



## A Temple and Church at Aya# (Cilicia)

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## A TEMPLE AND CHURCH AT AYAŞ (CILICIA)

By MICHAEL GOUGH

### INTRODUCTION

LESS THAN TWO thousand years ago Western Cilicia, the Cilicia Aspera of the Romans, supported a large population. Settlements in the interior were comparatively few, for the rugged character of the country forbids agriculture on any considerable scale, and communications are exceedingly difficult. On the sea-coast, however, those bays and natural anchorages which had been first the ports, and later the refuge of the pirate fleets that terrorised the Mediterranean until Pompey's campaign of 67 B.C., were thriving centres of seaborne commerce. Among the most famous of these were Corycus and Elaeusa (later Sebaste).

The modern traveller to Kız Kalesi and Ayaş, the villages which now occupy the sites of these two cities, will find little in the silted harbours to remind him of ναυσικλυτὸν ἄστυ Κωρύκιον or of ἀμφιρύτη Ἐλεοῦσα, as Oppian celebrated them in his *Halieutica*.<sup>1</sup> The outline of these harbours does indeed remain, but of maritime activity there is now no trace. The Cilician of the 20th century usually turns his back on the sea; yet it requires little imagination to see in the peasant, whose remote ancestors are almost as likely to have been natives of the place as pure-bred Turks, and who now lives at what was once Corycus, the old man described by Virgil,<sup>2</sup>

cui pauca relictī  
iugera ruris erant, nec fertilis illa iuvençis  
nec pecori opportuna seges nec comoda Baccho.  
Hic rarum tamen in dumis olus albaque circum  
lilia verbenasque premens vescumque papaver  
regum aequabat opes animis, seraque revertens  
nocte domum dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.

This modern Cilician lives amongst the ruins of a Roman city, ruins that are still sufficiently intact to give an impression of opulence to an otherwise deserted scene.

Ayaş, the site of Elaeusa, is to be found about fifty kilometres from Mersin on the new coastal road to Silifke (Seleucea on the Calycadnus). My wife and I first went there in March 1949, and found sufficient to incite us to return later. This we did in the summer of 1952, when we spent nearly a month at the site; and although in 1953 we stayed for no more than ten days, we were fortunate enough to have as collaborators

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<sup>1</sup> III, 208-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Georg.*, IV, 127-133. Although the poet refers to the countryside near Tarentum, where the old ex-pirate had been settled, the description of his holding and of his way of life might well have been taken from his original home in Cilicia Aspera.

in our work Mr. David Oates, a Research Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Bay Mehmet Yaylalı of the Adana Museum staff, who had been appointed to us by the Turkish General Directorate of Museums and Antiquities. Mr. David Wilson, a Scholar of Oriel College, Oxford, also gave us valuable assistance for part of the time.

During 1952 I confined my work to the recording of inscriptions, and to the partial clearance of a mosaic covering the floor of the apse of an early Christian church. This church is built inside the ruins of a temple of the Roman period, a temple of some importance in itself as the only reasonably well preserved Classical temple in Cilicia, with the obvious exception of the temple of Zeus Olbius at Uzuncaburç (Diocaesarea?), in the mountains north of Silifke.<sup>1</sup>

In 1953 Mr. Oates, assisted by Mr. Wilson, began work on a much-needed survey of the island of Elaeusa, now a headland joined by an isthmus of sand to the mainland. At the same time, in collaboration with Bay Mehmet Yaylalı, I excavated the remainder of the east end of the church, to enable a complete record to be made of it and of its floor mosaic. Meanwhile my wife completed a survey, begun the year before, of the temple.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of the present report is to give as adequate a picture as possible of the temple and its associated church. Before the description of the two monuments, however, a note on the geography of the region will be found, together with a brief outline of its history. Later I hope to publish a fuller account of the site, and also those inscriptions of Ayaş which have not, up till now, been recorded.

#### GEOGRAPHY (Fig. 1)

The Romans did well to describe Western Cilicia as *Aspera*. Here the Taurus mountains, which form the northern boundary of the Cilician plain, move relentlessly south-westwards towards the sea; first the higher peaks; then the forested hills with the occasional small upland plain; finally, a great rolling tract of jutting rocks and boulders. Apart from the Lamas River and a few small mountain torrents, there is very little water in Cilicia *Aspera*.<sup>3</sup> Also, the countryside is almost without natural communications.

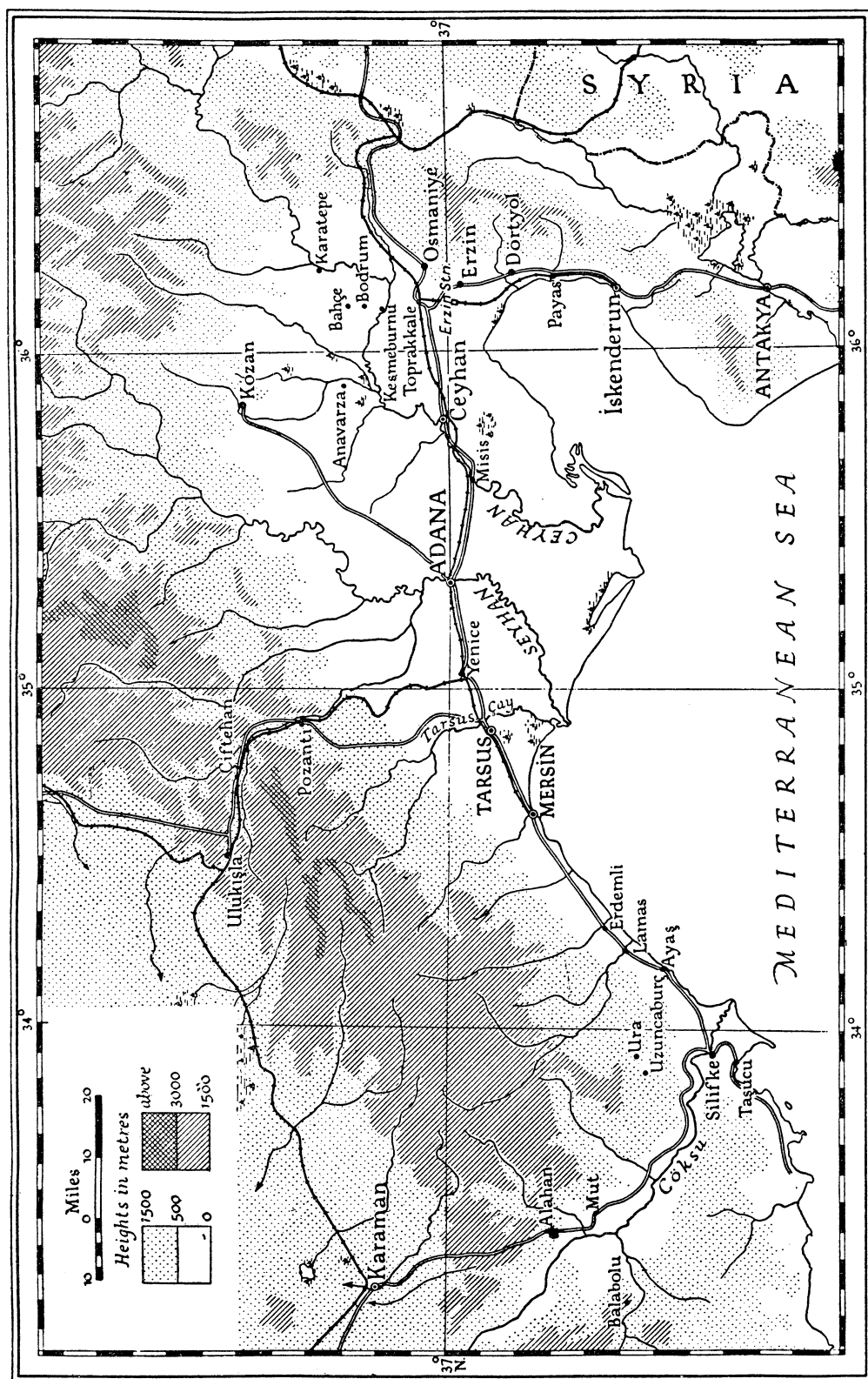
In Roman Imperial times, aqueducts carried water to the coastal cities and to some of the settlements in the interior. Particularly fine examples of these are the aqueducts which brought water from the Lamas River to Elaeusa and Corycus, and another at Olba (modern Ura) in the hinterland.<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere wells were sunk and huge cisterns constructed. Roads drove through the rocky countryside and connected the more important centres.

<sup>1</sup> *MAMA* III, p. 47; Fig. 68; Taf. 23, 24.

<sup>2</sup> My grateful thanks, as always, are due to my wife, who has prepared all the plans and sketches which illustrate the text.

<sup>3</sup> The great river of Cilicia *Aspera* and Isauria is, of course, the Calycadnus; but this paper is concerned only with the territory to the east of its course.

<sup>4</sup> *MAMA* III, Taf. 57, Abb. 179; Taf. 36, Abb. 105; Taf. 37, Abb. 106.



Drawn by V. Nehring

FIG. 1.—Map of Cilicia showing site of Ayaş.

Timber grew on the slopes of the mountains and supplied material for a thriving ship-building industry. Olive groves were planted on terraces by the seashore.

The aqueducts have fallen into decay, but the ancient wells and cisterns are often still in use. Peasants in the rocky interior frequently find the Roman road the quickest means of communication between village and village, though new roads to replace these veterans are now being constructed by the Turkish authorities. The reforestation of the Taurus region is the active concern of the Orman Genel Müdürlüğü, and recently planted olive trees now line the road from Silifke to its new harbour of Taşucu.

To approach Ayaş from either Mersin or Silifke is easy, and transport is frequent. The road from Mersin passes the ruins at Viranşehir (Pompeiopolis) and the large village of Erdemli. At Lamas, the natural and traditional frontier between Cilicia Campestris and Cilicia Aspera is reached.<sup>1</sup> The road then follows the coastline for several kilometres, passing many small Classical and Early Byzantine sites on the way until, finally, an extensive area of heroa and sarcophagi foretells the presence of an ancient city. This funerary area covers the ground which rises above the shallow curve of what was once a bay, before the island of Elaeusa was connected to the mainland by the sand left behind by an ever-receding tide. The heroa are ranged in orderly streets which run, on terraces, north-west and south-east, while another road, bordered by sarcophagi, leads inland to a site now only known by its modern name, Çatı Ören.<sup>2</sup>

Again on the mainland, and directly opposite the island on which the greater part of Elaeusa was built, are a number of public buildings, including the baths and theatre; while at the extreme south-east of the topmost terrace are the remains of the temple, which must have been visible for many miles out to sea.

The climate of Cilicia Aspera is much the same as that of the plain to the east, though it lacks the same enervating humidity. The inhabitants of Ayaş all leave the place during the summer heat, and appoint a single family to watch over their houses. In the autumn, winter and spring they are at home, to turn to their advantage the mildness of the weather, which makes the spring tomato crop of Ayaş one of the earliest in Turkey, and which fetches a fine price as far afield as the food markets in Istanbul.

## HISTORY

When Elaeusa was founded is not known. It has, indeed, been identified with Viluşa, a town mentioned in the Boğazköy tablets,<sup>3</sup> but its existence before the late 2nd or early 1st century B.C. is not yet proven.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, XIV, 671. Gibbon, in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, describes the exchange of Moslem and Christian captives on the bridge at Lamas during the 9th century. As the Arabs reached their own lines, they shouted *Allah Akbar*, while the Christians countered with *Kyrie Eleison*!

<sup>2</sup> First described by Theodore Bent, *JHS* XII, 1891, pp. 210-211. There is a temple of Hermes on one side of the valley, and a church of 5th or 6th century date on the other.

<sup>3</sup> E. Forrer, *Forschungen*, I, pp. 78 ff.

The earliest certain evidence of the city's existence is supplied by some local issues of coinage. On the obverse of a silver tetradrachm a goddess holding a tiller is a probable reference to the maritime importance of the place, while the legend reads Ἑλαιουσίῳ τῆς ἱερᾶς καὶ αὐτονομίου.<sup>1</sup> On the reverse of the bronze piece is the god Hermes, the tutelary deity of Corycus, and possibly of the whole of this area of Cilicia, where a divine guide and messenger would be a most appropriate patron.<sup>2</sup>

Elaeusa was presumably cleared of its piratical element after Pompey's victory at Coracesium. Many of the pirates were deported at this time, some to other Cilician cities (e.g. Adana),<sup>3</sup> while Virgil's mention of the old man from Corycus suggests that others were settled as far away as Italy itself.<sup>4</sup>

By the middle of the 1st century B.C. the district seems to have been administered by the Eastern Cilician dynast Tarcondimotus Philantonius, who, in the course of a long reign, was unwise enough to back the losing side on two important occasions. His first mistake was to attach himself to Pompey's cause; his second to give Antony armed support against Octavian. It is known that Tarcondimotus possessed a fleet, so that he must have owned possessions on the sea-coast as well as in the eastern plain of Cilicia. He is generally thought to have had an outlet to the sea on the Gulf of Issus,<sup>5</sup> but the ownership of territory on the coast of Cilicia Aspera would have assured him the necessary timber for ship-building. That he did actually possess territories in Cilicia Aspera is extremely likely. Cassius Dio<sup>6</sup> states that the younger Tarcondimotus, when restored by Augustus in 20 B.C. to the position previously held by his father, received back all his possessions with the exception of some coastal lands which were given to Archelaus I of Cappadocia. Strabo<sup>7</sup> makes the situation of these coastal lands clearer by his observation that Cilicia Aspera in the neighbourhood of Elaeusa was handed over to the Cappadocian king. Archelaus must have liked Elaeusa for, again according to Strabo,<sup>8</sup> he built himself a palace there. He also struck coins, with his own head on the obverse and a legend describing himself as φιλόπατρις and κτίστης on the reverse.<sup>9</sup> At about the same time he altered the name of Elaeusa to Sebaste in honour of his benefactor, Augustus.<sup>10</sup> The king, who probably died in A.D. 17,

<sup>1</sup> BMC, Pl. XL, No. 14 (*Lycaonia, Isauria, Cilicia*).

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 235, No. 9; Pl. XXXIX, No. 5. Oppian, himself a native of Cilicia, apostrophises Hermes in *Hal.*, III, ll. 8-9, and describes Corycus as Ἑρμαῖο πόλιν. The caduceus sign is widely found all over this area on reliefs and inscriptions, and Bent's description of temples and shrines to Hermes makes fascinating reading (*op. cit.*, p. 211).

<sup>3</sup> A. H. M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Provinces*, Oxford, 1937, p. 436, n. 17.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 49, n. 2 above.

<sup>5</sup> See M. Gough, "Anazarbus," *AS II*, 1952, p. 93, n. 30.

<sup>6</sup> *LIV*, 9.

<sup>7</sup> *XII*, 525.

<sup>8</sup> *XIV*, 671. Josephus, *Ant. Jud.*, XVI, 131, describes a visit of Herod to Elaeusa, where he was received by Archelaus in his palace.

<sup>9</sup> BMC, p. lxix.

<sup>10</sup> Tarcondimotus the Younger seems to have had the same idea in mind when he altered the name of Anazarbus to Caesarea at about the same time. See M. Gough, *op. cit.*, p. 93, and n. 34.

seems to have been succeeded by a second ruler of the same name, and in A.D. 38 Antiochus IV of Commagene and his wife Iotape took possession of the district. In A.D. 74 the kingdom ceased to exist, and Sebaste with its neighbouring territory became a part of the new province of Cilicia.

The history of the city after the 1st century A.D. is scantily documented, though it is clear that it flourished. Çatı Ören and Kanlı Divane, two inland settlements, are both known from epigraphic evidence to have lain within its territory.<sup>1</sup> Early in the 3rd century Elaeusa was described by Oppian as "seagirt",<sup>2</sup> evidently still an appropriate epithet, since on a coin of Geta the title *ναύαρχις*, "mistress of ships," was included in the legend.<sup>3</sup>

### AYAŞ.

#### PLAN OF TEMPLE

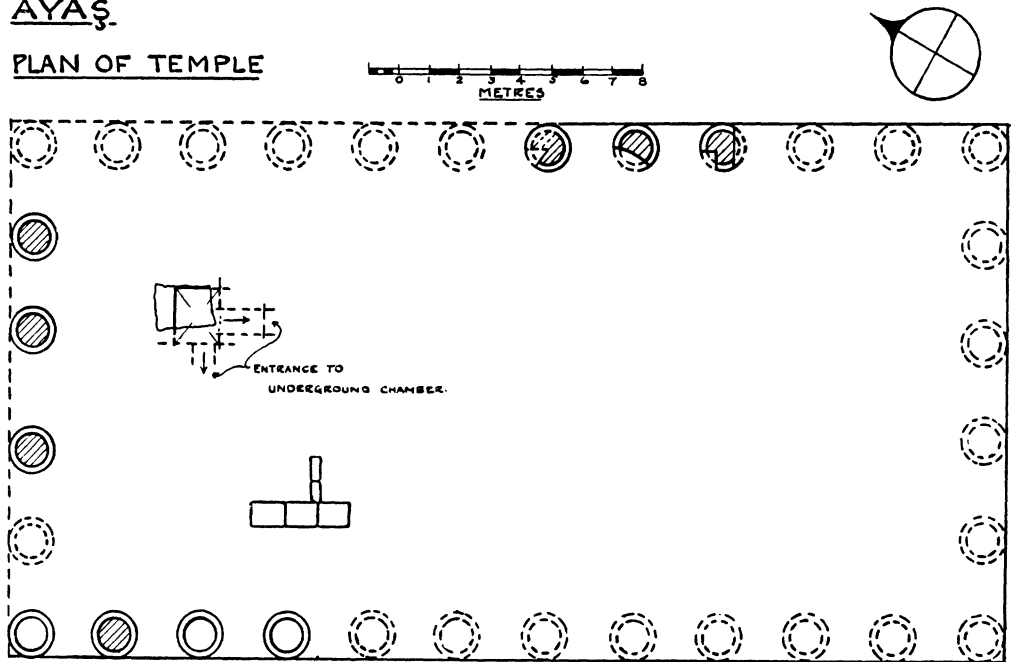


FIG. 2.

In the Christian period Sebaste was a see in the province of Cilicia Prima, and was represented by its bishop at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. The church described below (p. 57 ff.) must have been built at about this time.

Few inscriptions of historical interest were discovered at Ayaş and its immediate neighbourhood during the two campaigns. Two dedications (one to Hadrian and the other to Septimius Severus and Caracalla)<sup>4</sup> were

<sup>1</sup> See E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Western Cilicia," *JHS* XII, 1891, p. 232, No. 12, and p. 227, No. 4. *Pace* Ruge, *RE*, Vol. 10.2, p. 1886, s.v. Kanytelis, the ethnic name of the inhabitants of Kanlı Divane should be *Κανυτηλλεῖς*, not *Κανυτηλιδεῖς*. The correct reading, which is quite certain, has been established from an excellent squeeze made by Mr. David Wilson.

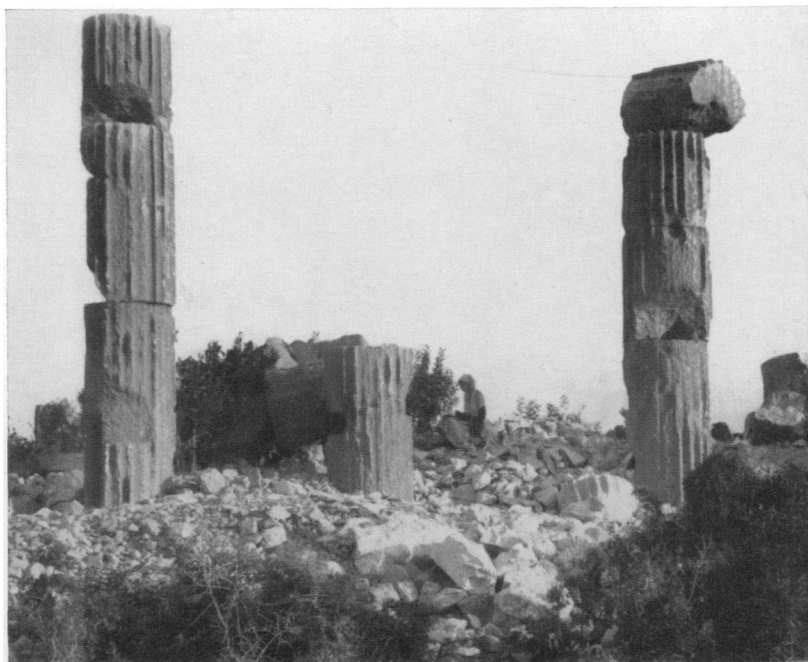
<sup>2</sup> See p. 49, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *BMC*, p. 236, No. 14.

<sup>4</sup> These inscriptions have not yet been published.

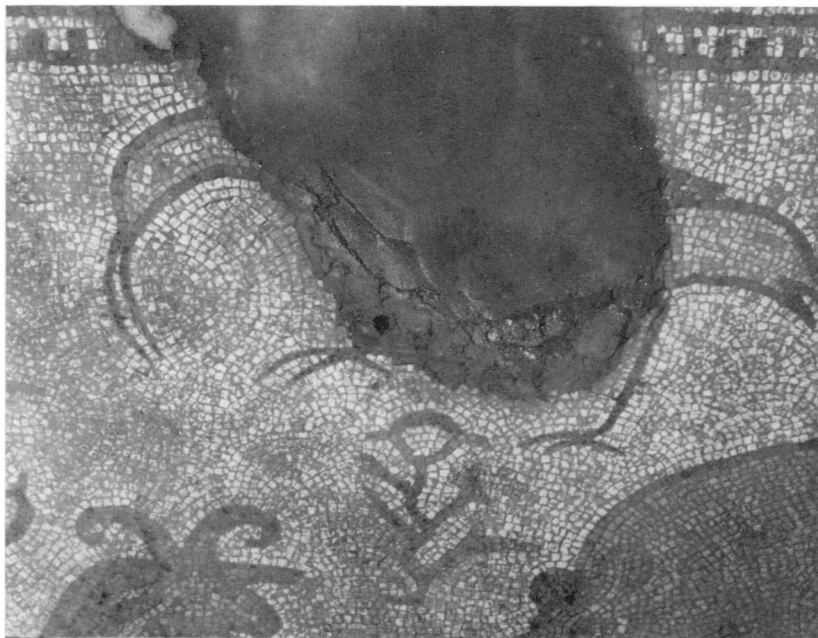


1. Church at Ayaş : The Apse.



2. Temple at Ayaş : Part of Northern Façade.





1. Mosaic at Ayaş : Curlew.



2. Mosaic at Ayaş : General View from South.

found, but the island, which might have been expected to produce valuable evidence, is so buried in drift sand that a major operation would be required to uncover it.

### THE TEMPLE <sup>1</sup> (Figs. 2 and 3)

The peripteral temple at Ayaş is at the southern end of a low headland that overlooks the south-west corner of the modern bay. It is approached from the north-west by a terrace about 100 m. wide. On the western side of this terrace the ground drops away to a ravine, down which a trickle of water flows in winter; to the east is a series of very narrow stepped terraces on which are the remains of numerous heroa and sarcophagi. The axis of the temple is from north-west to south-east, and the main entrance is through the north-west facade.<sup>2</sup> Here the foundations are on level ground, but on the other three sides, where the ground falls away fairly sharply, a raised podium was built. This feature is best seen below the southern facade where the concrete substructure is faced by regular courses of limestone.

The stylobate, which measures 17·60 × 32·90 m., is well preserved at the south end of the temple, and is paved with closely jointed rectangular slabs of excellent workmanship. These slabs are by no means regular in area, though they measure, on average, rather more than a metre square. Their height is c. 0·48 m.

Of the fluted columns (arranged 6 × 12 on the stylobate), only five now stand higher than their base mouldings (Pl. III, 2). Three are on the northern facade, while there is one each on both of the long sides. The example on the eastern flank was hollowed out in the Christian period and incorporated in the apse of a later church (see Pl. III, 1). On all these three sides, several simple bases remain *in situ*, but on the southern facade there is no trace either of bases or fallen drums. All the columns on this side were presumably removed when the church was built, and it was apparently decided to leave an open platform to the south.

The lower diameter of the shaft is 1·07 m., and it may be concluded that the total height of the columns, including base and capitals was between 9 and 10 m. Since the greatest surviving height of the shaft (without the topmost drum) is 6·40 m., and the combined height of base and capital approximately 1·25 m., the estimated total height is likely to be correct. Intercolumniation spaces on the flanks are 2·86 m.

The column bases, which are 0·53 m. high, are of the Attic variety,

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<sup>1</sup> The remains of this temple have been described by many travellers. Among these were Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort (*Karamania*, London, 1818, p. 250); Victor Langlois, *Voyage dans la Cilicie*, Paris, 1861, p. 231; Wilhelm and Heberdey, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschr. Akad. Wien.*, XLIV, p. 61; Paribeni and Romanelli, *Mon. Ant.*, XXIII, pp. 96 ff. The most authoritative account is, however, Keil and Wilhelm, *MAMA* III, pp. 221-2; also Fig. 176 and Taf. 56.

<sup>2</sup> To avoid the complications which would result from a perpetual reiteration of the intermediate points of the compass, the north-west and south-east facades will be described hereafter as north and south respectively; the two long sides as east and west.

while the plinths each measure 1·43 m. square. The capitals, though badly damaged, are of an unorthodox, but very attractive type, and might be described as sharing the characteristics of both the Corinthian and the Composite orders.<sup>1</sup> The bell is normally curved, though in one case, at least, it is square in section. At the angles, two ribs, separated at their bases, incline inwards towards each other and finally converge at the abacus in a volute. A large acanthus leaf with a delicate outward curve masks the springing of each rib. In the middle of each side a similar arrangement takes the place of the flat centre volutes normal to the Corinthian order. There is no upper row of acanthus leaves. The strong outward curve of both the angle and centre volutes must have imparted great vitality to the capital. Around the lower part of the abacus is a

### AYAŞ

#### PLAN OF TEMPLE AND BUILT-IN CHURCH

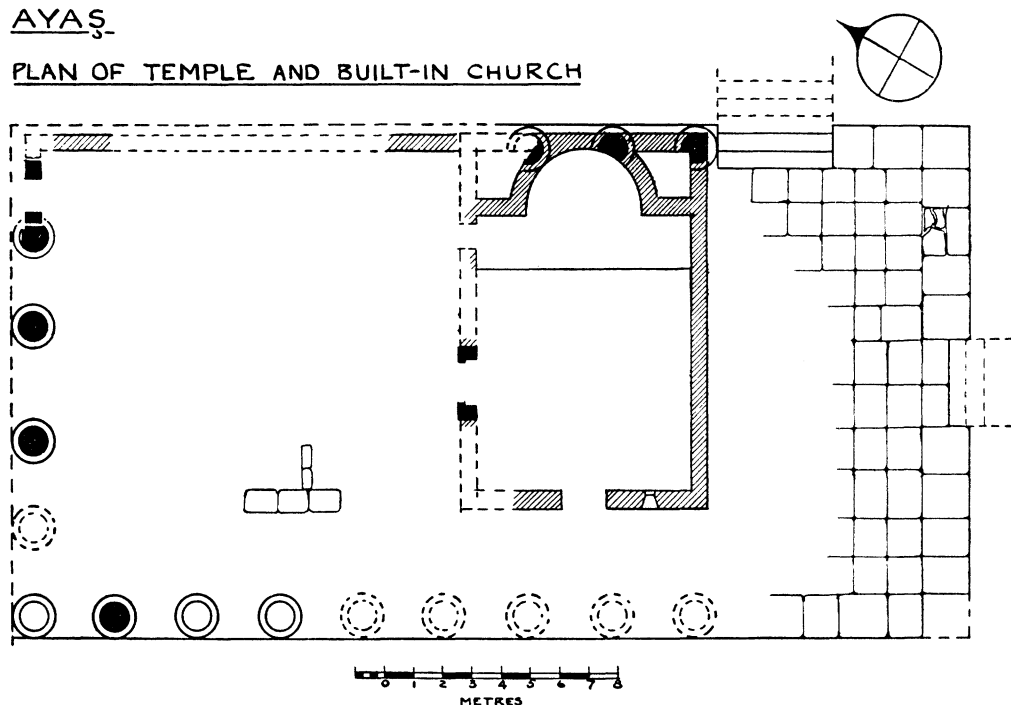


FIG. 3.

shallow running scroll, sometimes of ivy leaves, while above is a moulding of egg and tongue. The height of the capital is, on average, c. 0·72 m.,<sup>2</sup> and the bearing surface of the abacus 1·05 m.

Professor Adolf Wilhelm and Professor Josef Keil visited Ayaş in 1924. Their measurements and descriptive details of surviving portions of the entablature tally almost completely with ours. The architrave is in three fasciae, and the one surviving frieze block is decorated with a dolphin-rider and the foreparts of a hippocamp. The only discrepancy between our measurements and those of Wilhelm and Keil concerns the thickness

<sup>1</sup> Beaufort, *op. cit.*, p. 250, describes them as Composite.

<sup>2</sup> It may have been rather higher, but this is uncertain as all the examples are damaged.

of this frieze block, which we recorded as 0·47 m. as against their 0·385 m.<sup>1</sup> It is probably relevant at this point to state that we agreed on the thickness of the architrave at 0·98 m. Of the cornice there is no trace. It would have been the first element of the entablature to fall in any case, and may now be buried under rubble, or it may simply have long ago been destroyed.

The temple in recent years has been used as a quarry, and the lower course of some interior walls, not visible in 1924, have now been disclosed by the activities of stone robbers. Only a small part of them now remains, in the north-west of the temple. One of these, running parallel to the axis of the temple, is in exact alignment with the west wall of the interior church, and their thickness is the same at c. 0·70 m. At the start, I had assumed that this wall fragment might be all that remained of the temple cella, but its failure to agree with the position of the surviving columns virtually ruled out this attractive solution. That the blocks themselves were originally used in the cella is indeed very likely, but in their present position they almost certainly form part of a later structure built inside the temple, which is connected with the later church. The longest surviving stretch of wall measures 3·38 m., but after 1·98 m. it is cut by a cross wall running eastwards, which is only 0·30 m. in thickness and 1·47 m. in length. The possible function of these two walls is discussed below (p. 59).

At the north-east end of the temple is the entrance, recently uncovered, to an underground chamber. This entrance is a shallow vertical shaft measuring 1·97 × 1·77 across the top; its depth cannot be determined, since it is filled with rubble. At the south-eastern end of the shaft is the entrance to an arched passage 0·80 m. in width, which leads down an incline to a chamber below the floor of the temple. Since the end of the passage is partly choked, and there is a considerable drop into the chamber, the dimensions of this room were not taken. In the western side of the vertical entrance shaft is the opening to another passage which has been deliberately blocked with masonry. The purpose of the underground chamber, until it has been explored, must remain a matter for conjecture for the present.

The dedication of the temple at Ayaş is unknown. Professor Magie on the evidence of coins, has hazarded Zeus;<sup>2</sup> on the other hand, the position of the temple and the subject of the relief on the one surviving frieze block may rather suggest a deity more nearly concerned with the sea.

#### CHURCH (Fig. 4)

The existence of a church, built into the south-eastern end of the temple and at right angles to its main axis, was observed in 1924 by Professors Keil and Wilhelm, who incorporated it into their plan of the

<sup>1</sup> Our measurement appears the more likely, since the frieze, with antithema, would have had a total thickness of 0·94 m., which would fit the architrave better than a frieze block with a thickness (including antithema) of 0·77 m.

<sup>2</sup> Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, Princeton, 1950, p. 1339.

temple.<sup>1</sup> In 1952, when it became clear that certain features of the temple (e.g. remains of interior walls and the subterranean chamber), which had not hitherto been visible, required recording, the whole building was re-examined. In the course of this re-examination some loose tesserae were noticed at the south-east end of the church. Clearance of rubble at this point disclosed part of a mosaic floor, apparently in sound condition. At the same time it was seen that the whole temple plan had been modified during the Christian period to suit the needs of a new church.

It was characteristic of the early Christians to modify pagan temples

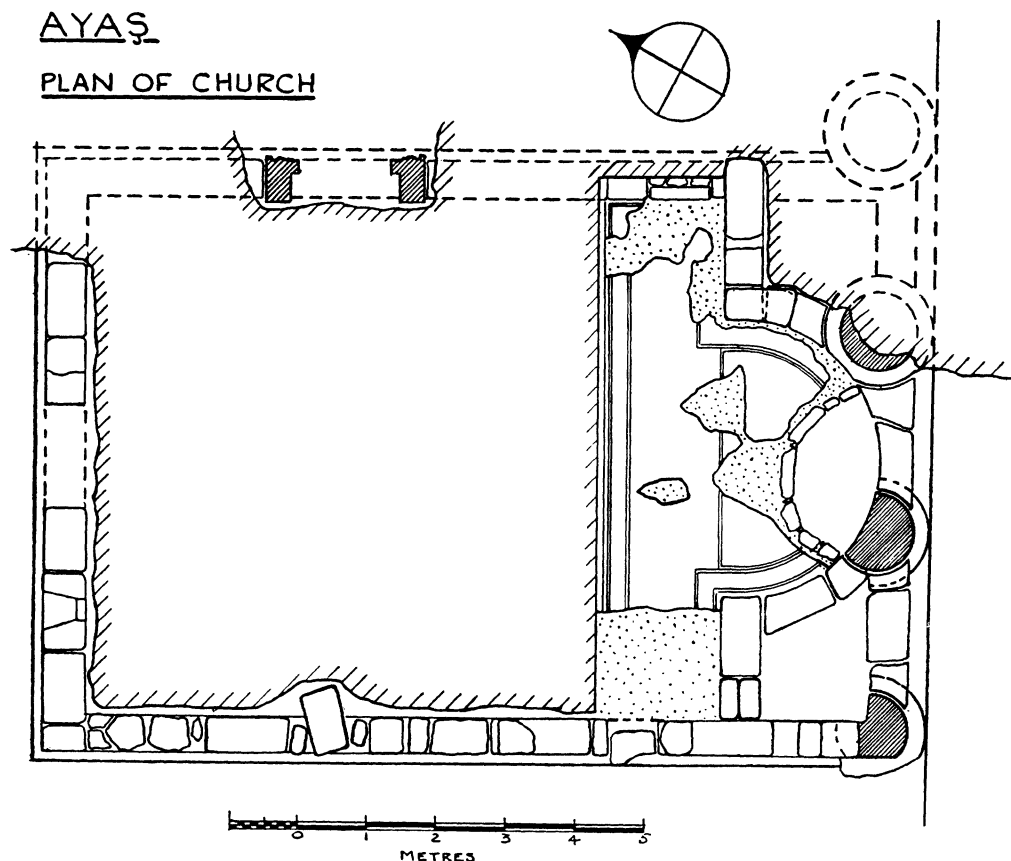


FIG. 4.

for use as churches ; <sup>2</sup> it was done partly to avoid a lot of unnecessary labour and expense, and partly, as it were, to exorcise the place of its pagan associations. This practice has not been confined to Christians. A large number of churches in Asia Minor, and elsewhere, were later converted into mosques for the same reason.

As the harbour of Elaeusa silted up during the early centuries of Christianity, so, it seems, the population of the city declined. In any event, the complete temple was considered too large for the needs of the

<sup>1</sup> *MAMA* III, Fig. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Examples are legion ; e.g. The Parthenon, the Pantheon, the temple of Rome and Augustus at Ancyra.



1. Mosaic at Ayaş : Eagle in North-East of Apse.



2. Mosaic at Ayaş : General View of South-West Portion.



1. Mosaic at Ayaş : Hunting-dog.



2. Mosaic at Ayaş : General View of Central Portion.

congregation, and the area of the church built inside it was only a fraction of that covered by the earlier building. The northern end of the temple, so far as the sixth column on the long sides, was modified to form an outer enclosure, belonging to the church, in which the priests' quarters may have been found. At the southern end, all the columns of the facade and the last columns on the flanks were removed, so that nothing but a bare paved platform remained.

If the columns of the northern facade are examined, it seems, from cuttings made in the shafts, that the outer and central intercolumniations were used as gates, while the second intercolumniation on either side was probably filled with masonry and made into a solid wall. The north-east corner column was actually removed, and replaced by a gatepost, though at the north-west the angle column was retained. This apparent anomaly can be explained, if it is assumed that a solid wall took the place of the earlier colonnade on the eastern side, while the western pteron was retained as the open side of a portico. The surviving evidence suits this theory, since there are no column bases left on the eastern side until the church apse is reached, while on the other flank they continue, almost without a break, as far as the south-west corner of the church. The interior wall (see p. 57 above) which runs parallel to the western colonnade, then fits into place as the back wall of this portico. At the present stage it is impossible to be more precise.

The southern platform seems to have been used as the public approach to the church. Steps were cut on the east and south sides to provide access from below. While the main entrance was at the west end there were two further doors, one in the middle of the north wall, the other at the north-east corner.

In the same way that the temple is not exactly oriented to the points of the compass, so the church, at right-angles to the main axis of the temple, is similarly out of true. The apse, in fact, faces east of north-east.<sup>1</sup>

The overall dimensions of the church, excluding the wall thickness (average 0.68 m.) are 11.35 m. × 7.30 m. The greater part of the nave floor was apparently flagged, while the east end, and the area enclosed by the curve of the apse, was decorated with a mosaic. In 1952, the southern part of this mosaic was cleared of the rubble, which covered it to a depth of about 0.50 m., and its subject determined, while in 1953 the northern section was systematically excavated and recorded. In this paper, a description of the mosaic will be given, followed by a report on the excavation, together with the conclusions to be deduced from the available evidence.

MOSAIC (Fig. 5 and Pls. IV, 2 and V, 2).

The theme is a *paradeisos*, probably derived from the myth of Orpheus charming the beasts, a suitable and popular subject for early Christian

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 55, n. 2.



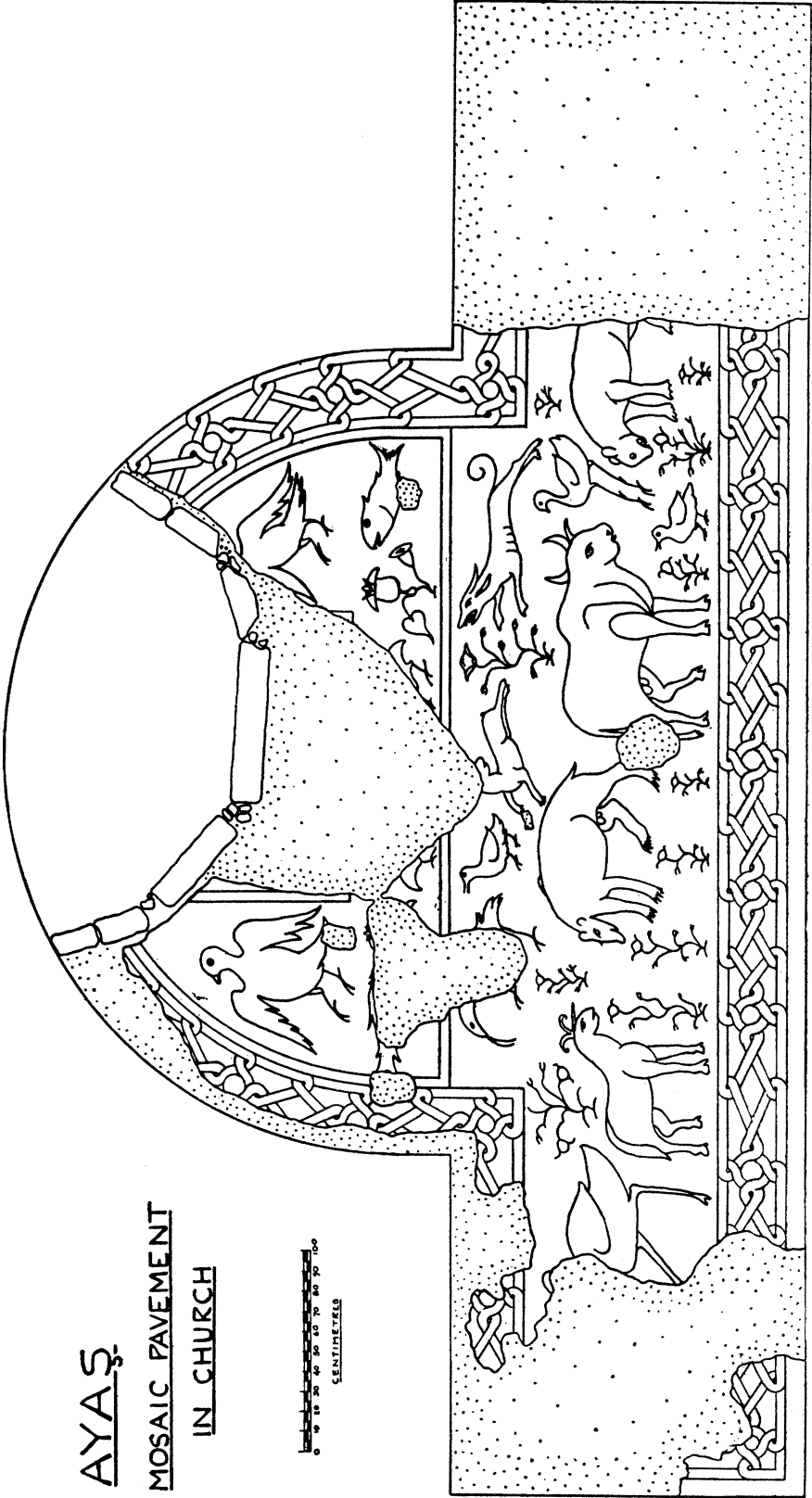


FIG. 5.

iconographers.<sup>1</sup> The mosaic, as a whole, is surrounded by an elaborate border, consisting of a running design of loops (Pl. IV, 2) connecting alternate circles and rhomboid figures,<sup>2</sup> and is divided into two main areas by a simple horizontal band. To the west of this band is a collection of animals and birds, arranged in two zones. The larger animals and birds in the lower zone use the border as an approximate baseline, while above are smaller creatures. In the apse, east of the dividing band, are birds and fish which flank a central panel now almost totally destroyed.

In the lower zone, looking from right to left, are the foreparts of a leopard (the hindquarters are destroyed), a duck, a bull, a bear, a ram and an ostrich. Above (again from right to left) are a bustard (?), a hunting dog (Pl. VI, 1) chasing a hare, another duck and a curlew (Pl. IV, 1). In the apse, just above the dividing line are two partridges and two fish facing each other. Above the fish are two eagles (Pl. V, 1) not this time antithetic. The whole of the centre design, which was enclosed in a panel, of which only small fragments of the border are intact, is lost in a very large break. This break was partly caused when a series of flat stones was set upright in a rough semicircle at the south-east corner of the apse: That these stones marked a burial is very likely, since in 1953 a fragment of human skull, possibly thrown aside by tomb robbers, was found amongst the rubble which covered the apse floor. The stones may well have marked a Christian burial, since the mosaic was originally left undisturbed as far as the edge of the semicircle (Pl. III, 1).

The colours used in the mosaic, apart from white, are pale and dark grey, blue, yellow, pink, brick-red, russet and brown. None of the shades is particularly bright, and no glass tesserae were used. The strands of the running cable which formed the main border design are blue, red, white and grey, while the alternating diamonds and circles are in yellow and white respectively. The simple band separating the two main areas of the mosaic consists of small squares of red and white enclosed between borders of blue and grey.

The colouring of the animals is not, in general, naturalistic. The outline of every beast is grey, and brick-red is used for the muzzles of animals and the beaks of birds; otherwise there is, apparently, no regular colour scheme. The bear in grey, the bull in varying shades of brown, and the lean hunting dog in brown, russet, yellow and white are nearest to life. The

<sup>1</sup> It is also possible that it represents the Messianic paradise prophesied by Isaiah (XI, 6-7). Herzfeld and Guyer (*MAMA, II*, pp. 106-107, Pl. 104.5) illustrate a *paradeisos* mosaic discovered by them in the "Cathedral" at Corycus, and cite an included inscription (not photographed) containing a quotation from the same passage of Isaiah; πάρδαλις συναναπαύσεται κηρίῳ καὶ . . .

<sup>2</sup> This design is discussed by Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, Princeton, 1947, Vol. I, pp. 547 ff. Single elements of the pattern are to be seen in the earliest structure of Kaoussie church (cf. cit., Vol. II, Pls. CXIVa, CXVb and c). This mosaic is dated to A.D. 387, and Levi infers that the developed pattern was in use by the middle of the 5th century. This is borne out by a close parallel in Room 7 of the upper level of the House of the Buffet Supper at Antioch, which Levi dates to c. 425. Later examples (c. 500) of a similar type may be seen, *ibid.*, Pls. LXXXIII and LXXXIV. See also Herzfeld and Guyer, *op. cit.*, p. 105, Pl. 103.

duck in the upper zone has brilliant and attractive plumage, picked out in pink and blue ; it is perhaps intended as a mallard. Rather bizarre in their general effect are the fat-tailed ram, in which much dark grey and russet is used, and the leopard with his neat, regular spots of blue and red. Interspersed amongst the beasts are stylised flowers. The stalks and leaves are in dark grey, the blossoms and buds in red outlined with grey. By a delightful coincidence, the two fiercest animals, the bear and the leopard, are in the attitude of smelling flowers (Pls. V, 2 and VI, 2).

The mosaic has no great artistic merit. The animals and birds all conform to the pattern-book style, prevalent amongst Antiochene artists during the late 5th and early 6th centuries.<sup>1</sup> The liveliest scene is of the hunting dog coursing a hare, but, this small episode apart, there is no composition in the real sense of the word. The bull and the bear have a certain strength, but the other animals and the birds are like the transfers in a child's scrapbook, for all that they have a naïf charm. The wild animals have their claws at full stretch ; the fish has teeth.

Despite the provincialism of the work, however, considerable importance may be attached to it, even if only as a country cousin of the later mosaics of Antioch, whose artists seem to have influenced the art of the Imperial Palace at Constantinople itself.<sup>2</sup> The animals find a very near parallel at Seleucia on the Orontes, in the mosaic of the Martyrion,<sup>3</sup> while the border is almost exactly the same as in the mosaic of the Buffet Supper<sup>4</sup> at Antioch itself, both of which may be dated to the late 5th century. Also, the scale pattern of the background at Ayaş is a feature of several Antiochene mosaics of the same period.<sup>5</sup>

#### EXCAVATION 1953.

Before excavation began in 1953 the northern part of the mosaic was buried to a depth of about 1.65 m., of which the first 0.50 m. consisted

<sup>1</sup> The Antioch mosaics, from the 4th century onwards, show an increasing influence of "Oriental textiles and eastern motions of composition". (See Morey, *Early Christian Art*, Princeton, 1942, p. 31.) Swift's claim (*Roman Sources of Christian Art*, New York, 1951, pp. 156-161) that the frontal mode of rendering and two dimensional flatness was Roman in inspiration appears to me far-fetched, and his examples unconvincing, in particular his Fig. 66. A primitive graffito, whose author had no pretensions to being a draughtsman, cannot be considered as reflecting a trend in the art of his period. The Antiochene pattern book style culminated in the mosaic of the Martyrium of Seleucia on the Orontes (Doro Levi, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, LXXXVII-LXXXIX).

<sup>2</sup> The Constantinople mosaics were dated, tentatively, by their excavators to the 5th century (St. Andrew's University, *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors*, London, 1947, p. 91). The style has something in common with Antiochene mosaics of the period, though its execution is superior. There is practically no continuity of composition, and the general effect is flat, with a minimum of perspective.

<sup>3</sup> See end of n. 1, above. Doro Levi, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 359-363, discusses this mosaic, which he dates before the disastrous earthquake of A.D. 526 (Procopius, *Hist. Sec.*, XVIII, 10).

<sup>4</sup> See n. 2, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> This method of filling the background is familiar from the first century A.D. onwards. It is, however, more commonly found at Antioch after the fourth century. (See Doro Levi, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Pls LXXXb, LXXVII, LXXXVI). The scale pattern is also used at Constantinople in the Palace of the Byzantine Emperors.

of spoil from unofficial digs by modern stone-robbers and treasure seekers. The total depth remaining to be excavated, therefore, was about 1.15 m. This ground was disturbed by tree roots, which were only cut away after they had been fully uncovered. The first 0.75 m. proved very hard going, owing to the accumulation of debris in the form of roof tiles and stone blocks which had fallen from the walls. Where the walls remained intact, it was observed that they were covered with cement, originally about 1 cm. thick, but now in a crumbly state owing to penetration by damp through the centuries. Into this cement was probably set the light composition of lime and very small pebbles which was found in the last 0.40 m. before the pavement level. This composition was possibly coated with plaster and then painted.

The wall at the north-east shoulder of the apse was found standing to a height of 1.35 m., but at the north-east corner of the nave it had been robbed, and a single block only was found *in situ* (h. 0.55 m.). Immediately west of this block was a door opening (see above, p. 59) 0.90 m. wide, with a narrow threshold 0.07 m. in height (Pl. IV, 2). The lower part of the western doorpost was also disclosed. The original opening of the door was blocked by a rough wall of dry stone, possibly the foundation trench of some later structure, possibly to block the opening after it had already been choked below with debris, to transform the church into an enclosure for animals.

Very little pottery was found, except for a few sherds of plain undecorated buff ware about 0.15 m. above the mosaic. At the same level, a fragment of a clay lamp (perhaps early Islamic) was brought to light.

The area lying within the rough semicircle of stones at the south-east corner of the apse was also excavated. Where the slabs did not fit closely, a fill of small stones had been inserted. At 0.10 m. fragments of two 13th or 14th century Byzantine bowls<sup>1</sup> were discovered, and at 0.22 m. the level of the original temple floor was reached. This had been cut away to allow for the interment—if indeed the slabs do mark the position of a grave. The total depth excavated inside this small enclosure was 1.85 m., but apart from a few architectural fragments, including part of a very small Byzantine capital, the fill consisted of a mass of rubble, mostly stone chips and roofing tiles.

#### CONCLUSION

The church at Ayaş may be one of the earliest Christian buildings to survive in Cilicia, for although the mosaic cannot well be dated much before the end of the 5th century, the position of the church, inside the temple, suggests that it was the immediate follower of its pagan predecessor.

The complete plan is not known, since the larger part of the nave is

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Professor D. Talbot Rice of Edinburgh University for examining and dating these bowls. Byzantine pottery had a wide area of distribution in the later centuries of the Empire, and it is not really surprising to find it in Cilicia during the Armenian period of supremacy.

buried to a depth of between 2 and 3 m. It is most likely, however, that it conforms to the standard basilican plan so popular in northern Syria and eastern Cilicia. A very small column base, found at the west end of the church, with a lower diameter of only 0·44 m. and, in addition, two small, fragmentary early Byzantine capitals, suggests that there were probably rows of interior columns, dividing the body of the church into a nave and two aisles. Only one Christian symbol, a cross of the Greek type, was discovered on a fallen block inside the apse.