's dump, and probably coming from the excavation of building ST 23: cf. reference in OSN I D 8 and 18.



FIG. I.1. General plan of Dime (2017).

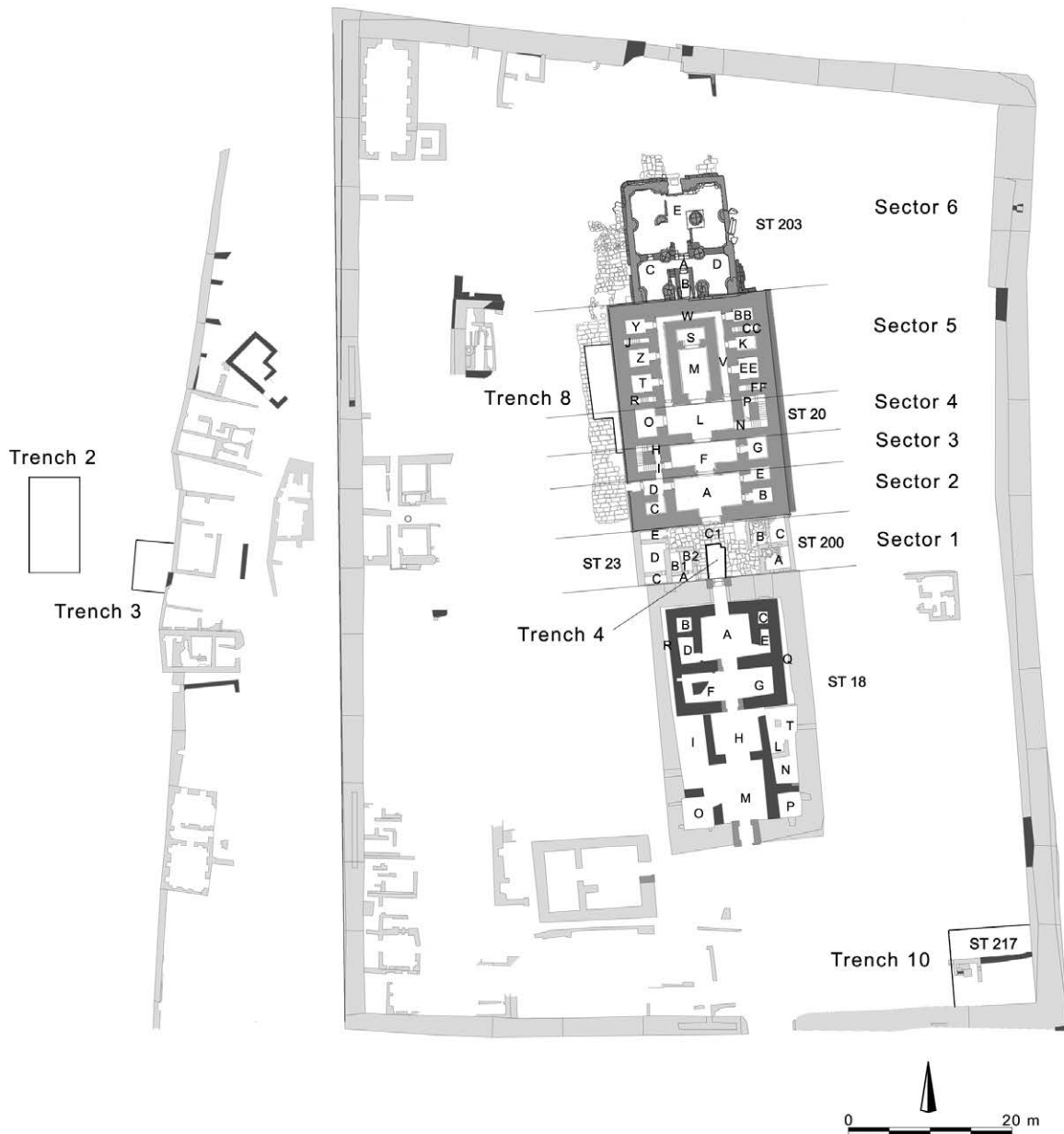


FIG. I.2. General plan of the *temenos* (2017). Sectors and trenches.



FIG. I.3. View of the *temenos* area (2014).



FIG. I.4. The south façade of the temple ST 18.

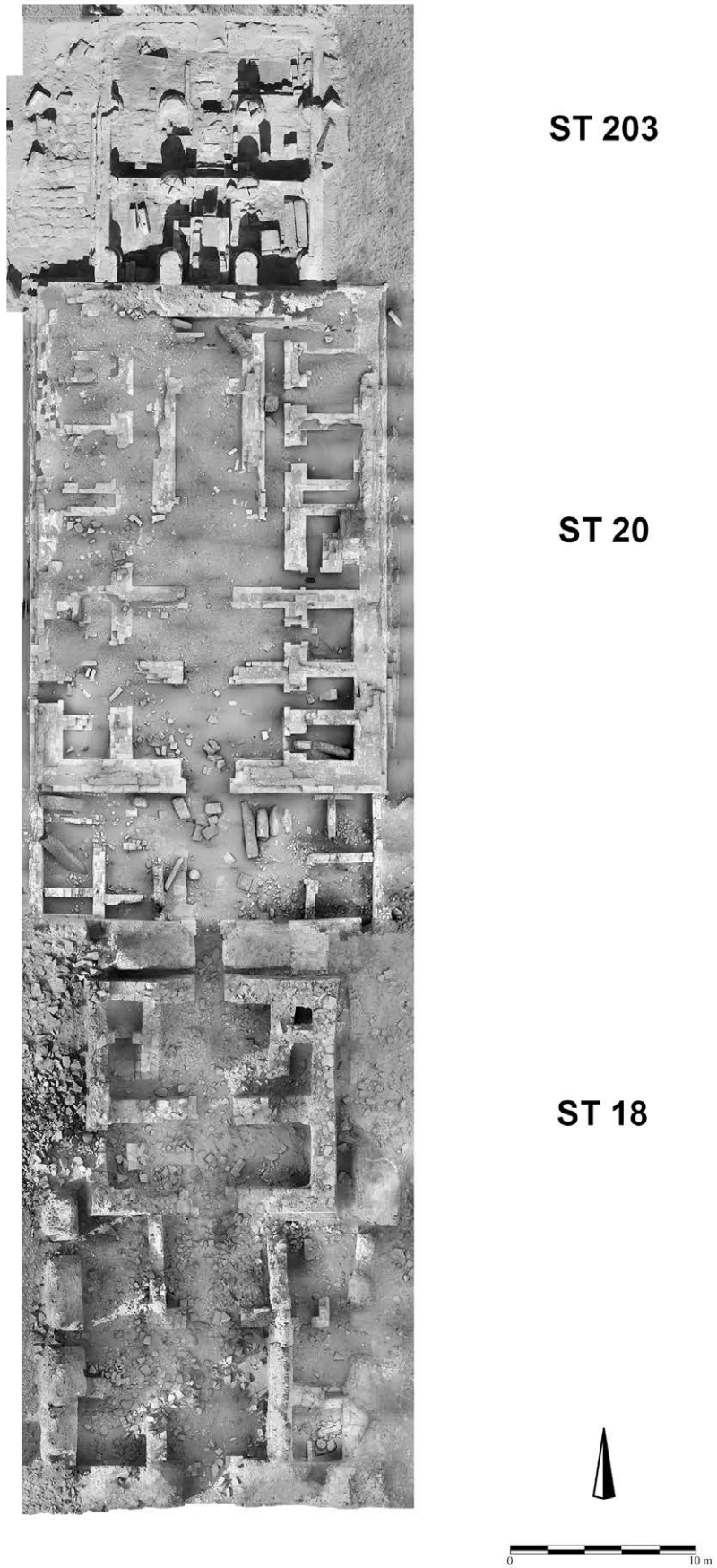


FIG. I.5. Orthophotography of temples ST 18-ST 20 and ST 203 (M. Limoncelli).



FIG. I.6. Temple ST 20 looking northwest.



FIG. I.7. Temple ST 20 and ST 18 looking south.

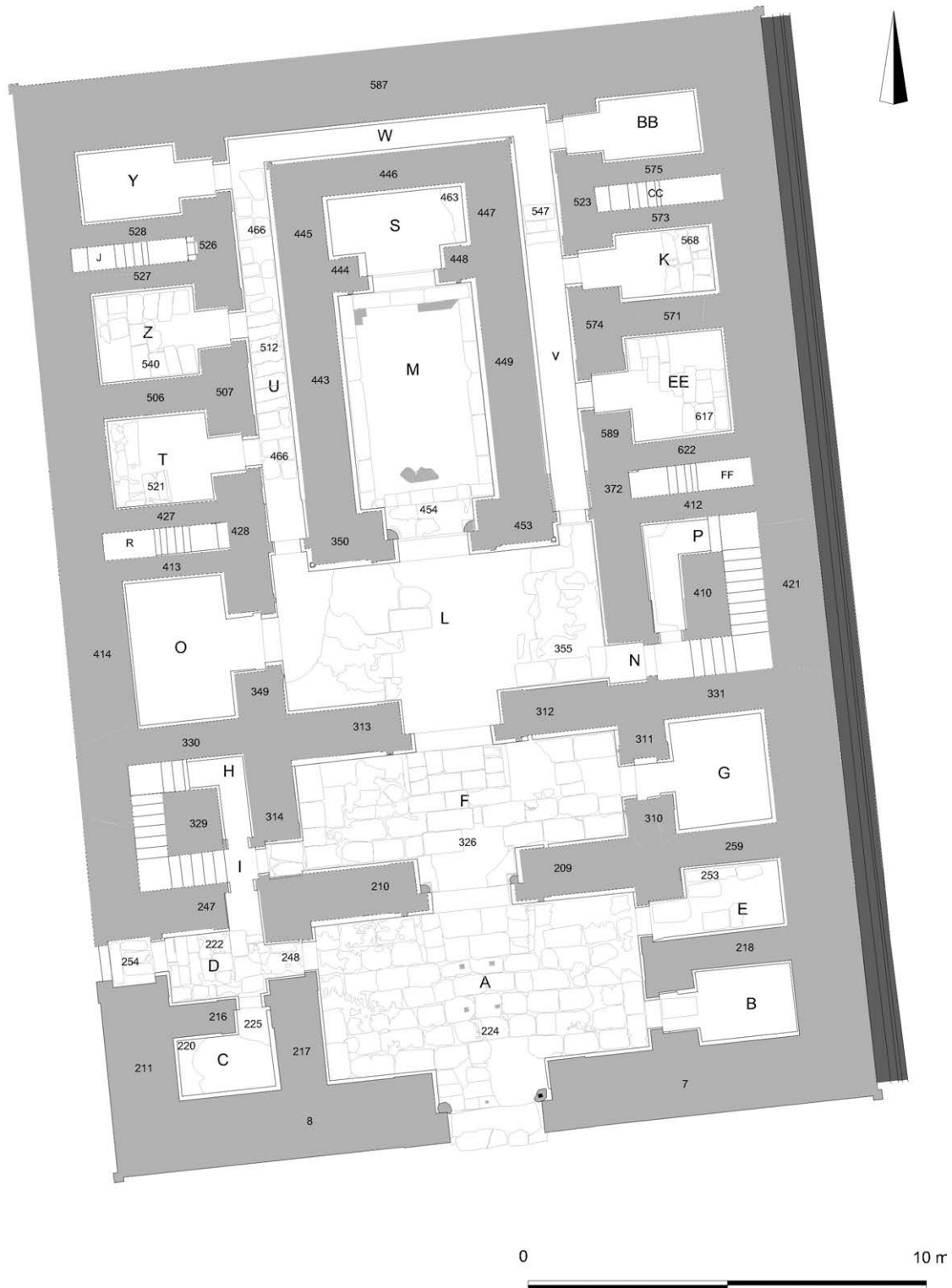


FIG. I.8. Temple ST 20.



FIG. I.9. West side door in ST 20 and floor ST12/810.



FIG. I.10. West pavement ST12/810 (Roman period).



FIG. I.11. West pavement ST12/717 and SU 719 = 718 (Late Antique period).

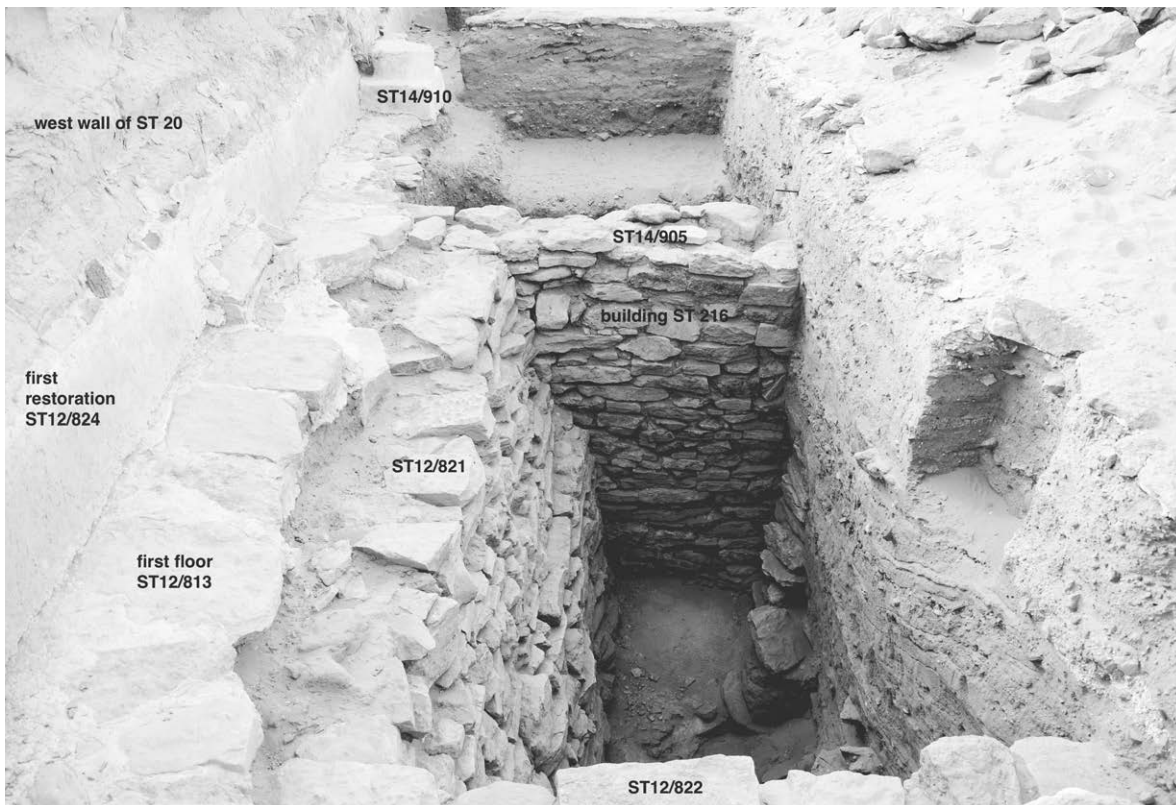


FIG. I.12. Trench 8 looking south.

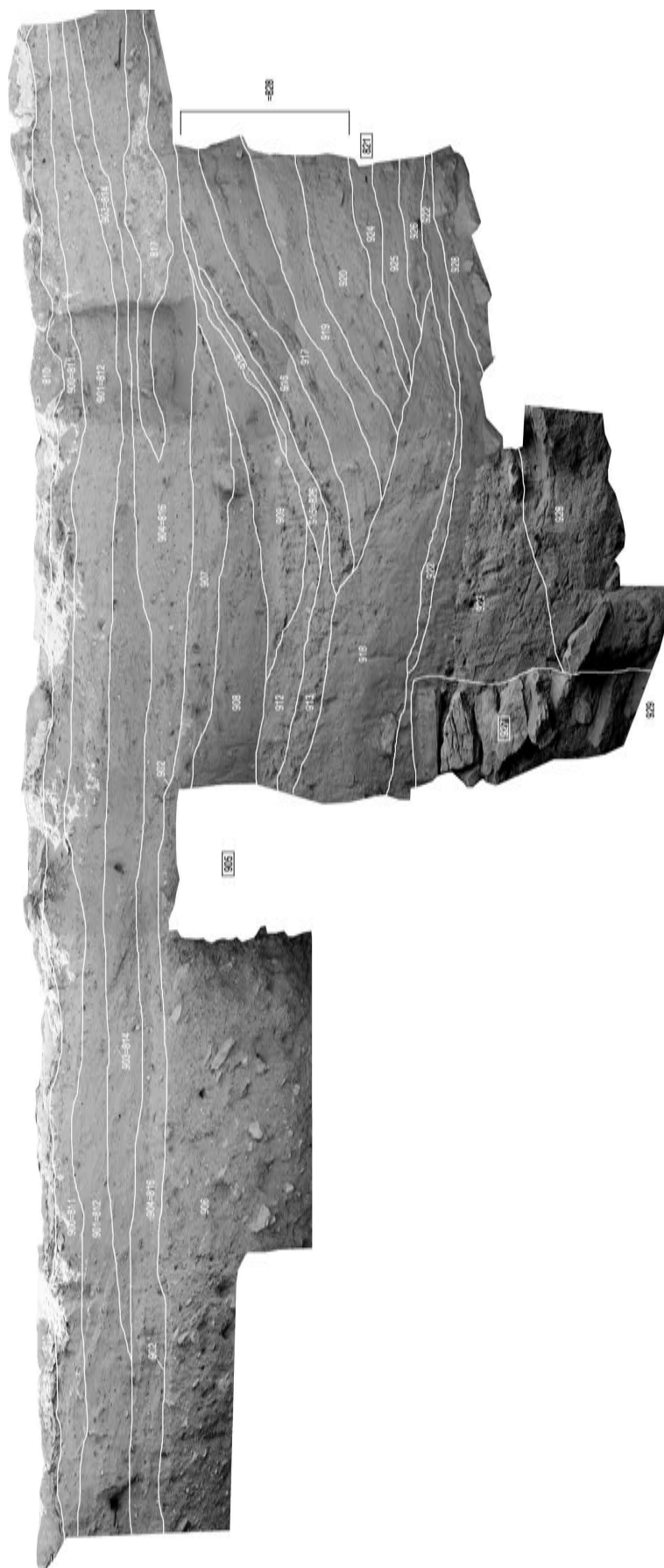


FIG. I.13. Trench 8 in floor ST12/810, west view of the stratigraphy.



FIG. I.14. Trench 10: collapsed walls of building ST 217.



FIG. I.15. Trench 10.1.

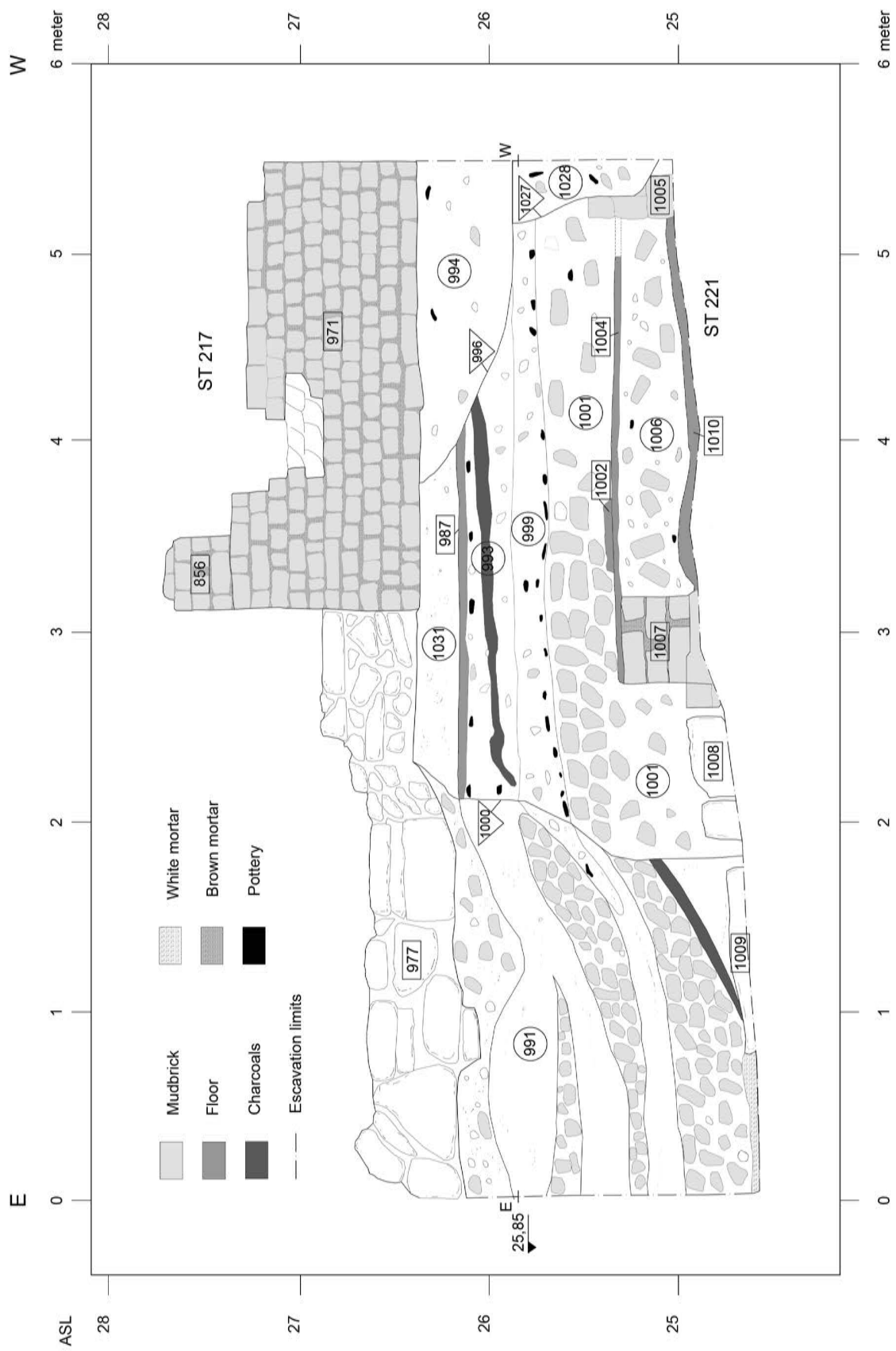


FIG. I.16. Trench 10.1. East-west view with building ST 217.

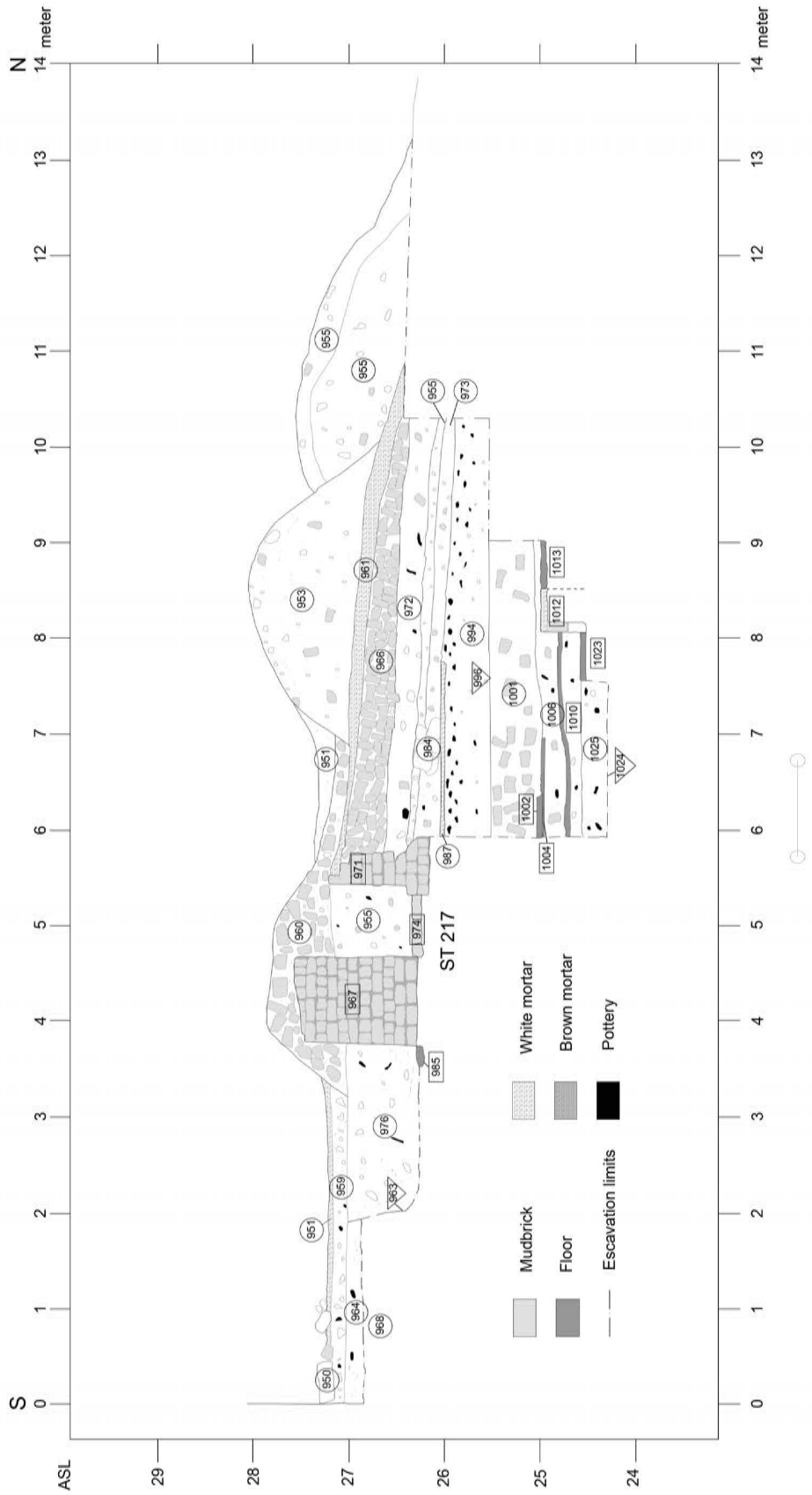


FIG. I.17. Trench 10.1. North-south view with building ST 217.



FIG. I.18. Trench 10.2 in the southeast corner of the *temenos*.



FIG. I.19. Zucher's area 10 looking south. Trenches 2 and 3 excavated in 2009.

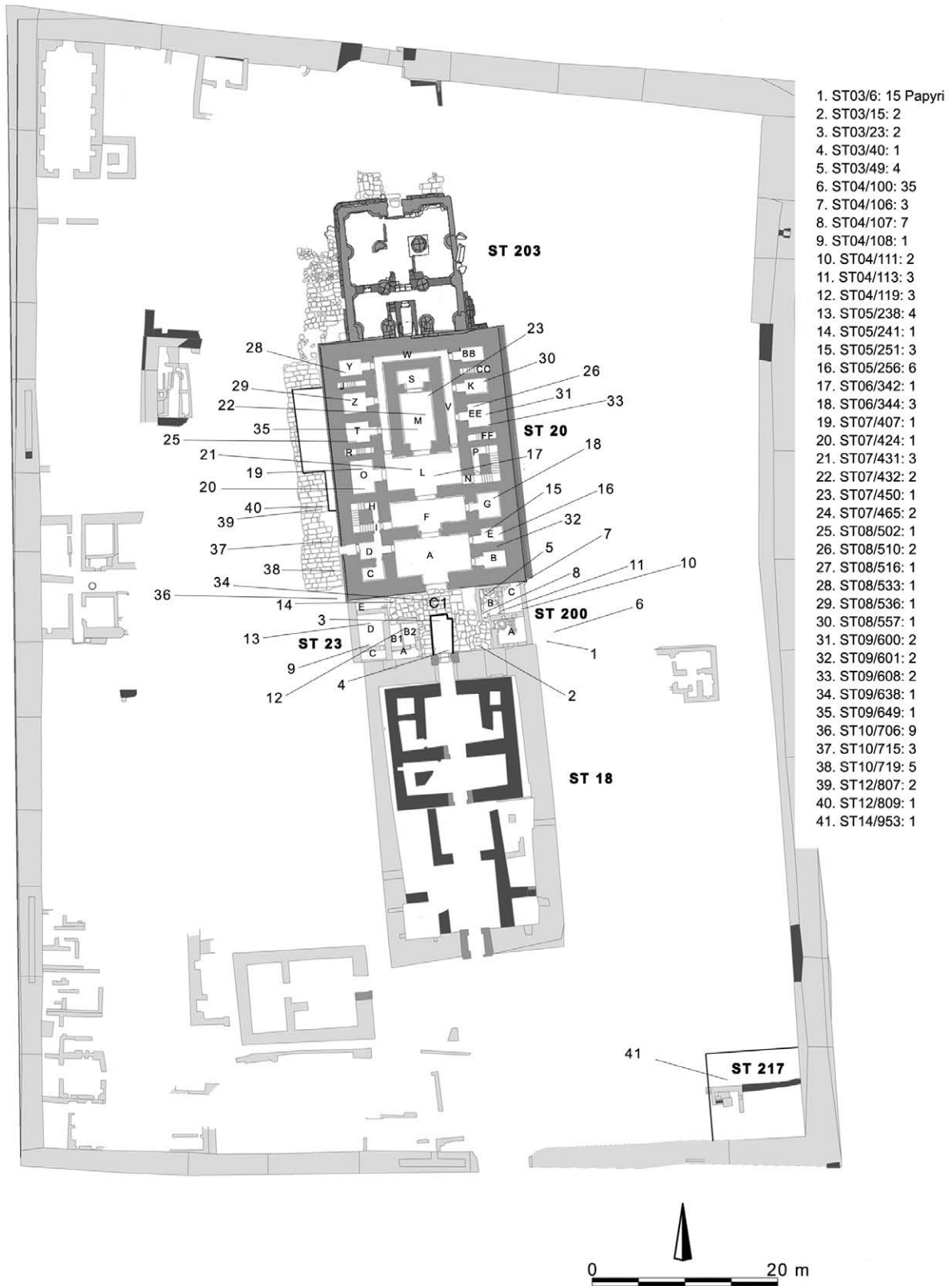


FIG. I.20. Distribution of the stratigraphic units with figured and Greek papyri.

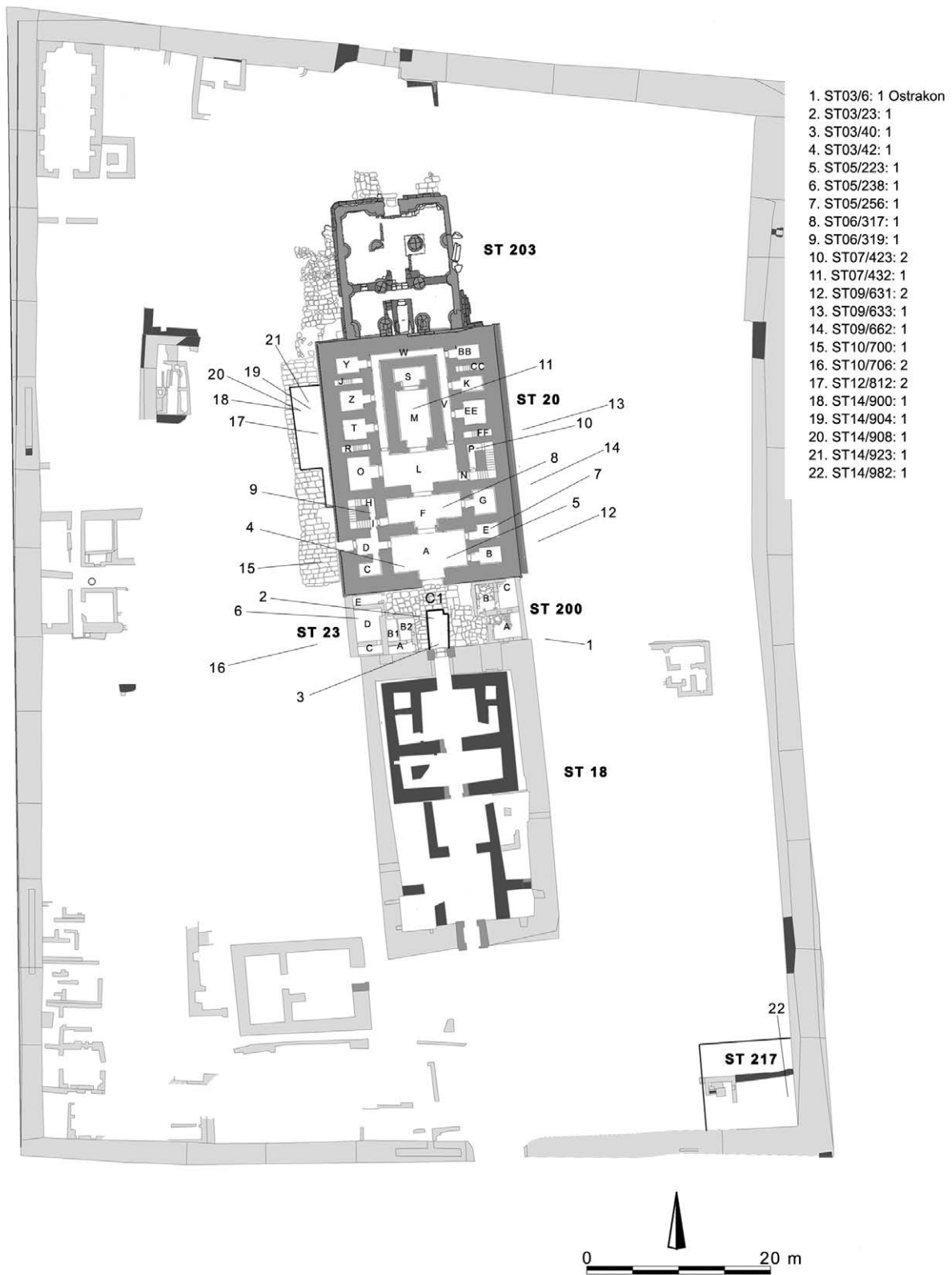


FIG. I.21. Distribution of the stratigraphic units with Greek and figured *ostraka*.

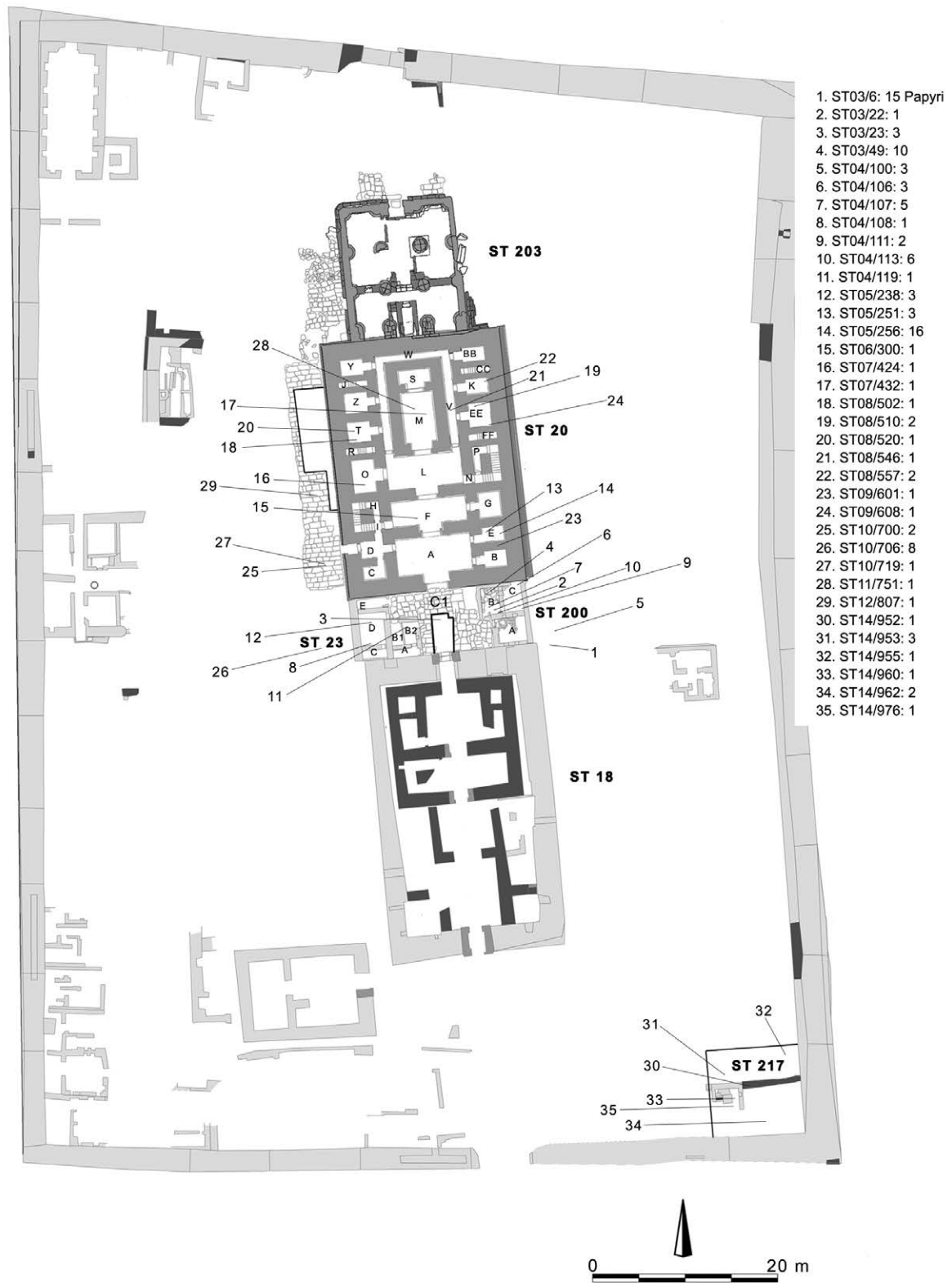


FIG. I.22. Distribution of the stratigraphic units with Egyptian papyri.



- | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. ST03/6: 32 ostraka | 20. ST05/212: 3 | 39. ST10/700: 14 | 58. ST14/907: 20 |
| 2. ST03/13: 1 | 21. ST05/238: 16 | 40. ST10/701: 2 | 56. ST14/908: 85 |
| 3. ST03/14: 6 | 22. ST05/241: 3 | 41. ST10/706: 112 | 60. ST14/909: 2 |
| 4. ST03/15: 2 | 23. ST05/251: 2 | 42. ST10/710: 4 | 61. ST14/912: 7 |
| 5. ST03/23: 5 | 24. ST05/256: 1 | 43. ST10/714: 2 | 62. ST14/913: 8 |
| 6. ST03/26: 1 | 25. ST05/301: 1 | 44. ST10/718: 2 | 63. ST14/914: 5 |
| 7. ST03/35: 6 | 26. ST05/344: 1 | 45. ST10/719: 11 | 64. ST14/916: 1 |
| 8. ST03/37: 1 | 27. ST07/416: 1 | 46. ST10/723: 1 | 65. ST14/917: 2 |
| 9. ST03/39: 3 | 28. ST07/423: 1 | 47. ST10/724: 1 | 66. ST14/918: 4 |
| 10. ST03/40: 2 | 29. ST07/452: 1 | 48. ST10/730: 2 | 67. ST14/919: 4 |
| 11. ST03/42: 6 | 30. ST07/546: 1 | 49. ST12/812: 1 | 68. ST14/920: 1 |
| 12. ST03/45: 2 | 31. ST07/557: 1 | 50. ST12/814: 1 | 69. ST14/923: 9 |
| 13. ST03/49: 4 | 32. ST09/601: 9 | 51. ST12/816: 1 | 70. ST14/926: 1 |
| 14. ST04/100: 45 | 33. SN09/6: 23 | 52. ST12/826: 1 | 71. ST14/928: 4 |
| 15. ST04/106: 1 | 34. SN09/: 3 | 53. ST12/828: 6 | 72. ST14/955: 2 |
| 16. ST04/111: 1 | 35. SN09/2: 1 | 54. ST12/850: 1 | 73. ST14/960: 2 |
| 17. ST04/114: 4 | 36. ST09/606: 1 | 55. ST14/900: 3 | 74. ST14/962: 2 |
| 18. ST04/118: 2 | 37. ST09/634: 1 | 56. ST14/901: 1 | 75. ST14/979: 1 |
| 19. ST04/119: 1 | 38. ST09/646: 1 | 57. ST14/904: 1 | 76. ST14/984: 1 |



FIG. I.23. Distribution of the stratigraphic units with demotic *ostraka*.

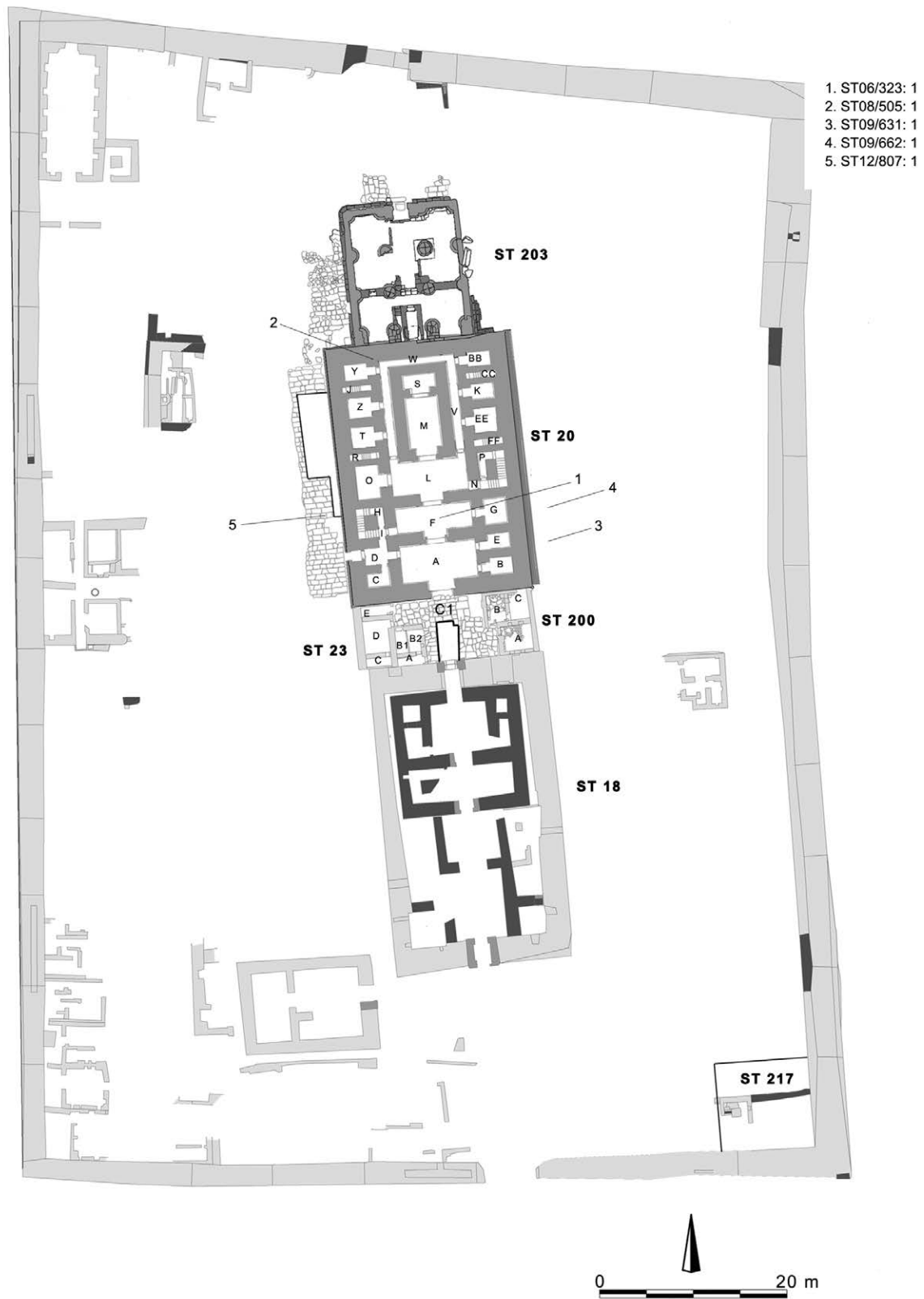


FIG. I.24. Distribution of the stratigraphic units with Coptic texts.

