

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK CARRIED OUT AT ALAHAN IN 1957

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I have the honour to submit the following report on archaeological work carried out by myself and other members of my expedition in the *vilayets* of Seyhan and İ-çel during July, August and October 1957 with the generous permission of the Turkish General Directorate of Museums and Antiquities.

JULY: Further surveying and photographic work was carried out at Alahan Manastırı on the road between Mut and Karaman. This concluded the project at this site where work was begun in 1955. A paper on this important Early Christian monument has already been published, (*Anatolian Studies*) V (1955), and another on the rock-cut church at the adjacent site of AL Oda *Anatolian Studies* VII (1957).

Near the summit of Mağras Dag, a mountain near Alahan, a monastery of (probably) the 5th or 6th century was discovered. The site is exceedingly difficult to approach, but in the time available the church and baptistery were surveyed and a photographic record made.

At Sinabic, near Mut, copies were made and photographs taken of about thirty five inscriptions, ranging in date from the 1st to the 4th centuries A. D. No evidence was found to support the theory that the site is to be identified with Dalisandos, as supposed by Hoguth (*Ecclesiastical Sites in Isauria, Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, Supplementary Papers* I, pp. 26/31).

AUGUST: This month was spent in excavation at Dağ Pazarı, possibly the ancient Coropissus, on the road Mut-Kozlar-Karaman. The site is of very considerable extent (c. 600 m. x 500 m.) and

the ancient walls still survive in many places, with rectangular towers at intervals. Built into the walls were found Roman Imperial inscriptions of the 3rd century A. D., which confirmed that the place had been a city (a *polis*), while in the village itself four episcopal inscriptions also came to light - inside the ramparts. The remains of a large number of ancient buildings are visible above the ground - Soundings were carried out at the sites of two churches; one is a basilica, the other a building of the domed ambulatory type.

(i) *The Basilica* This church, which was buried to a maximum depth of 2 m., is of the three-aisled type with a single-apsed apse and a side chapel. The architectural enrichment was of a high order, and the Corinthian capitals did not appear to be of a later date than the end of the 4th century A. D. Fragments of two large marble dishes were found, and parts of a stone eagle which must have been used in place of the angle volute of an unorthodox Corinthian capital of the type found in the monastery church at Alahan Manastırı. The *narthex*, which was 15.00 m. x 5.00 m. in area, was covered with a mosaic pavement of two periods, each period being defined by an inscription. The northern part was laid during the episcopate of John Elpidius, who was probably bishop at the end of the 4th century. The design, inside a series of complicated border motives, is of interlinking circles, enclosing a variety of birds (including geese, a peacock, doves and guinea fowl), black sacks of goat hair filled with vegetables of fruit, dishes of fruit (including apples, pears and pomegranates) and metal vessels. Later in the 5th century

(probably), there is evidence that a fire broke out and that the church was partially re-built. The southern part of the mosaic was, as an inscription proves, restored by the bishop Longinus. There is little change in the border motives of the two mosaics, but the original join is clear. The main design consists of a vine growing from a two handled jar; in the curls and loops of branches and tendrils are animals and birds in an arrangement which is commonly found in North Africa, Palestine, Jordan and Syria; it is, however, the first of its kind from Isauria. There is a great variety of birds; among them are a peacock, a cock, a hen with its chickens, a stork, a heron, a partridge, a guinea fowl, a duck, a swan and two doves. The animals consist of two sheep and a hare. Five sixths of this mosaic are in a good state of preservation, and the breaks have already been repaired with cement. At the end of the 6th century, or at the beginning of the 7th, the church was again heavily damaged by fire, and was never again re-built. On the other hand, a very poorly constructed chapel was raised inside the old *narthex* some time after the second fire.

(ii) The Basilica's successor was a large church of the domed ambulatory type. It had been surveyed very rapidly in 1890 by Headlam, Hogarth and Ramsay, - but the resulting plan looked unconvincing,

and it was decided to carry out soundings in an attempt to elucidate further architectural details. These soundings lasted a week, and were fully justified by the discovery of a huge pier, one of two which stood west of the apse and helped to support a dome. This important feature is missing from the earlier plan. In the *narthex* floor level was reached, and part of a simple mosaic in red and white was disclosed. Further excavation of this site would be most rewarding.

OCTOBER: The first half of this month was spent in both regions of Cilicia in an attempt to discover the road system in Late Roman and Early Byzantine times. Interesting finds were made at Balabolu, 215 km. east of Mut, and a possible road traced from there to Mut, Mağara, Uzuncaburç, Ura; Cambazlı and Kız Kalesi. At Mut, a silver reliquary of the 5th century was brought in by a villager for inspection. It is in a remarkable state of preservation, and finely decorated with figures of Christ and the Saints. After it had been drawn and photographed, it was left at the Adana Museum where it is now on display.

In conclusion, I have to express my sincere thanks to the General Directorate of Museums and Antiquities, to the Director and staff of the Adana Museum, and to the Kaymakam of Mut. All of whom gave my expedition the facilities at their disposal.

