

Were there "house churches"?

The crucial question about the liturgical places
before Constantine (312-337)

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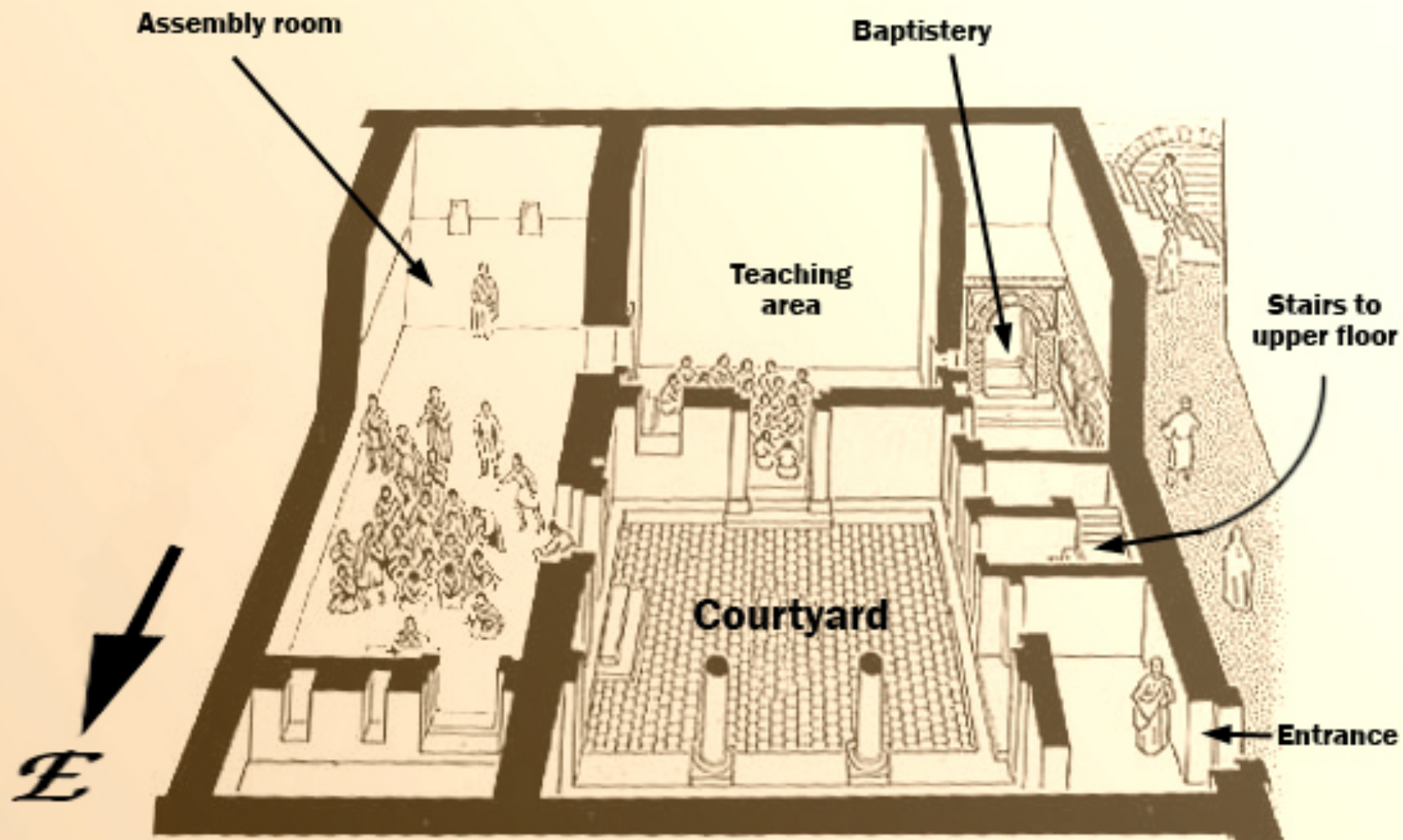
The cliché about „early house churches“ (here Wikipedia):

“ The first house church is recorded in [Acts 1:13](#), where the [disciples of Jesus](#) met together in the "Upper Room" of a house, traditionally believed to be where the [Cenacle](#) is today. For the first three centuries of the church, known as [Early Christianity](#), Christians typically met in homes, if only because intermittent persecution (before the [Edict of Milan](#) in 313) did not allow the erection of [public church buildings](#). ”

wrong architecture



- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. Vestibulum | 7. Cubiculum |
| 2. Impluvium | 8. Culina |
| 3. Compluvium | 9. Tegulae |
| 4. Peristylum | 10. Opus musivum |
| 5. Latrinae | 11. Triclinum |
| 6. Tabernae | 12. Trabs. |



3rd-C. CHURCH AT DURA-EUROPOS

wrong pictures



funeral meals in
the catacombs
(3rd/4th century),
not eucharists

wrong terminology

- „house church“ is a modern word-construction. It does not exist neither in the NT nor in the patristic literature:
- Acts of the Apostles: „house“ as gathering-place without information about architecture; no „house“ as liturgy-center
- S. Paul (Rom 16,5; 1 Cor 16,19; Col 4,15; Phlm 2):
ἡ κατ'οἶκον ἐκκλησία - no „house church“ as liturgy center
- (Origen) / Eusebius of Caesarea (+ 339):
„house of the church“ (domus ecclesiae) = „building of the church“ as liturgy center

How the church was really organized

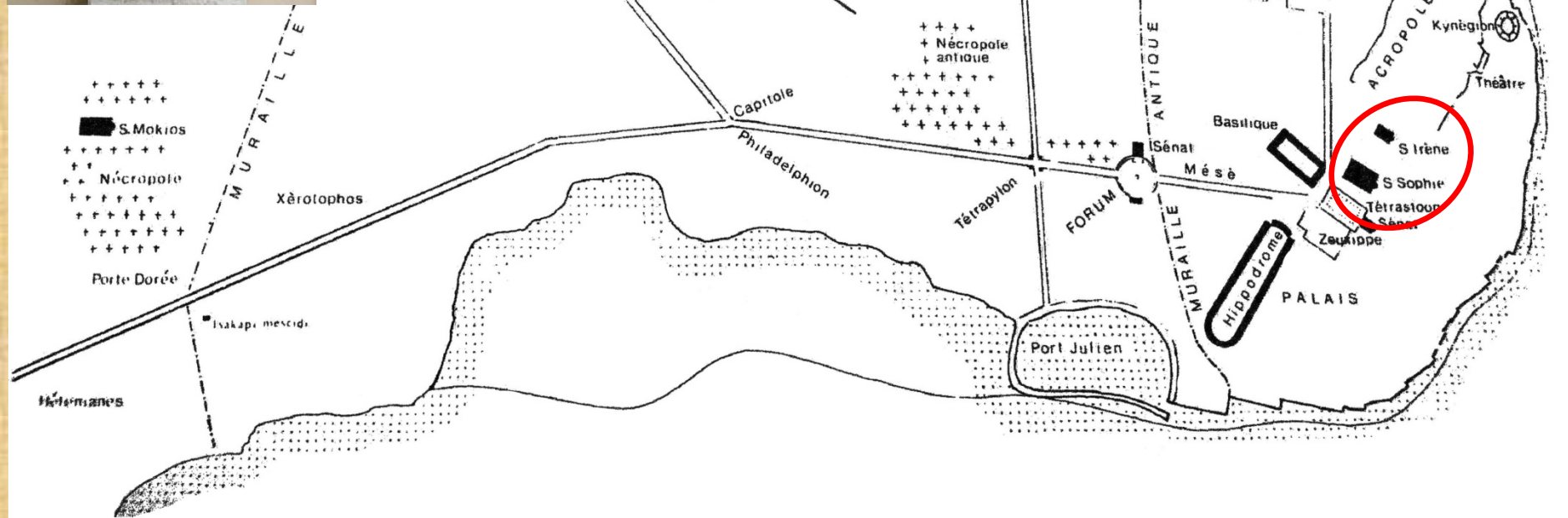
- urban character of christian mission
- unity of the city: „church“ = local church
- no fragmentary christianity, but ecclesiastical basic principle:
one bishop - one altar - one eucharist
most important representatives of this principle:
 - S. Paul (about 50)
 - John of Revelation (apocalypse) (about 80/90)
 - Ignatius of Antioch (beginning 2nd century)
 - Cyprian of Carthage (+ 258)

- Rom 16,1: „church“ in Kenchreai
- 1 Cor 1,2: „church“ in Corinth
- 1 Cor 16,1: „churches“ in Galatia (province!)
- 1 Cor 16,19: „churches“ in Asia (province!)
- Col 4,16: „church“ of Laodizeia
- 1 Thess 1,1: „church“ of the Thessalonians
- Rev 1,4: seven „churches“ in Asia:
Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira,
Sardes, Pergamon, Laodikeia

- Ignatius of Antioch wrote seven letters to seven cities.
- to the Philadelphians:
“So be eager to participate in the Eucharist! For there is only one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and a single chalice to unite his blood, a single altar as a single bishop together with the presbyterium and the deacons”

Positive proof or probability of only one place of christian cult in a city

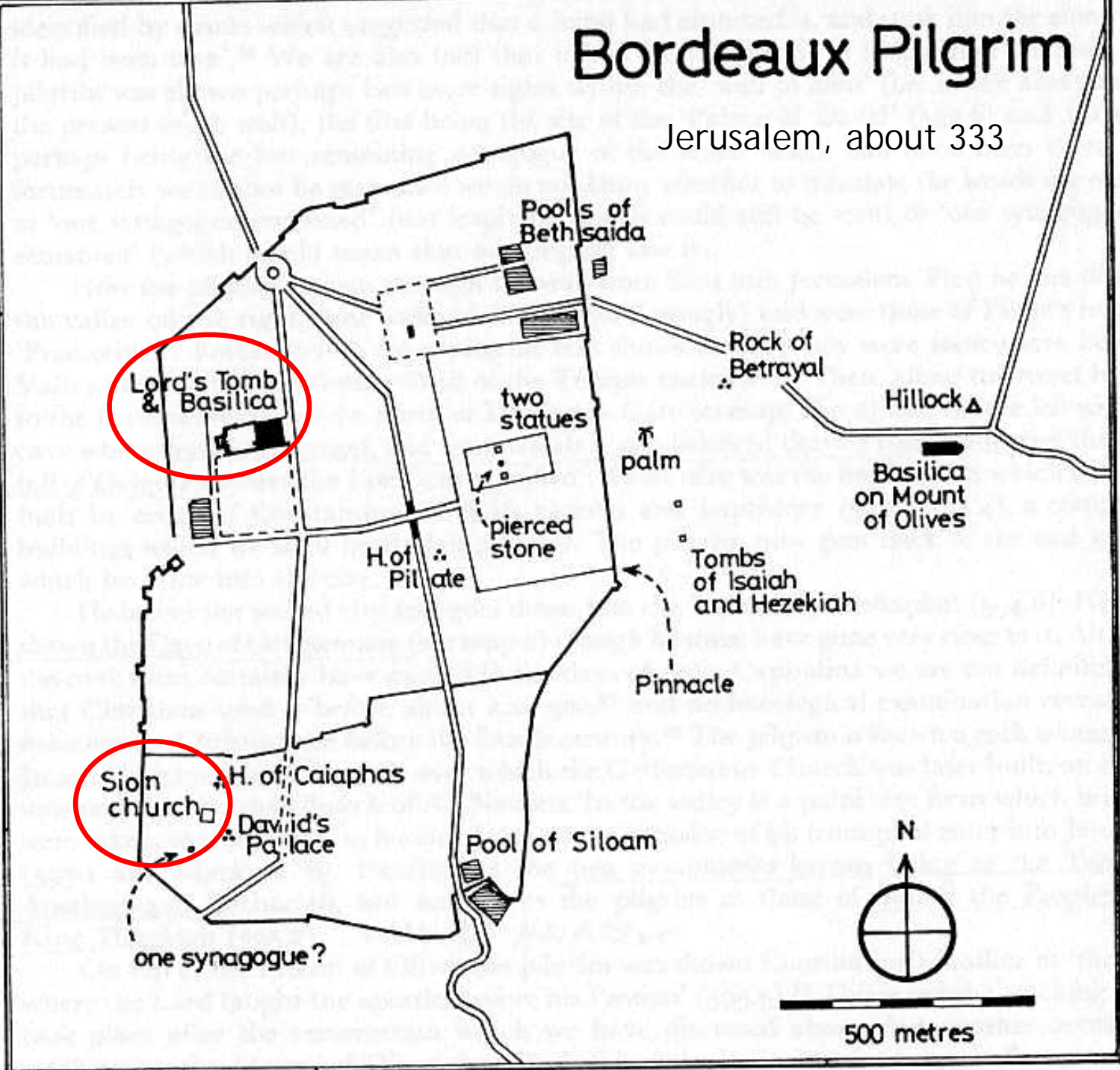
- Asia Minor (Corinth etc., Constantinople)
- Cappadocia, Pontus (Cesarea, Iconium etc.)
- North Africa (Tertullian, Cyprian, Gesta apud Zenophilum + Acta purgationis Felicis, Augustin)
- Syria (Antioch, Edessa, Trad. Apost., Didascalia, Dura Europos)
- Palestine (Cesarea, Tyre, Jerusalem)
- Spain (Synod of Elvira, 304)
- Alexandria (Clement, Origen)
- Rome (Paul, Justin, Pastor Hermae, Muratorian fragment, Hippolytus, „fermentum“, Lateran)

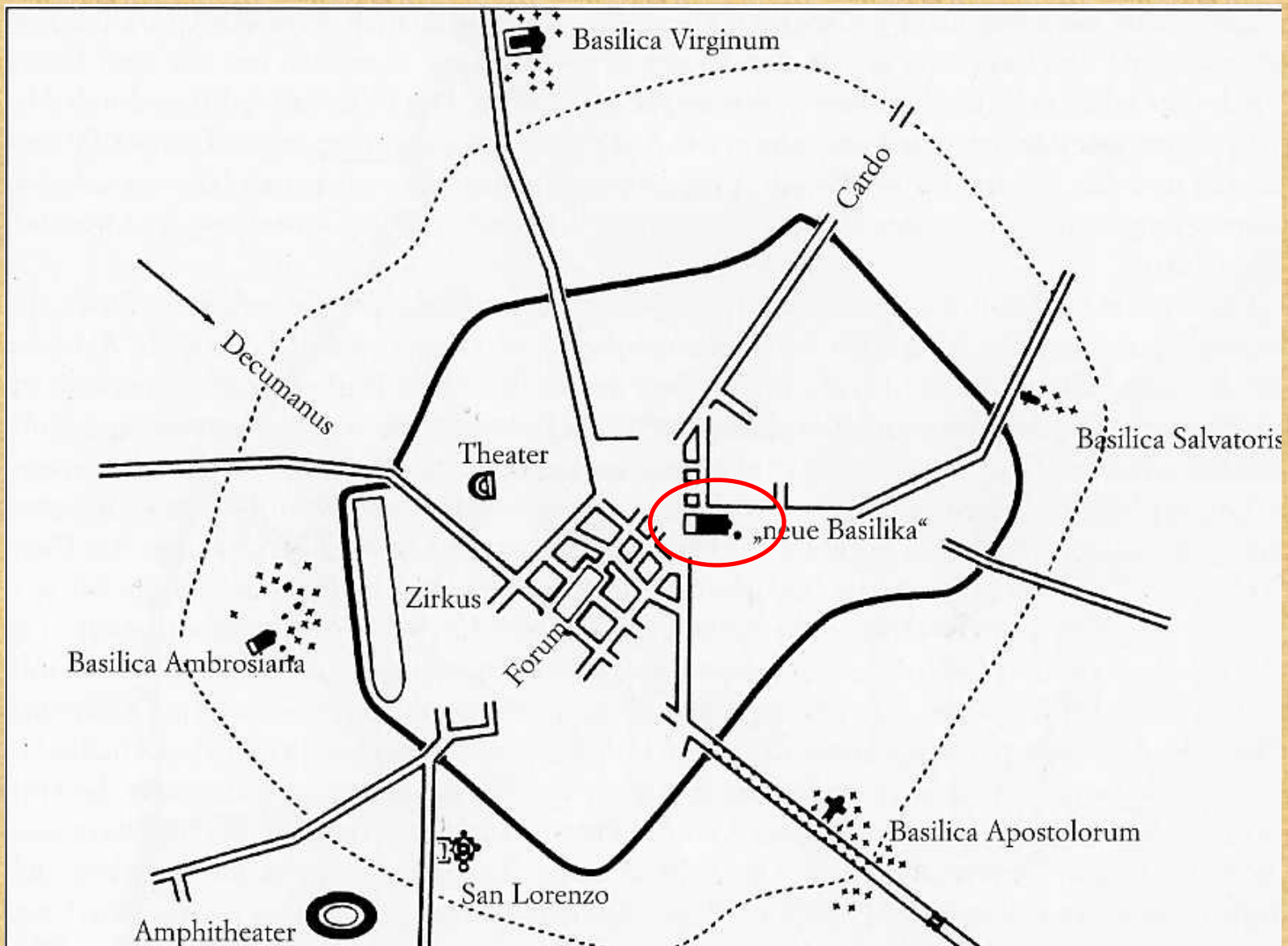


Plan I – Byzance antique et ville de Constantin.

Bordeaux Pilgrim

Jerusalem, about 333





Milan, at the time of bishop Ambrose (+ 397)

Rome:
 yellow = title churches
 (tituli)
 red = Lateran

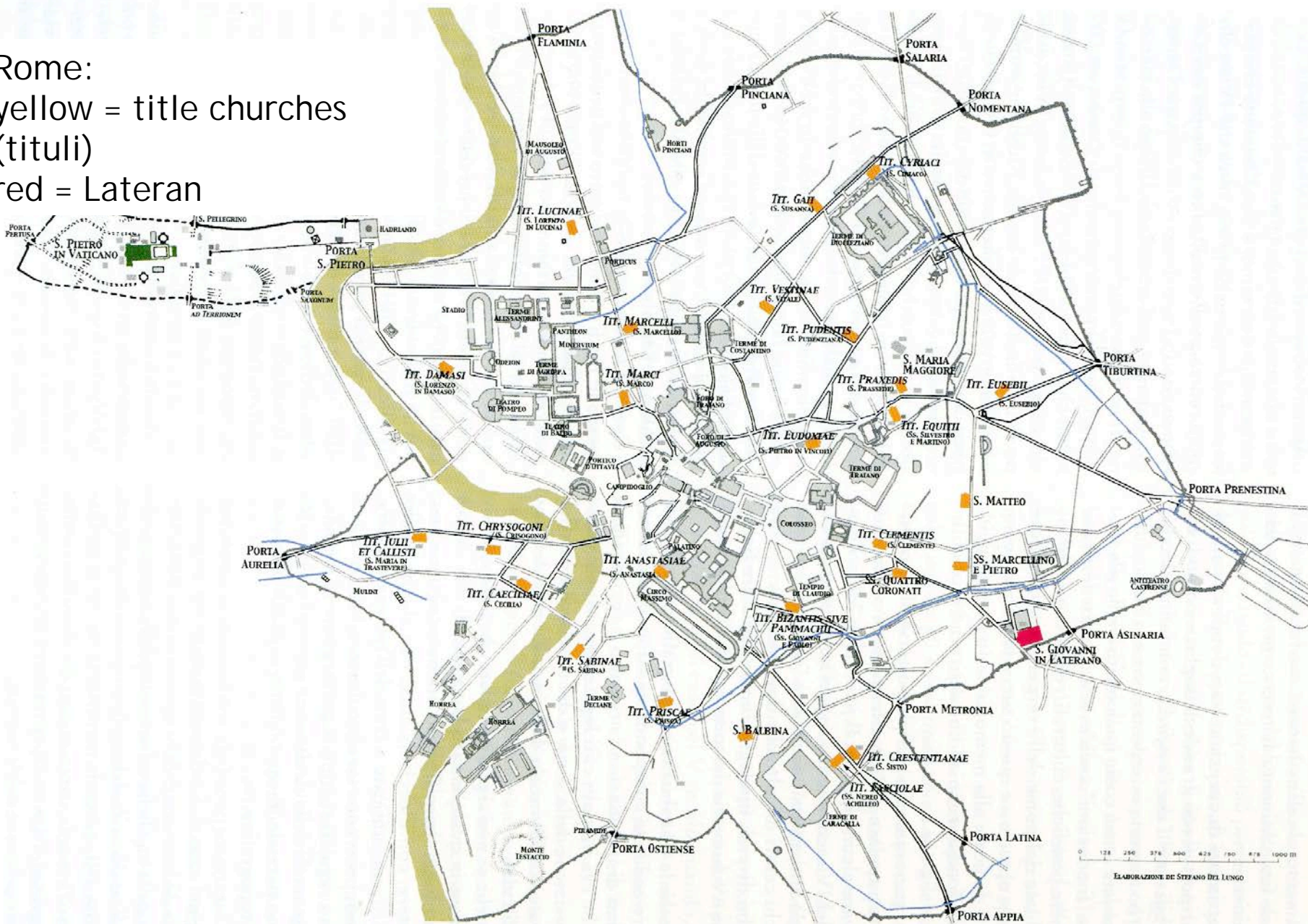
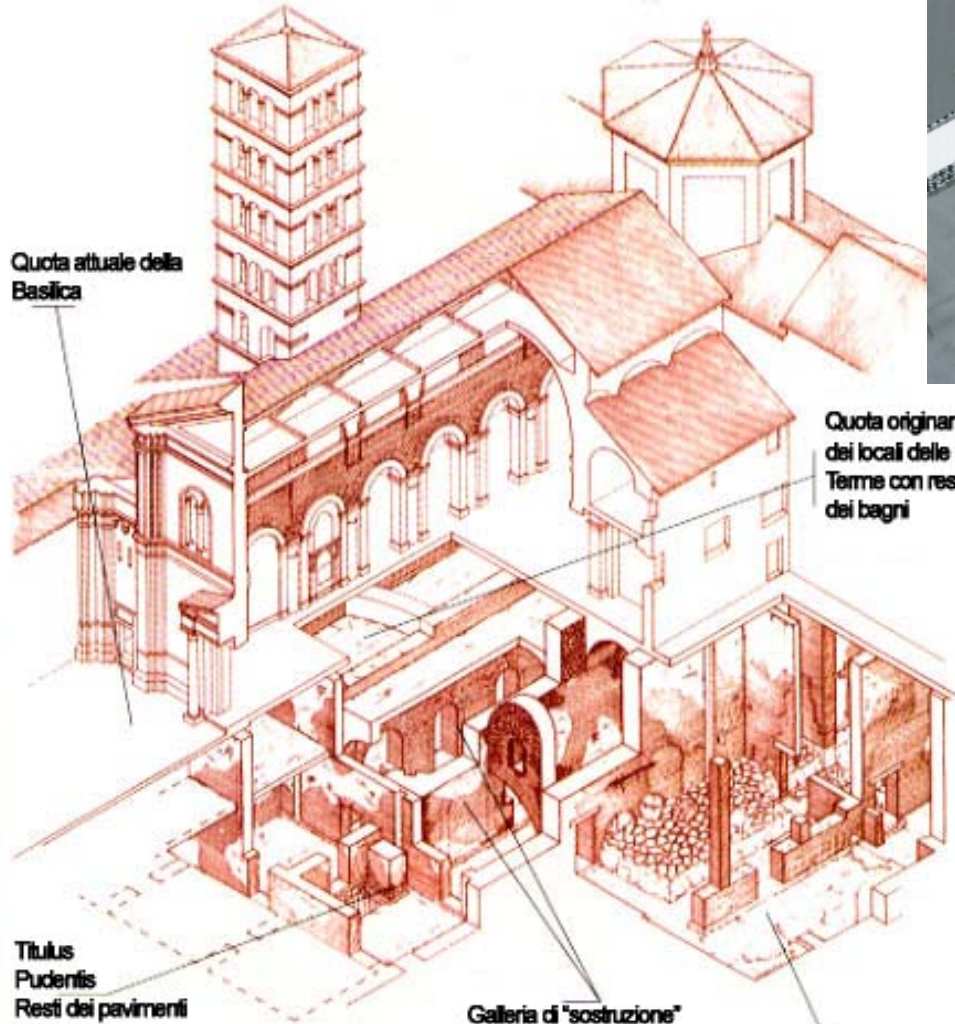


Fig. 1 - Roma nei secoli V-IX, sono evidenziati i complessi titolari.



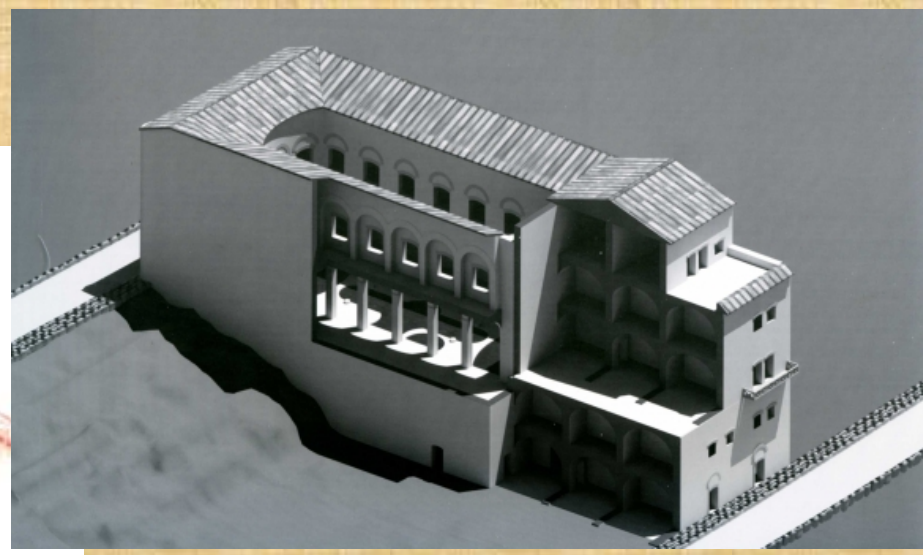
Quota attuale della Basilica

Quota originaria dei locali delle Terme con resti dei bagni

Titulus Pudentis
Resti dei pavimenti a mosaico

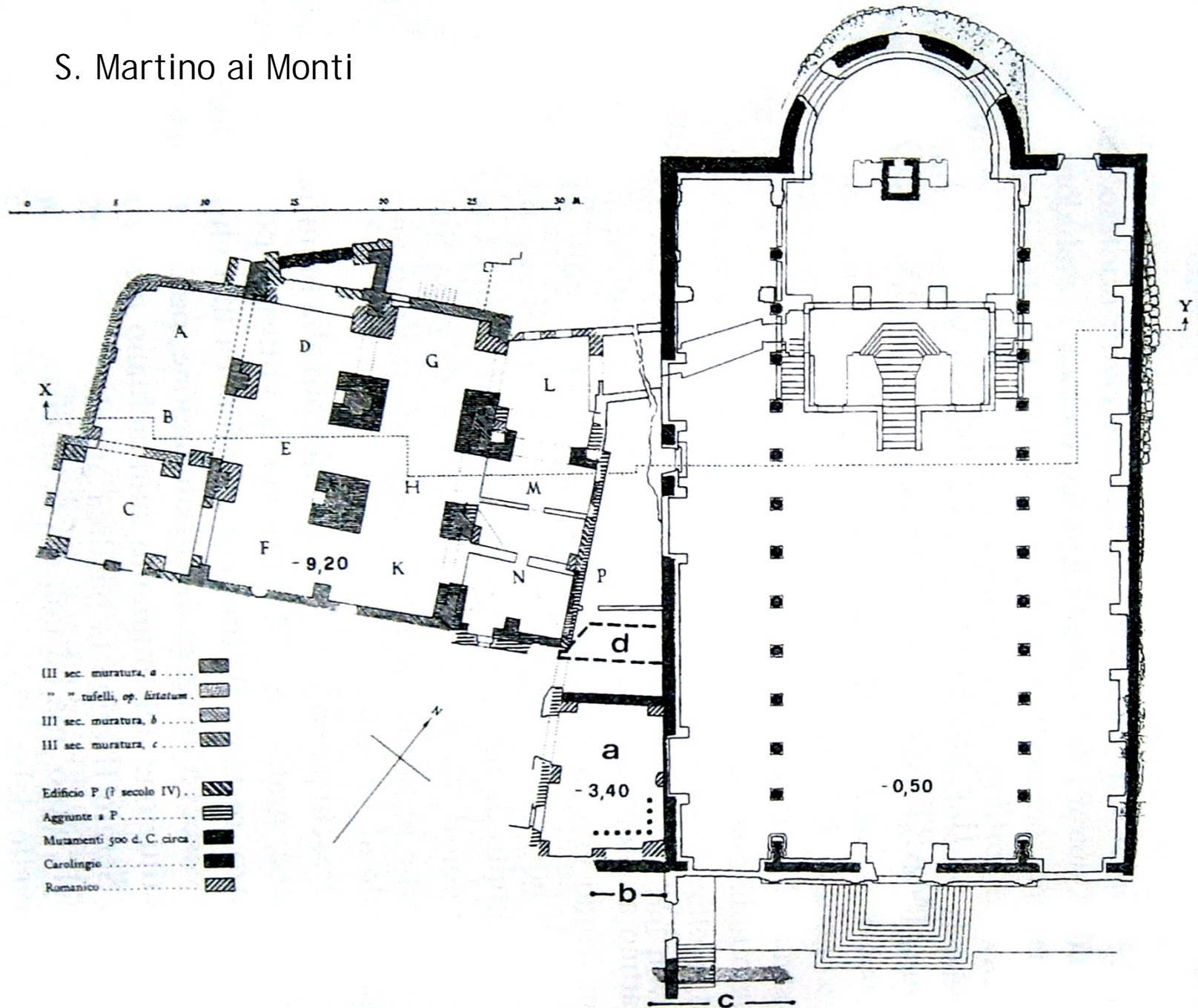
Galleria di "sostruzione" dei locali delle Terme

Resti del mosaico del pavimento del cortile laterale e pavimento in Basolato Romano



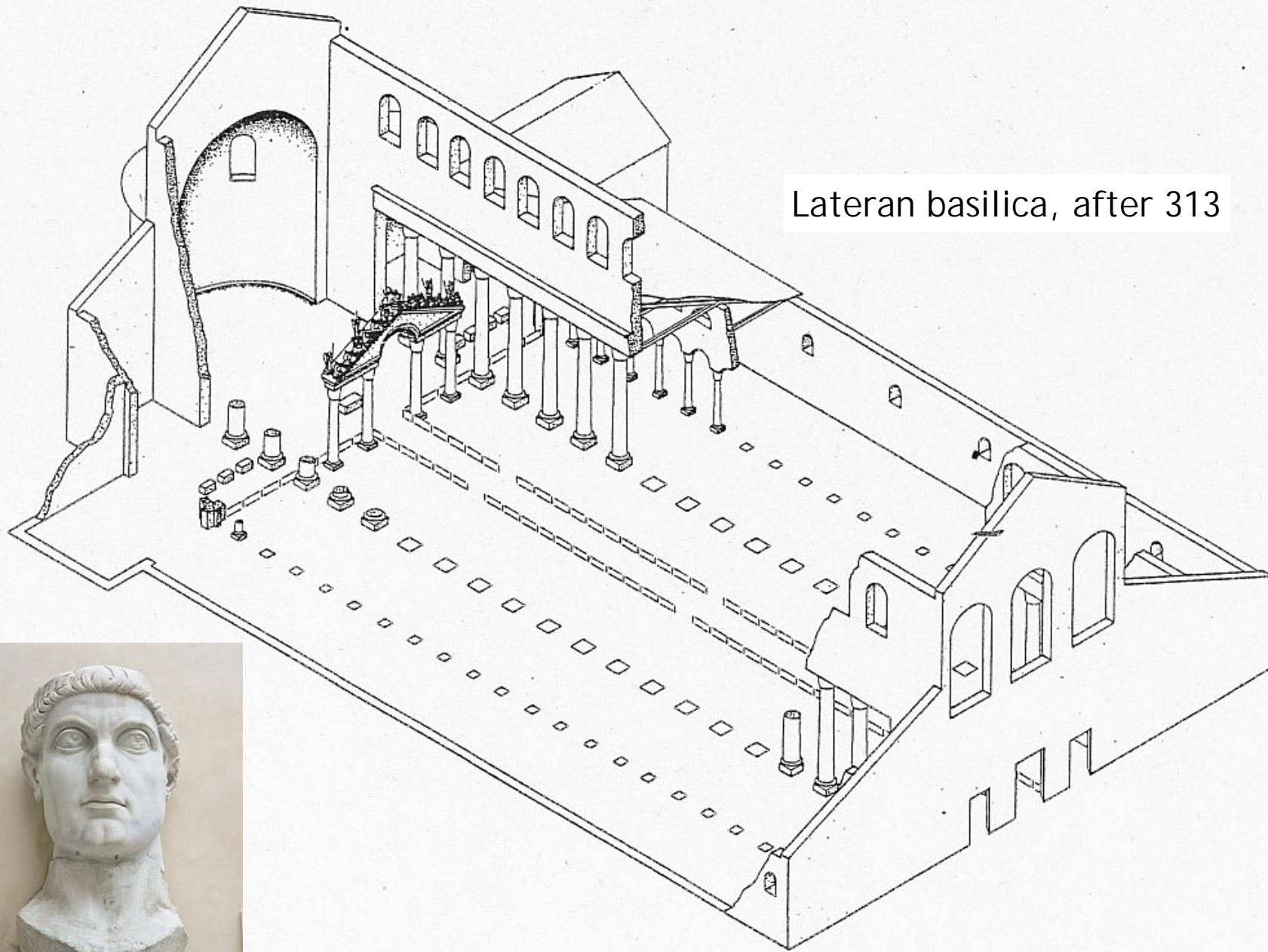
S. Pudenciana

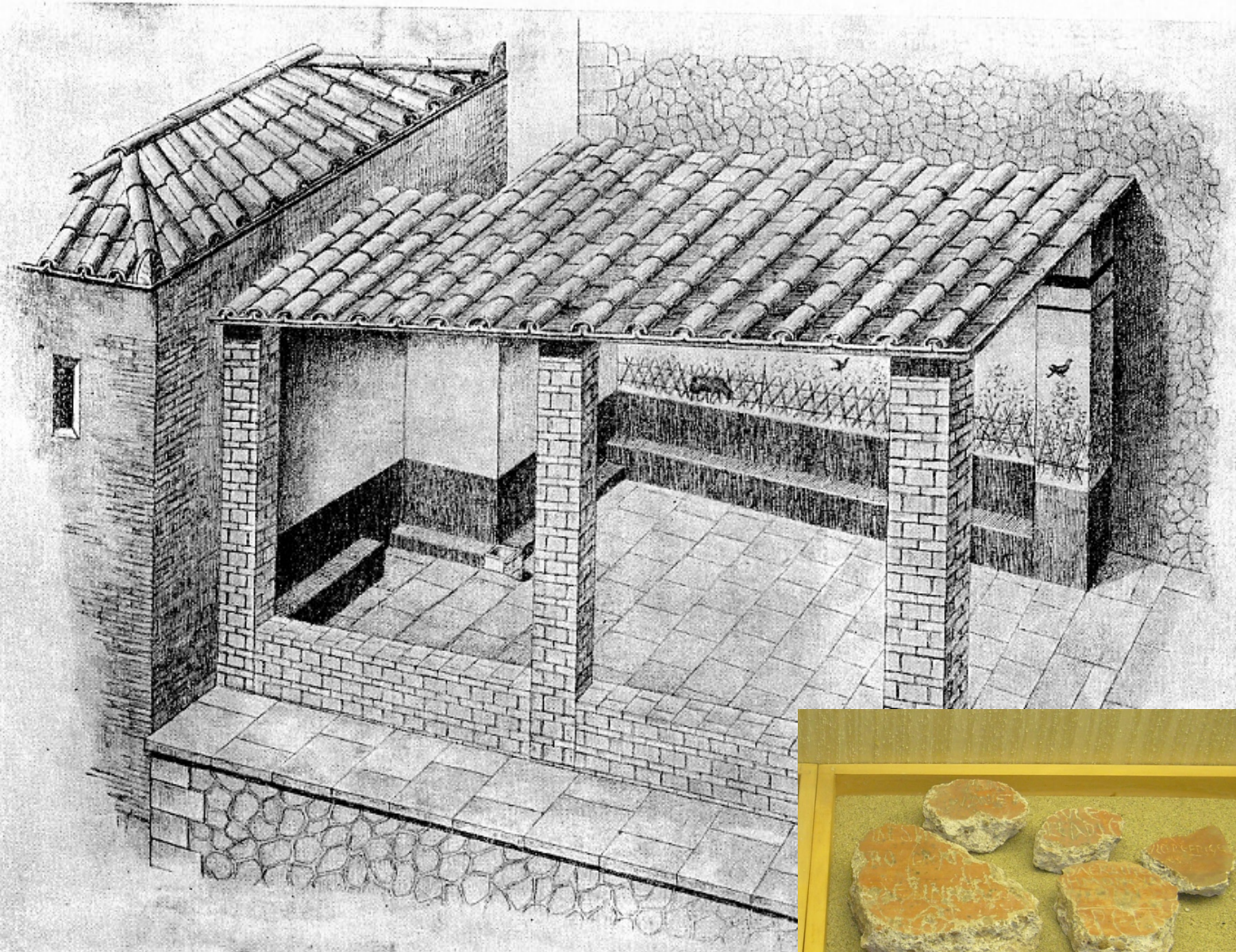
S. Martino ai Monti



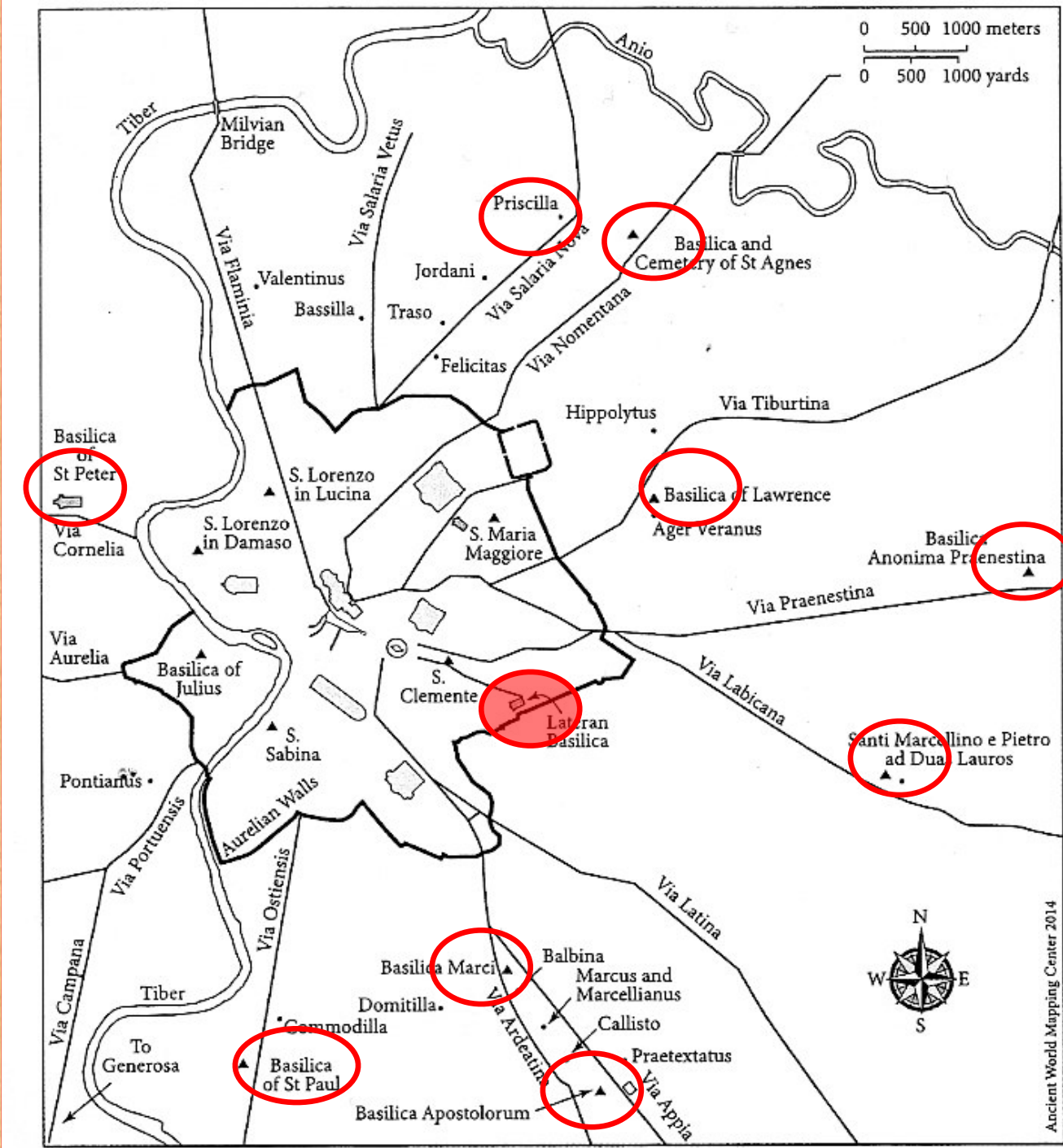


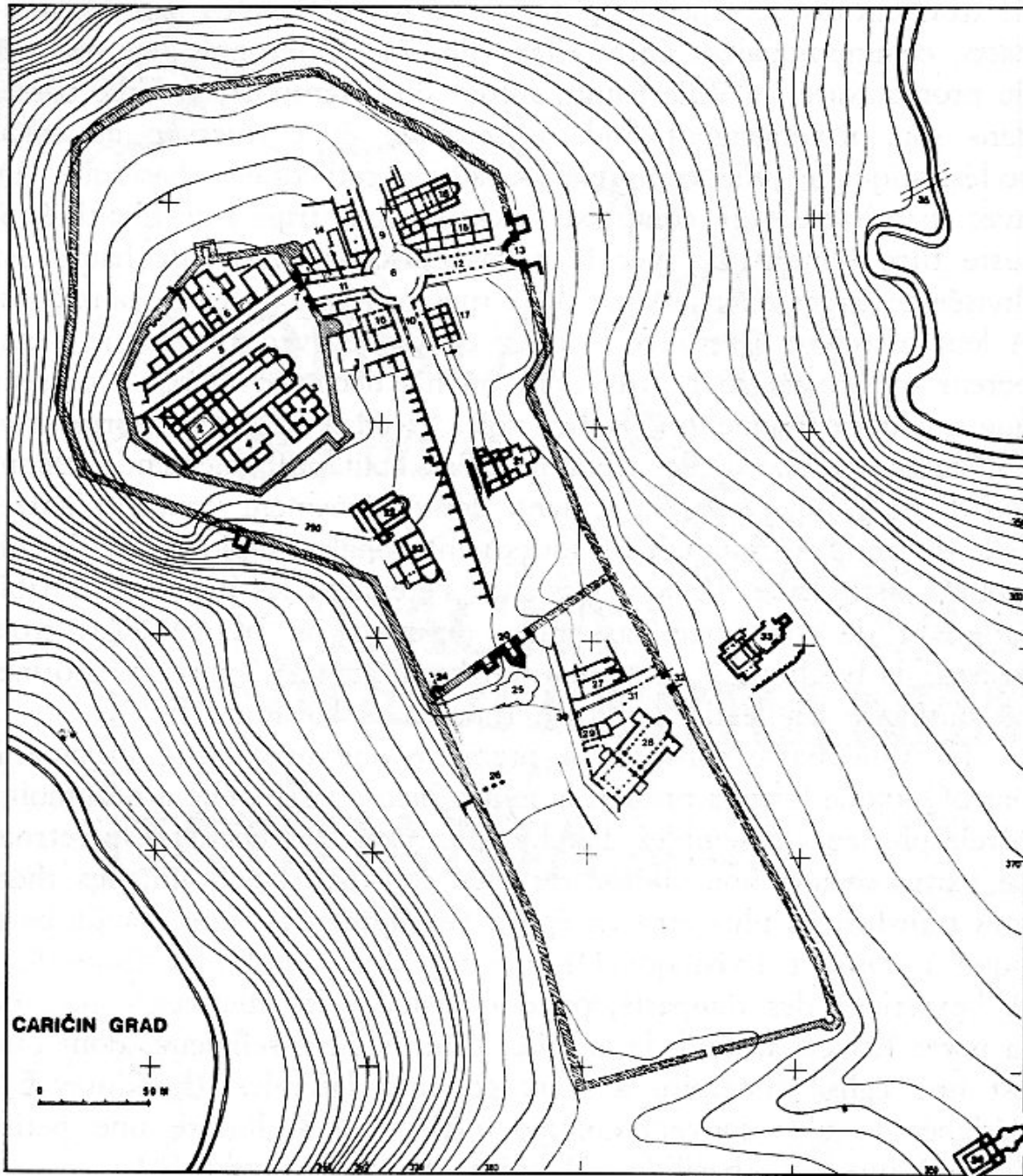
Lateran basilica, after 313





Triclia of San Sebastiano, 250 ca.





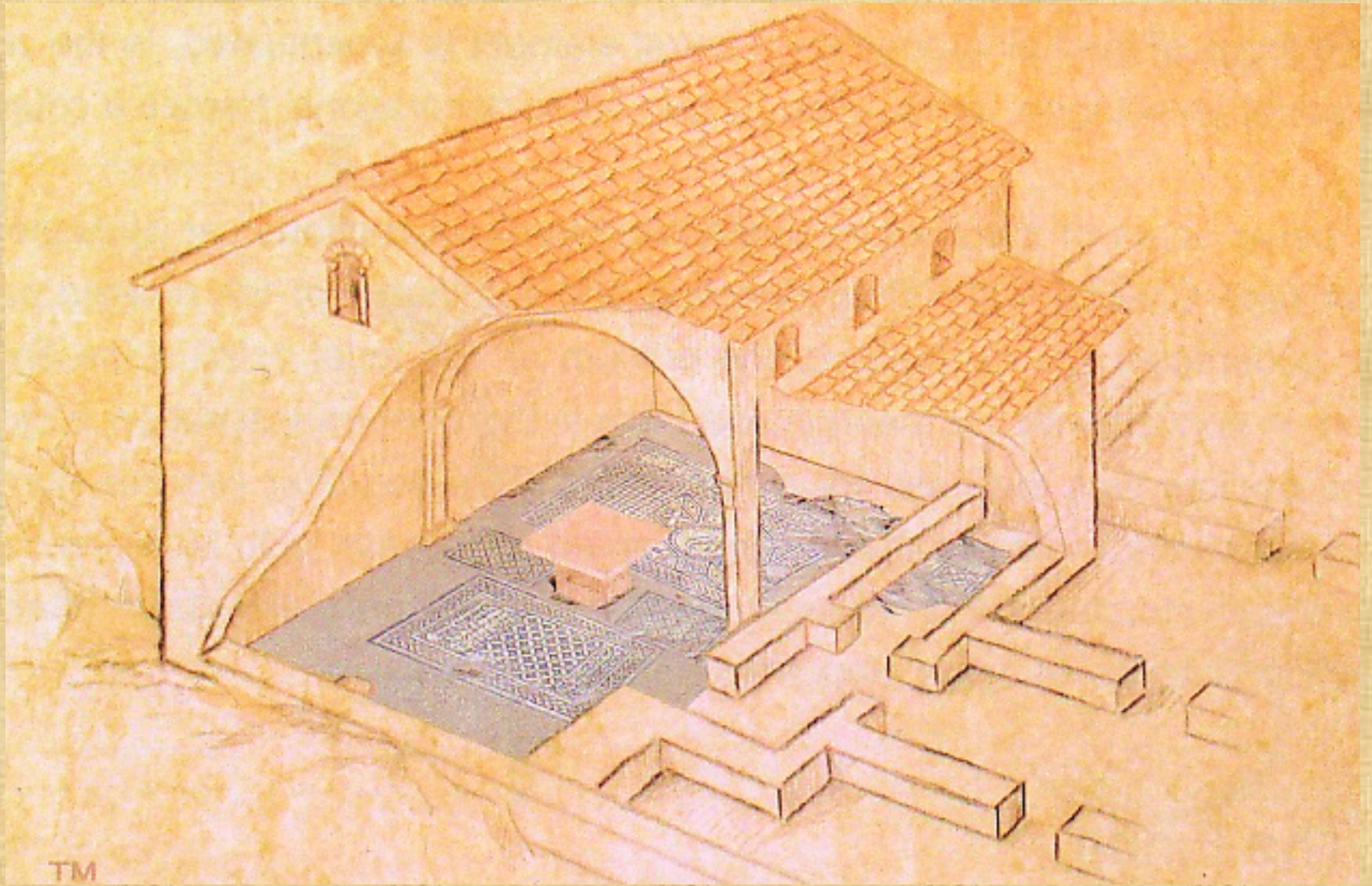
Justiniana Prima, Serbia
2nd half of 6th century



Atlasgebirge
Sahara

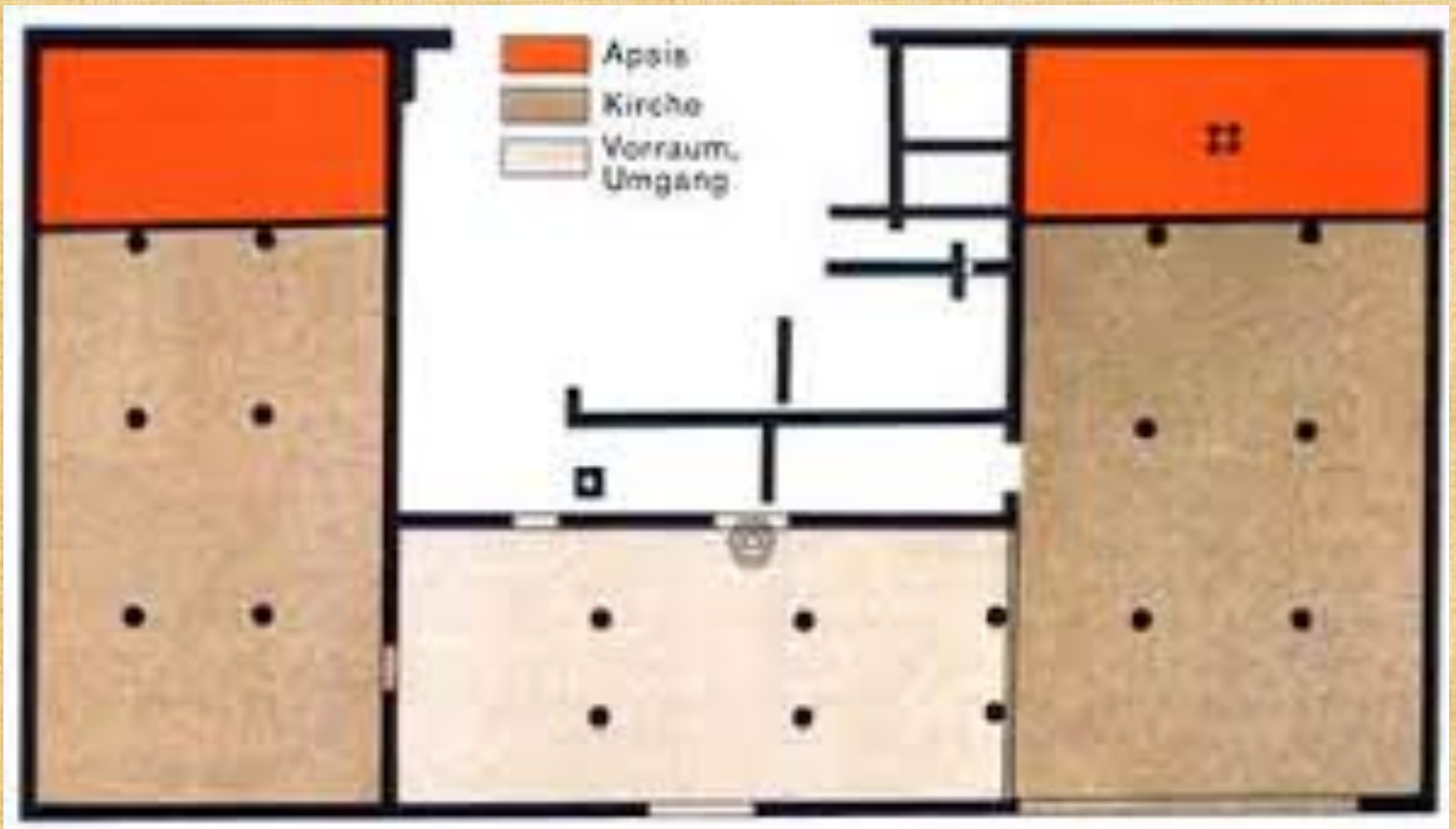
Desertae et Incultae Regiones

area
representing
su base
scale app



TM

Megiddo, about 260?



Aquileia, about 300