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## The Temple Church at Epiphaneia in Cilicia Pedias and its Terracotta Frieze

ORÇUN ERDOĞAN – HATİCE PAMİR\*

### Abstract

A large number of remains have been uncovered during the excavations carried out by the Hatay Archaeology Museum in Epiphaneia since 2006. One of the excavated buildings is the Temple Church first mentioned in 1892. The church lies on an ancient structure, presumably a Roman temple, situated about 40 meters south of the Colonnaded Street. It is a three-aisled church terminated by a semicircular apse with flanking chambers to the east and probably by a narthex to the west. Since only the lowest courses of the building are extant, it is difficult to ascertain the original appearance of the walls. Likewise, the majority of the architectural plastics have been lost. However, partly preserved remains at least show that most parts of the church were paved with mosaics while in other places paved with opus sectile, marble, and brick. The most extraordinary group of the finds is the architectural terracotta fragments. Based upon the forms such as dentils / geisipodes or cyma recta and various ornaments such as staurograms, crosses, swastika, acanthus, eggs and dart-like / ionic cymation and bead and reel-like motifs, these terracotta pieces are examined under three main types. Although no comparable *in situ* example was found in the Byzantine Empire, similar stone pieces from the early Byzantine

### Öz

2006 yılından beri Hatay Arkeoloji Müzesi başkanlığında sürdürülen Epiphaneia kazılarında çok sayıda yapı kalıntısı ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Bunlar arasında en ilginç buluntu grubuna sahip yapılardan biri Tapınak Kilisesi'dir. İlk kez 1892 yılında bahsedilen kilise, Sütunlu Cadde'nin 40 m güneyinde, erken döneme ait bir antik yapı üzerine oturmaktadır. Ana bünyesini doğuda sütunlarla ayrılmış üç nefli bir naos ile batıda olasılıkla bir narteks oluşturur. Apsisin iki yanında dikdörtgene yakın planlı iki oda bulunur. Sadece en alt sıra örgü taşları günümüze ulaşabilen yapının büyük bir bölümü mozaiklerle; kısmen mermer, tuğla ve opus sectile ile döşenmiştir. Kilisede ele geçen en sıra dışı buluntu grubunu mimari terrakotta parçalar oluşturur. Dış kesimi ve kyma rekta gibi farklı tuğla formları ile bezeme kısmındaki staurogram, haç, svastika, akantus, yumurta-ok ve boncuk dizisi benzeri süslemeleri temel alınarak üç ana tip içinde sınıflandırılmıştır. Her bir tip ve bu tiplerin alt gruplarında karşılaşılan biçimsel ve süsleme özellikleri, benzer bir *in situ* örneği bulunamayan bu parçaların özgününde çatı altındaki saçaklık ile belki de pencere ve kapı gibi mimari öğelerin üst kısımlarında bulduklarına işaret etmektedir. Arkeolojik buluntular ile karşılaştırmalı örnekler, kilise ve terrakotta

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and especially the Roman periods indicate that these architectural terracottas were a part of the entablature of the church. Archaeological finds demonstrate that both the church and the terracotta are dating from the fifth or sixth century.

**Keywords:** architectural terracotta, entablature, modillion, cornice, dentils, staurogram

parçaların MS beşinci ya da altıncı yüzyıla ait olduklarını göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** mimari terrakotta, entablatur, konsol, korniş, dış kesimi, staurogram

The ancient city of Epiphaneia is located in the neighborhood of Yeşilkent-Gözeneler in the Erzin district of Hatay Province and surrounded by the Taurus Mountains to the north and west, the Amanos Mountains to the east, and the Gulf of Iskenderun to the south. The remains of the city span in an area of approximately 80 hectares (fig. 1).

The pottery sherds found during the surveys provide the earliest data of the city dating from the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.<sup>1</sup> Information concerning its name comes from the Hellenistic period. Previously called Oiniandos, the settlement was reestablished with the name Epiphaneia in the second century BC by Antiochus Epiphanes IV or by his successors. The city was annexed to the Province of Cilicia, which was established a few years after the city came under Roman rule in 67 BC. It was also called Traianopolis during the reign of Trajan.<sup>2</sup> Having experienced prosperity for a long period, the inhabitants of the city are thought to have suffered for a while, like many other settlements in the region, after the sack of Sassanids in 260.<sup>3</sup> The region of Cilicia Pedias was again placed under the Province of Cilicia within the borders of the Prefecture of Oriens as part of the new provincial organization during the reign of Diocletian. The last provincial organization was carried out during the reign of Theodosius II. Epiphaneia during this period was subordinated to the Province of Cilicia II (Cilicia Secunda) in the Prefecture of Oriens and maintained its existence in the same administrative unit until the early Muslim conquests.<sup>4</sup>

With respect to ecclesiastical administration, the city during the early Byzantine period became a subordinate / suffragan diocese of the Metropolitan bishop of Cilicia II, Anazarbus, within the Patriarchate of Antioch.<sup>5</sup> Amphiōn, the first recorded bishop of Epiphaneia, is believed to have been martyred during the time of Maximinus Daia in the first quarter of the fourth century. Written sources speak of several bishops who took office in the city and participated in various synods between the fourth and the seventh centuries. Among them are another bishop Amphiōn who bears the same name as the first martyr, Hēsychios, Polychronios, Marinos, Paulos, Kosmas, Nikētas and Basileios.<sup>6</sup> In addition to these, another bishop's name was discovered for the first time in Epiphaneia on a recently unearthed mosaic floor lying in the gallery of the Colonnaded Street. The inscription with the name "Romanos" is dated to the sixth century.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lehmann et al. 2006, 81.

<sup>2</sup> Tobin 2004, 5, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ünal and Girginer 2007, 260.

<sup>4</sup> Sayar 2021a, 426-34; Tobin 2004, 7-8; Koder 2017, 11; Jones 1971, 540.

<sup>5</sup> Koder 2017, 11-12; Haldon 2010, 52, map 4.3; Hild and Hellenkemper 1990, 1:250.

<sup>6</sup> Hild and Hellenkemper 1990, 1:250.

<sup>7</sup> Pamir and Yastı 2020, 378.



Epiphaneia must have become part of the Islamic State immediately after the conquest of Cilicia Pedias in 636. During this period of struggle between the Byzantines and the Arabs in which Byzantine rule was completely lost by the early eighth century, the entire region of Cilicia became a borderland. The bishoprics were attached to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, as the population of many cities around Epiphaneia fled to Byzantine territory in the west.<sup>8</sup> Epiphaneia might have suffered a similar fate as its neighboring cities; however, no sufficient evidence concerning the period of the Umayyad Caliphate has yet been detected.

After this period of turmoil, the city was again mentioned in association with the Abbasids. Epiphaneia was fortified with the construction of a fortress during the reign of Caliph Harun al-Rashid and became a regional garrison town throughout the Abbasid rule.<sup>9</sup> The second and the last Byzantine presence in the city seems to have begun soon after Nicephorus' conquest of Cilicia Pedias in 965. With the recapture of Antioch about the same time, the region was once again annexed to the Patriarchate of Antioch. Armenians are known to have been settled here by the Byzantines by the middle of the 11th century, and the region turned into a conflict area for the Byzantines, Armenians, and the Crusaders throughout the 12th century. The city remained in the territory of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia after 1198.<sup>10</sup>

The buildings of the city have been severely damaged, especially in the last 50 years during the course of bulldozing and clearing fields for farming. According to the observations of nineteenth century travelers as well as the results of recent archaeological excavations and surveys, the main visible monuments of the settlement are the theater, odeion / bouleuterion, colonnaded street, water channels / aqueducts, necropolis, bathhouse, and the temple church, all of which date especially from the Roman imperial and early Byzantine periods. Travelers also give information about the gymnasium, city walls, bathhouse, and another church, none of which have been a subject of an exhaustive study.<sup>11</sup> The *fullonio* at Epiphaneia, recounted by Ammianus Marcellinus as the birthplace of the bishop of Alexandria between 357-361, may also be considered as a possible building of the fourth century although the authenticity of the story is questionable.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the Roman and Byzantine periods, little is known about the medieval buildings of the city. Except for a pottery workshop and barely discernable remains of the city walls,<sup>13</sup> most of the remains attributed to the Medieval Age were found as small-scale constructions (fig. 2).

## Temple Church

When the building was first briefly mentioned<sup>14</sup> and sketched<sup>15</sup> by Heberdey and Wilhelm in 1892, only the lowest courses of the naos, apse, and narthex were extant. The researchers who visited the church in the latter part of the 20th century encountered the same remains.<sup>16</sup> When

<sup>8</sup> Tobin 2004, 8, 13; Koder 2017, 11-13; Sayar 2021a, 436.

<sup>9</sup> Eger 2016, 111-12; Tobin 2004, 13; Hild and Hellenkemper 1990, 1:250; Sayar 2021a, 437.

<sup>10</sup> Koder 2017, 12; Eger 2016, 112; Tobin 2004, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Gough 1976; Hellenkemper and Hild 1986, 102-4, 127-28; Hild and Hellenkemper 1990, 1:250; Tobin 2004, 13-15; Lehmann et al. 2006, 82; Eger 2016, 112-18; Pamir et al. 2022a.

<sup>12</sup> Hild and Hellenkemper 1990, 1:250.

<sup>13</sup> Eger 2016, 112-18; Tobin 2004, 13-15.

<sup>14</sup> Heberdey and Wilhelm 1896, 18.

<sup>15</sup> For the sketch plan of the building published by the end of the 20th century, see Hild et al. 1982, 195, fig. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Gough 1976; Hill 1996, 166-67; Tobin 2004, 14-15; Bayliss 2004, 94-96; Eger 2016, 117.

Hellenkemper and Hild surveyed the city in 1983, they observed that also the lowest courses of the church were destroyed, and some of its remains had been already bulldozed.<sup>17</sup> The first archaeological excavations at the church started in 2017 and continued until 2021.<sup>18</sup> The church lies on an ancient structure situated about 40 meters south of the Colonnaded Street. The decorated large ashlars scattered around and partly constituting the lower courses of the building such as the bema, nave stylobates, and the main walls suggest that the early building in question was a temple dating from the Roman imperial period.<sup>19</sup>

The building is a basilical church consisting of a nave and two side aisles and terminated by a semicircular apse with flanking chambers. The aisles are separated from the nave by the columns. The wall traces and the mosaic floor on the west demonstrate that the church has a narthex,<sup>20</sup> whose limits are uncertain. The entrance to the naos was provided by seven doors in total. The two steps of the synthronon and the stylobates of the bema have been preserved. The side chambers flanking the main apse are connected to each other by a corridor / passage. The chambers, the east end of which are not completely excavated due to the orchard located immediately to the east, may have been terminated by a semicircular apse or directly by a flat wall judging by the regional counterparts. The lowest courses of the main walls of the naos were built from ashlar blocks while the apse and the flanking chambers from rough masonry consisting of basalt stones. A large number of brick pieces revealed during the excavations suggest that brick must have been used on the upper courses, as previously suggested by the other researchers (figs. 3-4).<sup>21</sup>

With the exception of the flooring, most of the remains of the interior decoration is badly damaged and have been lost. No fresco remains were detected *in situ* except for those pieces found fallen in the debris. Moreover, the multi-colored glass tesserae unearthed in the debris on the east of the apse indicate that the half dome of the apse was covered with mosaics. The remains also show that at least the lower courses of the apse wall facing the corridor / passage were revetted with marble. The excavations revealed that the bema and the apse were paved with opus sectile, the corridor behind the apse with brick slabs, and probably the entire nave with marble slabs. Apart from these spaces, the south and north aisles, narthex, flanking side chambers as well as the floors immediately outside the north and south façades were paved with mosaics. The motifs are predominantly geometric except for two beribboned birds (fig. 5). Since the mosaic floors in front of the façades seem to have been designed in accordance with the original architecture of the church, they cannot be associated with an earlier or later phase. Since no space dividing was observed, these parts of the church might have been used as porticoes. Only a few remains of architectural plastics were unearthed, among which were a fragment of the altar table, a pilaster capital, and several marble revetment fragments, of which some were carved in the champlévé technique. Moreover, a large number of flat tiles (*tegula*) and semicylindrical cover tiles (*imbrex*) were revealed.

<sup>17</sup> Hellenkemper and Hild 1986, 104.

<sup>18</sup> Pamir and Kara 2019, 328-30; Pamir and Yasti 2020, 381-85; Pamir et al. 2022b, 417-20.

<sup>19</sup> Hellenkemper and Hild 1986, 103; Hill 1996, 166; Bayliss 2004, 95; Tobin 2004, 5, 15. For a detailed description of the decorated architectural pieces, see Pamir and Kara 2019, 328-30; Pamir and Yasti 2020, 381-83.

<sup>20</sup> The narthex has been severely damaged. This part of the plan was created based upon the sketch plan done in 1892 (Hild et al. 1982, 195, fig. 3) and whose remains were unearthed as part of the archaeological excavation.

<sup>21</sup> Bayliss 2004, 95; Hill 1996, 166. The upper levels of the main walls might have been composed of rows of stones alternating with courses of brick as seen at the Early Byzantine bathhouse in Epiphaneia.

The alterations associated with the medieval phase of the church demonstrate that the building was demolished and totally lost its original function by the end of the early Byzantine period. The most explicit remains of this period are the asymmetric walls of unidentified spaces and the tombs built by destroying the marble and mosaic pavements.

### Terracotta Fragments (figs. 6-15)

The most remarkable discovery of the excavations carried out at the Temple Church is a group of decorated bricks. The total number of these terracotta pieces exceeds 500, the vast majority being found in fragments. However, given the agricultural activities that caused the scattering and the destruction of the material, one may expect that this number was originally much higher.

Although a great number of terracotta fragments have been found scattered around the present surface soil<sup>22</sup> during the surveys because of the bulldozing of the field, systematic excavations have demonstrated that their original positions where they had first fallen are immediately outside the main walls of the church (fig. 6).

These terracotta pieces can be classified into three main types based upon their various forms and decorations employed in molding techniques on the front faces.

### Type 1 (figs. 7-10)

This type is roughly rectangular in shape and consists of a dentil / *geisipodes* employed on the border along the upper long side and a relief on the surface of the front face. *Type 1* is examined under two sub-types as *Type 1a* and *Type 1b*, because of two different types of ornamentation employed in the relief section.

*Type 1a* constitutes the vast majority of the examples of *Type 1* and measures about 32 x 38 cm based upon an almost completely intact example. Their thickness ranges from 2.3 to 3.8 cm. The colors are predominantly 2.5 YR 6 / 8 (light red) and rarely 5 YR 7 / 6 (reddish yellow). It has four dentils on the border of the upper long side. The depths between each dentil measures 2.50 cm, and each dentil is 3 cm long. On the front face, there is a relief immediately below the beginning of the dentil. Covering the central part of the upper half of this face, it consists of a wreath motif with a diameter of 15 cm and a staurogram (*tau-rho*) measuring 10 x 10 cm. The wreath bordered by two outlines internally and externally is decorated with leaves facing upwards on both sides and a mid-rib in the center.<sup>23</sup> The staurogram in the center of the wreath is formed by adding the circular part of the Greek letter ρ to the vertical arm of the cross. This part of the letter ρ terminates with a line facing downwards at an angle of about 45 degrees. This cross with a double outline resembles the Greek cross in that the arms are equal in length as well as the Maltese cross since the arms enlarge outwards symmetrically and terminate in a concave shape.<sup>24</sup> With the exception of the surfaces of the relief and dentil parts, the majority of the examples have mortar residues on the front and back faces. In addition, shallow lines have been incised on the back faces of some examples, so as to adhere the mortar to the brick. There are traces resulting from using of the molding in the relief part as well as superficial differences in the ornament details.

<sup>22</sup> The level of the present surface soil ranges from +44,60 to +43,90 m.

<sup>23</sup> For a similar pattern see Balmelle et al. 1985, 139.

<sup>24</sup> For both cross types see Kalopissi-Verti and Panayotidi-Kesisoglou 2010, 286; Post 1975, 5; Mergen 2016, 260-61.

*Type 1b* is represented by only a few pieces, and in that regard, it provides the fewest examples of all the three types. It measures about 20-24 x 31 cm based upon two partly preserved examples, while the thickness ranges from 2.9 to 3.1 cm. The colors are very similar to those of *Type 1a* and predominantly 2.5 YR 7 / 8 (light red). It has four dentils on the border of the upper long side. The depths between each dentil and their length measures almost the same as *Type 1a*. On the front face, there is a relief immediately below the beginning of the dentil. Covering the central part of the upper half of this face, it consists of a wreath motif with a diameter of 13 cm and a Latin cross measuring 6 x 10 cm. Horizontal and vertical arms enlarge only at the ends, and in this regard, the cross resembles a cross potent which has vertical bars at the four ends.<sup>25</sup> The wreath encircling the cross is composed of a sawtooth / herring-bone pattern without any outline.<sup>26</sup> There are traces resulted from the use of molding in the relief part as well as superficial differences in the ornament details as seen in *Type 1a*.

### Type 2 (figs. 7-8, 11)

Due to the relatively thicker and smaller size of the brick, *Type 2* has the highest number of well-preserved examples among the three types. This modillion-formed type is roughly rectangular in shape and consists only of relief on the surface of the front face. It measures about 10 x 19 cm based upon a large number of well-preserved examples, while the thickness ranges from 4 to 6 cm. The colors are predominantly 2.5 YR 6 / 8 (light red) and rarely 5 YR 7 / 6 as *Type 1a-b*.

The relief, consisting of an acanthus motif and covering a part of the front face, measures 9 x 12 cm. The acanthus leaf is composed of a mid-rib and central veins on both sides. Except for the surfaces of the relief, most of the examples have a lot of mortar residue on the front faces. There are traces resulting from using of the molding in the relief part as well as superficial differences in the ornament details as in *Type 1a-b*.

### Type 3 (figs. 7-8, 12-15)

This type is rectangular in shape and consists of a relief employed on the border along the upper long side with a concave profile. *Type 3* is examined under four sub-types: *Type 3a*, *Type 3b*, *Type 3c*, and *Type 3d* because of four different ornaments executed in the concave relief section. The colors are predominantly 2.5 YR 7 / 8 (light red) as *Type 1a-b* and *Type 2*, while their thickness ranges from 2.5 to 3.5 cm. There are traces resulting from use of the molding in the relief section as well as superficial differences in the ornamental details as in the first two types.

No complete preserved example of *Type 3a* has been found. The largest pieces of this type measure about 18 x 21 cm. The concave section consists of a cross meander / swastika motif with the single return.<sup>27</sup>

*Type 3b* measures about 20 x 39 cm based on an almost completely preserved example. The concave section consists of a row of alternating stylized meanders formed of diverse arrangements of L-shaped motifs and vertical lines.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> For crosses of this sort see Kalopissi-Verti and Panayotidi-Kesisoglou 2010, 286; Gökalp 2009, 34; Mergen 2016, 261-62.

<sup>26</sup> For a similar pattern see Balmelle et al. 1985, 33.

<sup>27</sup> For the variations of the similar motif see Balmelle et al. 1985, 77-78, 81, 83, 86-87; Sezer 2007, 552.

<sup>28</sup> For a similar mosaic example from a building called Balıklarâğı Church in Cilicia, see Tülek 2004, 43, fig. 5.1.

As *Type 3a*, no completely preserved examples have been unearthed. The largest pieces of the *Type 3c* measure about 21 x 26 cm. The concave section consists of a row of alternating eggs and frame motifs. They are clearly separated from each other by deep grooves.

*Type 3d* measures about 19 x 45 cm based on an almost completely preserved example. The concave section consists of a row of the tangent alternating reel-like and horizontal beads motifs.<sup>29</sup>

## Evaluation

There are two settlements containing examples that are very similar to the terracotta fragments found at the Epiphaneia Temple Church in terms of material, form, and ornamentation. Although no *in situ* example was found at either site, these terracotta pieces, along with those of Epiphaneia, provide significant data for us to draw conclusions about their common and regional characteristics.

Located in the Toprakkale district of Osmaniye Province, Deli Halil Settlement is only 2 km away from Epiphaneia. This unfortified settlement mostly consists of such buildings as houses, cisterns, storage cellars, olive presses, and mills.<sup>30</sup> With the exception of a building identified as a temple, no public building was found, and therefore the site seems to be a large-scale village. The settlement is dated to the period between the early fifth to the end of the sixth century based upon the pottery sherds.<sup>31</sup> Although a very small number of pieces were found during the surveys, the forms and the ornamental character of these terracotta fragments are almost identical to the examples of *Type 2* and the *a, c, d* variations of *Type 3* in Epiphaneia.<sup>32</sup>

Another site is situated 10 km south of Epiphaneia in the Dörtüol district of Hatay Province. The settlement consists of two recently excavated basilical churches (Yeniuyurt Churches) and a group of unidentified buildings suggested to be along the pilgrimage route.<sup>33</sup> A great number of terracotta pieces were unearthed during the excavations conducted at the two churches, and both were dated to the period between the fifth and the sixth centuries based on the archaeological data. These terracotta fragments were manufactured in three main types and sub-types in terms of form as at the Temple Church in Epiphaneia. The brick sizes and the clay colors also bear strong resemblances to those in Epiphaneia, while there are slightly different variations and additional sub-types in the motifs. In addition, some paint residues were found on the front face of a piece identical to *Type 2* in Epiphaneia.<sup>34</sup>

The common stylistic, historical, and geographic characteristics attested in the terracotta pieces of these three sites, all of which are located in easternmost Cilicia Pedias, definitely point to a local production workshop in the Plain of Issus.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, since none of these fragments were found *in situ*, we may at least present other parallel examples in order to be able to suggest a possible original position of the terracotta.

<sup>29</sup> A very similar example of this variation is to be seen on one of the voussoirs at Alahan West Church; see Gough 1985, 164, fig. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Tülek 2014, 191-95; 2017, 683-84, 687.

<sup>31</sup> Tülek 2014, 195; 2017, 685.

<sup>32</sup> Tülek 2013, 1:266-67, figs. 2-5.

<sup>33</sup> Çelikay 2018, 4, 7, 150.

<sup>34</sup> Çelikay 2018, 134-38, 143-48, 152-54, 161.

<sup>35</sup> For the Plain of Issus recently called "Black Cilicia" due to its characteristic basalt stone, see Tobin 2004, ix, 1.

The stylistic features of each type described above provide some primary clues as to where these pieces might have been originally placed. One of the most remarkable details in this context is the presence of mortar residue on the surfaces of the front and back faces except for the relief sections. Another detail is that the pieces have concave, embossed, and recessed surfaces. These two main characteristics, which do not enable us to reconstruct the original positions of the terracotta on a horizontal surface, indicate that all or a large part of the undecorated sections of the terracotta must have been placed into the masonry of the church's main walls as architectural elements. However, the decorated sections seem to have projected outwards to be viewed from below.

There are plenty of stylistically similar architectural stone or marble elements that are comparable to the pieces at the Temple Church. In most cases, these elements are used as a component of the upper order of antique monuments, that is, entablature. Based upon the terminology of this order, *Type 1* with dentils may be defined as dentils; *Type 2* with acanthus leaf as modillion / console, and *Type 3* with concave profiles as cornice in terms of shape. Some details in the ornamentation also bear some resemblances: With an egg and its frame *Type 3c* resembles *ionic cyma* decoration (egg-and-dart), while *Type 3d* has bead-and-reel with its oval beads and reel-like motifs. Acanthus leaf executed on the front faces of *Type 2* is also a characteristic of the consoles of the geison-cornices.

The other motifs, such as the meanders, staurograms, and crosses adorning surfaces of *Type 1* and *Type 3a-b*, are almost unknown to the decoration repertory of the ancient entablatures. Given the upper order of antique monuments, all these comparable stylistic features of both the terracotta and the stone elements suggest that *Type 1* and *Type 2* belong to a cornice with consoles, while *Type 3* belongs either partially or completely to a cornice and / or to a frieze. It is undoubtedly difficult to precisely determine the exact positions of all the sub-variations of the three types within cornice and frieze. Nevertheless, based upon a very large number of extant examples of stone elements, we may assume that the dentils (*Type 1*) were surmounted by consoles (*Type 2*) and that the pieces of *Type 3* were placed either between the dentils and consoles or at the top of and more likely below them.<sup>36</sup> *Type 3c* and *Type 3d* seem to be in the different rows independently, since both the decoration and the angles of the concave sections differ substantially. The similarity in the dimensions and decorations of the concave sections of *Type 3a* and *Type 3b* indicate that the first two sub-types may belong to the same row. The same is true of *Type 1a* and *Type 1b*, in spite of the fact that *Type 1b* must have been placed at regular intervals or at specific points since only a few pieces were unearthed. In summary, all the types might have been arranged in five different rows independently at the most: *Type 1a-b* and *Type 2* (cornice with consoles); *Type 3a-b*, *Type 3c*, and *Type 3d* (frieze and / or cornice).

Although the Byzantine examples consistent with the order exemplified above are extremely rare, several early Byzantine churches in Cilicia attest both to a regional feature and to the continuation of the tradition to a certain extent. A stone fragment, suggested to have been a part of the entablature placed above a door lintel of the Meryemlik “Kuppelkirche” from the second half of the fifth century, partially repeats the upper order mentioned above with its

<sup>36</sup> For the comparable examples see Willber 1938, 89, fig. 35; Machatschek 1967, pls. 41, 44, 46-47, 49; Vandeput 1997, 274, pl. 41.3; 275, pl. 42.3; 279, pl. 46.1.2; 299, pl. 66.1.2.3; 309, pl. 76.4; 310, pl. 77.2; 320, pl. 87.3; 326, pl. 93.3; 333, pl. 100.1; 339, pl. 106.1; 341, pl. 108.2.3; 343, pl. 110.3; 349, pl. 116.4; 352, pl. 119.2; von Lanckoroński [2005], 1:54, fig. 39; 109, fig. 85; 111, fig. 88; 113, fig. 89; 117, fig. 91; pls. 15, 25-26; Durukan 2005, 109, fig. 4; Türkmen 2007, 216-25; 227-28; 231-35; Niewöhner 2011, 113, fig. 10; Eliüşük 2018, 270, fig. 41; Mörel 2019, 114, fig. 18c-d.

decoration elements such as consoles with acanthus leaves, egg-and-dart, bead-and-reel, and dentils.<sup>37</sup> The West Church at Alahan Monastery, dating from the second half of the fifth century, provides a similar layout. The consoles with acanthus leaves and the friezes with a variation of egg-and-dart motif, both of which once constituted the stone entablature of the west and south façades, are designed in a roughly similar order.<sup>38</sup> The south façade of the so-called Church of the Apostles datable to around 500 is thought to have had a similar stone entablature consisting of consoles with acanthus leaves, egg-and-darts, bead-and-reel, and dentils.<sup>39</sup> Despite the fact that this entablature is composed almost entirely of spolia pieces, an adaptation of this kind is important in that it shows an effort to maintain the ancient tradition by utilizing reused materials.

While the early Byzantine churches present only a small number of parallel stone examples containing all three types together, the elements which may be associated with dentils in *Type 1* and consoles in *Type 2* are seen more commonly on the exterior of the churches. These examples suggest that the terracotta pieces of the Temple Church may have been also placed into other parts of the church façades. For instance, in the early Byzantine churches in Cilicia, stone cornices with consoles akin to *Type 2* are employed not only below the roofs of the naos or above the door lintels, but also above the window lintels or immediately below the roofs of the apses. This is seen, for example, at Adana Karakilise (between the fifth-sixth centuries),<sup>40</sup> Kadirli Ala Cami (Kars Bazaar) (between the end of the fifth century-early sixth century),<sup>41</sup> Alahan East Church (second half of the fifth century),<sup>42</sup> and Mazılık Church (the fourth or early fifth century).<sup>43</sup>

As for outside Cilicia, a number of early Byzantine churches in Lycaonia and Cappadocia also provide similar façade decorations. Although termed as dentils (*Type 1*) in the publications, these stone examples resemble especially those of *Type 2*. Apart from the lower sections of the roof and above the windows and doors, they are also employed in the middle parts of the main walls of the churches.<sup>44</sup> The entablatures of the early Byzantine churches of Syria are designed in a completely different manner. The console-like elements, which may be partly associated with *Type 2* below the roofs of the churches called Kalb Lauzeh, Kal'at Si'man, and Arshin,<sup>45</sup> differ substantially with their huge dimensions and different forms from those in Cilicia, Lycaonia, and Cappadocia. In addition to these neighboring provinces, a group of mausoleums from the early Byzantine period in Rome and Ravenna bears resemblances to *Type 1* and *Type 2* with their console-like cornice elements placed immediately below the roofs.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Herzfeld and Guyer 1930, 51, figs. 50-51; Hill 1996, 233-34.

<sup>38</sup> Gough 1967, pl. 6; 1985, 161-62, figs. 23-24; 165, fig. 28; pls. 16-17.

<sup>39</sup> Bell 1906, 15, fig. 11; Gough 1952, 117, fig. 8; Posamentir and Sayar 2006, 335, fig. 19; Posamentir 2011, 210-11.

<sup>40</sup> Hill 1996, fig. 94; Sayar 2021b, 29, fig. 10.

<sup>41</sup> Bell 1906, 11; Bayliss 1997, pls. 12b, 13a, 14a; Hill 1996, 179.

<sup>42</sup> Gough 1967, pl. 9c; 1985, pl. 35.

<sup>43</sup> Edwards 1982, pl. 3a; Hill 1996, 208.

<sup>44</sup> For Lycaonia see Ramsay and Bell 1909, 335, fig. 262; 378, fig. 301; 408, fig. 332. For Cappadocia see Doğan 2008, 106-11, figs. 9-20; 134, figs. 66-67; Yirşen 2022, 76, pl. 59; 116, pl. 90b.

<sup>45</sup> Butler 1929, 73, pl. 3.74; 101, pl. 3.101; 131, pl. 3.133.

<sup>46</sup> For Santa Costanza from the fourth century see Doig 2008, 39-40. For Galla Placidia from the fifth century see Deliyannis 2010, 76. For Santa Stefano Rotondo dated to the fifth century, see Krautheimer 1969, 388, fig. 22. For the Mausoleum of Empress Helena from the fourth century, see Brandenburg 2005, 57, fig. 23.

## Conclusions and the Dating of the Terracotta

Although there are some similarities in terms of material and partly in form, the architectural terracotta of Antiquity, which became widespread especially from the Archaic period onwards, differs completely from the examples at the Temple Church in terms of both function and ornament. On the other hand, the terracotta pieces in question bear strong resemblances to the stone elements of the entablatures of Antiquity and particularly of Roman periods in terms of form, ornament and function. From this point of view, the finds of Epiphaneia should be considered as the continuation of the Roman architectural tradition.

It is not possible to identify the original positions of the terracotta pieces precisely, since only the lowest courses of the church walls are surviving and no comparable *in situ* instances exactly alike have been found yet. Nevertheless, as exemplified above, a group of pieces of frieze and cornice from the Roman and early Byzantine periods which are stylistically similar to those at Epiphaneia have provided some clues as to the possible façade design of the Temple Church. As discussed above, these terracotta pieces should be expected primarily in the entablature of the roof. Considering the amount and the findspots of those recovered (fig. 6) as well as the comparable examples from the early Byzantine period, we may suggest that the terracotta enveloped the eaves of the church roof along the north, south, west and east façades. Another possibility is that at least some of the pieces, especially *Type 2*, may have been placed on top of the doors and windows as well as in the middle sections of the façades. This possibility can be considered only as an additional feature rather than an alternative to the order of entablature, since most of the fragments seem more associated with eaves as the examples indicate. The more than 500 terracotta pieces also clearly show that if only the tops of windows and doors had been decorated, the vast majority of them would have remained unused.

Despite the fact that our proposal regarding the exact reconstruction of the façades is quite limited, there is a great deal of data that enables us to determine the period of the church and its terracotta. In the most general sense, when considered primarily only the main features of its architecture, this building with its basilical plan and flanking chambers reflects the characteristics of early Byzantine churches in Cilicia.<sup>47</sup> With the exception of a bronze coin of Constantius II (337-361) found only 12 cm above the narthex floor (+43,72 m), no coins from the period were identified. However, both the mosaic pavements and a group of architectural plastics provide clues for dating. The architectural plastics, including a marble pilaster capital decorated with acanthus leaves and volutes<sup>48</sup> and several fragments of marble revetment decorated with square, rectangular, quadrangle, reel, fish scale, palmette and acanthus,<sup>49</sup> point to a period from the fifth to the sixth centuries. The compositions executed on the mosaic floors also indicate a similar date range. The geometric patterns that can barely be discerned on the largely destroyed *in situ* mosaics are saw-tooth, meanders, triangles, three and two-strand

<sup>47</sup> For the detailed information as to the characteristics of the churches in Cilicia and Isauria, see Hild and Hellenkemper 1990, 1:85-95; Hellenkemper 1994, 217-37; Hill 1996, 11-61.

<sup>48</sup> For a very similar example from the recently excavated Yeniyurt Church B dated to the fifth or sixth century in Cilicia II in terms of technique, form and ornamentation, see Çelikay 2018, 141-42. The ornament is also very similar to that engraved on the surface of a capital found at Daphne / Harbiye in Syria I / Prima and datable to the latter part of the fifth century; see Stillwell 1941, pl. 35.86.

<sup>49</sup> Although no direct example has been identified, for the similar champlévé examples dating from the fifth and the sixth centuries in terms of technique and partly ornamentation, see Boyd 1982, 323, fig. 1 (Cyprus); 1999, 66, fig. 12; 67, fig. 14 (Cyprus); Kondoleon 2000, 220-23 (Syria I / Prima-Antioch); Yıldırım 2013, 369-72, figs. 154-58 (Pamphylia-Side); 2020 (Pamphylia-Side), 456-60, figs. 1-18; Pedone 2016, 504-5 (Phrygia-Hierapolis).



guilloche, waves, monochrome, bobbins, intersecting octagons, fish scales, grids, circles, and horizontal beads interloped tangentially, while the only figural composition consists of two beribboned parrots. All these geometric patterns are no doubt used not only in the Byzantine period but in Late Antique period as well. On the other hand, many examples from and outside Cilicia similar to the mosaic patterns of the Temple Church, including the intersecting octagons, circles, and horizontal beads interloped tangentially, and the grids, are datable to the fifth and the sixth centuries.<sup>50</sup> Figural compositions of beribboned parrots are very rarely found and are associated with the tradition of the late antiquity / early Byzantine period. The surviving mosaic examples depicting such figures date from the fifth and the sixth centuries too (fig. 5).<sup>51</sup>

It is also difficult to directly date the terracotta, due to their unique character and very small number of comparable examples. Both the Deli Halil Settlement and the churches in Yeniyurt, where almost identical pieces to those at the Temple Church were discovered as well as other comparable examples mentioned above, demonstrate that they must have been used in the same period as the church - about the fifth or the sixth century. Further, some of the motifs employed on the surfaces of the terracotta also indicate the same periods. For example, although the staurogram motif incised on the front faces of *Type 1* was applied to various Byzantine handicrafts and architectural artifacts from the fourth century onwards, most of the examples are dated to the fifth and the sixth centuries.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, with their unique characters, the meander<sup>53</sup> in *Type 3b* and the bead-and-reel like motifs<sup>54</sup> in *Type 3d* find their counterparts on the mosaic and stone decorations in two buildings, both of which date from the fifth century. The other motifs such as the cross on *Type 1b* and the swastika on *Type 3a* are not specific only to a small period of time but were used from Antiquity through the Middle Ages.

In any case, since there is not any convincing evidence indicating that the church continued to be used in its original function after the early Byzantine period, it is safe to suggest that the building fell out of use with the Umayyad domination of East Cilicia in the first half of the seventh century or was already demolished to a certain extent<sup>55</sup> by then. Apart from the fourth-century coin, all the Byzantine coins unearthed at the church are anonymous follies dating between the latter part of the 10th and the 11th centuries.<sup>56</sup> One of them was found between the upper and lower chin of a skeleton revealed in one of the tombs immediately outside the north

<sup>50</sup> For the similar examples see Levi 1947, 2:pl. 71b, 136; Daszewski and Michaelides 1988, 37, fig. 17; 136, figs. 51-52; Campbell 1988, 6, 57; 1998, pls. 10, 46, 70, 117, 199; Piccirillo 1993, 145-46; Tülek 2004, 22, 36, 69, 86, 147, 158, 225; Mayer and Allen 2012, 311, fig. 42; 332, fig. 74; Çelik 2012, 136; Çelikay 2018, 264, 267; Korkut 2020, 92, fig. 108.

<sup>51</sup> For the similar examples see Levi 1947, 1:358; 2:pl. 85d; Zori 1966, 124; Tsafirir and Hirschfeld 1979, 306, fig. 19; Campbell 1988, 6; Piccirillo 1993, 115, 216-17; Kondoleon 2000, 137; Cimok 2000, 292-93; Çelik 2012, 184-85.

<sup>52</sup> For a general information on the staurogram see Longenecker 2015, 106-10; Finney 2017. For the examples datable to the period in question see Ramsay and Bell 1909, 116, fig. 79; 169, fig. 133; Butler 1920, 77, 80, 159, 163; 1929, 230, pl. 3.245; Lorizzo 1976, 34, fig. 13; Frazer 1979, 571; Tchalenko and Baccache 1980, 109, fig. 297; Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1980, pl. 37.1; Daszewski and Michaelides 1988, 106, fig. 19; Beckwith 1993, 123, figs. 99-100; Ferrua 1990, 15, 163; Deckers and Serdaroğlu 1993, pl. 6c; Ruggieri 2005, 88, fig. 2.49; İşler 2010, 252, fig. 25; Zimmermann and Ladstätter 2011, 185; Sweetman 2013, 261; Bogdanović 2017, 69, fig. 2.13; Crow 2017, 158-59; Şimşek 2018, 92, fig. 14; 97, fig. 24; Dennis 2018, 128, fig. 6.4; Mitchell et al. 2021, 209, figs. 23-24.

<sup>53</sup> For a similar mosaic example at the Balıklarağı Church in Cilicia dating from the middle of the fifth century, see Tülek 2004, 43, fig. 5.1.

<sup>54</sup> For a very similar example of this variation on one of the stone voussoirs at Alahan West Church dated to the latter part of the fifth century, see Gough 1985, 164, fig. 27.

<sup>55</sup> For a suggestion asserting that an earthquake occurred in the first half of the sixth century and caused some damage in Epiphaneia, see Pamir et al. 2022a, 10, 19.

<sup>56</sup> Two anonymous follies were found in the naos at heights of +43,64 m. and +43,90 m. respectively.

façade.<sup>57</sup> It seems likely that the church was completely turned into a small cemetery when the Byzantines reconquered the region in the second half of the 10th century.<sup>58</sup> The pottery sherds recovered from two graves on the collapsed north wall<sup>59</sup> indicate that more bodies continued to be buried here after the 11th century as well. Although the function and period of the asymmetrical and irregular walls could not be identified, they may be attributed to the Middle Ages because they were built by destroying the pavements, and no design was detected related to the original function of the church.

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<sup>57</sup> Pamir and Kara 2019, 330. The grave was found between the levels of +44,08 m and +43,71 m.

<sup>58</sup> About 60 graves in total were unearthed in the nave, aisles, narthex and outside the main walls of the church. Their levels range from +44,10 m. to +43,44 m. While most of them were built by destroying the mosaic and marble pavements, some of the burials were constructed directly on the pavements or on the collapsed north wall. Based upon the small number of medieval coins and pottery sherds found inside the graves as well as the graves constructed above the north wall, one may suggest that the church was already transformed into a cemetery by the Middle Ages. On the other hand, this is not to say that all of the graves should be attributed only to the Middle Ages, since there are plenty of Early Byzantine burial examples located below the pavement levels of the naos or narthex when the church was still in use, as at the Temple Church in Epiphaneia. For the examples and a comprehensive study on such burials inside the church in the Early Byzantine period, see Yasin 2009, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77-79, 80-84. For similar examples from Cilicia, see Hill 1996, 10, 209, 237.

<sup>59</sup> Pamir and Kara 2019, 330. The top levels of the two graves are +44,00 m.

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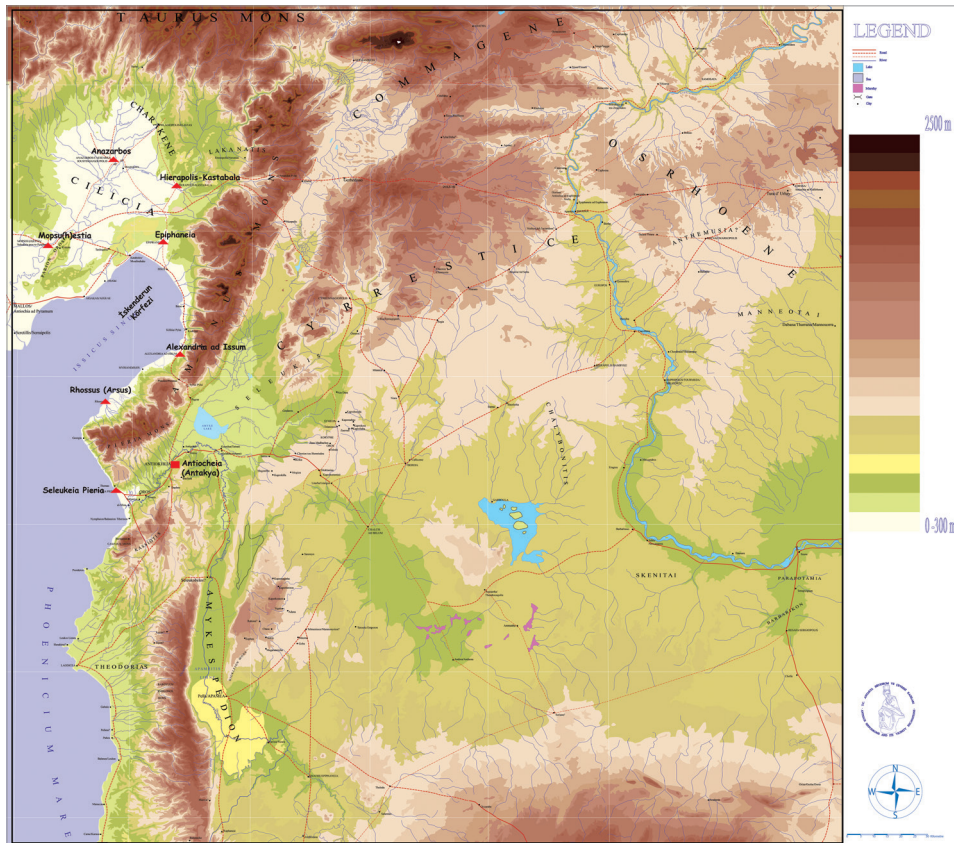


FIG. 1  
Location of Epiphaneia.

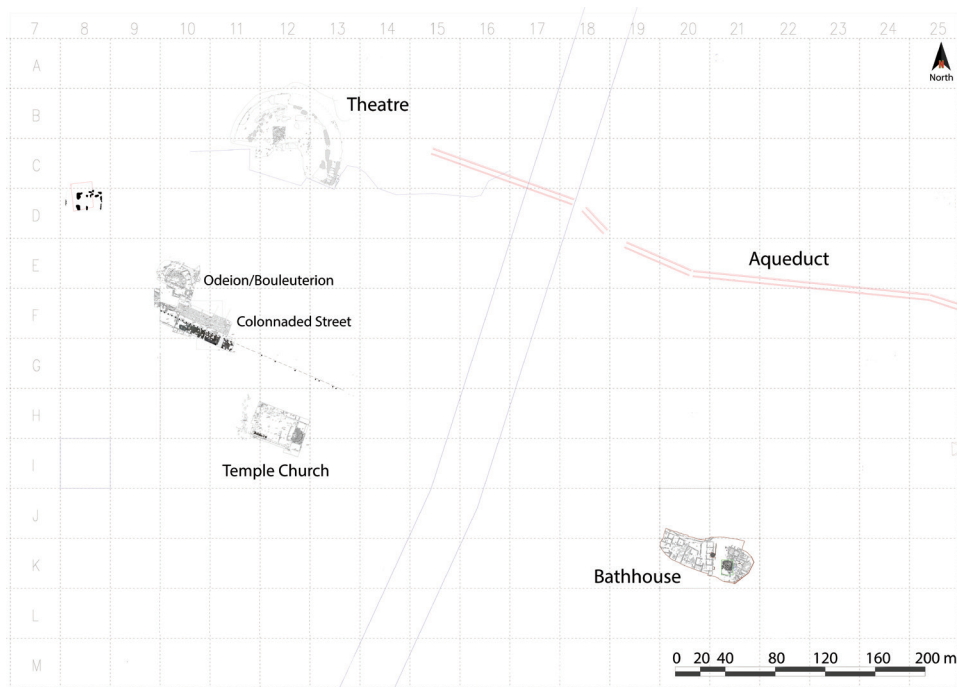


FIG. 2  
Plan of Epiphaneia.

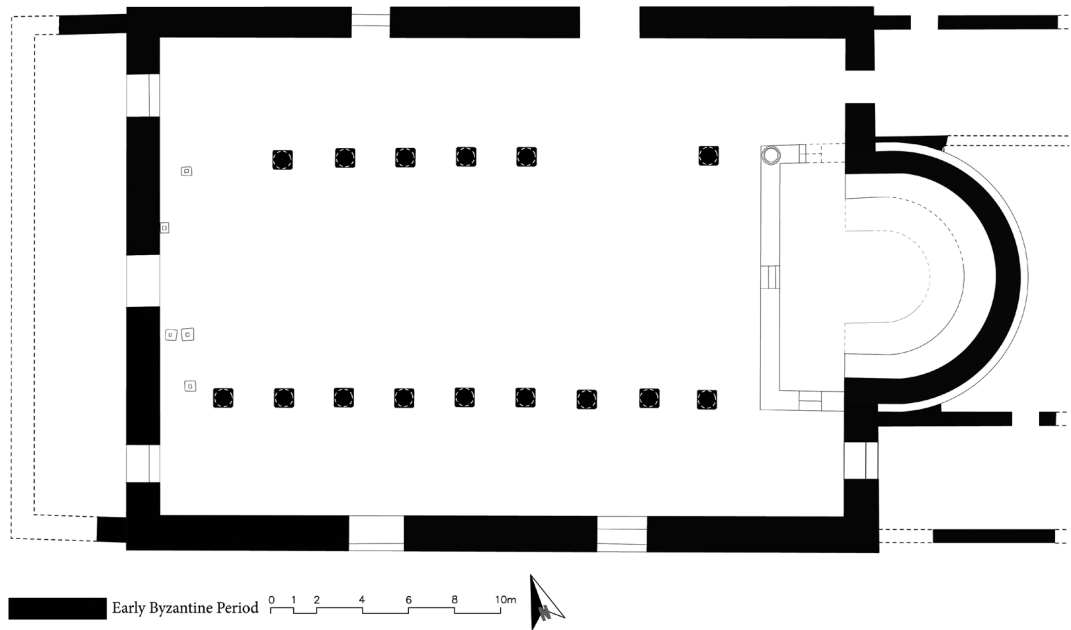


FIG. 3 Epiphaneia Temple Church, ground plan.

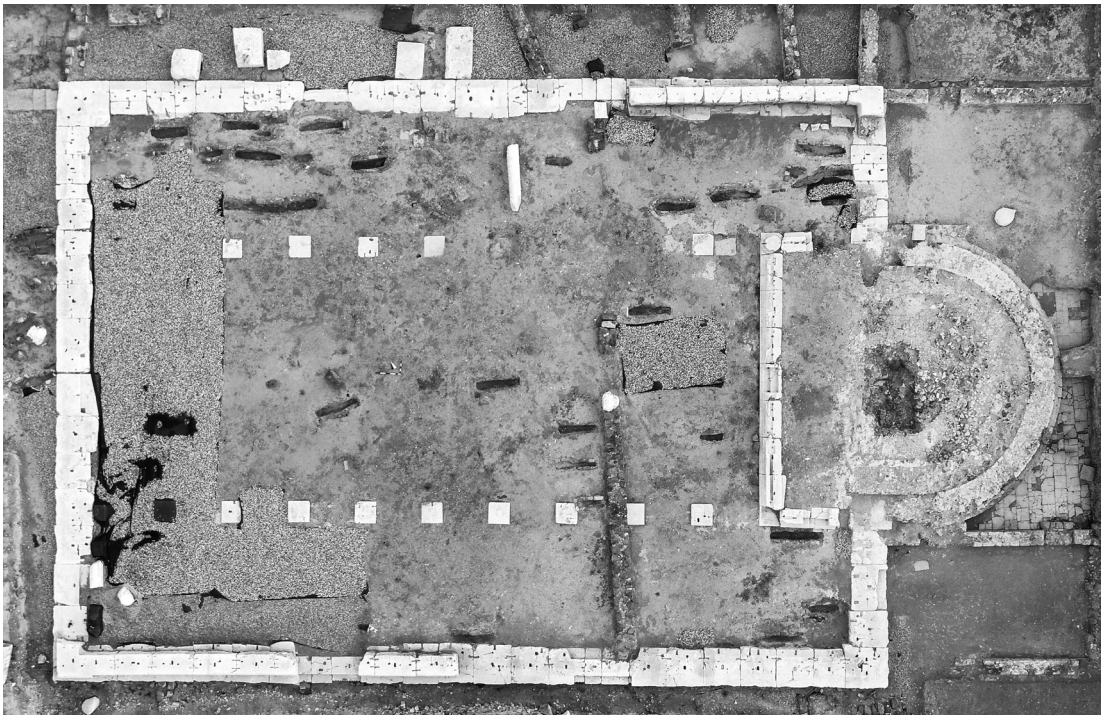


FIG. 4 Epiphaneia Temple Church, aerial view.





south aisle.



south façade, detail of the geometric mosaic floor and one of the beribboned parrots.

FIG. 5 *In situ* mosaic floors in the south aisle and immediately outside the south façade.

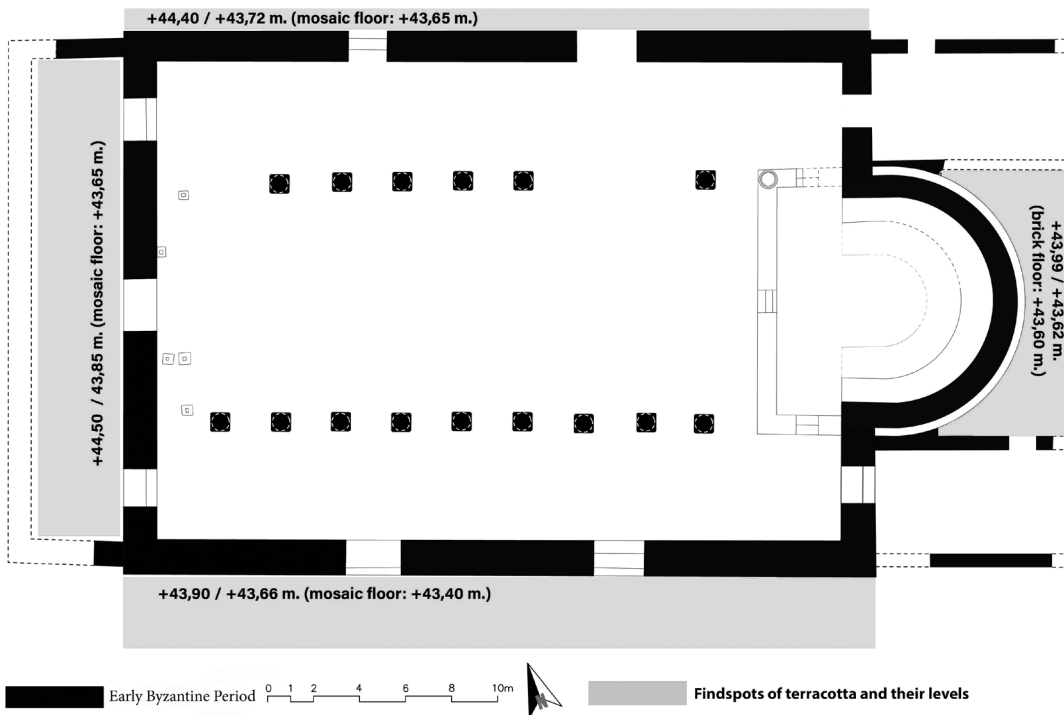


FIG. 6 Findspots of terracotta and their levels.



type 1a



type 1b



type 2



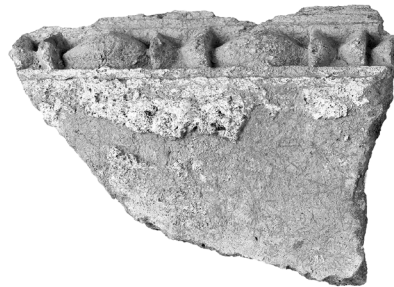
type 3a



type 3b



type 3c



type 3d

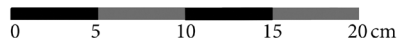


FIG. 7 Terracotta pieces, types 1-3. Selected photos.

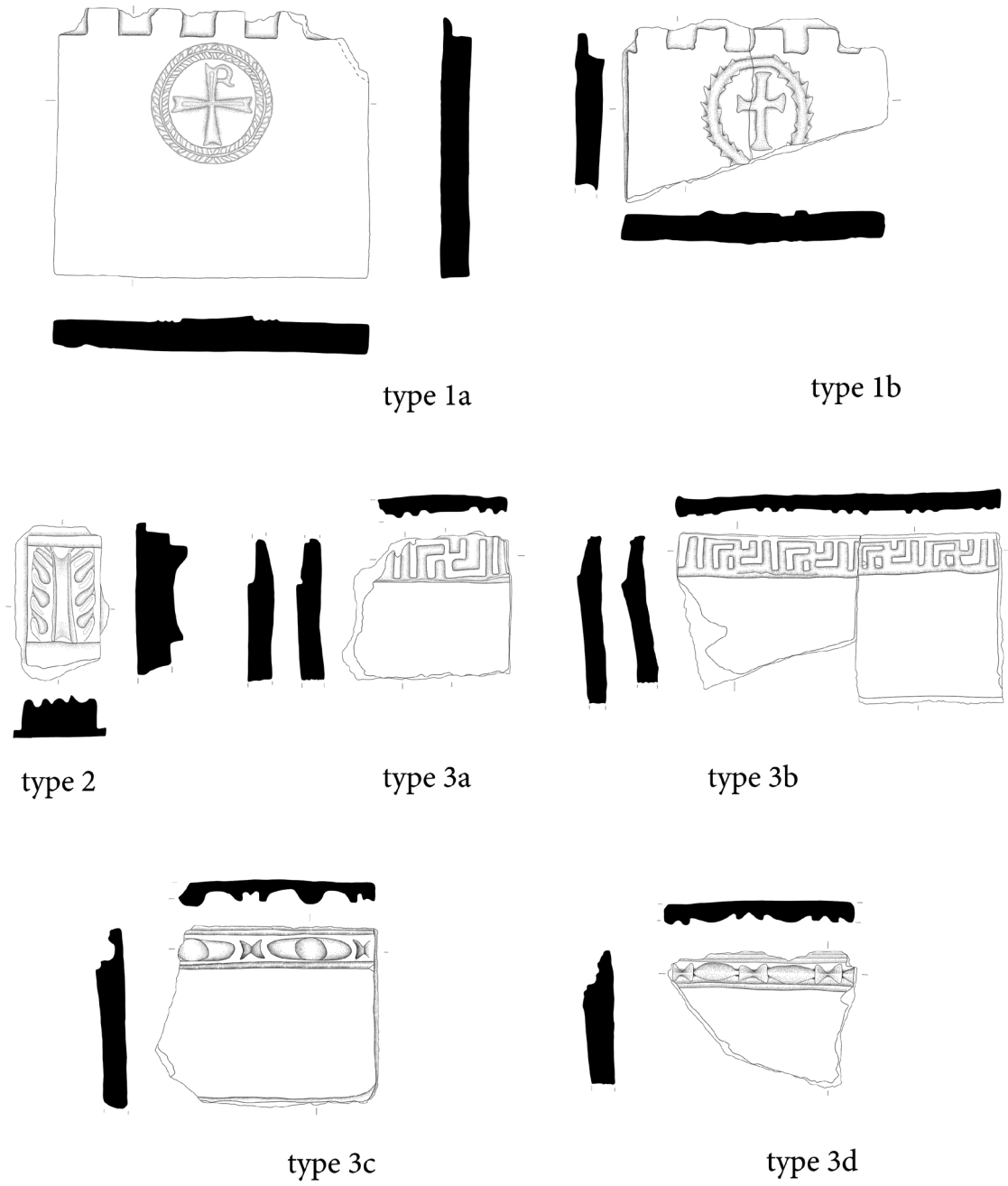


FIG. 8 Terracotta pieces, types 1-3. Selected drawings.

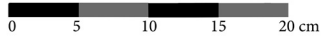


FIG. 9 Type 1a.

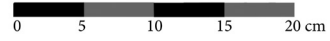


FIG. 10 Type 1b.

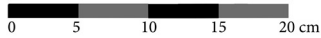


FIG. 11 Type 2.



FIG. 12 Type 3a.

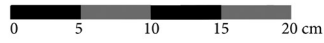


FIG. 13 Type 3b.

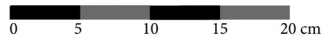


FIG. 14 Type 3c.

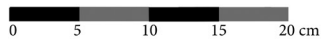
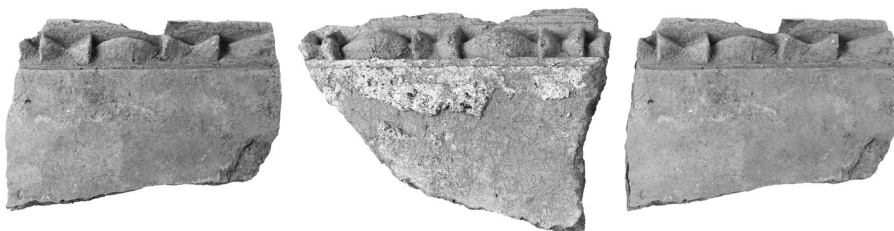


FIG. 15 Type 3d.

(All visuals used in this article belong to the Epiphaneia Excavation Archive of 2016-2021).





