

The Problem of Function of the Spaces East of the Apse in Cilician Churches

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Öz

Kilikia Bölgesi Kiliseleri'nde Apsisin Doğusundaki Mekânların İşlev Problemi

Kilikia Bölgesi, Bizans dini mimari örneklerinde, bölgesel özelliklerin yoğun biçimde görüldüğü bir bölgedir. Güçlü bir Geç Antik Dönem mimari mirasına sahip olan bölgede, farklı plan uygulamaları bir arada izlenebilmektedir. Apsislerin doğudan düz bir duvarla kapatılmış olduğu bazilikal plan şeması en yaygın görülen uygulamadır ve bölgenin Suriye ile olan kültürel ilişkisini gösterir. Bununla birlikte, neredeyse sadece Kilikia Bölgesinde görülen kiliselerin ana apsilerinin doğusunda neflerle bağlantılı mekânların yer aldığı bir diğer plan tasarımı da dikkati çekmektedir. Kilisenin doğusundaki apsisli mekânlar birbirlerine de bir koridor ile bağlantılıdır. Kilikia'ya özgü bu farklı mekân tasarımı konusunda, bölgede çalışan ilk araştırmacılar bir durum tespiti yapmakla yetinmişlerdir. Ancak, kesin bir işlev önerisinde bulunmamışlardır. Yirminci yüzyılın sonlarına doğru ise apsisin doğusundaki bu mekânların bütüncül bir şekilde mezar ve/veya martır kültü ile ilişkilendirilmeye başlandıkları görülür. Bu konuda, altındaki kutsal sayılan mağara nedeniyle

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aziz kültü ile doğrudan ilişkili olan bazilikal planlı Thekla Kilisesi en güçlü argüman olarak dikkati çekmektedir. Kilisenin doğu bölümünde söz konusu olan mekân kurgusu, mağaradaki kült alanı ile bu bölümün ilişkilendirilmesine yol açmış görünmektedir. Kilisenin ana giriş kapısına ait lento üzerinde yer alan yazıttan dolayı bir martyron barındırdığı kesin olan Yanıkhan Güney Kilise de bir diğer güçlü argümandır. Kilisenin doğusunda görülen birbirleri ile bağlantılı apsizli iki mekânın doğusunda olduğu iddia edilen kubbeli kare birim, doğrudan martyron olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Ancak, her iki yapının mimari verilerinin yeniden gözden geçirilmesi ve bu iki yapı örnek alınarak işlev önerisi getirilen bölgedeki diğer yapıların tartışılması gerekmektedir. Genellikle mezar ve/veya martyr kültü ile ilişkilendirilen bu mekânların işlev problemi bu çalışmanın konusunu oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kilikia, Bizans Mimarisi, Geç Antik Dönem, Martyron, Kilise

Abstract

Byzantine religious architecture of Cilicia presents strongly regional characteristics. This region possesses a rich architectural heritage from the Late Antique period, and various plan practices can be found here. The most commonly seen of them is the basilica plan scheme, where apses are closed off by a straight wall from the east, which also reflects the cultural connection with Syria. However, another notable plan scheme, almost exclusively found in the Cilicia Region, features spaces connected to the naves to the east of the main apses. The apsidal spaces to the east of the church are connected to each other by a corridor. The first researchers that studied the region merely described the overall status regarding this peculiar spatial design of Cilicia. However, they failed to suggest a definite function. It is observed that these spaces to the east of the apsis are associated holistically with tombs and/or the cult of saints toward the end of the twentieth century. Having a basilica plan directly associated with the cult of saints thanks to the sacred cave underneath, the Saint Thecla Church draws attention as the strongest basis for this argument. It seems that the spatial setup in the Church's eastern part gave rise to the association of the cult are in the cave with this section. South Church in Yanıkhan represents another strong argument as it certainly hosts a martyron as seen from the epigraph inscribed onto the lintel above the church's main gate. The domed square unit, which is allegedly situated to the east of the two interconnected apsidal spaces to the east of the church, is characterized directly as a martyron. However, the architectural data of the two buildings have to be reviewed and the other regional buildings, to which functions are ascribed on the basis these two buildings, have to be discussed. These spaces, often associated with tombs and/or the cult of saints, constitute the main subject of this study.

Keywords: Cilicia, Byzantine Architecture, Late Antique Period, Martyron, Church

Introduction

Cilicia has a prominent place in the History of Byzantine Architecture thanks to a number of churches dated to the Late Antique Period. Although regional churches reflect the general characteristics of Late Antique architecture, Cilicia is amongst the geographical zones where there are numerous local architectural features. The region's proximity to Syria gave rise to an architectural interaction at a certain level between the two regions. In particular, the interior space design that takes the shape of a closed rectangular, the straight eastern façade walls and the resulting corner rooms on both sides of the apse converge Syria and Cilicia in architectural terms. However, whilst churches with a basilical plan, where the apse protrudes are common in Western Anatolia, they are especially very rare in Eastern Rough Cilicia.

Apart from the elements that differentiate Cilicia from Western Anatolia and ensure the region's resemblance to Syria in terms of the church design, there is another design element that is observed only in Eastern Rough Cilicia. In thirty-nine buildings in the region, there are two spaces east of the apse which are connected to the side naves and which generally protrude. These spaces are also interconnected by means of a corridor between them. The functional problem of these spaces, which have been differently addressed by researchers, constitutes the main subject of this study.

Studies and Discussions

G. Bell, author of one of the earliest publications on the architecture of the Cilician Region, draws attention to the Şaha and Kanytellis (Kanlıdivane) examples. Laying stress on the apses of spaces that are located in the east of the main apse, the researcher suggests that these spaces were potentially used as tombs, chapels or baptistery.¹

In Korasion (Susanoğlu), the City and Graveyard Churches also have a similar spatial design in the east. The plans of churches were published in 1931 by J. Keil and A. Wilhelm; it is unknown if they have apses or not yet their eastern walls have collapsed. However, the apsidal niche, which is in the northern wall of the building named as the Graveyard Church, is thought to be a tomb of a saint or martyr and is thus considered to be a place of visit (fig. 1g).² But, it is understood that this consideration does not take the spatial design of the buildings' eastern section into account at all.

Kanytellis (Kanlıdivane), a rural settlement of the port city Elaiussa Sebaste in the Cilician Region, has a remarkable importance in the Late Antique Period architecture thanks to the structural remains. The Church number IV, which has a rectangular-planed space in the width of the naos eastward the apse, was addressed in depth for the first time by G. H. Forsyth in 1961³. While the naos connection of the eastward rectangular space is ensured through

1 Bell 1906, 390, 394-395.

2 Keil – Wilhelm 1931, 106.

3 Forsyth 1961, 127-137.

a wide-arch opening in the north, it is narrower in the east and is probably connected by means of a door (fig. 1d). Some researchers suggest that this space, which closes off the apse in the east, was subsequently added to the structure.⁴ The first suggestion regarding the functional characteristic of the space, by Forsyth, is that the spaces on both sides of the apse were probably used as *pastophoria* prior to adding the eastward space, but that the wide arches probably functioned as *ambulatorii* for the peripatetic ritual of crowded prayers following the addition of the space in question. He states that the church was probably regarded as a divine place as it had been built on the edge of a sinkhole or it could serve for visiting purposes for a probable tomb that had probably existed there.⁵ S. Hill also suggests that as to the east and north of Church IV the area has a wide necropolis, the church had probably been built as a funerary church.⁶ In a recent study, Cortese follows the opinions of Forsyth and Hill.⁷

Although Church II in Kanlıdivane was not discussed as it is the case with the other example, it constitutes a part of the same group with its spaces eastward the apse. Due to the additions and modifications made during the Turkish era, we are unable to comprehend its original design; however, we can say that this section is made up of three or four interconnected spaces protruding northwards with a door opening in the west (fig. 1c). Bell, who published the first paper on this structure, merely depicted the eastern spaces and did not suggest any opinion on its function.⁸ In his paper published in 1976, S. Eyice slightly changed the building's plan, but did not address its spatial functions.⁹ The last paper on the Kanlıdivane churches was published by A. Aydın in 2015. The researcher suggests that the eastward spaces are two-storey, but did not express any opinion on their function.¹⁰ Hill suggests that the church has a door in the northwest, facing the westward door opening in of the northeast space and that there is necessarily a corridor running through the church's north side. Since this corridor is connected to the church's eastward spaces, Hill associates the church with the Necropolis Church of Anemurium, where the corridor connects to a space that is supposedly a baptistery, and with the South Church of Yanıkhana, where the southward corridor connects to the eastward martyrion.¹¹ This opinion of the researcher can be construed that the eastward spaces at Kanlıdivane Church II serves a ritual purpose.

One of the best known churches in Cilicia is the Saint Thecla Church in Meryemlik. One of the earliest papers published on this building was by E. Herzfeld and S. Guyer. Excavating the church with a basilical plan that had been constructed over a cave where Saint Thecla is believed to have lived, the researchers explain that they have excavated only the apsidal additional space

4 Forsyth 1961, 132; Eyice 1976, 434.

5 Forsyth 1961, 132

6 Hill 1996, 188.

7 Cortese 2022, 177-178.

8 Bell 1906, 409-410.

9 Eyice 1976/1977, 425-426.

10 Aydın 2015, 193-194.

11 Hill 1996, 184.

located in the north. The researchers suggest that another space is supposed to exist also in the south of the apse and note that the northward space opens to a platform behind the main apse through a door opening on the southward wall (fig. 2).¹² Because of the long and straight eastward wall that is seen on the plan drawn by Herzfeld and Guyer and that is tangent to the northward space's apse, Hill is of the opinion that the church has a corridor space in the east. Moreover, Hill criticizes Herzfeld and Guyer for their description of the space here as a mere platform by overlooking this wall when describing the space. However, Hill firmly suggests that the side spaces of the apse and the eastward passage constitute the saint's martyrion. Attempting to associate the church with the Church of St. Demetrius at Thessaloniki, which he suggests to have been built with the donation of the Emperor Zeno, the researcher also expresses the opinion that the building should have a transept plan and inter-connected spaces on the east of the apse.¹³

Korykos is an important port city which possesses many churches with an eastward space design. Church G, located furthest from the city centre has a transept basilical plan without protruding transept arms. In the north and south nave axes on the east of the church's main apse, there are apsidal spaces with a rectangular plan. There is also a passage space with a square plan that is located between these two spaces for connection purposes. It is unclear if the southward spaces that open to naves in the west have a connection with outside or not. However, the northward wall of the space in the north has a small corridor for entrance from outside. The apsidal spaces were built directly in the form of a straight wall (fig. 3d). It is suggested that the unit, which remains between these spaces and which has a large square plan, had been exposed initially, but was later -probably in the Armenian Kingdom era- closed off by walling.¹⁴

The location of Church G seems to have determined the meanings attributed to the building. Church G was built in the city's necropolis area to the south of the road connecting Elaiussa Sebaste and Korykos in the same line with the Tomb Church and the Church I. The entrance to this road has a prominent tetrapylon and it is called as the "holy road" as it passes through the graveyard plot. Therefore, it is suggested that all three buildings could have been devoted to martyrs.¹⁵ Aydın recognizes that this place was a pilgrimage center and especially the transept Church G was devoted to Thecla based on the fact that the three churches are in a line along the way.¹⁶

An interesting example for the eastward space design is witnessed in Yanıkhán, a rural settlement with two churches, 12 km west of Erdemli. The

12 Herzfeld – Guyer 1930, 15.

13 Hill 1996, 34-35. The transept phenomenon and the association with the Church of St. Demetrius at Thessaloniki

suggested by the researcher as a probability are presented as a definite result on the following pages, 36-37. In a paper released at a later date, the researcher supports Hill's opinion by associating the Church of St. Demetrius at Thessaloniki with the churches of the Cilician Region, Craft 2015, 148.

14 Herzfeld – Guyer 1930, 122. Hill; on the other hand, is of the opinion that the building was constructed without any subsequent modification. Hill 1996, 129-130.

15 Herzfeld – Guyer 1930, 210.

16 Aydın 2004, 166-167.

northeastern space of the North Church has a baptismal font with a cross-shaped plan carved on the bedrock which clearly exhibits this place's function (fig. 3a).

The South Church has drawn more attention because of an inscription on the lintel of the main gate located on the mid-nave's axis. According to published plans, the three-nave basilical church has an apsidal space on each of the nave axes and a passage unit interconnecting them on the east of the main apse. Nevertheless, a square-plan and a domed protruding space is observed on the main apse axis to fill the gap between the additional spaces. Besides, there is an arched niche of a rectangular plan within this space's northward wall. Further, a corridor, which runs throughout the church's south side, connects this group of spaces outside on the east of the apse (fig. 4).

The South Church in Yanıkhan was first mentioned by M. Gough in 1965.¹⁷ Thereafter, F. Hild and H. Hellenkemper briefly mentioned the settlement and read three of the names carved on the lintel¹⁸. Hill recopied them as Georgios, Konon, and Christophoros which are probably the names of local saints. Due to the phrase in the beginning of the text, the structure is suggested to be a *martyrion* and to have been built by a certain Matronianos as understood from the final part of the inscription.¹⁹ Hellenkemper and Hild argue that saints' relics were kept underneath the altar and that the domed space with a tomb niche behind the main apse is the grave of Matronianus, who supported the building's construction process.²⁰ Hill, on the other hand, is of the opinion that eastward domed space that hosts the tomb niche, is the main martyrion.²¹

In another study, Cortese added the names Kerykos and Ioulitta as local saints to Hill's transcription and noted that the saints other than Georgios and Christophoros had been referred to in other settlements of the region. However, she shares Hill's opinion and denominates the domed space behind the apse as the saints' martyrion. Also, the corridor, which runs alongside the building's south part and connects the eastwards group of spaces, is intended to grant visitors access to the martyrion without having to pass through the interior of the church.²²

At Hasanaliler north of Korykos, a church built on a steep slope, has three naves in a basilical plan. On the east of the church apse, there are non-apsidal spaces that have examples in the region. Underneath this space, there are roughly planned spaces that are partly carved into the bedrock (fig. 1b).

According to A. Cortese, the small domed space (Cave 1) that is carved into the bedrock is the main core of the church area (fig. 5). According to the researcher, the church is built on this structure and other spaces were expanded around it. The researcher suggests that the ever-increasing respect to an

17 Gough 1965, 409.

18 Hild – Hellenkemper 1990, 459.

19 Hill 1985, 96-97.

20 Hill 1996, 260, comment that is referred to by Hill is not found in Hellenkemper – Hild's publications.

21 Hill 1996, 260.

22 Cortese 2022, 182-183

unknown local martyr reached such an extent that requirement emerged for the expansion of the building's core and for the building of further units to host more people. The researcher further suggests that vaulted space (Nr. 3) and other spaces attached around Cave 1 were built following the construction of this cave. The researcher argues that Cave 1 constructed by forming the bedrock relates to a cult that is associated to the memoirs of a martyr, while the northward one (Cave 3) could function as a meeting venue for payers and feasts in memory of the saint.²³

Finally, there is a double-apsidal space also in the east of a church located in Asteria, a small settlement on Boğsak Island west of Silifke. The eastward space is accessible through a corridor running alongside the church's south part. On the east of this space, which is accessible also via naves, an additional building was constructed at a later stage with a square plan outside and a cross-shaped plan inside. This building, which is covered with a dome and decorated with niches, functioned as a chapel and martyrion.²⁴ (fig. 1i)

Assessment

Above, we briefly introduced eight examples with spaces eastward the main apse as they were addressed in previous researches. Hill thoroughly argues that the eastward space design, which is observed in thirty-nine churches in total, is a practice specific to martyria in Cilicia or is, at least, associated to a tomb cult based on two buildings, the large basilica at Meryemlik and the South Church at Yanıkhán. We will deal with the architectural problems of both buildings later, but we should note in the first place that certain buildings, which have this spatial design that seems to be specific to Cilicia, are definitely not associated to *martyrion* or tomb cult. The archeological data on hand proves that such spaces were used as a baptistery at least in four buildings, as in Anemurium, Işıkkale, Yanıkhán and Korykos.

East of Anemurium, at the Center 13 III C Church, we can observe a non-apsidal spatial arrangement contrary to the general approach. On the southern part of the eastward group of spaces, there is a baptismal font ornamented with mosaics (fig. 3c).²⁵ Also, in the east of a church in Işıkkale, a rural settlement north of Seleucia ad Calicadnum (Silifke), there are two apsidal spaces interconnected through a door. The baptismal font, which is situated inside the apse, clearly indicates that the southern space functioned as a baptistery too (fig. 3b).²⁶ Yanıkhán North Church is similar to Yanıkhán South Church in terms of its plan and eastward space's design. A cross-shaped baptismal font, which was carved from the eastern spaces into the northward one on bedrock, is also observed in this building.²⁷ The last example that we know to be a baptistery within the group of spaces situated on the east of the main apse is the

²³ Cortese 2022, 117

²⁴ Varinlioğlu 2021, 130-132.

²⁵ Russell 1989, 1626

²⁶ Westphalen 2015, Fig. 3.

²⁷ Uygun-Yazıcı 2019, 191.

Korykos G Church. In 2016, an unauthorized excavation by treasure hunters in the northeast space of the church revealed a broken cross-plan baptismal font carved from a single piece of Proconnesian marble. This indicates that the northward space of Korykos G Church was also used as a baptistery. The baptistery of Korykos G Church is different from other examples in terms of space use. While access to the baptistery in two other examples is made through the interior of churches by means of doors in the nave axis, in the case of Korykos, the naos is accessible in the nave axis, besides the direct entrance from outside by means of a corridor built outside the otherward wall (fig. 3e). Similarly, Anemurium 13 III C church also has a door that provides access from the exterior on the northward wall of the space in north. Although it is not essential in the baptism liturgy, it is observed that catechumens enter the baptistery through an exterior door without being allowed into the naos and are admitted into the church after the ceremony through a door that opens to the nave. This has been discovered in many baptistery examples.²⁸

Although no baptismal font has been discovered, it is suggested that the northward one of the apsidal spaces in the east of a church, which is situated in Öküzlü and which is understood to be used by villagers after having been transformed partly, was used as a baptistery.²⁹

In the region, there are other eastward spaces too that can be suggested to be baptisteries. It is observed that the ancient settlement in Emirzeli intensified in the earlier period in the northward slope of the valley situated inside the village. The three churches that mark the settlement's Late Antique Period were built in the valley's southward slope in an irregular line.³⁰ Among them, Church 2 has two apsidal spaces and a square unit in between to connect them.³¹ An onsite examination in 2023 showed walls running eastward between apses to create a corner facing each other and a door opening in between. A door opening on the northward wall of the northeast space of Church 2 resembles Korykos G Church in terms of the space use (fig. 6). Considering the examples where catechumens are allowed in baptisteries from outside, we can suggest that the northward space in Emirzeli Church 2 can be functiona-

28 The buildings that have an entrance to the baptistery from the exterior of churches are observed in many Anatolian structures. Diokaisareia (Uzuncaburç) Church's Baptistery in Cilicia, Ölüdeniz Basilica Church's Baptistery in Lycia, Necropolis Church's Baptistery in Arykanda, Eastern Basilica's Baptistery in Xanthos, Miletus Saint Michael Church's Baptistery in Caria, Ephesus Saint Ioannes Basilica's Baptistery in Ionia, Gülbahçe Church's Baptistery, and Hagia Sophia Church's Baptistery can be given as examples. For more information, see: Uygun-Yazıcı 2019, 115-147-168-172-220-212-222-226.

29 Mimaroglu – Aydinoglu 2017, 129. If we are to suggest the use of the baptistery in the Öküzlü settlement, it would be reasonable to put forth one of the eastward spaces of the North Church. As a matter of fact, if a settlement has a church with a transept basilical plan, then that building is the settlement's main church and the baptistery must thus be associated to the main church as we can infer from the examples in in Side, Perge, Tlos, Olympos, Patara, Limyra, Sagalassos, Korykos, and other settlements. Based on this argument, the single-transept plan building found in Öküzlü is the North Church and the baptistery, if any, must be associated to this building.

30 Aydın associates this in-line construction of churches to the arrangement of Alahan and Korykos Churches outside the city wall and uses it as an argument to support her pilgrimage building suggestion; Aydın 2004, 167-168.

31 Aydın 2001, Drawing 1.

lized as a baptistery too. Similarly, the door opening on the southward wall of the apsidal space in the east of the İmamlı Church directly connects the space with outside and exhibits an adequate plan scheme for a potential liturgy of baptism (fig. 1e).

Although some of the buildings in Cilicia that are a part of a group of spaces designed eastward the apse were definitely used as baptisteries and while some of them can be suggested to function as baptisteries, the opinion that these spaces are related to the liturgy of tomb and/or to the cult of martyr is widely recognized in literature. Forsyth puts forth the first clear opinion that the design of such spaces aimed to function for visiting purposes despite the fact that he did not associate them to the cult of tomb. The *katholikon* of the Sinai Saint Catherine's Monastery is very similar to the Cilician buildings in terms of its plan. The researcher draws attention to this similarity, stresses its resemblance especially to Korykos, and shows Cilicia as the region for inspiration. In the Mount Sinai example, the unit that is between the apsidal spaces situated in the east of the church was associated to the "Burning Bush" story narrated in the Old Testament and the belief that the bush in this place is the one referred to in the Old Testament has emerged.³² This story does not contain any peripatetic ritual suggested for Cilicia.³³

In his book published in 1996 on the churches of Cilicia, Hill discusses the eastward spatial design of churches and confidently suggests that this plan marks *martyria* in Cilicia. He further puts forth that the initial form of this plan design is the grand basilical church in Meryemlik that he dates back to the period of Emperor Zeno (474-491).³⁴ However, the church's plan can make it difficult to organically associate this church to other examples in Cilicia. Hill assumes, probably correctly, that there must be symmetrically a similar space in the south too, although only the northward space of the apse was excavated. However, as we can see from the plan published by the researchers who excavated the building, the existence of a wall that closes off the church in the east is not in question as part of the church's design. As understood from the plan, there is a long wall that runs in the north-south axis in the east of the church and that is tangent to the side spaces' apses. But, this wall's southward end continues, while the northward end thereof takes the form of a corner towards north (fig. 7). Therefore, it is understood that the wall observed in the east of the church belongs to another building. Thus, the eastward space was not part of the original design of the Saint Thecla basilica, but stems from the proximity of other buildings.

On the other hand, Hill tries to associate the church, which was built on the cave where Thecla is believed to have lived and disappeared, to the Church of St. Demetrius at Thessaloniki. This church was built on a bath, where the saint is believed to have been martyred. Because this Church has a transept with an ambulatorium circulating through the east of the apse, he suggests that

32 Forsyth 1968, 18.

33 The researcher proposes that the churches in Cilicia Region could have a similar ritual with the one observed in the Holy Land; Hill 1996, 32.

34 Hill 1996, 33.

the Thecla Basilica might have a transept too.³⁵ However, there is currently no evidence suggesting that the Saint Thecla Church had a transept and the researchers failed to provide any such data following the partly undertaken excavation of the building. The researcher associates the eastward spaces to the transept plan based on the plan of the Church of St. Demetrius at Thessaloniki. According to Hill, there is a link between the development of the transept plan scheme observed in Cilicia's churches and the eastward spaces and this link is definitely associated to the fact of martyrdom.³⁶ However, the available data is not enough to establish such a link between the transept plan scheme and the eastward spaces. As a matter of fact, it is hard to say that there is a building with a transept accompanying the eastward spaces with the exception of Korykos G Church and Öküzlü North Church. The question if Kanlıdivane Church IV has a transept or not is the subject of another debate.

We should also note that there are certain discrepancies regarding the date of the Thecla Basilica that Hill suggests to set an example for the regional church designs. Following her visit in 384, Egeria reports the existence of a campus made up of a church and a monastery in the Thecla sanctuary.³⁷ It is known that Emperor Zeno has a church built in the Thecla sanctuary after his return to Constantinople. However, researchers debated the identity of this building. Forsyth suggests that the church with a basilical plan over the cave can be the one built by Emperor Zeno soon after the year 476.³⁸ Krautheimer is also in agreement with Forsyth and suggests that this basilica could be financed by Zeno.³⁹ Herzfeld and Guyer put forth that the church built by Zeno is the Domed Church. The researchers claim that the church with the basilical plan, which is linked to the sacred cave, already existed; thus, the newly built church was constructed at a certain distance.⁴⁰

Another controversial issue relates to the small church, the apse of which has been unearthed as a result of an excavation and which is situated on the southward half of the Thecla Basilica's apse. Seeming to have three naves, this building is partly situated over the cave (fig. 8). Herzfeld and Guyer point out that this building was built of spolia during the Armenian Kingdom era in Cilicia with an aim to maintain the holiness of the Thecla zone.⁴¹ Hill, on the hand, suggests that this small-sized structure was older than the Thecla Basilica and that this building was constructed in the 4th century. In particular, the researcher rejects the suggestion of Herzfeld and Guyer yet the apse of the small-sized structure would be overshadowed by the apse of the Thecla Basilica in the 5th century.⁴²

At this point, we should refer to the discrepancies regarding the date su-

35 Hill 1996, 33.

36 Hill 1996, 37.

37 McClure – Feltoe 1919, 42.

38 Forsyth 1957, 224.

39 Krautheimer 1986, 109.

40 Herzfeld – Guyer 1930, 32.

41 Herzfeld – Guyer 1930, 36-37.

42 Hill 1996, 218; Hill 1985, 97

ggested by Hill for the Thecla Basilica and his assumption that it inspired the regional churches. Specifically, the researcher points out that the grand Thecla Basilica, which sets an example for the regional churches, was built during the Era of Zeno and then dates South Church in Yanikhan, which we will address in-depth below, to the 4th century that is nearly one century ago.⁴³ The small church, which the researcher claims to be built in the 4th century and the apse of which is observed on the south of the the grand Thecla Basilica's apse, was obviously built at a later date. Currently, the stone cutting traces observed on the southward corner of the grand church's apse clearly indicates the placement manner of the closure system of the smaller apse therein. Therefore, it is evident that this small church was built at a later date than the grand church encompassing it, although not in the Armenian Kingdom Period in Cilicia. On the other hand, despite the researcher's suggestion of grand church's function as an initial form, the excavation team points out that the Anemurium 13 C church, which has a similar eastward space practice, is supposed to be built between 420 and 450.⁴⁴

The South Church in Yanikhan constitutes another and probably stronger argument regarding the suggestion that the eastward spaces are linked to the cult of tomb and/or saint. The inscription on the lintel of the church's main entrance shows without doubt that the South Church in Yanikhan has a martyrion. The five person names on this inscription are characterized as saints due to the word *martyrion* in the beginning of the line.

The eastward space's design on the apse and the contents of inscription on the said lintel seem to have convinced Hill that such buildings are associated to the cult of saints. In this regard, not only the eastward apsidal spaces, but also and especially the square-plan domed unit, which is shown among apsidal spaces and contains a tomb niche, seems important and the researcher evidently characterizes this space as a martyrion.⁴⁵

At this point, we need to reevaluate the spatial design in the east of this building. The first drawings of the building were prepared by Hellenkemper and Hild. Although the eastward group of spaces are depicted in the text, no space is shown on the drawing between the two apsidal side spaces.⁴⁶ In 1996, Hill republished the building's plan. In his plan, Hill indicates a domed square-plan space between the eastward apsidal spaces with a tomb niche on the northward wall.⁴⁷ In another recent study, Cortese, who visited the site, used Hill's plans as is.⁴⁸

The authors visited the South Church in Yanikhan to examine the eastward section. We should note in the first place that the eastward section of this church is slightly different from the plan that is mentioned by former researchers (fig. 9). Behind the main apse and just as it is the case with the

43 Hill 1996, 30

44 Russel 1989, 1624.

45 Hill 1996, 30.

46 Hellenkemper – Hild 1986, Fig. 13.

47 Hill 1996, Fig. 59.

48 Cortese 2022, Fig.248.

North Church Yanıkhān, there is an extremely narrow corridor that is bounded by the apse and the eastward wall. In Hill's plan, this structure has nearly a square plan. In the plan published by Hill and followed by Cortese, there is a square-plan unit that is accessible through a door opening situated right in the axis of the main apse. This square-plan unit slightly protrudes eastwards from the side apses. At the same time, the gap between the square unit and the end point of side apses are filled by walling. Inside the thick wall fill between the square unit and northward apse, a rectangular niche, which is characterized as a tomb niche, is placed (fig. 4). In the current state, there is another wall that is adjacent to the northward part of the eastward wall connecting the two side spaces.⁴⁹ This wall takes the form of a corner towards the southeast before arriving at the opening that is situated nearly on the main apse's axis. The arch, which the former researchers refer to, is on this wall that turns towards southeast. However, the wall closing off the rear part of this arch is masoned by villagers without mortar to open a road. Therefore, we must say that there is an arched opening, rather than an arched niche.⁵⁰ North of the space where the arched opening connects to, the wall that is tangent to the northward space's apse and that runs towards southeast is still visible at the road elevation. Moreover, it is understood that that this wall has no organic connection with the northward apse since the apse wall has a smooth surface (fig. 9).

Another wall, which seems to have been added later to the apse of the south space, runs towards the northeast but cannot be traced among the dense pile of rubble. Although Hill's plan shows a door on the axis of the main apse, no proper door opening is observed here. A straight wall connecting the apsidal eastward spaces collapsed behind the main apse due to the uneven wall endings (fig. 10, wall number 1, fig. 11, wall number 3). On the southward wall of the space to the east of this wall, which is supposed to run closed and straight, blocks indicating the presence of a vault can still be seen (fig. 11). Hence, we can definitely say that this space, the exact dimensions of which could not be determined due to the pile of rubble, probably had a trapezoidal square plan and its cover was a vault, rather than a dome.

The architectural data available suggests that the South Church has the same plan as the North Church to the east. The available data shows that a neat and pleasing arrangement of architectural space, as seen in the previously published plan, is unacceptable. There is neither a domed square space nor a tomb niche in this section. It is obvious that the arched opening, which is considered to be a tomb niche, provides access to the northward space that has an uneven plan.

Domed martyrium schemes with square plans and tomb/relic niches, as in the building on Boğsak Island, have many examples in the Late Antique Period architecture. The piles of rubble and recent interventions in the eastern part of the South Church in Yanıkhān may have made it difficult for the

49 Such a part of the wall that runs towards the apse is underneath the mortarless modern wall. Local people report that the mortarless wall was built by villagers by collecting ruins in order to open a road.

50 Cortese 2022, Fig. 248, 251: Although she saw that the rear of an arch here had been closed off with a mortarless wall, Cortese characterized this section as a square unit with a niche in her plan.

researchers to evaluate the data and led them to think that there were similar examples to those widely recognized in literature.⁵¹ However, this possible misinterpretation of the architectural data seems to have paved the way for the “holistic” association of the eastward space designs, which are common in regional churches with the tomb and/or saint cult.

The eastward lower spaces of the Hasanaliler Church, one of other buildings in the region associated with the cult of saints, are at the heart of the debate regarding this building. In fact, it seems more reasonable to explain the reason for the existence of the spaces beneath the eastward part of the Hasanaliler Church in a single way. Constructed on a steep slope, there is an elevation difference between the east and especially the northeast part of the church and the naos. During the construction process of the building, supporting the apse from below was necessary in structural terms. Consequently, a substructure was created on the bedrock to the northeast of the building with domes and vaults, which functioned as both covers and load bearing elements, and this part of the church was brought to the same level as the naos (fig. 12-13).⁵² This type of substructure applications may be a necessary requirement due to the rocky nature of the region. As a matter of fact, the eastward section of the Domed Church in Meryemlik and the eastward section of the Öküzlü South Church similarly rise on vaulted substructures.

However, the functionalization of the sub-spaces “gained” as a result of these structural practices is another problem. A function has not yet been suggested for the the Meryemlik Domed Church. In Öküzlü South Church, the northeast lower space may be a cistern. However, it should be noted that the heights and plan dimensions of the spaces are inadequate for a ritualistic function of the kind proposed by Cortese. Nevertheless, the available data does not provide any answer to the question as to the function of these lower level spaces. Furthermore, although Cortese states that there is no archaeological or inscription-based evidence, there is not sufficient data to accept her assumption⁵³ that these sites were built in memory of a local saint.

Still, the spaces to the east of the main apse, which were built on top of the eastward sub-spaces, are the spaces for which a function can be proposed, albeit partially, due to the architectural data they present. An eastward door on the south nave of the Hasanaliler Church opens to a space on the axis of the nave, which appears to have two sections. This space is connected directly to the exterior through a door on the eastward wall and to another space in the east of the main apse through a door on the northward wall. There is a cistern in the space behind the main apse in the north of the south space. The direct connection of the space with outside suggests a liturgy of baptism based on the Korykos G Church and on other similar buildings. Its close association to

51 The building on the Boğsak Island is also associated with the South Church in Yanıkhan; see Varinlioğlu 2021, 134. Although we acknowledge that the Boğsak Island example may be a martyrion, it is impossible to accept it as part of the eastward space design since it was added to the building at a later date.

52 Ayşe Aydın is also of the same opinion; Aydın 1999-2000, 249.

53 Cortese 2022, 118.

a water spring also supports this idea.⁵⁴

In a paper on pilgrimage centers in Cilicia, Aydın associates Emirzeli Church 2 and Korykos G Church to Thecla's basilica and suggests that the saint's second-degree relics may have been kept in these churches. Without citing any evidence, she suggests that both buildings may have been dedicated to Saint Thecla.⁵⁵ She supports her claim that the buildings in Emirzeli and Korykos may have been dedicated to a sacred person by comparing them with the alignment of the buildings at the Alahan Monastery.⁵⁶ However, the topographical structure of the Alahan Monastery, which is situated on a narrow platform obtained by grading a steep slope, necessitated an in-line construction.

In her study, Cortese analyzed the sanctuaries of Cilicia and the connections with the apostles, martyrs and local saints. Conducting a comprehensive onsite survey, she has compiled a list of the names of sacred persons in the region based on inscription data and literary sources and traced potential archaeological data on the basis of settlements. However, the data collected onsite does not make it possible to establish a definite connection between the structures and the saints.⁵⁷ The Saint Thecla Church, because of its cult area and the South Church in Yanıkhán, because of the inscription on its lintel, are two examples where the relationship between them can easily be established. However, in the entire region, where Mietke says that there are about two hundred Late Antique Period churches, only six churches are associated to sacred persons.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the relationship between the eastward space and the cult of a martyr, which is the subject of this paper and which researchers have emphasized, seems ambiguous. As a matter of fact, Korykos Yörük Graveyard Church, one of the examples that Mietke associates to the cult of a saint, has a similar eastward space arrangement, but the place where the actual cult of tomb is situated is not the eastern part of the church, but the northward rock tomb. According to Mietke, in order to ensure a connection between the church and the associated rock tomb, the rock mass was cut in a way that would destroy the other tombs, and the church was thus built adjacent to the sacred tomb⁵⁹. This suggests that the main cult site and the eastward spaces are not associated in the case of this building.

In consequence of the locations of the eastward sub-spaces of the Hasanaliler Church, Korykos and Emirzeli churches, there is not enough data to characterize them as pilgrimage/visit/cult centers. The comprehensive paper published by Cortese on the cults of saint in the region and her inference about the settlements and saint pairings seem meaningful when combined

54 Baptistery of Arykanda Bishopric Church, Akar 2022, 50; Baptistery of Gemiler Island Basilica Number I, Baptistery of Ölüdeniz Basilica, Baptistery of Idyros Church, Baptistery of Mountain Turant Church, Baptistery of Işıkkale Church, Baptistery of Karacaören Basilica Uygun-Yazıcı 2019 (139, 147, 152, 156, 183, 203-204). In the examples in question, there is a cistern adjacent to the baptistery.

55 Aydın 2004, 167.

56 Aydın 2004, 167-168.

57 Researchers also draw attention to the same problem; Cortese 2022, 275.

58 Mietke 2009, 123: Mietke notes that there are churches that were potentially devoted to saints in Çırğa, Holmoi, Korykion Antron, Yanıkhán, Anazarbos and Akören.

59 Mietke 2009, 130.

with Hill's evaluation of the eastward space designs that are widely observed in the region. To reiterate, Hill has two basic arguments on this subject; the first one is the Saint Thecla Church. Although it is certain that this building is a dedicated church, as it is explained above it is difficult for the eastward section to be an example for other buildings in the region. The second strong argument is that although it is obvious that the South Church in Yanıkhān was dedicated to saints as seen from the inscription, the church does not have an eastward martyrion as claimed. Besides, it is stated above that there is no connection between the transept plan and the eastward space as proposed by Hill.

At this point, the statistical data also gains importance. The outcome derived from matching of settlements and saint names by Cortese is interesting. The eastward space designs are most concentrated in Eastern Rough Cilicia, roughly the coastal and inland areas between today's Anamur and Erdemli Districts, where there are thirty-one churches with eastward spaces. However, the names of saints have been obtained from literary and inscription-based sources in only seven of the settlements where these structures are situated (fig. 14). Therefore, it is not possible to suggest a positive correlation between churches having the eastward space design and the cults of saints in the settlements.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the design of a space behind the apse connected to the church was a common practice, especially in Eastern Rough Cilicia. Hill, who considers and discusses this subject as a functional problem, associates these spaces holistically to the cult of tomb and/or *martyr*. As part of more recent studies, these churches have been described as *martyrion* - sometimes without addressing the eastward spaces - and often without citing any evidence. However, onsite findings and other literature data indicate that at least four of the eastward spaces are baptisteries and perhaps the same number can be proven to be baptisteries when excavated. It is possible to envisage that some spaces other than the ones that are possibly baptisteries as suggested in this paper may have the same function too. Therefore, considering this fact the eastward spaces may not be completely associated to the cult of the tomb. The main problem regarding this subject is that almost none of the buildings in question have been systematically excavated. The archeological excavations to be made will potentially terminate the debates that are conducted solely on the basis of the architectural data available on surface.

The eastward space design in Cilicia may, for some buildings, be related to the cult of the saint and/or tomb, as suggested by researchers. The opinion that a general culture of visiting and pilgrimage emerged in the region due to the fact that Cilicia is on the route of a journey through the Mediterranean to the Holy Land is acceptable. As a matter of fact, the presence of many saint names in the region points out that there could be a saint cult.

However, the data on hand shows that the holistic approach towards this issue, and even the main arguments of this suggestion, are either wrong or weak. The design of space behind the apse as a common practice in the region

can be perceived as a local appeal or tradition, although it is not yet known what function some of them have. At this point, the description made by Krutheimer with the implication that these spaces represent a region-specific practice without attributing any function thereto and defining them as “amorphous spaces” is noteworthy.⁶⁰ As a matter of fact, an example of this spatial design that is specific to the Late Antique Period is seen in the East Church of the Citadel in Korykos that researchers do not refer to. Since it is inside a castle, it ought to be dated to the Armenian Kingdom Period of Cilicia and was probably constructed by taking into account the other six church examples in the city. To conclude, this structure, which does not contain any inscription-based data on a saint, signifies that the spatial design observed in the east of an apse was maintained as an architectural tradition and a local appeal until the 12th or 13th century in Cilicia.

60 Krutheimer 1986, 60.

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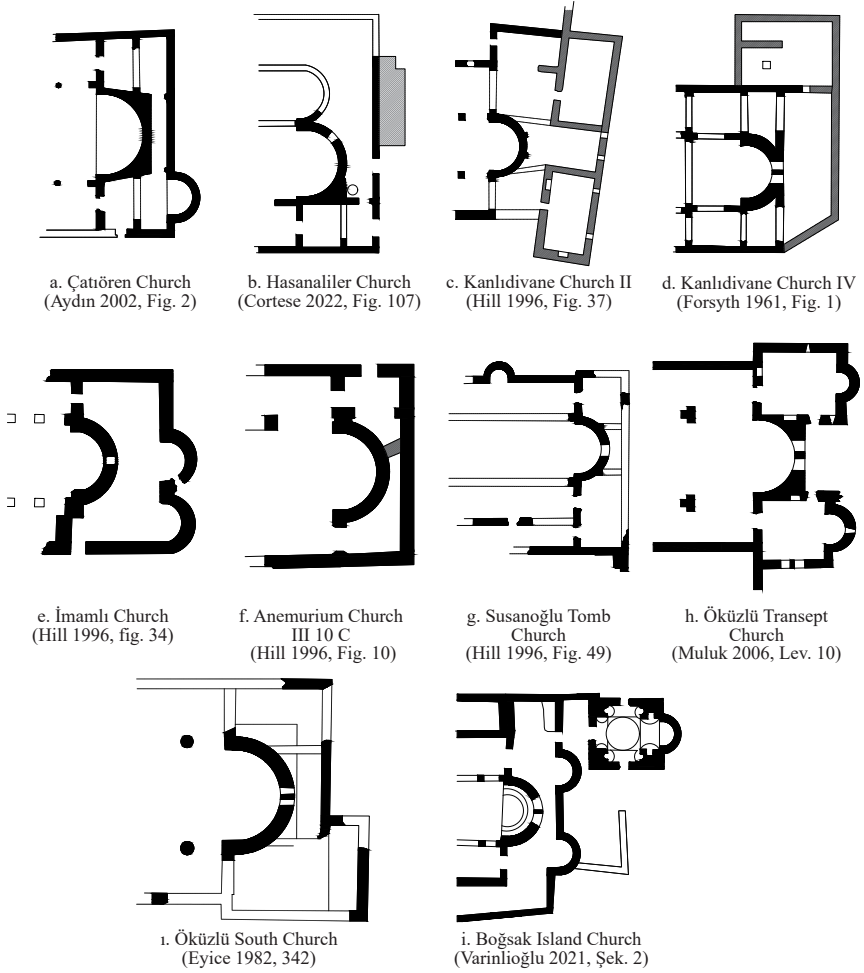


Fig. 1 Examples of Cilicia Churches with an Eastward Hallway



Fig. 2 Meryemlik Saint Thecla Church (Herzfeld-Guyer 1930, fig. 6)

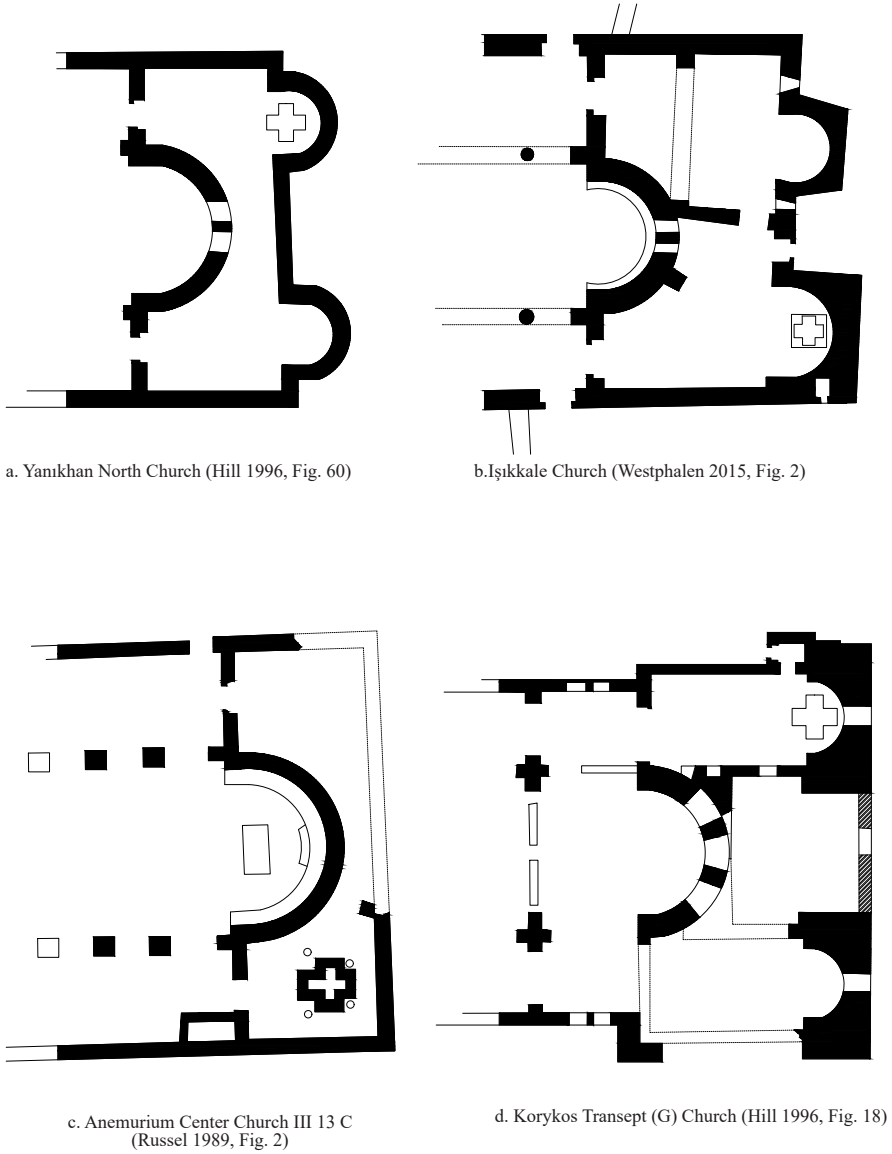


Fig. 3 Churches with a Baptismal Font on the Eastward Annex Building

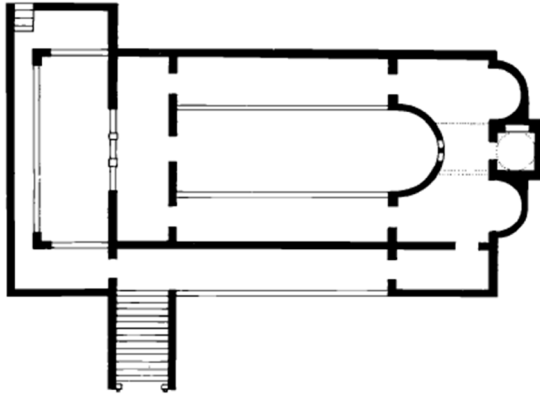


Fig. 4 Yanıkhan South Church (Hill 1996, fig. 59)

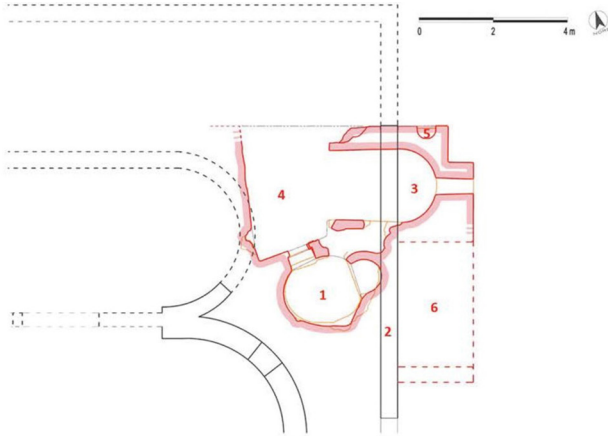


Fig. 5 Bottom Elevation Spaces in the Northeast of Hasanaliler Church (Cortese 2022, pl. 52, fig. 113)

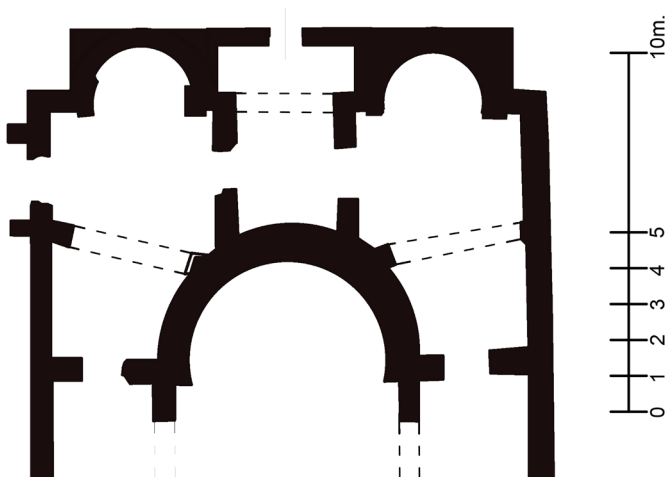


Fig. 6 Emirzeli Church Number 2

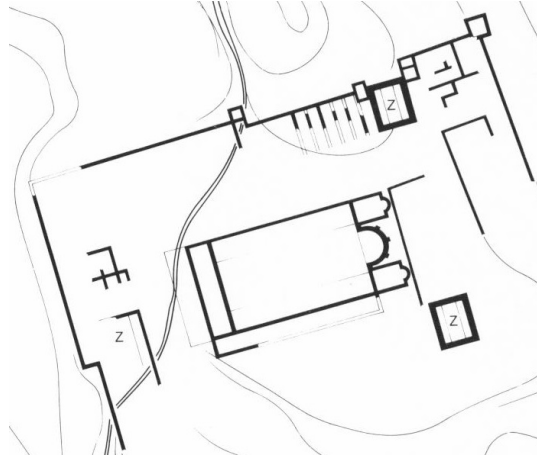


Fig. 7 Meryemlik Saint Thecla Church (Hellenkemper 1985/86, abb.3)

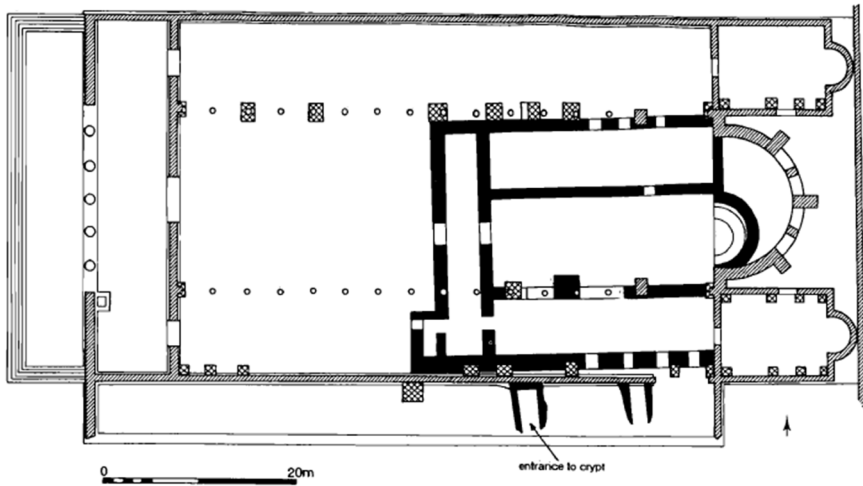


Fig. 8 Meryemlik Saint Thecla Church (Hill 1996, fig. 43)



Fig. 9 Yanıkhán South Church



Fig. 10 Wall Detail from Yanıkhan South Church



Fig. 11 Wall Detail from Yanıkhan South Church



Fig. 12 Bottom Elevation Spaces in Hasanaliler Church



Fig. 13 Apse Details from Space Number 1 in Hasanaliler Church

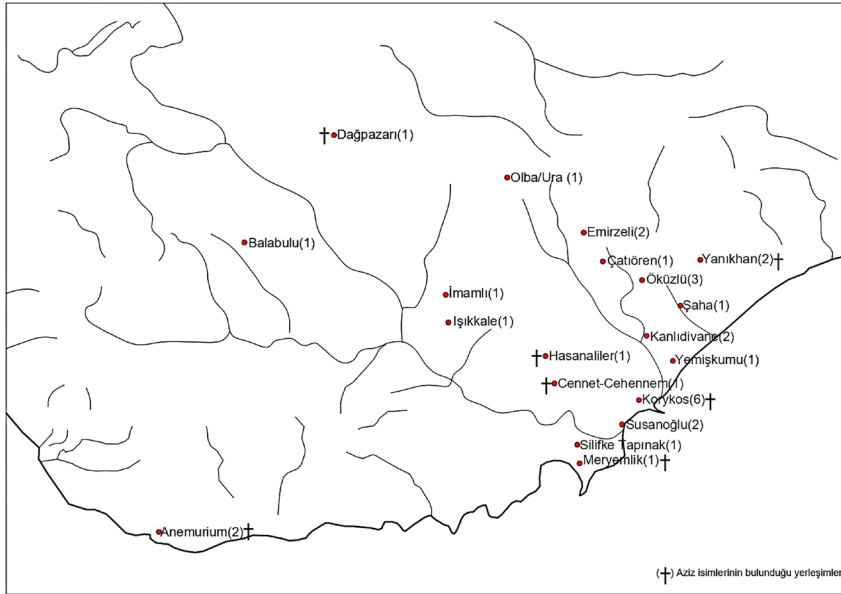


Fig.14 Cilician Settlements where Saint Names are Discovered and Churches that have Eastward Spaces