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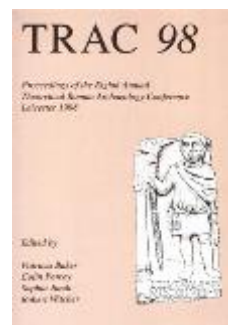
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A Pilgrimage Experience at Sacred Sites in Late Antique Anatolia

by Mark Jackson

An archaeological plan devoid of people and so many of the sensory elements which were once features of the original place is a technical drawing, facilitating interpretation of particular aspects of the archaeological site e.g. architectural phasing; clearly it cannot be expected to be a faithful representation of the original place. If we are to attempt to understand, through material remains, the significance of a 'sacred' place for its pilgrims, we must make use of more than just these plans. Among the features of the architecture not conveyed by such media are the full geometry of the architectural environment, the sequential experience of moving through that environment, and its sensory impact.

Plans and elevation drawings, are among the fundamental conventions in archaeological recording, but are limited in the extent to which they are able to fulfil adequately enquiry into the nature of built space. In many respects, they are quite acceptable tools for the representation of archaeological data and when supported with photographic evidence they may be very informative. However, archaeologists are beginning to utilise new tools which may combine surveyed data, rectified photographic representation and computer aided design technology to allow both the representation of archaeological data in new ways, and also the recreation, exploring and experiencing of places through reconstruction and dynamic visualisations. Hyperrealistic computer generated worlds are not far from us and it is these which may capture the geometry of environment, its sensory components and sequential experience (Lang 1987:324) with greater ease than the more traditional techniques of archaeological representation and reconstruction. This paper is not concerned specifically with the problems associated with such traditional techniques nor with the merits of innovative use of computer software for they are illustrated and dealt with elsewhere (Bayliss 1997a, 1997b; 1998; Gillings & Goodrick 1996; Reilly & Rahtz 1992). I hope to demonstrate that, in dealing with the archaeology of pilgrimage, we should not merely be working with typologies of buildings and the events which took place in and around them, but we should approach an understanding of the significance of built spaces for people in the past.

This paper is concerned with the way in which the architectural and sensory devices at pilgrimage centres created an environment which permitted a gradual intensification of the liturgical action and afforded increased feelings of expectation towards a final emotional culmination at the architectural and symbolic focus. Many of the devices within the architectural and natural environment of the pilgrimage centre, such as the way sound reverberated around buildings, are not well illustrated by current modes of archaeological representation, since they cannot be appreciated by looking at an archaeological plan. But for the pilgrim, the more sensory aspects of the architecture would have been very important in the creation of the religious experience.

This experience would have been dependent in part on the pilgrim's background and motivations, but the linear layouts of the sites which facilitated involvement in a whole succession of opportunities for sacred activity along their way, would have provided the pilgrim with a sequence of experiences not of the ordinary. This liturgy would have endorsed the importance of the place as sacred, thus confirming the pilgrim's desire for a spiritual experience, and increasing expectation for more along the route, so the final activity at the focus of the site could be one of great emotion.

Although a significant proportion of research into pilgrimage has concentrated on the motivations of the pilgrim and the concept of the Holy Place (MacCormack 1990), the analysis of the archaeology of pilgrimage has concentrated predominantly on the monumental architecture of the surviving pilgrimage centres, their layout, and the activities that took place in them (Ousterhout 1990:108; Stopford 1994:59).

Archaeological work on pilgrimage centres has traditionally tended to concentrate either on describing the activities performed by pilgrims around sites, or on detailed descriptions of their monumental architecture and layouts, focusing on building designs and decoration, and although acknowledging symbolism, interpretations have often followed typological, functional and historical approaches (Mango 1978:7–9). It has been considered, for example, that the layout of these sites facilitated the organisation of the large numbers of people who visited them (Stopford 1994:66). An example of this tradition of interpretation may be found in a discussion of split-level Crusader churches; the design of these buildings may have allowed the religious communities to continue worshipping on the floor above without being disturbed by pilgrims (Pringle 1987:351). But how did this arrangement affect the pilgrim's experience? Though he or she could not see the liturgy taking place - could it be heard? How might the combination of this architectural layout and liturgical actions have effected their experience? The architecture did far more than present large numbers of people with the opportunity to take part in ritual at specific places as they processed around a pilgrimage centre. We must not dehumanise our interpretations of these pilgrimage centres where emotions and senses would have played such a part.

In order to understand the experience of the pilgrim at these places we also need to appreciate the role of his or her own background and motivations for being there, as well as the architecture of the place (Lang 1994:318). The architecture alone cannot have determined behaviour, although it may have 'afforded' certain actions; the experience itself will have depended greatly upon the background and motivation of the visitor (Lang 1987:103–4). In spite of the fact that pilgrims may come from very different backgrounds, bringing and imposing a diversity of perceptions and meaning to the shrine (Eade & Sallnow 1991:10), pilgrims' motivations in general will be different from those of other tourists (Leyerle 1996:121); since although each visitor to a pilgrimage site has a different background, a sizeable proportion of pilgrims, as 'religious tourists', have a similar motivation. Whether they have travelled a long and arduous, or a much shorter journey to the site, they come prepared to arrive at a sacred place. Even before they arrive, they are in many cases open to accept the sacred nature of the site and are therefore more susceptible to the sacred experience than an ambivalent and uninformed visitor. It is the motivation behind the journey to the sacred place that differentiates the pilgrim from other tourists. Theirs' was spiritual journey complete with additional expectations and an agenda that goes beyond most travel experience. For many there was an expectation not just of the new and the exciting but of the sacred and the supernatural.

Smith explains, the idea of the *loca sancta*, the holy place, was seen as powerful, awe-inspiring, dangerous, important, precious and to be approached with due seriousness and gravity, setting it apart from the profane (Smith 1992:240). He remarks that 'The Holy can be approached only with due preparation' (Smith 1992:240). The holy place was, for the early medieval pilgrim, the object of yearning: *desiderum*, a journey not merely in space but of the soul (MacCormack 1990:22).

The study of the architectural layout of the sixth century pilgrimage centre at Mount Sinai by Finkelstein (1981:81) noted a series of prayer niches lining the approach to Jebel Musa, the summit of the mountain. Coleman & Elsner (1994:78) interpreted these as 'mini-goals' marking the ascent up Mount Sinai. Finkelstein (1985:56) also noted that paths facilitated movement towards the focus at Mount Sinai, via these opportunities for stationary liturgy. McKevitt also identified the movement of pilgrims towards the most sacred part of a shrine in an anthropological study of the

pilgrimage site of Padre Pio in Italy. His observations recognised movement towards the tomb of Padre Pio via other places on the site, associated with Pio's life, which became the foci of attention of pilgrims (McKevitt 1991:90). Points of significance, often offering the opportunity for ritual activity, are a common feature of the architecture of pilgrimage centres.

Finkelstein (1981:81) describes how some of the locations of prayer niches on the approach to the summit of Mount Sinai were places where there was a 'magnificent' view, and from some the peak was visible. These structures were places where pilgrims prayed and monks it is argued, provided an 'interpretative and liturgical form for pilgrim-experience' (Coleman & Elsner 1994:78). Those pilgrims who sought a particular experience would have been more receptive to the symbols than those coming loaded with indifference or scepticism.

These niches, like similar devices used elsewhere (see below), can be understood to be not just mini-goals to the pilgrim, neither were they just 'staging posts' or 'markers' on the way to the main goal. For, as well as being places to aim for while on the journey and places of activity, these structures had an experiential quality. As places for prayer, these niches became an integral part of the experience of the sacred site, since prayer may be both a personal and public activity. The position of the niches at places of significance within the site means that the liturgy practised there may have been given meaning by monks (Coleman & Elsner 1994:78) or may have been conducted with extra symbolism, but the experience itself belonged to the pilgrim.

Coleman & Elsner (1994:74) highlighted the failure of anthropologists to examine how the 'physical characteristics of pilgrimage sites can provide a religious topography designed to impose – or at least suggest behavioural and ideological conformity'. They concluded that the pilgrimage to Sinai incorporated at least two levels of transformation, one on the level of theology, and one on the level of self:

Through liturgy, images, the constant reading of scripture, and personal prayer, the pilgrim would have been associated with the biblical events which actually took place at the site

(Coleman & Elsner 1994:85)

In this study I hope to demonstrate that these paths that are typical of Pilgrimage centres, vary in physical appearance: they may be simple or monumentalised, colonnaded or covered, curved or straight, they may have run uphill or descended into tunnels, they may have provided and prevented lines of sight to final destinations. Whatever the nature of the path, its effect was to keep the pilgrim moving between the points of stationary liturgy, by stimulating anticipation for what was to come.

This investigation aims to explore the relationship between the architectural devices, physical characteristics and the pilgrims themselves by concentrating on examples of pilgrimage centres from the late Roman period in southern Turkey. The religious background of pilgrims and their expectation provide motivation for the activities they perform within the pilgrimage centre, which are of critical importance for their experience. It can be suggested that the more motivation the pilgrim has, the more meaningful the liturgy at each station will be for the individual and therefore the more fulfilling the experience. The fact that the pilgrim is given the opportunity to undertake a whole succession of such activities means that each fulfilling experience will add to the cumulative experience at the site.

The cumulative effect of undertaking a succession of liturgical activities, each with its own meaning, would have prepared the pilgrim for the final focus of the site mentally: full of expectation and excitement, nervousness and apprehension in order that the final encounter with the focus, perhaps a sacred relic, might be an experience of heightened emotional significance.

The succession of potential experiences featured along the linear layout of pilgrimage centres, and the architectural and striking natural environment of many centres would have afforded the opportunity to create feelings of anticipation and suspense as approach was made towards the final destination. The momentum behind this movement at the pilgrimage centre is provided by the desire to approach the most sacred part of the site. These feelings could have been increased by facilitating or depriving sight of the goal while still at a distance (Coleman & Elsner 1994:78); by the behaviour and actions of other people; the location of elements of surprise and distraction, e.g. touts selling trinkets, monks, shrines, tombs, baptisteries or baths and other rituals peculiar to the place; and images in the form of paintings, mosaics and sculptures, which would have held symbolism and meaning for their viewers.

Christians are concerned with the invisible one beyond all sense perception, and yet, paradoxically, they communicate with the Deity, normally, in and through sensory forms. Their religious life is expressed through the world of the body, its glance, its word and its gesture. Even their spiritual concepts are derived from the impressions received through the senses.

(McKenzie 1988:15)

Sensations could also be aroused through the use of light, colours, temperature, sounds and smells and by causing pilgrims to undergo physical exertion prior to their arrival; these devices afford the potential for a heightened experience at the final goal. The cumulative effect of the sensory properties of the environment was to afford an experience worthy of the sacred place, but only if the visitor was open and receptive to these properties.

The veneration of sacred places was a very important aspect of the early Medieval World. *Loca Sancta*, or sacred places, which were the objects of these journeys have been the focus of much research but little work seems to have concentrated on the way in which the sacred place is actually created in the mind of the medieval pilgrim. For a place to be appreciated as sacred it must convince; McKeivitt explains how twentieth century pilgrims visiting San Giovanni Rotundo come familiar with the myths of Padre Pio and ready for a spiritual experience: 'One or other of these is always granted because the pilgrimage facilitates intimate contact with the divine in the form of the special powers felt to reside in this sacred place' (McKeivitt 1991:93).

Through hearing information about holy places before arriving and personal preparation on the pilgrimage (McKeivitt 1991:92), the pilgrim thus comes to the site anticipating the Holy. The place must be able to afford an experience that will maintain this preconception in order to perpetuate its reputation. McKeivitt says, 'The sacred is not something given or something fixed, but must be constantly created and recreated. A conscious effort is needed on the part of the pilgrim to use and appropriate symbols, myths and rituals in order to vivify the experience of the pilgrimage and to make real the sacredness of the place' (McKeivitt 1991:79).

In order to understand the success of the medieval *loca sancta* we need to be aware of the potential for the pilgrimage centre to enable the pilgrim to vivify the notion of the sacred place that they bring with them. The sacred place must not be a disappointment. Relics or tombs were often the focus of the *loca sancta*. What is of interest here is how the pilgrim came to associate for example an old bone, whether in an elaborate case or not, with divine power. If we acknowledge that architecture is not enough to determine behaviour, then neither is material culture: in this case a reliquary with its contents. In this study I will list briefly evidence from three pilgrimage centres which are examples of *loca sancta*; following this, I will attempt to show how devices at these sites would have worked with the motivation of the pilgrim and contributed to the sacred experience.



Figure 1 Line of four arcosolia situated after the baptistery at the West end of the colonnaded walkway.

Alahan

Alahan, dated from the fifth century AD, is built on a huge rock-cut ledge on the side of the Göksu Valley, in southern Turkey (Gough 1985; Hill 1996:68–83; Figure 5). Archaeological and epigraphic evidence from the site have been used to suggest its function as a pilgrimage centre (Hill 1998, 317); there is a church at either end of the site joined by a colonnaded walkway. The route from west to east between these two structures passes a baptistery, a shrine, and four tombs in arcosolia (Figure 1); then follows a colonnaded walkway before arriving at the 'East Church' (Figure 2), beyond the 'East Church' was a steep path to a spring complex, bath and well (Gough 1985:10–16). This is a monumentalized environment, built in a very impressive geographical position:

...by whatever means this ascent is made, the impression on a visitor when he reaches the top is likely to be one of wonder. Wonder at the grandeur and extent of the buildings which stretch away to the right, and wonder, as he turns back towards the road up which he has come, at the magnificence of the wide views over the valley of the Göksu, to Mahras Dag on its far side and to the ranges of the blue Isaurian hills beyond. A moment or two is needed to catch breath

(Gough 1985:12)

Excavation suggests that initial construction, although not in a single phase, took place in a short space of time, with the colonnaded walkway and baptistery being the last to be built (Gough 1963:114). The site offers the pilgrim the opportunity, at specific points, to seek personal involvement in this sacred place: to venerate saints, to witness and obtain baptism and to follow a well defined route via these points between the churches at either end of the complex. At the far end of the site, the sacred spring, like the cistern near the end of the path at Mount Sinai (Finkelstein 1985:60) would have enabled pilgrims to quench their 'thirst'. As well as archaeological evidence for figural mosaics there is also imposing architectural sculpture full of imagery and symbolism that would have held messages for the pilgrims (Gough 1962:180).



Figure 2 Shrine (foreground right), situated on the southern side of the colonnaded walkway, with East Church in background

Gemile Ada

At Gemile Ada, an island off the coast of Lycia, thought to be a pilgrimage site, there were five churches dedicated to St. Nicholas, patron saint of sailors, travellers and pilgrims (Tsuji 1995). The settlement lay around the outside of the island, surrounding the interior, where the funerary monuments and the ecclesiastical monuments were situated.

The route from 'Church 4' up the hill to 'Church 3' is made via a long and vaulted passageway (Foss 1994:74), which has niches along its way, lined with tombs. At particular points where two vaulted passageways join, one encounters small centrally planned areas built with domed roofs (Tsuji 1995:Figure 6). Further procession is facilitated around the churches by additional passageways. Tombs positioned in the niches along the lines of these vaulted corridors provide a role as objects for veneration, but also the passages themselves monumentalise the path, encompassing the tombs and linking the churches. Their gradients, orientation, line, sensory properties, sounds and smells afford and prevent opportunities to take part in a variety of potential activities and lend themselves to a variety of experiences.

Meryemlik

Another of these pilgrimage places was the site of Meryemlik or St. Thecla (Herzfeld & Guyer 1930; Hill 1996:208–234; Figure 6) situated on a hill a couple of kilometres outside Silifke, the ancient city of Seleucia, on the shores of the Mediterranean (Ferguson 1990:887). Though the site has been planned, it is largely unexcavated. There are two main literary sources relating to this site: the Miracles of St Thecla (Dagron 1978) and the account of a visit to the site by the fourth Century pilgrim, Egeria (Wilkinson 1971, 121).

Having known about Meryemlik for some months and studied it in published material, I was finally able to make my own trip to this last site late one afternoon last August. After a 20 minute

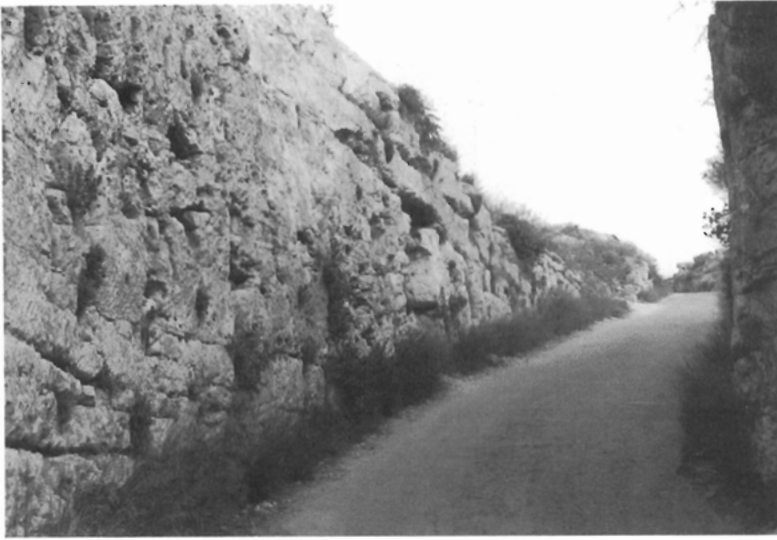


Figure 3 The cutting at Meryemlik, view along the cutting from the entrance.



Figure 4 The cutting at Meryemlik, emerging from the mouth of the cutting, view of the site (Courtesy of Richard Bayliss).

walk from Silifke the final approach was up a relatively steep hillside. Near the crest of the hill the final approach is guided through a rock-cut passage. This passage is c. 4m wide, cut into the rock to a depth of c. 3 to 4m and faced with ashlar masonry. Even when I was halfway along the passage – because it is rising to pass over the crest of the hill and because it is on a slight bend – I was unable to see the site (Figure 3).

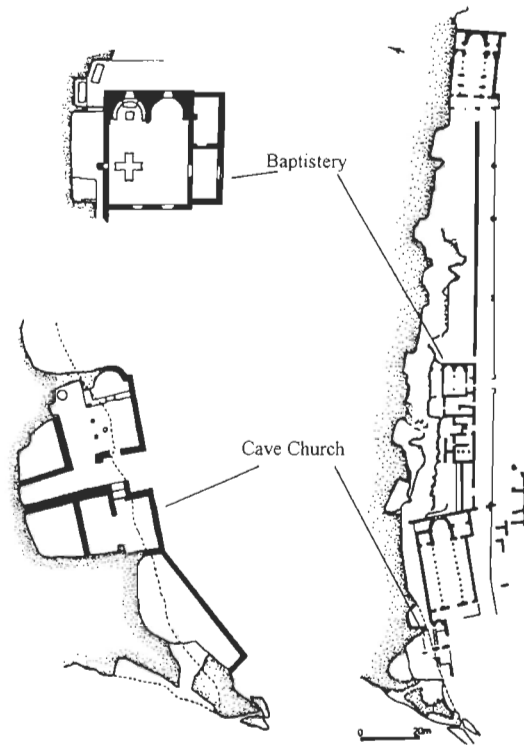


Figure 5 Plan of Alahan (Courtesy of Dr. Stephen Hill (1996)).

It was only when I emerged from the mouth of this passage that the plateau on the top of the hill, where the pilgrimage centre was once situated, became visible. I experienced a feeling of anticipation and excitement as my eyes were drawn to the end of the cutting, and I came closer to its mouth. The path continues forward; but what you see today is an almost barren plateau, in the distance the remains of the apse of the Basilica of St. Thecla, underneath which is the sacred cave (Figure 4).

From piles of rocks and rubble, my plan revealed information about the site, traces of which could be made out on the ground. As an archaeology student, I had decided before arriving that the place was important, that was my motivation, these insubstantial remains were proof enough. For the early Christian pilgrim, motivation for visiting St. Thecla's and recognition of the importance of the place would have been based on different criteria, but the passageway would have performed a similar role.

The Miracles of St. Thecla provide more vivid information about the site. They describe gardens at the sanctuary (Miracle 36:17–21, Dagron 1978), which had live birds: signets, cranes, geese, doves and birds from Egypt (Miracle 24, Dagron 1978). Dagron suggests that these birds would have brought joy to the visitors for aesthetic reasons (Dagron 1978:69–70); but these birds were also Christian symbols: as a group they symbolised paradise, individual birds were frequently used in Christian art to symbolise themes such as eternal life. These symbols had often been appropriated by Christianity from earlier religions but came to represent an important part of Christian iconography, occurring frequently in mosaics, paintings, and sculptures: for example: in the mosaic

from the apse of St. Appolinare in Classe in Ravenna (Deichmann 1958, 385). The garden at Meryemlik was all that was represented and symbolised in these 2-D images of paradise, but alive and real.

Further along the path were two enormous rock-cut cisterns on the right of the road, a bath building on the left and a huge domed basilica similar to the East Church at Alahan – known as the Cupola Church – and the remains of a splendid fifth century basilica, where now just the apse is standing. This building was rebuilt in the fifth century in place of an earlier structure and although very little is immediately visible above ground today, the crypt or cave itself, which was the shrine to St Thecla, still exists.

The gate to the crypt, the most sacred part of the site, was unlocked for me and two others by the guard; as I went down the steps the temperature dropped dramatically and once inside the cave, I was struck by the way I could hear nothing but our footsteps. As we walked around inside I carefully examined the cave in my attempt to be a diligent student of such buildings. Suddenly, the silence was broken by literally twenty-five fourteen year olds who had also come to experience the cave, but who did so by scrambling over every corner of it laughing and shouting. The breaking of the silence and their behaviour changed the atmosphere for me totally. However, this change in atmosphere and their behaviour did not remove my motivation for visiting the place; what struck me was their apparent lack of understanding of the archaeology, the architecture, religious history and significance of the place. I later accepted that they were simply behaving in a way that the architecture allowed but very probably not for which it was intended. But I was interested to notice that my own sense of the importance for the place did not seem to be appreciated by them.

A few weeks later, I spent a day at Konya on the central Anatolian plateau, where I wandered around the mosque at Mevlana, a place of Moslem pilgrimage. I looked at early copies of the Koran and the beautiful decoration of the interior, treating it more like a museum than a sacred site. As I approached the tomb of the Mevlana I noticed two young women standing just in front of it; the emotion in their facial expressions, the tears running down their cheeks and their postures challenged me to re-examine how they could have felt so much emotion when I was feeling so little.

In both situations I found that my own reaction to the place had been different to that of others. This is hardly surprising, and bears out Lang's assertion that although the architecture of a place may facilitate a particular experience there, it may 'afford' other behaviours and experiences as well (Lang 1987:103), to a large extent it is the motivation and background of the person that determines the experience. Importantly also, the behaviour and reactions of people in such a place may contribute to the experience of others there, but will not always have a discernible impact on them.

Evidence why pilgrims visited St Thecla's is not conclusive. According to Egeria, a pilgrim who was on her way back to western Europe from the Holy Land, she visited the site because it was not far out of her way (Egeria 22.2, Wilkinson 1971:121). The sources identify another motivation for visiting the site, Miracle 39 describes those 'without particular piety' who came to the site to relax because it was a calm place (Miracle 39) (Dagron 1978:77). This special quality was appreciated by more than just pilgrims and gives a clear impression that the site was viewed by its visitors to be different from the profane, that it was sacred.

The motivation and preparation to a large extent came from the pilgrim; but the architecture and environment of the site could work with that motivation to carry it along in the same way as a film uses a sequence of devices to afford reactions. A sizeable proportion of a film's audience might be crying as other individuals in the same cinema find a scene over sentimentalised and rather 'nauseous'. Different people will exhibit varying behaviour in responses to the same film, but through leading a whole audience through a sequence of devices similar reactions can be provoked in a significant proportion of viewers. Through examining the archaeology of pilgrimage centres it

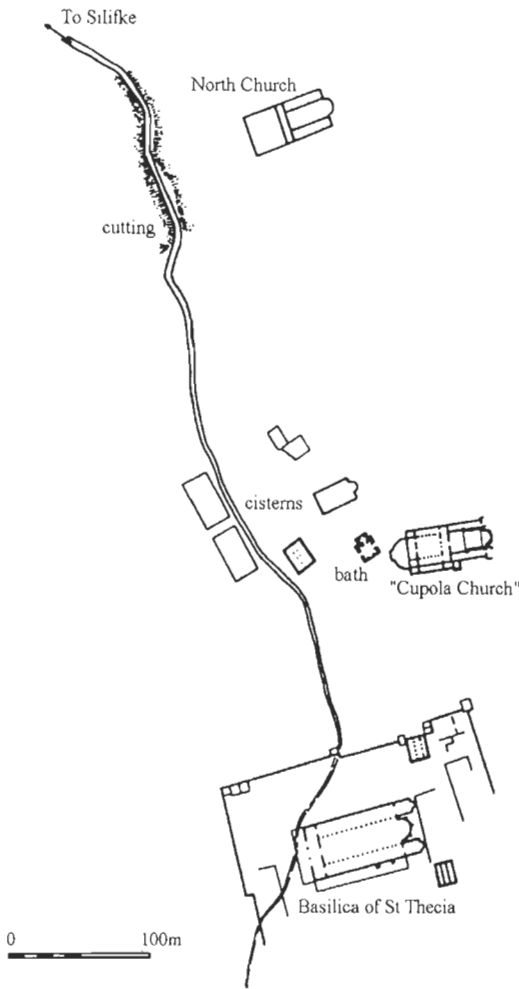


Figure 6 Plan of Meryemlik (Courtesy of Dr. Stephen Hill (1996)).

has been identified that movement is facilitated along simple, or monumentalised paths in the form of colonnades or vaulted passageways, via a sequence of 'stations'.

The sensory properties of the architecture however, afford different subconscious perceptions. In particular, noise and light affect our subconscious subjective perceptions of the quality of any behavioural setting (Lang 1987:130–1). Such changes in perception would be afforded by moving from a long vaulted passageway into a domed space as at Gemile Ada – the change in architecture would represent a change in acoustic properties so that the behaviour of sound would have changed; the behaviour of light would also have changed. The recreation of the sensory impact of these architectural features is difficult for us as archaeologists. We will need to predict the nature of the architecture itself with certainty in order to begin to approach problems of sounds and lighting and we need to understand these and the motivations of the pilgrims to understand the experience.

The expansion and development of sites is represented by an increase in the number of opportunities for stationary liturgy and the monumentalisation of the paths linking those points of activity. Features that would have offered additional opportunities to take part in ritual would have reinforced the potential of the site to create feelings of anticipation and suspense. The colonnaded walkway was the last part of Alahan to be built, the path was being used already and the building of the colonnade simply reinforced it. The shrine of St. Thecla was there when Egeria visited Meryemlik; by the time the Miracles were written the sacred garden with the birds existed. There was an organic development at these places that reinforced the sequential experience.

The opportunities for participation offered at particular points, involved potentially emotional activities. Baptism, signifying death and rebirth to eternal life would only be undertaken once. The baptistery in the early Church was seen as a womb for that rebirth (Underwood 1950:50). Clearly to be baptised or watch a baptismal ceremony was potentially a very emotional activity. These sites also offered the opportunity to pray at particular places; prayer may be defined as, 'the expression of one's desires to, or communication with a god or some spiritual power' (Macdonald 1981:1054); but a place of prayer alone cannot demand prayer. Motivation for prayer, especially sincere prayer, must come from the one who prays. Clearly the depth of prayerfulness depends upon the mental attitude of the one who prays. Preparation of this mental attitude is thus critical, and it is in this preparation that the environment may contribute.

Icons were the visual counterpart to hymns and sermons. We can understand something of the way that the people related to the icons in the medieval period from the testimonies of those who defended them during the period of their destruction known as iconoclasm. These relics were seen by John of Damascus (ca. 675–753/4) as 'Receptacles of divine energy' (Hahn 1990:91). Matthews cites the poet Agathias from whom we learn the importance of reciprocal eye contact between the image and the worshipper as a means for transmitting prayers (Matthews 1997, 26).

Icons were seen by some as appearing to be living beings, speaking to those who looked at them. This demonstrates something of the mindset of these people—they were prepared for spiritual experience. In today's Western World the majority of people, though not all (Middlemiss 1996) seem less able to expect a spiritual experience. Ancient sources and anthropology seem to suggest that people in the Medieval World were much more open to the concept of a spirit world, saints, omens and demons (Whittow 1996:134–5). The medieval pilgrim saw the icons through different eyes; when we study icons we do not have this medieval background. The pilgrim saw icons in their original context, not photographed for study in a book or lit by electric light in the church. Flickering candles lit the icon, so that every aspect of every single tessera of the mosaic reflected the light slightly differently. The icons might have seemed to be moving, many pilgrims willed these images to be alive. Egeria writes that the Church of the Anastasis was ablaze with lamps and filled with smells from the censers (Egeria 24.10; Wilkinson 1971:125). The icons were in a sensual environment and visited by people full of expectation, they demanded and received a sensual response.

The final goal of the pilgrim at each site was to reach its focus, where the experience was most strong. This focus was often a sacred relic or tomb. Holy objects such as this took on great significance in the Early Christian period. They could be used to invoke a spiritual presence, for protection, healing and salvation (Ousterhout 1990:115). People explained how, in their devotion, they sought sensual experiences with these relics through loving and kissing the icons. Relics were a link to the supernatural; after the sequential preparation at the site, pilgrims were ready to receive the relics' power.

The experience need not have ended at the relic since the scent contained in pilgrim bottles would have helped the pilgrims to relive their experience of the sacred site, even though they may

be hundreds of miles away, by stimulating their memories through smell (van Driel-Murray pers. comm.)

Conclusions

Ousterhout and Mango have highlighted the problem of trying to understand liturgy from church types (Mango 1974:9–10; Ousterhout 1990:108). It would be highly speculative to place too much interpretation on the fact that domed basilicas occur at a number of pilgrimage sites in southern Turkey (Myra, Germia, Alahan, Meryemlik) but it may be useful to explore briefly the acoustic effect of the change from basilical design to domed basilical design. Hill (1996) has discussed the appearance of the domed and transept basilicas in Cilicia and Isauria and has suggested that these provincial buildings, found at Alahan and Meryemlik, predated those at Constantinople such as Hagia Sophia (Hill 1996:60–61).

As a final point, I wish to stress that the acoustic properties of the new structures would have been different from the earlier basilical ones. The dome is acknowledged to be a particularly difficult architectural component to work with acoustically because it has a very distinct sound reverberation and echo characteristics (Mikeska & Lane 1959:862); however, we know that acoustic qualities were understood by ancient architects (Vitruvius 5:108). The use of the dome in church architecture in the East came to be very common in subsequent years, thus we may consider the adoption of the domed basilica to have been a successful innovation. Whether the change in acoustic and light properties of these new buildings was a consequence or a motivation for the change, is largely irrelevant to the point that for the visitor inside one of these newly designed churches, not only would the building look different, but also sound different to a basilical church. It is clear that something very unique was taking place at those sites where a change was first implemented from the basilica to the domed basilica.

Thus, it is tempting to believe that the successful adoption of the dome for important structures, at southern Anatolian pilgrimage centres, before its subsequent use in churches elsewhere, may have been due partly to the sensory properties of this new type of built space. Such properties may have afforded an environment suitable for a significant sensory experience for the visitors, particularly since these structures are found at sites where the sequential experience would have been so important [1]. The particularly well preserved example from Alahan would provide the ideal material to model one of these buildings and to explore the way in which sound and lighting behaved.

Pilgrimage centres were places of religious devotion and emotion. The social and religious background of the pilgrim played a vital part in the pilgrimage experience, but also critical were the pilgrimage centres and their role as sacred places. They had to confirm the pilgrims' expectations. They did this by providing the opportunity for the pilgrim to join in through a gradual succession of potential experiences, afforded by the sequential layout of the pilgrimage centres. Through the opportunity to take part in potentially emotive ritual, actively or passively at specific places and to move between these points via sacred paths whilst surrounded by a sensual environment full of music and smells, symbolism and mystery, the pilgrims' expectation and anticipation grew until the final encounter with a sacred object was one which might well provoke great emotion. This was a very unique environment and one which is not easily experienced through forms of representation used in archaeological publication to date.

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Endnote

- [1] The building of a twentieth century domed church for its shape without contemplating the effect the structure would have on the behaviour of sound produced by the required liturgical activity, necessitated the provision of buffers and absorbent wall coatings in order to achieve more satisfactory acoustics (Mikeska & Lane 1959).

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