# The British Archeological Project at Grumentum: 2017 Season

Final report on the 2017 excavations in Settore S, Grumentum

Dr. M. Taylor Lauritsen, Director
Institute of Classics
University of Kiel

Massimo Betello, Vice-director
Department of History and Humanities
John Cabot University

Initiated in 2014, the British Archaeological Project at Grumentum (hereafter BAPG) oversees the excavation of a large trench in Settore S at Grumentum, a Lucano-Roman town in western Basilicata (Fig. 1). The aims of the project are twofold: (1) to explore the growth of Grumentum's economy between the late Republic and the early Dominate through the excavation of commercial and industrial structures (e.g. *tabernae*, potteries, bakeries, etc.), and (2) to examine the town's pre-Roman layout by analysing material evidence from the period prior to installation of the Roman colony in the mid-1st century BC.

Excavations in Settore S began in 2009 under V. Scalfari, who opened a trench adjacent to the forum's southeast corner (Fig. 2). The primary purpose of this trench was to test the results of a geophysical survey conducted in the area, which seemed to indicate the presence of a large building complex positioned parallel to the forum.[1] Scalfari's excavations identified a series of rectilinear walls on the eastern side of the trench, accompanied by column bases and platforms to the west. While he dated some of the walls to the mid-1st century BC, he placed the main phases of construction in the 5th or 6th century AD, when a house with colonnaded peristyle was erected.

In 2012 and 2013, a small team from the University of Leuven extended the trench to the north, adding an area of approximately 15 x 15m to Settore S. Due to the size of this extension, only the topsoil and uppermost stratigraphic layers were excavated. During the 2014 campaign—the first conducted by the BAPG—the sector was reduced to an S-shaped area measuring approximately 85m². In an effort to focus on the chronological disposition of the architectural remains, the decision was taken to excavate using soundings (Fig. 3). Four of these were laid out across the trench in 2014 (numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4) and two additional soundings (5 and 6) were installed in 2015. Over the course of these two seasons, a number of important discoveries came to light.

On the eastern side of Settore S, the presence of multiple rectilinear structures was confirmed, and the western facades of these buildings (Fig. 3, dark green) appear to have opened onto a late antique road, which was paved with reused brick and tile fragments in the southern part of the trench. To the west of the road, we identified three more columns or platforms, positioned to the north of those found by Scalfari in 2009 and 2010 (Fig. 3, red and blue). This discovery seems to contradict Scalfari's reading of these features: rather than being associated with a late antique house, the columns are clearly part of a colonnade that continues northwards towards the far end of the forum. West of the colonnade, a series of substantial waste deposits were discovered. These contained artefacts from a variety of locations (African sigillata, Spanish lamps, Levantine glass) and time periods; most were deposited, however, in the 4th and 5th centuries AD. In particular, tremendous quantities of glass were discovered in the upper strata, leading us to believe that glass manufacturing was probably occurring nearby.

Prior to the 2016 season, then, the narrative that we had constructed for the general development of Settore S seemed relatively straightforward. The "eastern buildings" were likely a series of shops, built in perhaps the 1st or 2nd century AD and subdivided by interior partition walls that were constructed over the course of the following centuries. The shops were accessible via the road, which was positioned between the shop facades and the colonnade. In our view, the width of this space—c. 5.24m—was simply too great for the colonnade to have been attached to the eastern buildings, creating a portico. Even the grand public buildings of Roman Italy rarely employed *porticūs* of this size.[2] As a consequence, however, the colonnade had to be connected to something, and this we imagined to be

[1] Scalfari 2013, 63-64.

[2] Examples of narrower porticos in the public buildings include the forum portico at Grumentum (4.5 m), the portico in the Porticus Liviae at Rome (c. 5 m), and the porticos flanking the Capitolium at Ostia (c. 4.9 m).

another set of buildings located on the western side of the trench. We surmised that by the 4th century AD these buildings had been destroyed, and the colonnade along with them. In late antiquity, then, the eastern buildings were still in use (if heavily modified), with a wide road to the west. Between the road and the forum's eastern wall, we envisioned various types of industrial and mercantile activities taking place, thus accounting for the large quantities of glass and ceramic material that were found in this area.[3]

During the 2016 season, however, we made a number of discoveries that called aspects of this interpretation into question. Excavations in Sounding 5, which is positioned laterally across the width of the road, revealed a mortar floor (**US 6418**) and semicircular structure (**US 6421**) at a depth of c. 1.6m from the surface (Fig. 4). Pottery recovered from the structure's construction cut and the strata associated with the floor date both to the mid-2nd century AD. In Sounding 4, we found a sandstone column base underneath the column platform in northeastern part of the sounding (Fig. 5), reused as part of the foundation. A fragment of a near-identical base was recovered from the upper strata of Sounding 8 (Fig. 6), next to the remains of a column built in *opus latericium*. These two revelations indicate that the situation in Settore S is more complicated than previously imagined. First, the presence of the mortar floor US 6418 and "structure" US 6421 (at the moment, we are uncertain as to the purpose of the architectural feature) confirm that the space between the eastern building facades and the colonnade served as road only in late antiquity: prior to this it was probably an interior space. Second, the discovery of the sandstone column bases suggests that there was another phase of the colonnade, one that existed prior to the construction of the column platform in Sounding 4 and the *opus latericium* columns found throughout the area (as will be outlined below, we now believe that there at least three phases of the colonnade).

As a result of these developments, we went into the 2017 season with three primary goals: (1) to continue excavations around the colonnade (and to the west) in order to understand better its phasing; (2) to dig below the mortar floor in Sounding 5, in an effort to confirm its date and determine if similar surfaces existed underneath; and (3) to explore the eastern shops, focusing in particular on the interior space, with the aim of identifying the types of activities that were taking place therein. The individual sounding reports presented below show that in some instances we were successful in achieving these goals, in others cases we were not. But—as always seems to be the case—the season presented us with a number of new and surprising developments.

## Sounding 4

<u>Summary</u>

As in the preceding years, the situation in Sounding 4 shows substantial differences between the areas to the west and east of wall **US 6003**: evidently these two spaces were used for different purposes, and thus this report will be organised accordingly (Fig. 7). The two areas have not been excavated to the same depth, and virgin soil has not been reached. The main results can be summarised as follows.

The wall US 6003 (built using a solid white sandy mortar binding a conglomerate of tile fragments and stone pieces faced with river stones,[4] mainly fist-sized but a few of more than 20cm in width) has wall-faces displaying dissimilar appearances: (1) the western face is rough, made up by big river stones, and not smoothly rendered; (2) the eastern face is made up by smaller stones and it is carefully mortared (but not plastered) to create a flat wall-surface.[5] This face may have originally carried frescos found in pieces within a sandy layer (**US 6497**) located along most of the wall base.

Thanks to its smaller dimensions, the eastern area has been excavated more deeply. One of the oldest layers reached (**US 6481**, already identified last year) is equal to one found in the adjacent

[3] Indeed, Scalfari makes reference to a kiln that was excavated nearby "negli anni scorsi," but this excavation has never been published.

[4] These stones have roundish corners, evidently a result of natural erosion: they are likely from the nearby river Agri.

[5] This is similar to what was found during the 2016 season in Sounding 8. Here wall US 6003 was also discovered, but at a much shallower depth compared to Sounding 4. In Sounding 8 we did not excavate deep enough to reach the bottom of the wall, but we could observe that the masonry of the western face was composed of fist-sided river stones, rather than larger ones (perhaps these are located at the foundation level of the wall, as in Sounding 4).

Sounding 5 (**US 6495**). It appears as a flat, loose mass containing bits of broken bricks and tile without mortar (Fig. 8). It could be part of the preparation for the paving of an early walking/industrial surface (**US 6482**, see below) or the walking surface itself, and its limits have not yet been fully exposed (some strata partially cover it). US 6481 has an unclear relationship with an adjacent layer of loose silt (**US 6508**), and it is still partially covered both by a couple of still unnumbered silty layers[6] and by US 6482, a limited mortar surface (equal to **US 6494** in Sounding 5), which was either the walking/industrial surface itself or a patch for it.

In general, this entire area seems to have been created by a sequence of sub-horizontal layers of different quality and varied sizes, first for the walking/industrial surface and then as paving for the portico or street. This is not surprising, because while this area and the adjacent Sounding 5 are artificially distinct (as a consequence of the soundings' limits), in reality they were part of the same architectural space. At any rate, the walking/industrial surfaces (US 6481 and US 6482) cannot be the paving of the hypothesised portico (see below in "Tentative Conclusions") because the foundations of column **US 6362** and column platform **US 6266** are situated at a higher level (Fig. 9). For more on this walking/industrial surface see the final report of Sounding 5.

The western area has shown the same inconsistent characteristics of the previous years: a sequence of layers mostly produced from small artificial deposits. Only two were big and hard enough to be interpreted as walking surfaces, whereas all the others were small, disordered deposits combined and with some random and transient walking surfaces. In conclusion, the nature of this area is still unclear: it seems to be a dump site that increased in height in a rather irregular manner (no traces of a general and planned raise have been detected). Except for wall US 6003, no evidence of a structure has been identified. In general, the amount of pottery and glass recovered from the sounding this season was far inferior to that found during the 2015 and 2016 campaigns.

The Eastern Area

The presence of column platform US 6266 separates this eastern strip into a longer southern portion and a smaller northern one. The southern portion was minimally excavated this year:[7] only two layers were removed (**US 6479 and US 6480**). It seems that we reached the foundation level of wall US 6003 (the foundation appears to be visible), but we were able to distinguish neither foundation cut nor fill, probably due to the later construction of a parallel and adjacent wall ("platform" **US 6385**, visible in Fig. 9) that caused the destruction of the earlier layers. On the bright side, two of the oldest layers of this sounding have been determined to be identical to a pair found in the adjacent Sounding 5 (US 6481=6495 and US 6482=6494). US 6481 is composed of fragmented bits of mortar, broken terracotta tiles and bricks in a sandy matrix (the sandy quality is partially a result of the mortar's decomposition). US 6482 is a layer of mortar with inclusions of terracotta bits. These two strata are probably either the preparation-and-surface of a walking/industrial path, or are two surfaces of that same path. It also seems that these layers predate the construction of wall US 6003, but—as mentioned above— it could not be determined if they continued to the west of the wall because there we have not yet reached an appropriate depth.

Another problem that remains unresolved is the relative chronology for the construction of the brick column US 6362, located along the southern edge of the sounding. The column was discovered in 2015, and its foundation revealed in 2016. It is composed by four rows of broken tiles held together by layers of good quality mortar (roughly 0.5 cm thick). It has a diameter of 62 cm, and sits on a foundation made of mortar and broken tiles, carefully arranged into horizontal planes. The doubts regarding its phasing are caused both by the lack of a proper surface in phase with the column and by a series of nearby cuts (and fills) that are not easily distinguishable. At the moment there are three possible scenarios regarding the column's chronological development.

(1) The first option is to interpret all the cuts as later robber trenches. But this hypothesis conflicts with the fact that the column was not removed in its entirety, even though the trenches reached

[6] These unnumbered layers appear to be the youngest ones still in situ, and thus they will be the first to be removed in 2018.
[7] This was done to concentrate the effort on the westernmost parts of the trench, which were still at a higher level.

its foundation. While it is possible that robbers could have left some bricks behind, this seems fairly unlikely given the breadth of spoliated material found across the site.

(2) In the second hypothesis, wall US 6003 was constructed in conjunction with the walking surfaces further to the east. Later, a robber trench (**US 6477**) removed a southern portion of the wall and was filled—probably naturally—with a sterile, dark brown sandy loam (**US 6552**). Then "platform" US 6385 was constructed parallel and adjacent to the east face of wall US 6003, and this event removed the earlier surfaces. The function of this platform remains unknown; it might have been used to reinforce wall US 6003. Eventually, the "platform" US 6385 and the robbing backfill (US 6552) of wall US 6003 were cut by the foundation trench (cut **US 6404** and fill **US 6503**) for the column US 6362 and its foundation US 6400, in conjunction with the creation of a portico. At a later stage, the portico was renovated with the addition of new columns (positioned, for example, on column base US 6226). Sometime later, the robber trenches removed column US 6362, except for the lowest four courses of brick.

The problem with this sequence is that the first robbing of wall US 6003 would have to take place in perhaps the 2nd c. AD (so, fairly soon after its construction). This conflicts with the remains of the wall found in Sounding 8 during the 2017 season, which were preserved at a much greater height, indicating that its use-life extended into late antiquity (Fig. 10). Excavation of the upper strata in Sounding 4, Sounding 8 and the 2012 trench revealed a narrow deposit of grey soil (**US 6306**) positioned above wall US 6003 (Fig. 11). This was also connected to the robbing of the wall, but it (quite naturally) appeared much later in the chronological sequence, probably in the 4th or 5th c. AD. It is of course possible that parts of wall US 6003 were destroyed and/or robbed at different times and to different extents, but we have not found any transition points between these destruction events so far.

(3) The third option follows the initial events of hypothesis 2: wall US 6003 was constructed, along with the walking surfaces to its east. Later, part of this wall was buttressed by the "platform" US 6385. Then the portico was built and with it column US 6362. During this event, part of wall US 6003 was cut back and a section of the "platform" US 6385 was removed. A subsequent accumulation of portico surfaces followed. Finally, when the new column platform (US 6266) was introduced further to the north, the shaft of column US 6362 was rebuilt, necessitating a cut through the later occupational strata but leaving the foundation unaffected. The main difference between this theory and that presented in hypothesis 2 corresponds to the moment when the southern part wall US 6003 was cut back. In hypothesis 2, this event occurred as a consequence of robbing prior to the construction of the portico, whereas in hypothesis 3, it was undertaken for the purposes of erecting the portico itself.

The area on the north side of column base US 6266 is very small, and we are at a higher stratigraphic level here than in the south. During the 2017 season, we removed layers with a range of different compositional qualities. Some contained lumps of clay (**US 6522**), some were compacted and likely served as walking surfaces (**US 6496**) and others were composed of loose silt and contained fish bones (**US 6531**). Below these contexts, two unbaked clay bricks (**US 6532** and **US 6533**) were discovered protruding from the northern limit of the sounding. The parts visible were covered with a thin layer of white plaster.[8] It is possible that these mud bricks were associated with a pisé wall positioned beyond the northern edge of Sounding 4.[9]

In 2016, the foundation trench (**US 6204)** for column platform **US 6266** was identified along its southern and western sides, revealing, among other things, part of a sandstone column base (**US 6392**) that was incorporated into the foundation.[10] This season we were able to excavate the northern side of the cut, confirming the hypothesis that platform US 6266 is of relatively late date (i.e. 3rd or 4th c. AD). Its construction required alterations to many of the structures thus far identified: to the south the cut

[8] Only the southern faces are visible because the rest of the bricks extend beyond the borders of the sounding.

[9] We have evidence for mud brick construction on the opposite side of the trench, where a clay-and-stone socle was discovered in Sounding 2-3 during the 2014 season (Fig. 3, orange). The socle probably supported a pisé wall dating from the late 4th or early 5th century, a conclusion that is supported by the thick layers of compact clay that were found upon the removal of the topsoil in this area.

[10] As noted in the introduction, a similar base was discovered in the upper levels of Sounding 8.

removed part of "platform" US 6385, to the west it destroyed a section of wall US 6003, and to the north it cut layer US 6496, a soft, dark-brown (10YR 3/6) silt with many charcoal bits, some broken bones, but no mortar or fragments of tiles/brick. US 6496 postdates the deposition of the mud bricks US 6532 and US 6533. To the east of the platform US 6266 the excavation balk prevented any analysis, so no work could be done there.

The Western Area

In 2017, we continued to excavate the contexts located immediately to the west of wall US 6003. We identified a sequence of sloping strata abutting the wall, all of which sit on top of the walking surface in phase with US 6003's construction (and consequently, its construction cut), which we have not yet reached.

One of these sloping surfaces (**US 6497**) contained huge quantities of painted wall plaster alongside mortar, bricks and roof tiles (Fig. 12). The plaster fragments were primarily painted red, but also displayed blue, yellow and pink hues, and a handful presented identifiable design elements, such as stripes or swirls. Almost all of the fragments were found face down, indicating that they were probably attached to the western face of wall US 6003. Charcoal was also found throughout this context; it was in some cases attached directly to the plaster itself, which suggests that fire was perhaps the cause of the fresco's destruction. Obviously, this discovery adds a complicating element to the hypotheses laid out during the discussion of the eastern area: if the painted plaster was attached to wall US 6003, then the latter was probably not a low terrace-wall bordering the portico, but rather a much higher structure of yet undetermined purpose.

Apparently, the accumulation of layers against wall US 6003 corresponded to a few episodes of ground-levelling created by using different types of soils. These levelling deposits ranged in size: some were quite substantial, creating sub-horizontal surfaces, others much thinner with inconsistent matrices.[11] Among the broadest of these strata—covering nearly the entire sounding and extending beyond its northern and southern limits—were **US 6470**, **6516**, **6550** and **6558**. US 6470 was a soft dark grey silt with flakes of charcoal present everywhere except near wall US 6003. Given its flattened nature and the fact that it was positioned on top of layers abutting wall US 6003, this soil can be interpreted as an artificial raising of the area, but one that was not used as walking surface. Immediately below US 6470, US 6516 was discovered. This was a compact yellow-red surface, present in the western half of the sounding from north to south; it may have served as a temporary walking surface. US 6550 was below this; it was a sandy silt with some clay, characterised also by the presence of charcoal and mortar bits. The last (and therefore the oldest) walking surface identified (US 6558) was not removed in 2017, and it is still partially covered by other layers (Fig. 13). So far this is the most convincing of all the potential walking surfaces thanks to the high density of pebbles within its matrix. What appears to be half of a limestone mortar was found embedded in the centre of the sounding, and it has not yet been removed. The most notable small find of this year was a heart-shaped seal box, recovered from US 6550 (Fig. 14). When discovered the box was in excellent condition and still closed. It may be that inside there is the wax and seal imprint used to prevent tampering with the message, but thus far it has not been possible to open it. So the box has been simply recorded, photographed and stored in the museum.

Tentative Conclusions

In the earliest visible occupation phase, the eastern part of Sounding 4 and the adjacent Sounding 5 were home to a series of early walking/industrial surfaces (US 6481 and US 6482) that probably covered the full expanse between wall **US 6264** in the east and wall US 6003 in the west (Fig. 15). These surfaces certainly predate the portico, and also predate or were contemporaneous with wall US 6003 (at present this relationship remains uncertain). It is still unknown if this surface extended to the west of wall US 6003, as there we have not yet excavated to the same depth. On this surface the semicircular structure US 6421 (Sounding 5) was built, but its function is undetermined. Thus the late antique street passing

[11] One of the layers may contain architectural material from a dismantled bath complex, consisting of broken *tubuli*, painted plaster and tiles. Similar materials were found during the 2016 season in context US 6469.

through Soundings 4 and 5 was predated not by a similar imperial or republican thoroughfare, but rather a wide portico, into which the columns discovered in Sounding 4 were incorporated. It is now possible to suppose the existence of four phases for such a *porticus*:

Phase 1) Columns with sandstone bases. The sandstone bases found beneath column platform US 6266 and in Sounding 5 (as described in the introduction) were probably associated with the first phase of the portico, but at present there is no other evidence to indicate its extent, appearance or compositional materials.

Phase 2) Brick columns with *opus caementicium* foundations. Columns US 6362 (Sounding 4) and **US 6415** (Sounding 8) were positioned immediately to the east of wall US 6003. A similar column was found below the topsoil in the 2009-2010 trench, but was not excavated (Fig. 3). At this point, the portico was 5.24 m wide, wall-to-wall, and this width was maintained until its destruction. The columns seem to have been installed without bases (or the bases were made of plaster/stucco and no remains have survived) directly upon an *opus caementicium* foundation.

Phase 3) Rectangular foundations. The portico was reinforced by adding either brick pillars or brick columns on rectangular foundations ("column platforms"). Given the extent of the area excavated at present, it is unclear whether these were added to the existing colonnade or simply replaced it entirely. Column base US 6266 is evenly positioned between the columns US 6362 and US 6415, and this spatial pattern continues further to south (Fig. 3, red squares), where square/rectangular platforms were also discovered in the 2009-2010 trench. The northernmost of these platforms covered the brick column associated with the previous phase, and thus might represent evidence for its replacement.

Phase 4) Late antique street. At some point in the 3rd or 4th century AD, the portico was either partially or entirely destroyed, and was replaced by a street. Its surface consisted only of beaten earth in the earlier phases, but it was crudely paved with broken tiles and stones in a later phase. This action appears to be the last instance of monumental construction in this area.

Based on stratigraphical relationships, it is possible to situate the creation of the pisé wall (of which bricks US 6532 and US 6533 were a part) between phases 2 and 3 of the portico. This wall probably extended toward the east (in the direction of wall US 6264), but likely not to the west of wall US 6003. Indeed, layers of compact clay were found roughly at this level in Sounding 5, but nothing of this sort appeared in western part of Sounding 4. If this reconstruction is correct, it means that the pisé wall was located exclusively within the porticoed space.

From beginning to end, Sounding 4's western area was host to a series of (mostly large) artificial deposits composed of different qualities and containing varied inclusions. The creation of these fill-levels seems to have started following the construction of wall US 6003, and they continued to appear after its destruction. Some deposits were levelled and used as walking surfaces, but their extent did not reach as far east as the wall, likely because they were temporary planes associated with the use of the area as a dump site. No built structures have been identified in the western area.

Problems

It is still unclear which layer was cut first by the foundations of wall US 6003: even on the east side of the wall, no evidence for a foundation cut has been found. The lowest layers identified thus far (US 6508 and US 6481) could either abut wall US 6003 or be cut by it. As noted above, it remains to be seen if these layers are also present on the west side of the wall.

Wall US 6003 has also been found at different heights in different soundings. This is hard to understand if it was intended to be a single structure flanking the portico: how is it possible that in one area the wall is almost entirely destroyed (Sounding 4), when elsewhere it is preserved to a much greater height (Sounding 8)? If wall US 6003 was a terrace-wall built to support the portico, then it should have been a relatively low structure along its full extent. The presence of the painted plaster in US 6497 suggests that the western face of the wall was decorated, however, and this lends credence to the theory that it was at some point much taller—possibly as high as a single storey.

Connected to the previous point is the question as to when wall US 6003 was demolished. Was it partially spoliated and the robber trench backfilled at an early stage, only to later be cut by the installation of column US 6362? If this was the case, how is it possible that US 6003 was preserved to such a height in Sounding 8? Or perhaps the wall remained in use until the final phase of the portico, when it was robbed out at different times and to different extents. The fact that the construction of column US 6362 and column platform US 6266 only removed parts of the wall's eastern face indicate that it could have functioned as a low terrace-wall from this point onward.

Finally, there remains a question about the surface in phase with column US 6362. Modifications to the area east of the wall seem to have removed any walking levels linked with its construction: to the east of the column there appears to be a cut and fill of undetermined limits; to the west, we found a sequence of cuts, robber trenches and fills; and to the north, the so-called "platform" US 6385 was apparently cut by the foundations for the column, or by the second foundation of the portico (Phase 3, above). A proper walking surface was not found on top of it, however.

*Massimo Betello*

**Sounding 5**

The 2017 excavation of Sounding 5 represents a continuation of the work that began in this sounding in 2015. The campaign continued from the most recent context **US 6454** (located at a depth of approximately 1m) and ended with surface **US 6554**, the oldest context as yet revealed in Settore S. The primary aims for the season were to clarify the temporality of architectural stone and mortar feature (semicircular structure) US 6421 in the west wall of the unit, and to explore the possibility of a north-south division in the centre of the sounding, which was suggested at the close of the 2016 campaign. Indeed, the 2017 excavations did reveal such a division within the sounding, and thus, for the sake of clarity, the following report on this year's excavation will be organised along the same lines.

Eastern Half of Sounding 5: The "East Window" and its compact walking surfaces

Tile, brick, and stone surface US 6554 was the oldest layer revealed in Sounding 5, and indeed in the entirety of Settore S (Fig. 16). The surface was revealed in the "East Window" excavations (Fig. 17); this window was opened in the eastern third of the sounding in order to continue stratigraphic excavations without disturbing mortar surface US 6495, which extends westward into Sounding 4 (where, as noted above, it is called US 6482). US 6554 was comprised of broken roof tile, brick, and ceramic sherds (all coarse ware) in a red clay matrix. This surface is thought to represent a preparation layer for the clay walking surface **US 6535**, positioned immediately above it. At the far eastern edge of the window, positioned underneath wall US 6264, the top of wall **US 6540** was identified. Both of the surfaces to the west were cut by **US 6527** (fill **US 6474** and **US 6425**=**6492**) during the construction of this wall.

Due to its depth, walking surface US 6535 was revealed only in the East Window. In terms of composition, the soil was very compact and mottled with lumps of yellow clay and micaceous schist inclusions. It appears that both US 6535 and underlying US 6554 continue to the west, and thus at least partially underlie the later mortar surface US 6495. Both surfaces also seem to have continued to the east before being cut during the construction of wall US 6540. US 6535 was of variably thickness, with greater depth observed to the south, resulting in a slight slope in this direction. The layer contained predominantly ceramic sherds—mostly coarse ware—with a few bits of metal and brick.

Overlying US 6535 was layer **US 6526**, a hard brownish-red (7.5YR 4/4) soil containing large quantities of charcoal and brick fragments, ceramic sherds and animal bones. The stratum was of greater thickness in the north than the south; perhaps this depth disparity was intended to compensate for the slope evident in US 6535, thus creating a level walking surface on top of it. As with the layers below, US 6526 was cut by the construction cut (**US 6527**) of wall US 6540 to the east and appears to continue towards the west into the unexcavated portion of the sounding.

**US 6489** was the first layer identified within the East Window. It was also a compact walking surface, composed of compact brown (7.5YR 5/3) silty clay soil. The nature of the surface suggests that this part of the sounding repeatedly served as a functional occupational/walking area over time. US 6489 contained ceramic sherds, animal bone, and architectural debris. The context was also cut by US 6527 in the east and continues onward to the west, where it is adjacent to the mortar surface US 6495. The division between the two layers is abrupt, with an east-west split easily visible. The identification of this divide represents of one of the season's aims, which was to elucidate the organization of this space in the past. While we have not yet been able to identify the functions of the two areas, a clearer sense of how the space was arranged has been established.

Two thin layers, likely lenses, were observed overlying US 6489 in the eastern half of Sounding 5. These are **US 6485** and **US 6454**. The former, a compact red clay silt layer, was quite thin—approximately 3cm—and laid directly on top of US 6489 in the eastern and central half of the sounding. Within it ceramic sherds, animal bones, charcoal, brick, mortar bits and glass were found. US 6485 was revealed by the excavation of the thin overlying level US 6454. This stratum had amorphous boundaries and was of variable thickness, supporting the idea that it was a lens. The layer contained bits of charcoal and mortar, as well as ceramic sherds, animal bones, and a nail. Both US 6485 and US 6454 were adjacent to **US 6472**, a yellowish silty clay layer associated with surface 6495 and the western half of the sounding.

Several small (~30cm diameter), shallow (10-20cm) pits were observed in lens US 6485 and layer US 6489 (Fig. 18). These were cuts **US 6504**, **6505**, **6506**, and **6450**; the latter was first identified and excavated in 2016. Each of these pits were multi-layered and cut both contexts US 6485 and US 6489, with the exception of US 6450, which contained only a single fill deposit, and US 6504, for which only a single layer (**US 6490**) has been excavated in 2017. It is likely that a second, underlying layer exists, and thus it has been pre-emptively numbered **US 6582**. Detailed descriptions of the four cuts follow below.

1) US 6450 was circular and located in the centre of Sounding 5, adjacent to the north wall. It cut the mortar surface US 6495 and the yellow clay soil layer overlying it, US 6472.
2) US 6506 was positioned in the East Window, and was filled with two individual deposits. The lower fill layer, **US 6510**, contained medium-sized (10-15cm) stones and bricks in a loose, dark brown (7.5 YR 3/3) matrix. Above it, the fill layer **US 6486** consisted of a hard, slightly lighter-coloured (10 YR 4/4) soil, and contained predominantly ceramic sherds and animal bones.
3) US 6507 was also located in the East Window, and was rectangular with rounded edges. Lowermost fill layer **US 6547** was a shallow brown (2.5Y 5/4) silty clay loam approximately 8cm deep; it contained predominantly coarse ware sherds. Overlying fill layer **US 6491** was a yellow brown (10YR 4/6) hard silty clay loam containing ceramic sherds, bits of brick and mortar, animal bones, a few pieces of glass, a piece of bronze and a single fragment of painted plaster.
4) US 6504 was circular in shape and located near the centre of the sounding; it was bisected by sounding's south wall. Uppermost fill layer US 6490 was a dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay. While excavation of this cut did not continue beyond US 6490 in 2017, it is possible that, as in the case of cuts US 6506 and US 6507, a second, lower fill layer exists; as mentioned above, this unexcavated layer has been numbered US 6582.

Based on the similarities between these cuts: size, shape, depth and the fact that they seem to be limited to the US 6485/6498 horizon, we suspect that they served similar and contemporaneous functions. At present, however, their exact purpose remains unclear.

<u>The Eastern Edge of Sounding 5: Construction cut 6527, wall US 6540, and associated fills</u>

As noted above, cut US 6527 can be directly connected to the construction of wall US 6540. The cut was first recognised during the 2016 excavation campaign, when it definitively cut layer **US 6431**; as excavations continued below this context, it became clear that US 6527 also cut a number of additional strata: **US 6453**, 6454, 6489, 6526, 6535 and finally US 6554. US 6527 was filled primarily by **US 6425**, a dark red (5YR 3/3) compact clay silt, which was excavated in 2016. In 2017, another fill layer,

**US 6492**, was identified at the same level as US 6425. US 6492 ran north-south, in a 10cm band parallel to cut US 6527, along the edge of US 6454. It was determined that US 6492 represented an unrecognised and hence unexcavated area of US 6425.

Underlying US 6425=6492 was a lower fill layer, **US 6474**. This was a dark brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay loam that contained tile, ceramic sherds, architectural debris, and a few animal bones. The excavation of fill US 6474 revealed wall US 6540, which was constructed of cut stone and white mortar. This is the earliest built structure thus far identified in Settore S. It is positioned almost directly beneath wall US 6264 and follows the same alignment, confirming that the earlier architectural features present in the area similarly respect the orientation of the city's orthogonal grid.

The Western Half of Sounding 5: Conglomerate surface 6495 and architectural feature 6421

The aforementioned apparent east-west division of Sounding 5 is most clearly delineated by the presence of the mortar surface US 6495. Composed of a haphazard but uniform distribution of broken roof tiles, brick, stone, and ceramic sherds (including a *vernice nera* vessel with lid) and bonded with grey mortar, this surface can be distinguished from surface US 6489 along a roughly north-south line. US 6495, which was not excavated in 2017, likely served as a preparation layer for the mortar surface US 6494, which is only visible in posterity along the south wall of Sounding 5 and in Sounding 4 (US 6495=6481; US 6494=6482). US 6494 likely covered the entirety of US 6495, and served as a walking or industrial surface. Based on the materials recovered from these contexts and those identified in the East Window, we tentatively place the construction of US 6494 and US 6495 in the 1st century AD. Both surfaces certainly pre-date US 6421, the semicircular cut stone and mortar architectural feature located along the west wall of Sounding 5. That US 6495 and US 6494 are the earlier contexts is indicated by the builder's trench **US 6447**, which clearly cuts the former layer. However, there is also evidence for the subsequent repair of the latter surface: while both the cut and its fill (**US 6437**) were quite clear along the northern edge of US 6421, along the eastern and southern limits of the feature, tiles and sherds associated with US 6495 were observed intact (Fig. 8; Fig. 19). These seem to overlie builder's trench fill US 6437, and therefore it is hypothesised that these served to repair the surface after it was cut for US 6421's construction. The excavation of US 6495 during the 2018 season will hopefully clarify this relationship.

Overlying US 6494 and US 6495 was layer **US 6472**, a yellowish (10YR 3/4) silty clay layer that was distributed at variable thickness across the western half of Sounding 5, from its western limit to an amorphous boundary beyond US 6495 in the east, adjacent to lenses US 6454 and US 6485 and covering US 6489. Based on its uneven distribution (thicker in northwest corner, thinner over the US 6495 conglomerates), it could be considered a natural accumulation or a haphazard deposition of soils over the already deconstructed, demolished or disintegrated mortar surface US 6494. In the southwest corner of Sounding 5, south of the witness soil block and column platform US 6266, the excavation of US 6472 served to link Sounding 5 with Sounding 4. As previously mentioned, this confirmed that surfaces US 6494 and US 6495 were the same as Sounding 4's US 6482 and US 6481 (respectively); it also confirmed that US 6472 equalled US 6480.

Overlying US 6472 in the northwest corner of Sounding 5, **US 6484**, a thin, red (7.5YR 4/4) layer of soil with numerous charcoal inclusions was excavated. Limited in scope to an area approximately 50x30cm running into the north and west walls of the sounding's corner, and cut by builder's trench US 6447, this layer seems to be associated with a burning incident. Burning layers were also found to the north (US 6544) and south (US 6398) of column platform US 6266 in Sounding 4 at a similar depth, which suggests that perhaps there was fire in this part of the portico prior to the installation of the square/rectangular column platforms (indeed, this may explain why the structural overhaul took place).

As noted in report on Sounding 4, the decision was taken to leave US 6495=6481 intact until the excavations on the west side of wall US 6003 reach this depth. At this point, we suspect that the surface runs underneath the wall or was cut for its construction, but this will not be confirmed until the

beginning of the 2018 season. At that point, excavation will continue below the mortar surface in an effort to reach the contexts discovered in the East Window during the 2017 season.

*Dr. Kristen Heasley*

**Sounding 7**

At the beginning of the 2017 campaign, the original limits of Sounding 7 were extended to the east an additional 3m, in an effort to record more of the internal space of the room located to the east of wall US 6264 (Fig. 20). The sounding now measures 6 x 4m and is now our largest open area excavation. As a result of this, most of the digging in Sounding 7 focused on the extension until the surface was brought down to the level established further to the west during the 2016 excavations, which focused on the area either side of wall US 6264.

On the west side of the wall, at a higher level, only three contexts have been excavated. **US 6451**, located in the southwest corner of the sounding, was a large animal den, as indicated by its irregular shape, the mixture of finds, and loose soil towards the bottom of the pit. These characteristics are diagnostic for the presence of bioturbation. The purpose of the context **US 6467**, located on the west side of wall US 6264 along the sounding's north border, is not clear. It seems to be linked to the collapse-layer **US 6435**, which was associated with the destruction of wall US 6462—perhaps the debris from the original collapse was partly moved (Fig. 21). Between these two contexts was a layer that covered the collapse material, **US 6436**. Its function is not clear. Beneath these excavated contexts and among the collapse material there are the three contexts **US 6500**, **6501**, and **6502**, which are visible from south to north across the full width of the sounding. These are almost certainly equal to each other and at present are only divided by the collapse deposits lying on top of them. Confirmation of this hypothesis will have to wait, however, as the area has not been excavated any further in order to stabilise the wall.

<u>The Eastern Extension</u>

Beneath the topsoil (**US 6200**) was a thick layer of brown soil (**US 6201**) with a huge amount of mixed material, including fragmented bricks, tiles, ceramic and some stones; these covered the whole area of the extension. This seems to be an agricultural layer, which was probably deposited on top of the late antique structures in early medieval times to create a flat surface for agricultural use. Some barely visible remains of plough marks within the layer support this suggestion and the finds of late antique coins give a hint for the dating. This layer also covered the stone wall **US 6464**, which runs eastwards along the southern border of the sounding (Fig. 22). This wall seems to have subdivided the internal space of the building, likely separating the shop under exploration in Sounding 7 from its counterpart to the south. Underneath the layer US 6201 followed a similar layer, **US 6537**, which contained fewer artefacts (finds included mostly animal bone, along with four ceramic sherds and nine fragments of glass) and displayed a brighter soil colour (10YR 3/1). Along the north face of wall US 6464, a large concentration of mortar fragments was discovered at the top of US 6537; this deposit seems to be associated with a breach in the wall which appears approximately 2m from the eastern border of the sounding. The cavity and mortar deposit were probably caused by later plowing, an activity that—as noted above—occurred throughout the area during both the medieval and modern periods.

After removing US 6537, **US 6536** was discovered; this context covered the entire area to the east of wall US 6264, with a slight upwards slope towards the east. At this level, a large pit (**US 6555**) was identified in the northeast corner of the sounding. The northern and eastern extent of the pit remains undetermined. It was filled with **US 6545**, a 10YR 3/3 dark brown silty clay. The top of the deposit contained large fragments of mortar, roof tile and ceramic sherds; towards the bottom a greater quantity of animal bone began to appear in conjunction with glass fragments and a handful of small bronze coins

(none of which were dateable). At present, the purpose of the pit is unclear. Perhaps it was related to a destruction event in the area, or alternatively was a late antique attempt to extract clay.[12]

Below US 6536, a series of substantial deposits were uncovered across the sounding. Just to the east of wall US 6264, a context containing large amounts of clay (**US 6563**) was discovered. It was similar in terms of texture—if not colour—to **US 6564**, a layer located in the southeast corner of Sounding 7, just to the north of wall US 6464. Neither of these contexts was excavated in during the 2017 season, so it remains to be seen if they are, in fact, one in the same (Fig. 23). Between US 6563 and US 6564 was the shallow brown (7.5YR 5/4) lens **US 6565**. This context contained less clay than its counterparts to the east and west; it ran northwards across the centre of the sounding from wall US 6464. In the northern part of US 6563, there was an amorphous cut (**US 6567**) filled with dark brown soil (7.5 YR 3/2), **US 6562**. This fill contained burnt ceramic material and tile, shards of glass, metal fragments and a piece of slag. Given the nature of the finds, it has been posited that the cut and fill may be associated with industrial production.

There are also some interesting observations regarding the walls US 6264 and US 6464. At their junction is a large cut (**US 6519**) that destroyed a section of wall US 6264. It was filled with three different contexts: the uppermost layer, with soil similar to the topsoil US 6201, was **US 6471**; this was followed by a layer consisting of loose mortar and brick fragments (**US 6513**), and finally a reddish and black soil with mortar inclusions (**US 6517**). After removing the fills, it became apparent that the walls are not bonded, but that wall US 6464 abuts wall US 6264. The cut was most likely a robbing action in order to extract stones. Upon the removal of the layer US 6536, the top of the earlier wall **US 6583** appeared underneath the southern extent of wall US 6264 (Fig. 24). Unlike it's later counterpart, this structure was rendered entirely in *opus latericium*. It follows the orientation of wall US 6264, and, from a chronological perspective, probably corresponds to the construction of wall **US 6373** discovered in Sounding 5 during the 2015 season. This wall is positioned underneath the southern part of wall US 6264; it seems to have been covered by the construction of latter in the 2nd or 3rd century AD. The build date for US 6373/6583 is uncertain at this point.

It seems that the layers US 6537, 6565, 6536 and possibly the unexcavated contexts US 6563 and US 6564 were deconstruction or debris layers that were purposefully deposited in the room. This interpretation might also offer an explanation for the sloped surface of several contexts. The cuts US 6555 and US 6567 occur at different positions within the vertical stratigraphy and consequently were not contemporaneous; this suggests that the aforementioned debris layers were not deposited one after the other, but rather appeared across Sounding 7 over an extended period of time. In terms of datable finds, we found only a handful of late Republican/early imperial *ceramica comune* sherds, the wall of an ARS-A cup and a coin hailing from the reign of Caligula. All were recovered from relatively late contexts (3rd/4th century AD) and thus seem to be inclusions mixed into the dumping/debris layers deposited within the room. It may be that we're seeing a situation within the eastern buildings similar to that which occurred to the west of wall US 6003, in which fill/waste deposits were utilised to raise the level of the ground surface. That said, we have found no evidence of occupation or floor levels within the sounding thus far.

*Jens Schubert*

**Sounding 9**

Sounding 9 was opened in 2017 in order to identify the back wall of the shop/room under excavation in Sounding 8. Sounding 9 was located approximately 2m to the east of Sounding 8, following the line of east/west running cut stone and mortar wall US 6464. The 2017 excavations in Sounding 9 revealed the edge of the anticipated back wall, **US 6561**. To explore further the relationship between US 6561 and

[12] It should be pointed out that, while ceramic production may have been occurring in the vicinity of Settore S during late antiquity, the clay visible in Sounding 7 is not sufficiently refined for this process. It could perhaps have been used for the production of mud brick, however.

US 6464, the sounding was extended to the west by half a meter, leaving the final sounding dimensions at 2.5 x 2m.

At the bottom of the sounding, we uncovered **US 6594**, a loose, brown sandy loam, which is thought to underlie the tile surface **US 6566**, and is thus the earliest context visible. US 6594 presented amorphous boundaries and was observed only in the southern third of Sounding 9. Its ill-defined borders are likely the result of post-depositional action by either tree roots or fossorial animals, as suggested by the mixed, loose soil observed during excavation. Above this context, surface US 6566 was composed of broken roof tiles in a compact sandy clay loam matrix; it formed a preparation layer for mortar surface **US 6560** above. The tiles of US 6566 were concentrated primarily in the north and west of the layer, but extended regularly across the sounding. Neither US 6594 nor US 6566 were excavated in 2017.

Overlying the tile surface, US 6560 was a level mortar layer that abutted wall US 6561 and extended across the sounding towards the east (Fig. 25). The mortar of surface US 6560 was white, crumbly, and of non-uniform thickness, with greater depth observed towards the south. This variation in thickness is likely a result of attempts to level the surface. US 6560 may also be associated with US 6584, a line of mortar containing medium-sized (up to 10cm) stone and tile inclusions observed along the eastern wall of the sounding. Though the character of the mortar is similar in term of colour and consistency, the inclusion of stones and tiles was not observed elsewhere in US 6560, and the linear nature of US 6584 suggests a distinct architectural action.

Mortar surface US 6560 and the underlying tile surface US 6566 were cut by a plow scar (**US 6577**), which created a V-shaped trench of variable depth running roughly east-west across the sounding. Cut US 6577 was filled by **US 6576**, a loose brown (10YR 5/4) soil comprised primarily of overlying agricultural fill US 6201. The plow scar originally seemed to cut through the entirety of the sounding, from the eastern border westward through wall US 6561. However, to explore cautiously the relationship of the cut to wall US 6561, the fill soils positioned near wall US 6561 were excavated separately. This excavation revealed that the cut through the wall was, in fact, a robber trench and therefore an action entirely separate from that which created US 6577. As a consequence, the robber trench was given its own number: **US 6597**.

Unfortunately, the western extent of cut US 6597 could not be revealed due to the border of the sounding, and this confused our understanding not only of wall US 6561's scale but also its relationship to wall US 6464. A rectangular mound of mortar and stone, **US 6596**, was located in line with wall US 6561 to the south, but was separated from it by the robber trench US 6597 (Fig. 26). As a consequence, US 6596 was originally considered to be a separate, albeit mysterious, architectural element. However, the excavation of mortar surface US 6560, which extended in a linear fashion into the robber's trench, clarified the relationship between wall US 6561 and the enigmatic architectural US 6596: the former is a continuation of the latter, meaning that wall US 6561 extended southwards beyond Sounding 9's southern boundary. The robber trench US 6597 was also lined with mortar associated with surface US 6560, which may indicate that wall US 6561 was robbed for the purposes of constructing a drainage or service channel. Although the junction of walls US 6561 and US 6464 was not revealed within the sounding, it is reasonable to image that meet just beyond the northwest corner.

To the east of wall US 6561=6596, **US 6578**, a level, regular tile surface in a clay matrix was observed. This surface is contemporary with mortar surface 6560, as each are adjacent to one another and were found directly below agricultural soils 6201. However, tile surface US 6578 was only observed in the southeast corner of the sounding. Therefore, it is likely that this surface extends towards the south and east beyond the borders of the sounding. It is possible that mortar surface US 6560, which was limited to the eastern edge of wall 6561, also continues to the south, running parallel to tile surface 6578.

Wall US 6561 was not entirely revealed over the course of the 2017 excavation, due to both the extent of Sounding 9's physical boundaries and the termination of the digging season. In terms of masonry, it was produced from cut stone, river cobbles and roof tiles, bonded with a white mortar. The masonry is generally well-worked and secure, although the mortar is somewhat crumbly at the top, where the wall was covered by agricultural layer US 6201. In the northwest corner of Sounding 9, where

the western extent of the wall was not revealed due to the limits of the sounding, a second robber's trench (at present lacking a context number) was observed, filled with US 6201. The intention of this robbing incident is indeterminable based on the current view. But since the trench was irregular and somewhat concave, it was probably made with the intention to recover stone for later building activities, rather than to create a channel or other functional feature, as was the case with US 6597.

The architectural cut and builder's trench associated with the construction of wall US 6561 were not identified during the 2017 excavation campaign, meaning that all contexts excavated and identified (US 6560, 6566, 6594 and 6578) abut the wall and post-date its construction. Agricultural layer US 6201, which covered the aforementioned contexts uniformly across the sounding, was a thick layer of dark brown (US 10YR 3/4) loamy clay soil that alternated between loose and very compact. US 6201 contained artefacts from a broad range of time periods, including glass, bits of bronze, *tesserae*, modern and ancient nails, coins, common pottery, glazed pottery, animal bones, brick, tile and mortar.

*Dr. Kristen Heasley*

**Summary and Future Goals**

With the 2017 field season now complete, we are fairly confident about the later phasing of the architecture in Settore S. By the late 2nd or 3rd century AD, an elongated structure running parallel to the forum's east wall had been erected. This structure was composed of two primary areas: (1) the so-called "eastern buildings," which consisted of a series of quadrilateral rooms set next to one another, and (2) the colonnade/portico, located on the western side of the complex.

Each of the eastern rooms encompasses a surface area of approximately 33m², a calculation that can be made thanks to the discovery of wall US 6561 in Sounding 9. These spaces were not accessible via the typical "*taberna* doorway," which consists of a broad entrance with elongated threshold, but rather through a relatively narrow opening, measuring about 1.25m in width.[13] In previous years we hypothesised that the rooms functioned as independent shops, not only because of their regular plan, size and proximity to the forum, but also because there was a long line of them, stretching from the southern end of Settore S all the way to the forum's northern portico (Fig. 27). However, the lack of identifiable walking surfaces (and by extension activity areas) in Sounding 8 means that this interpretation remains uncertain, particularly when considered in conjunction with the absence of the traditional wide doorway that we might expect to find associated with urban *tabernae*. In any case, the positioning of the rooms one after the other along a singular façade is indicative of either a mercantile or industrial function, even if the precise purpose of these spaces must remain an open question for the moment.

To the west, the first phase of the colonnade (that is, the phase in which the sandstone capitals were used) was probably erected in conjunction with the original façade of the eastern buildings (represented by walls US 6373 and 6583 in Soundings 5 and 8, respectively) at some point in the latter 2nd or perhaps early 3rd century AD. That is to say, both the eastern buildings and the portico were likely constructed at the same time. It is now also clear that wall US 6003, which predated the construction of the complex, probably remained in use. The first floor of the portico seems to have been rendered in beaten earth with an irregular layer of mortar on top of it. Subsequent surfaces were composed only of *battuto*. In general, the masonry and flooring materials/techniques utilised during construction and in subsequent building phases were not of a particular high quality, a feature of the complex that is somewhat surprising given its proximity to the forum, as well as the standard of the other buildings that have been excavated nearby. To the east of wall US 6561 in Sounding 9, a pair of tile-and-mortar surfaces were discovered. At the moment, it is unclear whether these are associated within an interior space—that is, another room or set of rooms within the eastern buildings—or an external area. The use of tile in such a haphazard manner across the entire visible surface of the sounding perhaps suggests the latter conclusion, but we will reserve judgement on this issue until further evidence emerges. What is

[13] One 3rd/4th century AD doorway is visible at this point; it is located along wall 6264 at the eastern end of Sounding 5.

without doubt, however, is that there is further cultural activity to the east of the area currently under excavation.

As noted in the introduction, our interpretation of the situation in late antiquity remains much the same as in previous years. We can say with a fair degree of certainty that the colonnade (and consequently, the portico) was rebuilt a couple of times during the 3rd and 4th centuries AD; the latter of these events may have been in response to a fire. It is probably during one of these reconstruction phases that the painted plaster applied the western of face of wall US 6003 was destroyed, although the precise relationship between the wall and the colonnade remains a complicated (and unfortunately unresolved) issue. Over time, the interior spaces of the eastern buildings were subdivided with partition walls. An example of one such division came to light during 2014 season, when we identified a clay-bonded wall built in the mid-4th century AD (see n.8 above for more detail). The area to the west of colonnade was used as a dumping ground for local waste materials, some of which may have been connected to industrial production that was occurring nearby. Some of the waste deposits were also likely attempts to elevate the level of the walking surface in conjunction with the ever-rising portico-cum-road surfaces just to the east. Given the results of the 2017 excavations in Sounding 8, similar events may have been occurring within parts of the eastern buildings as well. It is unclear precisely when the portico and colonnade were destroyed and the area converted to a road, but certainly by the 5th century AD the surface was roughly paved with roof tile and brick.

The discovery of wall US 6540 in the eastern part of Sounding 5 was a complete surprise. Prior to its appearance, we had assumed that the visible architecture associated with the eastern buildings represented the first phase of construction in the area. It is now clear that this is not the case and that an earlier structure underlies the eastern buildings. Though we cannot date the masonry at this point, the ceramic record from the soil deposits that immediately predate the wall's construction suggests a late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD build date. The oldest context excavated thus far (US 6535) produced sherds of Arretine sigillata, providing a terminus post quem of the mid-1st century BC. Large quantities of black glaze pottery and *ceramica a pasta grigia* accompany this material, however, and are perhaps indicative of a slightly earlier date within the aforementioned range. Needless to say, US 6540 represents an exciting discovery and points to the likelihood of an entirely different form of occupation in Settore S during the years immediately following the installation of the Roman colony.

Given the wide range of new developments that occurred during the 2017 season, the aims for 2018 will be slightly more ambitious than in previous campaigns. In Sounding 4, we will complete the excavation of the contexts immediately to the west of wall US 6003 in an effort to determine if the mortar surface US 6482=6495 continues underneath the wall. Regardless of whether or not this is the case, the removal of the western layers should at least provide evidence for wall US 6003's construction cut, resolving once and for all questions regarding its build date. We will also continue excavations in the East Window of Sounding 5 in an effort to refine the phasing of both wall US 6540 and the unexcavated surface US 6554. In Soundings 7 and 9, work will carry on as well, and an expansion of the latter sounding further towards the east is a distinct possibility. Determining whether or not the tile surface US 6566 represents the paving of an internal or external space is crucial to understanding the full scale of the eastern buildings. If they were only a single row of shops, then perhaps the (quite poor) standard of the masonry and construction materials makes a bit more sense; on the other hand, if the entire structure extended eastwards, then the situation becomes a bit more complicated. Finally, it is possible that we will place another small sounding (perhaps 2x2m) further towards the north along the line of wall US 6264 in an effort to confirm that the line of shops does indeed continue towards the northern end of the forum, as indicated by geophysical surveys conducted in 2010 and 2011.

# Figures


Fig. 1 Location of Settore S at Grumentum

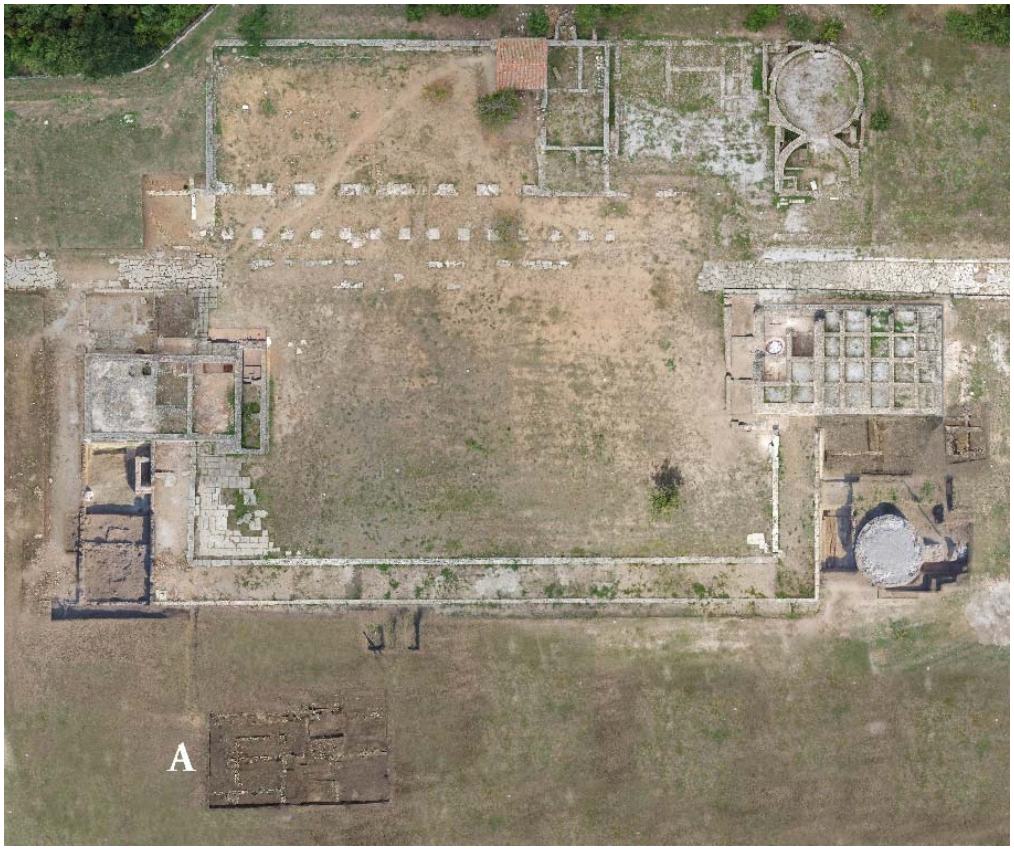


Fig. 2 Location of V. Scalfari's 2009 trench in Settore S, indicated by the letter A

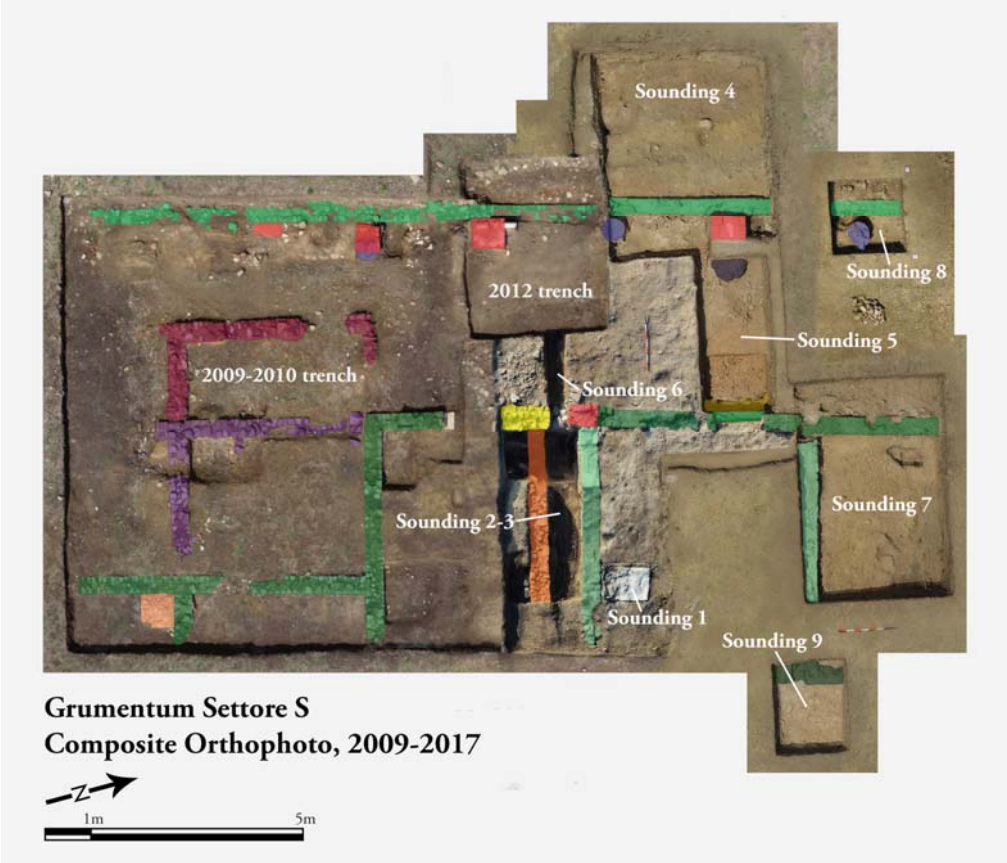


Fig. 3 Composite orthophotograph of excavations in Settore S at the conclusion of 2017 season. Architectural elements highlighted in various colours

Fig. 4 Sounding 5, 2016. Partial remains of mortar floor US 6418 (centre) and the top of the semicircular structure US 6421 (right)

Fig. 5 Sandstone column base identified below platform in Sounding 4

Fig. 6 Sandstone column base recovered from Sounding 8

Fig. 7 The eastern (right) and western areas of Sounding 4, bisected by wall US 6003. View from south at close of 2017 season

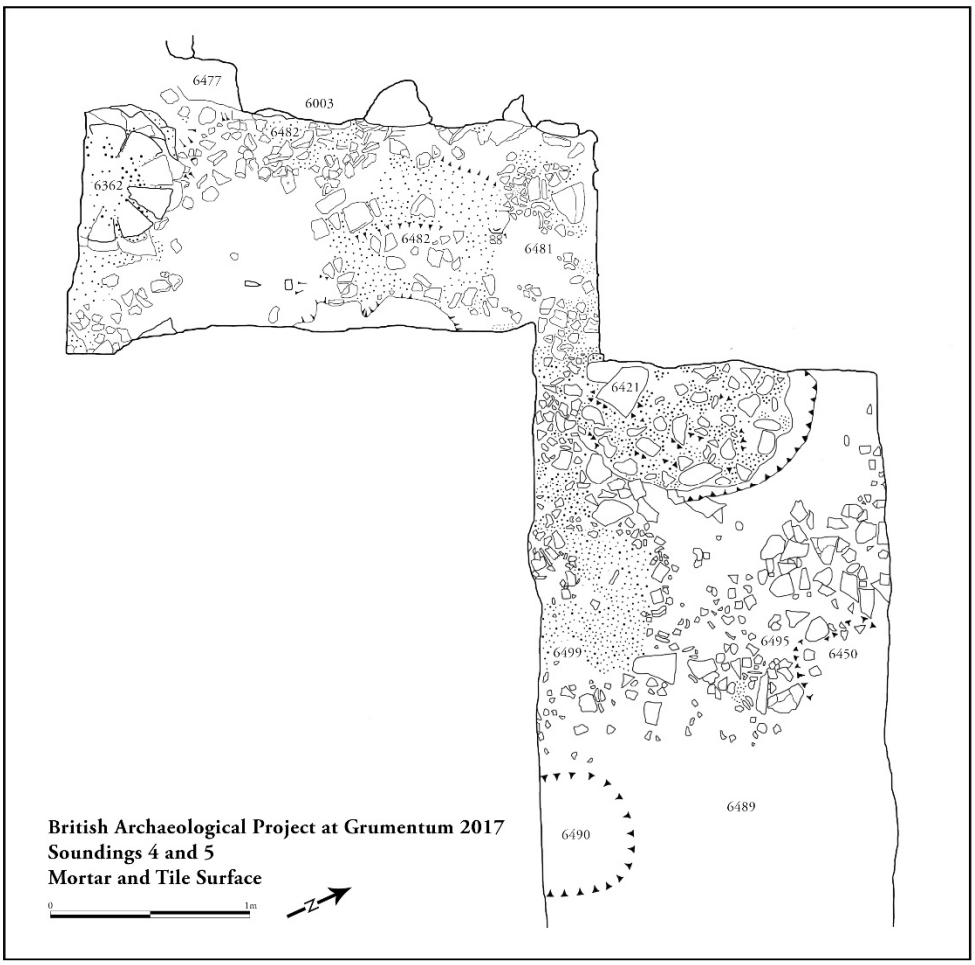


Fig. 8 Plan of mortar and tile surface US 6482-6495 in Soundings 4 and 5

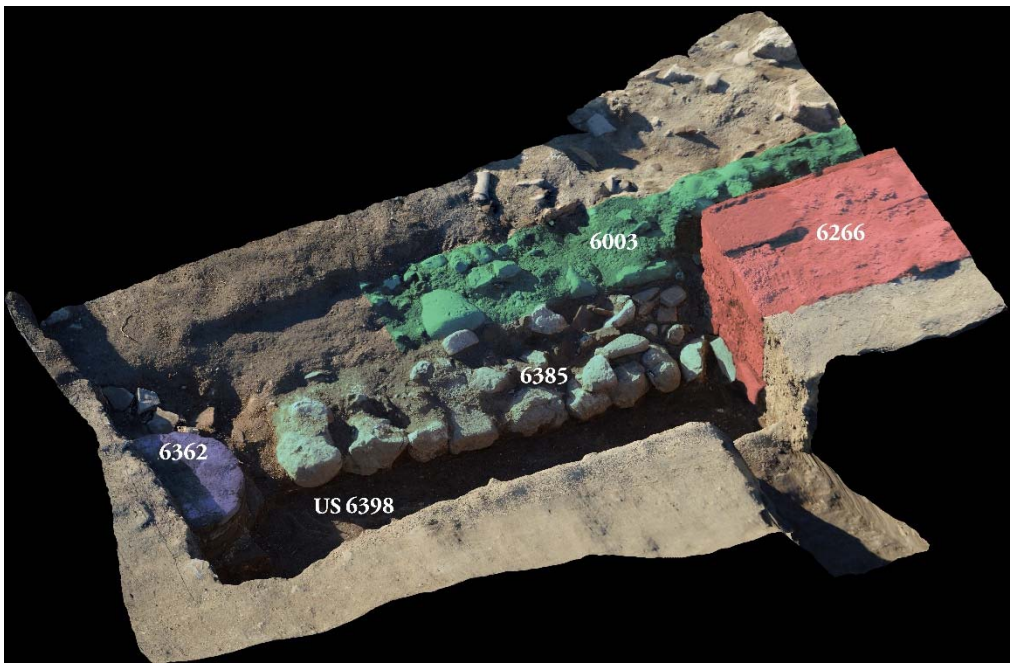


Fig. 9 Photogrammetric model of wall US 6003, column US 6362, "platform" US 6385 and column platform US 6266. Surface US 6482-6495 located underneath US 6398


Fig. 10 Photogrammetic model of Sounding 8 at close of 2016 season. Both wall US 6003 (1) and column US 6415 (2) visible at comparatively shallow depth. View from the east

Fig. 11 Sounding 4 in 2015, south wall. US 6306 is visible on the left side of the image, running underneath the photoboard and north arrow and above the top of wall US 6003

Fig. 12 Painted wall plaster collected from US 6497

Fig. 13 Sounding 4 at conclusion of 2017, view from north


Fig. 14 Seal box recovered from US 6550 in Sounding 4


Fig. 15 Orthophoto of BAPG trench at conclusion of 2017 season, with layout of walls

Fig. 16 Sounding 5, eastern window. Surface US 6554 visible on the left, wall US 6540 on the right

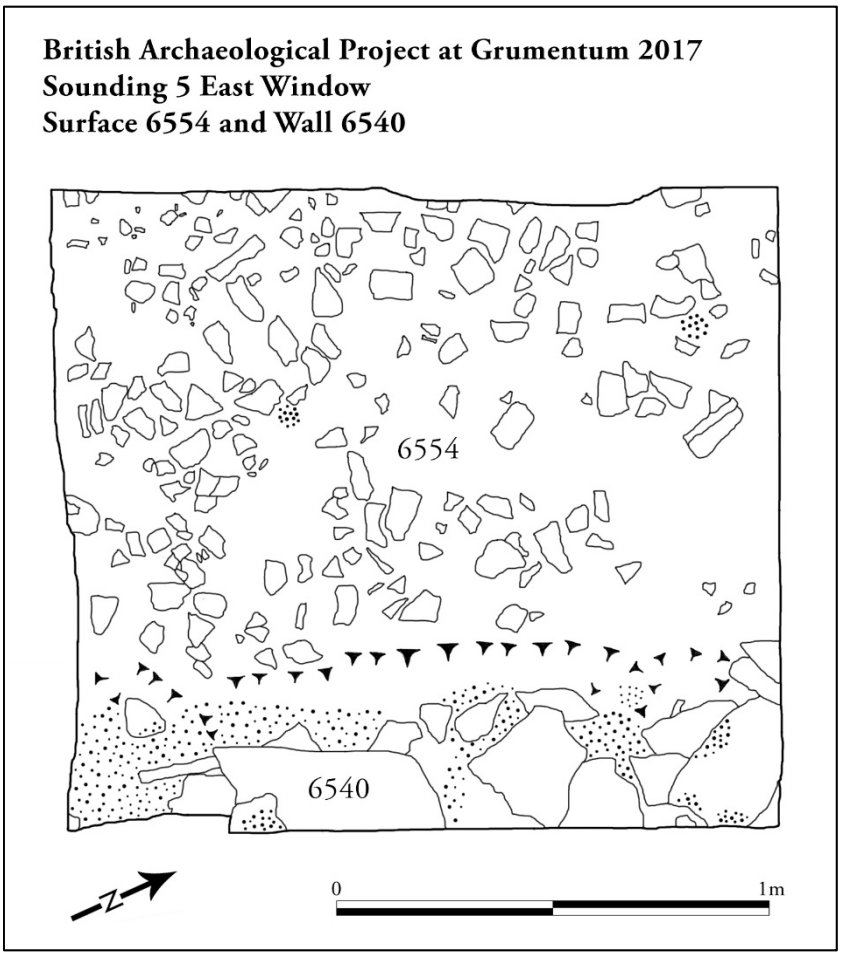


Fig. 17 Plan of East Window in Sounding 5

Fig. 18 Circular pits cut through US 6485 and US 6489 in eastern part of Sounding 5

Fig. 19 Surface US 6495, cut US 6447 and semicircular structure US 6421. View from the north

Fig. 20 Extension of Sounding 7 towards the east

Fig. 21 Wall US 6264, with debris from various collapse/destruction events visible to the west. Photo taken prior to extension of the sounding to the east

Fig. 22 Sounding 7 at close of 2017 season, displaying walls 6264 (foreground) and 6464 (background). View from northwest

Fig. 23 Sounding 7 at close of 2017 season, view from north. Cut US 6567 visible in bottom right

Fig. 24 Junction of walls US 6264 and US 6464. The upper courses of *opus latericium* wall US 6538 visible to the right of the metre stick

Fig. 25 Mortar surface US 6560 and wall US 6561 in Sounding 9

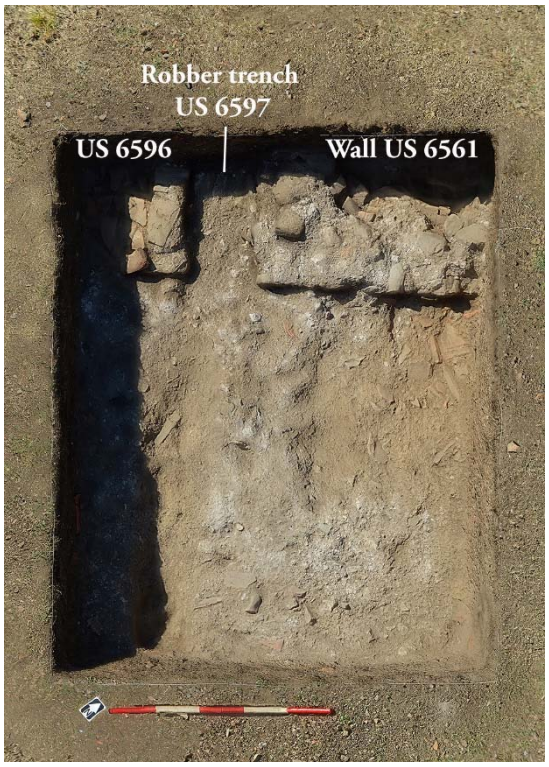


Fig. 26 Orthophoto of Sounding 9 depicting the relationship between wall US 6561, robber trench US 6597 and structure US 6596


Fig. 27 Results of magnetometer survey conducted in 2011, indicating that the line of rooms identified on the east side of Settore S continue northward