

ALEXANDRIA
POLISH-EGYPTIAN PRESERVATION MISSION
AT KOM EL-DIKKA, 1993/94

Wojciech Kołataj

Preservation activities were carried out over a period from October 1993 to May 1994 and were concentrated in the following areas¹ (Fig. 1:1,2,3,4):

THEATER

The main objective of our work in this sector was to protect relics of an Early Roman villa discovered under the portico located in front of the Theater. The partly preserved marble pavement of the *triclinium* underwent consolidation and reinforcement with lime mortar at the pavement's edges. A detailed exhibition plan of all the Early Roman constructions uncovered in the area of the Theater (trenches MX and MXVI) is due to be completed in the forthcoming season and submitted to the SCA authorities.

CISTERNS

Restoration of the eastern facade of the monument was completed (Fig. 2). Two additional sections of wall facing between buttresses nos II and III (c. 23 m²) as well as between buttresses nos III and IV (c. 40 m²) underwent complex restoration. A large amount of earth (c. 1000 m²) deposited in the area between the Cisterns and the Bath was removed using heavy machinery.

¹ The Mission headed by Dr. eng. Wojciech Kołataj was comprised of Dr. Maciej Witkowski, archaeologist-conservator, Mr. Piotr Zalewski, conservator and Dr. Grzegorz Majcherek, archaeologist. The Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) was represented by Mr. Ahmed Musa and Mr. Ala'a el Din Mahrus, Inspectors of Antiquities at Kom el-Dikka. During the season the Mission employed two masons and 17 unskilled workers.

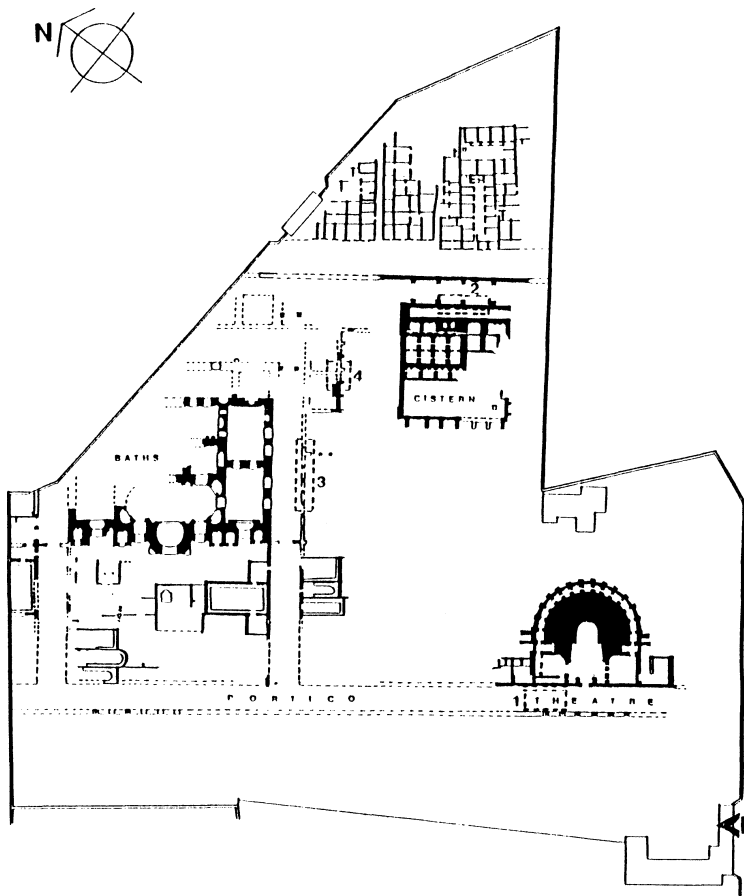


Fig. 1. Alexandria, Kom el-Dikka site.

As a result of this operation it was possible to uncover and survey a considerable section of the northern facade. Preservation work was immediately initiated in this part of the monument; the westernmost part of the foundations was consolidated and partly restored.

In the southern sector of the Cisterns some archaeological and architectural investigations were conducted. Two sets of Late Roman water wells and adjoining sections of channels were cleared. The result of this research enabled the necessary documentation to be completed. Work could also proceed on the final plan for its exposition and conservation.

BATH COMPLEX

A stone vault over a fuel store located in front of hypocaust furnace no. IV was reconstructed (Fig. 3:a). This store, located under the pavement of the Bath's southern porticoed passage, formed part of a large underground structure serving maintenance purposes. This reconstruction permitted work to proceed on the preparation of visitors paths in the area between the Bath and the Cisterns (Fig. 3:b-b).

A large pillar supporting the northeastern corner of the palestra was prepared for reconstruction. A large block containing sockets for wooden architraves was properly exhibited (Fig. 3:c).

Two more columns of the portico were re-erected (Fig. 3:d,e). A steel tripod used for lifting columns was then relocated and reassembled in a new location in order to re-erect yet another column in the coming season. One of the partly destroyed marble bases was restored and another one was reconstructed using artificial stone according to a formula already described in the previous report.

In the latrine (sector C), two more bases were made of artificial stone in order to continue the restoration and anastylosis of a column located in the very corner of the peristyle. A fragmentarily preserved marble column, which was already partly restored during the previous season, was additionally

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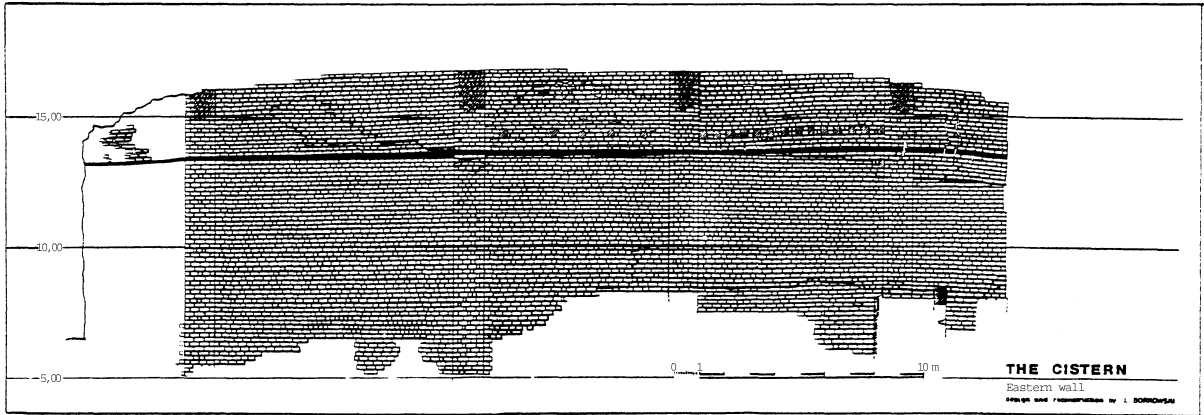


Fig. 2. Cistern, east wall. Design and reconstruction J. Borkowski.

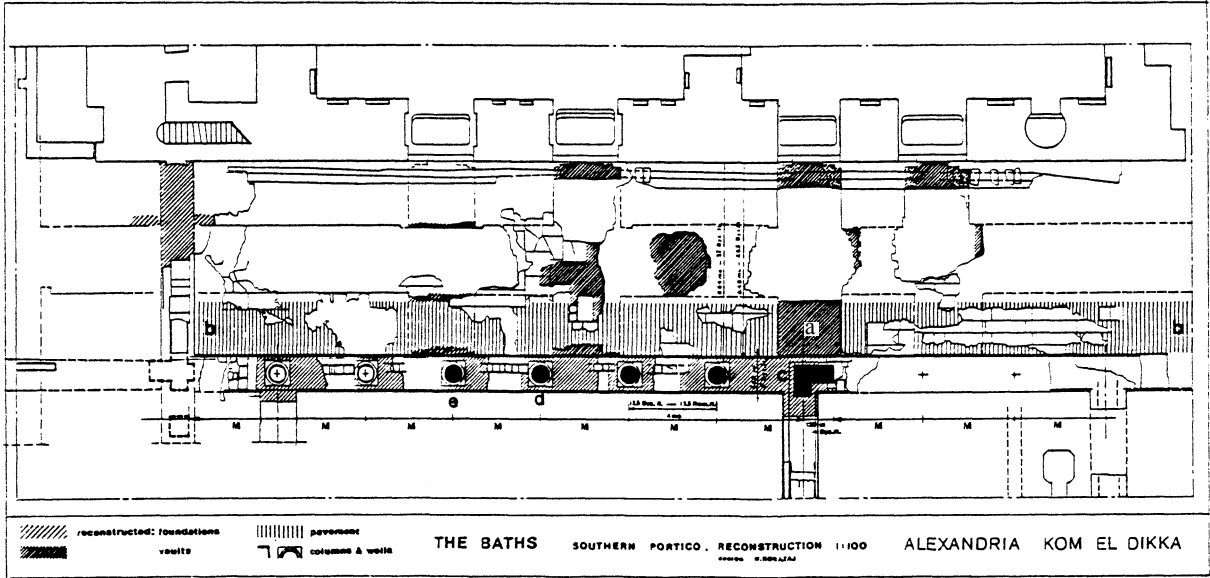


Fig. 3. Baths, southern portico. Reconstruction W. Kolčtaj.

reinforced with a stainless steel frame in order to fill in the missing fragments. A fragment of the no. III buttress of the Bath's outer wall was reconstructed in order to prepare a viewing platform for visitors.² Moreover, the dismantled foundations of the no. IV buttress in the said wall were cleared along with the adjoining section of the apodyterium wall. Both these structures are due to be reconstructed in the forthcoming season.

Part of the foundation wall supporting the stairs and entrance arcade in the southeastern vestibule of the Bath was also reconstructed. One of the pedestals supporting the arcade was restored, while another one was completed in view of the planned re-erection of a column in this location.

² Cf. *infra*, report on excavations, sector F.