

Satala Survey

In 1989, a project was initiated in Satala, the fortress that had formerly guarded Rome's northeastern Anatolian frontier, some 25km southeast of Kelkit. It had only ever been studied superficially by earlier scholars. Between 24 and 31 July 1989, Chris Lightfoot and a small team conducted a survey and produced an accurate plan of the site and its buildings. They were able to discover the walls of the fortress, though in poor condition, and to identify what was clearly a civilian settlement across the stream, in addition to exploring a basilica on the site. Outside the site itself, they discovered some structures surrounding a spring, an inhabited site about 5km from Sadak, and a lookout tower on a small hill. Because most of the inscriptions had been taken to Erzurum in 1986 and 1987, they were only successful in locating three inscriptions in the area. Coins, small finds, and pottery and glass sherds were recorded. The team supplemented their studies in the winter by examining the material from Satala held currently in the British Museum.

The next season lasted between 23 July to 10 August 1990 and began in Erzurum, where the team studied, recorded, and photographed material from Satala. After this, they began survey work on the site itself, expanding their work of 1989. The fortress plan was added to, and a plan of the basilica was created. Approximately 200 stones were measured, drawn, and recorded (which included inscriptions, grave-markers, and architectural fragments) and the additional collection of pottery, glass, metal, and tile fragments and some small objects was greatly facilitated by the fact that the fields had been freshly ploughed. Finally, two sites outside Satala proper were explored: a small church of uncertain date located just south of the site, and a complex that may have been a home or fortlet that appeared to have been occupied in Roman times.