

THIRD CAMPAIGN IN THE MONASTERY OF ST. BARLAAM

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Under the auspices of the University of Utah, we were able to continue the excavations of the Monastery of St. Barlaam on Mount Casios. The work began on the 15 th of July and continued until the 28 th of August. At the excavation site, the Turkish government was represented by the director of the Museum of Karaman, Mr. Abduraman Erdal. The architect was Mr. Nuri Ödekan from the Technical University of Istanbul. Both members proved to be extremely helpful in process of our work.

The plan of the work was to continue the excavation in the northern section of the *mandra* along the main wall from west to east, and finally to reach the southern area between the Basilica and the southern wall.

At the beginning of the work, after freeing the small compartments arranged along the northern wall from accumulated debris, it became evident that the medieval structures had been erected on earlier walls which had been constructed with evenly shaped rectangular blocks. The walls were not excavated but left unexamined at that time.

The excavation of the northern section (Fig. 1) of the *mandra* revealed nine rectangular, longitudinal chambers divided into two or three small compartments (north-south direction.) These compartments which display various degrees of irregularity are built by unevenly cut rectangular blocks of limestone ($0.34 \times 0.23 \times 0.15$ m) with an occasional application of marble spoils.

The surface of the walls in all of the chambers displayed traces of thin plaster painted in red or yellow. The red plaster was used for the floor pavement which in four instances still covers the whole surface of the floor. In the compartments numbered 7,9 and 10 we located small hearths of semi-cylindrical shape (the lower diameter 0.26 m, the upper 19 cm, height 23 cm, with a narrowing upper part (Fig. 2) The frontal flanks of the hearths are engraved with geometric patterns; one fragment displayed the head of a bull.

In seven instances the chambers were equipped with small irregularly shaped cylindrical cisterns of various sizes (1.35×1.15 m. to 1.93×1.35 m.) The interior surface of the cisterns was not covered with plaster but left unfinished which indicates they were used for the conservation or storage of food. From two of these cisterns, three small pitchers were recovered.

In the compartment immediately under the northern wall of the *mandra* we uncovered eleven storage jugs (height 0.77 to 0.91 m.) placed symmetrically in the east-west direction (Fig. 3.) All jugs, except one, were severely damaged by the collapse of the walls caused by a fire.

In the same compartment (north-west corner) we found the metal rims of two barrels which originally were embedded in shallow depressions. The storage jars contained small portions of charred grain, garlic, walnuts, and beans.

The small size of these monastic compartments indicates that each of these cells

was occupied by only one monk. Two larger chambers east of the Basilica were paved with fine gravel of 0.013 m. thickness and fine plaster of the same texture as on the floor of the Basilica, painted in dark red. In this particular place our findings did not reveal any direct indications as to the nature of these rooms.

The western front of the Basilica, comprising an area of 11.00 × 6.50 m, was paved with rectangular large blocks of limestone 0.15 m. thick. The south-western part of the same area contained five tombs.

The western section of the mandra appeared to be very promising. In the vicinity of the southern cistern we located two Doric drums (Fig. 4) built into the wall (in vertical and horizontal position.) The first one is 0.57 m. high, 1.20 m. in diameter; the second is 0.53 m. high, 1.16 m. in diameter (Fig. 5.) Both have circular dowel holes in the center (4 cm wide, 0.052 m deep) and twenty flutings (0.188 m wide.) The material used for the drums as well as for three fragments of a Doric frieze (Fig. 6) is an extremely fine grained limestone. Similar architectural fragments built into the walls were excavated at the very end of the previous campaign.

No direct evidence for the date of the Doric architectural parts was found, but for the present it appears that it could have been built at the same time as the Doric temple, excavated in the upper city of Seleucia Pieria (Antioch of the Orontes III, p. 33-34), between the end of the fourth century and the first century B. C.

In the northwestern section of the mandra in the exterior wall were incorporated two bases (Fig. 7) and one Corinthian Capital (Fig. 8) matching the Corinthian capital found in the previous excavation. It is evident that the two bases are of the same size and fine workmanship. The total height: 0.382 m; diameter of the lower torus 1.27 m; diameter of the upper torus 1.08 m. The plinthe is 1.26 m square. It is peculiar that the shaft and peristyle are missing. They could have

been cut and used for the basilica of St. Barlaam. Inasmuch as the evidence of such practice in this mandra has been ascertained on a few occasions. In regard to the nature of the monument which originally incorporated the two huge capitals and bases, we cannot come to a definite conclusion. But the number and size of the Corinthian fragments suggest a distyle, a commemorative monument which is not unusual for northern Syria in the Second Century, particularly in the valleys of Dana and Qatura.

The excavation revealed also five fragments of three chancel posts of which two are terminated by a hemispherical cup (0.094 m high) that are adjusted to the square tops (0.275 m) of the posts (Fig. 9) of the tops have holes in the center upon which originally some kind of metallic object could have been fastened. The surface of these and of other chancel posts which were found earlier, is decorated with plant ornaments without repeating the motif of the design once. At this stage we are not able to offer a definite date for these chancel posts, which are uncommon for northern Syria, but the stylistic features indicate they could belong to the Fourth Century.

Our work exposed a number of Greek, Latin and Georgian inscriptions, as well as objects of minor art, some of which may be mentioned in short: two molds for hosts, carved into a soft limestone, both circular in form and bearing inscriptions in one line around the exterior limits of the molds. The first, which is 0.317 m in diameter, with a broken off upper edge, bears a Greek inscription. The middle part is occupied by the full size image of St. Barlaam (identified by the accompanying inscription.) He holds in the right hand, in front of his breast, a cross; in the left, a scroll. The head of the saint, as well as a large portion of the mold's handle, is missing.

The second mold is intact except for small parts broken off the exterior rim (Fig. 10.) The total height is 0.075 m, the

height of the handle 0.035 m. The diameter of the mold is 0.165 m. This mold also bears an inscription in one line around the exterior limits of the circle. The inscription is Georgian (0.017 m high) executed in majuscul (mrgwlowani.) The central part of the mold consists of twelve equally divided squares in the form of an equal-armed cross; four squares in the crossing (each of the squares contains one abbreviated word) and two squares for each arm. The circular inscription reads: "O Lord, our God, accept this offering through the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, and Eternal Virgin, Mary." The inscription in the four middle squares reads: "Jesus Christ, Son (of) God." The paleographic characteristics of these inscriptions suggests them as products of the Twelfth Century.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that we found fragments of two candlesticks and one very handsome silver pectoral cross, worked in *niello*.

The numerous architectural parts as well as fragments of inscriptions, some of which we were able to reconstruct, were spread disorderly around the courtyard of the mandra. In one instance, the upper section of a chancel post uncovered du-

ring the season of 1964 in the Basilica, was found in a small compartment located immediately west of the southern gate of the monastery. This is one additional symptom indicating the willful and forceful destruction of the monastery.

We were fortunate to obtain dependable evidence which unmistakably indicates the close association between the monastic colony of S. Barlaam and two monasteries located on the southern slopes of the Black Mountain during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. One is the Monastery of the Holy Cross (dzeli Ckhorobisa) or of the Mother of God located near the town Surutme, and the other, where the above mentioned association can be extended to the end of the Thirteenth Century, the monastery of S. George (or S. Michael) located in the northern limits of Seleucia Pieria in a valley near the present town Kaboussie.

The fragments of two colonetts (one of them with a square base) carved with interlaced octogonal geometric motifs, testify that the Georgian architects active particularly in the monastery near Kaboussie during the Eleventh-Twelfth Centuries, were working in or for the monastery of S. Barlaam in Kasios.