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ABSTRACT

The Liturgical Furnishings of the City Basilica at Patara in the Early Byzantine Period

Division of the Nave and the Monolithic Slabs

Ceren Demirton

This study investigates the slabs which were recovered from the excavations of the City Basilica at Patara in 2013–2019. Their motifs, dimensions and materials are described and compared with similar examples from Byzantine architecture, while their functions are determined and a possible reconstruction is put forward. This typological study is the result of a scientific analysis of the slab construction methods and a structural examination of the basilica. A total of 190 liturgical limestone and marble artifact pieces which date back to the Early Christian Period have been found in the City Basilica at Patara. Since no such definition is forthcoming from Byzantine architectural studies, a new definition of these pieces as monolithic slabs has been proposed for those which are made of solid limestone with four-side trapezoidal cross-section, which are thought to have been used in the division of the nave. As a result of this study, it has been concluded that the slabs in monolithic form were used in the aisles on the northern and southern sides, and likely separated the naos of the basilica. The slabs in monolithic form which were found in the City Basilica at Patara are similar to others in Byzantine architecture in terms of their motifs, construction techniques and materials. They also originate from the architectural phase of the basilica, making it possible to date them to the second half of the 5th century A.D.

KEYWORDS

Patara, Early Christian Archaeology, Liturgical Furnishing, Division of Nave, Monolithic Slabs

The Liturgical Furnishings of the City Basilica at Patara in the Early Byzantine Period

Division of the Nave and the Monolithic Slabs

Introduction

¹ Situated on the southwestern shore of the Lycian Region¹, within the province of Antalya, the ancient city of Patara was clearly one of the most prominent cities in the Lycian Region of Asia Minor in the Roman Imperial and Byzantine Periods, not only thanks to its strategic position in the transport network of the region, but also because it was suitable for a naval base². At present, Patara's ruins fall within the boundaries of the Gelemis village in the district of Kaş, within the province of Antalya.

² To date there are ten churches and chapels which have been identified so far in Patara (fig. 1)³. One of the largest religious buildings in the city is the City Basilica, which measures 61.00 m × 32.00 m. It is a complex that was identified by the first excavators as an *episkopeion* with a central atrium and a monumental west entrance featuring rich decoration⁴.

³ Architectural finds and liturgical furnishings indicate that the first architectural phase of the basilica dates back to the second half of the 5th century A.D.⁵. The structure is of particular interest out of the basilicas in the ancient city due to its peristyle atrium and narthex in the west, while its aisles surrounding the transept form a L-shaped corridor in the east–west direction (fig. 2).

⁴ During the 2013–2018 excavation seasons, some liturgical furnishings of the basilica were identified in situ, including pieces of the altar, ciborium column bases, and the stylobate of the templon arrangement; some further pieces were also found not in situ, such as pieces of marble colonettes, offertory tables with monogram, column capitals and slabs from the templon, as well as the chancel slabs.

Title Page: Reconstruction of the monolithic slab with cat. 1 and 5

¹ I am deeply grateful to Prof. Dr. Havva İşkan Işık, Director of the Patara Excavations, Akdeniz University, for encouraged, motivated and supported me during my work at the City Basilica of Patara. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Burcu Ceylan Duggan for sharing her expertise with me. I further thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Beate Böhlendorf-Arslan as well as Dr. Martin Dennert for their constant support during the work and for their insightful comments and suggestions. Needless to say, all the remaining errors are my own.

² Koçak – İşkan 2015, 271–294.

³ For an overview, see Işık 2000, 100–102.

⁴ Effenberger – Kunze 1995, 257; Ceylan – Erdoğan 2016, 210.

⁵ Ceylan – Erdoğan 2016, 205. 207; Ceylan – Erdoğan 2019, 352.

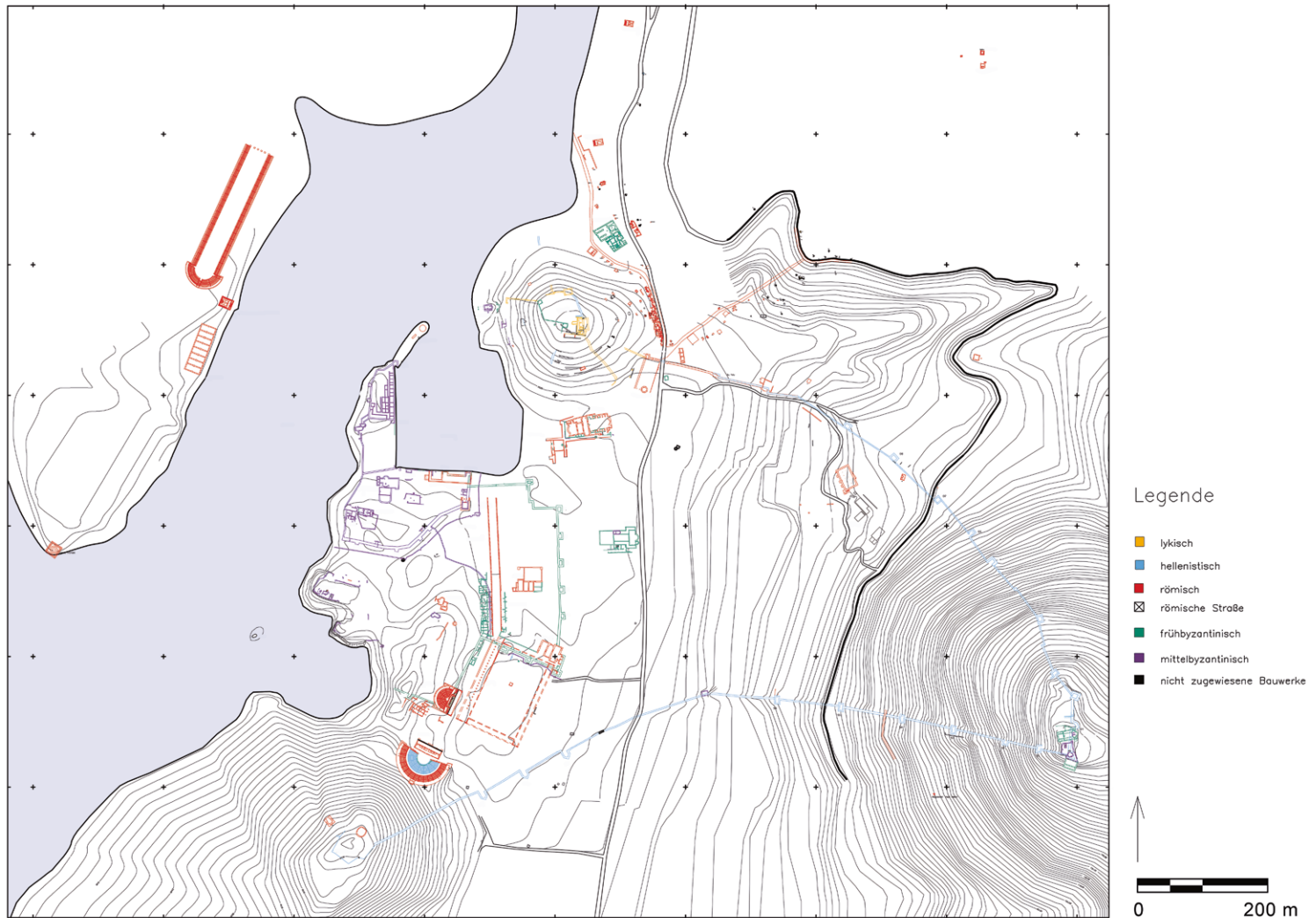


Fig. 1: The City Plan of Patara, 2020

5 The decorated and undecorated pieces of slabs were divided according to their forms as flat section form, trapezoidal section form and monolithic slab⁶. The presence of the monolithic slabs, a new type of slab, raise new questions, such as where they were located and what their functions were within the basilica. The present article aims to determine the arrangement of the nave and characteristic features of the monolithic slabs which were found during the excavation works in the City Basilica of Patara, their function and the reconstruction of the slabs within the basilica. The interior perception of the basilica will thus be examined from an architectural perspective.

Architectural Description of the City Basilica at Patara

6 The first academic study of the City Basilica at Patara was carried out in 1989 under the direction of F. Işık⁷. This was followed by a further three seasons of sounding excavations and documentation in the period from 1993 to 2019⁸. The excavations

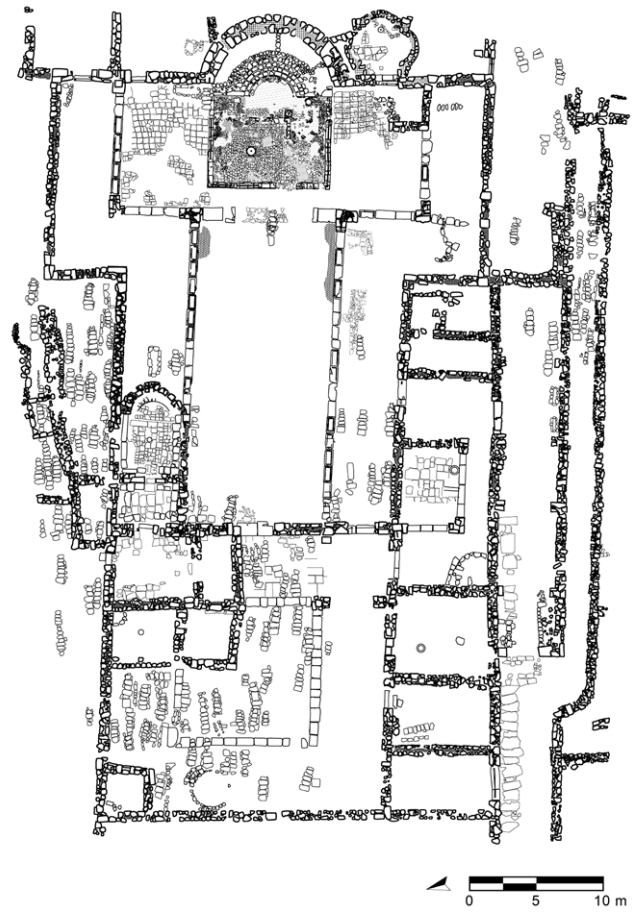
⁶ Demirton 2018, 107–122.

⁷ Işık 1991, 37 f.

⁸ Foss 1994, 14–16; Işık 1995, 257 fig. 226; Işık 1996, 170 f. fig. 184; Işık 1997, 200 f.; Hellenkemper – Hild 2004, 780–788; Koch 2007, 291; Bruer – Kunze 2011, 12; Işık 2010, 234; Işık 2011, 95 f.; Aktaş et al. 2015, 93–95; Işkan et al. 2015, 304 f.; Özkan 2015, 451–461; Ceylan – Erdoğan 2016; Işık et al. 2016, 101–103; Işkan et al. 2016, 366–369.



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were continued in 1993 under the management of A. Effenberger und M. Kunze. The research began from soundings, from which it was determined that the basilica had a transept plan and, together with the ancillary rooms which were identified in the south of the basilica, was an *episkopeion*⁹.

7 During the excavation and documentation works in 1994, a total of 17 soundings were made in different parts of the basilica. As a result of previous studies, the north-west corner of the atrium was determined, and column bases and stylobates were identified between the aisles¹⁰. The excavation works were restarted in 2013, leading to a preliminary publication of the site, and were completed together with the excavation and the drawing works in 2019 (fig. 3). The architecture of the basilica¹¹ and the liturgical furnishings¹² have been determined during the excavation seasons.

8 The basilica, which has an east-west orientation, has a plan comprising a nave, two side aisles, a transept with transept aisles surrounding the transept arms (reduced cross transept¹³), and a semi-circular apse, with a narthex and a peristyle atrium on the west side. The main apse-wall, the north and south transept aisles and transept arms, the stylobates between the nave and aisles, and the atrium and narthex, all date back to the first building phase in the second half of the 5th century A.D.¹⁴.

Fig. 2: The City Basilica of Patara, aerial view, 2019

Fig. 3: The City Basilica of Patara, layout

9 Effenberger – Kunze 1995, 257.

10 Effenberger 1996, 170 f.

11 Ceylan – Erdoğan 2016. Demirton 2018.

12 Demirton 2018.

13 Krautheimer 1986, 110.

14 For the architecture and dating of the building, see Ceylan – Erdoğan 2016.



Fig. 4: The City Basilica of Patara, view of atrium and narthex

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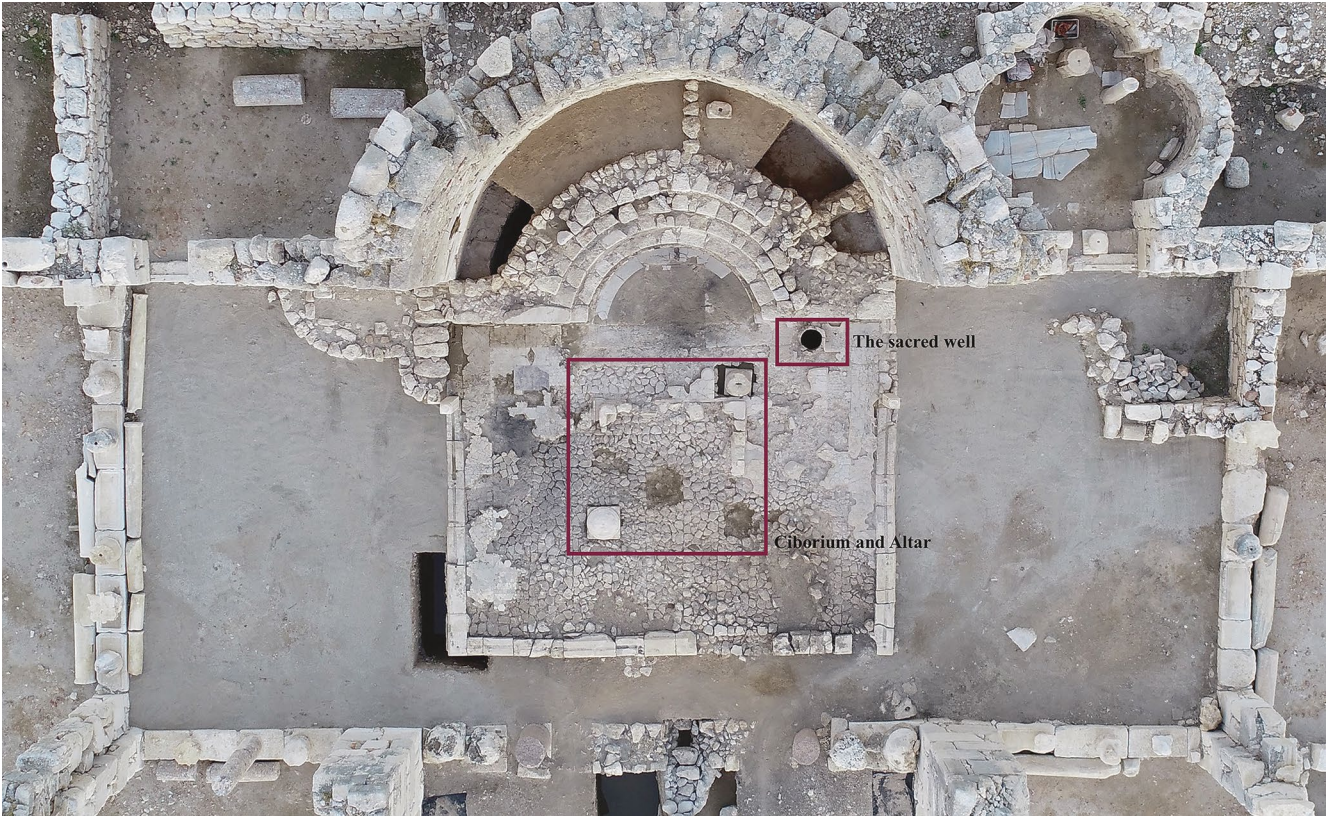
Fig. 5: The City Basilica of Patara, view from the naos

5

9 The narthex is rectangular in plan and measures 4.65 m × 10.80 m. The floor pavement of the narthex is made of brick and smooth-surfaced limestone, while the narthex is connected to the atrium with two doors. Three doors also provide access from the narthex to the naos (fig. 4).

10 The naos, which measures 39.00 m × 10.38 m, has a 2.00 m wide main entrance door and two doors which measure 1.10 m wide leading to the side aisles. The nave and side aisles have been separated by a limestone stylobate and end at the transept (fig. 5). The naos has a mosaic floor, most of which has been badly destroyed, and which has only been preserved in the northeast and southeast of the central nave¹⁵. Additionally, remains of the fresco wall paintings can still be identified on the walls of the southern transept aisles and side aisles.

15 During the excavation, the pieces of murex were found in the nave and the south transept was probably used under the mosaic floor as a filling material in the basilica. The use of murex as a filling material on the building was most visible in Andriake. In Andriake – Horrea a large amount of waste murex was used in the mortar admixture below the brick floor. In addition, murex waste can be seen in the mortar of the floor and walls in Andriake B Church (Aygün 2017, 10–20).



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7



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11 The rectangular transept, which measures 6.66 m × 9.15 m, is oriented in north-south direction. Two doors in the eastern wall of the basilica provide an additional entrance to the basilica from the east.

12 The bema in front of the apse was enclosed by a II-shaped templon¹⁶, which could be accessed by three openings in the south, north and west. The bema contains a part of the opus sectile flooring, the base of the altar and two of the column bases of the ciborium, to the southeast and northwest of the altar base which have been found in situ. Additionally, a sacred water well stands out in the bema, which is located 55 cm southeast of the ciborium column base and between the altar and the synthronon. The semi-circular apse is 4.97 m deep and 8.94 m wide. A window and four steps of the synthronon have been identified in the apse (fig. 6. 7. 8).

Fig. 6: The City Basilica of Patara, view of bema, transept and transept aisles

Fig. 7: The City Basilica of Patara, the ruins of the synthronon

Fig. 8: The City Basilica of Patara, the sacred well in the bema

16 For the templon reconstruction of the basilica, see Demirton 2018, 74–92; Demirton 2021, 304 fig. 9.

¹³ To date, four wells have been found in different locations in the basilica. In the Early Byzantine Period, wells can be seen in different places and spaces within a church. For instance, in the first phase of the basilica at Kalekapı at Herakleia Perinthos (Marmara Ereğlisi) dated to the 5th century, an ornamental circular water well was found in the center of the atrium¹⁷. Besides the sacred well in the bema in the City Basilica of Patara, round planned water wells were found in the room to the south of the apse, while another two were located in the southern rooms of the basilica. However, a well in the bema has an important position for the sanctuary in a church: in Aphrodisias, the bema of St. Michael's Church has a sacred well between the altar and the synthronon associated with the early structure and can be regarded as a clear example of a sacred well in a bema. The well is currently to be found at the centre of the east apse of the cathedral and is surrounded by four bases for a ciborium¹⁸.

¹⁴ In addition, a further well with a rectangular plan was found in the bema of St. Michael's Church in Miletus, which was converted from the Temple of Dionysos. The church in Miletus, dated to the middle of the 5th–6th century A.D., was probably named as St. Michael's Church due to St. Michael's connection with sacred water, which is part of the liturgy¹⁹. Another example of a sacred well found in the bema is from Didyma, the Church of St. Michael dated to the 6th century A.D.²⁰. It is known that numerous churches were dedicated to St. Michael due to his supposed healing abilities²¹, as well as to other archangels and angels in Asia Minor and Greece. The sacred water and pools inside the churches are also a 5th century A.D. phenomenon²². Additionally, Malalas relates in the 6th century A.D. that Constantine established a church of St. Michael at Sosthenion²³. If we return to the City Basilica at Patara, although there is no archaeological or written evidence, it emerges as a question whether there is any connection between the basilica and St. Michael.

¹⁵ Although it is not possible to determine the connection between the basilica and St. Michael without evidence, it is clear that the well has a liturgical position due to its location. The architectural arrangement called *thalassidion* is distinguished by its use of water tanks for washing the altar and by the liturgical objects used during the Eucharist; usually it is connected with a drainage system. Therefore, the difference among the water wells, especially between the bema and the other wells in the basilica, is that they are water reservoirs used for washing the holy objects²⁴. According to recent research by G. Öztaşkın, they constitute an example of the thalassidion arrangement which was used as a holy well in the bema, such as in the City Basilica of Patara, the Kasr-El-Kelb Church, and the Cross Monastery (in West Jerusalem)²⁵. It is remarkable that the wells in the bema are connected to a channel, as we see in the examples. Besides the uncovered well in the bema of the City Basilica at Patara, a water channel has been found in situ which is approximately 1.00 m below the south transept aisles ground (Room GG5) and covered by rubble stone. Although there is no specific excavation working between the channel and the well in the bema, in order to understand the relationship, it is necessary to take account of the fact that the channel is located on the same axis as the well. In the southwest of the channel in the southern transept aisles, a water

¹⁷ Westphalen 2016, 7.

¹⁸ Jeffrey 2019, 209 figs. 13, 2; 13, 4; Hebert 2000, 71–75.

¹⁹ Niewöhner 2016, 48.

²⁰ Wiegand 1941, 34; Niewöhner 2016, 48.

²¹ Prok. aed. 1, 18, 19 (Dewing 1940, 353–355); See more Robert 1960, 432 f.; Mango 1986, 117–132; Khazdan 1991, 1360.

²² Kullberg 2016, 158. For the origin of the St. Michael cult in pagan culture and its effects on Early Christian culture, see Niewöhner 2018, 97–124.

²³ Malalas Chronographia 4, 9 (Thurn 2000, 330. 332); Niewöhner 2018, 122.

²⁴ Sophocles 1900, 568; Taft – Bouras 1991, 71; Hunger 2001, 663; Öztaşkın 2020, 300–313.

²⁵ Taft – Bouras 1991, 71; Öztaşkın 2020, 303–306.

pipe is used to drain water which is connected with the southern appendix rooms. Since the water level changes from time to time, it is discharged from the channel in the southern transept into the channel extending to the harbor through the pipe system, in order to ward off the possibility of rising water. Today it is possible to follow this water line created from these canals and pipes. If we take into account all of these factors, it strengthens the possibility that the well arrangement was organized in the first phase of the basilica and located at a system connected with the water channel. In this context, it lies in a very important position in terms of understanding the liturgical movement in the basilica.

¹⁶ The first phase of the City Basilica of Patara was probably damaged by an earthquake, before the re-building of its south annex. Apart from the ancillary rooms, which belong to the second phase of the building, the changes and transformations in the bema are quite noticeable. The first phase of the bema floor has been covered with marble opus sectile. Many repairs of opus sectile can be detected in the south of the bema floor in connection with the earthquake, which date to the second building phase. During this ancient renovation, changes and transformations can also be observed in the liturgical furnishings²⁶. In the 2015–2016 seasons a Triconchos Chapel was unearthed and it has been suggested that it must have been abandoned well before the 11th century (fig. 9)²⁷. Additionally, the chapel in the northern side next to the basilica, which dates to the 11th/12th century, and 122 Christian graves in the naos, the atrium, the narthex and the aisles represent the last phase of the basilica²⁸.

¹⁷ During the sounding works in 2018, a number of ruins from the building connected to the pre-basilica period dated to the 3rd–4th century A.D. were recovered under the southern side of the aisles²⁹.

Interior Architectural Arrangement of the City Basilica: Division of the Nave

¹⁸ The division of the basilica interior is an arrangement that dates back to the first building phase in the second half of the 5th century A.D. based on architectural evidence and sculptures³⁰. The majority of the pieces of architectural sculpture were found in the basilica, including stone liturgical furnishings used in the naves and bema



9



10

Fig. 9: The City Basilica of Patara, Triconchos Chapel

Fig. 10: The City Basilica of Patara, stylobate, stumps of columns and column bases from the southern side of the nave

²⁶ Transformations in the liturgical arrangements can be seen on the renewed altar and templon stylobate. For more detail, see Demirton 2018, 86. 100 f. 132.

²⁷ Ceylan – Erdoğan 2016, 212.

²⁸ Demirton 2023a, forthcoming.

²⁹ Demirton 2019, 400 f.

³⁰ Ceylan – Erdoğan 2016.

and the small findings, which belong to the second half of the 5th century A.D.³¹. In the nave, the stone artifacts are not located in situ, aside from the stylobates, which makes it difficult to reconstruct the arrangement of the division of the basilica interior. However, a clear conclusion was reached following the study by stratigraphic works and archaeological evidence: the basilica was fitted with closure slabs in the intercolumnia from the beginning. Indeed, it is possible to see the stylobates and grooves of the column bases in the nave and transept wings in the basilica.

¹⁹ The nave, naos, transept and transept aisles in the basilica have all been separated from each other by a set of stylobates made out of limestone blocks, each of which measures approximately 1.20 m × 0.60 m. The height of the stylobates from the mosaic floor of the naos is 10 cm, while the height of the transept aisles, covered by bricks, is 25 cm. It is interesting to note that there is no slab groove or slab trace on the stylobates. All of the stylobate blocks were very likely spolia that came from the Roman Period. It is possible that they were taken from the tomb of Claudia Anassa in Patara from the 2nd century A.D. The inscription of this tomb is used as spolia in the northern nave and mentions Claudia Anassa and her family's *Heroon*³². The inscription block has the same characteristic form, size, material and style as the other stone blocks of the stylobate in the basilica. As such, it can be inferred that some of the stones from Claudia Anassa's tomb were used on the walls and interior architectural arrangement of the basilica.

²⁰ During the excavations, a total of five column bases were found which were used between the slabs and the columns in the naves of the basilica. The column bases have both vertical grooves (width 13–16 cm) and unfinished vertical strips on the molding. The width of the column base grooves and the width of the slabs are consistent (cat. 1. 2. 3. 4, fig. 10). It is possible that the bases were established before the columns and the slabs were assembled. Additionally, in the southern side aisle of the basilica, the shaft of a column has been found measuring 2.96 m in height and 44 cm in diameter, decorated with a Latin cross. The columns stand in harmony with the diameters and dimensions of the spolia column bases found in the side naves. Moreover, no traces of slabs or grooves can be identified on the column shaft (fig. 11). In other words, the slabs did not enter into contact with the columns. The slabs grooves or its traces are still visible in the L-shaped piers, which are 13–16 cm wide, and which suggest that the northern and southern side naves were separated from the nave by slabs and stylobates (fig. 12). This means that the aisles were created by slabs starting in the L-shaped pier.

²¹ The reconstruction work of the aisle was carried out on the southern side of the nave in the City Basilica due to its clearer tips on the dividing of the nave. The stylobates which divide the southern aisle and nave measure 1.20 m × 0.60 m and are 35 cm high, standing 10 cm from the mosaic floor of the central nave. This low stylobate supported the columns and closure slabs of the intercolumniation. In the reconstructed form, the monolithic slabs that were used to divide the nave from the side aisles were 1.25 m high and 1.90 m wide³³, with a stylobate block measuring 1.60 m in high. Relative to the central nave mosaic floor, the height is 1.35 m. Thus, it can be suggested that the nave is ›low-type‹ in the basilica (fig. 13).

²² From the reconstruction, it can be inferred that the aisles have been strictly separated from the central nave by a low-type interior arrangement. Movement between the nave and the side aisles would not have been possible at the end of the central nave. However, visual access would have been feasible between the nave and the aisles (fig. 14).

³¹ Demirton 2018.

³² For the inscription and translation, see Adak 1996, 132; Pallis 2019, 65.

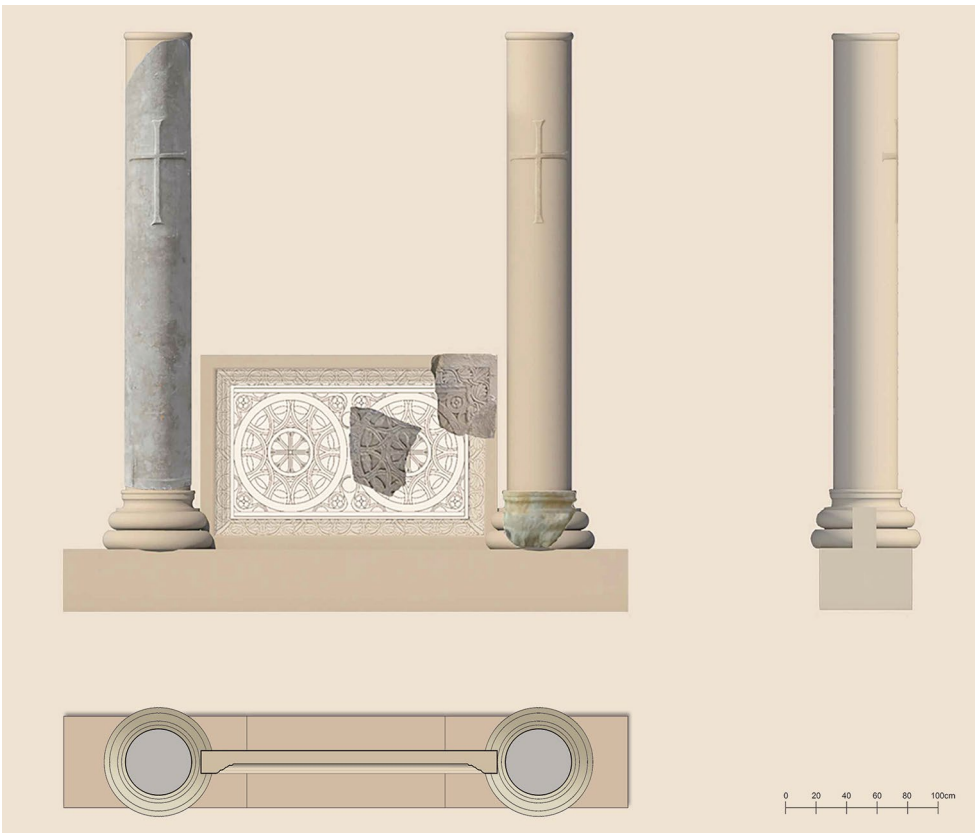
³³ The slab size accorded with the reconstruction based on its motifs and properties.



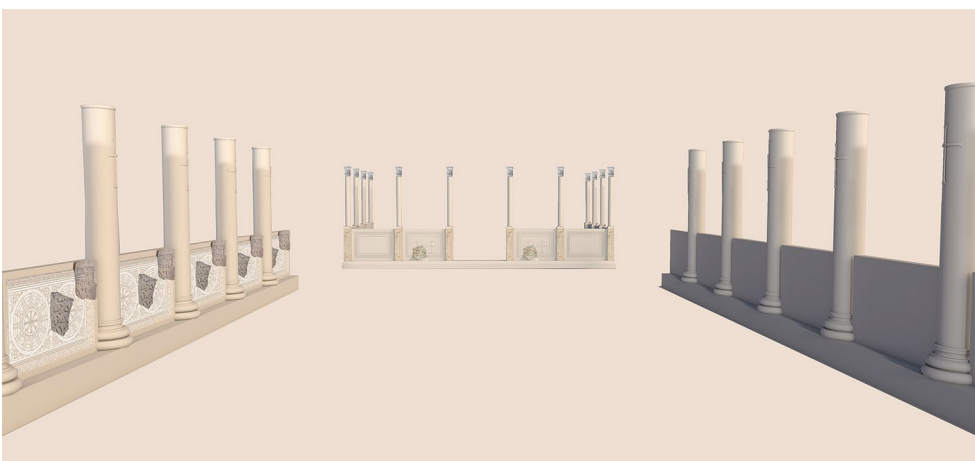
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13



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Fig. 11: The column with Latin cross of the southern aisle

Fig. 12: The slab groove in the L-shaped pier of the southern aisle

Fig. 13: The City Basilica of Patara, reconstruction of the division of the southern aisle

Fig. 14: The City Basilica of Patara, reconstruction of the side aisles and templon

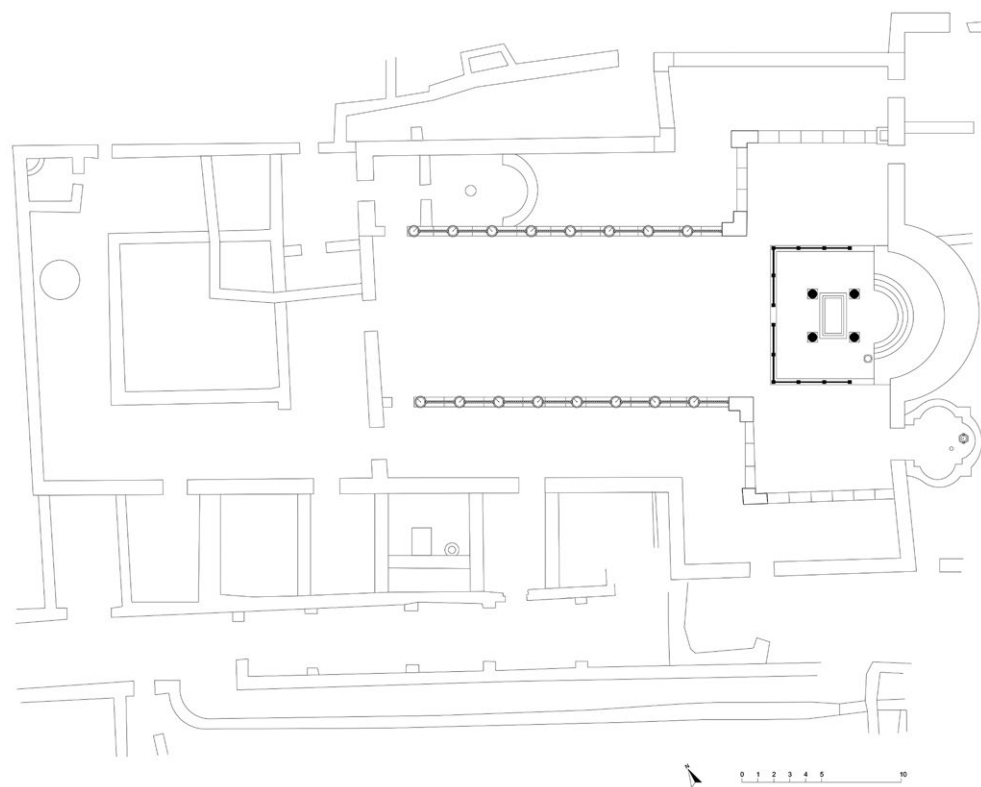


Fig. 15: The City Basilica of Patara, reconstruction plan of the southern and northern side aisles with bema

15

23 As a result of the reconstruction based on the slabs' traces of the L-shaped pier, eight column bases, eight columns and slabs were laid in parallel to each other in the arrangements of the southern and northern naves in the basilica. The first slab (to the east) was placed in the plan of the City Basilica according to the slab groove and the trace of the L-shaped pier in the southern side aisle. The trace and the groove of the slab on the pier shows that the slab was originally placed directly after the pier. Thus, it can be clearly understood that the passage between the nave and the side aisles was accessed from two doors at the end of the naos (fig. 15).

A New Type of Slab for the Division of the Nave: A Monolithic Slab

24 During the Early Byzantine Period (4th–6th centuries A.D.), slabs were laid in churches in different locations for various functions. Within the interior arrangement, slabs were used especially for liturgical furnishings, such as in the arrangements of the templon, ambon, altar, ciborium, solea, synthronon and cathedra. According to a passage in Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the bema was separated by templon slabs that were decorated with various motifs and materials such as woods from the 4th century A.D.³⁴.

25 Fragments of the slabs were used for closure and assigned to the inter-columniations and in the gallery of the church, and to the nave within the interior arrangement of the churches. Unsurprisingly, since pieces of the monolithic slabs were not found in situ in the City Basilica of Patara, the interpretations of the nave and slabs

34 Eus. HE 10, 4, 44 (Oulton 1932, 426 f.): «...ἀλλὰ γὰρ ὧδε καὶ τὸν νεῶν ἐπιτελέσας θρόνοις τε τοῖς ἀνωτάτω εἰς τὴν τῶν προέδρων τιμὴν καὶ προσέτι βάθροις ἐν τάξει τοῖς καθ' ὅλου κατὰ τὸ πρέπον κοσμήσας ἐφ' ἅπασιν τε τὸ τῶν ἁγίων ἁγίων θυσιαστήριον ἐν μέσῳ θείας, αὐθιγῆς καὶ τάδε, ὡς ἂν εἴη τοῖς πολλοῖς ἄβατα, τοῖς ἀπὸ ξύλου περιέφραττε εἰς ἄκρον ἐντέχνου λεπτοουργίας ἐξησκημένοις, ὡς θαυμάσιον τοῖς ὁρώσιν παρέχειν τὴν θέαν.»

during the excavation were based on stratigraphic studies and above all archaeological evidence. From this evidence it has been confirmed that the north and south aisles were separated from the nave by slabs. Consequently, the monolithic slabs can be said to offer important archaeological evidence for the liturgical as well as the architectural arrangement of the basilica.

26 In the City Basilica, among the materials found are four corner pieces of the monolithic slabs (cat. 1. 2. 3. 4). The slabs are made of limestone – a local material in Lycia – and their front features ornamentation, while the rear has no decoration. The front of the upper part of the slabs, which probably faced the nave, is surrounded by a flat border which is 10–15 cm wide. All sections of the trapezoidal borders feature an uninterrupted carved acanthus leaf design at the end of the border horizontally. Palmette motifs connected to the acanthus leaves and their branches decorate the corners of the slabs. There is a gadrooned rope motif on the slab below the trapezoidal section which contains the inner composition of the slab completely within the frame. On the front of each part in the composition of the slab, there is a double-stripe circle and a four-leaf flower motif with a seed in the middle of the circle.

27 For this reconstruction one may consult cat. 1 which offers more information. In the left corner of the slab there is a flower motif in a double-stripe circle. Following the ornamentation, a circular border with a stylized ivy-leaf motif can be observed.

28 The stylized acanthus motifs on the slabs can be found on the slab designs of many churches during the Early Christian Period in Lycia, such as on the Istlada Church³⁵, the Limyra Episcopal Church³⁶, Myra St. Nicholas Church³⁷, the Church at Alakilise³⁸, the Andriake B Church³⁹, the Olympos Episcopal Church⁴⁰, and the Asarcık West Church⁴¹. As well as in Asia Minor, the same motif can be found in the Basilica of Nikopolis in Greece⁴². We can observe variations of both the acanthus and the leaf motifs on the trapezoidal sections found in different geographies, and they appear in the same form especially in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D.⁴³. The pieces of the monolithic slabs used in the northern and southern side aisles of the City Basilica of Patara can be dated to the second half of the 5th century based on the ornament and style⁴⁴.

29 The monolithic slabs found in the City Basilica of Patara bear similarities to those found in the above-mentioned contemporary churches in the Lycian Region in terms of their decoration, technique and material. They can thus be referred to as a ›motif fashion of Lycia‹ that emerged from similar workshops especially in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D.

30 It is possible to see the slabs used in the arrangement of the nave as falling into forms in different types. U. Peschlow considered the fitting techniques of slabs through a technical analysis of the slab arrangements used between the columns for the separation of aisles. U. Peschlow presents two methods for the joining of the column bases and closure slabs: the rectangular slab was either inserted into a groove that was cut vertically into the column base plinth and molding of the base, or the slab was trimmed at its lower end to match the shape of the base (fig. 16)⁴⁵. This technical analysis reveals two different layouts for the slab arrangement. However, another important point to be

35 Marksteiner – Niewöhner 2004, 21–51 figs. 37. 38.

36 Peschlow 1984, 417 fig. 6; Pülz – Ruggendorfer 2004, 74 fig. 24.

37 Peschlow 1990, 217 fig. 2.

38 Severin – Grossmann 2003, 43 f. pls. 6 a–d.

39 Tekinalp 2000, pls. 118–125.

40 Sertel 2017.

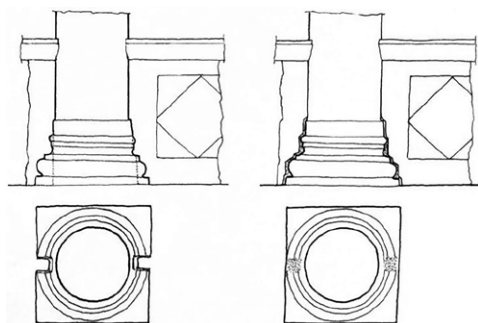
41 İşler 2009, 169 cat. 67.

42 Chalkia 2006, pl. 48 fig. 1.

43 Alpaslan 1997, 244 fig. 1.

44 For the other slabs and the liturgical furnishings found in the basilica, see Demirton 2018.

45 Orlandos 1952, 264 f.; Peschlow 2006, 54 fig. 1.



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Fig. 16: Techniques for installation of chancel slabs

added to U. Peschlow's analysis is the slab's own arrangement: in slab arrangements, some pieces such as slab bases, sides and uppers are used to support the base of the slabs. On the narrow faces of the slabs' base, side and upper side, grooves are drilled to fit a flat-section slab. For those pieces such as slabs bases, sides and uppers that complement the slab, there are longitudinal grooves in the slabs' bases, the column shaft and the column base in which the slab is fixed. Additionally, slots for lead can be seen under the slabs' base and on the side of the slabs. These slots indicate that the piece of slab is mounted on the stylobate, which indicates that they are used as a slab's base⁴⁶. The slabs are usually fixed into the slab grooves with mortar, as in the case of the slabs used in the dividing of aisles in the Olympos Episcopal Church⁴⁷.

31 However, according to the monolithic slabs in the City Basilica of Patara, it has been revealed that the slab itself was made using different techniques of stone carving. Three types of slab carving have been identified: flat-section slabs, trapezoidal section slabs, or slabs with an upper and lower basis⁴⁸ and side⁴⁹. These slabs are placed statically on the column shaft and column base; they have a trapezoidal section. In the City Basilica of Patara, the slabs have been found together with the slabs' bases and are monolithic. The bases of these slabs are formed from a trapezoidal section measuring 13–15 cm. The most important feature of the slabs, unlike the other slabs, are that any trapezoidal section is not added to the slabs in any way, and it has already monolithic bases and sides in four directions of the slabs. Accordingly, it is not necessary to drill holes or use clips on the slabs, stylobates or the columns. In addition, no clip holes, slab grooves or bonding agents have been identified in the basilica's stylobate blocks or the columns. In this arrangement, which is aimed to maintain the static balance of the slabs, each side of the slab is thought to have been processed with a monolithic-trapezoidal section.

32 The reconstruction plan of the slab was made using cat. 1 from which we possess the most information about the slab. As a result of the reconstruction of cat. 1, which is part of the upper left corner of the slab, it can be seen that it is 1.25 m high and 1.90 m wide (fig. 17). Additionally, in the reconstruction study of cat. 1, another piece of slab with a flat section was used that is thought to have belonged to the flat section of the monolithic slab (cat. 5). This slab piece conforms with cat. 1 in terms of its material, technique, measurement, decoration and style. The slab in monolithic form was 1.25 m high and 1.90 m wide, which was the slab size according to the result of the reconstruction based on the properties of the motifs. During the reconstruction, based on the continuity of the motif, the motif appears as a composition of two motifs in one slab. The reason for this is that some pieces of slabs found in the basilica contain a double composition of motifs side by side. It is also possible to have a different composition and in this case the width of the slabs may vary. However, these aspects are not expected to affect the slab's height, because of the continuity of ornamentation on the slab.

33 In considering the reconstruction of the slab, it is clear that the rectangular slab was inserted into the groove that was cut vertically into the column base's plinth and molding of the base. The important point to observe is that the slab does not have any connection with the column shaft. According to the reconstruction, there is a 3 cm gap between the slab and column shaft. This conclusion is additionally supported by the absence of the slabs grooves on the column shaft. Why was there not any connection

46 Alpaslan 1997, 235. 240 f.

47 Sertel 2017, 143.

48 Alpaslan 1997, 235 f.

49 Öztaşkın – Sertel 2017, 363 f.

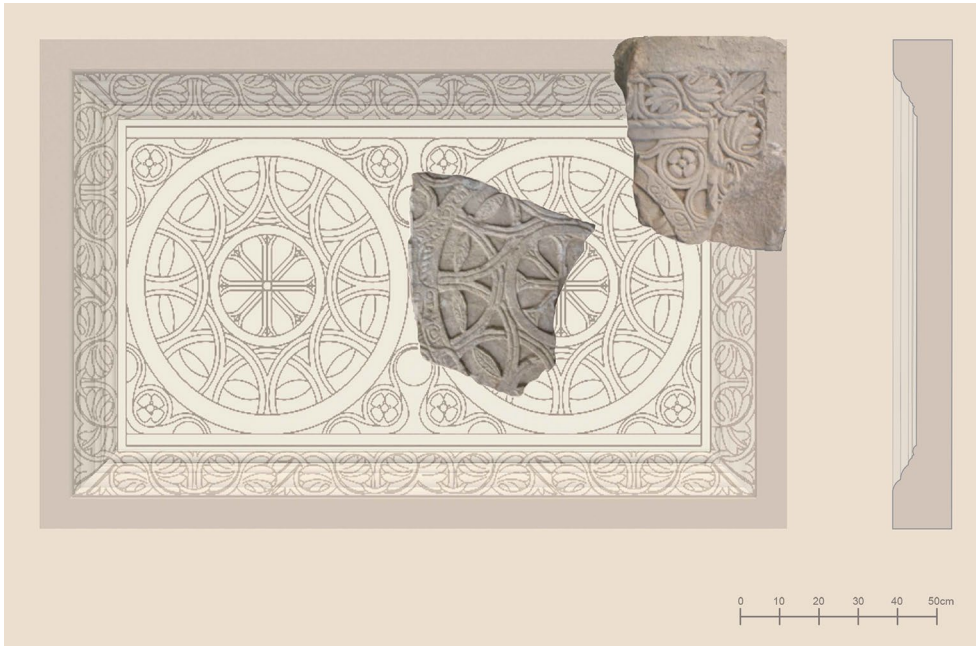


Fig. 17: The City Basilica of Patara, reconstruction of the monolithic slab

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between them? One reason may be an aesthetic concern on the liturgical materials. In other words, there is no need to make a deep and vertical groove in the column when the column and the slab are disconnected. In such cases, the slab provides balance from its own monolithic-trapezoidal bases. Another reason for this arrangement would be protection against an earthquake. By breaking off the connection between the column and slab, one can minimize the damage of a chain reaction of an earthquake. Another more remote possibility is that the limestone slabs, which were most likely ordered from a local workshop in Lycia, could not be technically organized with the spolia columns in the basilica.

34 Out of the variety of slabs from the Early Byzantine Period that we have studied so far, no similar arrangement of slabs in monolithic form has yet been encountered. Besides the various additional elements of slabs, the slabs containing a trapezoidal section are seen only at the bottom of slabs as monoliths. For instance, the slab arrangement in the Olympos Episcopal Church, which dates to the second half of the 5th century A.D., was made up of the lower, upper and side part of the slab which has a trapezoidal section (fig. 18)⁵⁰. Another example of the lower, upper and side part of slabs created with a trapezoidal section is found in St. Nicholas Church at Myra, which has been dated to the 6th century A.D. (fig. 19)⁵¹. In the City Basilica of Patara, the lower, upper and side parts of the slabs are made of monolithic limestone, and the slabs have no need for any auxiliary element as we see in the examples of Olympos Episcopal Church and St. Nicolas Church at Myra.

35 In the City Basilica of Patara, all of the pieces from the lower, upper and side of the slab would have been used to divide the nave from the side aisles, although it is unclear whether they were also used on the transept aisles. However, a grooving of the slabs on each side of the postaments in the transept aisles shows that the flat-section slabs found in the basilica were used for the division of transept aisles and transept wings. The slabs with flat section uncovered during the excavation stand in harmony with the hexagonal postaments found in the transept corridors and the traces of the flat section slabs on the L piers.

50 Öztaşkın – Sertel 2017, 372.

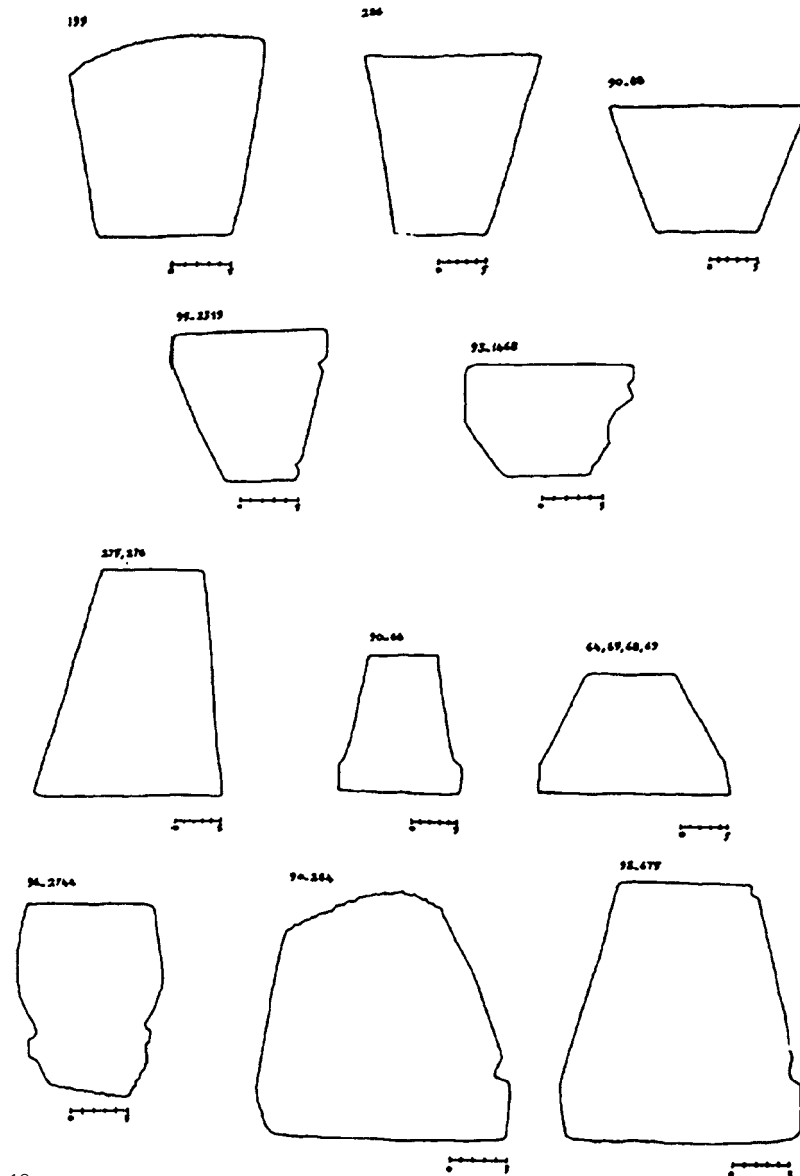
51 Alpaslan 1997, 214–245.

Fig. 18: Olympos Episcopal Church, fragment of slab and lower side of slab

Fig. 19: Myra, St. Nicholas Church, upper and lower profiles of slabs (after Alpaslan 1997)



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36 Furthermore, in the City Basilica of Patara, the whole structure except for the bema was constructed from the foundation of the building, with mostly roughly stones and spolia materials being used. It is clear that the marble was used not only in the arrangement of the templon but also for the entire construction of the bema, that is, the most sacred area in the basilica. The marble was used in the bema for the floor covering with opus sectile, the marble coating for the apse and synthronon, the altar trapeza, the altar column and the entire templon arrangement (templon pier, templon slab, templon column and capital). When the building materials of the whole basilica are taken into account, only the bema displays a precise design during the first phase of the basilica. Thus, it can be said that the imported marbles (most probably from the island of Prokonnesos) in the basilica were used to emphasize the sacred spaces such as the bema. For it is known that these custom-built liturgical furnishings were produced in Prokonnesos⁵² and Docimium⁵³ in Anatolia. When the liturgical materials produced in these regions are examined, it is clear that the liturgical furnishings at both production-points have similar characteristics in terms of their style, motif, size and materials within the bema of the City Basilica of Patara and as well as in the architectural artifacts found in the contemporary churches in Constantinople⁵⁴.

52 During the 4th–6th centuries A.D, materials had been serially produced in Proconnesos, where a large-scale export market was situated. These materials were exported to many Aegean and Mediterranean regions in Anatolia except Constantinople (Asgari 1995, 262–265). Shafts, bases and capitals of columns held an important place among the export products (Beykan 2004, 3).

53 Niewöhner 2007.

54 Peschlow 1991, 1465–1475; Demirton 2023b, forthcoming.

Conclusion

37 In Asia Minor the naves of many churches were formed by stylobates or stylobate-walls, columns with slabs or with slabs and curtains⁵⁵ between them. Nevertheless, the division of the naves with closure slabs in the intercolumnia is not always visible in churches of the 5th and 6th century A.D. For example, in Constantinople in the mid-6th centuries there are two churches whose naves are not divided by slabs: the Hagia Sophia and the Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus. However, in Constantinople St. John of Studios, which is dated to the second half of the 5th century A.D.⁵⁶, and Basilica A near Beyazıt Square, which is dated to the second half of the 6th century A.D., are two examples of churches which have closure slabs in the intercolumniations⁵⁷. In addition, the Church of St. John at Ephesus, the Basilica A at Perge⁵⁸, the Bishop Church in Hierapolis in Phrygia⁵⁹ and the Temple Church at Aphrodisias⁶⁰ all have a nave which is divided by slabs fastened between the columns. If we focus on the Lycian Region, some of the churches' naves and aisles have been separated by the slabs, column bases and columns, but some of them have not been separated in the similar arrangement. For instance, at the Liman Basilica in Olympos, dated to the late 4th–5th century A.D., the aisles and the side naves were separated from the central nave with a stylobate and columns. However, unfortunately, there is no information about the slabs of the basilica⁶¹. Similarly, in Andriake Church B dated to the 5th–6th century A.D., the stylobate blocks used on the side naves were found in situ. The locations of the columns separating the central nave from the side aisles were determined from grooves and clamp holes on the stylobates. The grooves in the slabs were interrupted where the column bases were placed⁶².

38 Another example comes from middle Lycia. In the Günağı Church, dated to the 5th century A.D., the nave arrangement was created with closure slabs in the intercolumniation. The slabs were inserted into the slabs groove on the Attica-type column bases. It is understood from the groove in the column base that the slab has a flat section⁶³. Moreover, although this aspect is uncertain, the side aisles of Asarcık East Church were probably separated by columns on the stylobate⁶⁴.

39 A church in Istlada dated to the 6th century A.D. also sees the nave divided by means of the columns. The fragment of a group of slabs found in Istlada have very similar characteristics and motifs to the slabs of the City Basilica of Patara, especially the upper and lower pieces of the slabs⁶⁵. The Andriake A Church also preserves columns which divide the naos, but there is no information about the slabs of the naves⁶⁶.

40 In addition to the arrangement of the nave with slabs in the intercolumniation, a different arrangement is observed for the division of the nave by the wall in the intercolumniation, as seen at the Olympos Episcopal Church dated to the second half of the 5th century A.D. The nave of the Olympos Episcopal Church was divided by means of the stylobate, the wall and slabs on the wall in the intercolumniation. The height of the nave with the wall and the upper and lower parts of the slabs measured between

55 It is known that the curtain divide system between columns was used to prevent the view from side aisles to the central nave in Ephesus St. Johns Church; see Peschlow 2006, 54 fig. 1.

56 Peschlow 2006, 54 f. 67.

57 Firath 1951, 164–167; Mathews 1971, 67–73; Peschlow 2006, 54.

58 Rott 1908, 48–50; İnan 1988, 212 f. figs. 50–53; Peschlow 2006, 56.

59 Peschlow 2006, 56.

60 Hebert 2000, 167.

61 Mergen 2011, 526–544.

62 Tekinalp 2000, 81.

63 İşler 2016, 371 f. figs. 3–8. 24. 25.

64 İşler 2009, 238.

65 Marksteiner – Niewöhner 2004, 35 figs. 19–21. 23. 26. 36–38.

66 Tekinalp 2000, 62.

1.60–1.80 m. A similar arrangement of the nave is also seen in the Olympos Necropolis Church⁶⁷.

⁴¹ In Lycia, the division of the nave by the wall in the intercolumniation is also seen in the Rhodiapolis Church. In this church, dated to the 5th–6th century A.D., just like in the Olympos Episcopal Church, a wall which is estimated to be 1.75 m high was revealed on the stylobates of the south and north naves with column bases⁶⁸. Moreover, in the City Basilica of Tlos dated to the Early Byzantine Period, there was found another example of an arrangement of a nave with wall. Here one finds a wall created with rubble and spolia stones between the postaments in the north side nave of the basilica. However, it is not clear whether this arrangement of the walls in the nave are from the Early Byzantine Period⁶⁹.

⁴² In Lycia, besides the arrangement of the nave with slabs in the intercolumniation, the division of the aisles by the piers is also quite striking in the interior arrangement of a church, for example in the case of the church in Dereağzı and the Basilica with Trikonchos Chapel in Choma⁷⁰. Notably neither of them is dated to the Early Byzantine Period: in the Dereağzı Church, which is dated to the 9th or 10th century, the nave, like the aisles, consists of three parts, namely a long central section and two squarish bays to the east and west. It was clearly understood from the north side that its end bays were divided from the center section by paired responds and isolated from the east and west bays of the nave by the wall piers, not by the columns and slabs⁷¹. Moreover, in the center of the Medieval Lycia Region, in the Asarcık West Church dated to the early 6th century A.D. (phase 1), the piers of naves were dated to the 9th century⁷². Thus, it can be understood from the nave arrangements of these churches, dated to the Early and Late Byzantine Period in Lycia, that there were different techniques and approaches to the division of naves between the 5th to 6th centuries A.D. and the 9th and 10th centuries. The reason for this variety in the churches' arrangement is hard to explain, but it is possible that each church has organized its own interior design over the years for static or aesthetic reasons. In addition, it is clear that, for the side-aisles and the central naves which are separated by slabs, there was not a common installation technique in the Early Byzantine Period. In the City Basilica of Patara, the arrangement of the slabs seen is a type that has not been encountered before in the use of the slabs and the division of the nave arrangement.

⁶⁷ Öztaşkın – Sertel 2017, 360.

⁶⁸ Tiriyaki 2012, 24–26 fig. 3.

⁶⁹ Korkut 2013, 192 f. figs. 6, 7; Korkut – Urano 2020.

⁷⁰ Çağaptay Arıkan 2001, 23–25.

⁷¹ Morganstern 1983, 42. 169.

⁷² İşler 2009, 367.

Cat. 1

Monolithic slab (fig. 20)

found from the southern aisle

Dimensions: Height 48 cm; width 39 cm; upper thickness 13 cm; lower thickness 8 cm.

Material: Limestone

Description: The corner of the pieces has the upper and left sides of slab which form a trapezoidal section. The front of the slab is ornamented, while the rear is plain. There is a flat 7.5 cm wide border with no ornamentation on the front of the slab. The 13 cm wide trapezoidal borders are decorated with an uninterrupted acanthus leaf design at the end of the border horizontally. The palmette motif connecting the acanthus leaves and their branches decorate the corner of the slab. There is a 3 cm wide rope motif under the trapezoidal section which contains the inner composition of the slab completely within the frame. In the composition of the inner slab, the front of the slab features one full and two semicircles with a double-stripe circle, 2.5 cm wide, and a flower motif consisting of four leaves and a seed at the center of the circle. There are fine-tip auger holes around the seed, and an ornamented circular border just below the circles measuring 4 cm in width. An ivy-leaf pattern encircles as a border. Part of the relief, comprising a 4 cm wide triplex line, can be seen below the border. Additionally, on the outside of the ornamentation it is possible to see the guidelines of the slab.

Date: Second half of the 5th century A.D.

Cat. 2

Monolithic slab (fig. 21)

found from the southern transept

Dimensions: Height 44 cm; width 30.2 cm; upper thickness 13.5 cm; lower thickness 11 cm.

Material: Limestone

Description: The piece comes from the corner of the trapezoidal section of the slab. Part of the bottom of the slab and its left side is broken. The rear is undecorated. On the front of the slab, following the undecorated border, there are acanthus leaves between curved branches on the trapezoidal section, and a palmette motif in the corner connecting the acanthus leaves.

Date: Second half of the 5th century A.D.

Cat. 3

Monolithic slab (fig. 22)

found from the northern transept

Dimensions: Height 29 cm; width 27.1 cm; upper thickness 15 cm; lower thickness 9.5 cm.

Material: Limestone

Description: On the front of the piece, the 15 cm wide upper part is undecorated. At the bottom is a border decorated with a trapezoidal section. On the front of the slab, following the undecorated border, there are acanthus leaves between curved branches on the trapezoidal section and a palmette motif in the corner connecting with the acanthus leaves. There is a 3 cm wide rope motif below the border. The circular bands are seen under the border.

Date: Second half of the 5th century A.D.

Cat. 4

Monolithic slab (fig. 23)

found from the northern transept

Dimensions: Height 26 cm; width 31.5 cm; upper thickness 12 cm; lower thickness 7 cm.

Material: Limestone

Description: Acanthus leaves are seen between the curved branches and the palmette motif at the corner of the slab in the trapezoidal (width: 11 cm). The border is narrowed by a 3 cm wide rope motif and a circular band that is partially visible at the bottom of the slab.

Date: Second half of the 5th century A.D.

Cat. 5

Slab with a christogram in a circle (fig. 24)

found from the triconchos chapel

Dimensions: Height 49.1 cm; width 41.6 cm; thickness 10.5 cm

Material: Limestone

Description: The fragment of a limestone closure slab was found broken in the triconchos chapel. Circle motifs measured 2 cm can be seen clearly on the front of the piece. It preserves relief decoration with the christogram in a circle. Inside the circle, there are four arms of the christogram which are 1.5 cm wide. Linear ornaments are placed on the inside of the arms of the cross. There are intersecting circles around the christogram which are 2 cm – 3.5 cm wide. Inside each semicircle there is a spikily leaf motif measured 3 cm wide and on the inside is detailed with twigs. The circles are surrounded by a border measured 4 cm wide. Within the ornamentation of the border successive spiral motifs and linear ornaments can be seen. All the motifs on the slab are ornamented by the method of embossing and scraping. There are traces of thin-tipped drills on the edges of the reliefs.

Date: Second half of the 5th century A.D.

Comparison: For circle motifs which intersect each other, see: Roux 1998, 282 fig. 323; Westphalen 1998, 324 fig. 26 cat. 119; Tekinalp 2000, pl. 178, D13.C, DIII; Niewöhner 2016, 199 MK220–MK221.



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Fig. 20: Cat. 1, monolithic slab

Fig. 21: Cat. 2, monolithic slab

Fig. 22: Cat. 3, monolithic slab

Fig. 23: Cat. 4, monolithic slab

Fig. 24: Cat. 5, fragment of slab with christogram

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die liturgische Ausstattung der Stadtbasilika von Patara in frühchristlicher Zeit

Abtrennung der Kirchenschiffe und monolithische Schrankenplatten

Ceren Demirton

In dieser Studie werden die bei den Ausgrabungen der Stadtbasilika in Patara in den Jahren 2013–2019 geborgenen Schrankenplatten untersucht und dargestellt. Dabei werden die Motive, Abmessungen und Materialien detailliert beschrieben, mit ähnlichen Beispielen in der byzantinischen Architektur verglichen, ihre Funktion bestimmt und Rekonstruktionsvorschläge gemacht. Diese typologische Studie entstand nach einer wissenschaftlichen Analyse der Plattenkonstruktion und einer strukturellen Untersuchung der Basilika. Insgesamt wurden 190 liturgische Kalkstein- und Marmorartefakte aus der frühchristlichen Zeit gefunden. Da in der byzantinischen Architekturfor-schung die vierseitig trapezförmig geschnittenen Plattenfragmente aus Kalkstein in monolithischer Form, die in der Anlage zur Abtrennung der Seitenschiffe fungierten, bisher nicht bekannt waren, wurde eine neue Definition als monolithische Platten vorgeschlagen. Als Ergebnis dieser Studie wurde der Schluss gezogen, dass die monolithischen Schrankenplatten in den Gängen an der Nord- und Südseite verwendet wurden und wahrscheinlich die Schiffe der Basilika trennten. Die in der Stadtbasilika von Patara gefundenen monolithischen Platten ähneln im Motiv, ihrer Technik und im Material jenen der byzantinischen Architekturplastik der zweiten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts, sodass sie sich in diese Zeit einordnen lassen.

SCHLAGWÖRTER

Patara, Frühchristliche Archäologie, Liturgische Ausstattung, Abtrennung der Kirchenschiffe, monolithische Schrankenplatten

ÖZET

Patara Kent Bazilikası Erken Hristiyanlık Dönemi Litürjik Eserleri

Nef Ayrımı Düzenlemesi ve Monolitik Levhalar
Ceren Demirton

Bu çalışmada, Patara Kent Bazilikası'nda 2013–2019 yıllarında yapılan kazı çalışmaları sonunda ele geçen levhalar incelenmektedir. Levhaların motifleri, ölçüleri ve malzemeleri incelenerek Bizans mimarisinden benzer örneklerle karşılaştırılıp işlevleri belirlenmekte ve bir rekonstrüksiyon planı sunulmaktadır. Bu tipolojik çalışma, levhaların yapım yöntemleri ve söz konusu bazilikanın mimari bilimsel analizinin bir sonucu olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Patara Kent Bazilikası kazı çalışmalarında Erken Hristiyanlık Dönemi'ne ait kireç taşı ve mermer malzemeden elde edilen toplamda 190 adet litürjik taş eserler ele geçmiştir. Bizans mimari çalışmalarında böyle bir tanımlama olması sebebiyle, nef ayırımında kullanıldığı anlaşılan dört yönden trapez kesitli, kireçtaşından işlenen bu mimari öğeler için 'monolitik levha' olarak yeni bir tanımlama önerilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonunda, kuzey ve güney yan neflerinde monolitik levhaların kullanıldığı ve böylece bazilikanın naosunu ayırımı sağladığı sonucuna varılmıştır. Patara Kent Bazilikası'nda bulunan monolitik formdaki bu levhalar, motif, yapım teknikleri ve malzemeleri bakımından Bizans mimarisindeki diğer örneklerle benzerlik göstermektedir. Böylece bazilikanın mimari evreleri ile benzer örneklerin karşılaştırılmasıyla, bu levhaları M.S. 5. yüzyılın ikinci yarısına tarihlendirmek mümkündür.

ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER

Patara, Erken Hristiyanlık Arkeolojisi, litürjik eser, nef ayrımı, monolitik levhalar

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