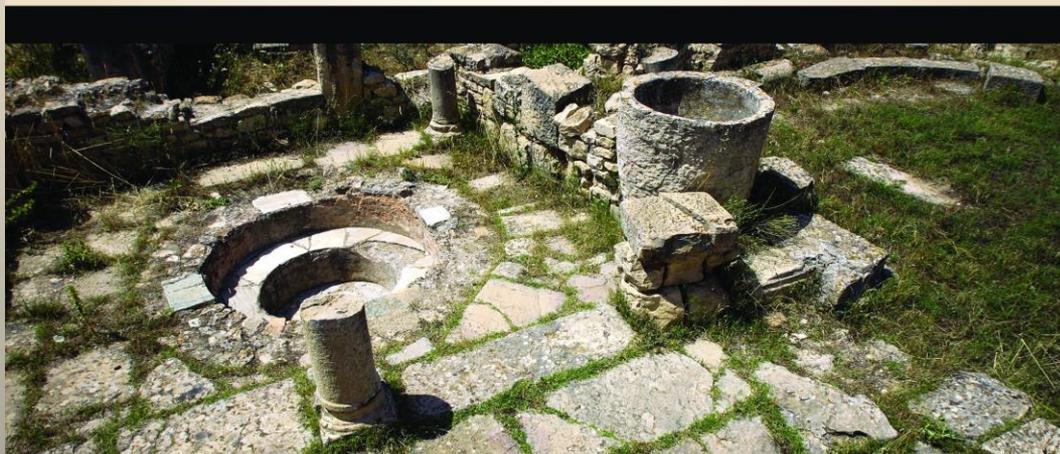




J. PATOUT BURNS JR. AND ROBIN M. JENSEN

CHRISTIANITY IN ROMAN AFRICA

the development of its practices and beliefs



Cyprian and the Unity of the Bishops

- Cyprian argued that only Bishops in unity have power and authority to sanctify by forgiving sins
 - In rituals of baptism, eucharist, reconciliation
 - Power (Holy Spirit) given by Christ to “college” of bishops (John 20:22-23)
 - Only Faithful Bishops, in unity have power to sanctify
 - Martyrs can intercede at Judgment by Christ; not in church

Cyprian and Rebaptism

- Cyprian and his colleagues rebaptized Converts baptized by those outside their communion.
 - Only Bishops in unity could baptize
 - Only Bishops who were faithful could hold and exercise power to sanctify (gift of Holy Spirit)
 - Baptism (and Eucharist) performed outside the unity were useless.
- Christians in Rome and Africa disagreed
 - Efficacy of Sacraments depended on God not Bishop

Donatist Schism

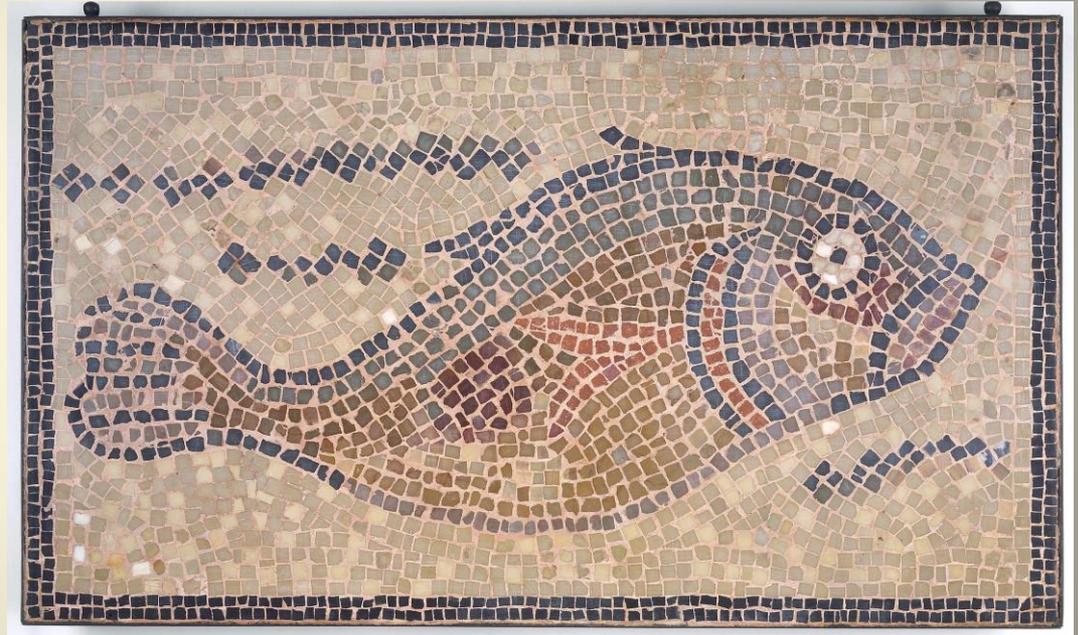
- Diocletian Persecution (303-304 in Africa) required Bishops to turn over sacred books and vessels
 - Some Bishops refused and were executed
 - Some Bishops capitulated or dissembled
- Conflict over status of Caecilian of Carthage (312-336)
 - Charge that he had been ordained by failed bishop
 - Donatus made competing bishop of Carthage
- Appeals to Constantine to settle conflict
 - Trials in Rome and at Arles supported Caecilian
 - Constantine attempted to force unity 317-321

Expansion of Donatist Schism

- Donatist church was isolated in Africa
 - All Bishops had to be free of crime of apostasy
 - Only the faithful bishops could have Holy Spirit and could sanctify
 - Acceptance of an apostate Bishop incriminated other Bishops
 - The entire church had become unfaithful by tolerating Caecilian and his colleagues
 - Donatists bishops formed the only Holy Church
 - Donatists “rebaptized” converts from Caecilianist church
- “Catholic” Bishops rejected Donatist charges and theory
 - The efficacy of sacramental ministry depends on Christ alone
 - Unfaithful bishops harm only themselves; should be removed
 - Converts from Donatist church are not rebaptized
- Focus of Conflict
 - Can guilt of apostasy be contracted by eucharistic communion?
 - Can baptism be given effectively by an unworthy minister?

Tertullian, On Baptism

We, being little fish, just as Jesus Christ is our great fish (IXTHYS), are born in the water. And we are safe only so long as we remain in the water.”



The Baptismal Ritual

According to Tertullian (ca. 200)

- Who? With What? When?
 - Not too young/unready
 - Importance of water
 - Easter and Pentecost
- Ritual
 - Preparation of catechumens = prayer, fasting, confession of sin (perhaps exorcism)
 - Cleansing/consecration of the water
 - Immersion, with profession of faith (Trinity + Church)
 - Anointing (priestly)
 - Imposition of hands inviting the Holy Spirit
 - First eucharist

According to Augustine (ca. 500)

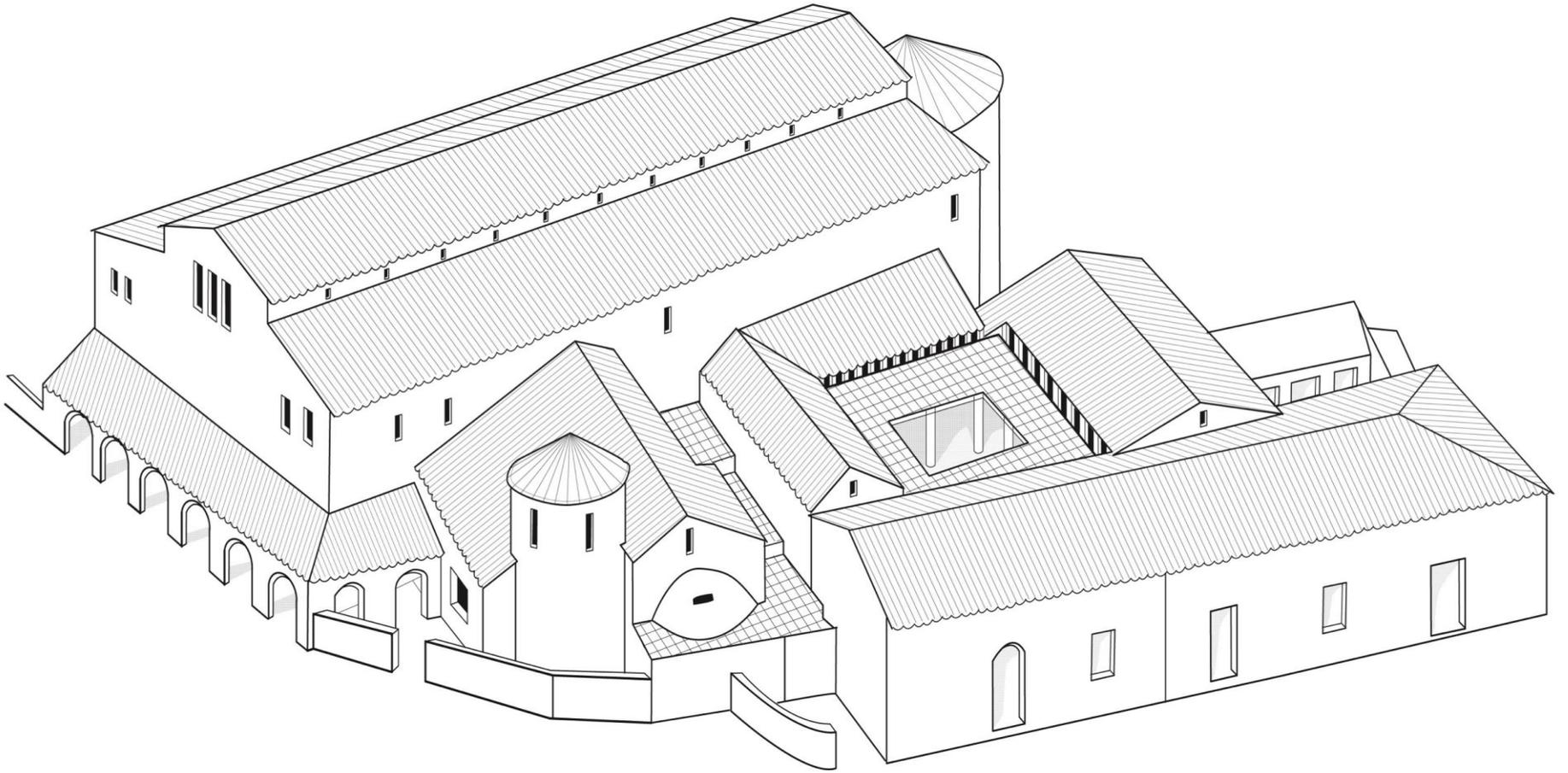
- Who? When?
 - Infants are more the norm but adults as well
 - Easter was common
- Ritual
 - Enrollment of catechumens at the beginning of Lent (signing with cross, giving of salt, imposition of hands)
 - Lenten catechumenate – instruction and formation, scrutinies, exorcism
 - Reception of creed, Lord's Prayer in last stages
 - Baptism
 - Renunciation of Satan
 - Consecration of the water
 - Removal of clothing
 - Interrogations, triple immersion
 - New garments
 - Anointing
 - Imposition of hands
 - First Eucharist

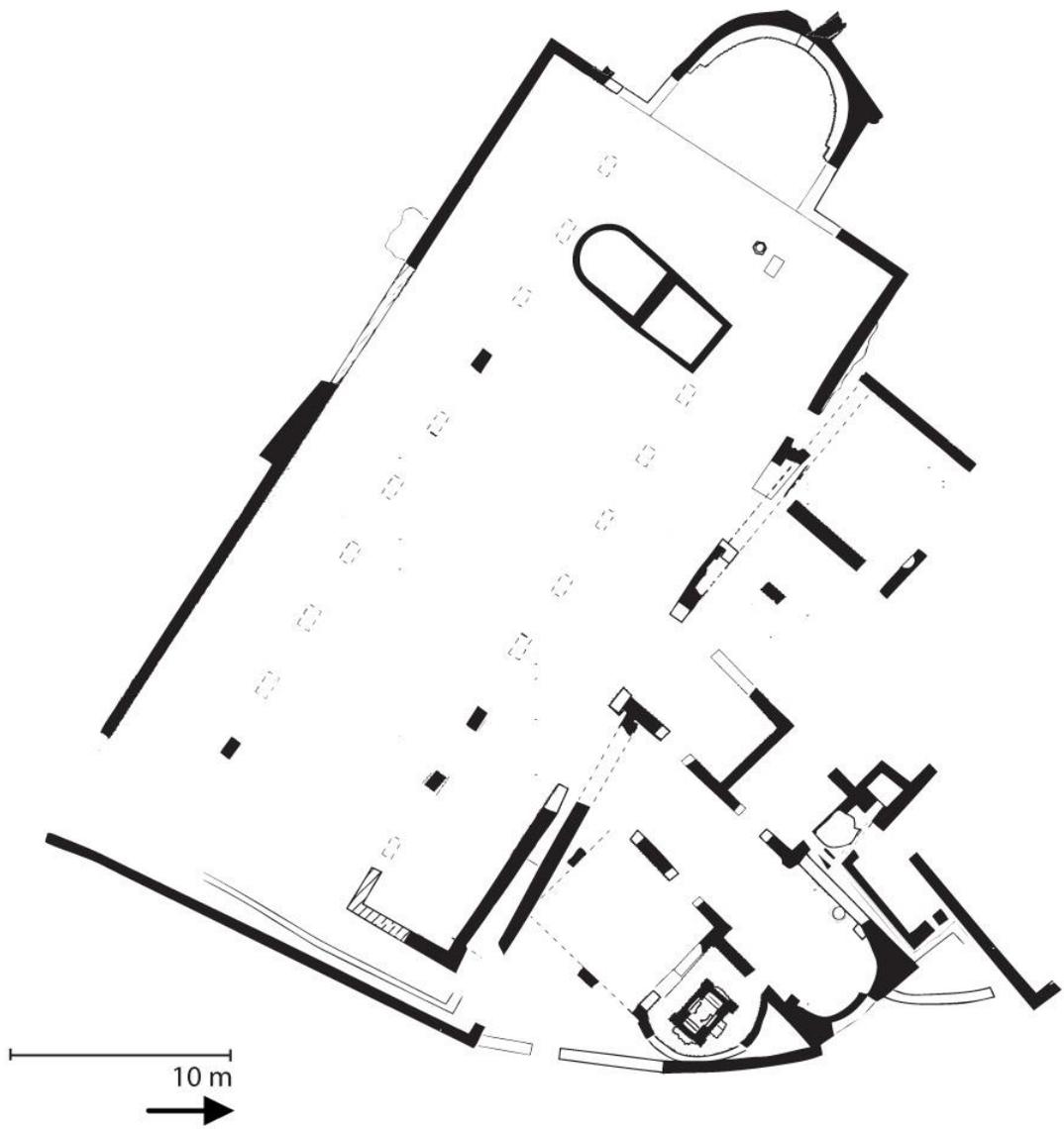
Baptisteries in North Africa

- Shapes – more variety: octagonal, cruciform, round, polylobed.
- Depth— varies from shallow to deep (.5 meters to 1.5 m). Size likewise.
- Relationship to main church: attached but separate. A variety of placements (e.g., behind the apse, by the entrance, on the side)
- More than one baptistery in a town. Could be an indication of competing cults or the development of parish system.

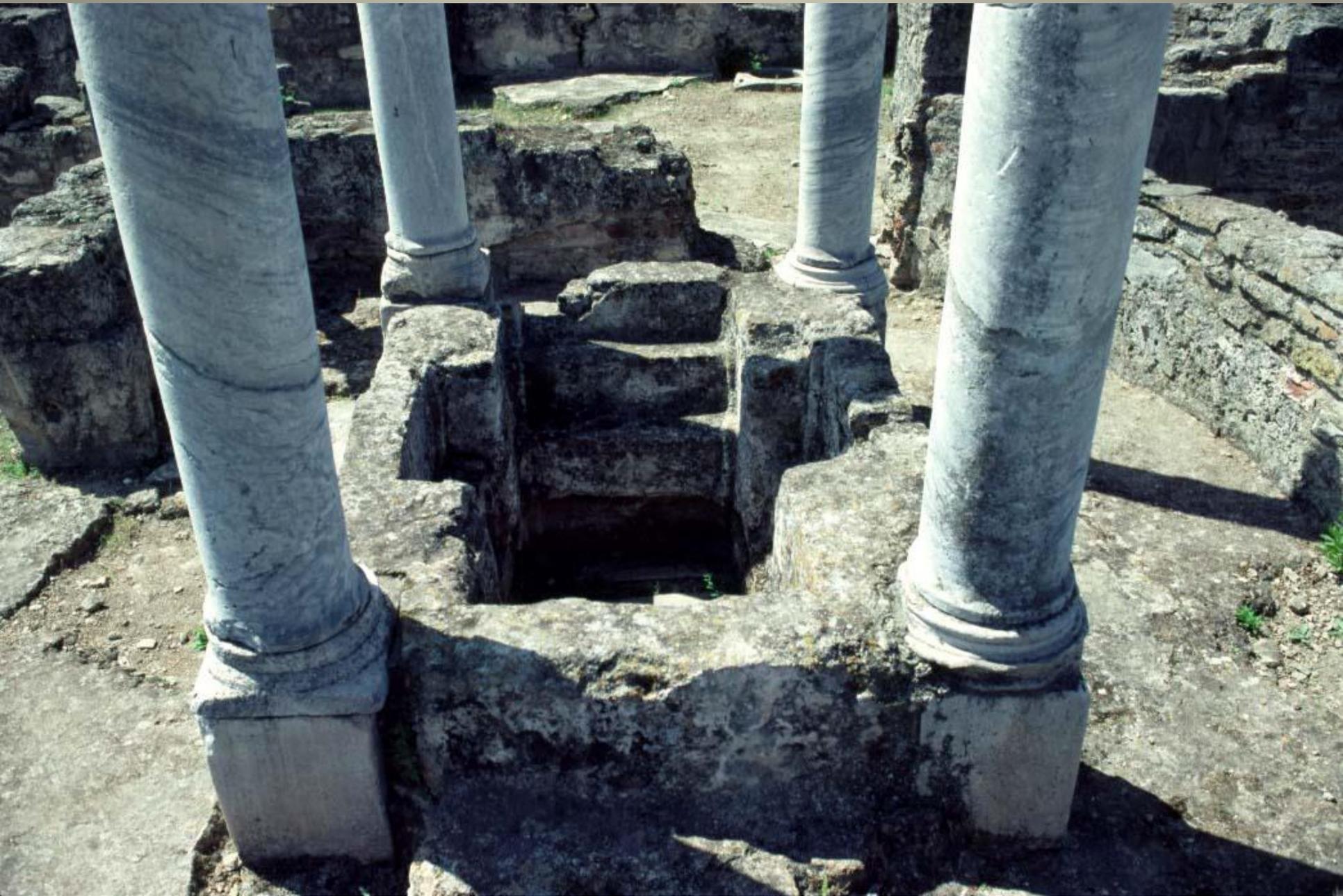
Site of Basilica, Hippo Regius (Annaba, Algeria)

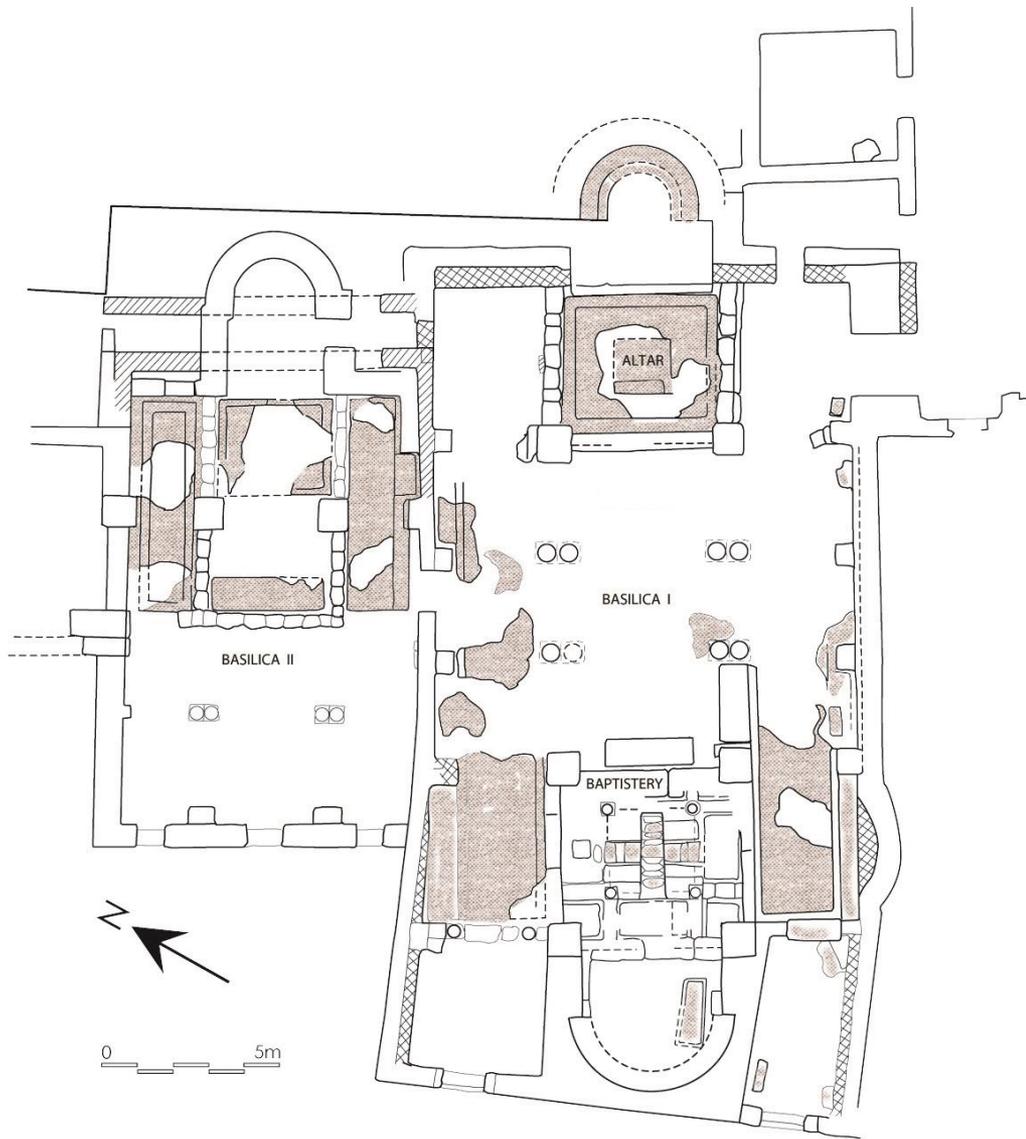








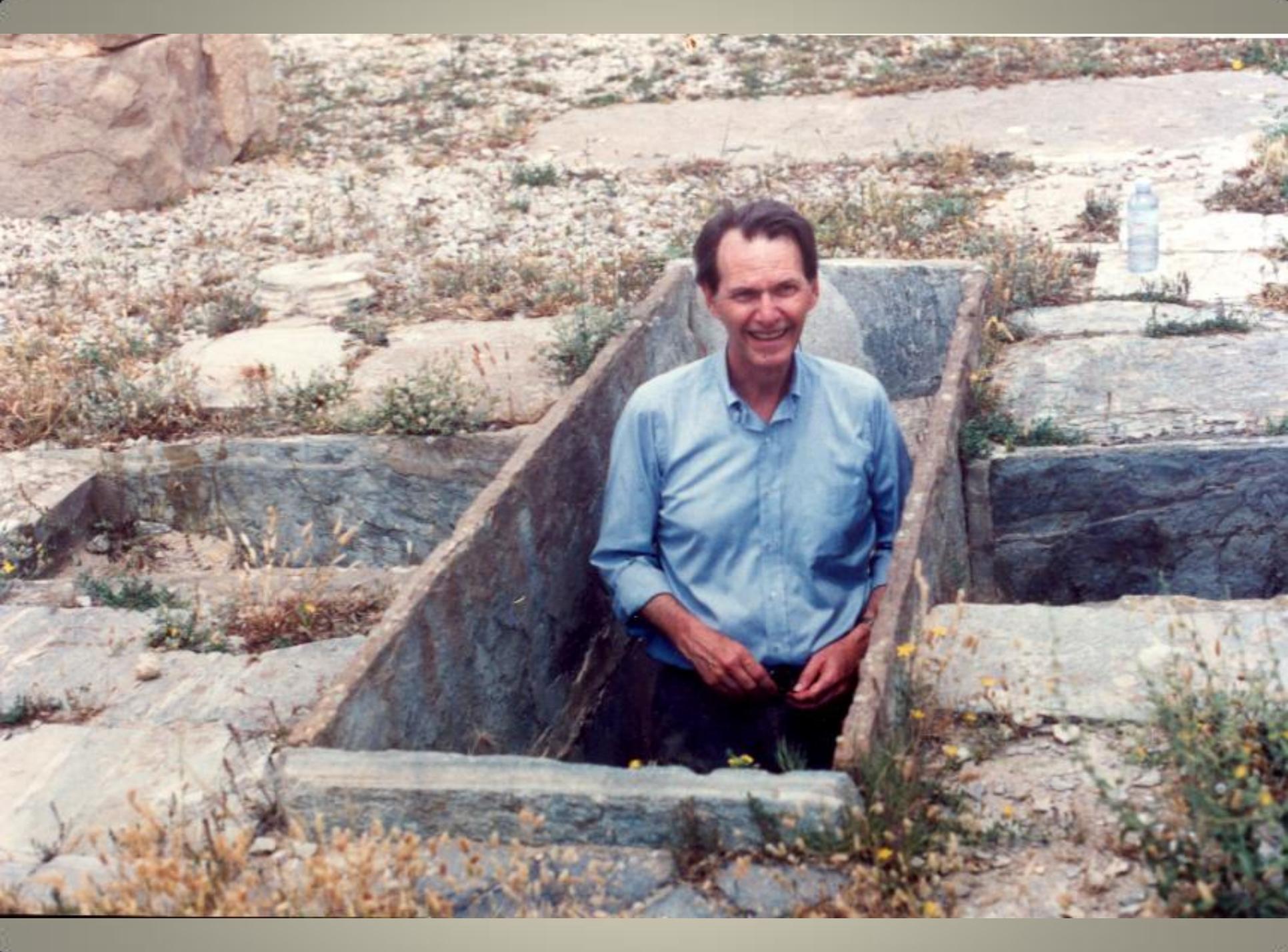


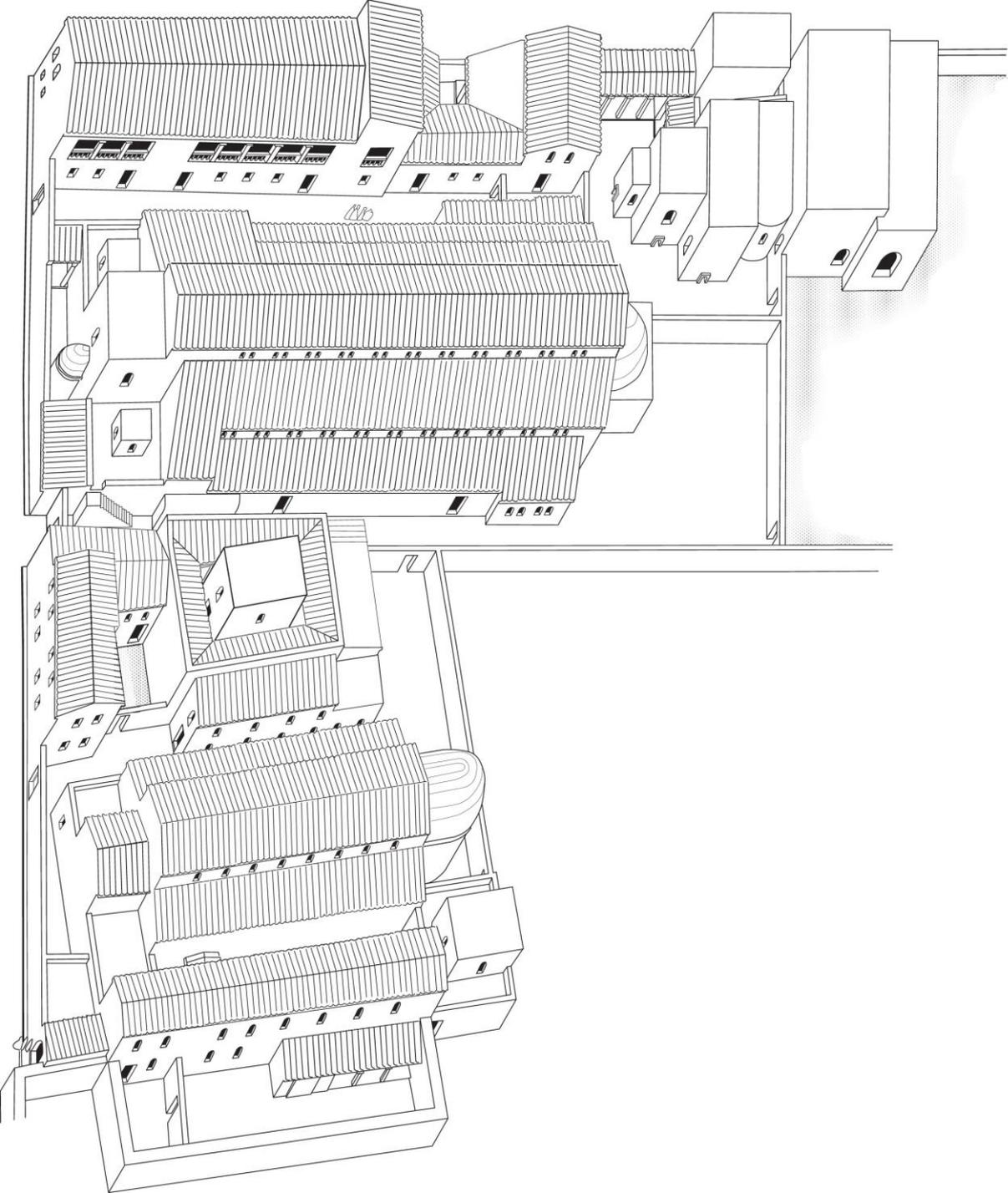


Plan of Bulla Regia Double
Church, 5-6th cen.
(Tunisia)









Site of 4-6th cen.
churches, Sufetula
(Sbeitla), Tunisia

BASILIQUE I dite DE BELLATOR (n° 13 du plan)

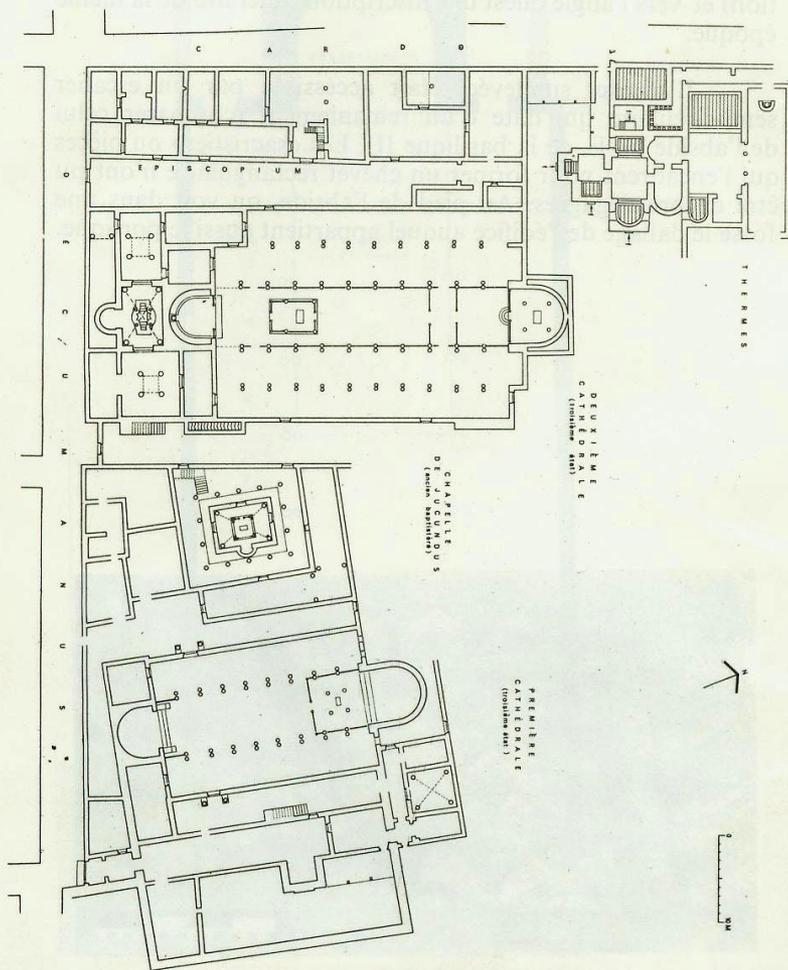
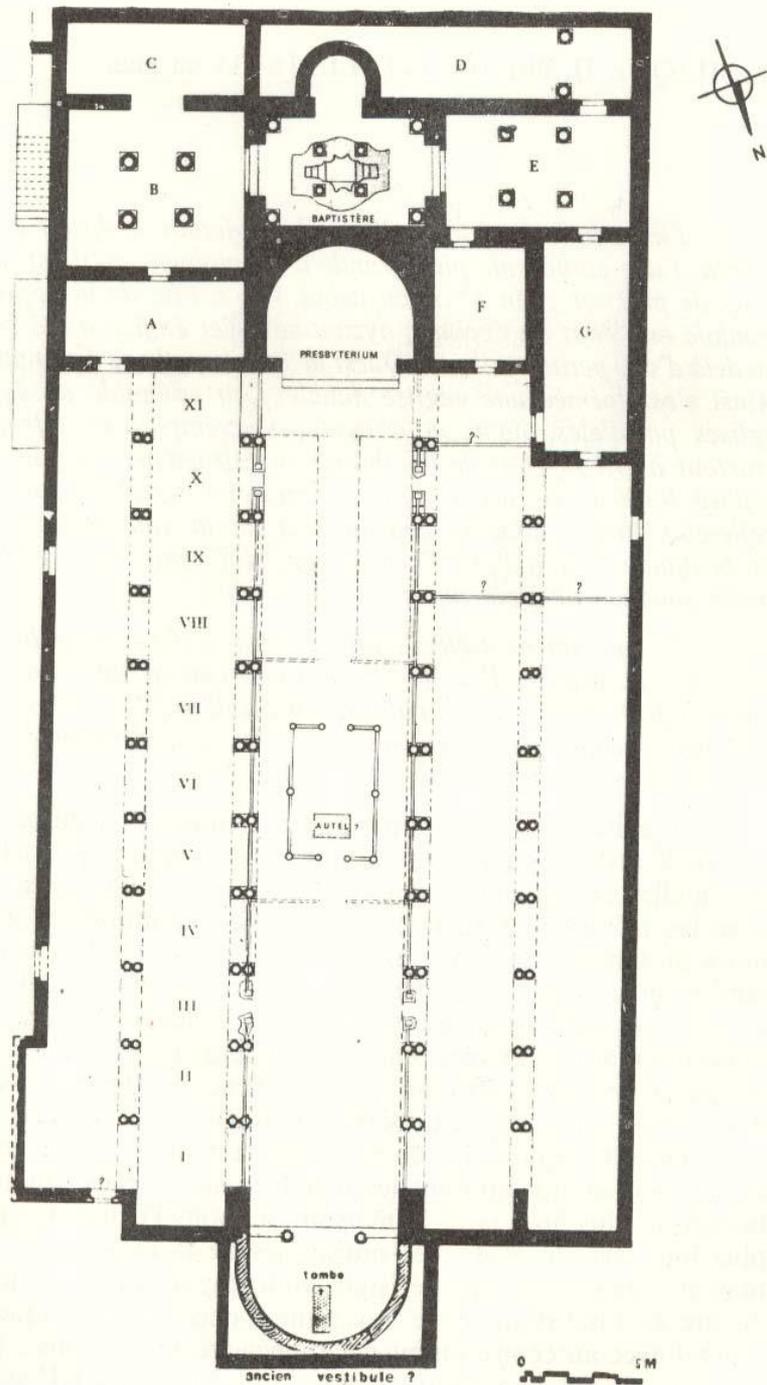


Fig. 18 : Le groupe épiscopal de Sufetula au VIe siècle : plan restitué (dessin Nowakowski d'après Hallier) .









Sbeitla (Sufetula),
Tunisia
6th cen.



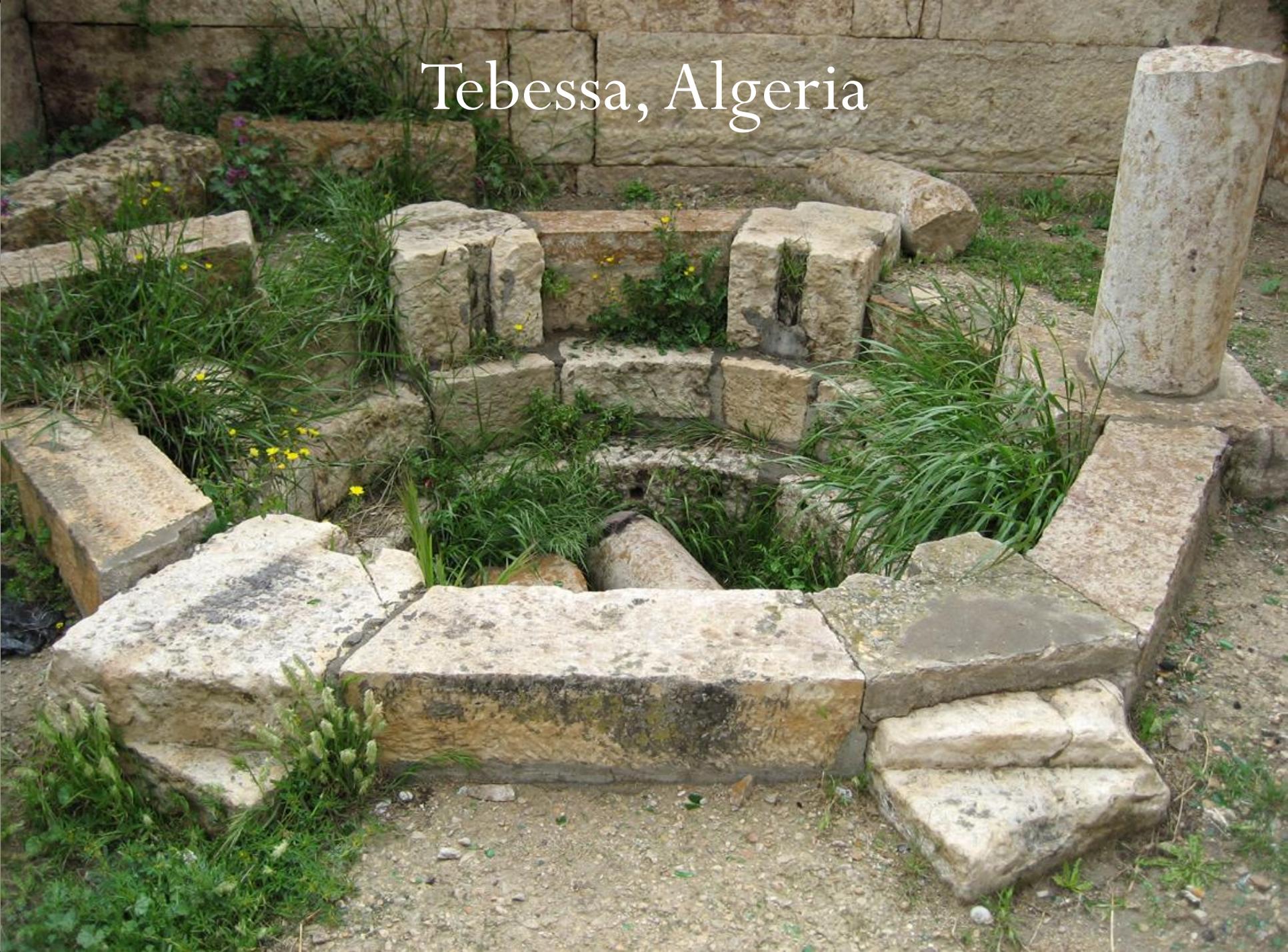
Tiddis, Algeria



Font at Timgad, Algeria, 4th cen.



Tebessa, Algeria



Tigzirt, Algeria



Baptismal Font, Kelibia (Tunisia), 6th cen.





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Bekalta Baptistery, Tunisia, 6th cen.



Tertullian's Theory of Baptism

- Baptismal Ritual may not be repeated John 13:10, Ephesians 4:5
- The ritual is necessary for salvation of adults
 - Can be administered in emergency by any male Christian
 - Should not be received before a person can make a personal commitment
- Martyrdom (dying in confession of Christ)
 - substitute for baptism not received
 - restore baptism after serious sin

Cyprian's Theory of Baptism

- Minister of Baptism must have Gift of Holy Spirit by which sins are forgiven
 - Matthew 16:18 and John 20:22-23
 - Holiness of life
 - Ministering within unity of church, in succession to apostolic college
- Martyrdom substitutes or replaces (in unity)
- Infants to be baptized (contagion of Adam)
- Baptism provided in emergency by clergy

Treatise on Rebaptism

- Water Baptism is always effective for dedicating a person to Christ
 - Marking military recruit taking oath of loyalty
- Spirit Baptism necessary for sanctification
 - Faith and Repentance are necessary
 - Spirit given by worthy clergy or directly by God
 - Not received by unworthy within the church
 - Can be received from God by subsequent change of heart

Fourth Century Theories

- Donatist
 - Baptism received only from a Faithful Bishop, within unity of true church
 - Require “rebaptism” of Catholics
 - Recognize baptism outside unity of the church in exceptions (conversion of whole congregations)
- Optatus of Milevis (Catholic writer)
 - Christ always baptized through his disciples
 - Three elements: Divine Trinity, Faith of Recipient, minister.
 - The first two are unchanging and determine efficacy

Augustine's Theory of Baptism

- Baptism necessary for Salvation
 - May be received from layperson or nonchristian
- Efficacy of Baptismal Ritual
 - Water Baptism dedicates a person to Christ
 - Efficacy from intention to perform the ritual
 - Power of Christ operative through any minister
 - Spirit Baptism given through Saints in the church
 - Persons who have Gift of Holy Spirit (love)
 - John 20:22-23; Matthew 18:18, 16:18; 1 Peter 4:8
 - Recipient: repentance, faith, desire for unity of church
 - Sanctification can be received or restored after baptism