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# UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA

**Investigation of an ancient polis of Phlius**

Department of Humanities:

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*To my mum*

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# Introduction

Chaos and order were common themes in ancient Greece. The line between the civilised and uncivilised marked the difference between the acceptable and unacceptable. In some cases, the Other, in the form of the chaotic wild nature or a foreigner, became a source of fascination and horror at the same time. The theme of the difference between the wild and the untamed in comparison with the civilised and the controlled keeps returning in the myths and the literature of the Greeks throughout the centuries and only emphasises in their own ways the importance of order and correct ways of being.

Among the most prominent features of the difference between these two themes is the communal life of men. A polis became a synonym for the Greek organised urban lifestyle that became almost a trademark of the people and integral to their identity.[1] The line between the wild and the ordered, between the cultured and the barbarous, turned into a declaration of the citizenship and sign of belonging to the wider society of Greece. Those who were lucky to attain their status of a citizen, whether through their birth or through other, if limited, means, were able to enjoy the privileges that their status offered through the recognition of political and economic rights within their respective communities.[2]

The existence of a polis and its implications on the modern world have been discussed since the very beginning of its birth.[3] In the 4th century Athens, Plato and Aristotle alike debated

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[1]Vlassopoulos, K., 'Ethnicity and Greek History: Re-Examining our Assumptions', in *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studi*es, Vol. 58, No. 2, (Oxford, 2015), p. 1.

[2] For further discussions of Greek citizenship see: Ober, J., Political Dissent in Democratic Athens, (Princeton University Press, 1998),

[3] For further discussions of Greek Polis see: Anderson, G., 'The Personality of the Greek State', in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 129, (The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, 2009), pp. 1-22, Vlassopoulos, K., I., *Unthinking the Greek Polis*, (Cambridge University Press, 2007), Rousset, D., 'The City and Its Territory in the Province of Achaea and 'Roman Greece', in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 104, (Department of the Classics, Harvard University, 2008), pp. 303-337

the ideal polis and what it takes to create a perfect community of people within a civilised world. However, polis poses a problem for the philosophers and researchers alike. It is the lack of a formal definition of the word and the phenomenon. The issue arises from a simple fact that every polis on the Greek islands and the mainland is both similar to its neighbours and completely unique in its own ways. These differences sparked debates and conversations throughout the centuries in the political theory debates. Is the Laconian constitution better than the Athenian? Is the regime of democracy or of oligarchy preferable for the best governance of the cities? In the end, each and every poleis held their own constitution that was considered a cornerstone of the community; it marked the difference between the individual poleis and, at the same time, it showed the belonging to the wider community of Hellenes belonging to the web of poleis surrounding them. The differences of the constitutions were possible to overlook, as it proved that the citizens of the polis were able to govern themselves in their own best interests, which in turn separated them from the barbarous Other.[4]

The constitutions were considered integral to the existence of the polis but also to the identity they represented for inhabitants. The custom, the traditions might have been different, but the importance of a constitution remained. However, not even these were unchangeable, with changing political climates, the constitution and the poleis could be changed through a myriad of influences, from internal strife of factions within the city itself, through general changes and directions of the Pan-Hellenic world, to aggressive intrusions of larger powers into the individual poleis and changing their constitutions based on their own preferences. And therefore, while the large players in the political battlefield of Greece were able to express their political persuasions in a freer way, the smaller poleis were often influenced, if not dependent on their local power.

[4] Said, .E., *Orientalism,* (Penguin Books, 1978).

Although the polis, as an essential to the identity of the Greeks, is undisputed, the definition of the polis remained throughout the centuries a topic of debate. While Aristotle introduced the polis as a 'living organism' with the ability to transform and change, it also required the presence of activity to determine its existence. The polis thus rests on the action of its inhabitants. He states that 'a state is a collection of citizens.'[5]

On the other hand, Aristotle also addresses the physical presence of the polis and questions whether the physical manifestations of urban settlements can be considered a polis by themselves:

> '*Suppose a set of men inhabit the same place, in what circumstances are we to consider their city to be a single city?'*[6]

In the text, Aristotle claims that the unity of the walls does not mean the unity of the people within the city;[7] thus, the unity, as well as their unified actions, of people is necessary for the existence of the polis. Which he reiterated in later lines:

> *'For inasmuch as a state is a kind of partnership and is in fact a partnership of citizens in a government, when the form of the government has been altered and is different it would appear to follow that the state is no longer the same.'*[8]

[5] Aristotle, *Politics*, 3.1274b39.
[6] Aristotle, *Pol*., 1276a23.
[7] Aristotle, *Pol*, 3.1276a25-30.
[8] Aristotle, *Pol*, 3.1274b34-37.

Therefore, the polis is identified with the actions of its members and unity they represent.[9] In the context of the real world, Aristotle judges that a polis that had change their government or had come to an internal strife resulting in a change recreates the city anew and provides the citizens with a new polis altogether. Some earlier studies of polis preferred the association of the community of the citizens with the polis and not its direct surroundings.[10] Although later studies equate the polis with 'the relationship of a given community to a definite area which is the polis-settlement.'[11] Others equate the polis with its production and ability to cultivate its surroundings.[12]

Overall, it is difficult to divorce the polis from its physical environment. It makes for a neat category, however, the people of the polis, the community which actions that make the polis functional, do not make their decisions within a vacuum and are inevitably influenced by their physical presence in the country and in their urban settlements.

The following text would like to investigate a polis of Phlius located in the Peloponnese with these observations in mind. Phlius as a less significant settlement in contrast to hegemons such as Sparta, Corinth, or Argos, does not have quantities of textual evidence that would fully attest to the community of the polis and how it represented itself during its existence. Neither there is abundance of archaeological evidence at present due to the continuation of settlements within its plains, thus redistributing a good deal of the architectural remains to the neighbouring villages for reuse.

However, as mentioned above, the physical and the community of people cannot be divorced from each other, therefore, the following text will attempt to collect the currently

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[9] Downey, G., 'Aristotle on the Greek Polis: A Study of Problems and Methods', in *Urbanism Past and Present*, No. 3, (Board of Reagents of the University of Wisconsin System, 1977), p. 24.
[10] Zatta, C., 'Conflict, People, and City-Space: Some Exampla from Thucydides' History', in *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (University of California Press, 2011), p. 321.
[11] Zatta, 'Conflict, People, and City-Space', p. 322.
[12] Gallo,L., 'La polis e lo sfruttamento della terra', in E.Greco,ed., *La Citta` Greca Antica*, (Rome, 1999), pp. 37.

known and available evidence, both textual and archaeological, and create a cohesive picture of the community and the environment the polis thrived and suffered in.

First section will look into the physical environment surrounding the site of Phlius. The studies in recent years focused on the geological processes and how the topography of the site might have influenced the settlements in the area. Including the redistribution of the building materials in the area throughout the centuries.

The second section focuses on the archaeological investigations of the site and its surrounding country, beginning with the early travellers of 18$^{th}$ to 19$^{th}$ centuries leaving accounts of the site at the time of their visits to through first excavations undertaken by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, starting in the 1892 and, somewhat irregularly, continuing well into the second half of the 20$^{th}$ century. Investigations were documented in various styles, however, this paper attempts to reproduce the final state of the finds and connect them to the idea of Phlius as a polis and its textual evidence.

In the third section, History of Phlius will be discussed namely through the textual evidence in connection to the political agency of Phlius and how the position of a smaller polis on the crossroads between Corinth and Argos affected its fortunes.

# 1 Topography

## 1.1 Phlius and the country around

The Phliasian plain is located in the eastern Peloponnese, some 20 kilometres from the Corinthian gulf, in the area of modern Corinthia. Its position lies between surrounding mountain ranges, plains, and narrow valleys connecting the plain to the Argolid, Corinthia, and Nemean Valley. The plain is home to the modern town of Nemea[13] and neighbours the plain of Ancient Nemea.

The plain has a triangular shape and is surrounded by the Kyllene mountain range and the Olygyrtos mountain range from the north-east, from the south-west by the Kelossa mountains, allowing for the Kelossa pass heading towards the Argive plain. (Figure 1.) At the eastern edge of the valley, a conglomerate bedrock extends from the Trikaranon mountain towards the plain; the ridge is partially separated from the mountain through gullies and a saddle. This westward-facing ridge provides the space for the acropolis of the ancient city of Phlius. The acropolis of the city is on average about 60 meters above the plain level. The ridge itself protrudes about a kilometre into the valley and extends about 500 meters in its broadest point.[14] In its eastern extremity, the ridge provides a natural defence to the acropolis in a form of a broken terrain and steep inclinations of the slopes. On the other hand, the western side slopes down to the plain in natural terraces, the lower ones providing the space for the chapel of Panagia Rachiotissa, which shows clear signs of spolia within its walls. (Figure 2)

The city relied on the local river Asopus, its spring being located in the massif of Megalovouni[15], and connected to the mythical landscape of the city itself. The plain of Phlius

[13] Formerly known as Agios Georgios.
[14] Alcock, S.E., 'Urban Survey and the Polis of Phlius', in *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1991), p. 425.
[15] Mount Karneatis according to Strabo.

is one of the largest plains of the Corinthian inland plains.[16] The Asopus river basin seems to be interesting to human activity from the early period of human history; the evidence of pre-historic occupation of its banks can be observed especially in its southeastern basin on the river's alluvial deposits. More specifically, Asopus River created quaternary alluvial deposits and upper Pliocene marls in the area of Phliasia.[17] These processes created situation in which the erodibility of marls and their character provided the plain with a soil ideal for cultivation and thus habitation.[18] The plain is intensely cultivated in present day, especially, popular crops in the area are cereals and wine.

Asopus river also provided another feature to the landscape of the Phliasian plain, namely, its river system feature of a drainage system, the river developed in a mildly high-altitude terrain and due its course, created through the process of erosion steep terrains on its course through the surrounding hills, entering the coastal plain, finalizing its course in Corithian Gulf.[19] This terrain caused that the mountain passes became significantly important for passing the mountains and thus the passes were integral to the settlement patterns in the area and documented routes, especially to Argolid.[20] Phliasian plain and its inhabitants were able to profit from the position of the plain on a major connections among several routes, to the east of the plain was Mycenae and ancient Nemea, to the south, through Kelossa pass, the Argive plain opened to the travellers, in the west the mountain pass provided connection to Stymphalia, and the route connecting Arcadia and south of the peninsula to the Corithian Gulf passed through as well.[21] (Figure 3) Although some questions of 'overall strategic importance of the Phliasian

[16] Mexia, K., 'Geoarchaeological observations in the wider area of Nemea using airphotos and GIS', in *Remote Sensing and Geology* ''Surveying the GEOsphere'', Nikolakopoulus, K., Glaesser C., Patel, N., (eds.), (2014, Springer), p. 270.
[17] Mexia, 'Geographical observations in the wider area of Nemea using airpohots and GIS,' p. 277.
[18] Wright, J. C., et all, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', in *Hesperia*, Vol. 59, No. 4, (American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1990), pp. 602.
[19] Mexia, 'Geographical observations in the wider area of Nemea using airpohots and GIS,' p. 274.
[20] Wright, J. C., et all, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', p. 585.
[21] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', A Dissertation in Classical Archaeology, Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of the University of Pennsylvania, (1968), p. 1.

plain' were raised[22] its position and reach provided enough agricultural and trading activities for its inhabitants.

### 1.2 Modern history of the site from 18th century travellers to the 20th century

In compare, to Greece in general, Phliasian plain did not attract large numbers of travellers who would leave a written record for the public. The plain was not extensively explored in the 18th and 19th centuries.[23] The earliest record of a visitor to the area is dated to 1792, H. Fourmont mentions the area of Phlius in a short commentary.[24] Fourmont notes remains of Doric temple, which he likens to the Theseion in Athens, except the Phliasian temple being constructed in other stone than marble. He also mentions seventeen visible columns within the structure. Fourmont reports also several stones with snake carvings and thus links the remains of the structure to Pausanias' description of the city and associates it with temple of Asclepios.[25] It is, however, unclear as to the location of the structure aside from the inference that it had to be in close vicinity to the site proper if not on it directly.[26]

By 19th century, the plain became more accessible and intrigued several other travellers. Among them, W. Gell who arrived to the Phliasian plain from the direction of Stymphalous and descended to the plain proper from the southwest corner. The remains he encountered in the area, Gell attributed to Phlius, wrongly.[27] The walls and foundations Gell describes are the same ones that are mentioned in 'The Topography of Phlius and the Phliasian Plain' published in 1924.[28] Gell continues his travels through the plain and describes also a hill in the vicinity of

[22] Alcock, S.E., 'Urban Survey and the Polis of Phlius', p. 425.
[23] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 17.
[24] Fourmont, H., *Missions Archeologiques Franciases en Orient*, (Paris, 1902), p. 583-598.
[25] Fourmont, H., *Missions Archeologiques Franciases en Orient,* p. 585.
[26] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 18.
[27] Gell, *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea*, (London, 1823), p.
[28] Russell, A.G., 'The Topography of Phlius and the Phliasian Plain', in *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, Vol. 11, No. 1, (Liverpool The University Press, 1924), pp. 43-44.

the village of Agios Georgios (modern Nemea) with remains of a settlement and city walls.[29] After approaching the hill of the acropolis, Gell described a small church dedicated to St. Irene (it is the only time the church is connected to St. Irene)[30] where he saw remains of a 'small Doric temple.'[31]

In 1830, Leake describes his travel in detail and provides his readers with description of the site proper. He visits the acropolis of Phlius and mentions traces of walls still visible in the area.[32] Leake also gives a description of several walls surrounding the area. A section of wall descending from the southeast corner of the acropolis towards a brook in the plain and remains of wall in the southwest, following the foot of the hill before reaching Asopus are described in the account.[33] Leake also makes a note of numerous remains in the plain under the acropolis, among them also the building of *Palati.*[34] However, while Leake described the area in significant detail, he does not mention the chapel at all, which is also noted by Biers.[35] While Leake might have not found the chapel appealing for the account itself, its omission is an odd decision, especially since the spolia within its architecture were most likely visible.

In 1818, Pouqueville observed the remains of a Doric temple in Phliasian plain. He mentions that the site has been reused and its place has been converted into a chapel 'whose apse was placed in the pronaos and whose door was cut through the *cella* wall.'[36] He mentions four standing columns of approximately 46,8cm in diameter, which 'more or less agrees with the column fragments' still present in the area of the chapel at the beginning of the 20th century.[37]

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[29] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 19.
[30] The chapel dedicated to St. Irene is not mention in any other accounts of the area, in general it is believed to be the chapel of Panagia Rachiottisa.
[31] Gell, *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea*,p. 390.
[32] Leake, *Travels in the Morea* (London, 1830), p. 339-345.
[33] Leake, *Travels in the Morea,* p. 340.
[34] Leake, *Travels in the Morea,* p. 342.
[35] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 20.
[36] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 20 from original Pouqueville, Voyage de la Grece (second edition, Paris 1825-26) V 296-313.
[37] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 21.

Pouqueville believed the temple to be associated with Hebe[38], however, the difference between the description of Pausanias and the physical presence of the chapel on the hill would be somewhat odd conclusion. However, in later passages Pouqueville mentions another Doric temple in the area lower of acropolis and another Doric temple in a 'short distance to the northwest.'[39]

While the time between the visits of the individual travellers must be accounted for, the differences in their accounts are interesting. Especially in the case of the temples. While Pouqueville mentions three structures that he describes as temples, Leake and Dodwell seem to miss these and Fourmont, few decades prior, mentions only two. It is possible to consider Pouqueville's third temple in the west with other structures that had been uncovered in the excavations in 20th century. Biers questioned Pouqueville's accuracy and he proved the author to be 'often misleading' however agrees that 'considerable remains were to be seen at the site before 1815, including at least one Doric temple, part of which may have been standing as late as 1729 and fragments of which are built into the small chapel.'[40]

Among other travellers, Ross in 1841 offers a first sketch of the site of Phlius[41], together with a significant number of inscriptions and seven undated gravestones and also assigns the chapel as the place of the original temple of Asclepius.[42] Subsequently, Curtius agrees with recognition of the chapel as a place of the temple, the author also makes remarks about the existing walls surrounding the area, for example the stream to the south of acropolis had been within the polygonal walls and most likely belonging to the suburbs of the settlement.[43]

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[38] *Ibid.*
[39] *Ibid.*
[40] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 21, footnote 44.
[41] Ross, L. *Reisen und Reiserouten durch Griechland,* (Berlin, 1841), p. 34.
[42] Ross, L. *Reisen und Reiserouten durch Griechland*, p. 25-39.
[43] Curtius, E., *Peloponenesos,* (Gotha, 1852-1852), Vol. II., pp. 470-478., This comment is also supported by Frazer in *Pausanias's Description of Greece*, second ed., (London, 1913), p. 77.

Overall, the early travellers to the region agree on several points. They all described visible remains of the settlement both on acropolis and on the plain of Phliasia. A majority of the authors have described the walls in the areas of acropolis, in this case including a tower, the hill proper, and the walls pushing all the way to the stream in the south. This stream is also associated with the gully described in Xenophon as a southern limit to the city.[44] The majority seems to also agree on the placement of the temple of Asclepius on the site of the present chapel of Panagia Rachiotissa. They also conclude, albeit in less normative manner, that the site has at least one temple of Doric order on the slopes and terraces of the hill and other remains of architectural structures in the plain. Especially, the *Palati* seems to be prominently visible throughout the periods.

Although the descriptions can be in some cases confusing, they allow us to consider the state of the site and its surrounding prior to the 20th century and the excavation efforts. However, it is clear that the site of Phlius and its remains had suffered a significant loss due to the continues human activity in the area. The site provided the surrounding areas with building materials during the centuries and there is an argument that this process increased in frequency in the 19th century with the population movements in the plain and surrounding mountainous areas.

### 1.2.1 19th century and the site of Phlius

The 19th century was not only the century of travellers but also the century of radical changes in European history. The national movements became a forefront in many countries,

[44] Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 7.2.13.

and one of them was the War of Independence in Greece, seeking freedom from the Ottoman empire.

While 19th century readers might have imagined the Greek countryside as almost a mythical place of the poems carrying on the unbroken tradition of agricultural life, the evidence points to the contrary. Phliasian plain is one of the multitude of areas which were effected by the constant movements of the people in historical periods.[45] One of the studies following the migration trends in Phliasian plain were presented as part of a larger project of The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project.[46] The focus of project shed the light on the process of 'transformation from the imperial, largely feudal system of the Ottoman Empire to a centralized nation-state.'[47]

During the 17th to 18th century, Greek countryside had shown a trend of depopulation of the lowlands, such as Phliasian plain and Nemean valley, in favour of mountainous areas.[48] This trend is linked to the imperial system and taxation of Greek agricultural workers under the larger Ottoman estates in the lowlands, creating economic and existential pressure on the population. In the case of Nemea valley, it is reported that while the Byzantine period showed a major agricultural activity by the beginning of the 19th century before the Greek Revolution the area had been sparsely populated despite its agricultural advantages.[49]

Through a systematic study of the settlement patterns, historical records, and oral history the NVAP established that the Nemean valley and the settlements in its surrounding were orientated towards the Phliasian plain and Agios Georgios (town of Modern Nemea), a settlement of 600 inhabitants in 1800 and not the modern Argos-Corinth road as was previously

[45] For detailed discussion of historical migration patterns see: Wright, J. C., et all, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', p. 595.
[46] Later referred to as NVAP.
[47] Wright, J. C., et all, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', p. 596.
[48] Wright, J. C., et all, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', p. 597.
[49] Wright, J. C., et all, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', p. 596.

believed.[50] The settlement of Agios Georgios had been closely connected to the monastery of the Panagia tou Vrachou Nemeas located on the mount Polyphengi, which had strong seasonal relationships with the communities in the mountainous areas surrounding the Phliasian plain.[51] Agios Georgios acted as a seasonal market and administration centre for the communities surrounding it and provided the necessary services to the inhabitants. However, these sparsely populated areas of Nemea and Phliasia changed rather dramatically after the Greek Revolution.[52] With the lack of the Ottoman imperial power a family farms became to dominate the region.[53] With the establishment of the centralized Greek government in Athens, and lack of Ottoman style feudalism, the population once preferring the less controlled mountainous areas started to resettle in the plains again. As the study of NVAP shows, the Phliasian plain benefitted greatly from this change and the evidence points towards an expansion of population, settlements, and agricultural activity in the area.[54]

Therefore, in a short period of time during the 19th century, Phliasian plain went through a major development of population. While it served as a major political and economic centre for the area consistently[55] the later decades of the 19th century brought the systematic change. The settlement no longer served as a meeting point during the seasons but became a centre in permanent use, independent of the seasons. And it is not only the mountains that provide the new inhabitants but also the widespread migration within Greece as well. The development of the small family farms, which became more popular with the new form of government, on previously scarcely cultivated land of Phliasia led to rise in need of resources. While the agriculture flourished with the cultivation of new fields and crops, the population required

[50] Wright, J. C., et all, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', p. 597.
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] *Ibid*.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] Wright, J. C., et all, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', p. 599.
[55] Wright, J. C., et all, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', p. 602.

housing, for themselves and all the spaces for the growing agricultural and economic activities. Therefore, the need for a building material had to rise in response.

# 2 Archaeology of Phlius

## 2.1 History of Excavations and Surveys

While the early travellers of the 19th century described the site, an archaeological campaign took place only by the end of the century, in 1892. Two students at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Henry and Charles Washington, decided to open several test trenches on the Acropolis and around the walls within the area. The very first campaign took place within a week.[56]

At the time no report was published. Only in 1923 a short report on the campaign was published with few brief descriptions of the finds, visible remains of the city, and other observations made at the time. Unfortunately, as author himself admits, a large amount of the information collected in the campaign were lost.

Archaeological activities resumed on the hill only in 1924 under the director of the American School of Classical Studies, Berth Hill. He sunk 87 trenches in several areas of Phlius proper and the plains surrounding it. By 1925, Blegen published a short report on the campaign but the information regarding the site, the finds, and the interpretations were limited. By 1968 William Biers, in his unpublished dissertation, collected the information from Blegen's diaries from the excavations of 1924 and tried to investigate the stored finds in the old Corinthian museum. Unfortunately, a large amount of the finds was mixed and damaged due to the incorrect storage at the facility. However, he was the first to collect, publish, and describe the overall site.

In the summer of 1970, an excavation was carried out under the American School of Classical Studies with W. Biers at the helm. The primary interest of the excavation was to

[56] Washington, H., S., 'Excavations at Phlius', in *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 27, No. 4, (The University of Chicago Press, 1923), p. 438.

'restudy one of the many areas tested' in the preliminary excavations carried out in 1924.[57] The campaign focused directly on the areas of *Palati,* areas north of *Palati*, including the theatre. The researchers returned in season of 1972, when they had continued their work as in the previously designated areas and expanded the site plans. In the season of 1973, Biers focused on the theatre and the structures surrounding it.

After that Phlius was abandoned by the researchers. Until the 1980s when it became a part of the Nemean Archaeological Valley project. This project did not focus on Phlius directly but on the Nemea Valley, and site of Phlius was only on the very edge of the designated study area. Even the Phliasian plain was not fully included in this designated research area. And eventually in 1990 by Alcock, with the Phlius Urban Survey conducted in the area, including wider survey of the plain and the remains in the modern settlements that have been reused in the villages.

## 2.2 Prehistorical Settlement of Phlius

Excavations have shown that the human activity in Phliasian plain, in the site of Phlius, can be seen as early as Neolithic period. An extensive prehistoric deposit has been uncovered both in the plain and the acropolis of the site.[58] The earliest deposits of pottery have been uncovered in the trenches on the acropolis and in the test trenches on the west slope of the hill. The trenches produced pottery sherds dated to the Early Neolithic Period; however, no architectural remains have been discovered during the excavation seasons of 1924 and in

[57] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', in *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 40, No.4, (The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1971), p. 424.
[58] Biers, W., R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits', in *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 38, No. 4, (The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1969), p. 444.

subsequent years that would be associated with this pottery. The Early Neolithic pottery represented the known types of wares common in the Peloponnese (Figure 5).[59]

In these trenches, very few Late Neolithic sherds were discovered.[60] From the uncovered pottery only a small number was possible to date to this period.[61] The excavation of 1924 uncovered significant amount of Early Helladic I and II pottery and remains of rubble houses associated with this period. Considering the amounts of found pottery from this period, it was suggested that the settlement had to be of considerable size in the Early Helladic Period.[62] The pottery also proved a close cultural connection between Phlius and Argos at the time, however, while the pottery shown a close cultural link, the quality of Phliasian production was significantly lower than the production from Argos.[63] From this period, a singular sherd of a foot showed signs of wares foreign to the area of Phlius and probably indicated an import from the east.[64] Therefore, it could be suggested that Phlius had been active in this period in wider web of connections and actively participated in interregional trade. The excavation season of 1924 yielded also deposit of obsidian, which could not have been determined whether the deposits came from Neolithic or Early Helladic period. At the same time, it strongly suggests an active participation of the settlement in the trading with distant partners and ability of the inhabitants of the settlement to purchase imported goods.[65]

From the Early Helladic III period and Middle Helladic period, no sherds were found at the site. In the case of the Late Helladic period, only one sherd has been dated to this period. This lack of pottery from Early and Middle Helladic periods suggests a possible abandonment

[59] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 34.
[60] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 4, and Biers, W., R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits', p. 445.
[61] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 35.
[62] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 37.
[63] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 5.
[64] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 37.
[65] *Ibid.*

of the site at the time, possibly as early as the end of the Early Helladic Period. The site might had been reinhabited in Protogeometric period as the evidence of few Protogeometric and Geometric sherds are present at the site.[66] Biers links this change in the settlement pattern to the description of Pausanias: 'This would work with Pausanias' and Strabo's Pre-Dorian settlement identified as Araethyrea.'[67] This would place the foundation of Arantia in the Phliasian plain somewhere in Middle to Late Helladic period.[68] And the return to the Phlius proper, as described by Strabo, could be placed to the periods of Protogeometric to Geometric period which would coincide with the found pottery in the trenches.[69] From the amount of found pottery dated to the Geometric period, Biers believes the site to be rather smaller settlement at this period.[70]

Archaic and Orientalising period brought growth of the settlement and deepening of the cultural and trade ties to Argos and Corinth.[71] From the excavation the most representative of this period is the Trench 72 sunk in 1924 on the south slope of the site, in close proximity to the temples on the acropolis. The trench produced a deposit of votive offerings that had been discarded from the sanctuary on the acropolis and thus provided a significant source of the information to the excavators. According to the excavation notebooks the trench has not been finished, and part of the deposit remained in situ.[72]

[66] Biers, W., R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits',p. 457.
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 6.
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 36.
[71] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 8.
[72] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 87.

## 2.3 Fortification

Fortification of the city and its suburbs were mentioned in the accounts of the travellers; however, their systematic study had not taken place before the second half of the 20th century. In the case of Washington, he remarks on the existence of 'polygonal walls' at the east end of the acropolis and remains of a tower connected to the fortification.[73] However, due to his limited trenches does not provide any more details on their state at the time.

In the campaign of 1924, the researchers do not focus on the systematic study of the fortifications as such but due to the extensive campaign they are able to provide more information on the topic. Especially as they uncovered several areas of the hill. Biers reports the information preserved in Blegen's journals regarding the walls and fortifications surrounding. Although the campaign provides certain amount of information about the state of the walls the reports and journals do not suggest any dating of the remains.[74]

Blegen in his report published in 1925 remarks that the north side of the hill had been well fortified by 'a strong well-built wall' of which remains were visible on the surface (Figure 6).[75] Later, Biers published further information about the walls. While the 1924 campaign did not focus on the fortifications as such, the researchers were able to make certain amount of conclusions and observations about the walls as they have appeared within the trenches.

### 2.3.1. North Slopes

They have identified a round tower connected to the northeast wall of the fortification, possibly the one mentioned by Washington.[76] There were several long stretches of the wall

[73] Washington, H., S., 'Excavations at Phlius', p. 439.
[74] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 152.
[75] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 25.
[76] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 29.

uncovered on the northern slope of the hill, they served as retaining walls for the fields and terraces above them.[77] The walls are built of local conglomerate blocks, these rectangular block, approximately of 0.55 metres to 1.32 metres, were laid carefully into the courses.[78]

One of the best-preserved stretches of the walls is one of 11m in length with east-west orientation with a turn to the south. This stretch is considered to be a part of a tower or a gate, with the highest point of five courses, measuring to 1.83 metres in height.[79] The fortification terminates in a round tower at the northeast corner, this tower is associated with the description of the early travellers. While the tower was not fully investigated in the time, the masonry seems to fit well with the rest of the northern lines. [80]

Unfortunately, due to the overgrowth, it was difficult to establish the final plan of the tower.[81] However, through the observable sections of the tower, Biers suggests at least two phase being represented.[82]

### 2.3.2. West Slopes

West side of the hill shows for two stretches of wall 'forming angles' with the orientation towards the cardinal signs, indicating a connection to a gate system, however, the journals or the dissertation do not come to any final assessment of the relationship between the two walls.[83] The walls that are farthest to the north are preserved to maximum height of 1mertre and they are constructed of crudely shaped block of bedrock. The blocks are worked; however they have difference in lengths, the higher courses, maximum of three courses are preserved, are made of

[77] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 153.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 154.
[80] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 155.
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 152.

smaller and more irregularly shaped blocks.[84] The second wall stretch heading the south is in better condition and is made up of local conglomerate. The maximum of four courses are preserved, with maximum height of 1.71 meters. Each of the courses are carved.[85]

### 2.3.3. East Slopes

Fortification walls following the east slope acts similarly as the north ones, serving as the retaining wall for the upper terrace.[86] The stretch of the wall in this area is preserved in four to five courses. The walls contain also re-used blocks and some of the pottery found in its vicinity is dated to Classical and Roman periods respectively.[87] Biers suggests that the wall must had been reconstructed with the spolia present however, it was done so with the same technique as the walls previously described.[88] Part of the east slope fortification walls were uncovered as a part of the trenches in the area. The wall in these sections had 'an outer and inner face of stone with a core of mudbrick' and measure to four meters in the width.[89]

### 2.3.4. South Slopes

On the south-east corner of the upper terrace other traces of a tower were discovered. However, due to the overgrowth the area was not fully investigated.[90] The walls from the tower running towards the south and down the hill are indicated by a line of the undergrowth, however, the walls proper are situated in short stretches alongside it.[91] The preserved parts of the wall

[84] *Ibid.*
[85] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 153.
[86] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 155
[87] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 155-56
[88] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 156
[89] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 157
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] *Ibid.*

were measured to hold 3.4 meters in width and in the areas where more than a course is preserved the wall seemed to be built in polygonal style.[92] The wall, when reaching the plain, was traced almost to the gully[93] and support the claims of early travellers about the wall in this area, recorded in Xenophon and his description of the city.

It is overall difficult to classify the style of the construction due to the preservation state of the site, however, it is clear that there were at least two phases in certain areas, and one of the walls was partially reconstructed in later period.

## 2.4. Washington's North Building

Washington reports a building on the north terrace of the acropolis. The building faces east. Its north wall is 6.3 meters, west wall 7.45 meters, south wall 5.7 metres, and the east wall end in a destruction. The walls were made of poros stone, however, the *cella* walls were consisting of slabs of limestones.[94] Several of these slabs were found in situ along the west wall.

The building consists of a *cella* and possibly a double entrance or an entrance with a column in antis. Inside of the *cella*, the inner face of the limestone slab on the west wall was cut obliquely from the upper to the lower edge, creating a slopping surface. At a distance of 0,45m from the slopping surface, a rectangular base of poros stone is located. Washington suggests that this poros block might have been a base of an altar or a cult statue base.[95] The poros block is off centre and Washington notes similarities to some of the Delphi's treasuries.[96]

[92] *Ibid.*
[93] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 158.
[94] Washington, H., S., 'Excavations at Phlius', p. 441.
[95] Washington, H., S., 'Excavations at Phlius', pp. 442-443.
[96] Washington, H., S., 'Excavations at Phlius', p. 443.

The North Building provided the excavators only with finds in form of conical loom weights and south go the building 4 doric column drums were found.[97]

Washington also offers a theory of the plan of acropolis. He believed that Northern Building on the acropolis' northern slope should be connected to Hebe, while Heraneum could be located to the eastern most area of acropolis. The sacred grove dedicated to Demeter and Kore, described by Pausanias, is associated with a threshold found in the central area of the plateau.[98]

Biers mentions a structure uncovered in 1924, based on Blegen's diaries. According to the report in Trench 62 of Season of 1924, a 'substructure' is found connected to the system of walls. Its relationship to the walls is not completely understood, however, the substructure appears to be of younger date than the wall. Blegen suggests that the substructure uncovered is the same building described by Washington. This, however, is questioned by Biers. Biers points out several inconsistencies, firstly the substructure uncovered is built from reused material, which is not mentioned by Washington at any point; secondly, Washington specifically mentioned limestone slabs present in situ in 1892, however, these are not reported in the season of 1924.[99] Therefore, it is unclear if this connection between the North Building uncovered by Washington and the substructure uncovered in 1924 is the same as Biers questions. On the other hand, both Blegen and Washington conclude unknown purpose of the structure and Biers himself comes to the conclusion of the shrine theory as these structures were the most common in the area according to the Pausanias' description.[100]

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[97] *Ibid.*
[98] Washington, H., S., 'Excavations at Phlius', p. 444.
[99] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 30.
[100] Paus.

## 2.5 The Hypostyle Hall

West of the hill is a portion of a building designated as Hypostyle Hal during the excavation of 1924. Two stretches of walls were uncovered in the west side of a building. The walls were built of thin blocks, approximately 0.6 metres in width and maximum of 4 courses were preserved, reaching the height of 1.09 metres. Block were relatively uniform with variations of 1.15 metres to 1.19 metres in length and 0.25 metres to 0.30 metres in height. They were made of a fine poros, however, three blocks appeared to be of local conglomerate rock and might have been a sign of later reparations.[101]

Three square bases and another partially preserved were found in connection to the structure. They were cut back on each side where a small area was raised, which might have been for columns of the structure.[102] The bases were set apart by 3.10 metres and 3 metres away from the east wall. Based on the placement of the bases, Biers suggests 'at least five rows of columns running east-west and three running north-south.'[103]

The 1924 campaign created two trenches associated with the Hall and reported 'a small poros octagonal column drum fragment ending in a Doric capital' which has been lost before 1960s and 'partially fluted column drum' which remained on the site but was not associated with the building.[104]

Part of the sherds from the two trenches[105] were lost the remaining evidence indicates the earliest sherds belonged to the Archaic period with Blegen dating the building to the 5th century BCE while Biers. Based on the architectural fragments associates the structure with the

[101] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 160.
[102] *Ibid.*
[103] *Ibid.*
[104] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 162.
[105] Trench 19 and 16, see Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', Appendix 1.

late 6th century to early 5th century BCE.[106] Biers supports his claims with the presence of the two antefixes dated to the second half of the 6th century.[107]

## 2.6 *Palati*

Larger and visible remains of an ancient structure were visible in the area south of the hill, the early travellers and well as the local oral tradition recognized this structure as '*Palati*' and subsequent campaigns and researchers kept the name. Washington describes *Palati* as 'outlined by remains of walls and with column drums projecting at regular intervals within' in 1924.[108] And Blegen in his published report in 1925, describes the structure as 'a basilica plan' and dated to Hellenistic period.[109]

However, the *Palati* has been only partially cleared in 1924, its further investigation had to wait until 1970 (Figure 7). The visibility of the structure might be also one of the reasons why the plundering in the area was quite thorough. Through investigation it was suggested that the earliest plundering of the site of *Palati* took place in late Roman Period around fifth to sixth century CE.[110] In Byzantine period, number of graves were cut through the structure, thus complicating the matrix again. While there is evidence for the site being used as a quarry in previous centuries, some of plundering most likely occurred also between 1924 and 1970 as several of the blocks reported by earlier researchers were no longer present at the site.[111]

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[106] Biers, W.R., 'Investigation at Phlius', p. 162.
[107] *Ibid.*
[108] Washington, H., S., 'Excavations at Phlius', p. 439.
[109] Blegen, C., W., 'Excavations at Phlius 1924', p. 27-28.
[110] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 425.
[111] *Ibid.*

*Palati* is composed of the outside wall in rectangular shape and with inner colonnade. The dimensions of the building are reported as approximately 34 meters in North-South direction and 25.70 meters in East-West direction with the local conglomerate stone serving as the building material.[112] The inner colonnade measured approximately 23.6 meters North-South direction and 13.8 meters in East-West direction.[113] Fron the northern side, the structure is connected to open courtyard and a theatre (Figure 8, 9). Through test trenches outside of the foundations to the east a footing trench was discovered containing 'working chips from walls and a relatively large amount of pottery', especially Attic and Corinthian wares dated to the middle of the fifth century BCE.[114] The finds also support the theory that *Palati* had an open courtyard. A fragment of a sima with a lion shaped head spout, with an angle of the head against the sima suggests that the sima was placed within an interior, was discovered at the north of the building. Other small architectural finds were also connected to *Palati*, palmette and lotus designs on soffit finds date the building to the fifth century BCE alongside the pottery before mentioned. The masonry also supports this theory.[115]

Part of the construction of *Palati* was also a course of orthostat walls, only two survived in situ. And through further investigation several other orthostats were discovered in the vicinity of the building. However, there were no indications of clamps being used in this scenario.[116]

The excavation seasons of 1970 and 1972 in Phlius uncovered 21 rectangular column bases for Doric columns within the wall of *Palati*.[117] In the season of 1970 only two were cleared (Figure 11).[118] The column bases are spaced in rows of eight on the long sides of the

[112] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 425.
[113] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p.
[114] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 427.
[115] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 431.
[116] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 427.
[117] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1972', p. 109.
[118] Bases 14 and 15 in Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 425.

building and five columns on the short sides.[119] The bases rest upon a rectangular blocks which are partially supported by the foundation wall. The foundation's upper course is made of 'well cut conglomerate' and the blocks are laid regularly.[120] On the other hand the lower course is constructed of 'blocks of various sizes, including some obviously re-used poros blocks.'[121] Biers notes interesting feature of the bases, the lower drum of the columns and the step of the block which is the base are cut from a single stone (Figure 13).[122] Common in Ionic but there is no parallel in Doric. While majority of the columns and bases were in this state, two basses base 9 and 11, in the north line are 'plain blocks rather than block and column drum' as the other bases.[123] Biers points out that these bases could be indications of a repair or rearrangement of the building considering a northern entrance.[124] Although, the northern entrance is mentioned, there are also indications in the south of the building that the entrance could had been placed in this area, as a recut threshold block and late concrete walls leading to the bases of 21 and 20 (which also consists only of foundation blocks), in later periods.[125]

The drums have twenty flutes, and they are preserved around 0.15 to 0.20 meters in height. The lower diameter of the column is approximately 0.685 meters.[126] Another distinguishing feature of the columns is the existence of an undercut on several of the lower steps of the bases facing inside of the building in the depth of 0.06-0.07 meters.[127]

During the investigation of the column base 14, a hard earth floor was exposed. The presumed floor was extending from the column further out and lied approximately 0.65 meters

[119] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 427.
[120] *Ibid.*
[121] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 429.
[122] *Ibid.*
[123] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 431.
[124] *Ibid.*
[125] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 432.
[126] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 430.
[127] *Ibid.*

below the cutting of the base.[128] The excavators came to a conclusion that the area within *Palati* was 'an open court, paved with slabs or plaques approximately 0.65 meters thick' and was connected to the cuttings of the respective columns. Therefore, the hard earth floor could be considered as a preparation for the floor itself.[129] Cutting on the bases 1 and 19 support the idea that this floor extended towards the south, however, due to poor state of preservation this could not be fully confirmed.

The cutting placements on the bases of base 1, 22, and 19 indicated a change of direction. Biers suggested that the inner courtyard of *Palati* was divided into two spaces with a border running between the bases across the space. Overall, the cuttings on the bases of the columns are irregular at some points, some bases lacking the cutting completely (base 10). Therefore, while Biers theory has its support it is difficult to conclude so without any doubts.

Mudbrick was exposed between bases 14 and 17 and the east foundation wall (Figure 12).[130] The construction was significantly disturbed by the Christian graves and the remains in general were rather fragmentary.

There could be a possible connection to Bouleuterion at Sikyon with placing a structure within a colonnade. In the case of Sicyon, it supported seats.[131] However, there is very little evidence as to the use of the *Palati*.

As noted above, Biers dates the earliest phases of *Palati* into the fifth century, but he notes also other architectural finds associated with the building that can be dated to the fourth century BCE.[132] And identifies a destruction level dated to the third to fourth century CE.[133]

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[128] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 430.
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 431.
[131] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 432.
[132] Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 432.
[133] *Ibid.*

# 3 History of Phlius

## 3.1 Mythical History of Phlius

Polis of Phlius while not as famous as some its neighbours was also introduced in the Description of Greece compiled by Pausanias in the 2nd century CE. In this narrative Pausanias introduces the city first through its history and founding. Which he puts against his previous knowledge as well. In the case of Phlius, Pausanias opens with the story of Aras and his children and ads some more information to a previous geographer describing the area.

According to Pausanias, first man to settle in the area of Phliasian plain was Aras 'who sprang from the soil' and founded the city. The city was located on nearby hill, the Arantine Hill, and named Arantia.[134] For the new settlement Asopus, son of Celusa and Poseidon, provided the water of the river named after himself.[135] However, the name of Arantia did not remain for the area too long, Aras' children, a son Aoris and a daughter Araethyrea, acclaimed to be experienced hunters and brave warriors, inherited the land and after Araethyrea's death, the brother named land after his sister.[136] Thus, in the list of ships of Iliad, Homer enumerates those of Phliasian plain as of Araethyrea, adding them to the list of Agamemnon's subjects.[137]

In following periods, Phlius comes to its final name, taken from a man Phlias. In this case Pausanias does not content himself with the opinion of Argives and links Phlias to the Phlias from Araethyrea[138], son of Dionysus, whose 'home was near to the springs of Asopus.'[139]

[134] Paus., *Description of Greece,* 2.12.4.
[135] Paus., *Description of Greece,* 2.12.4.
[136] Paus., *Description of Greece,* 2.12.5.
[137] Hom. *Il.* 2.571.
[138] Paus., *Description of Greece,* 2.12.6.
[139] Apol.Rhod. *Argo.* 1.115-117.

The fate of Phlius continued with the return of Heracleidae, and while Pausanias insists that Phliasians were by origin Argives[140] they had received 'additional settlers from the Dorian race'[141] through an agreement with a Dorian leader Rhegnidas which proved to be divisive to the people of Phlius. A group of exiles who disagreed with the proposed acceptance and rule of Dorians, led by Hippasus left Phliasian plain and sought refuge on Samos.[142]

These additions are made to the description offered by Strabo in 1st century BCE, when he described 'Araethyrea is the country which is now called Phliasia,' and the city of that land that had been abandoned and people had resettled 30 stadia farther and founded a new city of Phlius.[143]

Thus, locating the previous settlement of the Phliasian plain within 6 kilometres radius of the present site, however, omitting the name of a hill mentioned in Pausanias. This difference is not a major one as the texts do not provide opposite information, however, it raises a question about the Arantine hill as a name place utilized in later period and whether this hill name would be used also in previous centuries.

The narration of Pausanias provides another curious look into the identity of Greece and namely Phlius in this case in its earlier periods. His narration introducing Aras shows a simple foundation story of a city, however, in any ways is not trying to tie the city to further Greek world and makes Phlius and its inhabitants rather independent from its surroundings. The shared story of Asopus shared by other cities in close proximity to the river and his connections to other divine beings within the further narratives seems to be only a fleeting as he provides a water source and disappears from the narrative again. On the other hand union between very local Aras that has his ties to the very soil that would provide for the population enough

[140] Paus., *Description of Greece,* 2.12.3.
[141] Paus., *Description of Greece,* 2.13.1.
[142] Paus., *Description of Greece,* 2.13.2.
[143] Strabo*, Geo*. 8.6.24.

sustenance for settling in the area and Asopus, a river, also responsible for their agricultural success, however tied into the wider Greek narrative of the Olympian gods, only if through a dubious parentage, ties the local and panhellenic closer together without compromising the independent nature of the founding myth. Importance of a founding myth might be considered as an obvious and somewhat casual consideration, however, in the case of Phlius we can observe, even within its almost mythical past, periods of change and movement, at least within the plain itself.

Another curious point introduced by Pausanias is the story of the siblings, both skilled hunters and devoted to each other enough that the brother named the country and the city after his deceased sister. While this would suggest an importance of kinship ties, the idea of two siblings known to be hunters, especially in the case of the sister, begs to make an allusion to divine Artemis and Apollo. While the connection between the two pairs of siblings is not particularly strong, aside from the image painted by Pausanias, it opens a question of persistence of the local myths in the face of more widespread traditions. A step from siblings skilled in hunt and devoted to each other beyond grave to the divine siblings of Artemis and Apollo is not a long one. And especially, in period of threatened Greek identity a turn towards widely known figures would not be unusual or special. However, their cult of the siblings seems to persist all the way through to 2nd century BCE when Pausanias reports that their cult remains active and connected to the mysteries of Demeter celebrated in the city.

Another point to be mentioned is the statue of Artemis located on the acropolis of the city in close proximity to the sacred grove of Demeter and her daughter and Apollo's temple located in the agora of the ancient polis do not exactly attest to Phliasians' preoccupation with sibling pairs.[144]

[144] Paus., *Description of Greece,* 2.13.5-7.

On the other hand, there is no possibility to state without any reservations when the cult of the Arantine siblings began and became popular in the city. The chance of the cult being an outcome of later developments is plausible as well. However, whether the libations poured for Aras and his children became popular in earlier or later period, it indicates the importance of the local myth and local identity that found its outlet in this cult. The act of the worship of Aras and his children, who all gave the names of the plain, but none was in use anymore, shows how much Phliasians relied on and cared about the independence and their identity as a polis. Also, the name of Araethyrea seems to be well known and used in later periods as both Strabo and Pausanias make sure to explain their descriptions in the case of Phlius but not in other cases, such as Corinthia.

Another name for Phlius, the final one, also comes with few remarks from Pausanias. While Argives believe that the man who gave the name to the city was a man of noble but certainly human origin without any major connection to the mythical world in any sense; Pausanias expresses his disagreement and links Phlias to another known figure from the mythical narratives of Argos, where he associates Phlias the name giver with Phlias of Aerytherea who sailed on Argo. In this case, Pausanias' decision shows more of his interest in the interesting than in the popular beliefs. What led the author to this conclusion is hard to tell as he does not provide any information as to why he disagrees with the Argives on the matter. Additionally, he does not provide the Phliasian opinion on this matter either.

Evolution and complete change of names of settlements is not something unusual, especially if it comes to the settlements that survived throughout centuries, saw turmoil, military activities, change of religions. There are countless reasons why a settlement can come to a new name for itself be it by reasons outside of the power of their inhabitants or due to their decision in order to provide a new start for their own home. The shift from one name to another in such a long history signifies changed but does not necessarily inform on the topic

of why this has happened and whether the change was negative or positive for the continuous inhabitants of the settlement. Therefore, Phlius is not a singular case in this phenomenon, however, it is certainly interesting to consider in what way the names were changed and why were they changed in the first place. In the case of Phlius none of the changes suggest anything violent or negative for the settlement and even the resettling from Arantine Hill to the hill of the present site did not persuade the inhabitants, according to the ancient sources, to rename their city. However, the consistency of usage of the name of Araethyrea provides some food for thought

## 3.2 Phlius as a Political Force

Phlius, while an important regional centre for the area and an important point on the roads between Argos and Corinth, seemed to be rather on the sidelines in the question of panhellenic political landscape. While their position made the polis a point to consider, the polis itself did not bring too much of an attention to itself in periods leading to the Peloponnesian War.

The polis of Phlius was part of the Peloponnesian League, with Sparta as its hegemon. In the earlies years of the League, it was argued that Spartan remained relatively respectful towards the members and their respective legislations, however, that had slowly changed in the later years of conflict.

It was argued that Phlius's lack of presence in the evidence prior to the fourth century BCE might have been due to the 'steady and colourless foreign policy' that protected the polis and its hinterlands.[145] There is very little evidence of Phlius engagement with others than

[145] Legon, R. P., 'Phliasian Politics and Policy in the Early Fourth Century B.C.', in Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte, Bd. 16, H. 3, (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1967), p. 325.

Lacedaemonians and their unwavering support might have provided some of buffering to the polis in later years.

While Phlius must have had contact with its neighbours through trade and connections these are very rarely mentioned. Archaeological evidence shows the architectural and artistic influences of both Corinth and Argos. While Corinth seems to be very little preoccupied by its mountainous neigbour, Argos is reported to attempt conquer and overtake Phlius throughout the history, before, during, and after the Peloponnesian War. A. R. Burn defines the history of Phlius in simple terms of 'one long struggle for freedom from Argos'[146] however, it could be argued that Argos was trying to actively control the trading routes of the north of Argolid and the Kelossa Pass evidence does not suggest that Argos was able to reach Phlius proper.

### 3.2.1 Political landscape within the polis

Considering the political structure of Phlius, Legon argues that the internal affairs of the polis could be derived from the actions of the city during the conflict of fifth century BCE. There is a general conclusion that while Peloponnesian League involved several democratic regimes, namely in Elis, Mantinea, and Megara, majority of the other members were oligarchic states.[147] This assumption is also supported by the idea that during the Peloponnesian War, Phlius accepts refugees from Argos despite the two political powers being at odds, if not in open conflict at the time in 417 BCE. While there is a good argument to support the idea that Phlius sought an advantage in the welcoming of a dissident group from their enemy and might thus obtained information and support of the other, the welcome of

[146] Legon, R. P., 'Phliasian Politics and Policy in the Early Fourth Century B.C.', p. 325.
[147] *Ibid.*

refugees from Argos, especially oligarchic part, it would not be too farfetched to assume existence of personal and familial ties from one oligarchic group to another.[148]

Therefore, while it is impossible to decide whether Phlius was a democracy or oligarchic regime throughout its existence, it is clear that by the end of fifth century BCE the government was significantly more oligarchic leaning. Even if not in complete control, oligarchic fraction had enough power to sway the polis towards the acceptance of the refugees from the rival state.

However, this state was not a completely without its problems. In later periods, Phlius expels a group of people from its citizen body, and the foreign policy takes a turn. It is not a major turn in compare to the other polis, however, there is a change and not to the joy of Spartans. After 319 BCE Phlius orders expulsion of a group of people. This group is characterized by their association with the oligarchs in surrounding areas and oligarchs of Sparta, some with a close relationship tie to Spartan kings themselves. Therefore, the expulsion of oligarchs could suggest that while they held power in previous decades, Phlius democratic faction was able to destabilize and eventually dispute their power and by the end of this civic strife, the oligarchs of Phlius found themselves without a polis.[149]

It could be argued that Phlius might had been a regime of democracy with a strong and persuasive oligarchic faction, or that Phlius, while maintaining very reliable and bland foreign policy was not as united within the walls of the city, contrary to the expectations of the outsiders. However, it is impossible to say who was firmly in power prior to the beginning of the fourth century BCE. One way or another, Phliasian assembly was a significant player in the state in the 380s BCE.

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[148] Legon, R. P., 'Phliasian Politics and Policy in the Early Fourth Century B.C.', p. 326.
[149] Legon, R. P., 'Phliasian Politics and Policy in the Early Fourth Century B.C.', p. 326.

### 3.2.2 Phliasian assembly

Despite the very active role of the oligarchs during the Peloponnesian War, Xenophon reports a large assembly being visible from the fields under the city:

> *'There were a number of Spartans who complained that for the sake of a few individuals they were making themselves hated by a city of more than 5000 men. Indeed, the Phliasians, just in order to stress this fact, were in the habit of holding their assemblies in a place where the would be visible to the army outside*.'[150]

When Spartan king Agesilaus comes to the city and lays a siege on the behalf of the disenfranchised oligarchs expelled from the city, Phliasians hold their assembly in front of the Spartan army. Xenophon even describes it as a 'habit.' Although the assembly could be composed only by the members of the oligarchic group that remained in the city, it would be unusual if under such a circumstances, with a siege outside of their gates, it would be the minority of men in the city putting out a display such as this. Legon notes that 'since the assembly itself might have been oligarchic in composition, operating with less than universal suffrage. Yet, what we know of the size of this assembly in relation to the territorial extent and military capacity of the state makes it inconceivable that any significant proportion of the free populace was excluded.'[151]

Five thousand men mentioned in the assembly, and considering the access to the assembly, even with the general suffrage of the citizens, was also restricted to the men of certain age and status, for a settlement like Phlius, five thousand men suggests the city governance was more inclusive than we would expect in an oligarchic regime.

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[150] Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 5.3.16.
[151] Legon, R. P., 'Phliasian Politics and Policy in the Early Fourth Century B.C.', p. 326.

Thus, Xenophon account of the assembly's existence suggests that the expulsion of the oligarchs led to the democratic government over a period of time in the fourth century BCE. The subsequent accounts do not mention the assembly again, however, with the return of the exiles in later period and with Sparta increasing its influence and push within the League for their own political persuasion, Phliasian assembly as described in Xenophon might had been short lived and once again replaced by an oligarchic regime in subsequent years.

### 3.2.3 Phlius and Sparta within its territory

Phlius saw a quite few Spartan armies march through their plain. When Iphicrates of Corinth invaded the territory of Phlius and killed a large portion of the Phliasian army, Phliasian requested presence of the Spartan soldiers within their own walls.[152] Spartan garrison remained station at the city until the time when 'they thought that the Phliasian had recovered their confidence' and gave their city and laws 'just as they had been when they took the place over.'[153] Xenophon even reminds his readers that at the time Spartans not once mentioned the exiles now covered under their protection. The episode of the Spartan army station in the city proper and even 'granting' Phliasians their own customs back shows the gravity of the situation and the changes that took place in Sparta proper in a short time period. In Phliasian perspective Corinth seems to be a larger threat than Sparta at the time. On the other hand, we must consider the author himself, Xenophon could be considered as an author who sought to create a favourable image of Spartans as his benefactors and his narration of Peloponnesian war seems almost 'moralistic at times.'[154] Therefore, insistence that the Spartan kindly took the city under their wings and respected the autonomy of the polis and

[152] Xenophone, *Hellenica,* 4.4.15
[153] Xenophon, *Hellenica,* 4.4.15
[154] Warner, R., *A History of My Times*, (Penguin Books, 1986), p. 45.

their laws established Spartans as the providers of lawful state and fair foreign policy among their allies.

That left Phlius, who in previous contexts proved to be a stable and willing ally in the periods, whether within its oligarchic or democratic regime, open to interpretation. Was the presence of the Spartan garrison as welcomed in the city as Xenophon would like his readers to believe? Unfortunately, no other sources mention the situation. However, it is safe to say that Sparta had a military presence in Phlius throughout the times, as a base for an assembly of a military force or as a base outside their own territory proper.

Another reassurance of Xenophon, that Spartans not once mentioned the restoration of the Phliasian exiles also offers space for interpretations. While Spartans held a prominent position in the city and must had ruled it for some time their influence eventually came to an end. Xenophon's description claims that the change came with the growing 'confidence' of the city of Phlius and that once it was stable enough the soldiers returned to their homeland. Again, in a moralistic and uncritical reading of Xenophon, the Spartans provided important help and support to a smaller and less powerful ally in their hour of need and did not mention once the question of exiles that was a topic of conversation for the in previous dealings. Phlius on the other hand, with, most likely, democratic regime in power at the time stands alone and weak by the Corinthian raids in the territory. Is therefore, the presence of Spartans based on the Phliasian wish or based on the mistrust of the Spartan government of the Phliasians at the time. The lack of discourse reported in the case of the exiles can be also pinned onto moralistic approach of the author, but at the same time it could be a sign of other powers and interests in play. While the democratic government might not had been the most forthcoming to the oligarchic Spartan constitution, it had fulfilled its obligations as a military ally and thus the preference for the exiles might not had been as pressing as it might seem.

## Conclusion

The study of Phlius illustrates how even a relatively small and poorly documented community can contribute to our understanding of the Greek polis. Although it never reached the prominence of major centres such as Athens, Sparta, or Corinth, the available archaeological, geographical, and textual evidence demonstrates that Phlius functioned within the same cultural and political framework that defined the Greek world. The examination of smaller poleis, such as Phlius, allow us to broaden our knowledge beyond the leading powers and provide a more complex image of Greek communities in the period.

However, even when designating the small polis as a research question, we must consider its definition and historiography surrounding it. As argued above, the image of a polis as an entity composed of the citizen body and their active participation in the political life of the community seems to be only one-sided. No human settlement lives in a vacuum. The physical presence of the polis must be considered as well.

In the case of Phlius, the Phliasian plain, with its fertile soil and reliable river, and the surrounding ranges, provided the settlements in its territory with favourable soil and access to a major road connecting Corinth and Argos. The favourable position made the city of Phlius a key point in the Peloponnesian War, as its strategic position was felt on both Corinthian and Spartan sides.

The Peloponnesian War, although devastating, provided the opportunity for authors, namely Xenophon, to investigate the Phliasians. Through Xenophon's account, we are able to glimpse the polis of the 4$^{th}$ century and the presence of tensions among its inhabitants.

Phlius, while not a major power on the island, proved to be an actor worth notice. The internal strife between the democratic and oligarchic parties, and the eventual involvement of the Spartan king and army, demonstrate that the polis of Phlius was an active and at least partially autonomous actor on the wider political stage of Greece at the time.

And while the political and military involvement continues to intrigue the readers, it is also the descriptions we are able to extract from these passages. The passages that describe the city in great details. And demonstrate that Phlius was not only a group of people feuding over the city and power over it but also a physical presence of the city.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assess the possible motivations and interests of the inhabitants of Phlius through their shared government in times of peace and turmoil, but also through their physical presence and manifestation within the walls of their city. The city that, as discussed above, survived and rebuilt through several stages of occupation and a city that was able to monumentalize its surroundings. Thus, proving that the polis of citizens and the polis of the city cannot be divorced from each other.

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## Appendix

Figure 1a, View from the acropolis of Phlius towards east, author: EA Kubaska

Figure 1b, View from the acropolis of Phlius to the south, towards the modern town of Nemea. Source: EA Kubaska

Figure 1c, View from the acropolis of Phlius towards the north of the plain. Author: EA Kubaska

Figure 2a, Chapel on the western slope of the hill, Chapel of Panagia Rachiotissa. Auhto: EA Kubaska

Figure 2b, The chapel of Panagia Rachiotissa on the western slope, author: EA. Kubaska

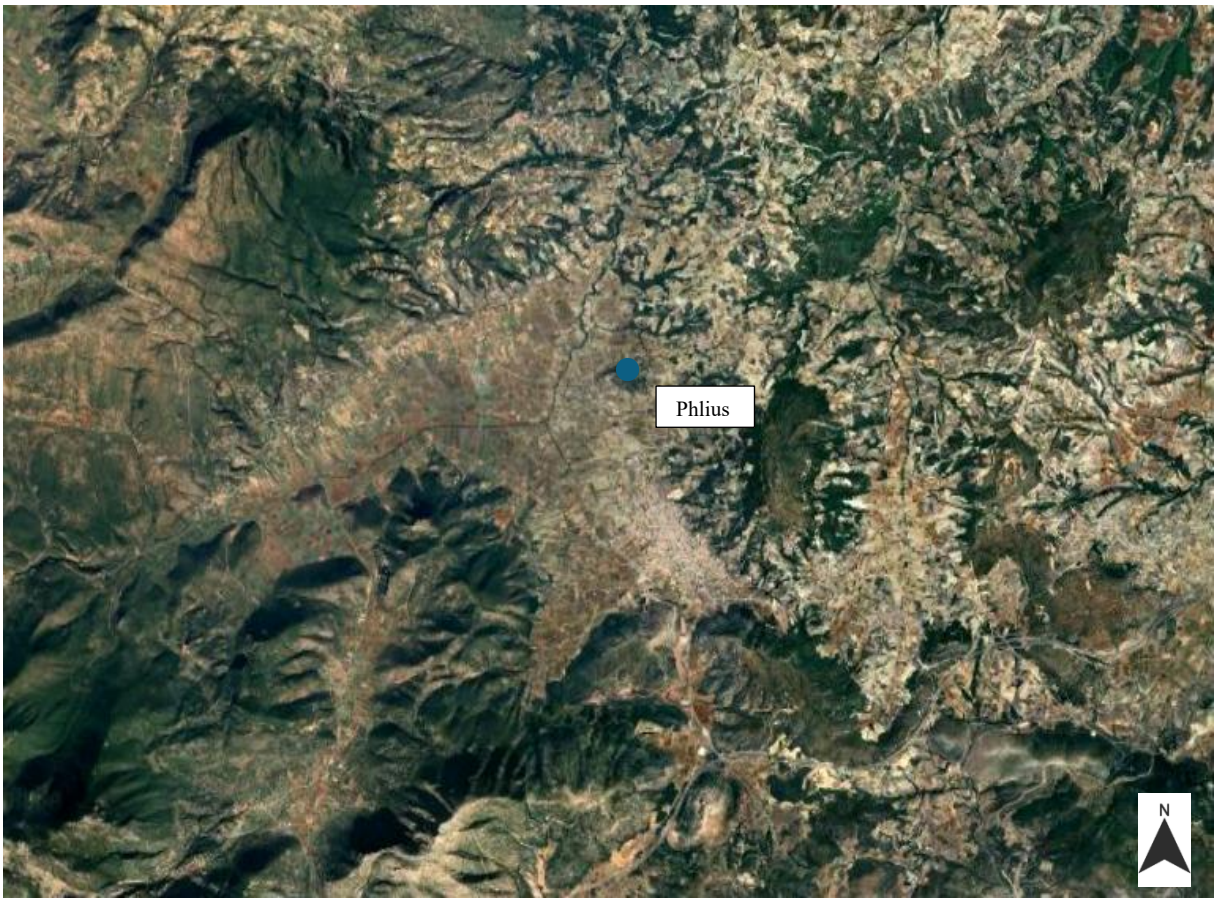


Figure 3, The map of Phliasian Plain and its surrounding ranges. Map adapted by E.A. Kubaska, from the *Google Maps* (Google).

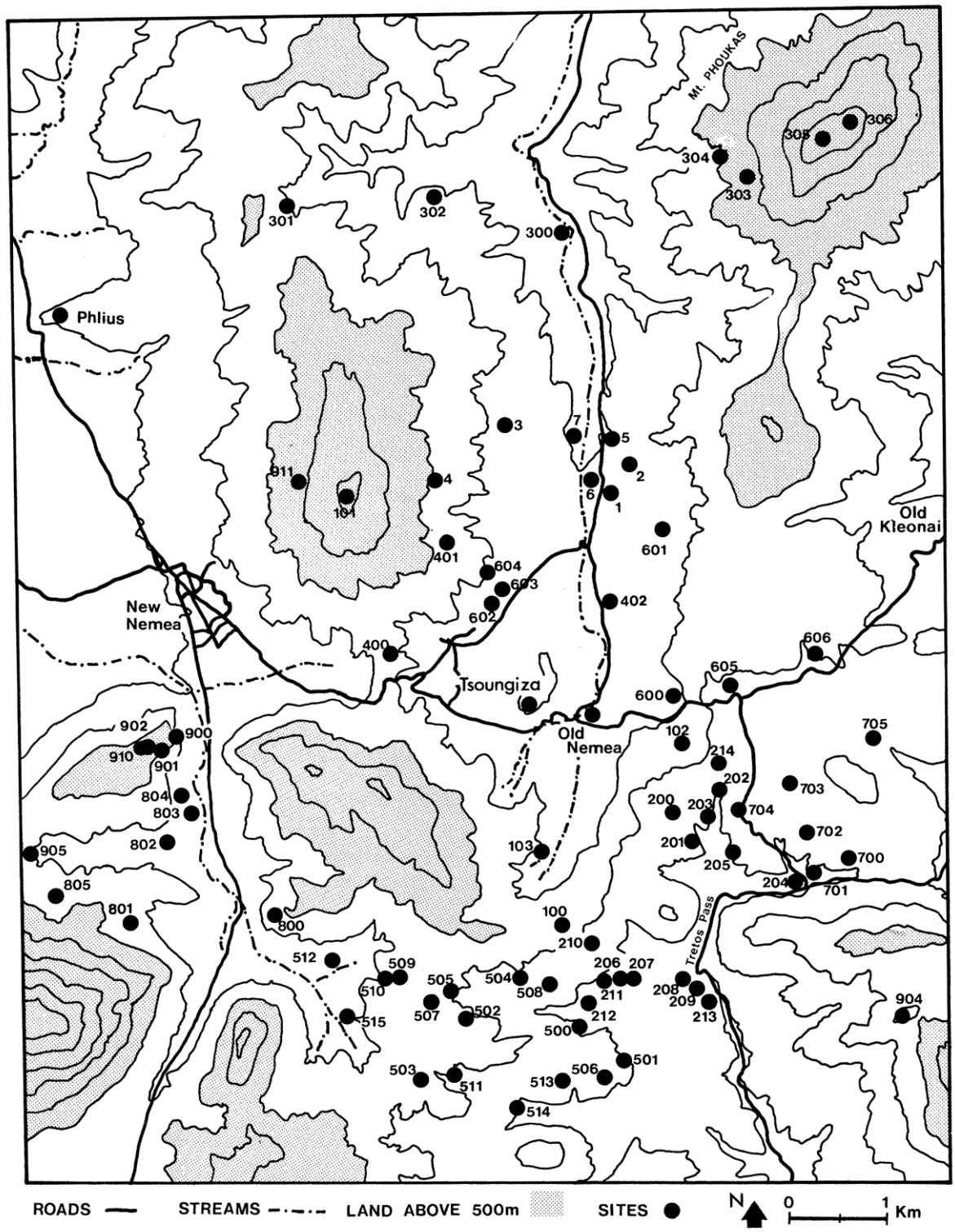


Figure 4a, Distribution of sites recorded in the course of the Nemean Valley Archaeological Survey. Adapted from Alcock, S.E., 'Urban Survey and the Polis of Phlius', in *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens,* Vol. 60, No. 4, (The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1991), p. 426.

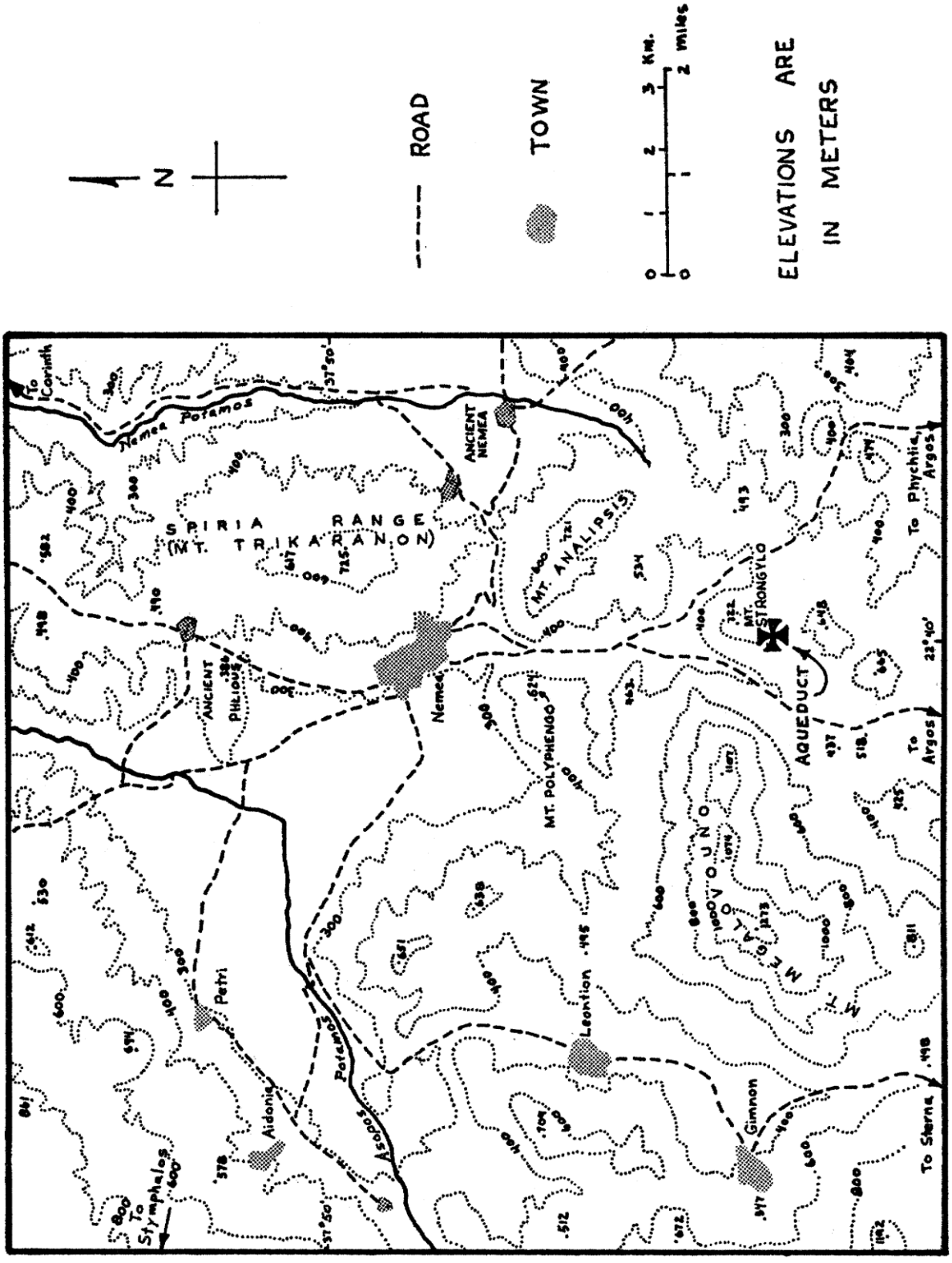


Figure 4b, The area of Phliasian plain, with the Hadrian aqueduct. Adapted from Biers, W., R., 'Water from Stymphalos?', in *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens,* Vol. 47, No. 2, (The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1978), p. 172.

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Figure 5a, Biers, W., R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits', in *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens,* Vol. 38, No. 4, (The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1969), p. 456.

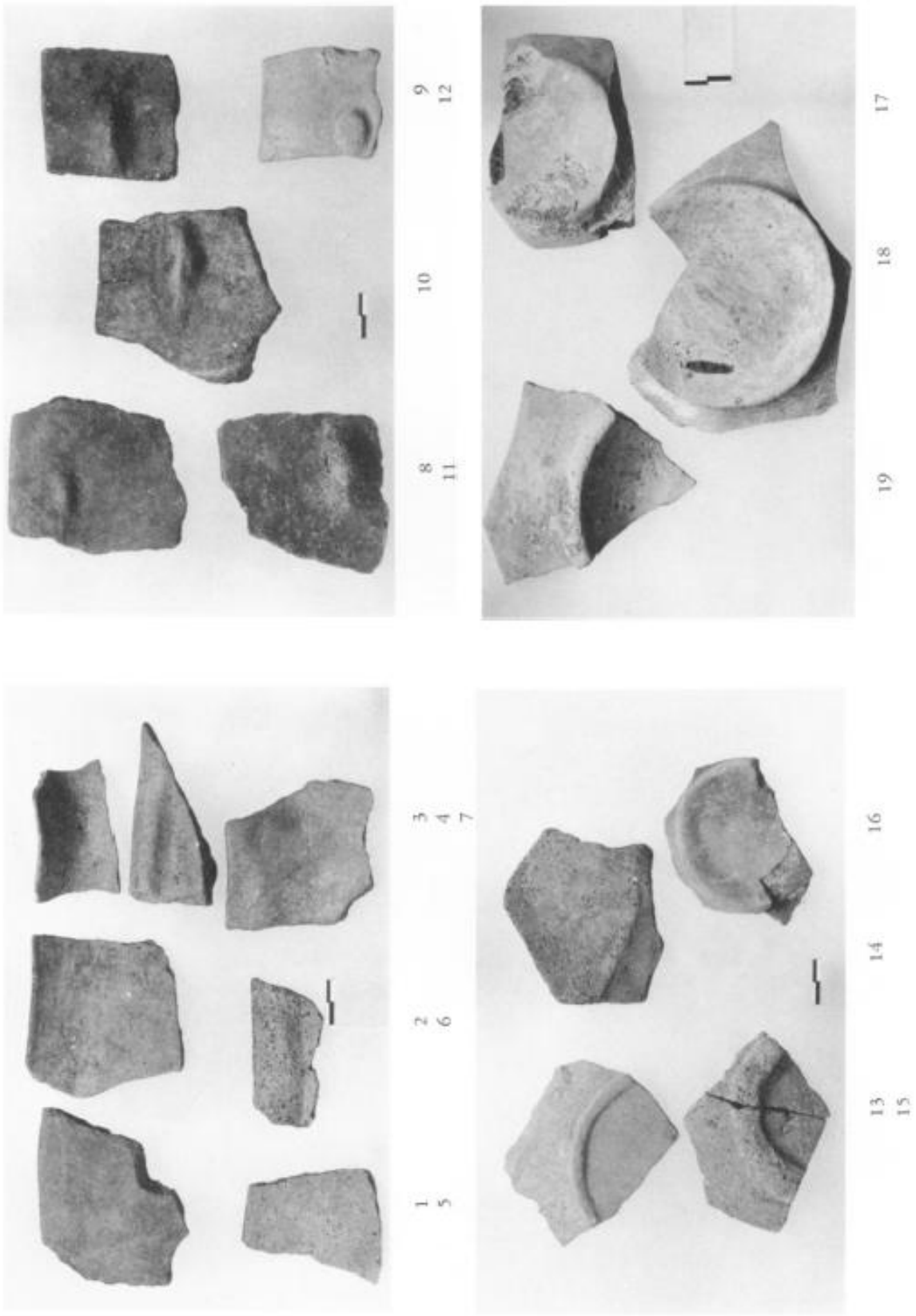


Figure 5b, Biers, W., R., ‘Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits’, Plate 113.

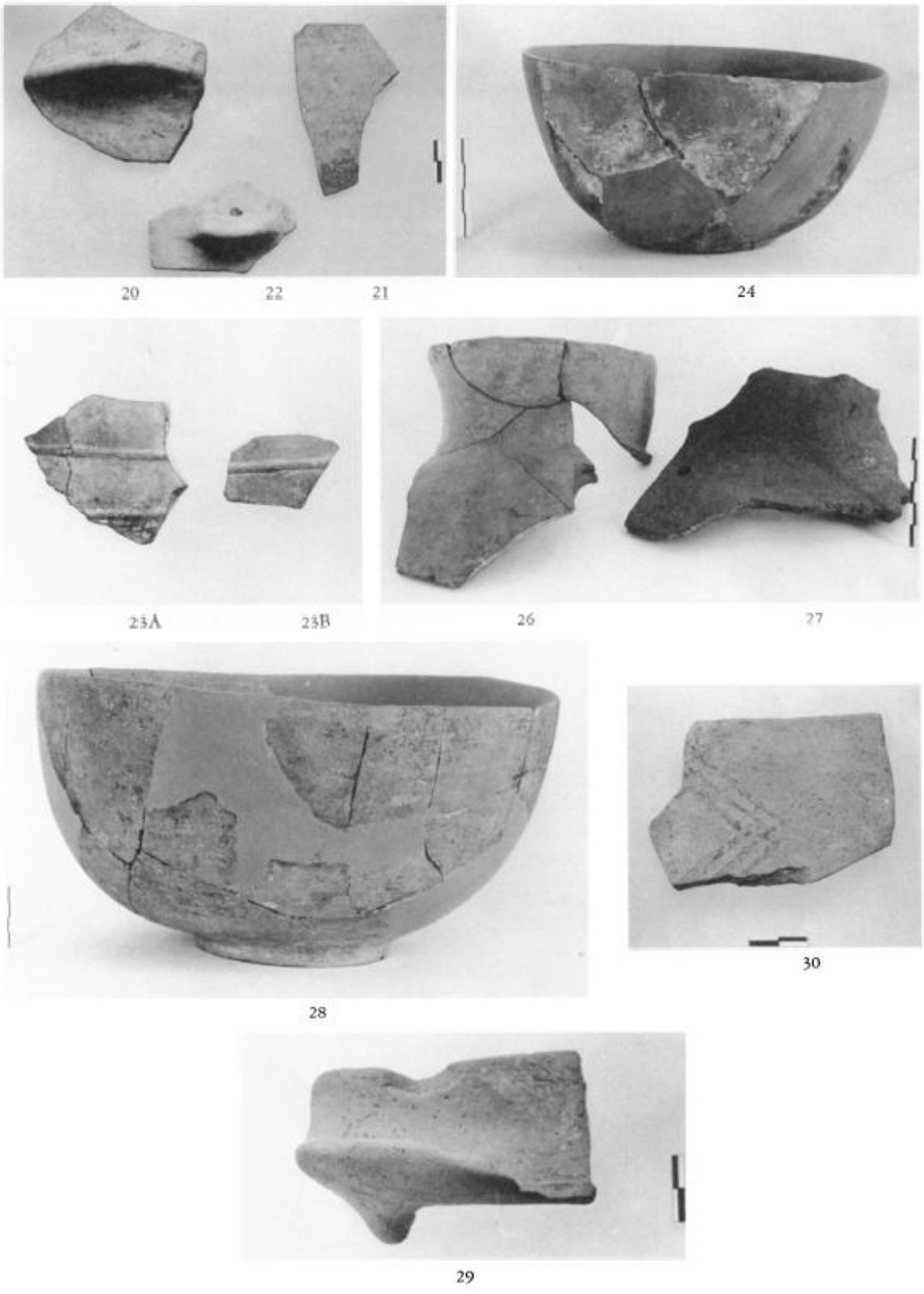


Figure 5c, Biers, W., R., ‘Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits’, Plate 114.

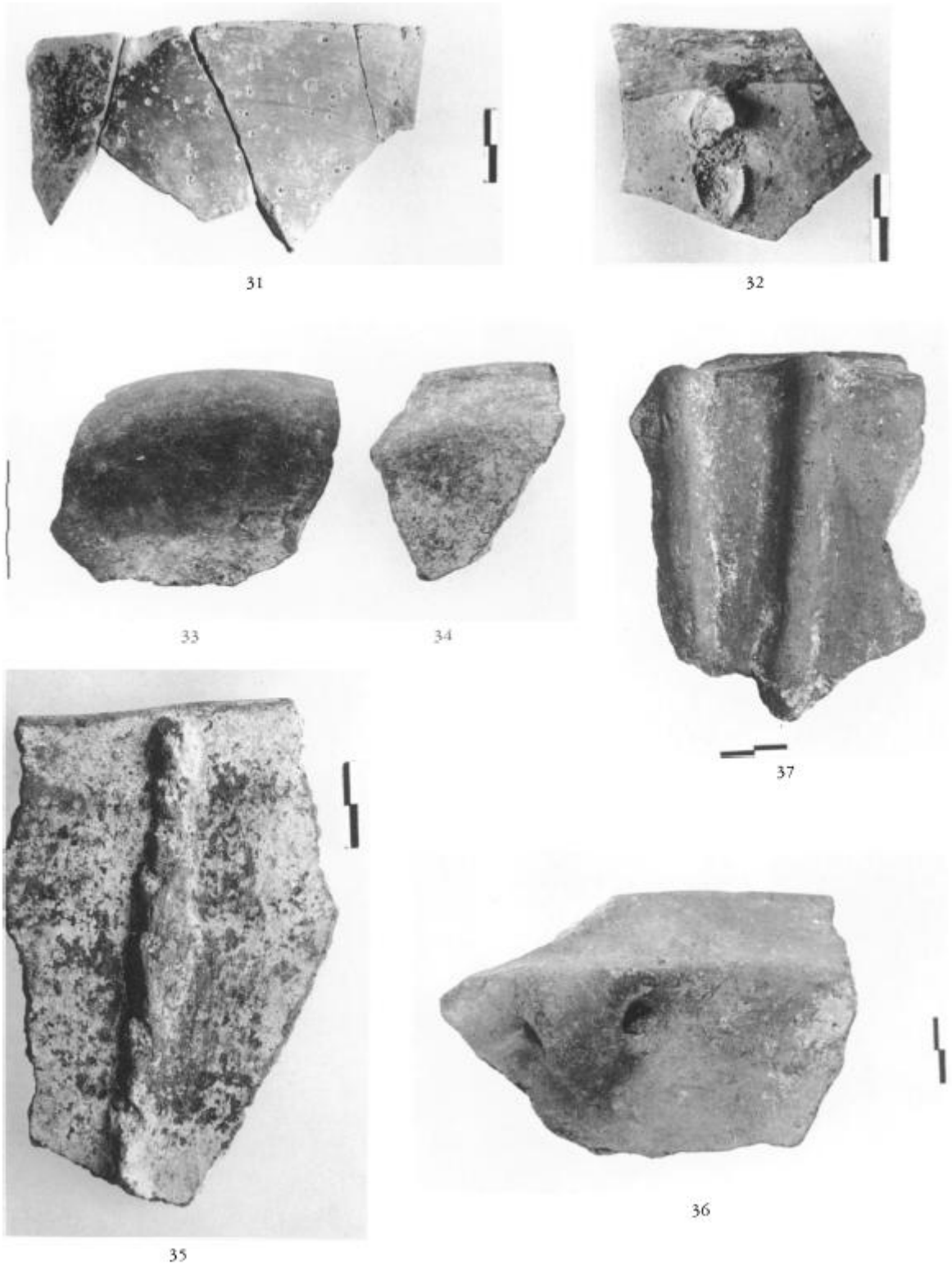


Figure 5d, Biers, W., R., ‘Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits’, Plate 115.


Figure 5e, Biers, W., R., ‘Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits’, Plate 116.

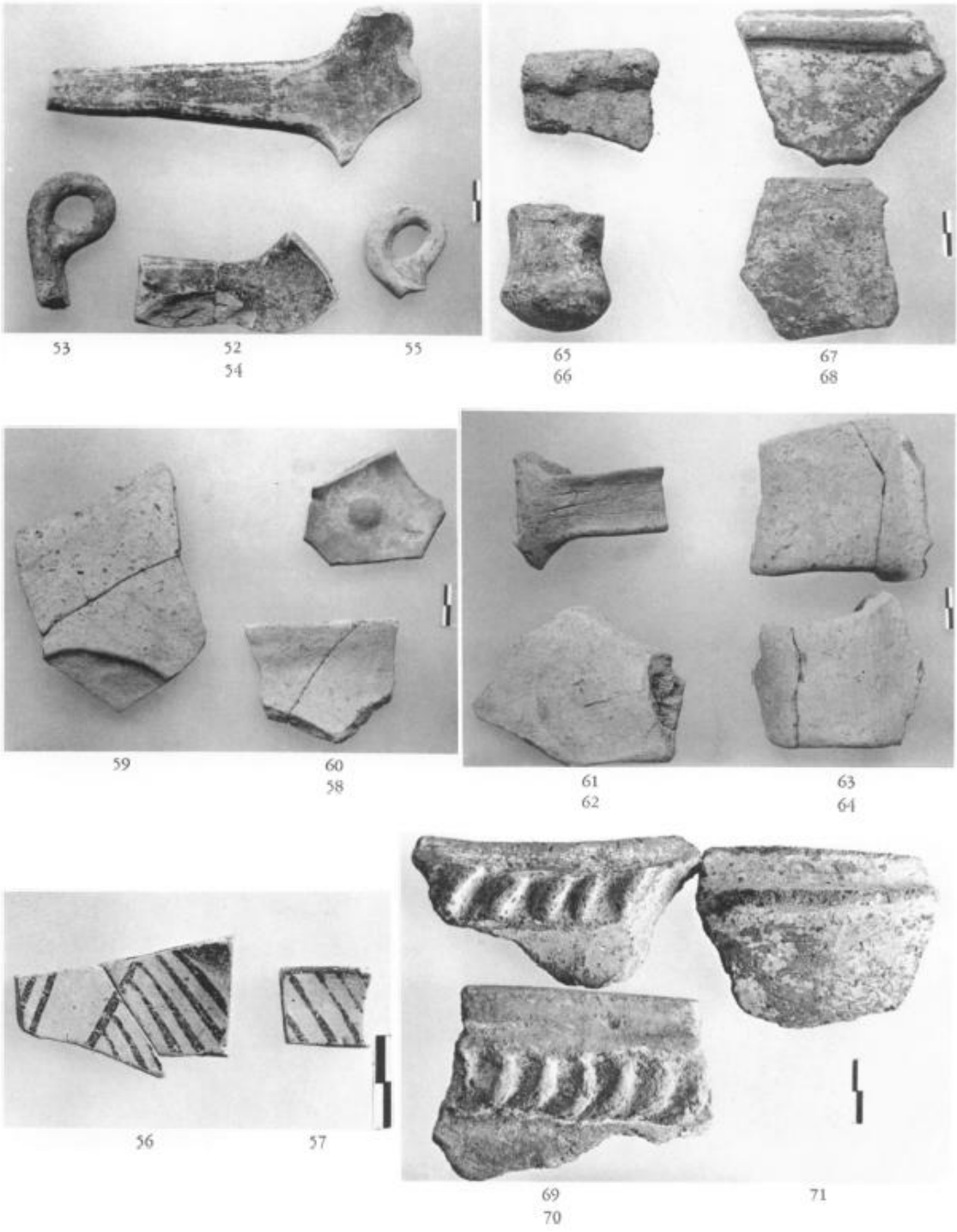


Figure 5f, Biers, W., R., ‘Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits’, Plate 117.

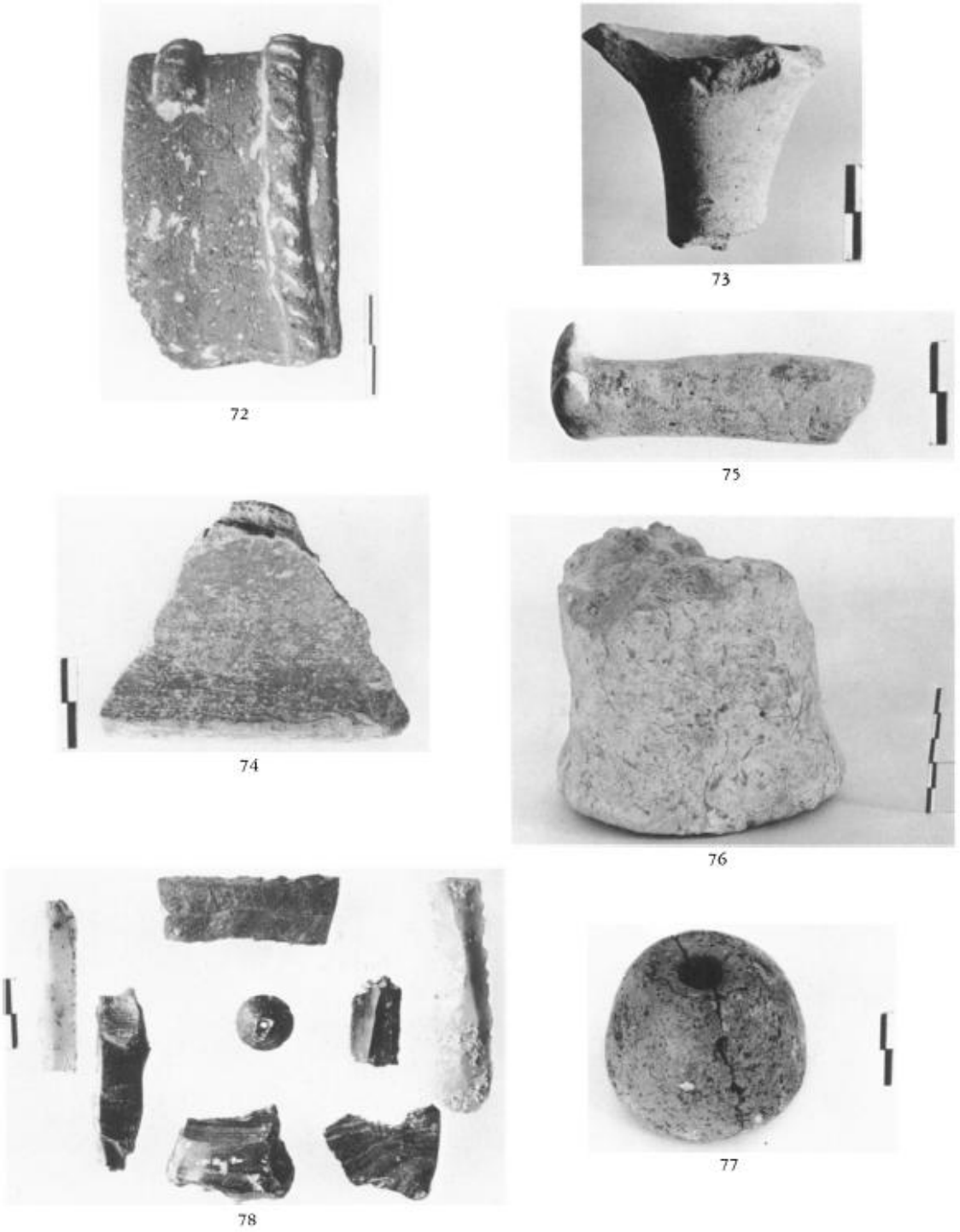


Figure 5g, Biers, W., R., ‘Excavations at Phlius, 1924: The Prehistoric Deposits’, Plate 118.

Figure 6, North retaining wall at the acropolis, possibly part of the fortifications, author: EA Kubaska

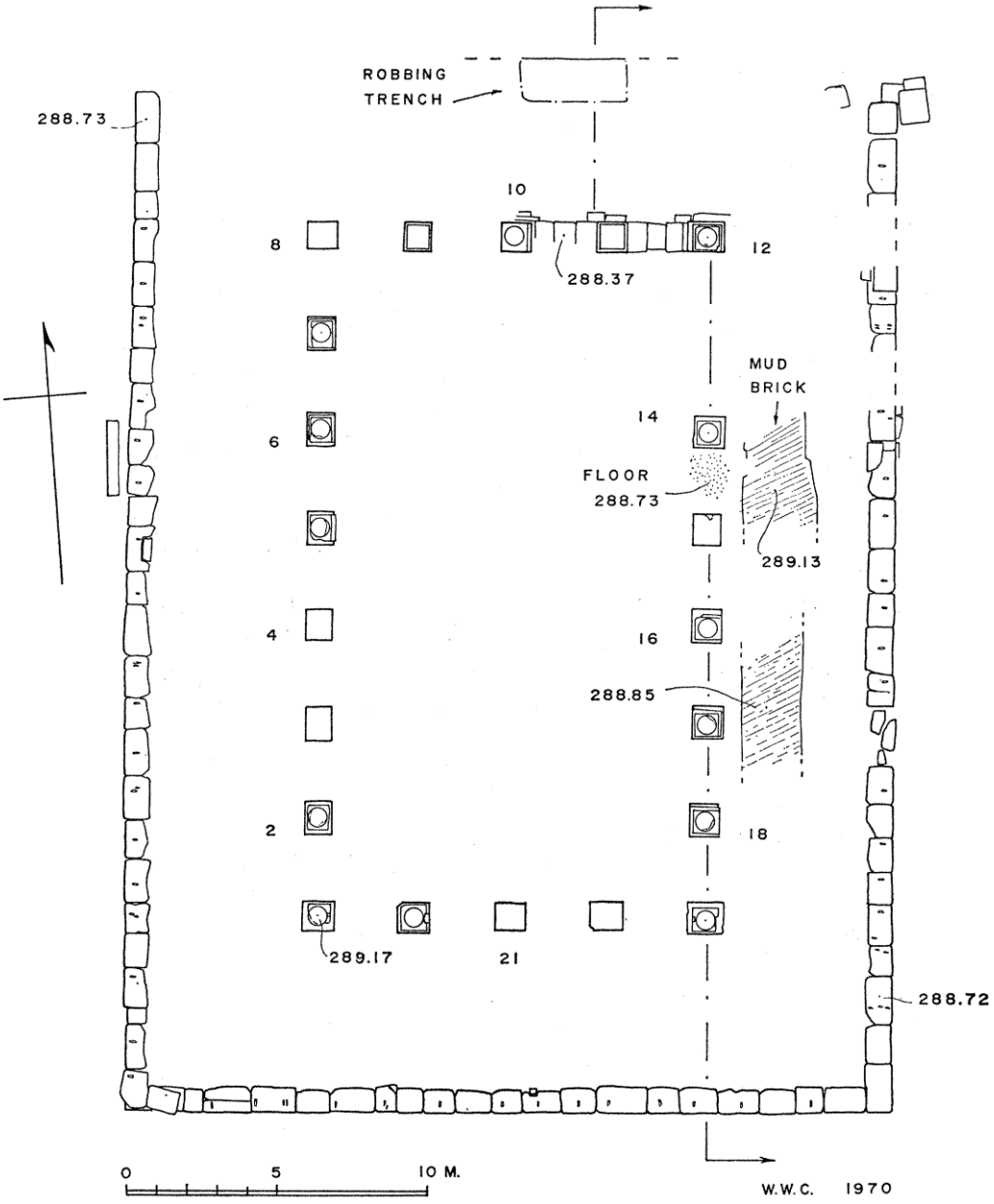


Figure 7, Plan of *Palati,* source: Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 426.

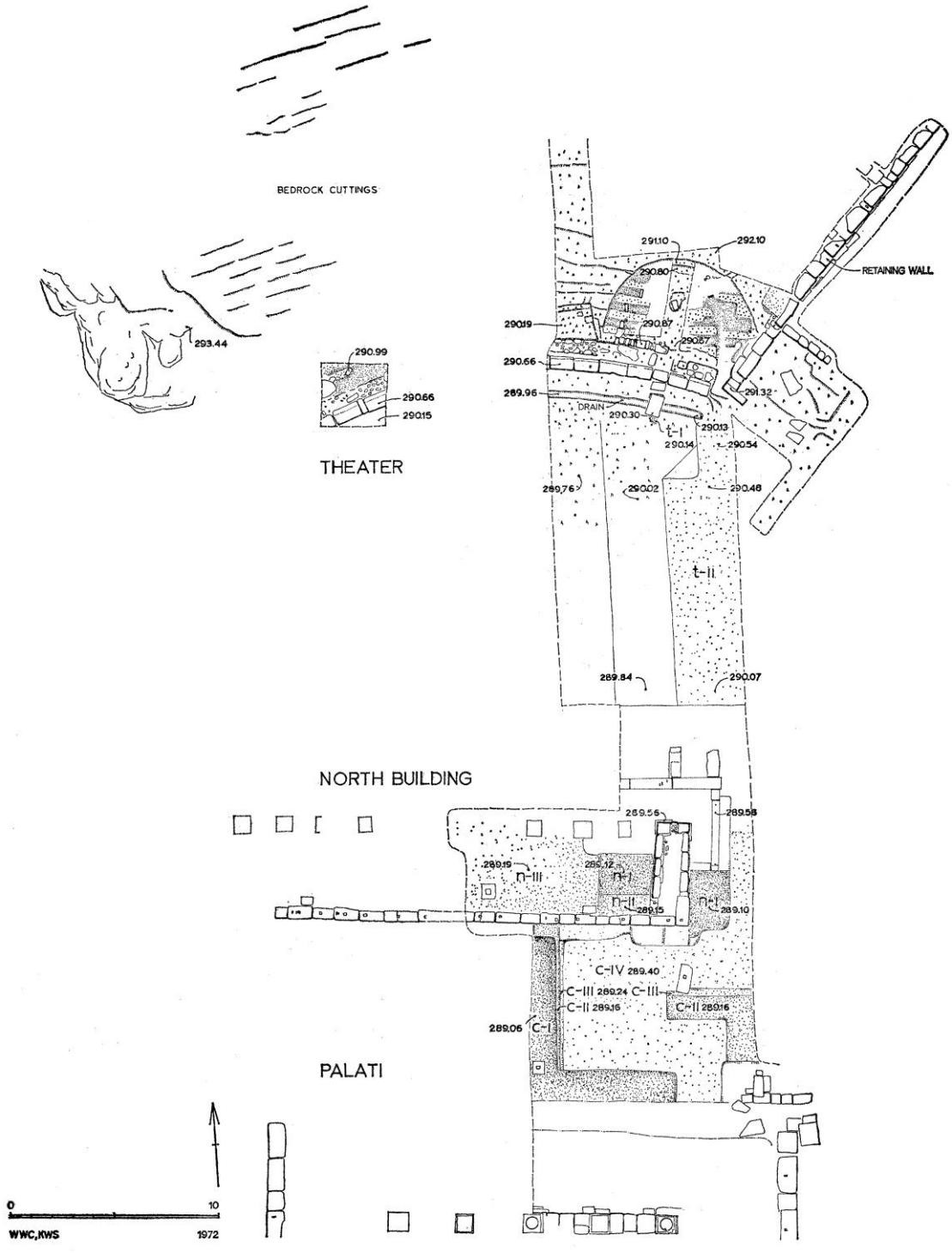


Figure 8, Area of *Palati* with the theatre and North Building, source: Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1972', p. 112.

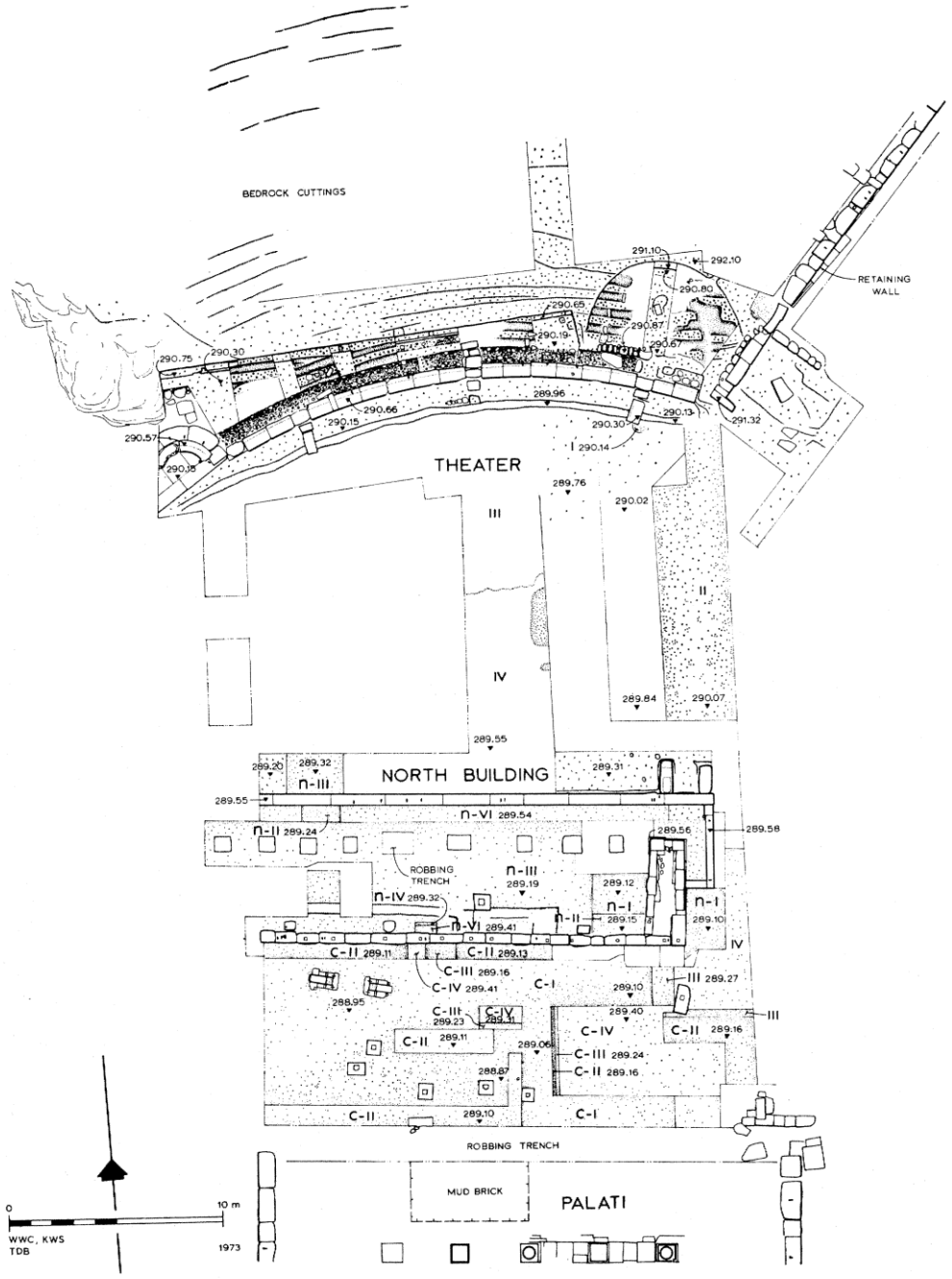


Figure 9, Plan of areas surrounding *Palati,* source: Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1973', p. 52.

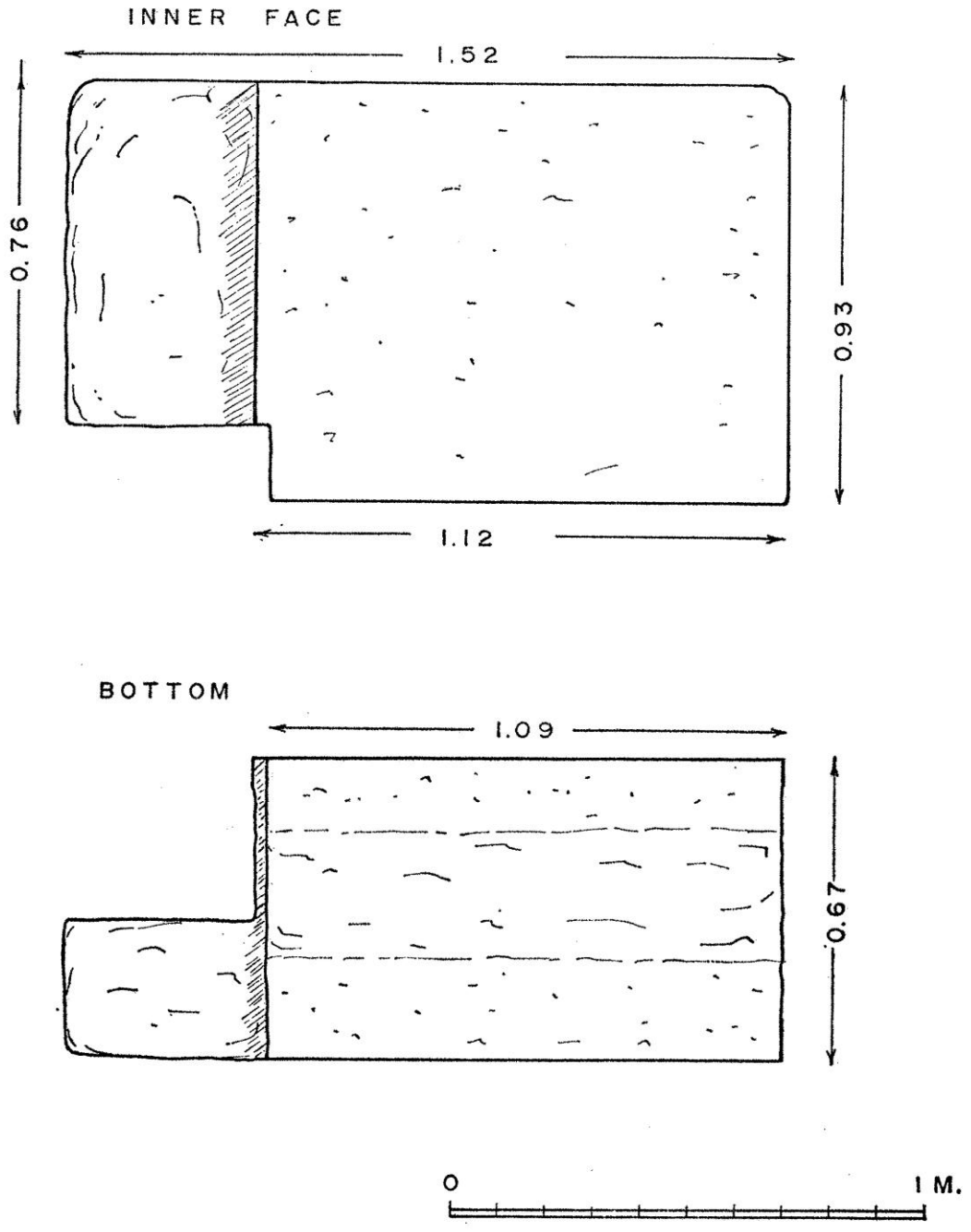


Figure 10, Orthostate block in the area of *Palati*, , source: Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 428.

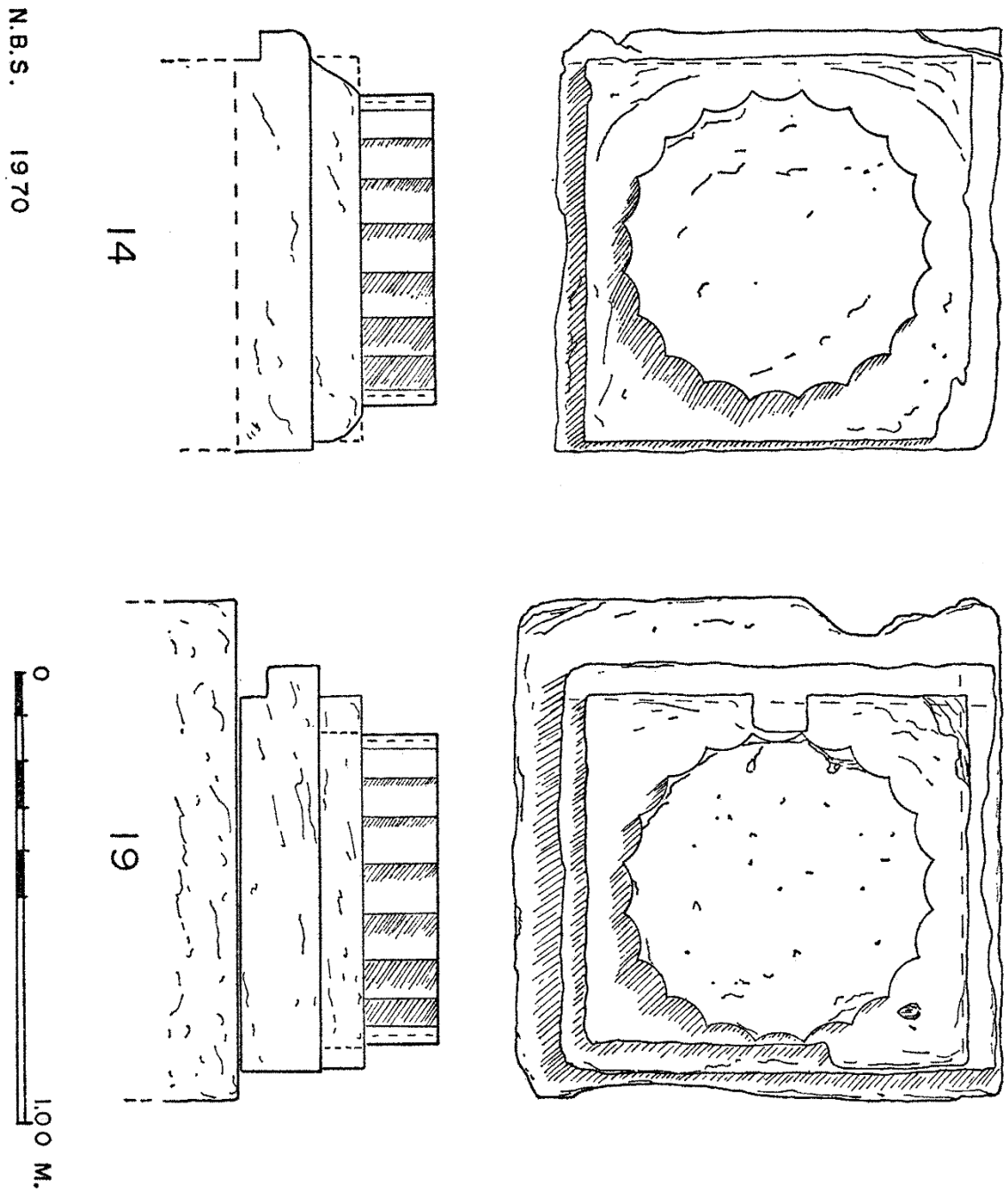


Figure 11, *Palati* bases 14 and 19 of columns, source: Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1970', p. 429.

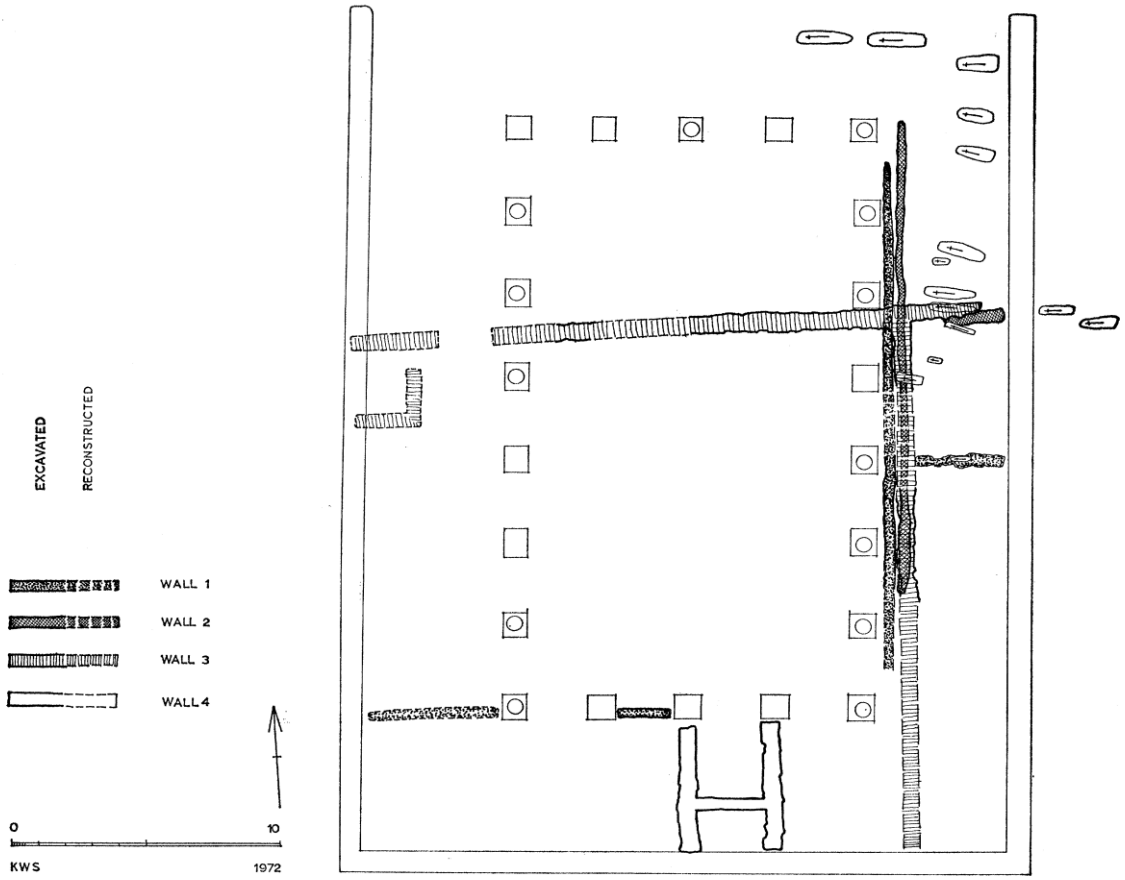


Figure 12, *Palati* plan of walls, source: Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1972', p. 105.

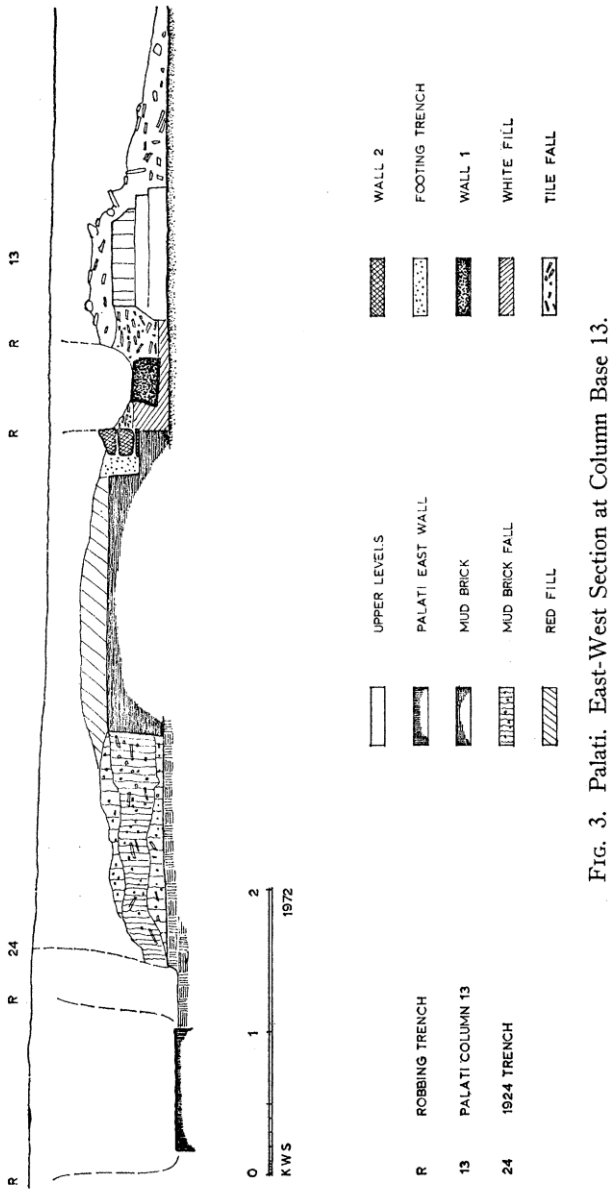


FIG. 3. Palati. East-West Section at Column Base 13.

Figure 13, *Palati:* East-West Section at Column Base 13, cross section, source: Biers, W.R., 'Excavations at Phlius, 1972', p. 106.