

TÜRK TARİH KURUMU YAYINLARI

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TÜRK TARİH KURUMU BASIMEVİ—ANKARA

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“THE PEACEFUL KINGDOM”
AN EARLY CHRISTIAN MOSAIC PAVEMENT IN
CILICIA CAMPESTRIS .

by

MICHAEL GOUGH

Karlık is a small village about 14 km. north-east of Adana, and only $2\frac{1}{2}$ km. west of the main road to Kozan¹. In 1958 I was invited by the Eski Eserler ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü to go there and investigate an early Christian mosaic of which a part had already been uncovered by villagers while building a *çardak*². The proposed work was to be in collaboration with Bayan Süheyla Keskil, then Director of the Museum at Antakya, and now an Inspector in the Ministry of Education, with the valuable aid of my wife³ and of Mr. R.I.L. Guthrie, then an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge. In August 1959, with a small group of villagers employed as labourers, we excavated the greater part of a large two-aisled basilica and recorded its floor mosaic as far northwards and westwards as possible, before it disappeared below the foundations of village houses. The mosaic at Karlık is the subject of the short paper which I offer as a small contribution to Professor Arif Müfit Mansel on the happy occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday. Professor Mansel's lively personality and his kindly interest in my work in Turkey just after the War made a lasting impression on me, and my wish for him is that the youthfulness which he has never lost will long remain undimmed, and that for many more years he will continue to interpret to the learned world the richness of Turkey's Classical heritage.

¹ See Map.

² As the props of the *çardak* rested on the mosaic itself, photography was very difficult. Those published with this article are intended less to illustrate the text than to prove the *bona fides* of the present author (!) and the authenticity of my wife's line drawing (Fig. 63 a).

³ All the line drawings are her work, and once again I am happy to record my gratitude.

The special interest of our mosaic is its subject, the 'Peaceful Kingdom' prophesied by Isaiah (XI, 6/8), which is here portrayed with a wealth of detail, however inept the execution of the scene and the spelling of the relevant text, that gives it perhaps an unusual significance. However, before any discussion of the floor, its dedicatory inscription and its possible reflection of contemporary events in ecclesiastical history, the building which it adorned should first be described. This was a basilica, so completely plundered in antiquity as a quarry for building material that only the foundations of the main body of the church and parts of its apse and the flanking pastophories remained as evidence of its original condition.

The church building at Karlık (Fig. 62)

The basilica, to judge from the remaining evidence, was about the same size as the West Basilica at Alahan⁴, though clearly of less opulence in its appointments. From east to west (at the point where it disappears under a village house) the length of the building – including the thickness of the apse wall (0.60 m.) – was at least 24.10 m. Its width was 17.50 m., which includes the thickness of the outer walls – both assumed to be, like the southern one, 0.65 m. If, therefore, the proportions of our church were normal for a long-aisled basilica in this locality and of its likely era, its overall dimensions were probably c. 35.00 m. × 17.50 m. No bases, shafts or capitals of the interior order were found, but the thickness of outer walls and stylobates show that the central nave was 7.50 m. wide and each side aisle 3.85 m. Of the *narthex* nothing is known, though presumably there was one if contemporary fashion was observed. (If it did exist, its remains are now under the modern buildings at the west end of the site).

The limestone remnants of the church were impressive only in the neighbourhood of the apse, where the seats of the *synthronon* were almost intact. The apse opening from north to south was 5.30 m., and it is very likely that the pastophories were of the same width as the aisles through which they were entered. The apse was at a slightly higher level than the nave, and had a depth of 4.30 m. from east to

⁴ Its internal dimensions are c. 32.00 m. × 16.00 m. See *AS* XVII (1967), n. 8.

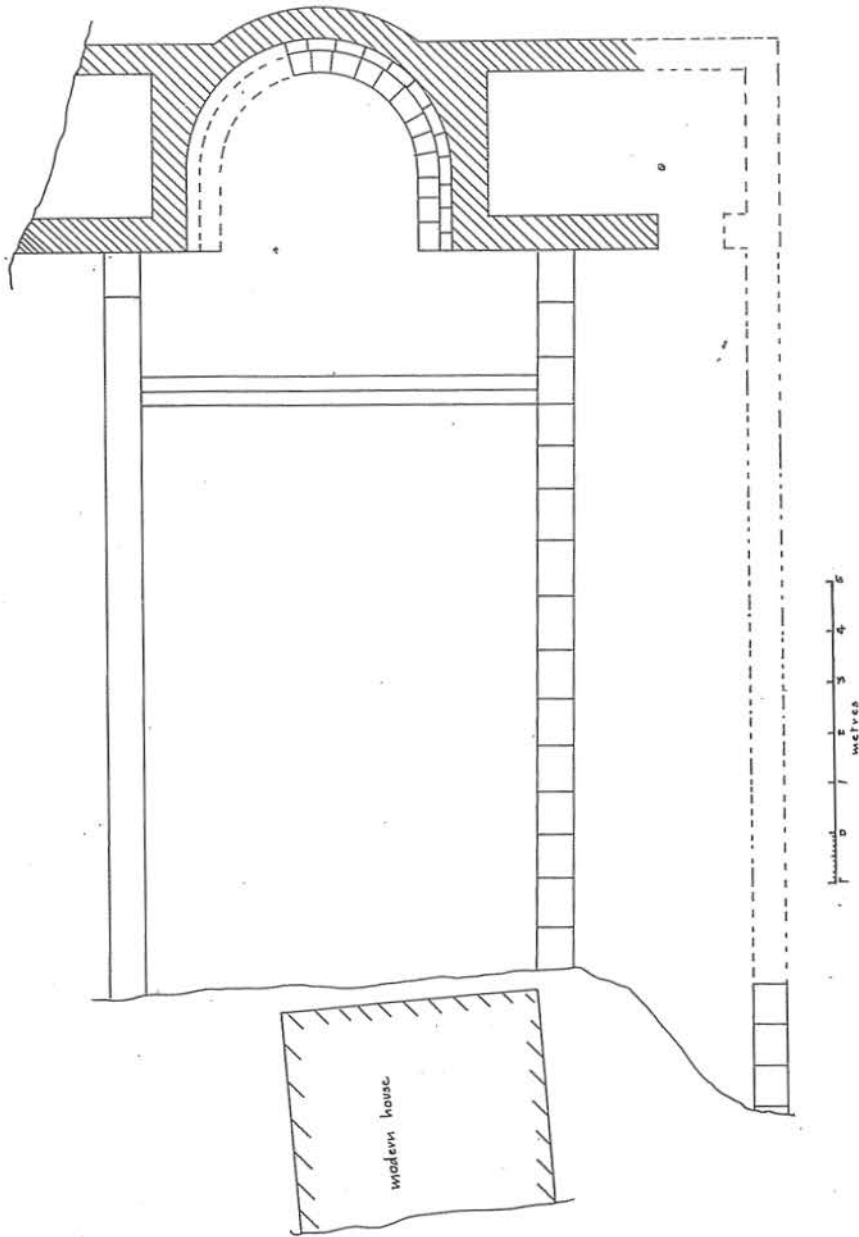


Fig. 62

west. Except in the nave, where the floor was covered with mosaic, flagstones - with patching of tile in places - were used, but most had long been taken away for re-use in later buildings. As only a few courses of limestone blocks (average dimensions were $0.65 \times 0.40 \times 0.40$ m.) of the north wall of the apse and of the north pastophory represented the architecture above foundation level, one can only suggest that the church would have been 'normal' in elevation, probably with a clerestory above the nave and possibly two or three windows in the apse.

The Mosaic (Fig. 63)

Of the total area of mosaic originally covering the nave floor about only one third was preserved; but by a happy coincidence this was enough to provide a reasonably clear picture of the overall arrangement. Most fortunately too, the dedicatory inscription was complete, as also was the garbled version of Isaiah's text used to explain the mosaicist's unsophisticated rendering of the Messianic Paradise. The width of the border motives on the south, as on the east side of the mosaic, is known, and so is the width of the main panel in the western nave. Thus, assuming that there was no irregularity of border motives on the north side, the dimensions of the mosaic are virtually certain. It will have been 7.50 m. from north to south, while on the longitudinal axis the eastern panel was 7.54 m. Before disappearing under the modern house, the western panel was 4.09 m. from east to west, and it is not unlikely that its original measurement was near to 7.50 m. This would make for a nice 2:1 ratio between length and width, and the appearance of a stag and an elephant at the extreme west end of the mosaic show that the mosaicist was straying well outside the range of beasts outlined in Isaiah's text⁵. The work, it must be admitted, is on the coarse side, with an average of only ninety *tesseræ* to the square decimetre, while the colour range was

⁵ An apparently orthodox mosaic version of the "Peaceful Kingdom" occurs in the 'Cathedral' at Korykos. See Herzfeld and Guyer, *MAMA* II, pp. 106/107 and Pls. 104/105). The quotation from *Isiah* XI was not photographed. The mosaic at Ayaş, close to Korykos, (Gough, "A Temple and Church at Ayaş", *AS* IV (1954) pp. 49/64) is quite without text, but the presence of leopard, lamb, bear and ox imply a Messianic Paradise. The ostrich is no more incongruous in context than is the elephant at Karlık.

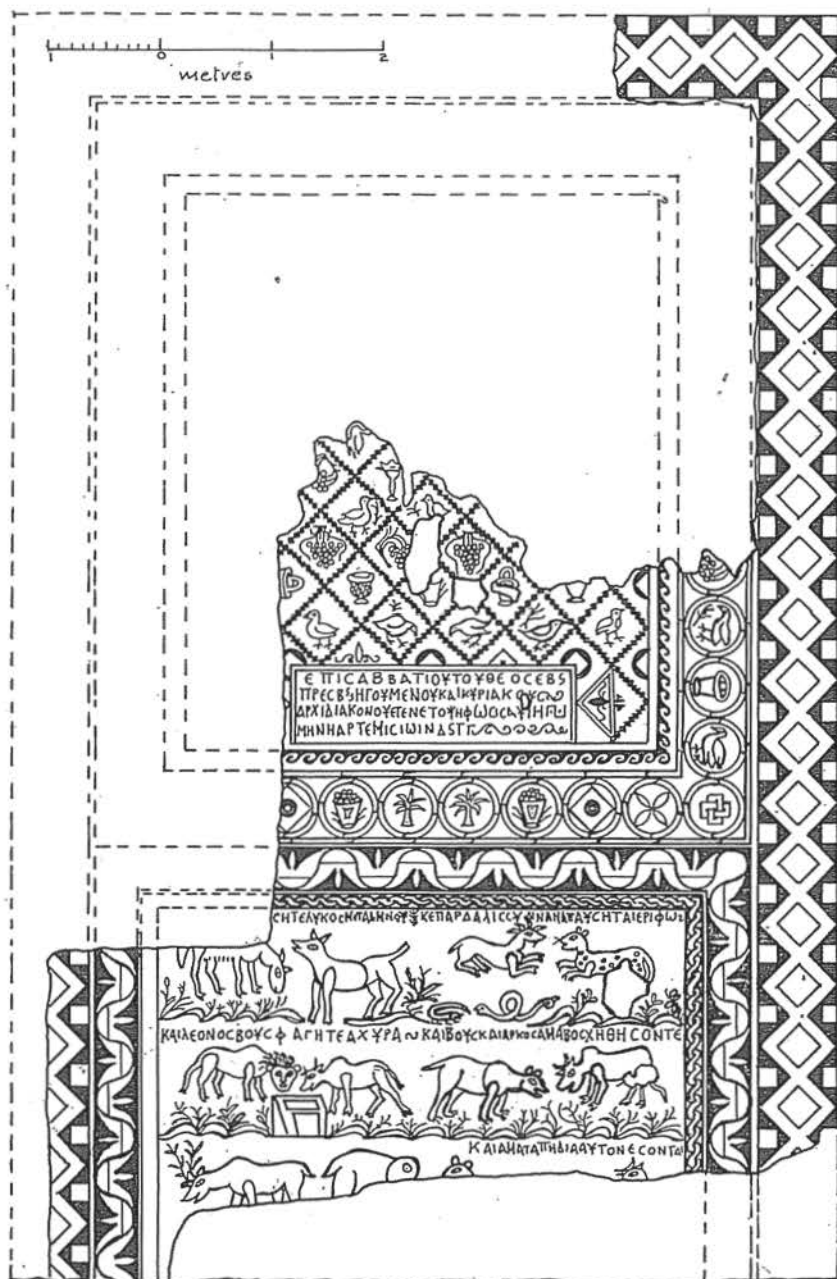


Fig. 63

limited to local stone, i.e. black, white, slate grey, tawny, lighter yellow and red.

The outer border of the whole mosaic was a simple geometric pattern in red, black and white, 0.69 m. in width. This consisted of red rhomboid figures against a background of white squares and black triangles. The border motives of the east and west panels were, however, quite distinct from each other. To the east, there was an outer border of linked roundels in red and white outlined in black, and, 0.62 m. wide. Each roundel enclosed an object - a palm tree, a basket of fruit, a single bird, a bird and a lizard or a simple geometric figure are among those which survive - and within this elaborate border was yet another, this time of conventional black wave pattern on a white ground and 0.14 m. wide. Finally a band of white between rows of single black *tesserae* (the whole band only 0.06 m. in width) acted as the immediate frame to the main field of the panel. The fruit in the baskets were black, red and yellow, but the palm trees an unlikely black and red, for our artist was not over-interested in verisimilitude.

The field of the mosaic is pure 'pattern-book', but curiously modern in its likeness to twentieth century British wall-paper of mediocre quality (appropriate perhaps to a sea-side boarding-house) even down to the careful cutting of the design in half at the western end of the floor to accommodate the *tabula ansata* with its dedicatory inscription. (Pl. 129 b) In fact the overall design is of continuous rhomboid figures with a diagonal measurement of 0.64 m., and each one consisting of single grey *tesserae* laid corner to corner. The emblems enclosed by the rhombi are generally the same as those in the outer border of roundels, with birds, baskets of fruit, bunches of grapes and ornamental goblets the commonest. (Pl. 129a).

The *tabula ansata* and its inscription should be much more illuminating than in fact it is (Fig. 63). This reads as follows :-

Ἐπι Σαββατιου τοῦ Θεοσεβ(εστάτου)
 Πρεσβ(υτέρου) ἡγουμένου καὶ Κυριακοῦ
 Ἀρχidiaκόνου ἐγένετο ψήφωσις αὐτῆ
 Μήνη Ἀρτεμισίω Ἰνδ[ικτιωνος] ιγ'

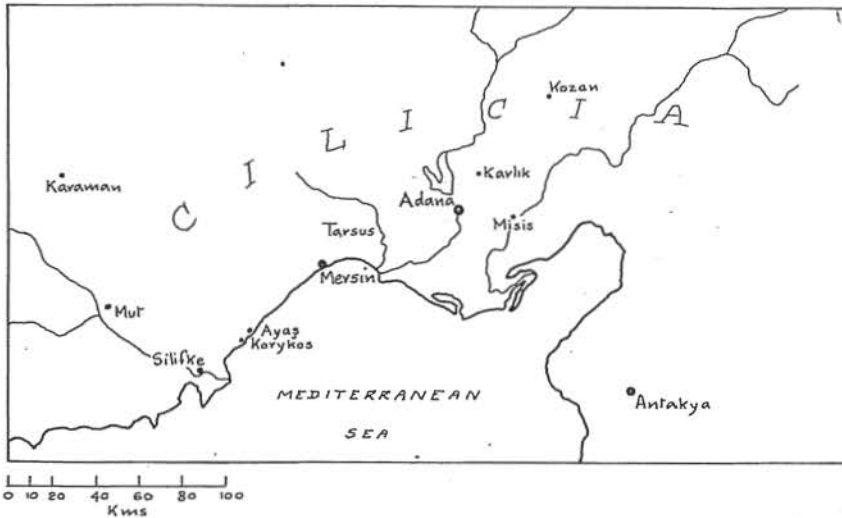
which we may translate as 'This mosaic was laid in the time of Sab-
 batius, Very Reverend Senior Presbyter, and Kyriakos the Archdea-

con, in the month of Artemisium in the thirteenth year of the Indiction'. As the ancient identification of Karlık is still unknown, there is little hope of tracing either Sabbatius or Kyriakos among the dignitaries of the Cilician Church. Sabbatius, to judge from his name, may have been a Christian Hellenized Jew, as was his fellow-countryman St. Paul, but the Archdeacon's name is still common, even in Greece of the twentieth century. A mention of the month tells us that the mosaic was laid in the fairly early spring, in late March or early April, while the prospect of finishing the job in good weather was still good. The year of the indiction is much more enigmatic, unless we can hazard a rough guess at the time that such a mosaic might have been commissioned. The only possible clue to the period of the indiction is the internal evidence of the western mosaic, now to be described. As explained earlier (p. 406), the subject is the so-called 'Peaceful Kingdom', a very suitable theme, it might be thought, for a church; for peace in the spiritual sense was promised by Christ to the faithful as a special gift. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you", *John*, XIV, 27. However, the Peaceful Kingdom's theme is not so much one of peace, pure and simple, but of reconciliation between opposing qualities or factions, as the almost incredibly misspelt text of our mosaic shows.

Λύκος μετὰ ἄμνου καὶ πάρδαλις συνναπαύσεται ἐρίφω καὶ λέον ὃς βοῦς φαγήτε ἄχυρα καὶ βοῦς καὶ ἄρκος ἅμα βοσκηθῆντε καὶ ἅμα τὰ πηδιὰ αὐτῶν ἔσον τε.

This version of Isaiah is at variance with the accepted text, for the beginning and end of 1. 2 have been inverted, and we must translate it as follows: "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the cow and the bear shall feed together, and their young ones shall be together". A suspicion that once Sabbatius and the Archdeacon had seen the work on the eastern mosaic and its commemorative inscription duly completed they went off to spend the summer at a resort in the Taurus is hard to dismiss, for the wierd orthography and comical appearance of the animals suggest that the work was left to an odd-job man under the unexciting supervision of the temporary incumbent at Karlık.

The border motives of the western panel are perfectly competently executed, the outer one being a simple continuation of the geometric pattern, 0.69 m. wide, already described (p. 410). Within this was a lotus band (0.34 m.) of grey and black flowers alternating with a gayer grey, red, white and black variety. Round the main field is a 0.12 m. frame of guilloche with red, pink and white strands between borders of black. (Plate 130a)



Harita

The illustration of the peaceful Kingdom is a fine piece of unconscious humour, though the correct animals are in their right place, and recognizable as such under the relative portion of the text, at any rate until the end of the second line. The elderly kid, its horns fully grown, and the mild leopard (Plate II) that confronts it are perhaps (Plate 130 b) fit mates; but the disillusion of the lion, contrasted with the evident satisfaction of the ox with their joint meal of straw suggests a *double entendre* that the mosaicist can hardly have intended. He was following this (without Bible in hand perhaps) with an asp and a cockatrice, when he realized that the text above called for a bear and a cow. At this point he appears to have lost his nerve, for at the start of the third row of animals are a stag and an elephant (!) which have no scriptural authority. However, he took

up the thread again where "their young ones (viz. of the cow and the bear) shall lie down together", and it is only sad that the modern house cut over the mosaic at this point, and nothing can now be seen except the tops of a calf's and bear cub's heads.

The rustic humour of the composition apart, perhaps one may hazard a guess that the patterns used in both east and west panels are of North African origin. Elephants certainly, and possibly palm trees suggest this. There is an elephant too in the mosaic of the *martyrium* of Antiochene Seleucea (not so far from Karlık), and this is usually dated to the late fifth century. That Isiah's Peaceful Kingdom and North Africa should be useful dating evidence for a mosaic is not far-fetched, particularly when the style of the work fits the late fifth or early sixth century⁶. At this period North Africa and Syria were united in their opposition to the dictate of the Council of Chalcedon and its condemnation of Monophysitism⁷. Cilicia, as subject to the Patriarchate of Antioch, was no stronghold of Orthodoxy. Consequently, the *Henotikon* produced by the Isaurian Emperor Zeno (474/491) to promote harmony between the two factions was not at first actively opposed by the Monophysites. The *Henotikon* was itself published in 482, and the first thirteenth indiction in which reconciliation might have been commemorated was the year 490/491. The spring of 491 would not have been too late to think in such terms, and this seems the most likely date for our mosaic. 505/506, when the Monophysite Emperor Anastasius was supreme, seems less likely, and fifteen years later found Justin on the throne.

The Karlık mosaic is not a masterpiece; it is extremely pedestrian, if amusing. However, as a historical document, it is perhaps not without points of interest.

⁶ These are the dates suggested for both the mosaics referred to above in n. 5.

⁷ It is interesting that the Karlık, Korykos and Ayaş mosaics are all in Cilicia, within the Patriarchate of Antioch. Furthermore, Theodore of Mopsuestia (Misis), who died in 428, was condemned as a heretic (a Nestorian) in 553. The direct counterblast to Nestorianism was, not unnaturally, Monophysitism, and controversy at Mopsuestia, not very far from Karlık, probably ran high. Furthermore, Theodore of Mopsuestia is known to have written a commentary on Isiah, of which practically nothing remains. (J. Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. III (1960), pp. 401/423).