

ALAHAN MONASTERY 1968

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Owing to the imminent departure of the Director of the excavation from Turkey, the season of 1968 was a very short one. Two full weeks were worked by an average of fifteen workmen between the 1st and 15th July, with three further days at the end devoted to cleaning up. Apart from the Director and Mrs. Gough, who again took charge of the administration of the camp, Mrs. St. F. M. Aldridge and Mrs. Brian Beeley undertook the conservation and restoration of finds, while Miss C. Dauphin, Miss M.L. Ward and Mr. A. MacNicoll were field assistants. The representative of the Turkish Ministry of Education was again Bayan Nihal Koloğlu and to her we are grateful for her ever-ready help and friendship.

With such limited time at our disposal, we had perforce to set our sights low; but our objectives, such as they were, were achieved. The north aisle (pl. 1) of the East Church, in which rubble was piled to a height of nearly 3 m. in places, was systematically cleared, moulded or otherwise significant blocks being stacked south of the eastern end of the walkway. They lay on a deposit of earth which varied in depth from about 70 cm. at the eastern end to 40 cm. at the west. This was carefully excavated and sieved, but disappointingly little was found in the burnt destruction level, which in any case was much disturbed. Not a single paving slab was found *in situ* on the rock-cut floor, though fragments appeared at every level throughout the length of the aisle (pl. 2). The room of *prothesis*, was left for a further season, since the upper courses of its western wall are badly

buckled and it was feared that vibration from work immediately below it might endanger the whole structure and cause its collapse.

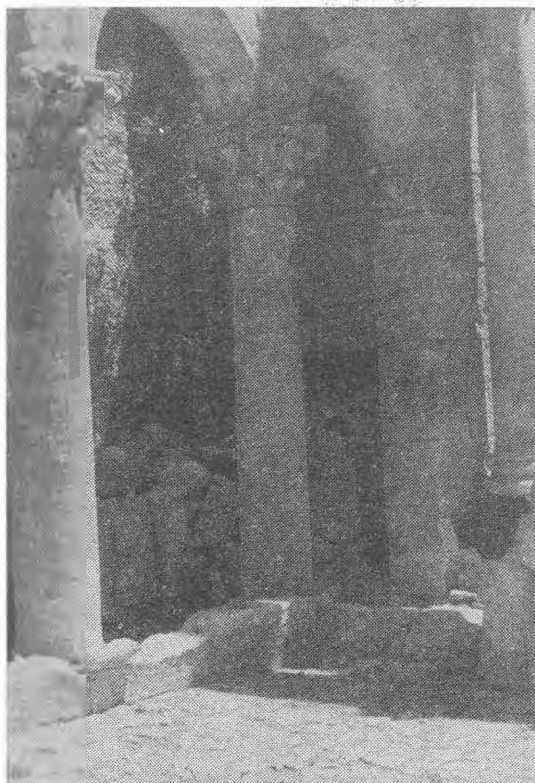
It may be recalled that in 1967 the whole of the south aisle had been cleared. In 1968, the blocks encumbering the room of the *diakonikon* were removed and the earth below them excavated. This turned out to have been greatly disturbed by robber trenches, though roughly in a central position between the north and south walls and backing onto the east wall the base of a small altar-like structure was still *in situ* (pl. 3). It measured 53 cm. square at the base, and stood to a maximum height of about 40 cm. The base had a simple decorative concave moulding along the sides, but other fragments found in association with it suggest that it was the twin of a base of exactly similar dimensions which has long been known as an intruder in the main apse of the church. This latter may have been looted from the room of *prothesis* which seems to have been particularly badly disturbed near its eastern wall. Evenly spaced round the base in the *diakonikon* were four rectangular sinkings for wooden supports of which the charred remains were still in existence. It was notable that in the undisturbed levels, the upper contained a coin of Justin II, and the lowest a minim predating the coinage reform of Anastasius.

In the *han*, Mrs. Beeley worked with special success on the joining and securing of screen fragments from the Basilica. Considering the hundreds of fragments involved, the very friable nature of the limenstone, and the similarity of the

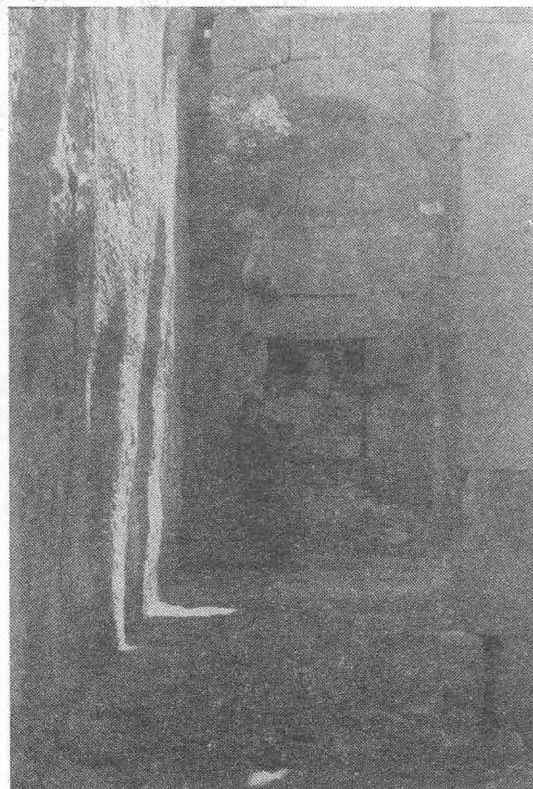
motives used by the sculptors, this gigantic jigsaw puzzle is yielding to treatment despite the fact that so many of the pieces are missing (pl. 4). Large wooden frames have been prepared for assembly of the screens and for ultimate display.

During the winter months, the monastery had again suffered damage, chiefly from the action of frost. Before the site

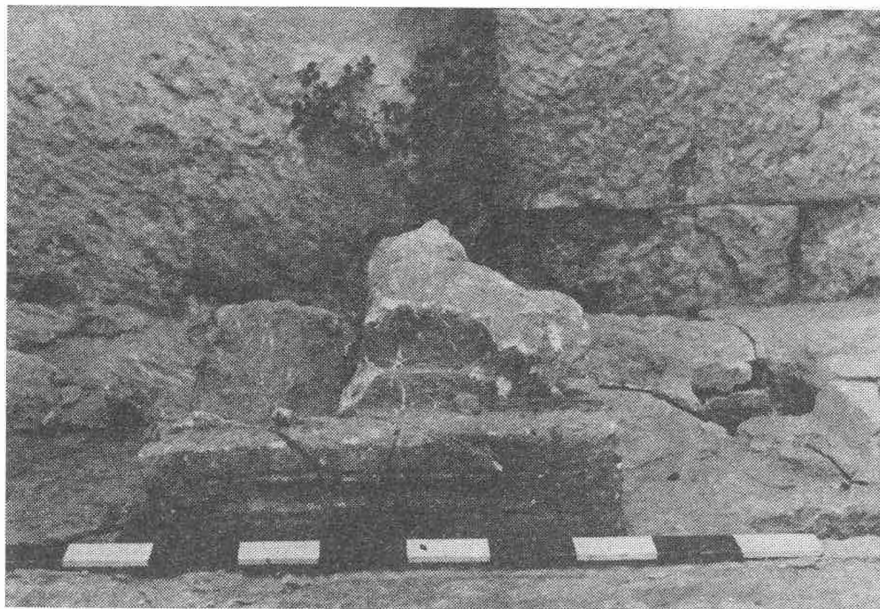
was left at the end of the season, however, this damage was made good (pl. 5). Weedkiller was also applied to walls and floors to prevent further deterioration due to the splitting of the stone by roots. In the East Church, at all events, the preventive action taken in 1967 had proved highly efficacious.



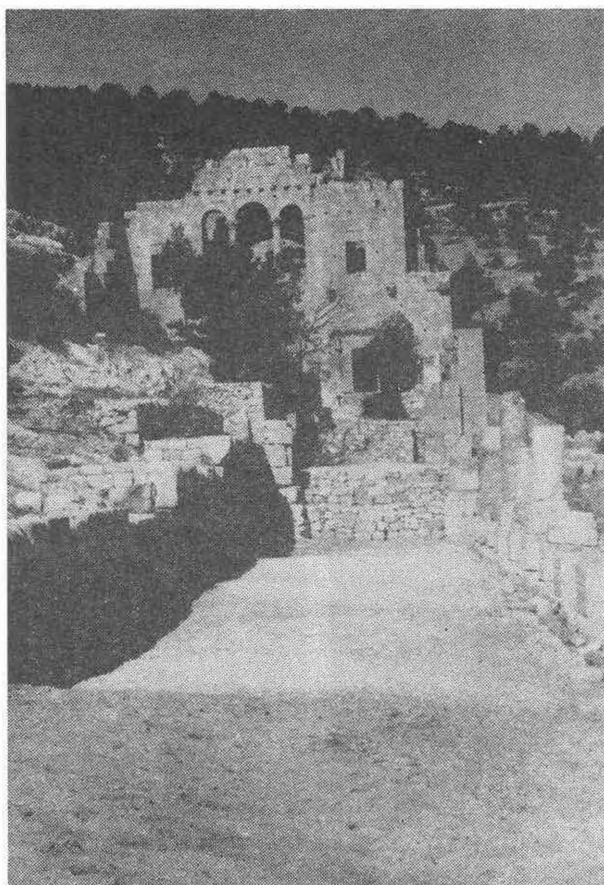
1 — ALAHAN : East Church East corner of north aisle choked with rubble.



2 — ALAHAN : East church north aisle after Clearance



3 — ALAHAN: East church small "altar" base in Diakonikon.



4 — ALAHAN : Basilica Restored section of decorated screen



5 — ALAHAN The East end of the monastery after Cleaning in 1968