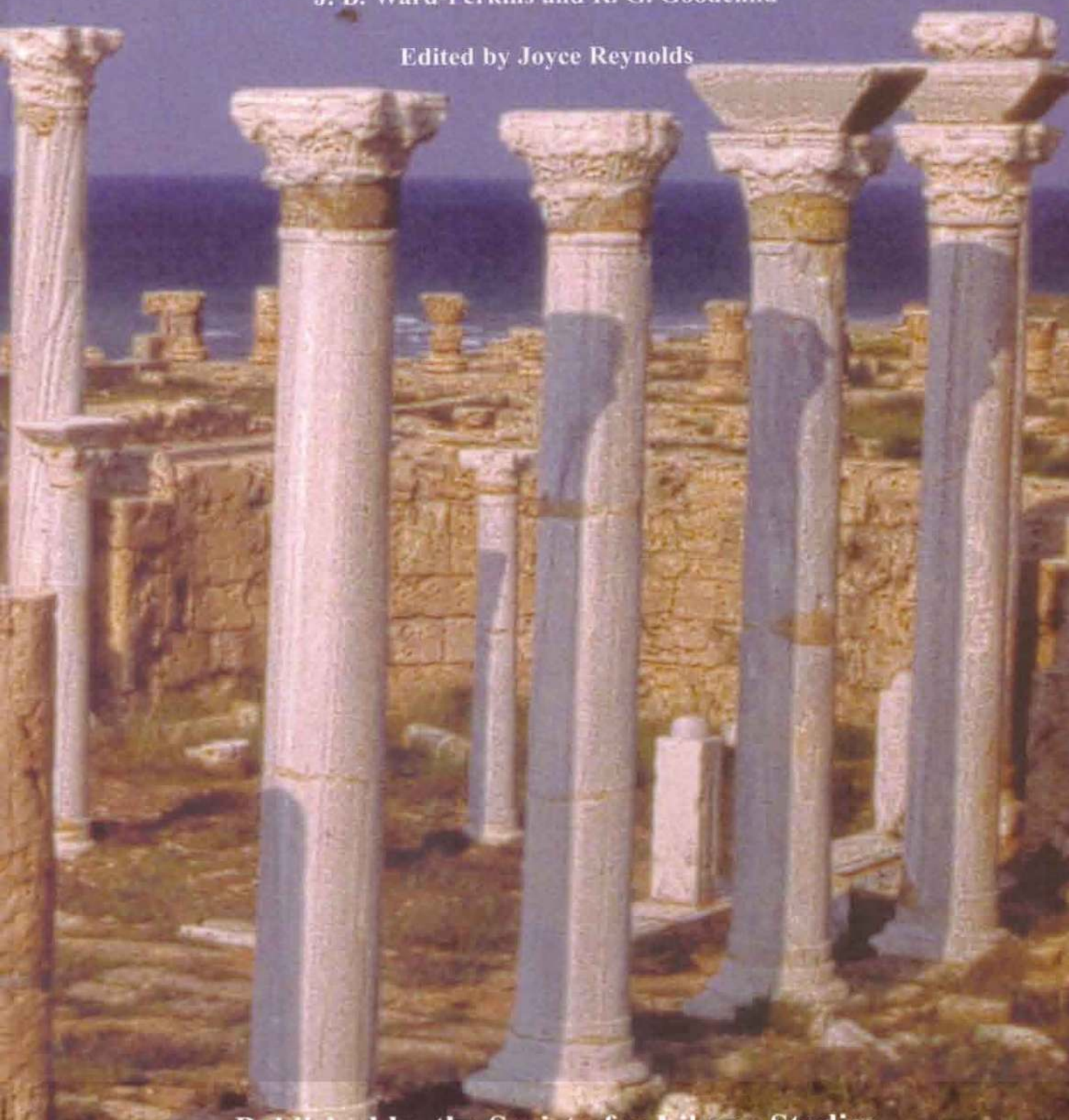


CHRISTIAN MONUMENTS OF CYRENAICA

J. B. Ward-Perkins and R. G. Goodchild

Edited by Joyce Reynolds



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J. B. Ward-Perkins and R. G. Goodchild

with contributions by R. M. Harrison, H. M. Dodge,
Sheila Gibson, John Lloyd,
Joyce Reynolds and Susan Walker

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Preface

The account of the Christian antiquities of Tripolitania which Richard Goodchild and John Ward-Perkins published in *Archaeologia* XCV (1953) was a landmark in the study of Libya in late antiquity; a companion piece for Cyrenaica was a natural sequel. There, Italian archaeologists had undertaken some excavation of Christian monuments (quite extensive in the East Church at Apollonia and the West Church at Ptolemais, on a smaller scale in the East Churches at Cyrene and at Taucheira and in the Central Church at Apollonia), and had been adding to the record of churches and possible churches seen in rural as well as urban areas begun by travellers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; but apart from Ward-Perkins' own article of 1943 (limited in scope, because prepared in wartime conditions, but a remarkable achievement in the circumstances), there had been no systematic study of them. For the country of Synesius of Cyrene such a study was a real *desideratum*, and in 1953 Goodchild's appointment as Controller of Antiquities in Cyrenaica provided the opportunity.

Goodchild himself started at once to look for the late antique and Byzantine monuments and soon stimulated a campaign of discovery by members of the Department of Antiquities, who began to explore the rural areas. As time and resources allowed—and as it became increasingly necessary to demonstrate the existence of important antiquities on sites open to the activities of builders and stone quarriers—he directed excavation, or clearance of débris encumbering buildings, by the Department (the East and Central Churches at Cyrene, the East and Central Churches at Apollonia as well as the 'Palace of the Dux' there with its chapel, and the Cruciform Building outside the city-walls (tomb or *martyrion*), the Christian workshop at Tarakenet, the two churches at Gasr el Lebia, a possible chapel at Ptolemais, the East Church at Taucheira). He also facilitated excavation or investigation elsewhere by others (the two churches at el Atrun and the West Church at Apollonia by Walter Widrig, the Christian building near the West Gate at Apollonia by Donald White, the tower of the Christian window-mullions at Taucheira by David Smith). Ward-Perkins set about examining, photographing, and describing the finds in detail (unexcavated as well as excavated ones) and arranged for them to be surveyed and drawn by professional architects (an independent if closely associated operation). The bulk of the writing was to be the task of Ward-Perkins. Goodchild was to have provided an historical introduction but was frustrated by the absence of up-to-date books in Libya and never produced it; and, given his administrative burdens, he envisaged, from an early stage, that Ward-Perkins' descriptions of the churches excavated by the Department would substitute for the conventional excavation reports that he never had time to write. There was much discussion between the two, however, in Cyrenaica and in Rome; and when the architects were drawing their plans they were often in correspondence with Goodchild as well as with Ward-Perkins. On or with the earlier plans there are, in fact, comments in Goodchild's hand- or type-writing (both quite inimitable) giving answers to their questions, usually made after a new inspection and occasionally even a new sounding; in 1961, when Martin Harrison was deputising for Goodchild in Cyrenaica, he performed the same functions (including the direction of the Department's excavation of a church at Ras el Hilal).

Ward-Perkins took teams to Libya, mainly for study of Christian monuments, in 1955 and 1958; and between these expeditions and after them, when Joyce Reynolds and Elisabeth Rosenbaum (later Alföldi-Rosenbaum) were in Cyrenaica for other purposes, urged them to make observations for him, Reynolds on the Christian inscriptions and Rosenbaum on the Christian mosaics; and he also asked Rosenbaum to collect iconographic and stylistic parallels for the latter after her return to London. Both he and Goodchild were now carrying heavy programmes of other work, but progress continued steadily; and brief but important discussions were presented to International Congresses of Christian Archaeology in 1962 and 1969 (Ward-Perkins 1965 and 1972) and to a conference on Byzantine Art in Ravenna in 1966 (Goodchild 1966*a* and *b*).

Nevertheless, when Goodchild died in 1968, the first of such blows to fall on the enterprise, there was still much to do. Ward-Perkins continued field studies with the help of Goodchild's Libyan successors in Cyrenaica, making visits in 1969 and 1971, and contributed a chapter on the Christian architecture of Apollonia to the volume on that city produced by the University of Michigan (Humphrey 1976). There he made it quite clear that a distinctly fuller treatment of each building was to be expected in the volume on Christian monuments of Cyrenaica that he had in preparation. He also offered a preliminary conspectus of his findings in a paper delivered to a colloquium on Synesius in Paris in 1979 (its *Acta* were never published and Ward-Perkins' typescript seems not to have survived). But the other calls on him continued to be heavy; and at the same time the necessary additional fieldwork had become more difficult to finance, since most of the funds available to British archaeologists for expeditions to Libya were being diverted to a major rescue excavation at Sidi Khrebish, Benghazi—which, as it happened, turned up a new church.

Meanwhile, developments in the Cyrenaican countryside began to open access to many areas that were previously difficult to visit; and subsequent exploration by the Department of Antiquities brought to light many new Christian monuments, and is still doing so. Moreover, others had begun to publish relevant studies which must be taken into account. In 1975 Walter Widrig completed a doctoral thesis for the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, *Two Basilicas at Latrun within the Context of Cyrenaican Church Forms*. Of this, an account of the basilicas at el Atrun appeared in print as Widrig 1978, while the rest, although never printed, is available on tape and has made its mark on the discussion. In the same year, Professor Sandro Stucchi included a chapter on Christian monuments in his survey of Cyrenaican architecture (Stucchi 1975, ch. vii), with brief accounts of a number of churches and consideration of their chronology and character. Stucchi's account differed from Ward-Perkins' on many details, and also on the general issues of their foundation dates and their defensive uses. Ward-Perkins 1979 is a review of this book in which he commented critically on some of Stucchi's points. The issues were raised again by Elisabeth Alföldi-Rosenbaum in their joint book on the Justinianic mosaics of Cyrenaica (Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980); for in the late seventies Ward-Perkins was persuaded that descriptive accounts of the Christian mosaics of Cyrenaica should be published separately and at once.¹

What he never did, unfortunately, was to write the full discussion of all these matters which he certainly intended; and which would surely have included the more general treatment of the mosaics which reviewers missed in the Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins volume and which is not provided here either, as well as an overview of the churches on which they will find that this volume too offers only a deficient section (in Introduction II). No doubt he hoped for one more field season in which to clear up outstanding factual problems.

Subsequently, after his own death, further relevant works have appeared—notably, Noël Duval's stimulating survey of Cyrenaican Christian monuments in the *Acta of the XIth International Congress of Christian Archaeology* 1986 (pub. 1989); and in 1987 Denis Roques' *Synésios de Cyrène et la Cyrénaïque du Bas-Empire*, to whose extensive use of the ancient literary sources the editorial debt here is heavy.²

When he died in 1981, Ward-Perkins' files consisted essentially of typescripts containing detailed descriptions, with architectural interpretations, of most of the churches known in 1969 (but not quite all), three notebooks with detailed notes on them and some additional drafts in manuscript, an extensive, but incomplete,

1 The volume is now in need of some revision, and when Professor Alföldi-Rosenbaum died in 1992 she had just completed work on a new edition which has not yet appeared at the time of writing.

2 There was also a Master's Thesis on Cyrenaican Christian churches presented to the University of Newcastle upon Tyne by a Libyan archaeologist, Mr Assaghaier Abusbee, but unfortunately it has proved impossible to establish contact with him in order to ask his permission to read and quote from it.

collection of drawings and photographs to illustrate what he proposed to say, one unfinished introductory section on the building materials and techniques used in churches, and a folder in which he had assembled Reynolds' preliminary notes on the Christian inscriptions. These were handed over immediately to Professor Martin Harrison who was, within a short time, taken seriously ill himself. Dr Hazel Dodge and Miss Sheila Gibson did all that they could to make the work ready for publication, but the fact that neither of them was able to visit Cyrenaica was a serious hindrance to them. Already, a little before his own death in 1992, Harrison had asked Reynolds to look over the manuscript. It is unfortunate that it was impossible for her to work on it seriously until more recently; in consequence many questions which an editor able to look at the monuments should have addressed remain unanswered.

Ward-Perkins' manuscript is manifestly incomplete, naturally takes no account of recent scholarship, and, in some sections, very clearly lacks the polish of a final text. Nevertheless its record of a considerable number of closely-observed monuments (some 44 monuments, 35 of them churches), often described when they were in markedly better condition than they are today, offers a significant contribution to knowledge of Cyrenaican Christian building. We have sought to supplement its contents by providing historical and topographical contexts for all sites (which we know that he intended); by updating the bibliographies;³ by drawing attention, in footnotes, to different views expressed by other scholars; by adding notes on Christian monuments of which he did not know on the sites that he visited; by listing, with some documentation, sites which he did not visit but on which Christian monuments are now reported (usually brief, unless there has been excavation). For the list we have assumed that the geographical coverage originally intended (which is nowhere discussed in the notes) was the whole of the two Diocletianic provinces of Libya Superior (Pentapolis) and Libya Inferior (Sicca). Both Ward-Perkins and Goodchild had in fact concentrated their main effort in the northern sector of the Gebel el Akhdar (approximately Benghazi to Derna), the heart of Libya Superior as of modern Cyrenaica. Both had paid some attention, however, to the area of the Syrtica between Benghazi and the Cyrenaican/Tripolitanian frontier at Graret Gser et-Trab (anc. Arae Philaenorum). Goodchild had also regularly inspected the area of the Marmarica east of Derna (anc. Darnis) as far as the modern Libyan/Egyptian frontier at Sollum (anc. Catabathmus), and, at the end of his life, was writing on a possible church at Marsa Matruh (anc. Paraitonion), the seat of the governor of Libya Inferior, and well to the east of Sollum. Since no churches were certainly attested in Libya Inferior in his lifetime, it is hardly surprising that Ward-Perkins did not include it in his itineraries, although, of course, he knew that there is quite a lot of ancient literary evidence for bishops there. The two provinces were closely associated for military defence and links between their ecclesiastics are certain; Goodchild's missing historical section would surely have brought out their relevance one to another.

We have presented what Ward-Perkins wrote almost exactly as he left it, leaving untouched points which may seem questionable today in the light of discoveries and discussion since the nineteen-sixties (above all on the issues of dating, of the defensive purpose of the church buildings and of the part played by the emperor Justinian in church construction), and retaining his wording almost entirely unchanged, having found that it was only too easy to improve the sound of a sentence by destroying its nuances and sometimes introducing actual error. We have removed obvious typing-slips and a few terminological inconsistencies, provided some additional headings and a regular introductory format for his entries, but our interventions have been very limited except where the typescript is defective. All substantial editorial interventions are printed in the distinct small font used here.

³ They are not complete, but will, we hope, provide adequate introductions to the literature (note, for instance, that a reference to Synesius' Letters assumes that the reader will also consult the commentary on them in Roques 2000). The use of the Harvard system of citation will inconvenience some readers, but we are constrained to accept it for its economic advantages.

For the illustrations too we have followed where possible the notes left by Ward-Perkins,⁴ with additions where possible for the additional monuments that we have listed. Unfortunately we have rarely been able to supplement them where later discussion has emphasised points different from those on which he concentrated. Moreover, what he intended to illustrate by drawings is clear only in part. The measured architects' plans are a major feature of the work and were almost all ready for inclusion; but there are some references to thumb-nail sketches of which only a few have been found, and some indications that he had in mind publication of a larger number of drawings of carved details, for instance of column capitals, than we have found. Discussion of the problem of dating the churches has stressed the potential significance of these details and the gap is, therefore, regrettable.

Sketch-plans of each of the five major cities, on which their Christian monuments are plotted, should show something of the distribution of monuments within their urban contexts; and sketch-maps of the northern Gebel el Akhdar region, and of the relevant parts of the Syrtica and the Marmarica, on which most of the sites are plotted, indicate the distribution of the known Christian sites, and while what is shown is certainly affected by patterns of modern exploration (which has been distinctly limited west of Wadi Kuf), it must be much closer to reality than it used to be.

All footnotes are by Reynolds.

We do not know how Ward-Perkins planned to arrange the sites. It has seemed to us too difficult (however desirable) to order the sections so as to bring out the relations of one site to another (of the rural sites in a city's territory to that city, for instance). Eventually, therefore, we have decided to rely on the provincial map for that, and have divided the sites into four sections within each of which they are arranged in alphabetical order; for sections 3 and 4 there are sub-sections listing ancient place-names which are not securely identified on the ground:

Section 1. The major cities of the Pentapolis (ancient names used). We have included Berenike (Sidi Khrebish, Benghasi) in this section, although Ward-Perkins left no description of its church, since he certainly intended to produce one (having kept, from a distance, an interested eye on the excavation).

Section 2. Rural sites on the Gebel el Akhdar with Christian monuments visited by Ward-Perkins (modern names used, since it is very rarely indeed that their ancient names are securely identified). We have included in this section Ras el Hilal, although there is no draft text on it, since he had assembled plans and photographs of it, described its mosaics and spoken of it briefly in accounts of his survey (Ward-Perkins 1972), and because Harrison, who directed its excavation, had in mind from the first its inclusion in the volume, and discussed both excavation and report with him.

Section 3.

- a* Rural sites on the Gebel el Akhdar whose Christian monuments were not visited by Ward-Perkins (modern names used).
- b* Rural sites on the Gebel el Akhdar whose Christian monuments are deduced from literary evidence but not securely identified on the ground.

Section 4

- a* Sites in the Syrtica with Christian associations (modern names used).
- b(i)* Sites in the Marmarica with Christian associations (modern names used).
- b(ii)* Place-names in the Marmarica with Christian associations known from literary sources only.

As always the transliteration of Arabic and Greek names has given much trouble. We have used forms which seem most likely to be easily recognised by readers, and have paid especial attention to what our colleagues in Cyrenaica have recommended.

⁴ Although it has not always been possible to discover the photographs that he had in mind.

Acknowledgements

It has proved too difficult to discover all who should be thanked for the funding of the various expeditions involved. For Ward-Perkins' own visits to Libya and those of his teams the main provider was certainly The British School at Rome; while The British School at Athens was responsible for those who worked at Taucheira and The Society for Libyan Studies for the work at Benghazi as well as for the several recent visits to Libya by Reynolds. In all cases the generous provision of accommodation, transport, and assistance of every kind by the Libyan Department of Antiquities has been fundamental. It is likely that there were other benefactors; we hope that they will understand the difficulty of locating their names in the circumstances.

For help and advice with the production of the volume the editor has many debts to friends and colleagues who allowed themselves to be pestered with questions; very especially in Cyrene to Abdulhamid Abdussaid, Breyek Atiyah, Fadel Ali Mohamed, Abdulghader al-Muzzeini, Daoud el-Halag, Said Farag, Saleh Wanis; at Apollonia to Fadlullah Abdussalam and his son Adam and to Breyek Kwenin; at Tolmeita to Abdussalam Bazama; at Tocra to Fathi Mohamed Ali; at Benghazi to Fuaad Bentaher, Ahmed Buzaian, Mohamed Dueib, Ibrahim Twahony, Khalid el-Haddar, Yussuf ben Nassir, Ali Salem Letric; in The Oxford Institute of Archaeology to Harry Edwards, Jane Inskip, Lynda Smithson, Alison Wilkins, Bob Wilkins; in Cambridge to Nigel Cassidy, Sarah Clackson, Robin Cormack, Soraya el Arabi, Nicholas de Lange, William Horbury, Janet Huskinson, Chris Kelly, John Martindale, Rolf Schneider, Dorothy Thompson; more generally to Selina Ballance, Graeme Barker, Willy Clarysse, J. J. Coulton, Catherine Dobias-Lalou, John Dore, Denis Feissel, Elizabeth Harrison, John Hayes, John Humphrey, Barri Jones, John Little, John Lloyd, David Mattingly, Dimitri Michaelides, Sara Paton, Charlotte Roueché, Richard Saller, David Smith, James and Dorothy Thorn, Claudio Vita Finzi, Hafid Walda, Susan Walker, Margaret Ward-Perkins, Donald White, Walter Widrig, Andrew Wilson; above all to Kenneth Painter who read most of it in draft and commented very helpfully, to Bruce Fraser who not only typed the manuscript but greatly improved the clarity of many editorial arguments, and to Elizabeth Savage for skilled and patient preparation of the manuscript for the printer. Further, Reynolds could not have made her recent visits to Libya unless she had been allowed to travel and stay with a series of Italian Archaeological Missions to Cyrene and is warmly grateful for their help to the late Lidiano Bacchielli, the late Claudio Frigerio, as also to Nicola Bonacasa, Serena Ensoli, Emmanuela Fabbricotti, Mario Luni, Claudio Parisi-Presicce and all their assistants and students; nor could she have completed her part in the work without the cheerful support of her nephew Bernard Reynolds in various ways, and not least in finding for her the shelf numbers of books in libraries whose catalogues have been computerised.

The surveying and the drawing arranged by Ward-Perkins were the work of Selina Ballance (Tomlin), David Bird, Margaret Browne, G. U. S. Corbett, Audrey Corbett (Petty), Sheila Gibson, Charles and Joan Hobbs, R. J. C. Jamieson, Mary Ann Meagher, Sara Paton, S. J. Staples, C. A. Valentine and Margaret Wheeler (these, at least, are named in his notebooks or have signed drawings). It should be noted that Ward-Perkins was never able to take sophisticated modern equipment to Libya for his surveying teams; but, since the architects concerned were well-accustomed to working with simple tools, it was their speed rather than their accuracy that was affected.

The volume also includes some plans drawn for the Department of Antiquities at Shahat by Abdulhamid Abdussaid and Said Farag, some arising from work at Taucheira undertaken by William Anson, Gordon Lawson and David Smith, and some from work at Benghazi undertaken by John Lloyd. Sara Owen of the Classical Faculty

in Cambridge has drawn a number of details, especially of the lettering, and W. A. Foster of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust a number more.

The photographs were, in many cases, taken by Ward-Perkins himself, but others come from the archive of the Department of Antiquities at Shahat or from the personal records of Selina Ballance, Susan Bird, G. U. S. Corbett, John Dore, Sheila Gibson, R. M. Harrison, J. A. Lloyd, Dorothy Thorn, Joyce Reynolds, Susan Walker, Andrew Wilson. A number have been redeveloped for us, to the great advantage of our readers, by Nigel Cassidy of the Museum of Classical Archaeology in the University of Cambridge, and by members of the photographic department of the Institute of Archaeology at Oxford.

The index was compiled by Paul Lee. The maps are drawn by Philip Stickler of the Department of Geography in the University of Cambridge and the town plans by Selina Ballance.

Reynolds is very conscious that her ignorances are responsible for errors and omissions, for which she can only apologise.

It is sad that Sheila Gibson, whose drawings are a major feature of the book and whose help in its preparation was fundamental, died before its publication.

J. M. R.*

*In compliance with the editor's wishes, the Society for Libyan Studies notes that she did not see the final printer's proofs.

Bibliography

1. Abbreviated titles of corpora and dictionaries, etc.

<i>AE</i>	<i>L' Année Épigraphique</i> (Paris, in progress from 1893)
<i>CIC</i>	<i>Corpus Iuris Civilis 16</i> (Berlin, 1944-59)
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> (Berlin, 1829-77)
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i> (Rome, Paris, etc., in progress from 1903)
<i>DACL</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d' Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie</i> , eds. F. Cabrol, H. Leclerq, H. Marrou (Paris, 1907-1953)
<i>FHG</i>	<i>Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum</i> , ed. C. Muller (Paris, 1885)
<i>GGM</i>	<i>Geographi Graeci Minores</i> , ed. C. Muller (Paris, 1882)
<i>IGLS</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie</i> (Paris, in progress from 1929)
<i>IRT</i>	<i>Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania</i> , ed. J.M. Reynolds and J.B. Ward-Perkins (Rome, 1951)
<i>NT</i>	New Testament of the Bible
<i>OT</i>	Old Testament of the Bible
<i>P.Vat.Gr.</i>	<i>Il papiro Vaticano Greco no. 11</i> , ed. M. Norsa and G. Vitelli (Vatican, 1931)
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1857-66)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844-53)
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 3 vols., ed. A.H.M. Jones et al. (Cambridge, 1971-1992)
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> (Bonn, in progress from 1950)
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> (Leyden, in progress from 1923)

2. Greek and Latin Works

(We have cited an edition only where the editors have had difficulty in locating a text.)

Acta Conc.	Acts of the Church Councils = G.D. Mansi, <i>Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio</i> (Florence and Venice, 1759-98), cited for Const(antinople) 449 and 553, Chalcedon, Eph(esus) 431 and 449, Nic(ea), Seleuc(ia),
Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus, <i>Res Gestae</i>
Athan.	Athanasius
	<i>Apol.Const.</i> <i>Apologia ad Constantium</i> , PG 25, 596-641
	<i>Epp.</i> <i>Epistulae Heortasticae</i> , PG 26, 1360-1444
	(for a fuller text of <i>Ep.39</i> see L.Th. Lefort, <i>CSCO</i> 151, Louvain, 1955)
	<i>Fug.</i> <i>Apologia de fuga sua</i> , PG 25, 644-80
	<i>H.Ar.</i> <i>Historia Arianorum</i> , PG 25, 696-796
	<i>Syn.</i> <i>Epistula de Synodis</i> , PG 26, 682-794
	<i>Tom.</i> <i>Tomus ad Antiochenos</i> , PG 26, 796-809
Claudian,	<i>Gild.</i> Claudius Claudianus, <i>De bello Gildonico</i>
	<i>Stil.</i> <i>id.</i> , <i>De consulatu Stilichonis</i>
Cor., Joh.	Flavius Cresconius Corippus, <i>Johannis</i>
Diod.Sic.	Diodorus Siculus, <i>Historiae</i>
Epiphani., Haer.	Epiphanius, <i>Panarion seu Adversus LXXX Haereses</i> , PG 41, 173-1200
Euseb., HE	Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> , PG 20, 45-906
VC	<i>id.</i> , <i>De Vita Constantini</i> , PG 20, 909-1229

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I Introduction

Libya and its people

The following notes are intended to provide some orientation for a reader who has little or no acquaintance with ancient Libya.

Geography

The core of the territory with which this book is concerned is a limestone plateau, the Gebel el Akhdar or Green Mountain, projecting northwards into the Mediterranean Sea, approximately opposite the Greek Peloponnese. It is flanked by the Syrtica to the west and the Marmarica (Western Desert) to the east, areas in which the mountain has fallen back from the sea leaving semi-arid coastal plains with limited possibilities for settlement (although probably rather more, so recent research reveals, than has usually been thought). The Gebel el Akhdar rises sharply from sea level in two steep steps with a plain of variable depth (the Luseita) between them; at some points there is a third shallower step taking it higher—the highest point being *c.* 900m above sea level a little south of Cyrene; it then drops away gently southwards to the Calanscio Sand Sea, becoming increasingly arid except in a small number of oases; but a line of these oases (Siwa, Jaghbub, Augila) has always provided a route from Egypt westwards with a branch southwards to the land of the Garamantes (Fezzan). That opens the Gebel and the coastal area to influences, and on occasion to attacks, from the south.

The coastal plain below the mountain is always narrow and sometimes non-existent, ruling out in antiquity a continuous east/west road beside the sea; overland travellers must necessarily have climbed the Gebel. At intervals deep and sometimes broad gorges (wadis) are cut into the mountain, most of them dry for much of the time but briefly carrying torrents after winter rains. The broader of these provide some good cultivable soil (but only when they are crossed by a series of retaining walls can the winter torrents be prevented from carrying that soil away). Many offer routes for comparatively easy north/south movement. One, the Wadi Kuf, the centre of an elaborate system of tributaries and at points remarkably broad and deep, cuts the northern Gebel into two; it is now bridged, but in antiquity the main east/west road across Cyrenaica seems to have divided into two branches, one turning south (approximately at Balagrae, mod. el Beida, on its east side and at Barka, mod. el Merj, on the west) in order to bypass its southern end, and the other turning north at Messa on the east bank and Gasr el Lebia on the west, to run down one bank of the wadi to the sea, where it could be crossed with relative ease, and up the other.

Cultivable land exists at all levels of the Gebel—on the Upper Plateau especially around Cyrene, but also in a number of small concentrations to the east and west; on the Luseita, most extensively around Barka, but also in pockets, some quite large, below Cyrene and to the east; on the coast at a number of wadi mouths, but especially around Berenike, Taucheira, and Darnis, and rather less extensively around Apollonia and Ptolemais. Rainfall is highest on the mountain (in its northern area) where there are also a number of springs, especially in the region east of Cyrene. Stucchi 1975, 357, argued that there was a climatic change in the late antique period, involving a marked reduction in rainfall. That is a controversial view. Throughout antiquity there was a need to conserve water, as there is today; it is not clear that the number of cisterns associated with the period of the churches in fact constitutes markedly more provision than had been made previously, nor that there has been any change in the rainfall régime between antiquity and modern times.

It is also relevant that the country is subject to earthquakes, and that there is some reason to suppose that the two centuries between approximately AD 350 and 550 may have been a particularly active period seismically. The literary records are limited in number and in precision; it seems likely that their authors have tended to assimilate quakes occurring over a period of time to a few major events (e.g. to that of AD 364/5) so that specific dates offered for earthquake damage should be accepted with caution. For some comments by a modern seismologist, see Ambraseys 1994.

Settlement

The geographical circumstances naturally dictated the pattern of settlement—in a limited number of cities and on a considerable, but unknown, number of smaller sites. There were four cities only, in the classical sense of the word, in the Greek and early Hellenistic periods: Cyrene, Barka (later Ptolemais/Barka), Euesperides (later Berenike), Taucheira (temporarily called Arsinoe). Around the turn of the second to the first centuries BC the main port of Cyrene was detached from her territory in order to create a fifth city, Apollonia (later Sozusa; see Section I, and always here referred to by both names). Hadrian founded a sixth, Hadrianopolis, which certainly declined in the third century AD, and may have been in effect a village thereafter. At the same time, and probably with increasing momentum during the Roman period, some of the smaller sites developed into what should perhaps be considered to be small towns and may figure in ancient accounts as *polesis*. Their importance will have derived from their positions on the lines of east/west communication both overland and by sea; the most notable examples are the Marmarican cities of Paraitonion, Antipyrgos and Darnis.

Communications

A major route across the territory linked the frontier between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania to Berenike, and Berenike to Taucheira, Ptolemais, Cyrene, Darnis and thence across the Marmarica to Egypt. There were branch roads to Barka and Apollonia/Sozusa and a network of tracks (largely uncharted) which provided access to the smaller settlements not touched by the main roads. It is probable that many travellers preferred to move by sea during the sailing-seasons and that the small ports dotted along the coast were in consequence more important than they seem to us.

The Population

The cities and some, probably many, of the villages were created by colonists. Those who arrived in the archaic period were Greeks, for the most part Dorians. They were joined at intervals later not only by other Greeks but also by Greek-speakers of more varied origins; thus clients of the Hellenistic kings of Egypt, including a significant number of Jews (cf. Strabo *ap.* Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* XIV.7.2), and, in the Roman period, Italian *negotiatores* with their slaves and freedmen (revealed by the inscriptions) and a contingent of Roman legionary veterans who were intended to compensate for the casualties of a major Jewish Revolt in AD 115-7 (*Türk Tarih Belleten* XI, 1947, 101f. = *SEG* XVII.585).

On the native Libyan population, evidence is limited. A few groups were probably already settled in villages when the first Greeks arrived, although their life-style was undoubtedly mainly pastoralist. Greek tradition presents them as substantially acceptant of the original colonies, though there was resistance when these were expanded. Subsequent references suggest marked cultural and economic interchange (cf. Hdt. IV.170, 189-90), a good deal of intermarriage, the sedentarisation and hellenisation of a number of Libyans in the cities and, to some extent, in the villages of their territories. There seem to have been long periods of reasonably peaceful relations with the still semi-nomadic peoples in the more arid regions, but occasional outbreaks of hostilities which may, sometimes at least, have followed from the actions of more distant peoples, rather than those of the immediate neighbours of the cities (Diodorus Siculus III.57-65). It is arguable that between the Marmaric War of the reign of Augustus (*SEG* IX.63) and that of Claudius Gothicus (*SEG* IX.9), Roman control prevented serious Libyan raids on the settled areas; and that there was a similar period of substantial quiet between the latter and the raids so vividly depicted in the Letters and *Catastasis* of Synesius in the early fifth century; but Claudian seems to implicate tribes of this area in the rising of Gildon (*Laus Stilichonis* I. v. 248-61 and 357-9, *De bello Gildonico* v. 188-98; discussed by Roques 1989, 69-75) so that a period or periods of tension a little earlier must be allowed for. After the death of Synesius we are again short of evidence and we cannot be sure that the only Libyan raids were those of which we hear specifically: i.e. in the middle of the fifth century (Priscus Panites frg. 14); at or soon after its end (John of Antioch 216); in the sixth century when Mazikes are recorded as supporting the Tripolitanian revolt against

Byzantium (Corippus, *Johann.* II.123-9); and an attack by the Maurysioi on Berenike in AD 543-4, apparently aimed at the governor of Libya Superior who was brother to that governor of Tripolitania who had provoked the Tripolitanian revolt (Theophanes, *Chron.* 322). But the evidence hardly supports a picture of constantly repeated attacks.

It also seems that in late antiquity some new Libyan groups settled within the provincial boundaries, for instance the Maketae who figure in the Decree of Anastasius (*SEG IX.356*, § 11) and the Marysoi (presumably identical with the Maurysioi) of Inscription no. 4 at Tarakenet, *Section 3a*; under special control of course. Some of them were called upon by Heraclius against Phocas in AD 610 (John of Nikiou pp.167, 176). It is presumably a group of this type which Goodchild 1967*a* envisaged as settled in the area of Barka, being Monophysite, if at all Christianised, hostile to the Orthodox government, and an important element in the swift success of the invasion of ^cAmr Ibn al-^cAs.

Provincial Organisation

At a date that is not quite certain, Diocletian reorganised Cyrenaica as the province of Libya Superior or Pentapolis and detached the Marmarica from Egypt (with which the sector east of Sollum had been governed since at least the Hellenistic period and the sector between Darnis and Sollum since at least the reign of Commodus) to form a new province of Libya Inferior, sometimes called Sicca. Each province had its own governor, one with headquarters at Ptolemais (modern Tolmeita) and the other probably from the first at Paraitonion (Marsa Matruh), but the military protection of both became the responsibility of the *dux* in Egypt. By the time that Synesius wrote *Epp.* 95 the military command in Pentapolis at least had been detached from that of Egypt (to his great dissatisfaction). It has been supposed that there was in consequence a *dux* for each of the two Libyas; Roques 1987, 225 argues that one *dux*, independent of the Egyptian command, now directed the defence of both. At a date before the end of the third quarter of the fifth century, however, a separate *dux* was being appointed to each (*CIJ II.Bk.XII.59.10* of AD 472), a system reflected in the Decree of Anastasius *de rebus Libycis* (*SEG IX.356*) which is addressed to the *dux* of Pentapolis only, and implied in Justinian's Edict XIII, chs. 17-22 (*CIC III. pp.789-92*), referring only to Inferior. Roques 1987, 226 argues that this system was introduced in the middle of the fifth century, in response to Libyan raiding; and that the establishment of Apollonia/Sozusa as the seat of the provincial government in place of Ptolemais was contemporary. The new system seems to have lasted for some time, but it is usually held that Sozusa was abandoned for Taucheira when the Arab invasion threatened; recent discussion raises the possibility that the change came earlier than that (see further under Apollonia/Sozusa, *Section 1*).

Diocletian attached the Libyas to the Diocese of Oriens under a *vicarius* stationed in Syrian Antioch; but when Egypt became a separate diocese in AD 367 they were, naturally, transferred to the care of the Augustal prefect in Alexandria. Justinian moved them again, this time to the pretorian prefect in Constantinople.

The eastern and western frontiers of these provinces are approximately clear, although the eastern frontier of Libya Inferior was moved eastwards by Justinian to take in Mareotis (Edict XIII). To the south they are obscure; in principle they seem to have included the oases of Augila and of Ammon (Siwa), which can hardly have been under serious control; but the southernmost point at which evidence for occupation has been found is, at present, Gasr Uertig on the Gebel Akhdar. On the face of it, that is in sharp contrast with conditions in the Roman imperial period, when there was a Roman fort at Msus much further south, and evidence suggesting a system of defence based on the track from Msus to Mechili; but although a Libyan farm of Roman date has been reported at Gasr Tecasis (Goodchild 1952*a*, 148 = 1976*a*, 150) and other pre-Arab finds at Mechili (Stucchi 1975, 476), the limit of extensive sedentary occupation was always much further north, and Goodchild thought that the fort at Msus had probably been evacuated well before the end of the Roman period. Thus the situation may have changed much less (if at all) between the later Roman and the Byzantine periods (Goodchild 1953, 74-6 = 1976*a*, 206; cf. also Johnson 1973, 122, 143).

Military defence

We are poorly informed on the defence system. In the time of Synesius it seems that it was based on garrisons stationed in or near the cities (although these cities seem often to have had to cope with raiders by themselves, cf. Synesius *Epp.* 108, 125), and that there was not much immediate help for the rural areas unless the locals organised themselves (Goodchild 1976*a*, 252-3; cf. also 1953, 65-6 = 1976*a*, 195-209). The Decree of Anastasius (*SEG* IX.356, undated within the reign) reveals a provincial garrison of five units in Libya Superior (it is tempting to suppose that one was based in each of the five old cities). Justinian's Edict XIII describes the soldiers of Libya Inferior as stationed 'in Paraitonion and the other cities' (certainly Antipyrgos and presumably Darnis, but others of the coastal sites had probably achieved city status and were perhaps included). Procopius (discussed by Roques 1994 and Reynolds 2000) indicates strong fortifications at Paraitonion and Antipyrgos (the latter were visible in the nineteenth century and glimpsed during rebuilding of the modern town after the Second World War, Goodchild 1966*b*, 277-8), at Taucheira, Berenike, and at Boreion (Bu Grada) in the frontier area between Superior and Tripolitania, all on the coast, and, in the interior of Superior, at two unlocated monasteries in the southern frontier areas, Agriolode and Dinarthison. For the large areas of both provinces of which nothing is said in any of the documents, the surviving monuments suggest first that all cities had some walls; at Apollonia/Sozusa and Taucheira on the lines of the Hellenistic circuit (White 1976, Smith/Crow 1998), at Berenike (Lloyd, 1990), at Cyrene and at Ptolemais probably on much shorter circuits (cf. Goodchild 1971, 144-5, Little 1990, 23), and second that there were widely extended subsidiary strong-points. Goodchild (1953, 65-76 = 1976*a*, 195-209) wrote that in the Gebel the country is full of castles and there are many too in the Syrtica; in the Marmarica they may have been fewer, but further exploration is needed there. On the Gebel it is noticeable that the villages, even when they approximate in size to small towns, are rarely walled, but often have a small but strong 'castle' along with their church; and many forts are to be seen distant from the villages too. Some should, no doubt, be thought of as fortified farms, private dwellings, rather than official buildings, and it is rarely easy to distinguish one category from another. For none is there satisfactory dating evidence, although the structural techniques in some cases seem consonant with fifth- and sixth-century building, and some show crosses which seem likely to be features of their first construction. They must have served as look-out points providing advance information of the movements of raiding parties, as well as postings for small forces.

Economy

The archaeological evidence (including that of the Christian monuments) seems to show that the rural areas of central Pentapolis were populous and modestly prosperous in the early Byzantine period. That is well-illustrated by Catani 1999 who stresses the frequent bath-buildings and the farms of Byzantine date as well as the churches to be seen on the Gebel. Goodchild 1966*a*, 217 suggested that to create these there had been something of a flight from the cities; but while the cities were not as large as they had been earlier, they too, where we know anything of them, show signs of building activity in late antiquity. These are most obvious at Apollonia/Sozusa after it became the provincial metropolis, but are not lacking elsewhere (Ermeti 1999 for a recent summing-up of the evidence at Cyrene). At the same time it is right to say that the quality of the new building does not compare with that of earlier periods, and although imported luxuries such as marble give some show of splendour, there has certainly been a falling-off.

II Christianity in the Libyas

Development

Individual Cyrenaican Jews figure as supporters of Christ in New Testament accounts of the crucifixion (*NT Matthew* 27.32, *NT Mark* 15.21) and of the subsequent years (*NT Acts* 11.20, 13.1). There is also a tradition that Mark the Evangelist was a Cyrenaican, who founded the Christian community in Cyrenaica and appointed one Lucius as its first bishop (cf. *Life of St. Mark* in *PG* 115.164b, 168a).¹ But no unequivocal evidence exists for Christians earlier than the third quarter of the third century AD.² Then, in c. AD 260, Dionysius bishop of Alexandria corresponded with a number of Cyrenaicans, including a bishop of Berenike, on the Sabellian heresy, and is reported as dedicating a treatise to a 'bishop of the parishes of Pentapolis' (Eusebius, *HE* VII.6 and 26). There were, then, organised Christian communities in some cities and perhaps all, led by men who might be engaged in serious theological discussion with ecclesiastics outside the province and who were sometimes given to unorthodox views. There is not enough evidence to show how large those communities were; Stucchi 1975, 360, 441, thought that they would be small, while Roques 1987, 324 argued that only if they were sizeable would Dionysius have troubled to intervene. Similarly the small number of Cyrenaican martyrs known from Diocletian's persecution (Delehaye 1902; 1940) has been used to support either view. By the time of the Council of Nicea in AD 325, however, the existence of rural bishops is evidence for the spread of Christianity in the country as well as the cities, while the recorded activities of Libyan bishops and the importance apparently attached by the Egyptian church to confirmation of its authority over them, as shown in the Sixth Canon of the Council,³ suggest many flourishing communities. In the middle of the fourth century archaeological evidence begins to appear (the Christian decoration of the House of Hesychius, Cyrene, *Other Monuments*, no. 3, probably belongs in the middle-third quarter of the century); while in the early fifth the writings of Synesius reveal several communities of apparently numerous, deeply-committed Christians; if, on the other hand, his references to pagans in Pentapolis other than the invading raiders (*Epp.* 66, 76) are rare, there is archaeological evidence which seems to confirm their survival (Ensoli-Vitozzi 1992, 239-48). It was Goodchild's theory that at the end of the fourth century the triumphant Christian masses at Cyrene smashed pagan cult images and ravaged what remained of temples;⁴ but it may have been a little later. There is hardly any evidence for Libya Inferior—but the native people met by Synesius at Azarion (*Epp.* 5) cannot be supposed to be Christian, although Roques believes that the helpful old man there was an ascetic. That there were many Christians outside the settlements might be doubted.

Subsequently (but it is not clear how much later) churches became important features of city sites, appearing for instance in the old city centres, and are among the most prominent and frequent of the surviving buildings in many villages. It would be imprudent, however, to suppose that there were no pagans left, if only because we lack secure evidence for the religion in the new settlements of Libyans that we glimpse in the later fifth and sixth centuries (Introduction I); we might have thought that emperors would have imposed Christianity on them, as Justinian is said by Procopius

¹ The tradition is not found before the fourth century AD; its form and the time of its appearance are so nicely adapted to support the claim of the Egyptian church to authority over the Cyrenaican (formalised at the Council of Nicea) that some find it suspect. For other sources and discussion see Roques 1987, 323, 324.

² Iren. *Haer.* 1.10.2, of the middle second century, refers to Christians in Libya, but there can be no certainty that he means more than the Maghreb; some later sources describe the heretic Sabellius of the late second to early third century as a Cyrenaican of Ptolemais, but this may be simply a reflection of the later attachment of Cyrenaicans of Ptolemais to his doctrine: cf. Euseb. *HE* VII. 6 and 26, Theodoret, *HE* XI. 9 and discussion by Roques 1987, 324.

³ The sixth canon is discussed in Chadwick 1960 and Martin 1981.

⁴ Goodchild 1966a, 206. The date is questioned by both Stucchi 1975, 360 and Roques 1987, 319, the one putting it later, the other earlier; indubitably we need additional excavation, with rigorous analysis of the results, as well as of the existing material, before we can feel confident of the sequence of events.

to have imposed it on the pagans of Augila (*Aed.* VI. ii. 19, 20, 23), but we do not have specific evidence for that, unless the many village churches could be held to provide it.

Within the Christian community our sources stress the emergence of a series of strong heretical groups, Sabellians in the third century, Arians in the fourth, Eunomians in the time of Synesius, Monophysites no doubt later. As already stated, Goodchild 1967*a* in fact argued (but with less specific evidence than one would like) that the existence of a Monophysite element, dissatisfied with the Orthodox government, was an important factor in the swift success of the Arab invasion in the seventh century. That is attractive, but hardly proved. It is unfortunate that we cannot at present distinguish the monuments of any of the dissident groups from those of the orthodox.

We are even less well informed of what happened after the Arab conquest. It is sometimes suggested that Christianity vanished from the Libyas very quickly, but there has not yet been a serious attempt to collect the evidence (admittedly a very difficult task); and there are passages in the literary sources (e.g. al-Ya'qubi, *Kitab al-Buldan* 343-4) which seem to suggest that there were still some Christian groups as late as the ninth century.

Christian organisation

The correspondence of Dionysius of Alexandria on the Sabellians (see above) has been held to indicate that by c. AD 260 there were Christian groups under bishops in all the five cities of the Pentapolis and it is presumed that the bishop of the metropolis (at that date Cyrene) exercised an authority over the rest, while the archbishop of Alexandria claimed authority over all. That is probable, if not exactly certain. In the early fourth century it has been estimated that seven bishoprics are known in Libya Superior and eight in Libya Inferior (Martin 1981, 43); and over the whole Christian period we now have evidence for between twelve and fourteen in Superior and ten, with perhaps another four, in Inferior.⁵ It seems likely that more will come to light as new inscriptions are found (the burial of a bishop at Sidi Bu Breyek, *Section 3a*, appears to indicate a previously unknown bishop's seat there), so that we should not assume that we know them all. Moreover the case of Hydrax with Palaibiska (*Section 3b*) shows that a rural site might be promoted from subordinate status to that of a bishop's seat and lose it again; it is clear that not all the known bishoprics co-existed.

The number of rural sees has occasionally evoked unnecessary surprise. Apart from the fact that several of the so-called villages would be better described as small towns, the often considerable distances over difficult country between them and the nearest city will have made it desirable to appoint senior ecclesiastics to some of them.

It is of course normal that the bishop of the provincial metropolis had authority over the others in the province. In Libya Superior he would presumably have been the bishop of Cyrene until the Diocletianic reform; he was the bishop of Ptolemais from Diocletian to a date in the middle or second half of the fifth century AD, and the bishop of Apollonia/Sozusa thereafter until shortly before the Arab invasion, when the bishop of Taucheira will have succeeded to the position. In Libya Inferior he will have been the bishop of Paraitonion almost certainly from Diocletian, and perhaps throughout, but possibly with a change to the bishop of Darnis in the later sixth century.

That the archbishop of Alexandria thought of himself as having some authority over all bishops of Libya Superior in the third century is clear from the correspondence of Dionysius (see above). At the Council of Nicea the sixth canon embodied a decision to confirm as a rule what is described there as a previous custom, that is the ultimate authority of the Alexandrian church in the Libyas. The relationship was not wholly without tensions (cf. Synesius' account of the congregations of Hydrax and Palaibiska, *Epp.* 66).

⁵ The calculation is imprecise because it is not possible to identify with certainty all the ancient place-names given in literary sources with sites that we know by modern place-names; thus the see of Olbia known from Synesius *Epp.* 76 may be identical with that of Gasr el Lebia for which bishops are known from inscriptions, but is not certainly so.

Monuments

For this section Ward-Perkins had only drafted the first part of an account of *building materials and techniques* which is printed below under that heading. Otherwise we offer a summary of what seem to Reynolds to be interesting points, essentially factual, arising from the descriptions of the buildings.

Inscriptions

There are now around 100 Christian inscriptions known from Libya Superior,⁶ about half from the cities and half from rural sites. None has been recorded as yet from Libya Inferior (a local report of one at Marsa Gabes has not been confirmed). Compared with earlier periods, this is still a small total, but that is normal for the whole ancient world.⁷ Further, more are painted, made in mosaic, written on ceramics, or scratched as graffiti, than are incised on stone (painting will have been cheaper, of course); but formal incision on stone did continue and there are some examples of quite high quality (e.g. illus. 128). Many, of all types, are in too poor a condition, however, to yield usefully comprehensible texts; and very few can be dated with much confidence, although the mosaics in the House of Hesychius at Cyrene (*Section 1*) should be of the mid-fourth century, those of the East Church at Gasr el Lebia (*Section 2*) must be of AD 538/9, while others closely related to them in style should be of approximately the same time; and there are a few stone-cut pieces, like the Church and Baptistry dedications mentioned below whose lettering looks to be characteristic of the sixth century (illus. 128, 366). Nevertheless they provide valuable information, for instance the names of bishops (of Cyrene, *Section 1*, Gasr el Lebia, Sidi bu Breyek, *Section 2*) and perhaps the locations of new sees (Gasr el Lebia, unless it is identical with ancient Olbia, Sidi bu Breyek, assuming that the bishop was buried near the site of his cathedral); church dedications (provenances uncertain but probably Cyrene or Berenike, *Section 1*, and el Merj, *Section 2*, or its neighbourhood); names of donors, e.g. of a baptistry (exact provenance unclear, but from Apollonia/Sozusa, either from its East or its West Church), of mosaics (Cyrene East Church, Gasr Bandis, *Section 3a*, Gasr el Lebia East Church) or of other items such as marble bowls and fittings of types which are not always specified (Ptolemais, Taucheira, both in *Section 1*, el Merj and/or neighbourhood, *Section 2*, Siret el Bab, *Section 3a*); the existence and boundaries of an ecclesiastical property (Siret Akreim, *Section 3a*); and there is a remarkable, if incompletely understood, ivory diptych containing, so it seems, a list of named persons for whom prayers were to be offered (Soluk, *Section 4a*). Painted texts on the internal walls of churches, even although they are very fragmentary (e.g. in Apollonia/Sozusa Central Church, Gasr el Lebia, Ras el Hilal, *Section 2*), indicate some likelihood that the interior walls were less stark than we incline to suspect; graffiti on those same walls and on fittings (Cyrene, *Building F*) show that some of the devout might be more literate than we would expect, even though they frequently wrote no more than simple prayers for God's help and acclamations of His wisdom, His grace, etc.; and there are at a more sophisticated level quotations from or adaptations of Psalms (Gasr el Lebia East Church, el Merj) and at Taucheira apparently an adaptation of a few words from the Septuagint.

Crosses are very frequent, and it is unfortunate that there has been no systematic effort to record them; the resulting information might be no more than banal, but any guide to the mentality of the people of the Libyas would be worth having. Some, of course, may record consecration of the building (so the pebble-mosaic cross in the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa); others were, no doubt, essentially apotropaic, especially those which so often appear at the corners of buildings (e.g. illus. 307, 331).

⁶ Contrast c. 50 known in 1959 (Reynolds 1960). Every item with any Christian content or symbol which includes a letter is counted as a Christian text—so crosses with alpha, omega, although not plain nor even monogram crosses; and items such as dedications to emperors of the period, or the Decree of Anastasius (*SEG IX.356*), are not included either, because none carries a Christian symbol.

⁷ For a useful general account of the 'epigraphic habit' in late antiquity and the early Byzantine period see Liebeschuetz 1996. The Cyrenaican picture, while substantially in accord with his, differs notably in the tiny number of its funerary texts.

The texts also give some glimpses of the society for which the churches were providing, although the donors' texts, combined with the unexpected rarity of funerary inscriptions (only six in all so far), suggest that they may be largely confined to the wealthy and do not take us into as ordinary a level of society as texts of the high Roman Empire often do. In the context of churches, donors may be churchmen, often bishops, but also lesser clerics (Cyrene East Church, el Merj, Gasr el Lebia East Church) and are certainly sometimes laymen (Apollonia/Sozusa baptistery, Ptolemais, el Merj, Gasr Bandis). Outside ecclesiastical buildings they are rare, but Marinus, a layman at Ptolemais, seems to have made a gift to his city, marking it with a cross. Honorary texts are uncommon, but a Christian teacher received one at Cyrene, apparently within the community of the church, and a Christian official at Tarakenet (*Section 3a*), apparently from his family. The use of epigraphy in a private non-funerary context is also to be seen at Cyrene (House of Hesychius) and Siret Gasrin el Giamel (*Section 3a*, the *gasr*), where the texts invoking God's presence and help have a patently apotropaic purpose. Something the same presumably applies to texts written in a cistern (Gasr Uertig, *Section 3a*) and those on weights (Apollonia/Sozusa, Cyrene) and storage jars (Apollonia/Sozusa, the 'palace').

Captions on the pictures created in mosaic (Apollonia/Sozusa East Church, Taucheira, Gasr Bandis, Gasr el Lebia, Ras el Hilal) may be due rather to the craftsmen, using style-books of foreign origin, than to the inhabitants of the Libyas. That is certainly true also of many if not all of the masons' marks on marble (cf. el Atrun, *Section 2*, Apollonia/Sozusa Central Church, Gasr el Lebia) which were surely cut at the workshop of origin (see below under *Marble*).

Two further features of interest are (a) the violence of the terms used of opponents (presumably heretics) in the church dedication which probably comes from Cyrene or Berenike (Cyrene, *Other Monuments*, 3.5), and (b) the versification of the texts from Tarakenet and the baptistery at Apollonia/Sozusa (Apollonia, Monument 7*d*), clearly set up by people who advertised their possession of a traditional Hellenic education.

There are a few relevant inscriptions without Christian content—most importantly records of emperors who were in some cases proclaiming activity in public building (Apollonia/Sozusa, Cyrene, Ptolemais), occasionally receiving honours (Apollonia/Sozusa, Cyrene); but at present none is later than the early fifth century. For the subsequent period our main—and very important—text is the decree of Anastasius *de rebus Libycis* (*SEG IX.356*) which we know to have been inscribed in Apollonia/Sozusa, Ptolemais and Taucheira. It should not be assumed that there were not copies also in Berenike and Cyrene; and there is also a fragment from another document (unpublished) found at Cyrene, cut in a very similar hand to that of Anastasius' decree. For other imperial interest there is only an indirect reference to the Empress Theodora in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia.

Representations of figures

Paintings have rarely survived, or only in such poor condition that no serious account of them can be given (but see illus. 44*a-b*, 223). Most of the known representations in mosaic are collected in Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980. The only piece of sculpture known at present is the statue of the Good Shepherd found at Paraitonion (*Section 4b*).

Monasteries

Synesius referred occasionally to monks and to monasteries in Pentapolis (*Epp.* 66, 126, 147) and himself proposed to found a monastery on an unidentified site beside a river Asclepius (*Epp.* 126). Procopius *Aed.* VI.ii.7-8 stated that Justinian fortified two monasteries, Agriolode and Dinarthison, in the southern boundaries of the province (just possibly Gasr Beni Gdem, illus. 338, and Gasr esh-Shahden, *Section 3a*). Stucchi 1975, 425 (see also Catani 1976) suggested that Siret Gasrin el Giamel (illus. 364) was one, also the Kinissieh near Derna (*Section 4b*, illus. 371), Zawiet el Argub (*Section 2*) and possibly another on a hill a little to the east of that. All these were dismissed as unproven by Roques 1987; but while it certainly could not be said that any one of them is proven (although the case for Siret el Giamel is strong), neither is any one of them disproved. In addition, Goodchild is remembered as having suggested that the 'West Church' at Taucheira might be a monastery, and the cave complexes in the Wadi Morgus and the Wadi Ngil (both *Section 3a*) are more recently discovered possibilities. There may be a reference to a monastery at Ras el Hilal in an Arabic

graffito inscribed after Christian use of the church ceased; but neither reading nor interpretation is certain.

Churches

Ward-Perkins left accounts, usually full, of thirty-five churches or chapels on twenty-two sites, and of nine other buildings related to Christian activity, but not, or not clearly, recognisable as churches. He also described church fittings held in several museums, notably those in a now-dispersed collection at el Merj. On the sites that he visited in Libya Superior a further four churches have now been recognised and four more buildings have been described as possible churches. On sites which he did not visit, twenty-one certainly identified or highly probable churches have been reported; there are several more which may be churches in Libya Superior and five in Libya Inferior. Loose church fittings reported in Libya Superior suggest the existence of at least eight more rural churches there. The total of certain or reasonably certain churches in the two provinces now stands at seventy-three, therefore. It should be noted that literary evidence indicates the existence of churches on at least thirteen sites in Libya Superior and ten in Inferior, none of them certainly identifiable on the ground. Some of these, therefore, may be churches already included in our totals under the modern names of their sites.

Building materials and techniques

The constructional techniques in use in Christian Cyrenaica were dictated first and foremost by the qualities of the building stones available locally and, to a lesser but still substantial degree, by the skill which local masons had, over the centuries, acquired in the handling of these stones.⁸ Another important factor was the ready availability of *spolia*: in a world where city-life had long passed its peak there were almost always earlier buildings to hand to furnish building materials without the need for fresh quarrying.⁹

The building-stone native to Cyrenaica is the bedded limestone which constitutes the cliffs and uplands of the Gebel Akhdar and which everywhere outcrops or lies immediately beneath the thin mantle of cultivable red soil. This limestone varies greatly in quality and strength according to the source. At Cyrene, for example, much of the stone was very easily cut and dressed, but on the whole it did not weather well unless protected by a facing of stucco. Ptolemais on the other hand had abundant supplies of a fine, tough stone; and though it too was used in many classical buildings with a facing of fine stucco, this was more for visual effect than for protection. Were it not for earthquakes and the depredations of man, a great deal of it would still be upstanding today.

With such stones to hand, the simplest and most effective form of monumental building is in ashlar (*opus quadratum*) masonry of solid, dressed stone. The tradition was still alive in the Christian period, but it had become one to be used sparingly and selectively, as for example in the outer walls of the East Church or the 'Palace of the *Dux*' at Apollonia/Sozusa. Such ashlar work called

⁸ Stucchi 1975 distinguished six different masonry techniques (see his p. 672, sv *Basiliche Paleocristiane, Tecnica muraria* for a summary description of them), which he used as important elements in his dating system; a lynchpin of this was the employment of orthostats which he thought to be securely attested only at the beginning of the sixth century in the so-called Headquarters of the *Dux* at Ptolemais (Kraeling 1962, 101-3, who, however, thought the building to be much earlier). Catani 1998 has now found that several masonry techniques were used in a single building-phase at Siret Gasrin el Giamel, demonstrating that they are not, in themselves, a safe chronological guide.

⁹ *Spolia* were available on some rural sites too: note their use at Gasr el Gaama (*Section 3a*) and Ras el Hilal (*Section 2*), for instance; but most of the evidence for freshly-quarried stone comes from rural sites, for instance el Atrun, Siret Gasrin el Giamel—where, in both cases, masons' marks have been recorded on the blocks.

for a precision of planned workmanship which had become something of a luxury, and in any case it was hampered by the need to use second-hand blocks of differing sizes rather than the standardised output of fresh quarry production.

By far the commonest type of construction in monumental Christian use consists, in one form or another, of two faces of masonry enclosing a rubble core (illus. 9, 52). The facing might be of good ashlar, carefully dressed on the exposed faces, as for example in the outer walls of the West Church at Ptolemais;¹⁰ it might be of smaller blocks of stone, roughly squared and more or less regularly coursed; or it might be in some combination of the two, with an outer face of ashlar, for example, backed by courses of smaller stones, or again stretches of small, faced rubblework alternating with stretches of ashlar, or with large single blocks, at any point that called for special strength—quoins, piers, doorways, pilasters, very much as in the so-called '*opus africanum*' of Latin-speaking north Africa (and for the same reason) or, nearer home, in the field walls which are such a striking feature of the landscape around Cyrene itself. With or without the ashlar reinforcement, such masonry may be considered to be a humble equivalent of the faced rubblework which sprang up everywhere in response to the *opus testaceum* and *opus mixtum* of metropolitan Roman practice. Exceptionally one finds it used with a lime mortar, but for the most part the Cyrenaican builders were content to lay the constituent rubble in beds of puddled mud.

A regular and necessary feature of such masonry is the use of levelling courses, which serve the double purpose of tying the two faces together ('bonding courses') and of neutralising the inevitable irregularities of coursing. These levelling courses were in essence functional, but by the fifth century (if not before) we find them commonly put also to decorative use, laid with a shallow projection so as to form the massive string courses which are often almost the only features to relieve the monotony of the severely plain, fortress-like exteriors of churches and civil buildings alike. A closely-related practice, with a long history of use in the Greek world behind it, is the incorporation of courses of horizontal slabs in order to tie the more superficial orthostat courses of the ashlar facing securely back into the rubble core (as, for example, in the 'Palace' Chapel at Apollonia/Sozusa); or again the use of horizontal bonding slabs so as to key the upright monoliths of a quoin or doorway securely into the adjacent wall face.

The detailed finish of arch-masonry will obviously vary greatly in accordance with local conditions: the quality of the stone, the skill of the masons and the status of the projected building. As in classical times one still has to reckon also on the Roman practice of organising work in sectors or in accordance with the specialities of the workmen employed. It was quite common, for example, to build the apse (which had to carry the load of a semidome) independently of the adjacent walls. At Apollonia/Sozusa, in the 'Palace' Chapel, there are two straight joints which can be explained only in some such terms: one in the north-east chapel, where the better-quality masonry of the apse-complex returns outwards to form the south end of the main entrance corridor to the 'Palace'; another alongside the pier that divides the south aisle from the narthex, in this case explicable only as the point of junction between the work of two constructional gangs. The results can on occasion be puzzling, as the account of the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa

¹⁰ Illus. 213, showing the outer wall of the West Church at Gasr el Lebia, illustrates the point.

shows. Even where one can demonstrate a succession of structures, it is often difficult to know whether this is a matter of days, months, or years. Each case has to be judged on its own merits.

The stone was dressed on the site, usually with a mallet and a mason's chisel. For the finer work, e.g. the jointing, this was a plain, flat chisel, but most of the larger surfaces were dressed so as to form a number of distinct toothmarks. Illustration 67 illustrates a characteristic example of the resulting surface.¹¹

The use of marble is discussed in a later section (under *Interior Fitments*). It remains only to refer briefly to three other major building materials: stucco, wood and the native rock.

Stucco was, of course, primarily a decorative medium. There are a number of tantalising scraps of painted wall-plaster, and we have the church at Ras el Hilal to show how much moulded stucco ornament there must once have been. In addition to its decorative uses, however, a facing of stucco had a very practical purpose both as a neat interior finish for the rougher types of masonry and also as a weatherproof external facing for the same types of masonry.

The forests which once covered the Gebel Akhdar had long since vanished.¹² A recent geological survey of a substantial area of the eastern Gebel indicates that by late antiquity just about every acre that was or could be made to be cultivable had been brought into use; and although scattered remnants of the ancient forest survived, and still survive, in some of the more inaccessible valleys, notably in the Wadi Kuf, wood suitable for building must always have been in short supply. Apart from such relatively modest fittings as door-frames, screens, and the seatings of *synthrona*, the main requirement was roofing timbers. Some of these could no doubt have been recovered from earlier buildings, but the rest would have had to have been imported.

As for the natural rock, the Christian architects were the heirs to a long tradition of rock-cut architecture, much but by no means all of it funerary. With so many examples before them, it is hardly surprising that they too should on occasion have followed suit.¹³ Sometimes, as in the West Church at Lamluda (*Section 2*), it was a matter of adapting an existing *hypogaeum*, but there are other instances, at Messa and at Umm Heneia el Garbia (both in *Section 2*), where an elaborate underground building can be seen to have been excavated specifically for Christian use. Gasr el Heneia, near Agedabia, offers an interesting late antique parallel in the secular field.¹⁴ Other examples no doubt await discovery.

¹¹ Ward-Perkins intended to discuss also the specific constructional and decorative uses to which the local stone was put; there is a limited note on these below.

¹² This seems to underestimate the likely availability of timber in the wadis, and is in sharp contrast to the view of Goodchild 1953, 72 = 1976a, 209, n.10 (see also Johnson 1973, 13). We are grateful to Dr Claudio Vita-Finzi for explaining: 'The geological record (Vita-Finzi 1969) shows that the wadis of Gebel Akhdar have been actively cutting down for the last 10,000 years or so, barring an interval of widespread silting between AD 500 and 1900. The implication is that conditions in the wadi floors, where trees now persist even in the most populated areas, prevailed throughout the classical period. Even in Tripolitania, where Goodchild thought that deforestation was more complete than in Cyrenaica, recent studies have shown that timber suitable for structural use was available'; and such timbers have been recovered from some *gsur* (Gilbertson 1996, 309).

¹³ For other relevant evidence and general views on rock-cut features in Cyrenaica see White/Wright 1998. Since Ward-Perkins wrote, two rock-cut churches have been found (Narbek, *Section 3a*, and Marsa Gabes, *Section 4a*) and one additional elaborate underground building which was probably excavated specifically for Christian use (Buma el Garbia, *Section 3a*); Umm Heneia esh Shargia (*Section 2*) may be another. His notes suggest another possible *hypogaeum* at Sidi Abdul Wahed (*Section 2*). See further below on *Crypts*.

¹⁴ Goodchild 1951a, 131-44 = 1976a, 173-81.

Dating

Christians may have triumphed in the fourth century, but it is far from clear where they worshipped. Ward-Perkins 1943, 124 argued that there was an initial church-building period in Cyrenaica in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, but came to think that very few of the churches that he described were in fact as early even as the middle years of the fifth century. He then suggested (1972, 232) that house-churches remained the norm in Cyrenaica later than elsewhere. Pernier 1935 had supposed a fourth-century adaptation of the crypt of the Temple of Apollo at Cyrene which Goodchild 1971, 119 and Stucchi 1975, 335 rejected; the attempt of Teichner 1996 to rehabilitate the theory does not, in Reynolds' view, answer their arguments. Stucchi 1975, 301 argued for a fourth-century adaptation of a pagan temple in the Valley Street, which is possible but not certain, as well as for a house-church at Cyrene, and for earlier basilicas which he thought traceable under the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa (1975, 390), the West Church at Ptolemais (1975, 365-6) and the West Church at Gasr el Lebia (1975, 388-90), all of them controversial proposals. It has become known recently (Bentaher 1999) that Professor el Fakharani, formerly of Gar Younis University, Benghazi, assigned a fourth century date to the mosaic floor of a building at Taucheira which he thought to be a church (Taucheira, *Other Christian Monuments*, a, iii, b). Neither the date nor the interpretation is at all secure; further excavation is needed. House-churches there must have been,¹⁵ and Synesius refers to more informal arrangements in exceptional circumstances, e.g. to setting up a table for an impromptu service in a fort or (by the unorthodox) in a private house;¹⁶ but whether we have found one yet requires demonstration. His references to normal usage suggest proper church buildings,¹⁷ but it may be that the first purpose-built churches have left no trace that has been found because they were of wood, wattle and daub,¹⁸ or, at best, mud-brick, while stone structures as described in the present book were generally later developments.

The dating of these stone structures presents another problem, essentially because comparatively few have been excavated. Of thirty-five churches or chapels seen by Ward-Perkins in Libya Superior, to which the editor's lists here add another twenty-five, only thirteen have been excavated, with one more disencumbered of modern over-building; and of five known in Libya Inferior only two (one only sketchily published). Moreover several of the excavations were undertaken before the development of modern methods, most are incomplete and almost none probed beneath the foundations. Only from Berenike do we have the evidence of pottery from below the foundations. It suggests a construction date there in or soon after the late fifth to very early sixth centuries. We do have finds carefully collected and analysed from within several other churches, notably from the 'Palace' chapel at Apollonia/Sozusa, from el Atrun, Ras el Hilal and Siret Gasrin el Giamel, which indicate that they were in use between the middle years of the sixth century and the Arab conquest. That is consonant with construction dates as much as a quarter of a century earlier than the middle of the sixth century, and perhaps even earlier, as Goodchild 1976*b* argued in discussion of the 'Palace' at Apollonia/Sozusa. The archaeologists should not be blamed for what they have not given us; they have worked under severe constraints, financial and other, and have usually been unhappily aware of the problems that these created.

In the absence of one kind of archaeological evidence, there has been heavy reliance on others. Using each his own preferred criteria, Ward-Perkins placed a very few churches in the fifth century, none much before its middle years, most in the sixth (see also Goodchild 1966*a*, 206), with an overwhelming majority in the reign of Justinian (for some discussion of his thesis see Reynolds 2000); while Stucchi 1975 assigned more to the fifth century, but again very few before its middle years, and spread the later ones over the whole sixth century and into the seventh. Stucchi's is in

¹⁵ Ward-Perkins 1976, 290 noted the possibility of one in the house below the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, and for Stucchi's proposal see above; but there is no certain instance.

¹⁶ Syn. *Epp.* 66.

¹⁷ Syn. *Epp.* 67 (Ptolemais), 122 (the Myrsinitis/?Wadi Kuf), *Catastasis* III. 301 c (Plain of el Merj).

¹⁸ Cf. the shack described by Sulpicius Severus in the Syrtica (*Dial.* I. 3-6).

some ways a more natural distribution; but if we are in fact concerned only with stone-built churches, Ward-Perkins' may be right nevertheless. It is rash to judge by appearances, but a considerable number do present a remarkably similar appearance.

The main criteria used for dating are mosaic floors, ground plans, marble fitments, masonry techniques, orientation.

1. In the East Church at Gasr el Lebia, there are mosaic floors of distinctive style dated by indiction in AD 538/9; and Goodchild, when he found one of these to be laid on the natural rock on which the church was built, argued that it was the original floor which gives us the date of construction of the church. Mosaics likely to be the work of the same 'school' of mosaicists have been found in several other churches, and where he and Ward-Perkins believed them to be the original floors they dated these churches too under Justinian (the Central Church and an annexe of the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, the Central Church at Cyrene, Ras el Hilal; we should probably now add Gasr Bandis); where they believed them to be secondary they assigned them to a repair or refurbishment made in or very soon after the reign of Justinian (the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, the East Church at Cyrene, probably the East Church at Taucheira; we should probably now add the incompletely published ecclesiastical building there). These datings have been very sharply questioned by Stucchi 1975 and Duval 1989*b* on the grounds that it is nowhere proved to their satisfaction that the mosaics concerned were the original floors; it seems that without further and very carefully recorded excavation, with specific attention paid to establishing the relationship of the mosaics to the walls, no consensus on this issue is likely.
2. *a.* Ward-Perkins compared the transeptal plan of the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa with that of the Great Church of Abu Mena which, when he wrote in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century, was being dated in the late fourth or early fifth centuries AD; in consequence he dated the Apollonian church a little, but not very much, before the middle of the fifth century. Following subsequent study, Abu Mena is now being dated much later in the fifth century (Grossman 1989).¹⁹

b. The most common ground-plan for a church in Cyrenaica (the basilical church of apsed nave and two aisles within a rectangular outer frame; see further below) was estimated by Ward-Perkins to be characteristic of the sixth century, even specifically of the reign of Justinian. He was aware that it did occur in the fifth century (so Cyrene East Church, first phase) but thought that it was not, at that stage, the plan established for regular use. While he may have been right, it might be prudent to avoid heavy reliance on this criterion, given that we have so few examples that can be securely dated on any other basis.
3. Marble fitments fall into two categories:
 - a.* Reused classical marbles, some without adaptation, others recarved, indubitably on the spot and probably by local sculptors (good examples in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa). Among these some column capitals have suggested comparison with capitals produced elsewhere in the fifth century; but there is disagreement among scholars about their dating and the length of time over which the designs may have remained in vogue, so that they seem an unsatisfactory guide for precise use; while Ward-Perkins himself thought that in

¹⁹ It has also been urged that the model for the transeptal plan is as likely to have been found in Syria as in Egypt. Against Ward-Perkins' suggestion that the formal authority of the Egyptian over the Cyrenaican church would make the Egyptian model particularly likely, note that Hellenkemper 1994 observed that the early churches of southern Asia Minor seemed to show that regional traditions of building and architecture were stronger influences there than were liturgical ties (a reference owed to Dr Painter).

periods of heavy demand (as under Justinian) stockpiled items of outdated types might be off-loaded on clients of small importance.

b. Imported marble items, most of them roughly-carved elsewhere for completion on the spot (good examples at el Atrun and the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa). It seems to be generally accepted that there are sixth-century parallels for many of these, and often ones from the reign of Justinian, but others exist for which fifth century dates are urged. It may be doubted whether we know exactly when the styles were first introduced or how long they continued in production. It is of course also the case that some of the pieces, chancel posts and screens for instance, could be introduced into a church during refurbishment; but columns and capitals are likely to be features of the original construction, except where refurbishment amounted to serious remodelling (as in the East Church at Cyrene). On marbles see further below.

4. Stucchi 1975 grouped the churches known to him according to a number of features among which the masonry techniques used to build their walls seemed to him particularly important, and proposed approximate dates for each group on the basis of other features (e.g. column-capitals) observed in one or more of its members. This too is not very satisfactory. Local conditions, building traditions, availability of resources and skills are likely to have affected construction more than he allows; and, as has emerged from a detailed study at Siret Gasrin el Giamel, several techniques may be used in a single building-phase in order to meet different constructional problems (Catani 1998).
5. Other criteria used by Stucchi, notably orientation and location of doors, also now seem to be features arising from local circumstance rather than, or as much as, from date. See further below.

It seems likely that more churches were built in the fifth century and more in the sixth before the accession of Justinian than Ward-Perkins thought; nevertheless it remains a reasonable possibility that a preponderance of those known to us is Justinianic in date (cf. Catani 1998, 135 on the evidence for increased activity at Siret Gasrin el Giamel during the reign of Justinian).

Dedications

Two churches are known from inscriptions to have been dedicated to the *Theotokos* (Cyrene, *Other Monuments*, no. 5, for which the provenance is not quite certain—Berenike is another possibility; el Merj no. 32, no provenance, but presumably from Barka or a neighbouring site) and a third, Justinian's church for the converted pagans of Augila, from Procopius, *Aed.* VI. ii. 14-20. A dedication to St. Menas (?church, ?monastery) is attested by an inscription at Siret Akreim (*Section 3a*). It has been suggested on the basis of the mediaeval name of the site and of some graffiti that the church at Ras el Hilal was dedicated to St. Andrew.

Donors

When Ward-Perkins and Goodchild began their work it seemed natural to take Procopius' *Aed.* VI very literally, indeed to go beyond what he says; they believed in fact that the two Libyan provinces had been neglected by emperors and continuously harassed, even occupied, by raiders for many years before the accession of Justinian, but were reconquered insofar as it was necessary and set on their feet by his military reorganisation and civil building programme. Ward-Perkins in particular sometimes wrote of Justinian as if he were a major donor of churches in Cyrenaica, providing for them architects, craftsmen and marbles.

Subsequently, Averil Cameron's book on Procopius (Cameron 1985) has introduced a more nuanced approach to that writer;²⁰ while Denis Roques (Roques 1987) has

²⁰ Cf. also the papers of a colloquium held in London in 1998, published in *Antiquité Tardive* 8 (2000), when archaeologists discussed the *de Aedificiis* with historians and literary critics.

brought together a great deal of evidence suggestive of less miserable conditions in the Libyan provinces in the fifth century. That is a context in which there could have been much more building-activity in the fifth century than Ward-Perkins thought; moreover it might encourage us to lay much more weight than he did on the emperor Anastasius, whose edict *de rebus Libycis* (SEG IX.356) indicates a vigorous approach to the military in Libya Superior.

Procopius in fact only refers two Cyrenaican churches to Justinian, a converted synagogue near Boreion in the Syrtica and a church of the Theotokos at Augila (both discussed in *Section 4*); and so far no inscription has been found in either of the Libyas that mentions him. The nearest to it is in the name of the 'new city Theodorias' on the site of Gasr el Lebia.²¹ It may be that he was responsible for many more, but we have no documentation for it. It is noticeable too that few if any churches covered by this survey qualify as truly splendid. The churches at el Atrun have been viewed as prestige-buildings and are sometimes assumed to be gifts of Justinian—but even there the quantity of marble available was insufficient to provide all that one might expect from an imperial donor: for considerable areas of the flooring, the reliquary chests and some column capitals, local stone was used.

It may, indeed, be wiser to refrain from attributing initiatives in church-building in the Libyas directly to any emperor. Elsewhere in the eastern empire bishops themselves seem often to have been the initiators of church-building and decoration. It is clear that in Cyrenaica too bishops were sometimes active—as the Justinianic bishops at Gasr el Lebia seem to have been responsible at least for the mosaic floors of the East Church, and a probably Justinianic bishop at Cyrene for at least a part of the mosaic floor of the reoriented East Church there and very likely more (since he is characterised as φιλοκτίστης). Private persons are also attested in inscriptions as making offerings to their churches and these may well have involved more actual building than we know; certainly one of the two baptisteries at Apollonia/Sozusa was privately built (Apollonia/Sozusa, *Monument 7 d*). It may be readily accepted that emperors (and members of their families) were important in stimulating the fashion for church-building and decoration in the empire as a whole, and may well have made it easy for others to get plans and 'pre-fabricated' marble fitments; but the picture presented by Mango 1986, 16-17, of local initiatives, resulting in local master-builders being left to do what they could with the plans provided, possibly with some imported marble fitments over whose number and size they had no control, and with local labour, some of it perhaps volunteer, sounds exactly what would produce the makeshift effects so often seen in Cyrenaican churches. On imported marbles see further under *Interior Fitments* below.

Distribution

Except at Berenike, where modern development has covered most of the ancient site and we are lucky to have found even one church, we know that the cities were well-provided, each with several churches within their residential areas; and at Apollonia/Sozusa, Cyrene and Taucheira one or more have been recognised also outside the walls. Churches are prominent too among the ruins of many rural sites on the Gebel in and east of the Wadi Kuf, and it is likely that the comparative rarity with which they have been reported west of the Wadi is simply the consequence of less extensive archaeological survey undertaken there. In the Syrtica and the Marmarica they were, no doubt, much rarer, but should have existed at any rate in some coastal settlements, with a few in the interior; archaeological exploration in these areas has been limited, however, and it is clear from the recent discovery of the settlement and church at Marina el Alamein (*Section 4 b i*) that the monuments may well be so deeply covered with sand as to elude surface-survey.

That all cities might need several churches is hardly surprising, especially so the provincial *metropoleis* which must provide for the needs of a gubernatorial staff and of visitors to law courts etc. as well as of their own residents. The existence of

²¹ It is not, unfortunately, known why this comparatively small rural site should have been singled out for imperial patronage. It was, perhaps, strategically useful or, like an obvious parallel at Cululis in Tunisia (see under Gasr el Lebia, *Historical Context*), it may have suffered a disaster such as an enemy onslaught for which the emperor offered compensatory help.

several churches in a rural settlement (as at el Atrun, Gasr el Lebia, Gasr Silu, Lamluda, Mgarnes, Siret Umm Sellem, all in *Section 2*) has struck some commentators as over-provision, however. It is, of course, impossible without excavation to demonstrate that they were all in contemporary use; but it seems to be the case initially at el Atrun and it is a reasonable conjecture on other sites. Sometimes one of a pair of churches is associated with a tomb or tombs, as are the West Churches at el Atrun, Gasr el Lebia and Lamluda, and we may suppose that it had a distinctive funerary function; and Stucchi believed that some of these were *martyria* (see below sv). Ward-Perkins suggested that the West Church at Gasr el Lebia might be a garrison chapel. Goodchild and Widrig argued that a number of them might have served the needs of heretics; but while Duval 1989*b* confirms that heretical use sometimes explains the presence of several churches on sites in the Maghreb, it is not an entirely satisfactory explanation on the small rural sites here, particularly when two churches stand virtually side by side as at el Atrun and Siret Umm Sellem. It may be that, often enough, the duplication occurred because two donors wished to make separate offerings;²² but we should, perhaps, avoid the assumption that the same explanation will be valid for all sites.

Another interesting phenomenon in the countryside is the small church built in close proximity to a single farm-house, as at Berteleis (*Section 2*), where Ward-Perkins argued that we can see a land-owning family providing for itself and a few dependents. The rock-cut church beside a *gasr* at Narbek (*Section 3a*) looks like another example, and there are probably more which have not yet been observed. The combination occurs also at Siret Gasrin el Giamel, where it may be that we have a monastic establishment.

Siting

We can hardly expect to explain the location of all churches on all sites, but there is some indication that what are probably the cathedral churches in the cities of Apollonia/Sozusa, Cyrene, Ptolemais and Taucheira were built in or close to the old civic centres. At Apollonia/Sozusa the East Church was certainly built on and partly out of an important public building whose main door gave onto what now seems likely to have been the *agora*; at Taucheira the East Church was built partly out of and very probably on top of a civic basilica which must have been close to the *agora*; at Ptolemais Synesius in *Epp.* 66 seems to make a connection between walking to his church and seeing what was going on in the *agora*; at Cyrene the case is less clear, but both the East Church and the Central Church are built beside the street along which a public centre is thought to have developed when the old *agora* became a purely ceremonial area in the second century AD. This new public centre is not fully excavated or understood, so that although we know that the Central Church is close to the crossing of two major streets (illus. 119), the point from which mileages on roads out of Cyrene were measured in the high Roman Empire, we do not know enough about the immediate environs of the East Church to comment on them usefully and to compare the two locations.

We do not know enough either about the site-plans of Berenike or of Paraitonion or of any of the villages to explain the locations of their known churches. Some village churches (Siret Umm Sellem for example) seem well-placed to serve the defensive purposes which Goodchild in particular claimed for them, but not all.

Defensive uses

Several of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travellers who described the ruins that they saw in Cyrenaica took for forts buildings now known to be churches (so for instance Pacho 1827, 120, Beecheys 1828, 338, 515); and Goodchild, when he began to look at Cyrenaican churches, was impressed by what seemed to him the defensive character of many of them (1952*a*, 150 = 1976*a*, 157), with massive sloping revetments built up against some or all of their outer walls (cf. illus. 237), ditches often cut in the rock alongside these walls, few windows at ground-floor level and little but slit-windows at any level (cf. illus. 320), and, in a few cases, towers (which

²² Is the issue related to that of Double Churches, on which see most recently Duval and others, *Antiquité Tardive* 4 (1996), 19-234?

certainly exist at Berenike and the Extramural Cruciform Building at Apollonia/Sozusa; and Widrig proposed others, e.g. at the West Church of Ptolemais, which are speculative). Indeed he included churches in his list of the buildings by which the Gebel was defended in the sixth century AD (Goodchild 1953, 206 = 1976*a*, 204). This view was accepted and developed into the concept of the fortress church by Widrig, largely accepted by Ward-Perkins, although with a degree of modification which it is difficult to assess in the absence of his own summing-up; it will be seen that in many of his descriptions of the buildings (e.g. Lamluda, Messa, Mgarnes, Mtaugat) he states firmly that the revetments were needed to buttress demonstrably unstable walls (as in *illus.* 263), and he, like Goodchild, also sometimes wrote of them as precautions against, as well as correctives of, the effects of earthquakes; but he continued to see a defensive element in them (Ward-Perkins 1969, 364/5). This view has been strongly attacked by Stucchi 1975, Roques 1987 and to some extent Duval 1989*b* (although Duval accepts that some churches would have had a defensive use). It is certainly the case that no revetments have been shown so far to have been included in the original structure of a church, that they may cover only a limited part of the walls of a church, and that quite often the need for a buttress (whether revetment or tower) to shore them up is obvious; and it is possible that the ditches are rightly seen, as by Stucchi, as the sources from which the stone for the buttresses was quarried and/or as channels for water needed for the cisterns which are frequent features of the churches. But ecclesiastics certainly played some part in the defence of the countryside in the time of Synesius²³ and since it is very obvious that only a few villages were walled and that on many sites the church was the most solid building of any size, it would be natural for villagers to treat it as a refuge, whether or not it had originally been designed as such. Raiders of the type described by Synesius were not going to mount long sieges of a building; what was needed when they came was a short-term refuge, which they could not enter easily nor quickly set on fire.

Whether any city churches were intended to be defensible, as has been suggested specifically for the Extramural Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, the East Church at Cyrene, the West Church at Ptolemais and for the Berenike church, is, perhaps, less likely; but it is hardly to be ruled out that they too might be considered as possible refuges in an emergency.

Ground plans

Most of the known churches in Libya Superior, and one certainly in Inferior (Marina el Alamein), were built within a rectangular outer frame (occasionally trapezoidal, as for the West Church at Siret Umm Sellem), with inscribed apse, nave, two aisles divided from it by arcades, small rooms usually at both ends of both aisles,²⁴ and either a narthex or a vestibule between two rooms at the end opposite the apse (see e.g. *illus.* 118); there was normally an axial entry, although occasionally the main door was in one long side; and there were often doors in other walls too, clearly to provide for needs which we can rarely now appreciate. They are hardly mirror-images of one another, however, but vary, for example, in orientation, size, proportion of their parts to one another, assignment of function to particular parts, methods of lighting, roofing and flooring, presence or absence of galleries, of upper storeys above the narthex and angle-chapels, as well as in the number and location of doors of entry. A few appear to have stood in defined precincts (presumably Siret Akreim; other examples are the West Central Church at Ptolemais, probably Berenike, Gasr el Gaama, Siret Gasrin el Giamel).²⁵ Some, at any rate in the cities, were given annexes, none of which has been fully explored (for example all the churches at Apollonia/Sozusa and the East Church at Cyrene). Some underwent refurbishment (so the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa), some extensive remodelling (so the East Church at Cyrene, and

²³ Cf. the church as the starting-point for the successful defence of a part of the Myrsinitis (*Syn. Epp.* 122), the interest taken by the bishops of Darnis and Erythron in a ruined but rebuildable fort for defence of the area of Hydrax (*Epp.* 66).

²⁴ Often called angle-chapels in the text, although they were not, it seems, always used as chapels.

²⁵ No precinct walls have been examined so far; there is no certainty that they have always been observed.

the churches of Messa, Mgarne, Umm Heneia el Garbia, probably Siret bu Hosh), with the result that they eventually had two apses which were, apparently, in contemporary use, although the later function of the earlier apse is never clear. On apses see further under Orientation and in the Section on *Interiors* below.

A limited number of different basic ground-plans has been found, usually, but not exclusively, on urban sites (the major rural example is the West Church at Gasr el Lebia, the only village site known, from its new name, Theodorias, to have had imperial patronage). These are:

1. The transeptal plan of the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa (illus. 3).
2. The cross-in square plan (*quincunx*) of the West Church at Gasr el Lebia (illus. 211) and of the extramural building at Apollonia/Sozusa, which was perhaps a tomb but may have been a *martyrion* (illus. 68).
3. The plan with *triconchos* substituted for an apse, in the Extramural Church at Apollonia/Sozusa (illus. 70), and in the small chapels at Gasr Silu and Siret Umm Sellem; also used for parts of churches as in the north-east angle-chapels of the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and the West Church at Ptolemais.
4. The plan with projecting apse, which is very rare but occurs in the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa (illus. 47), the rock-cut churches at Marsa Gabes and Narbek and probably the Church on the Coastal Ridge at Paraitonion in Libya Inferior.
5. The plan with nave and one aisle only, found in the rock-cut church at Narbek.
6. The plan with a narthex which is, in effect, a long narrow corridor with doors into nave and aisles; in the East Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa and Taucheira (illus. 3, 156) it has no door in the outer walls; in the West Church at Ptolemais it has a door in the west wall (but not an axial one; the door is in an area occupied by the base of a 'spiral' staircase at the south end); in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa (where it is not an original feature) it has apses at both ends and an axial door in the outer wall leading into an atrium (illus. 26).
7. The plan with a porticoed atrium, which is comparatively rare (e.g. illus. 26). In the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and probably also the East Church at Taucheira, the atrium is placed on the north side; in the Central and West Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa it is axial but in the latter its only outer door was originally on the south side (at a later stage an axial approach was created but the old one on the south side was retained). Simple open courtyards in front of the narthex are reported at Berenike and Ras el Hilal and may have gone unnoticed so far in other places.
8. The plan with short broad nave, narrow aisles and sets of rooms alongside each aisle in the church at Siret Gasrin el Giamel (illus. 364, interpreted as a monastery by Stucchi and by Catani).
9. Perhaps a plan with multiple aisles as seen in buildings at Gabu Yunes and Mgarne which Stucchi 1975 thought of as churches but which may not be such.
10. Bates' church at Paraitonion, if it is a church, is *sui generis* (illus. 373).

Some aspects of nos. 4-7 are probably to be explained by the need to adapt a church to pre-existing structures on and around its site, and, in the rock-cut churches at Marsa Gabes and Narbek, by the special problems of excavating into the rock (see also on *Crypts*, below).

Orientation

Orientation is known with certainty, or virtually so, for 52 churches or chapels. Of these 24 have apses at the east end (at the south-east in the West Central Church at Ptolemais), 24 at the west, and four at both ends. Of the last group, two certainly and a third probably were originally built with a single apse at the east end which was retained for an unknown function when the western apse was added (the East Church at Cyrene, Messa, Siret bu Hosh; the sequence of construction has not been established for Umm Heneia el Garbia).

It seems worth recording that eastern apses predominate in the cities (twelve plus the East Church at Cyrene in its earlier phase, compared with only three western

ones), while western ones are commoner on rural sites (twenty-one compared with eleven eastern ones, plus the western apses of the churches with two apses). Further, the three churches generally accepted as the earliest all have eastern apses (the East Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa, Cyrene first phase, and Taucheira).

On four rural sites there are adjacent churches with apses at opposite ends (el Atrun, Gasr el Lebia, Gasr Silu, Siret Umm Sellem), on one of which (el Atrun) they were apparently built contemporarily or nearly so.

Duval's conclusion (1989*b*, 2756) that in Cyrenaica the orientation is no certain clue to date seems right on present evidence; but a refinement of the procedures for dating might throw up some rationale at present hidden; and one can, perhaps, reasonably suggest that there is a presumption that eastern apses were preferred originally and western apses at a later period.

External appearance

Perimeter walls have shown traces of a stucco wash whenever they have been examined soon enough after exposure; and since the stucco was desirable to protect most local stone (see above), it was no doubt normal and perhaps universal that churches were white buildings. Otherwise, their masonry would have given, as it does today, a somewhat stark effect: in the surviving walls, such as those of the West Churches at Gasr el Lebia (illus. 212, 213) and Ptolemais, the rows of blocks are broken only by the occasional door, by slit windows placed high up, sometimes by a levelling course; and Pacho's drawing of what survived of the west front of the probable West Church at Mgarnes (Pacho 1827, pl. XXIII; see also Stucchi 1975, fig. 421) shows a plain wall broken only by a small central doorway with relieving arch above it. Much more varied façades are depicted in a panel of the nave-mosaic of the East Church at Gasr el Lebia (Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 59, 104 and their plate 16.2) and in a graffito on a block in the House of the Triapsidal Hall at Ptolemais (illus. 148); but neither correspond with such physical evidence as survives; and the suggestion of Harrison 1964, 11, n.33a that a Cyrenaican church façade with towers was depicted in panel A3 of the mosaic at Gasr el Lebia (generally taken as a city-gate, although the presence of what seems to be a curtain in the doorway is then surprising) seems unlikely too. When revetments and ditches were added to many of the buildings, their effect certainly seems to us to be fort-like and forbidding.

There were axial **doors** in the walls of the *narthex* in a majority of churches, but in some the main entry was in one of the long sides, inevitably so when a church was given two apses (the East Church at Cyrene, and Messa, Siret bu Hosh, Umm Heneia el Garbia in *Section 2*), but also elsewhere and notably in the East Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa and Taucheira, the West Church at Ptolemais, both churches at Gasr el Lebia).²⁶ At Apollonia/Sozusa and Taucheira the reason may have been the existence of earlier and important features on the site limiting the church-builders; we have no relevant information elsewhere. It is to be noted that three of these buildings (at Apollonia/Sozusa, Cyrene, and Taucheira) were probably or possibly cathedral churches. Occasionally main entries were fronted by a porch, as at the East Church of Apollonia/Sozusa and at Gasr el Gaama (*Section 3b*), or by *atria* (as in the Central and West Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa), or by a courtyard (as at Ras el Hilal and Berenike).²⁷ In addition to their main entries a number of churches had secondary entries in one or both of their long sides (as in the Central and West Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa, the West Church at Ptolemais, at Ras el Hilal and Siret esh Shnedira, *Section 3a*), and some even in the outer wall at the apse-end (as in both churches at el Atrun). It is often the case that these secondary doors were blocked in the later stages of the life of a church (as at el Atrun and at Ras el Hilal).

²⁶ At Gasr el Lebia there was an axial door to the West Church, but it seems to lead only to a subterranean courtyard with rock-cut tombs off it.

²⁷ It is by no means certain that the existence of such courtyards has always been noticed.

We should probably suppose that **windows** were rather more common than we know from the surviving evidence. Slits, splayed inwards and downwards, occur, but at a high level (e.g. in the West Churches at Ptolemais and Gasr el Lebia); they are well-illustrated at Zawiet el Argub (illus. 320). Round-headed windows were visible at the time of excavation in the east apse of the East Church at Cyrene.²⁸ Christian window-mullions have been recorded on a number of sites (thus at Berenike, illus. 81, Cyrene, illus. 107, Taucheira, Lamluda, and probably part of a window-arch at Siret el Bab, *Section 3a*, illus. 360).²⁹ In addition, clerestories have often been conjectured (e.g. for the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa). Window-glass has been suspected at Ras el Hilal, but unfortunately not proved. It may be that there was little concern with lighting, except where there were upper storeys including galleries; and that muted light, or, in winter, a lamp-lit dusk, illuminated by candles at appropriate points of the liturgy, was acceptable as the norm.

In the absence of roof-tiles from any sites except the East Church of Cyrene where a small store of pantiles was found, it seems likely that flat terrace-roofs were common. They would be reachable by internal staircases and could have served as fighting-platforms at need. Nevertheless domes and barrel-vaults also occurred; see further under *Interiors (Ceilings)*.

Interiors

Walls, presumably always white-washed, can sometimes be seen to have been painted too, usually with simple marbling or with geometric patterns (as at Ras el Hilal), but occasionally with more elaboration (see below). Our most vivid guide to what is likely to have been common practice is the rock-cut church at Narbek (*Section 3a*), where much of the whitened south wall is painted with rows of diamonds and circles, and there is a frieze of Christian symbols placed within circles (perhaps wreaths) just below the roof on the south and the west walls and above the nave arcade. In a few churches paintings of a much more elaborate kind have been found, notably a group of heads on one wall of a probable *martyrion* in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa (illus. 44), an *aedicula*, within which looped curtains framed a jewelled cross, on the outer wall of the north aisle in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia (illus. 223), and painted texts on the wall just mentioned at Apollonia/Sozusa and the wall of the probable *martyrion* at Ras el Hilal. In addition there were fluted pilasters of stucco, framing the simply-painted panels on the walls of the baptistery and the probable *martyrion* at Ras el Hilal. The whitewashed walls, with the painting and stucco decoration, may have compensated a little for the effects of limited natural light.

In a few interior walls small niches have been cut (e.g. in the central apse of the east wall of the Extramural Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, in the south wall of the West Church at Gasr el Lebia). It is not certain that these have always been recorded; nor is it quite clear whether they are part of the original décor or later additions.

Treatment of the **ceilings** is for the most part uncertain. Semi-domes of course covered apses, although they were not always true vaults (not, for instance, at Ras el Hilal, Siret el Craat or in the later apse at Messa, all in *Section 2*). There were domes over the two eastern angle-chapels of the West Church at Ptolemais (illus. 141-42), and barrel vaults in rather more demonstrable cases, for instance over the aisles of the West Church at Ptolemais (illus. 137), the four arms of the cross in the West Church at Gasr el Lebia, several of the chapels in the East Church at Cyrene. Often, however, we can only conjecture on the basis of the débris found within a building, which may—or may not—be on a scale to suggest a vault, or of the estimated weight-bearing capacity of the walls, which may preclude one. It was Ward-Perkins' view that timber roofs were very common.

On their internal decoration we have even less information. The examples of the rock-cut church at Narbek and perhaps the *hypogaeum* at Messa suggest that

²⁸ Placed at a point where the apse-wall abuts on the thin perimeter-wall, and cut through both thicknesses.

²⁹ Not necessarily always from churches, however, as the Tower of the Window Mullions at Taucheira demonstrates (Taucheira, Monument no. 3).

they might have been stuccoed and painted; and the stucco shell which covered the semi-dome of the apse at Ras el Hilal may indicate another common feature.

The **flooring** varies enormously from plain rammed earth (as in the north-east angle-chapel of the East Church at el Atrun), through mortared rubble (as in the apse at Ras el Hilal), to limestone flags (quite common), patterning with sandstone tiles (as in the aisles of both churches at el Atrun), mosaic (as in parts at least of the East and Central Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa, the two intramural churches at Cyrene, the East Church at Taucheira, the East Church at Gasr el Lebia, Gasr Bandis, Ras el Hilal), *opus sectile* in selected areas (thus in the chancels of the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, the East Church at Cyrene, Ras el Hilal), marble flags (East Church at Gasr el Lebia, West Church at el Atrun). It is clear that areas of particular significance were often provided with grand floors.

The **mosaics** are described in detail and fully illustrated by Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980. They reckoned that the mosaicists came from abroad (probably from Greece, but others have thought Syria), although they also trained local workmen. In the present state of our knowledge, however, it may be that we should not rule out the possibility of some survival of the local mosaic tradition which had once been very strong (as demonstrated by Michaelides 1998); and we should certainly remember that there are mosaics earlier than the accepted Justinianic series in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and the possible chapel south-west of the East Church at Taucheira. Most of the materials needed could have been found locally, mainly from marble imported earlier. As Harrison observed (1985, 234) these were comparatively cheap items; there is no evidence for tesserae of gold and silver, and not much for coloured glass as used in the great churches elsewhere which are known to have been imperially-sponsored.

Significant subdivisions

The main **apses** concluding the central naves were normally built very strongly, and independently of the perimeter-walls (often within a rectangular frame), so that there was sometimes a vacant space, suggesting a corridor (as at Berenike, illus. 74, and Ras el Hilal, illus. 270) or a small room (as at Siret er Rheim), between them and the perimeter-walls behind them; few of these areas have been fully explored and it may well be that they were always in fact filled with rubble, at least at ground-level, as is known to have been the case in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia and at Mtaugat. In the East Church at Taucheira (illus. 156) where there was no rectangular frame for the apse, one angle-chapel has a rounded wall as a result.

They were normally a little narrower than the naves, but occasionally a little wider (as in the Central Church at Cyrene and the West Church at Ptolemais). While often semi-circular, some were shallower segments of a circle (as in the east apse at Umm Heneia el Garbia), a few U-shaped (as in the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and the west apse at Siret bu Hosh), and one horse-shoe shaped (the 'West Church' at Taucheira). Some have a door or doors in their side-walls which communicate with the rooms that flank them (as in both apses of the East Church at Cyrene), but these were often blocked at a later stage (as in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia). They were vaulted, although not always with a true vault (cf. Ras el Hilal).

It is clear that many of them contained *synthrona*. Substantial remains of these were found in the west apse of the East Church at Cyrene (illus. 90; here there appears to be a narrow tunnel between the *synthronon* and the apse-wall) and in the East Church at el Atrun (illus. 176), some elements of one in the East Church at Gasr Silu, probably some part of a central throne at Ras el Hilal, and mortice-holes for the attachment of their wooden superstructures in more (for instance the West Church at Ptolemais, illus. 136). In many, however, the relevant part of the wall is lost or still covered by rubble. Duval 1989*b*, 2776 has observed that the *synthrona* must usually have been rather high, which would compensate for the fact that the apses are at best only slightly raised above the level of the naves.

Evidence for their decoration is rare, but at Ras el Hilal the walls above the *synthronon* were whitewashed and at one stage painted, while the semi-dome was covered by a stucco shell. Flooring was usually very simple (presumably because

largely covered by the structure of a *synthronon*), but in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa there was a fine mosaic;³⁰ and in the east apse of the East Church at Cyrene there was marble.³¹

The opening into the chancel was framed by an arch carried on columns (pilasters at Siret Gasrin el Giamel, half-columns at Siret Umm Sellem) which were set into the shoulders, or, sometimes, a little forward of them; there was a triple arch in front of the east apse and its flanking chapels in the East Church at Cyrene, but this seems to be unusual. In the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa there were inset metal crosses on the columns (illus. 39). It is generally assumed that the keystones were carved with a cross; that is likely, but none of the known keystones so carved can be attributed with complete confidence to this position. There was usually a small step down from apse to chancel and it seems that sometimes the division was also marked by a screen (as in the East and Central Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa), clearly movable or with a central opening, and often, perhaps, no more than a curtain.

There are, of course, also apses in other positions in some churches; so in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa an apse was added in the south-east angle-chapel which was apparently part of a *martyrion* (illus. 32), and two apses concluded the ends of the flanking hall and of the remodelled *narthex*; one of the latter contained a kind of *synthronon* (illus. 34). Apses at the ends of rooms in annexes could often have contained seats for presiding dignitaries (e.g. the annexe of the West Cemetery Church at Taucheira, illus. 168).

The **chancels**, in front of the apses, are always square or rectangular areas, usually a little narrower than the nave, defined by screens which were set on plinths and upheld by posts, occasionally, as in the Central Church at Cyrene, by bases carrying colonnettes (illus. 124), or, in the few known cases where they occupied the full width of the naves (as in the Central Church at Cyrene and the East Church at Gasr el Lebia), by screens on the sides facing the naves and by the walls of the adjacent angle-chapels on the other two. For the posts and the screens see below under *Fitments*. There are usually openings through the screens on either side, allowing communication with the side-aisles and the angle-chapels, and, of course, in the centre into the body of the nave: this last opening appears (where information survives) to give into a short corridor running between screens upheld by posts—it looks like a *solea* (a name suggested for it at several points in the text) but in no case is it known to have led to a pulpit placed in the nave. Occasionally there is evidence (as in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa) that the entries to a chancel could be closed by chains affixed to the posts at their two sides (illus. 31).

Where there is any evidence, the flooring is of some quality—marble flags, mosaic and/or *opus sectile* (as for instance in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia, the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa). On it, approximately in the centre,³² stood the altar and, in the West Church at el Atrun and at Ras el Hilal, the steps of an *ambon* placed beside the screen to the right of the corridor leading into the nave (for all movable items see below under *Interior Fitments*).

Naves contained the screened areas of the chancels at the apse-end and normally concluded at the opposite end with an axial door, sometimes a triple archway (as in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa) for ceremonial entry from the *narthex* and exit thereto. In two churches there are traces of transverse screens across the naves at approximately half of the distance between the entry to the apse and the back-wall (the East Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa and Taucheira); they presumably marked a

³⁰ Did the bishop and his clergy sit elsewhere (but what, then, was the function of the apse?) or in the apse on movable chairs?

³¹ Perhaps only in its later phase when the church had been reoriented and the function of this apse changed.

³² The only probable exception to this position for the altar is in the Church on the Coastal Ridge at Paraitonion, where it may have been under the arch of the apse.

change in function between the two parts of the nave outside the chancel, as Ward-Perkins suggested for the change in the character of the flooring in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia.³³

They were divided from the aisles by arcades,³⁴ carried on columns or piers,³⁵ whose bases stand on continuous plinths, and characteristically concluded at either end on respond walls which were the internal walls of the angle-chapels. The columns, which may always have been either re-used *spolia* (as in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa)³⁶ or newly-imported prefabricated marble (as in both churches at el Atrun), are much rarer than piers, both in city and rural churches, but do occur in rural ones (e.g. at Sidi Said, *Section 2*, as well as el Atrun) just as piers sometimes occur in urban churches (as at Cyrene). In some churches it is certain that some, even most, of the intercolumniations were blocked by screens (one screen so used survived *in situ* in the East Church at el Atrun); and the rock-cut church at Narbek, in which an approximately waist-high screen of rock has been left in position under all but the end-arches, seems to provide a guide to practice.

At Mtaugat there is an unexplained oval canopied feature, just in front of the arcaded entry from the *narthex* (illus. 261-66).

There is no nave whose roofing is uncontroversially established; flat timber roofs seem likely to be normal (see above).

Flooring is variable. Limestone flags are common, marble naturally less so (but the nave of the West Church at el Atrun has marble flags throughout). Mosaic, at any rate for parts of the nave, occurs in the refurbished East Church as well as in the Central Church at Cyrene, and for parts of the naves in the east Church at Gasr el Lebia (where marble flagging completes it) and at Ras el Hilal (where sandstone flagging completes it). Ward-Perkins and Goodchild believed that flooring of several types might be contemporary, the differences marking changes in the functions of particular areas; this possibility perhaps deserves more discussion than it has so far received.

Very occasionally, there is evidence for burial in a nave (as at Ras el Hilal, in the narrow space between the chancel screen and the north angle-chapel).

The **aisles** vary in length and width, losing space in a few churches to what are described in the text as ante-chapels to the angle-chapels, for example at el Atrun. They seem often to be rather undistinguished areas providing entry to the church from side-doors and channels of communication between the angle-chapels and into the nave, or, by way of staircases, to galleries where these existed, and to upper storeys above the angle-chapels and the *nartheces*; but they were sometimes of more significance, containing benches, as in the south aisle of the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and the north aisle of the East Church at Gasr el Lebia, whose painted walls in any case indicate its importance, and in the south aisle of the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa which seems to be a *martyrion*. There might also be burials (as in the West Church at el Atrun, where the carefully patterned floors again suggest that they were considered important).

Galleries have only been certainly recognised at el Atrun (in both churches) and at Ras el Hilal; although sometimes suggested elsewhere (especially in the West Church at Ptolemais), they have never been proved. Built above the aisles, they fronted the naves with smaller versions of the nave arcades, having screens in the

³³ Could it have distinguished the area to be occupied by communicants?

³⁴ There is no known case in which architraves were used, and even where voussoirs have not been found the presence of impost-blocks may strongly suggest that there were arches. The arches in the arcades are normally segments of a circle, but are of horse-shoe shape in the later church at Messa; elsewhere in the buildings too there are occasional examples of a horse-shoe shape (as in Cyrene East Church).

³⁵ The piers are usually square in section and sometimes made, as at Berenike, by cementing two re-used stone blocks together; but in the Central Church at Ptolemais the section is cross-shaped, from which Stucchi 1975, 398 argued that the roof must have been vaulted.

³⁶ Insertion of supporting blocks (no doubt stuccoed) below the bases on occasion facilitated the use of columns of unequal heights (as in the East and West Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa).

intercolumniations. Krautheimer 1986 conjectured (but without precise evidence) that those at el Atrun were the first to appear in Cyrenaica and were perhaps constructed to a plan received from Constantinople. It might seem that the extra space that they provided encouraged creation of additional rooms in the aisles (note the ante-chambers to the angle-chapels in both churches at el Atrun).

Angle-chapels are roughly square or rectangular rooms, normally of the same width as the aisles, but at el Atrun those at the apse-end are a little broader than the aisles and they are also provided with ante-chambers. At the ends opposite the apse they are sometimes no more than sections of the *narthex*; in fact the side chambers of what might be called a tricameral *narthex* (as at Ras el Hilal). They are usually to be entered from the aisles, those at the apse-end sometimes also from the apses or the chancels, and occasionally from the outside too (as at Ras el Hilal and the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa), although the doors in the external walls were often blocked later.

Their functions can only occasionally be discovered, but appear to have been variable: see further under *Baptisteries*, *Martyria*.

A **narthex** is found in most churches except, of course, those with two apses, but is missing also in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia, and perhaps at Berteleis. In a few it is a long narrow corridor with entry or entries into the church but no door in its outer walls (the East Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa and Taucheira) or no axial door there (the West Church at Ptolemais). In many it is a rather broader feature with an axial door in the outer wall, and may be divided by arches into three sections corresponding to the nave and aisles, with a door—or an arch (which may be triple)—into the nave and possibly simpler doorways into the angle-chapels of the two aisles; but there are also some in which the three sections are divided by walls so that they are tricameral, with a central vestibule through which one passed from the outside into the nave, flanked by two side-chambers; then sometimes called in the text an internal *narthex* (as in the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, the East Church at el Atrun). The side chambers seem usually to be reserved for mundane purposes—to house staircases and well-heads for instance; but the north-east room at Ras el Hilal has a mosaic floor and so, no doubt, a significant function.

There is often evidence for an upper storey above a *narthex* (as at Ras el Hilal).

Other features

Many churches have **annexes** but none has been fully explored. On the north side of the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa the annexe consists of a suite of rooms which seems designed to lead into the Baptistry; on the north side of the East Church at Cyrene one phase of the annexe included a baptistry; on the east side of the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa the adaptation of pre-existing buildings included the creation of a baptistry, and, among other installations, of a mosaic-paved hall; on the south side of the East Church at Taucheira there is a long narrow hall with a marble-paved dais at the west end (cf. the apsed hall flanking the West Extramural Church at Taucheira). Flanking halls are found elsewhere, e.g. at Khirbet al Kerek in Israel, where an inscription in a floor mosaic indicated that the room was a *diaconicon* (Delougaz/Haines 1960)—but it is probably mistaken to suppose that features of this type were all built to serve the same function and would be identically named, or, indeed, that any served one function only; they could well have been used on different occasions in the preparation of *catechoumenoi*, for meetings of the clergy, for the bishops' courts etc.

Six **baptisteries** are known, all for excavated churches, two at Apollonia/Sozusa (East and West Churches) and one each at Berenike, Cyrene (East Church), el Atrun (East Church)³⁷ and Ras el Hilal. There seems to have been no rule for their location: three were placed in an angle-chapel beside an apse (north of it in the East Church at

³⁷ At a late date the baptismal basin here was converted, apparently to hold two reliquary chests; does this mean that there had ceased to be a bishop at el Atrun?

Apollonia/Sozusa, south of it in the East Churches at el Atrun and at Ras el Hilal); one in an antechamber to the angle-chapel north of the apse (Berenike); one in a room north of the original apse but in a flanking annexe whose construction was dated by Ward-Perkins and by Goodchild in the reign of Justinian when that apse had lost its original function (East Church at Cyrene); one outside the church itself, in a position to which the main entry seems to have been from the street (West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa).

At Apollonia/Sozusa in both cases and at Cyrene the baptistery in fact formed part of a small complex which will have preserved its privacy, a function presumably performed by an ante-chamber preceding the baptistery at el Atrun, where, additionally, the doorways from the nave and aisles into the baptistery area were fitted with wooden doors which could be closed (an unusual feature in this church).

A degree of visual richness might be provided by use of marble or partly marble flooring (marble in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, *opus sectile* at Cyrene, slices of *cipollino* at Berenike), mosaic (West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa), although sandstone flags seem to have sufficed at el Atrun and simple plaster at Ras el Hilal; and/or by the wall-decoration (stucco pilasters framing panels painted with geometrical designs at Ras el Hilal, marble veneering in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa). Monumentality was achieved in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa by a complete reconstruction of what is likely to have been an angle-chapel of standard form into a triconch set in a cross-shaped frame, probably in the sixth century;³⁸ at Cyrene by conversion of a pagan marble sarcophagus into a surround for a baptismal basin carved into its floor (illus. 96, 97), and marble steps inserted at either end to provide entry and exit.³⁹ An elaborate canopy covered it; and there may also have been canopies over the basins in the East Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa and el Atrun.

Apart from Cyrene's, the known basins are simple, usually circular or oval (illus. 79), but cruciform at el Atrun East Church (illus. 177), cut in the baptistery floors, with two opposed flights of rock-cut steps for entry and exit; in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, however, an originally circular basin was later converted into a square one and lined with marble (illus. 17).

Both baptisteries at Apollonia/Sozusa had furnaces for heating water, a rare feature.⁴⁰ Possibly they should be associated with the presence of the governor's staff in the city in the sixth century.

Baptisteries have been conjectured in other churches, notably in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and the West Church at Ptolemais, but no installations have been found in either. Stucchi also interpreted as a baptismal basin a large tank at Taucheira which seems better taken as a cistern; and he thought that a number of small buildings, square, round or hexagonal, to be seen close to churches, might be detached baptisteries; only their excavation would show.

Stucchi suggested that in some cases the small buildings just described might be **bell-towers** rather than baptisteries; again only excavation would show.

There are few known churches in which there is not at least one **cistern** with one or more well-heads within the building, often fed, it is thought, by rain-water channelled in from the roof. In the West Church at el Atrun one of the well-heads is covered by an imported marble capital in roughed-out state; at Berenike a cross has been carved on one of the piers (cf. the crosses and Christian acclamations in a cistern which is not, apparently, connected with a church, at Gasr Uertig, *Section 3a*) and there are rope-marks on the blocks surrounding the drawing-hole.

³⁸ Its baptismal basin is, however, noticeably simple, compared with that of Cyrene's East Church.

³⁹ As Duval 1989*b* notes, external steps were needed at either end to enable *catechoumenoi* to reach and leave the internal steps. Presumably they were of wood.

⁴⁰ A letter of Goodchild's in the files refers to a third such furnace in Cyrenaica, but without locating it. It may have been an interpretation, later rejected, of the water tank found in the baptistery of the East Church at Cyrene.

As already stated, a number of churches were built in close relationship to rock-cut tombs which may underlie them (the West Church at Lamluda is an uncomplicated example) and may be accessible from within them as **crypts** (as in the West Church at Gasr el Lebia). We have no grounds for assuming that these tombs necessarily contained the bodies of martyrs, although some may have done so; most seem likely to be the tombs of respected local families, possibly the donors of the churches concerned.

Closely related to these, and presumably a development from them, is a group of churches with elaborate rock-cut *hypogaea* which seem to have been Christian constructions (Buma el Garbia, *Section 3a*, Messa, Umm Heneia el Garbia). They may have been tomb-complexes originally—or of course rock-cut churches like Narbek.⁴¹ Exploration of these *hypogaea* has revealed nothing as finely carved as Pacho showed in his drawing of a rock-cut Christian chamber at Zawiet Marazigh (illus. 369*b*), but that may belong to the same series. Moreover there is also indication that there were underground chambers, partly rock-cut and partly built, in some other churches, notably the Extramural Triconch Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, Sidi Abdul Wahed (*Section 2*), Umm Heneia esh Shargia (*Section 3a*). The rock-cut features discovered by Daoud el Halag in Wadi Morgus and Wadi Ngil (both *Section 3a*) should be remembered in this connection too.

Martyria were probably common but are not always easily identified. Several types of container for relics have been recorded, differently located in different churches. There are five reliquary chests known (illus. 65, 343), two of marble ('Palace' Chapel at Apollonia/Sozusa and Gasr Stablous, an unexplored site, *Section 3a*) and three of limestone (two at el Atrun, one at Berenike). None was found *in situ* but the most elaborate one, at Apollonia/Sozusa, must have been very near its original position; Goodchild 1976, 257 conjectured that it should be associated with oaths of loyalty taken by Libyan leaders before the governors. The two at el Atrun had apparently been moved at a late date to the adapted baptistery of the East Church, from an earlier position presumably in the West Church. There are also two larger chests, which may have been used as altars containing relics, in the north-west angle-chapel of the West Church at el Atrun and at Ras el Hilal; at Hilal this room was elaborately decorated, with a floor of *opus sectile* and mosaic and walls on which stucco pilasters framed painted panels, and it was accessible to a public which wrote pious graffiti on its walls.

Recesses within niches in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, resembling deposits for ashes in many Roman tombs (illus. 32), may also have contained relics. The most obvious example is in the north shoulder of the apse which was added to the south-east angle-chapel (there may have been another in the south shoulder). Here, as at Ras el Hilal, the décor of the chapel is suggestive, with a mosaic floor, paintings (including painted texts) and pious graffiti on the north wall. Duval 1989*b*, 2778 suggests that similar niches at the apsed east end of the annexe flanking the church on the north may have been for reliquaries too.

A tomb in the annexe to the north of the nave in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia, in itself unimpressive, may indicate another *martyrion*, approached from the area of the nave covered by the great mosaic and through a room whose floor was also covered in mosaic with inscribed reference to 'witness'. A recess in the north aisle of the East Church at Cyrene, which seems to have been carefully kept available to view from the nave, may be another; and, although there is no compelling argument for it, one or more of the tombs in the elaborate crypts described above may of course have contained martyrs' remains.

Several other *martyria* have been suggested, but not proved, notably the triconch angle-chapel in the West Church at Ptolemais; and it may be right to consider also the small triconch chapel at Siret Umm Sellem and the oval feature in the nave at Mtaugat. The evidence from the apsed hall in the house to the south-west of the East Church at Taucheira cannot at present (summer 2000) be properly assessed.

⁴¹ It is possible that the wholly unexplored area at the end opposite the apse at Narbek may have housed a tomb.

Interior fittings

The main features are the elements of the nave arcades, of the chancel screens, the altars, the baptismal basins, the *synthrona*, steps for *ambones*, doorways, windows. It is hardly surprising that in rural churches limestone is much more commonly used than marble; but marble does occur in the country—most obviously in the two churches at el Atrun, but also, if in apparently small quantities, elsewhere (see further below). Equally, while city churches may contain a number of marble fittings, they often contain some of local stone.

a. Limestone fittings were, no doubt, usually, perhaps always, made by local craftsmen and were commonly simple in form, for instance piers (see above) rather than columns, capitals and impost-blocks with little or no carved decoration,⁴² or crudely-carved as with the blocks carrying crosses found for instance at Buma el Garbia and Siret Akreim (illus. 330, 353). At the same time there are quite ambitious capitals in local stone in the atrium of the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa (illus. 18) and at el Atrun, chancel screens at Ras el Hilal (illus. 276-78) and el Gubba (probably), panels from a tomb in the West Church at el Atrun (illus. 193, 195) and in the oval feature at Mtaugat, and a lintel at Beit Thamer, all carved vigorously and attractively, which contrast with the mass-produced banality of prefabricated marble chancel screens as used for instance at el Atrun; the patterned aisle-floors made with 'tiles' of limestone at el Atrun and in the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa are another feature which suggests production by local workmen of some ability.

Other limestone features of interest are what Ward-Perkins described as 'curtain-brackets' (illus. 229-30 and the particularly clear photograph in Stucchi 1975, fig. 440). These have sometimes been found *in situ* (as at Siret bu Hosh and Zawiet el Argub), one on either side of the inner face of the lintel of a doorway, or very obviously fallen from such a position.

Many limestone fittings were made with newly-quarried stone, but it is certainly the case that some were re-used pieces (for instance the limestone columns in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and the church at Sidi Abdul Wahed) or adapted from re-used items.

b. All marble used in the Libyan provinces had to be imported and builders had always been economical with it, commonly salvaging damaged or outdated pieces for re-use. Church-builders inherited this tradition⁴³ and can be seen re-using marble spolia quite freely at Apollonia/Sozusa and Cyrene, more sparingly at Taucheira and Berenike, but so far not at Ptolemais.⁴⁴ Even at Apollonia/Sozusa and Cyrene large pieces are rare. Marble columns were indeed found for the colonnades in the East and West Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa, and to uphold the arches fronting the main apses in these churches and in both intramural churches at Cyrene, but for the colonnades at Apollonia/Sozusa it was necessary to adjust the heights of the plinths in an awkward manner because not enough columns of identical height were available (illus. 48). For the most part the spolia were smaller objects, often *stelae*, which could be re-used without much, if any, adaptation, for lintels and thresholds, or cut up for new purposes, as column-capitals, impost-blocks, window-mullions, chancel-posts (and probably

⁴² Capitals often show quite plain outward-sloping surfaces; were they perhaps provided with painted or stucco decoration, cf. the painted limestone capital at el Atrun (East Church, *Carved Fittings* 4, iii)?

⁴³ Stucchi 1975 inclined to the view that marble spolia were available in quantity only in the years fairly soon after disasters (he had in mind earthquakes), but spoils from disused buildings might be salvageable at any time.

⁴⁴ At Taucheira most of the spolia are of limestone, but a marble threshold and the marble flagging on the dais of the south flanking hall of the East Church are probably spolia, and perhaps also the column of Rhodian marble in the West Extramural Church. At Berenike, it is not clear how far the marble spolia found in the church had been used there as anything but rubble. At Ptolemais there is no evidence for marble spolia used in the churches, but in the absence of a full excavation report on the West Church this cannot be pressed (apparently relevant items in Tolmeita Museum are liable to have come from el Merj; and, if locally found, should not be automatically assumed to derive from churches. See further below).

screens, but no certain example exists), altar-bases (and probably altar-tables); no doubt also for the colonnettes which supported the tables, *ambon*-steps, baptismal basins, holy-water stoups and the like. Some, no doubt, were used for flooring (cut up for marble flagging and for mosaics or *opus sectile*) and some to manufacture cement. The workmanship of the items produced is variable, but some of the column-capitals and impost-blocks at Apollonia/Sozusa (illus. 20-25) are quite pleasing. If local workmen were employed to carve them, it appears that they were reasonably skilful; but it may be that men from elsewhere were hired for the occasion.

By the sixth century, church fittings and some architectural features in newly-quarried marble were being produced, on a scale that eventually suggests a kind of mass-production, in or near quarries in Asia Minor and Greece, and, it is believed, also in Constantinople (Sodini 1989, Asgari 1995), for shipment to church sites in many provinces.⁴⁵ How soon prefabricated material reached Cyrenaica we do not know. Nor do we know at whose order nor to whose profit it was produced and moved (see above under *Donors* for the possibility that they were sometimes private persons, not invariably emperors as is frequently suggested in the text).⁴⁶ The goods in this category that are most often attested are chancel-screens and posts, but there are also column-bases, column-shafts, column-capitals, impost-blocks, handrails for screens, altars, colonnettes to carry them, canopies, mullions for windows, lintels, door-posts and thresholds, or objects such as basins and plates. They surely also came with some blocks of uncut marble from which marble flags for flooring could be cut. Occasionally there are other items, like reliquary chests, which are thought to have been produced in different production centres (Sodini 1989), but whose production and distribution were probably analogous; possibly the marble statuette of the Good Shepherd found at Paraitonion may belong in this category.

The Pentapolitan record at present shows prefabricated marble items, certainly or probably, on fourteen sites.⁴⁷ Of these the most notable are el Atrun and Apollonia/Sozusa; but on all five city sites there are some (although at Ptolemais perhaps only from a civic and not an ecclesiastical building), and in rural areas certainly at el Merj, Gasr Beni Gdem, Gasr el Harami, Gasr Gatres, Gasr Stablous (reliquary chest); possibly at Gasr Bandis, Gasr el Lebia, Gusur Khalita, Ras el Hilal (most often chancel screens and/or posts). The imports in fact were not quite so strictly confined to coastal or near-coastal sites as was at first suggested (Ward-Perkins 1957, 162).

The prefabricated items show, normally, quite common-place designs and ordinary workmanship, especially on the chancel-screens (Sodini/Kolokotsas 1984, cf. also Sodini 1989, observing frequent parallels in Cyrenaica with items in the church Aliko II on Thasos; many elsewhere could be cited). Judged by eye they are mostly of Proconnesian marble, but Ward-Perkins believed that he detected items of Thasian at el Atrun, Apollonia/Sozusa and Cyrene. This view, although not confirmed for el Atrun by Widrig's visit to Thasos (information by letter to Reynolds), was encouraged by Sodini's parallels between designs in Cyrenaica and at Aliko, as by Reynolds' suggestion that a mason's mark which appears on a number of column shafts at el Atrun (MAK) occurs also on a column-shaft found finished but never removed from one

⁴⁵ It is tempting to connect this development with an increase in church-construction created by Justinian's policies, but it may have begun even before his reign. The distribution is most vividly illustrated by the Marzamemi wreck (Kapitän 1969; 1980; Sodini 1989), thought to have been carrying almost all the marble fittings for a single church, and presumably, therefore, to meet a specific order. Its date is not quite satisfactorily fixed, depending heavily on a fragment of African Red Slip Ware which probably belongs with it; this is of a type which first appears c. AD 500 but whose production period is of unknown duration (verbal communication from Dr John Hayes), nor can we know when, within that period, this piece was produced, nor how long it had been in use before it was wrecked.

⁴⁶ While it is probable that all quarries were imperial property, there is anecdotal evidence suggesting that private trading in marble continued (Sodini 1989, 169-170).

⁴⁷ It has not been possible to check the marbles used on all these sites, even by eye, and it may be that some items carved from *spolia* have slipped into the list.

of the quarries at Aliko (Sodini *et al.* 1980, 93).⁴⁸ Marble samples collected by Widrig from columns at el Atrun, and analysed by the Stable Isotope Method in the British Museum laboratory, together with fragments, collected by Reynolds at el Atrun and Cyrene, which were analysed by the same method in Mr Norman Herz's laboratory in America, tend to favour a Proconnesian origin rather than a Thasian, although some of Reynolds' pieces might fit an origin in the Thasos/Acropolis or Thasos/Cape Vathy quarries (see the *Appendix* below). Analysis of newly collected pieces late in 2002 in Rome has confirmed the presence of Thasian at El Atrun. Among those who have written recently about identification of marbles, several have urged the desirability of using more than one method of analysis, especially when marbles as close as Proconnesian and Thasian are involved. A more extensive and systematic collection of samples from the church sites, with analysis by several methods, is certainly needed before we can feel confident of a solution to this issue.⁴⁹ In the meantime it may be remembered that Sodini 1989 argued that craftsmen at Thasos had taken to imitating the popular designs of the Proconnesian quarries,⁵⁰ which would provide a sufficient explanation for the parallels between items found at the Aliko II church and those of el Atrun. It may be that craftsmen from Constantinople went to Thasos to teach them, which would account for the presence of the mark MAK in the Aliko quarry (if it really does occur there), since that is known from Constantinople as well as el Atrun.

A number of the imported marble pieces at el Atrun carry masons' marks; and one has been reported in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and another at Gasr el Lebia.⁵¹ Masons' marks, similar and sometimes apparently identical, have been reported also on similar marble objects in churches and cisterns in Constantinople and on other sites in the Eastern Empire. Up-to-date work on them begins with Deichmann 1976 and has been extended by Deichmann 1989 and by Sodini 1989*b*; but there is little doubt that there are more examples to be added to their lists and that serious study of them would be furthered by more extensive publications of photographs (their illustration principally by drawings in this volume is not as the editor would have wished).

It seems reasonable to divide the marks so far recorded in Pentapolis into two groups: (a) quite roughly-cut single letters on unpolished surfaces which would not be visible when the inscribed objects were in position (pp. 242-3, 254-5); occasionally two such letters have been cut on the same surface but separately; all fall within the restricted alphabetic range *alpha-epsilon*: these seem likely to be assembly-guides; (b) letters which are occasionally singletons, more often two or three placed together (sometimes ligatured or presented as monograms), rather more neatly cut than those of group (a) and in positions where they would still be visible when the object was in position, although not obtrusively so (illus. 35, 196): it seems a reasonable conjecture that they give the abbreviated names of craftsmen or the headmen of workshops. It seems sometimes to be assumed that all examples of each combination refer to the same man; but some of the names implied are common ones (Φίλιππος and Φίλων for instance) so that caution might be wiser. It is, of course, tempting to suppose that the ΦΙ who appears on an impost block at el Atrun is identical with the ΦΙ known from one in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and perhaps with the ΦΙ of various capitals/impost-blocks at Constantinople; equally that MAK (presumably for Macarius) who appears on column-shafts and a plinth in the West Church at el Atrun is the MAK who appears on a marble slab (presumably cut from a block bearing his name) at Gasr el Lebia, and perhaps with a man who signed a column-shaft in a quarry at Aliko (see above), as well as other columns in Constantinople; and that ΤΡΥ (presumably for Tryphon) who appears on a plinth in the East Church at el Atrun is also the ΤΡΥ whose

⁴⁸ The reading, it must be admitted, is based on a photograph only.

⁴⁹ See pp. 445-7.

⁵⁰ It is not quite clear how far his argument depends on the view that marble items from the Aliko quarry are found at el Atrun (which may be so but is not certain).

⁵¹ It is extremely easy to miss these during excavation and a careful search would probably reveal more.

monogram appears in Ravenna (S Vitale), Parenzo and in two of the cisterns at Constantinople. It may well be so; but a question-mark should remain. We should also bear in mind that if they are the same men it may be that their prefabricated productions travelled while they stayed at the place of production; but some travelling workmen are certainly attested (Sodini 1989*b*), men whose signatures appear not only on worked marbles at Constantinople but also at Philippi and at Ephesus where they figure on local as well as on imported marble. Whether any such men travelled to Pentapolis we cannot be sure—the two churches at el Atrun and the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa are the only ones in which imported marble columns are known to have been used in a large way. There was work to be done there which might justify the expense of transporting men, but on both sites a certain makeshift element is apparent in the assembly of the items—above all a quite frequent failure to make use of dowels for which holes were provided by those who had made those items—which might raise a doubt.

In the assembly of column-bases and shafts at el Atrun, lead disks were used (illus. 192). To use lead as a strengthener poured molten around dowels is a standard ancient technique, but lead disks such as Widrig found are difficult to parallel, although occasional examples are known. They could be related to the lead plates by which Justinian is said to have strengthened the piers of S. Sophia in Constantinople, according to the most satisfactory account of his work, Paul the Silentiary's *Descriptio S. Sophiae* 476-80. There is no evidence that lead disks were a standard Cyrenaican usage (although I have found so little published evidence anywhere for them that this is hardly significant).⁵² Was there then an imported master builder from Constantinople who introduced them at el Atrun? or did instructions for them come from Constantinople with the plans for galleries (if these were a new development in Cyrenaica, as Krautheimer proposed), since they might be held to require extra strengthening of the nave arcades? or did a local builder (or someone present who had, as it happened, been in Constantinople or some other place where the technique was in use) introduce it on their own initiative?

Specific fittings

The main altars were placed more or less centrally within the chancels. Each of those known to us consisted of a rectangular base prepared with seatings for an appropriate number of colonnettes to carry the table; the size seems to have varied with the size of the church. The bases known to us are sometimes of marble, sometimes of stone, normally plain (but moulded in the East Church at el Atrun); two were enlarged at an unknown date by surrounds of plastered limestone (el Atrun West Church, Gasr el Lebia East Church, illus. 186, 220), with a rough step added on the side of the apse at Gasr el Lebia East Church—if intended for the priest, as Ward-Perkins suggested, that would imply that he officiated facing the nave, but this is questioned by Duval 1989*b*, 2772.

The surviving altar tables are normally of white marble (but Duval 1989*b*, 2775 reports a fragment of a round table in coloured marble in the West Church at el Atrun); and, at least in some churches, they were covered by elaborate canopies upheld by marble colonnettes. There is evidence for these in the Central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa (illus. 29), in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia, at Ras el Hilal, and probably in both churches at el Atrun (although not in the excavator's view). The rock-cut canopy over what appears to be an altar in the crypt at Umm Heneia el Garbia (illus. 315) may suggest that a canopy was a common feature and of course it may often have been of local stone.

⁵² Orlandos 1966, 99-112. The advice of Dr J. J. Coulton has been especially helpful here. He points to an example of a similar practice in archaic Samos, but believes that it was not normal in the Greek period, though probably commoner in the Roman, and perhaps more so in Byzantine churches. There is a helpful note on Constantinopolitan practice in Dagron 1984, 236, n.111 (kindly brought to notice by Prof. Robin Cormack). Procop. *Aed.* I.i.53 wrote of pouring lead into the interstices and is generally thought to have given a garbled version of the standard procedure; the same is true of the anonymous *Narratio de Templo S. Sophiae* 13 which refers to dowels but does not mention lead. A serious study of the archaeological evidence is badly needed.

As far as Reynolds is aware the East Church at el Atrun is the only one in which there has been a probe below the altar; it revealed no sign of relics there, in contrast to common practice in churches of the Maghreb. On the other hand the presumptive altar in the crypt at Umm Heneia el Garbia has a hollow base which could well have held them.

Subsidiary altars have also been found—notably the chest-like structures in the probable *Martyria* of the West Church at el Atrun and at Ras el Hilal; while at el Atrun and at Ras el Hilal there are several additional marble altar tables including one that is *sigma*-shaped (illus. 182; original locations uncertain).

There are no complete **ambones** or pulpits, but five sets of two or three steps which, presumably, led to wooden platforms (cf. illus. 50). These are of re-used marble in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, local stone in the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa, the East Church at Cyrene, the West Church at el Atrun, and at Ras el Hilal. On the set at Cyrene an inscription (probably an acclamation) has been roughly cut on the top step. On the sets at Apollonia/Sozusa East Church and at Ras el Hilal crosses are carved on the sides.

At el Atrun and Ras el Hilal the steps were found *in situ*, within the chancel, set up against the screen and facing the nave, to the right of the entry from the nave. In the West Church at Apollonia/Sozusa they were found in the chancel but the excavator believes that the condition of the chancel-floor in the appropriate area indicates that they were dumped there after Christian use of the building ceased, having originally stood outside it in the body of the nave. The other two sets were found re-used. The type of pulpit and the attested locations appear to be unusual (so Duval 1989*b*, 2775).

For re-use of **limestone columns**, see above. Re-use of **marble columns** in the arcades and elsewhere, especially to carry the arch in front of the apse, is clear at Apollonia/Sozusa and Cyrene, although not so far attested at Berenike (where, of course, no church in the centre of the city has survived), nor at Ptolemais nor Taucheira; it appears occasionally in rural churches (for instance probably at el Merj and perhaps at Gasr el Harami). Columns of newly imported marble have been found in the Central and West Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa, and in both churches at el Atrun, but not certainly anywhere else. The same goes for the bases and plinths on which they stood, but it should be noted that the bases might be imported in quarry-state and used without further carving (as in the central Church at Apollonia/Sozusa).

The marble **capitals** and **impost blocks** fall into several groups: (a) those of re-used marble, which are especially well represented in the East and Central Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa. Some can still be examined in the East Church and show up as work of quite high quality (illus. 20-25);⁵³ it is natural to assume that they were carved by local craftsmen, but the possibility of immigrant masons should not be ignored; (b) those of newly-quarried marble of which one at least arrived at el Atrun in roughed-out quarry-state and was never finished, while the rest of those known to us were almost certainly imported in virtually finished condition (the Central and West Churches at Apollonia/Sozusa, both churches at el Atrun). The imported columns, bases, capitals and imposts may carry masons' marks, which can be paralleled elsewhere (see above).

Most of the marble **screens** used to define the chancels and the corridors leading from them into the naves, to block the nave arcades or to serve as parapets in the galleries, along with the posts that supported them where necessary, seem to have been of imported marble, prefabricated before shipment to a virtually finished condition⁵⁴ so that they required very little work to adapt them for use on arrival. It is possible that more of those found were of re-used marble than has been appreciated; but even if that were so there would still be a predominance of imported new ones and an interestingly wide distribution of them. The screens carry a rather

⁵³ It is now virtually impossible to examine them in the Central Church where the capitals concerned have been replaced in position on the limestone columns flanking the west end of the nave.

⁵⁴ The presence of such screens in the Marzamemi wreck (Kapitän 1969; 1980) appears to answer the doubts expressed by Duval 1989*b*, 2754 as to whether screens can have been prefabricated.

limited range of reliefs normally featuring crosses in geometric settings (illus. 113-16, 183, 197, 198). The **posts** are normally rectangular in section, on a low moulded base, with a simple rectangular moulding on each side and additionally grooved to receive screen ends as necessary, and with a plain finial (so illus. 31, 201); very occasionally a more elaborate type was used incorporating a colonnette (sometimes called a columnar post in the text), as in the Central Church at Cyrene (illus. 121-24). At el Atrun, Duval 1989*b* has identified a handrail (visible in illus. 186), an item which may exist, but has not been recognised on other sites. Posts and/or screens have been reported in the cities of Apollonia/Sozusa (all the intramural churches), Cyrene (both intramural churches) and the villages or small towns of el Atrun, el Merj and/or neighbourhood, Gasr Bandis, Gasr el Bania, Gasr el Lebia, Gusur Khalita, Siret el Bab.

There is one strong candidate for interpretation as a holy-water **basin** or **stoup**, a re-used pagan altar in the East Church at Cyrene (illus. 111). But there was also a marble basin in the collection formerly at el Merj, probably from Barka or the neighbourhood, and perhaps another from el Atrun, East Church.

Window mullions consist in essence of two oval-shaped half-columns, linked by a flat central area, with simple bases and capitals (illus. 107, 153). While most of those known are of limestone, one of marble was found (probably loose) in Berenike which has all the appearance of being a prefabricated imported piece, and another in the East Church at Cyrene, while there is one unprovenanced in Tolmeita Museum, possibly from el Merj or its neighbourhood.

For **flooring**, marble flags which may have been cut from newly-imported blocks are found at el Atrun and Gasr el Lebia; marble of various kinds was also used in *opus sectile* floors (Apollonia/Sozusa West Church, Cyrene Central Church, el Atrun West Church) and in mosaics, but it seems to be implied by Ward-Perkins' text that he thought that for both purposes there was an adequate supply of marble imported earlier which could be re-used. Analysis of the marble used for flagging would be useful. The one possible fact that the Cyrenaican evidence can offer at present is that a mason's mark which appears several times on columns and on an imported prefabricated plinth at el Atrun is probably identical with one found on a marble flag at Gasr el Lebia (MAK); and there is a chance that this has also been found on a finished column left in a quarry at Aliko on Thasos (see above and under Gasr el Lebia, *Inscriptions*, no. A 2).

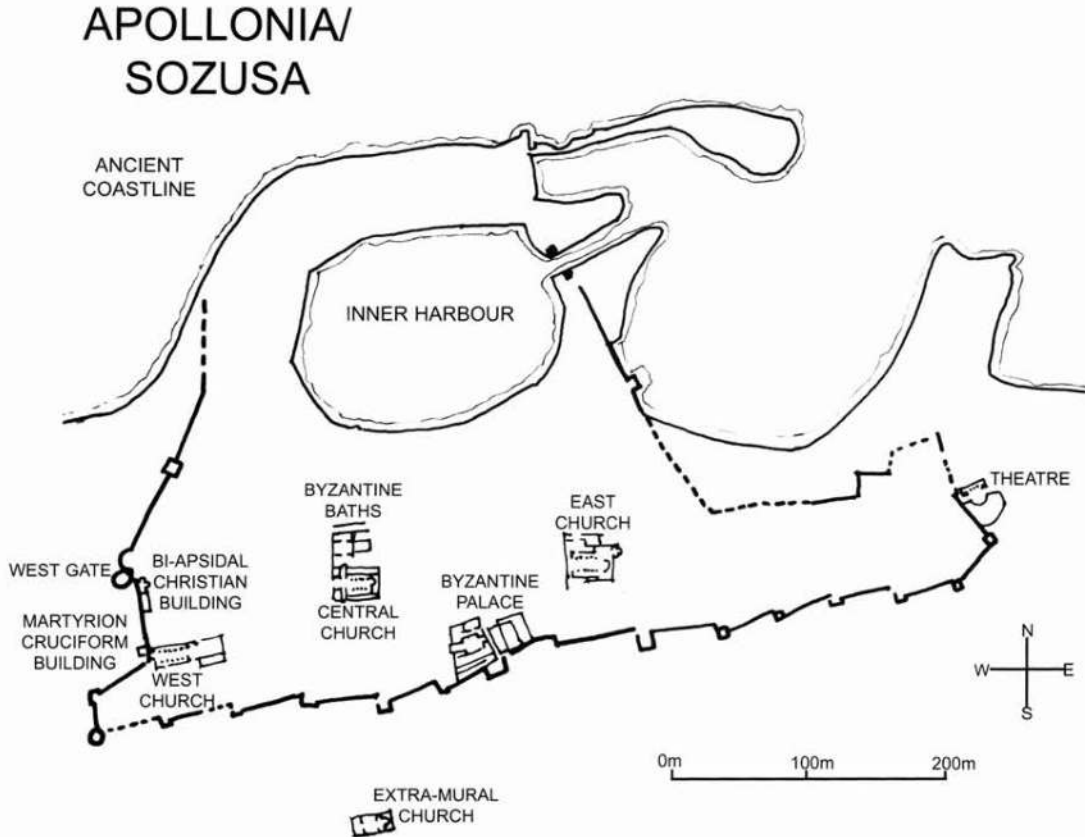
The two marble **reliquaries**, one from the 'Palace' Chapel at Apollonia/Sozusa and the other from Gasr Stablous were both no doubt imported in finished state (illus. 65, 343). Although prefabricated, therefore, they seem to belong in a different category from columns, column bases, capitals, screens and posts, whose production was a kind of mass-production. Sodini 1989*b* notes that we do not know where they were made. The presence of one at Gasr Stablous is an example of the distribution of imported marbles on the Gebel at a distance from the sea.

Section 1

The cities of Pentapolis

The Pentapolis

1. **Apollonia/Sozusa** (mod. Marsa Susa), illus. 1-72: four churches, a chapel within a 'palace', perhaps a *martyrion*, a Christian funerary chamber, another Christian building of uncertain purpose, various inscriptions and small finds; two bishops certainly attested, two more conjectured.



Illus. 1. Apollonia/Sozusa, sketch plan showing location of Christian monuments (Selina Ballance).

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Strabo XVII.837; *Stad.* 52, 53, 57; Pliny *NH* V.31-2; Mela I.40; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.3; Tab. Peut.; Prisc. Pan. fr.14; Epiphan. *Haer.* 73.26; Georg. Cypr. 789; Hierocl. 732.9; Joh. Nic. ch. CVII; *Acta Conc. Seleuc.*, *ibid. Eph.* 449; Pacho 1827, 162f.; Beechey 1828, 494, 516; Barth 1849, 453; Hamilton 1856, 84f.; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 60-3; Goodchild 1971; *id.* 1976b; Pedley 1976; Reynolds 1976; Purcaro 1976, 327-8; Martin 1981, 37; Lüderitz 1983; Laronde 1985; *id.* 1996; Ellis 1985; Roques 1987, 92-5, 224-7, 326-8; *id.* 1996, 408, 411; Duval 1989a; Smith/Crow 1998, 72-3; Reynolds 2000; Dobias 2000, 251-2.

Apollonia (later named Sozusa), on the coast c.19km north of Cyrene and with quite a good harbour, was originally known as Port of Cyrene, but acquired the status of city and a distinctive name in the late Hellenistic period (first attestation in 67 BC). Its civic territory must have been carved from that of Cyrene and is unlikely to have been extensive; its overland communications were limited, even poor in some directions; its importance and prosperity must have depended on its port. Comparative ease of communication by sea, especially eastwards to Libya Inferior and Egypt, may have been a prime consideration in the decision to move the governmental head-quarters of Pentapolis from Ptolemais to Apollonia, made at an unspecified date between the middle of the fifth and the early years of the sixth centuries (see further below).

In the first century AD, the city had a significant Jewish community (revealed by inscriptions) which disappears after the Jewish Revolt of AD 115-7. The earliest unequivocal evidence for a Christian presence is in its change of name to Sozusa, first attested in the title of its bishop in the Acts of the Council of Isaurian Seleucia in AD 359, a change plausibly assigned by Roques to the reign of Constantine. Some think that one of the Pentapolitan addressees of letters on the Sabellians, written by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, c.AD 260 (Euseb. *HE* VII.26), must be a bishop of Apollonia (Euphranor or Euporos is suggested), but the city is not mentioned in the passage.

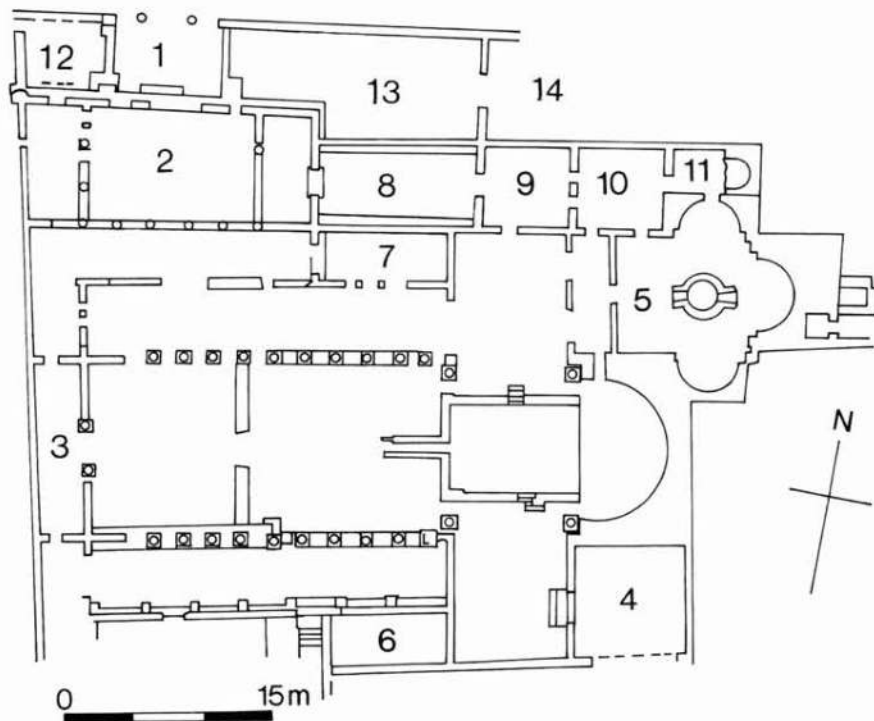
Inscriptions show that it attracted patronage from emperors of the late fourth to early fifth centuries AD (Reynolds 1976, nos. 6c, 12), but Synesius does not mention it, and there is very little information about it before the reign of Anastasius, when a copy of the imperial decree *de rebus Libycis* was set up there (Reynolds 1976, no. 37). Cut on marble, in letters which were well-designed and formed, it contrasts in quality with the copies found at Ptolemais and Taucheira (*SEG* IX.356, 414). Goodchild was surely right to argue that Apollonia/Sozusa is thus shown to be the chief city of Pentapolis by that time, the seat of the military governor and doubtless also of the subordinate civil governor; it is less clear that this came about under Anastasius, as he thought. Pedley argues for a change in the middle to later fifth century; Roques believes that it occurred between AD 443 and 449 and is to be associated with the creation of the post of *dux Pentapoleos* which he places between those years in the context of Libyan raiding on the province (see *Introduction I*).

There might be another possible pointer to the date if Goodchild was right in identifying a large building on the western hill as the 'Palace of the *Dux*'; but although he makes a strong case, it has not convinced everyone (note Duval sceptical, Ellis against). In any case, at present its dating rests uncomfortably on the evidence of coins excavated within it. They show it to have been in full occupation from c. AD 540, although they are, Goodchild thought, compatible with foundation as much as a quarter of a century earlier. As he was well aware, only excavation beneath it (for which he hoped) could give the information we need for precision. Here is a question that is still open.

There are also related and open questions concerning the defence of the city. It must be the case that the excavation of the apse of the West Church into the city-wall weakened that wall there, whether or not there was provision of a fighting platform forward of the wall on the roof of the Cruciform Building qv. Moreover Laronde (1996) has stated that the 'Palace' of the *Dux* obliterated a stretch of Sozusa's city-wall, and presumably refers to what Goodchild interpreted as the creation, in the second stage of the building's life, of a gate-house or guard-house south of the rampart (Goodchild did indeed think that this came to be used for some non-military purposes but believed it probable that it always carried a fighting-platform, and noted that it was eventually strengthened to form a defensive bastion). Pending publication of new facts, it is not necessary to suppose that the 'Palace'—and so the city—were ever undefended at any point; but we may agree with Laronde that there was a period of comparative confidence when perhaps the city's defences were allowed to run down, followed, however, by one of anxiety when they were strengthened again.¹ He is no doubt right that the inadequacy of this last work may be one reason for the final withdrawal of the *dux* to Taucheira. The withdrawal seems to be related by John of Nikiou to the Arab invasion in AD 642. The possibility of an anticipatory move a few years earlier, or, indeed, one made at the time of the temporary Persian occupation of Egypt in AD 619, should be borne in mind (see now also Crow in Smith/Crow 1998).

The number and the quality of the Christian monuments of Apollonia/Sozusa have always been apparent, and contrast sharply with the number of known bishops. The only certain bishops are Heliodoros, present at the Council of Isaurian Seleucia in AD 359, an Arian, subsequently involved outside the province in support of Aetius, and Sosius (?Sosias or Zosimus; the form of the name is uncertain) present at Ephesus in AD 449. As stated above, some add a Euphranor or Euporos of c.AD 260; and Roques conjectures a Theodoros in c.AD 560. Theodoros is known from a papyrus as bishop of Pentapolis (Maspéro 1911, 465-6); on the face of it, that should mean that he was the

¹ It is unclear how far the period of confidence could be associated with the reign of Justinian, or with the supposed involvement of the city in the successful revolt of Heraclius against the emperor Phocas in AD 609 (Joh. Nik., ch. 117 on which see Pedley 1976, 22).



Illus. 2. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, outline plan with numbered rooms (Sheila Gibson).

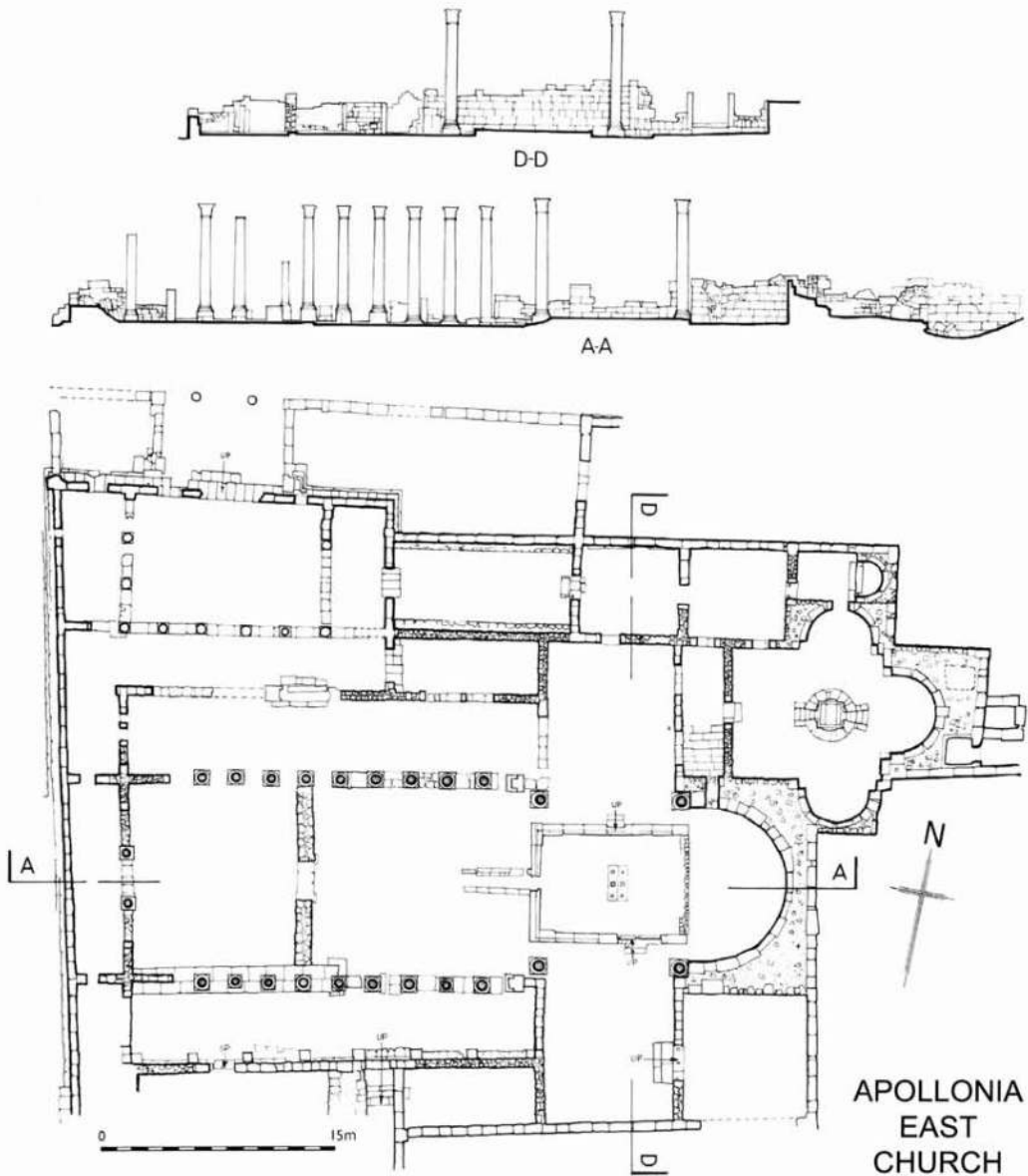
metropolitan bishop of the province, and so the bishop of Sozusa. When in Egypt, buying wine from a monastery near Hermopolis, he was accused of extorting money from the writer of the papyrus and driving him into exile—an interesting side-light on contemporary perceptions of the activities and power of a bishop.

It is remarkable that Procopius attributes no new building at Sozusa to Justinian. It may well have been adequately supplied with amenities such as baths by his time; or, some have suspected, he did not see the document which recorded Justinian's works here. But whether Ward-Perkins was right to attribute to Justinian extensive church-building in the city may now seem an open question (see also *Introduction II, Donors and Reynolds 2000*).

The West Gate of the city was blocked by a roughly-built wall of re-used material at a date estimated by White 1976, 111 as 'between AD 610 and 642'; but there seems to be no sign that Sozusa was taken by storm when the Arabs invaded in AD 642. The churches were at some stage made unfit for Christian use, but it is not clear just how soon this occurred. Life certainly continued on the site.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins had collected some information on the East and Central churches by or in 1943; but made fuller notes on all the intramural churches in 1955, supplemented them in 1958, 1969 and 1971, and added the cruciform building outside the city-wall in 1969, and the 'Palace' chapel in 1971. In 1955, the East Church was surveyed by C. A. Valentine and R. J. C. Jamieson, the Central Church by G. U. S. Corbett, and the Extramural (Triconchos) Building by R. J. C. Jamieson, probably with C. A. Valentine, and in 1969 the 'Palace' chapel by Sheila Gibson. The West Church was surveyed by Abdulhamid Abdussaid in connection with the excavation, and the cruciform building by G. R. H. Wright in connection with the work of the Michigan University Expedition to Apollonia. Details were drawn by Selina Ballance, Margaret Browne, Sheila Gibson and Sara Paton; and many of the plans were redrawn for publication by Sheila Gibson.



Illus. 3. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson).

The files contained one complete set of very brief accounts of the churches, the chapel and the cruciform building which was the basis of Ward-Perkins' publication on Apollonia's churches in the *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst I* (1966); and another of longer accounts published in the Report on the University of Michigan's work at Apollonia (Humphrey 1976). In the Michigan volume, Ward-Perkins made it clear that he would provide more details in his own projected volume on Cyrenaican Christian monuments, and more detailed accounts were indeed found for the East, Central and West Churches, and for the 'Palace' Chapel, although the last two were defective in some respects and have been supplemented here from the published versions and the notebooks. For the cruciform building the typescript was still more defective, and for the triconch building there was no fuller version, so that for both we have reproduced the published version and added supplementary notes where possible.



Illus. 4. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church before excavation.



Illus. 5. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, seen from the south-west after reconstruction.



Illus. 6. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, the atrium.

The Monuments

1. The East Church (?Cathedral),² illus. 2-25.

Bibliography

Beechey 1828, plan before p. 467; Maioletti 1930, 976-85; Ghislanzoni 1934, 431; Romanelli 1940, 273; *id.* 1943, 238-40; Ward-Perkins 1943, 125-31; *id.* 1949, 55; *id.* 1966b, 218-21; *id.* 1972, 224; *id.* 1976, 268-73; Khatchatrian 1962, 28, no. 219, 32, no. 244, 37, no. 270, 65; Nussbaum 1965, 211; Goodchild 1971, 187-8; Stucchi 1975, 135, 361, 363, 371-5, 379, 430, 435, 542; Bailey 1980, 72-3; Krautheimer 1986, 112-3, 492; Duval 1989b, 2746, 2748, 2761, 2763, 2764, 2766, 2767, 2768, 2769, 2771, 2776, 2780, 2782, 2783, 2784, 2785, 2787; Laronde 1996, 30-2; Bonacasa Carra 1998. For the mosaics, Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 9f., 61, 79-90, 150.

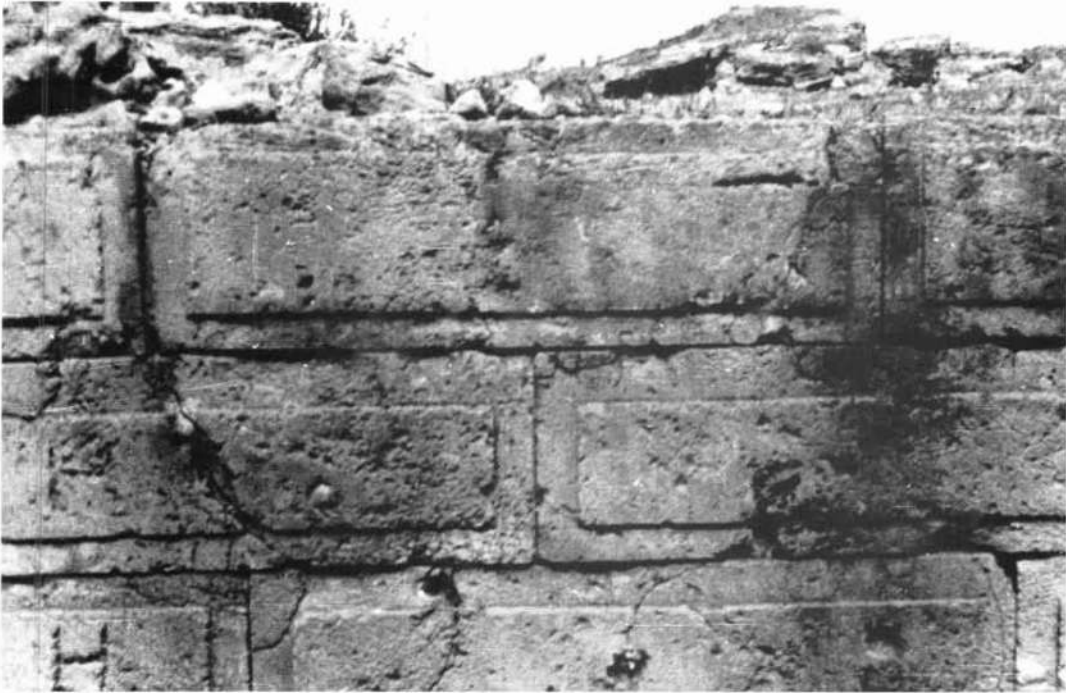
Discovery

The building was largely, but not completely, excavated and restored by Italian archaeologists before the Second World War, and short accounts of it appeared in Romanelli 1940 and 1943. Illustration 4 shows the site before the excavation; illustration 5 shows the church after restoration. Further excavation and consolidation were undertaken by the Department of Antiquities under Goodchild's direction in 1954-6, but excavation is still not complete in the annexes.

Description

Large transeptal basilica, with atrium, baptistery and other annexes (illus. 3), situated about 250m to the east of the Central Church. This is one of the

² It is not certain that it should be called a cathedral, but its size and central position (see n. 3) make it credible.



Illus. 7. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, masonry of the pre-Christian building.



Illus. 8. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, the nave, seen from the chancel.

relatively few Cyrenaican churches that are unquestionably of pre-Byzantine date; and it embodies a number of unusual features, notably the transeptal plan and its extensive use of classical *spolia*, which, at the time of construction, were evidently still in ready supply. It was restored, with some additions and modifications by Justinian,³ but the main structure remains that of the fifth-century building. There are fine mosaics of both periods.

The Pre-Christian Building

The western part of the church and the atrium (illus. 6) occupied the site, and used some of the outer walls and internal footings, of a monumental building, probably late Hellenistic in date, which seems to have been still standing when it was first decided to build the church. This earlier building was approximately rectangular in plan, measuring 10.5m across the north façade by at least 52m from north to south, which is the visible excavated length of the surviving west front. The slight irregularity of layout, which accounts for the corresponding irregularities in the plan of nave and atrium, no doubt reflects the alignments of the contemporary street-plan.⁴

The main façade lay on the north side, which was decorated with shallow pilasters at the outer angles and two more placed symmetrically on either side of the central door, which later became the main door into the atrium of the church. Moving southwards, there was a transverse wall on the line of the south nave-colonnade of the church, another on the line of the outer south wall, which marks the limit of the excavated area. Beyond this point the line of the west wall is now obscured, but photographs and drawings made at the time of the original excavation show that it continued some distance beyond the southern limit of the church. Apart from the outer walls and the two transverse walls, the only other feature now visible which is certainly earlier than the church, and which almost certainly belongs to this building, is a flight of stairs just outside the south wall of the church, in the angle between it and the room that projects westwards from the south transept (illus. 2, room 6). At the corresponding point on the west side, the footings of the outer wall show a similar rise, and there is a sudden steepening of the slope opposite the outer south wall of the church. All of this suggests that the early building was terraced upwards from north to south, and that there may well be a corresponding flight of steps, still unexcavated, just inside the west wall opposite the south end of the narthex corridor.

³ There is unfortunately no evidence to show specifically who was responsible for the additions and modifications. Their attribution to Justinian was derived originally from a belief that the Libyas were neglected and continually ravaged by raiders until his reign (Ward-Perkins 1943) and seemed to be confirmed by the argument that all were more or less contemporary with the Justinianic second-period mosaics (which Duval doubts); the date could, perhaps, be right, but not the attribution of the work to the emperor, which is not supported by Procopius.

⁴ Following recent excavation, Laronde 1996 has reported that, north of the public building which preceded the church, there was a large open area defined by an impressive wall whose line, where it is known, ran alongside the city's main east/west road and also an important north/south one. This area, he argues, is likely to have been the civic *agora*, and he supports the case for the character of the inscriptions available for re-use in the church. The selection of a site in the *agora* for a major church, if the identification is accepted, would be of obvious relevance to the history of civic development. It would also provide a reason why the builders did not add a substantial narthex and an axial door from it into the street to the west of the church, but placed their main entry on the north, giving into the *agora*, where, it seems, the entry to the preceding building had been.

As Bailey has now pointed out, the Beecheys' plan of the church shows walls extending to the south, while their plan of the city shows a whole rectangular building with its long axis at right-angles to the church which may possibly be discernible also on a pre-war aerial photograph (Caputo 1940). Despite the shortcomings of these plans, their indications would be worth following up.

Apart from the curious elongation of its plan the most distinctive feature of this building is its masonry (illus. 7). This is laid in regular courses of stretchers, each block of which is 1.18m long and 0.35m high and has a sharply cut decorative draft, 6.6cm wide and 1cm deep. The joints are bevelled. Rather surprisingly there is no attempt to produce a symmetrical bond by bringing the vertical joints of alternate courses perpendicularly above each other (as was common in the architecture of Augustan Cyrene, Ward-Perkins/Ballance 1958, 165); but in all other respects this is an extremely regular, carefully finished masonry. In most cases, though not invariably, the bottom course of stretchers rested on a course of headers, similarly drafted and projecting 0.34-0.35m from the main wall-face, and this in turn rested on an even wider footing of plain stretchers.

The north and west walls seem to have been incorporated relatively intact within the structure of the church; and perhaps also the transverse wall corresponding to the outer south wall of the church. The other surviving transverse wall was stripped down to the lowest visible course of drafted header blocks, and this, strengthened and widened, was used to carry the western part of the south nave colonnade. The east wall was very largely demolished, although the footings served to carry the east wall of the atrium.

The only clue to the date of this early building is the style of its masonry; and for this there fortunately exists one close parallel in Cyrenaica, the west gate at Tolmeita (Kraeling 1962, 58-60). This is in some ways finer work, with alternate courses of headers and stretchers bonded to a regular, repeating pattern, but the quality of the drafting of the individual blocks and the general effect of light and shadow are both very similar. The gate at Tolmeita is not precisely dated but is certainly Hellenistic, and the building at Apollonia may confidently be assigned to the same period.

The Fifth-Century Church Complex⁵

The local stone is a concreted quaternary sandstone, quarried from the ridge on which the city stands, easily carved when fresh and durable enough when protected with a facing of stucco. Except where the church incorporates earlier walling the majority of the masonry is a version of the familiar mortared rubblework,⁶ faced with courses of very approximately squared small blocks (illus. 9) and liberally strengthened at appropriate points (quoins, door-jambs etc.) with large up-ended blocks of squared stone (illus. 10); tied in, in elevation, with similar blocks laid horizontally. The apse and a few other walls are of dressed stone.

This is a masonry which lends itself to piecemeal construction, reconstruction and restoration, and it is very easy to miss (and almost as easy to imagine) significant structural joints. Fortunately the sixth-century restorers used a

⁵ There is no conclusive evidence for the date of first construction; Romanelli, with reservations, suggested between the fifth and sixth centuries; Stucchi, arguing from the building techniques and free use of spolia, put this among the earliest surviving Cyrenaican churches, built around the middle of the fifth century, perhaps even earlier; Krautheimer proposed c. 400 but thought it possibly rebuilt at roughly the same date as the Menas basilica at Abu-Mena in Egypt; and in 1976 Ward-Perkins opted for a little earlier than the mid-fifth century but not much, essentially on the basis of the architectural parallel with Abu Mena and to some extent of the earlier mosaics; but the relevant church at Abu Mena is now put at earliest in the second half of the fifth century (following recent excavation, Grossman 1989, 134), and Rosenbaum's parallels for the mosaics range from the late fourth to the early sixth century, so are too open-ended to give convincing support. Excavation under the foundations is the only way to a more satisfactory solution.

⁶ See *Introduction II*, 'Building materials and techniques'.



Illus. 9. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, faced-rubble wall.



Illus. 10. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, orthostats used in faced-rubble construction.

mortar that is readily distinguishable from that of their predecessors, and the main lines of the earlier building are nowhere in serious doubt.

Except for the baptistery and adjoining structures, the whole complex seems to have been built on one occasion. It consists of a broad, three-aisled nave; a projecting transept; a single eastern apse, which was probably flanked originally by a pair of plain, square chapels; and, built into the north end of the pre-church building, an atrium, from which a narrow corridor extended across the west end of the nave to form a diminutive narthex. Two small rooms in the angles between the nave and the transept, and a range of rooms along the north side of the complex are probably also original features.

For convenience of reference these rooms are numbered in the plan reproduced in *illus. 2*.

The Nave

Exclusive of the western narthex-corridor, the nave (*illus. 8*) is just over 25m long, with a central span of 12m and aisles of 4.5m. Nave and aisles are separated by two colonnades, each of nine re-used columns of green Carystian (*cipollino*) marble, ending towards the east in an elongated pier of masonry with a carved responding pilaster, and towards the west in a short projecting wall with a plain squared orthostat. The columns, found fallen and now re-erected, are of three different sizes, columns 1-6 of the north colonnade (from the west) being shorter than columns 7-9 by about 0.65m, and columns 1-3 of the south colonnade shorter again by another 0.85m; the difference is made up by means of square plinths of masonry, the irregularities of which were no doubt masked in stucco. The column-bases and capitals, nearly all of which have survived, come from two or three closely related sets, all of second-century or third-century date, and are all cut in a rather dull grey or blackish-grey coarse-grained marble, a rather poor-quality Greek marble that was extensively imported into Cyrenaica. There is now no trace either of a flat architrave or of arches, nor does there seem to be any record of the discovery of either during the excavations. There are, however, numerous impost-blocks (see below), some of which almost certainly came from the nave; and the narrow spacing of the columns within the colonnades is a further indication that the impost-blocks carried an arcade.⁷

At the west end of the nave a wide and lofty doorway, flanked by a pair of *cipollino* columns (*illus. 8*), opened into the central compartment of the narthex-corridor; and there was a substantial masonry screen right across the central nave opposite column 4 of the arcade, dividing it into two roughly equal parts.

Of the outer wall of the south nave-aisle, the western half is built of re-used blocks of sandstone, resting for the greater part of its length on the footing and one drafted stretcher-course of one of the transverse walls of the Hellenistic building and, for a short distance opposite column 6, on the substructures of a flight of steps belonging to the same building. The eastern half, from column 7 to the transept, is of much flimsier, orthostat-and-faced-rubble construction, and was probably an internal wall, the outer perimeter of the complex swinging out at this point to incorporate the small rectangular room (room 6) in the angle between the nave and the transept. Along the whole length of the inner face of the aisle-wall there ran a low stone bench, interrupted at regular intervals by projecting orthostats. There is a small door opposite column 2. The

⁷ For this problem see also El Atrun and Ras el Hilal (section 2).

area beyond it has not yet been excavated, and it is uncertain therefore whether it constituted a secondary entrance to the church or merely led into some annexe not yet explored.

The corresponding wall of the north aisle was of poor faced-rubble construction throughout its length, and much of it has now collapsed. A wide door opposite columns 1–3 (there are substantial remains of the threshold) was the main entrance into the church from the atrium, and there was probably a smaller door into room 7 (shown by one fallen orthostat and what is probably the seating of another). At the west end another door led into the northernmost compartment of the narthex-corridor, and at the east end there was an arch leading into the north transept. There are also several stretches of paving, mostly of square or rectangular slabs (0.50–0.60m) of brown stone, patched here and there with irregular fragments of marble.

The Transept and South-east Chapel (room 4)

Running right across the east end of the nave and projecting some 3m beyond it on either side are the remains of a spacious transept, measuring internally almost exactly 8m by 30m. In plan it falls into three distinct sections: two plain rectangular wings, and a central crossing carried on four lofty *cipollino* columns, which enclose an area of 9m by 10.5m (measured from centre to centre). The area beneath the crossing contained the chancel and was, therefore, functionally distinct. It was, however, in no other sense a tripartite transept. Not only were the nave-aisles separated from the transept by arches, of which the north jamb of that on the north side is still in place; but the two western columns of the crossing also were set well in from the line of the nave colonnades (illus. 8 shows the southwestern one), giving decisive emphasis to the distinction between nave and transept. The two eastern columns were, on the other hand, recessed into the shoulders of the apse.

The outer wall of the south transept is built of squared masonry (illus. 11) and is continuous, both westwards to its junction with the flank of the steps of the earlier building, and eastwards to enclose the square room that opens off the transept to the south of the apse (room 4). This was evidently the outer wall of the complex, the remaining walls being of faced-rubble-and-orthostat construction, except for the short stretch of the east wall which adjoins the more solid masonry of the apse. Despite the apparent absence of any entrance from inside the church into the small room in the angle between the nave and the transept (room 6), this must nevertheless have been an original feature, as was certainly also the chapel in the south-east angle (room 4). The latter, which is entered up two steps,⁸ is quite plain internally; it was almost certainly built as one of a pair of symmetrically-placed angle-chapels,⁹ of which the northern one was later demolished to make way for the baptistery (room 5).

The north transept echoes the south but contains both earlier and later features. The north wall contains work of several dates. The south-east corner of room 9 is that of an earlier structure built of large stone blocks laid in courses 0.39–0.55m high. Westwards from this point the line of the east-west wall is continuous through to the north wall of the atrium, built in a rather poor faced-rubble masonry containing no mortar; and similar masonry is continuous east-

⁸ In the 1955 notebook Ward-Perkins wrote that these steps are contemporary with or earlier than the Period 2 mosaic in the south transept; Duval 1989*b* seems to regard them as later.

⁹ Duval 1989*b*, 2750 suggests that it may have been a *martyrion*.



Illus. 11. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, south-east transept, with south and east walls.

wards through into the north-west corner of what later became the baptistery. Though it is very doubtful whether so poorly-built a wall could have been intended as an outer wall (contrast the outer wall of the south transept and of its adjoining chapel), it was nevertheless an important feature of the original layout, and a number of secondary walls, some contemporary and some later, were built up against it. One that is certainly contemporary is the west wall of the transept (the east wall of room 7), which turns westwards to become the north wall of the north aisle and which is built in an even poorer faced-rubble convention. One that is certainly later is the west wall of the baptistery. The corresponding wall of the baptistery narthex, i.e. the east wall of the transept, is now largely a modern rebuild, but the two ends are of pre-Byzantine work and are consistent with the hypothesis that the baptistery replaced an originally square room (room 5) comparable to the chapel (room 4) on the south side of the apse.

In short, if one allows for the pre-existing structures and for the changes wrought by the builders of the sixth-century baptistery, one can see that the north transept, as originally laid out, was almost exactly symmetrical with the south. The differences are only constructional. Whereas the outer south wall was the limit of the building in this direction, the north wall was planned from the outset to be an internal wall, separating the church proper from the buildings of the north wing.

The Apse and Chancel

The chancel is a raised rectangular enclosure (10.1m by 10.6m) which occupied the greater part of the crossing. Though modified in detail by the Justinianic builders, it appears to belong in outline to the original layout. This is certainly true of the east side, where the sandstone step which retained it not only supports the surviving patch of original chancel-mosaic at a level above that of the rest of the transept-floor but is also the eastern limit of the similarly pre-Justinianic apse-mosaic.



Illus. 12. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church. Chancel mosaic and part of altar base.

Traces of what was probably the original screen can be seen on the north side, where there is a 0.12m groove all along the top of the step, interrupted by a small pair of steps up from the transept floor (implying a gate in the screen) almost exactly on the north-south axis. This contrasts with the other two sides, which bear traces of a broader groove (0.30–0.35m) set well back from the edge. There is what looks like the socket for a chancel post at the west end of this line (i.e. at the south-west corner of the chancel) and towards the east end of the south side there is the cutting for a single step up. Along the west side the footing for a long entrance-passage (4.20m) projects down the axis of the nave (visible in *illus. 8*),¹⁰ and to the north of this point the whole of the outer edge of the platform has been trimmed back some 0.30-0.35m.

The altar has gone, but the excavators found the base for it, loose within the chancel area; it is now replaced. It consists of two *cipollino* slabs, sawn from columns and bearing the seatings for six altar colonnettes (partly visible in *illus. 12*).

The apse opens directly off the crossing between the eastern pair of columns which stand in prepared cut-aways in the two shoulders. The semi-circular inner face is of dressed stone masonry, laid in regular courses 0.38-0.50m high and preserved in places to a height of eight courses. The rectilinear outer face

¹⁰ Duval 1989*b*, 2772 believes that two stages of this passage are visible.

rests on a massive socle of dressed stone, but above this it was faced with courses of smaller squared blocks (five courses = 1.12m), still visible at the point where the added masonry of the baptistery overlaps and has preserved the earlier wall-face; the core is of earth and rubble. In the north flank (now somewhat obscured by restoration) there is a small blocked door, which must have communicated with the chapel that was demolished to make way for the baptistery.

The whole apse was paved with a mosaic, two-thirds of which are preserved. It should be remarked that this mosaic was laid at the level of the floor of the transept as a whole rather than that of the chancel. Though closely related, apse and chancel were functionally distinct, a distinction that was probably emphasized by a continuation of the chancel-screen across the east side of the enclosure.

Found built into the inner face of the apse, and since extracted, were three blocks of a monumental inscription dating probably from the joint reign of Valentinian, Valens and Gratian, AD 367-375.¹¹

For the mosaics of the apse and chancel, see below.

The Atrium, Porch and Narthex

The part of the Hellenistic building that lay to the north of the outer wall of the nave was converted by the builders of the church into a small courtyard with covered porticoes on three sides (room 2), while the narrower strip that lay to the west became a corridor, or miniature narthex, divided into three intercommunicating compartments which opened respectively into the central nave and into the two lateral aisles (room 3).

The atrium (illus. 6) was laid out symmetrically, with porticoes on the three sides facing the main entrance which, like that of the earlier building, lay in the middle of the north wall. The columns stood on tall cubical plinths, with Attic bases and elaborate Corinthian capitals, all cut in local stone, and a number of voussoirs in the same material show that they carried arches. There were three columns on the east and west sides, inclusive of the angle columns, and six on the south. The east wall follows the line and makes use of the footings of the Hellenistic building, and there are the rather indeterminate remains of two doors opening respectively into rooms 7 and 8. The west portico opens directly into the narthex-corridor, which is very narrow, and, apart from the transverse partitions (which have a structural function in relation to the nave arcades), featureless.

In front of the entrance to the atrium, corresponding to the central bay of the façade of the earlier building, there was a projecting porch (room 1). This has been badly robbed, and the remains are further obscured by those of very late buildings; but the position is clearly marked by a pair of re-used marble column-bases, their tops flush with the surviving pavement, which are all that remains of the two columns *in antis* of the entrance façade. As commonly in Christian architecture, the central span is wider than the two outer spans. Of the two flanking walls of the porch that of the west side has been almost entirely stripped; all that can now be determined is that it was built up against the scar of one of the pilasters of the earlier building. Rather more of the east wall has survived. It, too, was built up against one of the earlier pilasters, but

¹¹ Reynolds 1976, no. 12 with her plate 61. Since they show no signs of the curvature necessary for use in an apse, Goodchild rejected the implication of Oliverio 1933, 418 that they were part of its original structure.

it can also be seen to have been furnished with a heavy classical moulding of its own, which is carried round the square pier or buttress set in the angle between the porch and the façade of the atrium.

The fact that the atrium lies to the flank of the church and not on the main axis has no liturgical significance.¹²

The site was bounded on the north and west by streets that were still in use. That on the north side in particular was one of the principal streets of the city, and the Hellenistic building, of which the builders of the church were glad to make full use, already opened off it.¹³

The North Wing

Opening off the east side of the atrium there is a range of intercommunicating rooms, providing direct access to the baptistery and to the north transept of the church. The easternmost of these rooms (room 11) is certainly contemporary with the baptistery and is described below; apart from the wall between rooms 8 and 9, which belongs to the earlier building already referred to in connection with the north transept, the other three rooms are similar in construction to the rest of this part of the church and were probably built at the same time. The north wall is of re-used ashlar blocks throughout, and on the analogy of the southern half of the church must be considered as the north outer wall of the church complex. The remaining walls are of faced rubble; that between rooms 9 and 10 is bonded into the north wall of the transept. A single door opens from room 9 into the north transept, and two more from room 10 into the transept and the baptistery antechamber respectively. The south wall of room 8 is ruinous; two kerb-like features suggest that it was a mere passageway to room 9 and very possibly open to the sky, an arrangement which would greatly have simplified the roofing of the adjoining rooms. The other two rooms are now featureless.

There is also an outer range of rooms (rooms 12, 13, 14) along the street-frontage, on either side of the porch. The room to the west (room 12), in the angle of the two streets, is very ruinous indeed, but was presumably a part of the church complex; it was, perhaps, a porter's lodge. There is nothing, on the other hand, to show that rooms 13 and 14, which were connected to each other by a broad door, belonged to the church. There may have been a door from the porch, but they may equally well have opened directly off the street.

The Sixth-century Restoration

The principal, and indeed, to our knowledge, the only substantial structural alteration undertaken in the sixth century was the remodelling of the north-east corner of the building so as to accommodate a monumental baptistery. There were minor changes in the chancel area, referred to above, and it is even possible that the marble altar as such may date from this period. To the sixth century belongs also the re-laying of the mosaic in the south transept (illus. 11-13 and Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980).

¹² Stucchi stressed the parallel with the East Church at Toera where, as here, there was a lateral entry, also probably through an atrium, and where re-used inscriptions have suggested use of a preceding civic building. Unfortunately, in the present state of excavation, too little is known either of the relevant part of that church or of the surrounding features to allow us to press the parallel usefully. There are indeed other Cyrenaican churches with lateral entries, but there again we are too ill-informed about the plans, as well as the relative dates of the buildings, to make effective comparisons.

¹³ In Laronde's reassessment of the area it was the open *agora* and not a street which lay on the north side; see n. 4.



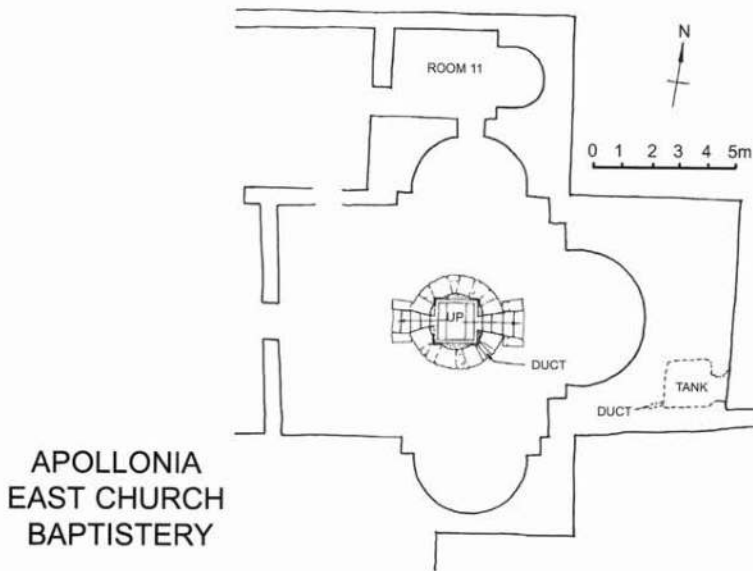
Illus. 13. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, south-east transept, showing two levels of mosaic flooring.

The Baptistry (illus. 14)

The antechamber to the west of it, and the small room 11 to the north of it are all additions to the original plan, almost certainly replacing a feature corresponding to room 5. The sequence is clearly demonstrated at the point of junction between the outer south wall of the added building and the already existing outer wall of the apse; and it finds ample confirmation in the character of the masonry, which is quite unlike that of the rest of the building. That of the baptistry complex is of two sorts: the inner faces of the three apses of the baptistry itself and of room 11 are of ashlar slabs laid in alternately tall and short courses (e.g. 0.30, 0.55, 0.29, 0.65, 0.28, 0.48 and 0.50m successively in the south apse, illus. 15); the rest is of rubble, laid in a hard white mortar containing a quantity of crushed brick and faced with courses of small, squared blocks (five courses = 1.10m). This is the only use of lime mortar in the whole building, the rubble elsewhere being packed in mud or, in at least one case, laid dry.

The antechamber was essentially a passageway, designed to give ready access to the baptistry both from the church and directly from the street, by way of the atrium and rooms 8-10, and at the same time to ensure privacy for the ceremonies taking place within the actual baptistry chamber. The three doors are carefully sited so as to avoid any direct view of the baptismal basin, and a door already existing in the flank of the apse was blocked. Some of the slab paving has survived, but the room is otherwise featureless.

The plan of the baptistry itself (illus. 14) is cruciform externally, and internally that of a *triconchos* occupying the far end of a short, broad rectangular hall, with a single door in the middle of the west side and two more doors in the north side, opening directly off rooms 10 and 11. There are recesses and seatings for small columns in the shoulders of the apses (an echo from the



Illus. 14. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church baptistery, measured plan (Sheila Gibson).

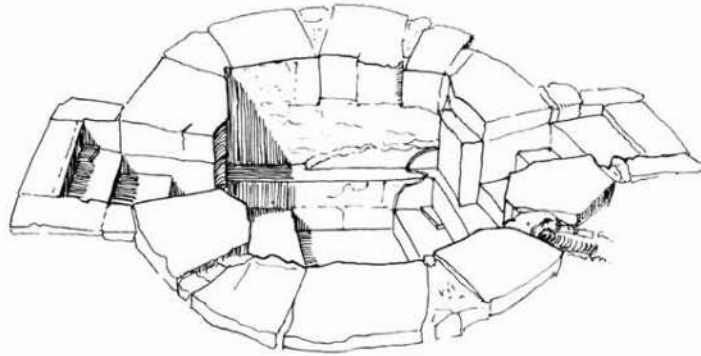


Illus. 15. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, masonry of south apse of baptistery.

architecture of the main apse of the church),¹⁴ and the apses themselves were presumably vaulted, very possibly in brick. It is, on the other hand, very unlikely indeed that the body of the hall was vaulted (the north wall is too flimsy), and there can be no question of any central dome, such as there was in the east angle-chapel (also *triconchos*) in the West Church at Ptolemais (qv). Externally the walls are of dressed stone, in 0.50m courses, and the south side of the east arm of the cross incorporates an earlier wall, which follows a slightly oblique line, parallel with that of the outer south wall of the church.

Built into the south-east angle of the central apse there is a small, square tank, with a curiously elongated barrel-vault of brick. The walls are packed with brick, laid with very wide joints in the same white mortar as the rest of the baptistery, and over

¹⁴ Ward-Perkins 1943, 127 and Goodchild 1966a, 211 noted that the walls of the baptistery had been veneered with marble (now largely lost); Duval 1989b, 2776 suggests that there may have been a *synthronon* in the eastern apse.



Illus. 16. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, baptismal basin, drawing (Sheila Gibson).

the brick there are traces of at least nine successive layers of waterproof cement. Beneath the tank there is now a void, which is all that remains of a hypocaust with an adjoining *praefurnium*. This was evidently a tank for heating the water used in the baptistery. It was fed from a second tank built into the opposite corner at a higher level, and a small outlet in the bottom south-east corner of the lower tank fed the heated water through into the baptistery, where there was presumably a tap controlling the flow to the baptistery basin.

In its present form the basin consists of a small tank, 1.50m square and 1.32m deep, recessed into the floor within a circular frame (outer diameter 3.30m) and entered by two flights of six steps each, set on the axis of the room (illus. 16, 17). It was faced with marble, of which there are now only scanty remains. This is not the original form, which was that of a much simpler, shallower basin, circular internally as well as externally. Although at first glance it may seem tempting to regard this as the baptismal basin of the first church, its position in the centre of the Byzantine baptistery clearly establishes its sixth-



Illus. 17. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, baptismal basin.



Illus. 18. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, atrium capital (limestone).



Illus. 19. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, small capital (limestone).

century date. It is just possible that the basin itself has been moved from a position within the original north-east chapel; but the only evidence for this is the absence of any trace of the earlier basin which one would have expected to find.¹⁵

Floor Mosaics

There are the remains of floor mosaics at three places—within the apse, within the chancel enclosure, and in the south transept (illus. 11-13). These fall into two sharply differentiated chronological groups, of which the earlier comprises those of the apse, chancel and original pavement of the transept, while the later are restricted to the transept where they were laid directly on top of the pre-existing pavement (both groups are fully described in Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins *cit.*). The second-period mosaic belongs unequivocally to the sixth century series of Cyrenaican mosaics found also in the Central Church and the forecomplex of the West Church at Apollonia, in the Cathedral and the Central Church at Cyrene and at Gasr el Lebia.

Carved Fittings¹⁶

1. The capitals of the nave are all of marble and are re-used from classical buildings.

2. The only capitals that are certainly of Christian manufacture are those of the atrium (*a*) and a very similar set (*b*) of which the position within the church is uncertain; they are all cut in local stone:

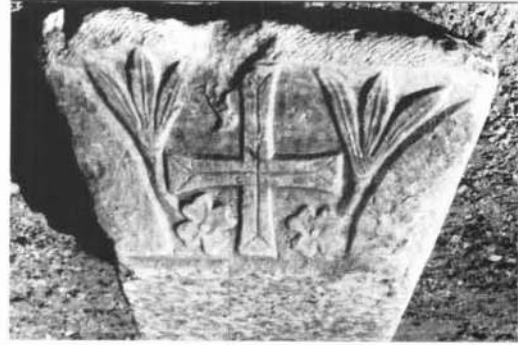
- a* Capitals of the atrium porticoes (illus. 18). Ht. 0.78-80m; across the *abacus* 0.64-0.65m diameter of circular seating 0.39-0.40m. They have rudimentary volutes and four large leaves covering the whole of the body. Of the original eight capitals, seven survive in whole or part.

¹⁵ For a possible foundation inscription see below, *Miscellaneous Inscribed Finds d.*

¹⁶ All marbles were diagnosed by eye only.



Illus. 20. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, impost block (marble).



Illus. 21. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, impost block (marble).



Illus. 22. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, part of impost block (marble).



Illus. 23. Apollonia/Sozusa: East Church, impost block (marble).

- b* Similar capitals of uncertain position, very like *a*, but slightly smaller (illus. 19); corresponding dimensions 0.70m, 0.56m, 0.29m. Four examples.

3. In addition to the above there is also a large capital from a rectangular pier, almost certainly that at the junction of nave and transept. It, too, is cut in local stone. Except for the extra leaves (a familiar classical expedient, especially in the eastern provinces) the form is that of a conventional Corinthian pilaster capital, and a classical date cannot, therefore, be excluded. The detail, however, is not at all unlike that of the atrium capitals, and it seems unlikely that capitals of this rather special size and shape would in fact have been available for re-use. It is probably contemporary with the church.

4. The following impost-blocks (all marble) were found in the Church, and, unless otherwise stated, were still there in 1969. All are carved on one face only. The dimensions are given in the order: top of the carved face (bottom of the same) x upper (lower) long side x height.

- a*, i 0.53m (0.38m) × 0.70m (0.41m) × 0.29m; white, large-crystalled Greek marble. Acanthus leaves displayed (illus. 20, see also drawing in Ward-Perkins 1943, 130, no. 6).
- a*, ii Another forming a pair with *a*, i.
- b* 0.44m (0.30m) × 0.68m (0.39m) × 0.20m; Proconnesian marble.



Illus. 24. Apollonia/Sozusa: East church, impost block (marble).



Illus. 25. Apollonia/Sozusa: East church, impost block (marble).

Monogram-cross between sprays of foliage and rosettes, the whole between two plain leaves (illus. 21, see also drawing in Ward-Perkins 1943, 128, no. 1).

- c* 0.56m (0.40m) × (0.43m) × 0.29m; coarse grey marble, probably the same as the column bases. A shallower, cruder version of *a*, i; inscribed on the end opposite the carved face; [it has not been possible to check whether this is the inscribed block, Reynolds 1976, no. 6 (see also Pugliese-Carratelli 1961, no. 201).¹⁷ Two of the inscriptions are (or are probably) of the first century AD, the third perhaps of the very late fourth or early fifth.]
- d*, i 0.47m (0.25m) × 0.65m (0.35m) × 0.26m; white, large-crystalled, Greek marble. A formal design of broad leaves with central ribs (illus. 22, see also drawing in Ward-Perkins 1943, 129, no. 3).
- d*, ii 0.45m (0.37m) × 0.62m (0.34m) × 0.23m; Proconnesian marble. A pair with *d*, i.
- e* 0.74m (0.49m) × 0.53m (0.37m) × 0.31m; Pentelic marble. Monogram-cross in a wreath between a pair of small birds and sprays of foliage; the ribbons binding the wreath end in ivy leaves (illus. 23). [In Apollonia Museum (1998). This was cut from what was probably a base for an honorary statue of the first century AD (Reynolds 1976, no. 9).]
- f* 0.68m (0.40m) × 0.55m (0.40m) × 0.30m; Pentelic marble. Symmetrical design of two entwined vine-scrolls (illus. 24). [In Apollonia Museum (1998). This was cut from a stele inscribed on three sides with lists of priests of Apollo (Reynolds 1976, no. 7; a fragment of one list is visible on the sculptured face). See note 17.]
- g* 0.68m (0.40m) × 0.56m (0.41m) × 0.26m; Pentelic marble. A scallop shell between two fish (illus. 25). [In Apollonia Museum (1998). This was cut from a stele inscribed on two sides with lists of priests of Apollo (Reynolds 1976, no. 8). See note 17.]
- h* Lower margin of carved face about 0.28m. Monogram cross with P reversed, between two plain leaves (as in *b*). [For a drawing see Ward-Perkins 1943, 129, no. 4.]

¹⁷ Pugliese 1961, nos. 201-3, wrongly attributes this and the three other impost blocks made from inscribed stelae (nos. *e*, *f*, *g* here) to the Central Church. The photographic archive of the Department of Antiquities shows that they came from the East Church.

- i* Lower margin of carved face about 0.30m. Chi-rho monogram between two plain leaves. [For a drawing see Ward-Perkins 1943, 128, no. 2].
- j* [Drawn in Ward-Perkins 1943, 130, no. 5 is another block carved with a narrow upright acanthus leaf, flanked on either side by three curvilinear features, to which it is bound, at about a third of the height above its base, by a band of similar form.]

[5. Set of white marble steps for an ambon, cut from a re-used stele which had been inscribed with an official dedication to Apollo (*SEG XX.707*), probably in the late fourth century BC. Found in 1929 in the Baptistery of the East Church (Oliverio 1961, p.40, no. 20 and his Fig. 35; see also Reynolds 1976, no. 5, with her plate 57, Laronde 1987, 148 with his Fig. 39).]

Inscriptions

The inscriptions known or likely to have been found in the church were published by Reynolds 1976, nos. 3-23, perhaps also 24, 25. Most are re-used, and in their original form constitute a group of texts of a type which might well have been found in the agora of a Graeco-Roman city; they provide part of Laronde's argument that the church site was on the Agora (see n. 4 above). Two of them honour emperors of the turn of the fourth to the fifth centuries (nos. 6 *b*, 12); a gap of some years must be allowed after that before their re-use in the Church can be envisaged.

The Christian or probably Christian texts are as follows:

1. Inscribed panel of the sixth-century mosaic in the south transept, found in 1920; now in Apollonia Museum. Reynolds 1960, no. 9, whence *SEG XVIII.760*; *ead.* 1976, no. 3 with her plate 57.3, and 1980, p. 150; Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 61. Letters, *c.* 0.09; lunate *epsilon* and *omega*.

ΝΩε

Noah

This is, so far, the only church mosaic in Cyrenaica to show a biblical scene. Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980 discussed its depiction of Noah releasing the dove from the ark, which is rather old-fashioned for its time, so Rosenbaum argued.

2. Two inscribed sandstone blocks probably from the same inscription, found in 1920 and possibly belonging to the first building phase. Lying in or beside the church. Reynolds 1960, no. 10; 1976, no. 4, with her plates 57. 3, 4*b*.

Letters, 0.18, lunate *omega*, ligatured NA .
a w. 0.54m x ht. 0.23m x d. 0.65m

· · ·]ΝΑΩΟΥ[· · ·

The church may be described here as a temple (ναός): cf. *Cyrene, Other Possible Christian Monuments*, no. 5.

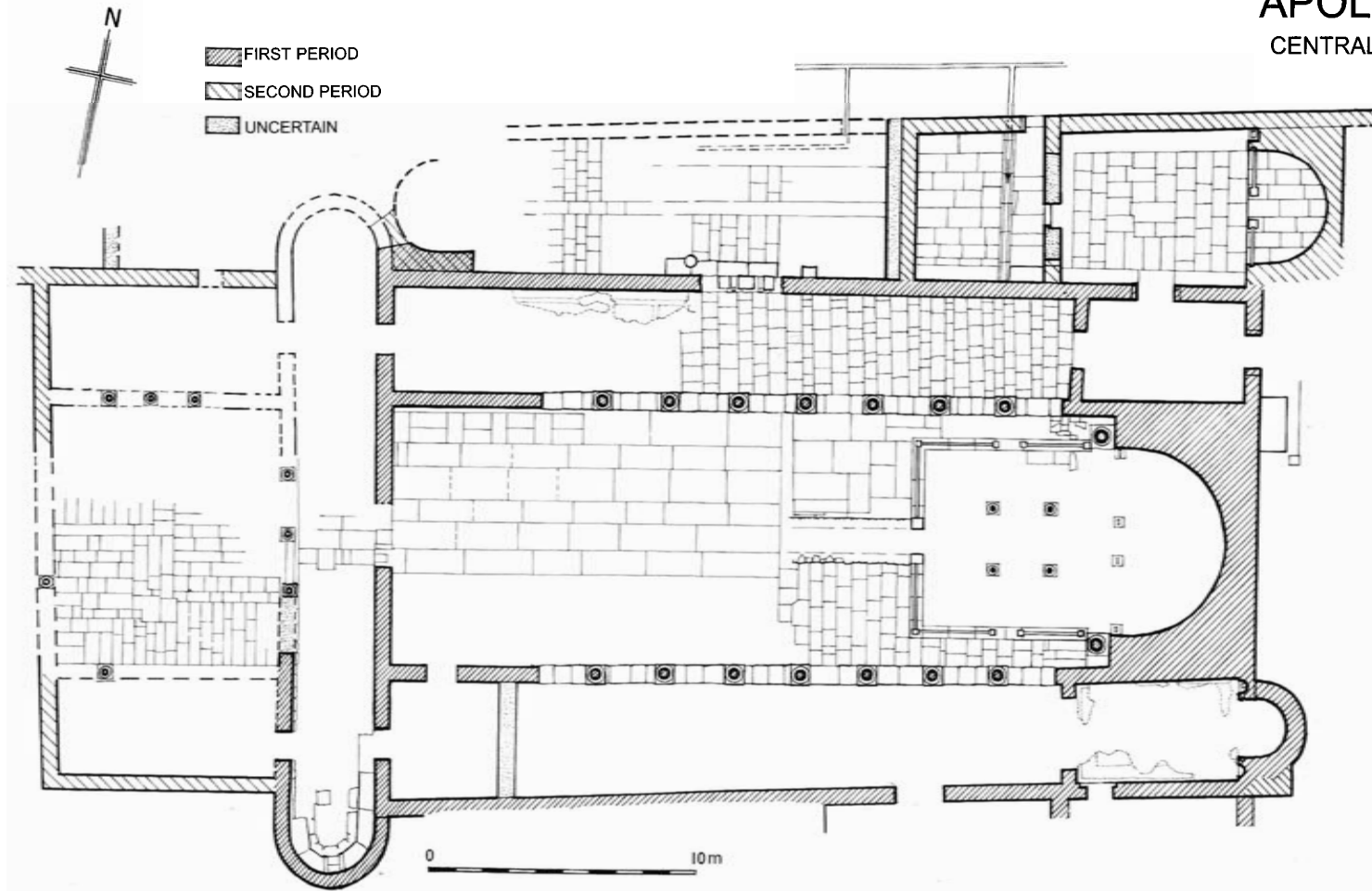
b w. 0.54m x ht. 0.23m x d. 0.65 m.

· · ·]ΩΝΑΜ[· · ·

Perhaps from the formula εἰς αἰῶνα αἰώνων Ἀμήν; "for ever and ever. Amen".

APOLLONIA

CENTRAL CHURCH



Illus. 26. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson).



Illus. 27. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, seen from the south-west after reconstruction.

2. The Central Church, illus. 26-45.

Bibliography

Beecheys 1828, plan before p.467; Ghislanzoni 1915, 157; Ward-Perkins 1943, 134 (drawing), 136; 1958, 185; 1962b, 644f.; 1966b, 221-2; 1972, 226; 1976, 273-6; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 62; Sichtermann 1959, col. 314; Goodchild 1966a, 212; 1971, 183-4; Stucchi 1975, 368-71, 399, 427; Bailey 1980, 63, 66; Krautheimer 1986, 112-3, 492; Duval 1989b, 2748, 2750, 2752-4, 2761, 2763, 2767, 2768, 2769, 2770, 2771, 2773, 2776, 2778, 2780, 2783-4, 2787; Bonacasa Carra 1998. For the mosaics, Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 90-2; for column-capitals, Sodini 1987b, figs. 4, 5; for chancel-screens, Sodini *ibid.* fig. 11.

Discovery

The excavation was begun by Caputo in 1940, and completed by the Department of Antiquities under Goodchild's direction in 1954-6; but not all the associated structures have been uncovered.

Description

Three-aisled basilical church (illus. 26, 27), with an eastern apse, situated near the middle of the city, about half way between the East and West Churches.¹ The building, which is remarkable for the completeness of its sixth-century marble fittings,² has a narthex and a small western atrium, and there is a range of added rooms along the north flank.

¹ Goodchild 1976b, 257 argued that this is the church which would most probably have been attended by the Dux and his staff, on the assumption that he has correctly identified the Palace of the Dux (see *Monument 4* below).

² The imported elements (whose date is, of course, controversial) did not suffice for all the needs of the builders; some *spolia* were required too; see also n. 3.



Illus. 28. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, east end of nave with apse, flanking columns, chancel and part of the north nave arcade.

The plan of the church itself (illus. 26) is a very simple version of the familiar sixth-century type, with an inscribed apse and four angle-chapels, the whole inscribed within a near-rectangular framework (33m × 19-20m), the slight eastward tapering of which was no doubt dictated by the alignments of whatever buildings had previously occupied this area.

The building seems to have been enlarged and modified on more than one occasion. The evidence has been somewhat obscured by the work of consolidation and restoration, but from the observations of Goodchild himself and from what is still visible it appears that both the narthex and the projecting apse of the south-east angle-chapel were at the very least afterthoughts. The atrium is probably, and the north range certainly, a later addition.

With the exception of the apse, which was faced with somewhat larger blocks, the walls are faced with roughly-coursed, very crudely-squared small blocks of the local limestone, the only refinement being the use of well-dressed orthostats for such features as the door-jambs, the angles of the apse and the responding pilasters of the nave-arcades.

The Central Nave

The central nave was unusually long (27m) in proportion to its breadth (just over 9m). For a short distance at the west end it was flanked by the walls that divided it from the angle-chapels. There followed the seven pairs of columns of the nave-arcades, the first three on each side being of local stone faced with stucco,³ the remaining four of Proconnesian marble (illus. 29). Another 2m of walling brought one to the face of the apse, which was slightly narrower than the nave and flanked by a pair of columns set in front of the two shoulders

³ There seems to be no further comment in any of the papers on these; do they represent a building phase undertaken before the cargo of marble fittings arrived, or one resulting from a desire for a longer nave than the cargo could provide? If the latter was the case, Ward-Perkins' subsequent argument that there were marble leftovers from the Central Church for use in the West Church, would be weakened.



Illus. 29. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, apse, flanking columns, chancel with reconstructed altar-canopy and chancel posts.

(illus. 28, 29). Unlike the rest of the building, which was certainly timber-roofed, the massive walls of the apse clearly indicate a masonry semi-dome.⁴ In addition to the bases, columns and capitals of the nave arcades there are a number of decorated marble impost blocks, and the excavators also reported the discovery of some voussoir blocks of the arcade itself. There is no indication whatsoever that there were ever galleries.

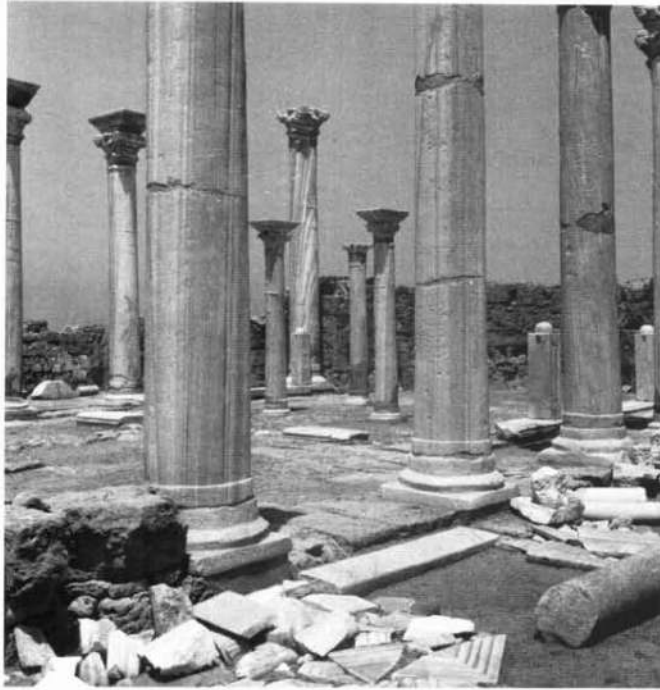
The Chancel

The chancel occupied an almost square area in front of the apse, slightly narrower than the nave and enclosed on three sides by a marble chancel-screen (illus. 28-30); on the fourth side, across the mouth of the apse, there are the sockets for a timber screen and there was probably also at some stage a curtain.⁵ Substantial parts of the marble footing for the chancel screen are preserved, together with half-a-dozen chancel-posts and fragments of the intervening chancel-slabs. The layout was conventional. There were small openings in the middle of the north and south sides, and in the middle of the west side the footings indicate a rather larger opening with an entrance passageway projecting some 4m westwards from it, no doubt itself flanked by chancel screens as in el Atrun, West Church. The altar has left no trace other than the scar left by the altar-base; but the four columns of an altar-canopy were found, fallen but almost intact, and they have been re-erected in the position indicated by the seatings for the rear pair of columns, in the middle of the chancel-area (illus. 28-30).⁶

⁴ Duval 1989b, 2776 argues that there was a *synthronon* in the apse.

⁵ The small holes in the columns at the shoulders of the apse which have been regarded as fixing points for a curtain (*Carved Fittings* no. 5) are interpreted by Duval 1989b, 2770 as designed to hold small metal crosses.

⁶ For reservations on the reconstruction see under *Carved Fittings*, 5b.



Illus. 30. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, fragments of chancel screens collected in the south aisle.

The western part of the nave was paved with a broad longitudinal band of large marble slabs, flanked on the north side by a narrow band of stone paving and on the south side by a considerably wider pavement of which only the rough mortar basis has survived (but presumably also of stone). The marble strip is curiously eccentric to the axis of the nave, but there is nothing to suggest that this represents any more than a simple miscalculation on the part of the builders as to how much marble was available. On the north side the marble paving extended as far as the chancel rail; on the south side it was made of smaller stone slabs. Of all this, only patches of the actual paving survive, but the imprints of many more of the slabs were still visible on the mortar basis when the church was first excavated.

The partial reconstruction of the chancel is based on the discovery *in situ* of the greater part of the marble step along the south side and of the bases of the pair of columns flanking the apse; also the impressions of the bases of the two rear columns of the canopy were still visible in the mortar base of the robbed pavement. The marble step bore the dowel holes for three of the four chancel posts on the south side (in the event the posts were used without dowels), and the position of the central opening was confirmed by the wear on the marble surface at this point. Additional pointers to the positioning of the individual posts were afforded by the grooves which housed the ends of the chancel-slabs and by the points of attachment of what appear to have been metal chains that could be hooked across the openings (illus. 31).

To judge from the only two slabs of paving still in place against the north step, it was of marble. A wooden screen across the mouth of the apse, with a central doorway, may be inferred from the four sockets that were found still in



Illus. 31. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, chancel posts with cuttings, probably for attached metal chains.

place. That there was also a curtain separating the apse from the rest of the chancel (not necessarily contemporary with the wooden screen) is suggested by the heavy wear on the outer sides of the bases of the columns flanking the apse, wear that can hardly be attributed to anything but the curiosity of persons peering into the apse from the only place where it could be approached without entering the forbidden ground of the chancel itself.

The re-erection of the nave colonnades presented no difficulty since most of the individual pieces were found lying just as they fell. For the detail of these colonnades and of the marble chancel fittings, see below.

Except for the partition wall at the west end of the nave arcade the north aisle was a simple extension of the nave, with doorways at the two ends leading respectively into the narthex and into the north-east chapel. These doorways, with their good orthostat jambs, are certainly original features. A now rather indeterminate opening near the middle of the north side is, on the other hand, almost certainly later, cut through when the north wing was added. There are the very fragmentary remains of the original mosaic floor at the west end, and this once extended some distance further to the east (how far there is no means of telling). The present stone pavement of the eastern part is certainly later, presumably contemporary with the opening of the north door.

The north-east chapel is featureless except for its three doors, of which that in the north wall lacks the fine orthostats of the other two and was no doubt opened when the north wing was added. There is no trace of paving and it seems to have been a simple passageway or vestibule.



Illus. 32. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, south aisle with added apse and niches, a martyrium(?).

Except that it tapers markedly from west to east and that it contains no traces of paving, the south aisle, as originally built, closely resembled the north aisle. Then, at some later date, a wall of very poor, makeshift masonry was built across the west end and a doorway cut through the north wall into the nave, creating a small separate chapel, accessible only from the narthex and the nave. A doorway in the south wall, near the east end, lacks the characteristic orthostat jambs and is probably also a later feature.

A wide arch with good stone jambs led into the south-east chapel (illus. 32). This was unusually elaborate. An apse at the far end, 2m wide and 1.70m deep (illus. 32), is structurally secondary to the outer face of the east wall of the church; but since in all other respects the apse appears to be an integral feature of the chapel, the sequence may represent no more than an elaboration of the original design undertaken during construction. Let into the shoulders of the apse are a pair of marble colonnettes, and crowded into the narrow space between these and the side wall are two small apsidal recesses. Let into the base of the left recess is a small square hole (0.18m × 0.18m) like a reliquary recess (illus. 33), and there are indications that its right-hand counterpart may once have contained a similar feature.⁷ The floor was covered with an elaborate mosaic, now sadly fragmentary (see Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980).

A doorway in the south wall, with cut-aways for a wooden door to close it from the north side, led into a second room, still unexcavated. The east wall of this room is straight-jointed against the outer corner of the church, but the masonry is at this point very confused. A safer indication of relative date is

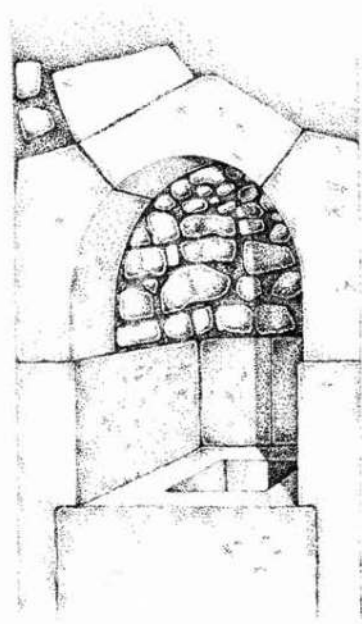
⁷ Duval 1989*b*, 2778 sees the niches in this chapel and perhaps also those in the apsed east end of the flanking hall as likely to indicate *martyria* in these locations.

afforded by the west wall, which appears to be of one build with the outer south wall of the church. It looks as if this room was an original feature of the design, closely associated with the elaborately-paved south-east chapel; but to be sure of this one would have to excavate further.

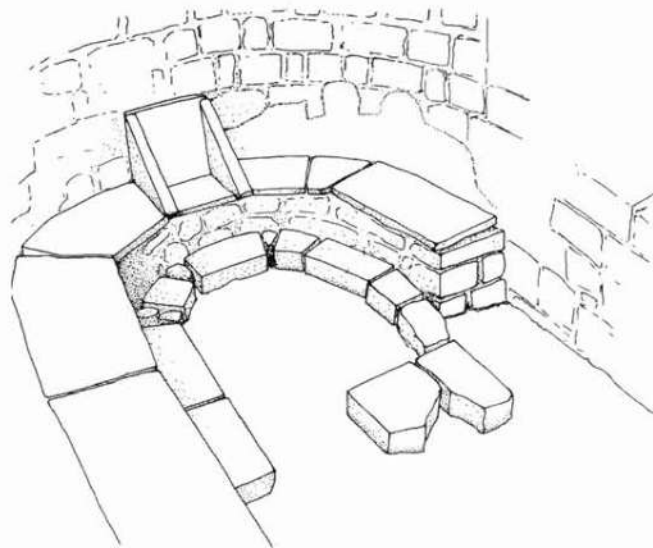
The atrium and narthex

Except for the south end of the narthex, which is well preserved, this part of the building has been badly robbed. The broad outlines can be made out, but much of the detail is somewhat problematical.

The narthex was of an unusual, very distinctive shape: a long, narrow, transverse corridor ending in two apses, which project beyond the outer walls of the church. The south end is quite well preserved and here the masonry can be seen to have been built up against, and secondary to, that of the church. At the north end the point of junction has been obscured by later building and by recent repointing; but when first excavated there were indications of a similar sequence. As in the case of the north-east chapel there is nothing to suggest any substantial lapse of time between the two operations; the masonry and the mortar are indistinguishable from that of the church; but structurally at any rate, the narthex was an afterthought. From it three symmetrically-placed doors led into the nave and aisles of the church. The most striking surviving features are the bench and the central throne-like seat which occupy the south apse (illus. 34).



Illus. 33. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, niche in south-east angle-chapel (W.A. Foster after a sketch in J.B. Ward-Perkins' notebook; scale approx. 1:32).



Illus. 34. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, bench and throne in narthex, drawing (Sheila Gibson).

The atrium seems to have consisted of an almost square, stone-paved courtyard, of the same width as the nave of the church and flanked by two porticoes of the same width as the aisles. The walls were built on footings of large, re-used blocks, and over much of the north part of the building this is all that has survived. The south portico is better preserved, and here the masonry is faced with courses of small, roughly-squared stones with a great deal of packing in the joints and without any use of the orthostats characteristic of the earlier work. The atrium is certainly a later addition to the complex.

There was an entrance in the middle of the west wall. The surviving elements, namely the seating for the south jamb and an adjoining column (now re-erected on its column-base, which was found *in situ*), suggest that this was a triple-arched opening, symmetrical about the axis of the building. The north and south walls of the courtyard were found stripped and partly obscured by later masonry; but it was possible to make out the positions of three column-bases on the north side and of one on the south, and these indicate portico-colonnades with short responding walls at either end. There are no surviving traces of paving in either portico. A doorway in the north wall of the outer portico may well be a later feature.

The only surviving doorway in the east wall, that from the south portico into the narthex, is almost certainly contemporary with the latter. It was presumably matched by a similar door at the north end. In the middle, there is a distinct possibility (see below) that the narthex was originally entered through an open colonnade. If so, the addition of the atrium saw the adaptation and partial blocking of this colonnade so as to create a double entrance framed between three columns. The substantial accuracy of this scheme is vouched for by early excavation photographs, which show the two southern column-bases still in position with a doorsill between them and, lying nearby, a third column-base. The resulting arrangement, with a column directly opposite the main door into the church, is unusual but by no means impossible at this late date.

The only direct clue to the original disposition of the west wall of the narthex is a straight joint which marks the end of the early masonry, just north of the line of the south nave-arcade and of the south atrium-colonnade. North of this point the wall is an addition, of the atrium period. Assuming a symmetrical layout, the architectural solution best suited to the space available would be a triple arch carried on four columns, of which the centre pair, opposite the main door into the church, was more widely spaced; but it must be emphasised that on the evidence available this can be little more than a guess.

Of the marble elements found in the atrium, the surviving column and column-base on the west side are of a rather poor quality, grey-blue Greek marble, the rest of Proconnesian marble. Two of the three bases of the north portico are of the same unfinished form as was used in the nave of the church; the rest are Attic bases, probably *spolia*. Found loose in the atrium were two small half-capitals and part of a whole one, all of the same simplified Corinthian type as used in the canopy over the altar.

The North Wing

At some time after (but probably not long after) the original construction, a wing was added parallel with, and running the full length of, the north outer wall of the church. This consisted of three unequal rooms: facing west a long, narrow hall with a western apse, and facing east a pair of rooms, of which the easternmost was the larger and had a large, projecting apse. At the east end the

walls are quite well preserved, but the whole of the western part of the outer wall and most of the western apse were found destroyed and have since been rebuilt as part of the necessary work of consolidation. The pavements are well preserved.

The western room was a plain rectangular hall, nearly 16m long and 5m wide, with a rather deep apse filling the angle between the north wall of the church and the north apse of the narthex. The masonry breaks off at the point of junction, but one can see what appears to be the sill and one jamb of an oblique doorway, linking the two apses. Though structurally secondary to both church and narthex, the masonry of this hall (and of the whole wing) is indistinguishable from that of the earlier building, to which it was probably added very soon after completion—certainly before the addition of the atrium. The hall was paved with stone slabs, neatly laid on either side of an axial strip. The remains of the door into the north aisle are puzzling, but the position of the opening, in the middle of the present gap in the wall, is clearly marked by the holes for the two jambs of a wooden door which opened outwards into the aisle.

The two eastern rooms belong closely together; indeed, in their original form they were really the parts of a single hall (12.3m long by 5.3-5.7m wide), separated only by a wide arch comparable to that which formed the entrance to the south-east chapel. This arch was later blocked, leaving only a small doorway. The western half, almost square, could be entered from outside the building by a small doorway in the north-east corner, and would appear to have served as an annexe, or antechamber, to the eastern room. The latter had a wide apse at the east end, up a low step. The masonry of the apse (which was inscribed within a rectangular outer frame) is unusually careful, with orthostat shoulders of squared limestone, and across the mouth of the apse there are the seatings for a chancel-like balustrade with a narrow central entrance. This part of the hall was accessible from the church by way of a large, well-built door in the north wall of the north-east chapel.⁸ Both rooms, including the apse, were paved with stone slabs, and there were benches along the north and south walls, parts of which survive, while other parts are represented by an unpaved strip along the wall-face. Benches and paving are thus clearly contemporary, and it is significant therefore to note that they date from the building's second phase, after the transverse arch had been narrowed to a mere doorway.

A feature of this whole area is the number of channels for the collection of water. The system consists of shallow runnels cut in the pavement. A main collector ran westwards along the street just to the north of the building, towards some cisterns, and from it two branches led into the building (where they were paved over), no doubt also heading for cisterns as yet unlocated.

⁸ Stucchi, who argued for a baptistery in the north-east angle-chapel of the church, interpreted this apsed room as a *consignatorium*, suggesting also that what he described as a marble rectangular *vaschetta* with crosses on its sides, seen lying in the north aisle, might be the baptismal basin. This is almost certainly the re-used impost-block described here under *Carved Fittings* no. 31, see also n. 9, illus. 41, 42, and if so is quite unlike the known baptismal basins of the province; there is also a hollowed-out column drum (illus. 43); but that too would not accord with the local pattern for baptismal basins.

There is another apsed hall flanking a Cyrenaican church in the West Extramural Church at Tocra, and they are not uncommon outside Cyrenaica. In a letter, Kraeling drew Goodchild's attention to one at Khirbet al-Kerek, also known as Beth Yerah, with a mosaic pavement and inscription apparently referring to the hall as τὸ διακονικόν (Delougaz/Haines 1960, 53-5). It is not to be assumed that such halls always served the same purpose and were identically named.

A second system is represented by a vertical shaft built into the left shoulder of the apse of the east hall, no doubt to carry roof-water to the same cisterns.

A small tank found just outside the north-east chapel⁹ had suggested to Goodchild that there might have been a baptistery here, awaiting excavation. It is evident that many North African cities did possess more than one baptistery. In this case, however, the subsequent discovery of a second baptistery in the West Church, makes one chary of postulating yet another. At this date, with the city's aqueduct liable to interruption, the careful collection and conservation of rain-water was a normal and essential part of the city's economy.

Summary of building phases

It is clear that the building underwent several successive structural phases. Although, however, the evidence on this point is cumulatively convincing, it is not always, in detail, as clear as one could wish, and it may, therefore, be helpful to conclude this section with a brief summary of the broader conclusions.

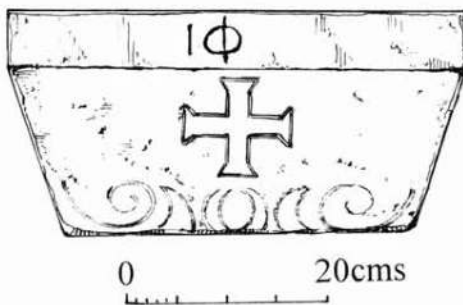
The building was first laid out, and work was at any rate begun, in terms of a simple basilica, planned on conventional Cyrenaican sixth-century lines¹⁰ and designed to incorporate a shipment of prefabricated, 'do-it-yourself' marble fittings.

Very soon afterwards, and quite possibly well before the completion of the original building (a circumstance which would greatly have facilitated the false bonding which obscures some of the structural joints), the plan was elaborated so as to include the narthex and an enrichment of the south-east chapel. This was followed, certainly after no great interval, and possibly even another modification of the original design undertaken during construction, by the addition of the north wing—or, it would be more precise to say, by the establishment of the north wing—on the plot of ground that already existed between the church and the street to the north of it.

After a further interval, this time long enough to involve the employment of a team of workmen using different masonry techniques, the building was again enlarged by the addition of an atrium. It was probably on this occasion that the north wing underwent certain detailed modifications, and that parts of the church itself were paved, or repaved, with stone slabs (illus. 26).

The only subsequent change that is probably attributable to the period of the building's continued use as a church is the modification of the west end of the south aisle to form a separate chapel.

The mosaics, of which there are only fragments, surviving in the



Illus. 35. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, impost block (James Thorn after Dorothy Thorn's sketch).

⁹ Almost certainly *Carved Fittings* no. 31; see also n. 8.

¹⁰ The date is, of course, controversial.

south aisle and the south-east chapel, belong to the first stage¹¹ and are patently of the Justinianic series. Given the importance of Apollonia and the availability of a complete set of marbles, it is a safe assumption that the building was undertaken early in the Justinianic programme of urban rehabilitation.

The materials and workmanship of this church are typically provincial Justinianic,¹² and the fine preservation of the nave colonnades and the chancel fittings make it a model example of the sort of church of which there are traces of so many others in North Africa, built very largely by local workmen, in local materials and to suit local needs, but incorporating marble elements which were imported in finished, or very largely finished, form from the imperial quarries on Proconnesos (Marmara) and on the island of Thasos. Like the mosaics which adorned many of them, this was part of the vast official programme of urban renewal which followed the Byzantine reconquest of western North Africa and the re-establishment of undisputed metropolitan authority in Cyrenaica itself. The nucleus of the Central Church may confidently be ascribed to the early years of this period, before the middle of the sixth century, perhaps after the refurbishing of the existing cathedral (the East Church), which would have been an obvious first task, but almost certainly before the building of the West Church which, as we shall see, was able to make use of some of the left-overs from the Central Church.¹³

Carved fittings

The marble fittings of the church fall into two main groups: the architectural elements used in the structure of the building and the elaborate fittings of the chancel, both of them imported in a form needing only superficial dressing and polishing, mostly from Proconnesos but some of the chancel fittings also from Thasos.¹⁴ In addition to these, there were the slabs of Proconnesian marble used for paving the chancel and much of the nave; a few classical *spolia*; and, partly imported and partly contrived locally from classical *spolia*, a number of architectural pieces the exact positioning of which within the church is usually only a matter of guesswork.¹⁵

¹¹ Duval 1989*b*, 2750 believes that they should be related to reconstruction of the church.

¹² Stucchi suggested that the cross-on-orb decoration of the columns thought by Ward-Perkins to be Justinianic imports, might be something added locally to re-used pieces; as Duval says, that is unlikely. A date in the sixth century, but not necessarily during Justinian's reign, is advocated by some scholars.

On one of the imported marble impost blocks in this church (*Carved Fittings* no. 22 with n. 21) a mason's mark is now reported which is very like (possibly identical with) one found on imported marbles at el Atrun (*Section 2*) and is a new fact to be taken into account here.

¹³ For reservations on this point see n. 3, and on the thesis of the whole paragraph, *Introduction II, Dating and Donors*.

¹⁴ On the problem of Thasian marble in Christian Cyrenaica see *Introduction II, Marble Fittings*. There is at present no certainty that these came from Thasos rather than Proconnesos; Ward-Perkins' diagnosis was made by eye only.

¹⁵ One at least of the capitals of the nave-colonnade was carved from a re-used funerary stele. While the inscribed face was photographed (Reynolds 1976, plate 67. 47), there seems to be no record that a photograph of the carved surfaces was ever taken and its present whereabouts is unknown. It must surely have been carved locally.



Illus. 36. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, column base from main nave colonnades.



Illus. 37. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, relief of cross on orb on a column-shaft in the nave colonnade.

a. Structural elements

The principal marble structural elements of the church were the four columns at the east end of the two nave-arcades and the two large columns flanking the apse. These are all of Proconnesian marble, the latter in particular being of the strongly-banded quality much favoured by sixth-century architects. The bases were found in position and most of the superstructure lying as fallen. They have since been restored.

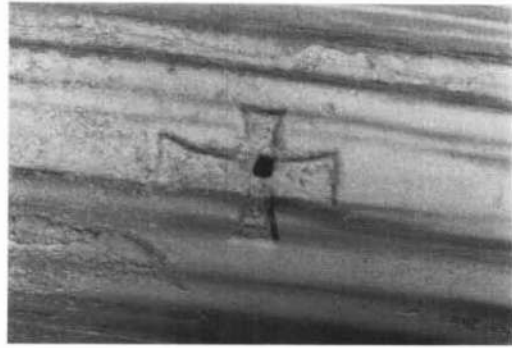
The dimensions of the individual components of the nave-arcade vary within a few centimetres from one another, but together base, shaft, capital and impost constitute a unit of approximately uniform height. They comprise:

1. The eight column-bases of the Proconnesian columns of the nave arcades: see illus. 30, 31 for examples clearly visible; 36 for a view of a dowel-hole and channel. Dimensions of a typical example: plinth, 0.76m; diameter of seating, 0.60m; ht. 0.34m. They are of the simplified 'quarry' type, used just as they were shipped, dressed to shape with a toothed chisel, but neither further carved nor polished. They were prepared for dowelling to the columns, but it is questionable whether the dowel holes were used.
2. The eight corresponding column-shafts: illus. 28, 30. The upper moulding is carved, the base moulding treated as a simple collar, and on the face of the shaft there is cross-on-orb in shallow relief (illus. 37).¹⁶ The upper surfaces cannot now be examined, but the damage which the capitals suffered in falling is such as to suggest that in this case the dowel holes were used.
3. Seven of the eight corresponding capitals (visible in illus. 27); the eighth was too damaged for replacement. These are of standard derivative Corinthian type, with sharply-edged leaves but otherwise rather soft,

¹⁶ At the end of a set of notes made before Goodchild's excavation, Ward-Perkins wrote 'Note Kufic graffiti on columns'; it has not been possible to check for these.



Illus. 38. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, impost block from the nave colonnades.



Illus. 39. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, seating for inset metal cross on column shaft flanking the apse.

rounded detail. The volutes, though proportionately small, are still clearly-marked.¹⁷

4. Four of the eight corresponding impost blocks, a typical example of which measures 1.05m (0.52m) × 0.74m (0.52m) × 0.37m. The sloping faces are straight or very slightly convex, with a low-relief Latin cross on the end facing towards the nave (illus. 38).

5. The columns flanking the apse (illus. 29), apart from their larger size and the absence of any impost, are virtually identical with those of the nave. The cross-on-orb faced inwards, across the apse, and not, as one might have expected, westwards down the nave. This is shown by the relative position of the seating for a small metal cross (illus. 39), which was let into the north column and would only have been visible if the column were so placed. A group of small holes drilled into the face of the shaft just below the cross-on-orb can best be explained as the fastening of a metal hook or ring for the suspension of a curtain across the face of the apse, replacing or supplementing the wooden screen referred to above.¹⁸

b. Chancel-fittings

A number of elements of the chancel were found either in position or else lying more or less as fallen, and some of those have since been replaced. These include many of the marble bases of the chancel-screen (found in position), a number of chancel-posts (of which six have been re-erected),¹⁹ and the bases, columns and capitals of the canopy which stood over the altar, and which has

¹⁷ See Sodinia 1987, 234, n. 28 with parallels, dating in the first half of the sixth century.

¹⁸ But see n. 3 for a different interpretation of these holes.

¹⁹ At the end of a set of notes made on the fittings before Goodchild's excavation, Ward-Perkins wrote 'Also from this church, now at Cyrene in front of a tomb on L of the road from Apollonia: white marble chancel-post, 0.37 × 0.79 (+ knob, gone) × 0.37, groove in L side, cross on orb on front in relief.' The photograph (illus. 131) is labelled 'Apollonia?' which presumably reflects later uncertainty about the findspot. The object, which it has not been possible to trace, does not fit obviously into the decor of this church, except insofar as it repeats the motif on the column-shafts; it much more closely resembles the type (in effect a colonnette base) used in the Central Church at Cyrene. Its place of origin should probably remain open to question at present.

been re-erected on the evidence of the impressions left in the floor by the two rear column-bases (visible in *illus.* 28 and partly in *illus.* 29). The fragments not restored include parts of at least four chancel-screens. An unusual feature of the posts and screens is that some are of Proconnesian, others of Thasian marble.²⁰

A feature of the restoration that calls for comment is the placing of impost blocks on the front pair of columns of the altar-canopy. The scale is right, and they were found in the chancel area. Nevertheless even in sixth-century Cyrenaica they constitute an architectural solecism which can only be accepted with reservation.

6. The basis of the chancel-enclosure, consisting of elongated slabs, partly of Proconnesian and partly of Thasian marble [see n. 14]; there was a small, three-quarter-round moulding along the outer edge; the inner edge was plain, constituting a barely perceptible step up from the marble paving of the chancel area: *illus.* 28. The greater part of the north and south sides and several blocks of the west side were found in position, with dowel holes for the fixing of the posts. Although in the event no dowels were used (the undersides of the posts themselves have no corresponding holes), the lightly-dressed seatings for the posts and the worn surfaces of the two lateral entrances to the chancel show that they do in fact mark the positions that were actually used. Given also the clear traces of the chains across these entrances (below, no. 8) the accuracy of the present restoration is not in doubt.

7. Six of the ten chancel-posts, all of Proconnesian marble and all with hemispherical finials and bold 'soffit' panels on the outer and inner faces (*illus.* 31). The two pairs flanking the lateral entrances are pierced with pairs of holes for the attachment of the chains which barred the entrances when not in use.

8. The four bases, columns and capitals of the altar-canopy (*illus.* 28, 29). These are miniature replicas of those of the nave-arcades, in Proconnesian marble. The capitals are of the very common late form with four acanthus leaves at the angles, the downturned ends of which take the place of the traditional volutes (visible in *illus.* 30). The front pair of shafts are carved with a cross-on-orb in shallow relief. The impost blocks now placed on the front two columns (for the correctness of the restoration, see above) are elongated versions of those of the nave-arcade, with a Latin cross in low relief on one face.

Among the fittings lying loose in the church, several more may be regarded as having belonged originally to the same chancel-screen. They are as follows:

9. Angle-post of Thasian marble [see n. 14], with a moulded finial. The front is carved with a 'vertical bar' panel, the right-hand face is plain, and there are slots for chancel-screens on the other two faces. This must have stood at the south-west corner of the chancel enclosure.

10. Post of Thasian marble [see n. 14] with a moulded finial. The front is carved with a 'soffit' panel. The right-hand face is slotted and the other two faces plain. That this was probably the post on the south side is confirmed by the socket for a metal fitting cut in the upper part of the carved face, near the left edge. This presumably held one of the terminals of the chain across the entrance. If the position of this piece has been rightly identified, any balustrade flanking the corridor from the chancel into the nave (*solea*?) must have been supported independently.

11. The upper part of the body of an angle-post of Pentelic marble, decorated on one face with a 'vertical band' panel. Possibly the north-west angle-post.

12. One complete chancel-slab, of Thasian marble [see n. 14] (1.79m × 0.92m). Decorated on one face with a Latin cross in relief within an otherwise plain moulded panel.

13. Fragment of a similar slab, with a Latin cross, in Proconnesian marble.

14. Fragment of a slab with a Latin cross on a low-relief disc, in Proconnesian marble.

15. Two fragments, in Proconnesian marble, with designs embodying Latin crosses and ribbons.

c. Marble fittings of the atrium

Although the atrium is badly robbed, some of the marble elements are still in place. They form a distinctive group, a mixture of *spolia* and of rather varied sixth-century imported pieces. This is precisely what one would expect to find in a building which was at best a structural afterthought, using whatever left-overs were still available. To this group may belong also some of the pieces listed in the next section.

16. Eight column bases found in position (here numbered clockwise from the south-west corner):

Nos. 1, 3. Thasian marble [see n. 14], in the same 'quarry' form as those of the nave.

Nos. 2, 4-6, 9, 10. Dark grey marble, probably Proconnesian, rather roughly dressed to conventional Attic shape.

Nos. 7, 8, 11ff. Missing.

17. Three columns, all *spolia*:

No. 1. Dark grey marble, probably Proconnesian.

No. 2. Proconnesian.

No. 10. A dark grey marble, similar to that from Teos.

18. One plain impost block of Proconnesian marble; 0.60m (0.25m) × 38m (0.25m) × ht. 0.25m.



Illus. 40. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, small capital.

d. Other architectural elements

In addition to the pieces described above, there are a number of individual pieces that were found lying loose during the excavations, in most cases without any indication of their original position within the church. Several of the impost-blocks are made from *spolia* and most are of rather crude workmanship. They must come from arcaded screens within the church, or probably from multiple windows.

19, 20. Two small capitals of Proconnesian marble, very similar to those of the altar-canopy (no. 8, above) but with vestigial traces of volutes (illus. 40).

21. Small capital (ht. 0.30m) of the same general type as nos. 19 and 20, but with eight tall and proportionately narrower acanthus leaves covering the whole body.

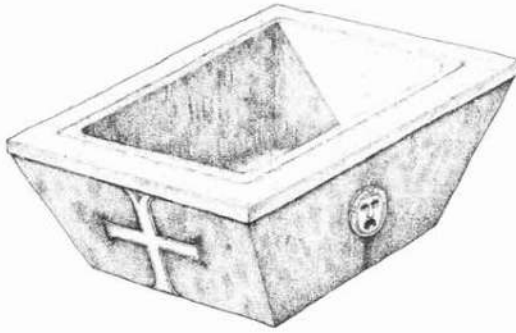
22. Shallow Ionic impost capital of Proconnesian marble. Top of impost, 0.70m × 0.46m; diameter of column seating, 0.29m; ht. 0.23m. On one end a Latin cross in low relief.²¹

23. Impost block of Thasian marble [see n. 14]; 0.63m (0.39m) × 0.44m (0.28m) × ht. 0.22m. On one end a plaited cruciform design, with rosettes in the loops and irregular sprays in the angles.

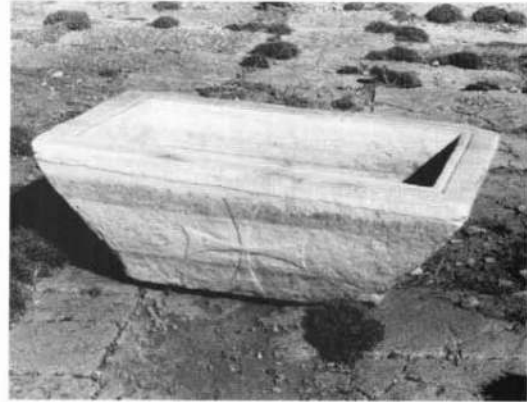
24. Impost block of Thasian marble [see n. 14]; 0.65m (0.31m) × 0.42m (0.30m) × ht. 0.17m. On one end a monogram cross between upright leaves and sprays; on the other end a very simple design of plain upright leaves, similar to that on impost block no. 2 in the East Church.

25. Impost block of Thasian marble [see n. 14], 0.60m (0.32m) × 0.40m (0.28) × ht. 0.19. On both ends a very crude leaf pattern, comparable to those on nos. 28 and 29.

²¹ This is likely to be a block (w. 0.71m × ht. 0.22m × d. 0.46m) in the Central Church pointed out in 1998 to James and Dorothy Thorn by Breyek Kwenin of the Antiquities Department, Marsa SUSA. See illus. 35. On the abacus, they noted the mason's mark ΦI or possibly IΦ (ht. 0.04m–0.045m) which also occurs on imported marbles at el Atrun (see *Introduction II, Marble Fitments*, and el Atrun, *Section 2, East Church*).



Illus. 41. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, impost block hollowed out to make a basin (W. A. Foster after a sketch in J. B. Ward-Perkins' notebook; scale approx. 1:10).



Illus. 42. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, impost block, hollowed out to form a basin; see also illus. 41.

26. Impost block of Carystian marble (*cipollino*); 0.55m (0.32m) × 0.39m (0.27m) × ht. 0.20m. On one end an equal-armed cross in a circular frame between upright leaves.

27, 28. Two very similar impost blocks of Carystian marble (*cipollino*); 0.55m (0.32m) × 0.39m (0.26m) × ht. 0.18m. On both ends a rudimentary design of upright leaves.

29. Plain impost block of Proconnesian marble; 0.65m (0.32m) × 0.38m (0.26m) × ht. 0.23m.

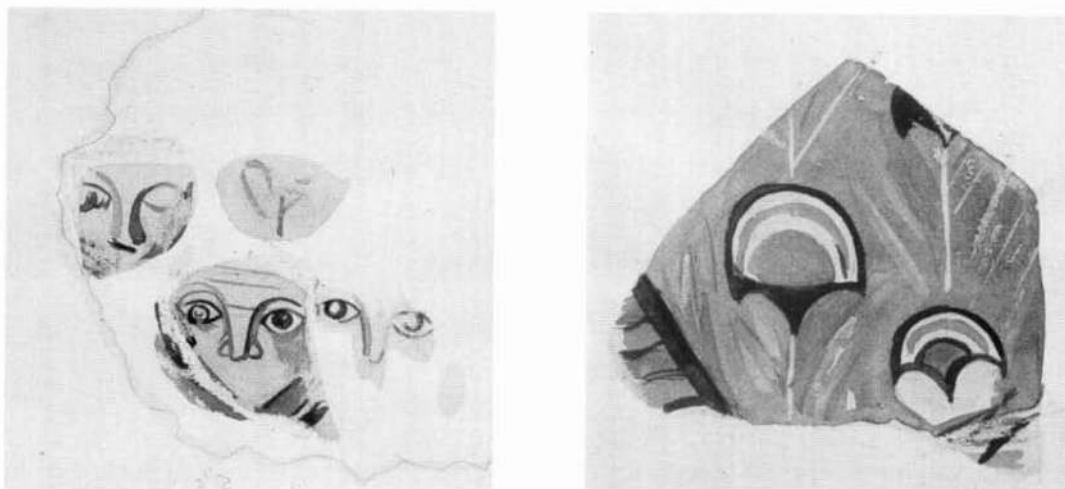
30. Unusually tall, narrow impost block of Proconnesian marble with a seating twice as long as wide. On one face a Latin cross in low relief. This piece is unusual also in having been fastened to the piece beneath it with an iron dowel.

31. Illus. 41, 42. Large impost block of Proconnesian marble (1.06m (0.60m) × 0.76m (0.56m) × ht. 0.36m) converted into a basin by hollowing out the upper surface. On both ends a Latin cross, and a small, low-relief lion-head spout in the middle of one long side. Found in the north hall (illus. 41). [For Stucchi's suggestion that this might have been the baptismal basin, see n. 8 above.]



32. Illus. 43. Hollowed-out column drum seen near 31 in 1998.

Illus. 43. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, hollowed-out column drum.



Illus. 44a, b. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, copy of painting on plastered wall of south aisle, now lost (unsigned drawing).

Painted and inscribed plaster

The walls of the south-east chapel were plastered and elaborately painted. At the moment of excavation two fragments were still in position and three more were recorded on fallen blocks. Nothing of this was still visible in 1969, [but in 1998 one block was reported to be in the reserve collection of Apollonia Museum.]

With the exception of the blue, which was presumably based on a glass frit, the colours could all have been based on local materials used in varying degrees of intensity.

1. On the north wall; painted in dull red and olive green on a ground of pinkish yellow, streaked with darker tones of the same colour. An architectural scheme, consisting of an inscription between schematically-rendered mouldings over what was perhaps a series of plain panels. Inscribed . . .]ΕΔΟCΞΒΙΒ[Λ]ΙΟC[. . .

Reynolds 1960, no. 12 whence *SEG XVIII.762*; Reynolds 1976, no. 44.

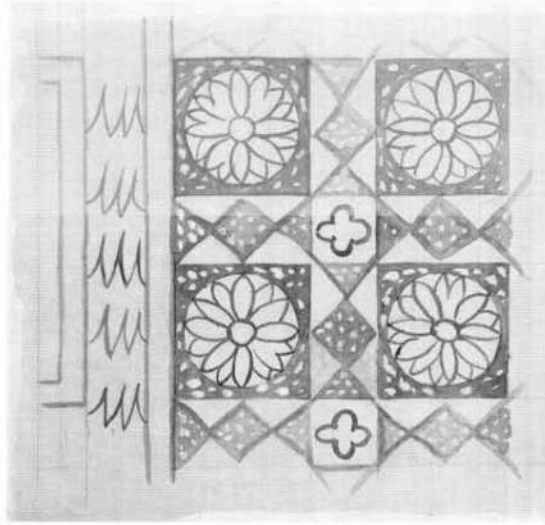
2. On the north wall; the same colour. The capital of a pilaster? Along the upper band an inscription incised and painted . . .]ΚΠΑΤΡΚΙ[. . .

Reynolds 1960, no. 12 whence *SEG XVIII.762*; Reynolds 1976, no. 44; it is possible that the intention was to write δόξα πατρί κέ υἱῶ κέ ἀγίῳ πνεύματι (Glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit).

3. Found fallen. A tile design in tones of dull red (the larger tiles) and blue, both with white overpainting. There are also rough graffiti, published in Reynolds 1976, no. 45 with plate 67:

a . . .]βο(ηθει) Κύ(ριε) ὀρθί με Θε(εός)
Help, Lord, set me upright, God

b . . .]Θ(εο)ῦ Κυ(ρίου) *vac.* ἀ[ν]υψοῖ το[. . .



Illus. 45. Apollonia/Sozusa: Central Church, copy of painting on plastered wall of south aisle, now lost (unsigned drawing).

· · ·]of the Lord God *vac.* may you raise up [· · · , perhaps followed by ‘your servant’ and a name, but a quotation from Psalm 112, as at a church in the area of el Merj (el Merj, *Section 2*, no. 31) is also possible.

In their notebooks, Ward-Perkins, and independently Reynolds, also recorded the presence of Arabic graffiti on this block (not transcribed or translated), about whose existence Laronde (1996, 44) expresses scepticism. It is unfortunate that wall-plaster of the kind on which they were written is fragile and may have been lost, but a renewed search for this block in the Museum would be worth while.

4. *Illus. 44a.* Found fallen. Four human heads, in pinks and reds with touches of blue.

5. *Illus. 44b.* Found fallen. Peacock feather in black, dull yellow and blue on a pink ground, with white overpainting.

6. *Illus. 45.* Found fallen. Geometrical pattern in blue, red and white.

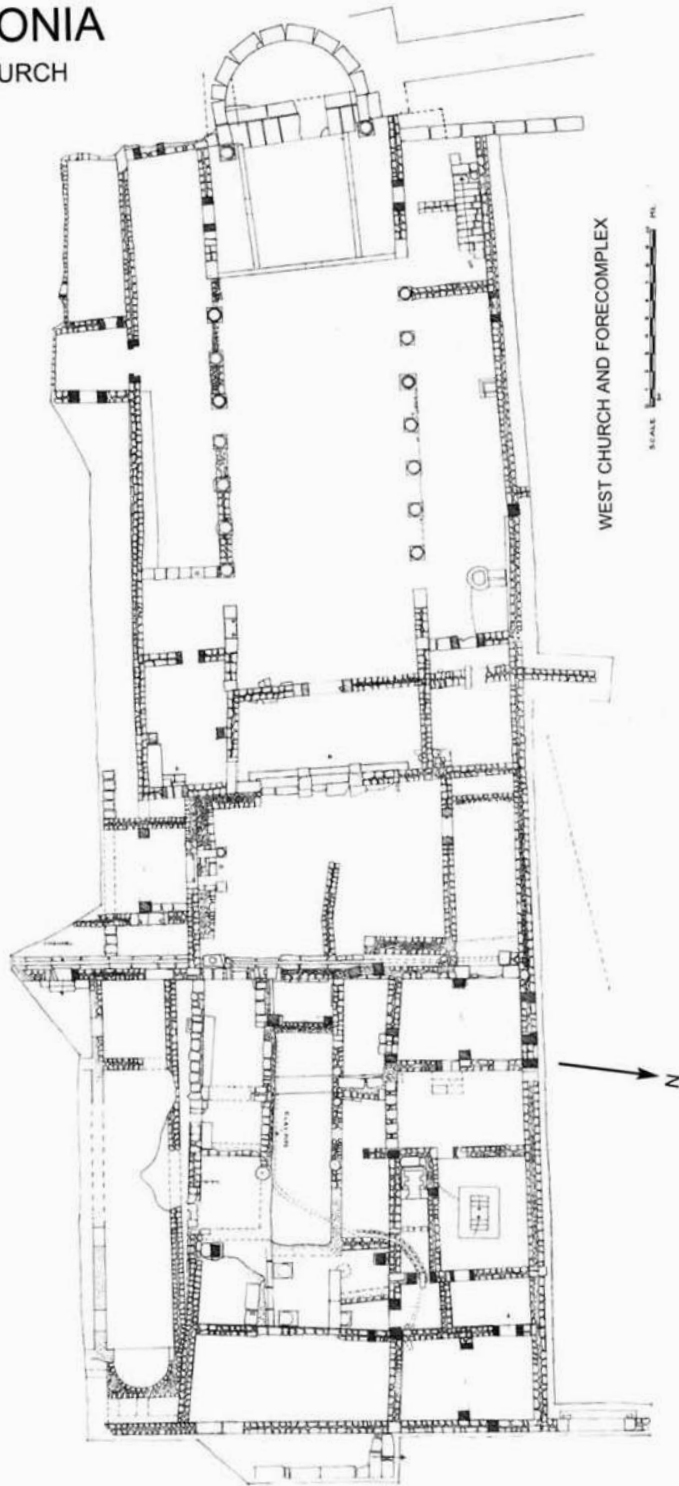
Other inscriptions

Pre-Christian inscriptions on re-used stones in the church (Reynolds 1976, nos. 46-9) include one text in honour of the emperor Hadrian and three which are certainly or probably on funerary stelae.

There is only one Christian item, a fragment of coarse pottery (0.05 × 0.03 m), inscribed before firing. Reynolds 1976, no. 50. Letters, 0.008, lunate *epsilon*, *sigma* and *omega*.

Κ(ύρι)ε βο[ηθεῖ]	<i>sic</i>	Lord, help
τῷ δοῦλ[ο σοῦ]	<i>sic</i>	your servant
Λέονι Ν[· · ·]		Leo [? son of ?]

APOLLONIA
WEST CHURCH



Illus. 46. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church and forecomplex, measured plan (Abdulhamid Abdussaid and Walter Widrig).

3. The West Church, illus. 46-56.

Bibliography

Beechey 1828, plan before p. 467; Widrig/Goodchild 1960, 70-90; Goodchild 1966*a*, 212-3; Stucchi 1975, 147, 363, 364, 367-8, 390-2; Ward-Perkins 1976, 276-83; Krautheimer 1986, 113, 492; Roques 1987, 95; Duval 1989*b*, 2749, 2750, 2751, 2761, 2764-5, 2772, 2775, 2781, 2784, 2785; Bonacasa Carra 1998. For the mosaics, Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 14-15, 30, 92-3; for column-capitals, Sodini 1987*b*, figs. 4, 5.

Discovery

Built up against the inner face of the western stretch of the city wall is yet another large Christian complex, that of the West Church. The site was already visible when the brothers Beechey made their survey, published in 1828,¹ but it was not until 1958-9 that it was cleared by the Antiquities Department under the direction of Walter Widrig and Richard Goodchild. On that occasion the pre-Christian levels were probed but not examined in detail, and the annexes were incompletely revealed.

Description

The buildings comprise a three-aisled basilical church with a projecting western apse (illus. 46);² at the east end of the church a small atrium-courtyard, entered from the south;³ and beyond this again, to the east, a baptistery and other structures (illus. 46, 53). The whole of the eastern part, including the atrium, is referred to by the excavators as the 'fore-complex', a useful descriptive term which is here retained, excluding only the atrium-courtyard, which was a virtually independent entity throughout the Christian period. Parts of the building continued in occupation, or were reoccupied, after the Arab conquest of Cyrenaica.

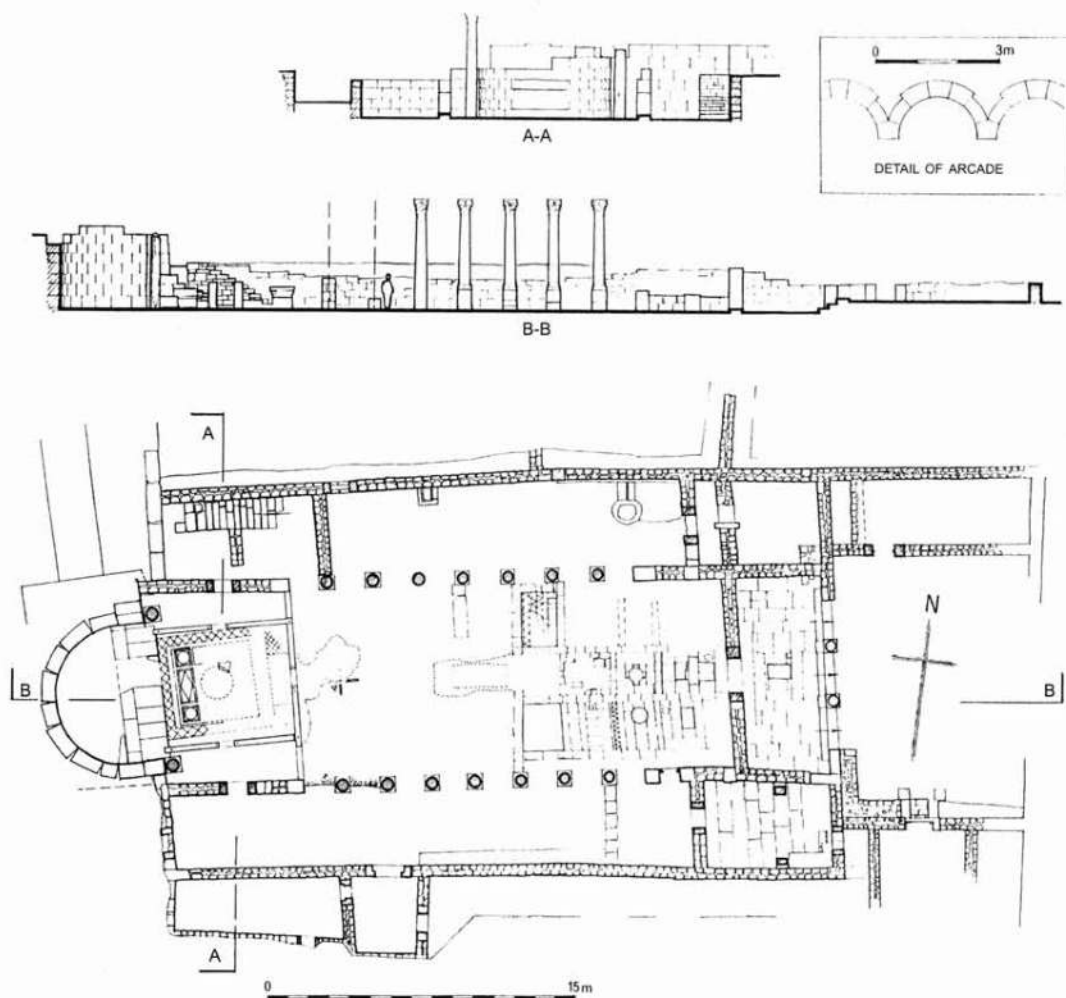
The considerable irregularities of layout that are visible in plan were due to the builders' extensive use of pre-existing boundaries and structures. To the west the site was delimited by the Hellenistic city-wall and to the east by one of the main north-south streets of the town. To the north and east the Christian builders incorporated long stretches of the outer walls of the building, or buildings, which had previously occupied the site; except for the east wall, towards the church, the atrium was almost entirely founded on earlier structures, as too were the baptistery-wing and the area which later became the courtyard of the fore-complex, where some of the earlier walls were left standing to a considerable height. The Christian builders were concerned to build a church, together with a group of related buildings, but they did so within a framework of which many of the lines were already established.

¹ It is now known that it was being pillaged for building stones in 1909: see *Other Christian Antiquities*, 2*d*.

² Stucchi (1975, 367-8) believed that the outline of an earlier church underlying the one excavated by Widrig/Goodchild was discernible at the east end; it had an eastern apse, a chancel in front of it (whose screens must have been of wood), a pebble mosaic floor to the west of that (figuring a cross; see below) and doors in the north, south and west walls. Duval is not satisfied that the features on which Stucchi relies are there or, if they are, are rightly interpreted by him, except for the pebble mosaic; Reynolds is equally sceptical. There is indeed a good case for dating the pebble mosaic earlier than the other forms of flooring found by the excavators, but that does not necessarily imply the existence of an earlier church (we are most grateful to Abdulhamid Abdussaid, who was present during the excavation, for advice here).

³ At a later date (see below) two doors were made in its east wall; while at some stage the south door was given a grander form and direct access was provided to the baptistery.

APOLLONIA WEST CHURCH



Illus. 47. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, measured plan (Abdulhamid Abdussaid and Sheila Gibson).

The Church

The plan of the church is that of a conventional sixth-century three-aisled basilica,⁴ with the exception of the western apse, which projects well beyond the western limits of the two flanking chapels (illus. 46, 47). To build it so, a section of the city-walls was dismantled and some of the blocks so obtained were re-used to line the inner face of the apse, which projected through the

⁴ The date is, of course, controversial.



Illus. 48. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, re-erected columns of the north nave arcade with voussoirs laid out on the ground.

wall. This may have been done, as the excavators suggest, as an economical way of supporting the weight of a masonry semidome, of which they found a number of fallen vault-stones; or it may simply be that within the space available the builders wanted to secure the maximum possible length for the nave of their church. In either case, the result was that the two flanking chapels in this case became mere compartments at the western ends of the lateral aisles, open to the aisles themselves but separated from the chancel-area by two walls that prolong the lines of the nave-arcades. Small arched doorways in these walls gave access directly to the chancel-area (illus. 50).

East of the line of the chancel (which is described below) the main body of the nave was separated from the aisles by colonnades, each consisting of eight arches carried on seven marble columns, and a short length of walling at the east end. The colonnades were made up of classical *spolia*, used as nearly as possible in matching pairs: five pairs of Proconnesian marble columns and two of somewhat larger, Carystian (*cipollino*) marble columns, the difference in size being adjusted, as in the East Church, by the positioning of the column-bases (illus. 48).⁵ The marble capitals were partly imperial-period *spolia*, partly contemporary. The former correspond closely both in material and workmanship with those re-used in the East Church, which represent what was indeed the standard 'Asiatic' type of Corinthian capital imported into

⁵ Two of the sandstone plinths on which the column-bases were placed are preserved to a height at which cuttings can be seen with the form of \perp on their east and west faces. They should indicate blocking of some intercolumniations, which Widrig/Goodchild thought more likely to have been effected by double-sided wooden benches than by simple screens.



Illus. 49. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, internal narthex, east angle-chapels and part of south aisle.

Cyrenaica in the late second and third centuries. The latter are of two sorts: half a dozen Proconnesian marble capitals of exactly the same evolved Corinthian form and dimensions as were used in the Central Church, and a pair which are of the same general form but larger and more elaborate, with two rings of acanthus leaves and at the four corners, in place of the volutes of classical usage, single large splayed acanthus-leaves (illus. 55, 56). The moulded impost-blocks and the voussoirs of the arches were of sandstone, and immediately above the arches there was a continuous moulded string-course. Up to this height the reconstruction is certain. From the generally rather unsubstantial character of the walls it seems also to be certain that the nave was timber-roofed, not vaulted; and in the absence of any trace of windows in the outer wall of the side-aisles (which are in places preserved to a considerable height) it is a reasonable assumption that there was a clerestory above the string course. This is confirmed by the relative height of the arch across the face of the apse.

At the east end the rectangular outer perimeter of the church enclosed three chambers: a shallow, central narthex and a rather deeper pair of angle-chapels (illus. 49). Of these, the north-eastern chapel was accessible only from the north lateral aisle, through an arched doorway with well-built orthostat jambs. At the south-east corner there have been considerable later modifications, but it is probable that, as originally built, this chapel was identical with its northern counterpart. The narthex was accessible from the nave through a single doorway, but was wide open eastwards towards the atrium-courtyard, up two steps and between the columns of a large triple archway. The excavators envisage the main façade of the church (i.e. the gable of higher roofing



Illus. 50. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, apse and chancel with an arched doorway on each long side, ambon steps and late staircase in the north aisle.

corresponding to the body of the nave) as probably rising above the inner (west) wall of the narthex, which would have had a sloping, lean-to roof, continuous with that of the two lateral aisles. This is questionable. The triple arch of the east wall of the narthex would have made such a lean-to roof almost impossibly high, and there would have been roofing problems at the outer north-east corner, where the north wing of the atrium abutted on to the north-east chapel. It seems more likely that the outer (east) wall of the narthex was conceived as a monumental façade, rising to the full height of the nave, and that the narthex and angle-chapels were all contained within the same roofing system as the nave and aisles. There are several parallels in Cyrenaica for such internal narthex-vestibules, including the nearby sites of Ras el Hilal and el Atrun (illus. 270, 174, 184).

The chancel was placed in the area of the nave that lies between the western respond walls of the nave colonnades, and its position is still clearly marked by the intact marble seating for a screen running round the north, east and south sides (illus. 50). The dowel-holes on this footing and the actual remains of chancel-posts and screens, eight, all of Proconnesian marble, enable this to be restored as having been of the usual form with gateways in the middle of all three sides.⁶ Two large Carystian marble columns stood in front of the shoulders of the apse (illus. 50), just as in the Central Church. The floor within the apse has been removed and, with it, any trace of whatever may once have stood therein, but, in the absence of any indication of a railing or screen between the apse and the chancel, the analogy with the Central Church

⁶ Damage to the nave floor on its east side has removed evidence for or against a screened passage (*solea*?) from the chancel into the nave.



Illus. 51. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, opus sectile floor of chancel.

suggests that here too there may have been a curtain.⁷ Of the altar, only a fragment of one of the supporting marble colonnettes survives, but there are substantial remains of what appears to have been a somewhat makeshift altar-canopy; and the excavators found the positions of three of the four bases of this canopy still clearly distinguishable on the pavement, near the centre of the chancel enclosure. They also found, lying displaced, the steps of an *ambon*, cut from a single block of sandstone (illus. 50).⁸

The chancel was paved in marble: around the edge, a frame of simple marble tiles, some laid obliquely, and in the centre a large, square panel made up of nine smaller, rectangular panels of multicoloured *opus sectile* laid

in a cruciform design, evidently removed from some earlier building and relaid here with some skill (illus. 51).⁹ The western part of the nave (the four bays immediately in front of the chancel) was paved with marble slabs laid on a bedding of poorly-concreted crushed brick and rubble. In this bedding, just in front of the chancel, there is a pebble cross (with, originally, *alpha* and *omega*), which would not have been visible when the floor was laid and must be presumed to be either a consecration cross or, more likely, a craftsman's *jeu d'esprit*.¹⁰ The eastern part of the nave was paved with a rather elaborate, though somewhat haphazardly contrived, pattern of panels of shaped stone tiles incorporating, here and there, small shaped pieces of marble.

The only substantial additions to this building that are certainly of Christian date are the pair of rooms built up against the south-west corner: a vestibule¹¹

⁷ The apse is described by Widrig/Goodchild (1960) as U-shaped; they supposed a vault over it (vault-blocks were found) continued by a barrel-vault over the arms of the U. They saw no evidence for a *synthronon*, but, since the relevant blocks are damaged, that is not conclusive.

⁸ Widrig/Goodchild (1960) argued that the foundation tiles and impressions of blocks in the mud-mortar of the chancel floor allowed no space for an *ambon* within the screened chancel area; they thought that the steps had been moved to the chancel from a position in the nave a little east of it, after Christian use of the building ceased.

⁹ *Opus sectile* floors of some elegance have been discovered also in the East Church at Cyrene and at Ras el Hilal, so that there were certainly craftsmen in Cyrenaica capable of producing this one; it is the case, however, that the fine work in the centre contrasts with crude work in the borders here.

¹⁰ See also note 1 for the pebble mosaic which Stucchi (1975) took to be the floor of an earlier church; he stated that the bedding in which it is laid can be firmly distinguished from that of the marble slabs; but is it certain that this must involve a significant difference of date?

¹¹ Widrig/Goodchild (1960) believed that this pair of rooms is constructed in a build which is later (though not very much later) than that of the main structure.



Illus. 52. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, chancel, north aisle and staircase; city-wall in background.

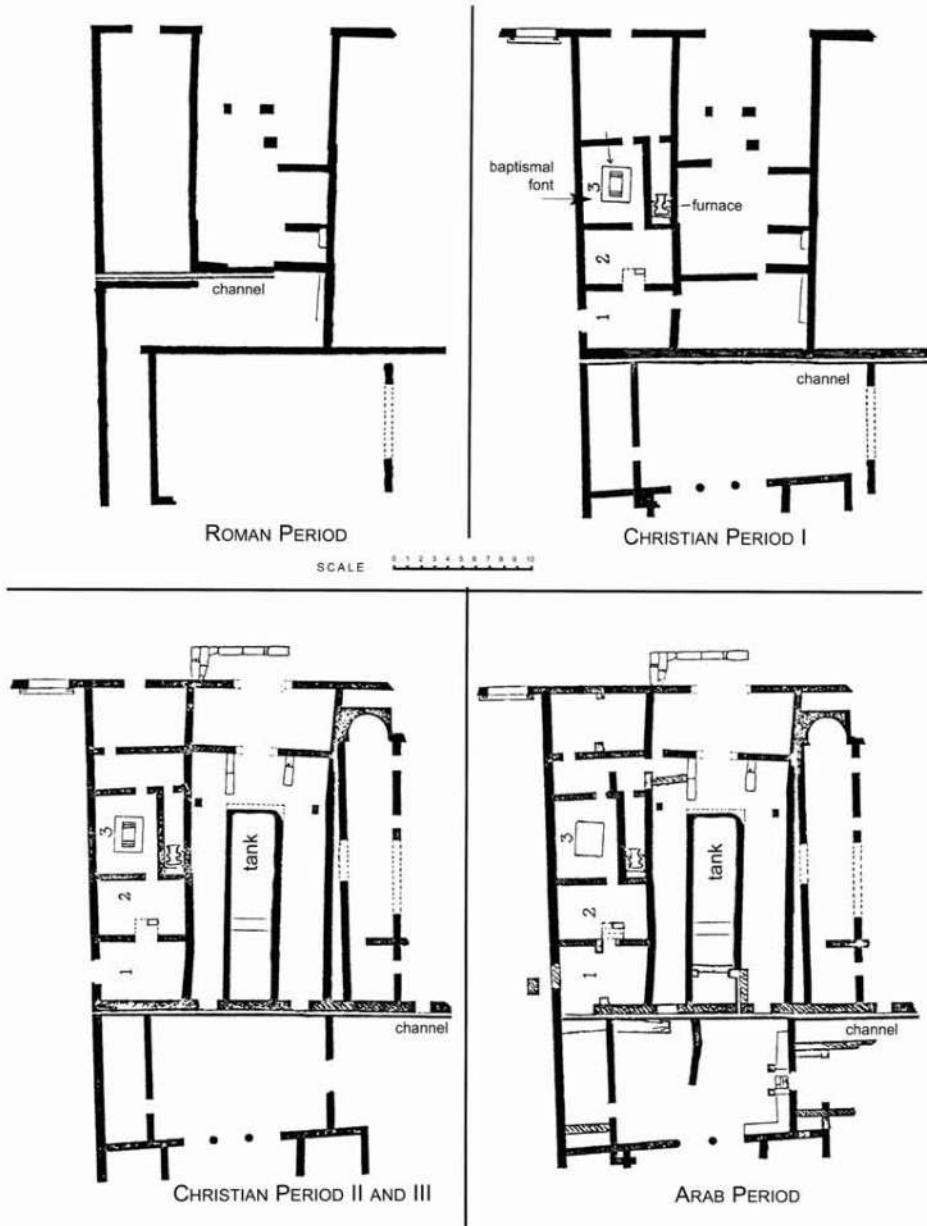
and a long narrow room of which the only distinctive feature is a niche in the outer (south) wall. This room, interpreted by the excavators as a sacristy, was accessible only from the vestibule, which in turn was accessible from the south aisle and from the exterior of the building. The excavators further suggest that the insertion of a flight of steps into the north-west chapel, leading up on to the city wall (illus. 52), may belong to the troubled days immediately before the Arab invasion of AD 642.¹² Another possibility is that they belong to the following period, when the building was converted to secular, and possibly military, use. After AD 642 there are no indications of continued Christian occupation.¹³ The nave seems to have been damaged, or possibly deliberately dismantled so as to use its roof-timbers elsewhere, leaving it open to the sky. It was here that such specifically Christian fittings as have survived were found dumped, whereas the north and south aisles show many signs of continued use, with new partition walls, benches and water troughs. At the same time the narthex and the two eastern chapels were remodelled and reroofed, linking this end of the building more closely to the atrium and to the rest of the fore-complex.

Discussion

Despite the use of many classical *spolia*, the Byzantine capitals used in the construction of the nave-colonnades are proof that the West Church was not

¹² Widrig/Goodchild (1960) were cautious about the destination of the staircase; Stucchi believed that it led to the tomb or *martyrion* outside the wall here (Monument no. 6).

¹³ Since it is not possible to date the Arab use of the building, some Christian use of the church after the Arab conquest is not to be excluded.



Illus. 53. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, fore-complex, four periods, sketch-plans (Sheila Gibson).

erected before the sixth century.¹⁴ Confirmation of this comes from the marble fittings of the chancel, which, though fragmentary, are of the same Proconnesian marble and workmanship as those of the Central Church; and from the floor mosaics in the ante-chamber to the baptistery, and in the long apsed hall in the south-east corner of the excavation (see Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980), which are both of Justinianic or immediately post-Justinianic date (see below).

¹⁴ The dating is questioned both by Stucchi and by Duval.

One can almost certainly fix the date even more closely. As the excavators observed, three of the capitals in the nave are identical with those used in the Central Church, and a fourth looks like an attempt to reproduce locally another capital of the same size and type, so as to have two matching pairs. The altar-canopy too was pieced together from two different sizes of columns. In other words, it looks as if the builders of the West Church were able to use the left-overs from the Central Church, but had to supplement them liberally (and did so with some skill) by the use of classical *spolia* and of locally carved Byzantine pieces. If we are right to regard the Central Church as a product of the 'initial rehabilitation' of the province, *c.* AD 535–40, one would not go far wrong in attributing the West Church to the years immediately before or after the middle of the century, or in round figures *c.* 550.¹⁵

The Atrium, Baptistery and other buildings of the fore-complex

The story of the atrium and of the other buildings of the fore-complex could be more easily told if the excavators had been in a position to elucidate, in greater detail than was possible without doing damage to the later structures, the plan and purpose of the Roman building which had previously occupied the site (illus. 53). Many of its walls remained standing throughout the successive Christian and Arab rebuildings, which must, as a result, have continued to present that rather makeshift appearance which buildings acquire which have been used over a long period for a variety of different purposes. In their report the excavators give a detailed account of the structural sequence of the surviving remains. In the present context it will be sufficient to give a broad picture of the development, singling out for more detailed comment those features which seem to have a direct bearing on how this part of the building was used in each period.

The Roman building (illus. 53) had made substantial use of techniques of marble revetment and of building and paving which can hardly have been later than the third or fourth century AD. A water duct (which remained in operation right through into the final period under Arab rule) suggested to the excavators the possibility of a small bathing establishment. An alternative is that these rooms, which seem to have had little internal communication, belonged to three or even four separate buildings. The north and east walls mark the outer north-east corner of the complex, within which one can distinguish the following elements: on the site of the Christian atrium-courtyard a large rectangular room, which could itself already very well have been an open courtyard; a passageway running round the north and east sides of this courtyard; and towards the east a range of three large rooms, or groups of rooms, of which at any rate the northern pair opened off the north-south street which was the eastern boundary of the whole complex. In its original, Roman form the building also extended westwards, but this part was levelled to make way for the basilical church and has not been explored; also southwards, where the rising ground is unexcavated and may conceal well-preserved structures.

For some reason that is not now clear, the builders of the sixth-century church demolished the western wall of the large west room (or courtyard) in order to build the façade of the basilica on a slightly different and slightly oblique line. The rest of the room they took over as an open atrium-courtyard

¹⁵ For reservations about the argument deployed here, see on the *Central Church* (Monument no. 2), footnote 3.

and, opening off it at the north end, a small subsidiary room, occupying what had been the earlier corridor. The south-eastern part of the complex seems to have been left alone, but the north-eastern hall and the north-east corner of the corridor were taken over and converted into an independent baptistery suite. This, rather unexpectedly, was not accessible directly from the church, but from the street, or passage, which ran down the north flank of the whole complex. It consisted of five rooms: at the west end an entrance vestibule, paved with sandstone blocks; then an inner antechamber, almost identical in size but paved with mosaic; next, the baptistery proper¹⁶ and, on the south side of it and accessible from the east, a small service courtyard containing a hypocaust furnace; and finally, at the far end was a large, plain room, with a doorway opening directly on to the north-south street. The actual baptistery was rather simple: a plain rectangular font recessed into the middle of the floor, with three steps leading down into it from the east and west ends. As in the East Church, hot water was piped directly from a tank situated over the adjoining hypocaust. Apart from providing access to the baptismal chamber, the easternmost room is now featureless.

At some date after (but perhaps not very long after) the construction of the baptistery, the area adjoining it to the south was taken over and remodelled so as to furnish an axial approach to the church from the street to the east. Within the rectangle delimited by the north, west and south walls, all upstanding previous structures were levelled; the floor was raised by more than a metre; and two new north-south walls were built at the east end, constituting a new façade towards the street and, behind it, a substantial antechamber, from which a doorway in the west wall led into the porticoed courtyard, which occupied the rest of the available space, and which the excavators refer to as an atrium. This was long and narrow (some 18m by 10m), the entire central space being occupied by an open water-tank (illus. 54),¹⁷ enclosed on three sides by porticoes with lean-to roofs of which the supporting columns had sandstone capitals and bases, while the lintels were probably of wood. On the fourth side, towards the west, two doorways led from the north and south porticoes into the old atrium-courtyard, the south wall of which was on this occasion shifted northwards so as to conform with the line of the outer south wall of the adjoining portico. At the other end of this new atrium-complex, footings projecting into the eastern street suggest some form of monumental porch, and the easternmost room of the adjoining baptistery was divided into two by a wall prolonging the line of the inner wall of the atrium-vestibule. The result of all this was to give the church a decorous axial approach from the east, very different in detail from that of the Central Church but comparable in its broad intent.

Later again, but still within the Christian period, the area to the south of the new atrium was redeveloped. What can now be seen was clearly only a part of a larger complex, still unexcavated, built in a masonry which is significantly different from that of the previous periods, with smaller facing-blocks and a higher proportion of rubble-fill. The only feature completely excavated is a

¹⁶ Whose floor seems to have been paved with marble, although little of it remains.

¹⁷ The tank with amphorae set into its walls should probably be interpreted as a fish pond: see Andrew Wilson 1997, 167-8. If this usage was introduced while the main building was a church, it strengthens the possibility that the fore-complex was an ecclesiastical residence of some kind.



Illus. 54. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, view of the church from the west end of the forecomplex, with fishpond.

long, narrow hall (14m × 3.25m) with an apse at the east end and an antechamber at the west end. The hall itself was paved with mosaic, and doors opened both from it and from the antechamber into the unexcavated area to the south, which was also accessible from the west, from the area immediately south of the former atrium-courtyard. The mosaic pavement almost certainly indicates some formal connection with the church. The excavators suggest that this may have been part of a considerably larger complex, possibly an ecclesiastical residence. Only further excavation can decide, but the suggestion is plausible.

In its final stages, after AD 642, the whole fore-complex was secularized, together with the church. In this part of the building there was less need for any major structural changes, and the later work consisted very largely of blocking or opening doorways, partitioning rooms, and generally of adapting the existing structures to their new role. The most substantial changes were to the old atrium-forecourt, which was given an impressive south entrance, approached through an outer vestibule and flanked internally by columns and broad benches. At the same time the former baptistery-wing was made directly accessible by opening doorways into it from the room to the north of the old atrium-courtyard and from the east end of the new atrium, while the former doorways into the street were blocked. As a result of these changes and of those effected in the body of the former church, almost the whole excavated area now became part of a single intercommunicating unit, of which the old atrium-courtyard was the central feature; and this in turn was part of the further complex, still largely unexcavated, which lay to the south. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that a building on this scale was of an official character, in which case it is an unusual and important document of the early days of Arab rule in Cyrenaica.

The Mosaics and the date of the Church

There are the remains of two sets of mosaics. One of these, quite well preserved, paved the inner antechamber to the baptistery. The other, now very fragmentary, was in the long hall with an apse along the south-east edge of the excavated area.

The baptistery-mosaic was of a simple rectangular design, with a narrow central panel framed within two wide, concentric borders. The central panel was figured, containing a peacock and a partridge; there was probably another creature, possibly a second partridge, at the left end. This panel was designed to be viewed from the west, that is when approaching the baptismal chamber from the direction of the church. The inner frame consisted of a loosely knotted ribbon design, of which the small, curvilinear interstices contained rudimentary rosettes and other plant forms. The outer frame was figured, comprising a loosely-strung-together procession of beasts, very much in the manner of the outer frame of the nave mosaic of the Central Church at Cyrene. The workmanship is markedly inferior to that of the second-period transept-mosaic of the East Church.

In the apsed hall only two fragments have survived: in the apse, the outer edge of what was probably a symmetrically-displayed vine-scroll pattern, with large bunches of grapes, and in the body of the hall, a border of interlaced ribbons. Again the workmanship is markedly clumsy.

The subject matter of both of these mosaics is characteristic of the sixth-century Cyrenaican series, but they are not of the quality of the finest pieces, such as the transept mosaic of the East Church. This is, and looks like, second-generation work.

Date and use¹⁸

From the foregoing account it will be apparent that there are still problems unresolved, but the broad outline, so far as it goes, is clear enough. Disregarding minor repairs and adjustments, we may distinguish the following sequence of buildings:

1. A Roman building, or buildings, of the third or fourth century AD, of which the north-western part was demolished to make way for the church, while much of the north-eastern part was left standing and progressively converted to Christian use.
2. The building of the Christian basilica, and the adaptation of some of the Roman structures to the east of it to create a simple atrium-courtyard and a baptistery. This dates from the reign of Justinian, but after the construction of the Central Church, probably *c.* AD 550.
3. A sweeping remodelling of the area to the south of the baptistery wing, so as to create a monumental approach from the east. The workmanship is indistinguishable from that of the preceding phase, upon which it may have followed very closely.

¹⁸ What follows is not included in the typescript, but printed from Ward-Perkins 1976, 283, where it provides the concluding section.



Illus. 55. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, capital from nave arcades.

4. Later again, but still probably well within the sixth century and quite certainly before AD 642, a rebuilding of the south-eastern part of the area. This is still largely unexcavated, but the long, narrow, mosaic-paved hall strongly suggests an ecclesiastical context, functionally as well as topographically associated with the church.

5. After secularization of the whole complex. The church itself probably became an open courtyard, with rooms or stables along either side. All the rest, from the narthex eastwards, became part of a single interconnecting unit, presumably residential and centred upon the old atrium-courtyard, which in turn was intimately connected with whatever buildings (still unexcavated) lay immediately to the south.

Carved fittings

(List compiled by Reynolds from Widrig/Goodchild (1960), Ward-Perkins' manuscript, and Ward-Perkins' notebook).¹⁹

1. The nave colonnades:

- a* seven re-used Attic or Attic-type bases of grey-white marble which were placed on individual high square plinths of sandstone and carried the columns (clearly visible in *illus. 48, 49*).
- b* five pairs of re-used columns of Proconnesian marble.
- c* two pairs of rather larger re-used columns of Carystian marble (*cipollino*).
- d* six re-used Corinthian capitals of a dull black-grey marble of a type regularly imported into Cyrenaica in the late second and third centuries AD (Widrig/Goodchild (1960) plate XXIX *c* for the type), closely comparable with the re-used capitals in the East Church.
- e* six Corinthian capitals of Proconnesian marble of the same type and dimensions as the set in the Central Church (Widrig/Goodchild (1960) plate XXXII *a*), described by Widrig/Goodchild as 'familiar in the Mediterranean area from the middle of the fifth century AD' (*illus. 55*).

¹⁹ All diagnoses of marble were made by eye only.



Illus. 56. Apollonia/Sozusa: West Church, capital from nave arcades.

- f* two Corinthian capitals of poor-quality Proconnesian marble of the same general form as those of *e*, but larger and more elaborate with two rings of acanthus-leaves and single large splayed leaves at the corners (Widrig/Goodchild, plates XXIX *d*, XXXII *a*); described by Widrig/Goodchild as a design of the sixth century AD (but not necessarily as late as Justinian's reign; so too Duval (1989*b*); see also Sodini 1987*a*, 234, n. 28). One of these included the letters *alpha* and *omega* in the design (*alpha* visible in *illus. 56*, see also Stucchi 1975, fig. 368).
- g* moulded sandstone impost-blocks each worked on three sides only, *c.* 0.49m x 0.49m at the bottom, 0.57m x 0.57m at the top, and 0.34m high (Widrig/Goodchild (1960) plate XXXII *d*).
- h* several contiguous blocks of a moulded sandstone string-course, 0.28m high, which ran above the arcades, composed of a convex moulding between two fillets (Widrig/Goodchild (1960) plate XXXII *c*). This is a feature for which Duval refers to parallels in Constantinople, Greece, and the Balkans, especially in the sixth century AD.

2. In front of the apse:

- a* two re-used columns of Carystian marble (*cipollino*) of the same size as those of 1*c* (*illus. 50, 54*).
- b* two Attic bases of Proconnesian marble for the columns of *a*.

3. In the chancel:

- a* an intact marble seating for the screen in which dowel holes show the position of posts and screens (*illus. 50, 51*).
- b* fragments of eight chancel screens of marble, originally *c.* 0.90m high, one at least apparently plain, others showing traces of relief decoration (a Latin cross on a raised orb, a rosette with tendrils pointing to crosses on either side, small latin crosses). Ward-Perkins identified the marble of all screen fragments that he saw as Proconnesian; Widrig/Goodchild (1960, p. 77, n. 19) suggested that a few were Carystian (*cipollino*).

- c* two virtually complete posts of Proconnesian marble and fragments of at least two more; one, with rounded knob, is shown by its grooves to be an angle-post; another, also with rounded knob, has a groove on one side only, and so must have flanked an entry; one, with a 'pie-crust' knob, also flanked an entry (Widrig/Goodchild 1960, fig. 1*a*).
- d* small pedestal and attic base, probably from the altar canopy (Widrig/Goodchild 1960, fig. 1*b*) of coarse-grained white marble with small grey veins. A column-shaft of the same size may belong with it.
- e* fragment from the lower part of a colonnette on a square base of Proconnesian marble (Widrig/Goodchild 1960, fig. 1*d*), possibly one of the supports for the lost altar-table.
- f* fragment of a small column-shaft, perhaps another support for the altar-table.
- g* two Corinthian capitals of grey-white marble, with a very stylised design (Widrig/Goodchild 1960, fig. 1*c*), perhaps from the rear-columns of the canopy (see also *d*).

4. Found upturned in the south-east section of the chancel, sandstone *ambon*-steps of rough workmanship, which was perhaps masked by stucco (illus. 50; Widrig/Goodchild 1960, plate XXXII *b*); the excavators argued that what survives of the floor of the chancel precludes the location of the *ambon* within the chancel, and that it must have stood in the nave.

5. From the narthex:

- a* two re-used Corinthian capitals of Proconnesian marble, clearly for the columns of the east entry to the narthex; Widrig/Goodchild (1960, 79, n. 21) compare the pattern with that of 1*e* above, but note that the relation of height to diameter is compressed to almost half.
- b* Attic bases for these found *in situ*.

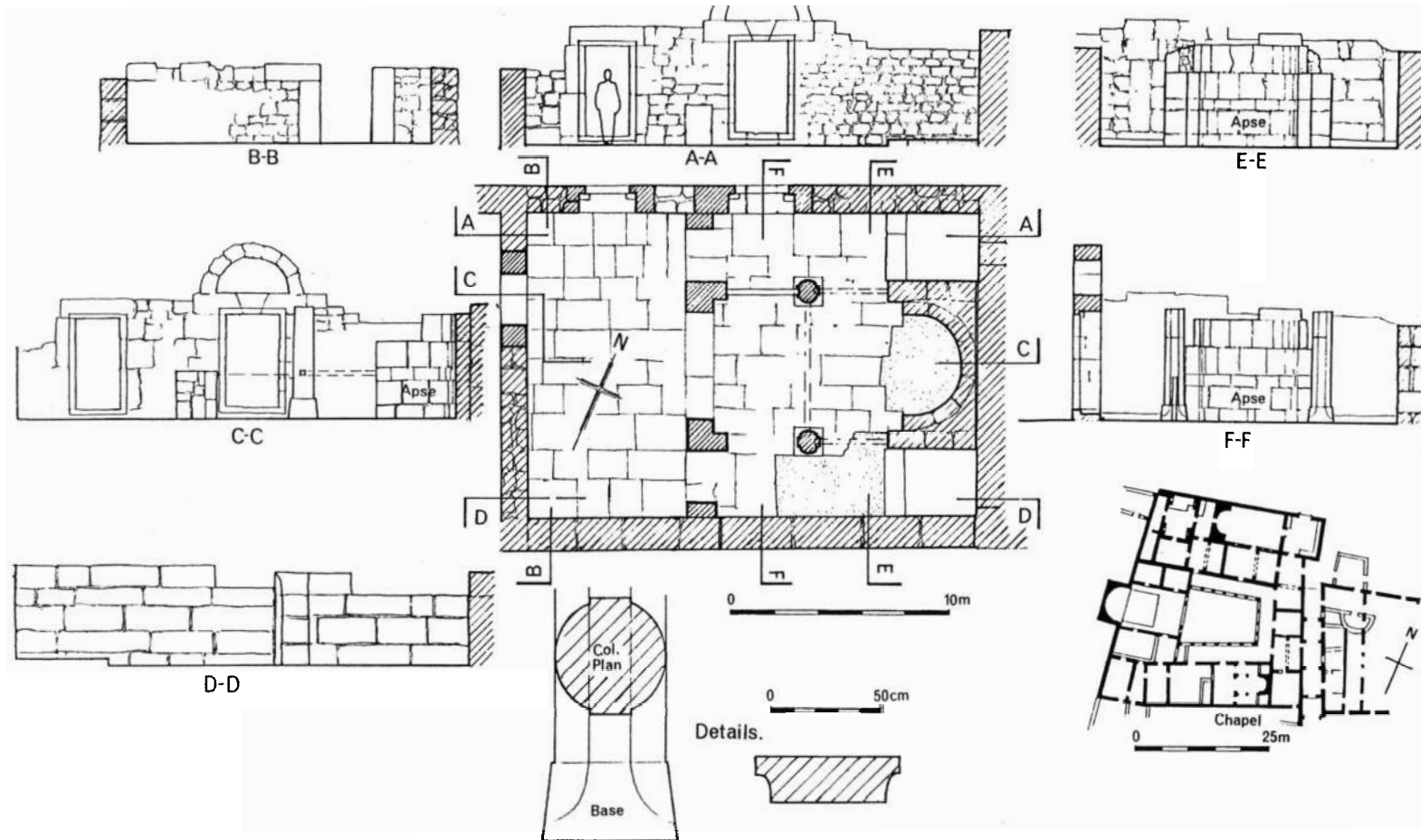
6. In the baptistery: a small plain impost block of Proconnesian marble.

7. In the atrium of the fore-complex:

- a* in the north-east corner, an Ionic impost block of Proconnesian marble; there are a cross within a wreath and leaves on the front and a rounded shell on the back.
- b* flanking the Arab-period door in the south wall of the courtyard, two re-used Attic bases for columns and, nearby, one re-used Corinthian capital, all of Proconnesian marble; the capital resembles those of 1*d*, but does not belong to the same set.
- c* two sandstone column-bases from a set which stood on the top of the long sides of the water tank; their columns would have supported the roofs over the aisles of the atrium.

8. Seen by Ward-Perkins lying loose in the church: elongated impost block of Proconnesian marble 0.55-0.30m × 0.38-0.29m × ht. 0.17m; there is a cross between leaves in low relief on the front and a design with leaf and tongue on the back; on the underside a square cutaway (0.26m) and a dowel-hole for the top of a capital are visible.

APOLLONIA
PALACE OF THE DUX



Illus. 57. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace of the Dux' and Chapel, measured plans and elevations (Sheila Gibson).

4. The 'Palace' and 'Palace' Chapel, illus. 57-67.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1960; 1966*b*, 249; 1971, 186; 1976*b*; Swoboda 1969, 301; Ward-Perkins 1972, 224; 1976, 285-8; Stucchi 1975, 375-6; Bailey 1980, 63, 64; Ellis 1985; Duval 1989*b*, 2752, 2772, 2777, 2784, 2787; Bonacasa Carra 1998.

Discovery

Excavated by the Department of Antiquities under Goodchild's direction between 1959 and 1962, but without a probe below its foundations.

Description

The Palace

Large complex building (illus. 57) in a commanding position on the western hill, with its southern rooms (which, in Goodchild's view, were intended to house soldiers) originally up against the city's rampart; in a second stage, a large rectangular building was constructed adjoining the south side of the rampart, and was reached through a door which breached the rampart, apparently to serve as a gatehouse/guardhouse to the complex (see pp.35 ff. above). Its position, its size, its chapel with a reliquary chest, and the number of its public rooms for reception and dining, led Goodchild to propose its identification as the Palace of the *Dux*. That has been accepted by some (e.g. Swoboda, Stucchi, Ward-Perkins), but not everyone (e.g. Duval, Ellis). It is, of course, a striking contrast to the fort-like building which Kraeling (1962) proposed to identify as the head-quarters of the *Dux* at Ptolemais; nevertheless, there seems to be a serious case for its official character.

Its date is also controversial (see see pp.35 ff.). In the absence of evidence from below the foundations, Goodchild tentatively suggested that it was constructed in the early sixth century, Ward-Perkins in the fifth century but perhaps as late as the reign of Anastasius, Stucchi, on the basis of the masonry techniques, soon after the middle of the fifth century. Only further excavation can bring clarification.

The Chapel, illus. 57-66.

Small, well-built chapel, occupying the eastern part of the south wing of the 'Palace of the *Dux*'. The south and east walls are also main constructional walls of the original building, and they are built of coursed ashlar, the courses averaging 0.51–0.52m high. The north and west walls are of the masonry that is used for the rest of the peristyle complex, with two faces of smaller blocks, roughly coursed and incorporating large ashlar blocks for such features as doorways and piers. The paving throughout is of the rather harder grey limestone that is commonly so used at Apollonia, for example in the atrium and secondary halls of the Central Church.

The plan at first glance suggests a variant of the cross-in-square type, but closer inspection reveals it as in fact that of a miniature three-aisled basilical church with a disproportionately large narthex. The main entrance was from the peristyle (illus. 58), opposite the western bay of the two-arched nave arcade. A similar but slightly smaller door led from the peristyle directly into the narthex (illus. 59), which was accessible also from the next room to the west.

A transverse wall of three arches divides the narthex from the body of the chapel. The central arch was wider than the other two (fractionally wider than the apse), and the piers of it were L-shaped, the other arms of the L serving as responds for the nave-arcades. The corresponding responds at the east end project from the shoulder of the apse, and in between are a pair of columns of the same distinctive form as those of the peristyle of the 'Palace', with a flattened vertical band on the east and west faces (illus. 60). As in the peristyle



Illus. 58. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace of the Dux', peristyle court with entry to chapel.



Illus. 59. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace' Chapel, smaller door from peristyle court.



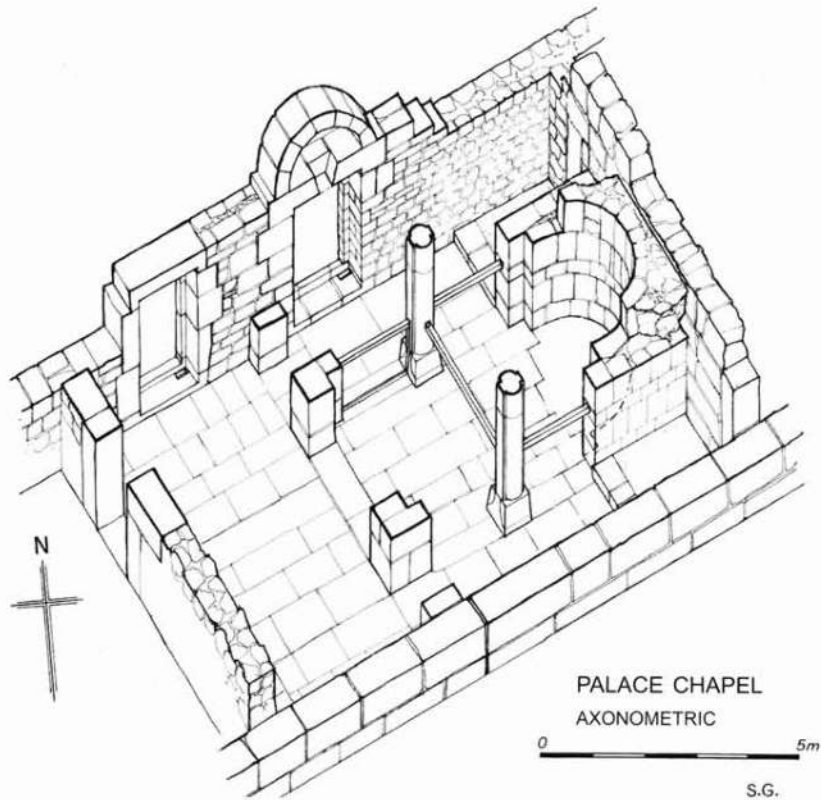
Illus. 60. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace' Chapel, apse and nave.

the bases are trapezoidal blocks, with shallow cut-aways at the corners forming an outward-curving continuation of the bands on the columns. The capitals are lost, but, on the analogy of the peristyle, they were trapezoidal blocks, either plain or, more probably, echoing in reverse the decoration of the bases.

The curved wall of the apse was structurally independent, being faced with vertical slabs, tied in half-way up by a course of horizontal slabs. A single block, now much weathered but of the same curvature and corbelled inwards, presumably represents the moulding at the spring of a masonry semi-dome (illus. 60). The floor is now of earth, but the fact that the paving of the nave breaks off just short of the chord suggests that it was originally raised and projected a short distance into the nave. Flanking the apse there were two miniature rectangular chapels. In plan these were simply prolongations of the nave-aisles, but in this case the step up is preserved, and they could well also have been demarcated by transverse arches between the outer walls and the shoulders of the apse. The actual floors within the chapels are lost.

There are two large doorways from the peristyle, one opposite the western arch of the nave arcade (just visible in illus. 60) and another, slightly smaller, opening into the narthex. These and the similar doorway from the peristyle into Room 14 were all fitted with wooden doors which opened inwards. There was a smaller, plain doorway between Room 14 and the narthex.

In elevation the only capital preserved in position is a simple out-curving moulding on the south pier of the small doorway from the narthex into the south nave-aisle (illus. 57). But there are a number of fallen voussoirs, including several of an arch of the size of that of the arcade of the central nave. If one restores the capitals of the two nave-columns on the same lines as those



Illus. 61. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace' chapel, axonometric, drawing (Sheila Gibson).

of the very similar columns of the peristyle, the main lines of the elevation fall readily into place (illus. 61). Low flanking arches and a wider central arch divided the narthex from the nave and the pattern may well have been repeated at the east end. The two pairs of longitudinal arches were of the same distinctive form as those of the peristyle, and immediately above them, on both faces, ran the string course of which a number of blocks were found fallen within the chapel.

Within the chapel the eastern bay of the central nave can be seen to have been closed off by a light wooden chancel-screen (illus. 57, 61). There are two sockets for a pair of light horizontal members, 0.08m to 0.10m square at floor-level and about 1.05m–1.10m above the pavement, and these were presumably reinforced vertically by some sort of railings or lattice-work, perhaps with a central gate.¹ There are also the slots for a substantial stone or marble *transenna* blocking the archway immediately opposite the main entrance (illus. 60, 62). Of the altar the excavators found no trace, but they did find lying in the body of the nave, opened and ransacked, the large carved marble reliquary-chest in the form of a sarcophagus, which is described below (illus. 65, 66).

Goodchild (1976*b*, 257) has suggested that this reliquary-chest played a part in the oath-taking ceremonies which were an important feature of the contemporary diplomatic scene. The suggestion is, in the context, an attractive one. The shape of the chest is a common one, but the size, the finish and the

¹ Duval criticises the axonometric drawing published by Ward-Perkins 1976 for showing no means of access to the chancel; as the text here shows, it should be understood that at least one of the barriers was movable.



Illus. 62. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace' Chapel, apse and chancel.

setting, all suggest an official purpose. It is noticeable, moreover, that the peristyle was paved as far as, but not beyond, the main door into the chapel. The chapel as such was clearly meant to be accessible from the 'Palace' vestibule. One may suggest that the reliquary-chest stood in or near the middle of the west bay of the nave, opposite and visible from, but not directly accessible from, the main door into the chapel. To reach it one would have had to turn right, into the narthex and so up into the chapel through the ceremonial western arch. The altar stood in its conventional position in the east bay, just in front of the apse, surrounded by a wooden chancel-screen.

The two doors from the peristyle are both well preserved. The span of the larger one (1.20m externally and 1.48m internally) was evidently felt to be too wide for the capacities of the local stone, and in addition to a relieving arch the lintel was treated as a flat arch, with a keystone between two corbelled members² (illus. 58, 63). Set up against the inner face of the rebating are the sockets for the framework of a wooden double door; two stout rectangular posts, about 0.30m × 0.17m, and a rather slighter (about 0.15m × 0.10m) cross-piece just below the stone lintel. There is the socket for a bolt in the middle of the stone door-sill (illus. 64).

The doorway into the narthex was slightly narrower, 1.08m widening to 1.32m, with a single stone as lintel and (presumably) a relieving arch (illus. 59). In other respects it was identical with its neighbour. The doorway into Room 14 has lost its lintel, but it too seems to have followed the same pattern.

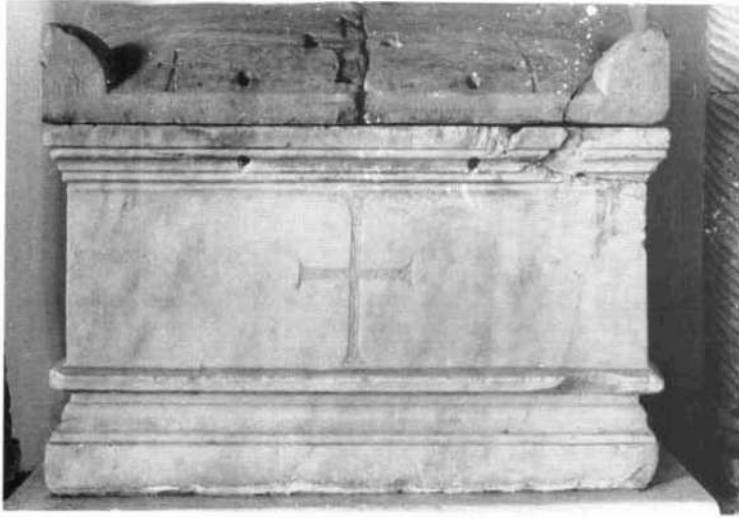
² The outer face was plastered and painted with the inscription no. 1; see below.



Illus. 63. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace' Chapel, main entry from peristyle court.



Illus. 64. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace' Chapel, main entry from peristyle court



Illus. 65. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace' Chapel, reliquary chest.

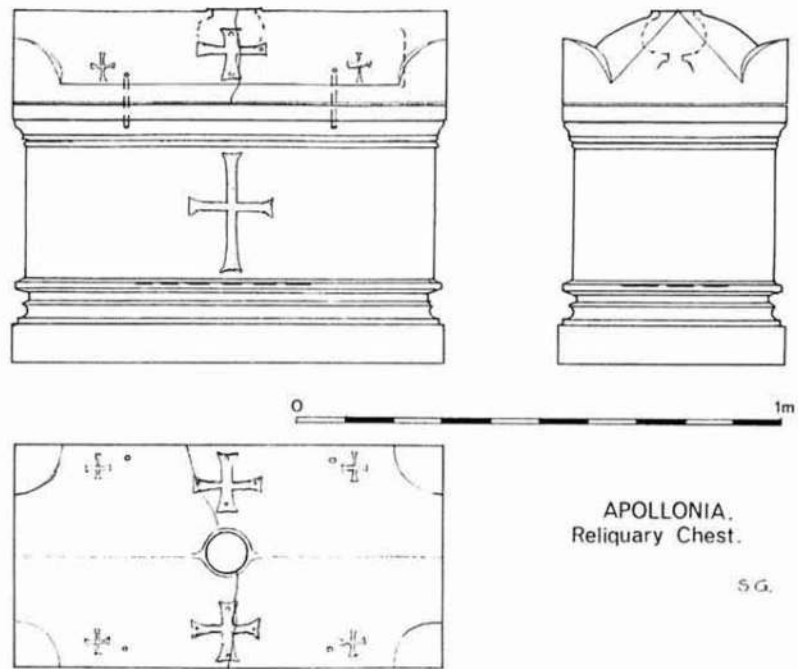
Added from the 1976 account:

From the mass of rubble found within the body of the chapel, it is clear that this part at any rate of the building was vaulted, presumably with three barrel vaults running longitudinally east and west. In view of the long history of later occupation, one cannot be sure that the absence of similar vaulting in the narthex is significant. If originally vaulted, it would presumably have had a barrel vault running north and south.

The marble reliquary (illus. 65) (now in Apollonia Museum), though larger (l. 0.89m) and more elaborate than usual, is of a form that was common in the fifth and sixth centuries, shaped like a sarcophagus with a gabled lid and acroteria. Both body and lid were ornamented with applied or inlaid metal crosses, and the lid was fastened to the body by means of four slender bronze bolts. A feature which it shares with many, but by no means all, such sarcophagus-shaped reliquaries is that the middle of the central ridge is splayed out to form a small platform, in this instance pierced by a hole leading down into the interior. A similar, but smaller (l. 0.51m) and less elaborate reliquary, now in Cyrene Museum, was found on the site at Gasr Stablous, on the upper plateau, south of Gasr el Lebia.³

The 'palace' chapel was built in the second half of the fifth century and very possibly as late as the reign of Anastasius, AD 491-518. It was, moreover, part of an official Byzantine government building. Not surprisingly, it reflects more closely the Aegean models of which it was a diminutive version, adapted to the particular requirements of which the palace itself was an expression.

³ Duval observes that the reliquary is of the type usual in Asia Minor, Greece and Syria; doubtless imported complete. See also Sodini 1989, 183, who believes that many reliquaries are likely to have been produced at a single quarry for export, the quarry being at present unidentified.



Illus. 66. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace' Chapel, the reliquary chest, measured drawings (Sheila Gibson).



Illus. 67. Apollonia/Sozusa: 'Palace of the Dux', cross on wall.

In the 1971 notebook, Ward-Perkins also recorded here three fragments of a colonnette of Proconnesian marble, and a small sandstone *tympanum* carved with a monogram cross in relief, then lying on the wall between the two doors.

Handwritten on the typescript is a reminder to add a note on the Christian symbols found in the 'Palace' itself; but there is nothing on these in the notebooks. The following list is extracted from Goodchild 1976, but it is certainly not complete:

1. Goodchild p. 248. At the north-east outer corner of the west wing, near the ceremonial entry, one of the quoins bears a simple inscribed cross.
2. Goodchild p. 248. In room 2 (the 'Audience-chamber') there were traces of a painted cross on a voussoir fallen from the semi-dome of the apse.
3. Goodchild p. 251. In the doorway between rooms 33 and 34 the lintel bears a carved cross, apparently plain but possibly monogram (illus. 67).

It is clear that Ward-Perkins intended to add a list of Christian features seen elsewhere in the 'Palace' but we have not found this and it has not been possible to make one from scratch.

Inscriptions

No texts were found in the chapel, but no. 1 in the 'Palace' peristyle, above the entrance to the chapel, is obviously directly relevant to it; it is not effectively legible. No. 2 comes from the interior of the 'Palace', in which a small number of earlier inscriptions were found re-used (Reynolds 1976, nos. 32-5) as well as one fragment of the fifth/sixth-century text of the decree of Anastasius *de rebus Libycis* (*ibid.* no. 37).

1. Sandstone keystone (w. 0.28–0.72m × ht. 0.48m) found *in situ* above the main door from the peristyle into the chapel, inscribed originally with seven lines of painted letters (ht. c. 0.05m) on plaster; Reynolds 1976, no. 31. The plaster has largely vanished and it has not been possible to produce a meaningful text:
 - [· · ? · ·]Α[·] Α
 - [· · ? · ·]ΦΑ
 - [· · ? · ·]
 - [· · ? · ·][· · c.9 · ·]ΟΥ[· · ·]
 - [· · ·]ΙΜΜΕΡΟΙ[· · c.5 · ·]ΟΥ[· · ·]
 - [· · ·]ΟΜΙ[·]Α[· · ·]
 - [· · ? · ·]
2. Large storage jar found in the Palace; now in Apollonia Museum. Inscribed in letters formed by a series of roundels impressed in the wet clay. Reynolds 1976, no. 36.

a On the rim, letters 0.03-4; Πολίανθε Oh Polianthus

b On the belly, letters of variable size up to 0.12m; lunate epsilon and sigma. A crude figure with arms outstretched has been drawn in outline to the right of l. 1, extending downwards over ll. 2, 3.

CAΤΙ *figure*

Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθ(η)ον τῶ ΑΥΤΑΤΗΛΗΚΗ Lord help [? . . .

crosses Π · Λ · VI || *crosses*

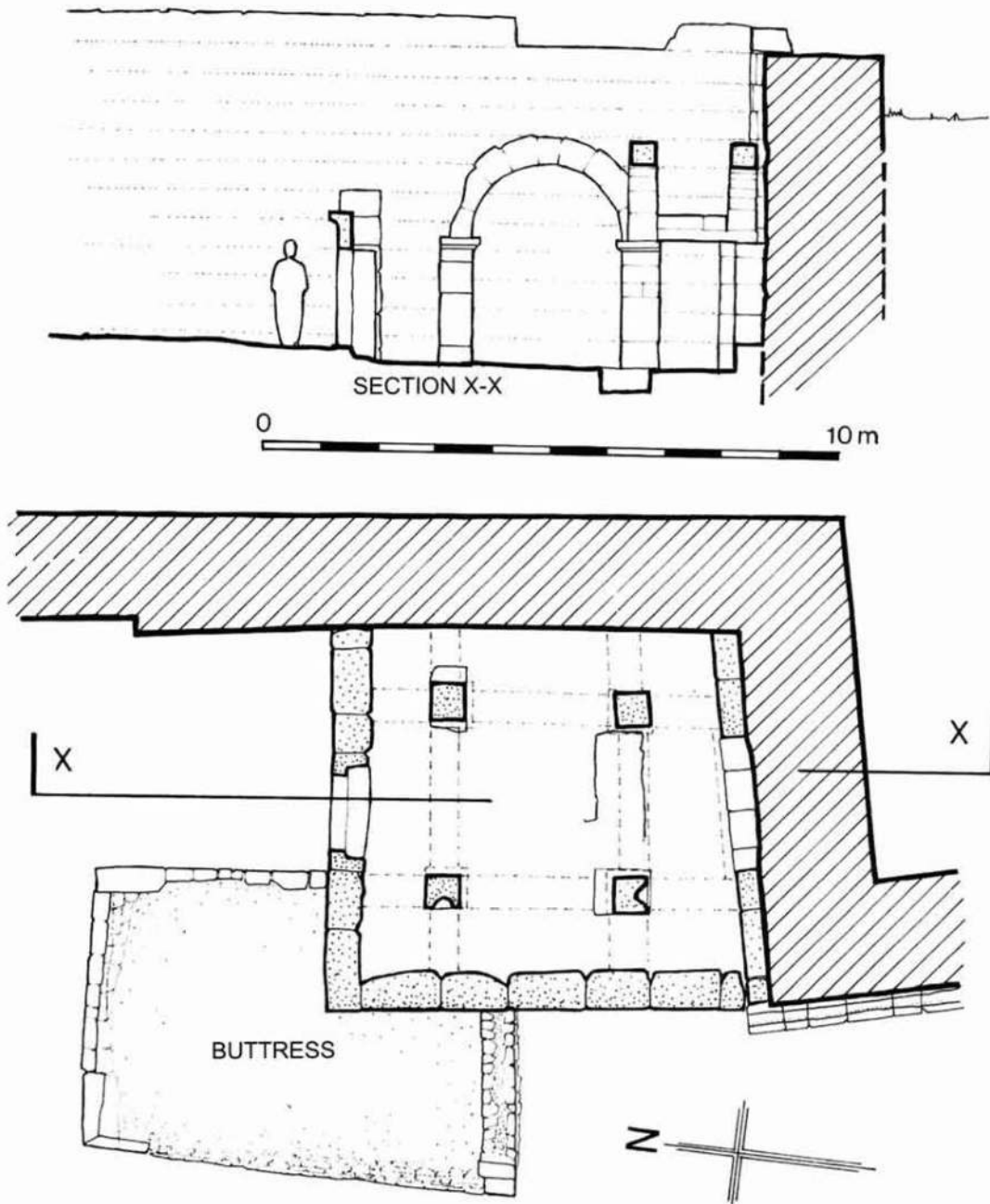
· · ·] ΙΑ[· · ·] [· · ·] ὀγδοα[· · ·

L. 2 written BOHΘCHON; the rest is presumably a personal name which has not been deciphered.

L. 3 possibly a figure, π' = 80.

L. 4 ending perhaps with the figure ὀγδο[ήκοντα] = eighty.

APOLLONIA
BURIAL CHAMBER



Illus. 68. Apollonia/Sozusa: Extramural Cruciform Building (?martyrion), measured plan and elevation (G.R.H. Wright).

5. The Cruciform Building outside the city wall, illus. 68, 69.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1965, 138; 1971, 191; Pedley 1976, pl. 47; Ward-Perkins 1972, 222, 229; 1976, 288-90; Vickers/Reynolds 1972, 37; Stucchi 1975, 417; Duval 1989*b*, 2779; Wright 1993 and figs. 2-7, 9. For the sarcophagus, McAleer 1978, 83-99.

Discovery

Built up against the outer face of the city wall, in the angle between Tower II and the curtain wall to the north of it, are the substantial remains of a vaulted cruciform building. It was discovered, and excavated under Goodchild's direction, by the Department of Antiquities in the course of the clearance undertaken before the building of the new Museum (illus. 68, 69).

Description

Massively constructed of reused blocks of stone, the plan of the building is that of a cross-in-square, or *quincunx*, with piers of masonry delimiting a square central area (illus. 69; roughly 2.60m × 2.60m) within a larger square (6m × 6m), which, though regular in intention, became in practice slightly trapezoidal as a result of the obliquity of the north wall of the tower with respect to the line of the wall to the north of it. The entrance lay in the middle of the north side, and directly opposite it, in the middle of the south side, there was a shallow recess, partly constructed and partly cut into the face of the older masonry. In front of the latter, between the two southern piers, the excavators found, partly sunk into the floor, a re-used Attic sarcophagus,¹ now in the Museum. The north-west corner of the building was buttressed by a near-rectangular mass of rubble contained within walls of masonry that are partly vertical and partly inward-sloping. There is nothing to show whether this was an original feature, or whether it was added later to counter signs of settlement.

The only surviving architectural detail is that of the capitals of the piers, which are simple horizontal slabs, bevelled outwards to provide a seating for the four arches which framed the central area and for the eight flat slabs which spanned the spaces between the piers and the outer walls. The outer ends of these slabs were either grouted into the pre-existing masonry, or rested on masonry built up against it. The niche in the middle of the south wall was spanned by an arch similar to those framing the central area, an indication that the four arms of the cross were barrel-vaulted. There is nothing to show how the four small square spaces in the outer angles were roofed, but flat slabs would have been the obvious answer.

Discussion

How was the central area roofed? G. R. H. Wright, who surveyed the building, favours a dome, and both structurally and aesthetically this would have been a perfectly acceptable solution, with many analogies in later Byzantine architecture. It should be noted, however, that on the evidence of the surviving remains a cloister-vault or a cross-vault would have been equally possible, or again, if there was any call for lighting the interior, a square central lantern with a timber roof. In view of the controversy that surrounds the origins of this common later Byzantine type of building, it would be unwise to do more than

¹ McAleer reports it as a Hippolytus sarcophagus; Ward-Perkins and Wright as a Meleager sarcophagus.



Illus. 69. Apollonia/Sozusa: Extramural Cruciform Building.

state the several possibilities. The one absolutely certain fact is that buildings of this cross-in-square, or quincunx, plan were already familiar in the eastern provinces as early as the second century (the so-called Praetorium at Mousmiyeh).² The appearance of such a building in sixth-century Cyrenaica occasions no surprise.

And what was the purpose of the building? Both the plan and the presence of a sarcophagus would have been very appropriate to a *martyrion*, and this is a possibility which certainly cannot be excluded. On the other hand there are no traces of any associated cult, nor did the excavators find any of the secondary burials which are such a conspicuous feature of most martyria. An alternative is that this was the mausoleum of some prominent member of the sixth-century Christian community, located so as to be as near as possible to the protective influence of the relics preserved in the West Church, which lay just the other side of the city wall. On the evidence available, this seems to be the more likely answer of the two.

² de Vogüé 1865, 45-6, fig. 11 and plate 7.

In what is certainly a version written earlier than the above, Ward-Perkins also made the following points:

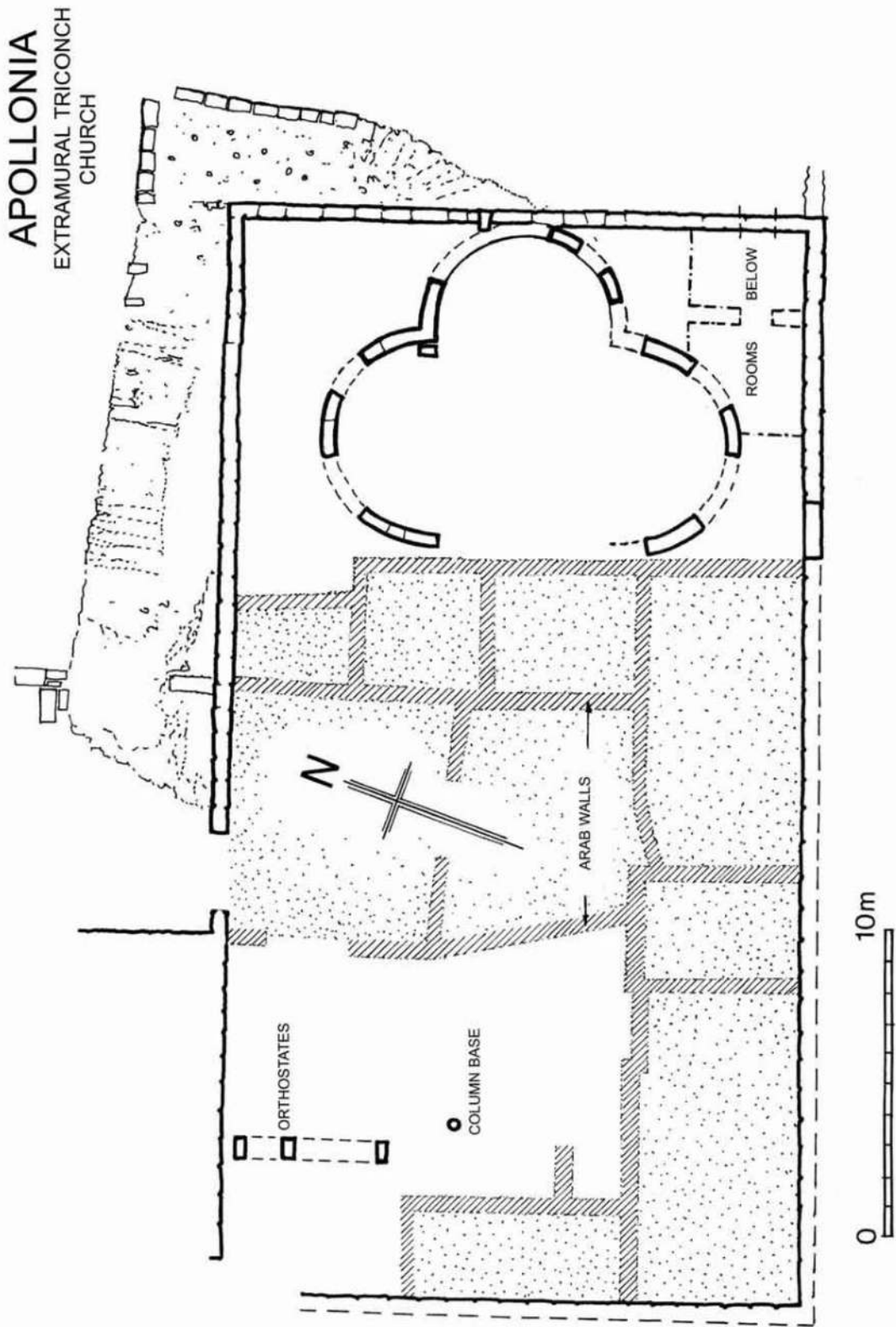
1. the bottom four courses of the city-wall against which the building is set are of the original fine masonry, laid in courses between 0.46m and 0.52m high, with shallow bevelled joints and occasional traces of drafting. Above this line the wall face has been rebuilt and the face of the tower is set back about 0.35m, providing a seating for the flat slabs that were laid across from the two southern piers of the chapel.
2. the four piers that supported the roof are built up of squared blocks, which were no doubt stuccoed, and which carry simple bevelled capitals on the two inner faces.
3. the four arches are now partially reconstructed.

Wright's account

Since Ward-Perkins wrote, Wright has published an account of the building based on his survey of 1967. Of his comments and additional information it seems useful to add here:

1. the floor of the burial chamber was sunk well below ground level.
2. the case for a dome is much stronger than Ward-Perkins thought.
3. the buttress is almost of the same size as the building itself. Presumably intended to resist lateral thrust on the building's one entirely free-standing angle, it can only be explained, Wright argues, if the central area was covered by a dome—he supposed 'a central independent hemispherical dome on pendentives, not a drum.'
4. the slabbed roofing for the four angle-spaces was probably laid not far below the crown of the vaulting in the arms of the cross, giving a head height of *c.* 3.50m.

He also discussed Stucchi's view (which was based on incomplete information) that the building was a *martyrion*, with an upper storey providing the space needed for the cult (which is otherwise lacking), reached either by steps on the external face of the city wall or via the late staircase in the north aisle of the West Church. Neither the upper storey nor the proposed approaches to it seem very probable to Wright. He suggests that the buttress served as a 'cavalier bastion' and that any stairways provided access (via the flat roof of the building) to the fighting platform. This too seems speculative.



Illus. 70. Apollonia/Sozusa: Extramural Triconch Church, measured plan (R. J. C. Jamieson).

6. The Triconchos Church, illus. 70, 71.

Bibliography

Beechey 1828, 515; Goodchild 1966*a*, 213; Ward-Perkins 1972, 224; 1976, 284-5; Stucchi 1975, 406-8; Duval 1989*b*, 2758, 2768; Bonacasa Carra 1998.

Description

The substantial remains of a large church, still unexcavated, can be seen to the south-west of the city, outside the walls.¹ The building was contained within a rectangular outer wall, built of a single thickness of large stone blocks and measuring some 36.50m from east to west by just under 20m (illus. 70). The greater part of the area so enclosed is still occupied by a modern house,² but about a third of it, at the east end, is clear of buildings though protected from over-zealous scrutiny by a grove of prickly pears. Within this eastern part one can distinguish the trefoil outline of a *triconchos* chamber, measuring internally 12.70m from north to south by 10m from east to west and opening westwards on to the presumed site of the nave. At the west end of the building a line of three massive squared orthostats suggests the probability of an internal narthex built in the orthostat-and-faced-rubble masonry that was regularly used at Apollonia for interior walls. At the south-east corner, at a lower level, there are two small interconnecting chambers, now characterless but very possibly of ancient origin.


At the north-east corner there are the collapsed remains of a heavy thickening of the outer walls, faced with what was once an inward-sloping revetment of squared blocks. This is a familiar Cyrenaican feature, variously interpreted as defensive in purpose and as a form of buttressing against earthquake—or possibly both. In this instance it seems clear that the thickening was added some time after the church was first built.

Discussion

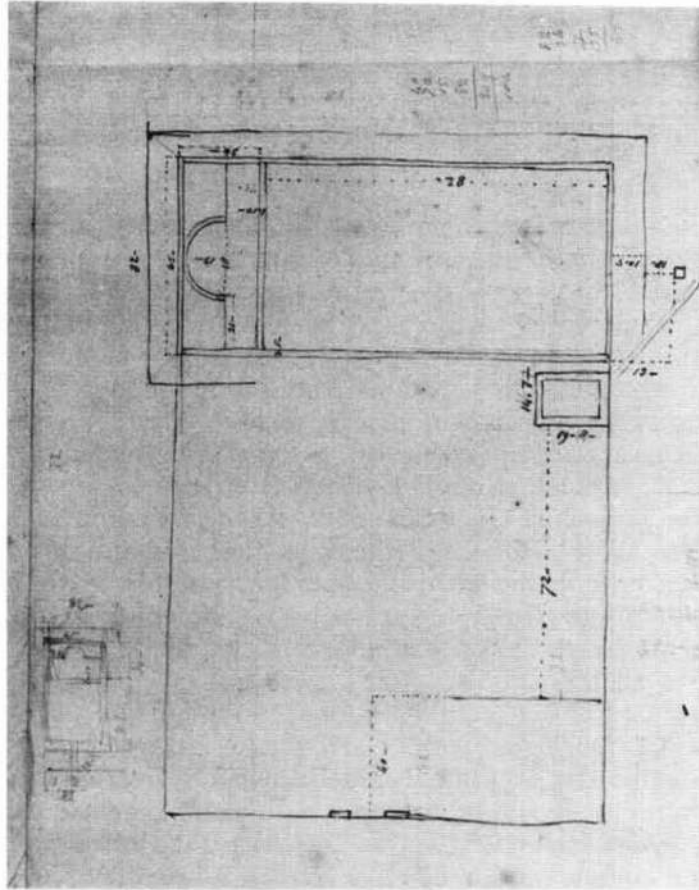
From these remains there can be little doubt that this building was a church of the type familiar in Early Christian Egypt,³ with a *triconchos*-chancel in place

¹ Mr Don Bailey, lately of the Greek and Roman Department, British Museum, has recently discovered in the Museum the plan of this building made by the Beechey brothers (illus. 71). It does not show the *triconchos*, which may well have been more thoroughly covered with earth when they saw it than it has been in recent times; it seems to indicate that there was a sloping revetment all around the outer walls of which the thickening of the walls at the north-east angle noted below by Ward-Perkins is the only obvious survivor today; it also marks a large rectangular enclosure, its perimeter wall stretching northwards from the two northern corners of the building, with what may be rooms along its east and west walls. This has been completely obscured in modern times as a result of road construction and housing developments, but should certainly be considered in any future discussion of the building. We are most grateful to Mr. Bailey for giving us this information, and to the Trustees of the Museum for allowing publication of the drawing.

² By 1994, the family whose residence inhibited a full survey in 1955 had moved away and Reynolds, with the help of Fadlullah Abdussalam, was able to penetrate a little (but not much) further than Ward-Perkins—a much more extensive examination would now be possible for an agile investigator. Reynolds noted:

- a. in the inner face of the south outer wall at the level of the two semi-underground rooms mentioned by Ward-Perkins, the tops of two arches
- b. inside the entry on the north side, at ground level, signs of limestone flagging
- c. to west of this, a half-buried marble column; and a marble capital reported by Fadlullah
- d. on the inner face of the central apse of the triconch, a little left of centre are two small niches (? for lamps); one block of the same apse has engraved , perhaps an indication that it is re-used.

³ Both Stucchi and Duval observe that the plan with triconchos is not found exclusively in Egypt.



Illus. 71. Apollonia/Sozusa: Extramural Triconch Church as drawn in 1821-2 (F. W. and H. W. Beechey; by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

of the normal chancel with a single axial apse. One finds the *triconchos* used in a very similar way in palace architecture—there is a good late Roman example excavated by Goodchild at Tolmeita (the ‘House of the Triconchos Hall’; Ward-Perkins *et al.* 1986, 126-42). However, the location of the Apollonia building, well outside the inhabited area, and its isolation from other buildings, are against any such interpretation in this instance. It is far more likely that this was a cemetery church.⁴ It is possible that the two semi-subterranean chambers at the south-east corner were a tomb, or part of a tomb, in which case this could well be a *martyrion* church, comparable to the West Church at Lamluda, which was certainly built over a pre-existing tomb complex. But without excavation any conclusion in this sense would be premature.

The extensive use of squared stone masonry, as in the East Church, and the incorporation of a *triconchos*-chancel, an unusual and almost exclusively Egyptian feature,⁵ both strongly suggest that this building was erected in the fifth century, when the ecclesiastical ties with Egypt were strong and those with Constantinople relatively weak.

⁴ This interpretation may seem to ignore the enclosure to the north which is described in n. 1 and shown in *illus. 71*.

⁵ But see n. 3.

7. Other Christian antiquities, illus. 72.

Some other Christian antiquities have now been found at Apollonia and can be added to the tally.

1. Byzantine Rooms south of the West Gate, illus. 72.

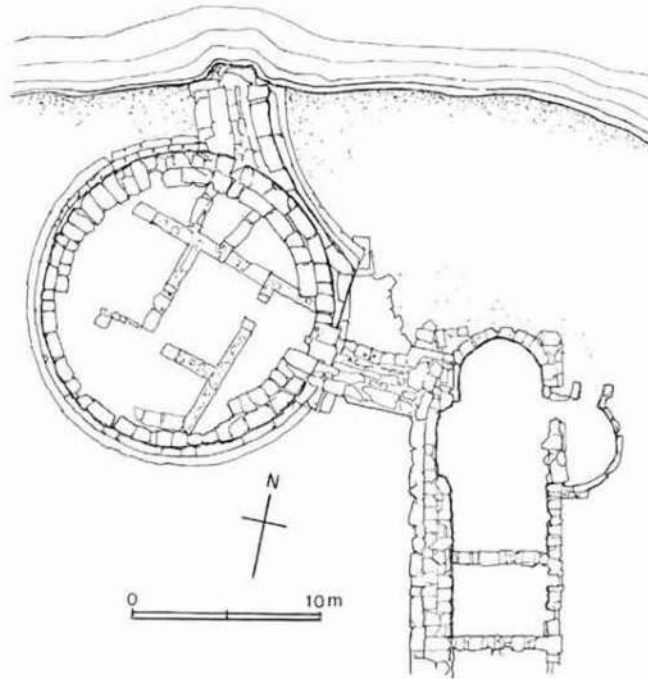
Bibliography

White 1966, 262; 1976, 112-4; Goodchild 1971, 183; Stucchi 1975, 417, 418.

Description

[Summary of the excavator's report and other comments by Reynolds.]

A series of rooms, in the largest of which the excavators found two reliefs of crosses (White 1976, plate 17c), was built up against the inner face of the city wall, immediately south of the West Gate (illus. 1). The building-technique, the crosses and a small number of coins found here suggest that the rooms were in use in the sixth-seventh centuries AD. The northernmost room has two apses, one at its north end, the other in its east wall towards the north end, the entrances to both being spanned by arches whose keystones carried reliefs of Maltese crosses (White 1976, pl. 17c). The other striking features are arched recesses c. 1m above floor level, four in the west wall and another in the south wall of the biapsidal room, another in the east wall of the room immediately south of that, and two more in the west wall of the room beyond that. White, like Goodchild, originally supposed that the rooms were used by soldiers on duty at the West Gate. Subsequently he compared their niches with those in the 'Audience Hall' of the 'Palace of the *Dux*' (Goodchild 1976b, 248, room 2), where they have been taken to be storage cupboards for documents, and therefore proposed an administrative function for these rooms too (he pointed also to the re-use in their construction of a stone inscribed with the word $\eta\gamma\epsilon\mu\omega\nu$, but it would be unwise to give any weight to that since it may have been moved to the place of re-use from elsewhere). Stucchi, who wrote before all the evidence on these rooms was available, interpreted as funerary those niches of which he knew, and so took the whole set of rooms to be a *martyrion*; that now seems very unlikely.



Illus. 72. Apollonia/Sozusa: Biapsidal Building (Sheila Gibson after a measured plan by Donald White).

2. Miscellaneous inscribed finds

- a In the West Gate, a lead medallion (diam. 2.1cm), pierced, probably for a suspension chain, inscribed on both faces; found on the floor of the Round Tower. Published White 1966, 261; 1976, 108.

Obv. Ἰωαννοῦ	above a Greek cross.	Of Joannes
Rev. Δωροθέου		Of Dorotheos

- b Between the East and the Central Churches.

- i. Fragment of a marble bowl inscribed on the rim (w. 0.035m); letters, 0.025m, lunate *epsilon*. Found in Byzantine buildings; now in Apollonia Museum. Published Reynolds 1976, no. 29, with her plate 65. It may well have come from the central Church.

[Κύ]ριε *cross* βο[ηθεῖ] . . . Lord help [? : :]

The names of the suppliant(s) must have followed, probably preceded by 'your servant(s)'.

- ii. Limestone panel, cut away above (0.81m × 0.53m × 0.075m); inscribed on one face between the arms of a cross with forked terminals; an incised line running from the two ends of the cross-bar encircles the upper part of the vertical; letters, 0.05–0.06m, angular *sigma* and *omega*, ligature of NKA in l. 1. Published Montet 1954, p. 265 whence *SEG* XVII.820; Reynolds 1960, no. 1; 1976, no. 30, with her plate 65.

Χ(ριστὸ)ς ν(ι)κᾶ	Christ is victorious
Α Ω	<i>Alpha Omega</i>


- c In the Roman baths.

Part of a coarse jar or amphora stamped three times with the same stamp; two of the stamps are complete, the third smudged. Published Reynolds 1976, no. 38.

- i. Set out in a circle surrounding *ii*
cross Εὐλογία Κυρίου Χ(ριστοῦ) ἐφ' ΗΠΤΑ

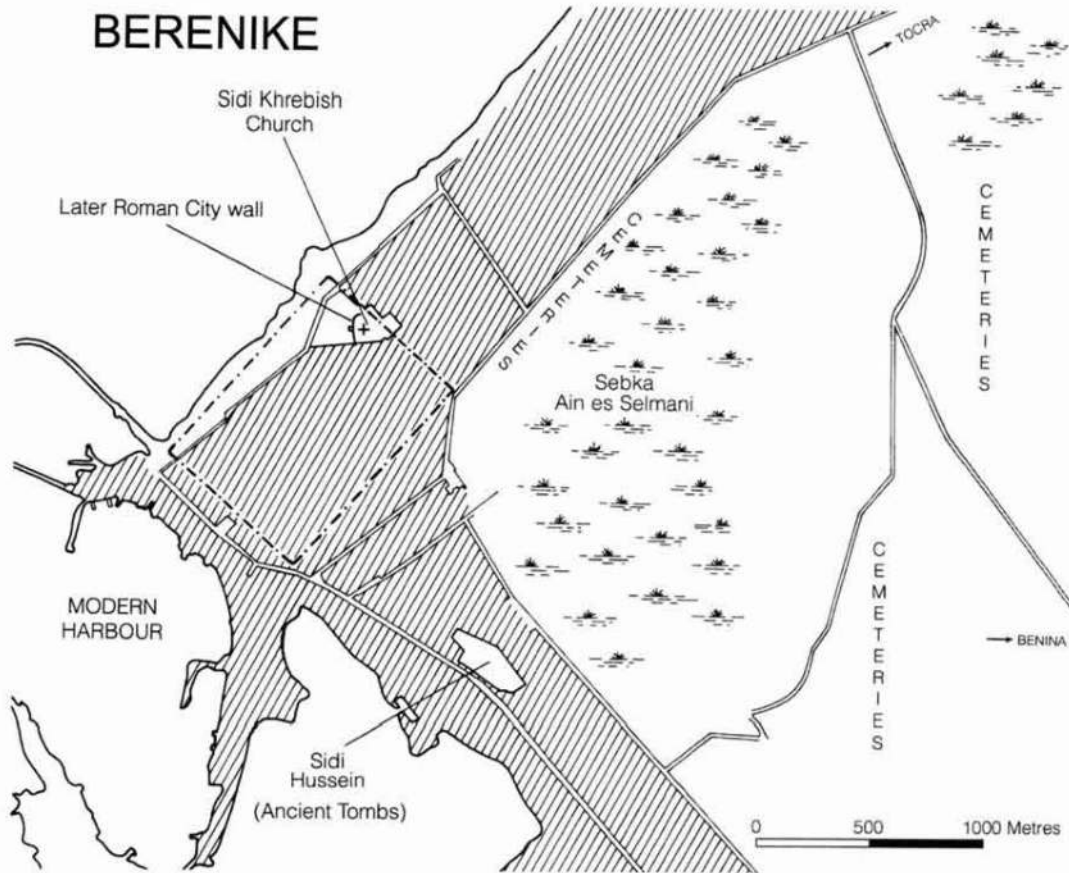
The blessing of Christ the Lord on [. . .]

A personal name (abbreviated) is possible; but it may be that the intention was to write ἐφ' ἡμᾶς.

- ii.  The monogram has not been deciphered.

- d In the area of the former Turkish military post. The left side of a marble feature (surviving w. 1.37m × ht. 0.29m × d. 0.13m), inscribed on one face within a sunk area (surviving w. 1.09m × ht. 0.29m); part of the right-hand border survives carrying a relief of a cross (the top lost). Letters, 0.04–0.05m, angular *sigma* and *omega*; abbreviation marks in the form of apostrophes; ΠΝ in l. 2 and probably ω| in l. 5 linked by slanting strokes. Published Robinson 1913, no. 74; Reynolds 1960, no. 13; Pugliese-Carratelli 1961, no. 200 *bis* (with incorrect attribution to Cyrene), whence Gallavotti 1963, 459f., J. and L. Robert 1964, no. 563 and Peek 1972, 20, whence J. and L. Robert 1973, no. 532; Reynolds 1976, no. 61, with her plate 71. Now in Apollonia Museum.

Following Dr. J. Uhlenbrock's discovery of a letter written by Oric Bates in 1909 to the American Archaeological Society (Uhlenbrock 1999), it is now known that the stone was discovered in that year by a party which included Bates and Richard Norton. They found it re-used in a bakery associated with the Turkish military post which was being established for the protection of Muslim Candioties recently settled at Susa. Bates also indicates that, for the military and civil building operations then in progress, the site of the nearby West Church was being rifled for good stone. Hitherto it has seemed likely that this



Illus. 73. Berenike: sketch map, showing location of the church; the probable extent of the Hellenistic and Roman cities is indicated by broken lines (J. A. Lloyd and Philip Dean).

2 Berenike (Benghasi), *illus. 73-81*: a church; a carved fitting possibly from another, perhaps an inscription; two bishops attested.

Bibliography

Stad. 57-8; Solinus 27.54; Euseb. *HE* VII.26; Syn. *Epp.* 42, 79 (with Roques 2000 *ad locc.*); Procop. *Aed.* VI.2.2-13; Theophan. 322; *Acta Conc. Nic.*; Stucchi 1975, 363, 395, 398, 431, 555; Purcaro 1976, 331; Lloyd 1978, 9-11, 17-34; Roques 1987, 95-6; 1989, 72; 1996a; Reynolds 2000; Dobias 2000, 253-4.

Westernmost of the five cities of Libya Superior (Pentapolis), a Hellenistic refoundation of the Greek colony of Euesperides and perhaps already its port. Its territory included some very fertile land watered by underground streams, and more which was dependent on a limited rainfall, but was liable to be raided by tribesmen from the Syrtica except (it is believed) during the period from the mid-first to the mid-third century AD when Roman control maintained peace. A new city-wall on a reduced circuit was built *c.* AD 250, presumably to combat renewed raiding.

There is very little evidence for its history at any date. A substantial Jewish community is attested in inscriptions of the first century AD, but disappears from the record after the Jewish Revolt of AD 115-7. The first indication of Christianity comes in *c.* AD 260, when its bishop Ammon received a letter from Dionysius, Archbishop of Alexandria, about the Sabellian heresy (presumably favoured in Berenike); in AD 325 its bishop, probably named Dachis, was present at the Council of Nicea; Roques has

pointed out that at the very end of the fourth century Claudian, *Stil.* i.v. 248-56, refers to the nearby lake Triton and the Gardens of the Hesperides in connection with support given by Libyans to the revolt of Gildon, and suggests a veiled reference to inhabitants of the neighbourhood of Berenike; in AD 411 (according to Roques) one of its citizens, Andronicus, became governor of Libya Superior and clashed with Synesius the bishop of Ptolemais; Justinian is reported to have rebuilt its city-wall and to have given it a bath-building; in AD 543-4 Maurysii from Tripolitania are said to have raided it, apparently after the incident of the murder of a number of Libyan chiefs by the governor of Tripolitania, and in order to drive out his brother who was governor of Libya Superior (Theophan., *cit.*); was it perhaps in reaction to this that Justinian rebuilt its city-wall and gave it a bath-building? Archaeological evidence is limited too, since the modern city overlies the ancient city centre and excavation has only been possible in the small area of the Turkish cemetery of Sidi Khrebish, which is on the edge of the ancient city, although not without importance in view of its proximity to the main route of entry to the city from the north. It is here that a church has been found.

The Monuments

1. The church at Sidi Khrebish

[A summary of the excavation report, with updating, by John Lloyd and Joyce Reynolds]; illus. 74-79.

Bibliography

Stucchi 1975, 363, 395, 398, 555; Lloyd 1978, 173-94; Sear 1978, 260-3 (decorative architectural elements in the church); Kenrick 1985, 420-1 (pottery and the date of the church); Krautheimer 1986, 493; Roques 1987, 95-6, 340; 1996, 411, 412, 423-5; Duval 1989*b*, 2745, 2762, 2764, 2767, 2769, 2773, 2775; Bonacasa Carra 1998.

Discovery

The church was found during archaeological exploration of the area in anticipation of modern development (which was not carried out), and excavated by John Lloyd *et al.* in 1972-3; Ward-Perkins left no account of it, but was in touch with the course of the work, and discussed it with Lloyd, although was not himself involved in any way with the final report; he certainly intended to include it in his book. Since Lloyd's publication in 1978, further study of the pottery by Kenrick, and of other finds by Lloyd himself, has led to some modifications of views expressed in it and these are incorporated here.

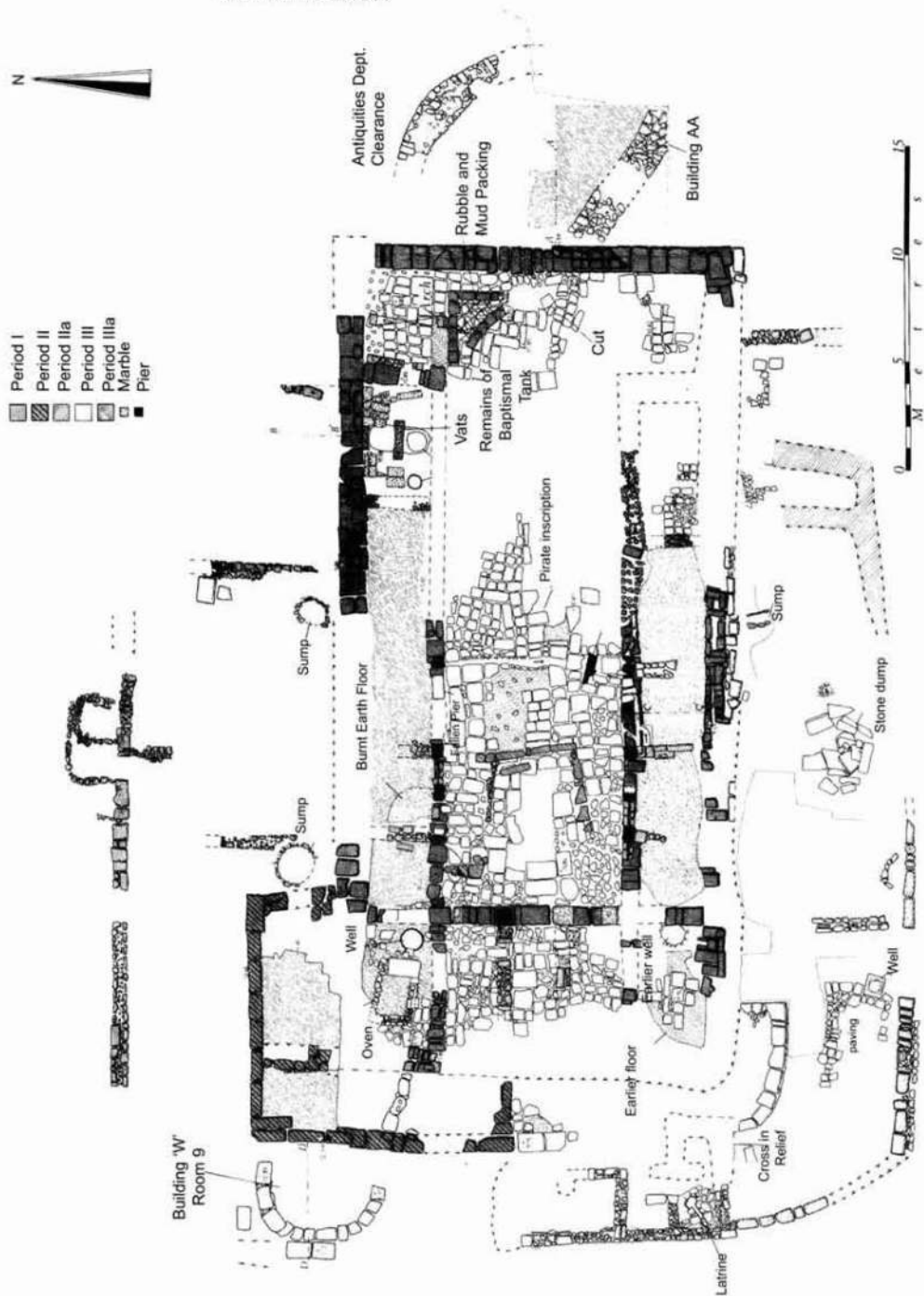
Description

The church (illus. 74, 75) stood near the summit of the low hill of Sidi Khrebish, isolated, it appears, from other buildings, but only 45m from the line of the third-century city wall, which is very likely to have been the one also adopted for the wall that Justinian is reported to have built. The area is close to the main overland route into the city in antiquity, had been a flourishing residential suburb from approximately the mid-first century AD to the mid-third but seems to have been substantially abandoned in the fourth and fifth centuries. There was scattered but not insignificant reoccupation of the abandoned houses in the sixth century, and to a lesser extent in the seventh, sometimes associated with light manufacturing installations; that presumably provided a congregation for the church. The character of the building, together with its position, which commands long views in all directions, has suggested that the church had a defensive as well as a religious function and could be fairly described as a fortified, even as a fortress church; but it should be noted that this concept is, in general, opposed by Stucchi, Roques and Duval.

Since its walls had suffered very badly indeed from stone-robbers (to the point that no entry-doorways survive—all must be deduced) and its interior had been stripped of fittings (presumably after the Islamic conquest of Cyrenaica), many questions must remain unanswered; but observations made during excavation have provided more information than might have been expected. Notably we know something of the order of construction.

BERENIKE

CHURCH AT SIDI KHREBISH



Illus. 74. Berenike: the church at Sidi Khrebish, measured plan (J. A. Lloyd).



Illus. 75. Berenike: Sidi Khrebish Church and tower from the west.

Building cannot have started earlier than the later fifth century, the latest date of any pottery sealed under its foundations (originally published as being of the early sixth century, but revised after further study).¹

The builders first cleared away débris and soil on a scale quite without known local precedent, in order to lay their foundations on bed-rock; which necessitated some raising of the floor level on the down-sloping south side of the building by layers of sand and débris, and later buttressing of its north-west corner (in order to resist pressure from soil banked up on the slope above) by construction of a tower (illus. 75, 76). Pottery sealed under the foundations of this tower is of the same date as that under the church walls, so that only a short time, if any, can have elapsed between the two.

On the prepared site the builders first erected a rectangle (38m long × 17.8m wide) of solid walls (between 0.93m and 1.05m thick); for these, as for the tower and the internal walls, they depended entirely, as far as we know, on *spolia* (no freshly-quarried blocks have been recognized). The stones used are of varied shapes, sizes and substances (limestone, sandstone and several marbles are recorded) which no doubt accounts for apparent variations in building techniques. Since so little survives above ground level any conclusion must be insecure, but it seems likely that in general the walls consisted of parallel lines of limestone blocks with a core of mud and rubble (illus. 77), but the blocks were laid sometimes as headers, sometimes as stretchers, sometimes as orthostats. Only in the base of the tower is it certain that orthostats were used regularly.

¹ Stucchi dated the building in the later fifth century AD (allowing also the possibility of the very early sixth) because it is one in which a building technique with orthostats was used. His fifth-century date conforms with that now derived from the pottery under the foundations, but his argument from the use of orthostats is weak. The evidence for the wall-building technique used is very slight indeed except in the tower, and that is an exceptional structure whose building techniques should not be assumed to be normal.



Illus. 76. Berenike: Sidi Khrebish Church, interior of the tower.



Illus. 77. Berenike: Sidi Khrebish Church, north wall.



Illus. 78. Berenike: Sidi Khrebish Church, central area of the nave, piers of the north and south arcades and drain leading to the cistern.

While most internal walls were probably built next, the apse certainly, and probably the chancel, were constructed on top of a roughly flagged floor which covered most of the rectangle except the aisles and the baptistery; but there is some indication that the area in which the apse was placed was already one step higher than the rest; if that is so, the ecclesiastical use was apparently planned from the first and any suggestion that the building was originally intended as a fort is undermined.

When completed, the rectangle contained a basilical church with inscribed apse at the east end, tripartite narthex at the west (the main entry went through its central room, as indicated by the wear of passing feet on the stones, as well as by the small forecourt outside the west end; it may even have been the only entry, although that seems unlikely), and a nave which is two and a half times as wide as the flanking aisles. The nave (*illus. 78*) was divided from the aisles and from the east narthex wall by arcades (probably nine on the north and eight on the south; five sandstone voussoir-blocks were found, perhaps derived from them); the arcades were carried on piers made from re-used stones cemented at the base, which stood on continuous stylobates, while solid walls continued their lines at the east end as far as the apse. The divisions of the narthex are on the same lines as those of the nave and aisles. There are angle-chapels at all corners, the two at the east end perhaps linked by what may be a corridor running behind the apse (compare what seem to have been the arrangements at Ras el Hilal [*Section 2*] but see *Introduction II, Ground Plans*); and at the east end there are two further rooms west of the angle-chapels, that on the south side markedly longer than that on the north. The north one is the baptistery, the only one of these small rooms to which a function can be assigned. It contains a rock-cut baptismal basin (*illus. 79*), probably oval, as at Ras el Hilal, but damaged by subsequent conversion into a vat, surrounded by a paving of sliced cipollino marble that is more ambitious than anything else that survives in the church, but of poor workmanship nevertheless.

Of the chancel we know only what can be deduced from broken elements of its furniture found dumped in the cistern (see *illus. 80* and *Carved Fittings* below), essentially two rather crudely-cut limestone posts (a marble post published with them in the



Illus. 79. Berenike: Sidi Khrebish Church, baptismal basin.

catalogue of architectural elements from Sidi Khrebish is almost certainly from elsewhere; see under Gusur Khalita, *Section 4*) and perhaps a fragment of a limestone screen carved with a floral motif in relief, reminiscent of the screens at Ras el Hilal. With them were two colonnettes which may have served as supports for the altar table of which fragments appear to survive; but there is no clue to the exact function in the church of the various marble columns and column capitals (all re-used) that were also found in the dump.

A limestone reliquary-chest was found re-used as a basin in an Islamic kitchen in the north-west angle-chapel; it clearly indicates a martyr-cult in the church, which may have been located in one of the angle-chapels, as, for example, in the West Church at el Atrun and at Ras el Hilal.

Beneath the nave was a very large rock-cut cistern, probably pre-dating the church, but retained for its needs. A cross had been cut on one of its piers, there are rope-marks on one of the ashlar blocks surrounding its drawing-hole, and elsewhere channels which seem to have been designed to feed it with rainwater from the roof. These channels also suggest that there was a clerestory; otherwise the only evidence for lighting comes from the several glass bases for hanging lamps that were found. The only evidence for the roof is the total absence of roof-tiles; the norm for houses at Sidi Khrebish had been the flat roof.

This was certainly a simple building; it was also furnished and decorated, it seems, with economy (in strikingly marked contrast to the expenditure of effort on preparation of the site). The evidence is, of course, limited, but what there is suggests that decoration was minimal, and crude except where earlier material was re-used. All internal walls appear to have been covered with a thin cream-coloured plaster skim, although in the north aisle there was a more conventional wall-plaster painted with green, yellow, maroon and white designs in rudimentary imitation of marble, and one of the piers had a heavy moulded rendering at its base, painted maroon. It will have looked better when it was fresh, but can never have given a rich effect.

The added tower consisted of a platform, 1.20m high, of stone and rubble, surrounded by walls whose highest surviving course was of large limestone orthostats probably originating in a Hellenistic building; there were almost certainly higher

courses, perhaps of different materials and build. It was undoubtedly needed as a buttress, but could have been designed with an eye to defence as well.²

It is not always easy to be sure whether the later developments observed in the building occurred while it was still a church or afterwards. The insertion of an arch north/south across the north-east angle-chapel, almost certainly to provide extra support for the apse or the roof or both, must, on the evidence of the pottery sealed under its base, be of, or later than, the late sixth century—and an Islamic construction is not ruled out. Possibly contemporary is a support-wall built up against the west wall of the same room. There is no clue to the date when additional rooms were first created (two in the narthex, two in the north aisle and at least two in the south aisle).

Finally a large deposit of fifth/sixth-century pottery (mainly amphorae and plainware jugs) was found in deep silt-deposits in the cistern, below the dump of church furniture discussed above. None of the pottery need be later than the mid-sixth century, and the closure of the deposit may reflect some kind of horizon in the life of the church (a disaster perhaps, but the evidence is insufficient).

On the west and south sides of the church, in an area defined by a boundary-wall, there are signs of minor buildings some of which could have housed persons connected with the church (a small, and poor, religious community has been suggested); but the buildings on the west seem to have been occupied in the Islamic period and a clear picture of the history of this area does not emerge.

After the Islamic conquest ecclesiastical use seems to have ended abruptly. There are some signs suggesting that there was a brief occupation by soldiers but we cannot see that there is evidence to justify Stucchi's conjecture that the church was converted into a mosque. Subsequently civilians moved in, some concerned with small industrial undertakings. The building was abandoned at latest in the tenth century.

Carved fittings

It is difficult to assess the carved ornamentation of the church from this sparse collection of re-used and damaged items; but the marble pieces may have given a richer gleam to the interior than we have suggested.

The list here summarises that of Sear (1978), omitting his A45, which almost certainly reached the Benghazi museum from Gusur Khalita, and adding a small number of items to be published in the projected volume IV.2 on Sidi Khrebish. The items in Sear's plate 32 are shown here in illus. 80.

1. Limestone block, damaged at the left side (w. 0.78m × ht. 0.51m), with a relief of a Maltese cross on one face. Found in the débris of buildings south-west of the church (illus. 80 a; Sear, no. A42).
2. Limestone chancel post broken into three pieces (w. 0.22m × ht. c. 1.01m), with vertical grooves on two sides (c. 0.095m wide × c. 0.04m deep at the top) and probably a hemispherical top (illus. 80 k; Sear, no. A44).³
3. Battered sandstone chancel post, broken away below (w. at base, 0.36m × ht. 0.63m), with a deep groove down one side (c. 0.10m wide × 0.065m deep), presumably, therefore, to stand on one side of a doorway; it has a hemi-spherical top in three sections, which is flattened above. Found in the cistern (illus. 80 l; Sear, no. A46).
4. Small limestone fragment (0.05m × 0.08m) with carved relief of a floral motif which reminded Sear of those on the chancel screens at Ras el Hilal; perhaps, therefore, itself from a chancel screen (Sear, no. A13).
5. Colonnade of blue-grey marble (w. at base 0.275m × ht. 0.36m), with square base and three stepped flat bands around the bottom of the shaft, comparable with items found at el Atrun; perhaps, therefore, one of the supports for an altar table (illus. 80 h; Sear, no. A47).

² The closest parallel is the tower associated with the cruciform building outside the city wall at Apollonia/Sozusa (*Apollonia/Sozusa, The Monuments, no. 5*).

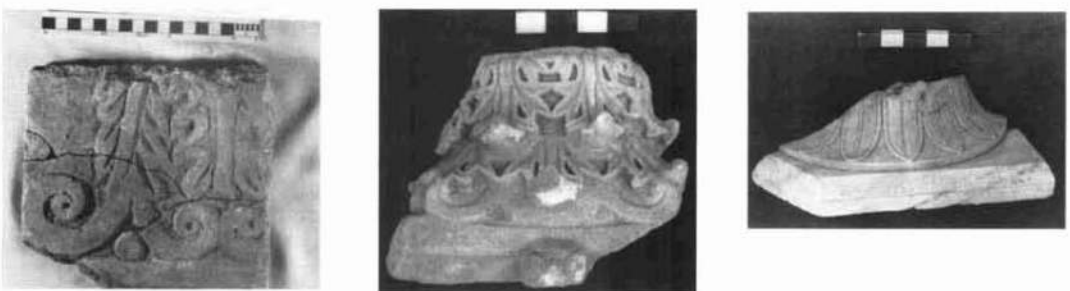
³ Duval 1989b was understandably misled by the carved fitting Sear no. A45 (for whose probable origin see under Gusur Khalita) into attributing marble chancel posts to this church; only limestone and sandstone are securely attested.



(a) Cross block

(b) Re-used reliquary

(c) Column fragments



(d) Lotus and acanthus capital

(e) Corinthian capital

(f) Marble pilaster capital



(g) Lotus and acanthus capital

(h) Colonette base

(i) Meta



(j) Sandstone altar?

(k) Limestone chancel post

(l) Sandstone chancel post

6. Part of a shallow object of coarse-grain white marble (ht. 0.043m), perhaps a dish, perhaps a table-top. Found in the robber trench of the north wall. Forthcoming in Lloyd Vol. IV.2, no. J.33.
7. Fragments of bowls and basins of coarse-grain white marble from the area of the church. Forthcoming in Lloyd IV.2, nos. J.34, 35.
8. Rectangular reliquary box of hard limestone (possibly not local), found as re-used in the Islamic period, with a hole cut in the base to allow water to drain away (illus. 80 *b*; Lloyd 1978, 189).
9. Three limestone capitals in poor condition, two found in the cistern (Sear, nos. A17, 18, 19).
10. Six fragmentary lotus and acanthus capitals of Pentelic marble, one found in the cistern, one re-used (? in the Islamic period) in the floor of the narthex (illus. 80 *g*; Sear, nos. A32-37).
11. Corinthian capital of white marble, rather squat in proportions. Found during clearance of the site (illus. 80 *e*; Sear, no. A38).
12. Part of a Corinthian pilaster capital of grey marble (probably originally w. 0.35m × ht. 0.19m). Found re-used (? in the Islamic period) in the baptistery floor (illus. 80 *f*; Sear no. A39).
13. Fragment of a limestone column-drum, perhaps with a battered capital. Found in the cistern (Sear, no. A17).
14. Eight fragments of marble column-shafts. Found in the cistern (illus. 80 *c*; Sear, no. A40).
15. Two marble metæ: *a* with round base (diam. 0.195m) and strigilated tapering cone (illus. 80 *i*); *b* broken above and below and without decoration. Found in the cistern (Sear, nos. A30, 31).
16. Two objects described by Sear as sandstone altars of pagan type, in poor condition; they have square bases and flat circular tops with small recesses in their centres (*a* w. of base 0.26m × ht. 0.51m × diam. at top 0.265m). One found in the cistern (illus. 80 *j*; Sear, nos. A25, 26).
17. A number of re-used pieces of limestone or sandstone, two recognisable as fragments of cornice, six as possible door mouldings. It is not clear whether all or any of them served such purposes in the church or had simply been converted into building blocks (Sear, nos. A12, 14-16, 20-23, 27-29).

Inscriptions

The four inscriptions found in the church are all on re-used stones (both marble and limestone). None belonged to the period of ecclesiastical use.

2. A window mullion

Another church may be implied by a white marble window mullion, published with a drawing by Ward-Perkins 1943, 134-5 (with drawing in fig. 7) as 'from Benghasi' and probably now in Cyrene (illus. 81). If so, it is a post 1.50m high, *c.* 0.40m wide and 0.20m deep, with a rectangular base, a shaft consisting of two half-columns divided by a flat area, each of the half-columns being decorated with five rounded bands at the bottom, one also with a monogram cross in relief at the top; there is a half capital above each of them carved with very simple leaf shapes. Probably sixth-century and imported. It is now (1998) in the yard behind the present Cyrene Museum. It may well be that it is also the Byzantine column from a window mentioned by Ghislanzoni 1915, 101 as seen near the Customs House at Benghasi. He commented prudently that it might have come to Benghasi



Illus. 81. Berenike: window mullion, first seen loose near the harbour.

from elsewhere, as ballast in a ship, but an origin in Benghazi remains possible. The neighbourhood of the Customs House, near the Turkish Castle, by the north-east side of the modern harbour, is an area in which a number of ancient items have been found (some, but probably not all, may have been re-used in the castle).

3. St. Menas Ampullae

Riley 1980, 364-5 catalogues fragments of two St. Menas ampullae found at Sidi Khrebish (see his fig. 131). One was found with items thought to be predominantly of the seventh century thrown into the cistern of House P.1 (Lloyd 1978, 307 with 148), the other in room 3 of building R 2 (Lloyd 1978, 305 with 133), where some of the pottery is thought to be of the fifth-sixth centuries.

4. Inscription concerning a church dedicated to the Theotokos.

It is just possible, Goodchild thought, that a Christian inscription sold in Benghazi to Richard Norton in 1909, and now in the American Academy in Rome, came from Benghazi and not from Cyrene as the dealer said; if so, perhaps from the same church as no. 2 above. For the monument see under Cyrene, *Miscellaneous Inscriptions*, no. 5.

3 Cyrene (Kyrene), mod. Shahat, illus. 82-131: three churches certainly recognised, a Christian house, three Christian tombs, several Christian buildings of uncertain function; four, perhaps seven, bishops attested.

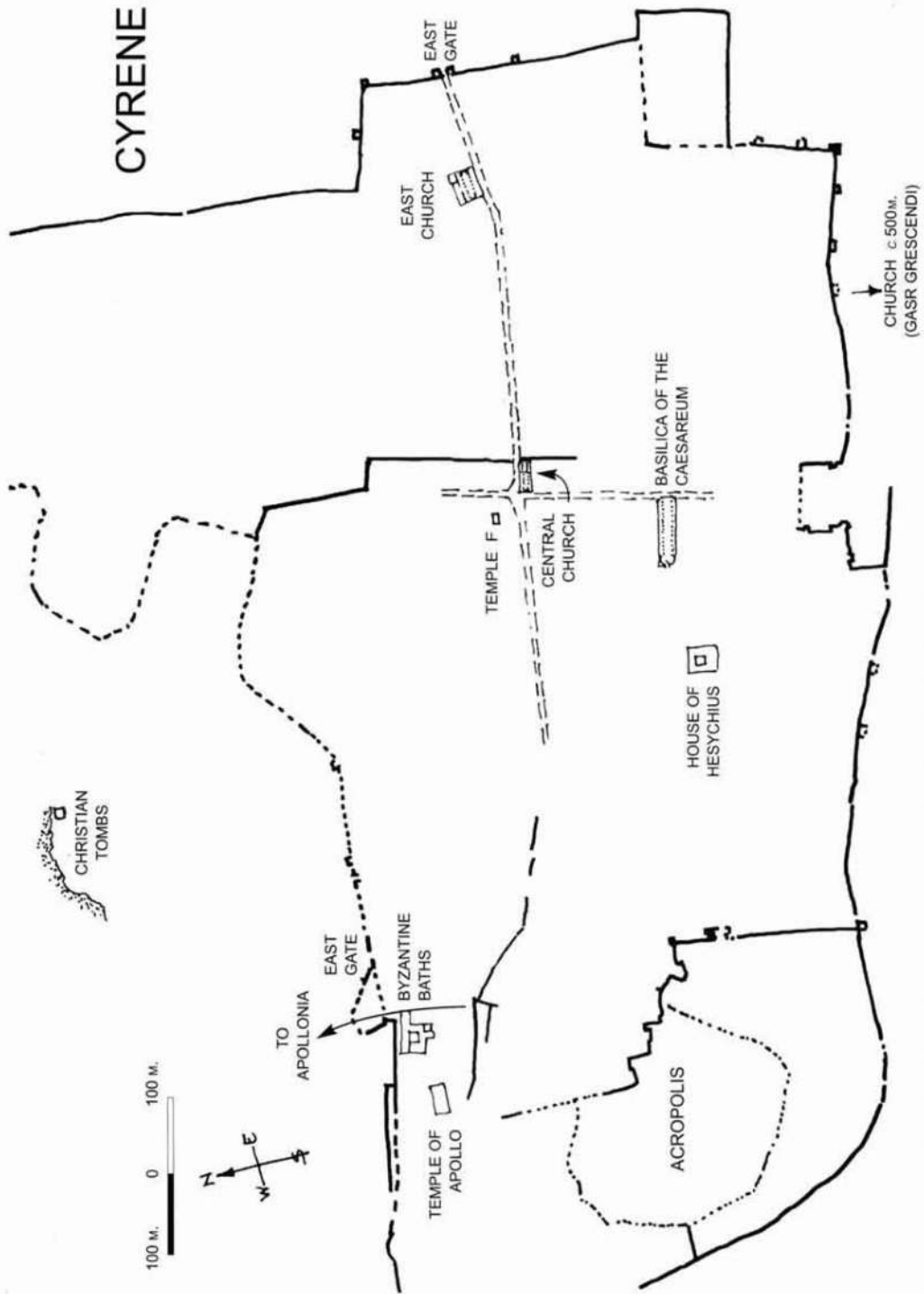
Bibliography

Amm. Marc. XXII.16.4; Syn. *Epp.* 66, 94 (with Roques 2000 *ad locc.*); *id. Cat.*; Euseb. *HE* VII.26.3; *Acta Conc. Nic.*, *ibid. Eph.* 449; Joh. Mosch., *Prat. Spir.* 148; Beecheys 1828, plan after p. 404; Delehay 1902; 1940; Romanelli 1943; Chamoux 1953; Goodchild 1961a, 83-95 = 1976a, 216-28; 1971; Purcaro 1976, 339; Applebaum 1979; Lüderitz 1983; Roques 1987, 96-8, 132-8, 148-53, 160-4, 206-12, 318-22, 325, 326-7, 340, 357; 1996a, 407, 411; Ermeti 1998, 243-54; Reynolds 2000; Dobias 2000, 256-8.

Cyrene was the leading city of Cyrenaica from its foundation by Greek colonists in the seventh century BC until the reign of Diocletian. From time to time, it suffered attacks from desert raiders, notably in the reign of Augustus and in the second half of the third century AD; and in the later period Goodchild reported construction of a city-wall on a circuit much reduced from that of its classical/Hellenistic wall. Following Diocletian's creation of the province of Libya Superior or Pentapolis, the governor's headquarters were moved to Ptolemais, perhaps as early as AD 297 (Goodchild 1961a, 92 = 1976a, 225); certainly the publication there of a copy of Diocletian's *Edict of Maximum Prices* (Caputo/Goodchild 1955) strongly suggests that the governor was there in AD 301. Cyrene indubitably lost status, but the agricultural potential of her territory and her prestigious history, together with the fact that the overland route across the province passed through her territory, assured her a continued and not negligible life. Although sometimes oppressed by the effects of natural disaster, above all earthquakes (perhaps the reason why Ammianus Marcellinus described her as *deserta*), and threatened from time to time by further attacks of desert tribes such as are described by Synesius, she remained a place of note, capable of some elegance, as the archaeological evidence and the record of Synesius' own life show us. It emerges clearly also from the account of the Christian monuments described below. In the early fifth century, Synesius was critical of her, being out of sympathy with certain of her chief men, but that is a different matter. The record, sparse already, is sparser still thereafter, but it is now certain that life continued on the site well after the Arab conquest.

There was a Jewish community there in the first century AD, which was vigorously destructive in the Jewish Revolt of AD 115-7, but disappears from the record after that. On the evidence of the Acts of the Apostles (and assuming that Cyrene means there the city and not the whole province as it sometimes does), individual citizens present in Judaea supported Christ in His lifetime, and some were involved subsequently in evangelical activity (see *Introduction II, Development*); indeed, a late tradition presents Mark the Evangelist as such a Cyrenaean taking the new religion to Cyrene and establishing the Jewish Lucius of Cyrene as the city's first bishop; some facts may lie behind the story. There is no more evidence until the third century AD, when Eusebius reports a letter from Dionysius archbishop of Alexandria to Basilides 'bishop of the parishes in the Pentapolis' written c. AD 260 (Euseb. *HE* VII.26). When Cyrene was the provincial metropolis it is likely that her bishop enjoyed primacy over other clergy in the province, as the bishop of Ptolemais did after Ptolemais became the metropolis, so that Basilides was, quite probably, bishop of Cyrene.¹ In Diocletian's persecution eight martyrs (all apparently Cyrenaean) are recorded in the province, including Cyrene's bishop Theodorus. Other securely attested bishops of Cyrene are Philon the elder, clearly orthodox at a time when many Cyrenaican Christians were Arian and an active agent in c. AD 365-6 in the irregular appointment of the orthodox Siderius as bishop of Palaibiska, his nephew Philon the younger, who was a contemporary of Synesius, Rufus who was present at the Council of Ephesus in AD 449, Menas known from the probably Justinianic mosaic inscription in the East Church (see

¹ Romanelli 1943, 231, n. 3 questions this, arguing that Eusebius must have meant Ptolemais, because that was the metropolis when he wrote.



Illus. 82. Cyrene: location of Christian monuments; sketch plan (Selina Ballance).

below). In addition, Moschus offers an anecdote of the late sixth or early seventh centuries concerning a Leontius who may have been bishop of Cyrene; he reported a document, written by Synesius and preserved in the treasury of the church at Cyrene, to prove that good works are rewarded in the afterlife. As Moschus apparently thought that Synesius was bishop of Cyrene, and as there is uncertainty about the text at the point where he describes the status of Leontius, it seems prudent to reserve judgment on him.

There is also a little evidence about the members of the Christian community. Women as well as men appear among the named Cyrenaican martyrs under Diocletian, and one of the men was a member of the civic élite.² By the second half of the fourth century a number of élite persons were Christian, as appears from the House of Hesychius and from the tombs of the Good Shepherd and of Dimitria and her son, all described below. Goodchild thought it likely that extensive and violent damage was done to the pagan temples and pagan cult statues of the city in the late fourth century by the Christian masses.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins examined and described two churches, while his notebook also contains extensive observations on the Christian house of Hesychius. In 1955 he worked on the East and Central Churches and on the House of Hesychius (his notes on the house were later outdated in important respects by Goodchild's excavation and so are not reproduced here), and in 1971, when he made supplementary notes on the East Church. The East Church was surveyed in 1955 by G. U. S. Corbett and Audrey Corbett, while some supplementary drawings were made by Selina Ballance; the Central Church in 1955 by R. J. C. Jamieson, when again some supplementary drawings were made by Selina Ballance; the House of Hesychius was also surveyed in 1955 by R. J. C. Jamieson (plan not reproduced).

The Monuments

1. The East Church or 'Cathedral',³ illus. 83-117.

Bibliography

Beecheys 1828, 404; Hamilton 1856, 46; Smith/Porcher 1864, plate 29; Haimann 1882, 87; Oliverio 1929, 499; Ward-Perkins 1943, 125; 1958, 186-7; 1972, 223-4; Sichtermann 1959, plates 43-54; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 41; Goodchild 1959, 68-9; 1966a, 207-11; 1971, 146-8; Duval 1973; 1989*b*, 2750, 2755-7, 2761, 2763, 2764, 2765, 2766, 2767, 2768, 2771, 2772, 2773, 2775, 2776, 2778, 2780, 2781, 2782, 2785; Stucchi 1975, 364-5, 392-5; Bonacasa Carra 1999. On the mosaics, Goodchild 1957*a*, 303-5; Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 9-10, 14-15, 95-114.

Discovery

The earliest published illustration of the building, in Smith and Porcher 1864, pl. 29, shows five arches of the nave arcade, the upper part of the west apse and part of the outer wall.

² Roques cites evidence from H. Delehaye, under 8th January and 26th March, 25th April and 30th June, for 4th July and 22nd August.

³ Goodchild 1961 suggested that this church was Cyrene's cathedral, having in mind its size, its grand baptistery and the fact that a bishop is named in one of its mosaics (inscription no. 2, below), and it has continued to be so described informally. Stucchi 1975, 365 protested that although it stands within the circuit of the Hellenistic city wall, its situation outside the later defences is unthinkable for a cathedral, and claimed the title for the Central Church (where, however, no baptistery has been found so far). The problem is not unlike that presented by the West Church at Ptolemais, although there sharpened by uncertainty about the survival of the Hellenistic city wall. We need further study of the character of late city walls on shortened circuits in Cyrenaica and their relationship to the earlier ones surrounding the same cities. Are they really 'city-walls' in the old sense? Did they, perhaps, create only 'inner citadels'? In the meantime it is convenient to retain the term 'cathedral' for Cyrene's East Church, while recognising that it is not certainly correct.



Illus. 83. Cyrene: East Church, before excavation; showing the north arcade, west apse and late walls in the nave.

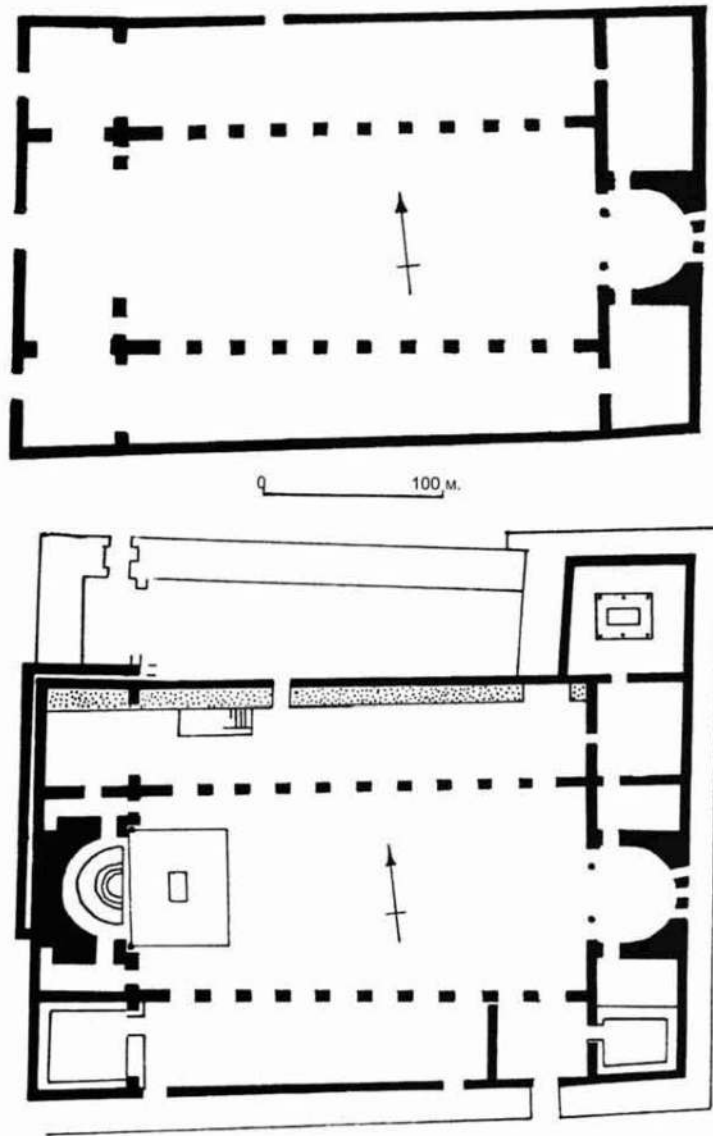
A limited excavation was undertaken during the early years of the Italian occupation (c.1917), for which the evidence is contained in several photographs in the archive of the Department of Antiquities. They include a view of the site before excavation (illus. 83), the east apse which was partly-cleared, and an area of the central nave, adjoining the three arches of the north arcade that are still standing. A further arch was either still standing or was replaced during the work, and the photographs show a number of late (i.e. Arab-period) walls running across the nave. This work indicated the basilical character of the building, but there was nothing published prior to the excavation carried out by Goodchild between 1954 and 1956 to prove that it was a church.⁴

Description

Large church, with baptistery and other annexes, near the head of the valley that leads up from the Sanctuary of Apollo towards the East Gate, dividing the promontory occupied by the earliest city from that next it to the north, on to which the city later spread. Up this valley ran the principal street of the Roman town, and beside it, on the north side, stood the cathedral, about 100m west of the East Gate and about 350m east of the road-crossing that marked the formal centre of the Roman city.

The church is a complicated structure, incorporating work of at least four different periods. The fourth of these, when, after the Arab conquest, the church had ceased to exist as such and its ruins were partitioned up for

⁴ This was written before the publication of the altar base (*Carved Fittings* no. 18) and the *ambon*-steps (*Carved Fittings* no. 17) and takes no account of Hamilton's report of a carved cross in the building, and others on gravestones in the area (the cross may well have been genuinely observed, although no trace of the tombstones has ever been noted subsequently).



Illus. 84 a, b. Cyrene: East Church, two phases (G. U. S. Corbett); the central door shown in the west outer wall of a is not proven.

domestic use, lies outside the scope of the present account. Many of the walls of this latest period had to be removed during excavation, but detailed plans and photographs are on record in the Department of Antiquities. During the three earlier periods the building was certainly in use as a church, and for simplicity of exposition the three periods are distinguished in the description which follows.

The First Church (Period 1)

The original church (illus. 84 a) seems to have been a relatively simple, three-aisled structure, enclosed within a plain, rectangular frame, which measures externally 40m long by 28.40m wide. The central nave measures



Illus. 85. Cyrene: East Church, east apse.

approximately 26m × 12.5m internally,⁵ and at either end of it there was a transverse partition running right across the building, with openings into nave and aisles. That at the east end delimited a central apse, flanked by two or more lateral chapels, and that at the west end a narthex, divided into three intercommunicating rooms, corresponding to the three divisions of the nave.

The features that can be distinguished as certainly belonging to this first period are as follows:

- i. The nucleus of the perimeter wall along the four outer sides, of which that on the south side has not been fully excavated, but appears to conform to the other three. It consists throughout of a single thickness of rather poorly-coursed blocks of yellowish-grey limestone, the inner face of which is extremely rough. If the small stretch of internal plastering that survives near the north-west corner, sealed by later masonry, is in any way typical, the total effect must have been very crude. A possible alternative (for which, however, there is no evidence and which appears to conflict with the evidence of the plaster referred to above) is that there was originally an internal facing of small masonry, removed when the whole outer wall was strengthened at a later date.

⁵ Ward-Perkins calculated on the basis that the nave arcades ran on the same lines in both periods. Stucchi believed that in Period 2 they were rebuilt on the lines of the outer walls of the Period 1 church.

Duval also believes that there were more changes than Ward-Perkins proposed between the first and second periods; he argues that the height of the cornice of the east apse and of the holes which he believes to be intended for attachment of its *synthronon* (see n. 8) indicate a floor level for the Period 1 church which was at least 1m lower than that of the Period 2 church. Ward-Perkins, see below, interpreted the holes as attesting a casing of wood or marble slabs on the apse wall; he recorded in his notebook that the cornice is surprisingly low in relation to the existing floor; but certainly believed that the excavators had reached the original ground level.



Illus. 86. Cyrene: East Church, nave and east apse from the west.

ii. The eastern apse (illus. 85, 86) and parts of the transverse wall that divides the apse and flanking chapels from the nave. The apse is built of good ashlar masonry, quite carefully dressed, in courses 0.29-0.32m high. The sixth course up incorporates a strongly-projecting cornice-moulding, and courses 8-10 the uprights of a triple window, the axis of which is curiously oblique to that of the church, approximating (whether intentionally or not) to that of the local sunrise at the equinox. When first exposed, the plain round heads of two of the openings were still in position, but these are now lost.⁶ On either side doorways, once arched, led into the flanking chapels; and two re-used classical columns within the entrance presumably carried a triple arch across the face of a masonry semi-dome. The columns bear traces of two distinct forms of screen, running right across all three openings. Cut in the bases are the grooves for upright slabs; and in the columns themselves there are shallow sockets for pairs of transverse bars. There is nothing to indicate the relative date of either. The wall that runs northwards from the shoulder of the apse is contemporary with it up to a point just short of the door at the east end of the north aisle. The corresponding wall on the south side has been almost entirely rebuilt.

iii. At the east end the piers of the nave-arcade are straight-jointed against the transverse wall onto which they abut. That they are nevertheless part of the original building is, however, clear at the west end, where the

⁶ Corbett records that the openings were cut through the perimeter wall as well as the apse wall (note in the file). Goodchild 1966a, 210 states that they were later blocked when, he says, the church was fortified (but see n. 9).



Illus. 87. Cyrene: East Church, west apse and part of nave.

corresponding junction of the north arcade and the west transverse wall is preserved to a greater height. Here, although the end pier itself is straight-jointed against the transverse wall, the upper parts of the two structures are certainly of one build. The straight joint was a matter of constructional convenience. Three arches of the north arcade are still standing and a fourth can be seen in early photographs. The piers are very simply built of plain rectangular blocks (average dimensions w. 0.90m × d. 0.65m × ht. 0.40m), placed one on top of another and capped by a shallower block which is slightly splayed longitudinally, upwards and outwards, so as to form a shallow ledge, which would have served to carry the centering of the arches (illus. 83).

- iv. In its original form the room at the north-west corner of the building had a door (later blocked) opening off the street to the west and two very wide arches, which were rather daringly built of elongated voussoirs and opened, respectively, into the north nave-aisle and into the room now occupied by the western apse (illus. 86, 99). The corresponding room at the south-west corner has been far more thoroughly robbed but seems to have followed the same pattern.⁷ Without dismantling a great deal of later masonry it would be impossible to say much about the central room. One would expect to find a large doorway on the axis of the building, but this stretch of the original west outer wall is now completely masked by later work. The fact that the two columns re-used in the shoulders of the Period 2 apse are of the same material and dimensions as one of those in the east apse suggests that they too may come from the first building, very probably from a columnar screen between the entrance and the nave.

⁷ Corbett showed doorjambs surviving in the west wall of the north-west angle-chapel and a space at the appropriate point in that of the south-west chapel.



Illus. 88. Cyrene: East Church, west apse and angle-chapels.

It is uncertain whether the scanty traces of marble paving in the eastern apse belong to this first period or to the next.⁸ They consist of a border of marble slabs framing a panel, or panels, of simple *opus sectile* tiles laid diagonally, and they certainly antedate the addition of a low bench running round the inner face of the apse. A short stretch of the masonry core of this bench is preserved on the south side, consisting of blocks about 0.40m high, just above which a line of nine 0.07-0.08m sockets running right round the apse (illus. 85) attest the former existence of a casing of wood or, more probably, of marble slabs.⁹

The sockets cut in the two column-bases between the apse and the nave show that either in this or in the following period a screen of stone or marble slabs ran right across, with the possible, but rather doubtful, exception of an axial opening (for which there is barely room). The pair of wooden rods which spanned each of the three openings were certainly continuous. They were 0.07-0.08m in section and were placed 1.90m and 2.45m respectively above floor level. They could have carried a light curtain. Both systems seem to belong more naturally to Period 2, when the apse would have been accessible only through the two arched doorways in the flanks.

The Period 2 nave mosaic reached right up to the entrance of the apse (illus. 85) and has obliterated all superficial traces of the Period 1 chancel, which presumably projected outwards into the body of the nave. Individual pieces that may reasonably be attributed to it are the four matching marble chancel posts that survive, re-used, in the footing of the Period 2 chancel (illus. 92, 93;

⁸ Stucchi envisaged the marble as the flooring of the apse when it had, as he thought, become a *martyrion* in the second period; on Duval's interpretation (see n. 4) it can only be of the later period.

⁹ The sockets are Duval's evidence for a *synthronon* in this apse in Period 1.

Carved Fittings, no. 1), and perhaps also the chancel post re-used in the doorway into the baptistery (*Carved Fittings*, no. 2) although this is larger and different in detail.

Other church fittings found lying in the apse by the first excavators are a marble window post (illus. 85, 107; *Carved Fittings*, no. 13) and a marble stele recut for use as the post supporting a marble screen (illus. 108, 109; *Carved Fittings*, no. 14). Neither was necessarily found in its original position. On the other hand, the two column-bases, of grey Greek marble, were found in position (illus. 85), and, fallen beside them, the two re-erected columns, of which one (south) is of a grey-and-white marble breccia, the other (north) of the same grey granite as the two in the western apse (illus. 87, 88).

The sixth-century reconstruction (Period 2)

In the sixth century the original plan was drastically modified (illus. 84*b*, 91).¹⁰ The framework of the earlier building was retained, but the orientation was reversed; a new apse was built into the central room of the earlier west wing; the main entrance was shifted to the south side, two bays at the east end of the south nave-aisle being cut off to form an internal porch or vestibule; the chapels flanking the eastern apse underwent considerable modification; and a large baptistery was added at the north-east corner of the building. In addition to these very substantial structural alterations the church was almost entirely repaved, partly in mosaic and partly in *opus sectile*.

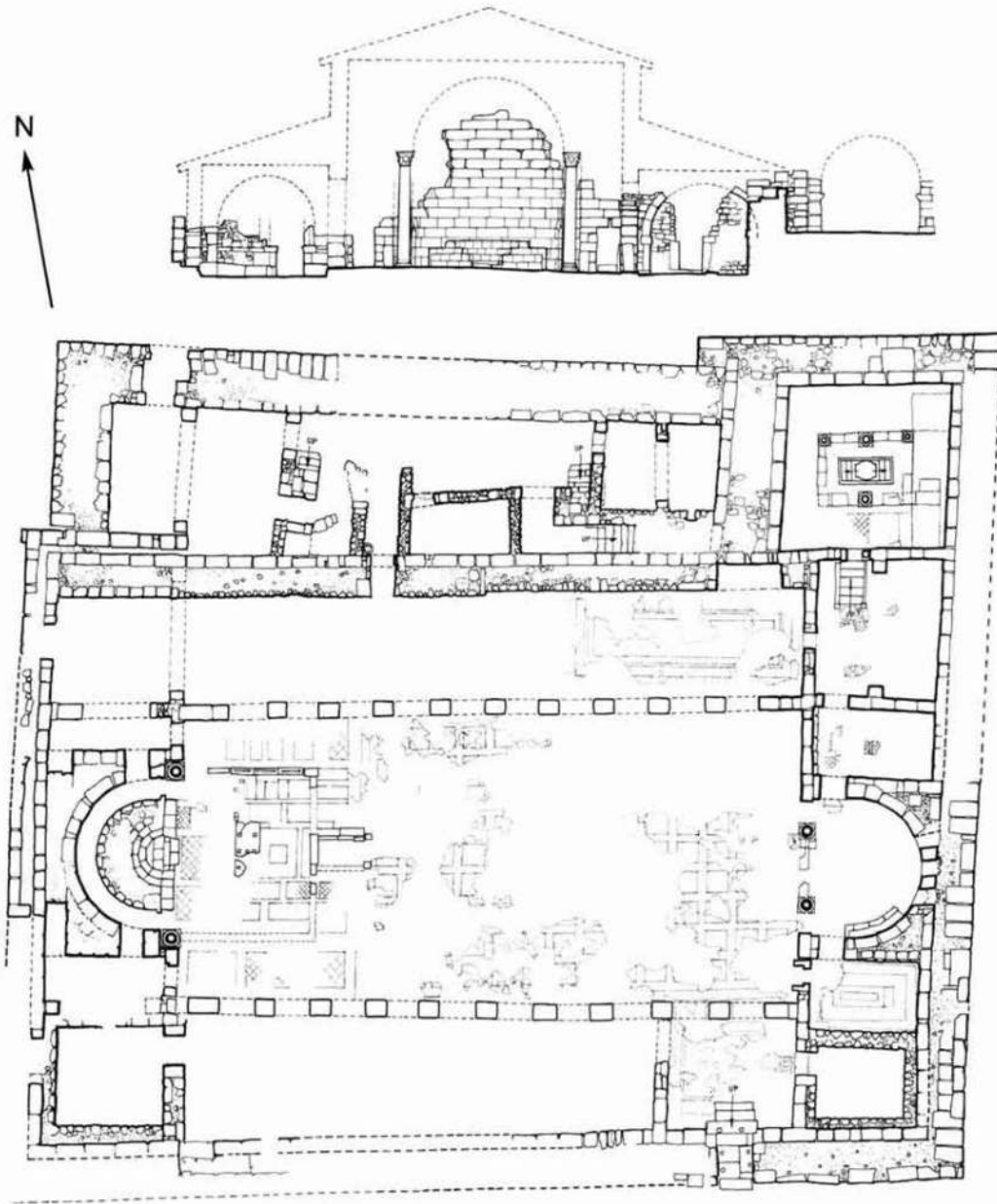
At the west end of the building the arches dividing the narthex into three rooms were closed by blocking-walls, of which that on the north side incorporated a smaller doorway, whereas that on the south was probably continuous; and within the central rectangular space so enclosed a new western apse was built (illus. 87–91). At ground level this was structurally independent of the surrounding walls, with narrow corridors running down the north and south flanks. The west side was similarly detached in plan, but the fifth and sixth courses were corbelled out to form a crude vault over the resulting space, which was found packed with rubble. Since there was no surviving trace of any facing to this filling, its precise relation to the lateral corridors remains problematic, but it seems very doubtful that there was ever intended to be any actual passageway from one corridor to the other behind the apse.

The apse itself is faced throughout with blocks of a limestone markedly yellower than that used in the first period, laid in regular courses, 0.41–0.42m high, and consisting mainly of stretcher blocks, although the bottom four courses include a few headers. At the two outer angles the added masonry rests up against that of the two inner ends of the transverse wall dividing the original narthex from the nave in such a way as to leave square recesses for the pair of re-used classical columns of grey granite, on bases of grey Greek marble, which formed the actual shoulders of the apse (illus. 85, 88, 90). There is no string course. Immediately to the right and left of the apse the first-period narthex wall was cut through to give access to the two flanking corridors, from which in turn low arches opened into the apse itself.

¹⁰ Ward-Perkins and Goodchild dated the second period church in the reign of Justinian on the basis of the mosaics (Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980) and the chancel fittings (see *Carved Fittings*, nos. 7–12). They did not discuss the reasons for the reversal of orientation. Duval 1973, 2755–2757, inclined to explain this as related to a need to fortify the east end of the building (it now seems more likely that the walls were thickened in order to shore them up where they had become unstable); but the principles regulating orientation in Cyrenaica are not, in his view, currently explicable (Duval 1989*b*, 2755–6).

CYRENE

EAST CHURCH



Illus. 89. Cyrene: East Church, measured plan, scale 1:100 (G. U. S. Corbett).



Illus. 90. Cyrene: East Church, west apse, synthronon and loose stone with inscribed cross.



Illus. 91. Cyrene: East Church, west apse and chancel.

The reorganisation of the west end of the building had eliminated the presumed original entrance from the west, and in its place a new doorway was now cut in the south outer wall, near the east end of the nave. This opened directly off the main street that ran from the old east gate down to the middle of the town; and since there was no room for an external porch, the eastern part of the south aisle was partitioned off to form an internal vestibule; at the same time the south end of the adjoining chapel of the east range was converted into what, from its position opening directly off the vestibule, was presumably a lodge for the porter or caretaker. The room to the north of the lodge became a separate chapel opening off the apse.

Apart from the outer doorway, with three shallow steps leading down from the level of the street to that of the floor within, the principal surviving element of the vestibule is its mosaic pavement, with a figured border and a rectangular central panel containing a design of repeated rosettes (illus. 94). The mosaic, of which the western part is mainly intact and the eastern part largely destroyed, is certainly contemporary with the steps. The western wall has been almost entirely stripped at a later date, but from the design of the mosaic border it was clearly continuous. The eastern border, on the other hand, incorporated a geometrical motif opposite the doorway into the porter's lodge. The latter was formed by the insertion of a rather flimsy, rubble-faced wall, dividing the original south-east chapel into two unequal parts. This wall is certainly secondary, since it is built up against an earlier plaster facing on the inner side of the outer east wall; and being continuous round the other three sides of the room, it was probably designed to carry a simple barrel vault.

The chapel to the north of the lodge, between it and the apse, was also vaulted. As in the previous period, it was entered from the apse; the door in the west wall is of a much later date. It was paved with an elaborately-figured mosaic, a curious feature of which is the position of the inscription which it incorporates. This is placed as if it were meant to be read by persons entering the chapel through a door in the east wall; and yet there certainly never was such a door, the masonry of the first-period outer wall being intact, without any trace of an opening. The inscription, which records the work of a certain bishop Menas, is unfortunately damaged and cannot be precisely dated (East Church, *Inscription*, no. 3).

Contemporaneously with this transformation of the south-east corner, the space to the north of the eastern apse was remodelled to form two unequal chapels of which the northern one was also the antechamber to the baptistery. The partition wall between them belongs almost certainly to this period, since it is straight-jointed at both ends against the earlier work and incorporates a course that projects slightly, in the manner characteristic of the Period 2 work, at the north-west corner of the building (see below). The only recognizably early feature of the southern of the two chapels is the remains of a marble *sec-tile* pavement, similar to that in the adjoining apse. From it a doorway with a wooden lintel led into the northern chapel which is almost square and was paved with a formal interlace design in mosaic (illus. 95). The outer east wall, the eastern half of the north wall, and the southern end of the west wall of this chapel are all of Period 1, but the whole of the north-west corner, including the arched doorway into the north nave-aisle, has been rebuilt in Period 2 masonry, distinguished by the use of the same projecting course. Later, probably in Period 3, this northern room was partly subdivided by an arch, of which the well-cut jambs are still in place against the north and south walls; later again this arch was in turn blocked by a rough wall with a small central door.

On the north side a flight of marble steps led up into the baptistery (illus. 95). This was a square room (6.70m × 6.80m internally) built up against the east end of the north outer wall of the church. In the middle there was a slightly raised, rectangular platform (3m × 4m), which served as the basis for a canopy carried on three pairs of marble columns and, partly set into it, beneath the canopy, a marble baptismal basin fashioned from the re-used body of an Attic sarcophagus (illus. 96, 97). There is a single entrance from the church, the west jamb of which was rebuilt when the baptistery was added; and the east and west walls are both straight-jointed against the Period 1 outer wall.

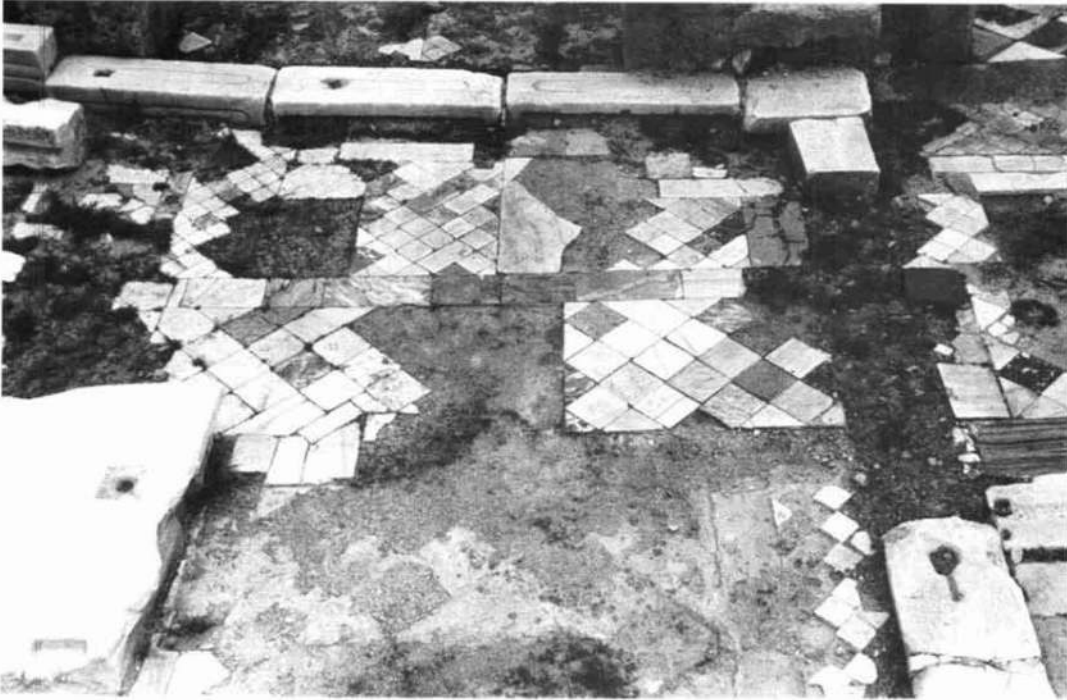
To the second period belongs also a thickening, or doubling, of the outer wall at the north-west corner of the building. The outer face is structurally independent of the existing first-period outer wall, although so placed as to leave only a very narrow gap between the two; and it is built of well-coursed, regular masonry (individual courses 0.33-0.35m high) laid to a good outer face and characterized by the incorporation of one levelling course (the fifth above ground level, as now exposed) which projects several centimetres beyond all the rest. Along the north side this outer wall was cut back in Period 3 at a point about 7m east of the outer north-west corner and it may originally have extended further. Along the west side, however, it returned against the original Period 1 outer face, and it was absent from the south-west corner of the building. It seems that by the early sixth century the north-west corner was already showing signs of the settlement which can be seen to have affected most of the presbytery area, and that it needed strengthening.

The presbytery in this period was relatively small, comprising the western apse and a rectangular space measuring some 5.50m × 7m directly in front of it, set within a slightly larger rectangular space which occupied the whole width of the central nave (illus. 91, 92). To the west of this line the flooring is in *opus sectile*, liberally interspersed with rectangular slabs of variegated marble; to the east of it, the nave was once covered with a grandiose carpet of mosaic, consisting essentially of fourteen rows of square figured panels.¹¹

The actual surviving remains of the presbytery are stretches of the pavement, most of the altar base, about half of the footings for the chancel rail, one loose chancel post and fragments of several chancel slabs, and the steps of the *synthronon*. The pavement is laid in a very simple *sectile* pattern, with a roughly symmetrical scheme of bands of marble slabs framing rectangular panels of small square tiles of coloured marble laid diagonally (illus. 92). The identifiable marbles are Chian (*portasanta*), Iasos, Carystian (*cipollino*), Pentelic, Phrygian (*pavonazetto*) and Proconnesian; all re-used. The altar base is a slab of medium-crystalled white Greek marble, with seatings for five of the six marble colonnettes which carried the altar and an additional recess in the centre (partly visible in illus. 91, 92).

The north side of the footing for the chancel screen is quite well preserved, consisting of four chancel posts laid end to end, re-used presumably from the Period 1 chancel screen (illus. 91, 92). Cut into the upper surface are the dowel-holes for the posts of a central opening and in the westernmost block (which is laid at a slightly higher level) the grooved seating for a chancel slab. The blocks to the east have no such groove, and it seems likely that the difference in level was made up by the insertion of the independent base-moulding

¹¹ Details in Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins (1980) 95-109; where the panels survive they show animals, wild and domestic, birds and occasionally men engaged in everyday occupations.



Illus. 92. Cyrene: East Church, west chancel with earlier chancel posts re-used as seating for its screens.

of which a fragment is preserved in the north wing (*Carved Fittings*, no. 11). Lying nearby is a single Period 2 chancel post, and fragments were found of at least four chancel slabs of typically Justinianic type.¹² The south side of the screen has been totally destroyed, but several of the footing blocks of the west side are still in position, with dowel-holes for an axial opening and, projecting from it towards the nave, a short entrance passage flanked by a pair of slabs, of which the seatings of one are still in place (illus. 91).

The well-preserved basis of the synthronon consists of the mass of stepped masonry (visible in illus. 87, 88, 90, 91). The outer face is concentric with the curve of the apse, leaving an 0.85-0.90m space between the two. In the middle of the front, two steps lead up to a small semi-circular platform (diameter 1.50m) from which rises a concentric flight of steps, of which three are preserved. Assuming that the sockets cut into the face of the apse (fifth course up) carried the supports of a wooden platform, upon which stood the actual seating, there were probably once five such steps. The respective curvatures of the apse and of the steps are such that there would have been plenty of room for a rather larger bishop's throne, placed centrally. A rectangular stone block carved on one end with a maltese cross, which now rests on the synthronon (illus. 87, 88), is not in position.

The South Aisle

The western part of the south aisle is still incompletely excavated and encumbered with the remains of later structures; and the eastern two bays, now converted into a vestibule, are sufficiently described above and in terms of the

¹² The dating is, of course, open to question.

mosaic which is its most distinctive feature.¹³ So much of the chronology of the church does, however, depend on the interpretation of the relationship of the new south entrance to the successive stages of the outer wall, that it is worth recording in detail the results of a small trial excavation made at this point in 1961 by Martin Harrison. He reported as follows:

'I have made a *sondage* in the southern doorway of the Cathedral and there is no evidence whatsoever of a doorway existing there in Period 1. The sequence of building appears to have been as follows:

1. Period 1 wall, later dismantled at this point to an unnecessarily low level.
2. Rough foundation course of Period 2 wall.
3. Period 2 wall, separated from foundation course by a very thin layer of earth (a levelling?).
4. The whole doorway filled with clay sherds and rubble to the depth of two courses of the Period 2 wall.
5. Laid on top of this, the re-used marble slabs of the threshold.
6. The vertical face of the doorway cut back to the level of the top edge of the marble slabs, presumably to accommodate a door-frame slightly wider than anticipated.

The Period 1 wall was, I suggest, cut unnecessarily low because, although the street outside was at the higher level indicated by the Period 2 threshold, the cutting of the door was done by workmen standing inside the church, at the level of the church floor.'

The North Aisle

This aisle is more fully discussed below in connection with Period 3 and later modifications, but it should be remarked that there is some reason to believe that already in Period 2 the east end of it had some special significance within the complex as a whole. It was paved with a mosaic of a quality equalled only in the chancel of the Central Church;¹⁴ and when the builders of the following period came to strengthen the outer wall there was some object which they went to considerable pains to conserve by building over it. This recess stands directly opposite the main entrance to the Period 2 church, and when, at a later date, the rest of this part of the nave arcade was blocked, it is significant that the first archway, opposite the recess, was kept open. The evidence is circumstantial, but cumulatively strong. What the object of veneration was one can only guess. One obvious possibility is a tomb; another is some sort of reliquary coffer, like that in the 'Palace' Chapel at Apollonia.

The East Range

That the two south-east chapels were vaulted is shown by the outer south wall of the apse, the lower six courses of which are either original and repointed, or else were rebuilt, and in either case now supported the spring of a barrel vault. There is no suggestion that this part of the building ever carried a second storey.

¹³ See Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 109-114; there are hunting scenes, fishermen and animals; and in the south-east chapel, where the main panel shows a crocodile attempting to eat a cow and a boy clinging to the cow's tail, there is an inscribed panel recording the work of bishop Menas (*Inscription* no. 2).

¹⁴ For the mosaic in this aisle see Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 111-114; it shows a Nilotic scene.



Illus. 93. Cyrene: East Church, close-up of chancel posts re-used as seating for screens.



Illus. 94. Cyrene: East Church, south vestibule.



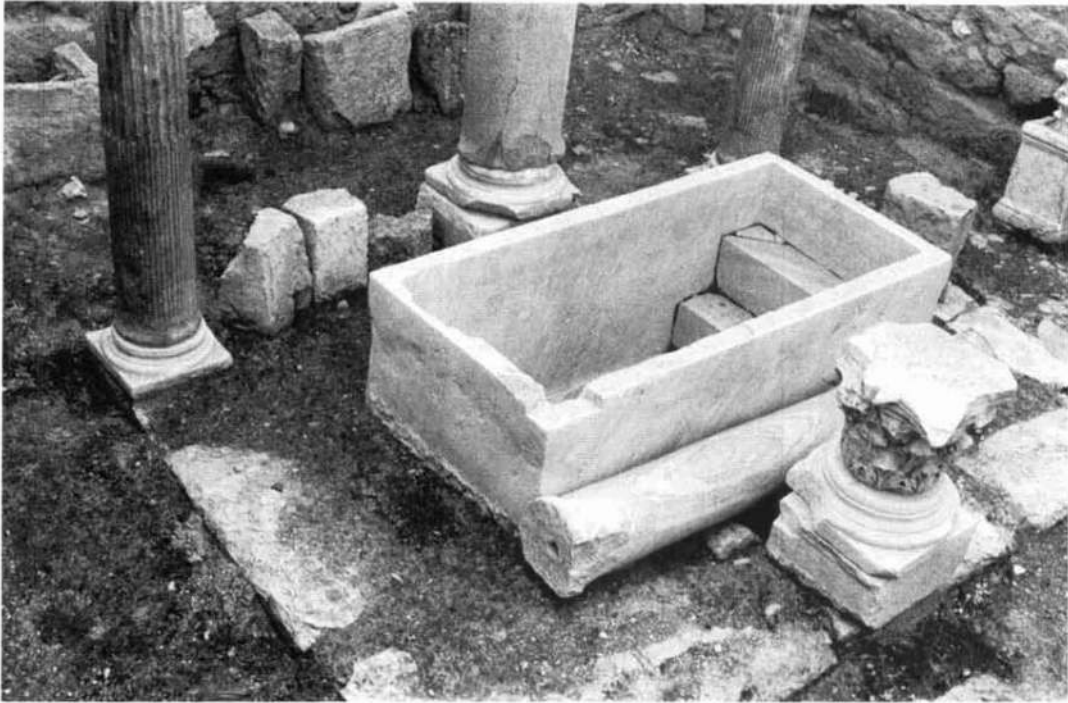
Illus. 95. Cyrene: East Church, north-east chapel and staircase to baptistery.

The two chapels to the north of the apse, on the other hand, were later both extensively remodelled, with the addition of a second storey (see below). Apart from the scanty remains of the pavement, the main Period 2 feature is the steps up to the baptistery (illus. 95). The east flanking slab of these is a split column of Carystian marble (*cipollino*), the west a slab of Proconnesian, and the steps themselves of Carystian (1), Pentelic (3) and Proconnesian (1). The surviving part of the west door-jamb is of limestone, that of the east jamb a re-used marble chancel post (*Carved Fittings*, no. 2; see illus. 106a).

The Baptistery, illus. 89, 96-98.

The walls of the baptistery, which were greatly strengthened and thickened in the following period, consisted originally of a single thickness of blocks of yellow limestone, laid in fairly regular courses, neatly dressed externally and liberally plastered on the inner face; at one point the plaster bears traces of a purple painted dado. The floor around the central platform was paved in *opus sectile*, of which the marble itself has disappeared, although the impression can still in places be made out on the mortar bed. The platform itself was raised about 15cm above the surrounding floor-level and was presumably surfaced with plaster. It carried six columns, of which parts of four survive (two of deep blue-black (Rhodian?) marble, fluted and reeded; one of grey granite; one of grey-and-white Greek marble), together with several assorted capitals and bases, all of them classical pieces re-used. Several small voussoirs and a three-way springer block (illus. 98) show that the canopy was arched. The baptismal tank has two flights of four steps leading down to a recessed circular basin (illus. 96, 97).¹⁵ Another re-used classical element, found displaced within the

¹⁵ Duval 1989b, 2781 noted that external wooden ladders would be needed at either end to enable catechoumens to reach and to leave these steps.



Illus. 96. Cyrene: East Church, baptismal basin and remains of canopy.

baptistery, is a small base of Pentelic marble, on which can be made out the partially erased figure of a maenad in low relief. The only essential later modification now visible is that when the outer wall was thickened, in Period 3, a small plaster-lined water tank was incorporated in the thickening, near the north-east corner.

The baptismal basin itself is an Attic sarcophagus, trimmed down and adapted to Christian use (illus. 96, 97). External dimensions: 1.11 (1.09)m × 2.30 (2.26)m × ht. just over 1.32m (the max. internal dimension). Two steps have been inserted at each end and a third, shaped like a double keyhole, cut in the thickness of the base. There is a small cross cut in the middle of the upper edge of each of the small sides. The original carving has been dressed back and the surface roughly polished, but examination of the lower part, which was encased in the platform and less thoroughly erased, shows that it was originally a Dionysiac sarcophagus, with figures against a background of vine stems and foliage. Specifically one can make out:

1. on the north long side, half-a-dozen more or less upright stems and various objects in higher relief, including two human legs and some drapery
2. on the east end, the left edge of a figure with a lot of drapery (a maenad?)
3. on the west end, a fragment of drapery
4. the base moulding, consisting of a *cyma recta* with an upright acanthus leaf design.



Illus. 97. Cyrene: East Church, interior of baptismal basin.



Illus. 98. Cyrene: East Church, baptismery, capital and springer block.

Third period

Already in the second period the structure had shown signs of weakness and at some subsequent date it was decided to strengthen the outer walls by a massive external thickening of rubble faced with courses of large, rather roughly coursed blocks. At the same time a rectangular wing of similar build was added along the north side, running westward from the projecting north wall of the baptistery along the entire outer flank of the north nave-aisle practically to the north-west corner of the building. The external thickening has been traced round the baptistery and along the east and part of the south sides, and it may well have been continuous also round the south-west corner, which is not yet excavated externally. At the north-west corner of the early building the Period 2 strengthening made it unnecessary. To the same period belongs the similar thickening inwards of the outer wall of the north aisle for a length corresponding to that of the added north wing.

Despite the complexities of detail it is evident that the north wing was planned as a consistent unit. The massive walls were from the outset intended to carry a second storey, and either on this or some later occasion an upper storey was added to other adjacent parts of the building. It is not at all easy to date all of this work. Many features are certainly of Christian date, since they incorporate Christian symbols. Others are certainly post-Christian, when parts of the south aisle and the north aisle-wing were occupied as habitations. Between the two extremes there are a number of features of which one can only determine the relative date.

The added north wing consists of an entrance vestibule at the west end; a complex of later structures within what was perhaps originally an open hall running most of the length of the wing; and at the west end a vaulted room beside a staircase that led to an upper storey. From west to east the features now visible are as follows:



Illus. 99. Cyrene: East Church, room at the north-west corner.

1. A small arched entrance set in the north outer wall and leading into a vestibule. The outer arch of the entrance is partially destroyed, but the inner arch is intact, plainly but solidly built, with a bevelled seating-moulding and seven roughly equal voussoirs. Towards the east the vestibule opened on to the hall between the well-built ashlar shoulders of a wide (4.20m) horseshoe arch.
2. A long narrow hall (17m × 5.50-6m), which seems originally to have been a single room but which was later subdivided into smaller chambers by secondary walls, of which some are still in place while others have been cleared away. Near the middle of the south wall of this hall (the north wall of the church proper) an arched doorway leads through into the north aisle of the church, opposite the seventh pier from the east end of the north nave-arcade (illus. 100). There is an inscribed cross on the keystone, and just outside the door, on the right as one enters the church, there is a cylindrical pagan altar, placed upside down and recarved with Latin crosses (illus. 111). It is of Pentelic marble and carved with a conventional garland-design. The top has been hollowed out, presumably to serve as a holy-water stoup.
3. At some later date the west end of the hall was converted into a small, approximately square room, built up against the south wall and partially blocking the horseshoe arch of the vestibule; and running the length of this room, between it and the outer north wall, a narrow east-west corridor. The arch at the west end of this corridor had a cross on the keystone. The north and west walls of the room were built of poor



Illus. 100. Cyrene: East Church, archway into the north aisle.

rubble-masonry and the remains have since been cleared away, leaving only the north-south transverse wall. Built up against the east face of the latter, and almost certainly representing an even later modification, is the lower part of a staircase, which incorporated a low arch so as to provide continued access to the room beyond.

4. Framing the doorway into the church, and again beyond it, are some more late walls, of which the most tangible features are a rectangular room occupying the south half of the hall and a short, L-shaped passage giving access to the earlier of the two staircases described in the next paragraphs.
5. The east end of the north wing is occupied by a complex of structures of which the nucleus is contemporary with the wing itself. This nucleus consists of a flight of stairs built up against the outer face of the original church and, occupying the rest of the east end, a rectangular chamber divided into two equal compartments by a wide, north-south arch. The stairs are wide and well-built and it is significant that they remained in use throughout the building's subsequent structural history. The adjoining room was entered through a narrow doorway at the north-west corner, the arch of which consists of four voussoirs and a narrow keystone and springs from seating-blocks of which one is plain and the other (re-used) has a simple moulding. The transverse arch helped to support the roof; it is much wider and the springing point proportionately lower, and the individual voussoirs are of decidedly elongated form. Incorporated into the rather crude, very roughly-coursed masonry of the south and west walls respectively are a square recess and two small



Illus. 101. Cyrene: East Church, north-east chapel with stacked pantiles.



Illus. 102. Cyrene: East Church, north-east chapel with dolia.

splayed windows. When finally abandoned, these rooms were in use as store rooms, with half-a-dozen large *dolia* (illus. 102) and, against the north wall, a stack of shallow pantiles (illus. 101).

6. Built up against the outer face of the west wall of the storeroom are the eight lower steps of a rather crudely-built staircase, at right-angles to the original stairs (illus. 103). The latter remained accessible by way of the L-shaped passage referred to above, the arched entrance to which is itself secondary to the added stairs.

The relative date of the north wing is clearly visible at its junction with the baptistery. Although there are several unexpected straight joints, on close examination these can be seen to be no more than the successive stages of a building operation which comprised both



Illus. 103. Cyrene: East Church, staircase against the outer face of the north-east chapel.

the outward thickening of the outer wall of the baptistery and the addition of the north wing.

The relative date of the thickening of the outer wall of the north aisle is shown by the fact that, whereas the footings of the thickening in places override and are later than the Period 2 'Fisherman' mosaic (Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 15), the thickening itself is earlier than any of the many late transverse features within the aisle itself (for which see below).

That there came in time to be an upper storey also over the north aisle and over the north-east chapels is shown (among other things) by the presence of a number of late staircases. Whether the whole of this upper storey was planned at the same time as the added north wing is doubtful. When the latter was added the monumental basilical character of the church was still accepted and respected. Over the north aisle, on the other hand, the addition of an upper storey involved the elimination of the ground floor as a monumental unit by the insertion of a number of transverse walls and the blocking of large parts of the nave-arcade.

On the available evidence it is quite impossible to present an orderly sequence of events. Indeed the impression conveyed by the remains is one of a piecemeal development without any coherent over-all plan. This would have been greatly facilitated if, as seems very likely, the roofs over the aisles were from the outset terraced rather than sloping and tiled.

It should be remembered that at least two of the later staircases in the north wing appear to be serving a superstructure over the north aisle.

One can distinguish three groups of structures:

1. At the west end of the north aisle, subsequently to the addition of the north wing, the north-west chapel was divided into two by a transverse wall with a central doorway. A similar wall cut off the first two bays of the aisle itself. Of the two associated staircases one is certainly contemporary, the other is structurally secondary but could in fact be of the same date. The pointed arch in the wall across the aisle suggests that this at any rate was a very late feature. Remains of a number of *dolia* show that in their latest phase these rooms were used for storage.
2. At the east end of the north aisle there are traces of a succession of structural events, of which the insertion of a transverse arch opposite the fifth pier from the east end of the nave arcade may well be contemporary with the addition of the north wing, since the north pier marks a change in the thickness of the Period 3 thickening of the north wall. Either contemporary with this or later is the blocking of all the arches of the nave arcade except the first (which was later blocked too) and the sixth (which seems to have remained open), and an inward thickening of the arcade wall from the south-east corner to the arch at the fifth pier. The object of this work must have been to support the upper storey. Certainly later are the insertion of a second transverse arch opposite the third pier and a further thickening of the arcade wall between piers 3 and 5.
3. The addition of a second storey over the north-east chapel is attested by the addition of a staircase against the outer face of the apse. Again the precise sequence of events is not easy to interpret. In the room with the staircase an arch, one opening of which is preserved at ground level against the middle of the east wall, may be an early feature designed to

help support the ceiling (cf. the room at the east end of the Period 3 north wing). If so, it was presumably dismantled when the room was subdivided into a passageway and a smaller square room, with a timber ceiling (beam sockets in the east wall) and cupboard-like recesses in the north wall. Alternatively the beam sockets are an early feature (cf. those in the chapel to the south of the apse, which must antedate the Period 2 vaults) and the low-level arch a later addition. In either case this room in its last stage was a storeroom, containing a number of *dolia*. The larger room to the north was similarly subdivided, at first by a wide, well-built arch, and later by a rough partition wall built within the arch.

Carved Fittings¹⁶

As in the other pre-Justinianic buildings of Cyrenaica, marble was available only in the form of classical *spolia*, and even so in relatively limited quantities. Even in the sixth century this and the local stone continued to be the principal source of supply. The only evidence of freshly imported material is that of the rather scanty remains of the Period 2 chancel fittings.

The following is a list of the major carved fittings of a specifically Christian character:

1. Four chancel posts, from a matching set, re-used as the basis for the north side of the Period 2 chancel screen (illus. 92, 93). Dimensions: 0.28-0.20m × 0.23m (approx.) × ht. 1.00-1.06m. The material is indiscriminately Proconnesian marble and a white statuary marble with medium-sized crystals. Parts of three faces are visible in each case, in two cases carved on two adjoining faces with a narrow, round-ended, rectangular panel (third face plain), in the other two with a similar panel on one face and slots on the other two visible faces. The upper faces (as now re-used) bear dowel-holes for the posts and a slot for the base of one of the screens of the Period 2 chancel. They are presumably the posts of the Period 1 chancel screen.
2. Chancel post of Pentelic marble, re-used as part of the east jamb of the doorway into the baptistery (illus. 106a).
Dimensions: 0.46m × 0.28m × ht. 1.11m, with a rectangular panel, with one adjoining face slotted, the other two plain. Near the top of the angle between the two plain faces is the scar of the attachment for a metal chain. The top had a finial, oval in plan, which has been chiselled away.
Though from a different series from those re-used in the Period 2 chancel screen, this post too presumably comes from the Period 1 church.
3. Corner of an open-work chancel slab in a white statuary marble with medium-sized crystals. Surviving dimensions: 0.38m × ht. 0.48m. The quality of marble and the form, both unique to the Cyrenaican series, suggest that this was part of the fittings of the Period 1 church (illus. 110).

¹⁶ All marbles were diagnosed by eye only; those attributed to Thasos are in particular need of confirmation.



Illus. 104. Cyrene: East Church, bracket found in the south aisle.

4. A series of rather roughly shaped, yellow limestone brackets, found fallen in the south aisle. Dimensions: 0.80m (of which 0.23m projecting) × 0.50m × ht. 0.56m. Lightly scored on the outward-curving under-surface of the projecting part is a slender monogram cross with the letters *Alpha* and *Omega* below the transverse bar. Probably from the Period 1 church (illus. 104).
5. Re-used base of Pentelic marble, found built into the steps leading down into the Period 2 vestibule. Dimensions: 0.67m × 0.27m × ht. 0.42m. Originally inscribed on one long face between mouldings:
 [Ἄν]ἄξανδρος Πραξιάδα
 (Anaxandros son of Praxiadas; Morelli 1961-2, no. 264). When re-used, the upper part of the left end was roughly recut to semi-cylindrical shape and the lower part carved with

a Latin cross. How the recut piece was used is not clear. It comes presumably from the Period 1 church (illus. 105).

6. Pair of matching chancel-posts of Proconnesian marble, both damaged. Dimensions: 0.23m × 0.26m × ht. unknown. One is carved with a rectangular panel on one face and a slot on one adjoining face, the other with similar panels on two adjoining faces and a slot on a third face; the remaining faces are plain. Both have shallow, bell-shaped finials (illus. 106a,b).
7. The greater part of a large chancel-slab, broken into many pieces, of Thasian marble¹⁷ (cf. el Atrun, plates 183, 190 and 191). Estimated length, c. 1.80m × ht. 1.00m. Carved on both faces:
 - a. An eight-petalled rosette with an elaborately knotted ribbon and originally two flanking Latin crosses, of which one survives (illus. 113).
 - b. Latin cross on a disc. Sixth-century (illus. 114).
8. Lower left-hand corner of a similar slab, of Thasian marble,¹⁸ with part of a Latin cross resting on the upturned end of a ribbon. Sixth-century (illus. 115).
9. Upper left-hand corner of a similar slab, of Proconnesian marble, with part of a Latin cross. Sixth-century (illus. 116).
10. Lower corner of a small chancel-slab of Proconnesian marble. Estimated dimensions w. 0.75m × ht. 0.90m. Carved on both faces:

¹⁷ Diagnosis is not so far confirmed: see Appendix.

¹⁸ See previous note.

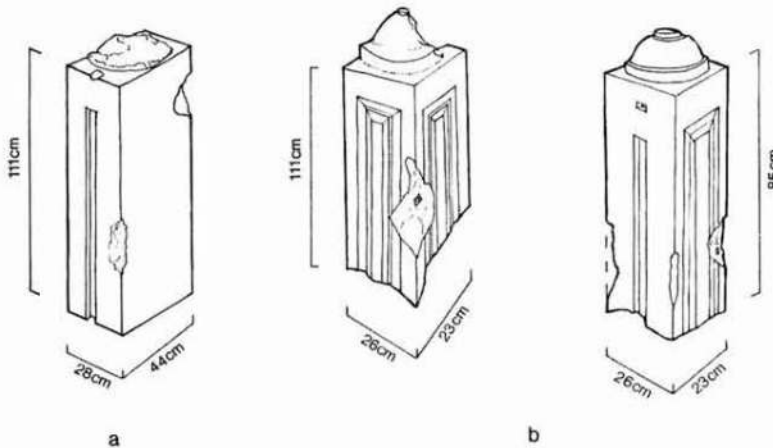


Illus. 105. Cyrene: East Church, re-used base of Pentelic marble, found built into the steps of the second-period vestibule.

a A plain Latin cross on an orb. Sixth-century.

b Not described.

11. Small section of the moulded base of a chancel-screen of Proconnesian marble, now lying loose near the east end of the north wing. 0.26m wide at base × ht. 0.10m.
12. Low pedestal base of Proconnesian marble, found loose near the west end of the body of the church. Dimensions: 0.39m × 0.39m × ht. 0.23m (pedestal) + 0.08m (column base). Three shallow lines



Illus. 106. Cyrene: East Church, chancel posts of the first phase, measured drawings (Selina Ballance and Margaret Wheeler).



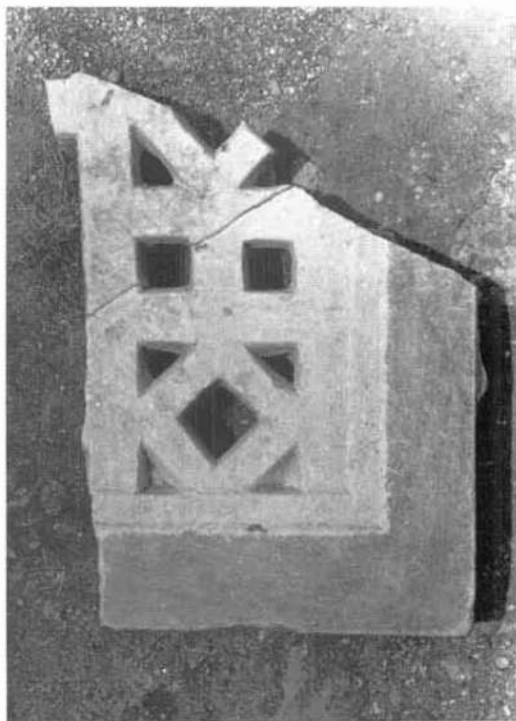
Illus. 107. Cyrene: East Church, window mullion of Pentelic marble from the east apse.



Illus. 108. Cyrene: East Church, marble stele re-used as a window-pier in the east apse.



Illus. 109. Cyrene: upper moulding of the re-used stele, with Christian inscription.



Illus. 110. Cyrene: East Church, part of a chancel screen probably from the first-period church.

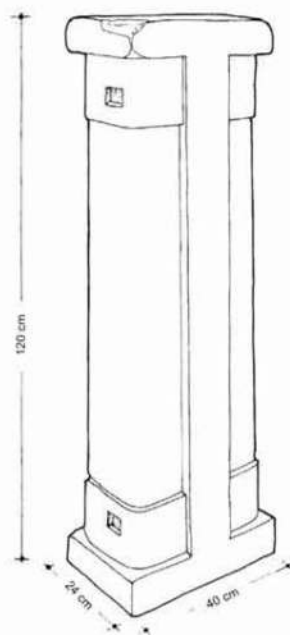
- constitute a rough moulding along the upper edge of the front face of the pedestal, and there is a deep slot for a chancel-slab in the middle of the left-hand face. The column base is dowelled to carry a column. Presumably part of the sixth-century chancel-fittings or possibly, in view of the poor workmanship, some subsequent modification thereto.
13. Window pier of Pentelic marble, found loose (and probably re-used) in the east apse (see unpublished photograph in the Department of Antiquities). Dimensions: 0.25m × 0.40m × ht. 1.18m. Simply and massively carved, with two half-columns, back to back, separated by the vertical band, 12cm wide, against which the actual window-frame rested; two small sockets cut off-axis into the top and bottom mouldings of one half-column suggest that it was later re-used as the post of a light wooden balustrade (illus. 107, 112).
14. Re-used funerary stele of Pentelic marble, found loose near the east apse (illus. 108, 109). Dimensions: 0.43m (0.46m) × 0.28m (0.295m) × ht. 1.00m. Originally inscribed on one broad face:
- Ζηνίων/Ζηνίων/ος (ἔτῶν) ἄ' / leaf
(Zenion, son of Zenion, aged 1 year)
- Re-used as part of a balustrade, with a slot cut in one of the narrow faces.
- A Christian inscription has been scratched in very poor lettering (not visible in all lights) on the damaged upper moulding of this base. Letters, ht. 0.01-0.02cm, lunate *sigma* and *omega*. Published Reynolds 1960, no. 2 (wrongly reporting the date of discovery as 1956) whence *SEG XVIII.754*.
- cross Κ(ύρι)ε βοηθήσων τοῦ [. . . sic Lord, help [. . .
- A personal name, perhaps preceded by δούλου σοῦ (your servant), doubtless concluded the text.
15. Circular pagan altar of Pentelic marble, up-ended and hollowed out for re-use as a holy-water stoup, to the right of the entrance into the north aisle from the north wing. Ht. 0.80m (approx.), diameter at base 0.47m. It was originally carved with heavy garlands framing small objects in relief (heads?) of which the latter were chiselled away when the altar was re-used. Instead, a small Latin cross has been carved between the garlands on the side facing the entrance (illus. 111).
16. Impost capital of Proconnesian marble, found loose in the south-east part of the church. Dimensions: 0.63m × 0.29m × ht. 0.23m; the rectangular underside, which is off-centre in relation to the longer dimension, measures 0.24m × 0.27m, and the circular seating for the head of the column, diam. 0.21m. Both convex faces were visible, the longer of the two with a Latin cross in relief (illus. 117).
17. Found re-used in an early Arab building on the site, and surely belonging to the church, is a set of three limestone steps for an *ambon*. On the topmost tread (0.85m × 0.27m) is a roughly-cut inscription in letters 0.05–0.065m high, with lunate *omega* and ligature of MHK; perhaps sixth century.
- Published Reynolds 1960, no. 3 whence *SEG XVIII.748*, and J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Ep.* 1961, 835; Chadwick 1960, 192.

cross Νέα Ῥώμη Κυρήνη New Rome, Cyrene

Robert vigorously contested Reynolds' suggestion that this could be associated with Cyrenaean opposition to Libya's ecclesiastical dependency



Illus. 111. Cyrene: East Church, entry from the hall on the north side to the north aisle, with holy-water stoup (Audrey Corbett).



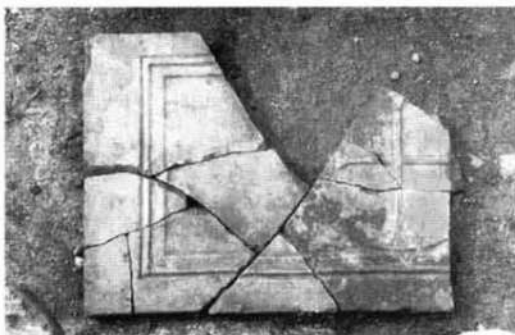
Illus. 112. Cyrene: East Church, window mullion (Selina Ballance).



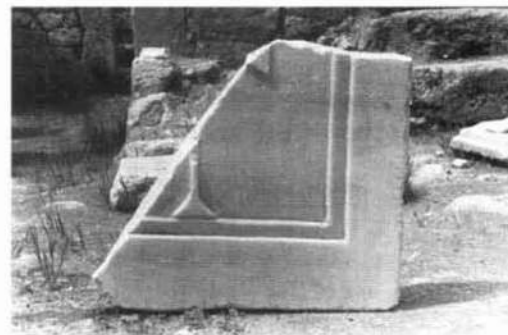
Illus. 113. Cyrene: East Church, part of a chancel screen from the second-period church.



Illus. 114. Cyrene: East Church, part of a chancel screen from the second-period church.



Illus. 115. Cyrene: East Church, part of a chancel screen from the second-period church.



Illus. 116. Cyrene: East Church, part of a chancel screen from the second-period church.



Illus. 117. Cyrene: East Church, impost block.

on Alexandria (confirmed at Nicea, see above) or with any aspect of Justinian's policy. It seems best to take it as a kind of acclamation with the sense of 'prosperity to New Rome and to Cyrene', or 'Cyrene acclaims New Rome'; but the only texts that Reynolds has found which are at all comparable are pagan (IRT 282 as interpreted by J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Ep.* 1953, 257, Λέπκις ἡ μεγάλη φιλι̅ σε Ρώμη, *IGLS* V, 2483, Μεγάλη Τύχη Ρώμη[ς] καὶ Ἐφέσου, *AE* 1995, 1586, Αὕξ(ι) Ἀσκαλ(ῶν) αὕξ(ι) Ρώμη).

In any case the location is puzzling: was the inscription possibly cut before the block was used to make the *ambon*-steps?

18. Not seen. Found in the East Church, presumably in the excavation of 1917. White marble base broken in two (w. 2.15m × ht. 0.19m × d. 2.15m) re-used as an altar-base, as appears from the holes for seven colonnettes to carry an altar-table. Published Pugliese-Carratelli 1961, no. 122, from the notes of G. Oliverio.

The base carried a Greek inscription of pre-Roman date published by Pugliese.

Inscriptions

1. Six non-Christian inscriptions were found in the structure in addition to those described above, but only one is of any significance to the construction of the church, being cut on part of a base for honorary statues of Valentinian and Valens (jointly Augusti from 364 to 367, when they were joined by Gratian, who does not seem to have figured in this text); this piece from their monument was used in the footing of the chancel-screen near the west apse, so in phase 2.
2. Three Christian texts were found, of which the two cut on pieces of church furniture are given under *Carved Fittings*, nos. 14, 17. There remains the important mosaic text in a rectangular mosaic panel, damaged above and below (0.70m × 0.46m), letters, 0.06-0.065m, rectangular *sigma* and angular *omega*; probably sixth-century. Published Reynolds 1960, no. 1 whence *SEG* XVIII.747 and J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Ep.* 1961, no. 835; Reynolds 1980, 148 with her plate 106.6.

<p>[ἐγένετο τοῦ] το τῶ [ἀγαθῶ]ν ἔρ[γουν ἐπὶ] Μηνᾶ [το]ῦ ὁσιωτάτου ἡμῶν [ἐ]πισκόπου κέ φιλοκτίστου</p>	<i>sic</i>	<p>[There came into being] this [good] work under Menas our very holy bishop who was a lover of building [· · ·</p>
5. [? · · ·		

L. 1, τῷ for τό as in *IGLS* IV.1525. L. 4, for the sense of φιλοκτίστης see Robert *loc. cit.*; Stucchi 1975, 401, who takes it as meaning 'a lover of God the Creator', ignores the body of epigraphic evidence. L. 5, Reynolds can only be sure of decorative features here, but a short line giving the date by the indiction year is not excluded.

Menas is otherwise unknown, but given the style and workmanship of the mosaics, which clearly resemble those of Gasr el Lebia, should be approximately of the time of Justinian. The lettering here resembles most closely that of the chancel-mosaic at Gasr el Lebia (*Section 2*), the latest of the mosaics there. Given that Menas loved building, it seems virtually certain that the formula with ἐπί (restored by analogy with the texts at Gasr el Lebia, *Section 2*) is here more than a simple chronological indicator, and implies that he had some responsibility for what was done, no doubt as a donor, and possibly of more than the mosaic-floors. This kind of activity by a bishop certainly suggests that the church was his, and so Cyrene's cathedral.

3. Byzantine weight (c. 1 in. sq. and 1/5 in. thick) said to have been found in the East Church; now in Cyrene Museum.

Γ cross B (presumably figures, three and two)
Cf. Apollonia/Sozusa, *Other Christian Antiquities 2, e.*

2. The Central Church, illus. 118-27.

Bibliography

Ward-Perkins 1958, 183; 1962, 646; 1972, 226; Goodchild 1966*a*, 212; 1971, 142-3; Stucchi 1975, 382-3; Duval 1989*b*, 2753, 2764, 2765, 2767, 2769-70, 2771, 2774, 2783, 2787, 2789; Bonacasa Carra 1998. For the mosaics, Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 12-4, 115-9; for chancel-screens Sodini 1989, fig. 11.

Discovery

The building was excavated by the Department of Antiquities under the direction of Goodchild. Brief reference to it and to its mosaics have appeared in Ward-Perkins 1965, 646, Goodchild 1966*a*, 212 and 1971, 142-3;¹ but it is otherwise substantially unpublished.

Description

Three-aisled basilical church (illus. 118), situated at the principal cross-roads of the Roman and Byzantine city, in the angle between the main valley street and the street that meets it at right-angles, descending from the acropolis-ridge across the south-east façade of the Caesareum (illus. 119).² The ground at this point slopes quite steeply downwards from south to north, with substantial terracing amid remains of earlier buildings following the same general alignment, and with a considerable overlay of later buildings above and immediately to the east of it. To fit into the available site the church had to be oriented slightly north of north-west, but for simplicity of description it will be treated as if running east and west, with a western apse.

The footings throughout are of squared blocks, no doubt in some cases following the lines of earlier walls. Except for the apse, which is built of dressed stone, the walls are faced with courses of medium-to-small squared blocks (average height of courses just under 0.20m), with considerable use of larger blocks for architectural features (piers, quoins, arches, doorways) and some use of the same in the walling (e.g. in parts of the walls that prolong the lines of the nave-arcades). The materials throughout are re-used from earlier buildings.

The church follows regular sixth-century Cyrenaican practice³ in being inscribed within a near-rectangular outer framework, 27.1-27.6m by 15.0-15.5m (illus. 118-120). The apse is framed between a pair of angle-chapels (illus. 118, 119), and two similar chapels flank the main entrance at the east end. This was a triple archway resting on a pair of re-used classical columns (illus. 118, 120), and it led through into a narthex-complex (not shown on the

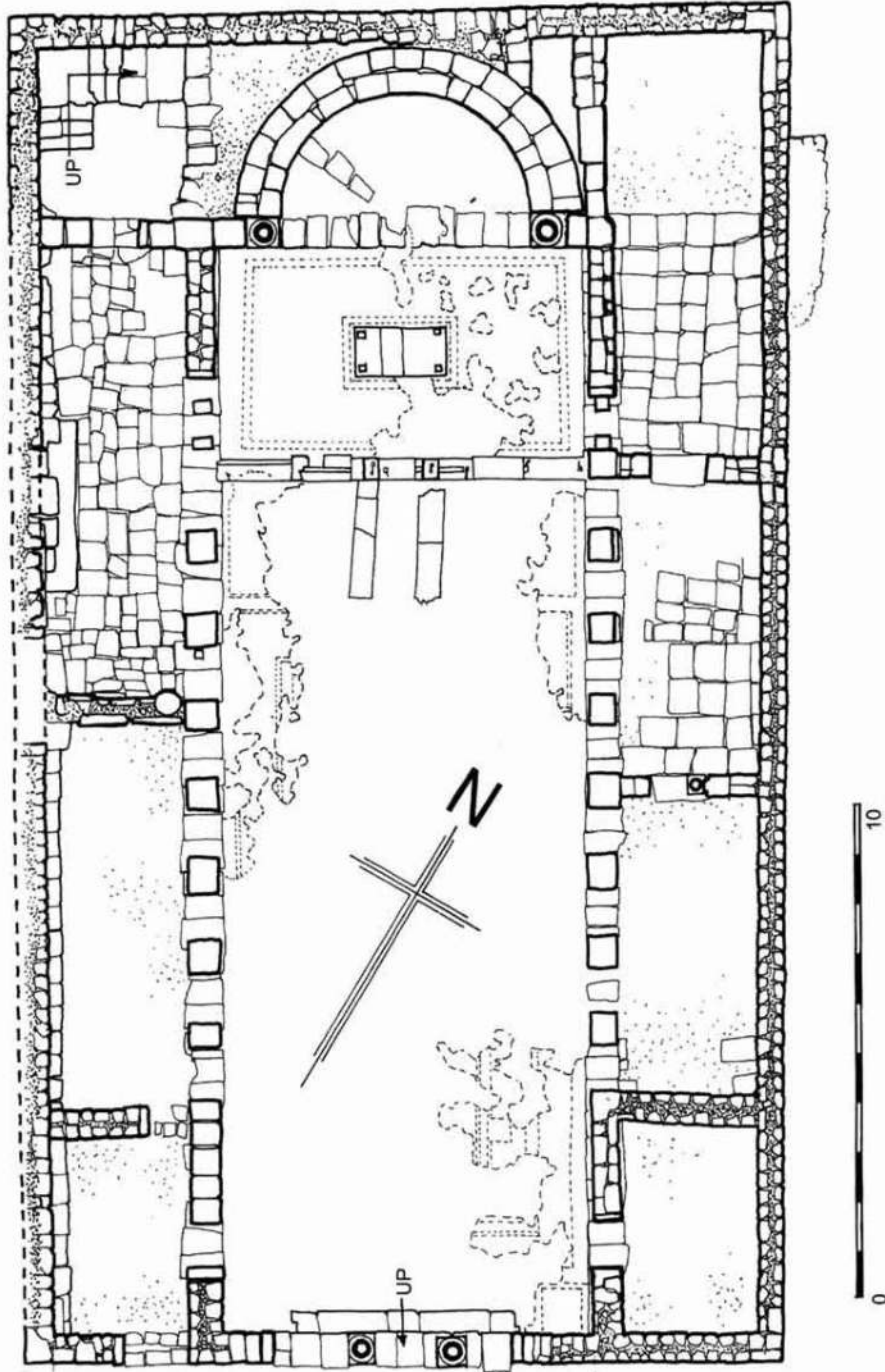
¹ And, since Ward Perkins wrote this passage, in Stucchi 1975 and Duval 1989*b* (both cited above), while the mosaics were presented and discussed in Rosenbaum/Ward Perkins 1980 *cit.*

² Since he regarded this as the cathedral church of Cyrene, Stucchi attached considerable significance to its central location and to what he believed to be the sacrifice of preceding amenities and buildings necessary for its construction (the footpaths of two streets, half a house as well as parts of the entry into, and the *frigidarium* of, a bath-building; these, contrary to Ward Perkins and Goodchild, he thought to be earlier than the church). An examination of the evidence on this site for the period preceding the construction would obviously be useful.

³ The dating is controversial; Stucchi places this in his second group of churches, to be dated in the second half of the fifth century, on grounds of its masonry techniques. Ward Perkins and Goodchild put it in the sixth century, in fact under Justinian, since they believed that the mosaic floor, which they dated under Justinian by analogy with that of Gasr el Lebia (section 2), was the original floor; this Stucchi denied.

CYRENE

CENTRAL CHURCH



Illus. 118. Cyrene: Central Church, measured plan, made before the narthex complex was accessible (R. J. C. Jamieson).



Illus. 119. Cyrene: aerial view of the Roman centre of Cyrene, with the Central Church (found among Goodchild's papers, apparently received from H. Braüner, architect and Dipl.Ing.).



Illus. 120. Cyrene: Central Church, looking east.



Illus. 121. Cyrene: Central Church, chancel and apse.



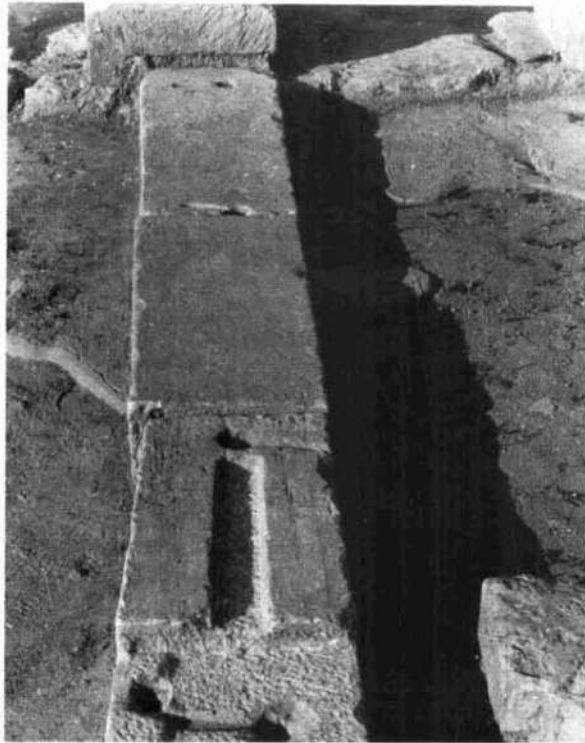
Illus. 122. Cyrene: Central Church, exterior of the apse, from the north.

plan) of which little more than the rectangular outline can at present be discerned through the complex of structures, both earlier and later, which still litters this end of the building.⁴

The apse, though inscribed, was structurally independent, being faced both internally and externally with carefully dressed stone and designed, presumably, to carry a semidome of similar materials (illus. 122). Two surviving voussoirs, one with an inscribed cross, may come from the frontal arch. Recessed into the shoulders of the apse were two grey granite columns (illus. 121), with re-used Corinthian capitals of coarse grey marble and, used as bases, a pair of up-ended four-way Ionic capitals of Proconnesian marble. The floor within the apse was one step up from that of the chancel and it may have been paved with a patchwork of re-used stone and marble slabs. Two small sockets symmetrically placed near the middle of the step indicate that at some stage there was a wooden screen across the mouth of the apse.

Though built independently, the exterior of this apse was encased within the rectangular framework of the outer west wall and the two angle-chapels (illus. 119, 122). It is very doubtful whether the cupboard-like compartment behind the north shoulder was ever visible in, or accessible from, the finished building. The transverse wall that prolonged the line of the face of the apse across the aisles, delimiting the two angle-chapels, was built of quite large blocks. On the south side it has been stripped right down to its footings, very possibly when at some late date a doorway (not shown in illus. 118) was opened in the north wall of the chapel, near the north-west corner, giving direct access to it

⁴ Stucchi believed that it is possible to disentangle the walls in the area beyond the east end of the nave. He traced an entry from the street on the north side, up steps into a passage from which, turning west, one moved through three rooms; the third of these gives either westwards down steps and through the doorway into the nave or northwards into a longish room divided into two by a feature of which two columns survive.



Illus. 123. Cyrene: Central Church, marble base for chancel-screen.

from the street. On the south side the corresponding chapel was entered from the aisle. It now contains the two lower flights of a substantial staircase, though whether this was an original feature or a later addition there is no means of telling.

The long sides of the nave consisted of arcades of eight (or possibly nine) arches, terminating at either end in stretches of solid wall. The walls at the west end delimited the chancel and incorporated a pair of small doors leading into the front corners of the chancel from the aisles, just behind the terminal piers of the arcade (or, if there were nine arches, filling the westernmost of these). The corresponding walls at the east end delimited the two eastern angle-chapels, in each case with a doorway leading directly from the nave into the chapel. In the centre of the east wall two steps led up into the narthex through a monumental entrance consisting of three arches carried on two re-used marble columns. The nave piers are now stripped down to a single course, but it is a safe assumption that they carried arches of masonry, as in the East Church and as regularly elsewhere in Cyrenaica. The body of the nave was entirely paved with a large mosaic, now sadly fragmentary, with a central geometrical design framed within a fine figured border.⁵

The chancel occupied the full width of the nave, from which it was divided by a chancel screen (now partly recomposed) of which the marble step was found still in position (*illus. 119, 121, 124*). On it could be seen the settings

⁵ See Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins, 1980; animals, savage and peaceable, birds (including a peacock), fish and a huntsman pursuing a tiger are shown.



Illus. 124. Cyrene: Central Church, chancel screen as restored.

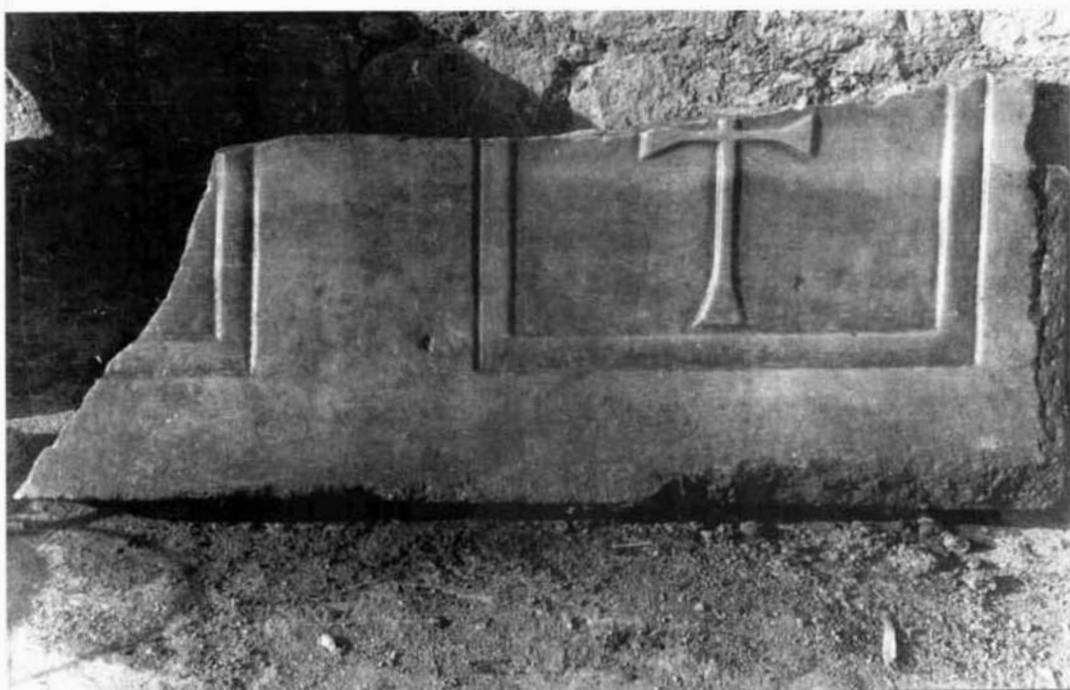
for two successive screens, and projecting axially into the nave there are the footings for a short entrance passageway (illus. 119). The altar base, composed of three slabs of marble ($0.90 \times 1.80\text{m}$), is still in place in the centre of the chancel, with sockets for the four supporting colonnettes (illus. 121). A fragment of one of the latter, of white marble, has survived, but of the altar itself there was no trace. The whole of the chancel was paved with a handsome figured mosaic, most of which has survived.⁶

The chancel could be entered from the aisles by doorways symmetrically placed in the eastern angles. These doorways had wooden frames and could presumably be closed; and, as noted above, they occupy what may originally have been a ninth, western arch of the nave-arcade. That on the north side is quite well-preserved and can be seen to open from the angle of a room which is divided from the rest of the aisle by a cross-wall with a central archway. What is the date of this cross-wall? With masonry of this sort, in which many of the secondary walls are straight-jointed against the main bearing-walls, it is very hard to be sure of the exact chronological sequence. It is obvious that the aisles of the church underwent modification on several occasions, the latest of which may well represent secular occupation in the post-Christian times. To this latest phase (or phases) of the north aisle belong the cross-wall opposite the fourth pier of the nave and the paving to the west of it; the opening of a doorway from the street through the north wall of the north-west chapel (not

⁶ See Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins, 1980; peaceable animals, birds and fish are shown and a jewelled cross with *alpha* and *omega*, within a medallion flanked by peacocks and smaller birds.



Illus. 125. Cyrene: Central Church, part of a chancel screen.



Illus. 126. Cyrene: Central Church, part of a chancel screen, the reverse side of 125.

shown in *illus.* 118); and, probably, the demolition of the façade wall of the same chapel. A glance at the south aisle reveals a comparable sequence. The cross-wall opposite the fifth pier is patently a very late, makeshift affair, and the pavement to the east of it must, in part at any rate, be contemporary. In this case it was a cross-wall on the line of the chancel-screen that was demolished, together, it seems, with one of the piers of the nave-arcade.

In its original form the west end of the church may already have had antechapels in front of the two western angle-chapels, as at Ras el Hilal (*illus.* 270). An alternative, and, on balance slightly more likely, possibility is that the church was initially planned with simple angle-chapels and a chancel that incorporated one arch of the nave-arcade, very much as in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia (*illus.* 218); and that this scheme was subsequently elaborated by adding the antechapels, closing the nave arch with a doorway, paving the two antechapels and, very possibly on this occasion, remodelling the chancel-screen.

Carved Fittings⁷

Of the specifically Christian marble fittings of the church all that has survived is part of one of the colonnettes which carried the altar and some fragments of the screen across the front of the chancel, including parts of four of the posts and the greater part of one of the slabs. The step dividing the nave from the chancel is intact, and on it can be seen the seatings and dowel-holes for some of the chancel-posts and grooves for some of the slabs. The blocks constituting the step are all re-used, and at least one of them (at the north end) carries dowel-holes and cramp-holes from this earlier use (*illus.* 123, 124). Two footings projecting from the middle of the step carried the flanking slabs of a short ceremonial entrance passage. On the basis of these indications, the surviving elements have mostly been replaced in positions approximating to those of their original use.

The surviving colonnette is of Proconnesian marble.

The surviving chancel-slab, also of Proconnesian marble, is of typical Justinianic type.⁸ It is carved on both faces:

1. With a wreathed Latin cross flanked by two rather larger Latin crosses poised on the heart-shaped terminals of the two wreath-ribbons (*illus.* 125).
2. With two equal panels (only one surviving), each, no doubt, containing a Latin cross (*illus.* 126).

The chancel-posts, again of Proconnesian marble, are not of the type usually associated with such screens. They are in fact pedestal bases, with a mere flange at the top and bottom of the pedestal and with the column-base proper left in the form in which it was received from the quarry (*illus.* 127). One or more of the faces are grooved vertically to house the ends of the slabs, and on two of them there is a Latin cross in low relief on the panel. They are dowelled to carry columns and two of them have been restored with what are probably the original columns: of a poor grey marble, short, squat and very crudely flanged (*illus.* 121, 124).

⁷ All marbles were diagnosed by eye only.

⁸ Some would argue that it is sixth-century but not necessarily Justinianic.



Illus. 127. Cyrene: Central Church, pedestal base for a chancel post.

The present restoration presupposes an originally symmetrical scheme, such as one would reasonably expect to find in association with a chancel-mosaic of unusually high quality. On the other hand, the surviving seatings appear to indicate an asymmetrical layout, with two slabs to the left (north) and three to the right of the central entry. This may represent a later repair; but, given the unusual, seemingly rather makeshift nature of the chancel-posts, it is not impossible that from the outset the builders had to do the best they could with the materials available. The quality of the mosaic was a matter of the skill of the mosaicists, who were already working in the province; the character of the imported marble fittings depended entirely upon what was available, and it may well be that by the time this church was ready for decoration it was already a matter of using up the left-overs.⁹

Inscriptions

No Christian inscriptions have been recorded here, but, re-used in walls in the area of the narthex, are fragments of two Roman imperial inscriptions, one perhaps of the second century AD, one of the fourth-fifth centuries.

3. Other Possible Christian Monuments

A. Within the City

1. Marble panels

Bibliography

Pernier 1935, 126; Ward-Perkins 1943, 125; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 25; Goodchild 1966a, 208; 1971, 119, n. 22; Stucchi 1961, 79; 1975, 335, 361; Teichner 1996, 54-6.

Fragments of late walls in the crypt of the ruined Temple of Apollo were conjecturally interpreted by Pernier as part of a Christian church, a view which Ward-Perkins and, originally, Stucchi accepted. They seemed to Goodchild to lack specific Christian features and in fact Stucchi, after re-examination, concluded that it is unlikely that there was any place of Christian worship here. Teichner recently questioned this, but apparently without autopsy or consideration of Stucchi's arguments. Even if these arguments were answered, positive reasons for supposing that there was a church here are needed. So far, the only items offered as such seem to be fragments of marble panels incised in the style of the late fourth to early fifth centuries AD (but

⁹ A note indicates that further discussion of the stair in the south-west chapel was intended.

without obvious Christian content); and their original connection with the crypt seems uncertain. In the light of the evidence for continuance of pagan cult in Cyrene in the fifth century (Ensoli Vitozzi 1992) there is surely a possibility that whatever adjustments were made in this crypt were, in fact, connected with that.

2. 'House Church'

Bibliography

Sjöquist 1954, 100; Stucchi 1975, 361.

Sjöquist's suggestion that the basilica of the Caesareum was adapted for use as a church has been abandoned; but Stucchi has proposed to interpret as a 'House Church' elements in late housing constructed within the basilica after its destruction by earthquake in *c.* AD 365. Susan Walker and Reynolds looked at the site in 1994 and saw all that he described, but in the absence of any specific Christian feature thought alternative interpretations preferable (e.g. as elements of purely domestic architecture). Professor Mario Luni tells Reynolds that the photographic archive of the Department of Antiquities shows the discovery here of fragments of marble which might come from an altar table and that in his view the position of four column-bases suggests an altar canopy. Christian use remains a possibility then, although further and more precise evidence would be welcome.

3. Building F in the Valley Street

Bibliography

Goodchild 1971, 141-2; Stucchi 1975, 252 with n. 2; 1981, 209-231.

This building was probably first erected in the second century AD as a temple, and converted at an unknown date to a different use which Stucchi believed to be Christian. A Christian inscription was found by Goodchild re-used in a late floor in it (Building F, *Inscription* no. *c*); there are Christian graffiti on the shaft of a *cipollino* column lying in the street in front of the building which Stucchi thought to have fallen from its portico (*Inscription* no. *a*); also on the shaft of a column found in the Byzantine Baths on the Sanctuary Terrace, now re-erected at the entry to the *frigidarium* of those Baths, which he believed to have belonged originally to Building F (*Inscription* no. *b*). It was interpreted by Stucchi as the oldest known place of Christian worship in Cyrene (indeed in Cyrenaica), which was, he argued, moved to his 'House Church' (no. 2 above) when Building F was destroyed in an earthquake (identified by him as that of AD 365).

There is clearly a case for suggesting Christian activity here, although not a proven one. The association of the inscriptions with the building is presumed, not inevitable; and there is no firm date for any of the later building-phases nor for any of the inscriptions; inscription no. *c* could have been brought from elsewhere to be re-used here (perhaps in the Islamic period). What is clearly proved is that at some time there was Christian activity in the neighbourhood; and, as Stucchi noted, the Central Church is only a few yards away across the road.

Inscriptions

a *Cipollino* column lying in front of Building F to which it had probably belonged, inscribed with graffiti which are difficult to read in any light. Reynolds, after examining the stone, thinks it likely (but not certain) that three hands were involved (she is very grateful to Dr Oliviero of the University of Urbino for his help here).

Bibliography

Stucchi 1981, 220-2 with plate, whence *SEG* XXXI.1579.

i Stucchi read here a single word in angular capitals which he took to be ΘΕΟΣ, God; to Reynolds it seems that there is a roughly incised rectangular frame containing further incisions which she felt unable to interpret.

- ii A little lower and to the left; Reynolds reads at some points differently from Stucchi, and doubts whether he was right to describe the letters as disposed in the shape of a cross. Both readings are set out side by side. Letters are variable in size, and some seem to be written back to front.

Stucchi	Reynolds
X	
Z	· Z
W	· W
H	H
·	ΦW
H	
∴	·
space	space
M̄	M̄
A	A
P	P
!	!
M̄	Γ
CE	H or M
Γ	(? B or ligatured KE)
!	! (Γ is just possible)
E	Cross

Stucchi interpreted as *cross* ζωήσης Μαρίας υιέ (May you live, son of Mary). Reynolds, with great reservations, suggests the possibility of X(ριστός) ζωή φώς (Christ, life and light) at the beginning; the reference to Mary in the lower part of the text may be right, but we should not, perhaps, rule out the possibility of χάρις, grace.

- b *Cipollino* column, one of a pair found re-used in late work (probably of the Islamic period) in the Byzantine Baths on the Sanctuary Terrace, now re-erected at the entry to the *frigidarium* of the Baths where they are believed to have been re-used; Stucchi argued that they had originally been taken there from Building F after its destruction by an earthquake. Inscribed with graffiti in irregular letters by several different hands, ave. 0.03 - 0.05m; lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, *omega*; several ligatures, superscript bars and other marks designed, presumably, to divide words and texts. It was Stucchi's contention that the height at which the graffiti are cut shows that they cannot have been inscribed when the column was in its present position and that in any case their texts are inappropriate to that position.

Bibliography

Oliverio 1930, 218 whence *SEG* IX.187, 188; Reynolds 1960, 286, no. 4a and b, whence *SEG* XVIII.755, Robert 1971, see also 1976, 584-5, no. 790; Guarducci 1973, 593-4 and 1978, 470-3 (c only); Stucchi 1981, 215-8, whence *SEG* XXXI.1578; P. W. van der Horst reported in *SEG* XXXVII. 1702.

- i *Dove with a twig in its mouth*

<i>vacat</i>		
<i>cross</i>	Κύριε βοήθη-	Lord, help
[· · ·]Σ	σον τῷ Ἰανου-	<i>sic</i> Janu-
	αρίῳ	arius

L. 2 Stucchi mistakenly regarded Σ as the *sigma* of βοήθησον; and suggested that two ploughs were engraved before it, which he took to show that Januarius was a farmer; it seems probable that another text (largely lost) was written beside our text.

Ll. 2-3, Oliverio read τοῦ for τῷ and Ἀν[αστασίω]. Reynolds has Ἀν/ασ[τασίω].

- ii Not seen; taken from Stucchi's publication.
 βοήθησο- Help,
 v Κύριε τοῦ Lord, the
 PABBI(?) [?]

L. 3 Stucchi interpreted as 'the Rabbi' = the teacher, and compared 'Philon, the teacher' in no. *c* below. Neither reading nor interpretation are altogether satisfying, despite the reference to rabbis in *Joh. Dam. Conf.* 9. A personal name may seem more likely; note 'Ραββος, Ραββους' attested in *SEG XLVII* (1997) 2069, 2075, 2077, 2082. Van der Horst accepts 'the Rabbi' and argues that the title can only be Jewish.

- iii Κύριε βοήθησον Lord, help
 Αναστασίω Anastasius,
 τοῦ ἔχοντος τὰς the man who has the
 περστέρας doves

L. 3. At the end, Stucchi read the figure $Y = 400$, which is difficult to see on the published photographs and was not apparent to Oliverio or Reynolds on the stone (the text is too high for Reynolds to check now). Anastasius, once thought to be the emperor, is now generally accepted as an ordinary resident of Cyrene, probably the owner of a dovecote, who sold the birds bred in it (Reynolds' suggestion that his doves were of metal and hung in a church has been shown by Robert to be impossible).

- c* Limestone block with simple moulding above (0.66m × 0.54m × 0.15m) inscribed on one face in roughly-cut letters of irregular heights (0.02 – 0.05m) with angular *sigma*, *phi* and *omega*. Found re-used in a late floor in Building F in the Valley Street.

Bibliography

Reynolds 1960, 284, no. 8, whence *SEG XVIII*. 753, J. and L. Robert 1961, no. 835, Goodchild 1971, 142, Guarducci 1978, 473-5 and Stucchi 1981, 219.

- [Εὐτ]υχῶς Good fortune
 Φίλωνι τῷ to Philon the
 διδασκάλῳ teacher
 καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς and his pupils
 5 αὐτοῦ ΙΧΘΥC Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.

There is an incised branch at the beginning of l. 3 and another at the end of l. 5. ΙΧΘΥC stands for (Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ υἱὸς σωτήρ).

The word ἰχθύς guarantees the Christianity of the text, but the omission of more overt references, together with some aspects of the lettering, suggested to Goodchild and to Reynolds that the inscription might date before the Peace of the Church; that now seems unlikely, but grounds for a firm alternative dating are not immediately apparent. Stucchi and Guarducci associated Philon with the elder Philon, bishop of Cyrene *c.* AD 363, a vigorous and pushing man, of strong orthodox convictions, as he appears in Synesius *Epp.* 96 (see also Roques 1987, 329-31 and 2000 *ad loc.*); and if this is he, the writer was presumably wishing him and his disciples well because he approved of what is certain to have been anti-Arian teaching. But on present evidence it may be rash to exclude an identification with this man's nephew, also called Philon, and also bishop of Cyrene; moreover the name was common in the city and the Philon recorded may be another person altogether.

4. Column from the Sanctuary Terrace

It remains a possibility that the column carrying inscriptions nos. *b*, *i*, *ii*, *iii* above, which was found in the Byzantine Baths on the Sanctuary Terrace, was in fact inscribed when in that location and records activity of Christians there.



Illus. 128. Inscription sold as from Cyrene, but possibly from Berenike: part of an inscribed church dedication.

5. Church Inscription

A church is possibly, perhaps probably, attested at Cyrene in an inscription bought by Richard Norton in 1909 from a dealer in Benghazi who said that it had been found at Cyrene. Since a dealer might hope to increase the value of his antiquity by attributing it to a famous site, Goodchild was sceptical of the authenticity of the findspot; it should not be regarded as certain—but it may well be right. On the assumption that it is so, Stucchi 1975, 382 suggested that it came from and referred to the Central Church. Since the Central Church was quite deeply buried until excavated by Goodchild, it may seem more likely that it came from the East Church, or even perhaps from Gasr Grescendi (no. 7 below), which have both always been partly above ground. Stucchi ruled these out as being cemetery churches to which he felt that the text is inappropriate; but his case against the East Church does not seem beyond dispute.

Norton presented the stone to the American Academy at Rome, where it is walled into a courtyard (illus. 128); we are grateful to Dr. Andrew Wilson for making up-to-date photographs and a re-examination of the stone, and to the American Academy for allowing him to do so).

Lower right corner of a white marble panel (w.0.95m×ht. 0.49m× d.c.0.07m) inscribed on one face. Letters, probably sixth-century AD: 0.03m, lunate *epsilon*, *sigma* and *omega*; an ivy leaf on a long undulating and branched stalk concludes the text.

Bibliography

Published Robinson 1913,104 (a comment of Hiller von Gaertringen), whence Preisigke 1915, no.5928; Ohl 1931; Reynolds 1960, 294 whence *SEG* XVIII.771, and J.and L. Robert 1961, no.835; Stucchi 1975, 382.

Since these publications, a photograph taken at the time of the purchase has been found in Cambridge, Mass., which seems to show shadows of letters at the end of l. 1 (but it is not certain that they are not chips), and perhaps part of a letter (Wilson suggests of *hypsilon*) before *tau* in l. 7. The lost upper part of the text must have stated that the church was dedicated to the Theotokos, perhaps with some description of her powers (cf. the lost text formerly at el Merj, *Section 2*, no. 32) and possibly named the donor(s). The lost left parts of the surviving lines are here filled *exempli gratia* (as by Robinson) with formulae that must express the sense, but do not claim to give the exact language of the text.

- · ·]ΛΛ[·]
5. [ἦν τις ἀδικήσῃ τὸν ναόν] σου τῶν ἐνταῦθα θε-
 [ομαχοῦντων κακοπο]ίησον τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ
 [καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ μετ]ὰ τῶν θεοκτόνων Ἰουδαίων κα-
 [τάθες τῶν δ]ὲ φροντιζόντων τοῦ ναοῦ σου τοῦ-
 [του Παρθέν]υε Θεοτόκε μὴ ἐκλείπη το γένος ἕ-
 [ως τῆς συν]τελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος ἀμήν.

. . . if anyone damages your temple] from among those here who
 [fight with] God, destroy his house
 [and put his name] along with the Jews who killed God;
 [but] of those who care for your temple,
 [Virgin] Mother of God, let not their name fail
 [until] the end of time. Amen.

The supplements follow those of Robinson with Hiller von Gaertringen, except in l. 2 where κακοπο]ίησον is preferred to their καταπά]τησον since it is reasonably certain that the first surviving letter is not *tau*. Christian use of ναός for a church and of curses in the pagan manner is unproblematic. The form of curse here is based on *NT Matthew XXIV.51* and *Luke XII.46* and there are numerous epigraphic parallels, as there are also for the anti-semitism.

It is virtually certain that the potential damagers of the church, against whom precautions were taken here, were heretics, presumably Monophysites. The language used is vivid evidence for the bitterness of feeling against them.

6. The House of Hesychius

Bibliography

Goodchild 1976a, 233; 1971, 89-90; Stucchi 1975, 220, 314, 483, 490; *PLRE II* (1980) 553; Liebeschuetz 1985, 159; Roques 1987, 206-13; 1989, 191-6; 2000, ad *Syn. Epp.* 93; Duval 1989b, 2791; Cameron 1992, 428; Cameron/Long 1993, 16-19. For the inscriptions alone, Reynolds 1959, 100-1; 1960, 286 whence *SEG XVIII.745, 746, J.* and L. Robert 1961, no. 835; 1980, 148-50.

A private house in a prime position just east of the Agora and north of the western section of the Stoa of the Herms. Perhaps first built in the first century AD, but it had been reconstructed on a number of occasions before being destroyed in an earthquake; the last reconstruction being of the fourth century. Its final décor included mosaic flooring in the peristyle corridor and *opus sectile* in at least one room; and although marred by poor quality workmanship shows a real attempt at elegance. The inscriptions in the floors reveal a Christian family, in which the name Hesychius recurs, once with the title *Libyarches*, which should mean 'president of the provincial council of Libya'; this was clearly an élite family of the city and of the province.

There has been a good deal of discussion of the linked problems of the identity of Hesychius the Libyarch and of the date when the house was destroyed. Goodchild and Reynolds originally believed that this Hesychius could be identified with the friend and official to whom Synesius addressed his *Epp.* 93 early in the fifth century; but in excavating the east rooms of the house Goodchild found no coins later than the reign of Constantius II, and concluded therefore that the house was probably destroyed in an earthquake of c. AD 365, so that its owner is unlikely to have been the recipient of Synesius' letter. Stucchi seems to have written without awareness of Goodchild's revised view; Roques rejected it. In the meantime Goodchild had proposed, in a letter to Reynolds, that, on the revised chronology, the senior Hesychius in the house might have been Synesius' father rather than his friend; and this possibility occurred independently to Liebeschutz, who worked it out in 1985. It is attractive but not without difficulties; see below. Cameron has now observed that Synesius' account of the origins of his relationship with his friend Hesychius points to a first meeting in the lecture-room of Hypatia rather than in a school-room at Cyrene—in which case that Hesychius can hardly have been a Cyrenaean; *PLRE* has offered an account of him as a governor of Pentapolis with a special commission, while Roques continues to regard him as probably a *defensor civitatis*.

Whoever the owner, the house shows the existence of a rich and prominent Christian family in mid-fourth-century Cyrene, and that in itself provides some insight into the background in which Synesius himself grew up.

The inscriptions

1. In mosaic

- a* Within a rectangular panel in the west corner of the peristyle, 4.21m long; letters, 0.13 - 0.16m; lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, *omega*.

Εὐτυχῶς Ἡσυχίῳ ἐν Θεῷ διὰ πάντος ἀΐξει βίου
Good fortune to Hesychius in God; increase his life (?livelihood) in all circumstances.

- b* Within a rectangular panel beside *a*, 4.21m long; letters, 0.24m; lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, *omega*.

Θεὸς βοηθὸς Ἀλοίπῳτι σὺν τέκνοις
God is (?be) the help of Aloipo and her children.

- c* Within a circle in the north corridor of the peristyle, diam. 0.56m; letters, 0.07 - 0.10m; angular *sigma*.

Θεὸς	God is (?be)
βοηθὸς	the help
Λαμπροτύ-	of Lamproty-
χητι σὺν	ches with
τέκνοις	his children

In previous publications Reynolds has taken the subject to be a woman, but now sees that the form of the name, points to a man (I am grateful to Dr Anne Thompson for advice here).

- d* Within a circle beside *c*, diam. 0.52m; letters, 0.07 - 0.08m; rectangular *sigma*, lunate *omega*.

Θεὸς	God is (?be)
βοηθὸς	the help
Ἡσυχίῳ	of Hesychius
διὰ πάν-	in all cir-
τος	cumstances

- e* Within a circle beside *d*, diam. 0.48m; letters, 0.06 - 0.08m; lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, *omega*.

Εὐτυ-	Good
χῶς Ἡσυ-	fortune to
χίῳ τῷ Λι-	Hesychius the
βυάρχη	Libyarch

- f* Within a circle beside *e*, diam. 0.50m; letters, 0.07 - 0.09m; angular *sigma*, lunate *omega*.

Χρισ-	Christ
στὲ βοη-	help
θεῖ τῷ	this
οἴκῳ	house
τούτῳ	

- g Within a rectangle beside *f*, 0.32 × 0.39m; letters, 0.06 - 0.07m, angular *sigma*, lunate *omega*.

Εὐτυ-	Good
χῶς Ἀθηνά-	fortune to
εἰδι	Athenaeis

2. In *opus sectile*

- h* Within a rectangle on the floor of a room off the corridor on the east side of the peristyle; letters, 0.08–0.09m; angular *sigma*, lunate *omega*.

Εὐτυχῶς	Good fortune
Ἑσυχίου	to Hesychius
νεῶ	the younger

In l. 3 the workman originally produced ΝΑΙΩ, which he corrected.

It is reasonable to suppose that the senior members of this group are the Hesychius of no. *a* and Aloipo (for Alypo) of no. *b*, presumably his wife. The Hesychius of no. *h* is clearly of a younger generation; but the identity of the two Hesychii of nos. *d* and *e*, as of the two persons in nos. *c* and *g*, is uncertain. If the Hesychius of no. *a* is in fact the same man as the homonyms in nos. *d* and *e* then presumably Lamprotyches (no. *c*) is a son and Athenaeis (no. *g*) a daughter, and Hesychius the younger (no. *h*) another son; but if he is also the father of Synesius, then Hesychius the younger must be supposed a brother of Synesius who died young, and the absence of Synesius' attested brother Euoptius and sister Stratonike, as well as the presence of two siblings whom he never mentions, are awkward. It may be that the inscriptions present three generations of the family; and that if the father of Synesius is among them, he is of the second, even the third, generation back.

3. Three fragments of marble inscribed with the name Hesychius were found in the house or in its neighbourhood.

- i* Marble panel recomposed from two pieces (w. 0.72m × ht. 1.05m × d. 0.04m) inscribed on one face within a *tabella ansata*. Found in 1934, in the cistern of the House of Hesychius; now in Cyrene Museum.

Letters, fourth- to fifth-century: 0.035; lunate *epsilon* and *sigma*.

Bibliography

Published Reynolds 1960, 287 whence *SEG* XVIII.752; *ead.* in Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 150.

Καλόκερε Ἑσυχί χαίρε Greetings, fortunate Hesychius

Presumably Καλόκερος (=Καλόκαιρος) is an adjective = fortunate, applying to Hesychius. The text seems to be congratulatory—but if it referred to the election of the man to an office, we might expect his title to be included; some private occasion, e.g. marriage, birth of a son, or even inauguration of the house, is perhaps indicated.

- j* Left side of a marble panel, moulded below (w. 0.45m × ht. 0.33m × d. 0.14m) inscribed on one face. Found in 1960 between the Stoa of the Herms and the House of Hesychius; now in Cyrene Museum.

Letters, fourth- to fifth-century: 0.045 - 0.05 m; lunate *sigma*.

Bibliography

Reynolds in Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 150.

<i>vac.</i> Ἑσυχίος [· · ·	Hesychius [· · ·
<i>vac.</i> ΚΟ[· · ·	? [· · ·
<i>vac.</i> οὗτος [· · ·	this man [· · ·

The stone was found so close to the House of Hesychius that it must belong to it; but too little survives to give a clue to what Hesychius is recorded here as doing. L. 2 may have given him the title κόμης = count.

B. In the Cemetery Area

7. Gasr Grescendi, illus. 82, 129, 130.

Bibliography

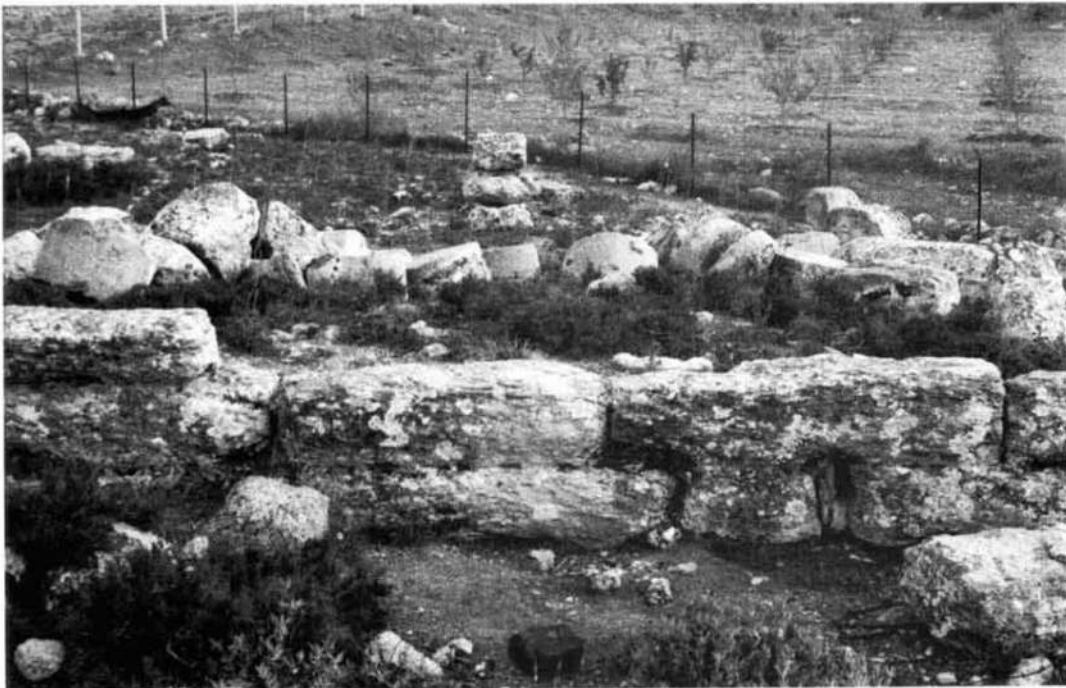
Stucchi 1975, 404-5, 418.

Basilica, presumed to be funerary, situated to the south of the city walls and of the main cisterns, near the head of the Wadi Bel Ghadir. Though it is unexcavated, its plan can be traced on the ground (see also the air photograph reproduced by Stucchi, on his p. 405).

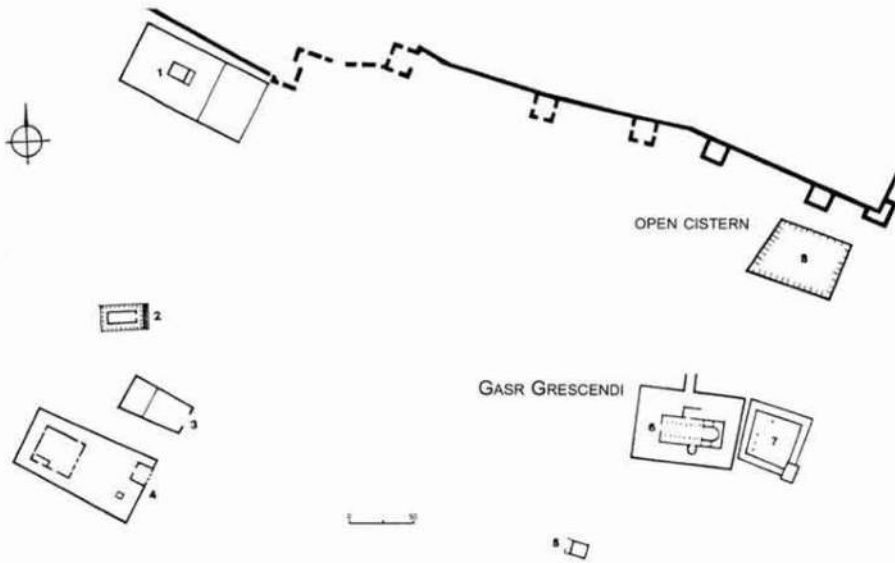
It is of basilical plan, with central nave and side aisles, has an inscribed eastern apse flanked by side-chapels, and entrances on the west and on the north; the importance of the latter, which is reached via an annexe, was emphasised by two sandstone columns of local work which divide the opening into three, and by its connection with a track coming from the direction of the city walls. There is at least one tomb in the south aisle near what Stucchi believed to be a pre-existing *martyrion* (an apsed rectangular structure) subsequently incorporated into the church. Only excavation could clarify the details here.

8. The Kinissieh.

Pacho 1827, 381-2 with pl. LXI (see also pl. XXXII) refers to a very large rock-cut tomb in the North Cemetery, alongside the road from Cyrene to Apollonia, called, locally, the Kinissieh = the church. It was also seen, under the same name, by Hamilton, who reported (1856, 70) that it contained nothing to suggest that it had ever been used either for Christian rites or for Christian burial, and by Smith and Porcher



Illus. 129. Cyrene: Gasr Grescendi, church, external wall and fallen column drums.



Illus. 130. Cyrene: Gasr Grescendi (after S. Stucchi).

1864, 33 with their plate 26. In fact, Reynolds has failed to trace any evidence to justify the name. The complex was identified by Cassels 1955, numbered by him N 66 (his p. 27) and described by him as 'a honeycomb of tombs' (N.B. Cassels' numeration here was misunderstood by Stucchi). It has been examined again recently by James and Dorothy Thorn.

Stucchi 1975, 418-20, 534, with figs. 425, 426, thought that the description extended to include the tomb on the Cyrene/Apollonia road which was adapted in *c.* 1917 for the Italian military as the Bab el Sousa, modern Cyrene's Susa Gate (but is no longer used as such). He interpreted it as a *martyrion*, with a martyr buried in a sarcophagus in the first of the tomb chambers (now inaccessible) and a chapel built on the rock-surface above it, reached by a rock-cut staircase beside it. When Reynolds and Susan Walker examined it in 1994 they found it often difficult to distinguish ancient elements among the extensive remains of modern works. In 2002, in the German Archaeological Institute in Rome, James and Dorothy Thorn saw photographs of 1934 and 1942 which indicate the existence (and destruction) of modern work which appears to exclude a Christian chapel here.

It appears that in modern times the term Kinissieh has also been applied to an area in the North Cemetery a little north of Cassels' N. 66 and higher up on the hillside (probably beyond the area in which Cassels worked). Breyek Atiyah and Abdulghadir al Muzzeini showed this to Reynolds in 1997; in a serious but not exhaustive search we found no signs of Christianity.

9. The Tomb of the Good Shepherd

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, pl. LXIII.9; Comparetti 1914; Bacchielli 1990; 1993*b*, 95-6.

A rock-cut tomb in the North Necropolis (Cassels N.171), originally perhaps of the second century AD but adapted and re-used in the fourth century (so Bacchielli) when the *arcosolium* in the wall to the left of the entrance was painted. On the front of the sarcophagus the painter showed a young shepherd carrying a sheep on his shoulders while five others are grouped at his feet; in the arch a peacock with tail outspread is surrounded by twelve fishes (Pacho's drawing wrongly combines shepherd, sheep and fish in one scene and omits the peacock altogether). A Christian interpretation can hardly be avoided.

10. The Tomb of Dimitria

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, pl. LXIII.9, see also Letronne at Pacho's p. 395; *CIG* 9136; Comparetti 1914; Jalabert/Mouterde, *DACL* VIII.1, cols. 643-4; Rowe 1959, 1; Reynolds 1959; Roques 1987, 45-52; Bacchielli/Reynolds/Rees 1992; Bacchielli 1993, 98-102.

A rock-cut tomb in the north necropolis (N.83), originally of Hellenistic date, but adapted several times and notably in the fourth century AD, when there is evidence for a number of burials. In the wall to the right of the entrance an *arcosolium* has been painted, the major features being a 'carpet' of stylised flowers set in rhomboids and, in the arch, three figures (the central winged one is probably best interpreted as an Eros, so Bacchielli) along with two peacocks (tails closed) and other birds, flowers, and garlands. Given their proximity to the two painted inscriptions on the wall to the left of the entrance, it is very likely that they should be interpreted as Christian.

The inscriptions

There are two texts in painted letters, *c.* 3cm high with lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, and *omega*.

- a* The left hand text is badly damaged, and only a few letters at the ends of lines survive; enough, however, to make it reasonable to argue that it recorded the Theodoulos who appears as his mother's son in the second text.

· · ·] · ΥΜ	
· · · ?Θεω]δούλου	?of Theodoulos
· · ·]	
· · ·]αμεθα	
· · ·]αυτην	
· · ·]λέξατο	
· · ·]CΟΝΙ	
· · ·]πάτηρ ? Κάλλιπος ό] πάτηρ	?Kallippos his father
· · ·]μεω	
· · ·]CΙC v.	
· · ·]vac.	

- b* To the right of (*a*)

<i>cross</i> Διμιτρία θυγάτηρ	Dimitria, daughter
Γαίου του ώνησαμένου	of Gaius, who bought
το μνημίο(v) τουτο ένθαδε κίτε	this tomb, lies here
μετά του υίου αυτής Θεω-	with her son Theo-
5. δούλου ούτοι έτελεύτησαν	doulos. They died
έπί άγρου Μυροπωλά σισμου	on the farm Myropolas in an earth-
γενομένου τέθικαν αυτός	quake. Callippos himself,
Κάλλιπος ό{v} άνήρ αυτής κέ	her husband, buried them and
{κέ} υίος αυτού Γάιος κέ γαμ-	his son Gaius and his brother-
10. βρεό(ς) αυτού Πολύβουλος	in-law Polyboulos.
Κ(ύρι)ε, μνησθήτω τον έν το(ύ) σπηλέ-	Lord remember those within
ου τούτου vacat	this cave.

For apparatus and more detailed analysis see Bacchielli/Reynolds/Rees 1992.

It is tempting, and common, to identify the earthquake as that of AD 364/5, but it is not necessarily right; Synesius apparently speaks of several quakes, any of which could have produced these casualties. In this family most of the members survived, recovered the bodies and buried them with proper honours, indicating the survival of social norms.

11. Other Tombs

- a* A photograph in the Cyrene Archive (H 3618 bis) shows a sarcophagus lid in the West Cemetery with a cross.
- b* A rock-cut tomb in the South Cemetery (between S3 and S4, in Cassels' numeration) was examined in 2000 by James and Dorothy Thorn who reported above loculus 3, and below a standard funerary inscription apparently of the Roman imperial period, the words (lunate epsilon)

cross Κ(ύρι)ε βοει[θεῖ · · · sic Lord help [· · ·

12. Unprovenanced items

- a* Possibly part of this collection but not recently located is an item seen and photographed 'in the East Cemetery at Cyrene' by Ward Perkins (illus. 131); the marble base of a colonnette-type chancel-post with a cross on orb in relief on the visible face. Since a number of sculptured items were brought to Cyrene from Apollonia during the Second World War and the decoration resembles that of the columns in the Central Church of Apollonia/Sozusa, he thought that it might belong to Apollonia; but so far it is not clear that this type of chancel-post was used there, while it does occur in the Central Church at Cyrene. The origin must remain uncertain.
- b* The Cyrene Museum contains a number of carved church fittings (mainly chancel posts or colonnettes for altar tables or canopies) for which no find-spot is immediately assignable (although some may come from the city churches and some, possibly, from Apollonia). Most show no particularly striking features, but note a marble capital with reliefs of Latin crosses on two faces and next to it, in a circle, a monogram.



Illus. 131. Marble base, probably from a chancel screen, seen at Cyrene, but possibly from Apollonia.

4 Ptolemais, mod. Tolmeita, illus. 132-54: three churches, and two other possible Christian buildings; inscriptions; five bishops attested.

Bibliography

(Ps.) Skylax 108; Strabo, *Geog.* XVII.3.20; Pliny, *NH* V.5; Euseb. *HE* VII.6; Epiphan. *Haer.* 73. 26; Athan. *De Synodis* 12; Philost. *HE* III.19; Syn. *De Regno*; *id. Epp.* 4, 42, 62, 66, 79, 105, 109 (with Roques 2000 *ad. locc.*); *id. Catastasis*; Prisc. *Pan.* fr. 14; Procop. *Aed.* VI. II.9-11; *Acta Conc. Nic(eae)*, *ibid. Seleuc(iae)*, *ibid. Eph.* 431; Chadwick 1960, 175-6, 190, 195; Goodchild 1961a, 83-95 = 1976a, 216-28; *id.* 1962, 97-107; *id.* 1967b; Kraeling 1962, 1-32, 51-62; Jones/Little 1971, 71-2; Purcaro 1976, 345-6; Ward-Perkins/Little/Mattingly 1986; Roques 1987, esp. 85, 87, 91-7, 326-8, 340, 348, 375-9; 1996, 411, 426-7; Reynolds 1990; 2000; Lloyd 1990; Little 1990, 23; Dobias 2000, 258-9.

Ptolemais, on the coast c. 44km east of Taucheira, was originally known as 'Port of Barka' (though its harbour is not particularly good); it acquired its name when it replaced Barka during the Hellenistic period as the civic centre of what came to be known as the combination Ptolemais/Barka.

Under the Romans it probably became an assize town, which would have made it an obvious candidate for provincial metropolis after Diocletian decided to move the governor's headquarters away from Cyrene when he created the new province of Libya Superior (Pentapolis); his reasons for the move are uncertain but the threat of invading raiders to Cyrene may have influenced him. It is not absolutely clear that it was also the headquarters of the *dux Pentapoleos* when this office was first created in the fifth century; thus Roques 1987 believes that this creation coincided with the transfer of the provincial capital to Apollonia. That is not certainly dated but was perhaps as early as the middle of the fifth century (so Roques), perhaps not until the reign of Anastasius (so Goodchild). For this move too we are given no clear reasons, but it may be that Apollonia's swifter communication eastward was an important factor. At an early date Ptolemais was known as a centre of the Sabellian heresy. Under Diocletian it presumably became the seat of the senior bishop of the province and the place at which synods of provincial bishops met, but then, no doubt, lost these functions to Apollonia. There is some evidence for building in the early fourth century to meet the new demands, but it is often overlaid by constructions of the late fourth and fifth centuries (which may have followed destruction by earthquake and might sometimes be plausibly associated with imperial response to Synesius' embassy to Constantinople on behalf of the province, which is dated by Roques from AD 399-402); but none of these, in so far as they survive, shows any mark of Christianity unless the inscribed *cippus*, *Inscription* no. 1, falls into this category (but it is more likely to be later). By the time that Synesius became bishop (in AD 412 according to Roques) there was at least one church in the city (on whose door notices could be posted), and there should have been a residence for the bishop, with offices, perhaps also a hall in which meetings of bishops or other clergy could be held; but of these we have at present no unequivocal archaeological trace, as we have none of any other Christian buildings in the city, except perhaps in the late fourth- or early fifth-century House of the Orpheus Mosaic (*Other Monuments*, d).

Synesius' letters give vivid glimpses of the political, ecclesiastical and military affairs in the city during the years when he was bishop. Most clearly he illustrates a period during which the province and, for a time, the city itself were subjected to raids from desert tribes. There is very little evidence indeed for what followed; but that peace was re-imposed is now generally regarded as certain, although it was broken again from time to time, so probably in c. AD 450 (Priscus *Pan.*) and around the turn of the fifth and the sixth centuries (John of Antioch 216).

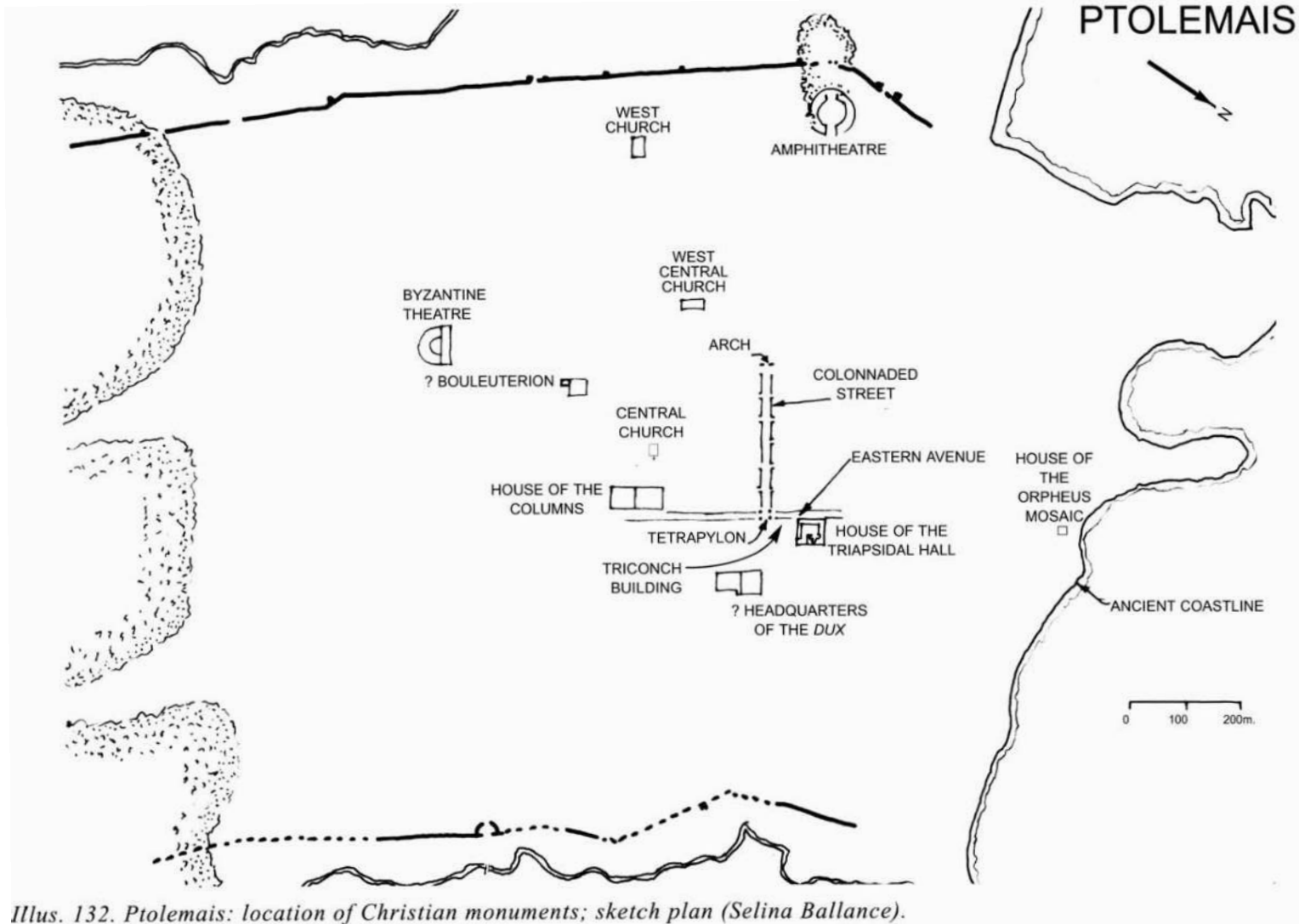
At an unspecified date the city's aqueduct was damaged, and that, we are told, led to a reduction of the population. It has been thought that this was the reason for the removal of the headquarters of the *dux* and the governor to Apollonia; but Roques suggests that the damage occurred after the removal, the failure to repair it being a sign of imperial loss of interest in Ptolemais. The city was, however, of sufficient importance for Justinian, as Procopius presents his story, to undertake that repair; thus, it is said, restoring the city's well-being. Indeed the latest excavations have

shown houses of some pretensions, if poor workmanship, at Ptolemais in the sixth and seventh centuries, some of them continuing in use after the Arab conquest. A sixth-century date for one or more of the known churches is not, therefore, so surprising as it once seemed. It is also to be noted that it was probably in the sixth century that a *tetrastylon* or *tetrapylon* (*Other Monuments*, b) was erected at the junction of the Monumental Street with the East Avenue (Stucchi 1975, 446-7; see also Kraeling 1962, 81-3). Whatever its exact form, it incorporated four monolithic white marble columns with fillets at the lower end, which carried Corinthian capitals of Byzantine type (Goodchild *ap.* Stucchi 1975, Stucchi fig. 454). Goodchild compared these with capitals in the West Church at Apollonia (so also Sodini 1987*a*, 234, fn. 28, placing them in the first half of the sixth century). The capitals are surely imported prefabricated pieces and the column-shafts probably so too. Whether they came as an imperial gift or represent civic outlay (or that of a civically-minded resident) they seem to indicate a greater importance for Ptolemais in the sixth century than modern historians have inclined to suggest.

A major controversy with implications for the interpretation of the churches has arisen over the city's defences in late antiquity. Kraeling (in conjunction with Goodchild) argued that a new and reduced defensive circuit-wall must have been built at Ptolemais, on the analogy of one which Goodchild believed to have been erected in the middle of the third century at Cyrene (cf. also one which Lloyd subsequently argued that he had found at Berenike); and Little in 1990 announced the discovery of traces of such a wall (dated in the later fourth century). Kraeling went further, in believing that much of the Hellenistic city-wall was slighted (its stones used for buildings such as those of the late fourth and the fifth centuries along the Monumental Street of Ptolemais); and that in the course of the fifth century the defence of the city came to be based on the official construction of a series of fort-like buildings within the original city area (followed by what may have been private construction of a number of similar but smaller ones). Since one of these so-called 'official' forts had the decree of Anastasius inscribed on its outer walls, the death of Anastasius must provide the *terminus ante quem* for that building and an approximate one for the whole series. On this thesis both the West Church and the West Central Church may be outside the defensive circuit of their time and they were well away too from the 'forts'; just as, on Goodchild's thesis for Cyrene, the East Church at Cyrene, the so-called Cathedral, is outside any contemporary defensive system. If that is right, it has been argued that they might have been designed to provide a refuge for their congregations in case of danger. Lloyd 1990 gives a careful assessment of the evidence for these late city-walls; but there seems to be need to collect further evidence on their precise function. Stucchi and Roques have opposed the argument, but there are weaknesses in their case against it, although they have made valid points. It is undoubtedly true that, at some stage, long stretches of the Hellenistic city-wall at Ptolemais were slighted, but the date is not clear (Roques 1987, 88, n.27 is certainly mistaken in thinking that the Beecheys' plan, reproduced by Kraeling 1962, 40, fig. 4, shows the Hellenistic circuit as upstanding in 1821/2). It is not so certain either that the stones re-used in the fourth-/fifth-century buildings on the site came from the city-wall; most of their inscriptions are ephebic—and while there were, indeed, ephebic inscriptions on stones in the city-wall, there were many also in the nearby Ephebic Gymnasium, which may very well be the source of stone for the church.

There was a community of Jews at Ptolemais in the first century AD, but it disappears from the record after the Jewish Revolt of AD 115-7. The earliest indication of Christians there is of the mid-third century when Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, associated the development of the Sabellian heresy with the city (Eusebius *cit.*). In the fourth century it was strongly Arian and one of its bishops, Secundus, is recorded as refusing to vote for the condemnation of Arius at the Council of Nicea in AD 325;¹ he was exiled in consequence but reappears at Ptolemais in c. AD 356, in association with a Stephanos who seems to have succeeded him and is attested as a bishop present at the Council of Seleucia in AD 359. At one point Secundus is recorded as murdering a non-Arian presbyter at Barka, and at another as seeking to consecrate

¹ Romanelli 1943, 232, n. 1 took him to be bishop of Ptolemais in Egypt, but offered no compelling reason.



Illus. 132. Ptolemais: location of Christian monuments; sketch plan (Selina Ballance).

Aetius in the place of Athanasius at Alexandria. The bishop of Ptolemais could clearly be a person of consequence in the politics of eastern Christianity; but against the Arians Athanasius himself intervened, and a Siderius, bishop of Palaibiska, a vigorous and orthodox ex-soldier, was appointed to Ptolemais. Synesius, the next bishop known to us, and certainly orthodox, has very little to say about them. The last bishop attested is Euoptius, generally accepted as being Synesius' brother, who was present at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431.

All the ecclesiastical buildings so far discovered at Ptolemais are likely to be later than Euoptius (and possibly later than the removal of the governor to Apollonia).² Kraeling compared their number unfavourably with that of the Christian monuments of Apollonia. It should be remembered, however, that only a comparatively small part of Ptolemais has been excavated; Goodchild was surely right to stress the probability of future discoveries of church-buildings on the site.

It is now clear that life continued on the site after the Arab conquest. We do not know how long, if at all, the churches remained in Christian use, although if the early date assigned to Arab graffiti in the West Church is correct, that must have gone out of use at once, or almost so.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins studied the West Church (excavated by Caputo) and the West Central Church (unexcavated) in 1955 and again in 1971 when both were surveyed by Sheila Gibson. As part of a different exercise he carried on Goodchild's excavation of buildings on the East Avenue, including the House of the Triapsidal Hall which now looks probably Christian, and the possibly Christian *triconchos* building at the north-east corner of the junction between the Avenue and the Monumental Street; on the latter Dr. John Little, who prepared Ward-Perkins' notes on it for publication and has been working over the finds, has most kindly made available up-to-date information.

The Monuments

1. The West Church, illus. 133-42.

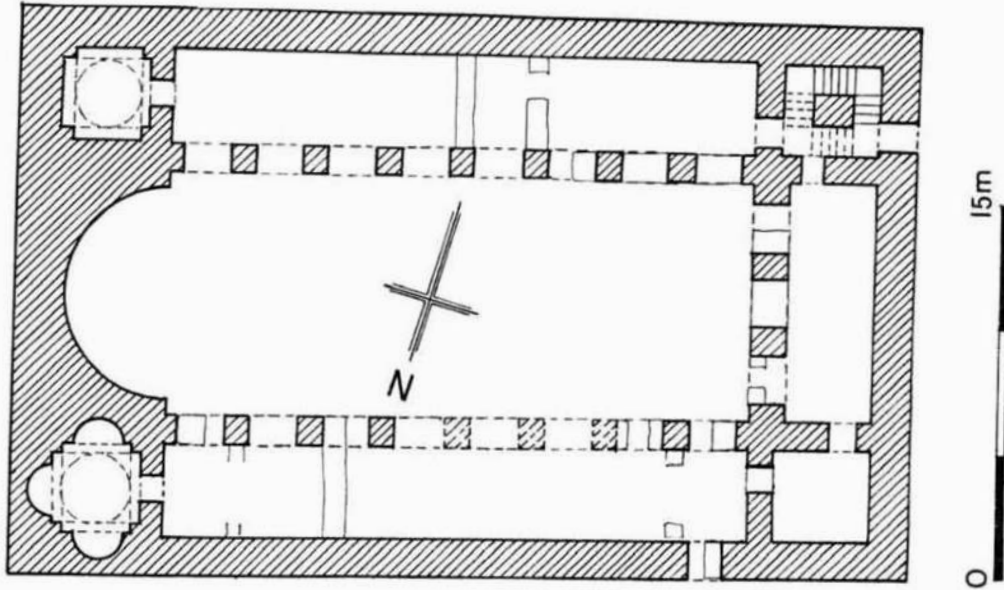
Bibliography

Beecheys 1828, 339, with plan opposite p. 337 and plate III; Ghislanzoni 1915, 138; Oliverio 1931 for photographs taken by Halbherr in 1910 (figs. 29, 30); Caputo 1940; 1954, 41-3, 53-8; Romanelli 1940; 1943, 240-1; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 71; Ward-Perkins 1943, 131-4; 1972, 226; 1979, 364; Kraeling 1962, 97-100; Khatchatrian 1962, 136; Goodchild 1966*a*, 214; Stucchi 1975, 362, 363, 365-6, 409-12, 435, 437, 505, 544, 554-5; Krautheimer 1986, 275; Roques 1987, 87; Duval 1989*b*, 2749, 2758, 2761, 2763, 2764, 2765, 2766, 2774, 2776, 2778, 2780, 2785, 2787.

Discovery

Excavated and restored by G. Caputo in the nineteen-thirties and briefly reported by him and by P. Romanelli. The post-Christian, Arab structures are nowhere described in any detail, but they are shown on a sketch plan reproduced by Caputo 1954, fig. 11. It looks as if by this date the nave was an unroofed, open courtyard.

² Synesius, *Epp.* 67, seems to imply that in walking from his house to the church in which he officiated, he passed through the civic *agora*. We do not know the location of Synesius' house, and are not certain of that of the *agora*; but if Goodchild's case for placing the *agora* immediately north of the Odeon (1967*b* = 1976, 210-5) is accepted, the site of the unexcavated Central Church would be a strong candidate for that, although the present building looks later, and is, in any case, rather small for a cathedral in a metropolis



Illus. 133. Ptolemais: West Church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson after Giacomo Caputo).



Illus. 134. Ptolemais: West Church, taken from a drawing made by H. W. Beechey in 1821-2 (by courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library).



Illus. 135. Ptolemais: West Church as reconstructed, seen from the south-west.

Description

Well-preserved basilical church with an eastern apse, about 200m to the north-west of the West Gate (illus. 135).³ It has undergone considerable consolidation and restoration (notably the completion of the vault of the north-east chapel and the partial re-erection of the fallen nave arcades), but the actual masonry is very largely ancient. It is faced throughout with well-dressed ashlar, laid in courses 0.40-0.43m high, with an occasional step in the coursing.

A feature of the building is the large number of masons' marks and later graffiti. The former include symbols, single letters and several letters together, either spelt out (for example ΑΠ, ΒΕΤ, ΠΤ) or in ligature, and the repetition of many of them suggests that the masonry was largely drawn from a single earlier building.⁴ The latter include a number of Arabic graffiti, some of them from the period immediately following the Arab conquest of North Africa, when parts of the building were adapted to secular use.

The building is accurately laid out within a neat rectangular perimeter, 35.50m × 21.80m externally, with massive outer walls, 1.50m thick, and interrupted by only two small doorways (illus. 133). The main part of this rectangle

³ Kraeling argued that the location of the church, which he thought 'remote from the presumed areas of densest population', was unsuitable for a diocesan or a parish church, and that it was not obviously provided with the proper installations for baptism. Given that the main entry is through a small door in the north wall, it was more likely, he suggested, to have served a clerical or monastic group living in the unexcavated area to the north. It should be observed that there are other Cyrenaican churches with main entrances in a side wall (so the East Church at Apollonia, the East and the Central Churches at Cyrene, the East Church at Taucheira). Pre-existing urban development (streets, other buildings) may have been the determining factors, but only further excavation can show this.

⁴ The symbols seem to Reynolds to include some in use by Christians (thus ✱); but there are some stones reused in the walls which are inscribed with ephebic graffiti of a type also found in a ruined building nearby which is provisionally identified as the Ephebic Gymnasium; this could have been the source of many, perhaps most, of the re-used blocks in the church.



Illus. 136. Ptolemais: West Church, apse and part of south nave arcade.

is occupied by the nave and side-aisles. At the east end there is a large apse flanked by an elaborate pair of angle-chapels, and at the opposite end an internal narthex flanked by a second pair of angle-chapels, of which that at the south-west corner combines the functions of an entrance and a staircase. It should be remarked that the entire excavation has been carried well below the Christian floor-level, exposing the remains of earlier houses and cisterns, on the same alignment but otherwise unrelated to the church.⁵ The floors of the latter must have been roughly level with, and in places higher than, the stylobates of the nave-arcades.

The central nave, 23m by 9.80m, is flanked throughout its length by arcades of eight arches (illus. 133). The piers are of solid ashlar, averaging 1.00m long by 1.18m wide, with a capital in the form of a simple outward-curving moulding on three sides (longitudinally and towards the nave). The arches spring from these, and above the crowns of the arches the wall is carried up another five courses to a heavy string-course moulding, which was probably continuous down the whole length of the nave and round the apse and (presumably) across the west wall (illus. 136). Nothing is preserved above this level, but in the absence of any windows in the lower walls one may reasonably presume some form of clerestory lighting. Given the height of the apse, there would have been plenty of room for such.

The side-aisles were arcaded throughout their length on the side towards the nave (illus. 135, 136), and they were roofed with barrel-vaults which were divided into eight bays by transverse ribs (illus. 137). Although these ribs convey the impression of reinforcing the vaults, in fact the ribs and the vaults between them are structurally quite independent. To minimize the load of

⁵ Among these remains Stucchi believed that he could discern the outline of an earlier, smaller church; this has been strongly contested by Ward-Perkins 1979; cf. also Duval 1989*b*, 2750.



Illus. 137. Ptolemais: West Church, barrel vault of north arcade, with transverse rib.



Illus. 138. Ptolemais: West Church, staircase in south-west angle-chapel.

rubble-fill carried by the vault it would have been logical to have used a flat terrazzo-roof, to which the stairs at the south-west corner might have given access (illus. 138).

The narthex is a simple rectangular room, the same width as the central nave, off which it opened through three arches which repeated the rhythm and dimensions of the longitudinal arcades; a keystone inscribed with a plain Latin cross (illus. 139) perhaps comes from the central arch. The room at the



Illus. 139. Ptolemais: West Church, keystone with relief of a cross .



Illus. 140. Ptolemais: West Church, masonry of apse.



Illus. 141. Ptolemais: West Church, vault of south-east angle-chapel.

north-west corner was accessible only from the narthex, through a tall, rather narrow arch; while an arch at the opposite end led into the corridor which was the only entrance to the church from the west end. This corridor housed at the same time the lowest flight of a staircase which wound upwards anti-clockwise round a square central pier. The three steps of the lowest flight brought one roughly to the level of the sill of the outer doorway (the ground outside is here slightly higher), three more to a landing at the south-west corner and one more up on to the lowest of the three surviving slabs of the sloping ramp which constituted the onward continuation of the stair (illus. 138). It presumably served a gallery over the narthex, as at Ras el Hilal (*Section 2*), and it may well have continued upwards to the roof.

The wide, rather shallow apse is featureless (illus. 136).⁶ The two voussoirs now in place above the south shoulder are a modern restoration, but it can hardly be doubted that there was in fact an ashlar semidome comparable to the vaults over the flanking chapels. All trace of the chancel disappeared when the floor was removed.

The two chapels at the east end were unusually elaborate. That at the south-east corner was square, with four pilasters at the angles converting it into a shallow cross. The pilasters carried arches, and these in turn supported a masonry dome (illus. 141), of which part of the south-western pendentive is still in place. It should be remarked that the floor-level was well above that now exposed. The arch over the entrance was filled with a *tympanum*.

The north-east chapel was a more sophisticated version of the same scheme, with the addition of three small apses. In this case the dome, though restored

⁶ But Kraeling, and subsequently Duval, noted holes in the interior wall of the apse for the attachment of the wooden section of a *synthronon* (illus. 140).



Illus. 142. Ptolemais: West Church, vault of north-east angle-chapel.

and consolidated, is still largely in position, a fine example of a circular vault built entirely of dressed stone blocks (illus. 142). The pendentives appear to be corbelled across the angles, and their curvature is slightly different from that of the concentric stone rings of the dome itself. A small window incorporated into the second and third courses of the axial semidome splays inwards and downwards from a narrow slit in the outer face.

All the authors who have discussed this building have emphasized its fortress-like quality, with massive outer walls and only two small entrances, and (it seems) a total absence of lighting at ground-floor level other than through high, narrow embrasures.⁷ Kraeling has even suggested that the western entrance was secondary, 'a by-product of the partial disintegration of the structure', but an examination of the masonry does not support this conclusion. Even so, the building was patently meant to be defensible, and this fact has a bearing both on our picture of its original form and on any consideration of its date.

The presence of a staircase at the south-west angle has been generally taken to indicate the former existence of galleries over the lateral aisles. Such a restoration does, however, present considerable difficulties.⁸ Taking the stylobate of the nave arcade as a datum point, the minimum height of the floor of any gallery would be about 7.90m above datum. Unless Caputo has wrongly restored the string-course moulding of the nave as continuous with the identically-profiled moulding round and across the face of the apse (and the

⁷ Since Ward-Perkins wrote, Stucchi has vigorously opposed the defensive interpretation on the grounds that the thick outer walls were necessary to withstand the thrust of the vaults, and the slit windows to protect from strong sunlight. Duval, while conceding that some Cyrenaican churches have defensive features, is sceptical of many that have been claimed as fortified (including this one) and rejects the concept of 'the fortress church'.

⁸ Stucchi believed firmly in galleries over the aisles.

restoration seems both logical and apt) this ran round the nave at a height of 6.60-7.25m above datum and the gallery would have had to be above this again. The resulting proportions seem almost impossibly lofty. Moreover in this instance the *argumentum ex silentio* carries considerable weight. Even supposing the upper parts of the nave arcades to have remained standing and to have been robbed in later times, one would have expected to find, discarded on the site, some of the more distinctively shaped (and therefore less tempting) blocks. In fact we know that the arcades had in part already collapsed at quite an early date. Not only did Caputo find parts of the south arcade lying as fallen, but otherwise almost intact, in the south aisle (Caputo 1954, fig. 37); but parts of the north arcade had fallen or been dismantled, and had been replaced by a continuous wall, already in late antiquity. The hypothesis of galleries over the lateral aisles runs counter to all the available evidence.

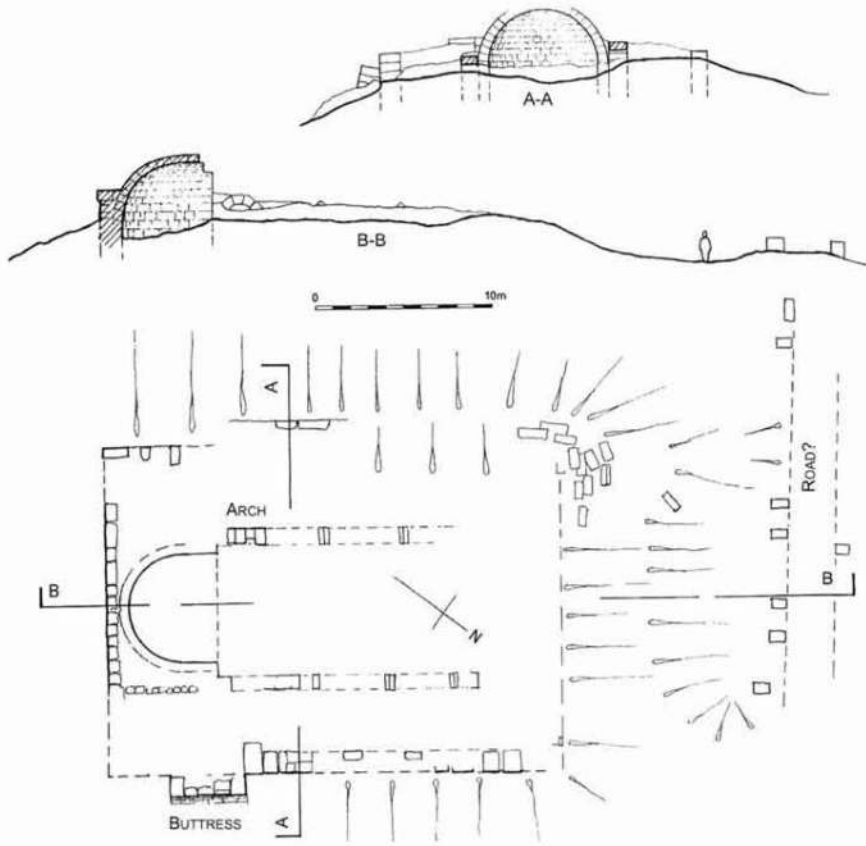
What then was the purpose of the stairs? It could well be that they served an upper storey extended only over the narthex. At Ras el Hilal, for example, there were galleries over the nave-aisles, but these were independently accessible from the aisles themselves, whereas the stairs near the north-west angle seem to have been restricted to the narthex. Another possibility is that here, at Ptolemais, the stairs led up to flat terrace roofs. This would not only have been in accordance with a well-established North African tradition but would also explain the unusually robust vaulting over the side-aisles. Such terraces would moreover be a logical feature of a building that might on occasion become a place of refuge. Perhaps the most likely conclusion of all is that the stairs gave access both to terraces and to an upper storey over the narthex. The latter, balancing the upstanding bulk of the apse and its two lofty flanking chapels, would have been an apt feature of what was obviously a building of some architectural pretensions.

It has been suggested (Kraeling 1962, 97) that the central nave too was vaulted.⁹ This is very questionable. The arcades could probably have carried the weight and the vaulted side-aisles the resulting outward thrust. But there is no parallel in Cyrenaica for a vault of this width carried out in dressed stone, and the alternative, some form of mortared construction, would have left clear traces of itself in the shape of masses of the fallen rubble, piled high within the body of the ruins. Of this neither the Beecheys' illustration (illus. 134) nor the pre-excavation photographs of Halbherr (of 1910; reproduced by Caputo 1954, fig. 11) show any trace. As in the churches of Apollonia, the central nave almost certainly carried a conventional timber roof.

As to the date, Caputo is prudently hesitant, whereas Kraeling (1962, 99-100), citing parallels from Tripolitania, opts firmly for a date in the middle of the fifth century, a time when, though threatened by tribal raids from the interior, the city's system of perimeter defence was being abandoned in favour of the fortification of a number of individual buildings. Against this it may be argued that the north-east chapel, so strongly reminiscent of the similarly-placed baptistery chapel in the East Church at Apollonia, is far more credible as a creation of the sixth century.¹⁰ The matter really turns on the answer to the

⁹ Stucchi too argued for the possibility of a nave vault.

¹⁰ Although elsewhere acceptant of it, Ward-Perkins was very cautious here about the possibility that the north-east chapel was a baptistery, an idea that appealed to Goodchild 1966a, 214, was regarded sceptically by Kraeling 1962, but accepted by Khatchatrian 1962. Given the absence of a basin, it is firmly opposed by Stucchi and Duval; and Duval 1989b, 2778 argues that the room could be more satisfactorily explained as a *martyrion*.



Illus. 143. Ptolemais: West Central Church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson).



Illus. 144. Ptolemais: West Central Church, general view.



Illus. 145. Ptolemais: West Central Church, apse.

question whether this type of inscribed rectangular plan, with its four angle-chapels, was an already-existing, native Cyrenaican development that was taken over and standardized by Justinian's architects, or whether they imported it from elsewhere. Most of the Cyrenaican churches of this type are unquestionably of sixth-century date;¹¹ but with the example of the pre-Justinianic East Church at Cyrene before one, one hesitates to be dogmatic.

[This last issue was to be discussed at greater length in a section which was never written.]

2. The West Central Church, illus. 143-46.

Bibliography

Hamilton 1856, 143; Ghislanzoni 1915, 138; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 71; Kraeling 1962, 100 and pl. XIV B; Goodchild 1966*a*, 214; Stucchi 1975, 414-15.

About 300m north-north-east of the West Church and barely 50m north-west of the peristyle house excavated by the University of Chicago there are the remains of a second basilical church (illus. 144; building 6 in Kraeling).¹² Though deeply buried and unexcavated, the semidome of the apse is still almost intact (illus. 145), and enough of the rest of the plan can be pieced

¹¹ Stucchi dates this one to the later sixth century; Roques as post-Justinianic; Duval assigns no date, but notes as a characteristically sixth-century feature the moulded cornice which forms the spring of the apse vault. If it is right to place it in the sixth century, it is likely to be later than the repair of the civic aqueduct and subsequent recovery of population which Procopius, *cit.*, attributes to Justinian.

¹² Kraeling observed that a Saint Menas flask was found by the Michigan Expedition in a shop on the far side of the road which runs along the south side of this church; flasks have also been found at Cyrene, Benghazi, probably at Apollonia, and possibly at Ras el Hilal (so Riley 1980, 364-5), at Paraitonion, and recently at Taucheira. For veneration of St. Menas in Cyrenaica see under Siret Akreim (*Section 3a*).

together from the remains visible on the surface to give a good general idea of most of the rest of the building. A great deal of it is still certainly intact beneath the high mound of rubble which represents the fallen superstructure and vaults.

The building was inscribed within a rectangular outer wall some 18.50m broad, from south-west to north-east,¹³ by about 25m long (illus. 143). Although the exact length is nowhere determinable, the profile of the mound is clear, and the dressed stone masonry of the north corner, which must have been upstanding until quite recent times, is still lying as it fell. The church stood within an open rectangular enclosure, but whether this was in any sense a contemporary feature only excavation would show.

The outer wall was built of large blocks of dressed limestone with the usual projecting levelling courses, one of which constitutes the uppermost surviving course of the outer south-east wall immediately behind the apse. The apse itself was at this point an integral part of the structure of the outer wall, backing directly against the inner face without even a string-course to mark the spring of the semidome. In plan it is almost as deep (5m) as it is wide (6m), the curve starting almost 2m back from the face of the arch.¹⁴ Apart from the facing courses of the crown of the arch, which have fallen, the vault is intact, with the successive courses of the semidome pitched progressively more steeply inwards towards the centre of curvature, supported at either end by the facing arch and locked into place against it by a composite three-block 'key-stone'. The extrados of the vaulting was left rough, being hidden from sight by a massive in-fill of rubble of which considerable remains are still in position. This was normal Cyrenaican practice, but it is only exceptionally that, as here, one can see the actual remains without the intervening hand of the restorer.

For the rest of the building one is dependent on such elements as project above the mass of fallen rubble. These are the south corner, most of the south-east end and considerable stretches of the north-east outer wall; the remains of at least six arches of the two nave arcades; two of them in position, the rest possibly slightly displaced; the fallen dressed stone masonry of the outer west corner; and at two points along the north-east and south-west sides a sloping outer reinforcement of the lower parts of the outer wall, carried out in rough masonry and presumably at some date after the initial construction. From the plan it is clear that there were chapels at the south and east corners, on either side of the apse. That at the south corner was accessible from the outside through an arched entrance in the south-west wall, and may have served simply as a vestibule. Like the West Church this may well have been a semi-fortified building from the outset. The south-east end of the north-east aisle was separated from the chancel by a wall. There was presumably a corresponding feature in the south-west aisle, although the only visible trace in this case is the upper part of an archway between aisle and chancel. Whether or not there are similar chapels at the north-west ends of the aisles there is nothing above ground to show.

The only decorative element now visible is a limestone springer block lying fallen outside the north-west end, carved on one end with an incised compass-

¹³ Kraeling and Goodchild stressed this unusual orientation.

¹⁴ Stucchi wrote of the arch of the apse as ogival; it gives that impression in some photographs, but in Reynolds' view that is because a section of the arc, including the keystone, has slipped out of position.



Illus. 146. Ptolemais: West Central Church, springer-stone with cross.

traced, equal-armed cross within a double circle (illus. 146). It was perhaps the central feature of a twin-arched window opening off the end of the central nave.

3. The Central Church

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 214; Stucchi 1975, 395, 397, 426, 543.

Goodchild listed and Stucchi described another unexcavated church immediately west of the Palace of the Columns.¹⁵ It was briefly visited by Reynolds with Dorothy Thorn and Abdussalam Bazama, in 1996, but in no way seriously studied. A rectangle of outer walls (not visible *in toto* on any side) contains the outline of an apse at the east end, two rows of at least five piers (which are cross-shaped in section) to carry the nave arcades, of which one key stone was seen fallen, and, on the south-east, one block of an internal wall, heavily plastered, which would correspond to the transverse wall of an angle-chapel at the east end of the north aisle.

Tumbled blocks (all probably re-used) in the outer walls often show letters likely to be quarry or masons' marks. Stucchi defined the construction of the walls as orthostat-with-rubble-fill and therefore placed the church in his third group, to be dated in the later fifth-sixth centuries. He believed that the shape of the piers implies vaulted roofs

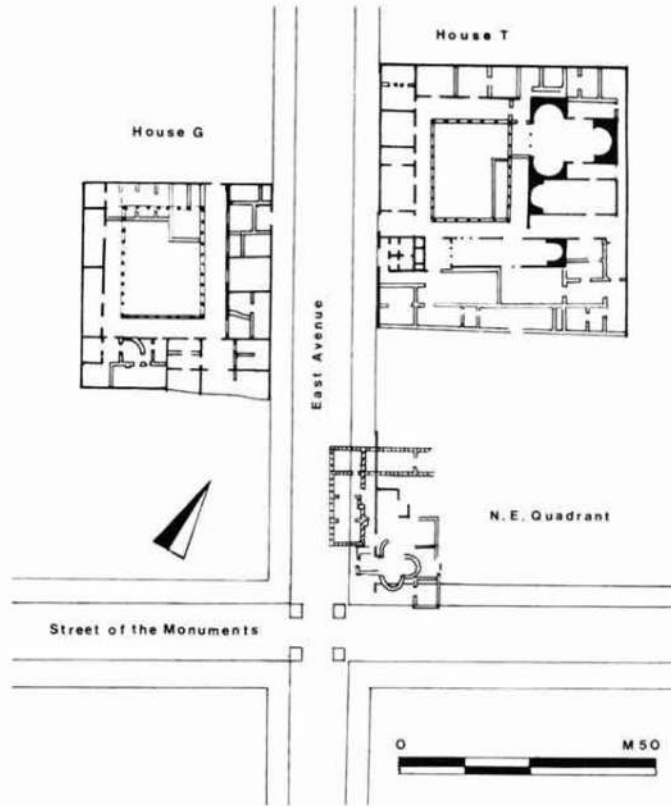
West of the church he reported a large atrium.

A little distance away is a hexagonal structure which he proposed to interpret as a baptistery (it is rather large for a campanile).

4. Other monuments

Other late antique monuments are numerous but specifically Christian features in them are rare. Goodchild 1966*a* predicted the discovery of more churches in the buildings known as Byzantine Forts, but none has yet been excavated.

¹⁵ This position is quite close to the area which, in Goodchild's view, was likely to be that of the *agora* of Ptolemais (see above).



Illus. 147. Ptolemais: House of the Triapsidal Hall (House T) and Triconch Building, measured plan (John Little).



Illus. 148. Ptolemais: House of the Triapsidal Hall, incised façade.



Illus. 149. Ptolemais: House of the Triapsidal Hall, incised cross.



Illus. 150. Ptolemais: House of the Triapsidal Hall, cross in relief.



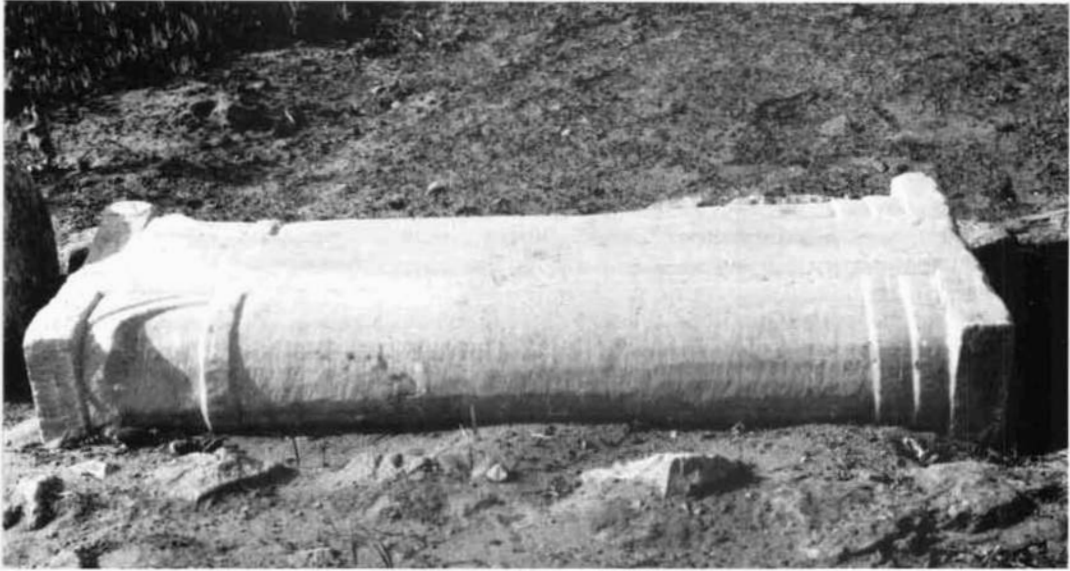
Illus. 151. Ptolemais: House of the Orpheus Mosaic, second mosaic.



Illus. 152. Ptolemais: House of the Orpheus Mosaic, second mosaic, detail of cross.

- a An apparently certain item is the House of the Triapsidal Hall (illus. 147) in the East Avenue (†Ward-Perkins/Little/Mattingly 1986). Here limestone blocks carved with crosses have been observed during brief visits in 1998 by Dr John Lloyd and Dr Andrew Wilson and, at greater leisure, by Dr John Dore in 1999 (illus. 148, 149, 150). Dr Dore rediscovered a stone, first observed in 1969 by Susan Allix, which carries a graffito of what seems to be a façade. It shows a row of four columns, the central intercolumniations spanned by an arch, the outer two by steeply-pitched gables; there are crosses within all three, probably others above them, and possibly other features in the damaged area above. It is difficult to see how this could be an image of the façade of the house or any part of it, but its presence seems to underline a Christian, even an ecclesiastical, function for the house. The house has been discussed as a possible palace for the *dux* (before his headquarters were moved to Apollonia); perhaps we should now consider its suitability as a palace either for the civil governor of the province or for the bishop of Ptolemais?
- b A probable item is the so-called *Tetrapylon* (so Goodchild 1964, 144, Kraeling 1962, 81-3, but Stucchi 1975, 446 calls it a *tetrastylon*) at the junction of the Monumental Street and the East Avenue. This now consists of remains of four large bases, fragments of marble columns and Corinthian capitals of Byzantine type (Sodini 1989*b*, figs. 4, 6), the last being dated by Stucchi in the fifth century, by Goodchild in the sixth. For illustration see Kraeling figs. 19, 20 and plan IX, Stucchi figs. 452-4; and note that his fig. 453 shows a block carrying a cross in the base (of which nothing is said in any of the descriptions). Stucchi conjectured that the columns carried statues of the four evangelists.
- c There is controversy about the small *triconchos* building (illus. 147) at the junction of the Monumental Street and the East Avenue exposed by the Department of Antiquities in 1956/7, which was once thought to be a possible church by Goodchild (Wright 1962, 83, n.110; but see also Goodchild 1962, 100 where doubt is expressed). Stucchi 1975, 420-1 interpreted it as a *martyrion*, associating it with a keystone carved with a cross which he saw lying near it (not rediscovered), and claiming that the arrangement of paving stones in the footpath in front of its door indicates that it had a special significance.¹⁶ Following further excavation in the East Avenue by Ward-Perkins and others it was discussed as Building III in the North-east Quadrant by †Ward-Perkins/Little/Mattingly 1986, 144-9, 151-2 (see also Little 1990, 23-4). The new work brought to light a stone carrying an Arabic inscription re-used as a paving slab in its floor, but also pottery, associated with the south apse-wall, which suggests a late Roman/Byzantine date for the construction. It seems clear that the building continued in use long after the Arab conquest; but there is no evidence so far discovered that it was ever a chapel.
- d There is also controversy about the late-fourth-/early-fifth-century mosaic showing Orpheus with a *nimbus* and purple cloak in the House of the Orpheus Mosaic (Harrison 1962, 13-18). Harrison, who excavated it, tentatively interpreted it as Christian and Roques 1987, 88 has supported that, while Rosenbaum 1989, 41 rejected it. Another mosaic panel found in the same house and now displayed near the Orpheus panel in Tolmeita Museum (May, 2000) has received less attention, but is certainly relevant (illus. 151, 152). Briefly described (Harrison 1962, 14) and only partially illustrated (Harrison pl. VII. 1), it does in fact show not only a winged season with nimbus, of particular interest if in a Christian context, but a number of crosses. When the two panels are considered together the case for a Christian interpretation may seem to be rather strong.

¹⁶ Dr Andrew Wilson kindly looked at this in 1998; there is indeed a marble panel re-used in the pavement here, but no compelling ground for believing that it is not a fortuitous repair.



Illus. 153. Ptolemais: Tolmeita Museum, marble window-mullion of unknown origin, possibly local.



Illus. 154. Ptolemais: Tolmeita Museum, marble chancel post of unknown origin.

Carved Fittings

In May 2000 Reynolds noted in the Museum a fragment of a marble chancel screen, a probably Proconnesian marble chancel-post (illus. 154) and a probably Proconnesian marble window mullion (illus. 153)—most likely all from the Barka lapidarium (see under el Merj where Ward-Perkins 1943, 135 noted a marble window mullion ‘of the same general form as that from Bengasi’ (i.e. *Berenike, Monument 2*), ‘but the engaged colonnettes are plain with rudimentary, formal capitals’; this seems to be identical with the one seen at Ptolemais in 2000 by Reynolds; its findspot seems to be unknown. He also observed ‘a few fifth-century capitals, some with Corinthian forms approximating closely to those from Abu Mena.’

Inscriptions

Of the public inscriptions so far found, only one has any Christian content.

- 1 Circular limestone *cippus* or pedestal, moulded above and broken below (diam. 0.48m × 0.44m) inscribed just below the moulding. Found in 1935, standing upside down in the Monumental Street, on the south side, not far from the Arch of Constantine.

Letters, late antique: 0.07 - 0.08m.

Bibliography

Published Reynolds 1960, no.15, whence *SEG XVIII.763* and *PLRE II*, 726, sv. Marinus 5.

ἐπὶ τοῦ λαμπ(ροτάτου) Μαρίνου *cross*
Under (in the time of) the distinguished Marinus

Marinus was presumably responsible for some decorative features in the street, involving this and perhaps other similar *cippi*; and the formula suggests that he acted in an official capacity. He was more probably a civic official (?*pater civitatis*) than a governor (although a Marinus who governed Pentapolis under Anastasius is known from Joh. Ant. fr. 216. The date in the fifth- to sixth-centuries given in *PLRE* is based on an earlier and overconfident estimate of the date of the letters by Reynolds; it may be right but is not certain.

- 2 Broken limestone block found in 1977 with other débris near the seashore.¹⁷

Letters, late antique.

ἢ φίλος ἴ	You are either a friend
ἢδε ἐχθρός <i>cross</i>	or an enemy

The somewhat enigmatic statement may perhaps be a reference to *NT, Matthew XII.30* - ‘who is not my friend is an enemy’.

- 3 Re-used limestone block (w. 0.72m × ht. 0.175m × d. 0.26m) inscribed on one face in letters ht. 0.02-0.03m, with cursive *alpha*, lunate *epsilon*, *sigma* and *omega*; perhaps fifth to sixth centuries. There are incised maltese crosses on either side of the text, a partly-obliterated cross placed centrally within Ω and a palm-tree to the right of it. Found buried near the sea-shore.

Bibliography

The text is unpublished but its content was used in *PLRE II*, p. 125.

¹⁷ It is tempting to suggest that the findspot, taken with those of inscriptions no. 3 and no. 5, may indicate that there was a church near the modern seashore; but it may be that material from elsewhere on the site was dumped here pending re-use in modern times.

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 5. | Φλάβ(ιος) Ἀκύλας
κόμ(ης) εὐξάμε-
νος τὴν εὐ-
χὴν ἔτε-
λίωσα | I, Flavius Aquila,
count, having made a vow,

paid my vow. |
|----|---|---|

The date is insecurely based. There is, of course, no clue to the character of Aquila's donation.

The remaining texts are funerary:

- 4 Marble panel reconstructed from three pieces (0.60m × 0.59m × 0.12m) found before 1936, near the former military hospital; now in Tolmeita Museum.

Letters, late antique, perhaps sixth-century: 0.045m - 0.05m; Η for H in 1.5, superscript bar above the abbreviation; ivy leaves at the ends of ll. 2,4.

Bibliography

Published Oliverio 1936, 534 whence *SEG* IX.408; Reynolds 1960, no. 16.

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 5. | Cross ὑπὲρ μνήμης
κοιμησεως
καὶ ἀναπαύσεως
τῆς μακαρίας
δούλης τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἰουλίας | For the memory
the rest
and repose
of the blessed
servant of God, Julia |
|----|---|---|

The dating of the letters is very insecure; but if correct seems to accord with the most recent archaeological evidence for the continuance of life in Ptolemais after the governor's seat was moved to Apollonia.

- 5 Another tombstone is possibly Christian, although, in the absence of a cross, it has been claimed as more probably Jewish:
Limestone block (0.55m × 0.59m × 0.31m) originally part of a cornice, but re-used. Found before 1915 on the sea shore; now in Tolmeita Museum.

Letters, late antique, perhaps fifth- to sixth-centuries: 0.04m, very irregular.

Bibliography

Published Ghislanzoni 1915, 152 whence *SEG* IX.410; Reynolds 1960, no. 17.

- | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------------------------------|----|--|
| Μνήσθηθε
Ῥουφου ὁ Θεὸς
τῆς κυμήσεως | <i>sic</i> | Remember
Rufus, God
of rest | or | Remember
the rest of
Rufus, God. |
|---|------------|-----------------------------------|----|--|

5 Taucheira, (Teucheira), Arsinoe, mod. Tocrá, illus. 155-70: two, possibly four churches, possibly a palace chapel, probably a baptistery, possibly a monastery, window mullions, inscriptions; three bishops attested.

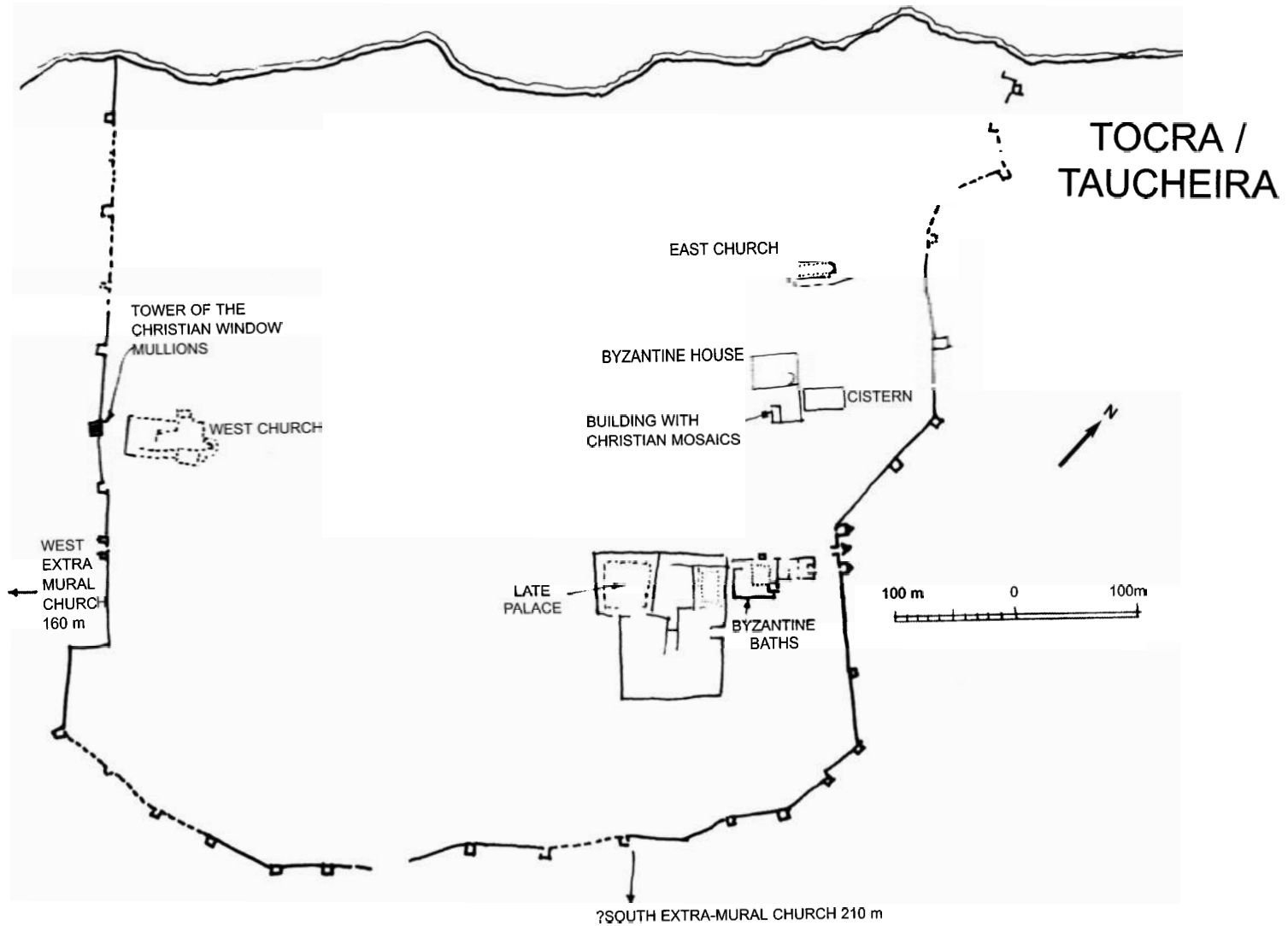
Bibliography

Hdt. IV.171; Skylax 108; *Schol. Pind. Pyth.* IV.26; Pliny *HN* V.32; *Stad.* 56; Amm. Marc. XXII.16.4; *Itin. Ant.* 67.3; *Syn. Epp.* 3, 94, 126 (with Roques 2000 ad locc.); Procop. *Aed.* VI.2.4; Hierocl. 733.1; Georg. Cypr. 792; *Acta Conc. Niceae, ibid. Eph.* 431, *ibid. Eph.* 449; Pacho 1827, 183-6, with pl.LXXX-LXXXVII; Beecheys 1828, 352-5, 367-76; Oliverio 1936, 164-241; Boardman/Hayes 1966, 3-5; *idd.* 1973, 3-5; Jones/Little 1971, 70; Purcaro 1976, 347-8; Jones 1983; 1985; Roques 1987, 94, 95, 326, 337, 340, 379; 1996a, 411, 423; Laronde 1994; Bentaher 1994; *id.* with Dobias-Lalou 1999; Smith/Crow 1998; Reynolds 2000.

Taucheira (Teucheira), on the coast between Ptolemais and Berenike, was the second Greek city to be founded in Cyrenaica, traditionally from Cyrene. It had quite good agricultural potential in its immediate neighbourhood and access to the fertile plain of el Merj (anc. Barka), but rather limited harbour facilities. It rarely figures in the literary sources, and has not been much excavated, although it has now become the site of annual training-digs by the University of Gar Younis at Benghazi; moreover the local stone is soft and finds are liable to be in poor condition. Its temporary (Hellenistic) name, Arsinoe, is evidence of some Ptolemaic interest; its reversion to its original name in the Roman period perhaps shows the strength of a Libyan element in its population (since the name is said to be Libyan). It seems to have been modestly prosperous in the Roman period but very little is known about it except that it had a substantial Jewish population in the first century AD, of which all trace is lost after the suppression of the Jewish Revolt of AD 115-7. There may have been a Christian group there at the time of the Sabellian heresy in the third century AD. Synesius at one point expected the province's military commander to be there (*Epp.* 94)—which might mean that the place was of greater importance in the government of Libya Superior than is usually supposed. That a copy of the decree of Anastasius *de rebus Libycis* (*SEG IX.356*) was displayed there surely means that it was garrisoned at that time. Procopius attributes works of fortification there to Justinian, and the late, probably Justinianic, fortifications do in fact show that it was provided with remarkably strong defences, largely built upon the basis of the earlier Hellenistic and Roman walls.¹ At a date usually thought to be closely related to the immediate threat of Arab invasion in AD 642 (so apparently John of Nikiou), it replaced Apollonia/Sozusa as the governor's seat and successfully resisted the first attack, although it fell to the second. No doubt to be associated with this change is the so-called 'palace', sometimes wrongly called 'fortress', excavated by Goodchild and by G. D. B. Jones, perhaps the Byzantine Baths, and possibly some of the Christian monuments that have been found on the site. It seems probable that such works were begun earlier than AD 642, perhaps even as early as the temporary Persian occupation of Egypt in AD 619, and possible that the transfer of the governor from Apollonia was also earlier than usually thought.

Three bishops are recorded: Secundus, present at Nicea in AD 325, Zenon at Ephesus in AD 431 and Photeinos at Ephesus in AD 449. There were certainly two churches and probably two more, and additionally two possible palace chapels, one in the Byzantine complex south-west of the East Church and one in the late 'palace', together with some other structures whose function is disputed. Further excavation is badly needed.

It is clear that a number of buildings were adapted for Arab use and that occupation of the site continued for a considerable time after the Arab conquest.



Illus. 155. Taucheira: location of Christian monuments; sketch plan (Selina Ballance).

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins made studies of the East Church, the West Church, the West Cemetery Church and the window mullions in 1955; all in haste, though some, at least, he had already seen briefly during the Second World War. He supplemented his study of the East Church in 1969, when he also examined the collection in the Museum. Surveys were made in 1966/7 in the East Church, the West Church, and the West Cemetery Church by Gordon Lawson, and of the city-wall (from which the mullions have fallen) by William Anson and David Smith (see n. 1).

The Monuments

In spring 2001 Dorothy and James Copland Thorn located a number of original drawings made in Cyrenaica by Capt. F. W. Beechey, who deposited them, between 1823 and 1826, in the Hydrographic Office (now at the Ministry of Defence, Taunton, Somerset, U.K.). They include useful drawings of buildings at Taucheira, made on a larger scale than any that have been published hitherto. Illustration 162 presents drawings made from them by James Thorn of the West Church, the West Extramural Church, the probable South Extramural Church and the East Extramural Building. The drawing of the East Church is less informative and has not been included. The editor is most grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Thorn for their generous help.

1. The East Church, illus. 156-61.**Bibliography**

Beechey's 1828, 329, 338, plan opposite p. 337, 367-76; Oliverio 1936, 196-7; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 76; Goodchild 1964, 145; 1966*a*, 215; Stucchi 1975, 363, 364, 367, 368*n.4*, 427; Duval 1989*b*, 2761, 2764, 2765, 2766, 2772, 2784. For the mosaics, Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 142.

Discovery

Already partially excavated before the Second World War, parts of it have been further cleared since; but the west and north sides still await detailed examination.

Description

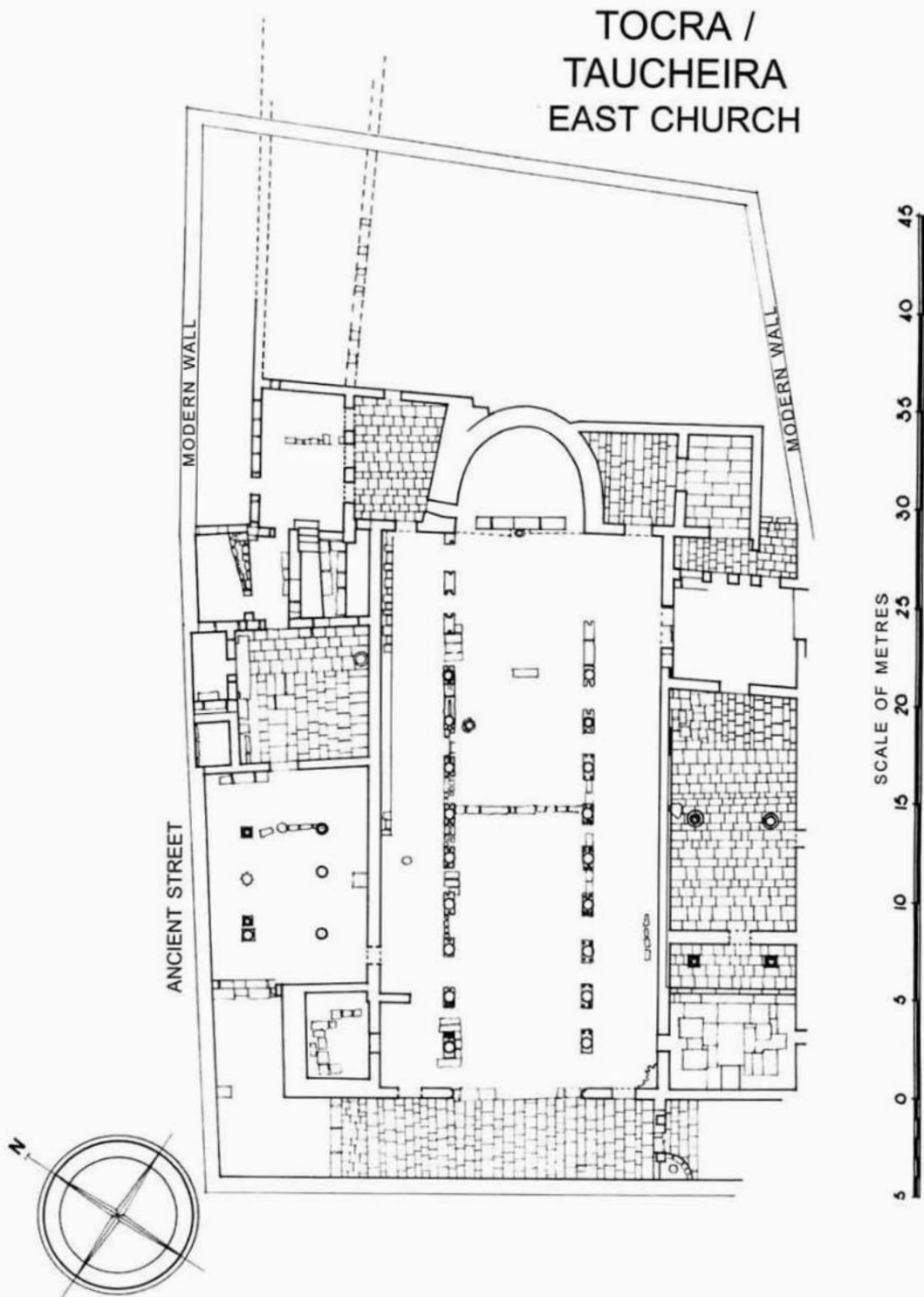
Basilical church (illus. 156), with accompanying buildings (illus. 157-60), occupying a site alongside and parallel with one of the main east-west streets of the town, about 75m west of the walls and 170m south of the present shore line.² The excavated complex consists of a three-aisled columnar basilica with an eastern apse; a range of rooms, including what appears to be some sort of ceremonial hall, along the south side; a narrow western narthex; and a further range, including what appears to be a small atrium, along the north side between the basilica and the street.³ All or almost all of the building material is re-used; and here and there the layout of individual walls is clearly influenced by that of the buildings which had previously occupied the site.⁴

The nave colonnades, which had Attic bases and Doric capitals, stood on almost continuous plinths, about 0.40m high, which sharply divide the central nave from the two lateral aisles. Slots cut in the top of these plinths and in the column-bases mark the position of chancel-slabs of which there is now no

² For Stucchi this was one of the oldest known Cyrenaican churches, perhaps of the mid fifth century, possibly even earlier.

³ Goodchild thought the possible *atrium* might be a baptistery, and Widrig a *martyrion*; there is no positive evidence for either interpretation.

⁴ For the possibility that there was a civil basilica here see n. 9.



Illus. 156. Taucheira: East Church, measured plan (G. R. J. Lawson).



Illus. 157. Taucheira: East Church, from the west end.



Illus. 158. Taucheira: East Church, from the east end.

other surviving trace,⁵ and a transverse feature opposite the sixth column from the west is presumably the footing for a similar screen set across the central nave. At the west end the central nave was open to its full width between two half-columns, and from this point eastwards the colonnades were continuous for at least ten intercolumniations. The east end is robbed to below the level of the column-bases. It is possible that the colonnades ran right through to the shoulders of the apse. Alternatively, there may have been a short stretch of responding walling between nave and side-aisles, as in so many other Cyrenaican churches.⁶ Except in the south aisle, where there are the fragmentary remains of a large mosaic floor along the south wall, possibly preserved, when the rest of the mosaic was rooted up in antiquity, by being covered by a bench, the pavement, wherever preserved, is of rather irregular limestone slabs.

The apse, which is faced both internally and externally with alternate courses of tall and short masonry (illus. 157, 159a), was erected independently of the structures that now flank it. These are, on the north side, a solid, buttressing mass of masonry with a splayed north face and, on the south side, the northernmost of a pair of chapels, elements which together have the effect of enclosing the apse within a near-rectilinear eastern perimeter. Only at the north-eastern corner, beyond the splayed 'buttress', does the north-eastern chapel project a short distance eastwards, no doubt in conformity with some pre-existing feature. The doorways giving access to the apse from the adjoining chapels are both secondary, having been cut through the apse-masonry. That on the north side is, on the other hand, contemporary with the buttressing feature. That on the south side was later blocked.

Of the flanking chapels, that on the north side appears in its present form to have been a vestibule, with an entrance from the east and doorways opening into the north aisle and into the room to the north, as well as into the apse. My own reading of the north wall of this vestibule, is that it was of a rather makeshift build, with alternating orthostats and rubble infill, and that only the westernmost of the three openings left by the disappearance of the infill was open. The corresponding chapel on the south side had three doors: from the apse, from the south aisle, and from the small adjoining room at the south-east corner of the building. Unlike the rest of the building, these two south-eastern rooms were paved with a friable white limestone and, together with the small anteroom referred to in the next paragraph, they were evidently in some sense a functional unit.

The south-east wing consists of four rooms. From the small square room at the south-east corner a doorway led into a narrow anteroom paved with grey limestone slabs, of which the south wall has still to be cleared. Beyond this again a small doorway, carefully sited off-axis, led into a larger room, which was accessible from the south through a doorway with a marble threshold, and from which large, symmetrically-placed archways led, respectively, into the east end of the south nave-aisle and into the large hall which was the principal feature of the south wing.⁷ Assuming the doorway with a marble threshold to

⁵ Cf. also Duval 1989b, 2772. Stucchi thought that the original chancel screens were probably of wood.

⁶ Stucchi thought that responding walls were not part of the original design.

⁷ It is possible, but not certain, that this threshold is the inscribed marble stele (SEG 26.1817) referred to by Goodchild 1964, 145.



Illus. 159 a. Taucheira: East Church, outer wall of apse (south side), south-east angle-chapel and south aisle.



Illus. 159 b. Taucheira: East Church, paving of south aisle.



Illus. 160. Taucheira: East Church, west end of the south hall.

be an entrance, this was the main south vestibule, affording monumental access both to the church and to the south hall and, more discreetly, to the three rooms at the south-east corner.

The south hall was a long, narrow room, some 20.80m by 6.40m internally and divided into three roughly equal bays by two pairs of columns. It was paved with limestone slabs, except at the west end, where two steps led up to a dais paved with marble (illus. 160). A doorway in the north wall gave direct access to the dais from the south aisle, and the marble paving is interrupted by a slightly raised slab of limestone which projects from the middle of the west wall, facing down the axis of the hall. The natural interpretation of these remains is that this was some sort of audience hall, with a separate entrance and a throne for the use of the presiding personage, in this context presumably the bishop.⁸ His audience would have entered from the vestibule. A transverse wall, near the westernmost pair of columns, is a later feature.

At the west end of the building there was evidently some existing feature which prevented a conventional axial development, with a west door and a narthex. Instead, as in the Cathedral at Apollonia, the narthex was little more than a narrow limestone-paved corridor running right across the building. The central part of this was open towards the nave between half-columnar pilasters set on the line of the nave colonnades. It seems on the whole likely that some form of colonnade returned across the opening between the pilasters, but if so

⁸ Stucchi described the hall as a *consignatorium*, but there is no evidence for an associated baptistery.



Illus. 161. Taucheira: East Church, staircase, with re-used Hadrianic text and cross.

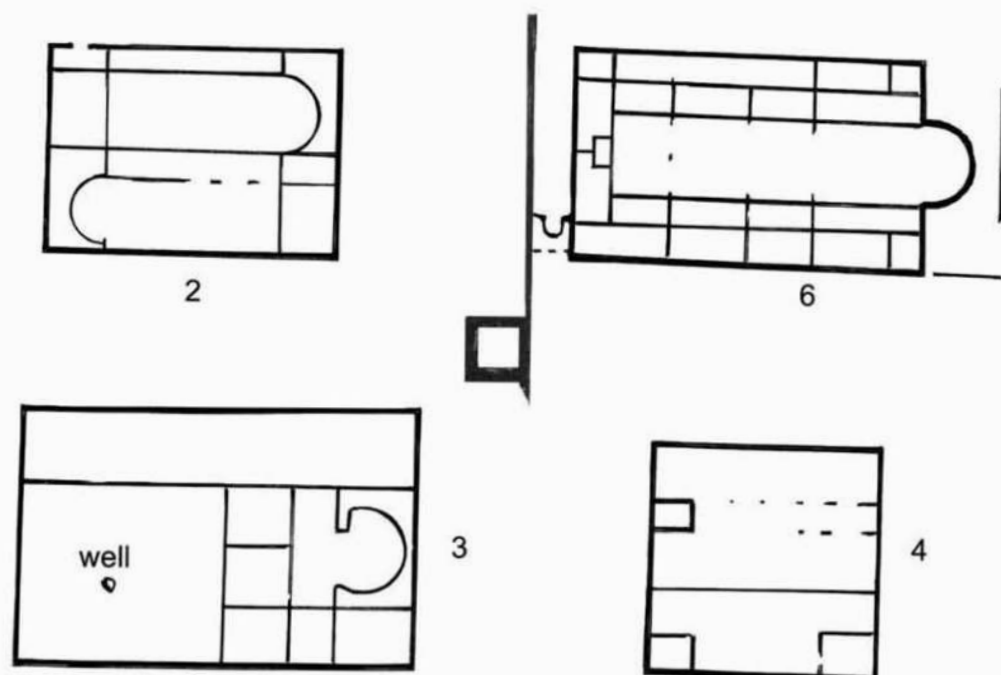
it has left no clear trace. Southwards there is a step up on the line of the outer wall of the nave, and just beyond it a doorway leading up into (or down from) a small room which is only partly excavated. Just inside the door, on the right, there is a hollowed-out column drum bedded into a low step. The north end of the narthex-corridor has been extensively robbed, and the detail is uncertain. Possibly the partly excavated room at the south-east corner was a second vestibule, with an entrance from the south, from which persons could have passed directly into the church or else, round the north-west corner, into the atrium and so into the complex of rooms at the north-east corner.

The north wing, facing the street, has suffered much from the combined effects of stone-robbing and of later occupation. At the west end there was a room opening off the north aisle; to the east of this, what looks like the remains of a small atrium (not a baptistery as suggested by Goodchild), with nine assorted, re-used columns; and to the east of this again, extending as far as the east end of the nave, a limestone-paved room. There was access from the atrium to this room, but not directly from the atrium to the nave. Beyond this are the confused remains of several rooms, one of which had at some period a doorway leading into the north-east chapel; and built up against the outer wall of the nave a staircase, the re-used materials of which incorporate parts of a Hadrianic inscription (*illus. 161*).⁹

Discussion

This building has suffered more than many from intermittent excavation and rather haphazard restoration, and it would undoubtedly repay more extended, systematic re-examination. Some knowledge of the immediately adjoining buildings and of whatever buildings preceded it on the site would probably explain many of the seeming anomalies. From the very extensive use of *spolia* and from the total absence of any fittings attributable to the sixth century (except for the remains of what could well have been an added sixth-century mosaic in the south nave aisle) it may reasonably be assigned to the fifth century.

⁹ The inscription (parts of which are also re-used in the plinths of the nave colonnade) records Hadrian's gift of a basilica to Taucheira, and led Goodchild to conjecture that the church was built out of the ruins of a civil basilica.
There is a plain cross incised on the riser of the lowest step in the staircase. (*illus. 161*).



Illus. 162. Taucheira: plan drawn in 1821-2 by F. W. Beechey (redrawn by James Thorn); no. 2 is the West Cemetery Church; no. 6 is the West Church; no. 3 is the possible South Extramural Church; no. 4 is the East Extramural Building.

2. The West Church, illus. 162-64.

Bibliography

Beechey 1828, 374; probably Hamilton 1856, 148; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 76; Goodchild 1966a, 215; Stucchi 1975, 404; Duval 1989b, 2761.

Discovery

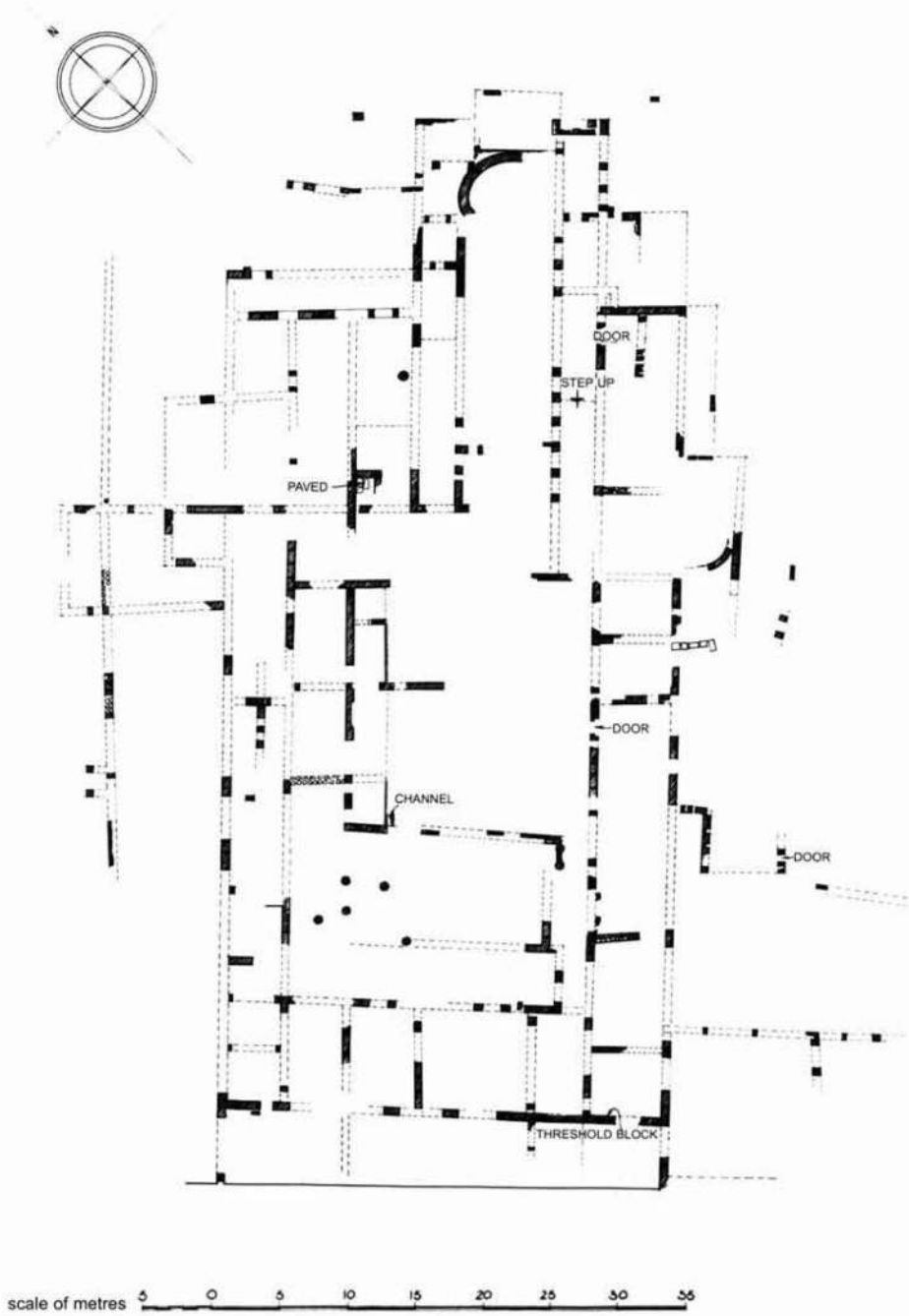
This building, no. 6 on the plan published by the Beecheyes in 1828 (cf. illus. 162), lies near the west edge of the town (the apse is about 75m from the west wall and about 80m north of the West Gate). At some time in the fairly recent past it has been the scene of some desultory grubbing, notably in the apse, but for the most part one is dependent on the evidence of the orthostats and walls that are visible on the surface, which are of great complexity and probably comprise elements of many different dates.

Description

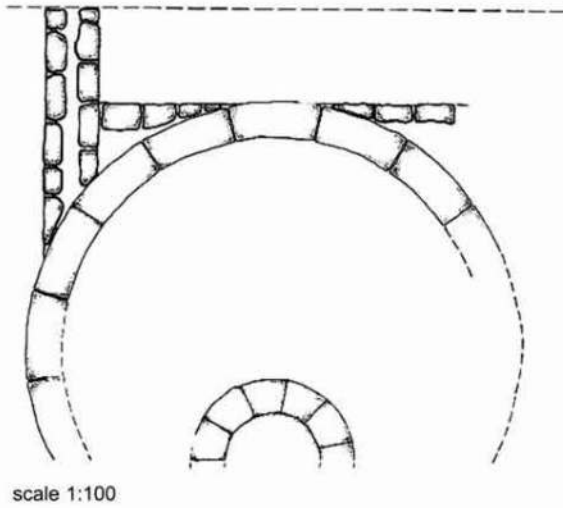
The plan (illus. 163, as surveyed by Gordon Lawson) must largely be left to speak for itself. From this a fairly plausible case can be made out for a three-aisled basilica (outer dimensions, about 27m × 14.20m) with a western apse;¹⁰ possibly, though not certainly, part of the same building, a narthex-like transverse feature at the east end, projecting and incorporating at the south end a northward-facing apsed hall; and just possibly, but doubtfully, some sort of

¹⁰ Stucchi, relying heavily on the Beecheyes' plan, wrote of an external apse and a large porticated atrium in front of the church.

TOCRA / TAUCHEIRA WEST CHURCH



Illus. 163. Taucheira: West Church, measured plan (G. R. J. Lawson).



scale 1:100
Illus. 164. Taucheira: West Church, measured drawing of the horse-shoe apse, 1955 (W. A. Foster from the notebook of J. B. Ward-Perkins).

rather suggest. The apse is a curious structure, of horseshoe-shaped plan (7m across \times 5m deep) with an outer face of squared blocks; at the centre of the church and symmetrical to it, but not concentric with it, is a small semicircular recess (diameter 1.30m). This could possibly be construed as the remains of the apse of a church with the basis of an internal *synthronon*, but both the horseshoe plan and the apparently free-standing apse are, to say the least, unusual. In view of the importance of this feature, not all of which is now visible, I include a copy of the measured sketch-plan made by myself in 1955 (illus. 164).

Discussion

Without excavation, the identification of any part of this building as a church cannot be accepted as proven. The most persuasive evidence is that of the Beecheys, who were both observant and remarkably accurate, and who saw the remains when they were probably considerably better preserved than they are today (a copy of their plan in illus. 162, no.6).¹¹

3. Tower with Carved Window Mullions, illus. 165, 166.

Bibliography

Ward-Perkins 1943, 134, with fig. 7; Smith/Crow 1998, 46-8, 68-9.

Description

An unusual and unexplained feature of Christian Taucheira is the fact that in the heap of debris below, and evidently fallen from, one of the towers of the city wall,¹² in the stretch immediately to the north of the West Gate, there are

‘forecomplex’, comparable with that of the West Church at Apollonia.

The two most distinctive features are the nave arcades and the apse. The former comprise a number of piers (average dimensions, 0.65m \times 0.55m), consisting of paired orthostats capped by single horizontal slabs, and, lying loose, several springer blocks for the actual arches. In 1955 the writer counted the equivalent of nine such piers and of two terminal semi-piers, giving an arcade of ten arches, some of which may in practice have been blocked, as the analogy of the East Church at Gasr el Lebia and the visible remains of the south arcade

¹¹ Goodchild is reported to have conjectured that the whole complex was a monastery; see also below, under *Tower with Carved Window Mullions*, where the possibility of a pre-Justinianic foundation for the West Church complex is canvassed.

¹² Tower 6 on the plan of the ramparts of Tocra made by W. Anson and D. J. Smith.

no less than four massive limestone window-mullions, 1-1.2m in height, each carved with a compass-traced, equal-armed cross (illus. 165). In our present state of knowledge of the site there is nothing to show why this tower should have received such special treatment, but it does at least suggest the possibility that it was itself, or else that it closely adjoined, a consecrated building.

In 1966 Dr. D. J. Smith, during the survey of the ramparts by Anson and Smith, studied Tower 6. His findings (Smith/Crow 1998) may be summarised as follows:

1. The mullions—he saw seven—lie amongst building-stones which have evidently fallen outwards from the tower.
2. Each comprises a carved base from which rise two engaged columns separated by a flat vertical element; the columns, which show marked entasis, rise to a capital splayed out like the springer of an arch; on the splayed face each is carved with a roundel containing a compass-traced cross; below the roundels are four plain horizontal mouldings and above them one more.
3. The tower, still standing to a height of c. 4m when surveyed, contained at, or near, its top a barrel-vaulted chamber; this was surrounded on the north, south and west sides by an ambulatory which appears to have been open, at least to the west, in the form of an arcaded loggia from which it seems that the mullions had fallen. No other tower at Tocra has yielded any comparable feature.



Illus. 165. Taucheira: city wall, window mullion fallen from tower no. 6.



Illus. 166. Taucheira: city wall, window mullion fallen from tower no. 6.



Illus. 167. Taucheira: block with cross in the 'Late Palace' area..

4. It is to be noted that the rampart between Towers 5 and 6 is unusually thick (2.05m compared with the normal 1.20m), and that Tower 6 is unusually large. Since the 'West Church' complex actually abuts on the wall along the whole of this unusual stretch, it seems reasonable to conjecture a connection between the complex and the wall such as the arrangements described in the Life of St. Sabas, when an abbot or a bishop was given responsibility for defensive building (for which he received a subsidy; cf. also the landowners of Constantinople given responsibility for maintenance of the Theodosian land wall). For some discussion of the relation of the Church to defensive construction see Smith/Crow 69-70.
5. Smith believes this section of the rampart to be attributable to Justinian; if this conjecture is sound, it is probable that, in some form, the 'West Church' complex was pre-Justinianic.

4. Tower 30, illus. 169.

Bibliography

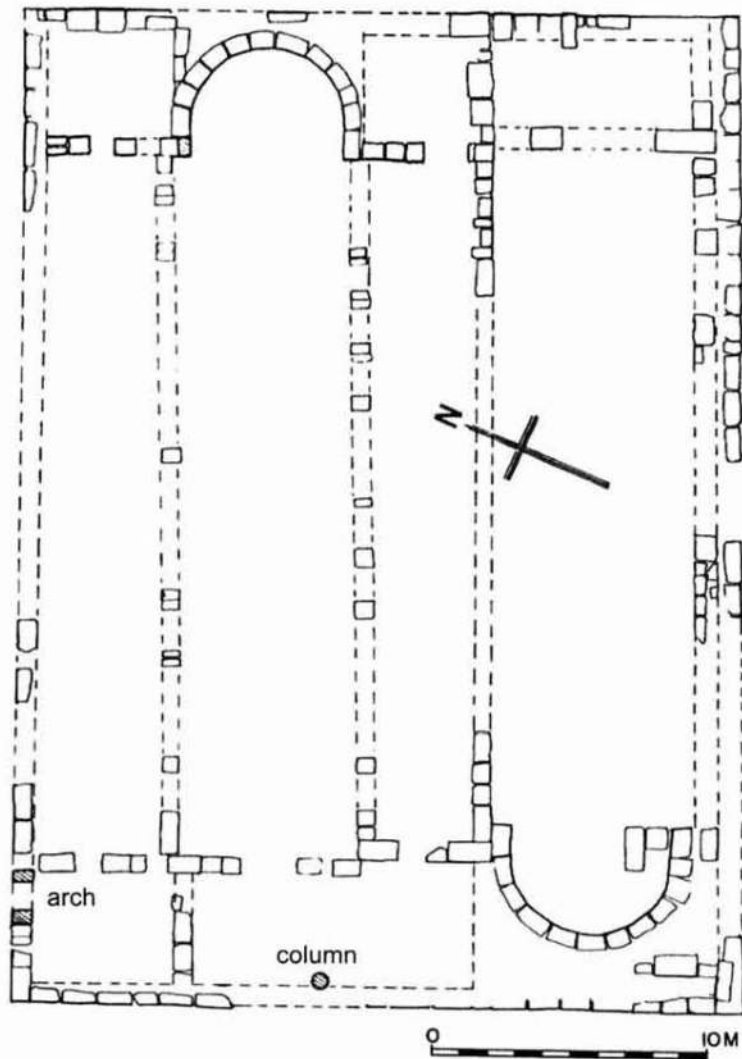
Smith/Crow 1998, 58.

A roughly-inscribed cross is reported on the west side of the tower.

5. The West Cemetery Church (West Extramural Church), illus. 168.

Bibliography

Beecheys 1828, 338; Goodchild 1966*a*, 215; Stucchi 1975, 395, 397; Duval 1989*b*, 2757, 2767, 2768, 2785.



Illus. 168. Taucheira: West Cemetery Church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler).

Description

About 200m beyond the walls, outside the West Gate, there are the considerable remains of yet another church (building no. 2 on the Beecheys' plan, illus. 162).¹³ Thanks to the unusually high proportion of squared stone used by the builders (most of it certainly re-used, but carefully dressed and laid), and also to the relative remoteness of the site from the modern settlement, most of the plan is still quite clearly visible. In addition to the dressed stone of the outer walls, apses, arcades and doorways, there are some remains both of faced-rubble masonry, used independently or in conjunction with orthostats, and of orthostat slabs backed with faced rubble. Within the rectangular outer perimeter (37m × 26.60m) there are two distinct architectural units: a basilical church with an eastern apse and, running the full length of the south side of the

¹³ Stucchi, in a very brief account, places this church in his third group, whose earlier examples he dates in the later fifth century.

church, a long, narrow hall (25m × 7m) with a small eastern antechamber and a western apse.¹⁴

The church itself was of the familiar type with four angle-chapels and an eastern apse (illus. 168). The apse was faced internally with dressed stone and presumably vaulted. It was closely framed by the outer wall and the walls of the two eastern angle-chapels, of which the outlines are clear but no details other than the orthostat jambs of the arch between the north aisle and the north-east chapel. The nave-arcades seem to have run the full length of the nave, consisting of ten arches with only short responding piers against the two end walls. At the west end there were three rooms corresponding to the nave and aisles. The northernmost is quite well preserved, with an almost complete archway in the north wall and the jambs of a similar arch into the north aisle. The central room seems to have opened on to the nave through a wide archway. Was there a corresponding axial entrance in the outer west wall? From the remains now visible it is impossible to say. If the stump of a spirally-fluted, dark Rhodian marble column just off the line of the wall is really in position (as it seems to be), it is not impossible that the wall was continuous, with some sort of central *aedicula*, the only entrance to this part of the church being the small door into the north-west chapel. In a building that stood on its own, outside the city walls, such an arrangement would be very intelligible. Of the south-west chapel only the lines of the east and west walls can be made out, the former displaced some 0.50m to that of the other two western rooms and presumably of a different date.

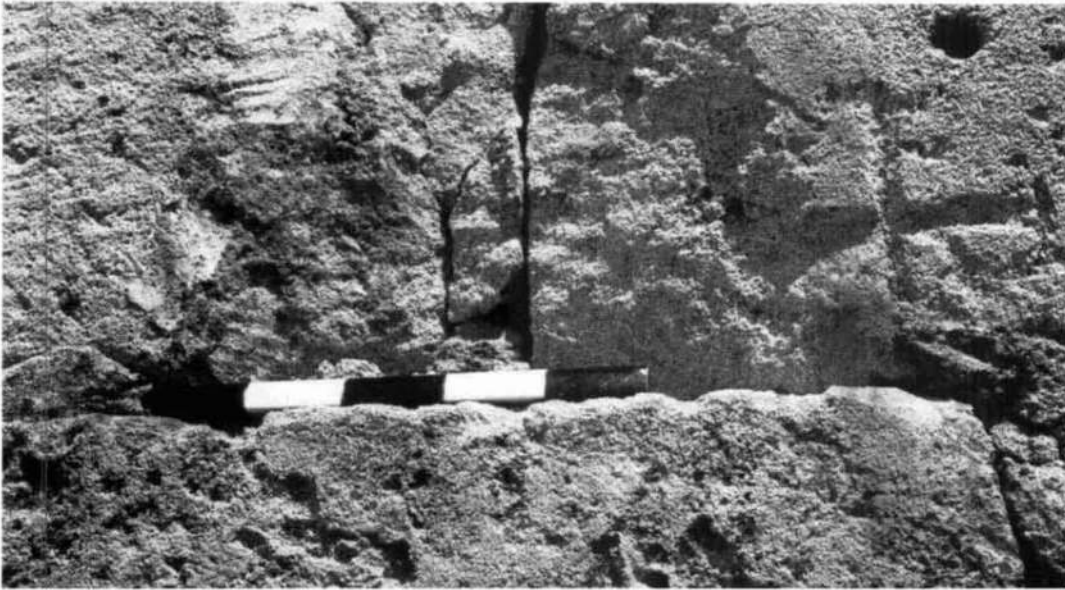
So far as one can see, the south hall was a single long, narrow room with an apse occupying almost the full width of the west end. At the east end a wide archway opened into a small anteroom.¹⁵ Whether or not it was directly accessible from the church one cannot tell. A doorway from the south-east chapel into the anteroom would be a logical feature, but one would have to excavate to be sure.

Discussion

As they stand the church and the hall were clearly built on different occasions. Which is the earlier? At first glance it is tempting to regard the hall as what remains of an earlier complex. The outer south wall is doubled in a manner that suggests the external strengthening of an existing structure and a slight extension of it westwards so as to conform with the new line established by the church. On the other hand, the junction of the two structures at the east end strongly suggests the priority of the church, and this is borne out by the character of the adjoining stretch of the wall common to the two buildings. This was built to a line facing southwards, the irregularities of the north face to be made up in smaller masonry. On balance it seems that the hall was an addition (conceivably replacing an earlier feature) the outer south wall of which was for some reason felt to need extra strength. The anomalies at the west end of the south church-aisle could be explained in terms of the heavy structural work involved in inserting a massive vaulted apse.

¹⁴ For the combination of church and hall, cf. Taucheira East Church. Stucchi suggested that the south hall was a *consignatorium*, which is difficult to accept in the absence of a baptistery (see also Duval 1989b, 2757).

¹⁵ On a plan of the church drawn by Smith in 1968 there is a note of an incised cross with forked terminals within a circle on the outer side of the east end wall of the Hall, 1.70m from the south-east angle.



Illus. 169. Taucheira: city wall, stone with cross in tower no. 30.

The church was certainly situated in a cemetery area, and although there is nothing in the surviving remains to indicate any architectural recognition of this fact, the possibility that it was built as a *memoria* is obviously one that has to be borne in mind. Perhaps the central room at the west end, with its re-used marble column, was built to house a relic rather than as an entrance. This is undoubtedly a building that would repay excavation.

6. Other Christian monuments

A Within the walls

i Museum collections

Ward-Perkins also recorded:

- a* that there are a number of Rhodian black marble columns, small and medium, on the site, comparable to the one in the West Cemetery Church.
- b* that in the Museum he saw several fragments of Proconnesian marble details which must have come from the churches: one impost block with a Latin cross, one Ionic impost block with a Latin cross (partly trimmed off), one angle of a chancel slab, one small corinthianising capital. No further information is available on them.¹⁶

ii Possible Palace Chapel.

Bibliography

Stucchi 1975, 454; Jones 1983, 117, fig. 9; *id.* 1985, 38, fig. 3.7.

In the Late Palace, partly excavated by Goodchild in 1962-5, with further work undertaken by G.D.B. Jones in 1968-9, it has been suggested that there may be a palace chapel with entry from the south-east corner of the east court. No details are available.

¹⁶ In May 2000 Reynolds also saw one battered chancel post (probably of Proconnesian marble).

iii Possible Baptistery and Chapel, with the large complex (?palace) to which they belong, Illus. 170a-d.

Bibliography

Stucchi 1975, 426-7; Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 34 n. 89 (listing only); Michaelides 1982; Duval 1989b, 2780; Bentaher/Dobias-Lalou 1999; Buzaian 2000.

- (1) The complex, some 100m south-west of the East Church, was partly excavated in 1972 by the Archaeological Department of the University of Gar Younis under the direction of Professor el Fakharani. It was never published; but some information about it became available through a colloquium in Tripoli in 1972. Bentaher, who has access to notes of el Fakharani's, suggests that it may have been a bath building but is aware that some essential features of a bath have not yet been found. Given the Christian features of its apsed hall ((3) below), its size (it occupies a whole *insula*, c. 38.50m × 72m), its quality and its proximity to the East Church, which is very probably the Cathedral Church, the possibility that it was the Bishop's Palace would be worth investigating when excavation can be resumed.
- (2) A large rectangular tank oriented north/south, with steps for access to the water at the north-west corner, was interpreted by el Fakharani and by Stucchi as a possible baptistery, and an apsed hall, similarly oriented, which is located immediately to the west of it (3 below), by el Fakharani as a *martyrion* and by Stucchi as a *consignatorium*. It is unlikely that the tank was a baptistery (it has none of the known features of one), and if not there is no obvious case for interpreting the hall as a *consignatorium*. There may be reference to the effects of baptism in the later mosaic (see below), but that would not prove its connection with a baptistery.
- (3) The apsed hall (see the plan published by Bentaher) is surprisingly oriented for a church or chapel—all but one of the known Cyrenaican churches or chapels is oriented east/west or west/east or approximately so, and the exception (the West Central Church at Ptolemais) is less out of line than this hall.¹⁷ It was entered via two antechambers, the first with benches against its west wall, the second with an additional door in its east wall which gives into the large rectangular area containing the tank (see under 2). Four floor-levels are reported by Stucchi, two of mosaic and above them one of *cocciopesto* and one of *gesso* similar to that thought to be Islamic at Ras el-Hilal. It is a reasonable conjecture, therefore, that it continued in use after the Arab conquest, but that the use then was non-Christian.

The earlier of the two mosaic floors was dated by el Fakharani in the fourth century AD. If that is right, the hall, if it was really a chapel, would be very much the earliest church-building securely attested in the Libyas; but the date seems to be open to question and assignment to the fifth century a serious possibility.¹⁸

This mosaic consists mainly of roughly square panels which contain representations of birds (including a peacock), fish, animals, flowers and baskets of fruit, the panels being divided from each other by a two-strand guilloche (illus. 170a-c). Running across the north end, on the threshold, is a rectangular panel (4.20m × 0.18m) containing an inscription (illus. 170d), discovered by Fathi Mohammed Ali el Abidi of the Department of Antiquities at Tocra and published by Dobias-Lalou (letters, 0.14-0.15m; lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, and *omega*; probably a leafy branch at the right end).

¹⁷ The apsed room at Zawiet el Argub (*Section 2*) seems so unlikely to be a church that it has been discounted here.

¹⁸ The style of this mosaic seems to Reynolds different from that of the known fourth-century mosaics in the House of Hesychius at Cyrene, and much closer to that of the fifth-, even the sixth-century mosaics of the province (for which see Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980).



Illus. 170 a, b, c. Taucheira: the apsed hall, sections of the mosaics.



Illus. 170 d. Taucheira: the apsed hall, mosaic inscription.

† ΕΙΡΗΝΗΙΟΔΟΟCCΟΥΑΡΧΙΙΕΡΕΥΟΒΛΕΠΩΝ † *branch*

cross εἰρήν(η) ἡ εἴσοδος σου ἀρχιερεῦ ὁ βλέπων *cross branch*

Your entry (?coming) is peace, high priest, the seer (?who sees, ?who sees all)

We have at present in the Libyas only one other legible Christian text which certainly comes from a doorway (at Gasr el Lebia [section 2], East Church, *Inscriptions in Mosaic*, no. 1) and that makes no reference to entries or exits. In Syria, which is quite rich in such texts (*IGLS, passim*), they commonly invoke a blessing on those passing in or out with goodwill. Here only one entry is mentioned, and the text is, as Dobias-Lalou observed, an adaptation of a question put in several forms to strangers in OT narratives, and specifically of the form in which it was put to the prophet Samuel by the elders of Bethlehem when he arrived there to anoint a son of Jesse (1 Samuel 16.4).

One other epigraphic use of this wording is known to Reynolds, in an inscription on a mosaic floor at Antioch on the Orontes (*JGLS* III. 770; see also Downey 1941, 83-4, with plate; Levi 1957, 320, with his plates LXX 1b, CXXX 1a). There the text (placed near the centre of the room) opens a long statement which includes a prayer for blessing on those residing or staying there (τοῖς μενούσιν ὧδε), and a reference to those who laid the mosaic in what is described as a τρικλίνιον, a common word for a dining-room. Its date is disputed, Downey suggesting the sixth century on epigraphic grounds which are probably insufficient, Levi the middle years of the fifth, following his analysis of the geometrical motifs which form the greater part of the floor-decoration. It contains no obvious Christian feature and has indeed been thought by some to be Jewish, on account of its use of the word εὐλογία. There can be no certainty that a text of this kind would always be used in rooms with the same function, so that we cannot argue strongly from the *triklinion* at Antioch to a *triklinion* at Taucheira, although that is a possibility. The Christianity of the Taucheira text is clearly indicated by the crosses, and the vocative ἀρχιερεῦ was therefore interpreted by Dobias-Lalou as a reference to Christ;¹⁹ ὁ βλέπων she took as 'the all-seeing', although it could, no doubt, mean 'the seer' or 'prophet' as in the Septuagint passage. The εἰσόδος can then be understood as Christ's coming into the world and the peace which was associated with that, rather than entry into the apsed hall. If that is right it is pertinent that Christ might be thought of as *archiereus* to whom the earthly *archiereis*, i.e. the bishops of the Church, correspond. That thought would have a special applicability if the apsed hall was part of a bishop's palace.

We should also consider, however, whether the addressee might in fact be simply the bishop. If so, his entry was a straightforward crossing of the inscribed threshold—which might seem a more natural explanation of a text placed within a threshold. It is true that the meaning of ὁ βλέπων is less obvious—but it could refer to local and personal circumstances which we cannot hope to uncover. Might he have been a man of great understanding and vision? Or a very acute overseer of his see? Or the builder of the hall seeing the work that he had commissioned? Or the recipient of a gift to the church looking at it? The interpretation should perhaps be left open.

The later mosaic floor, which overlaid the one just described, has been lifted and is stored in the Tocra Museum, where it is not at present (1999) readily accessible; but it was seen by Michaelides soon after discovery and its inscriptions were briefly noted by Reynolds at about the same time. From their information, taken with the reports of Stucchi and of Bentaher, it seems that in each of the four corners it presented one of the Rivers of Paradise (only two surviving), shown, as at Gasr el Lebia (section 2), in the form of pagan river gods (a feature not previously attested at the likely date); in front of the apse full-length captioned figures of *Ktisis*, *Kosmesis* and *Ananeosis* (of which *Kosmesis* has not, so far, been found outside Libya), standing side by side, each under one of the arches of a triple arcade; and, between them and the door, a Nilotic scene bordered by representations of rural life; there is no threshold text. The figures under the arcade are presented differently from their homonyms at Gasr el-Lebia, and rather more like those at Ras el-Hilal (*Section 2*), although not exactly so;²⁰ but the combination of motifs and the presence of the exceptionally-figured Rivers of Paradise and the rare *Kosmesis* have led to belief that this mosaic was made by the same workshop as those of Gasr el Lebia and Ras el Hilal and so is of the sixth century, probably Justinianic or a little later.

¹⁹ As in *Hebrews* 6.20, in a considerable number of Christian writers, notably Clement of Alexandria and Origen (for citations see G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Dictionary*, Oxford 1961, sv ἀρχιερεῦς), in the prayers of the Apostolic Constitutions and in the liturgies of St. James and St. Mark.

²⁰ For the mosaics on these sites and some discussion of their meaning see Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980.

The inscriptions are simple:

Letters, not measured; cursive *alpha*, angular *sigma* and *omega*.

Three figures, each under one arch of a triple arcade.

1.	<i>cross</i>	ΚΤΙΕ	<i>head</i>	ΙΕ	Κτίσις	Foundation
2.	<i>cross</i>	ΚΟΕ	<i>head</i>	ΜΗΕΙΕ	Κόσμησις	Adornment
3.	<i>cross</i>	ΑΝΑ	<i>head</i>	ΝΕΥ[ΕΙΕ]	Ἀνανέω[σις]	Renewal
4.	<i>cross</i>	ΦΙ	<i>palm, figure</i>	ΕΩΝ	Φίσων	Phison
5.		ΕΥΦΡΑ ΤΗΕ			Εὐφράτης	Euphrates

Obviously the hall was at the least newly decorated when this mosaic was laid, and the presence of Κτίσις may suggest something more fundamental. The three figures under the arcade may have made an essentially matter-of-fact reference to this process. It is also possible, of course, that there was a metaphorical reference to a Christian's spiritual hopes, founded on baptism, with the rivers of Paradise as symbols of the delights to come in the after-life; but the presence of these figures on the nave-floors at Gasr el Lebia and Ras el Hilal shows clearly that there is no need to associate them with a baptistery or even an area directly connected with one such as a *consignatorium*.

It is clear that the mosaics of both periods deliver messages that would be appropriate in a church or chapel; but in addition to the abnormal orientation of the hall there is no evidence for the presence of church furniture in it, nor any trace of footing for a chancel screen—there is indeed the scar of a possibly rectangular feature reaching into the earlier mosaic near the centre of the hall, but its date and purpose are wholly unclear, while it is even less clear what were the precise findspot (probably outside the walls), and the appropriate dating of human bones (probably Islamic period) recorded by the excavator. The later mosaic floor could have been part of a fundamental reconstruction which introduced a new function for the hall; but it is equally possible on the evidence that we have that the function remained the same throughout. And if it was not a church or chapel (?*martyrion*) it could also have provided a room in which priests of the churches in the see of Taucheira might meet for discussion—or, indeed, to take a common meal.

Further excavation is needed—but whether it can yield evidence that would solve the problem of function is uncertain.²¹

iv. St Menas flask

A damaged St Menas flask was found in a cistern in an area west of 6.A.iii above during excavations undertaken by the University of Gar Younis, Benghazi (Buzaian 2000, 65 and 94 with fig. 37, no. 27); other examples have been found at Berenike, Ptolemais, perhaps Apollonia/Sozusa and possibly Ras el Hilal as well as Paraitonion (see Riley 1980, 364-5). For a cult of Menas in Cyrenaica, see Siret Akreim (section 3).

²¹ Reynolds has had most helpful discussions of the problems of the first inscription here with William Horbury, Robin Cormack, Rosamond McKitterick and Charlotte Roueché, although she doubts whether any of them will be entirely in agreement with what she has written.

3. On the façade of a rock-cut tomb in the south wall of Quarry East V (numeration from Oliverio 1936). The façade carries three Roman-period inscriptions, probably of the first century AD (*SEG* IX.305, 573, 574), to which another was added much later (*SEG* IX.571). This later text was cut within a *tabella ansata* in relief (panel, w. 0.72m × ht. 0.20m; now much overgrown with moss), with a Maltese cross in the left *ansa* (the surface of the right *ansa* is lost). Letters, perhaps sixth century, 0.035m; lunate *epsilon* and *sigma*; V for Y; superscript bars above the abbreviated sacred names.

Bibliography

CIG 5292 (from Pacho); Oliverio 1936, 202 with pl. LXXVII, fig. 37, whence *SEG* IX.571; Reynolds 1965 whence J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Ep.* 1968, 591a; Guarducci 1978, 475.

<p><i>cross</i> ἀνάθεμα ἔστ[αι] ἀπὸ Π(ατ)ρ[ὸ]ς καὶ Υἱοῦ καὶ Ἁ- γίου Πνεύματος ἢ τις ὄδε θαπτεῖν τι[ν]ὰ ξένον</p>	<p>There will be a curse from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit if anyone were to bury a stranger here</p>
--	---

L.3, ἦ for εἶ and ὄδε for ὦδε.

Christians' use of curses to protect their tombs is of course well attested; Guarducci cites another example of the curse of the Trinity in a funerary text dated April AD 588 at Beer-Sheba (Alt 1921, 20, n.25).

4. Hamilton 1858, 149-50 describes above a door in a 'cavern' (presumably a rock-cut tomb in a quarry) on the west side of the city, a cross in a circle, with the letters ICXC = Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστός), Jesus Christ. Not rediscovered.

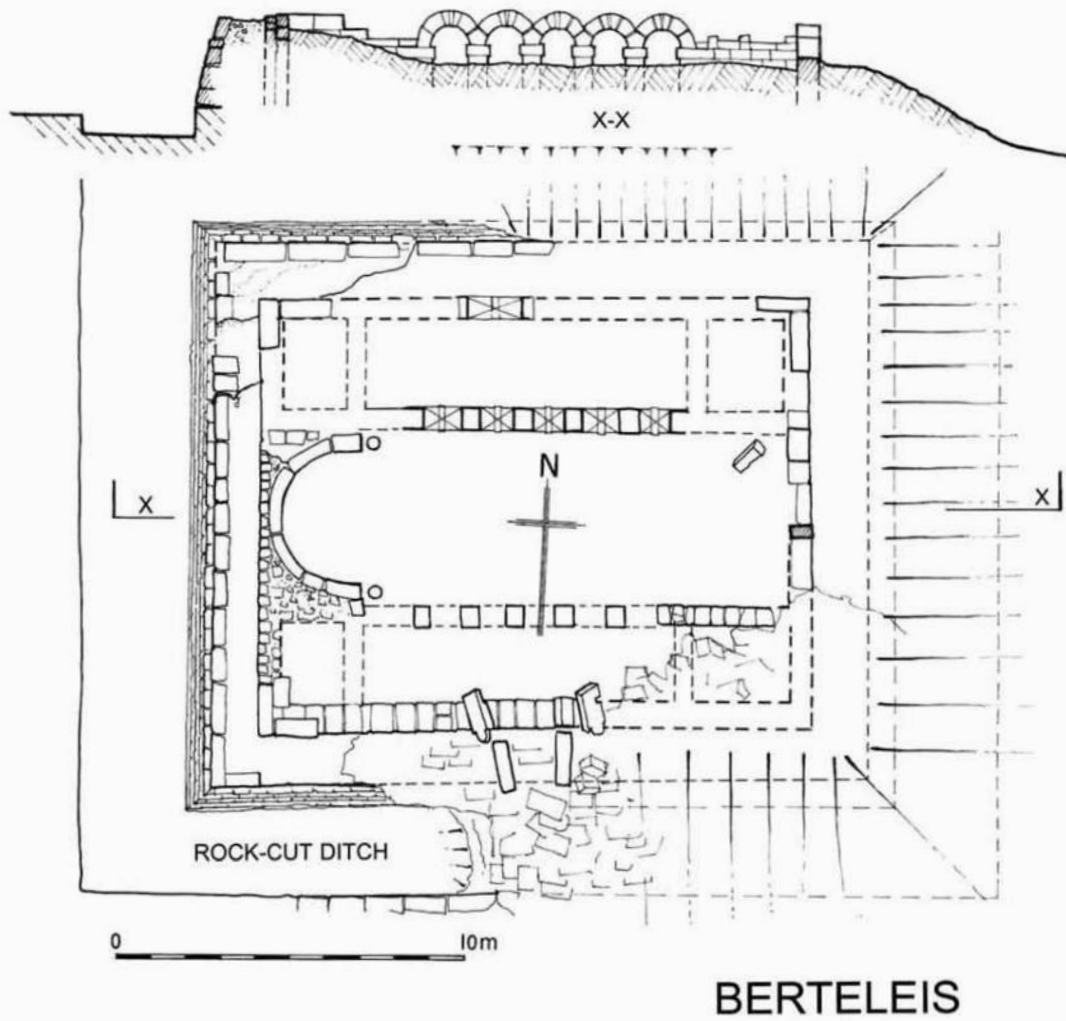
C Unlocated

Roques 2000 thinks it possible that the Asclepiodotos to whom Synesius addressed *Epp.* 126 was abbot of a monastery at Taucheira, and that the Meneleus of whom he writes was an intending monk.

Section 2

Rural sites with Christian antiquities
in the Gebel Akhdar area of Libya Pentapolis

Visited by Ward-Perkins



Illus. 171. Berteleis: measured plan (Sheila Gibson).

Berteleis, anc. name unknown, illus. 171-73, church.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 221-2; Ward-Perkins 1972, 227; Stucchi 1975, 377, 386-7, 429, 432, 435; Duval 1989*b*, 2761, 2763.

Discovery

The church was located from the air in 1956 and visited soon after by Goodchild and G. R. H. Wright; it remains unexcavated, and only very briefly described.

Ward-Perkins' programme

The site was visited and studied by Ward-Perkins in 1969, and surveyed at the same time by Sheila Gibson.

Small basilical church (illus. 171) situated at the foot of the upper escarpment, about 13km east of Cyrene and 2km, as the crow flies, north of Mgarnes. It can be reached by following the Cyrene-Apollonia road and then continuing eastwards along the country track that follows the foot of the escarpment.¹ The nearest modern landmark in 1969 was an unfinished school building, beside the track about 3km to the west of the church.

The building is well preserved, but buried to capital height in its own rubble (illus. 172), and the whole of the south-east corner is concealed by heavy scrub. A colony of savage bees offered an additional hazard to close investigation in 1969. Fortunately, the visible remains include three of the four outer corners of the original building, the apse, the arches of the north nave-arcade, the wall at the eastern end of the south arcade, and the position of two doorways. From these elements there is no difficulty in establishing the main outlines of the building.

There are two clearly-defined building periods. The original structure was a three-aisled basilica with western apse, of the familiar sixth-century Cyrenaican type, inscribed within a rectangular framework.² This building was subsequently fortified by strengthening the outer wall and adding a ditch (illus. 173).³ The scanty traces of yet later occupation are probably post-Christian.

The original church

The original church was quite small (12.6m by 16m). As, for example, at Mtaugat (*Section 2*), the outer corners were built of dressed stone blocks, whereas the rest of the outer wall was built of the usual faced-rubble work, in this case resting on a socle and levelling course of dressed stone. The interior walls were evidently of faced rubble, with dressed-stone arches, door-jambs etc. The rubble has everywhere collapsed, with one exception, in the middle of the outer west wall. Here a lime mortar was used, and the coursed outer facing is firmly mortared into place against the backs of the slabs which constitute the inner face of the apse.

¹ The track leading to the church from the Cyrene/Apollonia road runs alongside an ancient one, rock-cut and showing wheel ruts; at 2km it passes Gasr Khuraybah, a site where Gambini and Catani have surveyed and published a small Byzantine bath-building, probably in use from the mid-fifth to the mid-seventh centuries (Gambini/Catani 1976, 449f., 453f.).

² On the basis of the building techniques, Stucchi placed the church among the later examples of his second group of churches, which he dated in the second half of the fifth century.

³ On fortification of churches see *Introduction II, Defensive Uses*.



Illus. 172. Berteleis, the church, north arcade.

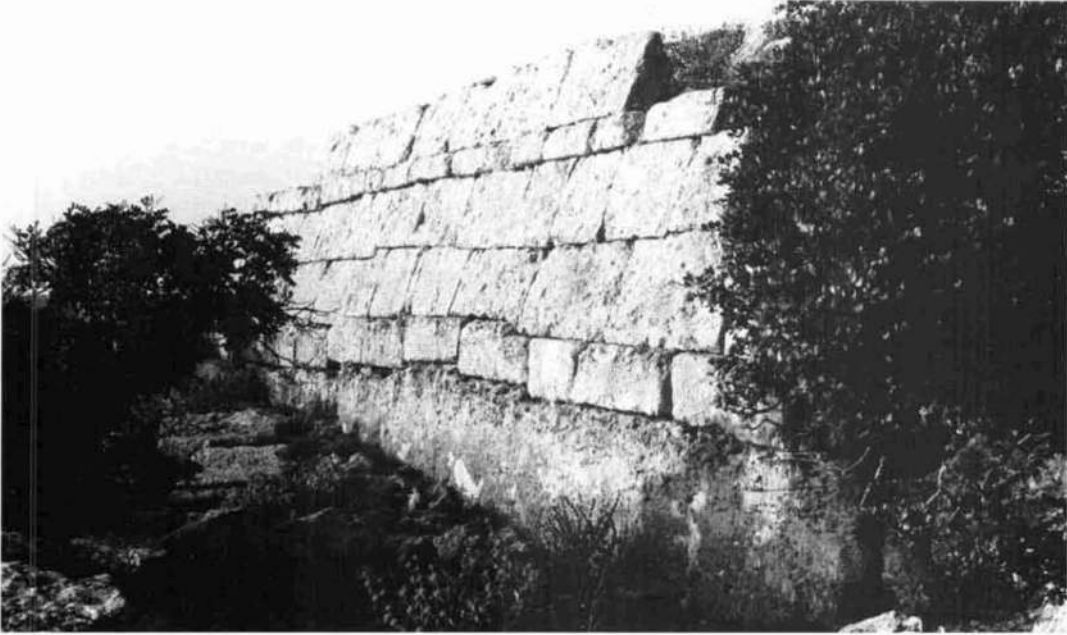
The five stone-built arches of the north arcade are all standing (illus. 172).⁴ The capitals of the rectangular piers are horizontal rectangular slabs, without mouldings, and each arch consists of a shaped springer-block, two voussoirs and a keystone with a projecting central flange. At the west end there was a short responding wall, flanking part of the (buried) chancel, and at the east end a rather longer wall (3.40m), delimiting some form of angle-chapel. On the north side the wall itself is buried; but the form of the easternmost arch shows that the arcade did not continue in this direction, and the remains of the corresponding south wall are still visible. There is nothing to show whether the space between the two eastern angle-chapels was treated as a small internal narthex (as at Gasr Silu, West Church) or whether, as, given the small dimensions of the whole church, is perhaps more likely, the narthex was omitted and this space was simply an extension of the nave.

There was probably an axial doorway at the east end (what may be one jamb of this projects from the rubble), but for everyday use there was also a large archway in the north outer wall, which faced towards the main buildings of the community.

The Second Period Church

At some later date the building was strengthened and made defensible by the addition of a thick outer facing of rubble faced with large coursed blocks and the cutting of a shallow ditch (illus. 173). At the east end the walls have fallen outwards, obscuring both masonry and ditch; but they are well preserved at the west end, and the surface indications suggest that they were continuous all round.

⁴ Goodchild's fig. 7 showed, as Stucchi's account described, arcades of eight arches each. That seems to be an error.



Illus. 173. Berteleis, the church, revetment wall.

The character of the outer facing, sloping gently inwards and with one leveling course, is sufficiently illustrated in the illustration. The new wall-face rose directly from the inner edge of the shallow, 3m wide, rock-cut ditch. The north entrance to the earlier building was blocked and presumably also the east door, if there had been such. In their place a new and smaller entrance was opened in the middle of the south side, its position marked by the remains of an arch, by a fallen pair of 'curtain brackets'⁵ and by the two up-ended slabs which flanked the passageway through the outer thickening.⁶

Subsequent Occupation

There are a few traces of rough later walling, but there is nothing to suggest that they are architectural in character or of any great antiquity.

Discussion

Much of the significance of this well-preserved little church lies in its setting. It is situated well off the beaten track, in difficult country. Paths up the steep slopes of the upper escarpment were few and devious, and the winter torrents that have here cut their way down through the lower escarpment have steep, precipitous valleys which begin to take shape almost immediately at the foot of the upper slopes. The strip of habitable country was narrow and difficult of access, but in compensation it included patches of rich soil, washed off the upper plateau and accumulated against the foot of the escarpment.

⁵ For 'curtain brackets' see *Introduction II, Interior Fitments, Limestone*.

⁶ Stucchi also noted some elements of pilasters with semi-columns which could, he thought, have belonged to an upper storey (the possibility that they were window mullions should be borne in mind), and he believed that, following the later reinforcement, the internal floor level was raised so as to be much higher than formerly.

Berteleis occupies a roughly-triangular stretch of such ground between the heads of two of the lower valleys, gently-rolling country with low rocky outcrops and level fields which, in 1969, carried a fine crop of grain. The church lies near the south-east corner, close to the foot of the escarpment. About 100m to the north-west of it, on a low, rocky knoll, are the stripped remains of a villa-farm of imperial date. This had been a substantial building, built in orthostat-and-rubble masonry and of some architectural pretensions. Its agricultural interests are attested by the bases of several sunken *dolia* and at least two cement-lined silos. In late antiquity it was succeeded by (and its walls no doubt used to build) the fortified *gasr*, the scrub-covered ruins of which occupy another rocky outcrop, about 200m to the east of the villa and 400m north of the church. Cut into the slopes around the *gasr* are several large caves. Other visible remains are a quarry near the church, in the face of which are cut two tombs; a short distance to the west of this another rock-cut tomb; and westwards again a much larger quarry and at least four rock-cut tombs, one of them with *loculi* for 24 bodies.⁷ Beneath the scrub that now covers the next plateau to the west can be seen ancient field boundaries.

Unlike the village communities of the upper plateau, this was clearly a single agricultural estate, the property of some local Synesius whose family lived successively in the villa and in the *gasr*. Such an estate was itself a community, and it was to serve this community that the sixth-century owners built and later fortified the church.

El Atrun (Athroun, Latrun, Natrun), anc. Erythron, illus. 174-196, two churches; three bishops attested, perhaps four.

Bibliography

Stad. 50; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.3; *Syn. Epp.* 53, 66 with Roques 2000 *ad locc.*; Jerome *Epp.* 98; Steph. Byz. sv, citing Artemidorus *Geog.*; *Acta Conc. Eph.* 449, *ibid. Chalc.* 451; Pacho 1827, 139-41; Beecheys 1828, 478; Goodchild 1952a, 150 = 1976a, 152; Ward-Perkins 1957, 162; Goodchild/ Reynolds 1962, 46; Howard Carter 1963, 23; Jones/Little 1971, 76; Purcaro 1976, 335 (sv Erythron); Widrig 1978, 94-7; Roques 1987, 104, 329-34, 340, 353, 361, 365, 375; Reynolds 2000.

Erythron is one of the few Cyrenaican 'villages' known from literary evidence whose site is identified with certainty. There is some account of its geographical features by Ward-Perkins below, and more in Widrig 1978 (note that he thinks that the Gulf of Erythra in *Syn. Epp.* 55 might refer to parts of the Bay of Marsa Hilal other than the immediate vicinity of el Atrun, the spring of sweet water on the shore being perhaps Ain Treitish near Ras el Hilal). It stands on the cliffs at the mouth of the Wadi el Atrun in its own small but fertile coastal plain, also has access to a broadish fertile area of the Luseita behind, and, south of that again, to a well-watered section of the upper plateau; its connection with this hinterland is attested by *Syn. Epp.* 66 for the later fourth and early fifth centuries AD, and surely existed long before. Erythron is not mentioned in any pre-Roman source, however, and both Howard Carter 1963 and Widrig 1978 reported an absence of pre-Roman sherds among those that they found on the surface of the fields; it could always have been a useful agricultural centre, but apparently developed into importance only in the Roman period, and mainly, perhaps, in late antiquity. Reynolds now regards as wrong the suggestion of Goodchild/ Reynolds *cit.* that it was perhaps named as a *polis* in the (probably) sixth-century verses inscribed at Tarakenet (section 3a); although it may well be the case that the *polis* concerned was Erythron. In any case, the activities of its bishops (see below) and the existence of its two churches are undeniable proof that it had become a place of some note—surely better thought of as a small town than as a village, and perhaps qualifying for the title *polis* in the Byzantine period (cf. Gasr el Lebia, below, then known as *polis Theodorias*). Widrig stresses that it had no significant harbour, but it was certainly possible for ships to land cargoes in the vicinity (thus, presumably, the marble used in the churches) and to take off local agricultural produce. There is insufficient evidence to show whether it became a centre for pilgrimage as he speculates.

At least three bishops, possibly four, are attested: Orion, elderly and criticised as too peaceable, who is dated by Roques as still in office *c.* AD 365-6, probably after a long tenure; Sabbatios, his successor, who died, so Roques argues, in AD 401; and Paul, who replaced Sabbatios and was still in office when Synesius became bishop of Ptolemais. Gemellinus, present at the Council of Ephesus in AD 449, is the possible fourth, rejected by Roques because he is named there in a group of Egyptian bishops; but no Erythron is known in Egypt, so has the name perhaps been misplaced?¹

Orion's quietude (meaning, in Roques' view, his laxity in dealing with Arians) led the village communities of Hydrax and Palaibiska (section 3b) to break away from his see and elect a bishop of their own, Siderius, with the connivance of the bishop of Cyrene (see under Hydrax and Cyrene). When Siderius died, Theophilus, as metropolitan of Alexandria, returned the communities, with their agreement, to the see of Erythron, to which he had, by that time, appointed Paul. Roques suggests that Paul, and Dioskoros of Darnis (section 4bi), another of Theophilus' appointees, were probably the two young and recently appointed Libyan bishops who were involved in Theophilus' activity against John Chrysostom (Palladius, *Dialogus* p. 48, ll. 3-4, Coleman-Norton 1928); and also that Paul was one of the envoys sent to Theophilus at the time of Synesius' election as bishop of Ptolemais to explain the terms on which Synesius was willing to serve (*Syn. Epp.* 105). His prominence may have been the

¹ Widrig added a Dracontius, present at Chalcedon in AD 451, but he was certainly bishop of Erythrae in Asia Minor.

result of his personality and relationship with Theophilus rather than an indication of the importance of his see; but Erythron must have supported him and presumably gained prestige from him. According to Synesius the subsidiary villages of Hydrax and Palaibiska became Paul's firm adherents and strongly resisted when Theophilus wished to detach them from Erythron again. Moreover Paul certainly succeeded in extending the see's property; in part, perhaps, with the aim of providing for the defence of outlying communities exposed to the attacks of raiders. Synesius examined a case brought against Paul by Dioskoros of Darnis for underhand and even violent seizure of an earthquake-ruined fort at Hydrax which was capable of being repaired for use against the enemy; the property, he decided, belonged to the bishopric of Darnis, but when Paul showed penitence for his improprieties, the sympathies even of the Bishop of Darnis swung in his favour; he was able to acquire the fort, and, with it, associated vineyards and olive groves.

It is remarkable that, so far, no trace has been found of the church (or churches) in which these attested bishops of Erythron officiated (but see *East Church, Carved Fittings* no. 4c; *West Church, Carved Fittings* no. 4c, both of which might, perhaps, have derived from an earlier church). On the earliest dating suggested for the two churches described below, they were built around three quarters of a century later than the last clear reference to Paul; and comparatively splendid as they seem to have been, no known name is associated with their construction or use. It has sometimes been suggested that they were imperially-sponsored, but it is argued below that this is unlikely.

Discovery

The site was known to early travellers, already identified by Pacho and by the Beecheys, who described it as 'an ancient town of small dimensions'. The East Church was first brought to public notice by Goodchild, following his 1951 expedition, 'Mapping Roman Libya'. By 1957 it had suffered badly from the quarrying activities of the builders of a coastal road from Marsa Susa to Derna; to save it from further depredations it was excavated by Walter Widrig, then of New York University, in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities. During the course of the excavation, the West Church was found, and similarly excavated in 1962. Limited further work was undertaken in 1965, after which some movable finds were taken to Apollonia Museum, some features were re-buried, and some obscured by necessary conservation.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited el Atrun in 1955 and 1957, made notes on the East Church, the only one visible at that time, and arranged for it to be surveyed by S. M. Staples. He returned in 1969 to supplement his notes after the excavation, and to study the West Church for the first time. On this occasion both churches were surveyed by Sheila Gibson and Margaret Browne, and Sara Paton measured and described many of the loose fittings. Unfortunately, as a result of action taken on the spot to preserve the monuments and to secure some of the more interesting fittings by their removal to Apollonia Museum, Ward-Perkins' observations, like those of Stucchi made at about the same time, and those of the surveyors, were inevitably defective. Ward-Perkins' accounts of the two churches were written before Widrig's excavation report was published in 1978, and therefore present problems, as he was aware that they might. They contain some errors which we have corrected (the longer in small print, the shorter between square brackets) and some omissions on points on which we have offered supplementary information, most of it derived from Widrig, but some from Ward-Perkins' notebooks and from Sara Paton's record. For the West Church the file contains two typed versions of Ward-Perkins' account, of which we have printed the fuller. Professor Widrig has given most helpful advice, but must not be held responsible for errors that we may have introduced.

The Site and the Monuments

A pair of very similar churches perched on the cliffs between the modern coast-road and the sea, about 30km east of Apollonia and 10km east of Ras el Hilal. This was the site of the ancient Erythron, a coasting station mentioned in the *Stadiasmus Maris Magni* and by Ptolemy.

At this point there is a short, narrow deep-water inlet, inaccessible by sea in rough weather but affording excellent shelter from the prevailing north-west wind. At the mouth of the inlet on the west side, about 100m to the north-east of the East Church, there are the remains of a square building situated on a knoll, with a wide (artificially enlarged?) depression on the landward neck and traces of walls built of large blocks projecting from it. This may simply have been a fortified tower (*gasr*), but it could also have been a wall placed to carry a beacon light.

The East Church lies a short distance to the west of the inlet, near the cliff-edge, and westwards again, just beyond it, there are the remains of what are presumably secular buildings of the succeeding periods, the later ones laid out on roughly the same orientation as the church, the earlier aligned obliquely to it. The earlier levels include floors of *opus signinum* and an oil-press.

The West Church lies another *c.* 200m to the west, again on the cliff-edge. Between the two churches the line of the cliffs curves inwards to form a shallow re-entrant, in the slopes of which can be seen a number of tombs. In the field boundaries in the vicinity there are a number of pieces of ancient masonry.

1. The East Church (Widrig's Basilica A), illus. 174-83.

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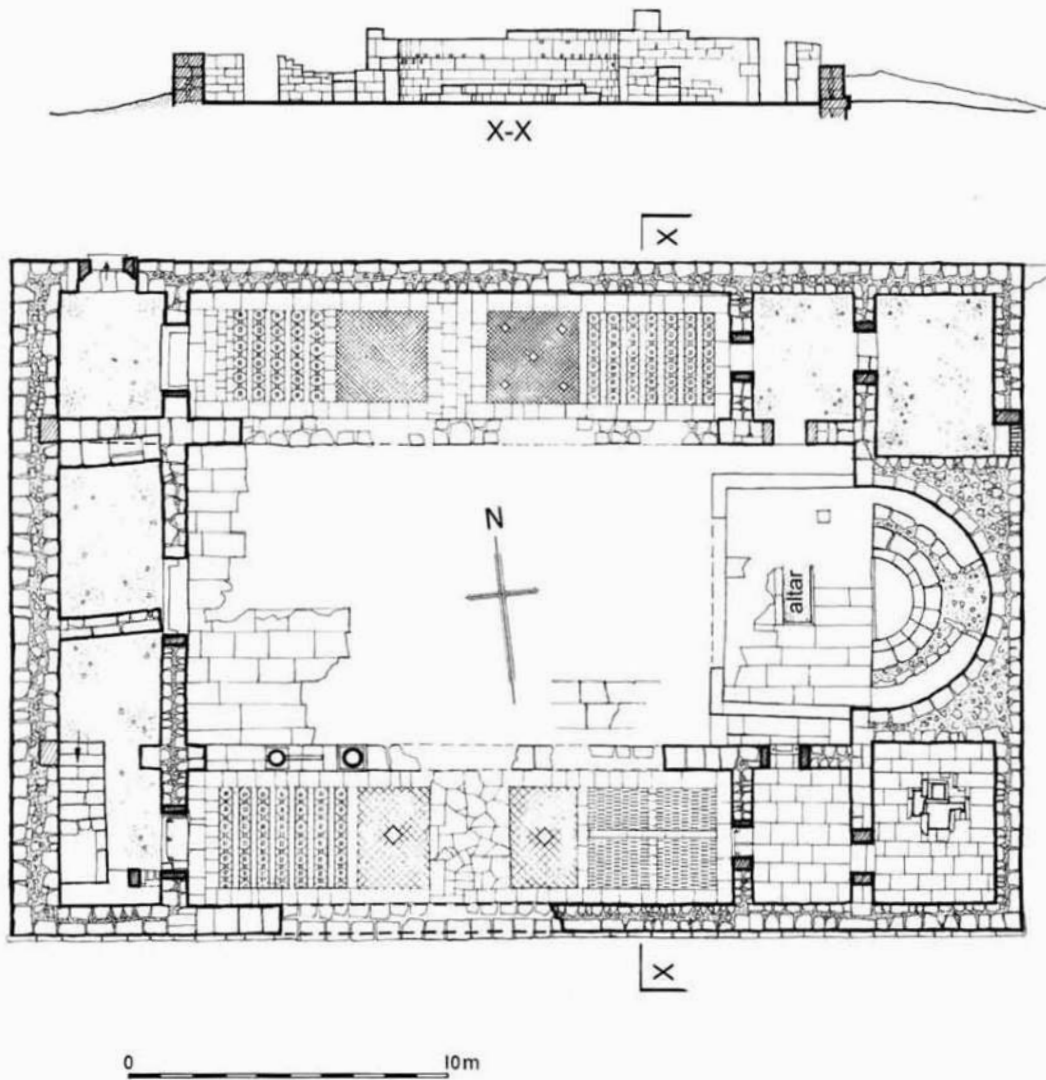
Widrig in Sichtermann 1962, cols. 433-4; Widrig 1978, 97-108; Goodchild 1966a, 218; Ward-Perkins 1972, 227-8; Stucchi 1975, 375-6, 378; Sodini/Kolokotsas 1984, 41, 44, 76, 137; Sodini 1989, 164, 165, 169 (but conflating the site with Gasr el Lebia), 204, and especially figs. 4, 5, 6, 9, 11; Krautheimer 1986, 267, 268, 492; Duval 1989b, 2745, 2747, 2758, 2764, 2765, 2767, 2769, 2770, 2771, 2772, 2773, 2774, 2782, 2784, 2785, 2786, 2787, 2789; Bonacasa Carra 1998; for the masons' marks, Sodini 1987b, 510; Deichmann 1989, 375 (both following Widrig 1978); for capitals, Sodini 1987, figs. 5, 6, 9.

Three-aisled basilical church with an eastern apse, angle-chapels and an internal narthex, the whole inserted within a rectangular outer frame (illus. 174, 175). Along the south side there is a shallow, rock-cut ditch.² Although the remains suffered at the hands of the road-builders, the ground plan is nowhere in doubt. Much of the elevation can be determined from the numerous marble fittings that have survived³ and from the analogy of the very similar, but better preserved, West Church.

Not only has the building been laid out with unusual precision, the external walls forming an almost exact rectangle, 32m long by 21.5m wide, but the masonry too is of better quality than usual. The apse, the inner face of the apse, the outer faces of the outer walls and such individual features as quoins,

² The ditch was found to turn the corners at both ends of the wall, but terminates soon after. Widrig believes it to be one of the several late features which indicate conversion of the church into a fortress. On the disputed matter of fortification of churches see *Introduction II, Defensive Uses*.

³ Some of Proconnesian, but Ward-Perkins reckoned that some of the marble used at Latrun probably originated in the quarries at Thasos. This was shown to be correct by analysis in 2002.



EL ATRUN
EAST CHURCH

Illus. 174. El Atrun: East Church, measured plan; it does not show the door in the west wall found by Widrig but not now visible (Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler).



Illus. 175. El Atrun: East Church, interior from the west end.

responds and door-jambs are built of dressed blocks of the local stone (a concreted sandstone) which have all the appearance of having been quarried specifically for the purpose. Although there is no clear masonry formula, nor is the coursing exact, along the exterior of the north wall there is a deliberate alternation of tall and short courses. The inner faces of the outer walls and most of the internal walls are faced with smaller coursed blocks, with a core of rubble set in mud.

Except at the west end, where the narthex has undergone considerable modification at some late date, the building seems to have remained in use substantially as it was first constructed.⁴ It comprises an inscribed eastern apse (illus. 176) framed between a pair of short, broad angle-chapels;⁵ a central nave flanked by a double arcaded order, consisting of five pairs of columns⁶ and, at the east end, a stretch of walling on either side of the chancel-enclosure; aisles, of which the east end, in each case, formed an antechamber

⁴ Widrig 1962 and so Stucchi 1975 postulated two building periods, the second, Widrig suggested, after a fire; but Widrig 1978 abandoned the two periods and concluded that signs of burning were restricted to the southern compartment of the narthex, under the late staircase.

⁵ The angle-chapels are unusual in being broader than the side aisles (5m as compared with 4m).

⁶ Widrig calculated (from the intercolumniation of the two columns found *in situ* and the eastern responds extant in 1960) that there were six pairs, whereas Ward-Perkins interpreted the evidence differently and claimed the existence of respond walls also at the east end (as shown in Sheila Gibson's plan, illus. 174).



Illus. 176. El Atrun: East Church, apse, synthronon and chancel.

to the angle-chapel beyond; over the aisles, galleries;⁷ and at the west end an internal narthex divided into three compartments in conformity with the nave and aisles. The only entrances [visible at the time of the survey] were at the north end of the narthex and at the south-east corner of the north-east angle-chapel.⁸

The Eastern Angle-Chapels

The west walls of the two angle-chapels were continuous with, and, except at the north end, of the same massive build as the shoulders of the apse, the other three walls in each case being faced internally with the usual smaller, coursed masonry. The north-east chapel had two entrances, one from the antechapel, the other (blocked in later antiquity) from the exterior, right up against the outer corner of the apse.⁹ The chapel had a plain earthen floor and appears to have been little more than a secondary vestibule.¹⁰ Its south-eastern counter-

⁷ There is no doubt that there were galleries in the West Church, and in the light of that they are deducible here too, given the presence of column-bases and shafts which are very like those of the main nave colonnades but smaller (see *Carved Fittings* 1bi-iii). Krautheimer 1986 argued that the use of galleries was spreading in the provinces during Justinian's reign, and that their appearance at el Atrun probably marked their first introduction to Cyrenaica. He suggested that plans for a galleried church might have been sent from Constantinople with the marble fittings.

⁸ Neither Ward-Perkins nor Stucchi saw a door in the centre of the west outer wall, but excavation revealed that it existed (Widrig 1978, plate III) and that it was eventually blocked; in Widrig's view the door at the north end of the narthex was opened only when this axial door was blocked. It is not marked on *illus. 174*, which records only what could be seen when the church was surveyed by Sheila Gibson.

⁹ After it was blocked it was converted into a niche or cupboard.

¹⁰ It contained an unusual capital in local stone, consisting of a square abacus on a cylindrical drum which was stuccoed and painted in red with lozenges containing dots (*Carved Fittings* 4c).



Illus. 177. El Atrun: East Church, baptismal font, adapted to take reliquary chests.

part was more elaborate. It was accessible only from the antechapel, with which it shared a common pavement of sandstone slabs. Just north of the middle of this pavement, and recessed into it, there are the remains of a small, cruciform, baptismal font (illus. 177), and on the walls there are traces of three successive coats of plaster.¹¹ The font was later partly dismantled and some of its slabs used to convert its northern arm into what looks like a rather crude reliquary recess.¹²

Though structurally part of the nave-complex, in terms of function the two antechapels clearly went closely with the chapels themselves. Both had three doors. That on the north side had an earthen floor and can have been little more than a passageway. That on the south side was paved continuously with the angle-chapel, and it is noticeable that, whereas many of the doorways within the building seem to have been open arches, the two leading from the nave (chancel) and aisle into the baptistery wing were fitted with wooden doors that could be closed.

The Nave and Aisles

The nave, 21m long by 9.5m wide, has been rather badly robbed for its good stone, but the respond and two westernmost bases of the south arcade are still in position, together with the somewhat irregularly upstanding seating between

¹¹ All interior walls of the church were found to have been stuccoed and then painted (although it was not possible to determine the exact colours used nor the patterns executed). The exterior walls were also stuccoed.

¹² The adaptation of the font provided space for two limestone reliquary boxes; fragments of two boxes (illustrated by Duval 1989b, 2777, fig. 24) were in fact found, one in the baptistery and the other in its ante-chapel.

them (illus. 175). The grey marble column-bases stood on squared plinths, with transenna slabs seemingly running the full length of the nave between them, wherever necessary, supported on a marble strip.¹³ The two marble orders, of which the lower one had Corinthian and the upper Ionic impost capitals, were certainly arcaded [although no voussoirs were found].¹⁴ The nave itself was paved with large marble slabs, laid longitudinally, the aisles with local sandstone, laid in panels of neat geometrical patterns within a framework of rectangular slabs (illus. 174).¹⁵

The Apse and Chancel

Built of unusually good-quality masonry, the apse, 2.5m narrower than the nave, was entirely occupied by a *synthronon*, the footings and two lowest steps of which were found intact (illus. 176). Except on the axial line, where the footings were wider and rest against the apse-masonry, they were built independently, with a roughly-concentric space between the two. Above this space, 10cm above pavement level, small sockets cut into the masonry of the apse mark the position of the timber which carried the actual seating of the *synthronon*, while the axial projection of the footings (above which there are no such sockets) presumably marks the position of the bishop's throne.

The chancel occupied a rectangular enclosure (4m by 7.8m), projecting into the nave from the shoulders of the apse¹⁶ and delimited by a neat 6cm sandstone step. The chancel-posts were dowelled directly into this step, whereas the screen slabs rested on a shallow marble moulding identical with that found in the West Church.¹⁷ On the sandstone step can be seen some of the scored setting-out lines.

The chancel enclosure was paved with marble slabs, and in the centre there are the remains of the low marble plinth (1m by about 1.60m) which once carried the altar. This was presumably of the usual form, carried on marble colonnettes, and over it stood the marble canopy of which elements (columns, column-bases, and low, moulded plinths) can be seen in the accumulated marble débris.¹⁸ It is instructive to observe that of these elements only the columns and their bases were dowelled together; the rest being used without dowels and apparently without any prepared seatings either on the altar base or on the paving around it. When dealing with the remains of an architecture in which conventional building practices were so haphazardly applied, one has to be very careful about using the *argumentum ex silentio*.

¹³ The two column-bases of the south arcade which were found *in situ* have cuttings for the attachment of a screen and a marble footing for it running between them. For the possibility that there were cushions of lead between bases and shafts see West Church, note 35.

¹⁴ For the absence of voussoirs compare, notably, the East Church at Apollonia (section 1) and Ras el Hilal below. At Apollonia/Sozusa, Ward-Perkins argued from impost-blocks to arcades (as implied here); at Hilal, Harrison suggested the possibility of wooden beams.

¹⁵ The patterns are shown on the plan (illus. 174); see also Widrig 1978, 128.

¹⁶ There is a square niche in the south shoulder of the apse, just outside the chancel enclosure, with an inscribed cross above it.

¹⁷ Duval 1989b, 2770, identifies handrails here (see under *Carved Fittings* 3.ii.).

¹⁸ For the altar, see *Carved Fittings* 3.c-e., and for the canopy, no. 3.f. In the absence of footings, Widrig is unwilling to accept that there had been a canopy, but offers no satisfactory alternative placement for the fragments interpreted as such by Ward-Perkins, by Stucchi (who believed that they provided the earliest evidence for a canopy in Cyrenaica), and (though less firmly) by Duval.

The Narthex

The Narthex was divided into three compartments by broad arches; the preserved responds artificially bond with the nave-and outer façade-walls and are on line with the nave-support system. In the west wall a single central entrance of 1.80m breadth originally gave access from the outside, but was subsequently blocked, presumably being replaced by the door visible in the north wall. Three doorways with recessed marble sills (*in situ*) and elaborately-moulded marble jambs gave into the nave (2.5m wide) and the two side-aisles (each 2.0m wide). The type of their jambs and the analogy of the West Church suggest that they had marble lintels with elaborately moulded faces.

Otherwise the narthex is heavily overlaid with structures that are certainly later than the original building, and very possibly of more than one period. Two transverse walls, built slightly obliquely and one of them partially blocking the main door into the nave, look like post-Christian secular occupation. On the other hand, an internal thickening of the south wall (with a recess built into the thickening) and the insertion of a flight of steps could well be an attempt to provide better access to the galleries, for which the original builders seem to have made surprisingly little provision.

A substantial outer thickening of the west wall may or may not be comparable in intention to that of the West Church, but the very small entrances and the ditch along the south side do imply a wish on the part of the builders to control access to the building. Though not, perhaps, strictly speaking, a fortified church, it was a church built with an eye to troubled times.¹⁹

Carved Fittings

Carved Fittings (compiled by Reynolds from Widrig's text and the notebooks of Ward-Perkins and Sara Paton). Sodini 1989, 164, fn. 3, refers to a study of the capitals prepared by himself with Duval in 1983 which, unfortunately, remains unpublished.

1. The nave colonnades:

a lower order

- i nine blue-grey marble column-bases of simplified Attic type;²⁰ measurements variable, plinth below *c.* 0.70m x *c.* 0.70m, upper diam. in two cases *c.* 0.55m, the other seven 0.44m-0.48m, hts. 0.20m-0.26m. Each base has a groove *c.* 0.10m wide in the centre of one side and on the opposite side an area of the same width in which the moulding is uncut. The two large bases are *in situ* in the north colonnade, in which other known bases are of the smaller size. For masons' marks, see below.
- ii four substantially complete column shafts of Proconnesian marble and a number of fragments;²¹ finished below with a single raised band, and above (normally) with a moulding and a thin band below it. When complete, ht. at least 2.70m, lower diam. *c.* 0.46m, upper *c.* 0.44m. For masons' marks, see below.

¹⁹ Widrig speculates on the elevation, lighting and roofing, for all of which there is suggestive but not conclusive evidence; and he stresses both the total absence of voussoir blocks among the finds, despite the virtual certainty that there were arches (see also n. 14 above), and the apparent absence of staircases earlier than the late one in the narthex, despite the certainty that there were galleries, as well as the high probability that there were upper storeys above the angle-chapels and the narthex. All original staircases must have been of wood.

²⁰ Probably Proconnesian. For production of column-bases on Proconnesos see Asgari 1992.

²¹ For production of column-shafts on Proconnesos see Asgari 1992; and for the possibility that some of these might be Thasian, see *Introduction II, Interior Fittings, Marble*.



Illus. 178. El Atrun: East Church, marble capital from nave colonnade.

- iii six Corinthian capitals of Proconnesian marble (one illustrated, *illus. 178*);²² measurements variable, ave. ht. *c.* 0.59m, lower diam. *c.* 0.46m, upper diam. *c.* 0.44m. For masons' marks, see below. For parallels see Sodini 1987*a*, 234, fn. 28; *id.* 1989, figs. 4, 5.
 - iv seven marble Ionic impost-blocks, complete or substantially so (one illustrated, *illus. 179*), measurements variable, diam. below *c.* 0.37m, upper surface *c.* 0.89m × 0.86m, ht. *c.* 0.35m, with a Latin cross in relief on two opposite sides. For masons' marks, see below. For parallels see Sodini 1989, figs. 9, 11.
- b* The upper order (gallery arcade; features *i* and *ii* are of the same material and form as the lower order; see also the parallels adduced for the items listed under *1.a*).
- i* four column-bases and some fragments; plinths, *c.* 0.65m × 0.65m, upper diam. 0.465m, ht. 0.23m. For masons' marks see below.
 - ii* four marble column-shafts and some fragments; when complete, ht. at least 2.38m, lower diam. *c.* 0.445m, upper diam. *c.* 0.36m. For masons' marks see below.
 - iii at least one Ionic impost-capital, diam. below 0.37m, upper surface 0.68m × 0.68m, ht. *c.* 0.35m. For masons' marks see below.

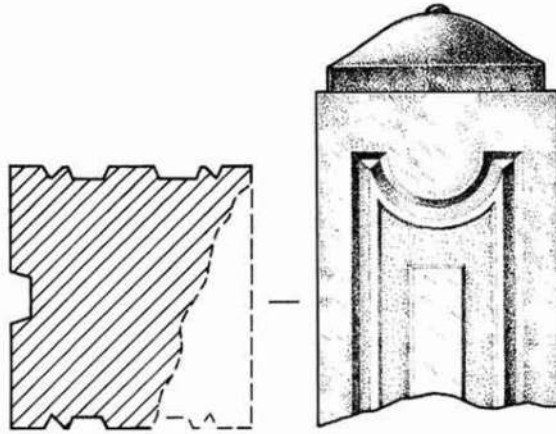


Illus. 179. El Atrun: East Church, marble impost block from nave colonnade.

2. Screens: (one illustrated, *illus. 183*; see also Widrig 1978, 127)

Four panels apparently of Proconnesian marble, cut to several sizes and designs: a number must be missing, since screens will have been needed not only to surround the chancel, and for the *solea* (if there was one), but also for the intercolumniations of

²² For production of Corinthian capitals on Proconnesos, see Asgari 1988.



Illus. 180. El Atrun: East Church, chancel post (W. A. Foster from a sketch made by J. B. Ward-Perkins in 1955).

nave-arcades and gallery-arcades. The four that have been found are on display in Apollonia Museum (1998).²³

- a w. 2.79m x ht. 1.02m showing ✱ within a moulded circular frame, having an elaborate knot below from which tendrils curve to either side, terminating in upturned ivy-leaves pointing towards latin crosses. Found in the *narthex*, possibly from a *solea*, but damage to the nave has removed evidence for its existence.
- b w. 2.05m x ht. 1.02m, showing the same design as *a*; probably from the chancel.
- c w. 1.43m x ht. 0.88m, showing a design similar to that of *a*, *b*, but the ivy-leaf terminals of its tendrils point down towards the corners of the panels and there are no flanking crosses.
- d w. 1.00m x ht. 0.74m, showing a Latin cross within a diamond-shaped moulding repeated three times, the inner diamond with ivy-leaves (?) at each of its angles, the outer one with a trilobe motif at the two side-angles. For parallels see Sodini 1989, 183 and fig. 11.

3. Other chancel-fittings: most now on display in Apollonia Museum (1998).

- a parts of three marble chancel-posts, all damaged above, are reported by Widrig, and one was recorded before excavation began by Ward-Perkins (1955 notebook; see illus. 180), the lower part buried but its pie-crust top visible. Assuming that they are a set, it seems that posts which carried colonnettes, a possibility envisaged by Widrig, are excluded. Of Widrig's three posts, one is described as large, closely resembling the posts of the central church at Apollonia/Sozusa and necessarily from an entrance, since it is grooved for a screen on one side only; a second is too short for use in the chancel-screen, and Widrig suggests that it might have been associated with the bishop's throne.
- b a number of fragments of apparently Proconnesian marble, having a *cyma recta* moulding on both side-faces, and one surface with a continuous groove *c.* 0.10m wide along its centre (illus. 176); nothing is said of the other surface, and the pieces seen in 1998 are too heavy for Reynolds to overturn. Ward-Perkins noted that there are here plinths to carry the chancel-screens; but there are also items

²³ See also the discussion in *Introduction II, Interior fittings, Marble*. The designs are paralleled in Thasian production, but in the sixth century it seems that Thasian masons may have been imitating Proconnesian (Sodini 1989, 164-5), so that these parallels may be misleading.

which Widrig thought might be either handrails set on the panels or a decorative feature fixed above both screens and posts. Duval identifies them as handrails for the screens, for which there are examples at Thasos (Sodini/ Kolokotsas 1984, 91-2).

- c two sides of the marble revetment for the sandstone altar-base (which has been robbed out).
- d four complete grey marble colonnettes and one fragmentary one, from the six which carried the altar table.



Illus. 181. El Atrun: East Church, marble capitals from the chancel area.

- e fragments from one edge and two corners of the white marble altar table.
- f three bases of local stone (with cuttings for screens), fragments of the marble columns that they supported and two of their marble capitals, finely-carved with birds at the corners (illus. 181); they seem best explained as parts of a canopy over the altar (despite the absence of footings or dowel-holes for them; so Ward-Perkins, Stucchi, and Duval, against Widrig). The capitals with birds at the corners are likely to be of Justinianic date. One of the capitals in this group, seen in Apollonia Museum in 1998, has \ominus (*epsilon* or *omega*) painted, apparently in antique paint (but without an analysis one cannot be sure).

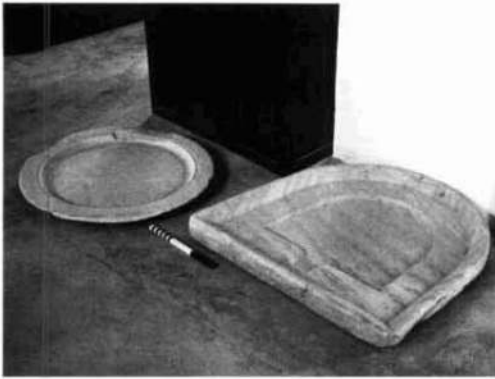
4. Miscellaneous

- a fragments of two limestone reliquary-boxes, probably from the converted font in the baptistery; the more complete box measured *c.* 0.44m x 0.40m and enough survives of the lid to show a relief of a cross with forked terminals within a wreath (Widrig's plate ii b).
- b a large dish of very white marble, diam. 0.66m (illus. 182) on display in Apollonia Museum (1998).
- c a stone capital found in the north-east angle-chapel, whose square *abacus* is set on a cylindrical drum which has been stuccoed and painted with red lozenges containing dots.
- d the lower halves of elaborately-moulded marble door-jambs for the doors between the narthex and the nave and the nave-aisles.
- e displayed with the items from el Atrun in Apollonia Museum (1998) and presumably therefrom, a sigma-table, 0.78m x 0.73m, probably of Proconnesian marble (illus. 182).
- f displayed with the items from el Atrun in Apollonia Museum (1998) and presumably therefrom, a capital, probably of Proconnesian marble, ht. *c.* 0.26m, featuring acanthus leaves curving outwards at the corners, width across the upper surface *c.* 0.365m, which has been painted in blue and reddish brown.

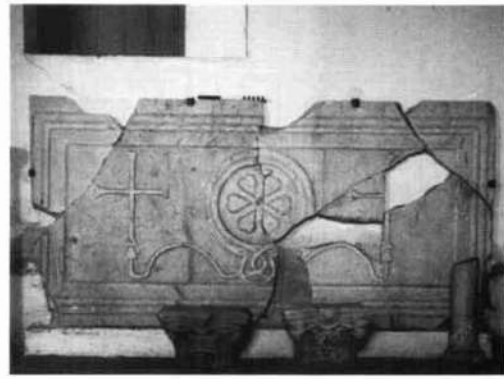
Masons' marks

Many of these marks were published by Widrig and taken from him into the publications of Sodini 1987*b* and Deichmann 1989. We have added the additional marks recorded by Paton and illustrated them with facsimiles which are a more accurate record of their appearance.

1. On the underside of Corinthian capitals: *a, b* recorded by Sara Paton, *c* by Ward-Perkins and Widrig, *d* by Widrig.



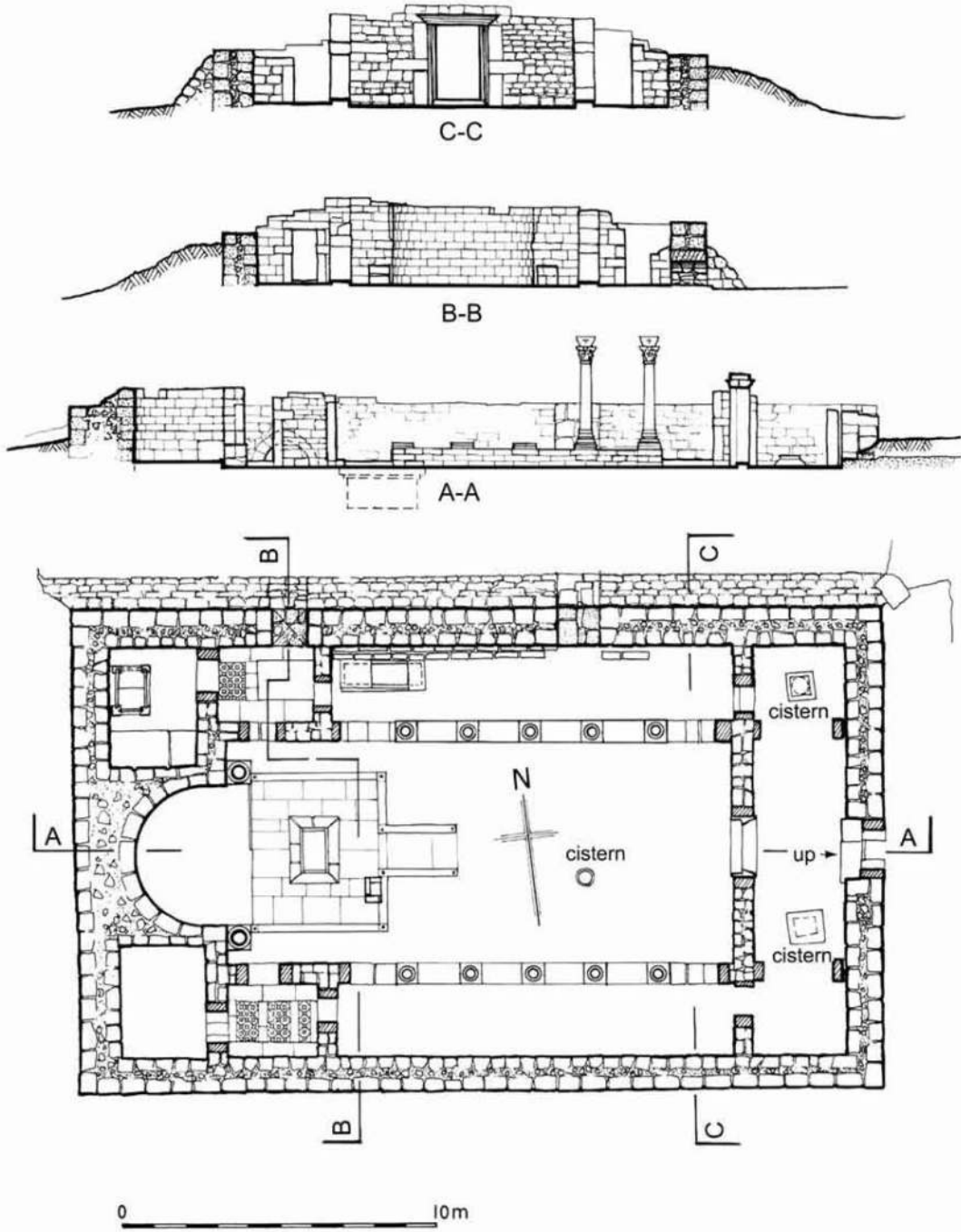
Illus. 182. El Atrun: East Church, marble plate and 'sigma' altar.



Illus. 183. El Atrun: East Church, marble chancel screen.

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------------|------|--|
| <i>a</i> | Base diam. 0.46 | ϵ | (probably cursive <i>alpha</i> : cf. 2 <i>c</i> below). |
| <i>b</i> | Base diam. 0.45 | Γ, Δ | (<i>gamma</i> and <i>delta</i>). |
| <i>c</i> | | Λ | (<i>delta</i> , <i>lambda</i> or <i>alpha</i>). |
| <i>d</i> | | ϵ | (? <i>lambda</i> or <i>alpha</i> , <i>rho</i> or cursive <i>alpha</i>). |
2. On the underside of five Ionic impost blocks; *a* to *c* in the southern and *d* in the northern line: *a*–*e* recorded by Paton; *f*, *g* by Widrig.
- | | | | |
|----------|------------|---|--|
| <i>a</i> | Diam. 0.36 | ϵ | (lunate <i>epsilon</i> or possibly <i>omega</i>). |
| <i>b</i> | Diam. 0.36 | Δ | (<i>delta</i> : cf. 1. <i>b</i> above, and <i>c</i> below). |
| <i>c</i> | Diam 0.36 | ϵ | (probably cursive <i>alpha</i> ; in the same hand as 1. <i>a</i>) |
| <i>d</i> | Diam 0.37 | Δ | (<i>delta</i> , probably in the same hand as <i>b</i> . above, and perhaps as 1. <i>b</i>) |
| <i>e</i> | Diam. 0.35 | ϵ | (probably cursive <i>alpha</i>) |
| <i>f</i> | | ρ | (probably <i>rho</i>) |
| <i>g</i> | | ρ | (probably <i>rho</i>) |
3. On the lower moulding of four column shafts:²⁴ *a*–*c* recorded by Paton and Widrig, *d* by Paton.
- | | | | |
|----------|--|----|---------------------|
| <i>a</i> | | ϕι | (<i>phi iota</i>) |
| <i>b</i> | | Β | (<i>beta</i>) |
| <i>c</i> | | ϕι | (<i>phi iota</i>) |
| <i>d</i> | | ϕι | (<i>phi iota</i>) |

²⁴ Φι (perhaps for a name like Φίλιππος or Φίλων) probably recurs on a capital found in the Central Church at Apollonia, and it is also found at Constantinople in S. Sophia (so Deichmann and Sodini). For implications see *Introduction II, Interior fittings, Marble*.



EL ATRUN
WEST CHURCH

Illus. 184. El Atrun: West Church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson).

4. On three bases: recorded by Paton and Widrig.

a In the southern line; this base carries two separate letters, on an unmoulded strip: ϵ (which might be read as lunate *epsilon*, but is possibly better taken as *omega*), and on the side at right angles to the above: ω *omega*

b In the northern line, on the circular area on which the shaft was to stand: B, *beta*

It is a reasonable conjecture that single letters cut on the undersides of the stones are assembly-guides, while in other positions they, and even more probably the groups of letters, are the abbreviated names of craftsmen. For further discussion see *Introduction II, Interior fittings, Marble*.

2. The West Church (Widrig's Basilica A), illus. 184-196. [By autumn 2002 there had been further work here by A. Laronde, including reconstruction of the chancel screen].

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 218; Ward-Perkins 1972, 227-8; Stucchi 1975, 364, 376, 377, 379, 381, 432, 437 n.4; Widrig 1978, 108-125, 130-1; Sodini/Kolokotsas 1984, 92, 121, 137, 164, 204, 221; Krautheimer 1986, 267, 268, 492; Duval 1989*b*, 2758, 2759, 2761-2, 2764, 2765, 2767, 2771, 2772, 2773, 2774, 2775, 2776, 2778, 2779, 2780, 2781, 2785, 2786, 2787; Sodini 1989, 163-86; Bonacasa Carra 1999; for the masons' marks, Sodini 1987*b*, 570; Deichmann 1989, 375 (both following Widrig); for the capitals, Sodini 1989, figs. 5, 6, 9.

The better-preserved West Church was smaller than its neighbour (24m by 15.6m); it was oriented differently, with the apse to the west; and had neither *synthronon*²⁵ nor baptistery (illus. 184). But the overall plan, the workmanship and the marble fittings, so closely resemble those of the East Church that there can be no possible doubt that the two buildings are part of a single project, built on a single occasion.²⁶

A *talus* (revetment) runs the entire length of the northern flank of the church.²⁷ Its purpose is to buttress the northern wall of the building (illus. 185). It turns both corners (the apse- and narthex-ends of the church) but is then quickly terminated. The slope of the land toward the edge of the bluff bordering the sea is steep here and must have threatened the fabric of the high north wall. This was not part of the original building-plan.

The masonry is of a quality well above average throughout, generally heavier and more substantial than in most of the East Church. Both in the wall-faces and the squared blocks used for quoins, door-frames and pilasters, the surfaces were dressed with a fine-toothed chisel.²⁸ The widespread recurrence of a distinctive mason's mark²⁹ confirms the impression that much of the stone was quarried expressly for use in this building, as seems also to

²⁵ Widrig 1978 canvassed the possibility of a *synthronon*, but decided on the whole against it; Ward-Perkins' notes indicate that he too had been in two minds about it; Duval 1989*b*, 2776, believes that there was one.

²⁶ Widrig allows the possibility of a short interval (a few years) between them. Stucchi places the West Church as the later of the two by a little.

²⁷ There was originally a gap in the revetment, corresponding to the door in the north wall, which gave access to the tombs cut in the cliffside here. Subsequently both doorway and gap were blocked.

²⁸ All walls, both exterior and interior, were stuccoed.

²⁹ Drawn in the notebook as π , a curvaceous letter *pi*.



Illus. 185. El Atrun: West Church, revetment along north side.



Illus. 186. El Atrun: West Church, the nave from the west, showing chancel with altar-base, ambon-steps, chancel-posts, handrail, and the plinth which carried the five central columns of the north arcade.

have been the case for the East Church. The outer walls are consistently 1.20m thick. There were rock-cut cisterns under both nave and narthex.³⁰

The Western Angle-Chapels³¹

The south-west chapel has been excavated to below the offset of the foundation course and presumably had only an earthen floor. Except for traces of plaster on the walls it is featureless. The antechapel was more elaborate, with a floor of small sandstone tiles laid in a rosette pattern. The three doorways had flat lintels,³² and were fitted with wooden doors, of which those towards the aisle and the angle-chapel opened inwards and that towards the chancel outwards. This was a small independent suite, which could be locked from the outside and which would have served admirably as a sacristy or treasury.

The north antechapel and the greater part of the north-west angle-chapel were similarly-paved with shaped stone tiles (at the south end of the latter there were large stone slabs). Against the west wall of the angle-chapel there was an upstanding box-like structure, consisting of four grooved angle-posts and four sand-stone slabs; the lid has gone. It could well be the container for a reliquary.³³

A curious and unexplained feature is an arch, just over a metre wide, built into the north outer wall just inside the ante-chapel and springing from just below floor level. It can never have been a passageway and it is much too large for a drain. The most likely explanation is that it is structural, carrying the outer wall over some buried point of weakness in the foundations.³⁴

The Nave and Aisles

The main lines of the nave correspond very closely with, but are much better preserved than, those of the East Church, with a lower order with capitals and impost blocks to carry stone arcades³⁵ (illus. 185 shows the tops of two columns restored in position, with capitals and imposts), and an upper order for the galleries with Ionic impost-capitals. There is, however, one odd feature, namely that, whereas the two terminal arches of each arcade were slightly

³⁰ No excavation below the nave and narthex floors was allowed, so that examination of the cisterns was cursory; but three well-heads, one in the nave and two in the narthex, suggest three cisterns. They were fed by drainage from the roof, the two in the narthex perhaps via an open water-channel of which some sections were found running alongside the north wall.

³¹ As in the East Church, the angle-chapels were broader than the aisles (3.80m as compared with 2.30m).

³² One lintel was found.

³³ A 'sarcophagus-shrine', in Widrig's description. Its contents had been removed, leaving only earth-débris with a few unidentifiable bones.

³⁴ Widrig decided that it must be a relieving arch.

³⁵ Bases and column-shafts in the colonnades were dowelled, although impost-blocks were simply set on capitals. In addition, Widrig noted that a cushion of lead was apparently provided between bases and shafts (some six of these were found; one shown in illus. 192); for discussion see *Introduction II, Interior Fittings, Marble*. It should be noted that Kapitän 1980 cites Ward-Perkins for a comparison of the bases with those in the Marzamemi wreck.

There were screens between the columns of both orders at ground level, only the first arch from the door on either side being open to allow movement between nave and aisles; one screen was found *in situ* (Widrig 1978, plate xi). In all, substantial portions of thirty-one were found, one more than the minimum required for the chancel and the nave arcades. They show variations in lengths and heights which suggest that there was at least one other placement. Most are now (1998) laid out on the open ground to the south of the church. On the designs see Widrig 1978, 130-1 and his plates xvi *a-d*, xvii *a-b*. For parallels at Aliki in Thasos, see Sodini /Kolokotsas 1984, Sodini 1989, 183f. and fig. 11.



Illus. 187. El Atrun: West Church, apse and chancel.

larger and reached down to the floor level, the five intervening columns stood on a continuous plinth just over half a metre high (illus. 186), upon which in turn stood *transenna* slabs [as shown in Widrig 1978, plate xi]. It looks as if the architect found that the columns supplied were too short for the desired proportions of his building. A number of fallen blocks with a stuccoed moulding presumably come from a string course above the gallery arcade.³⁶

The south aisle is featureless, but there is a low bench along the north wall of the north aisle and at the north-west corner of it, just outside the doorway into the antechapel, a large plain marble slab (1.03m x 2.65m) covered a well-built grave.³⁷ A doorway in the outer north wall, opposite the second column on the right, is not an original feature. It was probably opened up when the sloping outer reinforcement was added, and at some later date again it was re-closed.

³⁶ In addition to elements of the gallery-arcade, some evidence for a floor of mortared rubble was found, much as at Ras el Hilal (below).

³⁷ The nave and chancel were paved with white marble slabs, the side-aisles with small sandstone blocks forming an octagon pattern (Widrig 1978, plate ix), interrupted once in the north aisle and twice in the south by tomb-covers (those in the south aisle not visible at the time of the survey). Under the marble cover-slab in the north aisle was an under-cover formed by finely carved slabs of local stone presumed to be the work of local masons (illus. 193, 195). See also *Carved Fittings*. Both tombs in the south aisle had cover-slabs of local stone. All three tombs, like the sarcophagus in the north angle-chapel, had been emptied in antiquity and contained only earth and a few minor fragments of bone, with, in one case, part of the bottom of a stone ossuary box. The covers had been carefully replaced on the tombs after they were emptied.

The Apse and Chancel

The apse was well built (illus. 187), but, except for a low step up from the chancel, featureless, with an earthen floor.³⁸ Perhaps, being concealed by curtains or a screen, paving of any sort was felt to be an unnecessary luxury. It was flanked by two columns, not let into the shoulders but, as in Apollonia Central Church, projecting forward from them. The chancel is unusually complete, a rectangular marble-paved enclosure slightly narrower than the nave (5m x 4.30m) with a short entrance passage (*solea*) (illus. 186, 187),³⁹ a central altar (illus. 187) and a canopy over the altar.⁴⁰ It is delimited by a marble step, on which can be seen the dowel holes for the chancel posts (those in the middles of the north and south sides were concealed at the time of our survey, but on every analogy may be restored as framing central openings). As in the East Church, the actual chancel slabs rested in the slots of a low moulded plinth (illus. 187).⁴¹

In the middle of the floor a moulded marble slab (itself suspiciously like an altar table), with the seatings for four colonnettes, marks the position of the altar (illus. 186, 187). It is framed within a sandstone step, which is presumably (as at Gasr el Lebia East Church) a later addition. Lying loose in the apse are two columns (not in one piece with their capitals) of a marble canopy.⁴² [The sandstone steps for an *ambon* are] built up against the inner face of the screen, just to the left of the east entrance (illus. 187).

The Narthex

The narthex was a simple corridor running the full width of the building, divided only by shallow pilasters on the lines of the nave-arcades (the pilasters presumably carried tall transverse arches, dividing it formally into three bays). The single entrance to the building was in the middle of the east side, down two steps. Three doors led into the nave and aisles, of which that into the nave had an elaborately-moulded marble door-frame. The floor was the natural rock and in it were sunk two cistern shafts. The block used to close that at the north end is an uncarved impost-capital, still in its rough shipment-state.

At some second period the east entrance was narrowed to a mere 0.60m opening, and it may have been on this occasion that the secondary door in the north aisle was closed. The narrowing and closing of these doors was

³⁸ It was not possible to excavate the apse fully, but Widrig found that the chancel-paving finished at the chord and that there are slots in the shoulders which could indicate that screens separated it from the chancel. The apparent segregation of the apse, together with the absence of flooring or other decoration and of fully satisfactory evidence for a *synthronon*, suggested to him that it might have been a *martyrion* (for which, however, there seems no more positive indication). Duval 1989b, 2776, is convinced that there was a *synthronon* there, which would, of course, explain the absence of flooring.

³⁹ The chancel is no wider than the chord of the apse, but, with its entrance passage, extends almost halfway down the length of the nave. The two were paved with marble slabs.

⁴⁰ The altar was placed slightly forward of the exact centre of the chancel. On the same grounds as for the East Church, Widrig doubts the existence of an altar canopy (see East Church, n. 14). Excavation below the altar-base showed that there was no reliquary beneath it. Duval 1989b, 2773, reports fragments of several different types of altar in and near the church.

⁴¹ But see East Church n.17 and *Carved Fittings 3b*. Duval also identifies a handrail.

⁴² As well as a number of fragments from a series in which post, column and capital were made in one piece (illus. 194), which Widrig 1978, 117, regards as the chancel-posts.

independent of and later than the strengthening of the outer north wall with the sloping revetment.⁴³

Carved Fittings

(West Church: compiled by Reynolds from Widrig's text, and the notebooks of Ward-Perkins and Sara Paton). For discussion of some items see Sodini/Kolokotsas 1984, Sodini 1987*b*; 1989.

1. The nave colonnades:

a lower order

i three substantially-complete column-bases and a number of fragments of blue-grey marble, all of the simple Attic type used in the East Church, but smaller (see illus. 186, 187); plinth *c.* 0.64m × 0.64m, upper diam. *c.* 0.48m × ht. 0.24m; for masons' marks see below.

ii probably five substantially-complete column-shafts and a number of fragments of Proconnesian marble finished much as in the East Church, lower diam. *c.* 0.43m, upper diam. *c.* 0.30m, ht. ave. 2.34m (illus. 186, 187). For masons' marks see below.

iii ten variously-damaged Corinthian capitals of Proconnesian marble (illus. 186-88; see also Widrig's plate 29), lower diam. *c.* 0.38m, upper diam. not known, ht. *c.* 0.46m. Widrig detected two very slightly variant designs. For masons' marks see below.

iv eight impost-blocks of Proconnesian marble, upper surface *c.* 0.85m × 0.57m, ht. *c.* 0.27m, with a Latin cross in relief on one face (illus. 187, 189).

b upper order (gallery-arcade); material and form are as in a.

i seven substantially-complete column-bases and a number of fragments; plinth *c.* 0.58m × 0.58m, upper diam. *c.* 0.41m, ht. *c.* 0.19m. For masons' marks see below.



Illus. 188. El Atrun: West Church, marble column with capital and impost block from the nave colonnade.



Illus. 189. El Atrun: West Church, marble impost block.

⁴³ Widrig discusses the elevation and possible systems for lighting and for roofing. The evidence is inconclusive in both matters. He also stresses the total absence of voussoir blocks and of staircases (which must have been of wood).

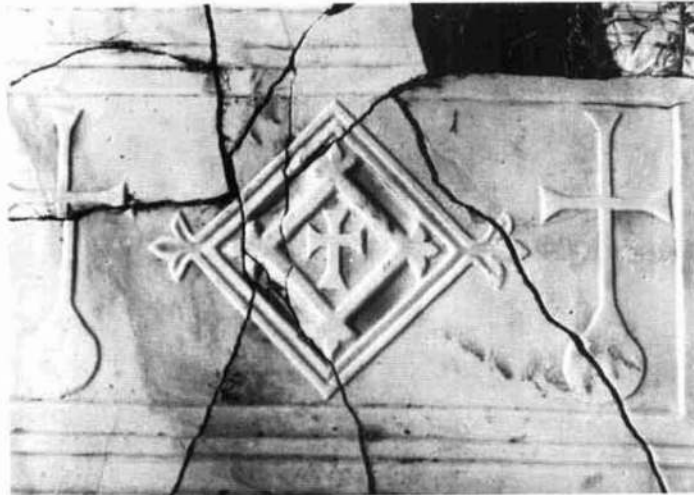
- ii probably twelve recognisable column-shafts and a number of fragments; lower diam. *c.* 0.35m, upper diam. *c.* 0.32m, ht. *c.* 2.02m; one has a handling knob *c.* 0.18m from the top. For masons' marks see below.
- iii parts of eleven Ionic impost-capitals, ten with lower diam. *c.* 0.32m, upper surface *c.* 0.63m × 0.63m, one rectangular with upper surface *c.* 0.75m × 0.48m. For masons' marks see below.

2. Screen slabs

Screen slabs (Widrig 1978, 130-1 and his plate xvi; our illus. 190, 191); many are laid out on the ground to the south of the church (1998). Substantial fragments of thirty-one marble screens were found, used to fill the intercolumniations at both levels of the nave arcade (one from the lower level found *in situ*, Widrig 1978, plate xi), to enclose the central area of the chancel, and, perhaps, to flank its entry from the nave (a position in which one long screen would fit). Some lengths and heights suggest that there was yet another location not certainly recognised (Widrig suggests tentatively that there could have been arched openings at gallery level above the entry to the nave). Five decorative designs are illustrated by Widrig pp. 130-1: fifteen show a central ✱ in relief, within a wreath, from which tendrils spread leftwards and rightwards, terminating in ivy leaves which point up towards Latin crosses (w. 1.96m–



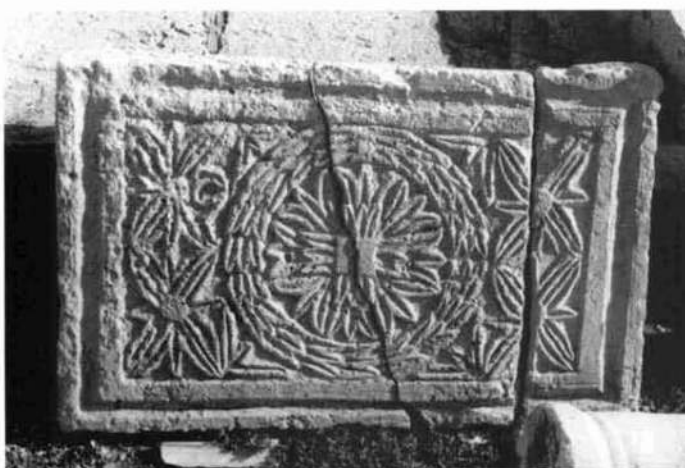
Illus. 190. El Atrun: West Church, marble screen.



Illus. 191. El Atrun: West Church, marble screen.



Illus. 192. El Atrun: West Church, marble column-base from the nave colonnade with remains of lead plate.



Illus. 193. El Atrun: West Church, carved limestone panel from tomb in the north colonnade.



Illus. 194. El Atrun: West Church, fragments of marble columns and capitals from the chancel area.

2.03m and 1.62m–1.65m × ht. 0.99m–1.09m); two show a Latin cross in relief within a double diamond-shaped frame, each diamond with trilobe features at the corners, flanked by Latin crosses above orbs (w. 1.52m and 1.54m × 0.89m); two show a central cross only, within a rather more elaborately-moulded diamond-shaped frame (w. 2.06m × ht. 0.89m); two a cross within an elaborately-moulded rectangular frame, flanked by crosses above orbs (w. 1.46m × ht. 0.86m); one (damaged) a cross, possibly maltese, within a wreath with a curving tendril on the right side which terminates in a down-pointing ivy leaf (the left side is lost); w. uncertain × ht. 0.86m.

3. Other chancel fittings:

- a parts of a number of columns with bases, drums and capitals made in one piece, interpreted by Ward-Perkins as from the altar-canopy, by Widrig as marble chancel-posts of the type which carried colonnettes and capitals above (some visible in illus. 187; see also illus. 194 and Widrig's plate xvii c). The capitals are of a highly stylised Corinthian type, which Widrig thinks probably the work of a local sculptor.
- b moulded marble altar-base found *in situ* (illus. 186);⁴⁴ it has four roughened areas at the corners on which stood the colonnettes supporting the table.
- c four marble colonnettes which carried the altar-table.
- d marble slab, forming the altar-table.
- e fragments of several rather larger colonnettes than those of a.
- f fragments of two rather more conventional Corinthian capitals than those of a (Widrig's plate xviii a), perhaps to be associated with e; lower diam. 0.175m, ht. 0.21m.
- g one substantially complete and two fragmentary Corinthian capitals, very finely carved; lower diam. 0.23m, ht. 0.28m; e, f, and g might well be elements from an altar canopy, although, as Widrig points out, there are no traces in the chancel floor of a system for fixing it in position (cf. *East Church, Carved Fittings* 4.f).
- h moulded sandstone impost-block, lower surface 0.33m × 0.33m, upper surface 0.52m × 0.52m, ht. 0.17m, perhaps to be associated with e–g.
- i a number of pieces of moulded marble with a groove along the centres of their rough surfaces (illus. 186) which presumably performed the same function as did their analogues in the *East Church, Carved Fittings* 3.b.





Illus. 195. *El Atrun: West Church, carved limestone panel from tomb in the north aisle.*

⁴⁴ Duval 1989b, 2773, observes that this is the only known example with a moulding, and suggests that it is a re-used piece. If so, that would be a striking contrast to the imported marble fittings which predominate in this church.



Masons' marks

Like the masons' marks in the East Church, most of these were published by Widrig and copied from him by Sodini 1987*b* and Deichmann 1989. There are a few additional marks here observed by Paton, and all are illustrated with facsimiles drawn from her notebook by Sara Owen, which are a more accurate record of their appearance.






1. Corinthian capitals: *b*, *c* recorded by Paton and by Widrig, *a* by Paton

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <i>a</i> | Base diam. 0.37, the mark is damaged |  | (possibly <i>mu</i>) |
| <i>b</i> | Base diam. 0.375 |  | (<i>delta</i> or cursive <i>alpha</i>) |
| <i>c</i> | Base diam. c. 0.36 | B | (<i>beta</i>) |

2. Ionic impost blocks: *a*–*c* recorded by Paton; *d*–*f* by Widrig.

- | | | | |
|----------|--|---|--|
| <i>a</i> | |  | (presumably <i>gamma</i>) |
| <i>b</i> | | I | (<i>iota</i>) |
| <i>c</i> | | Є | (<i>epsilon</i> or possibly <i>omega</i>) |
| <i>d</i> | | B | (<i>beta</i>) |
| <i>e</i> | | ω | (<i>omega</i> or possibly <i>epsilon</i>) |
| <i>f</i> | |  | (probably cursive <i>alpha</i> , possibly <i>rho</i>) |

3. Column shafts: *a*–*f* recorded by Paton and Widrig, *g* by Widrig; *a*–*c* are small columns, *d*–*g* are large ones.

- | | | | |
|----------|--|--|--|
| <i>a</i> | Diam. 0.35, on the top surface, at edge |  | (possibly <i>sigma</i>) |
| <i>b</i> | Diam. 0.33, on the lower band moulding | B
 | (<i>beta</i>)
(probably <i>omega</i> , perhaps cursive <i>alpha</i>) |
| <i>c</i> | Top diam. 0.33, on the top surface | < | (cursive <i>alpha</i>) |
| <i>d</i> | Lower diam. c. 0.36, on the top surface | ∧ | (<i>gamma</i>) |
| <i>e</i> | Base diam. 0.37, on the lower band moulding |  | (monogram of <i>tau</i> , <i>rho</i> and <i>hypsilon</i>) ⁴⁵ |
| <i>f</i> | Base diam. c. 0.41, on the lower band moulding |  | (monogram of <i>mu</i> , <i>alpha</i> and <i>kappa</i>) ⁴⁶ |
| <i>g</i> | Probably similar to <i>f</i> |  | (probably monogram of <i>mu</i> , <i>alpha</i> and <i>kappa</i>) |

⁴⁵ Presumably the abbreviated name Τρύφων. The monogram occurs also on carved marbles in S. Vitale at Ravenna, at Porec-Parenzo and in Constantinople (Binbirdirek, Yerebatan Saray).

⁴⁶ Presumably the abbreviated name Μακάριος. On its first discovery, Goodchild at once noted its possible connection with the same combination of letters on marble found in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia (below). It is possible that the same monogram also appears on the upper ring of a column found in the débris of the Aliki quarry on Thasos (Sodini *et al.* 1980, 93); see *Introduction II, Interior Fitments, Marble*.



Illus. 196. El Atrun: West Church, mason's mark on marble column-shaft from the nave colonnade.

4. On small bases

a	On one side	ΜΑΚ	(monogram of <i>mu</i> , <i>alpha</i> and <i>kappa</i>)
b	On one side On top	ΜΑΚ Γ	(monogram of <i>mu</i> , <i>alpha</i> and <i>kappa</i>) (<i>gamma</i>)
c	On one side On top	ΜΑΚ Δ	(monogram of <i>mu</i> , <i>alpha</i> and <i>kappa</i>) (<i>delta</i>)
d	On one side On top	ΜΑΚ Ε	(monogram of <i>mu</i> , <i>alpha</i> and <i>kappa</i>) (<i>epsilon</i>)
e	On one side (damaged) On top	Μ F	(<i>mu</i>) (uncertain)

See above on the masons' marks in the East Church. It is a reasonable conjecture that single letters on the underside of stones are assembly-guides, while those in other positions, and even more probably groups of letters, are the abbreviated names of craftsmen. For further discussion see *Introduction II, Interior Fitments, Marble*.

Discussion

The East Church seems to have been a cathedral church, the West Church probably funerary; and possibly, as Widrig suggests, it contained a *martyrion* of significance, whose relics were transferred to the adapted baptistery of the East Church in very late antiquity.

The foundation date is disputed. Ward-Perkins 1972 put it under Justinian, in the second quarter of the sixth century; Stucchi 1975 earlier, but without a firm time-reference; Widrig, having proposed the reign of Justinian in 1962, argued for *c.* 500 AD in 1978; Krautheimer 1986 opted for a date after 550; Duval 1989*b* notes elements of sixth-century date (but possibly before the accession of Justinian), and that also seems to be implied by Sodini's parallels.

Since there were few datable small finds, and none from significant positions (excavation below the floors was almost totally excluded), the evidence used for dating the buildings is essentially the church-plan and the style of the imported marble church furniture; but it is clear that there is no consensus about them. Widrig thinks the ground-plan, established by the middle of the fifth century, was outdated by Justinian's reign, while Krautheimer 1986 regarded it as in increasing use at that time. As for the church furniture, Widrig collected parallels for the Corinthian column-capitals which are of a type attested in use in the second half of the fifth century, but

still appearing at least in the early sixth. Ward-Perkins thought that column capitals are not a particularly reliable guide, so put the stress on items like chancel-screens, for which parallels can be found in sixth-century and sometimes specifically Justinianic buildings, and urged that any old-fashioned elements can be explained as due to the despatch of old stock to a backwater province during Justinian's very extensive building programme. Duval has also used the evidence from the church furniture found at Alikí in Thasos (Sodini/Kolokotsas 1984)—particularly relevant if it is the case that some of the marbles at el Atrun came from Thasos (as analysis in 2002 has shown that they did); that, like the masons' marks, points to a number of sixth-century (but possibly pre-Justinianic) features.

It is the case that masons' marks found at el Atrun also appear in a number of sixth-century buildings elsewhere, some Justinianic, and that the use of lead cushions between bases and column-shafts which has been observed here may be analogous to the treatment of the piers in Justinian's second S. Sophia. But even if the same masons are always indicated by identical marks (which cannot be certain), we do not know the date at which each began his working-life, nor at what stage in it the marks were cut; and it is highly probable that the lead cushions were in use over a much longer period of time than we know. We conclude with an *aporia*.

Ward-Perkins also believed that the el Atrun churches were imperially sponsored, and, in fact, by Justinian. Widrig accepted imperial sponsorship, but, since el Atrun does not appear in Procopius' account of Justinian's Cyrenaican works, suggested that the emperor was Anastasius or even Zeno. The theory was based on belief that the marble from imperial quarries would be distributed only on imperial authority, but the existence of private trading in it now seems to be accepted (Sodini 1989). In consequence, although the marble furniture of the el Atrun churches is the richest so far found in Cyrenaica and implies very considerable expenditure by the founder(s), it may be that we should not exclude a private patron or patrons. The see of Erythron itself owned productive property (see *Historical Context* above), while its quite extensive territory was certainly fertile and well-watered, and surely able to support at least one man of real wealth; so an enterprising bishop or a local landowner might be able to fund such a building (even two), especially if he could persuade the governor to assist him in organising the purchase and conveyance of marble from Constantinople.

Very few changes can be detected during the lifetime of the buildings, and none is precisely datable. Buttressing of walls, both exterior and interior, sometimes must, and always can, be explained as remedying structural weaknesses due to the lie of the land or earthquakes. Blocking and narrowing of doors which reduced access might have had a defensive purpose, or again might demonstrate a further concern with structural weaknesses—or both. In any case, Widrig's theory that the East Church was converted into a fortress cannot be accepted as proven.

The buildings apparently remained in use into the seventh century, and probably to the Arab invasion. The majority of the small number of identifiable coins found are of Phocas and Heraclius, but none was Arab, so that if there was post-Christian occupation of any kind, it was presumably short-lived or poverty-stricken. Widrig was able to recover some unusual features from the last days of the buildings, although their full significance is open to debate. When the tombs in the West Church were emptied, the tomb-covers were replaced with care, suggesting some continued use of the building. While the columns of the West Church were chopped and pulled out, those of the East Church were pulled out without much mutilation. In neither church is there anything to suggest a fight; and above all there are no charred timbers from a final fire. The presence of so much of the church furniture in the West Church seemed to Widrig to preclude a long period of decay. He argued that there had been a deliberate but not violent destruction in order to salvage both timbers and voussoirs (but it is not at all clear where the voussoirs will have been used).

El Merj, Italian Barce, anc. Barka; illus. 197-210: probably church furniture, inscriptions; three bishops, two readers and a presbyter attested.

Bibliography

Hdt. IV.160; Claudian, *Bell. Gild.* v. 159; Jerome, *Epp.* 126.2; Cor., *Joh.* II.123-9; Nik. Chon.; *Acta Conc. Nic.*, *ibid. Eph.* 431, *ibid. Eph.* 449; Hamilton 1856, 134; Smith/Porcher 1864, 20 and plate 16; Fantoli 1923, 91-2; Pietrogrande 1930, 122 and fig. 20; Ward Perkins 1943, 136; 1949, 65-6; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 65-6; Rovere 1958, 74; Chadwick 1960; Reynolds 1960, 287, 290-1; Oliverio 1961, 43, no. 22; Goodchild 1966a, 220; 1967a, 118-9 = 1976a, 260-1; Abdussaid 1971; Stucchi 1975, 362 n.16; Purcaro 1976, 330-1 (sv Barke); Roques 1987, 106, 227, 272-3; Duval 1989b, 2769; Dore 1993; Reynolds 1999; 2000.

Barka was a Greek colony, founded from Cyrene in the sixth century BC, but apparently always under some Libyan influence. It stood in the most extensive fertile plain of Cyrenaica, at a junction of east/west and north/south routes, and was Cyrene's only serious rival. In the Hellenistic period it lost its civic status to its port, which was then named Ptolemais, but seems to have retained an identity as a village, no doubt on account of the fertility of its land and because of the important road running by or through it in order to by-pass the head-waters of the Wadi Kuf (see *Introduction I, Geography*). By the second century AD its name was combined with that of Ptolemais to describe the city of which it was a part (Ptolemais Barka). Its site acquired further importance in late antiquity, and it became the main centre of the province after the Arab conquest.

Archaeological information from the site is very limited since flood-deposited silt overlies the earlier occupation levels. There is, however, literary evidence for a Christian community with leaders who were known beyond the locality in the fourth and fifth centuries, and such material finds as have been made point to a reasonable prosperity, not only in Barka itself, but in other settlements in its neighbourhood. The inscriptions seem to attest the presence of local donors; and the church fittings show that some marble items were being imported. Three bishops are known, Zopyrus, present at Nicea in AD 325 (an Arian, although in fact he signed, presumably to escape excommunication), Zenobius present at Ephesus in AD 431, and Theodorus present at Ephesus in AD 449. In the middle of the fourth century, we hear also of an unnamed presbyter, orthodox and a sufficiently vigorous proponent of his own views to attract the hostility of the Arian Secundus of Ptolemais, who murdered him.

By the fourth century Barka is better considered a small town than a village; and its size may well have been enhanced in the fifth after the breakdown of the aqueduct of Ptolemais and the consequent reduction in the population there. Even if some immigrants returned to Ptolemais when Justinian restored the aqueduct (as Procopius says), Ptolemais must always have depended for its local food supply on the plain of Barka; so that it is not hard to understand how Barka seemed the significant centre of Pentapolis to 'Amr Ibn al-'As when he invaded Cyrenaica in AD 642. More difficult to interpret are the references to Barka in Claudian's account of the revolt of Gildon ('laete ... vagantes Barkaioi'), in Jerome's letter to a correspondent in Carthage, and to the wild and violent Barkaioi described by Corippus as supporting the Libyan revolt against Byzantium in the Maghreb in the sixth century. From the last Goodchild argued for a takeover by invading Libyans and wrote of a Berber population, only superficially Christianised and probably largely Monophysite, hostile to Byzantium and an easy conquest for 'Amr Ibn al-'As in AD 644. Could it be rather that these Barkaioi were not named from the place Barka, but were descendents of the Barkitae of Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.6, apparently a tribal group occupying an area south of the Pentapolis, from a point east of the 'Garden of the Hesperides' (approximately Berenike, Benghazi)? Whether any of them were ever Christian is not clear, but their part in aiding the success of the Arab invasion—and the subsequent acceptance of Arab rule at Barka itself—may have been something like that which Goodchild attributed to the inhabitants of Barka.



Illus. 197. El Merj: lapidarium, marble chancel screen from Siret el Gatres.

Ward Perkins' programme

Ward Perkins had visited el Merj in or by 1943 and recorded Christian items in the Barce *Lapidarium*, which were subsequently dispersed. It has proved impossible to trace the present whereabouts of all of them; but a number were seen by Ward Perkins in Tolmeita Museum in 1969, where he drew them again, and a group in Cyrene Museum (many of which were again located in 1998 in the yard behind the Museum). It has not been possible to check how many of those described below are included in it, but a few additional notes have been added by Reynolds.

Descriptions of the monuments

Before the Second World War, a number of architectural pieces from Christian sites in the western Gebel were assembled and preserved in the *lapidarium* at el Merj (the Italian Barce), and two of the finer pieces were re-used to adorn the altar of the adjoining modern church. Some of these pieces, including the slabs in question, are known to come from the site of Siret el Gatres, about 11km west of el Merj where there are (or were) the remains of a church. Others were said to have come from a considerable distance. The verbal tradition that the slabs in the modern church at Barce came from Bu Gseir is mistaken, but it may well conceal a reference to some of the other pieces.¹ Indeed it seems very likely that there were a number of Christian sites in and around the rich plain of el Merj, an area that has received far less archaeological attention than the eastern Gebel.

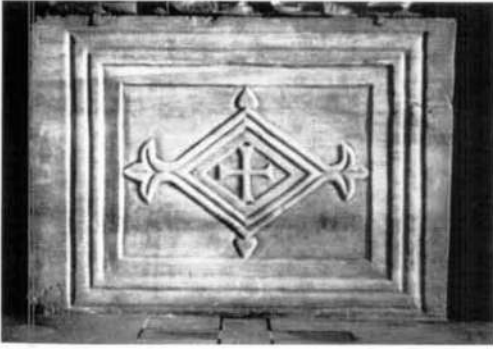
In view of this element of uncertainty and of the subsequent dispersal of the *lapidarium*, it has seemed wiser to list all of these pieces together as seen and recorded in 1943 and again shortly after the war.

A. Chancel-fittings known (nos. 1, 2) or believed (nos. 3-5) to have come from the site of Siret el Gatres, *c.* 11km west of el Merj

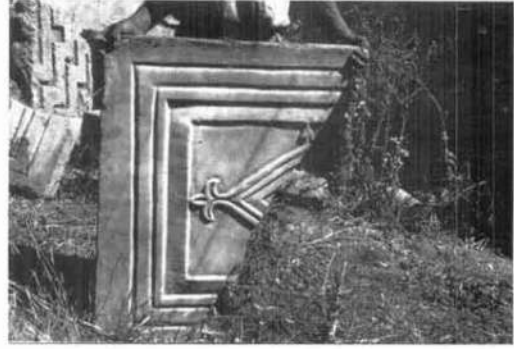
1. Illus. 197. Slab of Proconnesian marble (1.74m × 0.88m), [once re-used in the Barce modern church,] carved on the one visible face with a typical sixth-century design of two intersecting crosses forming an eight-petalled rosette and framed with ribbons, from the two ends of which spring Latin crosses.²

¹ That some pieces came from a distance is also suggested by Stucchi, see no. 31 below. The attribution of some slabs to Bu Gseir was made by Rovere 1958, 74; but there is also a specific reference to the discovery of 'marble panels' there in the Shahat photographic archive.

² Kapitän 1980 notes that nos. 1-4 are among many such slabs from many sites which are paralleled in the Marzamemi wreck.



Illus. 198. El Merj: lapidarium, marble chancel screen from Siret el Gatres.



Illus. 199. El Merj: lapidarium, fragmentary marble chancel screen possibly from Siret el Gatres.



Illus. 200. El Merj: lapidarium, the opposite face of 199.



Illus. 201. El Merj: lapidarium, five marble chancel posts (non-matching) of unknown origin (now in Cyrene Museum).



Illus. 202. El Merj: lapidarium, small marble column with capital, of unknown origin.



Illus. 203. El Merj: lapidarium, hexagonal marble base with effaced crosses, of unknown origin.

2. Illus. 198. Slab of Proconnesian marble (1.18m × 0.83m), [once re-used in the Barce modern church,] carved on the one visible face with a conventional sixth-century lozenge-motif enclosing an equal-armed cross. [A note in the file indicates that the thickness is 0.07m and that there is certainly some decoration on the reverse side.]
3. Left-hand part of a panel similar to no. 1, above. This is probably a piece now (1969) at Tolmeita (ht. 0.85m), of which the panel on the back, preserved to a length of 0.45m from the edge, is plain.
4. Illus. 199, 200. Part of a panel, of which one face is similar to no. 2, above; the other face contained a Latin cross on a low-relief disc within the usual framing border.
- 5-9. Set of five matching chancel-posts (ht. of post exclusive of the finial, 1.02–1.04m) with a 'vertical bar' panel on two faces and grooves on one or both of the remaining faces. The finials are elaborately moulded.³

B. Other church-fittings of Proconnesian marble, the find-spots of which are not recorded

- 10, 11. Pair of large chancel-posts (ht. of post, exclusive of finial, 1.00m; approx. 0.30m square) with 'soffit' panels on two faces and low finial, consisting of a splayed *cavetto* moulding and a central knob [see n. 3 on nos. 5-9].
12. A narrow (16-18 cm) version of nos. 5-9, above [see n. 3 on nos. 5-9].
- 13, 14. Two chancel-posts of proportions and workmanship similar to no. 12, but with 'soffit' panels [see n. 3 on nos. 5-9].
- 15, 16. Fragments of at least two colonnettes (ht. of one, 1.84m) with capital, shaft and base carved in one piece. The capital consists of four plain sharply out-turned leaves, the shaft is fluted spirally and the base consists of two diminishing fillets over a plain square plinth. These could well be from the canopy over an altar.
17. Illus. 202. Upper part of a similar colonnette, with a plain shaft and a capital with four simply-carved acanthus leaves.
18. Illus. 203. Tall, rather slender, hexagonal pedestal-base, with pedestal and Attic base carved in one piece. On each of the two sides of the pedestal a Latin cross in low relief, of which the horizontal arms have been deliberately mutilated. [Seen in 1998 in the yard behind Cyrene Museum.]
19. Small moulded pedestal, carved in one piece with an Attic column-base (ht. together 0.42m). In the context this is likely to have come from a Christian building.

³ Ward-Perkins recorded altogether 10 chancel-posts (nos. 5-14) at el Merj, but thought that there might have been more; a note from Goodchild in the files indicates that subsequently 14 had been brought to Cyrene from the Barce *lapidarium*. Illus. 201 shows five non-matching ones. It is not possible at present to identify them further.



Illus. 204a and b. El Merj: lapidarium, marble impost block of unknown origin.



Illus. 205. El Merj: lapidarium, marble capital of unknown origin.

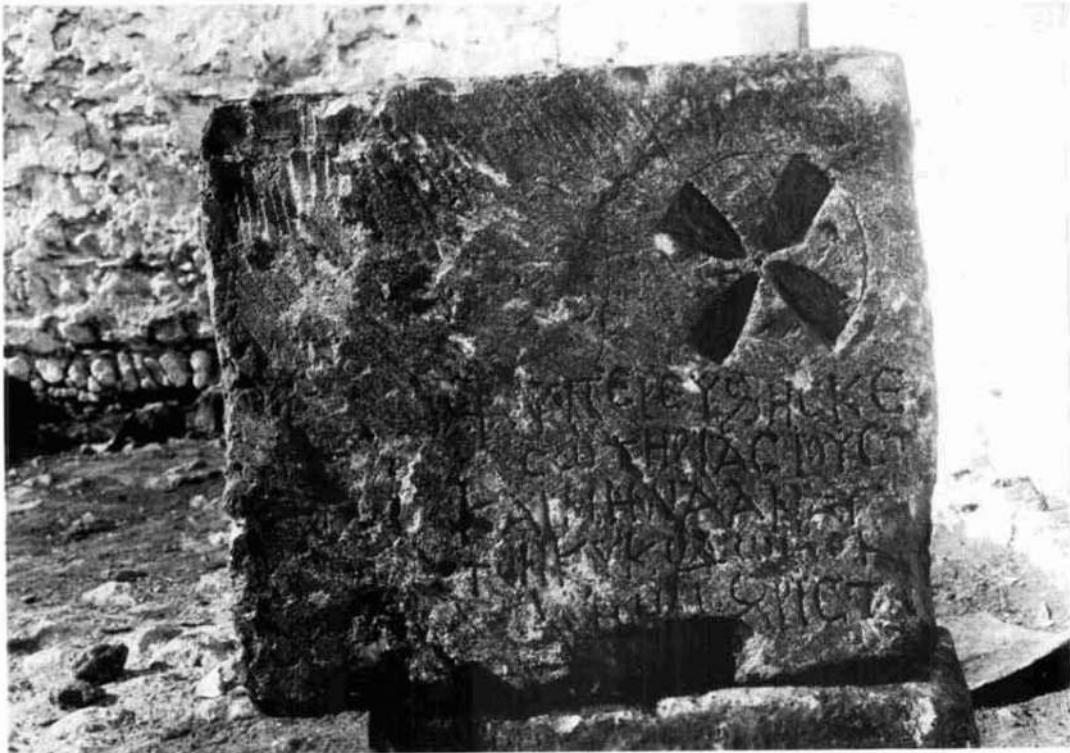
Illus. 206. El Merj: lapidarium, marble capital of unknown origin.

20. Illus. 204. Broken impost capital (0.45m across the *abacus*, ht. 0.34m) with a simple wreath motif running round the top and bottom and up the four angles, framing tapering, rectilinear, panels. The one complete panel contains a Latin cross; the two adjoining panels each contained an upright acanthus leaf; the fourth side is destroyed.
21. Colonnade capital (ht. 0.25m) of derivative Corinthian type, with rudimentary volutes and single acanthus leaves at the angles, interrupted on one side by a circular wreath of acanthus foliage framing an equal-armed cross in high relief. The cross was subsequently mutilated.
22. Illus. 205. Colonnade capital (ht. 0.30m), similar in form and treatment to no. 21, but with more developed volutes and lacking the wreath and cross.
23. Illus. 206. Colonnade capital (ht. 0.22m), of rather squat proportions. There are no volutes, the only ornament being the four leaves at the angles, which are treated in a very hard, geometric, manner.

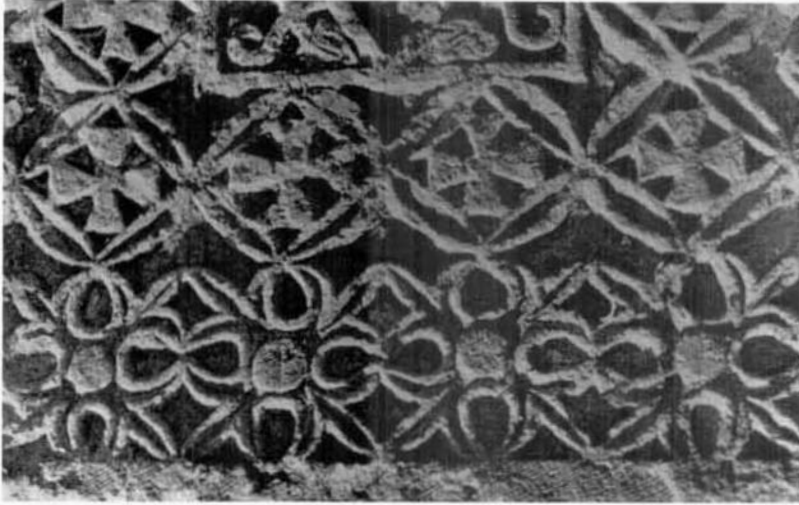
24. The upper left-hand part of a block of marble which has been cut down to the dimensions $0.86\text{m} \times 0.21\text{m} \times 0.21\text{m}$, leaving of the original low relief-decoration the upper part of one Latin cross and part of the left arm of another. Assuming an originally symmetrical scheme, with three crosses the block would have measured approx. $1.80\text{m} \times 0.30\text{m} \times 0.21\text{m}$. Perhaps a door-lintel. [Seen in 1998 in Cyrene Museum.]

C. Objects of limestone bearing Christian symbols

25. The *lapidarium* at el Merj contained several capitals of the same general type as the colonnette-capitals listed above (nos. 21-23), but larger, with two rows of acanthus-leaves, and carved in local limestone. Detailed notes of these are not available. The only one photographed [photograph not found] lacks volutes, although the central feature of the *abacus* incorporates a stylized reminiscence thereof. This is a fairly close local copy of a marble prototype, and like its fellows it presumably represents the larger architectural elements of one or more of the churches represented by the surviving marble fittings.
26. Illus. 207. Block of limestone ($0.56\text{m} \times 0.48\text{m} \times 0.24\text{m}$), part of a larger construction and carved eccentrically with a compass-traced maltese cross [and an inscription; seen in 1998 in Cyrene Museum; recorded in the Cyrene photographic archive as found at Barce and published from Oliverio's notes with this findspot.]



Illus. 207. El Merj: lapidarium, inscribed limestone block probably from el Merj.



Illus. 208. El Merj: lapidarium, sandstone chancel screen of unknown origin.



Illus. 209. El Merj: lapidarium, sandstone chancel screen of unknown origin.



Illus. 210. El Merj: lapidarium, two faces of a marble capital of unknown origin; from a cast.

Parts of the right-hand and bottom edges are lost and a crack has damaged the centre of the text. The text is cut in irregularly-shaped and poorly-aligned letters, 0.03–0.035m, with lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, *omega*, and perhaps a cursive *alpha* in l. 4; *chi* in ll. 1 and 5 resembles one which is probably of late fourth- or early fifth-century date at Cyrene (Bacchielli/Reynolds/Rees 1992, 19, fig. 14), but this is an uncertain clue to the date of the Barkaian text. Published Reynolds 1960, 290-1, no. 20 whence *SEG XVIII*. 767, J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Ep.* 1961, no. 835; † Oliverio 1961, 43, no. 22.

<p><i>Monogram cross</i> ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς κὲ σωτηρίας, ἰούστ[ου] καὶ Μηνᾶ ἀναγ[νω] - στῶν ΚΥΚΟΔΩΜΟΝ[. . .] 5 Ἀμὴν Χριστέ <i>vacat</i></p>	<p>For the prayer (vow) and salvation of Justus and Menas, readers . . . ? . . . Amen Christ</p>
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Line 4. ΚΥΚΙΔΩΜΕΝ[, Reynolds 1960; ΚΥΚΙΔΩΜΕΝ[, Oliverio, from which Pugliese suggested interpretation as Κ(υρίο)υ κ(η)δωμέν[ων], who care for the Lord. Is it possible that the intention was to convey κὲ ὑκοδόμων, for καὶ οἰκοδόμων = and builders?

Robert observed that the opening formula was more appropriate to the dedication of a gift of donors than to the funerary context proposed by Reynolds.]

27. Upper part of a window post, of the same general type as the example recorded from Cyrene East Church, and the East Church at Lamluda. Dimensions are not recorded.
28. Urn in the shape of an egg-cup on a low pedestal (diam. at rim 0.35m, ht. 0.39m) inscribed on one face with Βάσου (in letters, 0.03–0.065m, [with lunate *sigma*) between two inscribed Latin crosses with forked terminals. Published Reynolds 1960, 290, no. 19, whence *SEG XVIII*. 766; the text presumably gives the name of the donor.]
29. Illus. 208. Chancel-slab carved in deep counter-relief in a rather soft local limestone (estimated length when complete 1.08m with 3cm projecting flanges). Carved on one face was a centralized design (Ward-Perkins 1943, pl. VII) consisting of a square central pattern with a rudimentary vine scroll, framed by an inner band of twelve small equal-armed crosses in circular frames and by an outer band of twenty elaborately-lobed rosettes. [In 1943 Ward-Perkins treated this as a piece carved subsequently to the Arab conquest, comparing it with a carved slab found at Agedabia (*Section 4a*); but the Agedabia carving is now known to derive from an Islamic, not a Christian, building. This is presumably earlier.]
30. Illus. 209. Companion piece to no. 29 (Ward-Perkins 1943, pl. VIII) carved with a central equal-armed cross framed within a concentric series of rectilinear stepped-bands. The considerably damaged remains of nos. 29 and 30 are now in the museum at Tolmeita. [In illus. 267, 268, 278 similarly-decorated panels are visible at Mtaugat and Ras el Hilal.]
31. Illus. 210. Ward-Perkins 1943 described and illustrated, with photographs taken from a cast, a capital of unknown origin decorated on one face with a bird (?a peacock) drinking from a cup, and on another a rather less exotic bird perched on a disc which is decorated with a Maltese cross.

32. Two adjoining pieces from the left side of an inscribed rectangular block; not found, read from a photograph which refers to Barka, presumably because that was where it was taken; Stucchi 1975 suggested that the block might belong to a group of stones reported to have been found at Gusur Khalita, but no positive evidence for this has come to light. The lettering is carefully designed and cut, in letters likely to be of the sixth century, with lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, and *omega*. Published Reynolds 1960, 290, no. 18 whence *SEG XVIII*. 765.

<p><i>cross</i> Σὺ εἶ Θεοτό[κος ἡ ἐγείρουσα ἀπὸ γῆς] πτωχὸν κα[ὶ] ἀπ[ὸ κοπρίας ἀνυψοῦσα τὸν] πένητα κ[...]ετ[...] μετὰ βασιλέω[ν ...] 5 ΠΗCΙΑΝ[...] CΩ[...]</p>	<p>You are the Mother of God, [who lifts the] beggar [from the earth and raises the poor man [from the dung-heap? and places him] among kings [. . .</p>
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Ll. 1,2: ἐγείρουσα, ἀνυψοῦσα from Tod ap. *SEG* for Reynolds' ἐγείρεις, ἀνυψοῖς. For the formula cf. Psalm 112.7. The inscribed prayer to the Theotokos surely implies that the church in which it was erected was dedicated to her (the only other church dedications certainly attested so far in Cyrenaica are also to the Theotokos, see *Introduction II, Dedications*). It seems at first sight remarkable that the draftsman should attribute to Mary activities that the psalmist attributed to God, but there are parallels elsewhere for this; cf. for example in Romanos' Hymn to the Virgin (sixth-century AD), e.g. ll. 4-6 ἀλλ' ὡς ἔχουσα τὸ κράτος ἀπροσμάχητον ἐκ παντοίων με κινδύνων ἐλευθέρωσον ... but as you have the irresistible power free me from all dangers... (On this point I am most grateful for discussion with Miss Lucy Grigg, graduate student in the Cambridge Classics Faculty).

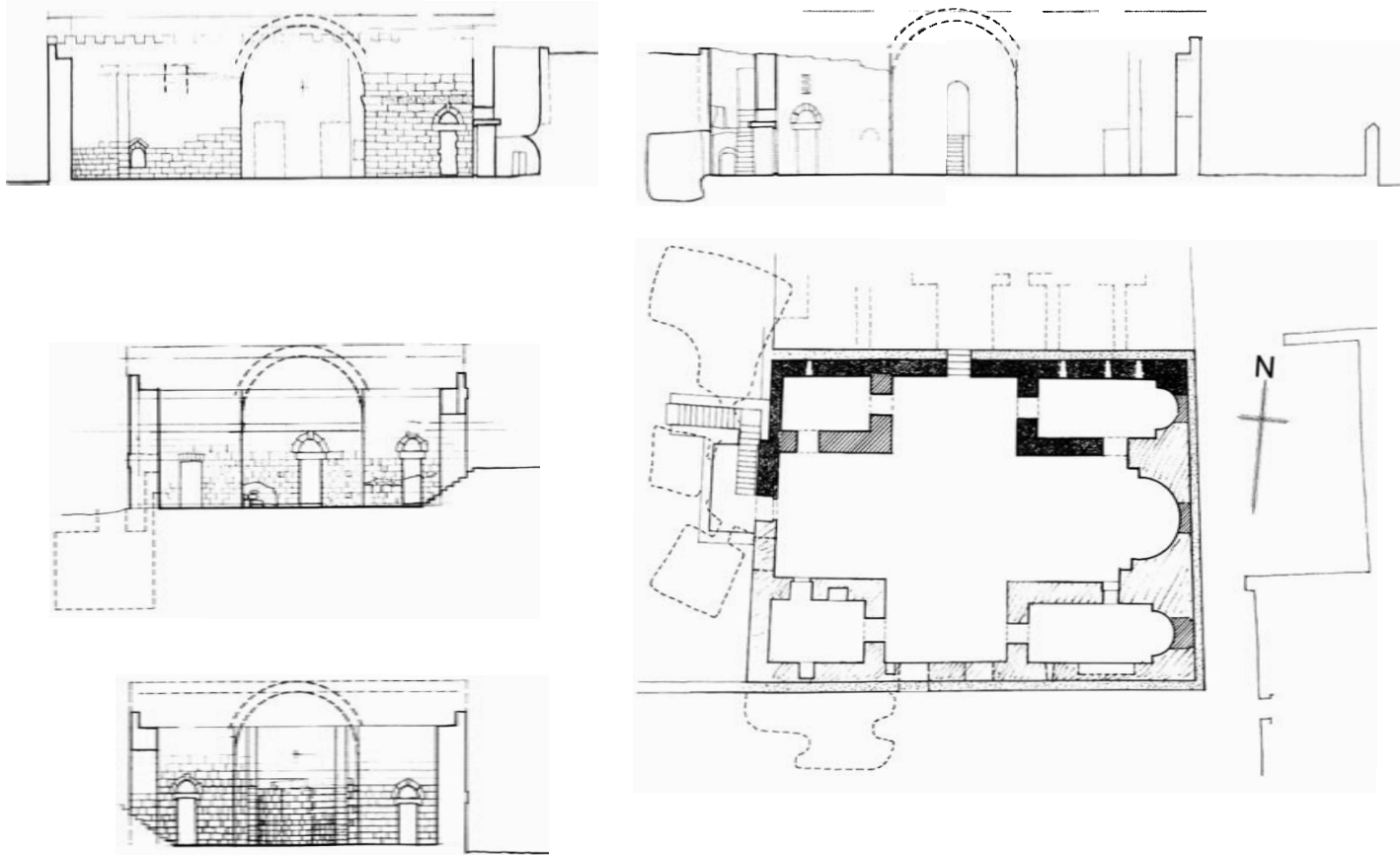
33. Fragment of a marble panel (0.35m × 0.18m × 0.06m) similar to the Justinianic series of chancel-screens but not belonging to it; published as an unprovenanced item in Cyrene Museum (Reynolds 1960, 287, no. 7 whence *SEG XVIII*. 756) but seen earlier by Ward Perkins (sheet of manuscript notes in file) in the Barce *lapidarium*; inscribed in very irregular letters 0.013–0.015m, with lunate *epsilon* and *sigma*.

<p>[ὕπὲρ εὐ]χῆς καὶ σοτηρίας τῶν [... sic ...] <i>vac.</i> <i>cross</i> Θεέκλας καὶ [...</p>	<p>For the prayer (hope) and salvation of the [... ...] of Thekla and [...</p>
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Reynolds published this as funerary, but, as with no. 28, the formula is more appropriate to a dedication by donors.

GASR EL LEBIA

WEST CHURCH



Illus. 211. Gasr el Lebia: West Church, measured plan, scale 1:100 (Sheila Gibson).

Gasr el Lebia (Ebia, Elbia, Leibia, Libia), anc. Theodorias (the name Neapolis is mistakenly added in the Barrington Atlas), perhaps originally Olbia (*Section 3b*); illus. 211-24: two churches, two bishops and one deacon attested.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1957; 1966*a*, 220, 222-3; Sichterman 1959, col. 342; Ward-Perkins 1962, 648-57; 1972, 228; Stucchi 1975, 381-2, 388-9, 412-4; Laronde 1987, 264; Roques 1987, 106-7, 340; Duval 1989*b*, 2750, 2754, 2758, 2761, 2764, 2765, 2766, 2768, 2769, 2771, 2772, 2773, 2778, 2787; Wright 1993, 51-2; for the mosaics, Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980 (with very full bibliography to that date), especially 121-39; for the inscriptions, Reynolds 1960, nos. 21-3; ap. Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 145-8 whence *SEG* XVIII.768-70; 2000; Feissel 2000, no. 70.

Some 56km east of el Merj and 2km north of the modern east/west road across Cyrenaica at Bir el Mfauaz, in the hilly country which precedes the final descent of the west bank of the Wadi Kuf system of gorges. Its low hill is easily defensible and dominates the small and fertile plateau on which it stands. It has good connections to the sea about 20km to the north at Maaten el Ogla and Ain Giargiarrumah and thence eastwards across the mouth of the Wadi Kuf/Giargiarrumah towards the territories of Cyrene and Apollonia; and is also in easy communication with Barka, Ptolemais and places further west. The major ancient features now are the two churches, on which archaeological investigation has concentrated; but there are traces of earlier occupation in the neighbourhood, some by Greek settlers as early as the fourth century BC.

Goodchild and others have proposed to identify it with the village Olbia (Synesius, *Epp.* 76), on grounds of homophony, which are not, as Roques noted, conclusive. Stucchi took it also to be Neapolis (Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.7) and regarded that as identical with Caenopolis (Ptol. *ibid.*), but Ptolemy's coordinates show that, for him, they were different places. The identification with Olbia may be right, but is not proven; the other two are unlikely and based in the first place on a mis-translation of inscription B10*a* below. For hard information we depend on the archaeological evidence and especially on the inscriptions: the place was clearly a small town in late antiquity and perhaps a key defence point; its new name, Theodorias, part of a refoundation apparently presented as a renewal, shows that it received the patronage of Justinian and, as the indiction date indicates, had done so by AD 538-9. Whether he was responsible also for the foundation and/or renewal of one or both churches is less certain than Ward-Perkins and Goodchild thought (see below); it seems probable that the adornment of the East Church—at least insofar as that refers to its mosaic floors—was due to private donors.

For circumstances that may be comparable, see the inscription *AE* 1996, 1704 (Pringle 1981, p. 319, Modéran 1996, 90-114, Feissel 2001, 102) from Ain Djelloula in Tunisia (anc. Cululis) recording Justinianic construction of fortifications and other works, with restoration of all features of civic status and the grant of her name by the empress, after a victory over the Moors. We do not, of course, have any evidence for preceding problems with an enemy at Gasr el Lebia, but they are not impossible.

The Monuments

Discovery

The East Church was discovered by chance in 1957 and excavated (but not quite completely) by the Department of Antiquities under Goodchild's direction in 1957-8. The mosaics have now been lifted on the advice of UNESCO, since it was found that they could not be adequately protected from damp while *in situ*; they are displayed in the museum on the site. The West Church, which had been incorporated in a Turkish fort which was subsequently extended as an Italian police-post, was already partly visible in the 1950's and was cleared of modern over-building by the Department of Antiquities under Goodchild's direction in 1965-9; there are, however, a number of related buildings which await excavation.



Illus. 212. Gasr el Lebia: Italo-Turkish fort incorporating the West Church.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited this site in 1958 and studied both churches; Selina Ballance and R. J. C. Jamieson surveyed the East Church at the same time. He returned in 1969, checked points in the East Church and made the much fuller study of the West Church which was then possible, while Sheila Gibson surveyed it.

1. The West Church, illus. 212-17.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 222-3 (incorrect on the vaulting); Sa'dawiyah 1968, 253; Ward-Perkins 1972, 228; Stucchi 1975, 388-9, 412-14; Wright 1993, 51-5; Duval 1989*b*, 2750, 2763, 2766, 2768, 2778; Bonacasa Carra 1998.

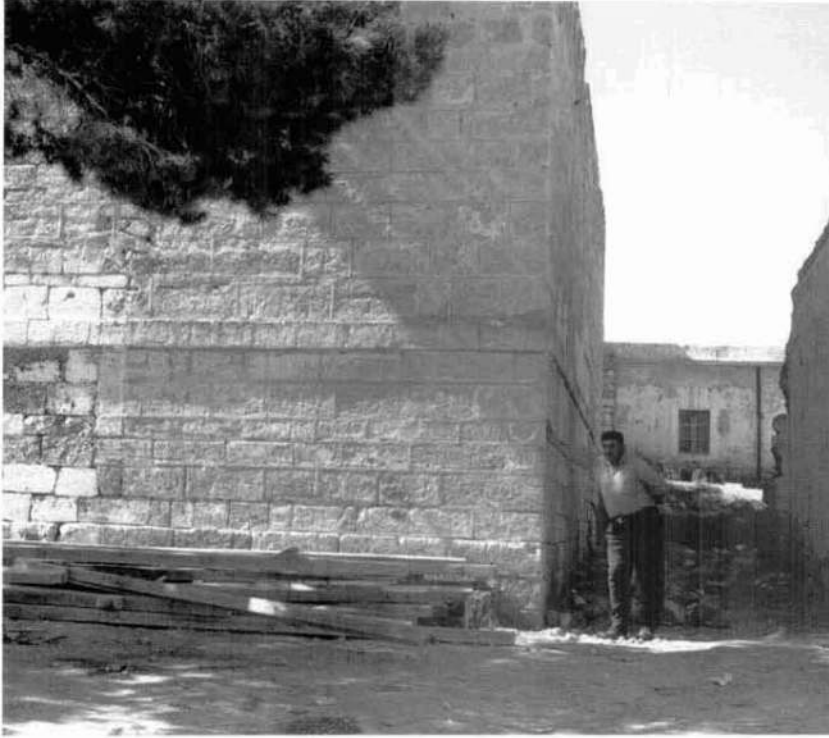
Description

Prominently situated on the crest of a low limestone ridge at the western end of the ancient settlement, about 500m to the west of the East Church. The main body of the church was evidently still standing when it was incorporated within a Turkish fort which was then adapted to be the fortified Italian police post of Gasr el Lebia (illus. 212).

Unusually for the Cyrenaican series the building is faced throughout with dressed limestone masonry (illus. 213), and it is unique in its slightly elongated cross-in-square plan (illus. 211).¹ It is inscribed within an approximately rectangular outer framework (20m north and 21.60m south by 15.2m east and west), which, with a narrow added outer facing, was incorporated bodily into the south-east corner of the Italian fort.² Internally walls of the

¹ But see under *Apollonia/Sozusa, Monument 5*, for a similar, although small, building there.

² Stucchi's plan (his fig. 394) was based on Goodchild's (1966*a*, fig. 8) which was outdated after the survey undertaken for Ward-Perkins. Moreover he believed that two building phases could be discerned; the first he dated in the second half of the fifth century, when he thought that the church was built on a more or less standard basilical plan, with an apse at the west end which communicated with a rock-cut tomb chamber below; the second he thought to be a major reconstruction producing a new church (which he inclined to date in the seventh century), with apse at the east end and the unusual cruciform ground plan described by Ward-Perkins.



Illus. 213. Gasr el Lebia: West Church, masonry of the west wall.



Illus. 214. Gasr el Lebia: West Church, north-east chapel.



Illus. 215. Gasr el Lebia: West Church, interior, east end.

same limestone masonry divide it into a cruciform central area and four angle-chapels (illus. 214-16), of which those at the north-east and south-east angles are proportionately longer and narrower than the other two. The eastern arm of the cross and the two eastern chapels end in inscribed apses. The inner walls of the north-west apse were removed by the builders of the Italian fort and have been reconstructed on the lines of their south-western counterparts.³ Elsewhere, despite considerable damage and subsequent restoration, the main lines of the plan and of much of the elevation are nowhere in doubt, and just enough of the superstructure has been preserved to show how the building was originally roofed.

There were only two doorways into the church from outside, of which that in the middle of the north side was evidently the main entrance.⁴ Along the west side the building was trenched into the rocky hillside, and the doorway at this end seems to have given access only to a small courtyard and to three irregular (and still incompletely excavated) rock-cut chambers, at least one of which has at some time served as a cistern.⁵ A feature common to all the doorways of the original building is that they are built with a flat lintel and,

³ But Goodchild had found traces of them.

⁴ Stucchi noted, correctly, that the arches above these doors are slightly ogival. It should also be observed that the floor level of the church is markedly lower than that outside it on the west side, so that there are necessarily steps downwards at the point of entry here.

⁵ During her survey, Sheila Gibson climbed into the area behind and under the wall at the west end and found no trace of the apse supposed by Stucchi (see n. 2 above), but a very small open area (rather simpler than the word 'courtyard' used for it by Ward-Perkins could suggest) and several rock-cut tomb-chambers, as shown on her plan. There is evidence, as Stucchi said, which might (but need not) suggest a martyr-cult, but none for an apse or an earlier church (so too Duval 1989*b*, 2750).



Illus. 216. Gasr el Lebia: West Church, west doorway.

over it, a relieving arch (illus. 213-17). The two doorways of the south-west chapel, the corresponding doorways (presumably) of the north-west chapel, and the west doorways of the two eastern chapels were all of this form. Those leading from the eastern chapels into the chancel, on the other hand, lack the relieving arch (illus. 215) and can be seen to have been cut through after the masonry was laid. That on the south side was later partially blocked. A large, arched recess in the south wall of the south-east chapel is an original feature, and there were smaller such recesses in the two western chapels. A shaft at the south-west corner of the south arm of the cross allowed water to be drawn from a large underground cistern.

There was at least one projecting levelling-course externally, visible on the west face at the level of the lintel of the door (illus. 213), and another internally, immediately above the keystones of the relieving arches (illus. 215-17). It was a misreading of the latter which led Goodchild to show the building as vaulted at two different heights, with the vault of the chancel about 1.50m higher than that over the other three arms of the cross. Although this course has been very largely dressed back and does at first sight look like the spring of a barrel vault, close examination shows that the vertical wall-face was in fact continuous for several courses above it. This was a string course, with a very simple, bevelled profile. The four arms of the cross were barrel-vaulted uniformly, at the height of which the southern half of the building still preserves clear traces.

The angle-chapels too were probably barrel-vaulted. They were certainly unusually lofty, with splayed slit windows at a level corresponding with the courses immediately above the internal string course. (Illus. 211 shows only those windows of which there are actual surviving traces). There is nothing to



Illus. 217. Gasr el Lebia: West Church, door into south-west chapel.

show how the central area was lit. There may have been similar windows high up in the three western arms of the cross, or there may possibly have been a lantern over the crossing. It would be in keeping with the proportions and fortress-like nature of the building for it to have had a flat terrace roof.⁶

Of pavements, paintings, mosaics or other fittings there is no surviving trace.

Despite the alterations and accretions wrought by the builders of the Turkish and Italian forts, it can be seen that the church was part of a larger, similarly oriented complex, substantial remains of which await excavation on the platform of higher ground to the west of it. The cross-in-square plan, the unusually solid masonry and the high slit windows, all suggest an official building designed for defence.⁷ One may guess—and without further excavation it must remain a guess—that the sixth-century builders chose this site for much the same reasons as the builders of the Italian fort, and that this was the garrison chapel of Byzantine Theodorias.

Inscriptions

There are no inscriptions in the proper sense but in 1994 Susan Walker and Joyce Reynolds observed graffiti on the internal face of the north wall in proximity to a number of niches; there are a number of simple crosses together with



They believe that an extended survey of both external and internal walls in different lights would yield more.

⁶ Stucchi and Wright argued for a dome at the intersection of the arms of the cross.

⁷ Both Goodchild and Ward-Perkins were impressed by what they felt to be an official character, as well as a strongly defensive one both in the architecture and in the masonry of this church, and attributed it to Justinian himself in view of the renaming of the site for Theodora attested in the East Church, *Inscription* no. B 10.

2. The East Church, illus. 218-24.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1957; 1966a, 220; Sichtermann 1959, col. 342; Stucchi 1975, 381-2; Duval 1989b, 2754, 2761, 2765, 2770, 2771, 2772, 2773, 2774, 2778, 2787; Bonacasa Carra 1998. The large figured mosaic was published by Goodchild in the *Illustrated London News* of 14 December, 1957, and has since been the subject of much discussion, notably by André Grabar in *Cahiers Archéologiques* 12 (1962) 135-8 and *Comptes Rendues de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* 1969, 264-79, while all the mosaics were presented in Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980; but, apart from the brief notes by Stucchi 1975, the church itself is unpublished.

Description

Three-aisled, partially basilical church, with a western apse (illus. 218), about 500m to the east of and downhill from the West Church. The ground at this point slopes quite steeply from north to south, and the church was terraced into the hillside, with other structures still unexcavated to the east of it.

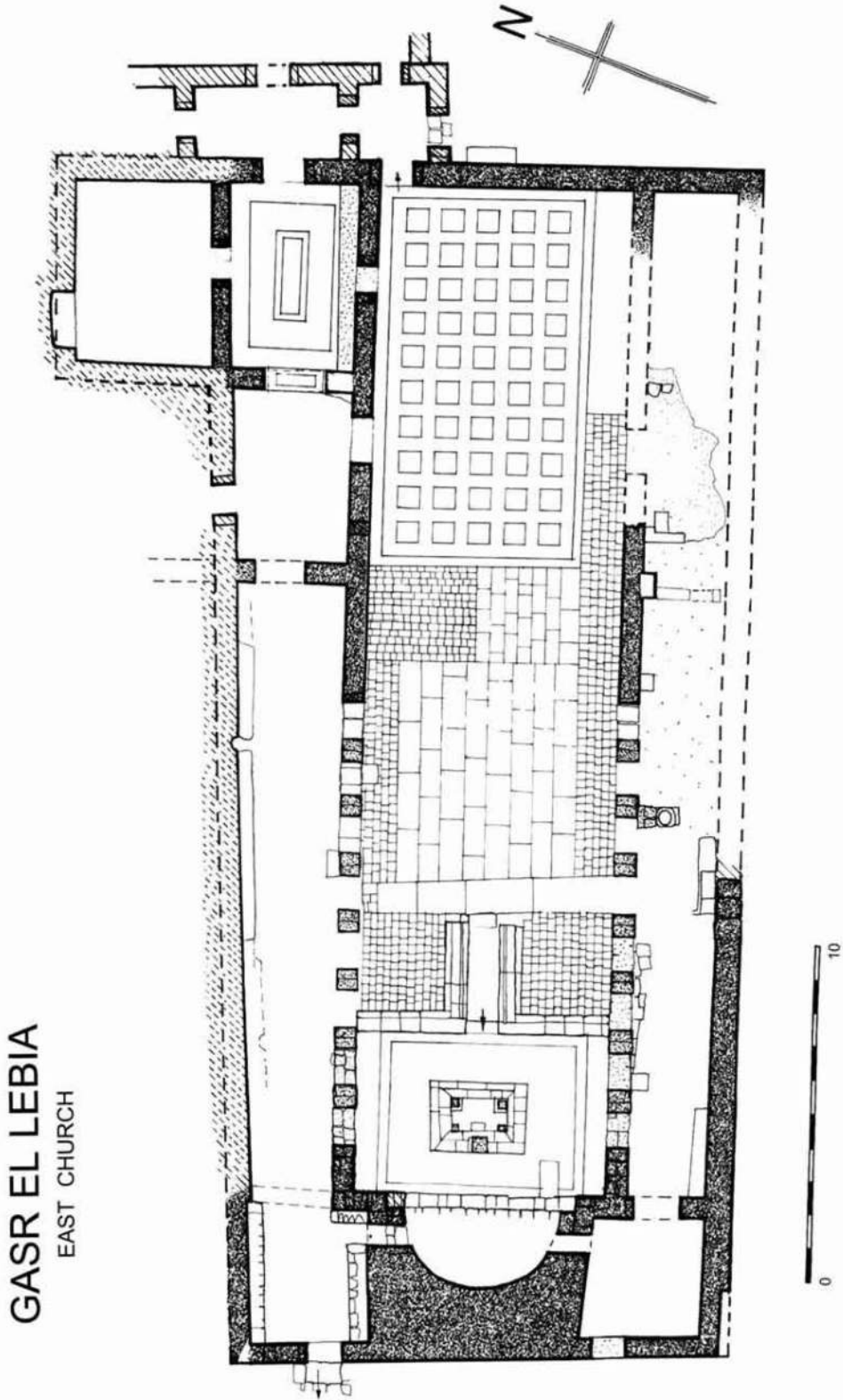
The church was laid out on a plan which, though regular in its broad intention, was in several respects markedly irregular in detail. The principal cause of this irregularity seems to have been the need to level a rocky spur which splayed obliquely out across the site chosen for the church, from the middle of the north side (where the outer wall is in places terraced into the rock to a depth of as much as 1.90m) towards the south-eastern corner of the building, where the nave mosaics were found to rest directly on the levelled rock.⁸ At the east and west ends it looks as if the building may also have been conforming to pre-existing structures. The result is a complex just over 35m long from east to west and 16.20m and 14.70m at the east and west ends respectively (exclusive of the buildings grouped around the north-east corner). Within this framework the central area, comprising nave and chancel, is almost exactly rectangular, the irregularities being relegated to the south aisle, to the two western angle-chapels and, above all, to the north aisle. Except for a few features of dressed stone, the walls are of a variable but generally rather poor orthostat-and-coursed-rubble construction.

For purposes of description the building may be considered as comprising the following elements: an inscribed western apse, with two flanking chapels; a rather small chancel occupying the two western bays of the central nave; the nave itself; the south aisle; the western half of the north aisle; and, opening off the latter and off the nave, a complex of chambers at the north-east corner of the building.

The Apse and Angle-Chapels

Though inscribed within what, in the finished building, was a solid mass of masonry, the apse was built as an independent structure, and only after completion was the space between it and the containing walls filled with mortared

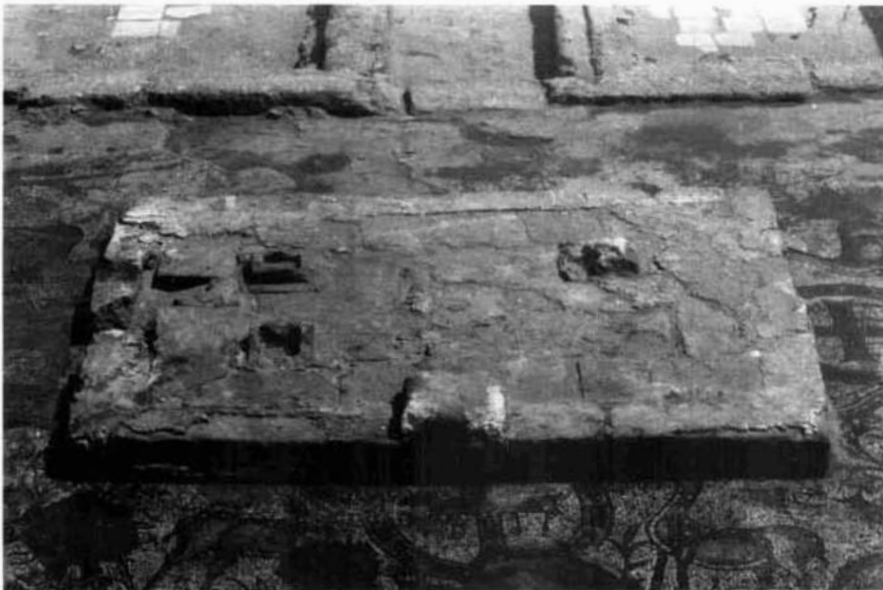
⁸ In the light of this, Goodchild and Ward-Perkins believed that the mosaic floors (which are of the sixth century) were contemporary with the construction of the church. Stucchi and Duval, however, have both expressed strong doubt about it; Stucchi placed the construction in the second half of the fifth century on the basis of its masonry technique, Duval believes that (before the mosaics were lifted) an earlier floor was visible in the centre nave; this is presumably the marble paving which Goodchild and Ward-Perkins thought to be contemporary with the mosaics. See further below under *Discussion*.



Illus. 218. Gasr el Lebia: East Church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson after R. J. C. Jamieson and S. Ballance).



Illus. 219. Gasr el Lebia: East Church, chancel and nave seen from the apse.



Illus. 220. Gasr el Lebia: East Church, altar-base.

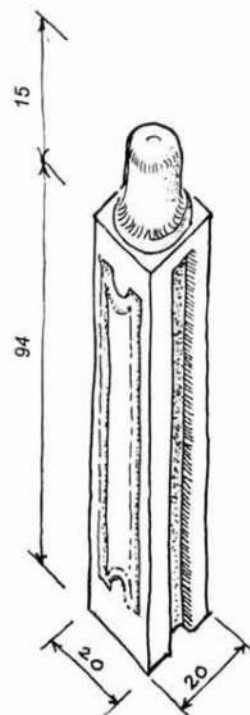
rubble.⁹ The outer face, of small coursed blocks, is exceptional in having been built with a fine-quality mortar containing a lot of crushed tile; the inner face, to a height of 0.70m, is of small coursed blocks and, above them, a single surviving course of larger squared blocks. Small arched openings in either flank gave direct access to the interior of the apse from the two angle-chapels. There is no trace of paving.

The angle-chapels are unusual in that they were accessible not only from the aisles and from the chancel, but also from whatever lay beyond the building to the west, a feature which was evidently held to be important enough to justify the very irregular shape of the south-west chapel. The doorway of this chapel was later blocked. In common with all the northern half of the building, the north-west chapel, being trenched into the hillside, is far better preserved than its southern counterpart. One stepped down into it from outside, and it seems to have served as a vestibule, with stone paving and with benches along the north and south walls, of which that on the north side was plastered and painted. An archway, 2.40m wide, led through into the south aisle. This was of good claw-dressed limestone masonry with a bevelled moulding at the spring of the arch.

The Chancel

The chancel occupied the rectangular space (4.70m by 7.30m) enclosed between the front of the apse and the two westernmost pairs of arches and short responding walls of the north and south nave-arcades (illus. 219). On the east side it was delimited by a 0.30m step down to the floor of the nave, and on the west by a similar step up into the apse. The step between nave and chancel carried a pair of chancel slabs, with a central entrance, flanked by the footings for a second pair of slabs, projecting 2.60m into the nave.¹⁰ The altar stood in the centre, its position marked by a rectangular limestone slab, in the corners of which are the impressions of the four colonnettes that carried the altar itself (illus. 220). Around it, occupying the whole of the rest of the chancel, ran the fine figured pavement.¹¹

Of the marble fittings of the chancel the cut-down fragment of the lower part of a Proconnesian marble column (diameter 0.29m) was seen in 1958 just outside the church. It had a groove in one face, as if to house one end of a chancel slab (illus. 221, 222). Two marble

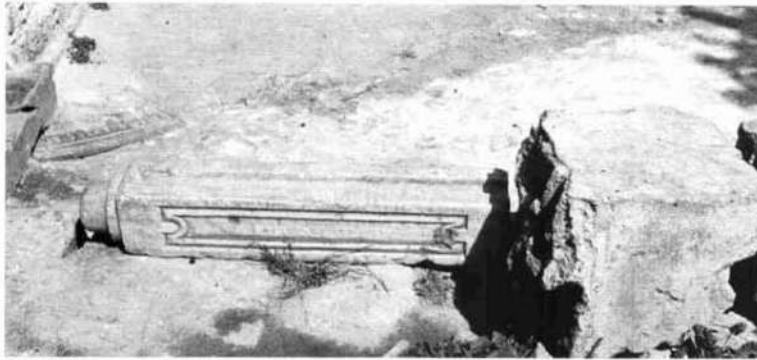


Illus. 221. Gasr el Lebia: probably from the East Church, marble chancel post (S. Ballance).

⁹ See *Introduction, Ground plans*.

¹⁰ Duval 1989b, 2772, suggests that there were two phases to this screened passage between the chancel and the nave.

¹¹ It was laid to frame an earlier altar-base consisting of the limestone slab only and was damaged when this was enlarged (see below); the striking feature of what survives is a border in which deer, along with smaller animals, partridges and trees, flank jewelled crosses set in roundels; see also under *Inscriptions*.



Illus. 222. Gasr el Lebia: probably from the East Church, marble chancel post.

chancel posts that were then lying outside the police post may well also have come from this building (then recently excavated) rather than from the West Church itself.¹² The layout and dimensions of the screen footings suggest that there were four large slabs, each 2.20-2.30m long, and six posts, approx. 0.30m square.

At some later date the basis of the altar was enlarged by the addition of a low step all around it, hiding from sight and damaging a band of mosaic 0.45-55m wide (illus. 220). This enlargement of the base, which was built up with blocks of stone and faced with plaster, and which has since been removed to display the mosaic, incorporated a taller square block in the middle of the west side. It looks as if the altar in its original form was too high for the comfort of the priest, who evidently officiated facing eastwards down the body of the nave.¹³

Other late features are the blocking of three of the four arches of the nave-arcades, the two northern arches and one of the southern arches, so bringing the chancel more into line with conventional Cyrenaican practice, and the addition of a small plastered block projecting eastwards from the step of the apse, near the south shoulder.

Most of the eastern half of the nave was paved with mosaic,¹⁴ the rest with marble, the individual slabs of which were removed in antiquity but of which the impressions were clearly visible when the building was first excavated. A curious feature of the lay-out is that both the mosaic and the corresponding panel of large rectangular marble slabs that lies to the west of it, are eccentric to the long axis of the church, being laid right up against the north wall of the nave but separated from the south wall by a strip between 1m and 1.30m wide. This strip and the square spaces on either side of the projecting entrance to the chancel were paved with smaller, roughly square, marble tiles. The possible significance of this lay-out is discussed below.

Entry to the nave from outside the church is at the north-east corner, and via the series of rooms lettered *a-g* on illus. 224.

¹² Duval 1989b, 2769, refers to chancel posts in local stone which we have not traced. On a drawing of one of the chancel-posts there is a note that it is of Proconnesian marble.

¹³ Duval suggests that the step added to the altar base may be too high to be a convenient standing-place for the officiating priest, whose position is therefore uncertain.

¹⁴ This consists of fifty approximately square panels, five in each of ten rows, linked by framing bands of looped circles and floral motifs. The panels show a variety of marine and rural scenes, a great peacock and the captioned representations described below in the section on *Inscriptions*.



Illus. 223. Gasr el Lebia: East Church, wall-painting in the north aisle.

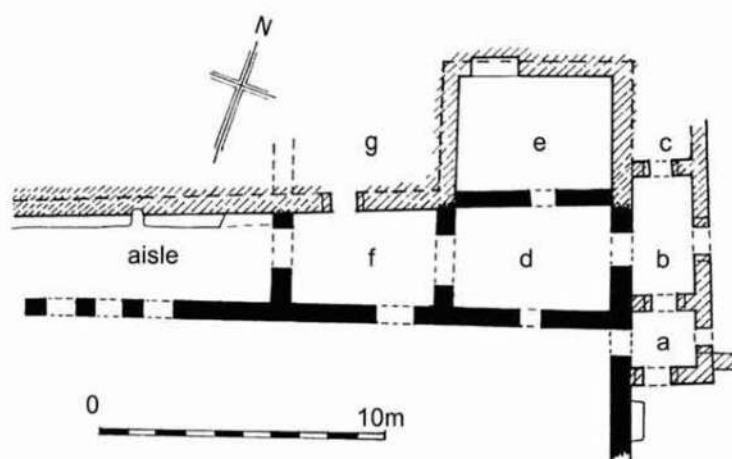
The South Aisle

This side of the building was terraced upwards to counteract the slope, and its remains have suffered accordingly. The whole of the eastern part of the outer wall, much of the inner wall and the paving (if any) of the western half have all gone. The only features that are certainly original are a patch of a concrete paving (or underpaving) in the eastern part; the position of a doorway through the inner wall, marked by the outline of the paving; and a well-built stone pier up against, and of one build with, the inner wall at a point corresponding almost exactly with the wall and arched doorway that separate the north aisle from the rooms to the east of it. This line, be it noted, corresponds also with the line of division between the marble-paved and mosaic-paved parts of the central nave. It looks very much as if the building was conceived as comprising two distinct but conjoined elements: to the west, the church proper, a building which, viewed in this light, assumes a fairly conventional lay-out and proportions; and to the east, a complex of rooms of which the mosaic-paved eastward extension of the nave was equally a part. That there was an entrance in the outer south wall in the eastern half, opposite the doorway from the south aisle to the nave, seems very likely, but unfortunately the footings at this point have been stripped down to bedrock.

The blocking of a number of the arches of the nave arcade and the building of piers up against them represent a later phase in the history of the site. To this phase presumably belong also a well- (cistern-) head and several other secondary walls.

The North Aisle

The north outer wall is partly rock-cut and partly of rather poor masonry, faced with courses of small, crudely-squared blocks. The corresponding parts of the floor too are partly rock-cut, partly of a stony fill. At the west end one entered it through an arch of some architectural pretensions and at the opposite end another, narrower arch, with a step down, led through into the first of the chambers of the north-eastern complex. There was a plastered and painted bench, 0.35m high, against part of the north wall, and beside it a vertical duct which presumably carried water from the uphill side of the building down into a cistern.



Illus. 224. Gasr el Lebia: East Church, lettered rooms in the north-east area (Sheila Gibson).

When first excavated there were still substantial traces of painting visible on the plaster of the outer wall, mostly of a rather elementary decorative character and now much faded. The most distinctive feature, painted in reds, greens and browns, was an *aedicula*, within which looped curtains framed a jewelled cross flanked by two low plants (*illus. 223*).

The North-east Rooms (*illus. 224*)

The group of rooms at the north-east corner consisted architecturally of two interconnecting rooms (*d* and *f*) which were in effect a prolongation eastwards of the north aisle; opening off the north sides of these rooms two inner chambers (*e* and *g*) terraced into the hillside, only one of which (*e*) has been excavated; and beyond the line of the east wall of the nave three small interconnecting rooms (*a*, *b* and *c*), of which one (*c*) is unexcavated. In structural terms there are several secondary features (for example, the wall between *d* and *e*), but in an orthostat-and-faced-rubble building-convention such as this, this is a matter of very doubtful chronological significance. Although it will be suggested below that this may in some sense be the nucleus about which the whole complex evolved, it is far from certain that any of these rooms are, as they stand, earlier than the rest of the building.

Room a A vestibule for those wishing to enter the building from the east. The jambs of the four doorways, like all those in this part of the building, consist of orthostats, tied back here and there into the body of the masonry by smaller horizontal slabs. There was a step down into the nave. Otherwise it is featureless.

Room b A passage leading to *c* and *d*. A fourth doorway, in the east wall, was later blocked.

Room c Unexcavated.

Room d Although this room, with its handsome figured mosaic, is now by far the most striking feature of the north-east wing, it seems in fact to be intended as an antechamber to Room *e*, with entrances from the nave as well

as from the east and west of which the nave entrance was later blocked by the plastered wall visible in *illus.* 219, resting on the outer border of the mosaic.¹⁵ If one may assume the positioning of the mosaic and its inscriptions it will be noted that the central figured panel of the mosaic was designed to be viewed from the inner room (*e*), the inscription in the west doorway (below, no. C 1) by persons entering from room *b*, and the two inscriptions in the inner border (below, no. C 2, 3) by persons who had already entered the room either from room *f* or from the nave. The principal entrance was that from the west, the least important that from the east.

Room *e* This room, accessible only from *d* up a step, is largely rock-cut and, except for a grave recess in the far left-hand corner, featureless. Whatever it once contained to justify its apparent importance within the total lay-out, this has vanished leaving no other trace.

Room *f* An antechamber to Room *d*, accessible both from the north aisle and across the nave. It has a rock floor, one step down from that of the aisle.

Room *g* Unexcavated.

Summing-up

It will be helpful at this point to summarise the elements of the plan which distinguish it from the rest of the Cyrenaican series:¹⁶

1. The effective subdivision of the building into an eastern and a western half along a line corresponding with the junction of the mosaic and marble pavements of the nave.
2. The incorporation of a complex of rooms at the north-east corner, a complex within which Rooms *d* and *f* seem to have played a special role.
3. The probability of a transverse axis opposite Room *f*. There was certainly a doorway between the south aisle and the nave at this point; and in the absence of any but a small, secondary doorway at one corner of the east end, the main entrance to the church might well have been from the south.
4. The ambivalent placing of the nave-mosaic—to be viewed conventionally, looking up the nave towards the altar, but at the same time displaced northwards as if to emphasize a connection with the rooms beyond.

It is tempting to see in these dispositions an analogy with the East Church at Cyrene. The plan of the latter is of more conventional proportions, but there is the same establishment of a cross-axis at the east end of the nave, in this case focussed upon some object, now lost, that stood against the north wall, opposite the main south entrance. In both cases the focus of interest was something that was meant to be freely viewed but to be approached only indirectly.

¹⁵ It consists of a central oblong *emblema* framed by a broad frieze showing various animals and a hunting scene, within an outer band of looped circles, diamonds and rectangles etc. The *emblema* shows a crocodile trying to drag a cow into a river and a scene with fishermen.

¹⁶ The place of the church within the Cyrenaican series was to have been discussed here in a section that was never written.

At Cyrene the arches of the arcade are left open, but barred. At Gasr el Lebia the original plan allowed for a doorway from the nave into Room *d*; but at an early stage this was blocked and the lay-out of the mosaic indicates that, from the outset, the main entrance to this room was from Room *f*.

One is reminded again of the chapel in the 'Palace of the *Dux*' at Apollonia, where too there was an object which was prominently displayed but which was only accessible indirectly, through the narthex. Was room *e* at Gasr el Lebia a *martyrion*, either the site of an actual pre-existing grave (for which the prior conformation of the ground would have been very suitable) or else containing some sort of artificial reliquary? The presence of a grave recess in the north-west corner is not in itself conclusive. It could easily be a secondary feature. Nevertheless, the hypothesis of a *martyrion* is one that could explain much.

Carved fittings

There is nothing recorded except the marble chancel-posts and part of a marble column as noted above, and there is no detailed information available about them.

The inscriptions

A. On marble; found in the church.

1. Fragment of a marble panel (0.09m × 0.11m × 0.035m); letters, 0.035m.

...] Μακ[...

2. Marble paving slab (1.56m × 0.65m × depth not measurable); letters, *c.* 0.06m, rather roughly cut.

Μακ , perhaps for Μακάριος.

Both were originally published as likely to refer to the bishop Macarius of B2 below. It is still possible that no. 1 may have come from a dedication that he made or from his tombstone; but no. 2 was thought by R. G. Goodchild to resemble what seem to be masons' marks on imported marble church fittings at el Atrun qv; there may be another example on a column in the marble-quarry at Aliko on Thasos; see also *Introduction II, Interior fittings, Marble*.

B. In mosaic

In the nave, within panels 0.60m × 0.60m; letters, ave. 0.045m, lunate *epsilon* in nos. 2, 3; lunate *sigma* in 1, 3, 9-11; lunate *omega* in 2, 6-8, 10; rectangular *sigma* in 4, 5, 7-11; cursive *delta* in 10; cursive *lamda* in 4, 10; *rho* with a slant stroke in 1-3, 5, 10, abbreviations in 2 marked by S.

In earlier publications the rows of panels have been numbered from west to east, but, since they were, indubitably, meant to be seen from the east, they are so presented here.

For full illustration see Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, plates 5.1-3, 6.1-4, 11.1 and 2, 16.1, 17.1, 106, 1. For some further comment see under *Discussion* below.

1. Row 10, panel 3; beside a picture of a two-storeyed building entered up a flight of steps (or a ladder); on the top is a nude male figure with radiate crown, holding a sword-like object whose point rests on an unidentified semi-circular feature; to the right is another building represented by three arches, on which a smaller unidentified figure is standing.

ΟΦΑ
ΡΟC

ὁ Φά-
ρος

The pharos

The interpretation was discussed by Goodchild 1961*b*, Guarducci 1975 and Giorgetti 1977; it seems clear that the Pharos of Alexandria is shown, with Helios; Guarducci argues that Helios represents Christ and the Pharos divine light. The other features are more controversial.

2. Row 5, panel 3; the text is set within a jewelled wreath. Abbreviations in ll. 6,7 marked by ζ.

	Ε Γ Ε	ἐγέ-	This work too
	Ν Ε Τ Ο Κ Α Ι	νετο καὶ	came into
	Τ Ο Υ Τ Ο Τ Ο Ε Ρ	τούτο τὸ ἔρ-	being in
	Γ Ο Ν Ε Π Ι Μ Α Κ Α Ρ Ι	γον ἐπὶ Μακαρί-	the time of Macarius
5	Ο Υ Τ Ο Υ Ο C Ι Ω Τ Α	ου τοῦ ὁσιωτά-	the most holy
	Τ Ο Υ Ε Π Ι C Κ Ο	του ἐπισκό(που)	bishop
	vac. Ι Ν Δ Γ	vac. ἰνδ(ικτίωνος) γ'	in indiction year 3

3. Row 4, panel 2; beside the figure of a youthful water-god who holds a *cornucopiae* and a lotus-flower; he sits on a jar from which water is pouring, beside a very large lotus-flower. There is inadequate space for the final letter which is only partly shown.

	Ε Υ	Εὐ-	Euphrates
	Φ Ρ Α	φρά-	
	Τ Η C	της	

For comment see on no. 8 and under *Discussion* below.

4. Row 4, panel 3, beside the figure of a nymph reclining at the foot of a fruit-tree, with left arm raised above her head and right arm resting on a jar from which water is pouring.

	Κ Α C	Κασ-	Castalia
	Τ Α	τα-	
	Λ Ι	λί-	
	Α	α	

For comment see on no. 8 and under *Discussion* below.

5. Row 4, panel 4; beside the head of a youthful river-god holding out a cup in one hand and a rush-plant in the other, as he sits on a jar from which water is pouring.

	Τ Ι	Τί-	Tigris
	Γ Ρ Ι C	γρις	

For comment see on no. 8 and under *Discussion* below.

6. Row 2, panel 2; on either side of the head of a bearded river-god, holding a rudder and sitting beside a fruit-tree, on a jar from which water is pouring.

	Γ Η head Ω Ν	Γήων	Geon
--	--------------	------	------

For comment see on no. 8 and under *Discussion* below.

7. Row 2, panel 3; above a female half-figure set in an aedicula which is topped by a conch; she is noticeably bejewelled and holds a basket of fruit in one hand and perhaps a piece of fruit in the other.

	Α Ν Α conch Ν Ε	Ἀνανέω-	Renewal
	conch Ω C Ι C	σις	

For comment see on no. 8 and under *Discussion* below.

8. Row 2, panel 4; beside the head of a youthful river-god who grasps a rush-plant and holds out a cup from which he pours water; he sits on his mantle and rests his other elbow on a jar from which water is pouring.

	Φ Ι C Ω Ν	Φίωων	Phison
--	-----------	-------	--------

Nos. 3, 5, 6, and 8 present the four rivers of Paradise, to which no. 4 adds, unexpectedly, Castalia. Within the Libyas the four rivers recur at Taucheira and they are, of course, comparatively common elsewhere; but their presentation as pagan gods has not hitherto been found elsewhere before the Middle Ages (Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 37-40). See further under *Discussion* below.

9. Row 1, panel 2; above a full-length female figure, wearing robe, mantle and jewellery, carrying a censer in one hand and a flower in the other; she stands between two trees.

KOC head MH tree CIC Κόσμησις Adornment

For comment see on no. 11 and under *Discussion* below.

10. Row 1, panel 3; written vertically on either side of a gate flanked by round towers.

a. ΠΟΛΙCNEA πόλις νέα The new city
b. ΘΕΟΔΩΡΙΑC Θεοδωρίας Theodorias

a. is clearly laid out in a manner which indicates not that the name was Neapolis, as supposed by Stucchi and the authors of the Barrington Atlas, but that Theodorias is a new city; see also Feissel 2000, no. 70 and Reynolds 2000; Modéran 1996, on *AE* 1996, 1704 = Feissel 2000, no. 73, provides an interesting example of the circumstances in which the name of the empress might be conferred on a city (in that case after a damaging attack by raiders).

11. Row 1, panel 4; beside the head of a woman dressed much as the woman in no. 9, who stands between two flowering trees, holding a wreath and branch in one hand and a folded cloth in the other.

KTI Κτί- Foundation
CIC σις

The three figures, *Ktisis*, *Kosmesis* and *Ananeosis* recur at Taucheira and *Ktisis* probably, with *Kosmesis* certainly, at Ras el Hilal; but with rather different iconography in each case. Elsewhere *Ktisis* and *Ananeosis* have been found, especially at Antioch on the Orontes, but so far not *Kosmesis* (Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 34-41). See further under *Discussion* below.

C. In the north-east room (*d*).

For illustration see Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, plates 56, 106.2-4.

1. In the west doorway, between rooms *f* and *d*, to be read from the west as one enters room *d*; within a *tabella ansata* (panel, 0.825m × 0.45m); letters, 0.06, lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, and *omega*, cursive *delta* and *lambda*, *rho* with a slant stroke, *hypsilon* with a cross-bar; ligatured ΗΜΠ and ΩΡ in l. 2, ΗΜ in l. 3, ΟΥ in ll. 4-6, ΝΕ in l. 6; abbreviations marked by a superscript bar in l. 3, by ϛ in l. 6.

<p>5. ΚΥΡΙΟCΤΩΝΔΥΝΑΜΕΩΝ ΜΕΘΗΜΩΝΑΝΤΙΛΗΜΠΤΩΡ ΗΜΩΝΟΘCΙΑΚΩΒΟΘCΟΜΕ ΓΑCΟΑΙΩΝΙΟC γ. ΥΠΕΡΑC ΠΙCΤΗCΓΕΝΟΥΤΟΥΔΟΥ. ΛΟΥCΟΥΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΥΔ^ϛΝΕΟ</p>	<p>Κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων μεθ' ἡμῶν ἀντιλήμπτωρ ἡμῶν ὁ θε(ε)ὸς Ἰακώβ ὁ θε(ε)ὸς ὁ μέ- γας ὁ αἰώνιος ὑπερασ- πιστῆς γένου τοῦ δού- λου σοῦ Θεοδώρου δι(ιακόνου?) νέο(υ)</p>
---	--

Lord of the hosts
be (*or* you are) with us, our succour,
God of Jacob, mighty

God, eternal God, be (*or you are*)
the shield of your
servant Theodorus the new deacon (?)

Guarducci understandably questions the reading and interpretation of the title in the last line; the reading seems to be very clear, however, and no alternative interpretation seems obvious.

2. Opposite the north doorway, but to be read from the south, on entry from the south doorway (unless that was already blocked), or from the bench along the south wall; within a jewelled roundel (diam. 0.47m); letters, 0.05-6m; lunate *epsilon*, *sigma* and *omega*, cursive *delta*, *rho* with a slant stroke; abbreviation in l. 6 marked by a slanting line. The spacing is very uneven, apparently to emphasise ll. 3-5.

	TAMAP	τὰ μαρ–	Your witnesses
	ΤΥΡΙΑCOY	τύριά σου	were
	ΕΠΙCΤΩΘΗ	ἐπιστώθη–	trusted;
	CANCFΟ ν.	σαν σφό–	that greatly
5.	ΔΡΑΤΩΟΙ	δρα τῶ οἱ–	adorns your
	ΚΩCOYTP	κῶ σου πρ(έπει)	house.

3. Opposite the east doorway between rooms *d* and *b*, to be read most easily from the west; within a roundel bordered by a wavy band (diam. 0.51m); letters, 0.035m; lunate and angled *epsilon*, lunate *sigma* and *omega*, cursive *delta*, *rho* with a slant stroke, *hypsilon* with cross-bar, ligatured OY in ll. 3, 5, 6; O at the end of l. 6 written very small; abbreviations in ll. 7, 8, marked by a ϛ.

	ΕΓΕ	ἐγέ–	This
	ΝΕΤΟΚΑΙ	νετο καὶ	good work
	ΤΟΥΤΟΤΟΑ	τοῦτο τὸ ἄ–	also came into
	ΓΑΘΟΝΕΡΓΟΝ	γαθὸν ἔργον	being
5.	ΕΠΙΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΥ	ἐπὶ Θεοδώρου	in the time of Theodorus
	ΤΟΥΟCΙΩΤΑΤΟ	τοῦ ὀσιωτάτο(υ)	the most holy
	ΝΕΟΥΕΠΙCΚΟ	νέου ἐπισκό(που)	new bishop.
	vac. ΙΝΔ Γ	vac. ἰνδ(ικτίωνος) γ'	In indiction year 3

D. Chancel

In the chancel, within a jewelled wreath which was seriously damaged when the altar base was enlarged (see above); letters, ave. 0.05m, rather tall for their width, lunate and rectangular *sigma*, lunate *omega*, *rho* with a slant stroke. For illustration see Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, plate 106.5.

	Ε[ΓΕΝΕΤΟΚΑΙΤΟΥΤΟ]	ἐ[γένετο καὶ τοῦτο]
	ΤΟΕΡΓΟΝΕΠΙ[ΤΟΥΟC]	τὸ ἔργον ἐπὶ [τοῦ ὀσ(ιωτάτου)]
	ΚΕΘΕΟCΕΒΕ[CΤΑΤΟΥ]	κὲ θεοσεβε[στάτου]
	ΕΠΙCΚΟΠΟ[ΥΘΕΟ]	ἐπισκόπο[υ Θεο]-
5.	vac. ΔΩΡ[ΟΥ]	δώρ[ου]

[This] work [too]
[came into being] in the time of
[the very holy] and pious
bishop Theodorus

Discussion

1. Date and order of composition

It has been generally accepted that the new city of B10 is the small town on this site and that it had recently received the patronage of Justinian, being renamed in honour of his wife. There is no evidence to explain this, but the site is of strategic value and may have been the location of a fort; while the case of Djelloula (Cululis: see under *Historical Context*) could indicate a preceding attack by enemy raiders. The only year during their joint reign to which the indiction figure given in B2 and C3 can refer is AD 538-9. From B2, C1, C3 and D it seems probable that the nave mosaic was laid first, under Bishop Macarius, while contemporarily, under Theodorus, apparently a newly-appointed deacon, the floor of the north-east chapel (room *d*) was planned, and begun with the panel in the doorway between rooms *f* and *d*. Before the year was out, Theodorus had become bishop, the floor of the north-east chapel was finished and perhaps that of the chancel begun. The chancel-mosaic may have been finished in the same year, but it is to be noted that the lettering of Theodorus' inscription there is slightly different from that of the other lettered panels—at least a different workman seems to have been involved.

It was the view of Goodchild and of Ward-Perkins that the mosaics thus dated under Justinian were contemporary with the construction of the church, but that has been contested, notably by Stucchi and Duval. It should be noted:

- a. that Goodchild did not 'assume' that the mosaics were the original flooring (as some of his critics have said)—he believed that he had found it to be so, since the nave-mosaic in the south-eastern corner was found to rest directly on the levelled rock (naturally the necessary terracing of the foundations in the downhill direction involved the interposition of an increasingly deep made-up level between the rock and the seating for the mosaics there). His belief has been shared by all who have actually worked on these floors (Ward-Perkins and Elisabeth Rosenbaum spent much time poring over them—the latter often on her knees on and beside them).
- b. that Goodchild, like Ward-Perkins, believed that the marble paving of the central nave was a different, but contemporary provision of luxurious flooring, marking a function for that area different from that of the mosaic-floored part of the nave.
- c. that when the mosaics were raised, Abdulhamid Abdussaid (who was present during the process) was confirmed by what he saw in the view that they had provided the primary flooring.

No one's conviction can count as proof. After reading many times what has been written on this issue, Reynolds can only conclude that it is very much harder than might be supposed to establish beyond all doubt the relationship of a mosaic floor to its building. Since Abdussaid tells her that there are more mosaics in the un-dug annexes to the church (see also Goodchild 1957) there is hope that in due course they can be excavated with special attention to this problem.

2. Donors

What exactly (if anything) Justinian gave to Theodorias in addition to its name and status, we do not know; public buildings, city-walls, a fort and a church may all be possible, as at Ain Djelloula (see *Historical Context*; but the shoddy construction of the East Church seems on the face of it inappropriate to an imperial gift), or simply fittings for one or both of the churches. It may be that the marble fittings of the East Church were imported, perhaps along with those at el Atrun (if, as it seems, a mason's mark similar to that of A2 occurs there); if so, they will, surely, have come from imperial quarries, but need not, perhaps, have been an imperial gift. As far as we know, the emperor was not named at all in the church, whereas considerable prominence was given in the mosaics to the names of Macarius and Theodorus, and the mosaic in room *d* incorporates what is probably a prayer specifically for Theodorus. It is true that the formula ἐπί with the genitive case of a name (see B2, C1, 3, D) need have no more than a chronological meaning, but it is compatible also with a claim to responsibility for what was done, so that there is a case for conjecturing that they were

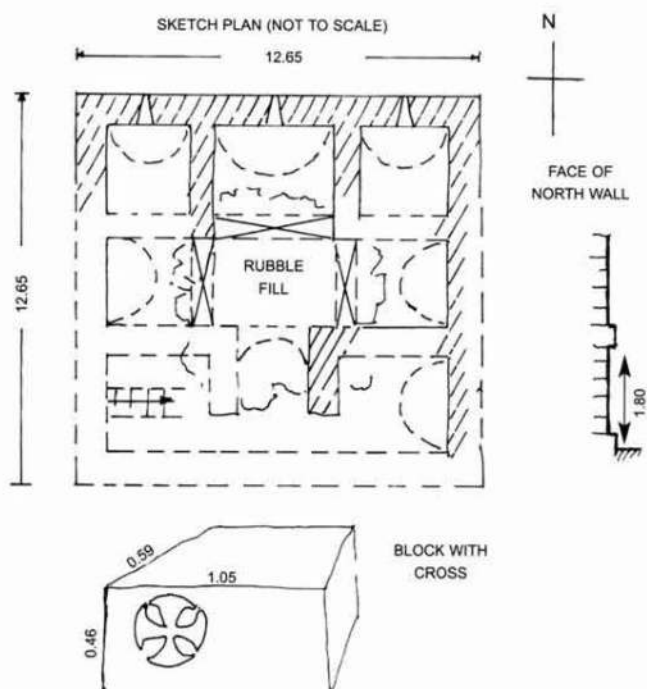
the donors, at least of the mosaics. If so, they used a group of mosaicists whose leader(s) may perhaps have been encouraged to go to Cyrenaica by official interest in church-building, but who seem to have recruited and trained additional workmen locally (see *Introduction II*), and, whether or not any of their floors were made to imperial orders, certainly also took commissions from locals (see also under Ras el Hilal, below, and Gasr Bandis, *Section 3*).

Maçarius was apparently responsible for at least one other gift to the church (note καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον in B2).

3. The meaning of the mosaics

Three attempts have been made to deduce a detailed and coherent message delivered by the panels of the nave-mosaic (Grabar 1969, Guarducci 1975, Stucchi 1975); Rosenbaum was unhappy with these, feeling that comparison with similar floors at Apollonia, Cyrene, Ras el Hilal and Taucheira (we should now probably add Gasr Bandis) indicates that panels and themes could be combined in such variable ways that no detailed interpretation can be accepted as the whole truth. It is of course certain that some panels in themselves, and some in groups, do carry symbolic meanings, and Rosenbaum followed Guarducci in suggesting that the meanings may often be at several levels simultaneously. So it might be supposed that the themes of Foundation (*Ktisis*), Renewal (*Ananeosis*) and Adornment (*Kosmesis*)¹⁷ were to be referred both to the new city and to the East Church itself; while Renewal, particularly when taken in the context of the four rivers of paradise (along with the unexpected and unexplained Castalia which Rosenbaum identified with the spring of that name at Daphnae by Antioch), could also suggest the baptism of the individual Christian and the delights of paradise to which it should lead; no baptistery has been found so far in the church, but excavation of the annexes is incomplete. The lighthouse (identified by Goodchild with that of Alexandria) is an obvious symbol for the guidance of the Christian into a safe home-coming; and so a natural beginning to the series.

The chancel-mosaic presents no real problems. The mosaic in the north-east chapel is more difficult, since the sense or relevance of the Nilotic scene in the centre is not obvious (note that it recurs in the Central Church at Cyrene and at Taucheira). The inscribed panels contain biblical quotations—OT, *Psalms* XLV.11 and 8f.; XXX.3 and 5, *Isaiah* xxvi.4 (LXX) in C1, *Psalms* XCII.5. (LXX) in C3. The wording of C3, with its stress on witness and/or belief, may well point to a martyr-cult which was presumably located in room *e*.



Illus. 225. Gasr Shnedeira: from sketches in Ward-Perkins' notebook (Sheila Gibson).

Gasr Shnedeira (Shenedeira), anc. name unknown, illus. 225, 226: Christian fort or house.

Discovery

The building was found by members of the Department of Antiquities at Shahat in the later sixties, but not surveyed.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited the site in 1969 and made rough sketches and notes which were never typed. No survey was undertaken.

Description¹

Just to the right of the ridgeway track that runs south-east from Gasr Beni Gdem, about 1km short of the village of Kteifah. The building dominates a spur that projects westwards, over the valley to the west; and around it are remains of various secondary structures, a number of caves and cisterns. The north wall is standing; the south wall has totally collapsed; and between them a number of structures are visible to a height that includes the spring of the vault. Not surveyed but sketched (illus. 225).

Outer north wall: robust, coursed (but rather roughly), with massive blocks on both inner and outer faces of very thick outer wall.²

This can hardly be a church, but it is surely a Christian monument.

¹ Taken from the notebook.

² On the drawing of this wall Ward-Perkins marked a projecting footing-course, a slightly-projecting levelling-course 1.85m above it, and a slit window. One fallen block from it carries an incised compass-traced cross (illus. 225).



Illus. 226. Gasr Silu: East church, apse; gasr in the distance.

Gasr Silu, anc. name unknown, illus. 226-34: two churches, a Christian fort or house.

Discovery

Found by members of the Department of Antiquities at Shahat in the later 1960s, but not surveyed.

Ward-Perkins' programme

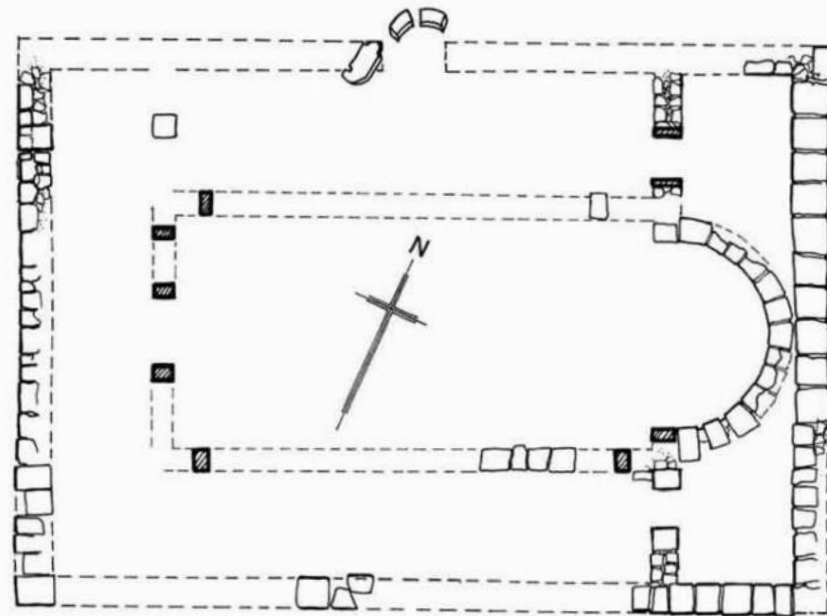
Visited by Ward-Perkins in 1969 and surveyed at the same time by Sheila Gibson and Margaret Browne.

The Site

A pair of churches, situated within an extensive but rather scattered settlement about a kilometre north of the foot of the upper escarpment, nearly 2km south-east of the minaret of Zawiet Mirad Masaud, and just over 10km in a direct line north of el Beiada (the former D'Annunzio). It lies beside a track which leads up a valley that was once extensively cultivated, with many soil dams, and which offers easy access to the upper plateau just east of el Beiada.

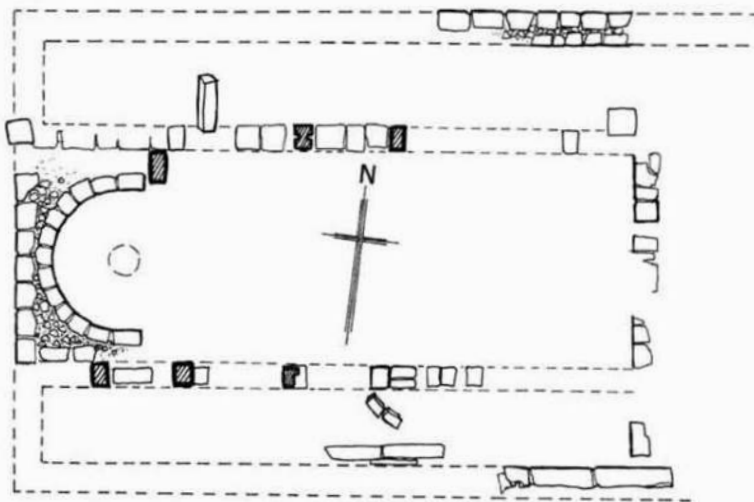
At this point, near the foot of the scarp, there are many stretches of good cultivable soil, interspersed with low rocky ridges, clumps of carob trees and patches of scrub. It was on two of these ridges, immediately to the west of the track and about 300m apart, that the main settlement was concentrated. The northern ridge is the more pronounced, falling away sharply at the west end, where it is crowned by the remains of an impressive *gasr* (illus. 226). The southern ridge is lower; on it are located the fragmentary remains of two churches, as well as of several other buildings.

A feature of the settlement is the number of cisterns and oil presses, the latter represented principally by the flat stones, usually inscribed with a circular runnel, which served to collect the oil as it was pressed. One of these is actually built into the apse of the West Church.



WEST CHURCH

0 10m



EAST CHURCH

GASR SILU

Illus. 227. Gasr Silu: the two churches, measured plans (Sheila Gibson).

The Monuments

1. The East Church, illus. 226, 227.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 234.

On the level top of a low limestone ridge just to the left of the track there are the scanty remains of a basilical church; approximate overall dimensions 13m by 21m (illus. 227). So far as one can judge, it was of conventional sixth-century form,¹ with a western apse.

The most determinate feature is the apse (illus. 226). This was, as usual, inscribed, the outer west wall being here faced with large squared blocks of the hard local limestone, the inner curved face with 0.60m orthostat-slabs; the latter can be seen to rest on a footing which, in turn, rests directly on the rock. An unusual feature of this apse is that it exactly, and no doubt deliberately, frames the mouth of a cistern, into which much of the earth from the interior has slipped, exposing several blocks of what might be the seating for a simple *synthronon*.

Two piers of the north nave-arcade are still partly standing, and from these and from a couple of voussoirs lying in the south aisle one can calculate that there were four arches in each arcade, each just over 2m in span.

Of the outer walls, a short stretch of massive stone blocks towards the east end of the south wall probably represents the foundation course; and a corresponding stretch on the north side the wall that rested on these foundations, with two faces of roughly-coursed smaller blocks. There are the rather exiguous remains of the north-south wall at the east end of the nave, including what may be the north jamb of a central doorway, and one block of what looks like a continuation of this line across the east end of the south aisle. The position and thickness of this wall relative to those of the outer walls show that the building did continue beyond this line (a pair of angle-chapels and an internal porch?), but nothing can now be seen above ground.

2. The West Church, illus. 227-29.

About 200m to the south-west of the East Church, beneath a large carob tree, there are the remains of a second church (illus. 227), of the same general size (15.5m by 22m) and type except that the apse in this case is at the east end (illus. 228). It is slightly better-preserved than its neighbour, but this is offset by the low scrub which made parts of it very difficult to survey.

At the east end most of the outer wall (of substantial squared blocks), the bare outline of the inner face of the apse (also of block-construction), and the transverse line that delimited the two angle-chapels can all be made out. In common with the other internal walls (and probably much of the super-structure of the outer walls too) the latter was of a rather less substantial build, combining squared stone orthostats (for piers, door-jambes and in places simply to give additional strength) with stretches of walling faced with smaller, roughly-coursed stones.

At the west end most of the outer wall and enough of the inner wall survives to show that, once again, there must have been some sort of internal porch flanked by angle-chapels. There is a large central door between this porch and

¹ But, of course, that date is open to question.



Illus. 228. Gasr Silu: West Church, apse.



Illus. 229. Gasr Silu: West Church, 'curtain-bracket'.

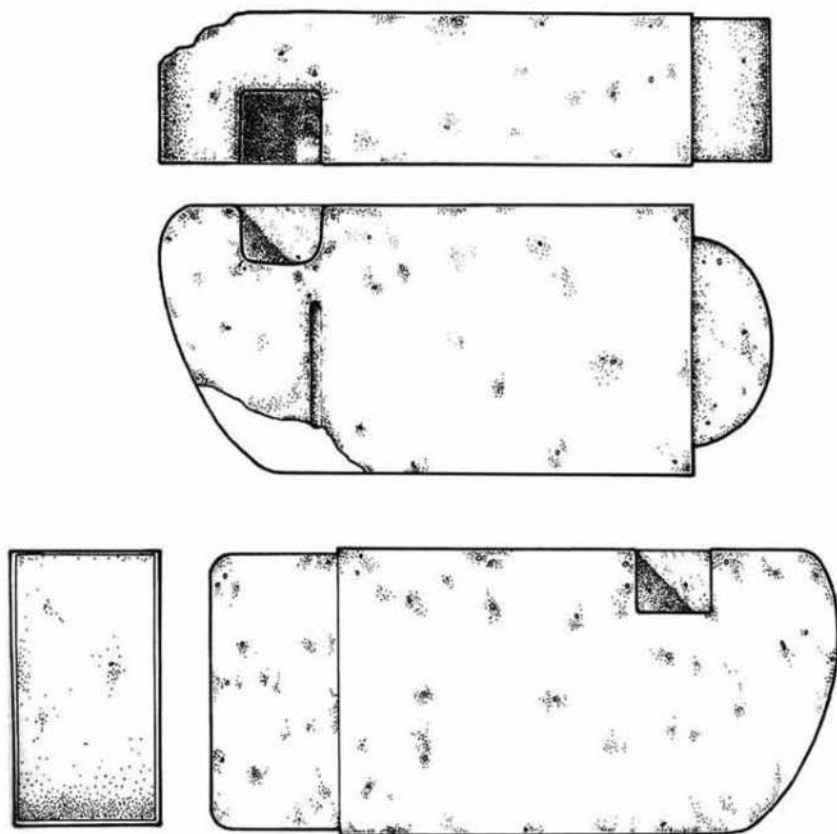
the nave, but it is doubtful whether in this instance there was any corresponding doorway in the outer wall. There was, on the other hand, a door in the middle of the north side, its position marked by fallen voussoirs and by one of a pair of 'curtain brackets' (illus. 229, 230).²

3. The *Gasr*, illus. 226, 231-34.

Although the fortress as such falls outside the scope of this publication, the constructional methods used in it are worth recording for the light which they shed on the monumental building-techniques in use at this late period.

The *gasr* was a rectangular structure, measuring 32.10m from east to west by 29.70m from north to south and surrounded by a 5m rock-cut ditch (illus. 231). The standing remains of the outer wall are of two periods. In its

² See Introduction II, *Interior Fitments, Limestone*.



Illus. 230. 'Curtain-brackets' from the West Church at Gasr Silu and Siret bu Hosh; sketches (W. A. Foster from Sara Paton's notebook)

original form, best seen along the north side, it was built of stoutly-concreted rubble, faced internally and externally with small coursed blocks and incorporating externally at least one projecting levelling-course of large dressed slabs. This wall was later strengthened by the addition of an outer facing of large squared stone blocks backed with rubble. The lower part of this seems to have been built of re-used material, laid in markedly irregular courses. This was capped by a very slightly projecting levelling-course, above which the masonry is of a distinctly better quality, with stone of a slightly different quality, which may well have been quarried for the purpose, and with more regular coursing than in the lower part.

One of the corner stones of the north-west angle bears a Maltese cross in counter-relief within a recessed circle (illus. 232). Though used up-ended, it looks very much as if it were a lintel stone re-used from an earlier building. Fallen nearby there is another block with two roughly-incised Stars of David (illus. 234).³ [A second fallen block inscribed with a compass-traced cross was photographed by a member of the Shahat Department of Antiquities (illus. 233).]

³ The symbol is thought to have had magical powers, accepted in antiquity by pagans, Jews and Christians alike; only in the Mediaeval period, it seems, did it acquire a special significance for Jews (see the useful account by E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York, 1953-8), vol. 12, 198-200.



Illus. 231. Gasr Silu: gasr, general view including the ditch.



Illus. 232. Gasr Silu: gasr, cross on the north-west corner stone.

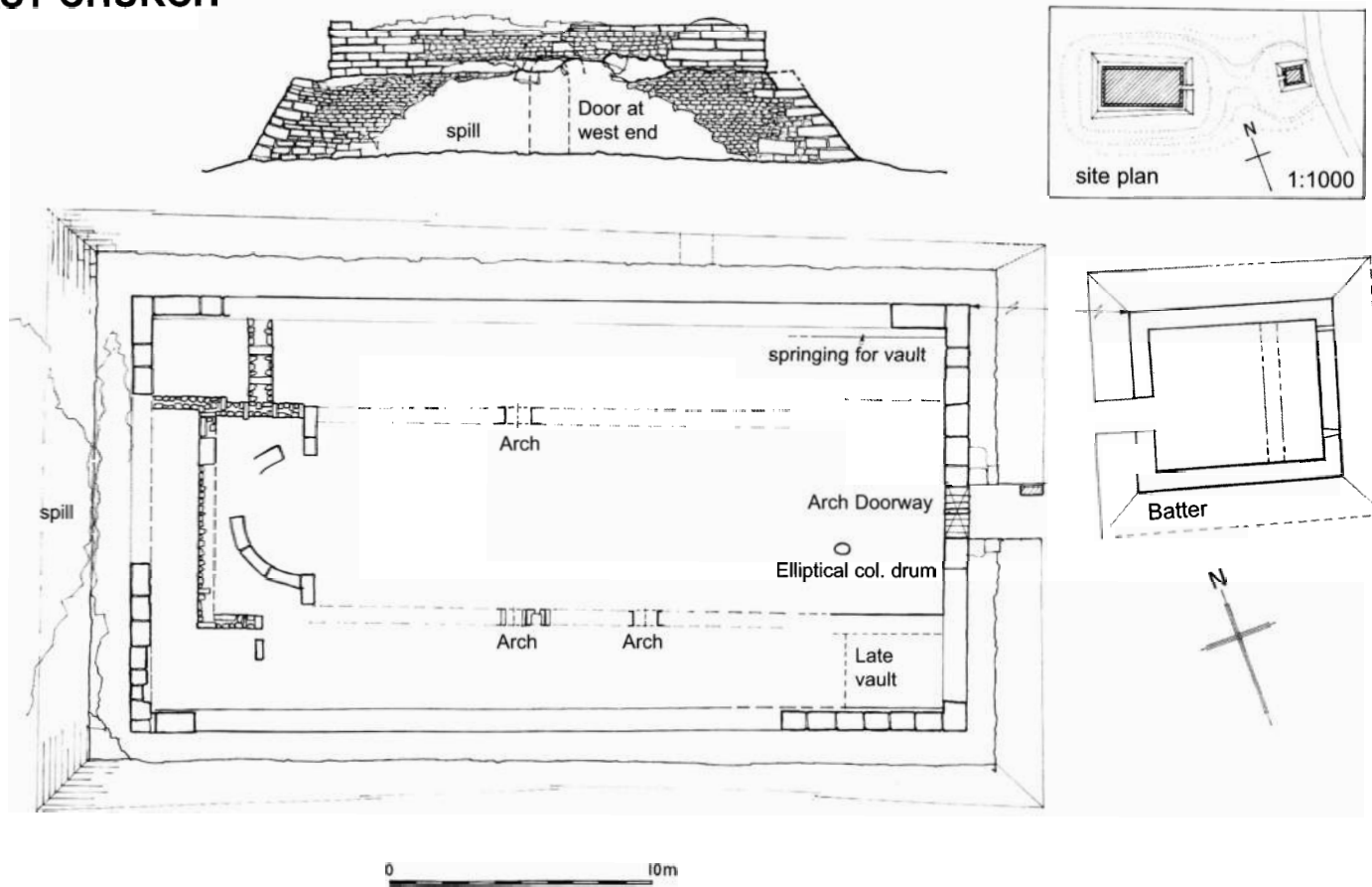


Illus. 233. Gasr Silu: gasr, compass-traced cross incised on a fallen block.



Illus. 234. Gasr Silu: gasr, crosses and stars on a fallen stone.

LAMLUDA EAST CHURCH



Illus. 235. Lamluda: East Church and neighbouring building, measured plan (S.M. Staples and Sheila Gibson).

Lamluda (? anc. Limnias), illus. 235-45: two churches.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 125-6, 127-8; Hamilton 1856, 106-7; Smith/Porcher 1864, 59; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 58; Goodchild 1952*a*, 150 = 1976*a*, 151; 1953, 73 = 1976*a*, 204; 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 229-30, 234; Stucchi 1975, 387, 395, 426, 432, 473, 487, 502; Purcaro 1976, 340; Bacchielli/Reynolds 1987, 461-3, 494-506; Roques 1987, 125, 401, 405; Duval 1989*b*, 2267, 2776, 2778-9, 2785.

The site of a flourishing townlet on the upper plateau, 28km east of Cyrene. It was situated at the point where in antiquity, as today, a road struck off northwards from the main east-west road across the upper Gebel, heading down to the coast at Ras el Hilal and el Atrun. Sixty years ago it was still an impressive complex of ruins, comparable to that still surviving at Mgarnes, but in this respect its proximity to the modern road has been its undoing. There are the remains of two churches.

Pacho identified the site with the Limnias of *Itin. Ant.* 68. 70, and this has been widely accepted; it has been questioned by Roques, since Lamluda is not particularly well endowed with water, and should not, perhaps, be assumed to be correct.

Apart from the two churches noted there, visitors have reported cisterns, oil presses, a Byzantine bath, and a Byzantine house. In a limited and unpublished excavation Goodchild found a paved street within what was clearly an urban area, and outside that, in a cemetery area, a number of small limestone tomb *stelae* featuring a usually rudimentary head of a type likely to reflect a Libyan tradition (Bacchielli/Reynolds *cit.*); although the names of the deceased were often Greek or Latin, and there were even a few persons with the *tria nomina* of Roman (or Latin) citizens, this suggests a population with marked Libyan connections. The remains seem predominantly late in date, Roman, late antique and Byzantine; but several fine Hellenistic mausolea are to be seen in the vicinity, on either side of the Lamluda/Hilal road. This was an area with a Greek tradition too.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited and described the churches in 1955, when an initial survey was made by S. M. Staples. After Goodchild's excavation Ward-Perkins returned in 1969, and Sheila Gibson undertook some further surveying.

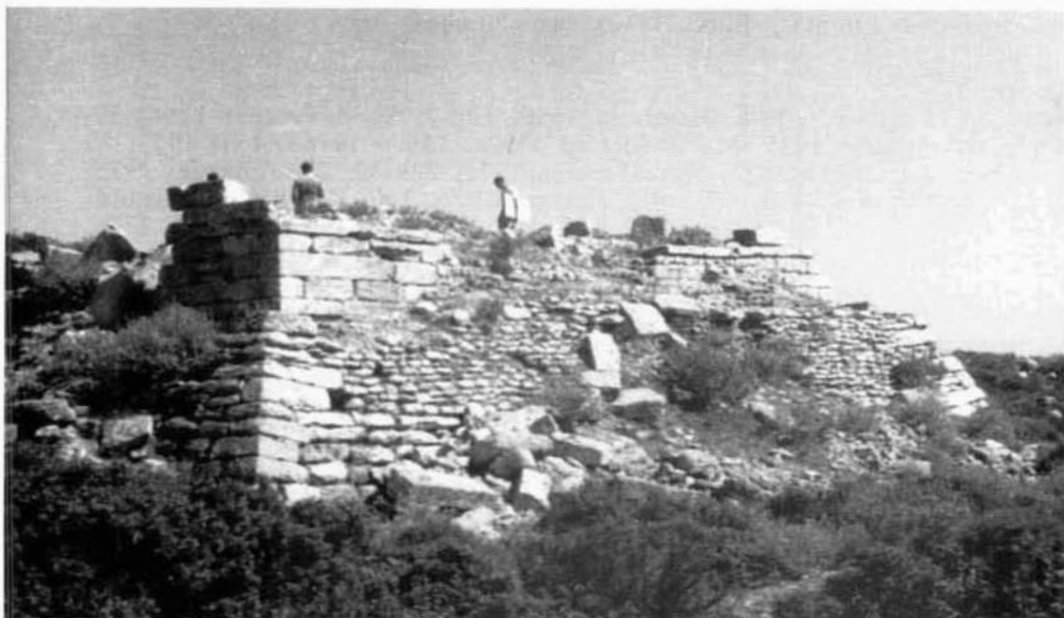
The Monuments

1. The East Church, illus. 235-41.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 125-6; Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 226, 229-230, 234; Stucchi 1975, 377, 387, 426, 432; Duval 1989*b*, 2767, 2778-9, 2785.

The East Church is today a prominent rectangular mound (illus. 236) a short distance to the north-east of the modern road junction. The greater part of the outer wall is standing to a height of 4-5m, and the interior is filled with fallen rubble to a depth which has almost completely buried the arches of the nave arcades (illus. 235). Although in its present state only the main lines of the building can be made out, a great deal of it must in fact be preserved, awaiting excavation.



Illus. 236. Lamluda: East Church, west end.



Illus. 237. Lamluda: East Church, wall and revetment, north-east angle.



Illus. 238. Lamluda: East Church, detail of masonry.

Two major periods can be distinguished.¹ The original building was rectangular in plan, 32m long and 16-16.5m wide. At the four corners the outer wall consisted of a single thickness of squared masonry blocks laid lengthways, many if not all of them taken from earlier buildings and some of them very large (illus. 237), and similar ashlar masonry was used for such internal features as the apse and the nave arcades. The remaining walls, including the central stretches of the outer walls, were built of faced-rubble masonry. The facing of the latter is very roughly squared but quite well coursed, and it was consolidated with courses of slightly projecting levelling blocks which were continuous round the whole building, rubble and ashlar alike (illus. 238). Two of these are still visible.

At some later date it was found necessary to consolidate the outer wall by the addition of a massive external facing, the outer face of which slopes inwards at an angle that varies between 45 and 60 degrees. Once again the corners are of dressed blocks, the rest being faced with smaller, elongated slabs upon a rough footing of rather larger stones (illus. 236, 237). To judge from the strong outward tilt of the earlier wall at several places this outer thickening represents the consolidation of a building which was in grave danger of collapse, perhaps as the result of an earthquake.

Of the internal lay-out enough can be seen through the encumbering rubble to show that it was a three-aisled basilica with a western apse; the main entrance lay at the east end (illus. 239) and there were chapels at the four corners, of which the two at the east end flanked an internal porch or vestibule. The apse, which was faced internally with dressed stone and was doubtless vaulted, was inscribed within a rectangular frame of faced-rubble masonry, the eastern face of which was separated from the outer wall by a narrow corridor,

¹ Stucchi dated the church, mainly on grounds of the masonry technique, in the second half of the fifth century AD.

2m wide. In the present state of the remains it is impossible to say how much of the visible walling on either side of the apse is original, or how closely it corresponds with the ground plan; but it is a fair assumption that the chapels opened off the west ends of the two lateral aisles with (presumably) access also to the corridor behind the apse.

The nave arcades are almost completely buried beneath a quantity of fallen rubble so great that the building must either have been wholly or partly vaulted, or else have had a second storey, possibly even both. The chapel at the north-east corner was certainly vaulted (the spring of a fallen vault is visible along the north wall). Its

south-eastern counterpart was presumably similar, though the existing vault, faced externally with a hard, waterproof concrete, dates from its subsequent transformation into a cistern. Between the two east chapels there was an internal vestibule, open to the nave through a columnar screen, one of the two columns of which projects through the rubble, with its capital lying nearby.² The outer entrance to the vestibule was arched,³ and it remained in use when the building was buttressed, although at some later date it was drastically narrowed by the insertion of a smaller arch, barely large enough for the passage of a single man (illus. 239). There seems also to have been a small secondary door in the north side, towards the east end of the nave. Here too a rectangular passageway was left when the outer revetment was added. This was later blocked.

About 40m to the east of the church, with its single door facing directly towards that of the church, are the remains of a rectangular tower-like structure (approximately 7m by 7.25m), the walls of which were reinforced in the same way, and presumably at the same time, as those of the church. It had a pair of slit windows in the east wall, and there are traces of what appears to be a transverse partition wall. Whether it was in fact related to the church, as



Illus. 239. Lamluda: East Church, arches of the main entrance.



Illus. 240. Lamluda: East Church, limestone window-mullion.

² A note on the ground-plan states that it is elliptical in form; cf. also below, n. 5.

³ The lintel over this doorway is carved with a relief of a maltese cross on each face.



Illus. 241. Lamluda: East Church, limestone window-mullion, detail of capital.

its position and structure certainly suggest, only excavation could determine.⁴

The only decorative elements now visible come from the eastern part of the building.

The limestone columns of the vestibule screen were elliptical in plan (0.54m by 0.45m) with a very slightly projecting, flattened surface in the middle of the two longer sides. The corresponding capitals curved sharply outwards to a rectangular abacus (0.70m by 0.48m), but apart from scored lines on the abacus they were otherwise plain. The socket for a 9cm wooden bar in the middle of one flattened face, suggests that there was a light screen, or possibly curtains, between the columns.

Another architectural element is a carved limestone window post (illus. 240), found lying outside the east door, presumably fallen from the upper part of the facade.⁵ The rudimentary leaf carving of the capital (illus. 241) is reminiscent of that of the capital of the 'pavilion' or canopied structure at Mtaugat, a building with which this church has much in common.⁶

2. The West Church, illus. 242-45.

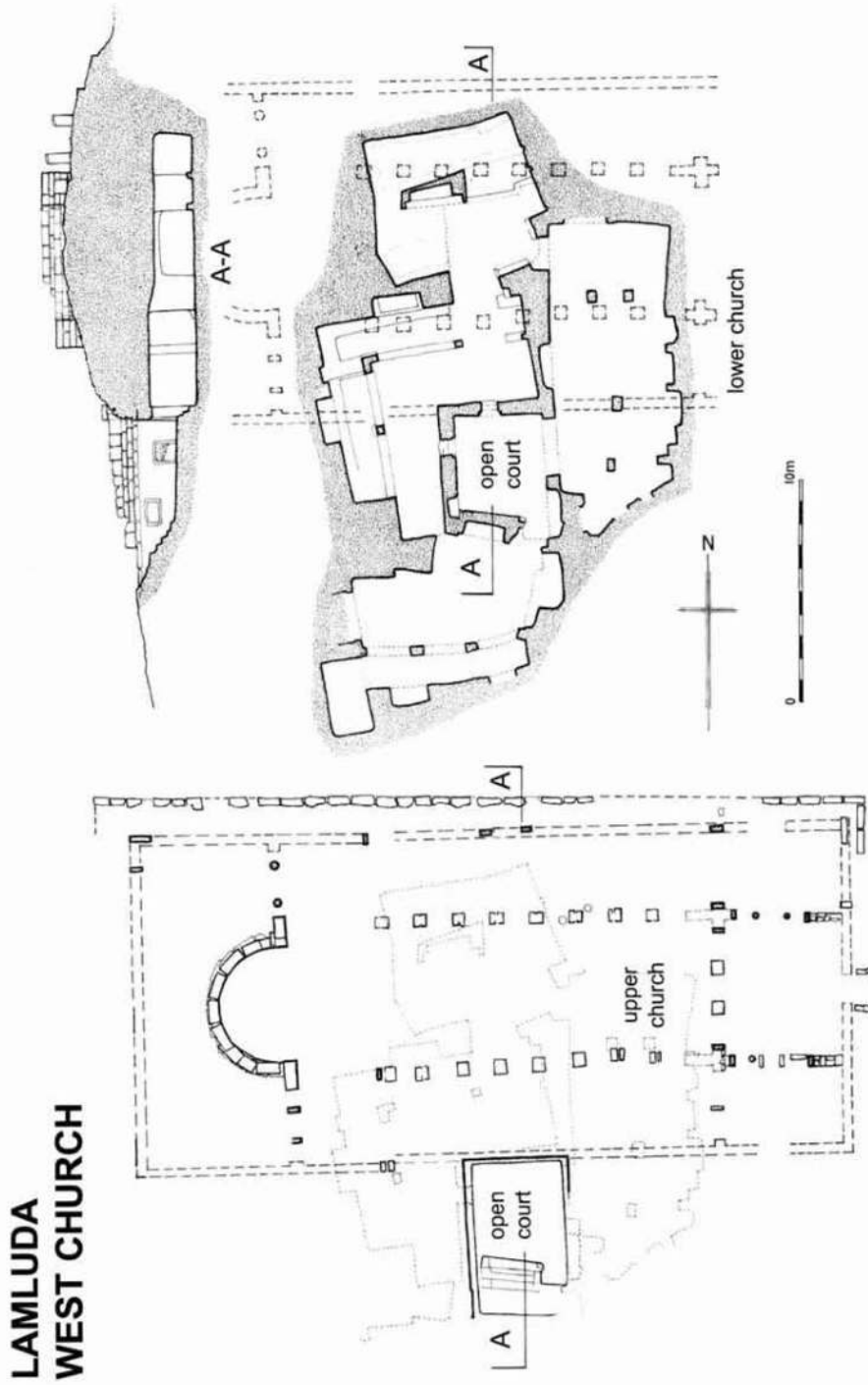
Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 229-30, 234; Stucchi 1975, 395-6 and fig. 447; Duval 1989*b*, 2778-9, 2785.

Until twenty-five years ago there were the substantial remains of a second church 500m north and west of the East Church, west of the road to Ras el Hilal. All that was readily movable was then dismantled to provide material for the boundary walls of the garden plot that now adjoins and partly covers the site. One can make out little more than the outline of the plan, based largely on such large squared stones or orthostats as were too large to move easily or could be conveniently re-used in position. Of the faced rubble infill between the orthostats, scanty traces can be seen here and there, notably at the east end.

The plan (illus. 243) appears to have been that of a typical sixth-century Cyrenaican basilica, with four angle-chapels and a western apse.⁷ As in the East Church the outer corners seem to have been built of dressed stone, and the whole outer wall, at any rate along the north and west sides, was later

- 4 Stucchi referred to a circular building just east of the church which he thought might be a baptistry.
- 5 In 1998 Reynolds saw several of these window-mullions (w. *c.* 0.19m × ht. 0.54m × d. *c.* 0.30m) collected together to the east of the church. It seems possible that they are the 'small piers with semi-columns carved in one piece with them' which led Stucchi to suggest that there was a second storey in this church.
- 6 In winter 1997-8 a carved slab of local stone (w. 2.15m × ht. 0.56m × d. 0.17m) was taken to Cyrene from the church or its immediate neighbourhood, and placed in Cyrene Museum. Its central feature now is an Arabic inscription; but there are also rows of diamonds outlined in relief and containing features some of which are suggestive of damaged Christian symbols (perhaps of the type seen on el Merj no. 29 with illus. 208). The back has been left quite rough.
- 7 The date, of course, is controversial; but Stucchi too dated this church in the sixth century (first quarter), largely on the basis of its building technique, using orthostats.



Illus. 242. Lamluda: West Church and underground complex, measured plans (Sheila Gibson).



Illus. 243. Lamluda: West Church.

buttressed by an outer thickening. The flanking stones of this thickening are now the only indication of the position of the main east entrance.

The outline of the apse,⁸ of dressed stone, is entirely preserved, shoulders and all (illus. 244), and until recently one could see a short stretch of the faced rubble masonry which formed the south wall of the north-west chapel, at the same time delimiting the masonry mass within which the apse itself was inscribed. Two limestone column-drums mark the entrance to this chapel, matched on the south side by the two orthostats of a wall with a central doorway. The positions of the eight piers of the nave arcades are not in



Illus. 244. Lamluda: West Church, apse

doubt (some of those on the south side have been slightly displaced). There is a gap of 4m between the western piers and the shoulders of the apse; but although at first sight this suggests the possibility of a transept, it could in fact just as easily have been filled by a pair of longitudinal walls of lighter construction, continuing the lines of the arcades and delimiting the chancel—in the context of Cyrenaica a far more likely solution. At the east end of the nave two piers (cf. Ptolemais West Church) and several orthostats mark the line of a transverse wall dividing the nave and aisles from a square inner vestibule and two angle-chapels. The vestibule and the two chapels were interconnecting through columnar screens, of which that on the south side was later blocked, leaving only a doorway.

⁸ Duval 1989*b*, 2776 and 2785, refers to traces of a *synthronon* and to a moulded cornice in the apse; holes for attachment of wooden seats may be visible in illus. 244.



Illus. 245. Lamluda: West Church, courtyard of underlying tomb.

Of the internal fittings of the church or of the floors there are no longer any traces.

The features that distinguish this building within the Cyrenaican series are not so much its plan, which follows broadly familiar lines, as its position outside the town, in a cemetery area, and its evident relationship to the larger of the surviving tombs.⁹ This too is of a type that is widely represented, a rambling, rock-cut complex (illus. 242) with a series of irregular chambers opening off what was probably always an open, sunken courtyard (illus. 245). The ceilings of these chambers are characteristically flat, taking advantage of one of the horizontal beds of very hard limestone which outcrop all over the upper Gebel, and they are supported, with some pretensions to the architectural niceties, by screen walls of squared piers. There is a similar but smaller rock-cut tomb some 50m to the east, and there are traces and records of other burials in the vicinity.

The church is so placed that most of the nave and the south aisle overlie the eastern half of the tomb (illus. 242) and if there were any doubt of the purposeful nature of this relationship, it is resolved by the careful siting of the outer south wall so as to coincide with the north wall of the sunken courtyard. The tomb was still accessible in Christian times, down a monumental flight of steps and through a doorway directly below the south wall (illus. 245).

There is no visible trace of any specifically Christian feature in the tomb, which was wholly or partly stuccoed and may have been painted. It is nonetheless difficult to avoid the conclusion that the church was built to mark the site of a tomb which contained, or was believed to contain, the remains of some venerated Christian personage.

⁹ Duval notes that although the church is built over a *hypogaeum*, Stucchi's argument that this was a *martyrion* is not justified.

Messa, perhaps anc. Artamis Kome, illus. 246-51: church.

Bibliography

Halbherr (1910) in Aurigemma 1930, 244-5 and Oliverio 1931, 274-9; Norton 1910-11; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 55; Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 229-30; Stucchi 1975, 439-40 (taking it to be anc. Lasamices); Laronde 1987, 276-81; Roques 1987, 101, 118, 405; Duval 1989*b*, 2755, 2757, 2779; for useful photographs of the site, see Oliverio 1931, figs. 47-57.

Messa lies near the edge of the upper escarpment, between el Beida (Balagrae) and the eastern lip of the Wadi Kuf system of gorges, in the angle between the modern east/west road across Cyrenaica and a road running north to the sea which, in antiquity, was probably a main route for east/west traffic avoiding the gorge of the Wadi Kuf. It is in an agriculturally rich area with a good supply of spring water and offers much evidence for early Greek settlement and strong hellenisation. Stucchi's identification with the Lasamices of *Itin. Ant.* 31 has not been generally accepted; Laronde's argument that it was the Artamis Kome of Ptolemy, *Geog.* IV.4-7 is attractive but not absolutely proven.

Discovery

The church was first noticed by Halbherr in 1910 and not long after by Norton, but was never surveyed.

Ward Perkins' programme

Ward Perkins first saw what was accessible of the church during war service in 1941 (so his notes); he visited it again in 1955 when access was still limited since it was occupied by a Libyan family, but a preliminary survey was made by C. and J. Hobbs; in 1969, after the family had moved out, Ward Perkins himself made a further examination of the building, and a new survey was carried out by Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler.

Description

Church and *hypogaeum* (illus. 246) near the western extremity of the ancient settlement which bears the name of Messa.

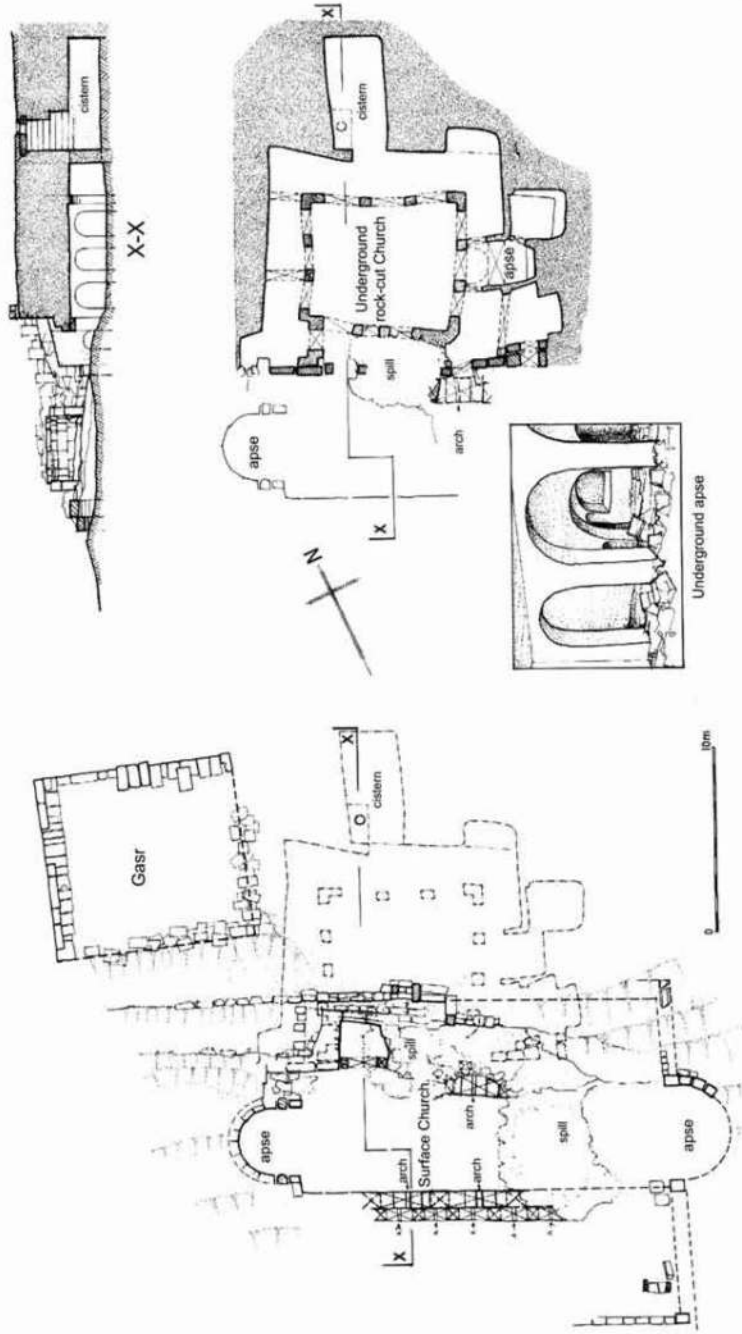
The settlement occupied a wedge-shaped promontory of higher ground extending south-westwards from the modern road that runs northwards from the modern village centre, about 10km west of el Beida. Its eastern limits are defined by the large quarries that lie just to the east of the same road. There are numerous field boundaries and remains of a number of tombs and mausolea in the immediate vicinity, and a spring in the adjoining valley-bottom. The main road from Cyrene to Barka appears to have followed the next ridge to the south, a short distance north of the modern main road.

The church itself is terraced into the hillside just below the crest, at the extreme south-western extremity of the settlement proper, just above a large, isolated carob tree. Immediately above it, on the crest, are the remains of a square fortified building, a *gasr* (illus. 247). In its present form the latter is a makeshift, late-antique structure, but it incorporates features of an earlier building laid out on the same alignment, which is also that of the adjoining field or property boundaries. The cistern incorporated in the *hypogaeum* was presumably related to this earlier building.

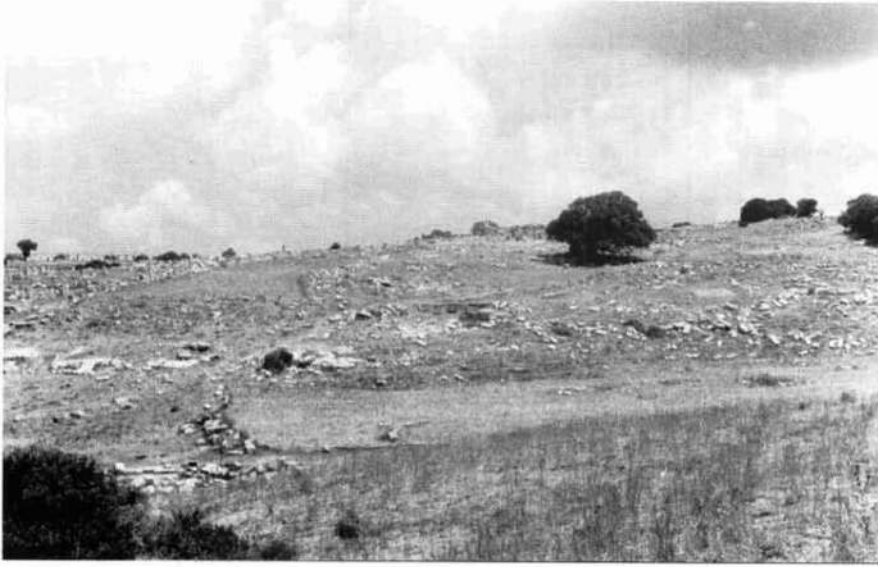
When first visited, in 1941 [and again in 1955], the site was occupied by a local family, but in 1969 the family had moved out, leaving a jungle of rank vegetation which was kindly cleared for us by the Department of Antiquities. The *hypogaeum* has evidently been in intermittent use for stabling over many centuries.

MESSA

SCALE: 1:100



Illus. 246. Messa: church, underground complex and gasr, measured plans (Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler).



Illus. 247. Messa: general view of the site, showing the gasr.

The church, which is oriented roughly east and west, is deliberately terraced into the hillside, with a drop of between 5 and 6m between the level rock-terrace on which the *gasr* stands and the floor of the church (which is nowhere exposed, but can be roughly estimated from the heights of the visible arcades). Though heavily encumbered by rubble and vegetation, the remains now visible can be seen to be those of two successive buildings. The larger and earlier of these appears to have been a building of some 28m × 19m, with an eastern apse. This was subsequently reduced in length to about 16–18m, and the apse was transferred to the west end. In both periods the natural rock projected into parts of the north aisle (illus. 250), which served in effect as an antechamber to the *hypogaeum*.

a. The Earlier Church, illus. 248, 249.

The principal features now visible above ground are substantial parts of the two nave-arcades (illus. 248, 249), which were left standing in the second period; part of the eastern apse and of the east wall of the north aisle; and an arched doorway marking the presumed line of the outer south wall, near the south-east corner of the south aisle. The line of the outer north wall is marked by the terrace-wall across the entrance to the *hypogaeum*. The later church has obliterated all trace of the original west wall, though it is a reasonable assumption that the western apse was built just within and up against it. Analogy suggests that there were two chambers flanking the eastern apse, but of these there is now no trace above ground. This end of the building seems to have been stripped when the church was reduced in size, and even the details of the apse could only be made out by superficial clearance.

Of the inner face of the eastern apse, the north shoulder and at least three adjoining blocks are still in position. They are backed by smaller blocks, rather roughly, in a manner suggesting that the outer face was not meant to be exposed but was enclosed within a rectangular outer frame. From the corner of the apse a short stretch of the east wall of the north aisle can be seen running northwards. It consists of two faces of small coursed blocks. The approximate position of the north end of the same wall is marked by a large block from the

outer face, apparently still in position. Of the corresponding south wall nothing can be seen above ground, although the block marking the south shoulder of the apse appears to be only slightly displaced.

The only visible feature of the outer south wall is part of the arch of a small doorway very near the south-west corner. This was later blocked by a thickening of the outer wall. Only one course of this thickening projects above ground, for a distance of 4–5m, but it was presumably of the battered form familiar from so many of these country churches.

In its original form the central nave was about 7.5m wide and the side-aisles about 3.5m, an arrangement which approximates in fact, and possibly in intention, to a transverse lay-out of 15, 30 and 15 Roman feet respectively, as measured from the outer perimeter to the centre-lines of the two arcades. The arches were small and rather low (average span 1.4–1.5m) and consisted of four substantial voussoirs with a narrow keystone, resting directly on square piers of masonry without any capital (illus. 248, 249). Of the south arcade three arches were still standing in 1969 (four in 1955). The north arcade is rather irregular in shape, the piers being partly rock-cut and partly built. Without clearance it is impossible to say exactly how the east and west ends of the north aisle were treated. At the west end the rock projects to form what appears to have been in effect an independent chapel opening into the west gallery of the *hypogaeum*. At the east end too the rock projected, though whether as a solid mass or as another independent feature is not clear. There may very well have been a gallery over the whole or some part of the north aisle. Several large, and otherwise unexplained, squared monoliths lying fallen roughly along the line of the arcade appear to have come from some feature at this higher level.



Illus. 248. Messa: the church, south nave arcade.



Illus. 249. Messa: the church, north nave arcade.



Illus. 250. Messa: the church, the western apse.

b. The Later Church, illus. 246, 248, 250.

If the mass of rubble fallen across the earlier nave on a line about 6–9m west of the shoulders of the original apse is rightly interpreted as being the collapsed débris of the east wall of the later church, this was a considerably shorter building than its predecessor. The earlier arcades were left standing, but they were strengthened by the addition of a second pair of arcaded walls built up against their inner faces, thus reducing the nave to a width of little more than 5m. The new arcades stood in no sort of rational architectural relationship to their predecessors, the individual arches being not only wider and taller but also differently shaped, coming to a distinct point, with a wedge-shaped keystone (illus. 248). On the south side two of the three arches are still standing, on the north side only the easternmost.

The apse is still standing (illus. 250). On the inner face the upper parts of the walls can be seen to consist of two levelling courses of square slabs (together 0.52m high) resting on a 0.65m course of orthostats. The semidome comprised an arch (now fallen) of shaped blocks and a curved vault of mortared rubble faced externally with courses of small squared blocks. The surface was finished with a thick coat of hard pink cement, which incorporated, in no discernibly regular pattern, a number of small cylindrical holes, 0.015–0.020m in diameter and of varying depth. They are unquestionably contemporary with the cement and look as if they once held small pegs, but what these pegs can have supported is not clear.



Illus. 251. Messa: the church, entry to the hypogaeum.

c. The Hypogaeum, illus. 246, 251.

Opening off the north aisle, whence it was accessible in both the earlier and the later periods, there are the chambers of an elaborate rock-cut *hypogaeum*, architectural in character and, apart from an earlier cistern opening off the north side of it, clearly planned and carried out on a single occasion (illus. 246, 251). The rocky shelf which caps the plateau, though easily quarried, is very strong. The central, nearly square chamber has an unsupported flat roof over 6m wide, and on three sides of it rock-cut piers and arches open on to similarly flat-roofed ambulatory galleries. The architectural effect is very much that of an open courtyard with surrounding porticoes. On the fourth (south) side, three rather smaller arches constitute the entrance from the north aisle of the church.

The west and north galleries are continuous except for the odd transverse supporting arch, again rock-cut. The east gallery is more elaborate, being divided by two transverse partition walls with small arched openings into three unequal parts. The northern part resembles the north and west galleries and is plain except for a short extension at the north end. The southern part is more complex, a wide rock-cut arch in the east wall giving access to an irregularly-shaped south-eastern 'chapel'. The south wall is obscured by the fallen débris of the church, and from the chapel; presumably also by later blocking; but it appears that in the first period both gallery and chapel opened into the church.

The central feature of the east gallery, between the two partitions, consists of three intercommunicating chambers. The first of these, roofed with a rock-cut semidome, is open towards the west to the full height of the arcade. To right and left the two small arched openings already referred to give access to

the north and south wings of the gallery, and opposite the entrance a low, wide arch leads through into a small trapezoidal-shaped chamber, prominently situated, in the rear (east) wall of which an arched recess faces out, down the axis of the building, towards the central 'courtyard'. From this second chamber a small opening in the left-hand wall leads into a roughly square inner (north-eastern) chapel with benches (which are rather roughly cut and may be later additions) along the north and east walls.

The cistern is an earlier feature, as can be seen both from an examination of the cutting of the rock (and covering plaster) at the points of junction, and from the way the north wall of the north gallery has had to swing to avoid the shaft. The cistern was plaster-lined and it had a capacity of about 40m³. The rectangular vertical shaft is partly built, partly rock-cut, and it was sealed by a slab with a circular hole in it.

The whole complex, ceiling and all, appears to have been plastered. The plaster, though blackened by centuries of smoke, was of excellent quality and applied with a care that concealed any irregularities of the underlying surface. The *hypogaeum* was a building of some architectural pretensions. The apsidal vault in the centre of the eastern range, unquestionably an original feature, is virtual proof that it was from the outset, cut for Christian use, a use in which the conspicuous arched recess on the axis of the inner room must have played an important part. Was this the burial place of some prominent Christian personage or the repository for the remains of some local martyr? If there was ever any painting on the plaster it has unfortunately been blackened beyond all hope of recognition. The only way to learn more of the exact purpose would be to excavate the accumulated filth in order to discover whether there are any traces of other fittings, as, for example, a screen enclosing the area of the apse, which in plan bears such a suspicious resemblance to the chancel of a conventional church.

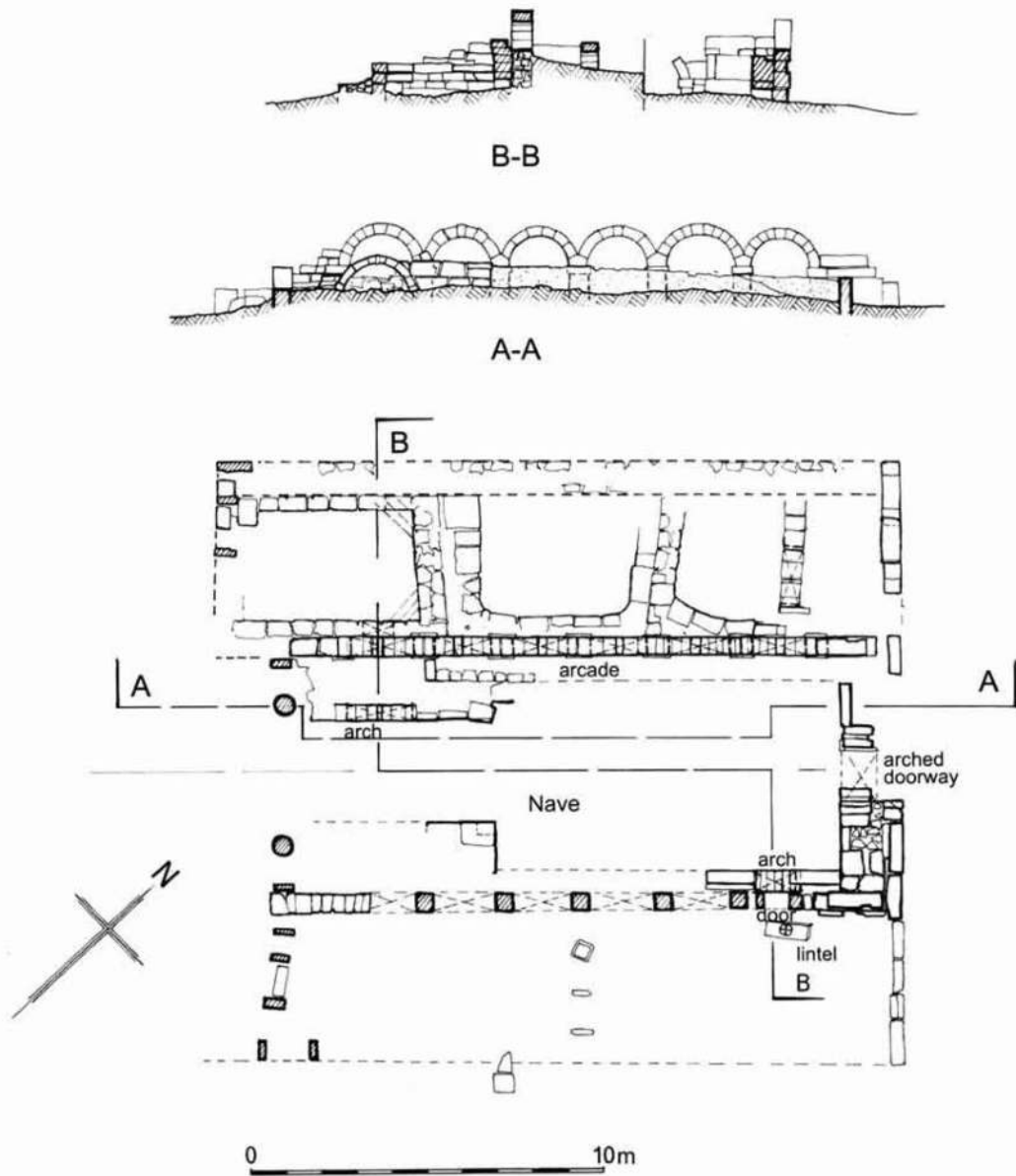
Excavation is also needed to show whether the *hypogaeum* and the earlier church are contemporary, or whether the latter was built to enclose and monumentalize the entrance to a pre-existing building. The somewhat irregular conjunction of church and *hypogaeum*, though rather suggestive of the adaptation of a pre-existing structure, is certainly not conclusive in this respect.

As for the church itself, here too a measure of excavation would be very welcome; but there does not seem to be any reason to question the contemporaneity of the earlier building with the rest of the Cyrenaican sixth-century series.¹ There is no direct evidence for the date of the later building. Its reduction in size may be no more than the result of an actual or threatened collapse of the east end, as witnessed by the buttressing of the outer south wall and by the doubling of the thickness of the surviving nave arcades. Whatever the reason, the building in its final form must have presented an extraordinarily ramshackle, makeshift appearance.

It is very tempting to see it as a product of the last phase of Cyrenaican Christianity, already under Arab rule. But that is only a guess.

This is unquestionably a building that merits clearance and detailed study.

¹ The date is, of course, open to question.



MGARNES

Illus. 252. Mgarnes: East Church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler).

Mgarnes (Mgernis; sometimes spelt Imghernis, Ngarnes, Ngernes, and Ghernas), anc. name unknown, illus. 252-56: two churches.

Bibliography

Laronde 1987, 321, n.228 (quotes Lemaire's observation from 1706); Pacho 1827, 159-61, pl. XXIII; Smith/Porcher 1864, 58-9; Halbherr (1910) in Aurigemma 1930, 247-8 and in Oliverio 1931, 285-6; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 56-7; Stucchi 1975, 80-1, 226, 448; Laronde 1987, 294, 297-9, 311, 334-6; Roques 1987, 118, 149, 401, 475, 506; for useful photographs, Oliverio 1931, figs. 62-66.

This small town is located just north of the main modern east/west road, where it runs approximately on the line of the ancient road, and at the point where a track turns northwards descending to the intermediate plateau and thence to the sea at Apollonia. It commands good views in all directions. Its land, which is fertile and well watered, was intensively farmed in antiquity as appears from the many field-boundary markers and the fields cleared of stones. The visible remains of the settlement are all late; they include baths, a cistern, an arch spanning a street, several houses; but in the cemetery there are some late classical and Hellenistic tombs; while a late-Hellenistic inscription (*SEG IX.354*) indicates a city-type organisation and refers to construction of a granary.

Discovery

The site was visited by several early travellers who commented on the number of surviving monuments and their state of preservation. The existence of churches was first recognised by Halbherr. The condition of the site has deteriorated subsequently. There has been no excavation there.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited and examined a church in 1969, and Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler surveyed it at the same time; but, although Goodchild had written of two churches here (as Stucchi was to do later), neither Ward-Perkins nor the surveyors worked on a second. What was described and surveyed seems to be Goodchild's 'unfortified church', and Stucchi's East Church—to judge by Ward-Perkins' statement below that it was south-east of the main inhabited area and by Stucchi's published photograph of the nave arcade of his East Church (his fig. 408), which apparently shows part of the arcade in our illus. 253; there are, however, points in his account (noted below) which are not easily reconcilable with what Ward-Perkins wrote.

The Monuments

1. The East Church, illus. 252-56.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966a, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 234; Stucchi 1975, 396, 404, fig. 408, 543.

Ruined church at the south-eastern extremity of the small but unusually well-preserved town of Mgarnes, which lies on the reverse slopes of the northern edge of the upper escarpment, c.12km east of Cyrene. The church lay to the south-east of the main inhabited area, just south of a large, shallow quarry and west of an isolated rectangular building which is the prominent feature of the site as one approaches it from the south. The building was extensively modified in Christian times, and there are indications of what may be even later occupation.



Illus. 253. Mgarnes: East Church, north nave arcade, north-west respond wall.

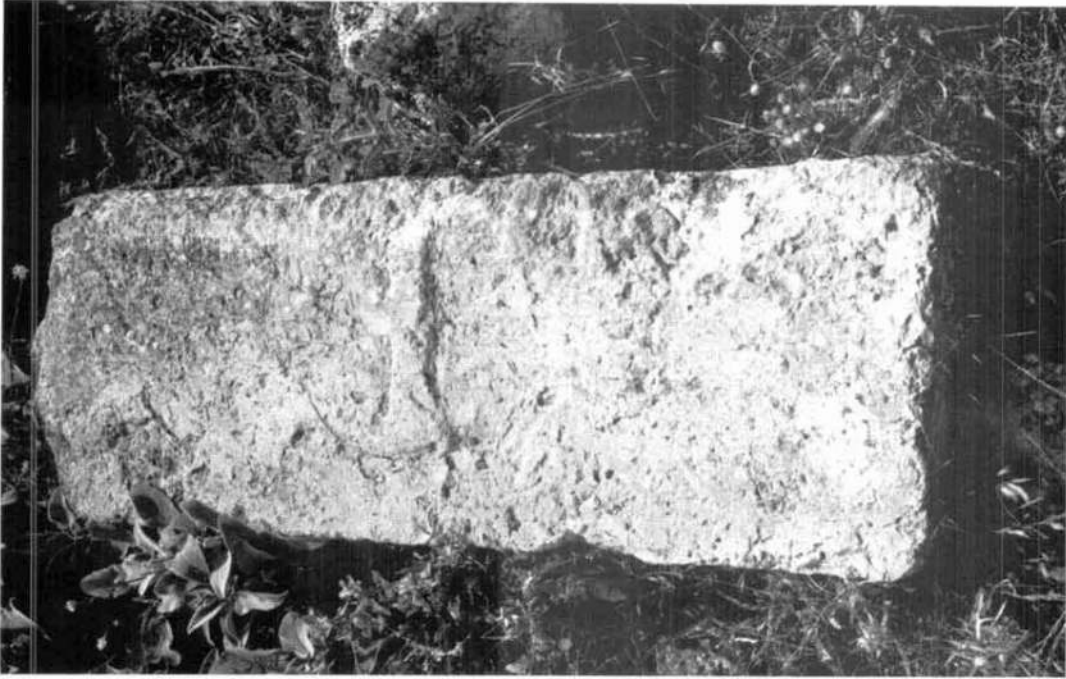
Enough survives of the original building to indicate that this was probably a basilica of conventional type,¹ measuring some 22–23m from west (in fact SW) to east (NE) by about 17.5m from north (NW) to south (SE) (illus. 252). The apse lay at the west end, which has been totally destroyed, but the nave arcades and most of the east façade have survived. The façade, the nave arcades and (presumably) the apse were of dressed stone, the remaining walls, where preserved, of orthostat-and-rubble construction.

In its original form the nave measured 15.5m by 7m internally. The six arches of the north arcade are still standing (illus. 253). They rest on rectangular, monolithic piers, with crudely-moulded slabs as capitals, trapezoidal springer-blocks and anything from five to ten voussoirs. At either end a short stretch of dressed stone masonry linked it to the transverse west wall and the façade wall respectively. The south arcade was similar but the actual arches have fallen.

The surviving elements of the original east façade indicate a construction of large blocks, including several massive up-ended slabs, which may have been backed with courses of smaller blocks. There was a large central door, of which the position of the south jamb can still be made out. There was no doorway into the north aisle, and the gap which now leads into the south aisle is probably accidental.

At the west end two symmetrically placed column-drums, diameter 0.67m, and still *in situ*, mark the entrance to the apse and the still-upstanding orthostats of an orthostat-and-rubble wall carry the line of these columns across the west end of the north aisle to meet the corresponding orthostats

¹ Stucchi believed that the apse was external and at the east end, where a trace of one shoulder was just visible, while the upstanding columns which Ward-Perkins saw as fronting a western apse seemed to him to mark the door of entry to the church and to be preceded by a large unroofed atrium. He also wrote of five aisles (pp. 396 and 543), the two outer ones being apparently late additions. It is clear that the ruins are not easy to interpret, and that excavation would be helpful.



Illus. 254. Mgarnes: East Church, lintel with cross (partly defaced).

which mark the line of the outer south wall. Although there are no clearly visible traces of the original building to the west of this point, it did unquestionably continue in this direction, and a doorway in the middle of the west wall of the south aisle led presumably into an angle-chapel. The corresponding features on the north side have been entirely obliterated by later rebuilding.

At some later date, but still within the Christian period, the building was drastically remodelled and reduced in size, eliminating the two side aisles and effectively reusing only the nave and chancel of the earlier building. Not all of the detail is clear, but enough survives to indicate the main lines of the reconstruction. The actual north and south walls and arches of the original nave were left standing; but either they were in a dangerous condition or else the span (7m) was now too large for the available timber (or perhaps both), and accordingly the two walls were reinforced by building fresh walls up against their inner faces, blocking the arches and reducing the span to 5.5m. The two western bays of the earlier nave were treated differently, but otherwise, so far as we can tell from the surviving remains, the new scheme was applied uniformly to the four eastern bays and also carried round the inner face of the façade, shortening the nave at this end by about a metre. The main entrance continued to be in the middle of the east end, through an arch incorporated into the new masonry. At the same time a small secondary doorway was inserted at the east end of what had been the south nave arcade and was now the outer south wall. The jambs of this door are still in place within the blocked earlier arch, with a corresponding archway through the inner thickening; and lying just outside is the lintel, carved in shallow counter-relief with a simple, equal-armed cross within a recessed circle (*illus. 254*).

At the west end, corresponding to the two western bays of the earlier nave, the alterations were more radical. Here the central, axial space was further narrowed by two projecting shoulders of masonry to a span of barely 3m. On the north and better-preserved side the line of the shoulder is prolonged westwards almost to that of the west transverse wall, and opposite the westernmost



Illus. 255. Mgarnes: East Church, later phase, lower arch in front of the westernmost arch of the original north arcade.

arch of the earlier arcade (which remained accessible) it is interrupted by a lower, wider arch, built of the elongated, shaped voussoirs that are characteristic of much of the later Cyrenaican work (illus. 255). On the south side the shoulder and the fallen voussoirs of a similar arch show that the scheme was roughly symmetrical; and on the shoulders themselves there are the seatings for a third, transverse arch, dividing the main hall from this narrower western section.

Apart from the vanished apse, which on every Cyrenaican analogy would have been built of substantial masonry and may well have continued to serve in the remodelled scheme, the only other surviving feature which may perhaps be ascribed to this much-reduced second-period building is the westernmost of the series of vaulted, or partly-vaulted, rooms that were built upon the site of the former north aisle. These were built up against the outer face of the former north nave-arcade, and with one exception there was no direct access to them from the church. Only the westernmost room could be entered through a small arched doorway built up against the westernmost of the former nave-arches (illus. 256), which (as remarked above) remained open and accessible. Assuming a doorway in the now-destroyed west wall, it could have served as a vestibule for a secondary entrance to the church (as, for example, in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia (illus. 218), or it may have been a sacristy, or strong-room, accessible only from the church itself.

That this second structural period of the building falls within the Christian period is proved by the cross on the lintel of the south-east door, and it is a reasonable presumption therefore that it continued to be used as a church. It looks very much as if the original building, with its rather slender walls and wide arches, had been damaged, perhaps by an earthquake, and that, as at Messa, the local community had to be content to rebuild it on a considerably reduced scale. Most of the essential features of the earlier plan were in fact reproduced: the apse (presumably), two narrow angle-chapels flanking a



Illus. 256. Mgarnes: East Church, later phase, wall of western room of the series built in the former north aisle, showing door into the church.

narrow chancel, and a nave occupying about half of its original area. There would have been just room for an altar in approximately its original position, between the two arches into the angle-chapels, which in turn would have provided the lateral access to the sanctuary area upon which most of these buildings seem to have set such store. It was not an elegant solution, but it was a practical one, making the best use of the shell of a building which, for whatever reason, had become unusable in its original, more expansive form.

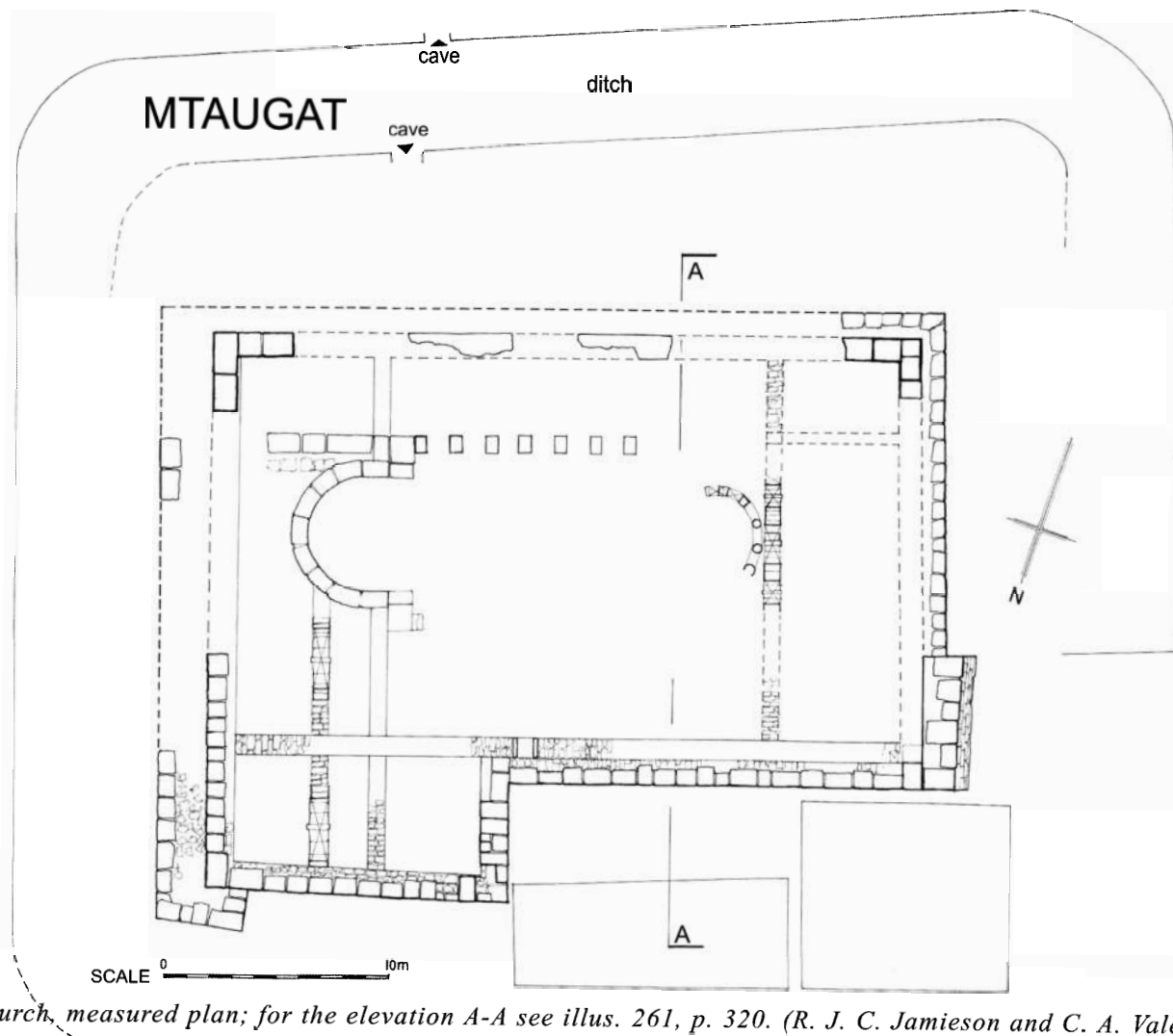
2. The West Church

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Stucchi 1975, 415, 428, 433, figs. 420, 421; Duval 1989*b*, 2758, 2761.

Identification

Stucchi's fig. 421 is taken from Pacho pl. XXIII and shows that his West Church is what Pacho 1827, 159 described as a fort and presumably what Goodchild meant by a fortified church (but which Ward-Perkins seems not to have examined). Stucchi's description presents a structure delimited by a rectangular wall with a shallow rock-cut ditch along three of the sides and an arched door in the north wall; the interior plan is complex but probably includes a narthex, a nave and two aisles, perhaps with two further aisles added later; nothing is reported about an apse. He opposed the defensive interpretation of Goodchild (as Duval does too) and argued that the ditches had in fact been the source of the newly-quarried stone blocks used, and subsequently served for collection of water. There is certainly serious need for further investigation here.



Illus. 257. Mtaugat: church, measured plan; for the elevation A-A see illus. 261, p. 320. (R. J. C. Jamieson and C. A. Valentine).



Illus. 258. Mtaugat: the church, south-east and south-west corners, east and south walls and view to south-west.

Mtaugat (anc. name unknown), illus. 257-69: church.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 156-7; Goodchild 1952*a*, 150, with plate facing 149 = 1976*a*, 151; 1953, 73-4 = 1976*a*, 204; 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 225; Stucchi 1975, 376-7, 395, 396, 397, 429, 433.

Discovery

The building was first noticed by Pacho, who thought it to be a large fort. Goodchild identified it as a church which, he thought, also served the function of a fort, an interpretation contested by Stucchi.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited and examined the church in 1957, and at the same time R. J. C. Jamieson and C. A. Valentine surveyed it; minor additions and corrections were made in 1969.

Description

Large, three-aisled, basilical church with an eastern apse (illus. 257), situated in gently rolling country about 2km south of the main el Beida–Derna road, east of the track running south from Zawiet Tert. Though overlooked by slightly higher ground to the west and north, the church itself is a distinctive landmark, well sited on a denuded rocky shelf overlooking the head of a shallow valley just to the south (illus. 258). There are many traces of ancient settlement in the near vicinity, and it must have served quite a large rural community.

There are the visible remains of at least three successive constructional phases. Many of the details of the original building are hidden beneath the heaped-up masses of fallen rubble which encumber the interior, but it appears to have been a conventional sixth-century Cyrenaican basilica,¹ with

¹ The date is, of course, open to question.



Illus. 259. Mtaugat: the church, north-west corner with revetment

an inscribed eastern apse framed by angle-chapels and an internal narthex at the west end. This building was strengthened and partially remodelled on at least two separate occasions. The first and most substantial of these involved the rebuilding of the north-east corner and the addition of a projecting north-east wing (illus. 262). This added work was in turn itself consolidated later by the addition of a further buttressing wall (illus. 259, 260) which ran round three sides of the building, with an added outer ditch. The building is unpublished.

1. The Original Church

The first church was almost certainly a large basilica of plain rectangular outline, 31m long by just over 18m wide (illus. 257). The outer south-east and south-west corners are still standing to a height of about 8m—some 25 courses (illus. 258). They are built of large blocks of well-dressed, well-coursed limestone, quarried expressly for the purpose from the rocky shelf on which the church stands, and this was the material also of such features as the apse, doorways and nave-arcades, wherever visible. The remaining walls, including the intervening parts of the outer walls, were of the usual rubble faced with courses of small blocks, and it is the collapse of this less substantial masonry which has filled the interior of the building, in places to the crowns of the still-standing arches.

The visible internal features attributable to this first phase are the apse, the inner flanking-wall of the south-east chapel, six piers and the eastern respond of the south nave-arcade, and much of the transverse wall which divided the nave from the narthex.

The apse is largely intact, though buried to the spring of the semidome. The latter (and no doubt the buried walls too, including probably the north-south chord wall) was built of good dressed stone masonry, the four surviving courses of which were dressed smooth internally but left rough externally, where they were backed with a rubble fill. There are no mouldings, and there is an added pier of squared masonry set in the angle between the shoulder and the pier which carried the first arch of the nave-arcade. Along the south side



Illus. 260. Mtaugat: the church, revetment along west wall.

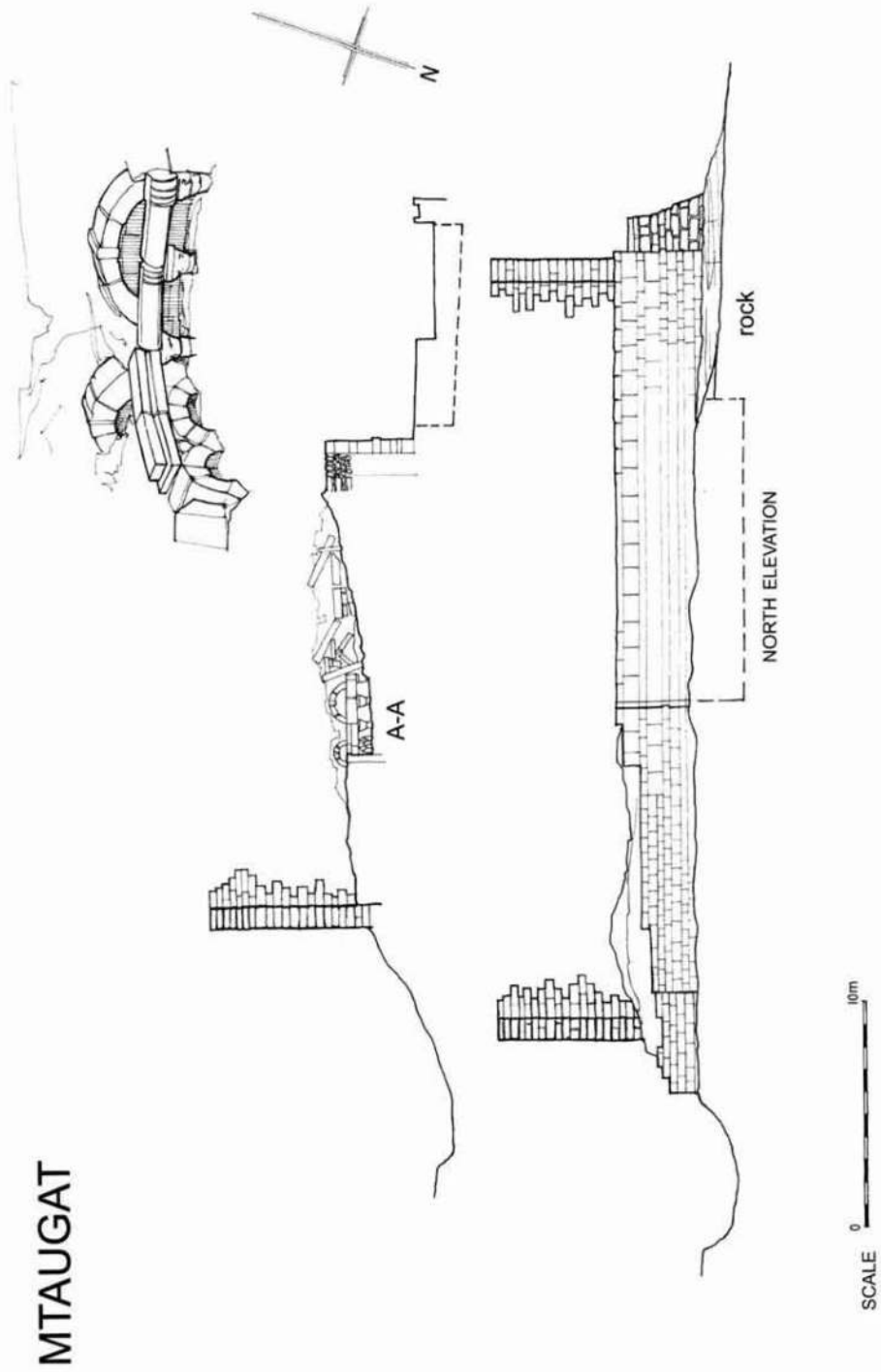
the apse can be seen to have been framed externally by a rectilinear wall of small-stone construction, with rubble in the space between it and the extrados of the semidome.² The corresponding north flank was completely rebuilt in the second period, an operation which would have been a relatively simple matter, given the structurally independent character of the inner shell of the apse.

The nave was arcaded. The arches have gone, but the stumps of six piers of the south arcade and the responding west piers (i.e. of six arches in all) project above the fallen rubble. The gap at the east end would allow space either for another three arches or for a length of continuous wall which, being of less substantial, faced-rubble masonry would have left little trace when it fell. Of the north arcade there is no visible trace.

There are upstanding traces of most of the north-south wall which divided the nave and aisles from the narthex. The central part of this incorporates three arches, of which the central one is more than half as wide again as its neighbours. Except for the keystones the voussoirs are long and narrow, both inner and outer faces being shaped to the curve of the arch. The rest of the wall, wherever visible, is of faced-rubble construction, except for an orthostat near the point of the junction with the line of the south nave-arcade. It is a reasonable guess that this line was prolonged westwards, dividing the narthex into three compartments, as at Ras el Hilal (illus. 270) and in the nearby East Church at Lamluda; and the original main entrance to the church could well have been in the middle of the west wall. But of all this there is nothing more visible above the rubble.

The only other features certainly attributable to this first period are the two jambs of a window near the middle of the north aisle. The window was blocked when this wall was thickened in the second period.

² See *Introduction II, Ground Plans.*



Illus. 261. Mtaugat: the church, canopied structure and north elevation, measured plans: for the ground plan see illus. 257, p. 316 (R. J. C. Jamieson and C. A. Valentine).



Illus. 262. Mtaugat: the church, masonry of projecting north-east wing.

2. The Second Church

At some later date, possibly as a result of an earthquake, the north side of the church was partly rebuilt and reinforced (illus. 261). The north-east corner had either fallen or was so damaged that it had to be demolished and rebuilt, and the opportunity was taken of adding a small projecting wing (illus. 262). The western part of the original north wall was left standing, but it too had to be buttressed by the addition of an outer thickening (illus. 259, 260).

The masonry of the new outer wall consisted of facing of alternately tall and short courses of well-dressed limestone, backed by rubble and incorporating one or more slightly projecting levelling-courses (illus. 262). The west end of this added wall coincided with the original north-west corner, and from this point it was continuous round the added chapels and along the northern part of the east side, replacing the earlier masonry of this part of the east wall and merging with it somewhere behind the apse.

Within the remodelled north-east angle the lines of the original outer wall and of the north-south chord-wall of the apse seem to have been retained, but the south flanking-wall of the earlier angle-chapel was demolished, and a new north-south wall, with two large, still-upstanding arches was added 2m to the east of its predecessor. It would need excavation to determine the details and function of the rather complex resulting lay-out, but it is probable that all the masonry now visible belongs to this phase. The height of the fallen rubble strongly suggests that this part of the building was two storeys high. Indeed, given the height of the two original angles, it is more than likely that the whole building was from the outset two-storeyed, with galleries over the aisles and an upper storey over the narthex.

The entrance in this second period must have been somewhere in the middle of the south side.

3. Subsequent Additions

Straight-jointed against the added walling at the north-west corner is a massive sloping buttress (illus. 259, 260); and straight-jointed against both this buttress and the outer north-east corner of the enlarged building is a further revetment,

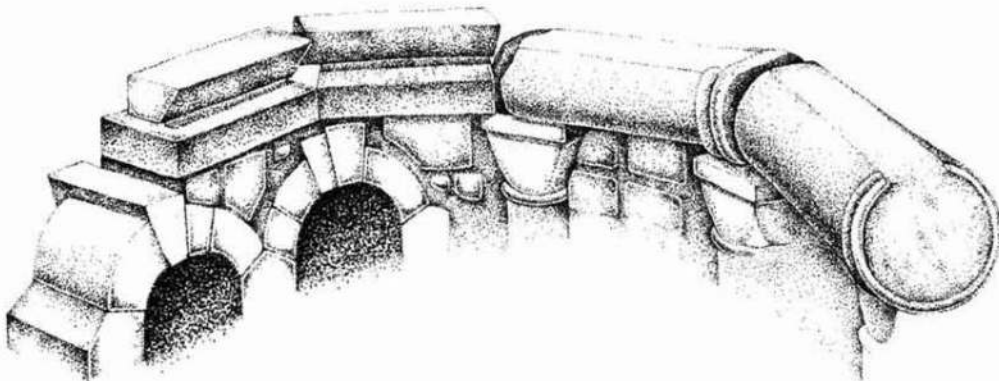


Illus. 263. Mtaugat: the church, masonry leaning outwards in need of buttressing.

period buttressing wall (and very probably contemporary with it) there is a rock-cut ditch nearly 5m wide. At the north-east corner it is obscured by fallen masonry, and the angle between the original north wall of the church and the projection of the north-east wing is filled with two open rectangular cisterns, part of a carefully coordinated catchment system, of which the channels can be traced for some distance on the gently rising ground to the north and north-east of the church. There are a number of such cisterns, some of them open tanks, others below ground, in the vicinity, both to the east of the church and in the valley to the south. In a countryside that lacks springs, the church and the community which it served would have depended very largely on the careful storage of the winter rainfall.

faced with large squared stones and running right round the west, south and east sides of the building. At the north-east corner it slopes inwards; along the south and west sides it is built of similar masonry, but vertical. A significant detail is that when it was built up against the second-period masonry at the north-east angle the latter was already leaning markedly outwards (*illus. 263*)—a very clear indication that a primary purpose of such sloping outer revetments was to buttress walls which, for whatever reason, were in danger of collapse.

Encircling the same three sides of the building as the third-



Illus. 264. Mtaugat: the church, canopied structure (W. A. Foster, from sketch made by J. B. Ward-Perkins in 1957).

4. The Western Canopied Structure

The most singular late feature is an oval or quasi-apsidal canopied structure partly visible beneath the rubble at the west end of the nave, just in front of the arches leading into the narthex (illus. 261, 264-66). The visible remains are those of an oval construction incorporating three stone columns and capitals spanned by a pair of flat architraves, and three piers carrying two standing arches and the spring of a third (illus. 265). The architraves are partly-recut stone colonnettes (illus. 266), and the line of them is picked up over the



Illus. 265. Mtaugat: the church, canopied structure in nave.



Illus. 266. Mtaugat: the church, canopied structure, showing carved capital.



Illus. 267. Mtaugat: the church, fragment of a limestone chancel screen.



Illus. 268. Mtaugat: the church, fragment of a limestone chancel screen.



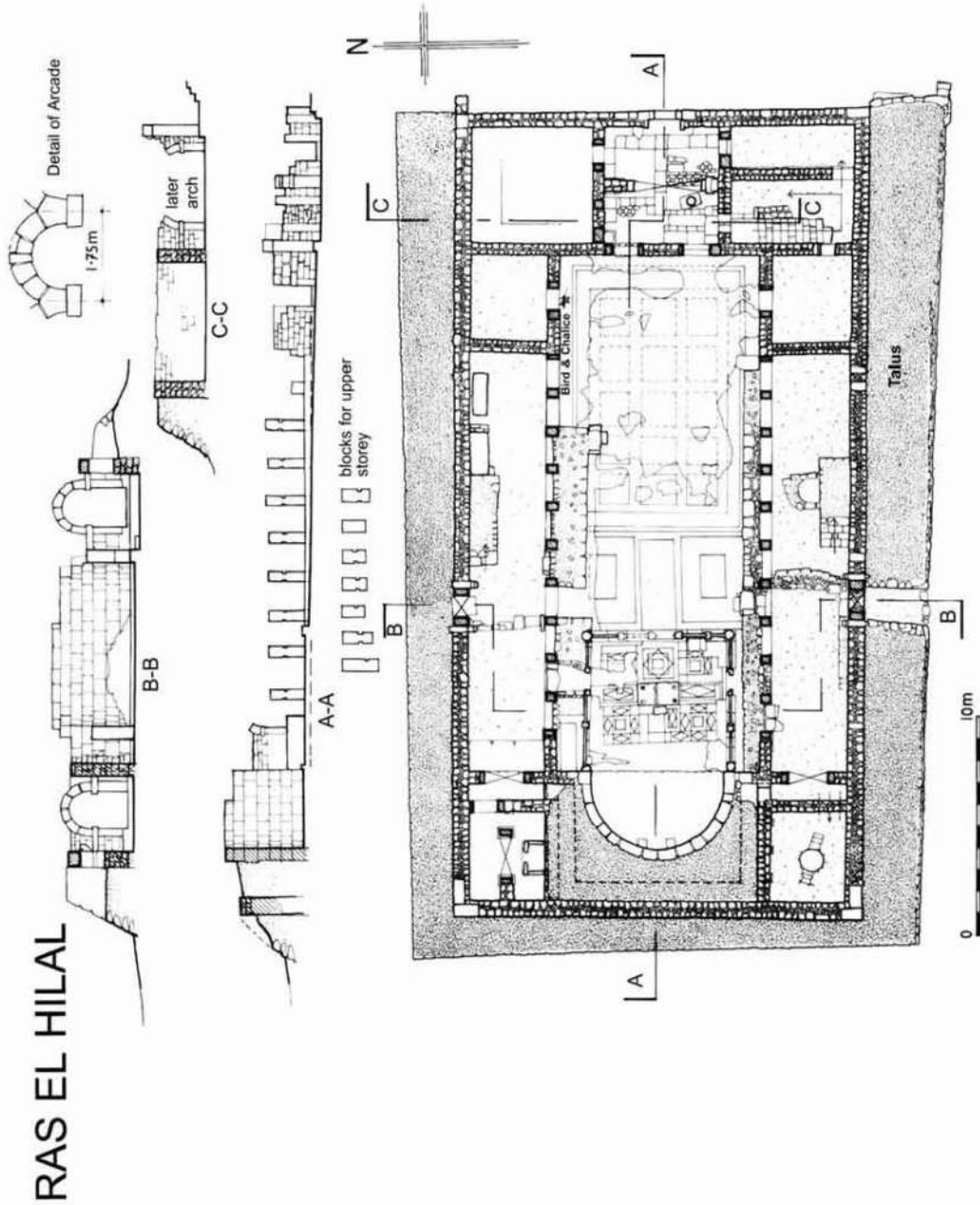
Illus. 269. Mtaugat: the church, fragment of a limestone chancel screen.

arches by two inward-corbelled courses of slabs. The re-used material includes parts of three carved slabs which, on the analogy of Ras el Hilal, may confidently be ascribed to the chancel-screen of the first church (illus. 267-69).³

At first glance this curious structure looks like an open counter-apse, but even disallowing for the compressed, oval shape and lack of symmetry, the curve on the south side extends too far inwards for this to be really feasible. The inward corbelling apparently indicates some form of light vault, and it looks therefore as if one must envisage some sort of makeshift canopied pavilion.⁴ Without excavation one can hardly say more, and given that one of the carved pieces seen in 1957 is no longer to be seen and another is displaced, such excavation is clearly very desirable.

³ For the third, compare also el Merj, no. 30, with illus. 209, and another example at Ras el Hilal, visible in illus. 278.

⁴ Stucchi 1975, 429, regarded the columns as sixth-century types and suggested that the structure might be a baptistery.



Illus. 270. Ras el Hilal: the church, measured plan (Abdulhamid Abdussaid, R.M. Harrison and Sheila Gibson).

Ras el Hilal, probably anc. Naustathmos, illus: 270-85: church, inscriptions.

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Skylax 108; Strabo, XVII.838; Mela, 1.39; *Stad.* 51; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.10.3; Pacho 1827, 141-2; Beecheys 1828, 479; Laronde 1987, 311. For the church, Harrison in Sichtermann 1962, 436-7; Harrison 1964; Goodchild, 1966a, 218; Ward-Perkins 1972, 225; Stucchi 1975, 359, 377, 383-5, 399, 430-5, 437, 555; Purcaro 1976, 342; Roques 1987, 354 (map only); Duval 1989b, 2744, 2745, 2747, 2756, 2757, 2761, 2763, 2764, 2765, 2767, 2769, 2770, 2771, 2772, 2773, 2774, 2775, 2776, 2778, 2780, 2781, 2782, 2785, 2787, 2788; Bonacasa Carra 1998. For the mosaics, Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 4, 9ff., 19f., 53f., 57f., 65f., 140-1, 150; for a photograph of the promontory and harbour, Jones/Little 1971, pl. vii. 2.

Discovery

Traces of a settlement and of two substantial buildings (taken to be forts) were observed on the promontory to the west of the harbour of Marsa Hilal by early travellers; Pacho's comparison of one of these with what he saw at Siret Esh Shenedeirah (section 3a), and the discovery that the latter was a church led Goodchild to recognise the Hilal building too as a church. It was excavated in 1961 by the Department of Antiquities under the direction of R. M. Harrison, who published his report on the work in 1964. It was surveyed by Abdulhamid Abdussaid and Harrison. Ward-Perkins visited it in 1969, when he made detailed notes, but apparently only on the mosaics. A summary account is included in this section, however, because the excavation was planned from the start with specific reference to his projected publication of Cyrenaican churches. It aimed to provide information on 'the type of isolated rural church with a *'talus'* or revetment (Harrison 1964, 1) of which no example had been previously excavated. Harrison also hoped that it would reveal, as it did, decorative features due to local craftsmen working in local materials, to set beside the imported marble pieces which were dominating the picture of church fittings.

Summary account of the church, by Reynolds, based on Harrison's excavation report, and published comments on it.

Promontory site *c.* 25km east of Apollonia (Marsa Sousa) and a little north of the modern Marsa Susa/Derna road. The east cliff overlooks the deep anchorage of Naustathmos (Marsa Hilal) whose name was applied by Mela to the promontory too; but the promontory settlement is quite separate from the harbour-side one and may well have had a different name locally. If it is the case that one of the Arab graffiti (see below, *Inscriptions* D) names it as 'the monastery al-Marh[...]', that would be certain, but it remains conjectural (and nothing in the building specifically suggests a monastery).

When it was excavated, the main structure was found to have collapsed upon itself, preserving many interesting details, but before the collapse there had been non-ecclesiastical use of it. Stucchi argued that it had been converted into a mosque (mainly because its walls carry eighth-century Arab graffiti which quote from the Koran); there are, however, no features specific to a mosque, for the well-heads to which Stucchi has appealed can be paralleled easily in the vestibules of churches, where we have every reason to regard them as in use by Christians; and, although the plastering over of the Christian mosaics (see below) may be significant, it appears that many of the chancel-fittings were still visible.

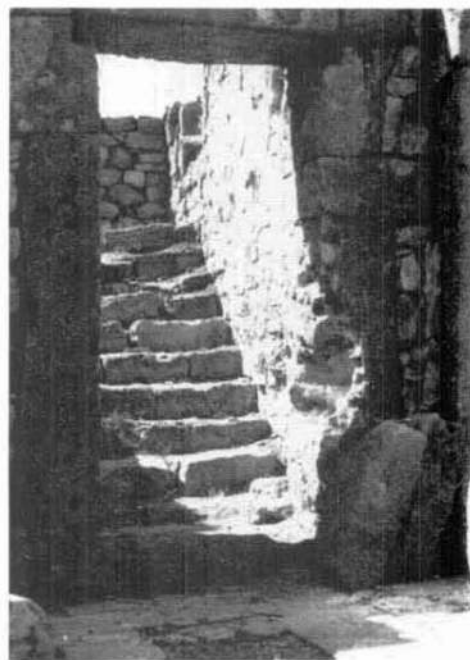
In the twelfth century al-Idrisi named the site el Bondariya and in the thirteenth it appears in the *portolani* of several European nations as Bonandrea (Kretschmer 1909 for the Italians, de la Roncière/Mollat du Jordan 1984 for others). The appearance of Bonandrea in the maps, together with that of the name Andreas among the Christian graffiti in the church, has led to the suggestion that it was dedicated to a St. Andrew (more probably the apostle than one of the several martyred Andrews); the possibility, though attractive, should not be regarded at present as more than a conjecture.



Illus. 271. Ras el Hilal: the church; chancel and nave from the apse.

The church was built as a three-aisled arcaded basilica, rectangular in plan, with an inscribed western apse (illus. 270, 271); it had galleries above each of the side-aisles and probably two upper storeys above the rooms at the east end.

The outer wall, 0.75m thick, is of small, roughly-dressed blocks, coursed and laid in two faces, with a core of earth-mortar, and was strengthened with heavy quoins at the corners; it was rendered in stucco both inside and out. There were three doors, on the south, east and north. Those on the south and north gave into the aisles just beside the staircases which led to the galleries; and in each case the shoulders of the arch were flanked by curtain-brackets (*Introduction II, Interior Fitments, Limestone*). The main entry was clearly that on the east, where the building faced onto a flagged courtyard. Here a narrow doorway led into a vestibule, paved partly with stone and partly with rudimentary *opus sectile*; from this a triple doorway in the west wall gave into the nave, another on the north (having carved capitals to its door jambs) into a large room paved with *opus sectile* and mosaic, while two single doors on the south gave into two non-communicating rooms, one of them containing a staircase (illus. 272) which, so the space available suggests, led not only to a second but to a third storey. A threshold in the southern end of the wall separating the two rooms must be for the doorway giving access to the first upper storey above the south-eastern room of the *narthex*. Towards the southern end of the wall separating the room with the staircase from



Illus. 272. Ras el Hilal: the church, staircase in Room F.

the south-east angle-chapel, there is a high-level opening which appears to be best interpreted as a window. There is a cistern under the floor of the vestibule, of uncertain date, but possibly original.

The nave was divided from the aisles by arcades of ten bays resting on two rows of nine piers which stood on continuous plinths (illus. 271). Slots were cut in the piers for screens (presumed to be wooden) between many of them. Fragments of smaller piers, clearly fallen from the galleries, showed similar slots. The floor, as far as the entry to the chancel, was covered with polychrome mosaics whose design, style and technique are comparable, sometimes closely so, with those of the Justinianic mosaics of Gasr el Lebia, Cyrene and Apollonia (Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980). It was found in poor condition but its main components were: at the east end, fifteen approximately square panels, three to a row, within a complex border; at the door-sill of the room at the east end of the north aisle (entered only from the nave), a representation of a two-handled cup with a wide mouth and short globular stem resting on a rectangular base, while doves perch on each handle, one looking backwards, the other stooping to drink; towards the west end, on either side of the entry to the chancel, two panels showing female figures, one captioned *Ktesis (sic)* and the other *Kossmesis (sic)*, discussed below under *Inscriptions*. The axial entry to the chancel and the narrow areas on either side of it were floored with rammed plaster only.

Of the galleries, apart from the detail of the arcade-piers just mentioned we can say only that fragments of rubble, faced with smoothed lime-mortar, found fallen in the aisles, are probably from their floors (but could be from their roofs); and that the absence of voussoirs may suggest that the piers carried wooden beams (but voussoirs are lacking elsewhere too, notably in the East Church at Apollonia/Sozusa and at el Atrun).

The chancel, 6m square, is raised c. 0.20m above the floor of the nave (illus. 271, 273, 274) and was surrounded on three sides by limestone screens of varying lengths and



Illus. 273. Ras el Hilal: the church; close-up of altar-base, opus sectile floor, chancel post and screens, ambon-steps.



Illus. 274. Ras el Hilal: the church, altar-base with bases for colonnettes to uphold the table, opus sectile floor.

thicknesses, richly-carved on both sides (illus. 275-77), set on plinths and supported by grooved posts also of limestone (one visible in illus. 273); the decoration consisted mainly of abstract motifs with stylised leaves and flowers. There were columns at each of the eastern corners, and three entries, on the south, north and east sides. At the centre is the altar base (a re-used door-slab from a Greek or Graeco-Roman tomb), with a rough step on the west side, and fragments of the marble supports for the table (fragments of several broken marble tables were also found);¹ and in the south-east corner the double step of an *ambon* (limestone) with crosses carved on its north and west sides (illus. 271, 277, 278). These two features antedate the flooring of *opus sectile* eked out with mosaic, but not necessarily by a significant period.

The apse stands a little forward of the west wall so that



Illus. 275. Ras el Hilal: the church, chancel screen no. 8.

¹ Kapitän 1980 compared the white marble altar-table found in the Marzamemi wreck.



Illus. 276. Ras el Hilal: the church, chancel screen no. 10.



Illus. 277. Ras el Hilal: the church, part of chancel, ambon, chancel post, screens.



Illus. 278. Ras el Hilal: the church, ambon-steps with relief of a cross.

there is room for a narrow corridor to run behind it (but this area was not excavated). It is built of well-dressed stone, which survives to a height of seven courses, and its inner face had twice been rendered in stucco which, on the second occasion, was painted, leaving traces of green colour. The semi-dome covering it was constructed by corbelling out the blocks in horizontal projecting courses, and was decorated with a large stucco shell, of which many fragments were found fallen. A regular line of mortices along the upper edge of the third course in the wall, 1.40m. above floor level, indicates the presence of a wooden *synthronon*; there are also blocks which could have provided supports for a central throne, but no evidence whether or not *synthronon* and throne were contemporary. Two monolithic limestone columns stood on either side of the springing of the apse. The floor seems to have been originally the native rock levelled with mortared rubble; the later lime-plaster floor, above which the fallen débris of the semi-dome and its stucco decoration were found, may be of the Islamic period.

The aisles were narrower than the nave. Each has a high-arched door in its outside wall, probably fitted so as to be coverable by a curtain, and a staircase leading to a gallery just beside the entry and angle-chambers at either end. The north aisle contains two graves.

The angle-chambers at the east end are entered only from the nave. Those at the west end were entered from narrow corridors which ran between the aisles and their own east walls and were reached via rather wide gaps in the east walls of the aisles. This unusual arrangement left the return walls of the apse without the buttressing which would be normal and, as a substitute, arches were built across each aisle in line with the return walls of the apse, probably, Harrison thought, as part of the original construction.

The south-west angle-chamber was a baptistery containing a circular rock-cut basin, plaster-lined, with two opposed flights of steps (illus. 279). The north-west one was a chapel with a small hollow platform against the south wall likely to have been an altar containing a reliquary. The floor of the baptistery was of rock and plaster, that of the chapel of *opus sectile* and mosaic. In both, the walls were decorated with stucco pilasters framing panels which were painted with simple geometric designs in red, blue and green.



Illus. 279. Ras el Hilal: the church, baptismal basin.

A notable secondary feature is the construction of a plain tomb which contained two skeletons (heads to west) in the area between the chancel and the north nave-arcade. This pre-dates the reinforcement walls of the nave-arcades (no. 2 below).

Subsequent features can be related to the need to bolster unstable masonry, possibly after earthquakes (but Harrison noted aspects of the construction and of the site which could have led to instability in any case). These features are:

1. a sloping revetment constructed around the north, west and south sides, founded, where examined, some 1.50m below the level of the outer church wall, near bedrock; there was an earth fill *c.* 3.0m wide between this and the church wall; when first built this was interrupted for the north and south doors but subsequently these were blocked and the revetment wall was carried right across them.
2. rough strengthening walls built to reinforce the nave arcades, overlying or cutting through the mosaic floor, and leaving only one passage from the nave into each aisle.
3. insertion of a transverse arch into the vestibule and closure of two of the doorways in each of the triple doorways out of it.
4. blocking of the entries to the corridor which is presumed to run behind the apse.
5. construction of a wide arch across the middle of the chapel at the west end of the north aisle.

Secondary features which probably post-date all the above are:

6. a lime-plaster floor *c.* 0.15m thick laid over the floor of the chancel and nave (perhaps also the apse)—incidentally covering a coin dateable to the period AD 615-29, clipped and worn.
7. two shallow graves dug in the south aisle floor.
8. a plaster-lined basin and several rough walls constructed in the north aisle. Graffiti, some of them Christian and some of the Arab period, were found on the walls (see under *Inscriptions*).

Harrison dated the construction of the church in the later second or the third quarter of the sixth century, arguing essentially from the mosaics, which he believed to be contemporary with the construction and closely comparable with the Justinianic set at Gasr el Lebia. The pottery finds, dated by J. W. Hayes as substantially from the period AD 550-650, and the few identifiable coins, of AD 578/9, 596-7 and 615/29, indicate in general terms the period of the church's functional life; but since none came from the foundations they are not directly indicative of its foundation date. Stucchi indeed proposed a foundation date in the second half of the fifth century and firmly stated the mosaic floors to be secondary (a view for which Duval expressed sympathy; for some comment on it, see under Gasr el Lebia, East Church).

It is clear from the Arabic graffiti that part of the church was still accessible in the eighth century. Whether, as Stucchi urged, it was actually converted into a mosque, with creation of facilities for ritual ablution in the vestibule, seems uncertain (see also above).

Carved Fittings

1. Small capital of white marble (w. 0.43m × ht. 0.35m × d. 0.54m) found in the chancel; the bell is sheathed by eight acanthus-leaves, one beneath each corner rising to full height, one on each side to half-height, the tips of the leaves curling outwards; the cutting is shallow and 'chunky'.
2. Illus. 273. Two colonnette-bases of white marble (c. 0.15m sq., diam. of fractured shaft, 0.09m) found *in situ* on the altar base.
3. Illus. 274. Column shaft with simple capital cut in one piece found standing on the mosaic border of the chancel floor, perhaps a table-support.
4. Fragments of at least three tables of white marble (Harrison's fig. 3, nos. 1-3) found lying on the late (?Islamic) plaster floor of the chancel.
5. Fragment of a spirally fluted shaft of black marble (diam. c. 0.15m) found in the north aisle.
6. Illus 273, 275, 277. Parts of ten chancel-screens of limestone (ht. c. 1.0m, thickness 0.09-0.12m, lengths varying from 0.75-1.75m), each carved in relief on both sides, although the treatment of the outer faces of those which stood on the north and south sides of the chancel is summary; the designs consist mainly of compass-drawn crosses, abstract motifs and stylised leaves and flowers (Harrison's plates iv a, v a, v b, vi b, vii b, d, e). The carving is free and linear, with an effect like that on wood or chalk; the repertory and the manner of overall surface-decoration recall those of Breviglieri in Tripolitania (Ward-Perkins/Goodchild 1953, 44-7, cf. also the carving on limestone found at Beit Thamer (section 3a), el Atrun East Church, and Mtaugat (both in section 2).
7. Parts of a number of limestone chancel-posts, eight of square section and two columnar; four with grooves in which to fit screens on both their sides, and six (from either side of the three entries) with grooves on one side only. The columnar posts, which flanked the northern entry to the chancel, were carved in one piece with their capitals, with square bases, spirally-fluted shafts (diam. 0.25m × ht. 1.50m) and acanthus-capitals (Harrison's plates III a and IV a). The surviving post from the axial entry has a rounded finial.
8. Stumps and fragments of two monolithic limestone columns which stood on either side of the springing of the apse and against which the terminal chancel screens were set.
9. Three-sided acanthus-capital of limestone (w. 0.40m × ht. 0.50m × d. 0.35m) from one of the above columns, found in the apse (Harrison's pl. vi d).
10. Limestone column-capital from the apse area, w. 0.33m × ht. 0.64m × d. 0.335m; the back is plain, the two sides carry reliefs of Latin crosses, the front a rather crudely-carved pattern of leaves. There is a dowel-hole on the top. In Cyrene Museum in 1998 (inv. no. 3370).
11. Small limestone capital found in a late wall in the south aisle, perhaps the finial of a chancel-post (Harrison's pl. vi c).



Illus. 280. Ras el Hilal: the church, limestone block with relief of a monogram cross.

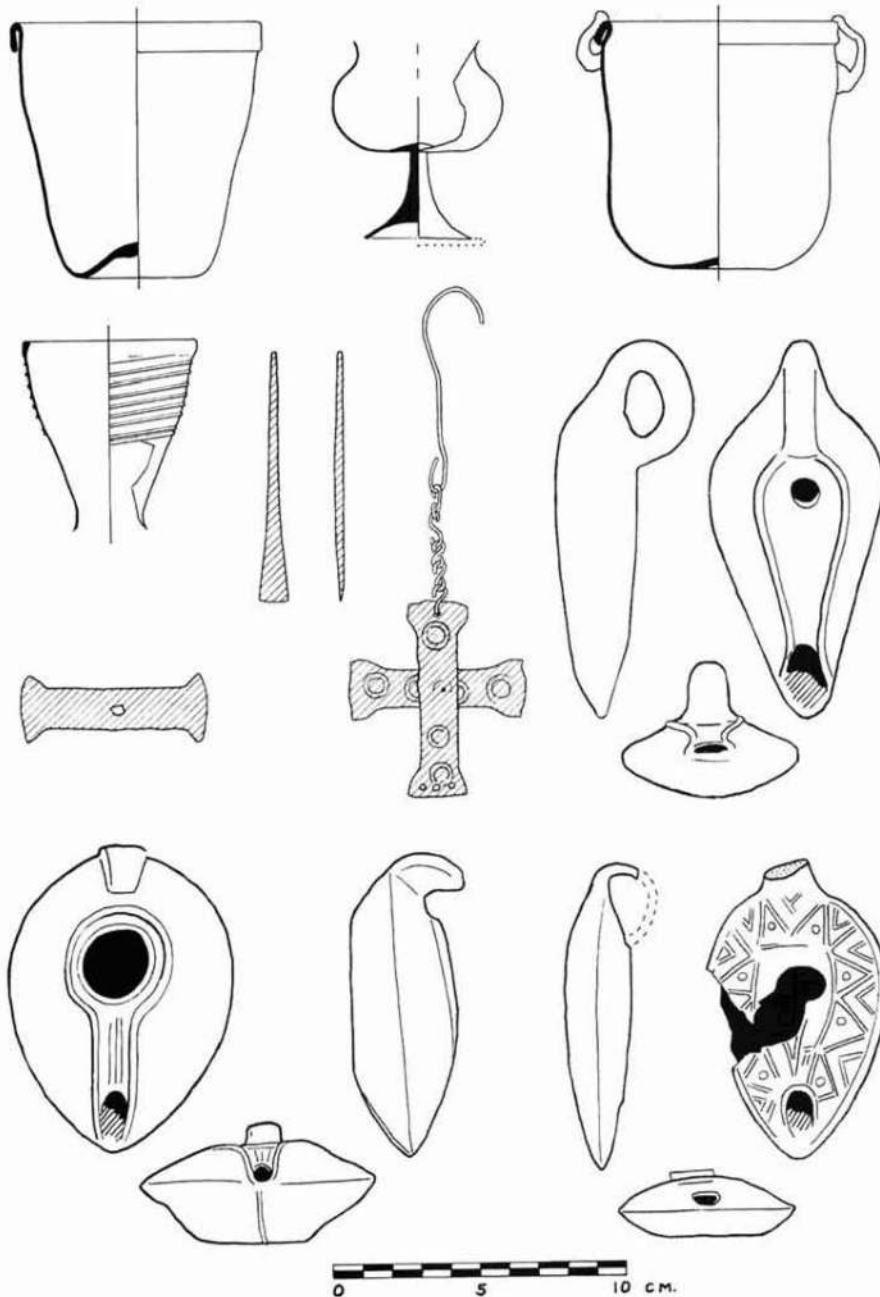
12. Illus. 278. Double-step of a limestone ambon (l. 0.83m × ht. 0.57m × d. 0.60m) with a cross in shallow relief on each side. Found in situ on the east side of the chancel, just south of the main entry (Harrison's pl. viii *b*).
13. Illus. 280. Rectangular limestone block (w. 0.28m × ht. 0.53m × d. 0.40m) carrying a high relief of a monogram cross; found at the west end of the nave.
14. Limestone block (w. 0.43m × ht. 0.35m × d. 0.54m), carrying a shallow relief of a Maltese cross in a circle, flanked by plant-motifs, probably one of a set from the doorjambes of the doorway from the vestibule to room A; two remain *in situ* on the western two jambes. Now lying outside the eastern end of the church (Harrison's pl. vii *c*).

Stucco decoration

15. Numerous fragments of a large shell which occupied the semi-dome of the apse (Harrison's pl. VI *a*).
16. Part of a narrow cornice, slightly curved, found in the apse (Harrison's fig. 3. 4).
17. Pieces of a pilaster-capital in shallow relief found in the apse (Harrison's pl. vi *a*).
18. Pieces of pilasters found in the chapel to north of the apse, those on the west wall, the east wall to right of the door and on the north wall fluted, those on the south wall plain. The pilasters framed panels painted with geometric designs, very similar to those of the baptistery (no. 19).
19. Pieces of pilasters found in the baptistery, used like those of the chapel to north of the apse (no. 18), two on the east wall and three on each of the others (Harrison's plate iv *b*).
20. Fragments of an acanthus-capital found in the chapel north of the apse.

Other finds

21. A bronze cross and chain and the bar of another were found on the late (?Islamic) floor of the apse (Illus. 281).
22. Two broken glass vessels were found in the same place (Illus. 281).
23. There is a possibility that fragments of window glass were found but not recognised as ancient.
24. A Menas *ampulla*, probably Justinianic in type, now in Apollonia Museum (inv. no. 244) may have come from here (see Riley 1980, 365).



Illus. 281. Ras el Hilal: small finds (R.M. Harrison)

Probably from the church

About 1km north of the church, in the ruins of an Italian gun post, Harrison reported many ancient blocks (ms. note in Ward-Perkins' file); among them he saw two reliefs of crosses in sunken circles (*a* diam. 0.42m, *b* diam. 0.30m). It is not clear whether he saw two blocks or one block with crosses on two faces.

Inscriptions

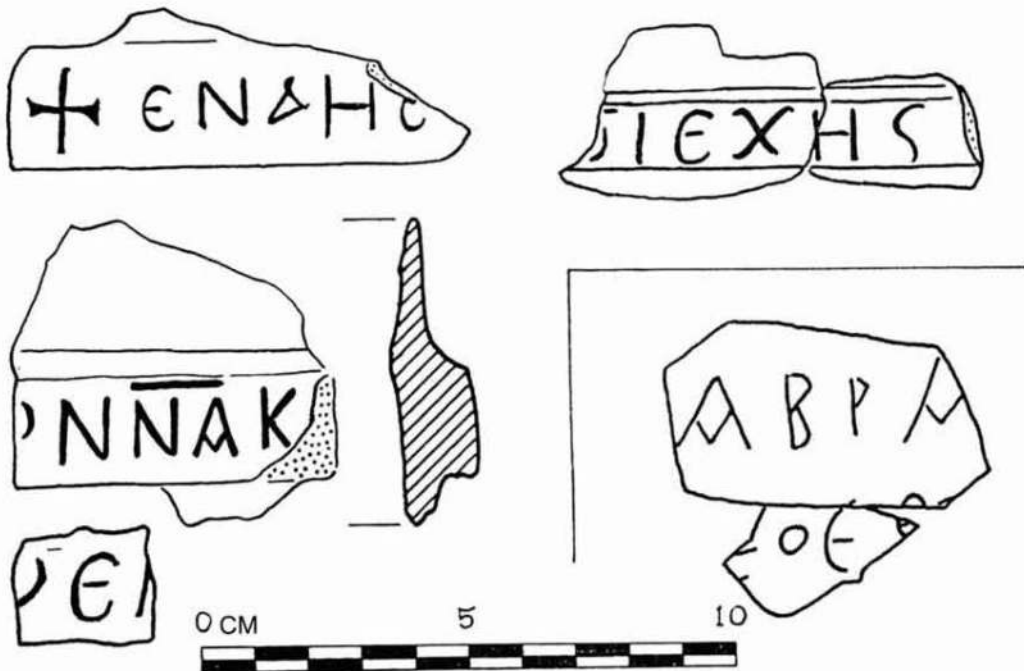
One re-used block of limestone was found carrying a secular text honouring the emperor Constantine with his sons Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans, between late December 333 and late May 337 (Reynolds 1964, p. 18).

The Christian inscriptions are:

1. Fragments painted on wall-plaster found in the débris of the north-west angle chapel (Room C, the chapel with altar likely to have contained a reliquary). There are two series (see Illus. 282).

- a*
- i Perhaps the intention was to give a date by indiction.
 - ii The superscript bar indicates an abbreviated word—perhaps $\nu\alpha\acute{o}\nu$ or $\nu\alpha\acute{o}\nu$ (for NA= $\nu\alpha\acute{o}\varsigma$ see *CIG* 8653).
 - iv The final letter is perhaps an abbreviation mark.
- b* This fragment may contain a reference to Abraham, cf. also in 3a.i, l. 2 and perhaps l. 3; he was, perhaps, especially honoured here. For a collection of formulae involving Abraham and his cult see *DACL* sv.

2. Two texts on the mosaic floor, set out in two rectangular panels which were placed one on either side of the chancel's axial entrance passage. Each panel shows a female *orans* standing in a niche between pillars and under a scalloped conch (Harrison, plates 13, 14). Both are now in Apollonia Museum.



Illus. 282. Ras el Hilal: the church, inscribed wall-plaster from room C (R. M. Harrison).

a 1.01m × 2.06m; letters, ave. 0.085m, lunate *sigma*; three letters on either side of the head.

Κτῆ vac. σις sic

b 1.095m × 1.90m; letters, ave. 0.085m, angular *sigma*; text above the head.

Κόσμησις sic

Personified *Ktesis* = Possession occurs elsewhere, cf. at Thyrea (Svoronos 1908, pl. LV) and is discussed by Levi 1947, i, p. 278, but hardly seems relevant here; more probably this is an aberrant spelling for *Ktisis*. *Ktisis* = Foundation (probably not Creation as proposed by Stucchi) occurs several times at Antioch, and in Cyrenaica at Tocra and at Gasr el Lebja where she is again accompanied by *Kosmesis* as here; *Kosmesis* is not so far attested outside Cyrenaica. For further discussion see under Gasr el Lebja, East Church. It is reasonable to suppose that the two figures characterise the acts of the founders in the buildings for which they claimed credit; but other ideas may have been present too.

3. Graffiti scratched in various hands on the plaster of the east and west walls of room C, the east wall of room D and the south wall of the north aisle. The texts are extremely difficult to decipher and although Reynolds has tried hard on several occasions to read more from the walls (but the plaster is steadily deteriorating) and more often from the photographs taken soon after the discovery, there has been little progress.

a i East wall of room C. Few readings are certain. Some letters are partly over cut by the Arabic writing.

L.1 BOHEI·IN[. . .

L.2 BENONIBEKAY TIOC·MINCON BOABBAC·BAO[. . .

L.3 ΔΡΕΑΝΔΟÇABPE[. . .

L.4 ΑΝΔΡΕΑ [· . .

L.5 [· . . .]X[· . .

L.6 [· . . .]ΔΟΕ[· . .

It may be that we should see here appeals for help (βοήθει, abbreviated or in full) from several supplicants; while in l.2 MINICON is perhaps for μνήσον, and in l.3 ΔΟÇ for “give”. The name Abraham, probable in l. 2, possible in l. 3, may be that of the prophet or of a supplicant; Andreas may refer to another supplicant—or possibly to the saint. L.5 presumably refers to Christ.

ii Apparently · . .]ΑΓΙΑ
ΑΝΔΡΕΑÇ

Perhaps two supplicants · . .]agia and Andreas, or l. 1 may contain a formula on the lines of ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀγία. Again the saint may be named.

b West wall of room C (illus. 283)

i Πέτρος

ii ΑΩΑΚ[· . . or ΑΝΑΙÇ[· . .

iii ΑΧΕΟΥ

iv · . .]ΑΔΜ, possibly misread for Ἄβ]ραάμ.

c East wall of Room D

i. · . .]ΑΗΡΗΝΟ[· . .

ii. · . .]ΡΙΟΝ[· . .

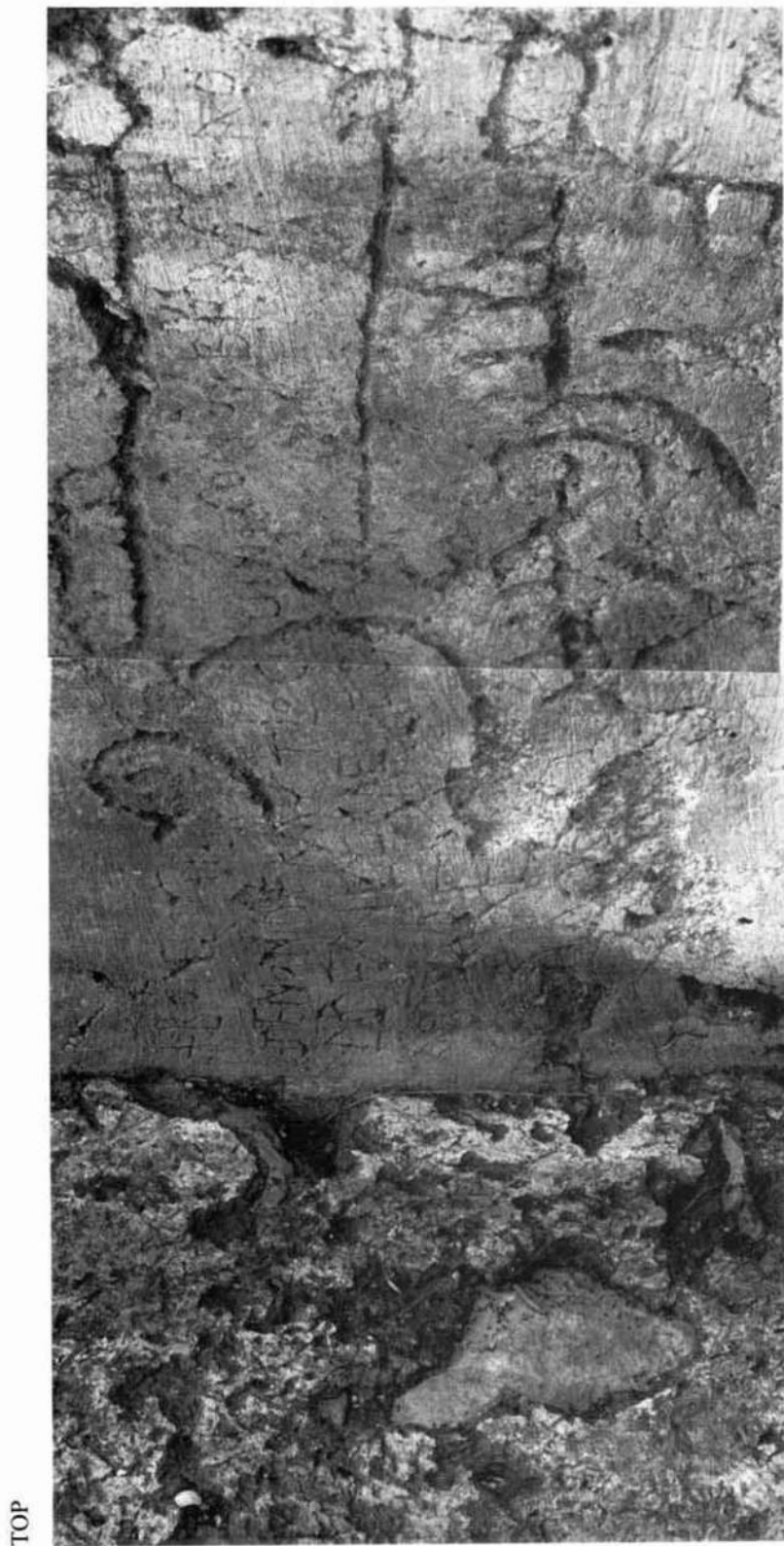
iii. Χ(ριστ)έ

d South wall of the north aisle.

Here I can see a number of individual letters—but no single words.



Illus. 283. Ras el Hilal: the church, Greek graffiti on wall-plaster, on the face of the south wall in the north aisle.



Illus. 284. Ras el Hilal: the church, Greek graffiti overlaid with Arabic on the plaster of a wall in room C.

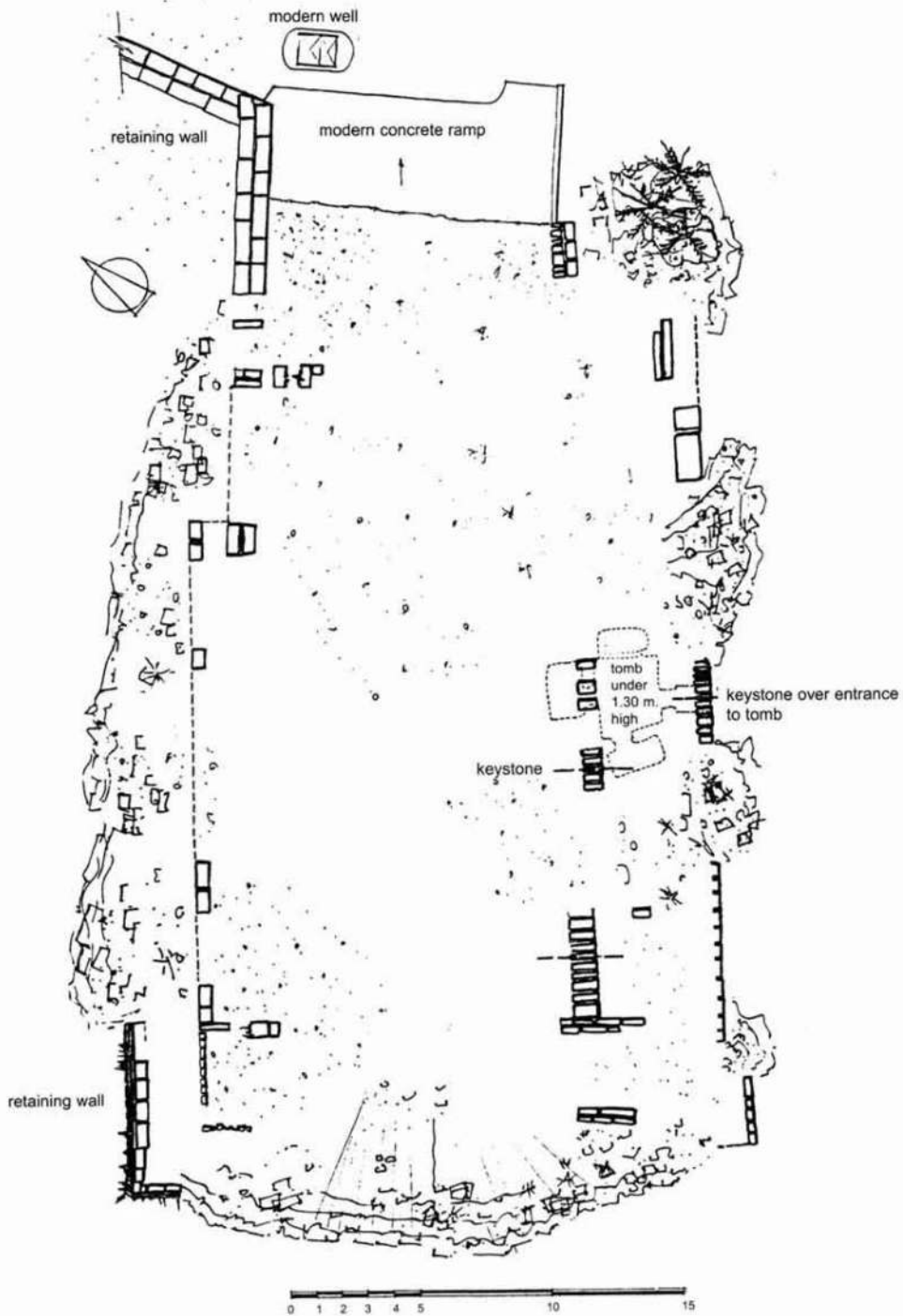


Illus. 285. Ras el Hilal: the church, Arabic graffiti on a wall in room C.

4. The Arabic inscriptions (illus. 285) are for the most part incised on stucco; one is dated in AD 722. They were read from photographs and drawings by Dr S. M. Stern. He published them in Appendix II of Harrison 1964, but believed that some of his readings could be improved with further study. It is relevant to observe that the text on the northern pier of the arch across the north aisle may have referred to the writer's dwelling-place as 'in the monastery of al-Maḥ' (al-Maj... or al-Makh...).

The presence of the Arabic texts has generally been taken to mean that Christian use of the building had ceased by a date early in the eighth century. If the reference to a monastery is correctly read, and if it is correct to suppose that it concerns the church described above rather than some more distant place from which the writer was absent on a journey, we have to assume that the Christian description of the building survived for a time after Christian use had ceased. That is not hard to accept. On the other hand it is not at present obvious that the site was ever monastic.

SIDI ABDUL WAHED



Illus. 286. Sidi Abdul Wahed: the church, measured drawing (R. J. C. Jamieson and C. A. Valentine).

Sidi Abdul Wahed, anc. name unknown, illus. 286: church.

Bibliography

Rohlf's 1871, 175; Haimann 1882, 92; Halbherr (1910) in Oliverio 1931, 273-4; Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Stucchi 1975, 396, 433 and fig. 444.

Discovery

The first traveller known to have observed a church here is Halbherr in 1910. It was not surveyed.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited this church in 1955 and made observations on the basis of which he wrote in pencil in the notebook a description headed *Preliminary Notes (31.7.55)*. No other version has been found. It is, obviously, a first version, written informally. The survey was made in the same year by R. J. C. Jamieson and C. A. Valentine.

The Site and the Church

Just above the Sidi's tomb, 100m north of the Italian east/west road across Cyrenaica, just east of the point at which it dips into the Wadi Kuf system of gorges. The church lies just south of the crest of a ridge that divides two tributaries of the Kuf. Along the crest to the west lies a substantial settlement, best represented by the numerous tombs around and immediately west of the church. Very fine views, south to Mukhtar village centre, west across the Kuf (Gasr Beni Gdem plainly visible) to the distant ridge beyond.

The church was a rectangular structure badly wrecked (a) by the proximity of the Arab cemetery and of a lime kiln between church and cemetery, (b) by a carabinieri fort the south wall of which lies along the church's north wall, (c) by a nearby *casa colonica*. At the east end a concrete apron leading down to a cistern probably obliterates the apse recorded by Halbherr (illus. 286).

A little clearance would reveal more than was recorded below in 1955. The main wall is visible over almost the whole of its western half and was built of alternate orthostat and header courses, the orthostats being roughly square and cut in the local stone, a rather soft, yellow limestone. At one point near the middle there is a short length of vertical ashlar revetment wall set out 1.00m; and the north-west corner is clasped by a battered buttress of not-very-good ashlar, the joints of which are plentifully packed with small stones. Along the west face this buttress is buried by fallen rubble; along the north it ends in a vertical cut-back which corresponds almost exactly to the east face of a transverse wall visible both on north and south sides of the church. A second substantial transverse wall, 0.96m across, with two ashlar faces, is visible at the east end of the surviving stretch. To the north the building was protected by a wide, vertical-sided ditch (opening off it is a chamber). The south side is similarly built, but at a considerably lower level owing to the lie of the ground, and towards the east end actually built against scarped rock. It is visible almost continuously from the west end to a point a little east of the second transverse wall (which is not exposed on the south side). Of this stretch, the west part preserves the outer face, the middle (over the arch) the inner face, and the eastern a part of the vertical rock-face against which it was built. About half way along is a well-built arch at a low level, which gives access to a smaller round-headed arch in the vertical rock-face 1.35m back. Through this one enters a flat-ceilinged rock-cut chamber, and through a round-headed, rebated arch in the rear, north, wall, a second chamber which lies under the nave of the church.

Of the north arcade nothing is visible, but the rubble is heaped high and there are thick bushes. On the south side there are three separate features: (a) at the west end a massive arch of large narrow voussoirs, *c.* 0.85m tall by 1.00m across the wall \times 0.26–0.35m along the extrados, which is roughly curved. The westward spandrel, of smaller rubble-work, links with and butts against the west transverse wall; (b) towards the centre a standing arch and probably a pier of a smaller arcade, set a bit south of a line from (a); the arch is of the type with some elongated, shaped voussoirs; (c) at the extreme east end, disappearing under the modern concrete apron, the north face of a rubble wall approximately on the alignment of (a).

Immediately east of (a), crossing the south aisle, there is a wall suggesting a distinct south-west 'chapel'.

Carved fittings

The notebook contains a drawing of a limestone fragment (max. width 10.5cm) captioned ?chancel post.

Sidi Bu Breyek, anc. name unknown, illus. 287-88: bishop's tomb, stone with cross.

Bibliography

Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1490.

Discovery

The site was discovered by members of the Antiquities Department at Shahat in the 1960's.

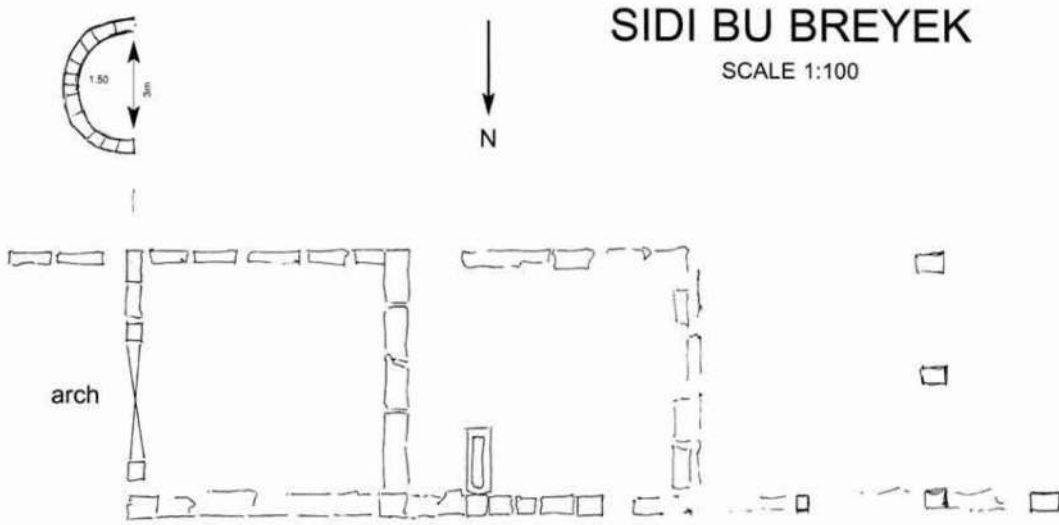
Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited this site in 1969 following receipt of information that there was an inscribed Christian tomb there; he made sketches and notes which can be supplemented by others made for him by Sara Paton.

The Site and the Monuments

A short distance south of the crest of the lower escarpment, about 8.5km NNW of the Lamluda road junction and about 3km west of the modern road from Ras el Hilal to Lamluda, are the remains of a small settlement, which included a church. It is reached by a modern forestry track. It is very far from certain that the remains of the church itself have been identified; but since the cemetery includes the grave of a bishop it seems worth while to record briefly what could be seen on the occasion of a brief visit in May 1969.

The countryside here consists of gently rolling knolls of exposed rock rising from flat stretches of accumulated red soil. The latter are rich and there are considerable patches of cultivation among the scrub and carob trees. The site occupies three knolls, of which the north-westernmost contains only tombs, including that of the bishop. The south-westernmost contained at least one large complex of underground chambers, and there has been substantial quarrying from the upper surface as well as several graves. The easternmost, now a grove of carob trees, included a number of substantial buildings, built in part of large blocks of dressed stone, with a spread of secondary buildings to the east and south-east. This was evidently the settlement, the other two knolls being occupied mainly by tombs and quarries.



Illus. 287. Sidi bu Breyek: sketch plan of possible church (J. B. Ward-Perkins).

Like the other two eminences the settlement itself is honeycombed below the surface with chambers, now partly collapsed and only intermittently accessible. The two most readily distinguishable buildings are a massively-built rectangular structure, the only building now visible that could possibly have been the church (*illus. 287*); and to the south-east of it, on the same general alignment, a fortified *gasr*. There are the orthostats and occasional traces of walling of other buildings also on the same alignment, and a well which is still in active use.

The 'church', about 7m wide and of uncertain length, runs northeast and southwest. The masonry is massive and there is a large, well-built arch near the southwest end. It is deeply buried in rubble.

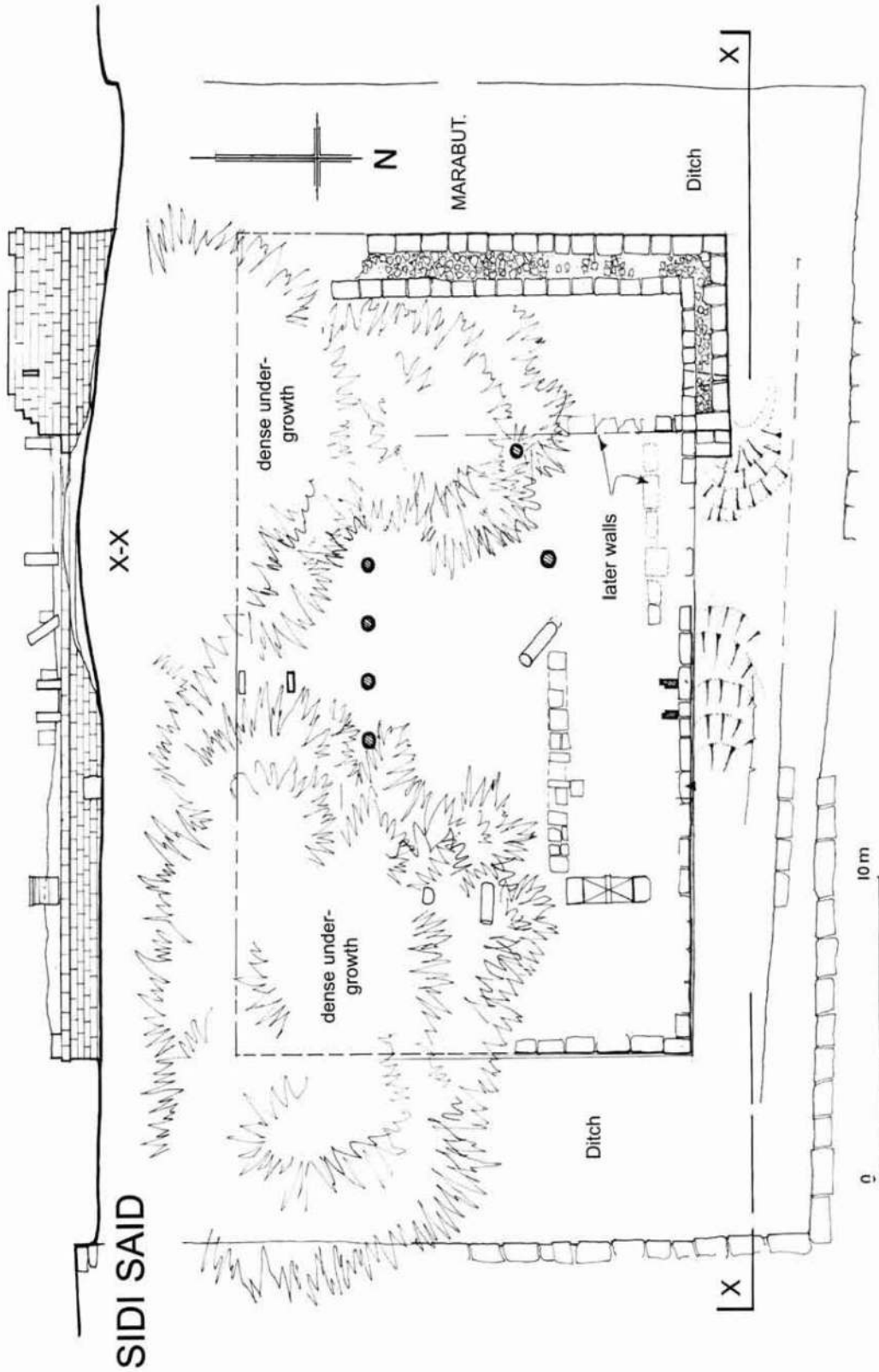
Inscriptions

1. In the settlement Reynolds saw in 1968 a limestone block carved with two crosses on either side of a damaged area in which some letters were visible:
cross Π [..?..] Ω *cross*
2. In the tomb of the bishop there is an inscription, cut and overpainted in red, the letters 0.10m or more high, with rectangular sigma (*illus. 288*):

Θεόδοτος ἐπ(ί)σ(κο)πος *monogram* *cross* ἐνθάδε κείται
 Theodotos the bishop lies here

ΘΕΟΔΟΤΟΣ ΕΠΚ Ϝ ΕΝΘΑΔΕΚΕΙΤΑΙ

Illus. 288. Sidi bu Breyek: inscription in the bishop's tomb (Sara Owen from Sara Paton's notebook).



Illus. 289. Sidi Said: the church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson).



Illus. 290. Sidi Said: the church, added facing at north-west corner.

Sidi Said, anc. name unknown, illus. 290-91: church.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 235; Stucchi 1975, 375, 431-3, figs. 376, 442; Duval 1989*b*, 2765.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited and examined the site in 1969, and arranged for it to be surveyed by Sheila Gibson on the same occasion.

The Site and the Monuments

Ruined church, situated in rolling, mainly scrub-covered country, about 1500m north of the main road from el Beida to Cyrene, about 9.5km east-north-east of the centre of el Beida. Immediately outside the west wall of the church is the tomb of Sidi Said himself, a much-frequented object of local veneration. Down the gentle slopes to the north there are a number of Arab graves, edged with stones taken from the church; and downhill from them, to the east, about 150m north-east of the church, are several trenched graves of uncertain date. There are traces of ancient settlement on the next hill to the north, about 300m away.

Although the walls of the church are standing in places to a considerable height (illus. 290), the thick scrub and several hives of very aggressive bees make them unusually difficult to survey (illus. 289). The remains of two distinct periods of Christian use¹ are further obscured by substantial traces of later occupation and by the height of the accumulated rubble within the building (illus. 291).

¹ Stucchi inclined to put the first construction of the church shortly after the middle of the fifth century.



Illus. 291. Sidi Said: the church, showing arched entry from the north aisle to the north-eastern chapel.

The original structure was rectangular, just over 25m by 17m. The walls, where visible, are of well-dressed, up-ended slabs (just visible in *illus. 291*), perhaps with an inner facing of small blocks. There are the remains of two longitudinal rows of limestone columns,² four of them, (about 2m apart, centre to centre) still in position in what must have been the south arcade. No apse is now discernible, but it was almost certainly at the west end. The transverse north-south wall now visible at this end is post-Christian; its predecessor seems to have lain a metre or so to the east of it, and an upstanding column on this line may mark the flank of the apse. Two columns at the opposite end presumably mark the entrance to an internal vestibule flanked by a pair of chapels; the archway leading from the north aisle to the north-east chapel is still intact (*illus. 291*).

Subsequently the west end and the north-west corner were strengthened by the addition of an outer thickening of concreted rubble faced with dressed masonry, preserved in places to a height of 14 courses (*illus. 290*). The facing is of unusually good quality, with two projecting levelling courses (courses 6 and 12 from the visible base of the wall). Similar masonry, with a levelling course, can be seen behind the scrub on the south side, but there is no way of telling whether this is part of the original structure (as its position in relation to the nave columns would suggest) or a later rebuild. In the north wall, near the north-east corner, there are the bottom two courses of the narrow splayed window which lit the north-west chapel. A doorway near the middle of the north side appears to belong to this second phase.

An outer ditch, up to 6m wide, is partly rock-cut, partly built.

² Stucchi recorded Doric capitals for the columns and stressed the local manufacture of the colonnades.



Illus. 292. Siret bu Hosh: the church and open cistern, seen from the north.

Siret bu Hosh,¹ anc. name unknown, illus. 292, 293: church.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 235; Stucchi 1975, 440 (but with mistaken identification); Roques 1987, 354 (map only); Duval 1989*b*, 2757.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited the site and examined the church in 1969; it was surveyed by Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler at the same time.

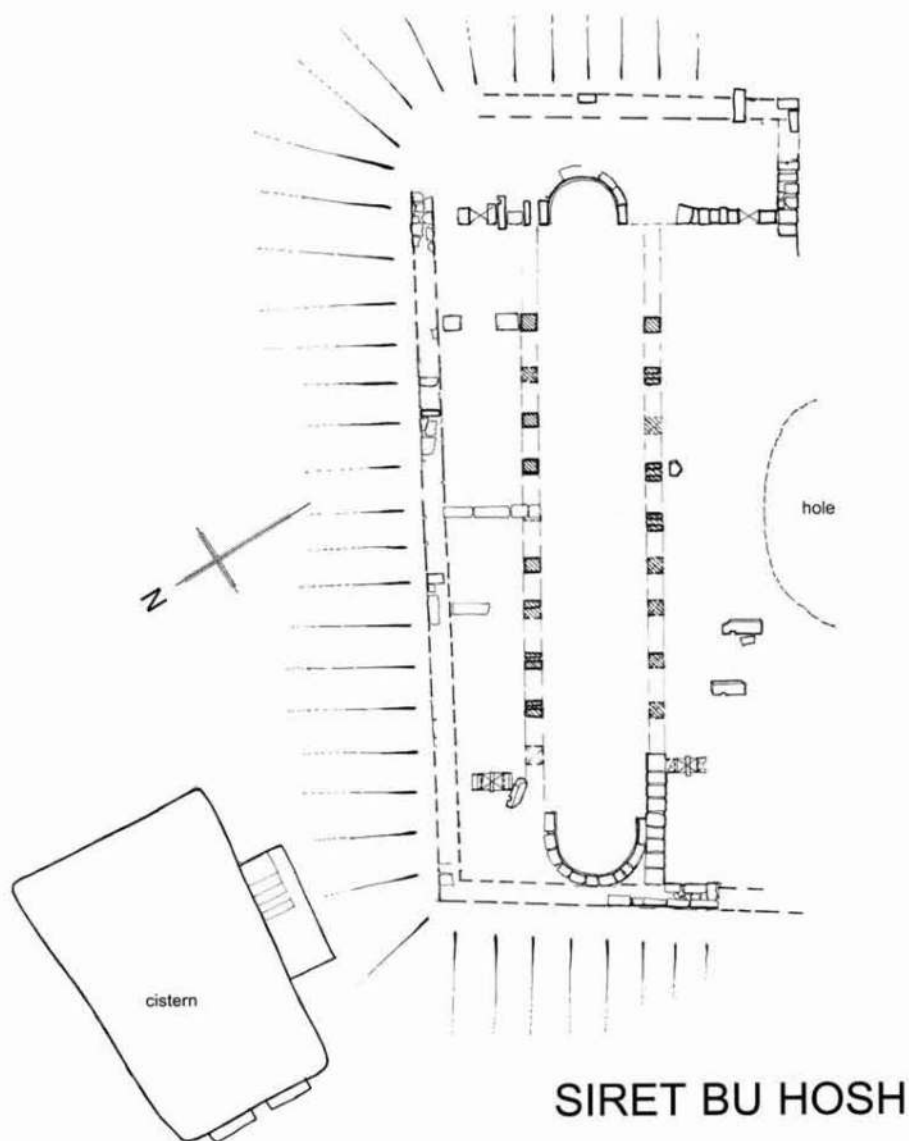
The Site and the Church

Ruined church on the northern edge of a low, rocky knoll a few hundred metres south of the edge of the upper escarpment, about 57km east of Cyrene, about 3km to the east of where the Derna road drops to the middle plateau and about 6km east-north-east of Ain Mara. There are slightly higher eminences 400-600m away to the north-east (right on the edge of the escarpment) and to the west, and another of the same height about the same distance to the east. Immediately to the south of the church, on roughly the same alignment, there is a ditched *gasr*, and just to the north of the north-west corner, but obliquely aligned to it, a large open cistern, 12m by 6.5-8m (illus. 292). To the south and west of church and *gasr* lie the remains of a substantial village settlement, beyond which are many ancient field boundaries.

¹ Located near Ain Mara, it must be distinguished from a similarly named site north-west of Lamluda, the hill of el Hoch, mentioned by Pacho 1827, 132-3. Here Pacho described a 'fortress' on a hill dominating other hills in the neighbourhood, and underneath it a *hypogaeum* consisting of a rectangular room 'containing two large niches and one decorated on the façade by two pilasters of which only the base survives.' This may well be another church built over a tomb, but the clue has not been pursued.

The church is very ruinous and covered with low scrub (illus. 293). Although it seems to have followed normal practice in being inscribed within a rectangular outer frame, with chapels at the four angles, there are several unusual features, notably the elongated proportions (31m long by 14.0-14.5m wide) and the presence of two apses, one at the east end and one at the west.

Along the east and north sides the line of the outer wall is marked mainly by the heaped-up mounds of fallen masonry, with here and there one or two blocks projecting from it, apparently *in situ*. Only at the south-east corner and along the southern part of the west wall is enough exposed to show that the lower part was built of two faces of quite large stones, bound together by an occasional transverse block and capped by a projecting levelling-course of flat slabs. Above this, at any rate at the south-east corner, the outer face was of similar orthostat-construction, whereas the inner face, of which there is now no



Illus. 293. Siret bu Hosh: the church, measured plan, scale 1:100 (Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler).

trace, may very well have been of smaller coursed masonry. The same masonry formula can be seen in the wall that frames, and is probably contemporary with, the western apse on its south side. The line of the outer south wall is interrupted by an irregular hole, now largely filled with fallen masonry. This may conceivably be a significant feature (cf. Umm-Heneia el Garbia or the West church at Lamluda, both in *Section 2*), but it could equally well represent no more than the collapse of a chamber excavated from the ditch of the adjoining *gasr*. Immediately to the north-west of the hole two fallen 'curtain brackets'² mark the position of an entrance doorway.

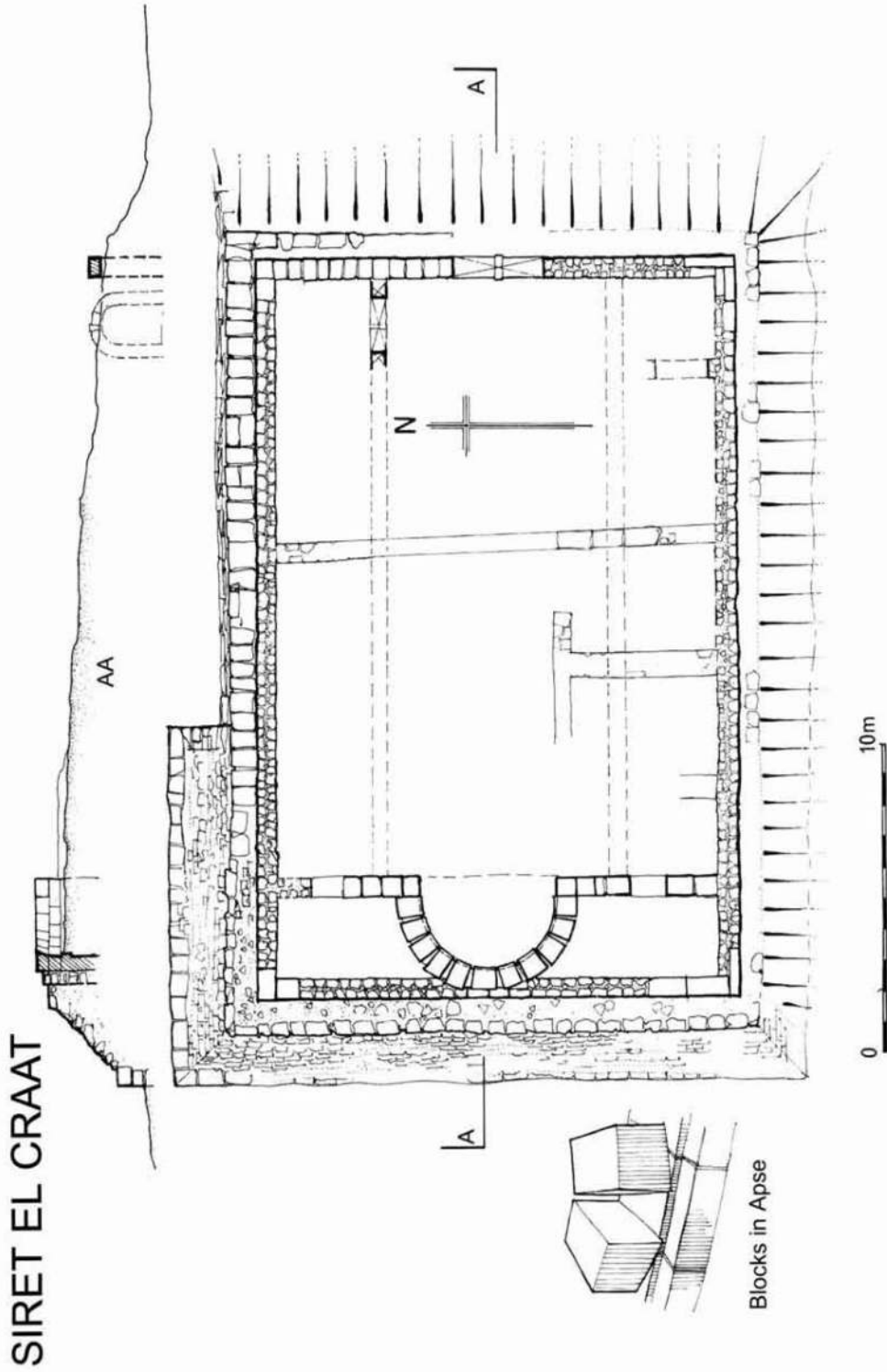
The central nave was very long and narrow (over 20m by 4m) and it was flanked by aisles of which that on the north side was equally long and narrow, and slightly tapering, from 3.30m at the east end to 2.60m at the west end, whereas that on the south side was considerably wider, at any rate at the measurable point near the south-east corner (about 4.50 m). The eastern apse is small and curiously eccentric to the axis of the nave; now buried to the height of the projecting levelling-course, it carried a semidome of dressed stone, one course of which is still in place. The position of the north-south wall of the north-east angle chapel is marked by a small arched doorway and, beside it, a fallen 'curtain bracket'. Little more than the line of the corresponding wall on the south side can be made out; the doorway shown in *illus. 293* is probable but not certain. The western apse occupies almost the full width of the nave and was unusually deep. It was built in masonry similar to that of the south-west chapel, with a levelling-course resting on an inner face of orthostats. Of the semidome itself there is now no trace. The western flanking-chapels are asymmetrical, that on the north side (marked by the still-intact arched doorway and, beside it, a fallen 'curtain bracket') being both narrower and a metre shorter than its southern counterpart. Of the latter the most conspicuous feature is the arched doorway, rather curiously placed up against the shoulder of the south nave-arcade.

There are many features about this plan which suggest that the building underwent at least one substantial reconstruction. One possibility is that the original building is represented by the western apse, the nave-arcades and the south aisle and angle-chapels, but that the northern and north-eastern part had on some occasion to be rebuilt, perhaps after an earthquake, on a reduced scale and with the insertion of an eastern apse, possibly even with a virtual abandonment of the western part of the building (the several obviously late transverse features in the north aisle could belong to this phase, but could equally well represent much later occupation of this part of the building when the church, as such, was already derelict). An alternative possibility is that the northern part of the building, together with the eastern apse, is what survives of a rather smaller early structure and that it is the southern half, including the south nave-arcade, the south aisle and the western apse, which is the later addition.

The balance of probability seems to rest with the first of these alternatives, but without excavation there can clearly be no certainty. What does seem to be certain is that, although the two apses may at some time have been in contemporary use, they were not built on the same occasion. Apart from its unusual proportions this was in origin a fairly typical member of the sixth-century Cyrenaican series.³

² *Introduction II, Interior Fitments, Limestone.*

³ The date, of course, is open to question.



Illus. 294. Siret el Craat: the church, measured plan (Sheila Gibson after Abdulhamid Abdussaid).



Illus. 295. Siret el Craat: the church, north-east corner and revetment of perimeter wall.

Siret el Craat/Kraat, anc. name unknown, illus. 294-96: church.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 117; Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 235; Stucchi 1975, 388, with his fig. 391, citing an unpublished manuscript of Ghislanzoni which described a journey made in 1918; Roques 1987, 354 (map only).

Discovery

Pacho described the building here as a fort; Ghislanzoni seems to have recognised it as a church, but did not publish his discovery. Members of the Department of Antiquities at Shahat visited it in the sixties, when Abdulhamid Abdussaid surveyed and drew it; but there has been no excavation.

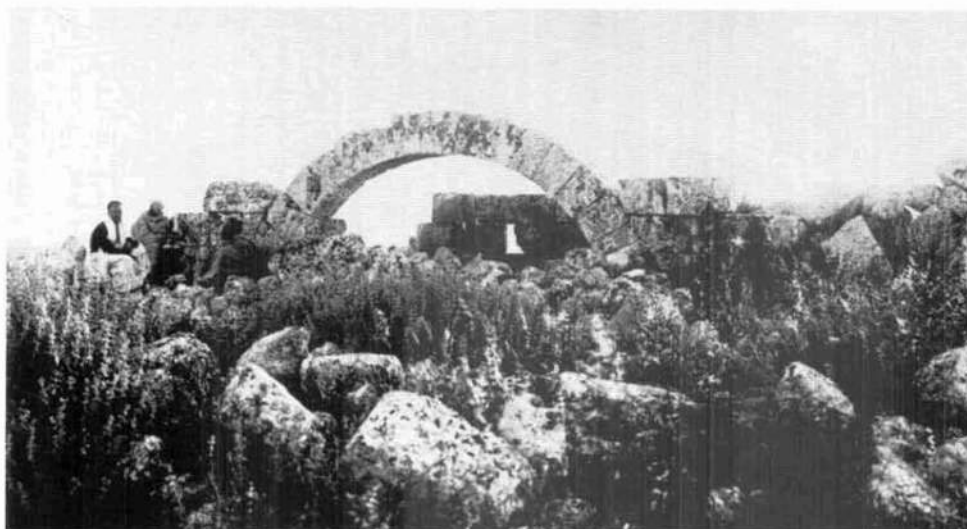
Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited the site in 1969 when he examined and described the church, but no new architectural survey was made.

The Site and the Church

Small church on the upper plateau about 37km east of Cyrene, 9km east of Lamluda and about 2km north of the main road from el-Beida to Derna at el-Gubba. It lies in open, cultivated country, within the walled gardens of a small farm. It is deeply buried in the débris of its own collapse, the main features now visible being the rectangular outer perimeter wall (illus. 295) and part of the semidome of the western apse (illus. 294). There are indications of two structural periods as well as of post-Christian occupation.

The original building was a neat rectangle, about 24m by 17m and it was built of good masonry, the outer corners of dressed stone and the remaining walls of two faces of small coursed blocks linked by levelling courses of transverse slabs. One such levelling-course is partly exposed towards the north-east corner (illus. 295). The only internal features of the nave and east end that are visible above the rubble are the crown of the main entrance arch, in the middle of the east side (illus. 296); the crown of the easternmost arch of the north nave-arcade; and what may well be the springer block at the west end of the south nave-arcade.



Illus. 296. Siret el Craat: the church, arch of entrance in the east wall.

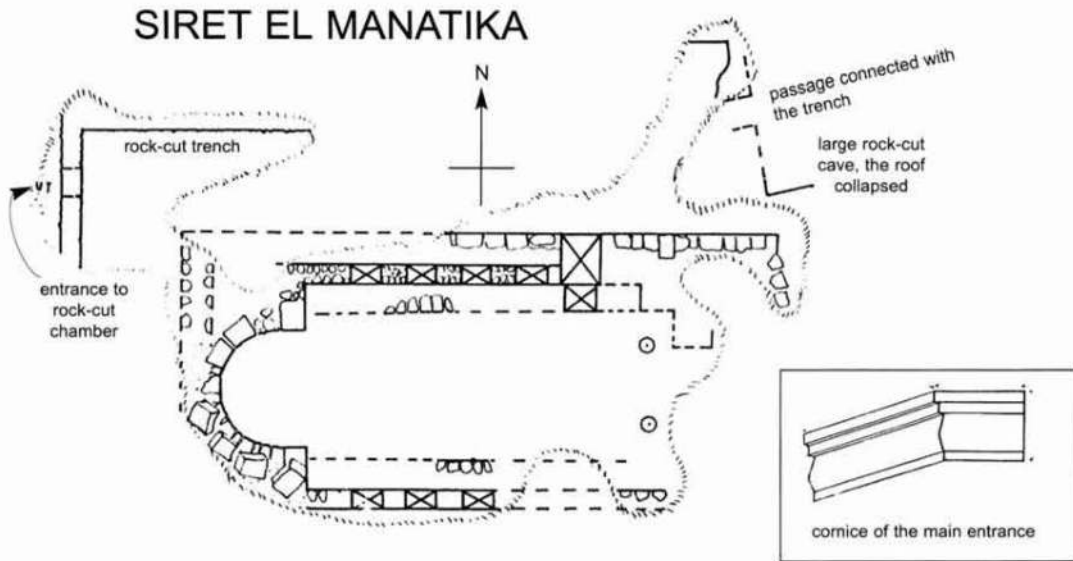
The apse was at the west end. It too is deeply buried, up to the levelling course which carried the semidome. The two surviving courses of the latter are built of large dressed blocks, corbelled inwards and neatly jointed on the inner face; the outer face is irregular, with gaping, splayed joints, and it was evidently incorporated within, and hidden by, an outer mass of faced rubble. The seating for the outer (west) facing of this can in fact be seen on the exposed upper surface of the levelling-course.

There are remains of the solidly-built transverse wall delimiting the two western chapels, including the doorway into the south-west chapel, with a rebated door-jamb, and possibly, but rather dubiously, that into the north-west chapel. There are the traces also of a doorway into the south-west chapel at an upper level, showing that this end of the building at any rate had two storeys.

The outer wall was later reinforced (illus. 295). Along the north side, and seemingly continuous down the east side, the reinforcement is visible as an outer revetment, with a levelling course, about 1m thick, resting on a steeply inward-sloping facing of dry-stone boulders. About 5m east of the face of the apse this revetment is suddenly thickened, being nearly 3m wide at the base all round the west end, but sloping inwards at an angle of about 45 degrees towards an inner facing which appears to be continuous with the revetment around the rest of the building. The lower, outer slopes at the west end are faced with massive boulders set in mud.

So far as can be determined in the present state of the remains, the two revetments are contemporary. Either it was only the western part of the building which was two storeys high and had to be specially reinforced, or else the whole building had two storeys and this part of it was in a specially precarious condition. The visible remains and the height of the accumulated rubble over the whole of the interior (2-3 metres) suggest the second alternative.

The internal walls shown in illus. 294 were seen and recorded on a previous occasion by Abdulhamid Abdussaid, but only the north-south transverse wall about half way down the nave is now visible. They represent later occupation when the building was already partly ruinous.



Illus. 297. Siret el Manatika: the church, measured plan, scale 1:100 (Abdulhamid Abdussaid).

Siret el Manatika (Mnietika), anc. name unknown, illus. 297: church.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966a, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 235; Stucchi 1975, 362; Roques 1987, 354 (map only)—all listing or locating but little more.

Discovery

The church was found in 1969 by members of the Department of Antiquities in Shahat. Abdulhamid Abdussaid drew a plan, but there has been no excavation.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited the site in 1969, but very briefly indeed. He made no plan, and never wrote up his notes, which are transcribed here from the notebook.

The Church

The church is some 25km west of el Beida, in a village settlement just east of the Wadi Kuf and a little south of Gasr Beni Gdem, an area of many ancient villages.

Visible are an apse at the west end, probably flanked by angle-chapels, five arches of the south arcade and traces of the north arcade (illus. 297), half-column blocks on either side of the apse, an arch probably leading into a north-west chapel. In the outer west wall and at the north-west corner the masonry can be seen to consist of large blocks backed by smaller ones; so too in the north-east corner and along most of the north-east side where there is also a battered outer skin of masonry.¹

An extra range is probable along the south-east side, a late oblique wall in a trench in the north wall and a moulded block, perhaps a Roman altar, lying loose.

On the face of it this seems to have been a three-aisled basilica with western apse.

¹ At the north-west corner the drawing shows a rock-cut trench outside the wall, with an entrance to a rock-cut chamber in one of its sides. Towards the north-east corner on the north side a large rock-cut chamber with collapsed roof is recorded.

Siret er Rheim (Rcheim), anc. name unknown, illus. 298-303: church.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 236; Stucchi 1975, 388, 404-6 (with fig. 409), 432, 433, 434; Roques 1987, 354 (map only).

Discovery

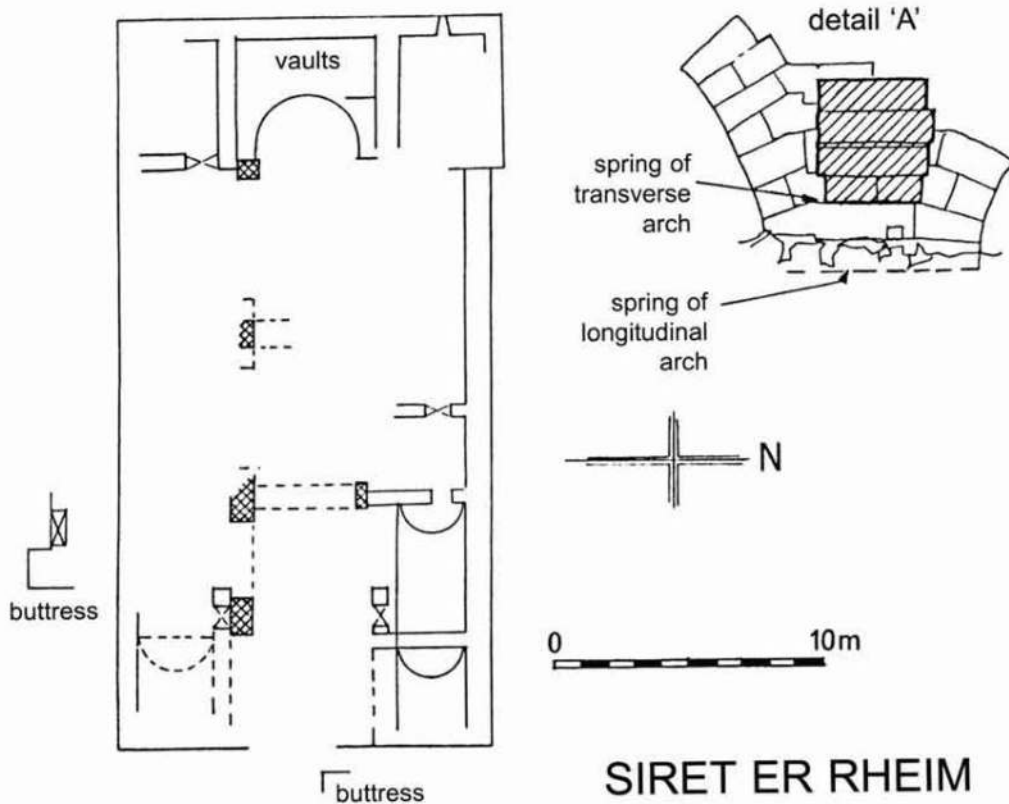
The site was discovered by members of the Department of Antiquities at Shahat in the early sixties, but there was no survey. The first published reference to it seems to be by Goodchild in 1966.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited the site in 1969, described it and made a sketch-plan. His description (printed below) is marked as 'for reconsideration'.

The Site and the Church

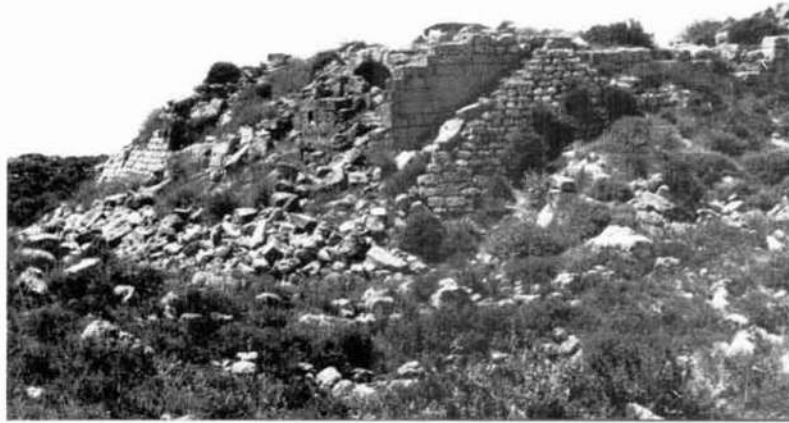
Well-preserved church and associated structures (illus. 298, 299), the remains of which, though heavily encumbered by rubble, mostly stand to a considerable height on a prominent site about 5km north-east of the village-centre of Mukhtar (formerly Mameli). At this point there are a number of flat-topped



Illus. 298. Siret er Rheim: sketch-plan (Sheila Gibson from Ward-Perkins' notebook).



Illus. 299. Siret er Rheim: the church, north wall with small projection at the north-east corner.



Illus. 300. Siret er Rheim: the church, north-east corner, with revetments and ditch.

ridges, which form the horizon to the south of the modern main road, and from the church (and even more strikingly from the ruined watch-tower 300m to the north) there are fine views northwards over a wide arc of country, reaching as far as the escarpment beyond el Merj.

The church, which lies roughly east and west, with the apse towards the west, stands within an enclosure. On the north, east and south sides this consists of a wide, rock-cut ditch immediately outside the walls of the church (illus. 300); towards the west, the ground slopes gently downwards and there is no ditch, the enclosure extending to include some of the associated structures within a roughly rectangular, walled perimeter. The other features are: (a) the base of a square tower, just outside the church at the north-west



Illus. 301. Siret er Rheim: the church, apse.



Illus. 302. Siret er Rheim: the church, west end.

corner; (b) a pair of vaulted cisterns a short distance to the south of the south-west corner (illus. 303); (c) a complex of buildings in the ditch opposite the middle of the south side; and (d) a small group of buildings and cisterns just beyond the outer wall of the north ditch, near the north-east corner. The stone for the ashlar masonry of the church was quarried from the valley-bottom, 400-500m to the west; and there are extensive traces of ancient cultivation.



Illus. 303. Siret er Rheim: the church, barrel-vaulted cisterns.

The Church

The church, substantial parts of which were evidently two storeys high, is filled with fallen rubble, which in places stands as high as the crowns of the visible arches, possibly burying others that are still intact (illus. 300, 301). Since the visible remains are of at least two periods, many details of the plan are inevitably doubtful, and will remain so until, if ever, the site is excavated. The broad outlines are, however, clear and, if one may assume a plan roughly symmetrical about the long axis (an assumption which the surviving remains appear to justify), they are enough to give a good general picture of the building as a whole.

The outer perimeter is rectangular, measuring approximately 27m by 13.50m, interrupted only where the north-east corner of the north-west chapel projects very slightly beyond the north wall of the nave, the masonry of which is built up against that of the chapel. The external walls are built throughout of freshly-cut ashlar masonry of which the stones of the outer face are larger (average height of courses, 0.25m) than those of the inner face, the whole being levelled off at intervals by projecting courses of headers (illus. 302). A sloping revetment of rougher masonry against the lower part of the outer face is a later addition (illus. 300, 302); to judge from the window embrasures (illus. 302), it was probably never much higher than it is today. Two entrances can be distinguished, one at the east end, on the long axis, the other near the east end of the south wall. The arch of the latter, flanked by a buttress, is still intact, buried deep in fallen rubble.

The apse stood at the west end of the nave (illus. 301), flanked by two rectangular chambers, between which and behind the apse was a third and much narrower chamber.¹ The apse itself and the semidome were of good

¹ See Introduction II, *Ground Plans*.

ashlar masonry, the remaining internal walls of a less substantial masonry, consisting of two faces of coursed orthostats or smaller coursed stones, enclosing a core of rubble and laced with slightly projecting courses of headers; quoins and arches were of carefully-squared stone (illus. 300). There were two storeys. The only door still visible at the north end of the east wall of the south-west chapel, is structurally contemporary with the apse. The rest of the south-west angle is featureless, having collapsed outwards. The narrow chamber behind the apse was roofed by several barrel vaults running east and west and may have been inaccessible at ground-floor level. At the upper level it was presumably a corridor between the two angle-chambers. The vaults of the north-east chapel appear to be intact, the only visible feature being an embrasure-like window in the room above.

The nave is of at least two periods, of which the remains of the later are the more immediately recognizable. These comprise the piers and arches of a pair of longitudinal arcades built up against the inner faces of the pair of partially or wholly arcaded walls that delimited the central nave of the original church. The visible remains of the south arcade consist of the following elements: a pier built up against the shoulder of the apse, partly concealing the simple moulding at the base of the semidome; two of the elongated piers which carried both the large longitudinal arches of the arcade and, at a higher level, arches spanning the nave; and what may be part of a third similar pier, but is more probably the terminal pier of the arcade, built up against an already existing wall which marked the eastern limit of the actual nave. That the corresponding north arcade followed the same general plan is shown by the existence of the transverse arches, although the only feature now visible above the rubble is the spring of one of these arches. Piers and arches, though irregular in profile, are of carefully dressed masonry. The relative date is shown not only by the relation of the westernmost pier to the apse, but also where, at the east end, the pier blocks an arch of an earlier wall.

Of the remaining visible structures, those that belong certainly to the earlier phase are three arches (or doors) of the pair of walls against which the second-period arcades were built and the easternmost of the three transverse walls that divide the north aisle into compartments. Other possibly, but not certainly, early features are the two remaining transverse walls. The barrel vaults over the two eastern compartments in their present form are probably later (the supporting wall of one of them blocks a first-period archway), but they may well replace earlier vaults on the same general lines. The third transverse wall incorporates an arched doorway, still intact, at a level higher than that of the vaulting of the two chambers to the east of it. Two of the arches of the longitudinal wall are opposite each other near the east end, that on the north side being of one build with the first transverse wall. They are quite small and may well be doorways. All that can now be seen of the third arch, which may be rather larger, is the upper voussoirs, just to the west of the second transverse wall.

These facts suggest that in the first period the nave may well have occupied only that part of the building that lay to the west of the first transverse wall, the remaining bay constituting an internal antechamber, or narthex (illus. 298).

On this hypothesis, the longitudinal arcades, probably of four bays, would have reached only to the second transverse wall, the eastward continuation being a continuous wall, except for the two symmetrically placed doorways, thereby cutting off the eastern parts of the two lateral aisles from the central nave—a characteristically Cyrenaican feature. Embrasures in the outer wall show that the vaulted chambers carried an upper storey, and there may well have been galleries over the lateral aisles. Though presumably damaged, perhaps by an earthquake, this building was probably still very largely standing when the second-period arcades and transverse arches were added in order to buttress the existing nave. At the same time the vaults at the east end of the lateral aisles were rebuilt. The third transverse wall, with its doorway at a higher level, may also be of this later period, the galleries over the aisles (if there ever had been any such) having collapsed and not been replaced. The buttressing revetment round the outer walls would belong to this same phase of general repair and consolidation.

There are many points in the foregoing account that call for confirmation by excavation. As a provisional analysis of the remains now visible, however, it offers a plan that accords well with what we know of Christian architecture elsewhere in Cyrenaica. The chapels at the east ends of the lateral aisles, in particular, are a distinctive feature which would appear to date the building as Justinianic, or later.¹

Tower, cisterns and other structures

The flat-bottomed, rock-cut ditch is some 14-15m wide, the outer edge being built up as a vertical wall of irregular lumps of masonry capped with a course of ashlar headers. Within it, opposite the middle of the south side of the church are the fallen remains of a considerable building, including four arches of what appears to be a rectangular, arcaded courtyard.

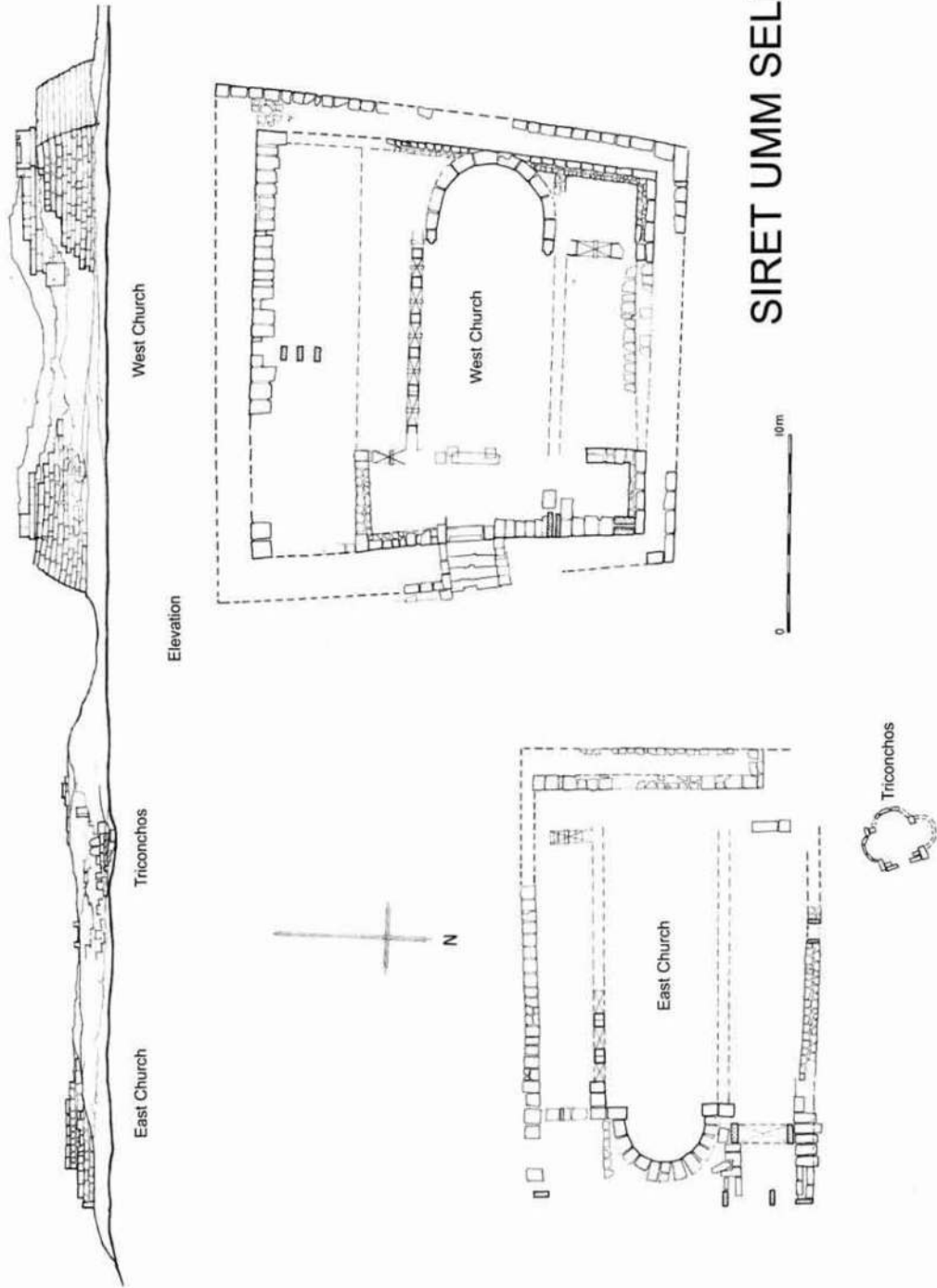
The tower, which stood obliquely up against the north-west angle of the church, is now little more than a heap of fallen masonry, distinguishable only as a roughly square structure standing on a platform some 10m square. From its relation to the ditch and the enclosure it appears to be an original feature of the complex.²

Another probably early feature is the pair of cisterns against the south wall of the enclosure, opposite the tower. Placed side by side, with three arches in the common wall, they measure together some 10m by 8m. Each was barrel-vaulted, the vault being built of ashlar to a height of three courses and closed with elongated chunks of stone laid radially in a tough mortar. There is an inlet duct leading from the church.

The complex of structures near the north-east corner of the enclosure includes a rectangular, rock-cut cistern aligned obliquely to the ditch and, at right-angles to it, a small, barrel-vaulted chamber, both of which may be earlier than the church. Contemporary with the church is a long, narrow, rectangular structure of coarse ashlar built up against the outer wall of the ditch; and later than both groups are a smaller, trapezoidal, rock-cut cistern, fitted into the space between the earlier structures, and an irregular rock-cut extension of the earlier cistern.

¹ The dating is, of course, open to question. Stucchi put this church in a group which he attributed to the second half of the fifth century, but that too is conjectural.

² Stucchi suggested that it might be a baptistery.



Illus. 304. Siret Umm Sellem: two churches and a triconch, measured plans (Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler).

Siret Umm Sellem (Omm Sellem), anc. name unknown, illus. 304-10: two churches and a triconch.

Bibliography

Ward-Perkins 1972, 231-2, 235; Stucchi 1975, 362 (listing only); Roques 1987, 354 (map only).

Discovery

It is remarkable that this site does not seem to figure in early published accounts of Cyrenaica, since it is large and close to the main ancient road, as well as to the Italian and modern roads, across the province. The earliest record seems to be of the nineteen-sixties when members of the Department of Antiquities at Shahat reported churches there.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins visited, examined, and described the site in 1969; the survey was undertaken at the same time by Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler.

The Site and the Churches

A pair of churches prominently situated within the ruins of an ancient village, on the upper plateau north-east of Labragh, 17km east of Cyrene, about 2km north of the modern main road from el Beida to Derna and about 1km south of the upper escarpment. The village lay along the crest and upper slopes of a low elevation running roughly east and west. Immediately to the east of it there is the head of a very deep, precipitous wadi (the Wadi el Agar), which cuts sharply down through the escarpment, and a shallower tributary valley delimits the village from the south. The site of Gasr Sbeah is clearly visible just across the main wadi, about 2km to the east.

Although it is not the purpose of this publication to describe the contemporary secular remains as such, it may be helpful to add a brief word about the unusually well-preserved community of which these churches were such prominent features.

The main inhabited area lay just to the west of the West Church. Here there is a tangle of walls and overgrown rubble, which has all the air of representing a settlement that grew up piecemeal over a long period of time. Prominent among the remains are several still upstanding oil presses. To the east of the churches the traces of settlement are more scattered and include at least two substantial, independently-sited buildings; one of them a large rectangular enclosure of orthostats (the spaces between them and any internal walls were of lighter masonry), again incorporating an olive press; the other rather more elaborate, with the ruins of a fallen tower at one end of a square yard and presses at one of the opposite corners. The latter building looks like the fortified residence of a well-to-do landowner.

Off to the north-east, at the foot of the slopes which form the last rise to the crest of the escarpment, are large quarries, and partly in and partly around these quarries is a cemetery. This includes rock-cut tombs, two mausolea built into the quarries, and a number of sarcophagi with flat or quasi-gabled lids.

Only the depressions and valley bottoms now contain soil in cultivable quantities, but the whole surrounding area is crossed by numerous ancient field boundaries, the patterns of which are strikingly clear on air photographs and could very easily be surveyed on the ground. The quarries, the cemeteries and the Hellenistic tomb fragments re-used in the West Church attest a long history, and in late antiquity this was still thickly inhabited farming country.



Illus. 305. Siret Umm Sellem: West Church, north-west corner; wall and revetment.



Illus. 306. Siret Umm Sellem: West Church, north-east corner, wall with compass-traced cross on corner-stone and revetment.

In this period at any rate, to judge from the numerous remains of presses, oil was a conspicuous element in the economy.

The Monuments

1. The West Church, illus. 304-08.

Slightly the larger of the two churches and markedly the better preserved is the West Church. This is of a rather irregular, trapezoidal shape and shows traces of at least three periods of work:

- a. An original, three-aisled basilica with inscribed western apse;
- b. the addition of a south wing and the enclosure of the whole structure within a sloping outer buttressing; and
- c. some later patching in the middle of the north side.

a. The original building

For reasons that are no longer apparent this was trapezoidal in shape, measuring 21m from east to west along the south side and only 18.5m along the north side. The width was roughly uniform, just over 14.5m, but the internal lay-out was asymmetrical, the north aisle being distinctly wider than the south, with a corresponding southward shift of the axis formed by the main east entrance and the apse.

The original perimeter wall was well-built, with an outer facing of quite large, dressed blocks, laid in courses which were freely stepped up or down to suit the sizes of the individual stones (illus. 305). There was at least one levelling course (0.22-0.25m high and projecting 0.06-0.08m), and orthostats were freely used, notably in the course immediately above the levelling course. There are some larger blocks also on the inner faces, but for the most part the latter are of the familiar small-coursed-block construction.

The visible remains appear to be those of a typical Cyrenaican basilica with chapels at the four angles. The apse was faced internally with large blocks, the two shoulders consisting of blocks with engaged, fluted half-columns, reused from some Hellenistic mausoleum. On the north side it was flanked by a square chapel, which was entered from the north aisle through a large arch. Of the corresponding south chapel there is now no visible trace above the accumulated rubble; it is not impossible that it was eliminated or enlarged when the south wing was added in the second period. All five of the arches of the south arcade are still standing, each arch consisting of nine voussoirs (illus. 308) resting directly on squared masonry piers. Of the north arcade there is nothing to be seen. At the east end the south arcade abuts on to the transverse wall that divided the nave from a small internal porch, or narthex, flanked by two chapels. The south-east chapel was entered from the south nave-aisle through a wide arched doorway. The details of the corresponding north-east chapel are not clear. The main entrance, in the east wall, is asymmetrical to the porch, in conformity with the axis of the central nave and apse.

b. The enlargement of the church

At some later time the building was enlarged by the addition of a room, or rooms, set against the outer south wall of the church and running the whole length of it. Either on this occasion or at some yet later date, the lower parts of the outer walls of the enlarged building were strengthened by the addition of a massive outer revetment, the irregular, sloping face of which is well preserved

along the west side and along parts of the north and east sides¹ (illus. 305, 306). The only visible break is at the east end, where it sets back to frame the main doorway. Incorporated into the masonry at this point are several blocks from a Hellenistic mausoleum. Whether there were any other, lateral entrances in this period (or indeed in the previous period) there is no means of telling.



Illus. 307. Siret Umm Sellem: West Church, compass-traced cross.

There is one point which suggests that the enlargement and the reinforcement of the building may be contemporary. As commonly in the buildings that were wholly or partly of squared stone construction, the outer corners of the original church were particularly carefully and solidly built.² A little superficial clearance was enough to reveal the south-east corner, whereas no visible trace whatsoever could be found of the corresponding south-west corner. It looks as if this whole corner, together with its chapel, may have been rebuilt when the south wing was added. But one would have to excavate to be sure.

c. Later work

The middle section of the north wall, which may well have been of lighter masonry (cf. Mtaugat, *Section 2* above), has collapsed and has been replaced, slightly off line, by a wall of rough block construction. It is clearly a very late feature, probably after the church had ceased to be used as such.

2. The East Church, illus. 304, 309.

The East Church was a building of about the same size (23m × 15m) as the original West Church and was built very closely up against it, the façades of the two buildings being less than 10m apart (illus. 304). It has been more thoroughly robbed than its neighbour, but what is left suggests that it was from the outset less carefully built. A feature of the parts now most clearly visible, at the east end, is the use of a form of construction with two faces of rather crudely dressed orthostat slabs capped by a levelling course of horizontal slabs. This probably applied only to the lower parts of the walls. Along the south perimeter wall two courses survive above the levelling-course, and these consist, both inside and out, of small coursed blocks.

Although the visible remains are exiguous, the solidly-built eastern apse, two piers of the south arcade (illus. 309) and traces of the three angle-chapels are enough to show that the plan was akin to that of the West Church in its original form, the main differences being the different orientation and the absence, at any rate in the form in which it has come down to us, of any axial entrance (the only entrance now visible is a small door in the north side). It must be remarked, however, that the west end has been strengthened and possibly modified at some second period. The north-west corner can hardly

¹ There is also a quite deep ditch.

² At the north-east corner, one of the east-facing stones has been inscribed with a compass-traced cross (illus. 306, 307).



Illus. 308. Siret Umm Sellem: West Church, south nave colonnade.

have been planned in the form in which one now sees it; and the north-east corner chapel, together with its arched entrance, is almost certainly a rebuild. Like its neighbour, this building too has undergone various changes, but without excavation it is hard to be more precise.

3. The Triconchos Chapel, illus. 304, 310.

Just to the north of the north-west corner of the East Church there are the partly buried, but still recognizable, remains of a small *triconchos* (illus. 310). The interior was about 2m square, with the doorway on the east side (illus. 304). Of the three apses, nothing is visible above ground on the north side; but most of the outline of the western apse can still be traced, and that on the south side still has in place two of the slabs of a slabbed semidome. The roof over the central space was carried on four square orthostat piers set inwards from the four corners. On the analogy of the funeral chapel at Apollonia and of such buildings as the baths at Mgarnes, one may suspect that these carried a concrete central vault.

The position of the respective doorways suggests that this building was in some way associated with the East Church.



Illus. 309. Siret Umm Sellem: East Church, two piers of the south arcade.



Illus. 310. Siret Umm Sellem: Triconch Chapel.

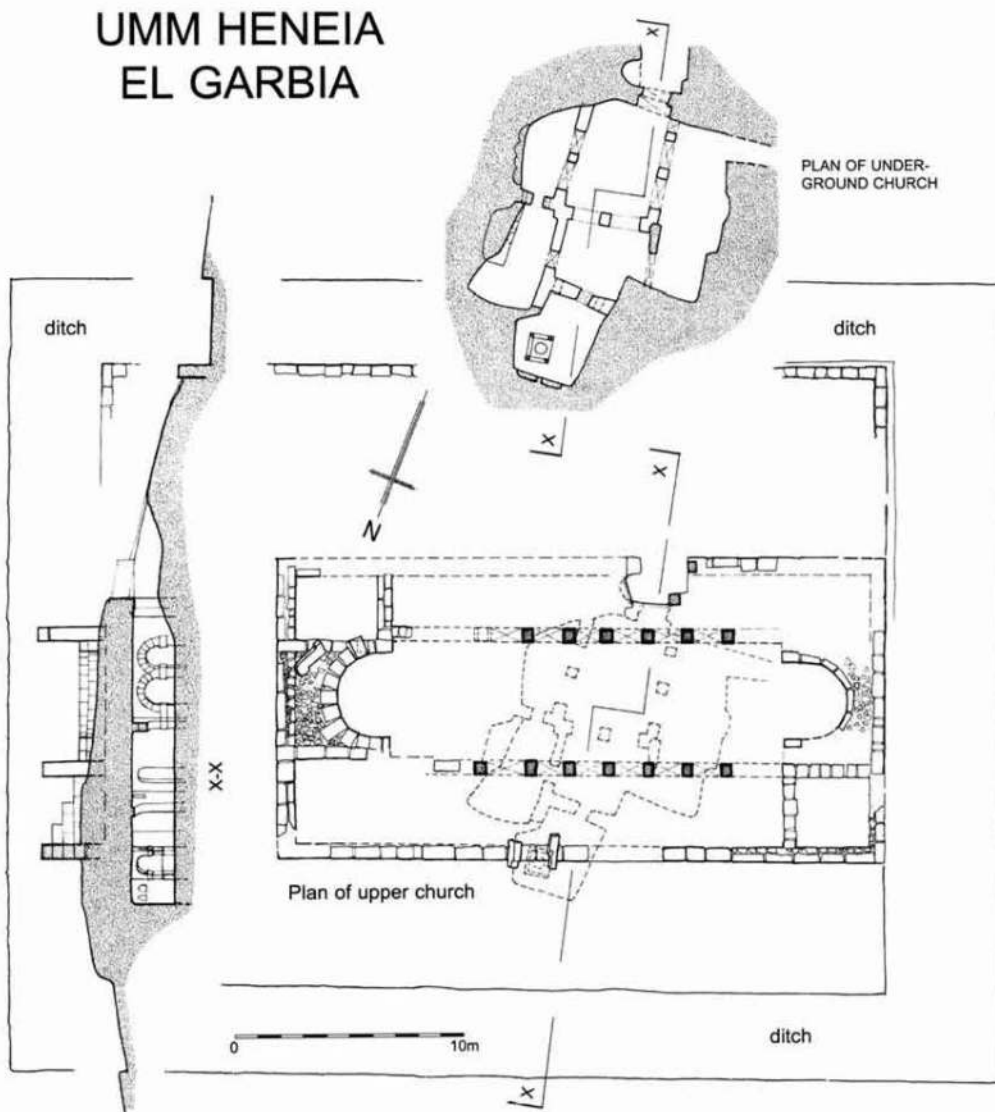
Umm Heneia el Garbia, anc. name unknown, illus. 311-15: Church and *hypogaeum*.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 230, 236; Stucchi 1975, 439-40;
Duval 1989*b*, 2757, 2779.

Discovery

The church was discovered by members of the Department of Antiquities at Shahat in the early sixties, but was not surveyed.



Illus. 311. Umm Heneia el Garbia: the church and the underground complex, measured plan (Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler).



Illus. 312. Umm Heneia el Garbia: the church, west apse and piers of the nave arcade.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins examined and described the church in 1969; Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler surveyed it on the same occasion.

The Site and the Church¹

An unusual church about 3km across country north of the new school on the Gariega road from el Beida to Gernada and about 10km south of Cyrene. It lies on a low ridge with higher ground to the north between two of the eastern headwater-tributaries of the Wadi Kuf, the Wadi Borgu and the Wadi Bu el Meihia. The whole area is now scrub, but immediately to the south and the south-east is a huge field-bank of stone indicating intrusive clearance for cultivation (date unknown).

1. The Church

The church consists of a two-apsed basilica, measuring 14m by 28m, standing within a ditched rectangular enclosure and beneath it, entered from near the middle of the south side, an elaborate underground complex, partly rock-cut, partly built (illus. 311).

The construction throughout is very simple and massive, partly of large blocks of stone of roughly square section, partly of slabs (illus. 313). The outer walls (five courses are visible on the north side, but stretches also on the east and west), are of squared stone with no levelling courses and backed directly by the smaller coursed stones of the inner facing. On the inner face of the south-east angle orthostat-slabs are *in situ*. There is a stretch of the original outer south wall west of the entrance to the cave.

The nave-arcades are partly intact and consist of six squared monoliths each, on one of which is perched a smaller squared stone (illus. 312). There is

¹ Taken from the 1969 notebook; still partly in note form.



Illus. 313. Umm Heneia el Garbia: the church, outer face of perimeter wall.

room for an extra opening (making seven in all) at the west end; but the absence of any responding monolith at this end rather suggests a solid wall forming an elongated respond. At the opposite (east) end it is very hard to tell what happened. There appears to be the seating for an arch *in situ* on the north side, where there was a long respond wall.

The west apse has the south shoulder in place and about half the curve of the apse in the form of the inner orthostat-slabs and levelling-course tumbling out off it (illus. 312). The whole south-west angle is lost under dense scrub; at the north-west angle the line of piers is continued by massive blocks framing the apse. The north-west chapel is filled and featureless, but there are several blocks on the line of the apse-shoulder.

The east apse is relatively shallower. The south shoulder is in place. The two outer walls (defining the angle-chapels) are largely of solid blocks and the rather rough levelling course of the apse rides over them; the inner apse-face below them is of smaller coursed-block masonry. Behind the apse there is about a metre gap to the outer east wall which is here (and here only) mortar-built, with a small-block inner face and upended-slab outer face. Is this a different period fill? There is a 'curtain bracket'² fallen (or re-used and displaced) just south-east of the apse.

In the south-east chapel all four walls are visible (in that to the south only there are orthostat-slabs at the south-east angle. The west wall is a well-built line of orthostat-slabs facing east, with a rough face to the west). Purpose? The east face is of smaller coursed blocks. There is no visible opening.

There was a door near the middle of the north side-wall with one 'curtain-bracket' lying across the wall and one fallen nearby.

2. The underground church

The underground structures consist of a miniature vestibule under the south aisle of the church; a 'courtyard' arcaded on the west, north and east sides, with galleries beyond the arches; an inner chamber off the middle of the north side; and a north-east chamber opening off the east end of the north gallery (illus. 311). The whole interior shows traces of fine stuccoing, now blackened beyond all recognition.

² See *Introduction II, Interior Fitments, Limestone.*

The entrance is a small square vestibule with rock-cut north, east and west walls (shallow recesses to east and west) and a built south wall on the line of the outer wall of the church. A fine door jamb is in place; the rest is blocking. There is no indication how or whether it was roofed.

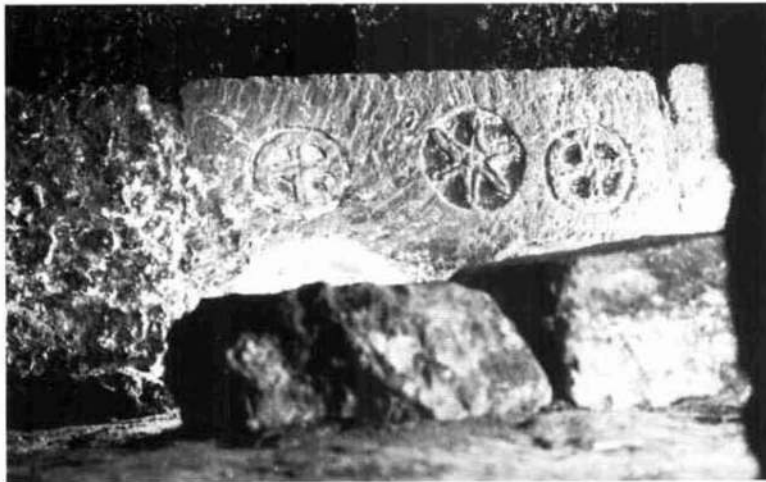
3. The arcaded 'courtyard'

This consists in essence of a rectangular cavern, flat-roofed and supported longitudinally north/south by two pairs of built arches of which the east is standing, the west is largely fallen. The arches consist of projecting rectangular impostes on rectangular piers; voussoirs very awkwardly crowded in without a trapezoidal springer block; and a roughly-packed and mortared fill (much of which has fallen or been picked out—it did little work).

The east gallery is only as long as the central area, being divided from the north-east angle by a well-built arch on the line of the angle-pier. There was a hole in the rock-roof just in front of the central pier of the east range, quite small but widening out sharply. The masonry of the wall above the pier rides up into it; i.e. it is earlier. The east wall has four manger-like recesses though they are too high to be mangers. The west gallery, apart from the odd recess, is featureless except for a narrow passage leading west from the south-west corner and blocked at the far end by fall.

The north gallery is better described as an inner vestibule, separated from the innermost axial room by a built wall with an arched door flanked by two windows (and common rock-roof). The wall dividing it from the north-east chapel is also built—arched to the west and flat-lintelled to the east, with rebates for a wooden door. The west wall is of rock.

The north-east chamber is entered from the inner vestibule and by a low-arched door from the east gallery. The northern part widens out a trifle irregularly, but is featureless. The main feature occupied the southern half of the east wall, opposite the door from the inner vestibule. There the rock is cut back and at the same time a built bench, about 1m high, projects into the room on the line of the east jamb of the door from the east gallery; and built into the middle of this, facing west, the small (45cm) arched openings with, over them, a slab decorated with a central six-petalled flower flanked by two crosses in circles (illus. 314).



Illus. 314. Umm Heneia el Garbia: the church, crosses and star on a block in the north-east underground chamber.



Illus. 315. Umm Heneia el Garbia: the church, baldacchino feature in the underground complex.

The innermost chapel is rock-cut except for the south (entrance) wall and the first stretch of the east wall, beyond which point it widens eastwards to accommodate a *baldacchino*-like feature; which reaches up to the roof as from arches carried on tall chancel posts with capitals rising from four slab-screens (illus. 315); the westernmost has fallen out. Two round-headed recesses high in the north wall are the only other features. The lid of the *baldacchino* (the rock-roof) is hollowed upwards. In the middle of the floor there was a hole, roughly chamfered at the top and then going straight down. It would need excavation but looks like the hole for a reliquary. The whole set-up suggests an altar-canopy, sited so that one could turn and face east.

A striking feature (checked independently by Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler) is how oblique the church is to the substructures, and how little direct support was given to such features as the arcades. This may have been simply miscalculation, but if so it was on a very substantial scale.

Zawiet el Argub, anc. name unknown, illus. 316-22: possible church.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Ward-Perkins 1972, 229; Stucchi 1975, 359, 425, with figs. 437, 438, 439; Roques 1987, 354 (map only); Duval 1989*b*, 2744 (map only).

Discovery

The site was discovered by members of the Department of Antiquities at Shahat in the early sixties, but was not surveyed.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins examined and described the building in 1969; it was surveyed by Sheila Gibson and Margaret Wheeler at the same time.

The Site and the Monument

Fortified building, possibly, but by no means certainly, a church, on the crest of the steep, isolated promontory that projects eastwards from Zawiet el Argub,¹ with which it is linked by a narrow saddle. The position, about 2km north of the modern main road from el Merj to el Beida, is a commanding one, with strong natural defences and wide views northwards and eastwards across the tangled country that forms the middle basin of the Wadi Kuf. The great Byzantine fortress of Gasr Beni Gdem² is clearly visible in the middle distance, 6km away in an east-north-easterly direction.

On the same hill, about 20m to the east, there are the roofless remains of a smaller square building of relatively recent mortared-rubble construction, with a single door in the west side and two piers to support a roof. The recess in the east wall, opposite the entrance, suggests the possibility that this was built as a mosque. The only other traces of habitation are some eroded structures built up against the outer west face of the main building and, down the hill to the north-west, the mouth of a large cistern.

The main ancient settlement lay more than a kilometre away to the west, on and down the far slopes of the ridge of which the Zawiet occupies an eastern spur. On the crest are the remains of a *gasr*, and beyond it, terraced down the slopes at the head of one of the valleys that tumble away south-westwards from the watershed, are the remains of a small town. This is now a scrub-covered tangle of ruins, prominent among them being several standing arches, two upstanding masonry apses, and various wells and cisterns. At the lower edge of the site, towards the valley bottom, there is a small concrete-vaulted bath-building, comparable to that at Mgarnes. Near the middle of the ruins there is an apse at one end of what looks like a rectangular hall. This could be the remains of a church, but without further clearance it would be very rash to claim it as such.³

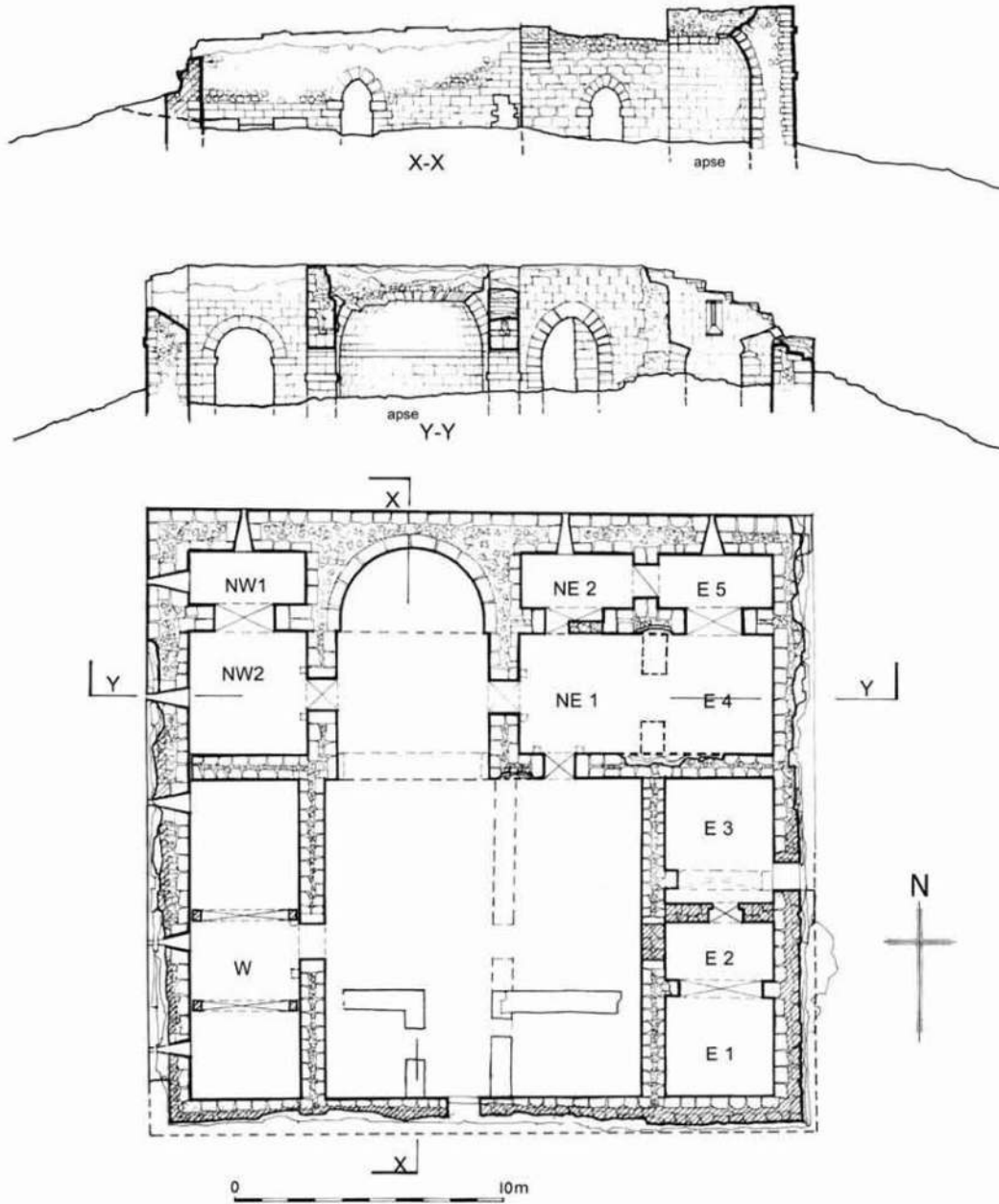
The fortified building was nearly square (23.60m × 24.90m) and almost exactly oriented, with the apse towards the north and the single original entrance in the middle of the south side (illus. 316). (The small doorway in the middle of the east side is a much later addition.) By far the best preserved of

¹ There is a good overall view in Stucchi's fig. 438.

² Not now accepted by all scholars as a fortress: see on this site in *Section 3a*.

³ See also Stucchi 1975, 504 and fig. 526.

ZAWIET EL ARGUB



Illus. 316. Zawiet el Argub: the building, measured plan with numbered rooms (Sheila Gibson).



Illus. 317. Zawiet el Argub: building of controversial purpose, north wall.



Illus. 318. Zawiet el Argub: building of controversial purpose, west wall.

the outer walls is that towards the north (illus. 317), which is standing in places 24 courses (about 5.50m) high. It is faced with dressed limestone blocks, laid in courses 0.20-0.25m high, two of which (courses 11 and 19 above ground level) are slightly projecting levelling-courses. The remaining coursing, though by no means perfect and involving here and there small stepped adjustments, is generally good and suggests that the stone was quarried expressly for this building. The same external masonry can be followed almost the entire length of the west wall (illus. 318) and half way down the east wall, but only at the north-west corner is it preserved to anything like the same height. One must envisage the exterior of the building as a fortified rectangular box, relieved only by the string courses, by the narrow slit windows and by the single doorway in the middle of the south side.



Illus. 319. Zawiet el Argub: building of controversial purpose, apsed room.

The inner face, here and throughout the building, was constructionally very similar, though built independently and in places using somewhat smaller blocks. The structural independence of the two faces was common practice, but in this instance one can see how greatly it facilitated construction, allowing for the insertion of such features as the numerous doors and springing mouldings without interrupting the simple rhythm of the outer face. It is significant in this respect that all the windows were sited between the two levelling courses. The thickness of the outer wall was about 1.60m. Between the two faces, the individual stones of which were not of uniform depth, there was a core of heavy rubble, set in mud, and there was a similar filling over the only surviving vault, that of the apse (visible in *illus. 319*).

The thickness of the interior walls was 0.80-0.90m, except for those flanking the 'chancel', which are about 1.15m. Of these interior walls, that between the west range and the two smaller rooms at the north-west corner is straight-jointed against the outer wall, and the relationship of the original structure of the east wall of the west range with the south outer wall is uncertain. Otherwise all the walls projecting inwards from the outer wall can be seen to have been of one build with it. It is only in the central and south-western sectors that there is any serious doubt about the original lay-out.

There are three windows in the north side, two and remains of three more in the west side; towards the east and south the original walls are not preserved to a sufficient height for them to have left any trace. All are of the same form, narrow slits externally, set high in the wall and splaying inwards and downwards (*illus. 320*).

The apse and 'chancel' (the walls of which are proportionately thicker) were certainly vaulted. The remaining rooms seem to have had wooden roofs, the necessary timbers for which, up to 4.5m span, would have been available locally in the valleys of the Wadi Kuf basin. The total absence of any trace of roof-tiles confirms what is in any case highly likely, namely that the roof was terraced. There is no sign of a staircase, but wooden steps would have been quite sufficient.

In order to simplify the detailed description of the interior, and at the same time to avoid prejudging the question of its use, the account that follows is made in terms of the numeration of the rooms given in illustration 316. It will



Illus. 320. Zawiet el Argub: building of controversial purpose, view of a window from the inside.

start with the northern part of the building, the main lines of which are not in any doubt; this will be followed by the remaining eastern and western ranges, respectively; and finally the south-central area, where the remains now visible leave considerable room for doubt whether this part of the building was partitioned symmetrically about the axis established by the apse and 'chancel', or whether it was an open courtyard roughly symmetrical about the south door.

The apse and 'chancel'

The apse was very slightly narrower than the 'chancel' and very simple in design, the masonry of the semidome rising directly from the walls without any intervening string course and resting directly against the rear face of the frontal arch (illus. 319). The space above the vault was filled with clay-packed rubble. The 'chancel', almost exactly square, was considerably taller than the apse. Towards the south it was delimited by a massive 'triumphal arch', of which the spring, a chamfered block, was about a metre above that of the apse; and although one might have expected the 'chancel' to have been barrel-vaulted at or just above this height, the side walls in fact continued upwards for another four courses. At this level one can still see on the west side the spring of this vault, which has fallen, leaving exposed the crude inner facing of the upper part of the wall separating the 'chancel' from room NW2.

The north-west rooms (NW1 and NW2)

This corner of the building is well-preserved, internally as well as externally. NW1 was entered from the 'chancel' by a small arch (9 voussoirs), with a pair



Illus. 321. Zawiet el Argub: building of controversial purpose, door from 'chancel' into Room NE1.

of 'curtain-brackets' flanking it on the inner face,⁴ and a larger arch (15 voussoirs) led into NW2 (illus. 320). In common with all the other arches of this first period, there is a plain or simply-chamfered block at the point of spring. For some reason which is not now apparent the south wall of NW1 is straight-jointed against the outer wall, but all the other corners of both rooms are fully bonded. NW1 has one window, NW2 two, all of the form described above. There are considerable remains of plain white plaster in NW2.

The north-east rooms (NE1 and NE2, E4 and E5)

There is some doubt whether there was a partition wall between NE1 and E4 (on balance, the rubble piled high on the floor and the vertical break in the facing of the upstanding north wall suggest that there was), but otherwise, though not so well preserved as the corresponding north-west rooms, the main lines are clear enough. This was an independent suite of interconnecting rooms, accessible only through two arched doorways (illus. 321), both of which have pairs of 'curtain-brackets' on the inner face. The surviving angles are all bonded except for the lower part of the north end of the partition wall between NE2 and E5—an unusually clear reminder that such joints may represent no more than constructional convenience. The wider arch between E4 and E5 has fallen, but the spring of it is still in place.

There are windows in the north wall of NE2 and E5 (the east wall has been destroyed to below window-level), and NE2 retains much of its wall plaster. At some late date the south door of NE1 was wholly, and that from NE1 to NE2 partly, blocked.

The east wing (E1-3)

Though not nearly so well preserved as the northern part of the building (the outer facing has gone completely and the interior has been considerably modified by later occupation), the main lines of the original lay-out of the southern part of the east side are still clear. This was built as a hall of three

⁴ *Introduction II, Interior fittings, Limestone.*



Illus. 322. Zawiet el Argub: building of controversial purpose, hall in west wing.

bays, with a single entrance in the middle of the west side. The piers between E1 and E2 are bonded into the walls and stand to a height which suggests that they carried transverse arches. Between E2 and E3 there is the stub of a similar pier against the west wall, but the corresponding east pier was destroyed when at some later date a narrow doorway with a wooden lintel was cut through the east wall.

Other later features are the blocking of the west door, and the insertion of a new partition wall with a narrow central doorway, which is partly arched, with moulded (re-used?) springer blocks and elongated voussoirs, and partly roofed with stones laid on wooden slats. The upper parts of the walls of this wing have been extensively restored to an almost uniform height in a masonry that is solid but very much more crudely finished than that of the early building. It is tempting to relate this extensive rebuilding and the spring of a doorway in the east wall with the construction of the small square building a few metres to the east.

The west wing (W)

The outlines of this hall are original, and except for the absence of any sign of its subdivision into three bays, it closely resembled the east wing. There are traces of three windows in the outer wall, and the door in the middle of the east wall is an original feature, with 'curtain brackets' on the inner face.

At some later date this hall was subdivided into three unequal bays by two slender arches, daringly constructed, of elongated voussoirs (illus. 322), and, as in the east wing, the outer walls were made up to a roughly uniform height. There are extensive traces of plastering contemporary with this later work.

The central area

The features of this area that are certainly early are as follows:

1. the shoulders of the arch fronting the 'chancel', together with the eastward extension of this line, including the door, later blocked, that led into NE1;
2. the southern half, the north end, and one jamb of the central door of the wall separating this area from the east wing;
3. the lower part, including the doorway, of the corresponding wall of the west wing (the bond at the south end of this wall is poor, but at the north end, though damaged, it can be seen to have been solidly bonded);
4. the eastern part of the outer south wall. It is possible that the western part has been wholly rebuilt, but if so it has been done very well, reusing earlier masonry and following the earlier line. For the same reasons, although it cannot be demonstrated that the entrance is in its original position, equally there is nothing whatever to suggest that it is not. Within the area so defined, now a tangle of fallen rubble liberally mingled with the evidence of long use as a stable yard, the only features now visible are the bare outlines of a pair of rooms, one on either side of the entrance. The irregular plan, the poor masonry, the fact that they have left no mark on the early walls to east and west, all suggest that these are secondary features, not parts of the original plan.

That this was an official building and that it served also as a fortress can hardly be questioned. Was any part of it also a church? A great deal turns on the character of the central area just described. One obvious possibility is that the west wall of the right-hand 'porter's lodge' rests on part of an earlier wall delimiting a nave laid out on the same axis as the apse and 'chancel'. This would give a symmetrical apse-chancel-nave lay-out of fairly conventional type, except that the entrance was off-axis and that the nave itself was not arcaded. The East Church at Gasr el Lebia (*Section 2* above) offers a near-parallel to both these features; and given the many close ecclesiastical analogies to the apse-chancel complex, with its flanking chapels, this would make quite good sense.

An architecturally plausible alternative is that the central area, with or without rooms against the south wall, was an open courtyard, with a series of rooms opening directly or indirectly off it, among them the apsed 'chancel'. This would make excellent sense of the southern half of the plan, with its virtually symmetrical lay-out, and it would explain why there is, relatively speaking, so little piled-up débris within the central area. It would also explain the puzzling and seemingly unnecessary disregard of orientation.

Without excavation one can do little more than state the possibilities. If the second alternative were correct, the apsed structure could well be some sort of an audience hall, with no specifically ecclesiastical significance. The analogy of the 'Palace of the *Dux*' at Apollonia suggests that something of the sort would not have been altogether out of place in a building which represented the re-establishment of imperial authority in the interior of the Pentapolis.⁵ That it served as a chapel is also possible, though this would seem *prima facie* less likely in view of its disproportionate size.

⁵ It is not clearly demonstrated that 're-establishment' was involved.

The other alternative would imply a church that was not only official in character but was from the outset designed to serve also as a fortress. That some of the churches in Cyrenaica (e.g. at Ptolemais), were built with the requirements of defence in mind, and that many others came in time to be fortified, is not in doubt. There is no other known instance where the military and ecclesiastical requirements were quite so equally balanced, but in a situation where military, civil and ecclesiastical considerations were so intimately interwoven one would hesitate to exclude such a possibility.⁶

On balance it would seem to the writer that this was a fortress and rather doubtfully a church. Only excavation could decide. In the long list of sixth-century Cyrenaican buildings awaiting exploration and consideration, this one takes a high place.

⁶ Stucchi suggested that the building might be a monastery.

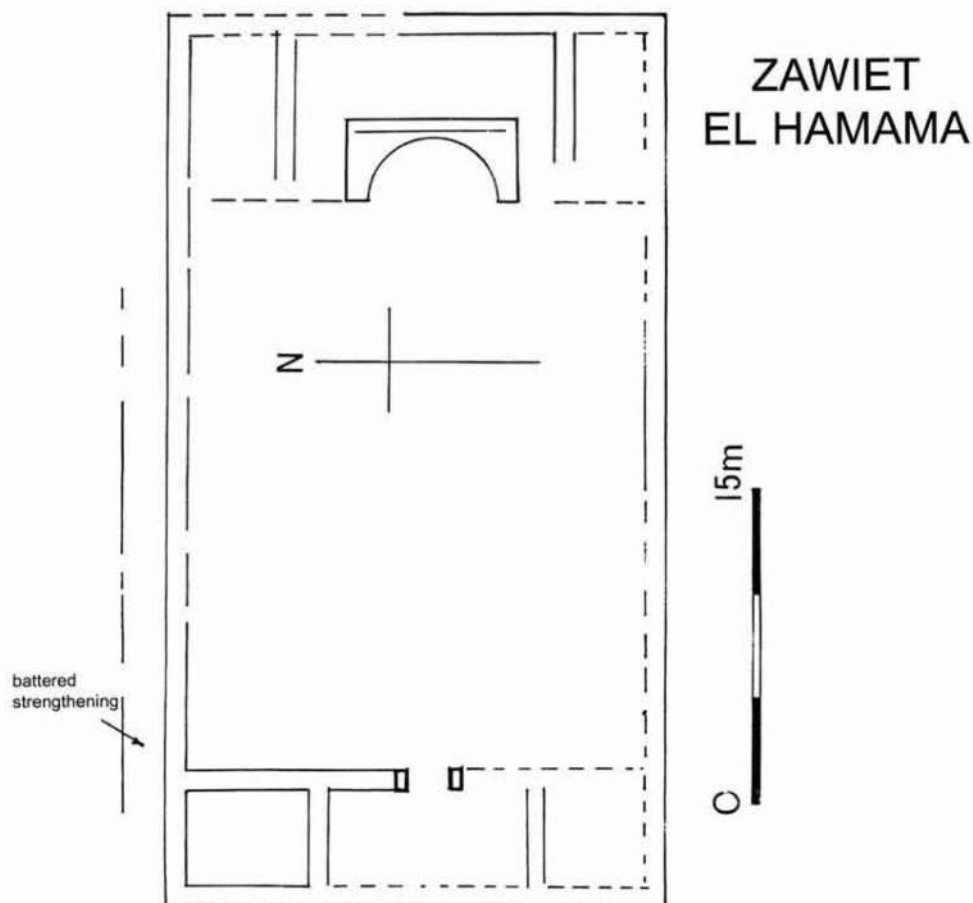
Zawiet el Hamama, anc. Phycous, illus. 323, 324: church.

Bibliography

(Ps.) Skylax 108; Strabo VIII.5.1, XVII.3.20; Mela I. 7; Lucan *Phars.* IX.36; Pliny *NH* IV.60, V.32; *Stad.* 53; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.3; Amm. Marc. XXII.15.2; Syn., *Epp.* 53, 101, 114, 129, 132 (with Roques 2000 *ad locc.*); Hamilton 1856, 85-9; Smith/Porcher 1864, 61-2; Goodchild 1952*a*, 150-1 = 1976*a*, 152; 1976*a*, 240-2, 249-50; Jones/Little 1971, 73f.; Flemming 1972, 115-8; Ward-Perkins 1972, 235; Stucchi 1975, 362 (listing only); Purcaro 1976, 344; Roques 1987, 99-101; 1996*b*; 1999.

Discovery

The site is on the coast, some 25km west of Apollonia and *c.* 24km north-west of Cyrene as the crow flies (longer by road): for the territory of Cyrene it was a port of some significance (especially, no doubt, after Apollonia became an independent city), and certainly an active one in Synesius' lifetime. A survey of the settlement as a whole, made by D.J. Smith and P.A. Titchmarsh in 1950, revealed traces of what seem to be warehouses, dwelling-houses, and tombs, as well as roads leading to Balagrae and probably Cyrene; for the harbour installations see Flemming 1972. Euoptius, brother of Synesius, had a house and garden there.



Illus. 323. Zawiet el Hamama: the church, sketch plan (Sheila Gibson from Ward Perkins' notebook).



Illus. 324. Zawiet el Hamama: the rubble of the church in the foreground.

Historical context

The site has been known since the middle of the nineteenth century; but the identification of a possible church was first made by members of the Department of Antiquities at Shahat in the later sixties. It has not been surveyed.

Ward-Perkins' programme

Ward-Perkins examined, sketched and briefly described the building in 1969, but did not write up his notes, and never arranged for it to be surveyed.

The Church¹

Massive remains of a large though much ruined church (illus. 323, 324) at the southern extremity of the large ancient site on the west side of the bay of Zawiet el Hamama, opposite the small village and mosque. The ruins are those of a large church with an eastern apse (42.75m from east to west × 23.50m from north to south), on a site that slopes gently eastward. Not surveyed, but examined briefly and a few overall measurements taken.

The building was rectangular and consists now of the massive heaped outlines of the two long sides, a fallen heap across the east end and a very massive heap at the west end. Out of this peep the almost complete outer contours of the building, mostly in good squared-stone build, but some stretches of two faces of smaller stones; also the south corner of the east apse *in situ*, and some slightly shifted blocks of the rest of the radius; also the square framing of the apse. Other features at the east end are two longitudinal walls, well out from the flanks of the apse; on the south a levelling-course; on the north two-faced small blocks.

At the west end are the two jambs of a central door between what look like two two-storeyed angle-rooms enclosing a vestibule—the north/south cross wall is quite clear over most of its length. This end was lofty and has collapsed in an impressive heap.

The central area is, by contrast, a striking open space, with no trace of arcades. Can it have been colonnaded with marble columns, since robbed?

There was certainly battered strengthening on the north side and probably on some or all of the other sides. Various features seem to have projected northwards from the north wall.

¹ Preliminary notes only, taken from the 1969 notebook.

Section 3

Rural sites on the Gebel Akhdar
where Christian antiquities not visited by Ward-Perkins
are reported or conjectured

a. Identified by modern place-names

Ain Giargiarrumah, anc. name uncertain, possibly Ausigda (*Section 3*): church.

Bibliography

Abdussaid *et al.* 1981, 24-6, site no. 4 (in Arabic).

There are two sites so named, one on the north-western bank of the Wadi Giargiarrumah, the second to the north of that near the mouth of the wadi and close to the sea, the second site comprising two sections separated by a ditch. On the higher south-western section of this second site traces of a church were found by Abdussaid *et al.* It has the apse at the west end (*c.* 5m across the chord; walls *c.* 0.65m thick) and an entrance visible at the east end. In what survives of the walls the stones are unevenly dressed. On their inner face at the east end traces of wall-painting are reported.

Ain Mara, anc. name unknown, possibly Hydrax (*section 3b*).

Asgafa. See Beit Thamer below.

Beit Thamer (Tammir, Thiarma, Ammer), anc. name unattested, possibly Palaibiska (*section 3b*): church.

Bibliography

Beecheys 1828, 468-9; Barth 1849, 475; Hamilton 1856, 110; Smith/Porcher 1864, 61; Haimann 1882, 84; De Martino 1908, 89; Bertarelli 1929, 474; Halbherr 1910 *ap.* Oliverio 1931; Goodchild 1952*a*, 150 = 1976*a*, 154, n. 29; Reynolds 1971, 47-9; Jones/Little 1971, 76; Stucchi 1975, 503; Bacchielli/Reynolds 1987, 491; Bacchielli 1993, 104-7; 1998; Roques 1987, 104; Abdussaid 1996.

Ancient settlement, *c.* 40km east of Cyrene (*section 1*), *c.* 3km east of el Gubba, *c.* 8km west of Ain Mara (both below) and *c.* 10km south of the coast at el Atrun (*section 2*), on a low hill surrounded by fertile land with a spring at the foot of the hill. Traces of an ancient road have been reported in the area, and ruins of a fort, of late houses (one with an ogival arch upstanding). Oil-presses and many rock-cut tombs are to be seen, among them the Asgafa tomb (Tomba di Edipo) with wall-paintings (which include mythological scenes) dated by Bacchielli in the fourth century AD, and several with funerary busts whose facial characteristics are generally held to be Libyan. Clearly the population combined Greek, Roman and Libyan traditions. A boundary stone shows that in the Ptolemaic period there was a royal estate here, which later became the property of the Roman people. The case originally made by Goodchild for identifying it with the Palaibiska of Synesius *Epp.* 66, supported by Roques, Abdussaid and Bacchielli, is attractive but not proven.

The church

(based on Abdussaid's illustrated account and a reference in Bacchielli 1998).

The church, which is a few hundred metres from the Asgafa painted tomb (Bacchielli 1998), is a three-aisled basilica built of local stone, with three apses at the west end, and piers dividing the nave from the aisles. Their capitals are pleasingly carved with decoration based on leaves and flowers, surely by local craftsmen; the lintel of a door lying among rubble towards the east end is similarly carved with reliefs of a cross within a circle at the centre and motifs, some based on vegetation, others geometrical, on either side, and on the moulding below. In the area of the altar there are several monolithic limestone columns, presumably from a canopy. Along the north outer wall there is a sloping revetment.

Bersis, anc. name unknown: a church has been claimed but is not proven.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 188; Beecheys 1828, 349; Hamilton 1856, 152; Bertarelli 1929, 85; Stucchi 1975, 398, 403-4, 423, 426 with fig. 405.

Site on the coastal plain *c.* 98km east of Benghazi, 6km west of Tobra, and *c.* 3.5km from the sea on the south side of the main modern east/west road across Cyrenaica. Several early travellers noted wells here and ruined buildings in their neighbourhood, post-classical as well as classical, naming them variously Mabli and Nabli, as well as el Bersis and Bir Shish; and the Beecheys, on grounds of homophony, wrongly identified it with the Neapolis of Ptol. *Geog.* IV.7.5. After inspection, they thought it impossible to plan any of the buildings visible without serious excavation, and since there has never been excavation it continues to be uncertain whether any of them was a church. Neither Ward-Perkins nor Goodchild included it in their lists of churches; but Stucchi thought it to be one.

On a visit made in 2000 in company with Yussuf ben Nasser of the Department of Antiquities, Benghazi, and of Ali Salem Letrik, Reynolds noted:

1. near the *marabout* of Sidi Abdul Wahat, a precinct wall of rough build (not necessarily ancient) surrounding an approximately rectangular mound.

2. on the mound a rectangular structure (the interior partly uncovered) with outer walls *c.* 1.20m thick and, where clearly visible (on the west side), rather rough in the lower levels, but of good ashlar-type masonry above; no door of entry was seen. Internally two storeys seemed to be distinguishable. In the lower one, there are two quite narrow arches, at right angles to the east wall, upheld on the east by piers set against it; in the upper one broader arches, (a) two over approximately the south-western half of the rectangle, (b) one over the north-eastern half, (c) one west of, and approximately at right angles to, (b). This does not wholly correspond to Stucchi's description, no doubt because more is now uncovered than at the time of his visit. On several of the arches, letters and other signs have been lightly cut (but Reynolds distinguished no words). They seem to include two crosses and a clear *alpha*, but may be comparatively modern tribal marks rather than ancient graffiti (as at the nearby site of Tansoluk; see below).

3. west of this mound, low walls of a number of other buildings overgrown with vegetation, traces of a large cistern and another mound (ditched) carrying a circular structure whose walls were revetted at the lower level but, as with the rectangular structure, of ashlar-type masonry higher up. This may be what Stucchi noted as *c.* 100m east (presumably a slip of the pen) of the rectangular building, and described as about 8m in diameter and reinforced later by an encircling wall *c.* 4.00m thick. He thought that it might be a campanile or (see his p. 426) a round baptistery. This is undoubtedly a site of importance; the obvious remains suggest a small town or large village with a fort or forts, but on the evidence available there is no demonstrable church.

Bu Gseir, anc. name unknown: church, possibly church furniture.

Bibliography

Shahat Departmental Archive, 1960.

Settlement *c.* 7km west of el Merj, beside the main east/west road across Cyrenaica, where a well-built structure, probably a church, was visible in 1960 when it was visited by Reynolds with Goodchild. It may be the source of some of the church furniture which was once stored in the Barce Lapidarium (see el Merj, section 2).

Bu Huwata, anc. name unknown: Christian tomb.

Bibliography

Shahat Departmental Archive, 1966.

Site *c.* 20km east of Cyrene, near Mghernes; a rock-cut tomb is reported with a cross on its façade above the door.



Illus. 325. Buma el Garbia: the church, underground complex, unmeasured sketch (Susan Walker).



Illus. 326. Buma el Garbia: the church, apse.



Illus. 327. Buma el Garbia: the church, north-east corner and buried arches.

Buma el Garbia (Boumnah), anc. name unknown, illus. 325-30: church.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 130 (but the Pl. XXV, fig. 5 referred to there is not obviously relevant); Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1495 with fig. 6.

Hill-top village in fertile rolling country c. 4km south of the main east/west road at Tert, c. 1km west of Buma esch Shargia and 1km south of Refaa (both below). There are a number of oil presses in the neighbourhood. The major visible building seemed to Pacho to be a fort, but when rediscovered by the Department of Antiquities at Shahat it became clear that it is a small basilical church with inscribed apse at the west end (illus. 326), the walls of the rectangle being constructed of dressed blocks with a rubble packing (illus. 327). Very little of the interior organisation is discernible but there is a fallen arch of the north nave-arcade near the apse and two arches, buried almost to their keystones, are visible in illus. 327. The most striking feature is a set of underground chambers, partly rock-cut and partly built, entered originally by a staircase (now blocked) from the middle of the church (illus. 325). In the main chamber a central rock-cut pier upholds the roof (illus. 328); an inner room contains three rock-cut sarcophagi, each approached through a rock-cut arch (illus. 329). Pacho also recorded here two columns between which was a conical opening closed by a conical stone, a rock-cut corridor of the height of a man leading from the main room, clearly another route of entry and



Illus. 328. Buma el Garbia: the church, underground complex, rock-cut pier upholding roof in main chamber.



Illus. 329. Buma el Garbia: the church, underground complex, arched approaches to rock-cut sarcophagi.



Illus. 330. Buma el Garbia: the church, block with incised crosses.

exit; these were not observed when Reynolds, Walker, Bird and Dobias-Lalou visited it in 1996 with Fadel Ali Mohamed and Abdulghader al-Muzzeini; but an adequate exploration of the underground features needs a much longer stay than ours.

Under the north-west corner of the church there is a cistern.

At the west end, outside the building, Fadel Ali Mohamed found a rough block of local stone (illus. 330) crudely carved (with cursive *alpha* and angular *omega*):

A cross Ω cross

Buma esh Shargia, anc. name unknown: church.

Site about 1km east of Buma el Garbia, now in a military zone and not accessible. Fadel Ali Mohamed reports a church.

Burkab, anc. name unknown: Christian tomb.

Bibliography

Mohamed, forthcoming.

3-4km north-west of Cyrene in the Luseita, on the top of a rocky knoll into which a chamber tomb has been cut. On the surface is a large flat stone on which a plain cross has been incised. Within the tomb there are at least three *arcosolia*, but in a brief check no Christian symbols were seen during a visit by Reynolds and Monica Zecca with Fadel Ali Mohamed in August 1997.

El Beida, anc. Balagrae. See Siret Gasrin el Giamel (below).

El Gubba (Qubbah); ancient name controversial, Kelida and Limnias have been proposed: church furniture.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 109, 117-8, with pl. X.XI.1,2; Hamilton 1856, 107-8; Smith/Porcher 1864, 59; Oliverio 1933, 121, with figs. 87-89; Stucchi 1975, 362, n. 16 referring to an unpublished ms. of Ghislanzoni; Laronde 1987, 306-8; Roques 1987, 105, 117, 355.

Well-watered site in fertile country some 44km east of Cyrene on the main east/west road, at a meeting-point of ancient routes leading (a) from el Beida to Derna, and (b) northwards from Ain Mara and Chaulan. Laronde argues that it was probably ancient Kelida (Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.7), Roques puts a case for Limnias (*Itin. Ant.* 68.2; traditionally identified with Lamluda); conclusive evidence is not available. Its most notable antiquity now is a fountain-house visible from the road; but earlier there were substantial remains on the hill above, attesting settlement at least from the Hellenistic period; among these a column, column capitals and a chancel screen (probably of stone, but this is not quite clear) appear to indicate the existence of a church. Decoration of the screen features a monogram cross in a circle with *alpha* and *omega* twice (Oliverio 1933 pl.88); it should perhaps be dated in the sixth century.

Gabu Yunes (Ghabou Diounis in Pacho), anc. name unknown: possible church.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 156 with Pl. XXI; Hamilton 1856, 105; Smith/Porcher 1864, 59; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 57; Stucchi 1975, 395, 396, 467-80, 543; Laronde 1987, 294, 304; Roques 1987, 118, 404.

Settlement near the edge of the upper plateau, just north of the modern east-west road, about 2km east of Labragh. It is notable for an upstanding Roman arch (apparently once four-sided), a bath and, to west of it, on the margin of the ancient village, a large building surrounded by a ditch which was interpreted by Hyslop/Applebaum as a fort, but by Stucchi as a church. Stucchi described arcades defining five aisles, traces of an apse at the west end of the intermediate aisle on the south side (implying at least three apses in all, he believed) and probably a door in the east side; for the five aisles he compared his east church at Mgarnes (section 2); it could perhaps be a late Byzantine or Arab bath building rather than a church, but without excavation its character remains uncertain.

Gasr Asceisc, anc. name unknown, illus. 331, 332: Christian fortified building.

Site about 12 km west of Ptolemais where the Wadi Asceisc issues from the lower escarpment making for the sea at Greved Sidi Nur ed Din some 2 km away. The *gasr* is well-built in ashlar masonry. At one corner both walls have been inscribed with crosses (illus. 332). A fallen pilaster-capital was also observed (plate 255). The *gasr* was visited and briefly surveyed by D. J. Smith during R. G. Goodchild's expedition to Roman Libya in 1951, but never published.



Illus. 331. Gasr Asceisc: crosses on corner walls of fortified building.



Illus. 332. Gasr Asceisc: pilaster capital fallen from fortified Christian building.

Gasr Ataquat, anc. name unknown; church.

Site of a church recorded on a map in Ward-Perkins' files (the names written in his own hand); west of Gubba and a little south of the main east/west road. Not visited.

Gasr Bandis, anc. name unknown, illus. 333-37: church furniture, mosaic floor.**Summary of findings by Fadel Ali Mohamed and Reynolds.****Bibliography**

Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1492-4, with figs. 4, 5; Mohamed forthcoming.

Hill-top village some 5km south of el Beida as the crow flies, in an area of intensive agricultural exploitation apparent from the dams constructed across the wadis to prevent loss of earth from winter floods. Around a central *gasr* there are traces of simple dwelling-houses, a small bath-building, as many as seven cisterns, numerous presses for olives and grapes together with vats, and a partially excavated mosaic floor (illus. 333-35 and inscription no. 1 below), which seems likely to be that of a church or other ecclesiastical building of the sixth century AD. The finds reported include also a small limestone column made in one piece with its capital (illus. 336) and an inscription (illus. 337 and inscription no. 2 below), a slab of marble suggestive of a chancel screen (found in association with the mosaic), parts of two marble chancel posts, coins, a little glass, some late Roman pottery, and animal bones. A modern village overlies the ancient one and complicated the small excavation carried out by the Shahaat Department of Antiquities in 1976.

Inscriptions

1. The mosaic (on which we are very grateful for advice from Dr Dimitri Michaelides) consists of rows of three panels, each 1m square, and each surrounded by borders filled with looped circles, much in the manner of the mosaic in the nave of the East Church at Gasr el Lebia (section 2) but less well executed. It was found *c.* 1m below modern ground level; and below it was a layer of whitish cement whose thickness varies from 0.10 to 0.20m, in which the tesserae had been set. It appears from the excavator's report that the mosaic floor was the first and, in fact, the only floor of the building. Three rows of panels (all to some extent damaged) were fully uncovered and a fourth partially so, before adverse weather conditions forced the excavators to conclude their work and cover what they had discovered.

The scheme appears to begin up against a wall at the east end of the building and develops in the westerly direction; but the panels were meant to be viewed from the west. In row 1 at the east end both side-panels show a man, apparently dark-skinned, wearing a headdress (different for each), and with at least one arm bare; the man on the left faces rightwards and holds a tiger, the man on the right faces leftwards and holds a spotted beast, probably a leopard; above, in each case is the word ΕΙΝΔΟC, *Indus*; in the central panel a striped animal (? another tiger) is shown prancing rightwards.

Indus is presumably the description of the man, or men, meaning 'the Indian', whether used as an ethnic or as a personal name. While there may be a reference to shows of wild



Illus. 333. *Gasr Bandis*: probable church, mosaic panel of man with leopard.

animals, or to fights with them in the arena, as productive of delight (for the continuance of wild beast fights in arenas during the reign of Justinian see Roueché 1993, no. 44), the images are likely to derive originally from representations of the Triumph of Dionysus (cf. the mosaic in the House of Dionysus at Paphos, Kondoleon 1995, 190-221, especially fig. 120).



Illus. 334. Gasr Bandis: probable church, mosaic panel of the male donor.



Illus. 335. Gasr Bandis: probable church, mosaic panel of female donors.

In the second row, panel 1 shows a cock with two hens; panel 2 (badly damaged) (illus. 334) a man facing leftwards, holding a basket (? of fruit) in his right outstretched hand and hauling an animal (? a lamb) with the other. Panel 3 (illus. 335) presents two women; the one in the central position, older and larger, rather grandly dressed, bejewelled (her long pendent earrings are striking) and apparently wreathed, faces leftwards and holds out to the left a round object (damaged) from which hang folds of cloth ending in tassels; the second, smaller and more simply-clad, placed a little behind the first, holds a leafy branch in her right hand and something which seems to be a jar (possibly an amphora) up against her left shoulder; above them is written [οἱ π]ροσφέροντες — those who make offerings.

It is clear that the persons so described are shown with their offerings, and since the participle is in the masculine gender it should not refer only to the two women above whom it is placed, but presumably also includes the male figure in the panel to their left. The word is regularly used of Christian donors. It is unfortunately not wholly clear what is the major offering here—the lady is certainly not holding out the image of a church; on the face of it, all figures present the fruits of the fields.

In the third row, panel 1 shows a horseman with flying cloak who has arrested his horse as it gallops leftwards; an animal gazes up at him, presumably his quarry in expectation of the spear

thrust; panel 2 shows a cow facing rightwards while her calf lies beside her looking up at her; panel 3 shows a lion of some ferocity advancing rightwards.

Of row 4, only a part of panel 1 was uncovered; it showed two long-necked birds facing each other.

The apparently haphazard combination of human and animal scenes on this floor, of ferocious wild beasts and peaceful domesticated ones, recalls the mosaics in the East Church at Gasr el Lebia, while those images which seem to be Dionysiac may be compared with the representation of Pan there. The lower quality of execution could

indicate that at Gasr Bandis the mosaic is later in date; but there is no obvious reason why it should not be the contemporary product of less skilful members of the same workshop.

For the dominant woman under the inscription in row 2, panel 3, there seems to be a parallel in a Christian mosaic found at Jerusalem, which was brought to our notice by Dr. Janet Huskinson; it is usually dated in the sixth century AD (Bagatti 1952, 145-60); for the horseman, although not for the specific scene here, there is one in the nave mosaic of the East Church at Cyrene (Rosenbaum/Ward-Perkins 1980, 118). It seems reasonable to suggest, as a provisional explanation, that a local landowner and his wife were recording a pious donation, and had called upon the services of the mosaic workshop which first became known to us from the East Church at Gasr el Lebia, although the mosaicists employed here were not its most skilful members.



Illus. 336. Gasr Bandis: probable church, limestone column with capital.



Illus. 337. Gasr Bandis: probable church, inscribed column capital.

2. Small limestone column made in one piece with its capital, which is inscribed on two faces, both badly damaged. The letters are roughly cut and irregularly spaced, with lunate *epsilon*, *sigma*, and *omega*:

Face a:

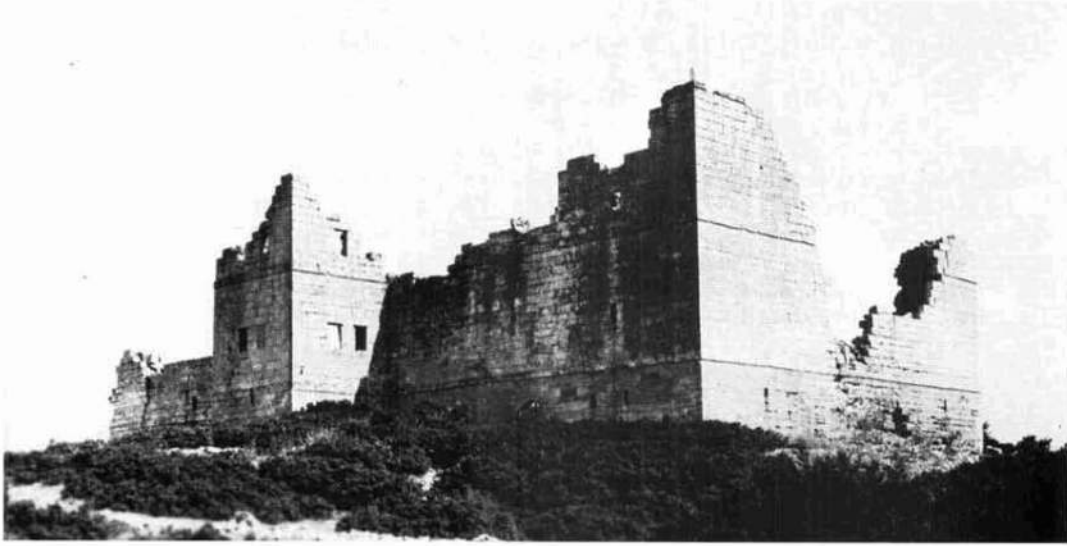
...]βωήθη v. κε[...
 ...]Παύλω[...
 ...]ΩΡΧΑΤΩ[...
 ...]ΚΙΠΩΚ[...
 5 ...]ΚΟΝΤΙΑ[...
 ...]θεῶ καί[...
 ...]COP[.]AA[...
 ...]ΗΤΩ[...
 [...

L.1, probably for [Κύριε] βοήθει, Lord, help [... (but the words may have appeared in the reverse order, κε being for κύριε, not καί), followed by a personal name; the presence of a possible personal name in l. 2 (Paulus) perhaps indicates that help was sought for a list of persons.

L. 7, possibly σοφία as at Siret el Bab (below).

Face b:

...]M[...]IOAC
 ...]A[...]OKΛEC
 [...



Illus. 338. Gasr Beni Gdem.

Gasr Beni Gdem (Migdum), anc. name unknown, just possibly Agriolode or Dinarthison, *illus. 338*: church furniture, possibly a monastery.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 169-71 and plate LXVII; Hamilton 1856, 125; Smith/Porcher 1864, 22 and plate 8; Rohlf's 1871, 172 with fig. 536; Norton 1910/11, plate XXXVI-II; Halbherr 1910 in Oliverio 1931; Fantoli 1923, 117-8; Goodchild 1953, 70-1 and fig. 18 = 1976*a*, 201-2 and fig. 62, plates 68-71; 1966*b*, 239-41 and fig. 5; Stucchi 1975, 422-3 and figs. 429-34; Roques 1987, 107, 379, n. 330; 1996*a*, 425; Reynolds 2000.

Impressive building (*illus. 338*) standing on the east lip of the Wadi Kuf system of gorges, c.15km west of Messa and a little to the south of the east end of the modern viaduct (from which it is visible). A substantial village is reported around it, some of it apparently troglodyte. It has commonly been considered a fort and does indeed make a fort-like impression, with its basic rectangular outline measuring 44m × 23m, two projecting towers one on each of the long sides, great height (still standing three storeys high at some points) and, as far as is known, only one entrance, a little west of the north tower. The outer walls are of double thickness, the existing façades and the towers, perhaps of the sixth century, being built up against pre-existing walls, which were perhaps of the fifth (but there is no specific evidence for either date). The internal arrangements are obscured by fallen material. In 1966 Goodchild reported the discovery of marble chancel-screens, one with a relief of a cross of characteristic sixth-century type, probably imported prefabricated marble pieces, found (so Abdussaid, verbally) to the east of the building near tombs; the present whereabouts of the screens has not been traced. He observed that if the building was a fort it might well have contained a chapel from which these could have derived, but accepted that Beni Gdem and the similar Gasr esh Shahden (some 8km to the south-east) could have been the monasteries of Agriolode and Dinarthison, which Procopius tells us were fortified by Justinian (*de Aed.* VI. ii. 7-8). Roques is not convinced and argues that the location is not sufficiently remote to fit the description in Procopius. It is not, perhaps, necessary to press the meaning of Procopius' words (ἐν ταῖς Πενταπόλεως ἐσχατιαῖς, ἀπερ εἰσι τετραμμένα πρὸς ἀνεμον νότον) too literally in this matter, since the settled area of Pentapolis was nowhere very far extended towards the south; but of course it may be that the monasteries should be sought further southwards. Roques' own suggestion is that the *gasr* is the fortress of Bombaia described by Synesius, *Epp.* 104.

Gasr Biyib, anc. name unknown: church.

Bibliography

Johnson 1973, 101, 119, 126.

Site in the Luseita, south-east of Ras el Hilal and a little west of the modern Lamluda/Hilal road, on an ancient east/west track which joined the ancient Lamluda/Hilal track. Johnson reports a village in a 'superb defensive setting', with a defensive wall, pottery sherds of Greek period and the church.

Gasr Disa. See Ausigda (section 3b).

Gasr el Benia (Baneia, alternatively called Gasr Gaballa), anc. name unknown: church, Christian inscription.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1953, 67-8 and fig. 16 = 1976*a*, 199 and fig. 60; Stucchi 1975, 516, n.4, 517, n.2; Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1496.

Large fortified village overlying a Roman fort, south of el Beida and *c.* 30km east of el Merj, on a hill-top at the junction of several valleys. The village was certainly occupied after as well as before the Arab conquest of Cyrenaica, but the date at which the curtain wall was constructed with re-used material is unclear. Fadel Ali Mohamed reports a church on the hill-top, two marble chancel-posts and a block carrying a Christian inscription. The block (w. 1.20 × ht. 0.20 × d. *c.* 0.35m) was re-used in the defence wall of the settlement; it carries a text, in roughly-formed letters (0.055 - 0.07m in height), with angular *sigma* and *omega*, diamond-shaped *theta*:

θε(ὸς) βοηθῶς *sic* God is our help

Gasr el Gaama, anc. name unknown, but, if part of the settlement at Maaten el Agla (see below), perhaps Kainopolis, illus. 339-41.

Bibliography

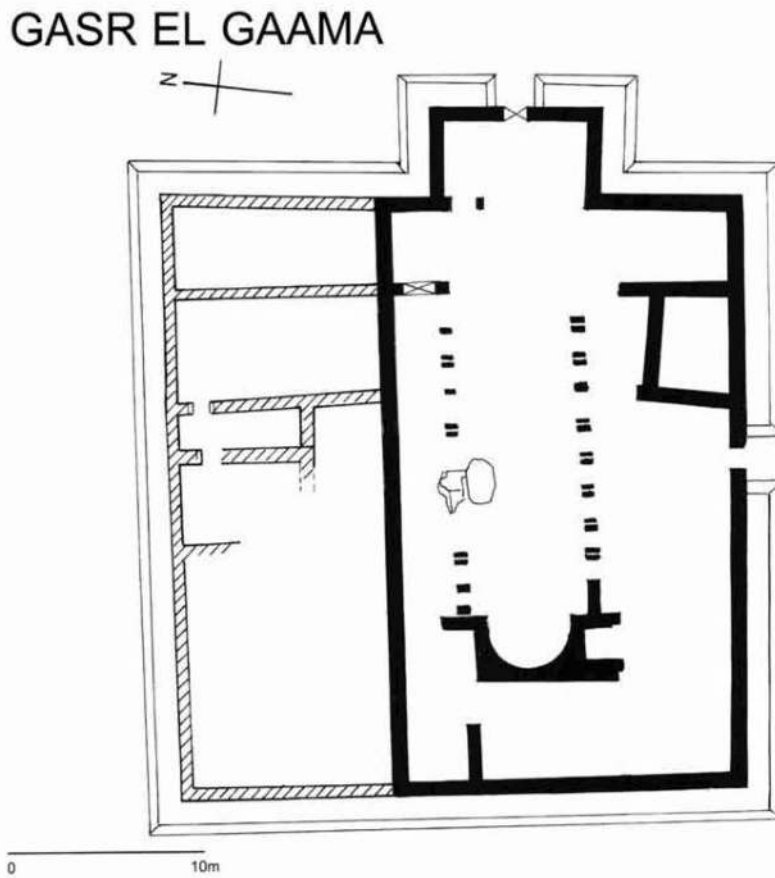
Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Stucchi 1975, 362; Abdussaid *et al.* 1981, 16-19, site no. 1 (in Arabic); Laronde 1983, 77-80, with figs. 5, 7, 8 (treating it as part of Maaten el Agla, without its separate place-name).



Illus. 339. Gasr el Gaama: the church, the south-west wall and revetment.



Illus. 340. Gasr el Gaama: the church, re-used lintel.



Illus. 341. Gasr el Gaama: church and associated building (Sheila Gibson after Said Farag).

Walled hill-top site just to the west of the lower reaches of the Wadi Giargiarrumah, c. 20km north of Gasr el Lebia and 21km west of Hania; just south of and closely associated with the settlement of Maaten el Agla, which is beside a small harbour some 600m away. It is probable that a main ancient road from Cyrene to Barka and Ptolemais crossed the Giargiarrumah here. There is evidence for Greek colonisation in the area at least as early as the fourth century BC, with extensive cultivation of the countryside around. To the south of the main gate in the rampart a rectangular building with west/east orientation was interpreted by Abdussaid as a small temple perhaps converted into a church before the bigger church was built. Near the centre of the site is a precinct c. 41m × 36m containing a rectangular building, 36m × 33.5m, with an inscribed apse at the west end, a narthex and a projection, presumably a porch, 1.25m deep, against the east façade; there is a second entrance in the middle of the south side, whose door lintel, a reused Hellenistic stone probably taken from a tomb, is still in position (illus. 340). Two rows of eight piers, somewhat irregularly spaced, define a nave c. 6.47m wide, on whose floor there are traces of a mosaic pavement made with rather large black and white tesserae. The outer walls have been reinforced by a sloping revetment (illus. 339). Traces of an upper storey are visible on the still-standing vault on the north-eastern side. There are also a number of small structures clearly connected with this church, mostly west and north of it, all in poor condition.

Gasr el Harami, anc. name unknown: church.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 111; Shahat Departmental Archive (report by Abdulghader al-Muzzeini).

Site some 45km east of Cyrene, north-east of Beit Thamer and about 4km south of the main east/west road on the edge of the upper plateau, with a 'fortified church' (presumably this is what Pacho called a fort) near a ditched *gasr*, cisterns and numerous other traces of buildings. An apse at the east end and a nave with two aisles are reported as clearly visible.

Gasr esh Shahden, anc. name unknown, just possibly Agriolode or Dinarthison (section 3b), and if so a monastery.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1953, 71-3 with figs. 19, 20 = 1976a, 201-3 with figs. 63, 64, pl. 73; 1966b, 239-40 with fig. 6; Stucchi 1975, 511, 523, 528, 531, with figs. 546, 553, 554; cf. Roques 1987, 379 n. 330; Reynolds 2000.

Large building with outbuildings, surrounded by a ditch and commonly taken to be a fort, on a hill-top some 8km south of Gasr Beni Gdem, of which it is reminiscent; the third of its building phases may be Justinianic. Goodchild admitted the possibility that it might be one of the two monasteries whose fortification Procopius (*de Aed.* VI. ii. 7-8) attributed to Justinian; the possibility is rejected by Roques (see under Gasr Beni Gdem).

Gasr Gatres, anc. name unknown: chancel fittings.

Bibliography

Fantoli 1923, 88; Goodchild 1966a, 220 with fig. 21; Stucchi 1975, 362 (listing only).

Site c. 11km west of el Merj on a small hill to the south of the main road; along with Roman ruins and an Islamic cemetery, marble chancel fittings were found, and placed in the Barce *Lapidarium* until its dispersal (see el Merj, section 2). They certainly imply the existence of a church.

Gasr Maghah, anc. name unknown: church.

Site recorded as that of a church on a sketch-map in Ward-Perkins' files (the names written in his hand); in the Luseita east of Cyrene in the area of Siret el Bab.

Gasr Sherbin, anc. name unknown, illus. 342: church.

Bibliography

Shahat Departmental Archive (report by Salem Hussein, Salem Suleiman, and Abdulghader al Muzzeini).

Site in the Luseita of Cyrene, some 16 km north-west of the city, where a church, a *gasr* and a bath-building have been recognised. The church has an inscribed apse at the west end and a buttress along the west wall. Marble columns, one with a finely carved cross on its base, and a marble capital, were found nearby (illus. 342).



Illus. 342. Gasr Sherbin: marble column-capital and base, perhaps for a columnar chancel post.

Gasr Sidi el Khadri, anc. name unknown: Christian farmhouse.

Bibliography

Fantoli 1923, 131; Goodchild 1953, 68-9 = 1976a, 199 with fig. 65d; Stucchi 1975, 518 with fig. 54.

Site some 9km south-east of el Merj and about 2km south of the main road from el Merj to el Beida. Described in 1953 as one of the numerous fortified farmhouses in the cultivable valleys close to the edge of the escarpment which overlooks the plain of el Merj. On one of the corners is a carefully cut cross, suggesting a sixth-century date.

Gasr Stablous, anc. name unknown, illus. 343: reliquary chest.

Bibliography

Ward-Perkins 1976, 288.

On the upper plateau south-east of Gasr el Lebia and near the modern town of Omar Mukhtar. It is the findspot of a marble reliquary chest (illus. 343) comparable to that from the Palace Chapel at Apollonia/Sozusa. The chest is now in Cyrene Museum (1998).



Illus. 343. Gasr Stablous, reliquary chest.

Gasr Uertig, anc. name unknown, illus. 344-45: Christian inscriptions in a cistern.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1953, 70 = 1976*a*, 200; Mohamed 1992, 53 (with plate);
Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1494.



Illus. 344. Gasr Uertig, view from the fort, showing the cistern and beyond it the semi-desert.



Illus. 345. Gasr Uertig, inscription in cistern.

Hill-top fort *c.* 20km south of Ghegab, near the track which ran south-eastward from Cyrene to the Gulf of Bomba, on the edge of and with a fine view over desert country (illus. 344). Goodchild interpreted it as one in a coherent line of forts defending the southern frontiers of Roman and late antique Cyrenaica. The main structure now visible appears likely to be Arab work, but there are sizeable cut blocks in the lowest courses which are probably re-used from the Byzantine, even the Roman, period.

Beside it Fadel Ali Mohamed has found a rock-cut cistern on whose walls Christian inscriptions (of a type suggesting a probably sixth-century date) have been painted or incised. These consist of:

1. plain crosses
2. *a.* a cross with ICXC in the two upper quarters,

Ι(ησοῦ)Σ Χ(ριστό)Σ	Jesus Christ
--------------------	--------------
- b.* a cross with ICXC in the two upper quarters and NI KA in the two lower quarters,

Ι(ησοῦ)Σ Χ(ριστό)Σ	Jesus Christ
νικᾶ	triumphs
- c.* a cross with XA ΠΙCΘY in the two upper quarters,

Χάρις Θε(εο)ῦ	the grace of God
---------------	------------------
- d.* Illus. 345, a monogram, presumably for Φῶς Light

The formulae are of course common; in the present context the grace of God may be particularly associated with provision of water.

Khedra, anc. name unknown, but Hydrax (section 3b) has been suggested: rock-cut cross reported.

Bibliography

Halag 1993.

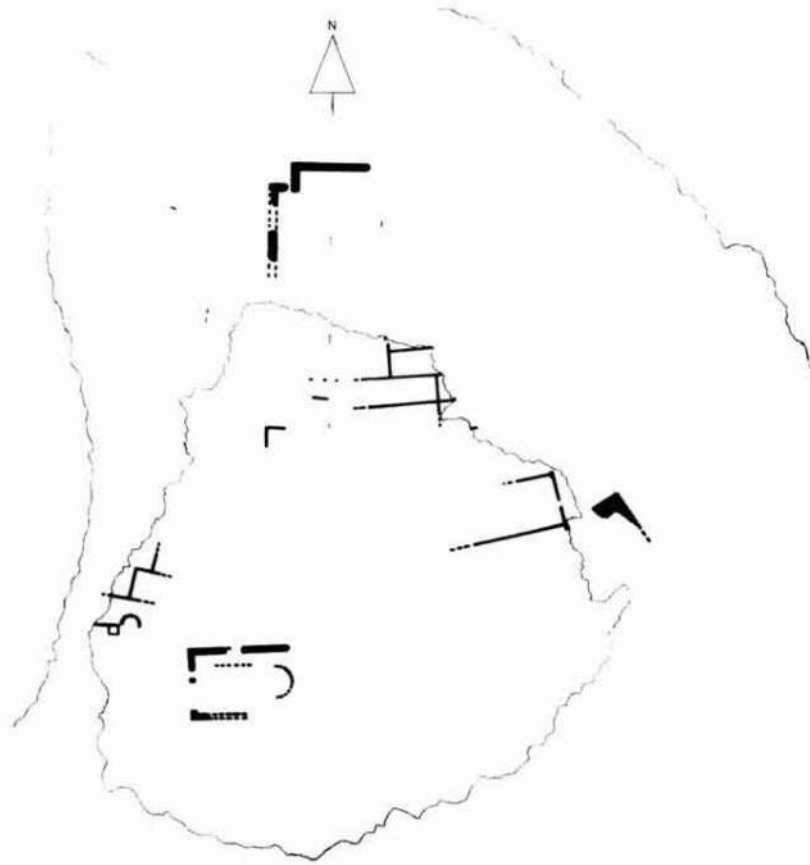
Khedra is *c.* 15km north of Ain Mara and a little south of el Atrun (Erythron) (Section 2), in the Luseita of Cyrene, where there is clear evidence of considerable ancient settlement and cultivation. A notable feature is a cave, two of whose inner walls are decorated with stick-figures of unclear date (perhaps prehistoric). Daoud has also reported an incised cross. He proposes to identify the site with Hydrax (Section 3b) on grounds of homophony. It does, indeed, lie between el Atrun and Ain Mara as Hydrax must have done, but has no obvious remains of a fort, which Hydrax is known to have had.

Maaten el Agla (sometimes Ogla, Ugla, or Augla), anc. name perhaps Caenopolis, illus. 346, 347: church.

Bibliography

Stucchi 1975, 359; Abdussaid *et al* 1981, site no. 2; Laronde 1983, 74-85.

Well-watered harbour-side settlement in an area of intensive ancient agricultural development, a little west of the mouth of the Wadi Giargiarrumah and closely associated with the hilltop site of Gasr el Gaama (see above). There is clear evidence of Greek colonisation and it is probable that the site is on a main ancient route from Cyrene to Barka. There are traces of warehouses and of other buildings including a church (illus. 347) whose rectangular outer wall measures *c.* 15m × 20m, with an inscribed apse at the east end. There is also plentiful ceramic evidence for occupation in late antiquity, but nothing has yet been reported from the period after the Arab invasion. Stucchi identified it with Semeros (*Tab. Peut.*), but this has not been generally accepted; Laronde's proposal of Caenopolis (*Tab. Peut.*) is very attractive, but not absolutely proven.



MAATEN EL AGLA

0 10 20 30 40m

Illus. 346. Maaten el Agla: sketch-plan of site, showing church.



Illus. 347. Maaten el Agla: church.

Narbek, anc. name unknown: church.

Bibliography

Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1495; Mohamed forthcoming.

Rock-cut church found by Fadel Ali Mohamed in 1996 at Narbek, some 5km west of the modern town of Omar Mukhtar, in the region south-east of the Wadi Kuf system of gorges. It is beside a small ditched *gasr* from which it is divided by a track that runs alongside the façade of rock into which it is cut. The neighbourhood has considerable agricultural potential and there are many signs of ancient settlement there.

Visited by Reynolds with Dorothy Thorn and Fadel Ali Mohamed in September 1996. The entry is at present encumbered and obscured by fallen stones, but there were presumably rock-cut steps down to it; from the inside, it can be seen to be a neatly rectangular space with sockets on the east jamb for a wooden door (although some of these could be modern). This entrance (the only one) is in the south side of the church nearer to the west end than to the east, and it is the only source of natural light for the interior.

Within, a rectangular area has been excavated, with a projecting apse at the east end. The rectangular space is divided by a rock-cut arcade into a nave and a single aisle (on the north side), while at the west end there are three inter-communicating rooms, entered by a door in the west wall of the aisle and open to inspection through two approximately square windows in the west wall of the nave. The nave is *c.* 13m long by 6m wide; the aisle of the same length \times width not measured, but approximately 3m; the apse, one step up from the nave, is 0.50m deep \times 2.49m high \times 3.20m across the chord; there is a small niche in the east wall of the nave to the south of the apse. The rooms at the west end were not measured, but seem to run the full width of the church and to be approximately 2m deep.

The arcade is carried on square piers with rather crude capitals. At either end are rectangular doorways giving into the aisle, but the five archways are all blocked by barriers of rock left in position to about one metre above the ground. The widths of the piers and of the arches are variable (arches from the east end, 1.33m, 1.06m, 1.15m, 1.26m, 1.55m; piers 0.63m, 0.75m, 0.73m, 0.82m, the rest not measured). Above the spring of the arch of the third arcade (counting from the apse) Fadel Ali Mohamed observed what appear to be inscribed letters of an inscription which may have preceded the cutting of the arch—at any rate what survives makes no obvious sense (T P Q K P).

The floor is entirely obscured by piles of débris from a long period of use to shelter both humans and animals. Walls and ceiling are blackened with soot but the ceiling of the nave may retain traces of patterned stucco; and on the nave walls a remarkable amount of painted decoration can be seen, although the colours are obscured (rust-red is the most obvious). Thus (1) on the west and south walls a band running immediately below the ceiling, defined below by a horizontal line, contains a row of circles (? wreaths) surrounding motifs, among them compass-traced crosses, Latin crosses and once a star (possibly a *chi rho*, but the top is obscured by a hole); this same scheme of decoration appears above the nave arcade too, but there on a stucco moulding; (2) on the south wall, towards the apse and below the band of circles, a series of rectangular panels is visible, each, as far as can be seen in the dim light, containing two vertical panels of circles linked by criss-crossing lines.

We now know certainly of two rock-cut churches in Cyrenaica, see also Marsa Gabes in Libya Inferior (section 4, b, i); Stucchi reported a third (see below) which we have failed to trace. Also relevant are the underground features below the churches of Messa, Buma el Garbia, Umm Heneia el Garbia (all in section 2) and probably Umm Heneia esh Shargia (see below). We should perhaps consider the possibility that the cave drawn by Pacho, and attributed by his text to Zawiet Marazigh /Massakit (below), and by his plate caption to Aphrodisias, is another. Conscious search for more in rural areas could repay effort; and surveys after clearance of rubbish and if possible soot, are badly needed.

So far there is nothing here which indicates a date for this church. The painted motifs observed are perhaps unlikely to be earlier than the fifth century; but that hardly helps us to set these churches in their place in the history of Cyrenaican church

construction. Rock-cut houses, tombs and sanctuaries are features of Greek and Roman Cyrenaica, and it would not seem unlikely that in many rural areas rock-cut churches were a natural development, and came early in the series. One could suspect that at Narbek a rock-cut tomb for a venerated personage may have been converted into a church; but without serious investigation of the rooms at the west end that is pure guess-work.

Refaa, anc. name unknown, illus. 348-52: Christian fort, possible church.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 130; Mohamed forthcoming.

Hill-top fort a little south of the main east/west road about halfway between Tert and Lamluda. Pacho also records large cisterns there. The fort is built of good ashlar masonry; crosses, probably of sixth-century type, have been carefully cut over the main south-facing gate and at several points on the walls (illus. 348-52). At the foot of the hill, beside rolling fields, is a small settlement in which an apsed building (apse at the east end), very possibly a church (illus. 352), could be seen in 1993, when it was visited by Reynolds, Susan Walker, Susan Bird and Catherine Dobias-Lalou in company with Fadel Ali Mohamed and Abdulghader al Muzzeini.



Illus. 348. Refaa; fort, interior face of wall, including a stone incised with a cross.



Illus. 349. Refaa: fort, arched doorway.



Illus. 350. Refaa: fort, stone with cross on wall.



Illus. 351. Refaa: fort, stone with compass-traced cross.



Illus. 352. Refaa: apse of building, perhaps a church, in the settlement below the fort.

Shariz (Sciahriz, Shehriz), anc. name unknown: possible church.

Bibliography

Halbherr 1910 in Oliverio 1931, 265-8; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 54; Stucchi 1975, 511.

Village site, some 2km south-east of Gasr Beni Gdem, notable for troglodyte houses, cisterns and fort-like buildings. One of these has an apse which suggested to Hyslop/Applebaum that it was a church.

Siret Akreim, anc. name unknown, illus. 353-54: boundary-stone of ecclesiastical property.

Bibliography

Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1488-90, with figs. 1, 2.

Hill-top site between 2 and 3km north-east of Ain Mara and 6km from Bir Tarakenet, found in 1995 by Fadel Ali Mohamed and visited by Reynolds with him in the same year; the two Christian stones were removed to Cyrene Museum. There are the ruins of a small ditched *gasr* at the highest point and signs of extensive ancient occupation around it, including an olive-press, wells, rock-cut cisterns and tombs. A limestone keystone (0.33m × 0.30m × 0.41m) was found on the western side of the built-up area, carved, rather crudely, with a cross in relief (illus. 353). The main find just to the north of the *gasr* was a limestone stele with a roughly moulded top (w. c. 0.48m × ht. 0.92m × d. c.0.31m) inscribed on one face within a rectangle defined by an incised line (illus. 354). The letters are quite competently cut but uneven in size (0.05-0.07m) with lunate *epsilon*, *sigma* and *omega* and the cross bar of *alpha* so shaped as to recall *chi* (Ⲭ); there are superscript bars above the abbreviations in ll. 3, 4 and possibly indications of the aspirate in ll. 1, 4. The inscription could be of the sixth century, but an earlier date is not precluded. The text reads:

5 τοῦ Ἁγι-
 ου Μη-
 γᾶ Κ(ϣρι)ε
 ὁ Θ(εο)ς β-
 ωηθει

Property of the holy Menas. Lord God help (us).

This appears to define ecclesiastical property, presumably belonging to a church or monastery dedicated to St. Menas. It is the first clear reference to the cult of Menas in Cyrenaica, as well as the first ecclesiastical boundary stone to be found there; otherwise there has been only the evidence of the St. Menas flasks found at Ptolemais, near



Illus. 353. Siret Akreim, block with cross in wreath.



Illus. 354. Siret Akreim, inscribed boundary stone.

the West/Central Church, at Berenike (Sidi Khrebish), Taucheira, perhaps also at Apollonia/Sozusa, at Ras el Hilal and at Paraitonion. It is the more interesting in that ecclesiastical property, marked by boundary stones, belonging to the see of Darnis but claimed by, and eventually transferred to, the see of Erythron, is attested in Synesius, *Epp.* 66, at and near the village of Hydrax (section 3b), which is commonly identified with Ain Mara. For further detail see el Atrun (Erythron), section 2.

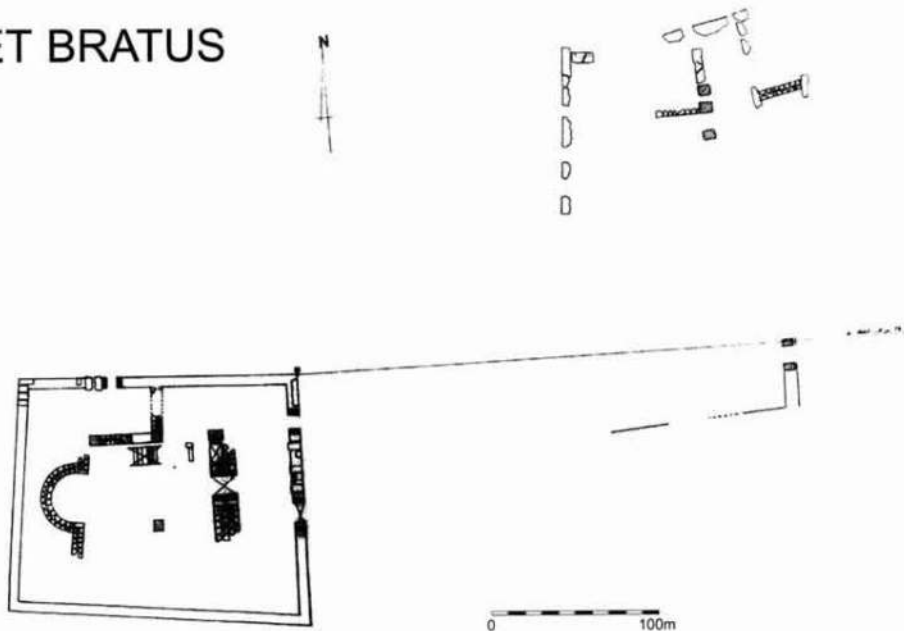
Siret Bratus, anc. name unknown, illus. 355-57: church.

Bibliography

Abdussaid *et al.* 1981, 39-41, site no. 13 (in Arabic).

Large agricultural settlement some 11km north-west of Messa, in the Wadi Kuf area north of Gasr Beni Gdem; pottery sherds show occupation from the Hellenistic period to the sixth century AD. On the east part of the site, where a grid of streets is discernible, a cistern is the main surviving structure. To the west, Abdussaid's party removed bushes to reveal some elements of a church (illus. 355, 356), consisting of a rectangular building, with walls whose blocks were laid in good head-and-stretcher technique, standing within an enclosing wall of poorer construction. Within the rectangle, at the west end, there is an apse, *c.* 3m across the chord, and, at the east end, an arched doorway (the upper part collapsed), with another smaller arch to the north of it; in the northern and north-eastern corners there are support-walls for vaults and arches. Part of a carved lintel was also found (illus. 357). Abdussaid suggested that there is some evidence for a second phase here when an upper storey was built. On the south side, externally, there are columns which, he thought, could have belonged to a loggia.

SIRET BRATUS



Illus. 355. Siret Bratus: sketch-plan of church (Department of Antiquities, Shahat).



Illus. 356. Siret Bratus: church.



Illus. 357. Siret Bratus: church, carved stone.



Illus. 358. Siret el Bab: the church, limestone column with capital.



Illus. 359. Siret el Bab: the church, the reverse side of 358.

Siret el Bab, anc. name unknown, illus. 358-60: column and door or window arch.

Bibliography

Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1491 with fig. 3.

Small site in the Luseita of Cyrene about 3km west of Sidi bu Breyek (section 2) and shown on the Second World War 1/100,000 map of Cyrenaica as very close to (and just possibly identical with) the reported position of Gasr Biyib (see above). Here, in a tumble of stones which must be a church, a carved capital has been found, made in one piece with its column (illus. 358, 359) and part of a limestone arch from a door or window (0.55m × 0.45m × 0.27m) carved with a cross and the line-ends of an inscription (illus. 360). The letters are fairly-well cut, 0.03-0.035m high, with lunate *epsilon*, *sigma* and *omega*, part of ll. 2, 3, being disposed between the arms of a cross.

	...]ης καὶ Θεοῦ σοφία] and the wisdom of God
	...]cross	
sic	...]cross τῶν πῦ cross ησά]of the makers
	...]cross [v.sic] cross τῶν	

L. 1. The reference to the wisdom of God might suggest, but certainly does not prove, a date under Justinian. It is possible that *Χάρις* (Grace) was mentioned in the first half of the line.

L. 2. Perhaps a prayer for those who constructed the building, on the lines of 'May God remember the builders' or 'He knows the names of the builders ...'

Illus. 360. Siret el Bab: the church, right side of a limestone arch for a window or small door.





Illus. 361. Siret el Giambi, rock-cut tomb, inscription.

Siret el Giambi, anc. name unknown, illus. 361: church and Christian tomb.

Bibliography

Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1495.

Small settlement on the west bank of the Wadi Kuf, a little north of Gasr Beni Gdem, containing a fort and a church (no details available) near which, in 1981, Fadel Ali Mohamed found a loose stone with a relief of a plain cross. Close by is a rock-cut feature consisting of two chambers, which was visited by Reynolds with him in 1981. On the wall to the right as you enter the larger chamber is a painted monogram cross and in the smaller chamber, which is entered from the larger, there are monogram crosses painted on the walls to the left, to the right and opposite the door, with another on the roof. The cross on the wall opposite the door is flanked by the words:

Θ(ε)ο(ς) βο(η)θ(η)ο(ς) God (our) help

Siret esh Shnedira (Sceneidira, Chenedireh), anc. name unknown, illus. 362, 363: church.

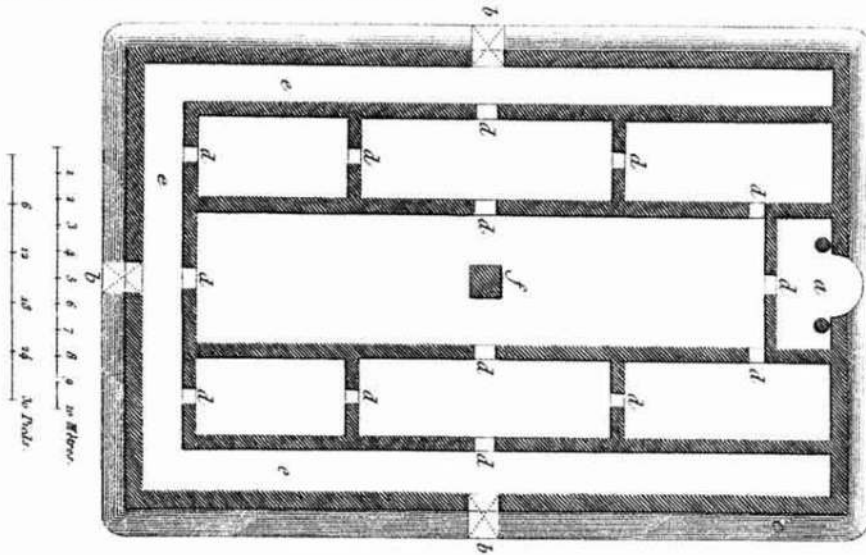
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Pacho 1827, 120-2 and plates XI.3, XIV; Goodchild 1953, 73, n. 31; 1966*a*, 220; Stucchi 1975, 362.



Illus. 362. Siret esh Shnedira: church (from J. R. Pacho).

SIRET ESH SHNEDIRA



Illus. 363. Siret esh Shnedira: church (from J. R. Pacho)

Small ancient village *c.* 4km north of el Gubba and *c.* 57km east of el Beida, dominated by what Pacho thought to be a fort but Goodchild recognised as a church. Neither Goodchild nor Ward-Perkins has left a description of it, but combining Pacho's account with his plan and drawing, and some verbal information from Fadel Ali Mohamed who has visited it, something may be said. Pacho described (and drew *illus.* 362, 363) a rectangular building, *c.* 18.50m × 13m, with outer walls of large well-dressed stones and a sloping revetment, with rounded corners, on all four sides, constructed of similar stones, with at least one levelling course of narrower stones, slightly projecting; within this, on three sides, he showed a narrow corridor and a second, inner, rectangle enclosing eight rooms (all, he thought, vaulted), clearly a central nave with inscribed apse and a rectangular chancel in front of it, two side-aisles each divided into three separate intercommunicating areas; the apse is flanked by two columns at the shoulders; the angle-chambers are shown as longer than is usual; the two at the east end communicate with the nave just outside the chancel-screen, while the two central ones communicate with the centre of the nave where they open on either side of an unexplained square feature (could it mark the position of a lost *ambon*?); and these doors are in line with doors in the outer walls communicating with the exterior corridor and aligned also with doors in the revetment; at the end opposite the apse, doors in the nave and the two side-rooms give onto the corridor, and the door in the nave is aligned with a door in the outer wall and the revetment. Pacho describes the three doors in the revetment and outer walls as too low for a man to enter standing upright but those in the inner wall as squared doors of a man's height. There was a second storey, which Pacho thought also vaulted. The drawing shows an outer ditch on at least two sides (*illus.* 363).

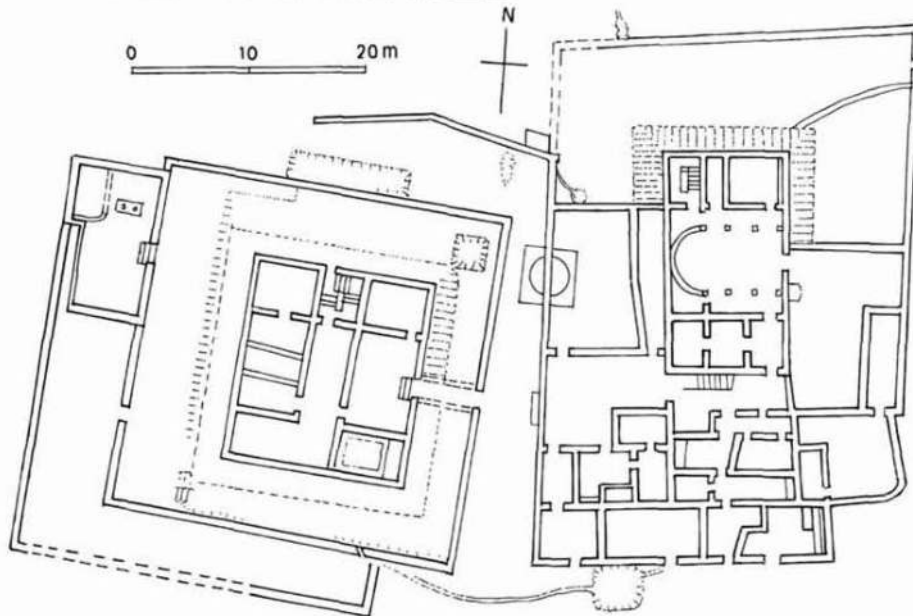
Siret Gasrin el Giamel, anc. name unknown, *illus.* 364: church, possible monastery, Christian house.

Bibliography

Stucchi 1975, 423f., 523, 525, 531, 547; Catani 1976; 1978; 1998; Roques 1987, 379, n. 30; Reynolds 2000.

On the main east/west route across Cyrenaica, *c.* 12km west of Cyrene and a few km east of the healing sanctuary of Asclepius at Balagrae; the site has recently been engulfed by the modern town of el Beida, but was certainly rural in antiquity. It was

SIRET GASRIN EL GIAMEL



Illus. 364. Siret Gasrin el Giamel: church and associated structures; measured plan (Sheila Gibson after Enzo Catani).

excavated and restored by Catani (for whose advice we are grateful) between 1966 and 1972; he found two complexes, both equipped for production of oil and wine.

Gasr A: within an approximately rectangular area defined on the north, west and east sides by a wall and on the south by what seem to be domestic buildings of simple construction, there is a small church which is part of a larger unit interpreted by Catani as a monastery. The perimeter wall (c. 0.19m × 0.11m), of small blocks and external orthostats, with its major axis north/south, has been reinforced by a sloping revetment along the whole of the north and west sides and parts of the east and south sides; entrances on the east and south sides give into an interior with an axis transverse to that of the exterior; the apse is on the west, its arch upheld by two tall monolithic pilasters of limestone, and has a small chamber on either side; the nave, which is markedly broader than it is long, is divided from the quite narrow aisles by two rows of three piers; there are rooms to south and north of the aisles and a staircase shows that over these were upper storeys. Catani and Stucchi have argued that it was constructed in the late fifth century and continued in use into the seventh (dates based on ceramic evidence).

Gasr B: a few metres away and differently oriented, is a 'fortified' agricultural villa, perhaps constructed at the end of the fifth century and continuing in use into the seventh (on the evidence of lamps found in it). Crosses have been carved in relief on the keystones of its arches and on its architraves; a mosaic inscription on the floor of its *cella vinaria*, made with small pebbles of two colours, reads Ἐμμανουήλ, Emmanuel, preceded by a circle enclosing a framed image of what seems to be an *orans* and followed by a wreath containing a monogram cross with *alpha* and *omega* in its upper quarters and *chi mu gamma* (perhaps for Χριστὸν Μαρία γεννᾶ) in the lower ones, after which there is a palm-tree and then traces of another wreath. Stucchi believed that Emmanuel was the name of the owner; but Emmanuel is rare as a name in the epigraphic record of the appropriate date and this interpretation is rejected by D. Feissel (*Bull. Ep.* 1996, no. 606; *SEG* XXXV. 861); it is more usual for an inscription in this kind of position to be apotropaic and that is how it is interpreted by Catani. The meaning, then, would be 'God is with us'.

Siret et Wes, anc. name unknown: Christian fort or farm.

Bibliography

Shahat Departmental Archive, Cyrene, 1966.

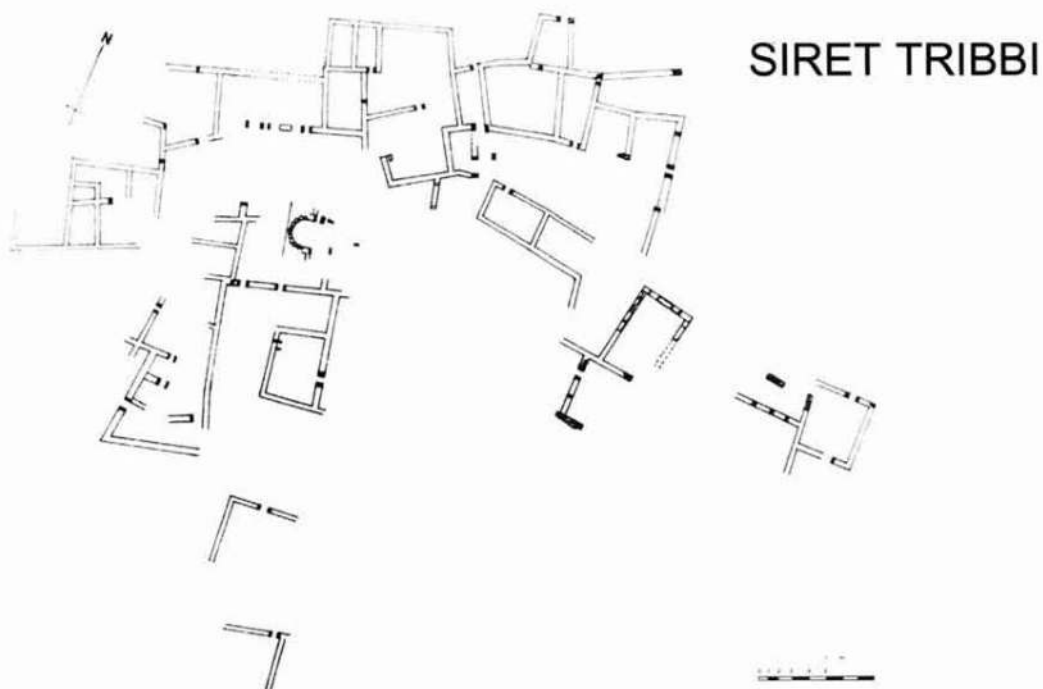
Site south-west of Hmada and el Merj whose main feature is a small ditched *gasr*. In its east wall a piece of colonnette—probably from a window—is carved with a cross and with a *chi-rho*.

Siret Tribbi, (Taribbi, Trippe), anc. name unknown, illus. 365: church.

Bibliography

Abdussaid *et al.* 1981, 71, site no. 30 (in Arabic).

Site on the west side of the Wadi Kuf, *c.* 18km north-west of Gasr el Lebia, visited by Abdussaid's party but not fully surveyed. In the centre is a tumble of stones which appeared, after minor clearance of trees and some stones, to be a small church with a western apse. Fragments of column-drums suggested that nave and aisles were separated by colonnades, but nothing of these was visible *in situ*. There were signs of continued occupation after the Arab invasion.



Illus. 365. Siret Tribbi: sketch-plan of site showing church (Department of Antiquities, Shahat).

Tansoluk, anc. name unknown: possible church.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1954*a*, 11; 1968, 32; Jones/Little 1971, 67; Stucchi 1975, 377, 408, and fig. 410 (but wrongly, as Reynolds thinks, attributing to this site the ivory diptych published as from Soluk, section 4).

Large settlement just to the north of the main east/west road *c.* 44km east of Benghazi and 15km west of Tobra. In 1996 when visited by Reynolds with Dorothy Thorn, Ali

Salem Letrik, Mouna Belcher and Khalid el Hadar, recent removal of the ruins of a modern settlement had revealed more antiquities than had been visible for some time previously, but also added to the rubble and so to the difficulty of interpreting the site. Discovery of the lower part of a milestone by Ali Salem Letric suggests that it was a Roman road station on the ancient east/west route across the province. One grindstone from an oil mill is some indication of its agricultural concerns. Of the two major upstanding structures one seemed to Goodchild a possible church, to Stucchi a certain one, and the other to Stucchi a possible campanile or baptistery.

The first is on the west of the site, on the edge of the funerary area; in fact its west end overlies a rock-cut tomb with a niche above its door suitable for a small funerary bust of the type which seems to be associable with sedentarised Libyans (Bacchielli/Reynolds 1987). It is surrounded by a ditch (into whose wall the tomb is cut), and is rectangular in shape, with outer walls built of small shaped blocks quite neatly coursed. The interior, like most of the ditch, is filled and obscured by heaps of fallen masonry, and we could distinguish no features of its internal arrangements unless a possibly curved wall indicates an apse at the west end of the south aisle (which is far from certain). In the rubble in the west ditch Khalid found a limestone block which may have carried a roughly carved cross in a circle, and beside it Reynolds recorded what might be the upper part of a limestone chancel post; but the damaged condition of both items precludes any confident interpretation. In consequence it is not yet possible to say more than that the building may have been a church; and that, if so, it appears to be associated with the tomb of a venerated local personage (but the chronological relationships of ditch, tomb and building are not clear). Excavation is needed.

Some metres to the east is a more or less square building, measuring *c.* 7.00m × 7.90m, well-built of large rectangular blocks in a manner which suggests an official, and possibly a military, construction. It has collapsed into itself, but an arched entry is visible on the west side and another arch aligned with it can be seen in the interior. On the west side the foundations of what could be the wall of a rectangular forecourt can be seen, but they are of a different build and might well belong to a different building. On the east wall Dorothy Thorn observed incisions some of which could be taken as stars and monograms, possibly Christian in intention (but this is a site on whose stones many modern tribal signs have been incised; and distinguishing ancient from modern symbols is not a straightforward matter). Stucchi thought that it might be a baptistery or a campanile; only excavation could show.

Tarakenet, anc. name unknown, illus. 366: Christian inscriptions.

Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 109-10; Goodchild/Reynolds 1962, 41-6 whence *SEG* XX.705a and b, and J. and L. Robert 1964, no. 586; Roques 1987, 271; Reynolds 1988, 171-2.

Set of chambers cut below the surface of the limestone plateau on the east side of the Wadi Tarakenet, *c.* 1km south-south-east of Bir Tarakenet and a little south of the main east/west road across Cyrenaica. There are signs of rough stone field-walls in the area, which is well watered and fertile, but no houses have been reported so far. An open rock-cut stairway leads down to the first of three roughly-rectangular chambers. In the largest of these much of the floor-space is taken up by the rock-cut circular base of a rotary olive-crusher, with shallow oil-vats on either side; one of the two millstones was found during Goodchild's excavation in 1959. In three of the walls there are niches, of which one in the south wall and two in the west wall are associated with panels prepared for inscriptions, one of them totally erased, another largely so; there is a fourth panel on the north wall just to the right of the entrance doorway whose inscription survives in large part. The surviving texts are likely to be of the sixth century AD and their Christian character is clear. The closely related nos. 1 and 4 refer to the construction of a workshop and of fine works; and although they are presented as a memorial to the founder, they do not seem to be funerary. Stucchi argued that this was a Greek tomb adapted twice in the Byzantine period; Goodchild noted firstly that the niches were never of a size to take inhumations, and secondly that if the chamber had ever existed without the rock-cut olive-crusher, the headroom at its back, near the



Illus. 366. Tarakenet, rock-cut workshop, inscription no. 4.

major concentration of niches, would have been less than 1.5m; he remained undecided between interpretation as a family tomb converted to an olive-pressing room or as an underground olive-pressing room which served also as a memorial to its founder and owner. The latter, it appears, held a military office in the neighbourhood over a group described as *Marysii* who were perhaps recently-sedentarised Libyans; he was then elected *strategos* (not necessarily another military office) by his city (whose name is not stated).

The Inscriptions

1. SEG XX.705b

Above the first niche in the south wall within a *tabella ansata* (panel 0.50m × 0.30m) in deeply cut letters (0.03-0.05m) which seem to be a gauche version of a sixth-century style; E, ω, *omicron* sometimes diamond-shaped; a plain cross in the left hand *ansa*.

	θ(ε)ἔ Χ(ριστ)ἔ ζοήν δός	God, Christ, give life
	Σαμφοδιονι <Σ>	to Samphodion,
	τῷ κτίστη τοῦ	the founder of this
	ἔργαλιου τοῦ -	workshop.
5.	του ὑπὲρ μνήμης	He made it as
<i>sic</i>	ἰδίας ἐπιμῆσ[εν]	his own memorial.

L.4 Robert commented that *ἔργαλειον* had the precise sense of *atelier* in the Byzantine world, and must here refer to the oil-press.

2. Erased panel above the first niche in the west wall; above it there are three monogram crosses within a painted arch.

3. SEG XX. 705a

Erased panel above the seventh and last niche in the west wall; above it are the painted letters X, M, Γ, presumably for Χ(ρίστων) Μ(αρία) Γ(έννα) 'Mary bore Christ', Χ(ρίστος) ἐκ Μ(αρίας) Γ(εννηθεῖς) 'Christ born of Mary', or Χ(ρίστος) Μ(αρίας) Γ(όνος), 'Christ, the Son of Mary'; in the panel the initial letter of the first line – E – was cut, but thereafter there are only traces of paint and of eight horizontal setting-out lines.

4. SEG XX. 705a

On the north wall near the junction with the east wall, within a *tabella ansata* (1.47m × 0.46m) in letters (ave. ht. 0.04-5m) very like those of no. 1. There are three plain crosses above and monogram crosses in the *ansae* (illus. 366).

θεσπέσιον ἔργον ξένη θαύμασον καὶ γὰρ ἄριστόν
 ἔστιν ἔχιν θαυμαστόν δ' ἄρ' ἰδὶν καὶ κτισθὲν ὑπὸ ἀνδρὸς
 τούτου Σαμφουδίου ὃς μυρία ἔργα ἐτέλεσσε ἐς
 5 βέλτερον Ἀλκινόου ἠγησάμενος τοδε ἴκου
 σοὶ δὲ Θεὸς καμάτων πολλοὺς περὶ κατανεῦσαι
 λείψαι καὶ γὰρ πᾶσιν συνευχομένους τοδε ἔλδωρ
 πρεποσιδίου γὰρ ἀρχὴν κατεχων ἐν Μαρύσ[οις]
 ἦρξ' ὄδ' ἀθάνατον στήλην ἐνταῦθα (ἀ)είρριν
 10 κείθεν δὲ στρατηγὸν ἐχιροτόνησε πόλις σ[ε?]
 καὶ τήν[δ' εἰ]ξετέλεσσα σάμα ἔργω σὺ ἐφεστῶς

Stranger, wonder at this marvellous piece of work;
 for it is very good to have and wonderful to see, and founded by this
 man Samphudion, who completed very many works,
 making this better than the house of Alkinoos.
 May God allow you to leave to your sons many achievements,
 for this is the desire of all as they pray.
 For holding the office of *praepositus* among the Marysi
 he began to raise here an undying memorial.
 But from here the city[?] elected you general
 and I completed this, setting up a sign of the work for you.

- L. 4 YKOY presumably for οἴκου.
- L. 5 ΠΕΣΙ for παισί. Goodchild/Reynolds supposed that God was asked to grant to the stranger also that he leave many accomplished works to his sons.
- L. 7 W. Morel ap. *SEG* suggested that πρεποσιδίου is for πρεποσιτίης; if that is right then Samphoudion is said to have held the office of *praepositus* among the Marysoi—presumably a form of Maurysii = Moors, a term which could be used of Libyans at this date (Procopius, *BV* II.10.2). The formula with ἐν might suggest that in this case Samphoudion was appointed to a command over them. Subsequently he was elected to be a *strategos*, possibly another military command but not necessarily so, by his city.
- L.10 Goodchild/Reynolds reading Ε[...] canvassed the possibility that the city was named as Erythron (el Atrun), which is within easy distance of Tarakenet; but neither the space available nor the metre are right for that. Reynolds now proposes σ[ε?] (cf. Eurip., *Medea* 510, 515, 1058 for σε at the end of a poetic line), which seems much more satisfactory, given the presence of σύ in l. 10. That the city was in fact Erythron remains possible.

It would appear that Samphodion (or Samphoudion) belonged to a society which was not only Christian but had some pretensions to Hellenic culture and an ability to call up Homeric echoes (cf. also, but rather earlier, the paintings in the tomb at Asgafa near Beit Thamer, above). The implications of the reference to the Maurysii are not wholly clear, but it seems likely that they were a Libyan people fairly recently moved into the area (see *Introduction I*); and although it is difficult to feel sure without more evidence, it sounds as if a system for local control of the incomers had been developed with the appointment of *praepositi*. The civic office to which Samphodion/Samphoudion moved seems to show that the villages and small towns of the province retained a local organisation as in their Hellenic past—but the glimpse of that here is very limited and uncertain.

Taurguni, anc. name unknown: Christian tomb or church.

Bibliography

Mohamed 1992, 52; 1996; forthcoming.

About 8 km west of Messa in an area of intensive ancient agricultural development. Fadel Ali Mohamed has reported a rock-cut church with painted walls, and, nearby, a re-used building block with incised representations of two peacocks facing each other on either side of a cross (see Mohamed 1996, fig. 5).



Illus. 367. Umm Heneia esh Shargia: church, apse and piers.

Toseir el Khadem, anc. name unknown: Christian fort or farm.

Bibliography

Shahat Departmental archive.

Ditched *gasr* with a compass-traced cross on one stone.

Umm Heneia esh Shargia, anc. name unknown, illus. 367, 368: church.

Umm Heneia esh Shargia is *c.* 7km south of the junction of the Cyrene/Apollonia road with the main east/west road, 3km south of Safsaf, and 1.5km east of the road to Got Gernada, within sight of Umm Heneia el Garbia (section 2), which is between 2 and 3km away. When visited in 1993 by Reynolds, Susan Bird, Catherine Dobias-Lalou and Susan Walker, in company with Fadel Ali Mohamed and Abdulghader al Muzzeini, the growth of prickly pears inhibited detailed observation of the small basilical church (illus. 367). The structure measures *c.* 14.5m × 10.5m; the nave is divided from the aisles by arcades carried on seven pairs of piers; the apse is at the west end and its lower levels are rock-cut, suggesting that there was a crypt; on its inner face the central panel carries a relief of a cross with a palm-tree above it (illus. 368); in the immediate neighbourhood to the north there are a number of rock-cut tombs, suggesting that this may have been a funerary church.

Wadi Borgu, anc. name unknown: church.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1966*a*, 220; Stucchi 1975, 362 (simply listing).

Site south of Cyrene, west of Got Gernada, and beside the headwaters of the Wadi Kuf; the main building was described by Goodchild as a fortified church.



Illus. 368. Umm Heneia esh Shargia: church, carved palm-tree on wall of apse below ground level.

Wadi Morgus, anc. name unknown: possible monastery.

Bibliography

Halag 1993, 139.

Set of chambers partly natural, partly cut in the rock, high on the west cliff of the wadi, which is *c.* 27km east of Apollonia, about halfway between Ras el Hilal and el Atrun and approximately north of Zawiet Marazigh. Here Daoud has reported a cross cut in a wall and a worked stone representing a lion; he interprets the complex as a monastery, named for St Mark. At the entry to another, much lower, cave which contains a spring, the damaged rock carried an inscription of which only two letters survive (ΠΑ[...]); its character cannot be assessed.

Wadi Ngil, anc. name unknown: Christian cave.

Bibliography

Halag 1993, 167-70.

Cave, high in the cliffside of the wadi, which is *c.* 34km east of Apollonia, and a little south of the spring Ain Ngil, which provides the water supply for the modern village of Kharsa. On an inner wall Daoud reports a cross in relief with a rock-cut table in front of it.

Wadi Senab, anc. name unknown: Constantinian monogram.

Bibliography

Bacchielli 1974/5; Luni 1974/5; Purcaro 1974/5, 292.

A tributary joining the Wadi Kuf in its upper reaches, some 10km south-west of el Beida. Settlements here, exploiting the fertile wadi bottom, are attested over a long period and no doubt continued after the Arab invasion. A Libyan cave-sanctuary and troglodyte dwellings illustrate native influences; Hellenistic walling in front of the sanctuary, a Roman-period statue of Heracles, a Byzantine Bath and a small fortified building, attest more urban ones.

In one of the settlements a limestone block roughly incised with the Constantinian monogram has been found near a cave called the Kaf el Gebir. In the cave of the Sanctuary of the Ploughs a fragmentary rock-cut inscription was drawn as concluding with a cross, but this is an error.

Zawiet Ennablu, anc. name unknown: possible church.

Bibliography

Ward 1968; Mohamed/Reynolds 2000, 1495-6.

This sizeable village site is *c.* 10km east of Batta, beside what was probably an ancient track from Ptolemais to the Wadi Kuf; it may well have been a Roman road station.

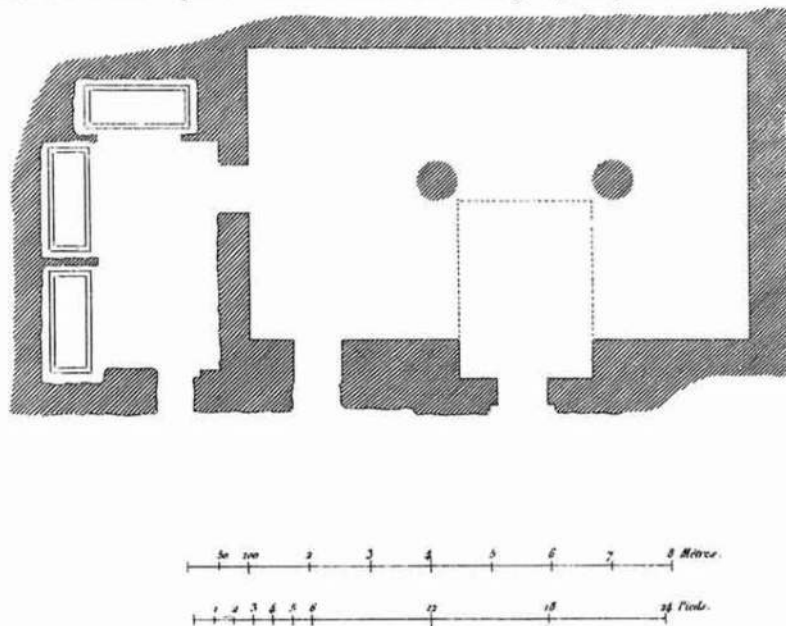
Mainly on grounds of homophony, Ward suggested that it was Neapolis, but it does not exactly fit the indications of Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.7 for this place. During a short visit in 1993, Fadel Ali Mohamed, Reynolds and Susan Walker found sherds dating from the fourth century BC to the Byzantine period and a damaged limestone column capital (diam. 0.44m × ht. 0.08m × width across the top 0.58m) decorated with reliefs of palm branches and a *chi-rho* monogram on the one surviving corner. This seems to suggest a church.

Zawiet Marazigh (Massakit in Pacho, which is incorrectly placed on his map), anc. name unknown. Pacho suggested Olbia (section 3b), Goodchild considered that it might be Palaibiska (section 3b), Roques thought of Archile (Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.7), *illus.* 369a,b: Christian tomb and perhaps chapel.

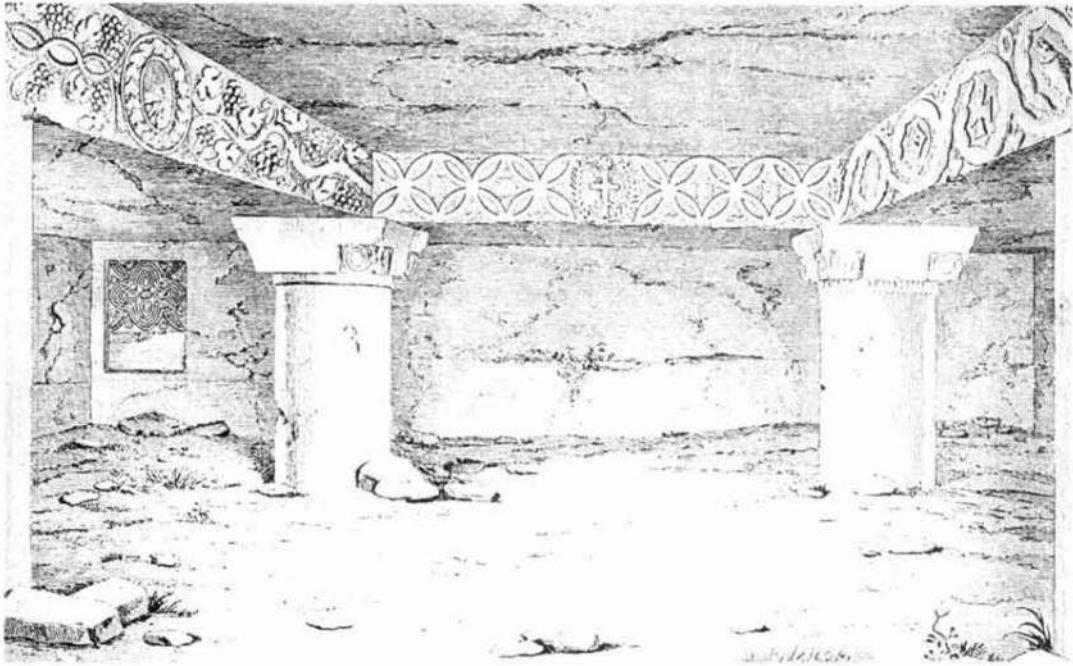
Bibliography

Pacho 1827, 111-5 with plates XII, XIII; Hamilton 1856, 110; Goodchild 1952*a*, 150 = 1976*a*, 154; Stucchi 1975, 534 with plate 564; Bacchielli/Reynolds 1987, 466-7; Roques 1987, 105.

Hill-top site on the edge of the upper plateau a little north of the main east/west road across Cyrenaica, on a minor road that turns northwards some 3km east of el Gubba and leads to the coast near el Atrun. It commands a fine view over the Luseita towards the sea. The ancient site is dominated by a small fort on the highest point, but there are other substantial remains, among which Pacho reported fragments of marble and of statues. In the scarp and in the walls of a large quarry below the first escarpment



Illus. 369a. Zawiet Marazigh: plan of rock-cut Christian rooms (from J.R. Pacho).



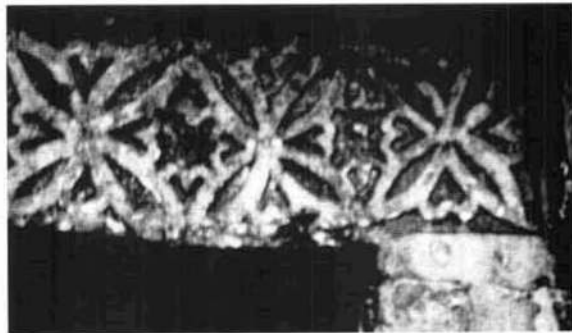
Illus. 369b. Zawiet Marazigh: drawing of rock-cut Christian room (from J. R. Pacho).

are a very considerable number of rock-cut tombs, some patently originating in the Hellenistic period, many with niches designed to hold funerary busts of the Roman period, one well-known for its two rows of rectangles with flat reliefs of very much simplified human bodies (probably to be taken as a typically Libyan funerary form).

Towards the western extremity of the site Pacho saw a rock-cut tomb (his plate xiii is wrongly captioned 'near *aphrodisias*'), which he thought to have been converted into a Christian chapel, in view of its Christian relief-sculpture. It eluded rediscovery until October 2002, when Abdulghadir al Muzzeini found it, and took Reynolds, with Dorothy and James Thorn, Emanuela Fabbriotti and students from Chieti University to see it. I offer the following brief account, in anticipation of a detailed one to be expected from Chieti. Inspection suggests that it was created for Christians, rather than converted for them as Pacho suggested.

There are two rectangular chambers, intercommunicating, but each with its own door from outside, the larger with a lightly-incised cross above the outer lintel. The smaller chamber contains three *arcosolia* and is obviously for burial. The larger is notable for a central rectangular area entered through the outside door, with raised roof notionally upheld by two rock-cut columns at the inner end. The column-capitals and the interior frieze of the raised roof are carved (*illus. 369 c-e*), clearly the work of local craftsmen whose skills were more moderate than Pacho's drawing (*illus. 369 b*) might suggest. Interpretation is impeded by a thick encrustation of soot and occasional deliberate defacement, some of it visible in Pacho's drawing, some presumable later. I note:

- a* on the column-capitals, carving intended to suggest that they are Ionic
- b* on the frieze opposite the entrance, a central monogram cross within a wreath of branches; there were probably elements between the arms of the cross which I did not distinguish, but the maltese cross which



Illus. 369c. Zawiet Marazigh: photographs of the rediscovered reliefs.



Illus. 369d. Zawiet Marazigh: photographs of the rediscovered reliefs.

Pacho suggested above the monogram cross seems to be an error; on either side are patterns formed on the analogy of compass-traced crosses (*illus. 369 c*), but the circles are irregular in shape and often oval rather than round

c on the frieze to the left, a central monogram cross within a wreath of ivy leaves, again probably including other elements, but already defaced when Pacho saw it; to its left are vine-branches and grapes (*illus. 369 d*), to its right branches with flowers (wrongly drawn by Pacho)

d on the frieze to the right, a composition of stiff wreaths in very flat relief, containing motifs of which a fish (*illus. 369 e*) and a maltese cross are clear

e to the right of the entrance, fairly low down, what may be a rock-cut holy-water stoup

f in the chamber walls a number of niches; and in the left-hand wall, to the right of the door leading into the chamber with the *arcosolia*, a sunk rectangular panel, part of whose surface has been carved with reliefs of the same type and quality as those of *a-d* (the panel is misplaced in Pacho's drawing).



Illus. 369e. Zawiet Marazigh: photographs of the rediscovered reliefs.

Interpretation of the larger chamber is difficult, but since there is no apse and no indication of any placement for an altar, it seems questionable whether it was a church or chapel in any normal sense of the terms. Possibly it was intended for private meetings in memory of the dead, or as a ceremonial area in which the eminent might 'lie in state' before being placed in a tomb.

It seems possible that this may be a kind of forerunner of the crypts that have been noted under some churches.

Pre-desert site without a name

Bibliography

Stucchi 1975, 416.

Stucchi cites a report of a rock-cut church c. 120km south of el Merj which he had not seen. It is described as a basilica with an apse opposite the entrance, rock-cut piers dividing the nave from the aisles (on one of which is a carved christogram) and, on either side, circular rooms with cupolas. At 120km south of el Merj the site would be beyond the limits of normal settled occupation. We have not so far been able to trace it.

Section 3

Rural sites on the Gebel Akhdar

b. known only from written sources

Agriolode: monastery.

Bibliography

Procopius, *Aed.* VI. ii. 7-8; Goodchild 1966*b*, 241; Stucchi 1975, 422-6; Roques 1987, 338, 379, 381; 1996*a*, 425-6, Reynolds 2000.

One of two monasteries in the southern borderlands of Pentapolis which Justinian is said to have fortified 'to prevent barbarians from slipping stealthily northwards and swooping suddenly on Roman territory' (see also Dinarthison). For the possibility that one or other might be identified with Gasr Beni Gdem or Gasr Shahden, see Gasr Beni Gdem (*Section 3a*).

Ampelitis (also recorded as Angelitis): churches.

Bibliography

Syn. *Cat.* III. 301c; Catani 1983; Roques 1987, 105-6.

Country district near the plain of Barka where Synesius reported that raiders had burnt the churches and carried off the sacred vessels. The most suitable location proposed so far connects it with the Ampelos which Pseudo-Skylax 108 places on the coast between Phykous (Zawiet al-Hamama, *Section 2*) and Apios, perhaps the area around Gasr Disa (*Section 3a*, so Catani); but since Steph. Byz. cites the Cyrenaean writer Agrotas for a statement that there were two Cyrenaean places named Ampelos, an upper and a lower one, it might be appropriate to consider the area around the closely related sites of Maaten el Agla and Gasr el Gaama at the mouth of the Wadi Giargiarrumah (see Ain Giargiarrumah, *Section 3a*).

Angelitis, the reading of some mss. of Synesius for *Ampelitis*.

Aphrodisias. See under Zawiet Marazigh (*Section 3a*).

Asclepius: monastery.

Bibliography

Syn. *Epp.* 126 with Roques 2000 *ad. loc.*; Goodchild 1976*a*, 243; Roques 1987, 91.

River beside which Synesius built a monastery. There is no sufficient topographical clue to its location; Goodchild suggested the neighbourhood of the Sanctuary of Asclepius at Balagrae; Roques, on the grounds that it was natural and common for bishops to build monasteries near the cities in which they officiated, proposed that of Ptolemais (with references to Jones 1971, 929-30 and Gaudemet 1958, 197).

Ausigda deduced from the ethnic Ausigditae (in some mss. Auxitidae, Axomitae, Axoumitae, Nausiditae): church.

Bibliography

Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.6; Syn. *Epp.* 122 with Roques 2000 *ad. loc.*; Steph. Byz. *s.v.* (citing Callimachus and Hecataeus); Goodchild 1954*a* (map only); 1976*a*, 243 (accepting the reading Axomis); Jones/Little 1971, 74-5; Purcaro 1976, 342 (*s.v.* Nausida); Desanges 1977, 114-7; Catani 1983; Laronde 1983, 73-4; Roques 1987, 101-4.

On the coast between Ptolemais and Aptouchou Hieron, it has been variously named and identified as Ain Giargiarrumah, Hania, or Gasr Disa. Following Desanges' discussion of the manuscript tradition of Synesius, *Epp.* 122, it appears clear that the correct name of the village was Ausigda (not in Garzya's text, but see Roques' commentary *ad. loc.*). Its inhabitants were led by their priests (notably by Faustus, a deacon) ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν αὐτῶν (? from the service, ? from the altar) against a raiding party which they wholly defeated. The action occurred in a long, deep gorge, thickly wooded and full of caves, called Myrsinitis, plausibly identified by Goodchild as the Wadi Kuf and its seaward extension, the Wadi Giargiarrumah.

The most generally accepted identification for Ausigda is Gasr Disa (on grounds of homophony). That is fairly well placed for action in the Wadi Kuf but is not known to have had a church, while Ain Giargiarrumah is very well placed for the action and has a church; a case could be made also for Maaten el Agla (*Section 3a*).

Laronde noted that Libyan connections are implied by the name Ausigda.

Auxitidae, see **Ausigda**.

Axomitae, Axoumitae, see **Ausigda**.

Dinarthison, unlocated: monastery.

Bibliography

Procop. *Aed.* VI. ii. 7-8; Goodchild 1966*b*, 241; Stucchi 1975, 422; Roques 1987, 338, 379; 1996*a*, 425-6; Reynolds 2000.

One of two monasteries in the southern borderlands of Pentapolis (see also Agriolode) which Justinian is said to have fortified 'to prevent barbarians from coming northwards stealthily and swooping suddenly on Roman territory.' For the possibility of their identification with Gasr Beni Gdem and Gasr Shahden see Gasr Beni Gdem (*Section 3a*).

Dioestae. See **Disthis**.

Disthis, Dysthis (Dioestae appears in some mss and is retained in some modern accounts), Tert or Faidia have been suggested: bishop.

Bibliography

Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.7; Syn. *Epp.* 125 with Roques 2000 *ad loc.*; Steph. Byz. *s.v.*; *Acta Conc. Eph.* 431, *ibid. Const.* 459; Pacho 1827, 155; Stucchi 1975, 395*f.*, 447, 474, 543; Roques 1987, 106, 263.

Village from which Synesius sought help against raiders. Its bishop Samuel was present at the Council of Ephesus in AD 449. Many modern writers have taken it to be the village which Stephanus of Byzantium calls both Thestis and Thyne, as well as that which Ptolemy calls Thintis *qv* below, while Fraser and Laronde add another form, Thinitis, read in *SEG* IX.1, 1.4 (early Hellenistic). Pacho proposed to place it at Tert (Teret, Tereth in his time), 23km east of Cyrene, see also Laronde; Roques suggested Faidia, 17km south of Cyrene. Conclusive evidence is lacking.

Hydrax, uncertainly located, perhaps Ain Mara, but see also Khedra (and other well-watered sites might be proposed): church.

Bibliography

Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4, 7; Syn. *Epp.* 66 with Roques 2000 *ad loc.*; Goodchild 1952*a*, 150 = 1976*a*, 152; 1953, 69-70 = 1976*a*, 200 with fig. 65, no.1; 1976*a*, 251-2; Stucchi 1975, 529; Purcaro 1976, 336; Laronde 1987, 308; Roques 1987, 80-2, 96, 104-5, 117, 141-2, 267, 329-30, 333-5, 417; 1989, 60-3

Village near the frontier between Libya Superior and Libya Inferior, on whose highest point Synesius describes a fort which had been overthrown in an earthquake (usually referred to AD 365, but there were other later quakes which could have been responsible). He also mentions a church, originally in the see of the bishop of Erythron (el Atrun, *Section 2*) from whom it had broken away, along with its neighbour Palaibiska (see below). It became the seat of a new bishop, the vigorous and apparently anti-Arian Siderius, appointed with the assistance of Philon bishop of Cyrene, and accepted by the Metropolitan at Alexandria. On the death of Siderius the two villages reverted to the see of Erythron and objected strongly when the Metropolitan wished to separate them from it again. Since the name Hydrax indicates a well-watered site Goodchild conjectured that it was Ain Mara, which is exceptionally well-supplied, has a fort on its highest point whose ruins suggest destruction by earthquake, and stands beside an ancient track leading to the sea at Erythron. This has been generally accepted; but Stucchi believed the ruined fort to be later in date (a sixth-century building), which, if correct, undermines an important element in Goodchild's case; there is clearly need for further enquiry. So far, no church has been reported at Ain Mara, which is increasingly covered with the buildings of a small modern town; but the whole area is one with many springs and plots of fertile land, dominated by hill-top forts with villages around them in which a church is sometimes recognisable. It may be that Hydrax is one of these rather than Ain Mara itself.

Synesius was concerned not only with the see to which Hydrax belonged but also with a dispute between the bishop of Erythron and the bishop of Darnis over

ownership of the fort and of some land in the area which had been developed for the cultivation of vines and olives. For this see under Darnis (*Section 4b*) and el Atrun. Synesius established the rights of the bishop of Darnis but persuaded him to yield them to the bishop of Erythron. For the existence of church estates in Cyrenaica see also under Siret Akreim (*Section 3a*).

Myrsinitis, probably the Wadi Kuf: see under Ausigda above, and Reynolds 2000.

Nausida: see Ausigda above.

Olbia, possibly Gasr el Lebia (*Section 2*): three bishops attested.

Bibliography

Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.7; Syn. *Epp.* 76 with Roques 2000 *ad loc.*; *Acta Conc. Eph.* 431; Goodchild 1957; Stucchi 1975, 358, 381; Laronde 1987, 264; Roques 1987, 106-7, 335, 340 (listing only).

Village visited by Synesius who participated in the election of a bishop Antonius as successor to a deceased bishop Athamas. Another of its bishops, Poplios, is attested at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431. There is no unequivocal clue to its location, but Goodchild and a number of recent writers have argued, largely on grounds of homophony, that it is identical with Gasr el Lebia, the Justinianic new city Theodorias (*Section 2*). That is attractive but not proven. Stucchi additionally proposed to take the site as the Caenopolis of the Peutinger Table col. 875 and the Neapolis of Ptol. *Geog.* IV.4.7, in neither case convincingly.

Palaibiska, ? Beit Thamer, ? Zaviet Marazigh (both in *Section 3a*): bishop.

Bibliography

Syn. *Epp.* 66 with Roques 2000 *ad loc.*; Goodchild 1952a, 150 = 1976a, 154, n. 29, see also 251; Purcaro 1976, 343; Roques 1987, 104-5, 329-33; 1989, 60-63; Abdussaid 1996.

Village in the borderlands between Libya Superior and Libya Inferior. Originally in the see of Erythron (el Atrun, *Section 2*), it broke away in the second half of the fourth century, taking with it its neighbour Hydrax qv above, because of dissatisfaction with a weak bishop Orion.

If Hydrax is rightly identified with Ain Mara, as commonly accepted (or near it, since the precise identification is not proved), Palaibiska, which must be fairly close, could reasonably be located near the crossing of the main east/west road with a track that runs between Erythron on the coast and Ain Mara. Goodchild considered Beit Thamer and Zaviet Marazigh, both sizeable settlements in well-watered fertile land, which meet these conditions; Roques and Abdussaid have argued for Beit Thamer. Proof is missing.

Tesila, location unknown: bishop.

Bibliography

Acta Conc. Eph. 449; Roques 1987, 337, 341.

A bishop Theodoulos is recorded at the Council of Ephesus in 449; but the place-name may result from textual error, since it does not appear in any other source.

Thestis: see Dysthis.

Thintis, Thinitis, Thyna: if identical with Dysthis, qv above, bishop.

Bibliography

Dobias 2000, 256 with references to publications by P. M. Fraser and A. Laronde.

The name seems to be Libyan.

Section 4

The Syrtica and the Marmarica

a. Sites in the Syrtica with Christian associations

Section 4: The Syrtica and the Marmarica

Section 4a: Sites in the Syrtica with Christian associations

Bibliography

Hdt. IV.172, 182; (Ps.) Skylax 109; Strabo XVII.836-7; *Stad.* 58-81; Pliny *NH* V.38; Ptol. *Geog.*, IV.4.1, 2; *Itin. Ant.* 65, 66; *Tab. Peut.*; Sulp. Sev., *Dial.* 1.3-6; Procop. *Aed.* VI. ii. 11-23; Beecheys 1828, 209-80; Treidler 1932; Goodchild 1951a = 1976a, 173-86; 1951b = 1976a, 187-94; 1953, 66-8 = 1976a, 196-9; 1966b, 231-4; 1968, 161-2; Laronde 1987, 199-218; Roques 1987, 77-82, 119-21, 380-1; 1996a; Reynolds 2000; and for Agdabiya, Pacho 1827, 26-9, pl. XC; Ferri 1926, 362f.; Romanelli 1943, 174, 237, fig. 31; Ward-Perkins 1943, 138; Goodchild 1952a; 1966a; Abdussaid 1964; Whitehouse 1972, 18-21; Purcaro 1976, 333.

Only that part of the Syrtica is relevant here which lies between Benghazi (Berenike), and the Diocletianic monument of Graret Gser et Trab (anc. Arae Philaenorum) which marked the Roman frontier of Cyrenaica with Tripolitania. It had probably come under the suzerainty of Cyrene in the fourth century BC and was certainly administered by the Romans as part of the province of Crete and Cyrene, or, after Diocletian's reform, of Libya Superior. If Procopius is to be believed, it was, towards the west, a marginal area in later antiquity—where the tax-gatherers never went—until Justinian constructed new defences.

There are signs on the ground of a number of small settled communities near Berenike, of civilian settlements near some forts (which were commonly built beside the major wells) and on the coast, at the several anchorages (none of them really good harbours and, given the reputation of the Syrtic gulf for shipwrecks, none, perhaps, heavily frequented) and road stations (over long distances we do not know the exact line of the roads); but settlement may have been always the exception. A predominantly Libyan and pastoral society is to be expected, no doubt following a life-style already indicated by Herodotus, with an annual trek to the oasis of Augila for the date-harvest. Since Procopius maintains that Augila remained pagan until the reign of Justinian, this will have favoured the survival of paganism throughout the Syrtica, although it was not universal. A bishop is attested at Boreion, the westernmost coastal settlement of any size, in the fourth century (but is not heard of later). In the early fifth century Sulpicius Severus described an encounter with a Christian preacher living in isolation in a primitive hut near the coast, serving a church of similar construction, with a poor and rural congregation. Christian artefacts implying churches, perhaps as early as the mid fifth century, have been found at Gusur Khalita and probably Soluk. That, with the analogy of the Marmarica (where the evidence is rather fuller), seems enough to suggest that Christianity may have been more vigorous than we know; so that Justinian could in fact have had more to build on than might be thought when Procopius claims in effect that he established a new defensive system for western Cyrenaica with Boreion as its base and combined military construction with some forceful Christianisation, at any rate near Boreion and at Augila. It seems worth noting that, at Agdabiya, although no church has in fact been found there,¹ al-Bakri (ed. de Slane, pp. 16-17) states that in his time (the eleventh century) its inhabitants were all Copts by religion.

At present nothing has been recognised for certain as a church anywhere in the area. There is, of course, a real likelihood that flimsy constructions of the type

¹ There was once believed to be the ruin of a church just outside the medieval city wall of Agdabiya (Purcaro 1976, 333, *sv* Corniclanum), but it was proved by excavation to be part of an Islamic fort. The history of the error is given by Abdussaid 1964 Nineteenth-century travellers who saw the feature (a vaulted room with a semi-dome) when much of the larger complex to which it belonged was visible, rightly identified the whole as Islamic, as did Ferri when he visited it in 1924; but subsequent destruction obscured the facts. In 1952 excavation by Naim Makhoul of the Libyan Department of Antiquities revealed again its whole extent, and so the Islamic character of the room in question; further work by Abdussaid, and subsequently by Whitehouse, confirmed the findings, which had already convinced others, including Goodchild; Ward-Perkins (who had always thought it likely to post-date the Arab conquest) omitted it from his 1952 schedule of churches.

described by Sulpicius Severus or using mud-brick, were commoner than stone-built ones, even after Justinian's activity; and in some places rock-cut churches, like those found at Marsa Gabes in the Marmarica (see below), and at Narbek on the Gebel Akhdar (*Section 3a*), are possible. Intensive archaeological survey is desirable.

The sites identified by modern place-names

Agdabiya (?anc. Corniclanum): see Introduction to the Syrtica, above, and Reynolds 2000.

Augila, mod. Augila and Gialo; church (literary evidence only).

Bibliography

Hdt. IV.172, 182; Strabo XVII.838.23 (but the name does not appear in the mss); Mela I.4.28, 8.46; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5.12; Procop. *Aed.* VI. ii. 14-20; *Acta Conc. Const.* 553; Pietschmann 1896; Gsell 1929, 143, n.; Degrassi 1930; Goodchild 1951*b*, 16 = 1976*a*, 193; 1953, 67 = 1976*a*, 196; Rebuffat 1969-70; 1970, 1-20; Stucchi 1975, 359, 360, 363, 441; Cameron 1985, 89; Roques 1987, 121; 1996, 416-9, 429-31; Mattingly 1995, 39; Reynolds 2000.

Two adjacent oasis settlements (called *poleis* by Procopius; but the classical sense of the word is hardly appropriate), 'about four days' journey from the coast for an unencumbered traveller', at a meeting-place of several desert tracks, where Libyans of the Syrtica harvested dates in the autumn (Hdt. *cit.*) as they do today. Their visits no doubt explain why Procopius' account of Justinian's organisation of the western defences of Cyrenaica at and around Boreion should be interrupted by reference to his Christianisation of the still pagan Augilites and construction of a church of the Theotokos for them. Procopius' account of the inhabitants as worshippers of Ammon and Alexander, who included a number of sacred slaves, has aroused scepticism, some believing that he has confused Augila with Siwa; but he has more or less correctly related Augila to Boreion, so that his description of Justinian's intervention should not be lightly discounted. Augila was certainly in contact with Siwa so that migration of a cult of Ammon from one to the other presents no difficulty, although it is perhaps less easy to accept for the associated cult of Alexander. Recently, Mattingly and, independently, Roques have suggested that Augila might be the location of the oracle of Ammon consulted by the Libyan rebels against Byzantine rule in AD 536 (Corippus, *Johann.* II.110; III.81; VI.116, 147, 179, 190, 556; VII.515, 519, 534; VIII.252, 304). If correct, this would add a dimension to Justinian's imposition of Christianity there, but it lacks conclusive proof. Corippus does not mention Augila and his vivid accounts do not tally either with other evidence for consultations of the oracle of Ammon at Siwa or with Mela's account of the only oracular consultations (of the Di Manes) which are specifically attested at Augila. Parke 1967, 232-3 argued that, in detail at least, they may be distinctly imaginative. Cameron 1985 agrees, Roques 1996 opposes.

No church or Christian artefact has ever been reported at Augila; but there has been no extended archaeological investigation. A suggestion that a bishop of Augila attended the Council of Constantinople in 553 rests, as Roques argues, on a very uncertain interpretation of the manuscript tradition.

Bu Grada, anc. Boreion: a bishop, a church (literary evidence only).

Bibliography

Stad. 78-9; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.43; Itin. Ant. 66.1; Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* II.3; Amm. Marc. XXII.15.2; Procop. *Aed.* VI. ii. 11-4, 21-3; Philost. *HE* 1.8; Beecheys 1828, 233-5 (wrongly naming it Tabilba); Sethe 1897; Goodchild 1951*b* = 1976*a*, 187-94 with plates 63, 65; Stucchi 1975, 361, 363, 457; Purcaro 1976, 331-2; Roques 1987, 79, 107, 226-7, 326, 340, 353, 381; 1996, 416-9, 427-8; Preece 1999; Reynolds 2000.

Of the two sites in the Syrtica named Boreion, one, which is 23.5km south of Berenike (Benghasi) and identifiable with the headland now called Ras Taiunes, does not seem ever to have been permanently occupied, at least by a population of any size (Goodchild 1951*b*, 11). In consequence it is reasonable to assume that the seat of the bishop of Boreion attested by Philostorgius was the site 12km northeast of Marsa Brega which is several times described as a village already during the Roman period.

Promontory site with a small harbour, near the bottom of the Gulf of Syrte, 'in the frontier regions of Africa' (Sozomen), 'the last *polis* of Pentapolis towards the west' but in an area 'where the tax-collectors never went' (Procopius); just to the west a line of low hills (not, indeed, mountains as Procopius thought, but sufficiently high to give useful views and also capable of providing cover for raiders of the overland route across the Syrtica) gave it a strategic importance for the defence of Cyrenaica. A bishop Sentianos (of Arian sympathies) is reported there in the fourth century at the time of the Council of Nicea (though he is not attested as present there); in the sixth Procopius claims that Justinian chose it as a key point in the defensive system here, fortified it (both a fort and a fortified settlement are visible), converted a nearby community of Jews to Christianity and transformed their ancient synagogue into a church. He followed this with conversion and church-building in the oasis of Augila presumably because many Libyans of this area regularly went to Augila for the date harvest in the autumn (as still happens).

The fortifications of the citadel and town, as well as the fort, were clearly visible when Goodchild visited, and seemed to him consonant with a Justinianic date; and some ceramics found there recently seem to date from the fifth-sixth centuries. Nothing has been observed, here or in the neighbourhood, which can be certainly identified as a church or as a synagogue. Stucchi noted an apsed building close to the harbour which he thought a possible church. The fourth-century bishop implies a church, of course; and we should expect one for Justinian's garrison. The transformed synagogue may have been further from the town than Procopius suggests. It may be relevant that Hebrew inscriptions (probably mediaeval) have been found a little to the west, across the border with Tripolitania at Iscina=*Locus Judaeorum Augusti* (Goodchild 1964, 101=1976a, 132-5).

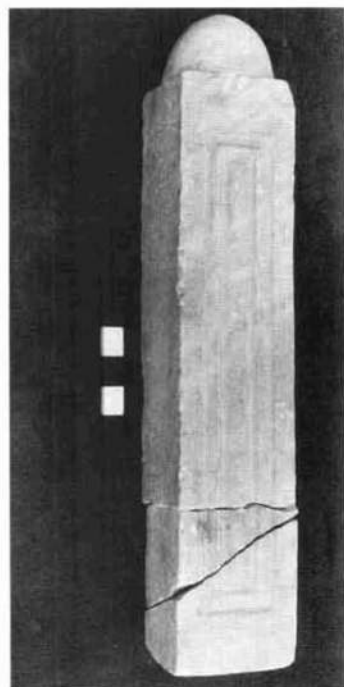
Gusur Khalita, commonly, but incorrectly, called Gasr Khalita (Kalita, also Galida), anc. name unknown, illus. 370: marble chancel post.

Bibliography

Goodchild 1951a, 143 = 1976a, 184; Ward-Perkins 1943, 134-5; 1972, 234; Stucchi 1975, 362 3-0also 524-5; Sear 1978, 263, no. A45 (unaware of the probable findspot).

A small settlement on the south side of the modern road from Benghazi to Agdabiya, c. 17km from the centre of Benghazi, from which marble church furniture has been reported (so Ward-Perkins cit. and a verbal comment from Ali Salem Letrik, formerly of the Department of Antiquities; for detail see below). The most obvious feature now is a ditched building on a hillock, being excavated in 1997 by Yussuf Ben Nasser of the Department of Antiquities at Benghazi, who is showing it to be a fort or fortified farm (as conjectured by Stucchi and by Goodchild). The marble church-furniture presumably came from a nearby building, but it has not been possible in the brief visits made by Reynolds in 1996 and 1997 to discern an appropriate one—the only obvious feature being an olive press. The settlement is on the edge of the region of Tika which is capable of effective agricultural development, so that the wealth implied by the presence of marble items is not too surprising.

If it is the case that items from this site were, for a time, in the Barce Lapidarium at el Merj, as Ward-Perkins and Stucchi have suggested, they have not been identified. On the other hand a chancel post in Benghazi Museum which is almost certainly from Gusur Khalita is described by Sear, 1978, as of bluish grey marble (presumably Proconnesian) and almost complete (w. 0.185m × ht. 1.03m × d. 0.10m), with grooves on both sides and a hemispherical top (illus. 370).



Illus. 370. Gusur Khalita, marble chancel post now in Benghazi.

Soluk, anc. name unknown: ivory diptych in a building now destroyed, which may well have been a church.

Bibliography

Fantoli 1923, 71; †Oliverio 1961, 48-51, no. 28 whence *SEG* XX.778; Goodchild 1966a, 221; Stucchi 1975, 360, 377 (but naming the site of origin as Tansoluk, almost certainly in error); Roques 1987, 119, 355.

Site now of a modern town, some 60km south of Benghazi, beside important wells on the edge of desert; it is always likely to have been a significant place for control of the approaches to Berenike and to the Gebel Akhdar. Although the desert is close there is some possibility of cultivation in the vicinity; Roques reported ancient oil presses there and argues also for vineyards, on the basis of an uncertain identification of the Ampelos of P s. Skylax 108 with the area occupied by the Ampalaontes of *Tab. Peut.* A strongly Libyan element in the population might be expected.

Fragments of an ivory diptych (now lost) were recorded in Benghazi Museum already in 1923 when they were said to have been found here. Stucchi attributed them to Tansoluk (*Section 3a*) which was sometimes called Soluk by nineteenth century travellers; but Fantoli and Oliverio are unlikely to have confused the two places. The fragments are reported to have been lying on a block of the soft local stone with a hollowed upper surface, in the ruins of a building which could have been a church; the building was presumably one of the Roman buildings reported by Fantoli to have been destroyed when the centre of modern Soluk was constructed.

Ivory tablet reconstructed from fragments, now lost; probably a liturgical diptych, giving the names of persons to be remembered during Mass.

	(a: older hand)	(b: later hand)
		...]ο
		...]υ
		...]υ
	...]υ	...]ίου
5	...]ου	
	...]υ	...]φη
	...]υ	
	...]υ	...]νιο
	...]νου	...]νουτίου
10	... Λ]ουκίου	...]νουφίδου
	...]θίου	
	...]νδου	...]η[·]είου
	...]ρου	... Π]τολεμίου
	...]ου	
15	...]ε[·]δωνος	...][[·]ου
	[·]Ρ]ουφου	...]ογίου
	Θ[ε]ολόγο[υ]	
	Φ[·?]νησ[ι?]λου	... Κρί]σπου
	Φλαβίου	...]ου
20	'Ιουλίου	...]όνου
	'Ετηάρχ[ου]	
	'Ιουλίου	
	Σέμν[ου]	
	[·]τ[...]	
25	'Ομυ[...]	
	Βοτ[...]	
	[...]	
	Φι[...]	
	Μι[·]·]ονο[...]	
30	[·]Ι]ουλίου	
	[·?]βιπωνο[...]	
	[Εύ]οτίου	

[· · ·]μ[· · ·]
 Θυ[· · ·]
 35 Ο[· · ·]
 Θεοδώρ[ου]
 [Κ]ρίτωνο[ς]
 [· · ·]υ[
 Πίσωνο[ς]
 40 Θεοδώρ[ου]
 Θευ[· · ·]
 [Εὐ]φημ[ί]ο[υ]
 [· · ·]υ[
 · · ·]ος[· · ·]
 45 · · ·]νίου
 · · ·]θ[· · ·]ου
 · · ·]ο[· · ·]ντ[· · ·]

Towards the top of the outside face: · · ·]Μ[· · ·

(a) Perhaps l.15 Φ[ε]ίδωνος, 18 Φ[α]νήσκου, 31 Βιπώνο[υ] Ο.
 The names in ll.9, 10, 24 are distinguished by crowns placed above them.

Oliverio dated the earlier of these texts in the mid-fifth century and the later in the sixth; but these datings can only be considered very approximate.

On liturgical diptychs carrying lists of names, whether of saints to be addressed or persons on whose behalf prayers are offered, he referred to F. Cabrol in *DACL* VI.1 (1920) cols. 1048f. They were certainly already in use in the early church and might be laid on the altar and/or read from during the litany. Here the names Etearchus (a, l.21), traditionally common in Cyrenaica, and Ptolemeus (b, l.10) for Ptolemaeus, very common there in and after the Hellenistic period, suggest that the persons listed are Cyrenaican, but their status is not clear. The crowns above three names must indicate some special distinction (but they seem to be placed within the list without receiving obvious hierarchical pre-eminence). Where the names are sufficiently legible they conform approximately to what we know of late onomastic practice in Cyrenaica in that a majority is Greek, but there is a substantial minority which are transliterated Latin. None is recognisably Libyan.

Section 4

The Syrtica and the Marmarica

- b. The Marmarica, Libya Inferior (Sicca),
Western Desert

Section 4b: The Marmarica, Libya Inferior (Sicca), Western Desert**Bibliography**

(Ps.) Skylax 107, 108; Strabo XVII.838; *Stad.* 7-47; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5.1-3; *P. Vat. Gr.* 11; *Itin. Ant.* 68.3-70.1; 70.7-73.3; Amm. Marc. XXII.16.1; Athan. *Epp.* XII.115; *Syn. Epp.* 5, with Roques 2000 *ad loc.*; Hierocl. 733.4-734.4; Georg. Cypr. 787; *Tab. Peut.*; Just. Ed. XIII; *Acta Conc. Const.* 459; Kees 1930; Bates 1927; Romanelli 1943, 124-8, 135-8, 167-75; Jones 1971, 361, 551; Goodchild 1966*b*, 237-8; Laronde 1987, 219-32; Roques 1987, 109-33; 1989, 69-75; 1996*a*, 410-3, 421-2; White 1996*b*, (with earlier bibliography).

The Marmarica stretches approximately from the Gebel Akhdar to Lake Mareotis. In its western sector lay the sites of the earliest Greek landings in North Africa and, at any rate from the fourth century BC, there was some permanent Greek settlement along the coast and a frontier with Egypt at Sollum (anc. Great Catabathmos). This area was initially administered by the Romans as part of the province of Crete and Cyrene, but at a date in the second century AD which is not precisely established, it was detached to become the Marmaric Nome of Egypt. Diocletian combined it with the Libyan Nome (Catabathmos to Mareotis, but almost certainly including Ammoniake, mod. Siwa) to form a new province of Libya Inferior (sometimes called Sicca) at the time when he also created the province of Libya Superior (Pentapolis). While the civilian affairs of the two provinces seem always to have been separately administered, their military affairs were interrelated and were sometimes combined under one *dux* (see *Introduction I*). For purposes of church history the two provinces may be usefully considered together; the meagre remains of churches in fact show them as resembling those of Pentapolis, perhaps at Marsa Gabes and certainly at Marina el Alamein, although at Marsa Matruh (Paraitonion) they seem to belong to a different tradition.

The capital city of Inferior was, probably from the first, Paraitonion (Marsa Matruh). Late references to Darnis (Derna) as metropolis have usually been taken to indicate a change but could, perhaps, be simply mistakes (so Roques).

The line of the western frontier is not clear. For Ptolemy the Geographer, Darnis was the frontier town between the Pentapolis and the Marmaric Nome of Egypt, but actually in the Pentapolis. From Diocletian it is generally assigned to Libya Inferior, as by Synesius (but not by Ammianus), although Synesius offers the complication that its Church claimed ownership of properties which were certainly in Pentapolis. The line presumably lay along the western frontier of its civic territory (which we do not know); but until Synesius' negotiation between the bishops of Darnis and Erythron (*Epp.* 5) it apparently included a few isolated church-properties in Pentapolis.

Justinian in his Thirteenth Edict reorganised its administration at about the same time as he extended its area eastwards, undertook major defence works and installed garrisons at two of its coastal sites, Paraitonion and Antipyrgos (Tobruk).

While the population must have been substantially Libyan and predominantly semi-nomadic (and is no doubt usefully depicted in the account of Synesius *Epp.* 5), there is increasing archaeological evidence to supplement the written testimony of *P. Vat. Gr.* 11 that in the later second century AD there were some quite flourishing settlements on the coast and more development of their immediate hinterlands than was once thought.

Churches have been reported at four sites only, Paraitonion = Marsa Matruh (probably two), Marina el Alamein, Marsa Gabes (rock-cut), Martuba, but there has not been much active archaeological exploration; there are surely more to be found. Perhaps as many as 22 bishops are recorded in 10 sees in the literary sources. Most of the sees are coastal; but Jones suggested that Marmarika was an inland settlement and Roques has put an interesting case for interpreting the titles of the bishops of Libya Secunda, Libya Septimiake and Libya *simpliciter* (Athan. *Tom.*, Introduction) as well as of Marmarika, as descriptions of inland sees whose semi-nomadic populations had no fixed centres. Others have thought that they may result from a corrupt manuscript tradition.



Illus. 371. Derna, Kinissieh.

i: Sites in the Marmarica with reported Christian associations identified by modern place names

Derna, anc. Darnis, *illus. 371*: a possible martyrion or monastery, bishops (literary evidence).

Bibliography

Stad. 47, 48; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5.1; *Itin. Ant.* 68.3, 70.9; Amm. Marc. XXII 16.4,5; Athan., *Festal Letters*, 39; Synesius *Epp.* 66 with Roques 2000 *ad loc.*; Hierocl. 734, 3, 787b; Joh. Mosch., *Prat.* 119; Georg. Cypr. 787b; *Acta Conc. Eph.* 431; Pacho 1827, 102-3 and pl. VIII; Hamilton 1856, 114-8; Sethe 1901; Hyslop/Applebaum 1945, 14; Goodchild 1966*b*, 237, cf. 1976*a*, 257; Jones/Little 1971, 76; Stucchi 1975, 357 (n.6), 363, 421-2, 425-6; Purcaro 1976, 333-4; Roques 1987, 109-10, 329, 333-4, 340; 1996*a*, 422; Reynolds 2000.

Coastal site in well-watered fertile country with a sizeable but not outstanding harbour; first mentioned by Ptolemy who seems to place it in Pentapolis, but on the border with the Marmaric Nome of Egypt. After Diocletian most sources assign it to Libya Inferior except Ammianus, who was presumably mistaken. For George of Cyprus it was the capital of Libya Inferior. Since the capital was certainly or probably Paraitonion earlier, that is often accepted as indicating an administrative change, perhaps in the later sixth century; Roques argues that George was mistaken.

Five bishops are known; Lampon, who died in AD 366 when Athanasius wrote of making provision for a successor; Menas who supported an opponent of Theophilus the metropolitan of Alexandria *c.* AD 400, and was probably sent into exile; Dioskoros his successor (see below); Daniel who was present at Ephesus in AD 431; Theodorus who had previously served as priest under Eulogios the metropolitan of Alexandria in the later sixth century. Of these, Dioskoros was involved in a quarrel with the bishop of Erythron (el Atrun, *Section 2*) over ownership of property in Hydrax (*Section 3b*) and so in Libya Superior. Synesius was involved in the negotiations, as a result of which Dioskoros ceded the property (it included vineyards and olive-groves as well as a castle which was in ruins following an earthquake). In the report on the affair which he sent to Alexandria, Synesius noted that Dioskoros had provided food for the poor in Alexandria from his well-managed property; a significant addition to our knowledge of church affairs.

Owing to medieval and modern developments the ancient town centre has been so overbuilt that almost nothing of it and certainly no urban church is known; Hyslop/Applebaum reported that Corinthian capitals are re-used in the Great Mosque, and these are reported by Roques, who has seen them, to be of the type called Theodosian; they could, of course, have belonged to a civic monument rather than to a church. Pacho and some other travellers have described a rock-cut cemetery on the coast a little east of Derna, whose name, Kinissieh, implies local belief that there had been a church or a chapel there (illus. 371). It consists of a series of rock-cut chambers high on a cliff overlooking an inlet of the sea c. 3km east of the centre of Derna and now within the city suburbs. Stucchi has argued from what he regarded as a rock-cut apse that there was probably a *martyrion* and, from the treatment of associated rock-cut chambers, that there was probably also a *coenobium* here. Roques has denied the adequacy of the evidence for this interpretation; Pacho implied that Christian symbols were visible here, and Stucchi 1975, 363, n.1 reported from P. Mamoli in *Pionieri Italiani in Libia* (Milan, 1912) 307 (not seen) 'evidenti elementi architettonici paleocristiani'; but they were not in fact observed when Goodchild and a party visited it in 1950; and in David Smith's photographs only modern graffiti and no characteristically Christian features of any kind are visible (none appear in illus. 371).

That there was a rock-cut cemetery here in the Roman period seems probable; illus. 371 suggests a row of niches for the funerary busts characteristic of Roman Cyrenaica above an entrance. It presumably served a community separate from that of Darnis itself, given its distance from Derna.

Marina el Alamein, ? = either anc. Antiphrae (*Section 4 b ii*) or Leukaspis or a combination of the two: church.

Bibliography

Daszewski 1990, 16f.; 1991; 1993; 1995.

Coastal site some 96 km west of Alexandria, the main area of settlement being on the south shore of a large lagoon which is separated from the sea by a narrow strip of very white sand. This strip has suggested to one excavator the identification of the site (at least the harbourside part of it) with Leukaspis (Strabo XVII.799; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5). Discovered during bulldozing for modern development as a *marina*, it was shown by rescue-excavation to have been an unwallled but sizeable place (at least 1 × 0.5 km in extent) of some pretensions and sophistication, with a number of what look like public buildings, including a church. It seems to have been occupied from approximately the second century BC to the early seventh century AD and shows some clear Egyptian influences but also contacts overseas and westwards.

The church is located on the eastern edge of the settlement and is a rectangular structure with nave and two aisles, an inscribed apse at the east end flanked by angle-chapels and a narthex at the west end. It seems to have been reconstructed on a number of occasions; and at an unknown date there was a burial in the north aisle. Unstratified coin finds of the fourth and fifth centuries are the only published clues to the date. There is no published plan. Daszewski draws attention to its affinities with Cyrenaican churches and with Syrian ones; but thinks that there is little like it in Egypt except perhaps a small fifth-century building at Abu Mena.

Marsa Gabes, anc. name unknown: church

Bibliography

Laronde 1987, 221, 224; Mohamed, forthcoming.

Coastal site with a small harbour, c. 150km east of Antipyrgos (Tobruk) where Fadel Ali Mohamed reported a cave, the Kef Essaem, which he interprets as a rock-cut church. It has a projecting apse at the east end, a nave and two aisles (one containing rock-cut benches) divided from one another by rock-cut colonnades. It is said locally that there was once an inscribed stone near the entrance, but it has not been found.

Marsa Matruh, anc. Paraitonion, Paratonion, also called Ammonia (so Strabo), illus. 372-74: one certain and one possible church, a statue of the Good Shepherd, a Menas *ampulla*, bishops (literary evidence).

Bibliography

(Ps.) Skylax 107; Strabo XVII.799; *Stad.* 19; Pliny *HN*, V.39; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5.3; Amm. Marc. XXII.16; Claudian *Bell. Gild.* V.160; Just. *Ed.* XIII; Procop. *Aed.* VI.2; Hierocl. 733.5; Georg. Cypr. 787c; *Tab. Peut.*; Socr. *HE* 1.6; Athan. *Tom.* 619.10; ; *id.*, *Apol. Const.* 32; *id.*, *Fug.* 7; Epiphanius. *Haer.* 73.26.8; Philost. *HE* III.19; *id.* VII.6, cf. Theodoret *HE* II.28.3; Theod. Trim., chs. 6, 8, 18 for the story of 401; †Bates 1927, 128-36; †Goodchild 1991; Kees, 1949; Jones 1971, 305-6; Stucchi 1975, 358; Roques 1987, 110-1, 226, 326-9, 331, 340, 355; 1996a, 395, 400, 412, 421-2; White 1996a (referring also to travellers' accounts and his own earlier excavation reports).

Coastal site c. 295km west of Alexandria with a good harbour flanked by a series of lagoons. Archaeological evidence for a substantial settlement has been found along the shores of the harbour itself and of the east and west lagoons (although modern development has now destroyed much of it); in the surrounding country wells and cisterns indicate associated agricultural development. In addition to its seaborne connections it stood on the main land route between Egypt and Cyrenaica and at the roadhead of an important track to the Ammonium at Siwa.

There is some evidence that it was a *polis* in the original Greek sense at the time of the Roman annexation of Egypt, surely therefore the chief city of the Nome of Libya, so that it would naturally become the capital city of Diocletian's province of Libya Inferior; and it was surely such at the time of Justinian's decision to give it major fortifications and a garrison. George of Cyprus on the other hand gives the title of metropolis to Darnis, from which some argue that there was an administrative change; Roques believes that George has made a mistake. That Claudian refers to it in connection with the revolt of Gildon presumably indicates that there were Libyans in its area who were restive at that time; Procopius suggests threatened attacks by Maurysii as the context for Justinian's fortifications.

A number of bishops are attested—a Titus at the Council of Nicea in AD 325, a Seras noted as a strong Arian from c. AD 350 (exiled c. AD 358 and recalled by Constantius, he was present at Constantinople at the enthronement of Eudoxus of Antioch in AD 360, and is also mentioned by Philostorgios as bishop in AD 363-4), Gaius present at Athanasius' Council at Alexandria in February of AD 362 (he was perhaps the Gaius noted by Athanasius among the bishops of Egypt and Libya who were in exile in AD 356). He must have interchanged with Seras. A Loukianos was one of the opponents of Theophilus of Alexandria in AD 400/1.

The Monuments

1. The probable church or chapel by the harbour, illus. 372-73.

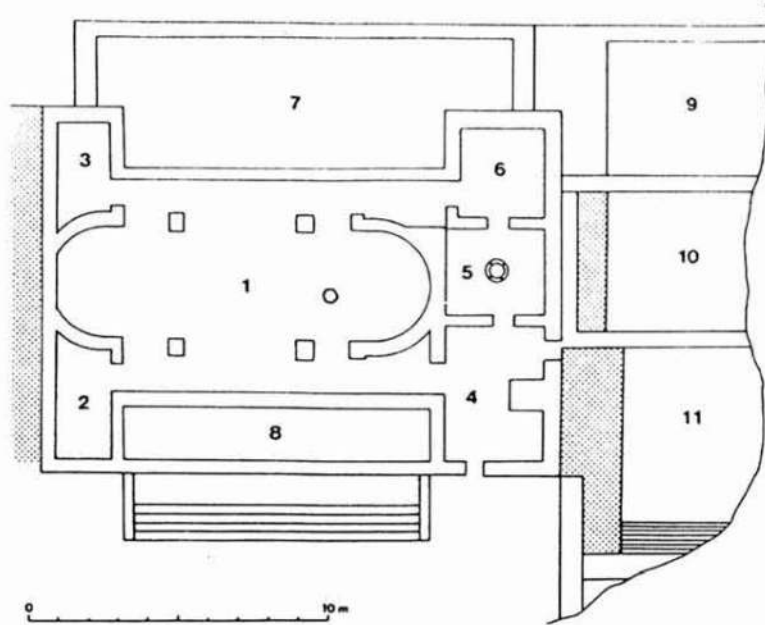
Bibliography

†Bates 1927, 128-36; Masser 1929, 31; †Goodchild 1991; White 1996a, 74, with fig. 12.

Building (now destroyed) close to the southern shore of the main harbour, due south of the harbour entrance, and some 100 yds. from a Byzantine house, excavated by Bates in 1913-4 (but for the *post mortem* publication his widow had only his notebooks to work from); Bates' working notes described it as a bath. It was re-examined shortly after by L. Goodenough, who hesitated between a basilica and a bath, and subsequently by Masser who described it as a 'double-apsidal Christian basilica'. That it was probably a Christian church or chapel, although of unusual plan, was the view reached independently by Goodchild after study of Bates' published notes, drawings and photographs and of Goodenough's unpublished ones. He argued that it showed none of the features characteristic of bath buildings and had produced several, particularly an item which he believed to be a leg to uphold an altar table, appropriate to a church. He proposed to date it in the sixth century but did not offer the detail of his reasoning for that.

MARSA MATRUH

CHURCH BY THE HARBOUR



Illus. 373. Marsa Matruh: church by the harbour (from R. G. Goodchild).

cistern underlay the eastern half of the central area, thought by Bates to be an earlier construction but certainly in use during the life of the building, fed by rainfall through a covered channel from the north terrace and accessible via a well shaft in the central area.

The outer walls, judged mainly by Bates' photographs, consisted of sizeable squared blocks in the lower courses and at corners, jambs etc., combined with mortared rubble to make what was a typically Byzantine build in Goodchild's opinion, and one capable of carrying a heavy roof; but at some point the east and west ends had been buttressed with mud-brick revetments. Other structures beyond the buttresses were inferior in workmanship and of uncertain relation to the church. A flight of four steps leading up to the southern terrace was taken by Bates to be earlier than our building but seemed to Goodchild likely to be an approach to its main entrance. The floors consisted of limestone flags over which, in some areas at least, marble panels had been laid and, in the west side-aisle only, red-painted plaster.

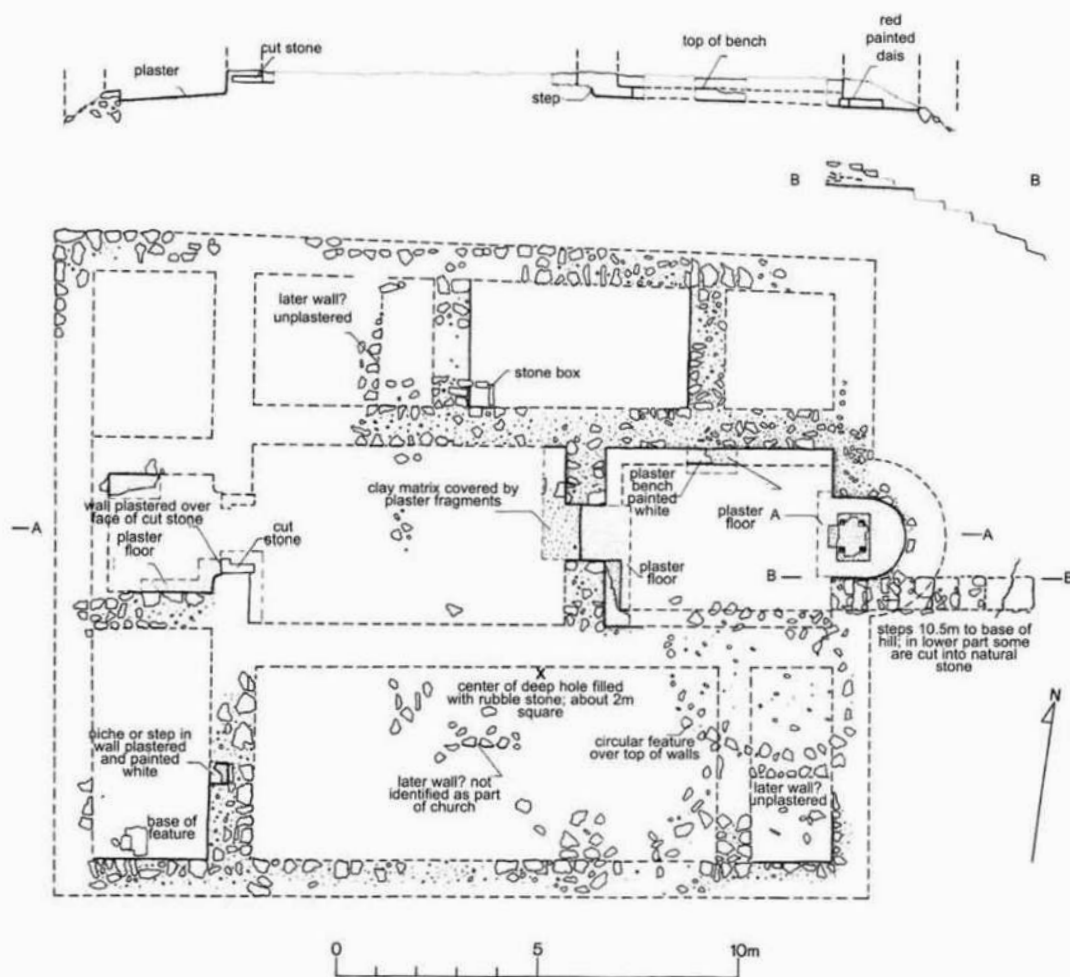
Loose finds included (1) limestone column-drums, once plastered, and simple limestone capitals, 'characteristically Byzantine', which Goodchild thought likely to have come from a loggia on the south terrace (their size being unsuitable for use in the central feature); (2) marble panels with mouldings, very probably chancel-screens; (3) fragments of cipollino columns (diam. 0.23m) which might have supported a canopy over the altar; (4) a small colonnette (diam. 0.08m) in which Goodchild recognised a table leg of a type normal in Cyrenaica to uphold an altar; (5) fragments of wall-plaster with painted letters, none large enough to give a complete word, but one—apparently—including a plain cross.

2. Menas ampulla

Bates (1927, 181) records the discovery of a Menas *ampulla* in a Byzantine house close to the presumed church no. 1 (examples have also been found in Libya Superior, probably at Apollonia/Sozusa, certainly at Berenike, Ptolemais and Taucheira, possibly at Ras el Hilal; and there is a building or a precinct dedicated to St. Menas at Siret Akreim).

MARSA MATRUH

CHURCH ON THE COASTAL RIDGE



Illus. 374. Church on the coastal ridge (from Donald White).

3. Church on the coastal ridge, illus. 374.

Bibliography

White 1989, 88-93; 1996a, 79 with fig. 15 and note by Donald Bailey p. 80.

Small church on the coastal ridge between the sea and the north-east corner of the first eastern lagoon, found and surveyed, but not excavated, by the University of Pennsylvania's expedition to Marsa Matruh. The plan shows a rectangular structure measuring *c.* 22m × 16.25m, with a slightly off-axis apse, probably projecting, at the east end.² Entry must have been in the centre of the west wall (which is lost) into the

² The exterior of the walls here is lost and the tumble of stones is such that it is unclear from the outside what was the ground-plan, as White stresses. In the interior, however, two points seem to point to a projecting apse: *a* that the altar base is so placed that the apse, if it did not project, would have been within the thickness of the back wall; *b* that the survey showed up what it is hard to explain except as part of the interior curve of an apse.

centre of the three rooms which occupy the whole width of the building here and from which a partly surviving door gives into the nave (down a shallow step); it faces the door of entry to the chancel (5.60m × 4.00m) (up a shallow step) and beyond that the base for the altar which is located within the entry to the apse. Where the walls between nave and aisles survive they are solid and there is no evidence for colonnades or piers; no evidence is visible either for the doorways between them or for those between the sets of rooms within the aisles or at the west end.

In the central room at the west end there is an earth floor but the nave floor was plastered and the chancel floor was of whitened plaster. The walls dividing the chancel and the nave are of rubble. Along the north wall of the chancel is a bench of similar construction, covered with whitened plaster. The base for the altar-table is rectangular with a projection 0.25m deep on the east side; it has been covered with red plaster and shows four holes in the top for the squared legs of the table. The legs are different from those normal in Cyrenaica, for which there was evidence in the Harbour Church, White, n. 27 ap. Goodchild 1990, 209.

In the north aisle there were three rooms, a small corner room at the east end and two larger ones to the west of it; in the rather broader south aisle there is another small corner room at the east end and one larger room to the west of it. Of the three rooms at the west end the southern one contains a small whitened niche (or step) in its east wall. There is a cistern under the nave.

At present the only clue to the date of construction comes from the pottery found loose in and around the building, which includes a number of items dateable between the fourth and early seventh centuries. Excavation might, of course, yield more; although it is probable that the picture has been confused by post-Christian activity in and around the church (note especially a late stairway at the east end outside the apse and that the building has apparently been stripped of decorative features).

In his publications White has noted possible connections with early Coptic churches.

4. Statue of the Good Shepherd

Bibliography

Breccia 1929; White 1996a, 71 with fig. 9.

Marble statue of a shepherd carrying a sheep on his shoulders, and flanked by adoring lambs; found in 1929 'during excavation for a modern building'; now in Alexandria Museum, inv. no. 22273. It was dated by Breccia, on the basis of a number of parallels, in the fourth or early fifth centuries and must surely be imported work.

Martuba, anc. name unknown: church.

Bibliography

Shahat Departmental Archive.

Inland site some 25km east of Derna where a church has been reported by Fadel Ali Mohamed. No details are available.

Siwa, anc. Ammoniake: ? a hermit (literary evidence).

Bibliography

Athan. *Apol. Const.* 32; *id.*, *H. Ar.* 72; Joh. Mosch. *Prat.* 123A; Hierocl. 734.4; Georg. *Cypr.* 787e; Pietschmann 1894, sv *Amnoneion*; Parke 1967, 232-3; Stucchi 1975, 565-76.

The oasis was the centre of the Libyan cult of the ram-horned god Ammon, god of flocks and of water in the desert, which spread therefrom both in the Libyan and in the Greek world; and it was famous as the seat of his oracle. Historians are inclined to say that the influence of the cult at Siwa weakened in the later Hellenistic period and never recovered, but the evidence is not quite clear. While it may be true in relation to Greeks and Romans, Ammon is attested as a still vigorous influence among Libyan peoples for whom we have few records (for his influence in the sixth-century Libyan revolt against Byzantine rule in Tripolitania, see under Augila, *Section 4a*) and, while he may have been consulted then at a centre or centres elsewhere, the possibility of

continued consultations at Siwa is hardly to be excluded. There is certainly no very positive evidence for the adoption of Christianity at Ammoniake. Athanasius speaks of the lot of bishops exiled to Ammoniake as cruelly hard; Moschus' hermit living there welcomed a visitor as a heaven-sent means of providing himself with Christian burial. A church has been reported there, but never confirmed (Stucchi 1975, 574). Since Ammoniake regularly features in the lists of places as part of Libya Inferior we might have expected Justinian to intervene, as Procopius says that he did at Augila in the Syrtica; the expectation is no doubt in part the reason why some scholars have thought that Procopius confused Augila with Siwa and that the Christianisation and church-building which he attributes to Justinian at Augila took place in fact at Siwa. Further archaeological investigation is badly needed.

Tobruk, anc. Antipyrgos: bishops (literary evidence).

Bibliography

(Ps.) Skylax 108; *Stad.* 38; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5.3; Procop. *Aed.* VI. ii. 2; *Tab. Peut.*; Georg. Cypr. 787f.; *Acta Conc. Niceae, ibid. Seleucia, ibid. Const.* 553; Pacho 1827, 48; Pietschmann 1894, 2534; Goodchild 1966b, 237-8; Stucchi 1975, 358, 359, 485; Purcaro 1976, 327; Roques 1987, 80, 111, 226, 267, 327, 341, 356, *id.* 1996a, 395, 400, 432; Mohamed 1997, 5-9; Reynolds 2000.

Coastal site with a fine harbour but a poor supply of fresh water, first attested in the fourth century BC, although apparently of minor significance until late antiquity; but traces of a Graeco-Roman settlement on the south side of the harbour have now been recorded, although their significance cannot yet be fully assessed. Bishops are attested in the fourth century AD, probably a Serapion who was present at Nicea in 325, certainly a Serapion present at Seleucia in 359, as well as an Aemilianus present at Constantinople in 553. Justinian built a fortified position on the north side of the harbour and garrisoned it. Stretches of walls likely to be his were seen by Pacho (who described them as Saracen) and were partly traced by Goodchild during reconstruction of the modern city after the Second World War; very little can be seen today. No church and no specifically Christian artefacts have been reported.

ii: Place names in the Marmarica with Christian associations known from written sources only

Antiphrae, Antiphra, Antiphro, possibly mod. Marina el Alamein (*Section 4 b i*): bishops (literary evidence only).

Bibliography

Strabo XVII.799; *Stad.* 7; Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5.7; Athan. *Tom.* 619. 10; Hierocl. 734.2; Georg. Cypr. 787g; *Acta Conc. Nic., ibid. Const.* 459; Pietschmann 1894, 2531; Jones 1971, 342; Roques 1987, 112, 326, 329, 337, 341.

Coastal site some 90km west of Alexandria, notable for its wine; a village in Ptolemy's account but probably a small town later and one of several possible identifications for mod. Marina el Alamein (*Section 4 b i*). A bishop Serapion may have been present at Nicea in 325 (but more probably came from Tobruk); a bishop Menas is attested at Athanasius' Council at Alexandria in 362; and a bishop Apollon at the Council of Constantinople in 459.

Geryas East, ? = Gereatis (*Itin. Ant.* 71.6), location uncertain: bishops (literary evidence).

Bibliography

Athan. *Epp.* XII. 115; Roques 1987, 327, 341.

In AD 340 Athanasius recorded the appointment of a bishop Andragathus here in place of the deceased Hierax. If the identity of the place with the Gereatis of *Itin. Ant.* is accepted, this is a coastal site c. 52km west of Catabathmus (so Roques).

Geryas South, ? = Geras (*Itin. Ant.* 71.9), location uncertain: bishops (literary evidence).

Bibliography

Athan. *Epp.* XII. 115; Theophilus *ap.* Jerome *Epp.* vol. V (Labourt), no. 100, §18; Roques 1987, 327, 341.

In AD 340 Athanasius recorded the appointment of a bishop Chenius here in place of the deceased Nikon and it is possible that in AD 404 Theophilus similarly records the appointment of a bishop Pizosus in place of the deceased Eudaemon (a Libyan rather than an Egyptian location for his Geras is not certain, but if its identity with the Geras of the *Itin. Ant.* is accepted, this is a coastal site c. 26.5km east of Catabathmos; so Roques).

Marmarike, unidentified: bishops (literary evidence).

Bibliography

Socr. *HE* 1.8, 9; Theod. Trim., LIX.68.18. Georg. Cypr. 787i; *Acta Conc. Nic.*; Chadwick 1960; Jones 1971, 361; Roques 1987, 56, 111, 326, 327, 331, 341, 355.

A bishop Theonas of Marmarike, was present at the Council of Nicea in AD 325 when he refused to subscribe to the condemnation of Arius; and a bishop Clementinus of Marmarika was among those who opposed Theophilus, the Metropolitan of Alexandria, in his dispute with Isidore, probably in 401, and appealed to the Pope. These are both obviously men of standing, so that their sees should be one of some consequence. Jones argued that it was the former chief city of the Marmaric Nome of Egypt and an inland site with a large rural area. Roques compares it with the titles of the bishops of Libya Secunda, Libya Septimiake and Libya *simpliciter*, suggesting that all referred to an inland see (?sees) whose inhabitants were semi-nomadic groups without fixed centres. There seems to be no conclusive evidence.

Zagyliis, mod. name unknown: bishops (literary evidence).

Bibliography

Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5.3; *Itin. Ant.* 72.1; *Acta Conc. Eph.* 449, *ibid. Const.* 459; Jones 1971, 342; Roques 1987, 112, 337, 341, 356.

Coastal site c. 74km east of Catabathmos, a village in Ptolemy's account, but later probably a small town. Two bishops are recorded, Philokalos at the Council of Ephesus in AD 449, Maximus at the Council of Constantinople in AD 459.

Zygrai, mod. name unknown: bishop (literary evidence).

Bibliography

Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5.3; Athan. *Tom.* 619. 10; Jones 1971, 342; Roques 1987, 112, 328, 329, 341, 356.

Coastal site with a harbour, c. 5km east of Catabathmos, a village in Ptolemy's account, but later probably a small town. A bishop Markos is recorded at a meeting summoned by Athanasius in AD 362, likely to be the Markos referred to as in post in AD 341 but in exile in AD 356 (so Roques).

Zygris or Zygis, mod. name unknown: bishop (literary evidence).

Bibliography

Ptol. *Geog.* IV.5.3; *Acta Conc. Eph.* 449; Leglay 1972; Roques 1987, 112, 337, 341, 356.

Coastal site with a harbour, c. 45km east of Marsa Matruh. A bishop Loukios is recorded at the Council of Ephesus in AD 449.

Appendix

Report on the stable isotope analysis of marble fragments from the basilicas at El Atrun and Cyrene, Libya

S. Walker and M. J. Hughes

Abstract: Three fragments of marble from the site of the Christian basilicas at el Atrun, and one each from the two urban churches at Cyrene (Libya) have been subjected to stable isotope analysis. The results show that all except one fall within the pattern of the quarry samples of Proconnesian marble.

Introduction

A number of churches in Libya were provided with some prefabricated fittings of marble, most lavishly the two at el Atrun, but among others less lavishly adorned the two urban churches at Cyrene. A single marble fragment collected during excavation at el Atrun by Professor Walter Widrig was analysed for stable isotopes in 1994 (DSR laboratory number 7091-5-T). Two further pieces were collected from the site in 1998 by J. M. Reynolds with two other pieces from the east and central churches at Cyrene. The descriptions of the five are given in Table 1.

Stable isotope analyses

The four further samples were supplied by J. M. Reynolds as small chips. Powder samples were obtained from each item either by crushing a cleaned fragment in an agate mortar, or using a 4mm tungsten carbide tipped masonry drill: initial drillings were discarded to avoid material affected by weathering processes. The samples were packaged and sent to the Department of Geology, University of Georgia, USA, together with a reference sample of a stable isotope standard (MAR-3), which has been analysed repeatedly in the Department of Scientific Research. The standard would provide a check of the compatibility of the results from Georgia with our own database.

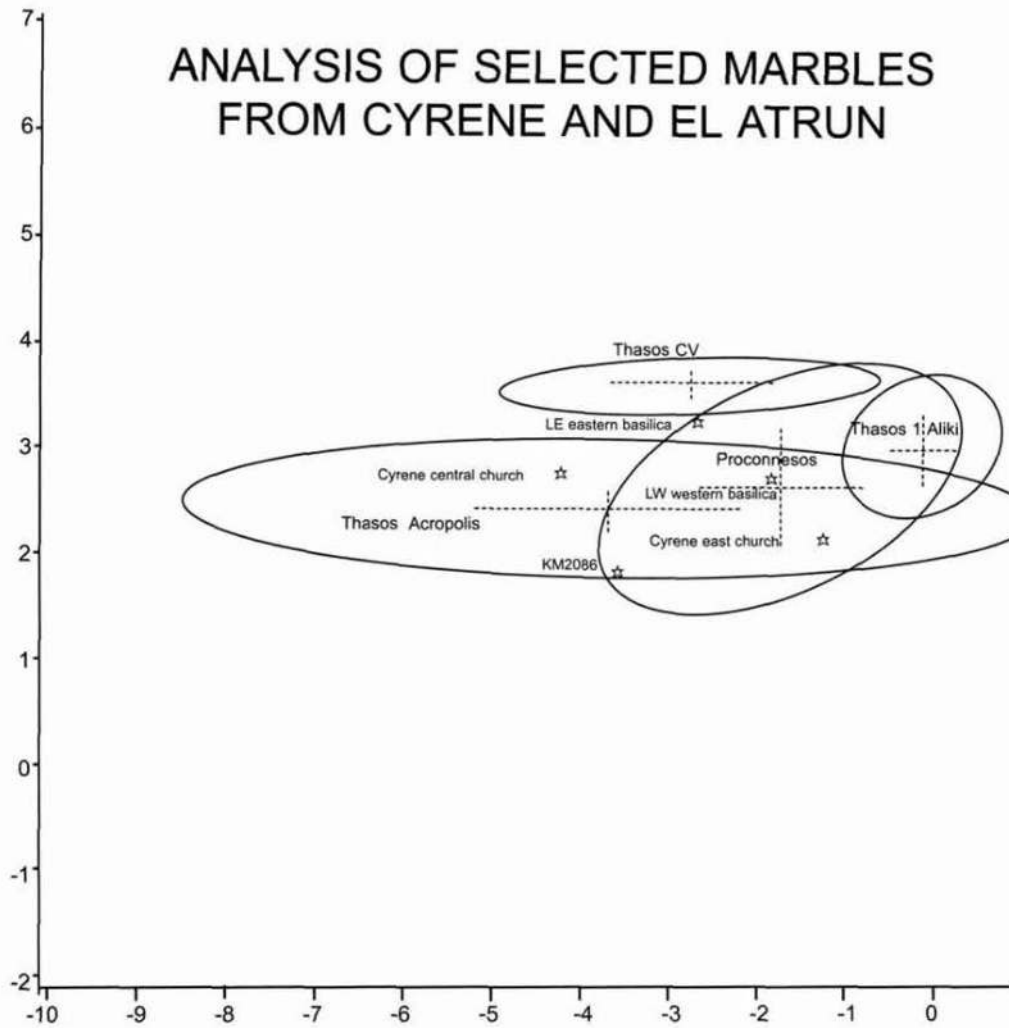
Results

The analytical results are given in Table 1. The results for the marble standard MAR-3 fall between one and two standard deviations of the average obtained by the Department of Scientific Research with its own mass spectrometer, and, together with an earlier unpublished study, indicate that the Georgia results can be used without further inter-laboratory adjustment. The data on all five pieces from the basilica show a scatter of points, i.e. there are no closely similar analyses among the five.

A diagram was plotted, representing the carbon ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$) and oxygen ($\delta^{18}\text{O}$) ratios of the samples, and the 90% confidence ellipses (Leese, 1988) of the isotopic signatures from quarry data made available by Professor Norman Herz (Herz 1987), supplemented by data from quarry samples analysed in the Department of Scientific Research.

Discussion

Figure 1 shows the results on the el Atrun and Cyrene fragments plotted against a selected series of quarry ellipses of Proconnesian and Thasian marble, i.e. excluding quarries which were not operational at this period or are



Illus. 375. Analysis of selected marbles from Cyrene and el Atrun (British Museum).

Plot of the stable isotope ratio results for carbon and oxygen for five fragments from the site of the basilicas at Cyrene and el Atrun, Cyrenaica, Libya, indicating their origin in the Proconnesian quarry for four of the fragments. The 90% confidence ellipses for a selected range of quarry data are also shown, with their centroids and one standard deviation about the centroid.

very unlikely sources. Four of the fragments fall within the Proconnesian quarry 90% confidence ellipse, while one falls outside, with more negative oxygen isotope ratios. This fifth fragment, CyrC, would be inside a 99% probability ellipse for Proconnesian marble, i.e. there is only a 1 in 100 chance of it having the same stable isotope values as those quarry samples. The ellipses for three quarries on the island of Thasos are also shown for reference; of these, only the Thasos Acropolis field overlaps with the results obtained on

BMRL	Sample No.	Description	Carbon ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$)	Oxygen ($\delta^{18}\text{O}$)
7091-1-Y	CyrE	east church	2.17	-1.22
7091-2-L	Lat2	LE Eastern basilica	3.27	-2.70
7091-3-N	Lat4	LW Western basilica	2.73	-1.82
7091-4 -Q	CyrC	central church	2.77	-4.20
7091 -5-T	(KM2086)		1.84	-3.55
MAR 3 standard			1.26	-3.53
BM mean (n=131)			1.039	-3.229
BM standard deviation			0.15	0.26

Illus. 376. Table: Stable isotope analyses of marbles from the site of the basilicas at Cyrene and el Atrun.

this occasion. It has been claimed that marble church furnishings were exported from the quarries at Alikı. No evidence was found in this programme of analysis for marble obtained from the quarries at Thasos/Alikı. It should also be noted that the two samples collected from the urban churches at Cyrene appear to come from different quarries.

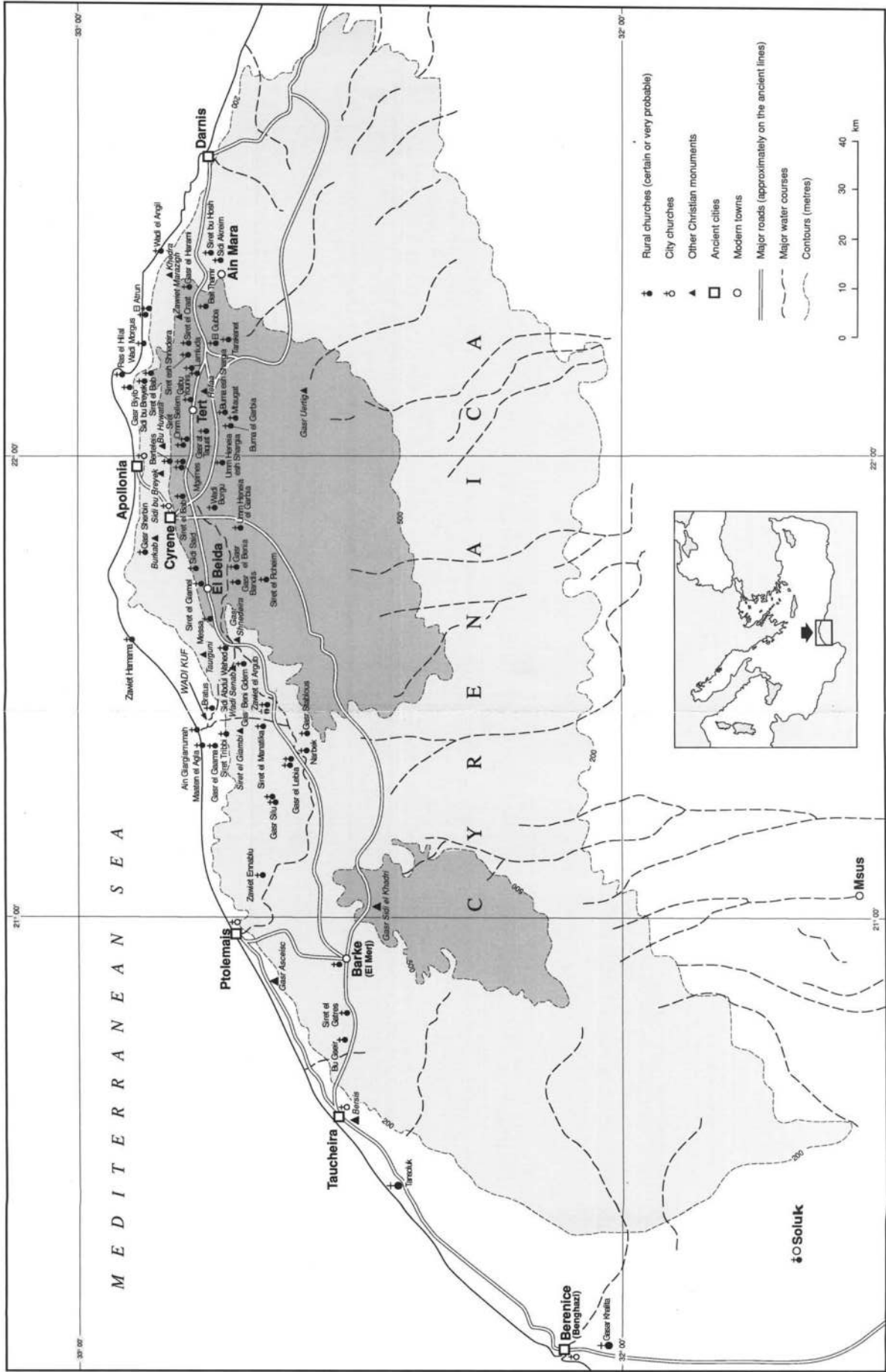
Conclusion

Stable isotope analyses of five fragments from the site of the basilicas at el Atrun, and the two urban churches at Cyrene (Libya), are consistent with the use of Proconnesian marble for four of the fragments analysed.

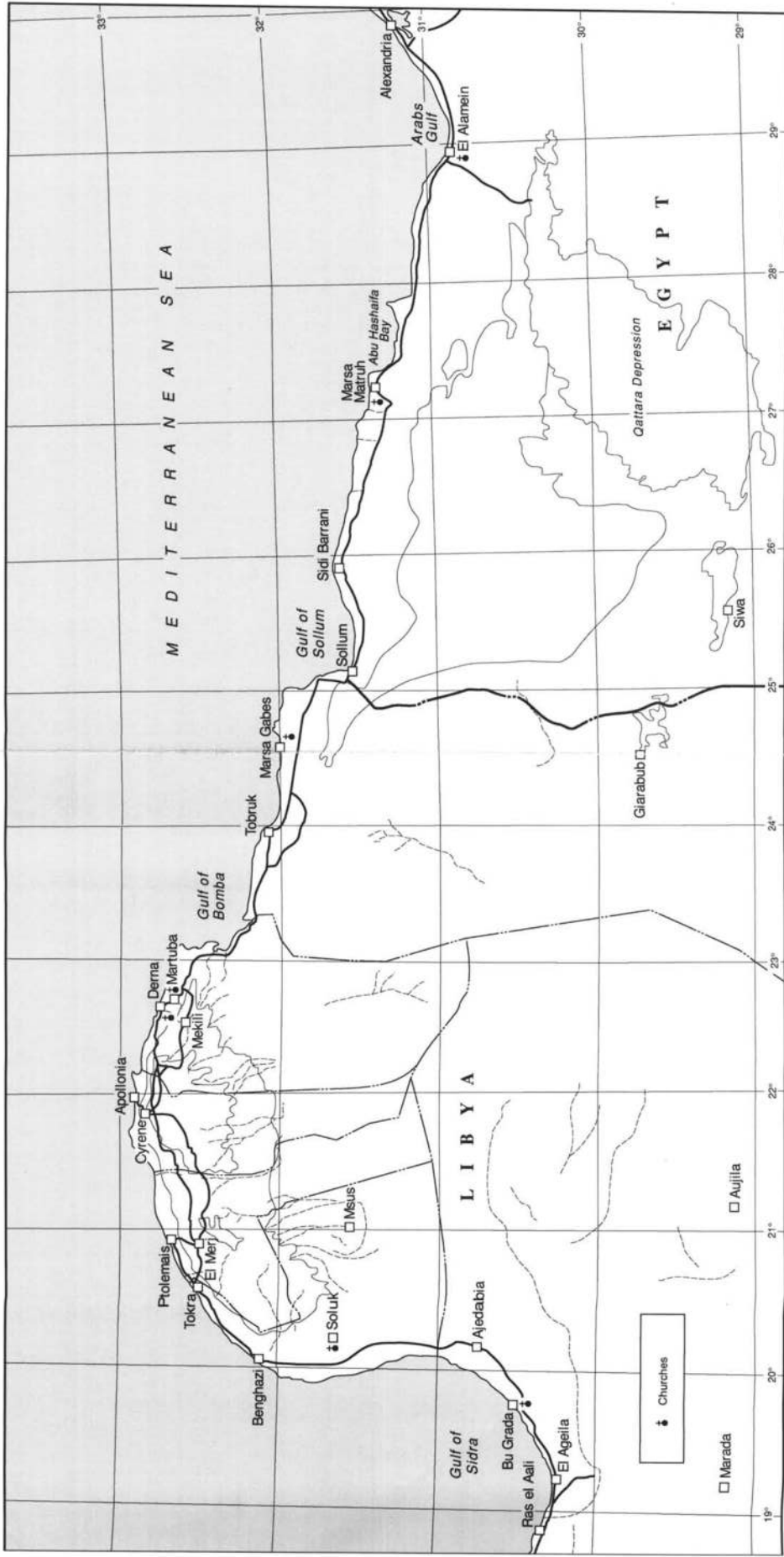
References

- Herz, N. 1987: 'Carbon and oxygen isotope ratios: a data base for classical Greek and Roman marble', *Archaeometry* 29, 35-43.
- Leese, M. N. 1988: 'Statistical treatment of stable isotope data', in N. Herz and M. Waelkens (eds), *Classical Marble: Geochemistry, Technology, Trade*. (Dordrecht and Boston), 347-54.

MAPS



Illus. 377. Location of Christian monuments and attested bishoprics in the northern Gebel el Akhdar; sketch plan (Philip Stickler).



Illus. 378. Location of Christian monuments and attested bishoprics in the Syrtica and the Marmarica; sketch plan (Philip Stickler).

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J. B. Ward-Perkins and R. G. Goodchild planned a detailed account of the churches of late antique and early Byzantine Cyrenaica, but both died before it was completed. Ward-Perkins' descriptions of thirty-five churches were found among his papers along with professional architects' measured drawings which he had commissioned and a collection of photographs for most of them. It is these which are presented here along with an introductory account of relevant Libyan history, a summary overview of the Christian monuments concerned and a brief account of recent discoveries or reports of others found subsequently in the two ancient provinces of Libya Pentapolis and Libya Sicca.

