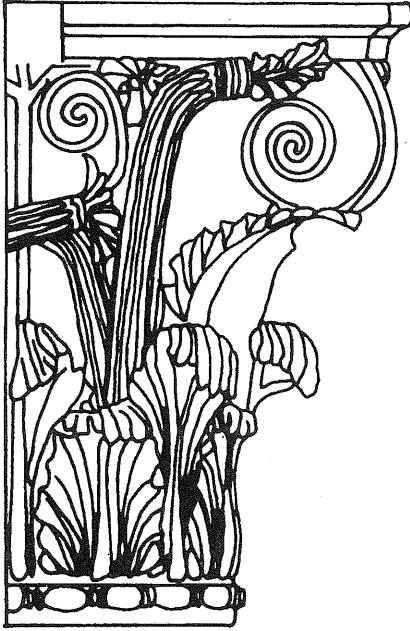


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A PLACE OF PERMANENCE IN THE CEMETERY AT FLAVIAS¹

(Lev. 150-154)

*Richard BAYLISS

It is generally accepted that the site occupied by the town of Kadirli in the Çukurova can be identified with the city of Flavias². To Edwin Davis in the late 19th century the remains of the ancient city were still highly visible despite being rapidly exploited by the inhabitants of the flourishing market town.

He describes it as the largest in a group of small villages "known by the general name Kars", collectively comprising about 700 houses, "surrounded by fine fields of barley". His brief description of the village paints a lucid picture of an agricultural community living in the fleshless bones of an ancient and once-great city; "...everywhere are columns, whole, or in fragments, pieces of white marble, architraves... wherever any excavation is made large hewn stones are found, even to the depth of 10 to 12 feet...the walls and courtyards of the houses are full of funereal inscriptions (much defaced), pedestals, sarcophagi..."³.

Other travellers followed in the next 30 years, J. Th. Bent, Gertrude Bell, Heberdy and Wilhelm⁴, but none made any more than cursory observations on the surviving archaeology. A publication by Bossert and Alkim in 1947 included their own apology that they were unable to devote much time to Kadirli, "...a very promising field for research..."⁵. This is more depressing given that their work there was never continued and thus none of the building remains within the town were recorded before their demise beneath modern, concrete Kadirli.

It therefore comes as little surprise that the mosque which Davis encountered, the Alacami, is the only structure of note to survive today (Figs 1, 2).

A broad historical framework for the site of the Alacami is vividly portrayed in the extant remains, which in general terms comprise four principal phases (Fig. 3).

¹ This paper is an abridged and updated (subsequent to 1997 fieldwork) version of Bayliss 1997 where more references and illustrations can be found.

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² Hild & Hellenkemper 1990, 378; Hill G.F. 1900, cvii.

³ Davis 1879, 124-6.

⁴ Bent 1890; Bell 1906, 10-11; Bell Notes (BELL1905, 3037-9); Heberdy & Wilhelm 1896, 32f.

⁵ Bossert & Alkim 1947.

1) A barrel-vaulted hypogeum was cut into a hillside overlooking the city in the Roman period, in a district which retained its function as a cemetery until recently (Fig. 4).

2) In the late 5th/early 6th century the site of the hypogeum was artificially terraced for the construction of a large church, built in at least two stages from a variety of reused architectural elements and in a style of construction typical of the region at this time (Figs 1, 2).

3) The arrangement of the site was modified in the medieval period, probably between the twelfth and the mid-thirteenth century when a small, but well-built chapel was tacked onto the apse, which re-employed the remains of the basilica as a compound wall.

4) The well-preserved chapel was converted into a mosque in 1489/90 with the structural additions of a mihrab and a minaret.

All of the early scholars who passed through town observed the presence and significance of the Alacami yet a systematic study was not undertaken until 1947, when Bossert & Alkım made the first attempt to produce a plan⁶. Unfortunately they only had time to complete the southern half of the building, which is rather crude, though on the whole relatively accurate.

Halet Çambel has taken an active role in the affairs of the Alacami since her work began at nearby Karatepe in the 1940s. In 1960 her team cleared the interior and conducted excavations in and around the basilica. She urged for the removal of temporary housing, which had begun to clutter the site and also for the re-routing of the adjacent road. In 1961 she organised the construction of a compound wall, which served as a gathering point for architectural and epigraphical fragments from all over the town. Yet while her archaeological conscience ensured the safety and preservation of the Alacami, her commitment to her long term projects meant that her occasional but significant activities at the Alacami never received full publication.

In 1993 I discovered an unpublished plan of the Alacami in the archive of Michael and Mary Gough, now under the charge of Dr Stephen Hill at Warwick University. Mary Gough had produced a more thorough survey of the standing remains when working with Professor Çambel in 1949 and this was finally published by Stephen Hill in 1996⁷. In November 1997, fifty years after Bossert & Alkım's publication, we set out to complete the survey of this complex site and to produce a detailed and contextual plan, supplemented by limited excavation in key

⁶ *Ibid.* fig. 167.

⁷ Hill 1996, fig. 35.

areas⁸. To the Goughs' plan we were therefore able to add a south courtyard, the staircase to the west of the basilica, the passageway and hypogeum and a topographical context (Fig. 3).

THE HYPOGEUM

We can be relatively certain that the hypogeum pre-dated the construction of the church. Excavations in the apse revealed that the foundation technique for the basilica was to set the blocks in a very narrow construction trench in the hard natural clay which was then left vacant or filled with lime chunks and rubble. Where the passageway butts against the hypogeum beneath the church a section of side wall has been robbed out, exposing the construction trenches of both structures. The passageway, like the basilica, also features a narrow rubble-filled construction trench, whereas the construction trench of the hypogeum was filled with poured mortar. While this evidence is not entirely conclusive, an earlier Roman date for the construction of the hypogeum is still most likely.

From the level of the exposed natural, visible in this robbed section, it is also possible to deduce that the hypogeum was essentially a subterranean structure. The original access from ground level, probably in the form of descending steps, was completely removed when the passage was built.

From the opening in the west wall a set of steps lead down into the burial chamber (fig. 5). Low benches flank the north and south walls and four earthenware pipes open into the centre of the vaulted roof, above a deep basin in the plaster floor between the benches. The pipes would seem to have been incorporated to allow ritual libation from above ground, provisions for which were very common in Roman funerary practice⁹. At the east end of the chamber a separate basin is formed by the construction of a low partitioning wall between the flanking benches.

THE LATE ROMAN CHURCH

The site of the tomb subsequently formed the focus for the next discernible phase of activity on the site, the construction of a three-aisled basilica (figs 1-3).

⁸ Harun Kaya (Bilkent University) skilfully oversaw much of the on-site organisation and I am deeply indebted to his contribution. Ayşe Salman (İstanbul University) was responsible for some gruelling subterranean elevation drawings and was cheerfully assisted by Çiğdem Girgin (İstanbul Archaeology Museum) who joined us on behalf of the Turkish Ministry of Culture. Our local workforce comprised Cumali Zaratlı, Ahmet Gamalak and Ali Güven. This work was undertaken as part of the Karatepe excavations. Our thanks goes especially to Professor Çambel and all our friends at Karatepe who so kindly accommodated us, fed us, and freely imparted their advice and assistance at every opportunity. The Alacami project was generously supported in 1997 by the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, University of Newcastle upon Tyne and the British Academy.

⁹ Toynbee, J. M. C. 1971. *Death and Burial in the Roman World*. London, p. 37, 41, 51, 52.

This measures some 33 by 19.5m from the narthex to the east wall of the nave and with a slightly protruding apse. The basilica was equipped with galleries as indicated by the presence of beam sockets on the interior of the walls, and the remains of stylobates show that it was divided by colonnades. The walls are relatively narrow (0.6m) and comprise reused limestone bonding-blocks laid with very little mortar. The exterior face appears as dressed ashlar while the interior is left rough and would originally have been rendered with plaster.

The exterior walls of the basilica are decorated with a base-moulding, a hood-moulding and a cornice. Curiously the north side at least was designed with a double (in some parts triple) course of base-moulding, the lower line being inverted to form a continuous flat plinth for the upper. The excessive reuse of the base-moulding suggests that a "bulk-load" had been acquired from a single earlier structure.

Each keystone of the hood-moulding is ornamented with a cross in a wreath. In contrast to more refined Syrian parallels, the hood-moulding on the Alacami displays some curious irregularities. On the south facade after the easternmost window, the moulding returns to the horizontal as if to be continued, before terminating abruptly. On the north facade the hood-moulding is only employed on the voussoirs and is not continued between the windows. A simple dentilated cornice is visible on all surviving walls of the basilica and is of a form which was very common in churches of the upper plain and in the foothills of the Taurus.

The apse is of extremely fine build and is still preserved to its full height including the semi-dome. It is pierced by three large arched windows, ornamented on the exterior with a hood-moulding between double engaged colonnettes fronting the mullions. The windows have subsequently been reduced in size and gridded. Small side-chambers in two storeys flank the apse, the lower of which could be entered from the aisles, from the apse itself, or, in the case of the north side-chamber, from the outside. Although most of the basilica survives to the height of the cornice, the west wall of the nave is now almost completely lost. Enough remains however to show that large doorways opened into the aisles and a very large opening, perhaps a tribelon (a triple arch) opened into the nave. Opposing central openings were also provided in the north and south walls, with the southern doorway being the most ornamental.

Large and low arched windows opened onto the aisles and six rectangular windows lit the galleries on each side. The eastern windows of the side chambers take the form of narrow internally-splayed loops. A surviving section of the east wall of the nave rises above the pitch of the aisle roof indicating the presence of a clerestory above the nave (Fig. 5). The large quantity of tile found in deposits associated with the destruction of the church suggests that the roofing system was tile and timber.

The basilica was equipped with porches on the north and west sides as evidenced by the presence of corbels and sockets in the respective walls. To the south lay a large irregular courtyard, the main entrance for which was from the west, adjacent to the staircase. The church builders took advantage of a relatively level terrace on the hillside for the church, but provisions were nevertheless made for the gradual east-west gradient. From the west a flight of steps led up from the lower ground and at the east end steps led from the south courtyard to the higher level. A result of this arrangement is that the interior of the apse was approximately a metre below the external ground level and excavations in the apse have shown that the land was artificially terraced.

The passageway, which butts against the west wall of the hypogeum, seems to have been contemporary with the construction of the church (Fig. 5). Its dimensions average 0.85 metres wide by 1.4-1.8 metres high and it slopes gradually from west to east for some 14 metres. It was lined on the flanking walls and ceiling by large blocks some of which appear to be in reuse while the floor was simply left as the hard natural clay.

NARTHEX

The means of accessing the galleries of the basilica is unclear. No evidence remains to clarify the existence of a linking western gallery, which would require only a single staircase to the upper storey and the external doorway to the upper floor of the north side-chamber appears not to be an original feature. It is within this context that one of the primary functions of a two-storey narthex can be understood, since its lateral orientation provided entrance to both galleries via a single staircase¹⁰.

The Alacami narthex was built to the same height as the side walls of the basilica and internal beam-holes show that it was correspondingly two storeys high (Fig. 1). In addition the porch on the north side was extended onto the narthex as shown by the continuation of the corbels. Yet previous scholars have proposed that the narthex was a later addition. It butts against the basilica, obscuring the base moulding on the west facade and while the basilica mouldings are repeated on the narthex, their execution reveals the hands of a different workforce. The dentils of the cornice have larger proportions and the base mouldings have a sharper profile. In addition the narthex contains a much larger quantity of spolia. On either side of the large central doorway are orthostats of a consistent height and parts of an ornate architrave were also incorporated, presenting a smooth face to the exterior with the ornament itself being concealed within the core of the wall.

¹⁰ As, for example the temple converted into a church at Uzuncaburç, the church at Canbazlı and the monastery of St John Studios in Constantinople.

It is these variations in construction and material, plus the presence of a butt-joint that suggest a slightly later date for the construction of the narthex, but the possibility can certainly not be ruled out that the narthex was part of the original design and represents a sub-phase rather than a later concept. In many ways a narthex is architecturally disassociated from the main body of a church and is a more straightforward construction than an apse or an aisled hall. We have no idea how long this church took to build in its entirety, but it must be assumed that a variety of different craftsmen plied their skills on it, summoned individually at the required time or when payment was available; stone-cutters, dome specialists, mosaicists, carpenters, marble-cutters and so on¹¹. Since nartheces were clearly uncommon to this region, we may attribute the construction of the narthex to a different group of craftsmen, working after the construction of the main basilica, but attempting to perpetuate its adornment¹².

Some additional evidence on this problem can be found in the construction of the passageway from the crypt (Fig. 5). A butt-joint in a direct line with the west wall of the narthex reveals a break in the construction of the passageway, indicating two phases consistent with the two above-ground. Clearly the passageway would have to be built before construction began on the basilica. Therefore in its first phase it extended some 4.5 metres beyond the west wall of the nave, facilitating the construction of a platform in front of the main basilica hall. This evidence implies that from the outset, some kind of structure was planned for the west end of the basilica, which may not necessarily have been the surviving narthex, but which was more than likely able to provide access to the upper storey. The subsequent extension of the passageway allowed the construction of a further platform for the porch which fronted the narthex.

INTERIOR ORNAMENT

The basilica was richly adorned with mosaics, both inside and out, some of which remain well preserved. Many were exposed and recorded by Professor Çambel in 1960 and it is hoped that their continued preservation will be the concern of a future project¹³. The mosaics in the courtyard, to the east of the apse and in the narthex all bear geometric designs, while Professor Çambel observed that the scant remains of the nave pavement indicated the presence of *opus sectile* and *opus alexandrinum*. Only fragments remain of the mosaic in the north aisle,

¹¹ The shrine of St Symeon took only a few years to construct, probably with imperial funding. However the more modest South Church at Akören, in the uplands north of Kadirli, took some 70 years to finish from apse to external porches (Mietke 1995, 38).

¹² See Stephen Hill's suggestion (1996, 262) for the possible existence of a group of specialist apse builders in Cilicia, based on evidence from Yanikhan.

¹³ AJA 1964, 159; Çambel 1997, with illustrations.

yet the well preserved south aisle and side chamber mosaics are beautifully executed and feature faunal scenes. The south side-chamber mosaic features a pair of opposing sheep facing an elaborate chalice from which a vine issues forth, inhabited by a variety of birds. Although a popular image, it bears similarities with the rebuild of the narthex mosaic from Dağ Pazarı, which Gough dated to the late 5th century¹⁴. The south aisle mosaic bears a long central panel (running east-west) on which survives a pair of frolicking deer. This is flanked by elaborate guilloche borders inhabited with small birds, which also bears reference with the same mosaic at Dağ Pazarı. Just inside the main doorway to the south aisle a *tabula ansata* attributes the construction of the church to an unnamed bishop and the abbot Polychronius, which from its style and lettering would appear to be 5th or early 6th century. However this panel was apparently inserted into the aisle mosaic, a peculiarity for which an explanation is not readily forthcoming. It may represent the re-founding of the church or perhaps it is merely a symptom of the multiple phases in the church's construction prior to its dedication.

The orientation of components on the south aisle mosaic also deserves comment. The deer scene, if read from left to right, should be observed properly from within the nave and from the south door would have appeared upside-down. Moreover the lateral arrangement of the inscription, against the "flow" of the strong east-west lines on the mosaic, demonstrates that it was designed to be read by an observer approaching from the west, not the south door. This would appear to be in contradiction with the architectural emphasis on the south facade which implies that the principle entrance was through the south door.

The construction of the small chapel in the medieval period has effectively obscured any traces of the arrangement of the original chancel. However, since the abandonment of the mosque in 1924 a significant proportion of the paving in the chapel has been ripped up in several campaigns by treasure-hunters and on one occasion a building contractor. These trenches were re-excavated in 1997, to assess the archaeology which had survived the intrusions and to make some sense out of what remained (Fig. 7). Fortunately some substantial early Byzantine features remained relatively unharmed. These comprised a deep north-south foundation along the chord of the apse with a platform extending some 3.5 metres to the west. The north-south foundation was part of the initial coursing for the basilica construction and also acted as a retaining wall for the terracing of the site, with the natural clay some 80cm lower on the west side than on the east (Fig. 5). The platform comprised three courses of large blocks, and was observed to be some 0.3 metres higher than the floor level of the basilica as recorded outside the chapel. It can therefore almost certainly be identified as the raised chancel of the basilica, particularly since its extent corresponds with a similar change in height in

¹⁴ Hill 1996, 151 (ft. 67 for Gough references), 153-4.

the side aisles. Fragments of a chancel screen discovered by Bossert & Alkim would appear to have originated from this structure.

DATING

Dating the church is inevitably problematic and based on stylistic comparisons rather than hard archaeological evidence, as is the case for most early Byzantine churches in the region. It has been observed that the distinctive style of construction at the Alacami forms part of a group of twenty or so known churches in the north-east of the plain and the foothills of the Taurus mountains, that are architecturally distinct from their Rough Cilician, Syrian and Cappadocian neighbours¹⁵. These churches are variously dated from the late 5th century through to the late 6th. They are recognisable by the following characteristics which each displays to a greater or lesser degree: a projecting apse, exterior mouldings, distinctive stonework, provision of large arched windows and lateral doorways, rarity of the narthex, and often featuring lateral courtyards and exterior porches.

In terms of construction and external decoration this group is demonstrably akin to the remarkable Syrian archetypes of the late fifth century, typified by the churches at Qal'at Sim'an and Qalblauze. Given the probable mid 5th/ early 6th century date for the mosaics (including the *tabula ansata*) and the stylistic comparison with dated churches in the region, I would support the date range proposed by Hild and Hellenkemper of the late 5th/ early 6th century for the construction of this church.

A PLACE OF COMMEMORATION

We do not know whether the pre-existing hypogeum had held any special relevance to the Christians of Flavia which may have inspired the construction of the basilica. Perhaps it was a tomb which had been used by Christians and was subsequently commemorated with the construction of the church. The most obvious and direct comparison for the arrangement of the crypt with an exterior access can be found in the substructures of the 6th century church of St Polyeuktos in Constantinople, where access to a passageway and crypt is also made from the west staircase¹⁶. However several other funerary and pilgrimage churches in Cilicia have similar arrangements, for example the crypt and great church at the Shrine of St Thecla outside Silifke, a church at Mazılık, and the monastic church at Ura¹⁷.

¹⁵ Bayliss 1997, 72-7; Hild, Hellenkemper & Hellenkemper Salies 1984, 228, 273-4; Hellenkemper 1994, 228; Mietke 1995, 39.

¹⁶ M. Harrison, *A Temple for Byzantium* (London 1989);

¹⁷ Hill 1996, 203-8, 214-25, 252

One of the most important indicators of the original function of this church must be its location; within a hillside necropolis overlooking the city. This was therefore no urban parochial establishment and probably not the seat of the bishop, but was more likely to have been a commemorative church with a funerary association as is further attested by the incorporation of the hypogeum into the design. In addition, a monastic connection is alluded to in the *tabula ansata*, which describes one of the founders of the church Polychronius, as presbyter and abbot.

So the question remains as to whether the site was intended as a monastic or a pilgrimage centre. Archaeologically a certain grey area exists between these two types of establishment, particularly since many pilgrimage centres were tendered by a residential monastic community, like at the shrine of St Thecla near Silifke and at Alahan near Mut¹⁸. The complex certainly appears to be much more extensive than a cursory inspection might suppose and Davis records other buildings in the vicinity which may have formed part of a larger establishment here¹⁹.

On this evidence it could be proposed that the original basilica at the Alacami was established as an extra-mural monastic church with a specific commemorative focus in the form of an object of veneration, situated in the chamber below the church and perhaps associated with a prominent local figure, either a martyr, a bishop or abbot. There are no martyrs recorded for Flavias although a resident of Anazarbus, a certain Julianus, was martyred in the city under Diocletian²⁰.

From the remains of early Christian churches of the 5th and 6th centuries in Cilicia it is clear that the celebration and commemoration of the dead was particularly important to Christian worship in the region. Yet as Stephen Hill has observed, the creation of a martyrium in Cilicia did not involve the construction of either a centralised or a particularly distinctive church form; basilicas were merely adapted for the purpose²¹. In his recently published thesis on the church architecture of the region Hill drew attention to the presence of corridors behind the apses of many Cilician churches, which formed a link between the side-chambers. He argues convincingly that we should see these as part of a funerary ritual involving an object of veneration located behind the apse. These structures

¹⁸ See S. J. Hill, "When is a Monastery not a Monastery?", in M. Mullet & A. Kirby (eds), *The Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism* (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 6.1, 1994), p. 137-145.

¹⁹ Davis 1879, 124.

²⁰ Contr. Bayliss 1997, 59 where I inadvertently misquoted Hild & Hellenkemper 1990, 378-9.

²¹ Hill 1996, 207.

therefore allowed processional fluidity between the aisles, passing the funerary focus, but without intruding upon the chancel area or nave.

It is clear from the Alacami and elsewhere however that the eastern passage was not the ubiquitous form of architectural expression for the provision of a funerary focus in a Cilician church. While it appears that the eastern passage was the preferred architectural device for "creating" a focus of funerary liturgy, some churches were built to commemorate a place which already possessed architectural or natural physicality, in the form for example of a tomb or a cave. At Mazılık above the Cilician plain, a network of caves was accessed from a doorway on the south side of the church which Edwards suggested "may be associated with the live and death of a local saint"²². In the cemetery church at Uzuncaburç a rock-cut tomb is incorporated into the west end of the basilica²³. The distinction is also perhaps reflected in the bifocality of the arrangements at the shrine of St Thecla near Silifke, which appears to have featured both an underground cave and an eastern corridor. Hill suggests that these were essentially separate martyria; one in commemoration of the place where Thecla spent the last days of her life and one for the place where she made her miraculous disappearance²⁴.

Whatever the case, the architectural consistency of the eastern corridors between different churches would allow for a degree of conformity in the ritual usage of the space. This could readily have taken the form of controlled and orderly procession. In contrast, the incorporation of a pre-existing place into a church called for greater architectural and liturgical innovation. The cave church at the Shrine of St Thecla was almost certainly equipped with more than one entrance and was therefore able to facilitate the pilgrim's movement through the cave, with an acknowledged entrance and exit. In this sense it functioned in a similar way to an eastern corridor.

These considerations lead us to question the use of the chamber beneath the basilica at the Alacami. A deep door slot in the staircase opening of the passageway demonstrates that it was designed to be well secured, particularly since it was accessible from outside the church. This implies that its contents were considered to be of value. Any human interaction with the place however would have been a personal and not a processional one, since only one person at a time could comfortably pass along the corridor, stooping for much of the way. It may be however that the crypt was meant to be viewed from within the basilica nave, through a vertical portal. A block is missing between the pipes in the vault of the chamber, yet the hole has become so choked with rubble that it is impossible to

²² Edwards 1982, 28-9, fig. 2.

²³ Hill 1996, 255-6.

²⁴ Hill 1996, 32.

discern if a shaft led up to the church. Whatever the case it seems certain that the chamber was meant to be either visited through the passageway or viewed from within the nave, as it would moreover be difficult to explain the relative positioning of basilica and crypt in any other way.

THE MEDIEVAL CHAPEL

The picture of eastern Cilicia after the sixth century is generally one of urban and demographic collapse, as it became a fluid frontier zone between Byzantium and Islam. Byzantine officialdom abandoned the cities east of Adana under Heraclius, which for many may well have been an act of little consequence and life went on regardless. During the first half century of Abassid rule (AD 750-800) the Arabs began to resettle and refortify the Cilician cities, probably in large groups migrating from the east. Christian populations are attested on the plain in this period, some acting as guides for the Moslems, but others as spies for the Byzantines, which probably led to the orders from Harun al-Rashid in AD 807 to destroy all the churches of the region. The Byzantines reconquered the province with some savagery under Nicephorus Phocas in AD 964 and from the middle of the 11th century displaced Armenians from the region of Ani were settled in the plain. This ultimately led, at the end of the 12th century, to the emergence of an independent and powerful state, the Kingdom of Lesser Armenia, which has left its archaeological legacy predominantly in the fortifications of the mountain passes and dominating crags on the plain.

The medieval archaeology of the Alacami bears at least some reflection to these historical developments of devastation and revival. At some time after the collapse or removal of the clerestory and aisle divides of the basilica nave, a very fine single-naved chapel was built, which reused the surviving apse of the earlier basilica (Figs 3, 6). Excavations within the medieval chapel have revealed extensive destruction deposits which appear to be associated with this historical period. This notion is supported by the presence of substantial quantities of roofing tile and other ceramics in the debris, in addition to metal artefacts such as a medallion cross and a number of early Byzantine architectural elements. The early Byzantine foundations discovered beneath the chapel floor had been partially dismantled and were filled and overlain by a packed burnt layer, deposited prior to the construction of the chapel floor.

The basilica not only provided reusable material for the new construction, but also subsequently took on a new function itself as the compound for the chapel. Around the exterior walls of the chapel was a continuous porch attested by the presence of corbels on the chapel walls at the same height as the original gallery beam-sockets. The open vousoir arch above the doorway on the west side bears a running motif described by Bossert and Alkim as middle Byzantine. Higher in the wall is an internally-splayed loop with a slightly pointed arch around which

five figures in low relief are barely visible. The closest parallels to the exterior moulding, execution of the stonework and internal arrangements are Armenian and the construction of is likely to have occurred between the twelfth and mid-thirteenth century²⁵.

THE ALACAMI

In 1489 Alâüddevle Bozkurt Bey commissioned the conversion of the medieval chapel and its ancient courtyard into a mosque, which took the name Alâüddevle Mescidi. The new owners reused stone from the basilica to construct a small minaret on top of the remains of the west wall of the narthex (Fig. 1). This was reached by a flight of steps, also of reused blocks, built over an internal narthex partition. The only other liturgical necessity for the conversion was a mihrab, inserted into the south wall inside the chapel.

The building survived the devastating incursions of Syrian bandits in 1695 which sent the local population fleeing to the mountains and also a period as an army storehouse in the late nineteenth century. In 1865, a decade prior to Davis' visit, the mosque was restored and from that time it functioned also a medresse and took the name Alacami. The year 1924 saw the construction of a new mosque in the town and the abandonment of the Alacami. So when Halet Çambel first visited the site in the 1940s she found it in opportunistic reuse as a stable.

CONCLUSION

Flavias is likely to have deteriorated along with the rest of eastern Cilicia in the seventh and eighth centuries and a period of demographic decline consistent with evidence from other sites is to be expected. It was during this period that the decay of the urban monuments truly set in. The early basilica at Kadirli however stands alone as one of the best preserved of all early churches in this region, which is especially surprising given that the walls are virtually un-mortared and only a single block in thickness.

The perpetuation of this site has relied on successive groups, of different cultural backgrounds, perceiving an inherent sanctity or potential significance in the place, from its origins as a tomb on a hillside, to its commemoration with a church, its restoration with the chapel and its re-invention as a mosque. Each new development was therefore deeply rooted in the past and contemporary perceptions of that past. It was the presence of the hypogeum which gave reason for building the church there, and the survival of the basilica which prompted the construction of the chapel. Simple efficacy could easily be argued as explanation for this medieval construction, but this could not have occurred without some recognition

²⁵ Bayliss 1997, 81-3.

that the appropriated building was a site of ancient sanctity, indeed a church. The same can be observed for the Moslem translation of the place, yet in a period when the town still boasted a substantial Christian population, the conversion to a mosque would also have been laced with plenty of social and political meaning. This building, overlooking the crumbling remains of the ancient city, must have been the major ritual focus of the medieval town, since it alone was singled out for conversion. From humble origins, the burial plot overlooking the city became a place where the past was embodied in the late 5th century, where the past was restorative in the 12th to 13th centuries and finally in the late 15th century where the past was coercive.

FIGURES

1. Alacami, general view from the south west.
2. Alacami, view from the south-east.
3. Plan of the Alacami; from hypogeum, to basilica, to chapel, to mosque,
4. Interior of the hypogeum looking east. Survey in progress.
5. East-West section across the basilica, hypogeum and apse excavations.
6. Medieval chapel facade.
7. Plan of excavations in the apse.

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See Bayliss 1997, 86-7 and Hild & Hellenkemper 1990, 379, for additional
sources on the Alacami.



Fig. 1

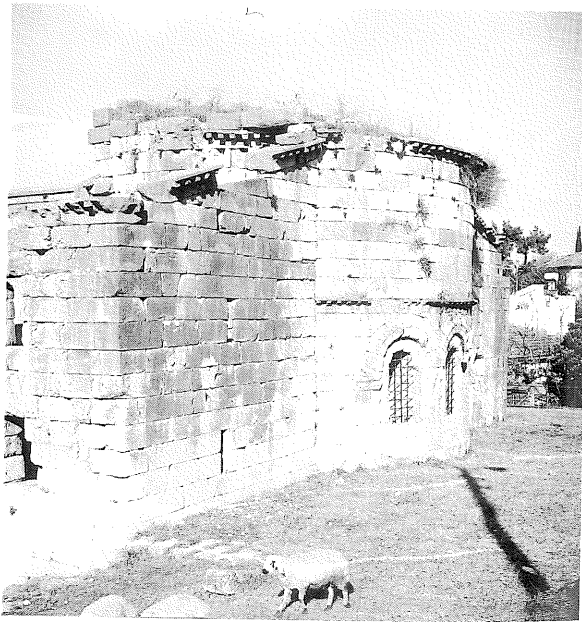


Fig. 2

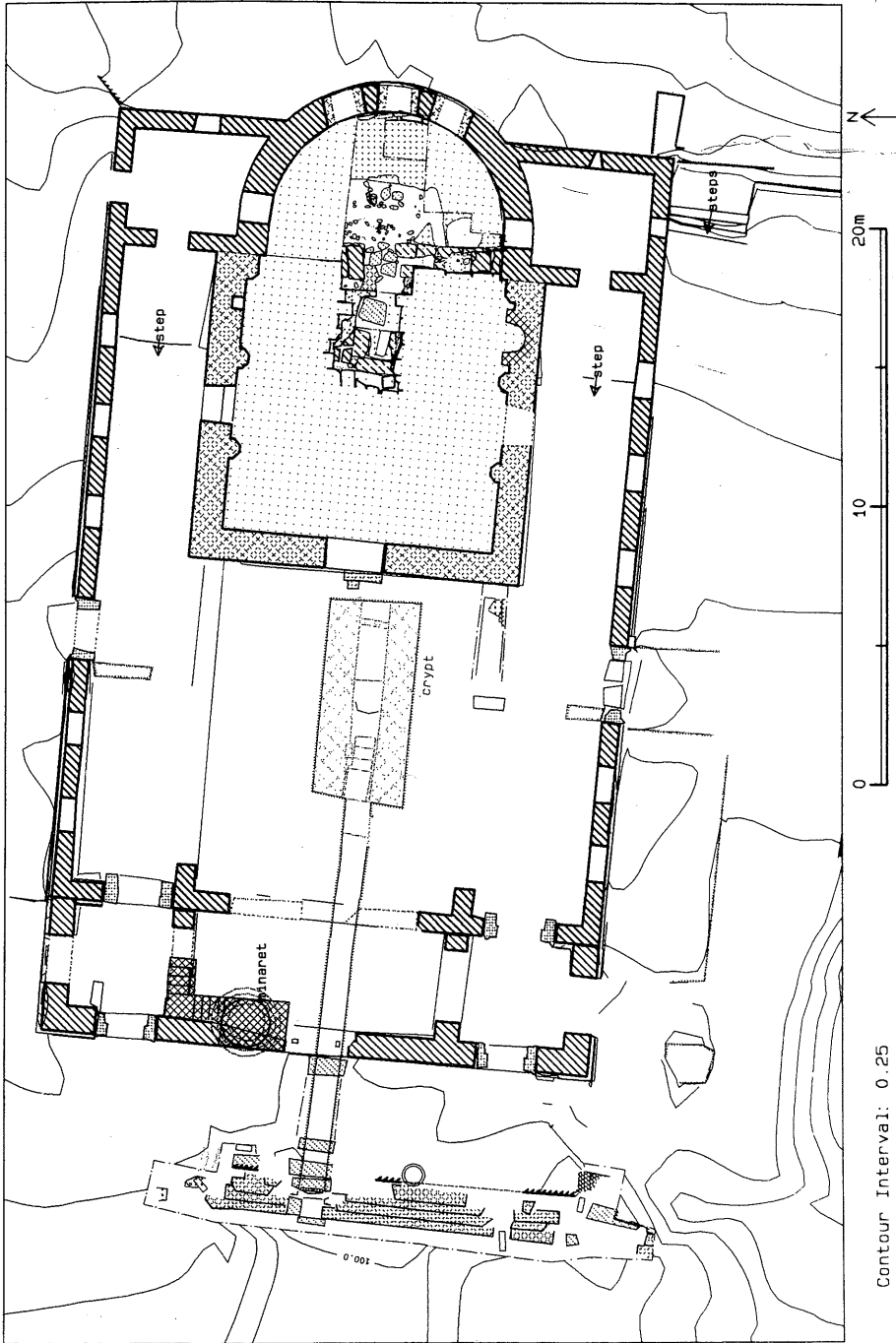


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 6

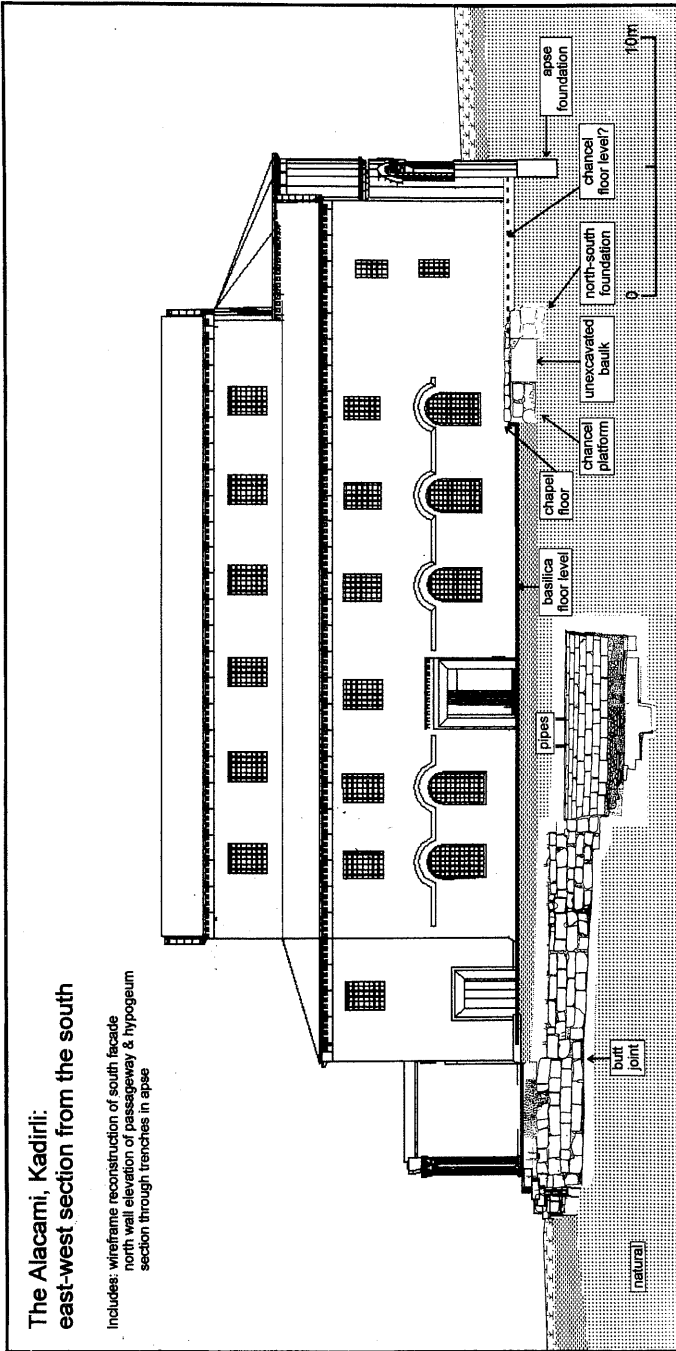


Fig. 5

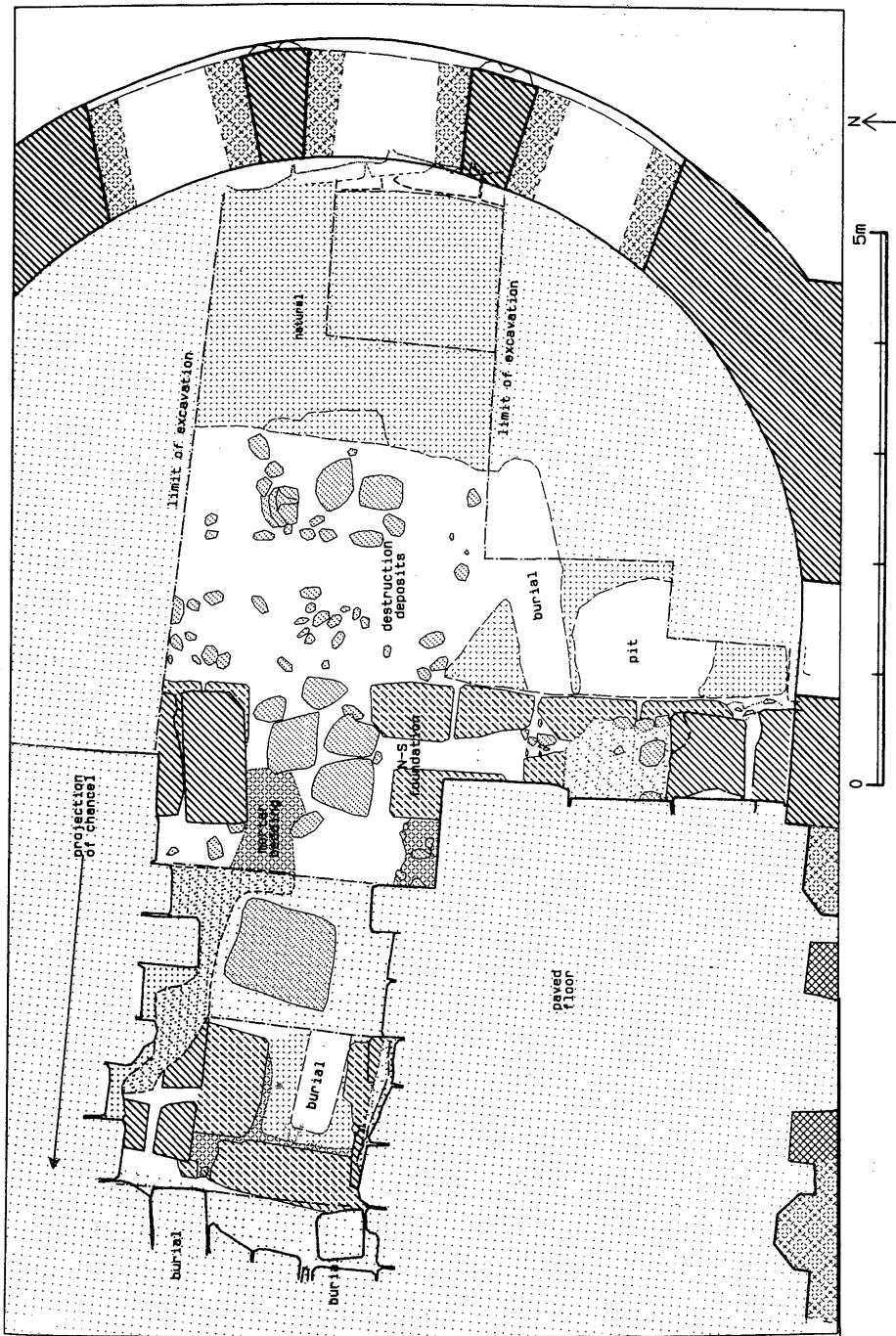


Fig. 7