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Unpublished Plans of Nicopolis

In the archives of the Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene there are ten drawings in ink on transparent paper, each stamped with a seal inscribed "Comando XXVI° Corpo d' Armata" and assigned an accession number from 270 to 279. There is no date affixed, but the catalogue entries list the date as 1943; the drawings must have been completed by September of that year when Italy capitulated to the Allies. All ten are ground plans. The largest, the site plan of the Inner Town, is at a scale of 1:1000, two drawings of the Inner City Wall are at 1:500, while the remaining seven plans of buildings which appear on the site plan are drawn at 1:200.

These drawings, while made over forty years ago, are still useful and important to the study of Roman and Byzantine Nicopolis because the survey work was done at a time when the area of the site plan and the location of all the individual buildings under discussion, the Inner Town, was still largely under cultivation and so was relatively free of the dense growth of brush and trees which has made much of the area inaccessible since. The aerial views taken by Father Schoder in September 1965 show the site much as it appears today¹.

I compiled a site plan in 1979. It is based on the plan made by the engineers of the Greek Army for Philadelphus, finished in January 1922 and published in *Praktika* 1926, on maps issued by the Epirus Regional Development Service in 1962 made available to me by the Ephoreia of Byzantine Antiquities in Yannina, information from both published and unpublished sources, and on observation *in situ* in 1978 and 1979. The Italian plans now provide additional indications not available for inclusion in my composite plan, indications which may prove useful in future survey work in the territory of the Inner Town, since the Italian site plan shows more structures with greater clarity and precision than any other Nicopolis site plan currently available.

1. *Raymond V. Schoder*, *Ancient Greece from the Air*, London 1974, 154–157 and several unpublished photographs of the site shown at the Symposium with the kind permission of Father Schoder.

The aim of my talk was to present a selection of the Italian Army plans and to point out the value of this previously unknown archival material in the study of the building history of Nicopolis. I plan a more extensive treatment and analysis in my doctoral dissertation for Harvard University on the Early Byzantine Town of Nicopolis and in a forthcoming article in the *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene*, for which Professor Di Vita will write the preface. We wanted to present these Italian plans for the first time on the occasion of the First Nicopolis Symposium; however, since all the drawings will be reproduced and discussed in the *Annuario*, here illustrations are omitted and the talk is summarized.

The Italian plan of the Inner Town contains indications which allow speculation about the existence of a gate in the southeastern section of the Inner City Wall. This site plan shows Basilica Alpha situated in a densely – built area of town, as testified by the wealth of remains recorded. Part of its *peribolos*, its enclosure wall, appears on the Italian site plan; it was first mentioned in print by Orlandos over two decades later². A rectangular building with a semicircular apse at one end appears on the Italian site plan and, to my knowledge, nowhere else. It may well be the building in the eastern part of the city excavated by Orlandos and Soteriou in 1937³.

Individual ground plans of Basilica Beta and of the buildings known locally as "Vasilospito" and the "Baths of Cleopatra" as well as of a large structure which I call the "Central Baths" often compare favorably with published plans; it seems plausible to imagine that the Italian military men in charge of the survey arranged for clearing which enabled them to record with an admirable degree of precision. The rest are contained in the original proofs mailed yesterday from Rome.

The selection of examples shown aimed to illustrate how the plans bearing the seal of the Comando XXVI^o Corpo d' Armata and soon to be published in the *Annuario* provide documentation valuable in reconstructing the building history of Nicopolis. In some instances corrections, interesting details, or supplementary information about the plan of a building can be gleaned from the Army drawings; in other cases the Italian drawing is more complete than any published plan of that particular building; and, finally, at times a series of structures as yet unidentified appears on this site plan and on no other readily available one, thus providing additional information on urban density and on probable street patterns.

2. Ergon (1964) 153; Praktika (1964) 179–181.

3. Praktika (1937) 82.