



## Interim report on excavations at Nokalakevi-Archaeopolis in 2011



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## **Abstract**

*The Anglo-Georgian Expedition to Nokalakevi (AGEN) carried out excavations in the Samegrelo region of western Georgia for the eleventh consecutive season at the site of Nokalakevi (Archaeopolis). The excavation took place between the 27th July 2011 and the 19th August 2011 and was carried out by a team of British and Georgian professionals with the assistance of student volunteers from Britain and Georgia.*

*During this season, work continued in Trench A, located next to the eastern fortification wall, in which further limestone foundations were revealed, apparently dating from the Early Antique (6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) period.*

*This season also saw the continuation of excavation in the whole of Trench B located some 60m to the west of Trench A. A sondage was continued in the southern part of the trench to expose and record further archaeological remains with a view to completing and backfilling this area. Two early Byzantine, Christian inhumations were revealed and recorded during these excavations.*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This document is an interim report of the results of the excavation undertaken at Nokalakevi in the 2011 season. A comprehensive report covering all the work undertaken since 2001 is in preparation and will be published in the near future.
- 1.1.2 The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with Georgian state legislation regarding excavation within ancient monuments and the relevant permissions were sought from and granted by the Georgian Ministry of Culture.
- 1.1.3 All aspects of the fieldwork complied with the Standards and Guidance, and Codes of Conduct of the UK 'Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA 2001).

### 1.2 Site Background and Location

- 1.2.1 Nokalakevi (which translates roughly as 'ruins where once a town was') is located in the west of Georgia in the province of Samegrelo, 15.5km northeast of Senaki (Figure 1). It sits in a loop of the River Tekhuri at the edge of the Colchian plain with hills on its northern and western perimeters. The site consists of an upper citadel atop a high hill and a lower town on the river terrace below, linked by strongly fortified walls.

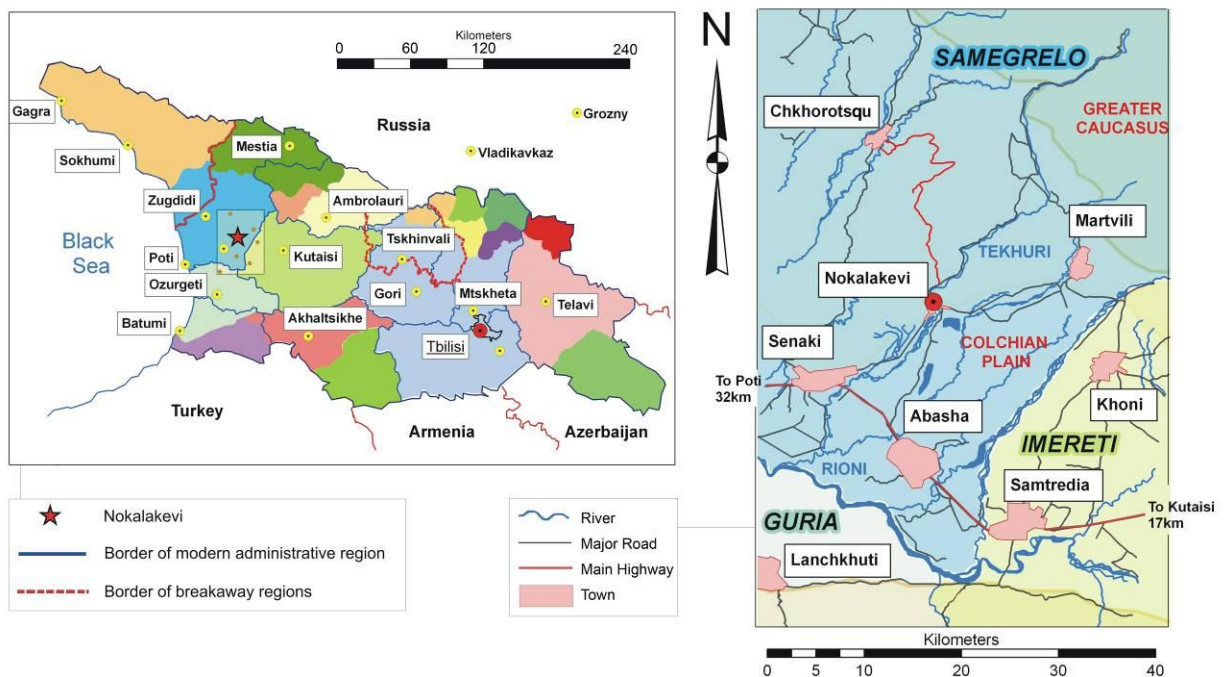


Figure 1: The location of Nokalakevi (Everill et al 2010)

- 1.2.2 Since the turn of the millennium, AGEN has focused on two areas within the walls, Trenches A and B. Trench A lies adjacent to the eastern fortification wall of the lower town, just north of the east gate. Work has been ongoing in this trench since 2001 and it was expanded to its current size (10m east-west by

13m north-south) in 2004. Since successfully bringing all parts of Trench A back into phase in 2006 a series of multi-phased structural foundations and burials were uncovered within a rich Hellenistic layer.

- 1.2.3 Trench B, located some 60m to the west of Trench A, was opened in 2002 and measures 7.5m east-west by 20m north-south. Excavation in Trench B was suspended during the 2006 to 2008 field seasons in order to concentrate resources on Trench A, but in 2009 it was re-opened with a view to reaching earlier cultural layers.

### **1.3 2011 Field Season**

- 1.3.1 The staff and volunteers arrived in Nokalakevi on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2011. Work began on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July with the reopening of both Trench A and B for the season's excavation. Protective layers of plastic and backfill from the end of the 2010 season were removed from the base of the trench. Excavation took place between Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July and Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2011.
- 1.3.2 The expedition staff, led by Professor David Lomitashvili (Head of the Expedition) and Ian Colvin, consisted of ten specialists in total. The Georgian team was composed of Dr Besik Lortkipanidze (Historian), Dr Nino Kebuladze (Finds Conservator), Nikoloz Murghulia and Ano Tvaradze (Site Supervisors) and Shorena Khetsuriani (Site Assistant). The British team consisted of Dr Paul Everill and Ben Neil (Co-Directors of AGEN), Kirsty Bone and Laura James (Site Supervisors) and Gemma Ward (Project Assistant).
- 1.3.3 Our Georgian students/ volunteers were: Levan Jajvani, Givi Kemoklidze, Sandro Karcivadze, Tamar Niniashvili, Tako Jafaridze, Tamta Klibadze, Ketii Tetvadze, Giorgi Lomitashvili, Tiko Antidze, Tengo Adamia and Nuka Adamia.
- 1.3.4 Our international students/ volunteers were: Poppy Brooks, Jennifer Clifton, Kate Cottrell, Emily Currah, Joshua Davies, Thomas Davies, Robyn Dijksterhuis, Pui Yin Liu, Jack Morrissey, Emily-May Northover, Edmund Palka, William Pender, Rebecca Simmons (all from Bradford University) and Australian volunteer Eddy Angeloff.
- 1.3.5 Although the entire field team were involved in the initial opening of both Trench A and Trench B at the beginning of the season, it was necessary to distribute the field staff and volunteers between the two trenches once they were both fully operational. Trench A supervision was undertaken by Nikoloz Murghulia and Kirsty Bone with a team of between 7 and 11 student volunteers, while Trench B was supervised by Laura James and Ano Tvaradze with between 7 and 11 students. Gemma Ward acted as Project Assistant working on both trenches during the course of this year's expedition.

### **1.4 2011 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.4.1 The broad aims and objectives for the 2011 field season, based on previous work within each trench, were outlined in last year's report (Everill et al

2011a). For Trench A these were as follows:

- To fully remove the remainder of colluvial layer **268**, and to investigate the topography of underlying deposits.
- To investigate the stratigraphic relationship between cobbled surface **203** and underlying structural elements.
- To continue to identify new structures, their form and their inter-relationship, and to retrieve dating evidence from associated cultural material.
- To produce a phase plan for the whole trench showing all related structures and deposits once exposed.
- To update section drawings of all sides of the trench.

1.4.2 The broad aims and objectives for the 2011 field season for Trench B were outlined as follows

- Excavate record and remove the extant burial **432**.
- To continue the sondage through the cemetery layers whilst maintaining the baulks supporting the walls. This to be done with a view to reaching natural and recording early cultural layers and enabling the unstable cemetery area of Trench B to be backfilled.
- Produce or update representative section drawings to show the sequence of colluvial and occupational deposits to the north of the trench.
- Excavate layers **425**, **422** and **429** revealed this year, while continuing to preserve the Hellenistic building at the far north of the trench.

1.4.3 General Aims and Objectives for 2011:

- To add further information to the stratigraphic matrices for both trenches.
- As this was the 11<sup>th</sup> season of excavations carried out by the Anglo-Georgian Expedition to Nokalakevi, plans to undertake a synthesis publication of the first ten years of the Expedition's work at the site are underway. The current publication target of a monograph is for late 2012.

## 1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report documents the results of excavations undertaken in Trenches A and B during the 2011 field season.

## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 A Brief History of Excavations at Nokalakevi

- 2.1.1 For a fuller discussion of the history and study of Nokalakevi please see Everill et al (2010). Key developments can be summarised as follows:
- 2.1.2 Modern study of Nokalakevi can be traced back to 1833 when the Swiss philologist Frédéric Dubois Du Montpéreux proposed the site as Aia, the capital of Homeric Colchis in the Argonautic myths, and Archaeopolis, the capital of late antique Lazika mentioned in the *Novels* of the Emperor Justinian, and by Byzantine historians and chroniclers.
- 2.1.3 In the winter of 1930-31, a joint German-Georgian expedition led by Dr A.-M. Schneider of the German Archaeological Institute in Istanbul undertook the first archaeological excavations at the site. Schneider's results were published in the German periodical *Forschungen und Fortschritte* in September 1931 and confirmed the identification of the site with Archaeopolis.
- 2.1.4 In 1973 the S. Janashia Museum of History established a large and well-equipped expedition to excavate and conserve the historical monument at Nokalakevi. This continued until the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 when large scale works at Nokalakevi temporarily ceased. Three volumes of results were edited by Parmen Zakaraia (1981; 1989; 1993).
- 2.1.5 The current excavations at the site began in 2001 with the establishment of the joint Anglo-Georgian expedition to Nokalakevi (AGEN).

### 2.2 Summary of Previous Results for Trench A

- 2.2.1 Comprehensive accounts of previous seasons' excavation results were provided in the relevant reports (Armour and Colvin 2004; Everill and Ginns 2005; Neil 2006; Everill 2007; Grant and Everill 2009; Grant et al 2010; Everill et al 2011a). The following summarised points are pertinent to this year's results:
- 2.2.2 A total of 27 burials dating from the Hellenistic period were excavated between 2001 and 2010, plus three late Roman burials. Of the Hellenistic period burials, four were contained within ceramic vessels; three others were cremations. A further five had been buried with jewellery, including bead necklaces, rings and bracelets.
- 2.2.3 First exposed in 2003 and more thoroughly in 2006 and 2007, a line of unbonded limestone boulders (context **187**) was uncovered measuring approximately 6m from east to west with a return to the north (at the western end) that extends for 1m. At the northern end of this return a large tapered post-pit [**219**] was revealed and directly east of this a further post-pit [**224**] was also uncovered. It seems likely that [**219**] once held a door post for the entrance to the building. These separate contexts were recorded together as parts of **Structure 1**.
- 2.2.4 After this area was fully revealed and investigated in 2007, subsequent lines of walls were exposed, confirming that these archaeological remains

represented a complex sequence of Hellenistic structures.

- 2.2.5 Further excavation of the area in 2007 and 2008 made it possible to formulate ideas about the types of structure and the building materials used. The walls appear to have been constructed on top of a foundation of large limestone blocks, which seems to have been laid onto the ground surface as there is no evidence for a foundation cut. These blocks were overlain by a horizontal wooden sill consisting of one or more beams, into which were fixed upright posts measuring c.100mm in diameter. Evidence for these posts was recovered as charcoal both in Trench A and within a comparable structure in nearby Trench B in 2005. Impressions of wattle within pieces of burnt daub in both trenches give further, clear indications that these walls were predominantly of a clay and timber construction.
- 2.2.6 No archaeological evidence for roofing material was found in these Hellenistic period contexts (in contrast with the great number of tiles excavated from the later Roman contexts), however buildings of a wattle and daub/ clay and timber construction are more likely to have been thatch or shingle roofed.
- 2.2.7 **Structure 2** was made up of a line of unbonded limestone boulders (context **212**) on an east-west alignment (4.5m long) with a return at the western end extending for 1m to the south. The east-west element of this structure is almost parallel to the east-west section of **Structure 1**.
- 2.2.8 **Structure 3** was a roughly square structure consisting of a line of unbonded limestone boulders. It was approximately 2.5m square, with the suggestion that there may have been an entrance at the northwest corner. It lay underneath **Structure 2** and about half a metre south of **Structure 1** on the same orientation as the other buildings. **Structure 3** was sealed by a substantial deposit of burnt material (**216**) – predominantly daub.

### 2.3 Environmental evidence from Trench A

- 2.3.1 The burnt deposit (**216**) was excavated in 2007 and has provided a valuable insight into life during the Hellenistic period at Nokalakevi-Tsikhegoji. The sieving and flotation of soil samples by Dr Marine Bokeria in that year produced a wide range of carbonised seeds, including wild and domesticated grape (*vitis vinifera*, *vitis sylvestris*), wheat (*triticum sp.*), pea (*pisum sativum*), rowan (*sorbus sp.*) and black walnut (*juglans regia*) (Bokeria 2009).
- 2.3.2 Palynological study in 2009 by Dr Eliso Kvavadze (2010) of samples from grave fill **260**, around the skull of skeleton **261**, also produced very interesting results. These provide further evidence for the climate and flora of Nokalakevi and surrounding districts in the Hellenistic period, as well as details of local burial practice.
- 2.3.3 The sample taken from the region of the forehead produced residues of human hair and textile fibres that probably represent the remains of a shroud or head covering. These fibres were predominantly of grey and yellow flax, with a smaller number of cotton fibres that had been dyed black. A single sheep hair was found. Microscopic cells of tree wood were thought to represent evidence for some kind of wooden construction, perhaps a coffin. Plant pollen was dominated by pine and cereals, including wheat, but



evidence was also found of hazel, alder, lime, nettle and hoary plantain. The microscopic remains of a large number of grass plants were also found, which was interpreted as evidence for the burial being lain onto, or covered by, a layer of grass.

- 2.3.4 The sample taken from the region of the eyes of skeleton **261** produced similar evidence for tree wood, flax and cotton, but with the additional discovery of yellow wool fibres and evidence of ticks. In addition to the plant pollen described above, evidence was also found of beech, spruce, fir, oak, chestnut, hornbeam and celery.
- 2.3.5 A third sample, taken from around the neck vertebrae of skeleton **261**, produced evidence of bird feathers/ down. This was interpreted by Kvavadze as the remains of a down pillow which had been placed under the head, however might be more likely related to the presence of a whole chicken placed in the grave, alongside the human remains. There was further evidence of flax and cotton fibres, and ticks or mites. Tree pollen included, in addition to those described above, caucasian wingnut and caucasian elm. Grains of domesticated grape vine and walnut were also found. Grass pollen was dominated by what Kvavadze refers to as yard and garden weeds, including knot grass, chicory, fragrant wormwood and hoary plantain. There was also evidence of emmer wheat and two-rowed barley.

## **2.4 Summary of Previous Results for Trench B**

- 2.4.1 Comprehensive accounts of previous seasons' excavation results were provided in the relevant reports (Everill 2003; Everill 2005a; Everill 2005b; Grant et al 2010, Everill et al 2011a). The following summarised points are pertinent to this year's results:
- 2.4.2 Thirty seven human burials were excavated within Trench B from 2002 to 2010, the vast majority of which were located within the small area of the northeastern corner of the Byzantine/ Medieval cemetery exposed in the southwest corner of the trench (Trench B/South). While the possibility of further burials remains high, the deposit underlying the cemetery soil was first exposed in 2009, suggesting that work is nearly complete on that phase.
- 2.4.3 The remains of a Hellenistic period clay and timber building were first exposed in 2004, and further examined in 2005. This building was characterised by a line of substantial, though undressed, limestone blocks which ran the full width of the far north of the trench. This wall base was orientated roughly east-west, and in places there were remains of the beam that once rested upon them. This beam survived in fragmentary form as charcoal, and the fire which apparently consumed the building also resulted in a large quantity of burnt daub which sealed related surfaces south of the building. Impressions of wattle within the daub, and fragmentary remains of narrow posts (which were presumably set upright into the beam) gave clear indications of the likely form of the building. Although no further investigation of this structure has taken place since the 2005 season, it was revisited in 2010 when the northern part of Trench B was reopened and it was noted that there has not been too much degradation of the visible structure over the course of the five years between excavations. Directly south of the wall, ceramic material sealed between the burnt daub and the underlying yard

surface was identified as belonging to the Hellenistic period. This yard surface consisted of three distinct deposits. A metallised surface that was apparently sandwiched between two larger cobbled surfaces. This metallised surface has been suggested as a pathway around the building. Further investigation of the structure itself has been put on hold whilst the yard area, which makes up the majority of the trench, is fully excavated over the course of the next few years. The structure has been protected from the excavation area by bringing the northern limit of the trench south by 1m which also serves as a step in the side giving protection to the archaeologists working in the area.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Excavation Methodology**

- 3.1.1 During this season excavation continued in Trenches A and B. Hand-excavation was carried out using picks, shovels and trowels in order to clean and reduce the level of the trench, define new layers and uncover archaeological features. All removed soil was scanned for the presence of any stray, unstratified artefacts, which were recovered and bagged for dating and analysis. An initial cleaning layer context number was assigned at the beginning of the season to ensure that any unstratified finds were kept separate from the underlying layer.
- 3.1.2 Local workmen were employed to help with spoil removal and spoil heap management.
- 3.1.3 A digital photographic record was maintained throughout the excavation of the trench, features and finds. A register of all photographs taken was kept for the archive. In addition, a blackboard, north arrow and scales were included within the photographs to ensure that the details of the feature/artefact/structure were better illustrated.
- 3.1.4 Levels of deposits, layers, features and small finds were taken throughout the excavation. In addition, spot heights were taken across the trench at the end of the season.
- 3.1.5 Individual features, sections and graves were planned at 1:10 and the trench itself was planned at 1:20.
- 3.1.6 Following the introduction of a palynological specialist from the Georgian National Museum to the expedition in 2009, a series of smaller samples were taken from sealed contexts within the graves for pollen analysis; and soil samples were collected from secure contexts within graves (e.g. from under long bones/within pot vessels) during the course of the excavations.
- 3.1.7 As graves were uncovered small tools were used to fully expose and clean the skeleton and associated artefacts for planning and photographs. On the completion of a 1:10 plan the skeleton was lifted and bagged by separate elements (e.g. left arm, right leg).
- 3.1.8 At the end of the season both trenches were re-covered using plastic sheeting, and backfilled sufficiently to cover the plastic, in order to protect the underlying archaeology until next season..

#### **3.2 Post-excavation Methodology**

- 3.2.1 Finds washing took place at the end of each day's excavation. All finds were cleaned, dried and bagged according to context and type to ease quantification and assessment.
- 3.2.2 Ceramic material recovered from each context was sorted by fabric, form and

style. These results were then catalogued to produce a separate pottery report.

- 3.2.3 Selected small finds and interesting pottery sherds were photographed and illustrated for the archive.
- 3.2.4 Osteological assessment, comprising the analysis of both human and animal skeletal material, was undertaken once skeletons/disarticulated bones were lifted. Human skeletal assessment consisted of, where possible, the determination of an individual's sex, age and stature, and the noting of any unusual/pathological traits.

### 3.3 The Site Archives

- 3.3.1 Two separate site archives were maintained (one for each trench) during the course of the excavations. The context register for this season continues on from past seasons' excavations within each trench and therefore begins at **283** for Trench A and **435** for Trench B. The contexts have been tabulated below.
- 3.3.2 Since the expedition is an international collaboration the archive is completed on site in both English and Georgian. This means that there are two copies of the site archive for each trench. The Georgian archive is stored at the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi, and the British one in Cambridge, with security copies at the University of Winchester. The site illustrations, such as feature and trench plans, are also copied to ensure that the archive is fully maintained in both the UK and Georgia.
- 3.3.3 Quantification of site archives for NOK 11 (*Table 1*):

TRENCH	A	B
Number of Contexts	10	14
Plan and section drawings	6	6
Photographs	350	116
Soil Samples (for Palynological Assessment)	5	15
Small finds	14	5

## 4.0 EXCAVATION RESULTS

### 4.1 Trench A: Results Summary

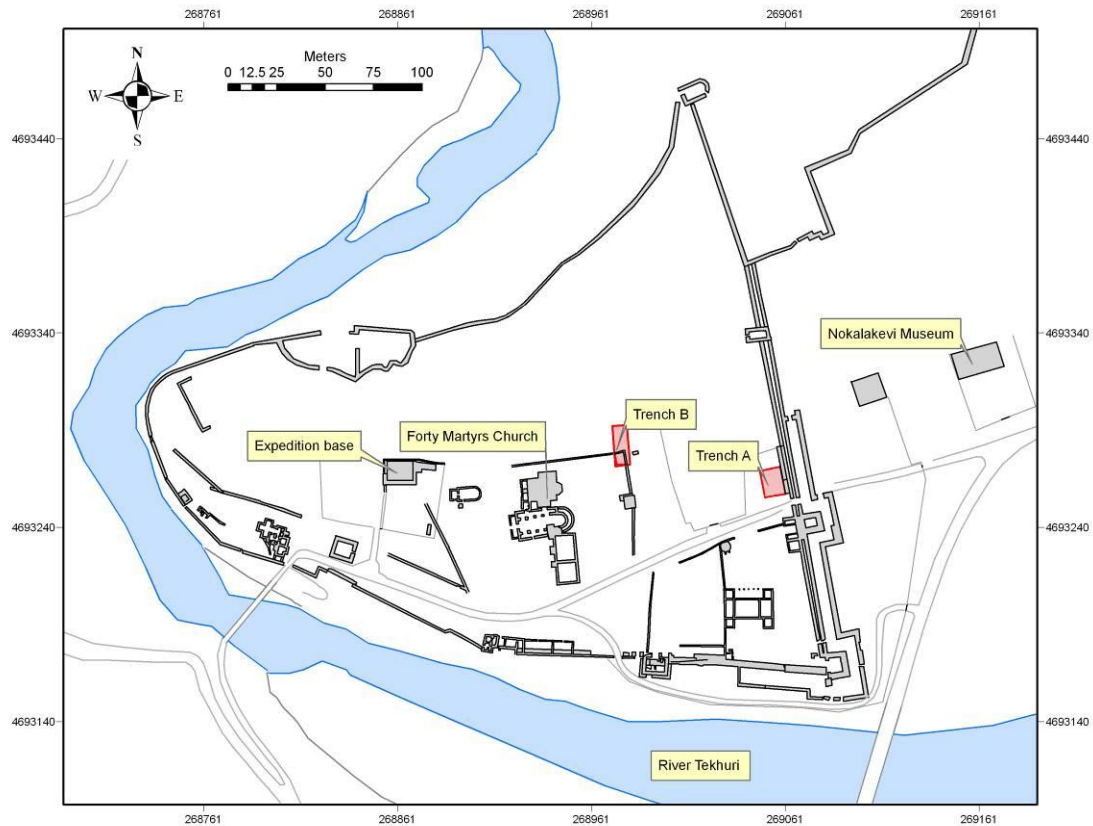


Figure 2: Location of Trench A from the 2009 RTK GPS survey (Everill et al 2011b)

4.1.1 The results of this season's fieldwork in Trench A have been presented below. Ten new context numbers were assigned (**283-292**) and excavation continued in some contexts assigned in previous years.

4.1.2 A list of this year's small finds can be seen in Table 4 in the Appendix.

4.1.4 Table 2: Recorded contexts from NOK 11/A (All levels refer to the zero established in the 1980s)

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions/ Details	Max. Depth/ Thick.	Max. Height/ Level
283	Layer	A layer inside the building defined by masonry <b>280</b> .	Exposed area 4.86m (E-W) by 2.1m (N-S).	n/a	
284	Layer	A layer covering a great extent of the trench, north of wall <b>280</b> .	10.4m x 5.5m.		-3.92
285	Layer	Greenish deposit, possibly cess, overlying <b>284</b> .	1.3m x 2.4m.	1.6m	-3.95
286	Layer	Deposit to west of masonry <b>280</b> , possibly within the structure.	2.07m (E-W) x 2.8m (N-S).		
287	Layer	Deposit to east of masonry <b>280</b> , possibly within the structure.	Not fully excavated.		
288	Layer	Daub deposit within central area of trench. Possible collapsed wall.	2.13m x 1.62m.		
289	Masonry	Stone footing/ foundation, to the east of, and apparently later than, masonry <b>280</b> .	1.92m (E-W), with a 2.7m long return to the north at the eastern end. Individual limestone blocks are on average: 0.34m x 0.36m x 0.09m.	Single course.	
290	Layer	Dark grey layer in the centre of the trench underlying <b>284</b> . Appears in a linear form, which runs approximately NNW-SSE across the trench. Perhaps an accumulative deposit at the base of a natural slope.	Not yet excavated.		
291	Layer	Very dark organic deposit, including charcoal, around a ceramic vessel (Small Find 8).	1.1m (N-S) by 0.65m (E-W).		-4.02
292	Layer	Deposit found within a ceramic vessel (Small Find 8), similar in character to <b>291</b> .			

## 4.2 Trench A: Context Summary

- 4.2.1 In preparation for the 2011 field season the sides and surface of trench A were cleared of silt and vegetation that had accumulated since last year.
- 4.2.2 Initial cleaning of trench A removed the remnant of **268** from the previous season. Finds were collected and bagged, and a pre-excavation photograph was taken.

- 4.2.3 An east-west step approximately 1m wide (N-S), was established across the full width of the trench. This was situated at the southern extent of the trench to enable improved access, and the continued preservation of a street surface that was revealed, recorded and reburied at this location.
- 4.2.4 A masonry wall described last season as comprising an east-west aligned wall with a north to south aligned return was further exposed, numbered as **289** and removed after recording. A series of four large unworked boulders **280** also identified last year have been further exposed revealing a north to south return.

### 4.3 Trench A: Layers and Deposits

- 4.3.1 The removal of remnants of **268** exposed **285** a greenish mid-grey, silty clay located centrally within the southern half of the trench slightly north of **280**, it measured 1.3m by 2.4m and was 0.08m at its deepest. The greenish hue suggests cress to be a large component within the deposit, an alternative possibility is that it is due to a high concentration of disintegrated stone of the same colour. An environmental sample was taken but has not yet been processed. The deposit existed as a layer with no associated cut, and overlay **284**, a dark grey clay silt of varying depth which occupied a large area. Layer **284** extended from the northern limits towards the southern edge, excluding only the area of masonry (**280**) and deposit **283**, which the structure encompassed (please see below). This context had inclusions of tiny stone and daub fragments along with occasional larger fragments of robust heated clay or daub, it was also culturally rich producing not only pot and animal bone but also five small finds. The assemblage suggests occupational material within a colluvial layer, the pot did not appear to be particularly abraded which may suggest the material had not travelled much distance.
- 4.3.2 It became clear soon after the removal of **284** commenced that two areas adjacent to **280** and **281** required separate context numbers. Within the area immediately to the west of **280** frequent small to medium sized fragments of limestone and medium-sized riverstones had begun to show through the dark grey silt. This rubble layer was very similar to **281** which overlay **280** and suggested the structure or further contexts relating to the structure could exist in this area. The homogeneous nature of the surrounding deposits, including **283** a mid grey silty clay residing within **280**, made it difficult to see any subtle differences, so the precautionary measure of allocating a separate number for the dark grey deposit in this area was taken. This new number (**286**) allows finds to be kept separate in the event that, with further investigation, the area emerges as being within the structure. The same precaution was taken with the area immediately to the east of **280**, this dark grey silt (**287**) appeared to abut **280** but again the similarities of the surrounding deposits made distinguishing separate contexts difficult.
- 4.3.3 The removal of **284** revealed the full extent of context **274**, first identified last season as a patch of heat affected clay within the north part of the trench. A second larger patch (**288**) was also exposed immediately to the south of **274**. Both heated clay deposits appear to overlie a spread of stone rubble (**272**) also identified last season which now seems to be extending towards the west and the south. Both **274** and **284** have been left *in situ* for examination at a later date.

- 4.3.4 The removal of **284** also exposed a very dark grey charcoal, silty clay which was mainly concentrated within the central third of the trench sweeping in a curve towards the north-west corner. Initially it appeared to be occupying a cut, further examination revealed it as an accumulative deposit which was settled within the lower part of a slope and lapping over cobbles **272**. Wet weather impaired full excavation this season and its relationship with **280** remains unclear, further excavation next season should reveal whether **290** continues beneath **280** and **283**.
- 4.3.5 The removal of **287** exposed a near complete pot rim situated very close to the masonry of **280**. Further investigation revealed it to be positioned upside down within very dark fine charcoal **291** which contained fragments of burnt wood. It was carefully block lifted whole and examined within the lab. The pot's fine charcoal contents (**292**) were carefully excavated; a fragment of silver bracelet and occasional animal bone were found but no human bone was present. Further removal of **287** in the south east area exposed a second pot, also adjacent to **280** and again positioned upside down but with a complete base. A third pot, which also appeared to be *in situ*, was found nearby. Large fragments of orange heated clay or daub became visible within the charcoal layer, along with several more pots potentially also lying *in situ*. **287** remains partially overlying **291** and the pots have been preserved in their positions for further investigation next season.

#### 4.4 Trench A: Walls, Masonry and Structures

- 4.4.1 A masonry structure (**280**), first identified within the south of the trench during the 2010 season, was further exposed. Eleven large undressed boulder stones were revealed, these form an east-west aligned wall, 5.81m long, with a north-south return that continues for 3.10m and appears to extend beyond the southern limit of excavation. Deposit **281**, also first identified last season as overlying **280**, was further defined this year and may represent a levelling or build up layer used to create a platform prior to construction. A deposit of similar character has been exposed adjacent to **280** and **281**. Although this rubble layer consists of a mix of limestone fragments and riverstones much like **281**, it appears to be an earlier layer and further investigation is required next season to determine whether it needs a separate context number.
- 4.4.2 The removal of the final remnants of **268** fully exposed **289** identified during the 2010 season as comprising a roughly east-west aligned wall 1.92m long, with a roughly north-south return of 2.70m that extended beyond the eastern limit of excavation. The masonry consisted of a single course of undressed stone. It sat on top of **284** and **287** at a higher level which suggests it is later in date than **280**. Though previously planned the wall had not been numbered or recorded so this was carried out prior to its removal this season, which allowed further excavation of **284** and **287** to commence.
- 4.4.3 The removal of **284** further exposed **272** in the northeast of the trench. First identified during 2010, layer **272** was described as having coarse components of varied size, from large unworked limestone blocks to small angular stones, within a matrix of silty clay. It appears to extend both southwards and westwards. It remains partially obscured by a further silty deposit as well as daub deposits **274** and **288**. The large blocks and fragments of masonry



within this context are consistent with remnants of a collapsed structure. Fragments of ceramic zoomorphic figurine were found within **272** during 2010, but it was unclear whether the fragments were *in situ*, residual or intrusive. Additional fragments were found this season within **284** situated in close proximity to **272**. These were provisionally dated to 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.

#### 4.5 Trench B: Results Summary

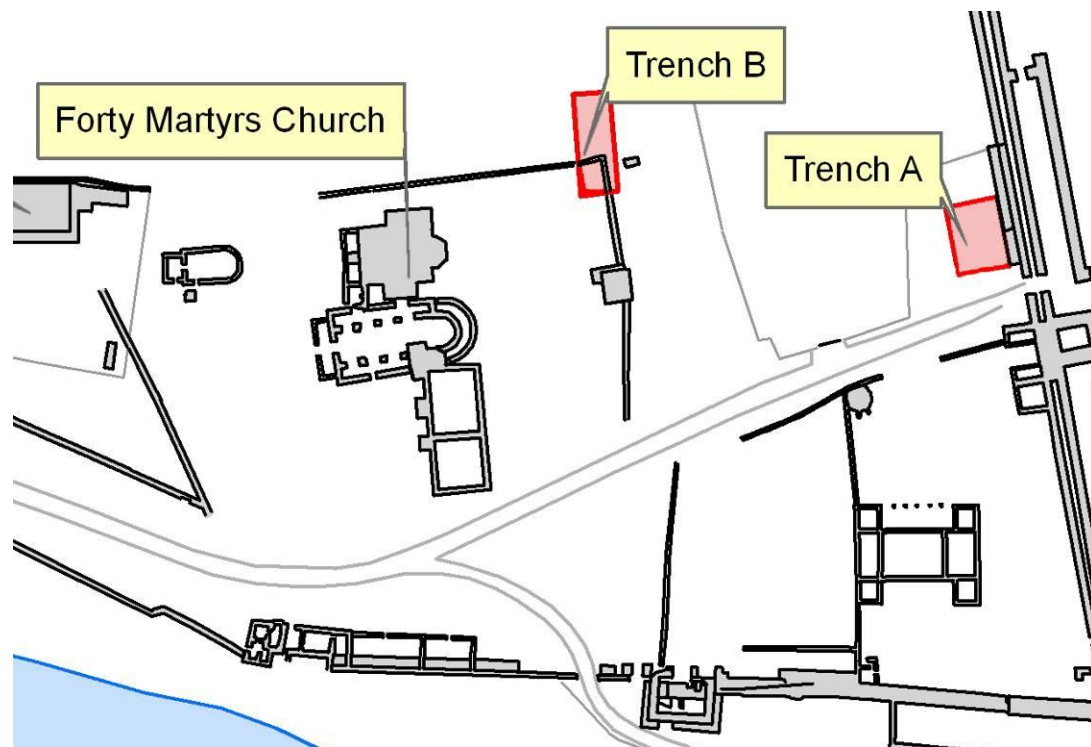


Figure 3: Location of Trench B from the RTK GPS survey results (Everill et al 2011b)

4.5.1 A summary of results from this season's fieldwork in Trench B have been presented in the table below. Fifteen new contexts were assigned this year (**435-448**), and excavation continued in some contexts assigned in previous years (**413; 422; 424; 429-434**).

4.5.2 A list of this year's small finds can be seen in Table 5 in the Appendix.

4.5.3 *Table 3: Recorded contexts from NOK 11/B (All levels refer to the zero established in the 1980s)*

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions/ Details	Max Depth/ Thick.	Max Ht/ Level
<b>413</b>	Layer	Mid brownish-grey, silty clay matrix, surrounding cobbles.		Approx. 0.35m thick.	-2.30
<b>422</b>	Layer	Mid-brown, silty clay matrix, with a firm compaction and inclusions of occasional charcoal and daub flecks and lumps. Containing cobbles, ranging from 2cm diameter to 25cm diameter; and small sub-angular stones.	Extending to the south from the wall by 5.40m in plan.	Approx. 0.945m thick.	0.545

424	Layer	Dark brown silty clay, with occasional stones and daub flecks, as well as rare charcoal flecks. Depth of layer this year is 0.17m.	From the southern wall 3.05m in plan.	Approx. 0.08m thick.	-2.25
429	Layer	Mid-grey silty clay matrix of firm compaction, surrounding cobbles, ranging from 2cm to 25cm diameter, and small sub-angular stones. Inclusions within the matrix of occasional charcoal flecks and daub flecks and lumps.	Extending to the northern edge by approx. 6.20m in plan.	Approx. 0.515m thick.	-0.255
430		----- Void -----	--- Void ---	-- Void --	Void
431	Fill	Dark brownish-black silty clay, with small cobbles and stones, and rare daub inclusions.	0.94m x 0.77m.	0.08m.	-2.20
432	Skeleton	Disarticulated partial skeleton (Hellenistic period?). Many bones missing. Present bones include 2 long bones, a partial mandible with teeth, one rib, and metacarpals.	0.94m x 0.77m.	0.08m.	-2.20
433	Cut	Oval in plan, with rounded corners and a flat base, and a sharp break of slope at both top and base.	0.94m x 0.77m.	0.08m.	-2.20
434	Fill	Daub in a matrix of silty clay, greyish-brown with orange daub; mid to firm compaction with moderate charcoal fleck inclusions and occasional small stones.	1.34 x 1.19m.	0.23m.	-2.43
435	Layer	Cleaning and clearing deposit.			
436	Layer	Cleaning and clearing deposit.			
437	Fill	Dark greyish-brown silty clay, mid compaction, with rare charcoal flecks. 0.09m thick.	1.14m x 1m.	0.08m.	-2.66
438	Cut	Sub-circular in plan. No corners. 1.34 wide, 1.19 long, 0.32 deep, with a sharp break of slope at the top; steep sides, near vertical; moderate break of slope at base; and flattish base section.	1.34 x 1.19m.	0.31m.	-2.33
439	Fill	Dark grey silty clay, firm to moderate compaction, with moderate charcoal fleck inclusions. 0.08m deep, 1.09m wide from west edge.	0.99m x 1.19m.	0.10m.	-2.33

440	Fill	Dark brownish-grey silty clay, with firm friable compaction with flecks of daub and charcoal included. 1.81m long, 0.61m wide, and approx 0.28m deep. Excavated with trowel in hot sunny conditions.	1.81m x 0.61m.	0.28m.	-2.30
441	Skeleton	Supine well preserved skeleton, laid out east west. Arms complete and flexed at elbow, hands at the shoulders; legs complete and stretched out. Arms possibly bound within shroud, missing bones include the patella and the sternum as well as some carpals and phalanges. Feet seem complete.	1.81m x 0.61m.	0.28m .	-2.30
442	Cut	Sub-oval in plan with rounded corners. 1.81m long, 0.61m wide, and 0.28m deep. Near vertical sides, flattish base. Orientated east west.	1.81m x 0.61m.	0.28m.	-2.30
443	Layer	Dark brownish-grey clayey silt with firm compaction.	Not yet excavated.	Not yet excavated.	-2.64
444	Layer	Mid brown layer under 422.	Not yet excavated.	Not yet excavated.	-0.43
445	Layer	Dark brown-black layer on northeast side of trench.	Not yet excavated.	Not yet excavated.	-0.51
446	Layer	Dark grey brown layers under cobbles 429.	Not yet excavated.	Not yet excavated.	-0.77
447	Fill	Light brown fill of circular feature.	Not yet excavated.	Not yet excavated.	-0.65
448	Fill	Charcoal fill of circular feature.	Not yet excavated.	Not yet excavated.	-0.76

## 4.6 Trench B: Context Summary

- 4.6.1 Trench B had accumulated a lot of silt and vegetation since the 2010 season. Initial work to prepare the trench for excavation took two days. Context numbers were assigned to the unstratified finds: **435** north of the cemetery wall and **436** south of it.
- 4.6.2 The northern limit of excavation was moved 1m south in order to protect the Hellenistic building (**381**) found in 2004 from damage. This new edge of excavation runs parallel with the previous edge of excavation and encompasses the whole of the wall base (**381**).
- 4.6.3 This year it was possible to remove the rubble layers, **422** and **429**, that lay beneath **397**, a Hellenistic metalled surface contemporary with the Hellenistic wall **381**.

- 4.6.4 The cemetery area at the south of the trench was reduced to the level of **413** across the whole of the area this year. Two burials, **432** and **441**, were recorded and lifted.

## 4.7 Trench B: Deposits and Cut Features

- 4.7.1 Layer numbers **422** and **429** were assigned in previous seasons. These were both rubble layers found beneath **397**, the metalled surface excavated last year. These rubble layers may be a colluvial deposit that was laid down in front of the Hellenistic building (**381**) prior to construction. They both contain sub-angular limestone rubble, ranging from 2cm to 25cm in length, within a matrix of silty clay. The difference between the two lies in the colour of the matrix. The mid grey matrix (**429**) was found in the southern part of Trench B (outside the cemetery wall), and the dark brown matrix (**422**) was found in the northern part of Trench B. Rubble layer **413** in Trench B within the cemetery wall was fully uncovered this year. It included frequent limestone fragments and occasional daub deposits within a matrix of brownish-grey silty sand.
- 4.7.2 At the start of this season **435** and **436** were assigned to describe unstratified cleaning deposits from the re-opening of the trench. **435** was assigned to the trench outside the cemetery wall, and **436** was assigned to the area within the cemetery enclosure in the south part of Trench B.
- 4.7.3 Within the cemetery enclosure layer **424** was a dark brownish-grey deposit of silty sand containing frequent inclusions of limestone and daub. This layer was found mainly towards the southern extent of the area and was what is best described as a cemetery soil, resulting from a long period of use for that purpose and the intercutting of graves. By the end of this season it had been entirely removed. Although there were no special finds from this fill this year there was a high quantity of ceramic finds as well as animal bone present. Also within this deposit were the cuts of both of this year's burials. Fill **434**, the upper fill of a circular feature, had been first observed last year, but was identified as such this year.
- 4.7.4 Removing layer **424** revealed the extent of the cobbled layer **413** underneath it which covered the whole of the area of investigation. The burial of skeleton **441** is visible as a cut through the cobbles as well as the circular pit **438** in the centre of the area. This year it was possible to clear the cemetery entirely, excavating all of the remaining burials and removing the cemetery soil.
- 4.7.5 A pit was found within the cemetery walls, located towards the western baulk. This was half sectioned in order to see the relationships between this and the surrounding deposits. The cut **438** was circular in plan with steep, near vertical sides and a flattish base. It was 1.34m wide, approximately 1.19m long and 0.32m deep when excavated. This pit contained 3 visible fills. The basal fill of **437** contained a large quantity of ceramics coming from one area on the south-eastern edge of the trench. The main deposit visible in the section of this pit was **434**, which was visible in plan from last year, although not completely as it was covered on the western side by another thinner deposit of **439**. **434** consisted of a high concentration of daub within a matrix of silty clay. Along with a large amount of ceramic and animal bone finds, a bead was found along the southern edge of the pit, which was recorded as

Small Find **3**. The topmost fill of the pit **439** only appeared in the western side of the pit although some of it may have been removed in previous years' work on account of it looking very similar to the cemetery soil (**424**) above it. **439** is a dark grey silty clay deposit containing moderate charcoal flecks as well as ceramic finds. It caps the pit.

- 4.7.6 During the excavation of the pit it was discovered that the layer of cobbles (**413**) is approximately 0.35m in thickness in the area surrounding the pit. Underneath the cobbles is a newly discovered layer, **443**, consisting of a firm dark brownish grey clayey silt. This was not fully exposed and will be investigated next year.
- 4.7.7 In the area outside the cemetery walls the main task for this season was to remove the rubble that lay across the whole of this section of the trench. Layer **422** was found to contain ceramic and animal bone, with a substantial amount of daub being found within the matrix of the cobbles. Towards the lower part of the deposit obsidian worked flakes were found as well as a few pieces of human bone. Layer **429**, to the south of layer **422**, contained similar finds including obsidian and a complete pot lid. The latter was recorded as Small Find 1.
- 4.7.8 These deposits were of a substantial thickness, varying between 0.95m towards the north and 0.52m in the south, and were not fully excavated this season. Where layers **422** and **429** had been removed they revealed the underlying deposits, including layer **444**, a stony brown silty clay towards the north; layer **445**, a semi-circular patch on the eastern edge of the trench, which was a darker brownish grey silty clay with a high frequency of charcoal on the surface; and layer **446**, which was a darker grey silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks.
- 4.7.9 Within the new deposit (**446**) were noted an indistinct daub patch as well as what looked like discreet features: **447**, a small circular mid light brown silty clay with charcoal and pottery, found in the centre of the trench; and **448**, another small circular patch, rich in charcoal, found along the eastern edge of the trench. These new deposits have been left unexcavated this year and have been covered and left for investigation in 2012, when the remaining patches of the cobble layers **422** and **429** will also be removed.

## **4.8 Trench B: Burials**

- 4.8.1 Cut **433** was situated in the north-eastern part of the sondage within the cemetery enclosure, and contained a burial previously identified in 2010. On excavation skeleton **432** was found to be a disarticulated, partial skeleton with a large number of bones missing. Present bones included two fibula, which lay perpendicular to each other, one north-south and the other east-west. Also present was part of the mandible with teeth, one rib and a number of metacarpals. Within the grave fill (**431**) were ceramic finds and a number of bone fragments. This skeleton lay directly above the only other burial excavated in this trench this year, skeleton **441**. It was approximately 0.94m in length, 0.77m in width and 0.08m in depth.

4.8.2 Directly underneath this lay the skeleton **441**. Its cut, **442**, was 1.81m in length, 0.61m wide and 0.28m deep. The skeleton was orientated east-west. It was in good preservation, supine with the skull facing north. The legs were fully extended, the arms flexed and lying together across the right shoulder. The skeleton was complete apart from both the patellae, which were not found. The damage to the skull occurred during excavation, as did the crack to the right blade of the pelvis and the femur. Pottery was found within the fill of this grave (**440**), which was cut into the layer of colluvial cobbles (**413**) that underlies the cemetery soil. This grave is the lowest burial found so far.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Trench A: General Discussion of Results

#### 5.1.1 *Layers and Deposits*

Deposits **268** and **284** appear to represent colluvial episodes, each carrying occupational material within them. Layer **284** was particularly rich in finds; a small white stone bead, a small silver bracelet, a bronze object thought to be a segment of leaf armour and a ceramic weight provisionally dated as 6<sup>th</sup> century BC were found, along with a substantial amount of pottery and some animal bone. However, the finds had not suffered much abrasion, indicating that the objects had not travelled a great distance. This may support an alternative interpretation of the layers as representing abandonment deposits. Fragments of zoomorphic figurine were also found within **284** mainly within the north eastern and eastern extent of the deposit in areas surrounding **272**. This may indicate the figurine was originally associated with **272** but became gradually washed in with **284**.

Deposit **290** was found to occupy a slight depression created by a steeper break of slope. Complete removal of **290** may reveal something of the underlying topography within the trench. There was a consistently high concentration of charcoal within the deposit, perhaps representing one particular burning event originating further up the slope. Heated clay deposits **274** and **288** may represent remnants of a floor or wall of a structure. An environmental sample was taken from **290** but results are not yet available.

The *in situ* pots associated with **291** appear to be submerged within the charcoal layer rather than occupying many separate cuts. For all the pots to be filled with and submerged within the same charcoal layer requires a rapid episode such as a burnt or burning wall collapsing. The heat affected clay/daub present within the deposit supports this interpretation. Deposit **291** currently seems to abut wall **280** and further excavation next season should clarify the relationship between **280** and **291**.

#### 5.1.2 *Walls and Structures*

Masonry **289** represents the foundation of a single wall, stratigraphically later than **280**. Although **280** has been further exposed this season further investigation is still required. Complete removal of **281** and **283** within the structure should clarify the relationship of **280** and the recently uncovered rubble deposit to the west. As yet no firm date has been attributed to this structure, and finds from the associated deposits are yet to be analysed. Layer **283** yielded several fragments from a pipe handled pot, a stone bead and a small zoomorphic figurine. Also among the assemblage were pieces of raw stone used in bead making, fragments of this stone were also found within **284**.

Layer **272** is possibly the earliest deposit currently exposed despite being present in a physically higher area of the trench. Excavation of **290** has revealed that the slope drops more sharply within the central part of the trench than was previously thought and further work needs to be done to elucidate the underlying topography.



#### 5.1.4 *Overall Conclusions for Trench A*

The broad aims and objectives for Trench A, as outlined in last year's report (Everill et al 2011a) and summarised above, were addressed as follows:

- The remainder of colluvial layer **268** was removed, and underlying deposits investigated.
- Cobbled surface **203**, and underlying structural elements, were protected by the deposit of backfill. Further investigation will not be possible.
- A new structure was identified, in the form of wall 289 and its relationship to other structures analysed, and dating evidence retrieved from associated cultural material.
- A phase plan for the whole trench was not possible this season, as the phase is still being revealed.

## 5.2 Trench B: General Discussion of Results

### 5.2.1 *Deposits and Cut Features*

The removal of cemetery deposits finally began to reveal the underlying colluvial layers. Layer **413** may indeed represent a continuation of Layer **429**, a colluvial deposit found to the north of the cemetery wall. Further excavation is needed to determine the precise relationship between these two cobble layers. The uncovering of the underlying colluvial deposit suggests that the Byzantine phase has now been removed, and that the focus will be on the underlying Hellenistic period deposits in this area.

5.2.2 The pit uncovered during this season's work (**438**) was half-sectioned and was found to contain much pottery, including a possibly complete vessel, a bead, and other finds. The largest deposit within the pit contains a high frequency of daub material, which could be related to the disturbance of underlying structural/ demolition deposits.

5.2.3 The area to the north of the cemetery was uncovered again this year, although no further excavation took place on the Hellenistic period building. The colluvial deposits uncovered in 2010 were excavated this year, revealing underlying deposits showing the same colour difference between the north and south as well as charcoal rich potential features which will be further investigated in future expeditions.

5.2.4 The demarcation between contexts **422** and **429**, aligned roughly east-west and apparently following a contour, may indicate underlying topography. It was thought that excavation of these deposits would reveal evidence for terracing on the lower slopes of the hillside and although this was not found this year, as the colour demarcation is still visible between the underlying deposits of **444** and **447**, along with the possible features situated along the same contour, this theory is still valid and will still be explored in the future.

### 5.2.5 *Burials*

Of the two burials excavated this year in Trench B one was a partial and disarticulated grave situated directly above the grave of a complete east-west skeleton which was well preserved and is the lowest burial found within this area so far. As the cut of this grave was into the underlying colluvial cobbles it

is believed that this skeleton is one of the earliest within this cemetery.

#### 5.2.6 *Overall Conclusions for Trench B*

The broad aims and objectives for Trench B, as outlined in last year's report (Everill et al 2011a) and summarised above, were addressed as follows:

- The extant burial **432** was excavated, recorded and removed.
- The sondage through the cemetery layers was continued whilst maintaining the baulks supporting the walls.
- Layers **425**, **422** and **429** were further investigated, while continuing to preserve the Hellenistic building at the far north of the trench.

### 5.3 Trench A: Proposed Aims and Objectives for 2012

- To number the new rubble deposit and investigate its stratigraphic relationship with **281**, **280** and **283** to establish whether the structure extends further to the west.
- To fully remove **287** so that a full understanding of **290** can be established.
- To investigate the stratigraphic relationship between **290** and **280**.
- To concentrate on reducing the level of the south end of the trench with the aim of revealing the topography of the underlying deposits.
- To bring the south part of the site into phase with the north part of the trench.
- To update the ongoing section drawing utilising the trench edge.

### 5.4 Trench B: Proposed Aims and Objectives for 2012

- Excavate the second half of the pit found within the cemetery area.
- To remove the colluvial deposit **413** whilst maintaining the baulks supporting the cemetery walls. This to be done with a view to reaching early cultural layers and natural, thus enabling the backfilling of the cemetery area of Trench B.
- Complete the removal of Layers **422** and **429** and investigate the charcoal patches to the north of the cemetery walls
- To update the ongoing section drawing utilising the trench edge.

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## APPENDIX

Table 4: Trench A Small Finds Register

Small Find No.	Context No.	Description	Trench Coordinates	Level
1	284	Fishing weight (6 <sup>th</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> century BC)	105.14/ 210.20	-3.79
2	283	Stone bead	100.05/203	-3.95
3	284	Small round copper alloy object	102.29/207.8	-3.99
4	284	Small white stone bead	103.07/207.4	-3.99
5	284	Small bracelet, poss. silver	102.2/205.66	-3.98
6	283	Fragments of pipe handled pot	101.90/203.65	-4.02
7	284	Bronze – poss. part of armour	104/209.8	-4.9
8	291	Pot	103.6/202.7	-4.02
9	291	Pot	103.9/202.95	-3.97
10	286	Small bar of bronze	97.45/203.18	-4.02
11	292	Braclet fragment from interior of pot	103.6/203.7	-4.02
12	291	Pot from east of wall footing <b>280</b>	103.55/202.15	-3.95
13	283	mini zoomorphic figurine	99.60/203.05	-4.11
14	272	Worked stone tool	107.4/203.75	-3.95

Table 5: Trench B Small Finds Register

Small Find No.	Context No.	Description	Trench Coordinates	Level
1	429	Early Antique lid of pot	106.37/211.13	-0.75
2	431	Silver earring from grave	102.17/204.15	-2.29
3	424	Bead	100.51/201.19	-2.36
4	434	Cu alloy fragment	100.85/202.18	-2.49
5	434	Cu alloy tag	101.00/202.27	-2.61