

## KARLIK AND DAĞ PAZARI, 1958

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During the summer of 1958, work was carried out at two sites, at Karlık Köyü (some 36 kilometres to the NW of Adana) and again at Dağ Pazari, the possible site of the city and bishopric of Coropisus, which lies some 33 kilometres to the N of Mut on the old caravan route to Karaman.

Karlık proved to be a very extensive site, with the remains of several large buildings of the Byzantine period still visible above the surface of the ground. Sherds collected there were nearly all Byzantine, though a few of them may have belonged to the Late Roman period. A possible identification of the site with the city of Neronias - Irenopolis was considered, but further research is necessary before such a possibility can be properly assessed.

The most important building at Karlık proved to be a large church whose foundations had been discovered by villagers. They had opened up part of the nave and revealed a mosaic, probably to be dated to the latter end of the 6th century, which represented the Messianic Paradise (or Peaceful Kingdom) of Isiah, a theme also known from Korykos in Cilicia Tracheia. An interesting feature of the Karlık mosaic was the manner in which the text of Isiah, written in very rustic Greek, divided one panel from another; all the scenes were literally represented, exactly in the order of Isiah's description, and this mosaic represents a notable addition to the relatively small number of those which deal specifically with this theme. At the end of the mosaic was a *tabula ansata* which was still partly buried under the earth. It is clear that its inscription was concerned with the dedication of the

mosaic and with the date at which it was laid. A minor clearance is all that is needed to settle both these points.

At Dağ Pazari, soundings were made in four areas: two of these were supplementary to work carried out at the same site in 1957, and provided us with very valuable fresh information. These were at the sites of the Basilica and the Ambulatory Church respectively. At the same time investigations were made of a church outside the walls of the city, and of a private house of the Byzantine period.

The plan of the basilical church has now been completed, and its probable date established by finds made beneath the paving of the south aisle, where the virgin rock was reached. Amongst finds made there were a coin of Arcadius (A D 395-408), immediately below the paving, and many sherds of Late Roman colour-coated ware. Further soundings in this building resulted in the discovery of a large area of *opus sectile* in the north aisle, while to the N of the *narthex*, the baptistery was found. This is a small rectangular building with an apse at its east end. Between the shoulders of the apse, and centrally placed, is a stone font with steps. The floor of the baptistery was also decorated with *opus sectile*.

Much further work was carried out in the ambulatory church, and its plan generally established. This plan, with its barrel-vaulted aisles and *narthex* and a central tower is particularly interesting. It suggests a compromise between the barrel-vaulted churches of Mesopotamia and the Isaurian basilica with central tower as found at Meryemlik and Alahan. In the western section of the nave, a fragmentary geometric mosaic of consi-

derable merit was discovered, while the clearance of the apse revealed extensive areas of *opus sectile*. The *confessio* in the centre of the apse had been robbed in the Karamanoğulları period.

Of the soundings made in new areas, the more important was concerned with a church to the south of the city, and situated outside its walls. As a result of its position, at a level very little above the river bed, it had been covered by debris from the hillside and was found to be in a good state of repair. It is a three-aisled basilica with an external apse and narthex. It is also likely that there was an *atrium* at the west end. In the *bema* is a fine mosaic, with its background in pink tesserae. At either end is an ornamental cross enclosed in panels with rich geometric decoration, while in the centre, in

another panel, are two lambs facing one another across a bowl of greenery. The apse has not so far been examined, but it is known from a small clearance made by villagers that it too has a mosaic floor.

A very limited preliminary sounding was made in the centre of the city area in an attempt to discover something of the architecture of Byzantine houses there. On a tamped earth floor were found a gaming piece of bone and a 4th century coin. Just below the topsoil was a coin of Justinian. It is hoped that work will be continued here if circumstances permit.

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