

Friarscroft and the Trinitarians in Dunbar

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SUMMARY

The field of Friarscroft, Dunbar, was examined in advance of redevelopment so that an assessment of its archaeological potential could be made. By tradition this field has been ascribed to the Red (or Trinitarian) Friars who founded a house at Dunbar c 1240 (Cowan & Easson 1976, 108). This tradition was accepted by the RCAMS (1924, 29) when they examined a dovecot tower that still stands in the centre of the field. The ashlar masonry incorporated in this building, two substantial arches inside and two gable ends facing respectively E and W, were interpreted as forming part of the Trinitarian Friars' church. As a result of exploratory trenches the extent of this friary church and part of a cemetery were uncovered. No cloister or other associated buildings were found, though only a portion of the field could be examined.

HISTORY

The Trinitarians, though usually described as friars, were neither a mendicant nor a teaching order. They were founded to support poor pilgrims and to ransom captives in the Holy Land (Cowan & Easson 1976, 107). Of the eight houses known to have been founded in Scotland, only three were located away from the E coast. This has been taken to indicate a connection between Trinitarian houses and pilgrimage routes to the shrine at St Andrews (I am grateful to Rev Ian McMartin of Dunbar for this suggestion). There is perhaps more evidence to show that nursing the poor was an important aspect of the Trinitarians' work than has previously been suggested. The foundations at Berwick, Fail, Houston and Scotlandwell, Loch Leven were all closely connected with hospitals (Cowan & Easson 1976, 171, 179, 182, 185), and it is notable that it was a master of the hospital rather than a prior who swore fealty to Edward I for the lands of Houston.

The house at Dunbar was founded by Christiana Brus, Countess of Dunbar, in 1242 – the reasons for the foundation not being known. The charter is quoted here in some detail as it has previously been interpreted as suggesting that there was only one 'friar to do divine service' (Cowan & Easson 1976, 108):

by this my present charter confirmed to God and the Friars of the Order of Holy Trinity and of Captives my house which I founded in Dunbar with all its belongings and chattels . . . To be held by the said Friars in pure and perpetual alms as freely, quietly, fully, and honourably as any other alms in the kingdom of Scotland is held and possessed, so that the Minister of the House of Berwick, for the time being, will have perpetual care and charge of the said house, who shall also find a

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friar to be Chaplain in the said house and continually celebrate divine service piously and devoutly for the quick and the dead: . . . the said Minister with the friars dwelling in the house at Dunbar (Harvey & Macleod 1930, no 14).

The reference to the 'Minister with the friars dwelling in the house at Dunbar' makes it likely that this house followed the usual pattern of maintaining a minister with three priest-brethren. Additional evidence for a normal establishment is the suggestion by Cowan and Easson (1976, 174) that the Trinitarians, rather than the collegiate church of Dunbar, were responsible for the *Maison Dieu* hospital in Dunbar, as the lands of the hospital were in the hands of the Trinitarian church at Peebles by the Reformation and it is known that the Peebles house had gained control of the lands of the Dunbar Trinitarians by 1529. Support for this hypothesis is given by the finding of medals inscribed 'Judea Captiva' in 1766 (Turner Simpson & Stevenson 1981, 22) which were thought to have come from the Carmelite friary in Dunbar. Cowan and Easson have cast doubts on the existence of a Carmelite foundation in Dunbar, as the only reference to the house is a post-Reformation one to land owned by Carmelites which may be a confusion with the Trinitarians. Indeed medals inscribed 'Judea Captiva' are more likely to be connected with an order which was originally set up to ransom captives from the Holy Land than with the Carmelite Friars whose connection with Mount Carmel would have been fairly remote by the time the order reached Scotland. The place where these medals were found (fig 1) is near the site of the hospital which was totally destroyed by 1728. Its name survives nearby as Maidendew, a corruption of *Maison Dieu*.

No mention is made of the Trinitarians after the foundation, until efforts were made by the Trinitarian house at Peebles to gain control of the land and revenues of the Dunbar house. These efforts ultimately succeeded in July 1529, only six months after the house had been granted to a secular chaplain (Cowan & Easson 1976, 108).

THE SITE

As the contours on fig 2 show the field of Friarscroft slopes sharply down to the S. The S end of the field is low-lying and until the introduction of proper drainage in the 19th century was subject to flooding. The field lies W of properties which front the High Street c 75 m further E. Between these properties is a close, 1.5 m wide, now filled-in by rubbish thrown from the High Street properties, whose lands are c 3 m above those of Friarscroft. The close was known as Friarswalk.

No previous archaeological work had been done on the site which had been used as a market garden. No trace of buildings, other than the dovecot, is evident on the earliest map of Dunbar which was drawn by General Roy in 1750. The dovecot is 3.5 m wide by 8.35 m long. Ashlar masonry is evident on the N wall of the building and on the central tower above the two gable ends, the apex of the two roof raggles being 9 m above the present ground level (RCAMS 1924, 29). On the S wall there is a blocked doorway (pl 31b). There is also evidence for blocked arches on both E and W faces. These are c 3 m wide, matching reasonably well the two arches inside the building that are estimated as being 2.4 m apart. The internal arches are 0.7 m thick and set 1.5 m from the inside of the walls, the S wall being 0.9 m thick. The pigeon nesting boxes had been cut into the building at a later date. There do not appear to be any floor divisions in this tower, though detailed examination of the interior was inhibited by the aggressiveness of the pigeon fleas that inhabited this dovecot.

THE EXCAVATION

The excavation of the site, in advance of building development, was a limited exercise to define the archaeologically sensitive areas, before the building plans were accepted. The work took place in two phases. The first in April 1981 with two people for 10 days and the second in May 1981 with three people for one week. It was on the theory that the dovecot was almost certainly part of the original friars' church

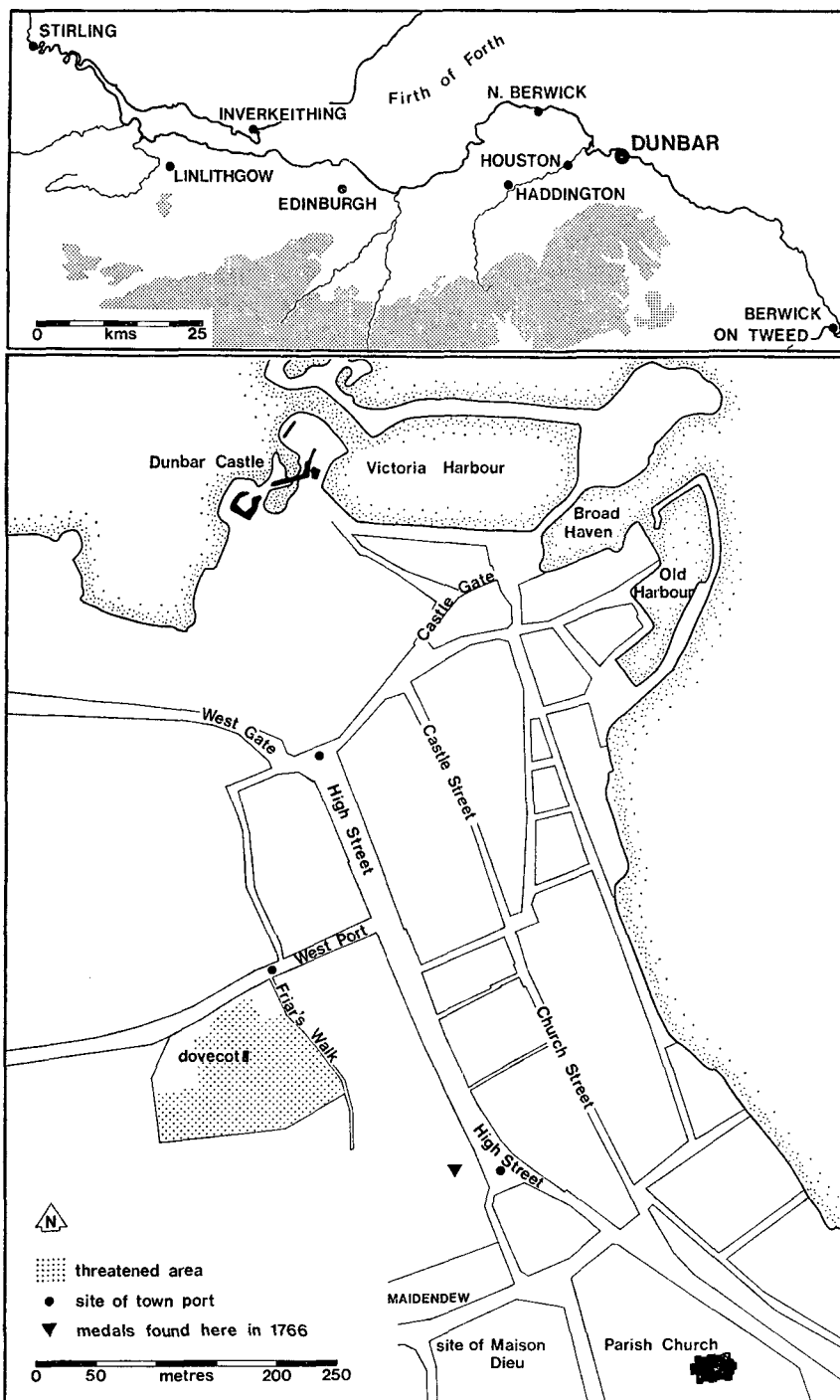


FIG 1 Location of Friarscroft, Dunbar

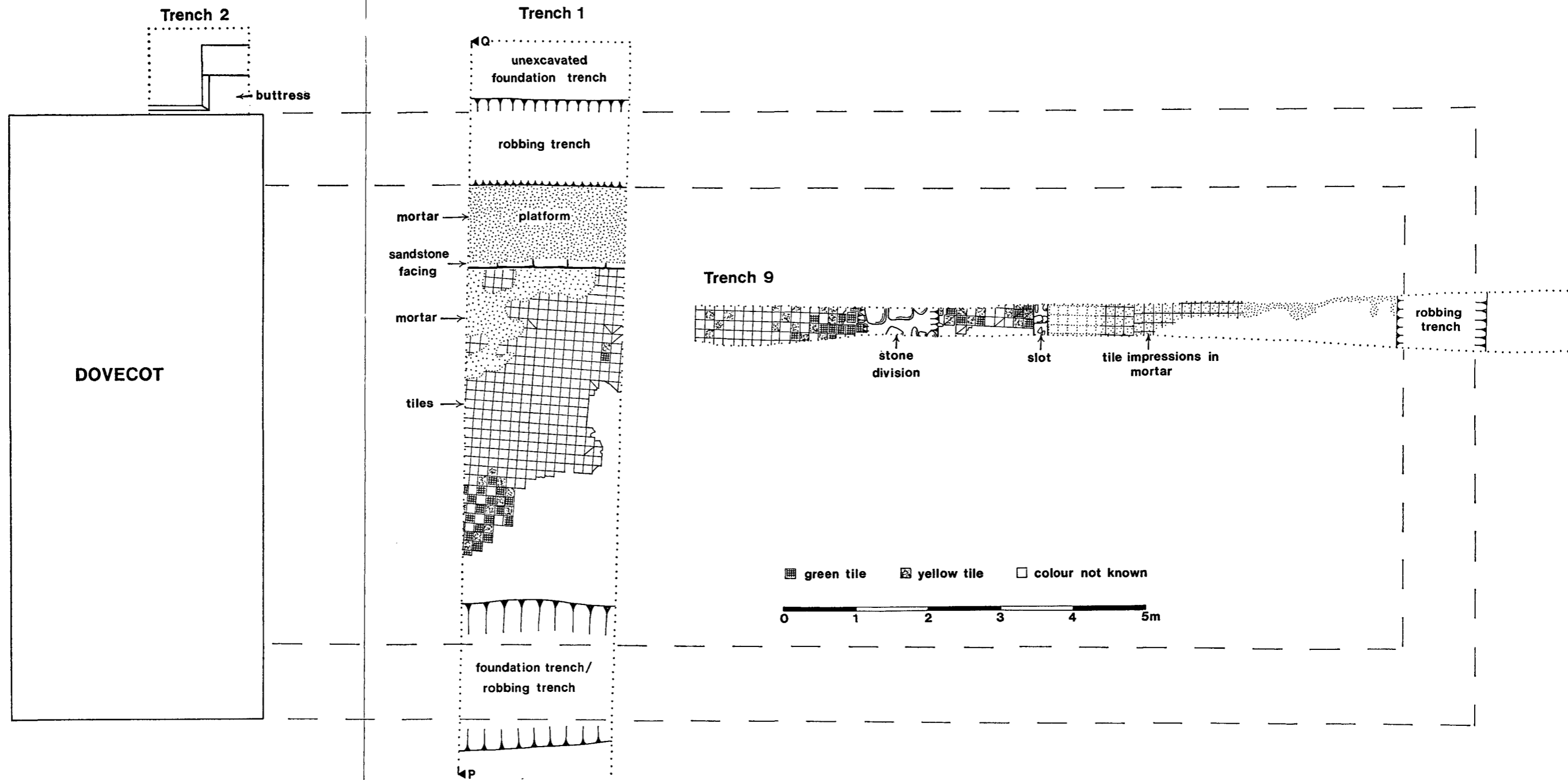


FIG 3 East end of the church and tiled floor as revealed by trenches 1 and 9

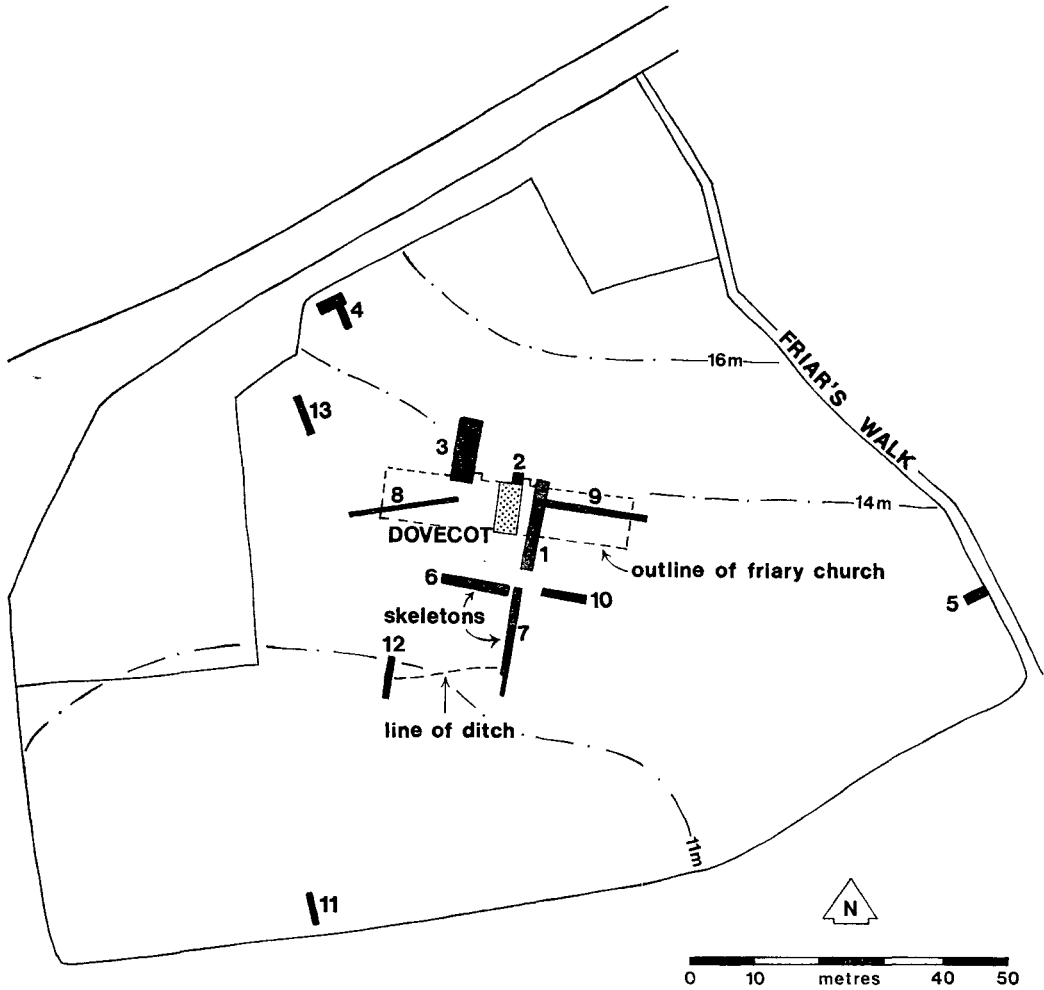


FIG 2 Position of trenches excavated at Friarscroft, Dunbar

that the excavation was conducted. The method was to remove by machine the topsoil and upper rubble layers and clear the remainder by hand. Trenches 5, 11, 12, 13 and the S extension to trench 4 were totally excavated by machine. The extent of the church was revealed in trenches 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9 as indicated on fig 2. This showed that it was a building 39 m long by 8.35 m wide with the W and E portions having the same internal length of 16.6 m. The present dovecot was clearly a central tower for this building.

Outside the dovecot the walls had been totally robbed-out leaving robber trenches varying from 1.1 to 1.25 m wide. Where examined, the bases of the robbed-out foundation trenches for the W and S walls were set c 0.4 m lower than the foundation for the E wall. This latter foundation was, in turn, 0.18 m lower than the N wall which was the same depth both E and W of the dovecot. It is obvious from these levels that the building was terraced into the slope so that less support was needed on the N and E walls. The foundation had been taken down to an underlying subsoil, which was composed of clay and which formed a more compact foundation than the silts that lay above.

Elaborate foundation trenches had been cut as shown in fig 3. Only that for the S wall of the chancel was fully excavated. On the S side this involved a slanting cut 0.25 m wide at a point 0.25 m above the base of the foundation trench, this being the maximum surviving depth of deposit, as the layers above, finely tilled silt with mortar and stones, were part of the destruction deposit. On the N side the cut was

more vertical, at an angle of 70° , and the fill was different from that on the S, consisting of brown silt and stones. These fills may not have been typical as the section for the N walls of both the chancel and the nave consisted of a sequence of mortar spreads, 0.25–0.35 m apart, separated by a compact clayish silt. The mortar spreads are interpreted as construction levels filled in as the wall was raised. At the base of the foundation trenches for the W and the E walls, a 0.1 m wide deposit of mortared rubble survived. It lay on the inside of the W wall and the outside of the E wall and, though not easily distinguished from the rubble fill of the robber trenches, it may have formed part of the original packing. Evidence at the base of the robber trench suggested that the lowest course of stone and mortar was up to 0.2 m wider than the robbed-out wall above.

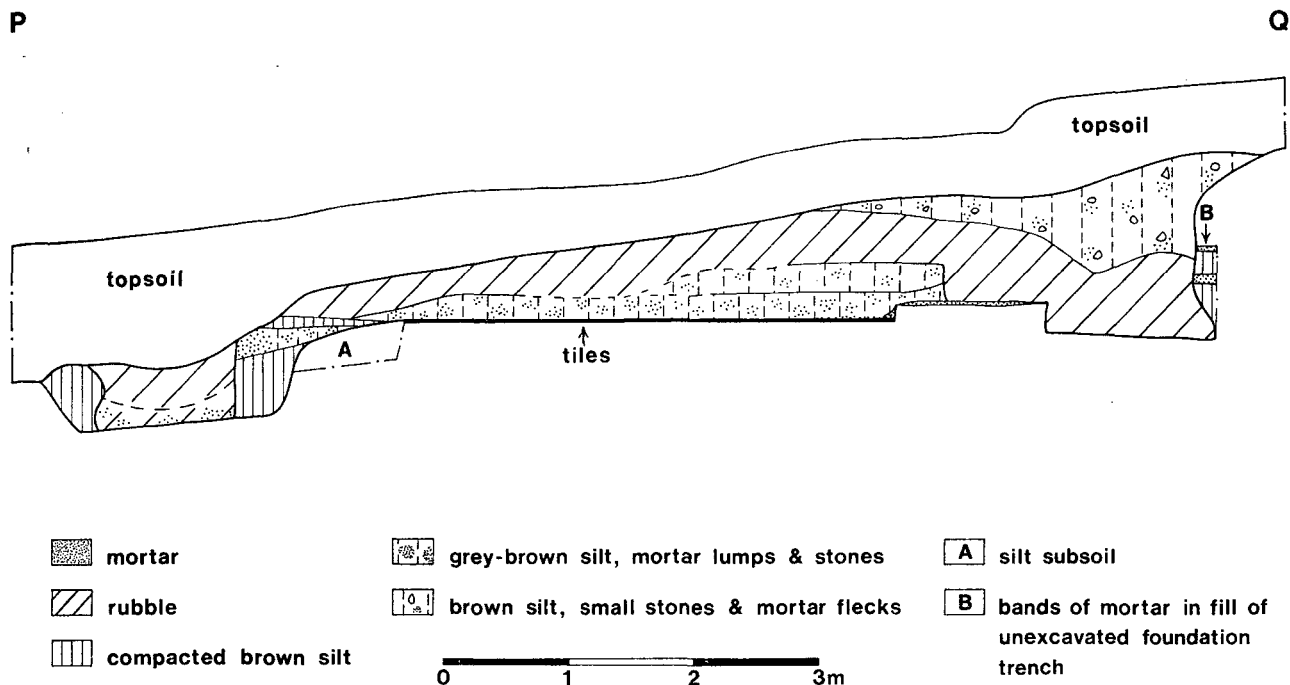


FIG 4 West section trench 1

On the N side of the dovecot, where ashlar blocks were evident, two chamfered courses were revealed (pl 31c) set 0.8 m below the present ground surface. Below this level was unfaced stone and it is probable that only the dressed masonry was exposed. No form of flooring or path was noted to the N level with the ashlar walling. Part of a buttress was found on the NE corner of the tower and the site of another one was deduced from a robbed-out trench extending from the N wall of the chancel. No evidence of buttressing was found in the other trenches excavated.

Within the building on the N side of the nave a clay floor was found in trench 3. It was not clear whether this was a raised aisle or part of a continuous floor level across the nave, as there was no floor surviving in trench 8 and the destruction rubble was up to 0.3 m deeper than the rubble in trench 3 to the N. The removal of the rubble revealed a brown silt considered to be the original ground surface. Two features containing copper-based slag were found in trench 8. The more complete example, 5 m W of the dovecot, was roughly circular, being 0.5 m in diameter. It contained a white silt, possibly in a bowl of red/brown silt, the latter probably being a burning of the underlying silt. Above the white silt was a clayish soil, yellow/brown in colour, containing small fragments of slag and charcoal. The other feature, further W, and lying between 11.25 and 12.20 m from the dovecot was less clearly defined. It was possibly linear but this was not certain because of the restricted area examined. The soil was mostly burnt silt and badly disturbed, more and larger pieces of slag came from this.

The chancel had suffered less damage than the nave so that most of the floor plan could be recovered. It was divided into three levels W to E by two features, one at 8.4 m from the dovecot and the other 10.8 m. The westerly division was probably 0.7 m wide, though possibly as much as 1 m wide, and was formed of shaped sandstone blocks set in clay. It is not certain that this was a stone wall, as charcoal with nails was found between the stones which may mean that some timber structure lay above these stones. The second division was a narrow slot 0.2 m wide with a clay and stone fill. The floor was formed from glazed tiles, either yellow or dark green. They were set on a slightly different alignment to that of N and S walls. Much of the glaze had been leached away rather than being worn by use and the surfaces had been fragmented, perhaps by falling rubble. Where evident, the colours suggested that an alternative yellow/green pattern had been deliberately laid, save at the E edge of the first floor. Here, the colours were mostly green for a distance of four tiles W of the division. As yellow tiles were evident in section this may only be part of an irregular laying rather than a variation of the pattern. The second level, 1.3 m wide, was 60 mm higher and the third level was estimated as being 135 mm higher still. An estimated level is necessary as only the tile impressions survive in this area. Beyond a line 13.6 m E of the dovecot no tile impressions survived though there was a mortar spread with a smooth surface and a slight humped shape (not shown on fig 3). This unimpressed mortar was covered with a deposit of charcoal that may only be a destruction deposit. The tiles at the E were more closely aligned with the walls than the tiles found at the W which were not parallel with these walls. There may have been another N-S division in the baulk between trenches 1 and 9, though as the highest level shows it was possible to have a change in the tile alignment without needing a division.

The floors were better preserved to the N, there being more extensive destruction on the S; because of this destruction it was possible to examine the levels below the tiled floors, particularly in trench 1. There was no evidence for earlier floors as the mortar bedding lay directly on a brown silt similar to that found in undisturbed levels on the site. At the W end there was evidence for at least two mortar spreads over the tiles, this mortar having a smooth though uneven surface. It is not certain whether these were patchings of the floor or the base for something structural as these lay against a low stone wall, formed from squared blocks of yellow/white sandstone, which was found 1.25 m S of the robbed-out wall of the chancel. This formed the facing for a small platform 150 mm higher than the tiled floor to the S and a very thin spread of mortar bedding was evident on the surface of this platform. Its height was almost identical to the estimated height for the E end of the chancel. As the tiled floor appeared to respect this platform, being cut to size, rather than being broken irregularly, it is probable that the platform pre-dated the tiles. A coin, possibly of Robert III (1390–1406), was found in rubble over the stone division between the first and second group of tiles.

A cloister and associated claustral buildings were expected on the S side of the church and trench 1 was extended to find traces of such buildings. But there was nothing between the compact brown silt similar to that found under the nave and chancel floors and the modern grey/brown silt with mortar flecks that had formed below the top soil. Further work in trenches 6, 7 and 10 did not reveal either walls or robber trenches. It is unlikely that robbing and subsequent ploughing was so severe that even the foundations of these putative walls had disappeared. In trenches 6 and 7 (trench 10 was not fully excavated) a series of burials was found that covered too large an area to be restricted to limits defined by the cloister and buildings such as the chapter house which were often used for burials. The burials were associated with medieval pottery and were cut into the brown silt mentioned elsewhere. They were not extensively examined and the skeletons were not lifted, but it was clear that there were some irregular practices which included two burials with the head at the SE, one of which was buried pelvis downwards (the head was not found). The cemetery was defined on the S by a ditch, recovered in trench 7, at least 4 m wide and up to 1 m deep. At this level it was cut into the underlying water table. There was a suggestion that the upcast from the ditch was thrown N, possibly to form a bank as there was a 2 m wide area of yellow/brown sandy silt in this position overlying the ubiquitous brown silt. The ditch lay 19 m S of the church and at an angle to the church, as it was traced again in trench 12, 24.5 m S of the church. No skeletons were evident in trench 12 so it is possible that the cemetery did not extend into this area. Another coin, possibly of Robert III, was found in the upper fill of this ditch.

There was no evidence for any buildings N of the chancel in trench 3, though medieval pottery was found in the silts excavated there. It is unlikely that there would have been buildings abutting the church to the N as this side of the structure was clearly buttressed. A further trench, 4, was laid out near the frontage on to the road out from the West Port which was assumed to be a medieval street line. Traces of a stone wall were found but this clearly belonged to a more recent building as modern porcelain and

bottle glass were associated with the foundation of this structure. Beneath the foundations was a series of silt and more clayish-silt lenses that filled a group of gullies aligned SE-NW. One gully was filled with a disarticulated group of cow bones, possibly from one individual. It is probable that these were agricultural gullies. There was insufficient time to study these features in detail. Pottery finds from the silt suggest that they were medieval, though the evidence of the animal bones would indicate that this deposit was later. Trench 13 was also cut to establish whether there were buildings elsewhere in the field. This was clearly not so and a series of silt deposits similar to trench 4 was encountered, though these were not fully excavated and did not reveal whether they too were gully fills. Trench 11 showed that there was no occupation beyond the ditch, only a clay subsoil similar to that found elsewhere lying directly under modern disturbed soils. Trench 5 revealed that the piece of wall examined was 19th-century or later in construction. It was thought that this wall might have been part of the 17th-century or earlier town wall but the foundations were less than 0.4 m below the ground surface and were associated with modern pottery. They also lay over a brown silt layer similar to that found elsewhere, also containing medieval pottery.

THE POTTERY

N L MacAskill

EARTHENWARES

The lack of distinctive features or forms and the small amount of pottery recovered meant that it was not possible to use the pottery as dating evidence. However most of the material appeared to be medieval.

General

Thirty-seven sherds of white and brown gritty wares are present, including one off-white cooking pot rimsherd and one brown everted rim from a thin-walled cooking pot. There are also sherds from two different externally blackened bases. Parts of two plain strap handles, probably from jugs, are present, one of which is glazed on its outer surface. A fragment of a thumbled basal angle and two other basal sherds in a fine white fabric are present. A jug rimsherd and two body sherds are present in a red gritty ware. Several different red and grey-brown sandy fragments are present including a white-slipped twisted rib rod handle and a partly reduced ribbed strap handle. There are also a thick, coarsely made buff-coloured basal angle sherd and four dark grey sandy body sherds.

Robbing contexts

Earthenwares from these contexts include white gritty wares and dark grey-green glazed post-medieval-type wares, including one everted open bowl rimsherd. There is also a thick red sandy basal angle sherd with internal brown glaze.

STONEWARES

A group of stoneware sherds from the robbing contexts has been provisionally dated to the 18th century.

TOP SOILS

These yielded assorted medieval fragments along with a sherd of delftware and a fragment of stoneware.

COINS

Identified by D Caldwell, National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, a Robert III (1390-1406) billon penny was found in the upper fill of the ditch recorded in trench 7. This was minted at Edinburgh, but is too worn to be tied down to a particular die variety. It is not recorded in Burns (1887). In a disturbance consisting of rubble and loose tiles that lay to the W of the second group of tiles a billon Robert III halfpenny was found.

FLOOR TILES

E Eames

Though the tiled floor illustrated on fig 3 and pl 32 was left in position, a number of pieces were recovered from the destruction levels. A representative sample of these was sent to the writer at the British Museum for examination.

Two complete tiles and two fragments were submitted. All were plain glazed tiles and apparently belonged to the same group. The body fabric was well prepared with few visible inclusions and fired to a light red. It was oxidized right through the two fragments of tile in which the interior was visible and on all surfaces of the two complete tiles. The edges were cut with a downward bevel and the bases, though fairly smooth, retained traces of the sand on which they had been formed and had therefore not been cut. There were no keys.

All four tiles showed features characteristic of Netherlandish products of the 15th and earlier 16th centuries. Tile 4 (see below) showed these most clearly because its surface was the least worn and damaged. The glaze had the slightly crackled appearance usual on biscuit-fired tiles and the flaking off on the glaze on tile 3 (below) was also characteristic. Netherlandish medieval tiles were fired twice, once before they were glazed and again after being glazed. English medieval tiles were fired once only, the lead and other metals such as copper or brass being applied to the unfired surface of the tiles in powdered form and drawing the necessary silica and alumina from the body clay. This produced a less glassy appearance but the glaze did not crackle or flake. The surface of tile 4 had large nail holes near each complete corner c 22–4 mm from the edges of the tile. Such holes were made by the spiked board with which Netherlandish tilers held the tile firm while they trimmed the sides round it. Spiked boards seem not to have been used by English tilers before the 16th century and then only rarely, and I know of no evidence that they were used in Scotland. These holes were fired into the tiles during the biscuit firing but filled up with glaze or slip and glaze when these were applied. During the second firing the filling of the holes frequently blew out, leaving small round cavities. Two such holes were present on tile 3, one partly blown and the other still filled but cut by the diagonal score across the surface, made before the tile was fired so that it could be broken into two triangles. The holes in tile 3 were in exactly the same position as those in tile 4 and a close examination of these positions on tiles 1 and 2 suggested that nail holes were present there but still filled.

The yellow colour of tiles 2 and 3 was obtained by coating the surface of the tile with a white slip before applying a lead glaze. On both tiles this slip was thin and appeared to have been scraped with a wooden tool that left marks of the grain on the surface and went right through to the body in places so that the yellow was streaked with brown. This and the deeper orange-yellow colour at the centre of the tiles have also been observed on Netherlandish tiles imported into England.

It may be concluded that all four tiles were imported from the Netherlands. It is probable that they were made in the 15th or early 16th century.

TILE 1 (124 mm × 123 mm × 29/22 mm)

The surface of this tile was a little worn but was mainly covered with an underfired dark green glaze in which the copper or brass filings that provided the green colour remained as isolated dark green specks in a slightly rough buff-coloured substance characteristic of a medieval lead glaze that had not turned to glass. The top of the tile had not been cut off parallel to the base. The tile had stood in the oven on its thinnest edge and on the opposite, thickest, edge was the clear mark of the tile which had been stacked above it at the unusually sharp angle of c 70° from the perpendicular. At the sides of this mark were patches of glaze that had run down from the tile above. These also were rough and apparently underfired as might be expected when adjacent tiles had been subjected to about the same firing temperatures.

TILE 2 (127 mm × 126 mm × 25 mm)

Damage in a line across the surface and at one corner revealed a small stone in the body of the tile, but this did not seem to have caused any breakage during firing: there was no glaze on the fractured area such as would have run on to it had it broken in the oven. The surface was covered with the thin scraped layer of white slip already discussed. The glaze was a light orange in the middle and a paler yellow at the edges of the tile. One edge only was worn suggesting that this tile had been laid against some architectural feature, such as a wall, pier, step, screen or stall which had prevented people from treading on most of its surface.

TILE 3 (127 mm × 90 mm × 26 mm)

One side of this tile was missing. It had been scored across one diagonal before it was fired so that it could be divided into two triangular tiles but the two halves had not been separated and it had been used as a square tile. The surface was worn but about half of it retained the same streaky slip and orange to yellow glaze as were present on tile 2.

TILE 4 (122 mm × 60 mm × 29/26 mm)

Only about half a tile, including one complete edge, was present. The surface was covered with a slightly worn dark green glaze. This had turned to glass but was speckled with darker spots which were presumed to be imperfectly dissolved brass or copper filings and suggest that this was a better fired example of the same glaze as that on tile 1. One incomplete edge showed the mark of another tile also placed at a very sharp angle, and this mark was outlined by the same rough underfired green glaze as was present on tile 1.

ANIMAL BONES

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No significant groups of animal bone were found apart from the group listed below from trench 4. This group was found in an agricultural gully more than 1 m below the present ground surface and the presence of medieval pottery fragments suggested that it was contemporary with the occupation of the church. However, the evidence of the bones contradicts this and the dating of both the bones and the gullies must remain uncertain.

GENERAL REPORT

The bones described came from a single feature of possible medieval context. The feature was located in a field at c 100 m N of the friary church. At first it was suspected that the bones were those of a single animal which had been buried after death. Examination of the bones revealed that three species of domestic animals were involved, namely cattle, sheep/goat and pig, and that the bones of at least two cattle were present.

The numbers of bones identified as to species (ribs, butcher's chips and vertebrae, other than those of the neck, are not included) were: cattle 27, sheep/goat 1, pig 1, corresponding to 93.1, 3.4, 3.4% respectively of the total number of bones identified. Most parts of the skeletons of cattle are present, but leg bones (high meat yielding) outnumber foot bones (low meat yielding) 9:6 and, unusually, a humerus and a femur are entire. There is no evidence as to the age of the animals from which the sheep/goat and pig bones came, except that they are from animals older than lambs, kids and piglets. Some of the cattle bones came from a juvenile animal of less than 2½ years of age, while a single jawbone is from a more mature animal which was at least five years old. The entire cattle humerus and femur bones discussed earlier and the single atlas vertebra from the neck of a cow are significantly bigger than any similar cattle bones reported at the medieval site at Perth High Street (Hodgson forthcoming), therefore an intrusion of more recent, bigger, carcass material must not be ruled out.

Data derived from measurement of the material in the sample and a more detailed report are lodged with the archive at the National Monuments Record, 54 Melville Street, Edinburgh.

DISCUSSION

The results of the excavation clearly confirm that the dovecot is the central tower for a church of medieval date, though the lack of masonry outwith the tower and of associated finds mean that the date of construction is not known. The length of the chancel and the documentary references to the field of Friarscroft confirm that this is the friary church belonging to the Trinitarians. No Trinitarian friaries survive in Britain, apart from fragments of the mid 14th-century

foundation at Ingham, Norfolk, and there are few remains of other 13th-century friary foundations. The closest comparison is supplied by the Carmelite friary at Hulne, Northumberland, excavated in 1889 (St John Hope 1890) which was founded in 1242. The plan shows that it too had a narrow central tower, 3.93 m by 7.63 m, and nearly equal-sized nave and chancel, the chancel having an internal length of 14.96 m. Also of interest is a series of internal divisions whose nature is not specified, but which would compare well with those found in Dunbar. By comparison with Hulne, it would appear that the low platform at the N of the Dunbar chancel was to support a choir stall. As the platform was no more than 0.15 m above the level of the chancel floor this may be too low and there was no clear evidence for a similar feature on the S side, though this might have been removed by robbing. A more convincing explanation is that it formed part of a raised N aisle as the width of the platform corresponds with the distance between the arch and the N wall recorded in the tower. The clay bank found at the N side of the nave in trench 4 might be a continuation of such a raised aisle, as it was set at a higher level than the deposits to the S in trench 8.

The mortar spread found abutting the platform and over the tiled floor is not readily explained. Its slightly humped shape would suggest that it was supporting some stone feature that has been robbed away since the mortar would not have been laid or survived in the position in which it was revealed. The mortar found at the E end of the church without tile impressions must clearly have supported the paving for the high altar which would appear to have extended 2 m from the E wall, to be fronted for 3 m by tiles at the same level.

The lack of masonry outwith the tower means that it is not possible to date phases of construction within the church, though the balanced form of the plan of the building makes it likely that it was completed soon after its foundation. The lack of a cloister and associated buildings, suggested by the discovery of buttressing to the N and a cemetery to the S, is puzzling and might mean that the church was built separate from the main foundation of the Trinitarians. The friars may have been given a church that had already been founded, though the length of chancel confirms that it is a friary or monastic church. It is possible that the main internal division, built of stone, is the remains of an original E wall as it appears too wide at 0.7–1.0 m merely to support a timber division. A width of 1 m is not significantly different from the 1 m width recorded for the S wall of the chancel. It is possible that the church was built in two phases and that the extended chancel is a later addition built after the church was given to the friars.

If the foundation was a small one, it is possible that friars were accommodated in the tower of the church as has been suggested for the Carmelite friary at South Queensferry (MacGibbon & Ross 1897, 296–309) where there were two floors with fireplaces. There is no evidence for this now at Dunbar, though such floors may have been removed when the nesting boxes were inserted. Also the tower is quite narrow at the top (see pl 31), more suitable for a belfry than living accommodation. The upper levels of the tower are clearly original as they contain ashlar masonry with roof raggles extending to the W and E. It is therefore likely that the friars lived elsewhere. Cowan and Easson (1976, 174) must be correct in ascribing the hospital to the Trinitarians and it must have been directly or closely connected with the 'house' of the Trinitarians. As they were a conventual order under the Augustinian rule it is to be expected that a cloister and claustral buildings were constructed for them. If these buildings were not located by the church, they must have been placed at or near the hospital. This would be extremely unusual and one wonders if a cloister was ever built for the friars.

The only evidence for a late occupation of the friary is the tile floor which is of a 15th- or 16th-century date. There was no evidence of any earlier floor, whether of stone slabs or tiles, and it must be that this was removed. When this alteration occurred is not clear, though possibly in the reign of Robert III (1390–1406) on the evidence of the coin found between the two westernmost

groups of tiles. If there were alterations to the church at the beginning of the 15th century, it may explain why the ditch was filled in at this time as the coin found here is definitely ascribed to the reign of Robert III.

Even though the 15th century was a period of intensive building and refurbishment of churches in Scotland, it is not clear why even a reflooring occurred; for, by 1529 the establishment had declined to such an extent that a secular priest could be granted possession of this 'house' (RSS(i) No 4110). This grant must mean that the original chapter had died out and it seems surprising that it should have been so rich and vigorous 100 years earlier or less so as to be able to afford and desire a new tile floor. Indeed the mortar spreads over the tiles at the W suggest a degree of wear which can only indicate intensive use. The decision of 1529 was revoked six months later when the house was granted to the Trinitarian foundation at Peebles (RSS(ii) No 203). It is clear that the Dunbar chapter of friars no longer existed.

The date of the destruction of the church is not known. Within the rubble and robbed-out wall trenches considerable quantities of 18th-century stoneware pottery were found and it is possible that the church was not destroyed until this date. Alternatively there may have been two periods of robbing as the section (fig 4, p-q) would indicate. This can be interpreted as an initial robbing of the fabric including the destruction of the windows and the removal of the good building stone to be found on the floor of the nave and on the aisle/altar platforms. This would be followed by a second stage involving the removal of the walls which may only have been stumps below the ground. General Roy's map of 1750 clearly shows only the dovecot and it is possible that the stoneware is later than 1750. This secondary robbing may only have been the removal of a few wall stubs and after this the church would have been forgotten completely save for tradition which has continued to link the surviving tower to the Trinitarian Friars.

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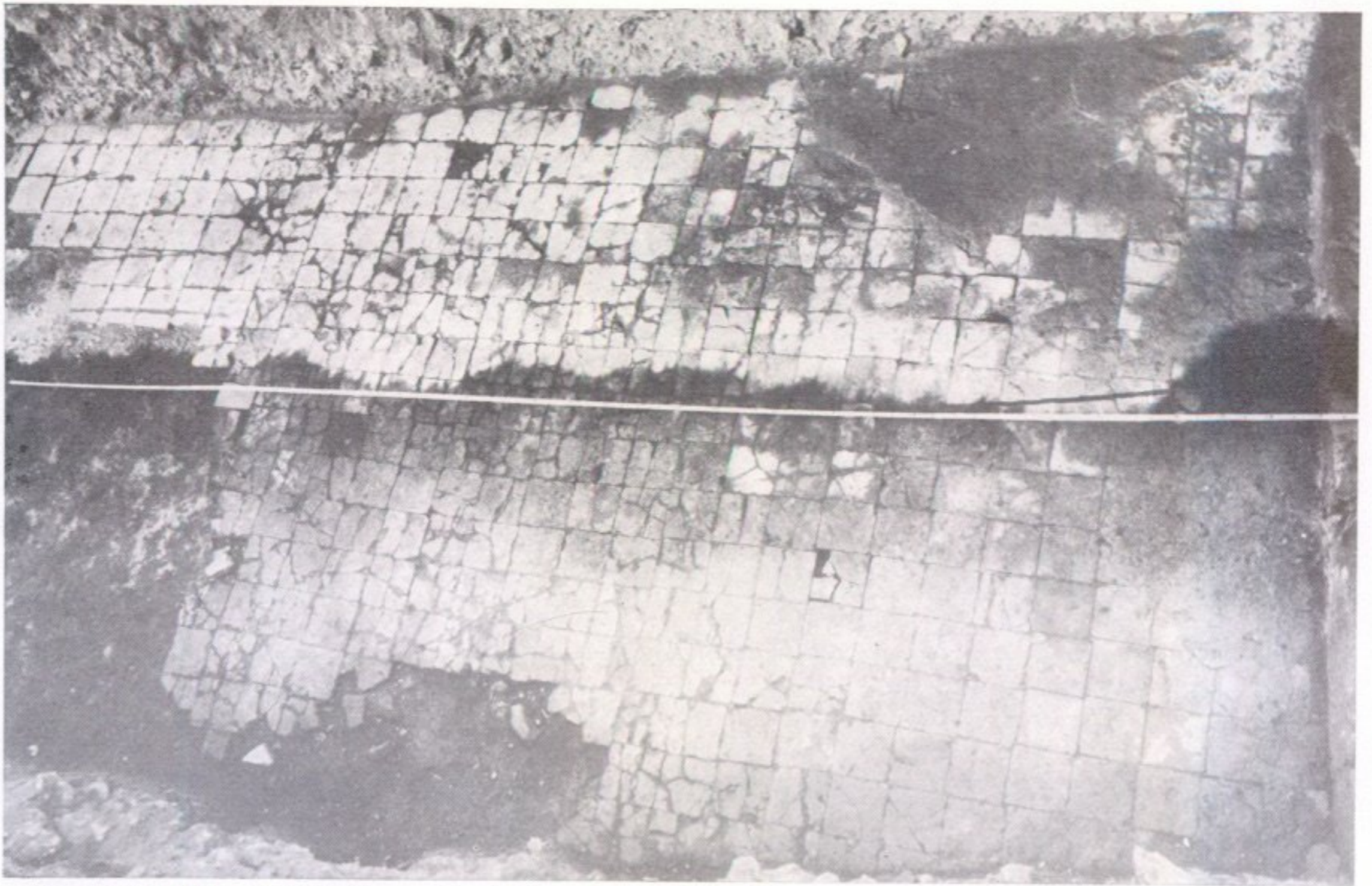
a South face of dovecot tower. Human figures mark position of W and E walls



b South face of tower showing earlier ?monastic doorway



c Buttress and chamfering on NE corner of the tower



a Trench 1 looking W. Tile floor with platform to the right (N)



b Trench 9 looking E showing the three tiled levels



c Detail of the tiles