

EL CASTELLUM DE BARCINO : DELS ORÍGENS A L'ALT IMPERI ROMÀ COM A PLAÇA PÚBLICA MONUMENTAL FINS A ESDEVENIR UNA FORTALESA A L'ANTIGUITAT TARDANA

L'àrea coneguda com *Castellum de Barcino* es va estudiar per primera vegada l'any 2004. Aquesta troballa va treure a la llum un espai públic datat a les dècades immediatament posteriors a la fundació de la ciutat romana. Un edifici monumental en forma d'àbsis, un *Cryptoporticus* i altres construccions són algunes de les estructures registrades. Les excavacions van mostrar que aquest espai no va estar envoltat de muralles fins a la primera meitat del segle IV dC. Ens han quedat menys testimonis del període de l'Antiguitat tardana, quan l'edifici principal d'aquest sector va quedar completament en ruïnes.

Paraules clau: *Barcino. Castellum.* Edificis públics. Muralla. Alt Imperi Romà. Antiguitat tardana.

EL CASTELLUM DE BARCINO : DESDE SUS ORÍGENES EN EL ALTO IMPERIO ROMANO COMO PLAZA PÚBLICA MONUMENTAL HASTA CONVERTIRSE EN FORTALEZA EN LA ANTIGÜEDAD TARDÍA

El área conocida como *Castellum de Barcino* se estudió por primera vez en 2004. Este hallazgo sacó a la luz un espacio público fechado en las décadas inmediatamente posteriores a la fundación de la ciudad romana. Un edificio monumental en forma de ábside, un *Cryptoporticus* así como otras construcciones se cuentan entre las estructuras registradas. Las excavaciones mostraron que este espacio no estuvo rodeado de murallas hasta la primera mitad del siglo IV d. JC. Menos testimonios nos han quedado del periodo de la Antigüedad tardía, cuando el edificio principal de este sector quedó completamente en ruinas.

Palabras clave: *Barcino. Castellum.* Edificios públicos. Muralla. Alto Imperio Romano. Antigüedad tardía.

LE CASTELLUM DE BARCINO : DEPUIS SES ORIGINES DANS LE HAUT EMPIRE ROMAIN COMME PLACE PUBLIQUE MONUMENTALE JUSQU'A SA TRANSFORMATION EN FORTERESSE DANS L'ANTIQUITE TARDIVE

La zone connue comme *Castellum de Barcino* a été étudiée pour la première fois en 2004. Cette découverte a mis en lumière un espace public qui date des dix premières années de la fondation de la ville de Rome. Parmi les structures répertoriées on compte une bâtisse monumentale en forme d'abside, un *Cryptoporticus*, ainsi que d'autres constructions. Les fouilles montrent que jusqu'à la première moitié du IV^{ème} siècle d. J.C. cet espace ne fut pas entouré de murailles. En revanche, nous avons moins de vestiges de la période de l'Antiquité tardive, lorsque la principale bâtisse de ce secteur tomba en ruine.

Mots-clefs: *Barcino. Castellum.* Construction publique. Muraille. Haut Empire Romain. Antiquité tardive.

Introduction

During the last 20 years in Spain and, more specifically in the political autonomous communities throughout the country, there has been an increase in the reach of legislation that protects heritage sites. This increased protection took place during an outbreak of building development, which forms at present, along with tourism, one of the major economic sectors in the country. This outbreak was such that public research institutions, such as universities and museums, could not absorb the increased demand for archaeological activity. Thus, a number of private companies in the cultural sector began to undertake what is known as “rescue archaeology”.

This practice is performed in new construction sites, away from urban areas, and in the very core of the oldest cities, which has led to the development of a flourishing “urban archaeology”.¹ The limitations of works promoted in such places are well known. There has been a high degree of alteration to the archaeological record over time, for construction activity has run continuously for hundreds, even thousands of years. In addition, the only partial recovery of structures and sediment deposits has occurred, due to the fact that the excavations were limited geographically to the actual spaces that were to be developed, and the work was also conditioned by security concerns. These factors have contributed to complexities in the archaeological record. On the other hand, those are also privileged places to study in detail the evolution of the human communities who dwelled there.

It is uncommon for one excavation to provide relevant information about key issues on a broad archaeological subject. Yet, this is the case for the history of Roman Barcino, with the diggings carried out in 2004 at 6 Carrer Regomir in Barcelona, whose primary results are presented in this paper.² However, after these diggings, many

other questions arose that will hopefully be addressed in further investigations and new excavations.

The *Castellum*, “A long story, short”

It is generally accepted that the small town of Barcino was founded sometime between 15 and 5 BC, being, thus an Augustean town.³ The area representing an enlarged octagon (a rectangularly-shaped plan with cut angles) was surrounded by an approximately 2 m (6.5 ft) wide, 8 m (26 ft) high foundational wall (Figure 1). Four gates gave entry to the city, each one at the end of the two main streets (Cardo Maximus and Decumanus Maximus) which intersected in the Forum.⁴ On the short side of this rectangle that faces the sea, by the Porta Decumana, there is a sector of town that stands out. This area’s archaeological name is *Castellum* and is a square-shaped area, 46 m (152 ft) wide per 60 m (195 ft) long. This was believed to have been a later addition to the original plan, thus enlarging the area. This occurred, also supposedly, during the times when the Augustean wall was doubled, surrounding the area with a new wall, approximately 2 m (6.5 ft) wide and 8.5 to 10 m high (28 to 32.8 ft), along 1200 m (3935 ft). Most of the towers of the city were erected by then, together with the new wall.⁵ The majority of the towers have a rectangular plan, only a few being circular, and one polygonal. Along the length surrounding the *Castellum* 7 towers were built.⁶

No diggings had ever been undertaken inside this area until now, thus only a portion of the round tower existing on the East angle of the *Castellum* has been recorded (Figure 2). This work took place after the archaeological works that preceded the installation of an elevator at 8 bis Regomir. Thus, before our excavation, it was not only uncertain when this area was built and how it evolved, but also how and why it was constructed.

* PhD in Archaeology, jhernandezgasch@gmail.com. My gratitude to Cate Rhodes for the English correction of the main body of my draft and to Ferran Puig for the many suggestions during the diggings and after reading this paper, from which my comprehension of the site and this work have largely benefited.

1. Unfortunately, not much of the enormous data produced by these excavations have been converted in available information, as little research has been developed and published.

2. The archaeological project, lead by the Servei d’Arqueologia of the Museu d’Història de la Ciutat de Barcelona, was executed by Actium, Patrimoni Cultural S.L. under supervision of Jordi Hernández-Gasch. The developers of the site were Sumasa, which undertook the works on behalf of Fundació La Caixa, belonging to the bank group “La Caixa”. These works aimed to set up the ground floor of an existing building as an Old People’s Club. The works lasted for 16 weeks from January to May 2004.

3. It was built up on a hill by the sea, named by the Romans as Mons Taber, 16 m (52.5 ft) high. The town itself covers a surface of 12.5 hectares (30.9 acres).

4. Porta Principalis Dextra and Porta Principalis Sinistra; Porta Praetoria and Porta Decumana. Two towers flanked each gate. The only ones surviving nowadays are the Porta Praetoria, a “trifora” gate fully preserved by the present Plaça de la Catedral and the Porta Decumana, seemingly a “trifora” gate partially preserved in Carrer Regomir (Community Center of the Pati Llimona). A description of the walls of Barcino is reported in DE PALOL (1999).

5. The name of *Castellum* is a contemporary interpretation by some archaeologists and it suggests a military use of the sector as a fortress. This matches with the building of a new city wall, episode which was believed to be linked to, although any empirical data were available to support it. Only for the medieval times, there are records of being a fortress (castrum) there. The exact dates for the construction of the city wall swing depending on the author. Balil (1961) thought it was built short after the first “Barbarian” raids (270-310 AD), but Granados (1991) suggested it was in a much later date (at the beginning of the 5th century AD). At present, most researchers prefer to place it in a middle point, sometime in the 4th century AD, although discussion is still far from being settled, due to the scarce evidences to support a certain chronology. As for the *Castellum* itself, very recently it was still being considered a late addition (MIRÓ, 2005: 59).

6. The shape and layout of the *Castellum*, even the number and design of the towers in the area, were known long time ago, after plans drawn in the 19th century.

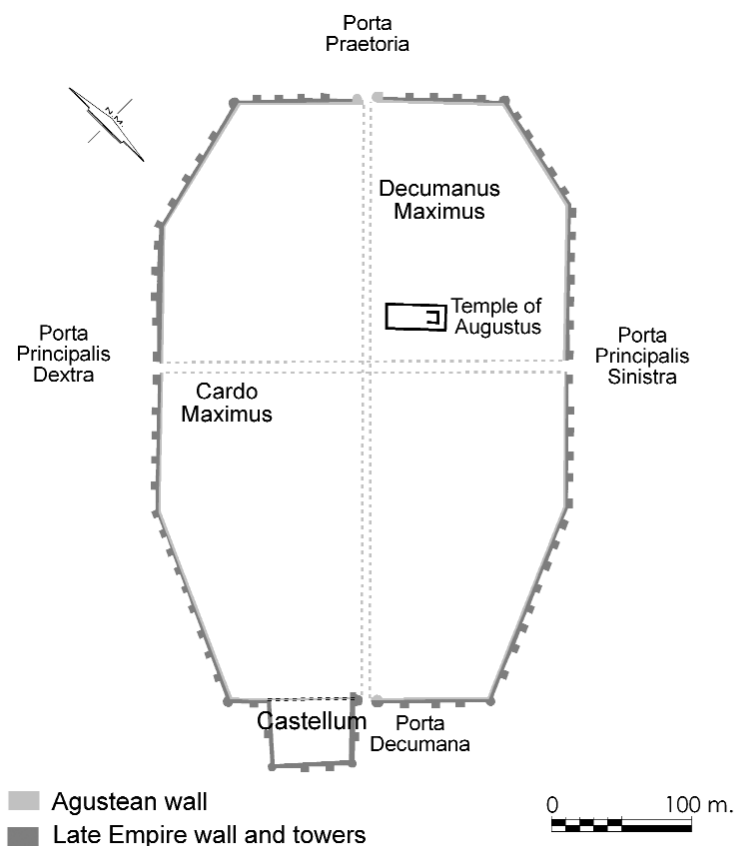


Figure 1

General plan of *Barcino* showing the location of the *Castellum*. [Own elaboration based on Emili Revilla's drawing – MHCb, Miró, 2005: 60].

The excavations at 6 Regomir

We surveyed, at different depths and to different extents, 10 rooms on the ground floor of the building and two more in the basement,⁷ covering approximately 17% of the inner surface of the *Castellum* itself (Figures 2 and 3). Under the floors, some of which were the original floors from the 19th century,⁸ we found soil clearly sedimented by the time this construction was built. We also plotted structural remains

(walls, floors, wells and sewers) from the modern and medieval houses. Amongst them, the most representative were the remains of the house built around 1750. Those belonging to previous constructions were even scarcer⁹.

Roman remains (both structures and archaeological strata) soon appeared in rooms 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12, showing that there was little accumulation of soil or debris upon these structures (Figure 3). This is due, most likely, to different factors: while some features, such as part of

7. The total surface covers an area of about 650 sq. m (7000 sq. ft), although some have only been prospected through soundings, while other extensively but to a limited depth, without wearing out the archaeological soil. That was due to security measures, as an inhabited five stories building exists on the spot.

8. The present building was commissioned by José María Escrivá de Romaní y Dusay, Marquis of Monistrol, to the well-known architect Josep Fontserè, who projected the Parc de la Ciutadella, the biggest park in the old quarters of Barcelona, and the recently controversial Mercat del Born. For the new construction, built in 1866, he pulled down the previous houses located at Regomir and Ataül and probably part of the Roman wall still surviving (at rooms 9 and 10). New and deep foundations were made, regardless what it was found underground, cutting when necessary, according to the architectural plan, the remains of the Roman wall.

9. Some shards of "green and manganese pottery" from the 14th century are amongst the oldest ones recovered from the medieval period, although after some documents it seems to have already existed a house in that part of the Roman wall in a such an early date as 1032 AD. I would like to thank Constanza Corredor for the huge documentation she gathered and selflessly she offer to us, after her patient research in archives and libraries in the country and abroad pursuing the traces of the evolution of the urban space at Regomir.

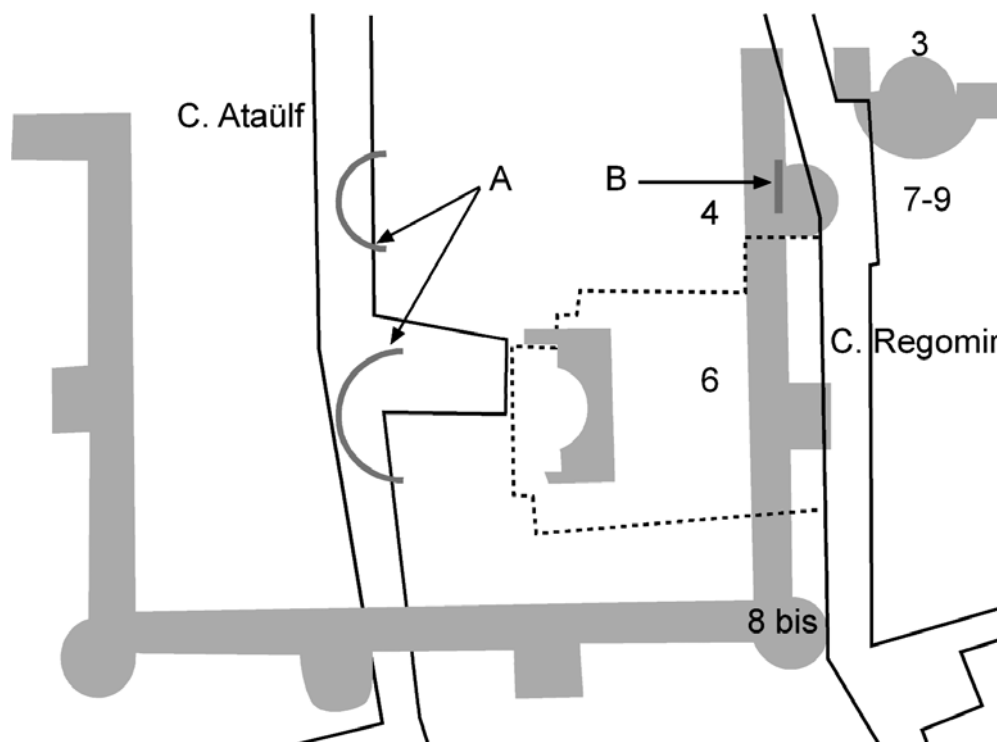


Figure 2

Plan of the *Castellum* showing the location of 6 Regomir and the discovered apse-shaped building. A shows the assumed location of the two apses drawn by Duran i Sanpere. B shows the possible location for the monumental gate drawn by Puiggarí (Own elaboration based on a drawing by the Dani Miquel- MHCB)

the city wall, stayed up and were reused until recent times, some other remains, such as the partially dug city wall in room 1, show that even the successive medieval and modern constructions above were built after tearing down their predecessors, almost to the ground, probably to make sure that new constructions were all at the same street level, which changed little over the centuries. In the center of the present house, the lack of pavements belonging to previous constructions points out to a large

excavation occurred in the 19th century, which pulled out most of the medieval and modern layers and features.¹⁰ In this paper we will only discuss the Roman remains, from the 1st century BC to the 6th century (the Late Antiquity).

Foundational Roman Topography

We will present the discovered features in chronological order to show the evolution of the sector and the subse-

10. In the basement, under the 19th century pavements and their preparations, Early Roman Empire levels were immediately found, except in the places where pits and dwells bored them in later times, as the dig of these rooms (11 and 12) took away other later remains.

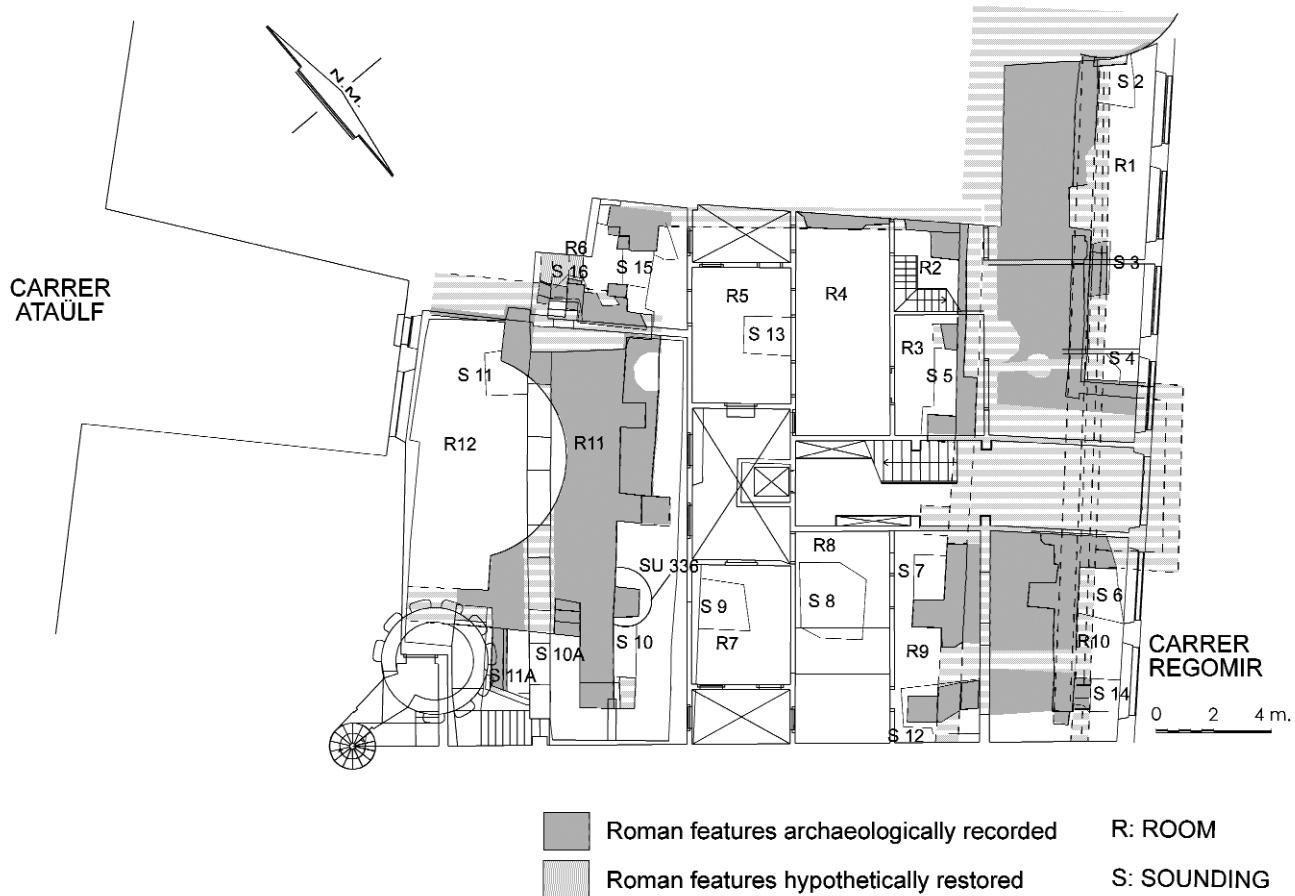


Figure 3

Plan of the site. In the background is the current house, built in the 19th century by Fontserè. R refers to the numeration of the rooms, S refers to the soundings made. In addition, it shows the location of the Roman remains (archaeologically recorded) and the hypothetical restoration of the missing parts.

quent redefinition of spaces. In the 1st century, these spaces appear to be:

- An Apse-shaped building¹¹
- A Portico Area
- Space A
- Space B
- Space C

THE APSE-SHAPED BUILDING

First identified in the basement, we have been able to

record only the part of this construction that is located in the area of the present building closer to Carrer Ataülf. The remains continue under the backyard and probably underneath the Carrer Ataülf itself (Figure 3). It shows a quadrilaterally-shaped plan on its exterior, with an interior whose shortest side is finished by an apse which intersects with the straight line of the wall (Plates 1 and 2).¹² At this point, it is worthwhile to mention that in the 1920s, the archaeologist Duran i Sanpere drew two apses which seem to have been discovered after

11. With the use of this term we want to underline it is a construction with walls and roof, but not an isolated or an entire edifice. The apse-shaped building, as the others spaces referred here, belongs to the same complex, being only a room of it.

12. The width of this building is for the interior 9.25 m (30.3 ft) and for the exterior, 11.75 m (38.5 ft). The longest walls are preserved 2.6 m (8.5 ft) in length and 1.25 m (4.10 ft) in width. The bulk of the shortest part of the building ranges from 4.3 m (14.10 ft) in the angles to 1.85 m (6.05 ft) in the middle of the apse. Due to excavation followed for building the basement, only the foundation of the construction has survived at 6 Regomir. However, the western Roman wall is preserved to the main floor, as parts of it were used as a wall for the 19th century cellar, being visible before our works.



Plate 2

Apse and joined pillars from the apse-shaped building; in the foreground, walls FF 36 and 37 (Room 11).

some works at Ataülf. A few years ago, technicians from the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat were able to locate on the map the largest of these two, right opposite the one most recently discovered (Figure 2). They are both of similar dimensions. Although it is not possible to observe the remains at present, this fact strongly suggests that the building we recorded had a rectangular shape and at least both shortest sides ending in apses. Parallels of this structure are found in Roman architecture.¹³

The face of the wall (both internally and externally) is made of small, square blocks (an opus certum or vittatum [Lugli, 1957; Lamboglia 1958]), which are held together with a filling of stones plastered with mortar (opus caementicium).

Some other features of this building include the following (Figure 4):

From the East corner, a wall (Feature number 30, from now on F 30) is projected 5.5 m (18 ft) long, ending in an ashlar that appears to be the base of a pillar (Stratigraphical Unit 710, from now on SU 710).¹⁴ This wall protects, in part, four steps (SU 736) of a staircase located inside the bulk of the building (Plate 3).

In room 6, 2 m (6.5 ft) above the basement, we could record the West angle of the building, which was preserved much better. Entering this wall, there is a channel which runs perpendicular to the wall itself.¹⁵

Finally, five pillars, separated from each other by approximately 2.25 m (7.4 ft), are joined to the exterior of the short wall (F 35), with dimensions of approximately 0.9 x 1 m (2.95 x 3.3 ft) (Plate 2). As the wall itself, the technique used to build the pillars is called opus vittatum.¹⁶ Clearly, they cannot be considered to be buttresses, for the dimensions of this wall would make them utterly redundant. Thus, their meaning has to be found in the next space, which is described below.

PORTICO AREA

The aforementioned pillars, find their counterpart 9.5 m (31.15 ft) apart. These are joined to a wall 0.75 m (2.45 ft) wide that runs parallel to the apse-shaped building, at a distance of 11.25 m (36.9 ft) apart (Plate 4).¹⁷ By the north, this wall presents another pillar (number 7) and they both are attached to a wall that runs perpendicular to the West.¹⁸ Having studied three sides of this space, we can state that it covered, at least, a surface of 200 sq. m (2,150 sq. ft). However, it is possible that a fourth wall was found fairly close to the southern pillars we recorded (numbers 6 and 12), as the apse-shaped building ends there and gives way by the North side to a corridor. If the symmetry we encounter in the planning has to be kept, the South end, where it is shown the projection of a wall (F 30) and an ending pillar (SU 710), as seen above, should give way as well to a corridor of similar dimensions (Figure 4).

Little is known about how this space was covered, but what seems to be clear is that some kind of roof was built, leaning on the pillars previously described. To cover such

13. Such as Basilicae, Nymphaea and Natationes (see note 34).

14. From local stone, sandstone, called "stone of Montjuïc", the nearby hill which supplied most of the stone for the construction since Roman times and where a Roman quarry was identified.

15. The walls of the channel are made by small stone and mortar and have 45 cm (1.5 ft) wide. The entrance to the wall of the apse-shaped building is made with two big ashlar on each side. It is clearly a channel to carry fresh water.

16. In fact, with the only exception of pillar number 6 (made with big ashlar attached to the wall), all of them belong to the outer wall of F 35, shaped in that way.

17. The wall facing is made as well with opus vittatum, so they are some of the pillars which stand out from it, although, at least, number 11 and 12 were built using big ashlar blocks (opus quadratum), joined to the wall. Pillar 9 has not been found as it lays underneath the current staircase, not surveyed.

18. This wall is at the base of the wall belonging to 4 Regomir. Thus, it could not be tore down when Fontserè built at 6 Regomir. No diggings have been carried out by it, being only its crest visible. On the West end of the wall (room 6) we find the last pillar (number 1), opposite to number 7, in line with those attached to the apse-shaped building, but separated from them by a corridor.

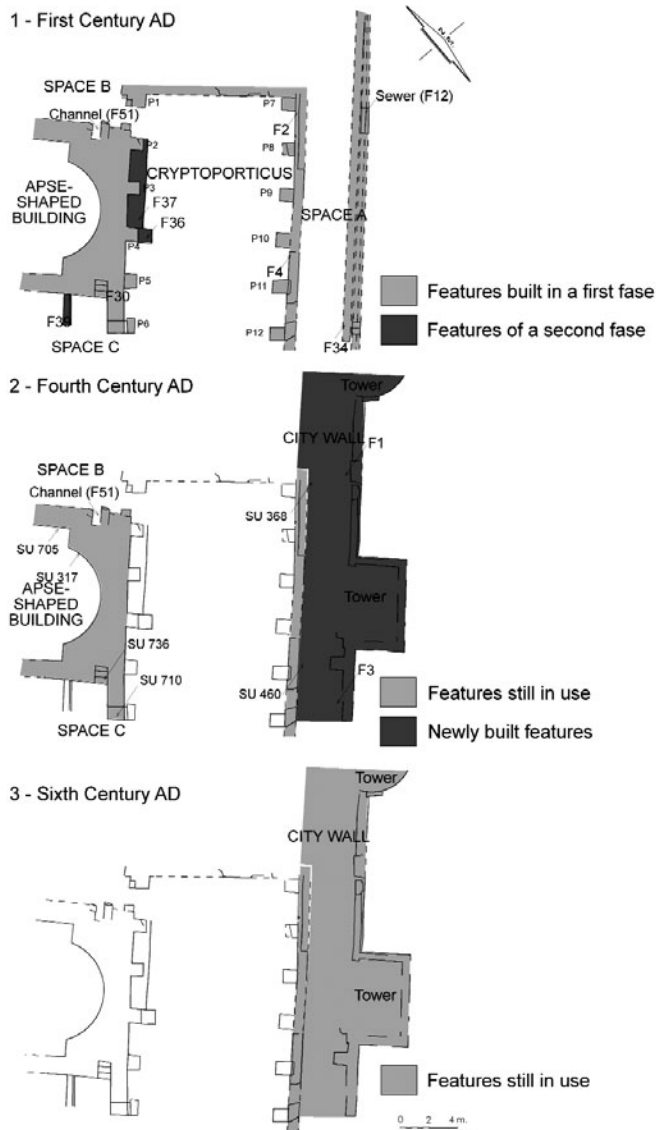


Figure 4

1. Shows the structures and spaces defined at the end of the 1st century AD. 2. Shows the construction of the city wall presumably in the first half of the 4th century AD, including some abandoned spaces. 3. Shows the state of the inner space recorded during the Late Antiquity period.

a large room, a middle pillar (or two) were needed.¹⁹ We purposely looked for these pillars, opening two pits in rooms 4 and 7. Unfortunately, the results of our search were negative, although in both cases we did not reach the natural soil, from where the constructive program was developed.²⁰ Finally, the staircase recorded on the apse-shaped building (see above) only makes structural sense if it turns to the East, since, for reasons of stability, it could not go through all of the bulk of the construction. Thus, there is evidence of a floor covering in this space. Some other data will be added later to explain the reason for interpreting the Portico Area as a Cryptoporticus (see note 25).²¹

SPACE A

All along the late city wall at 6 Regomir, by the outer part of the wall, the presence of an older wall can be traced underneath it. We played for a while with the idea of this being the Augustan wall, which for some reason at this point would have been torn down, instead of being reused for the newer construction, as generally occurs elsewhere in the city. The chance to explore a small portion of the foundation pit of the present building (room 10) finally provided us with the key. This outer-facing wall belongs to a wall only 0.65 m (2.13 ft) wide, which better explains why it was ruined when the fortification of this sector was attempted (Figure 4).

The space left between this wall and the one which sits at the northern limit of the Portico Area is named as 'Space A'. It has as a related feature, a sewer, which seems to be built attached to the wall. The walls of the sewer are made of opus caementicium, following the technique of lost formwork, the sole is made of tegulae, or brick, and the covering is made of fitted slab-stones (Figure 5, Plate 5). Again, some drawings, in this case of Puiggarí (1879, Figure 9), carried out by the time when the Roman tower and the attached medieval arch (Arc de Sant Cristòfor) were pulled down, in 1861, shed some light on the interpretation of the sector.²² A monumental gate, that the later tower hid, seems to have existed. According to the topographic orientation of the tower, it is possible that

19. It is obvious that timbers of about 10.5 m (34.45 ft) would curve when covering such a large length without a middle support. If a central pillar has to be considered the whole space would have been covered, if two, there is the possibility of an open-air central and elongated courtyard. However, it doesn't seem alike as the space for each portico and especially for the courtyard would have been too small and impractical.

20. Thus, we are not hundred per cent certain there are not remains of them, as, for instance, if these pillars were have been pulled down or partly or totally erected with timbers, preserving only the basements or some traces in the soil. Some electromagnetic tests were also performed with no clear results.

21. From now on, we will use indistinctively the more descriptive term of Portico Area and our interpretative name of Cryptoporticus.

22. It is shown two construction workers bended over the square blocks from the tower they are removing with levers, while, behind, a pillar appears supporting two arches (Figure 9). The pillar has architectural decoration showing a fluted shaft, topped with a Corinthian-like capital; the entablature above seems to be molded, presenting on the false cornice a lion head. A wall, which looks like an opus latericium tops the assembling. The blocks of this gate were kept and they are nowadays in the Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya. Present drawings show three pillars which form two arches and molded basements (not appreciated in Puiggarí's drawing). A similar basement, carved on a square block, has been found reused in the outer facing wall of the city wall at 6 Regomir (Figure 6, Plate 5).

this gate was located in the bulk of a solid tower or at its rear. In the first case, it would have belonged to the wall (F 34), although it is difficult to explain why it was not destroyed, along with the rest of this part of the structure, when the city wall was raised but, instead, it was included inside the body of the tower. In the latter case, the tower, leaning on the gate, would have been the continuation of the walls (F 2 and 4) that shaped the Portico Area, giving way to another space north of it.

SPACE B

As seen before, in room 6, the apse-shaped building is separated from pillar 1 of the Portico Area, showing a space that connects the latest space with an unknown 'Space B'. Because the walls of the channel run higher than the level at which the original soil of the Portico Area was located, this space seems to be partially blocked (Figure 6). No suitable explanation can be given to this situation at the present time.²³

SPACE C

Finally, at the other end of the apse-shaped building, the projection of the wall (F 30) and the attached pillar, along with pillar 6, give way to another unknown space to the south, called here 'Space C'. This space was partly filled by a construction of which the only recorded remain is a wall (F 39), which leans on the apse-shaped building. Opus vittatum was again the technique used to build it (Figure 4).

Foundational Roman Levels and Materials

The oldest levels seem to be found in relation with the sewer, in room 10, and, most likely, they were formed before the construction of this feature and, undoubtedly, outside of the city perimeter (Figure 5).²⁴ However, a large assemblage of archaeological material provided us with a solid base to determine the chronology of the levels which date the construction of the apse-shaped building. As we understand it today, for the construction of this building, as for the near Cryptoporticus,



Plate 3
Staircase to the apse-shaped building, projected wall (Feature 30) and pillar 5 (Room 11).

the soil was lowered to geological levels. The foundation of the building was built partly in opus caementicium using a lost formwork, partly in a "coarse" opus vittatum, followed by a "fine" opus vittatum above the pavement.²⁵ The part belonging to the foundation was later filled up with layers of soil, which alternates between sand (apparently from the beach [Plate 1])²⁶ and clays, both containing thousands of shards of pottery.²⁷

23. The diggings stopped long before reaching to geological soil; as a result there are still some chances for recovering new data if further excavations have to be performed. 24. A cup in Italian Terra Sigillata (Ettlinger R2 or 3) [Figure 7,12] in the deepest level reached in that sector (SU 691) might be traced in Augustean times, while other shards in South Gaulish Terra Sigillata (Dragendorff 18B, 36-Vernhet A2) and in Hispanic TS (Dragendorff 36-Vernhet A2), in SU 676, are found in the second half of the 1st century. This seems to be the date for the construction of the sewer, which, as we will see is the date when the whole sector was built. The small amount of shards to assess this date would require from further excavations.

25. This pavement has not been found, as the construction of the basement destroyed it to foundation. Levels can be assessed after several facts. Inside the building, the mentioned changes in the technique used for the inner wall are underlined by a small step, exactly at 7.5 m (24.6 ft) above the sea level. Outside, by the NE side of the Cryptoporticus, in the wall F 4, there is a similar step at the same exact level. However, a lower floor existed for that room at 6 m (19.7 ft) ASL, being most likely the one at 7.5 m (24.6 ft) made of wood (see below). Further NE, the sewer running alongside the outer wall of the Space A (F 34) shows its cover between 7.43 and 7.52 m (24.4 and 24.7 ft) ASL, which clearly indicates that when it was built and used the street outside the Castellum was at this level. Finally, being the apse-shaped building and the street at a higher level than the space in between them, it resulted in a basement. Hence we chose the particular name of Cryptoporticus. The stairs built in the bulk of the apse-shaped building start also at 6 m (19.7 ft) ASL and presumably connected the lower level with the immediately superior floor above the Cryptoporticus.

26. According to Izquierdo (1997), a natural harbor existed where Plaça d'Antoni López and the lower part of Via Laietana are at present. The large area used as a cemetery from the Santa Maria del Mar church to Mercat del Born shows simple burials made directly upon the beach sand. The old bay of Barcelona could have been a good shelter, especially if a barrier reef existed where later in time appeared the "island" of Maïans.

27. In fact, close to 5000 shards. This is a third of the total amount of collected items.

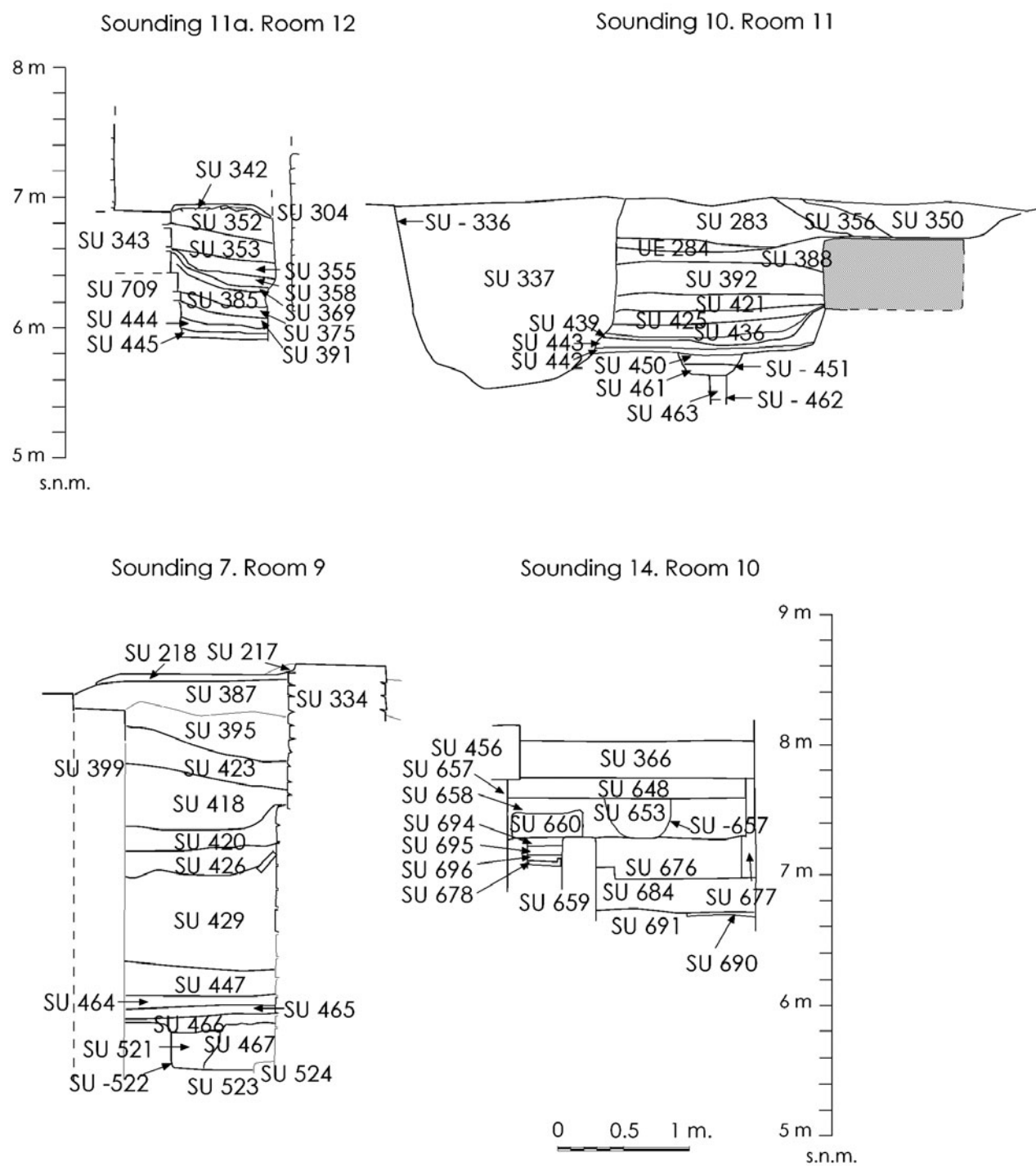


Figure 5

Compared sections from four different soundings. Sounding 11a belong to the Space C, while S7 and S10 belong to the *Cryptoporticus* at different ends, and S14 is located outside the Space A and the *Castellum* itself.

Amongst them, the most common types of pottery and their productions that provide chronological reference are: Amphorae from Tarraco (Dressel 2/4 [Figure 7,1], Pascual 1), Amphorae from Baetica (Dres. 20 A), Italian Terra Sigillata (Ettlinger 18, 18.2 [Figure 7,6], 22 or 33 [Figure 7,8], 27, 33.1, 36, 37, 37.4, R 2.2 [Figure 7,3], R 3.2, R 5 [Figure 7,11], R 6); South Gaulish Terra Sigillata (Dragendorff 16 [Figure 7,4], 18B [Figure 7,5], 24-25A, 27C [Figure 7,10], 29B [Figure 7,7], 30B, 29-37, 37 [Figure 7,9]), productions of thin-walled pottery (possible Mayet 5 [Figure 7,2], Mayet 20 and 29) and African Kitchen Pottery (Hayes 19-194, 22, 23, 196, 198, Ostia II, fig. 302).

While some of these types of pottery were not produced before 70 AD, some others stopped their production at the end of the 1st century. As a result, these levels were formed and, consequently, the apse-shaped building was erected in the Flavian times.

Pottery, found in the lower levels of the Cryptoporticus²⁸ (in contact with the outer wall of the apse-shaped building) and in the levels²⁹ cut by the construction of the sewer, provide us with further elements to date these features, spaces and, ultimately, the entire building program in that period (Figure 5).

THE EVOLUTION OF THE COMPLEX

In several places, surveyed by soundings, layers of ashes were found at 5.95 m (19.5 ft) above sea level. We interpret such levels as the result of a fire (perhaps, from the burning of a hypothetical wooden floor), that seems to have taken place by the first half of the 2nd century AD (Figure 5).³⁰

The following strata contains a large amount of construction material (tegulae and imbrices, but, especially, bricks), which shows that the Cryptoporticus never recovered from that early fire and that it was slowly filled up by, most likely, its own debris, losing its original function as a basement. The items found in these levels cover a wide chronological



Plate 5

In the sounding 3, sewer (Feature 12). Above it, founding of the city wall and first row of ashlars (among them the molded one)

range, from the beginning of the second half of the 2nd century to the end of the first half of the 3rd century AD.³¹ By this same time, the sewer was seemingly clogged.³²

Functional Interpretation of the Early Empire Complex

Among all of the remains, the one that stand out the most, due to its monumental nature, is the apse-shaped building. Its function, however, can not be easily assessed. A lack of pavement and of remains above it makes it more difficult to assess, leaving the entire interpretation of this

28. Sounding 10, SU 443 and 463, African Kitchen Ware (Ostia II, fig. 312).

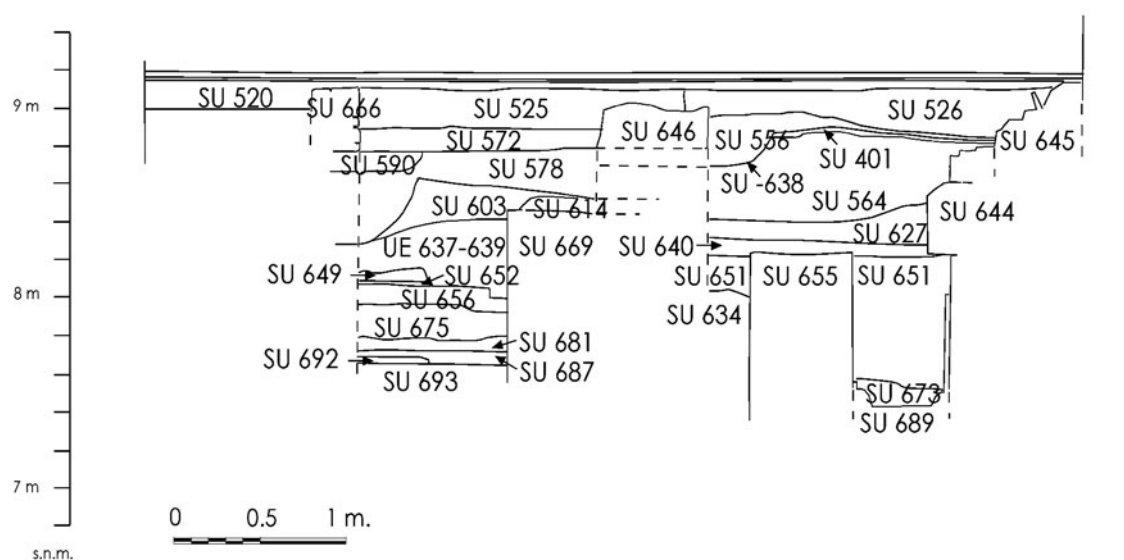
29. SU 676 (see note 24).

30. Soundings 10, 10a and 11a, SU 421, 425, 436, 390, 394, South Gaulish TS (Dragendorff 29B) and a coin of Vespasian (Plate 7). Although they seem to be formed in the foundational period, sounding 7 contains later materials, which only appear in the first half of the 2nd century AD: SU 447, 464, 465, such as African Kitchen Ware (Hayes 23B), Hispanic TS (Dragendorff 29 [Figure 7,14] and 35), and African Red Slip Ware (Lamboglia 6 [Figure 7,13]).

31. Sounding 10 (SU 392), 10a (SU 354 and 357) and 11a (SU 353, 355, 358 and 369) (Figure 5). We find productions in Hispanic TS (Dragendorff 27, 33 [Figure 7,19], 35, 36 [Figure 7,17], 37 [Figure 7,15] and 37A), African Red Slip Ware, type A (Lamboglia 4-36/Hayes 3C, Lamboglia 2A/Hayes 9A [Figure 7,18]), African Kitchen Ware (Hayes 23A and B [Figure 7,16], 196, 197 (Plate 8), Ostia II, fig. 302 and fig. 306), and one coin probably from Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (Plate 7).

32. Materials from inside the sewer (Sounding 3, SU 206, although lacking in that segment from cover and Sounding 14, SU 696) contain African Kitchen Ware (Hayes 23B, 196, 197, Ostia II, fig. 302), shards of Amphorae from Baetica and from North Africa and African Red Slip Ware, type A. The levels which cover it (SU 196 and 658) also have this sort of pottery: African Kitchen Ware (Hayes 182 [Figure 8,4], 196, 197 [Figure 8,3], Ostia II, fig. 302), Amphorae from Baetica (Dressel 20F [Figure 8,1], African Red Slip Ware, type A (Lamboglia 1, 3A/ Hayes 14A [Figure 8,2] and Lamb 10).

Soundings 15 and 16. Room 6



Sounding 3. Room 1

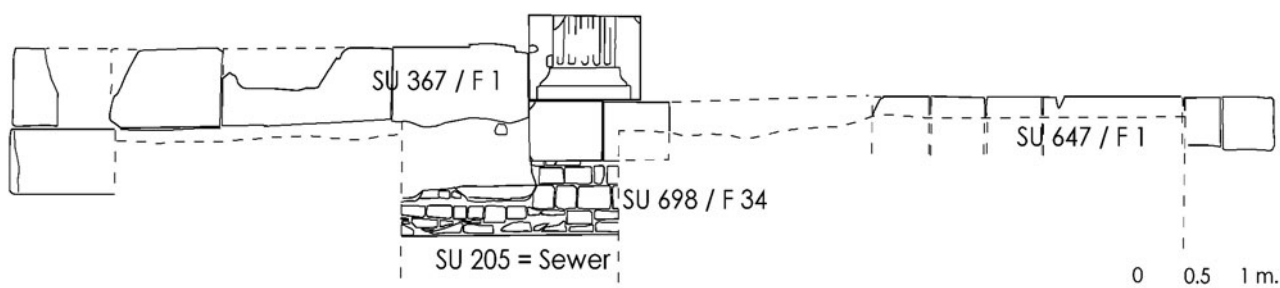
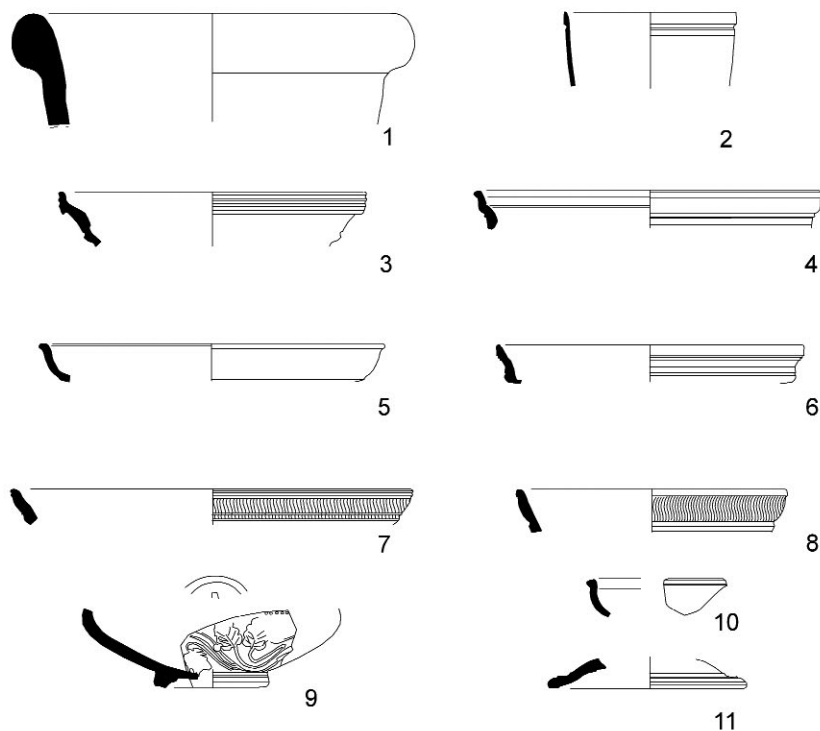


Figure 6

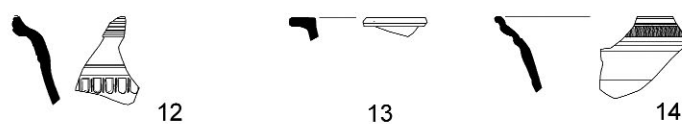
Section from soundings 15 and 16 by the Northwest corner of the apse-shaped building, its channel and the corridor to Space B.
Elevation drawing of the wall of the sewer (Feature 12), of the façade of the wall (F 34), and of the city wall (F 1), including the molded ashlar, by the sounding 3 in room 1.

SU 252, 400, 402

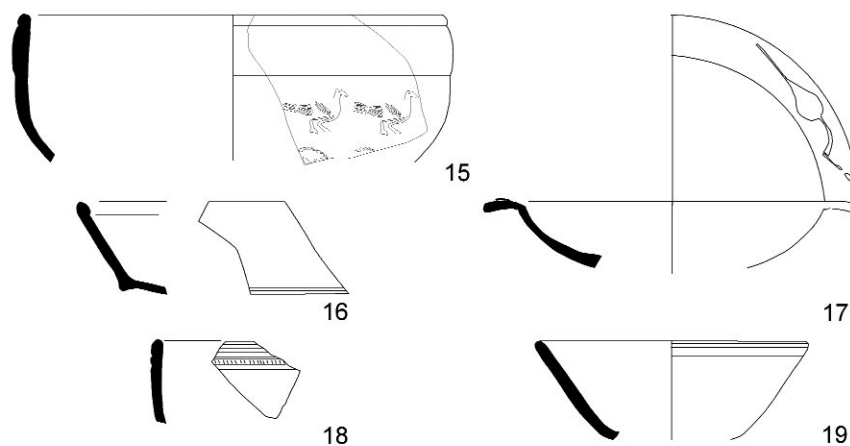


SU 691

SU 465



SU 353, 354, 355, 357

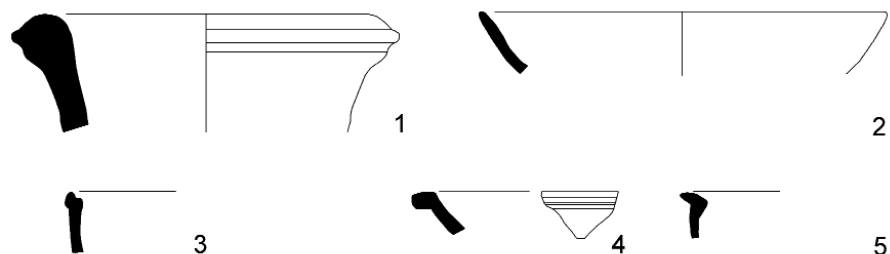


0 5 cm.

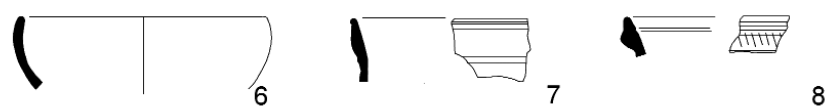
Figure 7

Pottery from the founding of the apse-shaped building (SU 252, 400 and 402), from a level previous to the sewer (SU 691) and from the fire (SU 465) and abandon levels (SSUU 353, 354, 355, 357) of the *Cryptoporticus*.

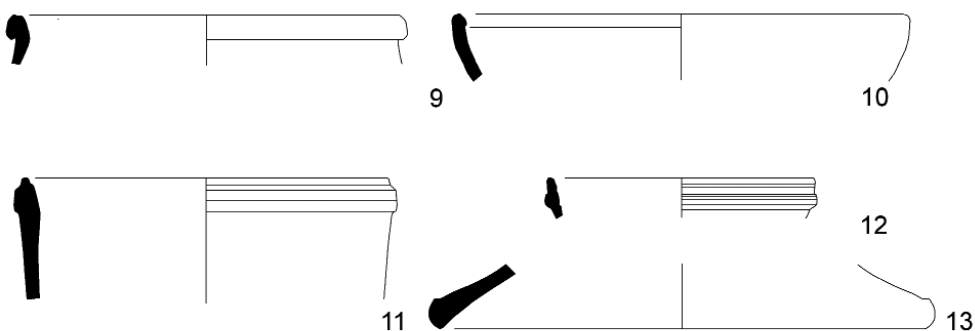
SU 206, 196, 658



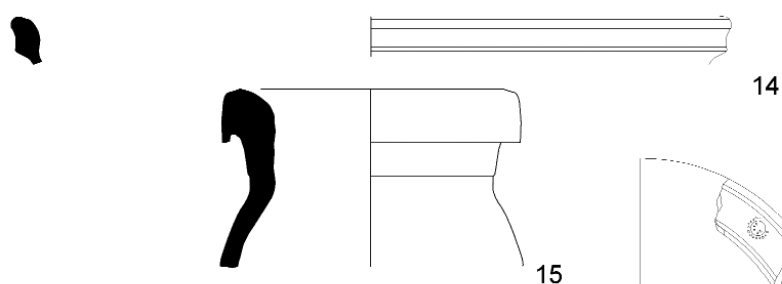
SU 429



SU 189



SU 651



SU 294

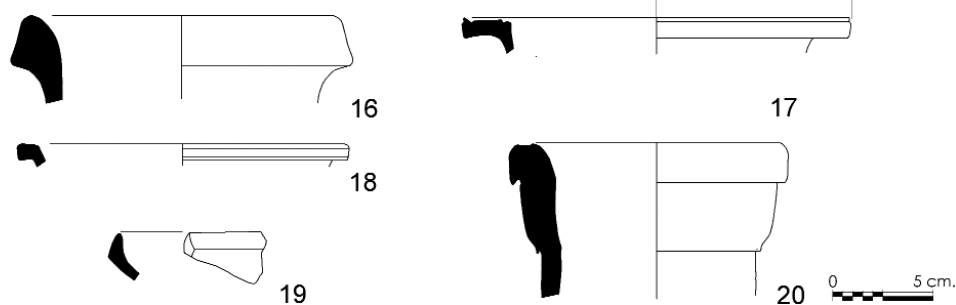


Figure 8

Pottery from inside the sewer and the levels covering it (SU 206, 196, 658), from later levels in the *Cryptoporticus* area (SU 429), from a level formed after the city wall founding (SU 189) and from inside the channel of the apse-shaped building (SU 651). Late Roman ceramics recovered inside a hole excavated in the Medieval times (SU 294).

part of the complex to its shape and a few other scattered elements.³³

Apse-shaped buildings or rooms of large dimensions are to be found, apart from the Basilicae,³⁴ mostly built in later times, in public baths, as a Natatio (swimming pool) or Nymphaeum. The channel we found, which carried fresh water presumably into the building, due to its large capacity, could have fulfilled perfectly the needs of such buildings.³⁵ The appearance of some tubes, used to build air chambers in warm rooms of the Roman baths, are further elements that point to Thermae.³⁶

Despite what has been said, this hypothesis can not be a final answer, and it arouses new questions: If, at the end of the 1st century AD, a public bath was built in the area (which was probably in use until the 6th century AD), then why, shortly thereafter, (in the first half of the 2nd century AD) were the famous baths of Lucius Minicius (both father and son) built in the present Plaça de Sant Miquel (where they are commonly located)? Or, why were other Thermae built (probably in the 2nd century AD) outside of the city walls, right in front of the Castellum, precisely at 7-9 Regomir? (Miró, Puig, 2000).

Although we have uncertainties about the hypothesis of a room for a public bath, other hypotheses gather much less credibility. The possibility that this space was a large water deposit is not supported by topographical evidence, since it is located at a low level, in relation to the surrounding urban space, neither by the location of the channel that seemingly supplies water (in the lower part of the structure, which would prevent it from being filled up), nor by the inner wall, that completely lacks coating and has been preserved 1.4 m (4.6 ft) high, above the founding wall (NW wall, room 12). However, there is no doubt a big fresh water deposit would have been highly efficient close to the presumable harbour to supply sailing ships across long distances.

No other evidence, other than the plan itself, was found to assess the use of the space called Cryptoporticus. Taking into account the low height that is proposed, it does not appear to be a walking area or even a space in which any activity would be performed, other than using the space for storage as in a warehouse.

As for "Space A," despite the fact that we only know of two parallel walls and none of the hypothetical internal subdivisions or items contained, its location in the sector near the entrance and exit of the Decumanus Maximus that goes towards the city or the sea (and presumably the harbour), suggests that it might be an area for Tabernae.

Recalling the monumental gate found when the Arc de Sant Cristòfor was pulled down (most likely in the same line of the wall F34 or even the back wall -F 2 and 4-) this area could have been a portico and walking area associated with both the gate of the city and the Cryptoporticus.

Late Roman Remains: The city wall and the evolution of the sector to the Late Antiquity

Sometime in the 4th century, as most scholars agree, the new city walls were built (see below for the discussion of evidence at Regomir) (Figure 4). This construction totally erased "Space A," destroying the walls (F 34) almost to the ground level. The foundation of the new wall (F 1 and 3) lies directly upon F 34, while the wall filling (SU 368 and 460) covers the available room that these previous walls shaped. An inner face for the wall was not built, as the filling of the wall itself is leaning against the older NE walls of the Cryptoporticus, which obviously were still left standing. Thus, it was created, ex novo, a wall of around 4 m (13 ft) wide, which, in essence, is the same width of both the Augustean and Late Roman walls combined throughout the rest of the city.

Technically, the outer face is an opus quadratum, using large, perfectly-square blocks, and the filling is an opus caementicium which reused, as everywhere else in Barcino, stones and architectural features from ancient buildings (Figure 6, Plates 5 and 6). At Regomir, we recorded some shaped stones probably belonging to cuppae.

The diggings also uncovered part of a square tower, of the same type and dimensions that are seen all around the remaining wall of the Roman town.³⁷ The outer walls are opus quadratum and have a filling of opus caementicium, which is adjoined to the filling of the city wall.

33. A broader knowledge of the topography of the entire Castellum would obviously shed some light on the meaning of the room itself.

34. Such as, for instance, the Basilica Ulpia in Rome or the the Basilicae in Augusta Raurica (GROS, TORELLI, 1994, 291, fig. 150) or Noviodunum (GROS, TORELLI, 1994, 249, fig. 124). A few buildings with apse ends are found in the Forum of Thugga (GROS, TORELLI, 1994, 261, fig. 127).

35. For instance, the Nymphaeum of Punta Epitaffio in Baia (Naples) has an apse-shaped plan, being 8.35 m (27.4 ft) width per 16.4 m (54 ft) in length (DE CARO, MINIERO, 1983, MANISCALCO 1997). However, Baia was an imperial resort from the 1st cent AD and the Nymphaeum itself could have belonged to the Claudius's residence. On the other hand, the Natatio from the Big North Baths in Tamugadi (Timgad), having a rectangular plan and two apse endings on the shorter sides, it is only 6.1 m (20 ft) width and little more than 9.15 m (30 ft) long (WOLOCH, 1983).

36. Only 20 shards of these elements have been recovered, 12 in levels formed in modern or contemporary times. The rest comes from strata dated in the 3rd, 4th, 5th centuries AD and, maybe, even in later times.

37. An angle of this tower was found in room 1, the other one in room 10, the foundation of the present building cutting its outer façade (Figure 3).



Plate 6

Outer wall and filling of the city wall. The walls of the present building are carved in the Roman filling. On the right, it is seen the outer wall of the circular tower.

Not much has been recorded from the “circular” tower in our intervention (Plate 6). However, 19th century plans of Regomir 4 show a structure that is square on one end and semicircular on the other. This curved shape was to be seen in the drawings of the Arc de Sant Cristòfor at this time, and part of it remains inserted into the wall shared by Regomirs 4 and 6, from the ground to the top floor (around 18 m -60 ft- high), in the form of big ashlars, which fashioned the outer wall as an *opus quadratum*. However, the semicircle appears to be projected out from the filling of the city wall, which seems to be leaning on the tower itself or perhaps bonded to it. In any case, the cavity found in the angle, made by the wall and the tower, partially destroyed the joint of both features, making it more difficult to assess their stratigraphical relationship.³⁸ The distance between both to-

wers is 11.2 m (36.75 ft), similar to the length between some other towers in the city wall of Barcino.

Finally, the evidence for dating the city wall at Regomir had to be taken with caution: they come from soundings which yielded few materials that were suitable for dating and, in some cases, were contaminated when part of the city wall was demolished in the 19th century. The materials of the soil located against F 34 (which was torn down by the construction of the city wall) provide a *terminus ante quem* for the city wall itself. It is dated from the beginning of the 3rd century to the beginning of the 4th century (Figure 5).³⁹ A *terminus post quem* is found in the level which leaned on the foundation of the wall, and seems to have been formed sometime after the second half of the 4th century through the first quarter of the 5th century.⁴⁰ Although we would need more digs at Regomir

38. This cavity was clearly manmade as it was excavated part in the filling of the wall (F 1) and the F 34 below, partly in the soil in front of these features. The access was conditioned by building a crown of stones and it was sealed by slab stones. Only visual surveying was carried out, being unknown the extension of it. Two more of these cavities are to be found in the angles of the square tower (rooms 1.3 and 10). They show as well a conditioned superior entrance made of stones, stone beams and slabs. We believe they were dug out and conditioned in modern times, although they have not been totally excavated for safety reasons. In any case, they allowed us to record, vertically, the city wall foundation, the walls of the Space A, the foundations of both towers, and, cut by these holes, the remains of the sewer all along Regomir 6.

37. An angle of this tower was found in room 1, the other one in room 10, the foundation of the present building cutting its outer façade (Figure 3).

38. This cavity was clearly manmade as it was excavated part in the filling of the wall (F 1) and the F 34 below, partly in the soil in front of these features. The access was conditioned by building a crown of stones and it was sealed by slab stones. Only visual surveying was carried out, being unknown the extension of it. Two more of these cavities are to be found in the angles of the square tower (rooms 1.3 and 10). They show as well a conditioned superior entrance made of stones, stone beams and slabs. We believe they were dug out and conditioned in modern times, although they have not been totally excavated for safety reasons. In any case, they allowed us to record, vertically, the city wall foundation, the walls of the Space A, the foundations of both towers, and, cut by these holes, the remains of the sewer all along Regomir 6.

39. Sounding 14, SU 648: African Red Slip ware, type A/C (Lamboglia 40).

40. Sounding 3, SU 189 TS African Red Slip ware, type A (Hayes 8B / Lamboglia 1C [Figure 8,12] and Hayes 9B / Lamboglia 2B), African Kitchen Ware (Hayes 23B [Figure 8,10], 19/194, 196 [Figure 8,13], 197 [Figure 8,9], Ostia III/Atlante CVII, number 8 [Figure 8,11], produced between 360 and 440 AD, and Lamb 9A/ Atlante CVI, number 4, produced between 180 and 420 AD).

6 to confirm it, it seems, at present, that the city wall was built there before 360 BC.⁴¹

Thus, if the Castellum was fortified during the refortification of the city, what was happening to its interior?

We have seen that, from the middle of the 2nd century, some major changes occurred in the area. Inside the Cryptoporticus, more debris piled-up from the second half of the 3rd century until the first half of the 4th century (Figure 5).⁴²

Also, something important that is relevant to the evolution of the recorded complex seems to have occurred at a later moment; the cover of the channel is pulled away and it is filled in with soil (Figure 6).⁴³

Some other signs of activity in the sector are shown by the appearance of late Roman pottery inside a hole that was dug in medieval times in order to plunder the stone of the pillar 5 (Figure 5, Plate 3).⁴⁴

Conclusion: A public, and monumental, area of the early times in the sea façade of the Roman town

The evolution of the developed sector of Barcino, archaeologically known as Castellum, is based, for the most part, on stratigraphical series recovered from limited soundings. It seems to have occurred as follows (Figure 4):

During the last quarter of the 1st century BC the whole recorded area was set up. This is the apse-shaped building of unknown function (belonging, perhaps, to a public bath), the Cryptoporticus and the floor (or floors) above, whose functional purpose is also unknown (perhaps serving as a storage place), and the area (indicated as "Space A"), facing the Decumanus Maximus upon exiting the city (proposed as Tabernae or a portico). Some other areas ("Spaces B," and "C") are deduced to the West and the South, although they have not been surveyed for they

belong to the neighbour buildings. No wall existed at that time that surrounded the complex.

Presumably, a fire occurred during the first half of the 2nd century BC, ruining the Cryptoporticus. At the same time, the sewer that ran under the street, along the continuation of the Decumanus Maximus, seems as it was clogged and abandoned.

Only in the 4th century, following the refortification of the city, was this area encircled by walls and towers (two of them being recorded now at Regomir 6, and another having been recorded a few years ago at Regomir 8).

We believe that the importance of what has been recovered at Regomir exceeds the semimicrospatial level and could be better understood under a new historical interpretation of the origins of Barcelona, being considered under the urban continuum in this place since Roman Barcino. This could not be the task of a single researcher, but, we are sure, it will be the result of a scientific debate that was already begun a few years prior.

In any case, to assess the parameters of what has been found, we think we need to address three basic questions: what, when and where. Or, as we understand it: first, the public and monumental character of the remains; second, very likely, part of the original plan of the city (if not utterly a part of it), as demonstrated by the old date of the construction of the complex (in the first decades of building development in the city); and, third, the location of the ensemble in the sea façade.

This latter spatial coordinate is extremely important; it has to do with the sound possibility that a harbour existed near the city, subsidiary of the large harbour area in the Llobregat river delta and south slope of the Montjuïc mountain Palet (1994).⁴⁵ This hypothesis was established a few years ago by Izquierdo (1997)⁴⁶ and Carreras (1998),⁴⁷

41. This date, as provisional as it is, apply as well to the entire city wall, since anything suggests that the wall in the Castellum area it is not strictly contemporary to the late wall surrounding the city, but just part of it.

42. Sounding 10 (SU 356 and 388), coin of Claudius II (Plate 7) and sounding 9 (SU 507) another coin of Claudius II minted after his death. Sounding 7, SU 429 Hispanic TS (Dragendorff 29-37 [Figure 8,7], Ritterling 8 [Figure 8,6], TS Africana A: Lamb. 1 [Figure 8,8], African Kitchen Ware (Lamb 10A/Hayes 23B, Hayes 196 and 197), African Amphorae (Keay 25), and one coin of Constantine I [Plate 7]), Sounding 15, SU 656 and 637-639, one coin of Constans and one of Constantius (Plate 7), and, in the same room 6, SU 662, another coin of Constantius.

43. SU 651, Amphorae from North Africa (Keay 25E and 62A [Figure 8,15]) and Late Antiquity pottery from Ibiza (Luteri 2 [Figure 8,14], CELA, REVILLA, 2004: 375 and Figure 168), which provides a date from late 6th century to the beginning of the 7th century AD. SU 578, located in a higher level, yielded a shard of African Kitchen Ware (Atlante CVII, 11), produced from mid 4th century until the end of the 6th century AD.

44. The soil which fills it (SU 294) contains ceramics from the 1st century AD to medieval times. Amongst the ones that indicates some activity in the area during the Late Antiquity are: Amphorae from North Africa (possible Keay 62F [Figure 8,16]), Dérivée de Sigillée Paléochrétienne (DSP 2 [Figure 8,17]) and African Red Slip Ware, type D (Hayes 108 [Figure 8,18]), made already in mid 7th century AD.

45. According to Palet, this sector of the harbour, in the south of the Montjuïc hill, became a central place in the new structure of the territory (PALET, 1994: 177), since the 2nd century AD, but especially since the 4th century AD onwards (PALET, 1994: 181).

46. For this author, the Castellum would have defended the entrance to the port and the city itself. As it was only a fortress in later times, we would say the Castellum serve to the interest both to the port and the city, providing services whatever they were (baths, warehouses, and/or others). The tradition of the area as a portuary place subsisted in medieval times (IZQUIERDO, 1997).

47. The high concentration of Amphorae of a local production type (Pascual 1) and, later on, of Amphorae from Baetica (Dressel 20) around the NE walls of Barcino, close to the sea, strongly suggest the possibility of a nearby harbor and storehouses (horrea) in the area (CARRERAS, 1998: 156).



Figure 9

Puiggarí's drawing showing the demolition of the Arc de Sant Cristòfol in 1861. During those works most of the circular tower was pulled down and a monumental gate appeared.

following new data. Before, it was long established (Pallarès, 1975; Pallí, 1985, amongst many others) that, at the end of the 1st century BC, a secondary road of the Via Augusta was built along the coast from the Tordera river valley to the Llobregat river valley. These studies linked the new itinerary to the foundation of Barcino as well as to the whole of the reforms that affected Hispania in the Augustan times (Tarradell, 1975). Palet (1994: 167) also showed as the coastal connection was reinforced after creating a road axis to link two close urban centers (Baetulo and Barcino). Many other authors recently insisted in the central location of Barcino, placed in between two river valleys (Llobregat and Besòs) which connected the coast with the hinterland (Izquierdo, 1997; Cubeles, Puig, 2003: 51). This route was long established as the Iberian

storage pits (6th–5th BC – 3rd BC) in the Montjuïc slope seemingly show. The sea façade, including the Castellum itself and some other suburban remains (public baths at Regomir 7-9, amongst others) are better explained by the presence of a harbour in the city.

Finally, it will be after the discussion of these three aspects (hopefully fuelled by more data from these and other new digs at Regomir 6 and in the Castellum and nearby areas), that we are going to be able to reach the initial reason for this space. Perhaps, if we can find the genuine intention for the construction of the complex, we would be able to find, as well, the original motivation for the founding of Barcino in the precise moment and location as it took place.

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