

Title: **Excavating the basilicas**

Author(s): Grzegorz Majcherek

Journal: *Studia Palmyreńskie 12*
Fifty Years of Polish Excavations in Palmyra 1959–2009, International Conference,
Warsaw, 6–8 December 2010

Year: 2013

Pages: 251–268

ISSN 0081-6787

Publisher: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw (PCMA UW),
Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (WUW)

www.pcma.uw.edu.pl – www.wuw.pl

Abstract: Like other Late Antique towns Palmyra went through a gradual Christianization of the cityscape. The process is best illustrated by the growing number of churches that have been surveyed and excavated throughout the city. The latest fieldwork by the Polish expedition in Palmyra focused on excavating a large basilical church located north of the previously unearthed episcopal complex. The most unusual feature uncovered in this church is the so-called Syrian *bema*, situated in the middle of the nave. This is the first time that this liturgical installation has been evidenced in central Syria.

Keywords: Palmyra, Late Antiquity, Christianity, basilica, Syrian *bema*